



Kostabi: I'm still kicking

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"People talk about me like I'm dead. I'm only 48," **Mark Kostabi** told Hampton Sheet publisher **Joan Jedell** at the Hamptons Film Festival screening of "Con Artist," **Michael Sladek's** documentary on Kostabi. "Even my friends tend to say, 'Mark was . . .'" So what did the media-savvy artist -- famous for hiring teams of low-paid painters to produce his canvases -- learn about himself? "I can see my life more clearly . . . I don't have to prove anything . . . I don't have to be desperate about publicity." Kostabi admitted he's uncomfortable with the film's title but said, "Michael painted a portrait of me. Some of it was an exaggeration, like when he portrays me as having gone bankrupt. I did not. I was on the brink, but didn't actually go bankrupt. Michael exaggerated, but that's about *his* art."

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