

Public Art and Social Justice: Paris, France

June 23-30, 2019

Faculty: Lisa Abia-Smith, Senior Instructor, PPPM and Scott Blair, University of Oregon GEO Program Director for France

Course Description:

Art has enormous power to instigate awareness and galvanize people to create change. Many contemporary artists such as JR, Banksy, and Vhils are using their public art to bring awareness of social issues such as racism, immigration, global warming, genocide, and misogyny. Through their work advocating for change, they blur the line between artist and activist. By using their art as an innovative medium for awareness, artists become advocates, challenging the biggest issues of our time. As a result, public art visually communicates an awareness works reaching people in their everyday environments and confronting them with social injustice that may easily be ignored. This one-week course will explore site specific installations in Paris created by contemporary artists and explore how cities and organizations such as museums dedicate space for public art to educate. Students will also create works of art illustrating a cause or social issue which is of value to them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course will:

1. Familiarize students with how public spaces are used to highlight current events and contemporary issues as presented by visual artists.
2. Explore the diverse processes of contemporary and established visual artists when designing political art.
3. Facilitate discussions to enable students to practice respectful, democratic and collaborative problem-solving skills that over time transfer to other classroom interactions and beyond.
4. Examine the role artists play in bringing awareness to political and social issues and helping to facilitate a personal point of view on these issues.
5. Provide students with the opportunity to witness and work with visual media and explore vehicles for creative expression from the standpoints of immigration, marginalization, isolation and identity.
6. Introduce how cities and civic organizations are a source for understanding contemporary issues and how artists use that forum to become activists.
7. Encourage a deeper appreciation of the critical role visual art can play in social justice.
8. Use personal and artistic narrative to develop critical thinking, communication and visual literacy skills.
9. Consider the idea that artistic creativity is sometimes the result of adversity and marginalization.

OUTCOMES:

1. Sketch book assignment: Students will be required to keep a sketchbook and will use it to document the public art viewed, respond to writing and drawing prompts and use for processing and collaborative piece illustrating a cause that they advocate for in their lives.
2. Each student will be required to attend daily sessions and excursions around the city of Paris and work on projects during the course.
3. Each student will prepare a written reflection (artist's statement) that presents the intention of the art work produced. This narrative will be descriptive in nature and also read orally for a cell phone audio tour used as interpretive material in the museum exhibition. The students will each record their own 3-4 minute statement.
4. Class members will keep a formal daily record (sketchbook/journal) of their experiences, which will be submitted for assessment. Writing prompts and sketching prompts.

COURSE THEMES AND ASSIGNMENTS TO ADDRESS THEMES

Themes Explored during Public Art Viewing/Research

- Access to the arts in public spaces
- Immigration status in France
- Race relations both globally and locally,
- Artistic representation of identity, historic symbolism, responsibility to stand with/for others
- Art as Memorial (Bataclan Night Club/Terrorism) and representation of death/loss in the form of public art.
- France's history from the Revolution to 1960s and 21st century.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This section should explain how the course is being conducted: lecture, seminar, discussions, student presentations, guest lectures, etc. Texts used to impart information should be included, and can include films, interviews, etc. This should also include use of experiential education opportunities, excursions, etc.

ART PROJECTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

- Project #1: Sketchbook and journal with 11 writing prompts completed. Daily writing and drawing prompts and documentation of trip.*
- Project #2: Critique of 7 public art works explored during the program.
- Project #3: Your Conviction: Collaborative work illustrating your cause.*
- Project #4: Artist's Statement and Didactics
- Project #5: Reflection paper "Artists as Activists"

** Final works for inclusion in museum exhibition*

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Student assessment will be based upon scope and sequence of art production and demonstrated growth and self-reflection.

Assessment Tools:

- Completion of painting and drawing assignments
- Discussion of the reading materials, responses to writing and drawing prompt. Reflection from museum excursions and site visits and completion of the daily studio assignments to be included in student sketchbook.
- Participation in critiques of student work on Thursday, June 21.
- Artist's Statement (Written and oral) and development of art didactics.
- Final project: 5 Art Production pieces
- Daily creative exercises

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Class Participation: 20%

Students are expected to actively participate in all excursions to public art sites, lectures, site visits and projects engaged in during the course.

Sketchbook/Journal 20%

Students are expected to maintain a sketchbook/journal in which they will respond to writing and drawing prompts given by the instructor, record daily observations, and notes from the lectures/excursions and collected ephemera.

Daily Studio Projects 20%: Paintings and drawings created and rough drafts for final paintings.

Recorded Artist's Statement: 5%

Students will present their final project with a 3-minute recording for Guide By Cell, audio tour to accompany their artwork on display at the museum Fall 2019

Final Visual Arts Project: 20%:

3 completed paintings for display September 8, 2019- January 14, 2020.

Artist's Statement and Supportive Didactics: 15%

A two-page paper providing an overview of the artist's process, intention, and ethnography. Due July 7, 2019

COURSE OUTLINE

Readings and assignments need to be linked where possible to the course Content. Where assignments or readings may change, faculty should list general or sample assignments and amount of reading per content area. It is not enough to just list the thematic topic; how the students will engage with that topic is also required.

Educational Activity	Hours student engaged	Explanatory comments (if any):
Course attendance	25	Paris museums (Pompidou, D'Orsay) and 2 contemporary art galleries to view and critique public art and discussion sections.
Assigned readings	5	
Writing assignments	8	Formal sketchbook/journal, painting didactics, and artist's statement
Project	7	Culminating public art piece
Lab or studio	7	Outside class time art production
Fieldwork, experience		
Excursions, field trips	8	8 hours of site visits to public art created by artists JR, Banksy and Vhils.
Total hours:	60	

Films

Exit Through the Gift Shop (Crime/Indie Film, 2010)

Art as Activism (Marcus Ellsworth: TED Talk, 2014)

Course Readings

[Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces](#)

CHANTAL MOUFFE

[Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy](#)

ROSALYN DEUTSCHE

[Transnationalizing the Public Sphere](#)

NANCY FRASER

[Boundary Issues: The Art World Under the Sign of Globalism](#)

PAMELA M. LEE

[Art Biennales and Cities as Platforms for Global Dialogue](#)

NIKOS PAPASTERGIADIS AND MEREDITH MARTIN