What Is the *Poor Image* Rich in?

Helena Schmidt

By 2020, as this chapter is written, there are more images available on the internet than ever before. On Instagram, over forty billion photos have been shared so far (status: February 2020), whereas the use of social media applications doubled between June 2016 and 2018.¹ Since the emergence of smartphones, communication via images has become part of our everyday lives. Konstanze Schütze, who wrote a dissertation on *imagery after the internet*, describes the image as “managing cultural unit of the present” (Schütze, 2019, p. 12). This means, that images shape and reflect our contemporary culture like no other phenomenon. This fact is crucial for a critical mediation of art that is supposed to teach a reflective approach to the phenomenon of digitally available and copyable images.

My dissertation, “From the *poor image* to *poor images*”² deals with digital images that circulate on the internet in relation to art educational practice. They are accessible to a broad range of users online and can easily be copied and reused. Specifically, in my research, I am interested

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H. Schmidt (✉)
Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Austria

in the use of images in an aesthetic context. In order to better grasp this new category of images that has emerged with the advent of the internet, I critically look at Hito Steyerl's term *poor image* from her essay, *In Defense of the Poor Image* (2009), which describes poorly resolved copies of images traveling across the internet. Thus, this chapter attempts to theoretically approach the term and to summarize Hito Steyerl's initial definition of the poor image in order to situate it in the present. More than ten years after the first publication of the essay, digital media has significantly changed. This is crucial for my hypothesis that poor images are suitable as raw material for contemporary, performative visual action (Sachs-Hombach & Schürmann, 2005).

Poor images are a product of the technical conditions of our time. They are inherently performative, for they are constantly subject to aesthetic transformations on their journey through the net. Poor images are part of our everyday communication as well as subject and raw material of artistic works. This is relevant for a contemporary art education that aims to mediate (digital) visual literacy, thus the capacity to critically "read, write and create visual images" (Harrison, n.d., para. 1) in our post-digital present. In this post-digital present, or sometimes referred to as post-internet, it's not the case that the internet is over (Steyerl, 2013). Rather, the prefix *post* describes a present in which the internet has become available almost anytime and anywhere, for a broad range of people. Entering the net is no longer a conscious act for those who have access to mobile internet; it has become possible to be constantly online using various mobile devices. Furthermore, collecting information has become very easy with the internet "at our fingertips" (Bunz, 2014, p. viii). Much of this digital information is visual:

In today's world meanings circulate visually, in addition to orally and textually. Images convey information, afford pleasure and displeasure, influence style, determine consumption and mediate power relations. Who we see and who we do not see; who is privileged within the regime of specularity; which aspects of the historical past actually have circulating visual representations and which do not; whose fantasies of what are fed by which visual images? (Rogoff, 2002, p. 25)

Although this visual culture, as Irit Rogoff, professor, theorist and curator, describes it, was already introduced at the end of the twentieth century with the emerging presence of new media, due to the dominance of visual

content on the internet, her thoughts are still very relevant. It's crucial for us educators to be able to identify and distinguish certain visual regimes and power relations online while the realm of images, their entanglements and contexts of signification seem to become increasingly complex in the post-digital present. The poor image is a post-digital phenomenon, as it has become a common image practice, both in art and everyday life, at most since the advent of smartphones. It represents both a practical product and an object of reflection in a contemporary, critical art education and can therefore be seen as an enrichment for it.

IN DEFENSE OF THE POOR IMAGE

"The poor image is a copy in motion" (Steyerl, 2009, para. 1). This quote is from the introduction to Hito Steyerl's essay, *In Defense of the Poor Image*, first published on e-flux in 2009. Ten years after the publication, the text is still relevant. Steyerl describes a contemporary hierarchy of images in which the poor images are at the very bottom. As a digital, poorly resolved copy of the original image, the poor image circulates on the net, partly without reference to its origin or authorship:

Its quality is bad, its resolution substandard. As it accelerates, it deteriorates. It is a ghost of an image, a preview, a thumbnail, an errant idea, an itinerant image distributed for free, squeezed through slow digital connections, compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed, as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution. (Steyerl, 2009, para. 1)

Steyerl (2009) describes the phenomenon using examples from film history. According to her, experimental and essayistic movies disappeared from the screens after the advent of commercial cinema. The latter replaced them and, due to lower demand, they were hardly shown anymore. High-resolution videos were only shown in elitist (art) institutions and installed on special projectors for a small audience, before disappearing into the archives (again). This has changed since the emergence of various online streaming platforms that are based on user content, such as *YouTube*. Steyerl (2009) explains that film classics that were considered to have disappeared from the screens are suddenly very easily accessible on the internet, albeit in poor quality. Furthermore, video art can be smuggled out of the museum with a mobile camera-phone to suddenly reappear on the internet (in the shape of poor images).

In the context of our post-digital present, which is inextricably linked to digital media, the question arises: What are the poor images today? The art educators Gila Kolb and Konstanze Schütze (2020) refer to an interview with Carson Chan by Karen Archey, when they describe that we are living in an *Internet State of Mind*. This illustrates a view of the world that has fundamentally changed since the internet:

We presume an Internet State of Mind and suggest a radically conscious approach to it (especially for art educators). For Internet State of Mind (Chan, 2011), understood as a fundamentally changed view of the world, leads us to a different perception of the world, which we now have to examine professionally. (Kolb & Schütze, 2020, p. 262, trans. Schmidt; cf. Archey & Chan, 2013, para. 8)

Since Steyerl introduced the poor image, digital technology has evolved tremendously. Smartphones film in 4 K resolution, drone, and mini action cameras are available and affordable to many for home use and are parts of the present-day consumer-oriented society. Until recently, holiday pictures taken with digital compact cameras had to be downloaded to the computer via cable and then sorted out before individual pictures were uploaded to the internet. Nowadays, a recording of a video piece in an exhibition can be, for many, posted on the net with a single click and in real time. For instance, using the Instagram story function, one can share an artwork live with one's online community.

Those images, produced by mobile devices, have ceased to only be badly resolved digital copies of analog originals. Should they still be called poor images? Why should we, after all the techno-social developments and innovations, still use this term? They are certainly copies in motion, but they are no longer "poor" in the sense of "badly resolved." So, can the term *poor images* still be used today in times of good resolution, live streams, and insta-messages? Where can *poor images* be found and do they need to be redefined under the updated media conditions? (Fig. 12.1).

WHAT IS A POOR IMAGE (TODAY)?

The artist Marisa Olson (2018) describes the poor image as a "lossy copy: a digital artifact accelerating toward a thing of the past; an accidental fallacy" (p. 2). This means, while the original image is still recognizable, the lack of certain information causes the image to become "poor

Fig. 12.1 On the website <http://www.helenaschmidt.com/> I am collecting poor images since 2015, which can be uploaded anonymously and without registration. The visual archive started as a part of the artistic research during my studies and served, amongst other projects, as a source of material for my master thesis

in something.” In the context of an internet characterized by widespread dissemination of content and constant updating, the meaning of the word *poor* may therefore vary in itself: It can describe low resolutions, fractured images, loss of information or sources or even barely recognizable content.

Similarly, the word *image* has different meanings depending on the context. Visual science distinguishes the “image” from the term “picture” (Mitchell, 2005). Pictures are materialized physical artifacts, while images are immaterial. Media scientist Simon Rothöhler (2018) describes digital images as invisible, stored code that computers can read and then convert into readable images (through pixel-shaped light points). These codes multiply and spread across the internet in a seemingly uncontrollable manner. In the shape of poor images, the digital code exists as innumerable copies of itself in different (digital) places. These online-environments vary in a way that would not have been technically possible

before the emergence of web 2.0, which caused an abundance of visual digital data.

For post-digital image phenomena, such as memes,³ GIFs or Insta-clips, this makes sense. On social media, images are commonly used as raw material for mini-collages used by the online community to visually comment on current events. These images, for instance in the shape of memes, are repeatedly recycled and, re-captioned, according to the shifting context: “Another fundamental attribute of Internet memes is intertextuality: memes often relate to each other in complex, creative, and surprising ways” (Shifman, 2014, p. 2). For example, the infamous art piece *Comedian* consisting of a real banana, duct-taped to a wall by Maurizio Cattelan at Art Basel Miami Beach in December 2019 caused an immediate abundance of internet memes. It was commented on, copied, and edited almost in real time all over the world.⁴

The viral meme-production was not only conducted by humorous or critical private commentators, but also by other artists and several commercial brands who copied it to advertise their products. For example, McDonalds shared an image of their french-fries taped to a wall on their Facebook-account. Ultimately, the meme was induced so far in the collective memory that the advertisement went on a meta-level: One ad just showed a piece of half torn-down duct tape on a wall. Above the brand-name “Big Mac[®],” which implies that the famous burger had until recently been taped to the wall.⁵ This is essential for art education, as it shows how quickly artistically relevant concepts, such as original, copy and authorship, market value and appropriation, become blurred and intertwined in the post-digital age. Within a very short period of time, private users, artists and advertisers alike access internet content and negotiate it in a similar way, but with completely different ulterior motives and goals. Such examples may help the field of art education to understand pedagogically and demonstrate the potential fluidity of the image of the present and the variety of actors who deal with it (Fig. 12.2).

Poor images today (in 2020) can thus be described as immaterial, digital image-copies that have significantly lower resolution than the original analog (or now also digital) image. They circulate publicly on the internet where they potentially mutate and multiply over and over again. They are sent as private messages, shared via stories, posted as permanent posts and streamed live on social media platforms. Steyerl (2009) defends these poor images because she considers them to have political, community-creating and artistic potential. Due to the rise of new popular

Fig. 12.2 One of seemingly countless meme-reactions to Maurizio Cattelan's piece *Comedian* by the feminist collective Guerilla Girls Broadband. Guerilla Girls Broadband [@guerillagirlsbroadband]. (2019, December 12). *Green Banana*, found objects, 8 x 8 inches, 2019. DETAILS AND PRICE INFO AT: <https://tinyurl.com/theartworldisbananas> (link in bio) #ht to @robertasmithnyt for the recognition. #provoke #protest #prevail 🐼🍌👤...#feministart #bananaart. [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B523Cztgddn/?utm_source=ig_embed

technologies, users not only consume images but also shape, change and redistribute them as prosumers (Toffler et al., 1980). As the professor for digital culture, Felix Stalder (2017), puts it, “Users of social mass media must produce (themselves)” (p. 57). So, following Steyerl (2009), images that were previously only accessible to a few are now available to a broad public, who produces and circulates poor images on their (mobile) devices. However, we know that a utopic online-detachment from the capitalist system has not become reality. Thus, the curator and writer Vanessa Kowalski (2018) doubts that YouTube, Twitter and Facebook are solely sources of empowerment and positive social change:

It was thought that the Internet would rejuvenate democracy, but [...] the past several years have shown that emancipation and subordination can be enacted by exactly the same tools. It seems however, that these tools are all that we, those deemed the users, have left. (pp. 24–25)

Consequently, we as users have to accept these tools up to a certain point if we want to interact with them. That means to always consider their possible negative as well as positive implications. The fact is, however, that we have access to more images, videos and information on the net than ever before and thus the possibility of using them both in everyday life and in our artistic and pedagogical practice. Steyerl's concept of poor images ten years ago theoretically captured what is practically the case today: The use of poor images as artistic raw material has become a self-evident practice. This requires that art education takes a closer look at the poor image in order to critically negotiate its peculiarities and possibilities.

In 1997 the art historian and professor W. T. J. Mitchell famously asked: "What do pictures want?" (2005). He attributes a creative power to pictures—be it historical idols or cyborgs. For Mitchell, what pictures want is closely linked to how we treat them and what we expect from them:

The question to ask of pictures from the standpoint of a poetics is not just what they mean or do but what they want - what claim they make upon us, and how we are to respond. Obviously, this question also requires us to ask what it is that we want from pictures. (Mitchell, 2005, p. XV)

By this question, Mitchell implies that we as viewers project desire onto the pictures. We tend to animate images and thus turn them into icons, i.e., cult images that embody certain values and ideas. Mitchell writes: "Poetry (as "making," or poesis) is foundational to picturing." (Mitchell, 2005, p. XV). As a result, the picture becomes productive, which can be easily linked to today's online image production, for example on Instagram. One could, following Mitchell, speak of a poesis of loss (loss of material, information, sources, resolution, etc.) that enables the images to become performative.

WHAT DO POOR IMAGES WANT (TO BE)?

Perhaps this leads to another question: What do poor images want? Or more precisely: What do poor images want to be? Assuming that we find ourselves in an *Internet State of Mind* (Archey & Chan, 2013), new types of images adapt to this condition. Internet images are part of an open and mobile visual field, “in which classes of images arise, consolidate, diverge and dissolve” (Heidenreich, 2005, p. 390; trans Schmidt). Poor images are one of those classes. They are no longer defined only by their (poor) resolution, nor by their content, but by the fact, that they are accessible online as numerous copies of themselves. The provenance of these images is no longer necessarily traceable, and their proliferation is accompanied by qualitative and aesthetic transformations. In contrast to a lousy black-and-white photocopy, these are *digital* transformations. Furthermore, the status as poor image is defined by its utilization—as soon as I screenshot a high-res rich image (e.g., from nationalgeographic.com) it becomes a poor one. The image, although now poor, reaches new realms of activity and distribution. Images acquire new performative potential and, as Hito Steyerl (2009) concludes in her essay, function as a “link to the present” (para. 29).

This supports my hypothesis that connects the poor image to a new performative pictorial practice (Sachs-Hombach & Schürmann, 2005). Once published on the net, the image is potentially inserted into a multitude of possible contexts. It becomes a potential starting point: not only as inspirational material but also as raw material for further processing by a large group of anonymous prosumers. They can reuse, crop, comment, reproduce, collage, expand them, and so on. At some point, depending on the specific context of the distribution, the original authorship can no longer necessarily be traced back. This also makes it necessary to discuss imagery in a different way than in pre-digital times. Internet images are constantly being shuffled around, they can appear as links in different places at different times and then seem to disappear again, whereby the duration and frequency of these actions can no longer be completely controlled by the original authors. Even images protected by copyright can be reproduced through screenshots and reappear as poorly resolved copies of the original. Following Mitchell (2005), they thus produce new meanings. Poor images in that sense are icons of the post-digital era: They

evoke pictorial agency and constantly transform during this process—qualitatively and quantitatively. The pictorial poorness turns into potential pedagogical richness.

@POORIMAGEARTEDUCATION—FROM PICTORIAL POORNESS TO PEDAGOGICAL RICHNESS

In order to further explain this pedagogical potential of the poor images, I will present the following examples from my own academic teaching practice. In 2018, I started the Instagram-Account @poorimagearteducation with students of a seminar at Bern University of the Arts. One task was to create an art meme based on a work of art history. Two students used digital cut-outs from paintings by Hieronymus Bosch and created a speculative story about the painter's supposed inspiration for his fantastic figures in the picture. They re-enacted these figures with their own bodies and objects found at the university, which they quickly and intentionally assembled into new "bad" collages using Photoshop. Then they juxtaposed these with the corresponding cut-outs and added the following signature to the picture on Instagram (Fig. 12.3):

Hieronymus Bosch was very eager to have the perfect models for his incredible artwork. Here we were lucky to find the ORIGINAL inspiration for 'Das jüngste Gericht', Ausschnitt aus der Mitteltafel, 1482, Akademie der Künste Wien. #art #boschprofessional #lastjudgement #north #renaissance [sic]. [Photograph]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bi36xFZAgn1/>

So, the students claim to be the original themselves, on which the art historical icon is based. In doing so, they intentionally use a trashy pictorial aesthetic and thus expose the traces of their working method. They transform the original picture into a poor image, but also make a poor image out of themselves. They enable a new perspective on the image and speculate about its creation beyond art historical knowledge (Figs. 12.4 and 12.5).

In a second example, the same students take a very close cut-out of a Bosch's Triptych of the Temptation of St. Anthony. It shows a detail of a jar with the leg of a dead animal sticking out of it. This image is juxtaposed with their supposedly "original" version consisting of a photograph of an electric water kettle, they found in the institute's kitchen. Behind

Fig. 12.3 Art Meme by Nina Kurth and Tina Odermatt, 2018. Poor Image Art Education [@poorimagearteducation]. (2018, May 17). Hieronymus Bosch was very eager to have the perfect models for his incredible artwork. Here we were lucky to find the ORIGINAL inspiration for “Das jüngste Gericht,” Ausschnitt aus der Mitteltafel, 1482, Akademie der Künste Wien. #art #boschprofessional #lastjudgement #north #renaissance [sic] [Photograph]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bi36xFZAgn1/>

the device, a hand protrudes with the index and middle fingers extended upwards—similar to the peace sign. This gives the impression that this hand, just like the claw in Bosch’s picture, would appear from the vessel.

The students operate with digital image processing techniques, social media language and humor. In doing so, they deliberately avoid creating an aesthetically perfect collage in order to point out the irony of their pictorial action. They do not care about perfect lighting, good composition or the best picture framing. Their photographs rather seem like testimonies of a performance or quick collage sketches. One can feel how quickly the pictures were taken. It seems as if an idea has immediately become an image. This is precisely where the appeal and richness of their visual examination lies. Seemingly naïve and careless, they include specific details of the “old” and “new” pictures in the post description,

Fig. 12.4 Art-Meme by Nina Kurth and Tina Odermatt, 2018. Poor Image Art Education [@poorimagearteducation]. (2018, May 17). Ciao Bella! Here a Still live [sic] of a dead leg in a Vase by Hyronimus [sic] Bosch. We figured out how he had his model set up in this beautiful artwork. You are welcome to try this at home! The painting: Ausschnitt aus Versuchung des Hl. Antonius, 1500, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga Lissabon #boschprofessional #ciao #stillife #beautifullegs #art [Photograph]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bi37aVXArAU/>

which gives the works a certain amount of naturalness. However, they very cleverly and intentionally use this as a stylistic method.

In the second example, the hashtags #boschprofessional, #ciao, #stillife, #beautifullegs and #art are used. #boschprofessional is repeated in all their memes; #ciao derives from the sticker that happens to be stuck on the kettle. The hashtags are both claims and also ironically included details from the pictures, which add to the Instagram posts' fun factor. The way the captures are written takes up a language that is read as typical for social media content. The students work with prompts and short, catchy sentences, such as: "Ciao Bella!" or "You are welcome to try this at home!" They are creating new visual narratives while combining existing art historical content with their own imagery and their own speculative storytelling.⁶ In short, the students copied, reproduced, reused,

Fig. 12.5 Art-Meme by Nina Kurth and Tina Odermatt, 2018. Poor Image Art Education [@poorimagearteducation]. (2018, May 17). Ciao Bella! Here a Still live [sic] of a dead leg in a Vase by Hyronimus [sic] Bosch. We figured out how he had his model set up in this beautiful artwork. You are welcome to try this at home! The painting: Ausschnitt aus Versuchung des Hl. Antonius, 1500, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga Lissabon #boschprofessional #ciao #stillife #beautifullegs #art [Photograph]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bi37aVXArAU/>

appropriated, cut up, and re-enacted the picture. The original image was set in motion, became the new image and at the same time its supposed prototype, which opens up speculations on the levels of original, copy, idea and methods of image production. This example and the student's way of working with poor images, illustrates what I introduced above as a *new performative image practice*. They utilize the poesis of loss by using poor images, creating new ones, and generating new narratives in a multilayered performative pictorial action that digitally mediates both the works of art history and the new creations.

In addition, a second student team created art memes through appropriation and recombination.⁷ They too have constructed alternative, speculative narratives about the history of art. For their memes, they created the hashtag #whatmichelangeloate. They made a series of posts,

in which they are using image details of frescos and photographic reproductions of sculptures by renaissance artist Michelangelo Buonarroti. In one post we see a collage combining a detail of Michelangelo's famous Sistine Chapel ceiling frescos (*The Deluge*, detail, 1508) with a Dutch still life showing a sumptuous arrangement of food (Frans Snyders, *Still Life with Meat Basket*, around 1640). In the caption, they narrate the feeling of having had too much to eat: "Going home after eating at your italian [*sic*] grandmother's house, be like ...".

Again, this type of sentence structure and the suggestion evoked by the open end is a characteristic Instagram caption. Like the first student group, they are using popular hashtags, such as #nofilter, #italiannana and #deathbychocolate. Interestingly, on a humorous level, this meme, just like the other examples, works without any prior knowledge of the original images used as templates. Although sources are given and it is implied that it has to do with Michelangelo, there is no further mediation of the image contents. What may be funny on a meme level, meaning to see apparently exhausted people after a feast, is rather tragic from an art historical point of view. The original picture illustrates a tragic biblical scene, in which people in vain fight for survival during the Great Flood.

This leads to some very important questions concerning art education. For although all the examples manage to convey art historical content with the help of poor images and a rethinking of their performative use, there are some problems. As already mentioned, the images work on a meme level; even without prior knowledge of art history or iconography. It is a frequent phenomenon that images of artworks appear on the internet without any indication of the source, or that they appear as memes without any comment. Although the students have provided the titles, authors and dates, the original contents of the images cannot be read without an iconographic education. The users potentially read them differently, which leads to their humorous potential. A critical mediation of art, for example at school, could link up with this and raise and discuss further questions. For example: Which scenes are represented here? How do we read certain figures, gestures, attitudes and objects depending on geographical, temporal, and cultural context? What kind of visual literacy is needed to read these images? Who are they made for? Can images in a digital context be misread at all? Or do they obtain a new meaning as poor images? After all, how many Instagram users even know who Bosch or Michelangelo are? And why and how can they have this knowledge? Do art memes encourage them to acquire it themselves?

A further step might be to address exactly such questions in class. In addition to the content of the images, captions, and hashtags can of course also be analyzed. Finally, it is also important to make the link to the present: What do we learn today from historical representations (of human beings)? Which art historical canon is reproduced by such kind of memes and to what extent is this problematic? (How) can we use Instagram and social media in order to create a new/an alternative canon? Which body norms do we see and which not? Which cultures are represented online and which are not? In summary—which physical and cultural ideals do we reproduce on Instagram and how is this reflected in our own image practice and self-representation on social media?

THE POOR IMAGE IN MOTION—ART EDUCATION

The poor image, as we have seen, is no longer just a copy in motion, but is transformative in itself. While images circulate on the internet, our present with its digital media possibilities is constantly moving, changing and refreshing itself:

The Web, although certainly a powerful social tool, has seeped so deeply into the foundations of everyday life that it has collapsed understandings of the present in exchange for a constantly refreshing sequence of now's. (Kowalski, 2018, p. 26)

Analogously, the term poor image must adapt to those present conditions. As described earlier, poor images are digital, circulating internet images that can be accessed by users at any time. Through their scattering and movement through the internet, which is inextricably tied to constant transformation, they are performative, as elaborated above. The images develop agencies by proliferation and circulation through the online world. This is possible so easily nowadays due to their digital materiality, in the sense of “matter matters” (Barad, 2003, p. 801). Furthermore, they are constantly being processed by human and non-human actors (such as algorithms or filters) online, which leads to constant change: “any change to the image is also a change to the program; any change to the programming brings another image to the screen” (Plant, 1996, p. 193). Indeed, this performativity is multilayered and possible links to pictorial action are expanding like a network.

This is precisely why poor images are suitable both as raw material for contemporary artistic practices as well as objects for the critical theoretical reflection on art. While visual practices, media and technologies are currently rapidly developing, art education must also adapt to the post-digital time. Teachers have grown up and been educated with completely different media realities than their students. Vanessa Kowalski (2018) contrasts the much-cited and etymologically not unproblematic categories of *digital native* and *digital immigrant* with the term *digital naïve*. She describes, how we all move across the cyberspace with a certain ignorance, lacking clearly defined rights and duties. One tends to take digital devices and the internet for granted, regularly consuming and producing web content. This naivety should be addressed by a critical mediation of art—especially at school. Acquiring visual literacy means being able to read, classify, and critically question visual phenomena of our time, such as digital images. For this reason, the poor image should be part of a radical (post-) digital artistic and mediating practice.

Art education in particular can be inspired by the poor image. This doesn't mean replacing traditional content, but offering the opportunity to react to a time dominated by rapidly changing visual content and applying the digital poesis of loss. In her dissertation, Konstanze Schütze writes that images are “perceived and processed as omnipresent and almost omnipotent material” (Schütze, 2019, p. 133, trans. Schmidt) in the current debates about digital media. At the same time, the internet and the ongoing digitalization are shifting “aesthetic and social practices that are particularly influential measuring points for the arts and extremely useful for appropriating” (Schütze, 2019, p. 14, trans. Schmidt). The described societal changes open up new realms of agency through the described accessibility and malleability of images that have a huge pedagogical impact. Images can no longer be separated into categories of online and offline, but must be radically conceived under the post-digital conditions. As we have seen, the *poor image* may be poor in resolution but it is very rich in pedagogical and societal influence.

NOTES

1. See Omnicore Agency (<https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/>) and Statista (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/>).

2. I have been working with poor images since my master's degree at the Bern University of the Arts. In my master thesis this was done through artistic research. See https://www.arteducation.ch/de/projekte/alle_0/inszenierte-archive-das-arme-bild-154.html. Since 2017 I am pursuing the dissertation project "From the *poor image* to *poor images*" (working title) at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.
3. "The term 'meme' was coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976 to describe small units of culture that spread from person to person by copying or imitation. [...] In the vernacular discourse of netizens, the tag 'Internet meme' is commonly applied to describe the propagation of items such as jokes, rumors, videos, and websites from person to person via the Internet" (Shifman, 2014, p. 2). In contrast to its original meaning, today the term is often used for pictures "[...] whereas in memetics the unit of analysis itself is abstract and controversial, Internet users tend to ascribe the meme tag to observable audiovisual content, such as YouTube videos and humorous images." (Shifman, 2014, p. 13)
4. See Artnet <https://news.artnet.com/market/art-basel-maurizio-cattelan-banana-memes-1726233>.
5. See Facebook McDonald's [@mcd] (<https://www.facebook.com/mcd/posts/10159244459202588>) and Design Taxi (<https://designtaxi.com/news/407841/Brands-Go-Bananas-Over-Art-Basel-s-Infamous-Display-With-Over-The-Top-Remakes/?fbclid=IwAR2bxsde7sjZIoTMC4IIQk1Oh85B6T2V2KHD-WCgzUztttHiSRapl6nxmWk>).
6. Speculative storytelling as in Donna Haraway's practice. See (Haraway, 2016).
7. Art-Meme by Nadja Knuchel and Isabelle Weber (https://www.instagram.com/p/Bi3_YwUgUta/). Caption: "Going home after eating at your italian [sic] grandmother's house, be like ... #nofilter #whatmichelangeloate #italiannana #deathbychocolate serious informaiton: 'Stilleben mit Fleischkorb' von Frans Snyders (17. Jahrhundert) 'The Deluge' (Detail) von Michelangelo, Sixtinische Kapelle (um 1508)" (Poor Image Art Education, 2018).

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