ALBA Study Abroad Barcelona

Hands-on Barcelona: Understanding Art History Through Art (2019)(ART299)

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Type of course: Art History, Art Theory

Number of credits: 5

Total hours: 50 hours

Language: English

Terms: Summer, fall, winter, spring

Course Description

A hands-on course with an on-site approach that employs art as a tool for developing an historical understanding of modern Spanish and Catalan masters, including five of Spain’s most prominent artists and their work, representing Impressionism, Costumbrismo, Cubism, Surrealism, and New Realism. Through analysis, interpretation, art and architecture, on-site sketching, lectures, and discussion, students will challenge their visual skills with drawing, painting, collage, and journaling using the city of Barcelona as a backdrop. The course provides a strong foundation for future courses in art history, art theory, and the making of art in general.

We will question and re-think what we truly understand as art, beginning with the first known examples of artistic expression that exist today, we will contemplate how humans throughout history have used art to express how we see and relate to our surroundings and how all art has an inherent meaning and reality.

We will examine how art has been made using two realities: an External Reality, which can be defined as a direct reflection of how the world is viewed, and an Internal Reality: emotions, fears, and a desire to change the things we cannot control. We will study examples where art is “elevated” from that which can be defined as only purely aesthetic and will learn how art enters in crisis in the modern era when representation and aesthetics are challenged, marking the beginning of conceptual art and the avant-garde movements with Fauvism, Cubism, Dadaism and Surrealism.

Technical aspects of the artists and periods include understanding techniques and components of art: why they are important and how to recognize those components using color theory, value, perspective, composition and design. Perspective and approach: historical and personal. Where to start when making art: sketching vs. drawing vs. painting, breaking down barriers of self-doubt and understanding the approaches of the masters. Historical reflection on the lives and work of Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró.

- Joaquín Sorolla (1863 - 1923) Impressionist Spanish Painting
- Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973) Cubist Spanish Painting
- Joan Miró (1893 - 1983) Surrealist Spanish Painting
- Salvador Dalí (1904 - 1989) Surrealist Spanish Painting
- Antonio Lopez (1936 - present) New Realism Spanish Painting

Finally, we will deal with the subject of how to make a career out of art...
Course Objective
Through creating their personal artwork, logbook or sketch journal, students will follow in the footsteps of Spanish modern masters to understand and experience art and its historical significance.

Instructional Methods
- Classroom discussion and lecture
- Field studies on location in Barcelona
- On-site discussion
- On-location sketching, drawing and painting
- Readings, handouts and other relevant materials based on student profile

Learning Outcomes
After completing this course, students should have developed both historical and personal perspective. Students should be able to:

1. Know that since the beginning of time humans have engaged in artistic expression
2. Use the tools gained in class as a method of observation and interpretation of the world and our surroundings
3. Understand that despite the aesthetic value of art, it serves a purpose, it has a function in addition to being a catalyst for effecting change
4. Learn from the creative process itself and be less concerned of the end result
5. Understand and accurately describe the art history of Catalonia and Spain with regard to the various movements studied.
6. Identify Spain’s most accomplished masters of art, as well as many of its actively working contemporary artists.
7. Understand the techniques used by the masters.
8. Describe the major artistic movements of premodern art as it relates to Catalonia and Spain and greater Europe.
9. Understand the historical importance of 20th Century Spanish and Catalonian art, and describe how art has defined and transformed the city of Barcelona as we know it today.
10. Draw from real life subjects with greater confidence and ability.
11. Understand art and the importance of the major components of color theory, value, composition and design
12. Communicate a point of view by means of drawing and painting through individual expression, technique, and composition

Assessment Criteria
1. Sketchbook drawing/painting and on-location journaling. Each week you will be given a homework assignment made up of your individual experiences while visiting our various on-location sites. Through sketching, painting, collage, journaling, and note-taking, your sketchbook will become an art log and will describe and define your own personal art experience while in studying in Spain. Although personal artistic ability is assessed, grading will be determined largely on participation and content and not necessarily artistic capability. Percentage of grade: 20%
2. Research paper and oral presentation - research and report on a work of local Spanish art (painting, sculpture, ceramic, weaving, etc.) that we viewed through one of our visits to a local museum. Subject must be submitted to instructor for approval and report must cite 2 academic sources. Percentage of grade: 20%
3. Weekly assignments: Each week you’ll be given assignments while on location. Assignments and instructions will be given at the site. Percentage of grade: 10%
4. Exam. Percentage of grade: 30%
5. Class participation. Percentage of grade: 20%
   Unexcused absences: maximum of 1 unexcused absence is allowed. More than 1 unexcused
   absence will result in a lowering of course grade by 10% for each absence. An excused
   absence is one that is certified by a health care professional.

Materials
Course materials will be provided and include: readings, videos to be watched outside of class,
sketchbook and other supplies including, but not limited to watercolor sketchbook - 8 x 10 or equivalent
size, travel watercolor paint set, black permanent ink pen - fine tip, drawing Pencils - HB, 2B, 4B, gummy
eraser.

Classroom Protocol
Attendance is compulsory for all courses. Unexcused absences can decrease your final grade according
to the ALBA Academic Policies. Participation is encouraged and will be graded in every course.
Punctuality is required. Late arrivals are expected to join the class causing minimal disruption and
should discuss their reason for lateness with the professor at the end of the session. Late arrivals will
be recorded on the attendance list. Continuous late arrivals might count as an absence.
Students must observe the ALBA Code of Conduct and respect the professor’s instructions.

Use of cell phones or other electronic devices is not permitted during class or
during tours except in an emergency. Opportunity will be provided for photos at specific times
throughout each class session.

Course Schedule
12 separate 2.5 to 3-hour sessions over six weeks, two days per week, for six weeks.
Except for the first class, most will meet on-location at prearranged meeting points (i.e., museums)
throughout the city of Barcelona. Students will be given instructions at the end of the preceding class
as to where and when to meet for each session. Email or WhatsApp group will be the best way to
communicate in case of any changes. Readings should be completed before the first class session and
will be provided before the course begins. This schedule and order of sessions is subject to change.
Attendance and participation are crucial and mandatory. Students must be on time and alert.

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Students will be informed with good time in advance
about make-up sessions if needed.

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<th>Week/Session</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Due Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Week 1 - sessions 1 and 2:</td>
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<td>Class meets at ALBA for general course introduction. What is art and how are we to understand art?</td>
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<td>Interpretation and Expression. Interpreting reality and identifying both external and internal reality.</td>
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<td>Art for survival. Sketching as a method to understand Costumbrismo. Introduction to Costumbrismo:</td>
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<td>a uniquely Spanish movement in art using the MNAC (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya) and its</td>
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<td>collection of Spanish and Catalán impressionist and Costumbrista artists, including Sorolla. Outdoor</td>
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<td>sketching: find your reality and make visible what is invisible.</td>
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<td>First sketching experience and assignment will be given for following session.</td>
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| Week 2 | Week 2 - sessions 3 and 4:  
Class meets at ALBA for introduction to 20th century art in the modern era which marks the beginning of conceptual art and the avant-garde movements, including Fauvism, Cubism, Dadaism, Futurism, Constructivism and German Expressionism. Class meets at Picasso Museum. Review and discussion of his life and work specifically during his formative years in Barcelona from the perspective of the academician: the demythification of the genius and how academic study, art as a vocation and the act of repetition establishes a sound foundation. Students will engage and develop drawings of the same scene of their choice using different drawing methods and discovering different results. |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 3 | Week 3 - sessions 5 and 6:  
Class meets at the Museu de les Cultures del Món to see where one of the major influences of Cubism began. Assignment: students will continue to engage and develop drawings of the same scene of their choice using different drawing methods and discovering different results. |
| Week 4 | Week 4 - sessions 7 and 8:  
Class meets at the MNAC and the Fundació Miró for an introduction to Surrealism and an understanding of how it was inspired by the Romanesque past. Review, discussion and comparison of Miró’s and Dalí’s life and work: how both artists sought poetry and meaning in their art by using color and symbols. Assignment: students will incorporate color and develop paintings of the theme or scene of their choice by introducing color. Alternative paintings will be explored, substituting colors of different hues and using optional methods of applying color, including collage. |
| Week 5 | Week 5 - sessions 9 and 10:  
Class meets at the gothic church of Santa Maria del Mar and the Sagrada Familia to understand Surrealism through symbolism. Light, color, symbols and meaning in architecture. Medieval art and architecture, Antoni Gaudí. |
| Week 6 | Week 6 - sessions 11 and 12  
Class meets at MACBA  
New Realism, modern day painters, El Pez (painter, muralist, street artist)  
Sixear - Sergio Hidalgo Paredes (painter, sculptor, street artist)  
Antonio Lopez (Painter, sculptor) Madrid  
Session 12 - Meet at ALBA for FINAL EXAM and Course wrap-up |