ArtHist.net

Session at Art, Materiality and Representation (London, 1–3 Jun 18)

Clore Centre, British Museum, London, Jun 1–03, 2018
Deadline: Jan 8, 2018

Ros Holmes, University of Oxford

"Agile Objects: The Art and Anthropology of Re-materialization"

Session at the Conference "Art, Materiality and Representation," jointly organised by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI), the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas of the British Museum, and the Department of Anthropology at SOAS

Co-Conveners: Emilie Le Febvre (University of Oxford) and Ros Holmes (University of Oxford)

At a time in which our experience of cultural artefacts is often physically removed by digitization, this panel seeks papers that consider the practices, politics, and affects of re-materializing artworks from diverse geographical perspectives. The process of de- to re-materialization has been referred to by David Joselit as a 'comedy of matter'; a situation in which the most "immaterial" of formats—digital information—has paradoxically led to a proliferation of material states. This metastasizing of media formats can in effect render a quantum of data into a printed photograph, a 3-D print or an analogue sculpture, facilitating a variety of practices from bootlegging and creative appropriation to the return of cultural heritage. These processes of re-materialization have subsequently led to the formation of 'agile objects': cultural artefacts whose value may have originally resided in their authentic forms but today are revered for their capacity as digital files to take on several distinct forms simultaneously.

While these practices among artists, media-makers and museums have been the focus of increasing scholarly attention, their theorization and prevalence beyond Western contexts remains largely unexplored. Redressing this imbalance, we premise that art historical and anthropological examinations of re-materialization can provide unique perspectives about the politics of cultural capital from the Near East to East Asia, Australia to Latin America. This multi-disciplinary panel therefore invites papers that consider the transposition of digital content into objects of material, commercial and collectable value, exploring the capacity of these 'agile objects' to shape artistic and museum practices.

We welcome papers that critically address re-materialization from disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, particularly from artistic practitioners.

Topics may include (but are not limited to):

The role of re-materialization as alternative document and archive

Acts of appropriation, 'bootlegging' and copying

Exhibition histories and collecting

Issues of authority, access and ownership

Modelling, GIS, 3-D printing

Cultural heritage returns and digital repatriation

Re-materialization as artistic practice

The role that re-materialization plays in mediating our experience of the visual

Proposals should consist of a paper title, a (very) short abstract of <300 characters and a full abstract of 250 words. Papers must be submitted via the conference website:https://nomadit.co.uk/rai/events/rai2018/conferencesuite.php/panels/6075

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