

Forensic Methods Used for the Verification of the Authenticity of Prints

Authors : Olivia Rybak-Karkosz

Abstract : This paper aims to present the results of scientific research on methods of forging art prints and their elements, such as signature or provenance and forensic science methods that might be used to verify their authenticity. In the last decades, the art market has observed significant interest in purchasing prints. They are considered an economical alternative to paintings and a considerable investment. However, the authenticity of an art print is difficult to establish as similar visual effects might be achieved with drawings or xerox. The latter is easy to make using a home printer. They are then offered on flea markets or internet auctions as genuine prints. This probable ease of forgery and, at the same time, the difficulty of distinguishing art print techniques were the main reasons why this research was undertaken. A lack of scientific methods dedicated to disclosing a forgery encouraged the author to verify the possibility of using forensic science's methods known and used in other fields of expertise. This research methodology consisted of completing representative forgery samples collected in selected museums based in Poland and a few in Germany and Austria. That allowed the author to present a typology of methods used to forge art prints. Given that one of the most famous graphic design examples is bills and securities, it seems only appropriate to propose in print verification the usage of methods of detecting counterfeit currency. These methods contain an examination of ink, paper, and watermarks. On prints, additionally, signatures and imprints of stamps, etc., are forged as well. So the examination should be completed with handwriting examination and forensic sphragistics. The paper contains a stipulation to conduct a complex analysis of authenticity with the participation of an art restorer, art historian, and forensic expert as head of this team.

Keywords : art forgery, examination of an artwork, handwriting analysis, prints

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