

## Court closes case on fake paintings Altink

From our reporter

AMSTERDAM

The court is in Amsterdam, the prosecution to dismiss the case against the artist C. van L of Beilen. According to the court, there is no evidence that Van L guilty to forgery of paintings by the artist Altink (1885-

1971). Altink was part of the Groningen Ploeg, a group of expressionist painters.

With the decision of the court comes to an end a curious thing. The affair surrounding the alleged falsification of Altink caused panic four years ago in the art world. Drenthe artist had early nineties with several auction houses in the Netherlands twelve canvases Altink for sale. Art experts were initially praised the quality of the paintings, but in May 1991 that changed when the North Dutch art dealer R. Smithuis-Bijnen thought two were offered at Christie's canvases forgeries. Then the auction house withdrew the work.

Also rival Sotheby's went to that measure about after Smithuis message led to the trial for the alleged forgery scandal. The police later arrested Van L who had to spend in custody for four days.

The prosecution, however, decided not to open proceedings against the Beilense painter in 1993. had shown that the towels showed no signs of falsification technical examination of the forensic laboratory.

Smithuis and a colleague had then complained to the court in Amsterdam because the case would be investigated sufficiently. They were right on the court, which determined that it had to do his homework for OM part.

But that research has yielded nothing against Van Loenen. However, it has been established that the signatures on some of the paintings probably not written by Altink. 'Criminal evidence, however, requires more than just likely, "says the court. Further research is possible, but is not considered necessary by the counselors. If all can be proved that the paintings are fakes, must also firmly established that Van L knew the paintings were not created by Altink. That evidence is difficult to deliver according to the court. Moreover, there is so much time has passed that Van L can successfully invoke an unacceptably long threat of prosecution.

Van L relief has taken note of the decision of the court. He will again

insurance claim submitted by the prosecution. He had after the first dismissal had been ten thousand guilders justice. The artist is also considering to claim damages from Smithuis. According to him, all that time for sale Altink 'been authenticated by experts and landed in renowned collections, including those of a museum.