

Art History, Art Studies, Art

Also relevant for: Cultural Studies

Course: Art History, Art Studies, Art

Group of courses: Esthetics

Provided by: Prof. Dr. Änne Söll

Last edit: Prof. Dr. Änne Söll, November 2019

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Course objectives:

Students are made familiar with gender and sexual orientation as analytical categories. Basic approaches, methods and theories will be presented which understand gender and sexual orientation as means of the social and symbolic order and show their connections to the art system. In this context, students should be made aware of the intersectionality of the categories gender and sexual orientation with other categories of differentiation such as 'race'. Students will learn to apply the acquired concepts critically in arts, art practice and art institutions.

Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

Gender studies in art and art history not only aim at revising the canon, but also at questioning its premises. Art is understood as part of a visual culture in which gender and sexual orientation are decisive factors. The most important research issues are the structural conditions for art production and artists, a critical history of institutions, images of women and the body as well as 'race'. Since the early 1990s, Judith Butler's performative approach has provided decisive impulses, which have been continued by queer studies. The challenge is to consider the intersectionality of gender with other factors ('race', sexual orientation) and to make it fruitful for studies of art.

Revision of the canon

Early gender studies approaches to arts and art history focused on uncovering the mechanisms responsible for the systematic exclusion of women from art academies, museums and art historiography. However, the addition of women artists to the canon of art history, which gender studies has promoted, were only a first step. The premises of this canon have also been questioned, and new criteria have been demanded and established. Such research was inspired by an art history oriented towards psychoanalysis, which has criticized the cult of the male genius and the approaches of a social-scientific art history that saw the emergence of works of art in the context of their social and political environment.

Embodiment and body images

The question of the representation of the female body in visual culture has been central to gender studies in art history. Images of femininities and masculinities have been structuring and producing the 'reality' of gender experience; both are interdependent. The reception of feminist film studies, dealing with the cinematic construction of 'points of view' and the representation of women and women's bodies in film, has been a decisive factor here.

Performativity, queer theory and masculinity research

Judith Butler's approach to gender and sexuality as performative has had a crucial influence on gender studies in art history. Butler's research approach and queer theory approaches are based on a political, deconstructivist reading of sexual orientation and gender. This understanding has also been adopted by critical approaches to masculinity in art history, which aims at revealing the mechanisms responsible for the emergence of the male-dominated art system. In addition, the paradox of the 'invisibility' of the male gender and the male body is addressed.

The challenge of intersectionality

In addition to the factors gender and sexual orientation, the factor 'race' has also been addressed by gender studies in art studies with the help of the reception of postcolonial studies approaches. How are racist structures reproduced in art and art studies and what are their underlying patterns? How do the factors gender and 'race' (and/or sexual orientation) coincide in the cultural construction of the social position as an artist?

Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

Gender studies holds its stand as a critical force in the arts and cultural sciences. For this reason, its contents should be integrated into art and art-historical study programs.* If the infrastructure is provided by suitable teaching staff, it is possible to provide courses with gender-specific content at all curricular levels. If this ideal form of implementation of gender content cannot be assured, it is advisable to set up a gender module that covers the spectrum of gender-related issues in art history along the four main approaches outlined above.

Degree Stage:

In order to make students familiar with the critical potential of gender studies from the very beginning, gender studies in art history should be an integral part at both Bachelor's and Master's level.**

* This paragraph is based on the former version of the curriculum by Carola Muysers: [Studie des Netzwerks Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung NRW Nr. 14, S. 317](#)

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Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

Eiblmayr, Sylvia. 1993. Die Frau als Bild: Der weibliche Körper in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts. Berlin: Reimer.

Fend, Mechthild, Ed.. 2004. Männlichkeit im Blick: Visuelle Inszenierungen in der Kunst seit der Frühen Neuzeit. Köln: Böhlau.

Garrard, Mary D., und Norma Broude, Eds. 2005. Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lindner, Ines u. a., Eds. 1989. Blick-Wechsel. Konstruktionen von Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte. Berlin: Reimer.

Paul, Barbara, und Johanna Schaffer, Eds. 2009. Mehr(wert) queer: visuelle Kultur, Kunst und Gender-Politiken. Bielefeld: transcript.

Pollock, Griselda. 1987. Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art. London: Methuen.

Schade, Sigrid, und Silke Wenk, 1995. Inszenierung des Sehens. Kunst, Geschichte und Geschlechterdifferenz. In: Bußmann, Hadumod und Renate Hof (Hrsg.): Genus: Zur Geschlechterdifferenz in den Kulturwissenschaften. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, S. 340–407.

Schmidt-Linsenhoff, Viktoria, Eds. 2005. Ethnizität und Geschlecht: postkoloniale Verhandlungen in Geschichte, Kunst und Medien. Graduiertenkolleg: Identität und Geschlecht. Köln: Böhlau.

Wenk, Silke u. a., Eds. 1996. Mythen von Autorschaft und Weiblichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert. Beiträge der 6. Kunsthistorikerinnentagung. Tübingen.

Zimmermann, Anja, Ed. 2006. Kunstgeschichte und Gender. Eine Einführung. Berlin: Reimer.

Journals:

[Kritische Berichte. Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften](#)

[FKW. Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur](#)

[Feminist Media Studies](#)

[Ada. A Journal for Gender, New Media and Technology](#)