

\$4M piece found

By KATE KOWSH, LIZ SADLER and DAREH GREGORIAN

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A multimillion-dollar Roy Lichtenstein painting that disappeared 42 years ago has popped up in a Manhattan warehouse — and its owner is trying to make sure it doesn't pull another vanishing act.

"Electric Cord" was last seen in 1970 when owner Leo Castelli sent the piece by the pop-art prince out to be professionally cleaned. It was never returned, and the fate of the painting was a mystery — until last week.

That's when Castelli's widow, Barbara Castelli, got a call from the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation saying the piece had turned up at a high-end art storage warehouse on the East Side, where someone was trying to sell it.

She asked for a restraining order barring the estimated \$4 million painting from being moved from the Hayes Storage Warehouse until she can get her day in court, saying in court papers that she's "deeply concerned" about the possibility of the artwork, "which is an American treasure by an artist native to Manhattan, again disappearing, perhaps to never be seen again."

Justice O. Peter Sherwood signed off on Castelli's temporary court order freezing the painting's location pending a hearing with the warehouse people and "John Doe" on Monday.

Amye Austin, an operations supervisor at Hayes, declined to comment.

Leo Castelli, who put on Lichtenstein's first solo exhibit at his gallery in 1962, bought "Electric Cord," a painting of a tightly wrapped electric cord, in the 1960s for \$750, the court papers say.

In January 1970, he sent the piece out to be cleaned by a well-regarded restorer named Daniel Goldreyer. But instead of returning the painting, Goldreyer told Castelli the work had been lost.

Lichtenstein, who's known for his dotted comic book-like panel works, died in 1997, and Leo Castelli died in 1999. The work was officially listed as "lost/stolen" in the international Art Loss Registry in 2007.

Then last week, James Goodman Gallery owner James Goodman called the Lichtenstein foundation to say he'd been told by a "third party" that the painting was at Hayes Storage, and asked if they'd authenticate the work, the court filing says. A rep for the foundation then tipped off Barbara Castelli.

Goodman told The Post he had no idea that the painting might have been stolen, and that the current owners claimed to have an invoice showing the piece was purchased from Leo Castelli.

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AUGUST 1, 2012, 2:02 PM

Lichtenstein Painting, Missing for 42 Years, Surfaces in Warehouse

By *ROBIN POGREBIN*

The Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein's black and white "Electric Cord" painting, which disappeared 42 years ago, has turned up in a New York City warehouse, The Associated Press [reported](#).

The painting was reported stolen after it was sent out to be cleaned by its owner, the art dealer Leo Castelli, in 1970 and never returned.

The 1961 painting -- which depicts a tightly wound electrical cord and whose value is estimated at \$4 million -- re-emerged last week when the [Roy Lichtenstein Foundation](#) notified Castelli's widow, Barbara Castelli, that someone was trying to sell it.

According to a court filing in New York State Supreme Court in Manhattan, James Goodman, a gallery owner, last week called the Lichtenstein Foundation to say he had been told by a "third party" that the painting was at Hayes Storage in Manhattan and asked if the foundation would authenticate the work, The New York Post [reported](#).

Mr. Goodman told The Post that he had no idea that the painting might have been stolen, and that the current owners said they had an invoice showing the piece was purchased from Castelli, [who died in 1999](#).

The court filing says the painting was recently on display at a museum in Colombia and that Ms. Castelli was "deeply concerned" that the painting may disappear again. Justice O. Peter Sherwood signed an order barring Hayes Storage from selling or moving the painting until a hearing next week.

Castelli, who mounted Lichtenstein's first solo exhibition at [his gallery](#) in 1962, bought "Electric Cord," in the 1960s for \$750, according to The Post. Lichtenstein died in 1997.

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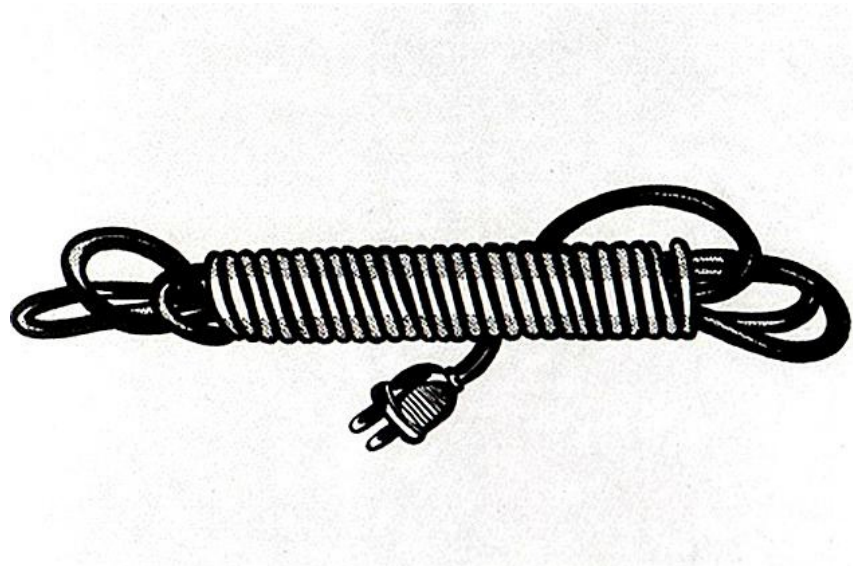
NEW YORK

'Lost' Roy Lichtenstein painting surfaces on Upper East Side after being missing for 42 years

Supreme Court Justice Peter Sherwood has barred "Electric Cord" from being sold or moved.

BY [BARBARA ROSS](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2012, 4:21 PM



"Electric Cord" painting by Roy Lichtenstein. The painting disappeared after it was sent out for restoration from the Leo Castelli Gallery on E. 77th Street 42 years ago. It has turned up in an upper East Side warehouse, and a judge has barred it from being sold or moved.

A painting by modern art pioneer [Roy Lichtenstein](#) that's been missing for 42 years has suddenly surfaced in New York — and a judge ruled Tuesday it can't be moved from an Upper East Side warehouse.

Lichtenstein's black-and-white "Electric Cord" disappeared in 1970 after being sent out for restoration from the Leo Castelli Gallery on East 77th Street.

The image of a tightly wound electric cord, painted by Lichtenstein in 1961 and purchased by Castelli for \$750, is now worth an estimated \$4 million, according to lawyers for Castelli's widow, Barbara Bertozzi Castelli.

Supreme Court Justice Peter Sherwood agreed to temporarily freeze any move to sell "Electric Cord" and to bar access to the artwork until he hears arguments Monday on who owns it.

"We're concerned that this painting is just going to disappear," Castelli's lawyer, Benjamin Semel, said.

"Electric Cord," which was once exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, has officially been listed as "lost" on the records of Castelli Gallery, which Castelli's widow inherited in 1999 when her husband died.

Leo Castelli gave international prominence to a post-war generation of American artists including Lichtenstein, who had his first one-man show in Castelli's gallery in 1962.

Barbara Castelli, an Italian art historian, only realized the painting should have been part of her inheritance in late 2006, when the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation sent out a holiday card featuring a picture of "Electric Cord." The card urged the public to report any information about its whereabouts.

She contacted the foundation and officially put the painting on an international registry of stolen artwork, according to court records.

On July 24, the Lichtenstein Foundation notified her that James Goodman, who owns a gallery on East 57th St., had called to ask if the foundation could authenticate a Lichtenstein in the Hayes Storage Warehouse on East 61 Street.

Officials with the foundation sent a rep to the warehouse to look at painting, which had been shipped there from the Quinta Galeria in Bogota, Columbia, for an impending sale, according to court records.

Sherwood has ordered the warehouse to refrain from relocating, selling or disposing of the painting, or allowing anyone access to it.

"There are always at least three sides to any story," Sherwood said.

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