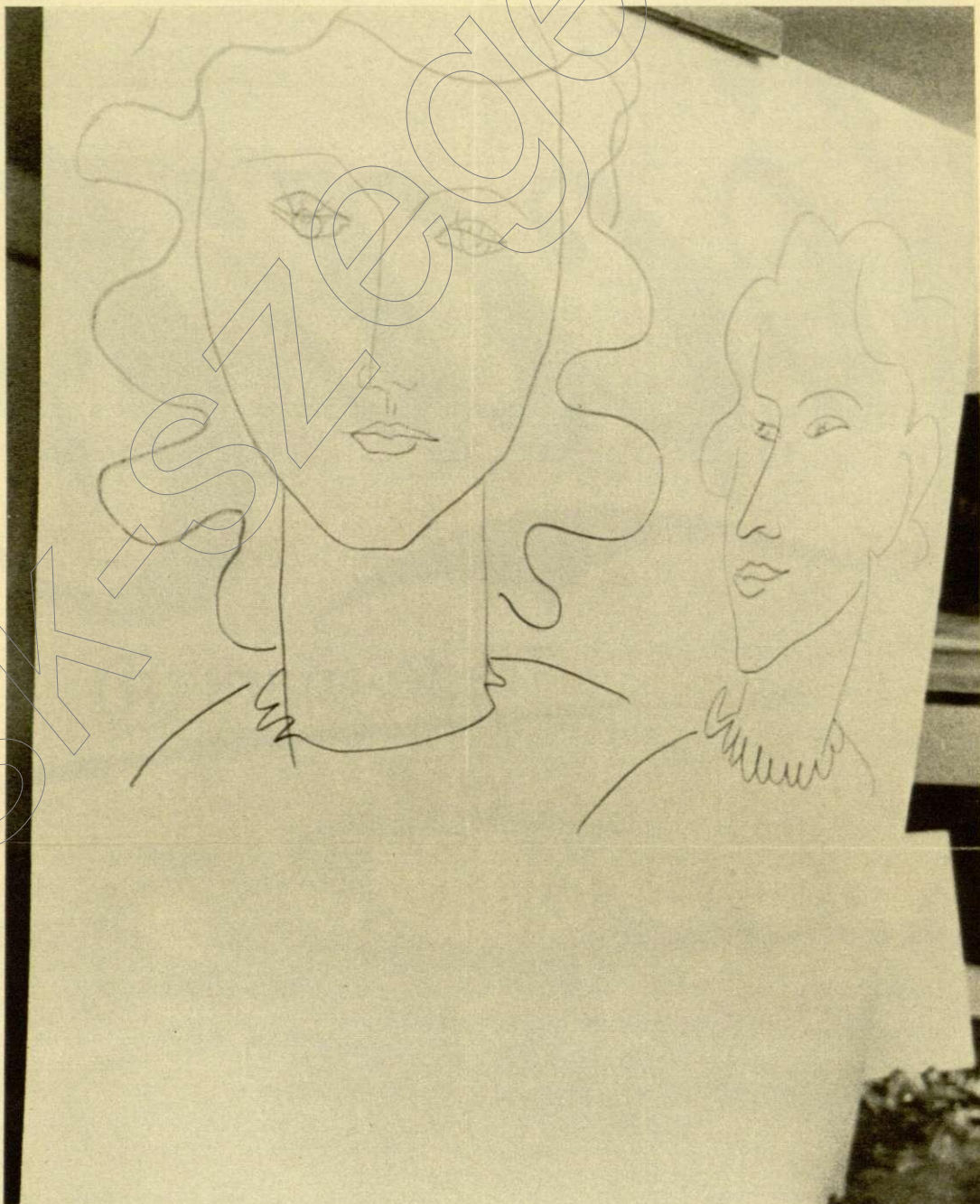


Elmyr De Hory 1970 feb
"Life"
festmény hamisító

What next—the Mona



A De Hory "Modigliani," titled *Portrait of Jeanne Hébuterne*, was bought by Texas Millionaire Algur Hurtle Meadows (LIFE, July 7, 1967). It appears to derive chiefly from Modigliani's hatted portrait of Jeanne, painted around 1918 (below). It apes the original's "peeping ear" and pensive hand gesture. But the De Hory hand is awkward, not integrated with the body's rhythms—a telltale failure—and the sketchy dress neckline fails to create a unified decorative shape.



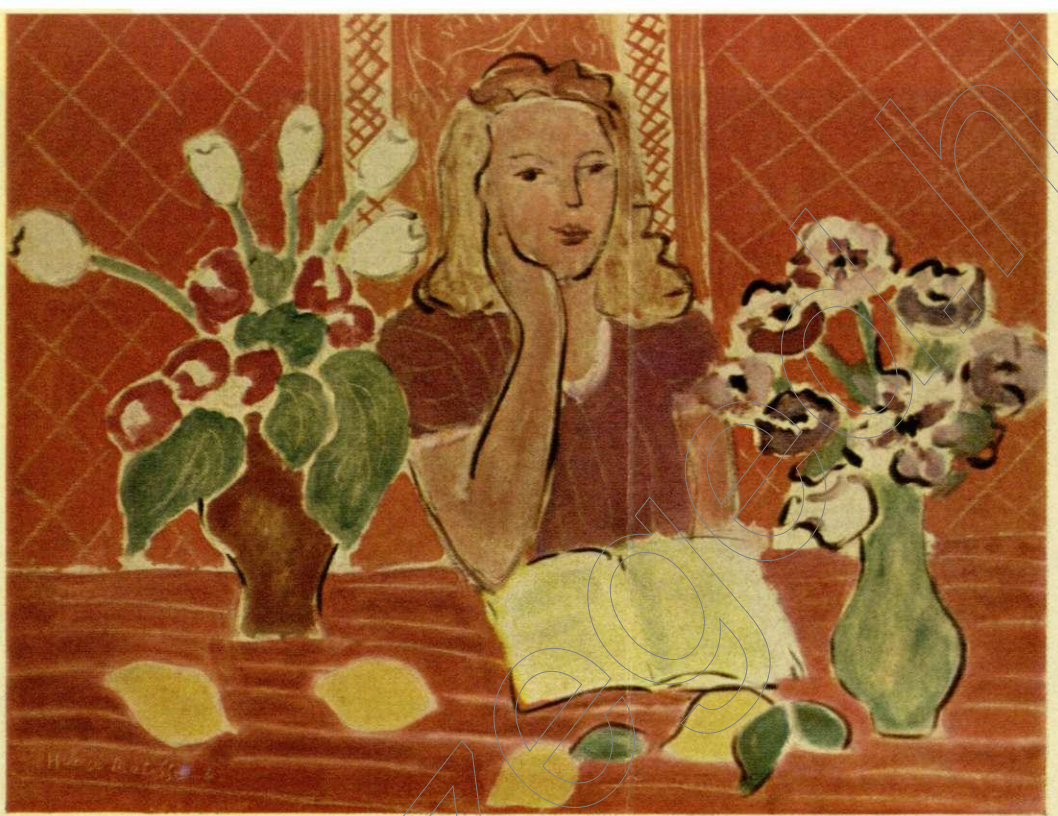
In his Ibiza studio, De Hory proudly displays a "Picasso" and a "Matisse" sketch that he has

By his own unabashed estimate, Elmyr De Hory has personally added some 1,000 oils, gouaches, watercolors and sketches to the world's supply of Matisses, Picassos, Modiglianis and other modern masterworks. He is so good at counterfeiting that in a recent book about him, *Fake!* (McGraw-Hill), Author Clifford Irving calls him the greatest of contemporary art forgers.

The dilettante son of wealthy Transylvanian parents, De Hory went from a wartime German refugee camp to Paris. In 1946 he knocked off a small sketch which he sold as a Picasso and was off on a rewarding career. It brought him an elegant villa on the Spanish island of Ibiza. Better

still, it allowed him to deflate critics and art experts, whom he contemptuously refers to as "so-called art experts." Nothing delights him more than admiring one of his bogus masterpieces in a museum or private collection. His claims range from the improbable to the outrageous. He estimates the paper value of his body of phony work at \$60 million. Occasionally he is even confused about whether he or Matisse, or whoever, painted a particular canvas. He sees nothing wrong in what he does, even after an assembly-line counterfeiting operation he ran in Paris with two other artful dodgers blew up in 1967 into the art-fake scandal of the decade.

sa?



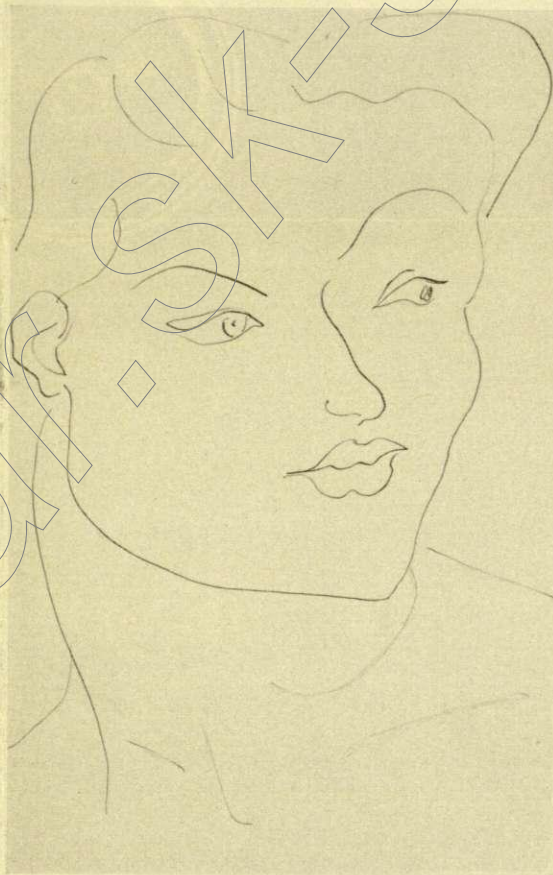
De Hory based his 1963 *Woman with Flowers* on Matisse's '40s style. He also did a Matisse-style drawing of it, providing "authenticity" by making it seem the artist had translated a sketch into oils.



just dashed off, on order, in two minutes flat.

The two went to jail, De Hory wound up broke and exiled on his island.

"Forgery has always been going on," says De Hory. "When Vlaminck was broke he used to do false Cézannes. Once he took one to Cézanne. 'Sure, it's mine,' said Cézanne. 'Nice, isn't it?' " It does not occur to De Hory that he is not Vlaminck, that his craft flourishes not because he is flawless but because even the masters are not, always. So De Hory goes on boastfully "confessing" to the authorship of some masterpieces that collectors have bought directly from the painters. With an ego like that, someday De Hory is liable to claim that smiling lady in the Louvre.



This portrait of Mlle. Roudenko, also in the Fogg, is a De Hory, not a Matisse, the forger says. The museum says it was acquired directly from Matisse.



De Hory claims to have drawn this Matisse *Portrait of a Lady with a Necklace*, now in Harvard's Fogg Museum. The Fogg acquired it from Paul Sachs, who got it in 1939, some seven years before De Hory took up counterfeiting.

De Hory tentatively claims to have executed this cubist still life, attributed to Picasso and now in the Philadelphia Museum. It is fairly convincing but the museum admits the two unnecessary lines between the scrolls at top and other un-Picasso-like details are suspect.

