

Summer Term 2021 – digital
Seminar II 53-563
Friday, 10.15 a.m. - 12.45 p.m.



Constituting Reality in Modernist Art and Poetry

Course Description

Why does Gertrude Stein not write like she speaks and why did Picasso paint prismatic women? Were they both untalented artists? The fact that their artworks and writing do not mimic what we believe is reality would suggest so. But critics beg to differ and we need to raise the questions: What actually is reality? How does our understanding of reality come into being? And finally, what is the **relationship between non-fictional reality and that of realities created in writing and visual artworks?**

In the course of this seminar we will turn to such fundamental philosophical questions and their possible impact on literary theory and the theory of art. We will do so by taking a particularly close look at the constitution of reality in both **modernist poetic writings and visual artworks**. As means of overcoming calls for artistic mimesis and because of its fusing both realist and idealist understandings of reality, we will centrally explore **Pragmatist ideas of reality constitution**. In connection with theoretical explorations of the nature of reality, and especially the investigation of Pragmatist ideas of reality constitution as infinite, creative and participatory process, this class aims for equally participatory discussions on a variety of selected modernist poems by American writers such as, for example, Wallace Stevens or Mina Loy, and modernist artworks by artists like Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Stella and others.