

**San José State University**  
**Department of Art & Art History**  
**ARTH 275, Seminar in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art: Alternative Modernisms**  
**Spring 2018**

Instructor: Dr. Dore Bowen, Associate Professor of Art History and Visual Culture

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Office Hours: Tuesday noon-2 pm

Class Days/Time: Tuesday, 3:00-5:45 pm

Classroom: ART 110

Prerequisites: Graduate standing, or the consent of the instructor

**Course Description**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a range of spectacles combined painting with lighting techniques derived from theater to create a sense of immersion. These included the well-known panorama and diorama, but also lesser-known spectacles, such as scrolled paintings, projected images, and rotating auditoriums. All of these spectacles featured imagery of mass appeal, including romantic figures, landscapes, natural disasters, and battle scenes. Advances in lighting and set design allowed artists to create special effects that added a sense of “being there” to the depicted scenes. These immersive installations quickly faded when photography arrived on the scene. However, these spectacles continued to influence ethnographic and natural history dioramas. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the spectacle emerged in French theorist Guy Debord’s “society of the spectacle” as a cautionary tale concerning the negative impact of commodity culture, and art critic Clement Greenberg’s denouncement of kitsch would further prevent these “edutainment” spectacles from entering into the modern canon.

Using spectacles as an origin point for contemporary art, this course covers a range of forms, including staged paintings, VR, natural history museum displays, and contemporary installation. We will read novels, theoretical tracts, and artist statements, and we will look at work in galleries and museums in light of these topics. Students will be encouraged to find their own point of intersection with this material.

**Course Goals**

This course is an advanced graduate seminar whose purpose is to provide a forum for methodological discussion and the presentation of individual research. The course will allow students to develop familiarity with a key body of theoretical texts, in order thereby to apply these texts to new or ongoing research projects. Students will be expected to develop research projects related to the theme of the course as well as to present their work to the class. Students will also be expected to take an active role in class discussions, including introducing one set of readings during the semester and an end of term presentation on their final paper.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

LO1 - read texts closely and apply the knowledge gained to their own writing;

LO2 - express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in primary and secondary texts in art history;

LO3 - write clear and effective scholarly arguments at a graduate level;

LO4 - organize and develop research for art historical audiences, including appropriate editorial standards for citing primary and secondary sources;

LO5 - conduct independent research, using primary and secondary sources available through libraries, electronic databases and, where appropriate, archival repositories.

## **Required Texts/Readings**

- 1) Greensheet: <http://www.sjsu.edu/art>
- 2) Readings and Assignments: Essays and assignments are available as a hyperlink on this greensheet or through Canvas at <https://sjsu.instructure.com>. (If there is no hyperlink then it is on Canvas.) You will also use Canvas to upload your weekly summaries, final paper summary and bibliography, and final paper. Use your SJSU ID and password to log in; Help Desk is at 408-924-2377.
- 3) Binder: A pocket binder/notebook for class notes, assignments, etc.

## **Optional Texts and Resources**

Links to writing guides are available through the library website, such as Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, and *Webster's New World Dictionary*. The library website also links to databases, image banks, and art journals as well. See the Art and Design resources at: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/ArtReference>.

**Library Liaison:** Aliza Elkins at [Aliza.elkin@sjsu.edu](mailto:Aliza.elkin@sjsu.edu)

## **The Seminar Format**

- Seminars require careful reading.
- Weekly summaries will help you to prepare for class. It is recommended that you enhance your reading by researching key facts presented in the text (use a valid source such as Oxford Art Online).

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

- Informed and thoughtful class participation: 20%. LO 1, 2. Participation is measured by the quality of comments and analyses made by students in attendance at a given session. Everyone is expected to contribute to each class session.
- Weekly Summaries responding to the required reading: 20%. LO 3. These 1-page typed papers must be submitted on Canvas before the beginning of the class; students are urged to bring an extra copy to assist with discussion. It is perfectly acceptable to write in a personal style.
- Research Paper Summary and Bibliography/Participation in Peer-Review:

Pass/No Pass. LO 4, 5.

- Final Paper: 40%. LO 3, 5. The final paper is a 7-page individual research paper on a modern or contemporary artist or practice within the course framework. Your paper topic should be approved by the instructor and include a specific topic and methodology, with the caveat that papers are not to focus on simple biography. The annotated bibliography should include primary and secondary research (e.g., books, monographs, journal articles, visits to museums, exhibition catalogues, media coverage and so on).
- Guide Discussion One Week: 20%. LO 1, 2. You will be responsible for guiding discussion during the second half of class one week. You ought to have read the weekly readings carefully and pulled out significant passages for discussion.
- Short Research Presentation: P/NP. LO 1, 2.

### Assignments Weight

Participation	%20
Summaries	%20
Research Paper	%40
Discussion Guide	%20
Paper Summary/Bibliography and Peer-Review	P/NP
Paper Presentation	P/NP

### Grading Chart

- A+ Superb within all three categories above, original research, well documented
- A Excellent work in all of the categories
- A- Overall Excellent work in most of the categories, but uneven
- B+ Very Good to Excellent work in all categories
- B Very Good work in all of the categories
- B- Overall Very Good work in most of the categories, but uneven
- C+ Sufficient to Very Good work in all of the categories
- C Sufficient work in all of the categories
- C- Overall Sufficient work in in most of the categories, but uneven
- D+ Sufficient to Poor work in all of the categories
- D Poor work in all of the categories
- D- Overall Poor to Not-passable work in most categories, but uneven
- F Not-passable, does not fulfill any of the criteria necessary for the assignment, or plagiarized in part or whole

### Numerical Grade Equivalent

93% & above	A
92% - 90%	A-
89% - 88%	B+
87% - 83%	B
82% - 80%	B-
79% - 78%	C+
77% - 73%	C

72% - 70%	C-
69% - 68%	D+
67% - 63%	D
62% - 60%	D-
below	F

- *No late assignments are accepted except in the case of a medical emergency, in which case students will need an original, signed and dated doctor's note explaining the condition and declaring that you are unable to attend class and complete work.*
- *No make-up or extra credit for late or incomplete assignments.*
- *Students must be present in class to receive credit for in-class assignments. As the University Policy states, "Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading. However, students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled.... Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated."*

### **Classroom Protocol**

#### **Cell Phones and Computer Use**

Students will turn their cell phones off while in class. Students may use electronic devices to take notes or follow lecture. Students who use electronic devices for other activities will be asked to leave the class.

#### **Personal Responsibility**

- Timeliness, attention, missed classes. Please arrive to class on time and wait until the break to use the restroom or get a snack. If you miss class for any reason you are responsible for acquiring the lecture notes from a fellow student. If you can't make it to class do not email me. This is your personal responsibility. If you miss an assignment there is no extra credit.
- You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, withdrawal, etc. above. No adds will be accepted after the deadline. You are responsible for dropping the course.

#### **Plagiarism**

- Plagiarism is taken very seriously and will result in an F on the assignment and possibly the course. Canvas is equipped with plagiarism detection so do not try it! A definition of plagiarism can be found on Judicial Affairs website.
- If you would like to include material you have submitted, or plan to submit, for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Integrity policy S04-12 requires approval by instructors.

**University Policies:** Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs maintains

university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.” You may find all syllabus related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP’s [Syllabus Information web page](#)

## **Course Schedule for ARTH 275, Spring 2018**

*Note: All reading and assignments are due the day listed on schedule. Schedule subject to change with fair notice. Please check Canvas announcements for changes.*

### **SECTION I. Installation Art and Immersive Experience**

#### **Wk 1. Jan 30: Introduction to Class/Nauman’s San Jose Installation**

Read: Bill Berkson, “History and Truth” in *Sudden Address* (Cuneiform Press, 2010)

Read: Willoughby Sharp, “Interview: Bruce Nauman” *Avalanche 2* (Winter 1971)

Read: Dore Bowen, “Corridor Reflections” manuscript copy (forthcoming, Bruce Nauman: Spatial Encounters, UC Press, 2018)

\* 5pm Panel and opening for Nauman installation

#### **Wk 2. Feb 6: Nauman’s San Jose Installation: The Question of the Virtual**

Read: Kate Mondloch, *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art*, Chapter 2 (On Nauman and Dan Graham) (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2010)

Read: Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art*, Introduction (MIT Press, 2003)

Suggested: If you are interested in this topic I recommend you read the entire book by Grau, also, see Graham Coulter-Smith, *Deconstructing Installation Art*, 2006  
<http://www.installationart.net/Chapter2Immersion/immersion01.html>

(FYI: In conjunction with Propeller Group at SJMA, Wednesday February 7, 2018, Screening 7–8:30 PM: This one-night only screening at the Towne 3 Cinema, 1433 The Alameda, San José, will be followed by a panel discussion.)

#### **Wk 3. Feb 13: \* Discussion in Thompson Gallery with panelists Joan Simon, Gwen Allen, Juliet Myers, and Ted Mann 1-3pm; 5pm panel @ Hammer Theatre in San Jose**

### **SECTION II. 19<sup>th</sup> Century Popular Spectacles**

#### **Wk 4. Feb 20: ¶Paris and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Spectacles: The Wax Museum, Arcades, etc.**

Read: Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities* (Chapters 1-3) (UC Press, 1999)

Read: Walter Benjamin, “Paris - Capital of the 19th Century” [1939 version] from *The Arcades Project*, translated by Belknap Press, 1999.

View: “The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin” at the Jewish Museum  
<http://thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/the-arcades-contemporary-art-and-walter-benjamin>

Reviews of the exhibition on Benjamin:

M, [http://www.metropolism.com/en/reviews/31654\\_jewish\\_museum\\_the\\_arcades](http://www.metropolism.com/en/reviews/31654_jewish_museum_the_arcades)

Red Wedge, [www.redwedgemagazine.com/online-issue/the-time-is-now](http://www.redwedgemagazine.com/online-issue/the-time-is-now)

New Yorker,

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/walter-benjamins-unfinished-magnum-opus-revisited-through-contemporary-art>

View: Bardou, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/benjamin/> )

### **Wk 5. Feb 27: Visualizing “the Past”**

Read: Maurice Samuels, *The Spectacular Past*, “Chapter 1: Showing the Past” (Cornell, 2004)

Read: Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, “Chapter 1: Modernity and the Planes of Historicity” (Columbia, 2004)

Suggested: Francois Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, pp. 104-119 (translated 2015)

### **Wk 6. March 6: Dioramic vs. Panoramic Vision**

Read: Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, Chapter 4

Read: Dolf Sternberger and Joachim Neugroschel, “Panorama of the 19th Century” (October, Vol. 4 (Autumn, 1977), pp. 3-20)

Read: Sophie Thomas, “Making Visible: The Diorama, the Double and the (Gothic) Subject” (*Romantic Circles*, 2005)

Read: Soren Pold, “Panoramic Realism” (*Nineteenth-Century French Studies* (Fall-Winter 2000))

Suggested: Balzac, *Pere Goriot* (excerpt)

## **III. Modern and Contemporary Spectacles**

### **Wk 7. March 13: Photography High and Low: The Case of Weegee**

Read: Richard Meyer, “Photography Is Elastic Weegee’s Cockeyed View of Hollywood” (*American Art*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 33-37).

\* Richard Meyer to visit class with 5pm lecture in ART 139

### **Wk 8. March 20: Spectacles in Contemporary Art**

Read: Interview with the Propeller Group at

[http://www.the-propeller-group.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/BOMBLOG\\_Diane\\_Mehta.pdf](http://www.the-propeller-group.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/BOMBLOG_Diane_Mehta.pdf)

\* Visit to the SJMA/Propeller Group at SJMA

### **Wk 9. SPRING RECESS MARCH 26-30**

**Wk 10, April 3: Diorama as Contemporary Art: From Duchamp to the Present**

Read: Hans Belting, excerpt from *Looking through Duchamp's Door: Art and Perspective in the Work of Duchamp, Sugimoto and Jeff Wall* (Köln: Walther König, 2010)

Read: *Espace journal* (Winter 2015), excerpts, special issue on the diorama in contemporary art

Read: "The Enduring Delight of the Diorama," Hyperallergic

<https://hyperallergic.com/394021/the-enduring-delight-of-the-diorama/>

(FYI: ICA Sandbox exhibition: Kathy Aoki, *Hello Kitty Monument Diorama*)

**Wk 11. April 10: Diorama in Contemporary Art (cont.): The Art of Educational Display**

\* **Possible Class Speaker / TBA**

Read: Karen Wonders, excerpt from *Habitat Dioramas: Illusions of Wilderness in Museums of Natural History* (Uppsala, 1993)

Read: Diane Fox, "Constructed Reality: The Diorama as Art"

View: On the Nutshell Dioramas: <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/nutshells>

**Wk 12. April 17: The Society of the Spectacle**

Read: Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*

Read: Paris: Invisible City, Bruno Latour & Emilie Hermant, at

<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/downloads/PARIS-INVISIBLE-GB.pdf>

View: <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/virtual/EN/index.html>

\* **2<sup>ND</sup> HALF OF CLASS:** Possible Library Tour with Aliza Elkin, Art Librarian

**Wk 13. April 24: Paper Summary and Bibliography Due / Peer Review**

One-page summary and bibliography due with presentation – peer review

**Wk 15. May 1: Machinic Vision**

Read: John Johnston, "Machinic Vision" (*Critical Inquiry* 26, Autumn 1999)

Read: Jonah Weiner, "Prying Eyes," Feature Article in the *New Yorker* (October 22, 2012) (see link on Paglen's website)

View: Trevor Paglen,

<https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/trevor-paglen-power-perspective-short/>

Suggested: <http://www.forensic-architecture.org/>

\* SFMOMA visit either today or final exam day (to discuss with class) to see *Sublime Seas*. John Akomfrah and J.M.W. Turner; *The Train* RFK's Last Journey

**Wk 16. May 8: Presentations – Papers Due**

Final Exam Friday, May 18	1445-1700
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