Recasting Reproduction (1500–1800) (London, 18 Nov 17)

The Courtauld Institute of Art, Nov 18, 2017
Deadline: Jul 6, 2017

The Courtauld Institute of Art

The contested concept of “reproduction” stands at a critical nexus of the conceptualisation of Early Modern artistic thought. The early modern period has been characterised by the development of novel and efficient reproduction technologies, as well as the emergence of global empires, growing interconnectedness through trade, warfare and conquest, and the rise of new markets and cultures of collecting. This ethos of innovation and cultural exchange was, however, contextualised against myriad contemporary ideologies still rooted in the values and legends of narratives of the past. Reproduction stood at the centre of this dichotomy. Set against the context of changing cultural tastes and the increasingly overlapping public and private spheres, ‘reproductions’ were involved within changing viewing practices, artistic pedagogy, acts of homage and collecting.

The idea of reproduction connotes a number of tensions: between authenticity and counterfeit; consumption and production; innovation and imitation; the establishment of archetype and the creation of replica; the conceptual value of the original and the worth of the reproduction as a novel work of art; the display of contextualised knowledge and the de-contextualisation of the prototype. At the same time, production is shaped historically through practices and discourses, and has figured as a key site for analysis in the work of, for example, Walter Benjamin, Richard Wolin, Richard Etlin, Ian Knizek and Yvonne Sheratt. Participants are invited to explore reproduction ‘beyond Benjamin’, investigating both the technical and philosophical implications of reproducing a work of art and seeking, where possible, a local anchoring for the physical and conceptual processes involved.

We welcome proposals for papers that investigate the theme of reproduction from the early modern period (c.1500-1800), including painting, print making, sculpture, decorative arts, architecture, graphic arts and the intersections between them. Papers can explore artistic exchanges across geopolitical, cultural and disciplinary divides and contributions from other disciplines, such as the history of science and conservation, are welcome. Topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to:

The conceptualisation and processes of reproduction and reproduction technologies before and at the advent of ‘the mechanical’;
Reproduction in artistic traditions beyond ‘the West’;
The slippage between innovation and imitation;
Part-reproduction and the changing, manipulation and developments of certain motifs;

Problematizing the aura of ‘authenticity’ and the ‘value’ of the original, copies and collecting;
Fakes and the de-contextualisation of a work through its reproduction;
Reproduction within non-object based study e.g. architecture;
Theoretical alternatives and the vocabulary used to describe the process and results of reproduction in contemporary texts.
Please send proposals of no more than 300 words along with a 150 word biography by 6th July 2017 to kyle.leyden@courtauld.ac.uk and natasha.morris@courtauld.ac.uk

Organised by Kyle Leyden, Natasha Morris and Angela Benza (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Reference:
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