

PERSONA, PERFORMANCE, AND THE MODERN ARTIST IN THE 19TH CENTURY

ARTHI 5155

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Fall 2018 Graduate Seminar

Wednesdays 1-4pm
MC619

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by appointment

Course description

Focusing on the origins of the modern artist in late-nineteenth-century Europe, this seminar will investigate the ways in which the performance of self and the construction of persona were constituent components of the narratives of modernity and of modern art. In addition to artists and writers whose personas rivaled the importance of their works (such as Camille Claudel, Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Oscar Wilde), the seminar will also investigate nineteenth-century performance practices outside of the realm of high art that also involved the exaggerated representation compulsory performance, or the masking of selfhood. Using detailed case studies, the seminar will pursue issues such as (1) the performance of volitional genders, (2) the signification of the newly-invented categories of sexuality (with both normative and rogue examples), (3) the compulsory performance and narratives of race, and (4) whether there was something that could be called “performance art” in nineteenth-century Europe.

The aims will be to investigate ways in which artists, critics, and others deployed performance and to explore how these were debated in public forums (newspapers, trials, reproduced photographs/prints, exhibitions, etc.). The seminar investigates questions of persona, celebrity, identity, race, gender, sexuality, and ability, and it bridges studies of art history and popular culture. The seminar also models a range of methodologies. Sessions both introduce a historical topic (e.g., Gauguin's primitivism, Saartjie Baartman's problematic fame, Wilde's trial, the exploitation of Joice Heth, etc.) and interdisciplinary approaches (feminist art history, performance studies, transgender studies, queer studies, disability studies, etc.).

This is a reading-intensive, graduate-level seminar with long-form, research-heavy writing assignments.

Learning Goals

This graduate seminar aims to:

1. Provide students with a grounding in the study of nineteenth century art and in performance studies.
2. Enhance students' ability to engage with concepts and to articulate this engagement in both verbal and written communication.
3. Through writing assignments, develop students' ability to synthesize and to mobilize historical analysis.
4. Increase students' awareness of methodological options and importance of in-depth research.

Course structure

Each three-hour session will focus primarily on the discussion of texts and images. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their preparation, attendance, and critical engagement with course readings and concepts.

The majority of the required readings will be supplied as PDFs via the “Files” section of Canvas. The list of required readings may be adapted throughout the semester in response to class discussions. Any new readings will be made available to students at least five days before the day they will be discussed.

Evaluation

All assignments must be completed on time in order to receive course credit (CR). In addition, work on all criteria should meet the standards of the course as established by the professor. There are no “extra credit” options. Students will be evaluated according to the following four criteria:

1. **Attendance and participation (15%)**

All students are expected to attend class meetings prepared to discuss the required readings. This is a discussion-based class, and all students should regularly and productively contribute to class discussions. Participation is predicated on attendance, and the student will be evaluated on both. Mere attendance without participation is not considered adequate and does not warrant a passing grade for this criterion. Students should regularly, respectfully, and productively contribute to in-person class discussions.

Should individual students or the class as a whole be unprepared to discuss the readings in detail and thus unable to participate at the expected level, additional required reading and writing assignments may be given in class. Any such new assignments must be completed in addition to previously outlined requirements in order to receive credit for the class, regardless of percentage of grade.

Attendance at all class meetings is essential. Irrespective of the other evaluation criteria, **more than two missed classes may be grounds for a “no credit.”**

2. **Weekly written summaries of required readings (15%)**

For each class, students must submit a hard copy of a typed summary the week’s readings. For **each reading**, provide:

- a. An overview of the *thesis and argument* of the reading (**3 sentences maximum**)
- b. Questions for class discussion (5 for readings over 50 pages, 3 for all others). Questions should be about the ideas or implications of the readings rather than merely factual.

In order to receive credit for the course, **all** reading summaries must be submitted. Late summaries will not be accepted more than **two weeks** after their due date.

3. **Leading course discussion (20%)**

Each week, teams of seminar participants will lead the discussion of the required readings. *This should not be organized as a summary of the readings.* Instead, it should be framed around common themes and discussion questions posed to the group. Teams are expected to prepare all visual materials and conduct background research necessary to lead course discussion. Teams may bring in the work of artists or writers not discussed in the readings, whom they feel help carry through the key concerns. Any new topics should be concisely introduced and be directly pertinent to the team’s presentation. (Contemporary artists are allowable, but only as a small proportion of the overall presentation.)

For each presentation, students will be required to prepare a Powerpoint/Keynote document. Your image presentation must be fully-prepared and ready to go. The professionalism of your presentations will be considered as part of the evaluation of your work. Do not expect to just grab things off of Google Image at the last minute or in class.

4. **Research Project (50%)**

The research project has three stages: (1) a draft, (2) a seminar presentation, and (3) a final seminar paper.

Presentation. Following on the draft of the research paper, students will prepare a seminar presentation and discussion of their topics. Details of expected time length will be shared in class. All presentations should be fully organized and professionally prepared. Students will be evaluated on the quality of information delivered, and all presentations should be fully researched, well prepared, and informative. Whether delivered extemporaneously or read from a script, all presentations should present the central themes of the developing research paper in depth before opening the topic up to course discussion and questions.

Draft and Final Paper. Students must submit a **draft** by **31 October**. Final papers are due **12 December**. Drafts are considered a required assignment.

Undertake a research topic of your choice that relates to the themes of the course. All papers should be explicit in their theoretical investments and discuss chosen queer theoretical concepts and methods in detail. Papers that merely recount a story of a queer artist, for instance, are not adequate, and all papers should advance an interpretation that is their own rather than merely a summary of the artist's stated intentions. Students may use this assignment to work on aspects of their Master's thesis, providing that the work submitted is significantly different from papers submitted to other seminars. (Submitting the same paper — or one that significantly overlaps — to a different seminar falls under SAIC's definition of "Academic Misconduct."). Word count requirements: 2000 for draft, 4500-5000 for final paper for students from the following programs: Art History, Arts Administration, New Arts Journalism, Visual & Critical Studies; for those from other programs, the final paper word count requirement is 4000 words.

Papers should be standard, double-spaced typed pages. Word counts listed above are exclusive of bibliography, captions, and endnotes. Paper bibliographies must contain **at least 20 items** from valid sources. Acceptable sources are books, exhibition catalogues, and articles from scholarly journals only. A good place to start (with access to online journals and other texts) is the "Art History Research Guide" at <http://libraryguides.saic.edu/arthistory>. Websites, blogs, or encyclopedias (online or otherwise) are not acceptable sources (though they may be objects of interpretation). Overall, your research should evidence your use of the Flaxman Library, the Ryerson Library, and their vetted online resources (e.g., the full-text access to scholarly journals).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Registered with the DLRC

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. *This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented.* You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

Classroom behavior

Smartphones should not be used during class time at any time. If you need your phone for *translation* or other *accommodations* reasons, you must have that approved in advance.

Laptops: Students will be allowed to use laptops for taking notes, but they should not use it for other purposes during lectures. Any student who does so will be considered "absent/non-participating" for the class session. More than two absences (for any reason) are grounds for No Credit.

Tardiness, especially repeated tardiness, may be considered "absent/non-participating." More than two absences (for any reason) are grounds for No Credit.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Any degree of plagiarism will result in “No Credit” for the course and additional institutional disciplinary action. Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place that protect student privacy and uses LDAP authentication to verify student identity.

The SAIC Student Handbook defines Academic Misconduct as follows:

“Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one’s own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic misconduct extends to all spaces on campus, including satellite locations and online education.”

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. One plagiarizes when one presents another’s work as one’s own, even if one does not intend to. The penalty for plagiarizing may also result in some loss of some types of financial aid (for example, a No Credit in a course can lead to a loss of the financial aid, merit scholarships, etc.), and repeat offenses can lead to expulsion from the School. Specific procedures for faculty to follow in the case of academic misconduct are detailed in the Student Handbook. For more guidance see the Flaxman Library’s Quick Guide “Avoid Plagiarism” at http://www.saic.edu/webspaces/library/plagiarism_quickguide.pdf.

COURSE CALENDAR

29 August

Course overview and introduction of aims

Museum visit

5 September

Myths of Madness: Vincent Van Gogh and Camille Claudel

1. G-Albert Aurier, "The Isolated: Vincent Van Gogh [1890]," in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger, eds., *Art in Theory: 1815-1900*, (London: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 948-52. [no reading summary]
2. Patricia Mathews, "Aurier and Van Gogh: Criticism and Response." *Art Bulletin* 68, no. 1 (March 1986): 94-104.
3. Patricia Mathews, "The Gender of Creativity: Women, Pathology, and Camille Claudel," in *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 64-85
4. Griselda Pollock, "Agency and the Avant-Garde: Studies in Authorship and History by Way of Van Gogh," in Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, *Avant-Gardes and Partisans Reviewed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 315-42.
5. Sidney Geist, "Van Gogh’s Ear Again. And Again." *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 13.11 (Fall 1993): 11-14. [no reading summary]
6. [optional] Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock. "Rooted in the Earth: A Van Gogh Primer." in Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, *Avant-Gardes and Partisans Reviewed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 3-51.
7. [optional] Griselda Pollock, "Art History as Spectacle" and "Lust for Life I and II" from "Beholding Art History: Vision, Place, and Power," in S. Melville and B. Readings, eds, *Vision and Textuality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 43-51.
8. [optional] Griselda Pollock, "Artists, Mythologies, and Media..." *Screen* 21, no. 3 (1981).

Review

1. "The Illness of Van Gogh" website
<http://www2.med.wayne.edu/elab/vangogh/MainIndex.htm>
2. *Lust for Life* (1956)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHoLni-W3QU>

12 September

Role playing: Paul Gauguin and Primitivism

1. Paul Gauguin, "Primitivism [1896-97]" and April 1903 letter to Charles Morice, in H. Chipp, ed., *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 83-86. [no reading summary]
2. Paul Gauguin, *Noa Noa*, trans. O. F. Theis (New York: Nicholas L. Brown, 1919), 1-34, 41-49, 76-78.
3. G.-Albert Aurier from "Symbolism in Painting: Paul Gauguin," In *Art in Theory: 1815-1900*, edited by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. London: Blackwell, 1998, pp. 1025-1029. [no reading summary]
4. Griselda Pollock, *Avant-Garde Gambits 1888-1893: Gender and the Color of Art History, Walter Neurath Memorial Lectures* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992).
5. Patricia Mathews, "Gendered Bodies: Paul Gauguin," in *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 161-77
6. Peter Brooks, "Gauguin's Tahitian Body," in *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
7. Selina Tusitala Marsh, "Guys like Gauguin," in K. Alexeyeff and J. Taylor, eds., *Touring Pacific Cultures* (ANU Press, 2016) [no reading summary]
8. [optional] Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Going Native: Paul Gauguin and the Invention of Primitivist Modernism [1989]," in M. Berger, ed., *Modern Art and Society: An Anthology of Social and Multicultural Readings* (New York: Icon Editions, 1994), 73-94

Review

1. Trailer for *Wolf at the Door* (1986) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_l63pBl7C_s
2. Trailer for *Gauguin: Voyage to Tahiti* (2017) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwKKIINXgw>

19 September

Performance on Trial I: Whistler v. Ruskin

1. James McNeil Whistler, "Ten O'Clock" [1885], reprinted in *Art in Theory: 1815-1900*, ed. Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger (London: Blackwell, 1998), 838-847.
2. Oscar Wilde, "Mr. Whistler's Ten O'Clock," and "The Relation of Dress to Art: A Note in Black and White on Mr. Whistler's Lecture," in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 13-20.
3. Jonathan Shirland, "'A Singularity of Appearance Counts Doubly in a Democracy of Clothes': Whistler, Fancy Dress and the Camping of Artists' Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Visual Culture in Britain* 8.1 (2007): 15-35
4. Transcript of the Whistler v. Ruskin Trial (1877) and commentary in Linda Merrill, *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 9-56, 135-97.
5. Shearer West, "Laughter and the Whistler/Ruskin Trial," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 12.1 (2007): 42-63.
6. David Craven, "Ruskin vs. Whistler: The Case Against Capitalist Art," *Art Journal* 37.2 (Winter 1977/78), 139-43
7. [optional] Andrew Stephenson, "Refashioning Modern Masculinity: Whistler, Aestheticism, and National Identity," in D. Peters Corbett and L. Perry, eds., *English Art 1860-1940: Modern Artists and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 133-49

26 September

Sarah Bernhardt, Oscar Wilde, and *Salome*

1. Carol Ockman and Kenneth Silver, "The Mythic Sarah Bernhardt" and Carol Ockman, "Was She Magnificent? Sarah Bernhardt's Reach," in *Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama* (New York: Jewish Museum), 1-74.
2. Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," and "Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young," in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 290-320, 433-5

3. Heather Marcovitch, "Celebrity, Caricatures, and Public Performances in the 1880s," in *The Art of Pose: Oscar Wilde's Performance Theory* (Peter Lang, 2010), 51-90.
4. Neil Bartlett, "Flowers," in *Who Was That Man? A Present for Oscar Wilde* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1988)
5. [optional] Richard Allen Cave, "Staging Salome's Dance in Wilde's Play and Strauss's Opera," in M. Bennett, ed., *Refiguring Oscar Wilde's Salome* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011)

3 October

Performance on Trial II: Oscar Wilde

1. Andrew Stephenson, "Sexual Geographies and the Significance of Location: The Modern Art Gallery," excerpted from "Precarious Poses: The Problem of Artistic Visibility and its Homosocial Performances in Late-Nineteenth-Century London," *Visual Culture in Britain* 8.1 (2007): 81-84
2. Oscar Wilde, "Oscar Wilde on the Witness Stand," in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 435-38 [no reading summary]
3. Documents relating to the Wilde Trials of 1895 in *Nineteenth-Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook*, edited by Chris White. London and New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 49-59. [no reading summary]
4. Ed Cohen, "Posing the Question: Wilde, Wit, and the Ways of Man," in *Performance and Cultural Politics*, ed. Elin Diamond (New York: Routledge, 1996), 35-47.
5. David Schulz, "Redressing Oscar: Performance and the Trials of Oscar Wilde," *TDR* 40.2 (Summer 1996): 37-59
6. "Wilde After the Trials," in Rupert Croft-Cooke, *Feasting with Panthers: A New Consideration of Some Late Victorian Writers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), 283-92. [no reading summary]

Review

1. Patti Smith reading Oscar Wilde's "De Profundis," 2016. Online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiG_KUutjrs

10 October

Performance and Survival: Trans Subjects in the Nineteenth Century

1. C. Riley Snorton, "Trans Capable: Fungibility, Fugitivity, and the Matter of Being," in *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 55-97.
2. J. Jack Halberstam, "Perverse Presentism: The Androgyne, the Tribade, the Female Husband, and Other Pre-Twentieth-Century Genders," in *Female Masculinity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 45-74.
3. Neil Bartlett, "Evidence: 1870," in J. Goldberg, ed., *Reclaiming Sodom* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 288-99
4. Uri McMillan, "Ellen Craft's Fugitive Selves," in *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 64-94.

17 October

Spectacles of Difference I: Saartjie Baartman

1. Sander Gilman, "The Hottentot and the Prostitute: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality," in D. Willis, ed., *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot"* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 15-31
2. Robin Mitchell, "Another Means of Understanding the Gaze: Sarah Bartmann in the Development of Nineteenth-Century French National Identity," in D. Willis, ed., *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot"* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 32-46

3. Debra S. Singer, "Reclaiming Venus: The Presence of Sarah Bartmann in Contemporary Art," in D. Willis, ed., *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot"* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 87-95.
4. Kellie Jones, "A.K.A. Saartijie: The 'Hottentot Venus' in Context (Some Recollections and a Dialogue), 1998/2004," in D. Willis, ed., *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot"* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 126-43
5. Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, "Ghosts of Sara Baartman," in *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 142-69.

24 October

Spectacles of Difference II: Disability and Performance in P. T. Barnum's Circus

1. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin, "Disability," *Keywords in Disability Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 2015)
2. Rachel Adams, "Disability and the Circus," in K. Ames, ed., *The History of the Circus in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2-20.
3. Rachel Adams, "Caught Looking: Spectators and the Exhibition of Human Curiosities," *Common Place* 4.2 (January 2004). Online at <http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-04/no-02/adams/>
4. Benjamin Reiss, "P.T. Barnum, Joice Heth and Antebellum Spectacles of Race," *American Quarterly* 51.1. (March 1999): 78-107.
5. Uri McMillan, "Mammy Memory: The Curious Case of Joice Heth, the Ancient Negress," in *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 23-64.

Review

1. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/P-T-Barnum>
2. P.T. Barnum Digital Collection at the University of Connecticut
<https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/60002%3APT%3ABarnumDigitalCollection>
3. Meghan Rinn, "Nineteenth-Century Depictions of Disabilities and Modern Metadata: A Consideration of Material in the P. T. Barnum Digital Collection," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 5 (2018). Online at <https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=jcas>

31 October

PRESENTATIONS

7 November

PRESENTATIONS

14 November

PRESENTATIONS

21 November

THANKSGIVING BREAK / NO CLASS

28 November

PRESENTATIONS

5 December

CRITIQUE WEEK

Final papers due in class 12 December.

12 DECEMBER

**Performance as Historical Revision: the Case of Colette / Justine / Colette is Dead Co / Colette
Lumiere in the 1970s and 1980s**

Readings TBA