



Fine Art Registry, By “FAR” the Best

By Anayat Durrani

An objective comparison of existing art registries

Art registries are sprouting up all over the information superhighway. Careful review of some of the more well-known art registries reveals that no two registries are alike in service and scope. And, that one, and only one, distinguishes itself as the most comprehensive and pioneering art registry in existence.

Registries are defined as official record keeping databases or listings. However, not all “registries” live up to these standards. There are those that refer to themselves as registries but are simply listings of local or state artists, or online galleries, or artists’ clubs, that are not in fact permanent registries. Only those that make a permanent record and are a primary source of information deserve to be called registries. An official registry is a place where a person can permanently record or make an initial record of a work of art that can be researched and archived for study. Some of these automated

databases include those that keep track of stolen art and other historical and cultural property.

SAMPLE ART REGISTRIES

The most basic art registries provide a platform for artists to showcase their work to the rest of the world, such



as the American Artist Registry. At this website, which only takes American artists represented by a physical gallery, artists must pay a fee of \$25 to register.

They can show up to 9 sample images of their work on their own page listing.

Other registries only offer certificates of authenticity like the National Fine Arts Title Registry. They offer online documentation for original works of art and provide each piece with an ID number to track ownership and value. Title certificates can be printed for display, inventory records, insurance schedules, and attached to the back of paintings to deter art theft. For a professional portfolio they charge \$15 per month with unlimited registrations and transfers (regular portfolio is \$10 per title registration, \$10 per title transfer).

Some offer searchable databases. Swift-Find is a site that provides a registry of new, used and stolen valuables. It describes itself as a “critical tool to identify whether valuable goods have been reported lost, stolen or looted.” It says it uses search and image matching technologies to help

See an in-depth chart comparing online art registries [here](#).

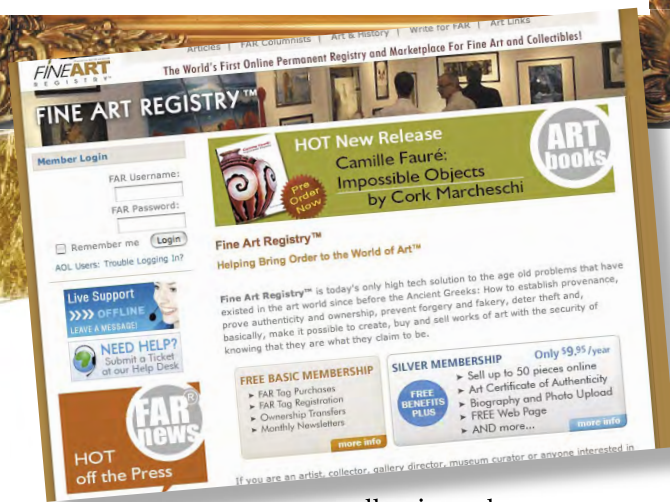
users check if items have been reported stolen to Swift-Find. Registration of objects with Swift-Find is free and anonymous (meaning ownership details are not recorded), but to search the Swift-Find database it will set you back \$9.00 for a single search and \$75.00 unlimited per month with a minimum 12 month subscription.

CULTURAL PROPERTY REGISTRIES

There are also several registries dedicated to Nazi and other lost, stolen, or looted cultural property. Some of these include the Lost Art Internet Database that was set up jointly by the Government and the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany and registers cultural objects that due to persecution under the Nazi dictatorship and the Second World War were relocated, moved or seized, mainly from Jewish owners.

The Commission for Looted Art in Europe created the Central Registry of Information in 2001 as an international database of research on all cultural objects seized by the Nazis. There is also the Nazi Era Provenance Internet Portal that provides a searchable registry of objects in U.S. museum

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collections that were lost, stolen, or looted in Continental Europe during the Nazi era. Along with some others, these are a sample of the more specialized registries available.

LARGER REGISTRIES

The larger international registries used by law enforcement, insurance companies, auction houses, and some in the art world include Art Loss Register, the FBI's National Stolen Art File (NSAF), and Interpol. All three of these registries have one major thing in common and that is they focus on artwork *after* it is stolen or lost.

The Art Loss Register (ALR) calls itself the largest private international database of lost and stolen art and functions as a clearinghouse for art buyers and collectors to determine good title (a single search of their database costs \$75 plus NY tax). Through NSAF, the FBI maintains a computerized index of reported stolen art and cultural properties for the use of law enforcement agencies worldwide. The NSAF contains images and physical descriptions of stolen and recovered objects, as well as information

on investigated cases. Interpol operates an international database of stolen art. They provide a purchasable DVD that lists about 20,000 works of art and cultural property updated every two months (full year subscription, or 6 DVDs, costs \$605). They send out art theft notices to law enforcement agencies worldwide.

OTHER REGISTRIES VS. FAR

How does Fine Art Registry™ (FAR®) stack up against the other registries?

FAR goes where no other registry has gone before. With a pioneering concept, it is an all-encompassing site for the artist,

collector, museum curator, law enforcement agency or those wishing to learn more about art in general. FAR is an invaluable resource, a place where artists can go to permanently register their artwork and for collectors, museums and galleries to register their collections. ([HOW FAR WORKS](#))

It differs from and far exceeds other registries, including those used by law enforcement, because of its high tech, one-of-a-kind, patented tagging system for works of art that helps establish authenticity and prevent art fraud and theft. FAR tags are manufactured with multiple technological security layers and made with 100% acid free materials and adhesives safe to apply to any artwork. The technology involved makes duplication, tampering, or counterfeiting of the tags virtually impossible. ([THE FAR TAG](#))

These tags are attached to the work of art or other collectible when it is registered in the FAR online secure database with photos and full description, creating a permanent, unique identity and registration for that piece.

FAR provides an online gallery for artists where they can display and sell their art. Unlike other sites, a basic FAR membership is free and available to any artist or collector. Each tag costs \$2.25 which is the only cost

involved in registration of a piece. Free membership entitles any artist or collector to permanently register as many works of art and valuables as they like with photos and full description. For an annual membership fee of about \$10, artists and collectors can also offer their works of art for sale on the website and receive the full benefits of the website. Unlike other online galleries, no commission is charged for these sales.

ownership of art pieces that creates a permanent record of new ownership that is beneficial for tracing art pieces, establishing authenticity, or for insurance purposes. It also provides customizable online certificates of authenticity for artists to use and print directly from their computer. On their own, certificates of authenticity are of little value as they can easily be forged (see [Certificates of Authenticity – Are They Worth The Paper They Are Printed On?](#))

But in combination with the FAR tag and registration they become worthwhile so FAR provides this additional service free of charge.

There are other features of the FAR website which makes it very different from any other: for example, the wealth of useful, practical information for artists in the form of dozens of articles written by a team of columnists and contributors in different specialized fields and also the extensive profiles written on many of the FAR artists.

“If FAR had been in use in WWII, we would all know who these pieces belonged to because there

would be at least an initial record of ownership,” says Teri Franks, founder and CEO of FAR, an avid art collector herself, with reference to the Nazi looted art.

Where the well known registries concentrate on artwork *after* it is stolen, FAR focuses on



FAR provides a means of establishing and permanently recording provenance and ownership of art pieces and is a benefit for artists, collectors, museums, galleries, insurance companies and law enforcement worldwide. FAR also offers a secure, electronic transfer of



all art and collectibles, whether anything happens to it or not. It is designed to create permanent provenance, not just to be of use in the event of theft or loss. And if artwork is stolen or lost, FAR provides a central location where it can be reported, which assists with its recovery and thwarts its resale. This is a strong deterrent to theft and other abuse such as copyright violation, fakery and forgery. Registries such as the FBI's National Stolen Art File require an object be well known and valued at \$2,000 at least (or less if associated with a major crime). FAR is available to everyone.

"The FAR concept is designed for the masses," says Franks. "There must be a place and had to be a place for the masses of collectors and artists to go. Nothing existed. As a collector, I needed it more than anyone. So out of necessity, FAR was born."

FAR differs from other online galleries in that buyers will know right away they are getting the real thing. FAR is a place where collectors and other art buyers can come to buy art with the security of knowing that they are investing in a permanently registered and recorded art object. The provenance of the piece is right there online and secure.

Before FAR, no permanent centralized registry and no global database for contemporary artists ever existed. Through FAR, artists and collectors are able

to quickly and easily manage their portfolios from anywhere in the world.

"When developing the FAR concept, I tried to think of every single possible scenario," says Franks.

Since its founding, FAR has emerged as a highly advanced

and complete registry offering more than the existing registries combined and at a significantly lower cost.

"Others have tried but failed to bring it all together into a central registry like FAR has," says Franks. "We have been the first to think of the bigger picture."



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