

Editorial

On Wednesday 10 August 1966, Dutch newspapers reported that the South African Broadcasting Corporation had banned the Beatles's music after John Lennon's claim that they were "more popular than Jesus". In defiance, the country's youth rushed to buy their records even as schoolmasters called on their pupils to burn them in the playgrounds. The very same pages also announced a more peaceful yet equally exciting event at the campus of Utrecht University, where a new art-historical journal had been launched. It was called *Simiolus* and would focus on "Western art history in the broadest sense". It aimed to "source papers not only from renowned authors but in principle from any *studiosus* who can contribute to art-historical scholarship". The journal was given the simple subtitle *Kunsthistorisch tijdschrift* and was scheduled to appear three times a year.

The first issue was unanimously lauded, and with a nod to its title Jaap Bolten called it "a high-level monkey" ("*Simiolus, een aapje op hoog peil*", *Vrij Nederland*, 25 February 1967, p. 10). It proved to be such a successful undertaking that in 1971 it was decided that it should appear quarterly. In practice, however, this proved difficult to fulfil: volume 5 ironically consisted of two double issues, volume 6 of one double and two single issues, and only volumes 7, 8 and 9 comprised four single issues (of which volume 8 was spread over 1975 and 1976). The quarterly ambition eventually proved impossible to uphold, and after 1977 the journal never again appeared four times in one year. In the new millennium, two double issues per year became more and more common, but we remained a quarterly in name.

Simiolus has always been primarily a labour of love, its production largely happening after and in between working hours. And lacking structural funding, it greatly depends on voluntary helping hands. The time has now come, therefore, to face reality, to bury the quarterly ambition and to regularise the previously irregular publishing frequency. As of this volume, *Simiolus* will appear less

often but more punctually, that is twice a year, in June and December. This will result not only in less frustration for authors, subscribers and editors, but will also keep the monkey high-level and guarantee the quality of the papers we publish. In keeping with our original subtitle, from now on we will therefore be subtitled *Journal for the History of Art*.

In spite of this change, the present issue makes perfectly clear that we remain true to the mission we announced almost sixty years ago. Covering topics from Jan van Eyck via Michiel Sweerts to Pyke Koch, and from Italian cardinals via Brussels ghosts to Dutch fascists, it includes papers by a young PhD student and established authorities. It is a particular honour to welcome the widely published Stephan Kemperdick, who is only now making his debut in *Simiolus*. Importantly, this volume also sees a firm return to our roots: while we bid farewell to Laurens Kleine Deters after four years of dutiful service on our editorial board, it is a pleasure to announce that Daantje Meuwissen of Utrecht University has agreed to take up the baton.

We wholeheartedly hope that this strengthening of our ties with the university will stimulate students to publish their papers with us, and we therefore look forward all the more to receiving submissions for our Haboldt-Mutters Prize, the call for which is open until the end of the year. Finally, this is also the place to express our immense gratitude for a very generous donation from the ever-loyal Rob Scheller and his wife Suus. In consultation with them, we have decided to establish a fund with which we can finance study days on particular themes, the papers of which — we hope — can be published in future thematic issues. Thank you, too, for helping us to keep our monkey high-level!

RUBEN SUYKERBUYK