

**Junior Concentration**  
**MODES : SPACE**

PUFA 3024

CRN: 6058

Fine Art Program, School of Art Media and  
Technology  
Parsons the New School for Design  
Spring 2009  
Thursdays, -- 3-8:40pm  
Building E, Room 402

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**1. Course description:**

Space is one of the fundamental terms by which we understand and experience our position in the world, and the relative position of objects and bodies around us. It is also one of the basic categories to which the “plastic arts” belong, according to a classical distinction between time-based and space-specific art forms.

In this course students explore various notions of space within their work, in a medium or media of their choice. Students engage and expand their notion of space by relating their work to a broader context, and by making that context an integral element in their practice.

Students may either focus on developing representational qualities in their work that suggest a certain kind of space, therefore gaining a deeper understanding of spatial problems within two-dimensional and three-dimensional modes; or they may focus on space as a physical entity that becomes part of their work, either through installation or site-specific work.

Emphasis is placed on the synergy between the practice and the theory of art: art-making will be informed by writing, reading, and regular class discussions and critiques, in which students develop an articulated vocabulary to express their ideas effectively. The study of other artists, writers and philosophers’ work and ideas will be encouraged and supported by appropriate reading materials provided or recommended throughout the course.

This class will also interact and collaborate with the other two courses in the program, namely Modes: Materiality and Modes: Performance.

**2. Objectives:**

In Modes:Space students will develop and further refine the direction they have taken in their individual work, by focusing on a *specific problem, project or area of research*.

They may also begin a completely new path by experimenting with new media and exploring ideas within the overall theme of the class.

Through rigorous and consistent study and practice, and through exposure to ideas and different opinions, students will achieve a higher level of complexity in their work. They will learn how to formulate their ideas clearly, how to write a proposal for a long-term project, and how to situate themselves in the context of contemporary practices related to the issue of space.

**3. Ideas to be explored:**

- place/space (concepts)
- abstract vs. illusionistic space
- domestic vs. industrial space
- private vs. public space
- open vs. closed space
- static vs. mobile space

- constructed vs. found space
- scale vs. size
- site-specific
- virtual spaces
- ephemeral places

#### **4. Methods and structure:**

No particular medium will be privileged over others; students will be free to work in the medium/media and field/s they choose, whether painting, drawing, sculpture, installation or time-based media. As an artist who works primarily with painting, drawing, and installation, I will bring to the class my own perspective and expertise in these fields, and occasionally open up the discussion to guest artists and speakers, including the instructors from the other sections of the Modes program.

The core of the class' philosophy is experimentation and self-examination. It is essential that the choice of media will be accompanied by a consistent conceptual basis.

For the most part, during class time students will be developing their own work; the instructor will be available for individual critiques, discussions, and technical demonstrations. There will be group discussions approximately every other week (please refer to the **course schedule** for a more detailed breakdown of the semester), and at least two critiques over the semester. Discussions will typically originate from a text given as an assignment, an exhibition we saw, or a particular topic. They will take place in the first hour of class.

There will be a 30' break during each session. Students should keep the classroom tidy and not eat while working.

#### **5. Requirements:**

Research sketchbook/notebook: make of this your daily tool for documenting the progress of your research with drawings, notes, photographs, and found materials. Sketchbooks will be reviewed periodically.

Proposal: at **the beginning of the semester you will develop a proposal for a semester-long project** (either based on a current, ongoing project or an entirely new one) **that involves space in a distinct way**. The project may be constituted by a series of works organized into an installation, or by one singular work of considerable scope and content (for instance, a book project).

This proposal will be handed in as a written document, and presented to the class for critique and input. The public presentation will also set the conditions for possible interactions and collaborations among fellow students. **Please see attached proposal guidelines.**

**At midterm** you will present your ongoing work in a **class critique/discussion**. Possibly there will be a unified discussion with Modes: Materiality and Modes: Performance at the same time.

**Towards the end of the semester** you will re-submit your proposal, together with a statement that analyzes the way the work has effectively developed and fulfilled the initial proposal (or diverged from it).

Class activities: while working on your project, you will also take part in class exercises and follow specific directions given by the instructor on a collective or a one-to one basis.

Research reports: you will research specific concepts and artists and give a class presentation of 20' accompanied by slides and examples from texts.

Museum and gallery visits are part of the required assignments.

You should attend at least 2 lectures from the lecture series, and write a one-page report on them.

**Please see attached list.**

Class critiques: together with the instructor you will select a number of works (that may include drawings, preparatory studies, photographs, etc.), which illustrate a particular concept, theme or concern in your proposed project.

Attendance to each class is mandatory. Two absences are tolerated; three absences will result in failing you. Avoid being late to class: ten minutes is considered lateness. Three instances of being late equal one absence. Leaving early is considered as arriving late.

Class participation is crucial to the successful completion of the course: you are required to actively participate in class discussions and critiques, interacting with your peers in a constructive fashion.

Reading and writing assignments in the schedule are due the following week unless otherwise specified. Papers have to be word processed, clearly written, double-spaced, and of the specified length. Sketches and graphic notations may be added separately.

## **6. Expectations:**

You are expected to be seriously involved with the course and with your work, and to be aware of its position in a critical context. You should be fluent with established notions in art history and art theory, and willing to engage in contemporary art discourses.

You are expected to come to class on time, and to have all the necessary materials you need for the day.

It is also expected of you to undertake research and groundwork relevant to your work and to the issues discussed in class, and to participate, whenever possible, to the cultural life of the City.

Make an effort to be up to date and informed about openings, articles and art reviews.

## **7. Grading procedure:**

Your final grade will be determined by several factors: your overall efforts on each project, the consistency demonstrated throughout the semester, your steady participation in class activities, and your commitment to your practice. You will be assessed on the semester proposal that you defined at the start; in other words, your work will be measured against the standards you set for yourself, besides external criteria as well. I will take into account your entering skill level, and your demonstrated discipline and attitude towards your work. I will consider the quality and quantity of your work, the amount and quality of background research (journal, sketchbooks and the like), your assignments and presentations.

Your final grade will be broken down as follows:

Project proposal, process and results: 40%

Class presentations, research, sketchbook/notebook: 20%

Participation (including discussions based on reading): 20%

Written papers, reports: 20%

**8. Suggested readings** (in some cases, excerpts will be made available to students in the class, by posting the file into Blackboard):

William V. Dunning, *Changing Images of Pictorial Space*

Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

Marc Augé: *Non-Places*

Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, University of California Press, 1976.

Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts*

Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, The New Press, NY 1997

Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical Enquiry*, University of California Press, 1998

Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 1985-86*. Random House, New York. ISBN 0-679-74237-9

David Bayles / Ted Orland

*Art & Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking*

Santa Cruz, CA : Image Continuum Press ; Saint Paul, MN : Distributed by Consortium Book Sales & Distribution c1993. ISBN: 0961454733 (pbk.)

Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, Edicion G, Barcelona 2002

Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*

George Perec, *Species of Spaces*

*Art in Theory 1900-2000*, Harrison & Wood.

Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, University of California Press, 1967

Gerhard Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting*

Ilya Kabakov, *The Text as the Basis of Visual Expression*, Oktagon

David Levi Strauss *Between Dog & Wolf*, Autonomedia, 1999

Whitney Biennial 1993 catalog

Venice Biennale 1999 and 2001 catalogs

## 9. Contemporary artists to be researched:

Gordon Matta-Clark  
Ilya Kabakov  
Julie Merethu  
Sarah Sze  
Jacobco Borges  
Neo Rauch  
Huang Yong Ping  
Maya Lin

Alfredo Jaar  
Chris Marker  
Jane and Louise Wilson  
Guillermo Kuitca  
Isidro Blasco  
Olafur Eliasson  
Gregor Schneider  
Xu Bing

## 10. Recommended exhibitions:

### Whitney Museum: Sites

Opens February 19, 2009

In the postwar period, the traditional notion of art as a discrete object has changed to include environments, places, and sites. The critic Harold Rosenberg famously described painting as "an arena in which to act," and since the 1950s artists have continuously expanded on that idea. In Earth art and performance-based works, the museum or gallery (and enclosed architecture in general) became a boundary to transgress or at least acknowledge as both a container and a barrier. In much contemporary practice, the process of making a work of art has become part of the content. Many artists treat their work as a continuous project in which the studio extends into the real world and/ or is brought into traditional spaces. The art itself may become a site or it may create one—a place and a space with its own rules and internal logic. This exhibition, drawn from the Whitney's permanent collection, explores how the idea of sites allows for a more experiential role for the spectator as well the creation of new types of spaces, whose qualities might be unbound, drawn in, or otherwise made pliant by their creators.

### PS1 – long term installations

#### MoMA

Focus: Joseph Beuys (ongoing)

Dreamland: Architectural Experiments since the 1970s (Ongoing)

Projects 89: Klara Liden (February 25–June 8, 2009) -- *site-specific installation*

#### The New Museum

Three M Project: Jeremy Deller: Conversations About Iraq

NY CT MA RI NH VT ME PA NJ DE MD DC VA NC SC GA FL OH IN IL MI WI MN IA NE WV KY  
TN AL MS LA TX AR OK MO KS SD ND MT WY CO NM AZ UT ID NV WA OR AK HI CA

February 11–March 22, 2009

*(mobile museum)*

Three M Project: Mathias Poledna: Crystal Palace

January 28–March 8, 2009

*(large scale video installation)*

#### The Metropolitan Museum

Pierre Bonnard: The Late Interiors

January 27, 2009–April 19, 2009

Robert Lehman Wing

Roxy Paine on the Roof: *Maelstrom*  
April 28, 2009–October 25, 2009 (weather permitting)  
The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden

The Brooklyn Museum

Long-term installation galleries  
The Black List Project, until March 29, Hall of the Americas, 1st Floor  
Gustave Caillebotte: Impressionist Paintings from Paris to the Sea, from March 27

The Drawing Center

Matt Mullican: A Drawing Translates the Way of Thinking, until February 5  
Unica Zürn: Dark Spring, from April 17

The Sculpture Center, Long Island City

The Space of the Work and the Place of the Object, until March 22

The Dream House (MELA Foundation)

Sound and Light environment  
Marian Zazeela, La Monte Young  
275 Church Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

**Modes:Space – Spring 2009**  
**Class schedule**

Week 1 1/29	Introduction Student work presentation Visit exhibition opening SPURA (LES)	
Week 2 2/5	presentation of proposal discussion	<b>Reading 1:</b> <i>Art &amp; Fear</i> , Bayles & Orland, excerpts. <b>Assignment 1:</b> Define your proposal about your current work and the direction you would like to take this semester (see <b>guidelines</b> )
Week 3 2/12		
Week 4 2/19	<i>Screening of The Five Obstructions + discussion</i>	
Week 5 2/26	<b>Collaborative project</b>	
Week 6 3/5		<b>Assignment 2:</b> Visit the Whitney exhibition <i>Sites</i> ; take notes of the artists and artworks that interest you most, and write a report.
Week 7 3/12	<b>Student research presentation / midterm crit</b>	
Week 8 3/19		<b>Reading 2:</b> Read Brian O'Doherty Notes on the Gallery Space.
Week 9 3/26	---- Spring Break ----	
Week 10 4/2	<b>Instructor Lecture/presentation</b>	
Week 11 4/9		<b>Reading 3:</b> Read excerpt from Kabakov's Total Installation text.
Week 12 4/16	<b>Guest artist: Elizabeth De Maray</b>	
Week 13 4/23		
Week 14 4/30	<b>final review/ critique</b>	<b>Assignment 3:</b> prepare your statement for final review. In no less than three pages, describe your final project/body of work

<b>Week 14</b> <b>4/30</b>	<b>final review/ critique</b>	<b>Assignment 3:</b> prepare your statement for final review. In no less than three pages, describe your final project/body of work of the semester, in light of your process, your previous work and
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