

Keith Moxey

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Course Description: When and where is the time of the history of art? The comfortable evolutionary narratives upon which works of art are hung appear increasingly suspect when viewed from post-colonial perspectives. Mounting interest in the cultural production of those places whose times have traditionally been subordinated or occluded indicates that the temporal exclusions demanded by the dominant status of western time are becoming intellectually indefensible. The hierarchization of the world's time zones based upon criteria of economic, military, and cultural power, all of which have so decisively shaped the narratives of art history, remain largely unrecognized. Can the discipline adjust to the idea of heterochrony, the realization that different forms of time may be jostling with each other in what each calls the "contemporary"? If heterochrony is acknowledged, on what basis can we relate non-synchronous contemporaneities to one another?

In this unique situation, students of the visual have also become more sensitive to the complex temporality of the work of art. There is a growing tendency to view visual art as a *presentation* as much as a *representation*, as much an object that has the power to create time--what might be called aesthetic time--as one that represents the time of a particular culture and historical moment. Art history's tendency to sacrifice "art" in favor of "history" in the interest of making past objects "readable" cannot be its only agenda. What does it mean to approach the work as if it makes its own history? While we may ascribe a work a place within a historical continuum, we are also aware that the process of historicization would not even begin unless our response and interpretation were not called into being by the work itself. The complex interaction of object with subject and its implications for the project of historical writing are more critical than ever.

How does the discipline come to terms with these two relatively recent developments asking us to rethink fundamental tenets of its theoretical structure? Leading theorists argue that works of art have the uncanny ability to break time, and that having done so, their distinct reception in different moments depends not on some preordained temporal unfolding, but on their translation--a translation not only from the customary "visual" into "textual" but also from one time into another. The readings collected here deal with the heterochronicity of both historical interpretation and the image itself. Temporality takes many forms, while works of art create time even as they provoke their own responses.

Requirements: 1. This is primarily a course dedicated to reading and discussing the assigned texts. Students will be expected to come to class well prepared to take part in discussion. Each week two members of the class will be asked to introduce the readings. These presentations should be no longer than five to ten minutes long. They should lay out the main arguments and comment on them. You can conclude with a couple of questions you think would be worth discussing by the class as a whole. Speakers can get together to work out how best to deal with

the assignment. Your comments (four or five pages long) should be turned in following the presentation.

2. You will be asked to write two short papers (ten pages long). A. Write a paper about a single work of art using an anachronic or heterochronic approach to understanding its historical time. B. How do the ideas discussed in this course affect your understanding of the concept of the “period” in the area in which you have chosen to specialize? The first is due at mid-term (**October 18**), the second at our last meeting (**December 6**).

Course Schedule:

Sept 6 Introduction: *Who’s who and what’s what? Aims of the course and how it works. Requirements.*

St. Augustine, “The Nature of Time,” *Confessions*, trans. Gary Wills, (New York: Penguin, 2006) Book XI, Parts 3-5, 267-282.

Sept 13 History’s Time: *Historicism and its criticism. To what other philosophies of history can we turn? What is the role of the image in accounts of the past?*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, trans. Adrian Collins (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957; 1874), 3-73.

Hayden White, “The Burden of History,” *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 27-50.

Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” *Selected Writings*, trans. Harry Zohn et. al. ed. Marcus Bulloch et.al., 4 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996-2003) 4, 389-411.

Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, “The Image of Objectivity,” *Representations* 40 (1992), 81-128.

Sept 20 Time and the Other: *What is the relation of local to global time? What forms of power dictate that one be considered dominant and the other subaltern? Can one be reconciled with the other?*

Johannes Fabian, “Time and the Emerging Other,” *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 1-35.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who speaks for the Indian Pasts?” *Representations* 37 (1992), 1-26.

James Elkins, “Art History as a Global Discipline,” *Is Art History Global?* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 3-23.

Sept 27 Time and the Image: *How do we experience images? Does the image make its own time?*

Martin Heidegger, “The Origins of the Work of Art,” *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1975; 1934-1950) 17-81.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” *The Merleau-Ponty Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen Johnson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 121-149.

George Kubler, “The Historian’s Commitment,” and “The Nature of Actuality,” *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 12-30.

Oct 4 Time in Art History I: *What is the agency of the work of art? How does its potential “life” affect received notions of art historical time?*

Frank Ankersmit, “Introduction: Experience in History and Philosophy,” and “Subjective Historical Experience: The Past as Elegy,” *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 1-11; 263-315.

Georges Didi-Huberman, “The History of Art Within the Limits of its Simple Practice,” *Confronting Images: Questioning the Limits of a Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005; 1st ed. Paris, 1990), 11-52.

W.J.T. Mitchell, “What Do Pictures Want?” and “The Surplus Value of Images,” *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 28-56 and 76-106.

Oct 11 Time in Art History II: *What are the consequences of the recognition that images belong to more than one temporality? How might this affect the work of the art historian?*

Didi-Huberman, “History and the Image: Has the ‘Epistemological Transformation’ Taken Place?” *The Art Historian: National Traditions and Institutional Practices*, ed. Michael Zimmermann (Williamstown: Clark Art Institute, 2003), 128-143.

Mieke Bal, “Introduction: Preposterous History,” *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999).

Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, “The Plural Temporality of the Work of Art,” and “Author and *Acheiropoeiton*,” *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 1-19; 123-133.

Oct 18 Modernism’s Time: *What was modernism? Is it still alive?*

Clement Greenberg, “Towards a Newer Laocoon,” *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, 4 vols., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) vol. 1, 5-38.

Rosalind Krauss, “The Originality of the Avant-Garde,” *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 151-170.

Thomas Mc Evilly, “Art History or Sacred History?” *Art and Discontent: Theory at the Millennium* (New York: McPherson, 1991), 133-167.

Oct 25 Postmodernism’s Time: *Why has it been so difficult to periodize the history of art since modernism? What debates swirl around the idea of “postmodernism?”*

Jean-Francois Lyotard, “What is Postmodernism,” *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984; 1st ed. Paris, 1979), 71-82.

Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend: Bay Press, 2002; 1st ed. 1983), 127-144.

Arthur Danto, Introduction: Modern, Postmodern, and Contemporary,” *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3-19.

Nov 1 Periodizing Time: *What is the role of the “period” in the history of art? Can we do without it?*

Ernst Gombrich, "Norm and Form: The Stylistic Categories of Art History and their Origins in Renaissance Ideals," *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance I* (London: Phaidon, 1971), 81-98.

Reinhart Koselleck, "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation': Two Categories," *On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985; 1st ed. Frankfurt 1979), 267-288.

Siegfried Kracauer, "Ahasuerus, or the Riddle of Time," *History: The Last Things before the Last*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 139-163.

Harry Harootunian, "Remembering the Historical Present," *Critical Inquiry* 33 (2007), 471-494

Nov 8 NO CLASS (Election Day Holiday)

Nov 15 NO CLASS

Nov 22 Contemporary Time I: *Can "the contemporary" be regarded as a period or have we come to the end of time? Is the nature of "our" artistic moment eternal?*

Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee, eds., "Introduction: The Contemporaneity Question," *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 1-19.

Nicolas Bourriaud, "Altermodern," *Altermodern* exh.cat., ed. Nicolas Bourriaud (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), unpaginated.

Giorgio Agamben, "What is Contemporary?" *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 39-54.

Nov 29 Contemporary Time II: *Is "the contemporary" a period?*

Dan Karlholm, "Surveying Contemporary Art: Post-War, Postmodern, and then What?" *Art History* 32 (2009), 712-733.

Alexander Alberro, "Periodizing Contemporary Art," *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration, and Convergence. The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2009), 935-39.

Keith Moxey, "Visual Time," *Visual Time: The Image in History* (in press).

Dec 6 Student Presentations: *Brief summaries of your second paper. Questions and (possibly) answers.*