

Arts 360: Installation Art in Time and Space

Professor Claudia Esslinger

Contact Office: Bexley 203-pbx 5465/ Home: 427-3873 Esslinge@kenyon.edu

Class Locations: Gazebo building/ Digital Studio

Class Hours MWF 2-4pm/ Office Hours: MWF 1-2pm, and by appt.



Course Description: Installation Art is based on the merger of Space and Time and on a relationship between the artist and the visitor. Utilizing your interests and abilities in a variety of subjects and media, you will create environments that immerse the viewer in a sensory/ intellectual/ emotional experience. The material and methods you use can range from everyday objects, to highly personalized forms, from appropriated sounds to surveillance video, from large wall drawings to interactive switches for the participant to manipulate. The class will consist of demonstrations of art skills particularly useful in installation (sculptural, video, audio, interactive media, graphic presentation etc), presentations by the professor, research and reports and journal entries, weekly critiques and an exhibition at the end of the semester.

Installation Art is a pervasive, varied, global practice for art-making that acts as a gathering place for expression in all media addressing all subjects in a wide range of styles by broad grouping of artists. So if this category of art making is so broad, how is it different from other forms of visual art? How can we define it at all?

SPACE for the viewer to enter that allow for

- an immersive experience on the part of the viewer (multiple senses)
- The piece is not complete without the viewer's literal presence.
- The viewer can experience the piece from multiple vantage points (rather than one)
- The literal space often means that the work has a relationship to the space, either site-specific, site-referential, or nomadic.

TIME is required to experience the work.

- For passage through the different elements
- Time to process/ dialog and interact with the work.
- Much of the work unfolds over time, is based on a time structure or loop.

The RELATIONSHIP between the Artist and Visitor is inter-dependent.

The piece doesn't fully exist without the viewer's active participation

Specific Characteristics: Installation Art is very fluid, eclectic and inclusive. The idea that materials and concepts are brought together in a temporary exhibition is something that is typical of Installation art. (Although installations are now reinstalled in a variety of locations and purchased)

Some typical approaches seen in contemporary Installation Art include:

An obsessive-compulsive collecting and arranging of material, sensory immersion for the participants, the use of tactile/sensual materials, sculptural forms and contraptions, large scale drawing, interactive video, found objects, hand crafted objects. The concepts include a use of paradox/ exaggeration, overwhelming spectacle, references to museums and public institutions, fantasy narratives and socio/political actions that can involve the community, to name a few.

Course Goals:

Be Curious, playful, dedicated, innovative and unafraid of risk.

Develop metaphors, irony and mystery in your work while avoiding clichés.

Develop an understanding of Time and Space as vocabulary for your aesthetic explorations.

What is the relationship of your idea to a specific time and place?

Understand the use of multiple senses to appreciate an art project.

Structure your time well and pay attention to detail.

Love your materials.

Anchor your work in its appropriate context: historically, culturally, socially, aesthetically.

and with regard to other courses you are taking through research and presentations.

Learn how to control and care equipment to the degree needed to produce your work.

Make art in relationship to others: your class, your community and beyond.

Specific Skills to learn:

Planning a project: research, measuring, diagrams, models, etc.

Preparing a space: building walls, basic wiring, painting, welding, etc.

Gathering and making elements: finding materials, sewing, drawing, printing photos, etc.

Media Control: lighting, projectors, computers, etc.

Publicity: Making a proposal, developing an artist's statement, postcard, documenting work.

Evaluation Criteria (Does the work show)

1. An approach that is visually, intellectually and emotionally **compelling**? Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to experience more?

2. Originality/ creativity/ **innovation**/ surprise/ cleverness? Does the work avoid clichés and pat expectations? Did you take a risk ...step away from your comfort zone?

2. **Conceptual depth**, sophistication or complexity that allows a **sustaining** interest from the viewer.

4. **Form** (its color, media, rhythm, etc) that supports the **content** (the idea or concept). Does it make sense to use this form for this subject?

4. **Resolution** in the way that makes sense for your own project. The various themes and metaphors should pull together into a unified whole that makes sense. It should be finished.

It should fulfill the assignment.

5. A **commitment** to the work that involves creative problem solving, development of technical skills, attention to detail, meeting deadlines, showing artistic integrity and effort, a willingness to learn from others including faculty and students, participation in group critiques and discussions.

6. An awareness of the **appropriate audience/ assignment/ social context** of your work as relating to other artists and non-artists, those of your generation and beyond, what era you are working within, what cultural knowledge you can refer to and what will be lost on the viewer. *The piece should be appropriate for galleries or public art presentations. It should be a creative response to the guidelines of the assignment.*

Communication and grading:

Grading comes in the form of comments and numbers. I really value talking to you personally, writing emails in response to your work and I only give number grades as a supplement to these more important tasks. Nevertheless, the numbers can tell you how I think you are doing in relationship to my overall expectations which are based on a history of knowing what students can do, what the rest of the class might be able to do in the allotted time, and what I think you *personally* are capable of all in relationship to the above mentioned goals. Please do not compare your grades with others! There are many reasons for variations in grades. What is taking a risk for one person might be comfortable and predictable for someone else with more experience. Good work comes in many forms! Please take initiative in scheduling conversations with me if you don't understand something. It is your responsibility to catch up on work you have missed. Communication is key to understanding! To do the best in this class you should start

work right after the assignment is given so that you can revise as needed. . If you miss a demonstration/ lecture, you will have to work with a TA and will not be able to visit the material as thoroughly.

Many critiques will offer a possible 10 points at a time, but this does NOT equate to traditional 100 point scales (where 70 is a C) ...instead I am trying to SPREAD out the scale. You can translate the numbers as follows:

9-10 = A- to A+ The high end of this indicates exceptional work to which nothing can be added, on time, following the assignment and with special insight, effort, risk-taking and creativity. All of the evaluation criteria are met. Excellent participation in critique and discussions.

7-8 = B- to B+ This indicates above average work, competent, safe and interesting but still lacking something or it could be innovative work without a high enough skill level. Good comments during critique and discussions.

5-6 = C- to C+ This indicates average work, average effort, basic amount of skill and creative ideas. Low participation in critique and discussions.

3-4 = D- to D+ The work is handed in but shows less than acceptable effort creativity and skill. Little to no participation in critique and discussions.

0-2 = F Little effort, skill, imagination.

Due Dates: Projects are due at the beginning of the class period on the date of the critique. A project is considered late if it is not ready at that time. Late projects will lose two points automatically. You will be graded for each assignment on the (progress and final) critique date. If the work is not finished, you should show it anyway to receive some credit, If you have an excused absence coming up on a critique day, the work is due *before* you leave.

Resubmission: You may always improve and resubmit work and the new grade will be averaged with your initial grade! Please submit the new version within a week and before the next critique. Lateness reductions cannot be erased by resubmissions.

Collaboration: You all have different aptitudes and experiences. Working together will improve all of your pieces. You are expected to help each other out and to pull your part of the load. Groups will also be important at idea sessions and critiques. It is here that feedback from your peers becomes collaborative. Your participation at critiques and discussions will influence your grade on each project.

Attendance Policy: Attendance in this class is extremely important because you cannot make up lost days by just reading or any other independent work. The class time is full of demonstrations, presentations, critiques and workshop time. If you miss demos you may never catch up and not know how to use the equipment. Workdays in class allow personal assistance from the professor on assignments and should be prepared for (*you should work outside of class to be at the next stage of work, ready for assistance. Expect to spend at least 12-15 hours per week outside of class*). Slide lectures and video screenings are wonderful opportunities to inspire your work and describe the nature of the assignment. Students who miss these invariably don't do as well on the associated project. For all of the above reasons, I am strict about attendance and accountability.

After three (3) unexcused class absences I will begin to *lower your final grade for the course by five points for each additional absence*. Unexcused absences should be saved for occasional minor illnesses and you should still notify me through a call or email. Two times late (10 min after class starts) will count as one absence. An absence before or after a break will count as two absences. Excused absences are only given for illnesses that require a doctor, death in the family, Kenyon sanctioned activities such as athletic events, etc, and must be okayed *before* the missed class. Do not leave for these events early. If you have more than three excused events that pull you away from class, you will have to start using your three allowed unexcused absences (for instance, if you have 5 scheduled events, two of them will use up some of your allowed unexcused absences) Excused absences do not include taking a friend to the airport, leaving early for break or the common cold.

Copies: All documentation of your work will be handed in as a copy on CD/DVD and for inclusion in the Kenyon Art Department Archives. They may be exhibited on our website or for promotional reasons within the college. You can purchase blank tapes and DVD's at cost from Lisa Dilts for this purpose.

Academic Honesty: Being honest academically in an art class is more difficult to define than in other classes. Sometimes using another image is intended as a cultural reference. It even has a name: "appropriation". Whenever this is intended, the image is well known enough in the culture for most people to know where it came from, and therefore it evokes some ideas or feelings tied to the original. This is fine for an artist to do. Occasionally students find compositions or images that they want to use in their work. Drawing from a photograph in a magazine is a common example. This should not be done just to make things easier, rather than drawing from life or gathering one's own photos, and the images often look stiff or commercial, but can be used if that is part of the concept of your piece. Taking another artist's image, composition or idea directly and passing it off as your own is a case for dishonesty however. I suggest that if you have a question, come talk to me first.

Disability Statement: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge you to contact the Office of Disability Services at 5453. The Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva (salvae@kenyon.edu) will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

Equipment policy: *You may not use any equipment until you have been trained on it. You are expected to care for all equipment both on the premises and off. If something breaks or is lost while in your possession, you are responsible for it financially. You may sign out equipment through Lisa Dilts between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30 (except the lunch hour, 12-1pm) Return time is by 12 noon the next day. If you are late in returning equipment, your borrowing privileges may be revoked. You may use Installation Art tools in the Gazebo, but you must get permission to take the tools off that site and must return them the same day. The keys must be returned when your portfolio is handed in or you risk not having your grade recorded. Make sure you clean up after yourself, don't bring food or drink in the edit facilities. Only Students enrolled in Installation art, Digital Imaging, Digital Photo, Video Art, Acting and Directing for the Camera and Photography and Advanced Studio may use Bexley Computer Lab. Anyone else, for any other project is not allowed (there is a media lab in the library for all other classes or other projects you create for other classes.*

For additional help contact Visiting Artist/ Manager of Technology: Adam Hinterlang (individual appointments available) Contact Adam at Hinterlanga@kenyon.edu or at his office in Bexley. Teaching Assistants are also available in the digital studio several nights a week (look for schedule) and Madeline Courtney, Shop Monitor in the Sculpture Area is available in the Sculpture Shop during scheduled hours.