

"ICONOCLASTS: POLISH CRITICAL ART AND WAR OF IMAGES"

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What is Iconoclasm? „It seems so dated” – says Michael Taussig, but why so many write about it today? New interest in the life of pictures makes us redefine the old issue of “picture-hate”. Thanks to the new research in anthropology of pictures we know now that images can inspire very different reactions; some claim, that pictures can themselves be subjects and influence or manipulate us; some others point out that we have changed the definition of the “icon”. To sum up - the age-old definitions must be revised. In our course we will investigate this new, “extended field of iconoclasm”.

Basic questions to answer:

- How the iconoclasm was developed in antiquity and early Christianity?
- What has changed during the Reformation time?
- Today’s examples of assaults on images – who hates what?
- What is iconoclasm?
- What is a new “icon” – how to be a modern “iconoclast”
- Can the iconoclasm be reshaped by the influence of the internet?
- Is burning a flag an iconoclasm? Is Wikileaks an iconoclastic engine? How human body may be a tool for iconoclastic act?

We will read texts by Friedrich Nietzsche, Michael Taussig, Bruno Latour, W.J.T. Mitchell, David Freedberg and Jas Elsner and collect modern examples of iconoclastic acts (arts); our goal is to build a modern, extended understanding of the old notion of “iconoclasm”.

Basic Bibliography:

Jas **Elsner**, *What is an Icon. Transfiguration and Transformation. Iconoclasm, the Liturgy and the Discourse of John of Damascus* (London 1987).

David **Freedberg**, “Idolatry and Iconoclasm,” *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: Chicago UP 1989)

Bruno **Latour**, *Few Steps Toward an Anthropology of Iconoclastic Gesture*, “Science in Context” (Spring 1997 no. 1): 63–84.

Bruno **Latour**, “Iconoclasm Or Is There A World Beyond The Image Wars?”, *Iconoclasm, Beyond the Image-Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (edited by Peter Weibel and Bruno Latour), ZKM and MIT Press, 2002: 14-37

W.J.T. **Mitchell**, “Offending Images,” *What Do Pictures Want*, (Chicago: Chicago UP 2005)

W.J.T. **Mitchell**, “The Rhetoric of Iconoclasm. Marxism, Ideology, and Fetishism,” *Iconology. Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: Chicago UP 1986)

Michael **Taussig**, “Iconoclasm Dictionary,” *TDR* (Spring 2012, Vol. 56, No. 1): 10-17.

Curriculum (outline)

1. Introduction: what does it mean: iconoclasm, iconolatry, iconodulia, iconophobia? Basic dictionary for iconoclasm study.
2. Iconoclasm in antiquity and early Christianity and Reformation - David Freedberg “The Power of Images” (fragments)
3. Assaulted images – examples (1): David Freedberg, “The Power of Images”
4. Assaulted images – examples (2): W.J.T. Mitchell, “What Do Pictures Want”
5. Assaulted images – examples (3): spolia (Jas Elsner - "From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics" - fragments)
6. How to define the iconoclasm? fragments from “The Power of Images”, “Iconology”, “What Do Pictures Want”.
7. What is an icon? Classic and contemporary definition. Does the new understanding of an icon open the door for a new iconoclasm? (Jas Elsner, “What is an Icon” - fragments)
8. What would it be – an iconoclastic gesture, how to assault the new icon? Bruno Latour “Few Steps Toward an Anthropology of Iconoclastic Gesture” - fragments
9. Polish “Critical Art” – cases of vandalism. Who is the iconoclast: the artist or the viewer?
10. *Iconoclasm Dictionary* according to Michael Taussig: part 1 (antiquated – sacred - icons – Nietzsche - Sacrifice)
11. *Iconoclasm Dictionary* according to Michael Taussig: part 2 (effigy- body-suicide bombers-wikileaks)
12. *Iconoclasm Dictionary* according to Michael Taussig: part 3 (Language: Foucault-author: Barthes)
13. What is Iconoclasm – Bruno Latour. If there is a war of images, is the iconoclast needed? The inter-image assaults.
- 14-15: Presentation of students’ projects