

AR/MA240 EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET IN CONTEMPORARY ART
IES Abroad Amsterdam**DESCRIPTION:**

The use of new media and the Internet has fundamentally affected art and our understanding of it. With technology becoming completely intertwined with our lives, underlined by the lingering effects of the pandemic, the difference between 'art' and non-art becomes increasingly blurred as a new phase of contemporary art emerges. This practice-based course will review these discussions alongside an overview of the history of both experimental and new media. We will discuss media technologies ranging from photography to film, sound, video, the body, and the Internet.

This course seeks to bring students from varying backgrounds together to engage in evaluating, strategizing, and employing experimental media as an artistic medium. Drawing on conceptual traditions that value concept over execution and actions over objects, experimentation, risk-taking, and participation are essential parts of this course; please come ready to work hard and share generously with your fellow students.

CREDITS: 3**CONTACT HOURS: 45****INSTRUCTOR:** Cathleen Owens**LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION:** English**PREREQUISITES:** None**ADDITIONAL COST:**

- **Laptop and smartphone** - To complete some assignments in this class, students are required to have access to a laptop and smartphone. If you do not have access, please contact your IES academic advisor.
- **Digital Storage** – Students will need a cloud storage account, USB flash drive or portable external hard drive to store files and easily transport them to different computers. It should have the storage capacity of at least 16 GB; work in this class is to be archived in one place, students may need to use one with capacity of 40 GB or more. Students will be required to follow good digital practices by backing up their important work in more than one place. This 32GB flash drive is under 10eu.

Please note, good data management is an integral aspect of this course. Computer failure or data loss will not be accepted as a legitimate excuse for late work. Please take care to regularly make back-up copies of work-in-progress, both online (Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.) and on your USB flash drive.

- **Final Project** - Spending money on your final project is not a requirement (and I would argue some of the best artworks are made without cost) but in the creation and installation of your final artwork, you may incur some expenses. We will work together on creating a budget in the run up to your exhibition. Budgets may range anywhere between 0eu and 50eu.
- **Sketchbook** - I recommend buying a physical sketchbook to keep notes and inspiration related to the class. This is what I use.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

This course is designed to provide a laboratory/workshop opportunity for students to develop an Internet-based creative practice, focusing on individual production, group projects and critical discussion.

The course consists of a combination of readings, lectures, demonstrations, gallery/museum visits, discussions, critiques, and writing.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Active participation - 10%
- In-class assignments - 15%
- Midterm assessment - 15%
- Artist presentation - 5%
- Moodle assignments - 15%
- Online sketchbook - 5%
- Final project - 35%

Active participation

Your active participation in class is essential to creating a dynamic learning environment. A main criterion of the grade comes from your comments being insightful and constructive, balanced between general impressions, opinions and specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions.

In-class Assignments

In class assignments are there to help you solidify concepts through experimenting. Don't forget to use me as a sounding board. You will be evaluated on your willingness to take risks as well as clear steps taken in development and execution of ideas.

Midterm Assessment

During week 6, I will distribute a written midterm assessment, where you must compare and contrast two artworks previously seen in class. In comparing and contrasting, you must demonstrate substantial knowledge and understanding of concepts, processes, and background of the artworks in question. You may use your notes.

Artist Presentation

During Class 8, you will present an artist chosen from the list at ubu.com/film. Presentations should be 10 minutes in length. Materials such as slideshows, texts, images, links, etc. must be uploaded to Moodle the evening prior to your presentation. Your presentation must be coherently organized and thoughtfully articulated. This is a service both to yourself and to your classmates. You may screen no more than 2.5 minutes of video during your presentation. We want to hear your opinion and personal feelings towards the work as well!

Moodle Assignments

You can find each Moodle assignment in the assignments column of the content section of this syllabus. Each Moodle assignment will be graded based on conceptual and aesthetic merits, technical proficiency, and discerned effort. Please upload text in PDF format or in the file format mentioned in the assignment description.

Naming Convention:

When uploading files, you must use the convention: YY.MM.DD_SP25_Lastname Firstname_Double Digit Assignment Number.

For example, if I were to upload my own piece for the first week's homework assignment, it would be: 25.02.13_SP25_Owens Cathleen_01

If you upload a file with an improper naming convention, I will not grade it until it is uploaded with the proper naming. It may seem strict, but it is often difficult to identify works after downloading.

Online Sketchbook

You are expected to create a free are.na account (your online sketchbook for the semester) and update it at least weekly with research and inspiration (text, images, links) tied to your own artistic interests. We will spend time looking at them together periodically throughout the course. You will be evaluated on your continuous, creative use of the platform.

Final Project

The class will culminate in a public exhibition of student's final artworks, separate from in class work and Moodle assignments. Your grade for this will be calculated based on amount of risk-taking, creative depth, and the originality of your artwork.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will:

- Experiment and become familiar with non-traditional forms of art making
- Produce several ambitious new-media artworks
- Examine how artists and thinkers operate in an environment of newness when there is not a precedent for exactly what they are doing
- Develop the necessary skills in the presentation and critique of their creative projects, both as a presenter and a critic
- Form artistic strategies in response to, and as a proponent of, social, economic, political, and environmental change
- Build analytical and technical skills through the use of new software and technologies
- Question authority and challenge conventions

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Since IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instructor and the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction, class attendance is mandatory and will be taken for every class. In addition, students are expected to be on time for classes, course-related excursions, and tests. Some courses include mandatory trips outside of regular class hours, i.e. on weekends. Students will be made aware of the specific dates of such trips well in advance and are required to attend. It is your responsibility to be aware of and adhere to this attendance policy.

Irregular attendance may result in a lower grade in the course, and/or disciplinary action.

Faculty mark attendance in Moodle weekly, noting whether students are present or absent. **If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked as absent.** Weekly attendance records will be uploaded, and you will receive automated messages regarding your absence count. In the same automated message, you will be provided with an opportunity to submit documentation to excuse absence(s) within one week of receipt of message.

Absences will be excused for the following reasons:

- Health issues (must include a Dutch doctor's note);
- A recognized religious holiday traditionally observed by the particular student, **only when communicated within the first two weeks of class to IES Academic staff and faculty;**
- A grave incident affecting family members;
- Conflicting academic commitments, **only when communicated within the first two weeks of class to IES Academic staff and faculty;**

Any other absences (such as missing an alarm or missing a flight) are unexcused.

One unexcused absence is permitted without penalty to a student's final grade. Beyond this, each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a deduction of 1/3 of your final letter grade (for example, A- to B+). IES staff will make deductions at the end of the semester based on received documentation. Faculty do not have the authority to judge absences. Only IES staff can change an unexcused absence to excused.

What to do if you are going to be absent

In any case when you are not going to attend class, out of courtesy to your instructor and your fellow students, **you must notify your professor** and IES staff.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
1	Introduction This week, we will discuss the syllabus, course content, and expectations. Students will share any previous experience with media art. We'll then head to the Stedelijk Museum to view the current temporary exhibition and their permanent collection.	Watch: Ways of Seeing, Episode 1 (1972), 30:04 Assignment 1: Take a video selfie as you, imitating yourself. What makes you, you? What can you exaggerate? Carefully choose your clothing, the location where you film, and the framing. Don't read from a script or edit your piece. Upload a 1-minute MP4 to Moodle. Provide your <u>are.na</u> link on Moodle. Both are due before the beginning of class next week.
2	How did we get here? Together we will dive into the history of experimental artistic movements, ranging from Dada to Situationism, conceptual art, Fluxus, video art, performance art, and happenings. Trying our hand at some basic computer programming, we will create digital works. Please download <u>Processing</u> to your computer before class. Contact me if you have any problems.	Watch: Ways of Something (2014), 31:02 Browse: https://anthology.rhizome.org/ Assignment 2: Skim through <u>The Fluxus Performance Workbook</u>. Choose one event score to perform and film. Submit an MP4 of your performance, no longer than 3 minutes. Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.

3	An image is an image is an image We are exposed to thousands of images a day in the so-called attention economy, both on the screens we interact with and in the real world. We will discuss the medium of the image from a set of different perspectives. What is the difference in creating an image by hand, like drawing, contra the computer-generated mass-produced imagery? We'll examine and discuss the ways we interact with the images we see. Do we swipe, stare, ignore, double tap, look away? In class, we will create our own original images using digital collage.	Read: Benjamin, Walter, et al. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." <i>Illuminations: Essays and Reflections</i>, Schocken Books, New York, NY, 2007, pp. 1–26. Assignment 3: After paging through <u>Ordinary Magazine</u> in class, I will assign an ordinary object to the whole class. Each student must submit 1 JPG sized 8x10in (20.3 x 25.4cm). Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.
4	Video and the moving image During this class, we will be examining artists' use of moving image, their motivation, and the medium's specific format. How can we exploit a medium that is often used to entertain and sell us things and turn it into something new? We'll look at artists using different strategies, such as Ryan Trecartin, Alex Da Corte, and Candice Breitz.	Read: Jennings, Gabrielle. <i>Abstract Video: The Moving Image in Contemporary Art</i>. U. Of California P., 2015, pp. 1 - 16. Assignment 4: Think of something that exists that you've never seen, and probably never will see. Articulate this thing through video. You can use found-footage but at least 50% of the footage must be your own. Upload as an MP4, no longer than 4 minutes. Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.
5	Language The most basic visual representation of an idea is often a description of the idea itself in text. This week we'll be examining various experimental ways of working with text. We'll cover language <i>in</i> art, language <i>about</i> art, and language <i>and</i> art.	Read: Goldsmith, Kenneth. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing by Kenneth..." <i>Poetry Foundation</i>, Poetry Foundation, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2007/05/paragraphs-on-conceptual-writing. Assignment 5: Submit a proposal for your final project. Minimum 400 words. Make sure to include the

		proposed concept, medium, and timeline. Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.
6	Performance, Identity, and the Body Performance art can give you room to think about who you are, where you are, and how you relate to those who are not who you are and where you are. We'll touch this week on constructing identity, representations of the self and aspects of everyday life in performance art. After this week's lecture is our midterm assessment.	Read: Kelley, Mike. "Mike Talks to Mike about 'Mike.'" <i>High Performance</i>, 1986, pp. 41–63 Assignment 6: Begin work on final project
7	Performance, Identity and the Body Online TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat are a daily part of our lives, both directly and indirectly. These networks are where memes thrive, and where heartbreaks, meals, selfies, and lives are shared. Online, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and nationality can all be constructed. This week we will use the Internet as a means to explore the construction and perception of identity. We'll be looking at various performance artworks, one example being the 2001 art project by Keith Obadike, entitled, Blackness for Sale, which is an eBay page advertising the sale of the artist's blackness.	Read: Troemel, Brad. "Art After Social Media." <i>Art Papers Magazine</i>, 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YGdWLe6ijAliOA-cxZ8830k9GHN9qvQt/view pp. 10–15. Assignment 7: Create your own conceptual social media account. Your URL should be posted on Moodle before the beginning of class next week. Students will present next week on their artist chosen from the list at ubu.com/film.
8	You Tell Me Artist presentations After presentations, we will be writing our own manifestos. Some examples of artist manifestos from history, including the interventionists, Fluxus and Futurists.	Read: Quaranta, Domenico. <i>Collect the WWWORLD: The Artist as Archivist in the Internet Age</i>, LINK, Brescia, 2011, pp. 39–47. Assignment 8: Create an artwork based on a classmate's manifesto. Write 250 words on your process. Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.

9	Final Project Status Report Bring materials to work in class on your final project. Each student will update the class on their progress, and what they still need help with. Together we will analyze the motivations, presentation, use of medium and strategies of all the projects.	Read: Lewitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." <i>Artforum</i>, June 1967. Assignment 9: Work on final project. Update timeline to reflect current progress and submit on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.
10	Sounds How many different sounds can you count on your commute to class each week? This week we will focus on capturing, manipulating, and reproducing sound in experimental ways. We will also go on a sound walk (a walk with a focus on listening to the environment) and create new artworks using this medium. There will also be time to work on your final artwork.	Read: Voegelin, Salome. Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art. Bloomsbury, 2013. pg 3 - 21 Watch: John Cage, 4'33", 05:46 Assignment 10: Record an audio intervention in public space and submit as an MP3. No longer than 4 minutes. Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.
11	Activism This week we will look at artists and collectives focused on enacting social, economic, political, and environmental change such as the Guerilla Girls, Billionaires for Bush, Pope.L, the K Foundation, the Yes Men, and Zardulu. Together, we will choose a cause to champion as a class and outline a campaign using various artistic strategies.	Read: Bradley, Will, and Charles Esche. Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader. Tate Pub., 2007, pp. 241 – 244, pp. 332 – 339. Assignment 11: In pairs, stage an activist action online, concerning your chosen cause. You may use examples we saw in class as inspiration. Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.

12	In the Real World (Course-related Trip) We'll visit various galleries and project spaces exhibiting experimental contemporary art.	Read: Archey, Karen. Peckham, Robin. 2014. "Art Post-Internet." Exhibition catalog, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art. http://ucca.org.cn/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PAI_booklet_en.pdf. Assignment 12: Write 500 words about 2 artworks we saw on our field trip - one that you loved and one that you hated. Don't forget to write about the environment, the accessibility, and the overall context you are seeing the artworks in. Due on Moodle before the beginning of class next week.
13	Work on Final Project in-class This week we will work on our projects in class. Please come prepared with materials and questions!	Continue working on your final project! You're in the home stretch!
14	Examination of Final Projects Students will present their final projects and engage in a group critique. We will take care of the final preparations for the public exhibition next week.	Assignment 14: Submit a 500-word self-evaluation of your final project as a PDF on Moodle before the final exhibition, part of your Moodle assignment grade.

15	Public Exhibition During the exhibition, you will present your work to the public. You are expected to actively engage with the audience in attendance. Be prepared to come with answers to questions you may be asked by onlookers. Have an elevator pitch about your work - what is it? Why did you make it? What are you trying to accomplish?	
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COURSE-RELATED TRIP:

During Class 12, we'll be visiting the following spaces around the city and discussing the accessibility and overall effectiveness of the spaces we enter. Is there a fee? Did someone greet you? How's the temperature of the space? What does the placement of the work say about the work? What other artworks are close to it? Can you picture the work anywhere else? How does the environment affect the meaning?

- Stedelijk Museum, institutional art museum
- W139, artist run project space
- Foam, photography museum, and magazine publisher
- Upstream Gallery, commercial art gallery with a focus on conceptual post-Internet art
- Brakke Grond | Vlaams Cultuurhuis, Flemish culture center
- Arti et Amicitiae, Dutch artist society and exhibition space

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Archey, Karen. Peckham, Robin. 2014. "Art Post-Internet." Exhibition catalog, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art. http://ucca.org.cn/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PAI_booklet_en.pdf.
- Benjamin, Walter, et al. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Schocken Books, New York, NY, 2007, pp. 1–26.
- Bradley, Will, and Charles Esche. *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*. Tate Pub., 2007, pp. 241 – 244, pp. 332 – 339.
- Diehl, Travis. "Her Body, Her Self: Amalia Ulman." *CURA.*, 18 Mar. 2021, <https://curamagazine.com/digital/her-body-her-self-amalia-ulman/>.
- Goldsmith, Kenneth. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing by Kenneth..." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2007/05/paragraphs-on-conceptual-writing>.
- Jennings, Gabrielle. *Abstract Video: The Moving Image in Contemporary Art*. U. Of California P., 2015, pp. 1 – 16.
- Kelley, Mike. "Mike Talks to Mike about 'Mike.'" *High Performance*, 1986, pp. 41–63.
- Lewitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." *Artforum*, June 1967, pp. 1–5.
- Quaranta, Domenico. *Collect the WWWORLD: The Artist as Archivist in the Internet Age*, LINK, Brescia, 2011, pp. 39–47.
- Troemel, Brad. "Art After Social Media." *Art Papers Magazine*, 2016, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YGdWLe6ijAliOA-cxZ8830k9GHN9qvQt/view> pp. 10–15.
- Voegelin, Salome. *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

REQUIRED VIEWINGS:

- Berger, John, director. *Ways of Seeing*. Films Incorporated, 1974, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZhJp8kqE>.
- Cage, John. "4'33". <https://vimeo.com/3176013>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2022.
- Mills, Lorna, director. *Ways of Something - Episode 1*. Vimeo, 2014, <https://vimeo.com/105731173>.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Baldwin, James. "The Creative Process." *Collected Essays*, Library of America, New York, 1998.
- Baudrillard, Jean, and Lotringer Sylvère. *The Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Interviews, Essays*. Semiotext(e), 2005.

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- Chan, Paul. "What Art Is and Where It Belongs." *e-Flux*, 2009, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61356/what-art-is-and-where-it-belongs/>.
 - Droitcour, Brian. "The Perils of Post-Internet Art." *ARTnews*, Art in America, 27 Nov. 2019, <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/the-perils-of-post-internet-art-63040/>.
 - Godfrey, Tony. *Conceptual Art*. Phaidon, 2011.
 - Greene, Rachel. *Web Work: A History of Internet Art*. 2000.
 - Kholeif, Omar. *You Are Here - Art after the Internet*. HOME, 2017.
 - Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Penguin, 2019.

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Cathleen Owens is an artist and educator based in The Hague, The Netherlands. She holds a BFA in Photography from the Fashion Institute of Technology and a master's degree in ArtScience from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. She is a founder and member of artist initiative [facettime den haag](#).

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