

## EDITOR'S NOTE

On February 23, 2022, the day before Russia invaded Ukraine, Russian activist Ilya Liubimov stood on St. Petersburg's main street, Nevsky Prospekt, holding a large-format reproduction of the painting *The Apotheosis of War* (1871) by Vasily Vereshchagin.<sup>1</sup> Considered today to be a canonical work of anti-war themes, the painting owes its fame both to numerous exhibitions outside Russia and to reproductions published in the form of photo books and postcards, which have allowed the work to resonate with the public not only in the past, but also today. The painting's historical reception includes political criticism by the director of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pyotr Nikolaevich Stremoukhov, who accused the artist of humiliating Russians at an exhibition in St. Petersburg in 1874, as well as that by German General Helmuth von Moltke, who allegedly issued an order banning soldiers from visiting a Vereshchagin exhibition held in Berlin in 1882.<sup>2</sup> Thanks to Liubimov's photos published online, including on social media, *The Apotheosis of War* – now locked away in Moscow's Tetriakov Gallery – has once again become an active actor. Photographs of the painting and of Liubimov with a reproduction of the painting have added further segments in the trajectory of the work's life, to use the term proposed by Bruno Latour.

The role of reproductions of works of art in art history as an academic discipline and in shaping the career of a work of art (Latour) could hardly be overstated. Reproductions not only provide visual evidence in art-historical narratives, but significantly shape its paradigm and impact the work of art's reception on the academic level as well as broader popular-scientific, social, and, last but not least, political levels. In the age of the network society, reproductions available in virtual museums on the Google Arts & Culture platform, on the websites of cultural institutions, on social media – to name the most popular channels – make works of art active actors of everyday life. Fi-

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g.: M. Zgliński's post available online: <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/pl.dearte/permalink/1977250382455611>> [accessed: October 10, 2022].

<sup>2</sup> M. Chernysheva, "The Russian Gêrôme" Vereshchagin as a Painter of Turkestan, *RIHA* 2014, 18 September, paragraph 42, available online: <<https://doi.org/10.11588/riha.2014.0.69952>> [accessed: August 8, 2022].

nally, a work of art's reproduction, especially a photographic one, intrigues researchers today as never before.

Developing since the beginning of the 21st century, and intensifying in the last decade, research on the reproduction of works of art has focused primarily on photography. Underlying these studies is the key assumption that examining the reproduction of a work of art makes it possible to recognize issues relevant to the history of photography in general (Geoffrey Batchen), and thus the possibilities and limitations of the photographic image, its various functions and meanings, its susceptibility to subjugation and at the same time the power to create systems of knowledge and governance.

The texts collected in this volume of *Artium Quaestiones* make it possible to point out several important directions in the study of photographic reproduction. Firstly, a photograph of a work of art is analyzed as a material object. This approach assumes exceptional importance especially in the texts of Geoffrey Batchen and Ellen Handy, who made reproducing daguerreotypes the subject of their articles. The "ambiguity between the categories of original and reproduction" pointed out by Handy in the case of daguerreotype reproductions which are unique objects, paradoxically finds a kind of continuation in Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe's reflections on digital reproduction in a 2010 article we translated. Indeed, a digital facsimile prepared by Lowe of a Paolo Veronese work, *Nozze di Cana* for its original location, San Giorgio in Venice, significantly complicates the status of the original and the copy – making visible "the migration of the aura". The second research area is focused on photography's influence on the perception of a work of art, which became the subject of, among others, *The Original Copy. Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today* exhibition, prepared by Roxana Marcoci in 2010 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In the case studies published in this issue by Hana Buddeus, Weronika Kobylińska and Adam Mazur, photography establishes a non-obvious view of artistic objects, gaining the status of unique images and independent works, circulated in the press and photo books. The transgression of scientific convention directs the attention of researchers to the photographs' authors, but also invites us to problematize the definition of the reproduction of a work of art and its function, whether understood as special insight (Buddeus) or translation (Mazur). Tomasz Szerszeń, on the other hand, discusses the case of the Surrealist magazine "Documents" (1929–1930), in which the reproduction of works of art became a critical tool against the conventions of seeing and producing images, and was part of a broader project of "decolonization of seeing". The third avenue of research present in this volume is laid out by studies of art historical photo-archives, in which photographs of works of

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art are material objects of research as well as important carriers of information regarding didactics, historical research, conservation, and established canons. In this issue we publish a translation of a text fundamental to the study of art reproduction archives, by Costanza Caraffa, in which the researcher poses questions about archive management policies, classification systems in use, data constellations, and the material media of photographs. The ongoing research on photothek, to use the term proposed by Caraffa, and on the archival ecosystem (Elizabeth Edwards) is presented in this issue by Kamila Kłudkiewicz in an article on the Art History Seminar at the University of Poznań (1919–1939), today's Adam Mickiewicz University.

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