When Art Dares: Artists and their Art as Provocative Agents
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Ernesto Neto’s Installation for El real viaje Real (MOMA PS1, 2003)

*When Art Dares: Artists and their Art as Provocative Agents* seeks to expose the versatile and unexpected dimensions of the art as a radical process of innovation, protest and deliberation between artists, society and power structures. *When Art Dares* will emphasize the power of art to provoke social debate, political revolution and philosophical reflection. Through attentive reading and dynamic discussion of theoretical, historical and autobiographical narratives, participants in the Series will reflect on the social and political agency of art and on the influence of artists to shape our attitudes to the role of cultural life in our present times. In particular, we will explore the specific challenges of the artistic experience in an age that privileges mass consumption and global entertainment. How can artists produce effective statements relevant to justice, ethics and political freedom? How can art accelerate social change? What is the power of art and artists today and how can it transform the lives of others at the local and global levels? These are some of the questions *When Art Dares* will explore.

The graduate level seminar will be structured as a dynamic sequence of discussions integrating six guest speakers who will expose their views on the current conditions of art productions and the social and political contributions of artists today. The objective of this guest series is to stimulate a critical reflection on the possibilities, the limits and the challenges of artists today to innovate and to transform their work into social and political interventions. Beyond an individualist or even narcissistic experience, artists have provoked a redefinition of political values and social attitudes. It is the objective of *When Art Dares* to reevaluate the history of art’s revolutionary power in connection with its current and future ambitions. Guest speakers will be announced at the beginning of the semester.
Reading Program

Session 1: Artists as Provocateurs: An Introduction

Jean Baudrillard, “Provocation”, “Controversy”, The Conspiracy of Art (Semiotext(e), 2005)


“We are the Revolution”, “We Create Social Conditions”, We Are the Revolution!: Rudolf Steiner, Joseph Beuys and the Threefold Social Impulse (Temple Lodge, 2013)

Session 2: The Ethics of Art


Session 3: Art and National Identity


Héctor Fouce, “From the Unrest to la Movida: Cultural Politics and Pop Music in the Spanish Transition”, Towards a Cultural Archive of la Movida (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013)


Session 4: Art and Propaganda


Theodor Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda”, *The Culture Industry* (Routledge, 2001)

**Session 5: Artists as Outlaws**


“Film Censorship during the Nazi Era”, “A Musical Façade for the Third Reich”
Stephanie Barron, ed. *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, (Harry N. Abrams, 1991)


**Session 6: Art and Taboo**


Elizabeth Ladenson, “Vladimir Nabokov: Lolitigation”, *Dirt for Art’s Sake: Books on Trial from "Madame Bovary" to "Lolita"* (Cornell University Press, 2007)

Klaus Biesenbach, “The Artist is Present, the Artist was Present, the Artist will be Present”, *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* (Museum of Modern Art, 2010)

**Session 7: Art as Industry**


**Session 8: Art and Radical Democracy**


**Session 9: Art, Otherness, Reconciliation**


**Session 10: Music as Politics (Guest Speaker 1)**

**Session 11: Literature confronts Domesticity and Boredom (Guest Speaker 2)**

**Session 12: Visual Artists confront Political Correctness (Guest Speaker 3)**

**Session 13: Art in Post-Colonial Contexts (Guest Speaker 4)**

**Session 14: The Parameters of Satire (Guest Speaker 5)**

**Session 15: Choreographers confront Sexual Taboos (Guest Speaker 6)**