Trans Aesthetics, Trans Politics

In this course we will explore the relationship between trans aesthetics and trans politics. We’ll look at foundational texts that are the cornerstones for aesthetic philosophy and theory -- Schiller, Kant, Adorno and others -- and think about what trans might do to the aesthetic as a theoretical category. We’ll look at film and visual art by contemporary trans artists -- ranging from Cassils, Kiyan Williams, Tourmaline to Wu Tsang and boychild -- to think about how trans aesthetics redefines and pushes the boundaries of both trans theory and aesthetic practice. Finally, we’ll read archival work by Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson and other trans activists to think through how trans activists have complicated the relationship between aesthetics and politics, from a position of extimacy with and exile from Left orthodoxy.