



A new education series for all.

Classes will take place:

Sundays at 12pm  
June 4 through July 30  
Tuttleman Auditorium

Instructors:

Robert Blackson  
Sharon Hayes  
Kate Kraczon  
Kelli Morgan  
Jesse Pires  
Anthony Romero  
James Merle Thomas  
Daniel Tucker  
Yuka Yokoyama

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# Course Descriptions

# What Isn't Contemporary Art: A Class to Consider the Limits of Our Time

## June 4

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INSTRUCTOR

**Robert Blackson & Kelli Morgan**

Curators Kelli Morgan and Robert Blackson begin this introductory class by exploring multiple definitions of contemporary art. What is it? When did it start? Who is it for? In our culture that can often feel stuck in the immediate present, Morgan and Blackson will explore generative examples of art that “unsticks” us from our contemporary understandings of society to allow for poetic and practical ways of becoming ourselves into the future. The core of this class is built around a respect for exchange and dialogue. Please come willing to share your experiences and expectations for what contemporary art has been and should become.

# Performance in Contemporary Art: On Stage, In Museums and on the Streets

## June 11

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INSTRUCTOR

Sharon Hayes

The term “performance art” came into use in the art world in the mid-1970s as a catchall to describe a wide range of activities that included protest art actions, concrete art, Happenings, Fluxus, ceremonies, demonstrations, dance, kinetic theater, arte povera, earth or ecological art, process art, interactive art, guerrilla art, guerrilla theater, guerrilla art action, street theater, live art, event art, event structure, consciousness raising, survival research and other activities. This course will make a quick pass through this unruly history and then focus in on a few performance works to help understand what performance is and why artists use/do it.

# Whose Feminism?

## June 18

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INSTRUCTOR

**Kate Kraczon**

Explore feminism in the art of the last fifty years via ICA's exhibition history, which reveals both prescience and limitations that reflect contemporary debates around the term.

# Is the Art World Racist and What to Do About It?

## June 25

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INSTRUCTOR

Anthony Romero

It is too simple to say that the contemporary art world is racist, in part because the problem of racism and racialization necessarily requires us to think, as artist and writer Dan S. Wang observes, about “three overlapping frameworks: a political history, a personal history, and a global context,” all of which are larger than any one art world. It also has to do in part with so-called “progressive” and “liberal” ideologies that run rampant in the contemporary art world. Ideologies that have art institutions and organizations large and small self-consciously admitting to having a “race” or “diversity” problem. That the art world understands it has a “race” or “diversity” problem allows it to relieve the pressures of having to correct the problem structurally. It can just as easily correct itself superficially through ethnically and culturally specific exhibitions, programs, and initiatives, all of which make present an absence without moving towards presence in any real and permanent way.

*Is the Art World Racist and What To Do About It?* lays out a critical historical framework for thinking about race and racialized practices within contemporary art institutions and organizations while proposing alternative strategies, policy, and structural changes that might aid programmatic initiatives in creating a more equitable and inclusive art world.

# Beneath the Surface: Reflections on Video Art

## July 9

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INSTRUCTOR

**Jesse Pires**

This session examines the phenomenon of video art from its inception in the 1960s to the present moment. We'll explore video art's relationship with film and television as well as its shifting position within the art world and question the very relevance of the term "video art" in a contemporary context. Approaching video both as a tool for political and personal empowerment as well as a completely unique system of exchange between viewer, artist, and technology, this class will present a non-chronological overview of artists and artworks utilizing video in various ways.



# Art & Social Justice: The Politics of Image Making

## July 16

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INSTRUCTOR

**Daniel Tucker**

While there are waves of support and enthusiasm for social justice issues, they never go away and artists never cease to connect with them as activist-artist participants or simply as fodder for the ongoing project of making challenging and relevant images. Increasingly, artists and organizers are coming together to borrow one another's tactics and strategies—recognizing that images have power and that the experiences that may be bracketed as “art” or “politics” both require visionary, critical, pragmatic skills and deep consideration of criticality and place, collaboration, ethics, material and interdisciplinary research. As they intertwine, these practices concerned with the role, history and potential of art in relationship to society can be seen in the streets and in the museum. They look diverse—a community meeting, a public mural, an exhibition, a poster, an educational workshop, a protest. This talk will give an overview of such practices and leave plenty of room to discuss some possibilities and challenges facing those working in this field.

# The Whole Earth and the Grand Tour: Global Contemporary Art in the 21st Century

## July 23

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INSTRUCTOR

James Merle Thomas

Over the past few years, two terms have spread like wildfire throughout the art world: The Whole Earth and The Grand Tour. These phrases have been used to describe several prominent exhibitions of global contemporary art, and have also referred to a sort of circuit—an itinerary that takes travelers along a European route of blockbuster art shows. While The Whole Earth was named after Stewart Brand's famous Whole Earth Catalog, which was published periodically beginning in 1968, the Grand Tour was intended for centuries as a rite of passage for wealthy young elites who traveled Europe in search of art, culture and the roots of Western civilization. But what do these two terms—one linked to a 1960s American counterculture, the other linked to a road trip for privileged European aristocracy—have to do with contemporary art at the dawn of the twenty-first century?

The answer, it turns out, is quite a lot. Over the past several decades, the field of contemporary art has evolved into a complex global picture—an “art world” composed of biennials and other large-scale art exhibitions; must-see art experiences that require travel to every continent; and an ever-proliferating network of art schools, commercial fairs, galleries, museums, collections, and other cultural institutions that form a complex system for producing, distributing, and consuming art. In order to navigate this global art world—one that has witnessed the flourishing of major contemporary art scenes in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia—it is useful to have a map. Touching on key examples of art, artists, exhibitions, and cultural agents and institutions that make up this complex network, this class will provide an overview of the contemporary global art world, and suggest an itinerary: a way to make sense of the global through the local.

# Context Shapes Content

## July 30

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INSTRUCTOR

Yuka Yokoyama

*Context Shapes Content* is an investigation of how regionally specific lived environments are major factors in forming skateboarding culture, Mingei, and my experiences within the Philadelphia art world as the co-founder and director of the Marginal Utility gallery. The formula to my own practice here in Philadelphia is a process of experimentation and learning. Skateboarding culture and Mingei helped me imagine the environment that I want to be in to be able to allow myself and others to express their thoughts freely. What I am learning from skateboarding is the pursuit of individuality within a group and through Mingei a deep commitment to regional art forms and communities.

Skateboard culture has a unique spirit and ethos. It is not exactly a sport, dance, or artform. Different styles of skateboarding are often influenced by geographic elements that are found in the regions, towns and cities where people skate. How well one adapts to the environment and develops one's own particular approach to performing maneuvers inspires other skaters to also think creatively about their style and trick selection. The identity of a skateboarding "team" consists of a combination of the individual personalities of the skaters themselves that often reflects the city and country in which they learned how to skate. Love Park was one of the most iconic skateboarding locations in the world, and Philadelphia is known for its DIY skate parks and technically aggressive style of street skating.

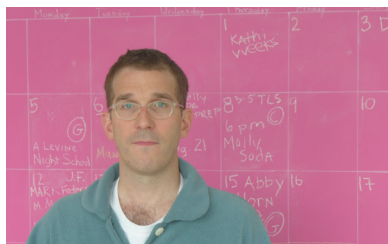
Sori Yanagi was a respected industrial designer and the president of the Mingei Museum in Tokyo. Sori's contribution to Mingei was not only through exhibitions at the museum, but also through

collaborations with craftsman from different regions of Japan with the intention of reviving traditions that were being lost due to industrial manufacturing. Mingei is deeply rooted within the different areas of Japan that use local materials and methods of work, skill and rituals, which are passed down through generations. Sori understood and respected how the natural habitat, local craftsmanship and modes of life help to form a region's identity.

Philadelphia's cultural habitat has a wide range of thoughts and belief. This is the city where Amish, Quakers, and Free Masons coexist among the cityscape of Frank Furness and Robert Venturi buildings. It is not a coincidence that this is the city where Charles Burns, the Brothers Quay, David Lynch and M. Night Shyamalan were inspired to write their stories about the supernatural and the uncanny. The city's creative psychogeographic gravity attracts artists such as Judith Schaechter, Paul Swenbeck, Leroy Johnson and Martha McDonald to channel the spirit of the city and translate into forms that reach into the past and speak to the contemporary psyche.

Mingei and skateboarding are two context sensitive approaches towards the environment and living communities that are creative, flexible and generative. Through working for Sori Yanagi I learned to pay attention and consider the ethos of art and where it is originated, and through an exposure to skateboarding culture I have become aware of how the ecology of physical and psychological environments influence and produce different kinds of communities.

# Instructor Bios



ROBERT BLACKSON has been the Director of Temple Contemporary at Temple University's Tyler School of Art since 2011. Prior to moving to Philadelphia, Blackson was Curator of Public Programs at Nottingham Contemporary, and curator of BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art, Newcastle/Gateshead, UK. He has curated exhibitions with numerous artists including Sarah Sze, Shahryar Nashat, Matt Stokes, Jimmie Durham (co-curated with Candice Hopkins), Minerva Cuevas, Christoph Büchel, Brian Chippendale, Julianne Swartz, Anthony McCall, Harry Smith, and Big Chief of the Yellow Pocahontas Mardi Gras Indian Tribe, Darryl Montana. Blackson has contributed to a variety of catalogues and publications, including *Art Journal*, *Cabinet*, and *Labyrinth*, and he has lectured internationally on issues related to contemporary art practice. In 2012 he was named an Andy Warhol Curatorial Fellow. Blackson's most recent curatorial projects include *Symphony for a Broken Orchestra* (2016/2017), *reForm* (2015/2016), and *Funeral for a Home* (2014).



SHARON HAYES is an artist who engages multiple mediums—video, performance, and installation—in an ongoing investigation into specific intersections between history, politics and speech. Hayes' work is concerned with developing new representational strategies that examine and interrogate the present political moment as a moment that reaches simultaneously backward and forward; a present moment that is never wholly its own but rather one that is full of multiple past moments and the speculations of multiple futures. From this ground, Hayes often addresses political events or movements from the 1960s through the 1990s. Her focus on the particular sphere of the near-past is influenced by the potent imbrication of private and public urgencies that she experienced in her own foundational encounters with feminism and AIDS activism. Hayes teaches in the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Fine Arts.



KATE KRACZON is the Laporte Associate Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, where she has organized over twenty exhibitions since joining the museum in 2008 from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. She is currently working on Ree Morton's first major retrospective in the United States in over three decades (2018), and is collaborating with ICA curator Alex Klein on an exhibition of work by Suki Seokyeong Kang (2018). Kraczon has curated solo exhibitions by artists including Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Karla Black, Alex Da Corte and Jayson Musson, Angel Nevarez and Valerie Tevere, and Becky Suss. She holds degrees from Oberlin College and the University of Pennsylvania.



KELLI MORGAN is a scholar, curator, author, lecturer, and teacher. Originally from Detroit, MI, she earned an M.A. in African American Studies in 2013 and received a B.A. in African American Studies in 2006 from Wayne State University. Morgan is due to receive a Ph.D. in Afro-American Studies and a graduate certificate in Public History-Museum Studies this spring from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. As a critical race cultural historian, Morgan specializes in American art and visual culture. Her work examines, critiques, and theorizes the ways in which American artists, art history, and art objects both challenge and reify the systematic mechanisms of anti-Black violence and oppression in the United States. She is the recipient of awards from the Ford Foundation and the Mellon Foundation, and was recently named the first recipient of The Winston & Carolyn Lowe Curatorial Fellowship for Diversity in the Fine Arts at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.



JESSE PIRES is Chief Curator at Lightbox Film Center where he has organized numerous film screenings including *Free to Love: The Cinema of the Sexual Revolution*, a month-long series exploring commercial and underground films associated with sexual liberation in the 1960s and 1970s. His more recent work has been concerned with exploring the connections between experimental cinema and contemporary art. He co-curated the program *Pop Cinema: Art + Film* in the US and UK, which was presented at International House in 2011. Jesse was a delegate at the 2010 Experimental Media Congress (Toronto) and the 2012 Experimental Cinema Congress (Berlin). He has curated programs for the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, Slought Foundation, Vox Populi Gallery, The Fabric Workshop & Museum, Light Industry, and Union Docs.



ANTHONY ROMERO is an artist, writer, and organizer committed to documenting and supporting artists and communities of color. Recent projects included, *The Social Practice That Is Race*, written with Dan S. Wang and published by Wooden Leg Press, and *Buenos Dias, Chicago!*, a two-year performance project produced in collaboration with Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American communities in Chicago and commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.





JAMES MERLE THOMAS is an art historian and curator of contemporary art. He currently serves as Executive Director of Vox Populi, a Philadelphia-based artist collective, and also teaches in the Department of Art History at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. Thomas holds a Ph.D. in Art History from Stanford University and worked closely between 2003 and 2013 with curator Okwui Enwezor to produce a series of biennials, academic symposia, and major museum programs focused on contemporary African art and cultural production. Serving as Assistant Curator for the Second Biennial of Contemporary Art of Seville (2005) and the Seventh Gwangju Biennale (2007), and as Executive Editor of Publications for the Third Paris Triennale (2012), Thomas has helped to present projects by a diverse range of artists to audiences in museums, universities, cultural institutions, and independent art spaces throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America.



DANIEL TUCKER works as an artist, writer and organizer developing documentaries, publications, exhibitions, and events inspired by his interest in social movements and the people and places from which they emerge. His writings and lectures on the intersections of art and politics and his collaborative art projects have been published and presented widely. Tucker recently completed the feature-length video essay *Future Perfect: Time Capsules in Reagan Country* and curated the exhibition and event series *Organize Your Own: The Politics and Poetics of Self-Determination Movements*. He earned his MFA from University of Illinois at Chicago and BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is an Assistant Professor and founding Graduate Program Director in Social and Studio Practices at Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia.



YUKA YOKOYAMA is a co-founder and director of Marginal Utility, a Philadelphia-based art gallery. Yokoyama was born and raised in Hiroshima, Japan and earned a BA in art history at the Joshibi University of Art and Design in Tokyo, and an MA in Museum Studies from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Before she started Marginal Utility in 2009 with her partner, David Dempewolf, Yokoyama worked for museums, commercial galleries, and non-profit art organizations in Japan and New York such as the Sori Yanagi Design Institute, Command N, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, ISE Cultural Foundation, Jack Shainman Gallery, and the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Questions?

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