

By Don Tse

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International art headlines were recently dominated by the news that Włodzimirz Umaniec, also known as Vladimir Umanets, was sentenced to two years in prison for vandalizing one of the Seagram murals painted by renowned abstract expressionist Mark Rothko (1903-1970).

The Seagram murals were donated

in 1969 to the Tate Modern Gallery in London, where they are on permanent display in a room designed and lit by Rothko himself. They are arguably the most important collection of modern art paintings owned by one of the most important modern art galleries in the world.

On Oct. 7, 2012, Umaniec, a 26-year-old Polish national who lives in England, entered the gallery, took out a brush and some black paint and wrote "Vladimir Umanets, A Potential Piece of Yellowism," in the corner of one of the murals. While art lovers around the world were in shock at the vulgar act of vandalism, Umaniec claimed to have increased the value of the priceless work and that his act was itself a work of art. Yellowism, claimed Umaniec, is an art movement he founded.

A similar act of vandalism in the name of art occurred in Paris in 2006 when a "performance artist" named Pierre Pinoncelli attacked Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (a sculpture made of a porcelain urinal) with a hammer.

The attacks on the Rothko and Duchamp pieces were shocking because the works are so treasured; they are featured in art books around the world. But art, by its nature is an unending process. While an artist may consider a single work of art "finished", art, being a reflection of our society, is ever-changing. So, it is possible to take an existing work of art and use it to create something new or better.

The same concept applies to the current trend in beer cocktails. Beer cocktails seem to be all the rage these days; I've tried them all across America and even in far-flung places like New Zealand. I am still shocked when someone takes a world-class beer, sometimes even a rare one, and uses it to prepare a beer cocktail. But I understand and appreciate what the artists who create these cocktails are doing. They are building on the artistry of others.

There are plenty of recipes for beer cocktails that you can find on the internet, but try one of these three for starters:

To make a Steamroller, shake one ounce each of freshly-squeezed lemon juice, St. Germain elderflower liqueur and rye whiskey and a half ounce of Heering cherry liqueur in a cocktail shaker with some ice. Strain the mixture into a glass and then fill the glass with Anchor Steam.

To make some Lambic Sangria, use a large pitcher filled with ice to mix 25 ounces of Lindemans Framboise, 22 ounces of Hoegaarden, six ounces of Lillet Blanc, one cup of fresh raspberries and half a sliced orange.

To make a Shock Me, pour a quarter of a cup of Brooklyn Brown Ale, two tablespoons of bourbon, one teaspoon of maple syrup and one teaspoon of Southern Comfort into a glass or shaker with ice. Stir (don't shake) the mixture, then strain into a glass.

Cheers! ♦♦♦♦