

COURSE TITLE	Art & Identity Politics, 1965 to Present
COURSE CODE	OC2302AH05
TUTOR	ORIANA FOX
START DATE	20/02/2024
DAY & TIME	TUESDAYS, 6PM - 8PM
LEVEL	ALL LEVELS
LOCATION	ONLINE

DAILY BREAKDOWN

Date	Topics/ Skills covered
20 February 2024	<p>Self-representation and the gaze</p> <p>This session will entail clarifying the distinction between art informed by identity politics and the much broader category of autobiographical art. To do so we will also take a close look at artworks in which the artist takes their own self and body as the subject matter for their work for decidedly political reasons. More specifically, we will explore works that pose a challenge to conventional and limiting depictions of gender, sexuality, race, age, class, nationality and disability respectively and as they overlap. These artworks represent the artists as active, empowered subjects, instead of passive objects displayed for the dominant gaze, often through the use of direct, confrontational eye contact. Artists covered include: Hannah Wilke, Leah Lublin, Wendy Geller, Mary Duffy, Rene Cox, Yuki Kihara, Zanele Muholi, Cassils and Hélène Amouzou. To analyse these works, we will make use of the key ideas of feminist theorists Griselda Pollock and Laura Mulvey and Black feminist scholar bell hooks.</p>
27 February 2024	<p>Objecthood and the denied gaze</p> <p>This session follows on from the topics addressed the previous week, but looks specifically at artists who present a denied gaze by averting their eyes or turning their backs to the viewer, or who embody objecthood, employ subterfuge, alter-egos or non-representational tactics such as abstraction and formalism. Employing these diverse strategies and making use of varied media, these artists continue to address identity whilst avoiding being pinned down by stereotyping or essentialism. Artists covered include: Carrie Mae Weems, Lorna Simpson, Mary Kelly, Adrian Piper, Lynn Hershman Leeson, James Luna, Sherrie Levine, David Medalla, Félix González-Torres, Amy Sillman and Vivian Chinasa Ezugha. Excerpts from the respective critical writing of queer theorists José Esteban Muñoz and Jennifer Doyle as well as art historian Uri McMillan will inform our understanding of these artists' distinct works.</p>
5 March 2024	<p>Controversial Curation</p> <p>Though arts institutions in the US and UK have consistently attempted to recognise and capitalise on marginalised groups through the curation of identity-based exhibitions, controversy has consistently surrounded them, leading to activism on the part of artists to protest their flaws and exclusions. This session will look at two case studies: The Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1969 exhibition "Harlem on my mind" and "The Other Story" at The Hayward Gallery in 1989. We will discuss each show in relation to wider aesthetic and socio-political contexts in which they arose, in the former's case that of the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement and in the latter's, the British Black Arts Movement at the height of Thatcherism and civil unrest in a number of British cities. We will also touch upon more recent controversies surrounding Dana Schutz's <i>Open Casket</i> (2016) and the accusations of antisemitism surrounding Documenta 15 (2022).</p>
12 March 2024	<p>Recognition</p> <p>This session looks at a broad variety of methods employed by artists as individuals and collectives to gain recognition in the face of institutional indifference and erasure. Key case studies include the direct action and public awareness campaigns of activist groups such as the Guerrilla Girls; the lesser-known, London-based but similarly feminist group, Fanny Adams; and AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and its artist collective Gran Fury. Additional examples will be discussed including performance art interventions in the streets; installation art; artist-run gallery spaces; and artist/curator projects aimed at decolonising the museum. Without gliding over their important differences, we will connect projects that take place at different times and places but that nonetheless call out for comparison due to their uncanny similarities in terms of their aesthetic and political approaches.</p>
19 March 2024	<p>Social Practice</p> <p>Social practice, socially-engaged or community-based art, as it has been variously labelled, is a mainstay of artists seeking to connect with everyday people, and often those who are underrepresented within or excluded from the cultural sphere. Key examples include: Suzanne Lacy's large-scale performance installation <i>The Crystal Quilt</i> (1985-87) aimed at raising awareness of the untapped potential of elderly women; Tania Bruguera's artist-initiated social movement and community headquarters <i>Immigrant Movement International</i> (2006-15); Oreet Ashery's <i>Staying</i> (2010) which gave voice to the experiences of lesbian asylum-seekers; and Eva Sajovic's <i>The Roles We Play</i> (2006-14), advocating for people living in poverty. Each of these examples employ distinct material and conceptual approaches which will be discussed in relation to critical ideas about participatory practice by theorists, curators and by the practitioners themselves.</p>