

## **7B IMAGE STUDIES: VISUAL EXPERIENCE AND THE SHAPE OF MEANING IN IMAGES**

Laurel Beckman  
Department of Art FALL 2009

### **Lecture                      M 5-6:50 pm                      CHEM1171**

Sections	101.	W/F	9-10:50am	Arts 1342	Daniela Campins
	102.	W/F	11am-12:50pm	Arts 1342	Karen Spector
	103.	T/R	11am-12:50pm	Arts 1342	Raymond Uhlir
	104.	T/R	1pm-2:50pm	Arts 1342	Raymond Uhlir

*“So I am left with this strange thought: even though we overlook so many things and see so little of what passes in front of us, our eyes will not stop seeing, even when they have to invent the world from nothing.” James Elkins*

*“One side of the system is critical; the other is...celebration. Everything is validated through images. People believe in this power-they are used to images being manipulated, and being manipulated themselves, by images.” Mariko Mori*

Using examples from contemporary art practice, art history, and popular culture, we will explore the primacy and fluidity of vision, the mechanics of form, and the roles of imagination and context in the making and viewing of images.

We will address the different aspects of images, in their production, presentation and influence, with all the plasticity they deserve. We'll assume the symbiosis of form and content while using a variety of approaches and media (drawing, painting, print, photography, digital) to elaborate fundamental concerns of space, color and context. The course is intensely structured, but it weaves issues in and out- putting you in the active position of synthesizing the material towards more informed choices in your looking and making. In order to do that it is required that you keep your projects and sketch book up to date, be attentive in lecture, read all class texts (including those in the reader, in Understanding Comics, the on-line references, and the lecture/slide notes), ask questions, and importantly, be inventive with your work.

#### Attendance, Grades, Homework:

The structure of the class is a weekly lecture + twice weekly studio (art-making) sections.  
The non-negotiable attendance requirements: You may miss only 1 lecture, and may not exceed a total of 3 missed classes. A 4th absence with an excellent excuse will lower your grade 1/2 step (such as a “B” becomes a “B-“). Missing 2 lectures will drop grade one full step. 5 total absences or more than 2 missed lectures and you cannot pass the class. Late appearances accumulate towards absences, with 3 lates = 1 absence. Grades will be based on studio projects (33%), engagement and class participation (33%), and an end of quarter written final (33%), mitigated by attendance. Any attempt to falsify attendance records will mean an immediate F for the entire course. You can expect to spend an average of 12 hours per week doing out of class work including projects and reading. Details of projects will be tailored to and outlined in each section. You are expected to keep a visual journal/sketchbook in conjunction to studio projects.

#### Cell Phone and Laptop Policy:

Cell phone use (calls, text, web, etc) is strictly forbidden during all class meetings. Please turn your phones to off. Laptop use, though seriously discouraged, may be used only to take notes during lecture. Recent studies have found that people learn more, and remember more, when notes are taken by hand; and given the nature of the class is visual, it's really important for you to be looking at the lecture screen rather than your laptop screen. To assist you with this, there are brief lecture notes in the reader. Any and all on-line activity, as well as software use that is not word processing-taking notes is off limits. Of course, all personal sound systems (except hearing aids) are also off limits during lecture, but may be allowed in some workshop sections by permission of section leaders. Infractions of the policy will be given an absence for the day.

# SPACE

## **Lecture 1**

### 9/28 INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL EXPERIENCE

Introduction to instructors, supplies, course structure and requirements, art resources on campus, S.B., L. A.  
Purchase supplies at bookstore, reader at AS notes, Understanding Comics at the Bookstore.

The fluidity of vision

Visual perception as a dominant descriptive sense

Slippage in reality and its representation

Learning through reproductions vs. actual work

Flat space (Euclidian)

Illusionistic space

Realism and Representation

Abstraction and Non-objective images

Video: sight through sound, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XN-9Uu00Sg&feature=related>

Photosounder, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S64FROErFYA&feature=channel\\_page](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S64FROErFYA&feature=channel_page)

Studio Projects: Shape Shifter, a four-step project.

step 1. Draw in pencil from still life arrangement.

step 2. Make an abstract drawing in pencil of your still life drawing.

step 3. Make a 3-d object from your abstraction.

step 4. Draw in crayon your object.

Supplies needed: pencils, crayons, paper, scissors, misc..supplies (wire, paper, paper mache, plaster, sculpting, tin foil, styrofoam, etc.)

Project objectives: drawing from observation, presenting representation & abstraction, working experimentally through an idea, image, relationship, the slippage between 2-d and 3-d.

reading:

**James Elkins**

How To Look at the Inside of Your Eye, and

How to Look at Nothing, from, How to Use Your Eyes, Routledge 2000

**Donald D. Hoffman**

A Creative Genius for Vision, from, Visual Intelligence: How We Create What We See

W. W. Norton & Company 1998

**Scott McCloud**

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art,

Chapter 2 - The Vocabulary of Comics

Kitchen Sink Press 1993

**J. Francis Davis**

Power of Images: Creating the Myths of our Time

Center for Media Literacy, nd, <http://:medialit.org>

**Sasha Archibald**

Ways of Seeing (eye movement experiments)

*Cabinet* magazine #30, 2008

## **Lecture 2**

### 10/5 THE ORGANIZATION OF SPACE- COMPOSITION AND FORM

The Picture Plane and Frame

Scale and Proportion

Shapes (overlapping, layering, transparency)

Light-dark

Symmetry, Asymmetry, the Diagonal, S-Curve, Golden Section, Grid, Figure and Ground, Hierarchical and Random Space

Negative and Positive Space, Visual Weight (crowded vs airy)

Cropping/Editing

Studio Projects: Giving Form to Qualities

1. Exercise: Cut Paper- Make seven 6”x6” compositions using black cut paper on white to evoke the following: depth, chaos, depressed, calm, dynamic, tense, overwhelmed. No representational imagery or non-cutting manipulation of the paper.

2. Project: Drawing- Construct a complex hierarchical composition about something you care about. Use pre-existing image sources (magazines, books, photographs, etc) for the work. Trace elements from your sources on separate pieces of tracing paper, building an archive of images to pull from. Using those elements, create a composition that you trace onto a single larger sheet of tracing paper. Feel free to overlap, confuse, invent from your sources. A little like seeing a fortune in tea-leaves, there is the pattern given you, and then you see something else. A hierarchical composition is where the viewer can identify some items as more important than others; in a way, you are guiding the viewer in how to see your image. Make the viewer care about what you care about. New supplies needed: xacto knife and blade, cutting mat, black construction paper, white smooth Bristol, ruler, tracing paper

Project objectives: visualize and articulate non-tangible qualities in 2-dimensional form, achieving visual tension and visual interest through composition (balance, tension, visual weight, dynamism, proportion, scale, cropping, asymmetry, etc.), imaginative results from limited resources, manipulating pre-existing sources.

reading:

**Daniel Chandler**

Visual Perception; “Searching For Patterns”

in association with University of Edinburgh, Heriot University

**Peter K. Kaiser**

The Joy of Visual Perception **access this on-line**

<http://www.yorku.ca/eye/>

**Steve Sabia**

Graphic Design for Usability (especially the parts on visual hierarchies)

<http://aaaproduct.gsf.nasa.gov/teas/SabiaTEA/GraphicDesignUsabilityV20/GraphicDesignUsabilityV20/>

<http://www.theworldsbestever.com/2009/07/09/the-creation-of-eric-beltzs-deep-shit/>

### Lecture 3

#### 10/12 THE ORGANIZATION OF SPACE- FLATNESS

Flat Space

Line- Line Weight, Line as Value (cross/hatch), the Association with Intellect, Mark-Making

Diagrammatic Lines, Maps, Contour

Gesture (using and observing the body), Expressive, Calligraphic Line

Shapes and Planes

Stencils, Graphic Shapes

Signs

Icons

Branding

film/dubbed to dvd: **Lotte Reiniger**, excerpt from The Adventures of Prince Achmed, 1926

animation: **Glenn Marshall**, Music is Math, Processing animation, 2008,

<http://vimeo.com/groups/processing/videos/1593564>

Studio Projects:

1. Exercise: Drawing- negative space definition of object.

2. Project: Wall Installation- The entire class will decide on one of two themes (we’ll do this together in lecture) – architectural systems or biological systems. Each of you will then create and execute an on-site a silhouette shape (single, morphed, complex) using only the supplied low tack black vinyl. Draw them first in pencil or ink, then translate that drawing to vinyl, which gets put directly on the wall. Those of you who have Illustrator/computer cutting vinyl experience may do that as well. You are encouraged to make connections to each others work, to make larger more ambitious pieces from the individual parts. No cutting on the walls, use the cutting mats, and follow instructions on where you can and can not install the vinyl.

New supplies needed: supplied vinyl and application tape, paper, erasers, blue painters low tack tape

Project objectives: see shapes rather than (knowable, analyzable) objects, line as definition, imaginative construction of a space, basic semiotics of symbols, individual expression and collaborative connections

reading:

**Scott McCloud**

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art,

Chapter 5 - Living in Line

Kitchen Sink Press 1993

**Joshua Decter**

Anton Vidokle: Acts of Cultural Transaction and Translation

Trans> Publications 2001

**Armin Hoffman**

Exerpts from: Graphic Design Manual: Principals and Practice 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

Academy Editions, London 1988

<http://www.brigataitalia.com/issue05/02/> (web version of Joshua Decter article with images)

Mauro Ceolin, Contemporary Emblems

[http://www.rgbproject.com/ContemporaryEmblems/ContemporaryEmblems\\_by\\_mauro\\_ceolin.htm](http://www.rgbproject.com/ContemporaryEmblems/ContemporaryEmblems_by_mauro_ceolin.htm)

## Lecture 4

10/19

### THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF SPACE- PERSPECTIVAL SPACE, LIGHT & THE POWER OF BELIEF

Illusionistic Space and Realism

Perspective-

Linear (mathematical) Perspective- 1, 2, 3 point; achievement through overlapping, scale, point of view, vanishing points, horizon, eye level, orthogonal lines, foreshortening; positioning yourself & the viewer

Subjective and Imaginative Perspective, Interpenetration of Planes

The Use of Light- Value, Chiaroscuro, Shading, Lighting, Mood, the Power of Illusion

Atmospheric Perspective (color and value in)

Texture

animation: **David O'Reilly**, iPhone anamorphosis, 2008

Studio Projects:

1. Exercise: Drawing- On the same 18"x24" piece of paper, position the same shape in space from 3 different vantage points (for example: from below, above, sideways, etc.)

2. Project: 3 Photographs- Set up a scene to photograph, it may be a diorama, an interior or exterior scene. Make a minimum of 3 photographs of that same scene using different lighting (only one of those may be a color light source) to evoke different ideas/feelings. If you make more than 3, you can explore more/any options. You may use emulsion based (traditional) or digital photography. Present your photographs mounted or otherwise in a stable presentable manner.

New supplies needed: a photographic device such as a digital camera/printer, a disposable, Polaroid, or 35mm camera, lighting (spot, flood, directional, colored gels, etc.), mounting board.

Project objectives: linear perspective, the effects of value, texture, and (natural, artificial and colored) lighting in the production of meaning.

reading:

**Lawrence Weschler** The Looking Glass, The New Yorker, January 31, 2000

**Ed Burton**, SodaPlay on-line interactive modeling <http://sodaplay.com/>

**Harold Olejarz**, interactive perspective <http://www.olejarz.com/arted/perspective/>

reference:

**Keith West**

Basic Perspective For Artists, excerpts

Watson-Guption Publications 1995

**John Montague**

Basic Perspective: A Visual Guide, excerpts

Wiley & Sons 2005

[http://www.ehow.com/video\\_4953947\\_visual-measuring-2d-design.html](http://www.ehow.com/video_4953947_visual-measuring-2d-design.html) (perspective tutorials)

<http://studiochalkboard.evansville.edu/draw.html>, online links to perspective

anamorphosis:

<http://www.anamorphosis.com/stenope.html>

<http://users.skynet.be/J.Beever/pave.htm>

<http://www.anamorphosis.com/exhibition/index.html>

## COLOR

## Lecture 5

### 10/26 HOW WE SEE COLOR

Seeing Color, Wavelengths

Subtractive and Additive Color Systems- Pigment and Light, Paint and Emulsion

RYB, CMYK, RGB

Color Theory Attributes:

Primaries, Secondaries, Tertiaries

Complementary Color

Hue, Value (tints and shades), Saturation/Intensity

Simultaneous Contrast, Contrast

Analogous Color, Temperature/Warm/Cool, Subjective Color, Monochrome, Gold

Color in Print, Photography, Digital (more next week)

video: **Sony Bravia** ad, 2006

Studio Projects:

1. Exercise: Color Pattern Paintings- Using acrylic paints, on a sheet of the vellum bristol, paint a 5"x5" section extracted from your hierarchy drawing (from week 2) using just 2-3 colors that illustrate one of the color theory aspects. On the lower central of the painting, paint 1"x1" square swatches of the 3 colors you use. Make another painting on another piece of bristol that uses the same pattern, but with a different color theory aspect set of 2-3 colors (and their little swatches)

2. Project: Painting- Using acrylic paints, use the pattern from above exercises and make a new painting; no other rules (don't hurt any property or living thing).

New supplies needed: color wheel, acrylic paints & mixing tray, brush(es), water jar, water tolerant paper

Project objectives: basic color theory- RYB paint pigments, primaries/secondaries, complements, simultaneous contrast, color technologies in print and digital media, color phenomenology

reading:

**Scott McCloud**

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art,

Chapter 8 - A Word About Color

Kitchen Sink Press 1993

**Cary Wolinsky**

The Quest For Color

National Geographic, Vol.196, No. 1, July 1999, pp. 72-93

**Sandra Blakeslee**

A Reason We Call Our Cheddar 'Sharp' and Shirts 'Loud'

New York Times, April 10, 2001

reference:

**Bruce MacEvoy**

Handprint- The most comprehensive discussion for artists of color perception, color psychology, "color theory" and color mixing available online:

<http://www.handprint.com/HP/WCL/wcolor.html>

From **Brown University** a good site on color theory

<http://www.cs.brown.edu/courses/cs092/VA10/HTML/start.html>

Color matters web site

<http://www.colormatters.com/colortheory.html>

## Lecture 6

### 11/2 HOW WE USE COLOR, PATTERN AND OPTICAL PHENOMENA

Review of color in pigment and light

Color in Communication and Meaning Structures, Media

Symbolic, as Attributed to the Feminine, Emotive and Irrational

Rainbows, Gradients, Gold

Motif, Certainty and Insanity in Pattern, Pattern and Decoration

Red (danger/sexuality), Yellow (journalism), Blue (moods)

Video: Underwater Creature Camouflage, National Geographic, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zC0zOLqYnRg>

dvd: **Stan Brakhage**, excerpts from By Brakhage, an Anthology, Criterion Collection 2004  
animation: **Jen Stark**, Papermation, 2007

Studio Project:

1. Exercise: Rubbing- Using a soft pencil, graphite or crayon, and newsprint or tracing paper, take a rubbing off an industrial (machine-made) material; next derive a pattern from it in the form of a black ink drawing on tracing paper.

2. Project: Color Relief Print- Using the pattern drawing you made from exercise #1 above, create a composition that you will cut in to a linoleum block and print.

New supplies needed: linoleum block (mounted, 6x9"), linoleum cutting tools, paper -newsprint + paper to print on, work apron or shirt.

Project objectives: basic ink and color in a printing process, transformation of an image through 3 steps  
reading:

**Michael Rock and Pamela Hovland**

Colored Lenses: The Rise of Color in the Media, from The News Aesthetic

The Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography, The Cooper Union School of Art 1995

**David Byrne**

Pink, from Cabinet magazine issue 11, Summer 2003

reference:

**David Batchelor**, ed.

Colour, excerpts, Whitechapel & MIT Press, 2008

**Peter Halley**, Exploding Cell, interactive color experimentation

<http://www.moma.org/onlineprojects/halley/index.html>

<http://www.moma.org/whatisaprint/flash.html> -interactive site about printmaking

Shredder web site: <http://www.potatoland.org/shredder>

<http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/~akitaoka/index-e.html> (careful)

## CONTEXT

### Lecture 7

#### 11/9 VISUAL LANGUAGE AND NARRATIVE SYSTEMS

Serial Imagery, Typology

Visual Language, Typography

Expressive 'Experimental' Typography

Text in Art

Narrative Systems- Episodic, Linear/Sequential, Non-Linear

Animation: <http://www.diacenter.org/margreiter/alphabeth.html>

<http://www.artofthetitle.com/>

Studio Project:

1. Create a unique visual, typographic language. Take 3 characters from that "alphabet" and show them changing over time and space, such as to evolve or devolve them. This language and its typographical form must not resemble any familiar language. Black and white only, ink on paper or board.

new supplies needed: presentation board, graph paper

Project objectives: plasticity of visual language, invention of authority, the role of narrative and other sequences in comprehension.

reading:

**Scott McCloud**

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art,

Chapter 3 - Blood in the Gutter

Kitchen Sink Press 1993

**Kenneth Goldsmith**, curator <<http://www.ubu.com>> visual+ concrete+ sound poetry site

**Doug Aitkin**, Loaded5X, online non-linear narrative project

<http://adaweb.walkerart.org/project/aitken/>

<http://www.jodi.org>

<http://www.typeworkshop.com/index.php>

<http://www.typeworkshop.com/index.php?id1=type-basics>

<http://www.artofthetitle.com/>

(11/11 Wednesday is a holiday)

## Lecture 8

### 11/16 THE DISPLACEMENT AND ASSERTION OF THE IMAGE

Juxtaposition, Reason and Chance

Collage, Photomontage, Cut & Paste, Mash-up, Hypertext- multi-sequential forms

Extra-Real Special Effects- Transparency, Blur, Glo, Drop-Shadow, 3D, Morph

Revisiting Representation and the Image as Fetish

>First Section Meeting: Demonstration of Digital Imaging Techniques

dvd excerpt: **Craig Baldwin**, Spectres of the Spectrum, 2000

excerpts: **Jeremy Blake**, Punch Drunk Love, Paul Thomas Anderson, director, 2002

audio: **Girl Talk**, from Feed the Animals cd, mash up of 300 songs in 50 minutes, <http://www.myspace.com/girltalk>

Studio Project:

1. Altered Book- Find/Choose a book that you will physically alter using collage and mark-making. Using at least 2 pages (leave them attached in the book), alter the existing book using whatever 'editing' devices you wish. Editing means adding and/or subtracting; the choices may show reason and or chance/the irrational. Let the original book's contents inform your response. You may use pencil, ink, cutting, collage materials including paper images you find or make.

New supplies needed: a book to sacrifice, collage materials (possible photographs, digital prints)

Project objectives: juxtaposition, narrative intent and styles, images + text

reading:

#### **Jello Biafra**

from F\*\*cked Up + Photocopied: Instant Art of the Punk Rock Movement, excerpt

Brian Ray Turcotte and Christopher T. Miller

Ginkgo Press 1999

#### **Dawn Ades**

The Marvelous and the Commonplace and Introduction, from Photomontage

Thames and Hudson 1976

#### **Sarah Boxer**

Transparent Enough To Hide

New York Times, December 19, 1998

#### **Joshua Decker**

Transparent, from Purple (Prose) Number 2-76 FW 1998/99, Elien Fleiss and Oliver Zahm editors, pp. 306, 307

#### **William Gibson**

God's Little Toys: Confessions of a Cut and Paste Artist

*Wired*, July 2005

[http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/ht/thonglipfei/hyper\\_defn.html](http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/ht/thonglipfei/hyper_defn.html)

[http://www.salon.com/ent/music/feature/2003/08/09/mashups\\_cruger/index.html](http://www.salon.com/ent/music/feature/2003/08/09/mashups_cruger/index.html)

Brian Dettmer's altered books: <http://centripetalnotion.com/2007/09/13/13:26:26>

## Lecture 9

### 11/23 PUBLIC PRACTICE

Relationship Between Viewer and Image

Private, Public, and Institutional Contexts

Specificity of site, reception, distribution

Intimacy and Spectacle

Multiples, Editions

video: **Graffiti Research Lab & The Anti-Advertising Agency**, Light Criticism, 2006

net: **Doug Pray**, director, Reverse Graffiti Project (Paul "Moose" Curtis)

Project:

Create and execute an assignment given from the "Learning to Love You More" web site.

There will be more information on this project in class.

<http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com/>

reading:

**Charles Merewether**

The Spirit of the Gift, from Felix Gonzalez-Torres

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA 1994

Josh MacPhee, Street Art and Social Movements, 2009, org published in Zapruder magazine

**Harrell Fletcher**, Towards a Tender Society, 2002 on line at:

<http://www.harrellfletcher.com> - explore all projects (including “learning to love you more”), writings, videos

<http://www.socialart.com/ARTPAPERS/artCollectives.html>

<http://www.woostercollective.com/> - the best online street art collection and links

<http://www.guerrillagirls.com>

<http://www.rtmark.com/>

<http://www.confluxfestival.org/conflux2007/projects/>

<http://www.billboardliberation.com/>

[http://www.themorningnews.org/archives/new\\_york\\_new\\_york/paper\\_faces\\_paper\\_cities.php](http://www.themorningnews.org/archives/new_york_new_york/paper_faces_paper_cities.php) - interview with Swoon and pics/video

<http://www.creativetime.org/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artist%27s\\_book](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artist%27s_book)

Robbie Conal's Guerrilla Postering and Etiquette Guide, <<http://www.robbyconal.com/videos/index.htm>>

(November 26 – 27, Thursday-Friday, is a holiday)

## **Lecture 10**

11/30                    FINAL EXAM

The final exam will be an in class, written exam. All you need to bring is a pencil or pen.

**Sections will meet during last week** –December 1 – December 3

Last Day of Campus Instruction is Friday Dec 4, 2009