What is (modern) Art?

Seminar Leader: Aya Soika
Times:  Tuesday: 13:30 – 15:00 (Bard College Berlin);
       Friday: 13:30 – 15:00 (Bard College Berlin and museums).
Location: P 98.O.07
Email: a.soika@berlin.bard.edu
Emergency Mobile Number: 0176 781 84232
Concentration requirements: Arts and Aesthetics
Distribution Requirements: Periods/Places

Course Description

This class discusses the changing significance of art in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition to acquainting students with new modes of pictorial representation and the re-definition of artistic practices, one of its goals is to introduce students to the historical conditions and problems connected with the advent of modernism in the visual arts. Definitions of what constitutes the ‘modern’ or ‘avant-garde’ status of works of art are manifold. Primary sources, such as contemporary reviews, artists’ letters and manifestos shed light on the intentions, rhetoric and public reception of radical artistic projects at the emergence of modernism. Later art historical interpretations - ranging from formalist approaches to investigations into the social and political conditions of modern life – help to establish conceptual frameworks within which individual works can be placed and understood. Visits to Berlin’s major collections of modern art are an integral part of the course syllabus.

Above: The original Fountain by Marcel Duchamp, 1917, photographed by Alfred Stieglitz.
Course Requirements

Attendance
Attendance at all classes is essential. Absences can only be excused if a medical note is submitted to the registrar's office. It is recommended to take notes of works discussed in museums and class (see Visual Art Exercise). Please note: Notebooks (and other electronic devices) may not be used in class. Please bring pen and paper instead, together with your notes.

Punctuality
Punctuality is essential for all classes. Please make sure you depart early in order to reach museums, and please lock in your coats and bags before the beginning of class. The itinerary from Pankow can be checked on www.bvg.de, but make sure you are also equipped with a city map. For Museum Island (Old National Gallery) the nearest train station is Hackescher Markt. Friedrichstrasse is also possible. For Museum Berggruen there is a direct bus (M45) from S-Westend. For the New National Gallery take the S or U Bahn to Potsdamer Platz and then walk for ca. 10 minutes.

Lunch bags for Museum Fridays
Stefan will prepare Lunch Bags for you on the day of our museum excursions. They can be picked up from the cafeteria on the day and will allow you to leave college early.

Reading & Other Tasks
For this class attendance is mandatory. Reading assignments have to be done in advance of class. In addition to the general preparatory reading, there will be a variety of tasks, such as the preparation of paintings or text passages before some classes. Students will receive suggestions for relevant books which provide further (voluntary) background reading in addition to the weekly reading assignments.

Visual Art Exercise
There will be one visual art analysis quiz in Week 9 (8th November), featuring a selection of works discussed in class and in museums. Discussions of individual slides should be short and relevant, in the form of bullet points, rendering specific information with reference to readings, class discussions and further context.

Presentation
Each student will deliver one presentation, focusing on the visual analysis and interpretation of a particular work. The presentations also reflect upon the work in the larger context of shifting notions of representation and, in the case of the text, on the historical context in which the text was written. Presentations should last no longer than fifteen minutes. Please make sure that you rehearse beforehand in order to avoid exceeding this timeframe. A 1-2 page document (ca. 800-1000 words) with structured presentation notes and a power point presentation should be submitted via email to the course leader on the day of class, before 10:00 am. If your presentation is too big to be sent via email please make it available online for downloading instead.
Essays
There will be two essays, due towards the middle (26th October) and end of the semester (18th December). In the first essay (ca. 2000 words) students provide an in-depth visual analysis of a work. In the second, long essay (ca. 3000 words) they discuss a clearly confined question – which they are free to choose in consultation with me - with reference to specific art works and some of the texts we have read. Drafts of the long essay may be submitted and discussed in the course of weeks 13 and 14. Please note that prior consultation with the Writing Centre may be recommended in order to reflect upon writing and structure.

Late Submission
Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Essays that are more than 24 hours late will not be accepted.

Grade Breakdown
Listed below is the percentage grade allotted to each essay, and to classroom participation and assignments
Seminar Grade = Attendance/Participation/Preparation of Art Works and Texts & Tasks
Seminar Grade (weeks 1-7): 15%
Seminar Grade (weeks 8-14): 15%
Visual Analysis exercise: 15%
Presentation: 15%
Essay I: 15%
Essay II: 25%

Figure below: René Magritte, The treachery of images, 1928-29. Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Weekly Schedule

Week 1

2nd of September
19:30 – 21:00
Introduction, with Geoff Lehman (Concentration Seminar Leader of the Spring Semester)

Works:
Jean-Francois Millet, The Gleaners, 1857, Musee d’Orsay
Kasimir Malevich, Red Square. Painterly Realism of a peasant woman in two Dimensions, 1915
Giovanni Bellini, Madonna and Child, 1487
William Bouguereau, Virgin and Child, 1888

Task:
“I have chosen this work of modern art because ….”

Please send a work of art via email beforehand, by Monday morning 10:00 am, – with a short description including artist, title, date, measurements, location – and, most importantly, a couple of sentences explaining why you have chosen this particular work. Be prepared to introduce the work briefly (ca. 3 minutes) in class, bearing in mind the introduction by Paul Wood which deals with the changing notions of the terms “modern” and “avant-garde”.

Reading:

For this semester you have been provided with various course books (Belting, Danto, Wood, Eisenman) (see bibliography and list of course books at the end of this document). Please use the first week to start familiarising yourself with the structure and themes of the books, and with the different approaches outlined in them. Although we will only be able to discuss selected chapters of these books in class you are encouraged to gain further background by exploring some of the themes in greater depth on your own.

Friday, 6th of September
13:30 – 15:00
Issues in Representation. A short introduction to Erwin Panofsky with regard to modernism in art.

Works:
Emil Nolde, The Life of Christ, 1912
Andy Warhol, The Last Supper
Vincent van Gogh, A pair of shoes, 1885
Henri Magritte, The treachery of images, 1928-29
Barnett Newman, Who is afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue, 1969-70

Reading:
Week 2
(9th/13th September)
After the End of Art: Retrospective Reflections by Arthur Danto
An Introduction to art history’s “Master Narratives”

Reading:
Arthur Danto: Introduction: Modern, Postmodern, Contemporary. In: After the End of Art, pp. 2-19

Additional Readings:
Hans Belting, Epilogues for Art or for Art History?. Chapter 1 in: Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism*, (English translation) Chicago 2003, pp. 3-6;

Friday: Visit of Museum Berggruen
13:30 – 15:00

Task for this session:
Visual Analysis exercises in front of original works. A selection of works for discussion will be circulated on Monday.
Week 3
(16th/20th September)
The manifold beginnings of “modern” art in the early 19th century

Works:
Caspar David Friedrich: Monk by the Sea, 1808-10
Theodore Gericault, The Raft of the Medusa, 1819
Eugene Delacroix, The 28th of July: Liberty leading the people, 1830
Joseph Mallord William Turner, Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway, 1844
James Abbot McNeill Whistler, Nocturne in Black and Gold – The Falling Rocket (c. 1875)
Mark Rothko, Rust and Blue, 1951

Reading:


Friday: Visit to Alte Nationalgalerie (Old National Gallery, Museum Island)
Romanticism

Works:
Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Medieval City on a River, 1815
Karl Friedrich Schinkel: A view of Greece in the Golden Age, 1825
Caspar David Friedrich: Abbey in the oak forest, 1809-10
Caspar David Friedrich: Oak Tree in the Snow, 1829
Caspar David Friedrich, Woman at the Window, 1822
Caspar David Friedrich, The solitary Tree, 1822
Caspar David Friedrich, Moonrise over the Sea, 1822

Reading:
Week 4
(23\textsuperscript{th} / 27\textsuperscript{th} September)
The Birth of the Avant-Garde in 19\textsuperscript{th} century Paris and Berlin: Realism

Paintings:
- Gustave Courbet, The Stonebreakers, 1850
- Gustave Courbet, The Studio of the painter: A real Allegory summing up seven years of my artistic Life, 1854-5
- Gustave Courbet, A Burial at Ormans, 1849
- Gustave Courbet, The meeting, 1854
- Gustave Courbet, Peasants of Flagey returning from the Fair, 1849

Reading:

Background Reading:

Friday: NO CLASS, note additional session in Week 14 instead
Week 5  
(30th / 4th October)  
Critical Approaches and Reception History: Impressionism and Post-Impressionism  
The Painter of modern Life

Paintings:
Edouard Manet, The Old Musician, 1862
Edouard Manet, Luncheon on the Grass, 1863
Edouard Manet, A Balcony, 1868-9
Edouard Manet, Olympia, 1863
Edouard Manet, Argenteuil, les canotiers (The Boaters, Argenteuil), 1874
Edouard Manet, In the Winter Garden, 1879
Edouard Manet, A Car at the Folies-Bergère, ca. 1882

Reading:

Background Reading:
Stephen Eisenman, Manet and the Impressionists. In: Nineteenth Century Art…

Friday: Visit to Alte Nationalgalerie (Realism and Impressionism)
Long Session: 13:30 – 15:30

Paintings:
Adolph Menzel, Balcony Room, 1845
Adolph Menzel, The Berlin-Potsdam Railway, 1847
Adolph Menzel, Flute Concert, 1850-2
Adolph Menzel: The Foot of the Artist, 1876
Claude Monet, St. German l’Auxerrois, 1867
Claude Monet, Summer, 1874
Claude Monet, View of Vétheuil, 1880
Edouard Manet, In the conservatory, 1879
Edouart Manet, Mansion in Rueil, 1882

Reading:
Fall Break: No Class on 7th and 11th October

Week 6
(14th / 18th October)

A critical discussion of the term "Post-Impressionism" / The case of Paul Gauguin

Paintings:
Emile Bernard, Breton Women at the Pardon, 1888
Emile Bernard, The Buckwheat Harvest, 1888
Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret, Le Pardon en Bretagne (The Pardon in Brittany), 1886
Paul Gauguin, Two fighting Boys, 1888
Paul Gauguin, The Vision after the Sermon. Jacob wrestling with the Angel, 1889
Paul Gauguin, Agony in the Garden: Christ in the Garden of Olives, 1889

Reading:

Background Reading:
Stephen Eisenman: Symbolism and the dialectics of retreat (relevant sections). In: Nineteenth Century Art.... (sections on Brittany).

Friday
Primitivism and Colonialism

Works:
Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, 1907, Museum of Modern Art, New York
Henri Matisse, Nu bleu. Souvenir de Biskra (Blue Nude. Souvenir of Biskra), 1907, Philadelphia Museum
Henri Matisse, Bathers with a Turtle, 1908, St Louis Art Museum
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Bathers at Moritzburg, 1909/1926, Tate Gallery London
Emil Nolde, Papua Boys, 1914, Neue Nationalgalerie

Reading:
Hal Foster, "Primitive Scenes". In: Critical Inquiry, vol. 20, no. 1, 1993, pp. 69-102 (available via Jstor);

Further background:
[Hal Foster, The “Primitive” Unconscious of Modern Art. In: October, vol. 34, 1985, pp. 45-70 (available on Jstor);
Week 7
(21st / 25th October)
Cézanne: “Father of us all”

Works:
The Rape, ca. 1867
Portrait of the Painter Achille Emperaire, ca. 1868-70
Portrait of Louis-August Cézanne, Father of the Artist, Reading, 1866
Mont Sainte-Victoire seen from Bibemus, ca. 1898-1900
The Large Bathers, 1900-1906
Still Life with Apples, ca. 1895-8

Reading:

Friday
Cubism: The fourth dimension

Reading:
Jean Metzinger, Note on Painting (1910)
Guillaume Apollinaire, The Cubists (1911)
Guillaume Apollinaire, On the Subject of Modern Painting (1912)
Guillaume Apollinaire, The New Painting: Art Notes (1912)
Guillaume Apollinaire, from: The Cubist Painters (1912)
Jacques Riviere: Present Tendencies in Painting (1912)


Works:
Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d`Avignon, 1907, Museum of Modern Art, New York;
Georges Braques, Clarinet and a Bottle of Rum on a Mantelpiece, 1911, Tate Gallery
Pablo Picasso, Still Life with Rope, 1912;
Pablo Picasso, Au bon Marche, 1913

First Essay due (Visual Analysis Essay, ca. 2000 words): Saturday, 26th October, 10:00 am. Please email your essay to me no later than 10:00 am, as word document rather than PDF if possible so that I can insert comments and feedback.
Week 8
(28th October / 1st November)
Futurist Visions

Works:
Umberto Boccioni, The City Rises, 199 x 301 cm, 1910, Moma New York
Umberto Boccioni, The Street enters the House, 1911, Sprengel Museum Hannover
Umberto Boccioni, States of Mind I: The Farewells, 1911, Moma New York
Umberto Boccioni, States of Mind II: Those who go, 1911, Moma New York
Giacomo Balla, Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash, 1912, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo
Gino Severini, Suburban Train arriving in Paris, 1915, oil on Canvas, Tate Gallery London

Reading:
*** Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism. In: Art in Theory, 1900-2000 (IIa/6);
Umberto Boccioni et al., Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto. In: Art in Theory, 1900-2000 (IIa/7);

Friday
The Modern as Ideal

Works:
Wassily Kandinsky, Improvisation 19, 1911, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus München
Paul Klee, Hauptweg und Nebenwege, 1929
Paul Klee, Zeichen in Gelb, 1937
Kasimir Malevich, An Englishman in Moscow, 1913-1914, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam
Kasimir Malevich, Black Square, 1915, Tretyakov Gallery Moscow

Reading:
Week 9
(4th / 8th November)
Greenberg's Modernism and its Limits

Map:
Alfred Barr, Chart of the Exhibition Catalogue Cover: Cubism and Abstract Art, 1936, Museum of Modern Art New York

Reading:

For Responses to Greenberg (re)read (voluntary):
[Arthur Danto: Introduction: Modern, Postmodern, Contemporary. In: After the End of Art, pp. 2-19];

Friday

VISUAL ART QUIZ
Week 10
(11th / 15th November)
The Readymade

Works:
Marcel Duchamp, Bottle Rack, 1914
Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917
Marcel Duchamp, L. H. O. O. Q., 1941-42
Raoul Hausmann, Mechanical Head: The Spirit of Our Age, 1921, Musee d’art moderne, Paris

Reading:
Tristan Tzara, Dada Manifesto 1918, In: Art in Theory, 1900-2000 (IIIb/3);

Background Reading:

16th November, Friday: Representing the Unconscious: Surrealism
Works (Selection, TBC):
Meret Oppenheim, Object (Fur Cup), 1936
Salvador Dali, Lobster Phone, 1936
Salvador Dali, Metamorphosis of Narcissus, 1934, Tate Gallery London
Salvador Dali, The Phenomenon of Ecstasy, photomontage from Minotaure, 3-4, December 1933
Brassai and Salvador Dali, Involuntary Sculptures, from Minotaure 3-4, 1933

Henri Magritte, Young Girl eating a Bird, 1927
Henri Matisse, The Empty Mask, 1928
Henri Magritte, The Treachery of Images, 1928-29
Henri Magritte, Time Transfixed, 1938

Max Ernst, Europe after the Rain I, 1933
Max Ernst, Europe after the Rain, 1940-1942
Max Ernst, The Horde, 1927

Bunuel, Le Chien Andalou (The Andalusian Dog)
A selection of Surrealist photographs

Reading:
Louis Aragon et al., Declaration of the Bureau de Recherches Surrealistes, 1925. In: Art in Theory, 1900-2000 (IVc/3);
Andre Breton, Surrealism and Painting 1928. In: Art in Theory, 1900-2000 (IVc/4);

Further background reading:
Week 11
(18th/22nd November)
The Politicisation of Art (Walter Benjamin, 1936)

Works:
Collages by John Heartfield, e.g. War and Corpses – Last Hope of the Reich, AIZ, 18, 1932, Heartfield Archiv, Adk Berlin
Hannah Höch, Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919-1920, Neue Nationalgalerie

Reading:

Friday, 22nd November
Film as Art / Propaganda

Works (Clip selections):
Leni Riefenstahl, Triumph of the Will (Triumph des Willens), 1935
Leni Riefenstahl, Olympia, 1938
Sergei Eisenstein, Battleship Potemkin, 1925

Reading:
Week 12
(25th / 29th November)
“Degenerate” Art

Works:
Documentary material from the exhibition such as photos of the hanging, exhibition catalogue, the Great German Art Exhibition. Examples of official art versus art coined “degenerate”

Reading:

Friday, 29th November
Art and Kitsch / Art and Totalitarianism

Works by Pablo Picasso, Norman Rockwell, Ilya Repin, Jeff Koons
Pablo Picasso, Guernica, 1937

Reading:
**Week 13**

(2\textsuperscript{nd} / 6\textsuperscript{th} December)

Pop and Consumer Culture (Warhol, Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg, Twombly)

**Works:**
- Andy Warhol, Mona Lisa, 1963
- Andy Warhol, Brillo Box, 1964
- Andy Warhol, Marilyn Diptych, 1962

**Friday, 6\textsuperscript{th} December**

Visit to Hamburger Bahnhof

**Works:**
- Andy Warhol, Advertisement, 1960
- Andy Warhol, Do It Yourself (Seascape), 1962
- Andy Warhol, Ambulance Destaster, 1963
- Andy Warhol, Mao, 1973
- Andy Warhol, Camouflage, 1986
- Roy Lichtenstein, Femme dans un fauteuil, 1963
- Robert Rauschenberg, Untitled, 1951-1952
- Robert Rauschenberg, Pink Door, 1954
- Robert Rauschenberg, Stripper, 1962

**Reading (both sessions):**
- Andy Warhol, Interview with Gene Swenson. In: Art in Theory, 1900-2000 (Via/12);
- Roy Lichtenstein, Lecture to the College Art Association. In: Art in Theory, 1900-2000 (Via/13);
Week 14
(9th / 13th / 14th December)
Conceptual Positions (Art after Philosophy)

Works:
Joseph Kosuth, One and three Chairs, 1965
John Baldessari, What this Painting aims to do, 1967
John Baldessari, Everything is purged from this painting but art, no ideas have entered this work, 1966-1968

Reading:
Joseph Kosuth, Art after Philosophy. In: Art in Theory. 1900-2000 (Villa/10);
Week 14, continued
Friday, 13th December

Visit to Neue Nationalgalerie

Works:
Barnett Newman, Who is afraid…
Other works TBC after opening of the exhibition

Reading:

Saturday, 14th December:

Visit of Hoffmann Art Collection, 16:00 – 17:30.

Meet no later than 15:45 in courtyard of Hoffmann Art Collection, Sophie-Gips-Höfe, Aufgang C, Sophienstr. 21, 10178 Berlin – Mitte. Please let me know if you cannot attend as early as possible, so that I can pass on your ticket (very important!)

Completion Week 15

Second Essay Due: 18th December (Wednesday), 22:00: Submission Deadline for Long Essay. Please email your essay to me no later than 22:00, as word document rather than PDF if possible so that I can insert comments and feedback.
Books
(See weekly readings for exact references)

Hans Belting, Art History after Modernism. Chicago 2003


Electronic Reader

Erwin Panofsky, Panofsky, Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance, Introduction, pp. 4-31


Plato, Book X, The Republic, various editions