Course Title

Art & Ideas: Art World Today – Berlin & Beyond

Course Number
ARTCR-UE 9153 D01

Instruction Mode: In-Person

Fall 2022

Lecturer Contact Information
Kimberly Bradley (she/her)

Your instructor will inform you about learner hours (one-on-one meetings).

Prerequisites
Interest in contemporary art and its structures.

Units Earned
3

Course Details
Thursdays 3:00–5:45 pm

Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class.

In the interest of protecting the NYU Berlin community, we are closely following guidance around COVID-19 from the Robert Koch Institute (Germany’s institute for disease control and prevention), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization, and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority. You are required to adhere to the most recent policies. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations so require. You will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol.
Course Description
The contemporary art world is an interplay of aesthetics and economics; egos and idealism. Museums mount blockbuster shows, biennials proliferate, art fairs go corporate, and auction sales hit new records. At the same time emerging artists struggle, and art criticism remains in perpetual crisis. Art in Berlin may be more production-based and experimental than in other major western cities, but it is still a microcosm of larger movements. Through readings, discussions, site visits, guest speakers, and student responses in the form of multimedia art projects and art writing, this course explores and exposes the conventions, trends, and current developments of contemporary art today, always keeping Berlin’s local context in mind.

This course also delves into art’s prevailing discourses (especially important during current pandemic-driven paradigm shifts) – and develops students’ own artistic practices and ambitions – via analysis, experiential learning, and input from professionals currently working in the art’s institutional and commercial

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
Through key concepts, discourses and challenges presented via primary and secondary sources, site visits and guest speakers, writing and/or multimedia art production, students learn to analyze and navigate the international contemporary art world. Students also gain insights into local and hyperlocal norms in Berlin and connect their own interest in art and art practices (art writing/curatorial studies/artistic production) to those in a city in which many boundaries and roles have not yet been defined. Shortly after the mid-term period, each student will develop an independent final project, which can take the form of a written paper (3000–3500 words) or a multimedia artwork or project. Its initial abstract/concept will be presented and discussed in class in the middle of the term.

Course Approach to Teaching & Learning (CATL)
As an instructor, I strive to open a space in which students feel comfortable and inspired to synthesize theory and practice in varied ways; connect dots between the assigned theoretical readings and the artworks and art experts we experience in person. This course focuses more on bridging and expanding upon ideas – as a collaborative group, in which students are essentially co-creators of the learning environment – than parsing theoretical concepts. Since the avant-gardes more than a century ago, art has asked pertinent (often unanswerable) questions rather than providing solutions; our classroom atmosphere reflects this spirit.

Assessment Components
Contemporary artists apply different lenses to seeing their worlds; students also learn based on widely varied backgrounds and world views. I apply a standard grading procedure to papers and presentations for the sake of fairness but also account for student development throughout the semester.

Class participation: 20% of total marks
This course is discursive: As I present information or show artworks in class or in galleries, the floor is open to students to respond to the work, connect what they see to course readings, seek clarification, express their views, and discuss topics as a group. Participation can also mean attentive presence and listening. The proposal/presentation on 3 November will be assessed in this category.

Writing assignments: 20% of total marks
Three writing assignments, one a response to Berlin’s art environment, two extensive art-critical assignments.

**Mid-term exam: 25% of total marks**
This is an open-book in-class essay exam comprising four questions. The exam’s essay answers are assessed on coherence/clarity of argument and criticality, not length.

**One final project/paper: 35% of total marks**
An independent final project, which can take the form of a written paper (3000–3500 words) or a multimedia artwork or project, pertaining to or evolving from topics or discourses related to contemporary art as discussed in class. Its initial abstract/concept will be presented and discussed in class in the middle of the term.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

**Required Text(s)**
Electronic Resources (accessible on Brightspace)

Please follow this link for the NYU Berlin Library Catalogue or the link on NYU Berlin's website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

**Session 1 – 1 September 3:00–5:45pm**
Introduction
What is contemporary art?
What is the superstructure that allows its production and distribution (the art world)?

*Learning Outcomes:* Understanding how contemporary art is defined in the art-historical canon, as well as its current issues (decolonization and inclusion among them), and former and current prevailing discourses. Understanding the network that is the “art world” (a term coined in the 1960s) and zooming in on Berlin as a microcosm of this art world.

**Session 2 – 8 September – 3:00–5:45pm**
The Art World as System, and Berlin’s place within it

*Readings for this session:*

*Learning Outcomes:* Taking Alloway’s network theory as a point of departure, students will gain an understanding of the components, players, and intricacies of the art world, then consider the unique situation that caused Berlin’s art world to develop and interconnect to the greater art scene as it has, and continues to do.
For the last hour of class time, we visit galleries on Auguststrasse, the hub where Berlin's post-Wall art world originated.

****Writing assignment (due by midnight 14 September)
Explore three exhibitions in Berlin. Write an 800-word response to the 1) art and 2) the conditions you see. A detailed assignment brief, as well as a list of suitable art venues, will be provided.

Session 3 – 15 September – 3:00–5:45pm
-Isms and micro-movements in contemporary art – and how to view, assess, and interpret the works in them

Readings for this session:
(additional tutorial pages from Gilda Williams’s book How to Write About Contemporary Art will be passed out in class)

Learning Outcomes: Understanding how the major ‘isms’ of contemporary art, beginning in the 1960s, segued into a plurality of micromovements that both coexist and cycle until today (plurality as per Heiser’s arguments in this week’s reading). And understanding the purpose of art criticism, and, in the context of discussing the writings due this week, learning several approaches to how to look at and write about artworks in all genres and mediums.

Session 4 – 22 September – 3:00–5:45pm
Art People: The Collector

Readings for this session:
optional: *Fraser, Andrea: “Le 0.01%, C’est Moi,” Texte zur Kunst, 83, September 2011, pp. 1–7.

Visit: Boros Collection with guided tour

Learning Outcomes: This session begins a “subthread” in this syllabus – the art world is populated by people in various important roles. We’ll begin at the “end,” so to speak, with the collector, the person who buys or acquires a work of art – and how this particular role has developed not only in art history (originally only the wealthy commissioned and purchased art) but since the turn of the twenty-first century.

Writing assignment (due by midnight 28 September)
Find a work or work group at the Boros collection that resonates with you. Write a positive review (350 words).
Find a work or work group at Boros that you feel is unsuccessful or fails. Write a
negative review (350 words).

IMPORTANT: Submit both reviews on one document.

Session 5 – 29 September – 3:00–5:45pm
First half of session: Art writing lab
Second half of session: The art market

Readings for this session:
*"Artspace editors: “Beyond Supply and Demand: How Artworks are Priced,” Artspace, August 24, 2017
https://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/collection-101/beyond-supply-and-demand-how-artworks-are-priced-54964
*Watch: “Soaring NFT Sales Redraw the Art Market.”
https://www.ft.com/video/2cfc76ad-5e03-4230-97da-aae12a9681cb?playlist-name=latest&playlist-offset=1

Learning Outcomes: The first half of class, we will workshop this week’s assigned writings as a group, in the process gaining an understanding of and applying certain art-critical writing approaches. The second half of class, students gain an understanding of the mechanisms of—and valuations within—the art market, which only began evolving when art became portable (when paintings moved from church walls to portable canvases), evolved into an intricate system based on symbolic value, but is in the throes of a paradigm shift as NFTs and other digital artworks enter the market.

Session 6 – 6 October – 3:00–5:45pm
Art people: The artist

Readings for this session:

Studio visit Heba Amin or Monira al Qadiri (TBC)

Learning Outcomes: Understanding the evolving role of the artist in society. Through the late Romanian artist Geta Bratescu’s poetic, diaristic text, we see an example of how the internal idea-making and the studio-based processes of artmaking can unfold; through Kaprow’s historical essay, we learn how the cliche of the solitary “genius” artist developed into the artist as solo entrepreneur as early as the 1960s. What is the role of the artist now? What might it evolve into, considering our current late capitalist system? The second half of class we’ll speak to a Berlin-based artist about their practice.

Session 7 – 13 October – 3:00–5:45pm

MID-TERM EXAM (entire session, four essays based on a choice of five questions)
Session 8 – 20 October – 3:00–5:45pm
Navigating the planetary – Beyond art-world eurocentricity

Readings for this session:
* Ndikung, Bonaventure: “South Remembers: Those who are dead are not ever gone,” South as a State of Mind magazine, 2017.

Learning Outcomes: Understanding and analyzing how the “world art” of early modernist Eurocentricity became “global art” in the late 20th century. Now, as museums and collections make efforts to decolonize, the notion of “planetary art” has arisen. An understanding of the issues behind deconstructing the art world’s north Atlantic hegemony (and its canon) from a broad view (Belting) as well as through a specific example (Sutton); more locally we will discuss the issues behind recently-opened and controversial Humboldt Forum in Berlin.

**Project presentation coming up: one-on-one learner hours available to discuss preliminary ideas**

Session 9 – 27 October – 3:00–5:45pm
Museums’ shifting mandates: Gropius Bau as case study

Readings for this session:
* Ndiritu, Grace: “Ways of Seeing: A New Museum Story for Planet Earth” Gropius Bau Journal, 2021

A visit to Gropius Bau with curator Natascha Ginwala

Learning Outcomes: Understanding and experiencing the background of the modern museum/exhibition hall (in the western world, most are based on imperialism or royal/industrialist collections made accessible to the public), and connect this history to museums toward restitution, inclusion, and reconsidering what an art institution is and can be. Berlin’s Gropius Bau’s current programming revolves around “care” and “repair.”

Session 10 – 3 November – 3:00–5:45pm
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: Each student presents abstracts/preliminary concepts for his/her/their final project (approx ten minutes, in presentation form); this session will be conducted in workshop format.
Session 11 – 10 November – 3:00–5:45pm
Art People: The gallerist // Political and sociocritical art

Readings for this session:
* Davis, Ben: “What Good is Political Art in Times Like These?” 9.5 Theses on Art and Class, New York, 2013, pp. 41–49.
optional:

Learning Outcomes: understanding of the role of the gallerist as well as, through the above readings and discussion, exploring the increasingly political role and status of contemporary art in a turbulent age: its efficacy (or not), its illusions, its real-world effects.

A visit to KOW Gallery, a commercial venue focusing on sociocritical artworks and social change.

Writing assignment (due midnight 16 November):
* Write a 600-word critique of an exhibition or artwork in Berlin you consider political, using descriptive and critical tools learned earlier in the semester, incorporating political context to the piece.

Session 12 – 17 November – 3:00–5:45pm
Art People: The curator // Art and technology: How has image reproduction and distribution changed the way we look at visual culture?

Readings for this session:

Guest speaker: Nadim Samman, curator at large, Kunst-Werke Center of Contemporary Art (TBC)

Learning outcome: This session’s message is again twofold: We’ll gain an understanding of the curatorial in contemporary art – the independent curator’s meditative but also “creative” role dates only to the late 1960s – but also discuss the intriguing shifts that technology has caused in art in general (beginning with photography, which, along with film, Walter Benjamin explores in the seminal text assigned this week) and continues with VR and AI applications in contemporary art. Curator Nadim Samman – “curator of the Digital Sphere” at Kunst-Werke, one of Berlin’s own homegrown centers for contemporary art – will discuss both.
24 November – THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Session 13 – 1 December – 3:00–5:45pm
Future art: Speculations and dreams

Readings for this session:
* Davis, Ben: “Three Tendencies for Future Art,” e-flux journal, March 2018

Learning Outcomes: synthesizing what we have learned so far, and applying this knowledge to speculate on what art can, cannot, or could do in a time of great change in the world – taking as examples the artists working in a “post-petroleum” world (as per Rahel Aima) or decoupling the act of commissioning artworks from an elite few to the citizen (Koch). If time permits, we will tour one last exhibition that dovetails with these topics.

Session 14 – 8 December – 3:00–5:45pm
Open questions, open answers
Class-sourced discussion on art’s present and future, in Berlin and elsewhere.

Assignment (due midnight 5 December)
Please email two questions on any issue that inspires or concerns you about contemporary art, Berlin’s (or the greater) art world, art criticism, art production, decolonization and inclusion, or anything else we’ve covered. The discussion will be based on your questions, which will remain anonymous.

Learning Outcomes: A synthesis of all we have learned this semester in the format of a student-sourced, open discussion. This session also serves as an open forum for last questions on final projects, and any other necessary or desired advising.

Final Presentations & Projects – 15 December – 3:00–5:45pm
IN-CLASS PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECTS OR PAPERS

Recommendations for a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment
We will discuss in-class laptop use in the first session (I do not allow note-taking on laptops as I’ve found all aspects of discussion and information retention much, much better without them; but in two or three of our sessions including presentations, laptops may be necessary, and exceptions will be made for students with academic accommodations from the Moses Center). Cell phones and tablets need to be switched off and put away. Students may not eat during class, except during breaks. Drinks are permitted.

Suggested Learning Opportunities that Relate to our Course
Visit galleries, museums, and art events as much as possible. There are hundreds of visual arts outlets in Berlin. Since the beginning of the pandemic, an increasing number of conferences, online exhibitions, showcases of video art, and “art talks” also take place online; these are moving back into IRL spaces. Both will be shared with the class. An ongoing updated schedule of openings (as well as a wide variety of other local information, such as artist
interviews and films) is available at Berlin Art Link (http://www.berlinartlink.com/) ... as well as at Index Berlin: http://www.indexberlin.de/

Your Lecturer
Kimberly Bradley has been an art critic, journalist, and editor since the 1990s and has written about art and other visual culture for a long list of magazines, newspapers, books, websites, and exhibition catalogues. In recent years she has curated conferences and talks series for art institutions and art fairs focusing primarily on postcolonial and transcultural art practices, but in some cases looking at broader tendencies in contemporary art (such as the rise of “political” art or structural issues in art-world politics). Discussing the mechanics of one of the contemporary (western) world’s last liminal, largely unregulated spaces has remained a source of fascination for nearly 25 years; teaching has provided a platform for not only transferring knowledge but also collaborating with and learning from a younger generation.

Born in California and raised in the American midwest, she graduated from Middlebury College in 1990. After several years in Hamburg, Germany, and a decade in New York, she moved to Berlin in 2003. Her book Navigating the Planetary, a reader on the decolonization of the global art world (co-edited with Hildegund Amanshauser and produced with the Salzburg Summer Academy of Fine Art) was published in 2020; it represents one of her primary fields of research. She recently edited the extensive reader Why Art Criticism? and is currently working on Chinese artist Zheng Bo’s first monograph with Gropius Bau in Berlin. kimberly-bradley.com

Academic Policies

Grade Conversion
Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A = 94-100 or 4.0
A- = 90-93 or 3.7
B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
B = 84-86 or 3.0
B- = 80-83 or 2.7
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3
C = 74-76 or 2.0
C- = 70-73 or 1.7
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3
D = 65-66 or 1.0
F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy
Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. Since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting.
As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team (berlin.academics@nyu.edu) by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or site staff may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from an NYU Staff member as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to NYU Berlin’s director or Wellness Counselor. Doctor's notes must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed, and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequently joining the class late.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to site staff; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

Final exams
Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics Team.

Students are not permitted to leave the site until their finals have been completed at the designated times. Upon receiving approval from the Academics Team, eligible graduating students may depart the site one day before their school, department or university graduation ceremony.

Late Submission of Work
(1) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (including weekends and public holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

(2) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (including weekends and public holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

(3) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days late (including weekends and public holidays) without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director, Dr. Gabriella Etmektsoglou.
(4) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(5) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on a university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism
As the University's policy on "Academic Integrity for Students at NYU" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offenses against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines

NYU Citations Style Guide

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities
NYU’s Office of Global Programs and NYU’s global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin’s Academics team in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics team will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only
excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays.

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)
Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website.

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the Personalizing Zoom Display Names website.

Moses Accommodations Statement
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Berlin.

Bias Response
The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the Web Form
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- US Phone Number: +1 212-998-2277
- Local Number in Berlin: +49 (0) 30 2902 91277
Please consider the environment before printing this syllabus. If printing is necessary, please select only the essential page range.