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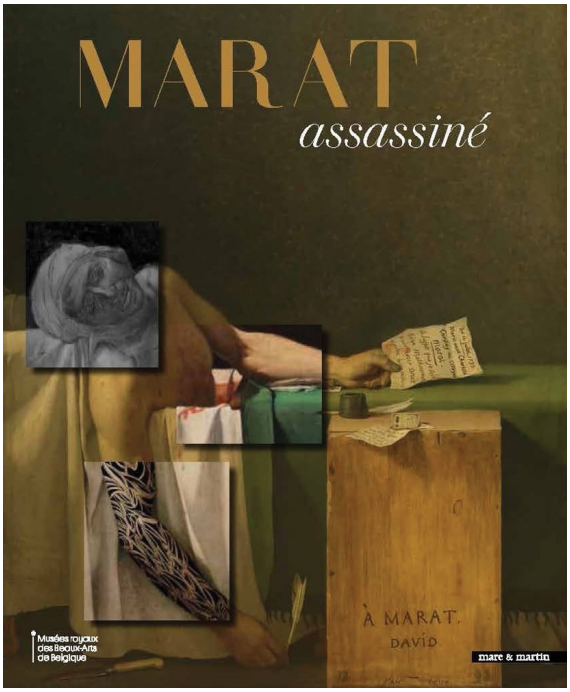

The Death of Marat

Jacques-Louis David

Ouvrage collectif sous la direction de Fabrice Biasino

ISBN	9782362220623
Publisher	Exhibitions International
Binding	Paperback / softback
Territory	United Kingdom and Ireland
Size	215 mm x 206 mm
Pages	48 Pages
Price	£15.95

- Accompanied an exhibition at Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (KMSKB-MRBAB), Brussels, 28 April to 7 August 2022

Since 1893, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium own Jacques Louis David's masterpiece *The Death of Marat* (1793). In order to bear witness to the central position of this painting in the advent of modern art, the Royal Museums dedicate an exhibition to this masterpiece. For the first time, this publication offers an unprecedented approach to David's artwork by combining both historical and contemporary views, as well as a scientific approach by presenting the results of a research campaign that involved laboratory analyses.

The exhibition is structured in three sections giving the public a new understanding of David's work. The first scientific section presents the results of the material and technical pluridisciplinary study entitled "Face to Face" conducted on *The Death of Marat*, which reveals for the first time the underlying sketch of the masterpiece. This research, carried out by the European Centre for Archaeometry of the University of Liège, is based on the use of scientific imaging techniques and non-invasive physico-chemical analyses carried out in situ. In the second, historical section, studio replicas conserved in Reims, Dijon and Versailles are presented, as well as a version belonging to a private collection (Paris). Finally, this section is completed by contemporary interpretations by artists such as Picasso, Ai Weiwei, Gavin Turk, Jean-Luc Moerman, Jan Van Imschoot, or a work by Rachel Labastie, who shifts the focus from Marat to Charlotte Corday, the absent protagonist in David's representation.

Published 20th Dec 2022