

# HANS MAKART (1840-1884) AND VIENNA. THE INFLUENCE OF PHOTOGRAPHY ON THE PAINTER'S WORK

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## **Abstract**

Hans Makart was already renowned during his lifetime as one of the leading painters of Historicism in Vienna. With his special style and stage and productions of festive processions he created what is known nowadays as „Makart style”.

So far it has been almost unknown that Makart based his painting on photography as a congenial source of inspiration for his pictures. He used photography in many different ways. On the one hand he planned designs by painting over reproduced photographs, on the other hand he was inspired by photographs (e.g. of the Egyptian women) for the composition of pictures. Like many of his colleague artists he did not admit the importance of photography for his paintings throughout his life.

**Keywords:** Historicism, painting, photography, Makart style.

Today, Hans Makart's significance as the most important painter of Historicism is unquestioned. However, in his monumental paintings, Makart glorified colour and naturalness in a way that broke free of the restraints of this style and followed the path leading to modernity. The Renaissance historical pageant that Makart organised for the silver wedding anniversary of the Imperial couple (Franz Joseph and Elisabeth) on 24 July 1879, and in which thousands of Viennese citizens took part, was the highlight of his career. From that time on, he could be assured of receiving great attention and his stagings, which became known as the „Makart style”, were exemplary for Vienna at the end of the 19th century.

Hans Makart was a painter who found a congenial source of inspiration for the pictures he created in photography. He established a variety of links to photography in his paintings, especially in his sketches<sup>1</sup>. From the mid-nineteenth century onward a number of artists – including, for example, the Realists Gustave Courbet, Wilhelm Leibl, Franz von Lenbach, and others as well as, subsequently, the Impressionists such as Edgar Degas, Max Liebermann, and Max Slevogt – open-mindedly accepted the optical conditions of the photographic image. Only the manner of their impact and the way they were incorporated into the work process varied, as did the readiness of the individual artists to openly name their photographic sources and sources of inspiration<sup>2</sup>. At the time the factor of photography

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution is the first to investigate the connections between photography and Makart's painting on the basis of the sources and investigations into his painting technique. The essay is an expanded version of the original that was published on the occasion of the exhibition: “Hans Makart – Maler der Sinne (Painter of the Senses)” in the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna 9 June – 9 October 2011 in the publication of the same name (see note 21).

<sup>2</sup> An admirable account of this subject was provided for the first time in: J. A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, “Zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte der Photographie in ihrem Verhältnis zur Malerei”, in: Erika Billeter (ed.), *Malerei und Photographie im Dialog von 1840 bis heute* (exhibition catalogue., Kunsthaus Zürich, Bern 1977, pp. 8-14.

in designing paintings was regarded as problematic and the mechanical, apparatus-bound picture technique was seen as aesthetically inferior to the genius of the artist.

This essay aims to explore the question of the importance Hans Makart attached to photography as a medium and how it influenced his pictorial processes as an artist. In the examples discussed below the focus will be on the photo-historical aspect and comparisons will be made with works of the time within the European context.

As regards sources, Makart's use of photography can be divided into three areas: his (artistic) sketches, into which he pasted photographic reproductions; the photographic staging of his own person and his studios; and his collection of photographs, which served him as source of inspiration and which is recorded in the auction of his estate in 1885<sup>3</sup>.

## REPRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ARTISTIC DESIGN PROCESS

Makart's first presentation to a wider public was in 1868 in Munich with *Moderne Amoretten* (Modern Cupids) and *Pest in Florenz* (The Plague in Florence). These works made him a celebrated young artist overnight, a fact that was due to the freedom he demonstrated in the choice of subject and manner of execution, but above all to the cherubs in the *Cupids*, shown as ambiguous child-woman creatures. Although he had no order from a customer, Makart developed fanciful architectural views in the three-parts of each cycle, into which for the first time he pasted photographic reproductions from his own works before completely overpainting them<sup>4</sup>. The photograph served as a technical aid to expedite the painting process by dispensing with a "second underdrawing"<sup>5</sup>; it formed a part of the genesis of the work and was made invisible by overpainting<sup>6</sup>. Makart modified his approach in the variant of the preparatory sketch used for *Einzug Karls V. in Antwerpen* (The Entry of Emperor Charles V into Antwerp) in 1875. Here he did not use a photograph as the base for his painting, but adopted a photomechanical reproduction technique on paper<sup>7</sup>, which produced the vague outline of an underdrawing and was then mounted on canvas. The painterly execution in grisaille is amorphous, having been painted partly using broad brushstrokes and partly in precise detail. It is unclear here why Makart uses a photomechanical reproduction method here without availing himself of its possibilities for altering sizes or for the production of duplicates<sup>8</sup>.

This suffusion of media was continued by Makart in his architectural vision of the *Gotische Grabkirche St. Michael* (Gothic Burial Church of St. Michael) of 1883 (Fig. 1).

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<sup>3</sup> A. Streit (ed.), *Katalog des Künstlerischen Nachlasses und der Kunst- und Antiquitäten-Sammlung von Hans Makart*, Wien 1885. In the "XIth department" some 2,500 photographs were listed, reproduction photographs as well as original photos of animals, models, and landscapes. Makart's photo collection was modest compared with Franz von Lenbach's photo archive, which contained some 13,000 pictures.

<sup>4</sup> The measurements of the photographs for *Moderne Amoretten* (Modern Cupids) from left to right are 27 x 42 cm, 49 x 28 cm and 27 x 43 cm; those for the *Pest in Florenz* (The Plague in Florence) are 19.6 x 40.4 cm, 19.5 x 40.2 cm and 19.7 x 40.4 cm. Thanks to the investigations into Makart's painting techniques in March of 2011 by Dr. Manfred Schreiner, Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna, in *The Modernen Amoretten*, a silver emulsion photograph (for example an albumin print) can be rejected, but this does not preclude the possibility of other photographic processes, which could be specified through further investigation.

<sup>5</sup> Renata Mikula, "Fotografie", in: Makart (exhibition catalogue, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden 1972), Stuttgart (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) 1972, pp. 212–17.

<sup>6</sup> The reference to the "thinly layered" overpainting must be corrected here, see: Erich Marx, Peter Laub (ed.), *Hans Makart 1840-1884* (exhibition catalogue, Salzburg Museum, Salzburg 2007), Salzburg, 2007, p. 220.

<sup>7</sup> The technique here is presumably "photogravure" or "light printing." This assumption is subject to an analysis of the painting technique.

<sup>8</sup> That Makart used photographic techniques to produce duplicates of his paintings (as did Franz von Lenbach) is not proven, contrary to previous assumptions (see Renata Mikula, „Fotografie“, in: Makart (exhibition catalogue, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, 1972), Stuttgart (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 1972, p. 213).

This sketch can be counted among Makart's large-scale architecture fantasies, which occupied him during the last months of his life despite the lack of a specific commission. He mounted a reproduction photograph measuring 28.5 by 23 centimeters into the design for the façade of the *Grabkirche* (Fig. 2). In spite of the small format in relation to the size of the overall design, measuring 3.43 by 1.59 meters, in terms of its media impact the photograph is the equal of the painting: it is mounted into the sketch as an independent architectural detail (frieze relief) and, within the context of the content, depicts Christ's Descent from the Cross.



Fig. 1. Hans Makart, *Gothic Burial Church of St. Michael, Tower Façade*, 1883, Belvedere, Vienna.



Fig. 2. Reproduction photograph of Rogier van der Weyden, *The Descent from the Cross* (c. 1435–40). Detail from Hans Makart, *Gothic Burial Church of St. Michael, Tower Façade*, 1883, Belvedere, Wien.

Here Makart chose a reproduction photograph of Rogier van der Weyden's *Kreuzabnahme* (The Descent from the Cross, ca. 1435–40) – one of the artist's main works in the Museo del Prado in Madrid. In terms of content the motif is thus appropriate to the funereal iconography. But the photographic reproduction is forced into a medial ambiguity: through the pale yellow varnish and partial overpainting in shades of ochre, the photographic design forms are reduced and integrated into the overall picture context<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, however, the photo remains visible as a quotation in the collage-like effect. The picture title "VAN DER WEIDEN. 160. La descente de la croix. (au Musée de Prado)" is an important indication of this fact.

From the mid-nineteenth century the art-loving public was familiar with photographic reproductions of famous paintings from major European collections in the form of so-called "gallery works"<sup>10</sup>. Album collections of the main works of European art history could be found in large numbers in the auction of Makart's estate in 1885. Photographic reproduction was greatly prized by artists, especially when the albums contained collections of their own works. They could use them to compete for better market placement and a greater reputation, a competition also fought by means of the size of the reproduction formats<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> That overpainting the photographs increased the color contrasts and the three-dimensional effect contradicts the theory of a grisaille-photographic context in Makart's work (see: Thomas Zaunschirm, "Der Sieg des Lichts – Bemerkungen zu Makarts Kolorit", in: *Alte und Moderne Kunst*, vol. 21, no. 147, Innsbruck, 1976, pp. 1-7).

<sup>10</sup> The principal publishers of art reproductions were Seemann in Leipzig, the Alinari brothers in Florence (from 1854), and the publishers Hanfstaengl in Munich. Petra Roettig, „Das verwilderte Auge“. Über Fotografie und Bildarchive in der Kunstwissenschaft, in: Matthias Bruhn (ed.), *Darstellung und Deutung. Abbilder der Kunstgeschichte*. Weimar 2000, p. 68f.

<sup>11</sup> Feuerbach complains in a letter to his mother dated 1 September 1872 that "by comparison Makart's photographs...vastly surpass ours in style and equipment," in: G. J. Kern/ Hermann Uhde-Bernays, *Anselm Feuerbachs Briefe an seine Mutter*, 2. Bd. Berlin, 1911, p. 267.

Another example of mixing the media of photography and painting can be seen in the profile design for a royal residence, one of the *Entwürfe für einen Palast* (Sketches for a palace) of 1883. This architectural vision was tackled without a specific commission and is presented on a massive scale and in color. Conceptually it resembles a book of sketches; in the top right-hand area of the picture the layout plan of the complex is mounted onto the canvas in the form of a photomechanical reproduction and then covered with delicate layers of paint (Fig. 2). Here the photographic medium is visible, analogous to the design for the *Grabkirche*, and is integrated into the painterly design process as an equally valid component.

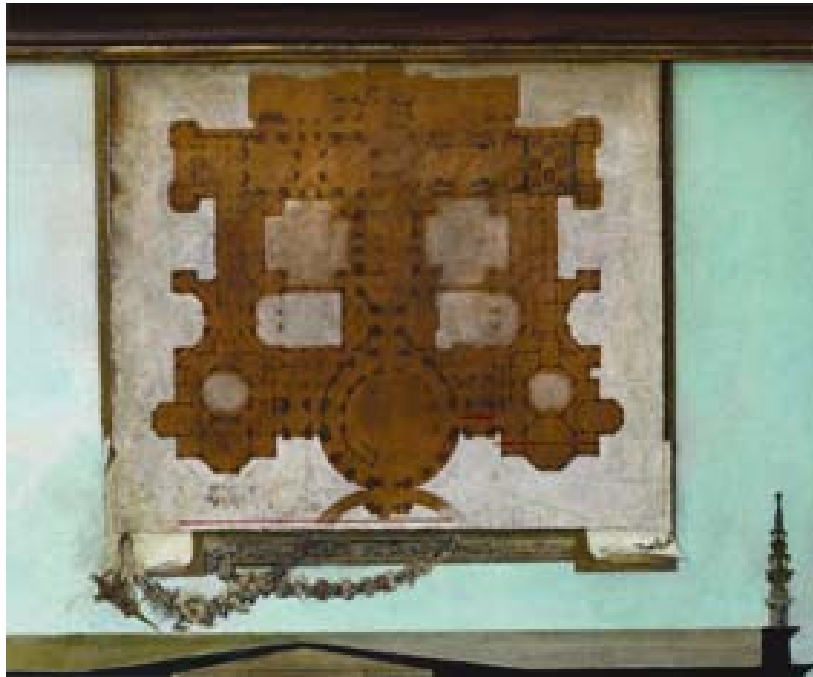


Fig. 3. Hans Makart, Ground plan. Detail from *Sketch for a palace*.  
Rear face and ground plan, 1883, Belvedere, Vienna.

For Makart, the photographic reproduction process was a welcome aid to speed up and develop his painterly processes. But the reproduction photographs incorporated as an accurate reproductive element into the architectural visions of his later years retain an autonomy in terms of both content and form. Makart was very familiar with the pictorial process of photocollage; it was also highly prized by upper class and aristocratic members of society, especially in the form of photo albums<sup>12</sup>. Usually produced in photographic establishments and sold worldwide, these collages permitted the simulation of events that had never taken place (for example family gatherings) or could represent the overpainting of content (caricature) in the form of photomontages<sup>13</sup>. The alternation between photographic and painterly effect was specific to this variation of collage, and visually speaking was public property. For Makart the visible use of photography was not a problem, either

<sup>12</sup> A first comprehensive exhibition on the subject of these collages can be found in: Elizabeth Siegel (ed.), *Playing with Pictures: The Art of Victorian Photocollage* (exhibition catalogue, The Art Institute of Chicago 2009/2010), Chicago, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> The Hanfstaengl art-publishing company in Munich was renowned worldwide for early photomontages (after 1858). Heinz Gebhardt (ed.), *Franz Hanfstaengl. Von der Lithographie zur Photographie* (exhibition catalogue, Münchner Stadtmuseum, München, 1984), München, 1984, p. 184f.

formally or aesthetically. In the case of Franz von Lenbach's paintings, in contrast, the photographic element always remained invisible<sup>14</sup>.

In utilizing an ambiguity of medium in terms of form and content, Makart thus made innovative and open structures of image and media possible. He consciously integrated the character of the various media into the planning of the artistic process, in which the sketch-like element and the alternation between "meticulous love of ornamentation" and "artistic generosity" were important design factors<sup>15</sup>. The design principle of ambiguity seems here to become a key aspect of Makart's creative art.

## EGYPT AND PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPIRATION

Makart and Lenbach arrived in Cairo in November 1875 – together with other artist friends – at the start of a trip to Egypt that was to last for several months. The unusual undertaking involved no competitive pressure<sup>16</sup> and was planned as a sort of business trip, because public interest in "Oriental painting" was considerable and the market value of such paintings had become a good source of income for the artists. Leopold Carl Müller, who was already on site, arranged accommodation in Musafirkhana Palace, a guesthouse that the viceroy placed at the artists' disposal and that could also be used as a studio. "Makart has been working very hard; he has painted eight pictures here, all of them enormous," wrote Müller. He was impressed by Makart's productivity and business acumen, for he had "already earned 10,000 guilders in Cairo"<sup>17</sup>.

Makart's friend Carl Rudolf Huber had joined the party not only as a painter, but also as a photographer. He took a large number of photos including snapshots that show the group of artists in a relaxed and cheerful mood. One particularly noteworthy example from this series of snapshots shows the artists lying, spread out, on the desert sand. This tableau vivant is based on the painting "Das Schlaraffenland" (The Land of Cockaigne) by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich and is a light-hearted paraphrase of the carefree life of this journey<sup>18</sup>. There is a noteworthy series of photographs of Egyptian girls by Huber; he recorded them in Musafirkhana Palace as models both wearing clothes and naked, and holding objects such as pitchers and musical instruments: "The photographic machine was in use all the time – the most remarkable poses were reproduced, of which the least improper ones cannot be described..."<sup>19</sup>. Huber had several copies made and distributed them to his artist friends, presumably also because of the erotic content (Figs. 3, 4)<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> J.A. Schmoll aka. Eisenwerth, "Lenbach und die Fotografie", in: *Franz von Lenbach: 1836-1904* (exhibition catalogue, Lenbachhaus München 1986/87), München, 1987, pp. 63–98.

<sup>15</sup> Nikolaus Schaffer, "Das Große Liebesspiel. Ein Versuch über ans Makart – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Kritiker", in: Erich Marx, Peter Laub (ed.), *Hans Makart 1840-1884* (exhibition catalogue, Salzburg Museum, 2007), Salzburg, 2007, p. 118.

<sup>16</sup> "A cheerful company...Ernst Lenbach, Hans Makart, Leopold Carl Müller, [Carl] Rudolf Huber, and the architects [Adolf] Gnauth and [Gangolf] Kayser...spent the winter in Cairo," Georg Ebers, *Rudolf C. Huber, Wien* 1897, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Günther Wimmer, "Der Orientmaler Leopold Carl Müller", in: Erika Mayr-Oehring (ed.), *Orient. Österreichische Malerei zwischen 1848 und 1914* (exhibition catalogue, Residenzgalerie, Salzburg, 1997), Salzburg, 1997, p. 60, notes 29, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Bodo von Dewitz, "Fotografien einer Künstlerreise nach Ägypten im Jahr 1875", in: Bodo von Dewitz (ed.), *La Bohème. Die Inszenierung des Künstlers in Fotografien des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (exhibition catalogue, Museum Ludwig Köln), Göttingen 2010, pp. 105–108.

<sup>19</sup> *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1876, as quoted in: Erika Mayr-Oehring (ed.), *Orient. Österreichische Malerei zwischen 1848 und 1914* (exhibition catalogue, Residenzgalerie Salzburg, Salzburg 1997), Salzburg, 1997, p. 242. The photos ascribed to Rudolf Carl Huber are to be found today scattered throughout a large number of museums



Fig. 4. Carl Rudolf Huber, *Egyptian Women in Musafirkhana Palace*, 1875–76. Gérard Lévy Collection, Paris.

Returning to Vienna, Huber's portraits of the girls and Makart's drawn studies served as an important source of inspiration for the latter's paintings and drawings<sup>21</sup>. At the request of Georg Ebers, Makart began to prepare models for his magnificent two-volume publication *Ägypten in Bild und Wort* (Egypt in words and pictures), which was to be published in 1879–1880 in Stuttgart by Eduard Hallberger<sup>22</sup>. More than thirty artists supplied drawings as the basis for reproductions of wood engravings for the lavish project.

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and collections, including the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; the Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum (Sammlung Frank), Linz; the Sammlung Dietmar Siegert, Munich; the Sammlung Gérard Lévy, Paris, among others. The Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Picture Archives and Graphic Department house reproduction photographs of Huber's snapshots mentioned above.

<sup>20</sup> Prints can be proved in the case of Lenbach, see: Erika Mayr-Oehring (ed.), *Orient. Österreichische Malerei zwischen 1848 und 1914* (exhibition catalogue, Residenzgalerie Salzburg, Salzburg 1997), Salzburg, 1997, p. 70, note 34. See: Martina Sitt/ Marvin Altner, "Makarts Frauengestalten. Repräsentatntinnen der bloßen Sinnlichkeit oder Akte der akademischen Form?", in: Agnes Husslein-Arco, Alexander Klee (eds.), *Makart – Maler der Sinne* (exhibition catalogue, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Wien, 2011, pp. 67-78.

<sup>21</sup> In the auction of the estate of 1885 there were seventy photographs, labeled as "Egyptian types" (Streit 1885, Lot no. 1060). Since Makart acquired photographs from various sources on his journeys, the Egyptian photos are probably not all by Rudolf Carl Huber. See: Martina Sitt/ Marvin Altner, "Makarts Frauengestalten. Repräsentatntinnen der bloßen Sinnlichkeit oder Akte der akademischen Form?", in: Agnes Husslein-Arco, Alexander Klee (eds.), *Makart – Maler der Sinne* (exhibition catalogue, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Wien, 2011, pp. 67-78.

<sup>22</sup> Georg Ebers, *Ägypten in Bild und Wort. Dargestellt von unseren besten Künstlern*. 2 vol. Stuttgart/Leipzig 1879/80. The English edition, *Egypt: Descriptive, historical, and picturesque*, also in two volumes, was published in London in 1887. Makart also delivered Egyptian-style motifs as models for xylographs in the book, see "Hans Makart-Album" [Franz Mondy Publishers, Wien, 1881].



In his *Wasserschöpfende Ägypterinnen* (Egyptian Women Drawing Water), his first design for Ebers' first volume, Makart clearly used Huber's photographs as a source of inspiration (Figs. 5, 6). Here Makart was not interested in a precise reproduction of the motif; instead, the photographic tool served as a source of inspiration for the overall design scheme of the composition (for example, two people sitting or standing) and thematic arrangements (for example, woman with pitcher). Striking here is the fact that photo-specific characteristics were incorporated into Makart's drawings: the lack of spatial depth (Makart extended the empty wall with a stereotyped architectural view), the photographer's standpoint (at eye level with the models), and the sun (as the only natural light source).



Fig. 5. Carl Rudolf Huber, *Two Egyptian Women with Pitcher and String Instruments*, 1875–76. Gérard Lévy Collection, Paris.

The question remains as to why Makart preferred photographs rather than drawings as a source of inspiration: presumably he felt they were more authentic and provided a greater degree of design freedom for his motif variations in terms of form.





Fig. 6. Emmerich Ranzoni after Hans Makart, *Egyptian Women Drawing Water*, c. 1875–76. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

### MAKART'S PHOTOGRAPHIC SELF-STAGING

The modern view of Makart sees his “almost anarchic easing of the approach to art” in relation to the socio-political and social situation,<sup>23</sup> with the cultivation of his artistic image

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<sup>23</sup> Nikolaus Schaffer, “Das Große Liebesspiel. Ein Versuch über Hans Makart – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Kritiker”, in: Erich Marx, Peter Laub (ed.), *Hans Makart 1840-1884* (exhibition catalogue, Salzburg Museum, Salzburg, 2007), Salzburg, 2007, p. 71.

and the staging of his art as a logical step pursued by the artist himself. In the spirit of the times he used photography to stage himself as an *enfant terrible* in photographic portraits as well as for the dramatic staging of his art in his own studio.

Of note are the photos which show the young artist as a lively and self-confident man (fig. 7). These studio portraits are unconventional in their complete absence of all furniture and props that might have hinted at the profession of the man in the photo. The photos lack all representative pathos, and Makart's appearance permits no conclusions regarding his profession, but rather shows him to be a personality with an outstanding physiognomy. This type of repertoire was not unknown in the portrait culture of the time and shows a high degree of similarity between the subjects of the photos and the photographers, as well as the artistic use of new, sensational reproduction possibilities. It was clearly normal for the artists



Fig. 7. Johann Baptist Scheidl, *Hans Makart in a Straw Hat*, 1856, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

themselves to influence the result of the photos. Pioneering possibilities for these early creative-artistic portrait photos were developed by Alois Löcherer in Munich (from 1849), as well as Julia Margaret Cameron, David Octavius Hill, and Robert Adamson in Britain<sup>24</sup>. This dramatic mode of creating likenesses probably had a considerable influence on Makart, since he asserted his design wishes even in conventional portrait photos of his own person in “carte-de-cabinet” format by professional photographers. As regards form, Makart’s physiognomy with his surprised but self-confident air recalls a contemporary artist type of painterly origin (Fig. 8)<sup>25</sup>.



Fig. 8. Gustave Courbet, *The Desperate Man*, c.1844–45.  
Private Collection, Courtesy BNP – Paribas Art Advisory.

In later years Makart assimilated his photographic self-staging entirely to the conventional rhetoric of professional photographers. Portrayed in historical costumes, it was the representation that took precedence, and the sophisticated and imaginative studio arrangements produced photos that were comparable to the highly meaningful paintings. The aesthetic was systematically translated into the photographic staging of the historical pageant of 1879 (Fig. 9)<sup>26</sup>.

It is possible to outline a deeper approach to Makart’s artistic self-image in his portrayal of himself in a series of photos taken by the studio of Josef Székely during the

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<sup>24</sup> For more detailed comments on this point see Bodo von Dewitz, “Die Inszenierung der Persönlichkeit in der Geschichte der Fotografie”, in: Landesmuseum Koblenz (ed.): *Bilder machen Leute. Die Inszenierung des Menschen in der Fotografie* (exhibition catalogue, Landesmuseum Koblenz, Koblenz, 2008), Ostfildern, 2008, pp. 17-29.

<sup>25</sup> The type of spontaneous gesture of Gustave Courbet’s self-portrait *The Desperate Man* of 1844–45 was intensively adapted and developed. See Klaus Herding, Max Hollein (eds.), *Courbet. Ein Traum von der Moderne* (exhibition catalogue, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, 2010/2011). Ostfildern, 2010, p. 110f.

<sup>26</sup> The significance of photography in the context of the pageant of 1879 is not treated here and will be discussed in detail in the publication accompanying the exhibition by the Wien Museum 2011 in the Künstlerhaus: Ralph Gleis (ed.), *Makart – ein Künstler regiert die Stadt* (exhibition catalogue, Wien Museum Karlsplatz), Wien, 2011.

execution of the painting *Charlotte Wolter als Messalina* (Charlotte Wolter as Messalina) in 1875. Charlotte Wolter posed in various positions on a sofa in the costume of Messalina (Fig. 10). In one of the photographs Hans Makart is sitting at her feet (Fig. 11). The photographic scenario evokes the impression of mythological costumes rather than a scene between artist and model. Makart is sitting with a bohemian air on the stairs beneath Wolter, as if playing the part of a minstrel. He has staged himself as possessing a gentle, artistic nature, someone who encounters all females shyly and submissively. In her role as the seductive woman on the photo, Charlotte Wolter looks very nonchalant. There is not a



Fig. 9. Victor Angerer, *Hans Makart in Renaissance dress on horseback on the occasion of the historical pageant 1879*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.



Fig. 10. Studio of Josef Székely, *Charlotte Wolter as Messalina*, 1875.  
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.



Fig. 11. Studio of Josef Székely, *Hans Makart and Charlotte Wolter as Messalina*, 1875 (detail).  
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

trace of her stage role as the unapproachable woman, whom Makart was to paint later. Nor do we see the destructive passion that oversteps every code of behavior, which Messalina embodied as the heroine of the Burgtheater in the highly acclaimed production of *Arria und Messalina* <sup>27</sup>. Makart seems here to be flirting with the patriarchal society. He stages the act of being dominated by a woman and slips as a painter into a submissive role. In the photographic portrayal, the highly dramatic role-play is transformed into the closeness of an intimate play and the exploration of a fragile nature.

The effect and the irresistible attraction that Makart's monumental painting *Messalina* exerted on his contemporaries could hardly have been more contrary: the eponymous heroine, described by such attributes as "majestic and lissom" and exhibiting a desirable sensuousness, struck up a mutually enriching relationship with the painter-genius Makart.<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 12)



Fig. 12. Charlotte Wolter as "Messalina", 1875. Wien Museum Karlsplatz.

Makart's versatile ability to orient his talents as an artist can be seen with regard to photography in a multi-layered relationship: he presents his artistic identity in a dramatic photographic setting but keeps his distance in every way from heroicizing himself in an imposing manner as an artist. This was the exact counter-approach to his artistic status as a "painter prince". With his photographic self-image Makart may well have seemed here to be the very opposite of Gustave Courbet's type of Parisian artist-bohemian. Both artists reached the zenith of their fame at the same time.

## THE PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO

The artistic and social significance of the artist's studio had changed radically during the period of Historicism. Many painters developed a lively interest in collecting through

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<sup>27</sup> The drama, specially written by Adolf von Wilbrandt, director of the Burgtheater from 1881 until 1888, with Charlotte Wolter in the leading role, written specifically for her, premiered on 14 December 1874 in the Burgtheater and ran successfully in the program until 1898.

<sup>28</sup> Compare the descriptions by the journalist Wolfgang Drews and the biography of Charlotte Wolter by M. Ehrenfeld of 1887, quoted in: Hans Makart Malerfürst (1840-1884) (exhibition catalogue, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Wien, 2000/2001), Wien, 2000, p. 102.

their historical awareness. The previously austere workshops now acquired the character of a cross between an art treasury and a curiosity cabinet: newly produced items were mixed with old. The studio itself was transformed into an artistic universe in which the artist's imagination could take flight. Makart found corresponding inspiration from his first Munich art teacher, Jost Niklas and from Friedrich von Amerling, whose studio had first been photographically presented in dramatic detail during the 1860s in Vienna by his painter friend Carl von Jagemann (Fig. 13)<sup>29</sup>. In Vienna, Makart's studio became a focus of public interest, prompted by a spectacular innovation: its temporary opening for a (paying) public, who were permitted to watch the master painting from a balcony. Innovative, too, was the architectonic design as a summer house (Fig. 14), as a vast salon with an accumulation of *objets d'art* in which the artist himself seemed like an exhibit in the festive atmosphere of a quasi-religious cult room. Makart's studio style became very fashionable and henceforth



Fig. 13. Carl von Jagemann, *Studio and residence of Friedrich von Amerling with a view through to Mercury by Bertel Thorvaldsen*, c. 1860. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

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<sup>29</sup> This mass of photographs by Carl von Jagemann from the collections of the Picture archives and Graphik collection of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek is on show here for the first time (Inv.: Pk 5040, 1-26). For a meticulously researched biography of the painter and photographer Jagemann, see: Marion Diehm, "Von Wertheim nach Wien – biografische Skizzen über den Maler und Hoffotografen Carl von Jagemann (1819-1883)", in: *Mainfränkisches Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kunst* 62, Bd. 133, 2011, pp. 187-244.





Fig. 14. August Stauda, *Exterior view of Hans Makart's studio, Gusshausstraße 25, Vienna, 1905.* Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.



Fig. 15. Josef Löwy, *Hans Makart (atelier). The Big Studio, c. 1875.* Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

influenced bourgeois interiors (Fig. 15)<sup>30</sup>. The urge to self-dramatization on the parts of artistic figures was directly linked to the commercialization of the art business and an economically strengthened and self-assured upper class. As painter, decorator, and arranger, Makart had now advanced to become a central figure in Viennese society and on the art scene, and his staged art productions were an appropriate projection screen for a wildly enthusiastic public approach to art.



Fig. 16. Victor Angerer, *Hans Makart wearing the costume for the historical pageant*, in *Le Monde illustré*, no. 1154/10 Mai 1879.

Corresponding to the opening of his studio to the public, Makart also employed photographs of his studio as a media multiplier: Photographs as visiting cards or postcards made inexpensive souvenirs that could have a wide impact.

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<sup>30</sup> Hans Ottomeyer, "Rückbezug und Fortschritt. Wege des Historismus 1848 – 1880", in: Ulrike Laufer, Hans Ottomeyer (ed.), *Gründerzeit: 1848-1871; Industrie & Lebensträume zwischen Vormärz und Kaiserreich* (exhibition catalogue, Deutsches Historisches Museums Berlin, Berlin, 2008), Dresden, 2008, pp. 319-327.

Fully aware of its media effectiveness, Makart built the possibilities offered by photography into his concept of an integrated self-dramatization. In doing so he did not present an authentic picture of himself to the public but staged himself and his studio in a publicity-seeking and promotionally effective manner. Thus the apparent authenticity did not arise through a fusion with the surroundings, but assumed the “sovereignty of distance”<sup>31</sup>. In the context of Makart’s complete oeuvre it would be wrong to over-emphasize the relationship between photography and painting. Makart’s attitude toward the new medium was certainly not comparable with that of his Munich artist colleague Franz von Lenbach, who made conceptual use of photography in his artistic work processes. Makart’s approach to the medium could be described as pragmatic; his evaluation of painting as a higher artistic form of expression (compared with photography) corresponded with the general view of art at the time<sup>32</sup>.

Hans Makart’s use of the medium of photography ranges from his use of reproduction photography as a design aid via its use as a source of artistic inspiration (in connection with the Egypt pictures), to its targeted use as a means of self-dramatization (Fig. 16). Makart himself, like most of his artist colleagues, refrained from voicing an opinion on the subject of photography.

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<sup>31</sup> Christopher Phillips, *The Judgement Seat of Photography*, quoted in: Ilka Becker, *Fotografische Atmosphären. Rhetoriken des unbestimmten in der zeitgenössischen Kunst*, München, 2010, p. 89.

<sup>32</sup> The equal regard for painting and photography within the artistic process was first put into practice in the Concept art of the mid-twentieth century.