

Images Rights

Press Release.

Paolo Cirio's solo show at NOME Gallery Berlin.

September 13th, 2019.

Paolo Cirio presents three new series of works at NOME Gallery. The exhibition *Images Rights* expands upon Cirio's concept of *Internet Photography*, with a particular focus on the economic, legal, and semantic values of photos circulating online.

Cirio's new works explore modes of appropriation art to address the political economy of images. Rather than authorship, these artworks problematize the ownership, liability, and social responsibility of the production and distribution of photos on the Internet.

The exhibition questions fair use rights, property rights, and consumer rights for the production, consumption, and trade of photos online. Images on the Internet aren't always free. They are instead increasingly controlled, constructed, and exploited to manipulate their economic value, monopolize their cultural capital, or monetize their viewing. The platform, archive, auction, collection, and patron become commodified and financialized, generating inequality rather than fostering the creation and exchange of art.

Cirio's artworks inquire into the need for regulations, fairness, and ethics in the economy of images, in a time when photos on the Internet drive negative social values, outrageous financial speculations, and monopolies of knowledge.

The ways of seeing images extend beyond the visual field. The images in Cirio's works are seen as constrained, performed, and bound with legal, financial, and linguistic devices that transform their value and meaning. By breaking down the semiotic, legal, and economic systems that constructs an image on the Internet, Cirio's work reveals the aesthetic and conceptual qualities of photos commonly dissimulated by their mere visual traits.

The series ***Attention***, ***Property***, and ***Derivatives*** each examine, respectively: images as attention economy, images as capital, and images as finance.

Attention

2019. Digital prints on glass.

The series appropriated photos by influencers promoting controversial products without disclosing them as paid advertisements. The compositions with prints make use of the original photographs and enlarged body parts, expressions, poses, and products.

Property

2019. Digital prints on glass, paper, and c-prints.

These series adopt the semantics of appropriation art with transformations of the images in compositions with color shapes and texts, which are overlaid onto the print of the original photos appropriated from Getty's websites.

Derivatives

2019. Digital prints on canvas.

This series is composed of hundreds of images and records of artworks appropriated from Sotheby's auctions to turn them into further financial derivatives. The photos of the artworks sold for the highest price at the auctions are printed on canvas with their prices overlaying the images.