

Ethical Concerns in the Electronic Age: The Appropriated Image

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Abstract

Access to worldwide images is ever-increasing. Acquisition of imagery, particularly digital imagery holds little or no geographic or cultural barrier. Artists utilizing appropriated images engage in an ethical arena supported by cultural discourse. In our paper, we examine questions of authorship, copyright and the ethical implications of an artist's use of appropriated imagery. How can the intent of an artist or artwork transform interpretation of an appropriated image? How far must an image be transformed to avoid copyright infringement? In our technological environment, is copyright becoming obsolete? With art historical references and contemporary case law examples, comparisons are made between varying ideas of authorship and originality in an attempt to provide additional discourse on a complex topic.