

AH207 Feminist Art in the 20th and Early 21st Centuries

Seminar Leader: Dr. Christina Landbrecht
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This seminar introduces the work of female artists in Germany and the US. Starting with artists who were educated around the turn of the century the seminar will trace the development of feminist art throughout the 20th century, ending with artistic positions that are recent figures of the feminist art discourse. Among the names to be discussed are, for example, Georgia O'Keeffe, Lee Krasner, Louise Bourgeois, Niki de Saint-Phalle, Alice Neel, Judy Chicago, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Ana Mendieta, Lygia Clark, Cindy Sherman, Kara Walker, and Martine Syms. Furthermore, a selection of seminal texts by prominent scholars such as Linda Nochlin, Griselda Pollock, bell hooks, and Helen Molesworth will be discussed throughout the course. The main idea of the seminar is to focus on the work of female artists who not only questioned the established art canon but contributed to changing and expanding it. A particular focus will be on themes such as "Body, Sexuality, and the Image of the Woman", "Politics of Race and Gender" and "Care and Maintenance as Artistic Practices". This way we will not only have the chance to get to know a multitude of diverse female artists and artistic practices but also unravel the intricate connections between critical discourse and the latter. Excursions to museum exhibitions, and a studio visit are planned as well.

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.

Accommodations

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

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 may 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.

Assessment & Assignments

Each student must give one classroom presentation and write two papers. The mid-term essay (2000 words) is due on October 16, midnight.

The final essay (3000 words) is due on December 18, 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

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students will receive feedback for their course work during and at the end of the semester. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

The grade breakdown for this seminar will be as follows:

Final essay (3000 words): 50%
Midterm essay (2000 words): 20%
Participation (including one classroom presentation): 30%

Schedule

All texts will be sent to you one week prior to the following class; there is no need to purchase any books or readers.

Week 1

31/08, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

To bring to the first class: Please choose any artwork from the list of artists mentioned below. Take 5 mins to describe one particular work to your fellow classmates (please pay attention to details) and tell us what you like/dislike about it and why you chose it.

The origin of Feminist Art History

Reading:

- Linda Nochlin, "Why have there been no Women Artists?" (1971)
- In: Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, London: Thames and Hudson 1989, p. 145-178

Week 2

07/09, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Image(s) of Women and Female Artists at the End of the 19th Century

Women as Other: Gabriel Dante Rossetti

Reading:

- Griselda Pollock, "Women as Sign. Psychoanalytic Readings" (1988)
- In: Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference. Feminism, Femininity and Histories of Art*, Routledge 1988, p. 120-155

The Archetype of the Female Artist: Berthe Morisot

Reading:

- Tamar Garb, "Berthe Morisot and the Feminizing of Impressionism" (1990)
- In: T.J. Edelstein (ed.), *Perspectives on Morisot*, exhib.cat, New York: Hudson Hills 1990, p. 57-67

Week 3

14/09, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Georgia O'Keeffe – Feminist role model

Reading:

- Linda M. Grasso, "Georgia O'Keeffe and Feminism" (2017)
- In: Linda M. Grasso, *Equal under the Sky. Georgia O'Keeffe & Twentieth Century Feminism*, University of New Mexico Press 2017, p. 1-20

Lee Krasner – Wife, Artist, Painter

Reading:

Andrew Hardman: Making Visible Lee Krasner's Occupation: Feminist Art Historiography and the Pollock-Krasner Studio.

- In: *Feminism and Art History Now. Radical Critiques of Theory and Practice*. Edited by Victoria Horne and Lara Perry, Tauris 2017, p. 87-103

Week 4

21/09, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Louise Bourgeois: A feminist reading

Reading:

Hilary Robinson, "Gesture" (2006)

- In: Hilary Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray. The Politics of Art by Women*, London / New York: Tauris 2006, p. 125-145

Meret Oppenheim: Fighting the Label of Feminist/ Female Artist

Reading:

Nicole Schweizer, "There is no such thing as 'Feminine Art'" (2006)

- In: Therese Bhattacharya-Stettler and Dominik Imhof (eds.), *Meret Oppenheim. Retrospective*, exhib. cat., Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz 2007, p. 123-134

Week 5

28/09, Monday 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Nikki de Saint Phalle: Fierce Femininities

Reading:

Amelia Jones, "Wild Maid, Wild Soul, a Wild, Wild Weed. Niki de Saint Phalle's Fierce Femininities in the 1960s",

- In: Jill Dawsey, Michelle White (eds.), *Niki de Saint Phalle in the 1960s*, Yale University Press, p. 220-237

Ana Mendieta: Bodily Experiments

Reading:

Leticia Alvarado, "Other Desires: Ana Mendieta's Abject Imaginings".

- In: *Abject Performances*, Duke University Press 2018, p. 25-55

Week 6

05/10, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Alice Neel: Painting People

Reading:

Patricia Hills, "Alice by Alice" (1983)

- In: Patricia Hills, *Alice Neel*, New York: Harry N. Abrams 1983, p. 11-185 (many illustrations, text only is about 20 pages)

Lygia Clark. Expanding Art

Reading:

Cornelia H. Butler, "Lygia Clark. A space open to time" (2014)

- In: Cornelia Butler / Luis Pérez-Oramas (eds.), *Lygia Clark. The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988*. New York: MoMA 2014, p. 12-29

Week 7

12/10, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Mierle Laderman Ukeles - Maintenance Art

Reading:

Helen Molesworth: "House Work and Art Work" (2000)

- In: *October* 92, 2000, p. 71-97

Mary Kelly – Post-Partum Document

Reading:

Kimberley Lamm, "Rewriting maternal femininity in Mary Kelly's Post-Partum Document"

- In: *Addressing the other woman. Textual correspondences in feminist art and writing*, Manchester University Press 2018, p. 186-231

PLEASE NOTE: mid-term essay (2000 words) due on October 16, by midnight.

19/10 FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 8

Please note that the class on 26/10, Monday, 9 – 12.15, will be held instead on **NOV 1, 2026 (12 am to 3.15 pm)**. We will see exhibitions at **KW Institute for Contemporary Art** (*Susan Hiller / Koo Jeong A*, Address: Auguststraße 69, 10117 Berlin) and **Gropius Bau** (*Gabriele Stötzer*, Address: Niederkirchnerstraße 7, 10963 Berlin)

Week 9

02/11, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Judy Chicago: Artist, Teacher and the Practice of 1970s Feminism

Reading:

Jane Gerhard, "Judy Chicago and the Practice of 1970s Feminism" (2011)

- In: *Feminist Studies* 37 (3), p. 591-619

Week 10

09/11, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Ecofeminism(s) – Then and Now

Reading:

Alona Pardo, "Reweaving the Web of Womanist Ecopolitics" (2023)

- In: Alona Pardo (ed.), *RE Sisters. A Lens on Gender and Ecology*, exhib.-cat, Prestel, 2023, p. 15-24

Agnes Denes - Pioneering Environmental Art

Reading:

Becca Voelcker, "Cultivating Hinterland: What Lies Behind Agnes Denes' *Wheatfield*?" (2024)

- In: Pamila Gupta et. Al (eds.), *Planetary Hinterlands. Extraction, Abandonment, and Care*, Palgrave, 2024, p. 51-61

Week 11

16/11, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Howardena Pindell – Black Feminist Critique

Reading:

Uri McMillan, "Is this Performance About You? The Art, Activism, and Black Feminist Critique of Howardena Pindell,"

- In *Embodied Avatars. Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance*, New York 2015, p. 153-180

Kara Walker – Race, Gender and the Economics of the Slave Trade

Reading:

Amber Jamilla Musser, "Queering Sugar. Kara Walker's sugar Sphinx and the Intractability of Black Female Sexuality,"

- In *Signs* 42 (1), 2016

Week 12

23/11, Monday, 9 – 12.15, c/o Berlin, Amerika Haus, Hardenbergstraße 22-24, 10623 Berlin in the exhibition "Carrie Mae Weems. The Heart of the Matter"

Reading:

bell hooks, "Diasporic Landscapes of Longing" (1994)

- In: Sarah Elizabeth Lewis (ed.), *Carrie Mae Weems*, October Files (series), London / Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press 2021, p. 15-24

Week 13

30/11, Monday, 9 – 12.15, Bard College Berlin

Cindy Sherman – Images of Women

Reading:

Judith Williamson, "A Piece of the Action: Images of Woman in the Photography of Cindy Sherman" (2006)

- In: Johanna Burton (ed.), *Cindy Sherman*, October Files (series), London / Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press 2006, p. 39-52

Martine Syms – Fictionalizing the Self

Reading:

Claudia Rankine, "The Revolution Will Be Videotaped" (2024)

- In: Guillaume Houzé et al (ed.), *Martine Syms. Total*, exhib.-cat, Lafayette Anticipations 2024 p. 242-252

Week 14

07/12, Monday, 9 – 12.15 at Wiesenstraße 62, 13357 Berlin

Visit of the studio of artist **Mariechen Danz** (2nd courtyard)

PLEASE NOTE: mid-term essay (2000 words) due on December 18, midnight.