

VANITY FAIR

Andy Warhol Art Authentication Board
520 West 20th Street
New York, New York 10011

1 February 2003

To whom it may concern:

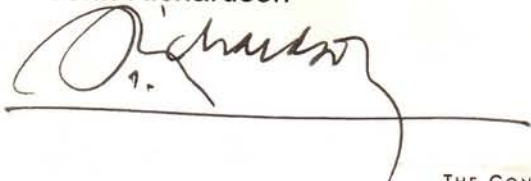
As the owner of a number of presents from Andy – a portrait as well as several other works – I feel I have a vested interest in the fate of the self-portrait belonging to my old friend Joe Simon. Given your decision not to authenticate the painting, many others, including myself, fear finding ourselves in the same boat. Fortunately, Andy's inscriptions are on the stretchers of my paintings, but it seems that this will not necessarily save them from the fate of other gifts from Andy to valued associates, which have been turned down by the Authentication board.

As a board member of IFAR, which keeps a wary eye on the problems of contemporary catalogue raisonnés, I feel that your experts are behaving in an unnecessarily high-handed way – a way that is of more benefit to the Warhol Foundation than it is to collectors or historians, like myself, who would hope that the Warhol oeuvre would be treated the way he would have liked.

As one of the eulogists at Andy's funeral, where I emphasized the importance of his catholicism, I ask you not just to reconsider your decision in this particular case but your policy in general. Since some of many prominent artists today never actually execute their own work, this policy would seem questionable to say the least. If Joe Simon's self-portrait is not authentic, so, it would seem, is most of Warhol's oeuvre.

I believe that one or two members of your board are valued friends of mine, so the last thing I want is to cause any trouble. However, having analyzed the evidence submitted to me by Joe, I feel he is totally in the right. I only wish he had done his homework before rather than after he submitted his painting to you. Above all, I hope that this matter and others like it can be cleared up to everybody's satisfaction.

John Richardson



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