

AR-469

Art since the 1950s: trends & topics at Documenta

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture	MA1, MA3	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	3
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	During the semester
Workload	90h
Weeks	12
Hours	2 weekly
Courses	2 weekly
Number of positions	

Summary

This course is devoted to understanding the evolution of art & its most relevant phenomena since the 1950s. Using the recurring international art show Documenta as a framework, it will critically examine and contextualize relevant artworks, topics & media that have shaped the world.

Content

In what way can it be enlightening, even crucial to engage with contemporary art today? Looking at the history and the evolution of the recurring international art exhibition *Documenta* can teach us. Originally conceived as a show bridging the gap between modernism and the 1950s in ruinous post Nazi Germany, the Documenta soon became a survey of trending topics in international art and thus in international culture. Since its first edition in 1955, the small city of Kassel has become the epicenter of the (Western) art world every couple of years. Revisiting and re-evaluating its most relevant editions by examining their most impactful artworks leads us to consider a diverse range of topics and media: conceptual art and moving images, feminist and post-colonial tendencies, performances and Social Sculpture, to name just a few. During the course of this class, it will become apparent how art not only records and represents current topics, but, in turn, shapes them as well.

Please note: The exam takes place in the form of a written essay (see below).

Keywords

- Documenta
- contemporary art
- contemporary culture
- 20th and 21st century
- academic research and writing

Learning Prerequisites**Important concepts to start the course**

You should be familiar with the key concepts of academic research and writing. What is a quote? How do I research historic facts? Which sources are trustworthy? Otherwise, no previous knowledge is needed.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Describe artworks

- Contextualise artistic currents of the 20th century
- Critique artistic concepts
- Theorize their own observations and research on contemporary artworks
- Analyze artworks

Transversal skills

- Use a work methodology appropriate to the task.
- Communicate effectively, being understood, including across different languages and cultures.
- Respect relevant legal guidelines and ethical codes for the profession.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
- Access and evaluate appropriate sources of information.
- Summarize an article or a technical report.

Teaching methods

Ex cathedra lectures alternating with online lectures.

The lectures will be interactive but do not require any preparatory reading.

Expected student activities

Attending the lectures and participating in the live discussions at the end of each lecture.

Writing an essay based on thorough academic research (see "assessment methods").

Assessment methods

The assessment consists of a written essay of ca. 3000 words, to be handed in by January 10, 2022 via email.

It can either expand on a topic discussed in class or use the methodology learned in class to analyze any artwork of the discussed time period that is connected to the topics discussed in the lecture. Topics will be arranged with the lecturer well in advance (in an abstract via email). To prepare for the written essay, we will discuss the importance of appropriate scientific research, writing and citation as well as transparency with regards to intellectual property. The essay must include proper citation with footnotes and bibliography as well as figures with proper captions.

The assessment criteria for the essay are:

1. Originality, Phrasing, Focus of the Problem (10%)
2. Compelling argument, analytical understanding of the overall topic (10%)
3. Reasonable structure of the essay (10%)
4. Examination of the specific research object (25%)
5. Analysis of the literature: research, overall state of research, evaluation, critical discussion (15%)
6. Vocabulary: adequate terminology, precise wording (10%)
7. Language: correct spelling, grammar, punctuation (10%)
8. Formal apparatus: consistency of citation method, bibliography and image index (10%)