Unboxing the Canon—Episode 8—"Appropriation and Copying"
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In this episode, "Appropriation & Copying," I take a look at the ways in which artists refer to the work of their predecessors through copying and appropriation. Art instruction uses copying as a method to learn. In addition, artists refer to their predecessors in a myriad of ways by quoting or remaking existing works of art. We can think of the history of Western art as a conversation between works of art, past and present. Appropriation differs. Appropriation art takes a known work of art and uses it in a way that reveals something about the original, but also creates a new work of art. Sometimes the differences between the original and the new work of art are theoretical, yet not visible. As a form of cultural critique, appropriation can reveal sublimated meanings in a work of art, political meanings, or socio-cultural meanings. While the verb "appropriate" has various meanings, in this episode, to appropriate means taking a work of art and re-making it in a way that reveals the original's meaning and simultaneously creates new meanings for the appropriation. This episode will briefly consider the modern work of Manet and Duchamp before turning towards contemporary art by Kehinde Wiley, Kara Walker, and Yasumasa Morimura, all of which appropriate the content or forms (or both) of the canon of Western art.

Sources + further reading:

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