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Duke's Auctioneers fined over Alfred Wallis fakes

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Image

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Image captionItems included a painted box, tins, tea chest and cigarette packets

A Dorset auction house has been ordered to pay more than £18,000 after advertising fake artworks it claimed were by Cornish artist Alfred Wallis.

Duke's Auctioneers of Dorchester admitted eight charges under unfair trading regulations.

The prosecution was brought by Dorset County Council's Trading Standards over fakes shown for sale in a brochure and on its website.

Items included a painted box, tins, tea chest and cigarette packets.

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The auction house was fined £6,300, plus costs of £11,805 and ordered to pay a £170 victim surcharge at Weymouth Magistrates Court.

Defence counsel Tim Bradbury said Duke's had been the victim, suffering the fraud and dishonesty of others, and it had since improved its policies.



Image copyrightDORSET COUNTY COUNCILImage captionWorks by the former fisherman can fetch tens of thousands of pounds

Dorset county councillor Deborah Coney said: "Our Trading Standards team acted promptly to intervene in this unusual case when alerted to these suspected fakes being put up for auction.

"Businesses applying claims and descriptions to items they are selling need to take reasonable steps to ensure they are true."

Works by the former fisherman, who took up painting as a hobby in his retirement, can fetch tens of thousands of pounds.

He died in 1942, and a number of his paintings can be seen at The Tate Britain and Tate St Ives.