

True Copy

Posted on [December 8, 2019](#) by [The Chronicler](#)

A Must See film. No way around it if you have any interest in 20th century Masters. For decades I have followed the career of Geert Jan Jansen. Although he says he has more passports than pairs of pants, this is his final name, he says his real name, but really who knows. The Documentary premiered at the the world's largest Documentary Festival in Amsterdam known as IDFA. One of my favorite people has shown his films here. This film is beyond description. Which means, I can't tell you anything about it, except I can tell you about the man himself. When younger, he had a gallery in Amsterdam. When meeting him I asked him if his family also had the gallery, he said no, his father was an art collector. He never attended art school, all is self-taught, grounded in one defining incident. The rent for the gallery was due and he didn't have the money. He decided he could paint a Karel Appel, submit it for sale and use the money to continue his business. As he tells it: he never 'copied' the work of the known master, he made an 'additional' piece. This first 'additional' piece was submitted, subsequently sent off to Appel in NY for verification and was personally authenticated. Appel described when and where he painted it. Well, says, Geert Jan, I didn't think I'd do it again, but then I did. His story of how he did it, the amount of work he put into studying the master, the amount of time he spent absorbing the details of the subject. For reasons he doesn't tell, he really wanted to thumb his nose at the art world And did he! The total number of pieces of his works hanging in museums and private collections is still unknown. I would love to tell all the ins and outs but in fairness to the story find the film. At the completion of the film, he had a minute to chat and I was able to ask questions I had had for years. One was, could he duplicate the strokes of either a right or left handed painter? He can. He visits some of his works when he knows where they are. He has been told to stand back from the paintings by guards in the museum. Not to get to close. He is close because he is checking out how his aging of the painting is progressing. Little does the guard know that for three weeks the painting lay under his door mat in order to age the canvas. What and how he has done... I could sit still for hours just taking it all in. In the film he explains he signs the canvas first because the signature is important and if you have done a work and then foil the signature all is for naught. My abiding interest in all things that lead to pretensions: wine, jewelry, antiquities and art! were satiated watching this amazing story. He has a castle here in Holland, and one can make an appointment to visit. I'm there.

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