

Contemporary Art in Britain

Class code ARTH-UA 9675 – 001

Instructor Details Dr Jane Beckett

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Office tbd Bedford Square Office Hour tba

Class Details Contemporary Art in Britain
Fall 2013
Tuesday 2.00 – 5.00
Bedford Square

Location to be confirmed. .

Prerequisites None but an interest in visual culture important

Class Description

Contemporary art raises vigorous debate and criticism. But what is contemporary about contemporary art? This course introduces you to some of the key issues in dealing critically with contemporary art with a focus on work on display in exhibitions in London, both major national collections and private galleries. The course explores art produced since the late 1950s through case studies of the work of individual artists and through themes which include photography; representations of the body; gallery display; video practice and installation art. Among other things we consider how contemporary art came to look as it does [with a focus on British art]; the different forms of material and presentation artists have employed; why and how diverse audiences are addressed; how markets, national prizes and private collections shape the kinds of art produced and inform public taste. We also look at the collection and display of contemporary art, on a private and a public scale; dealer galleries and issues of curation. Critical and historical writings by artists and theorists will be considered.

Tutor led lectures, video interviews with artists, critical texts or gallery and museum visits will form the basis for class discussions and presentations

Desired Outcomes

Familiarity with issues in Contemporary art and visual culture, an historical focus and critical framework for consideration of the themes and propositions presented in different works of art; an ability to analyse and explore the context in which art is made and a critical appraisal of contemporary accounts of art making and display

Assessment Components

1.Short paper (1,500 words): 20% ; 2.Academic Journal . Select any 8 weeks in weeks 2 –10. 30%.
3.Final research project/ paper (3000 words) 40%
Two spoken presentations, which will take place during the semester, given in class and in museums, by a group of students. All students in the presenting group will receive the same mark. Text write up (1 page): analysis and discussion in class: 10%

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class. Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class. Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Be as specific as possible about your expectations regarding student work

Assessment

Grade A: Demonstration of detailed familiarity with the visual and critical material under discussion; evidence of ability to engage critically with the main and secondary texts, pertinent, imaginative visual

Expectations

examples perceptively analysed and discussed; Fluent and articulate expression combined with ability to organise material and establish argument and main ideas. Positive participation in the class room and on visits

Grade B: Demonstration of familiarity with the visual and critical material under discussion evidence of ability to engage with critical secondary material and visual analysis. Positive participation in classroom and on gallery visits

Grade C: Limited reference to the primary and secondary visual and critical material and lacking the ability to organise material coherently

Grade D: Little or no reference to the visual and critical course material. May be descriptive with uncritical accounts and unfocused account of the subject of the paper; summaries of the main issues rather than argument; Inadequate or no bibliography

Grade F: Little or no understanding of the subject and little evidence of visual analysis or reading. Poorly organised and confused argument; clearly failed to understand the material under discussion. Inadequate or no referencing of source material

Grade conversion

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A=94-100

A-=90-93

B+=87-89

B=84-86

B-=80-83

C+=77-79

C=74-76

C-=70-73

D+=67-69

D=65-66

F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

Grading Policy

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

Attendance Policy

NYUL has a strict policy about course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.** While students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work, you should NOT approach them for excused absences.

Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill-health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons for absence will not be considered.

Excused absences can only be considered if they are reported in accordance with guidelines which follow, and can only be obtained from the appropriate member of NYUL's staff.

Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester. See also section 11.1 - Make up days.

Absence reporting for an absence due to illness

1. On the first day of absence due to illness you should report the details of your symptoms by e-mailing absences@nyu.ac.uk including details of: class(es) missed; professor; class time; and whether any work was due including exams. Or call free (from landline) [0800 316 0469](tel:08003160469) (option 2) to report your absences on the phone.
2. Generally a doctor's note will be required to ensure you have sought treatment for the illness. Contact the Gower Street Health Centre on 0207 636 7628 to make an appointment, or use HTH general practitioners if you cannot get an appointment expediently at Gower Street.
3. At the end of your period of absence, you will need to complete an absence form online at <http://bit.ly/NuCl5K>. You will need to log in to NYU Home to access the form.
4. Finally you must arrange an appointment to speak to Nigel Freeman or Donna Drummond-Smart on your first day back at class. You must have completed the absence form before making your appointment.

Supporting documentation relating to absences must be submitted within one week of your return to class.

Absence requests for non- illness reasons

Absence requests for **non-illness** reasons must be discussed with the Academic Office **prior** to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retrospectively. Please come in and see us in Room 308, 6 Bedford Square, or e-mail us at atacademics@nyu.ac.uk.

Further information regarding absences

Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student's final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from an examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

NYUL also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early departure.

Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the policies relating to attendance. A copy is in your apartment and has been shared with you on Google Docs.

Late Submission of Work

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted **in person** to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during **office hours** (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: the presentation of another piece of work or words, ideas, judgements, images or data, in whole or in part, as though they were originally created by you for the assignment, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the plagiarism policy.

All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to www.turnitin.com and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

Electronic Submission

The Turnitin database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students' work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

- 1) Go onto the Turnitin website <http://www.turnitin.com>
- 2) Click 'Create Account' in the top right hand corner
- 3) Select user type of 'student'
- 4) Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrolment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact academics@nyu.ac.uk if you have misplaced these).
- 5) Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

- 1) Log in to the Turnitin website
- 2) Enter your class by clicking on the class name
- 3) Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the 'submit' icon
- 4) Enter the title of your piece of work
- 5) Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click 'submit'

- 6) Click 'yes, submit' to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or 'no, go back' to retry)
- 7) You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website.
- 8) **Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you submit it to your professor** (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the 'file' icon in the 'content' column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. **Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.** NYU in London may submit in an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

Required Text(s)

J.Stallabrass, *High Art Lite: British Art in the Nineties* (London 1999) ISBN 1859844367
 J.Stallabrass, *Contemporary Art: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2007) ISBN 0-19-280646-
 Don Thompson *\$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art*,
 London 2008) ISBN-10: 9781845133023 or ISBN-13: 978-1845133023

**Supplemental
 Texts(s) (not
 required to
 purchase as
 copies are in
 NYU-L Library)**

Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art (Cultural Memory in the Present)*
 Stanford University Press; 2005) ISBN-10: 9780804751711 or ISBN-13: 978-0804751711
 Y-A.Bois, R.Krauss & B.Buchloh, *Art Since 1900*, (London 2005)
Brilliant: New Art from London, catalogue Walker Art Center, Minn. 1995
 L.Buck, *Moving Targets A Users Guide to British Art* (London) 1997 and 2004
 Neil Brown, *Tracey Emin Tate* ISBN 1-85437-642-3
 Martha Buskirk *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (MIT 2005) ISBN-10: 9780262524421 or
 ISBN-13: 978-0262524421
 Kieren Cashell *Aftershock: The Ethics of Contemporary Transgressive Art* (London 2009) ISBN-10:
 9781845115241
 Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s*, Verso, 2002, p300.
 ISBN 1859844723
 M.Collings, *Blimey: From Bohemia to Brit Pop: The London Art World from Francis Bacon to Damien
 Hirst*, (London 1997) ISBN 1901785009)
 M.Collings, *Sarah Lucas*, London 2002
 Roger Hallas and Frances Guerin, *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*
 (London 2007), ISBN-10: 9781905674190 or ISBN-13: 978-1905674190
 D.Hopkins, *Art after Modern Art 1945-2000*, Oxford 2000) ISBN 0-19-284234-X
 T.Smith *What is Contemporary Art ?* (Chicago 2009) ISBN-13 978-0226-76431-3 or ISBN-10 0-226-
 76431-1
I am a camera, catalogue Saatchi Gallery,
 A.Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis, 1998. ISBN-10: 0816627738 & ISBN-13: 978-
 0816627738
 M. Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational identity*, MIT 2002
 S. Kent, *Shark Infested Waters: The Saatchi Collection of British Art in the 90s* (London) 1994
 M. Merck and C. Townsend, *Tracey Emin* (London 2002) ISBN 0500283850
 G. Perry (ed), *Difference and Excess in Contemporary Art* (Oxford 2001) ISBN 1-14051-1202-6
 F.Spalding *British Art since 1900* (London, various editions) ISBN 0500202044
Sensation, catalogue Royal Academy London 1997 ISBN 0 900 946571

E. Suderburgh, (ed), *Space, Site, Intervention: Situation Installation Art*, Univ. of Minnesota, 2000
 C. Townsend (ed) *The Art of Rachel Whiteread*, (London 2004)
 Z. Kocur and S. Leung, eds. *Theory*

Internet Research Guidelines

The potential value of the internet for the study of contemporary art is enormous; there are very many useful websites available which provide much valuable information –visual, factual and critical– but they need to be used with discretion as the material immediately available is often very limited. Remember anyone can put material on the Web and that most that is there is not subject to critical review. However there are useful links via many gallery and museum sites and via Google to academic and professional articles and reviews. Addresses for museums and galleries pages and other sites of interest are listed where appropriate. You should use the Web to complement your reading and not replace it. Like books and articles websites should be acknowledged with appropriate references. All sources for your own research for papers and presentations should be academic or related institutional literature and web sites

Additional Required Equipment

None, but a camera & notebook are useful for gallery and museum visits.

Session 1

[2-9-2013]

Contemporary art – What is it?
Assigned Reading: Julian Stallabrass Contemporary art a very short introduction, 1-7. On NYU classes; T.Smith What is Contemporary Art ? – introduction , on NYU classes, Thompson, \$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art, 9-17
 Discussion and analysis of the work and display of Contemporary art

First paper given due in class Week 4: 24th September

Session 2

[9-9-2013]

New Definitions of the Artist & Painting Legacies or Discards
 Discussion - How have notions of the artist changed since 1950?
Reading Stallabrass, *High Art Lite* ‘The artists persona’, 46-8
 Thompson *\$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art*, 59-61
 Lecture and class discussion Legacies in Contemporary Art: Francis Bacon and Pop Art in England : Artists Considered Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud.

Session 3

[17-9-2013]

Painting Legacies & Discards II: Pop Art USA & UK: Artists considered: Richard Hamilton; Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol
Assigned Reading
 Y-A.Bois, R.Krauss & B.Buchloh, ‘1956’, *Art Since 1900*, 385-390; T.Crow *The Rise of the Sixties* (London 1996) Chap. 2 Consumers and spectators, 38-67, on NYU classes; Hal Foster, *The First Pop Age*, Chap 2 62-62-108. on NYU classes

Session 4

[24-9-2013]

Visit Australia Exhibition, Royal Academy, London

Session 5

[1-10-2013]

Legacies & Discards III: Photography, Words and Images- - the case of Gilbert and George
Assigned Reading: Y-A Bois, R.Krauss, B.Buchloh, *Art since 1900*, “1977 The Pictures Exhibition”, 580-583, Posted on NYU classes
 British Art of the Nineties- Saatchi, economics and the shock of the Sensation exhibition, London 1997.
Assigned Reading J Stallabrass *High Art Lite* , 196-222; Thompson, *The \$12 million Dollar Shark*, 93-102

Prepare presentations for Session 6- sheet of topics handed out in class

Session 6

[8-10-2013]

Institutions in which Art is Displayed. Visit Tate Britain
 Discussion and analysis of the work and display of Contemporary art
Reading Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary art?* 56-65;

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| Session 7 | <p>The Shock of the Sensation Exhibition 1997: Oral Presentations and Discussion Case Studies Presentations in class with material provided:</p> |
| [15-10-2013] | <p><u>Assigned Reading</u> you will need your copy of Stallabrass in class for this session. Sections from Kieren Cashell <i>Aftershock: The Ethics of Contemporary Transgressive Art</i>, on NYU classes A separate reading list will be handed out for this class</p> |
| Session 8 | <p>Visit Frieze art Fair, Regents Park <u>Reading:</u> Stallabrass <i>Contemporary Art</i>, chap. 5 The Rules of Art Now, 101-110. Smith, <i>What is contemporary art?</i> 143-145 Thompson <i>The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark</i>, Art Fairs, the final frontier, 185-193</p> |
| [18-10-2013 NB this is a Friday] | <p><u>Second paper given Due 10-12-13</u></p> |
| Session 9 | <p>West End Galleries Visit <u>Reading:</u> Stallabrass <i>Contemporary Art</i>, chap 5 The Rules of Art Now; Thompson <i>The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark</i>, 29-43; The art of the dealer, 45-55; Pricing contemporary art, 206-219</p> |
| [22-10-2013] | |
| Session 10 | <p>Barbican Art Gallery, Visit Pop Art Design Exhibit</p> |
| [29-10-2013] | |
| Session 11 | <p>Installation Art : Lecture and Discussion <u>Reading</u> Stallabrass, <i>Contemporary art: A Very Short Introduction</i>, 16-18, Miwon Kwon, 'One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity' in <i>Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art</i>, E. Suderburg (ed) Univ. of Minnesota, 2000 NYU Classes Claire Bishop, 'But is it Installation art?', <i>Tate Magazine</i>, Spring 2005. Link to tate provided on NYU Classes Installation Oral Presentations I</p> |
| [12-11-2013] | |
| Session 12 | <p>Installation Art : Oral Presentations- 2. Tate Modern <u>Reading:</u> Stallabrass, <i>Contemporary art: A Very Short Introduction</i>, 16-18, Miwon Kwon, 'One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity' in <i>Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art</i>, E. Suderburg (ed) Univ. of Minnesota, 2000 NYU Classes Claire Bishop, 'But is it Installation art?', <i>Tate Magazine</i>, Spring 2005. Link to tate provided on NYU Classes</p> |
| [19-11-2013] | |
| Session 13 | <p>Corporeality/Performance: Lecture and Discussion Why did artists representations of the body become a key issue in the 1980's and 1990s? Close focus on Louise Bourgeois and Tracey Emin</p> |
| [26-11-2013] | <p><u>Reading:</u> R. Krauss <i>Informe without conclusion</i>, <i>October</i> 78 (fall 1996) 89-105; reprinted in <i>Theory of Contemporary art since 1985</i>, eds. Z. Kocur and S. Leung, 395-407 [Posted on NYU Classes] Amelia Jones <i>Body Art/Performing the Subject</i> (tbs)</p> |
| Session 14 | <p>East End Galleries Visit Meeting place tbd</p> |
| [3-12-2013] | <p>Final Paper Tutorials this week</p> |
| Session 15 | <p>Concluding Contemporary Art-</p> |

[10-12-2013]

Hand in Final paper

**Classroom
Etiquette**

**Required Co-
curricular
Activities**

**Suggested Co-
curricular
Activities**

It's worth making the most of your time in London where there are many excellent galleries to view contemporary art and culture- see listings in *Time Out* magazine; The ICA, in The Mall has a range of exhibitions, film, theatre and contemporary performance and seminars discussions. Both Tate Galleries have continuous exhibitions and screenings of films and live music, and numerous events on Friday-Sunday evenings. There is a vast range of dealer galleries to visit. The Frieze Art Fair is held during this semester.

Your Instructor

Jane Beckett has curated numerous exhibitions of modernist and contemporary art; held posts at universities of East Anglia, London & Cambridge. Published widely on Dutch modernism, dada and diasporic & contemporary art. Main areas of Research/Interest: Ruins, mud; walking, mapping, urban space and structure; gender and space; modern and contemporary art, curatorial practices.