

History of Contemporary Photography

DOM-E3046

4 ECTS

Autumn 2021 (periods I-II)

16.9.2021 – 9.12.2021

Teacher: Harri Laakso (& guests)

harri.laakso@aalto.fi

Course description

The course explores the historical roots of contemporary photography; the key concepts and debates, and their historical development. The course includes both, the examination of relevant practices and genres (e.g. conceptual art, landscape, post-photography...), as well as the development of certain themes across photography's history (e.g. questions of photographic truth, narration, realism, ontology and technology). The whole range of photography's history is addressed but the focus is in art photography from the latter part of the 20th Century onwards, up until the present day. Connections are made between theory and practice, and between one's own photographic practice and the contemporary historical moment.

The lectures are in English, but the written assignments can also be completed in Finnish.

Requirements and course assignments

Attendance 80% and participation, reading assigned texts, completing 2 essays/assignments (and presentation):

1) Select one *photograph* (or *photographic work*) which *in your view* is particularly significant (or problematic) for the history of contemporary photography *and* has relevance to *your own practice*. Prepare a short essay on the subject (à la Barthes's *Mythologies*) 3-4 pages (c. 1000-1500 words) text + images. (Font size e.g. Times New Roman 12, spacing 1,5 – so they are easier for me to comment.) Mark references and citations in a consistent way, and use Turnitin.

Deadline: 8.11. Send to harri.laakso@aalto.fi as pdf-files

2) Write a short essay (also 3-4 pages) concerning a specific *theme/idea/observation* in contemporary photography history. This essay should support your further studies, so find a tempting subject. If you want you can experiment with an alternative way of writing/doing photography history. (Can be a work combining images and words in a new way, a short video etc.)

Deadline: 29.11. Send to harri.laakso@aalto.fi as pdf-files (with link to video etc.)

3) A short presentation in class on your assignments (1 and/or 2). The format of the presentation TBA.

Course grading scale: 1-5

Schedule

(Thursdays at 9.15-12 on Zoom, unless otherwise indicated. Changes are possible!).

16.9 Harri: *What is History, What is Contemporary, What is Photography?* (Course introduction)

23.9 Ari Saarto: *Site, Layer, Landscape, Topography*

30.9 Harri: *Issues in History of Contemporary Photography I*

7.10 Harri: *Issues in History of Contemporary Photography II*

14.10 Marjaana Kella: *The photographic' in contemporary art*

----- (21.10 – no class)

----- (28.10 - workshop evaluation week, no class)

4.11 Harri: *Issues in History of Contemporary Photography III*

*** * * 8.11: Deadline for assignment 1**

11.11 Ari Saarto: *Photography Propaganda, Counterpropaganda*

18.11 Suzanne Mooney: *Photographic Objects*

25.11 Tuula Närhinen: *Deep Time Deposits - Tidal Impressions of the River Thames*

*** * * 29.11: Deadline for assignment 2**

2.12 Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger: *Post-photography – Quote: You Must Not Call It Photography If This Expression Hurts You*
Final presentations I

9.12 Final presentations II
Course ending

* NB: You also have the (recommended) possibility for voluntary individual meeting with Harri during the course (30 mins by skype or Zoom). It is a possibility to discuss the assignments or other photography history and theory related issues. I will notify about possible times later in autumn, or you can set the meeting time by email.