



Russian Avant-Garde at the Museum Ludwig
Original and Fake. Questions, Research, Explanations

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The subject of counterfeit artworks has long been taboo, but today an increasing number of museums are opening up their collections to transparent assessments, sharing research findings and de-attributing works when necessary.

Over the past 10 years, the Museum Ludwig, together with international scholars, has been systematically examining its collection of Russian avant-garde paintings that were acquired by Peter and Irene Ludwig and donated to the museum in 2011.

Based on 24 examples, the research presented in this publication not only reveals the detailed process involved in confirming the authenticity or inauthenticity of a painting but also offers valuable insight into the working methods of the artists of the Russian avant-garde.

For various reasons, works of questionable authorship have continually found their way into private and institutional collections. Works by Russian avant-garde artists were counterfeited particularly often (due to their delayed reception after Stalinism, for instance). Even recently, paintings from this period which turned out to be counterfeits have been presented in museums.

The Museum Ludwig is also affected and is currently systematically investigating its collection of paintings with the help of international scholars. This research represents an important contribution to the international discourse on the Russian avant-garde. One goal is to identify and distinguish incorrect attributions in the museum's collection.

The exhibition and this publication present the methods and findings. With 30 works by El Lissitzky, Kasimir Malevich, Lyubov Popova, Natalia Goncharova, Kliment Redko, Nina Kogan, and other artists, it presents art-historical and technological methods for making artistic authorship and questionable attributions recognisable.

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