

# AH219 LANDSCAPE, LAND ART, AND THE CITY

Art and Aesthetics  
Module: Artists, Genres, Movements  
Fall 2024

Seminar Leader: Geoff Lehman  
Course Times: Wednesday, 14:00-17:15

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 13:00-15:00, or by appointment

## Course Description

This course will examine landscape art as a mode of representation, of experience, and of site-specific intervention, through close readings of a small number of major works. In the first part of the course, we will focus on European landscape paintings, from the Renaissance to modernism (where landscape plays a foundational role), as well as exploring the landscape tradition of Song dynasty China. In the second part of the course, we will turn our attention to land art, an artistic practice in which the engagement with landscape becomes a direct intervention in, and experience of, the actual physical landscape, and consider its relationship to landscape painting as well as its place within the transition from modernism to postmodernism. Topics for the course include: nature and human experience; landscape painting as expression of (scientific) curiosity or invitation to (religious) contemplation; subjectivity and the aesthetics of landscape; the materiality of the art object and the “post-medium condition” in site-specific work; art, ecology, and environmentalism; and the relationship of land art to the experience of urban space. Among the artists whose works will be our focus are Leonardo da Vinci, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fan Kuan, Xia Gui, Caspar David Friedrich, Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey, Claude Monet, Mary Miss, Robert Smithson, Ana Mendieta, and Agnes Denes. Readings will include art historical, philosophical, and literary texts. Visits to sites in Berlin to experience works of land art firsthand are an integral part of the course.

## Course Books

Course Reader

## Library and book purchase policies

The college book policy for 2024-2025 is that reserve stocks of books will be lent to students on the basis of need, or (thereafter) on a first come first served basis. Books not yet owned by the college will be purchased only to create a small library reserve collection, and for students receiving more than 70% financial aid. Otherwise, students must purchase all course books.

## Requirements

### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

### Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

### Use of Electronics

To facilitate a focused and engaging seminar discussion the use of electronic devices during class time is not allowed, unless for disability accommodation. If you have a disability accommodation, please inform your instructor at the beginning of the semester.

### Museum and Site Visits

Two of our scheduled classes will be site visits, an opportunity to look at site-specific interventions in the landscape of the city. We will also have one museum visit. All of these will take place during regular class time.

### Assessment

#### Participation

Students should arrive to each class on time and prepared. Being prepared means

- (1) having completed the assigned reading (in the specific editions indicated above),
- (2) bringing to class a non-electronic copy of the assigned reading, and
- (3) being ready to initiate and to contribute to discussion.

Engagement in class discussion should be regular as well as productive; quantity alone will not favorably affect the participation grade.

#### Writing Assignments

There will be two principal assignments over the course of the term: a midterm essay, 2000-2500 words in length, and a final presentation accompanied by an essay, 3000-3500 words in length, due at the end of the term.

### Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Extensions may be granted by the individual seminar leaders, but the request must be made at least 24 hours before the essay deadline. Late essays will be marked down one-third of a letter grade (e.g., from A- to B+) for every 24 hours they are late, down to a maximum grade of a C.

## Grade Breakdown

Class participation: 30%

Midterm essay: 30%

Final presentation: 10%

Final essay: 30%

## Schedule

### Wednesday, September 4      **The Song Dynasty and the Tao of Landscape**

*Fan Kuan, Guo Xi, Xia Gui, Ma Lin*

Reading:

Laozi, *Tao Te Ching*, selections

Hubert Damisch, *A Theory of /Cloud/*, Chapter 5, "The Hieroglyph of Breath" (pp. 200-225)

### Wednesday, September 11      **The Epistemological, The Evocative, and the Ecstatic**

*Leonardo da Vinci, Giorgione, Titian*

Reading:

Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, edited by I. Richter, selections

Walter Pater, "The School of Giorgione" and "Conclusion"

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Sections 1-7

Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines*, "The Andrians"

### Wednesday, September 18      **Pieter Bruegel's Dialectics: Nature and Culture**

*Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Jacob van Ruisdael*

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Hesiod, *Works and Days*, ll. 383-694 (Nelson trans., pp. 84-94)

Virgil, *Georgics*, Book I, selections

Hans Sedlmayr, "Bruegel's 'Macchia,'" sections I-IV and IX-XI (Wood trans., pp. 323-346, 356-370)

### Wednesday, September 25      **Goya's Metaphysics: Form and the Formless**

*Francisco Goya y Lucientes, Mark Rothko, Agnes Martin*

Reading:

Francisco Goya y Lucientes, *The Disasters of War*, series of 80 etching with aquatint prints, c. 1810-20, published posthumously in 1863

Clarice Lispector, selected stories

Gaston Bachelard, reading TBD

### Tuesday, October 2.

14:00-16:30

### **Visit to the Alte Nationalgalerie and the Pergamon Panorama**

*Caspar David Friedrich, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Yadegar Asisi*

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, Part 2 (on the sublime)

William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Stephan Oettermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, "Introduction: The Origins of the Panorama"

Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, selections

Wednesday, October 9                      **Photography and Painting: Orientalism, Aestheticism, Modernism**

Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey, *Maxime Du Camp*, *Gustave Moreau*, *Odilon Redon*

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

François Arago, "Report to the Academies of Arts and Sciences" (in *Classic Essays on Photography*)

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimages, British and French" (pp. 166-197)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan"

Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

Wednesday, October 16                      **Impressionism and the Avant-Garde**

*Claude Monet*, *Gustave Caillebotte*, *Paul Cézanne*

Reading:

Edmond Duranty, *The New Painting*, selections

Jules LaForgue, "Impressionism"

T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, "The Environs of Paris," pp. 147-185

Leo Steinberg, "Monet's Water Lilies"

Clement Greenberg, "Cézanne"

**Midterm essay due: 23:59 on Sunday, October 20**

**FALL BREAK (October 21-27)**

Wednesday, October 30                      **Land Art: Environments**

*Robert Smithson*, *Nancy Holt*, *Walter De Maria*

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Robert Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects"

Robert Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan"

Annie Dillard, "Pilgrim at Tinker Creek," selections

Film: *Spiral Jetty* (Smithson, 1970)

Wednesday, November 6,

14:00-16:30

**Visit to Naturpark Südgelände**

Photography assignment: photographing land art

Reading:

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, "Analytic of the Sublime," §23-29

Yve-Alain Bois, "A Picturesque Stroll Around Clara-Clara"

Wednesday, November 13                      **Land Art: Interventions**

*Mary Miss*, *Richard Serra*, *Ana Mendieta*

Discussion of student photographs

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field"

Clara Pinkoles Estés, *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, Chapter 7: “Joyous Body: The Wild Flesh”  
Further reading TBD

Wednesday, November 20.

14:00-16:30

**Visit to Memorials in Mitte**

Reading:

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage International Edition, 2004), Part I, pp. 34-51

W. G. Sebald, *Austerlitz* (Modern Library Edition, 2011), pp. 181-203

Eleanor Clark, *Rome and a Villa*, selections from “Roman Journal I” (*Ardeatine Caves*) and “Roman Journal II” (section on Santi Quattro Coronati)

Wednesday, November 27

**Art and Ecology**

*Agnes Denes*, *Betty Beaumont*, *Bright Ugochukwu Eke*, *Pierre Huyghe*

Reading:

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For”, “Solitude” (excerpt), “Winter Visitors”, and “Spring” (excerpt)

Henry David Thoreau, “The Succession of Forest Trees”

Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, “Women on Nature: Anne Conway and Other Philosophical Feminists” and “Epilogue”

**FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

Wednesday, December 4

Wednesday, December 11

*Final essay due: 23:59 on Wednesday, December 18*