



gallery owner irked by missing art

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Gordon Harrison likes to believe someone, somewhere is enjoying the painting that was stolen from his Byward Market gallery on April 29.

“It’s a bittersweet feeling,” he said Tuesday. “I hope they stole it because they loved it, because, deep down, it meant something to them.”

More likely, thieves stole the painting – a 16×16 oil-on-canvas piece that was one of a series of scenes from Toronto’s High Park – and sold it to someone else. Harrison said if it was sold on the black market, he wouldn’t ask to take it back.

But since it was probably purchased for less than the marked \$1,000 price, he added, a donation to the gallery would be nice.

In the eight weeks since the painting went missing, Harrison and gallery curator Phil Émond have only been able to imagine what has happened to it.

How many people has it gone through? Is it hanging over a mantle in an English castle? Or is it in a drug den, traded for a few grams of crack?

They might get some answers on Tuesday, when the Gatineau couple charged with the theft – Luc Gagnon, 48, and Diane Turgeon, 57 – appear in court for a plea. They turned themselves in earlier this month and were charged with theft under \$5,000 after media played videos of what appears to be them leaving the gallery with a painting.

lake view | high park, toronto | oil on canvas | 16h 16w | private collection

Emond is disappointed police haven't issued a search warrant to see if the painting is in their home. Det. Angela Kay, who is investigating the theft, said there is not enough evidence to issue a warrant.

It would be a "logical conclusion" to assume the painting was sold, Kay said. The detective refused to discuss the case further for fear of compromising the investigation, other than to say it appears to be a crime of opportunity – the gallery door was open, no customers inside.

Émond disagrees. He believes the painting, a signed Harrison original painted earlier this year, was targeted and the theft pre-planned.

Émond believes someone called the gallery to distract the lone employee, and while she was on the phone the painting was stolen. He said there were other paintings that would have been easier to grab.

He has since taken measures to prevent theft, such as securing the paintings to the walls. But for now, they can only wonder what happened to the High Park painting.

recovered stolen painting back on display

LAKE VIEW BY OTTAWA ARTIST GORDON HARRISON.

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The painting Lake View by Ottawa artist Gordon Harrison will be on view this weekend at his gallery at 100 Murray St.

The painting was hand delivered back to the gallery by Ottawa Police. It was stolen last April by two people who were captured on security camera. It is for sale for \$1,500. Two Gatineau residents have been charged in connection with the incident. Luc Gagnon, 48, has been charged with theft under \$5,000 and breach of probation. Diane Turgeon, 57, has been charged with theft under \$5,000