

# ARTH 318

## 'PRIMITIVISM' AND POSTCOLONIALISM



Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum*, 1992, Maryland Historical Society Museum, Baltimore, installation detail

### ART HISTORY

#### TRIMESTER 1

1 March to 4 July 2010

School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies  
Victoria University of Wellington



# ARTH 318

## ‘PRIMITIVISM’ AND POSTCOLONIALISM

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**Course co-coordinator:** Lawrence McDonald, OK 311, Tel. 463 5804  
 Email: [lawrence.mcdonaldt@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:lawrence.mcdonaldt@vuw.ac.nz)  
 Office hours: Monday 2.10-4 pm

**Where and when:** This course consists of a weekly one-hour lecture and a two-hour seminar. All lectures are in **Murphy LT 101** on Tuesday 1.10 pm – 2 pm; seminars are on either Wednesday 1.10 pm – 3 pm in **Murphy 632** or Thursday 1.10 pm – 3 pm in **Old Kirk 319**. Seminar attendance is mandatory.

**Trimester dates:** Teaching dates: 1 March 2010 to 4 June 2010  
 Mid-trimester break: 5 April to 18 April  
 Study week: 7 June to 11 June 2010  
 Examination/Assessment period:  
 11 June to 4 July

*Art History is situated on the level 3 (ground floor) of the Old Kirk building. Pippa Wisheart, Art History's Administrator, has her office in OK 306 (ext. 5800). Notices regarding the course will be posted on the board adjacent to her office. For general information about Art History see: [www.victoria.ac.nz/art-history](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/art-history)*

## *Course outline*

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The first part of this course will investigate the subject of primitivism in early modernist art and culture, looking at its role in the transformation of Western art and the construction of modern identity. In addition to major movements within the European and American avant-garde (cubism, expressionism, surrealism, etc.), we will look at local examples of primitivist discourse in a number of specific locations (the Harlem Renaissance in the USA and settler primitivism in New Zealand, Australia and the United States). The second part of the course will look at transformations in primitivist discourse after the Second World War in the context of global decolonisation. In this period primitivism as a hegemonic discourse of the West essentially fragments and disperses. But it does not necessarily disappear. In this part of the course we will look at critiques of modernist primitivism in contemporary art and criticism and examine the emergence of new themes within postcolonial art and culture: decolonisation and national culture, representation and identity, diaspora and globalisation.

### **Learning objectives**

This course will:

- introduce you to a more specialised study of art and to specific areas of theory and debate within art history and related disciplines relevant to the topic;
- refine your skills of analysis and interpretation within the specific context of the course;
- develop your awareness of a range of different approaches to art historical material;
- encourage you to produce substantial pieces of written work which demonstrate your ability to think and write critically;
- ensure your consistent application of the conventions of academic art historical writing;
- ensure that you are able to use the full range of reference systems in the University Library, including periodicals and on-line databases;
- develop your skills in the analysis and discussion of visual material in seminars;
- further encourage you to view artworks and use other primary resources

The lecture and seminar programme, required readings, information about assessment and assignments and a reading list follow.

### **Course delivery**

ARTH 318 consists of 12 one hour lectures and 12 two-hour seminars as outlined here.

## *Lecture and Seminar programme*

*Seminar readings can be found in the course Handbook. All lecture and seminar handouts will be available from the Art History administrator's office (OK 306) after each session.*

**NOTE: Seminar readings and attendance are required.** You must attend 9 out of 12 seminars to meet mandatory requirements for ARTH 318.

### Week 1

- |           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| 2 March   | 1 | Lecture: The modern and the primitive: an introduction       |
| 3/4 March | 2 | Seminar 1: Enlightenment exoticism and the 'state of nature' |

### Week 2

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 9 March     | 3 | Lecture: Tales of progress: primitivism in the nineteenth century |
| 10/11 March | 4 | Seminar 2: Gauguin, modernity, and the romance of the 'savage'    |

### Week 3

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|-------------|---|---|
| 16 March    | 5 | Lecture: Formalist primitivism and the universal aesthetic    |
| 17/18 March | 6 | Seminar 3: Formalist primitivism and the universal aesthetic. |

### Week 4

- |            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| 23 March   | 7 | Lecture: The country, the city and the studio: Expressionist primitivism. |
| 24/5 March | 8 | Seminar 4: Machine dreams and mechanical nature.                          |

### Week 5

- |              |    |   |
|--------------|----|---|
| 30 March     | 9  | Lecture: Childhood, madness and the outsider        |
| 31 M/1 April | 10 | Seminar 5: Surrealism and the primitive unconscious |

1 April                      FIRST ESSAY DUE

**Mid trimester break: 5 – 18 April**

### Week 6

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|-------------|----|---|
| 20 April    | 11 | Lecture: Black modernism                              |
| 21/22 April | 12 | Seminar 6: Black modernism and the Harlem Renaissance |

Week 7

- 27 April 13 Lecture: Settler primitivism in the United States and Australia  
 28 /29 April 14 Seminar 7: Settler primitivism in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Week 8

- 4 May 15 Lecture: Decolonization and the postcolonial turn.  
 5/6 May 16 Seminar 8: The global imaginary and cultural differences at mid-century.

Week 9

- 11 May 17 Lecture: National liberation and the role of culture.  
 12/13 May 18 Seminar 9: National liberation and the role of culture.

Week 10

- 18 May 19 Lecture: 1984: 'Primitivism' reprised  
 19/20 May 20 Seminar 10: Exhibiting the postcolonial

Week 11

- 25 May 21 Lecture: 'Where have all the natives gone?' Postcolonial art and identity.  
 26/27 May 22 Seminar 11: 'New ethnicities'.

28 May SECOND ESSAY DUE

Week 12

- 1 June 23 Lecture: Contemporary art, globalisation and 'the ethnographic turn'  
 2/3 June 24 Seminar 12: Contemporary art, globalisation and 'the ethnographic turn'

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**End of course**

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## *Assignments and assessment*

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ARTH 318 is assessed by means of **two essays** (25% for the first and 35% for the second) and an end-of-course two-hour **examination** (40%) based on the course readings. Examination period 11- 30 June.

The first essay should be 1500-2000 words in length and is due on **Thursday 1 April**. The second essay should be 2000-2500 words in length and is due **Friday 28 May**. Essays should be placed in the Art History assignment box in the foyer of Old Kirk, Level 3 or handed to Pippa Wisheart (OK 306) or the course co-ordinator, by no later than 5 pm on the due date.

**Essay presentation:** You must pay attention to setting out, correct spelling and grammar. Typed copy is preferred. Type or write on one side of the page only, leaving a generous margin on the left hand side. Typed essays should be *double-spaced*. If writing is not your fort , ask someone to check your work. *Researching and Writing Art History Essays*, the department's handbook, sets out standard practice. It is available on Blackboard.

**Criteria for assessment of essays:** Assessment of your essays will be based on the following criteria:

- understanding and definition of question
- formulation and development of argument
- use of visual and/or written resources
- originality and independence of thought
- mechanics (legibility, presentation, grammar, spelling, documentation)

**Art History has a policy that no extensions will be granted.** If you have medical or other problems preventing you from meeting a deadline, you must contact your lecturer at the earliest opportunity. Without arrangements having been agreed to, late assignments and essays will be penalised by the deduction of **two percentage points for each day** beyond the due date. The reasons **exceptions are not made** are that we cannot privilege some students over others; we must adhere to a defined programme of marking; and results must be furnished to Student Records on time. It is also important that we ensure students keep up with the course.

**There are limited aegrotat provisions for the internally assessed component of the course. You must sit the final exam to pass ARTH 318.** Aegrotat passes for the examination can only be considered on the provision of a medical certificate and on the fulfilment of mandatory course requirements.

## Marking

Essays and your exam will be marked by the course co-ordinator. A second opinion may be requested in the final assessment of any piece of written work.

**Mandatory course requirements.** Mandatory course requirements are defined in the University Calendar. **You must submit two essays, sit the examination, and attend at least 9 out of 12 seminar sessions to fulfil the mandatory course requirements for ARTH 318.** Seminars comprise half the course and will focus on discussion and analysis of assigned readings and selected visual material. It is therefore essential to the success of the course that students complete required readings, attend lectures and seminars, and make a vocal contribution to each seminar session.. **No assignments will be accepted after 4 June 2010 without prior arrangement.** If you are in any doubt about your ability to meet these requirements you must see your course co-ordinator immediately.

**Workload.** The University recommends that **18 hours per week**, inclusive of lectures and seminars, be given to a 300-level course in order to maintain satisfactory progress.

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## *Reading*

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of Vic books in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from Vic books and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

- 1 The ARTH 318 **Student Notes**, (**\$29.30**), includes required readings for all seminar sessions. This is available from Vic books as set out above.
- 2 There are two **set texts** for ARTH 318. The first is Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and modern art* (Thames and Hudson, 1997), a survey of the topic covering its major themes and drawing on more recent critical scholarship (**\$34**). The second book is Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch (eds), *Primitivism and twentieth century art: a documentary history* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2003) (**\$95.95**). Both books are available on closed reserve in the library or may be purchased from Vic books.



## General Information

### **General University Statutes and Policies**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC(Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx)

### **Taping of Lectures**

All students in the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies are welcome to use their own audio-tapes to record lectures. If you want to do this, please see your lecturer, tutor or the relevant programme administrator and complete a disclaimer form, which advises of copyright and other relevant issues.

### **Withdrawal dates**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

### **Class Representative**

A class representative will be elected in the first class. This person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

## GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY THE COURSE!

### THE CHARTWELL TRUST STUDENT ART WRITING PRIZE 2010

The Adam Art Gallery invites students to participate in the Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize, an annual writing initiative focusing on visual art and culture.

#### ELIGIBILITY

The prize is open to **all** VUW students studying Art History, Classics, Religious Studies, Museum and Heritage Studies, English, Film, Theatre, and Media Studies.

#### PRIZE

The winning entry will receive the cash prize of **\$500** and have their essay published on the Adam Art Gallery website **[www.adamartgallery.org.nz](http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz)**.

The 2010 winner will be announced at the Adam Art Gallery exhibition opening on **15 October 2010**.

#### GUIDELINES/CRITERIA

- Entries should be in the form of a review or essay addressing an exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery or a work from the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection
- Check **[www.adamartgallery.org.nz/learning-opportunities/chartwell-trust-student-writing-prize](http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz/learning-opportunities/chartwell-trust-student-writing-prize)** for previous winning entries
- Submissions should be no more than 1,500 words
- Texts should be clearly labelled with author's name, contact details, course of study and student ID
- Texts must be submitted in both hard copy form and in Microsoft Word format (A4, single sided and 1.5 spaced).

#### DEADLINE

Entries are **now open** and will be accepted up until the closing date.

The closing date for submissions is **1 October 2010**.

Entries should be sent to:

The Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize  
c/- Adam Art Gallery  
Victoria University of Wellington  
PO Box 600  
Wellington 6140  
or via email [adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz)