

Degrees of Authenticity



Artworks can be authentic, reproductions, copies or forgeries, but it's more complicated than that.

There are many other options.

Here is how artworks are classified and described among art professionals, in museum descriptions, and in auction catalogues and auction descriptions:

- **By** = Unequivocally a work wholly by the artist.
- **Full Name of the artist.** This is the same level as "By" = Unequivocally a work wholly by the artist.
- **Initials or surname of the artist only** = "after" = A copy of a known work of the artist. Be aware that "Initials or surnames of the artist only" don't always mean "after".
- **After.** This is the same level as "Initials or surname of the artist only." = A copy of a known work of the artist. A copy of any date.
- **Attributed to** = Probably by the named artist according to available evidence, although some degree of doubt exists. Probably a work by the artist, but not guaranteed.
- **Studio of** = Produced in the named artist's studio/workshop by assistants, possibly with some participation of the named artist. It is important that the named artist was responsible for the creative concept and that the work was meant to leave the studio as his. Also applies to a work jointly by the artist and his assistant (s). Be aware that some auctioneers use "Studio of" to mean "By assistants only". This is a limiting use of "Studio of" because obviously there are many instances when the artist and his assistants painted different parts.

- **Workshop of** = A work wholly by studio assistants.

- **Circle of** = A work by a contemporary of the artist, often associated with the artist as a pupil, former pupil, colleague, etc.

- **Follower of** = An unknown artist working specifically in the style of the named artist, who may or may not have been trained by the named artist. Some chronological continuity is implied. A work by an artist using the style of the artist, contemporary or nearly contemporary with the artist.

- **In the manner of** = A work of a later date imitating the subject, technique, and/or style of an artist

- **Style of** = This is the same level as "In the manner of" = A work of a later date imitating the style of an artist.

- **School of** = Indicates a geographical distinction, used only when it is impossible to identify a specific artist, his studio or follower

- **Signed, dated, inscribed** = means these are in the artist's own hand.

- **Bears signature, date, or inscription** = means added by another hand.

