



**VPAS 6312-051 (53731)**  
**Art and Society: Dematerialization and Rematerialization in Art, 1914-Present**  
**Dr. Charissa N. Terranova**  
**June 1-July 3, 2026**  
**Tu-Th 1-5**  
**ATC 2.705E**

Eileen Agar, *Autobiography of an Embryo*, 1933-34

### **Description:**

This course explores the braiding of dematerialization and rematerialization in art, c. 1914-present. The word “dematerialization” identifies forms within artistic practice that are immaterial, evanescent, or of marginal value, such as performance, photography, collage, appropriation, and found objects. This art often is ambivalent about machines, mechanization, and mass production and is anarchic, ironic, and righteously indignant. By contrast, “rematerialization” names the thrust in art towards upbuilding repair, social renewal, and sincere actions of the collective. A type of neo-romanticism, art of rematerialization explores nature and biology in the plural. Individual artists may be motivated by one, the other, or both forces, at once a sly trickster and sincere poet. The class studies the contextual role of science, technology, and nature in the making of dematerialized and rematerialized art, including wars of necessity versus wars of choice; rebuilding and economic redistribution; identity and individual agency; and environmental destruction and regeneration.

The class is visually rich. Images of art are central to each meeting. Grades are based on class participation, presentations, and two short essays summarizing and expanding on reading assignments. No prerequisites are required for this course. All comers welcome.

### **Assignments – Presentations and Essays**

- 1.) Presentations:** Students are required to make two 45-minute powerpoint presentations during the summer. Each presentation should focus on the entire reading assigned for the class meeting and at least one artist. This is a heuristic exercise, viz. a matter of teaching and learning for the presenter and class. Presenters should inspire group dialogue by directly asking fellow classmates questions about the reading, making image-rich presentations, and explaining the relationship these images have with the reading and/or contemporary issues, be they in the art world, natural and biological environments, and/or politics. Powerpoint presentations should consist primarily of images of works of art with captions. Text-based slides are permissible but should be kept to a minimum unless the text is with an image. To generate discussion, students are advised to strategically place slides with questions in presentations. Please send a pdf of presentations to [terranova@utdallas.edu](mailto:terranova@utdallas.edu) by 9 am of the morning following presentations. Percentage of grade: 33%.
- 2.) Essays:** Students submit one 1200-word essay based on their presentation upon the day of their presentation, making for a total of two 1200-word essays. The essays should be descriptive and interpretative, connecting at

least one artist to the assigned reading. The professor will return the essay with editorial comments concerning syntax, formatting, and contents. Percentage of grade: 33%. Essay formatting:

- cover page with center justified heading with student's name, course name, professor's name, date
- title of each essay center justified and underlined or italicized
- double spacing
- 12-pt. font
- endnotes
- comprehensive bibliography
- pagination

**3.) Edited Final Essays:** Students will submit the two 1200-word essays having addressed the professor's editorial comments concerning syntax, formatting, and contents on **Tuesday, July 7** to [terranova@utdallas.edu](mailto:terranova@utdallas.edu). The formatting of the final essays is the same as above. Percentage of grade: 34%.

#### **Attendance and Behavior Policy:**

Students are required to complete all assignments before meetings and arrive punctually to class ready to engage the assigned material. Students are allowed one unexcused absence after which each will result in the lowering of the final grade by one whole letter.

#### **Readings:**

The reading assignments are available on reserve at the library or at eLearning through the eReserves portal.

#### **Schedule:**

- Tu June 2      Dematerialization-Rematerialization: László Moholy-Nagy, Constructivism, and the Bauhaus
- L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vision in Motion* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1947) 7-112.
  - O. Botar, *Sensing the Future: Moholy-Nagy, Media, and the Arts* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2014) 11-81.
- Th June 4      Dematerialization-Rematerialization: Dada and Surrealism
- M. Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009) 65-104.
  - A. Breton, *Surrealist Manifesto* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969 [1924]) 1-48.
  - C. Terranova, *Organic Modernism: From the British Bauhaus to Cybernetics* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2024) 21-64.
- Tu June 9      Rematerialization: Popular Science and Experimental Art
- C. Terranova, *Organic Modernism: From the British Bauhaus to Cybernetics* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2024) 135-172.
  - S. Forgan, "Festivals of Science and the Two Cultures: Science, Design and Display in the Festival of Britain, 1951," *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 31, No.2 (June 1998) 217-240.
- Th June 11      Dematerialization: The Artworld and Institutions
- A. Danto, "The Artworld," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 61, No. 19 (Oct. 15, 1964) 571-584.
  - L. Woodruff, *Disordering the Establishment: Participatory Art and Institutional Critique in France, 1958-1981* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020) 31-90.
- Tu June 16      Dematerialization: Everyday Life, Protest, and War
- L. Lippard and J. Chandler, "The Dematerialization of the Art Object," *Art International*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (February 1968) 31-36.
  - L. Steinberg, "Flatbed Picture Plane" in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth Century Art* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1972) 61-98.

- Th June 18 Dematerialization: Fluxus and Pedagogies of Play
- H. Higgins, *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 1-16; 101-146.
  - N. Harren, "The Diagram Dematerialized: From Marcel Duchamp to John Cage to George Brecht," *Atharor*, Vol. 26 (2008).
- Tu June 23 Dematerialization: The Post-Medium Condition and Deskillling in Contemporary Art
- R. Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea" *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999).
  - J. Roberts, "Art After Deskillling," *Historical Materialism*, No. 18 (2010) 77-96.
- Th June 25 Rematerialization: Earth Works and Geological Time
- L. Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983) 1-120.
  - L. Arnold, "Exceeding the Field of Vision," *Groundswell: Women of Land Art* (New York: DelMonico Books, 2023) 13-25.
  - D. Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 35, No. 2: 197-222.
- Tu June 30 Rematerialization: Other Humanisms and Nonhumanisms
- S. Hutchinson, "Occupying Space: Land Art and the Red Power Movement, c. 1965-1978," *Image & Text*, Vol. 36 (2022) 1-23.
  - D. Sagan, "Umwelt After Uexküll," *A Foray in the Worlds of Animals and Humans by Jacob Von Uexküll* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) 1-34
  - T. Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be A Bat?," *The Philosophical Review* (Oct. 1974) 435-450.
- Th July 3 Rematerialization: Art after the End of the World
- A. Jacobs, et. al., "Co-Creatively Producing Knowledge with Other-Than-Human Organisms in a (Bio)Technology-Controlled Artistic Environment," *Social Inclusion*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2023): 51-64.
  - S. Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle; Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be 'Black'," *National Identities and Socio-Political Changes in Latin America*, A. Gomez-Moriana and M. Duran Cogan, eds. (New York: Routledge Press, 2013 [2001]) 30-66.