

Old Questions Asked Awkwardly – Awkward Questions Asked Innocently (2001) Raimi Gbadamosi

The screen glows in the domestic space. Not so much a screen as a holographic decoder. The image/object follows the eye across the room, always in full sight for maximum pleasure. Flicker, flicker and darkness moves in. Communication lines ease into life, terminals converse, credits are established, and a new image/object suffuses the room with light. The householder returns, groans, and dreads the inevitable argument with the gallery. They have got it wrong again, so much for leasing twelve pieces of art a period instead of buying one for life.

A plausible situation for the present or immediate future, the prerequisite technology exists and pay-to-view television is already accepted. The immediacy and fluidity of the print - and here 'print' has moved away substantially from the two dimensional, wall bound, framed entity which immediately springs to mind - allows a chameleon-like nature able to quickly investigate new ideas and concerns in a manner that other clearly delineated Fine Art media find difficult. The marriage of printmaking, as an artform, to its commercial cousin has allowed the production and presentation of imagery that would fail if it were not for this splicing of means.¹

The nature of the print, being an object suitable for (and capable of) mass production and consumption² has fashioned its place as a debunker of the 'art gallery system'. The predetermined undermining of the unique and original item diminishes the 'aura' of the art object, even before it enters the conundrum of mechanical reproduction. For the 'artist' that

¹ Keith Haring, Barbara Kruger, and Jenny Holzer are prime examples of this.

² Now, the use of the simulation for the masses and popular culture is important. The masses are everyone. To quote Baudrillard:

The term 'mass' is not a concept, it is a leitmotif of political demagoguery, a soft sticky, lumpenanalytical notion. A good sociology will attempt to surpass it with "more subtle" categories: socio-professional ones, , categories of class, cultural status, etc. Wrong it is by prowling around these soft and acritical notions (like "mana" once was) that one can go further than intelligent critical sociology. (Baudrillard, Jean. In the Shadows of the Silent Majorities Semiotext(e) New York, 1983. p. 4.)