COURSE PLAN

Arnd Schneider

New Approaches to the Anthropology of Contemporary Art:
Anthropologists as Artists, Artists as Anthropologists?

Contemporary art has only recently become a concern for anthropologists. For a long time, the anthropology of art has investigated the art of entire, often small-scale non-western societies, and put less emphasis on individual artists. This course will look at recent overlaps between art and anthropology. Following the so-called 'ethnographic turn', contemporary artists have adopted an 'anthropological' gaze, and even sometimes methodologies, such as fieldwork, in their appropriation of other cultures. Anthropologists, on the other hand, in the wake of the 'writing culture' critique of the 1980s, are starting to explore new forms of visual research and representation beyond written texts. This course will explore the potential for future collaborations between art and anthropology, based on an examination of key texts and review of a number of paradigmatic artists.

SESSION 1
14 January, 12.15 – 14.00

- Introduction to the course by the course leader: issues in the anthropology of art, definitions of art, contemporary art
- Allocation of student presentations for sessions 2, 3 & 4
- Discussion of the following readings (you must read these before the session):


  Schneider, Arnd. 2006. Appropriation as Practice: Art and Identity in Argentina. New York: Palgrave.ch.2


SESSION 2
11 February, 12.15 – 16.00

- Discussion of the following readings


- student presentations on individual artists from the list below (which have been allocated in session 1)

SESSION 3
25 February, 12.15 – 16.00

- Discussion of the following readings


Schneider, Arnd. 2006. Appropriation as Practice: Art and Identity in Argentina. New York: Palgrave. Chs. 1,6,7 (& 3 optional)

- student presentations on individual artists from the list below (which have been allocated in session 1)

SESSION 4
10 March, 12.15 – 14.00

- Discussion of the following readings


Schneider, Arnd. 2006. Appropriation as Practice: Art and Identity in Argentina. New York: Palgrave. Chs. 4,5,8 (& 3 optional)

- student presentations on individual artists from the list below (which have been allocated in session 1)

PRESENTATIONS
For presentations, starting in the second session, students are required to present the work of one artist from the list below and relate it to the readings. In particular, students should be critically exploring of how the work of the artists can contribute
to anthropological knowledge, methodological innovation and new representational and research practices. Students are invited to use visual means, such as powerpoint, in their presentations. The allocation of presentations will take place in the first session.

RAINER WITTENBORN
One of the best examples of politically engaging 'fieldwork' by artists. Artist Rainer Wittenborn and the writer on indigenous peoples, Claus Biegert, did several months research with the Cree of Northern Quebec, whose territory was threatened by a huge hydroelectric power station. The exhibition was first shown in a Cree School and then travelled to Montreal and San Francisco.

JOSEPH BEUYS
One of the major artists of the second half of the 20th century; Beuys stylized himself as a shaman, and many references in his work to anthropology in the widest sense.

LOTHAR BAUMGARTEN
Conceptual artist Lothar Baumgarten has been influenced by French Structuralism (e.g. Claude Lévi-Strauss) and his work criticises the appropriation of non-western cultures by the West, and explores the recognition of otherness (especially with reference to indigenous peoples of the Americas).

CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI
Boltanksi has been an early critic of the appropriation of otherness in Western museums (especially ethnographic museums), and explores notions of collections, and 'fictive' and 'real' human traces.

RIMER CARDILLO
Rimer Cardillo explores the Western histories of conquest and extinction of indigenous peoples in Latin America, with special reference to his native Uruguay.

CARLOS CAPELÁN
Capelán, Carlos. Only You. Carlos Capelan: Catalogue of an Exhibition at Bildmuseet, Umea University, Sweden. 2004
Carlos Capelán makes reference to the anthropological gaze and modes of representation, as well as his own identity, living between Sweden and Latin America.
MARK DION
Mark Dion deconstructs the western notion of archaeological 'research'.

NIKOLAUS LANG
A fine example of a major artistic ‘fieldwork’ project in Southern Australia, which lasted 3 years, related to aboriginal pasts and presents, and resulted in archeological, anthropological and performance works.

SHARON LOCKHART
A fieldwork-based project by the film-maker and photographer Sharon Lockhart, challenging assumptions of visual production and consumption held by mainstream visual anthropology, based on a collaboration with anthropologists and demographers in the city of Manaus, Brazil.

ANA MENDIETA
A paradigmatic artist, working in highly innovative ways with her body, and performance based expressions, and with reference to Afro-Cuban and indigenous cultures of her native Cuba.

TRIN T. MINH-HAH
The film-maker, feminist theorist and anthropologist in collaboration with artist Jen Paul Bourdier.

CÉSAR PATERNOSTO
Artist-scholar César Paternosto exploring the relation between ancient Amerindian sculpture and textile art and modern abstract art, including his own art-making.

ROBERT POWELL
Drauhgtsman and painter Robert Powell’s masterly ‘close-up’ ethnographic exploration of the Himalayas, in collaboration with anthropologist Michael Oppitz.

MICHAEL TRACEY et al.
Text by Edward Leffingwell, John Christophel, and Michael Tracy. Photographs
by Keith Carter, Graciela Iturbide, David Crossley, and others. Rice University Press, Houston. With text in both English and Spanish, this book documents Edward Leffingwell's performance art piece liberating the Rio Grande from its use as a political boundary, and reviving its role as a life giving source. Artists as recreators of a ritual procession (here: the Via Crucis): what does this reveal about the ritual process?

CECILIA VICUÑA,

GILLIAN WEARING