

Art History 301-2 / Cinema Studies 300
Contemporary Art and the Art of Curating / Cinema and the Other Arts
Professor Karen Beckman
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Monday 2-5, Room 201 Jaffe Building

Course description

This two-semester seminar will provide a forum in which to engage a variety of issues in contemporary art, including the question of what role film and new media play in the contemporary art scene. Each week, we will read a range of theme-based essays that pose strong, sometimes even polemic critical positions, which we will then engage and problematize through discussion and written work.

Our in-class engagement with issues in contemporary art, film and exhibition design will provide an important complement to the intellectual and practical challenge of planning and curating your own exhibition at the ICA with the help of the ICA curators. Each student will intern at the ICA, doing work related to the student exhibition. This year, the overarching theme of the show will be “Collaboration,” in conjunction with the Cinema Studies Program’s year-long theme, but it will be up to you to decide as a group how to make this concept work both intellectually and practically.

Site visits to private and public collections around the country (Philadelphia, New York, Washington D.C., Dallas, and more!) will provide you with the opportunity to experience contemporary art as we read about it, but they will also give you the chance to think about the different venues in which art and film are collected and displayed. These trips are mandatory, and you will be evaluated, in part, on written and oral responses to specific elements of the exhibitions we visit (layout, wall labels, publications, audio-tours, exhibition spaces, etc.). As you consider these curatorial decisions throughout the fall and spring semester, you should find yourselves in a good position to think critically and carefully about why and how you plan your own exhibition in a particular way.

This course, as you know, is somewhat unusual, and you will find that it challenges and rewards you in several different ways. In order to do well in this class, you will need: to be an active participant in discussions and group presentations; to prepare all the required reading, which means having questions ready to discuss; to work well with colleagues; to attend all site visits; to complete all written assignments by the agreed upon deadlines. Because we are working in conjunction with lots of different people (museums, ICA

curators, private collectors, you, me, etc.), we will need to be prepared for flexibility in schedules and last-minute updates, but I will do my best to give you as much notice as possible.

I am always available to discuss readings, ideas, questions (big or small), and difficulties, in office hours, and encourage you to come as often as you like.

Course requirements (Fall):

Exhibition journals: 25%

Class attendance and participation (includes doing the reading before class and internship work): 20%

One 8-page paper: 15%

One 4-page paper: 5%

Two oral presentations (one on reading, one on curatorial project): 15% total

Grading policies and submission guidelines:

I will not allow incompletes or extensions except in real emergencies. There will be a grade penalty for all other late work. I will evaluate you on your critical engagement with and understanding of the material covered in class, as well as on your participation with the group activities. Above all, I value work that strives to engage the topic in question in original, creative ways. In essays, I am most interested in how your own voice emerges distinctly from the voices of the authors we are reading through your argument. I also value *close, careful, detailed analysis* of the films, art, essays, or exhibition designs you are writing about. I encourage you to draft essays and outlines in advance, and to discuss them with me in office hours prior to the submission deadline, so you have time to revise your work.

All work should comply with MLA guidelines (see MLA handbook), and should be double-spaced in Times 12 font. Written work should be put under my office door by 5pm on the assigned date.

The SAS grading system:

A+ and A = 4.0

A- = 3.7

B+ = 3.3

B = 3.0

B- = 2.7

C = 2.0

C+ = 2.3

C- = 1.7

D+ = 1.3

D = 1.0

F = 0

Important dates (this information will be updated throughout the two semesters):

Formal proposal to Art History Faculty: week of 11/29

Formal proposal to ICA for exhibition: week of 12/6
 Essay #1 due: October 4th
 Essay #2 due: November 15th

Books and articles:

I have ordered a number of texts for the class, and they can be purchased at the Penn Book Center (130 S. 34th Street). These books will also be available on reserve at either Van Pelt or the Fine Arts library if you do not want to buy them. Other texts will be in the course reader, available from Campus Copy Center on Walnut.

P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film*

James Elkins, *What Happened to Art Criticism?*

Rosalind Krauss, "*A Voyage on the North Sea*": *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*

Art Now, ed. Riemschneider, Burkhard et. al. (recommended)

Amelia Jones, *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (will be used fall and spring)

ICA and other Philadelphia events (www.icaphila.org/events):

September 9 Chris Lord, "Ant Farm and Beyond," 6-8pm. Meyerson Auditorium, 210 S. 34th St., B1.

September 10 *Trials and Turbulence* opening: 5-6pm. Opening reception: 6-8pm.

December 3 Opening: *Experiments with Truth*, Fabric Workshop film and video installation (runs until March 12 in conjunction with film series)

Syllabus

September 13 Introduction

Discuss syllabus, goals, requirements, internships, trips.

Walk to ICA-discuss current exhibitions & earlier catalogues, gallery space, and Osorio opening.

Discuss exhibition theme: COLLABORATION

*Prepare advance press release.

Site visit: Gallery talk at ICA, September 15, 6pm-8pm (40 min. talk and discussion)
 Karen Beckman, "Video in Pepón Osorio's *Trials and Turbulence*."

September 20 Exhibition spaces and Display

Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," and Elaine Heumann Gurian, "Noodling Around With Exhibition Opportunities," in Karp and Levine, 2-32; 176-190.

Emma Barker and Christoph Grunenberg, in Barker, 8-49.

Nicky Hamlyn, "Interactivity," in Hamlyn, 155-166.

Site visit: Andrea Fraser, "Highlights: A Gallery Talk," Video Gallery, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

September 27 Issues in Curating

Guest speaker: Johanna Plummer, on co-curating Pepón Osorio exhibition?

Lawrence Alloway, "The Great Curatorial Dim-Out," in Greenberg, Ferguson and Nairne, 221-230.

foci (selections): Hasegawa, Hanru, Hlavajová, Cameron, London

*Discuss exhibition concepts and theme of "collaboration."

October 4 Photography

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (1936) in Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3.

Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Photography after Art Photography," in Wallis, 75-85

Douglas Crimp, "The Museum's Old/ The Library's New Subject," "Pictures," and "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism"

*Essay #1 due today

October 11 Authorship: Collaboration I

Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author"

Michel Foucault, "What is An Author?"

Christine Macel, "The Author Issue in the Work of Sophie Calle," *Sophie Calle: M'as-tu vue* (Pompidou 2004).

October 18 Appropriation

Sherrie Levine, Cindy Sherman

R: *Cindy Sherman: Retrospective* (MOCA Catalogue)

R: *Image Scavengers: Photography* (ICA catalogue)

Douglas Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation"

October 25 Fall Break

Screening: Recommended for Oct. 29th. Hollis Frampton's *Zorn Lemma* and *Less* at Princeton University.

November 1 ANTHOLOGY Film Archives visit: Art and Film I

R: *Art and Film Since 1945: Hall of Mirrors* catalogue. Recommended catalogue essay: Bruce Jenkins, "The 'Other' Cinema: American Avant-

Garde Film of the 1960s,” in *Art and Film*, 188-215. Review catalogue.
P. Adams Sitney, “Structural Film” → end, *Visionary Film*, 347-436.

Lauren Rabinovitz, “Joyce Wieland and the Ascendancy of Structural Film,” in *Points of Resistance: Women, Power, and Politics in the New York Avant-garde Cinema, 1943-71*, 150-183.

Annette Michelson, “Gnosis and Iconoclasm: A Case Study of Cinephilia,” *October* 83 (Winter 1998): 3-18.

“Gloria! The Legacy of Hollis Frampton,” Princeton University

Screenings: Friday Nov. 5th. Screenings at 1.30 and 3.30pm (Mandatory)

Conference: Sat. Nov. 6th. Hollis Frampton Conference (Recommended)

November 8 Art and Film II. Case Study: Hollis Frampton and the New York Avant-Garde

Hollis Frampton, “The Invention Without A Future,” *October* 109 (Summer 2004): 64-75

David James, ““Pure Film” (excerpts), *Allegories of Cinema*, 253-279.

*In-class work on Exhibition Proposal

November 15 The Projected Image in Contemporary Art

R: Chrissie Iles, *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977* (review catalogue)

Thomas Zummer, “Projection and Dis/embodiment: Genealogies of the Virtual,” in *Into the Light* catalogue and reproduced in reader.

“Roundtable: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art,” *October* 104, 71-96.

*Essay #2 due today

November 29 Collaboration II: Medium Specificity in the Post-Medium Age

Marcel Broodthaers, James Coleman, Nan Goldin, Hélio Oiticica (Review Goldin and Oiticica catalogues at reserve desk)

George Baker, “Reanimations (I),” *October* 104, 28-70

Rosalind Krauss, “*A Voyage on the North Sea*”

*Present formal exhibition proposal to AH faculty this week.

December 6 Review of semester; Exhibition planning; discussion of next semester.

*Journals due today

*Present formal exhibition proposal to ICA this week.

(Last class)

Books on reserve at Van Pelt:

P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film* (most recent edition)
 James Elkins, *What Happened to Art Criticism?*
 Rosalind Krauss, "*A Voyage on the North Sea*": *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*
 Riemschneider, et al., *Art Now*
 Amelia Jone, *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*
Cindy Sherman: Retrospective (MOCA Catalogue)
Image Scavengers: Photography (ICA catalogue)
Cindy Sherman (ICA catalogue)?
Art and Film Since 1945: Hall of Mirrors (catalogue)
 Chrissie Iles, *Into the Light: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art* (Catalogue)
Hélio Oiticica (Rotterdam, 1992)
 Nan Goldin, *Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (Aperture)

Topics to be covered in the spring semester include:

Globalization, Migration and Exile
 Race
 Feminism
 Sexuality
 Censorship and Scandal
 Back to Beauty?
 Subversion
 (Post) Postmodernism
 Video
 Performance
 The Body
 Minimalism