

The Art of Appropriation (Chester, 10-11 Jun 09)

Sarah Leach

The Art of Appropriation & Kurt Schwitters in England
Authenticity, Reproduction, Simulation

Keynote speakers: John Stezaker, Roger Cardinal & David Evans
University of Chester in conjunction with the Littoral Arts Trust
July 10 - 11, 2009

Conference & Exhibition Announcement and Call for Papers

As part of a wider debate related to appropriation, found objects and photography this conference will stimulate new areas of research into the legacy of Kurt Schwitters in England. This event also proposes an artist and academic discourse, which addresses the authenticity and authorship of artworks, a debate that may also encompass aesthetics, political and ethical considerations, conservation and curation.

In 1966 Richard Hamilton took the initiative to save Kurt Schwitters Merzbarn, which was Schwitters final work prior to his untimely death in 1947. This work was the final manifestation of processes of construction, collage, assemblage and collection, and ultimately exile, following his escape from Germany and subsequent internment. The Merzbarn relief wall was in danger of deterioration and loss in the damp conditions of the studio-barn where it was constructed at Elterwater in the Langdale Valley. The interior relief wall built into the gable end of the building is now housed at the Hatton Gallery at the University of Newcastle.

At the Littoral Arts Trust convened conference Kurt Schwitters in England in 2004 Richard Hamilton proclaimed his desire to remake the Merzbarn relief in a similar way to how he had remade Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* or *The Large Glass* (1915 - 1923), the original was damaged in transit to New York. Duchamp subsequently sanctioned replicas in 1961 and 1966. Hamilton's replica work was completed with the blessing, guidance and close-collaboration of Duchamp himself. Duchamp's practice since he abandoned painting and signed a urinal 'R. Mutt' and titled it *Fountain* followed the first readymade in 1915. These were editioned as reproductions themselves. Ever since this subversive act notions of authorship and authenticity have been problematic.

The invention of photography and its emergence as an art-form, itself a form of appropriation of people, places and objects, has opened the way for further debates related to authenticity, reproduction and simulation. The painter Ed Ruscha has referred to his books since 1962 with the publication of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* as 'readymades in photographic form'.

This conference invites calls for papers and selected artworks for an associated exhibition, which address and challenge the above issues directly or as a point of departure. The Schwitters orientated strand moves away-from and back to Hamilton's proposition to remake or fabricate the Merzbarn relief.

Academic papers and artist talks are welcomed which challenge and question the above propositions. Contributions are invited for: panel topics to be confirmed according to submissions (2-4 speakers) & individual papers (20 minutes + 10 minutes for discussion).

Send us your abstract before the deadline if you require an early response. We strongly recommend this option for overseas participants who may need to book flights.

We prefer email submissions but you can also post your abstract/proposal (500 words) by Monday May 18th 2009 to:

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Reference:

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