

Labor, Globalization and Art

TARTS 406a – Spring 2016

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Office: Whitney 001

Office Hours: TTh noon –12:50 pm or by appointment

Class Meeting Time: TTh 12:50-2:55

Classroom: Whitney 004

Course Summary

Through studio art practices, reading, writing, discussion, and the analysis of contemporary media and art, we will examine issues of work, labor history and the effects of globalization on our contemporary life. Students will make art about their own work experiences, fears about the current economic situation and their visions for the future. They will learn about the rich history of art that depicts labor issues, and we will look at some of the exciting art projects created by global justice movements around the world.

Course Objectives

- ◆ To explore a conceptual approach to art making
- ◆ To develop formal skills and fluency with visual grammar
- ◆ To participate in hands-on collaborative art making processes
- ◆ To experience a wide variety of contemporary art forms including digital imaging, found object/text work, site-specific installations, puppetry and Theater of the Oppressed improvisations
- ◆ To develop facility with the terms INTENTION, AUDIENCE and CONTEXT when discussing the goals of an artwork
- ◆ To become familiar with a variety ways of understanding how stories about work can become art
- ◆ To apply critical thinking in relation to labor issues as they relate to the global and local contexts

Course Requirements

- ◆ Reading and participation in discussions. Purchase class text: Agitate, Educate and Organize: American Labor Posters, and articles listed in the syllabus and on Canvas
- ◆ Journal – you will put photos, notes about readings and class discussions, sketches, media literacy exercises, any ideas for projects about your work experiences and the effects of globalization. The Journal will be graded twice – once at midterm, and again at the end of the quarter. **Using the journal daily will assure the best learning and creative experience and assessment.**
- ◆ Assignments: *One poster project* based on your work/labor/union story or globalization issues, *the Black Box project* (that looks at the journey of an everyday object from raw resources to factory to consumer), and a *Global Justice mask or puppet that may be used for a community project*

- ◆ Oral Presentation on a labor/global justice artist (see information about this assignment later in the syllabus)
- ◆ Class participation is essential and **unexcused absences will affect grades**. Attendance is extremely important in studio art classes.

Classroom Behavior

Food and drink are acceptable as long as you do not disrupt the class or bother your neighbors. **No food or drink is allowed on the computer side of the art studio.** Please turn off all electronic devices including cell phones and pagers when you come to class. Please be respectful and attentive when others are speaking in class. Arriving late or leaving early should never happen except on rare occasions; if you must arrive late or leave early, please do so in as unobtrusive a way as possible

Grades and Self-evaluation

Students will meet with the instructor individually to discuss their journals for a midterm assessment on April 26th. A self-evaluation statement is required as part of that review and will need to arrive in my email inbox by 10 pm on April 25th. The self-evaluation should reflect on participation in class discussions, the art process in relation to collaborative and individual work, and the insights culled from writing, reading and research. Students are required to share their studio projects during group feedback sessions and to participate in the discussions about their work.

All assignments are assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Familiarity with visual grammar in relation to the student's intention
2. Ability to be inventive both with content and form, and to take risks
3. Attention to craft and process
4. Responsiveness to suggestions to strengthen projects

Grades will be weighted in the following way: **Midterm journal (10%), Final Journal (20%), Poster Project (20%), Black Box project (20%), Puppet/Mask (10%) Oral Presentation (10%), Participation (10%)**

Grades will be given according to the grade point system. Please refer to this website for information about the grading scale:http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading_Sys.html

3.5–4 = **OUTSTANDING** work, significant extra time spent in developing work, risks taken, unity of concept and handling of materials to create an imaginative visual statement that challenges conventional thinking and image making

2.5–3.4 = **ABOVE AVERAGE** work, solid concepts and skillful handling of materials, exploration of conceptual ideas evident with thought provoking results

1.5–2.4 = **AVERAGE** work, competent execution of ideas but not pushing conventions, craftsmanship acceptable with no outstanding qualities, overall investment fulfills requirement but no risk-taking apparent, no evidence of extra time invested to strengthen technical and conceptual issues

.5–1.4 = **BELOW AVERAGE**, little involvement in exploration of ideas or misunderstanding of assignment with little attention to craftsmanship

0 = **FAILING**, no attempt to articulate ideas and total lack of regard for craftsmanship

The following factors will be considered when determining a final participation grade: *amount of effort expended throughout the course, amount of progress made in creative development, development of focused and productive work attitude, lateness, absences, and attendance. Development of a critical language is essential to your constructive participation in group discussions. Evidence of this skill in the discussion of your work and other's work is expected and will be considered in your final grade.*

Supplies

Blank-page, hard-cover journal (8"x 10" minimum), smart phone camera or digital camera (the latter can be borrowed from media services). Adobe Photoshop is the software used for photo/text projects and can be downloaded for a 30-day free-trial period from the Adobe website. www.adobe.com You can also use freeware or shareware online, such as GIMP or paint.net, for manipulating photographs.

You will be required to use a computer for creating some of the projects in class, and our computer lab technician will be available to assist you before and after class. Aside from the Mac computers and scanner in our classroom, there are open labs with Macs & PCs with Photoshop, scanners and printers in WG 108, SCI 105 and the Multimedia Lab on the ground floor of Cherry Parks. The Art Lab printers in the Whitney are the only ones with archival ink.

Scavenged materials will be used for the mask/puppet project.

Miscellaneous

If you choose to drop the course, you are responsible for reporting the change to the registrar's office. If you stop coming to class and do not contact the registrar, you will end up receiving a failing grade even if you attended only once.

The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), temporarily located in Cherry Parkes 206. Additional information can also be found by visiting http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm/

The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Support Services (DSS) functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with disabilities. In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UW Tacoma who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," is eligible for services from DSS. If you are wondering if you may be eligible for accommodations on our campus, please contact the DSS reception desk at 692-4522, or visit http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm/

Calendar

Mar 29 – Review syllabus and course goals. Instructor introduction. Discuss dominant culture and how art attempts to subvert the latter. Partner and introduce yourself to your partner in relation to history, when an event shifted your sense of who you are in relation to the dominant culture. Change partners and share something about a current or past job you've had, talk about jobs that have made

you feel a sense of meaning, and jobs that gave you a sense of alienation and loss of dignity. Collage activity in class.

Homework: Research labor history in your family/friends and record stories, collect objects/take photos that relate to those stories. Please explore this website and look at the art and read about it. <http://www.laborarts.org/exhibits/> Come to class prepared to discuss some art that you discovered on the website that really resonated with you. Write down the link so that you can get there easily and share it with someone else.

Mar 31 – Slide show – Discuss the WPA and art of the labor movement. Discuss strategies for making posters that tell stories. Visual grammar. Roles of the artist. Brainstorm first poster project with a partner.

Homework: Take photos, make drawings, & collect objects for first project. Do thumbnail sketches in journal. Read **Agitate! Educate! Organize!** Pp1-49. Make notes. Choose one artist to research more fully from list at the end of the syllabus.

April 5 – View more examples of labor art. Photoshop workshop. Discussion of readings.

Homework: Read **Agitate! Educate! Organize!** P 51-121. Bring in Ads for Media Literacy exercise.

April 7 - Media Literacy. View *The Story of Stuff*. Discussion of reading. Work in class on posters.

Homework: Prepare first draft of poster for feedback. Read the rest of **Agitate! Educate! Organize!**
Watch: <http://cwcs.yasu.edu/resources/video> Make notes for discussion.

April 12 – 1st Feedback and work session. Discussion.

Homework: Read <http://dorritlittle.com/category/start-here/> and make notes.

April 14– Work session. Discussion.

Homework: Read Alan Howard's "*Labor, History and Sweatshops in the New Global Economy.*" prepare notes for discussion.

Read <http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/rg/RGIntro.shtml>

April 19 – Work session. Discussion of global justice movement and art about the effects of globalization. Introduce the 2nd project: The Black Box project – the global journey of an object.

Homework: Begin second labor story poster. Watch: <https://vimeo.com/6803752>
<http://www.bigpicturesmallworld.com/movies/halffull.htm> and <https://vimeo.com/81231900>

April 21 – Look at 2nd draft of labor story poster. Find partner for Black Box project.

Homework: Write self-evaluation and bring journal to class for midterm conference on April 28th.

Questions for self-evaluation: Each question can be answered with a short paragraph (2-5 sentences). Journal must include notes on readings, films, gallery visit and researched artist, as well as sketches,

photos, collages and media literacy exercise. Please email self-evaluation by April 27th, 9 pm and include your artist choice for the oral presentation.

- 1) How have the discussions about labor history, work, class, globalization, and global justice helped you to develop your opinions on this topic?
- 2) What are some aspects of the reading and art we have seen that have opened your eyes to new ways of thinking about the topic?
- 3) How did the media literacy exercise help you connect with the topics of the course?
- 4) How do you feel about your creative process in developing your poster?

April 26 – Midterm individual conferences - Watch **Shift Change**. Make notes for later discussion.

Homework: Read Cultural Democracy excerpt on Globalization/Liberation.

April 28 – Class canceled. Instructor away at conference. Prepare oral presentations

Homework: Read <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/behind-the-scenes-of-seattle>

And <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/purple-america/the-battle-for-reality>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17872666>

May 3 – Discuss readings and the history of May Day. Slide show on Global Justice art projects/Theater of the Oppressed workshop. Introduce puppet/mask final project.

May 5 - Oral Presentations. Final draft of poster is due.

Homework: Read <http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2015/03/striking-mexican-farm-workers-vow-us-boycott>

May 10 – Oral Presentations. work session on Black Box projects.

Homework: Read and reflect: <http://www.steamiron.com/payday/class-20.html>,

<http://www.steamiron.com/payday/bigwords.html>

May 12 – Oral Presentations. Work on Black Box project. Print out posters and take them to be framed.

May 17 – Oral Presentations. Share first draft of mask/puppet project.

May 19 – Work Session.

May 24 – Presentation of mask/puppet project and community engagement with the latter.

May 26 – Work Session.

May 31 – Presentation of Black Box projects.

June 2 – Drop off journals with final self-evaluation. Visit the rest of the projects

June 7 – Pick up journals.

Bibliography

Alewitz, Mike, **Insurgent Images: The Agitprop Murals of Mike Alewicz**, Monthly Review Press, 2002

Armbruster-Sandoval, Ralph, **Globalization and Cross-Border Labor Solidarity in the Americas**, Routledge, 2004

Bigelow, Bill and Peterson, Bob (eds.), **Rethinking Globalization : Teaching for Justice in an Unjust World**, Milwaukee, Wis.: Rethinking Schools Press, 2002

Foner, Philip and Schulz, Reinhard, **Other America: Art and the Labor Movement in the US**, Journeyman Press, 1985

Johnson, Mark Dean (ed), **At Work: the Art of California Labor**, Heyday Books, 2003

Mitchell, Stacy, **Big-Box Swindle: The True Cost of Mega-Retailers and the Fight for America's Independent Businesses**, Boston: Beacon, 2006

Solnit, David, **Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World**, Citylights Publishers, 2003

Tarrow, Sidney, **The New Transnational Activism**, Cambridge U Press, 2005

Zandy, Janet (ed.), **Liberating Memory: Our Work and Our Working-Class Consciousness**, Rutgers University Press, 1994

_____ **Hands: Physical Labor, Class and Cultural Work**, Rutgers U, 2004

Film List (most of these are available to screen @ the UWT library)

Life and Debt (Stephanie Black, 2003), The Take (Naomi Klein, 2004), The Global Generation (2001), Where Do You Stand? (Lescaze, 2004), A Day without a Mexican (2004), Bread and Roses (Ken Loach, 2000), The Navigators (Loach, 2001) Out of Darkness (Barbara Kopple, 1990), The Corporation, Balseros (2005), Destination America (2005), Roger and Me (Moore - 1990), Downsize This (Moore - 1996), Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price (2005), It's a Wonderful Life (1946), Modern Times (Chaplin 1936), Crossing Arizona (2006), Golden Venture (2006), The Store (Frederick Wiseman), El Norte (Gregory Nava - 1984), Manufactured Landscapes (2007), Salt of the Earth (1953), Life (TVE, 2000), Globalization and Human Rights (Globalvision 1999), The New Rulers of the World (John Pilger, 2001), Robert McChesney takes on Media Globalization (Paper Tiger Television) Capitalism: A Love Story (Michael Moore, 2009)

Relevant Websites

<http://www.docspopuli.org/>

<http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/exhibit/>

<http://www.monthlyreview.org/insurgentweb/>

<http://www.laborarts.org/>

<http://www.ylem.org/artists/mmosher/grant3.html>

<http://www.riniart.org/mainframe.php?s=1>

<http://1400ml.com/thedagger/thedagger/solidarity/joehill.html>

<http://www.museumofthecorporation.org/why.htm>

<http://www.zeitgeist.net/wfca/wisefool.htm>

<http://www.zmag.org/LaborWatch.cfm>

<http://www.voyd.com/gab/>

<http://www.terminaltime.com>

<http://www.rtmark.com>

<http://www.theyesmen.com>

<http://www.gatt.org>

<http://www.beehivecollective.org>

<http://americanart.si.edu/helios/newmedia/lichty>

<http://www.workersrights.org/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweatshop#Anti-sweatshop_movement

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalisation>

<http://www.globaljusticemovement.net/>

<http://www.globaljusticemovement.org/>

<http://www.sociology.emory.edu/globalization/glossary.html>
<http://www.laborheritage.org/>
<http://www.graphicwitness.org/ineye/index2.htm>
<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/index.shtml>
<http://depts.washington.edu/wtohist/>
<http://www.sustainabletable.org/>
<http://www.eatwellguide.org/>
<http://www.newenergychoices.org/>
<http://www.thematrix.com/>
<http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/>
<http://www.thirstthemovie.org/index.html>
<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>
<http://www.transitionus.org/>

Choose one artist or collaborative arts group to research for your presentation

The Yes Men, Judy Baca, Ricardo Levins Morales, Platform London, Mark Priest, Patricia Ford, Rick Flores, Rini Templeton, Earl Dotter, Eva Cockcroft, Mark Vallen, The Beehive Collective, Eric Gottesman, Brett Cooke, Wendy Ewald, Carol* Simpson, Bill Yund, May Stevens, Jacob Lawrence, Ben Shahn, Sue Coe, Ralph Fasanella, Diego Rivera, David Avalos, John Jota Leanos, Carol Conde/Karl Beveridge, Critical Art Ensemble, SubRosa, RTMark, Don Fels, The Urban Homesteading Project; Mike Alewitz

Oral Presentation Criteria:

- Present a few examples (minimum of 5 images, maximum of 10) of the artist's work that deals with labor/globalization issues and discuss the meaning of the work and questions that you may have about it. Research should be from books or journals.
- A good place to find journal articles is via JStor or Project Muse - both search engines are easily accessible via the library electronic journals (go to the UWT library home page) - you will need to login to access them. There are many other search engines available via the library web page.
- You can also email the artists and ask them questions directly. Tell them that you are student in my class. Getting your information only from the artist and his/her website is not sufficient. You need to read interpretations about the artist's work written by others.
- If you discover that not much has been written about the artist you have chosen, then you will need to change artists. So it will be good to begin looking for articles several weeks before your presentation, just in case you have little luck finding material.
- After reading three articles by art writers or critics, summarize what you think that these writers feel are the intentions of the artist's work. It is fine to share quotes from these writers.
- Offer us a rough bio about the artist - it would be good to know where and when the artist was born, where or if s/he went to school, what class background the artist has, whether s/he teaches somewhere and what you think or what s/he says provoked him or her to be an artist who is dealing with the topics s/he is dealing with.

- The majority of your presentation should focus on the artwork itself (several different projects, if possible), and you should make a good effort to explain the artist's intentions through your discussion. In your conclusion, suggest a question that the class might want to respond to regarding the work.
- Presentation format can be in power point or you can just project scanned images of the artist's work on the large screen. Do NOT put the text of your presentation on the screen, only the title, date and medium of the works shown and then read biographical information, discussion regarding the content and intentions of the work and quotes from your notes instead.
- PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THERE ARE IMAGES FOR US TO LOOK AT WHILE YOU ARE SPEAKING.

*How to Make a Strong Journal

Your journal is your open book exam – it's how I learn about what you've learned, what you're questioning, where you are taking risks. You need to make images (with any medium) at least 2 times per week. And follow these guidelines:

1. Make notes that are REFLECTIONS about the class discussions, readings and videos - not just what was said, but how do YOU feel about them. If you disagree with the dominant opinions in class, but aren't clear why, write about that. If you feel lost, write about that. The great thing about journals is that you are writing for yourself, and developing your voice. If your buttons get pushed, and you are feeling shy to respond, the journal gives you a venue in which to shout, cry, whine, argue or rally support. It is one of the most important tools I can offer you in this course, and journaling can truly help you the rest of your life, if you allow its power in, even in a small way.
2. Make a collage based on some of the ideas expressed in class or in the readings, at least twice a week. Bend your journal to your will, take risks, don't be afraid to make ugly, royal failures and lose your inhibitions. BRAINSTORM all your assignments in the journal – don't just think about them – do sketches, crude or otherwise.
3. Although the journal project is not scrap booking, you may think this process is similar. Some people HATE scrap booking, so do an anti-scrapbook (what would that look like?). Play with materials, collect things relevant to the course content or images you're working with.
4. If you come to class bored, you can always open your journal and slip away into its pages. I never complain when students are working in their journals during class time.
5. Use your journal as a place to dream about the world you would love to live in.
6. Remember to write down notes to the readings. If you haven't had time to read all the articles listed in the syllabus, read them now. Put in your thoughts about what your reading. Don't self-censor.
7. **But remember THIS journal is not your diary.** If you need a place to tell your innermost personal thoughts about your current life challenges (other than those related to the class topic), get another journal for that (OR you can create special pages that are hidden, pockets or envelopes in this journal that are off limits for anyone to read, including me).

8. Finally, your journal is an important part of your grade, and is truly an open-book exam. If your projects in Photoshop aren't going well, you can vent in the journal. If you have ideas for site-specific installations, and other forms, you can diagram them in the journal. If you are worried or excited about the collaborative project write about it there. USE it everyday if possible. Make it a discipline. You will be amazed at how it blossoms for you.

THE BLACK BOX PROJECT

Some current discussion about contemporary life asserts that we perceive most of the things we use in our daily lives as emerging from some mysterious “black box.” We don’t much about where the things we use came from, what materials were harvested to make the furniture, technology, clothing, toys and essentials, and what effect making the object had on the environment or the workers who made it. So the task of this project is to do some research about an everyday object, learn more about its origins, how it was made and the price of making it on both the environment and those who make it. “Externalized costs,” as video, “The Story of Stuff” describes it. Once you have done this research WITH A PARTNER, you will take what you have learned and turn it into an art piece. More information about this exercise will be given as we introduce it.

GLOBAL JUSTICE MASK/PUPPET

After looking at some of the puppetry and masks that have emerged in the global justice movement, create a puppet or mask that speaks to your desires for a better world. Try to go beyond the typical visual clichés of rainbows, hearts and flowers and see if there are more specific ways you want to express your rage, grief or joy about the topics in this course. Use scavenged materials and create something three-dimensional with mixed media. Imagine how we would use it for a public intervention.