

**Contemporary Art 101: Appropriation Art**  
**Rochester Art Center**  
**Thursday, February 2, 7:00 pm**  
**Lecturer: Scott Stulen, Curator of Education**

Introduction:

Appropriation is defined as the creation of a new work by partially or completely borrowing elements from an existing work. This may include images from photographs, art historical references, advertisements, etc. This session will discuss the use of appropriated images and objects in contemporary art and associated legal and conceptual issues. We will explore how many contemporary artists use appropriation to comment on contemporary culture and our media saturated environment.

**Can be viewed as a two-dimensional version of the found object**

**Death of the Original:** Appropriation contradicts the modernist idea of the original and the “Masterpiece”. This is a break from art history, which placed great value on originality. Many contemporary artists feel that the media saturation permeating our culture makes it impossible to create a completely original image. The artist in this environment becomes more like a DJ...a manipulator of images into new content and form.

Elements commonly “borrowed” in Contemporary Art:

- The work of other artists: history or contemporary
- Images from everyday life
- Popular Culture
- Archival images
- Personal photographs

Two essays heavily influence appropriation in contemporary Art:

German philosopher Walter Benjamin  
*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction 1934*

American critic Rosalind Krauss  
*The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths 1986*

**Death of the Original**

- Contradicts Modernism
- The fluid nature of meaning - Relativism
- Contemporary Culture: futility of originality
- Artist remixing culture – DJ

**Roots of Appropriation**

*The first “Readymade”*

- Marcel Duchamp
- *Fountain* 1917
- Signed R. Mutt
- Conceptual: “declared as art”
- Art in the idea not the craft

**Marcel Duchamp**

L.H.O.O.Q.

**Salvador Dali**

Lobster Telephone 1936

**Andy Warhol**

Brillo Box 1963

**Transition Artists/Movements**

- Pop Art breaks the division between popular culture and high art
- Andy Warhol uses Pop Culture as subject matter-similar to a readymade  
Repetition softens impact and meaning

**Andy Warhol**

Last Supper

**Jasper Johns**

Flashlight

**Jasper Johns**

Ballentine Beer Cans

**Richard Hamilton**

Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing

**Robert Rauschenberg**

Estate

**Robert Rauschenberg**

Erased De Kooning 1953

*Direct Appropriation*

- **Sherrie Levine**  
*After Walker Evans 1981* "borrowing" images directly
- Putting the image into a new context alters meaning

**Jeff Koons**

*New Shelton Wet/Dry 1981*

**Jeff Koons**

Pink Panther

**Jeff Koons**

Michael Jackson and Bubbles

**Jeff Koons**

Bunny

**Haim Steinbach**

Supremely Black 1985

**Richard Prince**

Untitled 1983

**Richard Prince**

Untitled Cowboy 1993

**Louise Lawler**

Probably not in the show

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In and Out of Place

**Christian Marclay**

**Sigmar Polke**

Ms. Autumn and her Daughters

**Gerhard Richter**

Confrontation I

**Arturo Herrera**

**Margaret Killgallen**

Let it Ride

**Michael Ray Charles**

**Elizabeth Peyton**

**Katinka Galanos**

Hedges

**Christian Marclay**

Quartet

**Abinadi Meza**

The Prisoner 2005

American Beauty

**David Byrne**

**Appropriation as commentary**

*Humor, Irony, and Parody*

**Maurizio Cattelan**

*as Picasso*

**Marcel Duchamp**

L.H.O.O.Q.

**Marcel Duchamp**

Fountain 1917

**Sherrie Levine**

Fountain

**The Chapman Brothers**

**Jake and Dinos Chapman**

*Insult to Injury 2003*

*Francisco de Goya 'Disasters of War'*

*etchings reworked and improved*

**Hokusai**

The Great Wave

from 36 views of Mt. Fuji

**Jeff Wall**

A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai), (1993)

**Carl Andre**

**Rachel Lachowicz**

Homage to Carl Andre 1991

**Scott Stulen**

Carl Andre in the Enchanted Forest 2004

**Chris Johanson**

**Erik Ullanderson**

I saw this online

**Scott Stulen**

I saw this from a guy who saw it online

**Maurizio Cattelan**

**Scott Stulen**

The Food Chain

**Jeff Koons**

Puppies