



Art News Now: Betty Woodman Dies, LES Mural Controversy, Hans Hofmann Painting Recovered & More News

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by Pat Rogers

Have a minute? Get caught up with art news people are talking about. This edition includes news of Betty Woodman's death, a controversial mural on the LES, and more art news to know.

Groundbreaking ceramicist Betty Woodman died on January 3, 2018. She was 87 years old. Woodman was an early pioneer in the world of ceramics. For over 60 years, she created a hybrid of sculpture and painting which was highly inventive and unmistakably contemporary. Never content to view her work within the confines of the decorative arts or craft, she insistently pushed the medium into the realm of fine art, challenging the norms of a sometimes rigid art world. She began working professionally with clay in 1950, and over the next seven decades, experimented and elevated the medium into a truly unique art form.

In recent years, Betty's love of color and painting took on new meaning as she began to create brightly painted canvases that riffed on visions of home, courtyards, and gardens, according to her gallery [Salon 94](#). Ceramics continued to feature in her work, sometimes taking on the role of gestural brushstrokes and accents of color. Many of her paintings depicted imaginary rooms of the artists she admired, including Fra Angelico, Picasso, Bonnard and others. She also found inspiration in the landscape of Italy, where she and her late husband, George Woodman, shared a home and lived six months of the year when not in New York. Click [here](#) to see her work.

Betty Woodman had numerous solo shows at museums worldwide and her work is held by over 50 public collections. Solo exhibitions were held at Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); Institute of Contemporary Arts (London); Museo Marino Marini (Florence); Brooklyn Museum (New York), Victoria and Albert Museum (London); American Academy (Rome) and others. Her 2006 solo exhibition at The Met was the museum's first and only show for a living artist working in ceramics and the first retrospective for a living female artist, according to Salon 94.



Betty Woodman. Courtesy of Salon 94.

Five paintings by Hans Hofmann that were stolen over a decade ago have been recovered by Italian art crime investigators, [according to ArtForum](#). The art was stolen in 2003 from the now-defunct Cirkers art storage facility in New York City by longtime caretaker John Reit, who plead guilty in 2004, reported [Adam Klasfeld for Courthouse News Service](#). The Venice-based Art Recovery International (ARI) announced this week that they had recovered the paintings, according to *Courthouse News Service*. The cache of stolen Hofmann paintings came to ARI's attention after *The Artist* was consigned for sale at Swann Auction Galleries, after failing to sell at Heritage Auctions. A consignor from Swann contacted ARI about the paintings and all five works were connected to the theft. The paintings are estimated to be worth \$500,000, [according to the news account](#).

A four-story tall mural of a penis painted on the side of a LES building didn't last for long. Installed the day before Christmas (December 24, 2017), Swedish artist Carolina Falkholt painted the towering genital in gradations of vibrant red on the side of a Broome Street building as a commission by [The New Allen](#), a street arts group that aims to promote public art on LES, [reported Peter Libbey for The New York Times](#). Three days later, the public work was painted over upon orders by the landlord, after receiving complaints by neighbors, [according to Edward Helmore for The Guardian](#). The penis mural was a companion piece to a [vagina mural painted on a building on Pike Street](#). Less explicit and more fantastical than the penis mural, the vagina mural didn't draw complaints, according to both news publications.

The artist explained that her work is frequently about being comfortable with your body and as a sexual being, [according to The Guardian](#). [On her Facebook page, the artist stated](#), "We need to talk about sexuality without feeling ashamed. Raise awareness around consent, gender identity and sexual freedom. Education, the female experience and constant curiosity is the key." Click [here](#) to visit the artist's Instagram to see the work.

A landmark exhibition of George A. Weymouth is set to open this month at the Brandywine River Museum of Art in Chadds Ford, PA. The exhibition will present around 65 works in various media and will reveal the breath of Weymouth's visual exploration. Mentored by his close friend, Andrew Wyeth, Weymouth made use of watercolor and egg tempera to make haunting landscapes and powerful portraits, according to the museum. The show is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by the [Brandywine River Museum of Art](#) and Rizzoli/Skira. The catalogue features an introduction by Joseph Rishel, a former curator of European Paintings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and who selected the works for the show. "[The Way Back: The Paintings of George A. Weymouth](#)" will be on view from January 27 to June 3, 2018.



"The Way Back" by George A. Weymouth, 1963. Tempera on panel, 44 3/4 x 34 3/4 inches. McCoy duPont Weymouth.
© George A. Weymouth.

The Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach is naming a gallery on its first floor the Riccardo and Tatyana Silva Gallery after receiving a gift of \$500,000 from the philanthropic couple, the museum announced at the Bass Ball on December 16, 2017. Riccardo Silva is the owner of Silva International Investments. Tatyana Silva is a Bass Board of Directors. The Miami-based couple are art collectors and hold modern and contemporary art as well as Italian works from the Novecento movement.

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