

Introduction

As the new editors of the *Ikonotheka*, we are delighted to present to the reader the issue of the journal dedicated to the senses. Through the centuries, connoisseurs, critics, art historians, and art institutions favoured sight and the ocularcentric approach to art. This perspective has shaped our understanding of the singular role of the sense of sight in appreciating artworks of the past and it continues to affect the way we engage with contemporary art.

In this volume we focus on the role all the senses play in creating, handling, displaying, collecting, and exhibiting art. We are indebted to the course *The Sensory Renaissance* offered by the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH, Cambridge, 2014) and the recent studies into the importance of multisensory engagement with art and its history, including the research and publications of the Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions funded by the Australian Research Council.

The essays included in this publication range from discussion of medieval and early modern representations of the robes of Christ and the Virgin, through analysis of engaging sixteenth-century *tabulae scalate*, the significance of tobacco in early modern still lives, to the category of blindness in works by Marcel Duchamp and Dan Sterup-Hansen, and the sensory challenges of exhibiting modern and contemporary art. These focused case studies are complemented by texts of a broader methodological scope, which seek to provide a theoretical framework for dealing with the senses, most notably in contemporary artistic practice.

Apart from the contributions selected through the open call, we have invited several participants to provide statements about the role of the senses in artistic, art historical, and curatorial practices. We are very grateful to Marietta Cambareri (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston), Capucine Gros (artist), Deborah Howard (University of Cambridge), and Mary Sherman (artist) for their fascinating insights. Their statements open the volume and demonstrate a wide range of perspectives on the senses in their work.

The volume includes contributions focused on Central European art and works by artists from outside the mainstream of art historical discourse. The essays address the problem of senses in cultural, religious, philosophical, sociological, and political contexts. They attempt to historicize the sensorium and discuss ways of recreating the sensory experience in a museum space. Furthermore, authors include

artworks that can be discussed from a multi-sensory perspective. We hope that this multifaceted approach will be of interest to a wider audience.

We would like to thank our reviewers for providing invaluable feedback to individual contributors and our advisory board for their academic guidance.

Zuzanna Sarnecka, Editor of the volume
Wojciech Szymański, Editor-in-Chief