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

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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 is typically presented at the beginning of a course 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), notecards, questions for class discussion on individual slips of paper

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

Pre-class assignment:
1. Spend 15 minutes looking up information about “Richard Prince” and his work
   a. Answer the following questions in a short discussion:
      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?)
         a. Were the sources of your information presenting facts about his work, opinions, or both?

Session Instructions:
2. Introduction
   a. So, who is Richard Prince?
      i. Brief overview and introduction to the controversial aspects of his work
      ii. or show video in Kahoot:
         https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWhY99cjJ64
b. 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 if 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
   iii. What is the main issue you see with Richard Prince’s work?
      1. It violates copyright
      2. It violates individuals’ privacy/is unethical
      3. It takes original work by others out of context
      4. Nothing, it gives existing images a new context

3. Have students break into groups and each group will get a slip of paper with one question (from below) 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. Bring up the Google doc with the following questions for them to answer and take notes as the discussion unfolds:
   a. Copyright
      i. Does RP give proper attribution to the original creators of the work he shares?
      ii. What are the legal boundaries that RP is challenging through his work?
      iii. Does this fall within fair use?
   b. Privacy, Appropriation and Ethics
      i. What are the ethical issues you found with RP’s work?
      ii. What kinds of issues arise considering that many of the people RP uses in his work are women and minorities?
   c. Context
      i. What is the original context of the work RP is sharing and who is the intended audience of that work?
      ii. What meaning do these images have in the new context that RP has placed them in?
      iii. What choices has RP made in the production of his work that influence the interpretation and aesthetic value of the original image?

5. One minute paper (notecards): 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 (to be printed and distributed):

- Does RP give proper attribution to the original creators of the work he shares?
- What are the legal boundaries that RP is challenging through his work?
- Does this fall within fair use?
- What are the ethical issues you found with RP’s work?
- What kinds of issues arise considering that many of the people RP uses in his work are women and minorities?
- What is the original context of the work RP is sharing and who is the intended audience of that work?
- What meaning do these images have in the new context that RP has placed them in?
- What choices has RP made in the production of his work that influence the interpretation and aesthetic value of the original image?