



Chelsea Thompto, *When I Say What I Shouldn't*, TransAction, 2019. Thompto will visit Art 112 on April 13

## Contemporary Art 112/212

Spring 2021

TuTh 1:30–2:45 PM

Professor Elaine O'Brien

Open office hours: W 1–3 PM

<https://csus.zoom.us/j/83272361145>

Or email me for an appointment

[eobrien@csus.edu](mailto:eobrien@csus.edu)

Website <https://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/index.htm>

Blog: <https://artviewpoint2014.blogspot.com/>

### Course description:

After a background survey of the 1960s and 1970s, this course moves chronologically and thematically from 1980 to the present. You will become aware of how contemporary art appropriates every art tradition from every time and place. It reinvents the past for the artists' current situations and global contexts as they engage in countless ways with their lived experiences. Readings, assignments, and lectures shed light on what lies behind the aesthetic and anti-aesthetic choices artists make that shape the look of visual culture today.

Because contemporary art is global, a product of our information age of continual flux and border crossing, and because people of every identity make it in every conceivable medium, it is more challenging and necessary to comprehend than any other art in history. Indeed,

contemporary art is not “history” at all. It is about the present; contemporary artists’ era is our era. Therefore, learning about it will help you see your place in our times and the history of art as it unfolds.

*Prerequisite: Art 1C, Art 109, or equivalent with instructor’s consent. Please see me if you have not had Art 1C or Art 109.*

### Learning Objectives:

- Gain knowledge about contemporary art in context.
- Develop your understanding of the role of artists, artworks, and art institutions in society.
- Develop your understanding of why today’s art looks like it does, in dialogue with but distinct from the art of any other time.
- Develop your understanding of the relationship between an artwork and the artist’s personal and historical situations.
- Advance your vocabulary for talking about art form and content.
- Advance your critical thinking skills and worldliness.
- Gain an appreciation for the difference between artistic intention and the reception and interpretation of art.
- Learn to see the multiple interpretations of artworks as legitimate contributions to contemporary art discourse and overcome the notion that there is a single correct interpretation of an artwork.

### Required texts:

- Peter Kalb, *Art Since 1980: Charting the Contemporary*, 2014
- Subscribe (required and free) to [Hyperallergic](#), an excellent contemporary art blog. Click the link, scroll down, click the blue tab “Get our newsletter,” and fill in the information.

### Recommended texts:

- Charles Harrison, ed., *Art in Theory 1900 - 2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*
- Kristine Stiles, ed., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings*
- Free art news blogs: Read every day. See the left column of my website homepage for links: <https://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/index.htm> Besides *Hyperallergic* (required), read other contemporary art blogs that will keep you up on art news include *SquareCylinder* (Northern California); *Rhizome, The Seen* (Chicago); and *Centre for Aesthetic Revolution*.

Course Requirements and Grade Basis:

<b>Participation</b>	20%
<b>Contemporary Art Blog</b>	40%
<b>Quizzes</b>	40%

Total: 100%

**20% Participation:** Good participation is preparation, engagement, and how much you help others learn: a positive, questioning attitude. *Participation is recorded in Zoom breakout room discussions and chat reflections, attendance, being on time, and staying to the end of classes.*

**Attendance:** For an excused absence, email me and see me during office hours to explain why you missed class. If you have a medical excuse or other evidence, you can email that to me.

- Two *unexcused* absences do not affect your grade.
- Three *unexcused* absences - reduce your grade by one letter.
- Each subsequent *unexcused* absence reduces your grade by one letter.
- Five *unexcused* absences result in automatic failure.
- Chronic unexcused lateness or leaving early (more than three times) can reduce your grade by one letter.
- Scheduled appointments, transportation problems, and job demands are not excused.
- **Illness and family/childcare and emergencies are excused. If you can't email me proof, such as a health professional note, don't worry. See me during my office hour or by appointment to explain the situation and probably get excused.**

NOTE: Exchange contact information with two students in the class. Students can answer many questions about the class. If you miss a class, they can give you their notes to copy.

*If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation. Go to Services to Students with Disabilities (SSWD), Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me during my office hours early in the semester.*

*If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away! The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student. Email the CARES office at [cares@csus.edu](mailto:cares@csus.edu) to speak with a case manager about the resources available to you. Check out the [CARES website](#).*

**40%: Contemporary Art Blog:** *Contemporary Art Video* and *Artist-Lecture* Review blog

The blog launch deadline is February 9.

Blog progress reviews on March 16, April 6, and April 29

NOTE: *We will share blogs in breakout rooms throughout the semester.*

*\*I will post the URLs for your blogs on Canvas. Part of your overall blog grade is for comments on other students' entries. When commenting, be constructive and as respectful as you would be in person.*

- **Minimum quantitative content:**

- ✓ **Four artist guest lecture posts.** We will have four guest lectures this semester in Art 112.

- Complete the research preparation assignment for each of them.

- Take notes and complete your blog reviews about each guest speaker.

- \*\* See directions below for how to write a lecture review blog.

- ✓ **Eight hours of contemporary art videos**

- CHOOSE FROM ART 112 **CANVAS VIDEO LIST ONLY.** Email me for permission to use other videos. Each video you select will be a different length. You do the addition yourself.

- Create a public blog using Google Blogger, which is user friendly and has the options needed for this project: <https://support.google.com/blogger/answer/1623800?hl=en>

*As you select your template and content categories, look at example student blogs posted on Canvas and prize-winning blogs like Art F City and Hyperallergic to get ideas for your blog. Use the Hyperallergic articles as models for your own writing. Links for Hyperallergic and other art blogs are on my website's homepage on the left side.*

- Publish a blog entry for each video or series of video shorts. Caption all photographs, videos, links, and any other educational content you want to add.

- Write for readers who are advanced art students like yourself.

- Eight hours' worth of contemporary art videos is the minimum requirement for the course, but feel free to add additional subject-related content that you think is interesting and important.

- Weblog posting dates should span the semester regularly from beginning to end, so start right away. I will look at your blog weekly and mark the roster when you add

information.

- Your grade is lowered for starting late and not adding something weekly, including comments on other students' blogs. Make your comments constructive and substantive.

**Writing your lecture review blog posts:**

- Before the guest lecture, research the speaker and include relevant background information about them in your post.
- Take notes during their talk and review the Zoom recording of it.
- Ask the speaker one question and write down your question and the speaker's answer. Include the question and answer in your blog post.
- Include one photo of the speaker and pictures of their art from the web.
- Write a 200-400-word article for publication in your blog. See helpful video guidelines: "[How to Write A Blog Post for Beginners \(And Even Experienced Bloggers\)](#)"

**Final Blog Presentations in class are **May 11 and 13.****

I will grade your blog based on the following criteria modified from "[Google webmaster guidance for high-quality blogs](#)":

- Do the articles provide original content or information, original reporting, original research, or original analysis?
- Do the articles contain insightful analysis or interesting information that is beyond obvious?
- Does the page provide substantial value when compared to other blogs in the class?
- How much quality control is done on content?
- Do articles provide thorough descriptions of the topic?
- Are the articles too long or too short (stay between 200-1000 words), unsubstantial or otherwise lacking in helpful specifics?
- Does the blog have plenty of relevant photographs and are they captioned?
- Are the articles and entries edited well, or does it appear sloppy or hastily produced?
- Do the articles have spelling, stylistic, or factual errors?

**40% Quizzes:** 10-minute in-class quizzes noted on the schedule (changes in quiz schedule are announced in class and Canvas)

*Each quiz has two parts:*

1) Slide identification: give the artist's name and nationality, the title of the work, date, medium(s), location if it is not an art object, as in public art, performance, temporary installations.

2) Brief essay: You will be asked to discuss the social relevance and historical significance of the artwork, showing **what you learned from the readings, videos, and class lecture(s)**.

\*NOTE: A quiz might include art and information covered in previous tests.

- The essay questions will draw from \*the textbook and \*lecture notes. \*An “A” quiz gives information from both.
- Scoring is on a scale from 1-10 points based on mastery of the material. For the final quiz grade, the lowest score is deleted from your record. The rest are totaled and averaged.
- No makeup quizzes are given, but one “free” quiz (missed or low score) is subtracted from the total grade.
- The slide lectures are available on Canvas just before they are shown in class. Zoom classes are recorded and available for review on your Canvas Zoom page.

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## **Course Schedule** (subject to changes announced in class or by email)

General note about assignments: Study the textbook, *Art Since 1980: Charting the Contemporary* (as “Kalb” in schedule) and use it as a reference to expand your knowledge and better understand the readings, lectures, and videos. Use the book’s index to find artists and art movements presented in lecture. Class lectures loosely follow the text.

### **January 26:** Introduction

Assignment: Launch your blog. Use Google Blogger:

<https://support.google.com/blogger/answer/1623800?hl=en>

\*Add *title*, *photo*, and *basic information about you*. Upload the URL in Canvas. \*

Your blog-launch deadline is **February 9**.

\*Before launching your blog, review sample student blog on Canvas and some prize-winning contemporary art blogs like *Hyperallergic* for suitable models. See links in the left column of my website:

<https://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/index.htm> for contemporary art blog URLs

**NOTE: You will share your blog posts with other students in breakout rooms weekly after February 9.**

### **January 28:**

Assignment:

- Read “Introduction” to *Art Since 1980* (Kalb). How does he define contemporary art?

- Read the short definition of “contemporary” art on the homepage of *Google Arts & Culture*:

*Contemporary Art*: <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/contemporary-art/m0h0vk?hl=en>

**In a Canvas text box, write a 100-150 word comparison** of 1) Kalb’s definition of contemporary art and 2) the Google A&C author’s definition of contemporary art. What dates does each

author give for “contemporary” art? What do they say characterizes it?  
NOTE: Questions about readings might be on the quizzes.

**February 2:**

**February 4:**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 1: “Discovering the Contemporary”

**February 9: Blog launch deadline**

**February 11: Quiz**

**February 16:**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 2: “Taking Pictures: Appropriation and its Consequences,” pp. 46-65

**February 18:**

**February 23:**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 3: “Back to the Easel: Neo-Expressionism and the Return of Painting,” pp.65- 91

**February 25: Quiz**

**March 2:**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 4: “Into the Streets,” pp.91-116

**March 4:**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 5: “Commodities and Consumerism,” pp.116-14

**March 9:**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 6: “Memory and History,” pp. 140-168

**March 11: Quiz**

Assignment: Update blog and submit URL to Canvas for review.

**March 16: Blog Progress Review 1 Due**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 7: “Culture, Body, Self, pp.168-193. To prepare for Kelly Lindner’s visit, review the University Galleries <https://www.csus.edu/university-galleries/> and read a question for Sara. If she answers it, add her answer to your blog post for 1 point blog point extra credit.

**March 18: Guest lecture: Kelly Lindner: “How’d You Get to Be a Curator Anyway?”** an overview of Lindner’s curatorial practice and the role of the academic museum or gallery in shaping how she curates contemporary art.

**Spring Break**

**March 30:**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 8: “Eastward Expansion: Contemporary Art in Russia and China,” pp. 193 - 218

**April 1: Quiz**

Assignment: Update blog and submit URL to Canvas for review.

**April 6: Blog Progress Review 2 Due**

Assignment: Begin a blog post for guest lecturer Sara Garzón. Go to [Worldmaking Practices: a Take on the Future](#)

\*Include a question for Sara. If she answers it, add her answer to your blog post for 1 point blog point extra credit.

Read the following texts on the *Worldmaking* website:

- 1) **Sara Garzón:** [Notes for a Horizon-tality](#) (homepage part of the essay only)
- 2) **Alan Poma:** [Andean Futurism](#) – Poma’s statement and the video
- 3) **Kiyo Gutiérrez:** [The World, a Broken Jug](#) – Gutiérrez’s statement and video

Your blog post should include: 1) a short identification of three of the participants (Garzón and artists Poma and Gutiérrez), 2) a description of Poma and Gutiérrez’s art, 3) an explanation of Garzón’s argument and the two artists’ arguments (what they want their art to say), 4) your response to their argument, 5) and a few pictures. Insert the videos if you can. Add anything else you want that is relevant to the art and ideas.

**April 8: Guest speaker Sara Garzón**

Assignment: *Complete your post* for Garzón’s lecture. *Post a comment* on Chelsea Thompto’s blog and begin a post about her work for your blog. She has written several essays to help you understand her art. Access her blog through her website, where you can look at her art before reading her posts: <https://www.chelseathompto.com/>

\*Include a question for Chelsea Thompto in your blog about her work. If she answers it, add her answer to your blog post for 1 point blog credit.

**April 13: // Guest speaker Chelsea Thompto Artist Lecture**

Assignment: Write a blog post on Thompto’s lecture  
Chapter 9: “Engaging the Global Present,” pp. 218-250

April 15:

April 20:

Assignment: write a blog post on Dave Thomas, animator, that \* includes a question you want to ask him. If he answers it, add it to your blog post for 1 blog point extra credit.



Sources for your blog research:

Refer to 1) Thomas's page on the IMDb website for his list of works, awards and links to animated features: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1537173/> 2) An interview on *Animation Insider*: <http://www.animationinsider.com/2015/02/dave-thomas/> 3) Watch episode 1 of *Kid Cosmic* on Netflix if you can: <https://www.netflix.com/title/80244340> 4) Thomas's Tumblr <https://owner-of-wendys.tumblr.com/post/140239050574/justin-nichols-director> If you are interested in storyboarding, scroll down to "My Fair Hatey" about storyboard process.

**April 22: Guest speaker Dave Thomas on his career in animation**

Assignment: Read Kalb: Chapter 11: "The Art of Contemporary Experience," pp. 280-311

April 27: **Quiz**

Assignment: Update blog and submit URL to Canvas for review.

April 29: **Blog Progress Review 3 Due**

May 4:

May 6: **Quiz**

May 11: Blog Presentations

May 13: Blog Presentations