

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design

Rebekah Modrak, associate professor of art and design, with tenure, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, is recommended for promotion to professor of art and design, with tenure, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design.

Academic Degrees:

B.F.A. 1992 Alfred University, School of Art and Design, New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred, NY
M.F.A. 1996 Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Professional Record:

2008 – present Associate Professor of Art and Design, with tenure, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan
2005 – 2008 Associate Professor of Art and Design, without tenure, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan
2003 – 2005 Roman J. Witt Visiting Associate Professor, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan
2002 – 2003 Associate Professor, with tenure, Department of Art, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
1997 – 2002 Assistant Professor, Department of Art, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Modrak is a dedicated and effective teacher who combines scholarly research and investigation, studio practice and methods of making, and social/cross-cultural awareness to create an instructional environment that equips students for creative practice and research in the twenty-first century. Professor Modrak is adept at teaching across curricula and at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and she is currently teaching the school's BA Capstone Projects Course – a studio based course that challenges final-year students to synthesize their academic and studio work. Her teaching evaluations attest to her many strengths as well as her high standards for excellence. Former students cite Professor Modrak's impact on their intellectual and artistic practices as life changing. Words used to describe Professor Rebekah Modrak's teaching and mentoring include "rigorous," "challenging," and "supportive."

Creative Work / Research – Professor Modrak is an internationally-recognized scholar and artist whose research and creative practice are situated at the intersections of art, activism, and resistance to consumer culture. Professor Modrak has developed an expansive and interdisciplinary body of work that includes large-scale internet-based projects, publications, exhibitions, performances, and symposia. Her book Reframing Photography (2010, with Bill Anthes), is considered a ground-breaking text for studying contemporary photography, and she continues to update and expand the work online. Her recent Internet-based projects – including *RETHINK SHINOLA* (2017), *#extrange* (2017), and *Re Made Company* (2013) – have received considerable peer recognition and have sparked critical debate over rights of fair use. She is a frequent invited speaker and panelist on issues such as fair use, capitalism, and consumer culture, with recent presentations at institutions such as Harvard University, Rhode Island School of Design, Virginia Tech, and the Srishti Institute of Art,

Design and Technology (India). She continues to write and publish, including an invited chapter on the *Re Made Company* project in the *Routledge Companion to Criticality in Art, Architecture, and Design* (2017).

Significant Recent Works and Activities

- 2018 Modrak, Rebekah, “Best Made Re Made: Critical Interventions in the Online Marketplace,” *The Routledge Companion to Criticality in Art, Architecture, and Design*. Ed. Chris Brisbin and Myra Thiessen. Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- 2018 Modrak, Rebekah. “Part of the Fun is the Confusion: Causing Brands to Speak for Myself,” Invited Presentation, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- 2018 Modrak, Rebekah and Jonathan Schroeder, “Prompting and Performing Skepticism Through Parody: How the Artist-created Re Made Company Used Media to Critique Itself,” *Afterimage* on “Media Literacy in a Post-Factual Age.”
- 2017 Modrak, Rebekah, “Stop Selling What People Can’t Buy: Using Critical Design to Disrupt Brand Messaging,” Invited Presentation, The Center for Experimental Media and Arts and the School of Media, Arts and Sciences, Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore, India.
- 2017 Modrak, Rebekah. *RETHINK SHINOLA*, <http://www.rethinkshinola.com>.
- 2017 Juried Exhibition, *ArtPrize Nine*, Fountain Street Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- 2017 Team Leader, “Humility in the Age of Self-Promotion” Colloquium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- 2017 Modrak, Rebekah and Marialaura Ghidini, *#extrange*, a global curatorial intervention into consumer culture that transformed eBay into a site of artistic production and cultural exchange. <http://extrange.com/>.
- 2017 Residency, Center for Experimental Media Arts, Bangalore, India.
- 2016 Modrak, Rebekah, *Re Made Company*, <http://remadeco.org/> [major update to project launched in 2013].
- 2016 Invited Group Exhibition, *Rinse, Repeat*, The Armory, School of Visual Arts, Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, Virginia.
- 2015 Modrak, Rebekah, “Learning to Talk Like an Urban Woodsman: An Artistic Intervention,” *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Vol. 18, No. 6, pp. 539-558 (Oxford: Routledge).
- 2015 Modrak, Rebekah, “Bougie Crap: Art, Design, and Gentrification,” *Infinite Mile*, Issue 14, February 2015.

Service – Professor Modrak is an active and dedicated citizen of the university and the Stamps School. She has served on a number of committees and task forces and has held leadership positions within the Stamps School, including serving as Second Year Studio Coordinator in which she was responsible for overseeing a multi-section course that helps students synthesize learning from the freshman year and develop greater skill in independent creative work. She actively contributes to her discipline through service as a juror, external reviewer, and visiting editor, and her commitment to supporting the communities of southeast Michigan is evident through her participation in projects such as RX for Reading (Detroit) and leading teen workshops at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “Her productivity seems to be consistent, coherent, and both to play a leadership role in today’s recombinant artwork and also to be, in some instances, collaborative. Since collaboration is so thoroughly part of the workflow of recombinant creation, the signs of collaboration that I see in

her record seem to be important, and another example of pushback against the cult of genius that is so common in the art world.”

Reviewer B: “Professor Modrak’s work is impressive in quantity, quality and innovation. It is also impressive in the level of recognition and discourse surrounding it as well as in venues and level of response to the work on a national scale. This work involves important contributions to the field (of art and of photography and new media) in addition to the development of her own and collaborative projects. Professor Modrak’s work utilizes a performative and visual rhetoric to frame questions about the contemporary human condition. This is what makes it innovative.”

Reviewer C: “In addition to the social satire of the work, I believe one of the more interesting things about it is how Modrak shows us that artists can work anywhere, that they do not need to depend on the traditional validating gatekeepers of galleries and museums to distribute vital work. I believe Professor Modrak to be one of the more productive and interesting artist / academics of her generation.”

Reviewer D: “One of the aspects about Rebekah Modrak’s career that I find most outstanding is how she has tightly woven her teaching and college service into the same passions that motivate her creative research. In other words, she finds a way to take on each task as though it were another way for her to get her message of civility and responsibility across to her students and colleagues. It is Professor Modrak’s nature to raise challenging questions about consumption and our responsibility to make ethical choices. You should be proud of having such a valuable faculty member in the art school.”

Reviewer E: “Her work uses mimicry to activate a common ground for her audience to address the complicated content of highly design advertising that intentionally elicits consumers’ desire...Modrak is a leader and pioneer in a movement to place art where consumers go.”

Reviewer F: “I think her work is to be celebrated - it cuts across disciplinary lines as well as the boundaries between the academy and the broader community, and has attracted international attention. She has created innovative work that engages contemporary technologies and social media; doing so, she sheds light on the social and cultural implications of the internet, social media, online marketplaces, brands, and the wider consumer culture that these inhabit.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Modrak is an influential and internationally-recognized artist and scholar, a respected and innovative teacher, and a dedicated citizen of the academy. I strongly recommend Rebekah Modrak for promotion to professor of art and design, with tenure, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design.



Gunalan Nadarajan
Dean and Professor, Penny W. Stamps
School of Art and Design

May 2018