



*Sun, sun but different By Samantha Pridmore

'Cliché' is a French word for a metal plate used in printing presses to reproduce an image. The plate was designed for continual re-use, enabling replication with little extra labour.

What was once a technical innovation has become a ripe cultural aversion. It's a mournful irony that ideas and artifacts considered to have heightened qualities of truth or beauty often become overused, deadening their original allure. We can break with clichés by discarding them outright, but can a cliché be reinvented?

Digital artist Pénélope Umbrico toys with the question in her work, *2,301,082 Sun From Flickr (Partial)*, W2507. Sunsets rank amongst the

most photographed natural subjects. Searching the photo-sharing website Flickr for 'sunsets', Umbrico found more than half a million images.

She made snapshot prints from a selection, creating a wall-sized montage which overwhelms with its colour and scale. I spent a large chunk of an afternoon in front of the piece at Brisbane's Institute of Modern Art, pondering the notion of sampling existing material in the creation of something new.

There is only one sun but six billion perspectives. That's six billion opportunities to refashion a world of fixed icons and ideologies – from sun and sayings to whole social, cultural

and economic systems. The process of invention, adaptation and reinvention in the contemporary world is well chronicled. Big ideas, often seeded in subcultures, gather momentum before tipping into the mainstream. As an idea gains currency, the subculture drops it to pursue something fresh.

The effects can be as small as streetwear or as significant as social structures: consider the nuclear family, a cliché recast (and probably evolving still) to suit modern conditions.

On goes the cycle of invention – as regular as the setting sun – and within it, the opportunity to shed new light on old subjects.

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2,301,082 Sun From Flickr (Partial), W2507. Montage: Umbrico. Photograph: Iain Fyfe