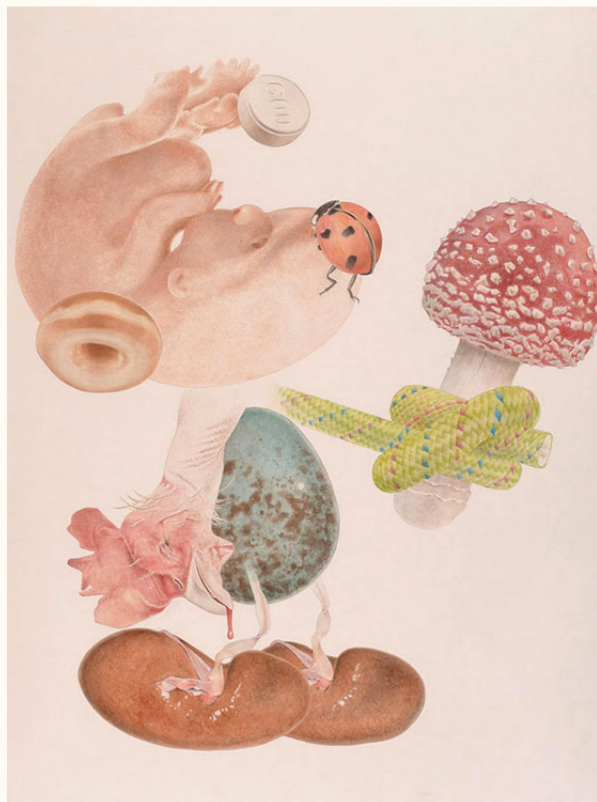


ALFRED STEINER'S ILLUSTRATIVE SURGERY

ILLUSTRATION // Thursday, 02 Aug 2012

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'In his watercolour and pen work, artist **Alfred Steiner** becomes a sick and twisted surgeon, turning all manner of body parts, animals and objects - such as space craft, turds, strawberries and camels - into beautiful but rather disturbing renderings of memorable and famous cartoon characters such. Steiner forces us to accept the things that popular culture often hides and tries to forget about.' [via](#)

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Openings: "Summer Group Exhibition" @ Joshua Liner Gallery

Posted by juggernut3, August 7, 2012









Last week, **Joshua Liner Gallery** held its annual *Summer Group Exhibition*. We were excited about the diverse showcase of talent as this has been a perennial preview of the talent which will be gracing the walls of the gallery for this upcoming art season. We saw faces old and new to the Liner's diverse and talented stable of artists. It seemed like **Alfred Steiner** (seen above), **Clayton Brothers**, **Cleon Peterson**, **Damon Soule**, **Daniel Rich**, **David Ellis**, **Ian Francis** (seen above), **Jean-Pierre Roy**, **Kris Kuksi**, **Mars-1**, **Oliver Vernon**, **Pema Rinzin**, **Riusuke Fukahori**, **Tat Ito**, **Tiffany Bozic**, and **Tomokazu Matsuyama** brought their "A game" as pieces displayed were impressive to say the least.

Norte Maar's director, Jason Andrew, explained to me that the copy is rather heavy as it is reputedly made from a dense carbon — hanging on the wall you wouldn't know.

In the press materials for the show it mentions:

To cover himself legally, [the artist] sent an e-mail to give [Schulnik] a head's up that he'd done the deed. She's not worried. Yet."

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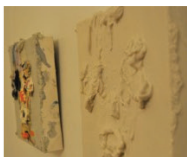
When Paintings Are Easily Reproduced

by Hrag Vartanian on January 11, 2012 7      



A view of Alfred Steiner's "Erased Schulnik (Diptych)" (2010) and "This Is Not a Work of Visual Art" (2010) at Norte Maar's "Guilty(NOT)Guilty" (photo courtesy Norte Maar)

So far, the debate about artistic copyright has been safely in the realm of design and photography — with certain exceptions, of course — but how will that conversation change when anything can be easily reproduced and presented without proof of origin or even the original artist's touch? These are questions that emerged when I saw Alfred Steiner's "Erased Schulnik (Diptych)" (2010), which is currently on display at Norte Maar's *Guilty / (NOT) Guilty* exhibition in Bushwick.



A detail of the surfaces of both parts of the diptych. (photo courtesy the author) (click to enlarge)

A copyright lawyer by day, Steiner bought a glob-erific clown painting by Allison Schulnik at Canada gallery on the Lower East Side. He then proceeded to have a replica of the work fabricated on a ZPrinter 650 3D printer. The result is a quite good monochromatic reproduction of the painting that is full of the brushstrokes and textures that until recently we thought we couldn't so easily reproduce.

Looking at the potential in this art work, I realized it was only a matter of time (months?) before paintings with their grooves and quirks could be churned out at will.

Will we soon all be able to own a perfect reproduction of a Picasso that only x-ray machines and laboratories will be able to say is a "fake"?

I am excited by the new frontier Steiner's work suggests. I think the piece is thought-provoking and full of contradictions — if they are both part of the same work, is there really a fake, what if I like the copy better than the original? The title is an obvious reference to Robert Rauschenberg's "Erased de Kooning" (1953) and I feel like it is a wink — or slap — at the once revered status artists had as singular creators, that special status feels somewhat compromised.



A detail of Steiner's work with the "original" on the left and the "copy" on the right. (photo courtesy the author)

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ALFRED STEINER

February 8, 2012 by [Russ Crest](#)



Drawings by [Alfred Steiner](#).

"Alfred Steiner, part intellectual draftsman, part pop culture surgeon. His works on hot press paper consisted of characters and scenes from the popular to the ambitious—Shaggy and Fred from Scooby Doo!, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Saint Anthony—all composed of jutting, blood-tipped bones and glistening, sinewy muscle. Profiles were assembled not with soft lines but with femurs, horses galloped not with hooves but on bare bone and demons brandished swords of muscle over prostrate outlines of pus and blood. Steiner creates a disorienting, dreamy and disturbingly beautiful feast for the eyes, calling to mind large masterworks of surgeons operating in an amphitheater, though one believes it is Steiner whose work operates on us, rather than vice versa. By creating instantly recognizable outlines from the most vital and basic parts of human anatomy, Steiner forces us to look at the culture around us while acknowledging the literal cultures within us." -Sarah Hassan

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Alfred Steiner

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In his watercolour and pen work, artist [Alfred Steiner](#) becomes a sick and twisted surgeon, turning all manner of body parts, animals and objects - such as penises, space craft, turds, strawberries and camels - into beautiful but rather disturbing renderings of memorable and famous cartoon characters such as Maggie Simpson, Yosemite Sam, Mickey Mouse, and Kenny McCormick. By blending vaginas and other parts of the body into the mix, Steiner forces us to accept the things that popular culture often hides and tries to forget about.



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A Few Observations on Copyright and Art

Vol. 5 No. 3

By Alfred Steiner

Alfred Steiner is an attorney at Morrison & Foerster LLP, specializing in transactions involving technology and intellectual property. Mr. Steiner also is an artist whose work has appeared in shows at The Drawing Center, Exit Art, the Miami University Art Museum, Gallery Poulsen in Copenhagen, Joshua Liner Gallery and Claire Oliver Gallery in New York, 101/Exhibit in Miami, and Guerrero Gallery in San Francisco. He can be reached at alfred@alfredsteiner.com. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of, and should not be attributed to, Morrison & Foerster LLP.

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I was recently talking with an acquaintance, who happens to be a copyright scholar, about a cease and desist letter that an artist had received from a publisher. The publisher objected to the artist's display and sale of works that collaged cutouts from a comic book with new material painted by the artist. I worried that if you took the copyright owner's claims seriously, any collage¹ incorporating copyrighted material would be prima facie copyright infringement, even a collage made of pictures cut from a copy of *The New York Times*. My acquaintance did not even blink at this observation, but seemed to believe it was a perfectly reasonable result.² My jaw slackened. How could it be that whenever people include a single shred of an authorized copy in a unique collage, they subject themselves to claims for copyright infringement that could result in \$150,000 in statutory damages³ and millions of dollars in plaintiff's attorney's fees,⁴ not to mention their own legal defense costs? Claims that, even if not meritorious, may be difficult or impossible to dispose of without a full trial?

Despite the possibility of such nightmare scenarios, most attorneys I talk with seem to believe that copyright works just as it should in the context of the Art World.⁵ I happen to disagree. In several important ways, copyright fails to function properly when art⁶ is involved, both in terms of basic fairness and intended economic incentives. I hope the following observations will bring those failures to light and suggest how courts and lawyers could tweak their analyses, within the established framework of copyright, to reach more reasonable results.

Fair Use Art Is Different: The 10-Foot Balloon Dog⁷ in the Room

Despite the fact that courts faced with the question have yet to acknowledge it, art *is* different. When a copyright owner alleges that artwork infringes, the question that courts must answer is whether the artist has violated the copyright owner's exclusive rights by creating a unique⁸ work. The court need not consider whether the artist can create unlimited copies of the work, as it must in other copyright cases. Nevertheless, courts treat cases involving four copies⁹ the same as cases involving millions of copies,¹⁰ mechanically applying the four statutory fair use factors without even nodding to this crucial distinction. But it defies credulity to say that Jeff Koons's use of Art Rogers's photograph *Puppies* to make four sculptures is the same, in terms of commerciality and market substitution,¹¹ as Luther Campbell's use of Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman" to make millions of phonorecords.¹² Copyright is designed to deal with mass production.¹³ It works well in the context of music, movies, books, and software, where works routinely sell millions of copies. But at least as applied now, copyright breaks down in its approach to art, which is not generally mass produced.

To address this issue, a reasonable general rule might be:

Anyone should be able to use preexisting material to make anything, so long as he or she makes only one copy and is not engaging in blatant piracy.

Or, to translate that into copyright-speak:

Reproducing and preparing derivative works based upon a copyrighted work for the purpose of creating, distributing, publicly displaying, or publicly performing a unique work constitutes fair use unless it would be reasonable to expect that someone would buy the unique work (or pay to see it displayed or performed) instead of buying an authorized copy

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