

New York investigators seize dozens of 'looted' artifacts worth over \$13 million from Metropolitan Museum of Art

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New York investigators have seized dozens of artifacts reportedly worth over \$13 million from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the last 6 months.

Investigators have reason to believe the artifacts had been looted from around the world, as reported by the [New York Times](#). The raid was led by the Manhattan district attorney's antiquities trafficking unit who liaised and worked alongside federal officials.

The raid suggests that the Manhattan district attorney's office is increasing its efforts to close-off backlogged repatriation cases and come down hard on the theft, looting and illegal trafficking of cultural property.

In total, 27 artifacts were seized from the museum with at least three different search warrants having been executed, according to the Times.

The artifacts will likely be sent back to their countries of origin next week. Repatriation ceremonies are expected to be penciled in for when the goods are handed over.

Twenty-one of the artifacts will be returned to Italy and six will be returned to Egypt.

At least eight of the artifacts had been acquired by the Met through Gianfranco Becchina, who takes care of a gallery in Switzerland and has previous convictions in Italy relating to the illegal trafficking of works of art.

Last month, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg announced that the antiquities trafficking unit made two other seizures of stolen artifacts, returning two books, written by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to Spain and a 14th century sculpture was returned to Nepal.

The books had been stolen from a Spanish library, before being sold at an auction house in Barcelona in 2011. They were then passed three private collectors before ending up for auction in New York in 2021.

The Nepali sculpture was stolen from a shrine in the 1960s and was later found on the New York art market in 2022, where it was seized by the antiquities trafficking unit.