

ART WORLD

The Top 10 Biggest Art Discoveries in 2015

Henri Neuendorf, Tuesday, December 22, 2015

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Modern technology has enabled researchers to discover exciting things about classic artworks.

Photo: Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Presented by **GUCCI**

Advances in technology have had a major impact on the art world this year. Cutting-edge research techniques have given scholars and conservationists unparalleled insights into the thought processes and techniques of master artists who died centuries ago, as well as finding long-hidden treasures.

Here we reveal the most fascinating art discoveries of the past year, from secret portraits to glowing sea creatures.



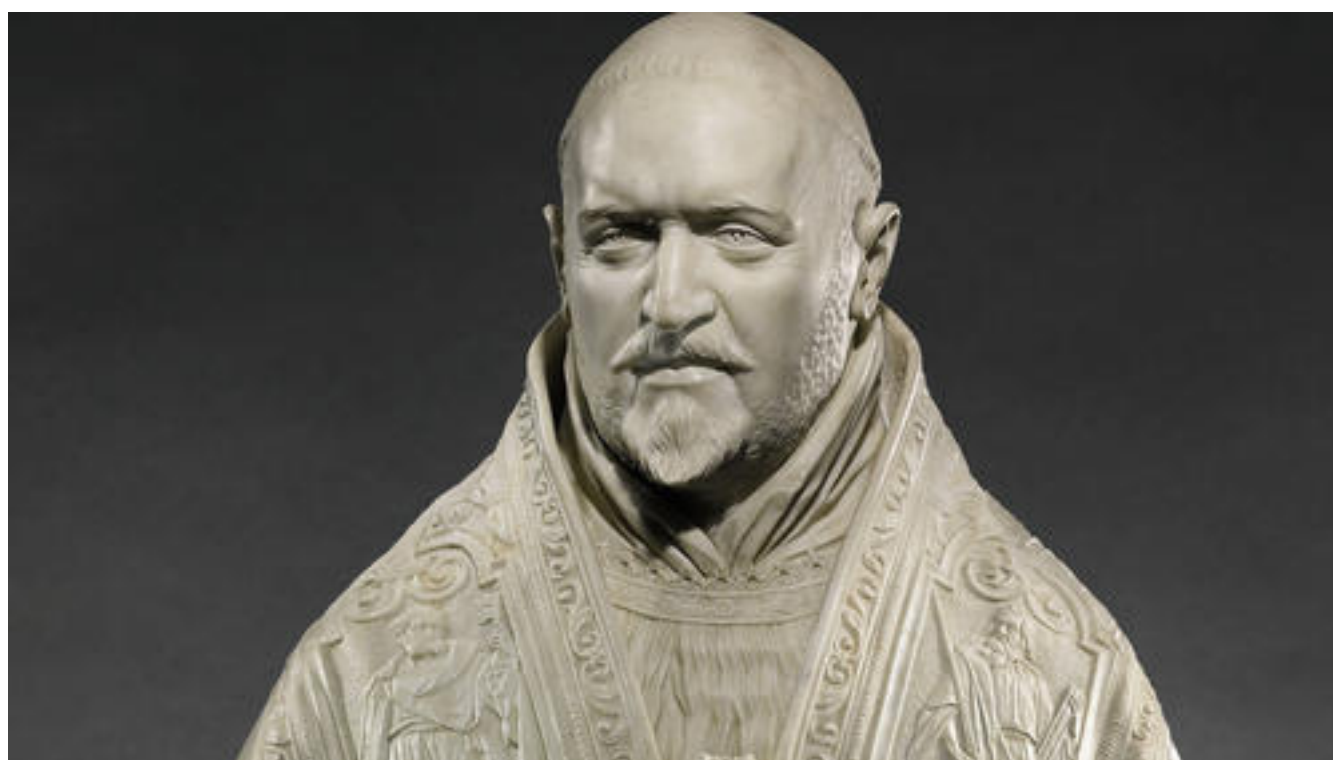
This putto sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is now believed to be by Donatello.

Photo: Otis Norcross Fund, courtesy the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

1. Lost Donatello sculptures discovered

A few years ago, art dealer Andrew Butterfield bought a wooden putto from the estate of Turin-based art dealer Giancarlo Gallino. The sculpture is nearly identical to a similar piece acquired by Boston's Museum of Fine Arts in the 1960s, which was determined at the time not to be from Donatello's hand.

But he couldn't ignore the resemblance. With the help of several Italian Renaissance art scholars, Butterfield secured the stunning attribution this year.

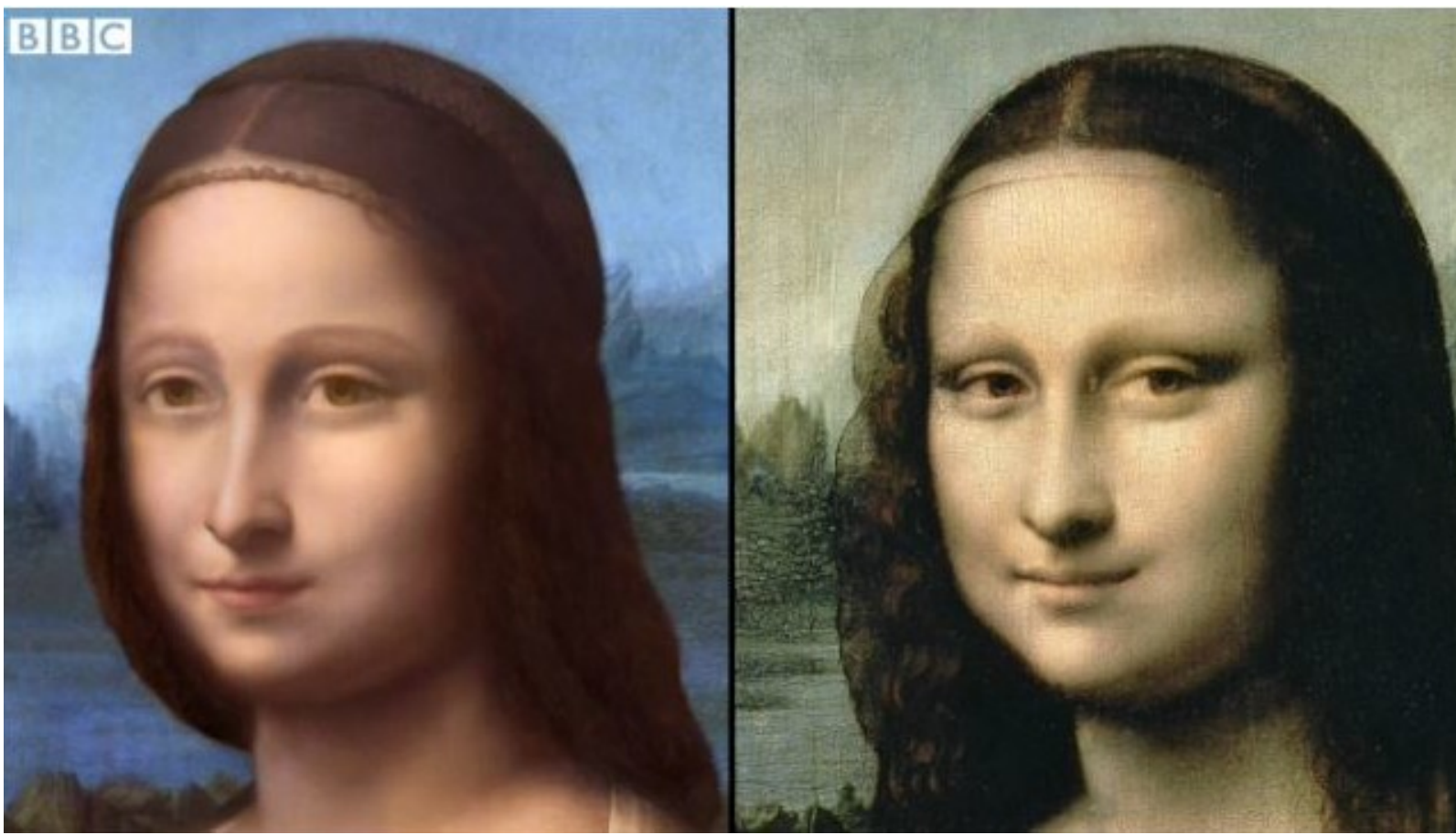


Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Pope Paul V* (1621).

Photo: J. Paul Getty Museum.

2. Rare Bernini bust found by Slovakian art dealer

A Slovakian art dealer took a gamble on a misattributed marble bust, which turned out to be an incredibly rare early work by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. In June, *Bust of Pope Paul V* was acquired by the Getty Museum in Los Angeles for \$33 million.



The *Mona Lisa* may have evolved from the portrait on the left to the one we know today.

Photo via BBC.

3. Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* has another portrait hiding underneath

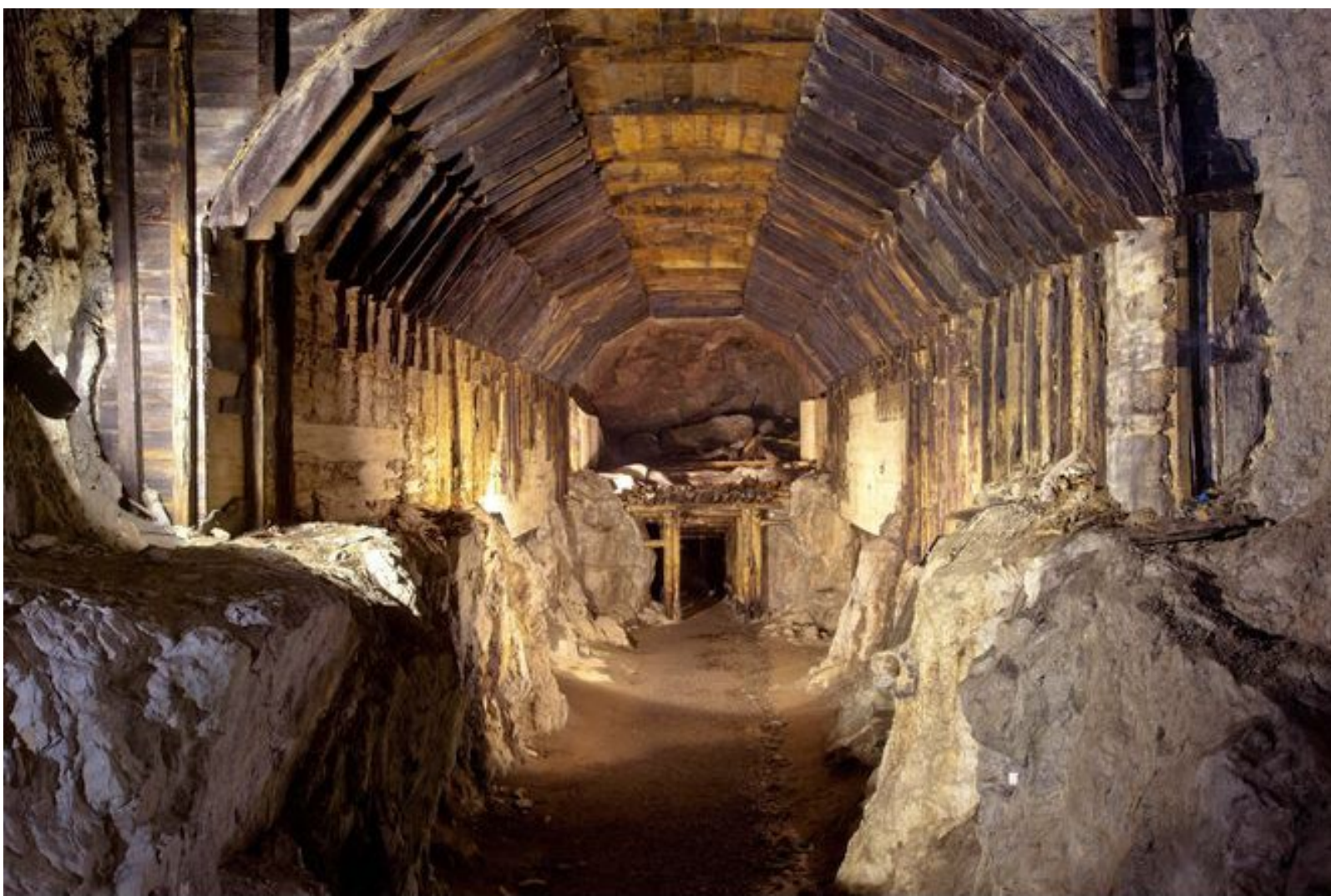
Over the course of a decade French scientist Pascal Cotte used reflecting light technology to analyze the most famous painting in the world. According to the researcher, the original painting did not include the sitter's enigmatic smile. The findings could reveal more information on Da Vinci's process, as well as the identity of one of the most famous women in the world.



Peter Carl Fabergé, the elephant automaton from the Diamond Trellis egg (1892).
Photo: Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2015.

4. Lost Fabergé egg elephant discovered

This year, researchers found a secret object in a Fabergé egg belonging to the British royal family's art collection. The Diamond Trellis Egg, commissioned by czar Alexander III in 1892, contains an automaton elephant embellished in diamonds and rubies. Despite its age, restorers were happy to note that the automaton still works perfectly.



Part of the Nazi's subterranean system built in what is today Gluszyca-Osowka, Poland, here seen in March 2012.

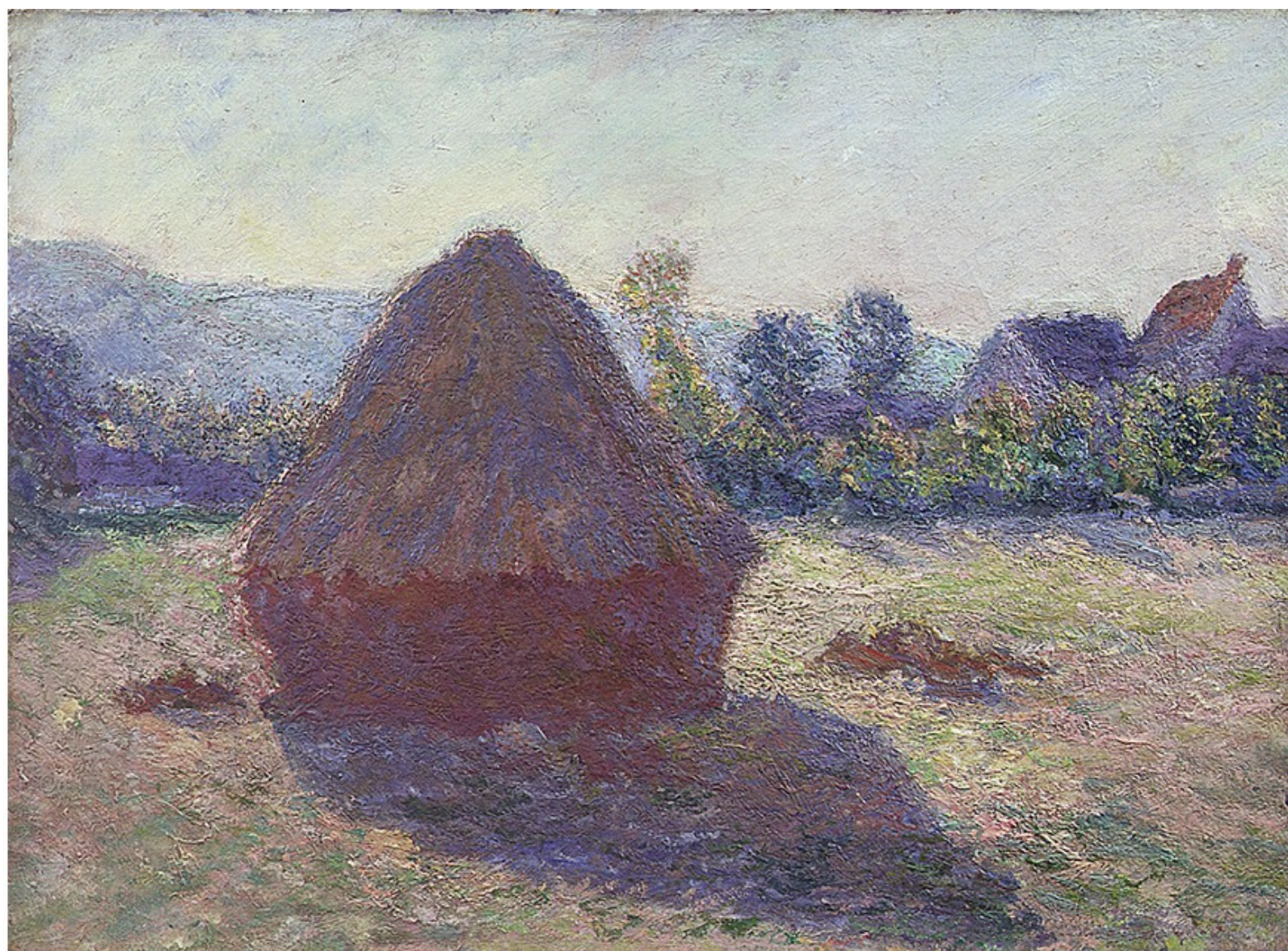
Photo: AP.

5. Nazi treasure train is likely a bust

Two men claimed to have discovered a long-lost military train near the Polish city of Walbrzych, which experts thought could contain gold, gems, and priceless works of art looted by the Nazis during WWII.

"We are still waiting for the facts to be established but we very much hope that it is a legitimate find—all opportunities to identify and restitute looted property from the Nazi era must be welcomed," the Art Recovery Group's Jerome Hasler told artnet News via e-mail.

But in December, professor Janusz Madej from Krakow's Academy of Mining told [BBC News](#), "There may be a tunnel. There is no train."



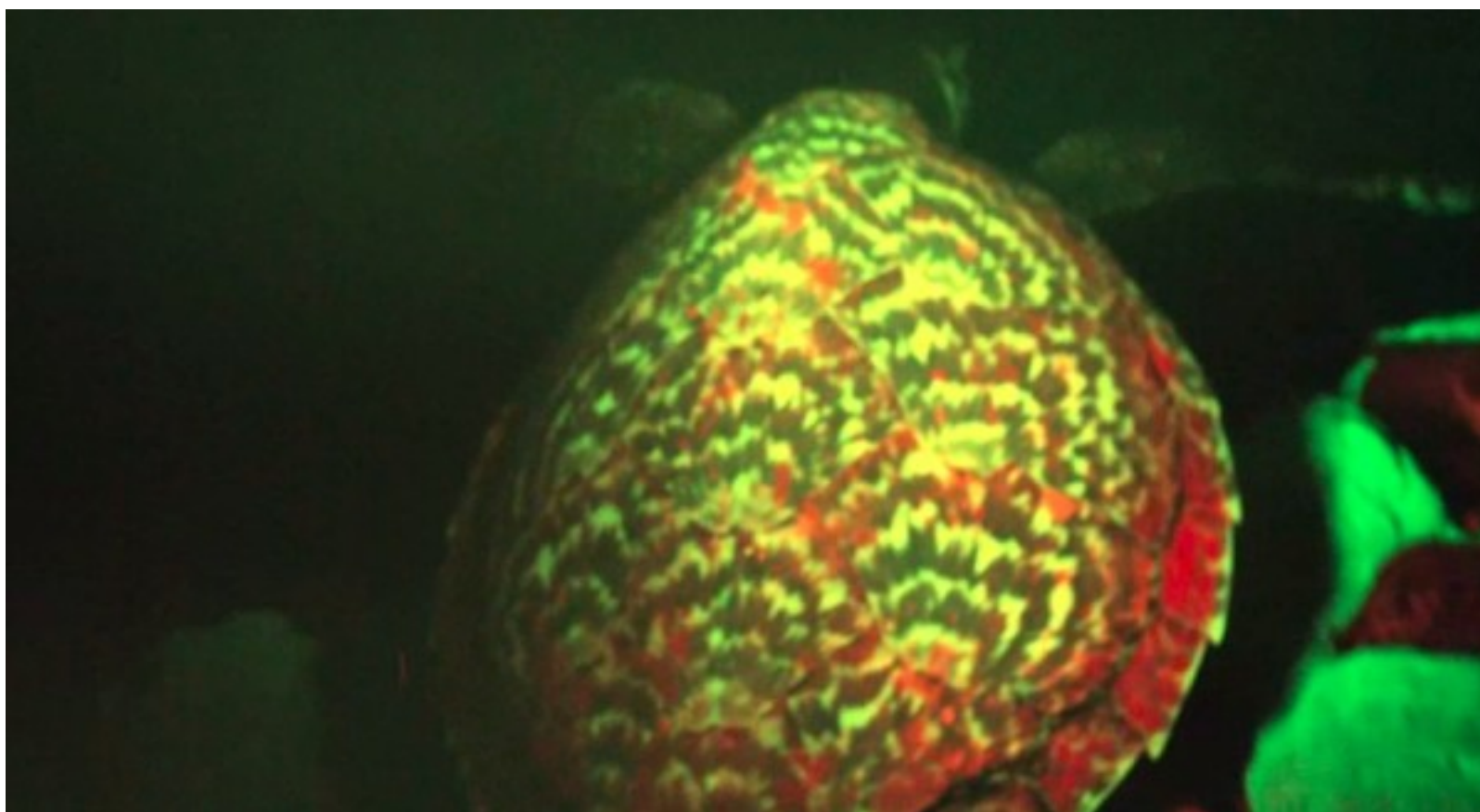
Claude Monet, *A Haystack in the Evening Sun* (1892).

6. Researchers find Monet's hidden signature

Researchers at Finland's University of Jyväskylä used a hyperspectral

camera and an XRF device to uncover Claude Monet's signature obscured under a layer of paint in *A Haystack in the Evening Sun*.

Until now, researchers have been skeptical of the authenticity of the 1891 painting due to the missing signature.



National Geographic Emerging Explorer David Gruber discovers a biofluorescent sea turtle near the Solomon Islands.

7. Art expedition accidentally uncovers new glow-in-the-dark sea turtle

In September marine biologist David Gruber discovered a critically-endangered hawksbill sea turtle that mesmerized its audience. The turtle's biofluorescent shell changes color depending on the water temperature.

Gruber was participating in a TBA21 Academy expedition—an art initiative which recruits artists, curators and scientist to work on projects relating to environmental issues worldwide. We're excited to see what the team comes up with in 2016.



Wreckage from the recently discovered galleon *San Jose*.
Photo: courtesy the Colombian Ministry of Culture.

8. Columbia discovers 300-year-old shipwreck worth \$1 billion

Described by Colombian president Jean Manuel Santos as “the most valuable treasure that has been found in the history of humanity,” the Spanish 18th century galleon *San Jose* and its treasures were found off the coast of Cartagena on November 27. Ownership is currently being

contested by Spain and its former colony.



Kazimir Malevich *Black Square* (1915)
Photo: Mich Theiner via The Independent

9. X-ray analysis gives shocking insights into Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square*

Researchers at Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery used X-ray analysis to discover an unsettling joke underneath Malevich's *Black Square* (1915). The text is thought to be a response to an 1897 painting by the French writer and humorist Alphonse Allais.

The Russian artist's influences may be much broader than previously thought.



A Carabinieri officer holding one of the recovered antiquities.
Via: Wanted in Rome

10. \$58 million trove of looted antiquities uncovered in raid

A joint investigation by Swiss and Italian police broke up a smuggling ring lead by the notorious Sicilian smuggler Gianfranco Becchina this year, which contained \$58 million of illicit antiquities. Police seized 5,361 items in one of the biggest busts of its type in history.

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[Henri Neuendorf](#)



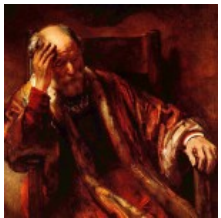
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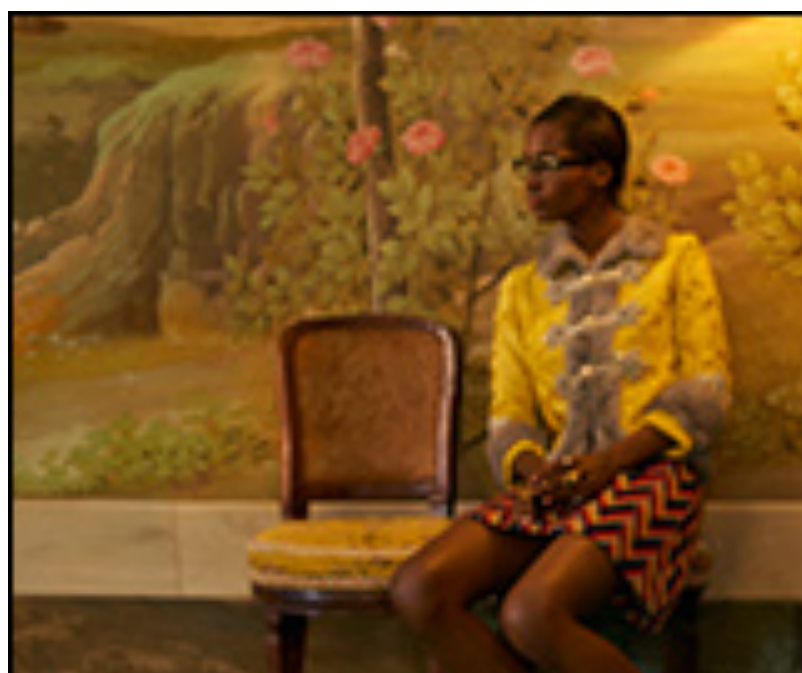


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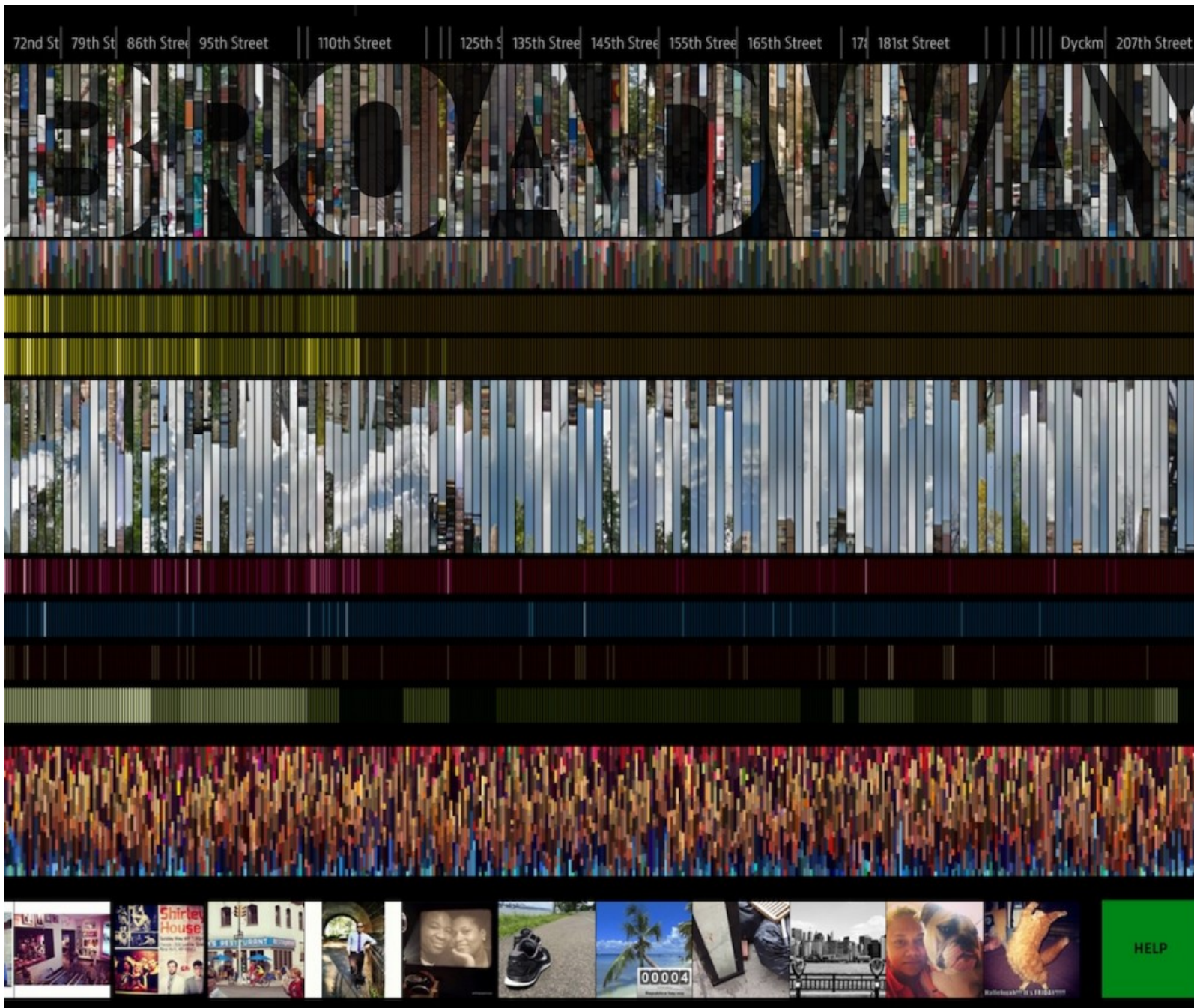
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At the NYPL, 'On Broadway' Portrays the World's Greatest Street

Blake Gopnik, Tuesday, December 22, 2015

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THE DAILY PIC (#1459): Since "civilization" very literally means "city life", there's some sense that all the art made since the ancient Egyptians is about the urban scene, while since at least the birth of modern art, in the 19th century, many artists have explicitly set out to depict our new lives in new cities. Today's Daily Pic is thus the latest effort in a very long line: It's a screen-grab from a digital project titled *On Broadway* (start humming now) which is part of "Public Eye: 175 Years of Sharing Photography", the wonderful show on view for another few weeks at the main branch of the New York Public Library.

The project's makers, Daniel Goddemeyer, Moritz Stefaner, Dominikus Baur and Lev Manovich, say that it depicts "life in the 21st century city through a compilation of images and data collected along the 13 miles of Broadway that span Manhattan". Those include photos of Broadway's facades, culled from Google's Street View (the top row in my Pic) and 660,000 shots taken by Instagramers as they strolled the great street (my bottom row). There are also samples from such immaterial data sets as taxi pickups and drop-offs on Broadway (22 million of those) and from census results giving the average household incomes along the path of the road.

If this piece launches an artistic movement, we'll have to call it data-pointillism.

For a full survey of past Daily Pics visit blakegopnik.com/archive.

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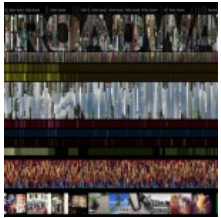
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Vintage Cheer from the NYPL Picture Collection

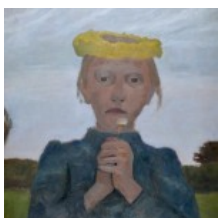
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At St. Etienne, Paula Modersohn-Becker Out-Currins John Currin

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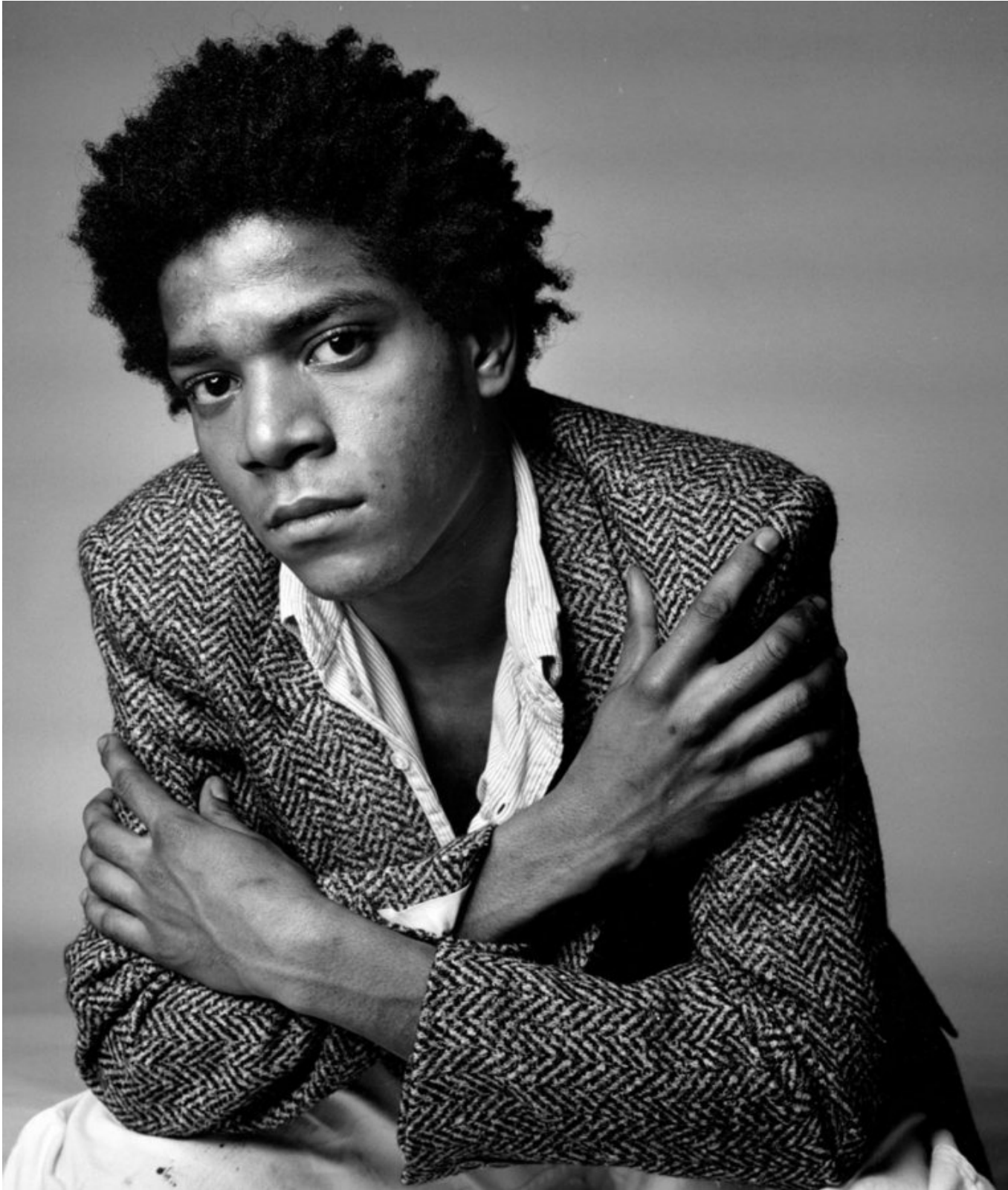
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8 Quotes From Jean-Michel Basquiat on What Would Be His 55th Birthday

Amanda Thomas, Tuesday, December 22, 2015

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Jean-Michel Basquiat.

For decades, street artists have tried to push the parameters of fine art, forcing the unconventional medium into the established canon. But there are only a select few that have been able to become more than a figure at the margins of the contemporary art scene.

Jean-Michel Basquiat did just that. He used his tag, SAMO, to get a foothold into the burgeoning gallery scene on the Lower-East Side in the 1980s: "SAMO FOR THE ART PIMPS," one version proclaimed. To his surprise and sometimes to his dismay, he became one of the most famous artist of his generation, befriending Andy Warhol and Francesco Clemente, and establishing a relationship with musicians, celebrities, and art world luminaries.



In celebration of what would have been his 55th birthday, we've compiled a list of quotes from the cheeky and enigmatic young artist, who died at 27 years old.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Sans titre (Self portrait with tie)* (1985).
Photo: courtesy Tajan.

On his favorite painters:

"The more I paint the more like everything."

On Black subjects:

"I think there's a lot of people that are neglected in art... Black people are never really portrayed realistically. They're not even portrayed in modern art."

On the origins of his artwork:

"Real life, books, television."

On not studying, but making:

"I was making [art] in an airplane once. I was copying some stuff out of a Roman sculpture book. This lady said. 'Oh what are you studying?' I said, 'it's a drawing,'"

On the ubiquitous copyright symbols in his work:

"It's a copyright [symbol], so I won't get sued."

On his slow process:

"I'm a slow person."



On owning a home:

"I haven't decided what party of the world isn't going to get blown-up so I don't know where to put it."

On his failing childhood artwork:

"I was a really lousy artist as a kid. Too abstract expressionist; or I'd draw a big ram's head really messy. I'd never win painting contests. I remember losing to a guy who did a perfect Spiderman."

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Amanda Thomas

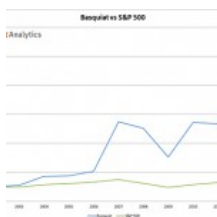
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