Topics in Visual Art and Culture : Art in Contemporary Culture

Class code  ARTCR-UE9161001

Instructor Details
Nicolas Baudouin
baudouin.nicolas@wanadoo.fr

Class Details
Thursday 15.00-18.00

Prerequisites  none

Class Description
The Parisian art scene is mostly famous for the dynamic first half of the 20th century. This course will introduce the students to contemporary art in order to make them appreciate and understand the creativity and the dynamism of the artist community in today’s French capital.

Focus will be made on the diversity of resources provided by the city. Special attention will be given on the new artistic practices and places as well as the different actors that are involved, such as the artists themselves, the private galleries network, museum's curators ...

References to the past and to the major artistic avant-garde movements and artists such as dada, geometrical abstraction, surrealism, expressionism ... will be provided in order to ensure a better appreciation of today’s artistic concerns.

Students will be exposed to the concept of “exception culturelle française” that involved the public institutions as key actors in the field of arts.

The semester will be organized between lecture-seminar with slides in class and field visits such as museum, galleries, Art Fair etc...

In order for the students to fully appreciate the quality and the interest of the art work that will be reviewed during the semester, references to the past and to the main streams of modern and/or contemporary art will be an ongoing concern. Specific aspects will be developed in light of the galleries/museum exhibitions taking place during the semester. Students are expected to explore on an individual basis the Parisian private gallery network and share in class the interesting exhibitions that they have discovered. As a final project, students will have to identify a living French artist and address in a 6 pages paper the quality and the interest of his/her work in perspective with the contemporary art world. The paper will include as appendix illustrative material and relevant bibliographical references.
**Desired Outcomes**

- Students will have a good understanding in how contemporary art is different from modern art.
- Students will have an in depth knowledge with critical references of the work of one specific French contemporary artist.
- Students will have a good knowledge/understanding of the Parisian contemporary art scene.
- Students will develop strong critical thinking and writing skills in identifying, describing, and analyzing works from different French contemporary artists.
- Gain an appreciation and enjoyment of contemporary art with the motivation to seek the intellectual and emotional pleasure of aesthetic experiences.

**Assessment Components**

A mid-term exam on **March 3rd** will cover slides lectures, museum visits and assigned readings. In the first part students will be expected to identify 10 works of art they have seen with name of the artist, titles, and dates. The second part will be a 3 pages essay on a specific topic formulated by the professor. (20%)

A 2 to 3 pages report about the **Art Paris Art Fair** visit presenting and addressing the specific qualities of one art gallery identified by the student. (Due for **April 7th**) (20%)

A final paper due for **April 14th** will be a 6 pages presentation with a critical perspective of a French contemporary artist, illustrated with representative examples of his/her work, and discussed in perspective with the French art scene. (20%)

Students will also have to make an oral presentation (10 mn.) of the chosen artist at the end of the semester. (20%)

A final exam on **May 12th** will be an identification of 5 to 8 contemporary art pieces followed by a 15 to 20 lines comment on each of the presented artists/pieces (20%)

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Assessment Expectations**

Midterm exam 20%,
3 pages field trip report from the Art Paris Art Fair 20%,
6 pages paper on a specific French artist 20%,
10 mn. oral presentation of the identified French artist 20%,
final exam 20%.

**Grade conversion**

Grade **A**: Achievement of outstanding quality
Grade **B**: Achievement of high quality
Grade **C**: Achievement of acceptable quality
Grade **D**: Achievement that is minimally passing
Grade **F**: The work was not of passing quality

NYU Paris aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.
Here is NYU’s Attendance Policy for students studying away at a Global Academic Center:

Study abroad 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. And 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 mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Beginning Fall 2014, at all Global Academic Centers, unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade.

Other guidelines specific to NYUParis include:

- **Attendance to class and all course-related events, even outside of regularly scheduled course times, is expected and mandatory.** Some class outings/make-up classes take place on Fridays.
- **Under no circumstances will non-University-related travel constitute an excused absence from class.** DO NOT book travel until you have received and carefully studied the syllabus of each of your classes.
- **If you are not sick enough to go to the doctor, you are well enough to go to class.** Doctor’s notes will be expected for all medical-related absences.
- **No tests, quizzes, or exams will be made up.** A missed test, quiz, or exam will result in a zero. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Academic Affairs team, not your professor.

New York University in Paris, as an academic community, is committed to free and open inquiry, to creating an intellectual and social environment that promotes this, and to upholding the highest standards of personal and academic integrity.

All NYUP students have the responsibility to uphold these stated objectives. As a member of this community, you accept the responsibility for upholding and maintaining these standards, which include refraining from all forms of plagiarism and cheating as detailed below.

Cases of plagiarism at NYUParis will be brought to the attention of NYUParis academic administration as well as the implicated student’s home school Dean.

**PLAGIARISM:** a form of fraud, presenting someone else’s work as though it were your own.

- A sequence of words from another writer who you have not quoted and referenced in footnotes.
- A paraphrased passage from another writer’s work that you have not cited.
- Facts or ideas gathered and reported by someone else.
- Another student’s work that you claim as your own.
- A paper that is purchased or “researched” for money.

---

1 NYU’s “Policies and procedures for students studying away at a Global Academic Center”
2 NYU’s Expository Writing Department’s Statement on Plagiarism
3 NYU Statement on Plagiarism
4 NYU Statement on Plagiarism
- A paper that is downloaded free of charge from the Internet

CHEATING
- Copying from another student’s exam or quiz
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance (crib sheets, internet, etc.) during an exam or quiz
- Having someone take your exam
- Accessing an exam or quiz in an unauthorized fashion prior to its administration
- Collaborating with other students or unauthorized persons on a take home exam
- Using the same written material for two courses without the express permission of both instructors
- Fabricating or falsifying data

A selection of photocopied articles and/or texts will have to be purchased by students.

Students will have to **purchase** the following book:
David Hopkins, *After Modern Art, 1945-2000*, Oxford University Press,

A few samples of the following books will remain available in the library for specific readings:


*Modern Art. Impressionism to Post-Modernism*, Edited by David Britt, Thames & Hudson.

For those reading French.

**Session 1**

01/21

Introduction to the scope of the course.
Most important artists in early 20th century: **The work of Matisse and Picasso**.

**Readings:**


**Session 2**

01/28

Most important artists in early 20th century: **The birth of abstract painting: Kandinsky, Mondrian and Malevich**.

**Readings:**


*Art in theory*, Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, “Wassily Kandinsky from Concerning the Spiritual in Art”, p 82 to 89
Session 3

02/04

Most important artists in early 20th century. **Marcel Duchamp and the dada movement.** Surrealism.

Readings:
- *Modern art,* David Britt, “Dada and Surrealism” p 203 to 251

Session 4

02/11

**Visit to the Centre Georges Pompidou:** modern art permanent collection (5th floor) at 03.30 pm

Session 5

02/18

**Post WW2 French painting:** The School of Paris: French tradition Neo-Cubist abstract painting (Jean Bazaine, Alfred Manessier, Roger Bissière etc ...)

**Nicolas de Staël and Jean Hélion:** From abstract to figurative painting.

Abstract expressionism: Georges Mathieu, Pierre Soulages.

Jean Fautrier and his “informal” paintings

Jean Dubuffet the rejection of cultural references in art and the concept of “art brut”

Readings:

Session 6

02/25

**New Realism** or “Forty degrees above dada”, the rejection of intellectual bourgeois abstract painting. Reality is back through the “accumulation” of Arman, the “compression” of César, the wrapping of Christo.

The decollage, or torn poster technique of Villeglé, Hains and Rotella.

Yves Klein from the monochrom to the art of nothingness (Le vide).

Jean Pierre Raynaud’s psycho-objects and the 24 years obsessive and ongoing project related to his house from construction to destruction (1969-1993).

Bertrand Lavier pushing the limits of the Ready made.

With Ben everything is art! (Fluxus in France).
Readings:
*After Modern Art*, David Hopkins, "*Duchamp’s Legacy: The Rauschenberg-Johns Axis*" p.37 to 64.
*After Modern Art*, David Hopkins, “*The artist in Crisis: From Bacon to Beuys*” p 67 to 93.

**Session 7**

03/03

**Midterm Exam**

**Session 8**

03/10

**Narrative figurative painting and political involvement.**
“The assassination of Marcel Duchamp” by Gilles Aillaud, Edouard Arroyo and Antonio Recalcati as a “painting-manifesto”. Duchamp being responsible for the raise of conceptual art.

Back to a **figurative painting** in reaction to the “bourgeois elitism” of the abstract école de Paris.

**Gérard Fromanger** and his bleeding flags, the blue assassinations from **Jacque Monory** and the “Vache qui rit” of Bernard Rancillac.

**Students oral presentations (1)**

**Readings:**
*Artpress 2, n°8*, New figurative painting,
Philippe Dagen, *Silencing Duchamp*, p.43 to 47

**Session 9**

03/17

**Visit to the Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris** (3.00 pm)

**Buren, Mosset, Parmentier, Toroni** (BMPT) the inaction painters and the search for the “zero degree” in painting.

**Daniel Buren** conceptual and minimalist artist. He is looking at the world as his studio and as a museum (in situ art).

The “almost nothing” pictorial gesture of **Niele Toroni**

**Support/Surface**: The painting being first an object/surface on which the artist is repeating the same gesture: **Claude Viallat**.

**Readings:**
*After Modern Art*, David Hopkins, “*The Death of the Object: The Move to Conceptualism*” p 161 to 195.

*October*, vol.80 (spring 1997), The turn of the screw: Daniel Buren, Dan Flavin and the sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition, Alexander Alberro.

*Art in theory*, Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, BMPT *Statement*, p. 861


**Session 10**

03/24

**Christian Boltanski**: obsession with his own memory as well as with the collective memory.

Between expressionism and conceptual art.

**Annette Messager**: refined cruelty.
Michel Journiac and the French performance art of the 70’s
Orlan and the concept of “carnal art”

Visit to the Palais de Tokyo (5.00 pm)

Session 11
Art Paris Art Fair at the Grand Palais
03/31

Session 12
Sophie Calle: when it is difficult to make a difference between life and art.
French contemporary photography, the young generation. Valérie Belin, Valérie Jouve,
Philippe Ramette, Luc Delahaye, Sophie Ristelhueber ...
Readings :
The Brooklyn rail, Sophie Calle: take care of yoursels,
Interview Magazine, Sophie Calle

Students oral presentations (2).

Session 13
Contemporary French Painting: Robert Combas, Djamel Tatah, Philippe Cognée, Bernard Frize ...
04/14

Students oral presentations.(3) Final paper due.

Session 14
French contemporary photography, the young generation. Valérie Belin, Valérie Jouve,
Philippe Ramette, Luc Delahaye, Sophie Ristelhueber ...
05/06

Students oral presentations (4)

Session 15
Final Exam.
05/12

Classroom Etiquette
- No eating in class.
- No cell phones in class.
- No laptop computers in class unless permission is expressly given by your professors.
- Leaving class to go to the bathroom or yawning in class is considered rude in France.

Required Co-curricular
Visiting the Parisian private art galleries network.