

## “DUMPSTER” PAINTING FROM COLORADO SELLS AT SOTHEBY’S FOR \$103,000

Date: 05-15-2008 09:17 AM CET

Category: [Arts & Culture](#)

Press release from: [Furniture Detective](#)



While digging through a neighborhood dumpster in Boulder, Colorado, a decade ago, Tammy Bullock found an oil painting “that just looked interesting.” She didn’t know it at the time, but the painting was by Takanori Oguiss (Japanese 1901-1986) entitled "Coin De Paris, Rue de Meaux." Oguiss painted many Parisian and Venetian street scenes and is well known in the international art community. No one knows how the valuable painting ended up in a dumpster in Colorado.

"The colors weren't attractive. The frame was ugly - this just wasn't anything I could put on my wall and be proud of," Bullock says but for some unknown reason, she kept the painting in a closet in her home for 10 years. "The painting fit in my closet -- I even stored my children's' school papers behind it," Bullock says. "I almost gave the painting away several times," she recalls.

Bullock and her family moved into a new home last September, and on the day of the move she almost threw out the painting. "I was halfway down the sidewalk when a little voice told me, 'No, don't throw it away – it might be worth something.'" She says that she often thought about selling the painting, but didn't know how to go about it, until she saw a news story on a Denver television station that featured a new Web site: WorthPoint.

The WorthPoint Web site is for fine art, antiques and collectibles owners designed to help people monetize things from garages and attics. Visitors can ask members of the site for free advice on an antique or pay a WorthPoint expert – a “Worthologist” a small fee to help them understand the value of an object and help them realize its value. Bullock contacted Thom Pattie, WorthPoint's Chief Worthologist, and sent him digital photos of the painting. Pattie recognized at once that the painting could be worth tens of thousands of dollars, conferred with several auction houses, and then helped her through the process of consigning it to Sotheby's.

Pattie has worked in the appraisal, antiques and auction industries for 40 years. He has managed multiple regional auction houses, and has performed onsite appraisals across the U.S. for international auction houses. Pattie said he quickly recognized the potential value of the painting and was happy to help Bullock find the right auction house. "This is exactly the need that WorthPoint was created to fill. We provided Tammy Bullock with a Web-based information resource -- and the personal attention -- to help her realize her dream. She really did find a treasure in the trash."

The painting, estimated by Sotheby's at \$70,000/\$90,000, sold on May 8 for \$103,000 including buyer's premium. Bullock is elated: "To think that I actually have something that sold at Sotheby's is probably more exciting than getting the money." She says she'll give some of the money to charity, put it towards her daughter's college education and her son's new contact lenses -- and maybe take a vacation. "I never would have had this wonderful experience without the help of Thom Pattie and WorthPoint," Bullock says. "And I'll never drive by another dumpster without wondering what treasure it might hold."

Atlanta-based WorthPoint is a social network for collectors and a search engine rolled into one. Its Web site is changing the process of assessing worth for collectibles by providing a vast database of sales records wherein an individual can assess the worth of their own collection. Through WorthPoint, collectors connect with experts to learn more about authenticity and value

in art, antiques, and vintage items. Through the WorthPoint online community, members can contact other collectors interested in buying, selling, or swapping stories, and they can share their insight and knowledge through the forums and wikis.

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