

# Recreations: *THREAT* or *MENACE?!?!*

## Introduction

I've been hearing about recreations ever since I started collecting original comic art. I never gave the subject much serious thought, and my gut reaction has always been "who cares?" After all, this is a hobby that focuses on one-of-a-kind items. It's not like stamps or coins. There are no "rare" or "limited edition" items. If you own the cover to Captain Misfit # 13, then nobody else does. It's a comforting thought, and for me, one of the thrilling aspects of the hobby.

But wait a minute. What if someone were to painstakingly (or, not so painstakingly) reproduce your beloved piece of art? Wouldn't that hurt the value? After all, there would be an additional piece of "original" art floating around out there in the world just like yours! Now your item is no longer unique! That's going to hurt the value. True? Let's explore the possibilities.

## Recreations by Amateurs

I've seen some recreations by amateurs out there, and most of them are pretty bad. I can't imagine that anyone would feel threatened when seeing one of these. Most look like they've been done by 14-year-old kids with some free time. Not to get too tangential, but while I've enjoyed Bill Cox's [www.comicartfans.com](http://www.comicartfans.com) website, I've always been a little bothered by all the amateur artists on it. Do they really belong there? I mean, none of these guys has ever drawn professional comics, and having to sift through some of those amateur

galleries can be pretty painful at times. Not to mention tedious when you're trying to look at the "real" art! Ah well, I guess the future comic art geniuses have to start somewhere. At least Bill's been kind enough to give us a warning –



I have actually seen some pretty good amateur recreations. One person that immediately springs to mind is John Papandrea. You can check out his gallery on the [comicartfans.com](http://comicartfans.com) website. A couple of notable recreations are his Uncanny X-Men 140, page 5 and the splash page from Uncanny X-Men 123 featuring Spiderman (both originals by Byrne/Austin). I'd wager that the average viewer would be fooled into thinking they were looking at originals when seeing these scans. John does a pretty good job!

## Recreations by Professionals

I get a little tinge of sadness sometimes when I think of the former professional artists, some of whom were HUGE talents in their day, trying to subsidize their living by offering to do recreations. I don't know why it bothers me. Maybe it's because I think these guys who have given so much to the industry over the years, deserve to have a good retirement, or maybe it's because I picture desperate has-beens who really need the money to support themselves because they didn't choose a "real" career. Maybe I'm wrong in thinking that (I sure hope I am). Maybe they're just continuing

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to do what they love. Whatever the reasons may be, the variety in level of quality can vary from the embarrassing to the sublime.

### Recreations by Original Artists

Ideally, for those who are actually interested in obtaining a recreation, one would want the artist who worked on the "original" in question. There are many current and former professional artists who advertise on various websites to do recreations and commissions. One professional who I think does a pretty nice job on recreations is Joe Rubinstein. His Captain America 254 cover recreation (original by Byrne/Rubinstein), is currently in Michael Lovitz's gallery on the comicartfans.com website (the scan isn't too great, but I've seen a better one and it's pretty nice). Another beauty by Joe is his recreation of the cover of Captain America 249 (also by Byrne/Rubinstein). That piece currently resides in the gallery of THE COMICART2003 (whoever that is) on the comicartfans.com website.

Apparently, to collectors of this stuff, recreations done by artists who had a hand in creating the original piece can fetch a pretty penny. A quick check with Heritage shows that a recreation of Detective Comics 136 by Dick Sprang fetched a whopping \$8,050 in March of 2002. L.B. Cole's recreation of his Blue Bolt # 105 cover also garnered \$8050 at Heritage in August of 2004. Will Gabri-El ([www.comicartpage.net](http://www.comicartpage.net)) is currently offering for sale a recreation of the cover of Fantastic Four 50 by none other than Jack

Kirby. The piece is in pencil only and has a price tag of \$6,250. Not bad for "forgeries"! Which brings us to...

### Recreations as Forgeries

I've never seen a forgery in the short 5 or so years that I've been collecting. At least not in person anyway. My memory isn't so good, but I believe there was a Silver Age Green Lantern page on ebay a year or two ago that someone on the Comicart-L list claimed was a fake (I want to say Dan Herman). Does anyone recall that? It looked like a typical piece of Silver Age DC art in the scans, but it's difficult to tell when looking at a small image in an ebay auction.

I do recall a relatively new collector to the hobby posting to the Comicart-L that thought it might be a nice idea to have a system in place for original comic art similar to the one CGC has for comic books!! This fellow even suggested that we slab the originals!! Not surprisingly, this idea did not meet with much enthusiasm. As a matter of fact, this guy was practically driven from the list as a heretic. After all, if you need a body of people to tell you whether your art is real, then you probably shouldn't be collecting original art. As an aside, this same collector complained that Heritage was hiding the bid amounts in auctions, which troubled this person because, apparently, he was basing his maximum bid on what everyone else was bidding! I got the impression that this guy was a speculator who was trying to make the transition

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from collecting comics, into original art because he heard it was a good investment. Unfortunately, he did beat me out at Heritage on a pretty nice Curt Swan World's Finest page from 1954 that featured Superman, Batman, and Robin! Man was this guy making enemies!

### Recreations in a Public Forum

As I stated in my introduction, I never gave recreations much thought. That is until people starting

recreating pieces that I owned!! Suddenly, I had strong feelings about the subject! (sort of). One day, while perusing the comicartfans.com site (I swear I don't work for the guy), I noticed a recreation of a single panel from a piece of art that I owned. It was a Jonni Future panel from a page penciled by Art Adams and inked by Kevin Knowlan (I reproduced this page in my "Still Going Strong" article on Adams). Below are the two pieces for comparison.



Recreation by Leanne Buckley



Original by Art Adams and Kevin Knowlan

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Personally, I prefer the original, but as my Uncle Frank would say; that's neither here nor there. I was really steamed when I saw the piece in this person's gallery. Not because my original had been compromised in some way, but because the person didn't have the decency to check with me to see if I minded. I would think that if someone were posting their art in the same public forum as me, it would have crossed their mind to check with me before having my art recreated! I have to say; I was a bit surprised by the whole thing. Knowing how touchy some people

can be when it comes to recreations, I would be afraid to get one of someone else's art even if I were just going to hang it on my bedroom wall. To top it off, I found another recreation a few month's later of a John Byrne Fantastic Four splash that I own. Once again, it was by another comicartfans.com member who had gotten the scan of my art from the very same site, and now had the nerve to post it in their gallery. I got really annoyed (again), and posted the following comment on the piece:

### COMMENTS:

» ADD A COMMENT

*Not as good as the original - which is in my gallery. In the future, you might want to ask permission before you have someone's art re-created. Especially when they are hosting their art in the same public forum as you.*

**Tony Marine** 8/26/2005

Never heard from the guy. Both of my recreations (I guess they're "their" recreations) are still on the comicartfans.com website (see links below). I had originally insisted that the owner of the Jonni piece remove it from his gallery. He complied but told me he was completely surprised by the fact that I minded in the first place. I ended up selling the piece, and shortly thereafter, he began displaying it again.

Gallery of THE COMICART2003:

<http://www.comicartfans.com/GalleryPiece.asp?Piece=45989&GSub=6273>

Gallery of George Tanner:

<http://www.comicartfans.com/GalleryPiece.asp?Page=1&Order=Date&Piece=50662&GSub=538&GCat=0&UCat=0>

### Bottom Line

The bottom line for me is – I really don't care about recreations. In my mind the one-of-kind- nature of comic art originals is unaffected by these copies. There is still only one original, and that's what people really want. I think the primary reason for people to even commission recreations in the first place is that the original is so highly coveted and valued, that they know they can never obtain it. A recreation is "the next best thing", but can never come close to the value of the original.

There is one small caveat to my argument however. I know some collectors will "stash" away their originals fearing that familiarity will hurt the value of the piece. If you

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have a piece of art prominently on display 24/7, people get accustomed to seeing it. If you have it in hiding for 15 years, and all of a sudden it comes on the market, the value may actually be higher since it hasn't been "around the block" so to speak. If someone were to have a recreation posted for any length of time, it could potentially hurt the value of the original by making it too familiar to potential customers. This was one of my reasons for not wanting "my" art (even though they were only recreations) posted

without my consent. I like to decide what pieces I will display publicly, and how long I will display them. I had a similar problem with the [www.comicartcommunity.com](http://www.comicartcommunity.com) website. I'm not sure who is uploading all the images on that site, but it seems they put up every image they can find on the web in the various artist galleries. They would even scope out ebay and make sure they snagged any pieces of art that were on the market. I had to request, on several occasions, that my art be removed from the site.

### **Mailing Comments:**

The first issue of the CFA-APA I had the pleasure of reading was #61 devoted to the Fleagle Gang. I didn't officially join however, until issue 62. One thing I always enjoy reading in each issue is the different mailing comments. I've meant to add some myself with each of my submissions, but typically, I'm rushing to simply complete my article. With this submission, I forced myself to take a little extra time and post some of my comments. If I didn't mention your name, my apologies – I can't remember everything I've read!!

**Roger Hill (Issue 61):** It was mixed bag of emotions for me reading your "Dracula's Greatest Hits" article about finding that great Jack Davis record album art. Jack and Woody are probably my favorite 2 EC artists, and while I was really happy to read how you lucked into those pieces, part of me was saying "Why can't stuff like that happen to me!?!".

**Dave Newton (Issue 61):** Though I know nothing about movie poster art and don't collect the stuff, I was intrigued by your great article on Reynold Brown (sadly, I don't own a copy of issue 60, so I've only read Part II). The many posters you reproduced were a real treat – would have been spectacular in color!

**Enrico Salvini (Issue 61):** Enjoyed hearing how you almost got "busted" for buying your "Holy Grail" on the side of the road! Very entertaining.

**Ken Danker: (Issue 63):** I had a blast reading all your "chase" stories. The Donnelly one was especially funny (though probably not to you at the time). All's well that ends well...

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**David Applegate (Issue 64):** Really enjoyed your Byrne article in the “Still Going Strong Issue”. I avoided writing about him because I knew you’d do a great job (and figured Gary Land would be writing about him also). My one complaint – not enough FF art!! ☺

**Bruce D. Macintosh (Issue 64):** Great interview with Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez. My first real exposure to comics was DC in the 70’s. Garcia-Lopez was always one of my favorite pencilers and produced a lot of great covers back then. I may yet do an article about him myself!

**Stephen Stein (Issue 64):** I knew you’d be a perfect fit for the APA, and your article “In Search of Squ Tront!” was proof of my good assessment!

**John Coates (Issue 64):** Enjoyed seeing all the free art you were able to scrounge up on those postcards! What a great idea. I had fun reading through all your descriptions.

**Joseph Melchior (Issue 64):** Always enjoy seeing more Bolland – I can’t get enough of the stuff!! Nice job!

**Bill Leach (Issue 64):** Great piece you did on “Jack and Jack”. I really enjoyed seeing all the Davis art you reproduced. Of course I never get tired of looking at Kamen’s women either! P.S. You sure look young in that photo! ;)

**Ray Cuthbert (Issue 65):** Ray, I really enjoyed your simple, and sincere ode to Eisner in this issue. Plus, you reproduced some great pieces!

**Joe Latino (Issue 65):** Your article about visiting the Breman with the gang made me want to be there with you all. I managed to pick up one of the catalogs from the show, but I’m guessing it wasn’t the same as seeing it in person.

**Doug Ellis (Issue 66):** You reproduced some great art in this issue – always nice to see some color in the APA! The Finlay illustration you picked up is absolutely stunning. Congrats!!