

Quarter/Year

Winter 2017

Course Number

ART-HIST 402

Day/Time

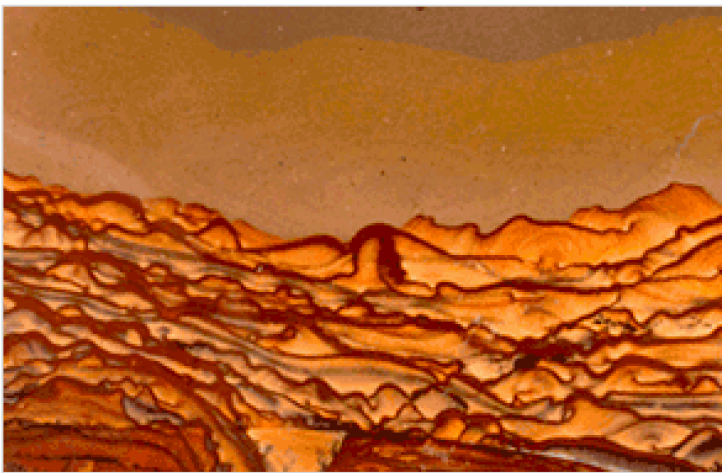
W 2:00-5:00

Instructor

Zorach

Course Title

Studies in Representation: The Intentional and the Unintentional



This seminar looks at the place of intention--or the absence thereof--in the making and reception of art. We will read critical and theoretical texts that grapple with this question, and test them out through a series of case studies generated by students from their own interests. The seminar addresses theory and historiography from Freud and phenomenology to the New Critics and analytic philosophy of mind to the poststructuralist Death of the Author. We will seek to understand why writers have questioned the place of authorial intent in the evaluation or interpretation of a work, as well as critiques and

responses to this position. In wresting authority away from the producer, have we given over too much authority to the consumer? In order to examine human intention (artists, patrons, even viewers) and the various forms of its absence, students are asked to come to class on the first day with an example that raises interesting questions about intention. Possible examples include miraculous ("acheiropoietic") objects, images "made by nature" and other nonhuman actors, artworks not intended for a human audience, artwork made using the operations of chance, collaborations in which any singular intention is difficult to establish, examples in which intention is simply inaccessible to the interpreter, and examples in which it is, or seems, all too apparent.

Required Textbooks

PDF readings provided on Canvas. Books suggested for purchase: Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*; Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*

Assessments

Active participation in class discussion, one or more extended presentations, final research paper