Cahiers de Mariemont, no. 43: Replicating Art

Deadline: Sep 15, 2020
www.musee-mariemont.be/index.php?id=1128

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The Royal Museum of Mariemont calls for papers on the topic of “Replicating Art” to be published in the issue 43 (2021) of its annual journal Cahiers de Mariemont. The thematic section of issue 43 will be dedicated to replicas created as copies of artworks which aim is not to deceive.

Established in 1970, the Cahiers de Mariemont is the annual journal of the Royal Museum of Mariemont (Belgium). The journal is peer-reviewed. It aims at promoting the study of the Museum’s rich collections, and also publishes articles, mainly in French and English, about a wide range of subjects from various disciplines including Ancient Mediterranean art and archaeology, extra-European arts, Belgium’s regional archaeology and history, precious books, decorative art, and museology. Its dossiers deal with current research themes in both transversal and cross-disciplinary perspectives.

According to Walter Benjamin (The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, 1935), replicas are disdained because they lack the ‘aura’ of the original artwork. However, the production of replicas cannot be disregarded since it has always played a major role in art history by being both tied to the artistic creation and to its diffusion. For a long time, the production of replicas has been a major part of artists schooling. For instance, without their Roman copies, many Greek statues would be known to us only by literary sources. The numerous replicas in bronze, plaster or marble of the Laocoon Group exhibited across Europe since the 19th century contributed to the creation of a common visual heritage. The decaying of artworks caused by their display has also encouraged museums to produce substitutes. This was the case, for example, of the Lascaux Cave. Duplicating a piece of art, whether it being for its accessibility or its preservation, raises the question of our relation to what makes an original and/or an authentic piece. Nowadays, thanks to scans made available by the British Museum, it is possible for anyone to 3D-print their own copy of the Parthenon frieze. The creation of replicas recently arose among the debate surrounding the restitution of artworks. In 2015, two artists created a replica of the Berlin Nefertiti bust, calling their creation a “digital repatriation”.
We are thus dealing with a complex topic that can be apprehended through many disciplines such as history, archaeology, museology and cultural history. It could as well be approached through its technical and material dimensions. It also implies moral and deontological questions.

Here is a list of themes that could be considered:
- the art of creating replicas
- the transformative power of a replica
- how to define and value an original / a copy

- replicas and Modernity: a turning point?
- “unreproducible” potential of artworks / the ban on copying
- replicas and audience / replicas and the democratisation of art
- replicas and modern technology / the process of copying artworks
- replicas and politics
- how replicas are considered in various cultural spheres
- the use of replicas in museums
- the business behind replicas

Proposals are to be sent to the editor of the Cahiers de Mariemont, Jean-Sébastien Balzat (jean-sebastien.balzat@musee-mariemont.be) by September 15th 2020. They must include a summary (2,000 to 3,000 characters), a provisional title, a selected bibliography and a short biography of the author (2 or 3 lines). The submitted article must contain a maximum of 30,000 characters (spaces included) preceded by a summary and followed by 10 keywords. The submissions are expected by January 15th 2021.

Reference:

CFP: Cahiers de Mariemont, no. 43: Replicating Art. In: ArtHist.net, Jun 4, 2020 (accessed Nov 14, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/23191>.