

COURSE CONTENT

Course Code	DD3023 (DD8004)
Course Title	The Fantastic In Western Visual Arts
Pre-requisites	NIL
No of AUs	3
Contact Hours	39

Course Aims

This course introduces you to a history of “fantasy” in Western art. The nature, concepts and practice of fantastic art is explored through a series of artistic-historical periods, movements and individuals. A diversity of notions of “fantasy” is addressed within different socio-political and historical contexts in which they were produced. This historical survey serves as a grounding for the understanding of the fantastic genre in today’s artistic and media culture, which will be of use for further studies in Western Art History, as well as illustrators and animators who wish to specialize in the genre of the ‘fantastic’.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the historical, cultural and esthetical function and development of the fantastic in Western Art History from the historical to the contemporary.
2. Decode and interpret the symbolic repertoire – literary, mythical, religious, and iconographic – used by fantastic art.
3. Apply the conceptual framework of the notion of fantasy to analyze and to discuss it as an essential factor within the creative-artistic process.
4. Organise and present research and the development of new ideas through analysis between different case studies from fantastic art.
5. Articulate constructive discussions with peers where issues related to fantastic art are debated in a logical, well informed, and creative manner.

Course Content

The course traces the milestones of the fantastic in Western art. Beginning with an insight into the development of fantastic subject matters in the Northern Renaissance, you will be exposed to the different contexts in which artists were driven to depict fantasy: the marvelous, the irrational and the horrific. After a historical survey covering from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries the course concentrates on the most significant twentieth-century movements concerned with the fantasy: Dada, Surrealism, Fantastic and Magic Realism. Finally, the course explores the evolution of the fantastic in contemporary art and new media. Theoretical references such as Freudian theory of dream interpretation, Svetan Todorov’s theory of fantastic narrative and Jean Baudrillard’s notion of *simulacrum* will serve as conceptual tools for visual analysis in this course.

Coursework Assignments:

Oral presentations (40%): You will engage three times in class presentations: as speaker in a seminar, as speaker in a curatorial project, and as respondent. Class presentations adopt two formats: seminars and curatorial projects. The seminar is a visual analysis on the work of an artist taken as a case study for the debate on particular issues, concepts or problems. The curatorial project is a proposal for an exhibition on a specific topic regarding the fantastic in visual arts.

Written Assignment (40%): The final assignment takes the form of an individual essay following the research methodologies and critical tools developed during the course.