

# Public Art & Political Theory

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public art- art that is created, enacted, or placed, in our public spaces- in particular is interesting to consider, as it brings the experience of art to the general public. In this way, it is inherently democratic. Social art practice, or what some call relational aesthetics, requires the participation of the viewer and thus actively engages. This course is partly an introduction to the study of the philosophy of art, and partly an introduction to public and interactive art.

The main purpose of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the many links between art, creativity, political life, revolution, and community-building, as well as the relevant key concepts, theories, and political theorists who have made contributions to this field of study. The student will work with a variety of readings in political philosophy, as well as in contemporary art and cultural theory.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Grading for the course will consist of class participation (25%), a midterm paper (30%), and a final paper (45%), to be submitted within four weeks of the end of the course.**

## COURSE POLICIES

- a. Assignment questions will be handed out in written form in class. To prepare your responses for the take-home papers, rely only upon course readings and your lecture and discussion notes.
- b. Writing is a major component of the class; I expect you to write professionally.
- c. This will be a discussion-based class. **Please do the reading and take notes on it prior to class, come to class, and be prepared to actively engage while you are here.**
- d. Always bring your readings (the actual books and articles) to class with you, as you will be expected to offer quotes from the reading as part of discussion.
- e. Finally- and this should go without saying- PLAGIARISM OF ANY KIND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. The key to avoiding plagiarism is citation! Cite *all* sources, not only direct quotations.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Diana Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Nato Thompson, *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, Cambridge, MA, The MIT press, 2012.

## **Course Outline and Schedule of Assignments** [SEP]

### **I. Art and Philosophy**

**Day One:** John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934), excerpts.

**Day Two:** Diana Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America*: read “Preface” and “Introduction”.

**Day Three:** Diana Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America*: read “Chapter Two: The Coupling of the Dionysian and the Apollonian: Nietzsche and Transcendent Art”

**Day Four:** Diana Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America*: read “Chapter Three: Camus and the Transformative Nature of Art: The Invigorating and Community-Building Experience of Public Art”

**Day Five:** Diana Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America*: read “Chapter Five: The Power of Creative Moments in Everyday Life: Marcuse, Revolution through Art, and a Critique of Everyday Life”.

### **II. Public Art, Social Art, Interactive Art** [SEP]

**Day Six:** Nato Thompson, *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, “Living as Form”.

**Day Seven:** Nato Thompson, *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, “Participation and Spectacle: Where Are We Now?” (Claire Bishop).

**Day Eight:** Nato Thompson, *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, “Democratizing Urbanization and the Search for a New Civic Imagination” (Teddy Cruz).

**Day Nine:** Nato Thompson, *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, “Microutopias: Public Practice in the Public Sphere” (Carol Becker).

**Day Ten:** collected articles on a selection of public art projects.