

ART HISTORY PROGRAM

Courses

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

<http://arthistory.ucdavis.edu>



Fall 2009

Art and Its Reception (AHI 250)

Professor Diana Strazdes

The artist, work of art, and its audience have always been closely intertwined. Just as it is axiomatic that the artist is responsible for the work of art, the work of art is often—indeed most often—understood through those who make up its audience. Yet the work of never offers a fixed understanding, for its meaning is never undisputed nor its effect immutable. In reacting to works of art, viewers do not necessarily reproduce the artist's point of view.

This seminar will focus on the reception of art as both a historically changing phenomenon and as an issue that poses general questions about the illusion that art creates. Although it will offer an opportunity to study American art from the nineteenth century, the intent of the seminar is to take a broad perspective that crosses chronological and national boundaries to seek useful applications from other disciplines to the art historical problem of assessing the difference between a work of art's creation and the way it is viewed.

We will spend the first weeks reading some of the key contributions in reception theory from the perspective of art history, literary criticism, and sociology

1. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*
2. Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?*
3. Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst, *Audiences*

An anthology of essays, James L. Michor and Philip Goldsteins, eds., *Reception Study: from Literary Theory to Cultural Studies*

We will also read selections of scholarly articles applying the issues of reception to art history and discuss primary documents in selected test cases. The seminar will end with the writing of individual research paper and oral presentations.

CRN 10723. 4 units

Thursdays, 3:10-6:00 pm, Art 210D