

CONTEMPORARY ART IN PRACTICE & THEORY

Interdisciplinary Seminar I – AD 290
Fall 2012

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Tuesdays 4 – 6:40
Thursdays 4:20 – 7

ADH 2236
office hours by appointment



Kara Walker *Look Away! Look Away! Look Away!* (installation detail, 1995)

THE CLASS (IN A NUTSHELL)

This interdisciplinary seminar is a survey, examination and interrogation of the multiple roles that contemporary art practices play in our current cultural moment. Through an emphasis on readings and class discussions, we will explore the major themes, theories and strategies that have developed across media boundaries in the last several decades. Screenings, as well as regular visits to galleries and museums, will supplement our in-class conversations.

All students are responsible for completing 7 short written assignments, 6 sets of reading response questions, one in-class presentation, and a final research paper on a contemporary artist. All screenings and museum and gallery visits are mandatory.

PREREQUISITES

Registration for AD290 requires the completion of the first year program as well as the April portfolio review.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- [T] *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, edited by Zoya Kocur & Simon Leung (Blackwell, 2005)
- [R] Reading Packet, available for purchase at the UPS Store (910 West Van Buren)
- [O] Online

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation are mandatory. We will be looking at a wide array of work and discussing rather dense texts at a fairly rapid clip, and you are expected to be on time and prepared for all class sessions. Museum and gallery visits, as well as screenings, are an essential part of this course. These visits and screenings will require students to budget \$61 for museum and theater admissions, in addition to the cost of the reading packet and textbook. All visits are mandatory.

If you do not participate in class discussions, you will not receive an A in this class. If you miss three classes, you will fail this course. You will be considered absent if you arrive to class late or leave class early twice. In order for your absence to be excused, you must contact me before class begins via email.

Concerning disabled students, the University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that individuals with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for full access and participation in UIC Programs must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (voice) or 312-413-0123 (TDD).

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. QUESTIONS (x6)** – After completing the scheduled readings, you will prepare three clear, probing and engaging questions for the following class period. You come to class with your questions typed, dated and signed. You will then exchange your questions with a classmate and the first fifteen minutes of class will be spent responding to these queries in order to facilitate discussion. Questions and answers will be collected at the end of class. Questions will be due on 9/4, 9/11, 9/25, 10/2, 10/16, and 10/30.
- 2. RESPONSES (x7)** – Over the course of the semester, you will turn in 7 responses to work seen outside of class. Responses will be a minimum of two pages in length and adhere to standard formatting conventions (1" margins, double-spaced, 12pt font, MLA or Chicago citations, proofread). Using the week's assigned readings as a point of reference, the essay should be a *subjective* response to the artwork seen *in person*. The response can be focused on a single piece of art, the space in which the work was seen, or the show / screening as a whole. The artwork / space / screening will function as a catalyst for reflective thinking, emotional reactions and memories, allowing the essay to be a creative response to creative work. Historical and contextual analyses are not discouraged, but should not be the primary aim of the essay.
- 3. ARTIST PRESENTATION (x1)** – Beginning in week 7, each student will give a 15-20 minute PowerPoint presentation to the class on a contemporary artist of your choosing. Your selected artist should have created the bulk of her/his work after 1985, and there should be enough written and visual information about the artist to provide solid biographical and critical context for their work. You must produce at least 3 references (typed) and show a minimum of 10 images/sounds/videos (properly labeled and cited) during the presentation. On the day of your presentation you must turn in a flash drive or disk containing your self-contained PowerPoint. Presentation dates will be chosen by lottery on 9/18. We will discuss research strategies and methodologies during weeks 4 and 5.
- 4. ARTIST RESEARCH PAPER (x1)** – At the end of the semester, on 12/4, you will turn in a minimum 5 page research paper adhering to standard formatting conventions (1" margins, double-spaced, 12pt font, MLA or Chicago citations, proofread) that provides an in-depth analysis of the artist chosen for your class presentation. No late papers will be accepted. The research paper will address at least one of the assigned readings covered in the course and one of the references turned in on the day of your presentation (cited and listed in a properly annotated bibliography). The research paper should address historical, contextual, aesthetic and theoretical concerns. A complete first draft of the paper is due via email by 10pm on 12/2. You must meet both of the deadlines and turn the paper in on time in order to pass the class.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

I expect that all of the work you produce for this class will be your own. Special care and consideration should be taken to properly cite all sources. If you plagiarize any material from outside sources for your written work or presentation, it will result IN FAILURE OF THE ENTIRE CLASS. There are no exceptions to this and no second chances.

EXTRA CREDIT / MAKE-UP WORK

The six weekly response questions are mandatory and cannot be turned in late. If you know that you will miss class on a day that response questions are due, they need to be emailed to me no later than 24 hours before the start of class. If you come to class without your response questions printed out and signed, you will not receive credit for the assignment. Thoughtful questions and responses are expected, and will count toward your class participation grade. Questions and responses will not be returned.

The in-class presentation cannot be rescheduled unless you are unable to come to class due to illness or personal emergency. If you are unable to present due to circumstances beyond your control, you need to make alternate plans with me at least 24 hours in advance.

The final paper is due, via email, in complete draft form at 10pm on Saturday 12/1. I will proofread your papers on Sunday 12/2 and offer suggestions, as well as any required revisions, by 10pm. Final paper drafts will be due in class, at 4pm, on 12/4.

GRADES ARE DETERMINED AS FOLLOWS:

Participation & Reading Questions / Responses	480 points
Class discussions	[150, 10 points each week]
Reading questions (x6)	[180 total, 30 points each]
Reading question responses (x6)	[180 total, 30 points each]
Artist Presentation	220 points
Artist Research Paper	300 points
TOTAL	1000 points

THE SCHEDULE

1	8/28	ART & LIFE
	see	Peter Lietchti <i>Signer's Suitcase: On the Road with Roman Signer</i> (1996)
	8/30	THE MUSEUM / EARLY VIDEO ART & PERFORMANCE
	see	Dan Graham <i>Performer / Audience / Mirror</i> (1975) Rita Meyers <i>Tilt</i> (1973) Bruce Nauman <i>Stamping in the Studio</i> (1968) William Wegman <i>Dog Duet, Used Car Salesman, Dog Biscuit in Glass Jar</i> (1972) Joan Jonas <i>Vertical Roll</i> (1972)
	read	Benjamin Gilman "Aims and Principles of the Construction and Management of Museums of Fine Art" [R] John Dana "The Museum as an Art Patron" [R] Georges Bataille "Museum" [R] Robert Smithson "Some Void Thoughts on Museums" [R]

- 2 9/4 **MUSEUM VISIT – MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**
 [meet at UIC, room 2236, 4pm]
 see Cauleen Smith: A Star Is a Seed
 Phantom Limb: Approaches to Painting Today
 MCA DNA: John Cage [\$7]
 read Adrian Piper “Cornered: A Video Installation Project” [T]
 Thierry de Duve “When Form Has Become Attitude – And Beyond” [T]
- 9/6 **MODERNISM**
 read Clement Greenberg “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” [R]
 Walter Benjamin “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility:
 Second Version” [R]
 Hans Hoffman “On the Aims of Art” [R]
 due 3 questions on Greenberg & Benjamin
 Response #1 – MCA visit
- 3 9/11 **ORIGINALITY & AURA**
 see Hollis Frampton *nostalgia (Hapax Legomena I)* (1971, 36m)
 read Rosalind Krauss “The Originality of the Avant-Garde,” excerpt [R]
 Dave Hickey “A Rhinestone as Big as the Ritz” [R]
 Hollis Frampton “Notes on (*nostalgia*)” [R]
 due 3 questions on Krauss & Hickey
- 9/13 see **SCREENING – WU TSANG: WILDERNESS**
 [meet at UIC, room 2236, 4:20pm]
 Conversations at the Edge, Gene Siskel Film Center, 6pm [\$7]
 read Coco Fusco “Passionate Irreverence: The Cultural Politics of Identity” [R]
 at least 2 reviews or articles: <http://cliftonbenevento.com/artists/artist-wu-tsang-press/>
- 4 9/18 **APPROPRIATION**
 see *Sonic Outlaws* Craig Baldwin (1995, 87m)
 read Jonathan Lethem “The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism” [R]
 Lorraine Morales Cox “Cultural Sampling and Social Critique: The Collage Aesthetic
 of Chris Ofili” [R]
 due Response #2 – Wu Tsang
- 9/20 see **SCREENING – ROBERT NELSON**
 [meet at GSFC, 5:15pm]
 Conversations at the Edge, Gene Siskel Film Center, 6pm [\$7]
 read Dave Hickey “Air Guitar” & “Shining Hours / Forgiving Rhyme” [R]
 Scott MacDonald “Robert Nelson” [R]

- 5 9/25 **MEDIA & MACHINES**
- see JODI *Max Payne Cheats Only 1* (2004)
 Cory Arcangel / Paper Rad *Super Mario Movie* (2005)
 Jacob Ciocci *Booty Melt* (2008)
 Takeshi Murata *Monster Movie* (2005)
 Jon Satrom *Yuppster Video* (2003)
- read Hans Magnus Enzensberger "Constituents of a Theory of the Media" [R]
 Jean-Louis Comolli "Machines of the Visible" [R]
- due 3 questions on Enzensberger & Comolli
- 9/27 see **SCREENING – BRENNA MURPHY**
 [meet at GSFC, 5:15pm]
 Conversations at the Edge, Gene Siskel Film Center, 6pm [\$7]
- read Rosa Menkman "Glitch Studies Manifesto" [R]
 Ian Glover "Artist Profile: Brenna Murphy" [O]
 <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2011/sep/21/artist-profile-brenna-murphy/>
- 6 10/2 **CONCEPT, OBJECT, PERFORMANCE**
- see John Baldessari *Baldessari Sings LeWitt* (1972)
 John Baldessari *The Meaning of Various Photographs to Ed Henderson 1* (1973)
 Francis Alÿs *El Gringo* (2003)
 Pipilotti Rist *I Want to See How You See* (2003)
- read Michael Fried "Art and Objecthood" [R]
 Sol LeWitt "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" & "Sentences on Conceptual Art" [R]
 Miwon Kwon "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity" [T]
- due Response #3 – Brenna Murphy
 3 questions on Fried, Kwon, LeWitt
- 10/4 see **SCREENING – HITO STEYERL: LOVELY ANDREA & IN FREE FALL**
 [meet at GSFC, 5:15pm]
 Conversations at the Edge, Gene Siskel Film Center, 6pm [\$7]
- read Hito Steyerl "In Defense of the Poor Image" & "Documentary Uncertainty" [O]
 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>
 <http://re-visiones.imaginarrar.net/spip.php?article37>
- 7 10/9 **THE GALLERY**
- read Brian O'Doherty "Notes on the Gallery Space," excerpt from *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* [R]
 Ad Reinhart "Art as Art" [R]
 Erica Balsom "A cinema in the gallery, a cinema in ruins" [R]
 Dave Hickey "Dealing" [R]
- due 3 research presentations
 Response #4 – Hito Steyerl

- 10/11 **GALLERY VISIT – THREEWALLS**
 [119 North Peoria Street, btwn. Randolph & Washington, open 11-5pm Tu-Sat]
 see Cauleen Smith: *The Journeyman*
 read Olu Oguibe “In the ‘Heart of Darkness’” [T]
 John Corbett, *Extended Play* excerpts [R]
- 8 10/16 **RACE & RESISTANCE**
 see George Holliday *The Rodney King Beating* (1991)
 Kevin Jerome Everson *Second and Lee* (2008)
 Coco Fusco & Paula Heredia *The Couple in the Cage* (1993)
 read Edward Said *Orientalism*, excerpt [R]
 Michele Wallace “The Culture War Within the Culture Wars: Race” [R]
 Avital Ronell “Haunted TV” [T]
 due Response #5 – Cauleen Smith
 3 questions on Said, Wallace and Ronell
- 10/18 see **SCREENING – LAIDA LERTXUNDI: A LAX RIDDLE UNIT**
 [meet at GSFC, 5:15pm]
 Conversations at the Edge, Gene Siskel Film Center, 6pm [\$7]
 read Phil Coldiron “Eight Footnotes on a Brief Description of Footnotes to a House of
 Love and Other Films by Laida Lertxundi” [O]
<http://cinema-scope.com/features/eight-footnotes-brief-description-footnotes-house-love-other-films-laida-lertxundi/>
- 9 10/23 **CAMP & KITSCH**
 see George Kuchar *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* (1967)
 Andy Warhol *Mario Banana (No. 1)* (1964)
 Kalup Linzy *Conversations wit de Churen II: All My Churen* (2003)
 Kalup Linzy *Lollypop* (2006)
 read Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp,” *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* [R]
 Carole S. Vance “The War on Culture” [T]
 Carole S. Vance “Feminist Fundamentalism: Women Against Images” [T]
 due 2 research presentations
 Response #6 – Laida Lertxundi
- 10/25 **VIDEO PERFORMANCE 1**
 see Ryan Trecartin *A Family Finds Entertainment* (2004, 42m)
 read Laura Kipnis “Repossessing Popular Culture” [T]
 due 2 research presentations
- 10 10/30 **AESTHETIC THEORY & THE CRITIQUE OF ART**
 see Jayson Scott Musson *ART THOUGHTZ with Hennessey Youngman* (2010-12)
 Work of Art: The Next Great Artist, excerpt

- read Immanuel Kant "First Book – Analytic of the Beautiful," excerpt from *Critique of Judgment* [R]
Theodor W. Adorno "On the Categories of the Ugly, the Beautiful and Technique," excerpt from *Aesthetic Theory* [R]
- due 3 questions on Kant & Adorno
- 11/1 **VIDEO PERFORMANCE 2**
- see Paul McCarthy & Mike Kelley *Family Tyranny / Cultural Soup* (1987)
Shana Moulton *Whispering Pines* (2002-06)
- read Kobena Mercer "Looking for Trouble" [T]
Rosalind Krauss "*Informe* without Conclusion" [T]
- due 2 research presentations
- 11 11/6 **RETHINKING AESTHETIC THEORY**
- read David Joselit "Notes on Surface: Toward a Genealogy of Flatness" [T]
Nana Last "Function and Field: Demarcating Conceptual Practices" [T]
John Rajchman "The Lightness of Theory" [T]
- due 3 research presentations
- 11/8 see **SCREENING – LAWRENCE JORDAN: BEYOND ENCHANTMENT**
[meet at GSFC, 5:15pm]
Conversations at the Edge, Gene Siskel Film Center, 6pm [\$7]
- read P. Adams Sitney "Moments of Illumination" [O]
<http://lawrencecjordan.com/images/articles/sitney.pdf>
- 12 11/13 **IDENTITY & POSTCOLONIALISM**
- see Isaac Artenstein & Guillermo Gómez-Peña *Son of Border Crisis* (1990)
Mona Hatoum *Measures of Distance* (1988)
- read Gerardo Mosquera "The Marco Polo Syndrome: Some Problems around Art and Eurocentrism" [T]
Jean Fisher "The Syncretic Turn: Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism" [T]
- due 2 research presentations
- 11/15 **MUSEUM VISIT: ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO**
[meet at ARTIC 4:30pm]
- see Steve McQueen & Hito Steyerl [\$12]
- read Ursula Frohne "Dissolution of the Frame: Immersion and Participation in Video Installations" [R]
Liz Kotz "Video Projection: The Space Between Screens" [T]
- 13 11/20 **IDENTITY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY**
- see Sadie Benning *It Wasn't Love* (1992)
Richard Fung *Islands* (2002)

- read Charles A. Wright, Jr. "The Mythology of Difference: Vulgar Identity Politics at the Whitney Biennial" [T]
- due 2 research presentations
Response #7 – Steve McQueen
- 11/22 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**
- 14 11/27 **TECHNOLOGY & WAR**
- see Harun Farocki *War at a Distance* (2003)
- read Jean Baudrillard "The Evil Demon of Images" [R]
Lev Manovich "The Database" [T]
- due 2 research presentations
- 11/29 **THE ARTIST AND THE CURATOR**
- read Michael Brenson "The Curator's Moment" [T]
Andrea Fraser "How to Provide an Artistic Service: An Introduction" [T]
Nelly Richard "Postmodernism and Periphery" [T]
- due 2 research presentations
- 12/1 due **10pm - FINAL PAPER DRAFT VIA EMAIL**
- 15 12/4 see **VISITING ARTISTS, ACTIVISTS, CURATORS:
LATHAM ZEARFOSS & ETHAN WHITE**
- due Final paper
- 12/6 **THE PAST, THE FUTURE**
- see Deborah Stratman *O'er the Land* (2009)