interactivity: contemporary art and new media, 1975 - present

Professor David Getsy
Department of Art History, Dartmouth College, Fall 2003
2A / Tuesday•Thursday 2.00-3.50pm / x-hour: Wednesday 4.15-5.05 / Carson L01

course description
Examining the impact of new media and technologies, this course will provide a selective introduction to issues relating to the production and reception of art since 1975. Students should note that we will not attempt to deal with the vast diversity of contemporary art but will rather focus on specific topics. We will be primarily concerned, though not exclusively so, with developments in the United States and Britain. Our concerns will be with the diversification of artistic media (for example, the growth of installation into a distinct artistic medium), the impact of new technologies on art practice (for example, the rise of video art), and the use of science and technology by artists. Particular emphasis will be placed on the emergence of "internet art" and its implications. We will investigate how the concept of interactivity has become an increasingly central component of art in this era and how this development has affected visual art's role in the public sphere. The second half of the course will be organized as a workshop with the goal of creating an online exhibition of internet art. Student teams will choose an individual internet art 'object' to research and present their findings to the rest of the class. The final paper will be a catalogue entry on their work to be included in the exhibition website.

course structure
Each two-hour session will consist of lectures and discussion of images, texts, screenings, and websites. Students will be tested on their comprehension and synthesis of course themes presented through classroom sessions and required readings. We will make active use of the x-hour sessions throughout the term, and attendance at all scheduled x-hour sessions is required. Any open x-hours may be utilized with as little as a day's notice. On occasion, links to relevant websites will be e-mailed to students for use in class discussion. Students should make sure to check their e-mail for any such updates the evening prior to class.

Class presentations will begin 11 November. Each session will begin with discussion of one internet art site submitted by the professor and will continue with presentations by three student teams.

method of evaluation
Students will be evaluated on the basis of (1) attendance, preparation, and participation in class discussion; (2) a midterm examination to be given 4 November and due on 5 November; (3) class presentation and final catalogue entry (text due 3 December); and (4) a comprehensive final examination to be held 7 December. Clarity, organization, depth, grasp of course material, and style will be among the criteria for evaluation in papers and examinations. Note that all course assignments must be adequately completed and submitted in order to receive a passing grade.

Class participation: All students are expected to attend class meetings prepared to discuss the required readings and websites. This is a discussion-based class, and all students are expected to regularly and productively contribute to class discussions. Failure to do so throughout the quarter will result in a reduced grade.

Take home midterm: There will be a concise midterm in the form of an over-night take home examination given on 4 November and due in class 5 November. There will be no rescheduling of this exam. Exams are due at the beginning of class on the 5th. Late exams will not be accepted. Students will be allowed to reference course readings but will be given a limited time to finish the exam.
Presentation and entry for exhibition catalogue: See below. Due 3 December at 5.00pm. Submit as a Word document via blitzmail attachment. Additionally, you will need to submit the following hard copies to Carpenter 307: (1) Final text of your entry, approved by Art History Writing Editor, (2) the draft of your final text on which the Art History Writing Editor marked required changes, and (3) the artist's permission to include the artwork in the online exhibition. Only one submission per team is required.

Final examination: There will be a final examination consisting of two essay questions only. Students will be asked to draw upon the discussions of course presentations for the examinations. Consequently, attendance at all discussion sessions will be essential to a passing grade.

collaborative on-line exhibition and final paper
The final outcome of the course will be an on-line exhibition of internet art. The selection of artworks to be included in the exhibition will be determined by student teams. These teams will select a recent internet artwork (defined as an interactive web-based project that is designated as an artwork by its creator or subsequent consumers and that is available to concurrent access by multiple viewers through the world wide web). The choice of the internet artwork will be crucial for this assignment, and students are encouraged to make this decision with a great deal of deliberation. Students may not choose internet artworks that are in the collection of museums or already included in major on-line exhibitions.

Student teams are required to give a presentation on their choice and lead a discussion in class about it. Feedback from the discussion will assist students in completing the writing component of this exercise.

All student teams must also secure permission to include the website in the on-line exhibition from its creator or copyright holder. Written documentation confirming permission has been granted must be submitted with the final writing assignment.

The central writing assignment for the term will be a catalogue entry for the on-line exhibition. Students will work in teams on this entry and submit, collectively, one final text per team. All catalogue entries are to be fully researched, include a bibliography of relevant references, and be attuned to course themes.

Texts should be written for a general audience while also meeting the above requirements. All students must work with Iona McAulay, the Department of Art History Writing Editor [302 Carpenter Hall, iona.mcaulay@dartmouth.edu], on their final text. A draft of the final text needs to be submitted to Ms. McAulay well in advance of the deadline. She will indicate any changes required before submitting the final text. Ms. McAulay will assist and evaluate writing skills and argumentation. Please note, however, that the Writing Editor will not advise on content for the texts. All inquiries related to the content of the papers should be directed to the professor. You must allow sufficient time between submitting the draft to Ms. McAulay and submission of final text. Students are encouraged to set up a schedule with Ms. McAulay to insure that there will be sufficient time to comment on and correct drafts. All final texts must be accompanied by the marked draft that indicates required corrections.

The final text is due via blitzmail attachment at no later than 5.00pm on 3 December. Students should also submit a hard copy of their text, the draft marked with corrections, and the artist permission.

Students may choose to submit a web-based project or hypertext instead of a text. Any such projects, however, will be held to the same standards of content and argument as traditional texts. Any students wishing to pursue this option should consult with the professor as soon as possible.

In the Winter Term, we will have an official launch for the website to which the faculty and student community will be invited. The web address will be http://www.dartmouth.edu/~arthist/interactivity.html.
course readings
There are three required sources for the course. All are available at Wheelock Books.
• Michael Rush, *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999)
In addition, some lectures will draw upon reserves at Baker-Berry, separately distributed articles, or sources on the web. Students will also be expected to familiarize themselves with any websites distributed prior to class.

Texts under the "Reference" heading are intended to provide further reading on concepts and arguments presented in the lectures. These suggestions are not required, but students are encouraged to explore them as part of research for the final writing assignment.

screenings and websites
Many classes will include screenings of videos, films, and CD-ROMs. The majority of these have been put on reserve for the course in the Jones Media Center. Generally, only clips will be presented in class, and students are encouraged to view the titles in their entirety. The Jones Media call number follows the title and date of the video or CD.

A number of relevant websites are listed after some sessions. We will discuss many of these in class, but students are encouraged to explore these sites as part of their supplemental work for the course and for their research.

explicit material
Students should be aware that graphic or explicit imagery and themes may be discussed at points in the course. Any concerns about this issue should be brought to the professor at the outset of the term.

differently-abled students
Any students with exceptional needs or concerns (including 'invisible' difficulties such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, or psychiatric complications) are encouraged to make an appointment with the professor to discuss these issues by the end of the second week of the term so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

course calendar

**Thursday • 25 September**
Introduction: The 'expanded field' of visual art since the 1960s

**Tuesday • 30 September**
Art as Idea: Conceptual Art, Fluxus, and their progeny

*Reading*  
• Rush, pp. 7-33  
• Sol LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art" [1969]:  
Reference


Websites

- http://www.fluxus.org/ [Fluxus Portal]

Of interest


Wednesday • 1 October • x-hour

Conceptual Art, Feminism, Performance, and Video in the 1970s

Screening
- Laura Cottingham, Not For Sale: Feminism and Art in the USA during the 1970s: A Video Essay (1998), #3294 [re: Adrian Piper, Faith Wilding, Martha Rosler]

Reference

Thursday • 2 October

Art and Act: Issues in Body and Performance Art from the late 1960s to the present

Reading
- Rush, pp. 36-75

Screening
- Newport Harbor Art Museum, Chris Burden (1989), #4555

Reference
- Amelia Jones, Body Art/Performing the Subject (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

**Websites**

**Tuesday • 7 October**
**Installations, Sites, and Art in the U.S. and Britain from the 1970s to the present**

**Reading**

**Reference**
- Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Fall 1990), pp.3-17.

**Websites**

**Wednesday • 8 October • x-hour**
open

**Thursday • 9 October**
**Video Art I: Early developments**

**Reading**
- Rush, pp. 78-113

**Screenings**

**Reference**


**Tuesday • 14 October • HOOD MUSEUM OF ART VISIT**

* Class will meet in the Hood Museum of Art, second floor Lathrop Gallery (works by Bill Viola, Naim June Paik, Cornelia Parker, Gary Schneider, and Juan Muñoz)

**Reading**


**Wednesday • 15 October • x-hour**

open

**Thursday • 16 October**

The Spectacle of 'Postmodernism' in the 1980s and the post-post-1990s: The 'Pictures' crowd and beyond

**Reading**


**Reference**


**Websites**

• [http://adaweb.walkar...](http://adaweb.walkar...)

**Tuesday • 21 October**

Snapshot art, luddite photography, and the impractical landscape (Nan Goldin, Wolfgang Tillmans, Catherine Opie, Steven Pippin, Jeff Wall, and Sam Taylor-Wood)

**Reading**


**Screening**

Reference

- Wolfgang Tillmans, If one thing matters, everything matters (London: Tate, 2003).
- Catherine Opie, Skyways & Icehouses (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2002).

Wednesday • 22 October • x-hour
Guest speaker: Matt Bucy, independent filmmaker and designer (Tip Top Studios) will discuss his database film Of Oz the Wizard (2003).

Reading


Thursday • 23 October
The 'Young British Artists' phenomenon and its malcontents

Reading

- Julian Stallabrass, "Dumb and Dumber?" in High Art Lite (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 84-123.

Screenings

- Samuel Beckett, Breath, dir. Damien Hirst in Beckett on Film, #1096 (2001), disc 3

Reference


Websites

- http://www.tate.org.uk/pharmacy/ [Damien Hirst, Pharmacy]

Tuesday • 28 October
Carnal Art and Cyborg bodies: Orlan and Stelarc

Reading

- "Telematics Timeline" Telematic Connections CD-ROM

Reference

• Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” [1991]
  http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html
  Websites
  • http://www.orlan.net/

**Wednesday • 29 October • x-hour**

Genetics and Art: Eduardo Kac, Marc Quinn, Aziz+Cucher

**Reading**
- Sheila A. Malone, "The Man Behind the Bunny: Interview with Eduardo Kac," *Switch* 16 (15 May 2001),
  http://switch.sjsu.edu/~switch/nextswitch/switch_engine/front/front.php?artc=26
- http://www.ekac.org/

**Reference**

**Websites**
- http://www.ekac.org/
- http://www.azizcucher.net/

**Thursday • 30 October**

Video Art II: Later developments in video, installation, and film as intermedia (Bill Viola, Gary Hill, Mona Hatoum, Tony Oursler, Matthew Barney, William Kentridge)

**Reading**
- Rush, pp. 116-67

**Screenings**
- Bill Viola, *I do not know what it is I am like* (2001), #3605

**Reference**

**Websites**

**Tuesday • 4 November • TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM DISTRIBUTED**

Internet art I: What is the new medium of new media?

**Reading**
- Steve Dietz, "Beyond Interface: Net art and Art on the Net II," 1998,
  http://www.walkerart.org/gallery9/beyondinterface/bi_fr.html
- Andrew Ross, "21 Distinctive Qualities of Net Art," 1999,
  http://switch.sjsu.edu/web/ross.html

**Reference**
• Tilman Baumgärtel, *net.art — Materialien zur Netkunst* (Nürnberg: Institut für moderne Kunst, 2000).
• Jan Ekenberg, "Ontological Problems with Web Art," *Switch* 7 (14 January 1997),  
• Bruce Sterling, "Short History of the Internet,"  
  http://w3.aces.uiuc.edu/AIMscale/nethistory.html

**Websites**
- http://calarts.edu/~line/history.html  [Natalie Bookchin, net art timeline]
- http://www.zkm.de/net  [Net_Condition]
- http://switch.sjsu.edu/  [Switch]

**Wednesday • 5 November • x-hour • MIDTERM EXAM DUE 4.15pm in class**

Survival Research Laboratories

**Screenings**
- Survival Research Laboratories, *A Scenic Harvest from the Kingdom of Pain: Live Show Footage of Three Machine Performances*(1984), #4552

**Websites**
- http://www.srl.org/

**Thursday • 6 November**

Internet art, activism, hactivism, and the web

**Reading**
- David Garcia and Geert Lovink, "The ABC of Tactical Media,"  
  http://www.ljudmila.org/nettime/zkp4/74.htm

**Reference**
- ZPK4,  
  http://www.ljudmila.org/nettime/zkp4/toc.htm

**Websites**
• [http://www.waag.org/tmn/main.html](http://www.waag.org/tmn/main.html)[Tactical Media Network]
• [http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ecd/ecd.html](http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ecd/ecd.html)[Electronic Disturbance Theater]
• [http://www.irational.org/](http://www.irational.org/)
• [http://www.thething.net/](http://www.thething.net/)

**Tuesday • 11 November**
Class presentations I

**Wednesday • 12 November • x-hour**
Understanding the internet and the internet art 'world': The theory of emergent organization

*Reading*  
• Johnson, pp. 11-67

**Thursday • 13 November**
Class presentations II

**Tuesday • 18 November**
Class presentations III

**Wednesday • 19 November • x-hour**
Discussion: Emergence Theory II

*Reading*  
• Johnson, 73-100, 115-29, 163-89

*Recommended*  
• Johnson, 101-14, 140-62

*Screening*  
• Will Wright, *SimCity2000*

*REQUIRED EVENING LECTURE – 5:30pm*
Margo Thompson, Department of Art History, University of Vermont
"Public Art and the Campus Community: Beverly Pepper’s Thel and Its Constituencies at Dartmouth College"
Loew Auditorium, 5:30pm

**Thursday • 20 November**
Class presentations IV

**Tuesday • 25 November**
Visual artists and the visualization of the web

*Screening*  

**Wednesday • 26 November • x-hour**
NO CLASS: Thanksgiving break

**Thursday • 27 November**
NO CLASS: Thanksgiving break
Tuesday • 2 December
Conclusion: Curating Internet Art and Telematics

**Reading**
- Steve Dietz, Glen Helfand, Lawrence Rinder, Benjamin Weil, "The Art of High Technology: A Conversation" *Telematic Connections* CD-ROM

**Reference**
- Roy Ascott, "Is There Love in the Telematic Embrace?" [1989], *Telematic Connections* CD-ROM

**Websites**

Wednesday • 3 December • x-hour

* Papers due 5 pm

SUNDAY • 7 December 11.30am
Final examination
*Starr Instructional Center, Baker/Berry Library*