

Between Enquiry and Object:

Visual and Critical Studies
Sophomore Seminar

Instructor:

Joshua Rios

Course Overview:

Too often creative practices and research-based scholarship are held in opposition, when they should be invited to inform each other. In general, Visual and Critical Studies promotes the interplay of academic and artistic curiosity, while encouraging a hybrid scholarly-creative practice. As a result, the course focuses on a variety of fields—literature, sociology, anthropology, art history, philosophy, and cultural studies, to name a few. The goal is to support student practices within a research-based framework, as well as to connect student work to larger critical and political conversations. Having stated all that, one of the main vectors of inquiry this course charts traces the relationship between art and the social or aesthetics and politics. As such, we will engage histories and theories emerging from feminism, ethnic studies, identity studies, indigenous studies, critical race studies, postcolonialism, as well as theories around embodiment and disability studies. Some artist, writers, and thinkers we will consider include: Eyal Weizman, Wendy Brown, bell hooks, Michel Foucault, Eve Tuck, Brian Holmes, Franco "Bifo" Berardi, Lucy Lippard, Walter Benjamin, Emily Jacir, and Okwui Enwezor. All kinds of making are welcome, including creative or scholarly writing, performance, photography, moving image, sculpture, painting, or any combination. All readings, screenings, and presentations are designed to provide an overview of topics pertinent to contemporary intellectual and creative production, and to offer exposure to practitioners that work through various paths of enquiry.

Key Readings:

Foucault, Michel (1995). "Panopticism," *Discipline and Punish*.

Lippard, R. Lucy (1984). "Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power," Ed. Wallace, Brian. *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*.

Weizman, Eyal (2014). "Introduction: Forensis," *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*.

Taylor, Diana (1998). "A Savage Performance: Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco's 'Couple in the Cage.'" *TDR*. Vol. 42, No. 2.

Tuck, Eve, C. Ree. "A Glossary of Haunting." *Handbook of Autoethnography*. 2013.

Writing Exercises and Some Examples of Moving Image Work:

Mixing the Social and the Personal:

Write a 2-3-page text that interweaves current events with the personal/experiential events unfolding in your life. Allow the so-called distinction between the the personal and the public to dissolve. You can pick any set of current events related to any field of interest and you can pick and choose from any aspects of your personal life to interweave.

Keywords:

Create a list of 10-15 keywords or short key phrases that describe your interests, practices, curiosities, disciplines, genres of concern, and any materials, objects, or forms associated with those interests, practices, curiosities, and disciplines/genres. Pick 3 keywords/phrases to elaborate on. Write between 200-250 words on each keyword. Writing should a) unpack the meaning of keyword in detail [personal or social], b) describe why it is significant to you and your practice.

Harold Washington Library Drift:

Take 15-20 minutes to look through the reference and periodical shelves on the 4th floor of the Harold Washington Library. Locate a periodical that resonates with an interest of yours or line of enquiry you are currently investigating or would like to investigate. Investigate. Gather together and elaborate on your selection and why you picked it (5 minutes). Read a short selection.

Screenings:

Screening/Discussion Franco "Bifo" Berardi on key concepts from his book "After the Future."
<https://vimeo.com/25367464>

Coco Fusco & Paula Heredia, *The Couple in the Cage*. (1993) 31minutes.

Coco Fusco, *TED Ethology: Primate Visions of the Human Mind*. (2015) 49minutes.

Paper Tiger TV, *Donna Haraway Reads "The National Geographic" On Primates*. (1987) 28minutes.
<https://vimeo.com/218047623>