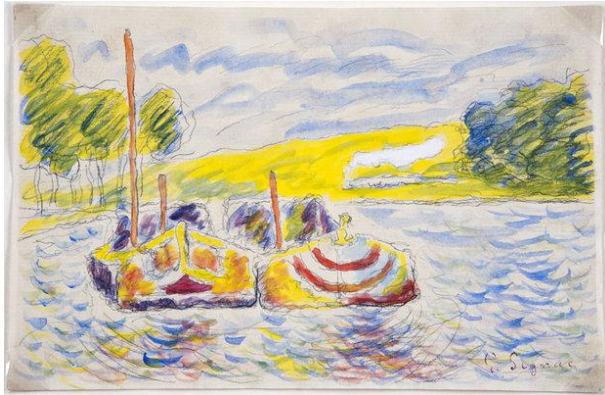


Sarasota's Ringling Museum features forgeries

The exhibition examines the lives and work of five great art forgers

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Museums are usually very careful to avoid showing paintings by Hans van Meegeren, Elmyr De Hory, Eric Hebborn, John Myatt and Mark Landis.

But those five artists are the subject of a touring exhibition that will be at Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art starting Friday.

They are five of the best art forgers of the 20th century. They re-created paintings by the such artists as Pablo Picasso, Johannes Vermeer and Henri Matisse, and they did it so well that their forgeries fooled experts.

"Intent to Deceive: Fakes and Forgeries in the Art World" shows their work, alongside some of the paintings and artists they duplicated and imitated.

The exhibition examines their lives and techniques, approaching their work much as a traditional museum exhibition approaches the work of a legitimate artist.

There's also an interactive element that challenges visitors to determine for themselves, using what they've learned in the exhibition, whether paintings are originals or forgeries.

The forgers had various motives. Some held grudges against the art establishment and enjoyed fooling the experts. Some simply liked the money. Landis, who's still living, donated his forged paintings to museums, apparently because he liked all the museum people being nice to him.

The stories are fascinating, but the intent is not to glorify the forgers, who were con artists more than fine artists.

"Prison, poverty, mental illness," said curator said Colette Loll. "Life does not end well for these people."

Details: May 23-Aug. 3, Ringling Museum of Art, 5401 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota. Tickets: \$25 adults, \$20 seniors 65 and older; children 6-17 \$5. Information: 941-358-3180, ringling.org.