

Contemporary Visual Culture (1945 to the present)

Course #: CFA 60206 A

Time: Tuesdays 6:30-8:50 pm

Room: Margaret Morrison A14, Room 103

Office Hours: By Appointment, CFA 300 Consultation Room

Instructor: Prof. Ben Ogrodnik

ben.ogrodnik@gmail.com

[please allow 24 hour turn-around time after you send an email]

Course Summary:

This course asks us to consider: what makes a work of art *contemporary*? Relatedly, we must ask: how do we define the broader contemporary *art-world*: who is (and who isn't) allowed to participate in the art-world, what are the defining events and venues for artistic exhibition, and what is the role of "the market"? Pursuing these questions can help us engage the art-world more productively as creators, consumers, and interpreters of art. Toward that end, the course is divided into several segments:

The first segment is a chronological **history of art**, tracing the major shifts, artists, and debates that lead us from the modern to the contemporary epoch of artistic production. This journey begins in the major city centers of the U.S. and Europe, but at the mid-way point we will widen the frame of reference to include other, equally important parts of the globe: China, Russia, Africa, Latin America, and the countries of the Middle East.

The second segment involves a hands-on engagement with the protocols, norms, and social spaces of the contemporary **art-world**: the culture of art curation, the contentious presence of philosophy/theory in art-making, the function of institutional critique, the market and many of the professional identities across the spectrum of the art-world. You are encouraged to consider your own orientation to the increasingly globalized art-world, and the kind of impact you might wish to have within it.

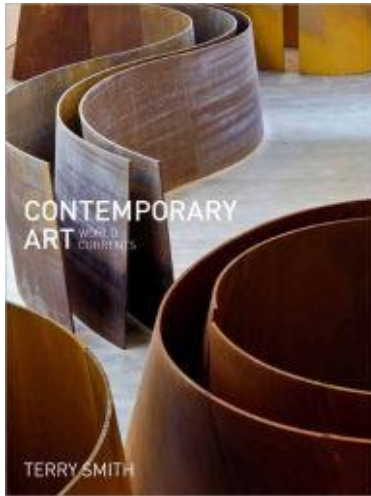
The third and final segment involves **art writing**: contemporary art, perhaps more than any other, requires interpretation, contextualization, and critique in order for it to be legitimated and recognized by various publics. In the course you will have the opportunity to practice a variety of written genres: humanistic research, evaluation and critique, as well as ethnographic and curatorial analysis of a local art exhibition.

Course Objectives:

- to become acquainted with the art of the contemporary period from 1945 to the present—understand its context, influences, impact

- to be able to critically evaluate works of contemporary artists as well as other forms of visual culture
- to develop the ability to critically read and discuss both art historical and visual studies articles written by leading scholars, as well as texts written by artists
- to begin to develop a style of art criticism (a critical vocabulary, a convincing writing approach)

Required Reading (purchase on-line or via Bookstore):



Contemporary Art: World Currents, 1st Edition, by Terry Smith.
ISBN-13: 9780205789719 (Pearson, 2011, 304 pages)

Throughout the course schedule, the above book will be referred to as: *CWWC*

NOTE: There is a Google Drive folder for this course that will be used extensively:

https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B0-iC7Vzm_yXOW9rSTI5d0wxUk0&usp=sharing

PDF files containing **required readings** for each week will be placed online, in a Weekly Folder. As we approach mid-term and final exams, you will receive a handout containing key terms, lists of key works of art, and questions to review for the exams. [This handout will **not** be a comprehensive list, but a guide. Your professor is apt to use any assigned reading as the basis for testing materials]

Students are expected to check this site frequently for announcements and to consult all needed materials **prior** to each lecture.

Recommended:

Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art, Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz
(Berkeley, CA, London: U of California, 2010)

A Short Guide To Writing About Art, Sylvan Barnet (New York: Longman, 2003)

Assessment Plan:

10% - Participation/Attendance

10% - Quizzes (six total)

20% - Mid-Term Exam

25% - Final Exam

Writings:

10% - Visual analysis

10% - Artist Contextualization

15% - Group Presentation

Grades (summary of breakdown):

Letter grades will be assigned as delineated below. Midterm Grades will include plus or minus grades. CMU only allows whole letter grades for Final Grades.

90-100 = A (for Midterm: 90 = A- and 100 = A+)

80-89 = B (for Midterm: 80 = B- and 89 = B+)

70-79 = C (for Midterm: 70 = C- and 79 = C+)

65-69 = D (for Midterm: 65 = D- and 69 = D+)

<65 = F

400 points total

Final Exam = 100 points

Mid-Term Exam = 80 points

Group presentation = 60 points

Contextualization and Visual analysis writings = 80 (40 points each)

Participation/Attendance = 40 points

6 Quizzes (esp. concentrated in 1st Half of the Semester)= 40 points (6 points each)

•**ATTENDANCE** is crucial. After **two unexcused absences**, you will lose ½ of a letter grade (and another, and another with each miss after one). If you miss more than five classes, you'll be asked to officially withdraw from the class or receive a non-passing grade for the course. If you're excessively late to class (or more than 10 minutes late for

one class), you'll be assigned an unexcused absence. If you are found asleep in class, you will be asked to leave and will be assigned an unexcused absence. It is imperative that students are engaged and take notes during the lectures, which will include material not present in the assigned readings. If you are absent from class, **you are responsible** for obtaining notes and copies of the material distributed in class that day from one of your classmates.

—**SIX IN-CLASS QUIZZES:** these will be unannounced and take place throughout the semester with the bulk of them taking place in the first half of the semester. They will be pointed specifically at the reading assignments and come in the form of several direct questions that you will answer in short form (two to three sentences), multiple choice, or T/F. The primary function of these quizzes is to encourage all students to complete their weekly reading assignments. Plain and simple: keep up with the reading.

•**TWO SHORT PAPERS:**

Contextualization paper: You will compose a short, **3-page essay on the life and formal technique of a modern or contemporary artist** whose work is currently on display at the Carnegie Museum of Art, in Pittsburgh. This paper will examine the art-historical significance of the artist, and at least one specific technique or intervention that makes them worthy of our attention. You will get the guidelines for this project during the term.

Exhibition paper: You will compose a short, **3-page review that deploys the techniques of curatorial analysis on an exhibition** (temporary or permanent) at an art venue in the city of Pittsburgh. Your analysis will assess not the objects but the curation of art: what mode of display is presented? What is your experience as a visitor, and what sorts of knowledge (experiential, linguistic, sensory) are offered, and to what effect? Your analysis will be framed with readings by Paul O'Neill and Brian O'Doherty. Guidelines will be released later.

•**GROUP PRESENTATION:**

At the half-way mark, our survey bursts open the history of art beyond the traditional Western centers of Europe and U.S., and zooms in on the critical contributions of many other countries. In a group of 4-5 students, you will be tasked with leading a class presentation on the artwork of a particular region: Russia/Eastern Europe, South America, China/East Asia, India, Oceania, Africa, and West Asia. The presentation format involves two components. A Creative component: create a virtual exhibition of 3-5 relevant artworks (found in *CAWC* textbook or on your own) in the form of a PowerPoint, website, blog post, etc. And a contextualization: give a brief biography of an artist that, in your opinion, is a significant figure working within the region. Each presentation will occur on the week focusing on a particular region (see calendar).

Before the final presentation, your group meets with the instructor for his approval of the presentation format and the chosen artist/artworks. This is meant to be a fun and

collaborative opportunity for you to simulate the design of an art exhibition, while also learning a great deal about the art traditions of a non-Western region of the world! Guidelines and grading rubric for the presentation will be released later.

•TWO EXAM PROJECTS:

—**Midterm Exam: Tuesday, March 1** ; —**Final Exam: TBA** Your exam questions will address both individual works of art, as well as debates in *Art History* and *Visual Culture* which we have addressed in the first half of the semester. The exam components: 1) Definition of key terms from the Modern, Late Modern, and Contemporary periods covered thus far. 2) Identification of key works (you are asked to note, correctly, the name of the artist, the title, date, and medium of the work, and country of origin of the artist). 3) Comparison of two key works that we have explored in the lectures covering part I of the course. 4) Essay section.

Important: We may not cover all the assigned reading in lecture/discussion, but you are expected to read all materials. As adult college students, you are expected to do this work on your own, and to be ready to account for material in the reading on exams/quizzes! **VERY Important:** There are no make-up opportunities for exams; you must take them.

•Class Participation I would like to see as much discussion as possible. You will improve your learning if you make regular, verbal contributions to the class, in the form of questions or responses to questions. Please be respectful to your peers; I have a zero-tolerance policy toward negativity of any kind. On certain days, I will not take roll; instead, there will be handouts or in-class activities that involve free-writing or group work, and this will take the place of daily attendance. Failure to comply will result in a zero for that day's participation score.

Participation can also take the form of homework, such as attending the CMU lecture series, and writing a short, paragraph-long journal entry on the talk.

You can find the **Spring 2016 Lectures Series** here:
<http://www.cmu.edu/art/lectures/index.html>

Class Conduct and Electronics Policy:

Often times the best learning takes place through discussion and classroom exercises alongside lectures. My intention is to teach in a relaxed, fun environment where discussion is lively. Knowing this, participation is critical. Please respect the instructor, guest speakers, and your peers by being mindful of your actions and how they affect others. To avoid any temptations or diversions, cell phones, social media, and all other electronic devices are banned during lectures and presentations.

Academic Integrity: No Recording

In consideration of academic integrity, audio or video recording of reviews, tutorials, classes or lectures is **prohibited** unless prior permission has been obtained from the professor.

Resources for Students with Disabilities (university policy)

The university provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals under the guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. A student with a learning or physical disability is urged to contact Larry Powell (8-2013, lpowell@andrew.cmu.edu), Equal Opportunity Services Manager, Disability Resources, to verify the disability and determine appropriate special services and accommodations.

After the Disability Resources office has documented the disability, it will provide the student with copies of a personalized memorandum that documents the disability and describes specific accommodations needed. It is the responsibility of the student to give all of their professors a copy of this memo EARLY EACH SEMESTER to make learning most effective during the entire semester. The student should also give a copy of this memo to the Assistant Head to inform and support the advising process, and to have a permanent record on file.

Students themselves must request accommodations for their documented disability. Professors cannot make accommodations for disabilities if they are not notified about them, nor should they be expected to make last minute or retroactive special arrangements for disabilities.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you use someone else's ideas or words as if they were your own without clearly identifying the original source. All sources in this course must be credited properly and any use of the wording of the original source must be enclosed in quotation marks. The first instance of plagiarism will result in an automatic '0' for the assignment. Upon the second offense, the student will be and receive an 'F' for the course. In all cases, the college procedures for reporting breaches of academic integrity will be followed.

Course Schedule (I reserve the right to change this at any time):

Tuesday, January 12

INTRODUCTION: Syllabus, Requirements, Background

READ:

Joselit, David. "The Private Gesture in Public: Art of the New York School." *American Art since 1945*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2003. 9-32.

Tuesday, January 19

READ:

Joselit, David. "Expanded Gestures: Painting of the 1950s." *American Art since 1945*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2003. 33-63.

Tuesday, January 26

READ:

Joselit, David. "The Media Public Sphere: Pop and Beyond." *American Art since 1945*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2003. 65-96.

Foster, Hal. "1957a: The Situationist International." *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*. Thames & Hudson, 2004, 391-397.

Tuesday, February 2

READ:

Joselit, David. "Objects, General and Specific: Assemblage, Minimalism, Fluxus." *American Art since 1945*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2003. 96-127.

Tuesday, February 9

READ:

CAWC, General Introduction, 8-13 ; CAWC, Late Modern Art Becomes Contemporary, 16-43

Group Projects assigned; schedule a consultation with instructor for approval

Tuesday, February 16

READ:

CAWC, The Contemporary Art Boom, 44 – 79
****CONTEXTUALIZATION PAPER DUE****

Tuesday, February 23

READ:

CAWC, The Contemporary Art Boom, 44 – 79 [Part II]
Mid-Term Review

****** Tuesday, March 1 ******

Mid-Term Exam Mid-Term Exam Mid-Term Exam

(Monday March 7, Mid-Semester Grades Due by 4 p.m.)

Tuesday, March 8

Spring Break; No Classes

Tuesday, March 15

READ:

CAWC, Russia and (East of) Europe, 84 – 115

Group Presentation

Tuesday, March 22

READ:

CAWC, South and Central America, The Caribbean, 116 - 149

Group Presentation

Tuesday, March 29

NO LECTURE ; National art & media conference in Atlanta! Make-up class TBA

Tuesday, April 5

READ:

CAWC, China and East Asia, 150 – 173

Group Presentation

Tuesday, April 12

READ:

CAWC, India, South and Southeast Asia, 174 – 195

Group Presentation

EXHIBITION PAPER DUE

Tuesday, April 19

READ:

CAWC, Oceania, 196 – 213

Group Presentation

Tuesday, April 26

READ:

CAWC, Africa, 214 – 235
Group Presentation

Tuesday, May 3

READ:

CAWC, West Asia, 236 – 253
Group Presentation

Tuesday, May 10

Final Exam Review

Final Exam TBA

May 17

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Final Grades Due by 4 p.m.

ART VENUES in PITTSBURGH and MID-ATLANTIC U.S. [by Melissa Ragona]

Art Museums and Galleries in Pittsburgh and Surrounding Area
Specializing in Print and Imaging (including image-making resources for local artists)
Artist Image Resource (AIR)
518 Foreland St, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
<<http://www.artistsimageresource.org/>>

The Andy Warhol Museum
"The Andy Warhol Museum is essential to the understanding of the most influential American artist of the second half of the 20th century. It is also a primary resource for anyone who wishes to gain insights into contemporary art and popular culture."
Corner of Sandusky and General Robinson Streets, Pittsburgh, PA
<<http://www.warhol.org/>>

Butler Institute of American Art
Located 75 miles northwest of Pittsburgh in Youngstown, Ohio, the Butler Institute has a collection of regional art that would be of interest to Western Pennsylvanians. They recently opened the brand new Beecher Center for Art & Technology. You can read about it in a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette January 26, 2000 article: "Artistic revolution: Butler Institute embraces the future with Beecher Center"

524 Wick Ave, Youngstown, OH 44505
<<http://www.butlerart.com/>>

Carnegie Mellon University: Regina Gouger Miller Gallery
The Miller Gallery is three exhibition spaces on different floors of the new Purnell Center for the Arts.

The Carnegie Museum of Art
the premier museum in the Pittsburgh region, the Carnegie Museum of Art offers a distinguished collection of contemporary art that includes film and video works, works of American art from the late 19th century, French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, and European and American decorative arts from the late 17th century to the present. On view now: The Carnegie International (until March 16)
<<http://www.cmoa.org/>>

Design Space Pittsburgh
Located in a reclaimed warehouse in Pittsburgh's historic Strip District, DesignSpace Pittsburgh is a unique gallery displaying exceptionally designed, handcrafted fine furniture and accessories for the home or office, as well as fine art.
310 Roup Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Frick Art & Historical Center
Mainly Renaissance and eighteenth-century French painting and Decorative Art, as well as idiosyncratic objects collected by the Fricks
727 Reynolds Street Pittsburgh, PA 15208
<http://www.thefrickpittsburgh.org>

Future Tenant Gallery

Future Tenant provides a laboratory setting for artists, arts managers, and audiences to explore the limits of the creative expression, presentation and interpretation of various art forms. Future Tenant is a project of Carnegie Mellon University and The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, located in the heart of the Cultural District. This art space, which features alternative exhibitions and performances by emerging artists from the CMU community and beyond, is managed by a team of students from the Masters of Arts Management program, a joint program of CMU's Heinz School of Public Policy and Management and the College of Fine Arts.
819 Penn Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
<<http://futuretenant.org/>>

Garfield Artworks
Specializing in Pittsburgh artists (Art Gallery and Performance Space), as well as local and national music presentations
4931 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

<<http://www.garfieldartworks.com/>>

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild

a multi-cultural arts education and presenting organization which has been providing cultural activities to residents of Western Pennsylvania for the past twenty-seven years. Programming is currently conducted in visual arts, with a focus on ceramic art and photography, and the performing arts with an emphasis on jazz. The Apprenticeship Training Program at Manchester Craftsmen's Guild teaches inner city, public school students the technical and aesthetic elements of ceramic art, computer imaging, drawing and photography while providing guidance and support for students to pursue their long term goals

The Mattress Factory

A museum of contemporary installation art; a research and development lab for artists. As a museum of contemporary art, it commissions new site-specific works, presents them to the widest possible audience, and maintains selected individual installations in a distinctive permanent collection.

Modern Formations Gallery

4919 Penn Avenue, Garfield (Pittsburgh)

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

Explores the edge of contemporary art.

Photo Antiquities

A museum dedicated to 19th century photography; vintage photographic images from all over the world.

Society for Contemporary Crafts

The Society provides a unique opportunity to view works by nationally known artists, learn about the creative process in their gallery and resource center, attend workshops on various arts and crafts, or to purchase quality contemporary craftworks in their store.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art

Operates four facilities in southwestern Pennsylvania: St. Francis College, University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown; Altoona; and Ligonier Valley.

University of Pittsburgh: University Art Gallery

Located on the first floor of the Frick Fine Arts Building, across from the Carnegie Library on Schenley Drive, the admission is free.

Westmoreland Museum of American Art

concentrates on Pennsylvanian art, with an outstanding collection of works by nationally recognized American artists (over 500 oil paintings and watercolors), and an important collection of Southwestern Pennsylvania artists.

Pennsylvania

Woodstreet Galleries

601 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

The Academy's museum is internationally known for its collections of 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century American paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, and as a study center for the work of Thomas Eakins, Cecilia Beaux, and Robert Motherwell, due to its collections and archival materials.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

In addition to providing exhibits, the Museum provides education classes for adults and children. Be sure to check out their online Web Projects.

Philadelphia Public Art

a growing photographic sample of public sculpture in Philadelphia, with (where possible) the sculptor, date, location, and inscriptions for each piece, as well as links to more information about the sculptor or subject on other sites.

SPACE

812 Liberty Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Concept Gallery

located in the Regent Square neighborhood of Pittsburgh, represents the region's established and emerging artists, and artists of national and international reputation. There is an emphasis on Contemporary Realist painting and historic and industrial images of Pittsburgh.

[Morgan Contemporary Glass Gallery](#)

Morgan Contemporary Glass Gallery is the first Pittsburgh art gallery dedicated to exhibiting contemporary studio glass, focusing on sculpture, goblets, and jewelry in glass and mixed media. Located on Ellsworth Avenue in Shadyside.

[Pittsburgh Center for the Arts](#)

Explores the edge of contemporary art.

[Mr. Roboto Project](#)

"The Mr. Roboto Project is a cooperatively run show space, art gallery & zine library located in Wilksburg (right outside the Pittsburgh city limits). Our aim is to create a comfortable and open space for people to experience a true DIY (do-it-yourself) community."

[Slaughterhouse Gallery](#)

A Gallery and a Community of Artists on Butler Street in Lawrenceville.

[Society for Contemporary Crafts](#)

The Society provides a unique opportunity to view works by nationally known artists, learn about the creative process in their gallery and resource center, attend workshops on various arts and crafts, or to purchase quality contemporary craftworks in their store.

[Space Pittsburgh](#)

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust opened this new gallery in the Cultural District in February 2004. SPACE values the creation of new works in multi-disciplines, presentation of artwork to the broadest possible audience, inclusion of established and contemporary technologies and the promotion of local artists outside of the region.

[Sweetwater Center for the Arts](#)

Two galleries for ongoing exhibitions. Located northwest of Pittsburgh in Sewickley.

[ToonSeum](#)

Located in downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District, the ToonSeum celebrates the art of cartooning, promoting a deeper appreciation of the cartoonists and their work through hands-on workshops, community outreach, cartoon-oriented educational programming, and exhibitions of original cartoon art.

[University of Pittsburgh: University Art Gallery](#)

Located on the first floor of the Frick Fine Arts Building, across from the Carnegie Library on Schenley Drive, the admission is free.

Nearby, but not in Pittsburgh:

[Akron Art Museum](#)

Located east of Pittsburgh in Akron, Ohio

[Albright-Knox Art Gallery](#)

A outstanding modern art museum in Buffalo, New York, especially rich in post-war American and European art,.

[The Cleveland Museum of Art](#)

[Hirshhorn Museum](#)

On the National Mall at the corner of 7th st. and Independence Ave. SW in Washington, DC (part of vast Smithsonian Museum network: <www.si.edu>)