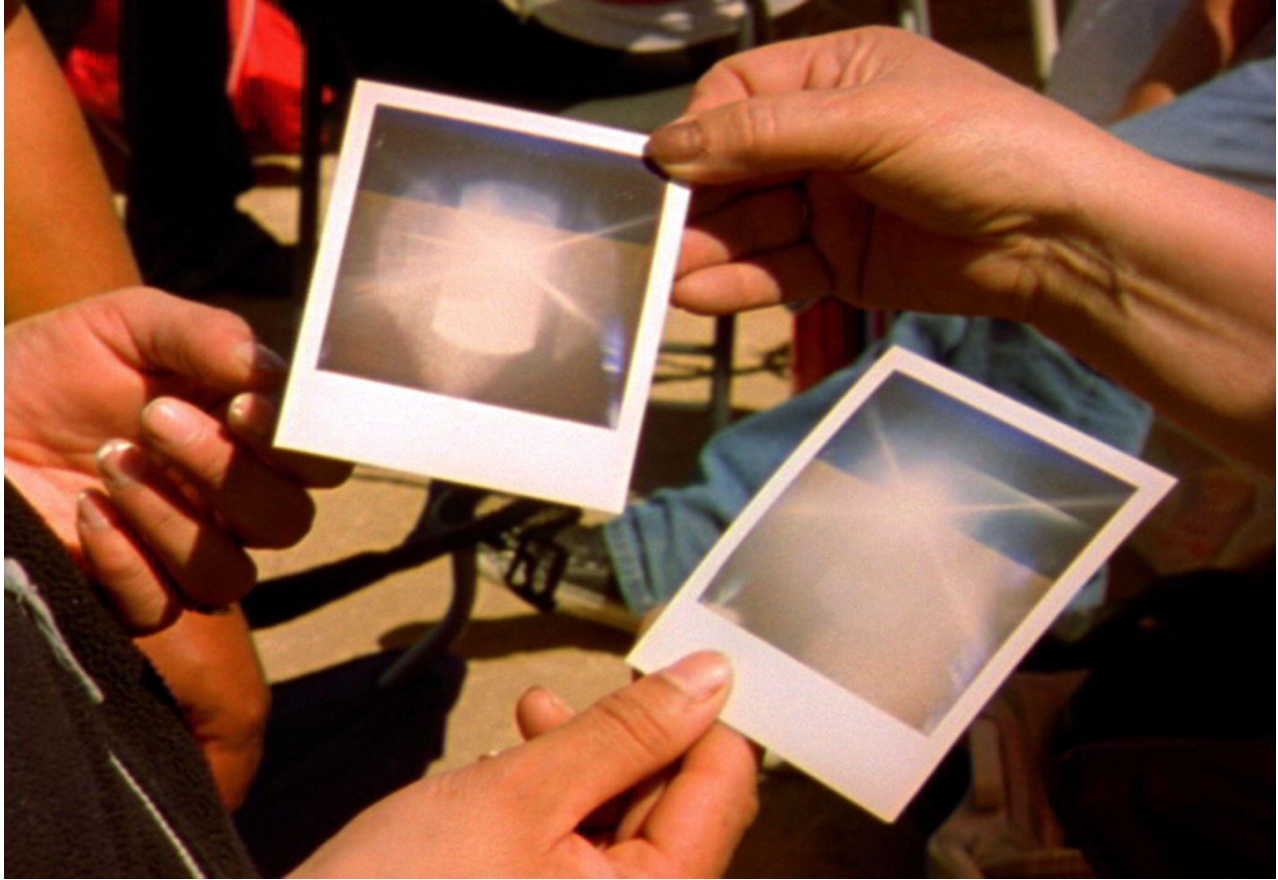


**Introduction to Visual Arts**  
Fall 2021  
**ARH 301: Unique #20800**  
Tuesday and Thursday 5-6:30 p.m, ART 1.110

**Instructor:** Donato Loia

**Email:** donatoloia@utexas.edu

**Office Hours:** Monday 1-3pm, Caffè Medici on Guadalupe St, and by appointment.



Adele Horne, Still from *Quiero Ver*, 2008. 16mm transferred to digital file. 6 min.

**Course Description:**

Neither a survey nor an art historical methods course, this class is primarily concept-driven, framed in terms of both art and visual culture. Students are not required to have any previous study in visual studies or art history to be successful in this course.

The course offers an overview of visual arts through a number of key questions that we will collectively address and attempt to answer. In an alternative to the chronological survey, our semester is organized around the presentation and discussion of complex issues and broad themes. In the coming months, we will disentangle a number of topics that are crucial for appreciation and, even more importantly, the understanding of the visual arts. Among these topics we will consider the modern coming of art institutions (like the museum); the boundaries

between sacred and sacrilegious images; the politics of representation; the transformation produced by the invention of photography and mass media; art's soft power; the role of the viewer. Topics will define our path and each one will be explored through a selection of artworks, monuments, sculptures, photographs, film stills, and the larger category of images that we will consider in relation to their historical, social, and cultural frameworks. Together these lectures, readings, and assignments introduce students to visual arts, foster cross-cultural perspectives, and facilitate student learning in critical analyses, and visual literacy.

### **Global Cultures Flag**

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity and knowledge of cultures outside the United States. A substantial portion of the material will cover practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. culture.

### **Visual and Performing Arts Credit**

This course can be used to fulfill the Visual and Performing Arts requirement of UT's core curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, teamwork, and social responsibility.

### **Communication:**

I am available to answer questions during office hours, immediately after class, and via email.

### **Required Readings and Discussions:**

There is no textbook for this course. All required readings will be posted on Canvas. You are required to complete the readings before coming to lecture and must bring a copy of the readings with you to class in order to refer to specific quotations. You may print out a hard copy of the readings or view them on your tablet or laptop. A portion of class discussion might center on the readings, so come prepared with questions and comments. Likewise, the readings will be incorporated into the exams.

For additional background material you may consult the following sites for short essays and videos:

- Oxford Art Online: available through the UT Libraries under its databases:  
<http://guides.lib.utexas.edu/art>
- The Met's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History:  
<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>
- Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, 9th ed.

### **Lectures and Note-Taking:**

Take copious notes when they come up during lecture and in your readings. You may take notes by hand in a notebook, on your laptop, or on your tablet.

**Canvas:**

I will post the following items on Canvas, under Files:

- Course syllabus
- PDFs of required readings

**Important Dates:**

October 5, 2021: **Question and primary examples for Essay/Assignment Due**

October 14, 2021: **In-Class First Exam**

November 4, 2021: **Essay/Assignment Due**

November 30, 2021: **In-Class Final Exam**

**In-Class Exams:**

There are two in class exams, a mid-term and a final exam. We will spend one lecture for each exam review. The exams will combine slide identification (you will have to provide the name of the artist, name of work, and date of work) and questions which will be based on the content of the lectures.

**Essay/Assignment:**

The essay assignment involves a 6 page analysis of a possible issue in visual arts. You must identify a key question that you want to analyze and explain why this question is important for the study of the visual arts. Spend at least one page to elaborate on the reasons that brought you to choose this question. Then, summarize two readings/videos/articles or any other material that would help you elaborate more on the question. Devote at least three pages to these sources. Finally, write two pages on an image/artwork that relates to the problem that you have decided to single out. This assignment should replicate and build upon the kind of questions and discussions that we will have in class throughout the semester. You could also re-analyze and discuss one of the key questions that we will consider in class, but you should indicate texts/research material and visual images that we have not discussed in class. I will not review essay drafts via email, but I am happy to discuss your ideas and essay assignments during office hours. Late essays will be marked down one grade per day.

**Grading:**

In-Class First Exam: 20%

Mid-Term Paper: 30%

In-Class Final Exam: 40%

Attendance: 10%

**All grades are final and non-negotiable. There will be no extra credit assignments.** Class participation will be taken into consideration if the student is on the cusp between two grades.

**+/- Grading Scale:**

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 = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = 0-59.

**Attendance and Class-Conduct:**

Attendance is mandatory. I will circulate an attendance sign-in sheet during every class period.

**You are allowed four unexcused absences.** Excused absences include religious holy days, but you must inform me via email at least one week in advance of the absence. Serious illness or injury may be considered an excused absence, if accompanied by a doctor's note. For other extenuating circumstances, please consult me.

Missing more than four classes will result in a lowering of your attendance grade by ten percentage points for each absence. If you miss five classes, for instance, your attendance grade will be 90%. **Absence from eight or more classes will result in automatic failure of this course.**

Please arrive on time and pack up your belongings only when the lecture has concluded. If you must arrive late or leave early, use the back door and sit in the back of the class that day in order to minimize distraction. Before class begins, silence and put away devices, and close websites and documents not pertaining to class. If you must miss class, consult a classmate for lecture notes and announcements you may have missed.

**University Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:**

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the policy of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, visit the Student Judicial Services website at [www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/](http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/).

**Learning differences and disabilities:**

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, visit: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/> Please inform me privately, well in advance of any exam, if you have official University paperwork, and I will make the appropriate accommodations.

### **Schedule of Class Meetings**

The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the schedule and change the syllabus. You will be informed of any changes in advance.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS, EXAMS, AND ASSIGNMENT**

### **Section I — Introduction and Preliminary Considerations on Art**

#### **WEEK 1**

**August 26:** What is art?

#### **Readings:**

- Carolyn Dean, "The Trouble with (the Term) Art," *Art Journal*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (2006): 24-32.

#### **WEEK 2**

**August 31:** How do art historians look at images?

#### **Readings:**

- James Elkins and Erna Fiorentini, "How Art Historians Look at Images," in *Visual Worlds: Looking, Images, Visual Disciplines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 349-359.

**September 2:** What do images want?

#### **Readings:**

- W.J.T. Mitchell, "What Do Pictures *Really* Want?" in *October* 77 (Summer 1996): 71-82.

#### **WEEK 3**

**September 7:** How has time been represented in visual arts?

#### **Readings:**

- James Elkins, "Time and Narrative," July 4, 2021  
[https://www.academia.edu/165600/The\\_Visual\\_chapter\\_on\\_Time\\_and\\_Narrative\\_](https://www.academia.edu/165600/The_Visual_chapter_on_Time_and_Narrative_)

**September 9:** How has narrative been represented in visual arts?

**No Readings.**

#### **WEEK 4**

**September 14:** How has the conception of space evolved over time in visual arts? (I)

#### **Readings:**

- James Elkins, "A Multicultural Look at Space and Form," July 4, 2021  
[https://www.academia.edu/165599/A\\_Multicultural\\_Look\\_at\\_Space\\_and\\_Form](https://www.academia.edu/165599/A_Multicultural_Look_at_Space_and_Form) (1-45).

**September 16:** How has the conception of space evolved over time in visual arts? (II)

**Readings:**

- Hans Belting, "Perspective as a Question of Images: Paths between East and West," in *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University, 2011), 13–54

**Section II — Representations and Institutions****WEEK 5**

**September 21:** What is representation?

**Readings:**

- Amelia Jones, "The Body And/In Representation," in *Self/Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-28.

**September 23:** What are you looking at?

**Readings:**

- James Elkins and Erna Fiorentini, "The Gaze," in *Visual Worlds: Looking, Images, Visual Disciplines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 33-53

**WEEK 6**

**September 28:** Why kiss an image?

**Readings:**

- James Elkins and Erna Fiorentini, "Worshipping and Destroying Images," *Visual Worlds: Looking, Images, Visual Disciplines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 263-274.

**September 30:** What does a monument do?

**Readings:**

- Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development," in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, edited by Nicholas Stanley-Price et al. (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 69–83.
- New York Times, "How Statues Are Falling Around the World," in *New York Times*, Online, June 24, 2020 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/us/confederate-statues-photos.html>

**WEEK 7**

**October 5:** What happens to a work of art when it enters a museum?

**Readings:**

- Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals. Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 1-20.

————— > Question and primary examples for Essay/Assignment due. Submit via email.

**October 7:** Is the museum a neutral institution?

**Readings:**

- James Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988): 189-214.
- Watch: DW Documentary, "A Palace for Berlin and the World" (2021)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P392ewvC\\_w4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P392ewvC_w4)
- Read: Artstuffmatters, "Refusing Tokenization/Racial Fantasy," (2020)  
<https://artstuffmatters.wordpress.com/2020/02/14/refusing-tokenization-racial-fantasy/>

**WEEK 8**

**October 12:** Review

**No Readings:**

**October 14: In-Class EXAM #1**

**Section III — Problems of Interpretations**

**WEEK 9**

**October 19:** What is photography?

**Readings:**

- Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave" in *On Photography* (1973), pp. 3-24.
- Olu Oguibe, "Photography and the Substance of the Image," in *The Visual Culture: The Reader*, edited by Nicolas Mirzoeff (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 565-583.

**October 21:** How do you look at an abstract painting?

**Readings:**

- Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," [1965] reprinted in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Francis Francina and Charles Harrison (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 5-10.
- Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Arts Yearbook 8* (1965): 74-82.

**WEEK 10**

**October 26:** What might be considered a work of sculpture?

**Readings:**

- Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 1-23.

**October 28:** What is beauty in visual arts?

**Readings:**

- Susan Sontag, "An Argument about Beauty," in *Daedalus*, Vol. 131, No. 4 (Fall 2002): 21-26.

**WEEK 11**

**November 2:** Is it possible to represent the sacred?

**Readings:**

- Diana Eck, "Seeing the Sacred" in *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 3-31.
- Jarich Oosten, "Representing the Spirits: The Masks of the Alaskan Inuit" in *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, edited by Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton, (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992), 113-134.
- Ivan Folletti, "God From God. Christ as the Translation of Jupiter Serapis in the Mosaic of Santa Pudenziana," in *The Fifth Century in Rome: Art, Liturgy, Patronage*, edited by Ivan Folletti and Manuela Gianandrea (Rome: Viella, 2017), 11-29.

**November 4:** What happened to sacred art in contemporaneity?

**Readings:**

- James Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-27.

-----> **ESSAY/ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**Section IV — Through Art and Beyond Art****WEEK 12**

**November 9:** How has the technological reproducibility of works of art changed arts' condition of existence?

**Readings:**

- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility. Second Version." in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 19-54.
- Watch John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Episode I (1972) [John Berger / Ways of Seeing, Episode 1 \(1972\)](#)

**November 11:** How has the digital reproducibility of works of art changed arts' condition of existence?

**Readings:**

- Arjun Appadurai, "Here and Now," in *The Visual Culture: The Reader*, edited by Nicolas Mirzoeff (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 173-179.

- Vittorio Gallese, "The Aesthetic World in the Digital Era: A Call to Arms for Experimental Aesthetics," in *Reti, Saperi, Linguaggi* Vol. 7, Number (2020): 55-84.

### **WEEK 13**

**November 16:** What kind of soft power does art, still, possess?

#### **Readings:**

- Henri Zerner, "Classicism as Power," in *Art Journal* 47, No. 1, The Problem of Classicism: Ideology and Power (Spring, 1988): 35-36.
- David Joselit, "The Art Effect: Power and Culture in the Struggle for Civil Society," in *Cairo Review* 14 (2014): 31-37.

**November 18:** Review

**No Readings**

### **WEEK 14**

**November 23 - November 25: NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break**

### **WEEK 15**

**November 30: In-Class Final Exam**

**December 2: No Class**