

Beat: Arts

Palm Beach Art Dealer Charged With Carrying Out Art Fraud Scheme

Daniel Elie Bouaziz

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USPA NEWS - Palm Beach art dealer Daniel Elie Bouaziz made his initial appearance before a federal magistrate judge in West Palm Beach to face charges of mail fraud, wire fraud, and money laundering in connection with his alleged scheme to sell forged high-end artwork.

The criminal complaint affidavit alleges the following: Bouaziz engaged in a scheme to sell paintings and other artwork that he falsely marketed for sale as original or authentic pieces by prominent artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol, Banksy, and Roy Lichtenstein. Bouaziz sold the fraudulent art from his Worth Avenue galleries in Palm Beach, Florida -- Danieli Fine Art and Galerie Danieli. Victims unknowingly purchased the fraudulent art pieces (some of which were inexpensive reproductions), for tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of dollars. Bouaziz purchased the low-cost reproductions from online auction sites, then drastically marked-up the prices and sold the works to victims as originals. Bouaziz used several tactics to deceive his victims, including falsifying a work's provenance (the art's ownership history) and adding a signature to a piece to make it appear authentic and increase its perceived value. In addition, Bouaziz laundered money he received from the fraudulent art scheme, according to the affidavit.

It is alleged that the following fake pieces, among others, were sold or offered for sale as authentic as part of this scheme:

Juan Antonio Gonzalez, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; George L. Piro, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Miami; and Matthew Line, Special Agent in Charge, IRS-Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) Miami Office, made the announcement.

FBI Miami's West Palm Beach Office and IRS-CI Miami investigated this matter. Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah J. Schall is prosecuting this case.

The criminal complaint contains mere allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

If you believe you have been a victim of art fraud, please contact the FBI's Art Crime Team at 1-800-CALL-FBI.

Thank you for reading my article. These are merely my thoughts and insights based on the facts. I use only verified sources. No fake news here. I write about a variety of subjects, mainly things I want to research and know more about. You can check out my website – Small Village Life at smallvillagelife.com, where I share useful articles and news.

Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Florida press release May 27, 2022

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