

To: "Reena Jana" [REDACTED]
From: Michael Mandiberg <Michael@Mandiberg.com>
Subject: answers
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Reena,

Here are some answers. I'm going to call you just to let you know that I've sent these to you. I'll let you read them, and then you can call me back when you are done and we can talk about anything I didn't fully explain or whatnot...

Michael

1. What do your afterwalkerevans.com and aftersherrielevine.com sites offer the viewer beyond what any net-surfer can experience already? For instance, my editor was saying, what's stopping him from going to a site with a Walker Evans photo and downloading it onto digital photo paper and framing it? Why does your certificate of authenticity matter? (Remember, this is for Wired.com, so the readers may not get the conceptual nature of your work at first...)

The site offers access to this information both as a political/artistic move and as an educational resource. The certificate is important b/c certificates are used by art world artists to insure the financial value of objects, whereas here they are used to make it impossible to accrue financial value. Educationally, this is actually the only place outside of the metropolitan museum (where I had to go to find out any information about the prints -- there are almost no books on her) where you can find out some of the important details about Sherrie Levine's photographs -- what size they were, how many images she photographed, which images she chose, which book they came from, etc...

On the print quality level, these images are very high quality. You would be hard pressed to find an image of one of these photos on the web that is at 850DPI... They have the same quality level as Sherrie Levine's rephotographs.

2. Are you "selling" any aspect of these sites...? What's the value of this art work?

No, they are very intentionally not for sale. Including the certificate of authenticity, along with giving away the hi-res files, is an attempt to create a physical object with cultural value (i.e. it fits within the continuum of art history, art theory, cultural theory)

but which cannot accrue financial value, as it is an unlimited edition, with inks that fade -- who would buy one in a gallery when they could go home and print one out for free? (smile)

3. Of course your email was from "Paula Cooper Gallery" -- now, I haven't called Paula Cooper yet, but I have the feeling that the quotes allow you to use her name. What's been her reaction?

4. What are the legal implications of this piece?

The show is titled "Paula Cooper Gallery" (the gallery Sherrie Levine shows at). Honestly, I was more concerned with the legal implications from using the Gallery name than the implications from using the images themselves. I haven't heard anything from Paula Cooper though... They are probably pretty smart and realize that it is kind of like Napster PR situation (where the law suit increased Napster's visibility onehundredfold(is that a word?)) -- if they pursue me for using their name, it will cause way more press/pr/image damage than if they just leave me alone.

5. Another comment made by my editor is that this art piece seems "too easy" -- but then again, what would he say about Duchamp's urinal? Any reaction to such sentiment? Care to tie your piece in with the continuum of modern and contemporary art?

Much conceptual art is an inside joke, and a lot of these jokes are one-liners ("too easy.") AfterWalkerEvans.com and AfterSherrieLevine.com (like Sherrie Levine's work itself) are no different. Conceptual art positions itself within cultural theory and art history in order to "make a point" yet this point is often esoteric, inaccessible, and without real philosophical depth. In part, these sites are this one-liner art prank, yet in part they attempt to negotiate this esotericism with the possibility of a wider audience afforded by the net, providing access to these jokes, to these objects, to this information. At the same time, they are fully aware of their place in "The Continuum," from the careful consideration and response to the way Benjamin's theories of reproduction have played out in appropriationist art of the last two decades, to the reaction to political/public artists like Felix Gonzalez-Torres, or Jenny Holzer, whose works were/started out as attempts to reach the viewer directly but ended up (through their entrance into the gallery commodification system) changing materials (holzer) and authenticating the right to reproduce the object, and not the individual pieces of candy that were taken away, preserving the exclusivity of the object (torres).

6. WOULD you say you're working outside the art world or in it? HOW has the Web helped or hindered you?

I think i am working in a liminal space between the art world and the outside-the-art-world. There are different audiences in each. Working in both, you can access these different audiences. The web has helped me immensely because of this. It has allowed me to share my work with teenagers in Australia, middle aged women in Ohio, people for whom the Chelsea galleries are entirely irrelevant.

That's about it. LEt's talk in the AM Thursday. All best, Reena Jana
212.XXX.XXXX OR 646.XXX.XXX.

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