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Art Today: A Critical look at Artists and Exhibitions in 2013
Spring 2013 | TTH 12:30-1:45 | Clough 417

Course Objectives and Description

Students will engage critically with art and exhibitions of the present. Students will be introduced to artists, contemporary trends, movements, exhibitions, readings, and other art materials that are currently generating a meaningful dialogue both professionally and in popular culture. An equal emphasis of the course is on opportunities to see local artists and exhibits featured during the semester in order to engage in a local dialogue. Students will be introduced to the discourse through books, exhibition catalogues, and leading art journals. Readings will be extensive. Students will visit galleries, museums, and other art spaces both during class and on their own outside of class. Emphasis will be placed on analytical and critical skills and will require working both individually and as part of a team.

Textbooks and Other Resources:

Sarah Thornton, *Seven Days in the Art World*

Readings as assigned

Moodle. A Moodle site will be kept for this class and it is very important to check it regularly. Students will find the syllabus, some readings, and other materials on this site. All tests and assignments will be submitted through Moodle. Please become familiar with it quickly.

Grading:

Final grade breakdown:

- Three exhibition reviews 30% (10% each)
- Lectures and participation in discussions related to course readings and class field trips: 10%
- Midterm presentation 20%
- Three Outside exhibitions and two lectures 10%
- Final exhibition organized by the student, including press essay (10%), museum model (5%), and the exhibition itself (15%): 30%

Important Notes:

- **Honor Code:** It is important to remember that the usual rules for written papers apply to the reviews for this class. Whenever you use another person's ideas or words, you must acknowledge that they belong to that person. When you decide to quote someone directly, you should use quotation marks and note the exact source, including author's name, title of book or article, place of publication, date, and page number. Whenever you paraphrase another person's original ideas, you must also acknowledge this in the same way. This is also applicable to any information found in press releases for exhibitions.

On page 15 of the online version of the student handbook (http://www.rhodes.edu/images/content/CampusLife/Honor_Constitution.pdf) it states that "Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty. A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment."

If you are for some reason unclear about plagiarism, please do not hesitate to see me *before* you turn in the paper.

- **Class Attendance:** After three absences your final class grade will be lowered one grade with each additional absence. To be crystal clear: if you miss three classes because you came down with a strain of the Ebola virus or a series of team sports absence and you have also decided to miss a day or two of class because you need to sleep late or you want to catch up on the latest season of *How I Met Your Mother* (or vice versa) it will be those unexcused absences that drop your grade. Additionally, if you are more than five minutes late three times it counts as an absence.
- Changes in content, scheduling, or other aspects of the course may be made at the discretion of the instructor. A rationale will normally be provided in class.
- Students with disabilities will be offered appropriate academic accommodation. Requests should be made during the first two weeks of the semester through the office of Student Disability Services.
- **Possible Objectionable Material:** This class includes images and content that involve issues of nudity, sexuality, violence, race and other themes that may be emotionally or politically challenging or even offensive to some viewers. If you are unwilling or unable to examine and discuss such works in an academic context then you should reconsider enrollment in this course.
- **The classroom/studio as a Safe Zone:** During this class we will have a number of frank discussions about contemporary art and that will cover some ground that may take you in to uncharted territory for your comfort zone. We expect an overarching mutual respect among all participants, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, and religion. Along with many other members of the Rhodes community, We are participants in the Safe Zones program, which is described on the College website: www.rhodes.edu/campuslife/11503.asp
- Certain class assignments may require off-campus activities and therefore a waiver must be signed by each student. Students unable to leave campus may request accommodation before the end of the second week of class.

Schedule of Classes

01.10	Intro to the course
01.15	We will discuss the chapter on Auctions in Sarah Thorton's <u>Seven Days in the Art World</u> . Students should be prepared to discuss the reading.
01.17	We will discuss the chapter on Art Fairs in Sarah Thorton's <u>Seven Days in the Art World</u> . Students should be prepared to discuss the reading.
*01.17 @ 7 pm *01.18 from 6:00-8:00	Paul Mpagi Sepuya lecture in Blount Paul Mpagi Sepuya reception
01.22	Discuss reviews as well as the midterm assignment
01.24	We will discuss the chapter on ArtForum in Sarah Thorton's <u>Seven Days in the Art World</u> . Students should be prepared to discuss the reading.
01.29	(First Review Due) Discuss ArtForum
01.31	Discuss ArtForum
*01.31	Moss Lecture by painter Donna Nelson, 7 pm in Blount Auditorium in Buckman Hall
02.05	We will discuss the chapter on the Biennial in Sarah Thorton's <u>Seven Days in the Art World</u> . Students should be prepared to discuss the reading.
02.07	We will discuss the most recent Whitney Biennial. The catalog will be on hold at the circulation desk at the library and students will need to research in order to discuss the critical response to the exhibition.
*02.07	Ruffin Lecture by art historian Steve Tuck, 6 pm in FJ-B
02.12	The Major Museum Exhibit (National Gallery of Art) Faking It: Manipulated Photography before Photoshop [National Gallery and MET] http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/faking.shtm Michelangelo's David-Apollo http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/apolloinfo.shtm

02.14	Discuss Alternative Spaces and how they work in a community.
02.19	The Museum Reading: Carol Duncan, “The Art Museum as Ritual” [pdf] Gale Anderson, <i>Reinventing the Museum, The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift</i> , AltaMira Press, 2 nd edition, 2012. Need to choose selection.
02.21	Visit to the Brooks Museum (Second Review Due)
*02.21 @ 7 pm	Michael Velliquette Lecture in Blount Auditorium
*02.22 from 6:00-8:00	Michael Velliquette Exhibition Reception
02.26	Midterm presentations
02.28	Midterm presentations
03.05	Brooks Museum Curator Marina Pacini will come in to discuss her ongoing project for a Marisol retrospective exhibition.
03.07	Professor David McCarthy presents on his research on Peter Saul’s letters
03.09 through 03.17	Spring break
Students must visit the Dixon Gallery to see Present Tense: Art from Memphis, 2001 – 2012 [February 3 – April 14, 2013]?	
03.19	Discuss <i>Present Tense</i> exhibition at the Dixon
03.21	John Weeden Visit to discuss Present Tense
03.26	(Third essay due) The Object Reading: selections from Neil MacGregor, <i>A History of the World in 100 objects</i> , New York, 2010. Easter Recess
April 04.02	Professor Tronchin will present
04.04	Kevin Sharp/Julie Pierotti
*04.05 from 6:00-8:00	Reception for Juried Student Exhibition
04.09	The Academic Journal

Reading selections from The Art Bulletin

04.11	The Major Museum Exhibit (Metropolitan Museum) Matisse [MET] http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2012/matisse
04.16	Studio visit with Greely Myatt
04.18 *04.19 from 6:00-8:00	Studio visit with Maysey Craddock Opening reception for Senior Thesis Exhibition
04.23	Final Presentations
04.25	Final Presentations

Reviews:

Over the course of the semester students will be expected to write several exhibition reviews (800 words each). The reviews are to be critical analyses of exhibitions. Students should take into consideration the aim of the artist or curator and to consider the success or failure of that artist or curator's goals. The reviews are to be focused on the work rather than the exhibition space itself. Exhibition reviews should read as a serious examination of the work rather than a casual blog posting. All reviews should be written in the third person. Good examples of exhibitions reviews are on Moodle. Early in the class we will discuss what makes for a good review. In addition to insights and observations about the work, a review's clarity, vocabulary and style will be primary considerations for grading. Reviews below 775 words and above 825 words will not be accepted.

Regarding lateness: Reviews are due at or before the beginning of class. Late reviews will result in a reduction of the grade by one letter for every 24 hour period. (A paper turned in after the beginning of class is one grade lower, same time the next day two grades lower and so on.) Students are required to turn in a pledged copy and to upload a digital copy of the paper as a word doc via Moodle.

Format: Papers should be turned in with the following layout settings: double-spaced, 12 pt font, left and right margins set at 1.5". Document files should be formatted with the student's name_review_date.doc. It is important to follow these instructions and violations will be penalized.

Midterm Artist Research Presentation: Each student is expected to research the life and work of a significant contemporary artist. Students will give a fifteen minute powerpoint presentation on the artist. To prevent redundant presentations, artists must be approved by the instructor prior to presentation. The presentation should briefly discuss biographical information about the artist but the bulk of the presentation should discuss the artist's work and impact on broader art community. Presentations should be uploaded to moodle prior to the class so the instructors can have them loaded onto the classroom pc to insure speedy transitions and to avoid fumbling with jumpdrives and the academic volume.

Parameters for Final Projects: (Fictitious Exhibitions)

Students will work in groups to organize an exhibition for a space of their choosing. (It can be a real or imagined space.) The show should be organized around a particular theme to be decided upon by the group. Since the shows are fictitious students can think creatively in ways that curators normally cannot. For example, students could assemble all the works of Leonardo da Vinci or a group of outdoor sculptures that normally cannot be moved.

Students will be responsible for creating a 1000 word essay to accompany the exhibition. The group will make a presentation outlining the goals of the show and speaking to the historical context and the need for such an exhibition. Students will be required to create a mockup of the space and where in that space each piece is to go. The mock-up should include a 3-D version of the gallery space with to-scale versions of the work.

Resources :

- Look through the art magazines in the library, they have tons of articles on or reviews that you might look at to think about. Talk to your professors, ask them about their favorite or most influential group show they ever saw (most will remember).
- The online archives for Art in General (www.artingeneral.org), Exit Art (www.exitart.org), Apex Art (www.apexart.org), the Whitney Museum of American Art in NYC (www.whitney.org), Independent Curators International (www.ici-exhibitions.org), as well as exhibition catalogs from the library or the instructor's collection.