



Marcel Duchamp as Rose Selavy (1921)



Eleanor Antin as Eleanora Antinova (1974)



Oreet Ashery as Marcus Fisher (2005)

Description

Revolving around the concept of the alter ego (or second self), this class focuses on image manipulation/Photoshop skills and performance for the video camera. Artists have created alter egos for numerous reasons: to explore gender identity, to reveal a more vulnerable or provocative side of themselves, or simply to make a body of work in a new direction. In this class students will learn about the use of alter egos and personas by artists from the early 20th century to today. They will also develop two projects: the first entails using Photoshop to create documentation of a fictional body of work for their artist alter ego and the second is to create a performance for the camera as that same character.

For Project 1, in order to get students to think about how photography and Photoshop might be used to create and document all other art forms, the alter ego can be any kind of artist other than a photographer. Because the project is to create documentation alone, and not actual artworks, the students can make their artist alter egos as ambitious and outlandish as they wish. To encourage students to think imaginatively, the first lecture will include works that use documentation playfully, like Yves Klein's *Leap Into the Void* (1960), Hayley Newman's *Connotations Performance Images 1994 -1998* and Jonathan Borofsky's *Mixed Materials* (1970) as well as artists whose works have posed a challenge to document such as that of Christo, Robert Smithson and more.

At the start of Project 2, students will get warmed up to the practice of performing for the camera by doing a number of theatrical exercises in groups and individually. They will also be introduced to artworks using direct address such as Alex Bag's *Untitled* (1995), Martha Wilson's *Premiere* (1972) and Carey Young's *I am a Revolutionary* (2001).

Materials & Equipment Required:

- Laptop and Projector with Speakers
- Internet Connection
- Computers with Photoshop and Adobe Premiere for student use
- Video cameras and leads for student use

Recommended Reading

- *Perform (Art Works)*, (Thames & Hudson, 2005)
- *Double Life: Identity And Transformation In Contemporary Art*, (Walther Konig, 2002)

(See overleaf for Schedule)

Schedule:

10 x 3-hour sessions



Crying Glasses (An Aid to Melancholia), 1995

Week 1: Introduction to Alter-egos and Project 1

Lecture and discussion around alter egos and personas from pop culture, contemporary art and art history and the use of photography in documenting large-scale, interdisciplinary and performance art.

Homework:

- Start to develop alter-ego character by answering basic questions about their background, artistic interests, style, appearance, what type of work they make, etc. in writing and sketches
- Bring in any images, materials or transparencies you wish to scan for your project.

Week 2: Learning Photoshop & Scanning Basics

After some demonstrations, students will take turns using computers/scanners and sketching plans for art documentation pieces.

Homework:

- Finish 2 Photoshop documentation images
- Research further into at least 2 of the artists presented and their alter-egos (and/or find an artist with an alter-ego that was not mentioned)

Week 3: Special Effects with Photoshop

Demonstration of advanced tools and techniques: masking, split screen technique. Independent work and individual feedback on 2 Photoshop collages.

Homework

- Begin more images documenting your alter-ego's practice
- Research and bring to class images of artist(s) whose work relates to coursework not previously discussed.

Week 4: Presenting Research and Independent Work/Feedback

Students will present 2 researched artists to the class. Independent work and individual feedback.

Week 5: Group Critique of Project 1



Alex Bag, Untitled (1995)

Week 6: Introduction to Performance for Camera and Project 2

Lecture and discussion of direct address in video art and Project 2 requirements.

Homework:

- Bring in an object of personal significance
- Sit somewhere for 5-10 minutes and write down what you are experiencing through all 5 senses

Week 7: Theatrical Exercises / Project Development

Theatrical warm-ups and exercises by Augusto Boal and discussion of 5 senses exercise. Students paired up to assist each other on Project 2 and feedback given on initial plans.

Homework:

- Plan/book equipment and time to meet with your partners over the next 2 weeks to film the performances. Consider: How will documentation be presented/used? What location? What angle? Will you be alone or require extras/audience?

Week 8: Introduction to Video Editing

Demonstrations and practical exercises using Premiere and After Effects.

Homework:

- Finish filming of performances and begin editing

Week 9: Feedback on Raw Footage or Rough Cut

Students present work in progress for group feedback.

Homework:

- Finish video and select 1-minute excerpt for presentation next week.

Week 10: Group Critique of Project 2