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The Imaginary Museum of Plaster Casts

In a number of European cities, those who bother to search can find the remains of once-prominent cultural institutions: collections of plaster casts after antique sculptures. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they played two essential functions: on the one hand, in the museum context, they provided the "general public" with an overview of the history of sculpture that no collection of originals could offer; on the other, in the context of art academies, they provided students with materials to copy and, ultimately, emulate. Both of these overlapping functions came under pressure in the decades around 1900. From an art-historical perspective, even second-rate originals were preferable to plaster copies, and contemporary artistic production opted for different models.

Cast collections spent most of the twentieth century in the wilderness, with increasing numbers of cast collections suffering neglect or active destruction up to the 1960s and 1970s. In recent decades, a number of collections have been restored or reconstructed and newly installed—Munich being prominent among them. Does this mean that the plaster cast collection has now been normalized and is now it a well-behaved footnote of cultural history? I would argue that its historical status remains contradictory, and therefore interesting. Casting is an ancient method of mechanical reproduction, and if the plaster cast came to be regarded as a somewhat uncanny and undesirable phenomenon, then this may be due as much to its futurist as to its old-fashioned traits.[i] Casts—whether in plaster or another material—are simultaneously archaic and prophetic. However, it is plaster as a cheap and brittle simulacrum that really brings the issue of the value of casts and cast collections into focus.

Casting culture

As Georges Didi-Huberman has emphasized, the casting of bodies or body parts was used by Renaissance sculptors such as Donatello, but was frowned upon by Humanist art theorists such as Vasari.[ii] Because casting was a mechanical procedure, it frustrated art's attempt to become accepted as one of the liberal arts—something with which sculpture, as a more physical art than painting, had greater difficulty anyway.[iii] Renaissance art theory placed a high value on imitation; artists were to copy

works by their great predecessors, but this was not a mechanical process. Imitation was not to be slavish, and was supposed to lead to compositions that modify their models. Although this was to a significant degree a manual affair, the hand was guided by the mind, by a lofty conception, and this was a fundamental difference from (apparently) merely mechanical practices such as casting.

Even so, Renaissance culture was unthinkable without various forms of (semi)mechanical reproduction, including woodcuts and engravings, and casts of revered antique statues. A culture developed in which the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoon and the other revered masterpieces of ancient art from the Vatican's Belvedere Courtyard or from the Capitoline Hill were sought after to make moulds and casts. Around 1540, Primaticcio, court painter to François I, was in Rome making plaster moulds from the most famous antique sculptures, which were then sent to France. In France, bronze casts for Fontainebleau were made from these moulds. The slightly less wealthy opted for plaster casts, which not only provided impressive decoration for the abodes of the rich and powerful (just as they would later confer legitimacy the triumphant bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century in its public museums); they were also important teaching aids for budding sculptors. When Louis XIV set up the French Academy in Rome in 1666, one of its prime tasks was to make various sorts of copies to be sent back to Paris: marble copies made by young and aspiring artists as well as casts.[iv] Because the transportation of brittle plaster casts was a dangerous and expensive enterprise, during the late eighteenth century an increasing number of casts was produced in northern Europe (where the buyers were) from moulds that had travelled across the Alps.[v]

By this time, the white surfaces of plaster casts had come to be appreciated as much as the more irregular marble surfaces of the originals, and sometimes *more so*. Winckelmann sang the praises of white as the colour which adds beauty to a beautiful body and makes it appear larger—and nothing was whiter than a new plaster cast.[vi] Fresh white plaster seemed to transubstantiate the flesh and turn it into *its own idea*.[vii] Plaster casts thus allowed neoclassical artists and art lovers to study a purified kind of sculpture, almost dematerialized yet three-dimensional, which could also be examined from all angles and even rotated. Winckelmann and Goethe received their first substantial impulses for their aesthetic in their native Germany, in particular at the Skulpturenhalle in Mannheim. In his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe reminisces fondly about his first visit to this cast collection, with its "forest of statues" that could be lit in various ways and turned on their pedestals – great advantages over the originals. Here, he finally saw the Laocoon group about which he had read so much—in Leipzig he had seen only a cast of Laocoon himself, not the entire group.[viii] When Goethe went to Italy, he made sure to visit the Farsetti collection of plaster casts in Venice in 1786, making the acquaintance of works that had not been present in the Mannheim collection.[ix] In Rome he visited a caster's workshop where he saw "together what is dispersed throughout Rome, which is immensely useful for comparisons."[x]

Even in Rome, then, cast collections had the function of allowing connoisseurs to directly compare dispersed works. In this respect they can be compared to the "imaginary museum" that was constituted by photography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As André Malraux observed, both go beyond copying existing museums and in fact form an "imaginary museum" of reproductions:

"Museums of casts and copies too bring together dispersed works: they chose more freely than other museums […]. They have more force than an album [of photographs], but not the virus which dissolves everything in favour of style. This stems from reduction in size and, often, from the absence of volume, and always from the proximity and succession of plates, makes a style come alive similar to a speeded-up film which makes a plant come alive."[xi] In *Le Musée imaginaire* (which was translated into English rather freely as *The Museum Without Walls)*, Malraux argues that the "real" museum was increasingly being supplanted by the imaginary museum of photography. From the very beginning, however, the "real" modern art museum coexisted with the imaginary museum of plaster casts, and was able to rid itself of its troublesome doppelganger only in the twentieth century.

When a museum was opened in the Louvre in the wake of the French Revolution, there were two collections of plaster casts, both supplied by the French Academy in Rome: the royal collection and the one owned by the Académie Royale de peinture et de sculpture.[xii] However, Napoleon's conquests went hand in hand with the requisition of works of art from occupied countries, which were transported to the Louvre. The famous antique sculptures from the Belvedere arrived in Paris in a festive procession in July 1798. In the Musée du Louvre, called the Musée Napoléon from 1803 onward, the cast collection lost its necessity: the plasters were supplanted by their originals. At least in the case of the Tiber and Nile statues from the Vatican, the originals were in fact exhibited at the very places where the copies had been installed from 1692 to 1793.[xiii] The imaginary museum of the cast collection was made real as the actual works of art became stand-ins for their own reproductions. When the original works of art had to be returned in 1815, the creation of a museum of plaster casts once again became a priority.[xiv] Throughout the nineteenth century, the Louvre was to house several museums of casts with varying contents.

From the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century, there was a small canon of "antique masterpieces" – those from the Belvedere being the most canonical of all. During the decades around 1800, however, the idea slowly sank in that most of the revered statues—such as the Apollo Belvedere—were not originals by Greek artists, but instead Roman copies. With the arrival of the Parthenon marbles in London and other discoveries, the status of the sculptures from the Belvedere receded, and earlier and authentic Greek works become more primary. But while extending backwards in time, the imaginary museum also moved forward, into the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. By the final decades of the 19th century, museums such as the Musée de Sculpture Comparée in the Trocadéro, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam were actively engaged in these fields, which seemed more relevant to contemporary culture after the demise of Neoclassicism. However, the rise of the imaginary museum of photography was unstoppable. Why did the photograph succeed where the cast failed?

Two imprints

As a method of mechanical reproduction, the plaster cast shares certain characteristics with photography. Both the cast and the photograph are imprints. The cast is the positive print of the

negative mould, just as the analogue photo print is a positive of a negative that is a photochemical imprint made by opening the lens briefly. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's categorization of signs into the triad: icon – index – symbol, we see that it is the *indexicality* of both cast and photo that stands out. An index is a sign that has some causal connection with the object to which it refers—a footprint to the foot that produced it, a weathervane to the wind.[xv] Signs can function in more than one Peircean register, and in fact the indexicality of casts and photographs has often been used to present them as perfect *icons*, as perfect likenesses.

Icons are signs that physically resemble what they stand for; this is not necessarily the case for indices, as the weathervane does not resemble the wind. Casts and photographic imprints do however form a special subset: their very indexicality makes them appear as "natural images", as *vera icons*. This reference to the Christian notion of the "vera icon" is not a frivolous aside, for the legend of the "a " image is proto-photographic myth. In fact, the Turin Shroud, which was supposedly in direct contact with the body of Christ, only really became a religious and cultural icon once a photographic negative of it was made in 1898: only in the negative did the image of the body became really apparent.[xvi] One could therefore say with Georges Didi-Huberman that in the case of both photo and cast "the element of *contact* remains a guarantee of uniqueness, authenticity and power – and therefore of aura […]."[xvii] Mechanical reproduction, then, does not forcibly destroy aura, as Walter Benjamin claimed—and Malraux's *Musée imaginaire* was to a large extent a critical response to Benjamin.

The *imaginary museum of photography* was superior to that constituted by cast collections in that it was far freer in selecting, enlarging and combining images, and in fact in *turning objects into images*: "These miniatures, these frescos, these stained-glass windows, these tapestries, these Scythian plaques, these details, these drawings, these Greek vases, even the sculptures, have become plates. What have they lost? Their object-quality. What have they gained? The greatest stylistic significance they can attain."[xviii] In the photographic *musée imaginaire,* works are often cropped, reduced to fragments, focusing attention exclusively on style. Works of various sizes and materials are all reduced to the same size and to two-dimensionality, whereas plaster casts remained doggedly faithful to the object's size, even as it replaced precious materials with that simulacrum of materiality that is plaster. Photography enjoyed greater autonomy vis-à-vis the object, which it dematerialized while still transmitting an incredible wealth of detail. Furthermore, whereas illustrated books tend to merge into one boundless imaginary museum of photography, the imaginary museum of plaster casts disintegrates into specific collections: one cannot place cast collections on bookshelves.

Photography became a crucial tool of the developing discipline of art history. Exhibitions such as the 1877 Hans Holbein retrospective in Dresden combined originals with photographs of Holbein paintings that were absent.[xix] In 1875—the fifth centennial years of Michelangelo's birth—an exhibition was organized in the Accademia in which the David was the only authentic piece—other sculptures were present as plaster casts, arranged around the central figure of the David, and drawings and frescos were presented as photographs. An imaginary museum combined an ancient technique of reproduction (casting) with a modern one (photography), and one original work. In the wake of the exhibition, a Michelangelo museum following the same principle was opened in 1882.[xx] More

fundamentally, as Haskell has stressed, the possibility of comparing works through photographs gave rise to the desire to compare the originals and thus to the genre of the old-master exhibition. As for permanent museum collections, these were supposed to consists of originals. In discussions about the Rijksmuseum and its plaster cast collection in the late 1910s, what stands out is just how marginalized cast collections had become in the age of the *authentic object*.[xxi] These "ghosts of things," as the art historian Willem Vogelsang called them, were uncanny presences in the museum of originals.[xxii] Many agreed that in theory they could be teaching aids for art historians, just as they had been for art and craft schools, but in practice there were great obstacles: since they were not to be combined with the originals, they required separate museums, and precisely because museums were now seen as repositories of authentic masterpieces, such cast collections in fact became "ghosts of museums," spectral doubles of the real thing.

Ultimately, photography exacerbated the aura of the unique object, which it dematerialized. In contrast to the cast, it was also perfectly capable of reproducing the two-dimensional medium of painting—and as Neoclassicism declined, painting became dominant. Hegel considered painting to be the medium of Christian art par excellence, being more spiritual and subjective than sculpture. For an idealist such a Hegel, the whole classicist enterprise ultimately rested on a fallacy: it was impossible to return to or revive Classical Greek sculpture, as that stage in the development of Spirit was irretrievably lost.[xxiii] With its idealized human bodies in stone or bronze, classic Greek art represented the pinnacle of art, a happy medium between Spirit and matter, subject and object. Christian art, on the other hand, was subjective and soulful. Painting was the perfect medium for modern subjectivism, and Antique sculpture looked cold and objective by comparison.[xxiv] However, Hegel also noted that while the greatest Christian art presented a subjective or spiritualized view of the world, of God's creation, recent art had tended to disintegrate into two opposed tendencies: either extreme subjectivism or minute attention to random objective details.[xxv]

The public announcement of the invention of photography took place eight years after Hegel's death, but Hegel's analysis of the logic of "modern" art also makes sense with respect to the upstart medium. Its seemingly slavish faithfulness was its boon and its bane. For many artists and critics, photography—as an imprint of reality—could never be true art. Soon, however, photographers sought to demonstrate that the medium could be used to poetic effect, to idealize the visible—in contrast to plaster casts. For instance, a photograph could show a sculpture at a specific time and place, in a certain light, from a point of view that emphasizes certain of its characteristics. Photographs could show sculptures in their contexts, but they could also decontextualize and estrange them. Both strategies could strengthen the aura of the sculpture as well as of the photograph's.

Edward Steichen's renditions of works by Rodin are perhaps the most famous instances of this tendency. Steichen and the other "pictorialist" photographers associated with the review *Camera Work* modelled photography after painting in order to make it as atmospheric and subjective as possible. In his photo print *The Thinker* (1902), in fact a composite of several exposures, Steichen showed Rodin himself in front of his white marble *Victor Hugo* and opposite the bronze *Thinker*.[xxvi] The sculptures seem like visions, transfigured matter, willed into form by the artist-thinker, having sprung from his

mind. Classicism may have been a thing of the past, but its idealization of the sculpture as an all but immaterial vision reached an apex in Steichen's staging of Rodin.

Modern art in plaster

Like many others in the decades before him, Rodin exhibited plasters at the Salon and other exhibitions, and turned his studio into a museum of plaster casts. His aesthetic ruptures with the past notwithstanding, this placed him squarely in the tradition of neoclassical sculpture and its highly rationalized production processes, in which plaster casting played a crucial role. This production process had been perfected by Antonio Canova, who as a young apprentice had first encountered the masterpieces of antique sculpture in the cast collection of the Palazzo Farsetti in Venice. Canova's production culminated in full-scale plaster casts after his clay models; these "original plasters" could then be displayed in his studio or elsewhere until buyers were found to finance their execution in marble. The original plaster thus served both as an enticement for the customer to buy a certain piece, and as the model for the final version.[xxvii] For the creation of the marble, the plaster would be covered with "points": thin nails were inserted into the plaster at certain crucial points and used to measure the sculpture and create a faithful plaster replica. A mechanical reproduction—a plaster cast of a clay model—was thus used to create a reproduction in marble, in a process which was manual, but with some mechanical and industrial characteristics.

This semi-industrial practice was as it were justified by the Neoclassical aesthetic, which placed the highest value on the artist's lofty conception. However, as the romantic conception of art became dominant, and paved the way for successive waves of avant-garde art, Canova's way of working was increasingly regarded as inartistic. Although Rodin's artistic practice was, like those of most sculptors, in part shaped by a mechanical reproduction, he was at pains to keep things fluid; he often dipped heads or small figures into liquid plaster, thus creating an irregular new surface (on which he could do further work).[xxviii] However, in spite of the mystique surrounding his unique touch, for the reproductions of these plasters in other materials Rodin relied on specialized founders (for bronzes) and studio assistants under his supervision (for marbles).

In 1982, Rosalind Krauss used a Rodin exhibition as an occasion to criticize the modernist cult of originality, which had given rise to the phenomenon of "first" and "limited" editions in sculpture.[xxix] Krauss's intervention reflects the problematization of the unique artwork in the artistic production of the 1960s and 1970s. With Minimalism, artists started using simple volumes that could easily be produced in numerous copies without any need for the artist's direct intervention, and in the wake of Conceptual art, the artwork was "dematerialized" even further.[xxx] This dematerialization above all entailed a rejection of the unique art object, leading to a profusion of materials—of editions. In the beginning, the rise of editions was accompanied by claims about making art more affordable and democratizing it, but by now the Rodin principle of exclusive and expensive limited editions has triumphed in contemporary art—from Jeff Koons to Jeff Wall. Modernism's fetishization of the

original and its unease about casting and multiplication in general has given way to a more pragmatic culture of editions. Once the taboo on mechanical reproduction had been lifted, artists created greater numbers of increasingly limited (and not so limited) editions. The acceptance of mechanical multiplication in the contemporary culture of editions turns actual museums into imaginary museums whose copies are without originals.

In this respect it should come as no surprise that the plaster cast has experienced a certain renaissance in contemporary art. With late works such as *Female Fig-Leaf* (1950), *Torture-morte* (1959) and *With My Tongue in My Cheek* (1959), Marcel Duchamp rediscovered casting as a valid artistic procedure. [xxxi] In his wake artists ranging from George Segal to Giulio Paolini and Walter De Maria have practiced various forms of plaster casting.[xxxii] Duchamp, who compared the selection of readymades to the taking of "snapshots," was in many ways a pioneer of today's culture of editions. [xxxiii] In the 1960s, Duchamp and Arturo Schwarz made series of editions of the original readymades. The "original" version of Duchamp's *Fountain* having been lost, a famous photo made by *Camera Work*'s Alfred Stieglitz that manages to make the urinal's forms surprisingly pleasing was used for reference.

Douglas Crimp's book *On the Museum's Ruins* contains a series of photographs by Louise Lawler of stored and restored plaster casts after antique sculptures such as the Munich Glyptothek's *Sleeping Faun* and *Fallen Warrior* (from the western pediment of the Aegina temple).[xxxiv] What Lawler here re-presents are the hidden remains of a patriarchal culture that has modernized its appearance, but these abandoned objects also anticipate the use of photomechanical reproduction by artists such as Rauschenberg and Warhol, or by Lawler herself. Referencing Walter Benjamin as well as Malraux, Crimp argues that this development throws the modern museum as a storehouse of "originals" into a fundamental crisis. Ultimately, however, this crisis strengthened the museum: the contemporary art museum has become a repository of quasi-originals and constitutes a synthesis of the old "real" museum and the imaginary museum.

Value, form, and matter

In recent years, Arnoud Holleman and Gert Jan Kocken have worked on a project which deals with the theft and partial destruction of one of the bronze copies of Rodin's *The Thinker* by bronze thieves from a provincial Dutch museum. The police tracked down the thieves, but not before they had started to cut up the sculpture, which interested them exclusively for the value of its metal. Kocken and Holleman's photograph of the retrieved work shows it looking like a cubist cyborg. As vulnerable as plaster casts have proven to be on many occasion, their downfall was often the sheer worthlessness of the material. In the case of a bronze cast such as *The Thinker*, the opposite is the case. In a crisis-ridden but globalizing and therefore still expanding economy, prices for metals are on the rise. This means that the scrap value of metal sculptures increasingly comes into conflict with their value on the art market.

In the case of the destroyed *Thinker*, the museum did not want to keep the work in its ruined condition and subjected it to a restoration process that almost amounts to a recreation. This suggests that what is valuable to the museum is precisely the sculpture-as-icon—not the historical "life" of any given cast, not the *biography of the object*. In "semiotic capitalism," sign value is everything—and the side of the sign that triumphs is Peirce's *symbol*, which is to say: conventional and codified meaning. With *The Thinker*, iconicity in the Peircean sense now stands in the service of convention, of the cliché. As a cultural commodity, *The Thinker* has to look exactly like *The Thinker*. Kocken and Holleman's freak won't do.[xxxv]

Today, the prices of many commodities have come to depend on design and on branding; commodities have become "culturalized". We pay not for the labour time invested in the transformation of materials into the finished product; labour is after all often farmed out to countries where cheap labour is abundant. As ever, idealism—in this case, crypto-idealist capitalism—is dependent on base matter. However, with a strong brand such as Apple, whose logo is more brand symbol than iconic rendering of a piece of fruit, the price of its products is dependent only marginally on Foxconn's slave-employees, or even that of increasingly contested materials such as coltan. Apple's pragmatic idealism remakes the world in its image. To put it in extreme terms: MacBook and iPad are the revenants of a classicism that attempted to transform bodies into quasi-platonic shapes by means of plaster casts and outline drawings. Plaster casts have never fetched really high prices, being intended precisely as affordable stand-ins. Only contemporary semiotic capitalism has unleashed the economic potential of idealist aesthetics.

Like Apple, Conceptual Art generates surplus value through branding and design. The promise of exclusivity made by brands such as Apple takes on a more extreme form in the artistic culture of limited editions that create artificial scarcity. It is telling that a 1998 internet project by Louise Lawler, *Without Moving/Without Stopping*, which allowed the user to move virtually through the Munich cast collection, is no longer online.[xxxvi] The navigable panorama photos with their changing captions transplanted the imaginary museum of plaster casts into an online environment; however, while mainstream art institutions briefly embraced "net art," they quickly withdrew their support in order to focus on materialized concepts once more.

The Conceptualist ideology of dematerialization was heightened and updated for the digital era by Sean Snyder in 2009. His unfinished *Index* project involved the digitization of all of his works and of his archive—doing away with material media such as tapes, films, photo prints, and even CDs and DVDs. *Index* was to have included both static and moving images, and in the film *Exhibition*, exhibited as part of Snyder's 2009 *Index* exhibition at the ICA in London, we see appropriated 1960s film footage from the Ukraine that shows various efforts at art education, including the presentation of reproductions of masterpieces from the Dresden Museum in a rural village. In another scene, one briefly glimpses a small plaster cast of the Venus de Milo being carried away.

The intended result would be an indexed online version of all of these materials, in the *Cloud*.[xxxvii] The Peircean index is the material side of the sign, coming into being through some form of

physical agency, whereas Snyder's *Index* is an index of the seeming destruction of its own material base. Of course, there would still be a material base: the *Cloud* needs energy plants and large computer centres. Precisely because it proposes to push dematerialization to extremes, Snyder's work manages to articulate the contradictions of contemporary cultural production. *Index* was never actually realized as a website, but the related photo prints (re)mediate the project in a successful way: with their images of "obsolete" media objects and their grainy surfaces as well as of digitized data, of seemingly formless patterns of pure information, they provide ambiguous indices of contemporary cultural production.

Cast collections are important precisely because their presence in the present is fraught with ambiguities; since they have never fully arrived in the present, they can also be used to leave it behind. The period of their greatest cultural success may have been the late-eighteenth century, when they were as important to sovereigns and members of the nobility as they were to the pioneers of the classicist aesthetic, which would reveal its political potential during the French Revolution. Cast collections had an ambiguous status even at their moment of triumph. By now, history has been reversed and we are well on our way to entering a post-democratic form of economic absolutism—the era of Corporate Rococo.[xxxviii] In such a situation, the anachronism that is the plaster cast collection might contain hints of different futures.

Sven Lütticken

This is an extensively reworked version of an essay that was written on the occasion of Krijn de Koning's exhibition at the Musée des Moulages in Lyon in 2003. The text was intended for a book which never materialized; a short version was published in Kunstlicht *25 (2004), no. 1 / 2. Many thanks to Krijn for an extremely stimulating exchange.*

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[i] On casts as anachronisms, see Georges Didi-Huberman, "La Ressemblance par contact. Archéologie, anachronisme et modernité de l'émpreinte," in: exhib. cat. *L'Empreinte*, (Paris : Centre Georges Pompidou, 1997).
[ii] Didi-Huberman, pp. 60-72.
[iii] See James Hall, *The World as Sculpture. The Changing Status of Sculpture from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), pp. 1-103.
[iv] Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 37; Geneviève Bresc-Bautier, "Copier l'antique à la cour de Louis XIV," in: exhib. cat. *D'après l'antique* (Paris : Musée du Louvre, 2000), pp. 60-68.
[v] See Charlotte Schreiter, "'Moulded From the Best Originals of Rome'—Eighteenth-Century Production and Trade of Plaster Casts after Antique Sculpture in Germany," in: Rune Frederiksen and Eckart Marchand (eds.), *Plaster Casts: making, Collecting and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter 2010), pp. 121-142.

[vi] Hall, p. 74. The quotation is from the "Von dem Wesentlichen der Kunst" section of chapter 4 of the *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums.*

[vii] See also Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press (1994), pp. 155-164 etc.

[viii] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in: Ernst Beutler (ed.), *Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche* vol. 10 (Stuttgart/Zurich, Artemis Verlag, 1962), pp. 548-549.

[ix] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Italienische Reise,* in: ibid., vol. 11, pp. 94-96.

[x] Ibid., p. 16

[xi] André Malraux, *Les Voix du silence* (Paris: Gallimard / Pléiade, 1951), p. 44. *Les Voix du silence,* which contains the reworked second version of *Le Musée imaginaire,* was first published as a separate book in 1947 (Geneva: Skira, 1947). In the first version, the remark on collections of casts and copies is a footnote (p. 53), but in *Les Voix du silence* it has been integrated (slightly modified) into the main body of the text.

[xii] The latter collection was quickly closed to the public and eventually moved. Predictably, the royal collection contained the small group of statues that had enjoyed the most prestige since the Renaissance: the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoon, the Hercules Farnese, and the like. In this respect, it resembled other such imaginary museums – or the others resembled it. Jean-Luc Martinez, "Les moulages en plâtre d'áprès l'ántique du musée du Louvre: une utopie du XIXe siècle," in: *D'après l'antique*, pp. 78-79.

[xiii] Martinez, p. 79.

[xiv] Martinez, p. 79.

[xv] A classic text on indexicality in modern art is of course Rosalind E. Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Part 1" (1976), in: *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge MA/London, MIT Press), 1986, pp. 196-209.

[xvi] See Hans Belting, *Das echte Bild. Bildfragen als Glaubensfragen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), pp. 63-67 .

[xvii] Didi-Huberman, p. 49; see also pp. 52-59.

[xviii] Malraux, *Les Voix du silence*, pp. 43-44.

[xix] Francis Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum: Old Master Paintings and the Rise of the Art Exhibition* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 92.

[xx] Marcella Anglani, "The Michelangelo Museum and the Evolution of the Galleria dell' Accademia from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth century [sic]", in: Franca Falletti (ed*.), The Accademia, Michelangelo, the Nineteenth Century (The Place for David 1)* (Livorno: Sillabe, 1997), pp. 37-53.

[xxi] May Meurs, "De gipscollectie van het Rijksmuseum II: opkomst en verval van een hulpmiddel voor het Nederlandse kunstonderwijs," in: *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 50, no. 2 (2002), pp. 272-276.

[xxii] Meurs, p. 277.

[xxiii] See Johan Hartle, "Rightist Hobbies and the End of Art," in: *Open* no. 23 (2012), pp. 27-29.

[xxiv] G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik III* (Werke 15) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), pp. 11-67.

[xxv] G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik II* (Werke 14) (Frankfurt am Main: Surhkamp, 1970), p. 239-240.

[xxvi] Executed by Steichen as a gum bichromate print, *Rodin – Le Penseur* was published twice by *Camera Work*— as a half-tone reproduction in 1906 and as a photogravure in a special 1906 Steichen portfolio.

[xxvii] Fred Licht, *Canova*, New York, Abbeville Press, 1983, pp. 224-227

[xxviii] Albert A. Elsen, 'When the Sculptures Were White: Rodin's Work in Plaster', in: exhib. cat. *Rodin Rediscovered*, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1981, pp. 127-150.

[xxix] Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde" and "Sincerely Yours," in: *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, pp. 151-194. The show that sparked Krauss's comments was *Rodin Rediscovered* (see note 28).

[xxx] See Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 [etc.]* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001) [original edition 1973].

[xxxi] Around the same time, Duchamp's friend Constantin Brancusi turned his own studio into a museum of plaster casts. As a good modernist, Brancusi did not use plaster casts as part of his production process, but copied his works in plaster when he sold them, allowing him to cling to their ghosts.

[xxxii] Paolini has used plaster casts of antique statues, made to look as spotless and even as possible, in a large number of works throughout the decades; De Maria's major plaster piece is *The 2000 Sculpture* (1992).

[xxxiii] See Krauss, "Notes on the Index."

[xxxiv] Louise Lawler, sequence in Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge MA/London: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 188-197.

[xxxv] Their photograph was however exhibited at the Singer Museum in the 2011 exhibition *Rodin. De Denker denkt weer*, which included the "restored" bronze cast as well as a number of Rodin's original plasters. Holleman and Kocken's project will result in a book publication.

[xxxvi] The project was realized for Stadium, a net art site taken over by the Dia Art Foundation in the late 1990s, which has since disappeared.

[xxxvii] Snyder was not able to complete this project; his artistic activity ceased in 2010.

[xxxviii] The term was coined by contemporary plaster caster Stephan Dillemuth; see Werner von Delmont, *Corporate Rokoko und das Ende des bürgerlichen Projektes* (s.l.: Permanent Press, 2035 [sic]).