

The University of British Columbia.
Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory.

VISA 581/582

Winter 2009.

Location: B.C. Binning rm 102.

Wednesdays, 3:00 -6:00 pm

Instructor: Manuel Piña

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Course description:

The last 15-20 years have witnessed a number of important developments in the production, distribution, and reception of art. The result is an “interim condition” (Wall) which poses important challenges to art practitioners. It also constitute an open space for experimentation and research, an exceptional moment for reflection on the very nature of art and the social role of art and artists at the dawn of the 21 century. This course will focus on three main topics at the centre of current debates.

- Images. The radical changes in image production and dissemination resulting of ongoing technological changes have sparked ample debates on the nature of images today. We will look at images in the social context at large to deal with “questions concerning the ethics of artworks and images in general” (Darmuid and Costello).
- Participation: *Participation, collaboration, relational aesthetics, socially-based art* are some of the terms used to describe a number of practices which seek to erase the boundaries between art and non-art. We will look at the history and present of these practices as a way to examine their relevance and the potentials they offer for the expansion of our individual projects.
- Education: The growing relevance of art education today is widely acknowledged. It has been one central topic in the last two Documenta exhibitions. The artistic director of Documenta 12 claims: ‘Today, education seems to offer one viable alternative to the devil (didacticism, academia) and the deep blue sea (commodity fetishism).’

Our program and our approach to teaching assistance may provide a very fertile ground for the active investigation of such possibility.

We will look at these aspects from a broader perspective interrogating our own position as artists in society at large in the realm between aesthetics, ethics and politics