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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

FACULTY OF CREATIVE AND CRITICAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE STUDIES

2021 Winter Term 1
AFRICAN ART AND VISUAL CULTURE (3)
(ARTH 380 001)

The Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies acknowledges that the land on which we are situated is the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) People.

Instructor: Dr. Suzanne Gott
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Office hours: by online appointment only

Academic Calendar Entry

Historic and contemporary sub-Saharan African art and visual culture with emphasis on socio-historical contexts. [3-0-0]

Prerequisite: Third-year standing

Course Format: Lecture (in-person)

Course Overview, Content, and Objectives

This course introduces you to the arts and visual cultures of sub-Saharan Africa—a rich, diverse, and dynamic area of art historical study and research. The course is organized according to selected case studies representing major themes, conceptual frameworks, and modes of historic and contemporary artistic practice in sub-Saharan Africa.

Learning Outcomes

The academic study of African art and visual culture is strongly interdisciplinary, combining approaches developed in the fields of art history, anthropology, and popular culture studies. Course reading assignments are designed to increase critical skills in reading and analyzing selected case studies from this multidisciplinary perspective. The course is also designed to broaden your understanding of African cultures, past and present, and expand your awareness and appreciation of African expressive culture.

Required Readings and Videos

Assigned readings available through course Canvas site—UBC Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR).



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Evaluation Criteria and Grading

Your grade will be based on: two mid-term exams; a final examination; and class participation.

Exam #1	30%	Thursday, Oct 13
Exam #2	30%	Thursday, Nov 17
Final Exam	35%	TBA
Participation	5%	

All exams will be written examinations based on lectures, assigned readings, and class discussions. Make-up exams will only be given in the event of a serious, fully-documented medical or personal emergency.

Participation

The participation mark will be based on the degree of active participation in class discussions throughout the term.

Final Examinations:

The examination period for Term 1 of Winter 2021 is December 10 to December 22, inclusive. Except in the case of examination clashes and hardships (three or more formal examinations scheduled within a 27-hour period) or unforeseen events, students will be permitted to apply for out-of-time final examinations only if they are representing the University, the province, or the country in a competition or performance; serving in the Canadian military; observing a religious rite; working to support themselves or their family; or caring for a family member. Unforeseen events include (but may not be limited to) the following: ill health or other personal challenges that arise during a term and changes in the requirements of an ongoing job.

Further information on Academic Concession can be found under Policies and Regulation in the *Okanagan Academic Calendar* <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>



Grading Scale & Definitions:

First class standing

A+ 90% and up	Exceptional: Thorough knowledge of course concepts, highly developed analytical skills evident in application of concepts in assignments and tests, superior skill in writing and expression, and high degree of originality and polish in presentation.
A 85 to 89%	Excellent: Thorough knowledge of course concepts, excellent analytical skills evident in application of concepts in assignments and tests, superior skill in writing and expression, and excellence in presentation of skills in assignments and on tests.
A- 80 to 84%	Nearing excellence: Approaching excellence, but not quite achieving it across the full range of qualities and skills outlined for achievement at the A level.

Second class standing

B+ 76 to 79%	Very good: Superior performance on assignments and tests but falling below excellence in knowledge and application of course concepts across the full range typical of achievement at the first class level; writing characterized by perceptive analysis and based on evidence credibly explained and applied to a clear argument, with few flaws in grammar, expression, style, and structure.
B 72 to 75%	Competent: Good performance, with competent but not consistently thorough understanding of course concepts; writing displays competent presentation of evidence with sound logic, but with room for improvement in expression, grammar, structure, or argumentation.
B- 68 to 71%	

Pass

C+ 64 to 67%	Adequate: Assignments and tests are adequate but display evident weaknesses in understanding of concepts, analytical ability, flaws in logic, and errors in one or more aspects, such as presentation of content, structure, expression, grammar, and use of evidence.
C 60 to 63%	
C- 55 to 59%	

Marginal pass

D 50 to 54%	Minimal knowledge of course concepts and/or serious flaws in presentation, such as lack of focus on topic, vague thesis, inadequate analytical abilities, or more pronounced difficulties in grammar, expression, focus, use of evidence, and other flaws in presentation of content, structure, and style.
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Failure

F 0 to 49%	Assignments and tests in this category may fail to address the assigned topic or question, fail to display adequate knowledge of the course concepts, fail to complete key aspects of the assignment, or display flaws in writing and expression to an extent that meaning is impeded or unintelligible.
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Aboriginal Programs and Services

The primary goal of the Aboriginal Programs and Services is to provide culturally appropriate services and support to First Nation, Metis and Inuit students. Please contact us if you have any questions or inquiries. Web: <http://students.ok.ubc.ca/aboriginal/welcome.html>

International Programs and Services

International Programs and Services (IPS) provides advising, transition services and programs for international students, and IPS works to foster an intercultural campus community where differences are embraced and respected and adapting is multidirectional. In response to COVID-19, International Program and Services have put together a page with important resources and frequently asked questions regarding immigration and health insurance. Web: <http://students.ok.ubc.ca/international/welcome.html>

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar at:

<http://okanagan.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0>.

And on the FCCS site here: <https://fccs.ok.ubc.ca/student-resources/academic-integrity/>

Student Learning Hub

The Student Learning Hub (LIB 237) is your go-to resource for free math, science, writing, and language learning support. The Hub welcomes undergraduate students from all disciplines and year levels to access a range of supports that include **tutoring in math, sciences, languages, and writing, as well as help with study skills and learning strategies**. For more information, please visit the Hub's website (<https://students.ok.ubc.ca/student-learning-hub/>) or call 250-807-9185.

Academic Integrity Matters (AIM) Program

AIM is a program that provides help with academic integrity (AI) issues for undergraduate and graduate students. Please contact the Student Learning Hub (<https://students.ok.ubc.ca/student-learning-hub/>) and ask specifically for an AIM appointment.

Library Information

The **Library** is available for research support and can be accessed [here](#).

UBC Okanagan Disability Resource Centre

The Disability Resource Centre ensures educational equity for students with disabilities and chronic medical conditions. If you require academic accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Centre located in the University Centre building (UNC 214).

General inquiries or students new to the DRC can reach us by emailing drc.questions@ubc.ca

Web: <http://students.ok.ubc.ca/drc/welcome.html>



UBC Okanagan Equity and Inclusion Office

Through leadership, vision, and collaborative action, the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) develops action strategies in support of efforts to embed equity and inclusion in the daily operations across the campus. The EIO provides education and training from cultivating respectful, inclusive spaces and communities to understanding unconscious/implicit bias and its operation within in campus environments. UBC Policy 3 prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of BC's Human Rights Code. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, educational programs, discrimination or harassment please contact the EIO (UNC 216).

Email: equity.ubco@ubc.ca

Web: www.equity.ok.ubc.ca

Health & Wellness

Health and Wellness offers a range of student health and wellness services, including a health clinic, counsellors, and health promotion programs. Students are encouraged to stay at home if they have a minor or communicable illness (such as flu-like symptoms) to prevent further spread of illness to other students, staff, or faculty. If students are too ill to attend class, the student should contact the instructor immediately and submit a "Self Declaration of Absence Due to Illness or Injury" form: [Student Declaration of Absence Due to Illness or Injury \(PDF\)](#)

Please note: Use of the self-declaration form during the final exam period is not accepted—students are advised to communicate directly with their instructor if they are sick and unable to write final examinations. This declaration is not an exemption from any exams, papers, or projects that were missed during the time of absence and does not modify any academic obligations.

If students would like to access a UBC physician, nurse or counsellor, please call our office at 250 807-9270 or visit our website: <https://students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness/>

The UBC Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a free, 24/7 wellness resource for students. Services include personal counselling, life coaching, group programs and more, based on your needs:

<https://students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness/student-assistance-program/>

FCCS Communications Portal

Consider signing up for our FCCS Communications portal for students in our undergraduate and graduate programs in Canvas.

This one-stop space will be used to keep students informed and up to date with important information related to your academic matters as well as updated on FCCS and campus events.

Self enrol: <https://canvas.ubc.ca/enroll/3KBYFY>

SAFEWALK

Don't want to walk alone at night? Not too sure how to get somewhere on campus? Call Safewalk at 250.807.8076. For more information, visit: <http://security.ok.ubc.ca/welcome.html>



Course Schedule with Required Readings and Examinations

You are expected to complete the reading assignments in preparation for each class meeting. You also need to bring a paper or digital copy of the assigned readings to each class.

Week 1 – World Heritage Sites

- Sept 8 introduction to the course
- Sept 10 film excerpts: *The Future of Mud: Masons of Djenné*

Week 2 – World Heritage Sites

- Sept 15 Excerpts from “Introduction” to *The Masons of Djenne*, by Trevor Marchand
- “The Djenné Mosque: World Heritage and Social Renewal in a West African Town,” by Trevor Marchand
- Sept 17 “Yoruba Heritage as Project: Reauthenticating the Osun Grove in Osogbo, Nigeria,” Peter Probst

Week 3 – Transcultural Engagements

- Sept 22 “Alien or Accepted: African Perspectives on the Western ‘Other’ in 15th and 16th Century Art,” by Kathy Curnow
- Sept 24 “Ghana’s Glass Beadmaking Arts in Transcultural Dialogues,” Suzanne Gott

Week 4 – Conceptual Paradigms: Civilization and Wilderness

- Sept 29 “Wilderness,” by Martha Anderson and Christine Mullen Kreamer
- “The Shirts That Mande Hunters Wear,” by Patrick McNaughton
- Oct 1 “So’o Masks and Hembra Funerary Ritual,” by Thomas Blakely & Pamela Blakely

Week 5 – Transcontinental / Transatlantic Connections

- Oct 6. “Why Do They Call it Kalabari? Cultural Authentication and the Demarcation of Ethnic Identity,” Joanne Eicher and Tonye Erekosima
- Oct 8 “Mami Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas,” by Henry John Drewal



Week 6 – Portrait Photography in Africa

- Oct 13 **Exam #1**
- Oct 15 *Future Remembrance: Photography and the Image Arts in Ghana*, Tobias Wendl & Nancy du Plessis (2005)

Week 7 – Portrait Photography in Africa

- Oct 20 “Issues of Authorship in the Portrait Photographs of Seydou Keita,” Elizabeth Bigham
- Oct 22 “Of Mutuality and Copying: Fashioning *Aso Ebi* through Fashion Magazines in Lagos,” Okechukwu Nwafor

Week 8 – Tourism

- Oct 27 “Masques Dogons in a Changing World,” by Polly Richards
- Oct 29 “Sankofa: Cape Coast Castle and Its Museum as Markers of Memory,” Ann Reed

Week 9 – Traditions in Transition

- Nov 3 “Dealing with the Devil: Meaning and Marketplace in Makonde Sculpture,” Harry West & Stacy Sharpes
- Nov 5 “‘This is What Makes Sirigu Unique’: Authenticating Canvas and Wall Paintings in (Inter)national Circuits of Value and Meaning,” by Rhoda Woets

Week 10

- Nov 10 *no class*
- Nov 12 *no class*

Week 11 – Modern / Contemporary Art

- Nov 17 **Exam #2**
- Nov 19 “El Anatsui: Transformations,” by Lisa Binder
- film excerpts: *Fold Crumple Crush: The Art of El Anatsui*, Susan Vogel



Week 12 – Modern / Contemporary Art

Nov 24 “Nationalism and the Rhetoric of Modernism in Nigeria: The Art of Uche Okeke and Demas Nwoko, 1960-1968,” by Chika Okeke-Agulu

Nov 26 “The Art of Almighty God in his Own Words,” Doran Ross

Week 13 – Modern / Contemporary Art

Dec 1 “‘These Walls Belong to Everybody’: The Graffiti Art Movement in Dakar,”
Leslie Rabine

Dec 3 “The Bag is My Home: Recycling ‘China Bags in Contemporary African Art,”
Ying Cheng

Week 14

Dec 8 last class meeting

Final exam date, time, & place: TBA



Bibliography of Required Readings

- Anderson, Martha, and Christine Mullen Kreamer. 1989. "Wilderness." In *Wild Spirits, Strong Medicine: African Art and the Wilderness*, Enid Schildkrout, ed., pp. 22-28. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Bigham, Elizabeth. 1999. "Issues of Authorship in the Portrait Photographs of Seydou Keita." *African Arts* 32 (1): 56-67, 94-96.
- Binder, Lisa. 2008. "El Anatsui: Transformations." *African Arts* 41 (2): 24-37.
- Blakely, Thomas, and Pamela Blakely. 1987. "So'o Masks and Hemba Funerary Ritual." *African Arts* 21 (1): 30-37, 84-86.
- Cheng, Ying. 2018. "The Bag is My Home: Recycling 'China Bags' in Contemporary African Art." *African Arts* 51 (2): 18-31
- Curnow, Kathy. 1990. "Alien or Accepted: African Perspectives on the Western 'Other' in 15th and 16th Century Art." *Society for Visual Anthropology Review* 6 (1): 38-44.
- Drewal, Henry John. 2008. "Mami Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas." *African Arts* 41 (2): 60-72, 82-83.
- Eicher, Joanne, and Tonye Erekosima. 1995. "Why Do They Call it Kalabari? Cultural Authentication and the Demarcation of Ethnic Identity." In *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Space and Time*, Joanne Eicher, ed., pp. 139-164. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Gott, Suzanne. 2014. "Ghana's Glass Beadmaking Arts in Transcultural Dialogues." *African Arts* 47 (1): 10-29.
- Marchand, Trevor. 2015. "The Djenné Mosque: World Heritage and Social Renewal in a West African Town." *APT Bulletin* 46 (2/3): 4-15.
- Marchand, Trevor. 2009. "Introduction." In *The Masons of Djenné*, pp. 1-12. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- McNaughton, Patrick. 1982. "The Shirts That Mande Hunters Wear." *African Arts* 15 (3):54-58, 91.
- Nwafor, Okechukwu. 2012. "Of Mutuality and Copying: Fashioning *Aso Ebi* through Fashion Magazines in Lagos." *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body, and Culture* 16 (4): 493-520.
- Okeke-Agulu, Chika. 2006. "Nationalism and the Rhetoric of Modernism in Nigeria: The Art of Uche Okeke and Demas Nwoko, 1960-1968 [with Commentary by John Picton]." *African Arts* 39 (2006) 1: 26-37, 92-93.
- Probst, Peter. 2009. "Yoruba Heritage as Project: Reauthenticating the Osun Grove in Osogbo, Nigeria." *African Arts*
- Rabine, Leslie. 2014. "'These Walls Belong to Everybody': The Graffiti Art Movement in Dakar." *African Studies Quarterly* 14 (3): 89-112.



Reed, Ann. 2004. “*Sankofa*: Cape Coast Castle and Its Museum as Markers of Memory.” *Museum Anthropology* 27 (1-2): 13-23

Richards, Polly. 2005. “Masques Dogons in a Changing World.” *African Arts* 38 (4): 46-53, 93.

Ross, Doran. 2014. “The Art of Almighty God in his Own Words.” *African Arts* 47 (2): 8-27.

West, Harry, and Stacy Sharpes. 2002. “Dealing with the Devil: Meaning and the Marketplace in Makonde Sculpture.” *African Arts* 35 (3): 32-39, 90-91.

Woets, Rhoda. 2014. “‘This is What Makes Sirigu Unique’: Authenticating Canvas and Wall Paintings in (Inter)national Circuits of Value and Meaning.” *African Arts* 47 (4): 10-25.