

For the Record: Making and Documenting Performance Art

ART 3842C Section 3G37

Spring 2019

Instructor: Coco Fusco

Class schedule: MW 11:45-2:45

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DESCRIPTION:

This is a studio class about performance art and how artists document their performances. Performance is essentially an ephemeral medium: it involves actions taking place in real time over short period. Performance is almost always presented in public; it is enacted by people (or by machines operated by people); and it is experienced through direct engagement with the performers. Throughout the semester, we will be looking at key examples of performance art from the past five decades to understand how artists have explored gesture, movement, conduct, speech and embodiment within art practice.

Many if not most artists choose to document their performances. Some write chronicles, some create objects to commemorate actions, some use photographs, audio recording, video and other electronic media. Documentation is especially important to performance because of its ephemeral nature. After the live act is over, what remains for consideration, future study and historical memory is the document. While the performance document is not the same as the performance, it is central to our understanding of the medium and often intrinsic to the works themselves.

Performance art has a long and interesting history of experimentation with recording technologies. This course will offer an opportunity to experiment with various presentation platforms and recording technologies to understand their relationship to performance art. Students will develop their own projects and will view and discuss performance documents.

CLASS FORMAT: This is a studio course that will combine the development and critique of student work with discussions about performance art histories. On Mondays we will spend part of class looking at documentation of performance art and also devote time to going over assignments. On Wednesdays we will present and discuss performances and performance documents.

ASSIGNMENTS: You will have three kinds of assignments: you will create performances and documents to share in class; you will conduct research about performance art history; and you will formulate written questions and comments about performance videos that we view in class. ***Late assignments will not be***

accepted unless the student can demonstrate emergency circumstances with written proof.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS: This class is designed to introduce you to performance art and its relationship to various recording technologies. The goal is to make you aware of the panorama of possibilities that performance offers and to offer students opportunities to experiment with ways of representing their live actions.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES: Students are expected to attend and participate in all sessions. If you are absent due to illness, a family emergency, religious observance, or another academic obligation, you must provide a written explanation to the instructor and when warranted, a note from a medical professional or your advisor. **If students miss more than three classes (without a legitimate excuse) they will not pass this course.**

The UF policy on attendance can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx - absences>

METHOD OF EVALUATION: You will be assessed based on the quality of your participation in class and your assignments. Any student who may be in danger of not receiving credit or not passing the course will receive a written warning prior to the end of the term. The final grade for the course will be determined by the following: quality and consistency of the student's participation in discussions (40%); quality of artworks (50%); attendance (10%).

Here is an explanation of how I determine final grades:

A grade:

1. Perfect attendance record
2. Substantive participation in at least 80% of class discussions, i.e. good questions and comments that demonstrate understanding of course materials.
3. Performances and performance documents that show high effort, solid understanding of performance concepts.
4. Consistently cooperative and supportive attitude shown in collective endeavors for class.

B grade:

1. No more than 2 absences.
2. Substantive participation in at least 65% of class discussions, i.e. good questions and comments that demonstrate understanding of course materials.
3. Performances that indicate that the student understood the key themes and idea of the course but may have some difficulty applying those ideas.
4. Frequent demonstration of a cooperative and supportive attitude in collective endeavors for class.

C grade:

1. No more than 3 absences.
2. Substantive participation in at least 50% of class discussions, i.e. good questions and comments that demonstrate understanding of course materials.
3. Performances that indicate that the student did not understand the key themes and idea of the course and may has difficulty applying those ideas.
4. Inconsistent demonstration of a cooperative and supportive attitude in collective endeavors for class.

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The UF policies on grading can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Policy on cell phones, laptops and recording: Cell phones should be turned on silent during class sessions. Laptops may only be used to produce work in class. Seminars may not be recorded without prior consent of the instructor.

For students with disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. For information about the Disability Resource Center please consult: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Policy regarding Health and Safety: please note
<http://saahhealthandsafety.weebly.com/hs-rules-by-area.html>

Policy regarding non-completion of assignments: Students must complete all assignments and participate in discussions regularly to pass the course. Students who

do not complete assignments by the end of the term may only request an incomplete in the event of extreme circumstances, such as a medical emergency. **No other incompletes will be issued.**

Equipment students need for this class: Students should come to class with a notebook to write in or a laptop for taking notes. Students should wear comfortable clothing and footwear so they can move easily and sit on the floor. Students should also have access to a digital camera for photography and video recording. Students should also have technology for audio recording. It is fine to use smart phones for this class, provided that students have software to remove recorded files from their phones and show work on computers.

WEEK 1: January 7: Introduction to the Class:

Opening discussion of what performance is, and what are the multidisciplinary influences. What are the contexts for presentation and documentation, what is the relationship between live acts and their recording?

View:

Linda Montano: Mitchell's Death (1978):

http://www.ubu.com/film/montano_learning.html

Adrian Piper: The Mythic Being: http://www.adrianpiper.com/vs/video_tmb.shtml

Rev. Billy Exorcises BP at Tate Modern: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luoL5A-SHQk>

Mark Leckey: Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dS2McPYzEE&list=PLKRABkfKZQI2Fq21JSfhIAyOm19FAr1z1&index=9>

January 9

Discussion: How does the presence of an audience affect experience of doing something? What is the difference between engaging in an artistic activity in private or in public?

View:

Yvonne Rainer Talking Solo: <https://vimeo.com/138198428>

Carolee Schneeman: Meat Joy (1964):

http://www.ubu.com/film/schneemann_meatjoy.html

Francis Alys-Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing (1997)

<https://vimeo.com/130838361>

Aki Sasamoto: Delicate Cycle (2016):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3wLqFKyjes>

Performance Exercise for Next Week:

Develop a performance that demonstrates something you know how to do and something you have never done before. Your final piece should last no longer than 5 minutes. These performances will be presented on January 14.

WEEK 2: January 14

View: Francis Alys: When Faith Moves Mountains:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eNuqLnFaYA>

Maria Teresa Hincapié: A Thing is a Thing (Una cosa es una cosa)
<https://vimeo.com/307852447> password: Coco's Class

Documentary about Chinese Performance Art: [https://www.dropbox.com/home/UF Course Readings/PERFORMANCE CLASS SPRING 2019?preview=chinese+performance+art.mov](https://www.dropbox.com/home/UF%20Course%20Readings/PERFORMANCE%20CLASS%20SPRING%202019?preview=chinese+performance+art.mov)

January 16:

In class presentation of performances.

Group Assignment for Next Week

Students will be divided into three groups. Each group will orchestrate a group activity in which all group members participate. These performances can last up to 15 minutes. These performances will be presented on January 23rd.

WEEK 3: No class on January 21 (MLK Day)

January 23: Performance Exercises:

Presentation and critique of the group activity performance.

Assignment for Next Week:

Create a performance that does not involve the sense of sight. It should last no more than five minutes. These performances will be presented on January 30.

WEEK 4: January 28

Discussion; Why record a performance? Why use writing to make a record of an action? What does committing performance to writing alter the understanding of an event?

View: William Pope L.: The Great White Way Part 1 (2002) :

http://www.ubu.com/film/pope_white1.html

Andrea Fraser: Official Welcome (2003):

http://www.ubu.com/film/fraser_welcome.html

Read performance texts by artists by:

Mierle Lader Ukeles- Manifesto

Adrian Piper - Passing for White, Passing for Black (1991)

Lygia Clark - We Refuse (1966)

Dan Graham – Performance/Audience/Mirror (1977)

January 30: Performance Exercises

Presentation of performances that do not involve the sense of sight.

Assignment for Next Week:

You should carry out this exercise for at least two hours and work on your own. Choose a location outside your studio and off campus where you can be alone for at least two hours. You can move for this exercise or be still. If you move, don't leave the site you have chosen. Choose and develop a means of recording your actions/inaction AND the events or non-eventfulness around you. Try to be as aware as possible of the smallest of changes in your own body, mind and immediate environment – don't just wait for something really noticeable to happen. Do not use any cameras or electronic recording devices. Limit yourself to what you can commit to memory, write down or otherwise record with some part of your body. Once you have completed your action chronicle the experience in writing if you have not already written it down.

Type your text from this performance and make copies for all of the class.

WEEK 5 – February 4

Discussion: Performance, which is action based and ephemeral, often involves the production of something material and atemporal -- a thing, an object, a trace, an element of waste. What are the ways that we can interpret and understand the impulse to show others the making of these things? What are we as audience members called upon to witness? How does watching something be made change our understanding of creation and also of what art is?

Works to consider:

Chris Burden: Send Me Your Money: <http://www.ubu.com/sound/burden.html>

Alison Knowles Makes a Salad Performance on the High Line:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pc5_pexVob8

Regina Galindo, Who Can Erase the Traces?:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D46p71QdCTc>

Dread Scott: Money to Burn: <https://www.dreadscott.net/works/money-to-burn/>

February 6: Performance Exercises

Bring your documentation to class from the exercise you carried out last Friday. We will review and discuss everyone's documentation.

Assignment for Next Week:

Many performances involve making, from concrete objects to ephemeral or immaterial things, to traces of actions, to records of actions, to waste products resulting from actions. Choose one of these approaches and develop a performance that is organized around the act of making. For your first attempt at producing an object in the course of a performance, create a piece that lasts no longer than 10 minutes and that can be executed in class.

WEEK 6: February 11

Discussion: We will continue our discussion about performances that involve making three-dimensional things. We will focus our discussion on how to conceive of the objects made in performances as documents of a set of actions.

View:

Chris Burden - Selected Works from 1970s:

http://ubu.com/film/burden_selected.html

Bruce Nauman: Performances 1968-1969: <https://vimeo.com/23096417>

Vito Acconci: Seedbed (1972): http://www.ubu.com/film/acconci_seedbed.html

Susan Mogul: Take Off (1972):

https://www.dropbox.com/home/SusanMogul_TakeOff?preview=SusanMogul_TakeOff_1974_CleanEdges.mov

Ben Patterson - Nano Fluxus (after Marcel Duchamp):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMZSKmKPCJw&index=17&list=PLKRABkfKZQI2Fq21JSfhIAyOm19FAr1z1>

February 13: Performance Exercises

We will present and critique the performances culminating in the making of things that you have created in the last week.

Assignment for Next Week:

Develop a performance that results in the making of a thing, but make sure this week to create something different in method and substance from what you made last week. If, for example, you made something with your hands last week, try to make something using another part of your body this week. Change the materials you work with. Alter your process. Think about how to leave traces of a set of actions.

WEEK 7: February 18

View: Bob Flanagan's **Sick**; <http://www.watchfree.to/watch-1144-Sick-The-Life-Death-of-Bob-Flanagan-Supermasochist-movie-online-free-putlocker.html>

February 20:

Presentation and discussion of performance related objects in class.

Assignment to work on for Next Week

Choose a performance art piece from a major figure in the field and conduct your own research on how that performance was created, why it was created and how it was documented by the artist. Write one page (typed, 250 words maximum, double-spaced with one inch margins, spell-checked!) about this artwork in which you should explain why you chose it, what documents you were able to access, what impressions you have if the work and how you think the artist executed the work.

WEEK 8: February 25: Performance Photographs and Performing for the Camera

Most of the history of performance is known through photographs: most of us learn about performances we did not actually see live by looking at pictures of them. Many performance artists rejected the use of photographic documentation in the 1950s and 1960s because they wanted to stress the uniqueness of live experience and promote a dematerialized art practice. This position also led to the elaboration of a critique of the objectification of performance through photography.

However, many artists have created performances exclusively for the camera. Some artists have concentrated on the ways that photography has shaped perception of who they are and what performance is. We will explore both these positions in our conversations.

View: Videos

Kalup Linzy: Keys to My Heart: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEuGJ7OCX0c>

All My Churen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81Mlehmn8cl>

Photos

Eleanor Antin: Carving, 1972

<https://dspace.fandm.edu/bitstream/handle/11016/22331/Antin2.jpg?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Sophie Calle, The Hotel, Room 47 (1981)

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/sophie-calle-2692>

Jill Magid: Evidence Locker (2004) : <http://www.evidencelocker.net/story.php>

February 27: Performance Exercises

Presentation of research on performance documentation

Assignment for Next Week:

For this exercise you may choose to work in pairs. Each student should create a performance that incorporates the act of photographing into the process. If you work with another student you can photograph each other. If you work on your own use a timer on your camera and a tripod. Keep in mind that what you will be showing the group next week are photographs, not the action documented in them. Give some thought to what kind of photographic look you want and how that affects perception of the actions performed. Think about the effects of scale, color, light and quantity of images employed to document a simple act.

WEEK 9: March 11

Discussion: We will continue to consider how photography shapes perception of performance art and how it reconfigures audiences. Does photography change performance art's temporality? How does it affect your sense of what a performance is or was?

View:

The Yes Men: Share the Safety Promo Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2r9ofi_vG5g

If You Eat Beef, Don't Wash: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjQhVPkKDcE>

Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Peña; The Couple in the Cage, A Guantanaui Odyssey:

https://www.dropbox.com/home/COCOFUSCOINFO/COCO_FUSCO_VIDEOS/Fusco's_other_videos?preview=Couple+in+the+Cage-MP4.mp4

March 13: Performance Exercises:

We will present and critique student performances that incorporate photography.

Assignment for Next Week

You will devise a short performance that you will record on video. Before you undertake this task, think about how the action will look on video and write your thoughts. Make a storyboard. What are you going to do? Will you record your action from start to finish? What camera angle(s) will you use? Will you record one continuous take or several takes? No editing of your video is required for this exercise. Make sure your video lasts no longer than 10 minutes.

WEEK 10: March 18

What happens to an action when it is performed for a live recording? How are actions amplified or transformed when their recording becomes part of the presentation or a substitute for the live act?

View:

Joan Jonas: Vertical Roll (1972): http://www.ubu.com/film/jonas_vertical.html

Excerpt from Dance (Lucinda Childs, Philip Glass and Sol Lewitt):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CByoefokGrA>

Wafa Bilal: Domestic Tension - The Paintball Project (2007)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_L6BC900rY&list=PL8E2DB23DB7246D69

March 20: Performance Exercises:

We will present and critique the performance videos made by students.

Assignment for Next Week

You will create a video of a performance again, but this time you should devise a performance that you can do in a public place. You can do it on campus, on the street, or in any other public space where people circulate and do not expect to see performances. You should work in pairs or groups for this assignment. Make a video that documents your performance and the reaction of the public. Your videos should be brief, no longer than 10 minutes. No editing is necessary for this assignment.

WEEK 11: March 25:

Discussion: How can performance videos weave together reality and fiction? Is there anything essentially real or unreal about performance? Do we have different expectations about the "real" aspects of performance when we see them on video?

View:

Sharon Hayes: Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) Screeds #13, 16 20, 29 (2003):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExBCbpAHEpM>

Emily Jacir: Crossing Surda (excerpt) (2002):
http://www.ubu.com/film/jacir_sudra.html

Mike Kelley and Michael Smith: A Voyage of Growth and Discovery (2010):
http://www.ubu.com/film/kelley_discovery.html

Hsieh Tehching: Time Clock Piece (1981)
http://www.ubu.com/film/hsieh_clock.html
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijqllOzSdI>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvebnkjwTeU>

March 27: Performance Exercises

We will present and critique the performance videos documenting actions that took place in public.

Assignment for Last Weeks of the Course

In the last section of this course, we will produce performances for two public events. For one project, each student will choose a classic performance art piece to reproduce live and create a document of it. Those projects will be presented on April 15. For the second project, students will create a performance of their own to be presented to an audience of their peers on.

This week, students should begin conducting research to determine which performance art piece they would like to reproduce. I will provide a list of suggestions but if students want to go outside that list, they should just check with me before doing so. Students should keep a record of all research conducted, including a list of websites, books and magazines consulted, copies of photos and videos of the performance to be reproduced, etc. All the documentation should be presented to the class on April 8.

WEEK 12: Preparation for Performance Re-enactments

April 1: View: Marina Abramovic: Seven Easy Pieces (2005)
https://archive.org/details/ubu-abramovic_seven

Wu Tsang: The Shape of the Right Statement (2008)

April 3:

Students will each meet individually with the professor to discuss their progress in preparation of the final performances.

WEEK 13: Presentation of Performance Re-enactments

April 8: We will install and review all the documentation and research materials that were amassed for this project. We will also agree on a schedule for presentation of works on April 10 and 15.

April 10: Presentation of Re-Enactments – Session 1

FINAL ASSIGNMENT:

Students should be planning their own performance to be presented publicly on April 22-24. The performance should last no more than ten minutes. It can be done as a solo piece or it can involve other members of the group, but each student in the class should create a piece, which is to say that participating in a group performance does not substitute for creating your own work. Try to challenge yourselves to think outside the box, to do something you would not usually do, or explore a method or a subject that you have not dealt with before. You will have two tasks - to create a live performance and to produce some form of document of that work.

WEEK 14: Presentation of Performance Re-enactments

April 15: Presentation of Re-Enactments – Session 2

April 17: Come to class with a written proposal for your final performance. You should write at least two paragraphs. In one paragraph you should describe what you intend to do, why you want to do it, and what you think your performance means. In the second paragraph you should outline the technical elements of the performance and explain how you will execute the action and create the documentation.

WEEK 15: April 22

FINAL PERFORMANCES SESSION 1

April 24

FINAL PERFORMANCES SESSION 2

LIST OF CLASSIC PERFORMANCE WORKS TO CONSIDER FOR RE-ENACTMENTS

Alan Kaprow - Happenings
Chris Burden- 5 Day Locker Piece (this can be abbreviated)
Bruce Nauman's Art Makeup
Janine Antoni's Loving Care
Adrian Piper's Funk Lessons
Ulay and Abramovic - Imponderabilia
Ana Mendieta - Sweating Blood
James Luna - Take a Picture with a Real Indian
Ben Patterson - Paper Piece
Maria Teresa Hincapié - Una cosa es una cosa (A Thing is a Thing)
Tehching Tsieh - One Year Performance-Time Clock Piece
Bruce Nauman - Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk)
Yvonne Rainer - Hand Movie
Lygia Clark - Abandonment
Liz Magic Laser - Stand Behind Me (2013)