

THE STATE OF CULTURE/ THE CULTURE OF STATE

This seminar will examine the relationships between art and society, between states and their cultures. We will deal with (art) history; what it consists of, how it is made, how it is read, who writes it and why. Most nations depend on a common cultural heritage for their identity; who forms this heritage, how and why; and do we, can we, or should we have a "common" heritage in one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse nations in history? We will also study the relationships between governments/ rulers and culture--today and throughout history. (When) was the precedent of the historical patronage system overthrown, and how did the various present-day forms of government support evolve? What differences has this caused in art (how does this relate to the construction of an "Art Career," and it's relationship to individual production or group/ community effort)? How is funding distributed in other countries and what effect does this have? Why are certain nations producing more "important" artists than others? Should we have a "Ministry of Culture?" What purposes does art serve? Must governments define art/ culture (and quality) before they can fund it? Why should governments fund culture? Does/ should state funding affect artist's production or content? What are the dangers in applauding art for art's sake and ignoring content or meaning? Is art a universal language?

Cultural differences in value systems, views of history, and ways of understanding time will come under scrutiny in this seminar. An important goal here is trying to elucidate a definition of culture (while trying to understand all the potential problems such a definition might pose or cause) and further attempting to specify the relationship between that culture and the society in which it exists. Monuments are also related to this field of study. They can be created by the state and serve a specific cultural role, or they may be private or secret in reaction to oppressive regimes. We will seek to understand the changes in objects and places created by the passage of time, or momentous events. Why do changes in government often bring changes in public display of either art or statues and other monuments? What are the similarities and differences between cave paintings, graffiti, paintings in museums, and the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial? What do monuments and memorials do? How do they function? Related fields include history, art history, architecture, folklore, public policy, archaeology.

SCHEDULE

Week 1; Introduction to the issues.

Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, & possibly 6; Awareness of multiple historical viewpoints and historical criticism, short history of art theory, role of art within history, and historical relationships of art to power, value, and class.

Weeks 7 & possibly 8; Monuments; historical to the present, popular and official. How and why they exist and how they change over time.

Weeks 9 & 10; Shift away from patronage system and all it's ramifications for art, artists, culture, and attitudes towards them. When and why this happened. 18th and 19th century revolutions, establishment of "modern" democracies, etc. The Academy, then and now. Changes over time in the understanding and expectations of an artist's career/ life.

Weeks 11 & 12; Early history (almost until the present) of modern government cultural programs and bureaucracies. What things are funded by governments and why.

Weeks 13, 14, & 15; Attitudes about art that drive the debates over government arts funding. Reasons to fund/ not to fund (effects of funding- positive/negative, and arguments for and against funding). Current or recent controversies (differences and similarities between Sensation,

Mapplethorpe, Serrano, and Serra). Questions and issues. We will discuss ideas about enlightenment of "the masses," purity, quality, the market, political art.

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