

Reading images: Painting, Photography, Film

Course Code: SMLM 044

Course organiser: Professor Elza Adamowicz

The course offers a study of pictorial, photographic and cinematic images, focusing mainly on modernist and postmodernist works of the 20th century. Its focus will be: **theoretical**, exploring the work of theorists of the visual image; **critical**, applying a range of critical approaches (including semiotic, psychoanalytical, feminist, postcolonial) to the analysis of groups of images; and **historical**, studying images within their contemporary context. Each session explores a specific critical approach, based on a theoretical text and the close analysis of a (group of) image(s). While the specificity of each medium will be constantly kept in mind, the aim is to propose readings which can be applied to different media, as well as plural readings of a single visual text. The course thus combines the practical objective of the acquisition of precise critical tools to read a photographic image, a film sequence or an abstract painting, and the intellectual objective of a theorization of (post)modernism.

Programme

1 Introduction: reading the modernist image

Picasso Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.) (1906-7)

Green, ed., Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger (Cambridge University Press 2001)

2 Reading abstract painting

Kandinsky, Malevich, Pollock

Greenberg, 'Modernist painting', in Art and Culture. Critical Essays, Beacon Press (1961).

Guilbaut, 'Postwar painting games: the rough and the slick', in Guilbaut, ed., Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal, 1945-1964, MIT Press (1990).

3 Collage and Photomontage : Dada in Germany

Ernst, Hausmann, Heartfield

Adorno, 'Commitment' (1962) in Harrison and Wood, eds., Art in theory 1900-1990.

4 Art and Politics: Surrealism and the Spanish Civil War

Picasso, Miro, Capa (photojournalism)

Robin Adèle Greeley, Surrealism and the Spanish Civil War (Yale Univ. Press 2006)

5 Photography: gender and the selfportrait

Claude Cahun, Orlan

Krauss, Rosalind E., Bachelors (MIT Press 1999)

Chadwick Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation

6 Film and psychoanalysis

Bunuel/Dali Un chien andalou (1929)

CR Williams, Figures of desire. A theory and analysis of surrealist film, Univ. of Illinois Press (1981)

Elza Adamowicz, Un chien andalou (IB Tauris 2010)

7 Photography and fetish

Louise Bourgeois, Man Ray

Dawn Ades, "Surrealism: fetishism's job" in Fetishism: Visualising Power and Desire (London: Lund Humphries 1995); Laura Mulvey Fetishism and Curiosity (Indiana Univ. Press 1996)

8 Word and image

Magritte, Michaux, Marinetti, Duchamp

Foucault This is not a pipe (1971). WJT Mitchell "Image and Word", "Mute poesy and blind painting" in Art in Theory 1900-2000.

9 Visit to Tate Modern

10 The postmodern image: appropriation and critique

Raphael, Manet, Picasso, Caro, etc Le déjeuner sur l'herbe

Hutcheon, A Theory of parody. The teaching of 20C art forms, Methuen (1985).

Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition (1979)

11 Art and memory

Anselm Kiefer, Boltanski

Huyssen, 'Anselm Kiefer: the terror of history, the temptation of myth', October 48 (1989), pp.25-45.

General Bibliography:

Arnold, Dana, Art History. A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press (2004).

Fascina, Francis, and Charles Harrison, eds., Modern art and modernism. A critical anthology, Harper and Row (1982).

Fascina, F., Pollock and after. The critical debate, Harper and Row (1985).

Freeland, Cynthia, Art Theory. A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press (2001).

Green, Christopher, Art in France 1900-1940, Yale University Press (2000).

Green, Christopher, ed., Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon, Cambridge University Press (2001).

Harrison, C. and F. Fascina, Modernism in dispute. Art since the 1940s, Yale UP and Open University (1993).

Last modified: 25 July 2011