

October 2007, Block 2
Topics Course WST #257
McWethy Hall

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#257 Women Make Their Mark **The Feminist Politics of Body Art**

This class will be conducted as a workshop. This beginning level course will explore the history, theory and practice of primarily female artists using their bodies as vehicles for social change. There will be assigned readings, videos, and slides pertaining to this work. **Process and experimentation will be stressed.** We will primarily, although not exclusively be concerned with **performance/action art**, particularly the **artist's body**. Assigned projects will accompany in-depth and numerous readings.

(Warning: This class may break all of the rules of Art. It may challenge you.)

Due to Cornell and Fire Code regulations, FIRE, HUMAN BLOOD, AND GUNS ARE **NOT PERMITTED** for use in your art-related activities.
ALWAYS CLEAN UP THE SPACE AFTER USING IT.

Requirements:

Attendance and participation in all class discussions and meetings/field trips. Be on time. If you are consistently late it will affect your final grade. There will be 3 performance projects due, a presentation and several papers.

GRADING

Projects and Papers *are expected* on **DUE** dates. Your grade is very dependent upon your participation. If you are not in class, you cannot participate. You are also expected to understand the concepts/ideas behind this work. It is very important to understand why artists do what they do....not only **HOW** do they communicate their ideas via their bodies, but **WHY?**

Class Participation/Attendance/Discussions 25%
Presentation/Projects 45%
Exams/Papers 30%

Presentations: Each student will research several avant garde women performance artists. Your presentation may include books, power-point, hand-outs, slides, videos, etc. The total length of each presentation should not exceed 15 minutes. There will be a class discussion following. See list of artists. Focus on **why** they use their body to make art...to voice their opinions and ideas. Discuss individual works of your chosen artist. What is their message? Who or what were they influenced by? Who is their audience?

Projects: In this class it is imperative that you explore and experiment. **Projects are due on dates are stated in the syllabus.** Performance will be the primary media used to express your ideas. I do not grade individual works with letter grades. If you are concerned with your grade at any time, please talk to me. You will learn by doing.

Critiques: Critiques are discussion periods about your work. It should be a good experience, one that helps you to understand and think about how your work's message is conveyed to your audience.

Assigned Readings/Responses All of your readings are at the library on Reserve. There are also many pertinent books on Reserve.

-EVERYTHING IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE-

WEEK 1 The 1950's, 1960's – Gender Roles / The Feminine Mystique
Since the 1960's (and earlier), female artists have used their bodies to question & challenge the constructed identity of femininity. WHY?????

---breaking out of the Frame---

MON 1 9-11 Introduction to Performance Art.
Breaking down the barriers between the art, the artist, and the spectator. View several slides with discussion of the work.

•Read: “*The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and Calarts, 1970-75*” pages 32-47. From the book The Power of Feminist Art – on reserve.

•Read: “*Outside the Frame: Performance, Art and Life*” pages 31-61. This is from: Outside the Frame, Performance and the Object, Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, 1994

•Read: NO MORE MISS AMERICA! (1968)

•Read: FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART – “Performance is not...”

•Read: Betty Friedan's “*The Problem that Has No Name*” 1963

•Read: “*identities: feminism, multiculturalism, sexuality*” (see photos on Reserve: chapter 4 pages 129-145 in Performance, Live Art Since 1960 by Roselee Goldberg)

1-3 Discussion: What is the Construct of femininity?
View Martha Rosler “*Semiotics of the Kitchen*” 1975
View Yoko Ono “*Cut Piece*” 1964
Faith Wilding “*Waiting*” 1971

Write a 5 page response to ideas that you are reading about. This should include a response to class discussions and work we are looking at. Focus on the main ideas of your readings and your response to them. Due Friday of this week.

PROJECT 1– “Blurring the Boundaries of Art and Life” or “Herstory”

Use autobiographical information, Recall a short story from your childhood, something you remember vividly. Use your voice in an unfamiliar (use your imagination) way. In this performance use one repetitive, mundane action while telling your story. Use of a prop is great. Will your action(s) intertwined with your story become more powerful? Think metaphorically as well as conceptually. The story or narrative does not need to be linear but it can be. Experiment. You may use naturally occurring sound or musical instruments if you like. 3-5 minute piece.

Due on Friday of this week.

TUES 1 ---- NO Class in the Morning – Read and Research
Begin research into several selected artists.

12:30-3 **The Turbulent Sixties (vhs) + Videos - 1950's ideology**
Discuss Betty Friedan's chapter + No More Miss America +
Outside the Frame

WED 1 **--** **No Class in Morning**
12:30-3 **Discussion of the rest of your readings.** View Yves Klein, +
women artists who "Talked Back".

THURS 1 **10-11** **Group A -- 2 Presentations**
1-3 **Group A -- 2 Presentations + discussion relating to artists/readings**

FRI 1 **---** **No Morning Class**
12:30-3 **Project One – 1st PERFORMANCES BEGIN**
PAPER IS DUE TODAY

- *Study Photos in books on Reserve - read the blurbs about photos.*
- **READ** "*the body: ritual, living sculpture, performed photography*" (on Reserve: chapter 3 pages 95-127 in Performance, Live Art Since 1960 by Roselee Goldberg) Make note of photos.
- **Read:** "*Feminist Performance Art: Performing, Discovering, Transforming Ourselves*" by Josephine Withers. Pages 158-173. From The Power of Feminist Art
- **Read:** "*The Body Through Women's Eyes*" by Joanna Frueh, pages 190-195. Both of these readings can be found in The Power of Feminist Art. See Photos.
- **Read:** "*V. Multiples*" by Kristine Stiles pages 256-272, from the book Out of Actions: between performance and the object 1949-1979

WEEK 2

DISCOVERING OURSELVES VIA PERFORMING THE BODY

MON 2 **10-11** **Group B Presentations (2)**
1-3 **Continue Performances – Project One.**
Discussion: All Readings

TUES 2 **10-11** **Discuss Readings (Focus on ...?)**
1-3 **Group B Presentations (2) + Exam over material covered.**
View Video – Fluxus Wedding (sometime this week)

- **Read: FOOD – pages 17-20 and 145-223, intro by Moira Roth-**
Taken from Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties by Linda Montano

Write a 5 page response to ideas that you are reading about. In addition, please respond to class discussions and work we are looking at. Focus on the main ideas of your readings and your personal response to them. Due Friday of this week.

PROJECT 2 --The Absurdity of Life. Subject is FOOD. Involve repetition, natural sound, and some element of the absurd. Must be collaborative. 2-4 people in a piece. Piece can be 3-5 minutes. Project Due on Friday. (Make sure to read Performances Artists Talking in the Eighties by Linda Montano – Food Chapter, on reserve – pages 17-20 and 145-223 intro by Moira Roth.)

ab□surd [ab-surd, -zurd] *-adjective*

1. utterly or obviously senseless, illogical, or untrue; contrary to all reason or common sense; laughably foolish or false: *an absurd explanation.*

-noun

2. the quality or condition of existing in a meaningless and irrational world.
[Origin: 1550-60; < L *absurdus* out of tune, uncouth, ridiculous. See ab-, surd]

WED 2 -- No Morning Class
12:30-3 Group C –4 Presentations
Food for Thought – Discuss the FOOD reading.

THURS 2 -- NO Class all Day

FRI 2 -- No Morning Class
12:30-3 Project 2 – Second Round of Performances!
Hand in Response Papers – 5 page Paper.

WEEK 3

WOMEN MAKE THEIR MARK.

**EXPOSING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT GENDER... RACE... CLASS... and
SEXUALITY -----THE IDENTITY CRISIS-----**

MON 3 -- No Class in Morning
12:30-3 Group D (3) Presentations
View Howardina Pindell video = Discussion

TUES 3 -- No Class in Morning
12:30-3 View Coco Fusco video - Discussion

WED 3 -- No Morning Class
12-30-3 Group E (3) Presentations + View Video/discuss

THURS 3 --- No Class in Morning
12:30-3 EXAM WITH SLIDES /Woman House Video

FRI 3 NO Class all day. Do research and prepare.

Project 3- RE-CONTEXULIZE AND RE-INTRODUCE a performance originally performed by an artist you are interested in - see list/books. The library has many

books on performance (see bibliography). Inter-library loaned some which are on Reserve. The internet is also a good place to find performance texts.

Please Write one final paper – 3-5 pages – on your response to this class and the ideas you were exposed to. Due Tuesday.

WEEK 4 -- I AM FOR ART...

"the shoe fit, and so, like Cinderella we
ran with it"

MON 4 10-11 Project 3 – Final Performances
 1-3 Project 3 - Continue

TUES 4 10-11 Project 3 Continues
 1-3 Project 3 Continues
 ■ Final Response is Due Today!

WED 4 OPEN

When thinking about performance-- think about sound, lighting, visual objects, smell, the environment or space, the beginning and ending, the audience. **Performance is "real time", that is- you must think about the length, the process of the piece, rather than the 'precious' object.** Performance takes place in real time and then is gone-- sometimes offering residue, but it is gone and cannot ever be repeated in quite the same way.

"the line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible." Allan Kaprow.

WOMEN ARTISTS OF IMPORTANCE:

MARINA ABRAMOVIC MARTHA WILSON
ANNIE SPRINKLE ANN MAGNUSON RACHEL ROSENTHAL
ELEANOR ANTIN JACKI APPLE LOUISE BOURGEOIS
MARTHA ROSLER LAURIE ANDERSON
CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN LUCY ORTA GINA PANE
GUERRILLA GIRLS ROSA GALINDO
PENNY ARCADE FEMINEST ART WORKERS
JUDY CHICAGO CHARLOTTE MOORMAN
ORLAN BONNIE SHERK SUZANNE LACYÍ
HANNAH WILKE HOLLY HUGHES HOWARDINA PINDELL
KAREN FINLEY CHERYL DONEGAN JULIA HEYWARD
COCO FUSCO HOLLY HUGH DIAMANDA GALAS
ADRIAN PIPER MERIDITH MONK ANN HAMILTON
MONA HATOUM ALISON KNOWLES
SHIGEKO KUBOTA JOAN JONAS
YOKO ONO REBECCA HORN LINDA MONTANO
ANA MENDIETA JANINE ANTONI JUDY CHICAGO
SADIE BENNING NIKI DE SAINT-PHALLE
FAITH WILDING (WOMAN-HOUSE) JUDY CHICAGO
MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES CHERYL DONEGAN

Presentations:

Your presentations should consist of pertinent/relevant information about the artist you choose to research...such as their backgrounds and the time they are working...if this tells us anything about why they are artists & why they use their bodies.

Please try

To find visual materials – web, video, DVD, cds, etc. I have slides, But you must let me know in advance.

Concentrate on their IDEAS concerning performance.

Why performance?

Why their body?

What issues are they concerned with?

Similarities/Differences?

*****Tie in IDEAS/Theories from your readings.**

Keep these presentations tight. Make them interesting.

(ie: not blah blah blah blah)

Group A (4)

Adrian Piper
Atsuko Tanaka
Niki de Saint Phalle
Carolee Schneemann
Shigeko Kubota
Faith Wilding

Group B (4)

Valie Export
Charlotte Moorman
Rebecca Horn
Bonnie Sherk
Eleanor Antin
Alison Knowles

Group C (4)

Marina Abramovic
Martha Rosler
Laurie Anderson
Cheryl Donegan
Gina Pane
Mierle Laderman

Group D (3)

Ana Mendieta
Annie Sprinkle
Yoko Ono
Janine Antoni
Hannah Wilke

Group E (3)

Linda Montano
Karen Finley
Holly Hughes
Orlan
Diamanda Galas