

**Daniel Friedman**

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**From:** mexmarket@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2009 4:17 PM  
**To:** danjoefriedman@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Fwd: letter on art authentication from Joanne Stuhr

Hi Daniel ,here's a rough draft of a letter from my friend Joanne. Call me today if you have any thoughts as I'm leaving tomorrow.Thanks,Jed

-----Original Message-----

From: mexmarket@aol.com  
To: joannestuhr@earthlink.net  
Sent: Fri, Aug 14, 2009 3:11 pm  
Subject: Fwd: letter

Dear Catherine,

As an Art Historian and Curator specializing in Latin American Art who has studied the Noyola Collection I was alarmed to see the recent statement issued by Carlos Phillips Olmedo et al. questioning the authenticity of the Frida Kahlo work in the forthcoming book "Finding Frida" Princeton Architectural Press. My concern is that the group has dismissed the collection out of hand without following proper protocol to authenticate works of art.

There are well established and time

honored analytical techniques for verifying a work of art. These methods rely on visual, scientific, historical and visceral or intuitive analyses. Ideally, such investigation is conducted by a team of specialists presenting an array of expertise. The team generally begins from an appropriate conservative position but remains reasoned, measured and unbiased. The process naturally begins with thorough examination—first hand, on site inspection, study, scrutiny and observation. This is followed by analysis and comparison: compositional elements and themes characteristic of the artist should be present; materials should be consistent with known and verified works by the artist; style should be consistent with known and verified works by the artist and from the same period; the artwork must be free of anachronisms and anomalies; media,

methods and tools must be appropriate to the time the work was created; the work may be compared to art by other artists, related by style or region, during the same period or art movement. Of course the provenance must be established and confirmed (or refuted) and the catalogue raisonné, if one exists, is consulted.

There exists an arsenal of objective (or at least less subjective) methods of forensic authentication—non-destructive scientific tests that can assist in establishing authenticity of an artwork. These include pigment analysis, microscopic investigation, digital wavelet decomposition, x-ray fluorescence, infrared photography, wood lamp test, dendochronology, thermoluminescence, each with applications to specific purpose and media. And new innovations and

technologies are continually developing. Drawings can be especially difficult to authenticate. Seldom is there a catalogue raisonné or reference volume containing all of an artist's drawings or works on paper. Therefore, the expert must rely largely on study of line quality, pigment analysis and paper type for authentication. For signatures, inscriptions or written texts, graphology and analysis of content of manuscript, media and support as well as study of the "anatomy," the style and mannerisms.

Just as a reputable doctor would not offer a diagnosis without first examining the patient and discussing symptoms or a competent judge would not adjudicate a case without first hearing the facts and both sides of the argument, a reasoned art historian should not attest to the validity of a work of art without appropriate investigation. Though none

of these tests is entirely conclusive independently, in combination when conducted by reputable professionals, they contribute significantly to the verification of authenticity. Without them, we have nothing more than unsupported opinion.

The Noyola's have made the collection available to any scholars or researchers to conduct studies. Additionally they have adhered to protocol by engaging scientists to complete pigment analysis and graphological studies, They have documentation of provenance, and have enlisted Kahlo's colleagues and other experts to certify the collection. I would hope that their detractors would undertake similar studies before disqualifying the collection.

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