

Notions of connoisseurship, originality and artistic statements with new technological developments in printmaking.

Developments in social networking and affinity spaces have promoted new forms of collaboration and participation, creating new affinity groups in the printmaking community. Online networks further emphasise the unique position of the printmaker/artist in new models of post-physical practice. With the developments in the curation of digital art-forms and socially mediated collaborative practice, the establishment of the online marketplace now forms a significant commercial environment for contemporary living. Some printmakers are embracing online selling as a medium for direct sales. Online markets offer entirely new forms of cultural consumerism, affording the print artist new concepts of materiality and connoisseurship.

Digital materiality, fluidity and the almost cultic status of signature, raise philosophical questions about the materiality, permanence and authenticity of post-studio, post-physical print objects. Emergent forms of printed objects are engendering new concepts of imprinting in physical, virtual and hybrid space in the 'lingua franca' of digital culture and practice. This suggests limited edition and analogue philosophy may no longer be applicable and questions arise about Walter Benjamin's theories on 'Aura', the digital medium and simulacrum, materiality and permanence, instantiation and temporal form and authenticity.

The computer has become more than commonplace. Prensky (2001, 1-6) said 'the arrival and rapid dissemination of digital technology in the last decades of the 20th century was in fact a "singularity" – an event which changes things so fundamentally that there is absolutely no going back'. The consequence of this was the birth of the "digital native" – humans born into a digital age and speaking digital language natively, as opposed to 'digital immigrants' who, born into the analogue age, have learned the language and speak it with an accent, whilst conceptually continuing to think in analogue.

This paper will explore how the dissemination of digital technologies in particular online groups, post physical practices and selling have affected both the traditional printmakers practice and their own and perceived ideas around commercialism, authorship, aura and authenticity.