

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	<i>The image and commodity value: A critical debate on the value of NFTs as an art object</i>
Lecturer	Suzanne Erasmus
Contact details	suzanne@designcenter.co.za
Term 1 Dates	17 February until 11 April 2025

FERM 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.

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

2. Assessment Opportunities / Units

3. Weekly Planner

3. Weekly Planner The table below is provid	ded as a guide and is subject to change at short notice.
	WEEK 1
ecture Introduction to B	rief & 01_Art History?
utorials Prescribed readi	ing class discussion:
Harris, J. (?	2002). Introduction. In <i>The new art history: A critical introduction</i> . 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
	W_Introduction_3GDMM & 02_ACW_Procedures
	WEEK 2
ecture Submission Unit 1	L – Faux Art Auction (class participation) & 02_Marxism
Tutorials Prescribed readi	
Storey, J. (2	021 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
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ecture 03_Benjamin (Cha	
utorial Prescribed Readi	
	(Author). & Winkler, M. (Translator). (2010). The work of art in its technical reproducibility. In <i>Walter Benjamin: An</i>
	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
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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.),

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- 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. <u>https://perlego.com/book/1852954/walter-benjamin-an-introduction-to-his-work-and-thought-</u> 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: <u>https://perlego.com/book/2194274/cultural-theory-and-popular-culture-an-introduction-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book</u>
- 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
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- Leslie, E. (2006, July 8). Walter Benjamin and commodity capitalism. Retrieved:

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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	me 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.

Assessn	Assessment Criteria for LO1		
This lea	rning 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.	

Learning Outcome 2

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

To analyse how the value of the image contributes to the meaning of the image in popular culture through the analysis of a selected NFT as a visual example.

Assessment Criteria for LO2			
This lea	arning outcome is achieved when:	/25	
а.	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 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			
Assessn	nent Criteria for LO 3		
This lea	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	

Asses	<mark>le to communicate information clearly in an academic es</mark> sment Criteria for LO 4		produce a sound and persuasive argument
	earning outcome is achieved when:	/15	
а.	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 introduction and conclusion, and uses paragraphs appropriately to make points	5	
С.	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	

Learnin	Learning Outcome 5				
By the s	By the successful completion of this module, the student should:				
Be able	to consistently apply correct and complete referencing	<mark>g metho</mark> o	ls and techniques		
Assessn	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			
с.	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			

Final Mark expressed as a percentage:

Feedback:

JNIT 3 – Research Activity – BRIEF

Unit Task / Question:

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		

1.1. Did mechanical reproduction increase or lower the value of the original artwork?

1.2. Did digital reproduction increase or lower the value of the original artwork?

1.3. Explain your findings in relation to 'Walter Benjamin and Mechanical Reproduction' in *Practices of Looking* (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018, pp. 191-195) HINT- compare three aspects of the aura

QUESTION 2

2.1. Reference your original artwork 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'

			Image List:
			Figure 2:
	Insert Image here		
Figure 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)

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QUESTION 3 - choose option A or B (mark your options with an X):

OPTION A The Son of Man by René Magritte	OPTION B American Gothic by Grant Wood	
Digital Reproduction no. 1	Digital Reproduction no. 1	
Digital Reproduction no. 2	Digital Reproduction no. 2	

3. Choose between Option A or B above and visually analyse and compare both the Original and digital reproductions (1 &2). Provide a critical and substantiated argument by referencing 'The Politics of Reproducibility' in *Practices of Looking* (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018, pp. 195-198)

QUESTION 4

- 4.1. Briefly reflect on the controversy around Barbara Kruger's "copyright" debate OR Ke\$ha's "breach of contract". Substantiate your discussion by referencing 'Ownership and copyright' in *Practices of Looking* (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018, pp. 198-205)
- 4.2. Discuss the concept of "creative geographies" as it relates to different forms of photography (i.e. printed photographs and digital photos found on online social media platforms. Substantiate your discussion by referencing 'Reproduction and the Digital' image in *Practices of Looking* (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018, pp. 205-'212). Provide two definitions of 'capital', as articulated by the prescribed academic text, not a dictionary.

QUESTION 5

Compl	ete the followi	ing: (4 po	ints)			
5.1.	According	(referer	nce here)	a Wish Imc	ige	
	to			is	-	
гa	(noference by) 	ation of		
5.2.	(reference he	<u>ere</u>)	explains the no <i>ruin</i> as	Stion of		

QUESTION 6

- 6.1. What is Benjamin's perspective on the value of new technologies & mass consumption? Use a selected NFT (nonfungible token) as an example to illustrate your point.
- 6.2. What is your opinion, *as a designer*, on the value of new technologies & mass consumption? Substantiate your answer with a reference from a prescribed reading as listed in the brief.

6.3 Reference your visual example (NFT) used above IMAGE LIST

REFERENCE LIST

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

ELANNING COTCON	
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 lea	arning 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		

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

Lear	ning Outcome 2					
By th	By the successful completion of this module, the student should:					
The	The student should be able to show insight into the commodity value of visuals, as grounded in Marxism					
This	learning outcome is achieved when:					
	-					
		/15				
с.	The student can assess the validity of an artwork.					
	(Question 2)					
		5				
d.	The student understands the concept of					
	ownership and copyright					
	(Question 4)					
e.	The student understands the concept of					
	'capital'	5				
	(Question 4)	\bigvee				

Learni	Learning Outcome 3					
By the	By the successful completion of this module, the student should:					
Be abl	e to identify, select and employ relevant and credible literar	y source	es to support an argument			
Assess	sment Criteria for LO 3					
This le	arning 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				
g.	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				

By the	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				
	sment Criteria for LO 4				
l his le	earning 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 Outcome 5 By the successful completion of this module, the student should: Be able to consistently apply correct and complete referencing methods and techniques				
	nent Criteria for LO 5 rning 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 perc	entage	