

HIS 327
THE ARTS AS HISTORY

Satisfies: HFA+, SBS+

Thematic Categories: "Arts, Ideas & Culture";
"Race, Religion, Gender & Sexualities"

T/TH, 2:00-3:20pm

Professor April Masten

“The way we see things is affected by what we know and what we believe.” (John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 1972)

Art is a product of history. It acquires its form, content, and meaning from the immediate conditions of its production and reception. This course will examine art works as historical documents. It will look at the shifting social, economic, political and cultural structures, both institutional and ideological, that supported and gave meaning and value to certain kinds of visual and performance arts, at the processes of art production, and at the changing definitions of “art” and “the artist” in nineteenth-century America. During the semester, students will be introduced to concepts and readings from a variety of disciplines, and to some amazing works of visual art, music, and theater. The classes will be a mixture of lectures and discussions or workshops. We will also visit an art studio on campus. Attendance and class participation are mandatory. Other forms of student assessment will include a weekly quiz, one midterm exam, miscellaneous assignments, one 5-page paper, and one 3-minute spoken presentation illustrated with PowerPoint slides.