

PARADOXES OF COPYRIGHT

Week 8: 17 - 21 February, 2025

Location: ZT 5. K111

Abstract:

Contemporary art's relation to copyright is paradoxical. Copyright gives artists a claim of ownership over their own work. Yet, it enforces a type of individual original authorship that poorly fits contemporary artistic practices, which are often collaborative, generative, and building on the works of others. Since Dada, many avant-garde movements intended to undermine the notion of artistic control and originality. At least since the 1960s, numerous artists and activists have explored this paradox in their works, coming into conflict with copyright, exposing the weakness of its conceptual foundations in the digital domain, instigating collective practices and, recently, through blockchain-based mechanisms (NFTs) pioneered notions of "ownership" that seemingly abandons copyright entirely. In this module, we approach copyright not as fixed legal system, but as a contested cultural domain, in which artists play a key role in developing new models for 21st century. We will focus on artists such as Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, Richard Prince, Cornelia Sollfrank, Elaine Sturtevant, and on movements such as "copy-left" and look into the strange case of the model Emily Ratajkowski who sold ownership rights to an image of herself she probably doesn't own. We will also look at the rise (and possible fall) of NFTs as the latest incarnation of the paradoxes of copyright.

Course requirements:

Attendance (80%)

- Participation in reading & discussions
- Creation and presentation of a "work" and a reflective work.
 - Create a work (textual, audio-visual) that consist to a large degree of third party material, you consider as a work of your own.
 - Write short text about how you made this work and what makes it your own.

https://pad.vmk.zhdk.ch/paradoxes_of_copyright_fs25

Monday: Basics of Copyright Law & Edge Cases

Morning

Introduction

Would you sign this letter?

- Open Letter: [Cancel the Christie's AI Art Auction](#). 8 February 2025
- Christie's: [Augementated Intelligence](#) Online Auction. 20 February – 5 March
- Christie's: [What is AI Art?](#)
- Nelson, George. 2025. "Thousands of Artists Demand Christie's Cancels AI Art Sale: 'AI Models

Exploit Humans.” ARTnews.Com (blog). February 11, 2025.

<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/artists-demand-christies-cancels-ai-art-sale-claiming-ai-models-exploit-humans-1234732217/>.

Copyright as Idea and Law

Background: [History of Copyright](#) Wikipedia

Utilitarian vs author rights argument

- [Artl.S8.C8.1 Overview of Congress's Power Over Intellectual Property](#) (1789) (US Congress)
- [Diderot's Letter on the book trade](#) (1763) (PRIMARY SOURCES ON COPYRIGHT, 1450-1900), [Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers](#) (1751-1772)

Swiss Copyright law

[Bundesgesetz über das Urheberrecht und verwandte Schutzrechte](#)

Art. 2: “Werke sind, unabhängig von ihrem Wert oder Zweck, geistige Schöpfungen der Literatur und Kunst, die individuellen Charakter haben.”

Art. 6: “Urheber oder Urheberin ist die natürliche Person, die das Werk geschaffen hat.”

Art. 10: “Der Urheber oder die Urheberin hat das ausschliessliche Recht zu bestimmen, ob, wann und wie das Werk verwendet wird.”

Art. 11: Der Urheber oder die Urheberin hat das ausschliessliche Recht zu bestimmen; (a) ob, wann und wie das Werk geändert werden darf.

Afternoon

Defining the edges of copyright: **When a photo is not “individual”**

- Gisela Blau: [Bild von Christoph Meili](#), 1997
- [Bundesgerichtsurteil: Gisela Blau Guggenheim vs BBC](#), 19. April 2004
- [Lichtbildschutz](#), URG Revision, 1. April 2020 (Artikel 2 Abs. 3bis)

Can a non-human be an author?

Animals

[Wikipedia Animal Made Art](#)

[The Monkey Selfie \(2011-2017\)](#)

Fobar, Rachel. [„A Person or a Thing? Inside the Fight for Animal Personhood“](#). National Geographic, 4. August 2021

Machines

Recker, Jane. [„U.S. Copyright Office Rules A.I. Art Can't Be Copyrighted“](#). Smithsonian Magazine (March 24), 2022.

[Künstliche Intelligenz: Können KI-Tools Urheberrecht verletzen?](#) Institut für Geistiges Eigentum, Bern (02.2023)

[Wem gehört das Gedicht, das Chat-GPT geschrieben hat? Das sagen die Gesetze](#), NZZ (29.04.2023)

Bundesministerium der Justiz (DE). [Künstliche Intelligenz und Urheberrecht - Fragen und Antworten](#) (März 2024)

The twisted case of Emily Ratajkowski

- [How many layers of copyright infringement are in Emily Ratajkowski's new NFT?](#) The Verge, 21.03.2021
- Emily Ratajkowski [Buying Myself Back When does a model own her own image](#) The Cut, 15.09.2020

Tuesday: Aesthetics, Authorship and counter-movements

Group Reading

- Barthes, Roland. 1967. "The Death of the Author." Aspen, 1967. <https://www.ubu.com/aspen/aspen5and6/index.html>
- Foucault, Michel. 1968. "What Is an Author?"
PDF
- Woodmansee, Martha. 1992. "On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity." Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal 10: 279-92
PDF
- Ortland, Eberhard. 2008. "The Aesthetics of Copyright:" In Proceedings of the XXII World Congress of Philosophy, 227-32. Philosophy Documentation Center.
<https://doi.org/10.5840/wcp22200811225>
PDF

[Stalder, Felix. 2014. "Urheberrecht - Wenn das Recht kunstfeindlich wird."](#) Kunstbulletin, 2014.

PDF

Kunstfreiheit.ch

Rethinking Copyright and Authorship under the digital Condition

Free Licenses, Copyleft and Creative Commons

Free Software Foundation. [What is Free Software?](#)

[GNU General Public License](#)

[Creative Commons](#)

Digital Commons

Creating Commons

Dulong de Rosnay, Melanie, und Felix Stalder. „[Digital Commons](#)“. Internet Policy Review 9, Nr. 4 (2020).

Stalder, Felix, und Cornelia Sollfrank. „Introduction“. In *Aesthetics of the Commons*, herausgegeben von Cornelia Sollfrank, Felix Stalder, und Shusha Niederberger, 11–38. Zurich / Berlin: Diaphanes, 2021.

Blockchain & NFTs

Stalder, Felix. „[From Commons to NFTs: Digital Objects and Radical Imagination](#)“. Makery (31.01), 2022.

Wednesday: Appropriation: Motives and Strategies

Jean-Luc Godard: »It's not where you take things from - it's where you take them to.« [source](#)

The Pictures Generation: Playing with authorship as a post-modern strategy

[Crimp, Douglas](#). 1977. Pictures. New York City: Artists Space. [Entry on Monoskop.org](#) read p. 3-5

Elaine Sturtevant (1924 - 2014)

- [Wikipedia entry](#)
- [Artnet Entry](#)
- [Introduction to Elaine Sturtevant](#), The Museum of Contemporary Art, 2015, 3 Min
- “Hans-Ulrich Obrist in Conversation with Elaine Sturtevant.” 2008. <https://032c.com/magazine/elaine-sturtevant>
- Lobel, Michael. „Sturtevant: Inappropriate Appropriation“. Parkett, 2005. [
PDF
- Heartney, Eleanor, and Eleanor Heartney. 2014. “Re-Creating Sturtevant.” ARTnews.Com (blog). November 1, 2014. <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/re-creating-sturtevant-63492>
- Phelan, Richard. 2015. “The Counter Feats of Elaine Sturtevant (1924-2014).” E-Rea, no. 13.1 (December). <https://doi.org/10.4000/erea.4567>

Jack Goldstein

- [Works on Ubu.com](#)
- [The Art Story](#)

Luise Lawler

- [Whithney Museum](#)
- [The Art Story](#)

Sherry Levine

- [David Zwirner Gallery](#)

- [The Art Story](#)

Richard Prince

- [Cowboys, 1989, Untitled \(Cowboy\): Behind Richard Prince's Photographs & Appropriation](#), Time Magazine, 2016, 14 Min
- ["Canal Zone."](#) Gagosian Galery, 2008
- Patrick Carriou. 2000. [Yes Rasta](#).
- 1. Trial: Leigh Anne Miller (2011). [Judge Rules Against Richard Prince in Appropriation Case Art in America](#) (March 22)
- Appeal: Prince vs. Carriou, The question of fair use [The 'Transformation' of Fair Use After Prince v. Cariou](#) 2014
- Goldsmith, Kenneth. 2012. ["Richard Prince's Latest Act of Appropriation: The Catcher in the Rye."](#) Poetry Foundation
- [New Portraits](#) Gagosian Gallery 2014
- [Review of New Portraits](#). Brooklyn Rail, 2014
- [Richard Prince Disowns His Ivanka Trump Portrait, Possibly Increasing Its Value](#). Hyperallergic, Jan. 2017
- [Prince on Ubu.com](#)

Harrison, Nate. „[The Pictures Generation, the Copyright Act of 1976, and the Reassertion of Authorship in Postmodernity](#)“. Art & Education (blog), 2012. (archive.org)

PDF

Fair Use (US Copyright)

- Copyright and Fair Use (Stanford Library): [What Is Fair Use? | Measuring Fair Use: The Four Factors](#)

Nate Harrison [Can I Get An Amen?](#), 2004

Further Reading:

Metropolitan Museum of Art, [The Pictures Generation, 1974–1984](#), 2009

- Jerry Saltz [Great Artists Steal](#), ArtNet, 2009

Evans, David, ed. 2009. [Appropriation. Documents of Contemporary Art](#). London : Cambridge, Mass: Whitechapel ; MIT Press. Read Introduction. p.12-23

Replicas. Originality on Trial in and around Olivier Mosset's Collection. 30.06 –29.10.2017. Musée Des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-De-Fonds. [Catalogue](#)

Afternoon:

Work on Assignement

Thursday: Paradoxes of machine creativity

Cornelia Sollfrank and the net-art Generator

[Net.Art Generator](#)

Warhol's Flowers:

Patricia Caulfield [Hibiscus Blossoms](#) (1964) – Andy Warhol [Flowers](#) (1964) – Elaine Sturtevant [Warhol Flowers](#) (1967) – Cornelia Sollfrank. [Anonymous Warhol Flowers](#) (2004 -). [OG flowers](#) (2010-2021).

[Legal Perspective](#), 2004

[I don't know](#), 1968/2006

[Kate Vass, Gallery Zurich](#)

Readings Net.Art Generator:

Sollfrank, Cornelia, and Winnie Soon. 2021. [Fix My Code](#). Berlin: EECLECTIC. Introduction & Chapter 3, [Ebook](#) Creative Commons: Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Jacob Lillemose. 2009. [Keep on Generating. On Cornelia Sollfrank's Multiple Authorships](#). In: Himmelsbach, Sabine (ed) Expanded original: Cornelia Sollfrank [anlässlich der Ausstellung “Cornelia Sollfrank. Originale und Andere Fälschungen”, Edith-Ruß-Haus für Medienkunst, Oldenburg, 24. Januar bis 19. April 2009]. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz.

Sollfrank, Cornelia. 2010. [Anonymous Warhol Flowers: Urheberrecht als Material und Gegenstand der Kunst](#). Irights.Info

Afternoon:

Work on Assignement

Friday: Machine Creativity, The case for/against Generative AI

Artist against a provider of a training data set

Reflections on [Kneschke v. LAION](#), Hamburg Regional Court 09.2024

Massive Data Sets, eg. [LAION](#) vs small and curated data sets, eg. [Source.plus](#)

Artists against AI Companies (Stability.ai and others)

Edwards, Benj. „[Artists File Class-Action Lawsuit against AI Image Generator Companies](#)“. Ars Technica, 16. Januar 2023.

Belanger, Ashley. „Artists Claim “Big” Win in Copyright Suit Fighting AI Image Generators“. Ars Technica, 14. August 2024.

AI and Authorship

- Caldwell, Mackenzie. 2023. “What Is an ‘Author’?-Copyright Authorship of AI Art Through a Philosophical Lens.” Houston Law Review 61 (2): 411–42.
- Malevé, Nicolas. „Style and Revenge: The Vagaries of the Artistic Class in Generative AI“. The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics 33, Nr. 67 (23. August 2024).

Phillip Schmidt: <https://humans-of.ai>

<https://haveibeen trained.com>

Afternoon:

Presentation & Discussion of Assignments.

[Further references](#) (Pad)

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