

PROJECT BRIEF	
Class	3 rd Year Graphic Multimedia Design
Intake	1/2025
Mode of Delivery	Full-time (FTH) & Part-time (PTO)
Project Number	1
Project Name	The image and commodity value: A critical debate on the value of NFTs as an art object
Lecturer	Suzanne Erasmus
Contact details	suzanne@designcenter.co.za
Term 1 Dates	17 February until 11 April 2025

TERM OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Introduction and Aims

As an introduction to level III Critical Studies, this theme requests students to critically reflect on the value of mechanical/digital reproduced images, such as NFTs as art objects. This entails the investigation of inherent and destabilised hierarchical Western ideologies within the History of Art, Visual, and Popular Culture specifically in the advent of digital reproduction, and the use of new media technologies within the production of digital art in the form of NFTs. The question of the value of art, past and present, will be explored through the lens of Walter Benjamin's seminal text, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin's argument will be applied to the case study of a selected Non-fungible token to determine its value. Further to Benjamin's argument around the value of digitally reproduced art, a critical Marxist Cultural perspective must be employed to question the hierarchical Western art History ideologies and analyse discourses within Visual Culture today. The cultural/social meaning and value of the image within art have changed due to mechanical/digital reproduction as reflected in the phenomenon of NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens). The above issues will be debated during a class session wherein students will argue for or against the value of digital reproduction, specifically NFTs.

Aims:

- To contextualise the relationship between Art History and Visual Culture Studies as it applies to digital reproduction in the form of NFTs today.
- To introduce students to the discourse of mechanical and digital reproduction.
- To provide students with insight into the image's commodity value, as grounded in Marxist Theory, a predominantly Western concept.

Objectives/Outcomes:

- Faux Art Auction: Students will produce and reproduce an original artwork and auction off their work in class.
- Research Activity: Questionnaire.
- Group Debate (PowerPoint presentation): Students will be grouped for/or against the value of NFTs. The groups will present their findings and debate their arguments in class.

2. Assessment Opportunities / Units

Unit no.	Output/task	Submission Date	Weighting / 100	Resub Opportunity
Unit 1	Faux Art Auction	Tuesday 25 February	10	NO
		Class participation		
Unit 2	Group Debate (class presentation)	Tuesday 25 March (in class)	40 -20% for each student who does not attend on presentation day	YES – end of Term 2
Unit 3	Research Activity	Sunday 13 April by 23h45	50	YES – end of Term 2

3. Weekly Planner

The table below is provided as a guide and is subject to change at short notice.

WEEK 1

Lecture | Introduction to Brief & 01_Art History?

Tutorials | Prescribed reading class discussion:

Harris, J. (2002). Introduction. In *The new art history: A critical introduction*. London, England & New York, NY: Routlegde. https://perlego.com/book/1620719/the-new-art-history-a-critical-introduction-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book

Academic Writing | 01_ACW_Introduction_3GDMM & 02_ACW_Procedures

WEEK 2

Lecture | Submission Unit 1 – Faux Art Auction (class participation) & 02_Marxism

Tutorials | Prescribed reading class discussion:

Storey, J. (2021 9th ed.). 4. Marxisms. In *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction* (pp. 59-83). London, England and New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved: https://perlego.com/book/2194274/cultural-theory-and-popular-culture-an-introduction-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book

Academic Writing | 04 ACW Lecture referencing plagiarism & Mendeley

WEEK 3

Lecture | **03_Benjamin** (Change & potential)

Tutorial | Prescribed Reading Discussion:

Steiner, U. (Author). & Winkler, M. (Translator). (2010). The work of art in its technical reproducibility. In Walter Benjamin: An introduction to his work and thought (pp. 130-141). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

https://perlego.com/book/1852954/walter-benjamin-an-introduction-to-his-work-and-thought-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book

Academic Writing | **05_ACW_writing an academic summary**

WEEK 4

Lecture | 04_Visual Culture vs Art History

Tutorials | Prescribed reading class discussion:

Horkheimer, M. & Adorno, T. W. (2009). The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception. In M. G. Durham & D. M. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and cultural studies: Keyworks* (pp. 71 - 101). Oxford, NY: Wiley Blackwell. https://perlego.com/book/2763877/media-and-cultural-studies-keyworks-

Academic Writing | bad-humour+academic-writing

WEEK 5

Lecture | 05_Vision & Visuality – western and African perspectives

Tutorials | Prescribed reading class discussion:

Droitcour, B. (2022, March 11). The first hundred days: Some thought on the challenges and rewards of publishing art criticism in the NFT space in *Outland*. https://outland.art/the-first-hundred-days/

Academic Writing | 11_ACW_OralPresentationSkills

WEEK 6

Submission Unit 2 – Group Debate (Presentations are to occur during class time!!!)

WEEK 7

Lecture | 06_Visual Analysis & Literacy

Tutorials | Prescribed reading class discussion:

Sturken, M. & Cartwright, L. (2018). Chapter 5: Visual technologies, reproduction, and the copy. In *Practices of looking* (pp. 179-218). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Academic Writing | Visual Methodology Workshop

WEEK 8

Submission Unit 3 – Research Activity Questionnaire

4. Reference List

Prescribed Readings

- Benjamin, W. (2009). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction in M. G. Durham & D. M. Kellner (Eds.),

 *Media and cultural studies: Keyworks (pp. 48 69). Oxford, NY: Wiley Blackwell.

 https://perlego.com/book/2763877/media-and-cultural-studies-keyworks
 pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book
- Droitcour, B. (2022, March 11). The first hundred days: Some thought on the challenges and rewards of publishing art criticism in the NFT space in *Outland*. https://outland.art/the-first-hundred-days/
- Harris, J. (2002). Introduction. In *The new art history: A critical introduction*. London, England & New York, NY:

 Routlegde. https://perlego.com/book/1620719/the-new-art-history-a-critical-introduction-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book
- Steiner, U. (Author). & Winkler, M. (Translator). (2010). The work of art in its technical reproducibility. In *Walter Benjamin: An introduction to his work and thought* (pp. 130-141). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

 https://perlego.com/book/1852954/walter-benjamin-an-introduction-to-his-work-and-thought-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book
- Storey, J. (2021 9th ed.). 4. Marxisms. In *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction* (pp. 59-83). London,

 England and New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved: https://perlego.com/book/2194274/cultural-theory-and-popular-culture-an-introduction-pdf/?utm medium=share&utm source=perlego&utm campaign=share-book
- Sturken, M. & Cartwright, L. (2018). Chapter 5: Visual technologies, reproduction, and the copy. In *Practices of looking* (pp. 179-218). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Additional Readings

- Camara, B. (2008). Preface. In *Marxist theory, Black/African specificities, and racism*. Retrieved from:

 https://books.google.co.za/books?id=W_H0JzpxTboC&printsec=frontcover&dq=marxist+theory+south+africa&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj_m9GQw_TfAhWxQhUIHQQiC5kQ6AEILTAA#v=onepage&q=marxist%20theory%2

 Osouth%20africa&f=false
- Fuchs, C. (2020). Chapter 4: Commodities, capital, capitalism in *Marxism: Karl Marx's Fifteen Key Concepts for cultural* and Communication Studies (pp. 38-76). New York, NY, and London, England: Routledge.
- Horkheimer, M. & Adorno, T. W. (2009). The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception. In M. G. Durham & D.

 M. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and cultural studies: Keyworks* (pp. 71 101). Oxford, NY: Wiley Blackwell.

https://perlego.com/book/2763877/media-and-cultural-studies-keyworks-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book

Isenberg, N. & Walter, B. (2001). The work of Walter Benjamin in the age of information. In *New German critique*, 83, 119-150.

Leslie, E. (2006, July 8). Walter Benjamin and commodity capitalism. Retrieved:

https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/8963/Walter+Benjamin+and+commodity+capitalism

Rush, M. (2005). Introduction. In New media in art. London, England: Thames and Hudson.

Sparke, P. (2009). Introduction. In *The genius of design*. London, England: Quadrille.

Sluis, K., Stallabrass, J. & Paul, C. (2013). The canon after the internet. In Aperture (213), 36-41.

Walker, J. & Chaplin, S. (1997). Visual culture as a field of study and the origins of visual culture studies. In J. Walker & C. Sarah (Eds.), *Visual culture: An introduction* (pp. 31 - 49). Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.

Wasserman, H. & Jacobs, S. (Eds.). (2003). Introduction. In *Shifting selves: Post-apartheid essays on mass media, culture, and identity*. Cape Town, South Africa: Kwela Books.

Weber, S. (2008). Benjamin's-abilities. Cambridge, MA & London, England: Harvard University Press.

Zegeye, A., & Kriger, R. (Eds.). (2001). Introduction. In *Culture in the new South Africa: Social identities South Africa series* (Vol. 2). Cape Town, South Africa: Kwela Books.

UNIT 1 - FAUX ART AUCTION - BRIEF

Unit Task / Question:

- Create one visual artefact in traditional media in which you spent at least 2 hours producing the
 artefact (this excludes the conceptualization and drafts). It is advised that you relate this artefact to your
 current studio project.
- Now spend a maximum of 30 minutes to digitally alter/reproduce the original artefact.
- Then print out the digital artefact and make a black and white photocopy of the original artefact.
- Photocopy the photocopy reproduction. Repeat this three to five times.
- Bring the original artefact, one A5 digital reproduction and one photocopied reproduction to class.
- Estimate the monetary value of each artefact. (Do not place a price tag on your artefacts! This is for your evaluation).
- After Participating in the Faux Art Auction, <u>use the information to complete Question 1 of Unit 3</u>: Research Activity sheet provided.

UNIT 1 – FAUX AUCTION – SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

3 x Artefacts

- Original,
- Digitally Manipulated and
- Photocopied

To be submitted on the Student Portal

For the sake of uploading your artefacts on the portal, please save them as PDF files in one doc or zipped as 3 separate pdf's

UNIT 1 – FAUX AUCTION – LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

All students who participate in the Faux Art Auction during class will automatically get 100% (10/100) for Unit 1.

UNIT 2 – GROUP PRESENTATION & DEBATE – BRIEF

Unit Task / Question:

Students will form opposing groups and present their differing positions on the value of NFTs as an art form.

Group 1:

Now that you have researched the topic, formulate a group research question around the topic to situate your position in favour of the value of NFTs as artworks. Select a case study (a selected NFT) for analysis that can be used to discuss your argument.

Group 2:

Now that you have researched the topic, formulate a group research question around the topic to situate your position as **not** in favour of the value of NFTs. Select a case study (a selected NFT) for analysis that can be used to discuss your argument.

Refer to all the prescribed readings as well as your research/readings around the topic and your position.

UNIT 2 – GROUP PRESENTATION & DEBATE – SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Task:

- 1 x PDF file & 1 x Turnitin Report (the similarity report, not the receipt please interpret your report and refine until it's acceptable)
- Each group will present their positions and continue debating their positions in the form of a debating platform during the scheduled class slot.
- Submit on the portal

Submission Requirements:

- GDC Title page (include all your credentials refer to the template on the student drive)
- +- 1500 words
- Research title
- Argument which clearly states your position for or against NFTs as artwork
- Image Analysis of Case Study (Selected NFT)
- Evidence from prescribed and additional readings
- Images (Screenshots and/or images from your selected visual example must be embedded into the essay with Figure Images and captions)
- Image List (see 5.5 on page 34 of the GDC referencing guide)
- Reference list (see 3.2 on pages 10 & 11 of the GDC referencing guide)



LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA			
Class	3 rd Year Graphic Multimedia Design		
Intake	1 / 2025		
Mode of Delivery	Full-time (FTH) & Part-time (PTO)		
Unit Number	2		
Unit Name	Group Debate		
Submission Date	Tuesday 25 March		
Student Name			

Learning Outcome 1

By the successful completion of this module, the student should:

Demonstrate an understanding of inherent and destabilised hierarchies of art, popular culture (design) and consumer culture specifically in the advent of digital reproduction in the form of NFTs.

Assess	ment Criteria for LO1		
This le	arning outcome is achieved when:	/25	
a.	The discourse (i.e. authenticity) of mechanical and		
	digital reproduction has been identified, defined,		
	and argued from a Visual Cultural perspective.	e.g.	
b.	To relationship between Art History, Visual Culture		
	Studies, was critically argued by referring to the		
	selected NFT.	e.g.	
c.	The commodity value of digital reproduction in the	/	
	form of NFTs has been argued, as grounded in		
	Marxist Theory	e.g.	

By the To ana	ng Outcome 2 successful completion of this module, the student sho lyse how the value of the image contributes to the mea ed NFT as a visual example.		ne image in popular culture through the analysis of a
Assessi	ment Criteria for LO2		
This lea	arning outcome is achieved when:	/25	
a.	The analysis identifies and explores the reproduction of the selected image in sufficient detail and using appropriate terminology	e.g.	
b.	The analysis adequately relates how the value of the image contributes to the meaning of the image.	e.g.	

Learning	g Outcome 3		
By the s	uccessful completion of this module, the student sho	uld:	
Be able	to identify, select and employ relevant and credible lite	erary sou	irces to support an argument
Assessm	nent Criteria for LO 3		
This lead	rning outcome is achieved when:	/20	
a.	A wide range of relevant and credible sources have been used to answer the essay question, including material from books, print and online journals or as prescribed by the brief	10	
b.	Sources have been interpreted accurately and fairly; applicable content has been sufficiently summarised and paraphrased to strengthen the argument, clarify a point, support a claim or produce a finding	10	

J™ 1€a	ir Grapnic Multimedia Design – Chilicai Studies			Page o or 15
Learning	g Outcome 4			
	successful completion of this module, the student sho	uld:		
	to communicate information clearly in an academic es		produce a sound and persuasive arg	ument
	nent Criteria for LO 4	Ι΄ ΄		
	rning outcome is achieved when:	/15		
a.	The argument is convincing due to claims made in			
	the essay that are supported by sufficient and			
	appropriate evidence	5		
b.	The essay is well structured, has a suitable	1 /		
	introduction and conclusion, and uses paragraphs			
	appropriately to make points	5		
C.	Ideas are communicated clearly and precisely due	/		
	to being written in an academic style, with			
	appropriate use of language, vocabulary, and			
	expression; spelling, grammar, and punctuation	/ 5		
	are correct	/		
		/		
1	1	V	ı	
Learning	g Outcome 5			
	successful completion of this module, the student sho	uld:		
	to consistently apply correct and complete referencing		ls and techniques	
	nent Criteria for LO 5			
This lea	rning outcome is achieved when:	/15		
a.	Indirect and/or direct quotes are present in the			
	submission.	5		
b.	Sources are referenced correctly in-text and in the			
	reference list	5		
C.	All readings in the Reference List are cited in-text			
	and vice versa.	5		
d.	Images are correctly referenced in-text and in the			
	image list	5		
e.	All images in the Image List are cited in-text and			
	vice versa	5		
		V I		
				Final Mark
				expressed as a
				percentage:
Fee	dback:			

UNIT 3 - Research Activity - BRIEF

<u>Unit Task / Question:</u>

The lecturer has compiled an MS Word document with questions and tasks around Unit 3 for each student to complete.



RESEARCH ACTIVITY QUESTIONAIRRE		
Class	3rd Year Graphic & Multimedia Design	
Intake	1/2025	
Mode of Delivery	Full-time (FTH) & Part-time (PTO)	
Unit Number	3	
Unit Name	Research Activity	
Submission Date	Sunday 13 April by 23h45	
Student Name		

QUESTION 1

Artefact	Estimated price	Sold price
Original Artwork		
Photocopied artwork		
Digitally altered artwork		

crease or lower the valu	ue of the original arty	work?	
e or lower the value of	the original artwork?)	
,		duction' in <i>Practices of Looking</i> ((Sturken
as it would appear in t	he Image List at the ϵ	end of an essay.	
1	e or lower the value of to 'Walter Benjamin ar) HINT- compare three	e or lower the value of the original artwork? to 'Walter Benjamin and Mechanical Repro) HINT- compare three aspects of the aura	e or lower the value of the original artwork? to 'Walter Benjamin and Mechanical Reproduction' in <i>Practices of Looking</i> () HINT- compare three aspects of the aura as it would appear in the Image List at the end of an essay.

2.2. Reference a selected NFT (non-fungible token) as it would appear in the body of the essay (in-text), the caption, and in the 'Image List'

	and in the image list	
		Image List:
		Figure 2:
	Insert Image here	
Figu	ure 2: Descriptive Caption. (Source: ?)	

2.3. Once referenced reflect on the 'value' of the NFT in relation to Visual Culture. Substantiate your discussion by referencing the prescribed reading: Visualization and Technology in *Practices of Looking* (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018, pp. 180-188)

	2010, ββ. 100 100/
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•	
•	
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•	

		OPTION B American Gothic by Grant Wood	
Digital Reproduction no. 1		Digital Reproduction no. 1	
Digital Reproduction no. 2		Digital Reproduction no. 2	
·	d argument	lyse and compare both the Original and digital repr by referencing 'The Politics of Reproducibility' in <i>Pr</i>	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		ger's "copyright" debate – OR – Ke\$ha's "breach of nip and copyright' in <i>Practices of Looking</i> (Sturken &	
photographs and digital photos found on o	online socia actices of L	lates to different forms of photography (i.e. printed I media platforms. Substantiate your discussion by poking (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018, pp. 205-'212). It is academic text, not a dictionary.	referenci
•	a Wish Imo	ige	
Complete the following: (4 points) 5.1. According (reference here)	is	ige	
to explains the no ruin as	is tion of ue of new t	echnologies & mass consumption? Use a selected N	NFT (non-
Complete the following: (4 points) 5.1. According (reference here) 5.2. (reference here) explains the no ruin as QUESTION 6 6.1. What is Benjamin's perspective on the val fungible token) as an example to illustrate	is tion of ue of new to your point e value of n	echnologies & mass consumption? Use a selected N . ew technologies & mass consumption? Substantiat	
Complete the following: (4 points) 5.1. According (reference here) 5.2. (reference here) explains the no ruin as QUESTION 6 6.1. What is Benjamin's perspective on the val fungible token) as an example to illustrate 6.2. What is your opinion, as a designer, on the	is tion of ue of new to your point e value of n	echnologies & mass consumption? Use a selected N . ew technologies & mass consumption? Substantiat	
Complete the following: (4 points) 5.1. According (reference here) 5.2. (reference here) explains the no ruin as QUESTION 6 6.1. What is Benjamin's perspective on the val fungible token) as an example to illustrate 6.2. What is your opinion, as a designer, on the	is tion of ue of new to your point e value of new to reading as	echnologies & mass consumption? Use a selected N . ew technologies & mass consumption? Substantiat	

UNIT 3 - Research Activity - SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

You are required to submit:

- 1 x MS Word document submitted on the Student Portal.
- 1 x Turnitin Report (the similarity report, not the receipt please interpret your report and refine until it's acceptable).



LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA			
Class:	3 rd Year Graphic Multimedia Design		
Intake	1/2025		
Mode of Delivery	Full-time (FTH) & Part-time (PTO)		
Unit Number	Unit 3		
Unit Number and name	Research Activity		
Submission Date Sunday 13 April by 23h45			
Student Name			

Learning Outcome 1.1 By the successful completion of this module, the student should: The Student understands the relationship between Art History and Visual Culture Studies			
This lear	rning outcome is achieved when:	/10	
d.	A visual analysis of the selected original artwork versus its digital reproductions has been interpreted according to an aspect of Walter Benjamin's concept of the 'Aura' (Question 3)	5	
e.	The selected original artwork versus its digital reproductions has been compared according to an aspect of Walter Benjamin's concept of the 'Aura' (Question 3)	5	

By the	ng Outcome 1.2 successful completion of this module, the student should: udent should be able to engage in the discourse of mechani	
	arning outcome is achieved when:	/25
C.	The student can identify the implications of mechanical and digital reproduction (Question 1)	5
d.	The student can successfully identify the potential and implications of technology (Question 6)	5
e.	The student is able to reflect on the 'value' of the NFT in relation to Visual Culture	5
f.	The student is able to define the concept of a 'Wish Image' (Question 5)	5
g.	The student is able to explain the notion of 'ruin' (Question 5)	5

Learning Outcome 2 By the successful completion of this module, the student should: The student should be able to show insight into the commodity value of visuals, as grounded in Marxism			
This lear	rning outcome is achieved when:		
		/15	
C.	The student can assess the validity of an artwork.		
	(Question 2)		
	(Question 2)	5	
d.	The student understands the concept of		
	ownership and copyright		
	(Question 4)	5	
_	,		
e.	The student understands the concept of		
	'capital'	/ 5	
	(Question 4)		
Loorning	Loorning Outcome 2		

Learning Outcome 3			
By the successful completion of this module, the student should:			
Be able to identify, select and employ relevant and credible literary sources to support an argument			
Assessm	nent Criteria for LO 3		
This lea	rning outcome is achieved when:		
		/20	
f.	A wide range of relevant and credible sources have been used to answer the essay question, including material from books, print, and online journals, or as prescribed by the brief	10	
დ.	Sources have been interpreted accurately and fairly; applicable content has been sufficiently summarised and paraphrased to strengthen the argument, clarify a point, support a claim, or produce a finding	10	

Learning Outcome 4				
By the successful completion of this module, the student should:				
Be able to communicate information clearly in an academic essay and produce a sound and persuasive argument				
Assess	Assessment Criteria for LO 4			
This lea	arning outcome is achieved when:			
		/15		
d.	The argument is convincing due to claims made in the essay that are supported by sufficient and appropriate evidence	5		
e.	The essay is well structured, has a suitable introduction and conclusion, and uses paragraphs appropriately to make points	5		
f.	Ideas are communicated clearly and precisely due to being written in an academic style, with appropriate use of language, vocabulary, and expression; spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct	5		

Learning	Learning Outcome 5				
By the s	By the successful completion of this module, the student should:				
Be able	Be able to consistently apply correct and complete referencing methods and techniques				
Assessn	Assessment Criteria for LO 5				
This lea	This learning outcome is achieved when:				
	/15				
f.	Indirect and/or direct quotes are present in the				
	submission.	3			

g.	Sources are referenced correctly in-text and in the reference list	3	
h.	All readings in the Reference List are cited in-text and vice versa.	3	
i.	Images are correctly referenced in-text and in the image list	3	
j.	All images in the Image List are cited in-text and vice versa	3	
	Final Mark expressed as a perce		