

Strategies of Visualization – Art and Ideas in Modern Central Europe

Dr. Matthias Vollmer

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| Email Address: | info@fubest.fu-berlin.de |
| Time Slot: | Thursdays, 1:30 p.m. |
| Language of Instruction: | English |
| Contact Hours: | 45 |
| ECTS Credits: | 6 |

Course Description

This course surveys the visual arts in Central Europe from the rise of modernism around 1900 to the present after postmodernism, with a strong focus on German art. It aims to study the individual works closely and interpret them critically by analyzing their formal structure, style and technique, iconography etc.; consider the concerns of the artists who created them; and place the works within their wider historical, philosophical, political, social and cultural backgrounds as well as within the international development of the visual arts in Western Europe and – in the second half of the 20th century – the US.

A consideration of the theoretical context is of particular importance for the understanding of 20th-century art and its role in society. Thus the course will also introduce students to major philosophical ideas of the period and will focus on various links to the visual art works including reflections on the methods which art historians have found appropriate in studying the objects and ideas which constitute their discipline.

Berlin houses some of the most splendid art collections in the world, such as the Neue Nationalgalerie, the Hamburger Bahnhof (with the Friedrich Christian Flick Collection), the Kupferstichkabinett (Graphic Arts), the Brücke-Museum, and the Berlinische Galerie, not to mention the collections of ancient art.

In addition, a vibrant scene of art galleries provides new perspectives on contemporary art that has not yet been established in the museums. An essential approach of the course will be to work not only with slides and text sources in class but also with the originals during excursions to different museums. Thus the specific material qualities of the art works discussed in class will be experienced in front of the originals. This can serve as an eye-opener for understanding the reasoning and the artistic procedure of the artists in their respective period.

Learning Objectives

In addition to establishing the basic chronological and stylistic evolution of art/painting in 20th century, the course will also be examining the variety of factors that influenced the style of key artworks. Throughout the course, we should keep asking ourselves, "why did this artwork look the way it did?" and keep discovering that there are a multitude of factors that explain the creation and historical and philosophical evolution of an artwork

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the hallmarks of and rationales behind a variety of artworks
- Make educated deductions why, when or how the paintings/artworks were designed that way.
- Identify and explain the different developments of styles and movements.

Student Profile

Should be in their fourth semester of college/university education or beyond.

Assignments and Grading

Attendance & Participation (includes 1 Independent Project report): 250 Points

Presentation and Handout: 150 Points

Midterm slides: 100 Points

Midterm questions: 100 Points

Midterm essay: 150 Points

Final slides: 100 Points

Final questions: 150 Points

| FU Grade | Points of 1,000 |
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| 1.0 | 980-1,000 |
| 1.3 | 950-979 |
| 1.7 | 900-949 |
| 2.0 | 850-899 |
| 2.3 | 800-849 |
| 2.7 | 750-799 |
| 3.0 | 700-749 |
| 3.3 | 650-699 |
| 3.7 | 600-649 |
| 4.0 | 500-599 |
| 5.0 | < 500 |

Literature

Readings on Blackboard.

Readings provide a general outline of the theoretical and formal characteristics of the art in the 20th century, leaving specific problems and issues for class discussion and independent work.

- Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (ed.): *Art in Theory 1900 – 2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Oxford 2003.
- Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Wieland Schmied (ed.): *German Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1905-1985*. Exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts. London 1985.
- Eckhart Gillen (ed.): *German Art from Beckmann to Richter. Images of a divided country*. Exhibition cat. Martin Gropius Bau: Berlin 1997/98.
- Joseph D. Parry (Ed.), *Art and Phenomenology*, New York 2011.
- Michael Hatt / Charlotte Klonk: *Art history. A critical introduction to its methods*, Manchester 2006.
- Stephanie Barron, Sabine Eckmann, Eckhart Gillen (ed.): *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*. Los Angeles, Berlin 2009

Course Schedule

| Calendar | Topics, Readings, etc. |
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| Session 1 | <p>Topic: Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview and assignments • Central Europe and Germany • Case study around 1800: The romantic tradition in German Art • 19th century background in German philosophy: Arthur Schopenhauer <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Romantic Spirit in German Art 1790-1990, ed. Keith Hartley, Henry Meyric Hughes, Peter-Klaus Schuster and William Vaughan, Stuttgart 1994, pp.13-16 (Keith Hartley: Introduction), pp. 210-211 (William Vaughan: Romanticism); • Peter-Klaus Schuster: In Search of Paradise Lost: Runge – Marc – Beuys, in: The Romantic Spirit in German Art 1790-1990, ed. Keith Hartley, Henry Meyric Hughes, Peter-Klaus Schuster and William Vaughan, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 62-81; |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arthur Schopenhauer, <i>The World as Will and Representation</i>, in: William McNeill and Karen S. Feldman (Ed.) <i>Continental Philosophy: An Anthology</i> (1998) pp. 59-64. |
| <p>Session 2</p> | <p>Topic: Around 1900 in Austria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Art History want, and how to approach a painting – Philipp Otto Runge • Arts and Craft, Art Nouveau (Vienna Secession) • Sigmund Freud: Reality and Dream <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michèle Lavallée: “Art Nouveau”, in: <i>The Dictionary of Art</i>, ed. J. Turner, Vol. 2, London 1996, pp. 561-568; • Art and Crafts Movement: Introduction, in: <i>The Dictionary of Art</i>, ed. J. Turner, Vol. 2, London 1996, p. 568; • Sigmund Freud from ‘On Dreams’ in: <i>Art in Theory 1900-2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas</i>. Ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. Oxford 2003, pp. 21-28. <p>See also readings of Session 12: “Psychoanalysis” in: Michael Hatt / Charlotte Klonk: <i>Art history. A critical introduction to its methods</i>, Manchester 2006, pp. 174-199.</p> |
| <p>Session 3</p> | <p>Topic: Expressionism and the Birth of Abstract Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austrian Expressionism • The Brücke • Blauer Reiter <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea Frey and Janni Müller-Hauck: Programs, Manifestoes, Critical Writings, in: Stephanie Barron and Wolf-Dieter Dube: <i>German Expressionism: Art and Society</i>, exh. Cat. Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 1997, pp. 328-332 (Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Franz Marc, Wassily Kandinsky); • Peter Selz: Fauvism and Expressionism. The creative Intuition, in: Herschel B. Chipp: <i>Theories of modern art. A source book by artists and critics</i>, Berkely and LA 1968, pp. 124-128 (Introduction fauvism and expressionism); • Siegfried Gohr: Kirchner and “Die Brücke”, in: exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 426-428; • Roger Cardinal: Primitivism, in: <i>The Dictionary of Art</i>, ed. J. Turner, London 1996, Vol. 25, pp. 582-585; • Sixten Rigbom: Kandinsky and “Der Blaue Reiter”, in: exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 429-431. <p>For background information, see Wieland Schmied: <i>Points of Departure and Transformations in German Art 1905-1984</i>, in: <i>German Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1905-1985</i>, ed. Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Wieland Schmied, exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 21-36.</p> |
| <p>Session 4</p> | <p>Topic: Feeling and Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friedrich Nietzsche: The Apollonian and Dionysian • Russian Avantgarde: Suprematism and Constructivism • Bauhaus • Ferdinand de Saussure – The Linguistic Turn <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kasimir Malevich, ‘Non-Objective Art and Suprematism’ and ‘The Question of Imitative Art’ in: <i>Art in Theory 1900–2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas</i>, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 293-298; • Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>, in: <i>Art in Theory 1815–1900. An Anthology of Changing Ideas</i>. Ed. By Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger. Oxford 2003, pp. 740-745; • Walter Gropius, “The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus”, 1923, in: <i>Art in Theory 1900 – 2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas</i>, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 309-314; |

- Alexander Rodchenko, ‘Slogans and Organizational Programme’ in: Art in Theory 1900–2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 339-341;
- Rainer K. Wick: Bauhaus, in: The Dictionary of Art, ed. J. Turner, London 1996, Vol. 3, pp. 399-404;
- Christina Lodder: Constructivism, in: The Dictionary of Art, ed. J. Turner, London 1996, Vol. 7, pp. 767-772;
- Ferdinand de Saussure, ‘Course in General Linguistics’ in: William McNeill and Karen S. Feldman (Ed.) Continental Philosophy: An Anthology (1998), pp. 297-304.

See also readings of Session 12: “Semiotics” in: Michael Hatt / Charlotte Klönk: Art history. A critical introduction to its methods, Manchester 2006, pp. 200-222.

Session 5

Topic: The Experience of the Disintegration of Reality

- The Dada Movement in Central Europe
- New Objectivity
- Walter Benjamin “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, 1936.

Readings

- Art in Theory 1900 – 2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 252-257 (Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto 1918”), pp. 259-260 (Richard Huelsenbeck and Raoul Hausmann, “What is Dadaism und what does it want in Germany?”), p. 408 (Otto Dix: “The Object is Primary”);
- Herschel B. Chipp: Theories of modern art. A source book by artists and critics, Berkely and LA 1968, pp. 366-382 (Introduction: Dada and Surrealism), 382-384 (Kurt Schwitters, from Merz, 1921);
- Maria Makela: A Clear and Simple Style: Tradition and Typology in New Objectivity, in: Negotiating History German Art and the Past, ed. Jay Clarke, The Art Institute of Chicago 2002, pp. 39-51;
- Walter Benjamin, The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, in: William McNeill and Karen S. Feldman (Ed.) Continental Philosophy: An Anthology (1998) pp. 244-252.

For background information, see Wieland Schmied: Points of Departure and Transformations in German Art 1905-1984, in: German Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1905-1985, ed. Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Wieland Schmied, exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 37-41.

Session 6

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Session 7

Topic: Beyond Realism

- Surrealism
- Two exemplary artists: Paul Klee and Max Beckmann

Readings

- Herschel B. Chipp: Theories of modern art. A source book by artists and critics, Berkely and LA 1968, pp. 366-382 (Introduction: Dada and Surrealism), 382-384 (Kurt Schwitters, from Merz, 1921);
- Max Ernst “What is Surrealism?” 1934, in: Art in Theory 1900 – 2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 491-493;
- Hanne Bergius: Kurt Schwitters: Aspects of Merz and Dada, in: exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 445-449;
- Malcom Gee: Ernst, Max, in: Dictionary of Art, Vol. 10, London 1996, pp. 466-471;
- Werner Spies: Max Ernst: The House Angel, in: German Art from Beckmann to Richter. Images of a divided country, ed. Eckhart Gillen, exhibition cat. Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin 1997/98, pp. 28-31;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Beckmann, "On My Painting", 1938, in: Herschel B. Chipp: Theories of modern art. A source book by artists and critics, Berkely and LA 1968, pp. 187-192; • Christian Lenz: Max Beckmann, in: Dictionary of Art, ed. J. Turner, Vol. 3, London 1996, pp. 477-482; • Ann Temkin: Paul Klee, in: Dictionary of Art, ed. J. Turner, Vol. 18, London 1996, pp. 108-113. <p>For background information, see Wieland Schmied: Points of Departure and Transformations in German Art 1905-1984, in: German Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1905-1985, ed. Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Wieland Schmied, exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 41-47, 52-55.</p> |
| <p>Session 8</p> | <p>Topic: Field-trip to art museum / exhibition. (Berlinische Galerie or Scharf-Gerstenberg Collection)</p> |
| <p>Session 9</p> | <p>Topic: The Destruction of the Arts in Nazi-Germany and Art in Post-War Central Europe: Abstract versus Figurative art.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Degenerated art" and Nazi ideology • Art Informel, Tachisme, Lyrical Abstraction, Zero • Socialist Realism <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art in Theory 1900 – 2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 439-441(Adolf Hitler, Speech Inaugurating the „Great Exhibition of German Art); • Sigrun Paas: Nazism, in: Dictionary of Art, Vol. 22, London 1996, pp. 709-712; • Stephanie Barron: Modern Art and Politics in Prewar Germany, in: "Degenerate Art". The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany, ex. ca. Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1991, pp. 9-23; • Siegfried Gohr: Art in the Post-War Period, in: exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 465-467; • Philip Coper: Art Informel, in: Dictionary of Art, Vol. 2, London 1996, pp. 543-545; • "Tachism", in: Dictionary of Art, Vol. 30, London 1996, p. 231; • Elisabeth Scheibler-Nay: The Artist's Identification with His Time: The Painter Ernst Wilhelm Nay, in: German Art from Beckmann to Richter. Images of a divided country, ed. Eckhart Gillen, exhibition cat. Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin 1997/98, pp. 88-91; • Stephan von Wiese: Zero, in: Dictionary of Art, Vol. 33, London 1996, pp. 636-637; • Otto Piene: Zero Retrospective and Günter Uecker / Dieter Honisch: My failure is my art, in: Zero out of Germany 1957 – 1966 And today, ex. cat. Galerien der Stadt Esslingen, ed. Renate Wiehager 1999/2000, pp. 38, 41-42; • Eduard Beaucamp: Werner Tübke: Reminiscences of JD Schulz III, in: German Art from Beckmann to Richter. Images of a divided country, ed. Eckhart Gillen, exhibition cat. Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin 1997/98, pp. 170-173; • Stephanie d'Alessandro: History by Degrees: The Place of the Past in Contemporary German Art, in: Negotiating History German Art and the Past, ed. Jay Clarke, The Art Institute of Chicago 2002, pp. 67-81. <p>For background information, see Wieland Schmied: Points of Departure and Transformations in German Art 1905-1984, in: German Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1905-1985, ed. Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Wieland Schmied, exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 55-70.</p> |

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| <p>Session 10</p> | <p>Topic: Topic: Perceptions of Reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myth, ideology and the German past (Joseph Beuys, Sigmar Polke, Anselm Kiefer, Markus Lüpertz, Jörg Immendorff, Georg Baselitz) • Frankfurt School and the critical social theory (Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer). • The search for new art forms: Happenings, Fluxus, Actions, Performances, Concept Art, Body art, Video-art <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephanie d’Alessandro: History by Degrees: The Place of the Past in Contemporary German Art, in: Negotiating History German Art and the Past, ed. Jay Clarke, The Art Institute of Chicago 2002, pp. 67-81; • Joseph Beuys “Not Just a Few Are Called, But Everyone” and “I am searching for Field character”, in: Art in Theory 1900 – 2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 903-906 and 929-930; • Heiner Stachelhaus: Beuys, Joseph, in: Dictionary of Art, Vol. 3, London 1996, pp. 891-893; • Anne Erfle: Sigmar Polke’s Images of Germany, in: German Art from Beckmann to Richter. Images of a divided country, ed. Eckhart Gillen, exhibition cat. Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin 1997/98, pp. 230-242; • Bazon Brock: Driving Out One Devil with Another. Prescription of Symptoms as Therapy, in: German Art from Beckmann to Richter. Images of a divided country, ed. Eckhart Gillen, exhibition cat. Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin 1997/98, pp. 332-341; • Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, in: William McNeill and Karen S. Feldman (Ed.) Continental Philosophy: An Anthology (1998) pp. 253-259; • “Marxism and the social history of art“ in: Michael Hatt / Charlotte Klonk: Art history. A critical introduction to its methods, Manchester 2006, pp. 120-142. <p>For background information, see Wieland Schmied: Points of Departure and Transformations in German Art 1905-1984, in: German Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1905-1985, ed. Christos M. Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal and Wieland Schmied, exhibition cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1985, pp. 70-74.</p> |
| <p>Session 11</p> | <p>Topic: Topic: Field-trip to art museum / exhibition. (Hamburger Bahnhof)</p> |
| <p>Session 12</p> | <p>Topic: Topic: Postmodernism and Deconstruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Theory and philosophy in postmodern central Europe: Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard and Michel Foucault • Painting, Photography: Neo Rauch, Gerhard Richter, Rebecca Horn <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaques Derrida, ‘Differance’ in: Todd May (Ed.) Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy New Jersey 1997, pp. 278-302; • Jean-Francois Lyotard, ‘Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?’ in: Todd May (Ed.) Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy New Jersey 1997, pp. 223-232; • “Psychoanalysis” in: Michael Hatt / Charlotte Klonk: Art history. A critical introduction to its methods, Manchester 2006, pp. 174-199; • “Semiotics” in: Michael Hatt / Charlotte Klonk: Art history. A critical introduction to its methods, Manchester 2006, pp. 200-222; • Gerhard Richter from Interview with Benjamin Buchloh, in: Art in Theory 1900 – 2000. An Anthology of Changing Ideas, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford 2003, pp. 1147-1158. |

Session 13

FINAL EXAM