The Counter Feats of Elaine Sturtevant (1924-2014)
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Image 1. Elaine Sturtevant, Felix Gonzalez Torres AMERICA AMERICA, 2004

Photo: ©Pierre Antoine

Light bulbs, rubber light sockets and cords, 12 parts, 20 m with 7.5 m extra cord each.
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris © Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris/ARC 2010. Photo: Pierre Antoine

1   "Works of art are supposed to be timeless and immutable, but as decades pass, they may also change unrecognizably", writes Robert Rosenblum in *Modern American Art* (170). Reflecting on his long relationship with the work of Frank Stella, the American critic who accompanied so much of the art of the 20th century here questions the time necessary to adequately comprehend art which is contemporary to us, and shares his sense that some of a work's future needs to be experienced in order to look at it fully. How thinking changes seeing, how material sameness can be alloyed to cognitive difference are questions that constitute the very essence of the work of Elaine Sturtevant, an artist who was born in Ohio in 1925 and who died in Paris in 2014. Her case is so extreme, or quasi theoretical, that Sturtevant (as she preferred to be named) could be a protagonist out of Borges, or the embodiment of a conceit by Baudrillard or Barthes. Her work is a challenge for intericonographic studies as it consists in literally redoing that of her contemporaries—in the 1960s a silkscreen painting by Andy Warhol, more recently an installation by Felix Gonzalez-Torres (Images 1 and 4)—remaking them with no apparent differences. Although in the 1980s her work was reassessed within the then-flourishing genre of Appropriation Art, few American museums have dared to purchase her works, unlike those of fellow Appropriationists[1]. The present article examines the case of this marginal artist by first considering the historical practice of the copy, a practice whose exasperation she anticipates, then highlighting the determinations of Sturtevant's repetitions and finally endeavoring to situate the latter's œuvre within the debate on intericonography.

1. In the beginning was the copy

2   In classical Antiquity, a legend, relayed to us by Pliny the Elder, relates the origin of drawing and painting to a young woman whose example in turn inspired her father to invent clay

modelling. The maiden of Corinth traced on a wall the outline of a young man projected there by sunlight or by the light of a candle; she could thus continue to behold the profile of her lover when he would leave for war. Implicit here is the notion of mimesis essential to Western visual tradition: copying direct from the model, copying from nature. In specifically American terms, this is a movement in which the hand follows perhaps that of the supreme artist; "His undefiled works" being the way Thomas Cole, the fabled "American boy" of 1825, spoke of the landscapes of the Hudson River Valley which the adamic American artist attempted to reproduce (Bjelajac 197, 193). The idea of the copy therefore comes from this essential although problematic notion of Nature as model and perhaps that of Nature's God as teacher. From the outstart, the image would seem to involve a double— although the arithmetic proves to be more complex. As a prelude to Sturtevant, let us therefore propose and examine carefully the unfolding of a sequence: artists copy, artists appropriate, culture appropriates, mass culture massively appropriates appropriations.

1.1. Artists copy

3 Artists copy perhaps in the holistic and programmed manner of children. Copying is learning from the inside; in this way, the artist learns gesture, technique, the plasticity of paint and of materials. In a drawing class, for instance, one copies and recopies the (fe)male nude in clay, in pencil, in pen and ink, in charcoal, on various grains of paper; and through repetition, one's body learns the requisite breathing, gestures, movement, sequence, and choreography. During the Renaissance, an artist was required to reproduce certain themes like the Annunciation, the Nativity, or Christ in Majesty (Baxandall)[2]. Early in their career, medieval and Renaissance artists copied and recopied specific motifs, many of which (the nape of a neck, a fold in a robe…) were learnt from style manuals. Styles, in the larger sense of the word, were also learnt or picked up by emulation—thus with Mannerism (still a new style without a name) at the time of Michelangelo. A distinction can be made between the formal period of apprenticeship (Leonardo, for instance, working in the workshop of Verrocchio) and the continuous learning-by-copying process (Michelangelo visiting the Brancacci chapel to copy Masaccio). We know what Michelangelo made of Masaccio's *Adam and Eve*; we are still discovering other remakes such as that in beads by American artist Liza Lou (*The Damned*, 2004, image 2).

Image 2. Liza Lou, *The Damned*, 2004

Resin, steel, and glass beads, 218.44 x 106.68 x 78.74 cm.
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris /Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris

4   Artists copy the great masters. For centuries, artists would set up their easel and copy at museums; they can still do so every morning at the Louvre; visiting the Prado, one might see someone replicating a Velasquez (and one's eye might be caught by the play of lances and bayonets between the original and a copy of the *Surrender of Breda*). James Elkins today takes his students to the Art of Institute of Chicago to understand Monet, Corot and Pollock. To understand Monet, he claims, you have to try to replicate the brushstrokes so that they have the requisite variety and omnidirectionality in order to prevent them from slurring or blurring (Elkins 9-19)—looking and learning, we might say, to put it simply. But it is not simple, in fact; for, in order to see, it is not enough to look, you need to do. This is one of the lessons of Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* where the eponymous artist is but one of the characters who needs to perform in order to measure and see the immensity of 9/11 (Phelan "Performing Man" 162-170).

1.2. Artists appropriate

5   Artists appropriate, artists borrow. Picasso, for instance, borrowed from almost everybody: Chardin, Corot, Courbet, Cranach, El Greco, Goya, Ingres... Thomas Hart Benton borrowed from Mannerism; and his pupil Pollock borrowed from Picasso. But to become Pollock, the latter stopped making Picassos and his "signature style" began. In a similar fashion, Newman borrowed and stole from Mondrian, until he declared his own identity in front of *Onement One* (1948) with the signature zip. Rothko borrowed from Matisse, not just the color, but what we might call the space around the painting (Phelan *Questionnement du cadre* 90). Closer to us, Sean Scully has borrowed both from Rothko and Stella, rehumanizing Minimalism, as it were. The key notion with appropriation is thus one of transformation, a paradoxical uniqueness which proceeds from copying. The form is repeated, but the feeling is different and new; such is the purport of T.S. Eliot's famous "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal [...]. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique" (Eliot 125).

1.3. Culture appropriates

6   Culture appropriates. We must recall that visual artists copy not just from each other, but from other types of imagery, such as photographs, whose framing solutions empowered Degas and then Hopper; and Hopper too borrowed greatly from cinema images. Basquiat devoured Gray's *Anatomy* but was not the only artist to take from medical imagery, as others from advertising, comic books, television, or video games... Culture in general might be described as a great chain of appropriation, provided we think of this process not as coldly intellectual, but as an emotional sequence internal to cultural history: artists only redo works which move them sufficiently, as Sylvie Coëllier points out (96). Writers appropriate pictures; we call this *ekphrasis*; in *Musée des Beaux-Arts*, W.H. Auden famously writes after Brueghel. Publishers too appropriate pictures: Jo Hopper might be called "the face that launched a thousand books". Just as film appropriates painting (see Pasolini for instance), visual art appropriates film (Douglas Gordon, for instance, makes a *24-Hour Psycho*). Fashion appropriates visual art: Yves Saint Laurent's Mondrian dress is a stunning instance of creative transposition which Bertrand Bonello attempts to retransform by splitting the screen in his *Saint Laurent* (2014). Shop design appropriates museum design. In this vast chain, even artist names are appropriated[3].

1.4. Mass culture appropriates massively

7   If culture then is a vast process of appropriation, we might go on to say that mass culture is the process of (massively) appropriating appropriations. The age of digitalization has increasingly facilitated borrowing, recycling, and remixing; information technology has generalized sampling, photoshopping, copying and pasting. *Warhol* today has become a verb, a facile computer option. Although she did not use digital technologies, the practices of Sturtevant anticipated our world; she practised its model, as it were, before it became our currency. The turn of the 21st century framed her ideas in a new cogency; Harvard, in 1999, was the theatre of a statement/performance entitled "Copy without Origins: Self as Disappearance" (Sturtevant 127)[4]. In *Artforum*, she welcomed "our pervasive cybernetic mode which pushes creativity outside the self", asserting to Bruce Hainley in 2003: "Remake re-use reassemble recombine that's the way to go!" (278). Any questioning of intericonography cannot thus ignore an artist who, referring to her remake of Duchamp's replay of Cranach's *Adam and Eve* (image 3), had the verve to write "Original Sin is not Original" (185).

Image 3. *Duchamp Relâche*, **1967**

Elaine Sturtevant, (Robert Rauschenberg and Elaine Sturtevant in)
Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris

2. This is not what you think, it is what you will think

8   Although represented by a major Parisian gallery and the recipient of a Venice award for her lifetime achievement in 2011, Elaine Sturtevant still remained a marginal figure at the time of her death in 2014. Her work warrants therefore a brief general presentation. The artist emerged in 1965 when she redid the only-month-old *Flower Painting* by Andy Warhol (an image which Warhol had himself appropriated from a Kodak advertisement). "Between 1965 and 1975", as Rosenblum informs us, she did "nine solo shows and participated in nearly a dozen group shows" (310)[5]. She repeated works by her contemporaries Jasper Johns, George Segal, Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, and Frank Stella. She re-enacted *Various Beuys Actions* and she remade Claes Oldenburg's *The Store*. The latter— seven blocks away from and five years or so after the original (December 1961 to January 1962)—was badly received; and her consistent take on Castelli artists (Johns, Rosenquist, Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, Warhol and Stella) met with ostracism from the art establishment. Rauschenberg, however, supported her and Warhol seems to have found her amusing; he

lent her a silkscreen for her flower paintings; she participated, as it were, in his strategy of impersonality. When questioned about his technique, Warhol famously quipped "Ask Elaine"[6]. Sturtevant withdrew from circulation in the mid-1970s to reappear first in a group show in 1985 and then in a solo show in 1986. This 1986 "White Columns" show included recent pieces from the 1970s and 1980s as well as her earlier work. At this time she was heralded as belonging to Appropriation Art ("the first postmodernist intruder on the American scene", said the press release[7]) and as the precursor of the kind of work then being produced by Sherrie Levine, Martha Rosler, Louise Lawler, Philip Taaffe, Richard Prince and Richard Pettibone. Rosenblum's brief essay dates from 1987. In the 1980s, while continuing to do remakes of Duchamp, Stella and Warhol, she extended her repertoire to contemporaries like Keith Haring, and, in the 1990s, to Anselm Kiefer, Robert Gober and Cuban-born American installation artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres (image 4). In her final years, she created installations combining her own film material and images from the mass media. In the last decade, she has been the object of major exhibitions in Frankfurt, at MIT (*The Brutal Truth*), in London, and in Venice. *The Razzle Dazzle of Thinking* was shown at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris in 2010; one of her last shows, which closed in Zurich in 2013, was aptly titled *Image over Image*.

Image 4. Elaine Sturtevant, Gonzalez-Torres Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform), 2004

Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris. Photo: Axel Schneider, Frankfurt am Main.

10   We now need to ask what determined Sturtevant's choice of originals, a process which the artist deemed unconscious and intuitive (Sturtevant 269). With one notable exception (that of Yvonne Rainer, a dancer at the Judson school), her models are male—a point to which we will return. Secondly, they are all her contemporaries (as, arguably, was Duchamp in 1967). Thirdly, some of them such as Warhol and Stella can be considered as major figures in the canon of American modern art as it was to be institutionalized by the MoMA or documented by Irving Sandler. The financial and political *Triumph of American Art* was the dizzy birthright of artists emerging in the 1960s (Sandler *L'École de New York* 102-114). Moreover, in targeting

the Castelli "stable", Sturtevant was aiming at the very system of the 1960s art world, its "understructure" (Sturtevant 267); Anne Cauquelin, for instance, in her analysis of that world, places Castelli as the third player in a game set by Warhol and Duchamp (Cauquelin 90).

11   Duchamp was one of the driving forces behind the artists who wished to remove themselves from the abstraction of Pollock or De Kooning, a force that, as described by Sandler (*Les années soixante* 139; *L'École de New York* 359), was relayed by of John Cage. In this way, Duchamp determined much of the thinking after Rauschenberg and Johns (Sandler *L'École de New York* 146). His contribution, to borrow terms from Rosenblum, was to place the cursor between the eye and the mind firmly towards the latter (252). Reduction, minimal intervention, depersonalization—these are his legacy. Art is, in essence, an idea. Sturtevant relishes Duchamp's use of what is already there and his questioning of authorship. Unlike Duchamp, she remade what she found, of course; but we should recall that in fact many of Duchamp's early readymades were later replicated by the artist. In Duchamp, Sturtevant loves the balance of action and inaction, of doing and not doing. Duchamp is defined by what he did not do, she asserts: "What Duchamp did not do, not what he did—which is what he did, locates the dynamics of his work" (Sturtevant 164). Likewise, not doing her "own" work may be said to define Sturtevant.

12   Warhol too purports to do as little as possible, taking images already given in satiety by 20th-century society. Perceiving the iconic power of signposts, soda bottles or soup cans, he repeats them, not once but several times; then he repeats his repetitions, literally like wallpaper. (In his essay, "L'art, cette vieille chose...", Barthes identified repetition as the key structure of Pop Art.) Starting too with a banal object, Warhol's work has taken some of the power of Duchamp's and might already be considered a precursor of Appropriation Art. Further reiterating images appropriated from advertising, comic books, newspapers and photographs, Sturtevant's cover versions of Warhol endorse the latter's subjugating iconic power (Sturtevant 288). The process is the same with Lichtenstein and it is hardly surprising that the artist zones in on an equally iconic power to be found in Frank Stella's shaped canvases. She comments thus on the retinal force of Stella: "[what is] always at stake is pushing the silent power of art to create a hovering force and energy that leave the spectator rocking and reeling" (Sturtevant 279). But when Sturtevant redoes Stella, what you see is not what you see. It is what you think.

13   Thinking rather than seeing is at the center of Sturtevant's art drive. By authorizing herself to redo a work, she seeks to empower the viewer to think. Power and thought are pivotal, indeed reversible for her. And like the Appropriationists, she sees culture as a manifestation of power, a power that Allan McCollum "framed" in his installations and that Louise Lawler exposed in *her* Stellas (Phelan *Questionnement du cadre* 187-196). In the 1960s, the American art world had indeed become an international locus of immense financial power; thus, to Castelli and to the power of money, Sturtevant constantly opposed the power of thinking. To the macho and patriarchal power of the art establishment and the macho thrust of Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism, she responded with the counter force of her own patronym (she said: "I like to use 'Sturtevant' because it's a strong powerful name[8]. I don't like to use 'Elaine' not because I dislike the name itself but because it's an interfering reference"*, 269)*. In choosing works of strong iconic impact, moreover, Sturtevant does not forget that the icon, from its religious origins to its current secular use, has always been, through its intercession with superior forces, a means of empowerment (Phelan "From Apartheid to Aids").

14   Whether she reuses a *Target* painting by Johns, a *Marilyn* by Warhol, a *Black Painting* by Stella, or an assisted readymade by Duchamp, what she seeks is to remove the viewer from the visual to the conceptual. She wants feat and counter feat to produce thought. For Sturtevant, the thrust of the work is to engender thinking, to create discourse; "to push articulation against visibilities" (Sturtevant 269); to give power to thought. She may thus be considered as a conceptual artist. "[T]he spectator's attention is not held by the internal relations or surface of the object but by its conceptual identity", Belinda Bowring analyses, concluding astutely that Sturtevant "revisits the prospects the work conjured at their point of conception" (in Sturtevant 231). Just as in front of the enactment of a piece by Sol LeWitt we are constantly returned to

the work's conception, we are returned by Sturtevant to the original power of the work that she repeats: "the comeback she stages is that of the initial encounter with the object and the power contained within that moment" (Bowring in Sturtevant 234). She returns us, in short, to the future opened by the piece.

3. The future is always already present

15   In redoing artworks, Sturtevant is saying: look at them again, look at them anew. Look at them as objects living and moving in time. Do you recognize them? Have you really acknowledged their power? Do you really see what is behind them? Do you see what is in front of them? Do you fully see, for instance, the future opened by Warhol? Do you see the presence of his work?

16   Sturtevant's work has not been institutionalized in the USA; whereas Richard Pettibone, for instance, has works at the MoMA, she does not. Perhaps the reason for this is that, unlike the Appropriationists, she does not reframe the original work, or remake it in another medium. Perhaps her reception was complicated too because her temporal displacement is often slight: she did her first Warhols only a few months after their initial exhibition and her actions after Joseph Beuys with a similarly short time-lag; her Kiefer airplane appeared just six months after the original. She repeated Gonzalez-Torres (image 4) too before he had been accepted and digested by the art institution. Therefore it would be inexact to say that she was simply recreating the canon.

17   Sturtevant starts out to replicate. In an interview to *artpress* in 1998, for instance, she insists: "the source works have to have the immediate appearance of the original. That's imperative. You need the impact of immediate identity and the repetition in order for the works to function as catalysis" (Sturtevant 290). Working from memory, she attempts to internalize the process of production, in order to end up "coming out in the same place" (282). But she doesn't quite do so. Viewers are forced to observe the work in order to check for small differences. Sometimes these are exposed by Sturtevant herself: she admits for instance to not getting the nose of the Kiefer plane right. She does not however always attempt to replicate exactly. Her 1965 Segal is generic: a Segal rather than a specific sculpture by Segal. Her retake on Paul McCarthy's *The Painter*, a spoof on De Kooning, differs considerably. In the case of *Lichtenstein Crying Girl* she changed the medium—hers is a single painting, Lichtenstein's a set of prints.

18   A possible genre, in fact, through which to consider Sturtevant is that of *performance*. Her work is not counterfeit, but counter feat and each work is a feat of replication. She speaks in particular about the difficulty of doing the Stellas (269). In her repetitions, it could be argued, she performs a voluntary self-effacement just as early performers (Burden, Acconci, Pane) highlighted their own mortality. Her withdrawal in the 1970s can be framed as a replay of Duchamp's retreat. Moreover, her later work consisted for a large part in written text to be performed orally.

Image 5. Installation view with Johns, Warhol and Gonzalez-Torres

Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris. Photo: Axel Schneider, Frankfurt am Main.

19   Ultimately, perhaps the unit which Sturtevant composes is not that of the painting but that of the exhibition. That may be, in the final analysis, her signature unit, for that is the level at which she transforms and transcends the work she repeats. The 1965 Bianchini show was a unique *composition* of a Warhol *Flowers*, a Johns *Flag*, an Oldenburg shirt, a Rauschenberg drawing, a Stella concentric painting and a Rosenquist; her Paris remake a year later further encased these works as one unit since the show was only visible from the outside (Sturtevant 282). Moreover, she has repeatedly referred to the *energy* of the White Columns show ("in 1986 we produced a show of high intensity and polemics and bounced in all directions", 278). In Frankfurt she replaced the entire collection of the museum; reflecting on the experience of working with Udo Kittelmann at the MMK (Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt), she noted: "it was not about the object—it was about a totality. It was vastly beautiful and it was about thinking" (Sturtevant 265). We can even take this line of analysis to a higher level: she produces not a work but a show, and not a show but a lifework. "One of the powerful things about the MMK show was that it showed the thread running through my work from 1965 to now. I think you have to have continuity to give work any power" (269). The performance of her lifework might thus have been her true unit of intervention, her originality.

20   Although the fact that she continued to do Warhols and Stellas for forty years altered the original equation, initially the count would seem to have been rather low when her production is examined for the three dynamic dimensions of intericonicity—historicity, spatial mobility, and plasticity[9]. What is left is the additional dimension of agency, of internal power in the sense referred to by W.J.T. Mitchell in *What Do Pictures Want?*. Perhaps they want to be reproduced, to engender more pictures; they *want* to be enlisted, to be enchained in the vast chain of appropriation we call culture.

21   Our gaze on artworks (as well as our inability to see them) is produced by the accumulation and decantation of history, by the production of discourse, and also by the production of other works. Installation art like that of Gonzalez-Torres enabled us to see Minimalism more fully; and Jeff Koons has allowed us to better perceive the achievements of Andy Warhol. The future of an image is, as it were, contained within the image because, as we look at that image, some of its future is already our present, and some of it our past. While remaining materially the same, works of art change unrecognizably with time, as Rosenblum noted. New works change old works; they make them work better, we might say.

22 The image, as we argued in the introduction, is permanently engaged in this practice of intericonicity, engaged with images of the past, images of its own gestation, but also images in its future. Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* was always already, as it were, engaged in dialogue with variations by Warhol and Mel Ramos just as the Mona Lisa was already smiling tongue-in-cheek at Duchamp, Warhol and Basquiat. The very structure of art, after all, can be defined in terms of repetition: one of the least unsatisfactory definitions of art, for the present author, is the one that defines the work of art as an address that says: consider this canvas as you have considered the Gioconda; take this (*voici*) or see this (*vois ceci*) as you saw Rembrandt; contemplate this on-site work as you did Bierstadt, Cole or Church. If, as Jerrold Levinson would have it, art is an endless series of applications for esthetic consideration, then each applicant calls upon a predecessor and is called upon in turn, and such a recruitment process necessarily involves an eye attuned to iconic interplay.

23 Elaine Sturtevant reduces this substitutive structure to what might seem to be a parody. Her own work may in the process be forgotten, it may not inscribe her name in any historical chain of nomination (although she has maliciously squatted that very chain in her naming process, literally placing her name next to others: Sturtevant, *Warhol Flowers*, Sturtevant *Lichtenstein Crying Girl*, etc.). Her late performances attest to the fact that thought and language have seemed to be her essential energies; and, had she moved to France in time, Roland Barthes might have said that the work of Sturtevant is a "text". If so, it is a text which "crackles and grates" more than it "caresses or granulates" to use his terms; it is a text about intericonicity, a text which is extreme, violent and indeed somewhat obtuse ("très fuck-you" to use her terms[10]).

24 It was to be hoped that the effect of the MoMA show, her first in the USA since 1990, would be to return us to the materiality of her work, its resistance. This thingness (Sturtevant was not, she decided, a conceptual artist after all[11]) might serve as a dynamic energy to counterpoise her performed discourse, to anchor her intericonography, and to stabilize her writing of images over images. However, completing this article in February 2015 after the show has just closed, it is time to acknowledge that the reception of the MoMA retrospective has been mixed—scathing in The New Yorker, skeptical in *Artforum*, more appreciative in the Washington Post—and that this post-mortem performance in the site of canonizations has not yet borne great fruit. The present author did not get to see the show, so cannot testify to whether his hypothesis as to the resurgence of the œuvre's "thingness" has proved to have any validity. He remains in two minds, wondering still if Sturtevant is not just a humorous eccentric and whether the ideas her work has produced, however pleasurable and diverting, are not merely academic.

4. Counter Conclusion

25 Artists copy, artists appropriate, culture appropriates, mass culture appropriates appropriations... massively. Or so we said. What if the starting point—*artists copy*—were a paradox? What, indeed, if making images *after* images came from the desire to see images *before* images? "L'homme est un regard désirant qui cherche une autre image derrière tout ce qu'il voit", Pascal Quignard writes (9); the French writer is here relating the impulse to seek another image behind every image to a scene concealed within the human subject, a scene invisible to that subject as it is the scene in which the subject itself was conceived. What then if our inception, or derivation, of new images from old images sprang from this sexually-fuelled quest for images *behind* images?

26 In order to see, DeLillo taught us, we need to do. What if *images behind images* could be glimpsed, or somehow revealed to the body, in the action of doing *after*? If that were so, Sturtevant's performance of her counter feats might then willingly or unwittingly be a form of doing-as-seeing transmitted to us, paradoxically, as an idea. Through this idea, if we enact it in turn, the awesome quest evoked by Quignard might momentarily be appeased while being relaunched, as the American artist would phrase it in her jocose upstart manner, in "leaps and bumps and jumps" (Sturtevant 290).

27 Perhaps that last hypothesis holds. It enables us for now to see Warhol and Stella, Rauschenberg and Lichtenstein, Johns and Beuys *et alii* as the all-star cast in variations of a

primal scene where Elaine Frances Horan from Lakewood Ohio is always and ever, in raucous rehearsal, becoming *Stur-te-vant*.

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List of images

Image 1. Elaine Sturtevant, *Felix Gonzalez Torres AMERICA AMERICA*, 2004. Light bulbs, rubber light sockets and cords, 12 parts, 20 m with 7.5 m extra cord each. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris © Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris/ARC 2010. Photo: Pierre Antoine

Image 2. Liza Lou, *The Damned*, 2004. Resin, steel, and glass beads, 218.44 x 106.68 x 78.74 cm. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris

Image 3. Elaine Sturtevant, (Robert Rauschenberg and Elaine Sturtevant in) *Duchamp Relâche*, 1967. Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris

Image 4. Elaine Sturtevant, *Gonzalez-Torres Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform)*, 2004. Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris. Photo: Axel Schneider, Frankfurt am Main.

Image 5. Installation view with Johns, Warhol and Gonzalez-Torres. Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg and Estate Sturtevant, Paris. Photo: Axel Schneider, Frankfurt am Main.

Other resources

To view images by Elaine Sturtevant, see the following web sites:
http://ropac.net/selected_works/sturtevant-estate
http://slash-paris.com/evenements/sturtevant-reloaded
http://www.modernamuseet.se/en/Stockholm/Exhibitions/2012/Sturtevant/

Link to the MoMA exhibit "Sturtevant: Double Trouble" (Nov. 2014 to Feb. 2015): http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1497

Notes

1 At the time of writing this article, the MoMA in New York has however programmed an exhibition (running from November 2014 to February 2015).

2 Baxandall tells us how the viewer too learned to mentally construct these scenes.

3 See for instance: https://es-es.facebook.com/hitchcafe Web. 15 September 2014.

4 Unless otherwise specified, all further quotations from Sturtevant come from the compilation *The Razzle Dazzle of Thinking*.

5 It was in fact through Rosenblum that the present author discovered Sturtevant.

6   http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/17/arts/design/elaine-sturtevant-appropriation-artist-is-dead-at-89.html?_r=0 Web. 8 May 2015.

7 http://whitecolumns.org/archive/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/83 Web. 15 September 2014.

8 "*Stur-te-vant*. It's so strong", she said in an interview published on the eve of her death. http://www.wmagazine.com/people/2014/05/sturtevant-moma-retrospective/photos/ Web. 15 September 2014.

9 See the introduction to this issue by Mathilde Arrivé, "L'Intelligence des images – l'intericonicité, méthodes et enjeux".

10 From Sturtevant's play *Spinoza in Las Vegas* (2008), quoted by Vanessa Desclaux in http://metropolism.com/magazine/2010-no1/sturtevant-1/english. Web. 15 September 2014.

11 So she concludes after her residence at MIT because she admits to making objects (Sturtevant 69).

Pour citer cet article

Référence électronique

À propos de l'auteur

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Richard Phelan is Senior Lecturer in American Studies at Aix-Marseille Université where, as a member of the LERMA Research Laboratory (EA 853), he is co-organizer of a seminar on visual images. His research concerns the parameters of their creation and circulation. Rothko, theatre, performance, public art, contemporary icons—these are some of his topics.

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Droits d'auteur

Résumés

This article explores the work of Elaine Sturtevant whose œuvre is entirely composed of images borrowed or copied from other artists. From her first *Warhol Flowers* in 1965 to her late text performances, Sturtevant belligerently used iconic images by other artists trying not to make them different, but the same. In advance of the Appropriationists, whose critical fortune gave a new perspective on her pursuits, Sturtevant questioned originality and authorship; her actions shifted the material objects she crafted towards image as idea, image as discourse. From Duchamp to Stella to Gonzalez-Torres, Sturtevant's choice of targets will be examined. Offering a radical case for intericonographic studies, Sturtevant displaces their focus towards the agency of the image and forces us to reconsider the practice of the copy, whose exacerbated status in our culture she anticipated.

Elaine Sturtevant, née aux États-Unis en 1925 et décédée en 2014 à Paris, a passé sa carrière d'artiste à répéter les œuvres des autres : Warhol, Johns, Stella, Duchamp, Gonzalez-Torres... Elle n'a pas cherché à s'en différencier, au contraire. Son travail obstiné (reconnu quand l'art de l'appropriation est devenu un genre florissant dans les années 1980) a questionné l'originalité et la notion d'auteur ; elle a fait glisser ses objets soigneusement fabriqués vers le conceptuel et le discursif. Elle représente pour les études sur l'intericonicité un cas radical déplaçant l'enjeu vers l'efficacité ou la puissance propre de l'image (son *agency*). Elle remet en cause la pratique culturelle des copies, dont elle a anticipé et exacerbé la prédominance.

Entrées d'index

Mots-clés : appropriation, copie, temps, Duchamp, Stella, Sturtevant, Warhol, performance, installation
Keywords : appropriation, copy, time, Duchamp, Stella, Sturtevant, Warhol, performance, installation