At the zenith of the civil rights movement in the USA and de-colonizing movements in Africa and Asia, just prior to the advent of second wave feminism, gay and lesbian liberation, and other social movements linking political liberation to embodied physical differences, something new was born. There arose a new vision of the body as precisely the obverse of how we now consider it—a single, universal human body shared by all, ungendered, unraced, unsexed. This new body-in-common, unmarked even by such core physical differences as biological sex, became legible as radically dissident under a new political ideology that has thus far largely escaped historical attention: Eros. As a potent challenge to a number of repressive orthodoxies, not least capitalism, Eros was also, perhaps not surprisingly, a central theme in a number of art works of the period, from Carolee Schneemann’s performances to Claes Oldenburg’s erotic public sculpture, Yayoi Kusama’s immersive environments, and Kenneth Anger’s films.

This course examines the relationship among art, sex, gender and revolution from the vantage point of Eros’ brief historical moment, a vista now largely obscured by our contemporary fixation on a politics of social distinction and bodily difference. As such, this period constitutes both the theoretical prehistory of the sexual revolution, as well as perhaps the defining episode in our ongoing transubstantiation of flesh into politics.

In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art.

Susan Sontag in Against Interpretation, p 14 (1964)
GRADUATE STUDENT COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will each be asked to present to the class—and critique—several of the assigned readings over the course of the semester, to offer a conference length (20 minute) paper on your research topic, and complete a 15-20 page research paper. The paper topic is largely of your choice. Please select one artist (you may select more than one if you’re doing a comparative analysis) and frame their work according to the logic of Eros as we’ve been developing it in class. Among the artists you may select (and this list is by no means comprehensive) are Acconci, Anger, Broughton, Clark, Hamilton, Horn, Lozano, Kaprow, Klein, Kuchar, Kusama, McCarthy, Oiticica, Ono, Ranier, Rosenquist, Schneemann, Smith, Thek, Twombly, Walthers. You are encouraged to meet with me before settling on a paper topic.

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course will challenge you in both the degree of difficulty and the quantity of reading. As a consequence, I will give you the option of deciding whether you to write a paper or take a final exam. If you choose to write a paper, it need be only 10 pages and no class presentation is required (though you may choose to do one). The other part of your grad will be based on your in-class critiques and participation.

A NOTE ON READING AND CANCELLED CLASSES

This course will start out in a flood of readings and gradually trickle to very light to accommodate your increased individual topic research. The texts can be dense and may require multiple readings to understand, so please allow plenty of time.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following texts are of central import to the course, as they were to the period in question. The King and Marcuse’s Eros and Civilization will be the first used:

1. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*
2. Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*
3. Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*
4. Richard King’s *The Party of Eros* has been republished, and older versions are also available used.
WEEK 1  INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND THE MEANINGS OF EROS
Discuss various artists and see Kenneth Anger, Kustom Kar Kommandos

WEEK 2  PREHISTORY: THE END OF IDEOLOGY DEBATE
Lipset “The End of Ideology?” in The End of Ideology Debate
Bell “The End of Ideology in the West” in The End of Ideology Debate

WEEK 3  EROS AND THE ROOTS OF THE “SEXUAL REVOLUTION”
King, The Party of Eros Introduction and chapters 1, 2 and 4
Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, chapters 1-3

WEEK 4  EROS AND THE EUROPEAN ROOTS OF AMERICAN THEORY
Finish Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, Chapters 4-11

WEEK 5  MARCUSE’S COMPLAINT
One-Dimensional Man, chapters 1-7

WEEK 6  FINISH ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN

WEEK 7  THE BODY POLITIC
Monika Langer, “Merleau Ponty: On the Ontological Limitations of Politics” in Domination
King, Chapter 3
Kaja Silverman, Flesh of My Flesh, selections
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<td>King, Chap 5</td>
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<td>Sontag, “Psychoanalysis and Norman O. Brown’s Life Against Death,” in Against Interpretation</td>
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<td>David Greenham, The Resurrection of the Body chapters 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>Susan Sontag, “Jack Smith’s Flaming Creatures,” in Against Interpretation “The Culture Industry Revisited” and “The Autonomy of Art” in the Adorno Reader</td>
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ADDiTioNAL BiBLioGRAPHY


Friedman, M. L. and Walker Art Center. (1962). New art of Brazil.


Lippard, L. R. “Eros Presumptive,” Hudson Review 20 (Spring 1967)


Reed, Christopher, (1994). “Postmodernism and the Art of Identity”

Rose, B. “Filthy Pictures,” Artforum 3 (May, 1965)


