

Spring 2017

Art since 1980

Craig Houser
CUNY City College

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Art since 1980

Art 31538 74569 2PR

Tuesday, 2:00-4:40

Prof. Craig Houser

CG-244

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Office hours: Tues., 1:00-2:00 p.m., Wed., 1:00-2:00 p.m.; and Thurs., 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Course Description

This course will explore art since 1980 and consider the questions and ideas embedded in contemporary art in relation to prior historical movements. We will consider a range of questions, including approaches on how to write about contemporary art, when and where to apply philosophical theories, and what a social historical context for a body of work might be, as well as who, how, and why some artists make it into the art history books and others don't. There will be weekly presentations of texts in class and writing assignments that will encourage students to present their opinions on current exhibitions in relation to examples of the literature discussed in class.

Required textbooks

Kalb, Peter. *Art since 1980: Charting the Contemporary*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2014.

Harrison, Charles, and Paul Wood, eds. *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2002. **N6490 .A7167 2003**

Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*. 10th ed. New York: Pearson, Longman, 2011. **N7476 .B37 2011**

Learning outcomes

Demonstrate familiarity with and ability to assess key secondary art-historical and theoretical literature.

Demonstrate the ability to evaluate primary source material.

Demonstrate an understanding of problems and issues concerning contemporary art.

Demonstrate the ability to identify and discuss works in terms of style, form, and art-historical context.

Demonstrate the ability to discuss and evaluate works using a variety of art-historical methods.

Demonstrate the ability to develop and present oral reports utilizing PowerPoint.

Demonstrate the ability to analyze exhibitions critically both in terms of content and presentation.

A note on art magazines

Such magazines as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *Art News* play a key role in defining contemporary art. These publications are typically not accessible via JSTOR. You can

search for articles using Art Full Text or other library search engines, but the texts are typically not available online. You'll have to go into the library. On the first floor bound volumes of these magazines are waiting for you on the shelves. You can find them alphabetically (e.g., *Artforum* is under A). You *must* use these magazines for your research. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade.

Grading

Attendance and Participation	5%
Presentations related to readings (1)	10%
Short papers (2)	20%
Research Paper including presentation	25%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%

Attendance and course requirements: Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class and more than 2 absences, regardless of the reason(s), will result in an F for the course. Showing up late twice will count as an absence. Please be prepared to start at the beginning of each class. You also must turn off your cell phones.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.

Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.

Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.

Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.

Internet Plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and "cutting and pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.

No food or drink is allowed in the classroom except water.

All trash including paper and water bottles must be removed from the room after class.

Schedule of classes with readings: Extra readings will be added

1. February 2

Introduction to the course

2. February 16

Required reading:

Read Introduction and Chapter 1, "Discovering the Contemporary," 10-45 (BB)

Jean-Francois Lyotard, introduction to *The Postmodern Condition*, in *Art in Theory*, 1122-23.

Extra readings:

Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *Art in Theory*, 773-79.

Mieles Laderman Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto," in *Art in Theory*, 917-19; and Valie Export, "Woman's Art," in *Art in Theory*, 927-29.

Joseph Beuys, "Not Just a Few Are Called, But Everyone," 903-6; and idem, "I am Searching for a Field Character," 929-32.

Ian Burn, "The Art Market: Affluence and Degradation," in *Art in Theory*, 935-38

3. February 23

Required reading:

Read Chapter 2, "Taking Pictures: Appropriation and Its Consequences," and Chapter 3, "Back to the Easel: Neo-Expressionism and the Return of Painting," 46-90.

Extra readings:

Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Art in Theory*, 949-53.

Sherrie Levine, Statement, 1038-39; and Barbara Kruger, "'Taking Pictures,' Pictures," in *Art in Theory*, 1041-42.

Gerhard Richter, Interview with Benjamin Buchloh, 1147-57; and Richter, "Notes," in *Art in Theory*, 1157-58.

DUE: first short paper: visual analysis.

4. March 2

Required reading:

Read Chapter 4, "Into the Streets," and Chapter 5, "Commodities and Consumerism," 91-139.

Extra readings:

Jean Baudrillard, "The Hyper-realism of Simulation," in *Art in Theory*, 1018-20.

Homi K. Bhabha on "hybridity" and "moving beyond," in *Art in Theory*, 1110-16.

Keith Haring, "Statement," in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 426-28; and Banksy, "Banging Your Head against a Brick Wall," in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 431-32. (BB)

Group Material, "Caution! Alternative Space!" in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 1054-56; and David Hammons, interview with Kellie Jones, 417-19. (BB)

Haim Steinbach et al., "From Criticism to Complicity," 1051-54; and Peter Halley, "Nature and Culture," in *Art in Theory*, 1042-45.

Mike Kelley, "Dirty Toys: Mike Kelley Interviewed," in *Art in Theory*, 1099-102.

5. March 9

Required reading:

Read Chapter 6, "Memory and History," 140-67.

Rachel Whiteread, "If Walls Could Talk," (BB)

Extra readings:

Andreas Huyssen, Introduction, in *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (BB)

Miwon Kwon, "One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, 34-55. (BB)

Maya Lin, interviews and lecture, in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 623-24. (BB)

Fred Wilson, "No Noa Noa; History of Tahiti," in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 680-82; and Kara Walker, "What Obama Means to Me," in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 419.

William Kentridge, "Art in a State of Grace . . ." in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 311-14 (BB)

6. March 16

Required reading:

Read Chapter 7, "Culture, Body, and Self," 168-92.

Extra readings:

Jonathan Katz, "The Senators Were Revolted: Homophobia and the Culture Wars," in *A Companion to Contemporary Art* (BB)

Judith Butler, interview with Liz Kotz, *Artforum* (1992) (BB)

Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror, in *Art in Theory*, 1137-39.

Thelma Golden, "What's White . . .?" in 1993 Whitney Biennial (BB)

Robert Mapplethorpe, interview with Janet Kardon, in *Theories and Documents on Contemporary Art*, 299-304. (BB)

Mona Hatoum, interview with John Tusa, 674-78; and Ann Hamilton and Kathryn Clark, "View," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, 738-41.

Cherise Smith, "Fragmented Documents: Works by Lorna Simpson, Carrie Mae Weems, and Willie Robert Middlebrook," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* (1999): 244-259, 271-72. (JSTOR); and Carrie Mae Weems, "Interview with Susan Canning," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 1044-46. (BB)

7. March 23

Midterm

8. March 30

Required reading:

Chapter 8, "Eastward Expansion: Contemporary Art in Russia and China," and Chapter 9, "Engaging the Global Present," 193-249.

Extra readings:

Chin-Tao Wu, "Biennials without Borders?" in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, 56-63. (BB)

Wu Hung, "Ruins, Fragmentation, and the Chinese Modern/Postmodern," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, 371-80. (BB)

Xu Bing, "An Artist's View," 1048-51; and Cai Guo-Chang, "Foolish Man and his Mountain," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 789-90. (BB)

Takashi Murakami, "The Super Flat Manifesto," 321-23; and Yasumasa Morimura, "Season of Passion; Interview with Kay Itoi," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 928-29. (BB)

Shirin Neshat, "Interview with Arthur Danto," 547-50; and Shazia Sikander, "Nemesis: A Dialogue with Ian Berry," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 314-16. (BB)

Ilya Kabakov, "Installations," 663-65; and Oleg Kulik, "Why Have I Bitten a Man?" 953-54. (BB)

9. April 6

Read Chapter 10, "New Metaphors and New Narratives," 250-79.

Extra readings:

Odila Donald Odita, "Third Color –Third Space," 190; and Peter Halley, "Notes on the Painting" and "Deployment of the Geometric," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 186-87. (BB)

Alexandra Keller and Frazer Ward, "Matthew Barney and the Paradox of the Neo-Avant-Garde Blockbuster," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 3-16. (JSTOR)

George Baker, "An Interview with Pierre Huyghe," *October*, no. 110 (Fall 2004): 80-106. (JSTOR)

DUE: second paper: critical review

10. April 27

Required reading:

John Handhardt, "Picturing Movement: Past and Present," in *Moving Pictures; Contemporary Photography and Video from the Guggenheim Museum*, 15-27 (BB); and Liza Kotz, "Video Projection: The Space between Screens," 101-15 (BB); and Nancy Spector, "Art Photography after Photography," in *Moving Pictures; Contemporary Photography and Video from the Guggenheim Museum*, 31-39 plus. (BB).

Extra readings:

Avital Ronnell, "Haunted TV,"? in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, 280-88. (BB)

Lev Manovic, "The Database," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, 435-54. (BB)

April 13: NO CLASS (Spring Recess: College Open)

April 20: NO CLASS (Classes follow a Monday Schedule)

11. May 4

Read Chapter 11, "The Art of Contemporary Experience," 280-311.

Extra readings:

T. J. Demos, "The Politics of Sustainability: Art and Ecology," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, 466-85. (BB)

James Westcott, "Gut Feeling: Thomas Hirschhorn's "Superficial Engagement," *TDR (1988-)* 51, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 171-75. (JSTOR)

Olafur Eliasson, interview with Jessica Morgan, 786-88; and Robert Irwin, "Being and Circumstance," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 645-46. (BB)

Andrea Zittel, "A—Z Management," 684-85; and Rebecca Horn, "Concert in Reverse," and "The Keep," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 761-63.

Damien Hirst, "On the Way to Work: Discussion with Gordon Burn," in *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art*, 447-49 (BB); and Joan Collins, "Tracey Emin," *Interview Magazine*, http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/tracey-emin#_

12. May 11

Presentations: Research Papers in Progress

13. May 18

Presentations: Research Papers in Progress

14. May 19

Research Papers Due and Review for Final

15. May 25

Final exam

Art since 1980

Presentations

Throughout the semester each student will present one of the extra readings by an artist, critic, art historian, or someone else involved with the visual arts during the last three-and-one-half decades.

You must make your presentation using PowerPoint. Please do not present passages of text that you underlined. Too often such phrases and sentences read as fragments and confuse your listeners. Instead, please follow the following format:

Your first slide should SUMMARIZE the text(s). That means you should give us the author, title, and date of the text(s) and explain general purpose(s). Where did the text(s) appear first? What was the goal of the text(s)? For example, many artists were upset by the criticism that their work received and therefore wrote articles to defend their work. Other artists wrote manifestos to champion what they believed were new and distinct practices in art. Critics also championed or disparaged new forms and ideas in contemporary art.*

Your next slide, or slides, should ANALYZE the text. How does the writer attempt to build her or his case? Make an outline of the text and explain how the writer tries to prove her or his main point.

Your final slide should EVALUATE the text. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the text? What generalizations does the writer make? Are there words that the writer uses that might be confusing? How could the text be better?

If you need to do extra research to understand the context better, you should do so.

***An added note on texts:** In some cases, I have chosen texts by artists who are not included in the textbook. Your job is to address why that might be the case: Did the textbook author make a mistake? Is the artist's work somehow not appropriate for a survey textbook? If so, why?

In other cases, I have paired two texts by similar artists, so that you can compare and contrast them. One artist may be included in the textbook and the other is not—why is that the case? Or one artist might be older than the other. Your job is to address how is their work similar and different, and how does the timeframe matter.

