

Art History 295/395/COVA 395: Art, Community and Activism

Mon/Wed 3-4:20, CWAC 153

Screening time: Mon 4:30-6:30, CWAC 157. This time slot will also be used for guest speakers and site visits.

Instructor: Rebecca Zorach

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Office hours: M 10-12, Th 2-4

Course description

This course considers recent issues at the intersection of art and activism, looking particularly at artists and projects in Chicago. Beginning with historical antecedents and theoretical background, the course moves quickly to very contemporary issues and interventions in art and tactical media, both inside and outside the art museum or gallery. We will consider a series of issues: how art and artists produce, define and critique notions of community, and map and creatively intervene in urban space; what it means for artists to develop expertise outside "art" per se (do-it-yourself culture, artists' efforts in HIV and biotech activism); the visual culture of antiwar and anti-globalization efforts; new media (digital), old media (silk screen, stencil, puppets), and "other" (film, broadcast, bicycles); performance and collaborative process. Course materials will include exhibition catalogues, interviews, manifestoes, websites, ephemeral materials, site visits in Chicago, and materials and expertise brought by students.

Requirements

Active participation in discussion [N.b. Quality is as important as quantity.

Especially appreciated are efforts at involving others in discussion]

Lead class discussion once, in groups that will depend on the size of the class. In order to prepare I ask that you meet with me as a group in office hours (or at another time to be arranged) the week before the class meeting you'll be leading. More info to come.

Contribute short review summaries and new links to online compilation of links on art and activism

Contribute short reading notes to chalk site (schedule tba)

Write one "program note" on an artist/activist individual or group for inclusion in "expo" program (to be explained)

Individual final project, 12-15 pp. paper or other project of comparable scope

Self-evaluation

Books ordered at Seminary Coop

Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another*

Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces*

Notes from Nowhere Collective, ed., *We Are Everywhere*

Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk, *From ACT-UP to the WTO*

Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance*

Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (optional background reading)

Other readings will be available on e-reserve. Additional materials for further reading and research will also be on reserve. Substitutions are possible based on student interests (to be discussed).

Resource list

http://lec.uchicago.edu/~utopias/mediawiki/index.php/Art_and_Activism_Links
(available through chalk site)

N.B. The Newberry Library and Chicago Historical Society exhibition, *Outspoken: Chicago's Free Speech Tradition*, is on view at the Newberry (60 W. Walton) until January 15.

Schedule of class meetings

January 3 Introduction

John Jordan, "Deserting the Culture Bunker" *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, vol. 3, 179-182

Charles Green, "Against Artists" from *free cooperation*

Kartemquin, *What the Fuck are These Red Squares?* (1970, 15 min.)

4:30 Screening:

Barbie Liberation Organization, *BLO Nightly News* (1994, 30 min.)

Street.Rec, *Retooling Dissent* (2002, 22 min.)

January 5 Historical/theoretical background 1

Benjamin, "The Author as Producer" in *Cultural Resistance Reader* (CRR), 67-81
Clement Greenberg, "Avant-garde and Kitsch" in *Art and Culture* pp. 3-21
Stephen Duncombe, "Introduction," CRR, 1-15
Mikhail Bakhtin, from *Rabelais and his world*, in CRR, 82-88

Suggested: Matthew Arnold, from *Culture and Anarchy*, in CRR, 49-58
Antonio Gramsci, from *The Prison Notebooks*, in CRR, 58-67

January 10 Historical/theoretical background 2

Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary art*, pp. 702-730 (readings on performance art)
Guy Debord, "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Terms of Organization and Action of the International Situationist Tendency," pp. 29-50 in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*
Arlene Raven, "Womanhouse" pp. 48-65 in *The Power of Feminist Art*
Robin D. G. Kelley, "Keepin' it (sur)real: Dreams of the marvelous," from *Freedom Dreams: the Black Radical Imagination* pp. 157-193

Suggested:

Laura Cottingham, "L.A. Womyn" in *Seeing Through the Seventies*, pp. 161-174
Kathy Battista, "Domestic Crisis: Women Artists and Derelict Houses in South London, 1974-1998" *Surface Tension*, 107-116

No screening scheduled; re-screening of Jan. 3 shorts possible in CWAC 153 (AH dept lecture in 157)

Public art, community art, and their discontents

January 12 **Visit to South Side Community Art Center**, 3831 S. Michigan Ave.
Meet outside CWAC courtyard on Greenwood at 3:00

Suzanne Lacy, "Introduction," pp. 19-47 in *Mapping The Terrain: New Genre Public Art*
Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, pp. 1-81

Suggested:

Mary Jane Jacob, "An Unfashionable Audience," pp. 50-59; Patricia C. Phillips, "Public Constructions," pp. 60-71; and Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art After Individualism," pp. 74-87, all in *Mapping The Terrain: New Genre Public Art*
Kester, pp. 82-151

January 17 Martin Luther King Day. No class/no screening

January 19 Debating public/community art

Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another* (entire book)

Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, pp. 152-191

Aaron Gach and Trevor Paglan, "Tactics without tears," pp. 143-157 in *JAP* vol. 1 n. 2 (2003)

Taking to the streets: media of protest

January 24 Media Activism

Critical Art Ensemble, "Electronic Civil Disobedience," ch. 1 from *Electronic Civil Disobedience and Other Unpopular Ideas*

Shepherd and Hayduk, *from ACT UP to the WTO*, Part Four ("Media and the New Social Movements")

www.indymedia.org; "Indymedia: don't hate the media, be the media," from *We Are Everywhere*, pp. 228-243

4:30 Speaker: Dara Greenwald, Video Data Bank, on 70s video collectives and activism

January 26 Writing on the wall (and on the streets)

Reading(s) from Eva Cockcroft, *Toward a People's Art*

Jeff Donaldson, "The rise, fall and legacy of the Wall of Respect movement" pp. 22-6 in *International Review of African American Art* v. 15 no1.

www.bikesagainstbush.com

Browse: Josh MacPhee, *Stencil Pirates*; James Mann, ed., *Peace Signs; A Brief History of Outrage*

January 31 But Is It Art?

Gregory Sholette, "Dark Matter: Activist art and the counter-public sphere," pp. 13-24 in *JAP* vol. 1 n. 3 (2004)

Derek Conrad Murray, "Hip-Hop vs. High Art: Notes on Race as Spectacle," in *Art Journal* summer 2004

Nato Thompson, "Contributions to a Resistant Visual Culture Glossary," pp. 167-178 in *JAP* vol. 1 n. 3 (2004)

4:30 Screening, Tony Silver, *Style Wars* (1982, 70 min.)

Feb 2 From ACT-UP to the WTO and back again

Shepherd and Hayduk, *from ACT UP to the WTO*, selections: "Introductions" (1-20); selections from part two (pp. 126-149, 172-201)
Douglas Crimp, "The Boys in My Bedroom" from *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*

Feb 7 No class – undergraduate break

Feb 9 The Carnavalesque

"Trickster's Time: the art of transforming protest" (section includes several different pieces), pp. 17-37 in *What If? Journal of Radical Possibilities*

"Carnival" section in *We are everywhere*, except pp. 228-255 (i.e., read 173-227 and 256-301)

Benjamin Shepard, "Playin' It Straight: Fighting To Turn NYC into a PATRIOT Act-Free Zone" pp. 63-73 in *JAP* vol. 1 no. 3 (2004)

Making Space: The Global and the Local

Feb. 14 Making Space

"Emergence" and "Networks" in *We are everywhere* (pp. 19-105)

Brett Bloom and Ava Bromberg, eds., *Belltown Paradise/Making their own plans*

4:30 Speakers: Ava Bromberg and Brett Bloom of *In the Field*

Feb. 16 Autonomy/nomadism

"Autonomy" section in *We are everywhere*

Hakim Bey, from TAZ, in *CRR*, pp. 113-118

Critical Art Ensemble, "Nomadic Power and Cultural Resistance," ch. 2 from *The Electronic Disturbance*

Suggested: Tom McDonough, "Situationist Space," pp. 241-265 in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*

Feb. 17 Recommended event: Panel discussion for *YOUGenics* exhibition, "Rounding up the Unusual Subjects: Art in the Age of Biotechnology and the Patriot Act" 6:00 pm, SAIC Auditorium, 280 S. Columbus Dr.

Feb. 21 Artist projects/spaces

Take a look at artist projects in *Surface Tension* [e.g. Colette Meacher, "Impish Acts of Sabotage," 27-38; Michael Rakowitz, "Works," 49-56; Laurie Palmer, "3 Acres," 67-74; Octavio Camargo, "Pé com Cabeça," 75-80; Lize Mogel, "Public Green," 103-106; Brandon Labelle, "Split Space: Practices of Transurban Life," 213-

228; Wochenklausur, "Art and Sociopolitical Intervention," 255-264]; optional:
"Utopia Station" section in *Dreams and Conflicts*

Meet only for 4:30 Screening: Andrea Meller, 156 Rivington (2002, 56 min.)

Feb. 23 Speaker: Jim Duignan, Stockyard Institute
Nato Thompson, "Until It's Gone: Taking Stock of Chicago's Multi-Use Centers"
in *The New Art Examiner*, March-April 2002, pp. 47-53

Feb. 28 Site visit: Mess Hall, 6932 N. Glenwood. Meet outside CWAC at 3:00

No readings; **Program Notes due**

Tactical Media and Technology

March 2 Pranks

<http://www.rtmark.com>

<http://www.theyesmen.org>

Rotten Milk, "Tactical Media: Chicago Overview" from *Lumpen* 89, pp. 10-11.

Andrew Boyd and Stephen Duncombe, "The Manufacture of Dissent: What the Left can learn from Las Vegas," pp. 34-47 in *JAP* vol. 1 no. 3 (2004)

Suggested: 347-396 in *CRR* (Reclaim the Streets, Reverend Billy, Billionaires for Bush, Electronic Disturbance)

Screening: Dan Ollman and Sarah Price, *The Yes Men* (2003, 83 min)

March 7 Technology

Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance*

"subRosa Manifestations," pp. 217-221 in Fernandez, Wilding and Wright,

Domain Errors

Browse *The Interventionists* catalogue

March 9 Space v. Time

Coco Fusco, "Questioning the Frame: Thoughts about maps and spatial logic in the global present," *In These Times*, Dec. 16, 2004

Conclusions

March 14 Final projects due

Based on student interest, a meeting may be scheduled early in spring quarter to present final projects to one another.