Setting Standards for Technical Authenticity Research!

What is a standard?
A standard is a voluntary agreement between parties about a product, service or process. Standards are not laws, but best practices. Everyone can - voluntarily - benefit from it. In business agreements standards have an important function. They provide market parties clarity and trust in products, services or organizations and challenge the society to innovate.

European and International Standards
Standardization is a process to realize a standard. This process is open, transparent and focused on consensus and takes place in standard committees which consist of representatives of all involved parties. This doesn’t occur only on national level but also on international level.

About NEN
The Royal Dutch Standardization Institute. We start by investigating to what extent the development of a standard is crucial for the parties concerned, and if there is a common interest. We then invite all interested parties to participate. A broad base of support is a prerequisite. Agreements are based on consensus and are recorded in a document. This is usually a standard.

Urgency
- The lack of standardization on the technical examination of paintings has led to an increasing amount of problems and confusion.
- For example the recent Knoedler case, where the court had no way of impartially evaluate the technical experts that contradicted and attacked each other to protect their own interests.
- This lack of standardization has offered the opportunity to forgers to use technical reports to their advantage.

Certification schemes, labels and registers
NEN enables stakeholders to meet up and ensures that they reach consensus on the subject. NEN is an intermediary between standardization and certification. NEN has certification schemes, labels and registers on various topics.

Stakeholders
The development of standardization is crucial for:
- Laboratories for authenticity research
- Legal institutes such as courts and law firms
- Auction houses and galleries
- Collectors and consumers
- Universities and other educational institutions

Participate and benefit
An interested party can be a producer, consumer, service provider, user, but also the government or a consumers’ or investigative organization. We are not always asked to develop a standard; the government regularly requests us to investigate whether standardization is possible within a certain sector or in a certain field. NEN will subsequently investigate and, depending on the outcome, start a project. All interested parties can participate.

Vision
- Develop international standards for technical reports and technical research on the authenticity of paintings.
- Enable stakeholders to adopt these standards in their practices.
- Build a registry of certified laboratories, who comply with the standards for authenticity research.
- Ultimately leading to a standardised field for technical research on the authenticity of paintings.

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NEN sets the standard