

# 6

## CONSUMERISM

*Pau Figueres*

The excess is with us forever. So let's have a drink of Coke. It's getting warm . . . It's no longer The Real Coke and that's the problem. You know, this passage from sublime to excremental dimension. When it's cold, properly served it has a certain attraction. All of a sudden this can change into shit. It's the elementary dialectics of commodities.

Slavoj Žižek<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the continuous use of trademark and brand visual material within contemporary art and its relation to remix in the era of hyper-consumerism. The relationship between consumerism, one of the tenets of capitalism, and art is not new. In 1960s pop art, low and high culture came together with everyday things, among which elements from the media, such as brands, appeared as the new main characters in the art scene. The influence of the pop art aesthetic has lasted to the present day, but even if we find similar cyclical problems, mistakes and solutions to those that took place in the second half of the past century, globalization boosts this relationship with refreshing art proposals. Postproduction and the remix of commercial iconography have emerged as different ways of representing consumerism that enable us to reflect on its role in late capitalism and contemporary art practice. In what follows, I discuss how art meets globalization and the extreme increase of commercial material presence—not just by celebrating the liturgy of consuming—but assuming these elements naturally as part of our lives; and the paradox of remix opposite to the idea of appropriation and remix as a result of hyper-consumerism.

## The Influence of Pop

Thanks to new business strategies and the deep-rooted connection between consumerism and capitalism, commercial brands have easily coped with barriers caused by the global economic crisis. The fall of the Berlin Wall illustrated the final steps toward a homogeneous society: it is one of the most significant twentieth-century events that contributed to the contemporary notion of *global*. Under this new paradigm, brands transcend national boundaries to unprecedented areas with the arrival and development of new technologies that allow new tools for advertising. High-definition billboards, targeted advertising on Internet browsing or video advertising in streaming are designing the mediascape of consumerism in the global era. Production and consumption excess not only leads to the necessity of residue recycling, more than ever, the demand for an ecology of the audiovisual and art production, justifies the work of recoding, redefining and remixing what already exists. The retrieval of the old idea of selecting an object and using it according to a specific purpose triggers the conditions for postproduction and post-appropriation during the 1990s and remix in the visual arts in the hypermodern<sup>2</sup> era.

The concept of consumption is evident in art history mainly during the 1960s with pop art and later in the 1980s with simulationism<sup>3</sup> in works that redefine existing material from mass media. But a new concern for remixing this material has emerged with the artist of the global era under what we consider the



**FIGURE 6.1** Times Square, New York, February 1, 2015. Courtesy of the author.

aesthetics of consumerism. Nicolas Bourriaud states that while the American pop art scene was fascinated by the visual frontality of the marketing spectacle—focusing on packaging, billboards, neon-signs and a whole ensemble of material used by brands to market their products—the European New Realists’ approach focused directly on the abstract phenomenon of anonymous consumption by rescuing used objects, becoming pioneers in representing a still-life of the mediascape and the industrial society. However, it is simulationism that brought forth the idea of creation as a way of consumption, exhibiting the object “from the angle of the compulsion to buy, from the angle of desire, midway between the inaccessible and the available.”<sup>4</sup>

Undoubtedly influenced by pop art and simulationism, a new concern for remixing this material has emerged with the artist of the global era under what we consider the aesthetics of consumerism. As part of the collective memory, brands are transmitted and spreadable, akin to Dawkins’s understanding of the viral nature of memes. Moreover, the dialectics of commodities through different emotional connections have set aside a very important place for brands among our necessities and our desires, encouraging excess and feeding consumerism. As could be expected, with the confluence of low and high culture and later with remix, art complies with this situation and transmits its concern by sharing the idea of spectacle, observing, making commentary, questioning and ultimately by representing the hyperbole of the invisible transcendence of consumerism, through the use of the commercial iconography that surrounds brands. The realms of commercial imagery, from billboards and banners to packaging, logos and typographies, coalesce into an outstanding raw material for artists worldwide, generating the global aesthetics of hyper-consumerism as a definite effect of late capitalism. The new redefining phenomena do not argue about authorship issues, as appropriation artists claim. Stealing is not the purpose, nor the means, of remix. The action of reusing and recycling is an automatic gesture, an attitude that goes further than any ethical question. In this new global picture, the concern, the admiration, as well as the new forms of addressing hyper-consumerism, are brought back by artists in new aesthetic proposals, pointing out the abstract concept and spectacle of excess with no geographic borders of action.

Similar aesthetic approaches to pop art are indeed unavoidable. For better or worse, the resurgence of remix in brands and the elements from the commercial mediascape as part of art production is absolutely reliant on pop art. The aesthetics of pop art obviously share a lot in common with the actual artistic proposals that deal with hyper-consumerism, but we cannot look at them as a simple repetition of style. Behind this exercise there is a different understanding whose awareness leads into a reaction from the art sphere to comment on this phenomenon. While the interest in consumption emerged from the fascination of its novelty, as new raw material and new concerns emerge, consumerism does not represent anything new in contemporary society because it has been radically absorbed by our subconscious. But the trend to continue making use of popular visual materials

continues to demonstrate a necessity for psychological integration, it is the concept of hyper-consumerism, the limits of excess that define the new art proposals. The abundant presence of commercial visual stimulus has made brands, once again, part of the palette of material and resources of the artist. Consequently, this situation pushed contemporary artists to vindicate any action of reusing and remixing the image of brands as a must without discussion. While the spectacle of consumption fascinated American pop artists and artists from the New European Realism, hyper-consumption—its aesthetics and its representation—is the concern for part of the community of global artists of the twenty-first century.

### Hyper-Consumerism as a Religion

“Capitalism is not good looking” argues Lipovetsky and Serroy in the introduction of their discussion on capitalism in *The Aestheticization of the World*, “in a very polite way.”<sup>5</sup> One important difference between today and past societies is the aesthetic value attributed to our landscapes and urbanscapes. Regardless of the fact that human evolution has incorporated new architectonic components to our landscape and industrial revolutions ravaged urban spaces with atmospheric and acoustic pollution, brands have dressed the cities and even natural spots with their own forms. They own the extraordinary faculty to produce a particular attraction for the human eye and brain, and moreover, the invisible essence that feeds a collective imagery whose content is dictated by the brand owners. During more than half a century of visual pollution, we have gained the right to defend the use of the forms of the mediascape; and according to Nicolas Bourriaud, this right can be fulfilled by reactivating, even hacking private property and copyrights and claiming for the necessity that no public image should savor impunity whatsoever.<sup>6</sup> We must assume that a logo belongs to the public space not just because of its presence in the streets, but because it invades our privacy by being prominent in every product we consume.

Looking at hyper-consumerism as the logic and the ultimate way of capitalism towards infinite growth, under Walter Benjamin’s idea of capitalism as religion,<sup>7</sup> we can think of brands as something that will lead us into redemption, promising happiness, status, success and a long list of virtues. But brands also appear to guarantee a better life, taking advantage of the insecurities and fears natural to the human condition—the fear of being unable to access the range of new and different products that appear weekly in store windows and make us think of human work as a purifying instrument to reengage with God.

As capitalism stands in for religion, Agamben locates the bank in the place of the celebration of the religious liturgy, where the priests command over credit, manipulate and manage the faith.<sup>8</sup> In this we find a wide range of symbols that help spread the word of money and the religious icon metamorphosed into the image of a brand. If we accept human labor as the liturgy of capitalism, and

consumerism as communion, the celebration of the actual liturgy is a non-stop party for believers, who swallow images of brands and thousands of visual stimulus that tease us to consume. But the satisfaction of purchasing disappears once we exit the temples of the cult for consumption, the mall, the store, and the thousands of online shopping sites that offer the Eucharist of shopping without moving from the couch.

We could identify a brand by the design of its logo. We could imagine a brand, as Baudrillard explained, as the heart of advertising differentiating two functions, the designation of a product and the mobilization of emotional connotations.<sup>9</sup> We could locate a brand as a product in a shelf of the supermarket and as the supermarket itself. Or, we could think of a brand as a simple idea. But the complexity of the nature of a brand goes far beyond defining and distinguishing products from others of similar features. Generally, there is a lot more embedded in the objects we consume. In a reference to Marx, Slavoj Žižek clarifies what is hiding under the complexity of a brand, as part of the “excremental” elementary dialectics of commodities. Quoting the Coca-Cola slogan, “Coke is the Real Thing!” we can understand how commodities, are objects full of metaphysical, invisible qualities—the real thing—that cannot be described, but that provoke our desire.<sup>10</sup>

We can hardly refute the idea that, as a result of capitalism and the subsequent advertising industry, brands have taken our society to a point where there is no way back for a natural relationship with consumption according to one’s needs. This is what art that reuses and samples brands communicates. Artists, whether engaged or not, use brands and their elements, amazed by both their own metaphysics and visual attributes, bringing forth the powerful functionality of brand design that captures artists’ (and anybody’s) attention. Are these the visual attributes of brands that remix art reclaims? Or is it somehow the metaphysics of commodities that is being pursued? Could we ever think of a consumption motivating a control system simply by reducing visual commercial pollution? Could we really live in a world without Coca-Cola?<sup>11</sup> Could we actually live in a world without brands and advertising? Is it only death that separates us from the symbolic world?<sup>12</sup>

What has been observed continuously becomes part of global worship. The concept of the brand is the real player in the shaping of what we call the aesthetics of consumerism. Both aesthetic and emotional connotations of a brand are necessary for understanding how the aesthetics of consumerism come about, and why artists use its attributes to represent a complex reality. The consequent relevance that our society has claimed for brands as part of a global collective memory is continuously concerning us according to how it affects art, even to the point of being convinced of vindicating its use, as part of the symbolic imagery that has been settled for all time in the aesthetics of the world. As a matter of fact, this concern pushes many artists to follow different schemes of gathering, reusing, remixing, sampling, re-inhabiting, revising and a complete series of concepts that involve the idea of providing new meanings to commercial iconography.

## Reciprocal Manipulations

When we have a look at the instruments that facilitate consumerism, we are not only coping with visual content, but with an invisible psychological warfare that shapes complex graphic strategies based on data collected in focus groups, user studies, and audience surveys. These unseen *agents*, those who promise the functionality, the efficiency, the happiness and the necessity for every product of the market, are the ones that manipulate our habits of consumption. Agents, according to Noam Chomsky,<sup>13</sup> are capable of making women start smoking, thanks to Edward L. Bernays's *Propaganda*, considered the handbook of manipulation for the public relations industry, through which he pretended to organize chaos:

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government, which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized.<sup>14</sup>

Isn't Coca-Cola being manipulative when it promises "The Real Thing"? What is "The Real Thing"? wonders Žižek.<sup>15</sup> "The Real Thing" is the absence of a physical content in a simple attempt to manipulate our consumer behavior. In front of the most evident manipulation of our codes, the response, in the form of resistance from art, is almost inevitable—a response of manipulating back and claiming the actual manipulation of those signs as something that is addressed to, and belongs to us. Manipulation in terms of remix should be used as a means and inspiration for creation, not as an act of vengeance, but as an act of negotiating, in which manipulation functions as a reciprocal agent. Remix is like a boomerang, the old guarantee of the symbiotic relation between art and advertising.

The commercial strategy that focuses on the use of the emotional force of aesthetics to service desires other than just artistic pleasure is not new, it is the same seduction strategy that capitalism follows to sell its mass production, says Lipovetsky.<sup>16</sup> If we have a look at the old alliance between art and advertising, we cannot ignore the connection between consumerism and remix. Once more, art feeds advertising and advertising feeds art in an infinite loop. Sometimes the borders between both are blurred and even a symbiotic relationship occurs. This symbiotic relationship also works the other way around. Bourriaud reflects on the aesthetics of the flea market:

An old sewing machine can become a kitchen table, an advertising poster from the seventies can serve to decorate a living room. Here, past

production is re-cycled and switches direction. In an involuntary homage to Marcel Duchamp, an object is given a new idea. An object once used in conformance with the concept for which it was produced now finds new potential uses in the stalls of the flea market.<sup>17</sup>



FIGURE 6.2 Shoe store, Bilbao downtown. Courtesy of the author.



**FIGURE 6.3** Pau Figueres. *Sleeping with the Fish*. Courtesy of the author.

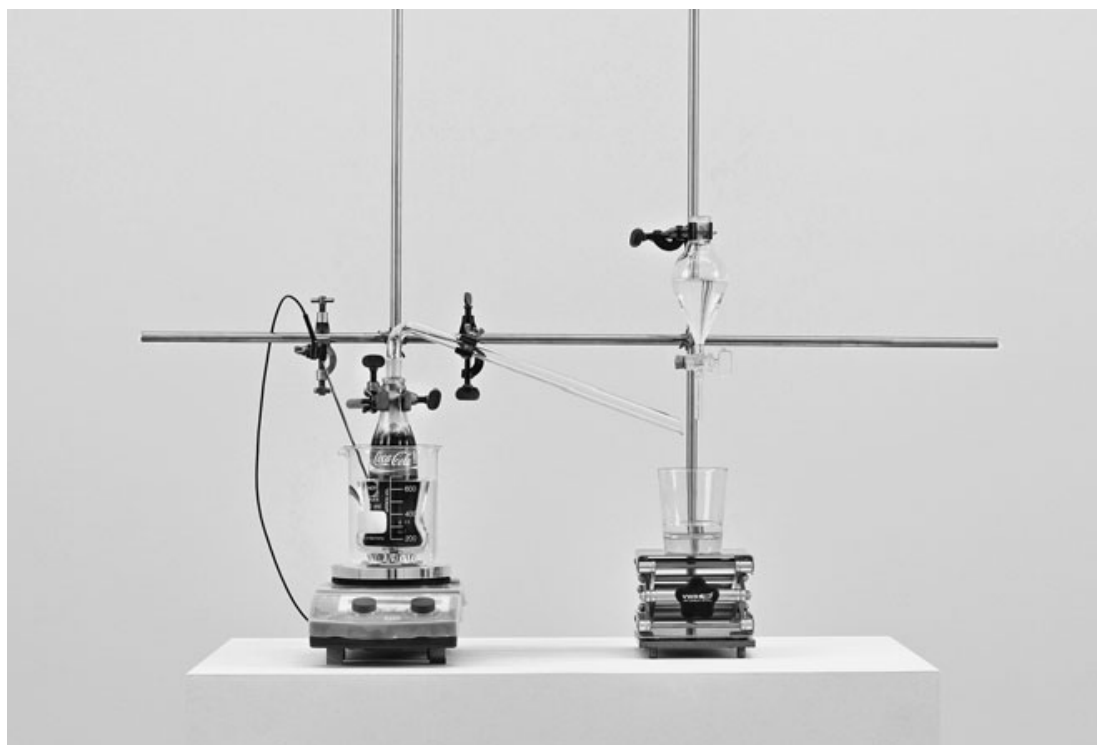


After a short walk in the commercial promenade of the European commercial downtown or the American mall, it is not unusual to find a new pair of Nike Air Max I next to thousands of other brand new versions and reproductions of the original ones—new colors and new materials but the same recycled design. The original Nike Air Max I appear as a readymade in a successful attempt of being commercialized under a different concept, which was—with all their metaphysical invisible qualities of the time—used by our parents in the 1980s for the purpose of running, meant for stylish fashion these days. In this case, the object/product loses its original functionality and achieves an abstract one, as a consequence of the effort of the brand to generate a new necessity. The idea of the readymade gives the sneaker a new conception: the same object with a different purpose. What it was meant to be, a cushioning, comfortable, stability revolution, does not offer anything else than status and melancholic pleasure. Many brands have found this strategy an exciting development for creating “new” products, selling the taste for vintage products and feeding the anxiety for consumption in the era of the new flea markets. On the other hand, it is the idea of postproduction that works with the different versions of the same sneaker. Nike recycles and remixes its own product in order to create an infinite range of “new” and exclusive Air Max to satisfy the needs of the consumerist masses. This example could make us reflect once more on how art has an impact not only in advertising, but in production and does not only influence advertising just aesthetically but also conceptually.

This paradigmatic relation between art and advertising in the global era could rather be a love affair between art and capitalism and defined by Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy as artistic capitalism or the aestheticization of capitalism. One could ask whether it is happening the other way around. And one could, and arguably must, reflect critically on the possibility that art is being overly influenced by the aesthetics of capitalism.

## Remixing the Brand

The evolution of the commercial strategies, advertising, marketing and design have transformed brands into the new global saints. The old religious icons have been replaced by a Nike Swoosh, a Coca-Cola Santa, a fast-food clown and a long list of new idols that have homogenized the aesthetics of twenty-first century society, as it is visible in hundreds of examples such as Helmut Smits’s successful attempt to turn Coke into water, making its “Real Thing” disappear, Olaf Nicolai’s *Big Sneaker* and Guillaume Poulain’s *Nike° 1999* inflatables or Superflex’s ironic representation of a flooded McDonald’s restaurant. To reflect on all the issues discussed above, I developed *The Revolution Will Be Sponsored*,<sup>18</sup> which is an online project that collects the work of 200 different artists that deal with postproduction and the principles of remix related to commercial brands. It hosts a list of 328 brand names, among which Coca-Cola, McDonald’s and



**FIGURE 6.4** Helmut Smits. *The Real Thing*. Photograph by Ronald Smits. Courtesy of the author.

Nike stands out for their repeated presence, especially in artworks of the past two decades. After looking at these figures, it is not really surprising to find these three corporate brands in the first places of the most chosen consumer and economic valuable brands global rankings.<sup>19</sup> My assessment based on this online art and research project is that, apparently, artists continue to incorporate into their work the forms of the global era, which began to materialize long ago, when consumerism as an ideology of capitalism took its first steps. It is a small wonder that one of the first artworks to represent a Coca-Cola bottle in anticipation of pop art—even before Andy Warhol started art-school—was *Poetry of America* painted by Salvador Dalí in 1943, during his period in America, where we can notice his interests in the relation between art, consumerism and capital.<sup>20</sup>

Aesthetic variables found in works included in *The Revolution Will Be Sponsored* also find a type of vindication through remix strategies of the ubiquitous visual commercial material as the global palette to build new forms. Such is the case of a work like *Logorama*,<sup>21</sup> the hyperbole of life through logos of thousands of brands, transforming each character and each element of the architecture of contemporary life, representing a ridiculous pseudo-reality meeting a grim reality: hyper-consumerism. A logo is a chosen form of recognizing and visually representing the ideas and characteristics of a brand, different invisible attributes that conform to the strategies of a company and its brand. It is through remix that this visual material is used to represent a totally different scenario: on one hand a mere



**FIGURE 6.5** Superflex. *Flooded McDonald's*. Courtesy of the artists.

aesthetic work, and on the other, a work of art engaged with a contemporary discourse of hyper-consumerism concern. Using the principles of remix, through sampling parts or even a complete form, a new universe that goes further than the sum of the features of simple logos is born.

Following this line of thought on remix, the omnipresence of brands and logos in our lives has taken other artists further away to use what they already claim as public material in works like Evan and Franco Mattes's (0100101110101101.org) *Nikeground*, a fake Nike advertisement campaign turned into art—an action in which only the famous icon of the brand is sampled, but even a whole set of visual elements to redesign a Nike webpage and diverse promo material is used to claim that:

Nike like other modern multinational corporations, is not an industry, it is an idea represented by its brand. It is an immaterial identity, an abstract message, an enormous advertising machine that does not produce anything, and limits its efforts to distributing products created far away in another part of the world. Precisely for its immateriality, the perception that people have of Nike is everything there is. Nike's earnings depend on their popularity, and their success depends on the image people have of their products—not in the quality of their products. [. . .] People, in turn, vindicate the right to use these symbols because they belong to anyone who lives through them every day, not those who impose them from above.

Nike's Swoosh is probably the most *seen* logo on the face of the earth, even more than any other religious or political symbol. In effect we have been working for them long enough with our bodies every time we wear brand clothes; it is now the time to reuse all that.<sup>22</sup>

The powerful functionality of brand design manipulation to capture consumers' and of course artists' attention, made brands such as Coca-Cola end up being one of the most remixed brands in the history of art, in an infinite range of art proposals, among which we find works such as Darren Lago's, *Coke 45 BlackPearl*, a gun made out of a Coca-Cola bottle in an example of a humorous and ironic contemporary-assisted readymade. Or the approach to the quintessential emblem of global consumerism, of Gert Robijns's *Fles*, a plastic Coca-Cola bottle and a tin can, both painted black, set face-to-face, proving the victory of the iconic design, in the fight with an anonymous but not less iconic can. More popularly, Ai Weiwei's *Han Dynasty Urn with Coca-Cola Logo* is another example of how the power of this icon seduces in a global scenario that hardly understands physical barriers, giving birth to works that show the confluence of Western and Eastern societies, in another attempt that reveals how the capacity of art to give feedback to hyper-consumerism is as ubiquitous as hyper-consumerism itself.

As we might already suspect, the work behind marketing and brand design, as well as controversial commercial strategies, has probably guaranteed the remix of brands like Nike and Coca-Cola in many artworks. But the need for a continuous growth of consumption offers a vast range of brand designs and brand promises that capture the attention of consumers and artists, becoming the new script of the global consumer society. Works such as *ABC*, an installation produced by Benjamin Verdonck, a collection of handmade logos representing the alphabet, is the perfect analogy of remixing commercial iconography as part of the collective memory, in an effort to recognize how these elements have become the new alphabets of hyper-consumerism.

What can be argued based on the examples presented above is that the action of postproduction and remixing in visual arts is an act of manipulation by itself, as we are using the same codes to approach a viewer who perfectly acknowledges what the huge Nike Swoosh might be. For example, we could define the term as a 3M manipulation,<sup>23</sup> in a process where brands manipulate the targeted audience, and artists manipulate the audience as well as the brand. Looking at this picture from another point of view, it can be argued that artists are conscious of the emerging complicity imposed on the viewer with such well-known everyday objects. To this effect, in my public intervention *The Revolution Will Be Sponsored*, carried out at the entrance of the Palmer Museum of the Pennsylvania State University, which consists of a 17-foot Nike Swoosh composed entirely of pebbles gathered from the museum gardens, we can notice how the aura and the metaphysical strength of the icon exceeds an effort of transformation, when recontextualized with the words of an Instagram user that shared a photo



**FIGURE 6.6** Cellular screenshot of the Palmer Museum’s Nike Swoosh and an Instagram reaction to it. Courtesy of the author.

of the work with the words “you know you go to the right school when you see this.” This is an example of the ambiguity and the complicity that takes place when a very well-known image is remixed. The viewer might be mainly seduced by the power of an existing commercial icon, while on a different level of interpretation, the artwork is making a deeper commentary on other matters.

The commonplace attributes of brands could well explain how the complicity between artist and viewer takes place—complicity that also works as a trap for an audience consumer of all of those brands. The commercial spectacle is responsible for facilitating both an approach to the production of critical knowledge and obscuring the content of the artwork.

## Conclusion

Duchamp favored selection more than composition or creation, because the artist was more empowered in the act of selection due to the growing consumer-driven culture that followed the industrial revolution. If we consider his action as the preamble of postproduction and the principles of remix, where the ability is no other than combining two selected items, by creating a new sound from two different sounds, like how we get a new color from mixing two different ones, the editing of a video from existing movie clips and the production of a new commercial universe from reusing a thousand logos in an installation. Both

postproduction and remix concepts should escape from the idea of appropriation or re-appropriation and get closer to the idea of using, utilizing and manipulating. The concept of appropriation makes reference to propriety—closer to the capitalist idea of consumption—and it diverges from the contemporary idea of sharing more than owning. Curiously the idea of appropriation with the aim of owning is close to consumerism and actually clashes with the conception of reusing and recycling that has been proposed. However, it is known that when an artwork is commercialized we fall into great contradictions. The artwork transforms itself into a commodity, it has been somehow manipulated. Maybe the price for vindicating the usage of the great icons should respond to the production of non-marketable nature works. Possibly the price has already been paid off by its appearance and re-advertising in the artwork. Perhaps this is the inferred contract that should remain unsigned, nourishing the relationship between art and advertising, between art and brands.

As we are witnessing the evolution of the global mediascape aesthetics, the effort from contemporary art to address the era of hyper-consumerism is taking place, redesigning the new aesthetics of consumerism through different forms of remixing commercial imagery, which differs from its precursors in the fascination and repulsion for the novelty of the effects of global homogenization. Brands and logos, understood as public material for their ubiquity, should make acceptable the use that art freely makes of them. The close relation between hyper-consumerism and remix is seen not just in terms of production and reproduction, but as an aesthetic solution that belongs to a hypermodern era and stands in, symbolically, for worshiping excess.

## Notes

- 1 Transcribed from *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*, directed by Sophie Fiennes, written and presented by Slavoj Žižek (2012 British Film Institute/Channel Four Television/Bord Scannán na hÉireann/The Irish Film Board), iTunes download 2016.
- 2 “We live in the era of the aesthetic boom thanks to the capitalism of hyper-consumerism. With the hypermodern era we face a new aesthetic era, a new super-aesthetic society, an empire where the sun of art does never set.” Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy, *La estetización del mundo. Vivir en la época del capitalismo artístico*. In my own translation from the Spanish edition: *The Aestheticization of the World: Living in the Era of the Artistic Capitalism* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 2015), 31–32.
- 3 In Chapter 4 of *Unpackaging Art of the 1980s* (“Peter Halley, Jeff Koons, and the Art of Marketing- and Consumption-Analysis”) Alison Pearlman defines simulationism: “By the summer of 1986, yet another artistic trend had risen. Simulationism—also known as Neo-Geo, Commodity Art, Neo-Conceptualism, and new Abstraction- was the most prominent trend to captivate the New York art world since Neo-Expressionism, Appropriation, and Graffiti Art [. . .] polemics in response to the trend were defining it along one or more of the following axes: as a continuation of the aims of Appropriation Art (Donal Kuspit’s emphasis), as an attempt to represent the simulation principle defined by neo-Marxist theorist Jean Baudrillard (Hal Foster’s emphasis).” Alison Pearlman, *Unpackaging Art of the 1980s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 105–106.

- 4 Nicolas Bourriaud discusses the differences between the American and European approaches to consumption when talking about the use of objects. *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005), 26.
- 5 Lipovetsky and Serroy, *La estetización del mundo [The Aestheticization of the World]*, 7
- 6 Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, 93.
- 7 In *Capitalism as a Religion*, Walter Benjamin reflects on how capitalism offers the same answers as a religion does. We can also point out how consumerism can ensure most of those answers too. Walter Benjamin, “Capitalism as Religion [Fragment 74],” *Religion as Critique: The Frankfurt School's Critique of Religion*, edited by E. Mendieta (New York: Routledge, 2005), 259–262.
- 8 Re-engaging with money, as Giorgio Agamben states: “God didn’t die, he became money.” Agamben talks about the economic crisis, capitalism as a religion, the role of history in European cultural identity, “bio-politics,” the “state of exception” and the fate of contemporary art in an interview with Giuseppe Savà for Ragusanews.com, accessed September 20, 2016
- 9 Jean Baudrillard, *The System of the Objects* (London: Verso, 2005), 209.
- 10 In the documentary *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek talks about the invisible transcendence of commodities.
- 11 Quoting Walter White, the main character in the *Breaking Bad* television series, when he wonders: “Do you wanna live in a world without Coca-Cola?” *Breaking Bad*, season 5 episode 7, “Say My Name,” directed by Thomas Schnauz and written by Vince Gilligan; created by Thomas Schnauz, Netflix.
- 12 “There is no outside. Once we enter the symbolic world there is no getting out again unless we lose self-awareness or die. One could somehow get off the grid, severing contact with all media and cultures but, even then, if this rather romantic and delusional decision is made after growing up with the concepts of our current global culture—which in a large part is an extension of Western culture—even then, if you decide to become a hermit, you will negotiate your existence in some context based on those Western principles. From this stance, to think of being outside media—or outside the text, for that matter—is a mute argument with a dead-end.” Eduardo Navas talks about how remix functions in art practice in the interview conducted for the exhibition *Pictoplasma: White Noise*, curated by Lars Denicke and Peter Thaler, which took place at La Casa Encendida, Madrid Spain from May 23, to September 8, 2013.
- 13 Noam Chomsky, *What Makes Mainstream Media Mainstream* (transcribed from a talk at Z Media Institute June, 1997), accessed August 17, 2016, <https://zcomm.org/zmagazine/what-makes-mainstream-media-mainstream>.
- 14 Edward L. Benays, *Propaganda* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1928), 9.
- 15 Žižek, *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*.
- 16 Lipovetsky and Serroy, *La estetización del mundo [The Aestheticization of the World]*, 121.
- 17 Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, 29.
- 18 <https://larevolucionserapatrocinada.wordpress.com>.
- 19 *Brand Footprint Annual Report 2016*, accessed June 12, 2016, [www.brandfootprint-ranking.com](http://www.brandfootprint-ranking.com).
- 20 Salvador Dalí retreated to the United States to escape from the World War II, and became fascinated by American mass culture. In an attempt to offend him André Breton named him “Avida Dollars” for Dalí’s obsession for money, he instead took it as a compliment: “En América querer ganar dinero es lo mejor que hay. Voy a triunfar con ese nombre” (In my own translation: “In America being eager for earning money is the best thing there is. I am going to be so successful with that name”). “El Dandi del surrealismo,” accessed June 12, 2016, Document1 [www.elmundo.es/especiales/2013/cultura/dali/extravagancia.html](http://www.elmundo.es/especiales/2013/cultura/dali/extravagancia.html).
- 21 Logorama, short film animation.

- 22 Laura Baigorri, *La obra de arte como alucinación colectiva. Una conversación con 0100101110101101.org* (In my own translation: *The Artwork as a Collective Hallucination: A Conversation with 0100101110101101.org*), February 2004, accessed June 20, 2017, [www.academia.edu/20061766/La\\_obra\\_de\\_arte\\_como\\_alucinaci%C3%B3n\\_colectiva.\\_Una\\_conversaci%C3%B3n\\_con\\_0100101110101101.org](http://www.academia.edu/20061766/La_obra_de_arte_como_alucinaci%C3%B3n_colectiva._Una_conversaci%C3%B3n_con_0100101110101101.org).
- 23 We decided to use the name of the brand 3M to explain the triple action of manipulation. First, manipulation held by brands towards its target; second, manipulation taken place when the artist targets the audience using a brand's commonplace features; and a third manipulation in terms of remix, taking place when the artist uses the attributes of brands to create his work.