

PASCA Spring 2010
BFA Course syllabus

Re / Un / Mapping

Instructor: Hedwig Brouckaert h.brouckaert@gmail.com

Multimedia: sculpture, installation, site-specific work.

Fridays (13-18h)

General overview of the course

What does mapping mean to you? How do you map your world and your experiences, and how do you transform them into art? In this 3D class, mapping is understood in the broadest sense of the term, as diagrams of both spatial and temporal relationships. Geographers agree to obey certain mapping conventions, to speak in a standardized visual language. Artists are free to disobey these rules, to construct their own clues and rules by rearrangement, manipulation, recombination, layering beyond recognizability, reinventing visual clues, creating a unique visual vocabulary. We will explore systems as a basis for making work and experiment with rules, data, chance, action, collaboration and other processes that often lead to surprising images. We will work with a wide variety of materials and techniques; interdisciplinarity is encouraged.

Expected learning outcomes

- Develop a disciplined, rigorous studio practice.
- Demonstrate a practical understanding of materials and processes.
- Learn to productively work in groups to develop a project.
- To be able to propose, develop and complete self-directed projects, practically, technically and conceptually.
- Use of the appropriate language for reflective and constructive thinking in class critiques, presentations and written personal reviews.
- Integrate the experiences and knowledge gained on the trips into a studio practice.
- Familiarity with art history and contemporary art practices, thus building a larger framework that will help in their own practice and development.
- Develop a broader understanding of the parallels between different art forms.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Three projects and one final project.
- Four class critiques & one open studio presentation
- Sketchbook / journal
- Personal reviews of readings, critiques and trips

GRADING

- 35 % assignments
- 25 % final project and presentation
- 30 % participation and attendance
- 10% sketchbook, writings and drawings

Your grade will be based on active participation in class critiques and discussions, proper attendance, the strength of your work, your work process, and your ability to find the best solutions for your artistic challenges and the ambition to push yourself to the next level of your artistic development. Your grade is also based on your writings and drawings in your sketchbook. Being late or leaving prior to the end of class 3 times will result in an absence. Being absent more than 3 times during the semester will affect your grade (one letter grade drop).

Never miss a critique or presentation class! Being late for such an important class will affect your grade. Students are expected to work at least 8-10 hours outside of class.

MATERIALS

- Sketchbook (with at least 50 pages)
- Large size paper (at least 40 x 26 inches), various drawing supplies
- Materials available in class: cardboard, plaster, concrete, clay, wood, polystyrene.
- Camera, Computer, printer

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1:

- Sunday January 24: Arrival in Pont-Aven
- Monday January 25: ORIENTATION
Lunch with faculty and staff, walking tours of Pont-Aven, meetings with studio teachers for each course
- Tuesday January 26:
Trip to supply stores, Post Bac meeting, presentations by the students (with the 10 images they sent for your application) apéritif with host families, dinner
- Friday January 29 (13-18h): Class starts:
 - INTRODUCTION TO COURSE
 - Powerpoint presentation
 - SHOW *This Not That* Baldessari Film
 - INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT #1 (group) due Monday Feb 8
 - Ideas and sketches ready to discuss next class, readings

WEEK 2 Friday Feb 5:

- Individual talks about ideas and sketches for PROJECT #1
- Studio work PROJECT #1

WEEK 3 Friday Feb 12:

- **CRITIQUE collaborative PROJECT #1**
- INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT #2
Powerpoint presentation
- Studio work PROJECT #2
- Give TRIP ASSIGNMENTS

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| <p>WEEK 4: Thursday February 18 - Wednesday February 24 MADRID – ARCO, BARCELONE – MACBA John Baldessari <i>Pure Beauty</i></p> |
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WEEK 5: Friday Feb 26:

- TALK ABOUT TRIP / show COLLECTED MATERIAL
Collect papers and discuss the shows in group
- Talk individually about PROJECT #2
- Studio work PROJECT #2

WEEK 6: Friday March 5:

- INTRODUCTION to PROJECT #3
Powerpoint presentation
- Studio work PROJECT #3

WEEK 7: Friday March 12:

- CRITIQUE PROJECT #2**
- INDIVIDUAL TALKS PROJECT #3
- Studio work PROJECT #3

WEEK 8: Friday March 19:

-Studio work PROJECT #3

WEEK 9 Friday March 26:

- CRITIQUE PROJECT #3**
- INTRODUCTION PROJECT #4
- Give TRIP ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 10: March 29 - April 2 PARIS/BERLIN

WEEK 11: April 5 - April 9 BREAK

WEEK 12 Friday April 16:

- INDIVIDUAL TALKS ABOUT PROJECT #4
- Studio work PROJECT #4

WEEK 13 Friday April 23:

- Studio work PROJECT #4

WEEK 14 **Friday April 30**

FINAL CRITIQUE PROJECT #4 & Open Studios

WEEK 15: Monday May 3: Clean & pack up

May 8: END OF SEMESTER Departure for Paris

ASSIGNMENTS

SKETCHBOOK / JOURNAL Mapping your thoughts and experiences

Ongoing during the semester, in the studio in Pont Aven and on the trips.

Keep a journal in which you do preparatory drawings and paste images and articles that are connected to the work that you are doing. A sketchbook is one of an artist's most valuable tools, and serves as a repository for all the visual input that fuels and feeds art making.

PROJECT #1 Chance

Jan 27- Critique Friday Feb 12

Collaborative project

Chance

The unintended and the undefined are rich in expressiveness. For this project you will generate operations based on chance to produce work. Try to be open to what happens and to be interested in the artistic act rather than in the product of the activity. There is always a moment of chance in the game; something which one can never fully control. A quality of openness to the unforeseen, the uncontrollable, the unconscious, is a goal for this class. The objective is to create the conditions that let this quality flourish and to lead the work (process) to a coherent and striking whole.

Serendipity: *to discover by accident and intelligence.*

Many discoveries in science were done while looking for something else. It required the intelligence of the inventor to see that there was an alternative discovery. Every problem can become a great gift when you work *with* it. Your "failures" can give you the perfect information for a new and better direction. Be aware of what is happening in your work and react to it.

Make an art piece using a process of chance, including collaboration with another student and/or the viewer.

Watch *This Not That* film about the artist John Baldessari and talk about Baldessari's early conceptual pieces.

Artists: Erwin Wurm (*One Minute sculpture*), Gabriel Orozco (*Yielding Stone*), Francis Alÿs *The Leak*, Maciunas, Honoré d'O, John Cage, *Exquisite corpses*, Marcel Duchamp, etc.

CRITIQUE: Feb 12

PROJECT #2 Mapping: Mathematical strategies and artistic processes.

Feb 12 - Critique March 12

All forms of art making contain an element of obsession. It drives the will to create and underlies most great works. In response to the variety of options that have come available, many artists have narrowed their focus to very limited parameters to explore a singular goal. This can be viewed as obsessive especially in a culture that glorifies the opposite of obsession – distraction.

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't." Hamlet, Act II, Scene 2.

Many artists follow strict rules, or certain 'neurotic' methods. For a period of time Mark Manders collected 'fives', objects and photographs referring to that number and arranged them in a room (*Room of Fives*). Art of psychiatric patients is often very fascinating because of its obsessive and neurotic quality. Obsessive-compulsive disorder is commonly characterized by intrusive, repetitive thoughts resulting in compulsive behaviors and mental acts that the person feels driven to perform and according to rules that must be applied rigidly, all aimed at preventing some imagined dreaded event. These are characteristics that can be very negative when out of control but in a healthy degree fuel our artistic practice.

You will apply a system of rules to your process of creation, resulting in artwork that ultimately becomes created and constructed by the imposed set of rules. The systems may be based on or derived from mathematics, logic, or games and chance, and therefore can range from the use of scientific data to arbitrary yet personally consequential rules. The process can extend from formula-based systems with predictable outcomes to variable systems that allow for your hand to show through, to systems of chaotic processes whose results are completely unpredictable. You could for example apply a rigorous system of documentation to map highly personal subjective body experiences.

The system or the set of 'rules' that you chose to work with have to be appropriate to your work and the themes you work with. So reflect thoroughly on your previous work and consider what will be relevant for this assignment. Look for something already present in your work and research it to the core. Push your work to the extreme, neurotically and obsessively.

Artists:

John Cage, Richard Long, Kathleen Vermeir, Augustin Lesage, Mark Manders, Tara Donovan, Tim Hawkinson, Damien Hirst, Jasper Johns, Sol LeWitt, On Kawara, Vik Muniz, Ed Ruscha, James Siena, Jennifer Pastor, Donald Moffett, Haluk Akakce, David King, Katharina Hinsberg, Katie Holland Lewis (*Tangled Pathways*), Abigail Reynolds *Mount Fear*, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Tatsuo Miyajima, Roni Horn, Vija Celmins, etc.

Readings:

Mark Manders *Excerpt of an Interview with Marije Langelaar*

ASSIGNMENTS / TRIPS:

TRIP TO BARCELONA & MADRID February 18-24

Madrid:

-ARCO Art Fair

-Reina Sofia *Tangled Alphabets* (Nov 25-March1)

Barcelona

-MACBA John Baldessari *Pure Beauty*, Rodney Graham *Through the Woodee*,

Armando Andrade Tudela

TRIP PARIS / BERLIN March 27 –April 2

Paris

-Permanent collection of Paris MACVAL

“Travel, depart, leave, haul, imagine, dream, hope, search, find, build, complete, return... Action verbs mark this third presentation of the permanent collection, weaving a narrative through works of art, a story of art and life. This new display of the MAC/VAL collection presents recent acquisitions, works never before displayed, and new works directly linked to the history of the museum - via foreign artists-in-residence. Its original approach highlights stories of movement, exile, travel, and dreams - the stories of people who in brutal, involuntary, or poetic fashion, commence a long journey, the journey of their lives. What is pursued, and what is built at the end of the road?”

from the MAC/VAL website, 2009.

Berlin

-GUGGENHEIM: *Utopia Matters* Kandinsky

ARTIST RESEARCH

- I will give you a list of artists. I expect you to pay close attention to the work of these artists in the museum shows we'll visit. Use it as a source for solving problems in your own work; it can inspire you technically and/or conceptually. During each project you'll also research artists of your choice relating to the project topic. Your research will include visuals (photographs, sketches) and you will prepare three written pages for a verbal presentation to the class.
- During the trips to the museums you will make a list of artworks (at least ten) that you are attracted too, and a list of artworks (at least ten) that you dislike. Put them in your sketchbook with info and sketches, photos if possible. Write in depth about why you like or dislike the work. You can use the list of artists that I will provide.
- Write a personal review about the ART FAIR (1p): What is your overall impression of the fair? Which artistic media are prevalent? Do you see a lot of experimental or conceptual work, or more object-based or saleable work? What was your favorite work and why, and in which gallery? Could you discern a difference between European and US galleries in the type of work they showed and in the presentation? How would you describe the overall public?
- Write a personal review about *Pure Beauty*, the exhibition at MACBA of John Baldessari (1p). What artistic processes did he practice? Give examples of specific works. How do you see the evolution of his work from the 60's to his contemporary work? What do you think is his strongest work and why? How would you compare him to other conceptual artists you know, such as Joseph Kosuth?

- Write a personal review about *Tangled Alphabets* / Léon Ferrari and Mira Schendel exhibition at Reina Sofia (1p.). How would you describe the artists' relationship with language?

TRAVEL PROJECT Map your travels

Capture images (sketches, photographs, video, sounds, smells, etc.)

Focus on one or several aspects of the cities – this can be a formal aspect, a certain action, an atmosphere, a situation, etc.. (i.e., all fives of Mark Manders, everything purple, all the sunsets wherever you are, all the doors you pass...please be more inventive and poetic than me!). Back in the studio, we will assemble these and play around with documentation strategies.

PROJECT #3 Mapping: Reproducing Complexities

March 12 – critique March 26

“ . . . In that Empire, the Art of Cartography reached such Perfection that the map of one Province alone took up the whole of a City, and the map of the empire, the whole of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps did not satisfy and the Colleges of Cartographers set up a Map of the Empire which had the size of the Empire itself and coincided with it point by point. Less Addicted to the Study of Cartography, Succeeding Generations understood that this Widespread Map was Useless and not without Impiety they abandoned it to the Inclemencies of the Sun and of the Winters. In the deserts of the West some mangled Ruins of the Map lasted on, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in the whole Country there are no other relics of the Disciplines of Geography.”

‘On Rigor in Science’ By Borges

The map is not the territory is a remark by Polish-American scientist and philosopher Alfred Korzybski. The more accurate the map, the more it resembles the territory. The most accurate map possible would be the territory, and thus would be perfectly accurate and perfectly useless. This tale by Borges is about the map that is the territory.

The development of electronic media blurs the line between map and territory by allowing for the simulation of ideas as encoded in electronic signals, as Baudrillard argues in *Simulacra & Simulation*: *‘Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: A hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory - precession of simulacra - that engenders the territory.’* (Baudrillard, 1994)

The Belgian surrealist artist René Magritte illustrated this concept in a number of paintings: *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* / *La Trahison des images* (The Treachery Of Images) René Magritte's 1928-9 painting of a pipe.

“We all know that our lives are all becoming more multi-layered and complex. It is no coincidence that in recent years complexity has become an important topic among even the most varying sciences, whether it be biology, physics, economics, sociology, architecture. Adhering to a very brief definition we could say: Complexity is the opposite of simplicity. According to the philosopher and historian of the sciences Sandra Mitchell from the Pittsburg University, we are slowly beginning to understand that the search for simple models of the world, and for a set of simple basic principles that we could trace all problems back to is doomed to fail. In order to halfway be able to describe the world, we must always have in mind the close interconnection and mutual feedback of its individual entities. It is these factors that cause the over-complexity of our reality. Nevertheless, it is obvious that we must reduce this excess of complexity. Otherwise, considering

the confusing relationships of natural and cultural processes, we would lose our orientation, and become unable to act.

...

But the reduction of complexity must itself be complex, because otherwise, if it were to simplify matters too much, it would not do justice to reality, and sooner or later, this would have negative consequences. Ideologies and fundamentalisms are always sub-complex reductions of complexity.” (Art historian Peter Lodermeier, Re/Pro/Ducing Complexities, MSU Bozeman MT 2008)

Having all this in mind, create a piece that represents the complexity of your experience of reality. How do you make work that does justice to that complexity? We look at mapping as a means to bring order to chaos, to seek location, explore ratios of scale and to chart new terrains. What does mapping mean to you? How do you map your world, your experiences and how do you transform them into art? Possible techniques to create your personal visual vocabulary include rearrangement, manipulation, recombination and layering beyond recognizability.

CRITIQUE March 26

READINGS: Borges, Baudrillard.

Artists: Urs Fisher (Installation 2009 New Museum NY)

Watch Film:

Peter Greenaway on A Walk Through H:

"I've always been fascinated by maps and cartography. A map tells you where you've been, where you are, and where you're going - in a sense it's three tenses in one. It's also an amazing ideogram of information that is very useful and, perhaps most pertinently, also not at all useful. My father had recently died, and the subtitle of the film was 'The Reincarnation of an Ornithologist' - my father was one. Through his life he had amassed an extraordinary amount of information about bird study, and I was very aware that with his death - as indeed with any death - a vast amount of very personalized information had gone missing, was totally irrecoverable. The film is on the journey a soul takes at the moment of death, to whatever other place it ends up - H being either Heaven or Hell. I devised 92 maps to help this particular character get there. The whole film was divided into five sections that represented movement from a very urban landscape to a wilderness landscape, and there were references and cross-references to all sorts of systems."

PROJECT #4 YOUR OWN PROPOSAL FOR THE FINAL

March 26 – Critique April 30

Write a one-page typed proposal for a sculpture, an installation or a body of work. Reflect about your previous work this semester and before, and of the feedback you have been given. Think of the successes and the 'weaknesses/failures'. What are the most important elements in your work, what direction would you like it to go? Write about all this in your sketchbook and try to be as clear as possible. Give your project a title. This working title can change at any time during the process but it should contain the essence of what the work will be about. Of course you don't know exactly what the end result will be, so how can you describe your project without restricting yourself in the creative process? How can you remain open for possible interesting sidetracks that might occur during the process without completely undermining your original proposal?

FINAL CRITIQUE & OPEN STUDIOS: Friday April 30

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *The Map as Art* (2009) Katharine Harmon
- *You are here* Katharine Harmon
- *On Exactitude in Science* (1946) a one-paragraph short story by Jorge Luis Borges
- *Simulacres et simulation* (1981) Baudrillard
- *Invisible Cities* (1972) Italo Calvino
- *Unmonumental* (2008) exhibition catalogue of the New Museum
- *Tangled Alphabets* (2009) exhibition catalogue MOMA
- *Pure Beauty* Baldessari (2009) exhibition catalogue Tate Modern
- *Mark Manders interview with Marije Langelaar*

- *This Not That* film about John Baldessari
- *A Walk Through H* (1978) Peter Greenaway, film 41'
- *Dogville* (2003) Lars Von Trier, film

Gauguin:

- *Letters from Brittany and the South Seas* Paul Gauguin, Bernard Denvir
Publisher: Crown Publishing Group, Pub. Date: August 1992
- *The Way to Paradise* (2003) Mario Vargas Llosa
This fictional novel is told in alternating chapters, eleven each devoted to the stories of Flora Tristán (1803-1844) and the grandson she never knew, French painter Paul Gauguin. The writer strenuously explores qualities in Gauguin's works, and sets the moral issues in a far wilder, more real historical world.
- *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919) short novel by William Somerset Maugham based on the life of the painter Paul Gauguin. The story is told in episodic form by the first-person narrator as a series of glimpses into the mind and soul of the central character, Charles Strickland, a middle aged English stock broker who abandons his wife and children abruptly to pursue his desire to become an artist.