

5. Representing Visual Culture: Objectives, assignments, lecture topics and readings.

Preface

The course “Representing Visual Culture” was developed when the research project “Opening Pandora’s Paintbox” began in January 2001, lectures had to begin at the end of February and there was some urgency to develop a new set of readings, lectures and assignments. Therefore what follows is a summary of the course *before much contact or advice* owing to time constraints.

Course Objectives

- To offer an overall account of the developing relationships between visual culture and society, from classical to early modernist times, with an emphasis on constructions of representation in visual expression.
- To give some insight into the intellectual, social and political developments and theories which influenced artists, craftspersons and designers in the given period.
- To articulate major debates surrounding the role of visual culture throughout history
- To prepare students as researchers in cultural issues
- To position art and culture within a design and media environment

Assignments

Three completed assignments are required for this subject.

Essay I: Due week 4, March 21, length 500 words (20%)

In your own words summarise Janice Winship’s views about the human body and the nude. How does this differ from the portrayal of the human body in magazines today?

References:

Betterton, R. (ed). 'A girl needs to get street wise: magazines for the 1980s', Janice Winship. *Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media*, Pandora, London, pp 127, 1987.

Clark, K. 'The naked and the Nude' in *The nude: a Study in Ideal Art*, Murray, London, 1956, 1984.

Saunders, G. *The Nude: a new perspective*, Harper Row, London, 1989.

Essay 2: Due: week 8, May 2, length 1000 words (30%)

Discuss and critique how in the Renaissance the status of art and the artist changed from artisan, to artist and ultimately to 'designer' in the development of the humanist man in a commercial world.

References:

Gombrich, E. *The Story of Art*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1984.

Grinnel, G.J. Heaven and Earth Reconciled: The Common Vision of Renaissance, Art and Science, *Leonardo*, 1988, Vol 12, no 2, pp. 195- 198.

Leonardo da Vinci. "Nature, Art and Science" from "The Portable Renaissance Reader". Edited by Ross, J.B. & McLaughlin, Penguin, London, 2000.

Meggs, P. *A History of Graphic Design*. , John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1988, Chapters 6-9.

Essay 3: Due week 13, June 6, length: 1500 words (50%)

"While Bodoni and Didot called their work *classic*, typographers since the early nineteenth century have classified these typefaces as *modern*, for they completed a development away from the organic origins of written forms" (Lupton and Miller, 1996:55). Discuss this statement in terms of the extent to which Neo-Classical typography expresses similar values of rationality, order and austerity as those associated with the fine arts during this period.

OR

Discuss the narrative and ideological purpose of *stylisation* and *hierarchic proportion* in the two-dimensional rendering of the human form in examples of work from Ancient Egypt and the Medieval era.

OR

Discuss how photography defines the beginnings of the modern era and the effects this had on new systems of representation including graphic design and advertising.

OR

Discuss the claim that design, visual communication and advertising have a short history of representation and consider how some historic connections to the arts and some key events mark the emergence of design.

Lecture Topics

1. Introduction: Representation and its Objects
2. Systems of Representation
3. The Philosophical Origins of Visual Representation
4. The Sacred & the Profane: Representation and Identification part 1
5. The Sacred & the Profane: Representation and Identification part 2
6. Images and Text
7. Science and the Re-presentation of Reality: the printing press and capitalism
8. Classification and Order in a Re-presentation of the natural world
9. New Terrains: Colonial Visions of Race & Place
10. Questioning the notion of the transitional: graphic design on the cusp of change
11. Representation and Individual Desire
12. Revolutions in Reality
13. In your Face: Signs of Modernity

Readings

Essential Reading List

Berger, J. *Ways of Seeing*, BBC/Penguin, London 1974.

Blauvelt, A. (ed). *Remaking History: The Convergence of Graphic Design, History, Theory and Criticism for Creative Practice*, ACD, Chicago, 1998.

Gombrich, E. *The Story of Art*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1984.

Hall, Stuart, (Ed.) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1997.

Hollis, R. *Graphic Design; A Concise History*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1994.

Jobling, P & Crowley, D. *Graphic Design: Reproduction and Representation since 1800*, Manchester University Press, New York, 1996.

Meggs, P. *Graphic Design*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1988.

Thwaites, T. et.al. *Tools for Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1994.

* Books and articles on the essential reading list above as well as those on the “set” lecture reading lists after each lecture are on 3 hour loan in reserve at CIW.

Extended Reading List

See also further readings listed on the weekly lecture summaries throughout this guide.

Barnet, S. *A Short Guide to Writing About Art* Harper Collins, New York, 1993.

Barnicoat, J. *Posters: A Concise History*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1986.

Barthes, R. *Mythologies* Vintage, London, 1970, 1993.

Burdick, A. “Ways of telling”. From Sandhaus, L. (ed). *New media. New narratives*, ACD, Park City, 2000.

Bullock, A. *The Humanist Tradition in the West* W. W. Norton & Co. New York, 1985.

Burke, P. *Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy 1420-1540*, Batsford, London, 1972.

Carter, M *Framing Art* Hale and Ironmonger, Sydney, 1990.

Chadwick W. *Women, Art and Society*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1995.

Clark, K. *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Art*, Murray, London 1956, 1984.

Cumming, E. and Kaplan, W. *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1991.

Caruana, W. *Aboriginal Art*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1993.

Csikzentmihalyi, M. “Design and Order in Everyday Life” from Margolin, V & Buchanan, R. *The Idea of Design: a Design Issues Reader*, MIT, London, 1995.

Dormer, P. *The Meanings of Modern Design*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1990.

Eco, U. *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (trans. H. Bredin) Yale University Press, New Haven, 1986.

Eisenman, S. *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1994.

Forty, A. *Objects of Desire, Design and Society 1750-1980*, Thames and Hudson, 1994.

Harrison, C. & Wood, P. *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* Blackwell, Oxford, 1993.

Hollis, R. *Graphic Design; A Concise History*, Thames and Hudson, London. *High and Low: Popular Culture and Modern Art*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1991.

Honour, H. & Fleming, J. *The Visual Arts: A History*, Abrams, New York, 1995.

- Janson, H.W. & F. *History of Art*, 5th ed. Harry N Abrams, New York, 1997.
- Kinross, R. *Modern Typography: an essay in critical history*, Hyphen, London, 1992.
- Kress, G & van Leewen, T. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Routledge, London, 1999.
- Lupton, E. & Miller, A. *Design, Writing, Research*, Kiosk, New York, 1996.
- McQuire, Scott. *Visions of Modernity*, Sage, London, 1998.
- Meggs, P. *Type and Image*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1989.
- Minor, V. *Art History's History* Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1994.
- Nelson, R and R. Shiff, *Critical Terms in Art History*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Nochlin, L., *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth Century Art and Society*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1994.
- Nochlin, L, *Representing Women Women*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1999.
- Raine, K. *William Blake*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1974.
- Rawson, P. *The Art of South East Asia*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1967.
- Sontag. S. *On Photography*. Middlesex, Penguin, 1979.
- Spencer, H *Pioneers of Modern Typography*, Humphries, London, 1969.
- Stafford, B. *Good Looking: essays on the virtue of images*, MIT, Cambridge, 1996.
- Vasari, G. *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, (trans. A. B. Hind), Dent, London, 1927.
- Vaughan, W. *Romanticism and Art*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1994.
- Whitely, N., *Design for Society*. Reaktion, London, 1997.
- Woodham, J. *Twentieth Century Design*, Oxford University Press, 1997.