

Photography Imitating Art:  
Defining the Indefinite Nature of  
Appropriation

Sarah Louise Lordan

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Defining the Indefinite Nature of  
Appropriation

By  
Sarah Louise Lordan

Supervisor: Dr. Justin Carville

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## **Declaration of Originality**

This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire in partial fulfilment of the examination for the BA (Hons) in Photography. It is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institution.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sarah Louise Lordan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'S'.

Sarah Louise Lordan

Student Number:

**N00172821**

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the notion of originality in relation to Appropriation Art. Appropriation is an artistic method that came to rise in the Postmodern Era, where the user becomes an active participant in dissecting and manipulating the concepts and works of their predecessors. To understand how an appropriative artwork maintains originality, one must look at the layers of intent placed upon the work by the artist. In investigating how originality manifests in Appropriation Art, the artist's research and concept must be evaluated in tandem with the style or material appropriated. Research and Concept are fundamental components of any given artwork; they can be defined as the elements of forethought necessary for an artwork to be produced. One does not appear without the other, though one takes precedence when discussing originality in Appropriation. Style and Material are variables also present in any given artwork; they refer to the thing that has been appropriated. In investigating how appropriative artworks maintain originality, a working theory of categorisation is produced: whereby Research and Concept can be considered primary characteristics of Appropriation, determining the approach that an artist takes in order to justify the appropriation; and Style and Material can be considered secondary characteristics of Appropriation, determining the process by which an artist appropriates.

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## Introduction

The nature of humanity is inherently set in simulacra; where all of the world's histories have come together, repetition occurs amongst the storylines of the individual folklore, religions and mythologies.<sup>1</sup> The underlying sentiment is almost always centred around the betterment of humanity, whereby the appropriation of fables, religious passages, or the legends of gods and demigods teaches the audience of ethics and morals. In his essay *Appropriating Appropriation*, art historian, curator, and Postmodern critic Douglas Crimp writes: "Appropriation, pastiche, quotation — these methods extend to virtually every aspect of our culture," and with regards to art and visual culture; the appropriation of concepts and ideas features as an underlying aspect at the centre of production.<sup>2</sup> Whilst considered a characteristic of contemporary practice, appropriation is apparent throughout the history of art. It is evident in biblical scenes derived from Christian theology,<sup>3</sup> similarly seen in those depicting Greco-Roman mythology,<sup>4</sup> and in the Pre-Raphaelite Era, where prose and written word inspired the imagery produced.<sup>5</sup> Appropriation is even present in the colours, techniques, tools and mediums that an artist chooses to work with whilst making their masterpiece.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Hillel Schwartz, "Vanishing Twins," in *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likeness, Unreasonable Facsimiles*, (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 19–47.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," in *Documents of Contemporary Art: Appropriation*, ed. David Evans (Whitechapel: MIT Press, 2009), 189–193.

<sup>3</sup> Proto-Renaissance; Cimabue, Giotto & Duccio

<sup>4</sup> Botticelli, Caravaggio & Raphael

<sup>5</sup> John Everett Millais & Julia Margaret Cameron

<sup>6</sup> I.e. painting techniques, pigments, canvases, brushes, etc.

Through this appropriation of a medium comes the introduction of recurring signs and signals within the image; in their most basic forms, white signifies purity, red — fertility, and black — death.<sup>7</sup>

Appropriation is a technique most commonly thought of in relation to the Postmodern Era,<sup>8</sup> a movement that can be broken into three main categories, “a critique of historical narratives... a critique of the myth of originality... [and] a critique of the grounds of difference”.<sup>9</sup> Of particular interest to this study is the critique of historical narratives, and most importantly, the myth of originality. Appropriation can be considered a method of communication, referencing previous artworks, ideas, literature, etc., for comparative or reinforcing purposes; “this is where we were; this is where we are now”. As it is not confined to one specific medium and there are no definitive characteristics to it — other than the taking of something and making it one’s own — the purpose of this study is to outline a mode of categorisation to use while assessing the origins of individuality in Appropriation Art.

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<sup>7</sup> Semiotics, forging an allegorical structure.

<sup>8</sup> Beginning in the early 1970s, Postmodernism is most often known for its scepticism, encouraging introspection, breaking down the hierarchical barriers between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art, questioning ruling narratives, capitalism; the artworks produced were most often laced with irony, satire and parody.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, “Ideas of the Postmodern: Introduction,” in *Art in Theory 1900—1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 987–992.

The work of Douglas Crimp was essential in formulating the working theory to further categorise appropriative artworks. In his *Pictures* essay, Crimp proposed that:

it has now become necessary to think of description as a stratigraphic activity... uncovering the strata of representation... not in search of sources or origins, but of structures of signification: underneath each picture there is always another picture.<sup>10</sup>

These layers of meaning must be decoded in order to understand the significance of a Postmodern or Post-Postmodern artwork in its entirety. In his essay *Appropriating Appropriation*, Crimp proposed that appropriative artworks could be considered under a Stylistic or Materialistic process, whereby an artist appropriates the style of another, or they appropriate a physical, tangible thing, incorporating it into the new work.<sup>11</sup> The question posed after digesting Crimp's Stylistic and Materialistic categories of process was, "how do I further categorise artworks that follow various different approaches, whilst still falling under the same heading of Appropriation in tandem with Crimp's headings?". Thus the ontological question was posed, "what subcategories *can* appropriative artworks belong to?" and in asking this question, it prompted another; "how should these categories be organised?". These ontological questions proposed the investigation into the categorisation of Appropriation art in order to uncover individuality.

Building out from Crimp's statement that one must take part in a stratigraphic activity, breaking through each layer of representation and the

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<sup>10</sup> Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," in *October*, Vol. 8 (MIT Press, 1979), 75—88.

<sup>11</sup> Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," 189–193.

allegory present in the physical artwork, posed the idea of breaking down the process that the artist undergoes; the route that they take to arrive at the finalised artwork. In breaking down an appropriated artworks' meaning, it is possible to uncover the elements of originality included by the artist through individual thought and opinion. Stylistic and Materialistic Appropriation refer to the physical *act* of appropriation taken on by the artist, the *process* they worked with; one can compare the old with new and see where the appropriator has deviated from the work of the original. Through applied research, it was deduced that Research and Concept could be considered two influencing factors that can determine why and how someone might begin to appropriate information, objects, styles and materials as a method of communication. Research and Concept-Based Appropriation refer to the *approach* that an artist undertakes to arrive at their final piece; the elements of forethought that dictate how the artist will make their artwork.

The importance of this proposed method of categorising is that it propagates a new way of thinking about the artmaking process, and in particular, the process of making non-conforming appropriative art. Through the breakdown and categorisation of an artwork, one can determine the elements of originality that the artist has imprinted on their work. This study aims to outline a means of categorising the approach undertaken to make a piece of appropriated art whilst finding a way to further determine how an artist maintains originality in their appropriated artwork. This study's

working hypothesis is that Research and Concept can be considered two categories that determine an artist's approach to making an artwork. Furthermore, it can be assumed that because Research and Concept refer to the elements of forethought in creating an artwork, that the distinction of originality can be derived from this forethought, as it is subjective to each individual artist.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the theoretical framework necessary to understand where the new working theory is derived from. The chapter introduces Appropriation by definition, broken down into verb and adjective, outlining its relationship with art and ownership. Art's inherently appropriative pedagogical methods underline the necessity for a distinction between thievery and ingenuity. The relationship between photography and appropriation is touched on to outline its significance to this discussion. The notion of originality is discussed with references from major Postmodern theorists to understand what is meant by 'originality' in the age of the unoriginal. With originality in mind, Crimp's Stylistic and Materialistic methods of categorising appropriative processes are introduced, followed by the introduction of the hypothesised categories of approach: Research and Concept-Based methods. Using examples, these methods of categorisation are applied to introduce the working theory, explained both individually and in relation to one another.

In Chapter Two, the theory of Research-Based Appropriation is explained more definitively, outlining why it can be considered as a means of categorising appropriation. Two different types of Research-Based Appropriation are discussed in this chapter; one from the pedagogical standpoint, which produces a passive narrative, placed upon the appropriated work, and the other, from a condemnatory standpoint, creating a narrative that actively critiques what the artwork attempts to discuss. Under the subheadings of Stylistic and Materialistic Appropriation, three artist's works are broken down; looking at the artist's background, the process of artmaking, the technique applied, the concept, the use of allegory, what the work represents, and how originality is maintained.

Finally, in Chapter Three, the theory of Concept-Based Appropriation is explained more definitively, underlining the distinction between conceptual art and Concept-Based Appropriation. Still under the subheadings of Stylistic and Materialistic Appropriation, this chapter is discussed with a greater emphasis on the manipulation of allegory (as found in my research, the appropriation of allegory is where most artists manage to maintain originality in their appropriative artworks), though still discussing the background, artmaking process, the techniques and concepts used, what the work represents, and how originality is maintained.

## Chapter One: Introduction to Theory

As outlined in the Introduction, seen throughout the history of art is a tradition of appropriation forged by artists — whether as a source of learning and evolving one’s techniques or to claim artistic licence over a thing, ignoring its traditional conventions and supplying it with new ones. *Appropriation* originates from the Latin *appropriatus*, meaning “to make one’s own”.<sup>12</sup> Today, *appropriate* has acquired several different meanings: as an adjective, when something is “suitable or right for a particular situation or occasion”.<sup>13</sup> This definition would suggest that (in the context of art) the artist decides whether or not to deem something worthy of appropriating.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, as an adjective, appropriation can be considered the rationalising thought that comes before the act of appropriation.<sup>15</sup> As a verb, *to appropriate* means “to take something for your own use, usually without permission”.<sup>16</sup> The artist chooses a previous work that they consider to be synonymous (or capable of relating) to the current issue or theme they are attempting to discuss. Therefore, to appropriate can be regarded as the physical act of removing something from its original context and placing it in a new one. The use of the term *own* must be acknowledged; it implies that the

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<sup>12</sup> Robert S. Nelson, “Appropriation,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson & Richard Shiff (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 160–173.

<sup>13</sup> “Appropriate,” *Cambridge Dictionary*.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/appropriate>

<sup>14</sup> The object of appropriation is subject to the artist’s choice. It has the capacity to be anything, and thus bears infinite modes of expression.

<sup>15</sup> Can be looked at as the theoretical reasoning behind an appropriative artwork. The building of relationships.

<sup>16</sup> “Appropriate,” *Cambridge Dictionary*.

*thing* that has been appropriated becomes the property of the ‘appropriator’. In his essay *Of Property*, John Locke deduces that ownership is acquired through labour; “His labour hath taken it out of the hands of nature, where it was common, and belonged equally to all her children, and hath thereby appropriated it to himself”.<sup>17</sup> Thus, if ownership is derived through labour, and appropriation is the taking of something and making it one’s own, a seal of authenticity or originality must be sought out when looking at appropriated works.

As the pedagogical model for art is intrinsically referential, appropriation is ever-present in the art world. Art classes teach students to look at and learn from the works of their predecessors,<sup>18</sup> “to get ideas from other objects and artists, and to expand part of an object or image in order to help find their creative voices”.<sup>19</sup> In the contemporary academic world, appropriation of information is considered plagiarism if not cited correctly. Conversely, in the art world, appropriation is regarded as an elaboration of someone else’s idea — the evolution of art — deemed successful if the work created maintains elements of originality. Though if the work produced is *too*

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<sup>17</sup> John Locke, “Of Property,” in *Two Treatises of Government*, (England: Awnsham Churchill, 1689), 12,

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/LockeJohnSECONDTREATISE1690.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Historically speaking an artist would take on an apprentice, who would study and mimic the work of their superior, to the point where the students' work was indecipherable from their master's. The apprentice would only ‘graduate’ upon proving their ability to produce a masterpiece (a piece of art akin to that of their master). It must be noted that during this period of art-making where religion and religious passages were the basis of the artworks; the work produced was not painted by the artist per se, but by God, through the hands of the artist. Thus originality is not considered in the same way it is today as it was then.

<sup>19</sup> Joan A. Mullin, “Appropriation, Homage, and Pastiche,” in *Who Owns This Text?*, ed. Carol Peterson Haviland & Joan A. Mullin, (University Press of Colorado, 2009), 105–128.



similar to the original piece, “an artist can claim it as ‘pastiche’, ‘in the style of’ or ‘as an homage to’ a particular artist or mentor.”<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that there is still the possibility for appropriated works to be considered plagiarism.<sup>21</sup> As technological advancements rapidly surpass that of their legal counterparts, faults are found in an old copyright system. The limitations of the digital sphere’s ever-changing parameters — that the large majority of artists now work from and within<sup>22</sup> — are nonspecific or relatively unknown. With the monetisation of all things,<sup>23</sup> the question must be asked; “where does the line fall between appropriation and stealing?”; where artwork meets robbery. Regarding copyright laws of twenty-first-century works, an appropriated piece can come under fire if it does not have evidence of sufficient labour,<sup>24</sup> failing to transform the existing work into something distinctly new.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in order to differentiate between the two, one must look deeper into the artmaking process to fully understand where the work has originated from and mark how it has evolved.

The notion of originality within the art world became skewed when stepping into the Modern Era. Amidst the rapid technological and mechanical advancements came the birth of photography, acting as a catalyst, propelling art into the age of mechanical reproduction. The lovechild of science and

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<sup>20</sup> Mullin, “Appropriation, Homage, and Pastiche,” 105–128.

<sup>21</sup> The laws vary from country to country, but the general basis stays the same throughout.

<sup>22</sup> The internet.

<sup>23</sup> Data, information, people, content.

<sup>24</sup> This relates back to Locke’s theory of property.

<sup>25</sup> “Copyright and the Visual Artist,” on *Visual Artists*.

<https://visualartists.ie/copyright-and-the-visual-artist/>

technology, photography represented all that the art world could not achieve on its own — with absolute and inarguable accuracy. The camera freed up “the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens.”<sup>26</sup> Photography thus became a tool for artists, utilising the camera’s ability to capture the picturesque in an instance and employing<sup>27</sup> the image as a reference for their artworks. The introduction of photography into the art world would irrevocably change how artists produced their works. With the ability to print the same image in multiples, photography only skewed the notion of originality further; how can one decide which of a print is the *most* original? Perhaps it is that the *original* is, in fact, the negative that has captured the information, which would mean that only the photographer holds the original, and all else are solely copies.<sup>28</sup>

Still not considered a standalone art form, the first photographic movement began to take hold by the late nineteenth-century. The Pictorialist Era emerged, born from the burden of the camera’s undeniable truths and the desire for photography to be considered an artistic medium in its own right. Pictorialism — strongly influenced by reigning art movements<sup>29</sup> — could be defined by its manipulation of a photograph in an attempt to create works of

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<sup>26</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, (Cape Town, 1970), 219–226.

<sup>27</sup> Appropriating.

<sup>28</sup> Or in the case of painters employing photography as a reference for their works, this begs the question; is the photograph considered the original and the painting an appropriated work — a copy of the photograph. Furthermore, is the photograph considered in the same sense as the paintbrush, the pencil and the camera — as a tool?

<sup>29</sup> The ethereal nature of Romanticism (early-mid 1800’s) and the obscure visual representations of Impressionism (1860–80).

art, encouraging experimentation amidst the photographic creation. Pictorialists<sup>30</sup> adopted<sup>31</sup> an evident painterly aesthetic, often consisting of romanticised, soft-focus images — to emphasise the beauty of the subject matter, as opposed to merely recording information. The Pictorial movement proved that the photographic medium was malleable in each individual's hands, showcasing its value as an art form. This movement can be considered photography's first step into the world of Appropriation Art.

As the Modernist Era drew to a close and the introduction of new artistic mediums dwindled, the discussion of the death of the avant-garde arose. Art critic Michael Fried prophesied the death of art as it was, in 1967; “art degenerates, as it approaches the condition of theatre”.<sup>32</sup> Fried believed that; “the concept of art itself... [is] meaningful, or wholly meaningful, only *within* the individual arts”.<sup>33</sup> Amidst its death, artists began to build on what was already there, combining mediums to create new *original* works. This artistic mutation comes to be known as Postmodernism, “not confined to any particular medium... [artists] were willing to ‘corrupt’ one medium with another”.<sup>34</sup> On the discussion of originality, Richard Shiff asks, “If artists must use what has already been shaped, how can they and their artworks attain originality?”. Hypothesising that originality is *transmissible*, passed

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<sup>30</sup> Edward Steichen, Robert Demachy, Clarence H. White.

<sup>31</sup> Appropriated.

<sup>32</sup> Theatre refers to “what lies *between* the arts”.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 148—172.

<sup>34</sup> Crimp, “Pictures,” 75—88.

from one artist to another — “the artist [is the] inheritor and bearer of original first principles, a set of universal truths” that can be built upon and manipulated to the advantage of each individual artist.<sup>35</sup> Shiff also suggests that perhaps it is when one *elaborates* on existing methods and mechanisms that “the artist [acts] as [a] countercultural deviator of a tradition or as social deviant”.<sup>36</sup> Under Shiff’s deduction of originality, it can be assumed that appropriation is inherent in the evolution of art, and appropriated artworks act as proof of change.<sup>37</sup> To further reinforce the notion of originality in the age of the unoriginal, Michel Foucault surmises that “the notion of the ‘author’ constitutes the privileged moment of *individualization* in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences”.<sup>38</sup> From this, it can be assumed that originality is not to be considered as newly-found knowledge, but newly-found ways of applying this knowledge to create something ‘individual’ to you, the author. Rosalind Krauss described it aptly; “With his own self as the origin of his work, that production will have the same uniqueness as he; the condition of his own singularity will guarantee the originality of what he makes”.<sup>39</sup> As we all perceive the world differently, it would be naive to believe that our understanding of concepts and ideas would not be different and subject to each individual’s experiences. Thus, each

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Shiff, “Originality,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, 145—159.

<sup>36</sup> Shiff, “Originality.”

<sup>37</sup> Playing off of Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” — I learn, therefore I evolve.

<sup>38</sup> Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?,” in *Art in Theory 1900—1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 923–928.

<sup>39</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “Originality of the Avant Garde,” in *Art in Theory 1900—1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 1060—1065.

subjective artistic perspective is valid and necessary in order to formulate a generalised and objective understanding of what *is*.

In the new Postmodern Age,<sup>40</sup> one does not have to define themselves and their work by one specific appellation;<sup>41</sup> they can call themselves by the simple, all-encompassing term ‘artist,’ not to be bound by the confines of their descriptor. An artists’ work can traverse a multiplicity of artistic planes without breaking into someone else’s profession — without stepping on the toes of those whose work stays within the margins of their assigned appellatives. Being an *artist* rather than a photographer allows for experimentation, manipulation and the amalgamation of techniques and mediums. The benefit of being an artist is the possibility for further learning, gaining influence in breadth and depth by dabbling within the different mediums. This acquisition of extensive knowledge allows for the cherry-picking of techniques in order to create distinct and original works of art, allowing the artist to attain “absolute self-creation”.<sup>42</sup> This application of learned techniques becomes a definitive characteristic of appropriation, putting into question the traditional notions of *art* as it was within its restrictive confines.

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<sup>40</sup> The Postmodern Age saw appropriation techniques skyrocket, with the likes of the Pop-Art movement blurring the lines between mass production and the art world, it managed to critique the growing issue of the rapid consumption of art as a ubiquitous commodity. Out of this movement came the Pictures Generation, born from an influx of visual culture, motion pictures and advertising. The movement acted as a response to the overwhelming amount of stimulus that bombarded the human psyche on a daily basis.

<sup>41</sup> Painter, sculptor, printmaker, photographer.

<sup>42</sup> Krauss, “Originality of the Avant Garde,” 1060—1065.

There is no argument that the notion of originality in appropriation is a juxtaposing concept that contradicts itself as a whole but individually carries a multiplicity of meanings depending on the context of its discourse. This study is looking specifically at appropriative artworks that employ the use of the photographic medium within their process. The complex nature of appropriation incites inherent confusion in the observer whilst regarding what *is* and what is not considered to be appropriation. In almost all cases, there are elements of appropriation that can be seen in any work of art due to its pedagogical methods. However, this is not to suggest that there are no new original works of art, only that what consists of an original artwork must be reconsidered. Because appropriative art does not fall into any specific artistic medium, it can be challenging to understand what *it* is. Appropriation serves as an umbrella term for a plethora of mixed media. To fully understand what appropriation *is*, it is best to do so by splitting the movement up into categorical methods of approach rather than being defined by the mediums that the artist has utilised.

With the nature of appropriation being undefined and malleable to its user, categorising these works using Douglas Crimp's ideology should alleviate some confusion. In his essay *Appropriating Appropriation*, Crimp deduced that an artist undertakes a Stylistic or Materialistic process while making appropriative art.<sup>43</sup> *Stylistic* Appropriation refers to visual

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<sup>43</sup> Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," 189–193.

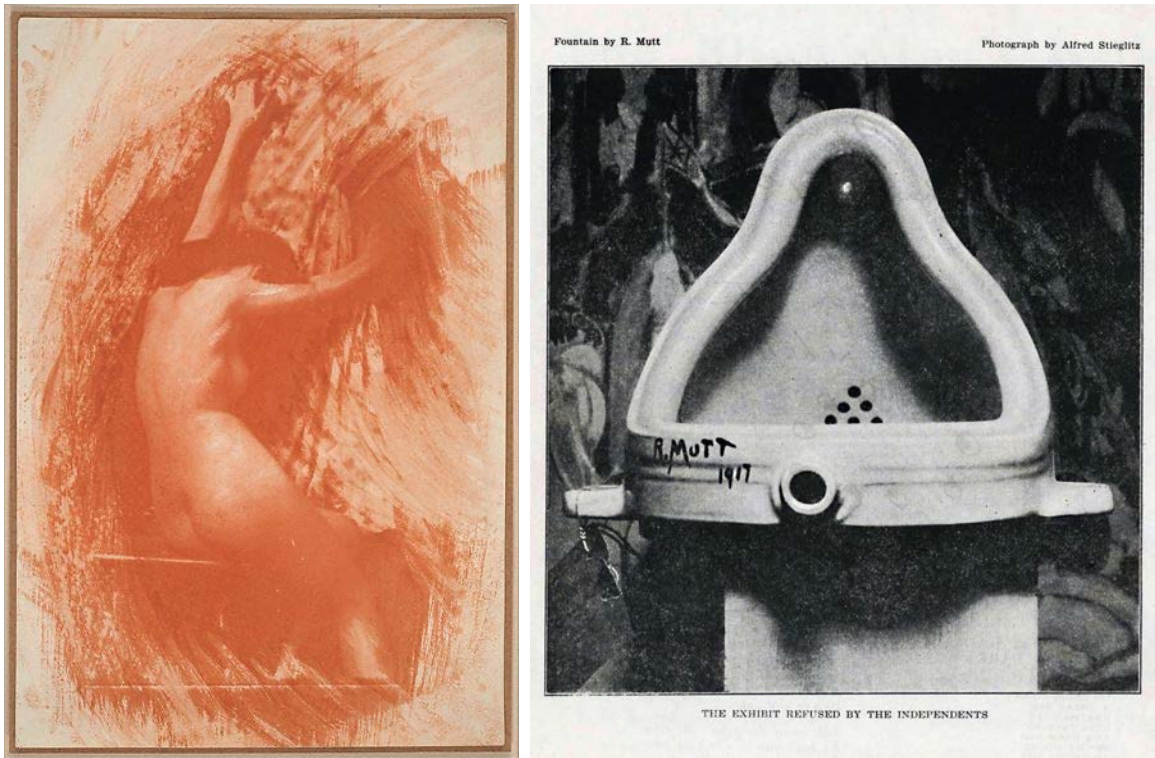


Fig. 1. Robert Demachy, *Struggle*, c. 1903.

Fig. 2. Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917 (photographed by Alfred Stieglitz).

characteristics, motifs or techniques distinct to a movement, culture, or specific to a particular artist used in a new context. The best example of the Stylistic Appropriation process would be Robert Demachy's *Struggle* (Fig. 1.), produced during the Pictorialist Era. Demachy used the non-commercial process of gum-bichromate printing to create an image that encapsulated painterly brushstrokes and a sketch-like quality. Employing a terracotta-esque hue, synonymous with the sanguine chalk often used in life drawings at the time, Demachy manipulated the artmaking process to pay homage to another medium within the art world.<sup>44</sup> *Materialistic* Appropriation refers to the

<sup>44</sup> Robert Demachy, "Struggle," on *MOMA*.  
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/289550>

taking “from history an actual object,” a physical, tangible thing not created by the appropriator. The object’s original purpose and significance are removed or manipulated, with a new relevance assigned by the appropriator.<sup>45</sup> The most famous example of this approach would be Marcel Duchamp’s readymade sculpture titled *Fountain* (Fig. 2.). Made at the beginning of the Dadaist Era, Duchamp took a urinal, placed it upside-down and presented it with the year and his pseudonym ‘Richard Mutt’ tagged on its side. Written by an anonymous source on the controversy of the readymade, it was said that:

whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.<sup>46</sup>

To add another layer of appropriation to the work, Alfred Stieglitz then took a photo of Duchamp’s readymade — stealing its likeness — and consequently disposed of the urinal.<sup>47</sup> Thus, a cycle of appropriation takes place: Duchamp appropriated a urinal, Stieglitz appropriated Duchamp’s *Fountain* and then got rid of the referent altogether, leaving his photograph as the only way to experience the groundbreaking work, Duchamp then (in the 1950s/60s) commissioned seventeen replicas to be made that are now dispersed

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<sup>45</sup> Crimp, “Appropriating Appropriation,” 189–193.

<sup>46</sup> Anon, “The Richard Mutt Case,” in *Documents of Contemporary Art: Appropriation*, ed. David Evans, (Whitechapel: MIT Press, 2009) 26.

<sup>47</sup> “The Fascinating tale of Duchamp’s Fountain,” on *Phaidon*.

<https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/may/26/the-fascinating-tale-of-marcel-duchamps-fountain/>



worldwide (the original was appropriated to replace itself, as well as allow for the work to appear in more than two places at once).

Furthermore, building out from Crimp's categorisation to formulate a more specific theory (in an attempt to distinguish the different aspects of appropriative methods more definitively), there is a Research-Based or Concept-Based approach to appropriation. The former being that the knowledge acquired through research and appreciation justifies the appropriation of previous artworks. The latter being that a concept<sup>48</sup> (created by the artist) drives the justification of appropriating previous works. Both of these approaches precede the physical act of appropriating;<sup>49</sup> they occur in the moments of rumination that prelude the creation of the artwork. Respectively, Stylistic and Materialistic Appropriation refer specifically to the physical act of doing,<sup>50</sup> and Research and Concept-Based Appropriation refer to the process of reasoning.<sup>51</sup> In both instances, artists occasionally leave the original allegory by the wayside to assert their own narratives, alternatively employing the original allegory as a basis or reinforcement for their new works as a mode of representation.

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<sup>48</sup> The artistic idea itself.

<sup>49</sup> Stylistic or Materialistic Appropriation.

<sup>50</sup> The verb: *to appropriate* — to take something for your own use, usually without permission.

<sup>51</sup> The adjective: *appropriate* — suitable or right for a particular situation or occasion.

<b>Stylistic Appropriation (the act)</b>	Visual characteristics, motifs, techniques specific to a particular movement, culture or person used in a new context.
<b>Materialistic Appropriation (the act)</b>	The “taking from history an actual object.” A physical, tangible thing <sup>52</sup> is manipulated and repurposed in a new context.
<b>Research-Based Appropriation (the thought)</b>	Where the acquisition of knowledge encourages the creation of an artwork. A question is being asked, and through research, the artist arrives at a definitive answer by which they express through artwork. The knowledge acquired justifies the reasoning for appropriating previous works. Previous works act as evidence/references in these circumstances.
<b>Concept-Based Appropriation (the thought)</b>	Where artwork is seen as the solution to a problem. When information is perceived and processed in such a way that incites an idea by observing or connecting instances. The problem justifies the reasoning for appropriating previous works - a reiteration or contradiction to what has been uttered previously; the artwork becomes a discussion. Previous works act as proof of theory/concept.

Table 1. Outlining the characteristics of each individual heading.

Seen in Table 1. are the characteristics of each categorical heading explained in their singular forms. This categorisation is not finite or absolute — and this study is not to suggest that the appropriator creates their works within the confines of these categories, nor do they perhaps think of their work processes in such a manner — it is solely for the purpose of visualising the different methods of appropriation. While analysing these artworks in relation to the categories mentioned above, the notion of originality and how the artist upholds individuality within their appropriative works will be highlighted by comparing old and new with further investigation into the artmaking process.

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<sup>52</sup> Not created by the appropriator.

Because of Appropriation Art's complexities and the nature of this categorisation being relatively obscure, the working theory will be explained using prominent examples of these categories. The two photographers used to delineate this theory are strongly influenced by the Golden-Age Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer, though their methods of appropriation vary. Tom Hunter works with a Research-Based and Materialistic approach, and Hendrik Kerstens works under a Concept-Based and Stylistic approach. Both Hunter and Kerstens have a mutual appreciation and fascination for Vermeer's works, but they display their appreciation in different manners. It is important to note that there is a distinct difference between appropriating the work of master artists (who have died more than seventy-five years ago)<sup>53</sup> and appropriating newer works from the contemporary world of art.

The Materialistic and Research-Based Appropriation of Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (Fig. 3.) by Hackney-based photographer Tom Hunter is a prime example to begin explaining this theory. Hunter's interest in Vermeer originated during his studies at The London College of Printing, from which he delved deeper into the Dutch painter's use of the camera obscura, along with his visual and representational techniques.

<sup>54</sup> Intrigued by how Vermeer depicted the mundane and private — yet familiar — moments of the average person, Hunter reinterprets the motifs employed

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<sup>53</sup> This relates back to copyright regulations, whereby appropriating the work of someone who has been dead more than seventy-five years is acceptable, as the work is then considered to be in the public domain.

<sup>54</sup> Tom Hunter, "Essay: Under The Influence," *Tom Hunter*.  
<http://www.tomhunter.org/essay-under-the-influence/>

within the paintings and applies them to relevant social circumstances within his own struggling community. Under the new name *Woman Reading a Possession Order* (Fig. 4.), the first thing to notice is the very apparent mimetic approach to Hunter's appropriation, from the repurposing of the title to the overall composition of the image. Evolving from a 'girl,' reading a 'letter,' to a 'woman,' reading a 'possession order,' Hunter removes the trivialities of cordial letter-writing, replacing them with harsh realities of life outside the bosom of safety.



Fig. 3. Johannes Vermeer, *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window*, 1657-59.

Fig. 4. Tom Hunter, *Woman Reading a Possession Order*, 1997.

Hunter essentially inverts all of Vermeer's allegorical tropes, cropping the room in tighter — replacing the grandiose walls with a split-painted wall — removing the privacy of the curtain — suggesting that the viewers are

voyeurs invading her space — leaving her with nowhere to go. The warm earth tones, suggesting safety and prosperity — reinforced by a bowl of fruit lying on the bed — are replaced by highly-contrasted cool-tones of red, green and blue — a baby<sup>55</sup> replaces the fruit<sup>56</sup> — emanating a sense of detriment. Hunter has placed the woman in front of a window, just as Vermeer did, though Vermeer had painted an open window suggesting access to “the sublime”. Conversely, Hunter depicts a closed window, suggesting “the realisation that one is still part of the universe”.<sup>57</sup> All of these inversions of Vermeer’s *material* prove that Hunter has undertaken an extensive amount of *research* in order to produce this appropriated work to such a significant standard while still maintaining a level of originality. Hunter has reappropriated the wistful, romantic allegory of Vermeer’s seventeenth-century painting and placed it in the dark and dank reality of the modern twentieth-century. Acknowledging the effectiveness of Vermeer’s depictions of the mundane and not often seen, Hunter re-employs these private moments in the context of those who are having their privacy stripped from them — the safety of their walls, being torn down.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The mouth that requires food and nourishment.

<sup>56</sup> A source of food and nourishment.

<sup>57</sup> “A window in art is often a symbolic entry/closure to/from the vastness of the Cosmos. In other words, it’s a peephole through which one may sense ‘the sublime’: the odd, simultaneous, twin sensation of insignificance when one acknowledges the vastness of nature coupled with the realisation that one is still part of this universe.” Hunter, “Essay: Under The Influence,” *Tom Hunter*:

<sup>58</sup> Both figuratively and literally.

Now, to look at the work of Hendrik Kerstens to discuss the theory of Stylistic and Concept-Based Appropriation. It is necessary to note that Kerstens, born in The Netherlands, did not initially practice as an artist but took it up in his later years when he became his daughter's (Paula) primary caregiver. So, that extensive Research-Based element of acquired knowledge and methodology that Hunter has learned from his art schoolings, Kerstens does not have — in the same sense. Attempting to capture the fleeting nature of childhood and the feelings that accompany having and being a child — the vulnerability, responsibility, the evolutionary aspect of growth and the notion of youth — Kerstens' daughter acted as his muse. Kerstens' documentary approach changed when upon returning home from horse riding one day, Paula removed her helmet, uncovering a hair-net holding her hair in place (See Fig. 12.). He wrote of this moment;

It reminded me of the portraits by the Dutch masters and I portrayed her in that fashion... The thing that fascinates me in particular is the way a seventeenth-century painting is seen as a surface which can be read as a description of everyday life... Northern European painting relies much more on craftsmanship and the perfect rendition of the subject. The use of light is instrumental in this.<sup>59</sup>

In that instance, when Paula removed her helmet, Kerstens' *concept* was realised, and this newfound concept justified his *stylistic* appropriation of Golden-Age masters.. Though Kerstens does not reference specific paintings in his appropriation as Hunter does, he works in “the style of,” “borrowing” their techniques in order to create works of pastiche.

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<sup>59</sup> Hendrik Kerstens, “Hendrik Kerstens,” *Danziger Gallery*.  
[www.danzigergallery.com/artists/hendrik-kerstens2?view=slider#13](http://www.danzigergallery.com/artists/hendrik-kerstens2?view=slider#13)

With a characteristically Dutch face as his muse — fair skin, clear and smooth, light blue eyes and a strong nose — Paula inadvertently becomes a physical reference to Golden-Age artworks. It could be said that for almost a quarter-century, Kerstens has appropriated Paula’s features, attempting to forge a relationship between his works and those of the masters — this, of course, skews the notion of materiality. However, it must be remembered that Paula is not an object to manipulate, and so her physicalities can only influence and reinforce Kerstens’ to work *in the style of* his Dutch predecessors. Kerstens has produced several pieces paying visible homage to Vermeer, manifesting immensely detailed works, depicting a composed Paula, with a peaceful expression, enforcing the painterly element of chiaroscuro, she is engulfed by high-contrast light. Kerstens’ intent for these images — as their nature became more and more obscure — is to create “a conceptual and humorous dialog between the past and present”.<sup>60</sup> The novelty aspect of the images come from the objects used to recreate the ‘Victorian-esque’ looks. Using simple household objects, the grandeur of headpiece and regal garb is replaced by towels and toilet paper. These subtle changes highlight the constructed element and uniform approach to portrait paintings and early photographic portraits,<sup>61</sup> encouraging discourse surrounding representation, constructivism, and the notion of art itself.

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<sup>60</sup> Kerstens, “Hendrik Kerstens,” *Danziger Gallery*.

<sup>61</sup> Daguerreotypes and carte-de-visite.



Fig. 5. Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, 1665.

Fig. 6. Hendrik Kerstens, *Napkin*, 2009

Whilst Kerstens' *Napkin* (Fig. 5.) does not outright reference Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Fig. 6.), it can be assumed that there is a relationship between the two images. The uncanny resemblance of Paula to the painted woman is the first thing to notice. Her pale skin stands out against the black background, mimicking that of the original. Paula's high cheekbones cast a shadow upon her round face just as it does in Vermeer's depiction. Conversely, Paula wears all black, aside from a white napkin<sup>62</sup> placed atop her head, to look as though it were a maid's bonnet, compared to the rich blue and gold colours, suggesting wealth — and the pearl earring a symbol of purity. Vermeer paints the girl with a soft, almost lustful gaze,

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<sup>62</sup> Commonplace household objects/rubbish.



mouth parted, looking up at the viewer, inviting them to believe that she might perhaps be meek and feeble, malleable under their thumb. Kerstens, on the other hand, captures Paula's gaze head-on, looking straight out at the viewer, unwavering and defiant, insisting that they look into her eyes as she exudes strength and power.<sup>63</sup> Kerstens' Stylistic and Concept-Based Appropriation of Vermeer's work through novelty household objects acts as a sort of comic relief; the real focus being a social, cultural and political commentary on consumerism, waste, and the ecological crisis that is now being faced due to the irreparable damage done to Earth at our hand. As Kerstens' style changed from documentary to conceptual, Paula evolved from an object of interest to a participating subject, rewriting the narrative of art and the objectified woman.

When discussing Appropriation Art, originality is at the forefront of the conversation. It is the make-or-break aspect that differentiates between innovation and pastiche. Looking at an artist's background, techniques, concepts, allegorical structure, and modes of representation can give the observer a better understanding of the methodological approach that an artist undertakes when making their artworks.<sup>64</sup> In the case of Hunter and Kerstens, they both maintain originality in their appropriative artworks in different ways. Hunter does so by modernising Vermeer's scene in its entirety,

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<sup>63</sup> A nod to the ever-changing roles of women in society.

<sup>64</sup> This theory can be applied to any artwork, but in this case it is specific to appropriation art.

replacing the romantic allegory with a new, darker narrative. This appropriation is only possible by researching the significance of the original in order to reference and repurpose the image with such accuracy. Kerstens maintains individuality by creating nuanced and satirical renditions of familiar portrait compositions from the poised and perfect past. Kerstens' artworks could not have come to fruition had he not witnessed that moment when Paula removed her riding helmet from which his concept was actualised.

	<b>Research-Based</b>	<b>Concept-Based</b>
<b>Stylistic</b>	<p>Where acquired knowledge influences an artist, and an idea is built from this information. The artist using Stylistic references to the original source, suggests the relationship between the works.</p> <p>“I have gathered knowledge on symbolism in Renaissance paintings, and I will use these symbols as references in my new work to reinforce the narrative.”</p>	<p>Where an artist's idea is the sole factor driving the appropriation of visual characteristics from previous works. The act of appropriation reinforces the artist's concept in some way. Referencing its predecessors.</p> <p>“I have an idea, it will be carried out in the style of...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Motifs</li> <li>● Colour schemes</li> <li>● Technique</li> <li>● Composition</li> </ul>
<b>Materialistic</b>	<p>Where knowledge acquired about the physical thing informs and influences the artist. The artist creates a new idea/concept/meaning building out from the original piece. The pertinence of the original work is the source of the new concept.</p> <p>“I know how significant the original thing is, my work will use that and elaborate on it/or disregard it”.</p>	<p>Where a tangible thing influences the artist, and the idea is born from this object/subject. The concept can only be carried out through the appropriation of the physical thing. The significance of the concept is moot without the physical object and vice versa.</p> <p>“Ceci n'est pas une pipe”<sup>65</sup> Uses a physical thing as a referent, to express Surrealist philosophy.</p>

Table 2. Outlining the characteristics of each heading in relation to the opposite category.

<sup>65</sup> René Magritte, *The Treachery of Images*, 1928—29.

Seen in Table 2. are the categories of appropriation previously discussed, showing where they overlap, the possible thought process behind them, and how they might manifest in artworks. These categories can be considered as a two-part process: Research and Concept-Based, referring to how the artist begins to approach their appropriation (the thought process that must happen in order for an artwork to manifest, rationalising what you are about to do), and Stylistic and Materialistic, referring to the method of appropriation undertaken (the physical act of appropriating, how they will use a previous work). The following chapters will give various examples of appropriative artworks that employ the photographic medium, both Stylistic and Materialistic, under the headings of Concept and Research-Based Appropriation. In doing so, multiple different approaches to appropriation art will be discussed,<sup>66</sup> showing both the *original* and appropriated artwork,<sup>67</sup> highlighting the significance of the appropriated work produced within a specific climate.

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<sup>66</sup> All of which have some form of photography incorporated into the work.

<sup>67</sup> Where available.

## Chapter Two: Research-Based Appropriation

This chapter takes a closer look at the notion of Research-Based Appropriation using Crimp's Stylistic and Materialistic headings as subcategories to decipher where on the spectrum of appropriation a specific artwork lies.<sup>68</sup> Before discussing any artworks under these headings, first, it must be understood what is meant by Research-Based Appropriation. As this theory is used to outline the elements of forethought that steer an artist towards appropriation, when using the term 'Research-Based,' I refer to the qualitative methods<sup>69</sup> that influence an artist to arrive at their final piece through appropriation techniques. This sort of practice is not uncommon in the art world as it is a method taught to students to process their thoughts and ideas through the thoughts, ideas and artworks of others. Each artist's research process varies considerably, though the objective stays the same, setting out to look for something "suitable or right," to resonate with their particular thoughts and ideas, or in an attempt to answer a question posed by these thoughts and ideas. Thus, research can be used as a definitive characteristic for categorising appropriative artworks and ensuring originality in an appropriated artwork.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," 189–193.

<sup>69</sup> Qualitative research refers to the collection of non-numerical data, i.e. written accounts, essays, observations, documents, theories, etc. Qualitative thus refers to the measurement of characteristics as opposed the measurement of the quantity of something.

<sup>70</sup> "Appropriate," *Cambridge Dictionary*.

In order for Research-Based art to take place, it is assumed the artist is looking to answer a question of sorts, to find a resolution for something that they have observed, or to remedy a situation. Through the learning and acquisition of knowledge and information on a specific topic comes the answer to their question. Patricia Leavy, a leader in research design and art-based research, writes that both:

artists and qualitative researchers alike may aim to shed light on something about the social world... [to] develop new insights about the relationships between our sociohistorical environments and our lives, or to disrupt dominant narratives and challenge biases.<sup>71</sup>

The researcher arrives at a state of enlightenment after acquiring “a novel worldwide view [that covers an] expansive terrain”.<sup>72</sup> From here, they make their artistic decision and justify their reasoning for creating a piece of art through appropriation. Using appropriation as a method of referencing, the artist can show the viewer that this is what they are talking about; this is the point of interest; this is why the piece has been made. Through their research, the artist has managed to conceive, manifest, actualise and solidify their artwork’s rationale.

Information can be considered as a currency of sorts — its value varies to those who read it. How one builds an opinion is entirely dependent on the information that they absorb and the environment that it is absorbed from or within. Therefore, an infinite amount of artworks can be produced

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<sup>71</sup> Patricia Leavy, “Social Research and The Creative Arts,” in *Method Meets Art: Art-based Research Practise*, 18.  
[https://books.google.ie/books?id=sb\\_nDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&dq=research%20based%20art&lr&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ie/books?id=sb_nDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&dq=research%20based%20art&lr&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>72</sup> Leavy, “Social Research and The Creative Arts,” 6.

based on the same subject matter whilst still maintaining originality and individuality, as an artist's opinions and perspectives are subjective to them personally. This theory can also be applied to the practice of Appropriation. There are infinite ways in which an artist can use and manipulate the technique of appropriation to their advantage, just as there are infinite ways for information to be used and manipulated subject to its reader. Each process intends to achieve a different outcome whilst still using the same act of appropriation. Similarly, photography proved capable of a multiplicity of purposes depending on who was in possession of the camera.<sup>73</sup> In any case, the artist takes on a research project to seek out information and find relationships between what is seen and what is read, to correlate meaning between life and literature, art and reality.

All humans have the capacity to detect and pinpoint correlations and patterns that appear in life. However, the select few have the patience and skill to hone in on these correlations and apply them to their practice. It can be considered a civic duty — that those given the task of seeing these relationships must speak of them — to tell the world of what they see and their findings in an almost prophetic manner. The importance of information reveals itself to those willing to listen and to those willing to seek out the relationships between past and present — to link up their own utterances with

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<sup>73</sup> From this, it can be assumed that the tools and materials that an artist uses are constant, and it is the artist that acts as the variable. Furthermore, in the case of appropriative art, the artist can be considered an outlier, deviating from the conventional uses of these tools and materials to find new modes of expression.

the utterances of those who have come before. Through applied investigation, an opinion is justified by the accumulation of multiple opinions; the appropriation of previous works supply a new work with reinforced relevance and meaning. The new work is read through previous works acting as the continuation of a sentence. To use the words of Postmodern critic Craig Owens to reinforce this notion; “one text is *read through* another, however fragmentary, intermittent, or chaotic their relationship may be; the paradigm for the allegorical work is thus the palimpsest”.<sup>74</sup> It can then be assumed that some, if not all, appropriated artworks maintain an allegorical structure whereby there is an undercurrent of meaning attached to the artwork that has been built out from previous works or through the acquisition of information. Thus, allegory is implicit in the new work as it was present in the old, though there are now several layers of meaning that need to be broken down and digested individually, which must then be reconfigured in relation to each other to be fully understood.

Appropriated artworks are rarely just “art for art’s sake” in the way that fine art would be appraised solely for its aesthetic value. There is usually an active narrative attempting to be told; the artist demands the viewers’ engagement. As opposed to previous art movements, most appropriated artworks only truly come to life in the *presence*<sup>75</sup> of the viewer. The artwork attains its final form — reaching its full, resolute potential — when it comes

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<sup>74</sup> Craig Owens, “The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism,” in *October*, Vol. 12 (MIT Press, 1980), 67-86.

<sup>75</sup> Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, 148—172.

into contact with the audience. The work becomes *whole* in the eyes of the beholder. In this sense, art becomes philosophical;<sup>76</sup> the viewer becomes a part of the artwork in the same way that a brushstroke or a concept is paramount to the finished piece. The audience is the missing piece of the artwork; if there is no audience, the artwork is not complete. It is all well and good to create socially relevant art; however, until that piece comes in contact with the ‘outside world’, the critique and narrative are rendered meaningless, mute. The artwork only attains its actualised meaning when it performs for the viewer, to be consumed and digested. The artwork aims to provoke the viewer to observe and analyse, encouraging them to reassess how they look at the world. As appropriation can be considered a reactionary movement, it only makes sense for the work produced to be made whole when put in front of an audience, for a multiplicity of other reactions to be fueled by this reaction.<sup>77</sup>

It is impossible not to be influenced by what the brain absorbs; the information consumed both consciously and unconsciously will inevitably round our interests, views and opinions of the world. All artists working in Research-based practices “[use] research as a tool to guide their practice as a

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<sup>76</sup> Begging the question “if an artist makes a work of art and nobody sees it, did they make it at all?”

<sup>77</sup> “A postmodernism of resistance and a postmodernism of reaction... the former — its desire to change the object and its social context...” Hal Foster, “Postmodernism: A Preface,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, xii.

[https://monoskop.org/images/0/07/Foster\\_Hal\\_ed\\_The\\_Anti-Aesthetic\\_Essays\\_on\\_Postmodern\\_Culture.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/0/07/Foster_Hal_ed_The_Anti-Aesthetic_Essays_on_Postmodern_Culture.pdf)



whole, as well as to structure the pieces they create”.<sup>78</sup> To apply this theory of an artist’s research influencing their appropriation and to show the many forms that it can take on, three different artists who work with the medium of photography will be discussed under the subcategories of Stylistic and Materialistic Appropriation<sup>79</sup>. The first two artists: Robert Mapplethorpe and Cindy Sherman, work with Stylistic Appropriation, incorporating the style of an artwork that they wish for their new work to be *read through*. Though Mapplethorpe and Sherman both work with Stylistic Appropriation, their strategies are different. Mapplethorpe appropriates from a pedagogical standpoint, learning *through* the work of others,<sup>80</sup> whilst Sherman appropriates from a condemnatory standpoint, critiquing the thing in question *through* appropriation.<sup>81</sup> The last artist discussed in this chapter: David LaChapelle, works with Materialistic Appropriation, repurposing the narrative of a Sandro Botticelli painting. He, too, works in a condemnatory fashion mixing truth and fantasy to compare and contrast the mythical story of Venus and Mars and the irrefutable history of Africa and its conquerors.<sup>82</sup>

As stated in Chapter One, the pedagogical model of art is set in the appropriation of information, methods and styles; thus, it can be said that art education propagates appropriation as a method of artistry. From this, it can

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<sup>78</sup> Caroline Sniders, “How to make research-driven art,” last modified August 16, 2018. <https://thecreativeindependent.com/people/how-to-make-research-driven-art/>

<sup>79</sup> Additionally, it will be discussed whether the new work takes on an active or passive narrative.

<sup>80</sup> Creating a passive narrative.

<sup>81</sup> Creating an active narrative.

<sup>82</sup> Creating an active narrative

be assumed that an artist working in a Research-Based practice will inherently appropriate the information gathered to reaffirm their beliefs or work as a counter-argument to their opinions.<sup>83</sup> That being said, the appropriation of an artwork from a pedagogical standpoint can produce a passive artwork in some instances. Robert Mapplethorpe's more traditional works can be seen as examples of the pedagogical model<sup>84</sup> of Stylistic Appropriation creating a passive work of art, in which the artwork bears little to no meaning below the surface of the image, other than to replicate or reinvent the aesthetic of the original.<sup>85</sup>

In his early years, influenced by experimental artists, Mapplethorpe (who studied drawing, painting and sculpture<sup>86</sup> in the Pratt Institute<sup>87</sup>) dabbled in the art of mixed-medium collage<sup>88</sup> before picking up a camera in 1970.<sup>89</sup> Once beginning down the photographic route, Mapplethorpe worked

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<sup>83</sup> This notion of Research-Based Appropriation can also be applied to techniques used by artists. The appropriator (in this case, Mapplethorpe) learns about the methods and modes of technique, production and representation used by his influencers and applies them to his own works accordingly. Thus, he is paying homage to his predecessors, working in the style of pre-war photographers. "Imitation is the highest form of flattery".

<sup>84</sup> Pedagogical appropriation referring to the learning from predecessors' works in order to gain "absolute self-creation" (to reuse Krauss' phrase) via mimicry, or the information obtained through art teachings having influenced the methods by which an artist works.

<sup>85</sup> This is not to suggest that Mapplethorpe's works of this kind bear no merit, in fact it is the opposite. Mapplethorpe is proving to himself and those who witness his works that he has the capability to make works in the same way as the notorious photographers that he admires. Though the potency of the works are relatively stale, as the new Postmodern movement takes hold of the artworld.

<sup>86</sup> Traditional artmaking mediums that all had the apprentice/master dynamic.

<sup>87</sup> Though he dropped out before graduating.

<sup>88</sup> The first instance of appropriation — Materialistic, can be considered an active work of art as it must be broken down and digested in order for it to be understood.

<sup>89</sup> "Biography," on *The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation*.

<http://www.mapplethorpe.org/biography/>

predominantly in a studio environment.<sup>90</sup> The works of particular interest to this discussion are his still lifes, nudes, and portraits — traditional art genres, which could be deemed derivative and unoriginal in the Postmodern Era of experimentation. Mapplethorpe’s own artistic approach and style was formed through studying the work of others. As noted by Crimp, “Mapplethorpe constructs from his historical sources a synthetic ‘personal vision’”.<sup>91</sup> It is not surprising that he would work in such a traditional manner, having emerged from a school of art. Building out from what he had learned, it would only seem natural for one to work in the same way that the greats did in order to achieve great things.<sup>92</sup> Mapplethorpe’s chief concern was with the form of an image, its “composition, color, texture, balance, and, most of all, [its] beauty”; the overall aesthetic value being of the utmost importance.<sup>93</sup> It is apparent in his works of this nature that Mapplethorpe indeed studied the techniques and styles of artists that he admired. Of particular influence were the pre-war photographers; Edward Steichen, Edward Weston, Man Ray and George Platt Lynes, their presence evident in his style, composition and subject matter.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> (A traditional artmaking environment) The nature of his imagery varied, his most famous works being of more salacious content, opening up the world of BDSM and gay culture to the general public.

<sup>91</sup> Crimp, “Appropriating Appropriation,” 189–193.

<sup>92</sup> This could be related to how method actors take on the role of their character in order to come across as emotionally sincere.

<sup>93</sup> “Robert Mapplethorpe - Lydia Cheng,” on *Artsy.net*.

<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/robert-mapplethorpe-lydia-cheng-12>

<sup>94</sup> It can be assumed that an artist studies another’s work for aspirational and educational purposes, to have some aspect of the admired work manifest itself in the new work, in some way or another. Mapplethorpe’s work displays itself in a chain of appropriations, inherent when learning in a pedagogical format.



Fig. 7. Man Ray, *Return to Reason (Retour a la Raison)*, 1923.

Fig. 8. Robert Mapplethorpe, *Lydia Cheng*, 1987.

Though Mapplethorpe does not outright exclaim the appropriation of Man Ray's *Return to Reason (Retour a la Raison)* (Fig. 7), it is apparent that it has been used as a stylistic reference for the production of *Lydia Cheng* (Fig. 8.). The two images seen above depict the female form, with light bleeding in through a slatted window from somewhere to the camera's left or right, being cast upon the body.<sup>95</sup> While appropriating Ray's style, Mapplethorpe's rendition does not quite have the same soft, ethereal and romantic air about it; but instead, he takes on a statuesque and clinical approach.<sup>96</sup> Ray's image is

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<sup>95</sup> Both artists had the innate capability to capture the human form detached from its owner, honing in solely on the physical landscape of the body.

<sup>96</sup> Mapplethorpe's approach to constructing his imagery can be related back to his art schoolings and in particular to sculptural compositions.

warm-toned and doused with texture; from the film's grain to the warped shadows falling over the body's landscape, there is no space in the image left untouched by texture. Conversely, Mapplethorpe's interpretation is crisp and clean, a stark contrast between light and dark, void of tangible texture aside from the strategically placed shadows cast across the torso; the body's marble white flesh suggests perfection, once again harking back to his time studying sculptural compositions.<sup>97</sup>

Mapplethorpe studied his predecessors to realise what he wanted his own photographic work to be — studying and researching with the intent of manifesting an authoritative and individual style.<sup>98</sup> Mapplethorpe's work can be considered passive as he is merely creating his own interpretation of a preconceived aesthetic. He does not wish to add any commentary or critique the work that he has appropriated but simply appreciates it for what it is and pays homage to it. There is not much in the way of allegory or narrative to be unpacked or digested, as Mapplethorpe's main concern was with traditional forms and compositions. The work can be taken at face value; it does not need to be picked apart as the information is presented outright to the audience, thus making them passive viewers, observing the image's aesthetic and compositional value. Mapplethorpe's image is the only one to appear in

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<sup>97</sup> The contradictions between Ray's and Mapplethorpe's work highlights what was discussed in Chapter One, in that one can appropriate a style, but the rhetoric of the image may change completely, and in this case, it does.

<sup>98</sup> Appreciating pre-war studio photographers' aesthetic, Mapplethorpe's work takes their approach, wanting their style to be intermingled with his style; their influence to be his influence.

this study that takes on this passive form; all others that will be discussed are active, forcing the audience to dissect each part of the image piece by piece to decode its meaning.



Fig. 9. Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Stills #21*, 1978.

Now, to look at Cindy Sherman, whose artworks can be considered active under the headings of Stylistic and Research-Based Appropriation. A part of the Pictures Generation,<sup>99</sup> Sherman is most famous for her groundbreaking series, *Untitled Film Stills*, consisting of seventy photographs portraying a single female figure in various

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<sup>99</sup> A group of artists influenced by conceptual and pop-art, that used methods of appropriation and montage to critique the constructed nature of artworks and imagery that were gathered in an exhibition by the name of "Pictures," curated by Douglas Crimp.

scenarios that embody the cinematic aesthetic of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>100</sup> Sherman's work conjures a subtle yet scathing feminist critique, attempting to "challenge biases",<sup>101</sup> looking at the role of women and female representation in movies, magazines, paintings and fashion photography.<sup>102</sup> Her observation led to inquiry; she found repetitive patterns in the representation of "femininity" and the portrayal of the "female" across all types of media.<sup>103</sup> The accumulation of "female" tropes that you see in Sherman's images are not real-world women, but spurious versions, conjured by "visionaries";<sup>104</sup> two-dimensional, fictitious characters that serve a minimal purpose to the plotline, often playing the subordinate part of damsels in distress or lustrous eye-candy. Having noticed these "traits," Sherman set out to research the stylistic approaches and compositional aspects of how these "women" are captured and began to photograph the personalities accordingly.

Sherman creates unseen yet familiar scenarios for each individual character, though they do not quite add up, as the woman plays the lead role, acting as the star of her own show. It is important to note that Sherman plays the actor;<sup>105</sup> she is the star in a show of her making, morphing and warping

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<sup>100</sup> Charlotte Cotton, "Revived and Remade," in *World of Art: The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 215.

<sup>101</sup> Leavy, "Social Research and The Creative Arts."

<sup>102</sup> Sherman noticed recurring tropes and themes that female characters played out on screen.

<sup>103</sup> These words are put in quotes because they are representing the idea of a woman as opposed to a *real* woman.

<sup>104</sup> I say this with a hint of sarcasm, as in most cases, these visionaries were men projecting their misogynistic ideals onto the portrayal of women in the media.

<sup>105</sup> Or should I say actress.

her image to fit into these stereotyped, trademarked “female types”. Sherman portrays the characterised and categorised ego’s of “femininity”. Her multifaceted portrayals provoke the questions: “how do I know this woman?”, “how have I deduced how this woman acts, how she talks, what her ideals are simply by looking at her superficial exterior?”.<sup>106</sup> The commentary that can be taken away from this series is that women must perform daily, playing a part in their own — but most importantly, in someone else’s — show.<sup>107</sup> A visual characteristic can define the role of a woman, acknowledged and categorised for her exterior representation as opposed to considering the possibility that she is, in fact, worth more than meets the eye.

Sherman made a notable observation that had not been previously discussed in detail;<sup>108</sup> turning it on its head, she changed the narrative from female as an object to female as human.<sup>109</sup> Sherman’s work can be deemed Stylistic and Research-Based as she does not acknowledge any movie in particular but instead looks at and researches how female characters are presented; how they are dressed, their facial features, the scenarios they end

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<sup>106</sup> Her artworks are inherently active as they provoke the viewer to have this inner monologue with themselves.

<sup>107</sup> Because the woman is always the supporting role, her needs, character arc, and plot, secondary to the main character.

<sup>108</sup> The role of women, feminism, misogyny and the male gaze in cinema. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Visual and Other Pleasures: Language, Discourse & Society*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989).  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-19798-9\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-19798-9_3)

<sup>109</sup> As a person of substance, a person of interest, a person of relevance, worthy of their own storyline.



up in, and how these scenes are technically composed (as seen in Fig. 9.).<sup>110</sup> Sherman's execution is faultless; there is a familiarity in all of these images as if the viewer has seen them before; her breakdown of the narrative allows the viewer to fill in the contextual gaps of what has come before and what will happen after this scene takes place.<sup>111</sup> The context of the original<sup>112</sup> changes as it makes its way down the line; what was, in the beginning, a continuously failed representation of strong female characters, in the end, becomes an inverted narrative whilst still rotating within the same sphere of discussion.<sup>113</sup> Sherman's work can be considered active as it elicits such a strong response, demanding the viewer's participation in breaking down the layers of meaning tied to each individual aspect of her composition. The viewer is confronted with a social dilemma that they can choose to engage with or ignore.<sup>114</sup> In any case, Sherman's work provokes a response from the viewer, whether as a string of reflective thoughts, an emotional reaction, or a realisation that there is a detachment between the female and the female identities portrayed in the media.

Now, to look at David LaChapelle, whose referential artworks can be considered active under the headings of Materialistic and Research-Based

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<sup>110</sup> Camera angles, lighting, content and subject matter.

<sup>111</sup> The relationship between these tropes and Sherman's work manifests itself in a series of utterances, like a game of Chinese whispers.

<sup>112</sup> With inherently negative connotations.

<sup>113</sup> This change of tune highlights appropriation's ability to capture the evolution of an idea in a moment of stasis.

<sup>114</sup> If chosen to engage with, the viewer is challenged by their own self and their belief systems.

Appropriation.<sup>115</sup> Best-known for citing art history and, on occasion, recontextualising and manipulating famous imagery, “disrupt[ing] dominant narratives”<sup>116</sup> to convey present-day social issues.<sup>117</sup> One work of particular interest presents this highly stylised and conceptually vast appropriation of a traditional painting portraying a scene derived from Roman mythology. Sandro Botticelli’s ethereal *Venus and Mars* (Fig. 10.) is reimagined to iterate a site-specific narrative, transforming into *The Rape of Africa* (Fig. 11.). LaChapelle creates a stringent commentary regarding the manipulation of Africa’s resources and the fallout following the continent’s commodification by colonisers. Turning Botticelli’s narrative on its head, appropriating not just a part of the painting but the painting in its entirety,<sup>118</sup> LaChapelle studied the original painting’s allegory and narrative to create a successfully accurate and poignant reinterpretation. In creating this artwork, LaChapelle would have undertaken extensive research into Africa’s history in order to depict a narrative based on fact so as not to misrepresent the truth.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> LaChapelle comes from a background in art education, just as Hunter and Mapplethorpe did, so a systematic and research-based approach is ingrained in his practice.

<sup>116</sup> Leavy, “Social Research and The Creative Arts.”

<sup>117</sup> LaChapelle creates concept-heavy photographic renderings laced with influence from the Surrealist and Pop-Art Eras. “David LaChapelle,” on *Artnet.com*.  
<http://www.artnet.com/artists/david-lachapelle/>

<sup>118</sup> Just as Hunter does in chapter one.

<sup>119</sup> The accurate representation of Africa’s history is paramount to the potency of this work. As LaChapelle is a white man (in a place of privilege) depicting the history of Africa (a minority, an “othered” group), it is imperative to do as much research as possible so as not to fall prey to negative social power dynamics of representation, as has happened in the past.

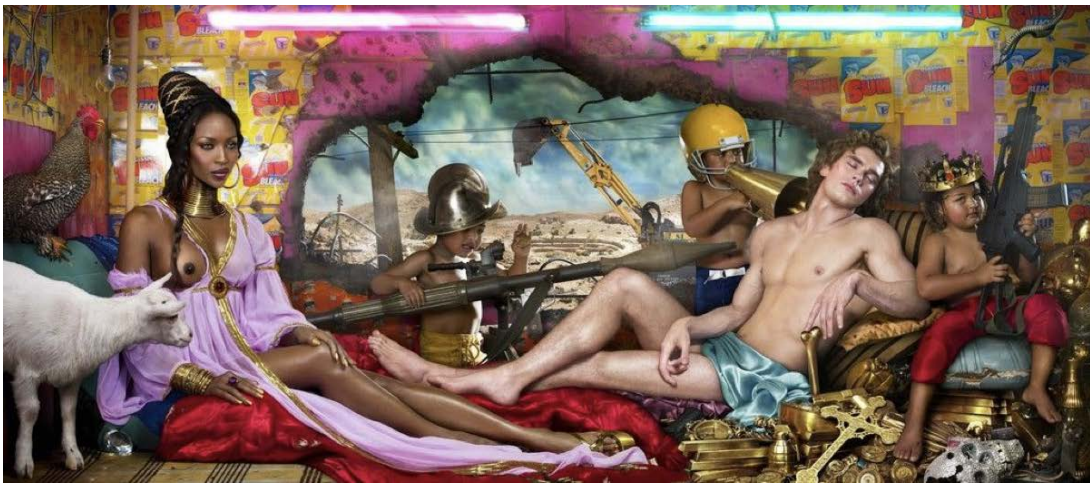


Fig. 10. Sandro Botticelli, *Venus and Mars*, c. 1485.  
Fig. 11. David LaChapelle, *The Rape of Africa*, 2009.

Botticelli's painting depicts "Venus, the Goddess of Love, having successfully conquered Mars, the God of War, through sex, [sitting] peacefully victorious as Mars sleeps, defeated and spent".<sup>120</sup> Venus is the heroine in the painting, fully aware and conscious of her actions and surroundings; she has exiled Mars and rid the land of war through an act of love. LaChapelle's reimagining of the painting is saturated with reversed

<sup>120</sup> Inna Arzumanova, "Politics of Outrage: David LaChapelle's "The Rape of Africa"," in *American Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (2011): 367-74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41237551>.

allegory;<sup>121</sup> Venus now represents a conquered Africa; her ripped dress suggests the rape, aggression, coercion and corruption that she has experienced at the hand of war (Mars/colonial power).<sup>122</sup> Venus sits limp; her face expressionless, eyes void of emotion, gaze not focused anywhere in particular, in stark contrast to that of the original; as if in shock from what she has just experienced, drained of emotion and energy, Venus knows she has lost the fight.<sup>123</sup>

Mars, who lays in exaltation on a bed of gold, is surrounded by child soldiers holding machine guns. These child soldiers have replaced the mischievous satyrs playing with armour and weaponry, hammering home the harsh reality of colonial power's effect on Africa and the ripples of chaos that followed; stealing Africa's gold for their own gain, leeching and polluting good land, raping their women, reigning violence upon their people, turning the continent into a commodity to be split up and consumed amongst their white superiors. In the background, a burnt-out hole opens up the space to show a desolate landscape invaded by diggers, no sign of life or livestock; the landscape has been wiped out in search of gold.<sup>124</sup> Mars is undoubtedly in

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<sup>121</sup>The general composition stays the same, Venus and Mars (I will refer to the characters in LaChapelle's rendition respectively) are still set in a post-coital scene.

<sup>122</sup> David LaChapelle, "David LaChapelle's best shot: Naomi Campbell and the rape of Africa," interview by Karin Andreasson, *The Guardian*, May 29, 2014. "<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/may/29/my-best-shot-david-lachapelle-rape-of-africa-naomi-campbell>

<sup>123</sup> This re-representation of Venus can also be considered in relation to the European view of the exotic black African beauty with laboriously intricate hairstyles, distinctive jewellery, and bare breast (all generalised references of what an African woman looks like); rendered fragile, tame, docile, put in her place by Mars, where she must stay, quiet and obedient.

<sup>124</sup> Mercury, a metal used in gold mining, has poisoned the water sources in the surrounding areas; countless innocent lives have unwittingly been affected by this toxic material. Of the

control in LaChapelle's rendition, surrounded by his child army and accumulated gold; he sleeps peacefully, knowing that the lives of others will be put in the line of fire to protect his own.<sup>125</sup>

LaChapelle employs symbolic references in his imagery; sitting alongside Venus is a rooster, a voice of danger, and a lamb, often suggesting suffering and sacrifice.<sup>126</sup> As these animals are the only things to surround her, it can be assumed that Venus' status is regarded in the same way as livestock: to be owned, consumed and disposed of.<sup>127</sup> LaChapelle appropriates the painting's narrative successfully through his acquired knowledge of the original and his research of the subject matter discussed in this piece, creating an active artwork that demands decoding.<sup>128</sup> The new work brings to light the reality of what occurs when one entity considers itself superior to an "othered" group and thus invades<sup>129</sup> their space, taking it for their own, coupled with the ongoing problem of the power of whiteness in society.<sup>130</sup> LaChapelle contrasts the original: an ethereal, mythological painting, and replaces it with fact-based content — albeit hyper-stylised and

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same name is the Roman god Mercury who rules over commerce, profit and the transportation of goods, indoctrinating himself into society, wreaking havoc upon the African planes.

<sup>125</sup> Colin Wiggins, "The Rape of Africa," from *Galerie Alex Daniels – Reflex Amsterdam*. <https://reflexamsterdam.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/uploads/2016/03/the-rape-of-africa-teaser.pdf>

<sup>126</sup> The sacrificial lamb is prophetic in this instance, Venus must sacrifice her individuality, her freedom, handing herself over to the unrelenting grip of her European superior.

<sup>127</sup> The roles have been reversed; Venus is stripped of her power as it is handed over to Mars; she cannot stop the God of War; he will go on to sully the continent with hate and weaponry.

<sup>128</sup> Consumerism, greed and power.

<sup>129</sup> Appropriates.

<sup>130</sup> White privilege.

overloaded with transparent and subliminal information to include as much context as possible — in order to create a critical utterance of a romanticised history.

There are infinite ways to apply research to artwork, just as there are infinite ways to appropriate information. Looking at the research undertaken by an artist outlines the differentiation between the appropriated artwork and its reference. In dissecting appropriated artworks, the artist's background, the techniques, concepts, and use of the original allegorical structure show the viewer where the individual's opinions have been incorporated and how appropriation came to be the "answer" to their question. Art has the possibility of being active or passive; active being that the artwork can provoke the viewer, encouraging them to delve deeper, sifting through the layers of meaning to arrive at the point of interest. An active artwork has a purpose far more significant than merely pleasing the eye of the audience. In contrast, passive artworks can be considered art for art's sake, encouraging freedom of expression but ultimately carrying no greater meaning outside of visual aesthetic and perhaps self-discovery.

In the case of Mapplethorpe's Stylistic Appropriation, his research question was, "how do I find my own distinct style?". The rationale/answer to this question was likely along the lines of: "I like the aesthetic of Pre-War photographers, so I will study them and elaborate on their techniques in order

to establish my own style”.<sup>131</sup> Mapplethorpe’s work of this nature is thus, passive, as he does not attempt to have his work engage with the audience on any subliminal level; wishing to have his work appraised for its composition, form and technique — for its superficial, surface-level value — simply put, for what the eye sees. In Sherman’s case, her research question was, “how do I communicate the problematic representation of women in the media?”. The rationale/answer was to use these representations to reference the problems they pose for women. Sherman appropriates the concept of the cinematic woman — an object of scopophilia — a character not based in fact but on the premise of being looked at and enjoyed by the male viewer.<sup>132</sup> Sherman’s work is innately active, as it probes the viewers’ own belief systems; they must digest her artwork, ruminating over its meaning, taking it apart to piece it back together.<sup>133</sup> In the case of LaChapelle’s work, his research question was, “how do I communicate the problematic relationship between Africa and the outside world?”. The rationale/answer was to use the reversed narrative of Roman Gods, Venus and Mars’ relationship.<sup>134</sup> LaChapelle’s work is innately

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<sup>131</sup> Learning the importance of form, style and composition from his predecessors, Mapplethorpe manifests self-actualisation by appropriating those he admires.

<sup>132</sup> Sherman proves the power of appropriation and its ability to discuss important aspects of culture and society. Through her studying the composition of the film aesthetic and the characters seen on screen, Sherman creates a critical work that has now become known as a seminal piece of feminist artwork in a lens-based world dominated by men.

<sup>133</sup> Thus, the audience plays an active part in applying meaning to the work — inviting what the mind sees to be incorporated into the artwork’s narrative.

<sup>134</sup> Appropriating both the physical and allegorical aspects of Botticelli’s painting, LaChapelle acknowledges the power and influence of the great masters and their significance in the building up of the art world’s reputation. Using the familiarity of these images as the basis for his new works, reappropriating the mythological narrative of love and war, LaChapelle replaces their connotations with greed and power to relay a critical narrative of the harsh truths of reality.

active as it engages with the viewer, demanding that it be decoded in order to inform the viewers of a not-so-often discussed history. Sherman and LaChapelle alike use active methods of appropriation to critique society and what it has come to, using their artistic ‘powers’ for good as a means of enlightenment for those who might not know or fully understand what is going on in the world.<sup>135</sup>

The use of allegory was discussed in this chapter on a general level showing how it can be manipulated to the artist’s advantage. In Chapter Three, under the heading of Concept-Based Appropriation, the artworks’ allegory will be dissected in a more critical approach, with supporting theory to reinforce the significance of manipulating allegory to create original appropriated artworks. It is essential to keep in mind the notion of an active artwork going forward as the following works fall under this heading. It is also important to note that aspects of research will inherently present themselves in the coming chapter as it is impossible to produce a critical concept without some elements of research to be undertaken by the artist.

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<sup>135</sup> Or in their world specifically.



## Chapter Three: Concept-Based Appropriation

This chapter takes an in-depth look at Concept-Based Appropriation, using Crimp's Stylistic and Materialistic headings as subcategories to decipher where on the spectrum these appropriative artworks lie.<sup>136</sup> In Chapter Two, it was surmised that Research-Based Art, and consequently, Appropriation Art, begins with a question; a question of any sort, even existential questions such as: "who am I?", "what is my artistic style?", and "how do I reach my artistic potential?". Appropriation proves to be a means of finding an authoritative artistic voice through someone else's methods. By following somebody else's path, the artist will inevitably find their own, branching off from, and elaborating on their "influencer's" methods and viewpoints.<sup>137</sup> Thus, it can be assumed that Concept-Based Art, and therefore, Appropriation begins with a problem<sup>138</sup> and a solution,<sup>139</sup> working their way backwards to fill in the contextual gaps as it goes. As this theory is used to outline the elements of forethought that steer an artist towards Appropriation, in this discussion, the term 'Concept-Based' refers specifically to the idea that an artist has in order for their piece to manifest. This theory is not attached to the notion of Conceptual Art; "for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object," though it does, in part

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<sup>136</sup> Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," 189–193.

<sup>137</sup> Krauss, "Originality of the Avant Garde," 1060–1065.

<sup>138</sup> The problem becomes the concept.

<sup>139</sup> The solution becomes the art piece.

coincide, as the concept is a crucial factor in weighing the validity of the appropriated work.<sup>140</sup>

In this instance, the word “concept” is used in reference to the original meaning of the word — “something conceived in the mind, an abstract or generic idea generalised from particular instances,” which is communicated through the final piece of art.<sup>141</sup> When creating new work, the artist builds a concept in their head,<sup>142</sup> one which stems from divine inspiration or is teased out from the brain.<sup>143</sup> The concept may be bare-bones, a skeleton that needs fleshing out, or perhaps it is a metaphysical image of what will be created, a sort of imaginary thing, yet to be actualised but currently in the process of being realised.<sup>144</sup> The idea has already set itself in the artist’s mind; they merely wait for a spark of inspiration to ignite it wholly. Uncovering even a minute piece of information can be the catalyst to propel the idea from imagination to creation, transforming it from potentiality into the possibility of a fully-fledged work of art. Thus, the term *concept* refers to the inception of an idea. The moment when all information, perceived and processed,

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<sup>140</sup> “Conceptual Art,” on *Tate.org*. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/conceptual-art>

<sup>141</sup> “Concept,” on *Merriam-Webster*; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/concept>

<sup>142</sup> Or on paper.

<sup>143</sup> “The claim that poets are aided in producing their own poetry. At lucky moments a god takes them over and brings value to the poem that it could not have had otherwise.” Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, “Divine Inspiration,” *Plato’s Aesthetics*, last modified Jun 22, 2020. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-aesthetics/#DivIns>

<sup>144</sup> This can be considered in relation to the Representational Theory of Mind, which refers to “mental states, such as thoughts, beliefs, desires, perceptions and imagings. Such states are said to have “intentionality” – they are *about* or *refer to* things, and may be evaluated with respect to properties like consistency, truth, appropriateness and accuracy.” Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, “The Representational Theory of Mind,” *Mental Representation*, last modified Jan 21, 2020.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mental-representation/>

comes together in the mind of the artist. The idea becomes an output to express this information, this revelation, this newfound understanding of the world.<sup>145</sup>

In an age where nothing is original, and there are no new ideas, it is now well known that to create great works of art, the artist must build out from the scaffolding supplied to them.<sup>146</sup> There is an element of ingenuity that is native to Postmodern Art; a composite artwork, mixing a plethora of mediums to create an all-encompassing piece saturated with allegory and meaning; full to the brim with amalgamated ideas and approaches to creating, referencing its predecessors as a way of referencing the outside world.<sup>147</sup> Appropriation is the allowance of preconceived ideas and relationships to be incorporated into and influence new works.<sup>148</sup> German philosopher Martin Heidegger writes on the use of allegory as a means of expressing ulterior motives in *The Origin of the Work of Art*:

The artwork is indeed a thing that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself is, *allo agoreuei*. The work makes publicly known something other than itself, it manifests something other: it is an allegory. In the artwork something other is brought into conjunction with the thing that is made. The Greek for “to bring into conjunction with” is *sumballein*. The work is a symbol.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Or whatever the concept is in relation to.

<sup>146</sup> Information, previous artists, art mediums, styles, movements, etc.

<sup>147</sup> The real world — outside of art.

<sup>148</sup> Preconceived ideas can be considered anything that falls under the artistic school of thought: style, material, symbolism, techniques, movements, etc.

<sup>149</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. & trans. Julian Young & Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge University Press: 2002), 3.

<http://users.clas.ufl.edu/burt/filmphilology/heideggerworkofart.pdf>

Through allegory and symbolism, the appropriative artwork becomes a referent<sup>150</sup> to previous iterations on a given topic. While the idea justifies previous works' appropriation, the finished piece matters as much as the idea itself. As touched on in Chapter One, to avoid copyright issues or plagiarism, one must prove the distinction between the new and the original work.<sup>151</sup> To reiterate, while the idea is the driving force for appropriating, the final piece is the factor that determines the relevance and necessity of the appropriated work; the final piece is the active symbol or referent. The potency of the appropriated work is determined by a combination of both the idea itself and how it manifests in the final piece.

A concept can be actualised in a fleeting moment, where ideas collide and create something far more significant than initially anticipated. It is not always the case that the artist is seeking out a concept, but perhaps the concept finds them, appearing before the artist, to show a new and alternative way of looking at a problem. In turn, this concept becomes a comparative study of what came before and what *is* now, "a combination of two opposite modes of reaction... a past and a present mode".<sup>152</sup> This act of comparing<sup>153</sup> is where Appropriation finds its way into the conversation. Owens aptly

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<sup>150</sup> "The person, thing, or idea that a word, phrase, or object refers to." "Referent," on *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/referent>.

<sup>151</sup> "Copyright and the Visual Artist," <https://visualartists.ie/copyright-and-the-visual-artist/>

<sup>152</sup> Jules Lemaître cited by Walter Benjamin "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London, 1973), 94. Quoted in Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," 77.

<sup>153</sup> Or relating.

describes the reconfiguration of meaning and how appropriation allows for an artist's rhetoric<sup>154</sup> to be passed on to or through a new work:

Allegory becomes the model of all commentary... [it] takes place *within* works of art... Allegorical imagery is appropriated imagery; the allegorist does not invent images but confiscates them. He lays claim to the culturally significant, poses as its interpreter. And in his hands the image becomes something other... He does not restore an original meaning that may have been lost or obscured... Rather, he adds another meaning to the image. ... [it is] the source of its theoretical significance.<sup>155</sup>

Whether knowingly or unknowingly, allegory is present in almost all mediums that attempt to communicate with a viewer. There is an element of prior intellect that must be present in order to latch onto the underlying symbolism that is laced into works of art. In a sense, allegory means but one thing if the viewer allows it to be so. However, if the viewer perceives a greater contextual meaning,<sup>156</sup> then meaning is justly applied. The significance of allegorical communication is that it can easily go unnoticed to the untrained eye yet has the capability to open up a world of information and discourse to the invested viewer.

As stated previously, Concept-Based Appropriation refers to the idea or the project being the driving force; and is thus, the justifier for using methods of Appropriation. The artist has noticed something, perhaps not through research, but in their day-to-day or in passing, registering a recurring instance, problem, or social issue. The artist has something that they want to say, and appropriating in this instance brings more weight to the value of the

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<sup>154</sup> "Verbal communication: discourse." "Rhetoric," on *Merriam-Webster*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rhetoric>.

<sup>155</sup> Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," 69.

<sup>156</sup> That perhaps this allegorical piece holds some higher significance.

concept. As opposed to making something brand new, with no reinforcing characteristics and no allegorical branches to grow from, the artist uses what is already there to prove the importance of their new idea, either by relating to or disproving the old idea. Just as one cites the origin of the information discussed in a written work, in appropriative art, one references a previous work to build a relationship between the two. There is, of course, as with any project, elements of research that go into creating this appropriative work. This discussion is not to prove that Concept-Based and Research-Based methods are wholly independent of one another. In fact, elements of Concept and Research-Based methods are present in all works. They work in parallel to one another, rotating on an uneven axis, with one always closer to the centre point (the artwork) at any given time. Consequently, one element will always have a more substantial influence over the final piece than the other. One is at the forefront of the justification for appropriation in each circumstance; i.e. the research gathered justifies the appropriation or the concept actualised justifies the appropriation of a style or material. Two Concept-Based artworks with active narratives will now be discussed under the respective headings, Stylistic and Materialistic Appropriation, to prove this theory; but first, to further outline how an artwork can be deemed Concept-Based, I will refer back to the work of Hendrik Kerstens.



Fig. 12. Hendrik Kerstens, *Hairnet*, 2000.

In Chapter One, Hendrik Kerstens' Stylistic Appropriation of Johannes Vermeer's work was discussed. Kerstens' witnessed his daughter removing her riding helmet. Not entirely sure what he was doing, but knowing that the moment was significant; that the visual was significant, that the relationship to previous eras was significant; his concept was realised the moment he captured her image (see Fig. 12.).<sup>157</sup> This relationship to the past was built, with his daughter grounding us in the present.<sup>158</sup> The contrast

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<sup>157</sup> Kerstens, "Hendrik Kerstens," on *Danziger Gallery*.

<sup>158</sup> Relating to Lemaître's theory of two opposite modes of reaction.

between past and present became his solution. Kerstens' had been ruminating over a problem. The problem of: "how to capture the notion of fleeting youth and the passage of time in one image." In that moment, when Paula removed her riding helmet, his problem had been solved. He then began filling in the gaps as to what exactly it was that his images were attempting to say.<sup>159</sup> The passage of time is highlighted by the choice of medium,<sup>160</sup> content, and materials used.<sup>161</sup> A stark change from simpler times to one of corruption, pollution and mass consumption are all incorporated under the guise of regal, Victorian-esque portraits that use the humour of household objects to ground the images in a critical yet satirical discourse.<sup>162</sup>

Now, to give an example of Concept-Based Appropriation in the subcategory of Stylistic<sup>163</sup> Appropriation, my own work will be used to explain this theory and its process in-depth.<sup>164</sup> *What is a Woman?* (Fig. 14.) did not start as a larger-than-life artwork; it began with a problem. A problem that required self-reflection and introspection and graduated to a more extensive discussion with my female peers. It is not uncommon for women to find themselves feeling "less than," rigorously comparing themselves to the feminine ideal that is incessantly projected in advertising, media and

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<sup>159</sup> Rhetoric.

<sup>160</sup> Digital camera.

<sup>161</sup> Plastic and disposable items.

<sup>162</sup> The allegory in this instance is the passage of time, and how the world has changed since The Golden Age, to the contemporary world we live in. The use of household rubbish suggests reference to the Anthropocene (the current epoch), denoting significant and irreparable damage of the Earth's geology and ecosystems, by human impact.

<sup>163</sup> Appropriating the style of a thing rather than the thing itself.

<sup>164</sup> Which was the primary influence for creating this method of categorisation for appropriation.



cinematic production.<sup>165</sup> This problem is universal,<sup>166</sup> and it deserved to be considered a topic of conversation instead of a taboo subject, to be discussed only behind closed doors. It demanded a resolution of sorts. Having thought about this problem endlessly, day-in and day-out, multiple possible approaches began to surface, some bearing more weight than others. The problem began manifesting in dreams, and that is where the solution was found; a composite woman made up of multiple different women and multiple different body parts. The reference images that came to mind were the likes of biological diagrams, autopsy images, and of course, Leonardo da Vinci's, *The Vitruvian Man* (Fig. 13.), which became the main point of reference moving forwards into production.

*The Vitruvian Man*, also referred to as “The proportions of the human body according to Vitruvius,” is a study based on Vitruvius Pollio's: *De Architectura*, in which he discusses the geometry of “perfect” proportions.<sup>167</sup> The appropriative artwork intends to acknowledge the modern-day, hyper-sexualised notion of the “perfect” female form in relation to the mathematical depiction of a perfect human body.<sup>168</sup> Highlighting the

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<sup>165</sup> Most of which are predominantly conceived and governed by males. This follows on from the discussion in Chapter 2, regarding Laura Mulvey's theory of the Male Gaze. Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”

<sup>166</sup> Albeit gender-specific.

<sup>167</sup> Sneha Dewani, “The Vitruvian Man: A guide to proportion and symmetry,” on *The Arch Insider*,

<https://thearchinsider.com/the-vitruvian-man-a-guide-to-proportion-and-symmetry/>

<sup>168</sup> This can once again be looked at under Lemaître's theory of two opposite modes of reaction. The original: a diagram that proves, in theory, that a mathematical equation can be applied to gather accurate measurements of a human form. Thus being referred to as the “perfect,” which can be considered in relation to Fibonacci's sequence (a.k.a. The Golden Ratio). The new work: plays off of the notion of “perfect,” and applies it to a modern-day

detrimental effects that perfectionism can have on the human psyche, these “perfect” proportions were turned on their head and countered with imperfect proportions. The relationship between the two works is the consistent, algorithmic perfection of da Vinci’s piece, compared to the inconsistent yet realistic imperfections that make up *What is a Woman?* as a whole.<sup>169</sup>

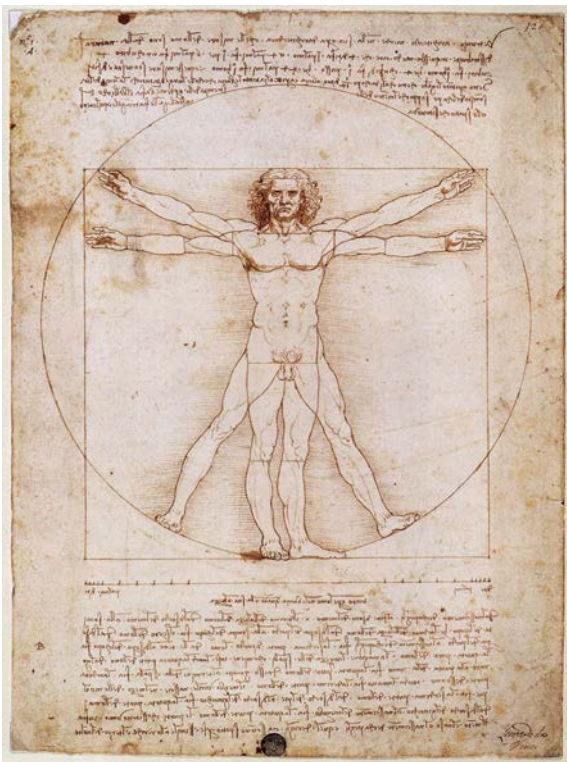


Fig. 13. Leonardo da Vinci, *The Vitruvian Man*, c. 1490.

Fig. 14. Sarah Louise Lordan, *What is a Woman?*, 2019.

As the project evolved and encountered constructive criticism from peers and lecturers, the composite woman grew two extra sets of arms and

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discourse in which the “perfect” female form is dictated by the male gaze. Projecting unrealistic (and physically impossible) expectations of what the female form should look like, the modern ideal cannot be manifested by means of mathematical equations, as there is no even distribution throughout the body, and therefore the new ideal does not fall under Fibonacci’s sequence as a whole. It is the contradiction between these two ideals that forges their relationship.

<sup>169</sup> It is the comparison of an ideal, and a reality.

legs so as not to be confused with a singular form. She grew larger and larger, reaching eight feet in height, not to be ignored or belittled, creating an other-worldly being that commanded respect from the viewer.<sup>170</sup> Da Vinci's drawing depicts one singular form in two different poses; the appropriated piece depicts nine different women in three different poses:<sup>171</sup> the segmentation of body parts mirroring that which da Vinci had drawn up. The idea was that there is no whole body to be sexualised or ogled; no individual to lust after or covet, meaning that the sentiment of the project comes across to the viewer more apparently. The body is merely a vessel to house a mind, which holds far more value than any physical aspect of its exterior. While the women are indecipherable, the body parts are universally recognised, there is no room for judgement.

The act of appropriating, in this instance, incorporates the original context into the new work as the base layer of intent;<sup>172</sup> the meaning of the original is dissected and reworked to be used as an argument.<sup>173</sup> *What is a Woman?* can be considered under the heading of Concept-Based Appropriation as the problem is the reason for the work's creation.<sup>174</sup> It was not a question of "does the female ideal projected in media and society affect the human psyche?" It was an inarguable statement. Yes, society and media

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<sup>170</sup> The viewer must look up at this godlike woman. Alternatively, this woman looks down on the world.

<sup>171</sup> Made up of thirty-nine individual images.

<sup>172</sup> Though, at the time, I did not know that I was taking part in such an act.

<sup>173</sup> "The source of its theoretical significance." Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism."

<sup>174</sup> The problem being that of female body image and body dysmorphia.

do perpetuate negative and discriminatory outlooks on the female form.<sup>175</sup>

The solution to this problem was to create an active artwork that is palatable and digestible to the masses. Referencing this infamous work of art introduces an element of familiarity that is brought into the new work, gaining the viewer's attention for an important cause.<sup>176</sup> As the piece does not take the physical thing but mimics aspects of the original composition, the subcategory of appropriation can be considered Stylistic.

To continue this discussion of Concept-Based Appropriation, Barbara Kruger creates active artworks employing the process of Materialistic Appropriation. Kruger's work is known for using appropriation to critique the growing reliance on advertising to enforce the mass consumption and commodification of products. From a graphic design background, working at Condé Nast magazines, Kruger became fluent in making effective visual deliveries.<sup>177</sup> Taking images from magazines,<sup>178</sup> Kruger applies obscure and cryptic tongue-in-cheek slogans, with bold red lettering emblazoned over the

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<sup>175</sup> It is important to note that at the time of conceiving this project the Cork Rape Trial had just taken place. After a night out, a twenty-seven year old man, attempts to rape a seventeen year old girl who is asleep in bed. The victim's underwear were "brought into question" as a way of justifying the actions of the perpetrator. "Does the evidence out-rule the possibility that she was attracted to the defendant and was open to meeting someone and being with someone? You have to look at the way she was dressed. She was wearing a thong with a lace front." Suggesting that this girl, who was asleep, was open to the possibility of being raped because of the style of underwear that she put on that day. Jennifer O'Connell, "Lawyers concerned over public backlash after underwear comments in rape trial," on *The Irish Times*, Last modified Nov 24, 2018.

[www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/lawyers-concerned-over-public-backlash-after-underwear-comments-in-rape-trial-1.3708111](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/lawyers-concerned-over-public-backlash-after-underwear-comments-in-rape-trial-1.3708111)

<sup>176</sup> "In the artwork something other is brought into conjunction with the thing that is made... The work is a symbol." Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art."

<sup>177</sup> Barbara Kruger, (Text by Cristina Ruiz) "The Artwork: Oral History," *The Gentlewoman*. Issue 22, 2020. <https://thegentlewoman.co.uk/library/the-artwork>

<sup>178</sup> A product of consumerism.

original images. With her history in advertising, Kruger pulls the viewer in, knowing how to entice them, manipulating text and colour to provoke a reaction from the reader. These manipulations become visual triggers distinct to her work; bright-red bold writing,<sup>179</sup> put on top of black and white imagery<sup>180</sup> attracting the eyes, demanding to be seen. These three colours, so stark and vivid, cannot be missed. This ‘unmissable’ aspect of Kruger’s work pulls on the notions of advertisement and consumption itself.<sup>181</sup> In the late eighties, visual culture was on the rise and being overstimulated by a constant flow of information and imagery was coming to be the new norm. Kruger became a critical voice of consumption; “[zeroing] in on social politics in a way that functioned very much like advertising... seductive and nostalgic in its visuals, yet stinging, with a text that shoved it through you.”<sup>182</sup>

Advertising puts itself in a position of power, convincing the viewer that what they are selling was intended for the betterment of humanity or the betterment of the individual. Rephrasing Descartes’ “I think therefore I am,” which relates to individual thought solidifying one’s existence in reality; Kruger recontextualises its meaning writing, “I shop therefore I am” (Fig. 15.), removing the *thought* element that defines one’s existence, and replacing it with consumption. This removal of thought acknowledges the

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<sup>179</sup> Font used: Futura Bold. Bound to be seen, even at a glance, information is still registered. The slogan is absorbed consciously or otherwise.

<sup>180</sup> Huge visual contrast, stark colours (black and white, technically not colours at all, and red, one of the three primary colours, the colour at the end of the visible spectrum of light).

<sup>181</sup> Mass media is on the rise; an influx in visual stimulus perpetuates competition for the viewer’s attention.

<sup>182</sup> Cindy Sherman, (Text by Cristina Ruiz), “The Artwork: Oral History.”

thoughtlessness that is now related to mass-consumption.<sup>183</sup> The consumer is, thus, defined by what they own. An external entity, not attached to their person, nor definitive of their character, has come to encompass humanity as a whole. The power dynamic has moved from the conscious human mind to an unconscious human-made thing; this inanimate object now *defines you* and proves that *you existed*; it is thus the *reason for your existence*.<sup>184</sup>

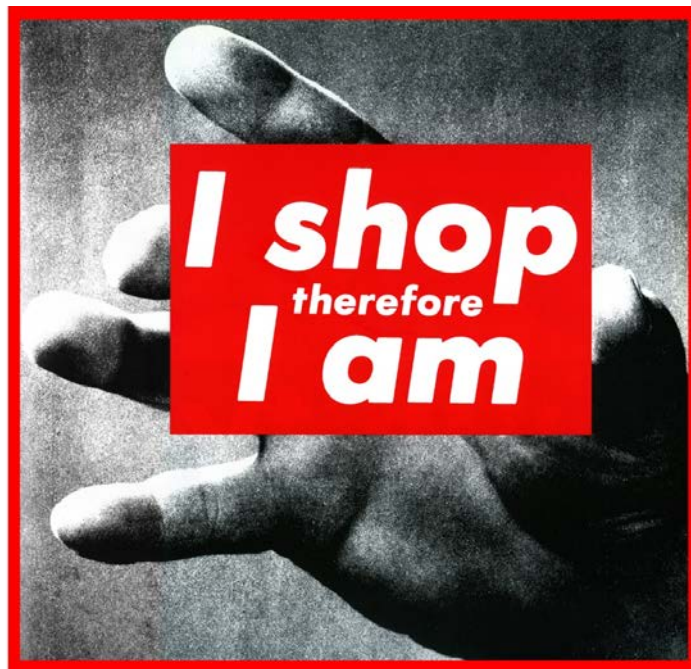


Fig. 15. Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (I shop therefore I am)*, 1987.

Kruger's concept, the problem of consumption, is the force by which she justifies the Materialistic Appropriation of an image from a magazine.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>The consumer plays in an act of cognitive dissonance, deeming an item as something of necessity, when in actuality they are buying in excess. Buying for the sake of buying. There is an element of addiction which now plays a part in consumption; dopamine floods the buyer's system when a purchase is made, giving them a high. This in turn creates a cyclical pattern of needlessly purchasing items in search of that high once more.

<sup>184</sup> "It eats up the surplus of consumable goods, and it helps to preserve the special mental atmosphere that a hierarchical society needs. George Orwell, *1984* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), 228.

<sup>185</sup> An article of consumption.

Kruger's work is considered in the subcategory of Materialistic Appropriation, as she has removed a physical thing from its original context and placed it in an alternate context, with a new purpose attached to it. There is a direct relationship between the original and the appropriated images as they are both of the same basis, i.e. consumption; albeit Kruger is critiquing the practice creating an active narrative, but the relationship still stands.<sup>186</sup> Kruger's work can be defined as Concept-Based, as she has not looked to answer the question of what consumerism is; she already knows, and by working in a magazine, has played an active role in the process of consumption.

Concept-Based Appropriation begins with a problem, which generates an idea, that then creates a solution in the form of appropriative art. Thus, a concept can be considered the inception of an idea. Where all information is perceived and processed, an idea is produced as a way to express or argue what is understood to be true. The term *concept* is used with regard to its original meaning, that of "an abstract idea," which is communicated through the final piece. Concept-Based Appropriation allows for an active and authoritative voice of opinion or criticism to come forth and present the idea to the audience in the form of an artwork. Allegory plays a large role in the significance of Appropriation as a method of communication and outlines a

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<sup>186</sup> To, once again, relate this to Lemaître's theory of two opposite modes of reaction: Kruger is comparing two ulterior mindsets based in the sphere of consumption. The original, encouraging the viewer to consume mindlessly; and the new work, encouraging the viewer to acknowledge their compulsion to consume in excess, to reassess what it means to own objects, and what that ownership does to benefit quality of life.

distinction between the original and the appropriated work. Not found solely in Concept-Based Art but referenced heavily in this section; allegory is the latent meaning derived from previous works, incorporated into a new work to build or break relationships and further inform the audience of the context in which the artwork's discussion takes place.



## Conclusion

In a Post-Postmodern Era, modes of expression are heavily based in referencing (word association, memes, music, pop-culture, literature, etc.); everything we say, see, hear, and perceive can be related back to something that has been previously experienced. Particularly, with the exponential rise in technology (which has inevitably become an extension of our anatomy), we are in a constant state of processing and filtering information; what is deemed ‘relevant’, ‘irrelevant’, or in relation to something seen before but perhaps in a different context. Humans process and perceive information by building relationships with what they know already; our mode of communication and understanding has become inherently referential. Thus, what consists of an original artwork must be reconsidered in this age of reference, looking at the approach undertaken by an artist to outline their thought process, enlightening the viewer of how the artwork maintains originality.

The instantaneousness of media means that humanity has become aversed, desensitised to critical, in-depth thinking; no longer considered a necessity when digesting imagery, as soon as an image comes into sight, it is gone again just as quickly. This inherent detachment between final piece and process has become detrimental for an artist’s work, feeling as though they must keep up with the world of mass-production and reproducibility,<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Fast-fashion, fast-food, fast-information, fast-art, what is next?

producing artworks as if picked out from the line of production.<sup>188</sup> The artist *must* produce for the hungry yet uninvested, uninterested eyes of the viewer — not caring for the hours, days, weeks, months, years that an artist has put into the making of their artworks — only caring for the end result for one fleeting moment, to be forgotten soon after it was consumed.

Appropriation allows for art to play an active role in social, cultural and political critique, creating provocative works that invoke an evaluation of character, society, and the world that we so naively call our *own*. Though it cannot change the course of history, Appropriation allows the audience to ruminate over how time has passed, how humanity has evolved (or devolved depending on how you look at it), and the effects of humanity on the course of nature. Appropriation allows for retrospection, a *then* versus *now* picture, an artistic spot the difference, urging the viewer to find discrepancies in how we live, experience, and treat one another.

Research and Concept can be considered primary characteristics of an appropriated artwork, outlining an artist's forethought and rationale; as without either of these aspects, an artwork could not be conceived. Thus, Stylistic and Materialistic Appropriation can be considered secondary characteristics that determine the process of expression, describing the techniques by which the artist has appropriated a previous work. Concept and Research-Based Appropriation can be seen to work on an axis, rotating

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<sup>188</sup> Andy Warhol referred to his studio as “The Factory” for this very reason.

around a centre-point (being the piece of art itself); the distance of the methodology from the centre-point dictates which category takes precedence over the other; which becomes the driving factor for the work of art. That is not to say that one occurs without the other, as all artworks must have a concept of some sort, and all artworks have elements of research laden in their creation (how could one's artistic voice become authoritative without some semblance of fact-based knowledge rippling through the veins of the artwork). Thus, the research influences the concept, or the concept influences the research, working in symbioses with one another.

The hypothesised theory of Concept and Research-Based Art allows for appropriated artworks perceived to be given named categories that they can thus, be filtered through; to give the artwork one's full attention by trying to understand the circumstances and environment in which it was made, slowing down the process of digestion. Yes, there is the Stylistic of Materialist approach to the physical *act* of making the artwork, but this theory adds another layer of distinction, allowing us to look at the process by which artworks are conceived, how one decides what they will make their artwork in relation to. These methods of categorisation are merely scaffolding to build an understanding of the construction of Appropriation Art.

The intended outcome for this study was not to pigeon-hole artworks but to broaden the ways in which we think of Appropriation Art and the modes by which we categorise it. There are the original methods of

categorising art in a general sense; by classification,<sup>189</sup> by medium,<sup>190</sup> by form, by genre, by style. Furthermore, there are modes of categorisation specific to a particular movement: in the case of Appropriation Art, there seemed to be minimal investigation into the possibility of categorising such works, aside from the work of Douglas Crimp. This study aimed to find an alternate mode of categorisation to further distinguish the *approaches* to Appropriation Art in order to understand and appreciate them as they are. This new mode of categorisation is not absolute, nor should it be treated as such. The works discussed have been placed under these headings by the author through research and deduction, solely for the purpose of this study, and are not definitive or replicant of the artists' intentions.

Whether Concept or Research-Based, Stylistic or Materialistic, Appropriation Art opens up a discourse around representation and the social power dynamics of art and appropriation.<sup>191</sup> Who has the right to make art? Furthermore, who has the right to appropriate, and under what circumstances is it considered justifiable? Is it when the artwork proves to have a greater purpose than just art for art's sake? If so, how does one regulate the narratives explored in appropriative art? The reality is that appropriation is everywhere, written into every aspect of modern culture — the art world included — and

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<sup>189</sup> Fine Art, Visual Art, Plastic Art, Performance Art, Applied Art & Decorative Art.

<sup>190</sup> Photography, Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Pottery, etc.

<sup>191</sup> Appropriation was born out of colonialism, so ingrained in its ethos is the inherently negative connotation; where one in a position of power is taking from a 'lesser' and *making it their own*.

for all the constructive discourse that appropriated artworks open up,<sup>192</sup> malpractice and misuse of appropriation will always be present in its undercurrent. In order to avoid this misuse, looking for a seal of originality through breaking down the layers of production allows for an appropriative artwork to be placed on this spectrum of originality. In breaking down the elements of an artwork — the research, the concept, the style and material employed, the allegorical structure — the investigator uncovers the originality specific to the individual artist, reinforcing Krauss' notion that originality is derived from the individual.

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<sup>192</sup> Social, environmental, geographical, political, racial, cultural, gender.

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