Preface

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Hardly any other picture has been reproduced as often as Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Many great artists have created their own versions of the painting, among them the likes of Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg. Marcel Duchamp even created several variations in his famous *L.H.O.O.Q.* The image has been printed on mugs, posters, shopping bags, and numerous other objects of varying artistic value. For the cover of this volume, we chose a recent work by Lithuanian artist Šarūnas Joneikis, entitled *Looking for Mona*. In this work the artist examines the relationship between the well-known visual image, its title and the expectancy this title creates in the observer. In fact, in 1911, when the painting was stolen from the Louvre, people were literally "looking for Mona". When it resurfaced in 1913, the picture was not identified as the original due to its appearance or an analysis of the canvas, but rather because of its inventory number. The theft sparked an unforeseen interest in copies of the absent original, and made the *Mona Lisa* the famous painting it is today. The history of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is thus deeply connected with forgeries, copies, and disputable originals. In a series of etchings in which the same motif is shown with slight variations, Joneikis attempts to determine the point at which one of his prints actually could become the *Mona Lisa*. By deforming the image in his prints, the artist emphasises the arbitrariness of the connection between title and image. Hence, every version he creates effectively becomes a kind of *Mona Lisa*.

Forgeries are a universally current topic. In the last few years the art market was shaken by forgery scandals surrounding the works of Max Ernst and Alberto Giacometti, creating a great amount of public interest. Documentaries and movies such as Stefan Ruzowitzky's Oscar-winning film *The Counterfeiters* are being produced to critical acclaim, and in contemporary art research, forgers and their work are a topic of continuing interest. See, for example, Christopher S. Wood's *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (2008) or Thierry Lenain's 2011 study *Art Forgery: The History of a Modern Obsession*. Forgeries are an omnipresent part of contemporary culture, and closely related to historically and culturally informed ideas of authenticity, legality, authorship, creativity, tradition and innovation. Current interest revolves around not only the concept of faking, but an interrogation of the categories 'authentic' and

'fake'. The international conference *Faking, Forging, Counterfeiting: Discredited Practices at the Margins of Mimesis*, held in Autumn 2015 at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich by the International Doctoral Program MIMESIS, aimed at expanding the horizon of research in this area. In this conference publication, different approaches to the concept of forgery are brought together to highlight the notion that forgeries have to be understood as productive mimetic processes and seen in the context of their time. To reach a broader understanding of what such a perception entails the editors chose essays from different scholarly fields such as art history, literary studies, media studies, and theatre studies. The contributions describe the practice of forgery not as the inability on the part of the artist to create an original, but rather as a creative act in itself. They focus on various implementations of forgery such as faked traditions, pseudo-translations, imposters, identity theft, and hoaxes in different cultural and historic contexts. By opening up the scope of the aesthetic implication of forgeries, this anthology aims to consolidate forgeries in the aesthetic discussion as an autonomous mimetic method of creation.

In lieu of an introduction, in his essay Henry Keazor (Heidelberg University) discusses the theory of 'six degrees of separation' that can be discerned between what is commonly referred to as the 'original' and as the 'forgery'. Hereby, it becomes evident that most of the practices that can lead to a forgery are in themselves legitimate and even well established in every day art practice. It is only the way in which their results are presented that can make them become forgeries. In the second part of his text, Keazor goes on to discuss cases in which the boundaries between a "hoax" and a "fake" are blurred, thus demanding the implementation of new, fitting notions which can cover both phenomena. He coins the term 'foax', a compound neologism melding forgery and hoax, and emphasises how such forgeries develop a life of their own. Keazor proposes to understand these not merely as deceptions but as entities that challenge our understanding of originality and authorship.

Friedrich Teja Bach (University of Vienna) takes a more critical approach with regard to forgeries as an independent art form. Whilst discussing several recent cases of forgeries and relaying his own experiences as an expert on Constantin Brâncuși, Bach examines strategies of unveiling forgeries, and in doing so scrutinizes the interdependence of the forger and the art market. By discussing the stories behind forgeries, he emphasises the narrative as a possible key to uncover a forgery. In this way, he characterises forgers as storytellers rather than as artists.

In a case study Jacqueline Hylkema (Leiden University) explores the 17th-century discourse in which painters and playwrights identified themselves with the figure of the mountebank — a character which by the late 1500s had become a byword for all types of forgery and fakery. Hylkema discusses three artworks by Hendrick Goltzius, Ben Jonson, and Gerrit Dou, which use the mountebank as a vehicle to explore the illusionary nature and dynamics of their own métier. She then argues that the Earl of Rochester's Alexander Bendo handbill (1676) is a continuation of this particular discourse but takes the identification between the

mountebank and artist one significant step further and thus challenges the boundaries between art and forgery.

Through a reading of 19th-century Voltaire pastiches, Manuel Mühlbacher (LMU Munich) explores the transition from the early modern to the modern paradigm of authorship in France. While the emerging discipline of bibliography and the editors of Voltaire's collected works strive to enforce new publishing conventions, Mühlbacher argues, such figures as the notorious pastiche writer Nicolas Châtelain continue to subvert the ideal of identifiable authorship. Playing with multiple identities and questioning the concept of personal style, 19th-century pastiche writers seem strangely faithful to Voltaire, who was himself a master of literary mystification and deceit.

Margaret S. Graves (Indiana University Bloomington) focuses in her essay on pre-modern Islamic art objects and their inauthentic modern 'completions'. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, an enormous number of objects without secure archaeological provenance were sold. In her study of the *Andarz-nāma* manuscript and certain *minā'ī* ceramics, Graves examines and problematizes the techniques by which dealers fabricated complete objects to meet the demands of the market.

Tina Öcal (Heidelberg University) proposes a reading of the forgeries of Giovanni Bastianini against the background of Italian *risorgimento*. She stipulates that Bastianini's forgeries embody the transculturation process of the European-American gaze of the 19th century into early Renaissance art. Öcal argues that these forgeries can be perceived not only as a falsification but also a way of preserving the culture by merely selling duplications instead of the original. Both essays also examine the cultural and spatial transfers these objects have been subjected to.

With Klaus Benesch's essay we both leave the forgery of art and art objects behind and take a leap into the 20th century. Benesch (LMU Munich) argues that William Gaddis' 1955 novel *The Recognitions*, in response to the abundance of fake art in contemporary society, sets out to redefine the act of repetition itself. The essay reads Gaddis' novel together with Kierkegaard's philosophical narrative *Repetition* (1853) and thus identifies Gaddis' handling of various repetitions and recognitions in his text as the re-capturing or unfolding of an existential truth in Kierkegaard's sense.

Florencia Sannders (LMU Munich) focuses on a different aspect of repetition. In her essay, she explores the grey area between literary experimentation and plagiarism. Sannders takes a look at Pablo Katchadjian's 2009 novella *El Aleph engordado* (*The Fattened Aleph*). Since this book adds 5,600 words and thus 'fattens' Jorge Luis Borges' short story 'El Aleph' from 1949, Borges' widow, who is also the heir and copyright holder of his literary estate, considered the work an act of plagiarism.

Laura Kohlrausch (LMU Munich) then proceeds to contextualize and scrutinize i.a. Borges' own acts of forgery in her essay. Taking a theoretical approach, she aims to show how literary texts since antiquity have invented their own sources by referring to or even quoting from fictitious texts. Kohlrausch points out that

in these instances of feigned intertextuality texts are not forged in the traditional sense but rather non-existing sources are referenced and thus effectively brought into existence.

Yola Schmitz (LMU Munich) explores yet another kind of forgery with James Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian* (1765): the feigning of a translation. Schmitz examines what many consider to be one of the most sensational literary forgeries of all time, discussing how Macpherson achieved these poems' apparent authenticity, and how he managed to convince so many readers, including linguists, of their veracity — in spite of the absence of 'original' texts.

Laura Fenelli's contribution (Kent State University/Richmond College in Florence) addresses the faking of miraculous images and relics. The icon of St. Dominic of Soriano in the 17th century created a cult which rapidly spread from southern Italy to Spain and the Americas. Yet, this image was in fact shown to be a late 15th-century painting, only later promoted as a miraculous icon for political and economic reasons.

Contemporary practices that could be considered forgeries are explored by Daniel Becker (LMU Munich) in his paper on imitation in new media art. He discusses how strategies similar to those of forgers were used by artificial intelligence and avatars to disguise their bodiless existence. Becker addresses the dimensions of deception and counterfeiting on an interactive level, from Alan Turing's theory of the 'Imitation Game' to contemporary art works that deal with questions of the autonomy and agency of computer software and data. His paper retraces such strategies and points out their consequences for a modern concept of forgery.

Simone Niehoff (LMU Munich) also focuses on 21st-century strategies of forgery, specifically examining hoaxes. She defines the hoax as a mimetic practice, which employs forgery as a means of parody, subversion, and, more recently, political activism. Niehoff reads the infamous *Dreadnought Hoax* from 1910 as a precursor to more contemporary artistic interventions expressing critical political views. She contrasts this approach to recent fake political campaigns by The Yes Men and the German Center for Political Beauty.

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