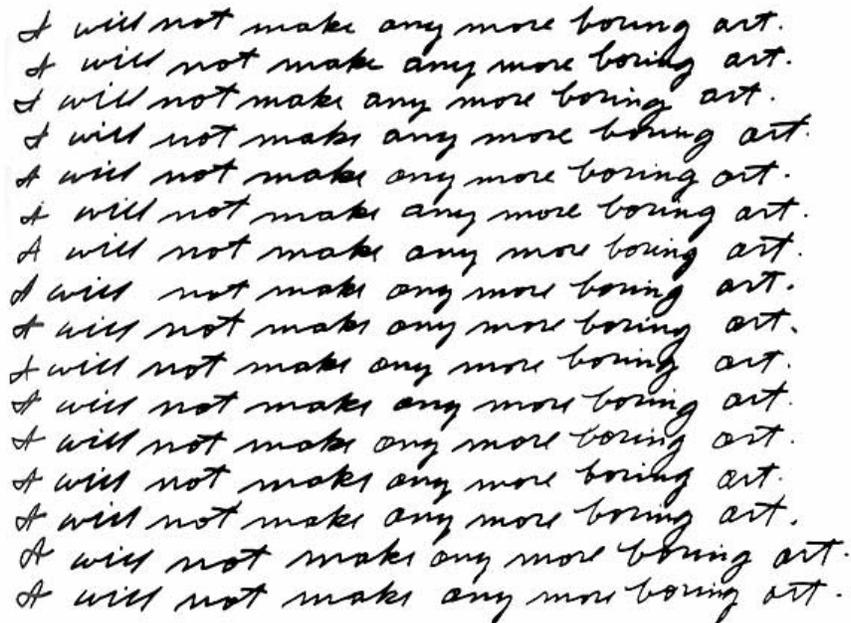


ARHS 4349 Seminar on Contemporary Art Fall 2006
Thinking Matters: Conceptualism, PhotoConceptualism and Video
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
Tuesday 5:00-7:50
Owen Fine Arts Center 1635
charissa@smu.edu

office location – Owen Fine Arts Center 3622
office phone – 214/768.2488
office hours – Monday-Wednesday 3:30-5:00



*I will not make any more boring art.
I will not make any more boring art.*

John Baldessari, *I will not make any more boring art*, 1971

Description

We might agree that any successful invocation of the art object in the present, whether painting or other, requires mediation on the part of the artist. That is to say, the artist begins by necessity with questioning "What is art?" As such, the work of art passes through several permutations of mediation, the means of which vary greatly. Mediation can be technological in nature, as with the computer-configured painting of Inka Essenhigh, Franz Ackermann, and John Pomara. It can also be performative and borne of the theatrics of placement and the human body, as in the work of Richard Tuttle and Coco Fusco.

Mediation, what might be considered a form of productive doubt, marks the supercession of what began over a century ago in the writings of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, with his teleological ordering of art's development through time. For Hegel, art was but the material incarnation of spirit. According to his philosophy, spirit would ultimately move beyond the need to take form as art and dematerialize into pure thought. Art, the physical thing, would thus become obsolete, or so it seemed. Though conceptual artists are wont to distance themselves from the Hegelian trajectory, the "dematerialization of the work of art" at the hand of conceptual artists in the 1970s seemed to be but the apotheosis of Hegel's aesthetics. After this temporary death of the art object arose new forms of art, largely bereft of the traditional tenets of the avant-garde. No longer would art pose a social promise or mode of resistance. Rather, artists made art that went along with the market place, mimicking it and selling to the highest bidder. Cast in another light, the transformation, if not demise, of "critical thinking" in art (modes of resistance and the critique of capitalism, for example) marks perhaps not the end of the avant-garde but the trigger of its mutation into something entirely other.

This seminar aims to:

- 1.) Investigate the disappearance and reappearance of the object over the last forty years according to at least three lines of intermingling but distinct inquiry: the Hegelian sublation of art into philosophy; the Marxist-situationist critique of the commodity; and emergent art practices – painting, photography, and video – in the present based on new forms of technology.
- 2.) Query the standing of form, process and beauty within this rubric of dematerialization.
- 3.) Query the existence of the avant-garde in the twentieth century and the avant-garde in the present.
- 4.) Develop a new discussion of aesthetics based on the coalescence of art, technology and political economy.

Course Requirements

- 1.) REVIEW – *The Art of Richard Tuttle* is an exhibition currently on view at the Dallas Museum of Art. You must write a three- to four-page journalistic review of the show. Your models for writing are the reviews of art, architecture, books and film in the *New York Times*. No research other than familiarizing yourself with the review format and critic's voice is necessary. Due date: Tuesday, October 3. [25%]
- 2.) PRESENTATION – Students will be required to make an introductory presentation on an artist or critic. Each presentation should include visuals. Each of you is responsible for guiding thirty minutes of class time. The length of the presentation should not exceed fifteen minutes, leaving fifteen minutes for discussion during the class. This presentation will provide each student with the opportunity to do preliminary research for the larger research assignment of the course, the essay described below. Please be certain to sign up for a presentation in one seminar during the term. Dates of presentations: November 7, 14, 21, and 28. [25%]
- 3.) ESSAY – Each student will write one essay that is fifteen pages in length. The subject of the essay will emerge from the seminar presentations. This assignment is to be an exercise in research, critical thinking and persuasive writing. While falling under the greater themes of the seminars, the subjects of the essays should be highly focused. Students should arrange to meet with the professor in office hours to discuss topics. The essay must be double-spaced and include a title page with the title of the essay underlined and student's information, a bibliography, and end or footnotes. Due date: Tuesday, December 5. [25%]
- 4.) ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION – Each student is required to do the reading before class, to attend each seminar, and participate with authenticity and critical verve. [25%]

Texts

There are books available for you at the bookstore and on reserve at Hamon Arts Library. The following is a list of required, optional and reserve texts for the course.

Required-

Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on Fine Art (Aesthetics) Volume 1*, trans. by T. M. Knox

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

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*

Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*

Reserve-

Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*

Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*

Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties*

Thierry de Duve, Arielle Pelenc, and Boris Groys, *Jeff Wall*

Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: Art and Theory at the End of the Century*

Jonathan Gilmore, book review of *Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity & Art of the Modern Age: Philosophy from Kant to Heidegger* in *The Art Bulletin*, Sept. 2002; available on-line at JSTOR
Ken Knabb, ed., *Situationist International Anthology*
Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*
David A. Ross, ed., *010101: Art in Technological Times*
Michael Rush, *Video Art*
Sohnya Sayres, ed., *The 60s without Apology*
Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*
Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds., *The New Media Reader*

Policy on Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If you will not be able to attend a specific session, you must make arrangements with another student to get copies of notes, etc. You are allowed one unexcused absence, after which your grade will be lowered one half grade. Assignments must be turned in on time. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled classes or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue) Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.) Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)

Schedule

Tuesday August 22

Introduction and sign-up for presentations

Tuesday August 29

History and Periodization I: Historical Consciousness

- Frederic Jameson, "Periodizing the Sixties," *The 60s without Apology*, Sohnya Sayres, ed.
- Thomas Crow, chapter 6, "1969," *The Rise of the Sixties*

Tuesday September 5

History and Periodization II: Hegelian Sublation and the End of Art

- G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on Fine Art (Aesthetics) Volume 1*, trans. by T. M. Knox, pp. 303-314; 421-442; 502-530; 573-576; 602-611
- Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, 17-30
- Jonathan Gilmore, book review of *Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity & Art of the Modern Age: Philosophy from Kant to Heidegger* in *The Art Bulletin*, Sept. 2002; available on-line at JSTOR

Tuesday September 12

Object, Commodity and Process I: Dematerialization and Reification

- Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*
- Nam June Paik, "Cybermated Art," *The New Media Reader*, 227-229
- Lucy R. Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art," *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 46-51

Tuesday September 19

Object, Commodity and Process II: Institutional Critique

- Thierry de Duve, "Echoes of the Readymade: Critique of Pure Modernism," *October*, vol. 70 (Autumn 1994) 60-97 available on-line at JSTOR and on reserve in Buskirk and Nixon, *The Duchamp Effect*
- Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: from Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 514-537

Tuesday September 26

Object, Commodity and Process III: Post-Medium Condition

-Rosiland Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea": *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*
-Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media," *The New Media Reader*, 261-275

Tuesday October 3

Avant-garde I: Psychology
-Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*
-DUE: 3- to 4-PAGE REVIEW

Tuesday October 10

Avant-garde II: Social Promise
-Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*

Tuesday October 17

Avant-garde III: Cynical Reason
-Andreas Huyssen, "Foreword: The Return of Diogenes as Postmodern Intellectual," in *Critique of Cynical Reason* by Peter Sloterdijk, ix-xxv
-Peter Sloterdijk, 3-9; 156-169

Tuesday October 24

Avant-garde III: Cynical Reason
-Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: Art and Theory at the End of the Century*, 1-32; 99-124
-Jeff Wall, "Photography and Liquid Intelligence," *Jeff Wall*, Thierry de Duve, Arielle Pelenc, Boris Groys and Jean-François Chevrier, eds., 90-93

Tuesday October 31

Art in the Age of Mechanical and Televisual Production
-Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, 217-252
-Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, part 1, pp. 3-76

Tuesday November 7

Art in the Age of Digital Production
-Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," *The New Media Reader*, 515-542
-Michael Rush, *Video Art*, 7-62
-John S. Weber, "Beyond the Saturation Point: The Zeitgeist in the Machine," *010101: Art in Technological Times*, David A. Ross, ed., 15-23

Tuesday November 14

Presentations

Tuesday November 21

Presentations

Tuesday November 28

Presentations

Tuesday December 5

Final Essay Due in Dr. Terranova's Mailbox
-DUE: 15-PAGE ESSAY

