

## ***Sublime: The Crisis of Looking*** **Spring 1999**

**Instructor** - Barbara DeGenevieve

### **Class description:**

Since its inception, photography has been an instrument of record and categorization. Somewhere there exists an image of every kind of phenomenon, anomaly or ordinary object that humans have encountered or produced. We record to know, just as we look in order to know. We are both curious about and obsessed with visual information. Film and video are implicated as well in this voyeuristic endeavor which reaches a point of cultural crisis in regard to the body. This class will consider neither voyeurism nor crisis in a negative sense, but rather contemplate through readings, discussion, and individual studio practice what it means to look. Issues of spectatorship, visuality, and the notion of the sublime will be considered in relation to meaning, encompassing everything from family snapshots to pornography to contemporary art making practices.

### **Readings:**

*Mandatory reading:*

1. "Feminist Body building" in *Building Bodies* (1997) edited by Pamela L. Moore
2. "The Perfect Moment" in *The Scandal of Pleasure: Art in the Age of Fundamentalism* (1997) by Wendy Steiner
3. "The Secret's Eye," in *The Explicit Body in Performance* (1997) by Rebecca Schneider
4. "Permission to see" in *The Explicit Body in Performance* (1997) by Rebecca Schneider
5. Introduction in *Dirty Looks: Women, Pornography, Power* (1993) edited by Pamela Church and Roma Gibson
6. Chapter 1 in *The Secret Museum: Some Treasures Are Too Precious to Display* (2013) by Molly Oldfield
7. Chapter 1 in *The Female Nude* (1992) by Lynda Nead
8. Chapters in *The Feminine Sublime* (1997) by Barabara Claire Freeman
9. *Meditations on The First Philosophy* by Rene Descartes
10. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (1993) by Michael Taussig

*Recommended reading:*

1. *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger

### **Schedule:**

The syllabus is flexible and subject to change – expect readings, field trips, and guest presentations to be added throughout the semester. Always come to class prepared to work.

Each afternoon 3-4 students will be scheduled to show work. Each person should show work at least twice during the course of the semester.

**Week 1 - February 2:**

Intro, video, discussion

**Week 2 - February 9:**

Plato, Finkel, Crary. pp. 1-30

**Week 3 - February 16:**

Kramnick intro, Locke, Leibnitz, Voltaire, Crary. pp. 31-65

**Week 4 - February 23:**

Descarte, Lacan, Stone. pp. 66-84

**Week 5 - March 2:**

Burke, Kant, Nead, Freeman. pp. 85-123

**Week 6 - March 9:**

Kristeva reschedule pp. 124-145

**Week 7 - March 16:**

Freud via Stafford-Clark and Dollimore, Jay. pp. 146-190

**Week 8 - March 23:**

Foucault. pp. 191-217

**Week 9 - March 30:**

Olivier Richon - reading to be announced.

**Week 10 - April 6:**

Foster. pp. 217-237 Jeff Wall, others on uncanny list

**Week 11 - April 13:**

Bryson, Bhabha (Crit Week) pp.238-254

**Week 12 - April 20:**

Mulvey, Gamman/Makinen. pp. 255-288

**Week 13 - April 27:**

Mercer. pp. 290-313 Maplethorpe

**Week 14 - May 4:**

Ross, Koch, Williams. pp. 314-349

**Week 15 - May 11:**

Gamson, Vanderbilt, Penley. pp. 350-408 John Wayne Bobbitt Uncut,  
Jerry Springer