

ART 4468: ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY ART -- Prof. Ryan

SPRING '06

Class meets Tu-Th, 12:10 - 1:30 PM
201 Design Building (DB)

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Office hours: Thu. 1:30-3:30



2005 Turner Prize winner, Simon Starling, his piece *Tabernas Desert Run*, 2004, fuel cell powered bicycle, vitrine, w/c on paper

ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY ART

At the beginning of the 21st century the art world includes a greater number of professionals than at any other time in history. Institutes and museums of contemporary art have grown in unprecedented numbers around the world in the last twenty years, as have biennial exhibitions and art fairs. The contemporary art on display is heterogeneous in the extreme, and not just in terms of its diversity styles and techniques. The past two decades have also seen the simultaneous proliferation of widely divergent views concerning the functions of art and artists in society. Do artists make objects or ideas? Must art be permanent or can it be ephemeral? What do the waning of Western hegemony and the assertion of multicultural viewpoints across the globe mean for standards and criteria for art? Who owns collaborative, multi-authored and "open source" pieces? Is "artist" a profession or a practice? Artists work with keyboards as much as (or possibly more) than with paints and brushes. But who owns and regulates the distribution of digitized art? Much of the art of the late 20th century concerned the human body and sexuality (writer Vivian Sobchack called the 1990s "the decade of sex in art"). Early 21st-century art questions the very nature of humanity. Does art have ethical and moral responsibilities today?

ART 4468 considers such issues and analyzes the sources and theories behind them. Four broad and interrelated categories of issues under consideration are: 1) institutions: museums, galleries, and dealers; 2) receivers of art: "viewer" vs. "public" vs. "user"; 3) technology: how digital media is changing the nature of art; and 4) art, ethics, and our "culture of catastrophe."

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students enrolled at the graduate level:

- 1) 2 exams, a midterm and a final exam. Details of the exams to be announced later in the semester. Total 40% of final grade.
- 2) 7-page paper *and* class presentation (on the same subject) on a specific problem or debate in art of the past decade. 40% of final grade.
- 3) Daily assignments and overall class performance 20% of final grade.

Undergraduate students:

Requirements are the same with the exception of the presentation, which is not an undergraduate requirement.

BLACKBOARD

Course materials and announcements will be posted on a Blackboard site for this course, which will also serve as a communications center. All students must have access to computers with Internet capabilities, possess and use a PAWS email address, and all students must familiarize themselves with the Blackboard program. Blackboard is accessible on your PAWS home page under Student Services..

READINGS:

The course will cover miscellaneous material that will be assigned on a weekly basis. *A few short books will be available for purchase.* Readings will be on reserve in Middleton Library and/or the Design Library. **NOTE:** Assigned readings are to be read before the class meeting at which they will be discussed, i.e., the assignments are to be fulfilled ahead of time and students should come to class prepared to discuss reading material.

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction

Class 1

Institutions of Art: Art Museums, Galleries, and Dealers

Classes 2-3

Receivers of Art: "Viewer" Vs. "Audience" Vs. "User"

Classes 8-13

Technology and Art: Media Technologies and Creative Evolution

Classes 14-19

Art and the Culture of Catastrophe: Is There an Ethical Imperative?

Classes 20-24

ART 4468 START-UP BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is a preliminary list supplemented by additions throughout the semester.

Works with asterisk (*) are on reserve for this course.

Surveys and General Works on Contemporary Art

Foster, Hal, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, . *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.

Grosenick, Uta and Burkhard Riemschneider. *Art at the Turn of the Millennium*. Taschen, 1999.

Sandler, Irving. *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.

Wheeler, Dan. *Art Since Mid-Century: 1945 to the Present*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991.
(Note: only through 1990.)

Critical and Issue-Oriented Works

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Conspiracy of Art*. Cambridge, MA: Semiotext(e), at MIT Press, 2005.

Jean Baudrillard, "The Work of Art in the Electronic Age, Interview by *La Sept*, 1988. From *Baudrillard Live: Selected Interviews*, Mike Gene, ed. New York, Routledge, 1988.
Reprinted in *Artists, Critics, Context: Readings in and Around American Art Since 1945*. Paul Fabiozzi, ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002, pp. 484-490.

Bourraud, Nicolas. *Postproduction*. New York: Lucas & Sternberg, 2002.

- Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Les Presses du Reel, 1998; English 2003.
- Bolton, Richard. *Culture Wars: Documents from the Recent Controversies in the Art*. New York: New Press, 1992.
- Doss, Erika. *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995.
- Dubin, Steven C. *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Fabozzi, Paul F. *Artists, Critics, Context: Readings In and Around American Art Since 1945*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.
- Felshin, Nina, ed. *But Is It Art?: The Spirit of Art as Activism*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995.
- Ferguson, Russell, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornell West, eds, *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990.
- Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s*. New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999.
- Hertz, Richard, ed. *Theories of Contemporary Art*. Second Edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1995.
- Jones, Amelia, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press, 1998.
- Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*.
- Lippard, Lucy. *The Lure of the Local: A Sense of Place in a Multicentered World*. New York: New Press, 1997.
- Mitchell, W.J.T, ed. *Art and the Public Sphere*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Nelson, Robert S., and Richard Shiff, *Critical Terms for Art History*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Senie, Harriet F. *The Tilted Arc Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press, 2002.
- Stiles, Kristin, and Peter Selz, eds. *Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1996.
- Shohat, Ella. *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998.
- Steinberg, Leo. *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Wallis, Brian, ed. *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, reprint edition. New York: David R. Godine, 1994.
- Wallis, Brian, Marianne Weems, and Philip Yenawine, eds. *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America*. New York: New York Univ. Press, 1999.