



John Myatt with one of his paintings at the Birmingham exhibition. The artist, long known for his masterful forgeries, has become a collectible painter

Master forger acquires genuine cachet

By Peter Aspden, Arts Correspondent

The style was unmistakably that of the great French Impressionist painter Claude Monet: light and shadows rippling across the peaceful poolside scene, while expertly applied daubs of bright red paint competed playfully for the viewer's attention.

The only giveaway was its price tag: a knockdown \$45,000 instead of the expected multimillion-pound sum.

The "Monet" on the walls of Birmingham's Halcyon gallery was not by the French master at all, but a rather more recent work by John Myatt, long known throughout the art world for his masterful forgeries, but now rapidly becoming a col-

lectible painter in his own right.

The Birmingham exhibition, which ends tomorrow, brought together 45 of Mr Myatt's original works, painted in the style of some of the most famous figures in art history, including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Amedeo Modigliani.

Far from being tainted by their lack of originality, nearly all the works have been purchased in the space of 10 days, including the Monet-styled "Water Lilies, 1904", which became the most expensive painting by the artist to be sold.

The success of the show marks a dramatic change in the fortunes of Mr Myatt, who was imprisoned for fraud in 1969 for his part in painting fakes, and profiting

from their sale in the art market.

So convincing were Mr Myatt's copies that more than 200 of them were sold through leading auction houses in London and New York, fooling many experts, in spite of his use of unconventional materials such as household emulsion paint and K-Y jelly.

He served six months of a 12-month sentence in Brixton prison, where he further practised his skills, earning him the nickname of Picasso.

Today he has gone "legit", presenting the paintings in his own name, and going to extravagant lengths to ensure that they are identified as such to prevent future confusion: some of them have had microchips embedded in them, other are embossed with the artist's logo "JMGP" (John Myatt Genuine Fakes).

Mr Myatt said that most buyers of his work were attracted by the paintings "because they like the look of them. They can't afford the real thing — they probably can't even afford the

changing of the door locks and security doors they would need if they bought the real thing."

He has found his own niche in an art market that has seen prices rising almost continuously in recent years. His first "Masters Collection" of limited edition prints sold out almost immediately. Next Wednesday sees the start of his new series on Sky Arts, "Mastering the Art", in which he talks about the tricks of the trade that helped embarrass the art establishment.

In three years' time, he will give up painting in the style of others, and start producing his own original work, he says. "I'm not sure what the style will be," he adds. "But they will be landscapes. I love clouds. Clouds, clouds and more clouds."

FAKING IT

Podcast: interview with John Myatt, ex-forger turned artist, on his past life and new exhibition

www.ft.com/artsact



Waterlilies by 'Monet'

FINANCIAL TIMES | Saturday November 3 / Sunday November 4 2007 | **211**

Subscribe now

In print and online

Tel: 0800 298 4708

www.ft.com/subscribe-now



Selling price in Irish Republic €2.50

World Markets

STOCK MARKETS

	Nov 2	prev	change
Dow Jones Ind	13995.30	13967.87	+0.20
Nasdaq Comp	2840.38	2794.83	+0.56
S&P 500	1509.65	1508.44	+0.08
FTSE100	1509.87	1570.39	-0.67
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	4440.08	4415.27	-0.12
FTSE 100	6530.6	6086.1	-0.84
FTSE All Share UK	3361.53	3389.38	-0.82
CAC40	5720.42	5730.92	-0.18
Nexia Dex	7849.49	7880.85	-0.40
Nikkei	16527.48	16870.40	-2.09
Hang Seng	30468.34	31492.88	-3.25
FTSE Global All-Cap	459.50	464.64	-0.46

CURRENCIES

	Nov 2	prev	change
\$ per €	1.451	1.442	+0.009
£ per \$	0.689	0.693	-0.004
¥ per €	2.090	2.079	+0.011
¥ per \$	1.438	1.442	-0.004
¥ per €	0.696	0.693	+0.003
¥ per \$	1.485	1.481	+0.004
¥ per €	2.389	2.391	-0.002
¥ per \$	1.672	1.674	-0.002
Sfr per €	2.403	2.414	-0.011

COMMODITIES

	Nov 2	prev	change
Oil Brent \$ Dec	92.08	90	+2.08
Oil WTI \$ Dec	95.93	93.65	+2.28
Gold \$	796.70	791.50	+5.20

INTEREST RATES

	Nov 2	prev	change
US Gov 10 yr	303.45	4.31	-0.04
UK Gov 10 yr	129.46	4.92	-0.05
JP Gov 10 yr	100.57	4.17	-0.02
US Gov 2 yr	100.86	1.59	-0.08
US Gov 30 yr	106.34	4.62	-0.01
Gov Gov 2 yr	100.09	3.84	-0.04
Fed Funds Eff	4.59	4.60	-0.01
US 3m Bills	3.52	3.70	-0.18
Euro Libor 3m	4.59	4.60	-0.01
UK 3m	6.22	6.22	+0.01

Prices are latest for edition

On FT.com today

Faking it
Podcast: John Myatt, ex-forger turned artist, on his new exhibition

www.ft.com/artsact

