Sculpture 1  
M W 10-12:30  
Instructor: Oren Pinhassi  
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Office hours by appointment

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Course Description
This studio-based course will introduce students to fundamental ideas in sculptural thought and practice, exploring concepts related to volume, structure, texture, scale and monumentality, site-specificity. We will focus on thinking about materials—their histories, their uses, and their properties—with the aim of beginning also to think *through* materials. By engaging students in looking at the world of objects, products, and structures both inside and outside of art, this course will challenge students to think about how matter takes on meaning.

This course aims to create a productive confusion surrounding the question of what sculpture is today. We will start by working with more traditional techniques like carving, casting, and woodworking, and will move towards expanded sculptural practices such as installation, public interventions, and the use of new media. Our goal is to begin producing our own meanings through materials and actions. *Why should this thing be made, and why out of this material, by this process, in this context?*

Each studio assignment, supported by readings and presentations, is designed to unravel a different moment in the history of sculpture and sculptural thought by bringing students—along with their contemporary perspectives—into a material dialogue with the forces and contexts that gave rise to those moments.

Course Structure
Class will meet bi-weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays: beginning of class will be dedicated to group critiques of the previous week's assignment, as well as introductions to new assignments, which will include presentation of art historical references and demos of materials and techniques. This is a fast-paced, energetic class, but we will make sure that for each assignment there will be enough time dedicated to studio work and one-on-one conversations with the instructor. There will be individual and group critiques throughout all processes and at all levels of production, especially for your final project.
Course requirements and evaluation

This is a course that will require you to keep an open mind and to participate fully. It takes as a vital part of its structure the generative nature of group discussion; therefore, differing perspectives are welcome. Part of what you will be practicing in class is talking about your own work and the work of others, so openness in discussion will be as important as respect. In a similar vein, you are encouraged to be playful in exploring your own ways of interpreting assignments (this includes your approaches to using materials, techniques and concepts), but if you decide to depart from the guidelines of the assignment as they been laid out in class, you will be expected to articulate how your work is engaged with the core questions of the assignment.

Attendance: 15%
Participation in discussions and critiques: 25%
Final project: 20%
All other projects (includes drawings, sketches, models, documentation): 40%

**Please have a sketchbook for this class, keep it with you at all times, and use it for sketches, notes of ideas, names of artists mentioned that were inspiring for you, names of films, websites, books etc.

**Please document all your projects and submit the photos in one PDF file at end of semester.

**Your participation grade will include mandatory attendance at the following events:

Beginning Tuesday, January 27th: Picture/Thing exhibition at Zilkha
Wednesday, February 11, 4:30pm in the CFA Hall: Rachel Harrison artist talk
Tuesday, February 24, 4:30pm: Picture/Thing panel discussion at Zilkha
Course Calendar

01/26  **First Class: Introduction and syllabus review:**

Review of course syllabus, assignments, expectations, and methodology

Slideshow: Statue—Sculpture—The expanded field—Non-art structures

We'll start exploring the wide-ranging field of three-dimensional concepts, material options and the relationships between our bodies and objects, space, and materials

**Assignment:** Read MATTER MATTERS (column 1,2) by Manuel DeLanda,

**Weeks 1-2: Adding/Assembling: from the realism of Leonardo’s corpses to the cultural realism of ready-made objects**

01/28  **Additive processes – Malleable matter**

Adding materials and drawing as a basic tool for studying structure from the inside towards the outside; looking at anatomical drawings and illustrations; skeleton, joints, muscles, weight distribution, orbiting movement and posture

**Exercises:**
- Blindfolded clay-modeling exercise: visualizing self-images of the body
- Quick gestural and additive line drawings (with live model)
- Wire skeleton studies as foundation for clay armature figure (with live model)
- Building up clay armature in additive process; focusing on form and mass of body rather than surface (with live model)

**Assignment:** finish clay armature for next class (continue from drawings)

02/2  **Additive Processes - Gathering/Assembling/Jointing/Transforming**

transformation of objects’ scale, context, meaning and materiality; adding meaning, erasing meaning; the archeology of formal qualities and meaning; processes of abstraction; the hoarder as an artist; the call of objects

**Exercises:**
- Group critiques and presentation of students’ figures and drawings from last class
- Please document (with phone camera) each one of the different stages of this assignment
- Gathering and jointing together different objects from the school’s environment: anything ranging from studio materials, trash, organic
objects, etc.
- Covering the new assembled form with tape and painting it a solid color

**Assignment:** Watch online lecture: Jane Bennett - Powers of the Hoard: Artistry and Agency in a World of Vibrant Matter
[http://youtu.be/q607Ni23QjA](http://youtu.be/q607Ni23QjA)

**02/4 Additive Processes - Gathering/Assembling/Joining/Transforming**
- Continue to work on project in studio:
- Fast structural drawings as a study of new painted form: additive line drawing, tonality drawings
- Sculpting a scaled-down version of the painted form using one material in additive process, subtractive process or a combination of both processes

**Assignment:** Finish sculpting the scaled-down object for next class, bring a shoebox or a small cardboard box for next class (carving)

**Weeks 3-4: Carving and Disassembling: relations of body-matter- imagination and the breaking apart of the familiar image**

**02/9 Subtractive Processes – Carving**
from body representations to biomorphic abstractions; positive to negative; cavities, curves, holes; porous surface/smooth surface; ideas of continuity and disruption in form and texture

**Exercises:**
- Group critiques and presentation of the different stages of students’ work from last assignment
- Plaster demo and carving tools and techniques demo
- Casting and carving plaster blocks

**Assignment:** finish carving exercise for next class, bring a ready-made object/product/material for disassembling project for next class

**02/11 Subtractive Processes – Disassembling**
Disassembling as a process of learning an object; disassembling as an action of generating new context and reveling hidden structures

**Exercises:**
- slideshow; *breaking apart of the familiar image*; Gordon Matta-Clark, David Adamo, christian marclay
- working with a ready-made object or a material unit and disassembling it in a way that will generate new context for the object and the way we will
perceive it.

02/16 **Subtractive Processes – Disassembling**
- Continue to work on project in studio

02/18 **Subtractive Processes**
- Group critiques and presentation of students’ works from last 2 projects (carving and disassembling)

**Weeks 5-8: Bodily Scale, Bodily functions, Bodily materials, Bodily abstractions**
- Wood, Plaster, cement

02/23 **Woodworking demo:**
- learning how to use wood shop machinery; hand tools, power tool and joinery; how to efficiently use our body while working
- Woodworking and safety demo at wood shop

02/25 **Structures, Bodies, function**
**Woodworking**
- Architectural sculpture; furniture as sculpture; objects that are designed for the body; bodily scale; alteration of functionality; sculpture as a machine

**Exercises:**
- Working with wood to fabricate a familiar object/furniture that is designed for the human body and serves a clear function like sitting, laying, eating, playing, etc.
- Continue to work with wood, we will think about how we can alter the function of that object; adding material or changing the scale to cancel/shift/exaggerate or parody the functionality of the object; thinking about the logic of machines and their place in culture we will try to create an object of idiosyncratic logic

03/2 **Structures, Bodies, function**
**Woodworking**
- Continue to work on project in studio

**Assignment:** Read Georges Bataille: “L’informe” (“Formless”) 1929; finish project for next class
03/4 Structures, Bodies, function
Woodworking
- Group critiques and presentation of students’ work from last assignment

Spring break

03/23 Plinth/Body/Bulb/Lumps:
from the classical plinth to ready-made objects as plinth; positioning and installation of sculptural objects to alter context and content; the space of the work – the space of the viewer; abstractions of body images; bodily materials, bodily objects; materials’ integrity Vs. materials’ alchemy

- Slideshow and discussion of new assignment plinth/body/bulb/lump
- Basic mold making & casting demo and exercises–Part 1; plaster, alginate, cement

Assignment: think about any kind of ready-made object that will interact with and serve as a plinth for an object that you will craft. Think about the materials you want to use to create your object and bring them all to the next class (if these are not materials that are provided by the school); the object you are creating should be dealing with ideas of bodily abstraction or bodily materials.

03/30 Plinth/Body/Bulb/Lumps
- Basic mold making & casting demo and exercises–Part 2
- Continue to work on project in studio

04/1 Plinth/Body/Bulb/Lumps
- Continue to work on project in studio


Weeks 9-11: Site specificity, Interventions, Public work
monumental sculpture/monumental gestures Vs. invisible/hidden works; works that consider the ways in which we use public space; performance and sculpture; the spatiality of sound

- If you would like, for this project you can work in groups of 2, 3 or 4 students
04/6  **Site specificity, Interventions, Public work: Studying the location**
- Slideshow and discussion of new assignment

**Exercises:**
- Walking around the university and choosing a location of interest
- Studying the way people use this space/location; how they walk, how they use their body, what are the habits or repetitions in using that space
- Document those findings in different ways (notes, drawings, recordings)
- Think of a work that will interact with the space in a way that will be relevant to one or more of the issues we discussed during the assignment's slide show.

**Assignment:** make drawings of the work and the way it will be installed in the space or location you chose and bring it to next class

04/8  **Site specificity, Interventions, Public work: Working with a 3D model**

**Exercises:**
- One-on-one (or 2,3,4-on-one) conversation with instructor about the project, please bring drawings with you
- Building a 3D model of the work and the way it will be installed in space, please include a human figure for scale

04/13  **Site specificity, Interventions, Public work: Working with a 3D model**
- Continue to work on 3D model
- Photographing model with the right perspectives to get a sense of the proposed project

04/15  **Site specificity, Interventions, Public work: working in real scale, materials and at location**

**Assignment:** read “Torture Concrete; Jean-Luc Molène and the Protocols of Abstraction” by Reza Negarestani

04/20  **Site specificity, Interventions, Public work – film screening**
- We will watch the documentary film *Quiet Moments in the Musée Précaire Albinet* by Atelier Thomas Hirshhorn
- Continue to work on projects

**Assignment:** finish projects for next class
04/22  Group critiques and presentation of students' projects/performances

**Assignment:** start thinking about conceptual and material directions for independent project, bring notes or first sketches for next class

**Weeks 12-13  Independent projects and conferences:**
self-motivated project that will be developed through one-on-one conversations with instructor

- We will be practicing how to think and talk about the work and will collect cultural references that are relevant for our project
- The students should demonstrate command of the physical and conceptual aspects that we have dealt with in class, finding their own ways to experiment materially and conceptually

**Assignment:** read *Sentences on Conceptual Art* by Sol Lewitt, and *Paragraphs on conceptual art* by Sol Lewitt

*Final critiques will take place during finals period, date TBA*