

**AHRB New Directions in Copyright Research Network
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Who owns that artefact? The case of Livia's Head

In December 2004 the Classics Museum at The Australian National University was targeted by thieves, who stole 5 priceless (and irreplaceable) items – including a Bronze Portrait Head dating from the First Century BC. The international response to this event was overwhelming, with coverage in American, Japanese, Canadian and British newspapers, the involvement of the Australian Federal Police, Australian Customs, Interpol and major auction houses.

I take this event as my starting point for a discussion of ownership, appropriation, literal and figurative theft. The parallel considerations of neighbouring rights become particularly fascinating when one asks 'who really owns artworks in the first place'? Museums? Collectors? Insurers? Educational Institutions? I then try to apply those insights into a broader discussion of the on-selling of artworks - both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – in the context of resale rights and neighbouring rights issues.