

Summary

AGNIESZKA PATAŁA / About the Brueghels, after Bruegel. Comment on the margin of the exhibition “The Brueghel Family. Masterpieces of Flemish Painting” (The Royal Palace in Wrocław, 23 July – 30 September 2013)

The exhibition “The Brueghel Family. Masterpieces of Flemish Painting”, held in Wrocław from 23rd July to 30th September 2013, inscribed in the series of events which have been organised for many years now with the aim to present to a wide audience the oeuvre of a few generations of painters deriving from the famous family or somehow related with them. Inevitably, some issues that arouse on the occasion of the exhibition have remained the same for years. It applies mostly to the question of functioning of huge painting workshops, where the work was based on a division of labour, strict specialisation of artists, reproduction of the most popular patterns, copying compositions that had been created in workshops of forerunners or collaboration with other masters. In the case of the Wrocław exhibition works that belong mostly to private collectors served as examples of the aforementioned issues. As less recognised works they won an advantage for the discussed event. Nevertheless, next to the paintings, the audience was another essential component of the exhibition. Ca. 75 000 visitors and their reactions, questions and reflections deserve our attention. When observing the people who came to the Royal Palace in Wrocław, one could get an impression that in quite many cases they were highly interested and demanding viewers who wanted to grasp the sense and read symbols of every tiny detail present in the paintings. In some cases they were also unaware of the specifics of the mode of operation of large painting workshops in Early Modern Europe, and at least the way the *atelier* of the Brueghel dynasty used to function. Their reactions, doubts and questions seemed to be symptomatic and induced to more general reflections over the contemporary viewer attitude towards the presented to them works, and the task that await future organisers of events of this kind.