

northwestern university
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

Quarter/Year	Course Number	Day/Time	Instructor
Fall 2018	ART-HIST 260	TR 12:30-1:50	Feldman
Course Title			Degree/Distro Fulfillment
Introduction to Contemporary Art and Its Histories			Area VI



Eddie Peake, *Got no Time for the Unspectacular*, 2016

What is contemporary art? When is contemporary art? For whom is contemporary art? Where is contemporary art? And...why does contemporary art matter? This undergraduate survey provides an introduction to some of the central artists, themes, works, and debates comprising the history of contemporary art (roughly 1960 to today), with a particular focus on the social and political engagements that have informed artistic developments during those decades. The ways in which artists have approached, contested, reflected, and reconfigured the problems and possibilities of institutions—be they social, governmental, academic, political, commercial, media-based, or the art world itself—is a central theme around which the

course will find critical traction and build historical context. In addition to cultivating an understanding of what has made particular genres and instances of artistic practice significant to art history, this course allows us to think about how globalization, technology, current world conflicts, and social media, for example, have shaped artistic production, art criticism, and the art market. It also asks us to reflect upon the temporality of our present and what it is that is “contemporary” to our “now.” Assignments include short writing assignments based on local art exhibitions of international artists, weekly readings and online viewings, regular canvas posts, and a flexible-format final exam. No prior knowledge of art history or contemporary art is required.

Required Textbooks

Readings will be on canvas as pdfs and as a reader to be purchased at Quartet copies.

Assessments

Short papers, in-class midterm, section posts, flexible form final exam.