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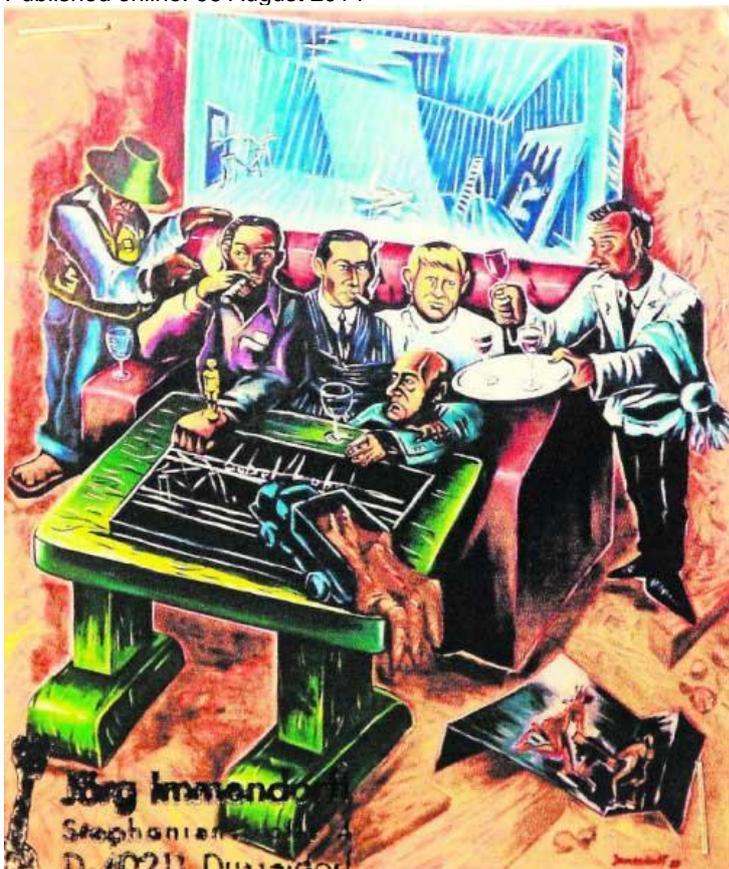
# THE ART NEWSPAPER

## German court spares contested work

A “doubtful” copy sold through Jörg Immendorff’s studio will not be destroyed

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The reproduction of Immendorff's *Ready-Made de l'Histoire dans Café de Flore*. Photo: A3512/Roland Wehrauch

A contested work by the late German artist Jörg Immendorff does not need to be destroyed, a court in Düsseldorf ruled on Tuesday. The piece, a reproduction of Immendorff's *Ready-Made de l'Histoire dans Café de Flore*, has been at the centre of a long-running legal dispute between the owner of the painting and Immendorff's widow, Oda Jaune.

In 2008, one year after Immendorff's death, Jaune discovered the piece in an auction catalogue. At her request, the work was withdrawn from auction due to concerns it was a fake or an unauthorised copy. Jaune then sought permission in the District Court of Düsseldorf to have the work destroyed, which it granted in 2012 after pronouncing the work a fake. But the owner of the work filed an appeal and the case went to the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf, which overruled the decision to destroy the work this week.

The authenticity of the work was "irrelevant", the court wrote in a statement, but was "seriously doubtful". Since the owner's brother had bought the work in 1999 directly from the artist's studio, with an authenticity certificate by the artist, "the dissemination of the work was lawful", the court says. Immendorff "had at least tolerated the direct sale of works in his studio by his employees. He thus gave the impression that he authorised their sale and thereby consented to them being considered 'his' works," the statement continues, "even if, in specific cases, the employee sold Immendorff works that were not legitimate."

The market for Immendorff's late works has been problematic. In 1998, the artist was diagnosed with a neurodegenerative disease that gradually made him unable to paint. He relied on his studio assistants to complete his works, but there are doubts about his actual level of involvement. Benedikt Bräutigam, Jaune's lawyer, was unavailable for comment.