



# ESCUELA DE ARTE ÚTIL

**June 20–August 10, 2017**

**Class Hours:** Tue/Wed/Thu, 4–8 PM (required of full-time students);  
Fri, 2–6 PM (optional)

**Instructors:** Tania Bruguera and invited guests

**Coordinator:** Alessandra Saviotti

**Facilitator:** Gemma Medina Estupiñan

Tania Bruguera’s socially engaged, political projects apply the aesthetics of art to everyday life. Focusing on the transformation of social affect into political effectiveness, they are intensive interventions into the institutional structure of collective memory, education, and politics. This project continues Bruguera’s interest in, and use of, transitional institutions—in this case an art school—to harness the potential of art to shift perspectives and to initiate and contribute to social, political, and cultural change.

*Escuela de Arte Útil* is an updated version of her earlier long-term pedagogical project *Cátedra Arte de Conducta*, which took place in her home in Havana from 2003 through 2009. The focus on *arte útil*, a term suggesting art as a tool or device for social change, is coupled with the aims of the Arte Útil Archive (2013–ongoing), the main tool for the school that is presented here for use. It is also available online at [arte-util.org](http://arte-util.org).

Bruguera has conceived a new curriculum for this project that uses the concept of *arte útil* to address the challenges facing artists today by looking at a group of art projects and methodologies that may constitute a parallel art history. This is the central pedagogical and installation component of the exhibition that runs concurrently at YBCA, and Bruguera is in residence for the duration of the school. Students enrolled at collaborating academic institutions receive credit toward their undergraduate and graduate education degrees, and are will be part of the YBCA Fellows program as well.

While the school's core group of attendees are required to have a systematic engagement with the project, the general public is welcome to participate on a drop-in basis with paid gallery admission or membership.

*Escuela de Arte Útil, a commissioned art project for the exhibition Tania Bruguera: Talking to Power / Hablándole al Poder, is organized by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in collaboration with California College of the Arts, San Francisco Art Institute, the University of California at Berkeley, San Francisco State University, the Asociación de Arte Útil, and the YBCA Fellows program.*

### **Course Description**

Whether through self-organized groups, individual initiatives, or user-generated content, people are developing new methods and social formations to deal with issues that were once the domain of the state. These initiatives are not isolated incidents, but part of an art history that has yet to be told, and they are shaping our contemporary world. This class focuses on the concept of *arte útil* and the shifting role of contemporary art, and will consider institutional self-criticism, active hyperrealism, a-legality, reforming capital, beneficial outcomes, sustainability, intersections with other disciplines, and modes of creative collaboration.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Students are expected to actively participate in the class sessions, do the required reading, contribute substantively to the conversations, and generate a new project that will be shown at the end of the course. Consistent attendance and punctuality are essential. The class involves discussions on how to create an *arte útil* project, including the implementation of the criteria and their relation to the public realm.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Understand the history, strategies, and challenges of *arte útil*
2. Become familiar with the lexicon, especially concepts such as “beneficial outcome,” “initiator,” “usership,” “sustainability,” and “implementation”
3. Test *arte útil* strategies and resources
4. Understand the differences between relational aesthetics, public art, and socially engaged practices

5. Learn new fieldwork and collaboration skills
6. Create your own *arte útil* project

## **Assignments**

Students have two weeks to work on and present each assignment. Incomplete assignments will prevent you from participating in the final show.

### **ASSIGNMENT 1**

Weeks 1 and 2

Think about a recurrent injustice that affects you, and propose new ways in which the issue could be addressed. Research the Arte Útil Archive to find similar projects and use them as starting points and references for your proposal. Present and discuss with the class; touch on your proposal's references to the archive and how it differs from those examples. Produce a prototype. A respondent will be assigned for every prototype. He or she will question how the project tackles new uses for art within society, its effectiveness, its feasibility, and who benefits from it and how.

### **ASSIGNMENT 2**

Weeks 3 and 4

Choose one relational aesthetics, public art, or socially engaged art project that does not fit the *arte útil* criteria and transform it into an *arte útil* proposal. Present it to the class. Submit a written description of your prototype idea from weeks 1 and 2, taking into account the respondent's feedback. The instructors will review your submission.

### **ASSIGNMENT 3**

Weeks 5 and 6

Present your project prototype to the class. Describe your strategies for its potential sustainability, including how it challenges the field within which it operates, how it works on a 1:1 scale, and how it can evolve considering the current urgencies it faces. Identify your potential users, and strategies to transition it to its constituency. Explain how aesthetics are established during the process. Present your implementation timeline.

## **Class Schedule**

(subject to change)

## **WEEK 1**

### **Introduction to Arte Útil**

**Instructor: Tania Bruguera**

#### **Tue, Jun 20**

4–5:50PM: Understanding the differences between relational aesthetics, public art, socially engaged practices, and *arte útil*

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Introduction to *arte útil*

#### **Wed, Jun 21**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Analyzing the *arte útil* criteria

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis: Manifesto de *arte útil*

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Using the archive and the lexicon, review of case studies by category and strategy. SFAI students present the tool kit realized during the collaborative class “Evolving the Archive: Arte Útil in the Bay Area”

#### **Thu, Jun 22**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Successes, challenges, and side effects of *arte útil*

6–8PM: Students’ assignment #1 discussion

#### **Fri, Jun 23**

2–6PM: Critique, studio, drop-in time (by appointment with instructor)

## **WEEK 2**

### **Institutional Self-Criticism**

Guest instructor: Alistair Hudson, Director, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art

#### **Tue, Jun 27**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Institutional self-criticism

**Wed, Jun 28**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Museum 3.0 concept and practicalities

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2— Meeting with other *arte útil* practitioners TBD.

**Thu, Jun 29**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—The museum as a civic institution

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #1 discussion

**Fri, Jun 30**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

**WEEK 3****Active Hyperrealism**

Guest instructor: Debt Collective (Thomas Gokey and Karissa McKelvey)

**Wed, Jul 5**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Active hyperrealism

**Thu, Jul 6**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Working on the 1:1 scale

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners: Karissa McKelvey of Strike Debt Bay Area presents the activities and actions carried in our region

**Fri, Jul 7**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Removing the frame

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #2 discussion

## **WEEK 4**

### **Reforming Capital**

Guest instructor: Jeanne van Heeswijk

#### **Tue, Jul 11**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Reforming capital

#### **Wed, Jul 12**

4–5:50PM: Session 1–Crossing over

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2–Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners: Fieldfaring (Ted Purves and Susanne Cockrell) present *Temescal Amity Works*, Arte Útil Archive project #121

#### **Thu, Jul 13**

4–5:50PM: Session 3–Scaling impact

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4–Students' assignment #2 discussion

#### **Fri, Jul 14**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

## **WEEK 5**

### **A-legality**

Guest instructor: WochenKlausur

#### **Tue, Jul 18**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: A-legality

**Wed, Jul 19**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Loopholes versus illegal and a-legal strategies

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Skype meeting with other *arte útil* practitioners

**Thu, Jul 20**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Affect versus effectiveness in art

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #3 discussion

**Fri, Jul 21**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

**WEEK 6****Sustainable Outcomes**

Guest instructor: Rick Lowe

**Tue, Jul 25**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Sustainable outcomes

**Wed, Jul 26**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Steps toward building community

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners: the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project presents their platform, Arte Útil Archive project #558

**Thu, July 27**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Securing permanency and change

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #3 discussion

**Fri, Jul 28**

Site visit to Bay Area case study TBD (by appointment with instructor)

## **WEEK 7**

### **Usership**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera

#### **Tue, Aug 1**

4–5:50PM: Reading discussion with instructor

6–8PM: Lecture and discussion: Usership

#### **Wed, Aug 2**

4–5:50PM: Session 1—Audiences, constituencies, and usership

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 2—Meeting with Bay Area *arte útil* practitioners: Bonnie Ora Sherk presents *A Living Library*, Arte Útil Archive project #503; *Crossroad Community: The Farm*, Arte Útil Archive project #007; and *Portable Parks I–III*, Arte Útil Archive project #008

#### **Thu, Aug 3**

4–5:50PM: Session 3—Aest-ethics and social ecology versus services

6–6:20PM: Case studies analysis

6:30–8PM: Session 4—Students' assignment #3 discussion

#### **Fri, Aug 4**

Critique, studio, drop-in time

## **WEEK 8**

### **Conclusion**

Instructor: Tania Bruguera

#### **Tue, Aug 8**

4–6PM: Students' prototype and implementation discussion



6:10–8PM: Discussion of successes, challenges, and side effects of implementation I

**Wed, Aug 9**

4–6PM: Students' prototype and implementation discussion

6:10–8PM: Discussion of successes, challenges, and side effects of implementation II

**Thu, Aug 10**

4–6PM: Students' prototype and implementation discussion

6:10–8PM: Discussion of successes, challenges, and side effects of implementation III

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS**

**Sat, Jul 15**

**SFAI symposium**

Details TBA

**Thu/Fri/Sat, Sep 28–30**

***The Arte Útil Summit 2017: "Does Art Have Users?"***

Organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Education and Public Practice department and the Asociación de Arte Útil. The program is part of SFMOMA's Phyllis Wattis Distinguished Lecture Series.

**READINGS**

Arte Útil Archive: [http://http://www.arte-util.org/projects](http://www.arte-util.org/projects).

Aushana Aikens, Christina, et al., eds. *What's the Use? Constellations of Art, History and Knowledge: A Critical Reader*. Amsterdam: Valiz, 2016.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Aspen*, nos. 5/6 (1967). Available at <http://ubu.com/aspen/aspen5and6/threeEssays.html#barthes>.

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- Sherk, Bonnie Ora. "Position Paper: Crossroads Community (The Farm)." In *Art and*

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London: Tate Publishing, 2007.

Wallis, Jonathan. "Interview with Tania Bruguera." *Art and the Public Sphere* 4 (2015).

Wright, Stephen. *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*. Eindhoven, the Netherlands: Van  
Abbemuseum, 2013. [http://www.arte-util.org/cms/wp-  
content/uploads/2015/03/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf](http://www.arte-util.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf).

Yank, Sue Bell. "From Freehouse to Neighborhood Co-op: The Birth of a New  
Organizational Form." *FIELD: A Journal for Socially Engaged Art Criticism* 1, no. 1  
(Spring 2015).