

Bard Berlin

Conference

Conference 2009

The Politics of Cultural Ownership

Art objects may strike us as beautiful or ugly, familiar or new. We think less often about their proprietorship: how they came to stand before us in a museum, collection, or exhibition; who owns them or has lost ownership over them. The annual conference 2009 explores the question of how ownership of cultural artefacts is determined and challenged, and what specific histories govern cultural appropriation. Our debate extends beyond the fate of cultural objects moved from their original context, to include other instances of appropriation or reworking, whether considered legitimate or otherwise: the forging of identity through drawing on the experience of others; the development of art through media already produced by previous innovations and creative endeavours. Above all, the debate prompts us to reflect on the political and historical conditions of aesthetic experience: how objects which seem 'free-standing' or autonomous bear the traces of a journey that may be fraught with conflict or injustice, or the outcome of a multiplicity of diverse material influences.

Guest speakers

- Daniel Butt, Professor at the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford
- Volker Wiese, Professor at the Bucerius Law School in Hamburg
- Joy Garnett, artist and member of the College Art Association's Committee for Intellectual Property
- Ruth Franklin, senior editor at *The New Republic*
- Denise Budd, Lecturer-in-Discipline in the Core Curriculum at Columbia University and Director of ArtWatch International