ARHS 3358 – Gender and Sexuality in Modern and Contemporary Art

Dr. Anna Lovatt, annalovatt@smu.edu
May Term 2019 (Thursday May 16 – Friday May 31)
11am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm
Room TBD

Catherine Opie, Being and Having, 1991

Course Outline:
Questions of gender and sexuality are central to our understanding of identity, community, self-expression and creativity. They have therefore been of vital interest to modern and contemporary artists. This course demonstrates how theories of gender and sexuality from a variety of disciplines can contribute to our knowledge of the production and reception of works of art.

We will consider how artists have represented, performed and theorized gender and sexuality in their work. The gendering of the art historical canon will be another key concern, prompting us to look beyond the dominant narratives of modern and contemporary art to previously marginalized practices. Finally, we will consider the role of the viewer in the reception of art and how the act of looking is inflected by gender and sexuality.

Instructor’s Biography:
Dr. Anna Lovatt received her PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London in 2005. Her research focuses on post-Minimal and Conceptual art of the 1960s and she has published extensively in this area. Dr. Lovatt joined SMU in 2014 as Scholar in Residence in the Department of Art History, having previously been Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Manchester, U.K.

University Curriculum Requirements:
This course fulfills UC Foundations: Ways of Knowing

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of more than one disciplinary practice.
2. Students will explain how bringing more than one practice to an examination of the course topic contributes to knowing about that topic.

**Course Format:**
The course will be taught in two 2hr sessions each day. The first session will be a discussion or presentation based on an important theory of gender or sexuality. This will be followed by group discussion and activities. The second session will be a lecture by the Instructor exploring how artists and at historians have engaged with the theoretical source studied that morning. Each day, we will consider how a particular theory of gender and sexuality contributes to our knowledge of artworks.

**SMU Course Policies:**

**Academic Honesty and Misconduct:**
You are bound by the Honor Code and the SMU Student Code of Conduct. For complete details, see: http://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentLife/StudentHandbook/HonorCode

**Disability Accommodations:**
Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit http://www.smu.edu/ALEC/DASS to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

**Religious Observance:**
Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:**
Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

**Attendance:**
Because of the brevity of the May Term, students are expected to attend all class sessions. If you will not be able to attend a specific session, please notify the instructor in advance via email and make arrangements with another students to get copies of notes. **2 unexcused absences will result in failure (F).**
**Assessment:**
20% 20 minute group presentation, notes to be submitted to the Instructor.
20% First in class exam, 1hr, May 24.
20% Second in class exam, 1hr, June 1.
40% 2000 word paper. Submit hardcopy in class, June 1.

Students will receive written feedback on their presentation and the two in class exams. These low-weighted assignments are intended to be formative assessments that will enable you to practice and develop your skills in collaborative work, textual analysis, research, writing and critical thinking in preparation for the final paper, which is weighted at 40% of the course.

**In Class Exams**
The in class exams will be 60 minutes long and will be divided into three parts:
1. A comparative analysis of two images, with reference to themes covered on the course so far (20 mins).
2. A comparative analysis of two further images (20 mins).
3. A response to ONE of six questions based on theories of gender and sexuality we have covered so far. You will be allowed to bring photocopies of the six key texts in the manner of an open book exam. (20 mins).

**Final Paper**
Respond to the following prompt:

*How can theories of gender and sexuality contribute to our knowledge of artworks? Refer to the work of one theorist and two or three artists.*

The final paper should be 2000 words long and should include word-count, page numbers, footnotes, bibliography, and illustrations.
Schedule of Classes

Thursday May 16: Introduction
In the first session, we will go through the course syllabus and assessments and assign group presentations for the days that follow. This will be followed by an introductory lecture and a group discussion based on the assigned text by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. In the afternoon, we will visit the Dallas Museum of Art to discuss a selection of artworks related to the course.

Required reading:

Friday May 17: Surrealism and Sexuality
L’Amour fou (“mad love”) was one of the guiding concepts of the Surrealist movement that emerged in Paris during the 1920s. But the Surrealist embrace of sexuality was at best hetero-normative and at worst, openly homophobic and misogynistic. In today’s class we will consider the embrace of Freudian psychoanalytic theory by the Surrealist leader André Breton. We will also study artists on the margins of “official” Surrealism, such as the lesbian artist Claude Cahun, who translated Havelock Ellis’s writings on human sexuality.

Required reading:

Monday May 20: Abstract Expressionism and Postwar Masculinity
During the 1940s and 50s Abstract Expressionist painting was often described in explicitly sexual and gendered terms. Painters like Jackson Pollock were admired by critics for their macho personae and the “seminal,” “virile” quality of their work. Yet this period in American art coincided with the publication of the Kinsey Reports into male and female sexuality, which were seen to indicate the decline of the American male. Today we will discuss Abstract Expressionist painting as a form of “masculine masquerade.”

Required reading:

Presentation:
Why were the Kinsey Reports so controversial?

Tuesday May 21: Sexuality and Violence in Postwar Photography
Today we will consider the work of three artists affiliated with late Surrealism in the 1950s and 60s. Artists including Hans Bellmer, Pierre Molinier, Unica Zürn addressed themes of sadomasochism in their photographic works, which feature bound, fragmented and proliferating bodies of indeterminate gender. The ethics and aesthetics of these provocative images will be considered in relation to the photographic processes of doubling, cropping and photomontage.

**Required reading:**

**Presentation:**
How does Georges Bataille characterize eroticism?

**Wednesday May 22: The Fragmented Body in 1960s Sculpture**
Lucy Lippard’s 1966 exhibition “Eccentric Abstraction” highlighted the work of a number of sculptors whose work had anthropomorphic qualities without representing the body in any conventional way. Instead, the work of Louise Bourgeois, Yayoi Kusama, Eva Hesse was often characterized by breast-like and phallic forms suggestive of the body in pieces. We will look at this work in conjunction with the psychoanalysis of Melanie Klein, who characterized infantile sexuality in terms of aggressive and reparative urges.

**Required reading:**

**Presentation:**
How did the psychoanalysis of Melanie Klein depart from the earlier work of Sigmund Freud?

**Thursday May 23: Women and Work in the 1970s**
In today’s class we will study artists working during the 1970s in the context of Second Wave Feminism, whose work dealt with women’s labor inside and outside of the home. From documenting the mundane routines of motherhood (Mary Kelly) to cleaning the museum as a work of art (Mierle Laderman Ukeles) and withdrawing from work altogether (Lee Lozano), these artists raised questions about the economic and cultural valuation of women’s labor.

**Required reading:**

*EXAM 1*
Friday May 24: Gender and Performativity in the Punk Era

During the late 1970s and early 80s artists and musicians addressed issues of gender in self-conscious and overtly performative ways. From Cindy Sherman’s self-portraits as a spectrum of ‘feminine’ stereotypes, to Jimmy DeSana’s faceless, androgynous figures in bondage gear and high-heeled shoes, this work placed emphasis on theatricality and artifice. We will discuss the ways in which these cultural practices prefigure gender theorist Judith Butler’s later assertion that all gender is a form of performance.

Required reading:

Presentation:
What is the relationship between gender and drag, according to Judith Butler?

Tuesday May 28: AIDS, Art and Activism

Today we will consider artistic and activist responses to the global AIDS pandemic that began in the early 1980s. Although HIV and AIDS affect people of all genders and sexualities, the beginning of the pandemic saw gay men demonized and much activism of this period was aligned with the gay rights movement. The artist collectives ACT UP, Gran Fury and Group Material engaged in art as political activism, whereas Felix Gonzalez-Torres made more abstract and elegiac works about his partner's illness and death from AIDS. We will look at these practices alongside writings by Leo Bersani and Douglas Crimp.

Required reading:

Presentation
Why does Simon Watney criticize the media response to the AIDS pandemic?

Wednesday May 29: Intersectionality

In her video Free, White and Twenty-One (1980), Howardena Pindell appears alternately as herself, speaking about her experiences of racism in the art world, and as a white woman who reprimands Pindell for being paranoid and ungrateful. The video exposed divisions within the Feminist Art Movement, which often ignored race and class in its bids to unite women. Using the concept of intersectionality, we will consider the pioneering work of Pindell alongside younger artists like Kara Walker, Issac Julien and Lorna Simpson, who represent identity as the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, class, ability, religion and age.
Required reading:

Presentation:
How does intersectionality complicate our understanding of oppression?

**Thursday May 30: Queer Kinship**
Whereas the heterosexual structure of the nuclear family traditionally excluded non-normative gender and sexual identities, our understanding of what constitutes a “family” is being redefined. In today’s class, we will consider artistic representations of alternative family structures, kinship networks and queer genealogies, looking at the work of Nan Goldin, Catherine Opie and Zachary Drucker, amongst others.

Required reading:

Presentation
What are the similarities and differences between “chosen families” and biological families, according to Kath Weston?

**Friday May 31: Body as Material**
In our final class we will look at artists who use their bodies as an artistic material. Transgender artist Heather Cassils uses bodybuilding techniques to remodel their body, which is presented in a continual state of becoming rather than in the process of “crossing” from one gender to another. We will discuss Cassils’ work, along with feminist performances by Elenaor Antin and Orlan, in the context of theories of gender and technology.

Required reading:

*EXAM 2*

*PAPER DUE*
Further Reading

Core Bibliography
Pollock, Griselda, *Differencing the Canon: Feminism and the Writing of Art’s Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999)

Extended Bibliography
Broude, Norma and Garrard, Mary, *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, (New York, 1992)
Doyle, Jennifer et al., *David Wojnarowicz: A Definitive History of Five or Six Years on the Lower East Side*, 2006
Halperin, David M. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (New York, 1990)
Jones, Amelia, *Otherwise: Imagining Queer Feminist Art Histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016)
Muñoz, José Esteban, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York, NYU Press, 2009)
Muñoz, José Esteban, *Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Politics of Performance*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999)
Local museums and galleries with collections/exhibitions relevant to the course:

Afterimage www.afterimagegallery.com
2828 Routh Street, Dallas, Suite 115, 214-871-9140.
Hours: Mon - Sat 10-5:30.

Dallas Museum of Art www.dallasmuseumofart.org
1717 N. Harwood, 214-922-1200.
Hours: Tue - Sun 11-5, open late on Thursday until 9 p.m.

The Warehouse www.thewarehousedallas.org
14105 Inwood, Dallas, TX, 214-442-2875.
Hours: By appointment only, mostly groups.

Dallas Contemporary www.dallascontemporary.org
161 Glass Street, Dallas 75207; 214-821-2522.
Hours: Tue-Sat 10-6, Sun 12-7.

Goss-Michael Foundation www.gossmichaelfoundation.org
1405 Turtle Creek Boulevard, Dallas 75207; 214-696-0555.
Hours: Tue-Fri 10-5, Sat 12-4.

Amon Carter Museum www.cartermuseum.org
3501 Camp Bowie Ave., Fort Worth, 817-738-1933.
Hours: Tue-Sat 10-5, open Thursday until 8, Sun noon-5.

Kimbell Art Museum www.kimbellart.org
3333 Camp Bowie Ave., 817-654-1034.
Hours: Tue - Thur, Sat 10-5, Fri 12-8, Sun, 12-5.

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth www.themodern.org
3200 Darnell Street (University Drive and Camp Bowie Blvd.), 817-738-9215, toll-free 866-824-5566.
Hours: Tue - Sat 10-5, Fri 12-8.

Nasher Sculpture Center
2001 Flora Street
Hours: 11am-5pm, Tues-Sun