

## **RA 24 (2022) Replicas. Architecture as copy or invention**

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The history of the copy is as old as the history of architecture itself. While Pliny the Elder considered the origin of painting to be the desire to reproduce the outline of a shadow, and Vitruvius did the same for sculpture when he described the Corinthian order as life emerging from death, the model as copy of the natural highlights the synthesis of the two disciplines as the boundary between any creative act and mimesis. An appropriate example is Roman architecture conceived as an aide-mémoire of the Greek model, with signs distinguishing between originals and replicas recognized only in the details of words and their formal variations.

In the endless list of models of imitatio to which architecture originally refers, the model as a full-scale replica has responded to different interests and contexts over the centuries. Giorgio Vasari gives an account of a widespread practice in Florentine workshops in the fourteen-hundreds. Then, reproductions of fragments of ruins were taken as the manifesto of an anachronistic Renaissance, laying the bases for the diffusion and circulation of antiquity and its imaginaries. The Baroque extended its use to the world of stage sets and theatre, like some of the creations of Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Then, in the 18th century, academies added their renewed pedagogical interest in a total architecture, in which the copy and displacement of the original guaranteed learning, laying the foundations for the successful future Beaux-Arts current. Examples include the duplication of the Sainte-Geneviève façade by Jacques-Germain Soufflot and the numerous campaigns carried out in Rome. Later, the technical reproduction introduced with the international expositions gave rise to the culture of fragment and detail at the first museums of artistic reproductions in cities such as London, Madrid, Barcelona and Paris. In the 20th century, the architecture avantgarde, pushing back against academia, rejected the art of the copy as dogma, heading high-profile instances of both the destruction of natural casts and campaigns to discredit those who used them. This discredit was, however, opposed by artists such as Marcel Duchamp.

Today, new initiatives focus attention not only on the legacy and future of their collections, but also on the theoretical problem arising from the origin of form as memory and the reproduction techniques associated with it. Artists and architects such as Rachel Whiteread, Asta Gröting and Jorge Otero-Pailos, research projects of the kind headed by the V&A at the 15th and 16th Venice Architecture Biennale, commemorative exhibitions like the one at the James-Simon-Galerie in Berlin, the work of practices such as Peter Zumthor's and pedagogical proposals by the Drawing Matter organization are just some examples of how unusually contemporaneous one of the possible models of

study, replica by contact, has now become. Its scope must be addressed, along with many others, in all its complexity. The call for submission of articles to RA journal sets out to address the issue of architectural models in the terms outlined here. The aim is not to refer so much to examples that are well known in artistic literature as to monographs of case studies and theoretical essays that explore the origin and paradox of architecture as copy or invention using systems of replica or duplication, at the same time challenging concepts surrounding originality, authorship, completeness and memory. Aby Warburg alerted us to this: each age has the antiquity it deserves.

More info and possible topics for articles (Spanish or English) are listed in the URL provided.

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