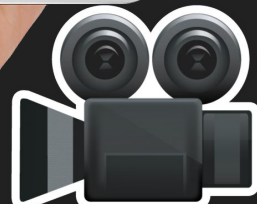
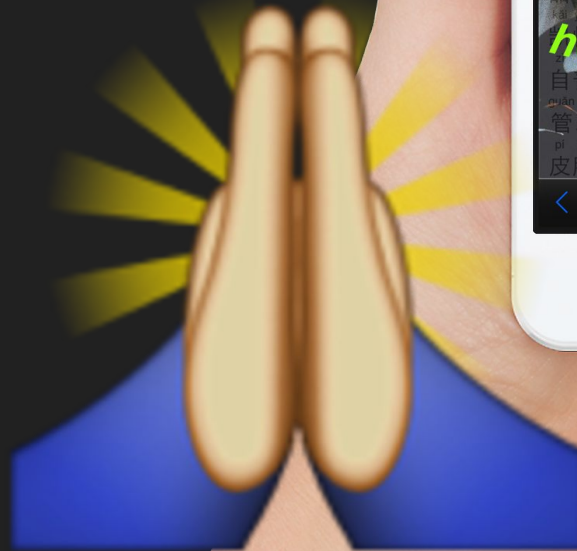
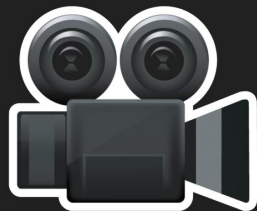
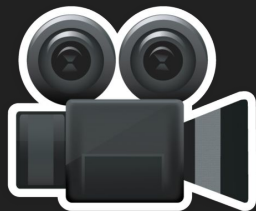


WALTER BENJAMIN ON SNAPCHAT

Return of the aura ???

a final presentation by
sharada tolton



This presentation is a THOUGHT EXPERIMENT:

Does Walter Benjamin's theory of art and mechanical reproduction apply to the digital age? Is the "aura" fully absent in digital art?



first: WHAT IS "AURA"?

Benjamin defines an artwork's "aura" as its "embeddedness...in the context of tradition" (Benjamin, Part V).

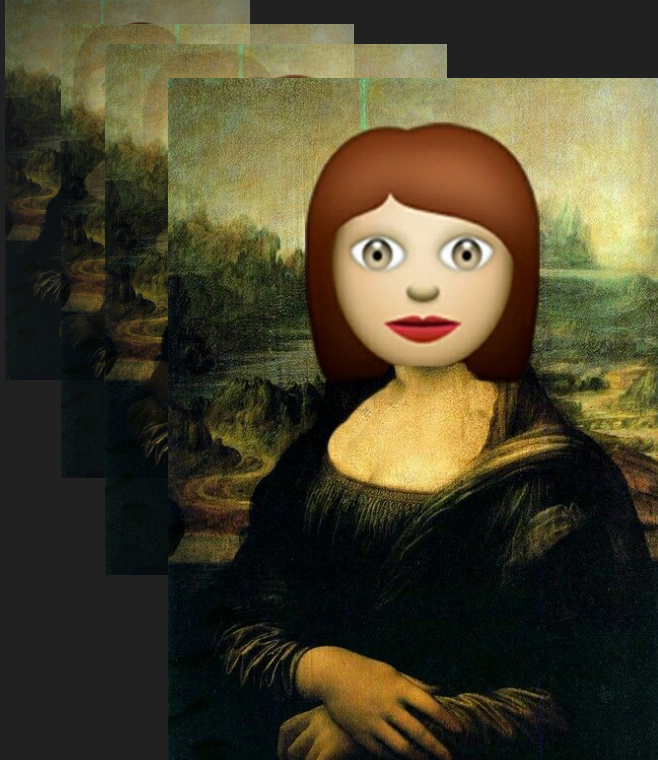
The aura of a work of art is the material residue of the historical circumstances of its creation (III).



The artwork holds ritual value
because of its uniqueness
“here and now” (III).



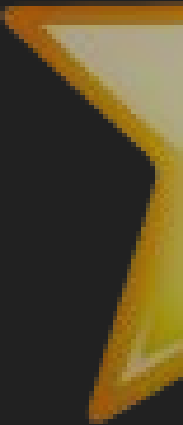
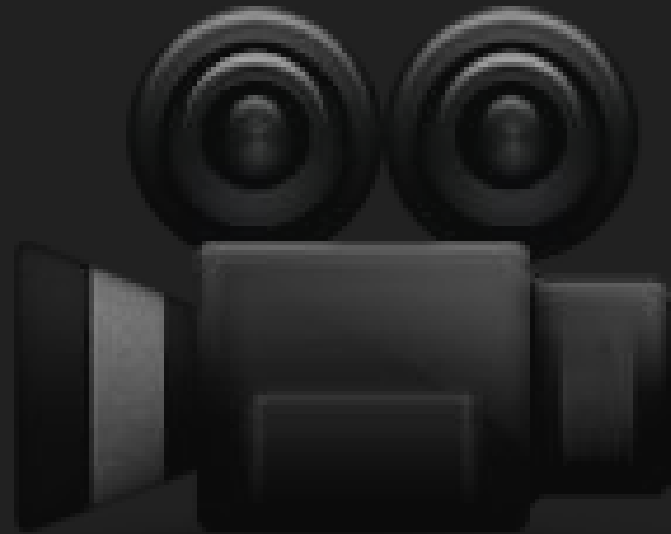
second: HOW DOES MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION SUPPRESS THE AURA?



Precisely by taking away the here-and-now-ness of the work of art. Mass produced art doesn't contain the historicity of its original making.

Benjamin's case study:

FILM



Benjamin argues that **IN FILM:**

- Reproducibility replaces cult value with **exhibition value** (IX)
- **Subject to intervention** by a group of experts, the actor's performance is more **test-like** than ritualistic (X)
- The **editing** process strips away ritual "single stroke" value (VII)

Digital-reproduced video on social media is a recent evolution of photo and film, but does it lack “aura” like the earlier forms?

criterion 1

“now-ness”

A digital clock displaying the time 17:35 in a white, segmented font. The clock is set against a clear blue sky. In the upper right corner, the dark silhouette of a palm tree is visible against the sky. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clear day.

17:35



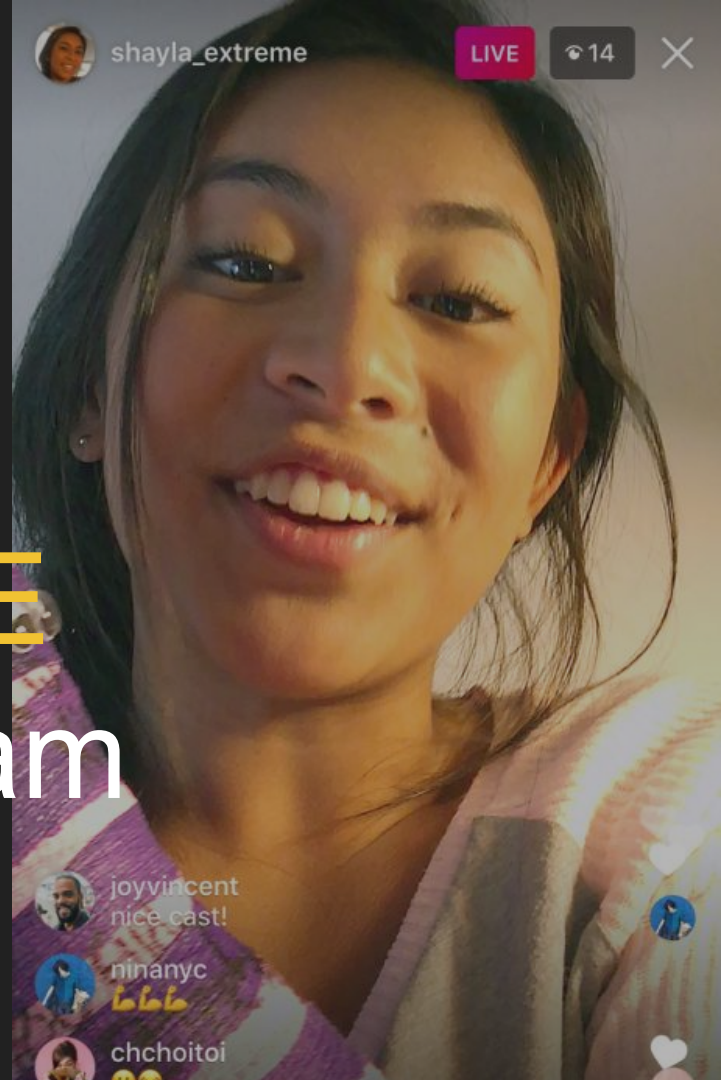
Uptodown Test

With “disappearing” media,
Snapchat and Instagram simulate the
fleeting immediacy of perceiving a
handmade artwork:

our experience of the video or
photo comes to exist in a
unique moment in time_

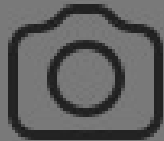
This effect only intensifies with **LIVE STORY** on Instagram

```
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^ _ /  
:F_P:
```



For which I receive a notification saying,

“@lauren_artgirl
started a *Live Video*,
catch it before it ends”



Instagram

The app's authors remind me of the

fleeting now-ness

of the video_

Your Story

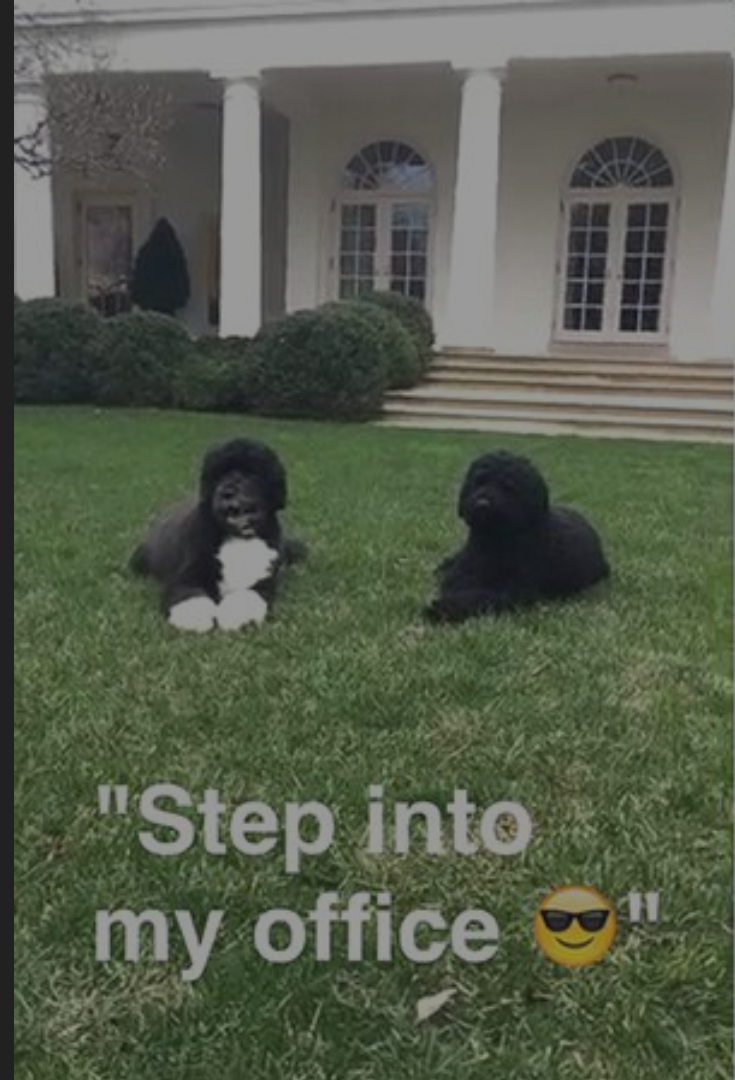
imuggle

mariefleuraux

kellyslat

criterion 2

“here-ness”

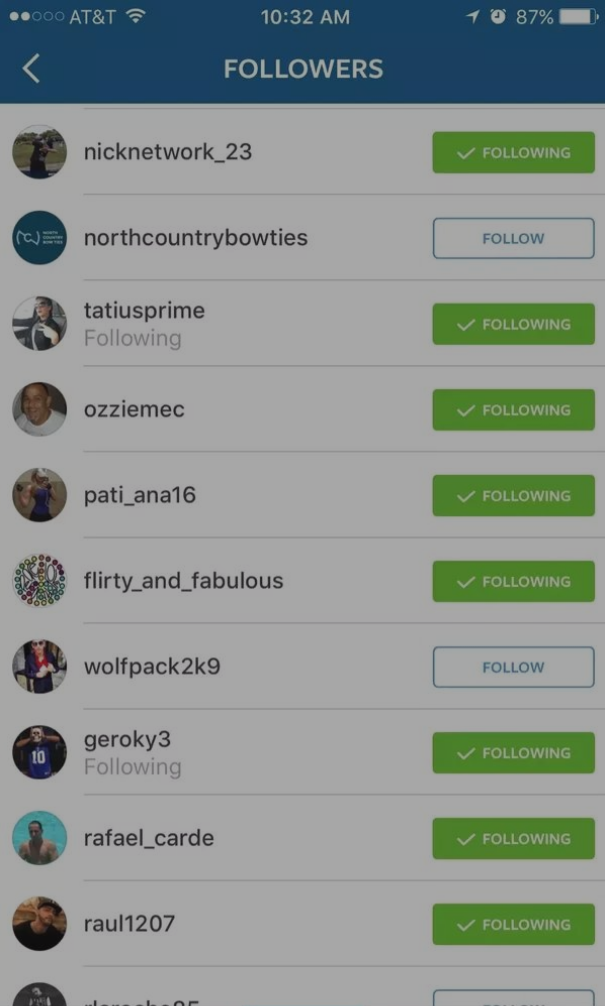


"Step into
my office 😎"

On social media,
network imitates
uniqueness of
place

```
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Some accounts are private, signalling **exclusivity**, while others are barely followed, signalling **obscurity**_

and columns of
comments show the
historical
residues of
viewer
reactions



So is social media really

NETWORKING and

LIVE STREAMING

aura????



Does a disappearing image or live video successfully simulate the “strange tissue of space and time”? (IX) _

To resolve the question, I turn to

exhibition value



Despite these feints at cult value and uniqueness,
social media is powerful expressly
because of its potentially massive,
simultaneous audience



Benjamin would say it is up to us whose
political agendas are advanced
by this media

FEEL
THE
Bern

If it's in our hands,
let's tip Instagram and
Snapchat **in favor of the
people**, let's follow the
corners of these social
networks where otherwise
**voiceless people are given
voice.**



Sources:

Benjamin, W. (2002). "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility." In H. Eiland & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Selected Writings, Volume 3, 1935–1938* (pp. 101–133). (Translated by E. Jephcott, H. Eiland, and Others). Cambridge: Harvard University Press