Walls of Power: Public Art, Fall 2015
ARTS-UG 1440-001
Thursday, 6:20-9:00pm
1 Washington Place
Room 432

Instructor: Terry Culver
Tjc202@nyu.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 5-6 & by appointment
Please email in advance

Course Description
Walls of Power will explore how visual art, performance art, and activist art in the public sphere contribute to political dialogue and community building.

In doing so, the course will integrate the hands-on practice of public art making with the study of politics, community building, culture, urban planning, art history, and social issues as they relate to public art, with a special focus on New York City.

Course Objectives/Learning Goals
With a multidisciplinary approach, the course will examine the remarkable transformation of public art through history and the roles it has played to both support and to resist established political beliefs. Emphasis will be placed on defining public space, understanding the role of public art in society, and using public art as a prism to understand wider cultural and political trends. The course will examine selected historical examples of public art as well as contemporary ones, and take advantage of the public art throughout New York City.

This course approaches public art as an important part of an ongoing dialogue about cultural values, commerce, politics, and public life. We will become familiar with the role that contemporary artists and technology have played in shaping this dialogue by supporting or resisting political change. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the role of technology and art in society and in defining public interaction. Also, the course will cover the impact, both direct and indirect, of certain technological developments on art and other media.

This is not a lecture course. This course requires inquiry, intellectual curiosity, and participation from each student.
A major component of the course will be a public art project that students will plan and execute during the semester. This semester, we will collaborate with Critical Massive to design, create, and produce a mural in New York City. Working with a team of profession graffiti artists, students will be an integral part of the process of the project, from its organization, conception, design, and completion. Students will keep a journal for the duration of the project, which will be used to evaluate the project and to connect it to the history of public art.

This course will build upon previous public art courses taught from 1999—2014 at Gallatin, which included public art projects at IS296, PS142, Brooklyn Firehouse 229, Soho Digital Projection Initiative, digital projections in Central Park, and a submission to the World Trade Center Memorial Design Competition.

**Coursework and Assignments**
Coursework will consist of artmaking, readings, several short-length papers, and contributions to the collaborative art project. High priority is placed upon quality of completed assignments, participation in class, close reading of materials, and original thoughts in writing.

The course work will consist of:

1) **Readings.** To be assigned each week. It is important that students do the readings and come to class with two questions or observations to raise during class. These are to be emailed to me prior to class or posted on the Walls of Power Facebook Page.

2) **Ongoing Dialogue.** Comment and/or post on the Walls of Power Facebook Page.

3) **Contributions to the Mural Project.** Students are expected to be fully engaged in the discourse and design of the project and find some way to make a tangible contribution through design, painting, photographs, interviews, etc.

4) **Final Presentations.** Students will be assigned an artist’s work to research and present at the end of the semester. The presentation should cover the artist’s intentions, common themes in his/her work, and the context in which the work exists. The presentations should be approximately 5-7 minutes long and can include multimedia. I will be available to provide advice and guidance on the presentations.
**Grading**

Grades will be evaluated by:

- Attendance, full participation in class, and completion of assignments (50%)
- Contributions to mural project (25%)
- Quality of final project (25%)

**Academic Integrity**

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [here](http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html)

**CALENDAR**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>September</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Welcome &amp; Introduction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Core Issues in Public Art</td>
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<td>Assessment of Art in the Public Sphere</td>
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<td>Case Study: Civic Virtue</td>
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<td>Reading Due: Cynthia Deng, History of Public Art in the U.S.</td>
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<td>Mural Project Site Visit and Assessment</td>
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<td>Mural Design Session #1: Preliminary Assessment and Concepts</td>
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<td>Assignment Due: Visit to Image Objects, City Hall Park &amp; the Twin Towers in Light</td>
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<td>Sculptural Smackdown: Whose Art and for Which Public?</td>
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<td>Competing Artistic and Political Interests</td>
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<td>Case Studies: Tilted Arc and Vietnam Veterans Memorial</td>
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<td>Mural Project Design Session #2: Concepts and Intention</td>
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<td>Reading Due: The Making of the Washington Monument and Mural Site Assessments</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>Evolution of Street Art in New York City</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker: Noah Shapiro, Founder of Critical Massive</td>
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Mural Project Design Session #3: Concept Design and Interpretation
Reading Due: Tom Finkelpearl, *City As Site*

8  *Alternative Histories: Public Art as Discourse*  
Case Studies: Suzanne Lacy & One and Another  
Mural Project Design Session #4: In-class Mural  
Assignment Due: Lucy Lippard, Mapping the Terrain and Mural Design

15  *Fall Recess: No Class*

22  *Charged Atmosphere: Spatial Politics*  
Case Study: Union Square  
Reading Due: Rosalyn Deutsche, Uneven Development in New York City  
Mural Project Design Session #4: Final Design

29  *Mural Painting on Site*  
Assignment Due: Reading on the Community Mural Movement

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**November**

5  *Mural Painting on Site*  
Assignment Due: Reading by Martha Rosler, Out of Order, the Public Art Machine

12  *Mural Painting on Site*  
Assignment Due: Reading by Michael Warner, Publics and Counterpublics

19  *Taking it to the Streets*  
Mural Project Impact Assessment and Evaluation  
Art and Activism: organizations, movements and artists  
Assignment Due: TBD

26  *Thanksgiving-No Class*

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**December**

3  *Location, Location, Location*  
Site specific and conceptual public art  
Assignment Due: TBD  
Visit to Madison Square Park, Installation of *Fata Morgana*

10  *Final Presentations*