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Chapter 1
Why Imitation, and Why Global?

Paul Duro

For his 2010 exhibition, *Sunflower Seeds*, Ai Weiwei layered the floor of Tate Modern's vast Turbine Hall with 100 million seemingly identical, yet actually unique, tiny sculptures of sunflower seeds (*plate 1*).[1] The installation, presented in opposition to received norms of experiencing art (at first visitors were allowed to walk on the sculpture),[2] offers itself as a representational 'field' with no obvious boundary, positioning the spectator both inside and outside the work. The seeds were manufactured, over a period of several years, by ceramics workers in the city of Jingdezhen, the centre of Imperial Chinese porcelain production for over a millennium. Despite their number, the sculptures are the result of hundreds of skilled workers making each 'seed' one at a time. The use of a precious material – porcelain – and the labour-intensive production process is a poignant reminder of the conflict between the seriality of their production and the personal content brought to the installation by the artist.

Materially, the seeds reference a long tradition of ceramic production that was the envy of the West – as Europe's largely failed attempts to imitate Chinese hard-paste porcelain attest.[3] As a cultural phenomenon, sunflower seeds – a ubiquitous snack food in China – evoke the excesses of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), when millions of people, including Ai's father, the poet Ai Qing, were exiled to remote regions of China, denied individuality and identity at a time when Mao Zedong represented himself, in presumably unwitting emulation of Louis XIV, as the sun, toward whom innumerable sunflowers – the Chinese masses – turned their heads.[4] Equally the work poses challenging questions about the nature of repetition and what it means to be an individual in an increasingly global society. Do the variations between the ostensibly identical seeds matter? Do we see them as identical only when, in grotesque imitation of a totalitarian ideology, differences are suppressed in the interests of a supposed homogeneity? Produced in their millions, the seeds eloquently interrogate notions of uniqueness and originality foundational to the Western conception of art, while the variations between each seed suggest that labels such as repetition, replica and facsimile serve as much to obfuscate difference as they do to establish a putative similarity.[5]

Ai Weiwei's art is yet more grounded in the practices of imitation, citation, and referentiality than might at first seem to be the case. Ai's high profile exhibition – 'According to What?' – is also the title of a 1964 painting, *According to What* (without a question mark), by Jasper Johns (*plate 2*).[6] Johns' vast canvas is made up of six panels that total more than two metres in height and almost five metres in length

Detail from Jasper Johns, *According to What*, 1964 (*plate 2*).

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which incorporates, in its turn, a distorted copy of Marcel Duchamp's *Self-Portrait in Profile* of 1957, concealed inside a hinged canvas in the lower left corner.[7] In 1983, Ai referenced the same Duchamp self-portrait by shaping a wire coat hanger into Duchamp's profile (a wire coat hanger protrudes from the canvas of Johns' *According to What*). Ai then photographed the coat hanger, lying on a sheet of construction plywood, having partially filled the profile with . . . sunflower seeds.

The 'circle of reference' that Ai engages in, arcing back to Duchamp via Johns while anticipating, with the sunflower seeds, his monumental installation in Tate Modern, problematizes the concept of imitation and denies any easy solution to the question of referentiality. Not only issues of replication, repetition and copy are involved, but also those of originality and innovation. What might be meant by these terms gives rise to a further series of questions that have application in many

1 *Ai Weiwei holding* Sunflower Seeds, 2010. London: Tate Modern (The Unilever Series). Photo: © Tate.

2 Jasper Johns, *According to What*, 1964. Mixed media on canvas, 192 × 88 inches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Edwin Janss Collection. © VAGA, NY. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

of the essays that follow. How do different cultures approach the issue of citation? How far might the transformation of the model be considered to be necessary to the practice of imitation? What is a copy? To what extent are notions of authenticity tied to the concept of originality? How is imitation to be understood in different cultural contexts and traditions? How is technology, including digital technology, changing the way we think about the practices of repetition? What is the connection, if any, between imitation and copy? What is an adaptation? In what ways may imitation across cultures be understood as a form of appropriation? How has imitation been historically understood, and how might it be understood now?[8]

These questions serve to introduce a principle adopted by the authors of the following essays – that no one definition of imitation may be discovered, and that no one term, be it imitation, repetition, citation, copy, quotation or some other supposed cognate, may stand without inflexion from another term in the word group. It is for this reason that the authors of this collection have paid special attention to terminology, not with the impossible aim in mind of establishing impermeable conceptual distinctions or firm terminological categories, but to acknowledge the differences *between* terms that may appear closely related yet carry specific and potentially divergent meanings when employed in different contexts. Only then will the works discussed in these pages escape the denigrating appellation of copy, borrowing, or replica, to reveal their importance within an ongoing history, and histories, of visual representation both within and across historical and geographical borders.

The Practice of Imitation

When Aristotle wrote that 'there is man's natural propensity, from childhood onwards, to engage in mimetic activity',[9] when J.-A.-D. Ingres admonished his students to 'study antiquity and the old masters' in order to 'imbibe the sap of the plant',[10] or when Nicolas Poussin wrote that 'novelty in painting does not consist primarily in the subject that has never been seen, but in good and novel arrangement and expression',[11] they were commenting on a practice that the vast

3 Edgar Degas, *Oenochoe in the Form of a Head of a Young Man*, *c*. 1855. Crayon on paper, 25.5 × 19.0 cm. Paris: Musée d'Orsay. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

majority of artists undertook at some stage of their careers, and many continued to practise throughout their lives. Likewise when Sir Joshua Reynolds commented that 'even genius, at least what generally is so called, is the child of imitation',[12] or when Louis Racine, son of the celebrated dramatist, commented that 'good imitation is a continual invention',[13] they were referring to the potential for imitation to transcend mere copying to engage with artistic creativity. And when Edgar Degas told George Moore, 'what I do is the result of reflection and the study of the great masters',[14] or explained to Ambroise Vollard that a young artist should 'copy the masters and recopy them, and when he has given evidence of being a good copyist, he might reasonably be allowed to do a radish, perhaps, from Nature',[15] he was giving voice to a perception that, until the advent of modernism, was universally considered to be a necessary preparation for a the making of a significant pictorial statement (*plate* 3).

Writing in 1829 in the prospectus to *English Landscape Scenery* (1831), John Constable observed:

> In art, there are two modes by which men aim at distinction. In the one, by a careful application to what others have accomplished, the artist imitates their works, or selects and combines their various beauties; in the other, he seeks excellence at its primitive source, nature. In the first, he forms a style upon the study of pictures, and produces either imitative or eclectic art; in the second, by a close observation of nature, he discovers qualities in her which have never been portrayed before, and thus forms a style which is original. The results of the one mode, as they repeat that with which the eye is already familiar, are soon recognized and estimated, while the advances of the artist in a new path must necessarily be slow, for few are able to judge of that which deviates from the usual course, or are qualified to appreciate original studies.[16]

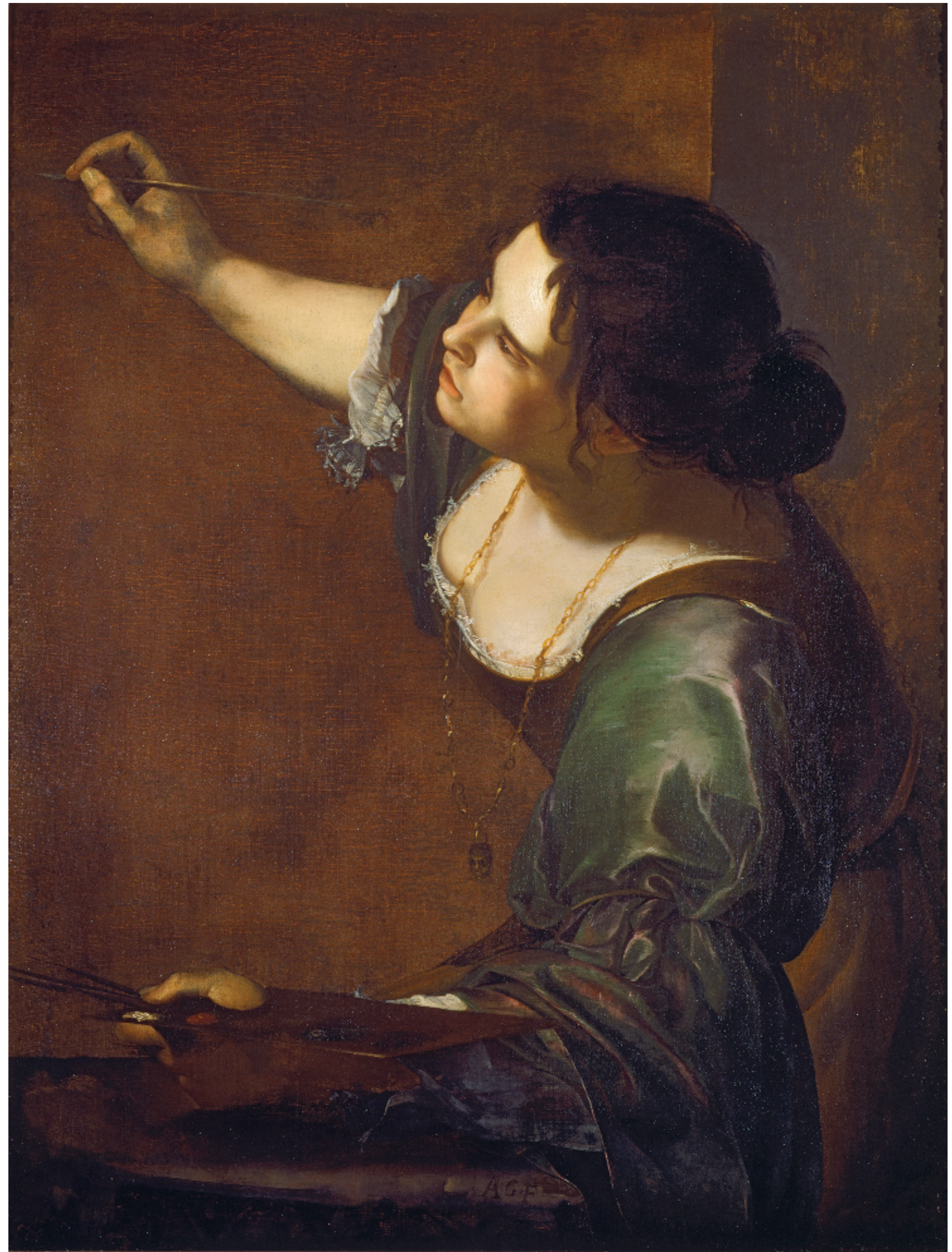
4 Thomas Couture, *La peinture réaliste*, 1865. Oil on panel, 56 × 45 cm. Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland. Photo: © National Gallery of Ireland.

I shall return to this distinction below, but for now it is sufficient to point out that treating imitation as a stable representative category – 'a careful application to what others have accomplished' – instead of seeking 'excellence at its primitive source, nature', pre-emptively and narrowly distinguishes between artists who followed a more independent path to imitation and those who pursued one kind of imitation only – that of copying after antiquity. Constable's remarks thus allow us to define with more precision the mimetic choice available not just to the nineteenth-century artist, but to all artists at least since the Renaissance, between the imitation of the world as it appears to the eye and the imitation of nature through reference to the Antique.

Introducing imitation in this way will help us to understand why Charles Blanc, in proposing the establishment of a musée des Copies in 1871, had no difficulty in arguing that imitation of past art was the way forward for his contemporaries,[17] or why Charles Gleyre saw no contradiction in urging his student Claude Monet to copy the antique while professing, according to another student, a dread for mimicry and the imitation of other painters.[18] It enables us to see beyond the paradox of why Thomas Couture, a noted progressive who declared, 'I have a horror of what is called serious painting', nevertheless contrasted his own training in Gros' studio, where he copied antique casts and engravings after Raphael and Poussin, with the modern artist's studio, filled with old shoes and cabbages (*plate 4*).[19] But while the exhortation to 'study antiquity and the old masters' constitutes a large part of what is commonly understood by imitation, it does not tell the whole story. Quite why this perspective is so limiting, particularly as an explanatory model with regard to the importance of a theory (or theories) of imitation more widely conceived, will underpin a large part of the argument that follows, but for the moment two objections may be raised.

The first objection turns on the assumption that a universalizing category, based largely but not exclusively on *imitatio* (rhetorical imitation, or the imitation of select models), and expressing aesthetic values found in Aristotle's *Poetics*, may safely be employed as a secure starting point for comparison with other modes of repetition and referencing.[20] As Maria Loh has commented, 'imitation is an embedded practice that can be traced in one form or another throughout the history of western art', while Matthew Potolsky, with equal justice, asserts that 'the very concept of art, for Western culture at least, is inconceivable without the theory of mimesis'.[21] The development of this seemingly all-encompassing mode of imitation is neatly allegorized in Artemisia Gentileschi's *La pittura (Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting)*, in which the artist portrays herself with the attributes of the imitative arts, including a pendant with mask representing the dramatic arts, satin dress alluding to the arts of illusion, and dishevelled hair expressing creativity (*plate 5*).[22]

The second objection, and particularly problematic from the point of view of the present collection, follows from the above characterization of *imitatio* as foundational to Western epistemologies of art. The 'embedded practice' of the imitation of (ideal) nature has had the effect of occluding, and demoting, other imitative practices, both within Western epistemologies of the visual and in the rest of the world. Temporally and geographically centered in this way, imitation exemplifies Max Weber's comment that it is only in the West that 'cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having universal significance and value'.[23] This has not always been



5 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-portrait as the Allegory of Painting* [*La Pittura*], 1638–39. Oil on canvas, 96.5 × 73.7 cm. London: The Royal Collection. Photo: © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II/ Bridgeman Art Library.

understood, especially from the point of view of cross-cultural distinctions. The major 1984 exhibition, *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* at New York's Museum of Modern Art, based its narrative on a supposed concordance between cultural phenomena.[24] For one of the organizers of the exhibition, William Rubin, a significant example of the 'affinity' between the tribal and the modern is to be found in Pablo Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, in which the faces of three of the five models have been repainted with representations of West African tribal masks (*plate* 6). At first glance it may seem that the imitation is one of simple homage, a kind of fraternal acknowledgement of shared values, in which Picasso learned from West Africa artists what in fact the catalogue implied he already was – a primitive among the moderns.[25] More problematically still, the references to African art forms are presented not as citations or appropriations (and certainly not as copies) but as the realization of

6 Pablo Picasso, *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 243.9 × 233.7 cm. New York: Museum of Modern Art. © Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY. Photo: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by Scala/Art Resource, NY.

a universalizing modernist aesthetic embodied in Picasso's early masterpiece to which, in a paradoxical inversion of the trajectory from model to copy, the masks, the source of Picasso's imitation, are seen as paying homage.[26]

Imitation in a Global Context

The force of the criticism levelled at *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art* has not been lost on more recent approaches to issues of cross-cultural exchange.[27] Okwui Enwezor argued in his keynote address at the Association of Art Historians 2013 conference that the emergent discourse around an expanded geographical field demands recognition of difference and diversity, if not complexity and contradiction, within a set of practices no longer constrained by regional, national, or continental borders.[28] Enwezor argued that the implications of the 'west versus the rest' model functions as a strategy of domination, where Western forms of representation become agents of domination, thereby occluding other forms of representation that all too easily become associated with prejudicial notions of marginality and imitation.[29] As Artistic Director of *Documenta11*, Enwezor worked to 'deterritorialize' the exhibition both geographically and culturally, a strategy designed to provoke 'multiple ruptures' in the fabric of a hegemonic Western visual culture – including the practices of imitation and mimicry implicit in subalternism.[30] Commenting on the deterritorialized, essentially borderless, art world following the decline of 'European and US-centric perspectives', Terry Smith has recently argued that 'art

now comes from the whole world, from a growing accumulation of art-producing localities that no longer depend on the approval of a metropolitan centre and are, to an unprecedented degree, connected to each other in a multiplicity of ways, not least regionally and globally'.[31] If this observation is true, and all the evidence points to its veracity, then the same must also be true for imitation.

It is this sense of bringing into simultaneous view the local and the global that animates Georges Adéagbo's 'The Becoming of the Human Being . . .' installation, part of the *We Face Forward: Art from West Africa Today* exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery in 2012. Adéagbo brings to his work what has been called a 'play of relations' between continents, countries, and locations. In this case the relation is that of Manchester, UK, and of Adéagbo's hometown of Cotonou, Benin (*plate 7*),[32] and is manifested in the seemingly random juxtapositions of found objects that represent, in this case, Cotonou and Manchester, such as newspapers, books, sculptures, beer bottles, magazine covers, guide books, clothes, LPs, jewellery, shells, ivory, musical instruments, passages of the artist's own writing – a bricolage of artefacts that question commonly held assumptions about the nature of art, of representation, and what it means to work in the interstices between the global and the local.[33] In particular, by addressing the relation between Africa and other parts of the globe, Adéagbo questions what it means to represent something in a global context, juxtaposing West African elements of his installations with materials collected in the locality of the exhibition to reveal the flawed relationality of supposing one to be the 'origin' or model of the other.

7 Georges Adéagbo, *The Becoming of the Human Being, Talking about the Destiny of the Human Being, and Showing the Destiny of the Human Being. The King of England and the Queen of England. [Le devenir de l'être humain, parlant du destin de l'être humain, et faisant voir le destin de l'être humain. Le roi d'Angleterre et la reine d'Angleterre.]*, 2002/2012. Mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation: *We Face Forward: Art From West Africa Today*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 2012. Photo: Michael Pollard.

This point is imaginatively illustrated in an introductory essay for the *Documenta11* catalogue, in which the Argentinian critic and curator Carlos Basualdo describes taking an acquaintance from Paris to visit the French Embassy in Buenos Aires (*plate* 8).[34] Designed by the French architect Paul Pater in 1912, the visitor remarks how French the building looks – the rusticated first storey, the mansard roof, the heavy fenestration interspersed with ionic pilasters, the pronounced cornice and ornate lantern atop a cupola, all speak eloquently to the beaux-arts style popularized in Second Empire and Third Republic France that subsequently lent its face to civic and domestic architecture from Mexico City to Washington, DC. Yet the visitor notes that neither the materials, nor the proportions, nor the ensemble, correspond to the model imitated. Rather the replication serves to emphasize the 'chaos of delicately extravagant references' that problematize the distinction between model and imitation. In this respect, the embassy is 'full of quotations', a persistent collection of 'architectonic tics' entangling the gaze in an infinity

8 *The French Embassy, Buenos Aires*. Photo: Barcex/ Wikimedia Commons.

***9 The Paris Las Vegas Hotel and Casino as seen from The Bellagio*. Photo: Jürgen Matern/Wikimedia Commons.**

of citations that quote the model without reproducing it. Musing that imitations of this kind function like an encyclopaedia, Basualdo wonders whether, when his friend returns to Paris, he will see the ghosts of Buenos Aires in the boulevards of the French capital: 'Will he be able, from now on, to appreciate the supposed difference between originals and copies? . . . I imagine him seeing the New World in the Old, just as we usually see the Old World in the New: both parts of a continuum in which categorical definitions no longer apply, a continuum that suppresses the hegemony of the model in favour of the primacy of differences which are more or less sensitive, more or less infinite. I wonder if he will become less concerned with the myths of origin?'[35]

The language employed here points to many of the key issues addressed by the present collection – difference, original, copy, new, old, continuum, hegemony, model, primacy, origin, imitation, reference. It is easy to see that while some terms are close to being synonyms, others (original/copy, model/difference, new/old) function rather as markers of difference and distinction. These polarities, along with the distinction between imitation and copy, the primacy of the model, the value of exemplarity, the issue of centre and periphery, the limits of referentiality, the question of repetition, the local and the global, problematize the nature, aims, and purpose of what is understood by imitation.

Basualdo's characterization of the cultural interaction of the architecture of Buenos Aires and Paris as a 'continuum' that dissolves the categories of original and copy works to expose the 'primacy of differences' that underlies all imitation. But what might be understood by 'imitation' in this instance? The Palacio Ortiz Basualdo was, after all, designed by a French beaux-arts architect and would not draw attention to itself were it to be found on the boulevards of Paris. Is it not therefore manifestly a French building, designed by a French architect, transposed to South America? Not

quite. As the Parisian visitor noted, the failure of the imitation is not in the detail, nor in the ensemble, but in what might be termed the *fact of imitation* – the kind of quotation only possible when the imitation is removed from the context or reference for which it was originally intended. In this sense, it is rather like the replica Eiffel Tower at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel and Casino (*plate* 9). Neither the proximity of the 'Arc de Triomphe' nor the 'Opera' are sufficient to overcome the realization that what one sees on the Las Vegas Strip is patently *not* the Eiffel Tower nor Garnier's opera house nor the Arc de Triomphe but their simulacra, bereft of the context that might persuade us we are indeed on the Champ de Mars, the Place de l'Opéra, or the Place de l'Etoile. Of course, this may be just the point. For many visitors to Las Vegas the ability, within a short distance, to perambulate Paris or travel from Giza to Rome within a block or two trumps any lingering nostalgia for what might be termed authenticity. Yet authenticity, in the sense of establishing the credentials of the representation such that the work of the work can take place free of the stigma of 'copy', is exactly what many of the authors of the present collection seek to investigate. In these cases the repetition asserts its separateness from the original/model by articulating difference, establishing a space that allows it to reference the model yet remain independent of the formal and aesthetic properties of that which it imitates.

The Essays: A User's Guide

The origins of the present collection are to be found in two gatherings that took place in 2011, from which the majority of the papers were selected. The first, a joint University of California, Riverside/California Institute of Technology workshop organized by John Brewer and Malcolm Baker, brought together participants who considered imitation from diverse conceptual, aesthetic, and historical positions, and with a particular emphasis on cross-cultural perspectives, including examples of imitative practices originating in East Asia, Europe, and South America.[36] The second event, a double session at the College Art Association annual conference in New York City, organized by Malcolm Baker and Paul Duro, addressed the question of imitation from a variety of theoretical, regional, and historical perspectives, with the intention of opening up the topic to as many interpretations as possible. Topics included discussion of reproductive prints, eighteenth-century portrait busts, Winckelmann's theory of art, contemporary quotational art, early photography, and postcolonial appropriation.[37] In order to round out an already rich and varied collection, several more essays were added on Native American art, twentieth-century 'found' imagery, imitation and destination in contemporary art, and copy production in Edo-period Japan. The result is a collection designed to open debate and discussion around the concept of imitation whenever, and wherever, it is found.

The essays may be divided into three loosely knit groups – 'dialectical imitation', 'transcultural currents', and 'the poetics of imitation'. These groups should be understood as proposing a provisional guide or road map with the aim in mind of orienting the reader through a cluster of terms surrounding imitation that are at once intimately related yet, as we have seen, conceptually distinct. However, they should not be considered as categories against which other categories may be compared or contrasted. To do so would be to risk establishing an originary or foundational meaning for one group against which other meanings would then be measured – a particularly inappropriate strategy when dealing with a concept as slippery as imitation, and quite against the intention of all the contributors to this volume. Readers are therefore invited to draw their own conclusions, measuring their own perceptions against the provisional itinerary offered here.

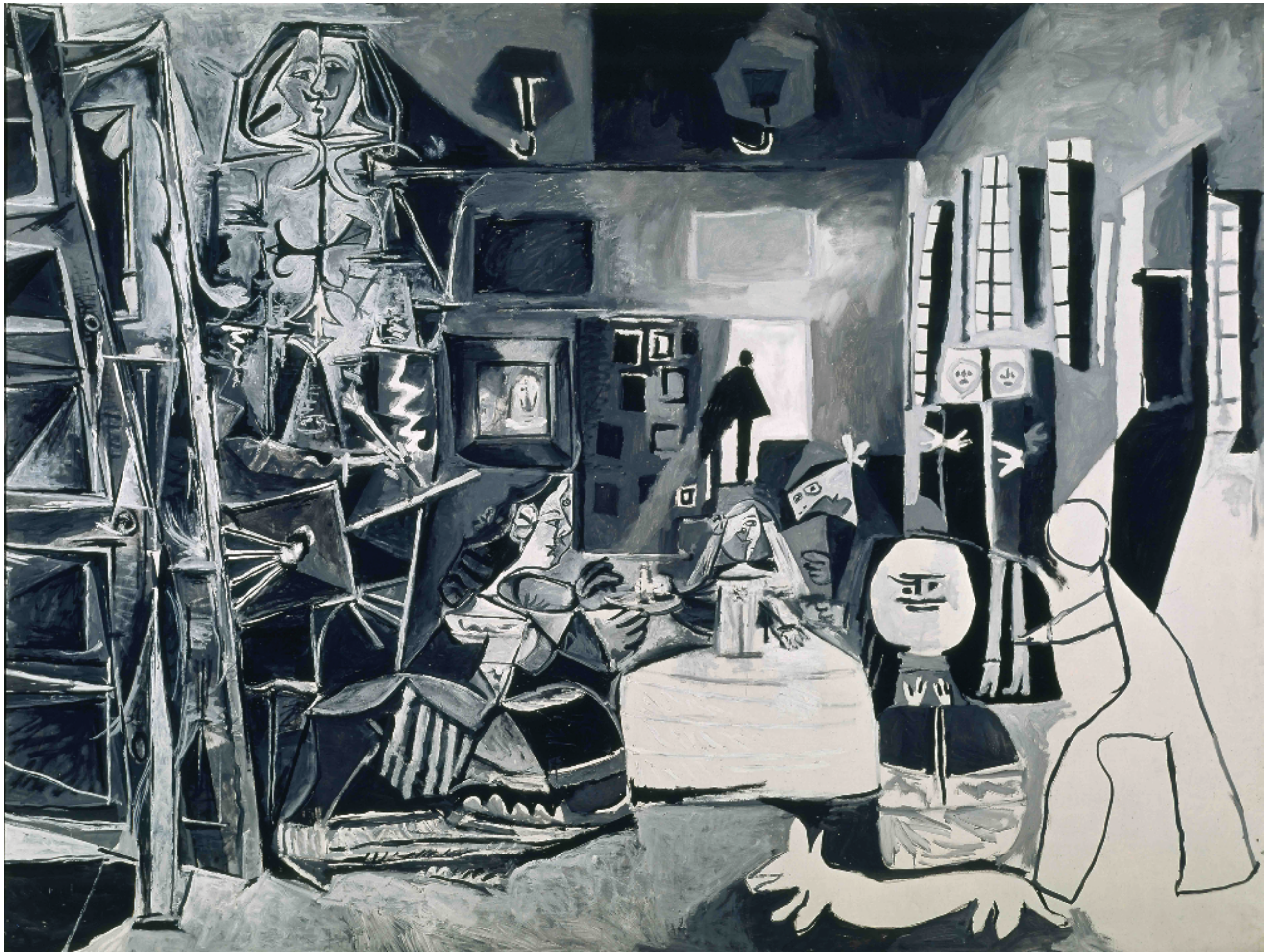
Dialectical Imitation

Referring to his multiple studies after Diego Velasquez's *The Ladies in Waiting* [*Las Meninas*], Pablo Picasso remarked:

> Let's suppose that one wanted to copy *The Ladies in Waiting* purely and simply. There would come a moment, if it were me who had undertaken this task, when I would say to myself, 'What would happen if I moved that figure there a little to the right or the left? Then it would no longer be the *Ladies in Waiting* as they appear in Velasquez's painting . . . they would be my *Ladies in Waiting*'.[38]

Picasso's comments distinguish his imitation from copying 'purely and simply' on the one hand, and the pursuit of *ab nihilo* originality on the other. His *Las Meninas, after Velasquez, No. 1* shows that he is imitating, not the appearance of Velasquez's painting, but its viability as a model (*plate 10*). His rhetorical question, 'What would happen if I moved that figure there a little to the right or the left?' is answered by his assumption of right to ownership of both the imitation and the model ('my *Ladies in Waiting*'). Put another way, Picasso understands that his principal task is to find the means to re-present the subject as *his* subject, and the resulting painting as *his* painting. He wants us to understand that his artistry lies, not in his ability to copy, but his abrogation of the model; not what Velasquez's *Ladies in Waiting* is, or even seems to be, but what it must be *for him*. From the point of view of what I will risk calling 'true' imitation, Picasso's

10 Pablo Picasso, *La Meninas, after Velasquez, No. 1*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 194 × 260 cm. Barcelona: Museu Picasso. © Estate of Pablo Picasso/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY. Photo: Bridgeman-Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.



proprietorial claims are perfectly reasonable. Picasso is in the work. To this end his approach is necessarily different from that of an artist who sets out to copy the model 'purely and simply'. The subject of Picasso's imitation is not his model, but his right to challenge the exemplarity of the earlier painting, free from mimetic constraint. That the model is another work of art, and not mythology, history, nature, or the antique, matters less than the imperative to establish a critical distance from which his imitation can influence not only our understanding of what constitutes an imitation, but also our interpretation of its celebrated model. Picasso is at pains to establish the conditions for his painting's coming into being as an independent work of art.

This borrowing of themes or formal properties of other artworks is hardly new, and whether termed imitation, emulation, eclecticism or citation, is present in all periods and cultures. Yet unlike these modes of imitation, imitation as challenge, exemplified by Picasso's painting – what Thomas M. Greene in a brilliant study of Renaissance poetics, *The Light in Troy*, calls 'dialectical' – raises the intriguing possibility that, far from being synonymous with copying, some forms of repetition confront the model as if in contest, throwing down a challenge to its claims to exemplarity and originality.[39]

Dialectical imitation is the theme of the first essay in this collection – Ian McLean's 'Post-Western Poetics: Postmodern Appropriation Art in Australia'. As McLean explains, appropriation art in Australia was from the first framed by issues of globalization, provincialism, and 'cultures of the second degree' that, when brought into dialogue with the emerging discourse around the art of Australia's indigenous peoples, revealed tensions that play out uneasily in contemporary visual culture. It is from this perspective that McLean discusses Gordon Bennett's *The Nine Ricochets (Fall down black fella, jump up white fella)* of 1990 in relation to its use of themes present in fellow-Australian Imants Tillers' earlier *The Nine Shots* (1985). The 'borrowing' generated considerable interest because Tillers had, in turn, borrowed elements of Michael Nelson Jagamara's *Possum Dreaming*, then a little known painting by a virtually unknown Papunya Tula artist, and melded it with the formal and iconographic properties of Georg Baselitz's early work *Forward Wind* (1966). McLean traces the complex history of this intercultural borrowing to unpack a seminal instance of the intersection of postmodern appropriation with post-Western art.

Intimations of what McLean refers to as 'post-Western poetics' are present in Patrick Greaney's 'Essentially the Same: Eduardo Costa's Minimal Differences and Latin American Conceptualism'. Framing his topic as 'anti-imitation', Greaney addresses Latin American artists' responses, in the 1960s and 1970s, to the dominance of North American and European models of conceptualist art practice. From the first the Latin American artists adopted the seemingly paradoxical stance of closely imitating the North American model while asserting the individuality and uniqueness of their responses, setting up a centre and periphery debate that denied the claims of northern hemisphere conceptualism to its exemplary status, a strategy that touches on the discussion earlier in this introduction of the beaux-arts style for the building that was later to house the French Embassy in Buenos Aires.

Focusing on two works by Eduardo Costa, *A piece that is essentially the same as a piece made by any of the first conceptual artists, dated two years earlier than the original and signed by someone else* (1970), and the staging of a 'Happening' that in fact did not take place in Buenos Aires in 1966, Greaney explores a process of imitation that sets out to deny the primacy of the model in understanding the significance of the imitation. Reacting to local concerns and conditions, these 're-happenings' perform an imitation that functions not as a copy or repetition, but one that problematizes the model-to-copy direction.

In this way these works challenge the model's right to be considered the origin, and the 'repetition' to be depreciatively characterized as an imitation.

Invoking the importance of Thomas Greene's observation that 'every creative imitation mingles filial rejection with respect', Carolina Mangone's essay, 'Like Father, Like Son: Bernini's Filial Imitation of Michelangelo', focuses on Bernini's imitative challenge to Michelangelo.[40] In this case the imitation could not be idolizing. Michelangelo was a tyrannical artistic forebear whose influence was anything but benign on those who came after. More problematically still, Michelangelo was widely considered 'inimitable' – an artist whose artistic achievement demanded he be recognized as the equal of the ancients, but whose *maniera* was irreproducible. Mangone argues that Michelangelo's celebrity functions as a challenge that the ambitious Bernini had to take up. For Bernini, that meant imitating Michelangelo in a competitive, even critical, way. In making a bid to assume Michelangelo's reputation through a reworking of his achievement, Bernini drains Michelangelo, the 'originary' artist of the exchange, of his originality, thereby questioning his right to artistic precedence. As a result Michelangelo, Bernini's 'titanic predecessor', becomes little more than the creator of insufficiently realized models which Bernini subsequently develops to perfection.

Transcultural Currents

As several essays in this collection show, while imitation may operate within a given cultural formation, period or region, establishing a tradition that allows for the perpetuation of a particular practice or a set of values, another group addresses a cross-cultural current of artistic ideas and practices that range across cultural formations, historical periods, or geographical regions. This is the case that motivates the work of contemporary African-American artist Kehinde Wiley, whose referencing of canonical works of European art, for the most part from the Renaissance and after (examples include paintings by Jacques-Louis David, J.-A.-D. Ingres, Johannes Cornelisz Verspronck, and Hans Memling), have brought into juxtaposition the self-confident and empowering poses typical of traditional European portraiture with subjects drawn largely from the hip-hop culture of black urban youth in the United States. More recently, as in the case *Alios Itzhak* from his series *The World Stage: Israel* of 2011, Wiley has drawn his subjects from among the diverse faiths and ethnicities living in Israel today (*plate 11*). Far from merely imitating European prototypes, however, Wiley reinvents his subjects through a matrix of contemporary references and allusions that position his sitters within an originary frame of reference yet outside tradition, effecting a displacement to the existing representational order while accentuating the cultural alterities assumed by many of his subjects.[41]

It is this transcultural dimension to which Janet Catherine Berlo responds in her essay 'Navajo Sandpainting in the Age of Cross-Cultural Replication'. Addressing the distinction, in North American indigenous cultures, between an original, a copy, and a replica, she demonstrates that, while the artefact itself, such as a painted shield, a beaded dress, a carved clan hat, may be traded, duplicated, or otherwise reproduced, ownership of the intellectual or spiritual property remains strictly in the hands of the original maker. The circulation of such objects outside their indigenous context has, in recent years, become problematic in some cases, involving issues of censorship, exchange, the repatriation of objects from museums, and the rights to culturally sensitive imagery. Navajo sandpainting is a case in point. Long acknowledged as one of the most significant art forms of Native North America, ceremonial

11 Kehinde Wiley, *Alios Itzhak [The World Stage: Israel]*, 2011. Oil and enamel on canvas, 292.1 × 203.2 × 0.4 cm. New York: The Jewish Museum. © Kehinde Wiley. Photo: The Jewish Museum/Art Resource, NY.

sandpainting functions as the site of communication between the 'Supernaturals' (the Holy People), the ritual practitioner, and patient for whom the ceremony is being performed. Significantly for consideration of terms such as 'original', 'replica', and 'copy', the transience of the image (each sandpainting is ritually obliterated at the end of the ceremony) is a re-creation of the clouds, rainbows and lightning used by the original supernatural makers of the image. As Berlo explains, it is a duty for the *hataali* (medicine man) to reproduce, then obliterate, the sacred imagery. 'Permanent' replicas of sandpainting do exist, executed not only in sand but also in other mediums from drawing to painting to weaving. Are they copies, reproductions, or cultural theft? Do they carry with them an aura of the original? It is hard to say with

certainty, but we should bear in mind that the sandpaintings on which these 'replicas' are based were never intended as permanent works of art but rather the enactment of a sacred process – an act of repetition that gives the sandpainting a contingent and temporary presence in imitation of the creations of the gods.

Transculturism is addressed by Kazuko Kameda-Madar in her essay, 'Copying and Theory in Edo period Japan (1615–1868)'. Challenging stereotypical ideas attached to copying while exploring the issues of reproduction, allusion, adaption, pedagogy, and transcultural influence, Kameda-Madar argues for a more subtle definition of *utsushi* (copy, duplicate, replica) to embrace a notion of *funpon* (study sketch, pictorial model), that allows for a more expansive understanding of terms like creativity and originality. As in many Western theories of imitation, one way to approach this problem is through ancient theories of painting that, in the case of the Chinese 'model', distinguish between copying as a mechanical practice concerned with technique, and imitation as the transmission of exemplary forms (Japanese artists believed the proper study of painting began with imitating the Chinese example in order to gain the technical discipline necessary for the development of an individual style). Kameda-Madar shows that this imitation is linked to the example of poetry, in which the works of venerated poets of an earlier age are quoted in more modern works, lending an element of referentiality and allusion to the imitation. Throughout the Edo period imitation was the principal means of training in the Kano school, and while theorists distinguished between artists who produced through natural talent, and those who imitated the work of others, so-called 'literati' painters strove to emulate the spirit rather than the letter of their models. Thus the 'vulgar' images of those who copied the model slavishly (one critic mentions the Dutch excelling at this kind of imitation) miss the essence of the emulation, just as those who paint, for example, a mountainous landscape, should not paint it as it appears to the eye, but select those features that capture its craggy nature.

Replication, albeit of a contemporary kind, is Vivian Li's topic in 'Original Imitations for Sale: Dafen and Artistic Commodification'. Li examines the phenomenon of mass-produced, trade painting industry copies of old masters and contemporary works in the 'oil painting village' of Dafen in southern China. As the artistic mecca of contemporary copy culture, Dafen is intriguing for what it reveals about contemporary art practices. Despite, or perhaps because of, the general acceptance of the legitimacy of Andy Warhol's production methods in the 'Factory', where studio assistants collaborated in the artistic process, there remains considerable prejudice that a sweatshop of art workers cannot replace the individual artistic genius on which notions of originality and authenticity depend. Yet to assume that questions of originality and imitation underpin Dafen's success is to overlook the fact that both artists and public are aware that the resulting imitation is not a true 'copy', but rather an interpretation manufactured to meet the demands of a culture of commodification. Yet the analogy with mechanical or mass production is easily overstated. Dafen artists do not have access to the 'original'; rather they copy from a photograph or another reproduction, and while some orders for multiples do mean that Dafen's artists work on occasion on a production line system, each adding one part to the painting, they more commonly work in an environment more analogous to a traditional studio workshop, in which workers skilled in the various aspects of production work alongside the artists who produce the paintings. Dafen artists are not making copies of paintings that their intended audience know from first hand experience, but that are themselves celebrated through their reproduced likenesses. Hence the walls of the galleries in Dafen mix portraits of President Obama and Chairman Mao Zedong with the *Mona Lisa* and the work of late nineteenth-century

academic painters. These reproductions share a common theme – they can all be sold. The 'copy' of a celebrated painting or photograph is made available to the widest possible public, detaching the reproduction from the original yet paradoxically intensifying its cult value in the eyes of its public.

The Poetics of Imitation

When Eugène Emmanuel Amaury Pineu Duval, better known simply as Amaury-Duval, first visited J.-A.-D. Ingres' studio around 1825 with a view to training as a painter, his future teacher noticed his new student admiring a large drawing by the Italian painter and engraver Luigi Calamatta after Ingres' *Vow of Louis XIII* (*plate 12*). At this point, Amaury-Duval reports, Ingres becomes animated, and his eyes shine with passion: 'You see this drawing . . . it's beautiful, isn't it? . . . Of course I don't mean the picture; the picture, the newspapers say, is a pastiche, a copy of Raphael.'[42] What Ingres asks Amaury-Duval to admire is not the drawing itself, but the tradition on which Ingres has based his painting: 'Well! this is no pastiche, this is no copy . . . I've left my mark . . . Certainly I admire the masters, I bow down before them . . . above all before the greatest [Raphael] . . . but I don't copy them . . . I have drunk their milk, I have nourished myself on it, I have tried to appropriate their sublime qualities . . . but I have not pastiched them.'[43]

Significantly Ingres does not say he has imitated or emulated Raphael, and he emphatically rejects 'copy' and 'pastiche' as unworthy of the kind of nourishment he gains from the encounter. Rather he 'appropriates' the sublime qualities of his model the better to express his own artistic individuality. In this sense Ingres is a 'strong poet' of the kind described by Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence*, in which the poet, or artist, is able to embrace the example of the great masters without being consumed by them.[44] For Ingres, and those who thought like him, the object imitated was not the material painting at all; rather he has imitated the idea – that stage of picture making that lies behind Raphael's painting as it lies behind every original creation. Ingres tells Amaury-Duval that the art of Raphael constitutes an indefinable yet essential presence through which, for Ingres, notions of reality and truth are given coherence.

This is the perspective taken by the third group of essays – essays that, for all the important distinctions of approach between them, share a common thread in that their subjects reference the model from a position of independence, a strategy that Thomas Greene calls 'heuristic'.[45] Greene's argument, that certain artists demystified their sources to present them for what they were – citations that stood in autonomous relationship to the model – finds an echo in Martin J. Powers' essay, 'The Temporal Logic of Citation in Chinese Painting', in which he examines the concept of citation from the point of view of historical consciousness. Powers' argument is that the abandonment of naturalism in Chinese art in the Song period is coterminous with the development of citation, or the conscious borrowing of an anterior artist's pictorial vocabulary. This is no subtle allusion or emulation, nor simply copying the 'classics' of earlier times, but a problematizing of the notion of precedence by introducing incompatible stylistic features from different historical periods into the citation. Unlike traditional imitation, in which the value of the model is seen as independent of its copy and in possession of an unassailable standard of excellence, in historical citation the juxtaposition of multiple and inconsistent styles reveals the artist's subjective choices in which the cited elements appear as intrusions into the composition. The fact that these artists are not emulating any one style but juxtaposing pictorial devices belonging to different historical periods underscores the fact that they ironically manipulate their sources to assert, not only their own artistic autonomy, but also to intervene in the space occupied by the model. In other words, the artist cites an

anterior artwork, but does so in a manner that denies access to its original meaning.

With many modern artists the study of the art of the past has taken on an inquisitorial role. From this perspective imitation is first and foremost a strategy of distanciation from the model, whereby the resulting imitation presents itself as a series of ruptures that sunder the painting's connection with the model in a radical and potentially disruptive way. For example, Paul Cézanne's studies of older art most often limit his 'copy' to a detail abstracted from the whole, thereby side-lining both the subject and the composition in favour of a 'spiritual affinity' that references the model while positioning the copy at the threshold of a new representational order.

This is Richard Shiff's topic in his essay, 'Ingemination', in which he argues that an artist such as Paul Cézanne employs an imitative strategy that allows for the transfer not only of the affective image but also qualities of the model that would inhere in its repetition. In fact Cézanne's copies, in the sense of being facsimile reproductions, are not copies at all. All manual repetition introduces material changes to the imitation, just as appropriation, emulation, or any other form of imitation introduces intended and unintended changes to the imitation. The resulting abstraction disengages the copy from its model, allowing for a work to emerge that is materially and aesthetically independent of its source.

Cézanne's 'abstraction', firmly situated within the narrative of Western modernism, finds its afterlife, or continuing life, in a global context. Examining the work of the contemporary Chinese artist Zeng Fanzhi and the American Barnett Newman, Shiff finds their art, like that of Cézanne, is in dialogue with both the motif and the means of expression. From this point of view, imitation, whether of the model, the motif, or the idea, abstracts itself from any supposed dependency on the model to become the site of its own pictorial problematic. Cézanne, and those whose thought follows a similar logic, like Newman and Zeng, imitate neither the external nor the internal model of nature, but reproduce the physical marking of material that thereby directs the experience of the artist and brings the pictorial representation into being.

Alex Potts' essay, 'The Image Valued "As Found" and the Reconfiguring of Mimesis in Postwar Art', likewise investigates a modern instance of pictorial citation. Employing the notion of 'as found' – a phrase used by Reyner Banham in his influential article 'The new brutalism' of 1955 – Potts explores the distinction between a Duchampian 'readymade' and the 'as found' appropriations of artists such as Gerhard Richter and Andy Warhol, whose significant transformations of the source image (cropping, enlarging, reframing) and translation into a different medium have the effect of emancipating the borrowing from its original context while keeping its distance from its new setting, allowing the image to retain an autonomy, and authority, free from the imputation of authorial control. This suspension of artistic intention is aided and abetted by the use of photo-mechanical means of

12 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Vow of Louis XIII (1601–1643), King of France and Navarre*, 1824. Oil on canvas, 421 × 262 cm. Montauban: Notre Dame. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

production such as silk screening, into which Warhol has allowed imperfections and accidents to creep in, lending the mechanical and non-descript look of the model its appearance of mechanical reproducibility. 'As found' is also applicable to the work of the new realist artist Jacques Villeglé, whose transfer of disfigured advertising posters from Parisian walls to canvas effects a transformation of the source material, inviting an attentive viewing quite different and more focused than in its original context. For these artists, the 'as found' qualities of the source material preserved the mass media credentials of the model, allowing artists to quote the imagery without the need to justify their choice or express any opinion of the content.

Concluding the essays in this volume, Jonathan Bordo's 'History Lessons: Imitation, Work and the Temporality of Contemporary Art' addresses the conditions under which art is considered an imitation of art. Commenting on Goethe's visit to Rome in 1786 in which he determined to commission a reproduction of an antique Medusa, Bordo remarks that, for Goethe and his generation, 'the ancients provided the models for an art that still had to be achieved'. Bordo goes on to question the reproducibility of the artwork through a reconsideration of Walter Benjamin's celebrated essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility' (1935–36). Pointing to the distinction between technological reproduction that overwhelms the original, and digital reproduction, of which Benjamin could have no inkling when the essay was written, Bordo explores the place of the artwork in the age of the digital screen. Bordo is equally concerned with the nature of the artwork, its status as a model, and its autonomy as artwork when confronted with its potential imbrication in technological reproduction. But this artwork is not simply 'there', to be reproduced or imitated according to the whims of current technology. It is itself retrospectively constructed as an autonomous art object, released from its status within cult or history to perform as model for work yet to be produced. Thus the contemporary artwork, or the artwork in a contemporary setting, is at the unplaceable origin of its own being. Its influence is both anterior and posterior to its own reproduction, bequeathing to its imitations an identity in which they cannot participate, and yet which is a prerequisite for their existence.

These 'acts of memory', gestures of reference and recall, serve to situate the artwork, offering a site for dialogue and exchange, reminding us that the practices of imitation are neither an afterthought to original creation nor a synonym for copying, but a dynamic, creative activity through which representational practices and protocols seek a tangible form. Not the last word, then, or even a summation of the state of research, this collection hopes to engender debate and discussion of two topics – imitation and globality – that, whether taken individually or at their intersection, remain in pressing need of further study.

Notes

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1 Part of the Unilever Series, *Sunflower Seeds* ran at the Tate Modern from 12 October 2010 to 2 May 2011.
2 Subsequent to the opening of the exhibition, health concerns resulting from porcelain dust given off by the sculpture forced authorities to restrict access to marginal viewing areas.
3 'Porcelain', *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*. Oxford Art Online, Web. 29 September 2013, http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t4/e1345>REF. C18 porcelain.
4 Mami Kataoka, 'According to what? – A questioning attitude', in *Ai Weiwei: According to What?* Tokyo (New York, 2012), 9–21 (13).
5 For comment on *Sunflower Seeds* see http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series-ai-weiwei-sunflower-seeds.

Accessed 10 July 2013.
6 *Ai Weiwei: According to What?* was organized by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC and the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, in 2012.
7 Patricia Kaplan, 'On Jasper Johns' *According to What*', *Art Journal,* 35:3, 1976, 247–50.
8 These questions are inspired by the discussion at the University of Riverside-California Institute of Technology Early Modern Workshop, 21–22 January 2011, devoted to 'Repetition, Emulation, and Innovation'.
9 Stephen Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary,* Chapel Hill, NC, 1987, 34.
10 J.-A.-D. Ingres, *Ecrits sur l'art,* Paris, 1947, 20. Unless otherwise indicated, this and all subsequent translations are by the present writer.
11 Giovan Pietro Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects,* trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl, notes by Hellmut Wohl, intro. by Tomaso Montanari, Cambridge, 2005, 339.
12 Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art,* edited by Robert R. Wark, New Haven and London, 1981, 98.
13 Louis Racine, 'De l'utilité de l'imitation, et de la manière d'imiter', *Oeuvres completes,* Geneva, 1969, 2, 405–6.
14 George Moore, 'Memories of Degas', *Burlington Magazine,* 32, 1918, 22–9, 63–5 (64).
15 Ambroise Vollard, *En écoutant Cézanne, Degas, Renoir,* Paris, 1938, 60.
16 C. R. Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, Esq. R.A. Composed Chiefly of his Letters,* London, 1845, 195. The same passage is cited in Louis Emile Edmond Duranty, 'The new painting: Concerning a group of artists exhibiting at the Durand–Ruel Galleries', in Charles S. Moffet, *The New Painting: Impressionism 1874–1886,* Oxford, 1986, 37–47 (46).
17 Paul Duro, 'Une impulsion vigoureuse aux travaux d'art: La création du Musée des copies', in Jacques Guillerme (ed.), *Les Collections: Fables et Programmes,* Paris, 1993, 283–8.
18 Martha de Fels, *Vie de Claude Monet,* Paris, 1929, 64; and Charles Clément, *Gleyre: étude biographique et critique avec un catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre du maître,* Paris, 1878, 172.
19 Thomas Couture, *Méthode et entretiens d'atelier,* Paris, 1867, 79.
20 See Stephen Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary,* Chapel Hill, NC, 1987.
21 Maria H. Loh, 'New and improved: Repetition as originality in Italian baroque practice and theory', *Art Bulletin,* 86:3, 2004, 477–504 (478); and Matthew Potolsky, *Mimesis,* New York and London, 2006, 2.
22 Mary D. Garrard, 'Artemesia Gentileschi's Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting', *Art Bulletin,* 62: 1, 1980, 97–112.
23 Quoted by Enrique Dussel, 'Beyond Eurocentrism: The world-system and the limits of modernity', in Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (eds), *The Cultures of Globalization,* Durham, NC and London, 1998, 3–31 (3).
24 William Rubin (ed.), *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern,* 2 vols, New York and Boston, MA, 1984.
25 An exhibition caption reads in part: 'Picasso's grasp of the informing principles of tribal sculpture . . . reflect his profound identity of spirit with the tribal peoples'. Cited in James Clifford, 'Histories of the tribal and the modern', *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art,* London and Cambridge, MA, 1988, 189–214 (191).
26 As Clifford recognizes, 'The catalogue succeeds in demonstrating not any essential affinity between the tribal and the modern . . . but rather the restless desire and power of the Modern West to collect the world'. Clifford, 'Histories of the tribal and the modern', 195–6.
27 For incisive comment on art and globalism, see Keith Moxey, 'A "virtual cosmopolis": Partha Mitter in conversation with Keith Moxey', *Art Bulletin,* 95: 3, 2013, 381–92.
28 Okwui Enwezor, 'Keynote Address', Association of Art Historians Annual Conference, 11–13 April 2013, University of Reading, UK.
29 Keith Moxey has noted that a European art history functions poorly when confronted with 'the incommensurability of global cultures and the distinctiveness of their approaches to the past'. Moxey in James Elkins, Zhivka Valiavicharska and Alice Kim (eds), *Art and Globalization,* University Park, PA, 2010, 18.
30 Okwui Enwezor, 'The Black Box', in *Documenta11_Platform 5: Exhibition Catalogue,* Kassel, Germany, 8 June–15 September 2002, Ostfildern Ruit, 2002, 42–55 (42). On subalternism see Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Minorities histories, subaltern pasts' in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* Princeton, NJ, 2000. For further comment see James Elkins (ed.), *Is Art History Global?* New York and London, 2007, 228; also see McLean, 'The world art artworld', *World Art,* 1: 2, 2011, 161–9.
31 Terry Smith, 'Currents of world-making in contemporary art', *World Art,* 1: 2, 2011, 171–88 (174).
32 Agustin Pérez Rubio, 'Georges Adéagbo, a subversive mission', in Octavio Zaya (ed.), *Georges Adéagbo, La Mission y los Missioneros/The Mission and the Missionaries,* Milan, 2012, 11–13 (12).
33 Octavio Zaya, 'The mission and the missionaries', in *Georges Adéagbo,* 136–44 (144).
34 Carlos Basualdo, 'The Encyclopedia of Babel', in *Documenta11_Platform 5: Exhibition Catalogue,* 56–62 (56).
35 Basualdo, 'The Encyclopedia of Babel', 56.
36 'Repetition, Emulation, and Innovation', University of California (Riverside)–California Institute of Technology Early Modern Workshop, 21–22 January 2011.
37 'Imitation, Copy, Reproduction, Replication, Repetition, and Appropriation', College Art Association Annual Conference, New York, 9–12 February 2011.
38 Pablo Picasso in conversation with Jaime Sabartès, in Bernard Ceysson, 'La copie destructive', *La Revue de l'art,* 21, 1973, 19–24 (20).
39 Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry,* New Haven and London, 1982, 45.
40 Greene, *Light in Troy,* 46.
41 For a critique of Wiley's painting see Krista Thompson, 'The sound of light: Reflections on art history in the visual culture of hip-hop', *Art Bulletin,* 91: 4, 2009, 481–505 (482).
42 Eugène-Emmanuel Amaury-Duval, *Atelier d'Ingres [1878],* new edition, introduced by Daniel Ternois, Paris, 1993, 74.
43 Amaury-Duval, *Atelier d'Ingres, 74.*
44 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry, New York, 1997;* for a study that finds little place for 'strong poets' see W. Jackson Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet,* New York, 1972.
45 'Heuristic imitations come to us advertising their derivations from the subtexts they carry with them, but having done that, they proceed to distance themselves from the subtexts and force us to recognize the poetic distance traversed.' Greene, *Light in Troy,* 40–3 (40).