FA104 Drawing and Conceptual Practice

Seminar Leader: Claire Lehmann  
Course Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9–10:30 a.m.  
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Course Description
This studio course will train students' perceptual ability, but will also consider drawing as a versatile tool—as a means for visual thinking, an exploratory device, and an end in itself. This class will alternate between the practical acquisition of technical skills and the expansion of students' theoretical background through presentations, readings, and discussions. Students will develop their facility with line, value, and texture, but also with various modes of drawing: figuration, abstraction, observation, and imagination. A final project, to be chosen by each student, will be required; in-class group critiques and weekly assignments will also be an integral part of the course.

One important aspect of this class to note is that drawing from life is not a major focus of the course. Instead, the practice of drawing will primarily be a jumping-off point for a number of conceptual, rather than perceptual, projects. This course is intended for students who want to engage seriously with contemporary practice, and who have an interest in using drawing as a versatile tool to approach a wide-ranging set of aesthetic concerns.

Requirements

Attendance
Punctual attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is, absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the final grade for the course. Because our weekly time together is limited, particularly for a hands-on studio course, being on time for each class is particularly important, despite the early meeting time. Lateness will count as an absence for this course.

Participation
Participation in class discussions and critiques is key, and represents a full 20 percent of the final grade. We will critique each outside assignment on Mondays, and these discussions will require the engaged, respectful participation of all students.

Policy on Late Submission of Assignments
Per Bard Berlin's policy, assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Assignments must be installed and ready to critique by the start of Monday's class to be considered on time.

Grade Breakdown
Class participation: 20%  
Involvement in critiques, discussions, in-class assignments  
Weekly assignments: 55%  
Projects will be assigned each week on Wednesday to be due the following Monday, and will generally require at least four hours of outside work time.
Final Project: 25%
Each student will propose and begin work on a final project three weeks before our last critiques

Schedule
Order, length, and nature of assignments may change. I will keep you clearly informed of any changes as the semester progresses.

Week 1, Sept. 1–3
Discussion of the class, introductions
Verbs, gestures, marks in the expanded field
Assignment: Gesture glossary, mark documentation

Week 2, Sept. 8–10
The evolution of a gesture
Slide talk on the gesture
Assignment: A single mark, systematically repeated

Week 3, Sept. 15–17
The support / ground: basic materials
Slide talk on expanded drawing
Assignment: Drawing without implements: the possibilities of the drawing support

Week 4, Sept. 22–24
Representation without observation
Assignment: Stencil work: applying gesture/mark glossary to a representational composition

Week 5, Sept. 29–Oct. 1
Museum visit to Hamburger Bahnhof: Schedule to be modified TBD

Week 6, Oct. 6–8
Automatic drawing / the apparatus
Film program in-class
Assignment: Machines for drawing: Create an apparatus for drawing that can be operated by different users to make the same result

Week 7, Oct. 13–15
Drawing as evidence
Assignment: The indexical mark: Making drawings that leave evidence of action

Week 8, Oct. 27–29
Performative drawing
Slide talk on the body and the gesture
Assignment: Drawing in space and time: The city as support for drawing

Week 9, Nov. 3–5
Other tools: photomechanical reproduction, found images
Assignment: Photocopier- and camera-based compositional works
Week 10, Nov. 10–12
In-camera collage
Assignment: Narrative tableaux: Create collage using found or drawn components; final images to be created through photographic means

Week 11, Nov. 17–19
Nontraditional materials
Film program in-class
Assignment: Drawing without art materials: an art-supply free zone

Week 12, Nov. 24–26
Nontraditional materials continued
Assignment: Nontraditional drawing 2

Week 13, Dec. 1–3
Final project work sessions

Week 14, Dec. 8–10
Final project work sessions