

Bills take aim at fraudulent art sales

More than \$100 million worth of reproductions were sold in the United States last year.

Calling it a safeguard for patrons of the arts, state Sen. Jack Faxon D-Farmington Hills, praised his Senate colleagues for passing his legislative package that will protect consumers from fraudulent marketing and sales practices used by deceptive art dealers.

The Faxon legislation (Senate Bills 55 and 56, coupled with House Bill 4066), is aimed at the sale of "art multiples," which may be marketed as limited editions of an original work of art.

"With today's technology, the art market now has the ability to mass

produce copies of original art works," Faxon said. "Too often, the unwary or uninformed consumer has been duped into buying copies of reproductions sold as 'exclusive editions.'"

Faxon said the bills were introduced because art purchases have become a popular way for consumers to invest their money. More than \$100 million worth of reproductions were sold in the United States last year.

"The sale of art 'multiples' has even become a popular fund-raising technique for charitable organizations," Faxon said.

Specifically, the bills would require art merchants to provide information about each sale including clarification of the potential future value of the multiple. If it turns out that the written information supplied to that art purchaser is false, the buyer is then entitled to a refund for the price of the object.

However, the art merchant may disclaim this responsibility in the event there is an honest lack of knowledge of specific items of required information. These required items include:

- whether the multiple is properly attributed to the named artist;
- whether the multiple was signed by the artist after it was produced;
- whether the artist was de-

ceased at the time the master was made which produced the multiple;

- whether the purported number of multiples in a "limited edition" is the actual number;
- whether the multiple is a reproduction of a work formerly created by the artist in another medium;
- whether the artist is another medium;
- whether the artist approved in writing the "limited edition"; and
- whether there are other editions of the same or virtually the same image.

Such disclosures will have the beneficial effects of:

- alleviating confusion in the marketplace;
- preventing deceptive merchandising practices;
- providing a basis for consumer self-education in areas of moderately priced art that doesn't merit the hiring of expert opinion for evaluation; and
- protecting the public in transactions where abuse is not immediately apparent.

The Faxon legislation is modeled after a New York law. It puts into law the practices followed by most reputable art dealers.

clarification



Thomas Daniels
Farmington



Darnel Krause
Farmington Hills

The Rouge River cleanup in Farmington and Farmington Hills on Saturday, June 6, will run from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Call the respective city halls to volunteer: Farmington Hills, 473-9520, and Farmington, 473-7250.

Pictures of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Optimists Club's Officers of the Year, Farmington Hills officer Darnel Krause and Farmington officer Thomas Daniels, were reversed in Monday's Observer.

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