Reading

5. PDF Readings on D2L: Various poems, image texts, critical articles, and interviews

Course Description

In this course, we will read and discuss exemplary works that integrate poetry with the visual arts in various ways, along with theoretical articles about these modes, and then we will write/create our own such works. The course will be divided into four units: 1) an introduction to the main elements and techniques of poetry writing; 2) ekphrasis—poetry that responds to visual art in order to amplify, expand, and/or interpret its meaning, to inhabit it or to confront it; 3) concrete and visual poetry in which typographic elements are integral to the work’s meaning; 4) works that merge text and image in other ways, such as collage, painted poems, digital poems, multi-arts installations, and book arts. In this last unit, we will create both an individual and a collaborative project.

To provide a framework for our investigations and experimentation, we will focus discussion on 1) the poets’/artists’ contexts for and processes in creating the works; 2) how the visual and textual components mix, compliment, provide a counterpoint to, disrupt, and/or are in conversation with one another; 3) what questions, meanings, effects, and tensions emerge from various combinations; and 4) why these projects matter—what do they contribute to our conceptualizations of literature, visual art, and culture? During each unit, we will write a few responses to the readings, complete in-class writing exercises to generate ideas, draft poems/creative projects outside of class, and bring poems to class to be critiqued by classmates who will offer suggestions for how we might best revise our pieces to achieve the desired effects. We will also take field trips to an art exhibit (unit 2) and to our library’s book arts collection (unit 4).

Course Requirements

1. **Reading Responses:** Spread throughout the semester, you will write seven 300-word analytical/critical responses to prompts I’ve posted in D2L regarding the course readings (±2 per unit).
2. **Individual Creative Works:** You will write an ekphrastic poem (unit 2), create a visual work in response to a classmates’ poem (unit 2), write a concrete/visual poem (unit 3), and create a multi-page project that merges poetry with personal ephemera and/or other visual elements (unit 4).
3. **Peer Critiques:** You will write critiques of your peers’ poems/projects that you will post to D2L. We will also hold workshops that include verbal critiques (units 2-4).
4. **Collaborative Creative Project:** In groups of three, you will create an inter-arts project that merges your original poetic text with visual elements. You might create a collage, painted poem or photo poem, sculpture that incorporates text into its body, series of visual or digital poems, poetry film, artists’ book, or installation (unit 4).
5. **Portfolio of Revisions:** Bearing in mind the critiques you receive from your peers and instructor for each of the individual writing assignments, you will revise your pieces and collect them together with a reflective essay in a final portfolio at the semester’s end.