Repetition and Difference: The Dissemination of Photography

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Tuesday
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5:00-6:30pm
Polymathic Institute, DML 241

Geoffrey Batchen’s talk will address the effects and implications of photography’s relationship to reproduction. Among other effects, photography’s reproducibility allows photographic images to be widely circulated, but it also gives the same image the capacity to come in many different looks, sizes and formats. It also makes it possible for an image to appear in many places at once and to exist simultaneously at many different points of time. Equally complicated is the way its capacity for reproducibility ties photography to the processes and social implications of capitalist mass production, making any study of its effects an unavoidably political issue. Indeed, a tracing of photography’s dissemination throughout modern culture, as evidenced in particular photographic instances of repetition and difference, reveals the medium to be fraught with its own divided and multiplied identities. By exploring this one crucial issue, Batchen aims to present a way of thinking about photography that can match the extraordinary complexity of the photographic experience.

This event is co-sponsored by the VSRI and USC Art History.