

HISTORY
ARTS
CULTURE

DOCUMENTARY
45 MIN.



VERSIONS

Arabic, English, German,
Spanish: 04 x 45 min.

RIGHTS

Worldwide  

ORDER NUMBER

38 4857 | 01-04

The Cranachs and Medieval Modern Art

38 4857-01, 01 x 45 min.

Two artists who embodied the ideal of the Renaissance man were Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) and his son Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515–1586). They were among the most successful painters of the 16th century, working as court painters and immortalizing Martin Luther and the Reformation in their paintings. They also ran printing workshops, were paper wholesalers, had a pharmacy license and were mayors of the renowned university city of Wittenberg. In Cologne, the Cranachs' work is being digitized – a treasure trove for professionals and art lovers. The Cranach Digital Archive (CDA) makes it possible to zoom in on even the tiniest figures or the fine networks of cracks in painted faces. Our film follows in the Cranachs' footsteps and provides an insight into the lives, work and times of the famous family of painters.

Words against Silence – Indonesia's Courageous Writers

38 4857-02, 01 x 45 min.

With its 17,000 islands, 800 languages and 300 ethnic groups, Indonesia is a nation of superlatives. And one that is still searching for a common identity. After 350 years of Dutch colonial rule, decades of regional independence wars and a military regime that cost the lives of a million people, the country has yet to look its past squarely in the eye. For many years, a number of courageous writers have been agitating for this process to begin, by tackling subjects that still remain shrouded in silence: As a student in the 1990s, Linda Christanty from Jakarta joined the movement to topple Suharto. Azhari Aiyub from Banda Aceh writes about the region's past struggle for liberation and coping with the aftermath of the tsunami. Oka Rusmini lives on the island of Bali. She describes the constraints of the Hindu caste system. Through their work, all three give a voice to the weak.

The Mystery Conman – The Murky Business of Counterfeit Antiques

38 4857-03, 01 x 45 min.

For years, a talented fraudster smuggled counterfeit antiques onto the art market. No one knew who the person was but workshops in southern Europe aroused suspicion. Experts have therefore named the fraudster the "Spanish master." The documentary follows German archaeologist Stefan Lehmann, who's been on the shark's tail. Around 40 counterfeits have been discovered so far, but he thinks it's only the tip of the iceberg. Lehmann hasn't made himself popular, as the subject of counterfeiting tends to get swept under the rug within the art trade and museums. A Swiss collector was the first to break the silence. He gave Lehmann access to a bronze head of Emperor Augustus, which he had bought for several hundred thousand dollars in New York. It's an exciting case for Lehmann. Will his examinations prove that the head is fake? Auction houses and galleries know exactly what they're selling, according to Christoph Leon, an art dealer from Basel who's working with Lehmann. He says the market is full of fakes because antique sculptures fetch high prices among investors. This film follows a trail of dirty dealings and gives an insight into the secretive world of the antiques trade.

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Ai Weiwei Drifting

38 4857-04, 01 x 45 min.

Also available: 60 min. versions in English | 38 4894

Ai Weiwei is one of the most provocative artists of our time. At home in China, he was subjected to surveillance, detention and house arrest. He was able to leave in 2015 and now lives in Berlin. In his recent work, he takes Europe to task for what he considers its disastrous refugee policy. He turns his despair and anger into art and protest.

A solitary rubber dinghy floats in the Aegean between Turkey and Greece. Ai Weiwei covers inside the boat. He cannot swim. What is the message? "We are all refugees," the artist says. He has created memorials in museums and public spaces out of boats, lifejackets and clothes abandoned on Europe's beaches.

The film gets close to Ai Weiwei, illuminates his work, and also gives a rare glimpse into his private life – with his mother in Beijing, with his son and partner in Berlin. Nevertheless, he remains a mysterious figure in many respects. Just who is Ai Weiwei?