

AHST 3320 Section 501
Course in Contemporary Art
Kinetics of Urban Sprawl
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
Spring 2008
Monday, 7:00-9:45
03.31.2008

Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity by Alexander Alberro

Monday April 7

In-Class Screening of Film

Steven Spielberg's made-for-TV movie
(and first movie)

Duel

Revised Schedule

Cyborgs, Cybernetics, and the Automotive Prosthetic

April 7: In-Class Film: *Duel*

- 1.) FILM LAB: Screening of Film: *Falling Down*, Week of April 7

April 14: Conceptualism as Aesthesis: Jeff Wall, Paul McCarthy and Richard Prince

- 1.) No Reading, just lecture

April 21: Los Angeles: Automotive Ecology

- 1.) Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, 3-38; 77-92; 143-160; 195-204
- 2.) Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 502-513 e-reserve
- 3.) Robert M. Keesing, Review of Gregory Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, in *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 76, No. 2 (June 1974) 370-372, available at JSTOR
- 4.) Bob Turner, Review of Gregory Bateson's *Mind and Nature*, in *RAIN*, No. 36 (Feb. 1980) 11-12, available at JSTOR
- 5.) FILM LAB: Screening of Film: *Death Proof* from *Grindhouse*

Revised Schedule

April 28: Cyborgs and Prosthetic Bodies

- 1.) Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (MIT Press, 1994) reread 3-21; 56-61; 77-105; 284-296; 308-360
- 2.) Sarah S. Jain, "The Prosthetic Imagination: Enabling and Disabling the Prosthetic Trope," *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter 1999) 31-54, available at JSTOR
- 3.) Elizabeth Grosz, "Prosthetic Objects," in *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*, chapter 9, pp. 145-205 [??? Uncertain about final page number of chapter] e-reserve
- 4.) Written Assignment #3 Due

May 5: Final Exam: 7:00 p.m.

Quiz

Who is Seth Siegelaub?

Part I The Contradictions of Conceptual Art

p.1 Seth Siegelaub's quote: What happens to value in conceptual art according to Siegelaub?

p. 2 What is the major gist of the "contradiction of conceptual art" about which Alberro writes?

p. 2 What is "informatization"?

Chapter One Art, Advertising, Sign Value

p. 4-5 Please explain the "fundamental reconception of the patronage vis-à-vis conceptual art.

p. 12-13 What is the role of Image. Art Programs for Industry, Inc.? Whose project was this?

p. 14 How does Siegelaub's cultivation of corporate support compare with Lucy Lippard's description and historical account of conceptual art?

p. 20 How does Dan Graham discuss the notion of "place"? What does this mean to the conventions of the art object?

Chapter One Art, Advertising, Sign Value (continued)

p. 22 Let's parse Graham's quote on page 22:

Andre translates material base into base measure of values, literally inverting normative value terms for material ones. Bricks, bales of hay, slabs of slate, aluminum or zinc are worth exactly what their market value (defined by scarcity of supply and demand) brings. Their sale as art adds commission price to gallery and artist (also determined by laws). The commodity is produce, not produced by the artist's handiwork. It possesses actual, physically definable qualities as opposed to abstract, imagined or critically defined qualities. Instead of projecting past artists' or the artists's past experiences for the viewer's emotional investment, Andre's sculpture is placed in a present situation of confrontation open to the viewer's here and now experience. No permanently worthwhile experience is implied, the "value" of Andre (or Flavin or Warhol or Christo) being temporally contingent on its present context.

Chapter 2 Art as Idea

p. 28 Let's discuss some of the words that Alberro uses:

- a.) post-painterly
- b.) antihumanist
- c.) nonmetaphorical (Alain Robbe-Grillet)

p. 32 What's the relationship between Kosuth and Warhol?

p. 35/8 What does it mean for Sol LeWitt to try to make art that isn't subjective? What is he doing?

p. 39 What is the relationship between art and idea/ art and material in the work of Kosuth?

Chapter Three Locations, Variations, and Durations

pp. 60-65 What is the evolving relationship between sculpture and architecture and what are we to make of it? Artists here include Huebler, Christo, Heizer, de Maria, Long, and Oppenheim.

pp. 70-71 What is the relationship between Smithson and Huebler, in particular their use of maps? How are they unique from one another?

p. 82 What is meant by the following: "...the very core of Huebler's project was based on questions of signifying and signification, of making and remaking relationships. The material signifiers could be joined and parted in multiple ways in each and every viewing of the work. In this sense, the operation of Huebler's work shifted the focus to the play of the signifier and the practice of *signifying*, more strongly and decisively than previously."

Chapter Four The Linguistic Turn

p. 84 Do you understand the following statement? "In a creative misreading of the latter's *Flag* (Jasper John's) series, Weiner problematized the artist's decision-making process and frustrated critical attempts to interpret artworks as stemming from the personal subjectivity of an exceptional, unique sensibility."

p. 86 What are the repercussions of McLuhan and Fiore's statement? "Electric circularity has overthrown the regime of 'time' and 'space' and pours upon us instantly and continuously the concerns of all other men. It has reconstituted dialogue on a *global scale*."

p. 87 What is the "simultaneous" happening?

p. 89 What is the meaning of "performative" in the following sentence? "Weiner's *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf*...was the artist's most performative work to date."

Chapter Four The Linguistic Turn (continued)

p. 100 What do you make of the following statement? "Weiner's conceptualist work thus joined Kosuth's and Huebler's in dismantling the conventional idealization of the artist as that person who, on the basis of a craftsmanlike maintenance of traditional skills, emblemized the unity of the psyche, society and culture based on the synthesis of physical, mental, spiritual, and technical work. Instead, Weiner, Huebler, and Kosuth simply claimed value for their work by the mental labor of artistic development that led to its design, while deeming the physical labor of inserting a readymade text as a newspaper advertisement, taking a photograph, or emptying an aerosol can of spray paint directly onto the floor to be of secondary importance. In the process, these artists replicated not only capitalism's division of mental and physical labor, but also its privileging of the planning and design stage of production over the procedure of construction."