

ART 6933 –Relational Aesthetics: Art as Activism, Interactivity, and the critical role of the Art Object
Sculpture Graduate Seminar
Spring 2021
6 credits

Instructor: Sergio Vega
Hours: Thursday periods E1 to E3 (7:10 to 10:20 PM)
Classroom: FAC (basement)
Office Hours: Thursday 5 to 7 PM (by appointment only).
Office FAD 229 / phone: 352-281-7283

Goals and Objectives of the Seminar

This seminar studies theoretical approaches to sculpture making, installation art and related art forms, in order to disclose how diverse critical discourses are employed to inform and contextualize the understanding, reception and distribution of artworks. The objective is for students to develop the standards of research, conceptualization and production expected from professional artists. In order to achieve this goal, it is crucial that students strive for developing an effective visual and critical vocabulary to substantiate their practice. Students will be required to produce a new body of work and to talk and write about it in relation to art history and contemporary art theories. Emphasis will be on the integration of studio practice and critical thought.

In addition, the goal of this specific seminar will be to examine theories of participation in art and to implement them in student art projects. The course will also focus on multiple interpretations of interactivity and on the ways in which art can generate social engagement.

Methods of the Course

This course will consist on lectures, readings, class discussions of the readings, critiques of student work and individual consultations. In our weekly class critique sessions students will have the opportunity to receive feedback from classmates and instructors. Students will show their work in progress throughout the semester in this forum. For the final presentation it is expected that the work will be displayed in a finished condition as if it were installed in an exhibition open to the public. The strategies and forms of presentation are crucial for the appropriate reception of the projects. Students should set up studio visits with faculty individually. Everyone needs to meet with the instructor of record for this course at least once this semester.

Topical Outline

In the past forty years, the field of sculpture has expanded to incorporate the methods and theories of an array of disciplines. Happenings, performance art, land art, site specificity, institutional critique, architecture, digital media, video art, photography, installation art, are just some of the fields into which sculpture has developed. Strategies of production, distribution, display, reception, interactivity and sociability are now primary concerns of sculpture practice.

This course will engage in a critical interrogation of the relationship between art and society by tracing the transformation of the discourses of art as solely predicated in the autonomy of the art object into those of interactivity and relational aesthetics.

If the ethical purpose of art could change society: how would it do it?
What is the relationship between artistic practice and activism? Can they be one and the same?
If art manages to generate social engagement, is it beautiful because of it?
What is the role of aesthetics in everyday life? Is aesthetic choice a political act?
Can art objects generate social change?

Topics covered:

1) The poetics of the open work (Umberto Eco)

- 2) The negation of the autonomy of art (Peter Bürger)
- 3) Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm (Guatari and ecology)
- 4) Chat Rooms (Hal Foster)
- 5) Artificial Hell conclusions: Claire Bishop

Case studies

Critical readings and lectures will examine the paradigm of art as the vehicle for interactivity from a historical perspective by focusing on the cases of the International Situationist, Tucumán Arde, Brazilian Neo-concrete Art, and Fluxus.

- a) Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Art as intervention, Psychogeography, Détournement and Dérive
- b) Tucumán Arde: Protest as Art, artist's at the workers' union, early manifestations of Conceptual Art
- c) Fluxus: Happenings, anti-art, performance, multidisciplinary art and utopian communities
- d) Brazilian Neo-concretism. Beyond formalism: the art object as an interactive living entity
- e) Delegated Performance: Outsourcing Authorship in recent art

Books

Participation

Edited by Claire Bishop
 Whitechapel Gallery- London
 The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts
 ISBN 978-0-262-52464-3

Artificial Hells

Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship
 Claire Bishop
 Verso Publisher
 ISBN 978-1-84467-690-3

Grading Criteria

- A) *Outstanding*: thoughtful and intelligent ideas presented in a clear, organized, and engaging manner, the final product has fine art exhibition quality, among the very best.
- B) *Above average - good*: the ideas are interesting and successfully presented; shows potential, but not necessarily distinctive; roughly equal in quality to the majority of work completed by other students, the final results can be improved.
- C) *Average - mediocre*: achieves the minimum requirements, but not particularly clear, successful or ambitious. Quality of the work is below that of most other projects submitted.
- D) *Unsatisfactory*: does not satisfy the minimum; generally unsatisfactory in terms of quality and clarity.
- F) *Failed*: The student did not complete a project.

Final grade is obtained by evaluations added in percentage
 Artwork 60%
 Attendance and participation 20%
 Assigned presentations and critical papers 20%

Attendance policy

Classes like this are designed to give students the maximum personal attention, however they only succeed when students understand that each person is important to the community. Each student's unique voice is needed in discussions and critiques. Attending class is a vital part of learning the skills and concepts students need to enhance their expressive potential and artistic abilities.

Policy regarding make-up of late work, and missed critiques

It is the student's responsibility to make up missed class sessions or late work. Group critiques and class discussions cannot be repeated. Critique due dates demand the student's attendance.

Counseling

University Counseling Services/ Counseling Center
301 Peabody Hall
P.O. Box 114100, University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-4100
Phone: 352-392-1575
Web: www.counsel.ufl.edu

If you are experiencing problems or difficulties with the academic requirements of this course you may also contact the Departmental Advisor in Fine Arts: +1 (352) 392-0207. Further, the Dean of Students Office can assist you with a range of support services. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/supportservices/>

Students with Disabilities:

If you require accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment during office hours so that we may discuss your needs in accordance with the UF official policy: "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 present this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation."

Academic Honesty

The university's policies regarding academic honesty, the honor code, and student conduct related to the honor code will be strictly enforced. Full information regarding these policies is available at the following links:

- Academic Honesty:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html#honesty>

- Honor Code: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

- Student Conduct: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>

Health and Safety

1) The link below includes information and policies regarding health and safety in the School of Art and Art History at UF. <http://www.arts.ufl.edu/art/healthandsafety>