

Matt Groening

Hi. I'm Matt Groening, cartoonist, and creator of *Life in Hell*®, "*The Simpsons*"™, "*Futurama*"™¹ and other works. Welcome to my page.

You've probably seen my name, or signature, on many items offered for sale on eBay, such as photographs or cartoon cels featuring "*The Simpsons*" and "*Futurama*" characters. You may also have noticed that a lot of sellers claim that their photos and other items bear my actual or original signature or autograph. While I do from time to time sign or autograph items, I am sorry to report that many of the items posted on eBay that are described as having been signed by me actually do not bear my actual or original signature. Many of these items have stamped or preprinted signature blocks and many are forgeries.

How do I know? Well, I have made it a habit over the years that when I do sign things, I only do so in a certain way. One of the reasons I do this (aside from being a creature of habit) is so I can tell if someone has attempted to duplicate my signature. Unfortunately, it is not as hard to do as one might think -- anyone with a computer can copy my handwriting. Anyway, because I've adopted a certain style, I usually can spot a forgery from the real thing instantly just by looking at it online. And, believe it or not, I do spend a lot of time reviewing the postings on eBay and elsewhere on the Internet. When I find something that is a forgery, I notify eBay and they remove the item from the site before the auction closes. This happens all too often and I'm trying to put an end to it and need all the help I can get.

Why do I do this? That's simple: I owe so much to all the people who have supported *Life in Hell*, "*The Simpsons*" and "*Futurama*" all of these years, and I just can't stand the thought that fans of my works are getting ripped off.

So, what can you do to help? Well, my best advice is to be very careful when bidding on so-called "autographed" items, especially the more expensive ones described as "rare" or "one of a kind." I suggest that if you are interested in bidding that you email the seller and ask a lot of questions about the item before you bid, such as:

- where did you get the item?
- how do you know Matt really signed it?
- when and where was it signed by Matt?
- did you actually see Matt sign it?
- do you have an original certificate of authenticity?
- was the certificate of authenticity issued by 20th Century Fox or verified by Matt?
- do you have an actual place of business, like a gallery or store where customers like me can come look at the item?

If the seller doesn't respond or if you don't get satisfactory answers, do yourself a favor: Save your money and don't make a bid. If you really want to be sure you are getting what you pay for, my best advice is that you visit a reputable dealer who is willing to give you a certificate of authenticity from 20th Century Fox, or a written money-back guarantee that the item is the real thing. That way, you'll have some recourse if you later find out you've bought a fake.

Thanks for your interest, help and support.

Your pal,

Matt

P.S. for more information on "The Simpsons," visit the official 20th Century Fox website at www.thesimpsons.com.

For "Futurama," go to www.fox.com/futurama.

¹ "The Simpsons" and "Futurama" are registered trademarks of The Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.