Art and the City: Buenos Aires, New York, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City

Class Code  ARTH-UA 9650 or SASEM-UG 9152

Instructor Details  Dr. Florencia Malbrán
fmm234@nyu.edu
Office hours: by appointment

Class Details  Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 15:30 to 17:00 pm.
Location to be confirmed.

Class Description  This course studies modern and contemporary art and architecture through a strategic focus on the cities of Buenos Aires, New York, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City. We consider key artworks and architectural movements, approaching art history in urban, sociohistorical and contextual terms. Emphasis is placed upon the city as a hub for the production and reception of art.

Cities are multifarious complexes of paradoxical elements, where rhythms of stasis and motion coexist. Every city absorbs creative interchange, while also triggering different types of transformation. Our speculations on the urban environment will bring up multiple questions that point back to and extend beyond the mere physical structure of the city, discovering arenas of social action. How does art exploits the characteristics of the metropolis? How is art distributed and consumed throughout the dense fabric of the city? We will explore art (primarily Latin American art) as a staging ground for the city, and the city as staging ground for art.

Developing comparative perspectives on Buenos Aires, New York, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City will illuminate the particularities of the places under investigation, albeit with reference to aesthetic trajectories as well as broader technological, economic, and social-political changes. New York is included in our selected network of Latin American cities, acknowledging its critical importance as a center of cultural experimentation where artists (including Latin American artists) share ideas in a global context.

Work in class will focus on both visual and textual analysis, employing images, manifestos and critical essays. The course includes a lively program of tours throughout Buenos Aires, visits to museums and private art collections, and conversations with guest contemporary artists.

Desired Outcomes  Students will:

Demonstrate a critical understanding of Latin American art and architecture, recognizing the complexity of the cultures of Buenos Aires, New York, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City.

Analyze and interpret significant works of art, buildings, manifestos, texts, ideas, and events in their historical contexts.
Examine both shared and diverse human experiences in order to recognize similarities and differences across cultures; comprehend the relevance of the past to the understanding of the present.

Reflect on their own assumptions and ideas about geographically or culturally unfamiliar cultures.

Read and write about art and architecture with a critical point of view that displays depth of thought, is mindful of theoretical traditions, and demonstrates personal engagement.

Assessment Components

Students must come to each class having read the material carefully, and be prepared to speak intelligently. Participation in class discussion is essential and only possible if you do the mandatory readings. Additional “suggested readings” are optional.

There will be a midterm exam, concerning identification and discussion of slides along with definitions of vocabulary words.

There will also be a short paper (1000-1300 words approximately) and a longer final paper (3500 words approximately). Instructions regarding the papers will be provided at a later date. If you turn a draft of your final paper one week early, I will personally go through it with you for rewriting so that you may submit it again for a better grade.

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<th>Assessment Components</th>
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<td>Class participation and attendance</td>
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<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>First paper</td>
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<td>Final paper</td>
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Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays / exam questions and the work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** Work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, or poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

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<td>79-77</td>
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Final Exam dates cannot be changed under any circumstance. Mid term exam dates will be scheduled with each lecturer. Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from examination (with authorization, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, or an increased weighting on an alternative assessment component, etc.).

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the instructor.

**Final essays must be submitted to the instructor in print and electronic copy.** If students are not in Buenos Aires they must send a printed copy via express postal mail (i.e. FeDEX, DHL, UPS, etc) to the NYU Center in Buenos Aires – Anchorena 1314 - (C1425ELF) Argentina. This copy must arrive before or on the date of established deadline.

**Attendance Policy**

- NYU’s Global Programs (including NYU Buenos Aires) must adhere to a **strict policy regarding course attendance. No unexcused absences are permitted.**
- Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 1% from the student’s final course grade.
- Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies.
- Absences due to illness or mental health issues must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez, within one week of your return to class.
- A doctor’s note excusing your absence is mandatory for the absence to be justified. The note must clearly state that student is not able to attend class.
- **The date on the doctor’s note must be the date of the missed class or exam.**
- Being absent to any kind of examination must be informed at or before the time of said examination via email to the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez (moira.perez@nyu.edu).
- Requests to be excused for non-illness purposes must be discussed with your instructor prior to the date(s) in question. (If you want the reasons of your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your lecturer, please contact the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez, at moira.perez@nyu.edu)
- Students with more than four unexcused absences will fail the course.
- Each class lasts one hour and half or two hours. **Missing one class represents one absence.** For courses that meet once a week (three-hour block), missing one class represents two absences.
- Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of a class will count as a full absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Make-up classes for Holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.
Late Submission of Work

Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director for Academic Programs during office hours (Mon – Fri, 9.30 am to 5 pm), who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Academic Programs and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Language Courses: Work submitted within 2 days after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100-point scale. Written work submitted after 2 days after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Plagiarism Policy

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is intimately related to the teaching and learning process. When writing research papers, you need to keep in mind that plagiarism includes the use of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It also includes presenting and/or paraphrasing discourse or ideas from a published work (in print or on internet) without quotation marks and clear without acknowledgment of the original source.

For formatting in your papers, refer to MLA guidelines.

On matters regarding academic integrity, refer to the section “Academic Standards and Discipline” in the College of Arts and Science Bulletin http://bulletin.cas.nyu.edu/page/academic.policies#STANDARDS and to “Statement on Academic Integrity” in NYU Expository Writing Program: Policies and Procedures: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/policies__procedures.html#statementacademicintegrity

All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.

It is expected that the student follow the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

Required Texts


**Supplemental Texts**

**Suggested readings (topic by topic)**

I. Latin American Art and the City


II. Avant Garde in Latin America. Art in the 1920s and 1930s.

II. a.


II. b.


I. c.


I. d.


I. e.


III. a.


III. b.


III. c.


III. d.


III. e.


IV. Aftermath: the current stakes of art in Latin America. Globalization, participation, site specificity.

IV. a.


Note: This Syllabus is subject to change

Week 1
Feb. 6-8

I. Course presentation: Latin American art and the city.

I. a. Framing Latin American art.
I. b. The city as an arena for the encounter between differences.

Readings:


Week 2
Feb. 15-20

II. Avant Garde in Latin America. Art in the 1920s and 1930s.

II. a. FOCUS BUENOS AIRES:
Readings:
Liernur, José Francisco. “Arquitectura en la Argentina del Siglo XX: La Construcción de la Modernidad.” (excerpts).

Architectural walking tour (TBC)

**Week 3**  
**Feb. 22-27**

**II. b.** FOCUS MEXICO CITY:  
Mexican muralism. The Mexican Revolution and José Vasconcelos’ new educational program (1920-1924). Modern architecture intertwined with muralism. Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros.

**II. c.** Antonio Berni: Muralism beyond Mexico?

Readings:
Coffey, Mary K. “The ‘Mexican Problem’: Nation and ‘Native’ in Mexican Muralism and Cultural Discourse.”

“Manifesto of the Union of Mexican Workers, Technicians, Painters and Sculptors.”

Rochford, Desmond. “The Technology of Utopia.”

Fraser, Valerie. “Mexico.”


**Week 4**  
**Mar. 1-2**

**II. d.** The Modern Art Week (1922) and the Brazilian avant-garde. The Brazilwood manifesto (1924) and the Anthropophagite Manifesto (1928) [Manifesto Pau-Brasil; Manifesto Antropófago]. Tarsila do Amaral and Oswald de Andrade.

Readings:

Andrade, Oswald de. “Anthropophagite Manifesto.”

Andrade, Oswald de. “The Brazilwood Manifesto”.

**Museum visits:**

**Week 5**  
**Mar. 6-8**

**II. e.** FOCUS NEW YORK:  
Abstraction, Non-objectivity and Constructive art. The Guggenheim Museum and Frank Lloyd Wright’s architectural thought. New York as an international axis for Latin American art.
Readings:

Museum visits:

Week 6
Mar. 13-15

III. a. Abstract Art and the creation of a new space. Inauguration of Brasilia. The Ruptura and Neo-concrete movements of Brazil.

Readings:
Brett, Guy. “A Radical Leap”.
Fraser, Valerie. “Brazil.”
Gullar, Ferreira. “Neo-Concrete Manifesto.”

Midterm examination

Week 7
Mar. 20-22
III. b. FOCUS RIO DE JANEIRO:

Readings:
Rolnik, Suely. “Molding a Contemporary Soul: The Empty-Full of Lygia Clark.”
Clark, Lygia. “Beasts [Bichos].”
Oiticica, Hélio. “Selected Writings.”

Week 8
Apr. 3-5
III. c. Conceptual Art in Latin America

Readings:
Ramírez, Mari Carmen. “Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America.”
LeWitt, Sol. “Sentences on Conceptual Art.”

GUEST LECTURE. April 3, 7-8:30 pm:
Conversation with artist Jorge Macchi
**Week 9**

**Apr. 6-10**


**Readings:**
- Greco, Alberto. “Vivo-Dito Manifesto”
- Minujín, Marta, Santantonín, Rubén, and Romero Brest, Jorge. “La Menesunda.”
- Ferrari, León. “Artist’s Response.”
- Suárez, Pablo. “Letter of Resignation.”
- Gramuglio, María Teresa and Rosa, Nicolás. “Tucumán is Burning. Statement of the Exhibition in Rosario.”

**Week 10**

**Apr. 12-17**

**III. e.** FOCUS BUENOS AIRES/FOCUS NEW YORK: Violence and memory.


**Readings:**
- Simpson, David. “Remembering the Dead.”
- Battiti, Florencia and Rossi, Cristina. “The Art of Remembering”.

**Museum visits:**

Visit to Parque de la Memoria. Monumento a las Víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado.

**Short paper due**

**Week 11**

**Apr. 19-24**

**IV.** Aftermath: the current stakes of art in Latin America. Globalization, participation, site specificity.

**IV. a.** MEXICO CITY THROUGH THE LENS OF ART: Francis Alÿs and Gabriel Orozco.

**Readings:**
- Bourriaud, Nicolas. “Relational Form” and “Art of the 1990s.” In *Relational Aesthetics*.
- Bishop, Claire. “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics.”
- Farquharson, Alex. “Curator and Artist.”
**Screening:**

**Week 12**
Apr. 26-27

**IV. b. RIO DE JANEIRO THROUGH THE LENS OF ART:** Ernesto Neto and Beatriz Milhazes.

**Readings:**
Herkenhoff, Paulo. “Beatriz Milhazes —the Brazilian Trove.”


**Museum visits:**
Visit to an art exhibition or private art collection. *(To be confirmed)*

**Week 13**
May 3-4.

**IV. c. BUENOS AIRES THROUGH THE LENS OF ART:** Guillermo Kuitca, Pablo Siquier, Jorge Macchi.

**Readings:**

Mesquita, Ivo. “Cartographies” and “Latin America: Another Cartography.” In *Cartographies*.


**Week 14**
May 8-10

**Conversation with guest contemporary artist.**

**Week 15**
May 15-17

**Final Paper Due**

**Classroom Etiquette**
Please refrain from using your cell phone in class, and restrict laptop usage to course-related purposes.
**Your Instructor**

Florenica Malbrán teaches at New York University in Buenos Aires, and was Craig M. Cogut Visiting Professor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Brown University in Spring 2017. She holds a Ph.D. from Rosario National University, Argentina, and a M.A. from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York, where she was a Bruce T. Halle Family Foundation Fellow. Specializing in Latin American art history, contemporary art, curatorial studies, and critical theory, Malbrán has served on the faculties of NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study in New York City and Universidad de San Andrés in Buenos Aires.

Also a curator, she has organized exhibitions in Argentina, the United States, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, and Paraguay. She has been in residence in France, Switzerland, and Spain, and was the Hilla Rebay International Fellow at the Guggenheim Museums in New York, Bilbao, and Venice. She has held curatorial positions at the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires and the Pinacoteca do Estado in São Paulo.

Her shows have been reviewed in Clarín and La Nación in Argentina, O Globo in Brazil, El Tiempo in Colombia, and Artforum in the United States. Selected catalog writing includes essays on Guillermo Kuitca and on Pablo Siquier for Argentina’s La Nación book series on seminal national artists, on Ernesto Neto for the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, and on Ragnar Kjartansson for the Icelandic Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale.