San José State University  
Department of Art & Art History  
ART-02 The Artist in Contemporary Culture Section 02  
Spring 2016

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Professor Robin Lasser  
Office Location: Industrial Studies 219  
Telephone: 510 282 6993 cell preferred  
Email: Robin.lasser@sjsu.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesday + Thursday 11:00-12:00 (drop in)  
Class Days/Time: Tu./Thurs. 6:00 – 7:15 PM  
Classroom: Art Building, Room 108

Course Description

This is an introductory course for those new to studying art. This course offers critical readings and problem-solving: principles of form and theory and research applied to real-world situations frequently confronted by contemporary artists.

A question that most of you are probably familiar with is “What is Art? This course is not interested in answering that or finding new ways to ask that question. There are plenty of opportunities to figure that out in your career as an art student and artist. What this course asks is, “What or who is an Artist?” The title of artist is thrown around a lot for so many different reasons. We call someone who is groundbreaking in their field, (even for a non-creative field), an artist. There is a parallel people use to equate artistry with genius or groundbreaking. But are they really artists? How do we define the title of artist in contemporary culture if the lines that define an artist are eroding or evolving? In this course, we will look at the different roles artists have played in contemporary art history and culture. We will look at the artist as activist, environmentalist, community organizer, cultural diplomat, identity explorer, and space shaper, place maker. Do you consider yourself an artist? Maybe at the end of this course, you would be able to answer that question for yourself.

This course expands notions about roles that artists play in contemporary culture, how their practice and productions may include and or move beyond traditional mediums like painting, drawing, photography, and sculpture, and how the arts may align with other disciplines including architecture, engineering, urban planning, ecology, community, and civic service.
Course Goals
Artists think creatively and visually across all media, and they have many roles in society. Roles to be considered will include (but are not limited to) the hero, rebel, cultural interpreter, culture-jammer, and cultural healer/record-keeper. Roles may align with other fields of study such as biologist, naturalist, anthropologist, archeologist, sociologist, and environmentalist.

To expand our imagination and develop some breadth of scope concerning the narrow way we traditionally think about art, artists, and their practice. In this pursuit we will discuss and write about a diverse set of contemporary artists and how they survive by creating unique jobs and projects that are sustainable in contemporary society.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Build on skills in creative problem-solving, brainstorming, and visual communication.
2. Deploy skills in visual research and in applying theory to new situations.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the language of visual critique.
4. Expand skills in writing and speaking to include formats of written proposal, formal description and analysis.
5. Decipher the cultural roles played by various contemporary artists.

Assignments: This course is a seminar with readings and art practice homework to be done outside of class time. Students will also be expected to attend at least one art lecture and to attend at least one off-campus gallery opening.

1. You will read assigned articles/view videos and come to class prepared to participate in discussions. Aligned with learning objectives 1, 2, 3, and 5.

2. You will write three reviews about visiting artists and how their work relates to the slideshows of artists presented in class and the roles they play. This is aligned with learning outcome 2, 3, 4 and 5.

3. You will create a final art project and proposal aligned with learning objectives 4 and 6.

4. You will create an idea archive aligned with learning objectives 1 and 2.

Link for Adobe Cloud Suite  http://its.sjsu.edu/services/software/adobe/

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook
Readings will be distributed at the beginning of each topic section. The readings will be sent to students by email prior to the introduction of each topic.
Other Readings

Students will be asked throughout the semester to look at the work of artists in relation to each topic we will cover. A suggested reading list, with books related to the topics covered in class, is provided below:

Sarah Thorton, Seven Days in the Artworld
Linda Weintraub, In The Making
Ted Orland, The View from the Studio Door: How Artists Find Their Way In An Uncertain World
Osha Neumann, Doodling on the Titanic, The Making of Art in a World on the Brink
Beverly Naidus, Arts for Change Teaching Outside the Frame
Bell Hooks, Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom
Guillermo Gomez –Pena, The New World Border
Fusco and Wallis, Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self
Sue Spaid, Ecovention: Current Art to Transform Ecologies
Robin Lasser, Refuge in Refuse: Homesteading Art and Culture

Websites/Blogs:

The Nature of Cities:  http://www.thenatureofcities.com/about/
Art Net News:  https://news.artnet.com/?pg=2
WEAD Women Environmental Artists Directory:  http://weadartists.org
KQED Art21:  http://www.pbs.org/art21/
KQED ART SCHOOL:  http://ww2.kqed.org/artschool/artists-a-z/
TED Ideas worth spreading  https://www.ted.com

Other equipment / material requirements

You will need to keep a journal of weekly ideas related to each topic presented in class as well as ideas generated by exposure to visiting artists and class field trips. This journal may contain sketches, photographs, text- any creative way to document your ideas. You should plan on having 20 ideas by mid term, 40 ideas total for the final. Ten of those 40 ideas need to be “visualized” in your idea journal.

Library Liaison

Our library Liaison is Rebecca Kohn. She can be reached via email at Rebecca.Kohn@sjsu.edu and by phone at (408) 808-2007. Her office is located on the 4th floor of the King Library and she welcomes students to contact her with research questions. Art and Art History Library Resources are available online at:  libguides.sjsu.edu/Art. All of the University Library Resources can be accessed at:  libguides.sjsu.edu/az.php

Course Requirements and Assignments

There will be four main topics that we will cover in this course. Public Art and the Spectacle, Art and Social Engagement, Art and Culture / Identity, Art and Environmental Issues. Each topic is based on a role that an artist has performed in. The details for each topic are enclosed in the Course Schedule at the end of this green sheet. Each topic period, will start with an assigned reading, introductory slide/video show / lecture followed by a presentation by a visiting artist. A double spaced two- page response is due for each topic/visiting artist. A large portion of the class schedule is dedicated for the final. The final will consist of four days of oral presentations of projects prepared by each student. The project is also turned in and presented in the form of a written proposal that includes concept note, time line, images, and budget. The goal here is to apply some real world lessons taken from the various topics that we covered during the semester. The weeks leading up to the final presentations will consist of in class demonstrations and individual consultations.
All dates are subject to change with fair notice.

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but also because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading but participation is required and your presence is required for participation.

**Grading Policy**

**Grade Breakdown:**
Final Project: 30% (written proposal 15 percent, project installation 15%)
Each paper 10 total =30%
Weekly idea journal to be turned in mid term and final 20%
Class participation 20%

**Grading Criteria**

The work created in class will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Extra credit papers about a lecture on art, or field trip to an art institution is possible. Grade goes down half a grade, for each day a project or paper is late.

A   Outstanding: thoughtful and intelligent ideas presented in a clear, organized, and engaging manner; among the very best.
B   Above Average - Good: the ideas are interesting and successfully presented; shows potential, but not necessarily distinctive; roughly equal in quality to the majority of work completed by other students.
C   Average - mediocre: achieves minimum requirements of the assignment, but not particularly clear, nor ambitious. Quality of work is below that of most other projects submitted. May be above average idea presented in incomplete state.
D   Unsatisfactory: does not satisfy the minimum requirements of the assignment; generally unsatisfactory in terms of quality and clarity.
F   You didn't submit an assignment.

**Classroom Protocol**

It is expected for students to attend each class period since a lot of this course is based on participation. Absence of any class period is not an excuse for turning in assignments late. Students are encouraged to use any technology that will help facilitate the production of projects and assignments. The use of technology outside of the class’s purpose is not allowed. Cell phone use is not allowed and your cell must be placed on silent mode when class is in session.

**University Policies**

**General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student**

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90–5 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing
concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

**Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at [http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html). Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/). The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at [http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/).

**Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material**

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
  - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor’s process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
  - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

**Academic Integrity**

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at [http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/).

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center (AEC)](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/aec](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) to establish a record of their disability.
Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See **University Policy S14-7** at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the **Academic Success Center** at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space is also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit **Peer Connections website** at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the **Writing Center website** at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center.
on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to
scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.
# ART 02-01 The Artist in Contemporary Culture
## Spring 2015
### Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Any changes to this schedule will be noted on Canvas.

## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>Introduction to course and review the syllabus, student and professor introductions. Create a list with names, e-mail and phone numbers. TA will take care of this task. Assignment: Read articles related to Topic 1. <strong>Artist as place maker/environmentalist</strong> (Article: Steven Siegel pdf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>Topic 1. <strong>Artist as place maker/environmentalist</strong>  Meet in Thompson gallery at 6PM to experience “The Plastic Ocean” exhibition. 6:30 meet back in classroom for lecture: Andrew Goldsworthy. If you can please attend the lecture about the exhibition from 5-6PM in the auditorium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>Topic 1. <strong>Artist as place maker/environmentalist</strong>  Olafer Eliason and Steven Siegel. (Extra credit for attending lecture by Sam Bower, room 144, 5-6PM on Tu., February 9.)  Assignment: Read articles related to Topic 1. <strong>Artist as place maker/environmentalist</strong> (Lasser, v.6-1 (Gonzalez) pdf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>Topic 1. <strong>Artist as place maker/environmentalist</strong> – Adrienne Pao, Kathryn Sylva, Marguerite Perret and Robin Lasser (Extra credit for attending lecture before class by Sam Bower, room 144, 5-6PM.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>Topic 1. <strong>Artist as place maker/environmentalist</strong>  Mark Dion, artist as biologist and lecture on how to write paper for Topic 1. Rubric for grading and formal writing strategies including descriptions of artworks, interpretation and evaluation, and the roles the artist plays in contemporary culture. Must refer to what was discussed in each class lecture, readings for topics, and your own original thinking. Use footnotes and credit for readings and original research. Assignment: Turn in paper due Tuesday, February 16. Read articles about artist Jon Rubin and collaborators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Turn in your two page reflection about Topic 1  <strong>Topic 2: Art and Social Practice: Artist as cultural anthropologist, farmer, community organizer.</strong> Lecture Candy Chang and Jon Rubin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
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| 4    | 2/18 | Topic 2: Art and Social Practice: Artist as cultural anthropologist and community organizer  
Lecture: Jon Rubin continued and Suzanne Lacy  
**Assignment:** Read article: *Our Lives In This Place pdf* and *Refuge in Refuse-Street Spirit pdf*  
Field Trip to the Albany Bulb in April 9. |
| 5    | 2/22 | Topic 2: Art and Social Practice- Artist as cultural anthropologist and community organizer guest artist Shalini Agrawal  
Director | Center for Art and Public Life, California College of the Arts  
Oakland, CA  
[http://center.cca.edu/](http://center.cca.edu/) |
**Assignment:** Turn in paper on Topic 2 on Tuesday March 1. |
| 6    | 3/1  | Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist  
JR and Krzysztof Wodiczko |
| 6    | 3/3  | Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist  
(Ai WeiWei) feature length film or  
Guest Artists Carmina Eliason “Food, Maintenance and Social Practice” with artists Rirkrit Taravanija, and Mierle Laderman Ukeles  
**Assignment:** Read *Can Black Art Ever Escape The Politics of Race pdf* |
| 7    | 3/8  | Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist  
William Kentridge and Kara Walker  
Lecture in Art building, room 144, 5-6PM by Sonya Renee Taylor, performance artist, poet, and activist. Extra credit |
| 7    | 3/10 | Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist  
(African Diaspora)-Adrienne Piper, Carrie Mae Weems, and David Hammons. |
| 8    | 3/15 | Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist  
Guest artist/photographer Raheleh (Minoosh) Zomorodinia |
| 8    | 3/17 | Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist  
(African Diaspora) continued- Nick Cave, and Yinka Shonibare |
<p>| 9    | 3/22 | Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/24</td>
<td><strong>Topic 3: Art and Culture/ Identity – Artist as interventionist and revolutionist</strong>&lt;br&gt;Guest Lecturer Zartashia speaking about James Luna, Santiago Sierra, Wafa Bilal, Sherin Neshat, Mona Hatum, and Titus Kaphar</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/29</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/31</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Project proposals: EXAMPLES OF Concept Notes, budget and timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/7</td>
<td>Break into 6 groups – 4 people per group- Discuss project ideas and who will do what in terms of proposals (concept note, budget, timeline, and images.) Pick a lead person to manage the project. Assignment: Walk on campus together to figure out appropriate temporary installation area. <strong>April 9, Saturday, field trip to the Albany Bulb Landfill</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/12</td>
<td>Discuss project/proposal idea with Robin and TA’s. Assignment: Each person writes rough draft for proposal and brings hard copy to class on 4/14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>In groups, edit the rough proposals and compile into one file. Send draft proposal by e-mail to Robin and TA’s by midnight, Friday, 4/15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/19</td>
<td>Proposal drafts returned and discussed. Make refinements and turn in final proposal by midnight, Thursday April 21.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>Groups work on fabrication of project. Confirm site agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/26</td>
<td>Groups work on fabrication of project. Confirm site agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Group 1 and 2 Present installed projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>Group 3 and 4 Present installed projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Group 5 and 6 Present installed projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>Image and Idea show – please attend in gallery 3 and black gallery or guest artist?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/12</td>
<td>Grades and party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>