English 591: Contemporary Issues in the Arts
Professor Wendy Steiner
FBH 116: T. 10:30-11:30

**Texts** (on order at the Penn Book Center, 34th & Sansom)
Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*
J. M. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*
Kazuo Ishigoru, *Never Let Me Go*
Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*
Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*
Pablo Picasso, *Suite Vollard*
Colin Rhodes, *Outsider Art: Spontaneous Alternatives*
Kathleen Rooney, *Live Nude Girl: My Life as an Object*
Michael J. Sandel, *The Case Against Perfection*
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
Wendy Steiner, *The Scandal of Pleasure*

**Online Essays and Images**
Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra and Simulations”:
http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jean-baudrillard/articles/simulacra-and-simulations/
Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”:
http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm
Oron Catts, *victimless leather* (text and images)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Birthmark”:
http://www.online-literature.com/poe/125/
Roman Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics”:
http://www.thu.ee/files/arts/6007/t=123615b0c9ec23cc96df501c2bcd69801.pdf
Henry James, “The Real Thing”:
http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnline/2098/
Archibald MacLeish, “Ars Poetica”:
http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu/archive/courses/liu/english25/materials/macleish.html
Robert Mapplethorpe: http://www.mapplethorpe.org/portfolios/
Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”:
Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, Book X: 220-559: “Pygmalion” and surrounding myths:
http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Metamorph10.htm#Toc64105570
re: Ezra Pound, “Imagism”:
http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5658
President’s Council on Bioethics:
http://bioethics.georgetown.edu/pcbe/transcripts/jan02/jan17session2.html
Syllabus

January 12  Introduction: Functions of the Interart Comparison
           19  Modernism: Jakobson, Pound, MacLeish, James, Benjamin
           26  Creation/Procreation/Mirroring: Shelley, Catts

February 2  Perfection: Hawthorne, President’s Council/Bioethics, Sandel
           9  Creating Woman: Ovid, Shaw
           16  The Model: Picasso, Mulvey, Rooney
           23  Aesthetics v. Ethics: Nabokov

March 1  Aesthetics = Ethics: Coetzee
           8  SPRING BREAK
           15  Outsider Art (artist as monster): Rhodes
           22  Culture Wars: Mapplethorpe, Steiner
           29  Virtuality: Baudrillard, Jenkins

April 5  Audience and Interactivity: Bourriaud
           12  The Creature’s Voice: Ishiguru
           19  Presentations

This course examines intersections between aesthetics and ethics in 20th-21st verbal and visual art. It is aimed at a wide range of students, from those interested in interart relations and aesthetic theory to those specializing in contemporary culture, whether literary or visual. Among the notions under investigation will be virtuality, iconicity, gender, bio art, modeling, beauty, pornography, and interactivity.

Assignments
A term paper presented orally on April 19th and submitted in written form by April 26th.