

The Laws of Art. Rules and Rituals (Munich, 19–20 Apr 2013)

München, Apr 19–20, 2013

Deadline: Feb 1, 2013

Madalina Rosca

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE LAWS OF ART. Rules and Rituals

Interdisciplinary symposium for new scholars, organised by the PhD Programme ProArt School of Arts, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

“There is one law of art that is eternal: We don’t want to be bored.” is how Kurt Tucholsky sums up the ultimate aim of all artistic creation. But what other rules apply to aesthetic phenomena? What kinds of patterns emerge during the production, presentation, reception and interpretation of works of art? In what ways do these rules affect the recognition of works of art as works of art in the first place? How do they define elements of style? And what happens when conflicts arise between the laws of art and those of other fields, or when artists or works of art break existing laws? The question of law in art can be approached through categories such as justice, ideology, ritual or performance, which are particularly useful because they are multi-perspectival and interdisciplinary, offering different applications for a variety of research topics and questions.

Ideologies, rituals and performative strategies all work to establish links between individuals and communities as recipients of a common code. While ideologies point to political, religious or aesthetic worldviews in often authoritarian terms, performative strategies are here understood as means of legitimising such world-views through the use of collective patterns of action. Frequently these harness the unifying power of the ritual. As a habitual set of actions with a definite form and a theatrical and performative mode of presentation, the ritual focuses emotions. Featuring props, special instruments and bodies, it is time-based as well as space-bound. With its particular combination of accuracy and repetition, the ritual resembles a theatre production, which is open to different interpretations at every performance. While in common uses of the word, ‘ritual’ is often equated with habit, convention or routine, it is in fact the very opposite: It interrupts the normal course of things, creating a state of alterity to everyday practices. Rituals can thus be understood as rhetorical punctuation marks in the grammar of art.

From a legal point of view, the field of art is regulated by copyright and personal rights, although in many political regimes art is further controlled through censorship. The case of the Russian group Pussy Riot, which became an international media sensation, showed how works of art can be judged to be blasphemous, and artists tried and imprisoned for it. Law and art collide, opening up

questions regarding the interdependence of law, religion, politics and the artwork.

Art is subject to laws. Taking this thought as a starting point, the symposium aims to identify and analyse artistic strategies in the battle for expression and legitimisation. The following non-exhaustive list of questions shall open up a space for discussing the laws of art from a variety of disciplinary and historical angles:

- What can we learn about the laws of art by looking at categories such as justice, ritual, ideology and performance in an interdisciplinary and transhistorical way?
- How useful are the frameworks used in fields such as law, political science, religion or media studies for the examination of laws in art? In what ways do the laws of art relate to other systems of rules, particularly those of a political, religious or legal nature?
- How have these practices changed historically?
- What is the role of the media in negotiating laws of art, and what are its means of doing so?
- To what extent can rituals be regarded as stylistic devices in the aesthetic system of rules? Does this differ across cultures, historical periods and political regimes?
- What happens when art breaks existing laws, or is put on trial? What is the role of the legislator in the production and reception of art? How important are violations of the law in artistic practice? Is there a need for art to cross the limits of the legal in order to be perceived as art?

The symposium is primarily aimed at doctoral candidates from all fields of the arts (film, music, theatre, art and art history, and cultural studies). In accordance with the interdisciplinary ethos of ProArt we would also like to invite contributions from related fields and discourses. Please send us your proposed topic for a 20-minute talk as an abstract of no more than 400 words, together with your CV (both as word documents). The deadline for abstract submission is 1st of February 2013.

Email: kunstgesetze@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

Homepage: <http://www.proart.marc.uni-muenchen.de>

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Reference:

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