

A New Glasnost On War's Looted Art

By SOPHIA KISHKOVSKY

MOSCOW, March 11 — For more than 80 years the Soviet Union had the most museum bureaucracies and secret repositories, one reportedly in a monastery way down, reflecting its deep cultural glasnost. Russia's Ministry of Culture is posting images and descriptions of them on a new Web site.

They are thousands of paintings, archives and rare books looted by Soviet forces in Germany after World War II and taken to Russia as so-called trophy art. (Now the preferred term in Russia is "displaced cultural treasures.") Hitler's forces had previously pillaged many of the works from Jewish owners and other Nazi victims.

The site is also being used to search for what the ministry estimates as two million works of art that disappeared from Russian museums during the Nazi occupation. An unknown number were destroyed in the war, but some have turned up in Russian antiquities shops or at auctions abroad; a few have been re-

turned by Germany.

But the site, which has two Web addresses — www.izart.ru and www.restition.ru — has problems: it operates only in Russian and has no system for searching for a specific artist or title; someone investigating the site must usually read each museum's entire list.

As of this month, the site has 10,000 items, said Aleksandr V. Khobovskiy, the culture ministry official in charge. "The plan is to have 500,000 by 2005," he added.

Mr. Khobovskiy said claimants would have 18 months from the time an item was posted to file a formal petition for restitution through their governments. Unclaimed items would then be declared Russian property.

Asked about the prospects for an English translation of the material on the site, he said that the culture ministry was always short of funds and that the priority was to make all the information public. He noted that the site provided color photographs and dimensions of paintings and rendered the titles of foreign books (but not artworks) in their original lan-



The Pushkin State Museum in Moscow displays some of the so-called trophy art taken to Russia by Soviet troops in World War II. It includes two Goyas: "Carnival," left, owned by Baron Maurice Herzog, a Hungarian Jew whose art was first stolen by the Nazis, and "Female Portrait," right.

guages, approaches that could alleviate some of the difficulties. The site includes lists from 19 museums, libraries and archives in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and several other cities. Most institutional links on the site are still

empty. But the lists do include seven 17th-century German book collections from the State Public Historical Library in Moscow, an extensive archive from the German colony in Bessarabia at the State Historical Museum, and several hundred paint-

ings now in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. The site's listings for the Grabar Restoration Center, a prominent art conservation organization based in Moscow, include photographs of any identification marks on paintings.

OPERA REVIEW

The Fury of Russia In Realm Of 'Otello'

By ANTHONY TOMMASINI

The beginning of Verdi's "Otello," which depicts a savage storm battering the port of Cyprus, is supposed to be terrifying. It was certainly terrifying on Monday night when the conductor Valery Gergiev began the Metropolitan Opera's first "Otello" of the season, the realistic 19th-century opera, the realistic 19th-century opera, the realistic 19th-century opera.

But some of that terror came from the shakiness of the orchestra's playing as the belliest Mr. Gergiev drove the tempo relentlessly and pushed the musicians for maximum sound and fury. And some of the fear came from the real worry on the faces of the chorists. Portraying the citizens of Cyprus who branch from the docks as the ship arriving,



Names of Fine Arts, exhibition "Vincent's Choice," an exhibition at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, illustrates how van Gogh derived inspiration from the themes and compositions of other painters. For example, Millet's "Sower," above, led to van Gogh's "Sower With Setting Sun," right. Some of van Gogh's interpretations have even come to overshadow the original works.

Glimpses Into van Gogh's Imagination

Two Dutch Museums Offer Fresh Angles on a Favorite Son

By ALAN RIDING

AMSTERDAM — The 150th anniversary of van Gogh's birth on March 30 could hardly go unnoticed here. In normal times the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam receives 1.6 million visitors annually, while about 300,000 visit the Kröller-Müller Museum near Arnhem, which owns the other major van Gogh collection in the Netherlands. This year, linked for the occasion by a shuttle bus, these museums are hoping for a birthday boost to van Gogh tourism.

Their challenge is to present exciting collections in ways that suggest an event. Here, they have taken different paths. The Van Gogh Museum is offering "Vincent's Choice: The Musée Imaginaire of van Gogh" through June 15, and "Gogh Moments," from June 27 to Oct. 12. At the Kröller-Müller, through Oct. 12, is "Vincent and Helene," Helene being the wife of Anton Kröller, the industrialist who financed her collecting passion.

Of the two shows now open, the Van Gogh Museum exhibition is perhaps the more interesting one because it throws fresh light on that artist's creative process. Most artists find in-

spiration in other artists, and van Gogh was unusually catholic in his taste, revering Rembrandt, Delacroix and Millet. But he admired many others and commented on no fewer than 1,100 works of art in his letters. "Vincent's Choice," that exhibition proposes, is the collection that van Gogh might have created.

Designed by the New York architect Thierry W. Despont, with 51 oils by van Gogh among the 184 paintings and drawings on display, this show traces van Gogh's creative journey as he takes the themes and compositions of painters who capture his imagination, then reinterprets them in his inimitable style. Today his copies — above all those of Millet's "Labors of the Field" and other peasant scenes — are often better known than the originals.

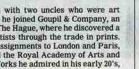
"Vincent's Choice" is organized thematically, but this usually colligates chronologically, so that van Gogh's discovery of different painters, as recorded in his letters. The first sections on youth and religion, which include no works by van Gogh, are reminders that he was interested in painting long before he devoted himself entirely to art in 1869 at 27.

While his father, a Protestant pastor, had hoped he would enter the church, he began his

art education with two uncles who were art dealers. At 16 he joined Goupil & Company, an art dealer in The Hague, where he discovered a paucity of artists through the trade in prints. During long assignments to London and Paris, he frequented the Royal Academy of Arts and the Louvre. Works he admired in his early 20's, like Rudolph's "Storms," are in this show.

Throughout this period, while still under his father's influence, van Gogh was also drawn to the religious art of 18th-century Dutch artists. As his letters to his younger brother, Theo, testify, he responded strongly to the emotional punch of artists like Ary Scheffer, whose "Agony in the Garden" and "Christus Consolator" are in this exhibition. They provided what the young van Gogh wanted from art: sentiment, mood and allied contemplation.

After leaving Goupil in 1876, he drifted through various jobs. He even trained to be a lay preacher, and though he later rejected organized religion, he remained profoundly religious, at times suffering deep psychological distress over his failure to emulate the example of Jesus. His sense of God's presence in nature was crucial. It gave him a reason to be.



Works by van Gogh Foundation

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By any measure Mr. Gergiev is a vociferously involving and powerfully instinctive musician. But he has an idiosyncratic technique that is difficult to follow. When working with forces accustomed to his approach, especially his home company in St. Petersburg, the Kirov Opera and Ballet, he can give transcendent performances. But he has been the Met's principal guest conductor since 1997, and the Met orchestra and chorus have not still completely adjusted to his ways. Keep in mind, they have long been used to James Levine, whose technique is flawless. In the cast were two pillars of the Kirov: the powerhouse tenor Vladimir Golovinski as Otello, and the best-voiced baritone Nikolai Putilin as Iago. At a time when opera vocal styles have melded into



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Emil Bernard's "Blue Coffeepot," far left, influenced van Gogh's "Still Life with Coffeepot." The works hang side by side at the Van Gogh Museum, along with other pairings that demonstrate how van Gogh drew from numerous artists, including Signac, Hiroshige, Millet, Delacroix and Rembrandt.

BOOKS OF THE TIMES

A Mound Of Wisdom (Slightly Revised)

By MICHIKO KAKUTANI

Had David Wells not cast doubt on his own credibility as an author by altering some of the statements that appeared in galleries of his own baseball memoir — in the wake of a media storm, he pulled a Charles "I was misquoted" Barkley, selling reporters that he'd failed to go through it "with a fine-tooth comb" — readers of this 400-plus-page book might well have wondered what all the fuss in Yankee land was about. The book has some salty things to say about Wells's flood years in the big

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PERFECT 'M' NOT

Boomer on Beer, Baseball, Backaches, and Baseball

By David Wells with Chris Klecki

Illustrated, 413 pages, William Morrow, \$25.95.

leagues, but they are profane, for the most part, in a good-humored Ozzy Osbourne sort of way. For that matter, they are buried beneath reams (and reams) of often numbing detail about this pitcher's peregrinations through the major leagues with half a dozen teams; his struggles with back problems, elbow problems and his late last-berating music, late-night singing parties and burgers and beer.

Wells is up front about his likes and dislikes: the former Mets manager Bobby Valentine and the former Reds owner Marge Schott, in particular, come in for slashing passages. Yet there's little in the rant and riffs in this book that the brass, big-mouthed Boomer hasn't said before: in a 1999 Playboy interview he was considerably more vitriolic about Roger Clemens (for whom he was traded to the Toronto Blue Jays

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INSIDE

THE POP LIFE

The Beastie Boys post a song of protest and a message to the world on their Web site. Page 3.

CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Linn Davis and his orchestra do justice to Berlioz's "Damnation de Faust" and win an ovation for "Roméo et Juliette." Page 6.

MUSIC REVIEW

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FILM REVIEW

Irritant Chadha's "Bend It Like Beckham" takes a comic look at immigrant life in a London suburb. Page 5.

GREAT PERFORMANCES Kiss Me, Kate

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Honoring Rock's Past, Talking of Here and Now

By JON PARELES

The present was very much on the minds of the musicians and music executives gathered to celebrate the past at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Monday night at the Waldorf-Astoria. Three British punk and new wave rock bands — the Clash, the Police, and Elvis Costello and the Attractions — took their place in the hall, along with the Australian hard-rockers AC/DC and the pop-soul duo the Righteous Brothers. All became eligible 25 years after their careers began. And as hall members paid tribute to their new peers, many commented on the preparations for war and the decline of the music business.



The Police, above from left, Andy Summers, Sting and Stewart Copeland, at Monday's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction. Elvis Costello, below, and the Attractions were also among those inducted.

"We're having a good time tonight, but we're going to talk a lot of people next week, so let's not forget it," Neil Young said. Introducing the politically minded punk band Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave, said, "Whenever people take to the streets to stop an unjust war, the spirit of the Clash is always there."



Elvis Costello, above, and the Attractions were also among those inducted. The Police, above from left, Andy Summers, Sting and Stewart Copeland, at Monday's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction. Elvis Costello, below, and the Attractions were also among those inducted.

never may have dreamed of this type of moment." The Clash's surviving members did not perform. Billy Joel introduced the Righteous Brothers — the duo of Bill Medley and Bobby Hatfield — by marveling at their ability to sing "Unchained Melody" at half speed. "It was so slow, it was magical," Elio Jaffe praised Mr. Costello, saying, "His songs have no musical boundaries. He's never been afraid to take a chance." Mr. Costello thanked a long and varied list of songwriters, beginning with Frank Schubert and concluding with Bob Dylan and Jon Mitchell. Steven Tyler of Aerosmith lavished praise on AC/DC, saying, "There is no greater purveyor of the power-rock sound than the hellfully ploughed through 'Highway to Hell' and 'You Shook Me All Night Long'."

Unlike previous Hall of Fame ceremonies there was no closing jam session by the assembled musicians. The Hall of Fame, which runs a museum in Cleveland, also recognizes performers outside the spotlight. Three session musicians were inducted posthumously: Benjamin, who created the Motown drumbeat; Floyd Cramer, a country-music session pianist famous for a sliding attack he called the "slip note" approach, modeled on the sound of pedal steel guitar; and Steve Douglas, who wrote the hooking tenor and baritone saxophone lines heard on songs by Duane Eddy, the Crystals, the Ventures, the Beach Boys and countless other Los Angeles recordings.

Mr. Ostin, who ran Warner Brothers Records and Warner Music Records, was recorded as a nonperformer. Facing a room full of executives, he pointedly said, "It's the music and not the bottom line that should get our highest priority." Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg made an early surprise appearance, declaring "New York rocks" and saying that the Police hit "Every Breath You Take" inspired the city's anti-smoking legislation. Ostin of the Waldorf — a few people held signs protesting the Hall of Fame's list of men to women, which is more than eight to one.

Dutch Museums Offer Glimpses Into van Gogh's Mind

Continued From First Arts Page
a painter in 1886, and it became his refuge in the months before his suicide in July 1890. With the section on "Nature, rural life, sentiments," van Gogh himself gives the show. He was particularly taken by the simple dignity of laborers, which explains his fascination with Millet. Following Millet's works, he painted and drew peasants working the fields, as with "Digging in a Potato Field," and at rest. Living first in The Hague, then in Antwerp in the early 1880's, he studied Rembrandt, Hals and Rubens with enthusiasm, but the truly momentous change in his art came after he moved to Paris in 1886. Already devoted to Delacroix, he was impressed by Pissarro and Manet. Then, thanks to the Impressionists, he discovered color and light. He also came across Japanese prints. He always welcomed the inspiration of

others. "Vincent's 'Choice' indicates that point. Emile Bernard's 'Blue Coffin' hangs beside Van Gogh's 'Still Life With Coffinpot,' Signac's 'Snow, Boulevard de Clichy' beside Van Gogh's own 'Boulevard de Clichy,' Millet's 'Sower' beside Van Gogh's monumental 'Sower With Setting Sun,' Hiroshige's 'Sudden Shower on the Great Bridge Near Atake' beside Van Gogh's 'Bridge in the Rain (After Hiroshige),' and perhaps most daringly, Rembrandt's 1669 'Self-Portrait' beside Van Gogh's 1888 'Self-Portrait as an Artist.' Paris also brought Van Gogh into direct contact with many of his contemporaries, with whom he stayed in touch even after he moved in 1888 to Arles in the south of France, where he was joined by Gauguin. Gradually, through the 1880's, his palette grew, landscapes alone spoke for him. "They are vast stretches of corn under troubled skies," he wrote

To two some weeks before his death, "very very sad" in order to try to express "extreme loneliness." At the Kröller-Müller, the novelty of "Vincent and Helene" is the presence of van Gogh's works — 87 paintings and 185 drawings — in the order in which Helene Kröller-Müller acquired them between 1888 and 1928. The oils, which are normally displayed as part of the museum's broader collection of post-19th-century art, are also shown together. This museum makes a detour not only for its van Gogh collection and its important works by Mondrian, but also for the many modern and contemporary sculptures on view in the surrounding De Hoge Veluwe National Park. The chronology of Helene Kröller-Müller's van Gogh purchases is less interesting, but the folder that fed her shopping spree, which on a single day, May 18, 1920, led her to acquire 20 of his oils.

A news release from the museum says that the acquisition was a socially committed and impassioned act and an expression of her artistic drive. In 1911 she began planning a private museum to be built around his paintings and the donated collection to the Dutch people in 1920, and she died in 1934, a year before he was born. This exhibition has van Gogh from all periods along with masterpieces, including "Cafe Terrace on the Place au Lait" and "Country Road in Provence by Night." His drawings, bought by Kröller-Müller from two collectors, offer particular insight into van Gogh's Dutch work in the early 1880's. Yet as a show "Vincent and Helene" offers so great revelations. It is hard to see any link to this collector's acquisitions beyond their availability.

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Crossword

- ACROSS 1 "The Crucible" setting 36 Middle of the cup 41 Arrow poison 42 Britn 43 Chihuahua cities 44 "Friend" network 14 Not merely allegory 47 Parched 48 Baked steaks 50 Speaks like Robert Byrd 51 Any year for birds 52 Urugu, to Caesar 54 Painter's medium 55 Squaring flower, verb, loosely 56 Sox fans 57 Talk like Daffy 29 Ancient 59 End of the quip Mexican 34 Rutabaga, e.g. 30 Growth 31 Malaga Mrs. action is 33 Fit to serve 37 Motel Banks 38 D.C. group

Edited by Will Shortz

- DOWN 1 One's title 2 I do some modeling 3 "Wheel of Fortune" boy 3a Science fiction writer Stanislav 4 ... ("1974 song") 5 Horshu peak, briefly 6 Nonprofessionist 7 Social attachment 8 European language 9 1952 word 10 Strips figure 11 1007 and other action is 12 Position filter 13 Five Nations 14b 18 Axel, e.g. 19 Weather line 20 Popular "Moon Oke" 21 Sanjour's filter 22 U.S. fluency honorific 23 Energetic cleaner 24 Router 25 Classroom routine 26 Heavy transport 27 Stock figure 28 Diving birds.

3x10 crossword grid with numbers 1-28.

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ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE: 38 D.C. group 39 End of the quip Mexican 40 Strips figure 41 Arrow poison 42 Britn 43 Chihuahua cities 44 "Friend" network 45 Horshu peak, briefly 46 Nonprofessionist 47 Parched 48 Baked steaks 49 Speaks like Robert Byrd 50 Any year for birds 51 Any year for birds 52 Urugu, to Caesar 53 Fit to serve 54 Painter's medium 55 Squaring flower, verb, loosely 56 Sox fans 57 Talk like Daffy 58 Rutabaga, e.g. 59 End of the quip Mexican 60 Strips figure

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