
Call for Papers

Appropriation, Inappropriation, Expropriation

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In a 2014 interview, the artist Lisa Oppenheim described her practice in terms that evoke a strategic duty: in a world awash with images, she explained, the objective of art is “to distill and to edit and to process” rather than simply “add more to the noise.”

Oppenheim is referring to the art of appropriation, a term that, in itself, does little to illuminate either the diversity of media and practices it implies today, or the far reaching consequences of such practices in our current, media-saturated moment. What is revealing, however, are the multiple equivalencies conjured up by Oppenheim’s formulation: to appropriate is to distill, filter, or refine; to edit, assemble, or abridge; to process, sort, or translate.... If the world is indeed a commotion of images, objects, and data churned out in ever-vaster quantities by a ceaseless cultural machine, it is here amidst the clamor that the artist must begin to derive her art.

To summon the words of an “appropriation” artist born in 1975 is also to acknowledge the epochal shift and the altered contexts in which such artists and filmmakers currently operate, so divergent from the conditions that gave rise to the Pictures Generation of the 1970s and 1980s. For those earlier artists, the act of appropriating was a matter mainly of disavowal (“the artist is dead”; “there is no originality”) and demystification (“the artwork is but a commodity, the viewer of art but a consumer”).

If today's most avid and innovative appropriation artists have internalized those obsessions, their work must also contend with entirely new sets of questions and contingencies: what is the status of evidence in the era of political polarization and “post-truth”? What is the nature of authenticity and authentication in a presumably “post-historical” world? Where do the laws, discourses, and aesthetics of property converge with those of art in the matrix of appropriation and expropriation? Has the aura of the work of art resurfaced, phoenix-like, from the embers of mechanical reproduction in the age of social media and digital manipulation? Has the “archive fever” of recent decades evolved into an epidemic of recycled knowledge and speculative excess, or do recycling and speculation point the way to a radical line of flight from the information morass?

For this special dossier on “Appropriation, Expropriation, Inappropriation,” the editors of Lumina seek interventions by scholars, theorists, artists, and activists who wish to engage in the construction of new histories and new genealogies of appropriation art in and for the present. We welcome scholarly articles, speculative essays and quasi-fictions, visual thought experiments, and provocative manifestos that seek to reframe debates about authenticity, evidence, copyright, intellectual property, the archive, and the aesthetics and politics of appropriation in contemporary cultural and communicational production. Prospective contributors may hail from any of a diverse array of disciplines, including but not limited to communications, art history, media studies, visual culture studies, cinema studies, post-colonial studies, legal studies, the history of science and technology, legal studies, design and architecture, and the fine arts.

Keywords: archive; property; copyright; appropriation; communications; expropriation; evidence; authenticity; authentication; post-truth; post-history.

Timeline:

- **Deadline for submission:** 03/01/2020
- **Submission of opinion:** up to 08/22/2020
- **Questions:** revista.lumina@ufjf.edu.br