



## ARTS 3615: Issues in in 20th and 21st Century Art

2022 Winter Session	
<b>Total Class Sessions: 25</b>	<b>Instructor: Staff</b>
<b>Class Sessions Per Week: 6</b>	<b>Classroom: TBA</b>
<b>Total Weeks: 4</b>	<b>Office Hours: TBA</b>
<b>Class Session Length (Minutes): 145</b>	<b>Language: English</b>
<b>Credit Hours: 4</b>	

### **Course Description:**

This is a discussion-based course, designed to introduce diverse critical issues and debates that the contemporary art in 20th and 21st century illustrates and emphasizes through its creative practices. Students will examine theoretical and philosophical texts relevant to the developments in the visual arts of the 20th and 21st century within and against socio-historical and cultural contexts. Discussions, lectures, and selected readings will introduce a variety of critical methodologies for writing and thinking about art. Students will apply analytical skills and independent, critical thinking both orally and in writing.

The topics addressed in this course include:

- Globalism and Transnationalism in Art
- Art and Political Commitment
- Feminism and Art
- Disability in Art
- Queer Art from 1960 to Present
- Race and Identity
- Race and the Contemporary Art History Cannon
- Sexuality in Art
- 20<sup>th</sup> Century Photography
- Modern Art to 1950
- Modern Art since 1950
- Art and Cultural Heritage: Issue of Looting and Destruction
- Business of Art (Marketing, Copyrights, Investment)

### **Course Materials:**

**There is no textbook assigned specifically to this course, all required readings will be listed below in the syllabus and will be available to students.**

**Course Format and Requirements:**

Class time will be used for a combination of lectures, class discussions, and student presentations.

**Attendance:**

Attendance at lectures is vital to get a thorough understanding of the material. This course requires verbal participation in-class exercises, activities, and contributions to class discussions. Students must be present and actively involved to receive these points.

**Course Assignments:****Class Participation: 20%**

Students are expected to read the assigned texts ahead of class and participate in lively academically stimulating discussions. Attendance is required and punctuality expected.

**Two Short Writing Assignments: 30% (15% for each)**

Short 2-4 pages writing assignments to practice critical analytical and writing skills. Details will be discussed during the first meeting during the semester.

**Reading Presentation 20% (group project)**

Students will choose the topic from the required readings and prepare a leading discussion during the class, supported by a handout and a short PowerPoint presentation.

**Research Paper Writing Assignment (30%)**

Each student will choose a topic that represents a particular interest and will write 10-12 pages research paper, due by the last week of the semester.

**Course Assessment:**

Class participation	- 20%
Short Writing Assignments	- 30%
Reading Presentation	- 20%
Research Paper	- 30%

**Grading Scale (percentage):**

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
98-100	93-97	90-92	88-89	83-87	80-82	78-79	73-77	70-72	68-69	63-67	60-62	<60



### **Academic Integrity:**

Students are encouraged to study together, and to discuss lecture topics with one another, but all other work should be completed independently.

Students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty and integrity that are described in the Chengdu University of Technology's *Academic Conduct Code*. Any work suspected of violating the standards of the *Academic Conduct Code* will be reported to the Dean's Office. Penalties for violating the *Academic Conduct Code* may include dismissal from the program. All students have an individual responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the *Academic Conduct Code*.

### **Special Needs or Assistance:**

Please contact the Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material. Our goal is to help you learn, not to penalize you for issues which mask your learning.

### **Tentative Course Schedule:**

#### **Class 1 & 2:**

Review of the syllabus, introduction to the scope of the course, review of requirements and assignments.

#### **Topic: Overview - Modern Art**

A short surveying the myriad avant-garde movement that found inspiration in this time, some themes central to artists in the period from 1900 to 1950 that we will discuss include:

Art as more than a mere visual representation of objective reality: why is there such a shift in the visuality of art around 1900? What motivating factors are there?

Art as the depiction of modernity: how do representations of the modern city often define modern art? What sorts of visual tropes allow us to discern an artist's attitude toward modernity and the new city?

Art as a means of social or political engagement: how does art continue—from a trajectory started in the middle of the nineteenth century—to approach issues of social justice or to allow politics into its form and subject matter?

Art as a reflection of history: how do historical events or changes direct the course of art in the early twentieth century?

#### **Readings:**



Selections from: Mary Ann Caws “*Manifesto: A Century of Isms*” (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), “Founding and Manifesto of Futurism,” Tristan Tzara’s excellent Dada manifestos, and André Breton’s Surrealist manifestos.

“Picasso and Braque – Brothers in Cubism” – Michael Brenson, *New York Times*, Sept. 22, 1989  
“New Encounters with les Demoiselles d’Avignon: Gender, Race, and the Origins of Cubism.” Chave, Anna, *Art Bulletin*. v. 76, no. 4 (1994), 597–612.

**Selection from:**

Thomas E. Crow, “*The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent*” (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

Barbara Haskell, “*Blam: The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance, 1958–1964*” (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1984)

Alexander Dubadze and Suzanne Hudson, eds. “*Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present.*” (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)

Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel, “*Themes of Contemporary Art,*” 3rd Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

**Class 3 & 4:**

**Topic: Art and Political Commitment**

This goal of this section is to examine the relationship between art and politics—not only how art reflects political ideologies or the political events of any given historical moment, but also how the artist can be examined as a committed worker in the political realm. This class will look at how political thinking has impacted the arts, both in terms of style and subject, and in terms of moments of heightened transformation in history. We also consider how the arts have affected history and politics—seeing art as a means of direct political action as well as the means to instigate social change, sometimes in a quieter way. This topic is surely vast, with the impulse to delve into the endlessly circular definitions of “What is art?” “What is propaganda?” and “What is the political?”

**Themes:**

How do we discuss the relationship of art to politics (subject, style, material, format, context, intention)?

Are concepts of beauty and pleasure inherently in conflict with art made for a political purpose?

What is the relationship of artistic freedom to political commitment?

Must an artist take a committed political stance?

Is commitment the same as making art that is enlightening or educational?

How do class, race, and gender play into expectations about political art?

Are art and propaganda mutually exclusive?



Readings:

Leighton, Patricia. "The White Peril and l'art nègre: Picasso, Primitivism, and Anti-colonialism." *Art Bulletin*. v. 72, no. 4. December 1990. 609–630.

Selections from:

Shapiro, Theda. *Painters and Politics: The European Avant-Garde and Society*. New York: Elsevier, 1976.

Rockhill, Gabriel. *Radical History and the Politics of Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Egbert, Donald Drew. *Social Radicalism and the Arts in Western Europe*. New York: Knopf, 1970.

The Great Utopia: *The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-1932*. New York: Guggenheim/Rizzoli, 1992

**Class 5 & 6:**

**Topic: Globalism and Transnationalism**

Globalization and transnationalism are often perceived as phenomena that have had their most apparent impact on art in the contemporary era. Several scholars such as Andreas Huyssen, however, have accurately and persuasively discussed globalization and transnationalism as historically relevant and pervasive topics that contest the belief that cultures can be or were ever actually "pure." Instead, cultures/nations/ethnicities/groups have always inevitably interacted, collided, and blended throughout time.

Readings:

Andreas Huyssen, ed., "Introduction," *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 1–23.

Selections from:

Jonathan Harris, ed., *Globalization and Contemporary Art* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

Kobena Mercer, ed., *Exiles, Diasporas, and Strangers* (Boston: The MIT Press, 2008).

**Class 7 & 8:**

**The first short writing assignment due**

**Topic: Feminism and Art**

This class will look at how feminist thinking has impacted the arts—both by looking at the work of women artists influenced by these ideas since the 1960s, and by considering how a feminist



lens can change the way we look at art made throughout history, and even the category of art itself.

Themes:

Constructs and Performances of Masculinity and Femininity

The ‘Personal’ is Political—and Art is Personal and Political

History, Myth, and Narration—Deconstructed and Reconstructed

Chronologically, “Feminist Art,” a category of art made by women consciously aligning their art practices with the politics of the Women’s Rights Movement and feminist theory, emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Readings:

Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” *ARTnews* (January 1971), 22–39, 67–71.

Griselda Pollock, “Feminist Interventions in the Histories of Art” (1988), in Eric Fernie, ed., *Art History and Its Methods* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 296–313.

Anna Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power,” *Arts* 64:5 (January 1990), 44–63.

Blake Gopnik, “What Is Feminist Art?” *Washington Post*, Sunday, April 22, 2007

**Class 9 & 10:**

**Topic: Disability in Art**

We will discuss examples of modern and contemporary artists who engage with issues of disability in their work. A significant issue in contemporary theory is the deconstruction of the embodied nature of humanism. In humanistic thought, the mind and body are separate, with the body acting as a vehicle for the mind. Information technologies, scientific discoveries, and bioengineering challenge the role of the body, yet they are unable to fully replace the human body. Moreover, war, plastic surgery, and prosthetics have had a significant impact of the role of the body as well as of representations of people with disabilities, specifically as powerful subjects in critiques of war.

**See: DisArt Festival: [www.disartfestival.org](http://www.disartfestival.org)**

**Class 11 & 12:**

**Topic: Queer Art 1960-Present**

This topic has two key concepts: censorship and visibility. Until very recently it was not socially acceptable to be out as an LGBT or Q person. As such, queer art over the twentieth century has been shaped by, on the one hand—the need to conceal references to queer identity and



experiences and, on the other—a desire for visibility: the cultural imperative to create representations of queer identity because none exist. Scholars, namely Richard Meyer and Jonathan D. Katz, have explored how mid-twentieth century artists (including Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and Agnes Martin) developed visual codes to signify queerness in clandestine ways. After this period, the Stonewall Riots of 1969 marked a shift towards more visibility. The confrontation was part of a groundswell of activism tied to the protest spirit of the period, including civil rights and women’s liberation, and it led to a new social movement for lesbian and gay rights. Unlike previous forms of gay activism, gay liberation promoted visibility by encouraging people to “come out” as LGBTQ, rather than remain closeted and/or assimilate to dominant social norms. This ethos was manifested in art as well as art history: artists became emboldened to make art about their sexual identity, and LGBTQ art historians began to recuperate the work of LGBTQ art that went unnoticed, had been censored, or written out of history books. The desire to document and celebrate depictions of queer identity, life, and history is an example of the politicization of sexuality that emerged during this period.

### Readings:

Whitney Davis, “Homoerotic Art Collection from 1750 to 1920,” *Art History* 24:2 (April 2001): 247-277.

David Halperin, “Is There a History of Sexuality?” *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, eds. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, David M. Halperin, pp. 416-431 (New York: Routledge, 1993).

Selections from:

Catherine Lord and Richard Meyer, *Queer Art, and Culture*. (London: Phaidon, 2014).

David Getsy, ed. *Queer* (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

### Class 13 & 14:

#### Topic: Race & Identity

A lot of research has been done on African American/Black identity especially as it is so intimately tied in with larger themes of American art. Other races/ethnicities and other cultural identities are often lesser known and more poorly represented in survey courses and the discipline in general. This chapter here does not purport to be a thorough overview of all or even most of the various cultural groups of the United States, but rather offers a starting point when discussing art in the context of race and identity in the United States.

#### **Readings: (selected from):**

Bearden, Romare and Harry Henderson. *A History of African American Artists: From 1972 to the Present* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993).

Chang, Gordon, Mark Johnson and Paul Karlstrom, eds. *Asian American Art: A History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).





Mercer, Kobena. "Reading Racial Fetishism: The Photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe." *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Yenawine, Philip, Marianne Weems, and Brian Wallis. "Introduction," *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America* (New York: NYU Press, 1999). *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America* provides a good compilation of essays that discuss the effect of the Culture Wars during the 1980s.

### **Class 15 & 16:**

#### **The Second short writing assignment due**

#### **Topic: - Race and the Contemporary Art History Canon**

From a perspective rooted in critical race theory, this lesson provides students with an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing key artworks, theories, and practices in art history and museum studies. We will explore the role of race in contemporary visual arts, visual culture, and exhibition practices, investigating how the field of art history, the presentation of race, and whiteness are inextricably tied. We will also study the ways in which artists subvert, contest, and speak to this complex history and the often-exclusionary art historical canon.

Some questions to consider are:

Art: What is high art, fine art, or low art? Who defines this? What is the canon? Who is allowed in? Who is not? Who decides this? How has the art historical canon changed over the years? Or has it?

Race: What is race? Who defines it? How does it interface in the arts? What is whiteness? How does it impact the master narrative of art history? How has race been used, documented, or alluded to in art—historically and in the present? Does race of the artist matter? Why? Why not?

#### **Readings:**

Nancy Hynes, and John Picton, "Yinka Shonibare." *African Arts* 34, no. 3 (2001): 60–95.

Judith E. Stein, "Sins of Omission: Fred Wilson's Mining the Museum." *Slought Salons* (November 2003).

John Pepper, "Africa's Diaspora of Images." *Third Text* 19, no. 4 (2005): 339–55.

Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient" in Kymberly N. Pinder ed., *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History*. (New York: Routledge, 2002): 69–86.

Bridget R. Cooks, "Confronting Terrorism: Teaching the History of Lynching through Photography," *Pedagogy* 1, (2008): 134–5.

Salah H. Hassan, Brett de Bary, and Cheryl Finley, eds., "Special Issue: Strange Fruit: Lynching, Visuality, and Empire." *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* 20 (Fall 2006).

Jennifer A. Gonzalez, "Fred Wilson: Material Museology" in *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008): 64–118.





Walter Mignolo, “Museums in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity: Fred Wilson’s Mining the Museum (1992)” in Jonathan Harris, ed., *Globalization and Contemporary Art* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011): 71–95.

### **Class 17 & 18:**

#### **Topic: Sexuality in Art**

We can study art to learn about different aspects of sex in society—ideas about fertility, morality, beauty standards, gender ideals, and national identity. Especially since the feminist art movement, artists—namely women and people of color—have devised new ways to use art for gender, sex, and race for their own self-determination. Students will become familiar with the influential scholarship of John Berger, Laura Mulvey, and bell hooks to gain skills for analyzing the gender and racialized constructions of sexuality.

#### **Readings:**

Anna Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power.” *Arts Magazine* (vol. 64 no. 5, January 1990): 44-63.

Whitney Davis, “Founding the Closet: Sexuality and the Creation of Art History.” *Art Documentation* 11 no. 4 (Winter 1992): 171-175.

Carol Duncan, “Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting” *Artforum* (December 1973), 30-39.

#### **Selected from:**

John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin 1972).

bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2015).

When Naked Selfies Become Wall Art: <https://www.bustle.com/articles/7642-erin-m-riley-artist-weaves-tapestries-from-nude-selfies-photos>

#### **Online resources:**

Heilbrunn Timelines on the History of Art (Sex [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hi/hi\\_sex.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hi/hi_sex.htm)).

### **Class 19 & 20:**

#### **Topic: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Photography**

We focus on a key aspect of the history of photography: how twentieth-century photographers balanced the camera’s capacity for documentation with its aesthetic possibilities to convey a variety of social and cultural messages.

See: BBC Series: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/photography/genius/>



Art and Photography: 1990s to the Present:

[https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ap90/hd\\_ap90.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ap90/hd_ap90.htm)

Art and Photography: The 1980s; [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ap80/hd\\_ap80.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ap80/hd_ap80.htm)

### **Class 21 & 22:**

#### **Topic: Art and Cultural Heritage: Looting and Destruction**

Almost daily there are reports of the destruction and looting of art and objects of cultural heritage of local, regional, national, and international significance, notably coming out of the Middle East, but also from many other places in the world. Popular books and movies, such as *The Rape of Europa*, *The Monuments Men*, and *The Woman in Gold*, have brought more attention to the subject, especially regarding outrages perpetrated during World War II, while scholars, policymakers, lawyers, conservationists, and forensic scientists are intimately involved in combating atrocities currently being committed. Cultural property crime is not, however, a new phenomenon, but a tactic employed over millennia across continents and against many different cultural groups for a variety of reasons. The thematic subject of art and cultural heritage (looting and destruction) offers students the opportunity to engage with a potent subject that can elicit cultural empathy, to critically examine a historical and contemporary societal problem that affects their present and future, to examine their own attitudes and values, and to consider how art intersects with issues of power.

There will be a focus on three major themes, with a section for each:

Destruction/iconoclasm and the erasure of culture (due to ideology, neglect, or disregard for the object)

Looting and the appropriation of objects (for purposes of propaganda and economic gain)

Restitution, repatriation, reconstruction, and artistic interventions

Watch the movie: 2006 film *The Rape of Europa*, available online through Hulu.

Ethical Question: *Would you buy Hitler's Art?* —see Michael E. Miller, “Hitler’s artwork sells for \$450,000, raising questions about auction house ethics,” Washington Post, June 22, 2015.

See: <https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2010/01/monuments-men-rescuing-art-stolen-by-nazis>

See: Lieber Code: <https://www.uscbs.org/1863-lieber-code.html>

“Why We Have a Civic Responsibility to Protect Cultural Treasures During Wartime”

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-we-have-civic-responsibility-protect-cultural-treasures-during-wartime-180954887/>

### **Class 23 & 24:**

#### **Topic: The Market of Art (Business, Marketing, Investment)**



Issues with art as medium of investment, influence in marketing, business, art authenticity, copyrights, legal issues.

Pownall, Rachel Ann Jane, “Art as a Financial Investment” (March 2007). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=978467> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.978467>

David W. Galenson “Artists and the Market: From Leonardo and Titian to Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst” – *NBER (National Bureau of Economic Research) working paper 13377*, revised Jan. 20, 2022.

Jonathan E. Schroeder, “The Artist in Brand Culture” in “*Marketing the arts: a fresh approach*” Daragh O’Reilly, Finola Kerrigan, eds., Routledge, 2010.

Fishman, Joseph, Creating Around Copyright (March 13, 2015). *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 128, no. 5, pp. 1333-1404, 2015, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2465590>

Hagtvedt, Henrik and Patrick, Vanessa, Art Infusion: The Influence of Visual Art on the Perception and Evaluation of Consumer Products (2008). *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 45, June 2008, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2086795>

### **Class 25: - Research Paper Due**

**A brief discussion of each person research paper summaries.**