

# AUTHENTICATION IN ART

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# ARTVIATIC

## 21 Works by Modigliani Exhibited in Genoa Suspected of Being Fakes

by [Pauline Le Gall](#) | Jul 24, 2017 |



Last year we explained the complexity of certifying works by Amedeo Modigliani (see [Battle Over Authentication of Works by Modigliani](#)). The Italian painter, who died at the age of 35, is a favourite with forgers, who know that his paintings are sold at record prices and that their documentation is often incomplete. The artist was in the habit of offering paintings and drawings without keeping any record of the transaction, which today makes certification of his works a difficult business.

A new argument over forgeries by this artist has just erupted in Genoa in Italy, a few days before the end of a retrospective exhibition of his works at the Palazzo Ducale, which attracted more than 100,000 visitors. The foundation that organised the exhibition decided to close it earlier than planned and the city's authorities have confiscated 21 paintings that are suspected of being forgeries.

## “Even a child could see that these were crude fakes”

Since May, the Modigliani specialist Carlo Pepi has been reported in the Italian press that he suspected that the retrospective included no fewer than 13 fakes. “Even a child could see that these were crude fakes”, he told the [Telegraph](#). Pepi is very familiar with this subject as it was he who brought the Livorno hoax to light in 1984. At the time, the city council ordered the waters of Genoa's port to be thoroughly searched for sculptures by Modigliani. There was a story that the painter had thrown them in the water following derogatory remarks about them by his friends. When the search came to nothing, students sculpted some heads and placed them in the water, upon which everyone claimed that these were the famous works by the Italian painter. Everyone, that is, except Pepi, who realised that the affair was a hoax.

Another Modigliani specialist has expressed doubts about the exhibition in Genoa. Marc Restellini, who has worked for years on the painter's catalogue raisonné, also reacted to the affair, in particular on the Institut Restellini's Facebook page. There, he posted documents by Marc Ottavi, an expert on Kisling, which claimed that the works presented in the exhibition and attributed to Moïse Kisling were also fakes. “The exhibition is questionable”, he wrote in May on Facebook, “and I had to point this out to the Italian authorities as soon as I saw its contents. Our institute is familiar with these works and as they are fakes, we have available all the documentation and scientific evidence to confirm it”.

In a statement, the Palazzo Ducale said it was cooperating with the authorities. We wait to hear just how many of the works in the exhibition will be officially confirmed as forgeries.