

# THE SOCIAL AND SPATIAL POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ART

CS 301T-01

San Francisco Art Institute, Spring 2017

Dr. Robin Balliger

Thursday, 1 – 3:45, Rm. 18

Office Hours: Tuesday and Friday 12:30 – 1:30, Rm 15 (please make a specific appointment and additional times can be accommodated)

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## *Course Description*

Murals and community public art of the 1960s – 1980s played a critical social role by producing alternative political narratives and making visible minority/subaltern perspectives and peoples' histories. Contemporary murals and street art are still celebrated as more accessible, democratic, and participatory, but questions emerge about whom these projects serve in relation to changing publics, race and class dispossession, state-led regeneration strategies, and urban restructuring. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the entrepreneurial language of 'community development' is increasingly inserted into public art projects, while the institutional demand for "socially useful art" often serves as a strategy for disciplining the arts in the outcome and market-oriented context of neoliberalism. 'Illegal' street art has also been brought into the 'white cube' of the museum. This course explores the socio-spatial politics of murals, street art, social practice art, and other public art projects in conversation with critical readings on the public sphere, symbolic and material production of urban space, entrepreneurial influence, and governance strategies.

Prerequisites: CS-300 Critical Theory A

Satisfies: Critical Theory B requirement, Global Cultures req.

## *Course Requirements*

- 1) Seminar Participation, Attendance, Critical Reading Notes (4) -- 20%  
Students must attend all class meetings unless you are sick or have an emergency. Students are expected to read assigned course material in advance and to actively participate in seminar discussions. Critical reading notes of approximately one page single-spaced are required for four classes (CRN on schedule).
- 2) Take-Home Midterm Exam (includes all course readings, lectures, to date) 30%
- 3) Presentation of Final Project 10% (15 minutes, must be well-organized and include all required elements)
- 4) Final Research Paper (10-12 pages) - 40%  
Original research paper on a topic of your choice; you can focus on a street/community public art piece or performance, public art event/festival, urban art practice/intervention, investigate public arts funding practices, etc. Your topic must be situated in relation to spatial location, social context, audiences, funding, critical analysis of application process (if relevant), etc., and include significant engagement

with course materials. More details will be provided and you should consider this a signature BA/BFA project that could be submitted as a writing sample for graduate programs, grants, employment in arts fields, and so forth.

### ***Required Texts***

All articles will be posted on the Moodle course page.

### ***Learning Outcomes/Educational Objectives***

- Know historical contexts for community murals and public art practices from the 1960s to present, in relation to changing social formations, spaces, and economies
- Understand critical terms/concepts of democracy, the public sphere, counterpublics, community, cultural capital, creativity, arts-led urban redevelopment
- Develop critical, ethnographic, and aesthetic strategies for analyzing the social impact of specific public art practices, including: community public art, social practice art, street art, site-specificity, new genre public art
- Diverse case studies develop understandings of non-Western and minority cultural and artistic practices, in relation to the broader context of globalization, border contestations, and new media spaces
- Develop critical thinking, writing, and verbal abilities through in-depth study of contemporary public art issues (CS 301 is the second semester of required one-year critical theory sequence)
- Produce a ten-page research paper that includes advanced theoretical engagement and research on an original topic; final paper demonstrates effective argumentation and writing at advanced undergraduate level

### **Grades:**

Grades will be determined by the following numerical breakdown:

97-100	A+	73-76	C
93-96	A	70-72	C-
90-92	A-	67-69	D+
87-89	B+	63-66	D
83-86	B	60-62	D-
80-82	B-	<60	F
77-79	C+		

(See additional SFAI policies at end of syllabus)

***CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF AND PUT AWAY DURING CLASS***

## Class Schedule

Jan 26 INTRODUCTION - Historicizing the Public/Private Division

J.G. Fichte – excerpts from “The Science of Rights” 1796  
Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, pp. 375-376  
Review Foucault on the ‘political,’ space and governance  
Barber, Benjamin “The Art of Public Space”

Feb 2 The “Public Sphere,” Counterpublics, and Democracy

Habermas, Jurgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*,  
pp. 1-26; 122-125; 159-160; 164; 171  
Warner, Michael, “Publics and Counterpublics,” 2002  
Cole, Sally and Lynne Philips, *Contesting Publics: Feminism, Activism,  
Ethnography*, pp. 1-15, 2013  
Burton, Johanna, Shannon Jackson and Dominic Willsdon, “Plight of the Publics:  
An Introduction to *Public Servants*,” *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of  
the Common Good*, eds. Johanna Burton, Shannon Jackson, and Dominic  
Willsdon, 2016.

Further Reading: Fraser, Nancy, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Wendy Brown

Feb 9 “Community,” Community Public Art and Site-Specificity  
CRN

Lippard, Lucy, “Public Art: Old and New Clothes,” *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, pp. 262-275, 1997.  
Deutsche, Rosalyn, “Agoraphobia,” *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, pp. 279-304, 1996.  
Kwon, Miwon, “The (Un)Sittings of Community,” *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, pp 138-155, 2002.  
Creed, Gerald, “Reconsidering Community,” *The Seductions of Community: Emancipations, Oppressions, Quandaries*, ed. Gerald Creed, pp. 3-14, 2006.

In-Class Films: Drescher ; Lucy Lippard video on Creative Time 2013, CT Summit: Art, Place, and Dislocation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Feb 16 Community Public Art - Mission Mural Tour 1 – 3:30, Location TBD  
(We will meet in the Mission, do not go to class at SFAI!)

Barnett, Alan, *Community Murals: The People’s Art*, pp. 11-47, 1984.

Drescher, Timothy, "Street Subversion: The Political Geography of Murals and Graffiti," *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture*, ed. James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters, 1998.

Weisman, Jane and Janet Braun-Reinitz, "Community Consensus, and the Protest Mural," *Public Art Review* 17/1 (2005), pp. 20-23

Further Reading: Drescher, Timothy, *San Francisco Murals: Community Creates its Muse*, 1994; *On the Wall: Four Decades of Community Murals in New York City*, 2009. Pitman Weber, John, "Politics and Practice of Community Public Art: Whose Murals Get Saved?" 2003/2004; Hazelwood, Art, *Hobos to Street People: Artists' Responses to Homelessness from the New Deal to the Present*, Freedom Voices, 2011.

Feb. 23           Anxieties/Reassertions of Civic and Social Life in the Neoliberal Era  
CRN

Harvey, David, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, pp. 1-4

Putnam, Robert, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, pp. 15-28, 2000

Lacy, Suzanne, "Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys," *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, pp.19-47, 1995

North, Michael, "The Public as Sculpture: From Heavenly City to Mass Ornament," *Critical Inquiry* 16, 1990, pp. 860-879

Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Relational Aesthetics*, pp. 11-24

In-class video: Neil Brenner, Creative Time Keynote Speech 2013

### **Midterm Exam distributed**

March 2           Art and Culture in Urban Restructuring/Gentrification

Deustche, Rosalyn, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," *October*, Vol, 47, 1988, pp. 3 - 52

Davis, Mike, "Fortress L.A.," *The City Reader*, pp. 195-201, (from *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*)

Zukin, Sharon, *The Cultures of Cities*, pp. 1 – 11

"Boyle Heights Activists Demand that All Galleries Get the Hell Out of Their Neighborhood"

<http://www.laweekly.com/news/boyle-heights-activists-demand-that-all-art-galleries-get-the-hell-out-of-their-neighborhood-7134859>

Film: "Basquiat"

Further Reading: Smith, Neil, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy", *Antipode* Vol. 34, No. 3. 2002; Zukin, Sharon, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*; Smith, Neil, *Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*

March 9           Artist Lecture by Rigo 23

## Midterm Exam due in Class

March 16 Creativity, Cultural Capital, and Culture as Resource  
CRN

Yúdice, George, *The Expediency of Culture*, pp. 9-28, 2003

Wu, Chin Tao, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s*,  
Intro pp. 1-6; Ch. 5 Embracing the Enterprise Culture, pp. 122-158, 2002

Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class... and how it's transforming  
work, leisure, community, and everyday life*, Ch. 1 and "Preface to The  
Rise of the Creative Class Revisited."

Szeman, Imre, *Neoliberals Dressed in Black; or, the Traffic in Creativity*, 2010

## MARCH 23 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

March 30 Street Art, Social Movements, and "The Right to the City"

Lefebvre, Henri, "The Right to the City," *Writings on Cities*, pp 107-110; 116-  
117; 158-159; 173-174, 1968/1996.

Lyle, Erick, "Introduction," Streetopia, 2015.

Crimp, Douglas, *AIDS Demo Graphics*, pp. 12 – 24, 1990.

Chang, Jeff, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation*,  
pp. 118 – 125 (See images on the web)

McCaughan, Edward, *Art and Social Movements: Cultural Politics in Mexico  
and Aztlán*, Chp. 1, 2012

"DIY in Crisis: Has Oakland's Ghostship Fire Jeopardized the Underground?"

[http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/has-oaklands-ghost-ship-fire-  
jeopardized-the-underground-w456665](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/has-oaklands-ghost-ship-fire-jeopardized-the-underground-w456665)

Film: "Exit Through the Gift Shop"

Further Reading:

"Why Shepard Fairey's inauguration protest posters won't have Trump on them"

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/shepard-fairey-launches-people-poster-campaign-trumps-  
inauguration/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/shepard-fairey-launches-people-poster-campaign-trumps-inauguration/)

April 6 Cultural Practices, the Making of "Territory," and Policing Public Space

Dávila, Arlene, "The Times-Squaring of El Barrio," *Latino Spin: Public Image  
and the Whitewashing of Race*, 2008

Werth, Alex and Eli Marienthal, "Gentrification as a Grid of Meaning,"  
*City*, 2016

Gregory, Siobhan, "Detroit is a Blank Slate: Metaphors in the Journalistic Discourse of Art and Entrepreneurship in the City of Detroit," *EPIC*, 2012.

Study these SF Public Art Project websites:

Future Farmers, "Victory Gardens" (and other projects)

<http://www.futurefarmers.com/#projects/victorygardens>

Rebar, Park(ing) Day <http://parkingday.org/about-parking-day/>

Market Street Prototyping Festival, <http://marketstreetprototyping.org/>

April 13      New Publics/New Media/New Spaces of Contestation  
CRN

Thompson, Nato, *Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, pp. 2-27, 2015

Lasch, Pedro and Teddy Cruz, "Transnational Community-Based Production, Cooperative Art, and Informal Trade Networks," *What we Made: Conversations on Art and Cooperation*, ed. Tom Finkelpearl, pp. 240-268, 2013.

Garcia Canclini, Nestor, "The Death of Public Space," *Art Beyond Itself: Anthropology for a Society Without a Story Line*, 2014

Sholette, Gregory, "Mockstitutions," *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*, 2011

Further Reading: Demos, TJ, "Another World,... and Another: Notes on Uneven Geographies," *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics*, pp. 151-160, 2015; Chambers, Iain, "A Line in the Sand," *Tijuana Dreaming: Life and Art at the Global Border*, 2012; Mesch, Claudia, "Anti-Globalization," *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945*, 2014.

April 20      Social Practice Art Debates I  
Research Presentations (6 at 15 minutes each)

Thompson, Nato, "Living as Form," *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*

Bishop, Claire, "Participation and Spectacle: Where Are We Now?" *Living as Form*

Rick Lowe, Project Row Houses, <http://creativetimereports.org/2013/10/07/rick-lowe-project-row-houses/>

Davis, Ben, "A Critique of Social Practice Art: What does it mean to be a political artist?" *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of the Common Good*, pp. 423-435

Further Reading: Purves, Ted, ed., *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art*, 2005; Helguera, Pablo, *Education for Socially Engaged Art*; also see multiple arts projects in *Living as Form*, e.g., Suzanne Lacy, "The Roof is on Fire," 1994

April 27      Social Practice Art Debates II  
Research Presentations (6)

Ranciere, Jacques, "The Paradoxes of Political Art," *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, pp.142-159, 2015  
"Growing Dialogue: What is the Effectiveness of Socially Engaged Art?" *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of the Common Good*, pp. 437-463.

Study Arts Collectives:

Torolab (Raúl Cárdenas)

<http://creativetime.org/summit/speakers/raul-cardenas-osuna/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rahqaiqPd7A>

Postcommodity

<http://postcommodity.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZBNqwNMkQE> "Repellant Fence"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M86drs2pLOg> "My Blood is in the Water"

May 4            Research Presentations (8)  
Do reading/work on your project  
Final questions/discussion of research projects

May 11         FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS  
Final course wrap-up and celebration  
Teaching Evaluations

### **Information on Class Assignments**

#### **Critical Reading Notes, Seminar Participation, and Attendance**

Seminar participation, attendance, and reading notes comprise 20% of your grade. This is a significant percentage, which means you need to read the assigned material and come prepared to discuss it, as the class will be conducted as a seminar. I am aware that the reading load for this course is demanding, so if you are having difficulty please come see me.

Critical reading notes are primarily to facilitate class discussion and for me to provide feedback to help you prepare for the midterm and final paper. Reading notes must be brought to class and turned in on the current day of the assignment. You will do reading notes four times during the course. Sometimes I will provide a specific prompt for the reading notes and some will be open in terms of your response. Reading notes should demonstrate an understanding of the article/book, while emphasizing your commentary and critical engagement. Keep your notes concise and do not include extensive detail (although you may certainly write more notes for your own use). Reading notes should be about one page typed single-spaced. Reading notes will be

graded with a "circled plus," "plus," or "check." A "circled plus" indicates an outstanding analysis, a "plus" indicates a good understanding of the material, a "check" needs improvement, and you will receive 0 if nothing is turned in. These grades and commentary provide continuous feedback on your comprehension and analysis.

### Comprehensive Midterm Exam

There will be a comprehensive take-home Midterm Exam that will include all material from the first half of the course (all readings, lectures, films, discussions). The exam will include a matching section, short answer questions (1/2 page each single space) and one longer essay (approx. 3-4 pages double-spaced), and you will have two weeks to complete the exam. The exam will be composed in such a way that you will need to think across the various sections and themes in the course and to analyze material in new ways. As such, completing the exam not only 'tests' your comprehension of the course material, but functions pedagogically by improving your analytic ability.

Advice! If you do the assigned readings throughout the course, take notes, and complete all the "critical reading note" assignments, you will be in a great position to complete the exam and do well.

### Final Research Paper and Presentation

A 10-page original research paper will be due at the end of class and students will also present their research to the class. Specific details and requirements for the paper will be provided.

## **SFAI Institutional Policies**

### **ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER**

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides free academic support to all SFAI students on any assignment or project. Because everyone benefits from discussing and developing their work in an individualized setting, SFAI recommends that all students make use of the ARC. Students are also welcome to drop by the ARC to study or meet with a group; the space has desk, computers, a printer, course textbooks, and other reference material. The ARC also holds workshops and writing techniques and study skills throughout the semester.

Students can make an appointment with a tutor by dropping in during our regular hours or by visiting [sfai.mywconline.com](http://sfai.mywconline.com). The ARC opens the third week of the semester and remains open until the last day of classes. Regular hours for our Chestnut Street location are Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 4 PM, with additional hours that vary by semester at Third Street, the Sutter Street Residence Halls, and the Anne Bremer Memorial Library.

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

SFAI has a commitment to provide equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations; to provide equality of access for qualified students with disabilities; and to provide accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services that will specifically address those functional limitations of the disability which adversely affects equal educational opportunity. SFAI will assist qualified students with disabilities in securing such appropriate accommodations, auxiliary aids and services. The Accessibility Services Office at SFAI aims to promote self-awareness, self-determination, and self-advocacy for students through our policies and procedures.

In the case of any complaint related to disability matters, a student may access the student grievance procedures; however, complaints regarding requests for accommodation are resolved pursuant to Section IV – Process for Requests for Accommodations: Eligibility, Determination and Appeal.

The Accessibility Services Office is located on the Chestnut Campus in the Student Affairs Office and can be reached at [accessibility@sfai.edu](mailto:accessibility@sfai.edu).

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND MISCONDUCT POLICY**

The rights and responsibilities that accompany academic freedom are at the heart of the intellectual, artistic, and personal integrity of SFAI. At SFAI we value all aspects of the creative process, freedom of expression, risk-taking, and experimentation that adhere to the fundamental value of honesty in the making of one's academic and studio work and in relationship to others and their work. Misunderstanding of the appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic dishonesty. If a student is unclear about appropriate academic conduct in relationship to a particular situation, assignment, or requirement, the student should consult with the instructor of the course, Department Chair, Program Directors, or the Dean of Students.

### **FORMS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**

#### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's words, ideas, or information. At SFAI academic writing must follow conventions of documentation and citation (6.1; MLA Handbook, Joseph Gibaldi ch.2). Students are advised to seek out this guideline in the Academic Support Center, to ask faculty when they are in doubt about standards, and to recognize they are ultimately responsible for proper citation. In the studio, appropriation, subversion, and other means of challenging convention complicate attempts to codify forms of acknowledgment and are often defined by disciplinary histories and practices and are best examined, with the faculty, in relationship to the specific studio course.

#### **Cheating**

Cheating is the use or attempted use of unauthorized information including: looking at or using information from another person's paper/exam; buying or selling quizzes, exams, or papers; possessing, referring to, or employing opened textbooks, notes, or other devices during a quiz or exam. It is the responsibility of all students to consult with their faculty, in a timely fashion, concerning what types of study aids and materials are permissible in their specific course.

#### **Falsification and Fabrication**

Falsification and fabrication are the use of identical or substantially the same assignment to fulfill the requirements for two or more courses without the approval of the faculty involved, or the use of identical or substantially the same assignment from a previously completed course to fulfill requirements for another course without the approval of the instructor of the later course. Students are expected to create new work in specific response to each assignment, unless expressly authorized by their faculty to do otherwise.

#### **Unfair Academic Advantage**

Unfair academic advantage is interference—including theft, concealment, defacement or destruction of other students' works, resources, or material—for the purpose of gaining an academic advantage.

#### **Noncompliance with Course Rules**

The violation of specific course rules as outlined in the syllabus by the faculty or otherwise provided to the student.