

Caroline Ashleigh Associates



Caroline Ashleigh, AAA, USPAP
Certified Member
Appraisers Association of America

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About Caroline Ashleigh, AAA

Caroline Ashleigh is an internationally known appraiser of Antiques Roadshow since 1995. She is the founder of Caroline Ashleigh Associates, a full-service appraisal and auction services throughout the United States, dedicated solely to the sale of fine art and antiques.

She is a graduate of New York University in Appraisal and is a certified member of the Appraisers Association of America. She is a committee and Midwest regional representative of the Appraisers Association of America. She has appraised to several of the major auction houses including Sotheby's and important celebrity collections such as Debbie Reynolds.

Her career began in the museum world as a member of the American Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Arts in Detroit, Michigan and Cranbrook Academy of Art. Her scope of work includes a 75 million dollar appraisal completed in 2007. She serves as art appraiser and

Ms. Ashleigh lectures extensively to public forums and seminars. She is a contributing author to the *Forbes* magazine, *Art and Antiques Magazine*, *Art Insider Magazine*, *Art and Antiques Magazine*, *Art Insider Magazine*, *Chubb Collectors*. She has been the subject of *Forbes* magazine, *Antiques Trader Magazine*, and served as "Editorial" on the subject of fakes and frauds.

She has been the subject of biographical records and is a field of expertise for the past ten years.

BERNARD EWELL ART APPRAISALS, LLC
THE INTERNATIONAL SALVADOR DALI EXPERT

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*If a person has integrity, nothing else matters.
If a person does not have integrity, nothing else matters.*

- ### SALVADOR DALI - OUR SPECIAL FOCUS
- What is Artful Dodgers?
 - Who or what is this Salvador Dali
 - What makes you the expert?
 - Why are there so many fake Dalis?
 - What if my Dali is a fake?
 - The Dali Controversy

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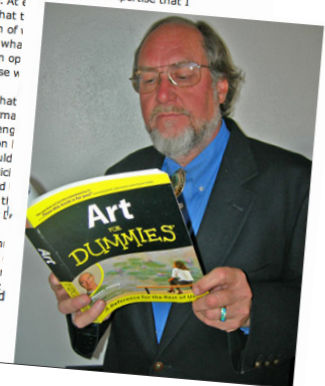
What makes you the expert?



By 1987, I was in a position to accept the first of three earliest art fraud court cases. I was then hired as a consultant, working for the Federal Trade Commission, FBI, Justice Service, military Offices of Special Investigation, and various District Attorneys. I estimate about 65% of my time was spent

In 1980, I (Bernard Ewell) was asked to appraise two prints attributed to Salvador Dali and my examination showed that they were represented as being the "original lithographs" that the gallery that had sold them and was referred to the publisher who referred me to his attorney. This man told me to "just accept the paperwork and not cause any trouble". I was hooked and I contacted every potential source of expertise that I could. At the time, I told that "a can of worms" and I knew who was an op one else w

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THE GREAT PARK WEST GALLERY \$40 MILLION DONATION, PART II

HOW "INDEPENDENT" ARE THE PARK WEST GALLERY APPRAISERS?

by Theresa Franks for
Fine Art Registry®

This is a follow up to Part I of this series in which we examined Park West Gallery's record of art donations (and presumably tax write-offs) to universities and so on (read Part I [here](#)).

Park West Galleries, Inc. also operates in Michigan under the assumed name Circle Fine Art Liquidators. Circle Fine Art (once a publicly traded company) went bankrupt and Park West is believed to have bought its stock in a reported May 2, 1996 asset sale. We now have evidence that Caroline Ashleigh appraised a good majority of the Circle Fine Art inventory which Park West Gallery acquired. What we have uncovered here calls into serious question the ethics of the appraiser and not surprisingly, most certainly Park West Gallery's business practices, as you will see below.

A Bit of Backstory

Since Fine Art Registry® has been investigating art auctions aboard cruise ships (it will be two years in April), Park West Gallery has always maintained that it has sought out "independent" appraisers to value its inventory. Just so we are perfectly clear, the term "Independent" is defined by Merriam-Webster as:

1. Not subject to control by others: self-governing.
2. Not affiliated with a larger controlling unit.
3. Not contingent.

Prior to the publication of the New York Times article by Jori Finkel exposing Park West Gallery's deceptive trade practices, whereby victims would demand a refund from Park West, and its customer service representatives (Laura Maki, Mary Gordon and Mary Courson) would regularly send emails to victims requiring them to jump through hoops in order to "prove up" their demand for a refund. In other words, as ridiculous as it sounds, Park West's customers were required to prove that the artwork they bought from Park West Gallery was not worth what Park West Gallery claimed on its appraisals. Now we always thought it should be the other way around – that the onus should be on the seller to prove the authenticity and value of the items sold. Fine Art Registry also believes that it is critically important that one first obtain verifiable provenance and authentication regarding works of art, especially those of deceased masters, prior to seeking out appraisals. For if the work of art is found to be inauthentic, then there would be little need for appraisal as to value.

Park West would insist that the victims – their own customers – obtain an "independent" appraisal, but not from just any independent appraiser. Park West Gallery was quite specific as to whom it would accept appraisals from. In fact, Park West Gallery insisted that the victims of their deceptive trade practices seek out Bernard Ewell and Caroline Ashleigh for an evaluation and appraisal for which a significant fee was charged – a minimum of \$250.00 for each appraisal – which would no doubt enrich Ewell and Ashleigh and at the same time would serve to legitimize Park West Gallery's "closed market" pricing. In other words, the Park West recommended appraisers were expected to agree with Park West Gallery's auction retail prices or whatever price Park West Gallery would assign to the work of art being contested. That was presumably a condition imposed by Park West if the appraisers wanted to continue to be retained by Park West (which they both have been.)

Here is an example of one of the many emails we have seen from Park West Gallery to FAR® members who demanded refunds for artwork and in this case, specifically regarding Park West Gallery Dali and Picasso prints:

"From: "Laura Maki" <LMaki@parkwestgallery.com>

Dear _____,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I believe you will enjoy Bernard Ewell's information and understand why we used him to authenticate our Dali collection.

Attached are the links to independent appraisers. As you will see by their credentials they are more than qualified. I would be happy to have any one of them provide an independent appraisal, at Park West expense for your Dali and Picasso work.

http://www.bernardewell.com/salvador_dali/what_makes_you_the_expert.html

Bernard Ewell's contact # 505-954-4113

<http://www.appraiseyourart.com/caa.php>

Caroline's curriculum vitae is also attached

Caroline Ashleigh's contact # 248-613-4056

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you and have a good day!

Kind regards,

Laura Maki

Park West Gallery

Client Services Supervisor

Phone # 1-877-440-0630 Ext. 1248

E-mail: LMaki@parkwestgallery.com

Bernard Ewell is not the subject of this particular writing, but it is important to mention that Ewell has maintained that he is independent and objective and has never valued any Park West Gallery artwork that he personally authenticated. Notwithstanding the fact that Bernard Ewell is not an acknowledged Dali authenticator within any recognized market setting such as Christie's and Sotheby's, we have seen evidence to the contrary. He has indeed offered written opinions as to value of the Dali prints exclusively offered by Park West Gallery and for which he provided authentication.

It is clear also that Bernard Ewell and Caroline Ashleigh were at least acquainted in 2003, as evidenced by a sworn declaration (or affidavit) signed by Caroline Ashleigh, dated 12 March 2005, and lodged with the Southern Indiana District Court where Ashleigh was sued for civil fraud, wrongful conversion of Indian artifacts, and breach of fiduciary duties among other things. (See [Gwen Yeaman, v. Caroline Ashleigh Caroline Ashleigh Associates, Inc. Case No. 1:05-cv-0406-LJM-WTL](#)). In Caroline Ashleigh's sworn testimony, she states at paragraphs 3 and 4, the following:

"I am an independent general appraiser.

I first met Gwen Yeaman ('Yeaman') in or about the Spring of 2003 through a meeting arranged by Bernard Ewell of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who wanted Yeaman to meet me. The meeting took place in Oakland County, Michigan."

(Read the Caroline Ashleigh Affidavit [here](#).)

Now is all this just a coincidence? Fine Art Registry doesn't think so. Let's recap:

1. Both Bernard Ewell and Caroline Ashleigh are appraisers.
2. Both work or have worked extensively for Park West Gallery.

3. Park West Gallery recommends both appraisers to its customers with the assurance that both appraisers are independent from Park West Gallery.

4. Bernard Ewell resides and has offices in Santa Fe, New Mexico, more than 1500 miles from Oakland County, Michigan.

5. Bernard Ewell arranges a meeting in 2003 with Caroline Ashleigh in Oakland, Michigan, just where Park West Gallery happens to be located.

It is questionable at best to say that either appraiser, Bernard Ewell or Caroline Ashleigh, is independent of Park West Gallery. The evidence shows that they are more dependent on Park West Gallery for their bread and butter than not. But let's explore a bit more.

Caroline Ashleigh is a "Rug and Textile" appraiser. She is not an appraiser with any expertise that we could find in artwork. This is abundantly evident from a reading of her web site. And like Ewell, she is far from being "independent" as you will soon see. It appears that Caroline Ashleigh was paid to legitimize the "retail pricing" of Park West Gallery artwork. To our knowledge, Ashleigh has zero experience with the valuation of Dali or Picasso works of art.

Did Ashleigh act as an independent appraiser as cited repeatedly by Park West Gallery? Not by a long shot. Not according to the evidence we have uncovered and continue to uncover on a daily basis. We have confirmed with former Park West Gallery insiders that Caroline Ashleigh has been paid a colossal sum of money to prepare "Appraisal Templates" on behalf of Park West Gallery since 2007. This type of practice is often characterized in the industry as an "appraisal mill". Ashleigh is hardly more independent than Al Scaglione, who owns the Park West Gallery inventory and who applies his signature to Park West Gallery Certificates of Authenticity and Appraisals.

Caroline Ashleigh was on retainer with Park West Gallery for the appraisal and consignment of works of

art exclusive to Park West Gallery. That's right, when the Park West Gallery victims were refused refunds; they were referred to Caroline Ashleigh to help them sell their Park West Gallery art they sought refunds for on "consignment". Yet Ashleigh's experience is limited to appraisals exclusively related to rugs and textiles and some antiques, such as cowboy hats, vintage western clothing, a paper dress, and a tin carousel. For the most part, her expertise is limited to the valuation of rugs and textiles. It is then a strained stretch for her to have appraised, as reported on her web site, a \$75 million dollar institutional art collection (and in other reports she claims \$90 million). Hmmm? We wonder whom she performed this gargantuan appraisal for. See Ashleigh's "About Us" link which states in relevant part:

"Her career began in the museum world as a member of the educational department staff of the Detroit Institute of Arts in Detroit, Michigan and Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Currently, Ms. Ashleigh's scope of work includes a 75 million dollar art appraisal of an institutional collection, which she completed in 2007. She serves as art appraiser and consultant to the world's largest art gallery."

There is only one art dealer that Fine Art Registry knows of that is arrogant enough to lay claim to being the "world's largest art gallery" and that's Park West Gallery. So how do we know that Caroline Ashleigh was contracted by Park West Gallery? What follows is an email that Ashleigh sent to Morry Shapiro in August of 2007, months after Fine Art Registry began its investigation of cruise ship art auctions. Because Park West Gallery and its lawyers actively continue to threaten legal action against everyone and anyone (including world recognized experts, and the victims of the gallery's own deceptive trade practices) that might dare speak out or share information with FAR, we will not disclose the identity of our sources of the information we received concerning Ashleigh here, but rest assured, our information is accurate and reliable. FAR did reach out to Caroline Ashleigh

for comment regarding her appraisals for Park West Gallery, but we have yet to hear back from her. We assume she has no comment on the subject:

"Hello Morry,

I have been giving much consideration to my participation in appraising works of art by living artists for Park West Gallery since our last meeting, and I am excited to share with you some of my revised thoughts going forward. I am interested in setting up another meeting with Albert and you, as soon as possible, to discuss your thoughts and come to an agreement so that we can launch this new endeavor.

It is apparent to me that Park West Gallery can supply me with steady work to do the volume of sales that it enjoys. This volume would allow me to render my services at a discounted rate. At our next meeting, perhaps we could discuss how many pieces per month you would like my firm to complete, at what price per piece, and how payment would be rendered.

The Circle Fine art appraisal for retail value is complete. I have two bound reports - one for MRMAM and one for Claymore which I can drop off to you on Friday, August 10 and, at the same time, pick up the check for the third and final payment.

Looking forward to seeing you soon,
Caroline"

And then another email sent by Caroline in August of 2008, which reads:

"Good morning Morry,

It is with eager anticipation that I write to you with regard to the progress of our collaborative

appraisal project. To date, I have provided a working template to be utilized for this project, and now await a mutually agreed upon schedule going forward for its implementation. Because of the volume of work inherent in this project, the majority of my time will be devoted to it. Therefore, with consideration of my business operations and budgetary requirements with regard to necessary cash flow, I am available at the earliest opportunity to discuss the eminent timetable of this project and details of the contract with you as opposed to devoting and committing my time to other jobs at this point in the calendar year. Please advise me what to do with regard to your timetable for the project as you are my first priority, but I have to continue making a living as I have financial obligations to meet.

All best,
Caroline”

We believe the above-quoted emails to Morris Shapiro prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Caroline Ashleigh is far from independent and far from impartial when it comes to Park West Gallery inventory. The correspondence speaks for itself.

Perhaps Caroline Ashleigh needs a refresher course in what constitutes an “independent” appraisal. The IRS says in relevant part that it must be an individual who:

- has earned an appraisal designation from a recognized professional appraiser organization or has otherwise met minimum education experience requirements prescribed by Treasury regulations; regularly performs appraisals for which the individual receives compensation;

- can demonstrate verifiable education and EXPERIENCE in valuing THE TYPE OF PROPERTY SUBJECT TO APPRAISAL*;

- IS COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT OF THE DONOR.

[*Note: It is absolutely critical to choose the appropriate appraiser for the type of objects being evaluated. Revenue Procedure 66-49; CFR 601.602, specifically addresses an appraisal by a qualified person and requires that the appraiser submit a summary of the appraiser’s qualifications. The credence or weight given to an appraisal by the IRS depends on the qualifications of the appraiser’s competence and knowledge of the property he/she is appraising. When choosing an appraiser for an art collection, an inquiry should be made in order to establish whether or not the appraiser is familiar with the market and whether he/she has dealt with the object’s subject matter. An appraiser that is an authority on rugs and textiles would not be considered to be the appropriate person to appraise works of visual art.]

If indeed Caroline Ashleigh did appraise any part of any artwork that was donated by Park West Gallery (see [Part 1 of this series](#)), then an official investigation by authorities should be commenced. Moreover, and perhaps even more egregious, given the email correspondence above, it is crystal clear to Fine Art Registry that Caroline Ashleigh was never “independent” or objective which means Park West Gallery has a lot to answer for, and to the extent that Ashleigh accepted appraisal fees from victims, those fees should be refunded without question.

More on this subject in the future as we discover additional facts and evidence.



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