



THE ART NEWSPAPER

[Russia-Ukraine war](#) [Art market](#) [Museums & heritage](#) [Exhibitions](#) [Books](#) [Podcasts](#) [Columns](#) [Adve](#)

Art market
[Archive](#)

Art historians appointed to the Warhol Authentication Board to help judge attributions

The Warhol Foundation adds curatorial experts to attempt to ease the controversy surrounding its authentication board

Jason Edward Kaufman

30 November 2005

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts has appointed art historians Judith Goldman and Trevor Fairbrother to the Warhol Authentication Board, in succession to David Whitney who died earlier this year. Foundation president Joel Wachs told The Art Newspaper he made the appointments based on the recommendations of the existing board members—Neil Prinz, Sally King-Nero, and Robert Rosenblum—who suggested including a fifth person.

The Authentication Board was established by the foundation in 1995 to judge the authenticity of Warhol-related works submitted for its review, a function formerly performed by the Estate of Andy Warhol. The committee meets periodically to review submissions, with members receiving \$500 per meeting. The next session is scheduled for 10 February 2006, says Mr Wachs.

Instead of candidates such as Warhol Museum director Thomas Sokolowski and Whitney curator Donna de Salvo, both of whom have direct experience of assembling exhibitions of Warhol's work, the foundation has opted for two former curators. Ms Goldman was curator of prints at the Whitney Museum from 1976 to 1991, and Mr Fairbrother was curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) from 1983 to 1996, and curator of modern art at the Seattle Art Museum from 1996 to 2001. It remains to be seen if their backgrounds will help the controversy that surrounds the Authentication Board.

Ms Goldman's expertise in prints and Pop Art should be an asset in dealing with the prickly issues related to Warhol graphics. She has contributed catalogue texts for Warhol exhibitions such as "The Warhol look: glamour, style, fashion" at the Warhol Museum and the Whitney in 1997, and others for recent shows at Paul Kasmin and Gagosian Gallery in New York.

Mr Fairbrother, though best known for his work on John Singer Sargent, organised "Beuys and Warhol" for the MFA Boston 14 years ago. He also published an interview with Warhol in Arts Magazine in 1987, an essay about Warhol's early career in the catalogue of a 1989 show at Grey Art Gallery, and, most relevant to matters of connoisseurship, wrote "Form and ideology: Warhol's techniques from blotted line to film" for the Dia's 1989 "Discussions in contemporary culture #3: the work of Andy Warhol". No member of the board was willing to comment on the issues facing the board.

Since 2003, the board has been under fire from owners of rejected works and members of the artist's circle who claim their knowledge of Warhol's practice is ignored. The board has routinely denied the authenticity of silkscreens made without Warhol's direct supervision, but his former associates argue that to reject such works contradicts Warhol's practice of having works of art printed without his direct oversight. Scholars point out that it was precisely Warhol's blurring of authorship and his adoption of modes of mass production that mark his significance in the history of art. There is growing consensus in the field that, rather than exclude such works from the catalogue raisonné being compiled by the foundation, they should be included, allowing the market to decide their value.

"It is just bad art history and folly not to draw on the contemporaries who actually knew the artist," says art critic Richard Dorment of the Daily Telegraph in London, a commentator in a BBC documentary on the controversy, scheduled to air in late January. "They are saying he worked like an Old Master and that his touch was very important," says Mr Dorment, "but he is a conceptual artist, the main descendant of Duchamp".

There also have been unsubstantiated allegations of conflicts of interest in an authentication board funded by the Warhol Foundation, which is also custodian of a large body of Warhol's work that it offers for sale. Critics also condemn the board's refusal to disclose the reasons that lead to rejection of a work. The board claims that to do so would provide a road map for forgers, but this has frustrated owners of rejected works who must abide by another of the board's policies that requires owners to sign a waiver of their right to challenge rejections in court.

The board's legal counsel Ronald Spencer says the board is not considering altering any of its policies, and that no lawsuits are pending or threatened.

Originally appeared in The Art Newspaper as '*Art historians appointed to help judge Warhol attributions*'

[Art market](#)

[Authentication](#)

[Andy Warhol](#)

[Pop art](#)

[The Andy Warhol Foundation](#)

COOKIE SETTINGS