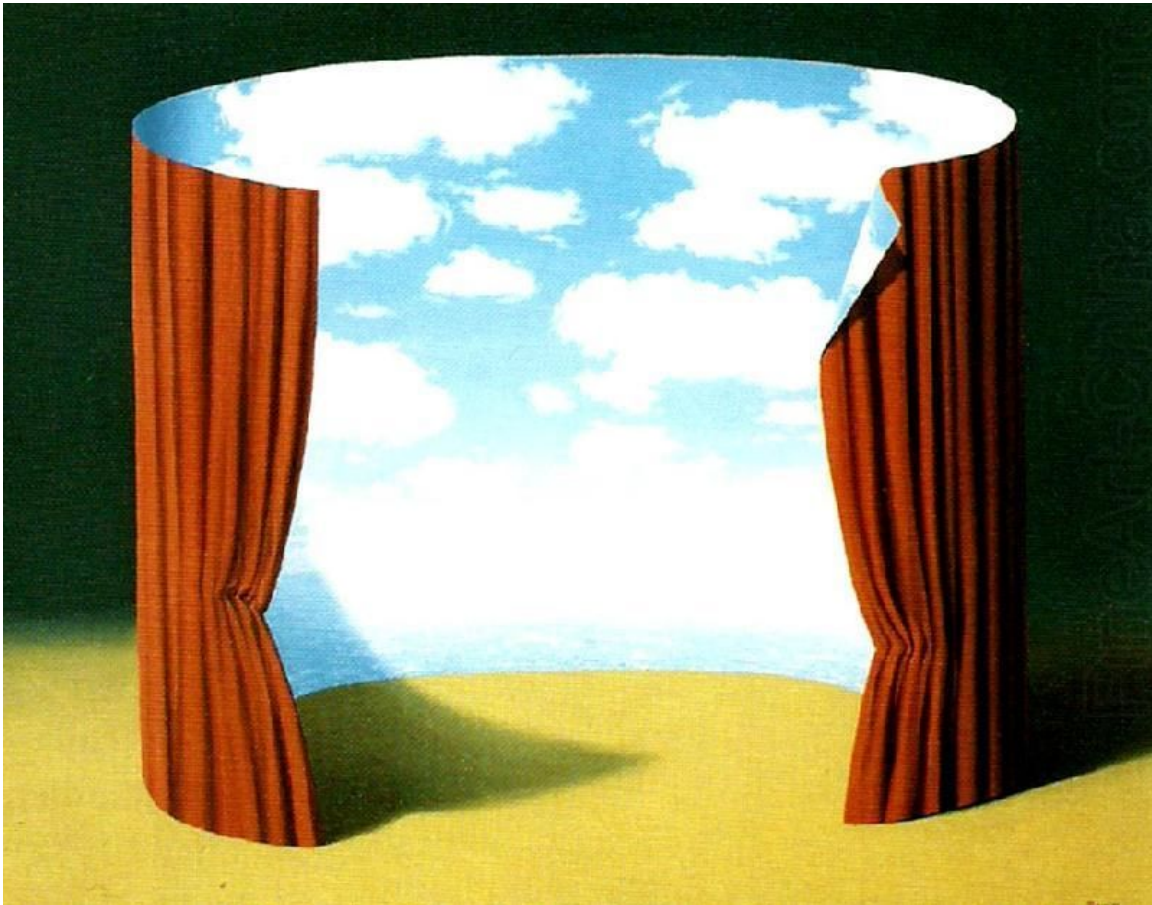


Talking About, Talking With Images (Sophomore Seminar), Spring 2018

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Rene Magritte, *Memoirs of a Saint* (1960)

Overview

What do we do in art school? Beyond learning technical skills for creating within our medium, what can we know? What do we need to know about art and art making?

This course is, in essence, a conversation. The short readings, stream of small projects—written, performative, and imagistic—will serve to keep that conversation alive and profound. Week to week, students will be expected to read, gather, and create outside of class in a series of small projects that will then serve as the subject of discussion and critique in our sessions.

This course will explore, from several different angles, how to look at art, how to talk about art, how to critique and be critiqued, and how to narrate oneself within history.

Short readings throughout the semester will model methods of talking about art through the lens of semiotics, art criticism, and cultural studies, and how art talks through images, gestures, and history. The class will frequently be split into small work groups and critique sessions, and these concepts will be practically applied through a series of writing and art making projects.

Books

This book is older and can be found very cheap on the used market. In addition, we will read a few essays by Roland Barthes and Vilém Flusser that will be distributed as PDFs. These authors are considered canonical—Barthes in Semiotics and especially the photography, Berger in Cultural Studies and especially painting, Flusser in Design.

Required:

1. *Ways of Seeing*, by John Berger

Tentative Schedule

Week1

- An introduction to the course
- Getting in to our groups
Throughout the course, students will be arranged into groups of two. Though many of the assignments are individual by nature (such as portfolios and planning your curricular paths), these will be working groups in which you can bounce ideas off each other. Almost every other week I will meet with these class sub-groups individually to review your work. At the beginning of class, these groups will be arranged randomly, but as we continue, we'll organize the groups based on common interests and practice.
- The Auto-Biography assignment
For the following week, student groups will draft their own independent artists bios, wireframes of their portfolio as they wish it to be on graduation, and resumes they hope

to have 2 years after graduation. These drafts will be reviewed in our individual meetings the following week, and then refined and turned in the next week.

Week2 – meetings with groups

- Each group of two will have a 30 minute meeting with the instructor to review their Auto-Biography drafts.
- For the following week, each group will be assigned 1 question from the first two chapters of Berger which they will be responsible to answer in discussion next week.

Week3

- Discussion of Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, chapters 1 & 2.
- Getting in to groups #2, and the Talking With Images project
New groups of two will be arranged based on common or complimentary interests and media of practice. For the Talking With Images project, students will reproduce Berger's 'image essay' forms from his book, sampling existing imagery from visual culture and juxtaposing and sequencing it in order to reveal and deliver a message. Each group will be assigned a theme or axiom and content area. Drafts of the project will be reviewed in individual meetings the following week.

Week4 – meetings with groups

- 30 minute meetings with groups to review their work on the Talking With Images project.
- For the following week, each group will be assigned 1 question from chapters 3 & 4 of Berger which they will be responsible to answer in discussion next week.

Week5

- Discussion of Berger chapters 3 & 4.
- Presentation of Talking With Images group projects.
- Getting in to groups: Portfolios and Mentors
Over the next two weeks, students will draft an online portfolio of their work incorporating their bios and wireframes they have already made. As part of this process, each group will be assigned a 'mentor'—a graduating senior or recent grad whose work and interests have some correlation to each group's. Over critique week, groups will schedule a meeting time with their mentor to share their portfolio of work and discuss their curricular paths through SAIC.

Week6 – Critique Week

- No class, scheduled meeting with mentors

Week7 – group meetings

- 30 minute meetings with groups to review their portfolios and select Dean's List candidates
- For the following week, each group will be assigned 1 question from chapter 5 of Berger which they will be responsible to answer in discussion next week.

Week8

- Discussion of Berger chapter 5.
- Selection of Dean's List student
- Getting in to groups: The Curricular Mapping project
Groups will be assigned based on similar departmental/curricular interests. Each student will draft a schedule laying out their intended curricular path through SAIC over the next 2 years. This will involve research into different departments, courses, and instructors and will be based on their own project of imagining their portfolio and resume and previous meetings with mentors.

Week9 – group meetings

- 30 minute meetings with groups to review drafts of their Curricular Maps.

Week10

- A discussion of critiques, critiquing, and talking about images.
- Getting in to groups: Talking About Images / Art You Love & Hate
Student groups will be assigned based on similar or complimentary aesthetics. Each group will select two artists whose work in some way mirrors their own: one they would like to emulate, one of which they are critical. On these artists, each group will compose a 10 minute thesis-based, argumentative presentation to be delivered to the class in two weeks.

Week11 – group meetings

- 30 minute meetings with groups to review their work in preparing Art You Love & Hate presentations.

Week12

- Group 10 minute presentations of Art You Love & Hate with Q&A.
- Getting in to groups, the Critique Project
Our final project will be one of critique. Each student will bring to class one current work to display or present and the class will act as a critique group to give feedback. Each student will have 30 minutes for their critique (sessions spread over 2 classes) and can create formal rules for their critique if they wish.

Week13 – group meetings

- 30 minute meetings with groups to review what each student intends to bring for critique and how it will be displayed.

Week14

- Critique session #1

Week15

- Critique session #2