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M&G Hosts Free Lecture on Notorious World War II Forger

Greenville art and history enthusiasts will have a unique opportunity to learn about World War II's most notorious art forger on Thursday, Apr. 21 at 6:30 p.m at the Hughes Main Library.

Renowned art historian and author Jonathan Lopez will introduce guests to Han van Meegeren, "The Man Who Made Vermeers." Lopez has spent years extensively researching van Meegeren and is the author of the book "The Man Who Made Vermeers: Unvarnishing the Legend of Master Forger Han Van Meegeren."

The book, on which his lecture is based, gives the reader an inside look at this ingenious Dutch con who fooled Hitler's second-in-command, Hermann Goering, into thinking he had an original Vermeer painting. Lopez also explores the bizarre personal side of van Meegeren and the methods that he used in forging Vermeer, whose beloved artistic renderings made him a prime forgery target.

The lecture ties in well with the Museum & Gallery at Heritage Green's current exhibit "The Art of Sleuthing," that features a Vermeer forgery on loan from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Called "The Smiling Girl," this is a significant loan for M&G as the National Gallery rarely, if ever, has loaned it out. While opinions among experts are divided on the identity of its maker, Lopez takes the position in his book that the painting actually was done by van Meegeren himself.

Presented by the Museum & Gallery, this Art in Focus lecture is free of charge and open to the public.

On Friday morning, April 22, Lopez will again be speaking in a more informal setting at M&G's Heritage Green location. This drop-in event, "Breakfast with Vermeer," will give guests the opportunity to see the exhibit, interact with Lopez during a gallery talk by the National Gallery's painting, and enjoy a delicious catered breakfast.

"We're looking forward to understanding more about the psychology and ethics of this infamous forger; it's an incredible story of twists and deception, which will be all the more interesting since it's presented by the forger's biographer," Erin Jones, M&G director, said.

"Breakfast with Vermeer" will last from 10 a.m-noon. Admission for non-M&G members is \$25 and includes breakfast. M&G members receive a \$5 discount.

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