Exhausted Commodities: The Material Culture of Music

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Abstract

Abstract: The twentieth century ended with the widespread conversion of cultural artefacts into digital information. Less attention has been granted to the ways in which cultural artefacts accumulate in the form of "things"—tangible books, recordings, and other objects whose economic value has often withered. This article examines the question of cultural waste and looks at those commercial and social institutions (such as the flea market and garage sale) which have evolved in order to keep old cultural commodities circulating. The recycling of old musical styles within contemporary practice is examined as one means of retrieving and revalorizing cultural waste.

Résumé: La transposition massive d'artefacts culturels sous forme digitale a marqué la fin du 20e siècle. En revanche, on a porté moins d'attention à l'accumulation de ces artefacts sous forme de "choses"—livres, enregistrements et autres objets matériaux dont la valeur marchande a fortement diminué dans bien des cas. Cet article examine la question de détritus culturels, et jette un regard sur les institutions commerciales et sociales (telles que le marché aux puces et la vente de garage) qui ont évolué afin de garder les vieux biens culturels en circulation. En outre, l'article examine le recyclage d'anciens styles musicaux dans la pratique contemporaine, à titre d'exemple de récupération et de remise en valeur de détritus culturels.

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Here are the 10 Contemporary pieces as the examples of consumer culture art by famous Pop artists. The browsing, selection and purchase of goods and commodities have become one of the defining activities of modern urban life. In this consumer culture, shopping has become a crucial ritual for shaping and transforming our identities. Artists have always been fascinated and intrigued by the consumer culture and the way it shapes our society. Yet, this relationship between art and the distribution and consumption of commodities has always been a complicated one. It was the mid-1950s when the art world got a new movement which, oddly, both celebrated and criticized consumption choices and mass (‘Exhausted commodities’, Canadian Journal of Communication, 25/1, pp. 175–85. Straw, W. 2009. ‘In memoriam: the music CD and its ends’, Design and Culture, 1/1, pp. 79–92. Straw, W. 2012. ‘Music and material culture’, in The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction, ed. Clayton, M., Herbert, T. and Middleton, R. (New York, Routledge). Street, J. 2013.