

**Lesson Title:** Richard Prince, Aesthetics, and the Value of Information

**Developed by:** Amanda Meeks

**Overview:** This lesson was developed for a Photography course on the theory and psychology of photography (non-majors and majors both take this course). This lesson was presented during a section on the aesthetics of photography. It was meant to challenge their assumptions about art, information (online) as a commodity, and copyright practices of artists. Students may be asked to look up Richard Prince before class or during, as the lesson suggests.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Identify and discuss relevant issues related to the work of Richard Prince, including copyright, appropriation, and visual information as a commodity.
- Consider the original context of the work of Richard Prince and critique whether these images, in this new context, take on a different meaning.
- Discuss the choices that Richard Prince has made in the production of his work to influence interpretation and aesthetic value

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Teacher Materials:** Kahoot.it, google doc with attached questions for group contributions (emailed to students ahead of class)

**Student Materials:** Any mobile device, computer preferable for group work

**Session Instructions:**

1. Introduction
  - a. Kahoot.it questions:
    - i. Do you use instagram to post personal photos?
      1. Yes, all the time
      2. Only of my cat
      3. No, I don't use Instagram
      4. What's Instagram?
    - ii. How would you react someone else hung your instagram photo in a gallery?
      1. I would expect credit
      2. I would expect compensation
      3. I would expect they ask my permission
      4. I wouldn't really care
  - b. So, who is Robert Prince?
    - i. Brief overview and introduction to the controversial aspects of his work
2. Spend 15 minutes looking up information about "Richard Prince" and his work.
  - a. In a collaborative google doc, have students answer the following questions:
    - i. What did you discover?

- ii. What struck you as interesting about his work?
  - iii. What struck you as problematic about his work?
  - iv. What kind of publications did you learn about his work in? (blogs, articles, online art journals?)
  - v. Were the sources of your information presenting facts about his work, opinions, or both?
3. Have students break into groups and each group will get a question to work with and answer amongst themselves. They'll have 5 minutes to discuss before they are asked to share their question and lead a discussion on the question.
  4. Copyright
    - a. Does RP give proper attribution to the original creators of the work he shares?
    - b. What are the legal boundaries that RP is challenging through his work?
    - c. Does this fall within fair use?
  5. Privacy, Appropriation and Ethics
    - a. What are the ethical issues you found with RP's work?
    - b. What kinds of issues arise considering that many of the people RP uses in his work are women and minorities?
  6. Context
    - a. What is the original context of the work RP is sharing and who is the intended audience of that work?
    - b. What meaning do these images have in the new context that RP has placed them in?
    - c. What choices has RP made in the production of his work that influence the interpretation and aesthetic value of the original image?
  7. One minute paper: Is this art? Pull in concepts discussed during class to defend your answer.

**Assessment:** One minute paper analysis

**Reflection/final question for instructor:** This work is polarizing for some students; did anyone disengage? If so, why?

**Questions for student discussions:**

Does Richard Prince give proper attribution to the original creators of the work he shares?

What are the legal boundaries that Richard Prince is challenging through his work?

Does Prince's use of others' images fall within fair use? Why or why not?

What are the ethical issues you found with Richard Prince's work?

What kinds of issues arise considering that many of the people Richard Prince appropriates are women and minorities?

What is the original context of the work Richard Prince is sharing and who is the intended audience of that work?

What meaning do these images have in the new context that Richard Prince has placed them in (i.e. Art Galleries)?

What choices has Richard Prince made in the production of his work that influence the interpretation and aesthetic value of it?

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Does Prince's use of others' images fall within fair use? Why or why not?

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