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Title:
Intericonicity and Online Video Art or How Contemporary Art Is Inventing Itself?

Area:
'The Contemporary' across Disciplines

Abstract:

Today, videos originally displayed online have entered substantial areas of the art scene. In 2009 Leor Grady's video self-portrait *In Order of Appearance* (USA 2006) -previously shown on *Vimeo*- was exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institute/Washington DC. In the following year, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum hosted an exhibition entitled *YouTube Play. A Biennial of Creative Video: 25 select works* were on display. Additionally art historians are beginning to show interest. E.g. Terry Smith offers a critical debate on the online video *Everyday/Noah Takes a Photo of Himself Every Day for 6 Years* (USA 2006) by Noah Kalina in his book *What is Contemporary Art?* (2009, 205 and 209).

My talk deals with the fundamental question: Which theoretical understanding of contemporary art causes this entrance of online videos into the discourse of art? Against the backdrop of an aesthetic discourse theory (Rosen, Krüger, Preimesberger 2003), which assumes that, alongside texts on the theory of art, the images themselves also create their theory, the presentation asks for the visual discursively generated art theory of online videos.

The increased accumulation of inter-iconic references within the exhibited and discussed videos turns this phenomenon into the central focus. From this perspective, the online video proves to be characterized by an art theoretical understanding, that Rosalind Krauss called a *post-medium condition* (1999/ 2000). In order to gain knowledge of the character of the new media condition, online videos compare their own media imagery with other media imagery (e.g. film, graphical user interface) within the online video itself. Thereby they invent a specific medium and with it a new distinctive subject area of the aesthetics. In this case, intermedial image references are clearly not intended to be understood in line with Clement Greenberg's view as an aesthetic opponent to modernism (1981), but rather as a necessary visual instrument of its production.

But the online Video shows that the creation of art is not only bound up with Krauss' notion of the "reinvention of the medium" (1999), but also with the "reinvention and degradation of its mass media usage". Online Videos use intra-iconicity, which is the reference created between one online video and other online videos, to visualize critical cultural positions aimed at the medium in its mass media usage. Through the thereby

invariable presentation of self-promoting amateur videos, intra-iconic practices prove simultaneously to be a means for generating this mass-media stereotype.