ART601-01: Vision, Gender and Difference: Women and Art 
Since 1950
Spring 2009, T 5:00 - 7:30 pm

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HRS: W 10-3; T H 12:30-1:30; T 4-5; o.b.a.

Description:
Twenty years ago, this class (if it existed) might have asked: where are the women artists in art history? Ten years ago, it might have changed that question to this: is there a woman’s style which is different from men’s or is there a symbol system which is specifically female rather than male or generic? Today, although some art historians and textbooks still foreground the contribution of men, not all of us do. And most of those questions have largely been answered. The questions we might ask today is this: how does gender enter into the work of art? If the artist’s gender affects art, it is probably because of wider social expectations which affect gender, not because of inherent differences in skill or talent. If a female iconography has emerged, it has been in response to an increased interest in the body as the carrier of meaning, whether the male body or the female body. What becomes especially relevant, then, is the question of how artists of either gender use these bodies: what does it mean when the female body becomes the subject; why has the male body been depicted so rarely outside of religious art; does the meaning of the body change from one period to another or from one culture to another.

This course will examine what might be called a new “canon” of great women artists, but we will examine this canon in light of the following questions: Are the issues of feminist art different from the issues of contemporary art? Is “feminist art” a useful rubric for discussions of women and art? Are there particular feminist issues which may or may not be present in the work of a female artist some, all, or none of the time? How much do we need to know about the artist to know the artwork?

Goals and Objectives:
• investigation of leading women artists since 1950
• examination of changing social conditions and their impact on women who become artists and responses to the art of women 
• critical analysis, in writing and presentation, of writing about women artists

Textbooks

Web Sources:
class web site: www.radford.edu/rbarris (Link to the page for ART601)
ARTSTOR: www.artstor.org [class folder: WGA Spring 2009; password: wgaspr2009]
Directions for using artstor are included later in the syllabus.
Youtube provides several short videos explaining the features of Artstor and showing you how to register. Two useful links follow:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bP0VZhbeqC4
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAlQsiINiAA

Artstor is an image library to which Radford University subscribes. In most cases, rather than preparing image groups for you, I will ask you to make your own image groups and save them in your personal work folder for this class. Since this is not a class with image-based exams, the goal of the image groups will be increasing familiarity with the works of the artists we discuss. Many of you have used Artstor already, in which case you’re already registered. You do not need to register again, but you do need to sign up for the class folder.

*For new users: VERY IMPORTANT!!!* The first time you use Artstor, you must either be on campus or go to the artstor site by using the Radford library link. Once you have a log-in and password, you can work from home for 4 months without working on a campus computer. Registration for Artstor is simple: Hit the “go” button to enter the digital library. A new screen opens up with the Log In box in exactly the same place as the Enter box had been on the previous screen. To register, you enter your email, the password you want to use, and hit submit. After you register, whenever you use Artstor you will have to log in with the same information. Although you can do an image search without logging in, you will not be able to save anything and you will not be able to access the class folder.

*All users: Make sure you allow pop-ups for this site.* If you change computers when working, you will have set this feature on each computer you use. Otherwise, it will not work.

**REGISTER FOR THE COURSE FOLDER.** After you register for Artstor, you must register for the class folder. (This is not the same thing as RU course registration!) My course folders are password protected. Go to the FIND button at the top of the page, hit “unlock password protected folder” and follow the directions. After you unlock the folder, it will always show up in your menu of folders and image groups. If I do add an image group to the folder, you will be able to see it and open it.

**Requirements:**

**Attendance and Participation:**
Attendance is absolutely necessary since this is a seminar-class and it meets once a week. More than 2 absences without legitimate documentation of truly extenuating circumstances will result in an F. Participation is also expected, and is more than simply showing up for class. I will expect you to be prepared for discussion by having read the assigned materials before they are discussed in class.

To facilitate participation, I will assign weekly essays on the readings and artist of the week. These essays must be completed before the relevant class and turned in. I will grade them on a scale of 15 points. Individual grades will be grouped as follows:

- 12 - 15 points on 90% of the weekly essays, you will receive an A for class participation
• 12-15 on 75% of the essays, with no grade lower than 10 = B
• 12 - 15 on 50%, no grade lower than 8 = C

Total cumulative points for weekly essays: 200

Midterm essay: this will be a longer essay assignment, probably involving a revision/rewriting of one of the chapters in *After the Revolution*. Details will be provided in class. **Points: 200**

**Major Project**

• create a class book, volume 2, of *After the Revolution*. Either alone or with one other person, choose a candidate for inclusion (some of these artists are included on the syllabus); write a long essay which justifies the selection of this artist, explores her career and paradigmatic style, and provides an in-depth analysis of 2 works. Select 5 works to include as “full-page” color plates (they must be referred to in the essay), and recreate one of them to photograph from real life. 10-15 pages if done alone; 15-20 pages if done with a partner. Word counts, format, etc. will be provided in class. **(300 points)**
• every one will be responsible for leading a 20-30 minute discussion on your work in progress. **(100 points)**

**Library Reserves (ask at the desk)**

**DVD’s**
art:21, Season Three
Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, The Mistress and the Tangerine
art:21, Seasons One and Two
art:21, Season Four

**BOOKS**
[other books to be added]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME AND ARTISTS</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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| **Weeks 1-2** | Introductory themes and questions  
Overview of artists  
What approaches to the study of women artists are offered by the readings? How do the approaches of the two books as a whole compare? What questions do they ask?  
Joan Brown; Louise Bourgeois |
|  | forward and introduction to *After the Revolution*  
ch. 26, 36 in FVCR (*Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*)  
*After the Revolution*: Louise Bourgeois  
dvd: *The Spider, the Mistress, and the Tangerine* |
| **Weeks 3 - 4** | female imagery, female craft, and the “central core”  
Chicago, Schapiro  
from Pattern and Decoration to ‘decorative” installation  
Judy Pfaff*, Jessica Stockholder*, Nancy Rubins, Kozloff  
Pollock’s “critique” of feminist art history and Schor’s critique of Pollock |
|  | Read: Nancy Spero  
ch. 8 and 10 (FVCR)  
Read: Judy Pfaff  
ch. 13 and 29 (FVCR) |
| **Weeks 5 - 6** | obsessive repetition or the destruction of form? Nevelson, Hesse, Kusama, Hamilton*, Coyne |
|  | Ann Hamilton |
| **Weeks 7 - 8** | Can abstract painting be discussed in feminist terms?  
Artists: Krasner, Mitchell, Murray* |
|  | ch. 23  
Elizabeth Murray |
| **Weeks 9 - 10** | color and the body  
Alison Saar, Abramovic, Walker*, Gallagher*, Kiki Smith* |
|  | ch. 28 and 14  
Smith, Abramovicz, Gallagher |
| **Weeks 11 - 12** | necessarily incomplete (photography, film and video):  
Sherman, Neshat, Rossler, Weems, Goldin, Antin*, Simmons* |
|  | ch. 51 and 33  
Sherman, Neshat |
| **Week 13** | playing with language: Holzer, Kruger |
Jenny Holzer |
| **Week 14** | reexamination of the questions from week 1  
Are they doing anything different from contemporary male artists? |
|  | Dana Schutz |

* = art21 segment; we will watch it in class