

# AH209 Radicalism of the Avant-Garde

Seminar Leader: Dr. Susanne Märten

Course Times: Friday, 9:00-12:15 (with offsite visits to museums and galleries outside regular course hours)

Office Hours: by appointment

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## Course Description

The term “avant-garde” has become a mainstay of art-historical description. But what does this term actually mean? How did the practices and movements classed in this manner alter the way art is conceived, produced, presented, and displayed? This course examines the transformation of art in the period between 1900 and 1930. We will look at how movements such as Expressionism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Bauhaus and Surrealism proposed completely new ideas of the artwork. A work came to be conceived as the result of any kind of practice serving the programmatic purpose of the artist. In his *Triadisches Ballet* Oskar Schlemmer combined dance and pictorial art, while Kurt Schwitters invented the dadaistic sound poem (*Ursonate*). Other innovations, from Bauhaus and Werkbund, aimed at eliminating the traditional distinction between the fine arts, design and crafts. Traditional boundaries and hierarchies between artistic fields and media were overcome; photography could be used in unusual ways (abstract photography) and new artistic techniques like collage and montage (John Heartfield, Hannah Höch) were invented. The significance of these developments will be analyzed in the context of the institutionally-sanctioned art produced around 1900, dominated by painters like Adolf Menzel, Max Liebermann, Max Slevogt or Lovis Corinth. Our investigation of the avant-garde includes discussion of its manifestos, and of original works in museums, collections, and archives.

## Week 1

07.09. 2018, Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

### Introduction

#### Readings:

Excerpt from Georg Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1902), published in: Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*, Blackwell Publishing: Malden, Oxford, Carlton 2016 (18th ed), S. 132-136.

Excerpt from Meyer Shapiro, *The Nature of Abstract Art*, *Marxist Quarterly*, April-June 1937, S. 306-7, quoted in T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, 1985, S. 3-4.

## Week 2

14.09.2018, Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

### Manet to Cézanne – French Modern Art in Imperial Berlin

#### Readings:

Excerpt from Peter Paret, *State and Art in Imperial Berlin*, in: *The Berlin Secession. Modernism and Its Enemies in Imperial Germany*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 1980, pp.9-28.

Excerpts from Maurice Denis, *Cézanne*, originally published in *L'Occident*, September 1907, republ.. In *The Burlington Magazine*, XVI, Jan/Feb 1910, pp. 207-19 with an introduction by Roger Fry, here taken from: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 39-46.

### Week 3

21.09.2018, Friday, 10.00 - 12.30 – 10.30 Einlass

*Special Session: Meeting Point Alte Nationalgalerie*

**Anton von Werner, Adolf Menzel, Max Liebermann, Lovis Corinth**

**Edouard Manet, Camille Pissaro, Paul Cézanne**

#### Reading:

Excerpts from Max Liebermann, *Imagination in Painting*, first published in: *Die Neue Rundschau*, Vol XV, no 3, Berlin March 1904, pp. 372-80, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 30-33.

### Week 4

28.09.2018, Friday, 10.00 - 12.30

**Primitivism and Avant-Garde in France – Pablo Picasso, André Derain, Henri Matisse**

#### Readings:

Excerpt from Guillaume Apollinaire, „The Cubists“, *L’Intransigeant*, 10th October 1911, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 185-186.

Excerpts from Mark Antliff/Patricia Leighton, *European Primitives*, in: *Cubism and Culture*, London 2001, S. 24-63.

### Week 5

06.10.2018, Saturday, 12-15.00

*Special Session: Meeting Point Brücke Museum*

**Primitivism and German Expressionism – The artist groups *Die Brücke* and *Der Blaue Reiter***

#### Readings

Hal Foster, 1908 – Wilhelm Worringer publishes *Abstraction and Empathy*, in: Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin Buchloh, David Joselit (eds), *Art since 1900*, London 2016 (3rd Ed.), pp. 97-101.

Excerpt from Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, 1908, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 66-69.

Wilhelm Worringer, *The Historical Development of Modern Art*, publ. in: Rose-Carol Washton Long (ed), *German Expressionism, Documents*, New York 1993, pp. 9-13.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Programme of the Brücke*, publ. as a woodcut 1906, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), p. 65.

Max Pechstein, *Creativ Credo*, first publ. in Kasimir Edschmid (ed.), *Schöpferische Konfession. Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit*, XIII, Berlin 1920, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp.271-272.

Franz Marc, *Foreword to the planned second volume of Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)* 1914, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp.158-159.

### Week 6

12.10.2018, Friday – 9.00-12.15

**Cubism – Space and Time in Painting and the invention of Collage**

#### Readings

Excerpts from Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, *Cubism*, Paris 1912, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp.194-201.

Excerpts from Mark Antliff/Patricia Leighton, *Cubism and Culture*, London 2001, S. 64-79, 159-196.

### Week 7

19.10.2017, Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

**Futurism – the beauty of speed and movement and Avant-Garde’s turn to fascism.**

**F.T. Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni, Giacomo Balla.**

#### Readings:

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism, first publ. in *Le Figaro*, Paris on 20 February 1909, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 146-149.

Umberto Boccioni et al., Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto, first publ. 1911, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp.150-152.

Benjamin Buchloh/Rosalind Krauss, 1909 F.T. Marinetti publishes the first Futurist manifesto (...),in: Hal Foster et al. (eds.), *Art since 1900*, London 2016 (3rd Ed.),pp.102-109.

### **Week 8**

26.10.2018, Friday, 9.00-12.15

**Dada in Zürich and Berlin**

#### Readings:

Richard Huelsenbeck, *First German Dada Manifesto* („Collective Dada Manifesto“) 1918, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 257-259.

Richard Huelsenbeck and Raoul Hausmann, *What is Dadaism and what does it want in Germany?* (1919), publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp.259-260.

Excerpts from Richard Huelsenbeck: *En avant Dada*, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 260-263.

Hal Foster, 1916, In Zurich the international movement of Dada is launched and 1920, The Dada Fair is held in Berlin (...),in: Hal Foster et al. (eds.), *Art since 1900*, London 2016 (3rd Ed.),pp. 147-153, 186-191.

*29.10.2018 - 04.11.2018 Fall Break*

### **Week 9**

09.11.2018, Friday, 10.00 - 12.30

*Special Session: Meeting Point Berlinische Galerie*

**Dada Collage: Hannah Höch, Raoul Hausmann, John Heartfield**

#### Readings:

Joshua Ditrich, Primitivism, Photomontage, Ethnography. Utopian Fragments in Hannah Höch’s *Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum*, in: David Ayers and others (eds), *Utopia. The Avantgarde, Modernism and (Im)possible Life*, Berlin 2015, pp. 241-255.

Ralf Burmeister, „Cutting Together“ in Dadaist Collages, in: *Manifesto Collage*, ed. by Christiane zu Salm, Nürnberg 2012, S. 29-40.

### **Week 10**

16.11.2018, Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

**Bauhaus in Dessau and Weimar**

#### Readings:

Walter Gropius, The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus, (The Bauhaus Manifesto 1919), publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 309-314.

Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus*, Köln 2016, pp. 16, 31-41.

To watch:

**Oskar Schlemmer, Triadisches Ballett (1912), Interpretations**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GM3iC-yCf8A>

Bayrisches Staatsballett

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GM3iC-yCf8A>

<https://vimeo.com/67084264>

### **Week 11**

23.11.2018, Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

**The artist as engineer – Russian Constructivism / Kasimir Malevitch, Vladimir Tatlin, El Lissitzky**

Readings:

Kasimir Malevich, Non-Objective Art and Suprematism, publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 292-293.

Vladimir Tatlin, The Initiative Individual in the Creativity of the Collective (1919), publ. in:

Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), p. 334.

Yves Alain Bois, 1915 Kasimir Malewitsch shows his Suprematist canvases (...) and 1921 The Members of the Moscow Institute of Artistic Culture define Constructivism, in: Hal Foster et al. (eds.), *Art since 1900*, London 2016 (3rd Ed.), pp.142-146,198-203.

### **Week 12**

30.12.2018, Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

**Surrealism - Avant-Garde and Psychoanalysis**

Readings:

Excerpts of André Breton, from the First Manifesto of Surrealism (1924), publ. in: Harrison/Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (2016), pp. 447-453.

Rosalind Krauss, 1924 André Breton publishes the first issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (...), in: Hal Foster et al. (eds.), *Art since 1900*, London 2016 (3rd Ed.), pp. 214-219.

### **Week 13**

07.12.2018, Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

**The space of the museum from an Avant-Garde perspective – El Lissitzky's *Demonstration Room***

Reading:

Benjamin Buchloh, 1926 El Lissitzky's *Demonstration Room* and Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau* (...), in: Hal Foster et al. (eds.), *Art since 1900*, London 2016 (3rd Ed.), pp. 244-247.

### **Week 14**

14.12.2017 Friday, 9.00 - 12.15

**Avant-Garde and Utopia**

and

**Modernism and the Social History of Art**

Reading:

Sam Cooper, „Enemies of Utopia for the sake of its realisation“, Futurism, Surrealism, Situationism, and the Problem of Utopia, in: , David Ayers and others (eds), *Utopia. The Avantgarde, Modernism and (Im)possible Life*, Berlin 2015, pp. 17-32.

Benjamin Buchloh, The social history of art: models and concepts, in: Hal Foster et al. (eds.), *Art since 1900*, London 2016 (3rd Ed.), pp 15, pp. 24-33.

## **Requirements**

### **Attendance**

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than one absence in the seminar (e.g. one double session) will significantly affect the grade for the course. Please also make sure you depart early in order to reach the museums and exhibition spaces in time.

If absent, a short notification via email, sent before the beginning of class, is expected. Please note that punctuality is essential. Also note that the use of smartphones and notebooks is not allowed during seminars. Students are advised to consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

### **Assessment**

The course assessment consists of the overall seminar work (one presentation in addition to class participation) and two essays. See also “Grade Breakdown”.

### **Presentation**

Each student will be in charge of one oral presentation. For the presentation, students will bring to class one or more pages of written notes with questions and bullet-points intended to introduce the assigned reading and to facilitate the discussion. These notes will be handed to the instructor at the end of the class and will be part of the presentation grade.

### **Writing Assignments**

There are two essays for this course, one mid-term essay (ca. 2000 words) and one longer final essay (ca. 3000 words). A range of prompts will be provided in advance.

The mid-term essay is due on 21th October, midnight.

The final essay is due on 20th December, midnight.

Essays should include footnotes/references, bibliography and a list of illustrations. The structure and draft of your essays can be discussed in individual tutorials.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

All written work must be submitted electronically and on time. Please note that essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Seminar Grade = Attendance (preparation of texts/participation in discussions, presentation)

Seminar Grade: 50% (30% /20%)

Essay 1: 20 %

Essay 2: 30 %