

ART HISTORY/VCS 3913:

Bods 'n Borgs

FALL, 2011

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Please turn off all pagers and cellphones.

Students with learning disabilities or other issues see instructor.

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Texts: 1) *The Gendered Cyborg* (Routledge, 2001) edited by Gill Kirkup, Linda Janes, Kath Woodward, Fiona Hovenden.
2) *Professor Pack Reader* compiled by James Hugunin

Synopsis: Course will consist of an introductory look at the theoretical debates over the humanist vs. posthumanist body in contemporary theory. The body and society, the Object/Grotesque Body, Modern Primitives, Cyborg theory, Cyberfeminism will be explored in the readings and integrated with the viewing of visual material pertinent to the texts under critical examination.

Evaluation: Two papers of six pages each minimum **or** one research paper of fifteen pages in length due at final class meeting **or** substitute a visual project (to be presented in class) for **one** paper related to the issue of bodies (*see me first about this option*):
1) **Midterm paper** in which you will either:
a) do a synopsis of key points and common threads running through the readings;
or
b) apply a critical theoretical method as discussed in the text to some visual material. **Six page minimum.**

2) **Final paper** in which you will either: a) do a synopsis of key points and common threads running through the readings; or
b) apply a critical theoretical method as discussed in the text to some visual material. **Six page minimum.**

3) **Class participation and attendance:** ask questions, make observations. Miss more than 3 classes without valid medical excuse = NCR.

3) **M.A. art history and M.F.A. studio grads** will do a 15 page research paper and a 15 minute oral presentation; the studio grad can, if he or she so wishes, directly engage their own studio production within the context of the course content.

DATE/WEEK	DESCRIPTION/READINGS
8/31 1	<p>INTRODUCTION, EMBODIMENT: Subjective and objective aspects of the body (idem-identity vs. ipse-identity). Discuss initial reading below, view slides and an excerpt from <i>Being John Malkovich</i>.</p> <p>HAVE READ: not applicable.</p>
9/7 2	<p>THE BODY AND SOCIETY: Theories of the body, Marx, Foucault, Merleau-Ponty. View slides and videotape <i>Marx: The Video</i> by Laura Kipnis.</p> <p>HAVE READ: in Xerox: Calvin O. Schrag's "The Self After Postmodernity" and Chap. 1 & 2 from Bryan S. Turner's <i>The Body and Society</i>.</p>
9/14 3	<p>FACE AND THE SOUL: Physiognomy, the Face as Symbolic Form. View slides and videotape <i>Crush</i> by Nelson Henricks.</p> <p>HAVE READ: in Xerox "The Face and the Soul," Patrizia Magli from <i>Fragments For a History of the Human Body, Part II</i>, edited by Michael Feher, et al. Also check out Phrenology on: http://pages.britishlibrary.net/phrenology</p>
9/21 4	<p>TAXONOMY AND HUMANS: critiquing the discourse of Western technoscience. View slides and videotapes <i>Border Stasis</i> by Guillermo Gomez-Pena.</p> <p>HAVE READ: in <i>The Gendered Cyborg</i>, Chap 1.1: Londa Schiebinger's "Taxonomy for Human Beings" and Chap. 4.5 Evelyn M. Hammonds's "New Technologies of Race."</p>
9/28 5	<p>BODY AND ART IN 1960s AND 1970s: Body Art, Conceptual Art, Performance Art. View <i>Centers and Pryings</i> by Vito Acconci, <i>Now</i> by Lynda Benglis, <i>Boomerang</i> by Richard Serra, and <i>Vertical Roll</i> by Joan Jonas videotapes and relevant slides.</p> <p>HAVE READ: in Xerox: Rosalind Krauss's "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" from <i>Video Culture: A Critical Investigation</i>, edited by John G. Hanhardt.</p>
10/5 6	<p>THE GENDERED BODY: Bodily Inscriptions, the Body and Biology. View <i>It Wasn't Love</i> by Sadie Benning, and <i>Mad About the Boy</i> by Alex Umen, and video <i>Forrest Bess: Key to the Riddle</i>.</p> <p>HAVE READ: in Xerox: Lynda Birke's "Bodies and Biology" and Judith Butler's "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions" from <i>Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader</i>, edited by Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick.</p>
10/12 7	<p>THE GROTESQUE: Cindy Sherman, Paul McCarthy, Matthew Barney, Jake and Dinos Chapman., etc.. Views slides and <i>Black and White Tapes</i> by Paul McCarthy, excerpt from <i>Crumb</i> and <i>The Thing</i>. (Continued on page 3)</p>

HAVE READ: in Xerox: Ali J. Subotnick's "Introduction, to 'The Re-Emerging Grotesque,'" (1997 MAAH Thesis, unpublished) and Rosi Braidotti's "Signs of Wonder and Traces of Doubt: On Teratology and Embodied Differences," from *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, edited by Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick., and "Prosthetic Gods in Atrocious Places: Gilles Deleuze/Francis Bacon," from *Carnival, Hysteria, and Writing* by Allon White..

10/19 8

THE ABJECT: Lacan's and Kristeva's theories in relation to Bob Flanagan, Kiki Smith, Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, etc..View slides and videotapes *Kiki Smith* and *Autopsy* by Bob Flanagan on *Endurance, Reel 4* and *When I was a Monster* by Anne McGuire and Hester Scheurwater.

Midterm papers/brief synopsis of visual project/long paper intent all due.

HAVE READ: in Xerox: "Prologue," and Chap 1., "Contemporary Art Exhibitionists," in Linda S. Kauffman's *Bad Girls and Sick Boys*, and Deborah Caslav Covino's "Abject Criticism" (an excerpt from *Genders* 32 (2000).

10/26 9

THE POSTHUMAN BODY: Body alterations, cosmetic surgery, Orlan's facial modifications., modern primitives. View *Successful Operation* by Orlan on *Endurance, Reel Four*, and view documentary *Venus of Mars* by Emily Goldberg.

HAVE READ: in Xerox: Kathy Davis's "My Body is my Art: Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia?" and Linda S. Kauffman's Chap. 2, "Cutups in Beauty School," from *Bad Girls and Sick Boys: Fantasies in Contemporary Art and Culture*, Steve Mizrach's "Modern Primitives: The Accelerating Collision of Past and Future in the Postmodern Era," and two articles on Stelarc: "A New Image of the Artist" by David Dolan and "Stelarc, Performance and Masochism" by Rachel Rosenthal.

11/2 10

CYBORGGOLOGY: Toward a cyborg anthropology.View the film *Creation of the Humanoids*.

HAVE READ: in Xerox: Gary Lee Downey, Joseph Dumit, Sarah Williams's "Cyborg Anthropology," from *The Cyborg Handbook* edited by Chris Hables Gray and Anne Balsamo's "Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture" from *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* edited by Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick..

11/9 11

CYBERFEMINISM: Envisioning a feminist cyborg, challenging old dualisms. View slides on cyborgs and see Ericka Beckman's "Hiatus" in *e-[d]entity: female perspectives on identity in digital environments, Part I* curated by Kathy Rae Huffman.

HAVE READ: in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, Chap. 1.3, Donna J. Haraway's "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,"and Chap. 1.4, Jennifer Gonzalez's "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research," and Chap. 1.5, Nina Lykke's "Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: Feminist Confrontations with Science."

- 11/16 12 **REPRESENTING THE FEMININE IN SCI FI:** Embracing the alien, erasing alienation; the technological reproduction of gender. View *Liquid Sky* by Slava Tsukerman.
FINAL PRESENTATIONS
- HAVE READ: in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, Chap.2.4, Vivian Sobchack's "Postfuturism," and Chap. 2.5, Anne Balsamo's "Reading Cyborgs Writing Feminism."
- 11/23 13 **NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING VACATION**
- 11/30 14 **REPRESENTING REPRODUCTION:** Laura Mulvey and Gayatri Spivak. View videotape *Born to Be Sold: Martha Rosler Reads the Strange Case of Baby M* and *Underexposed: The Temple of the Fetus* by Kathy High.
FINAL PRESENTATIONS
- HAVE READ: in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, Kathryn Woodward's "Introduction to Part Three," and Chap. 3.3, Dion Farquhar's "(M)other Discourses."
- 12/7 14 **CRITIQUE WEEK, NO CLASS**
- 12/14 15 **CYBERFUTURES**
FINAL PROJECTS / PAPERS DUE.
- HAVE READ: in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, Chap.4.3, starting on p.280, Alison Adam's "Feminist AI Projects and Cyberfutures."