

# Counterfeits and conservation – responsibility or liability?

Ute Larsen

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*Best practice for establishing the authenticity of an artwork should be a collaborative process, which results from the expertise of art historians and the technical examinations carried out by conservators. This is demonstrated by a number of forgeries that have appeared on the New Zealand art market. Four pencil drawings were brought to the conservation laboratory at the Auckland Art Gallery for assessment to help with their authentication. This paper describes the investigative path for establishing whether these were original drawings by one of New Zealand's best-known portraitists, Charles F Goldie (1870–1947). The results of the examination and the cooperation with other professionals will be addressed.*

*The author hopes to initiate a discussion regarding the role of conservators in public institutions and their potential responsibility to identify fakes and consequently prevent their circulation.*

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## Author biography

Originally from Germany, **Ute Larsen** completed her conservation studies at the University of Canberra, Australia, graduating in 1997 with a degree in Applied Science. In 1998 she moved to New Zealand to take up the position of Paper Conservator at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

Ute's research interests into the materials and techniques of Frances Hodgkins resulted in an article published in the *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*. Ute was co-curator and co-author of the exhibition and publication *Frances Hodgkins: Leitmotif*. More recently, she focused on the extensive AAG collection of watercolours by Henry Fuseli and co-authored the paper *Henry Fuseli: necessity or frugality? The artist's selection of drawing papers*, also published in the *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*.

## Notes