

Department of Film and Media Studies
Hunter College, CUNY

IMA 78076: Multi-Channel Video Installation Fall 2021, Thursday 10:10 am to 1 pm Room: 543 Hunter North Course website: https://www.andrewdemirjian.com/mcvi	Instructor: Andrew Demirjian Office: 520G Hunter North Office hours: Monday 1 pm - 2 pm (via Zoom) Thursday 1:30 – 3:30 pm (in person) and by appointment Email: ademirji@hunter.cuny.edu
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Course description:

In this hands-on production course, we will create new multi-channel video installation artworks that are in conversation with the rich and diverse histories of this practice. We will engage with the technical, theoretical and aesthetic concepts that inform the production, post-production and exhibition of producing these immersive works.

Using both hardware and software methods for synchronizing sources, we will experiment with different vertical and horizontal configurations of multiple monitors and projectors to display student work. Projection mapping and sculptural techniques that investigate methods for breaking the rectangular frame will also be explored. In addition to multiple channels of video, we will also work with multiple channels of audio to create immersive environments. Students will gain hands-on experience working with a quadraphonic sound system and subwoofer along with other speaker configurations.

Through a series of short readings, we will survey diverse perspectives, contexts and topics in this mode of production. We will also screen, critically analyze and discuss a wide array of practices from artists working in this medium. The course will be taught as a hybrid, with some classes via Zoom for discussing texts and learning post-production techniques and others in-person to set up monitors, projectors and speakers to test our work. Documenting the pieces created in class will be part of our working method, ensuring students are able to easily show the outcomes of their work for crits, grant proposals and future exhibitions.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the term, students should be able to:

1. Conceive and produce multi-channel video installations that are resonant with contemporary culture.
2. Edit synchronized, frame accurate video Adobe Premiere and After Effects for multiple channel projects.
3. Understand the aesthetic and technical differences between synchronized and unsynchronized video installations.
4. Develop a deep understanding of the history of video installation and identify leading practitioners in the field.
5. Write proposals for installations that clearly articulate their creative vision and discuss

the theoretical underpinnings for their work.

6. Deftly navigate the technical equipment needed for the exhibition of artworks that use projection mapping as well as multiple projectors and monitors.

7. Develop a critical and theoretical framework for analyzing multi-channel video artworks.

Method of Evaluation:

1. Deconstruction Exercise 10%
2. Synchronized Diptych/Triptych Exercise 15%
4. Reading Responses 15%
5. Class Presentation 10%
6. Final Project 35%
7. Participation: 15%

Required Readings:

Due dates listed in the course schedule

- o “Sites of Screening: Cinema, Museum, and the Art of Projection”, from *Surface* by Guiliana Bruno
- o “The Editor”, Stefano Basilico
- o “Video Installation: The Body, The image and the Space in Between”, Margaret Morse
- o “Before and Besides Projection: Notes on Video Sculpture, 1974 – 1995”, Henriette Huldish
- o “Beyond the Cinematic Screen: Installations and the Internet”, *The Essay Film After Fact and Fiction*
- o “Off the Wall: Video Sculpture and Installation”, from *A History of Video Art* by Christopher Meigh-Andrews
- o “Certain Obliqueness”, Renée Green
- o “From Ten Thousand Waves to Lina Bo Bardi via Kapital”, Isaac Julien

Recommended Readings:

Surface, by Guiliana Bruno

A History of Video Art by Christopher Meigh-Andrews

Video Spaces: Eight Installations by Barbara London

Expanded Cinema, by Gene Youngblood

Before Projection: Video Sculpture, 1974 – 1995, by Henriette Huldish

Video Art: The First Fifty Years, by Barbara London

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a guiding principle of the Hunter College learning community because all students should have the opportunity to learn and perform on a level playing field.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, obtaining an unfair advantage, and falsifying records or documents, whether intentional or not.

Hunter College upholds the right to promote academic integrity on its campus as an educational institution of the City University of New York. The College has the responsibility to review all charges of academic dishonesty and implement sanctions, including, but not limited to, failing the course, official transcript notation, suspension or expulsion from the College when it has been determined that academic dishonesty did occur. Please click [here](#) to see a full list of disciplinary sanctions.

Accessibility

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of Accessibility located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call (212) 772-4857/TTY (212) 650-3230. If you have registered with the Office of Accessibility, please let me know at the start of the term.

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment, retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444). All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123. CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct. Link: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/diversityandcompliance/repository/files/cuny-policy-on-sexual-misconduct.pdf>

Class Participation. By enrolling in this course and entering the classroom, each student makes the tacit commitment to participate in the class. Active class participation involves more than mere physical presence. Students are expected to be actively involved in the class. They should take the initiative in discussion and projects, ask relevant questions, and contribute to the overall learning environment of the class.

It is your responsibility:

1. To prepare for class by having read assignments, written papers and/or prepared projects

2. To actively participate in class discussion and activities;
3. To take notes on discussions, presentations, and activities conducted within the class;
4. To complete all course assignments, even if you are absent from a class meeting.

Rockowitz Writing Center:

The Rockowitz Writing Center offers students help with their writing at every stage of the writing process. You can make an appointment for a live video session at:

hunter.mywconline.com.

Counseling and Wellness Services:

Counseling and Wellness Services (CWS) is another campus resource and service center for all matriculated students that is operating remotely for counseling services at no cost to all Hunter students. You can make an appointment at:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/student-services/counseling-and-wellness>.

RESEARCH PRESENTATION

The research presentation is a fifteen-minute presentation of aesthetic, technical or theoretical information related to video installation. This is your chance to share your research and interests with our group regarding a topic you are excited about and you believe will be of interest to the class. The topic does not need to relate to your final project. If you think you'll need more time to do your topic justice, for instance, if it is a subject that requires a technical demonstration, please reach out and let me know what you are thinking in advance.

Technical topics might include demonstrating alternative techniques for synchronizing multiple video feeds like using the Raspberry Pi, showing students an advanced technique with Mad Mapper or demonstrating how to use SketchUp to create 3D diagrams for . Aesthetic ideas may be comparing and contrasting two artist's work or analyzing regional tendencies or styles in a particular geographical location. A list of artists you may want to consider will be provided, but you are also encouraged to explore areas of interest. A theoretical presentation may include a presentation of critical thinking on a related theoretical topic like Maurice Merleau Ponty's 'Eye and Mind' that examines relationships of the body in space or an examination of theories of immersion.

DECONSTRUCTION EXERCISE

Using between two to five video channels, create a deconstruction of an existing media piece. This could be one of your favorite films or one of your least favorite films, it can be a film you've created or something from the Internet. For this exercise the key idea is to reshape, reorganize or deconstruct the film in some way, breaking the linear whole into non-linear parts.

For example, you may want to break apart a film using conceptual categories like the related gestures of the actors (ex. All the winks on one monitor, all people flipping their hair in another monitor, the gesture of reaching). Another approach you may want to consider is segmenting the locations of a film, for instance, all of the shots that take place in the kitchen,

the bedroom, the hallway, etc.. in Chantal Ackerman's *Jean Dielman* for instance. You might want to consider deconstructing your film based on the sonic qualities, for instance, the silences would play in one monitor, the humming in another, the use of a keyword, etc... Another approach might be to deconstruct your selected film by the types of shots, all close-ups in one monitor, all medium shots in another, all tracking shots, etc... These ideas are just the tip of the iceberg, the fun is coming up with your own concept and trying it out.

For further inspiration, make sure to read the complete essay and the different approaches artists take in "The Editor" by Stefano Basilico. As he puts it, "They (the editors) don't need to shoot the films for they understand that the editing and shaping of what may already exist in the world is a more powerful and revealing act. Furthermore, by selecting what already exists, they foreground the deconstructive nature of this act, whose purpose is to destroy illusion and reveal the inherent manipulative powers of the medium." You may also want to consult Richard Serra's Verb List on our class website.

You don't have to use all the shots in your film and your video loops can be relatively short, we are primarily interested in the conceptual exercise of thinking of deconstruction and spatial segmentation and then examining the effect on the viewer to experience the piece this way. We will most likely only watch 5 to 7 minutes of each piece in class, to make sure each student's work is seen. This exercise is more 'mad scientist' testing a hypothesis and its results versus sculpting a highly resolved piece. The videos you create will not be synchronized, so plan for compelling happenstance between moving images in the monitors versus precisely composed frame accurate syncopations, that is coming next.

SYNCHRONIZED DIPTYCH/TRIPTYCH EXERCISE

For this exercise, we will create a precisely synchronized diptych or triptych that will be screened in class. We will use the editing techniques demonstrated in class and the BrightSigns synchronizing system to create your choice of diptych or triptych. The stakes are higher point wise for this exercise with an eye to creating a more polished work. This exercise may be a segment of the final project that you'd like to test drive and get feedback on before you launch into the full version. The work may also explore some of the different aesthetic styles we've encountered so far in the semester like a video essay form or using video like a musical instrument. The piece should be between one and five minutes in length.

FINAL PROJECT

Each student will create a highly resolved multi-channel video installation as their final project. The piece can be synchronized or unsynchronized and can be inspired by any of the different types of practices we have seen throughout the semester: video sculpture, remix, video essay, abstract, animation, projection mapping, rhythmic, visual/sonic, textual or any as yet un-seen form.

The piece should engage thoughtfully with space and the relationship between the viewer's body in relation to the screens. Ideally, the piece will be between 90 seconds to 15 minutes in length. Throughout the class we have emphasized the role of editing in creating these works. The editing of your final project should be judicious with an eye to creating a really solid

short piece versus a long, wandering unfocused epic. In other words, the assessment of this work is not based on duration as much as a unity in design; all of the parts working together to create a compelling short video installation that is engagingly choreographed.

The Final Project requires a two-paragraph proposal for you to submit prior to the Thanksgiving break that outlines the concept, style, concerns, channels and spatial configuration. These don't have to be set in stone and can change, but through writing your ideas down it often enables you to see it more clearly and identify ways it can be developed into a more resolved work. Your final project should be conceived to work within the equipment that we have available. We should have the ability to output 5 separate video channels at HD or higher quality, each of these channels can be duplicated, but a project that conceives of 7 separate video channels is unlikely to be realized as you imagine. Please consult the equipment list and ask me if you have any specific ideas that you'd like to talk through.

To insure we are able to screen all of the student pieces, we will most likely group the students who are using the same basic setup (2-channel, 3-channel, etc..) and show their work together sequentially, before we move to a different grouping.

In addition to the multi-channel video installation, each student should include a two-page written paper to be submitted after your screening. Your paper should discuss: the evolution of your thinking about the piece, which readings or artworks that you inspired by and how you used this inspiration to arrive at your current piece, and what technical challenges did you encounter and how did you resolve them? In addition, please consider how you might modify the work or develop it further based on seeing it realized.

No later than 10 days before you show the work, you should also submit one or more files that show your sketching the configuration of your screens/projections/sculptural elements. You can use a 3D design app like SketchUp or hand draw these sketches.

Final Project Rubric

Total points: 35

Proposal: 3

Diagram: 3

Paper: 4

Artwork: 25

Comprised of:

- Concept
- Editing
- Sound
- Spatial configuration

READING RESPONSES:

There are five written reading responses due this semester for our class readings, each one should be at least a page long. Please submit these to your class cloud drive prior to class.

The readings were chosen to provide aesthetic, historical and theoretical context for your artwork. For each reading response I will suggest a few possible topics for you to consider but you can also get in a writing flow about what you thought was compelling about the reading or what associations or ideas they generated for you. This writing is a way for you to think out loud and contemplate how the ideas in these texts might take your work in new directions.

Schedule

Please be advised that the schedule below is subject to change. You are responsible for coming to class and/or checking the course website for any changes to our schedule.

Date	Weekly Topic	Readings	Assessments
Week 1: August 26 th	Course Introduction and Overview		
Week 2: September 2 nd	From cinema to museum Categorical editing	“ <u>Sites of Screening: Cinema, Museum, and the Art of Projection</u> ”, from Surface by Guiliana Bruno	Response paper on reading due in Google Drive Sept. 2 nd prior to class
Week 3: September 9th (No class Sept. 16 th)	Categorical imperatives, Remix, Internet genres Discussion of Deconstruction exercise	“ <u>The Editor</u> ”, Stefano Basilico	

Week 4: September 23rd ONLINE CLASS	History of Video Installation – Guest Lecture from Christopher Meigh Andrews Student presentation #1 & #2	“Off the Wall: Video Sculpture and Installation”, from A History of Video Art by Christopher Meigh-Andrews	
Week 5: September 30th	Student presentation of Deconstruction exercise	No reading due	Deconstruction Exercise Due
Week 6: October 7th CLASS FIELD TRIP	Shigeko Kubato @MOMA (plus other video installations) [purchase scheduled ticket for 12:00 Noon] & John Akomfrah: Five Murmurations at the Lisson Gallery [approximately 10:00 AM] 508 West 24th Street	No reading – see suggested texts on both of these artists on our website	Students begin work on synchronized diptych or triptych
Week 7: October 14th	Demonstration: Techniques for	“Video Installation: The Body, The image and the	Reading Response due on

	creating synchronized video with Adobe Premiere Student presentations #3& #4	Space in Between”, Margaret Morse	
Week 8: October 21st	The Video Essay in a multi-channel environment Alternative techniques for creating synchronized video with Adobe After Effects How to use the BrightSign software to synchronize videos Student presentation #5 & #6	“Beyond the Cinematic Screen: Installations and the Internet”, Nora M. Alter from The Essay Film After Fact and Fiction and “Certain Obliqueness”, Renée Green from <i>Essays on the Video Essay</i>	Reading response due
Week 9: October 28th	Screening of Synchronized Diptychs		Exercise #2 due for Group A – Synchronized Diptych (students submit their final files via cloud drive by noon Wednesday the 27th or their work will not be shown)

Week 10: November 4 th	Screening of Synchronized Triptychs		Exercise #3 due for Group B Synchronized Triptych (students submit their final files via cloud drive by noon Wednesday the 3 rd or their work will not be shown)
Week 11: November 11 th	Group discussion of video sculpture Mad Mapper Demonstration and exercise in 503, IMA Digital Media Lab & Black box Student presentations #7 & #8	“Before and Besides Projection: Notes on Video Sculpture, 1974 – 1995”, Henriette Huldisch	Reading response due
Week 12: November 18 th (No class Nov. 25 th)	Expressing the inexpressible Alternative approaches to synchronizing video using Max/MSP Student presentation #9 and #10 (additional Mad Mapper techniques)	“From Ten Thousand Waves to Lina Bo Bardi via Kapital”, Isaac Julien	Reading response due

Week 13: December 2nd	Student presentation #11 Work on final project. Space and equipment available for testing work samples	No reading due	If you want to screen you're synchronized multi-channel samples they must be submitted Wednesday, Dec. 1st by noon
Week 14: December 9th	Testing and prototyping multi-channel final projects (503A, IMA DML, BB)		If you want to screen you're synchronized multi-channel samples they must be submitted Wednesday, Dec. 8th by noon
Week 15: December 16th	Final Presentations		Final presentations due by Wednesday, Dec. 15th