

AH308 Art of Two German States 1945-1989

Instructor: Dorothea Schöne

Course Times: Tuesdays, 2pm-3:30pm & 3:45pm-5:15pm

Email: dschoene@atelierhaus-dahlem.de

Office Hours: by email appointment

Course description

The two German states founded at the end of the Second World War pursued highly distinctive policies in regard to the development of the visual arts. Their respective strategies had a decisive impact on the history of modern art, and on the relationship between institutional art production and instances of critique and experiment. Broadly, the GDR as a Communist republic under Russian influence endorsed the aesthetic of "socialist realism," which strongly influenced its public art and monuments. Artists were expected to belong to state-sponsored organizations and to serve the interests of the polity. At the same time, possibilities for dissent and independent innovation did exist, and found expression at pivotal moments in the GDR's lifespan. In West Germany, a capitalist liberal democracy, the picture was apparently very different. But here too, state policy shaped the kind of art thought favorable to the promotion of international (in this case "Western") alliances, and particularly to the strengthening of links with the United States. The styles associated with now-classic "modern art" can be directly attributed to this policy. As well as meeting immediate global and domestic political demands, art policy in the two German states affected the treatment--or encouraged repression--of the "German catastrophe" (the Nazi regime, the war, and the Holocaust) that was their common historical origin. This course examines the divergent policies of the two German states in respect to art-making, display, and promotion, and traces the consequences of policy for the work of individuals and groups. Artists whose careers began in the period under discussion will visit the class to discuss the degree to which German unification changed their practice. Depending on the approval of funding for a large-scale exhibition on postwar German art scheduled for summer 2019, selected essays by students may be published in a accompanying exhibition catalogue.

Requirements

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.

Class Etiquette: If absent, a short notification via email, if possible sent before the beginning of class, is appreciated. Please keep your bathroom breaks to a minimum and note that punctuality is essential. Also note that the use of smartphones and notebooks is not allowed during seminars on campus as well as in other locations. Students are advised to consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Assessment

Students will be evaluated based on their written work, completion of assignments and participation in class discussion. Success in the class will therefore depend on timely completion of written assignments and course readings, as well as thoughtful engagement with those readings in class through asking questions, formulating responses, and participating in discussion.

Assignments & Presentations

Students conduct independent research on the life and work of an artist chosen from a given selection of names. Mid-term evaluation will be based on research reports and completeness of annotated bibliography. Throughout the course, students are ready to report on the progress and results of their research. In addition, each student present on a historical topic or artist group in one of the class sessions.

The final essay will be a revised version of the work-in-progress reports, which may eventually be used for publication in an exhibition catalogue.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Essays that are more than 24 hours late cannot receive a grade of higher than C (see also policy on late submission in the Bard College Berlin Student Handbook).

Grade Breakdown

Listed below is the percentage grade allotted to each essay, and to classroom participation and assignments.

Seminar Grade = Attendance (participation/preparation of texts, occasional responses and presentation(s)/written responses)

Seminar Grade/ Participation in Class: 30%

Presentation in Class: 20%

Artist Biography (Draft Version)/ Research Report/ Bibliography: 30 % - **due Oct 26th 2018 (mid-term due date)**

Final Essay: 20 % - **due Jan 4th 2019**

I. September 4th 2018

Introductory session.

1. NS-Dictatorship/ Unconditional Surrender
2. Holocaust and Exiled Artists
3. Division into Four Zones
4. Reeducation/ Reconstruction/ Reintegration

Recommended Reading: Pamela M. Potter: Occupation, Cold War, and the Zero Hour, in: *Art of Suppression. Confronting the Nazi Past in Histories of the Visual and Performing Arts*, Oakland 2016, pp. 89-129.

II. September 11th 2018: 1945-1949

a. National Socialism and Art

Recommended Reading: Paul B. Jaskot: National Socialists and Art. Becoming the Perpetrator, in: *The Nazi Perpetrator. Postwar German Art and the Politics of the Right*, Minneapolis/ London 2012, pp. 13-45.

b. Exile and Emigration

Recommended Reading: Stephanie Barron: European Artists in Exile: A Reading Between the Lines, in: *Exiles + Emigres*, Exh. Cat. LA County Museum of Art, pp. 11-29; Sabine Eckmann: Considering (and reconsidering) Art and Exile, in: *Exiles + Emigres*, Exh. Cat. LA County Museum of Art, pp. 30-39; Keith Holz: Scenes from Exile in Western Europe: The Politics of Individual and Collective Endeavor among German Artists, in: *Exiles + Emigres*, Exh. Cat. LA County Museum of Art, pp. 42-56.

NO CLASS ON SEPTEMBER 18TH 2018 (instead Saturday, Oct. 6th)

III. September 25th 2018 – 1950s

a. Ruptures and Continuities

Recommended Readings: Sabine Eckmann: Ruptures and Continuities: Modern German Art in between the Third Reich and the Cold War, in: *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*, Exh. Cat. LA County Museum of Art, Los Angeles 2009, pp. 48-63; Karen Lang: Expressionism and the Two Germanys, in: *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*, Exh. Cat. LA County Museum of Art, Los Angeles 2009, pp. 84-100.

b. Bauhaus and the Cold War

Recommended Readings: Greg Castillo: The Bauhaus in Cold War Germany, in: *Bauhaus Culture. From Weimar to the Cold War*, ed. by Kathleen James-Chakraborty, London/ Minneapolis, pp. 171-193.

IV. October 02nd 2018 – 1950s

a. Abstraction in West German Art

1. documenta I+II
2. Abstraction as a Global Language

3. The Artistic Trajectory of Abstraction

Recommended Readings: Walter Grasskamp: 'Degenerate Art' and Documenta 1: Modernism Ostracized and Disarmed, in: *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, ed. by Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, Minneapolis 1994, pp. 163-194; Susanne Leeb: Abstraction as International Language, in: *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*, exh. cat. LA County Museum of Art 2009, pp. 118-133.

b. Socialist Realism

1. Formalism Campaign
2. Realism vs. Socialist Realism

Recommended Readings: Ursula Peters and Roland Prügel: The Legacy of Critical Realism in East and West, in: *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*, exh. cat. LA County Museum of Art 2009, pp.64-84; Barbara McCloskey: Dialectic at a Standstill: East German Socialist Realism in the Stalin Era, in: *ibid.*, pp. 104-117; Claudia Mesch: Recuperating the Modern: The Cold War Battle for the 'Real', in: *Modern Art at the Berlin Wall*, London/ New York 2008, pp. 21-48; Eckhart Gillen: The Cold War of the Arts II. Realismo versus Socialist Realism, in: *Facing the Future*, Exh. Cat. ZKM Karlsruhe, 2018, pp. 250-269.

V. October 6th 2018

Visit of Eisenhüttenstadt and Kunstarchiv Beeskow

1. Collection of Socialist Realist Art from GDR Public Collections
2. GDR Architecture

Recommended Reading: Ruth May: Planned city Stalinstadt: a manifesto of the early German Democratic Republic, in: *Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 18, 2003, pp.47-78.

VI. October 9th 2018 – 1950s/60s

a. Art, Cold War Conflicts & the Public Space

Recommended Readings: Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper: Figuration and abstraction in Berlin in the 1960s: two modi in East-West art and art politics, in: *Figuration/ Abstraction. Strategies for Public Sculpture in Europe 1945-1986*, ed. By Charlotte Benton, London/ New York 2004, pp. 147-168; Eckhart Gillen: The Cold War of the Arts. Monument to the Unknown Political Prisoner and Memorial to the Buchenwald Concentration Camp, in: *Facing the Future: Art in Europe 1945-1968*, Exh. Catalogue ZKM Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe 2016, pp. 236-249.

b. Presentations of research results I.

VII. October 16th 2018 – 1960s

a. ZERO – Fluxus – international movements in the 1060s.

Recommended Readings: Daria Mille: Zone ZERO. A European Network of Friends, in: *Facing the Future: Art in Europe 1945-1968*, Exh. Catalogue ZKM Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe 2016, pp. 336-359.

b. Presentations of research results II.

VIII. October 23rd 2018 – 1960s

a. Pop Art

Recommended Readings: *German Pop*, (English Summary) Exh. Cat. ed. by Martina Weinhart, Frankfurt am Main 2014.

b. Presentations of research results III.

FALL BREAK

IX. November 6th 2018

a. Visualizing the Vietnam War

Recommended Reading: Annette Vowinckel: Horst Fass, Thomas Billhardt, and the Visual Vietnam War in the Two Germanys, in: *The Art of War. German Visual Culture Vol. 5*, ed. By Deborah Ascher Barnstone and Barbara McCloskey, Oxford/ Berlin/ Brussels et al. 2017, pp. 213-238.

b. Presentations of research results IV.

X. November 13th 2018 – 1970s

a. Terror and Trauma – the RAF

Recommended Reading: Svea Bräunert: The RAF and the Phantom of Terrorism in West Germany, in: *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*, Exh. cat. LA County Museum of Art 2009, pp. 261-271.

b. Film Screening: Lutz Dammbeck *Zeit der Götter (Age of Gods)*

XI. November 20th 2018

Film Screening: Gerhard Richter *Painting* & Discussion
Recommended Reading: tba

XII. November 27th 2018

- a. Photography – the Becher School in the West
- b. Photography – East Germany Photography

Recommended Readings: Astrid Ihle: Photography as Contemporary Document: Comments on the Conceptions of the Documentary in Germany after 1945, in: *Art of Two Germanys. Cold War Cultures*, Exh. cat. LA County Museum of Art 2009, pp. 186-205, ; *Do Not Refreeze. Photography Behind the Berlin Wall*, Exh. Cat. 2008.

XIII. December 4th 2018

Performance art in East Germany in the 1980s

Studio visit Via Lewandowsky

Recommended Reading: Durs Grünbein: Potestant Rituals: On the Work of the Autoperforationisten, in: *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present*, Exh. Cat. Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, 1999.

XIV. December 11th 2018

- a. Revisiting German Art of the 20th Century

Recommended Reading: April Eisman: Denying Difference to the Post-Socialist Other. Bernhard Heisig and the Changing Reception of an East German Artist, in: *Contemporaneity*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2012).

- b. Final Discussion