

Syllabus

Name of Discipline:	Art and Society
Teacher(s):	Gizela Horváth, Krisztina Erdei
Contact(s):	erdei.krisztina@partium.ro horvath.gizela@partium.ro
Weekly Hours (course + seminar/lab/practice):	2 (course+practice)
Credits:	5
Language of Instruction:	English
Year of Study (recommended):	BA (2nd year), MA

Prerequisites

There are no specific prerequisites for taking the course; however, an openness towards visual art is essential.

Course Content

Abstract

"Art and Society" is an immersive course that delves into the dynamic interplay between visual art and contemporary societal issues. This course examines how modern and contemporary visual artists engage with and respond to the social, political, and cultural landscapes of their time. Students will explore a wide range of visual media, including painting, sculpture, photography, digital art, and installation, while considering the impact of movements such as feminism, globalization, environmentalism, and social justice on artistic production.

Through critical projects and discussions, students will investigate the role of the artist as a commentator, activist, and innovator. The course emphasizes understanding how contemporary visual art practices challenge traditional boundaries and provoke new ways of thinking about identity, community, and the world around us. Furthermore, students will have the chance to engage with contemporary art in practice, taking part in a project on a topic to be decided collectively. The course aims to facilitate the connection between theoretical knowledge and creative expression. Upon completion of the course, students will have a comprehensive understanding of how visual art both shapes and is shaped by the contemporary world.

This course is well-suited to students interested in the intersections of visual art, contemporary culture, and societal issues. Previous experience in art is helpful but not required.

We are pleased to collaborate with students from other academic disciplines, including literature, education, social sciences or economics.

Topics (7 courses+ 7 seminars)

Week	Topic
Class 1 Gizi	<p>Title: <i>Introduction to Art and Society.</i></p> <p>Main themes: The role of art in premodern societies. From commissioned art to the autonomy of art. Avant-garde and society.</p> <p>Bibliography: Tanner, Jeremy: Introduction: Sociology and art history, in: <i>The Sociology of Art. A Reader.</i> Routledge, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004, pp. 1-25</p> <p>JR: Can Art Change the World? TED. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fY-iSzbls8</p>
Class 2 Krisztina	<p>Title: <i>Globalization and Contemporary Art</i></p> <p>Main themes: The impact of globalization on visual art practices Exploration of cross-cultural influences in contemporary art. Case studies: Global art biennales, art from the Global South, diasporic art. (Documenta, Venice Biennale, the rise of global art stars like El Anatsui, and the emergence of Central European artists in global biennales, the international recognition of artists like Marina Abramović)</p> <p>Bibliography: Jessica Lack: <i>Global Art</i>, Thames & Hudson, 2020</p>
Class 3 Gizi	<p>Title: <i>The social turn in art</i></p> <p>Main themes: Relational and participatory art. The society of spectacle (Guy Debord) and relational aesthetics (Nicolas Bourriaud). "Micro-utopias" and "artificial hells" (Claire Bishop). Participative projects.</p> <p>Bibliography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bourriaud, Nicolas 2002. Art of the 1990s. In: <i>Relational Aesthetics</i>, Les presses du reel, pp. 11-18. • ArtTheoriez: Relational Aesthetics / Nicholas Bourriaud. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJZqRS4FHWc • ArtTheoriez: Artificial Hells - Claire Bishop - Book Review https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDRvEWuIUIk
Class 4 Krisztina	<p>Title: <i>Art and participation: Art and Politics</i></p> <p>Main themes: The role of visual art in political movements and social activism. Case studies: Art in the Civil Rights Movement, anti-war art, contemporary activist art (e.g., Shepard Fairey's "Hope" poster, the Guerrilla Girls' activism, Éva Besnyő and Dolle Mina feminist movement, Claudia Andujar, Ihar Hancharuk: <i>Watchers/Readers</i>, The Prague Spring's influence on Czech art (e.g., David Černý), Polish avant-garde movements like the Orange Alternative, and Hungary's subversive art during the 1980s, György Galántai's underground exhibitions, Gabriella Csozó)</p>

	<p>Bibliography: Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship. London: Verso, 2012, 275-284 https://selforganizedseminar.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/bishop-claire-artificial-hells-participatory-art-and-politics-spectatorship.pdf</p>
Class 5 Krisztina	<p>Title: <i>Environmental Art: Visual Responses to the Climate Crisis</i> Main themes: Visual art's response to environmental issues and ecological concerns. Sustainability in contemporary practices. Case studies: Artists addressing climate change, habitat destruction, and sustainability (e.g., Agnes Denes' "Wheatfield – A Confrontation," Olafur Eliasson's ice sculptures, Noémia Goudal: Anima, Almudena Romero). Bibliography: Almudena Romero: The Pigment Change, https://fisheyegallery.fr/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ENG-Almudene-Romero-The-Pigment-Change-2.pdf Karrie Jacobs: The Woman Who Harvested a Wheat Field Off Wall Street https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/14/t-magazine/agnes-denes-art.html</p>
Class 6 Gizi	<p>Title: <i>Art and Identity: Gender, Race</i> Main themes: Exploration of how visual art addresses and reflects issues of identity. Feminist art, Black art movements, Postcolonial reflections. Case studies: Artists who challenge stereotypes and explore identity through their work (e.g., Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman, Yasumasa Morimura, Basquiat, events: Documenta 15, Biennale 2024 - Strangers Everywhere). Bibliography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katy Hessel: Text, Image and Photographic Performances. In: 2022 The Story of Art without Men, Penguin, pp. 359-378. • Armchair Academics: What is Postcolonialism? A Short Introduction to Postcolonial Theory. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nC428rtMB8
Class 7	<p>Discussion: Understanding the dynamic relationship between visual art and society The objective of this discussion is to gain insight into the dynamic relationship between visual art and society, with a particular focus on contributions from Central Europe and the countries of origin of the students. To this end, the participants will engage in the creation of mind maps.</p>

Class 8	Themes of the final projects that incorporate local challenges, with a particular focus on how they engage with contemporary societal issues through visual art.
Class 9	Working on final projects 1.
Class 10	Working on final projects 2.

Class 11	Working on final projects 3.
Class 12	Final Project Presentations and Critique 1. Present and critique final projects
Class 13	Final Project Presentations and Critique 2. Present and critique final projects
Class 14	Poster Conference

Learning Outcomes

1. **Analyze Visual Art in Context:** Critically analyze contemporary visual artworks within their social, political, and cultural contexts, understanding the complex relationship between art and society.
2. **Understand Contemporary Art Practices:** Identify and explain key concepts, movements, and practices in contemporary visual art, including how artists engage with current societal issues such as identity, globalization, and social justice.
3. **Understand the Role of the Artist:** Assess the role of the artist in contemporary society, considering how artists act as commentators, activists, and innovators within various cultural and societal frameworks.
4. **Develop Art Criticism Skills:** Apply art criticism methodologies to evaluate contemporary visual art, articulating informed perspectives through written and oral communication.
5. **Connect Theory with Practice:** Synthesize theoretical knowledge with practical experience by participating in creative projects that reflect an understanding of contemporary visual art practices and their societal implications.

Assessment

Moodle test and presentation of the final project

50% Moodle test, 50% final project

Requirements to Pass

minimum 5 at test, finished final project presented.

Bibliography

Books:

Bishop, Claire 2012: *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Verso.

Bourriaud, Nicolas 2002: *Relational Aesthetics*, Les presses du reel

Debord, Guy 2021 : *The Society of the Spectacle*. Cambridge : Unredacted Word.

Hessel, Katy 2022: *The Story of Art without Men*, Penguin.

Tanner, Jeremy 2004: *The Sociology of Art. A Reader*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis e-Library.

Wolff, Janet 1993: *The Social Production of Art*. Macmillan

Studies:

Horváth, Gizela 2022. The Spectacle of Protest: The Case of Budapest University of Theatre and Film Arts (SzFE). In: Mário S. Ming Kong, Maria do Rosário Monteiro (Eds): *Creating Through Mind And Emotions*, CRC Press, Taylor and Francis Group, 373-379.

Horváth, G. 2021. *Paint on the Walls: Artistic Expression on the Outside Walls of the City*. In Tamás Juhász (Ed.): *Art in Urban Space: Reflections on City Culture in Europe and North-America*. L'Harmattan Publishing, Budapest-Paris, 41-59.

Horváth, Gizela 2017. The ambiguity of micro-utopias. In: Monteiro, Maria do Rosario & Ming Kong, Mario S. (eds.). *Utopia(s) – Worlds and Frontiers of the Imaginary*. Boca Raton London New York Leiden: CRC Press, Taylor and Francis Group, 2017, 241-247.

Horváth, Gizela 2023. Displaying Participatory Art. In Vítor Moura and Connell Vaughan (Eds.): *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics*, Volume 15, 2023, 271-284.

Horváth, Gizela 2023. The Reception of Participatory Art. The Case of Documenta Fifteen. *STUDIA UBB. PHILOSOPHIA*, Vol. 68 (2023), 1, pp. 97-112.

Online articles

Videos

ArtTheoriez: Relational Aesthetics / Nicholas Bourriaud.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJZqRS4FHWc>

ArtTheoriez: Artificial Hells - Claire Bishop - Book Review
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDRvEWuUIk>

Arnaud Gerspacher: Introduction_The Social Turn,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWHo35gQigg>

Armchair Academy: What is Postcolonialism? A Short Introduction to Postcolonial Theory.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nC428rtMB8>

Kerr Houston: Postcolonial Theory and Art History.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWhPVBPVQ98>

Nicola Price: Art and Globalisation 3: Colonisation.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6CvjtNqVD0>

Tom Nicholas: Postcolonialism: WTF? An Intro to Postcolonial Theory.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbLyd0mQwlk>

JR: Can Art Change the World? | TED. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fY-iSzbls8>