

**EXTENDED  
ABSTRACT****Investigation of Originality and “Appropriation” in the Creation of Visual Arts****Mozhdeh Derakhshani****<sup>1</sup>M.A. Student of Art Research, Faculty of Arts, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran. Email: md.art1810@gmail.com**

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**Introduction**

Originality in art has always been the concern of artists, art lovers, and art critics. With the advent of postmodern art and the emergence of works by avant-garde artists, such as “Fountain” by Marcel Duchamp, a great challenge was posed in the concept and evaluation of originality. In this regard, a direct and explicit return to history, tradition, and extra-textual references were recognized in works of art as “appropriation”. Such artists created artworks through the usage of intertextuality, the removal or addition of elements to one or more other works, and reference to the existing evidence from the audience's point of view. As a result, they were able to create new functions for a previous work of art. In this regard, the present study aimed to focus on the concept of originality with an approach of appropriation in the visual arts. This study attempted to find out what are the criteria of the originality of an artwork and how can the difference between artistic creation in the form of appropriation and plagiarism be distinguished. For this purpose, the most relevant sources for this research was the “Application of the component of ‘appropriation’ in the commercial advertisement” by Mahboubeh Taheri (2016). The above-mentioned article explains the view that the visual images of commercial art are perfect examples referencing, and that appropriation in commercial art is in line with intertextuality. Moreover, Parvanehpour and Binaye Motlagh (2019) in their study “Appropriation and the Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze: A Study of the Relationship of Deleuze's Thought and Anti-Platonism with Modern Art” discussed Deleuze's thought as a philosopher who opposes Platonism and uses the thought processes developed from the appropriation of postmodern artists to introduce this method as a way to end representation and begin a new understanding of the world. This research is of particular importance since there is a need to express the concepts of originality regarding the notion of appropriation in visual arts from the perspective of experts and address the similarities and differences of appropriation with intertextuality and plagiarism.

**Keywords:**Originality,  
Appropriation,  
Intertextuality,  
Visual arts**Methodology**

The present qualitative study had a descriptive-analytical design. This research aimed to correctly depict the relationship between appropriation and originality in works of visual arts and find their similarities and differences with intertextuality and plagiarism.

**Results**

Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" was a factory-made non-artistic object that he called a work of art by signing it and placing it in a gallery. (Figure 1) The creation of such works which were based on defamiliarization and appropriation challenged the definition and evaluation of originality, and thereby necessitated a re-reading of the existing definitions of artistic originality. Appropriation means modifying a previous artwork and ascribing it to oneself. This concept became especially important in the art after 1970 since it reflected new conceptions of postmodern and critical art. In the concept of appropriation, the artist is considered as the producer of the work. This concept has also been accepted by some thinkers since the close relationship of art and culture allows any object with non-artistic usage to be turned into art by the application of creative modifications. Moreover, those who use appropriation are also considered artists, and their works meet the necessary criteria of an artistic creation which are having a goal to create a special cultural role and transfer meaning.

The famous work "One and Three Chairs" by the contemporary American artist and theorist Joseph Kosuth is such an example, (Figure 2). In this work, Kosuth has put three representations of a chair together, including the chair in the work, the image of the chair, and the dictionary definition of the chair. In fact, this artwork is not about the meaning of the word chair; however, it is about the meaning of the idea of art itself. In the works of some artists, such as Barbara Kruger, appropriation is a way of questioning the concepts of originality and authorship in a straightforward and subtly. In fact, this neo-conceptual artist expresses a message via her works, and that is the ownership of the works that she has actually copied from others (Figure 3).



Figure 1. Fountain  
Marcel Duchamp  
Source: thumbor.forbes.com

Figure 2. One and three chairs,  
Joseph Cas sott, 1965  
Source: www.museoreinasofia.es

Figure 3. It's a small world,  
but not if you have to clean it.  
Source: Baharlou et al. (2011)

At first glance, there are ambiguities about the difference between appropriation in postmodern art and plagiarism. Appropriation, which means ascribing an artwork to oneself, can refer to forging and using the works of others. However, the experts of contemporary art in their definitions of this concept reject this issue since appropriation refers to an adaptation or derivation of artwork and in fact a new reading of the work in the form of postmodern art. "After Marcel Duchamp" by Sherrie Levine is such an example which in fact reproduced the artwork of Duchamp with only a change in the material of the work (figures 1 and 4). Another example is the painting of Mona Lisa by Duchamp, in which he added a beard and a mustache to the original Mona Lisa painting (Figure 5). It can be said

that the artist in this work has somehow used defamiliarization.



Figure 5. Mona Lisa with beard and mustache, Marcel Duchamp  
Source: [www.domusweb.it](http://www.domusweb.it)

Figure 4. After Marcel Duchamp, Sherrie Levine  
Source: [www.hypocritdesign.com](http://www.hypocritdesign.com)

Postmodern adaptations can take many forms, including copy, eclecticism, ironical references, imitation, and duplication, and try to be influential even without the slightest bit of innovation. Fake and original works may be similar in appearance but have different backgrounds and the most important difference is that the original work carries the special creativity of the artist and the fake work is just a copy.

## Conclusion

In appropriation, there is a previously designed relationship between adaptation and intertextuality. Moreover, its history differs from forgery and plagiarism and often leads to defamiliarization. The Originality of an appropriated work is not defined by its uniqueness and inimitability since the social reaction to the artwork and its intellectual originality are the most important criteria.

## References

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