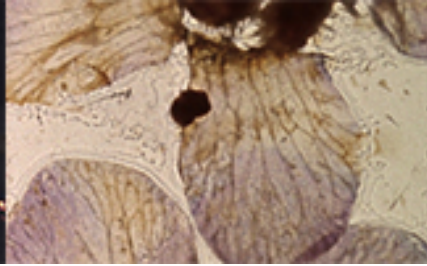




Krzysztof Wodiczko



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Pipolotti Rist

## THE ART OF EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND VIDEO: ARTS 391

PROFESSOR: CLAUDIA ESSLINGER OFFICE HOURS: 9:30-10,1-2 MWF AND BY APPOINTMENT  
PBX 5465 CELL: 740-504-5896 WEB SITE: [ESSLINGERSCLASSES.COM](http://ESSLINGERSCLASSES.COM) FOR INFO, EXAMPLES, LINKS.

In this course you will experiment with the creation, manipulation and exhibition of digital film projects. In doing so you will continue a tradition from early filmmaking, where abstract montage, surreal juxtapositions and obscure narratives reflected innovations in the art, science and politics of the time. Like many current artists and filmmakers, we will follow the path of these historical trajectories by using contemporary technologies and concepts for acquisition, development and distribution of our work. Although experimental work can be widely defined, we will emphasize the aspects that separate it from mainstream commercial work. Demonstrations of a wide range of equipment and software will be provided from low-tech to high-tech, but in addition you will be expected to be problem-solvers and researchers as well, and to share your discoveries with your colleagues. Discussions of historical/cultural forms, will offer a context for the assignments. Frequent critiques will offer important feedback. Any additional talent you bring from other creative abilities from music to dance to writing creatively will be useful in this class.

### Course Goals:

- Be curious, playful and innovative.
- Emphasize visual and aural formal qualities and detail.
- Challenge yourself in an area that is difficult for you and be unafraid of risk.
- Love your materials and images, but don't be afraid to cut them (you don't have to stick to your first idea)
- Structure your work time well and show dedication.
- Anchor your work in its appropriate context: historically, culturally, socially, aesthetically and with regard to other courses you are taking through research and presentations.
- Learn how to control and care equipment to the degree needed to produce your work.
- Make art in relationship to others: your class, your community and beyond.

### Evaluation Criteria *Does your work show:*

- An approach that is visually, intellectually and emotionally **compelling**? Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to see more?
- Originality/ creativity/ **innovation**/ surprise/ cleverness? Does the work avoid clichés and pat expectations? Did you take a risk ...step away from your comfort zone?
- Conceptual depth, sophistication or complexity that allows a **sustaining** interest by the viewer.
- **Form** (its color, media, rhythm, etc) that supports the **content** (the idea or concept). Does it make sense to use this form for this subject?
- **Resolution** in the way that makes sense for your own project. The various themes and metaphors should pull together into a unified whole that makes sense. It should be finished. It should fulfill the assignment.
- A **commitment** to the work that involves creative problem solving, development of technical skills, attention to detail, meeting deadlines, showing artistic integrity and effort, a willingness to learn

from others including faculty and students, participation in group critiques and discussions and attendance during TA hours. (because this is very important, there will be a separate 10 points available for this at the end of the semester, in addition to how it affects each assignment)

- An awareness of the **appropriate audience/ assignment/ social context** of your work as relating to other artists and non-artists, those of your generation and beyond, what era you are working within, what cultural knowledge you can refer to and what will be lost on the viewer. ***The piece should be appropriate for experimental galleries and/or video festivals, not just college audiences. It should be a creative response to the guidelines of the assignment.***

#### **Class Etiquette:**

- ***Critiques:*** You don't need to raise your hand to comment, and I encourage you to participate. Make sure to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear and give everyone a turn.
- ***Bodily care:*** Please plan to eat before and after class but not *during* class. If you must have a snack for health reasons, please speak to me about it and *never* eat near a computer. A closed container of water may be placed below your desk for urgent care. You may leave if you need the restroom without asking but please be as quiet as you can.
- ***Internet/phone/ Computer work: Put your computer and phone to sleep during critiques, demos, discussions and lectures.*** In a class where you are sitting in front of a powerful computer all the time, with your phone in your pocket, it is very tempting to use that technology when we are meant to be doing other things. We all get *very* distracted by mouse clicks or texting when someone is presenting something or when we are having a critique. Please do not continue to work on your project when we are looking at someone else's work, instead put your computer to sleep. Take notes in your journal. Being a full participant in the critique observation and discussion is part of what I evaluate you on. Email may be done before or after class, or during a break. If you are waiting for something to render, please plan other aspects of your project during wait time rather than get distracted by e-communications.
- ***\*\*\*A separate plus or minus will be attached to each grade that reflects your class etiquette.\*\*\****

**Communication and grading:** Grading comes in the form of comments and letter grades. I really value talking to you in person, writing emails in response to your work and I only give letter grades as a supplement to these more important tasks. Nevertheless, these can tell you how I think you are doing in relationship to my overall expectations which are based on a history of knowing what students can do, what the rest of the class might be able to do in the allotted time, and what I think you personally are capable of all in relationship to the above mentioned goals. Please do not compare your grades with others! There are many reasons for variations in grades. What is taking a risk for one person might be comfortable and predictable for someone else with more experience. Good work comes in many forms! Please take initiative in scheduling conversations with me if you don't understand something. It is your responsibility to catch up on work you have missed. Communication is key to understanding! To do the best in this class you should start work right after the assignment is given so that you can revise as needed. . If you miss a demonstration/ lecture, you will have to work with a TA and will not be able to visit the material as thoroughly. If you miss a workday, you miss some one on one time.

#### **Critiques will be weighted, with a multiplier number indicating the weight. (Bx2 for instance)**

A- to A+ The high end of this indicates exceptional work to which nothing can be added, on time, following the assignment and with special insight, effort, risk-taking and creativity. All of the evaluation criteria are met. Excellent participation in critique and discussions.

B- to B+ This indicates above average work, competent, safe and interesting but still lacking something or it could be innovative work without a high enough skill level. Good comments during critique and discussions.

C- to C+ This indicates average work, average effort, basic amount of skill and creative ideas. Low participation in critique and discussions.

D- to D+ The work is handed in but shows less than acceptable effort creativity and skill. Little to no participation in critique and discussions.

F Little effort, skill, imagination.

**Due Dates:** Projects are due *at the beginning of the class period on the date of the progress or final critique*. A project is considered late if it is not **ready** at that time and will receive an F until submitted. The F will then be averaged with your grade if the piece is handed in BEFORE the next scheduled critique or within a week. If you have an excused absence coming up on a critique day, the work is due **before** you leave. Most projects will have one or more progress critiques for which you will receive credit toward the final score. ***The final project is due before the last day of class, not during final's week. The final portfolio for the semester is due the next class day after the final critique.***

**Resubmission:** You may improve and resubmit work and the new grade will be averaged with your initial grade. Please submit the new version within a week. Revisions that are expected for the entire class receive their own credit. This doesn't apply to the final project.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance in this class is extremely important because you cannot make up lost days by just reading or any other independent work. The class time is full of demonstrations, presentations, critiques and workshop time. If you miss demos you may never catch up and not know how to use the equipment. Workdays in class allow personal assistance from the professor on assignments and should be prepared for (you should work outside of class to be at the next stage of work, ready for assistance. Expect to spend at least 12 hours per week outside of class). You will always do better on an assignment if you are ready for the workdays in class. Video screenings are wonderful opportunities to inspire your work and describe the nature of the assignment. Students who miss these invariably don't do as well on the associated project. For all of the above reasons, I am strict about attendance and accountability.

After three (3) unexcused class absences I will begin to *lower your final grade for the course by one-third letter grade level (A- to B+)* for each additional absence. Unexcused absences should be saved for occasional minor illnesses and you should still notify me through a call or email. Two times late (10 min after class starts) will count as one absence. Excused absences are only given for illnesses that require a doctor, death in the family, Kenyon sanctioned activities such as athletic events, etc, and must be okayed **before** the missed class whenever possible. Do not leave for these events early. All work must be **handed in before** an excused absence if it is due on the date of the absence or it will be considered late. If you have more than three excused events that pull you away from class, you will have to start using your three allowed unexcused absences (for instance, if you have 5 scheduled events, two of them will use up some of your allowed unexcused absences.) Excused absences do not include taking a friend to the airport, leaving early for break or the common cold.

**Collaboration:** You all have different aptitudes and experiences, please be respectful of these in each other. Working together will improve all of your pieces. For some projects you will be the crew for another artist in the class. You are expected to help each other and to pull your part of the load. Groups will also be important at idea sessions and critiques. It is here that feedback from your peers becomes collaborative. Your voluntary participation at critiques will influence your grade.

**Technical Proficiency:** You may not use any equipment until you have been trained on it. Equipment and software should be tried immediately after being demonstrated. Although you may work in teams some projects, you will be expected to have a basis of competency on all equipment and software individually. Most of you will have some training from a beginning level class, but there will be additional training that you will get in this class. Some things may be done differently, and the software has changed. Increased technical proficiency may show determination and hard work (which can improve your grade), yet it is the concept and structure of your piece that will make it successful along with the appropriate amount of technological know-how.

**Equipment policy:** You are expected to care for all equipment both on the premises and off. If something breaks or is lost while in your possession, you are responsible for it financially and you must tell me immediately. You may sign out equipment through Lisa Dilts between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30 (except the lunch hour, 12-1pm) Return time is determined by the assignment in agreement with me (sometimes you may keep it for the length of the assignment, other times you must share). Make sure you clean up after yourself, don't leave personal

elements on or near your station, don't bring food or drink in the edit facilities. Only Students enrolled in Installation art, Digital Imaging, Digital Photo, Experimental Video and Film, Acting and Directing for the Camera and Photography and Advanced Studio may use Horvitz Digital Studios. Anyone else, for any other project is not allowed (even with you helping them! There is a media lab in the library for all other classes or other projects you create for other classes.)

**Copies:** All work will be handed in on Midian for grading and for inclusion in the Kenyon Art Department Archives. They maybe exhibited on our website or for promotional reasons within the college.

**Academic Honesty:** Being honest academically in an art class is more difficult to define than in other classes. Sometimes using another image/video is intended as a cultural reference or quote. It even has a name: "appropriation". Whenever this is intended, the image is well known enough in the culture for most people to know where it came from, and therefore it evokes some ideas or feelings tied to the original. This is fine for an artist to do. It is less appropriate to use a copy of a beach scene from a TV commercial for instance, just because you need a "beach" and you aren't near one. Taking another artist's image or idea directly and passing it off as your own is a case for dishonesty however unless the "stealing" itself is part of your concept. I suggest that if you have a question, come talk to me first.

**Journal:** You will keep a journal in which you will record ideas, notes on demos, notes and responses to screenings and readings. You can sketch ideas for video sequences, storyboards, treatments, etc. It can also be a depository for interesting articles you find.

**Disability Statement:** If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact you ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge you to contact the Office of Disability Services at 5453. The Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva (salvae@kenyon.edu) will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

**Privacy vs Confidentiality:** I am happy to talk to you about issues you are concerned about...just know that I am not mandated to confidentiality the way a counselor, doctor or clergy person is. For this reason, if there is danger to yourself or others, especially in terms of sexual harassment/misconduct/assault, I will need to notify the college titleIX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). For more information about your options at Kenyon, please go to: <http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-equal-opportunity/sexual-assault-and-harassment/> If you are having a particularly hard time for any reason, please let me know early and keep me in the loop...this need not be specific, but some general communication.

#### **Equipment and Materials:**

Notebook/Journal, (Bookstore)

An external drive if you can...thunderbolt or USB 3 should work.

Books available through me and Library....see extensive bibliography in FAQ on lab computers.

#### **Assignments:**

- Extra\_Ordinary: abstracted montage/ manipulation based on form
- Trailer for a Movement using appropriation
- Social Synergies Project: Juxtapositions
- Public Art project; Creative Distribution
- Commitment seen through class participation, class etiquette, attitude, work ethic, timeliness, will be filtered into each grade.

*For additional help contact Visiting Artist/ Manager of Technology: Emily Zeller (individual appointments available) Contact Emily at Zellere@kenyon.edu or at her office in Horvitz. Teaching Assistants are also available in the lab for three evenings per week.*