

LIT 20S-01 (Fall 2011)

WF 2:50 - 4:05PM

Location: Art Building 102

Instructor: Zach Blas

Email: zachary.blas@duke.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Art, Media, and Interventions After the Internet

<http://artmediainterventions11.wordpress.com>

In May 2004, artist and activist Steve Kurtz is wrongly arrested and charged with bioterrorism for using biological specimens in an artwork about genetically modified food. In November 2008, the art and activist group The Yes Men distributes 80,000 copies of a fake edition of the New York Times that features articles on a better future, including the Iraq War ending and free public education for all. In March 2009, hacker and artist Ricardo Dominguez leads an online protest against the University of California President's website that crashes the site's servers.

Today, in our era of globalization and the internet, artists and activists are blending together to create new methods for politically intervening in the world. Notably, they use a multitude of media--films, videos, websites, blogs, software, social media, and do-it-yourself electronics--to protest, resist, and re-imagine their current social and political situations. These artistic practices blur the distinction between art and activism in unique, shocking, and affective ways.

In this course, we will look at a variety of these approaches to artistic political intervention in the 21st century, such as tactical media, electronic civil disobedience, and hacktivism. We will pay particular attention to how artists and activists define and participate in political action as well as how different forms of media enable and require different forms of intervention.

We will read from a range of texts and disciplines to critically engage with these practices, including first-hand documents and manifestos by artists and political groups, as well as essays in art history, philosophy, media studies, and journalism.

Our focus on media will help us continually ask and attempt to answer: What happens to art when artists become activists? What happens to political action when activists become artists?

We will draw on these groups, works, and texts: The Facebook Suicide (Bomb) Manifesto, Wikileaks, Critical Art Ensemble, The Yes Men, The Invisible Committee, Radical Software Group, A Hacker Manifesto, Electronic Disturbance Theater, The Situationist International, The Zapatista Army of National Liberation, Raqs Media Collective, Counter-Cartographies Collective, Edu-factory Collective, Tiqqun, Hakim Bey, Colectivo Situaciones, Turbulence, AAAAARG, and The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest.

Required Texts

All reading materials will be available to download as a zip file of pdfs through the add/drop period of the semester. Typically, readings will consist of a series of short texts. There will usually not be more than 40 - 50 pages assigned per week.

Course Requirements

class participation

weekly 1/2 - 1 page blog posts

4 - 6 page essay with 1 revision

7 - 10 page essay with 1 revision

10 - 12 page essay with 1 revision

Grading & Expectations

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation (20%)

Attendance in this class is mandatory. You should plan on attending every class. You are allowed three unexcused absences over the course of the semester. After that, your class participation will drop a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence. Upon the fifth unexcused absence, you will receive a failing grade for the course.

Every student will be expected to participate in every class. Class discussion is an essential part of this seminar. It is important that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

Blog Posts (20%)

Posting every week to the course Wordpress blog is required. Students are expected to post brief comments about the materials covered in class. Posts must be approximately 500 words (1 page). Please come prepared to respond to your peers' posts. All posts are due by 11:00pm on the Saturday before the material is covered in class. (provide links)

Essays and Revisions (60%)

All essays must be written in 12 point font with 1 inch margins on all sides, stapled together. Students will have the option to revise all essays once they are graded. Essays that show significant improvement can earn up to full credit.

Essay 1 (20%) a close reading of a text

Essay 2 (20%) a close reading of a visual artwork

Essay 3 (20%) a critical, comparative analysis of writing, art, and political topic discussed in class

Students are also encouraged to make use of the Duke University Writing Studio. You can find details and schedule an appointment at <http://uwp.duke.edu/wstudio/resources/index.html>.

Details on the requirements for each paper will be distributed in class.

Screenings

I will schedule afternoon or evening screenings of the films and videos that are to be discussed in class. While attendance at these screenings is not mandatory, students who don't attend the screenings will have to view these materials on their own time. Details on the screenings will be provided in class.

Appointments

Students are strongly encouraged to set up an appointment to meet with me at any time in the term when course material seems unclear. This is the best way to ensure that students have a solid grasp of the material before embarking on the final paper.

Email

Students in this class are required to check their Duke email account at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

Laptop Policy

While students are permitted to use laptops for the purposes of note taking, computer note-taking should not detract from your active vocal and visual participation in this class. I ask that you respect this regulation.

Honor Code

Students are expected to abide by the terms of the student code of academic conduct, available in your undergraduate bulletin or online at <http://www.integrity.duke.edu>. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.

Respect and Tolerance

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here. Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

Course Schedule

Introduction

w 8/31

The Yes Men, New York Times "Dream Edition," <http://www.nytimes-se.com/>

"New York Times Hoax - The Yes Men Fix The World," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoZQNgAnvqs>

Vincent Bethell, "Naked Protest," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zz7g8N30u0o>

f 9/2

Nato Thompson, "Trespassing Relevance," *The Interventionists* (pp 13 - 22)

"Krzysztof Wodiczko," *The Interventionists* (pp 25 - 28)

"The Surveillance Camera Players," *The Interventionists* (pp 83 - 88)

History, Revolution, Influence

The Situationist International and May 1968

w 9/7

Greil Marcus, "The Long Walk of the Situationist International," *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (pp 1 - 20)

Sylvère Lotringer, "The Great Refusal," *ArtForum May 2008* (pp 302 - 305)

f 9/9

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (film, excerpts in class)

René Viénet, *Can Dialectics Break Bricks?* (film, excerpts in class), http://www.ubu.com/film/vienet_dialectics.html

Situationist International, "Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation," <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/1.situations.htm>

Situationist International, "Questionnaire," <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/9.questionnaire.htm>

Situationist International, "Definitions," <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/1.definitions.htm>

Suggested:

Guy Debord, "Separation Perfected," "The Commodity as Spectacle," and paragraph 67, *The Society of the Spectacle* (pp 11 - 34, 43 - 44)

Guy Debord, "A User's Guide to Détournement," <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/detourn.htm>

Nato Thompson, "Détournement," *The Interventionists* (pp 151)

The Zapatistas and 1994 Revolution

w 9/14

Zapatista (film)

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=211108422793632049#>

Tom Hansen, "Historical Timeline," *The Zapatista Reader* (pp 8 - 15)

Andrew Kopkind, "Opening Shots," *The Zapatista Reader* (pp 19 - 21)

Zapatista Army of National Liberation, "First Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle," *The Zapatista Reader* (pp 217 - 220)

Zapatista Army of National Liberation, "EZLN Demands at the Dialogue Table," *The Mexico Reader* (pp 638 - 645)

f 9/16

Chiapas Media Project, *Caracoles: New Paths of Resistance* (video)

Octavio Paz, "The Media Spectacle Comes to Mexico," *The Zapatista Reader* (pp 30 - 33)

Subcomandante Marcos, "The Long Journey from Despair to Hope," *The Mexico Reader* (pp 646 - 654)

Subcomandante Marcos, "Do not Forget: Ideas are also Weapons," *The Zapatista Reader* (pp 311 - 315)

Suggested:

Subcomandante Marcos, "The Fourth World War Has Begun," *The Zapatista Reader* (pp 270 - 285)

Revolution, Art, and Analog Media

w 9/21

Susan Meiselas, *Pictures from a Revolution* (film, watch Thursday)

Diana Taylor, "Past Performing Future: Susan Meiselas's *Reframing History*," *Susan Meiselas: In History* (pp 232 - 236)

Shifts in Media

Digital Media and Control

f 9/23

Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies," *Negotiations* (pp 177 - 182)

Alexander Galloway, "Introduction," *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* (pp 2 - 27)

Radical Software Group, "Carnivore," <http://r-s-g.org/carnivore>

*****Essay 1 due in class*****

Hacking

w 9/28

Alexander Galloway, "Possibility," *Anarchitexts: Voices from the Global Digital Resistance* (pp 284 - 286)

McKenzie Wark, "A Hacker Manifesto Version 4.0," *Anarchitexts: Voices from the Global Digital Resistance* (pp 344 - 357)

Suggested:

Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker, "Counter Protocol," "Notes for a Liberated Computer Language," *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (pp 97 - 101, 159 - 166)

Tactical Media, Subversion, & Hacktivism

Tactical Media

f 9/30

David Garcia and Geert Lovink, "The ABC of Tactical Media," *Anarchitexts: Voices from the Global Digital Resistance* (pp 107 - 110)

Rita Raley, "Tactical Media as Virtuositic Performance," *Tactical Media* (pp 1 - 30)

Josh On, "They Rule," <http://www.theyrule.net/>

RTMark, "Barbie Liberation Army," <http://www.rtmark.com/blo.html>

Preemptive Media, "Zapped!" <http://www.preemptivemedia.net/zapped/index.html>

Critical Art Ensemble, "Halifax Begs Your Pardon!" <http://www.critical-art.net/>

TacticalMedia.html

More Tactical Media and Subversion

w 10/5

The Yes Men, *The Yes Men Fix the World* (film, watch Thursday)

Experimental Interaction Unit, "Dispersion," <http://www.eiu.org/experiments/dispersion>

Mark Tribe, "etoy.SHARE," *New Media Art* (pp 42 - 43)

etoy, "TOYWAR.COM," <http://toywar.etoy.com/>

Suggested:

0100101110101101.org, "Biennale.py," <http://0100101110101101.org/home/>

biennale_py/ index.html

Hacktivism and Disturbance

w 10/12

"The Hacktivists Digital Zapatismo," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-U-he8LN3k>

Mark Tribe, "Zapatista Tactical FloodNet," *New Media Art* (pp 40 - 41)

Brett Stalbaum, "The Zapatista Tactical FloodNet," <http://www.thing.net/~rdom//ecd/ZapTact.html>

Ricardo Dominguez, "Electronic Disturbance: An Interview," *Cultural Resistance Reader* (pp 379 - 396)

Ricardo Dominguez and Coco Fusco, "Electronic Disturbance," *Anarchitexts: Voices from the Global Digital Resistance* (pp 98 - 106)

Critical Art Ensemble, "Electronic Civil Disobedience," *Electronic Civil Disobedience and Other Unpopular Ideas* (pp 7 - 32)

f 10/14

Jill Lane, "Digital Zapatistas," *The Drama Review* 47, 2 (T178), Summer 2003 (pp 129 - 144)

Bioterrorism

w 10/19

Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Strange Culture* (film, watch Thursday)

"Critical Art Ensemble Defense Fund," <http://www.caedefensefund.org/index.html>

Critical Art Ensemble, "Free Range Grain," <http://critical-art.net/Biotech.html>

Critical Art Ensemble, "GenTerra," <http://critical-art.net/Biotech.html>

Critical Art Ensemble, "Acknowledgements," "Introduction: Bodies of Fear in a World of Threat," "When Thought Becomes Crime," "Reflections on the Case by the U.S.

Justice Department Against Steve Kurtz and Robert Ferrell," *Marching Plague: Germ Warfare and Global Public Health* (pp 7 - 10, 13 - 21, 117 - 121, 123 - 148)

Globalization and Neoliberalism

Hardt & Negri

f 10/21

The Fourth World War (film, watch Sunday), <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=4947562540870341312#>

selections from Hardt & Negri's *Empire* and *Multitude*, and October 2009 *ArtForum* excerpts

Okwui Enwezor, "Reckoning with Empire," *ArtForum October 2009* (pp 175 - 177)

Raqs Media Collective

w 10/26

Mark Tribe, "Raqs Media Collective," *New Media Art* (pp 76 - 77)

Pamela M. Lee, "How to Be a Collective in the Age of the Consumer Sovereign," *ArtForum October 2009* (pp 185 - 189)

Raqs Media Collective, "A Concise Lexicon of/for the Digital Commons," *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (pp 340 - 349)

Raqs Media Collective works, <http://www.raqsmediacollective.net>

GeoAction and Mapping

f 10/28

Brian Holmes, "The Revenge of the Concept: Artistic Exchanges, Networked Resistance," *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (pp 350 - 368)

Brian Holmes, "Do-It-Yourself Geopolitics: Global Protest and Artistic Process," *Escape the Overcode: Activist Art in the Control Society*, [http://](http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2007/04/27/do-it-yourself-geopolitics)

brianholmes.wordpress.com/2007/04/27/do-it-yourself-geopolitics

Counter-Cartographies Collective, <http://www.countercartographies.org>

An Atlas of Radical Cartography, <http://www.an-atlas.com>

Suggested:

Brian Holmes, "Cartography of Excess: Bureau D'Études & Multiplicity," "Drifting Through the Grid: Psychogeography and Imperial Infrastructure," *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms* (pp 7 - 14, 29 - 34)

Bureau D'Études, <http://bureaudetudes.org>

*****Essay 2 due in class*****

Borders

Transborder Immigrant Tool

w 11/2

Electronic Disturbance Theater, "The Transborder Immigrant Tool," <http://bang.calit2.net/xborder>

Alex Dunbar, "Follow the GPS, Ése: The Transborder Immigrant Tool Helps Mexicans Cross Over Safely," *Vice Magazine*, <http://www.viceland.com/int/v16n11/htdocs/follow-the-gps-225.php>

Transborder Immigrant Tool videos, <http://vimeo.com/banglab>

Micha Cardenas, "No Borders Struggles: The Electronic Disturbance Theatre 2.0," *DigiMag 62*, <http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=2011>

f 11/4

continue Transborder Immigrant Tool

Ricardo Dominguez Virtual Sit-In Against the UCOP case
b.a.n.g. lab documents, <http://bang.calit2.net>

Identity

Cyberfeminism and Queer Desire

w 11/9

Alex Galloway, "Cyberfeminism," *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* (pp 184 - 196)

VNS Matrix Manifesto, <http://www.sysx.org/gashgirl/VNS/TEXT/PINKMANI.HTM>

Micha Cardenas, "Becoming Dragon," <http://secondloop.wordpress.com>

Maria Fernandez and Faith Wilding, "Situating Cyberfeminisms," *Domain Errors! Cyberfeminist Practices* (pp 17 - 27)

Race and Racism

f 11/11

Mongrel, *Colour Separation* (1997)

Jennifer González, "The Face and the Public: Race, Secrecy, and Digital Art Practice," *Camera Obscura* (2009), pp. 37 – 65

Mendi and Keith Obadike, *Blackness for Sale* (2001)

Coco Fusco, "All Too Real: The Tale of an On-Line Back Sale" (2001)

Hasan Elahi, *Tracking Transience* (2002 - present)

Wafaal Bilal, *Domestic Tension* (2007) and *Virtual Jihadi* (2008)

The University

Student Activism Today

w 11/16

"Chronology of Occupations & Struggles in California," *Occupy California*, <http://occupyca.wordpress.com/timeline>

"Communiqué from an Absent Future," <http://wewanteverything.wordpress.com/2009/09/24/communique-from-an-absent-future>

"The Necrosocial," <http://anticapitalprojects.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/the-necrosocial>
"Statement by the occupiers of Campbell Hall"

“Anti-Capitalist Projects: Questions and Answers,” *Anti-Capitalist Projects*, <http://anticapitalprojects.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/anti-capital-projects>

“Occupied Berkeley: The Taking of Wheeler Hall,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISZrR7qE-Oc>

“UCSC Occupation - Friday Night,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1k-jsBlZmpo>

“UCSC Occupation #4 - Kerr Hall - Fri,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMw54zCLdRk>

f 11/18

Edu-factory Collective, “All Power to Self-Education!” *Toward a Global Autonomous University: Cognitive Labor, The Production of Knowledge, and Exodus from the Education Factory* (pp 0 - 17)

Education Outside the University

w 11/30

Nicholas Mirzoeff, “Anarchy in the Ruins: Dreaming the Experimental University,” *The Interventionists* (pp 143 - 146)

“Looking at Los Angeles: The Public School,” *art:21*, <http://blog.art21.org/2009/11/12/looking-at-los-angeles-the-public-school>

“Small is Beautiful: a discussion with AAAARG architect Sean Dockray,” *Masters of Media*, <http://mastersofmedia.hum.uva.nl/2010/01/05/small-is-beautiful-a-discussion-with-aaaarg-architect-sean-dockray>

“Scanners, collectors and aggregators. On the ‘underground movement’ of (pirated) theory text sharing,” *Open Reflections*, <http://openreflections.wordpress.com/2009/09/20/scanners-collectors-and-aggregators-on-the-%E2%80%99underground-movement-%E2%80%99-of-pirated-theory-text-sharing>

16 beaver group, <http://www.16beavergroup.org>

The Public School, <http://all.thepublicschool.org>

AAAARG, <http://aaaaarg.org>

Escape

Tiqqun and The Invisible Committee

f 12/2

The Invisible Committee, *And the War has only just yet Begun* (video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owbXZ--4i20>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3SVjPMgWaU>

“FOX NEWS reviews ‘The Coming Insurrection,’” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKyI2qNskJc>

Aaron Lake Smith, “Vive Le Tarnac Nine!: The French Tradition of Brainy Sabotage Lives On,” *Vice Magazine*, <http://www.viceland.com/int/v17n4/hdocs/vive-le-tarnac-nine-407.php>

Tiqqun, “How To?” *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader* (pp 297 - 312)

The Invisible Committee, “Introduction: A point of clarification,” “From whatever angle...,” “Get Going!” “Find Each Other,” “Get Organized,” “Insurrection,” *The Coming Insurrection* (pp 9 - 19, 23 - 28, 95 - 132)

Tactics

w 12/7

Bernadette Corporation, *Get Rid of Yourself* (video)

Alexander Galloway & Eugene Thacker, "Tactics of Nonexistence," *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (pp 135 - 137)

Sean Dockray, "Facebook Suicide (Bomb) Manifesto," <http://turbulence.org/blog/2010/05/28/idc-facebook-suicide-bomb-manifesto>

Hakim Bey, "From TAZ: The Temporary Autonomous Zone," *Cultural Resistance Reader* (pp 113 - 115)

*****Essay 3 due in class*****

Models of Collective Movement, Action, and Protest

f 12/9

Colectivo Situaciones, "On the Researcher-Militant," <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0406/colectivosituaciones/en>

Turbulence, selections from *What Would it Mean to Win?*

Brian Holmes, "Swarmachine: Activist Media Tomorrow," *Escape the Overcode: Activist Art in the Control Society*, <http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2007/07/21/swarmachine>
selection from *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, <http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org>

www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org

Mark Tribe, "Port Huron Project," <http://www.marktribe.net/art/port-huron-project/Wikileaks>, <http://wikileaks.org>

Brian Holmes, "Affectivist Manifesto," *Escape the Overcode: Activist Art in the Control Society*, <http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2008/11/16/the-affectivist-manifesto>