

CCST-307 *Contemporary Indigenous Aesthetics: Decolonization & Recontextualization*

School of Critical Studies, California Institute of the Arts

Fall 2020

COURSE SYLLABUS

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Course website:

Course Overview:

This course will analyze contemporary indigenous practices and their relationship to global aesthetico-political discourses. The place of indigenous art within Western art history is fraught with the discipline's role in the process of colonization. However, during the last twenty years or so, there has been an influx of indigenous professionals - curators, critics, historians, theoreticians, arts managers, and collectors - who have helped to re-contextualize indigenous arts. Therefore, in addition to the contributions indigenous artists have made through their work, we will investigate the specific contributions other indigenous cultural practitioners have made during the last two decades. We will take a comparative approach (limited to Anglophone regions) in examining the various colonial legacies and the corresponding decolonizing strategies that inform the production, dissemination, and consumption of contemporary indigenous arts. While analyzing local differences, we will also maintain a global perspective, paying particular attention to the place of contemporary indigenous art within the international art market as well as its participation in the international flow of art via international biennials.

Learning Outcomes:

1. To identify a framework and language for how contemporary indigenous practices fit into the discourse of visual culture within a social justice lens.
2. To understand how indigenous aesthetics has impacted visual culture within the broader context of twentieth century social, cultural and political history, particularly colonization.
3. To develop your own framework for understanding the relevance and meaning of indigenous aesthetics in visual culture within modern and contemporary society.

Requirements:

- **Participation:** Consistent and engaged participation in discussions is required. I expect for you read thoroughly and critically and come to class prepared with questions and comments. We will be supportive and respectful of one another as we engage in debate--good collegiality is a form of politics and our classroom is a community. Missing more than one class meeting will negatively affect your standing in the course. **10%**

- Collaborative Class Facilitation: A group of 2-3 students will facilitate a 30-40 minute class discussion every session (apart from the first session). If we have guest speakers the group will be in charge of moderating the conversation. **I will have a Sign-Up sheet the first day of class.** Facilitations will provoke dialogue about; 1-the central argument(s) of the scholarship being engaged, 2-the theoretical and methodological approaches utilized and innovated by the scholars, 3-the potential social, cultural, and political stakes of the work, 4-how the work connects to other scholarship we have engaged in the class (with the exception of the first group). I encourage facilitation groups to utilize media (such as short video screenings), group activities (such as free writing or creative writing exercises), and other methods to create a dynamic space. However, these are not required, what is most important is that we have a quality exchange in the class. **30%**
- 1 x 3 page Response Paper: You will submit one 3 page response paper in **Week 5**. Response papers are due in class of Week 5 - **HARD COPY ONLY**, and late responses will not be accepted. Response papers are tools for working through the material and thinking about how the material can relate (or not) to your own scholarly, artistic, and social justice interests. They can be critical, open-ended, and/or personal. What I am looking for is an earnest engagement with the work. Make sure that your papers engage with all of the readings assigned, although more emphasis on one or two within that context is acceptable. **10%**
- For **Week 8** you will make an artwork inspired by the content covered during this course. This artwork will be a 3D object that somehow encapsulates, indexes, or performs your own family history and more specifically, your cultural identity. As you become more familiar with the course material we will discuss this project in more detail. Each person will present on their object in class for 2 minutes. **10%**
- Final Project & Presentation due in **Week 14: 40%**
 --Typed Research Paper, 10-12 pages double-spaced plus bibliography.
 --More information will be provided later in the course, but this project **MUST** engage with the topics of the course, including several of the readings
ALL TOPICS TO BE APPROVED BY INSTRUCTOR BY WEEK 7. PLEASE BRING IN A TYPED ONE-PARAGRAPH PROJECT IDEA TO CLASS.

Brief presentations of your Final Project (5 minutes each) will be held during our final meeting in Week 14, **and the written portions will be due the same day**. No late papers will be accepted without a doctor's note.

Summary of grade allocation:

Participation: 10%

Collaborative Class Facilitation: 30%

Biographical Object: 10%

Response Paper: 10%

Final Project & Presentation: 40%

Total: 100%

Services for Students with Disabilities

CalArts will provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have registered with the Student Affairs office. Registration with the Office of Student Affairs is on a voluntary, self-identifying basis. Services are available only after a student has presented certified, current documentation of the disability from an appropriate medical or educational specialist, and this documentation has been reviewed and accepted as complete. Please go to <http://calarts.edu/studentservices/disabilities> for extensive information on services for students with disabilities.

Grading Policy/Absences

CalArts does not grade on the A-F scale. We grade using:

- High Pass (HP): Passing with Excellence
- Pass (P): Passing with Quality
- Low Pass (LP): Passing
- Incomplete (I): Temporary evaluation. Through agreement between student and instructor, Incompletes must be made up during the following semester. Incomplete evaluations not made up within the specified period of time will convert to NC.
- No Credit (NC): Work did not meet the criteria for credit. "NC" evaluations may not be converted to credit bearing grades except by petition to the deans council initiated by the instructor of the class or, in the instructor's absence, the dean of the school offering the course.

The following changes to the grading policy will go into effect for all students beginning Fall 2013:

- NC (no credit) grades will appear on a student's permanent academic record
- NX (insufficient attendance) grades will no longer be used
- Withdrawal Period will be extended until the 10th week of the semester

NC grades must appear on external records to ensure accurate reporting to peer institutions and for financial aid reporting. While CalArts does not use a Grade Point Average (GPA) as part of its marking system, the following formula will be used for external purposes: HP =4.00, P=3.00, LP=2.00, NC=0.00.

Students will no longer receive NX grades, but the longer withdrawal period (through the 10th week of the semester) will provide an option for students to exit a course without receiving a failing grade. To drop a course during the extended withdrawal period, a student will obtain the Course Withdrawal form from the Registrar's Office, consult with his or her mentor, obtain the course instructor's signature verifying the last date of attendance, and return the form to the Registrar's Office. The course will remain on the student's record with a "W" grade, but the grade of "W" will have no effect on the grade point average.

If a student misses more than 3 sessions of class and does not pursue the withdrawal option, a NC will be given and will appear on external records.

To read the revised Grading Policy in its entirety as well as frequently asked questions, click on the link below:

<https://my.calarts.edu/policy/3-1-8-1-grading-policy-beginning-fall-2013>

Change of Grade

In the interests of operating an equitable grading system, Critical Studies stringently enforces CalArts' change of grade policy. Students have one semester upon receiving an "Incomplete" grade to make up any missing coursework and/or projects. If this work has not been completed by the end of the semester, the Incomplete converts automatically to a "No Credit". After that time, changes require the approval of Deans Council. Deans Council will approve such grade changes only in the case of extreme, extenuating circumstances or in cases of administrative/faculty error.

Course Policies:

Absences and Lateness

Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for rescheduling exams. There are no extra credit assignments for this class.

Format

Please type and double-space your written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number and staple multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your writing.

General Decorum

Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

Plagiarism

Critical Studies endeavors to teach students the essential skills and basic ethics involved in any academic enquiry. To this end, we are committed to observing the policy on plagiarism set out in the CalArts Course Catalog. This stipulates that plagiarism is the use of ideas and/or quotations (from the internet, books, films, television, newspapers, articles, the work of other students, works of art, media, etc.) without proper credit to the author/artist. Critical Studies holds to the view that plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and is a serious breach of acceptable conduct. It is also the policy of CalArts that students who misrepresent source material as their own original work and fail to credit it have committed plagiarism and are subject to disciplinary action. In the case of Critical Studies, any student caught plagiarizing will immediately be given a 'no credit' for that class. The student will not be allowed to rewrite the paper, and if there is further evidence of plagiarism, Critical Studies will recommend more severe disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or want direction on how to credit source material, ask the member of faculty and refer to reference guides on permanent reserve in the CalArts library. The CalArts reference librarians may be able to offer additional information as well.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
- Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
- Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
- Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions

When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline.

Schedule of Classes and Readings:

Week 1

Introductions

Museums, Nationalism & Identity

1. Amanda J. Cobb, "The National Museum of the American Indian as Cultural Sovereignty" in *American Quarterly* 57 (2) 2005, pp. 485-506
2. Miriam Clavir, "New Zealand: A Comparative Study" in *Preserving What is Valued: Museums, Conservations and First Nations*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002
3. Amy Lonetree, "Museums as Sites of Decolonization" in *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2012
4. Christine Lalone, "Introduction: At the Crossroads of Indigeneity, Globalization and Contemporary Art," in *Sakahān: International Indigenous Art*, Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2013

Week 2

The Life of Things: Art, Artifact, and Animism

1. De Boer and Gray, "Interview with Homi K. Bhabha," in *Brian Jungen*, Rotterdam: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, 2006
2. Anders Kreuger, "Stone as Stone: An Essay about Jimmie Durham," *Afterall*, Summer 2012, University of Chicago Press
3. M. J. Morwood, "Australian Rock Art Research," in *Visions from the Past: The Archaeology of Australian Aboriginal Art*, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002
4. Nicholas Thomas, "Objects: Indigenous Signs in Colonial Design," in *Possessions: Indigenous Art / Colonial Culture*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1999

Week 3

Epistemologies, Language, and Hegemony

1. Nancy Mithlo, "No Word for Art in Our Language?: Old Questions, New Paradigms," *Wicazo Sa Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Spring 2012, pp. 111-126
2. Brenda Croft, "To Be Yong (At Heart), Gifted and Blak: The Cultural and Political Renaissance in Indigenous Art in Australia," in *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia*, Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007
3. Ken Watson, "Poetic Justice: An Overview of Indigenous Art," in *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia*, Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007

Week 4

Performance, Gender, and the Essential Indian

1. Mara Gladstone & Janet Catherine Berlo, "The Body in the (White) Box: Corporeal ethics and museum representation" in *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First Century Museum*, Janet Marstine (ed), London and New York: Routledge, 2011

2. Marcia Crosby, "The Multimedia Work of Rebecca Belmore: A Disturbing Uncertainty," in *Action and Agency: Advancing the Dialogue on Native Performance Art*, Nancy J. Blomberg (ed.), Denver, Colorado: Denver Art Museum, 2010
3. Lara M. Evans, "The Artifact Piece and Artifact Piece, Revisited," in *Action and Agency: Advancing the Dialogue on Native Performance Art*, Nancy J. Blomberg (ed.), Denver, Colorado: Denver Art Museum, 2010
4. Stephen Gilchrist, "From Tiwi with Love: Bindi Cole," *Artlink*, March 2010, Vol. 30, No. 1,
5. Museum of Contemporary Native Arts: *Acting Out: A Symposium on Indigenous Performance Art*: <http://www.iaia.edu/calendar/acting-out-a-symposium-on-indigenous-performance-art/>

Week 5

Class visit to Hammer Museum, *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World* (free admission) with curator's tour by Anne Ellegood
<https://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2017/jimmie-durham-at-the-center-of-the-world/>

Optional event: Artist Walk-Through: James Luna on Jimmie Durham at 6pm
<https://hammer.ucla.edu/programs-events/2017/02/artist-walk-through-james-luna-on-jimmie-durham/>

Week 6

Methodologies of/as Colonialism

1. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Research through Imperial Eyes," in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London and New York: Zed Books, second edition, 2012
2. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Colonizing Knowledges" in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London and New York: Zed Books, second edition, 2012
3. Mario A. Caro, "Disciplining Art History" in *The Native As Image: Art History, Nationalism, and Decolonizing Aesthetics*, dissertation
4. *Stronger than Stone: Reinventing the Indigenous Monument*:
<http://strongerthanstone.org>

Week 7

Native Art as Commodity: Authenticity, Identity, and Intellectual Property

1. Margaret Dubin, "Objects Desired: A History of Collecting," in *Native America Collected: The Culture of an Art World*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001
2. Margaret Dubin, "Collectors: Charity, Empathy, Matching the Sofa," in *Native America Collected: The Culture of an Art World*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001
3. Fred R. Myers, "Making a Market: Cultural Policy and Modernity in the Outback," in *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2002

Week 8

Indigenous Curating

1. Bill Anthes, "Contemporary Native Artists and International Biennial Culture," *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 109-127
2. Jennifer Shannon, "The Construction of Native Voice" in *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, Susan Sleeper-Smith (ed.), Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2009
3. Michelle McGeough, "Indigenous Curatorial Practices and Methodologies," *Wicazo Sa Review*, Spring 2012, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 13-20
4. McMaster, "Indigena: A Native Curator's Perspective" in *Art Journal* Vol. 51, No. 3, (Autumn, 1992) pp. 66-73
5. *Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Queensland Art Gallery, Australia: <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/apt8>
6. Aboriginal Curatorial Collective: <http://www.acc-cca.com>
7. Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative: <http://www.boomalli.com.au>

*** BIOGRAPHICAL OBJECT PRESENTATIONS

Week 9

Week 10

Modernism and Indigeneity

1. Bill Anthes, "Art and Modern Indian Policy," *Native Moderns: American Indian Painting, 1940-1960*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006
2. Ian McClean, "Modernism" in *How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art*, Brisbane, Queensland: Institute of Modern Art, 2011
3. Elizabeth Hutchinson, "Playing Indian: Native American Art and Modern Aesthetics," in *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009

Week 11

The Photographic Legacy: Enacting Visual Sovereignty

1. M. Dubin, "Native American Imagemaking and the Spurious Canon of the 'Of-and-Buy'" *Visual Anthropology Review*, Spring Summer 1999, Vol. 15, No. 1
2. Steven Leuthold, "Native American Identities and Media," in *Indigenous Aesthetics: Native Art, Media, and Identity*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998
3. Hannah Fink, "Self-Evident: Indigenous Artists and the Photographic Image," in *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia*, Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007

Week 12

Land and Landscapes

1. Kathleen Ash-Milby, "The Imaginary Landscape," in *Off the Map: Landscape in the Native Imagination*, Washington DC: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 2007
2. Jennifer Biddle, "Tjanpi Desert Weavers," in *Remote Avant-Garde: Aboriginal Art Under 1999*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016
3. Kate Morris, "Running the Medicine Line: Images of the Border in Contemporary Native American Art," *The American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Fall 2011, pp. 549-578
4. M. Melissa Elston, "Subverting Visual Discourses of Gender and Geography: Kent Monkman's Revised Iconography of the American West," *The Journal of American Culture*, 35:2

Week 13

Film as Self-Representation

1. Steven Leuthold, "Visual Arts Documentaries," in *Indigenous Aesthetics: Native Art, Media, and Identity*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998
- (3 articles below in one PDF):
2. Michelle H. Raheja, "Toward a Genealogy of Indigenous Film Theory" in *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013
 3. Michelle H. Raheja, "Visual Sovereignty, Indigenous Revisions of Ethnography," in *Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013
 4. Michelle H. Raheja "Visual Sovereignty, Indigenous Revisions of Ethnography, and *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*" in *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013

Week 14

Final Project Class Presentations

