Contemporary Art Since 1960
Department of Art and Art History, FAH 055/0155-01

Fall 2013, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30—5:45PM, Bromfield-Pearson 101

Professor Claire Grace
Claire.Grace@Tufts.edu
Office hours: 11 Talbot Ave, Room 108, Fridays 10am-12pm

This course offers a historically rooted introduction to contemporary art. It sets an anchor in the 1950s and moves through the major debates and practices of the period between 1960 and the present. Rather than a strictly chronological survey or exhaustive catalogue, the course attends to specific moments, techniques, and theoretical frameworks that continue to fuel and inform contemporary practice and criticism. In the sixty-year span under our lens, many artists turned their attention away from the canvas and studio and toward contexts of reception and conditions of public experience. The boundaries of the art object transformed in turn, at times dissolving entirely. Faced with an enormous range of historical conditions—the social movements of the 1960s and ‘70s; the Cold War; an emerging globalized network of travel, communication, and capital; the AIDS crisis and LGBT activism; a seemingly endless “war on terror”; and the recent uprisings in the Middle East, among others—artists invented formal strategies by which to intervene in a world ever more mediated by images. They theorized the difference between the politics of representation and the representation of politics, and undertook a sweeping redefinition of concepts of authorship, autonomy, and originality. They proposed new models of spectatorship—and therefore forms of subjectivity and sociality—by which to navigate increasingly globalized conditions of exchange. With a purview tied to New York, but with an eye to the global reach of current debates, this course asks: Why does art matter in 2013? How do its projects extend and challenge the dialectical relationships between modernism and postmodernism, the medium and post-medium conditions of art making, empire and postcolonialism, the medium and post-medium conditions of art making, empire and postcolonialism, subject and society?

REQUIREMENTS:

Readings: Each lecture’s reading assignment consists of one critical essay (occasionally supplemented by a brief primary text) and a short selection from the textbook (TB below). Read these materials—around 50-75 pages per week—for larger conceptual frameworks and arguments, rather than specific details pertaining to individual works. Pay special attention to works and artists discussed in lecture. Critical essays will be made available online via Trunk; the textbook is available at the campus bookstore and on reserve at the library: Hal Foster, et. al., Art Since 1900, vol. 2, 1945 to the Present (2011).

Students registered for 0155: a bi-weekly reading discussion (beginning week 3) will take place every other Thursday evening following regular class time (location TBD).

Exams: there will be a midterm exam (20%) and a cumulative final exam (40%). These will consist of slide identifications, slide comparisons, and short essays based on lectures and readings. Please keep track of the slide lists that will be made available on Trunk following each lecture; the objects they list (and no others) will be fair game for exams.

Students registered for 0155: exams are not required.

Essay 1, due in class October 3: Formal analysis (15%). Visit the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA); the modern/contemporary wing at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA); or the current
temporary exhibitions at the Tufts University Art Gallery. (The ICA and MFA are both accessible via public transportation. Show your student ID for free admission to the MFA; ICA admission is free to the public on Thursday nights, 5-9pm.) Pick any post-1960 work currently on display. Study the work closely in person for at least one hour and while there, make a simple but rigorous and exhaustive list of notes that describe the work’s physical properties in as much sensory detail as you can. Next, use these notes as the basis for a coherent 3-page descriptive essay that synthesizes (only) the sensory data you have gathered. Be sure to make a note in your paper of the title and date of the work, and the name of the artist. Submit your paper along with your notes from your in-situ observations. (While you work, keep a separate list of larger interpretive questions as you will be returning to this object for your second paper.)

Students registered for 0155: Essay 1 is not required.

Essay 2, due in class November 14: Interpretative analysis (25%). Using your descriptive essay as groundwork, develop an 8-page essay that interprets the artwork you chose for your first paper. Your second paper should present an argument about this work by drawing on concepts addressed in the course, as well as assigned readings (at least two, not from the textbook). Take on outside research as necessary, particularly to situate the work you have selected within the artist’s larger oeuvre and art historical context. Support your argument with evidence from both your research and your first-hand visual observations. Make use of office hours to discuss your paper topics. Students registered for 0155: Essay 2 should be a 20-page research paper, and will be due the date of the final exam. Make use of office hours to discuss your progress.

All papers should be double-spaced in 12pt font with 1-inch margins. Cite all sources with consistent adherence to either MLA or Chicago guidelines. Please submit your papers in print-form, preferably on double-sided paper.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

Week 1
Tuesday 9/3: Introduction

Thursday 9/5: Abstract Expressionism: Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler
  • TB, pp. 380-391, 400-405, 477-482.

Week 2
Tuesday 9/10: New Realism I: Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns
  • TB, pp. 406-410, 442-447 (through until section heading “What you see is what you see”), and p. 480 (grey box on Steinberg).

Thursday 9/12: New Realism II: Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, Yayoi Kusama
  • TB, pp. 488-493.
Week 3
Tuesday 9/17: Pop: Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Corita Kent
  • Hal Foster, “Death in America,” October, 1996.
  • TB, pp. 483-487, 530-535.

Thursday 9/19: Minimalism: Frank Stella, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Yvonne Rainer
  • TB, pp. 447-448 (“What you see is what you see”), 508-512, 536-539.

Week 4
Tuesday 9/24: Conceptual Art and Fluxus: Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner, Sol LeWitt, Cildo Meireles, Alison Knowles, Adrian Piper
  • TB, pp. 494-501, 571-577.

Thursday 9/26: Process Art: Eva Hesse, Lynda Benglis, Robert Morris, Richard Serra
  • Robert Morris, “Anti-Form” (1968)
  • TB, pp. 544-548, 578-581

Week 5
Tuesday 10/1: Performance and Video: Vito Acconci, Bruce Nauman, Joan Jonas, ASCO, Chris Burden
  • TB, pp. 604-613.

  • TB, pp. 549-552, 584-588.

First Paper due in class

Week 6
Tuesday 10/8: Institutional Critique: Michael Asher, Hans Haacke, Daniel Buren, Fred Wilson, Mierle Laderman-Ukeles
  • TB, pp. 589-592.

Tuesday 10/10: Feminisms: Mary Kelly, Judy Chicago, Nancy Spero, Martha Rosler, Eleanor Antin
  • TB, pp. 614-619.
Week 7
Tuesday 10/15: No class

Thursday 10/17: **Midterm Exam**

Week 8
Tuesday 10/22: **Appropriation:** Sherrie Levine, Louise Lawler, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Dara Birnbaum, Gran Fury
   • TB, pp. 624-627, p. 631 (grey box on Baudrillard).

   • TB, pp. 683-688.

Week 9
Tuesday 10/29: **Painting’s “Return”:** David Salle, Gerhard Richter, Stephen Prina, Lari Pittman, Amy Sillman, Mickalene Thomas
   • TB, pp. 640-643, 744-751.

Thursday 10/31: **Imperative Bodies:** Robert Gober, Félix González-Torres, Mona Hatoum, Mike Kelley, Rona Pondick
   • TB, pp. 689-693.

Week 10
Tuesday 11/5: **Queer Theory:** Dahn Vo, Zoe Leonard and Cheryl Dunye, Donald Moffett, Zanele Muholi, Jim Hodges

Thursday 11/7: **Postcolony:** Jimmie Durham, Jane Alexander, Wangechi Mutu, Yinka Shonibare, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Emily Jacir
   • TB, pp. 661-665.

Week 11
Tuesday 11/12: **Artist as Historian:** Matthew Buckingham, Catherine Lord, Doris Salcedo, Otolith Group
   • TB, pp. 636-639 (beginning at “From Pop to photomontage”).
Thursday 11/14: Postmedium: James Coleman, William Kentridge, Christian Marclay, Sophie Calle
  • TB, pp. 718-723

**Second Paper due in class**

**Week 12**
Tuesday 11/19: Relationships: Lygia Clarke, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Liam Gillick, Mark Dion
  • TB, pp. 712-716 (through until “An archival impulse”)

Tuesday 11/21: Social Turn: Tania Burguera, Paul Chan, Thomas Hirschhorn, Ai Weiwei
  • TB, pp. 738-743, 752-756 (through until “Immersing the spectator”), 758-763

**Week 13**
Tuesday 11/26: Global Flows: Andreas Gursky, Julie Meheretu, Sarah Sze, Pierre Huyghe

Thursday 11/28: No class

**Week 14**
Tuesday 12/3: What Is Contemporary Art?

Tuesday 12/5: Review