



# SIGNATURES AND HANDWRITING

There is a widespread belief that signatures determine if a painting or drawing is authentic or not.

Every week people ask us to tell them if a signature is authentic because they hope this will establish if the artwork is authentic.

**The reality is quite different. Signing was not widespread in the past. There is only one Michelangelo that is signed. Leonardo didn't sign any of his paintings.**

Until about 1950 most artists would sign when they sold a work or would deliver it to the gallery they worked with.

The consequence was that every artist had hundreds or thousands of works in his studio that were not signed.

When the artist died all these unsigned works would be left behind. His dealer or family members would sign them for him,

in order to sell them.

For this reason a very large number of authentic artworks were not signed by the artists who created them.

While it remains useful to check and compare signatures, particularly for artists active after 1950, it is not as crucial as many people believe.

When there is text, in addition to the signature, it does open the door to checking if it is the artists' handwriting. Sometimes text is found on the back and occasionally a dedication or something similar is written on the front.

The expectation with text is that it is by the artist.

If you would like to check handwriting, or to find out if a signature is possibly by the artist, we offer our services.

**We provide both opinions and official forensic examinations of signatures and handwriting.**