Physical spaces tell stories. Every place inhabited by human beings is infused with narrative. The spaces we move through in our daily life are constantly telling us stories about “how to behave” or “who we are” within that space. They speak to us. Soothe us. Even yell at us. The stories that are told by the spaces that surround us shape us just as much as we shape them. It is in this dialogue—of creating space and it creating us—that we become who we are and who we hope to be.

Gan Golan, excerpt from essay “A space for new stories”

Beyond Zuccotti Park

This is a studio course that will introduce you to various aesthetic strategies used to create site-specific performance/art works. Through a series of progressive exercises, using different artistic mediums, you will use variety of structures to create site-specific studies in an ever widening scope. We will begin with ourselves as a site, expand to our classroom, our associated communities and the public and private spaces that comprise our urban environment. Along the way we will be exploring what skills and tools we have and need to acquire to develop as artists working in this field. The course will culminate in the creation of proposals for larger scale hypothetical site-specific works to allow to you to expand your imaginations outside the limits of the course and learn the basics of writing grant proposals to fund such projects.

The course will also include reading about and viewing documentation of site work by seminal artists in this field as well as a limited number of critical writing assignments to develop our thinking about the aesthetics and politics embedded in site practice. We will be exploring core inquiries into the intent of site work, the latent meaning embedded in place/space, the nature of audience/performer relationships, the ethics involved in artist/community interactions and the ways in which site works function as a forms of activism.

"Site-specific" is a term frequently associated with the visual arts but since the Happenings of the 60's and 70's, a body of work termed "site-specific performance" has evolved as highly structured works of art that are designed around, for or because of place. In the streets, in fields, deserts, forests, garbage dumps, abandoned buildings, on the border, aboard boats, in virtual space and outer space, this genre has unleashed the power of performance to indelibly mark our sense of locational identity and investigate notions of space/place/non-place. As site artists confront the matrix of social forces and overlapping communities that relate to a given site, their aesthetics, creative processes, forms and goals have shifted. How are they blurring the lines between art and activism,
art and urban renewal, art and spirituality, art and real life? These are some of the questions we’ll explore through our practice in making site work and through in-class discussions.

Requirements
Attendance and Participation: Any unexcused absences may lower your grade. This class is both experiential in nature and will require your regular attendance and invested participation in class activities, and rehearsals outside of class as well scholarly investigations into the social theories and issues that underlie the practice. Please come to each class having done any required work on assigned site studies, readings and writing assignments- and prepared to participate in “on your feet” class activities as well as in discussions. Late arrival (more than 15 min.) will count as half an absence.

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Center for Students with Disabilities for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities, I encourage you to do so.

Late Assignments: Late assignments, as a rule, will not be permitted. Only in extraordinary circumstances will late assignments be accepted. Late assignments may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor, but may be given a reduced grade.

Assignments: Promptness in completing class assignments and required readings is a requirement. However, circumstances may arise which make it impossible to complete class requirements on time. When such circumstances occur, appropriate arrangements must be made in advance whenever possible. You are expected to have prepared thoroughly for each class. Preparing site studies as per schedule is a requirement. Preparation also includes any outside rehearsal or preparation to prepare site studies individually or in groups, reading the assigned readings prior to class, summarizing the content and being prepared to discuss it; listing questions or reactions to the material; and making connections between concepts in readings, videos we view and your own artistic practice. Print out readings and bring to class or have them available on your laptop during class.

Readings and other assignments are listed in a box below date they are assigned and should be completed by next class meeting unless otherwise stipulated. Writing assignments will include two written responses to classmates’ site studies, one 3-4 page paper analyzing a protest as a site-specific performance, a community voices script and a final proposal for a hypothetical site-specific work. Site studies will include a written performance score, and audio tour, the creation of a community sourced script, a visual intervention piece and the conception of a hypothetical site-specific project. Details of assignments to be discussed in class. You can expect to have approximately 4-5 hrs of work outside of class time each week.
Syllabus in Detail

Week 1
Thursday 9/6 Introduction to Site-Specific Performance/Art & Self as Site
Performative explorations of locational identity; introduction to use of performance scores. View Liz Lerman solo. Make teams for next week.


Week 2
Thursday 9/13 Reading a Site: Public Space, Public Sphere
Discuss readings.
Apply analysis of space to classroom: educational space.
Work in teams to create site studies that reveal something about the latent meaning in educational space.
Learning how to look deeply at the latent meaning in place/space and using what naturally occurs as basis for mediating viewers’ perception of a site.
View: Natalie Bookchin’s Mass Ornament


Week 3
Thursday 9/20 Walking the City: Performance as Experience
Discuss readings re: art and experience. Do a performance score as a class. Introduction to the “mediated walk” as a form of site practice. Show Angels and Accordions. Discuss assignment. Brainstorm elements of a score.

**Week 4**

**Thursday 9/27  Walking the City: Audio Interventions**
Reflect on Walking the City assignment. Hand in hard copy of your score and give your response to the score you performed to its creator.
Discuss Soundwalk Tours. Whisper tours in class.
View documentation of audio walks by Teri Rueb and Janet Cardiff. Discuss Oddey reading. Discussion of upcoming assignment. Training on audio equipment

**Assignment:** Due 10/4: Purchase Soundwalk tour and download to your phone or ipod. [http://www.soundwalk.com/#/TOURS/](http://www.soundwalk.com/#/TOURS/) Choose a tour and do it before next class.
Start work on creating a short audio score to guide the listener on a walk. You can choose to do this with partner or do it individually. Technology used can be an ipod, iphone, MAC laptop and edit using Garage Band or other program like Protools if you are familiar with it. Please put the audio file you created on a CD and bring to class. Make sure to label your disc with your name(s), title of assignment and of piece. If the technical requirements of this assignment are a challenge, please see me. Not everyone has access to the appropriate equipment but we can problem solve. Final Audio Tour due 10/11.


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**Week 5**

**Thursday 10/4 Community Voice & Civic Engagement**
Check in on audio tours.
Read out loud scripts and/or view performances of scripts artists have developed using community voices: Anna Deveare Smith, Michael Rohd & Sojourn Theatre, Ping Chong, Marty Pottenger, The Civilians, Suzanne Lacy. Note different roles artists have played in shaping the public presentation of these voices and the ethics involved. What role might they play in forwarding civic dialogue?

**Assignment:** Due 10/11: Finish your audio tour. Bring it to next class: 2 copies on 2 CDs.
A performance of process and practice. 2005 NET Festival at Dell Arte in CA.

Attend Dance on the Greenway! 10/6 Shows 1 and 4 pm Details at www.dtetc.org

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**Week 6**

**Thursday 10/11 Community Voice & Civic Engagement (con’t)**
Hand in CD of your audio tour and exchange other copy with a partner.
Graffitti critical issues of our time. Introduction to Boal Image Theatre to identify issues of importance to class. Form affinity groups, identify issue and interviewees. Role Play interviews. Go over Interview Tips and form questions.

**Assignment:** Due: 10/18: Do the audio tour you were given. Write a 1 page response.
Bring 2 hard copies to class: one to give to its creator, one to hand in to me.

**Assignment:** Record an interview with someone with a point of view and experience related to the issue your group is investigating. Transcribe, email to your team members and at least one member of each group should bring their laptop to next class with the group’s interviews on it. Please review Purdue Owl Interview Tips document on Blackboard before doing your interview.

**Week 7**

**Thursday 10/18 Community-Based Script Development**

Time in class to develop scripts. Mid-term check-in. Guest Lecturer pending availability. Where have you felt limited by lack of skills, knowledge, tools or models?

**Assignment:** Finish community-based scripts. Do any research you might want to include. Grab any additional material, or do more interviews if needed. Meet with your team to rehearse for reading next week. Go to Undesireable Elements performance 7:30 @ La Mama.

**Week 8**

**Thursday 10/25 Script Presentations**

In class readings of scripts. Hand in hard copies. Brainstorm how they might be staged site-specifically.


**Week 9**

**Thursday 11/1 Performance as Protest**

View Occupy Wall Street, Las Madres, Act Up, Tank Man. Notice and analyze how these protesters use both the metaphoric content of site and aesthetic tools to increase the impact and visibility of their actions.

**Writing Assignment:** Due 11/8: 3 pages, double spaced: Choose one of the above protests, or another of your choice (i.e. Rosa Parks and the bus boycott, or other protests from the Civil Rights movement, Tea Party, OWS, The YES Men) Research. Introduce the issue and the group organizing the protest, describe the intent of the protest. Describe and analyze what aesthetic tools were used and to what end. What role did the site play? What strategies were organizers using to achieve their purpose? How did this protest redefine public space? What was the significance of their choice of sites? Read as necessary to research your topic. Include a separate Works Cited page noting sources you used as research and cite them in your paper. See Purdue Owl for MLA guidelines on citing sources.

**Week 10**  
**Thursday 11/8 Subversive Images: Visual Art and Media Tools**  
View and discuss works by Krzysztof Wodiczko, Alfredo Jaar, Gran Fury, The Yes Lab.

**Assignment:** Due 11/15: Research an organization that is working on a social issue that resonates with you. Develop an images and/or signage that might be useful to their work by highlighting the issue. Using what we have learned about looking at what is already in a site, create at least one image or piece of signage that mimics design elements of existing signage/image but interrupts or changes the message, redirecting its meaning to speak to the issue your organization focuses on. Create a visual piece that you can bring to class- a photograph, drawing, Photoshop redesign. Bring in a short description of the organization you have chosen as well.

**Week 11**  
**Thursday 11/15 Subversive Image Presentations**  
View signage and/or image projects. Discuss.  
Reflect and discuss final projects.

**Assignment:** Due 11/29: Think about what you’d like to propose as a final project. Write a paragraph as a pitch you will present to class describing a hypothetical project you’d like to create. These can be purely aesthetic site projects, or can have activist agendas. Address your aesthetic strategy and elements, the structure of the project and your intention.

**Week 12**  
**11/22 No Class. Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Week 13**  
**Thursday 11/29 Proposals for Final Site Projects & Beauty and Spectacle**  
Bring in your paragraphs and make your pitch to class. Form groups.  
Discuss format of proposal. Look at sample proposals and budget template, discuss research to be done. View *Summer in Ivye, Safe Harbor, Royal De Luxe* Discuss role of beauty and spectacle as end in and of themselves and as subversive strategies

**Assignment:** Due 12/13: Work on your final project.

**Week 14**  
**Thursday 12/6 Brainstorming with class on final site-specific projects.**  
Each team will present where they are and facilitate a brainstorm with class.
**Assignment:** Finish your proposal and create presentation for next class. These can include staged readings of sample scripts, PowerPoint or Prezi presentations of images, and/or short videos or audio tracks. Please bring in copies that include narrative (see handouts that have questions to be addressed, length of narrative and a budget template). Please make these as engaging as possible not just dry readings of narrative. We will be acting as a grant panel and ask you questions. Details as to length allocated to each group to be discussed in class but plan to keep your presentation under 10 min.

**Week 15**
**Thursday 12/13 : Presentations of Final Projects**
In class presentations. Reflection on course. Course evaluation forms.

Grades are based on:

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<thead>
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<th>Site Studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance Score</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio Score</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-based script</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<td>Sign/Image Assignment</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Hypothetical Site Proposal</td>
<td>35 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grading Equivalence:**
A=93% and above; A-=90%-92%; B+=87%-89%; B=83%-86%; B-=80%-82%; C+=77%-79%; C=73%-76%; C-=70%-72%; F=below 70%

**Plagiarism**
NYU has strict regulations regarding plagiarism. If you have any questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me or visit this website for useful information.
http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/plagiarism.shtml

**Incompletes:** Only in extreme circumstances should students consider not completing course work and taking a grade of Incomplete. If such circumstances arise that course work cannot be completed in a timely fashion, and a student wishes to take an Incomplete, this must be discussed and approved by course instructor prior to end of course and a specific timetable agreed upon for completion of course work.

Additional Readings and Viewings: Are either now or will be on Blackboard in Folder: Assignments/Additional Readings (These will not be covered in class but are provided should you want to read more deeply about various aspects of this field or view more artists’ works. If there is a specific area you wish do more research on, contact me. I’ll suggest or post other readings)