

Fakes and Forgeries

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Advice to Collectors

The Annual Mithras Lecture at the Goldsmiths' Hall in October was given by Detective Sergeant Claire Hutcheon, under the aegis of the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars. It was entitled 'The Art Crime Investigator ... '

The Arts Scholars are the 110th - and latest - Livery Company in the City. Detective Sergeant Hutcheon is the head of the Art Crime Division at the Met. Her talk encompassed fascinating stories of art theft and recovery, and art forgeries.



DS Hutcheon at work

The talk was fascinating, but it was the advice for collectors of art that came attached to it that was particularly valuable. My understanding of that advice was that collectors should keep a full record, and ample photographs, of their works. I have researched further, and here are my suggestions:

- i) in addition to your ordinary security (locks, keys, alarms and vigilance) you should complete, as fully as is possible, an International Standard for Art ID form for each object in your collection. Developed by *Object ID* in collaboration with international art organisations, it is an international standard for describing art, antiques and antiquities. Its use helps to combat art theft. *Object ID*, by encouraging the use of the standard and by bringing together organisations around the world that can encourage its implementation, is at the forefront of the fight against art crime; and
- ii) almost as important, take photographs of the art work, not just from the front, but from the sides and back as well. Why not include the top and bottom while you are at it? And store the ID and photographs securely!

DS Hutcheon is available to provide more detailed advice.

Alan Williams

ObjectID: <http://archives.icom.museum/objectid/>

DS Hutcheon: claire.hutcheon@met.police.uk

Note: in *The Pewterer* two, or perhaps three, articles on, or adjacent to, the subject of fakes and forgeries:

Vol 2 no 1 (2011) (not currently available online)

Vol 6 no 1 (2015): [Forgeries](#)

and, perhaps, the Grainger candlestick. See vols 3.1 (not currently available online); [3.2](#); and [3.3](#).

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