Concentrating upon the arts of New York, San Francisco and Black Mountain College in a period of accelerated experimentation, this seminar series moves within the interdisciplinary framework of cultural environmentalism and reflects an awareness that the ‘social’ is made not only in historical practices but in the construction of human geographies.

It explores how an imaginary of place might be performed by literary texts and non-verbal forms through examining relations between lived and socially produced space, and charts the play of forces and forms, of power and knowledge generated by the avant-garde during a time of increased aggression on the part of the Market State.

Themes arising will include notions of performance and performativity, the encoding of cultural memory in the artwork, and the social ambivalence towards technology—as agency of democracy, of mechanisation, of repressive bureaucracy—or what Lewis Mumford dramatised as a dialectical tension between ‘Art and Technics.’ Ideas drawn from commentators such as Henry Adams, Michel Foucault, Marshall McLuhan, Michel de Certeau, Judith Butler, Gaston Bachelard and Gilles Deleuze will be brought to bear upon a series of works drawn from the Abstract Expressionist/Beat and Pop/Conceptualist eras: the means of theorising transitions from an immediate postwar emphasis on intuition and the body in creative production to the saturated mediations of the mid-1960s and the origins of what Paul Virilio terms the ‘disappearance of the aesthetic.’

We will discuss how subsequent changes in the definition of subjectivity as the primary determinant of social location and analysis might underwrite moral and political self-confidence, marking out some points of origin, boundary lines and new relationships within the formations of city and biosphere. The six sessions are arranged thematically. Each will
focus on a set of core texts, but will also draw on visual culture, music and performance art as a means of celebrating interdisciplinary and comparative practice.

**Course Structure:** 6 x 1.5 hr seminars running in weeks 2–7 of Michaelmas Term.

**Essays:** Students will be encouraged to invent their own coursework essay topics in association with the seminar themes, drawing upon whatever primary and secondary materials they may choose.

**Reading:** What follows is an indication of the primary materials and issues to be addressed across the six seminars. The starred items signify essential class preparation.

**Weeks 1 & 2: Space & Improvisation**

*Jack Kerouac, ‘October in the Railroad Earth,’ Lonesome Traveller (1960)*
Marshall Berman, All That is Solid Melts into Air (1982)
Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice (1992)
Robert Creeley, ‘A Sense of Measure,’ in A Quick Graph: Collected Notes and Essays (1970)
Ornette Coleman, Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation (1960)
Gilles Deleuze, ‘Postscript on Control Societies,’ in Negotiations (1990)
Michael Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces,’ Diacritics 16 (1986)
David Harvey, Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography (2001)
Ivan Illich, Tools for Conviviality (1973)
Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man (1964)
Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilisation (1934)
Charlie Parker, Bird at St Nick’s (1950)
Frederick Winslow Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management (1911)

**Week 3: Habitat**

*Frank O’Hara, ‘The Day Lady Died,’ in Lunch Poems (1964)*
*Charles Olson, selections from The Maximus Poems (1983)*
*Paul Blackburn, ‘Listening to Sonny Rollins at the Five Spot,’ & ‘How to Get Up Off It,’ in Selected Poems (1989)*
Marc Augé, Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity (1995),
Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space (1964)
Mike Davis, Dead Cities (2002)
Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle (1967)
Richard Buckminster Fuller, Earth Inc.. (1973)
Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961)
Jack Kerouac, *On The Road* (1957)
Henry Miller, *The Air Conditioned Nightmare* (1945)
Gary Snyder, *Earth House Hold* (1969)

**Week 4: Hybridity**

*Michael McClure, *Ghost Tantras* (1964)
Jerome Rothenberg, *Technicians of the Sacred* (1968)

**Week 5: (A)Social uses of Ecstasy**

*Euripides, *The Bacchae*
*Stan Brakhage, dir., *Dog Star Man* (1961-4)
William Burroughs, *Naked Lunch* (1960)
John Coltrane, *Ascension* (1965)
John Coltrane, *Interstellar Space* (1968),
Nick Roeg, *Performance* (1969),
Brown, Norman O., *Closing Time* (1973)
Valerie Wilmer, *As Serious as Your Life: Story of the New Jazz* (1977)

**Week 6: Entropy**


*Paul Virilio, Art as Far as the Eye Can See* (2007)


Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918)


Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991)


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