

Art and Material II: The division of labour in the creative process

Interdisciplinary symposium in Zurich, Thursday / Friday, 14 / 15 November 2019

Venue: SIK-ISEA, Zollikerstrasse 32, 8032 Zurich

A partnership between the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) and Bern University of the Arts (HKB)

Idea and organisation:

SIK-ISEA

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Prof. Anne Krauter, art history lecturer in the Conservation & Restoration division / research fellow on the project "Materiality in Art and Culture"

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In November 2018 SIK-ISEA and Bern University of the Arts (HKB) jointly ran an interdisciplinary symposium on "Art and Material: Representation, Materiality, Processes". It centred on issues around materials in modern and contemporary art, notably implications for value and alterations that affect the preservation and perception of an artefact, be it as part of an artistic strategy or as a natural consequence of ageing. The follow-up conference planned for autumn 2019 will shift the focus towards artistic production today and the increasingly common division of labour during the genesis of a work.

For some years now, a striking change has been observed in the relationship between artistic invention and implementation: artists concentrate increasingly on devising an idea or a project and then task specialised companies with carrying it out. Occasionally (and historical techniques like sgraffito or stained glass making are no exception), this exchange between the

participants begins at the design stage, with the knowledge of materials and techniques contributed by experts stimulating artists to produce new designs and the emergence of production communities which already play a part in creating content and concepts.

There are many reasons for these trends in art production: new technologies and machines such as 3-D printers, CNC tools and high-speed milling are extremely expensive. Although apparatus of this kind is usually available to students and even free-lance artists at art schools and workshops, the specialist skills they require are part of a constantly expanding spectrum of knowledge that artists do not seem motivated to master in full. Many apparently find artistic interaction with a specialist more stimulating than learning the sophisticated techniques required to operate the equipment for themselves. Moreover, challenges to the artist's traditional role since the early 20th century have led to a greater emphasis being placed on the conceptual and entrepreneurial aspects of art production. Today's artists are expected more than ever before to define their own approach to the conceptualisation, social anchoring and materialisation of their output.

The proposed symposium will reflect upon the phenomenon whereby design and production are becoming increasingly discrete processes in art making today and will examine the role played by aspects such as training for artists, technical innovations, the partial disappearance of traditional techniques and the mechanisms informing the art market. Particular space will be devoted to how this separation of design and implementation is influencing not only the preservation of works but also concepts of authorship and authenticity. This call for papers is addressed to interested parties in the fields of art, art studies and conservation / restoration.

Four sections have been proposed along with the following potential themes:

- Historical aspects
 - Spotlights on the history of segregating invention from production (mosaics, casting, printing techniques, stained glass et al.)
 - Materials and techniques encountered in the training of artists before 1900
 - Artists' workshops as production sites applying a division of labour

- Workshop reports
 - The segregation of design and implementation: case studies
 - Conservation/restoration of works manufactured by third parties
 - Case studies about production communities

- Training
 - Specialist knowledge of materials: cutting-edge technologies and historical techniques
 - Materials and techniques encountered in the training of artists today

- The art sector: sociological and economic aspects
 - Conceptual production communities versus commissioned art
 - How separating design from implementation affects the idea of authenticity
 - Marketing, exhibition and collection of works manufactured by third parties

30 minutes will be allowed for each presentation. The conference languages are German, French and English. Accommodation and travel costs (2nd class / economy) will be reimbursed by the organisers upon submission of receipts. Please e-mail a summary of your presentation (max. 1 page) in German, French or English, accompanied by a short CV, to Regula Krähenbühl (regula.kraehenbuehl@sik-isea.ch) at SIK-ISEA by 1 June 2019.

A selection of conference presentations will be published along with selected contributions to the previous conference in November 2018 in the SIK-ISEA series “outlines”.