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Remixing Remix Remixed

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Remixing Remix Remixed

by
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A thesis presented to the
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Abstract

Remix culture plays an important role in the expression and communication of visual art. It is a discourse by which I strive to directly engage culture by cutting and pasting together already existing visual information. By doing so, I strive to promote an exchange of ideas and feelings between juxtaposed pieces. In this age of post-digital era collage, I am interested in the meaning and propaganda associated with collage and assemblage and the modes of disseminating messages via cut-and-paste.

By juxtaposing images that differ in style, content, and meaning, I am able to build panoramas of fractured identities that manifest themselves as overlays-on-overlays of distorted caricatures. Taking inspiration from sources as diverse as prehistoric cave paintings and street art mark-making, my work is a free association landscape that draws comparisons between unlikely references. With a single work, I attempt to say everything and nothing simultaneously. This denies permanence in meaning and celebrates the bizarre unknown.

My thesis work *Reference Complex* (2014) is a large-scale mural that investigates my own reference impulse – my compulsion to combine and redefine imagery via appropriation and collage. The work aims to create a shift from traditional perspective. By recycling unrelated segments of visual information, I have created a landscape of divergent space and alternative culture. The mural is used as a strategy to explore the potential of remix culture and the exploration of free culture that allows visual representations for a new system of social culture and artmaking.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Table of Contents	3
Introduction	4
Remixing Durer	7
Contemporary Citations	14
Digital Conflux	16
Remixing Self	20
Conclusion	23
Notes	24
Illustrations	25
Illustration Citations.....	40
Bibliography	42

Introduction

The discourse of remix is one by which I strive to directly engage culture. This discourse can be defined as the process by which I create new works by cutting and pasting together already existing visual information in such a way that I promote an exchange of ideas and feelings between the juxtaposed pieces. Although the specificity of the term remix belongs to the post-digital music culture of the 1970s¹, the philosophy of remix can be extended to other areas of contemporary society related to expression and communication, including the visual arts. In fact, the practice of juxtaposition – of comparing and contrasting competing visual information to create entirely new works – existed prior to the term remix and is rooted in the surrealist techniques of bricolage, collage, and assemblage.

It can be said that remix is a culture – a discourse, philosophy, and custom in which the primary goal is to communicate with contradictions in such a way that the source is not totally obscured. As such, remix is a reference culture, and it acts as both a citation source and an endless cycle of footnotes and endnotes of visual information.

By its very nature remix is a systematic and self-referencing discipline that holds that all art is from art before its time, and works created using the principles of remix are categorically derivative. According the United States Copyright Office, a derivative work is defined as “A work based on or derived from one or more already existing works.” These works can be as diverse as motion pictures based on novels, translations of foreign text, and reproductions of art.

Many critics – artists among them – find the ideologies of remix culture threatening because they assume that, as a discipline, remix discredits the role of the artist as a purveyor of

insight and creativity. Such usage of appropriation is often associated with the idea that the role of the artist has been diminished to the degree that artistic voice is insignificant – a critical matter when one considers that voice is central to art-making.² However, if one carefully takes into account the way in which remix culture engineers images, one realizes that the assumption that derivative works deny artistic voice is false. In the case of remix, poetic license is promoted through the use of replication, amalgamation, and manipulation, proving that “even, and sometimes especially, in the case of the appropriation artists, it does matter who is speaking.”³

As an artist who employs remix via collage and assemblage, I particularly believe that the imitative quality of works created under the philosophy of remix remain inventive and imaginative. It can be said, that such works are more inspired than they are copied. For me collaging and assembling appropriated and sourced information gives old ideas a new material and conceptual form. A large portion of my practice concerns mythic world building in the context of a larger cultural sphere.

I manipulate multiple sources of visually and contextually distinct materials to create loose narratives, the frameworks of which surround the creation of several fictive mythologies concerning the convergence of cultures, and the discourse of remix has allowed me to rethink and rehash concepts pertaining to identity, space, and art itself. By juxtaposing images that differ in style, content, and meaning, I am able to not only contrast opposing worlds, but I am also able to draw comparisons between them. Most importantly, however, I am able to create a domain that is unlike that which is described in the original source material.

My works are not direct representations of any specific historical experiences, and they are not focused on a single character or dedicated to singular events, rather they present a series of interconnected vignettes that depict the rituals and ceremonies of societies that are out of place

and time. Even though the events that take place in my works are distinct from real world events, they reference familiar episodes of human interactions and beliefs. Because I use appropriated imagery as a tool by which each element contributes to the meaning of the entire piece but also retains its individuality, I am able to relate them to the present, compare them to the past, and create links for the future.

Remixing Durer

In the series *Dialogue with Durer* (2012 - present), I use multiple layers and seamless cuts to create collages that look as if they are original works created by Durer himself (Figure 1). The ongoing series consists of thirty-seven separate eight-by-ten inch works that investigate themes of identity and persona and survey acculturation resulting from the European exploration of the African, Asian, and American continents.

Sourcing images from *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Durer* (1963) edited by Dr. William Kurth, I set a guideline of using at least four different woodcuts to create a single background layer. On top of these initial compositions, I reinsert layers of crowds and characters featured in Durer's woodcuts. I then photocopy these images to flatten them. Doing so aids in creating a quality of permanence and cohesion not only within each collage but between each work. Lastly, I include mythological creatures and cultural masks, taken from Richard Huber's *Treasury of Fantastic and Mythological Creatures* (1981). These masks range in different meanings from the spiritual to the commonplace, and they represent the non-human aspect of humanity – our capacity to be animalistic, god-like, and demonic. The inclusion of masks within my work has connotations and denotations associated with identity and persona.

The mask plays a significant role in *Dialogue with Durer* related to its meaning in social and ritual events. It may act as both a disguise of feelings, beliefs, and attitudes and a promotion of the ego, psyche, and personality – albeit, via concealment. Generally speaking, masks play a variety of roles in social and ritual ceremonies that range in mode from entertainment, celebration, and performance to practical applications related to disguise, protection, beauty, war, and health. I am particularly interested in tribal masks because their meanings have often been

obscured in Western culture, and therefore could be indicative of all of these things, individually and simultaneously.

Moreover, the inclusion of the mask as identity camouflage represents suppression of individuality (Figure 2). The mask acts as a costume and helps identify social roles. Conversely, it conceals the character's true emotions. It works as a way to hide – to act without visibility – concealing beliefs with misrepresentation... primarily the misrepresentation of the identities of my characters. This misrepresentation, furthermore, promotes ideas of estrangement and play. The idea of being behind a mask sets an atmosphere of tension that is promoted by the type of mask used (i.e. tribal) and also because the intent of usage of these tribal masks are obscure. I am interested in my audience's levels of comfort and discomfort with this concealment because it questions social constructs.

The mask as a promotion of persona also has an important role in my work that follows a psychoanalytical view on persona. According to psychologist Carl Jung in his 1928 essay *The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious*, "The persona is a complicated system of relations between the individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual. That the latter function is superfluous could be maintained only by one who is so identified with his persona that he no longer knows himself; and that the former is unnecessary could only occur to one who is quite unconscious of the true nature of his fellows"⁴ As such, it can be said that the individual personality is the innate being, and the public personality is the visible façade. The inner personality of the individual refers to the emotions, thoughts, and feelings that are rarely revealed to others. The public personality refers to the readily visible emotions, thoughts, and feelings that are easily and openly shared.

Fitting with Jung's definition, the role of the mask within my work represents the public personality, or rather how the public perceives the personality – not the inner personality of the individual who may feel that he or she is unconventional, abnormal, or strange. The mask as such, is a way to politely cover up and to protect one's true self from the public. Jung writes: "Just as man is a social being, cannot in the long run exist without a tie to the community, so the individual will never find the real justification for his existence, and his own spiritual and moral autonomy, anywhere except in an extramundane principle capable of relativizing the overpowering influence of external factors."⁵

One important external factor that I took under consideration with this work was the historical and social placement of the Northern Renaissance as an art movement. It was time of great contradictions. The traditions of religion were contrasted to advancements in science, and both offered insufficient explanations and comforts to the problems that inundated the era. For example, plagues ran rampant, but the science of medicine was not sophisticated enough to control the epidemics, which in turn caused people to look toward religion, which was promoted with the use of religious iconography, not only because it gave people hope, but also because visuals were necessary due to the fact that the vast majority was kept illiterate by the clergy who wanted to keep intellectual control over scripture.

Perhaps one of the greatest disappointments of this era of history is the colonization of the African, Asian, and American continents. The attempts at acculturating indigenous cultures was violently racist which can be juxtaposed not only to the seemingly enlightened and knowledgeable positions of the Renaissance science movements but also to the purported piety of the religious faction. Entire populations and cultures were obliterated either physically or by

assimilation. Such attitudes and actions seem completely inconsistent to the ambitions of reason, thought, and individualism that our history books state about the time period.

To echo the turmoil of the era, the world as presented in *Dialogue with Durer* is compressed and chaotic (Figure 3). I want the prints to impart a sinister feeling on my audience. I see the work as a collection as fictive vignettes – short narrative scenes illustrating the bizarre, the unknown, and reflections of the human fear of the irrational. As such, this work also represents my interest in horror vacui. Horror vacui is defined as the fear of the void, a fear of empty space. It also represents my vision as an artist... my compulsion to fill space and the comfort I take in the chaos of lines.

This interest in horror vacui is extended to my use of crowds and the representation of image space. It is an intrusive method. By using horror vacui, I encroach on my audience's sense of visual space by not allowing their eyes to rest. The way crowds in my work behave and interact promotes my concerns with the nature of the mask – the need for the concealment of identity. In this way, the crowd is a manifestation of hell. As such, crowds represent the density of space and of time.

I found Durer's illustrative style conducive to this visual space not only because of his line work, but also because of the way in which he used classical motifs in response to the Italian Renaissance. In *The Life and Art of Albrecht Durer* (1943), Erwin Panofsky writes on Durer as a maverick of iconography and as a theorist of art. Panofsky states: "Durer's contemporaries would have observed certain iconographic features which easily escape the modern beholder. They would have shared his delight in paralleling the tense relations between Adam and Eve to that between a mouse and a cat crouching to the spring and they would have appreciated the symbolism of what most of us would be apt to dismiss as 'picturesque accessories.'"⁶

As such, Albrecht Durer was arguably one of the greatest influences of his time during the Northern Renaissance. He was aware of the Italian Renaissance and used multiple cultural aspects and influences from this movement to create his own spiritual and mythological motifs that were often infused with humor and fantasy. He transformed the culture of his own time, and his graphic nature influenced others to copy his style and engravings. It should also be noted that as an innovator he charged himself with fusing the heavy iconography of spirituality with the modernistic and not yet established language of scientific reasoning. On the fusion Durer's artistic practice and scientific thinking, Panofsky states, "No doubt a conflict can be felt between the didactic and at the same time excessively naturalistic treatment of [these] figures and the fantastic character of the theme."⁷

An important goal of my collage work is to find the dialogue between two sets of contrasting visual information so that I may create a conversation which alludes to cultural patterns related to customs, standards, and values. The aim to create discourse is an objective shared by other collage artists. The surrealist and dada artist Max Ernst believed that "Collage technique is the systematic exploitation of the fortuitous or engineered encounter of two or more intrinsically incompatible realities on a surface which is manifestly inappropriate for the purpose – and the spark of poetry which leaps across the gap as these two realities are brought together."⁸

Ernst is well known for a series of collages published in 1934 as a graphic novel entitled *Une semaine de bonté* (English translation, *A Week of Kindness*). The work features 182 images created by rearranging illustrations cut from Victorian era novels and encyclopedias (Figure 4).⁹ Beginning with Sunday, the work is divided into seven sections organized as five volumes and explores multiple psychoanalytical themes such as the unconscious, the ego, violence, religious

skepticism, and sexual expression and suppression.¹⁰ “The scenes of unrest and brutality that appear on many pages match the alarming political situation of the time and the rise of dangerous forces. Ernst was then reacting against the establishment of dictatorships in Europe, and the rise to power of the National Socialists.”¹¹ By juxtaposing images, Ernst was able to create a conversation about social discontent. His work was a reflection on modern culture promoted via psychoanalysis.

Another artist who juxtaposes historical visual images to create dialogue that revolves around the analysis of societal themes is Bruce Connor. He describes his collage practice as follows: “I would start on a collage, and I would start looking for an object to complete it. The collage could be a dialogue between separate attitudes trying to reach a common agreement: a drama. I made some assemblages dealing with violence and sexual obsessions and fetishes.”¹²

In *Christ Casting out the Legion of Devils* (1987), Connor depicts Jesus – armed with a gigantic pair of scissors and accompanied by three followers – rebuking a host of symbolic shapes and eyes which represent demonic forces (Figure 5). The work acts as a great moment of drama, and everything seems to come to a standstill. In the illustration, Connor sets up a scene that creates intense feelings of religious skepticism by parodying one of Christ’s most notable miracles.

It can be said that collage technique is a practice that promotes discourse, especially when the topics of conversation are difficult or uncomfortable. I am able to explore themes of past religious and social oppression by remixing tribal masks with works by Albrecht Durer, an artist who is considered by some to have embodied within his woodcuts the scientific and religious themes of the Northern Renaissance. By combining these images together, I am able drastically change the original meaning of both sets of visual information. In doing so, I

challenge the audience's perception of history, causing them to rely on their own interpretation of the multiple associations that can be gleaned from my inclusion of tribal masks and the imbedded connotations of Durer's own iconography.

Contemporary Citations

Art in America (2012 - present) is an ongoing collage series currently consists of forty-five small works of varying sizes created from the glossy magazine gallery advertisements obtained from *Art in America*. I selected these images without regard for who the artist was, concentrating on color and line and shape. Sometimes these collages delve into complete non-representation (Figure 6). Sometimes I create abstracted faces and figures. In many ways I feel that I am drawing with other people's images using scissors and a glue stick.

I spend hours at a time with piles of the magazines, flipping through them multiple times, pulling out pages and collecting them in a pile. I then sort the pile in terms of style, color, and possible meanings that could be derived from the images. Next, I trim the edges and texts from the pages containing the images I have selected. After this, I reorganize the images, adding them to the pieces that I have already previously collected. By this time, I will have formed some idea about my own compositions. My cutting strategy is important to this series. I express meaning through cutting the paper, by using original and non-organic cuts... cuts not determined by the lines or colors featured in the works that I am using. I try to deviate as much as possible from these parameters.

After this, I combine the cut pieces. I employ my sense of direction and creativity to make my collages. Like my cutting strategy, my strategy for pasting them together is free-form. My compositions are made from anywhere between two to five separate images (Figure 7). After completing the pieces, I scan them into the computer and save them as a high resolution jpegs. I then have the ability to adjust these files and print them at a larger scale.

With *Art in America* I do not intend to copy the ideas found within the paintings used to create the collages. I am not attempting to recycle themes, motifs, and concepts used by others, but rather my collages are meant to stand in as copies of the act of painting itself (Figure 8), of creating a work, a stand in for remix that holds that the philosophy has not only redefined what it means to be an artist but also challenges what art constitutes. Remix aesthetics is the fulcrum on which my studio practices pivots. It is a tradition of thought for making art that qualifies the work using visual aspects such as principles of art and elements of design.

Remix exists as a way for the artist to transform through imitation. Often such work is merely regarded as a distorted form of an original production. However, I believe that transformations by copying allows new readings of comparable concepts. In his book *In Praise of Copying*, professor and journalist Marcus Boon explains that “the word ‘copying’ evokes images of gadgets, technologies of mechanical reproduction, or the masterly hand of the artist who is particularly skilled at producing reproductions.”¹³

These components and categories act as a set of instructions which the artist learns and is expected to master. Artists have been conditioned to such an extent using this methodology that even when depicting visceral and/or personal experiences they detach themselves from the subject matter in order to engage with the formal aspects of the work. The main goal of art, therefore, is discovering the best way in which one can represent a subject or idea. As such, art is representation, portrayal, and simulacra – *artifice*.

Digital Conflux

Sometimes I feel editing my painting concur lines in Photoshop. Feels like weeks and months in front of a painting, feeling the pain and breakdown in front of it. With Photoshop all these pains come quick and fast in a short period of time. Yet have the same effect of pain. However in a fast and overwhelm sensation.

~ Personal reflection on my studio practice, 2014

Virtual Wheatpastes (2013 - present) is an ongoing series of twelve digital works. They are created by first taking photographs of local St. Louis area neighborhoods and then photo-shopping my own works onto the sides of abandoned houses, neglected storefronts, and condemned buildings (Figure 9). The series explores my interests in the meanings and propaganda associated with street art, and with the works I hope to make correlations between ideas of temporality and permanence as they relate to real and virtual space in the post-digital age.

When I first arrived in St. Louis, I decided to set out to explore the many and varied areas of the city such as the Cherokee, Dogtown, The Grove, Tower Grove, East St. Louis, and MLK and Paige Street, North St. Louis. I am most drawn to the fact that St. Louis is considered in surveys to be one of the top 5 most dangerous cities in the United States with one of the highest murder rates.

I began the series by exploring for photographs. I take trips that result in around 200 photographs each. I aim to explore these neighborhoods alone in my vehicle with no sense of directions for my destination. I don't set many plans from where I'm headed other than that I

maybe want to explore a particular neighborhood that I've heard about in the news or rumored about in conversation.

I often study the newspapers to learn and understand the neighborhoods of St. Louis. For going on a year and a half, I have been exploring these areas as they are reported in the media as dangerous. I am relatively a tourist in this city, and coming from a small Iowa town, I am intrigued by the culture of the city which seems to be at odds with itself. Driving through St. Louis, I have noticed huge gaps in race and class that peppers the entire city, the neighborhoods seem to fold in and out of good and bad areas. For example, you can have a gated community merely three blocks away from project housing.

I set out on my journeys for these photographs early in the morning, between 6 and 8 am, depending on the sunrise. I start with no sense of direction when I drive and take photographs. I search for old buildings, places that once had lots of life and energy... the places that were once popular and could have represented vibrant culture. Each *Digital Wheatpaste* is derived from editing one of these photos by photo-shopping my own work on the sides of buildings featured in the photographs... like virtual graffiti (Figure 10). The work I use to virtually tag buildings is work that I myself would have once used to make real wheatpastes and stencils. In fact, the process of using my own photography (or specifically my photography practice itself) is similar to the one that street artists would use by scouting areas to find the perfect buildings to showcase the work.

By doing so, I hope to challenge how the audience frames their sense of space. Also exploring the gap between real and virtual space is the collective Re-Public. Consisting of BC Biermann, Jordan Seiler, and Ean Mering, the group is known for its mobile application which

“Digitally resurfaces walls and buildings in urban centers by overlaying digital content onto the physical environment (Figure 11).”¹⁴

The work of Re-Public explores conflicting ideas about property ownership as they relate not only the physical environment but also to virtual space (Figure 12). According to the group’s website, their work aims to challenge our sense of private property law and notions of ownership and access:

Through the Re+Public app, the mural comes alive in digital 3D, animation, and movie textures. Additionally, users can interact with the mural by touching either "production" or "beauty". This choice forms an anonymous data set, which could potentially develop into more intentional data sets with regard to how citizens interact with the urban space that surrounds them.¹⁵

In my opinion, the term public relates to an entire population or the majority of a community. It is often compared and contrasted to the term private, which relates to a single individual or a specific set of people with shared interests within a community. However, the actual meanings of these words and their definitions are complex, especially as they relate to the physical domain containing property and the virtual domain containing ideas. Figuring out what ideas or information should be public and private eventually becomes an issue on how ideas and information can be used and/or what ideas or information can be owned. This is especially true in a culture where most people feel entitled to receive information and to share the opinions they form, while at the same time placing a high value on their private and personal information.

How the artist understands the work is temporary maybe lasting hours or weeks versus the idea of virtual digital World Wide Web wheatpaste playing on the idea... the permanence of the internet (as they say everything posted on the internet will exist forever. For example, I will think of a word or idea of an event then I will search for an image of it using the internet then

make a redrawing of it. It is important for me to use the internet as it is -- open to the world, an endless access of references and discovery.

It is this communicative aspect that I try to incorporate in my own work, which is an expression and exploration of my own self-identity. The communication of thoughts and ideas, emotions and feelings are the reasons that art is so important. Without this aspect, art would be a lost cause. Art would be soulless, pointless, and without meaning. To quote Julian Sanchez:

"Remix isn't just about an individual doing something alone in his basement; it becomes an act of social creativity. And it's not just that it yields a different kind of product at the end, it's that potentially it changes the way that we relate to each other. All of our normal social interactions become a kind of invitation to this sort of collective expression. It's our real social lives themselves that are transmuted into art."¹⁶

Street art capitalizes on the heartbeat of what it means to make images. It is authentic because it functions outside of academic constraints. Artists who use this mode of expression are not completely limited by formulaic rules. In fact, I use my knowledge of these rules (formal painting techniques, elements of design, etc.) to place street art in the realm of fine art. I also do this by drawing parallels between street art and abstract expressionism, which capitalizes on a similar type of authenticity that street art does, i.e. the importance of communicating thoughts, feelings, and philosophical and political ideologies.

Remixing Self

I start by getting to know the canvas better, pondering its raw cloak surface. I work my way around it, prepared it in using a slow, passionate gesso progress with a 12 inch painters brush, allowing me time to get closer to the work, questioning my next move, how I will perform with it.

~ Personal reflection on my studio practice, 2014

My thesis project is a reflection of my studio practice. *Reference Complex* (2014) is a six by twelve foot permanent marker and acrylic drawing on unstretched canvas which has gone through cycles of being rolled and unrolled, painted and gessoed. I have created a crowded landscape with faces and figures, monsters, masks, sinister feelings in celebration of the divergent image (Figure 13). As such, the piece denies permanence and celebrates the bizarre unknown. I want the viewer to see references to the past and see the new way I depict it and transform the work.

As an artist I am influenced by the world turning around me. Asking everything about how and why humans exist. This helps me with the process of building and creating my own worlds. I often refer to my work as a melting pot of references. It is my personal description of the world. Reflecting this notion, *Reference Complex* is a puzzle of obscure allusions, asides, and annotations. I took inspiration from a multitude of sources including but not limited to prehistoric cave paintings, Greek vase painting, street art mark-making, and tattoo culture. The nature of the work also alludes to my old, home studio where I would paint murals on the walls.

I used the walls of my apartment as a foundation to gain a greater understanding of a drawing style unrestricted by academia. It was interior graffiti. It was a constantly evolving painting. I did multiple installation on the wall. Iterations and permutations of colors and shapes.

It is from the practice of drawing on walls that I developed the process of layering images. My apartment walls served as a sketchpad on which I would draw and paint after I came home from school or the local bar. Being next to the wall every second of being home allowed me to question the struggle of being an artist and fears of not being accepted by the art world.

Reference Complex is concentrated on a large male figure wearing a round pair of spherical glasses, smoking a joint, and shooting up with a needle. He is accompanied by a conjoined, three-eyed woman and a pestered by a hummingbird. The image is a reference to Grant Wood's *American Gothic* (1930) (Figure 14). Evoking thoughts of Americana and serving as a pictorial example of the rural heritage of the United States, Wood's painting is considered one of the most recognizable and popular paintings of the 20th century (Figure 15)¹⁷ By reworking this iconic image with my own graphic style, I am attempting to make connotations about how the American landscape has changed since the golden age of the early 20th century. My image is referencing how remix culture – as a self-referencing and post-digital ideology – has reshaped popular culture.

My process for creating the project can be described as follows: After collecting hundreds of reference images from books and magazines, I scanned each one and digitally edited them in Photoshop. Exploring the possibility of making it less complex or more complex, I then printed the images and collaged them. I used the collage as a starting point to map my composition to the canvas. I then projected each images on the canvas at different time so that each images was projected separately. This allowed me to create a new sense of shapes by exploring overlapping lines and transparency.

It is an image that can be read with its overlaps and overlays. As such, it acts as a compound narrative, a single work that tries to say everything and nothing at once. Fractured

identities manifest themselves in the painting as smiling/grimacing faces overlaid as a series of outlined, distorted caricatures that work with and against each other. Meaning of the piece lies in my own reflections of the world around me...Creating something that fulfills my need to occupy space. Something evidenced by horror vacui.

Reference Complex is a free association landscape of hybrid animal humans, humans wearing animal masks, faces, chaos, crowds... *Horror vacui, mythological dinosaurs, hands. Fists, arms grasping hands, teeth and eyes, medicine men. Child, self. Santa Claus smoking a blunt. Walking bomb, flying bullets, balloons; Children toys, rocking horse, and a wind-up car. Skulls and drama.* I want the viewer to feel somewhat nervous with all the eyes looking at them, threatening them, giving judgment. Beware of all the teeth.

Conclusion

I am interested in remix not only as an artistic method but also as a technique that allows me to question and explore social schemas. My practice, therefore, is a melting pot of styles and themes. I use reproductions of Albrecht Durer prints as the contextual background and conceptual springboard to explore my own mythology surrounding identity and persona. I decontextualize the contemporary art world by cutting apart and pasting together the works of up-and-coming painters and printmakers. I generate graffiti in photographs taken of derelict St. Louis neighborhoods as a way to engage notions of real and virtual space. And within my thesis, I reference my own use of remix culture as a way to survey my practice as a byproduct of the post-digital, hipster generation.

My thesis combines the meanings and propaganda of remix with formal aspects of abstract expressionism, minimalism, and street art. I deconstruct and incorporate the communicative aspects of these disciplines into my own work as a method to explore distorted identities – both my own and those of others. Expression of gesture and manifestations of graphic line used within the work acts as a mode of creating and disseminating messages which I hope place my audience in a space of being not only in the world but of being part of a black and white landscape in which they may not fully belong.

The way in which I collage and overlay illustrations and apply paint are demonstrations of my philosophy. They are the standards that adhere to my messages of the higher conscious of self-investigation and of my reflections of art history – placing remix in the parameters of fine art and placing fine art in the parameters of remix to better explain myself to the world.

Notes

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- ⁹ "Musée d'Orsay: Max Ernst, 'Une Semaine de Bonté' — the Original Collages." 2014. Accessed April 22. [http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/events/exhibitions/in-the-musee-dorsay/exhibitions-in-the-musee-dorsay-more/article/the-collages-of-max-ernst-20799.html?tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=649&cHash=89c5689e41](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/events/exhibitions/in-the-musee-dorsay/exhibitions-in-the-musee-dorsay-more/article/the-collages-of-max-ernst-20799.html?tx_ttnews[backPid]=649&cHash=89c5689e41).
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- ¹¹ "Musée d'Orsay: Max Ernst, 'Une Semaine de Bonté'"
- ¹² "Oral History Interview with Bruce Conner, 1974 Aug. 12 - Oral Histories | Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution." 2014. Accessed April 22. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-bruce-conner-12989>.
- ¹³ Boon, Marcus. *In Praise of Copying*. Harvard University Press, 2010. 84.
- ¹⁴ "Re+Public - About." 2014. Accessed April 22. <http://www.republiclab.com/about>.
- ¹⁵ "Re+Public - About."
- ¹⁶ "Transcript of 'Re-Examining the Remix.'" Accessed April 8, 2014. http://www.ted.com/talks/lessig_nyed.
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Illustrations



Figure 1

Joshua Cornelis, *Dialogue with Durer, No. 5* (2012), collage, 8" x 10".



Figure 2

Joshua Cornelis, *Dialogue with Durer, No. 5* (2012), collage, 8" x 10".



Figure 3

Joshua Cornelis, *Dialogue with Durer, No. 5* (2012), collage, 8" x 10".



Figure 4

Max Ernst, "The Court of the Dragon 7," collage illustration from *Une semaine de bonté* (1933)



Figure 5

Bruce Conner, *Christ Casting out the Legion of Devils* (1987), 104.5" x 115".



Figure 6

Joshua Cornelis, *Art in America No. 1* (2012), collage 8" x 10".



Figure 7

Joshua Cornelis, *Art in America No. 32* (2013), collage, 8" x 10".



Figure 8

Joshua Cornelis, *Art in America No. 41* (2014), collage, 8" x 10".



Figure 9

Joshua Cornelis, "*Sara-Lou's*" (2013), Digital Wheatpastes, digital collage.



Figure 10

Joshua Cornelis "*Delmar*" (2014), Digital Wheatpastes, digital collage.



Figure 11

Re+Public, photograph detailing the commissioned mural
And the associated mobile application created for the SXSW Festival



Figure 12

Re+Public, photograph detailing commissioned work and mobile application
For the Grand Center, St. Louis, Missouri.



Figure 13

Joshua Cornelis, process photograph of *Reference Complex* (2014), acrylic and permanent marker on canvas, 6'x12'.

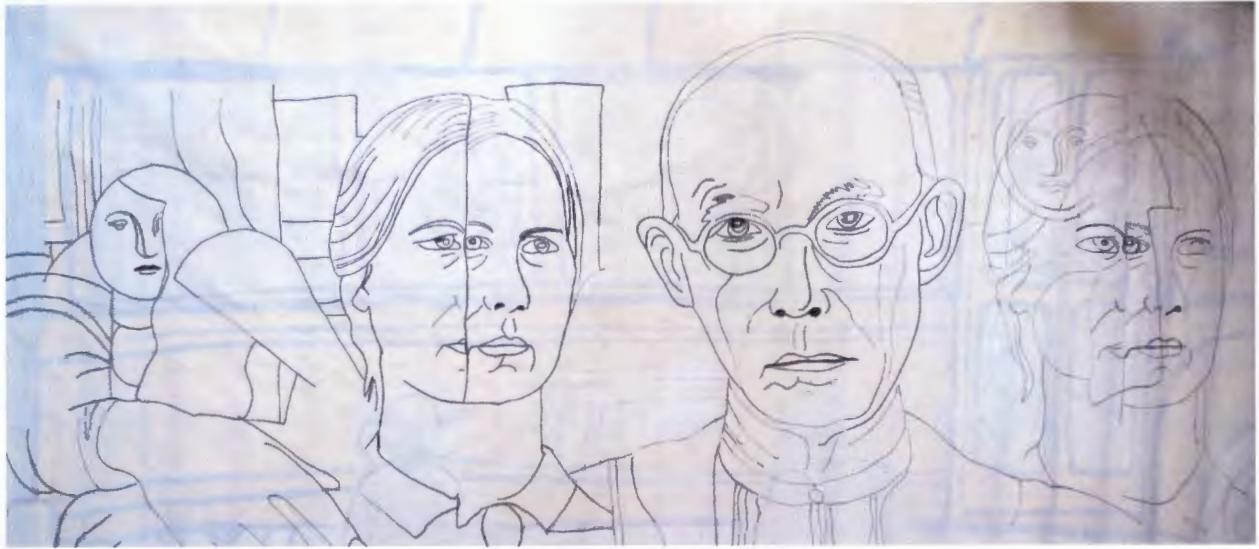


Figure 14

Joshua Cornelis, process photograph of *Reference Complex* (2014), acrylic and permanent marker on canvas, 6'x12'



Figure 15

Grant Wood, *American Gothic* (1930), painting, 29¼" × 24½"

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Bruce Conner, *Christ Casting out the Legion of Devils* (1987), 104.5" x 115". *Magnolia Editions*. <http://www.magnoliaeditions.com/artworks/christ-casting-out-the-legion-of-devils/> (accessed March 30, 2014).

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Re+Public, photograph detailing the commissioned mural and the associated mobile application created for the SXSW Festival. *Re+Public: Re+Imagining Image Space*. <http://www.republiclab.com/projects> (accessed April 20, 2014).

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Re+Public, photograph detailing commissioned work and mobile application for the Grand Center, St. Louis, Missouri. *Re+Public: Re+Imagining Image Space*. <http://www.republiclab.com/projects> (accessed April 20, 2014).

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Grant Wood, *American Gothic* (1930), oil on beaverboard, 29¼" × 24½". Wikimedia Commons. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cc/Grant_Wood_-_American_Gothic_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg (Accessed April 16, 2014).

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