

Paul Cossu

Partner



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Paul Cossu is a partner in Pryor Cashman’s Art Law Group, where he handles transactional and dispute matters for galleries, auction houses, institutions, artists, advisors, collectors, and other members of the global arts community.

Paul’s clientele encapsulates the entire “art world” ecosystem. From major auction houses and museums, to up-and-coming artists and galleries, and everything in between, Paul has helped his clients balance their legal needs with the commercial practicalities of the art market.

Paul’s reputation as one of the top art lawyers is built on his ability to navigate the complexities of the art world, and his success in securing favorable outcomes for his clients. As Chambers 2025 commentators noted, “Paul really understands the idiosyncrasies of the art world. He does not just understand the law, he really understands our ecosystem” and “[Paul] also has the intangibles of understanding people and navigating situations. Paul can read the other side and adapt accordingly.”

TRANSACTION EXPERTISE

Paul’s transactional work is extensive and includes counseling galleries, institutions, artists, advisors, and collectors on day-to-day matters as well as drafting and negotiating time-sensitive agreements (including, but not limited to, agreements for the purchase, consignment, loan, commission, and/or securitization of artworks). Auction consignments are a significant component of Paul’s transactional practice, and he has handled multiple \$100+ million deals with the major auction houses (both for public auction and private sale).

Paul provides guidance to clients on all aspects of their legal and business matters, helping steer them through potential pitfalls and taking advantage of Pryor Cashman’s wide range of legal resources to ensure that matters that clients may not have been aware of are properly addressed.

DISPUTE AND LITIGATION PRACTICE

Paul provides counsel to clients on their most important legal and business disputes. He acts as outside counsel for clients on art-related disputes, including cases involving WWII restitution, inauthenticity, and ownership claims. Paul has counseled clients through business separations, fiduciary duty disputes, and succession planning.

His litigation work includes a wide range of art-related cases in state and federal courts, including representing prominent collectors in claims against the Knoedler art gallery that sold forgeries for millions of dollars, good faith owners in actions defending against title claims (both in the traditional civil litigation and forfeiture contexts), purchasers in claims for breach of contract and violation of the New York’s Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, and artists in high-profile copyright infringement cases (both bringing and defending against claims). Paul has also

successfully litigated several cases that have helped clarify and redefine the “entrustment doctrine” which applies when an artwork is consigned or otherwise delivered to an art merchant (*Overton v. Art Finance Partners LLC*; *Galin v. Hamada*).

Paul was previously a named partner at a leading boutique art law firm in New York and worked at Pryor Cashman from 2019 to 2020 before rejoining the firm in 2023.

Services

- Art
- Litigation

Education

- Brooklyn Law School (J.D., *cum laude*, 2011)
- McGill University (B.A., 2006)

Recognition

- Ranked in Art and Cultural Property Law, *Chambers and Partners High Net Worth Guide* (2020-25)
- Brooklyn Law School, Art Law Association’s Distinguished Alumnus of the Year (2017)

Community

- Board Member, Printed Matter
- Advisory Council, Swiss Institute
- Brooklyn Law School, Adjunct Professor of Art Law
- Christie’s Education, Art Law Faculty Member (2018-2019)

Admissions

- New York
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
- U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York

Professional Affiliations

- Professional Advisors to the International Art Market (PAIAM), Board Member, New York Chapter (2021-present)
- Former Secretary, Art Law Committee, New York City Bar Association
- Former Co-Chair of the Fine Art Subcommittee of the New York State Bar Association’s Entertainment, Arts & Sports Law Section