

#### 4T 2016 ETHICS OF [RE-]PRODUCTION

"Our era prefers the images to the things, the copy to the original the representation to the reality, appearance to being." (Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 1857)

Feuerbach's pronouncements marks the symptomatic loss at the heart of modern experience: loss of tradition, loss of the Creator, loss of a connection one formed with what one produced, and loss of a solid ground. These losses were mediated through the hopeful belief on human rationality, science and progress.

It was ironic that, despite the radical changes, this new era did not challenge the traditional belief in the singularity of Truth and reality, but simply replaced its referent from metaphysical to scientific. New developments, however, initiated questions on this singularity, starting with the invention of photography, blurring the boundaries between the original and its duplicates, the real and the appearance of the real, scientific documentation and artistic representation. In this framework, Feuerbach's statements in the "*Essence of Christianity*," were more than a discussion on religion, but an embodiment of the frustrations and alienation an individual felt in the modern era with all its novelties. Not surprisingly, this quote was used extensively in visual studies in the twentieth century.

A century after Feuerbach, as the belief on the Truth is abandoned, and the discourse on multiple realities began, philosophers like Baudrillard and Deleuze re-addressed these questions in different ways. Their discourse was no longer based on a singular, mechanical, and modern world but one that became multiple, digital and postmodern. In one century, as our experience of the world turned more fleeting, so did the production systems, transforming from manual to mechanical and to digital, challenging materiality, authorship and permanence. While the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed discussions on whether mass production systems were impoverishing art or were they finally presenting opportunities for the realization of "total work of art," the twenty-first century seemed to have left its high aspirations behind and fully immersed itself in the aestheticization of the capitalist experience.

So what happens to the question of ethics all through these transformations? Do we still need to demarcate the line between an original and the copy when reality itself is suspect? Or is it even relevant to talk about the original? Where do we locate the producer, the product, the process and the client/spectator in this discussion? What are the emancipatory design practices that our new era allows that were not a possibility before?

This year's symposium focuses on the ethics of [re-]production in design and throughout design history. Papers are invited to focus on one of the following thematic categories or their intersections in the context of different fields including but not limited to design and cultural studies.