

## UCoA, UNIVERSAL CERTIFICATE of AUTHENTICITY

U-CoA.com is a single independent platform for the creation, inventory, standardization, storage, management and exchange of Universal Certificate of Authenticity (UCoA) for goods.

As an artist, I was asked to produce and issue certificates of authenticity for my artworks. I happened to produce them personally, but sometimes it was the case that a third party did it for me such as an assistant, gallery or art dealer. In this case I did not get a copy of the certificate. I noticed that many certificates were often different from one another with variations in format, details and history about the artwork, depending who created these certificates.

Some of these professionals have since closed or ceased their activity. If they still exist their archives are rarely accessible. The only way I have to check the authenticity of the certificates for my own works is to refer to my own archives (i.e. the list of my works sold, to whom, when, where etc.), then from this information I piece it together. Sometimes, I don't know the name of the collector or the first buyer.

I also collect art on a personal basis and have done so since I was a teenager. My first purchase was a poster of Dali, signed, that I bought on credit at the Roumanille bookstore in Avignon. The owner made me a certificate of authenticity (following my legitimate fears about it being a fake Dali signature :-)) and unfortunately with time and successive moves, I lost this fragile certificate. Today for sentimental reasons I am really sad to not have it.

Following a long tradition of artists collecting and dealing art, first by passion and then by necessity to survive, I have collected and sold over the years very different rare items such 1970's Japanese robots, old synthesizers, Eileen Gray and Corbusier furniture's, old watches, old drawings, contemporary art, old books... One could say that I am an 'omni-collector'.

If I mention these experiences, it is because I realized the vital importance of a certificate of authenticity, not only to authenticate the item, but also to authenticate its provenance and any other useful information which allows one to trace its history. This work of authenticity, provenance and certification is a complex puzzle. The traceability of a work, and the preservation over time of the validity of this information, is difficult to establish, yet absolutely essential. Not to mention that sometimes Certificates act as title deeds.

Most of the time the certificate is a thin A4 sheet of paper, that barely holds a photograph of the object. A second copy is very rarely archived by the person who produces the certificate. When this is the case however, the archives are not accessible to amateurs or collectors, making it very difficult to access or acquire another copy. Unfortunately, the certificates involved in this process are often lost or damaged. Those who produced them, or who have a copy of them often change functions, disappear, or simply want to remain anonymous.

There are also many cases where a certificate is not always issued.

For example, the two biggest auction houses in the world do not issue certificates of authenticity in their names, even if in the eyes of the law they must ensure the absolute authenticity of what they offer for sale. Some private art dealers then sell works of art that came from an auction house and therefore protect themselves through this link. In July 2019, a pair of Nike sneakers was sold for \$375,000 at Sotheby's in New York! In this case it seems normal that the buyer should require a certificate of authenticity of the same standard as someone who buys a Paul Gauguin artwork.

For contemporary galleries, artist, creators preparation and management of certificates is very time consuming and costly.

The luxury industry is confronted with the problem of counterfeit and seek solutions through traceability to validate the authenticity of its products. Up until now, the luxury brand industry and the art industry have started to try to find some solutions to certification, however these have been limited to their individual needs.

So far, no individual platform offers a single independent center for expert archiving, validation, detailing, production, storage and standardization of all certificates of authenticity for valuable items (works of art, cultural goods, luxury products or other collectibles).

U-Coa.com is single and simple platform who answers to this problems and beyond with its UCoA editor, freemarket, inventory system and more.

Mathieu Briand