**ArtH 492/509 Alternative Art Since 1960**

**Topic: Global Conceptual Art**

Professor Adair Rounthwaite, vadair@uw.edu

Tuesday and Thursday, 10-11:20am, in-person meeting in Art Building 317

Office hours Tuesday 12:30-1:30pm, Wednesday 10-11am, or by appointment, in my Zoom meeting room:   
<https://washington.zoom.us/j/2448300971>

# Course summary

Depending on your perspective, you may think of conceptual art as the most innovative art movement of the 20th century, or as the driest and least appealing unit from your Art Since 1945 survey. Conceptualism revolves around the notion that art is defined by its idea. That radical concept brought about a sweeping reconsideration from the 1960s onwards of existing understandings of the artwork, the role of the artist, and what it means to experience art.

Though dominant understandings of conceptualism used to revolve around a group of American and British artists working from 1967 onwards, the past two decades have seen an explosion of scholarship that has greatly broadened that history in two key ways. First, scholars and curators now see conceptualism fundamentally as a global movement, in which ideas circulated around the world but where certain kinds of art practice took shape in response to their local circumstances. In that process, conceptual approaches sometimes gave rise to much more overtly political kinds of art that we might associated with “classic” analytic conceptualism. Second, scholarship of recent years has increasingly stressed the importance of conceptualism as the condition of emergence of contemporary art as such, meaning that this history is still very much alive and well in the present.

This course covers a wide range of case studies from the 1960s to the present, which come from many different parts of the world. We’ll get a chance to revel in the diversity and ingenuity of conceptualism, and also to discuss historical methodologies for understanding it. What does conceptualism in particular tell us about the condition of art making around the world in the late 20th and early 21st centuries? How has it been particularly important in the articulation of contemporary art’s political nature? What have artists gained by engaging local histories via a conceptual vocabulary? It is still useful to think of conceptual art as a “movement,” once we take it beyond the narrow bounds of Anglo-American history?

# Learning goals:

* Gain familiarity with conceptualism as a movement and with key artists and writers associated with it.
* Learn about case studies from around the world, and reflect on how their diversity and similarity informs what we consider to be an “art movement.”
* Engage in discussion and reflection about the value of decentering Western histories, and about the extent to which learning about a history can help you to critique it.
* Increase your understanding of the connections between contemporary art post-1989, and innovations that took place in the 1960s and 1970s.
* Strengthen your analytical writing and speaking skills.
* Practice managing your workflow proactively and obtaining support when necessary throughout the quarter.

# Evaluations

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| Introductory writing assignment, due 10/11 | | 10% |
| Group presentation on an artist’s text | | 10% |
| Choice A for a major writing assignment: Two 5-page response papers | Choice B for a major writing assignment:  15-page research paper | 60% (2 x 30% for response papers, for research paper 5% initial prospectus + 55% final paper) |
| Participation, orally in class and digitally via Hypothes.is for selected readings | | 20% |

Introductory writing assignment

This assignment is a short paper of just 500 words, in which you will reflect on the “Early articulations” (October 5) readings and the questions they raise about the framework of our class. See Canvas for a detailed assignment description.

Group presentation on an artist’s text

You will work with between one and three other students to create a 15-minute presentation about two short artists’ or critics’ texts from the period under analysis. These presentations are intended to spark discussion and bring careful attention to the nuances of various conceptualisms. See Canvas for an assignment description and sign-up (and see the schedule below for eligible dates and texts).

Major writing assignment

You have two options in terms of your major writing assignment(s) for this course. The first is choosing to write two 5-page papers which draw on class material to respond to prompts. These papers do not require external research, and are a good choice if you’re newer to art historical writing or to modern and contemporary art. The second option is to write a 15-20 page research paper. I expect Masters and Doctoral students in Art History and related humanities fields to choose this option. See Canvas for assignment descriptions.

Participation

The bulk of participation will take place orally, in class. In addition, six readings will provide opportunities for you to participate via annotations in Hypothes.is. This will enable us to deepen our collective readings of those texts and also provide an opportunity to strengthen participation credit for those who are shy about talking in class.

# Class schedule

For each reading listed, read it *before* class for the day next to which it is listed. For example, read the Sol LeWitt texts before 10am on Tuesday, October 5th.

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| Th 9/30 | Course introduction and syllabus discussion  Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss, “Forward,” in Luis Camnitzer et. al. eds., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950s-1980s.* New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999, pp. vii-xi.  Alexander Alberro, “Reconsidering Conceptual Art: 1966-1977,” in Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson eds., *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999, xvi-xxxvii. |
| T 10/5 | Early articulations  Sol Lewitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art (1967)” and “Sentences on Conceptual Art (1969),” in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, ed. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 987-991.  Hélio Oiticica, “Position and Program (1966),” in Alberro and Stimson, pp. 8-10.  Eduardo Costa, Raúl Escari, Roberto Jacoby, “A media art (manifesto) (1966),” in Alberro and Stimson, pp. 2-4.  Jerzy Grotowski, “Towards a Poor Theatre (1965),” in Eugenio Barba ed., *Towards a Poor Theatre: Jerzy Grotowski*. New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 15-25. |
| Th 10/7 | Fluxus  Natilee Harren, “George Maciunas, Fluxboxes, and the Transitional Commodity,” in *Fluxus Forms: Scores, Multiples, and the Eternal Network*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020, pp. 133-168.  **Hypothes.is annotation opportunity**  **Introductory writing assignment due on Canvas at 11:59pm on Monday, October 11th** |
| T 10/12 | Dematerialization  **One presentation slot: 1) Lippard & Chandler and Atkinson**  \*\*\*Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, “The Dematerialization of Art (1967)” in Alberro and Stimson, pp. 46-50.  \*\*\*Terry Atkinson, “Concerning the Article: ‘The Dematerialization of Art’ (1968)” in Alberro and Stimson, 52-58.  Branka Stipančić, “Lines (1979),” translated in *Parallel Chronologies: An Archive of East European Exibitions* accessible at <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/texts/branka-stipancic-lines/>.  Ivana Bago, “Lines – exhibition curated by Branka Stipančić,“ *Parallel Chronologies: An Archive of East European Exibitions*, accessible at <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/lines-by-branka-stipancic/>. |
| Th 10/14 | Arte Povera  Jacopo Galimberti, “A Third-Worldist Art? Germano Celant’s Invention of Arte Povera,” *Art History* 36 3 (April 2013): 418-441.  **Hypothes.is annotation opportunity**  Germano Celant, “Arte Povera: Notes on a Guerilla Warfare,” *Flash Art* 5 (1967). Accessible at <https://flash---art.com/article/germano-celant-arte-povera-notes-on-a-guerrilla-war/> |
| T 10/19 | African conceptualism(s)  Okwei Enwezor, “Where, What, Who, When: A Few Notes on ‘African’ Conceptualism,” in Camnitzer, ed., *Global Conceptualism*, pp. 108-117. |
| Th 10/21 | Diverse approaches in American conceptualism  **Two presentation slots: 1) Lozano and the two Piper texts 2) McShine and Burnham**  \*\*\*Lee Lozano, “Dialogue Piece (1969),” in Alberro and Stimson, pp. 112-119.  \*\*\*Adrian Piper, “On Conceptual Art (1988),” in Alberro and Stimson, 424-425.  \*\*\*Adrian Piper, “The Logic of Modernism (1992),” in Alberro and Stimson, 546-549.  \*\*\*Kynaston McShine, “Introduction to *Information* (1970),” in Alberro and Stimson, pp. 212-214.  \*\*\*Jack Burnham, “Alice’s Head: Reflections on Conceptual Art (1970),” in Alberro and Stimson, 216-219.  **For Writing Option B, initial abstract due Monday 10/25 at 11:59 via Canvas** |
| T 10/26 | Lea Lublin – Argentina/France/Poland  Catherine Spencer, “Lea Lubin’s exercises in denaturalization,” in *Beyond the Happening: Performance and the Politics of Communication*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2020, pp. 181-224.  **Hypothes.is annotation opportunity** |
| Th 10/28 | Sick day |
| T 11/2 | Latin American conceptualisms  **Two presentation slots 1) Oiticica and Clark 2) Camnitzer and Meireles**  \*\*\*Hélio Oiticica, “General Scheme of the New Objectivity (1967),” in Alberro and Stimson, pp. 40-42.  \*\*\*Lygia Clark, “Concerning the Instant (1965)” and “Concerning the Magic of the Object (1965)” in Yves Alain Bois and Lygia Clark, “Nostalgia of the Body,” *October* 69 (Summer 1994), pp. 100-102.  \*\*\*Luis Camnitzer, “Contemporary colonial art (1970)” in Alberro and Stimson, 224-230.  \*\*\*Cildo Meireles, “Statements (1981),” in Alberro and Stimson, 410-412.  **For Writing Option A, short paper #1 due Monday 11/1 at 11:59 via Canvas** |
| Th 11/4 | On Kawara – Japan/US/Mexico  Jung-Ah Woo, “On Kawara’s ‘Date Paintings’: Scenes of Horror and Boredom,” *Art Journal* 69 3 (Fall 2010): 62-72. Available with UW sign-in at <https://www-jstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/stable/25800346?sid=primo&socuuid=9df880f9-e08c-4685-a6b3-7ec9b3becbee&socplat=email&utm_source=email> |
| T 11/9 | Japanese practices between conceptualism and the concrete  **One presentation slot: 1) Ono and Genpei**  \*\*\*Yoko Ono, “The Word of a Fabricator (1962),” in Doryun Chong et. al. eds., *From postwar to postmodern : art in Japan 1945-1989 / Primary documents.* Durham: Duke UP, 2012, pp. 136-138.  \*\*\*Akasegawa Genpei, “The Intent of the Act Based on the Intent of the Act – Before Passing Through the Courtroom (1966)” in Chong, pp. 187-191.  Nakahara Yusuke, “Room as Alibi: Gentle Criminals (1963)” in Chong, pp. 138-139.  Mika Yoshitake, “Living Structures,” in *Requiem for the Sun: The Art of Mono-ha*. New York: Blum & Poe, 2012, pp. 104-116. |
| Th 11/11 | **Veterans Day – No class** |
| T 11/16 | Art & Language  Robert Bailey, *Art and Language International: Conceptual Art between Art Worlds*. Durham: Duke UP, 2016, pp. 13-43.  **Hypothes.is annotation opportunity** |
| Th 11/18 | The New Art Practice in Yugoslavia  Marko Ilić, *A Slow Burning Fire: The Rise of the New Art Practice in Yugoslavia*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020, pp. 115-166. |
| T 11/23 | Central and Eastern Europe  **One presentation slot: 1) Szentjóby and Pauer**  \*\*\*Đuro Seder, “The Collective Work (1963),” accessible at <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/texts/duro-seder-the-collective-work/>  \*\*\*Ilya Kabakov, “The Point is the Turning of the Pages (1970s),” accessible at <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/texts/ilya-kabakov-the-point/>  \*\*\*Tamás Szentjóby, “Exclusion exercise – Punishment-preventive autotherapy (1969-72),” accessible at <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/texts/exclusion-exercise/>  \*\*\*Gyula Pauer, “The Second Pseudo Manifesto (Advertisement) (1972),” accessible at <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/texts/gyula-pauer-pseudo-advertisement/> |
| Th 11/25 | **Thanksgiving – No class** |
| T 11/30 | Conceptualism and Performance  Genevieve Hyacinthe, *Radical Virtuosity: Ana Mendieta and the Black Atlantic*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2019, pages TBA.  **Hypothes.is annotation opportunity** |
| Th 12/1 | Conceptualism and the condition of contemporary art  Terry Smith, “One and Three Ideas: Conceptualism Before, During, and After Conceptual Art,” in Smith and Robert Bailey, *One and Five Ideas: On Conceptual Art and Conceptualism*. Durham: Duke UP, 2017, pp. 117-144. |
| T 12/7 | (Post)conceptual painting  Winnie Wong, *Van Gogh on Demand: China and the Readymade*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014, pages TBA.  **Hypothes.is annotation opportunity** |
| Th 12/9 | NFTs as global(ized) conceptualism  Tina Rivers Ryan, “Token Gesture,” *Artforum* (May 2021), <https://www.artforum.com/print/202105/token-gesture-85475>.  David Golumbia, “Blockchain: The White Man’s Burden,” *Medium* blogpost (February 21, 2020), <https://davidgolumbia.medium.com/blockchain-the-white-mans-burden-e3ef75c97830>.  **Short paper #2 and research essays due Friday 12/10 at 11:59 via Canvas.** |

There is no final exam for this class.

# Pandemic circumstances

As I think you’re all acutely aware, this quarter is happening under unusual and difficult circumstances, and we may experience further disruption depending on the circumstances on campus and in the broader pandemic. Out of respect for everyone in the class, it’s important to me that we stick to the state mask guidance, and I’m grateful to you for helping to protect others’ health through good mask practice (i.e. no masks off to eat in class, mask properly fitted over your nose, etc.). If something happens that means we can’t meet in person for a portion of the quarter, we will likely switch to a synchronous Zoom format and keep the syllabus largely the same in terms of the schedule of readings and topics. I have chosen to conduct office hours on Zoom to maintain my office space, where I spend time working and eating throughout the day, as free as possible of aerosols. Zoom also provides great flexibility in terms of location to help you access office hours around your busy schedules.

# Communication Policy

Especially as this quarter may hold unexpected twists and turns, you MUST check your UW email and Canvas notifications multiple times a week and respond promptly to emails from me and from your peers. I aim to reply to you within 24 hours during the week for urgent issues, however I am typically unable to respond to email between 4:30pm on Friday and 7pm on Sunday due to the demands of caring for two kids of ages 5 and 1. If it’s been a couple of days since you emailed me and I haven’t answered, please go ahead and send a reminder email. I will not be at all insulted, as I probably have just lost track of your message.

# Participation policy

Excellent participation consists in doing the readings, being present for class sessions and contributing thoughtfully to discussion every session. Class sessions missed without prior discussion will result in a steep decrease in the participation grade. The Hypothes.is annotations are voluntary and provide you with another opportunity to strengthen your participation, in a way that doesn’t involve talking in class.

# Grading policy

Lateness: I reserve the right to deduct 5% for every day, including weekends, that a written assignment is late. If you are experiencing circumstances that will prevent you from submitting work on time, please talk to me as soon as possible, without waiting until the deadline has passed.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism and cheating carry a heavy grade penalty decided at my discretion, which can range from receiving a 0 on the assignment in question to failing the course. If you are tempted to cheat, I recommend that you consider a visit to the University’s Counseling Center to get support concerning stress and emotional coping.

# Accommodation

I look forward to working with students who may need learning accommodations (for the

official School of Art policy, see supplementary document). If you are registered with Disability Resources for Students, please make sure I receive your documentation within one week of the start of class.

# Anti-discrimination

As your instructor I am committed to making our classroom a space without discrimination, where each one of you feels comfortable expressing yourself, and equally, is willing to listen to your peers express themselves. If discrimination does arise, I invite you to discuss it with me and we can make a plan for how to rectify it. Being committed to anti-discrimination doesn’t mean that you need to be nervous about saying the “wrong” thing. Rather, it’s a commitment to process, in which all of us agree to remain generous and self-reflexive, and to help each other out in the collective work of establishing a positive group dynamic. As an able-bodied, cys-gendered white woman, I am committed to the ongoing act of taking responsibility for my position of power within the digital classroom, and working to make it a welcoming space for others who don’t share my experiences or opinions. The School of Art’s official Equal Opportunity policy is available on the School website.

See appended document for office School of Art policies.