

Contemporary Critical Issues

The Borders of Aesthetics/The Aesthetics of Borders: Transborder Practices, Speculative Conditions, and Post-Contemporary Art

“...the border—analyzing it as an abjection machine and as a state-sponsored aesthetic project, and as a practice, not a static, violent, hybrid place, or a refulgent metaphor but rather as a network of regulatory mechanisms and disciplinary triggers.”

- Mary Pat Brady, “The Homoerotics of Immigration Control”

We find ourselves at the edges of borders that tunnel into and across our bodies as nation-states re-organize their frames and aesthetics under the sign of neoliberal transparencies, of visibilities as targeting, of rogue accounting of who counts and what is allowed to flow and where. As Jacques Rancière has put forth “representation” is now an act of policing and seeking social presence no longer offers the “rights of citizenship”. We are now called on to create escape aesthetics, manifest exits cultures, queering cartographies, perhaps not wholly imperceptible or completely opaque gestures-but instead attempts at a translucent aesthetics.

Let us re-cross borderlines, nation-states as frames, the current containment policies and their segregated flows with a post-contemporary aesthetics of translucency, of de-framing, re-aligning what can be figured and drawn-out otherwise. Our task will be the tracing out of disturbances, alter-social practices, border-methods, counter-diagnostics of undocumentation, of unbecoming, of unfolding, of an under-commons that is now a necessary condition to deal with the everyday at edges of the world in a time of ruins. The art, theory and gestures that we will consider will move us from geo-politics to geo-aesthetics, from reflective politics to ethical diffractions, from border-art to border-less art, from sites to non-sites as switchcodes for what art might be done right now.

We will read sections from the following: Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, J. Derrida's *The Truth of Painting*, *Escapes Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century*, *The Femicide Machine*, *REMEX: Toward an Art History of the NAFTA Era* and a number of other essays.

Watch of the following works: Louis Hock's *Southern California: Cinemural* (1979) and *The Mexican Tapes: A Chronicle of Life Outside the Law* (1986), Silvia Gruner's *un chant d'amor* (2004), Lourdes Portillo's *Señorita Extraviada* (2002), Alex Rivera's *The Sixth Section* (2003), and a number of other videos, films, and network projects.

We also consider art work, art projects and gestures that re-mark, re-perform, and re-stage the site and non-site of borders: Situationist International, inSite 1994 to 2005, Marcos Ramirez/ERRE, Chantal Akerman, Yoshua Okón, and Maria Iorio and Raphaël Cuomo.

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Grading Policies and Evaluation: 25% Attendance, Participation and Presentation 25% Leading Discussion 25% 1 Project 25% Paper (One 10 page MLA style).

You will be expected to attend every class. If you have more than 2 unexcused absences, your final grade will drop a letter grade and 1/2 a letter for every additional unexcused absence that comes after. Two unexcused lateness will be considered an absence.

Schedule of Classes, Readings and Films:

September 29th – Introduction: The Borders of Aesthetics, The Aesthetics of Borders

Watch: *The Cisco Kid: The Gay Amigo* (1949)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=az49DJfufUs>

Watch in Class: Silvia Gruner: *un chant d' amor* (DVD in Class) (2004).

Read: Mary Pat Brady, “The Homoerotics of Immigration Control”
http://sfonline.barnard.edu/immigration/brady_01.htm

Oct. 6th – Defining Aesthetics: Kant and After

Read: Critique of Judgment (page 48 to 124):
http://monoskop.org/images/7/77/Kant_Immanuel_Critique_of_Judgment_1987.pdf

Watch in Class: Chantal Akerman: *De l'autre côté (From the Other Side)* (2002).

Oct. 13th – Framing Borders, or the Truth of Painting

Read: J. Derrida's “The Parergon” from *The Truth of Painting*:
<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/Parergon.pdf>

Watch: Situationist International (Part 1 to 3):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SvdWk8zRrI>

Oct. 20th – **NO CLASS** – Bordering, Neo-Bordering, and Post-Bordering

Read: *Escape Routes* (Pages 3 to 82):
<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/Escape.pdf>

Watch: Louis Hock's *Southern California: Cinemural* (1979):
<https://vimeo.com/104908372>

Watch: *The Mexican Tapes: A Chronicle of Life Outside the Law* (1986):
<https://vimeo.com/104908372>

Oct. 27th – Controlling and Escaping Frames

Read *Escape Routes* (Pages 85 to 161):

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/Escape.pdf>

Watch in Class: Alex Rivera's *The Sixth Section* (2003).

Nov. 3rd – Drawing, Figuration, and the Immigrant

Read: Thomas Nail's *The Figure of the Migrant* (Introduction):

www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/TheMigrant.pdf

Read: Christopher Sohn's "On borders' multiplicity: A perspective from assemblage theory"

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/BorderAssemblage.pdf>

Watch in Class: Maria Iorio and Raphaël Cuomo's *Sudeuropa* (2002 – 07).

Nov. 10th – En(gender)ing Bordered Bodies with Cuts, Lines and Vectors

Read: *The Femicide Machine* (2012) by Sergio González Rodríguez

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/TheFemicideMachine.pdf>

Watch: Ursula Biemann's *Performing the Border* (1999):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ICtJ-Vt4jo>

Watch In Class: Lourdes Portillo's *Señorita Extraviada* (2002):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nE8xl_p-UiM

Nov. 17th – Re-Folding, Unfolding, and Enfolding Borders

Read *Escape Routes* (Pages 162 to 221):

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/Escape.pdf>

Watch: Yoshua Okón's *Octopus* (2011):

http://www.yoshuaokon.com/ing/works/octopus/video_vi.html

Watch: Alex Rivera's *The Border Trilogy* (2003):

<http://alexrivera.com/project/the-borders-trilogy/>

Nov. 24th – Border/s-as-Method/s or Re-Assembling Aesthetic Line-Breaks

Read: Amy Sara Carroll's "Border" section from *REMEX: Toward an Art History of the NAFTA Era*:

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/REMEX.pdf>

Watch: Vicky Funari and De La Torres's *Maquilapolis*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUQgFzkE3i0>

Dec. 1st – Transbordering The Ruins of Lines

Read: Marcela A. Fuentes's "Zooming In and Out: Tactical Media Performance in Transnational Contexts"

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/Zooming.pdf>

Read: TBT book:

http://pactac.net/books/TBT_Book.pdf

Watch in Class: TBT documentary,

Dec. 8st – Projects Presentations or Exhibition

Papers Due: December 18th

MORE Readings and Materials:

Readings:

Eunson Kim, "Neoliberal Aesthetics: 250 cm Line Tattooed on 6 Paid People":

<http://csalateral.org/wp/issue/4/neoliberal-aesthetics-250-cm-line-tattooed-on-6/>

Mezzadra, Sandro and Brett Neilson, *Border As Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, Duke University Press, 2013.

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/BorderAsMethod.pdf>

Thomas Nail - *Returning To Revolution: Deleuze, Guattari and Zapatismo* (Introduction)

<http://www.thing.net/~rdom/ucsd/Borders/Returning.pdf>

Interview with Thomas Nail

<http://criticallegalthinking.com/2015/06/30/on-destroying-what-destroys-you-an-interview-with-thomas-nail/>

Zizek

<http://inthesetimes.com/article/18385/slavoj-zizek-european-refugee-crisis-and-global-capitalism>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/26/world/europe/nationalists-in-finland-hurl-rocks-at-iraqis-seeking-asylum.html>

Projects:

<http://refugeeair.org/press-contact/>

<http://neurope.eu/article/welcome-but-how-the-refugee-phrase-book-project/>

Selected Bibliography

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Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Routledge, 1983.

Andreas, Peter. *Border Games: Policing the U.S.-Mexico Divide* (second edition). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009.

Anzaldúa, Gloria *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute: San Francisco. 1987.

Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, 1996.

Bhabha H, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London, 1991.

Bolaño, Roberto, 2006, Picador; Reprint edition (September 1, 2009); *The Savage Detective*, Picador, 2008

Buck-Morss, Susan, "Passports" in *Documents*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Spring 1993).

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Danelo, David, J. *The Border: Exploring the U.S.-Mexican Divide*. Stackpole Books, 2008.

Dear M, Leclerc G, editors, *Postborder City: Cultural Spaces of Baja California*,

Dery, Mark, editor, *Latin America and the Technological Imaginary in the Digital Age*, Routledge, New York, 2015.

Derrida, J, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavy Jr. and Richard Rand, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Domínguez-Revulcaba, Héctor and Ignacio Corona, editors, *Gender Violence at the U.S.-Mexico Border: Media Representation and Public Response*, 2010.

Fox, Claire, *The Fence and the River*, Minnesota Press, 1999.

Polkinhorn, Harry, editor, *Visual Arts on the U.S./Mexican Border*, 1991.

Hooper, Cynthia, *Provisional Communities: 3 Videos About Tijuana*, (2006-2008), 24 min; *Hecho a Mano*, 2008 12 min; *Basura Quemada*, 2007 6 min; *Lazaro Cardenas Electrizada*, 2006 6 min.

Janzen, Rebecca, *The National Body in Mexican Literature Collective Challenges to Biopolitical Control*, Palgrave, 2015.

Kurgan, Laura, *Close Up at a Distance: Mapping Technology and Politics*, Zone Books, 2013.

Lerner, Jesse and Rubén Ortiz Torres, *Frontierland/Fronterilandia*, video, 1995.

McLagan, Meg and Yates McKee, editors, *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*, Zone Books, 2012.

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Papdopoulos, Dmitris, and Niamh Stephenson, Vassilis Tsianos, *Escape Routes,: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century*, Pluto Press, London, 2008.

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Ronell, Avital, *Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech*, University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

Ruben Martinez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*, 2007.

Sadowski, Claudia, editor, *Globalization on the Line: Gender, Nation, and Capital at U.S. Borders*, 2001.

Sheller, Mimi, editor, *Mobility and Locative Media: Mobile Communication in Hybrid Spaces*, Routledge, 2014.

Weibel, Peter, editor, *global aCtivISm: Art and Conflict in the 21st Century*, MIT Press, 2015.