

The Presence of Art

Reinterpreting Modern and Contemporary Art

Code: HUM2013

(here)()()
()(there)()
()()(here and there -- I say here)
()(I do not say now)()
(I do not say it now)()()
()(then and there -- I say there)()
()()(say there)
()(I do not say then)()
(I do not say, then, this)()()
()(then I say)()
()()(here and there)
()(first here)()
(I said here second)()()
()(I do not talk first)()
()()(there then)
()(here goes)()
(I do not say what goes)()()
()(I do not go on saying)()
()()(there is)

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Front cover illustration:

Vito Acconci: *Here*, 1967 (fragment)

Introduction

1 Topic

This course is about the histories, theories, and practices of modern and contemporary art.

2 Objectives

- To study historical and theoretical approaches to modern and contemporary art.
- To enable critical reflection and debate on the meaning of artistic practices.
- To learn how to write an art review.

3 Aims

Since the late 19th and certainly through the mid-20th century artists have issued avant-garde manifestoes of change, claiming their art to be ahead of the times. Critical of conventions and traditions, they regarded art as a revolutionary means to social, political, cultural and intellectual emancipation and progress. Through a "shock of the new"; by making tabula rasa with the existing, art was to create a better world.

Nowadays, such radical ambitions might sound naïve, were it not for the fact that artistic modernisms served all too well the murderous ideologies of both the socialist and fascist totalitarianisms of the last century. Indeed, as yesterday's future has become today's past, the utopias of a bygone era seem to have been disappointed, at last - or have they not? Do we need to rescue avant-garde virtues and ideals for the sake of the relevancy of contemporary art? Or are we not better served with what is described as anti- or post-modernism in the arts? Does modernism come with a critical legacy besides the modernist avant-gardes' definite influence on global popular cultures and their booming success on the international art market? Or has the potential for artistic critique been exhausted for good? And how about that emergent global elite of super-rich individuals and their legal-, financial- and political advisors? After all, they seem to have found in the contemporary art world a transnational field of experimentation to (re-)negotiate values, expertise, authority and power in different walks of 21st century life. What are the effects of such trials of the meaning of art, today and tomorrow?

Intrigued by such questions, this module considers histories, theories and practices of modern and contemporary art: providing an overview of heterogeneous and experimental pasts, the course invites critical debate on contemporary art's contested present and its beleaguered futures. The course features a visit to the Bonnefanten museum including a conversation with its curator for modern and contemporary art (Paula VandenBosch), as well as a visit to the Jan van Eyck Academy.

4 Coordination

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5 Schedule

Check 'MyTimetable' for the exact dates, times and locations of the activities in this course. Moreover, a specified topical schedule is published at your Student Portal. The Student Portal is the principal means of official communication and making announcements for this course. Please check your Student Portal regularly.

6 Attendance

In accordance with general UCM rules, there is a compulsory attendance requirement for this course. Attendance is registered. Students who have valid reasons for their absence and wish to compensate for missed meetings need to apply for an additional assignment with the Office of Student Affairs. The course coordinator will inform those applying for an additional assignment about its nature and deadlines.

7 Assessment

Regular preparation for tutorial group meetings, lectures, screenings and other scheduled activities is required. Assessment in this course consists of the following parts:

- Participation in tutorial group meetings / performance as discussion leader (pass/fail)
- An art review of 2000 – 2500 words (60% of the final grade)
- A final take home exam consisting of open essay questions (40% of final grade).

The review may be written about (a) recent or historical exhibition(s), artwork(s), artist(s), book(s)/publication(s), fair(s) auction(s), museum(s), etc. relating to the subject matter of the course. Instructions on how to write a critical review, as well as more information on the format and requirements of the final exam will be provided in the opening lecture of the course.

Students are encouraged to start their work on the review early and to hand in outlines and drafts of their reviews for feedback. In order to be eligible for feedback, the following deadlines apply:

- Theme and outline: Week 4
- 1st draft: Week 5

Students who fail the course, but meet the attendance requirement and have made a fair attempt at participating in the assessment are eligible for a resit taking place in the fourth week of period 3.

8 Literature

Key texts for the course are:

- Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, David Joselit (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed. London, Thames and Hudson
Please note that in case you consider buying Art Since 1900, only buy the 3rd edition published in 2016. In case of doubt, ask the course coordinator.
- Sarah Thornton (2008). *Seven Days in the Art World*. London, Granta Books
- Georgina Adam (2014). *Big Bucks: The Explosion of the Art Market in the 21st Century*. Farnham, Lund Humphries
- Gilda Williams (2014). *How to write about Contemporary art*. London, Thames & Hudson

All the key books can be found in the UCM reading room, as well as in the inner city University Library. For easy access you may want to consider buying them.

Below each task text relevant literature is indicated. Literature marked **RR** is in the reading room. All readings marked **E** can be found in the E-reader. The coordinator will send you **PDF** versions of some texts and [hyperlinks](#) indicate material freely available online.

Tasks

Task 1

Why "Art Since 1900"?

Somewhere along the line, art history majors with professors worth their salt will encounter, severally or federated, the critics Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Hal Foster and Rosalind Krauss. This quartet has been working together since the 1970s, and is currently co-editor of the journal 'October'. Founded in 1976 and subtitled 'Art/Theory/Criticism/Politics', October introduced a generation of academics to an art history radically more complex than the fables of [their predecessors], or the connoisseurship on which they were based. Formalist criticism collides in October with Althusserian Marxism, post-Freudian psychoanalysis, poststructuralist linguistics, film theory, queer theory and institutional critique. In the course of its re-examination of the historical avant-garde, the journal [...] has pondered the theory of the sign, foregrounded photography and helped to install Peter Bürger's 1974 essay 'Theory of the Avant-Garde' (translated into English in 1984) as a founding text of alternative cultural criticism.

Frances Richard, *London Review of Books* (2006)

There is a lot of rhetorical self-examination in the book: a lot of "I", as Rosalind Krauss et.al. question how meaning is made and how society constructs our economic desires, and how their intellectual make-up as critics is constructed. But this somehow goes with retaining absolute schoolmasterish authority.

I think the book's use to a contemporary general reader is not so much its direct information about the present but more as an indirect guide on how to think about the present.

But when they get to contemporary art [...] [you] feel you're reading only theory, whereas earlier, theory was only one strand. The writers carry from the past into the present an aura of authority, but not the creative imagination that in the earlier sections earned them authority, as far as the reader was concerned.

Matthew Collings, *The Guardian* (2005)

At one point the team states its modest hope that Art since 1900 offers 'a much more complex tableau than the one served up to us when we were students'. It certainly does – but its success could also be its problem. We have already seen how quickly a fascinating analysis (T.J. Clark on Manet's Olympia) can harden under university pedagogy into a formula, a doxa. Precisely because Art since 1900 is so well conceived, even user-friendly – with information boxes, timelines and useful cross-references – it is likely to produce a strong doxological effect. Will the next generation react as strongly as this one has to its own precursors?

Norman Bryson, *Frieze Magazine* (2005)

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al.(2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed. pp. 12-16 **RR**
- Matthew Collings (2005). Modern Masters. The Guardian. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/may/14/highereducation.news>
- Frances Richard (2006). White Hat / Black Hat. London Review of Books **E**
- Norman Bryson (2005). Art Since 1900: Modernism, Anti-modernism, Postmodernism. Frieze Magazine **E**
- Gilda Williams (2014). How to write about contemporary art. Pp. 9-17, p.235 **RR**
- About *October*, the journal founded by the authors of *Art Since 1900* <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/octo>

Task 2

Psychoanalysis in Modernism and Beyond

It may be true that the uncanny [*unheimlich*] is something, which is secretly familiar [*heimlich-heimisch*], which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfills this condition. But the selection of material on this basis does not enable us to solve the problem of the uncanny. For our proposition is clearly not convertible. Not everything that fulfills this condition — not everything that recalls repressed desires and surmounted modes of thinking belonging to the prehistory of the individual and of the race — is on that account uncanny.

The uncanny as it is depicted in *literature*, in stories and imaginative productions, merits in truth a separate discussion. Above all, it is a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and something more besides, something that cannot be found in real life. The contrast between what has been repressed and what has been surmounted cannot be transposed on to the uncanny in fiction without profound modification; for the realm of phantasy depends for its effect on the fact that its content is not submitted to reality testing. The somewhat paradoxical result is that *in the first place a great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life; and in the second place that there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life.*

Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (1919)

We have only to understand the mirror stage as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image - whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago*.

This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject. This form would have to be called the Ideal-I. But the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as I his discordance with his own reality.

Jacques Lacan, *The Mirror Stage* (1949)

The mirror stage remains the best known of Lacan's ideas, yet unlike his later work it barely features in current debates in political and cultural theory. Because it is pre-social and pre-linguistic, the mirror stage is assumed to be pre-political as well.

Malcolm Bull, *London Review of Books* (2001)

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., pp. 17-23 **RR**
- Sigmund Freud (1919). The 'Uncanny'. *Imago*, Bd. V. **E**
- Jacques Lacan (1949). The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience. In: *Écrits, A Selection*, transl. Alan Sheridan. Associated Book Publishers **E**
- Malcolm Bull (2001). Hate is the new love. *London Review of Books* **E**
- Steven Poole (2009). My Teaching. *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/apr/18/my-teaching-jacques-lacan>

Task 3

Uncanny Gazes

SURREALISM, *n.* Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express -- verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner -- the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.

ENCYCLOPEDIA. Philosophy. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life.

André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924)

Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions. Now, search as one may one will never find any other motivating force in the activities of the Surrealists than the hope of finding and fixing this point.

André Breton, *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1929)

Is the self automatically interesting in art? Or can it only claim our attention to the extent that it produces ordered and lucid structures, full of articulate meaning? For those who suffered the big hangover of the sixties, the disagreeable end of a culture that invested so much faith in hallucination on demand [...], there can only be one answer to that question.

Robert Hughes: *The Shock of the New* (1991)

But another strategy also developed [...] to assault the prerogatives of vision, one that could be called the "uncanny gaze", by which it was meant to return against the controlling system of the "gaze" itself by using its own power to overthrow it.

Hal Foster et.al., *Art Since 1900*, (2016) p.734



Max Ernst, *Au rendez vous des amis*, 1922



Hans Bellmer, *The doll in the woods*, 1934

Every kind of petty documentation, psychic laundry list, and autistic gesture has been performed, taped, pinned up, filed, and photographed. Every sort of odd act, from lurking below a ramp in a gallery and masturbating to fantasies about the people walking overhead (Vito Acconci) to patterning one's body with sunburn (Dennis Oppenheim) has come into art.

Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New* (1991)

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed. Years: 1924, 1927a, 1977, 1993a **RR**
- Louis Aragon, translated by S.W. Taylor (1987 [orig. 1926]). 'Preface to a modern mythology', 'The passage de l'opéra'. In: Paris Peasant, Picador Press, London, pp. 19-24, 27-29. **E**
- André Breton, A. (1972). *Manifesto of Surrealism*. In: Manifestoes of surrealism, University of Michigan Press, Ann Harbor, pp. 3-27. **E**
- Simon Watson-Taylor (1970). *Liberation Then*. The New York Review of Books **E**

Task 4

The Social History of Art

But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice—politics.

Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935)

The historical avant-garde's attack on art as an institution has failed; that institution survived it. The effort to integrate art in the praxis of life has failed; art remains autonomous in bourgeois society, able to affect that society only in a mediated way. But the failure of the historical avant-garde marks a crucial turning point: art became conscious of the existence of the institution of art, and of its own claim to a problematic autonomy

Leah Ulansey about Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1984)

The artistic critique is currently paralyzed by what, depending on one's viewpoint, may be regarded as its success or its failure. It was successful in the sense that, confined to minorities and avant-gardes until the 1950's, from the end of the 1960's, it coincided with the aspirations of an enormous audience. This type of critique now possesses a base and spokespersons, and it occupies a significant place in the media. [...] By helping to overthrow the conventions bound up with the old domestic world, and also to overcome the inflexibilities of the industrial order – bureaucratic hierarchies and standardized production – the artistic critique opened up an opportunity for capitalism to base itself on new forms of control and commodify new, more individualized and 'authentic' goods.

The artistic critique is today caught in a dilemma both of whose horns reveal its impotence. [...] To escape from this dead end, perhaps the artistic critique should, to a greater extent than is currently the case, take the time to reformulate the issues of liberation and authenticity, starting from the new forms of oppression it unwittingly helped to make possible.

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005)

Commitment is not a category of art. This does not mean that art is apolitical. It means that aesthetics has its own politics, or its own meta-politics.

Political art cannot work in the simple form of a meaningful spectacle that would lead to 'awareness' of the state of the world. Suitable political art would ensure, at one and the same time, the production of a double effect: the readability of a political signification and a sensible or perceptual shock caused, conversely by the uncanny, by that which resists signification.

Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2000)

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., pp. 24-33 **RR**
- Walter Benjamin, translated by Harry Zohn (1969 [orig 1935]). *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. In, *Illuminations* **E**
- Leah Ulansey (1984). Review of Peter Bürger *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. In, *MLN* Vol.99, No.5, pp.1192-1195 **E**
- Sebastian Budgen (2000). Review of *A New Spirit of Capitalism*. In, *New Left Review* 1, Jan, Feb 2000, pp. 149-156. Available at: <https://newleftreview.org/II/1/sebastian-budgen-a-new-spirit-of-capitalism>
- Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005), *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Verso pp. 439-472 **E**
- Jacques Rancière, translated by Gabriel Rockhill (2004 [orig. 2000]). *Politicized Art*. In, *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*, pp.56-61 **E**
- Ben Davis. Rancière, *For Dummies*. Available at: <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/books/davis/davis8-17-06.asp>

Task 5

Avant-Garde Ideologies

[All in capital letters:] I REALIZED VERY SOON THE DANGER OF REPEATING INDISCRIMINATELY THIS FORM OF EXPRESSION AND DECIDED TO LIMIT THE PRODUCTION OF "READYMADES" TO A SMALL NUMBER YEARLY. I WAS AWARE AT THAT TIME, THAT FOR THE SPECTATOR EVEN MORE THAN FOR THE ARTIST, ART IS A HABIT-FORMING DRUG AND I WANTED TO PROTECT MY "READYMADES" AGAINST SUCH CONTAMINATION.

ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE "READYMADE" IS ITS LACK OF UNIQUENESS... THE REPLICA OF THE "READYMADE" DELIVERING THE SAME MESSAGE; IN FACT NEARLY EVERY ONE OF THE "READYMADES" EXISTING TODAY IS NOT AN ORIGINAL IN THE CONVENTIONAL SENSE.

Marcel Duchamp, *Apropos of Readymades* (1961)



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917

Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art... making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art

An artist is somebody who produces things that people don't need to have.

Andy Warhol



Andy Warhol, *Brillo Box*, 1964

The belief system of the old language of painting had collapsed, and coinciding with it collapsed our ability to believe in the social, cultural, economic and political order of which it had been part. When this institution of painting and sculpture collapsed, something much more important than a style of art-making was altered—it meant that the meaning of art was in a crisis. [...]

Joseph Kosuth: *Art after Philosophy and after* (1971)



Joseph Kosuth, *One and three chairs*, 1965

- Hal Foster et al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, 3rd ed., years: 1909, 1914, 1916a/b, 1923, 1926, 1935, 1960c, 1961, 1962c, 1976 **RR**
- Marcel Duchamp (1996). 'The Creative Act', 'Apropos of Readymades', 'The Richard Mutt Case'. In: K. Stiles, P. Selz (Eds.), *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art. A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp. 817-820. **E**
- Joseph Kosuth (1991). Painting versus art versus culture (or, why you can paint if you want to, but it probably won't matter). In: *Art after philosophy and after: collected writings, 1966-1990*, MIT Press, Cambridge, pp. 89-92. **E**
- Fumihori Nonomura (2001). Manga Dan Graham story. In: M. Brouwer (Ed.) *Dan Graham : works 1965-2000*, Richter Verlag, Düsseldorf, pp. 375-398. **E**
- Sol Lewitt (1996). Drawing series 1968 (fours). In: K. Stiles, P. Selz (Eds.), *Theories and documents of contemporary art : a sourcebook of artists' writings*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 823 **E**
- Sol Lewitt (1996). Sentences on conceptual art. In: K. Stiles, P. Selz (Eds.), *Theories and documents of contemporary art: a sourcebook of artists' writings*, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp. 826-827. **E**

Task 6

Formalism and Structuralism

The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence. [...] [The] more closely the norms of a discipline become defined, the less freedom they are apt to permit in many directions. The essential norms or conventions of painting are at the same time the limiting conditions with which a picture must comply in order to be experienced as a picture. Modernism has found that these limits can be pushed back indefinitely -- before a picture stops being a picture and turns into an arbitrary object; but it has also found that the further back these limits are pushed the more explicitly they have to be observed and indicated.

Art criticism and art history lag behind Modernism as they lagged behind pre-Modernist art. Most of the things that get written about Modernist art still belong to journalism rather than to criticism or art history. It belongs to journalism -- and to the millennial complex from which so many journalists and journalist intellectuals suffer in our day -- that each new phase of Modernist art should be hailed as the start of a whole new epoch in art, marking a decisive break with all the customs and conventions of the past. Each time, a kind of art is expected so unlike all previous kinds of art, and so free from norms of practice or taste, that everybody, regardless of how informed or uninformed he happens to be, can have his say about it. And each time, this expectation has been disappointed, as the phase of Modernist art in question finally takes its place in the intelligible continuity of taste and tradition.

Clement Greenberg, *Modernist Painting* (1960)

This book has a double theoretical framework: on the one hand, an ideological critique bearing on the language of so-called mass-culture; on the other, a first attempt to analyse semiologically the mechanics of this language. I had just read Saussure and as a result acquired the conviction that by treating 'collective representations' as sign-systems, one might hope to go further by unmasking them and account in detail for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into universal culture.

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957)

In fact, "Mythologies" began as a species of cultural journalism, of which certain blogs (Paul Krugman's, for example) might be the closest contemporary analogue. Beginning in 1954, Barthes had been asked to write a monthly or bimonthly column for the Paris literary magazine *Lettres Nouvelles*, which he did, dutifully, for two years. His attempt to synthesize these pieces into a larger statement of methodology came later, as Barthes reread his own closely observed and documented associations. The myth—current since Edmund Burke denounced the Declaration of the Rights of Man—of French intellectuals blinded by their own theories, implicitly contrasted with the more empirical and process-driven Anglo-American mind, thus bites the dust, as Barthes himself hoped it would.

Marco Roth on Barthes in the *New Yorker* (2012)

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., pp. 34-41 **RR**
- Clement Greenberg (1960), *Modernist painting*
http://www.yorku.ca/yamlau/readings/greenberg_modernistPainting.pdf
- Roland Barthes (1972 [orig. 1957]). *Mythologies*, New York: The Noonday Press pp. 107-164 'Myth Today' **PDF**
- Marco Roth (2012). Roland Barthes: Myths we don't outgrow. Available at:
<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/roland-barthes-myths-we-dont-outgrow>
- Richard Brody (2012). The uses of mythologies. Available at:
<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/the-uses-of-mythologies>

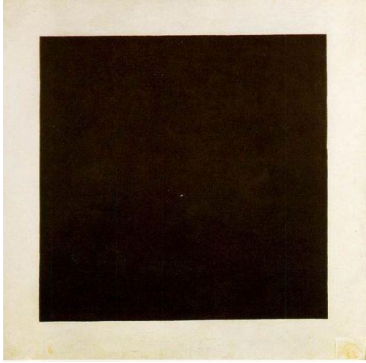
Task 7

Mythical Methods

Colour is the essence of painting, which the subject always killed.

Every real form is a world. And any plastic surface is more alive than a (drawn or painted) face from which stares a pair of eyes and a smile.

Kasimir Malevich



Malevich, Black Square, 1915

The painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through.

It doesn't make much difference how the paint is put on as long as something has been said. Technique is just a means of arriving at a statement.

Jackson Pollock



Life Magazine spread on Jackson Pollock, 1949

I like everything that has no style: dictionaries, photographs, nature, myself and my paintings. (Because style is violent, and I am not violent.)

Unlike the period when one had to learn technique and train from the youngest age, today no one masters technique any more at all. Painting has become so easy – anyone can do it! – that it's often very bad. In this context, as soon as someone knows technique, it jumps out at the viewer. That said, for me technique is something obvious: it's never a problem. I've just remained extremely attached to a culture of painting. What's much more important to me is the attempt, the desire to show what I want, in the best way possible. That's why technique is useful for me. For me, perfection is as important as the image itself.

Gerhard Richter



Gerhard Richter, painting

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., years: 1915, 1917, 1944a, 1947a, 1949a, 1960b, 1970 **RR**
- Paul Rabinow (2008). *Marking Time. On the anthropology of the contemporary*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. pp. 106-128 **E**
- Robert Chandler (2014). Malevich: beyond the black square. *The New York Review of Books*. Available at: <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/gallery/2014/aug/05/kazimir-malevich-beyond-black-square/>
- Laura Cumming (2011). Gerhard Richter: Panorama – review. *Tate Modern, London*. In: *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/oct/09/gerhard-richter-panorama-tate-review>

Task 8

Poststructuralism and Deconstruction

It is not enough, however, to repeat the empty affirmation that the author has disappeared. For the same reason, it is not enough to keep repeating that God and man have died a common death. Instead, we must locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings this disappearance uncovers.

Perhaps it is time to study discourses not only in terms of their expressive value or formal transformations but according to their modes of existence. The modes of circulation, valorisation, attribution, and appropriation of discourses vary with each culture and are modified within each. The manner in which they are articulated according to social relationships can be more readily understood, I believe, in the activity of the author function and in its modifications than in the themes or concepts that discourses set in motion.

Michel Foucault, *What is an Author?* (1969)

Discourses set up a distinction between what belongs to the work and what is outside of the work. But there is something between every pair in opposition (inside/outside, above/below, external/internal edge-line, framer/framed, figure/ground, form/content, signifier/signified). The stroke(/) (trait, gesture) establishes a separation or opposition [every opposition depends on a usually ignored mediating third]. But this perverse and necessary game we must be lucid: the passe-partout does not unlock every opposition, does not provide a new master-key to aesthetics.

The painting only seems independent of the frame. Its uncanny unities and multiplicities continue to be noted.

Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (1987)

In every form of art there is a sort of permanent Cynicism towards all established art.

Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth* (1983-84)

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., pp. 42-50 **RR**
- Michel Foucault (2011 [orig. 1983-84]). *The Courage of Truth (The government of self and others II). Lectures at the College de France 1983-1984*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 187-189 **E**
- Michel Foucault (2010 [orig. 1969]), *What is an Author?* In: Paul Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. Vintage Books **E**
- Jacques Derrida (1987). *Passe-Partout*. In: *The Truth in Painting*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 1-13 **E**
- Paul Rabinow (2003). *Anthropos Today. Reflections on Modern Equipment*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. pp. 57-68 **E**

Task 9

Performing Differences

When I was writing my first book on performance art in the late 1970s, [...] I [...] ended up with an unexpected conclusion to my book. Not only did live art by artists represent the very spirit of its own times and reveal the ways in which artists from different disciplines interconnected, it also showed me how certain ideas in painting or a sculpture, which as a traditional art historian I might have looked for in other paintings or sculptures, often originated in some sort of performance action. Indeed, the history of performance throughout the twentieth century showed performance to be an experimental laboratory for some of the most original and radical art forms; it was a freewheeling, permissive activity for intellectual and formalist excursions of all kinds that could, if studied carefully, reveal layers of meaning about art and artmaking that simply were not clear before. As such, it was a missing piece in the big picture of art history studies.

In the 1990's, performance is an important reference, not only in art history but also in the very latest courses on contemporary culture, whether in philosophy, photography, architecture, anthropology, or media studies. Performance—whether autobiographical monologue or personal ritual, dance theater or artists' cabaret—provides incomparable material for examining contemporary viewpoints on such issues as the body, gender or multiculturalism. This is because live work by artists unites the psychological with the perceptual, the conceptual with the practical, thought with action. According to the current tenets of critical theory, the viewer of art, the reader of a text, the audience of a film or a theater production are all performers, since our live, immediate responses to an art work are essential to the completion of the work.

RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art since the '60s*



Allan Kaprow, *Yard*, 1961



Marina Abramovich and Uwe Laysiepen (Ulay), *Imponderabilia*, 1977



Jay Z and Marina Abramovich in the music video to "Picasso Baby"



Tino Seghal, *Kiss* at the Stedelijk, 2015



Jeff Wall, *Mimic*, 1982

[These] beautiful images might help to reconcile us to a world without qualities where the human subject has little place. In this regard Gursky might take away too finally what Wall seems to restore too quickly – the authority of a unified subjectivity.

Hal Foster et.al. *Art Since 1900* (2016), p. 777

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., years: 1971, 1972a, 1972b, 1974, 1984, 1998, 2001 **RR**
- Allen Kaprow, (2003, [orig.1971]). *The education of the un-artist, part I. In: Essays on the blurring of art and life*, University of California Press, Berkeley [etc.], pp. 97-109. **E**
- Carrie Lambert-Beatty (2010). *Against Performance Art* (on the Art of Marina Abramovich). In: *Artforum*, May 2010. **E**
- Alicja Khatchikian (2013). *Art Worlds and Aesthetics. Relational Aesthetics in Tino Sehgal and Marina Abramovic*. Dept. of Social and Cultural Anthropology / University of Vienna **E**
- Andrew Frost (2014). Tino Sehgal: this is so contemporary – review. In: *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/australia-culture-blog/2014/feb/06/tino-sehgal-this-is-so-contemporary-review>
- Amelia Jones (2011). *The Artist is Present: Artistic Re-Enactments and the Impossibility of Presence*. In: *The Drama Review*, Vol.55, No.1. pp. 16-45 **E**

Task 10

Globalization, networks, and the aggregate as form

The contemporary art world is a loose network of overlapping subcultures held together by a belief in art. They span the globe but cluster in art capital cities such as New York, London, Los Angeles, and Berlin.

It is important to bear in mind that the art *world* is much broader than the art *market*. The market refers to people who buy and sell works (that is dealers, collectors, auction houses), but many art world players (the critics, curators and artists themselves) are not directly involved in this commercial activity on a regular basis. The art world is a sphere where many people don't just work but reside full time. It's a "symbolic economy" where people swap thoughts and where cultural worth is debated rather than determined by brute wealth.

Noon on Saturday the ninth of June. The Venice Biennale doesn't open to the public until tomorrow, but it's already over for the art world.

Sarah Thornton: *Seven Days in the Art World* (2008), pp.xi, xii, p.221

The 'official' or hegemonic art world whose capital and infrastructural power is still centered in the developed nations can also feel monolithic. Despite their far-flung locations, its outposts resemble one another architecturally and programmatically [...]. Art works on exhibit tend to share a formal idiom, belonging to what might be called an international style.

Art Since 1900 (2016), p.54

"I'm an atheist, but I believe in art. I go to galleries like my mother went to church."

Sarah Thornton (2008) p.93

Art museums belong decisively to this realm of secular knowledge, not only because of the scientific and humanistic disciplines practiced in them [...] but also because of their status as preservers of the community's official cultural memory.

Carol Duncan: *The Art Museum as Ritual* (1995), p.8



52nd Venice Biennale, 2007



Koons on the roof (Metropolitan Museum of Art), 2008

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., pp. 51-60 and year: 2007c **RR**
- Sarah Thornton (1998). *Seven Days in the Art World*. pp. xi-xx, pp.221-253 (Introduction and The Biennale) **RR**
- Georgina Adam (2014). *Big Bucks*. pp. 9-12, 83-96 (Introduction and The New Taste Makers) **RR**
- Chin Tao Wu (2002), *Privatizing Culture*. **E**
- Carol Duncan (1995): "The Art Museum as Ritual", in: Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals. Inside public art museums*. **E**

Task 11

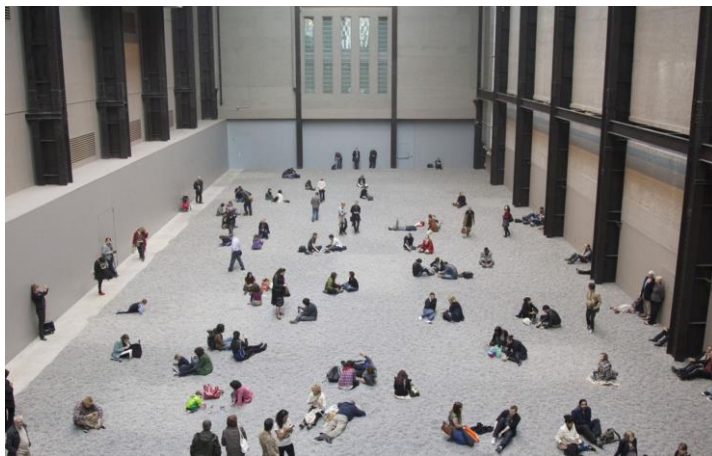
Global players & cultural diversity in the contemporary art world

There is a story that before the 1940s, if a letter arrived at Christie's in London with a foreign stamp, it was put directly into the bin because 'it couldn't be important'.

Francois Curiel, president Christie's Asia, cited in Giorgina Adam (2014) p.130

Ai Weiwei's contribution to Documenta 12 in 2007 [...] was aptly titled *Fairytale*. As part of the work, 1001 Chinese citizens, most traveling abroad for the first time, were brought to Kassel as 'tourists'. As in a fairy tale, these travelers were transported to a different world – an art world – at minimal cost to themselves and with the technical assistance of Ai's substantial staff along the way.

Art Since 1900 (2016), p.824



Ai Weiwei Sunflower Seeds, Tate Modern, London, 2010

Some artists have achieved such financial success and fame that they are starting their own museums, notably in China: the gunpowder artist Cai Guo-Qiang is building one in his hometown of Quanzhou, while Zeng Fanzhi has hired the Japanese architect Tadao Ando to design his Yuan Museum in Beijing [...]

Giorgina Adam (2014) *Big Bucks*, p.80



Zeng Fanzhi 'The Last Supper' (2001)

In 2013 Zeng Fanzhi's 'The Last Supper' broke the record for the most expensive Asian contemporary artwork sold at auction, at a record-breaking HKD180.4 million (\$23.3 million).

Readings

- Hal Foster et.al. (2016). *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* 3rd ed., and years: 1989, 2010a **RR**
- Giorgia Adam (2014). *Big Bucks*. pp. 104-105, 130-158 'Globalisation' in Art Fairs and Emerging Economies **RR**
- Alexandre Errera (2014). How China is changing the balance of power in the art world. In: Forbes. Available at:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexandreerrera/2014/02/27/how-china-is-quietly-changing-the-balance-of-power-in-the-art-world/#6c154cb12c8a>
- Xan Brooks (2017). Ai WeiWei: 'without the prison, the beatings, what would I be?' In: The Guardian. Available at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/sep/17/ai-weiwei-without-the-prison-the-beatings-what-would-i-be>