Title -

The Urge to Appropriate: Internalising appropriation through hybrid studio practice.

Abstract -

This project aims to engage the strategic concealment of appropriation strategies within a responsive cross-media based art practice. Its purpose is to investigate the use and effect of appropriation strategies using a range of media to produce a series of installed environments. The cumulative effect of the work aims to submerge the audience into an experience of referential excess. This overload suggests either a resignation into that excess or a potential untangling of an idiosyncratic authorial system.

The research is motivated by questioning and reflecting on my own mediality, a term defined here as the perceived reality that one is influenced by via the media, and an ongoing interest in the systems that enable the distribution, control, flow and ownership of ideas and imagery in media saturated environments. These systems are: methods and forms of media transmission and reception such as television, radio, internet, and distributed media such as films and music, and the resulting protocols or rules that sit alongside these transmission forms such as copyright, authorship, ownership and re-numeration. The work addresses both the personal, internal concerns of myself as author and the disconnected, autonomous qualities of the resultant work to reflect on larger observations about media saturated culture. It articulates a studio language designed to straddle the gulf between these two dynamics.

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The research output consists predominantly of installation environments comprising video, projection, sound, objects and images connected by series of static imagery. These explore the occurrence of an appropriation of the act of appropriation itself - a loop in space and time. This is achieved by capturing, observing, altering and re-transmitting the glimmers of this occurrence back into the medial system. This looping is the both the key strategic device and conceptual premise underlying the research. It uses both local and global sources of data, and mixes of information that include personal anecdotes, clichés and grand narratives, drawn from my observation of and intrigue with sub-cultures that can be loosely classified as taking a D.I.Y. or 'Do It Yourself" approach. These include Software and Hardware Hacking, Noise Music, Heavy Metal and Car Customisation.

While appropriation is a part of all cultural development since the beginning of time, the project extends the discussion of appropriation in post-modern art practice. The defining period of appropriation art is seen by many as the post-Pop period of the late 1970's in the work of artists such as Richard Prince, Sherrie Levine and Cindy Sherman. These artists use appropriation as both a direct strategy, and as a totalising subject matter of their work. My work extends a current dialogue surrounding appropriation strategies, with specific reference to the writings of Paul Taylor, Sean Lowry and Brogan Bunt, who posit a shift from direct, strategic appropriation strategies to a more innate, almost default presence of an appropriative urge operating in contemporary art production.   This is considered in the light of works by Banks Violette, Takeshi Murata and Ondrej Brody & Kristofer Paetau, who all operate from a position of a subliminal appropriative urge or logic in their work. My project adds another discursive node to this field by making work that uses appropriation to loop and synthesise ideas, objects and

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images into installation environments. It synthesizes the experiential residues of personal encounters with mediated signals, contains them within new cultural statements and re-transmits them into the passing flow of time.

Through the application of various appropriative strategies including sampling, remixing, collage and synthesis, the project generates new knowledge about cultural appropriation. It achieves this by creating a looping, referential system of production that operates as a reference-machine, a cascading system that creates overloaded medial transmissions. These transmissions submerge the audience into sensorially excessive installed environments that encourage contemplation about the role and place media occupies in our lives.