No prerequisites Exam: Date Unknown

## MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART

01:082:240, index #11905 Prof. Brett-Smith Tuesday and Thursday, 1:10-2:30pm, Voorhees Hall, Room 104, College Avenue Campus



"The Arrest of Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba," by artist Arona Diarra

#### **Modern and Contemporary African Art**

This course will survey the world of modern and contemporary African art across the continent. Lectures and discussions will navigate the creation of huge sculptures in wood and garbage, the painting of elegant canvases in Senegal, the interwoven history of art and the fight against Apartheid in South Africa and the sophisticated photography now being created across the continent. The course will probe the destructive politics behind much of contemporary African Art, and it will include installation art, textile art and hangings. We will discuss whether contemporary African artists work in the Western art world or the African world or both, and which dominates each artist. How do modern African artists create their artistic identities and how to they use them once they are created? Who is a modern 'African' artist?

There will be two 3-4 page papers and a final. The papers will analyze the cultural, political and economic context of the assigned art work. You will be challenged to relate these conditions to a reading that discusses or relates to the artwork in question. The midterm and final will follow the format of the papers.

## **Learning goals and Assessment**

This course fulfills the following core requirements:

- To learn the appropriate vocabulary and critical tools for discussing and writing about works of art.
- To gain awareness of the major stylistic developments in the world of contemporary and modern African art. To understand the complicated colonial and postcolonial histories that inform modern and contemporary African art.
- To be able to communicate easily and logically what the student has learned in both written and oral form.

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• To evaluate different ways of studying an object as presented in the readings and to synthesize the information from multiple sources in order to generate new insights.

#### This course meets the following Core Curriculum learning goals:

#### **Arts and Humanities**

(p) Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.

## **Cognitive Skills and Processes**

- (t) Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.
- (v) Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

These learning goals will be assessed through a twenty minute class discussion period focused on a short (5 minute) presentation by a single student of a reading assigned to the entire class. This discussion will occur at the beginning of each class. At times I may assign a short (one paragraph) in class writing assignment and we will work with these commentaries to understand some of the art under discussion.

Students will also demonstrate their synthetic understanding of the relationship between modern African art and contemporary culture and politics in two three to four page essays on assigned paintings, sculptures, videos, or installations.

There will also be a final focused on knowledge of the different artists and artistic movements covered in the class.

## Lectures and readings will be available for download on Sakai.

#### **Class Policies**

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes; if you anticipate missing one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <a href="https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/">https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/</a> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me and repeated absences will seriously affect your final grade.

All assigned readings are required and should be completed before class to enable your full participation.

# Plagiarism and academic honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism in Rutgers's official policy statement on academy integrity: <a href="http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml">http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml</a>. As a student in this course, you are responsible for understanding and thus avoiding the varieties of plagiarism in college writing outlined in this statement. Any student who plagiarizes will receive a zero for the given assignment and, in some cases, a failing grade for the course. Please see the end of this syllabus for further information regarding plagiarism.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 lunch time on Thursdays. My office is 008E in the basement of Voorhees Hall. If you can't find my office, go to the main art history office and ask them to direct you; it is just underneath. I prefer that students email me so that we can set up a specific time for an appointment. My email is <a href="mailto:brettsmi@rci.rutgers.edu">brettsmi@rci.rutgers.edu</a>. Under normal conditions I should respond within 24 hours.

# **Special Needs**

Please notify me if you have any documented disabilities or special circumstances that require attention, and I will be happy to accommodate you. Students with disabilities may also contact the Kreeger Learning Center directly: Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue, Suite 123, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, email: dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu, 732-932-2848, Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 5:00pm.

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Full disability policies and procedures are at <a href="http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/">http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/</a>. Students with disabilities requesting accommodation must follow the procedures outlined at <a href="http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html">http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html</a>

#### **Expectations for lectures**

- Arrive before the start of lecture and recitation.
- All cell phones are to be shut off before the start of lecture and recitation.
- Be considerate of others.
- No texting is allowed in the classroom
- No private conversations are allowed during the lecture
- Knowing the material & artists we study in the lecture section of the course
- Being prepared by reading the assigned articles and participating in the discussion section of the class
- I do not mind your eating in the classroom as long as you clean up after yourself
- I encourage the use of computers to take notes but not to view movies!

The Department of Art History expects all its students to attend every class, except in cases of illness, religious necessity, serious family concerns, or other major problems. We expect that students will arrive on time, prepared to listen and participate as appropriate, and to stay for the duration of a meeting rather than drift in or out casually. In short, we anticipate that students will show professors and fellow students maximum consideration by minimizing the disturbances that cause interruptions in the learning process. This means that punctuality is a "must," that cellular phones be turned off, and that courtesy is the guiding principle in all exchanges among students, faculty, and staff.

# **Study Tips**

Start early, study hard, study often! You will be able to understand and process the information better if you keep up with the schedule laid out in the syllabus. Do not hesitate to ask any questions that may help your study process.

Read the books and articles listed!

**Readings:** You can find the required and optional readings on Sakai under the course number and the heading, Resources, or in the Art Library reserve under the course number. You will not be able to make sense of the lectures without reading this material.

# Grading

Grade distribution:

Two Papers = 50% Class Participation in Discussion: 25% Final exam: 25%

Grading Scale:

A = 90 - 100 B+ = 87-89 B = 80-86 C+ = 77-79 C = 70 - 76

D = 65 - 69 F= 64 and Below

<u>To pass this course, you must take the final exam, complete the paper assignments and participate in class.</u> In other words, failure to turn in the papers, to make the oral presentations required of every student and to take both exams will result in a failing grade.

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# **Description of Paper Assignments:**

• Analysis Papers: Two 3-4 page papers analyzing the cultural, political and economic context of the assigned art work. You will be challenged to relate these conditions to the assigned reading that discusses or relates to the artwork in question. You will also be asked to make a coherent argument about the relationship between the image and the assigned reading. In order for your assignment to be considered complete, you must upload your paper to turnitin.com.

2<sup>nd</sup> Analysis paper: 3-4 page paper analyzing the cultural, political and economic context of an art work discussed in the second half of the class. The paper will present the same types of challenges presented in paper #1, but now you will have the experience of that paper behind you. The assignment is designed to enable each student to demonstrate the progress they have made over the semester in the effective written communication of an argument. Each student will also be able to show their increased ability to place an art work in the historical, economic and political context of contemporary Africa and to make a cogent argument.

#### Exams:

The powerpoints used in the course will be available for download on Sakai. Each student should download every powerpoint and be prepared to discuss the cultural framework and visual impact of every artwork listed in the powerpoint. You will be required to memorize the basic information (e.g. artist, title, date, medium and/or location) for the artworks shown in the powerpoints. Otherwise you will be asked to respond to some very general questions about the work, such as, "How does this work express the anguish of the fight for the end of Apartheid?"

# **Required and Optional Readings**

Each section will have specific readings, either sections of books, or articles assigned to accompany it. It is your responsibility to read these materials so that you can participate in the class discussion.

You will be able to find the assigned materials either on reserve in the Art History Library or on Sakai. Readings on Sakai are often posted under an abbreviation of the title or under the author's name. Please be aware of this when looking for a reading.

# Week 1, Introduction, January 17th and 19th

Vogel, Susan. 1991. "International Art: The Official Story," in *Africa Explores: 20<sup>th</sup> Century African Art*. New York: The Center for African Art. 176-197.

Amselle, Jean-Loup. 2004. "Intangible Heritage and Contemporary African Art," in *Museum International*: 56:1/2, 84-90.

Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield. 2002. Dialogue, "Museums and Contemporary African Art: Some Questions for Curators," in *African Arts*, 35:4, 9, 87.

## Week 2, January 24th and 26th - When is art "Contemporary African" Art?

McEvilley, Thomas. 1994. "An Interview with Ouattara," in *Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennial*. New York: Museum for African Art, 71-81, 95-6.

Enwezor, Okwui. 1995. "Ouattara: Beyond Shamanism," in Nka, 2, 25-9.

Oguibe, Olu. 2004. "Art, Identity, Boundaries: Postmodernism and Contemporary African Art," in *The Culture Game*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 10-17, 179.

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# Week 3 - Defining a Nationalist Art in Dakar, Senegal, - January 31st and February 2nd

Harney, Elizabeth. 2002. "The Ecôle de Dakar: Pan-Africanism in Paint and Textile," in *African Arts*, 35:3, 12-31, 88-90.

Harney, Elizabeth. 2004. *In Senghor's Shadow: Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal 1960-1995*, 49-104. Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 2009 [1970]. "Négritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century," in *Perspectives on Africa: A reader in Culture, History and Representation*, ed. Roy Grinker, Stephen Lubkemann, and Christopher Steiner. Malden: Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 477-83.

# Paper #1 Assigned

# Week 4 - Photography in Mali - February 7th and 9th

Nimis, Erika. "A l'époque du noir et blanc/ In the Days of Black and White," in *Photographes de Bamako/Bamako Photographers*. Paris: Editions Revue Noire, 28-86.

Diakhaté, Lydia. 2002. "Seydou Keita 1921-2001: The Last Interview," in Nka, 16-17, 18-23.

Bigham, Elizabeth. 1999. "Issues of Authorship in the Portrait Photographs of Seydou Keita," in *African Arts*, 32:1, 56-67, 94-96.

#### Week 5, El Anatsui (Ghana) – February 14th, no class on 16th, CAA meetings

Vogel, Susan. 2012. El Anatsui. Prestel Verlag. Munich. 10-30, 46-75.

Paper #1 due

## Week 6, El Anatsui, Yinka Shonibare, Feb 21st and 23rd

Vogel, Susan. 2012. El Anatsui. Prestel Verlag. Munich. 10-30, 46-75.

Oguibe, Olu. 1999. "Finding a Place: Nigerian Artists in the Contemporary Art World," in *Art Journal*, 58:2, 30-41. Shonibare, Yinka. 2002. "Yinka Shonibare," in *Art Journal*, 61:2, 82-3.

Enwezor, Okwui. 1997. "The Joke is on You: The Work of Yinka **Shonibare**," in *Nka*, 6-7, 10-11.

Castro, J.G. 2006. "In Art, Anything is Possible: Yinka Shonibare," in *Sculpture*, 25:6, 22-27.

## Week 7, Nsukka School in Nigeria -Feb 28th and March 2nd

Ottenberg, Simon. 2002. *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art.* Seattle, Washington: The University of Washington Press.

## Week 8, Oshogbo - March 7th and 9th

Probst, Peter. Oshogbo and the Art of Heritage. Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 2011. Pp. 1-77.

# **Spring Break**

#### Week 9

# Cheri Samba and Popular Painting in the Democratic Republic of Congo - March 21st and 23rd

Jewsiewicki, Bogumil. *Cheri Samba: The Hybridity of Art.* Westmount, Québec: Galérie Amrad African Art Publications, 1995, pp. 18-48.

Fabian, Johannes. Remembering *the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 3-21.

## Paper # 2 Assigned

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Week 10, South African Artists in the Struggle Against Apartheid, Jane Alexander, Paul Stopforth and Helen Sebidi.

March 28th and 30th.

Peffer, John. "Becoming Animal The Tortured Body During Apartheid," in *Art and the end of Apartheid*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, 41-72.

# Week 11, South African Artists after Apartheid, William Kentridge, Zwelethu Mthethwa - April 4th and 6th

Tomkins, Calvin. "Lines of Resistance: William Kentridge's Rough Magic," in *The New Yorker*, 18 January, 52-59. Bongi Dhlomo, "Zwelethu Mthethwa Talks About His Photographs," in *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa*. Ed. Frank Herreman. New York: The Museum for African Art, 1999, 66-75.

Peffer, John. "Shadows: A Short History of Photography in South Africa," in *Art and the End of Apartheid*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

## Week 12, April 11th and 13th, Ibrahim El-Salahi, Sudan

The Tate Gallery. Ibrahim El-Salahi A Visionary Modernist. Pages to be announced.

# Week 13, Contemporary Arts of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Diaspora: Julie Mehretu, Skunder Boghossian – April 18th and 20th

Ethiopian Passages: Contemporary Art from the Diaspora. Washington, D.C.: National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, 17-53.

Paper # 2 due

Week 14, Review - April 25th and 27th

PLEASE NOTE: This schedule is tentative and subject to change at any time. It is your responsibility to keep yourself informed about any changes

# **Course Learning Outcomes:**

This course has been designed to result in the following course-learning outcomes for students:

- 1) Identify key artists and examples of art that fall in the categories of modern and contemporary African art.
- 2) Consider how the terms 'modern,' 'contemporary,' 'African,' and 'contemporary African' are applied to art and identify other possible approaches for categorizing such works.
- 3) Expand knowledge of African art as a means to gain greater understanding of and appreciation for diverse visual practices.
- 4) Develop critical reading and thinking skills necessary to summarize information and arguments presented in class readings and discussions.
- 5) Refine skills necessary to be an active and engaged learner.

# **Bibliography**

- Amselle, Jean-Loup. 2004. "Intangible Heritage and Contemporary African Art," in *Museum International*: 56:1/2, 84-90.
- Bigham, Elizabeth. 1999. "Issues of Authorship in the Portrait Photographs of Seydou Keita," in *African Arts*, 32:1, 56-67, 94-96.
- Bongi Dhlomo, "Zwelethu Mthethwa Talks About His Photographs," in *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa*. Ed. Frank Herreman. New York: The Museum for African Art, 1999, 66-75.
- Castro, J.G. 2006. "In Art, Anything is Possible: Yinka Shonibare," in Sculpture, 25:6, 22-27.
- Diakhaté, Lydia. 2002. "Seydou Keita 1921-2001: The Last Interview," in Nka, 16-17, 18-23.
- Enwezor, Okwui. 1995. "Ouattara: Beyond Shamanism," in Nka, 2, 25-9.
- -----. 1997. "The Joke is on You: The Work of Yinka Shonibare," in *Nka*, 6-7, 10-11.
- Fabian, Johannes. Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Harney, Elizabeth. 2002. "The Ecôle de Dakar: Pan-Africanism in Paint and Textile," in *African Arts*, 35:3, 12-31, 88-90.
- ------. 2004. In Senghor's Shadow: Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal 1960-1995, 49-104.
- Jewsiewicki, Bogumil. *Cheri Samba: The Hybridity of Art*. Westmount, Québec: Galérie Amrad African Art Publications, 1995.
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- Nimis, Erika. "A l'époque du noir et blanc/ In the Days of Black and White," in *Photographes de Bamako/Bamako Photographers*. Paris: Editions Revue Noire, 28-86.

Oguibe, Olu. 1999. "Finding a Place: Nigerian Artists in the Contemporary Art World," in Art Journal, 58:2, 30-41.

----- 2004. "Art, Identity, Boundaries: Postmodernism and Contemporary African Art," in *The Culture Game*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 10-17, 179.

Ottenberg, Simon. 2002. *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Seattle, Washington: The University of Washington Press.

Peffer, John. "Shadows: A Short History of Photography in South Africa," in *Art and the End of Apartheid*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

Probst, Peter. Oshogbo and the Art of Heritage. Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 2011. Pp. 1-77.

Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 2009 [1970]. "Négritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century," in *Perspectives on Africa: A reader in Culture, History and Representation*, ed. Roy Grinker, Stephen Lubkemann, and Christopher Steiner. Malden: Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 477-83.

Shonibare, Yinka. 2002. "Yinka Shonibare," in *Art Journal*, 61:2, 82-3. Tomkins, Calvin. "Lines of Resistance: William Kentridge's Rough Magic," in *The New Yorker*, 18 January, 52-59.

Vogel, Susan. 1991. "International Art: The Official Story," in *Africa Explores: 20<sup>th</sup> Century African Art*. New York: The Center for African Art. 176-197.

-----. 2012. El Anatsui. Prestel Verlag. Munich. 10-30, 46-75.

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Longer version: Cheating on tests or plagiarizing materials in your papers deprives you of the educational benefits of preparing these materials appropriately. It is personally dishonest to cheat on a test or to hand in a paper based on unacknowledged words or ideas that someone else originated. It is also unfair, since it gives you an undeserved advantage over your fellow students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will take cheating very seriously. All suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism will be automatically referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs, and we will recommend penalties appropriate to the gravity of the infraction. The university's policy on Academic Integrity is available at <a href="http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy">http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy</a> I strongly advise you to familiarize yourself with this document, both for this class and for your other classes and future work. To help protect you, and future students, from plagiarism, we require all papers to be submitted through Turnitin.com.

Since what counts as plagiarism is not always clear, I quote the definition given in Rutgers' policy: Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other nontextual material from other sources without proper attribution.<sup>2</sup>

A SPECIAL NOTE: Students often assume that because information is available on the Web it is public information, does not need to be formally referenced, and can be used without attribution. This is a mistake. *All* information and ideas that you derive from other sources, whether written, spoken, or electronic, must be attributed to their original source. Such sources include not just written or electronic materials, but people with whom you may discuss your ideas, such as your roommate, friends, or family members. They deserve credit for their contributions too!

Judgments about plagiarism can be subtle. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask for guidance from your Professor

## **Student-Wellness Services:**

## Just In Case Web App

<sup>1</sup> This web link was corrected on Sept. 13, 2015. S. Lawrence

<sup>2 &</sup>lt;a href="http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/">http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/</a> Updated with the University's current language on July 13, 2012 and web link was corrected on Sept. 13, 2015. S. Lawrence.

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#### http://codu.co/cee05e

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

## Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

# (848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

## **Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)**

# (848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

# **Scarlet Listeners**

# (732) 247-5555 / http://www.scarletlisteners.com/

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

## **Disability Services**

# (848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / https://ods.rutgers.edu/

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.