

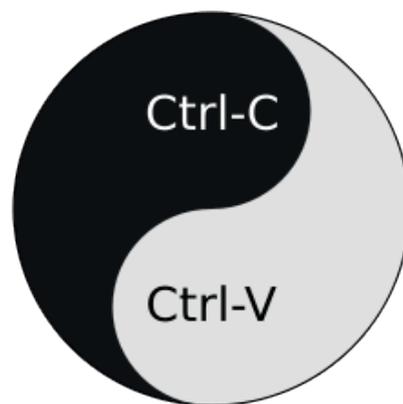
IV

Copy Paste Culture

3.10.2017 — 3.11.2017

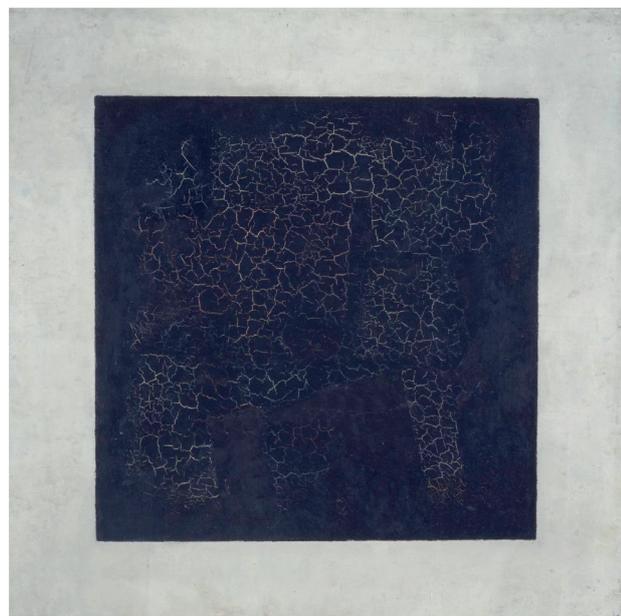
The fourth exhibition featured in Athamor №5 presents four projects which rely in different ways on appropriation practices such as the copy or the remix, in order to propose new — yet mediated by the original — artistic contents. Appropriation art has a long history, often mistaken for plagiarism or quickly discarded as less valuable than its point of reference, rarely considered as a creative process per se.

The concept of copy seems to undergo a similar destiny, at least in the last two centuries. On the contrary, it performed a major role in ancient times, when the act of copying was not only common but also promoted as important and — as other idealized activities — invested with religious implication: the term itself copy comes from Latin *Copia*, the goddess symbolizing abundance and copiousness. Quite a bit later, and after 150 years of industrial and mechanical reproduction, Walter Benjamin stated that no matter how perfect a copy could be, it would still miss the aura, meaning originality and authenticity — intrinsic qualities of a work of art.



One of the sacred symbols for Kopimism advocates

In our hypertextual world, in which every instance appears to be the copy of a copy, a baudrillardian *simulacrum* with neither origin nor end, this aura “is no longer based on the permanence of the ‘original’, but on the transience of the copy”.¹ To produce a digital copy is an effortless process simply achieved by a keyboard shortcut, and the practical gesture leaves space to its symbolic and conceptual connotation, to such an extent that it is nowadays possible to embrace the Missionary Church of Kopimism², whose foundations are free access to knowledge and artistic copy.

Kazimir Malevich, *The Black Square*, 1915

tation) over a static element (the painting), he is quoting Malevich himself: “It is from zero, in zero, that the true movement of being begins.”

Carla Rak, *Collage #1*, 2016 (frame)

First shown in 1915, Malevich’s *The Black Square* was hung at the left corner of the exhibition room, a position reserved to religious icons in traditional Russian culture. This intentional choice gave even more strength to a painting which, unlike icons, does not represent, as conceived expressly non-representational. A zero degree in art history, able to draw a path for the following art in the 20th century. Nevertheless — as the title itself suggests — this artwork still represents something, a shape we recognize as a square. Dealing with this implicit statement, Kasper Lecnim simply takes over Malevich’s form and transform it into another. Lecnim’s appropriation is both visible in the outcome and in the process. By applying a dynamic action (ro-

Carla Rak’s *Collage #1* deals with the appropriation of existing materials and provides them a new context, connecting them with the crochet technique. Like other manual techniques, this is based on a constant repetition of a limited set of gestures. Repetition is a founding mechanism in many rituals, facilitating abstraction and meditation. During the obsessive and repetitive act of crochet, hand movements are combined with a more hidden and secret mental activity, expressed by a picture-in-picture video. The intimate and silent world of manual labour clashes with partially blacked-out footage of hunting and space. This depiction of violence and infinity questions our understanding of the bigger picture, and suggests

to focus instead on comforting, familiar gestures, such as the crochet itself. The audio track, from the 1974 movie *Un homme qui dort*, stresses the importance of the repetitive practice as a pondering act.



Sergej Ėjzenštejn, *Battleship Potemkin*, 1925 (frame)

Nicholas Lockyer's collage work *Tombstone* features frames from John Wayne's first and last Western movies.³ This affection towards cinema is reflected in the artistic process chosen by Lockyer, which resembles the juxtaposition largely used by Russian director Sergej Ėjzenštejn in his 20th century masterpieces.⁴ This "theory of attraction assembly" intends to shock and induce in viewers' thoughts the formation of new images. Gathering together several references, Lockyer acts in the same way, since "as undefined forms become cut up, glued and juxtaposed, new variations are crafted forming new worlds, creatures and environments".⁵



Zip file system icon of macOS 10.12 Sierra

Opening Fold, by Italian artist Alberto Cuteri, calls into question the concept of online and offline as a parody of the idea of public and private sphere. In order to experience the work hosted on the online exhibition the viewer has to paradoxically download it on a computer. Inside the compressed file — in a file universe conceived by the artist — multiple artworks are collected, focusing on different aspects of the connection between user and network and all its possible contradictions. For instance, Internet Diary contains a collection of web pages saved as PDFs; while Mix contains a series of artist's interventions on PDF web pages. Overprints is a series of web pages printed one on top of each other on the same sheet of paper, and Thumbnail Cache is a vast collection of images unexpectedly retrieved by the artist on

his laptop. As a “cyberflâneur”,⁶ Cuteri claims for his own piece of network-land where to upload his digital wunderkammer, but access to this collection is granted only after a subsequent download. The way users retrieve any information, or artwork, from the downloaded folder resembles more an Internet dérive than a conscious method to browse folders and drives.

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- 1 Hito Steyerl, “In Defence of the Poor Image”, e-flux journal 10, November 2009, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>
- 2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missionary_Church_of_Kopimism
- 3 *The Big Trail* (1930) and *The Shootist* (1976)
- 4 Especially notable in *Strike!* (1925)
- 5 <http://cargocollective.com/paperphantasm/About-the-Artist-Contact-Details>
- 6 <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/cyberflaneur>