Art 140: Art Theory and Practice
Fall 2009
TTH 12:30-1:50

Elise Richman
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Course Description

Art Theory and Practice is an introduction to the art, artists, and concepts that inform select, major modern and contemporary art trends and movements. Through lectures, discussions, videos, readings, field trips, written assignments, presentations, and hands on art projects the class will address the following questions:  What is Art?  What purpose does art have in our lives?  What ideas do contemporary and modern artistic movements express?  How have broader cultural, socio-political, and scientific developments precipitated shifts in artistic practices?

The focus of this course is on the art of pivotal 20th and 21st century artists who have redefined our ideas about art. We will explore the intellectual, expressive, and aesthetic issues involved in the creation of art from a historical context. Students will analyze the formal elements and conceptual issues surrounding significant art works that represent critical trends in modern and contemporary art. A series of projects based on the theories and aesthetic concerns of relevant artists will accompany oral and written modes of consideration and analysis. In this way, students will actively engage in artistic practices that relate to the ideas covered in this course. Additionally, students will prepare weekly, typed questions in response to reading assignments.

Objectives

- To gain a clearer idea of how art is defined in our culture today.
- To investigate the role of art in our lives.
- To examine the reasons for divergent and ever changing approaches to making art.
- To explore the reciprocal relationship between art and the broader culture.
- To acquire a larger visual vocabulary in order to speak and write about art more effectively.
- To engage in the creative process of conceptualizing and making art.
Course Outline

**Week One: 9/1, 9/3**
Introduction: The Big Picture: What is Art? What is Art For?

We will begin to explore our personal ideas about how art ought to be defined as well as consider art as an embodiment of values.

9/1 Video: Excerpt from video, *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*
9/3 Field Trip: Kittredge Gallery to see Maki Tamura and Paul Vexler exhibitions

**ART IN THEORY READING ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK ONE**

**THURSDAY**

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

1 page Kittredge Gallery response paper (due 9/10)
2 page letter to curator Michael Darling regarding *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949-78* (due 9/10)

Special field trip to the Seattle Art Museum Thursday evening to view exhibit *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949-78* and attend Paul McCarthy and Richard Jackson dialogue, McCarthy and Jackson are featured in *Target Practice*.

**Week Two: 9/8, 9/10**
Internal and external frameworks for reading art—How do we approach art on its own terms as well as within a historical context?

9/10 *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack 1949-78* lecture by curator Michael Darling
9/10 Kittredge Gallery response paper and letter to curator Michael Darling due

**ART IN THEORY READING ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK TWO**

**TUESDAY**
- Paul Wood, “Art of the Twentieth Century,” (Chapter 1, *Frameworks for Modern Art*)
ART IN PRACTICE PROJECT

*Line in Space* drawing exercise (due 9/15)

**Week Three: 9/15, 9/17**
Perception, Subjectivity, and Modernism

We will explore definitions of Modernism and focus on how Cezanne’s paintings involve a heightened level of subjective, perceptual engagement.

9/15 *Line in Space* drawing critique

9/17 In class drawing exercise

ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK THREE

**TUESDAY**

- Clive Bell, “Simplification and Design,” (*Art of the Twentieth Century: A Reader*)
- Sheldon Cheney, “The Story of Modern Art,” (*Art of the Twentieth Century: A Reader*)
- Eugene Lunn, “Modernism in Comparative Perspective,” (*Art of the Twentieth Century: A Reader*)
- Paul Cézanne, “Letters to Emile Bernard,” (Course Packet)
- Roger Fry, “An Essay on Aesthetics,” (Course Packet)

ART IN PRACTICE PROJECT

*Simplification of Form* drawing (due 9/24)

**Week Four: 9/22, 9/24**
Culture, Context, and Choice

Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp, two of the most influential figures in the visual arts, radically changed what art looks like and how it is defined.

9/24 *Simplification of Form* drawing due

ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK THREE

**TUESDAY**

- Alfred Barr, excerpt from *Cubism and Abstract Art* (Course Packet)
- Pages 185-217, “Cubism,” *Art in Theory and Practice*, (Course Packet)
- Clement Greenberg, “The Pasted Paper Revolution,” (*Art of the Twentieth Century: A Reader*)
THURSDAY

- Jason Geiger, “Interpreting the Readymade: Marcel Duchamp’s Bottlerack,” (Frameworks for Modern Art, Chapter 2)

ART IN PRACTICE PROJECT

*Pasted Paper Perspectives* collage (due 10/6)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

*Reading a Cubist Painting and Collage* paper (due 10/6), Read Paul Smith’s essay, “Reading a Cubist Painting,” (Art of the Twentieth Century: A Reader) *in conjunction with this assignment*

**Week Five: 9/29, 10/1**
Action and Ideals: American Abstraction

We will focus on the work of Barnett Newman and Jackson Pollock, two painters whose large-scale abstract paintings represent more than meets the eye.

ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK FIVE

**TUESDAY**

- Charles Harrison, “Abstract Art: Reading Barnett Newman’s *Eve,*” (Frameworks for Modern Art, Chapter 3)
- Barnett Newman, “The Sublime is Now,” (Course Packet)

**THURSDAY**

- Charles Harrison, “Jackson Pollock,” (Course Packet)
- Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” (Course Packet)
- Harold Rosenberg, “American Action Painters” (excerpt), (Course Packet)

ART IN PRACTICE PROJECT

*Signature Gesture and All Over Design* (due 10/13)

**Week Six: 10/6, 10/8**
Reverberations of the Ready-Made: Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, and Donald Judd

How did Duchamp’s Ready-made objects affect ideas about the relationship between subjects and objects?

**10/6** Video excerpt from Duchamp interview, Masters of Modern Sculpture
**10/6** Critique of *Pasted Paper Perspectives* collage
**10/6** *Reading a Cubist Painting and Collage* paper due
ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK SIX

TUESDAY
- Marcel Duchamp, *The Artist’s Voice*, (Course Packet)
- Leo Steinberg, “Other Criteria,” (Course Packet)

THURSDAY
- Philip Leider, “Literalism and Abstraction,” (*Art in the Twentieth Century: A Reader*)

*Week Seven: 10/13, 10/15*
I’ll Be Your Mirror: Andy Warhol

A look at the master of pop art and the consumer culture his work reflects.

10/13 *Signature Gesture and Allover Design* project due
10/13 Andy Warhol (video excerpt)
10/15 Guest Lecturer, Art Historian Kolya Rice

ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK SEVEN

TUESDAY
- Andy Warhol, *Warhol in his Own Words: Untitled Statements 1963-87* (excerpts), (Course Packet)

*No Class Tuesday October 20th, Fall Break*

*Week Eight: 10/22*
Postmodernism: Deconstruction and Information

A brief overview of the Postmodernist shift in thinking about art.

ART IN THEORY READING ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK EIGHT

THURSDAY
- Paul Wood, “Inside the Whale: An Introduction to Postmodernist Art (Course Packet)
- Jeff Koons, *Full Fathom Five* (excerpt), (Course Packet)
- Linda Weintraub, “Honesty: Jeff Koons,” (*Art on the Edge and Over*)
- Barbara Kruger, “Pictures and Word,” (Course Packet)
- Linda Weintraub, “Gender Equity: Barbara Kruger,” (*Art on the Edge and Over*)
- Linda Weintraub, “Homeliness: Mike Kelly,” (*Art on the Edge and Over*)
• Linda Weintraub, “Unoriginality: Sherrie Levine,” (Art on the Edge and Over)

ART IN PRACTICE PROJECT

Juxtapose (due 11/10)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Juxtapose Process/Concept paper (due 11/10)

**Week Nine-Eleven: 10/27-10/29**

Breaking Boundaries: Beyond the Gallery Walls

Carolee Schneeman, Joseph Beuys, Marina Abromovic and Ulay, Vito Acconci, Ana Mendieta, Christo and Jean Claude

A consideration of artists who confront identity issues, politicize a sense of self, and create site specific art as well as a reconsideration of the purposes art can serve.

10/27 Visiting Artist Talk, Isabel Manalo (Chism Artist)
11/3 *Fuego de Tierra* (video), Ana Mendieta
11/10 *Running Fence* (video), Christo and Jean Claude
11/10 Juxtapose paper and project due
11/12 Visiting Scholar, Ellen Dissanayake

ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK NINE: 10/27, 10/29

**TUESDAY**

• Griselda Pollock, “Painting, Feminism, History,” (Art of the Twentieth Century: A Reader)

**THURSDAY**

• Kristine Stiles, “I/Eye/Oculus: Performance, Installation and Video (Course Packet)
• Joseph Beuys, “Untitled Statement,” (Course Packet)
• Linda Weintraub, “Political Reformation: Joseph Beuys,” (Art on the Edge and Over)
• Carolee Schneeman, *From the Notebooks 1962-63*, (Course Packet
• Linda Weintraub, “Blood: Carolee Schneeman,” (Art on the Edge and Over)
ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK TEN: 11/3, 11/5

TUESDAY
- Gill Perry, “The Expanding Field: Ana Mendieta’s Silueta Series,” *(Frameworks for Modern Art, Chapter 4)*

THURSDAY
- Marina Abramovic and Ulay, “Dialogue with Heidi Grundman,” (Course Packet)
- Vito Acconci, “Steps into Performance (and out),” (Course Packet)
- Linda Weintraub, “Sound: Vito Acconci,” *(Art on the Edge and Over)*

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK ELEVEN: 11/10, 11/12

TUESDAY
- Christo, “Fact Sheet Running Fence” and “Wrapping up Germany: Interview with Sylvere Lotringer” (Course Packet)

THURSDAY
- Ellen Dissanayake, “What is Art?” (Course Packet)

ART IN PRACTICE PROJECT

*Relational Aesthetics* (due: 11/24)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

*Relational Aesthetics Proposal* (due: 11/24)

**Weeks 12-14: 11/17-12/3**

Cultural Codes and Visionary Visions: Bruce Nauman, Matthew Barney, Christian Boltanski, Kara Walker, Brian Jungen, Matthew Ritchie, and Julie Mehretu

An exploration of how cultural memory, forms of mapping, and performance have subversive, reflective, and transformative potentials.

11/17 Bruce Nauman and Matthew Barney Art 21 videos
11/24 *Relational Aesthetics* Proposal and Project due, Poster Session presentation of projects
11/30 Kara Walker Art 21 video
12/1 Matthew Ritchie Art 21 video
ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK TWELVE: 11/17, 11/19

TUESDAY
- Joan Simon, “Breaking the Silence,” (interview with Bruce Nauman), (Course Packet)
- Bruce Nauman, Notes and Projects (1976), (Course Packet)
- Linda Weintraub, “Matthew Barney,” (Course Packet)

THURSDAY
- Christian Boltanski, “Interview with Demosthenes Davvetas (1985),” (Course Packet)
- Linda Weintraub, “Rummage: Christian Boltanski,” Art on the Edge and Over

NO READING WEEK THIRTEEN

No Class Thursday November 26th, Thanksgiving Break

ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK FORTEEN 12/1, 12/3

TUESDAY
- Darby English, “This is not about the Past: Silhouettes in the Work of Kara Walker,” (Course Pack)
- Daina Augaitis, “Prototypes for New Understandings,” Brian Jungen, (Course Packet)

THURSDAY
- Linda Weintraub, “Matthew Ritchie,” (Course Packet)
- Douglas Fogle, “Putting the World into the World,” Julie Mehretu: Drawing into Painting, (Course Packet)

ART IN PRACTICE PROJECT

Contemporary Artist Visual Presentation (due 12/17)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Contemporary Artist Paper (due 12/17)

Week 15: 12/8
What Next? How do we ensure that art matters on personal and broader cultural levels?
ART IN THEORY READING FOR WEEK FIFTEEN

TUESDAY

- Suzi Gablik, “Making Art as if the World Matters,” *The Reenchantment of Art*, (Course Packet)
- “Beauty and its Discontents,” *Who Cares*, (Course Packet)

Required Texts

- Art 140 Course Packet, available in bookstore

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to arrive on time. Turn cell phones off before class.

*Excused absences:* Only four excused absences are permitted per semester. Five absences, even excused, will result in a WF (withdrawal/failing grade).

*Unexcused absences:* You may have one free absence over the course of the semester that will not affect your grade. Your grade will be lowered by one half letter for each subsequent unexcused absence. Five absences (either excused or unexcused) will result in a withdrawal/failing grade.

*Lateness policy:* Three tardies are the equivalent of one absence. A tardy is defined as being between 5 and 15 minutes late. If you are more than fifteen minutes late it counts as an absence. If you must miss a class, inform me immediately.

*Excused absences are defined as documented medical or family emergencies. It is the student’s responsibility to submit acceptable documentation in a timely manner. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to minor illnesses, oversleeping, interviews, weddings, vacations, and traffic problems.* (From Art Department Attendance Policy)

Grading

Students will be graded on their writing assignments, presentations, art projects, attendance, and participation in group discussions and critiques.
A 95-100%, A- 90-94%: Excellent understanding of concepts, creative, strong art work, thoughtful, well researched written papers, constant engagement in class discussions
B+ 87-89%, B 83-86%, B- 80-82%: Very good work and consistent participation
C+ 77-79%, C 73-76%, C- 70-72%: Good/average work, uneven engagement and participation in class
D+ 67-69%, D 63-66%, D- 60-62%: Poor work and lack of engagement in class
F 59% or lower: Failure to grasp goals of course and/or 5 or more absences

Final grades will be calculated according to the following ratios:

Written and Visual Projects 70%
Weekly Questions 10%
Final Contemporary Artist Project 10%
Participation 10%

Final Exam 12/17, 12-2:00