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CRISES OF MEANING IN COMMUNITIES OF CREATIVE APPROPRIATION

A Case Study of the 2010 RE/Mixed Media Festival

Tom Tenney

On February 27 2010, *The New York Times* published a piece called "The Free-Appropriation Writer," in which Randy Kennedy reported on the controversy over German novelist Helene Hegemann's alleged plagiarism, and questioned whether her use of another writer's work in her novel was theft or an allowable form of "sampling" or "remix." Kennedy defined the modernist concept of the creative writer as one of "the individual trying to wrestle language, maybe even the meaning of life, from his [*sic*] soul," and asked readers to use this ideal while judging the young novelist's actions. Only after she was caught did Hegemann defend her appropriation as "remix"; however, she seemed to be portrayed in the article as a spokesperson for remix culture. Kennedy drew parallels between Hegemann and David Shields (whose masterwork of creative appropriation, *Reality Hunger*, had been released only three days earlier), placing them together on the same side of the "battle lines" between "a culture of borrowing and appropriation on one side and, on the other, copyright advocates and those who fear a steady erosion of creative protections."[1]

What struck me as unfair about this particular article was not only the blanket portrayal in the media of appropriation as an agent of cultural erosion—note the heroic language portraying defenders of copyright as "advocates" while those who appropriate add to the "erosion of creative protections"—but also the tacit equation of two wildly different styles of appropriation. Kennedy's article was just one circumstance inspiring the creation of the RE/Mixed Media Festival[2] in the spring of 2010, an event that has become an annual celebration of appropriation in the arts, approached from the artist's

perspective. As opposed to a conference, where appropriated art is only discussed, the festival seeks to provide a voice for artists in the public discourse surrounding copyright and creative appropriation by providing a venue for artists to demonstrate the legitimacy of appropriative techniques using their native language, i.e., the works themselves. The goal of the festival is to provide a response to the growing body of negative press and public opinion that equates creative appropriation with plagiarism and piracy. A primary tactic is to connect the contemporary cultural practice of remix to the rich heritage of appropriation in the arts.

What follows is a case study—a narrative inquiry into the building of the festival during its first year, 2010. As a practicing artist, a student of media history and theory, and a digital media professional, I have dedicated myself to promoting and inviting artists into a contemporary discourse that includes sharing, appropriation and the cultural commons.

Background

Over the past two decades, the proliferation of new production, reproductive, and sharing technologies has enabled authors, such as Hegemann and Shields, as well as visual artists and cultural producers at large to move easily from a modernist-metaphoric to a metonymic, multitextual order of representation through sampling and other appropriative methodologies. Indeed, Lev Manovich has called remix the "dominant aesthetics of the era of globalization, affecting and reshaping everything from music and cinema to food and fashion."[3] Kennedy's article seems to indicate a crisis of legitimation for artists who employ such methodologies. Concurrently, the culture industry seems to be experiencing a crisis of assimilation, an inability to absorb these works, creating tension between artist and industry. In this way, it may be said that these technologies have been both good and bad for artists. On the one hand, they have provided uncompli-

> The Ethics part of this book more thoroughly details the tensions Tenney alludes to here.

cated and affordable means to sample cultural objects for the purposes of aesthetic and social commentary; on the other hand, this proliferation has also led to an increased scrutiny by those with a vested interest in maintaining the economic status quo of the content creators.

As a teenager in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I learned about art through the lens of punk rock, a culture in which it seemed as though everything—music, lyrics, clothing, and attitudes—was appropriated. Jamie Reid's iconic collage imagery for The Sex Pistols was rooted in Situationist *détournement* and The New York Dolls were simply the blues dressed up in red patent leather and painted with postmodern lipstick. In 1986, I portrayed a black-leather-jacketed Hamlet in Robert Wilson's staging of Heiner Muller's *Hamletmachine*, in which Ophelia delivered lines appropriated from Karl Marx, a photograph of the author was torn in half in a nod to Barthes and Foucault, and the great Peggy Lee hit, *Is That All There Is?* was plunked out by a single finger on a piano. More than a decade later, I produced a series of midnight shows in a performance loft in downtown NYC—musical send-ups of pop culture and Giuliani-era NYC politics. The shows were a collection of cherry-picked headlines and personalities, mixing and mashing disparate fruit from the tree of the cultural zeitgeist. The performances were guided by a ten-point manifesto,[4] three of which were :

Figure 30.1 Tom Tenney portrayed a black-leather-jacketed Hamlet in Robert Wilson's 1986 staging of Heiner Muller's *Hamletmachine* (courtesy of Tom Tenney)

- Nothing is original, everything has been done before
- The world is your playground, history your library—borrow from it freely
- Creativity is placing two previously disparate elements side by side.[5]

These principles became the motivational force that led me to, and guided me through, the process of organizing the RE/Mixed Media Festival. What I discovered was not only a crisis of legitimation between industry and artist, but also one of meaning within the remix community itself.

Establishing Parameters

After recruiting three fellow artists—Emilie McDonald, Bruce Smolanoff, and Marie Mundaca—as coproducers, and creating calls for submission, one of our first tasks was to define a set of criteria for the work: Which kinds of art constitute "remix?" Without being too broad or too narrow in our definition, our primary objectives were to challenge the meanings advocated by mainstream media and interrogate the concept of "piracy," and also to explore and celebrate the position creative appropriation occupies as an aesthetic practice in the continuum of art history.

In his influential book, *Remix*, Lawrence Lessig characterizes remix culture as "Read/Write" (RW) as opposed to "Read Only" (RO), using the vernacular of today's digital technology. He defines RW culture as one in which "ordinary citizens" have the ability to transcend the role of passive media consumers, and become active producers as well. Far from being a new phenomenon, Lessig portrays RW culture as a *return* to the folk culture model dominant prior to the twentieth century when, due to the rise of technologies of reproducibility and repetition, culture became "professionalized" and RO

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See Chapter 15 for Byron Russell's discussion of a RW culture that supports remix as activism and an activity of self-expression.

became the status quo.[6] It is significant that Lessig characterizes remix culture as the restoration of something that has been *lost*, as opposed to the popular idea, reinforced in Mr. Kennedy's article, that the sharing of cultural artifacts is something new, enabled by digital tools. In my view, artists who are being playful with technology today don't seem substantially different from the amateur tinkerers who created the very media technologies that eventually led to RO culture. Further, creative appropriation in the arts has a long history, and in the twentieth century alone, appropriative practices were employed by the Cubists, Dadaists, Surrealists, Situationists, Pop Artists, and such contemporary artists as Richard Prince and Sherrie Levine, among many others.[7] What differentiates "remix culture" is, among other things, the scale of production—the degree to which anyone can participate in reusing cultural objects for individual self-expression.[8]

Lessig's portrayal of remix as "Read/Write" most closely aligned with the type of barometer we were reaching for, as it provided a characterization rather than a definition. Instead of holding each submission to a precise definition of remix, we instead decided to include work that we felt landed within the long historical continuum of creative appropriation, work that would help create a dialog between artists, scholars, policy makers, and audiences. Therefore, the parameters for acceptance became less about whether a work identified itself specifically as remix, and more about how well it asked the question: "What is remix?" The only questions we asked artists were ones that determined if their work fulfilled the most elementary definition of "creative appropriation." For example, we asked, does the work appropriate an already-existing work?[9] and, does the relationship between combined elements create a new significance not present in each element individually? We began with the idea of remix as a question in the hopes that what we would end up with was not a polemic but a creative expression of our process. While planning the festival, we encountered and considered unexpected challenges dealing with ethics, responsibility, and meaning.

Ethical Considerations

An influential work in planning the festival was Bruce Conner's 1967 film, *Report*, a found-footage collage of media coverage of the Kennedy assassination that uses appropriation to interrogate the mass media's commodification of the cultural mythology surrounding the fallen president. I had heard about the film in 2009 after seeing *A Movie*, another of Conner's film collages. *Report*, however, was unavailable for purchase, so in order to see the film at all, I had to make an appointment to view the 16mm version archived in the Performing Arts Library at Lincoln Center. *Report* is an excellent example of creative appropriation as practiced in late twentieth century experimental cinema, so when I later discovered a bootleg DVD of all of Conner's films on the Internet, I purchased it without hesitation. After receiving the disc, we included *Report* in a YouTube collection called *The Roots of Remix* that we curated in advance of the festival—a playlist designed to showcase a diverse array of appropriated art and cinema.

As far as we knew, our exhibition of *Report* mitigated neither the artistic nor the market value of the film; our intention was to cultivate an awareness of the artist and

his work, and provide a historical context for what we refer to today as remix. A month before the festival, I received an email from YouTube informing me that the video had been "disabled . . . as a result of a third-party notification from Jean Conner [Conner's widow], Trustee of the Conner Family Trust claiming that this material is infringing."[10] While this action was certainly Ms. Conner's right under the law, one wonders why she would object to a fan's attempt to bring her late husband's work to a public that may have never seen it, and one that, further, had little *possibility* of seeing it due to its unavailability in the marketplace. My conclusion was that Conner's demand was not about money, but about maintaining *control* over the use of—and therefore the cultural *meaning* of—the work; for once an object is liberated from the purview of the creator and becomes part of the cultural archive, its meaning and relevance are then measured by the public discourse surrounding it.[11] Certainly, contextualizing the film as an antecedent of remix culture couldn't have been intended by the artist. However, there seemed to be an inherent inconsistency in restricting access to a film that was largely created by reassembling newsreel footage.[12] Nevertheless, this incident raised the issue of ownership from a personal, ethical perspective. Our feeling was that this kind of "piracy" respected the work, and could only lead to expanded interest in Conner's body of work. Such an act can be compared to the work of collectors in the 1940s and 1950s who repressed jazz recordings to preserve them from fading into obscurity.[13] Similarly, my intent as a proponent of creative appropriation was to uphold such historical examples in the hope that they would serve as both inspiration to artists, and precedent in the argument for creative reuse of cultural artifacts.

Another ethical question we faced in the planning stages was whether to charge audiences to attend. There is an unavoidable conundrum in setting an admission fee for an event that centers on work appropriated from copyrighted material. Of course, we wanted to recoup our production costs, but were unclear on whether doing so would create ethical, or even legal, complications. Perhaps more importantly, we had to consider and preserve the relationship between remix culture and the gift economy. Ultimately, each and every work that we were presenting relied and drew upon the idea of a "cultural commons," a principle that culture belongs to everyone and no one, and that commercial interests—those that would build a pecuniary fence around art—were destroying the ability of others to create. This is not to say that a work cannot simultaneously exist in both a market and a gift economy at once. Lewis Hyde articulates this dialectical aspect of the gift economy: "Even if we've paid a fee at the door of the museum or concert hall, when we are touched by a work of art something comes to us that has nothing to do with the price."[14] Eventually, we decided to keep the event free for the first year, prioritizing sharing with a wide audience over recouping our costs. This decision seemed to make the most sense in terms of both demonstrating our commitment to the cultural commons, and maximizing the size of our audience, critical in launching an event of this scale.[15]

Artists and Collaborators

Because digital technologies that characterize the work of "remix culture" are, by and large, video and audio technologies, it followed that these constituted the bulk of the submissions we received. Finding works that represented the other arts required more effort and outreach on our part. Our objective was to present remix in ways that audiences might find surprising or unexpected, throughout the 11 hours of festival

programming. What follows are descriptions of selected events[16] that represent the over-all experience, listed in chronological order of presentation.

Video Program: Remixing Politics and Culture

The first presentation following the keynote was a collection of six videos offering political and social commentary on contemporary culture and politics. Elisa Kreisinger, a remixer from Boston, presented a radical reedit of *Sex and the City* clips entitled *Sex and the Remix* (or, *The Queering of Carrie*), Jonathan McIntosh's video, *So You Think You Can Be President* mashed up the Obama/McCain debates as an *American Idol*-esque reality show, and Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung's *In G.O.D. We Trust* was a stop-motion animation made entirely with images found through Google image search. Other artists screened during this program were Desiree D'Alessandro, Seth Indigo Carnes, and Kat Green.

"Artists Only" Panel on Appropriation, Remix, and Copyright, Moderated by Deanna Zandt

Moby, a popular electronic musician, has been a vocal advocate for copyright reform for several years. At the time of the festival, he had recently launched a website[17] providing independent filmmakers with free access to his music for use in their soundtracks.

Figure 30.2 Jonathan McIntosh mashes up the Obama/McCain debate as an *American Idol-esque* reality show in *So You Think You Can Be President.* Screen shots from YouTube (courtesy of Jonathan McIntosh)

Including Moby in the festival drew a diverse audience, and his new site was a salient topic of conversation for a panel discussion among artists. Other artists who similarly advocated sharing and copyright reform included Elisa Kreisinger, Seth Indigo Carnes, Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung, and music journalist Christopher Weingarten. However, with so many artists on the same side of the philosophical divide, there was a danger of the discussion becoming doctrinaire, exactly the situation we were trying to avoid. For this reason, we recruited two artists willing to represent a viewpoint that favored stronger copyright protections. Kait Kerrigan and Brian Lowdermilk, two New York City performers who run a website[18] for composers who provide self-published sheet music to musicians for a licensing fee. Their stories provided an intelligent and measured counterpoint to the others. During the 40-minute debate, both sides presented compelling arguments, with Moby referring to copyright as a "strange and antiquated idea," and Kerrigan/Lowdermilk arguing for stronger protections for artists. Elisa Kreisinger offered the centrist viewpoint that copyright is "great when it protects—and it protects [the remixer] with fair use."[19]

Man with a Movie Camera: The Global Remake

Perry Bard is a New York City artist who works on interdisciplinary collaborations for public space. Her Web-based project, begun in 2007 and titled *Man with a Movie Camera: The Global Remake*, invites Web users to remake scenes from Vertov's 1929 silent film, *Man with a Movie Camera*, and upload them to a database. She describes the project as:

> A participatory video shot by people around the world who are invited to record images interpreting the original script of Vertov's *Man With A Movie Camera* and upload them to this site. Software developed specifically for this project archives, sequences, and streams the submissions as a film. Anyone can upload footage. When the work streams, your contribution becomes part of a worldwide montage, in Vertov's terms the "decoding of life as it is."[20]

Figure 30.3 Perry Bard's *Man with a Movie Camera: The Global Remake*, invites Web users to remake scenes from Vertov's 1929 silent film. Screen shot from YouTube (courtesy of Perry Bard)

Because the project allows for multiple users to upload the same scene, the software randomly selects one interpretation of each scene and then stitches together a new result for each screening, which is shown side by side with Vertov's original film. The result points to a kind of remix that falls outside even the most radical definitions. Bard's project represents a work where the concept of the author is not only thrown into question, but must be applied to hundreds of artists simultaneously. While Eduardo Navas's classification of "regenerative remix"[21] seems to come closest to describing this type of work, it differs in that no single artistic vision is at play, but rather oscillates between a collaboratively created *work* and an algorithmic *process*. This "algorithm-as-selector"[22] methodology could perhaps more accurately be called "generative" or "procedural" remix, with the artist assuming the role of programmer, and computer processes stepping into the role of author.

Extending Game Culture Panel

Moderated by media professor Josephine Dorado, this panel explored emergent forms of expression sparked by innovations within the game industry and gamer communities. From the release of tools to make user-created content such as custom avatars and maps, to the addition of filmmaking tools, the discussion focused on the large opening that has formed in digital media through which gamers are showing that they are not just passive consumers, but engaged media makers. Panel members included Michael Nitsche, Jesper Juul, Bit Shifter, and ILL Clan.

Video Remix Competition Screenings

As an incentive for participation, the films and videos received through our website submission process were entered into a competition judged by a panel of artists chosen by us—although neither I nor any of the producers were on the panel—with the winner to receive a cash prize of $500. We were delighted with the variety of films we received. Ten advanced to the final round of judging at the festival, a few of which are described below.[23]

Jake Gyllenhaal Challenges the Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize by Diran Lyons mashed up Gyllenhaal's characters from *Donnie Darko* and *Jarhead*, who are seen interrogating Barack Obama on the legitimacy of his Nobel Peace Prize. Of the video finalists, this was an excellent representation of a remix that employs techniques of radical reediting and recontexualization as a method of overt social critique.

Western by Lili White was the longest and most complex of the videos presented in the competition. White's film is a collage of found footage from spaghetti Westerns and original footage of the American Southwest. The soundtrack layers traditional cowboy music over soundtracks of Western films. Throughout, a voiceover tells the story of a filmmaker who dons a military uniform in order to gain passage to the occupied region in Palestine. The layering of multiple meanings serves to reveal a parallel between the American genocide of Native Americans, and the current political struggle in Israel and Palestine.

In *Helping Johnny Remember* by Ashleigh Nankivell, the artist used only one video as a source—an educational film from the 1950s about cooperation and sharing. The originality of the film comes from Nankivell's use of Adobe After Effects to transform

JAKE GYLLENHAAL CHALLENGES THE WINNER OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
A POLITICAL REMIX VIDEO BY DIRAN LYONS

Figure 30.4 *Jake Gyllenhaal Challenges the Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize* by Diran Lyons is a mashup of Gyllenhaal's characters from *Donnie Darko* and *Jarhead* (courtesy of Diran Lyons)

the children in the film, who complain about the title character's unwillingness to share, into little monsters and demons. In this light, Johnny is seen as an antihero, a rebel loner—an apt, if clichéd, metaphor for the "misunderstood artist." At the end of the film, Johnny exacts his revenge by firing laser beams from his eyes and decimating his classmates, who disappear in spectacular explosions, or shatter like glass into the ether. The film ends with Johnny smiling knowingly to the audience, as he continues to play with his toys alone.

Sweatshoppe

Sweatshoppe was a multimedia performance collaboration between Bruno Levy and Blake Shaw at the intersection of art, music, and technology. The two developed software to construct a 3D visual remix[24] composed of found images, film clips, and vector shapes. The projected visuals were reactive to the electronic music being mixed in real time by the two artists on laptops, both wearing insect masks. The performance represented a remix of different media types and a blending of the languages of representation. These included cinematographic techniques applied to layers of video, photography, and vector graphics, that responded to sound stimulus, all in real time, and all mixed within the metamedium of the laptop computer—a phenomenon Lev Manovich refers to as "deep remixability."[25]

Steinski

Another notable remixer that we recruited was Steven Stein, aka Steinski, a music producer widely known for his analog tape collages in the 1980s such as *The Payoff Mix, Lesson 2 (The James Brown Mix)* with his partner Double Dee. We booked him as the last act of the evening, and he remixed music and visuals simultaneously, providing an energetic culmination of a long day.

Crises of Meaning

Since our festival was, at least in part, a theatrical event, we planned to remix a historical event surrounding the first screening of Joseph Cornell's film, *Rose Hobart*—an early example of appropriation in film (and a prototype of the fan-video). In the mid-1930s, Cornell reedited found footage from the 1931 film *East of Borneo* into a 20-minute tribute to the film's star, Rose Hobart, with whom he was allegedly obsessed. Cornell originally screened the film through a filter of blue glass, and replaced the soundtrack with two tracks by Brazilian composer Nestor Amaral. *Rose Hobart* premiered in 1936 in New York City at the Julien Levy gallery on Madison Avenue. Salvador Dali was in the audience and, according to Cornell's biographer, he felt a moment of zeitgeist during the viewing:

> Halfway through the movie, there was a loud crash as the projector was overturned. "Salaud!" came from Dali, which was tantamount to calling Cornell a skunk. Levy yelled for lights . . . After [Dali's] anger had subsided, he lamented to Julien Levy: "My idea for a film is exactly that, and I was going to propose it to someone who would pay to have it made . . . I never wrote it or told anyone, but it is as if he had stolen it."[26]

For the role of Dali, we enlisted performance artist Will "Master" Lee, who is well known in downtown Manhattan performance circles for his off-the-wall portrayals of the bombastic Spanish surrealist. The audience received no indication that this would be a reenactment other than a short sentence in the program and a prop movie projector fashioned from a cardboard box that was placed unobtrusively on the stage, in front of and below the screen. Cornell's film played to a seemingly appreciative audience who, about three-quarters of the way into the film, began to take notice of the agitated rumblings from a man with a flamboyant mustache who sat among them. Suddenly, Master Lee exploded from his seat, rushed onto the stage, dutifully knocked over our prop projector, and launched into a postmodern remix of Dali's tirade. Lee was sure to include all the original elements of Dali's rant but added his own performative embellishments as well. Valmont Sprout, another performance artist, accompanied Lee on stage with an improvised interpretive dance.

After the initial shock, most of the audience realized that this was, in fact, all part of the performance. However, a few moments after Lee stormed the stage, a woman left her seat and approached me in the back—she was a representative from one of our partner organizations who had been peripherally involved in the planning of some of the festival's events. Sounding slightly panicked, she asked what was going on and whether I could do something about this interruption. I reassured her that it was all part of the performance, but she was resistant, and insisted that I remove him from the stage, before angrily making her way back to her seat.

This incident, which ended up being an unintended *enhancement* to the performance, was also a reminder that the value of remix does not rely only on a consensus of definition, but on a negotiation of *cultural meaning* as well. In *The Wealth of Networks*, Yochai Benkler wrote,

> Culture [is not] a fixed artifact. It is the product of a dynamic process of engagement among those who make up a culture. It is a frame of meaning from within

which we must inevitably function and speak to each other, and whose terms, constraints, and affordances we always negotiate.[27]

The woman's reaction to our carefully staged stunt was marginally upsetting to me as a theatrical producer. However, it served as a reminder of the reasons for producing the festival in the first place. In order for free culture advocates—artists, producers, scholars, and activists—to challenge the culture industry's monopoly on meaning, we must first be able to negotiate these meanings among ourselves. This doesn't mean that we always need to agree on definitions, only that a plurality of meanings should be accepted and understood.

Another incident that reinforced this point occurred on the morning of the first day of the festival. While preparing to leave for the venue, I received an email from one of the judges of the video competition, a video remixer known for his satirical political video remixes, who sent a note responding to my request from the judges for their final votes on the video competition. The email read:

> Are these all by a bunch of guys? Not a very good representation of the vast array of styles of remix videos that are out there at all. Honestly I kinda hate most of these, no hard feelings but these represent basically all the stuff I'm trying so hard to work against with my remix videos and advocacy work for fair use. Where are the vidders[28] for instance? I would say my choices are . . .
> (1) *Jake Gyllenhaal Challenges the Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize*
> (2–5) I can't stand to watch all the way through.
> Hope that does not mess up your scoring.[29]

In reality, five out of the ten remixes in the competition were by women, or had a woman as a primary artist. Of greater concern was his accusation that the videos didn't represent a variety of styles of remix. Aesthetic heterogeneity had become of such critical importance to me and the other producers, it had become one of our guiding principles. Finally, I can understand someone simply not liking a particular remix, or even a certain style, but was this artist really trying to "*work against*" them? And what, exactly, could that mean?

This reaction seems to be indicative of a crisis of meaning on a level deeper than simple opinion. The ten videos he was asked to watch were chosen precisely *for* their uniqueness and diversity of style, and although they may not have aligned with this artist's practice—i.e., subverting media objects with the overt intention of achieving a critique of culture or politics—I would argue that simply transforming a cultural artifact is a creative act that also contains within it, inherently, an element of subversion. I believe this for two reasons: (1) a remix, regardless of its political intentions, is the manipulation of a sign in a way that was not intended, subverting the original meaning and bringing about a unique expression of the work; and (2) it also constitutes subversion because, under the current copyright regime in the US, remix is an intentional act of cultural disobedience which asserts the agency of the artist within a cultural milieu that is increasingly prohibitive to this type of act. Looked at from this perspective, even the least political remix can become a profoundly political act.

Both of these incidents served to illustrate one category of complexity that the RE/Mixed Media Festival continues to address—the internal disconnect among the ranks

of remix culture. As previously stated, it's not necessary that every artist fall in line behind a singular aesthetic or political perspective. However, an acknowledgement of the variety of ways appropriation has been, and continues to be, used as an aesthetic practice may go a long way towards an understanding of its diversity of meaning in contemporary culture.

Conclusions

Since the inaugural event in 2010, the RE/Mixed Media Festival has undergone two subsequent iterations, each attracting more artists and audience than the last. The progression we have seen—not only in numbers, but in the variety and level of innovation of the artists—has been remarkable. With somewhat less of an emphasis on film and video, the 2011 and 2012 editions of the festival have broadened to include hacker/maker workshops, interactive installations, sculpture, sound art, and theater. Panels have included discussions on remix in literature, hip hop as cultural intervention, and talking back to pop culture through video remix, among many others.

In 2011, Congress's introduction of the SOPA and PIPA bills[30] and the resulting controversy had the positive effect of elevating public awareness of the implications of more stringent copyright regulations, allowing us to continue to challenge hegemonic definitions of terms like piracy and file sharing, which resulted in stronger interest and support from audiences and artists alike. These developments have certainly helped to heal what I have observed to be a lack of consensus on the saliency of remix as a cultural praxis. Additionally, as global market concerns have caused other nations to examine their own copyright laws, interest in sensible reform has become a worldwide concern. For the first time, in 2012, the RE/Mixed Media Festival hosted a total of 18 international artists, representing over one-third of our total roster for that year. We continue to program on a "cross-pollination" model so that each year audiences who come for a specific performance or panel are exposed to several other ideas in the process. In our view, this is how social evolution occurs and culture advances—and how we hope remix and creative appropriation will ultimately be redeemed as a legitimate artistic practice in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1 Randy Kennedy, "The Free-Appropriation Writer," *The New York Times*, February 27, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/weekinreview/28kennedy.html.

2 The presentation of the name—RE/Mixed Media Festival—pays homage to V. Vale and Andrea Juno, founders of RE/Search Publications. Since the early 1980s, RE/Search has been publishing books on a variety of underground artists and countercultural trend—books that have helped shape my own aesthetic and to which my interest in remix owes a tremendous debt.

3 Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 267.

4 Tom Tenney, "Jarmusch's Golden Rules v. Grindhouse Manifesto," Inc.ongruo.us, May 1, 2010, http://inc.ongruo.us/2010/05/01/jarmuschs-golden-rules-v-grindhouse-manifesto.

5 This point was an unintentional paraphrase of Comte de Lautréaumont who, in 1869, wrote, in *The Songs of Maldoror*, "As beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table." The phrase was popularized by the surrealist Andre Breton, and is misattributed to him in Jonathan Lethem's February 2007 article in *Harper's*, "The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism."

6 Lawrence Lessig, *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 28–31.

7 Kembrew McLeod, *Owning Culture: Authorship, Ownership, and Intellectual Property Law* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 126–145.

8 Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 293.

9 As opposed to a genre or style, in which case we'd consider it more a hybrid form than a remix.

10 Personal correspondence, April 30, 2010.

11 Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks*, 285–294.

12 Conner did not use footage from the Zapruder film, as is sometimes assumed.

13 Alex Sayf Cummings, *Democracy of Sound: Music Piracy and the Remaking of American Copyright in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 35–62.

14 Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2007), xiv.

15 As this is not a sustainable model without major funding, it has changed in the interceding years. We do now charge a nominal admission fee for the festival, which provides access to everything at the event. No separate admission is charged for any single performance, exhibit, or presentation.

16 A PDF of the full program can be downloaded from http://www.remixnyc.com/2010-Program (accessed August 15, 2014).

17 Moby, *Mobygratis: Music for Independent Film Makers*, http://www.mobygratis.com.

18 New Musical Theatre, http://www.newmusicaltheatre.com.

19 RE/Mixed Media Festival, "Tweets from the 2010 RE/Mixed Media Festival," http://remixnyc.com/tweets-from-the-2010-remixed-media-festival.

20 Perry Bard, "Man with a Movie Camera," http://dziga.perrybard.net.

21 Eduardo Navas, *Remix Theory: The Aesthetics of Sampling* (New York: Springer, 2012), 73.

22 Selector is the Jamaican term for DJ. I actually prefer selector to the American term as it's both more descriptive of its function and more appropriate in its application to other, nonmusic, media.

23 All of the video finalists can be viewed at http://www.remixnyc.com.

24 3D glasses were distributed to the audience.

25 Lev Manovich, *Software Takes Command*, 267–277. Manovich defines "deep remixability" as the combining not only of media content, but also of the languages, techniques, and methodologies used to create their means of expression.

26 Deborah Solomon, *Utopia Parkway: The Life and Work of Joseph Cornell* (London: Pimlico, 1997), 87–89.

27 Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks*, 282.

28 Vidding refers to the fan practice of constructing new music videos from clips of a movie or television show. See Francesca Coppa, "An Editing Room of One's Own: Vidding as Women's Work," *Camera Obscura* 26, no. 77 (2011).

29 Anonymous, personal correspondence, May 10, 2010.

30 The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Protect IP Act (PIPA) were legislative bills whose ostensible purpose was to restrict foreign websites from providing illegal content. However, provisions included in both bills allowed for the removal of non-infringing Web content as well, including political and other forms of protected speech.

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