

## copy-create-manipulate

### A program part of the Viper Festival 04 curated by [plug.in]

Culture has always made references, borrowing and appropriating. It was clear already to the ancient romans, that there was no ‚creatio ex nihilo‘. The Renaissance artists created their typical culture based on copying antique greek sculptures and more. This creative cultural process is again similar to the one of the appropriation artists of the 70ties and 80ties, for whom copying became an artistic concept.

These artistic strategies contradict the current laws on copyright, which become increasingly rigid. Artists who apply these common practices can be held responsible for offending the law. They protect the monetary interests of the distribution industry and of some happy few artists. But they also hinder cultural development – at least in the opinion of the many critics of those laws.

Digital culture has made it possible for a strong resistance against copyrights to form. The efforts for alternative models, which accompanied digital culture from the beginning are becoming wide spread and achieve an increasing public realm for their cause. [Plug.in] has been engaged in the critical debate around copyright since it was inaugurated in 2000 and has collaborated in local and international projects. We have accumulated knowhow and a substantial network, which we want to activate for the upcoming Viper Festival. We want to provide insight in a pressing debate on ‚creative commons‘, ‚free art‘ and ‚open content‘. Our program consists of preparatory events, a solo exhibition with net art pioneer Cornelia Sollfrank and a panel-discussion during the festival.

## Preparatory events

October 14. 2004, 8pm:

### **Elaine Sturtevant and the appropriation strategies and copying techniques in the 20th century art**

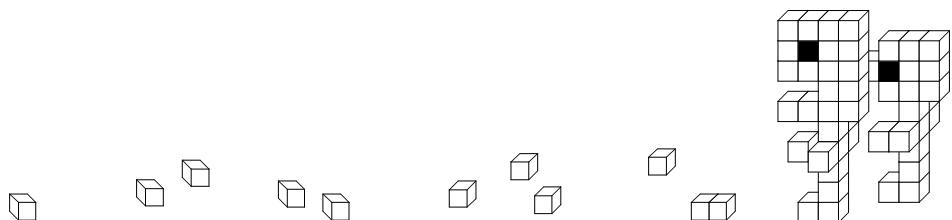
Lecture by Viola Vahrson, art historian Berlin

Viola Vahrson’s lecture leads up to our topic ‚copy-create-manipulate‘ by addressing an important artistic position of the 20th century: Elaine Sturtevant.

In the mid 60ties Elaine Sturtevant began to accurately copy works by her colleges Frank Stella, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns and Claes Oldenburg, declaring them original artworks by signing them with her name.

Some of the artists supported Sturtevant and appreciated her radical approach, others rejected her strongly. Only very few gallerists, curators and critics took an interest in her work. Due to the hostility Sturtevant experienced in the early 70ties, she quit her artistic work.

Only in the mid 80ties, when appropriation artists such as Sherrie Levine, Richard Prince and Mike Bidlo became widely accepted, Sturtevant also picked up her artistic work again.



November 11. 2004, 8pm:

**Saemann meets Schneemann**

Performance von Andrea Saemann. Premiere

The new performance by the Basel based performance artist Andrea Saemann is part of a larger work series entitled ‚Generation Gap‘, which the artist started 2002 with a grant by the Kunstcredit Basel. In ‚Generation Gap‘ the artist researches performance pioneers of an older generation such as Valie Export, Ulrike Rosenbach of Laurie Anderson. Saemann is interested in their fame and in the effect their age has on their artistic approach. While on the one hand researching the explicitly female history of performance art, Saemann also develops her own artistic language and performances. Her new performance makes a reference to the American artist Carolee Schneemann, who’s works on themes of the body and gender changed the performance genre radically in the 60ties and 70ties.

## Exhibition:

### Legal perspective

Exhibition by Cornelia Sollfrank

November 5. – 22. 2004, Wed-Sun 2-6 pm

Opening: November 4. 2004, 8pm

For this exhibition Cornelia Sollfrank realized a whole new work in the trouble spot between a current artistic practice and the laws in force. Her original project for the [plug.in] exhibition was to display a series of images which were produced by her net art generator. The net art generator uses pictures with Andy Warhol flower paintings and reassembles them to create new images. This project would not have been in accordance with the law and could therefore not be realized. As a consequence, Cornelia Sollfrank visits several lawyers specialized in intellectual property right with a camera team. She asks the lawyers about the possibilities of displaying her work in [plug.in] an about the legal risks. The interviews address the limitations of the artistic freedom, which is granted by the basic rights of most countries. It asks about the violations against intellectual property, which are committed by a computer program, by any internet user, and by an artistic practice which is becoming more and more important in a contemporary cultural discours. The beautiful and visually seducing Andy-Warhol-flower-pictures are at the core of the interviews, but must remain absent in the exhibition. What becomes visible instead is the boundary, where it’s no longer artists but lawyers and laws which take decisions on cultural developments: The legal perspective as a continuation of the central perspective.

## Panel-discussion

### Out of Balance.

Discrepancies and changes in artistic practice and intellectual property.

Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup> 4-6pm in [plug.in] Basel

Panel-participants

- **Séverine Dusollier**, Adjunct Professor, University of Namur and initiator of creative commons belgium.
- **Jamie King** author and one of the editors of the media culture magazine Mute, London
- **Stella Rollig**, curator and director of the Lentos museum in Linz.
- **Rolf Auf der Maur**, attorney with specialty in communication law intellectual property as well as legal aspects of the internet
- **Cornelia Sollfrank**, artists, cyberfeminist, net art pioneer
- Moderation: **Patrick Tschudin** (tbc), Radio DRS

The panel focuses on the term and concept of ‚intellectual property‘ in relation to art. It will explore the history of the term and discuss the current change in the way the concept is dealt with today legally, artisticly and publicly.

The panel participants will come from different backgrounds: Lawyers, with specific knowledge in intellectual property; members of the resistance against the increased tightening of the respective laws; art historians / curators and artist with a cultural approach to the theme. They will give brief presentations regarding their viewpoints and then engage in a discussion.

The panel will offer the following:

- Give a comprehensible overview on the concept of ‚intellectual property‘ and it’s history. The audience should be able to understand, what went wrong in the development from a sensible legal idea of protecting the artists to a law, which mainly protects distributors and stands in an increasing discrepancy with common artistic and everyday practice.

- convey information about resistance movements and their background.
- Point out the meaning of appropriating strategies in art and cultural history and discuss concretely the case of Andy Warhol and the way in which his artistic concept of adopting and reusing is perverted by the way his estate is currently dealt with.
- Make it as clear and as tangible as possible, what this debate has to do with the audience in the space, particularly regarding the current legal adjustments which are debated in Switzerland. Provide the information necessary for the audience to form their own opinion.
- Elaborate on the contradictory situation between the requirements of an artist, who's definition is to question given settings and expand traditional concepts of art by re-evaluating the concepts of authorship and work - while at the same time having to function within an art world which is based on these two concepts.
- Discuss the limitations of artistic freedom and cultural development, which the legal system provides.