

LEARN TO READ ART

LEARNING TO READ_ LEARNING TO RELATE _

A course proposal by Jesús Palomino

2017



ABSTRACT

Learning to Read_Learning to Relate_ is a course proposal specifically designed for all those art students searching for critical and aesthetical confrontation in relation to visual contemporary production and culture.

This course seeks to encourage individual aesthetical research and curiosity utilizing the experience of critical dialogue towards a practical knowledge of contemporary discourses of art and practices.

The course will be focused on a complete and solid understanding of MINIMAL ART, CONCEPTUAL ART, PERFORMATIVITY MODES and RELATIONAL AESTHETICS. The proposal is inspired by Lawrence Weiner and Paul Thek's educational approaches to art education and contemporary culture understanding.

LEARNING TO READ_ [A critical approach to knowledge]

The course organized in several sessions and meetings will provide the basic knowledge and information about the works of important artists at the field of contemporary visual art production proposing an open dialogue oriented towards a coherent individual creative inquiry.

Through a simple performative approach [with the motto of BUILDING MYSELF OUTDOORS] every participant could identify her/his personal aesthetical referents to relate consequently with their historical implications and deeper meanings. We shall follow the approach to artistic understanding proposed by Lawrence Weiner.

The American artist Lawrence Weiner created a poster in 1991 for Printed Matter that said: LEARN TO READ ART. He explained his work in this way: *"That phrase is advertising a particular means with which you can go through life, it doesn't tell you that if you don't learn to read art you're going to be fined, it just says: Learn to Read Art. I don't see that as an imperative. All artists are attempting to communicate, in whatever form, and if you can learn to read that form then you can either accept it or reject it. If you can't read it, then it doesn't mean anything to you."*

Hence, according to Weiner's assessments, a basic knowledge on contemporary culture and its recent productions is needed in order to be able of reading art; a basic visual literacy is required to structure a clear understanding on contemporary visual experience.

Through a well structured course of lectures, the students will get familiar with the labels of MINIMAL ART, CONCEPTUAL ART, PERFORMATIVE MODES and RELATIONAL AESTHETICS. I have used this already existing documentation in several previous workshops, seminars, and lectures at University level and PhD programmes.

The whole process of learning will be focused towards practical understanding.



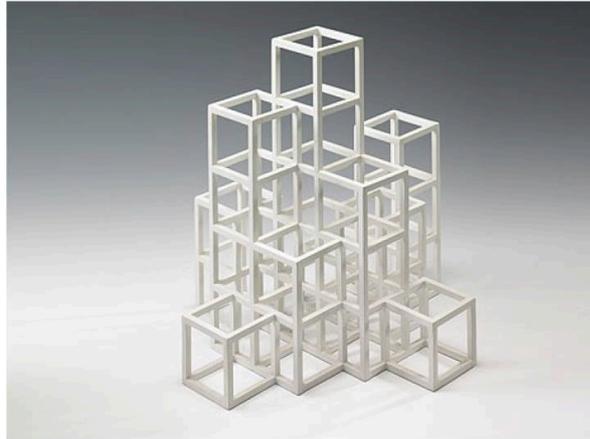
1. DONALD JUDD. Untitled (Four Boxes), 1968.



2. DAN FLAVIN. Untitled, 1987.



3. ROBERT MORRIS. Untitled, 1996.



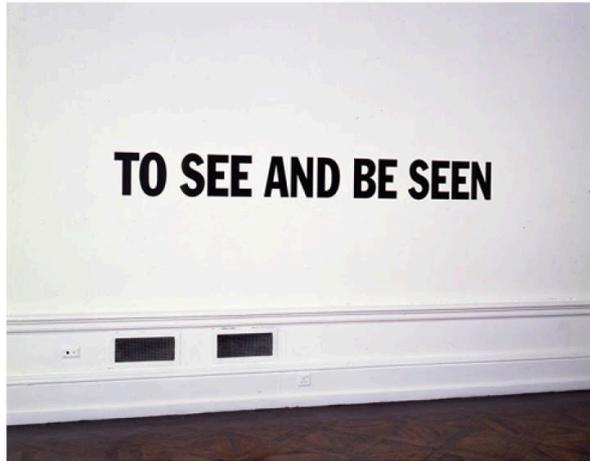
4. SOL LEWITT. Daily Icon, 1968.

M I N I M A L

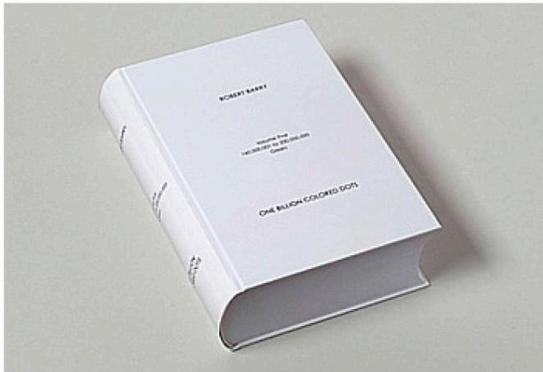
FIRST LECTURE: MINIMAL ART



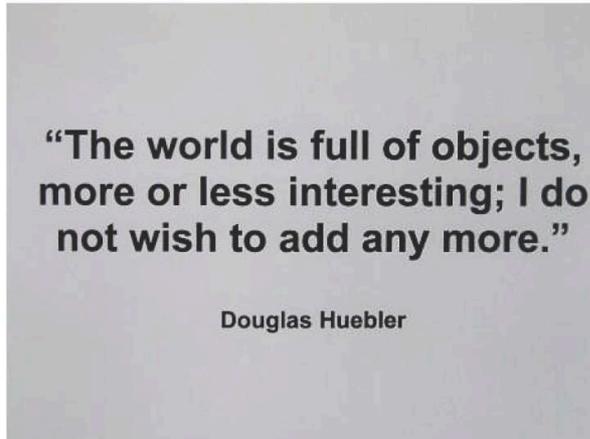
1. JOSEPH KOSUTH. Art As Idea As Idea, 1966.



2. LAWRENCE WEINER. To See And Be Seen, 1972.



3. ROBERT BARRY. One Billion Colored Dots, 1971.



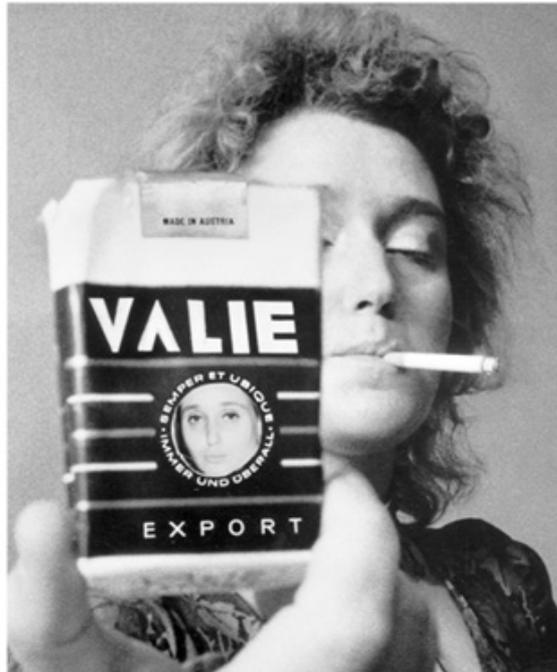
4. DOUGLAS HUEBLER. Quote, 1970.

CONCEPTUAL

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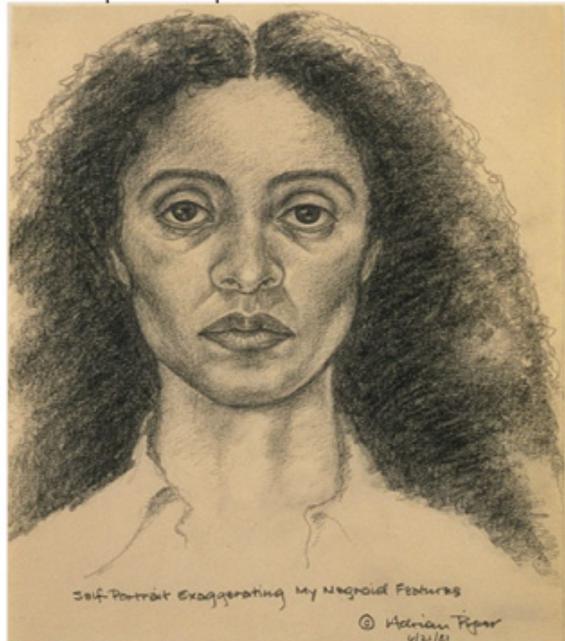
1. ANA MENDIETA.
Untitled.(Facial Hair Transplant, Moustache). 1972



2. VALIE EXPORT.
Smart Export. Self-portrait, 1970.



3. ROBERT MAPPELTHORPE.
Self-portrait, 1980.



4. ADRIAN PIPER.
Self-portrait exaggerating my negroid features, 1981.



1. FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES. Untitled, 1989-1995.



2. PHILIPPE PARRENO & RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA. Puppets, 2009.



3. VANESSA BEECROFT. VB 18, 1998.



4. DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ FOERSTER. 2058, 2012.

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LEARNING TO RELATE_ [A dialogic approach to understanding]

On the other hand, in order to relate all those referents provided by the students, I propose to follow Paul Thek's TEACHING NOTES. Teaching Notes, [as the critic Sofía Olascoaga writes in her essay *Paul Thek's Teaching Notes: From Simple Questions to Active Transformation*] "is a questionnaire created by the American artist Paul Thek to teach the 4-Dimensional Design Class under his charge at Cooper Union in New York between 1978 and 1981. The notes consists of a series of questions that deal with subjects ranging from personal data to philosophical perspectives. They are formulated through compelling writing, and stimulate a playful but indepth exploration of the interrelated nature of personal and contextual events, as part of artistic production. The piece becomes a useful tool to interrogate the role that these relationships play in cultural production."

This second part of the course, *Learning To Relate_ [A dialogic approach to understanding]* will be focused on individual interchange and mutual communication around all those personal referents proposed by the students following the specific questionnaire of the course. The method and the dynamics will be oriented towards personal narrativeness as a practical approach to art practices.

The whole process of questioning as creative inquiry will be held publicly through group meetings and open group dialogues. This dialogic dynamics gives the students practical skills to structure their own individual narrative around their objects of interest.

My teaching experience with this method of questioning is really positive, and it helps the students to get aware in a simple manner about their own field of interests.

I really consider that CURIOSITY IS THE CORE OF KNOWLEDGE AND GENUINE ART ACHIVEMENTS. In my opinion any teaching process should be based on a well structured method capable of:

1. FEEDING CURIOSITY;
2. ENCOURAGING RESEARCH PROCESSES;
3. APPLYING AESTHETICAL EDUCATION.

I should insist that this understanding of teaching is mainly based on my experiences and background as a professional visual artist invited to organize workshops with advanced students of art at university level, Master and PhD programs; the whole process and method proposed will be performed with a practical focus on art practices, dialogue and critical thinking.

QUESTIONNAIRE_ Learning to Read_Learinig to Relate, 2017

1. Any music or sound piece of your interest?
2. Any work of literature or text of your interest?
3. Any work of architecture?
4. Any moving image work?
5. Any photographic work done by any other person?
6. Any visual work?
7. Any personal memory represented by a three dimensional object?
8. Any secret represented by a three dimensional object?
9. Any countryside or any specific site that you would like to visit?
10. Any living person you would like to meet?
11. A person who is not anymore among the living beings you would like to meet?
12. Any photographic image realized by yourself at the public space?
13. Any photographic image realized by yourself in your house?
14. Any picture or image you would like to set on fire? ¿Do you want to set it on fire?
15. Any object from your house that makes you feel absolutely indiferent?

Could you present it as much attractive as possible to an audience?

17. Any thought you would like to send telepalitacally to any absent person in this place? Do you want to send it?

18. Any project without limits of production you would like to do?

Be as much accurate as you can

19. What would you do with all these objects apart from an art piece?
20. Present all these objects in the most attractive way to a public. Do it accurately.



Concerning the artworks presented by the students the questionnaire could proceed as follows; for instance about a music or a sound piece:

1. Who or what led you to this music or sound project?
2. When did you discover this music or sound piece?
3. Your interest: Is it emotional or intellectual?
4. If your interest is intellectual: Could you explain it?
5. If emotional: Could you explain it?
6. What do you relate this music or sound project with?
7. How often do you listen it? How many times?
8. Is it very present in your personal memory?
9. Are you aware of the importance of this music for any other persons?
10. How important is music or sound in your life? From 1 to 10?

PICTURES CREDITS:

Page 2_ *Learn To Read Art Poster Edition*, 1991. Lawrence Weiner. Lawrence Weiner created a poster in 1991 for Printed Matter that said just that: LEARN TO READ ART. He explained this work in this way: *“That phrase is advertising a particular means with which you can go through life, it doesn’t tell you that if you don’t learn to read art you’re going to be fined, it just says: Learn to Read Art. I don’t see that as an imperative. All artists are attempting to communicate, in whatever form, and if you can learn to read that form then you can either accept it or reject it. If you can’t read it, then it doesn’t mean shit to you.”*

Page 8_ *Park, A Plan for Scape*, 2002. Documenta 11. Dominique Gonzalez-Foster.

Page 10_ *May*, 2009. Kunsthalle Zürich. Installation view. Philippe Parreno.