

The Family Resemblance in the Handwriting of Painters: Jacek and Rafał Malczewski's Case

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Abstract : This paper aims to present the results of scientific research on family resemblance in the handwriting of painters. Such a problem is known in handwriting analysis, but it was never a research subject in the scope of painters' signatures on works of art. For this research, the author chose Jacek, and Rafał Malczewski (father and son) as many of their paintings are in museums, and most of them are signed. The aim was to create a catalogue of traits similar to the handwriting of both artists. Such data could be helpful for the expert's opinion in the decision-making process to establish whether the signature is authentic and, if so, whether it is the artist whose signature is analysed, not the other family member. There are known examples of relatives of the artists who signed their works. Many of them were artists themselves. For instance Andrzej Wróblewski's mother, Krystyna was a printmaker. To save his legacy, she signed many of her son's works after his death using his name. This research methodology consisted of completing representative samples of signatures of both artists, which were collected in selected Polish museums. Then a catalogue of traits was created using a forensic handwriting graphic-comparative method (graphic method). The paper contains a concluding statement that it could be one of the elements of research in an expert's analysis of the authenticity of the signature on paintings.

Keywords : artist's signatures, authenticity of an artwork, forensic handwriting analysis, graphic-comparative method

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