

# Contemporary Art: 1965-Present

ARHS 3369 – J-Term 2018

Date/Time/Location TBD

Dr. Eric M. Stryker

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office hours: immediately after class - OAC #3603

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

An international survey of contemporary art from 1965 to the present with specific attention given to the emergence of new modes and new media in art – specifically conceptualism, site-specificity, installation, performance, video, multimedia, interactive and digital art. These now prominent forms of art will be studied as they have evolved out of the social upheaval and shifting artistic practices at the close of the 1960s. Each will be historicized in relation to a range of influential developments in critical theory, social history, and both local and global visual cultures.

## COURSE BENEFITS

- Students will discuss how contemporary art practices relate to contemporary life.
- Students will gain detailed knowledge of major developments in *global* contemporary art since the late 1960s.
- Students will learn ways of understanding and interpreting the new modes of contemporary art, including installation, sound art, video art, computer art, internet art, interactive art, body art, performance art, site-specific art and conceptual art.
- Students will learn how the intellectual history of this period spurred dramatic changes of the range of objects and practices called “art” in our world.
- Students will be introduced to foundational texts in critical theory, including postmodern theories of gender, race, class and sexuality; post-structural analyses of language and meaning; theories of late capitalism; performance theory; and various critiques of mass media.

## UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM

Humanities and Fine Arts (*formerly “Creativity and Aesthetics II”*)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Specific UC learning objectives are:

- Students will be able to analyze and construct clear and well-supported interpretations of creative works.
- Students will be able to evaluate sources and analyze the role and value of creative works to the cultures (context) that create and adopt them.

## ART HISTORY MAJOR

Temporalities Post-1600

## REGISTRATION

This is a mid-level course in art history, open to undergraduate art history majors and non-majors. There are no pre-requisites to the class. However, the class assumes a basic knowledge of 20th Century world history. If this is a concern for you, please consult with the instructor or teaching assistant.

## NOTE ON COURSE MATERIAL

This is a class in contemporary art and visual culture. As such, lectures and readings will include, on occasion, frank discussion of visual material with sexual and/or violent content. If this is of concern to a student, he/she should address this with the instructor at the start of the semester.

## **INSTRUCTOR BIO**

Dr. Eric M. Stryker is an assistant professor of modern and contemporary art history at SMU, with particular focus on the British and European art in the middle of the Twentieth Century. His research interests focus on the intertwined relationship between modernism, urbanism, cultural geography and social history. Publications include writings on Richard Long and the geography of the British empire; Eduardo Paolozzi's figurative sculpture in relationship to the rebuilding of post-WWII London; and the relationship between blitzkrieg and abstract art during WWII. He was curator of an exhibition of British print culture's engagement with landscape and topography at the Yale Center of British Art and chaired an international conference on international visual culture during the Second World War, also at Yale University. His forthcoming book is *Transitional Spaces: Figuration in Post-War England*.

## **READINGS**

There are 6-7 short readings (extracts from primary sources) for each class meeting. They are all primary source readings in one textbook, available [on reserve at Hamon Library](#) or for purchase at the [SMU Bookstore](#).

- Charles Harrison (ed.) *Art In Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ISBN 978-0631227083

Please note that readings are mandatory. Although we may refer to the text from time to time, lectures will not summarize the readings. It is important, therefore, to do the readings carefully and take notes in preparation for the exams.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at class is mandatory. Three unexcused absences will result in you being dropped from this course.

## **IF YOU MISS A CLASS**

If you are missing class, you are strongly encouraged to obtain from fellow students notes from missed lectures, or to come to office hours to discuss missed lecture material.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

With notification prior to class and documentation, excused absences will be granted for the following circumstances:

- Family emergencies or funerals.
- Illness or medical emergencies
- Seniors conducting job interviews should make their best effort to schedule interviews at times outside class hours. If a conflict is unavoidable, the excused absence should be requested far in advance of class.
- Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify the instructor 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.)
- Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity are 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)

## **ACADEMIC ETHICS**

Students are expected to abide by the [SMU Honor Code](#) at all times. If you have questions about how the Honor Code applies to your work in this course, please contact the instructor.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the instructor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)

## **PAPER**

1800-2300 words, submitted online

- 1) Choose one work dating from roughly 1940-1970 relevant to the course material, currently on display at the Dallas Museum of Art, Nasher Sculpture Center, Amon Carter Museum, or Fort Worth Modern.
- 2) View it in person. (Remember that an online photograph is likely to mischaracterize the original work; it is critical to view the work yourself.)
- 3) Write an argument-driven essay on this work based on your visual analysis. Write an argument-driven essay on this work, based on your visual analysis of the object and secondary/primary source research in the college libraries. You may frame your thesis by forming it in relation to major concepts or issues discussed in the class or readings; or you may devise it from scratch. However, this paper is not a research paper. Your argument should be supported by a well-organized set of distinct points made in separate body paragraphs.

## **GRADING CRITERIA FOR PAPERS**

- Analytical insight
- Originality and clarity of thesis statement
- Effective argumentative structure and support
- Quality of formal analysis
- Quality and effectivity of prose
- Effective use of contextual information
- Appropriate use of authoritative primary and secondary sources (paper 2 only)

## **ESSAY STRUCTURE**

- A title
- Thesis sentence & introduction
- Body paragraphs, each with a clear purpose supporting your thesis argument
- Conclusion

## **ESSAY FORMATTING**

- Name in header at upper right on each page
- Page numbers
- 1-inch margins & 12pt standard font
- If images are included (they are not required), they must appear in a separate image appendix and do not count toward the page-count.
- Proper citations. (Please consult the Chicago Manual of Style if you need to learn how to do this properly. Alternatively, MLA or APA formatting may be used.)

## **PAPER GRADE POLICIES**

- Failure to adhere to basic formatting requirements may result in your paper being returned to you ungraded; you must then submit it as a late paper.
- Late submissions will be marked down one letter grade per each day overdue. Extensions will only be granted in the case of special circumstances (illness, family emergencies, etc.)
- Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. Please see the University guidelines and rules on academic honesty. It is also grounds for an automatic 'F' in the course.

## **WRITING SUPPORT**

When writing your paper, please consult the writing resources links provided online. Further guidance is available during office hours.

## COMMON WRITING ERRORS

- First person narration. The standard in scholarly writing (and even in most journalism other than opinion columns) is the 3rd person.
- Second person narration. Even worse, you'll telling the reader what to do instead of convincing him/her with the strength of your argument
- Lack of a thesis statement - or an unclear thesis statement. This is probably the most damaging thing you can do to your grade. The entire point of writing assignments is for students to develop skills of persuasive writing, where a clear (and preferably original) argument is well-supported by well-structured body paragraphs, a logical sequence of ideas/information, and analytic insight.
- Poor structure of body paragraphs. Be sure to do at least one edit specifically focused on whether each of your body paragraphs (1) supports the thesis statement (2) is linked in a leading or ending sentence back to the thesis statement (3) is not overly long or rambling and (4) has a clear sense of purpose within the overall structure of your essay.
- A *\*too\** generalizing or unspecific thesis. Be sure to read your thesis statement and make sure you (1) define your terms (2) use as particular and specific language as you can. If you can take any portion of your thesis statement and plunk it down on any other object, it is almost certainly way too generalizing.
- An indulgently subjective thesis. Yes, we want and we *\*prefer\** original arguments! However, relying too much on your personal taste, or employing speculation that assumes something which is not materially present is going too far.
- Does not have close-looking. If you find yourself saying something like "It is a colorful painting" or describing other all-over effects of a work, then you aren't looking carefully and hard enough at the details and materials of the work.
- Too many grammar mistakes or complete lack of proofreading. Unless you are a student who knows English as a second language (in which case, they are writing coaches on campus specifically for you), there really isn't an excuse for really sloppy grammar and a lack of proofreading. You put all the work into your paper; make sure it is legible and persuasive. A few typos or grammatical slips are forgivable. An onslaught of such errors is not.

## FINAL GRADES OF INCOMPLETE

I will consider the possibility of granting you a grade of incomplete...

- for unfinished papers only. (NOT exams.)
- if you come to me individually to discuss your situation and plan for completing the remainder of your work. You must have valid extenuating circumstances to be granted this privilege.
- if more than 50% of the course requirements are completed by the end of the final exam.
- if granting a grade of incomplete does not give one student an advantage over his/her peers.
- If an incomplete grade is granted, you must complete a digital form sent by the registrar's office with an agreed deadline for remaining assignments.

## EXAM

There will be one cumulative final exam in the form of an online digital exam.

- The first section will be a series of image comparisons, some with question prompts. Students are expected to identify and respond substantively to images in short essay format, comparing and contrasting the works while connecting them to major concepts and relevant historical contexts. Study images from the lectures will be provided on the course website.
- The second section will also include a long essay question on a large theme or critical issue which recurs throughout the course material.

## STUDYING TIPS

- Do memorize the ID information. However, don't stop there. Instead, continue to cycle through the images asking yourself "what is important about this object" and "How does it compare to others?"
- If you are new to slide comparisons on exams, create a comparison and practice the ID and short response on paper, with a timer in hand. This is confidence building.
- For the readings, try summarizing the most important points and examples on one index card per chapter. This makes review go much more smoothly when you are studying for an exam.
- Context, Content, Concepts, the Visual and the Technical
- Ideal responses in both short and long essay form will have a good balance of these elements. As you study, ask yourself if you know enough of each of them for each slide. Then, when you take the exam, remind yourself to attempt to include each of them in every response.

## EXAMINATION TIPS

- If you can't remember the complete ID for a slide on exam day, do your best guess! It is worth trying to score a point or two.
- If you really don't know the images on screen, don't give up. You can still do your absolute best to compare and contrast the images, in visual terms and also in relation to some of the big themes and discussions we have had in the classroom. If you identify them incorrectly, your short response will still be taken seriously for what it is. For instance, if a 1990s object is on screen and you misidentify it as a 1930s object, but then demonstrate you know a lot about 1930s object, that will get you some points.
- For the final exam essay, we always recommend you *\*quickly\** outline your response in the margin or on the exam handout before you start writing. This almost always leads to better writing and more thorough responses.
- A general rule: the more valid points you make in written responses, the more points you will get.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION					
Paper	40%	full letter grade	late penalties apply		
Exam	40%	= short essay comparisons	20%	numeric grade	no late or make-up exams permitted
		+ long essay question	20%	numeric grade	
Class Participation	20%	adjustment to total grade at end of semester			

LATE PENALTIES	
Up to 24 hours late	-10 points
Up to one week late	-20 points
Up to two weeks late	-30 points
Up to three weeks late	-40 points
By the end of term "Reading Day"	-50 points
Nothing submitted	Grade of 0 (Zero)

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION								
A numerical system is used to calculate final grades. Some items are graded on the 100 point scale. Others are grades with full or flat (no +/-) letter grades. Numeric values are calculated as follows:								
Letter Grade	Numeric Range	Median Value	Letter Grade	Numeric Range	Median Value	Letter Grade	Numeric Range	Median Value
A+	97-100	98.5	C+	77-79	78	F+	50-59	55
A	94-96	95	C	74-76	75	F	30-49	40
A-	90-93	91.5	C-	70-73	71.5	F-	1-29	15
B+	87-89	88	D+	67-69	68	Not completed	0 (zero)	0 (zero)
B	84-86	85	D	64-66	65			
B-	80-83	81.5	D-	60-63	61.5			
Please note: Grades of A+, F+ and F- do not officially exist at the university. They are used in this course for record-keeping and better numeric translations of letter grades during end-of-term grade calculations.								

## **SCHEDULE**

*Please note that each of the readings are very short primary source texts, averaging 5-8 pages*

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### **Postmodern Strategies I**

#### Major Topics:

Major branches of postmodern thought; new modes in contemporary art; new media in contemporary art; conceptualism; post-minimalism; process art

#### Artists:

Tony Smith, Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth, John Baldessari, John Latham, On Kawara, Robert Morris, Eva Hesse, Richard Serra, Hans Haacke, Hanne Darboven, Jennifer Bartlett, Komar and Melamid

#### Readings:

- Lyotard "What is Postmodernism" In *Art in Theory* (AIT)
- LeWitt "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (AIT)
- LeWitt "Sentences on Conceptual Art" (AIT)
- Kosuth "Art after Philosophy" (AIT)
- Morris "Notes on Sculpture 4: Beyond Objects" (AIT)
- Haacke "Statement" (AIT)

#### Viewing:

- Video-documentation of Ann Hamilton's installation art

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### **Postmodern Strategies II**

#### Major Topics:

Photorealism; appropriation art; pattern and decoration movement; late capitalism; simulation and simulacrum, the super-real & hyperreal; the "death of the author"; modernist "originality"; marxist theory of value

#### Artists:

Richard Estes, Audrey Flack, Chuck Close, Duane Hanson, Gerhard Richter, Sherrie Levine, Jeff Koons, Robert Longo, Sarah Charlesworth, Richard Prince, Joyce Kosloff, Valerie Jaudon, Robert Kushner, Miriam Schapiro, Kim MacConnell, Ned Smyth

#### Readings:

- Baudrillard "The Hyper-Realism of Simulation" (AIT)
- Jameson "The Deconstruction of Expression" (AIT)
- Richter "Notes" (AIT)
- Foucault "What is an Author" (AIT)
- Barthes "From Work to Text" (AIT)
- Krauss "The Originality of the Avant-Garde" (AIT)
- Levine "Statement" (AIT)
- Lippard "Postface" (AIT)

#### Viewing:

- 1980s anthropomorphic television advertisement

**Postmodern Strategies III**Major Topics:

Installation art; “archive art”; museum critiques; art market critiques; neo-expressionist painting; deconstruction and post-structuralist theories of language

Artists:

Ann Hamilton, Tony Cragg, Thomas Hirshhorn, Ilya Kabakov, Lothar Baumgarten, Fred Wilson, Christian Boltanski, Dieter Roth, Mark Dion, Damien Hirst, David Salle, Julian Schnabel, Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, Jörg Immendorf, Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer

Readings:

- Derrida, “The Exorbitant: Question of Method” (AIT)
- Derrida, ‘The Engraving and the Ambiguities of Form’ from *Of Grammatology*” (AIT)
- Kiefer, Cucchi et al. “The Cultural-Historical Trajectory of the European Continent” (AIT)
- Bell “Modernism and Capitalism” (AIT)
- Schier “Painting after Art?: Comments on Wollheim” (AIT)
- Burn/Ramsden “The Role of Language” (AIT)

Viewing:

- Video-documentation of Ilya Kabakov’s installation art
- Video-documentation of Jonathan Borofsky’s installation/public sculpture
- Video-documentation of Thomas Hirshhorn’s installation art
- Video-documentation of Lothar Baumgarten’s installation art
- Extract from Dieter Rot’s video-diary works
- Film Clip: Credit sequence from *Apocalypse Now*

**Body, Performance & Identity I**Major Topics:

Body art, performance art, feminist art, identity politics & poetics, feminist theory, the gendered gaze, gay liberation social movements, queer theory, ritual and culture, the medicalization of queer bodies, the AIDS epidemic in visual culture and art, “social research” in performance art

Artists:

Bruce Nauman, Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Carolee Schneeman, Womanhouse, Judy Chicago, Faith Wilding, Mary Kelly, Guerilla Girls, Gran Fury, Act Up, Donald Moffet, Richard Deagle, Names Quilt Project, Andres Serrano, Robert Mapplethorpe, Ross Bleckner, Felix Gonzales-Torres

Readings:

- Althusser “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” (AIT)
- Artforum “The Artist and Politics: A Symposium” (AIT)
- Kristeva “Prolegomenon’ to *Revolution in Poetic Language*” (AIT)
- Mulvey “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (AIT)
- Kristeva “Powers of Horror” (AIT)
- Rose “Sexuality in the Field of Vision” (AIT)

Viewing:

- Bruce Nauman, example of body art work
- Chris Burden, *Shoot*
- Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*
- Marina Abramovic, *Rhythm*
- Installation documentation of Felix-Gonzales-Torres
- Documentary footage of Names Quilt
- Documentary footage of ACT-Up agit-prop
- Documentary footage of Guerilla Girls

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## **Body, Performance & Identity II**

### Major Topics:

Race & ethnicity, black liberationist art, identity politics, African-American contemporary artists, Latino & Chicano contemporary art, “black art” in the British empire, critical race theory, post-colonial art and theory, art on and about borders, transnationalism and migration, “institutional critique” in performance art

### Artists:

Adrian Piper, Betye Saar, Lorna Simpson, Kiki Smith, Kara Walker, James Luna, Jimmie Durham, Coco Fusco, Guillermo Gomez-Peña, Border Arts Workshop, Rasheed Araeen, Yinka Shonibare, Mona Hatoum, Anish Kapoor, Isaac Julien

### Readings:

- Williams “When was Modernism” (AIT)
- Foucault “A Lecture” (AIT)
- Art Worker’s Coalition “Statement of Demands” (AIT)
- Ramsden “On Practice” (AIT)
- Said “Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community” (AIT)
- Spivak “Who Claims Alterity” (AIT)

### Viewing:

- Fusco & Gomez-Peña, *Couple in the Cage* (clip)
- Isaac Julian, example of video art work

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## **No Class (Weekend & MLK Day)**

It is recommended that you work on your paper this weekend.

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## **Space, Place, Perception & Participation**

### Major Topics:

Earth and land art, public sculpture vs. site-specificity, anarchitecture, sensory environments, graffiti & graffiti art, globalization & travel, collaboration, participation, situational aesthetics, relational aesthetics, George Segal, John Ahearn, CoLab, Group Material, Tim Rollins and K.O.S., Rirkrit Tiravanija, Liam Gillick, Gabriel Orozco, Vanessa Beecroft, Maurizio Cattelan

### Artists:

Ana Mendieta, Richard Long, Robert Smithson, Walter de Maria, Michael Heizer, Nancy Holt, Christo and Jean-Claude, Dan Graham, Lucas Samaras, Robert Irwin, James Turrell, Olafur Eliasson, Carsten Höller, Gordon Matta-Clark, Fab 5 Freddy, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, David Wojnarowicz, Banksy

### Readings:

- Smithson “A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects” (AIT)
- Smithson “Cultural Confinement” (AIT)
- Serra “The Yale Lecture” (AIT)
- Burgin “Situational Aesthetics” (AIT)
- Atkinson/Baldwin “Air Show” (AIT)
- Baudrillard “Ethic of Labour, Aesthetic of Play” (AIT)

### Viewing:

- Robert Smithson, The Spiral Jetty (two clips)
- Vanessa Beecroft, video-documentation
- Rirkrit Tiravanija, video-documentation

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## **New Media Art I**

### Major Topics:

Experimental video art, video-installation art, media-performance, media theory, television, mass-media critique

### Artists:

Nam June Paik, Dan Sandin, Phil Morton, Peter Campus, Joan Jonas, Richard Serra, Ant Farm, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, Doug Aitkin, Piploitti Rist, Gary Hill, Shirin Neshat, Tony Oursler

### Readings:

- Foster "Subversive Signs" (AIT)
- Kruger "'Taking' Pictures" (AIT)
- Kristeva "Interview with Catherine Franclin" (AIT)

### Viewing:

- Nam Jun Paik, *Information Superhighway*, video-documentation
- Dan Sandin, *Wandawega Waters*
- Peter Campus, *Three Transitions*
- Joan Jonas, *Left Side / Right Side*
- Serra and Holt, *Boomerang*
- Ant Farm, *JFK Assassination*
- Ant Farm, *Media Burn*
- Jenny Holzer, video documentation of installations
- Doug Aitkin, *Electric Earth*
- Tony Oursler, video-documentation of installations

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## **New Media Art II**

### Major Topics:

Digital aesthetic, bit and byte-culture, cyberspace visualized, computer-aided design, digital painting, telematics art, bio-art, computer art, internet art, function and dysfunction, interactive art, robotics in art & culture, cybernetic performance art

### Artists:

Tom Friedman, Camille Utterbach, Jodi.org, Survival Research Laboratories, Eduardo Kac, Critical Art Ensemble, Orlan, Stelarc, Matthew Barney

### Readings:

- Habermas "Modernity – An Incomplete Project" (AIT)
- Williams "Dominant, Residual and Emergent" (AIT)
- Kuhn "Postscript – 1969' to *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*" (AIT)

### Viewing:

- Film clip: *Tron* (Disney, 1986)
- Stelarc, *Ping Body*
- Orlan, *Surgery Performance*
- Matthew Barney, *Cremaster*
- Camille Utterbach, video-documentation of interactive works.
- Survival Research Laboratories, video-documentation of telematic-robotic performance art

### Interact:

- three internet art sites TBD

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**(No Class)**

**Paper Due**

by 11:30PM, submitted online

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**(No Class)**

**Online Final Exam Due**

by 11:30PM, submitted online