

AUTHENTICATION IN ART

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Race is on to beat art forgery with DNA technology

Artists Mat Collishaw, Idris Khan and Gary Hume support new platform

by [MELANIE GERLIS](#) | 1 April 2016

A British company is the latest to launch a labelling system that uses synthetic DNA to help protect works by living artists. Mark Darbyshire, the London framer, and Steve Cooke, the software developer, have created Tagsmart Certify to help combat forgeries. While issues of authenticity dog the market for older works, Cooke says the dynamics of today's broader landscape—including online channels and emerging markets—heighten the need for immediate authenticity in contemporary art.

“Some artists don't want to get technical, but they may now just have to be,” he says. Artists who have already endorsed the product—which has 12 security features, including its DNA label—include Mat Collishaw, Idris Khan and Gary Hume, who are among Tagsmart's founding supporters.

This past October, the Global Center of Innovation for i2M Standards (based at the University at Albany in New York) announced advances in authentication standards and a third-party system with a new form of engineered DNA. Aris Title Insurance contributed \$2m to the Center's standards-based role.

Laurence Shindell, the chairman of Aris, says that he “applauds” Tagsmart's initiative, but that “the real need is for the means to assess which one or number of current and future solutions will meet necessary standards”.

