
PART V

The Copy and Power

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Image Enhancement Through Copying? Global and Local Strategies of Reproduction in the Field of World Art and Heritage

Abstract The digital and global cultural turn has created the effect that culture- and media-related strategies and practices of copying, as they have evolved and been conventionalized in the age of modernity, are subject to major transformations. Global cultures are often identified as “cultures of copy” which show a pronounced disinterest, even disregard in the modern idea of the sovereign, untouchable, and unreproducible original. This essay paper focuses on new global and local strategies of reproduction in the field of world art and heritage. It studies how the relationships of particular cultures (here Western, Asian, and Arabic) towards the concepts of original and copy, and creation and reproduction, are displaced, renegotiated, or even reaffirmed in the digital age of “copy and paste,” given that the means of digital reconstruction allow for unlimited remake. The issue of image empowerment through copying of world art heritage is discussed on the basis of a) the replication and virtual reconstruction of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan, and b) “remakes” of the Parisian Louvre in Lens (Northern France) and Abu Dhabi. Using an individual art work and an art institution as objects of inquiry, the innovation potentials and iconoclastic conflict zones of the new “glocal” power of the copy are scrutinized. As a result of this case-based analysis, this study argues that, due to the pressure of the global cultural economy, copycatting has become a new cultural-economic and political strategy for image empowerment in the field of world art and heritage. Analogous to remediation processes in digital cultures, local and global copycats of world art heritage are empowered to remaster the original image. Innovative imitation is found to be a guiding principle for globalizing the heritage market. Given that copy(cat)ing implies geopolitical relocation, the transformative power of the copy is interpreted as a newly politicized right and cultural power to copy.

Keywords Cultures of copy, iconoclasm, world cultural heritage, Bamiyan Buddhas, Louvre

Global cultures are often identified as “cultures of copy.”¹ This definition implies that the increase and reevaluation of copying practices is a consequence of new reproduction technologies, in particular the digital media that have made the concept of the original completely obsolete. Contrary to the traditional stance in modern western culture and philosophy that the copy can never outpace the original, that it always includes the betrayal of authorship/creatorship as well as the infringement of intellectual property, the aesthetic, social, and economic media practice in global cultures has proven that copying in both its old analog forms and new digital variants has become a creative power for innovation, if not even a new norm and paradigm for transformation. This digital cultural turn has the effect that previous historical, culture-related, and conventionalized definitions, strategies, and practices of copying undergo major resignification. The research interest of this paper is guided by the question of how the relationship of particular cultures—here Western, Asian, and Arabic—towards the concepts of original and copy, and creation and reproduction is displaced, renegotiated, or even reinforced in the digital age of “copy and paste,” given that the means of digital reconstruction allow for the unlimited remaking and resurrection of works and beings that have even ceased to exist in reality.

The following analysis will focus on two case studies in the domain of world art heritage. This field is particularly interesting for discussing global and local strategies of copying, because it comprises a conflict line that runs between the originality *and* the universality of world cultural heritage. Due to its declared uniqueness and human universality, the question of whether it is legitimate to reproduce and copy world art, including museum institutions that hold, preserve, and represent collections of world art and heritage, is a markedly delicate one that has stirred a heated debate over the last decade. This is mostly due to the fact that the globalization of culture and cultural heritage has not only revealed the diversity of cultures of copy, including their (in-)different views on the value relationship between original and copy, but it has also brought to bear the issue of who has (or doesn't have) the right and power of reproduction under certain conditions and in specific contexts. Besides being cultural assets, the question of authority on the multiplicity of the copy and the replication and reproduction of the original has become a political one.

Within the field of visual arts, the effect of global cultures of copy has become particularly evident in the form of the worldwide multiplication of well-established art institution formats such as the museums of modern

1 The notion of “cultures of copy” became a much debated and well-established concept in 2011, when the Edith-Russ House for Media Art in Oldenburg, Germany, organized (in collaboration with the Goethe Institute of Hong Kong) an exhibition by this title that dealt with the phenomenon of the copy as a global cultural strategy. It alluded to an earlier publication by Hillel Schwartz entitled *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York: Zone, 1996; revised and updated 2013).

and contemporary art (MoMA and MoCA), the art biennial, and the art fair—formats that have historically originated and evolved in the West. As a response to this new globalizing trend, the issue of image enhancement through copying will not only be discussed on the basis of a) an individual art work, namely the Buddha statues of Bamiyan, whose potential reconstruction in Afghanistan and “real” copy in China has sparked a hot intercultural debate on the material and immaterial values of copying cultural heritage, but also with reference to b) an art institution: the Louvre as *the* museum of world art that has been copied and remade in a local version in Lens, France, and a global version in Abu Dhabi. Using these examples, the conflict zones and innovation potentials of the new global power of the copy are scrutinized by a number of questions: Where do the decisive fault lines between intellectual and material property run? Wherein lies the power of transformation and innovation, as exerted by the global cultural translation of world culture symbols, their (trans-)historically shaped images? In what way does the copy displace and disgrace the original through the process of translocation? What differences between global and local strategies can be observed with respect to the contemporary remake and reactivation of world-historical art heritage, including its institutions of preservation and presentation?

Copying the lost, lost in copying: Reproductions of the Buddhas of Bamiyan

In this first part, the analyzed relationship between original and copy is defined by the physically destroyed and no longer existent original. With regard to the purpose of the copy, this case is distinct from a relationship wherein a copy can refer to an existing, material original (artefact) in its full grandeur and uniqueness. Each irretrievable loss of an original, aesthetically and historically unique work of art evokes the human desire to reconstitute it by a copy. This desire is expressed even more strongly the more powerful the destruction of the original image has been. Arising from the experience of loss is the question of what forms, practices, and functions of reproductions are technically considered and culturally accepted as substitutes for the lost or smashed original and how they are conceived to relate to the physically non-existent original work. The destruction of the monumental Buddha statues of Bamiyan by the Taliban in March 2001 is an impressive example of this image “recreation” effect. Hitherto, three concrete reconstruction attempts that represent culturally different models for rebuilding the destroyed art heritage of Bamiyan have been undertaken. They raise the challenging question of whether the reconstruction or replica of an art object or cultural object destroyed through an iconoclastic assault can have a healing, reconciling effect of “spiritual” transformation, or even be transmuted into another act of iconoclasm, as a second-order assault on the original.

In March 2001, the two monumental Buddha statues in the contested valley of Bamiyan, an important strategic point in the so-called “war against terror” in Afghanistan, were destroyed by Taliban militants. In addition to the two large Buddha figures in the center of the rock cliff, a smaller statue of a seated Buddha as well as another ten-meter-high Buddha statue in the neighboring Kakrak valley were blasted. Due to the monumentality of the larger Buddhas, the process of destruction dragged on for almost 20 days. Mullah Mohammed Omar, who claimed to have commanded the destruction of all Buddha figures in the Bamiyan valley, justified the act of violence by claiming he was acting within the law of Islam: “The breaking of statues is an Islamic order and I have given this decision in the light of a fatwa of the ulema and the supreme court of Afghanistan. Islamic law is the only law acceptable to me.”² This legitimization was enforced by the subsidiary argument that “all we are breaking are stones.”³ The UNESCO, commissioned by the United Nations for the protection and conservation of universal cultural heritage, condemned the act of destruction as “crime against culture,” and also spoke, in the same breath, of a “great loss of humanity.”⁴ An important, delicate point in this context is that UNESCO granted world heritage status to the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan only when they were threatened to be destroyed by the Taliban.⁵

As unique and unrepeatable as this act of destruction appears, due to its brutality being staged as a large-scale media spectacle, the iconoclasm against the Buddha statues of Bamiyan is not an unprecedented act of image devastation. The Taliban were copying iconoclastic strategies already used throughout history for the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha images: the smashing of the face was performed in the eighth century, as part of the Islamization of the region, and the bombardment of the full-body figures with canons and artillery fire also took place during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, according to the wishes of the great Mughal emperors Shah Aurangzeb and Nair Shah, as well as Abdur Rahman Khan, the Emir of Afghanistan. Given this historical dimension, the distinctiveness of the iconoclastic destruction of 2001 lies in its extent. Following an escalating spiral of political events, the aim of the Taliban was to completely eradicate the Buddha figures, and with them the history of Buddhist images and beliefs, from Afghan territory.

The iconoclasm was religiously motivated by the imperative to destroy any false copy of God, for which any representational image qualifies. The Islamic prohibition of images, which does not originate in the writings of the *Qur'an*, but in the *Hadith*, that is the collected traditions of the prophet

2 Archaeological Institute of America 2001.

3 Archaeological Institute of America 2001.

4 The valuations by the UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura are reproduced in *The World Heritage News Letter*, May-June, 2001, 30.

5 The Bamiyan district was inscribed in the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2003. This means that, as a result of the destructive iconoclastic action, the Bamiyan Buddhas were upgraded to world cultural heritage status.

Mohammed, is primarily based on the aspect of figuration. The text canon of *Hadith* agrees that all visual representations possessing (or casting) a shadow, including the depiction of God, are prohibited. In Islamic culture, God alone is reserved the right to act as *bâri* (i.e. creator) or *muçawwir* (image maker). The total identification between God and image, creator and creation, negates any principle of representation and thus prevents a fundamental differentiation between original and copy. Because only God is conferred with the power to create images, any visual figuration by man amounts to a copy of creation. Artists are often equaled with polytheists or iconodules. As a consequence of this aniconism, sculptures are untruthful idols that must be destroyed. The logic following from this view is that Mullah Mohammed Omar can state that, with the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, only stones have been broken, and not a monument of cultural significance. The iconoclastic strategy of defacement and disembodiment negates the idea that creation can be visually materialized and reproduced.

The focal point of this study is not to discuss the motives behind the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues in the past and in the new millenium—this has already been done extensively⁶—but instead it is to explore the motivation for and the practices of reconstructing and copying the lost Bamiyan Buddhas in the aftermath of their destruction in 2001.

The material and symbolic loss of the Bamiyan Buddha images called for reconstitution and compensation in the Buddhist, Afghan, Asian, and Western world. The first step towards replicating the Bamiyan Buddha, undertaken in direct response to the brutal anti-Buddhist and anti-iconic destruction of the rock-carved originals, happened in Sri Lanka. When the Taliban initially threatened to destroy the Bamiyan Buddha figures, Sri Lanka, the seat of Theravada Buddhism, had already offered to finance an international operation in order to save the two monumental statues. After the destruction, the Colombo government expressed interest in buying the remains of the statues in order to rebuild substitutes. India partly joined this effort, assuring the Sri Lankan government that maps taken from a survey of the original historical site could be provided for the reconstruction of the statues. Because the remnants of the original Buddha statues were never transferred to Colombo, the Sri Lankan Buddhist organization bootstrapped by building a replica of the Bamiyan Buddha, financed by donations from both Sri Lanka's Buddhist community and its minority Muslim community. A stone statue-carving committee was established for proposing plans for the recreation of the statue. It entrusted the renowned Indian sculptor Padma Sri M. M. Sthapathi, from Bharantha, with the responsibility of carving the massive Buddha statue on the Western boundary of the Rambadagalla temple land. The sculptor decided not to reproduce one of the two standing Buddha figures of Bamiyan, but to reconstitute an image of the smaller seated Buddha figure in the Bamiyan valley.

6 This has been accomplished by Falser 2010.

Originally, it was positioned between the two standing figures where it was also attacked by the Taliban. For maximum recuperation, the sculptor created the world's tallest granite Samadhi Buddha statue (fig. 1). While this near-superhuman recreation effort should directly compensate for the loss of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the image of the Buddha substitute was intended as a revivification of a historical, much-admired Sri Lankan Buddha figure, namely the Samadhi statue situated at Mahamevnāwa Park in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, in which Buddha is represented in the position of the *Dhyana Mudra*, the posture of meditation associated with his first Enlightenment. It was created between the third and fourth century, later damaged during a landslide from a mountainous rock site, and then reconstructed. This adaption indicates that the original intent of reproducing the Afghan Buddha of Bamiyan was transformed into the recreation of a variation of a local Buddha. This act of reproduction is therefore about the reconstitution of the glory of Buddha, of his reawakening through relocation. The hardship associated with this large-scale recreation evinces the strong compassion many felt with regard to the destroyed Buddhas of Bamiyan. The visual continuity of the genuine replica is of secondary importance, given that Buddha's spiritual image is manifold, a transformative power in itself.⁷

The second case of reconstituting the world-renowned Buddha statues of Bamiyan by local copying strategies relates to the Chinese culture of copying. It is a radical example, for the pop-cultural commercialization and dehistoricization of world cultural heritage as part of the media flows of globally circulating, openly accessible images. Commissioned by the Oriental Buddha Kingdom Corporation, a thirty-seven meter high replica of the smaller Buddha statue of Bamiyan was erected in the mountains of the Buddha Theme Park in Leshan, Sichuan Province (fig. 2).⁸

Significantly, the Buddha Theme Park with the Bamiyan Buddha copy is located in an area that was granted UNESCO world heritage status due to being home to the largest stone-cast Buddha statue in the world, the famous Buddha of Leshan.⁹

In addition, the renowned Mahao cave tombs dating from the Han dynasty are found in the same area, thus falling under the protection of

7 On July 24, 2013 it was made public that Rajnath Singh, an Indian politician, had pledged to build a replica of the Bamiyan Buddha at Kushi Nagar in Uttar Pradesh, where Gautam Buddha attained Parinirvana after his death. This announcement indicated that the replication of the Bamiyan Buddha continued for the purpose of recompense. For further information, see "Rajnath reiterates pledge to build replica of Bamiyan Buddha." *The Hindu Business Line*. July 24, 2013. Accessed February 15, 2017. <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/politics/rajnath-reiterates-pledge-to-build-replica-of-bamiyan-buddha/article4948040.ece>.

8 The park showcases replicas of more than 3,000 world-famous Buddha statues from around the world, in particular India, Thailand, and Myanmar, directly in the neighborhood of the giant Leshan Buddha.

9 The "Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area" was listed as a UNESCO world heritage site in 1996. It also includes the Mahao cave tombs from the Han period.



Figure 1: Samadhi Buddha Statue in Sri Lanka, 2001.



Figure 2: Replica of the Bamiyan Buddha Statue under Construction in Leshan, China.

the Leshan Giant Buddha world heritage site. In order to be able to erect the Bamiyan Buddha replica on the rock face of Leshan, numerous ancient, UNESCO-protected Mahao tombs are suspected to have been removed and also partly damaged by the workers of the theme park enterprise, Oriental Buddha Kingdom.¹⁰ By this act of violence, a new form of global cultural, if not touristic iconoclasm through religious “theme park-ization” was introduced.

When the destruction of parts of the world heritage site became known, local archaeologists from the Mahao museum responded with an outcry. How could it happen that historically valuable monuments were replaced by a new—and even poor—copy of another (destroyed) original monument of cultural-historical significance? Their cynicism over the disregard for the historical value and UNESCO status of the world cultural heritage site was intensified by the fact that Liang Enming, the acting director of the Oriental Buddha Kingdom theme park who had had the idea of building the Bamiyan Buddha replica, previously held the position of the vice manager of the Leshan cultural office and was responsible for the protection of the Mahao rock tombs and their remnants. The conflict between universal global and local values reached a new peak in the given case. While aiming at preserving the original Bactrian image of the Bamiyan Buddha statues as a universal image of Buddhism on Chinese territory, Chinese national cultural heritage was sacrificed, its human universality disrespected.¹¹ The partial destruction of world heritage artefacts serves the purpose of image conservation; the act of face-saving contributes to image enhancement and image distribution. This bizarre logic is proven by the respective arguments for legitimizing the replica of the Bamiyan statue on the cliffs of Leshan put forward by Liang Eming, the director of the Buddha Park, and Chinese copyists: “The Buddha statue at Bamiyan Valley is the common wealth of humankind. The aim of building the replica is to make it possible for those who have never seen the statue to look for themselves at its great beauty.”¹² According to the stone carvers, who were commissioned by the Oriental Buddha Park Corporation, the Leshan replica of the smaller Bamiyan Buddha statue should be better (in terms of design) than the original. In concrete terms, this meant that the destruction of certain facial parts, (supposedly) caused by Muslim invaders in the eighth century, was to be rescinded, thus revealing the Buddha’s original face with its unfeigned features. Heads and faces of surviving Afghan Buddha

10 According to Hannah Beech’s article “The Shock of the New,” published in the TIME magazine on March 9, 2003, an official entry in the UNESCO World Heritage list recording the destruction of some Mahao cave tombs is missing. This might be due to the fact that the demolition could not yet have been officially proven. However, it seems no coincidence that the replica of the Bamiyan Buddha was hidden from the public soon after the publication of Hannah Beech’s article in the TIME magazine.

11 In 2003, the Oriental Buddha Capital Holding was subject to police investigation and was eventually charged with the destruction of world cultural heritage.

12 “China to Build Bamiyan Buddha Statue Replica” 2001.

statues are said to have figured as role models for the reconstitution of the face. Basically, the reconstruction was intended to efface the history of Muslim iconoclasm towards the Bamiyan Buddha figures and to recover their uncorrupted original image, removed from all historical battle scars. The material historicity and uniqueness of the original art work appears to be of minor significance compared to the idea of a full-body reproduction enabling the reconstitution—and surmounting—of the destroyed original image. Hence, the damage of numerous original Mahao tombs done by one singular copy of the Bamiyan Buddha, designed to be wholly true to the original, is acquiesced.

The high-aiming plan to trump the original with a copy in new splendor did not develop fully. The damage done to the UNESCO-protected Chinese Mahao tombs aroused strong anger from the side of national and international culture preservers. In response to the worldwide protests, the replica of the Bamiyan figure had to be hidden from the eyes of the world. Until today, it stands unseen in the rock cliffs, covered by a large cloth. Supposedly, this veiling and locking away from public sight was done for preventive reasons, for fear that the Buddha replica would itself become victimized through iconoclastic attacks motivated by the fight over the original historical value of the cultural heritage site. Since the Bamiyan Buddha replica has disappeared from sight, a kind of double-veiling has taken place; the damage to the Mahao tombs on the Leshan world cultural heritage site has disappeared from public debate. The anti-iconic public strategy pursued by official Chinese cultural authorities in order to suppress the worldwide articulation of protest proves to be a strong political measurement and attack against those figures representative of copycat cultures, those who celebrate free copying as a legitimate strategy of image appropriation and who show themselves indifferent to, if not disrespectful towards, the values and protection rights of intellectual and material property in world heritage.

The third attempt of reconstruction presented in this paper is dichotomous, as it concerns both the physical rebuilding and the virtual reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. In 2004, the rescuing of the remains of the blown-up Bamiyan statues began under the direction of ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, subordinate to the UNESCO as evaluation authority. “Because the destruction was unavoidable, the main goal of UNESCO was to secure and preserve the remaining pieces that were not destroyed by the explosion, and to study the potential re-setting in place of the fragments that fell to the ground.”¹³ Around 9,000 pieces were recovered, the heaviest among them weighing up to 60 tons. The safeguarding of the original remains of the Giant Buddhas of Bamiyan became a strategy for the virtual reconstruction of the statues.¹⁴ In 2010, Michael Jansen, a building historian from the RWTH in

13 Margottini 2014, 1.

14 As documented in Petzet 2009.

Aachen, presented a "Cultural Masterplan" for the rebuilding of the Bamiyan Buddha statues using the original pieces. In archaeological terminology, this reconstruction technique is called anastylosis. In cooperation with his research team, he created an elaborate 3-D computer model of the Bamiyan statues based on the precise geological reconstruction of each fragment.¹⁵ He proposed relocating each original piece at its precise position before the Taliban's iconoclastic attack, noting that "the faults shall remain visible" in the form of supplemental brick material in order to document the destruction "as part of the history of these ancient master works."¹⁶ This conservatorial position is also applied to the faces of the Buddha figures, which shall be preserved in their iconoclastically damaged and effaced state. The reconstitution of the mutilated face of the original is carried out by the use of original pieces. It is conspicuous that many of the technique-oriented scientific reconstruction pictures show a faceless Buddha as a destroyed image. They include the image-annihilating gesture of the earlier, pre-Taliban act of iconoclasm into the visualization model, but at the same time present the Buddha figures as colorfully painted ancient



Figure 3: Reconstruction of the large Bamiyan Buddha by Michael Jensen and Georgios Toubekis (RWTH Aachen) in cooperation with the Chair of Conservation-Restoration, Art Technology and Conservation Science at the TU Munich.

15 Jansen 2011.

16 Jansen, quoted in Ell 2010. English translation by the author.

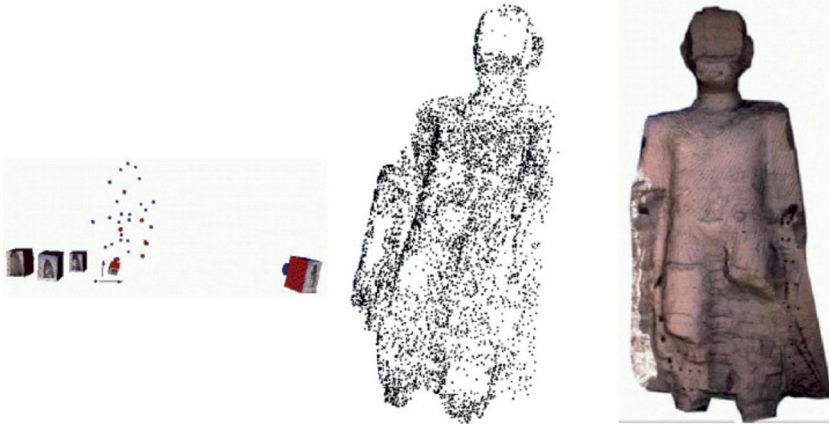


Figure 4: Textured Model of the Small Buddha of Bamiyan, as reconstructed by Armin Grün. View of the recovered camera poses of tourist images (left). Point cloud (centre) and textured 3D model, obtained with ETH Zürich's automated matching program.

cult statues—a paradoxical constellation which indicates basic reservations toward attempting a perfect reproduction (fig. 3).

In contrast to this partial reconstruction related to the historical condition of the statues before the iconoclastic Taliban attack, a pop music video about the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha figures, produced by the Afghan Hazara singer Bisharat Bashir in 2011, and again in 2013, envisages the complete reconstruction of the original Buddhist cult figures by full-fledged replicas.¹⁷ The music video of the new Hazaragi song shows the virtual resurrection of all monumental Buddha figures in the Bamiyan valley, including the originally existing reclining Buddha in front of the standing Buddhas in the rock niches, in full golden regalia. The remodeling is not only focused on a full-body copy, but also on the complete recreation of the destroyed face. From the cultural perspective of the Hazara people, this re-facing aims toward the reconstitution of their own Buddhist tradition and history that can also be understood as a practice of face-saving. The Afghan Hazara seek to reconstruct their own origin as descendants of the Kushara with the deep and radiating power of the Buddha copies that fill the void of the missing originals.

The virtual reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues as a reimagining of their original image in contrast to the real reconstruction by use of original pieces has also inspired scholars in the field of visualization. The most prominent attempt to virtually reconstruct the Bamiyan Buddha

17 The version of the 2011 Hazaragi Song displaying the reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas is available at YouTube. "Bamiyan'Hazaragi' song 2011," YouTube video, 3:26, posted by "Javad Rajabi," March 4, 2012. Accessed October 6, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soI_v6wxGic.

figures was made by Armin Grün, of ETH Zurich and his team. He developed a photogrammetric reconstruction of the large Bamiyan Buddha with the help of new visualization techniques (fig. 4).¹⁸

A set of three different image types—internet images, tourist images, and metric images—was employed in order to produce a morphed composite image of the large Buddha that comes authentically close to the original image, in both its artistic quality and cultural value. This time, the power of the copy lay in the digital remediation. Image reproductions were used to reconstitute the authentic image of the original large Buddha, thus reversing the traditional relationship between original and copy. The aniconism symbolized by the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas stands in stark contrast to the image multiplication applied for the virtual reconstruction of the Buddha cult statues and their remediation. Because of the evidential power of photographic and scientific images, the spiritual and affective power of the Bamiyan Buddha image—that is, the triad of the cult image, the artistic image, and the world heritage image—can be reconstituted. In principle, the image-based 3-D reconstruction model of the large Buddha figure could serve for the physical reconstruction of the statue. However, the resurrection of the virtual Buddha in real space has not yet been conducted, most likely because of concerns that it would then be perceived as a “hard” copy of its virtual origin.

As demonstrated, the reconstructionists of the Bamiyan Buddha statues are subject to accusations of iconoclasm. In the case of the Chinese Bamiyan Buddha replica of Leshan, physical iconoclasm—that is destruction of the UNESCO-protected ancient rock tombs—is coupled with symbolic iconoclasm, the effacement of original art-historical value and the destruction of the original scene of the Buddha figure. Arguably, the relocation copying of the Bamiyan Buddha on the mountain slopes of Leshan took place out of pure greed and ignorance. Even the other two examples of reconstruction can be said to contribute to the demolition of the Bamiyan Buddha image, albeit unintentionally. On one hand, this argument can be maintained because the shattered “original” image is staged in its brokenness (anastylosis), thus continuing to inscribe the image history of destruction into the collective visual memory; on the other hand, it can be argued that the virtual reimaging through image reproduction, multiplication, and morphing attacks the artistic uniqueness and autonomous validity of the original image. Image reconstruction always implies image destruction. In that sense, iconoclasm is inherent to visual cultures of copy, be they scientific, artistic, political, religious, or touristic.

The presented examples of how nations compensated for the physical loss of the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan clearly illustrate that the characteristics of the “remade” versions very much depend on how the relationship between original and copy is defined in the given cultural

18 For detailed information about the 3D modelling of the Bamiyan Buddha statues see Grün 2004 and 2013.

context. Regional cultures (whether Asian or Western) have the same share of influence as domain-specific cultures (e.g. religious culture, scientific culture, art culture, or commercial culture). The line of demarcation contouring potential areas of conflict thus runs between *reconstitution* and *reconstruction* strategies. The Asian attempts at replicating the (lost) original Buddha statues of Bamiyan—be it the religiously motivated Sri Lankan reproduction or the Chinese rebuilding of the Buddha figure for commercial touristic purposes, or even the Afghan Hazaragi virtual reimagination of the Bamiyan Buddhas as part of a music video—are all characterized by a strategy of reconstitution aiming at compensation and reconciliation. Relatively independent in their different cultural and social contexts, they don't consider authenticity as defined by the site- and area-specific material, artistic, spiritual, and historical value of the monument. This is one of the reasons why, for instance, the removal of authentic parts of a world heritage site (as in the Leshan case) was accepted because it made room for a replica of another, supposedly more attractive world heritage monument. As shown, compensation can also mean amendment and improvement. The copy is permitted to be more perfect than the original; it can either completely reconstitute the damaged, destroyed, or lost original in its full magnificence, or even enhance it. The transformative power of the copy lies in the survival and revivification of the original image beyond its site-specific location. The replicas line up to outpace the original by a process of outsourcing. The Afghan Buddha of Bamiyan can be resurrected globally, in renewed splendor, without any harm done to its local origin. This translocational potential can be related to the Buddhist concept of reproduction, which is markedly different from its religious, aesthetic, and media-technological understanding in Western (Christian) culture. Buddhist strategies of reproduction follow the model of reproduction in nature. It is not nature itself that is copied, but its strategies of reproduction. Buddha can multiply without losing identity. Buddha reproductions are substantially connected via the main Buddha, meaning that all of them are authentic incarnations of Buddha. This principle allows for multiple reproductions as creative acts of production. Reproducibility signifies diversity and abundance. At the same time, genealogical reproduction plays an important role for the replication of the Bamiyan Buddha statue.¹⁹ By appropriating the original act of production, the intangible heritage and artistic practice of carving a giant stone Buddha statue out of a steep rock slope is kept alive. The historical survival and cultural transmission of the carving techniques and the reproductive features of Buddha imaging outrank the significance of the original, destroyed, or dead monument. Replication amounts to compensation, even redemption for the loss of the original. In this respect, it helps avert the loss of authenticity.

19 See Mersmann 2004.

Contrary to this reproductive approach to the heritage value of copying, the described western strategies, pursued in the context of world heritage preservation as universal strategies, aim for reconstruction that avoids the notion of copying. The main goal of these reconstruction attempts consists of safeguarding and rehabilitating the site-specific original image. The physical remains of the original Buddha statue are integrated into the virtual reconstruction, thereby advancing the fragmentation and virtualization of the original. As the original is a historically broken image, it is not permitted to resurrect fully or perfectly. The concept of anastylosis,²⁰ as well as the proposal for a partial physical reconstruction of only the lower parts of the large Buddha statue while keeping the dust and rubble of the smaller Buddha in the niche,²¹ indicate that the physical reality of the original can only be present—or *presented*—in a virtual space. In terms of faithfulness, the virtual remodeling of the original seems to substitute, if not dispense with its physical reconstruction. The scientific data preservation of the virtual reconstruction makes the physical conservation (including the remnants) of the original more and more obsolete. This virtual displacement of the original as a monument from material culture will likely have a strong transformative effect on how the authenticity, originality, and validity of world cultural heritage will be defined in the future of digital archaeology.

Coping with the copy: Offshoots of the Louvre

A new trend in the global network economy of culture is the copying of complete art and heritage institutions. Following Ribeiro's argument for the dependence of economic life on copying in this volume, the recent development reaffirms how heavily cultural production relies on cultural reproduction and replication. The multiplication of entire cultural institutions such as world art museums for consumption by remodeling existing templates amounts to a new institutional commodity fetishism. The Louvre museum in Paris, which marked the birth of the museum in Europe and advanced by definition to "the museum of museums" in the nineteenth century, is a good example among museums to demonstrate the motivations and economic power strategies connected with cultural-institutional replication. With the inauguration of the Louvre-Lens museum in Northern France in 2012, and the official opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi in the

20 Article 15 of the UNESCO Venice Charter states that "All reconstruction work should however be ruled out a priori. Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognisable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form." (*International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* 1964).

21 See Jensen 2011, 163.

United Arab Emirates in 2015, the central Louvre museum has donated a local and global copy of itself to the world. It is obvious that the corporation of the Louvre museum is copying the “Guggenheim principle,” as first described by Hilmar Hoffmann in his book of the same title in 1999, in which he compared Guggenheim’s opening of joint-venture museums all over the world with the franchising principle of McDonald’s and spoke of a new era of hegemonic museum politics heralded by Guggenheim’s capitalist imperialism.²² By opening two new branches, the Louvre appears to have followed this cultural-economic strategy of global museum politics. It copies the Guggenheim model as an economic success model, hoping for the recurrence of the so-called Bilbao effect. The Louvre spin-off museums aim to bring the glamor associated with a world-class arts culture either to regions that are underdeveloped or to rising cities that aspire to become world cities. The production of the glamor factor is targeted by the group of the so-called GLAMUR museums, that is global art museums that position themselves as economic reactivators, among which are included the Tate, the Guggenheim, the Pompidou, and since 2012, the Louvre. They are able to produce an aura of glamor independent of the dreariness and insignificance of their location, because they bunker universal human treasures of art and cultural heritage from the distant past as well as contemporary times. According to Beatriz Plaza, the GLAMUR museum is characterized by

global media visibility and sheer presence in the communications environment; outstanding architecture by a superstar architect; big blockbuster exhibitions and a large number of visitors; being magnets for tourists; requiring large capital cost investments and operating budgets; using expensive advertising and commercialization strategies; having a huge operative risk; [and] a hope for substantial impact on the local economy.²³

Besides their cultural-educational objective, these museums function “to become an effective economic engine”²⁴ through the creation of employment and the generation of tourism.

Given the cultural-economic ambition of image enhancement through copying, how, in fact, is the relationship between the Louvre in Paris and the Louvre-Lens defined? Is it a temporal relationship between the original historical museum in Paris and the contemporary museum branch in Lens? Or is it a chronological relationship between “firstness” and “secondariness?” A genealogical relationship between progenitor and descendent, parent company and offspring? Or a technical and economic production relationship between role model and copy? Finally, is it a spatial, geopolitically

22 Hoffmann 1999, 14–15.

23 Plaza 2010, 155.

24 Plaza 2010, 155.

defined relationship between center and periphery, the national and the transnational, the local and the global?

The Louvre offspring museum in Lens was envisaged to contribute to the regional development of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region.²⁵ It was designed to regenerate the stagnant local economy and become a magnet for regional art and heritage tourism. As a branching strategy, it drew on the asymmetry between the French periphery and its center. Using the local reproduction of the Parisian Louvre as a role model for the world art museum, including the transfer of renowned pieces of world art heritage from the Louvre to the Louvre-Lens, was meant to compensate for the wounds of regional history. The transplantation amounts to a rehabilitation project, the recovery of the ruined region of Nord-Pas-De-Calais from a series of historical, economic, and political disasters through the means of GLAMUR museum culture. In terms of the relationship between the museum institution located in the center and the museum institution located in the periphery, the Louvre-Lens is officially labeled as annex of the Louvre Paris. Henri Loyrette, the President and Director of the Louvre Museum Paris, emphasizes however that it is not dependent on and subordinate to the central historical Louvre museum, but that it is *the* Louvre in all the facets of its original identity: "This 'other' Louvre, this museum of glass and light, set deftly atop a former mine works, Shaft 9-9b of Lens, is not simply an annex of the Louvre, it is the Louvre itself. It is the Louvre in all its dimensions and all its components, in its geographic and chronological breadth, a universal museum"²⁶ (fig. 5).

In order to prevent the Louvre-Lens from being perceived as a local "dependent" and unqualified museum reproduction of limited, secondary importance, the argument of the universal museum is put forward. The sovereignty and uniqueness of the local museum branch is underlined by conceding it the right—and even the power—to redefine the Musée du Louvre in Paris with regard to content, concept, and function: "The establishment of the Louvre-Lens is an opportunity for the Louvre to rethink its vocation, to consider its collections and to step outside of its walls and look at itself from a little distance. An opportunity to experiment with things that are not possible within the restricted envelope and organization of

25 In 2003, the Ministry of Culture and the Louvre Directorate launched a call to the 22 regions of France with the objective to implant a Louvre branch within one region. This initiative was part of a newly-introduced decentralization strategy of French cultural institutions that came in response to the long-lasting criticism that French art and culture were unfairly concentrated in Paris, and therefore privileging the capital's community. Only the Nord-Pas-De-Calais region applied for the regional Louvre branch and proposed six cities for the museum project. Lens was finally selected and officially announced by France's then Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin. Lens's coal mining wasteland was chosen as the location of the new museum. The Louvre annex site was planned for the top of shaft 9-9b. The newly-built museum, designed by the Japanese architectural firm SANAA in collaboration with New York architect Tim Culbert was opened on December 4, 2012.

26 Loyrette n.d.-a.



Figure 5: Museum Louvre-Lens.

the Paris location."²⁷ This statement highlights that the regional copy of the Louvre in Nord-Pas-De-Calais should help to renew and regenerate the original Louvre in the French capital with a fresh contemporary perspective of critical regionalism. With this goal, the process of museum reproduction turns into a process of creation by which difference and innovation are constituted at both ends of the Louvre museum's history, its past, and its present. A new identity of the old historical Louvre Paris unfolds in the contemporary Louvre-Lens. This is why Henri Loyrette can confidently claim "The future of the Louvre is now in Lens."²⁸

The Louvre Abu Dhabi—its official opening, currently projected for late 2016, has been delayed multiple times—is the second offspring of the Louvre Paris. Considering that Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) known for its highly international community, ambitiously strives to become a leading global player in the Arabic world, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, appearing as a global reproduction of the French national Louvre museum in Paris, is a perfect investment to that end. Whereas the Louvre-Lens at the far north end of France reflects the decentralization of museum institutions in the nation state of France, the Louvre Abu Dhabi points to the decentralization of the Western museum monopoly in a globalized art and museum world. Based on the assumption that the Louvre is a universal museum to be shared by all people and cultures,

27 Loyrette n.d.-b.

28 Loyrette n.d.-b.

an inter-governmental agreement for thirty-years of collaboration was signed by the UAE and France in March 2007.²⁹ One of the characteristics of this treaty is that the cultural collaboration between the UAE and France is not restricted to the Louvre museum, but extended to a group of French museums that joined forces under the umbrella of *Agence France-Muséums*.³⁰ The contract prohibits the creation of any similar museum institution with the name of Louvre in any of the other emirates of the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, or Iraq, thus protecting the French Louvre brand in the Arab world. The French museums will loan works for the permanent galleries and temporary exhibitions for the first ten years and also assist in developing the national collection.

The construction of the Louvre Abu Dhabi is part of ongoing plans for the touristic and cultural development of Saadiyat Island, a natural island alongside Abu Dhabi's coast. The cultural mega-project is supervised by the Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) tasked with conserving and promoting the heritage and culture of the Abu Dhabi emirate and the Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC), an independent company of which the TCA Abu Dhabi is the sole shareholder. Besides the Louvre, Saadiyat Island will host the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (designed by Frank Gehry), the Zayed National Museum (Foster + Partners), the Performing Arts Centre (Zaha Hadid Architects), and the Maritime Museum (Tadao Ando Architect & Associates). The architecture for the Louvre Abu Dhabi was designed by French star architect Jean Nouvel (fig. 6). In "combining modern architecture and inspiration drawn from the region's traditions," the design should reflect "the desire to create a universal museum in which all cultures are brought together."³¹

The Louvre Abu Dhabi deal has sparked much controversy. A petition against the deal was signed by 4,650 museum experts, archaeologists, and art historians, who insisted that museums are not for sale. Therein, the Louvre was accused of behaving "like a corporation with a clearly-defined

29 It was agreed upon that Abu Dhabi would pay over a period of 30 years for the privilege to display art works from French museums. France received 525 million US dollars for the use of the Louvre brand alone, as well as a gift of 33 million dollars to renovate a wing of the Paris Louvre in order to showcase Islamic art works in a newly-designed exhibit.

30 The International Agency of French Museums comprises the following museums or cultural heritage-related institutions: Musée du Louvre, Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Musée du quai Branly, Réunion des musées nationaux, Musée et Domaine national de Versailles, Musée Guimet, Musée Rodin, École du Louvre, Domaine national de Chambord, and the Établissement public de maîtrise d'ouvrage des travaux culturels.

31 Louvre Abu Dhabi 2014. The huge white dome spanning 180 meters in diameter and covering two thirds of the museum recalls the Arabian architecture of a mosque, mausoleum, and madrasa as well as the universal spherical symbol of the globe. The invention of a modern museum through variations of classical Arab forms makes clear that the "universalism of the Louvre Abu Dhabi represents a cultural mix" (Louvre Abu Dhabi 2014 a) characteristic of the hybridity of modern global cultures.

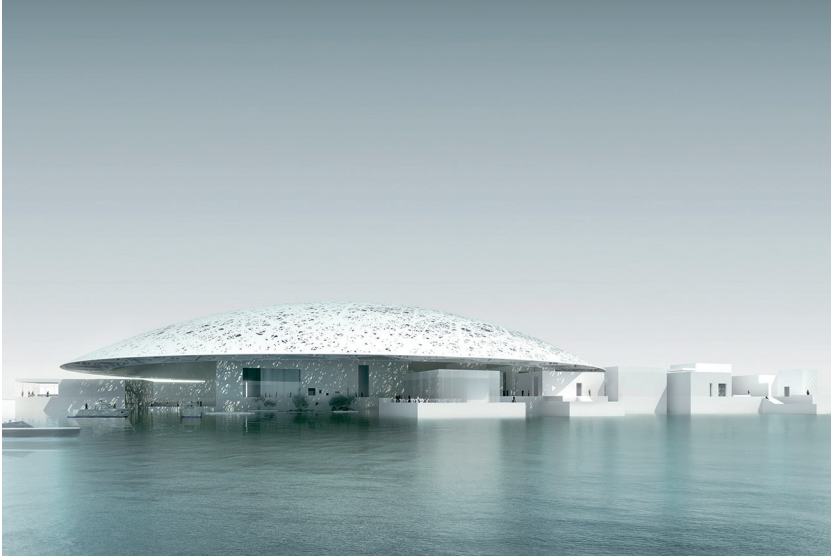


Figure 6: Museum Louvre Abu Dhabi, 3-D model.

strategy: profit maximization.³² The responses to this critique from both sides, the Louvre leadership in Paris and the city government of Abu Dhabi, draw on the mission of intercultural dialogue and the universality of cultural values. Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, the Cultural Minister of France, argued: “We’re not selling the French legacy and heritage. We want this culture to radiate to parts of the world that value it. We’re proud that Abu Dhabi wants to bring the Louvre here. We’re not here to transform culture into a consumer product.”³³ Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE President and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi countered:

This is a major achievement in Abu Dhabi’s vision to become a world-class destination bridging global cultures. This accord further strengthens international dialogue, which will embrace all cultures. This initiative is a unique milestone in international cooperation and bilateral relations and a tribute to the longstanding and friendly ties our two nations have enjoyed. It also creates an enriching environment to be treasured by and to educate generations to come.³⁴

The main argumentation applied by the Parisian Louvre directorate to legitimate what might be called a “remake” of the Louvre in Abu Dhabi is

32 Statement by Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, President of Germany’s Foundation for Prussian Culture (“Art in the Desert” 2007).

33 Krane 2007.

34 Online article from the Design Build Network: “Louvre Abu Dhabi,” n.d.

heavily based on the modern idea of universalism. The Louvre Abu Dhabi is defined as “the first universal museum founded in the Arab world.”³⁵ Its creation is related to the *Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums*, signed in 2002 by nearly twenty museums, including the Louvre, in order to reaffirm, through a code of conduct, the contemporary relevance of the universal museum model increasingly criticized as a Western hegemonic model rooted in colonial history.³⁶ According to the mission statement of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the “universal approach suits Abu Dhabi well, reflecting the city’s position at the crossroads of east and west, and its vital ancient role in the days of the Silk Route, when the region linked Europe and the Indian Ocean, opening up exchanges between Asia and Africa. The museum will reflect the region’s role as a crossroads for civilisations.”³⁷ The “Birth of the Museum” in Abu Dhabi strategically copies the birth of the Parisian Louvre as the encyclopedic and universal museum in the intellectual and cultural climate of the Enlightenment. It presents itself as an even more universalizing museum, as it breaks with classical departmental divides, the categorization of art works by technique or civilization, in favor of a display of the continuity of universal art as a chronological and thematic narrative from the archaeological to the contemporary, enabling the visitor to form a shared universal memory of historical cultural entanglement in a global perspective. This comparative historical approach will open up

new horizons [...] underlining how much—before the effective rise of Westernization—the multipolar world that we see as a contemporary fact is an ancient reality. The multiple perspectives introduced by this comparative exercise undoubtedly disrupt a certain world view that the West has imposed and are, of course, essential to the relevance of the universal ambition of the Louvre Abu Dhabi.³⁸

Regarding this cross-cultural art-historical approach, the double-bind resulting from the definition of the Louvre as both universal *and* singular reveals its deeper meaning. The Arab relocation, reassembling, and representation of original copies of world art and heritage from the Louvre Paris adds diverse uniqueness to their universality. The original works surrounded by an aura of human universalism are reconstituted and reaffirmed as singular originals through their museum-cultural translation into the Abu Dhabi context. Likewise, the reproduction of the universal museum at its new location in the Arab world results in a single—and singular—museum that defies its actual origin as a multiplied or “copied” museum.

35 Des Cars 2014b, 27.

36 Des Cars 2014b, 27.

37 See the definition of the Louvre Abu Dhabi as universal museum on the website itself (Louvre Abu Dhabi 2014b).

38 Des Cars 2014b, 31.

Remastering the copy: Global and local transformations

The concept of *remastering* is used in this concluding part in order to assess the global expansion and appreciation of the copy as a new masterpiece. This increased valuation of the multiplied copy to the singularity of a new original can be related to both its capacity for technical reproduction and its transformative power for innovation. The practice of remastering, in fact, originated as a media technique of post-processing. Usually, remastering techniques are used to remake and enhance older, outdated, or damaged audio and video recordings into newer (digital) reproductions. They can be applied to the full scale of reproduction techniques, from *restoration* to the remaking of original material. As proven in the discussed examples, the remastering of original historical works and institutions in the field of world art and heritage is placed in a range between reconstruction (anastylosis, virtual remodeling of the Bamiyan Buddhas), reconstitution (Sri Lankan and Chinese replicas of the Bamiyan Buddhas), and renewal (Louvre-Lens and Louvre Abu Dhabi). In all cases, the copying of the material object tends to play a secondary role. The sheer materiality of the art object appears worthless for reproduction. The object of copying is of immaterial quality, encompassing the aura, image, brand, or value (i.e. cultural, religious, economic, or scientific) of artifacts and art institutions that have achieved the prestigious and distinctive status of universality in world art and heritage.

The favoring of strategic and conceptual “image” copying is a characteristic element in so-called “copycat cultures.”³⁹ Generally, the term copycat culture is used to designate the copying of business ideas and plans for launching startup enterprises. Although this strategic principle of copying proven business models is despised by many—it is often seen as bad business practice in violation of intellectual property principles—it has experienced significant popularity growth in recent years. Oded Shenkar,⁴⁰ the author of “Copycats: how smart companies use imitation to gain a strategic edge,” unfolds a particularly positive view on the business practice of copycatting. He claims:

We need to lose the mind-set that imitation is an embarrassing nuisance residing at the margins of business life, and bring it to center stage strategically and operationally. Business leaders need to appreciate the value of imitation but also be aware of its costs and

39 The English term “copycat” signifies “mimicry”. The term “copycat culture” arose in the context of genetic reproduction after the first cloned cat was born on December 2, 2001, at the veterinary faculty of Texas A&M University. The cloning was carried out by Mark Westhusin in cooperation with the Korean geneticist Taeyoung Shin. An alternative naming for the cloned cat was “carboned cat.”

40 Oded Shenkar holds the Ford Chair in Global Business Management at the Fisher College of Business at Ohio State University.

risks, and learn to see imitation not as an impediment to innovation but as a driver of innovation, if done right.⁴¹

The author even introduces a new term for the beneficial side of copycatting: “imovation” or “a fusion of imitation and innovation to create a competitive advantage.”⁴²

There is no escaping the fact that, over the last decade, copycatting has been adopted widely as a new practice of and paradigm for the global cultural economy. In China, for instance, *shanzhai* copycatting has transformed from a knockoff practice of consumer good imitation to a wider cultural phenomenon of reproduction since around the time of the Beijing Olympics, in 2008.⁴³ Meanwhile, its use has not been restricted to the copycatting of brand products, but has expanded to all areas of social and cultural life, including places and institutions (i.e. media formats, restaurants, stores, buildings, and even towns).⁴⁴ Some scholars argue that *shanzhai* is a phenomenon of counterculture targeting, aiming to deconstruct the dominance of official Chinese culture and the global hegemony of Western culture.⁴⁵ It is evaluated as a form of “grassroots innovation” that “takes place outside of government control, not within it.”⁴⁶ The violation of intellectual property rights is regarded as its necessary condition.⁴⁷

In the light of these interpretations, the replication of the Bamiyan Buddha in China and the reproduction of the Musée du Louvre in Lens and Abu Dhabi can be qualified as glocal strategies of copycatting. The replica of the Bamiyan Buddha in the Buddhist theme park of Leshan is a clear example of *shanzhai* copycatting in the field of world art heritage.⁴⁸ The Chinese Buddha copy represents what Hennessey, in his analysis of the Chinese

41 Shenkar 2010, 4.

42 Shenkar 2010, 4. The author lists “Rules of Imovation” by which he encourages firms to “not reinvent the wheel,” but to “put the buzz in imitation.” He calls for “removing the stigma attached to imitation and making it as exciting and fashionable as innovation.”

43 *Shanzhai* literally means “mountain village” or “mountain stronghold.” In Chinese history, it was referred to hideouts of bandits and outlaws. Its contemporary usage relates to the loss of official control. *Shanzhai* as a new cultural phenomenon of copycatting began with name-brand knockoffs, such as the copying of smartphones, laptop computers, and designer fashion. See Yao 2008, for further information.

44 For the broad range of Chinese *shanzhai* copycats, see <http://www.businessinsider.com/things-that-china-copied-from-the-world-2013-8?op=1> (accessed June 15, 2014), where the Bamiyan Buddha replicas in Leshan are also mentioned. The website documents that, besides a Florentine village copied on the outskirts of the Chinese city of Tanjin, the UNESCO world heritage site of the Austrian village of Hallstatt was also replicated in the province of Guangdong.

45 See Hennessey 2012, who gives an excellent overview on the different historical notions and contemporary interpretations of *shanzhai*.

46 Representative examples for this approach can be found in Zhu and Shi 2010.

47 In this sense, copycatting contributes to a non-hegemonic world system. Along the lines of Ribeiro (in this volume), it can be categorized as a strategy of “economic globalization from below.”

48 Even though the copying happened before the official acknowledgement of the era of *shanzhai* culture, it possesses all of its characteristics.

cultural practice of *shanzhai*, has interpreted as a shift from the Confucian “culture of emulation” to the neo-Confucian “culture of imitation.”⁴⁹ The remastering of the original is the main aim of the laborious copying process. Perfect imitation of the original production process shall enable the attainment of a new, reawakened originality. The copycat is born as a new masterwork—in this shift of gravity lies the supremacy of the copy, including its power of resistance against further copying attempts. As discussed earlier, the Chinese copying of the Bamiyan Buddha statue is a strategic move of a commercial counterculture mimicking the universal values of an unreproducible “high culture.” It appears, unwittingly or not, as a parody of the contemporary trend in Chinese cultural policy to destroy national heritage in order to make room for innovation and economic success while, at the same time, subscribing to the UNESCO principles for protecting world cultural heritage.

The reproduction of the Louvre museum in Lens and Abu Dhabi reflects the imovative business strategies of copycats, as described by Shenkar. It happens under the assumption that the museum model of the Louvre sells globally, in whatever regionalized or locally-assimilated form, due to its legitimization as a universal museum brand. Innovation is expected from imitation in different local cultures and global contexts. Through relocation and remodeling, the universality of the universal museum, incorporated in the Louvre, is multiplied into diversity. The cultural-political implications and economic effects of copycatting the historical Louvre are as of yet inconclusive. Viewed from the perspective of French state culture and its claim to world supremacy, the imovative copying of the Louvre museum brand serves the purposes of a neo-colonial empowerment of the modern colonial art institution—the universal museum of world art and heritage—in the contemporary age of globalization.⁵⁰ The replication effect of the Louvre branches in Lens and Abu Dhabi aims to exert a profitable regional and global impact of the French cultural economy in the global world. It will empower the French Louvre (including its affiliated museums and exhibition market) to become a global, transnational player in the world of museum corporations. The historical power of the modern Parisian Louvre, threatening to vanish in an increasingly globalized art and museum world, is revived and reauratized through its contemporary,

49 Hennessy 2012, 438.

50 This copying can be interpreted as a global extension and enforcement of the European, and in particular French, politico-cultural translation privilege as carved out during colonial history. Cultural-economic agents, such as the Louvre museum corporation, seek control of their right to copy as a transcultural translation process. They determine how the heritage of world art, including its values and aesthetic norms, is translated globally. This strategy is not far off from Delaporte’s temple translation of Angkor Wat for the French metropole Paris, as a colonial act of cultural heritage appropriation and metonymical translation (see Falser, in this volume). The main historical difference is that, in the case of the Louvre offspring museums, no copies or substitutes of artifacts are tolerated, such that even the “copy versions” of the Louvre museum are defined themselves as “original” museum sites with new, genuine identities.

local, and global variants of reenactment. In this respect, copycatting functions as a compensation strategy for the loss of French world power in the global cultural economy of art and heritage. On the other hand, the state approval for franchising and copying the Louvre museum amounts to the betrayal of historical originality and a disregard for intellectual property rights, although museum representatives have claimed that these are to be maintained. Particularly the outsourcing and relocation of the Louvre to Abu Dhabi can easily be identified with cultural expropriation; this is why it was heavily criticized by the French establishment and public as a sellout of national cultural heritage. The potential of image enhancement is shifted from the French to the Arab museum world, whose representatives are put in possession of the power to remake the original. They can remaster the original Louvre by remaking the birth of the museum in the Arab world,⁵¹ and thus gain the right to reinterpret the French legacy of world art history from their national, regional, or local point of view. It is in this vein of role reversal that the transformative power of the copy can produce mighty effects of transculturation.

Strategic image copying, characteristic of copycat cultures, has led to a redefinition of the copy itself. In this age of digital and genetic reproduction, where originals and original identities can be recreated and remodeled virtually, the ontological idea of an analogy between original and copy has been replaced by the post-production notion of the copy as a reconstruction and remediation,⁵² or a remake of images. The moment of transformation is positioned between past and present, historical master and contemporary remastering. Imitative innovativeness prevails over originality; authorship and interpretive sovereignty are multiplied. Enhanced through mobility, virtuality, and networking, copies have the power to reenact and redirect the original in relation to themselves. In this changed perspective, the local and global strategies of decentering and displacing the value of the original will exert the strongest impact on transforming culture-related concepts of original and copy.

Figures

Fig. 1: Accessed November 23, 2016. <http://www.samadhibuddhastatue.lk/>.

Fig. 2: © REUTERS / Guan Niu.

Fig. 3: © Arnold Metzinger / TU Munich.

Fig. 4: Photogrammetric Reconstruction of the Great Buddha of Bamiyan, Afghanistan (PDF Download Available). Accessed January 23, 2017.

51 "Birth Of A Museum" was the title of the first exhibition (April 13–August 22, 2013) and catalogue of the museum Louvre Abu Dhabi. See Des Cars 2014 a.

52 See Bolter and Grusin 2000, who argue that new digital media gain their cultural significance by refashioning older media.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227635047_Photogrammetric_Reconstruction_of_the_Great_Buddha_of_Bamiyan_Afghanistan.
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Fig. 5: © K. Sejima + R. Nishizawa / SANAA, Imrey Culbert, Catherine Mosbach Paysagiste. Photo: © Philippe Chancel.

Fig. 6: AJN_HW_Abu_Dhabi_Louvre_04. © TDIC Architect A.

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