
Couple Charged with Stealing 271 Picassos Face Five Year Jail Term

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Prosecutor Laurent Robert argued before the Criminal Court of Grasse in southeastern France that the electrician and his wife have committed an offence that “causes harm to humanity.”

He said the defendants stole the paintings and other objects between 1970 and 1973 during the last years of the artist’s life, when Le Guennec was employed as a handyman on Picasso’s estate.

Le Guennec has told police that he was given the artworks by Picasso’s second wife, Jacqueline.

Family members and custodians of the Picasso estate have dismissed this claim as ridiculous.

Prosecutor Robert added that the world was deprived of these works for nearly 40 years, but did not request the maximum penalty on the grounds that the couple did not seek to profit from their thefts.

The court will have to issue a decision regarding Le Guennec and his wife, who allegedly stole artworks valued at 60 million euros (\$68.3 million).

In addition to jail terms, judges may opt to fine the couple 376,000 euros (\$427,000).

Their secret came to light after they attempted to appraise the works in 2010 to arrange for their children’s inheritance.

