

History 433

Creatures:

**Art and Biology from Early
Modernity to Now**

Carla Nappi

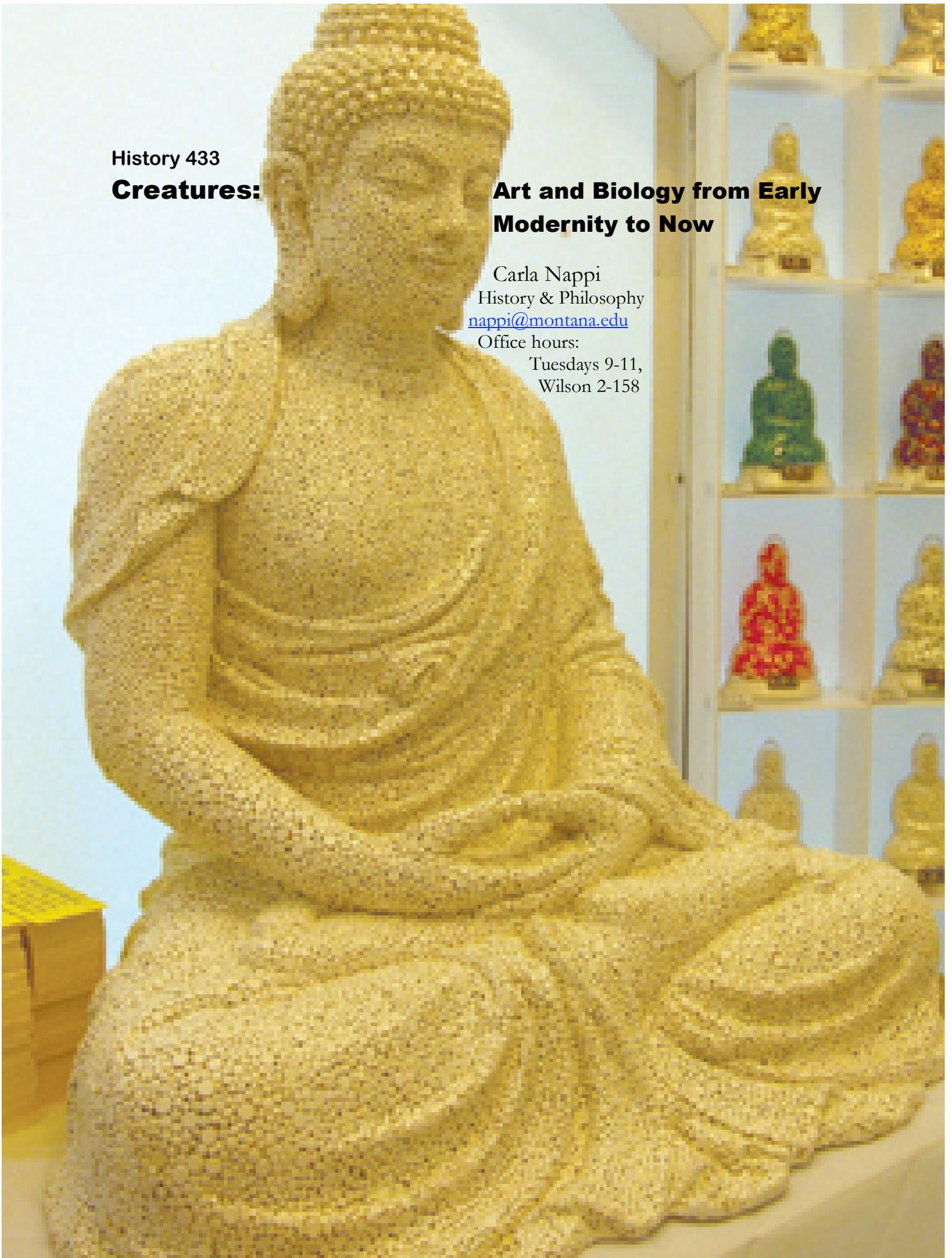
History & Philosophy

nappi@montana.edu

Office hours:

Tuesdays 9-11,

Wilson 2-158



I INTRODUCTION

Who I Am

I'm a historian of science and medicine, with a heavy research focus on natural history in early modern China. I'm currently revising a book manuscript, *The Monkey and the Inkpot: Natural History and its Transformations in Early Modern China*. I've also begun work on two new projects: the first looks at exchange of natural objects among the Chinese empire and its borderlands in the 17th and 18th centuries; the second is a more theoretically-informed project on the senses and contemporary arts and sciences. This class stems from the latter project.

You'll learn quickly that I have a very unorthodox approach to history. I like experiments, risks, and creativity. I appreciate hard work. I like being challenged, and change my mind often. I don't sleep much. I'm a Gen-Xer, I obsess, and I have a short attention span. I don't IM or text-message, and I lend out my books all the time (so feel free to ask if there's something you'd like to borrow).

How to Get in Touch With Me

The best way to contact me is **always, always** via email: nappi@montana.edu. Unless I'm traveling, you can expect a reply within 24 hours (though usually much sooner than that). You can try my office phone in an emergency (994-6798) but email will be quicker (always, always). My office hours during the Spring 08 semester are Tuesdays 9-11, but feel free to make another appointment or drop in whenever my door is open.

Who You Are (And Who Should Be Taking This Class)

You might be a history major, a science major, or none of the above. You feel free to ignore whatever prerequisites are officially listed for this course, because they were imposed by The Man and not by me: there are no prereqs necessary. You're willing to challenge your presuppositions and to put some serious time into reading and thinking about the course materials. You care about your education (however you define "education" and whatever setting in which learning takes place for you, classroom or bathroom or living room or the top of a mountain). You will not turn in assignments that are cut-and-pasted from websites or plagiarized from the work of others. You see the virtual classroom setting as a community of like-minded fellow travelers, and you respect your classmates.

What This Course Is

This seminar will serve as an introduction to the history of the life sciences, taking the intersection of art and biology as its major focus. The title is a play on words, making use of the dual sense of "creature": a created object broadly conceived, and a living organism. Aren't we clever? Of course we are.

The emerging field of “Bio-Art” is an exciting and integral space for the convergence of the arts and sciences in the modern world. Artists and biologists, treating living tissue as an artistic medium, have been creating work that challenges the boundaries between objects and beings, life and art, and raises ethical and intellectual issues that touch the very core of the biosciences, technology, and human expression. Topics will range from early modern *wunderkammern* (you’ll know what that means by the end of the course), to Dolly and the transgenic art of Eduardo Kac (we can debate how to pronounce his last name), to the use of bodies in works by Damien Hirst, Joseph Cornell, and artists inspired by them. This course explores the roots of this quintessentially modern concern in a pre-modern context, tracing the foundations of bio-art as a way to better understand current and future developments in the life sciences and the arts. With that in mind, the semester will be divided into two halves, each containing 7 weeks of instruction. The first half of the course will be devoted to providing historical context for the second half, which will explore the same themes in contemporary settings.

By the end of the course, we will collectively:

- Be able to think more critically and deeply about the history of concepts like ‘science,’ ‘art,’ and ‘bodies’
- Find ways to do interdisciplinary work that incorporates innovative materials and ideas into exploring questions that *you* find meaningful and exciting
- Introduce some of the literature and methodologies of the science studies field, especially as it pertains to biology and the “two cultures” of science and art
- Develop your critical writing skills and ability to read work on contemporary life sciences, art, and related topics with a more critical eye
- Be able, quite literally, to *see* texts and other media differently

II GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Grading Overview

The grades for this seminar will be based on participation (**50%**, including posts and responses in web-based discussions, which will be closely structured and monitored by the instructor), an essay-based two-thirds-term (**20%**), and a final essay project (**30%**).

Each week, the instructor will provide a reading guide and short introduction to the themes and goals of the week. Students will then be required to post a think-piece (essentially a short essay on the readings) and respond to another student’s piece. The discussion board will then be opened to general comments and debate, with the instructor posting comments as necessary and appropriate. Students will receive detailed feedback on their weekly think-piece assignments.

How I Will Grade Participation

In this course, 50% of your grade will be based on participation in web-based class discussions. I’ll use the following rubric when assessing your final participation grade:

A-LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- The student consistently posted insightful comments and questions that prompted on-topic discussion
- The student consistently and explicitly engaged the course materials in discussion
- The student consistently helped clarify or synthesize other classmates' ideas
- If disagreeing with another classmate's ideas, the student stated his/her disagreement or objections clearly, yet politely
- Excelled during week as Discussion Leader: posted questions early, guided discussion of week's material as effectively as possible

B-LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- The student was notably lacking in one or two of the items listed for A-level participation
- The student consistently had to be prompted or coaxed to participate
- The participant usually, but not always, expressed her/himself clearly

C-LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- The student was consistently lacking in two or more of the items listed for A-level participation
- The student was extremely reluctant to participate, even when prompted
- The student rarely expressed him/herself clearly

D-LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- The student frequently attempted to draw the discussion off-topic, even if the student's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric
- Was not seriously engaged during assigned week as Discussion Leader

F-LEVEL PARTICIPATION

- The student was rude or abusive to other course participants
- The student consistently failed or refused to participate at all, even when specifically prompted or questioned, even if the student's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric
- Was not seriously engaged during assigned week as Discussion Leader

The Final Project

Make this into something that will help you, something that matters to you, something that lets you explore a topic or medium that you may not have been able to in previous classes. This is the time to take risks: work for *you*, not for me, and base this project *not* on what you think I want to see, but what *you* want to work on. You should decide on a format by the midterm. Some possibilities include:

- A final essay (10-15 pp)
- A creative work in a medium of your choosing (If you hand in a creative final piece make sure it is accompanied by a written explanation of the work, including a bibliography, a statement of the research that went into the project, and any other information useful for your audience and evaluator!)
- If you are preparing to be a teacher, the final project can be a syllabus for a course of your own design, a series of lesson plans, etc. (Make sure it is accompanied by a written explanation of the work, including a bibliography and a statement of the research that went into the project.)
- A blog or website devoted to a particular topic, idea, or theme that stemmed from the course. (Make sure to discuss this with me ahead of time to nail out ideas, guidelines, etc.)
- A Cornell box or boxes
- There are a lot of other possibilities! I'll talk about this in more detail as the semester progresses.

III THE WEB-BASED FORMAT

The Importance of Checking Email

IT IS VITAL that you check your email regularly, as email is the primary medium I will use to contact you about the course. If you don't use your myportal account, make sure to provide me with an alternate email address **as soon as possible**.

The Course Website on WebCT

The course WebCT site is our virtual classroom for the semester. Get to know it!

<http://webct.montana.edu/>

Log in with your WebCT ID. Click on Tab for "HIST43301s08 Creatures..." The "Course Menu" on the lefthand side of the page lists all of the course components, including the discussion board, course readings, and other handouts.

Posting on the Discussion Board

The discussion board is our primary space for talking with each other, posting responses to the week's material, and generally rocking out. To post on the discussion board:

1. Click "Discussions"
2. Click on the topic for the week ("Week 2," etc.)
3. To post a new thread, Click the bar for "Compose Message" and follow the directions.
4. To post a response: Click on the icon next to the posting you'd like to respond to, and hit "Reply" to post your response.

And so on, and so on. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Guidelines for Web-Based Discussion

Please pay close attention to the following guidelines for weekly web discussions.

Weekly Guides:

I will post a guide to the week's material each week by noon on the previous Saturday. Use this as a roadmap through the themes and readings for the week!

Posting to Discussion Board:

Content and Quality: Your posts each week should indicate that you've read and understood the week's material. Make sure to use proper English, paying attention to spelling, capitalization, etc. When citing course materials in your post, give the relevant info (title and page # or URL) in a parenthetical note.

Quantity: You should post at last THREE TIMES each week, with your responses to other students' ideas consisting of more than just "I agree" or "That's a good point": the idea is to engage each other and get a conversation going. The quality of your posts is more important than their quantity: they should contain specific details from the week's material, not just baseless opinions. Your posts should be your own words: if you quote from the textbook or some website, explain what you are doing and use quotation marks. Your activity on the board will be assessed each week: Do not go into the discussion boards at the end of the semester and post a bunch of comments that no one will read. (The Management is clever and catches on to such roguery.)

Weekly Instructor Response: Most weeks (after Week 1), I will write a response to each student's posts and email it to you by Sunday evening. This is meant as a way to gauge your own progress, and will not be posted publicly. I will tailor my suggestions to what each of you need to work on individually, and please take them into account when posting during the following week.

Timing: At least two of your posts should be on DIFFERENT DAYS. Try to submit your first post by WEDNESDAY so that we have time to have a decent online conversation. Avoid the last-minute flurry of posts! No one likes a last-minute flurry.

Discussion Leaders:

Students will take turns leading the online discussions. I have posted a schedule to get us started, but please let me know DURING WEEK 1 if you have a strong preference for a certain week and we can rearrange things. Students lead the discussions by posting provocative questions and keeping the conversation going. Make sure the questions are up at the very start of the week. Discussion leaders may choose to email one another to coordinate their leadership before the week begins. Good discussion questions are typically open-ended and debatable, but are also specific enough to promote a focused discussion. Regardless of who is discussion leader, all students are encouraged start new threads and discussions if they find something that interests them.

Optional Weekly In-Person Meetings

Since most of us are located on campus at MSU, I will host weekly discussions of the course materials. These are entirely optional: you will receive full credit and can get an “A” in the course by participating entirely online. I will only take in-person group meetings into account when assessing your semester grade if it works in your favor: for example, if your final grade is on the border between a B and a B+, I might use regular and energetic participation in in-person group meetings as a reason to bump you up to the B+ range.

There will be two weekly options:

- 1. Wednesdays 1-2 in Wilson 1-128**
- 2. Thursdays 10-11 in Wilson 1-148**

If you can't make one of these times feel free to stop in and chat about the week's material during my office hours!

IV READINGS

The course material will include short essays, images, and files posted to the WebCT site. During some weeks, topical pieces will be paired with more theoretically-oriented essays. In addition, the books required for purchase will include:

1. Steve Baker et. al., eds. *The Eighth Day: The Transgenic Art of Eduardo Kac*
2. Damien Hirst, *I Want to Spend the Rest of My Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now*
3. Italo Calvino, *Under the Jaguar Sun*
4. Caroline Jones, ed., *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*

Right from the beginning, try to get comfortable with the fact that this course works quite differently from some of the other courses you've taken. We are going to try to take full advantage of the medium in which we're working, and thus the websites/images/sounds listed for each week are *just as important* as the printed reading material. The Management does not put special sacred value on the paper-printed word in this virtual classroom. Make sure to get to the items marked with asterisks, and browse through the rest according to your interest, inspiration, and available time. I will occasionally post additional material of interest. Each week, also feel free to point us in the direction of other material that you find interesting or relevant to the topic at hand!

And now, on to the good stuff...

Semester Schedule in Outline
(with The Management reserving the right to adjust as necessary)

Week 1	(Jan. 16-18)	Introduction
Week 2	(Jan. 21-25)	Collecting and Displaying Life
Week 3	(Jan. 28-Feb. 01)	Bodies and Anatomy
Week 4	(Feb. 04-08)	Life as Artifice
Week 5	(Feb. 11-15)	Picturing Life
Week 6	(Feb. 18-22)	Shaping Life
Week 7	(Feb. 25-29)	Eating Life
Week 8	(March 03-07)	Sensing Life
Week 9	(March 17-21)	Sensing Life
Week 10	(March 24-28)	Eating Life
Week 11	(March 31-April 04)	Shaping Life
Week 12	(April 07-11)	Picturing Life
Week 13	(April 14-18)	Life as Artifice
Week 14	(April 21-25)	Bodies and Anatomy
Week 15	(April 28-May 02)	Collecting and Displaying Life

INTRODUCTION

CONSIDER

This is the first week of the seminar, and we'll use this week to get oriented: with the course, with our materials, and with each other. With that in mind, use your first posting to the discussion board to provide some thoughts on the following three questions:

1. What is an "artist"?
2. What is "science," and what makes it different from the arts?
3. Who are you, and what on earth are you doing in this class?

Since this is a short week you don't have to worry about posting three times, but please make sure to post by SATURDAY JANUARY 12 by 5 pm so that we all have time to get acquainted before jumping into more substantive discussion next week! Getting to knowwwwwww yoooouuuu, getting to know all-a-booooouuut yoooouuuu...

READ (sort of)

I'll go easy on you all this week. Make sure to read the syllabus in detail: there is a lot of information to process in here. Use this week to get your ducks in a row: make sure you have the books, can access the WebCT site, and can download files when necessary. Check to make sure you know when it will be your turn as discussion leader. Eat a hearty yet nutritious breakfast. Floss your teeth, for goodness' sake.

COLLECTING AND DISPLAYING LIFE

CONSIDER

Many of the phenomena we'll be looking at this semester have their roots in, or somehow engage with the idea of early modern *Kunst-* and *Wunderkammern*: broad speaking, cabinets of wonder. In some ways, the course itself functions as a cabinet of curiosities. In some ways, our course format (internet) is also a kind of cabinet of wonder. Think about the importance of the objects themselves in a collection, as well as their juxtaposition/arrangement. As of this week, also **make sure** to consult the weekly reading guides for the course, which will have updates, deep thoughts, the names of the pdf files, and other assorted Objectively Helpful Things.

READ

- *Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature* (selection)
- *Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* ('A world of wonders in one closet shut,' 17-47; Searching for paradigms, 48-96; Sites of knowledge, 97-154

AND CHOOSE FROM:

- *A) Martin Kemp, *Seen/Unseen: Art, Science, and Intuition from Leonardo to the Hubble Telescope* ("The Art of Analogy: Leonardo and Palissy," 87-115)
- B) Lawrence Weschler, *Mister Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* (selection; if you choose this, definitely check out the MJT website below.)

SEE and BROWSE

Ulisse Aldrovandi's theater of nature: <http://www.filosofia.unibo.it/aldrovandi/>
Especially see the online archive of the images of the creatures in his museum:
<http://www.filosofia.unibo.it/aldrovandi/pinakesweb/main.asp?language=it>

Athanasius Kircher, *China Illustrata* 1667 <http://shl.stanford.edu/Eyes/china/>

- *The website for the Museum of Jurassic Technology: <http://www.mjt.org/>
(Check out the MJT viewfinder images in the in-person meetings this week!)

For an interpretation of the idea of a *wunderkammer* by a contemporary experimental artist, see Shelley Jackson's *My Body: A Wunderkammer*: <http://www.altx.com/thebody/>

An exhibition at the Getty Museum set up to function as an interactive web-based *wunderkammer*: <http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/devices/choice.html>

The Museum of Online Museums: <http://www.coudal.com/moom/>

BODIES AND ANATOMY

CONSIDER

This week is an introduction to the early history of anatomy and its connection with theater, images, and display. Pay special attention to the way women's bodies are differentiated from those of men (and others) in early modern Europe, as we will see a contemporary re-interpretation of these same issues later in the semester.

How are bodies and body parts conceptualized as art? What was the relationship between the doctor/scientist and the artist in the early modern world? In what ways were body parts an artist's medium?

READ

*Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (The whole book is amazing, but look at "Introduction," 13-38; "Holy Anatomies" 39-76; and "The Empire of Anatomy," 207-260)

*Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* ("The Autoptic Vision" 1-15; "The Body in the Theater of Desire" 39-53; "Excution, Anatomy, and Infamy: Inside the Renaissance Anatomy Theater" 54-84; "The Realm of Anatomia" 183-229)

Andrea Carlino, *Books of the Body* (selection)

*Andreas Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* <http://vesalius.northwestern.edu/>

Read: Introduction by Vivian Nutton

Browse through sections of Book One, paying attention to how images are used

And if you have time:

Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (selection)

SEE and BROWSE

The *Dream Anatomy* exhibit at the National Library of Medicine:

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/dreamanatomy/da_dream.html

LIFE AS ARTIFICE

CONSIDER

Early modern automata in Europe and the Middle East.

READ

*Jessica Riskin, *Genesis Redux* (selection)

*Jessica Riskin, "The Defecating Duck, or, the Ambiguous Origins of Artificial Life," *Critical Inquiry* 29.4 (Summer 2003): 599-633.

*Barbara Maria Stafford, *Devices of Wonder* (selection)

*Edgar Allen Poe, "Maelzel's Chess-Player"

<http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/lit/horror/TheWorksofEdgarAllenPoeVolume4/chap17.html>

If you have time:

Gaby Wood, *Edison's Eve: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* (selection)

For another perspective:

Gunalan Nadarajan, "Islamic Automation: A Reading of Al-Jazari's The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices (1206)," in *MediaArtHistories*

For fun:

George Saunders, "I CAN SPEAK!™," in *In Persuasion Nation* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006): 3-12.

SEE

The Franklin Institute video of Maillardet's automaton: <http://www.fi.edu/learn/automaton/>

PICTURING LIFE

CONSIDER

Images of life and the history of biological illustration. Pay attention to different ways of seeing nature described in the week's materials. Check out the primary source examples as well!

READ

- *Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (selection)
- *Paul Freedman, *The Eye of the Lynx* (selection; please see in conjunction with the link to Cassiano's paper museum, below)
- *Marjorie Lee Hendrix, "JORIS HOEFNAGEL AND THE "FOUR ELEMENTS": A STUDY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NATURE PAINTING" (Very brief selection introducing Hoefnagel's Four Elements. Please read in conjunction with file of Hoefnagel images on WebCT

And if you have time;

Pamela O. Long, "Objects of Art/Objects of Nature: Visual Representation and the Investigation of Nature," in *Merchants and Marvels*, 63-82.

"Hyperrealism: One Step Beyond" <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue6/hyperrealism.htm>

SEE

Cassiano dal Pozzo's Paper Museum: <http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/pozzo/default.htm>

BROWSE

The website of artist Walmor Correa: <http://www.walmorcorrea.com.br/indexi.htm>

SHAPING LIFE

CONSIDER

Sciences of form and the relationship of art and science in “Romantic biology.” Think about Goethe’s importance as a figure in both the arts and sciences.

READ

- *Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Part Two: Scientific Foundations of the Romantic Conception of Life, and Part Three: Goethe, a Genius for Poetry, Morphology, and Women), selection
- *Writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (selection)
- *Martin Kemp, *Seen/Unseen: Art, Science, and Intuition from Leonardo to the Hubble Telescope* (Part III: Discerning Designs: “Natural Geometries,” 165-199; and “Growth and Form,” 200-238)
- *D’arcy Wentworth Thompson, *On Growth and Form* (brief selection)

SEE

On Goethe, see the online materials compiled for a course on Goethe and the sciences:
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/physics/courses/sth209/index.html>

And if you’d like an excuse to try to relate this week’s material to literature and Surrealism:

For another take on form and the arts, see me for works of the *Oulipo* literary group

On the Exquisite Corpse: Elza Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (selection)

EATING LIFE

CONSIDER

Ideas of taste, food as a bridge between early modern arts and sciences. Sensation and memory in the arts and sciences.

READ

- *Brillat Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste* (selection)
- *Carolyn Korsmeyer, *The Taste Culture Reader* (selection)
- *Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (brief selection)
- * Italo Calvino, *Under the Jaguar Sun* (“Under the Jaguar Sun”)

And if you have time check out:

Levi-Strauss, *The Origin of Table Manners* (selection)

SEE

The website for *Gastronomica*: <http://www.gastronomica.org/>

SENSING LIFE

CONSIDER

This week we start focusing on sensation in the art/life science interface, and the importance of sensation to both realms more generally.

READ

**Caroline Jones, ed., *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*

*Italo Calvino, *Under the Jaguar Sun* (selection: "The Name, The Nose"; we finish the book next week)

*Chandler Burr, *The Emperor of Scent* (brief selection) along with perfume reviews by Luca Turin

If you have time:

Chandler Burr, *The Perfect Scent: A Year Inside the Perfume Industry in Paris and New York* (selection)

For fun if you have even more time:

Patrick Süskind, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* (selection; the recent film doesn't do the story justice, and is full of nostril-close-ups and pictures of stinky things)

SEE

The Thierry Mugler perfume coffret inspired by the book and film:

<http://www.perfume.thierrymugler.com/us/>

BROWSE

Perfume blogs of interest:

Now Smell This <http://nowsmellthis.blogharbor.com/>

Bois de Jasmin <http://boisdejasmin.typepad.com/>

Also of interest:

Elisabeth de Feydeau, *A Scented Palace: The Secret History of Marie Antoinette's Perfumer*

Jim Drobnick, ed. *The Smell Culture Reader*

Richard Stamelman, *Perfume*

Luca Turin, *The Secret of Scent*

Visionaire 42: Scent

SENSING LIFE

CONSIDER

Part two of our focus on sensation: Sound and the art of the DJ

The “Two-Thirds-Term” is posted on FRIDAY, MARCH 21 and will be due by next Friday!

READ

*Italo Calvino, *Under the Jaguar Sun* (“A King Listens”)

*DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid, *Rhythm Science*: selection, along with accompanying

Hypnotext by Peter Halley available at

http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/mediawork/titles/rhythm/rhythm_webtake.html

**Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* (selection)

*John Cage, *Silence* (selection)

For fun, if you have time:

Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a DJ Saved my Life: The History of the Disc Jockey* (selection)

WATCH and LISTEN

Scratch (DVD available in my office)

For fun, browse the digital journal *C-Theory*: <http://www.ctheory.net/> This is a site full of resources that will prove interesting and relevant to many weeks of the course. This week, check out a special section of C-Theory on music and digital musicians:

<http://142.104.128.50/wires/music1.html>

All kinds of good stuff available on DJ Spooky’s website: <http://djspooky.com/>

ADD: 33 1/3 selections

EATING LIFE

CONSIDER

Jello, molecular gastronomy, and edible art

READ

**El Bulli 2003-2004* (selection)

*Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (selection) and Jello-art

ADD: Italo Calvino, *Under the Jaguar Sun* (This is one of our course books. For this week, read the story “Under the Jaguar Sun”)

SEE

Visionaire No. 47: Taste (This volume is available in my office and we’ll look at it during the in-person meetings this week)

Decoding Ferran Adria (DVD available in my office)

BROWSE

Browse the websites of some of the artist/chefs at the forefront of the movement known by some as “molecular gastronomy”:

El Bulli: <http://www.elbulli.com/>

wd50: <http://www.wd-50.com/>

The Fat Duck: <http://www.fatduck.co.uk/>

ADD: The website for *Gastronomica*: <http://www.gastronomica.org/>

SHAPING LIFE

CONSIDER

Dolly, glowing bunnies, and transgenic art. The role of “new media” (especially web-based electronic media) in creating a new space for the interbreeding of contemporary art and science. The websites are especially important this week, so please make sure to visit them!!!

READ

*Steve Baker et. al. eds., *The Eighth Day: The Transgenic Art of Eduardo Kac*

*Jane Maienschein, *Whose View of Life?* (selection)

*Eduardo Kac, ed., *Signs of Life: Bio Art and Beyond* (Kac’s “Introduction” and selections from “III Bio Art” and “IV Biology and Art History”)

SEE

**Eduardo Kac’s website:

<http://www.ekac.org/>

**“tech flesh: The Promise and Perils of the Human Genome Project”

http://ctheorymultimedia.cornell.edu/issue2/issue_main.htm

BROWSE

The Visible Human <http://visiblehuman.epfl.ch/index.php>

e-art: new technologies and contemporary art¹

<http://www.fondation-langlois.org/e-art/e/index.php>

SymbioticA: The Art and Science Collaborative Research Laboratory

<http://www.symbiotica.uwa.edu.au/>

“digital dirt” <http://ctheorymultimedia.cornell.edu/issue1/digidirt.htm>

¹ Hint: You know an organization is Objectively Hip when they eschew capital letters in their title or banner material.

PICTURING LIFE

CONSIDER

The life of images

READ

- *Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (brief selection)
- *Jennifer Tucker, *Nature Exposed: Photography as Eyewitness in Victorian Science* (brief selection)
- *Carol Freeman, "Imaging Extinction: Disclosure and Revision in Photographs of the Thylacine (Tasmanian tiger)," *Society & Animals* 15.3 (2007): 241-256. (Make sure also to see The Thylacine Museum, below!)
- *Martin Kemp, *Seen/Unseen: Art, Science, and Intuition from Leonardo to the Hubble Telescope* (Part IV Out of Our Hands: "The Camera," 239-273; "The Faithful Record," 274-300; "Invisible Worlds," 301-322)

Also of interest:

Carol Freeman, "Is This Picture Worth a Thousand Words? An Analysis of Harry Burrell's Photograph of a Thylacine with a Chicken," *Australian Zoologist* 33.1 (2005): 1-16.
Liz Wells, *The Photography Reader* (selection)

BROWSE

- **The Thylacine Museum: <http://www.naturalworlds.org/thylacine/>
There are a number of other books on the Tasmanian tiger ("Thylacine"), but the website above has by far the best collection of sources. Check out the videos of thylacines on the site! They're pretty amazing.

LIFE AS ARTIFICE

CONSIDER

Games and artificial life. In the first version of “Life as Artifice” we looked at mechanical automata. This week we’ll spend some time looking at the contemporary child of the same concept: cellular automata

READ

- *Margaret Boden, *The Philosophy of Artificial Life* (selection)
- *Joline Blais, *At the Edge of Art* (selection)
- * Mitchell Whitelaw, *Metacreation: Art and Artificial Life* (Introduction and selection)

SEE

Background on Conway’s “The Game of Life”:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway%27s_Game_of_Life

BODIES AND ANATOMY

CONSIDER

Bodies as art. Bodies used to problematize the idea of a “creation” and the distinction between creator and created. Remember to compare this with the previous incarnation of this theme earlier in the course! Prepare yourselves...

READ

*Damien Hirst, *I Want to Spend the Rest of My Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now*

*If you don't have a copy of the Damien Hirst volume, see instead Barney, *The Cremaster Cycle* (via his website <http://www.cremaster.net/>)

*William Gibson et. al., *Stelarc: The Monograph* (selection)

*Sian Ede, *Art and Science* (selection)

For a comparative case, see the work of artists Wenda Gu and Huang Yongping, who also use animals and human body parts in their work:

<http://www.wendagu.com/home.html>

<http://visualarts.walkerart.org/oracles/>

SEE

The Cremaster Cycle (via his website <http://www.cremaster.net/>)

Stelarc's webpage: <http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/>

On the Bodies-as-Art phenomenon:

Bodies: The Exhibition <http://www.bodiestheexhibition.com/>

Body Worlds <http://www.bodyworlds.com/en.html>

David Barboza, “China Turns Out Mummified Bodies for Displays” *NYT* August 8, 2006.

COLLECTING AND DISPLAYING LIFE

CONSIDER

This is the final week of the course, and we'll take this as an opportunity to conclude our journey and bring together the themes we've spent the past several months thinking and talking about. With that in mind, use your final posting to the discussion board to provide some thoughts on the following three questions:

1. What is an "artist"?
2. What is "science," and what makes it different from the arts?
3. Who are you, and what on earth did you get out of this class?

READ

- *Deborah Solomon, *Utopia Parkway: The Life and Work of Joseph Cornell* (selection)
- *Charles Simic, *Dime-Store Alchemy: The Art of Joseph Cornell* (selection)
- *Dore Ashton and John Ashbery, *A Joseph Cornell Album* (selection)
- *Lynda Hartigan, *Joseph Cornell: Navigating the Imagination* (selection)

SEE

- *Joseph Cornell: Navigating the Imagination <http://pem.org/cornell/#>
 - *Joseph Cornell's Work (at least some of it) <http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/cornell/>
- For fun: Jonathan Safran Foer, ed., *A Convergence of Birds: Original Fiction and Poetry Inspired by the Works of Joseph Cornell*

MAJOR EVENTS

Final paper due by May 07!!!