

Copies Copies Copies

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ATE 3 The Art Museum as an Educator: Interpreting Art for Educator

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Copies Copies Copies

“Good artists copy, great artists steal” joked famed cubism artist Pablo Picasso but what was it that he meant by this? To copy someone means to reproduce something similar or identical to something else. By this definition, artists copy all the time and promote copying, by drawing through observation, parodying ancient works, or parodying famous pieces. This raises the question, is art made less “valuable” if it is copied from another piece? To continue, do the ownership and branding of the piece by the artist create the art rather than the visible image? This also raises the question “Why do artists copy?” The proposed museum exhibit *Copies Copies Copies* seeks to have guests ask these and personally answer these questions, by allowing them to engage in a visual analysis of varying levels of copied artwork, create their own copies of the work in this exhibit and provide context to copied works. *Copies Copies Copies* strives to achieve this learning using works from local artists, and by providing engaging activities and opportunities for viewers to create and display their art.

Purpose and Goals

This exhibit seeks to open a discussion of copying and ownership in the current art world. Artists copy works for numerous reasons, to help build a specific skill, to provide modern discussion using past imagery, to show irony, etc. Many art schools and classes require students to copy a reference to help students learn new skills, would this make their art less than that of the original? Does copying diminish the meaning of a piece? These are the core questions of this exhibit, while not being directly asked by the docent or exhibit information will be answered by the viewer, personally, through the artwork they will create in this exhibit, or through their words in their poetry created at the end of this exhibit. Much of public opinion finds copies to not be art, and often passes it off as such, rather than researching its contribution to the artist or

conversation the piece is a part of, an example being the current analysis of Roy Lichtenstein, a pivotal Pop Art artist as some of his works have been copies (Sooke, 2014). This exhibit, through the art of local artists and forcing viewers to create a copy of their own, intends to have viewers think about the context of copied works so that they can view them as individual pieces.

Ownership is also discussed in this context as viewers will learn to associate the copies with the current artists, rather than automatically naming the original piece and artist.

Involvement and Audience

This exhibit will compose of a small team as it is a tiny show. A combination of curators, art historians, and art educators would be the optimal occupations for those involved with this project as they would provide the knowledge needed for visual and historical analysis and context of the art presented in this exhibit, as well as have an understanding ways to present art-centric information and vocabulary to an audience that has never been acquainted with these ideas, processes, and terms. Local artist involvement is crucial to the message of this exhibit, as it presents artwork from different artistic levels of ability and provides a less intimidating presence for viewers to create their work in. This exhibit plans for viewers of all ages and all art backgrounds, providing an opportunity for learning for those who are not art aligned, and a space for the application of knowledge and analysis of works for those who study art. The activities provided majorly consist of guided drawing and coloring, intended to be highly engaging to younger viewers and be a less intimidating form of creation for the average viewer.

Materials & Space

As previously stated, this exhibit heavily relies on the work of local artists. A curation of about thirteen works has already been collected to display in a gallery space. These pieces were collected from four Long Island University art education majors with six pieces from artist

Loredana Citizen titled *The Girl with the Dinosaur Earring*, *Lizard with Bugs*, *Sumer Woman Copy*, and *Matisse Drawing Copy*, three pieces from artist Allison Zabransky titled *Vermeer Copy*, *Dad Portrait*, and *Woman with a Cigarette*, two pieces from artist Stephanie Veitsman titled *Distracted* and *Profile Study* and one piece from artist Roselie Bongiovi titled *2022*¹. Their works were selected both through the quantity that matched the theme of this exhibit, and variety of ways in which the referenced work was copied to provide a “spectrum of copying.” These works provide a variety of mediums, consisting of paintings, drawings, sketches, and sculptures. Labels will be created for these works, but will only contain the title of the piece, name of the artist, and year from which the piece was created. The gallery space should be one room consisting of two full walls, and three partition walls that form a rectangular shape with two exits². Four tables are needed for this exhibit, as they will be the locations of the worksheets given to viewers to participate in activities. There will be no encasement or boundaries for the pieces in this exhibit, to allow guests to display their art next to their piece of choice, so staff will be required to be present to keep the artworks preserved and protected. Multiple boxes of crayons, black ink pens, markers, and pencils will be needed for this exhibit, to both provide variety and replacements for damaged or stolen materials. There should be enough drawing materials to accommodate at most thirty guests, as this is the most amount of people that can be comfortably hosted in the space provided. This amount will also be reflected in the number of worksheets printed per activity, sixty seems to be the best number so that guests would be able to take more than one of each sheet should they wish to restart or create another. While this exhibit is small, a backless bench is placed in the middle of the exhibit, so that guests can view art while seated, to limit museum fatigue, and provide additional space for viewers to complete their

¹ Images will be provided in appendix

² Appendix contains layout of gallery

activities. Finally, a docent should be available to provide viewers with a fuller experience and guide them through the exhibit to answer any questions.

Movement in the Exhibit

Copies Copies Copies uses the work of local artists, to help viewers understand that artists of all levels of skill and fame copy from one another, as well as to create a less intimidating image to copy from. The space itself will be small, comprising one gallery room to have the space for viewers to walk around and participate in the activities provided to them, but limits the possible museum fatigue that guests experience. The start of the show comprises a wall dedicated to the title of the show *Copies Copies Copies* as well as the quote that started this proposal. Guests will then move to the right, a direction of movement shown to be the most common by viewers in the work *The Museum Experience* written by John Falk, where famous copies will be given to them prompting a discussion of copying throughout art history to allow for viewers to become acquainted with the discussion and vocabulary of the exhibit. This first activity is also present on this wall, an activity that requires guests to memorize an image presented to them, and then attempt to draw it when the original drawing is obscured from view. The viewer would then place their work where the original piece was, and the process would start again, using the new image as the image to remember, a visual version of the game “Telephone.” Viewers will then move on to the right to start the exhibit with “exact copies” which are images in the exhibit that are exact replicas of the original image. The images comprising this section include the following, *Summer Woman Copy* a 16x20 inch painted canvas by LIU Post artist Loredana Citizen that derives from *Summer Woman*, created by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Vermeer Copy* a 16x20 inch painted canvas by LIU Post artist Allison Zabransky that derives from *A Young Woman Seated at the Virginals* created by Johannes

Vermeer. Viewers are then presented with a cluster of three images which are all titled *Matisse Copy* comprised of a 14x17 inch cardboard sculpture, and two 18x24 inch charcoal drawings on paper by LIU Post artist Loredana Citizen that refers to *Arabesque* created by Henri Matisse, which show the progression of directly copying an original piece, to creating inspired work. Viewers are then presented with two worksheets to take with them for the remainder of the exhibition, one asking viewers to match the original artwork to the copy shown to them in the exhibit, and another asking them to copy a work shown in the exhibit, that further prompts viewers to hang their copy around the piece that they drew. These worksheets allow viewers to participate in the exhibit in the same way that artists have, by creating a copy based on a piece that inspired them and hanging it up in the gallery next to the original work. Viewers will then move to the wall opposite them, which is filled with the following works, *2022*, a 16x20 inch painted canvas by LIU Post artist Roselie Bongiovi, *The Girl With the Dinosaur Earring*, a 16x20 inch painted canvas by LIU Post artist Loredana Citizen, *Lizard with Bugs*, a 16x20 in painted canvas by LIU Post artist Loredana Citizen, *Dad Portrait*, a 16x20 inch canvas painted by LIU Post artist Allison Zabransky, *Woman with a Cigarette*, a 24x36 inch canvas painted by LIU Post artist Allison Zabransky, *Profile Study*, an 18x24 inch paper sketch created by LIU Post artist Stephanie Veitsman, and *Distracted* a 16x20 inch canvas painted by LIU Post artist Stephanie Veitsman that is inspired, rather than direct copies, that show how even if the image itself is not an exact replica, the processes, messages, and even color schemes behind a piece could be what is copied from an original. Along this wall are further worksheets for viewers to engage with that ask them to perform tasks such as recoloring an original work, drawing a figure in the chair of an original piece, and more along these lines of copying, and prompt viewers to place their piece next to the original once again. The conclusion of the exhibit would be a magnet

wall of both the vocabulary of the exhibit and common phrases that viewers can manipulate to create their own “magnet poetry” based on the ideas and processes that they experienced during their visit to this exhibit. This allows for both literary participation for those who may be less inclined to participate in the drawing used throughout the exhibit, and to gauge how guests understand the exhibit, by reading their thoughts through their poems. A digital survey will also be presented to guests at the end of this exhibit for them to fill on their personal devices. This exhibit will have a docent available to guide viewers through the intended order of the exhibit, and guidance for the activities given to guests. Docents will be able to address the following during the walkthrough; famous copies in art history, the different elements that causes artists to copy, why artists make direct copies, the context that causes artists to create inspired work, how the art community benefits from copies, how ownership makes a work separate from the original. Arrows are also placed on the floor of the exhibit to help guests independently make their way around the exhibit in its intended order.

Expected Viewer Participation

While the activities are optional to the viewer, it will be implied by docents that they are critical to gaining the full experience of the exhibit, as they subtly force viewers to create their own artwork through copying. These activities also provide small feedback on the effectiveness of the exhibit's ability to reach its goals, by showing a viewer's understanding of the tasks given to them through drawings, which provide different observational clues than that of a written survey as drawings unlike words in this instance would not be hyperbole. To gain more direct feedback from guests and their experience with the exhibit, a survey will be given for them to complete individually over the phone. To possible motivate viewers to complete their surveys, they will be prompted to upload their drawing into the survey, to be entered in the “Featured

Copy of the Week” for our exhibit, which gives their piece a place in the exhibit for a week that future viewers will analyze with the other works in the exhibit.

The Future of Copies Copies Copies

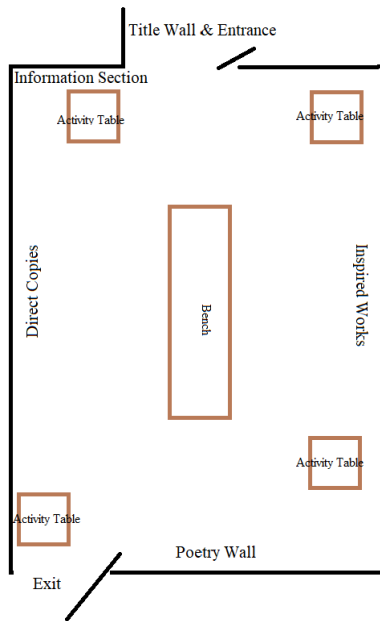
While this exhibit is currently being planned to occupy museum space indefinitely, it would be best to treat it as and plan for it to be a traveling exhibit. Core pieces will be collected to travel to other museums, such as Citizen’s *Matisse Copy* series as it shows the spectrum of copies, however, new pieces will need to be collected by curators in the areas in which this exhibit is being held. Museums will have the option to work in hand with this exhibit team to create a more permanent installation, being put in contact with the artists whose work was chosen so that they could build an exhibit that matches the themes of *Copies Copies Copies*. Allowing *Copies Copies Copies* to travel provides to experience to more communities, brings exposure to more modern artists which increases the museum's engagement with its local community. *Copies Copies Copies* plans to keep admission included in a museums base rate admission to not deter potential viewers due to additional costs.

Discussion

Copies Copies Copies is an exhibit that seeks to collaborate with local artists to teach viewers about copied works in the art world, their impact on modern art discussions, and discuss the concept of ownership over pieces. Viewers will be touring a small gallery room full of thirteen pieces with the optional guidance of a docent and observing a range of copied works that start with direct copies and ends with heavily inspired copies. Viewers will then have the opportunity to engage in activities that will prompt them to create and display their own copied pieces. The curation of works from local artists is crucial for this exhibit as it engages the community as well as create a less intimidating space for viewers to create their own works in.

To further guest engagement and feedback, guests will be able to create their own “magnet poems” to display using words the lessons that they gained from this as well as complete a digital survey to display their experiences within the exhibit. Motivation for completion of the activities is through the opportunity for guests to temporarily display their art next to the work being displayed, making guest art become part of the exhibit itself, along with the range in difficulty for the activities, ranging from recoloring an image to recreating a displayed work of art. Motivation for the completion of the survey is given through guests submitting their copies in the survey to enter in a raffle to win “Copy of the Week” allowing for their copy to be a more permanent work in *Copies Copies Copies* and be analyzed with the works of local artists over the course of seven days. *Copies Copies Copies* seeks to have guests be able to answer why artists copy, how ownership contributes to the impact of a piece, and how current copies contribute to the discussions being held in the art community through providing the context, vocabulary, and visual analysis copied works.

Appendix



Floor Plan of *Copies Copies Copies*



Lizard with Bugs Loredana Citizen



Girl with the Dinosaur Earring Loredana Citizen



Summer Woman Copy Loredana Citizen



Matisse Drawing Copy Loredana Citizen



2022 Roselie Bongiovi



Distracted Stephanie Veitsman



Profile Study Stephanie Veitsman



Vermeer Copy Allison Zabransky



Dad Portrait Allison Zabransky



Girl with a Cigarette Allison Zabransky

References

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