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*Copythet – Cultural Practices
Transgressing Copyright Boundaries*



Disegno

JOURNAL OF DESIGN CULTURE

Double blind peer reviewed open access scholarly journal. Not for commercial use.

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Aims and Scope

Disegno publishes original research papers, essays, reviews on all possible aspects of design cultures. The notion of design culture is understood by us as resolutely vague: our aim is to freely discuss the designed environment as mutually intertwined flows of sociocultural products, practices and discourses. This attitude openly ventures beyond the academic distinctions between art, design and visual culture being accordingly open to all themes with relation to sociocultural creativity and innovation. Our post-disciplinary undertaking expects intellectual contribution from all potential members of different design cultures. Besides providing a living platform for debating issues of design culture our particular aim is to consolidate and enhance the social legitimacy of design culture studies as an emerging field in the Central European academe providing criticism of fundamental biases and misleading cultural imprinting with respect to the field of design.

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AUTHENTIC VS. FAKE

Bea Correa

ABSTRACT

Despite all efforts to eradicate counterfeit goods, we receive thousands of e-mails every day advertising anything from luxury label replicas to phony life-saving medicines. Every city has a crowded black market. And “Fake” is not merely limited to B-grade products: how many times have you seen a beautiful woman and wondered which parts were authentic? “Fake” has become one of the defining keywords of the current age, according to Mindwhatyouwear founder, Bea Correa.

#fake, #counterfeit, #trade mark, #knock off, #Louis Vuitton, #Galeria Pagé

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My name is Bea Correa, I am a Brazilian-born designer living in Amsterdam. I studied law at the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and graphic design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy (Holland).

At the Rietveld, while my colleagues were making books, magazines and posters, I was more interested in printing my texts on panties and shirts. I founded my label Mindwhatyouwear in 2001 when I realized that fashion was a very powerful communication medium. Fashion walks in the streets, a book does not. In my webshop I sell reflections on the smaller and larger issues of modern life. There are people who publish their thoughts in books. I “publish” my ideas on clothes instead.

The other reason I founded Mindwhatyouwear was because I got tired of label dictatorship forcing us to advertise its logos in our frontpage clothes and pay for it.

I felt that my mission was to liberate those poor label slaves. Mindwhatyouwear believes in the power of design to change the world with dailysmall revolutions. And you don’t need a lot to provoke them. One word on a shirt is enough.



Fig.1. They all love you shirt, 2010, Mindwhatyouwear



Fig.2. No Bombs bag, 2006, Mindwhatyouwear



Fig.3. Sex and the City advertisement



Fig.4. The Devil wears Prada book cover

When I started my FAKWEAR collection, many people asked me what the idea behind it was. It was initially a guerrilla action against the fashion victim rules. I was watching "Sex and the City" and reading "The Devil wears Prada". I heard about waiting lists to buy a designer bag and girls being judged because they were wearing shoes from last season's collection. Not "this season's" shoes.

My FAKWEAR collection was also a reflection of the reality I saw: technology was making copying much easier and the authentic versus fake dilemma was becoming very present in our modern lives. Selling counterfeit goods seemed to be illegal, but I could buy them easily on the black market. Actually, I didn't even need to go to the black market anymore. I was receiving hundreds of spams advertising knock-offs in my mailbox everyday.

Fig.5. Replica designer bags advertisement found on the web

It was Christmas time and I went to Brazil to visit my family. I met the new silicone breasts of my friend and I got jealous, they were much better than my real ones.

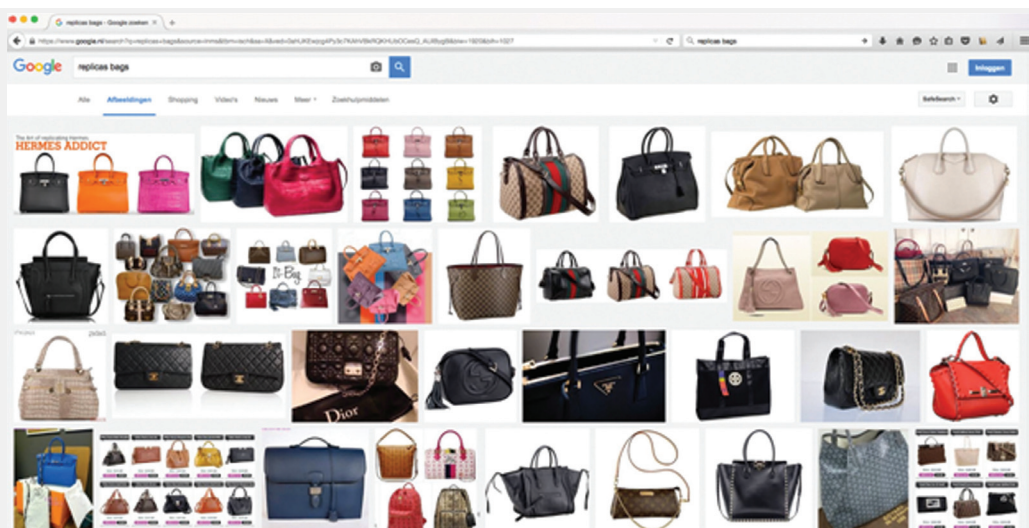




Fig.6.
My girlfriend's
new boobs

*Fig.7. Galeria Pagé, photo by
Guilherme Toussaint*

*Fig.8. Galeria Pagé, photo by
Carol Leslie*

*Fig.9. Galeria Pagé, photo by
Cristiano Penteado*





I went for a walk in downtown São Paulo looking for local design. But mostly what I found was copycat products. I ended my trip at Galeria Pagé, a famous counterfeit goods shopping center. It was my first time there and I was very curious. Apart from the fact that almost everything they were selling there was fake, it seemed to me a very normal shopping center. I saw many respectable ladies and gentlemen walking in the galleries. I also saw a policeman, protecting the crowd from pickpockets.





Fig.10. My aunt's authentic Louis Vuitton bag

Fig.11. FAKWEAR bag, Mindwhatyouwear

In the evening I went for a family dinner and witnessed a discussion between my cousin and her son. He criticized her for buying a Louis Vuitton bag for one thousand dollars. On another family occasion I noticed that both my aunt and her maid were wearing the same Louis Vuitton bag. One was authentic and the other was not.

Then I decided I had to have one as well.

I made my first personal FAKWEAR bag. I bought a knock-off Louis Vuitton bag at the Galeria Pagé in which I boldly screen-printed the word FAKE to emphasize its "fakeness".

I sold it immediately. All my friends and friends of friends wanted to have one. What surprised me was that many of them already had an authentic Louis Vuitton bag. Well, not all of them. One confessed to me later that her authentic bag actually was fake.

Back in Holland, I put them up for sale on my web-shop. Due to my training as a lawyer was very aware of the legal implications of selling counterfeit products in my site. But according to my artistic way of thinking, I was not selling counterfeits anymore since I was authenticating them as FAKE. I had changed their status, transfiguring the copy into a new original.

Very soon I started to get e-mails and phone-calls from all over the world. People were interested in buying one because they loved the concept.

Fig.12. Mail from a potential buyer, Mindwhatyouwear archive

Date: April 19, 2006 5:17:05 AM CEST
To: info@mindwhatyouwear.com
Subject: Fake bags

I adore the concept behind these bags...I've felt the same way for so long about the way we replicate as a society.

What I was wondering though, is how you do sell the bags? There isn't a place on the website for selling them, so do you rely on selling them locally as you source the "original" fake locally?

Just curious, I might like to add one to my collection and bring your message to Canada.

Cheers,
katie

Because they were going to a party.

Fig.13. Mail from a potential buyer, Mindwhatyouwear archive

hello bea!
thanks thats great!

It would be awesome if You could send it as fast as possible. I would love to have it on sunday on a big party where all the girls have the real LV bags and all these kind of things. So it would make me so happy to have the fake one then!

I really love it! I love the hole minwhatyouwhere homepage! Think its great.

Thanks Yvonne.

-----Ursprüngliche Nachricht-----

Von: Bea Correa [mailto:bea@mindwhatyouwear.com]

Gesendet: Sonntag, 17. September 2006 20:33

Because they were confused.

Fig.14. Mail from a potential buyer, Mindwhatyouwear archive

Date: July 13, 2005 10:28:18 PM CEST
To: info@mindwhatyouwear.com
Subject: QUESTION FROM AN INTERESTED FUTURE CUSTOMER

To Whom it May Concern:

I have never ordered from your company. I would like to know if your products ACTUALLY SAY "Fake" or if it's just for us to know. (I believe it's just for the customers to know they are not authentic).

Also, what are the prices in US dollars?

Thank you,



Fig.15. Press, Mindwhatyouwear archive

Fig.16. Press, Mindwhatyouwear archive

I also had many e-mails from men wanting to order a bag for their girlfriends. And many journalists wanting to publish articles about them. I found my bags on blogs and discussions everywhere, and sometimes in languages I couldn't understand.

The bags were making people reflect on what and why they were consuming. No longer being ashamed because they could not afford the new trend. The paradox was that my fake bag was setting a new trend for honesty. Sometimes though, the fake bag was censored. Like on a TV magazine programme in Belgium. At first they wanted to show the bag. But then I got this weird e-mail in which they asked me if I had an authorization to "copy" bags.



Fakewear: How phony becomes tony

CHUVANNESS By Cecile Van Straten
The Philippine STAR 02/22/2006



Just so we're clear about it, fake bugs me. I'm not in favor of fake designer goods, fake boobs, fake people, and most especially, as an LV fan, fake Louis Vuittons. That bugs the hell out of me.

But this one I like.

Brazilian-born artist Bea Correa has come up with a line where she literally printed the word "FAKE" over counterfeit Louis Vuitton pouches.

As someone allergic to fake goods, I am strangely attracted to this purse as an art object, though I wish I could have it in a Speedy 35 since the pochette cannot hold my houseful of stuff.

Mind What You Wear

Instead of trying pass that knock-off for the real thing, isn't it time to embrace the truth?

Dutch design boutique [Mind What You Wear](#) calls a fake a fake with this new series of [brilliant bags](#). Founder Bea Correa's perspective extends beyond the simple hand bag:

Despite all efforts to eradicate counterfeits goods, we receive thousands of e-mails every day advertising anything from luxury label replicas to phony life-saving medicines. Every city has a crowded black market. And 'Fake' is not merely limited to b-grade products: how many times have you seen a beautiful woman and wondered which parts were authentic? 'Fake' has become one of the defining keywords of the current age, and Mind What You Wear is embracing the trend.



by [Josh Rubin](#) [Email This](#) [Link](#)

Fig.17. Press, Mindwhatyouwear archive

Fig.18. Mail from TV magazine programme, Mindwhatyouwear archive

Subject: Autorisation

Date: February 16, 2006 9:22:07 AM CET

To: Correa Bea

Hi Bea,

I have a question which to us seems very important:
Have you asked permission to "copy" bags of a well-known label or is
FAKEWEAR a deposited label with all the autorisation of producing fake bags?

The thing is that a lawer told us that if the other labels are not aware of
your work, they might pursue us for making an "ad" to by "imitation" of
their product.

I hope you understand what I mean.

Please let me know,

Best,

Fig.19. Boy selling and wearing fake Diesel shirt in Turkey, Mindwhatyouwear archive





I also received very serious proposals to export my products on a large scale. I consulted lawyers who told me it was impossible, because even if I was authenticating my bag as fake, every flower printed on it was protected as a Louis Vuitton trademark. It had to remain an art project. Not that I was safe. I could receive a letter from the lawyers from LV any day.

It aroused my curiosity in everything regarding patents and trademarks. It is not important who creates something but who registers it first. And it is about having money to register it, because that is expensive. The 'Cupuaçu case' is a good example: There is a fruit that grows in the rainforest and is traditionally used in South America to make juice, ice cream, jam, cake and chocolate. A Japanese company started to produce those goods and registered the name CUPUAÇU as a trademark. Now this Japanese firm is threatening Brazilian companies with lawsuits who use the name Cupuaçu in their label.

Another interesting case where the defenders of trademarks are the bad guys is the decision of the Brazilian government to break AIDS drug patents and produce copycat versions in order to lower its price. In this context, copying should be seen less as a crime and more as an attempt at sharing welfare.

Three years later, I got the dreaded letter from Louis Vuitton's Malletier law firm. I was ordered to stop selling the bags immediately or they would start a lawsuit against me. They also contacted my internet provider who threatened to block my site if I did not delete the pages. I was able to convince them that my goal was not selling counterfeits and making a profit on the goodwill of Louis Vuitton but rather promoting a discussion and hoping to bring more understanding about the issue. Since then I have been prohibited from selling the bags. But fortunately I was granted the right to exhibit the bags as well as publish the pictures as a "piece of art".



Fig.20. Fair Use: Information Piracy and Creative Commons in Contemporary Art and Design exhibition, Columbia College, Chicago, USA, 2010

Voor nep hoeft je je nu niet meer te schamen

Expositie in Amsterdam over alles wat 'fake' is

» Neptassen, nepwimpers, nepborsten: we worden omringd door 'fake'.

» In Amsterdam is een expositie aan het fenomeen gewijd. Is nep wel zo erg?

Door **OLGA VAN DITZHUIZEN**
AMSTERDAM. Dit is misschien wel het beroemdste voorbeeld van 'na-maak'. *'For how long do you have to keep faking your orgasm in your partner?'* Het staat op de muur van tentoonstellingsruimte 'Platform 21' in Amsterdam. 'Tja dat hoort er ook bij', zegt Dewi Pinatih, een van de samenstellers van de expositie *Something... fake*. Platform 21 heeft met de vernoemde 'fake' een inventarisatie gemaakt van alle nep die ons in de wereld omringt. En dat is een hoop: nepvies, nepborst, nepwimpers, nep-vulvulien en in het straatgebeelde, nep-eilanden in Dubai, nep-nostalgie woontjes en natuurlijk nepschuren in een nep-spijkerbreed.

Wat precies 'fake' is en wat niet, is niet eens altijd duidelijk. Kun je bijvoorbeeld schoenen van het diermoderke Gucci, dat duidelijk 'genuispiereerd' zijn op een ontwerp van Gucci, nog wel namaak noemen? En is 'fake' eigenlijk altijd wel zo slecht?

Ik vond de silhouetten van mijn vriendeninnen een stuk mooier dan mijn eigen, natuurlijke', zei ontwerper **Bea Correa** onlangs in een door het platform georganiseerd symposium over nep-producten. De Braziliaanse Correa was verbaasd dat de namaakversies van designspullen in haar thuisland Brazilië niet zo graag afreken vonden als de originele, dure versie. Had haar moeder een peperdure, originele 'limited edition' handtas, kwam de werkster een paar dagen later met een exacte kopie op de proppen. Wat voor waarde heeft een 'echte' tas van Louis Vuitton eigenlijk?

Correa kwam op het idee om nep-tassen te verkopen. Louis Vuitton-nerds met in kochten het woord 'fake' over de volle breedte. De op die manier exclusieve 'fake' maakte tassen bleken niet aan te slepen. Nep heeft kennelijk helemaal niet iets te zijn om je voor te schamen.

Natuurlijk zijn er slachtoffers van namaakspullen, zoals de ontwerpers met een aangestapt copyright. Maar de grote schaal waarop 'fake' artikelen worden aangeboden, zorgt er ook voor dat mooi ontwerpen tassen voor een groot publiek beschikbaar zijn. 'Ik heb ook een namaak-Gucci-tas', verklaart Pinatih. 'En die kost nog steeds 200 euro. Ik vind hem hartstikke mooi. Een echte had ik nooit kunnen betalen.'

Terwijl buiten de muren van de ex-



Echte nep-Louis Vuitontassen, tot kunstobject gemaakt door de Braziliaanse ontwerper Bea Correa. Beeld Platform 21

positie ruimte juist de hang naar 'echte' en 'ambachtelijke' producten toeneemt, wordt binnen een kopie met de werkelijkheid genomen. De wanden zijn behangen met kitscherige tropische zonsopgangen, als achtergrond voor de veelal uitgeprunte beelden waarop kunstenaars hun spel met echte en namaak spelen.

'We hadden natuurlijk ook echte materialen of foto's kunnen gebruiken, maar het jatten via Google paste wel bij het thema', zegt Pinatih. Fotografe Kim Boske liet zich inspireren door zeventiende eeuwse stillevens. Die waren ook hartstikke nep: een schilderij van tien verschillende bloemen in een vaas, die nooit allemaal op

hetzelfde moment in bloei hadden kunnen staan. Boske fotografeerde bloemen op verschillende momenten, en plakte met fotoband de afbeeldingen zo op elkaar dat het samen een boeket werd. De onrealistische lichtinval verraadt dat de foto nooit 'echt' gemaakt had kunnen worden.

De Belgische kunstenaar **Stefaan Dheenede** probeerde de kwestie echt-namaak om te keren. Hij kocht een Billy-boekenkast bij IKEA en maakte een kopie – maar dan van echt hout. Het houten exemplaar verkopte hij weer in de originele doos en bracht deze terug bij de klantenservice, met het idee dat een nieuwe klant nu een echt houten Billy in huis heeft.

'Fake is het tegenovergestelde van authentiek. Maar wat is er nu nog authentiek?' zegt Pinatih. Ze wijst op de trend van net-echte zijdebloemen, en woningen die in nostalgische stijl worden opgetrokken. 'Het is allemaal splinternieuw. Dat het namaak is, wordt niet vermeld.' Het toppunt is de vicesgeworden 'fake' memo Amanda Lepore. *'The Number One Taboo in the World'*. Lepore heeft zoveel cosmetische operaties ondergaan dat niemand meer weet of het extreem grootplipige lid uit het New-Yorkse nachtleven nu ooit als man of als vrouw geboren werd. Pinatih: 'Doordat alles op deze expositie zo bij elkaar staat, zie je eindelijk de idee ervan, hoe banaal het is.'

Tentoonstelling 'Something... fake', t/m 27/10 in: Platform 21, Prinses Irenelaan 19, Amsterdam. Open do t/m zo 12:00 tot 18:00. Zie ook www.platform21.nl of pluk@platform21.nl sms code 89626 naar 7585.

Valse Kunst

• Ook de Belgische kunstenaar **Magritte** had een fascinatie voor echt en onecht. Hij schilderde omstreeks 1928 een pijp en schreef erbij: *'Ceci n'est pas une pipe'* – het was immers geen pijp, redeneerde hij, maar de afbeelding van een pijp.

• 'Er is maar één Museum Valse Kunst in de wereld en dat staat dus in Zuidwest Drenthe' meldt dit museum in Vliedder op de website. De collectie: een nep-Rietveldstapel, nep-Mona Lisa en nep-Rodin. Maak een virtuele wandeling op www.museumvalsekunst.nl of pluk@platform21.nl sms code 89626 naar 7585

• Platform 21 vormt de aanloop voor een museum op de Amsterdamse Zuidas, een nieuw 'stadshart' vol kantoren aan de A10.



Fig.21. Something Fake Exhibition, Platform 21, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2006



Fig.22. Fair Use: Information Piracy and Creative Commons in Contemporary Art and Design exhibition, Columbia College, Chicago, USA, 2010

