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Art and Archaeological Fakes on Display. Forty Years of Temporary Exhibitions (1915-1955)

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Abstract

Since the second decade of the twentieth century, temporary exhibitions on art and archaeological fakes and reproductions have appeared in museums, galleries and research institutes in Europe and America. Aiming to educate collectors and curators, to denounce and raise public awareness of forgeries, and eventually to disseminate the value of fakes as historical documents, these exhibitions are something of a litmus test for the perception of, and critique on, this phenomenon over time. Drawing upon an anthology of paramount exhibitions held during the first half of the century, this research provides an insight on display strategies, as well as the patterns, reasons and purposes for exposing fakes and reproductions, tracing back both commonalities, differences and changes over time.

Dal secondo decennio del ventesimo secolo, mostre temporanee su falsi e riproduzioni d'arte e archeologia sono apparse in musei, gallerie e istituti di ricerca in Europa e in America. Con l'obiettivo di educare collezionisti e curatori, di denunciare e sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica sui falsi e, infine, di diffondere il valore dei falsi come documenti storici, queste mostre rappresentano una sorta di cartina di tornasole per la percezione e la critica di

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questo fenomeno nel tempo. Basandosi su un'antologia di mostre importanti realizzate nella prima metà del secolo, questa ricerca fornisce una panoramica sulle strategie espositive, nonché sui modelli, le ragioni e gli scopi dell'espone falsi e riproduzioni, descrivendo sia i punti in comune, sia le differenze e i cambiamenti nel tempo.

1. *Introduction*

This paper will provide an insight on the perception of, and discourses over, art and archaeological fakes and reproductions during the first half of the nineteenth century via the paradigm of temporary exhibitions.

Just like museums' permanent installations, temporary exhibitions reflect choices – of objects, displays, and narratives – through which categories and hierarchies are affirmed that mirror the “choral” thoughts of the contemporary society – its tastes, ideas, knowledge, desires, queries and values. Not only do temporary exhibitions dialogue with the history of art history and archaeology, but they also open multiple windows to the contemporary art market, the history of collecting, national and international cultural policies, and the reception of Ancient and Modern artistic and cultural identity in contemporary civilization.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, copies and plaster casts in permanent installations were meant to foster educational and artistic training as well as enhance museum narratives¹. Nonetheless, when forced

¹ A *Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of All Countries* was signed by fifteen European Princes at the Universal Exposition of Paris in 1867 to start a European network of exchanges, which would be strengthened at the Universal Exposition of Antwerp in 1885. According to the *Convention*, the model of a system of reproducing works of art was the South Kensington Museum, and illustrations of it were exhibited in the British Section of the Paris exhibition (on the cast rooms of the future “Victoria and Albert Museum”, see Patterson, Trusted 2018). The end of the nineteenth century was indeed the golden era of casts rooms in most of European Museums and Universities (see Anderson 2015, in part. pp. 57-70) as well as in the United States; in 1891, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York even published a *Tentative List of Objects desirable for a Collection of Casts, Sculptural and Architectural, intended to illustrate the history of plastic art* (1891) that mirrors the American contemporary ideal universal art and archaeological museum. Not only did cast rooms provide useful teaching devices and promote access to artworks that otherwise were unlikely to be seen by most locals (see Conestabile 1874a, pp. 366-369; de Zerbi 1885), but integrated into traditional exhibits, casts and reproductions also assured museums to make comparisons between artworks, fill gaps in the chain of objects, complete collections, and thereby conceive, ordinate, realize, and disseminate complex archaeological discourses. The debate was particularly alive in post-Unity Italy, where it was tied to that on classical education and casts museums were established on the German model (paradigmatic is the case of Rome, where Emanuel Löwy, holding the first chair of “History of Ancient Art”, founded the *Museo dei Gessi*); on the Italian debate, see, e.g., on the one hand, Salinas 1866, pp. 38, 42, 1874, p. 12; Conestabile 1874a, p. 367; de Ruggiero 1874, pp. 76-77, 80-81 and ff.; on the other hand, Fiorelli 1883, pp. 13-14, 1885, pp. 558-565 and ff.; for an overview, Catoni 1993; for a comparison with the debate in Germany, see Mommsen cit. in Conestabile 1874b, pp. 75-77, Hübner 1874; Conestabile 1969; Schiering 1969; in France, see

to confront head-on doubts concerning authenticity, museums usually had their contentious objects downgraded, withdrawn from display and even destroyed or deaccessioned. However, a series of temporary exhibitions on art and archaeological fakes and reproductions held both in Europe and the United States changed this. They aimed to warn collectors and the public against, and educate them about, the ubiquitous frauds, by illustrating how to detect doubtful signs. Other exhibitions instead were organized by art police units, rather intending to stigmatize and counter forgers, denounce the threat against the integrity of the art world, historical mystifications, and the economic and social costs of crimes. Furthermore, a series of solo exhibitions were dedicated to the infamous artist/forgery Alceo Dossena; the concepts of originality and authenticity were thereby raised and contested.

The use of copies and casts in permanent installations is beyond the scope of this paper². Instead, it will focus on a number of exhibitions of art and archaeological fakes and reproductions that were organized on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean between 1915 and 1955 (tab. 1), before the debate over the aesthetic and ontological status of forgery and the relevance of authenticity to aesthetic experience began among analytic philosophers³. The paper will provide an insight on display strategies, as well as the patterns, reasons and purposes for exposing fakes and forgeries, tracing back both commonalities, differences and changes over time.

2. *Art and Archaeological Fakes and Forgeries on Display (1915-1955)*

On September 20, 1915, at the Danske Kunstindustrimuseum in Copenhagen, the curtain went up on “Forfalskninger”. This was a five-day exhibition of art and archaeological fakes, organized as an initiative of the Museum Director, the Danish art historian Emil Hannover⁴, to coincide with the Constituent

Bréal 1872, also reviewed by Enrique Perrot (1873) and Daniele Pezzi (1873), and Bréal, Rénan and Dumont cit. in Conestabile 1874b, p. 77; in Ireland, Lewis 1872; in the United States, Robinson 1916. Plaster casts could also provide useful devices for gathering back together the *disiecta membra* of one object which was to be split throughout different museums and foster sort of repatriations *ante litteram* (e.g., Salinas 1874, p. 18) and reconstruct lost originals (see for instance Adolph Furtwangler’s reconstruction of Pheidias’ statue of Athena Lemnia – Palagia 1987).

² See note 1. In general, on replication, see also Codell, Hughes 2018; Mazzarelli 2010; Frederiksen, Marchand 2010.

³ Bernard 2020.

⁴ Müller 1892; Holck 1920. Emil Hannover was very interested in the phenomenon of art forgery, as accounts for his book on old Copenhagen porcelain forgeries (Hannover 1912) as well as two lectures he gave in 1912 and 1913 to the Kunstindustrimuseets Venner concerning donations (Danske Kunstindustrimuseum, II16805 Manuskriptskab, acc. n. 59534, 1912-1913, *1ste Foredrag om Forfalskninger holdt for Vennerne ved deres 1ste Møde; Ibidem*, acc. n. 47813,

Meeting of the Skandinavisk Museuinsforbund. One hundred and seven counterfeited items went on stage. Among them, there were forged works of art and archaeological artefacts, ranging from allegedly “Egyptian”, “Greek”, “Roman” objects to “Renaissance” sculptures, “Chinese” bronze censers, “Copenhagen” porcelain (Fig. 1)⁵. Most items came from the Museum’s own collections, while some others were on loan from various Danish institutions or private collectors. Notwithstanding the First World War, a few objects were lent by German Museums as well. The exhibition aimed to warn museum curators and collectors against forgeries; the exhaustive catalogue entries following Hannover’s programmatic introduction, labelled the items on view providing details about these objects’ models, provenance and *comparanda* in other collections. The danger signals and deceptions were pointed out as well. Furthermore, along with the booklet of captions, was a bibliography of counterfeit art, which likely reflected the speech Hannover gave during the curators meeting⁶. One year later, an appendix of plates featuring the most important pieces on view was issued⁷.

The fact that this exhibition was to set up the scene for the first meeting of an international museums’ association, is evidence of the growing scale of the problem of art forgery in the early twentieth century. Indeed, many exposé-style articles and handbooks, in colourful frescos full of intriguing characters and in the style of critical treatises, had been provided to collectors and curators with some detecting tools since the late nineteenth century⁸. Nonetheless, it was only from the mid-1910s, when the tautology forgery-fraud subject was formally established – inciting its persecution⁹, that some Museums started constructing temporary critical narratives around fakes and reproductions. Although forgeries were generally shunned, banned from display cabinets and ostracised by Academia¹⁰, the need to define the concept of the inauthentic in a broad social, cultural, economic, legal, ethic, aesthetic, and historical perspective, became the driving force behind new research avenues and educational agendas.

1912-1913, *Manuskripter til foredrag af Emil Hannover*). I am very thankful to Nils Frederiksen, in charge of the *Kunstindustrimuseum* historical archive, who has helped my research with professionalism and kindness.

⁵ Hannover 1915a.

⁶ Hannover 1915b.

⁷ Hannover 1916.

⁸ Among others, see Robinson 1891; Evans 1893; Spielmann 1903-1904; Eudel [1884] 1908, [1907] 1908, 1909; Furtwängler 1899; Le Quex 1904; Munro 1905; Maskell 1906; Gardner 1908; Beissel 1909; Roessler 1910; Boyer 1911; Lang 1912; Bayard 1914; Kaempffert 1914. For a bibliographical compilation, see Reisner 1950; Koobatian 1997; see also Andreoli 2011.

⁹ Lenain 2011.

¹⁰ See for instance the case of the Appleton collection of Tanagra figurines of the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, which was revealed to be fake in 1900 and withdrawn from exhibition at once (*Artistic Boston Fooled* 1900).

So far as the author knows, “Forfalskninger” (Copenhagen 1915) was the first temporary exhibition on art and archaeological fakes and reproductions¹¹. Less than one year later, in April 1916, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean¹², the Pennsylvania Museum of Art of Philadelphia – again a museum of fine arts – was staging “An Exhibition of ‘Fakes’ and Reproductions”¹³. Designed by Edwin Atlee Barber¹⁴, Director of the museum and Honorary Curator of the American Pottery and Porcelain Department, the temporary installation covered the field of fine arts, featuring, among counterfeits and imitations of the most renowned European ceramics, Chinese porcelains, and French and German enamels, also heavily restored and deceptive copies and imitations of “Greek” and “South-Italian” vases¹⁵, “Tanagra figurines”, “Roman” lamps, and “Aztec” specimens (Fig. 2). They all came from the museum’s own collection. Nonetheless, the exhibition was not only a catalogue of acknowledged mistakes, but it also aimed to raise public awareness of the malicious threat of art and archaeological forgery and to instruct amateur collectors and museum officials in detecting it. To this end, original models and their modern counterparts were displayed side-by-side for comparison and study, with black cards with golden lettering labelling authentic items. Furthermore, the illustrated catalogue following the exhibition provided visitors with detailed captions pointing out the material and stylistic elements betraying a counterfeit object. Most notably, in connection with the show, collectors desiring information on authenticity, were invited to bring their artworks to the museum for analysis.

Indeed, the temporary display of acknowledged fakes in special showcases to warn and educate is a paradigm that American museums used again in their decades-long fight against art counterfeiting, a phenomenon which was strictly connected with the dynamics of the global art and antiquities market. As a matter of fact, exhibitions devoted to fakes and possibly even the definition of the fake went hand in hand with collecting and curatorship as well as connoisseurship

¹¹ See *infra*, note 56.

¹² Lang had been dreaming of «an exhibition of fakes» in America as early as 1901 from the pages of the «The Independent» (Lang 1901, p. 2455). He was also echoed by «The New York Times» (*Show up your fakes* 1901).

¹³ Barber 1916; *Special Exhibition of ‘Fakes’ and Reproductions* 1916; *Fakes and Reproductions* 1916.

¹⁴ Hough 1928. The Philadelphia Museum of Art holds a folder with some unpublished papers, reports, and letters as well as clippings on the market in bogus antiquities by Barber (*Forgeries of Eastern glass and pottery (‘Used’), 1911-1912. Edwin Atlee Barber Papers. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Library and Archives*, <https://pmlibrary.libraryhost.com/repositories/3/archival_objects/47755>, 12.02.2019). I am very thankful to Miriam Cady for her kind help and for sending me the material.

¹⁵ Among these, there are three imitations of Greek originals made by the Danish potter Peter Ipsen on the occasion of the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (ns. 256, 257 and 259), featured under the section “Classical pottery”, whereas – most interestingly – an *ad hoc* section was dedicated to “Wedgwood” and his *all’antica* productions as models of imitation and counterfeit themselves (n. 268).

just as American collectors and museums were expanding their horizons. In 1923, Henry Walters, the Vice-president of the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts of New York, declared to the *New York Times* that an investigation would be made of Gothic objects in the museum on whose authenticity doubts had been cast and if any spurious artworks was found, it would be removed (but not those containing authentic parts, which would be classified as “restored” rather than “entirely original”)¹⁶. Nonetheless, only one year later, a glass case with the label “Modern forgeries” was installed in one of the Egyptian rooms. It contained «carved scarabs, a model mummy case, stone statuettes of gods and kings, and pieces of supposedly ancient attempts at glass making»¹⁷.

In 1929, a “Forged or Real” exhibition put on display some of the Metropolitan’s sculpture forgeries. Aiming at «removing some of the string of criticism copiously launched against those who were deceived» but rather «scarcely helping buttressing our strongholds against future campaigns waged in the interest of what is false»¹⁸, this exhibition placed authentic terracotta and marble vases and figurines beside their modern forged counterparts; anomalies in firing and modelling and the effects of some aging techniques were exposed as well.

The case of the Metropolitan’s Arms and Armor Department is another interesting example. In 1932, the English antiquarian Charles R. Beard claimed in «*Connoisseur*» that one of the most famous “Gothic armours” of the renowned Dino Collection was nothing but an ambitious and convincing *pastiche* of pieces of different epoch and origin, enriched with modern additions¹⁹. The armour in question had already been on view at least since the early twentieth-century Bashford Dean’s installation of the gallery and labelled as partially restored²⁰. Stephen V. Grancsay, Dean’s long-time assistant and successor as curator, eventually removed the armour from display and expressed his doubt over its

¹⁶ *Says he sold fakes to the Metropolitan* 1923; *Promises inquiry into museum pieces* 1923. Interestingly enough, Walters, who was a collector himself, declared he used to «keep a special case into which [he] put pieces which [he] discover[ed] to be spurious». The eponym museum in Baltimore would also organize an exhibition on the museum’s own forgeries: “Artful Deception. The Craft of the Forger”, in 1987 (Vikan 1987).

¹⁷ *Egyptian ‘Fakes’* 1924.

¹⁸ *Forged and Real at Metropolitan* 1929; De Forest, Kent 1929.

¹⁹ Beard 1932. As accounts for the long-running debate over authenticity (of arms and armors in particular) on «*Connoisseur*», see also Roe 1922; Roe, Beard 1930; Beard 1933; Shedelmann 1948; more in general, see also, *Looting and Faking* 1944; *The Validity of Fakes as Works of Art* 1946.

²⁰ According to Pyhrr, Dean had even deliberately included in his gallery one or two vitrines of nineteenth-century fakes, with explanatory labels pointing out their abnormalities in terms of design, material and patinas (*Of Arms and Men* 2012, p. 13). I am very grateful to Donald LaRocca, Curator of the Arms and Armour Department of the Met, who has given me valuable information concerning the recognition and explication of arms and armor forgeries as a normal function of the department at that time. Dean purposely acquired many examples of fakes in order to document the practices of particular forgers; many of these were deaccessioned and sold in the following years.

authenticity²¹. Nonetheless, most astoundingly, in the same year, he also set up an “Exhibition of forgeries”²². It consisted of three vitrines installed on the west side of the main armour gallery (H9), next to “the armorer’s workshop”. The first case displayed the “Gothic forgeries”, whereas the other two showcased genuine pieces enriched by etching, damascening and embossing. «The purpose of the exhibition [was] educational»²³; first, by placing forgeries and falsifications and their authentic models side-by-side, students could train their eyes to differentiate them; secondly, by pointing out counterfeiters’, the skills of the ancient armorer were emphasized, thereby fostering an appreciation of authentic armour.

Helping «students, collectors, and critics, indeed all who in their several ways are interested in art, in the study of the problems of quality and originality, as also of period, school, and the like»²⁴ was also at the hearth of the London Burlington Fine Arts Club’s 1924 exhibition of “Counterfeits, imitations and copies of works of art”. Indeed, while 1920s American Museums’ exhibitions may be regarded as sheer catalogues of acknowledged errors, European museums rather used to gather loaned fake artworks to set up complex discourses around the manifold topic; they focused on Modern Art and crafts forgeries. The London exhibition put on scene spurious Modern pictures, drawings, metalworks, furniture, carpets, ceramics, glass, and sculptures on loan by various institutions and private collectors, beside their original counterparts. It drew a line between *sine dolo* casts, copies, imitations made for purposes of record and dissemination or artistic practice, and restorations and fakes, forgeries, and *pastiches* intending to deceive. Not only did exposure rely on style and quality anomalies and anachronisms, but state-of-the-art scientific detection techniques, including pigment analyses and X-rays examination, were also brought to public attention for the first time. Furthermore, the exhibition first glanced at the topic of art forgery throughout a philosophical eye, questioning whether authenticity is an aesthetically relevant property, that is whether the same aesthetic appearance could not warrant the same aesthetic appreciation and judgement – and, therefore, the same display²⁵.

²¹ See Pyhrr 2012, pp. 215-223 and ff. for a detailed report with further examples of fakes and forgeries from the Dino Collection, to which they came chiefly from the then famous dealers Carrand, Spitzer, and Bardini, downgraded or even deaccessioned. For some examples also in the Riggs collection, see Carrara 2012. On the relationship between Riggs and the dealer Marcy, Blair, Campbell 2008, pp. 26-30.

²² Grancsay 1932, pp. 46-48.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ «The Burlington Magazine» has hosted, over the years, many articles about debated and spurious artworks: see, for instance, de Rorthays’ articles on the *Tiara of Saitaphernes*, which was revealed as a forgery in 1903 (de Rorthays 1903a-d); see also, among others, Veitch 1909; White 1910; Fry 1927; Pope 1935; Friedländer 1941.

²⁵ These questions, already implicitly pointed out by Guillaume Apollinaire (1903) and Clive Bell (1913), would be later conceptualized by the Formalist tradition. For an overview, see Bernard 2020.

Two years later, in 1926, the dichotomy of innocent and deceptive copies (of nineteenth-twentieth century paintings only) and the manifold purposes behind them were explored at Vienna's Oberen Belvedere. "Fälschungen und Faksimiles von Kunstwerken des 19. Jahrhunderts" staged copies and forgeries after Franz Alt, Paul Cézanne, Honoré Daumier, Gustave Klimt, and other famous painters, featuring «Beispiele der Praktiken manueller Darstellung von Kunstwerken, Kopien, Ersatzstücke, Signierungen, Kompilationen, freie Nacherfindungen, und Beispiele mechanischer, im besonderen photomechanischer Reproduktionen»²⁶. As in the above-mentioned exhibitions, one hundred thirty originals and non-originals were displayed side-by-side for comparison.

Nonetheless, case histories of acknowledged forgeries ending up being exhibited as such can be traced back also in Europe. Emblematic is the case of the "prehistoric finds" that once had been the foundational linchpin of the Austrian Historical Museum of Baden before being revealed as forgeries by Joseph Wuhack in the early 1900s²⁷. After they were withdrawn from exhibition in Baden, these artefacts eventually ended up being permanently showcased in the museum of the Police Directorate of Vienna²⁸. In fact, art and archaeological forgeries started attracting the attention of some national art police units²⁹, among whom, there was Siegfried C. Türkel, the scientific director of the Kriminologischen Instituts der Österreichischen Staatspolizei of Vienna. A renowned jurist and criminologist, Türkel was also an expert in chemical analysis and dating techniques, which he applied to the broad field of counterfeiting, from manuscripts and typewriting to checks³⁰, through alleged archaeological relics. On this topic, in 1927, likely following the lecture he gave during the Second International Police Congress, held in Berlin in 1926 under the aegis of the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC)³¹, Türkel published a pamphlet/enquiry, entitled *Prähistorische Fälschungen: eine Rundfrage*³², opening with, and featuring some of, the Baden forgeries on view at the Police Museum³³.

Indeed, in the late 1920s, the battle against forgers by the judicial police came under the spotlight. One year before the shocking murder of the judge of

²⁶ *Fälschungen und Faksimiles* 1926, p. 14.

²⁷ The scandal, denounced by one Gustav Colliano, ended up in a trial against the forger (Türkel 1927, pp. 1-3) and made headlines: see, for instance, *Gefälschte prähistorische Funde in Baden* 1902; *Gefälschte prähistorische Funde* 1902; *Aus Den Gerichtssaale* 1902.

²⁸ Türkel 1927, pp. 1-2.

²⁹ A special art investigation department was existing in Italy, for instance as early as 1914 (*A fine arts police* 1914).

³⁰ Türkel 1933. See also, Türkel 1930. His discoveries were featured heavily on the press: see, e.g., *Chemistry Vs. Forgery*; *Dr. Turkel's Way of Telling if a Check Has Been Raised* 1933 and *Test reveals age of writing by ink action on paper* 1933.

³¹ Türkel 1927, p. 16; *Teilnahme österreichischer Fachleute am internationalen* 1926.

³² Prehistorical forgeries had been fooling the market at least since the late nineteenth century, as account for, e.g., Evans 1893; de Mortillet 1885; Munro 1905; Vaysonne de Predenne 1932.

³³ Türkel 1927, pls. I-II.

the forensic police Bayle, who had authored a controversial evaluation of the “prehistorical” finds of Glozel³⁴, in 1928, the Dossena scandal exploded³⁵.

A series of solo exhibitions were organised soon after in Italy and abroad. Two expositions were held in Italy in spring 1929: in April, an exhibition of twenty-three of Dossena’s works on loan by three deceived collectors occurred at Naples’ renowned Corona Gallery³⁶, and an “Esposizione di 28 capolavori di Alceo Dossena” was hosted in Milan’s Micheli Gallery in May – its catalogue featuring an essay by the art critic Elpidio Piccoli³⁷. A larger exhibition was staged in January 1930 at Berlin’s Hall of Art, which Dossena made several works especially for; a film of Dossena at work in his studio titled “Schaffende Hände” was made by Hans Cürdis, the Director of the Institute for Cultural Research, that was released at the show and followed by a catalogue³⁸. One year later, thirty-three of Dossena’s artworks were on view at the Mostre di “Fiamma”’s rooms in via Bocca di Leone in Rome, whose catalogue featured some excerpts of Piccoli’s above-mentioned essay³⁹.

These exhibitions aimed at making a celebrity of Alceo Dossena as a contemporary «great artist of the chiesel, a marvellous creator of Madonnas and Putti»⁴⁰; one able to «far risognare, mentre intorno si brancola sull’orrido, la poesia e la Potenza di quella che fu e dovrà essere gloria assoluta d’Italia»⁴¹.

Mutatis mutandis, in 1933, a public auction of Dossena’s works was set up at The Rose Room of the Hotel Plaza in New York: “Exhibition of Sculptures by Alceo Dossena”. The National Art Galleries auctioned a collection of thirty-nine “authenticated” (*sic*) statues and reliefs by the Cremonese artist conferred by one Giuseppe Giosi of Rome⁴², including allegedly marble and bronze archaeological finds and sculptures in style of Italian Masters from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century – among which a wooden copy of the *Annunciation* group purportedly by Simone Martini (Fig. 3)⁴³. According to Alfred M. Frankfurter, the renowned art critic and

³⁴ On the complex case of Glozel, see Grivel 2003, with previous bibliography. On Bayle’s researches, de Ruggieri 2007. His murder caught the attention of the press: see, e.g., *M. Bayle assassiné* 1929 and *L’assassin de M. Bayle* 1929.

³⁵ For a detailed bibliography on Alceo Dossena and the Dossena *affaire*, see Mazzoni 2017, notes 9 and 10. See also Sox 1987, Horak 2016.

³⁶ Sox 1987, pp. 69-70.

³⁷ *Esposizione di 28 capolavori di Alceo Dossena* 1929; *Il “Quattrocento di Alceo Dossena”* 1929. See also Horak 2016, pp. 155-157.

³⁸ Cürdis 1939.

³⁹ *Mostra personale dello scultore Alceo Dossena* 1931.

⁴⁰ *Art News* 1929.

⁴¹ *Mostra personale dello scultore Alceo Dossena* 1929, p. 6.

⁴² The appendix to the catalogue reports two authentication certificates with Alceo Dossena’s signature, dating 15 March 1933 and 2 April 1932 (Frankfurter 1933, pp. 86-90).

⁴³ The group was inspired to the painting by Simone Martini at the Uffizi (Frankfurter 1933, pp. 36-39, ns. 15-16). The pieces, which represent quite a different variant of the marble group bought for \$ 150.000 by Helen Frick and ended up in the Pittsburgh University Art Gallery the

editor of «Art News» and the Auction Catalogue, Dossena's artworks were to be «valuable, to the collector and museum, for artistic achievement as for scientific documentation»⁴⁴. Indeed, not only were the apparently dichotomic concepts of authenticity and forgery contested (the “fake Simone Martini” becoming an “authentic Dossena”), but all these exhibitions may be regarded to as very early forerunners of instances of historicization of the figure of the artist/forgers⁴⁵, which would have wormed their way into display cabinets only from the late 1980s⁴⁶.

Dossena's works had indeed deceived many eminent connoisseurs and curators, including Wilhelm von Bode, Frederick Mason Perkins, Charles Loeser, Detlev Freiherr von Hadeln, and Harold Parsons. The art historian Leo Planiscig, the Director of the Sammlung für Plastik und Kunstgewerbe of the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna, was among the few who doubted of the authenticity of some works which were proposed to him. When, in 1937, the death of Dossena caught the attention of the Austrian press⁴⁷, the Cremonese forger was among the main characters of “Gefälschte Kunstwerke”, curated by Planiscig himself with Ernst Kris⁴⁸ at the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna – the former being celebrated as the *deus ex machina* who disclosed the Dossena scandal⁴⁹.

The exhibition was set up in the Applied Arts Gallery to coincide with the Jahrestagung Internationalen Verbandes der Museumsdirektoren and stayed

very same year (F. Gastaldello, E. Pellegrini, in Pellegrini 2017, pp. 438-439), were sold together for \$ 600 – the second highest auction price. It is worth pointing out that the Milan exhibition Catalogue mentions the Madonna as a Saint (*Esposizione di 28 capolavori di Alceo Dossena* 1929, p. 25).

⁴⁴ Frankfurter 1933, p. 7.

⁴⁵ As a matter of fact, a permanent exhibition of fakes and forgeries was installed by Anthony Radcliffe in the Cast Courts of the Victoria and Albert Museum sandwiched in the corridor between the 46A and 46B galleries, featuring, among others, also three terracotta reliefs by Alceo Dossena (Sox 1987, p. 72).

⁴⁶ See tab. 1 and below.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., *Der berühmte Kunstfälscher Dossena gestorben 1937; Der Meisterfälscher Dossena Gestorben 1937; Meisterfälscher Dossena Gestorben 1937; Ein Meisterfälscher Gestorben 1937*.

⁴⁸ Kris also co-authored a book on the psychology of the artist with Otto Kurz (Kris, Kurz 1934). On the latter, see *infra* note 61.

⁴⁹ E.g., *Der berühmte Kunstfälscher Dossena gestorben 1937*. See *Nuovi accertamenti viennesi a proposito delle sculture del Dossena. Dichiarazione del dott. Planiscig* 1928. See also Gastaldello 2016-2017, pp. 18, 35-36 and 54; Mazzoni 2017, pp. 435-436 and note 14.

on view through September and October⁵⁰, before moving to Graz in 1938⁵¹. On show were eighty-seven artworks of all kinds, comprising paintings, marble and bronze sculptures, enamels, ivory carvings, weapons and porcelains from the “Middle Ages” to the “seventeenth century” as well as an *all’antica* marble grave relief from the Obizzi collection, “Roman” fictional medallions and coins, “Classical” bronze and terracotta statuettes, and “Egyptian” Baphomets, dating from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (Fig. 4)⁵². Furthermore, on display were many photographs reproducing Dossena’s sculptures, which were not mentioned in the catalogue⁵³. The catalogue opens with the curators’ sardonic declaration laying bare «die Fälschung als Feind»⁵⁴, seductive and alluring because of its being object of desire and of a blinding and possessive passion. In fact, the exhibition’s first aim was not to provide a guide to recognising fakes, but rather to denounce these «Entthronte Größen sind sie, die, ans Licht gezogen, sich des Lichtes schämen» and, most notably, to historicize the phenomenon⁵⁵. To this end, the introduction is followed by a list and description of the objects exhibited, giving an account of their history as the “Tragikomödie” of which they had been the main actors. Furthermore, many of them, which came both from the museum’s own collection and from privately-owned ones, either they were designed to deceive or not, were set side-by-side with an original, for the point of comparison between them to be available and in order to entice the visitors into looking at true artefacts by means of their malicious counterpart.

“Gefälschte Kunstwerke” is paradigmatic of how, in the late 1930s central Europe, fakes that were stigmatised as threats to the integrity of art

⁵⁰ The exhibition was featured hugely on the press: see, e.g., *Ausstellung von Kunstfälschungen* 1937; *Die Ausstellung gefälschter Kunstwerke* 1937; *Ausstellung gefälschter Kunstwerke* 1937; *Ausstellung gefälschter Kunstwerke* 1937; *Ausstellung gefälschter Kunstwerke* 1937; *Rössler* 1937; *Rainalter* 1937; *Journalistische Fälschmünzerei* 1937; *Der berühmte Kunstfälscher Dossena gestorben* 1937. Indeed, the topic was under the spotlight, as they account for, e.g., *Methoden im Kunsthandel. Allerlei Fälschungen* 1937, and *Kampf gegen Antiquitätenschwindel. “Gut erhaltene, Funde sind verdächtig* 1938. This is litmus card of the interest that not only connoisseurs, collectors and curators, but also the general public (see also *supra*, notes 17-18) had in exhibitions of art and archaeological fakes. Indeed, that of the reception of the exhibitions on art and archaeological fakes by both experts and the general public is a topic which would warrant further enquiry and open new research avenues; it would be worth exploring, on the one hand, how much these exhibitions were cited in subsequent scientific publications and exhibition catalogues; on the other hand, how much they were featured on the press and, ideally, what was the ratio of these exhibitions’ visitors to others’.

⁵¹ The Archive of the *Kunstskammer* holds two folders about this travelling exhibition: *Kunstskammer 9/PL/37* (Vienna) and *Kunstskammer 37/L/37* (Graz). I am grateful to Susanne Hehenberger, in charge of the *Kunsthistorische Museum*, for helping my research with expertise and kindness.

⁵² Planiscig, Kris 1937.

⁵³ See, e.g., *Ausstellung von Kunstfälschungen* 1937; *Ausstellung gefälschter Kunstwerke* 1937; *Die Ausstellung gefälschter Kunstwerke* 1937.

⁵⁴ Planiscig, Kris 1937, p. 3.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

and archaeology were persecuted. To this end, only one year before, the Naturhistorischen Gesellschaft of Nürnberg had staged an “Ausstellung über Fälschungen aus Nordbayern statt”, featuring Hans Hösch’s allegedly prehistoric findings formerly in the collection of the painter Gabriel von Max, which the museum had just acquired from Mannheim for the price of 20 Reichsmark⁵⁶.

In contrast, in the same years, in the United States, the topic of art and archaeological forgery became the centrepiece of new research and educational agendas. “Art: Genuine or Counterfeit?”⁵⁷ was on view at the Fogg Museum of Arts in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from May 1 to June 20, 1940. It was a temporary exhibition loaned by graduate students enrolled in the course “Museum Work and Museum Problems” at Harvard. It aimed to provide students and the general public with the opportunity to improve their power of discrimination in distinguishing between original and fake and, possibly, to discourage the forgers and their acolytes, followed by the wish that this example would be imitated by other institutions on a greater scale. Concerning the display, many authentic artworks were flanked by others identified as inauthentic. In most cases, labels reciting a concise “Genuine” or “Counterfeit” were to inform the viewer of their status⁵⁸. Other times, however, visitors were challenged to tell original and imitation apart by themselves, through a sort of game, or they were provided with just a few hints for further investigation⁵⁹. While this method required the attention of the viewer’s eye, there were also some references to the result of the scientific analyses which had been carried out on some objects. Scientific methods had been brought to the fore one decade before, but it was only in this moment that, though brushed aside by the connoisseur, they would become progressively crucial to the authentication process⁶⁰. Among its thirty-two exhibits, “Art: Genuine or Counterfeit?” counted, as usual, not only deliberate forgeries, but also innocent imitations, copies and reproductions, among which, “Early Modern” and “Modern” paintings and drawings, “Renaissance” sculptures, prints, Limoges enamels, “Egyptian” and “Aztec” sculptures, a “Greek” marble fragmentary statue and a “Tanagra” figurine, ancient “Chinese” vessels and statuettes. They arrived from both private and corporate collectors – including the Yamanaka & Co. of New York – and public institutions, among which feature prominently, apart

⁵⁶ Graf 2000, p. 16. Forgeries by Hösch had already been the central pieces of a temporary exhibition of forgeries organized by Johannes Ranke to coincide with an anthropological congress in 1885 in Berlin (*ibidem*, pp. 13-14).

⁵⁷ *Art: Genuine or Counterfeit?* 1940. I am thankful to Michelle Interrante, in charge of The Fogg Museum of Art Archive, for her kind help.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., *Art: Genuine or Counterfeit?* 1940, ns. 2, 14, 18.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., *Art: Genuine or Counterfeit?* 1940, ns. 1, 8, 13, 22 and 10 respectively.

⁶⁰ See the behemoth of manuals, including Cole 1955; Savage [1963] 1976; Fleming 1975. See also the exhibition catalogue Hours 1980.

from the host museum – which also held two sculptures by Giovanni Bastianini and Alceo Dossena, the latter commissioned *ad hoc* –, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Cambridge Peabody Museum.

The following decade, with the Second World War raging, did not witness any paramount exhibition⁶¹. Nonetheless, in October 1943, a temporary display of archaeological forgeries – likely the first one to be ever dedicated solely to archaeology – was installed at the then Palestine Archaeological Museum (now Rockefeller Archaeological Museum) in Jerusalem. The exhibition, organised by Leo Aryeh Mayer under the aegis of the Department of Antiquities of the British Mandatory Government, set the venue for the First Congress for Land of Israel Studies of the Hebrew Society for the Exploration of Eretz Israel and its Antiquities⁶². This was of particular relevance at a time in which colonial archaeology and its use in a nationalistic perspective was at its height, while the ghost of Moses Wilhelm Shapira’s “Mohabite forgeries” was still in the air.

In contrast, likely also in reaction to the number of fraudulent exchanges of authentic artworks that had occurred during their chaotic relocations and returns following the war⁶³, in the early 1950s a large number of exhibitions on art and archaeological fakes and forgeries took place.

In 1952, two exhibitions were organized independently from one another. On June 6, the Stadelijk Museum of Amsterdam inaugurated “Vals of Echt?”, which was also on tour in Europe (in Maastricht, Basel, Zürich, and Düsseldorf) and the United States (in Corning, Baltimore, Boston, and Louisville as “True or False?”) later⁶⁴. On July 21, at the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford, the curtain went up on a small exhibition of “Forgery and Imitation of Antiquities and Works of Art”.

The Stadelijk’s travelling exhibition was conceived as kind of a game: there was no indication regarding the authenticity of the artefact on view, so that visitors could train their eyes in telling the original apart and, later, find the solution in the catalogue⁶⁵. The show was designed by the art historian Maurits Michel van Dantzig, the famous inventor of Pictology, a system to identify artists by their brush or pen strokes that he applied to both attribution and aesthetic quality evaluation; coupled with chemical and physical techniques,

⁶¹ Nonetheless, crucial contributions to the study of art and archaeological forgery as a phenomenon were provided by Friedländer (Friedländer [1942] 1955) and Kurz (Kurz [1946] 1961). The latter, in particular, condemning, but also being subservient to, the trend in the contemporary literature on fakes of recounting only anecdotes and presenting superficial guidelines, attempted to re-evaluate the hermeneutic potentiality of fakes and counterfeits for the history of culture and taste.

⁶² Cit. in Doron 1989, pp. 5-6. Silvia Krapiwko, Head of archive IAA, to whom I express my gratitude, told me that the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum holds a folder about this exhibition. Nonetheless, I could not access it.

⁶³ Prisco 2019, p. 275.

⁶⁴ van Dantzig 1952; 1954.

⁶⁵ Prisco 2019, note 13.

applying the principles of Pictology also allowed to reveal differences between the fake and its original counterparts. With this in mind, new light was thus shed on the manifold forms of the inauthentic, from the copy and the schoolwork to the overpainting, the pasticcio, and the imitation, reaffirming the tautology forgery-fraud. As a matter of fact, the exhibition, first held in the homeland of the infamous Dutch forger Han van Meegeren only a few years after his trial and condemnation⁶⁶, was mostly devoted to paintings, from allegedly Primitives to Early Modern and Modern Masters, featuring also both fakes and “authentic” works by van Meegeren himself; they went on scene also some *œuvres* by Bastianini and Dossena and the famous *Tiara of Saitaphernes*⁶⁷.

The Oxford exhibition instead, designed by W.L. Brown, the Keeper of the Department of Antiquities, was arranged in the Temporary Exhibition Gallery to coincide with the 58th Annual Conference of the Museum Association and stayed open until November⁶⁸. It gathered exhibits from the two departments of the Ashmolean and from other Oxford museums, i.e., the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Museum of the History of Science and the Eastern Art Museum. The display was divided into four sections: drawings and paintings, minor and applied arts, antiquities and Far Eastern Art. Furthermore, the Heberden Coin Room hosted a related exposition of coin and medals. As usual, they were placed on view both forgeries and innocent copies and imitations. Although the emphasis was on the typical fake that could slip unheated into any collection, there was also reference to famous forgers, including Giovanni Bastianini, “Flint Jack”, and William Smith and Charles Eaton. In coincidence with the opening of the exhibition, Harold J. Plenderleith, the Keeper of the Research Laboratory of the British Museum, held a lecture titled *Fakes and Forgeries in Museums*, introducing the approaches to scientific and technical examination in authenticity studies⁶⁹.

Chemical and physical analyses, which from the very 1950s started being widely applied to study and authenticate artworks⁷⁰, were also the main concern

⁶⁶ On van Meegeren, the infamous forger of Vermeers, see Moiseiwitsch 1964; Godley 1951; Coremans 1949.

⁶⁷ van Datzing 1954, p. 45, n. 28, pls. 39-40. The *Tiara of Saitaphernes* was kind of a *leitmotif* in the exhibitions on forgeries held in second half of the twentieth century; it was on display, e.g., at “Vals of Echt?”, Amsterdam 1952 (van Datzing 1952) / “True or False?”, Corning 1953 (van Datzing 1954); “Musée des Faux artistiques”, Paris 1954 (*Musée des faux artistiques* 1954); “Fakes and Forgeries”, Minneapolis 1973 (*Fakes and forgeries* 1973); “Fake? The art of Deception”, London 1989 (Jones *et al.* 1990); “The Secret of the Tiara: Work of the Goldsmith Israel Rouchomovsky”, Tel Aviv 1997 (Benjamin 1997); “L’Âge du Faux. L’authenticité en archéologie”, Neuchâtel 2011 (Kaeser 2011).

⁶⁸ The small exhibition did not have a catalogue. Scattered information can be found in *Ashmolean Museum. Report of the Visitors* (1952), pp. 3, 10 and 42, and Brown 1952, p. 161. I am very grateful to Clare Pollard for her enquiries and kind advice.

⁶⁹ The paper was published in the dossier appeared in the *Museums Journal* (Plenderleith 1952).

⁷⁰ See *supra*, note 60. On the advent and increasing sophistication of scientific techniques in the authentication of works of art and their (sometimes conflictual) relation with art historical

of “Take Care”, on view at the Brooklyn Museum of New York between January and February 1954 (Fig. 5). Organized by Sheldon Keck, veteran of the Museum’s restoration laboratory, and his wife, Karoline K. Keck, not only did the exhibition shed some light on state-of-the-art sleuthing techniques, but it also delved into the art of preserving and restoring paintings. The panoply of scientific examination to which paintings had been subjected included both non-destructive means, such as X-ray and IR photos, and destructive ones, like microscopy, spectroscopy, and X-ray diffraction. A film documenting the different techniques was projected as well.

Not only did scientific detection methods represent a valuable device for museums, but they proved powerful weapons also for art police units, which were playing a major role in detecting as well as displaying art and archaeological forgeries – as already mentioned the case of Türkler, in the Twenties. In the summer 1955, the “Exposition Mondiale Le Faux dans l’Art et dans l’Histoire” was set up in Paris, as part of the yearly “Salon International de la Police”, at its third edition⁷¹. The first Salon had been organised in 1953, at the initiative of the Amicale Internationale des Policiers ACDIPR, to display the artworks of the “*flics-artistes*”, in a small gallery in rue de Bourgogne. At its second edition, arranged in a gallery in rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, the Salon had been enriched by «une sensationnelle attraction... le premier *Musée des Faux artistiques*»⁷². Although the exhibition was temporary and its catalogue modest⁷³, its resonance was such that the third Salon reached an international scope and was staged in the most prestigious art gallery of Paris, the Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées – with the exalted collaboration of Sureté Nationale, Préfecture de Paris and Interpol.

In the catalogue, the *commissaire principal* Guy Isnard, artistic director of the Comité and author of books on forgeries as well⁷⁴, synthesises the chief aims of the Salon in these terms: «dévoiler le fraude, mettre en garde, protéger le droit des ‘créateurs’, stigmatiser les faussaires et leurs complices», and provide «une démonstration éducative devant servir à l’édification des collectionneurs, des acheteurs, des étudiants, des artistes, des connaisseurs et amateurs d’art»⁷⁵.

evaluation, there is a broad bibliography; for some latest references, see Craddock 2020 forthcoming; Scott 2020 forthcoming; Scott 2016; Craddock 2009, pp. 2-5 *et passim*; see also, Spier 1990. To this end, it is also worth pointing out how the publication of both originals making-technology and state-of-the-art authentication techniques proved useful to forgers themselves, who got used to paying attention to anachronisms, reusing old frames, canvases, panels, papers, ceramics etc., and employing ageing techniques to give their new artefacts convincing appearance, spectra, date etc. For some examples, see Craddock 2009.

⁷¹ For a broader and detailed account of this exhibition, see Prisco 2019.

⁷² Léon Theus in *Les Faux dans l’Art et dans l’Histoire* 1955, n.p.

⁷³ *Musée des faux artistiques* 1954.

⁷⁴ Isnard 1955, 1959, 1974.

⁷⁵ Guy Isnard in *Les Faux dans l’Art et dans l’Histoire* 1955, n.p.

Among the short essays which follow, it is worth mentioning the one of Serge Roche, President of the Confédération internationale des Négociants en oeuvres d'art, who brought to the fore the point of view of the dealer. His poetic contribution remembers how Isnard himself invited him to visit the venue of the exhibition and figure out together its installation. After the initial scepticism,

Petit à petit, durant notre promenade, l'unité paraissait cependant possible, le rythme des salles s'affirmait... En même temps, j'acquerrais la certitude de l'utilité de cette manifestation, combine il était nécessaire que l'oeuvre de tous ceux qui ont triché soit mise ai grand jour afin de permettre au public de se faire une idée du faux, d'en connaître les limites et de savoir aussi que l'acheteur est bien défendu dans ce domaine et que la répression est sévère⁷⁶.

The display was divided in two parts: “Le Faux dans l'Art” and “Les Faux dans l'Histoire”, including, in the section “Contrefaçons et Faux Divers”, “Archéologie” and “La Préhistoire”. Fakes, innocent reproductions, and their authentic counterparts were displayed in close proximity for comparison. In some cases, a concise label displayed alongside the item identified it as “vrai”, “faux” or “surdecoré”⁷⁷, whereas, other times, visitors were challenged to identify its status for themselves⁷⁸, like in “Art: Genuine or Counterfeit?” (Cambridge 1940) and “Vals of Echt?” (Amsterdam 1952)⁷⁹. Furthermore, some artefacts were accompanied by the results of the scientific investigations which had been carried out on them.

The Salon featured also an Italian contribution, consisting of eleven artefacts sent by the Istituto Centrale del Restauro (ICR) of Rome, together with their labels, the results of the scientific investigations and a photo-montage describing the activities of the Istituto. These were items that the ICR had collected in the previous years for the project “Mostra del falso d'arte”, which was meant to become a permanent installation⁸⁰.

Items and photographs of art and archaeological fakes and imitations had come from all corners of Italy. Nonetheless, the “Mostra del falso d'arte” (Fig. 6), which would have been the *pendant* of the “Mostra permanente di restauri e di documentazioni dei restauri”, that opened at the ICR in May 1950, was not to be and there was only a small, temporary exhibition without any catalogue. The chronology of “Mostra del falso d'arte” is uncertain, oscillating between 1955/56 and 1959. The fact that the items that had been borrowed by the Soprintendenze

⁷⁶ Serge Roche, in *Les Faux dans l'Art et dans l'Histoire* 1955, n.p.

⁷⁷ E.g., *Les Faux dans l'Art et dans l'Histoire* 1955, s.v. *Céramiques*.

⁷⁸ E.g., *Les Faux dans l'Art et dans l'Histoire* 1955, s.v. *Dufy*.

⁷⁹ The same double-pattern would have been adopted later, e.g., for “Artful Deception. The Craft of the Forger”, Baltimore, Walters Arts Galleries 1987 (Vikan 1987), whereas other exhibitions would have chosen the sole quiz-game, like, e.g., “Fakes & Forgeries: Yesterday and Today”, Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum 2011 (*Fakes & Forgeries* 2011). Most exhibitions, however, would have featured labels identifying and describing the objects.

⁸⁰ On the project of this museum dedicated to forgeries, see Prisco 2019.

faced some resistance and refusals when asked to be sent back, is striking. It proves that the director of the Institute, the art historian Cesare Brandi, thought that taking them from their own museological context as “non-art” would have raised an unsolvable question when side-by-side with “true” art.

In fact, although the exhibition failed, Cesare Brandi took on the role of forerunner of two different driving forces in the subsequent study perspectives: first, he emphasised the importance of scientific analyses, which were only marginal in restoration work, when the art historian’s true tools failed, that is, critical and aesthetic analyses in the case of fakes⁸¹. Secondly, notwithstanding the paradigm of the ontological impossibility of fakes as art, he foreshadowed the hermeneutic re-evaluation of fakes and forgeries as historical documents, bearers of aesthetic, cultural and social messages on multiple levels and part of the history of taste and art criticism⁸².

3. Conclusions

This path throughout forty years of temporary exhibitions on art and archaeological fakes and reproductions allows us to identify commonalities, differences, and changes over time, so far as display strategies, as well as the patterns, reasons and purposes, are concerned. We may conceptualize three format-paradigms that have been employed again, as exhibitions of art and archaeological forgeries have multiplied over the years and especially in the last decade.

First, exhibitions conceived and put on by museums for chiefly educational purposes. Whether they were catalogues of the museum’s own acknowledged mistakes – from “‘Fakes’ and Reproductions” (Philadelphia 1916) to “Take Care” (Brooklyn 1954) – or the outcome of a University class – like “Art: Genuine or Counterfeit?” (Cambridge 1940) – or yet they were to set up the venue for an international meeting of museum curators, gathering loans from outside – from “Forfalskninger” (Copenhagen 1915) to “Forgery and Imitation of Antiquities and Works of Art” (Oxford 1952) –, they first aimed to warn

⁸¹ «Il giudizio di falsità deve scaturire quanto meno sia possibile da apprezzamenti stilistici e quanto più possibile da analisi, constatazioni, documentazioni di fatto. E questo non perché proprio io voglia negare l’universalità del giudizio estetico, ma perché, trattandosi di non-arte, deve intervenire nel giudizio una catena di indizi, che proprio nel giudizio estetico non possono intervenire, tanto meno motivarlo» (Brandi 1955, p. 28).

⁸² Brandi’s ideas and beliefs on fakes and forgery found a place in the introduction for the entry *Falsification* written for the *Enciclopedia Universale dell’arte* (Brandi [1958] 1987), that was re-published in *Teoria del restauro* (Brandi [1963] 1977). Most notably, in the late 1950s, the art historian Giulio Argan designed the project of a twenty volumes series of art history to be published by Einaudi to include also a volume entitled *Tecniche, falsi, restauri* (techniques, fakes, restorations) by Cesare Brandi, which still was not to be (Nicoletti, Rossi Pinelli 2018, pp. 156 and ff.).

visitors against, and educate them about, the ubiquitous fakes, illustrating the doubtful signs and how to detect them. This format would have been bought by many museums in the subsequent years, as to account for example the miscellaneous exhibitions “Forgeries and Deceptive Copies” (London, British Museum 1961)⁸³ and “Fakes and forgeries” (Minneapolis Institute of Fine Arts 1973)⁸⁴, and is still in vogue, as shown, for instance, by the recent travelling exhibition “Fakes, Forgeries and Mysteries” (Detroit 2010)⁸⁵ and “L’Âge du Faux. L’Authenticité en Archéologie” (Neuchâtel, Laténium 2011)⁸⁶.

Secondly, exhibitions like the Parisian *Salons des flics* (1954, 1955), gathering counterfeits confiscated by the art police units, aimed at unveiling frauds, stigmatizing and countering forgers, denouncing the crime against the integrity of the art world and historical mystification, as well as highlight the financial costs and celebrating the police itself. Although exhibitions of this kind fell out of style in the mid-nineteenth century, they came back in fashion in recent years, as account for, e.g., “The FBI collects” (Washington D.C., McIntosh/Drysdale gallery 1986)⁸⁷, and, more recently, “Veri, falsi e ritrovati” (Venice, Ca’ Foscari 2008)⁸⁸, set up by the former Gruppo Tutela Patrimonio Archeologico of the Guardia di Finanza, and “The Metropolitan Police Service’s Investigations of Fakes and Forgeries” (London, Victoria and Albert Museum 2010)⁸⁹, conceived and curated by the Arts and Antiques Unit of London’s Metropolitan Police Service⁹⁰.

Lastly, that of the solo exhibition by the artist/forgery, like the series of Alceo Dossena’s (Naples 1929, Milan 1929, Berlin 1930, Rome 1931, New York 1933), is a paradigm that has been employed again afterwards as well. Along with “Retrospectiva di Alceo Dossena” (Rome 1956)⁹¹, exhibitions devoted to the Russian goldsmith Israel Rouchomovsky – “Secret of the Tiara: The Work of the Goldsmith Israel Rouchomovsky” (Tel Aviv, Eretz Israel Museum 1997)⁹² –, Icilio Federico Joni, Umberto Giunti, and the other nineteenth-twentieth-century forgers of Italian Primitives – including “Falsi d’autore. Icilio Federico Joni e la cultura del falso tra Otto e Novecento” (Siena, Santa Maria della Scala 2004)⁹³ –,

⁸³ *An exhibition of forgeries and deceptive copies, held in the Department of Print* 1961.

⁸⁴ *Fakes and forgeries* 1973.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., Kahn 2010.

⁸⁶ Kaeser 2011.

⁸⁷ See, e.g., Shenon 1986.

⁸⁸ *Veri, falsi e ritrovati* 2008.

⁸⁹ See, e.g., Hardwick 2010.

⁹⁰ They are worth mentioning also “Possessione. Trafugamenti e falsi di antichità a Paestum” (Paestum 2016) – Zuchtriegel 2016 – and the temporary displays organized within the Cycle of Conferences *L’arte non vera non può essere arte* by the *Carabinieri Nucleo Tutela Patrimonio Culturale* in 2017 (*L’arte non vera* 2018).

⁹¹ Biancale 1956.

⁹² See Benjamin 1997.

⁹³ Mazzoni 2004. More in general, on the figure of the forger, see “Artful Deception. The Craft of the Forger” (Vikan 1987). On the Italian production of *spuria* over the nineteenth and

and, more recently, to the Dutch Han van Meegeren – “Van Meegeren’s Fake Vermeers” (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen 2010) – provide some examples. By shedding light on the activity and the poetics of the artists/forgers and their *milieu*, these exhibitions drew attention to the critical analysis of, and reflection on, nineteenth-twentieth century antiquities collecting and trading *tout court*, that is the economic, social, and cultural scenario in which artistic reproduction and forgery were at their height. This was the last consequence of the 1980s re-evaluation of the figure of the forger and the phenomenon of art forgery as historical instances, mirrors of cultural, social, ethic, aesthetic, and epistemological values. This re-evaluation, foreshadowed by Cesare Brandi – and, before him, by Otto Kurz –, came to the fore thanks to exhibitions like “Vrai ou faux? Copier, Imiter, Falsifier” (Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 1988)⁹⁴ or “Fake? The art of deception” (London, British Museum 1989)⁹⁵.

With this in mind, panels on forgeries have been included in traditional exhibitions, framed into broader cultural discourses concerning Classical artistic and cultural memory and identity in our Modern and Late modern civilization and art; “Carvers and Collectors. The lasting aura of ancient gems” (Malibu, Getty Museum 2009)⁹⁶ and “Voglia d’Italia. Il collezionismo internazionale all’ombra del Vittoriano” (Rome, Palazzo Venezia – Vittoriano 2017)⁹⁷ provide two valuable examples.

On a different note, it is worth noting that from the late twentieth century, the flourishing business of counterfeits and the spreading of “fake news” taking over the globe, exhibitions have been organised that looked at the threat of forgery through the prism of diverse types of products, ranging from food to luxury and pharmaceutical. Paradigmatic is the case of the Parisian exhibition “Vraiment Faux” organized by the Fondation Cartier in 1988 (Jouy-en-Josas, Fondation Cartier 1988)⁹⁸ and also exported to Italy – “Veramente Falso” (Milan 1990) – and, more recently, the Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum-produced “Fakes & Forgeries: Yesterday and Today” (2010)⁹⁹ travelling across Canada.

twentieth century, see also “L’art d’imiter. Images de la Renaissance italienne au Musée d’art et d’histoire: falsifications, manipulations, pastiches”, Geneva, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire 1997 (Natale, Ritschard 1997) and “Vrai ? Faux ? Le Primitif italien était presque parfait”, Ajaccio, Palais Fesch 2012 (Moench 2012).

⁹⁴ *Vrai ou faux? Copier, imiter, falsifier* 1988.

⁹⁵ Jones *et al.* 1990.

⁹⁶ <https://www.getty.edu/news/press/center/carvers_and_collectors.html>.

⁹⁷ Pellegrini 2017.

⁹⁸ *Vraiment faux* 1988.

⁹⁹ *Fakes and Forgeries* 2011.

Lastly, since the topic of forgery is tangent to that of revival and appropriation¹⁰⁰, it is worth mentioning a number of exhibitions dealing with Postmodern appropriations from both Classical and Modern Art, from “Berlin und die Antike” (Berlin, Große Orangerie Schloss Charlottenburg 1979)¹⁰¹, “Pictures” (New York, Artists Space 1977)¹⁰² and “Art about Art” (New York, Whitney Museum of American Art 1978)¹⁰³, to the more recent “Icons: The Art of Appropriation” (New York, Sotheby’s 2012)¹⁰⁴ and “L’image volée” (Milan, Fondazione Prada 2016)¹⁰⁵.

If Alfred Lessing claimed that, whatever the reason for the removal of van Meegeren’s *Disciples of Emmaus* from the walls of the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam, still «it embodies and bears witness to the greatness of the seventeenth-century art of Vermeer»¹⁰⁶, we may say that not only do the semiotics of forgery exhibitions’ patterns¹⁰⁷ investigated in this paper shed light on museums, galleries, and art police units’ reactions to, and reception of, forgeries over the century, but, in this *mise-en-abyme*, such narratives of/on forgeries also prove part of the history of culture and art criticism.

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¹⁰¹ Arenhövel, Schreiber 1979.

¹⁰² Crimp 1977.

¹⁰³ Lipman, Marshall 1978.

¹⁰⁴ <<http://www.sothebys.com/it/auctions/2015/icons-art-appropriation-n09376.html>>.

¹⁰⁵ Demand 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Lessing 1965, pp. 469-470.

¹⁰⁷ Different narratives have been constructing through different display strategies: original/non-original side-by-side *versus* original/non-original in different panels; lonely forgeries *versus* forgeries/*sine dolo* copies and imitations; archaeological diagnostics with/without scientific diagnostics; labels *versus* quiz etc.

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Appendice



Fig. 1. Some of the objects on view at “Forfalskninger” (Copenhagen, Danske Kunstindustrimuseum 1915). From left to right: Hannover 1916, cat. nos. 29, 73, and 88



Fig. 2. Some of the objects on view at “Fakes’ and Reproductions” (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Museum of Fine Arts 1916). From left to right: Modern French copy (France, eighteenth century) of genuine Chinese Ch’ien-lung porcelain plate (1736-1795); genuine example of Zwischenglass (Bohemia, mid-eighteenth century) and Venetian imitation (eighteenth century); Modern imitation of late sixteenth-century Siegburg white-stone cannette and genuine example. Barber 1916, cat. nos. 2 and 1, 234 and 235, 297 and 298



Fig. 3. Alceo Dossena, *Annunciation in the manner of Simone Martini*, polychromed wood, early nineteenth century, auctioned at “Sculptures by Alceo Dossena” (New York, National Art Galleries 1933). Frankfurter 1933, cat. nos. 15 and 16

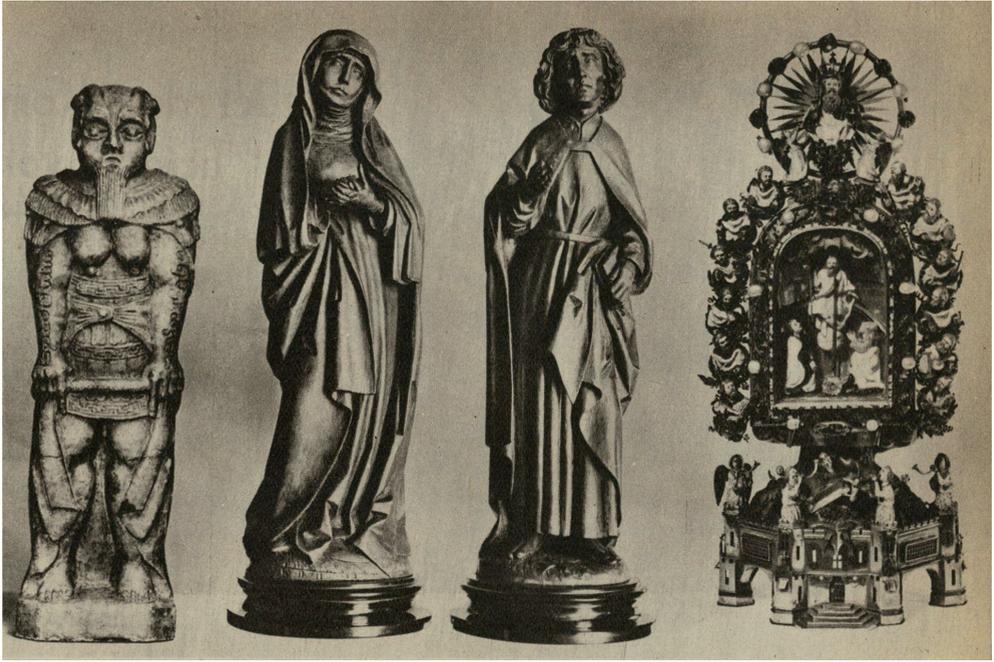


Fig. 4. Some of the objects on view at “Gefälschte Kunstwerke” (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum 1937). From right to left: eighteenth century Egyptian Baphomet; Modern wooden statuettes of Holy Mary and Saint John after models of Tilman Riemenschneider; Modern golden reliquiar with pearls and precious stones after fourteenth century originals. Roessler 1937, p. 7



Fig. 5. Exhibition interior of “Take Care” at the Brooklyn Museum (1954), © Brooklyn Museum, photographs retrieved from <<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/>>

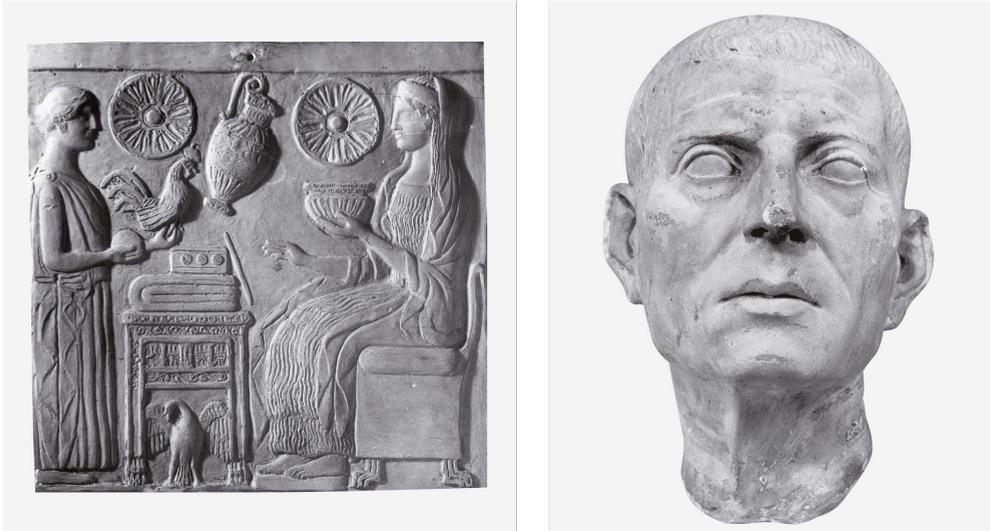


Fig. 6. A couple of the archaeological fakes on view at “Mostra del Falso d’arte” (Rome, ICR 1955). From left to right: fake Locrian terracotta *pinax* (*Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Puglia e del Materano*); fake marble portrait of a male (*Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Torino*). Prisco 2019, p. 276

Tab. 1 – Exhibitions of art and archaeological fakes held between 1915 and 2020

Year	City	Museum	Exhibition
1915	Copenhagen, DNK	Danske Kunstinsuuseum	<i>Forfalskninger</i>
1916	Philadelphia, PE (USA)	Pennsylvania Museum of Art	<i>“Fakes” and Reproductions</i>
1923	Vienna, AUT	Kunsthistorische Museum	<i>Ausstellung Gefälschte Kunstwerk</i>
1924	London, GBR	Burlington Fine Arts Club	<i>Counterfeits, Imitations and Copies of works of art</i>
1924	New York, NY (USA)	Metropolitan Museum of Art	<i>Egyptian ‘fakes’ (?)</i>
1926	Vienna, AUT, touring	Belvedere, touring	<i>Fälschungen und Faksimiles von Kunstwerken des.19 Jahrhunderts</i>
1929	New York, NY (USA)	Metropolitan Museum of Art	<i>Forged and Real (?)</i>
1929	Naples, ITA	Corona Gallery	(Exhibition on Alceo Dossena)
1929	Milan, ITA	Galleria Micheli	<i>Esposizione di 28 Capolavori di Alceo Dossena</i>
1930	Berlin, DEU	Hall of Art	<i>Der Bildhauer Alceo Dossena aus dem filmzyklus “schaffende Hände”</i>
1931	Rome, ITA	Mostre di “Fiamma”, via Bocca di Leone 83	<i>Mostra personale dello scultore Alceo Dossena</i>
1932	New York, NY (USA)	Metropolitan Museum of Art	<i>An exhibition of forgeries</i>
1933	New York, NY(USA)	National Art Galleries - Rose Room, Hotel Plaza	<i>Sculptures by Alceo Dossena</i>
1936	Nuremberg, DEU	Naturhistorischen Gesellschaft Nürnberg	<i>Ausstellung über Fälschungen aus Nordbayern statt</i>
1937	Vienna, AUT	Kunsthistorische Museum	<i>Gefälschte Kunstwerke</i>
1940	Cambridge, MA (USA)	Harvard, The Fogg Museum of Art	<i>Art: genuine or counterfeit?</i>
1943	Jerusalem, ISR (British Mandate)	Palestine Archaeological Museum (Rockefeller Museum)	(Exhibition on archaeological fakes)
1952	Oxford, GBR	Ashmolean Museum (Temporary Exhibitions Gallery)	<i>Forgery and imitation / Fakes and Forgeries in Museums</i>
1952	Amsterdam, NLD, touring	Stedelijk Museum, touring	<i>Vals of Echt?</i>
1953-1954	New York, NY, touring	Corning Museum of Glass, touring	<i>True or false?</i>
1954	Paris, FRA	Gallerie du rue Faubourg St. Honoré	<i>Musée des Faux artistiques</i>
1954	New York, NY (USA)	Brooklyn Museum	<i>Take Care</i>
1955	Paris, FRA	Galerie du Grand Palais	<i>Le Faux dans l’Art e dans l’Histoire</i>
1956	Rome, ITA	Associazione della Stampa, Palazzo Marignoli in via del Corso 184	<i>Retrospektiva di Alceo Dossena</i>

1955/6- 1959 (?)	Rome, ITA	Istituto Centrale del restauro (ICR)	<i>Museo del Falso d'arte</i>
1961	London, GBR	British Museum	<i>Forgeries and Deceptive Copies</i>
1967	New York, NY (USA)	Graham Gallery	<i>Art: Authentic and Fake</i>
1967	Madison, WI (USA)	Madison Art Center	<i>Fakes and Frauds**</i>
1969	Portland, OR (USA)	Portland Art Museum	<i>Fakes, Frauds and Forgeries**</i>
1970	Chicago, IL (USA)	The Renaissance Society of the University of Chicago	<i>Know What You See**</i>
1972	New York, NY (USA)	Martin Gordon Gallery	<i>Buyer Beware</i>
1973	Minneapolis, MN (USA)	Minneapolis Institute of Arts	<i>Fakes and Forgeries</i>
1973	Huntington, NY (USA)	Heckscher Museum of Art	<i>Mistaken Identity</i>
1973	Princeton, NJ (USA)	Princeton University, Art Mu- seum	<i>Seventeenth century landscapes: Ital- ian, French, Flemish, Dutch. Prob- lems of authenticity in nineteenth and twentieth century art</i>
1973	Münster, DEU	Westfälischen Kunstverein	<i>Original + Fälschung</i>
1975	Pittsburgh, PA (USA)	Pittsburgh University	<i>Forgeries and their detection</i>
1976- 1977	Essen, Berlin, DEU	Museum Folkswang, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbe- sitz	<i>Fälschung und Forschung</i>
1977	Westport, CT (USA)	Annual Southport-Westport An- tiques Show	<i>Genuine antiques and their counter- feits</i>
1977	Toledo, OH (USA)	Toledo Museum	<i>Deceptions in glass</i>
1979	Berlin, DEU	Orangerie Schloß Charlotten- burg	<i>Berlin und die Antike</i>
1980	Vienna, AUT	Akademie der Bildenden Künste	<i>Original, Kopie, Replik, Paraphrase</i>
1981	Washington D.C. (USA)	Dumbarton Oaks	<i>Questions of Authenticity among the Arts of Byzantium</i>
1983	London, GBR	Clarendon Gallery	<i>Bartolomeo Cavaceppi: 18th centu- ry Restorations of Ancient Marble Sculpture from English Private Col- lections</i>
1983	Amsterdam, NLD	Allard Pierson Museum	<i>Echt vals? namaak door de eeuwen been</i>
1984	Maryland, MD (USA)	Annual hunt valley antiques show	<i>Fakes and forgeries, marriages and deceptions</i>
1984	Brussels, BEL	Musée Royaux d'Art et d'His- toire, Brussels	<i>Vervalsingen van Egyptische kunst</i>
1986	Washington D.C. (USA)	Mcintosh/Drysdale gallery	<i>The FBI collects</i>
1986	Hull, GBR	Ferens Art Gallery	<i>Don't trust the label: an exhibition of fakes, imitations and the real thing</i>

1987	Oxford, GBR	Ashmolean Museum	<i>Forgery and its Detection</i>
1987	Baltimore, MD (USA)	Walters Arts Galleries	<i>Artful Deception. The Craft of the Forger</i>
1988	New York, NY(USA)	Asia Society Galleries	<i>The Real, the Fake and the Master-piece</i>
1988	Paris, FRA	Fondation Cartier	<i>Vraiment Faux</i>
1988	Paris, FRA	Cabinet des Medailles	<i>Vrai ou faux? Copier, Imiter, Falsifier</i>
1989	Tel Aviv, ISR	Israel Museum	<i>Fakes and Forgeries from Collections in Israel</i>
1989	London, GBR	British Museum	<i>Fake? The art of Deception</i>
1989	Aarhus, DNK	Kunstmuseum	<i>Kunst og Kunstforfalskning</i>
1996	Kansas City, MO (USA), touring	Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, touring	<i>Discovery and Deceit: Archaeology and the Forger's Craft</i>
1997	Jerusalem, ISR	Israel Museum	<i>The Secret of the Tiara: The Work of the Goldsmith Israel Rouchomovsky</i>
1998	Kansas City, MO (USA), touring	Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, touring	<i>Treasures of Deceit</i>
1998	Milan, ITA	Museo Poldi Pezzoli	<i>Falsi da museo: falsi capolavori al Museo Poldi Pezzoli</i>
2000	Jerusalem, ISR	Rockefeller Museum	<i>Truly Fake. Moses Wilhelm Shapira, Master Forger</i>
2002	Jerusalem, ISR	Rockefeller Museum	<i>Truly Fake. Moses Wilhelm Shapira, Master Forger</i>
2004	Bruges, BEL	Groeningemuseum	<i>Fake or not fake: het verhaal van de restauratie van de Vlaamse Primitieven</i>
2004	Springfield, MA (USA), touring	The Michelle and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts	<i>Intent to Deceive: Fakes and Forgeries in the Art World</i>
2007	Greenwich, CO (USA)	Bruce Museum	<i>Fakes and Forgeries: The Art of Deception</i>
2008	Venice, ITA	Ca' Foscari	<i>Veri, Falsi, Ritrovati</i>
2009	New York, NY (USA)	Brooklyn Museum	<i>Unearthing the Truth, Egypt's Pagan and Coptic Sculpture</i>
2010	London, GBR	Victoria and Albert Museum	<i>The Metropolitan Police Service's Investigations of Fakes and Forgeries</i>
2010	London, GBR	National Gallery	<i>Close Examination: Fakes, Mistakes and Discoveries</i>
2010	Detroit, MI (USA)	Detroit Institute of Arts Museum	<i>Fakes, Forgery and Mysteries</i>
2010	Paris, FRA	Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Parc de la Villette	<i>Contrefaçon, la vraie expo qui parle du faux</i>
2010	Rotterdam, NLD	Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen	<i>Van Meegeren's Fake Vermeers</i>
2010-	Toronto, CAN, touring	Royal Ontario Museum, touring	<i>Fakes & Forgeries: Yesterday and Today</i>
2011	Neuchâtel, CHE	Laténium	<i>L'Âge du Faux. L'authenticité en archéologie</i>

2016	Capaccio, ITA	Parco Archeologico Paestum	<i>Possessione. Trafugamenti e falsi di antichità a Paestum</i>
2017	Reggio Calabria, ITA	Museo Archeologico Nazionale	<i>Vero o falso. Il valore dell'originale, lo stile dell'imitazione</i>
2017	Cosenza, ITA	Museo dei Brettii e degli Enotri	<i>Bello ma Falso, tutta un'altra storia!</i>
2017	Winterthur, DE (USA)	Winterthur Museum	<i>Treasures on Trial</i>
2018	Münster, DEU	Museum für Archäologie Herne	<i>Irrtümer und Fälschungen der Archäologie</i>
2018	Hannover, DEU	Sprengel Museum	<i>Fake News: Original + Fälschung + Kopie + ...</i>
2018	Taipei, TWN	National Palace Museum	<i>Fimeries of Forgery: "Suzhou Fakes" and Their Influence in the 16th to 18th Century</i>
2018	Hildesheim, DEU	Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum	<i>Irrtümer und Fälschungen der Archäologie</i>
2019	Roma, ITA	Università degli Studi Roma Tre	<i>In difesa della bellezza. Diagnostica umanistica e tecnologico-scientifica per lo svelamento del falso nell'arte</i>
2019-2020	Girona, ESP	Girona Art Museum	<i>Genuine fakes. The art of deception</i>
2020	Cologne, DEU	Museum Ludwig	<i>Russian Avant-Garde at the Museum Ludwig: Original and Fake . Questions, Research, Explanations</i>
2020	St. Peter, MN (USA)	Hillstrom Museum of Art	<i>Elmyr De Hory, Artist and Faker</i>
2020	Binghamton, NY (USA)	Binghamton University Art Museum	<i>Holy Hoaxes: A Curator Collects</i>

* Cited in Koobatian 1997; the museum's archive does not hold any folder or reference to this exhibition.

** Cited in *Fakes and Forgeries* 1973.

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