**ASEM 644/2 TUESDAY, 1:30-3:30, FALL 2017**

**THEME: GOING PUBLIC**

**Instructor: Lon Dubinsky** [**londubinsky@gmail.com**](mailto:londubinsky@gmail.com)

**Objectives/Description:**

This seminar explores traditional and changing ideas of the public and their implications for contemporary visual art practice. Considerations include: a) relevant historical influences and conceptions, b) circulating work to diverse publics and through multiple channels, including museums, commercial galleries and social media, ) commission-based public art works and community-based social practices, d) shifting notions of public participation and engagement, and e) the impact of major public events in contemporary art, specifically the Münster Sculpture Project, documenta14 and the Venice Biennale which all take place in 2017.

**Seminar Structure:**

The seminar begins with an introduction about various past and current conceptions of the public. This includes discussion of a lecture by Carol Becker on “Artists as Public Intellectuals” and initial reference to several public events such as the 2017 Münster Sculpture Project and documenta 14. In the weeks that follow each student will be responsible for providing perspective about an issue, posed in the form of a question randomly assigned, that is taken up with the public dimension of contemporary art practice.

Midpoint in the course, there will be time for an open discussion to address common concerns that have evolved thus far. Further attention will also be given to a range of public art events and works both locally and globally. The student perspectives will then continue for the remainder of the seminar with a wrap up discussion scheduled for the final class.

**Assignments/Requirements**

* **In Class Perspective Value: 30%**

Guidelines:

Each student will offer a perspective on a randomly-assigned question by: 1) providing an initial response, 2) raising a few related observations for the class to consider and 3) assisting in moderating the discussion. Some questions lend themselves to more direct yet debatable answers; others are more nuanced and may require more conceptualizing or commentary rather than a straight answer. There is also some overlap in the questions but this is intentional in effort to consider some of the more critical issues from various vantage points. The initial response should be about 15 minutes with the remaining time, about 45 minutes, set aside for discussion. Power points or similar formats are discouraged as this is not a formal lecture/presentation but references to art works, art events, course readings and other source material are certainly encouraged to inform the perspective and to stimulate discussion. Each student must also submit a two-page summary of his/her perspective on the question.

* **Analysis: Course Readings(s) and Reading of your choice. Due: October 31st. Value: 30%**

Guidelines.

The purpose of this assignment is to critically consider how selected readings address the idea of the public in conceptual and/or practical terms and the implications for contemporary art practice. In terms of the course list, if articles and/or chapters from anthologies and/or website or video (except Becker lecture) are chosen for review not less than three must be considered whereas one entire book will suffice. The personal choice can be limited to one selection which can be another text or an art work or art event, such as an exhibition. Approximate length: 1500-1800 words. Hard Copy only.

* **Final Paper. Due: Monday, December 4, 5:30pm, No Extensions, Value 30%**

The purpose of the final assignment is to provide a focus on the public dimensions of your work and practice. The paper can reflect and/or expand on questions and issues raised during the seminar and/or it introduce new considerations in terms of your work be they conceptual, practical or historical or any combination thereof. References to both course texts and outside sources are encouraged.

Approximate length 1500-1800 words. Hard copy only

* **Overall participation in class discussions: 10%**

Written assignments can be submitted in English or French.

Students are expected to comply with assignment deadlines and risk penalties if they do not meet them. For more on responsibilities: <http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/>

**Readings: A Working List**

Darin Barney, Gabriella Coleman et. al. eds. *The Participatory Condition in the Digital Age*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. (Reserve)

Carol Becker. “Artists as Public Intellectuals.” McMaster University Lecture Series, 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7gFj8PxxT0>

Claire Bishop. The Digital Divide: Contemporary Art and New Media.” *Art Forum*, September 2012. <https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Programs/Art%20History/Digital-Divide.pdf>

John Colapinto. “The Real Estate Artist.” *New Yorker,* January 20, 2014.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/20/the-real-estate-artist>

Jurgen Habermas interviewed by Markus Schwering. “Internet and Public Sphere: What the Web Can’t Do,” Reset Doc, 24 July 2014. <http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000022437>

Kasper Konig and Britta Peters eds. Skulptur Projekte, Münster, 2017/, Münster Sculpture Project, 2017. (Amazon: available for order, September 27/2017)

Varig Molinar. “Street Art and the Changing Public Sphere.” *Public Culture* 29 (2 82) 2017, pp. 385-414. (E-Journals)

Rick Lowe. Harvard Graduate School of Design Class Day Lecture, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdB1l4o3cFc>

Fenwick McKelvey, Matthew Tiessen and Luke Simcoe. “We Are What We Tweet: The Problem with a Big Data World when Everything you Say is Data Mined. “*Culture Digitally.* June 3, 2013.

<http://culturedigitally.org/2013/06/we-are-what-we-tweet-the-problem-with-a-big-data-world-when-everything-you-say-is-data-mined/>

Elizabeth Miller, Ted Little and Steven High. *Going Public.* [*http://goingpublicproject.org/about/*](http://goingpublicproject.org/about/)

Ray Oldenburg. *The Great Good Place.* Boston: *DaCapo Press, 1999.* (Reserve)

Paul O’Neill and Claire Doherty eds. *Locating the Producers*: *Durational Approaches to Public Art* Amsterdam: Valiz, 2011. See: especially See especially: introduction pgs.4-14 and roundtable pgs. 41-367. (Reserve)

Martha Radice and Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier. Eds. *Urban Encounters: Art and the Public.* McGill Queens Press, 2017. (Reserve)

Jacques Rancière. *The Emancipated Spectator.* Verso: Brooklyn and New York, 2009. (Reserve)

Cathy Stanton. “Outside the Frame: Assessing Partnerships Between Arts and Historical Organizations.” *The Public Historian* Vol. 27, No. 1, 2005, pgs. 19-37. <http://www.cathystanton.net/stanton-outside-the-frame.pdf>

Michael Warner. *Publics and Counterpublics.* New York: Zone Books, 2002. (Reserve)

**Schedule**

September 5: Introduction

September 12: Discussion: Lecture by Carol Becker and initial conceptions of the public

September 19: Questions presented and discussed

September 26: Questions presented and discussed

October 3: Questions presented and discussed

October 10: Questions presented and discussed

October 17: Mid-point open discussion

October 24: Questions presented and discussed

October 31: Questions presented and discussed (Reading Analysis due)

November 7: Questions presented and discussed

November 14: Questions presented and discussed

November 21: Questions presented and discussed

November 28: Wrap-Up

December 4: Paper Due, 5:30pm No extensions

**THE QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the audience for the current exhibition on Expo 67 at the Musée d’art contemporain?
2. What is the relevance today of Habermas’ notion of the public sphere?
3. Is there a need to distinguish between interactive and participatory practices?
4. Does social media enhance or impede public discourse?
5. Why is Velasquez’s *Las Meninas* still relevant for thinking about the artist’s public?
6. What is the political and cultural significance of the *Refus Global* now?
7. Are multiple claims of identity reshaping the idea of public art?
8. Is relational aesthetics a variant of public participation?
9. How dependent is public engagement on the medium or media used?
10. What is significantly public about the Canadian Centre for Architecture sculpture garden?
11. What would Joseph Beuys think about Instagram?
12. What are the artistic consequences of a loss of personal privacy?
13. What is so public about private art galleries?
14. Is community driven social art practice necessarily more publically engaged?
15. Does “fake news” matter in the art world?
16. Is the public an obsolete conception?