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 International Film Circuit, inc.

presents

**Is it still a masterpiece if no one can find it?**

# STOLEN

a film by Rebecca Dreyfus

With the voices of  
**Blythe Danner and Campbell Scott**

**A Precision Films Production**  
produced by **Susannah Ludwig** and **Rebecca Dreyfus**

**US - Color - 2005 - 85 min - Digibeta**

Contact:  
Wendy Lidell 212-777-5690  
[wlidell@infrc.us](mailto:wlidell@infrc.us)

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# STOLEN

## Synopsis

In 1990, in the early morning hours after St. Patrick's Day, thieves disguised as Boston police officers gained access to Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner museum and successfully perpetrated the largest art heist in modern history. Among the thirteen priceless paintings stolen were works by Rembrandt, Degas and Manet. But none is more sorely missed than *The Concert* by Johannes Vermeer, one of only 35 surviving works by the beloved Dutch master. For those who loved these paintings, particularly the rare Vermeer, the theft felt almost personal.

To date, not a single painting stolen that day has been recovered.

*STOLEN* began as an exploration into this unusual crime, but quickly became the catalyst for a renewed attempt to find the missing masterpieces. At the heart of the film is a very unlikely hero: Harold Smith, the most renowned art detective in the world. Despite his lifetime battle with skin cancer, the cunning and witty Smith has made this case his personal obsession. Now, with Dreyfus's camera in tow, Smith embarks on a final journey to crack a mystery that has confounded law enforcement officials for fifteen years.

The mood is set through the reading by actors Blythe Danner and Campbell Scott of correspondence between the 19<sup>th</sup> century Grand Dame Isabella Stewart Gardner and her envoy to Europe, art aficionado Bernard Berenson. Their passion for great art, as expressed in their letters, is elaborated by contemporary art experts, among them, Tracy Chevalier, author of *Girl With a Pearl Earring*. These "subplots" help us appreciate just what the world has lost.

Harold Smith's quest to recover the Gardner paintings takes him through the Boston criminal underground. It takes him to Ireland to investigate the theory that the Irish Republican Army, known to have a penchant for stealing Vermeers, may be involved. It takes him on wild goose chases, and precipitously close to the truth.

*STOLEN* takes the audience along on this thrilling journey through the worlds of art and crime, not only to solve a perplexing mystery, but also to understand the mysterious power of art.

To see images of the missing paintings, see <http://www.find-the-art.com/art.html>.

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# STOLEN

## Cast of Characters

**Harold Smith** – One of the shrewdest art crime investigators in the field whose obsessive mission to recover the lost Gardner Museum paintings is followed by the film. Smith continued his work to recover the Gardner paintings until the last week of his life. He died on February 19, 2005 and *STOLEN* is dedicated to his memory.

Smith was an investigator considered by many to be the world's leading expert in fine art recovery. He has worked for Lloyd's of London and other fine art insurers for 50 years.

Smith cuts an interesting figure - in a bowler hat and eye patch; he also must wear a prosthetic nose to cover the ravages of skin cancer. Mr. Smith is passionate about recovering art. He has taken on the Gardner case as a labor of love. Underneath his courtly manner lies a shrewd investigative mind. His many high profile cases include the largest gold theft in American history, which he solved through the dexterous use of an informant.

**Isabella Stewart Gardner** – (1860-1924) – Founder of the Gardner Museum, amassed what was considered for many years the greatest private collection in America. She was a friend, patron, and muse to many of the major figures of her day, including Henry James, who allegedly used her as a model for Isabel Archer, the protagonist of *Portrait of a Lady*; the psychologist William James; and Bernard Berenson, whom she almost entirely supported. She played a role in the discovery of the painter John Singer Sargent and gave him a studio in her museum, which he used for twenty years. She was an illustrious and somewhat notorious figure in the press, the subject of numerous scandals and endless fascination.

Gardner bequeathed the museum -- her collection and the replica of an Italian Palazzo, which houses the work -- to the city of Boston. The museum is a subject of intense debate within the academic community, due to her ironclad will, which stated that no one could add anything to nor remove anything from the collection, nor move anything from her rather unusual placement, which was often based on form, color, and apparent whim, instead of region and chronology. Gardner was instrumental in bringing art and culture to America. To date, her story and her contribution have been largely overlooked.

**Tom Mashberg** – Boston Herald reporter who has followed the Gardner theft since 1990. By his own account, “I was a manic obsessive in 1997 when I was on this case. There was something rude about [the theft].” Mashberg recounts his blindfolded excursion to see what may have been Rembrandt's *Storm on the Sea of Gallilee*. He also received paint chips proven to be contemporaneous with the works of Vermeer.

**Myles Connor** – Mensa Member, Art Criminal. Many in Boston believe he was in some way involved with the Gardner theft. Though he was in jail when the crime took place, he admits “I at one time planned to rob the place” and now claims it was associates of his who did it. In 1998 he offered to broker the return of the Gardner art in an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate his way out of jail. He is now out on parole, still claiming he could recover the paintings...for a price.

**William Youngworth** – Myles Connor's former right-hand man. While Connor was in jail, Youngworth held a press conference offering the return of the Gardner art for Connor's release. He is allegedly the person who brought Tom Mashberg to a warehouse, showing him what Mashberg believes was the stolen Rembrandt.

**Dick Ellis** – Former Head, Scotland Yard Art Squad. “I think it is highly likely that the IRA had a hand in this”. Ellis is still working on the recovery of the art, but does not divulge certain facts, possibly for fear of putting himself in peril.

**Paul “Turbocharger” Hendry** – Art thief turned police informant. Claims a friend of his, now dead, was once offered the paintings by Boston gangster, Whitey Bulger. He speculates the IRA are in the position to recover the lost art and proposes getting Senator Edward Kennedy to approach former IRA operative, now sitting Irish Senator, Martin Ferris, to get the IRA to cooperate.

**Tracy Chevalier** – Author of *The Girl With the Pearl Earring* helps us understand the power of Vermeer. “There is something very magical about Vermeer’s paintings that affects people. It becomes a kind of obsession. I know I’m obsessed.”

**Greg Smith** – Harold’s son, who joined the family business in 1986. He testifies to Harold’s obsessive devotion to his quest.

**Frank DiMaria** – Devoted gallery attendant who has worked at the Gardner Museum for 45 years. The great love of his life, he says, is Isabella Stewart Gardner and her “palace”. At age 13, he stood before John Singer Sargent’s portrait of Gardner, who said to him, “You’re mine, and you’ll know me all your life.”

**Douglass Shand-Tucci** – Isabella Stewart Gardner’s biographer. He reminds us that the Gardner Museum is the “only such institution designed by a woman, named after a woman, built by a woman, and whose future is determined by a woman”. He calls Gardner (1840-1924) the first great American art collector

**Marie-Cécile Commère** – Archivist, Drouot Auction House in Paris. She documents the purchase of *The Concert* by Gardner in 1892 for \$5,000.

**Katherine Weber** – Author, *The Music Lesson*. Vermeer scholar. “There is something really comforting in those paintings.” Recounts previous thefts of Vermeer paintings by the Irish Republican Army.

**Ron Gollobin** – Boston Crime Beat Reporter. He explains the specifically Bostonian nature of the crime, which happened on St Patrick’s Day, and the long shadow of Boston underworld figure, Whitey Bulger. “If he didn’t do it, speculation is he probably got a piece of the profits.” Everyone is still afraid of him and remains quiet, even in the face of a \$5m reward.

**Celeste Brusati** – Vermeer scholar. She provides a close analysis of the many mysteries of *The Concert*, most notably, pointing out that there is a painting within the painting. “On the far right, *The Procuress* by Dirck Van Baburen [depicts] a bordello scene and a man purchasing sexual favors from a woman.” Brusati ponders, "The inclusion of a low-life scene in a high-life painting does raise questions about how the two worlds relate." One might even conclude that the painting itself is a snapshot of the crime.

**Anthony Bailey** – Vermeer Biographer.

**Susan Vreeland** – Author, *The Girl in Hyacinth Blue*.

**Michael Sullivan** – United States Attorney, Boston.

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# STOLEN

## Cast

Blythe Danner as	Isabella Stewart Gardner
Campbell Scott as	Bernard Berenson
Featuring	Harold Smith

## Crew

Director/Producer	Rebecca Dreyfus
Producer	Susannah Ludwig
Associate Producer	Chelsea Horenstein
Camera	Albert Maysles, Rebecca Dreyfus
Additional Camera	Michael McDonough, Matt Howe
Composer	Peter Golub
Editors	Markus A. Peters, Liz Ludden
Associate Producers	Eric Mendelsohn, Sharon Guskin & Wilder Knight III

With Support from:	The Jerome Foundation The New York State Council on the Arts From The Heart productions The Mark Silverman Fellowship for New Producers The New York Foundation for the Arts Made in association with Court TV Additional funding provided by The Women in Film Finishing Fund
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## Production Notes

In March of 1990, two thieves dressed as Boston police officers gained entrance to the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum and successfully plundered \$500 million worth of art. Among the thirteen priceless works stolen were two of the greatest paintings in the world: Rembrandt's *The Sea of Galilee* and Vermeer's *The Concert*, one of only 35 surviving works by the beloved Dutch master.

It was the most expensive art heist in American history. The Gardner museum offered a \$5 million reward. But as the years passed, not a single work of art was recovered. For the museum, the terrible loss was compounded by the fact that the institution was bound by Isabella Stewart Gardner's will, which stated that no work of art be moved or replaced: hence, the frames which once held masterpieces now hung empty on the walls.

For those who loved the paintings, particularly the rare Vermeer, the loss felt almost personal.

More than ten years after the theft, filmmaker Rebecca Dreyfus found herself still haunted by the missing Vermeer. She had first seen *The Concert* as a young girl and had been overwhelmed by its mysterious beauty within the Gardner's uncanny, intimate space. In 2002, disturbed by the lack of progress in the case, she decided to make a film exploring *The Concert* and its theft. She was intrigued by the power of the painting and its hold over those who loved it, including herself. As a filmmaker and storyteller, she was particularly compelled by the outrageous range of characters involved in this highly unusual crime story: from the 17th century Dutch masters and 19th century Grande Dame Isabella Stewart Gardner to the present-day conmen and convicted felons who had been linked to the theft in the press.

Dreyfus enlisted her mentor, the renowned documentarian Albert Maysles, as director of photography and began to research the past and present aspects of her film. She immersed herself in Isabella Stewart Gardner's world, uncovering fascinating letters between Gardner and legendary art connoisseur Bernard Berenson, who helped Mrs. Gardner to buy some of the world's most beautiful paintings. She found others, including author Tracy Chevalier (*Girl with a Pearl Earring*) who revered Vermeer and were devastated by the painting's loss. She studied the international crisis of art crime, a multi-billion dollar enterprise that is devastating the world's cultural heritage.

The film was proceeding slowly and quietly. And then something radical and quite unexpected occurred.

Dreyfus had contacted art investigator Harold Smith to get some background information on international art theft. A courtly man with an ever-present fedora, an eye-patch, and a prosthetic nose to cover the ravages of skin cancer, Smith has one of the shrewdest minds in the art recovery business; he'd solved many of the world's most important heists, including the largest gold robbery in the United States.

The interview seemed simple enough, until Smith mentioned that he shared Dreyfus' passion for the missing Gardner paintings and had been himself obsessed with the case for years. He then confessed to Dreyfus something even more startling: his belief that -- after so many years, and such a large unclaimed reward -- a renewed search for the Gardner art might yield real results. With Dreyfus and her film as his inspiration, Smith now decided the time was right to find out on his own what had happened to these paintings and, perhaps, to bring them home.

Dreyfus' film underwent a dramatic transformation: the film about an art heist became part of an active investigation into the recovery of the missing art.

Smith had a simple and time-tested strategy. His years of experience told him that there were people out there who had heard something about the crime and wanted that reward -- and that, if word got out to them, they'd come to him with what they knew. After all, he was an art investigator, not law enforcement. He didn't want anyone jailed; he wanted the paintings back.

He initiated a publicity blitz, receiving coverage of his quest in *The New York Times*, *Reader's Digest*, and Court TV, among many other venues. After just a few weeks, the strategy began to pay off: Smith's twenty-four hour hotline began to ring with potential informants and alleged sightings of the Vermeer.

What followed was a wild journey that crossed two continents, entailing secret meetings with a member of Boston's criminal underworld, a former Scotland Yard detective, and a talkative informant called "The Turbocharger" who happened to know a great deal about a particular international terrorist group -- and its possible link to the missing Gardner art.

The investigation, which is still ongoing, has had many stunning turns and surprising results -- all documented by Dreyfus, who finished her film in 2005 with the help of actors Blythe Danner and Campbell Scott, who recorded voiceovers as Isabella Gardner and Bernard Berenson. The film, called *STOLEN*, is a stirring, visually stunning, and thrilling glimpse into the worlds of art and crime that were brought together on that fateful night in 1990. It is a testament to the power of great works of art to move us to tears and compel us to act, and to the tenacity of one man in particular who -- as he nears his eighties, still fighting his nearly lifelong battle with skin-cancer -- refuses to give up until he brings his paintings back where they belong.

If you have information that may lead to the recovery of the missing Gardner paintings, let us know at [www.find-the-art.com](http://www.find-the-art.com).



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**BLYTHE DANNER**

*As the voice of Isabella Stewart Gardner*

Blythe studied acting and got her degree from Bard College and began her career in Boston theater companies, making her stage debut as Laura in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*. By 25, she won the Theater World Award for her work in Moliere's *THE MISER* at Lincoln Center. She went on to win a Tony Award in 1970 in her Broadway debut for her role in *BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE*. Additionally, Blythe has been nominated for Tonys for performances in Harold Pinter's *BETRAYAL*, a revival of Tennessee Williams' *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*, and for a revival of *FOLLIES*. For 25 years, she has been a regular performer at the Williamstown Summer Theater Festival.

She made her film premiere in the television film production of *DR. COOK'S GARDEN* in 1971. Her earliest starring film roles were opposite Alan Alda in *TO KILL A CLOWN* (1972) and in the title role of *LOVIN' MOLLY*, directed by Sidney Lumet. Over the next thirty years she has played roles in critically acclaimed films such as *BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS*, *FORCES OF NATURE*, *TO WONG FOO THANKS FOR EVERYTHING*, *JULIE NEWMAR*, and *SLYVIA*, playing the mother of Sylvia Plath. Danner is most recently known for her role opposite Robert De Niro in the comedy hit *MEET THE PARENTS* and its sequel, *MEET THE FOCKERS*. She is also a regular guest on television's *WILL AND GRACE*.

Married to the late director/producer Bruce Paltrow, she is the mother of two children, actors Gwyneth Paltrow and Jake Paltrow.

**CAMPBELL SCOTT**

*As the voice of Bernard Berenson*

Acclaimed actor Campbell Scott has appeared in many Broadway productions such as Tom Stoppard's *THE REAL THING*, *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*, *AH! WILDERNESS*, *HAY FEVER*, and *THE QUEEN AND THE REBELS*. Off-Broadway, he has appeared in *THE LAST OUTPOST*, *COPPERHEAD*, *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS* and *ON THE BUM*.

His first film role was in *FROM HOLLYWOOD TO DEADWOOD* followed by the highly praised *LONGTIME COMPANION*, *THE FEUD*, and Bernardo Bertolucci's *THE SHELTERING SKY*. Scott appeared in *DEAD AGAIN* directed by Kenneth Branagh and starred opposite Julia Roberts in *DYING YOUNG* directed by Joel Schumacher, *SINGLES* directed by Cameron Crowe, *THE INNOCENT* directed by John Schlesinger, and *MRS.*

PARKER AND THE VICIOUS CIRCLE directed by Alan Rudolph. He co-stars with Steve Martin in David Mamet's film THE SPANISH PRISONER. His most recent film appearances include BIG NIGHT, THE DAYTRIPPERS, SHIP OF FOOLS, HI-LIFE, TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN, SPRING FORWARD, OTHER VOICES, LUSH, DELIVERING MILO, ROGER DODGER and SECRET LIVES OF DENTISTS.

Mr. Scott co-directed the film BIG NIGHT with Stanley Tucci. He served as the director for OFF THE MAP. For the stage, he has directed MISS JULIE, SNAKE PIT and RECRUITING OFFICER.

## **REBECCA DREYFUS**

*Director*

Rebecca Dreyfus has been making independent films for almost a decade. She is an award-winning director, writer and producer whose work legendary film critic Stanley Kauffman has called "a testament to what film can do in the hands of a good documentarian: turn fact into truth."

Ms. Dreyfus' current full-length film STOLEN is the fascinating and outrageous story of the largest unsolved art heist in American history. This film is an in-depth exploration of this unusual crime as well as a testament to the power of great works of art. The film recently garnered an audience award as well as prizes for best documentary and best musical score. It is currently in the festival circuit. STOLEN will be released in theaters in the spring of 2006 followed by a dvd release on netflix in the fall of 2006.

Her first award-winning feature film entitled *Bye-Bye Babushka* opened to critical acclaim in New York and Los Angeles and has been shown on television in more than twenty-five countries including PBS affiliates in the United States. Her two short films *The Waiting* and ROADBLOCK have also received prizes around the world as well as national and international television broadcasts.

Ms. Dreyfus resides in New York and holds a BFA in film from SUNY Purchase. She was recently named a filmmaking fellow by the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) and a screenwriting fellow by The Sundance Film Institute. She is currently at work on a romantic comedy.

## **SUSANNAH LUDWIG**

*Producer*

The Sundance Institute recognizing her as a "visionary independent producer" named Susannah Ludwig the 2003 Mark Silvennan Fellow. She is the co-founder of Persistence of Vision Films Flourish Films, a New York based Production Company.

The fascinating and outrageous story of the largest unsolved art heist in American history.

is the subject of Ludwig's latest film. This feature documentary entitled STOLEN is an in-depth exploration of this crime, which took place at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston in 1990. STOLEN is also testament to the power of great works of art to move us to tears and to compel us to act. STOLEN has received support from The Jerome Foundation, New York State Council of the Arts, The Roy W. Dean Foundation and The Women in Film Finishing Fund.

Ms. Ludwig has been a major force in the realization of numerous critically acclaimed films including *Our Song*, directed by Jim McKay (released May 2001 by IFC Films), *The Ballad of Ramblin Jack*, (released by Lot 47 Films), *Spring Forward* starring Ned Beatty and Liev Schreiber (distributed by IFC Films) and *La Ciudad*, (recipient of the Open Palm Award at the Gotham Awards, Best Picture at the Havana Film Festival and distributed by Zeitgeist Films.) She was an associate producer on *Mutiny: Asians Storm British Music* which is currently touring the festival circuit.

Ludwig has also produced numerous short subject films such as *Shadowboxer*, directed by Vilka Tzouras (premiered at the 2002 IFFM,) *The Hat*, directed by Julia Jordan and Terry Stacey (distributed by Bravo Networks,) and *Weekend Getaway*, directed by Elizabeth Holder (distributed by Hypnotic Inc.) Additionally, Ludwig has produced six behind-the-scenes documentaries for the American Movie Classics and the Independent Film Channel including *The Making of Camp* which aired on IFC in 2003.

In addition to her feature and television work, Ludwig often acts as producer on corporate videos and commercials. She is on the adjunct faculty at Long Island University where she teaches documentary film production.

## **ALBERT MAYSLES**

### *Camerawork*

Two of America's foremost non-fiction filmmakers, Albert Maysles and his brother David (1932-1987) are recognized as pioneers of "direct cinema," the distinctly American version of French "cinema verité". Born in Boston of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, Albert received his B.A. at Syracuse and his M.A. at Boston University where he taught psychology for three years. He made the transition from psychology to film in the summer of 1955 by taking a 16mm camera to Russia to film patients at several mental hospitals. The result, PSYCHIATRY IN RUSSIA, was Albert's first foray into filmmaking. Among his many groundbreaking films are PRIMARY (1960), MEET MARLON BRANDO (1965), SALESMAN (1968), GIMME SHELTER (1970), and GREY GARDENS (1976). Among his many awards are the 1994 International Documentary Association Career Achievement Award, S.M.P.T.E.'s 1997 John Grierson Award for Documentary, the American Society of Cinematographers' 1998 President's Award, the Boston Film and Video Foundation's 1998 Vision Award, Toronto's Hot Docs 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award, the 1999 Flaherty Award and the Thessaloniki 2001 Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1999 Eastman Kodak saluted Albert as one of the 100 world's finest cinematographers.

For more information, see [http://www.mayslesfilms.com/company\\_pages/maysles\\_productions/al\\_bio.html](http://www.mayslesfilms.com/company_pages/maysles_productions/al_bio.html)

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# ***STOLEN***

## **Festivals**

2005 Sarasota International Film Festival  
***AUDIENCE AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY***

2005 The Independent Film Festival of Boston

2005 Maryland Film Festival

2005 Newport International Film Festival

2005 Nantucket Film Festival

2005 Provincetown International Film Festival

2005 Los Angeles Film Festival

2005 New York/Avignon Film Festival  
***BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM***  
***BEST ORIGINAL FILM SCORE***

2005 Montreal World Film Festival, Canada

2005 Deauville Festival of American Film, France

2005 Athens Film Festival, Greece

2005 Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival

2005 Sao Paulo International Film Festival, Brazil

2005 High Falls Film Festival

**PRECIOUS METTLE**  
 Art investigator  
 Harold J. Smith, known  
 for his trademark  
 bowler and disarming  
 wit, photographed in  
 New York City on  
 April 22, 2004.



VANITY FAIR NOMINATES **HAROLD J. SMITH**

**B**ECAUSE this Columbo of the international art scene has outsmarted the world's most sophisticated criminals for half a century, working with Scotland Yard, the F.B.I., and special police units to recover millions in stolen art and antiquities. BECAUSE when the power went out at the Bellagio in Las Vegas last Easter, underwriters for Boston's Museum of Fine Arts put him on the next plane, just to make sure the museum's estimated \$188 million in Monets, on loan to the hotel, were safe. BECAUSE he has uncovered fake Michelangelos and Picassos, cracked one of the biggest gold-robbery cases of our time (an \$11 million North Miami caper that turned out to be an inside job), and

recently found a Salvador Dali masterpiece, missing since 1974, having met the suspect 25 years before—at Dali's home. BECAUSE in her documentary *Stolen*, which hits film festivals this winter, director Rebecca Dreyfus captures the sleuth's 14-year obsession with what is believed to be the largest art heist in U.S. history—a still-unsolved \$300 million mystery that began in 1990 at Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum—and offers a glimpse at the humble mastery he brings to his work. BECAUSE the former merchant marine from the Bronx has accomplished this much despite a seven-decade battle with degenerative skin cancer, requiring hundreds of operations. BECAUSE, at 78, he shows no signs of letting up. —ADAM LAURHUF

