

## **TRANSMEDIA: PERFORMANCE ART (ART 317C)**

Spring 20011

Tuesday and Thursday: 2pm-6pm

Room: ART 3.206

Instructor: Michael Smith (michaelsmith@mail.utexas.edu)

Office Hours by request: 2.203 (across from photo)

Teaching Assistant: Jeff Stanley (jeffrey.charles.stanley@gmail.com)

### **Course Description:**

A concise definition of performance art has yet to be established. Most historians and practitioners would agree on two points: there are no rules and one may borrow from any source. In this introductory course students will learn how to develop and produce solo performance art pieces for different contexts and venues. Emphasis will be placed on developing one's ideas rather than refining one's technique. Students are encouraged to look for inspiration from a variety of sources including popular culture, current events, art and the routines of everyday life. Attention will be paid to developing ideas and images and translating them into time based-pieces employing a process of layering, the addition and/or subtraction of text, movement, and/or audio/visual elements. In addition to presenting and critiquing individual assignments, class time will also be devoted to discussing readings, viewing video documentation and field trips to destinations outside of the classroom.

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

60% of final grade will be based on completion of assignments (4 performance projects)

40%: attendance and participation

### **Attendance:**

Class attendance is a requirement and use of the full class period is expected. You will be allowed three sick, personal, physical or mental health days without grading consequences. It is up to your discretion how you use these three days. Being late to class three times or leaving class early three times will count as an absence. 15 minutes late to the start of class will constitute a tardy. Leaving class before being dismissed by your Professor will constitute an early departure. A 4th absence will result in the lowering of your final grade by one letter grade. Absences, tardiness and/or early departures beyond this could result in course failure. If a serious medical or personal situation occurs affecting attendance, please discuss it with your professor.

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Course Objectives:**

In this beginning course performance art is regarded as a tool, rather than a discipline. Students will be encouraged to develop interests and ideas initiated in other studio art and academic classes and throughout the semester will meet with the professor to evaluate

their progress in relation to class assignments and their own goals. In addition to acquiring a more comprehensive knowledge of the history of performance art through a series of readings, screening and speakers, students will also learn how to develop, produce and document live solo and collaborative art performance works.

### **Required Readings:**

A series of readings related to Futurist, Dada and Happening performances to give a sense of a history of avant-garde strategies and attitudes about materials, process and audience, and their lasting influence on contemporary art practices.

Carlson, Marvin A. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Goldberg, Roselle: *Performance Art: from Futurism to the Present*

Howell, Anthony: *The analysis of performance art: a guide to its theory and practice*

Kaprow, Allan: *Essays on the blurring of Art and Life*

Kirby, Michael: *Futurist Performance*

Kirby, Michael: *Happenings*

Schechner, Richard: *Performance Studies: An Introduction, Second edition*. New York: Routledge, 2006

Schimmel, Paul: *Out of actions: between performance and the object, 1949-1979*

### **Suggested On-line Resources:**

There are several helpful online resources that discuss and/or feature video, performance and new media art. Here are a few:

<http://www.ubu.com/film/>

An incredible resource hosting hundreds of experimental and avant-garde films, videos and sound works from the past 50 years. It is one of the most comprehensive sites online.

<http://www.eai.org/eai/index.htm>

Founded in 1971, Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) is a nonprofit arts organization that is a leading international resource for video and media art. A pioneering advocate for media art and artists, EAI's core program is the distribution and preservation of a major collection of over 3,500 new and historical video works by artists. For over 37 years, EAI has fostered the creation, exhibition, distribution and preservation of video art, and more recently, digital art projects.

<http://www.vdb.org/>

Founded in 1976 at the inception of the media arts movement, the Video Data Bank is an important resource in the United States for videotapes by and about contemporary artists.

The VDB collections feature innovative video work made by artists from an aesthetic, political or personal point of view. The collections include seminal works that, seen as a whole, describe the development of video as an art form originating in the late 1960's and continuing to the present. The videos in our collections employ innovative uses of form and technology mixed with original visual style to address contemporary art and cultural themes.

<http://newmedia-art.org/sommaire/english/sommaire.htm>

The New Media Encyclopedia is the first trilingual English-French-German catalogue of its kind freely available on-line. It is intended as a source of information, a tool for documentary research, and a scholarly work, but also a locus of debate on artistic practices related to the new media.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Weeks 1-5**

#### ***Culling, Assembling and Sequencing***

Experimentation with a variety of elements, including text, image, sound, movement and media to develop performance events taking place at a particular time and place.

Particular Attention will be paid to the documentation of these events using video, audio, photography and/or text. Chance operations, fragmentation and montage will be encouraged and explored.

### **Weeks 6 - 10**

#### ***Pastiche, Parody and Appropriation***

During Weeks 6-10, the class will work with familiar templates and narrative models borrowed from television, the Internet and other media. Drawing from stuff we peripherally see, hear or read daily, like point of purchase videos, sitcoms, reality TV and/or radio talk shows, projects may borrow from anywhere and use anything as a model to create new performance pieces.

### **Weeks 11-15**

#### **Context and Production**

Working with themes considered during the first eleven weeks of the semester, students conclude the course by producing a group program of individual and collaborative pieces developed for a specific site outside of the classroom.

## **Assignments and Deadlines**

### **Assignment #1: *Culling, Assembling and Sequencing***

Prepare a script for a 3-5 minute solo performance piece incorporating any three elements. Project proposals must be researched thoroughly before meeting individually with the Professor. After a proposal has been accepted it is to be presented to class.

### **February 1**

**Proposals Due: *Culling, Assembling and Sequencing***

**February 15:**

**Assignments Due: *Culling, Assembling and Sequencing* Due**

**Assignment #2:**

***Pastiche, Parody and Appropriation***

Choose a location. Find out all you can about the specific place and record all your research. Based on your initial interest and what you learned about the site, choose a familiar narrative model or template to develop a performance. Write a script and make an audio recording of it, keeping in mind the ambient sounds and conditions of the site. Presentation of the proposals, audio and research for the class should be treated like a performance. After scripts are presented and reworked, presentation and/or documentation of the performances will take place at a specific site determined by the students (after consulting with professor).

**February 24:**

**Proposals Due: *Pastiche, Parody and Appropriation***

**March 3:**

**Assignment #2 *Pastiche, Parody and Appropriation* Due**

**Assignment #3**

**Taking into consideration solo projects produced for assignments 1&2 and the theme and context for the final performance event, come up with a solo performance to present in the group event.**

**March 31**

**Proposals for Final Project/Event Assignment Due**

**May 3**

**Final Projects Due**

**Oral Reports**

Throughout the semester, each student will be required to prepare a 15-minute presentation for the class on an individual performance artist, group or movement. Each presentation should give a sense of the historical background of each artist or group's work and also their influence and significance for other artists. Prepare a handout for the class highlighting key points of the talk and use PowerPoint or other presentation tools to supplement the talk. Dates of presentation to be determined during the semester.

**Academic Integrity**

According to the General Information catalog, "the value of a university degree depends on the absolute integrity of the work done by each student for that degree, a student should maintain a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work".

**University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

**Documented Disability Statement**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).