

Gallery Holding Smithuis frustrated Altink affair

"Prosecutor may blunder here with impunity "

From our reporter ROB Boubber

CASTRICUM / AMSTERDAM - Gallery Holding Renée Smithuis from Castricum thousands of guilders and an illusion. "Yes, I am an illusion, that you are also treated fairly in the rule of law. A prosecutor may impunity blunder here and I admit that's pretty frustrating. "

The protracted case last week ruled on the fake paintings Altink: the Amsterdam Court gave permission to dismiss the case: The defendant artist Cor van L [REDACTED] from Drenthe Beilen explained the ruling as a victory and considered after that ruling legal action against the expert witness, Renée Smithuis. Smithuis that this weekend just got hold of the official decision of the court does. "I sincerely hope he does. That gives me the opportunity the matter again clearly doing explained. There is no opportunity to go to the Supreme Court. I must temporarily drop the matter. It has already cost me loads of money. And basically I pay makes up for the mistakes Justice. "

Although not a party - she performed at the request of police and Justice as an expert witness - she was eager for the benefit of its industry, the renowned art dealer, to prove systematic art forgery. Smithuis "I'm sure the paintings are false. Suffering no doubt Justice. The case was dismissed because the court states: "We can never be ascertained that Van L [REDACTED] made them" and "we can never prove that he is acting with the knowledge that the paintings are false."

The Amsterdam lawyer Smithuis, Mr. Hammer explains: "The ruling of the Court is that he believes it is likely that the judgment of the expert witnesses is correct and is supported by the findings of the Forensic Laboratory. There is authorized dismiss as additional technical evidence is difficult to deliver. "

Immediately after the verdict called Drenthe artist Cor van L [REDACTED] he was vindicated. And like the first dismissal he put the shelving of the proceedings, so that his Altink really. and also followed a violent attack on Smithuis, whom Van L [REDACTED] suffered wants stories. The anger of Van L [REDACTED] did not address the complainants including major auction houses - but the expert witness that is the driving force behind the complaint, according to him.

Smithuis became involved in the case Altink when Van L [REDACTED] early nineties with several auction houses in the Netherlands cloths Altink offered for sale. Smithuis: "At a viewing day at Christie's was asked my opinion on the three Altink cloths. Christie's doubted myself vigorously and I said that they were obviously false. Then the auction house withdrew the work; a practice which was immediately followed by Sotheby's and Glerum. And the Hague Venduehuis paid her buyers who had previously purchased a Altink 'back, as well as auction Sunshine. There were other auction houses that sold 'Altink, but they have never taken back to me. "

Sotheby's was one of the plaintiffs in the first case, which was dropped in '93 for lack of evidence. Two expert witnesses were unhappy with the first dismissal. Smithuis from Castricum and Hofsteenge Groningen, both reputed as connoisseurs of the work of Altink, protested at the Amsterdam Court. The dismissal was their competence into question and their reputation as experts in the proceedings. Mr. Hammer: "And [REDACTED] explained the dismissal as if the prosecutor had rehabilitated him. Van L [REDACTED] crowed immediately see, art is real. "

serial

Hamer calls the case a serial, almost too bizarre for words. He believes that the Public Prosecutor, mr. L.Dun has worked at the time sloppy. That was also the Amsterdam Court. The court held that the officer in '93 his work was not done and a new judicial investigation was ordered into the possible forgery of 31 paintings attributed to the Groningen Squad Painter Altink.

gave the expert witnesses, each separately, and considers that only three were really the 31 confiscated paintings. Both essentially the same three paintings as authentic, the other canvases were categorically not Altink. Hamer: "The court considered the opinion of the experts plausible. But proving the falsity is only one link in the chain of the judicial process: prosecution is a second step. You'll have to prove intent. And that is only if you set a thorough investigation.

According Smithuis showed the officer Dun - the same officer as the first case shelved - lying in there again. It was even known that Van L [REDACTED] bought the old gebuikte linen old spiel slats. But the officer was not re about to seize the various belongings in the studio and the offending pictures. "

real examined

Lawyer Hammer says that the Prosecution has not done its job. "There are indicated at the re-opening of the investigation methods for further examination, but not used. The officer went to the first proceedings only on a conclusion of the Central Laboratory. The lab had studied for practical reasons, but some paintings and one of them concluded that the canvas was painted before 1942 and therefore not distorted by Van L [REDACTED]. What was not involved in the research that no one - not even the expert witnesses - drew the authenticity of this painting in question. This was just a real Altink. In the official report of the police state clearly Smithuis Well just this cloth, "Country road, farm and a horse 'or attributes to Altink."

Smithuis: "Then there is the question of suddenly surfaced sign ring. Expert witness Hofsteenge showed the officer that a painting in recent years with no sign of the ring

trade and owner was exchanged when it appeared in the collection of Van L [REDACTED] a signature appeared to wear. That cloth was proof, but Dun officer left that risk and has never examined that work. "

According to Mr. Hammer court has explicitly suggested to turn over the case to reopen an experienced officer. Hammer: "An officer with particular expertise. But the same officer who was involved in the initial treatment, did the matter. "The officer got after the first dismissal commissioned to do his homework. His report gave the impression that the man was obviously offended. That still does not make every effort to show his own wrong? "

That there in the Netherlands are fake Altink in circulation is emphasized by art historians. Rijksmuseum director Henk van Os wrote in his foreword to the new book Hofsteenge De Ploeg, that many false canvases Altink been identified and he stated explicitly that caution had to work to go when buying it.

Smithuis "We have urged witnesses to Mr. Van Os. That man knows his craft better than anyone. But again the same officer Dun refused to do that while he flatly reported that there was no unanimous opinion in the art world on false Altink. He has no museum, no art historian, will not enable a true collector and all inquiries raised by us, he refused to perform. He wanted only one thing: shelve away with a case he knew nothing about and which he did not take the trouble to understand a little of. A failed prosecution tackle is simply not possible within our jurisdiction. Otherwise I would complain today. "

Hamer: "It is the duty of the judiciary to detect art forgery and systematic disruption of the art trade and condemn. Now is a clumsy approach a professional forger lucky escape. "