

## **ART 496: The Practice and Theory of Curating Contemporary Art**

Instructor: Emily Zimmerman, zimmee3@uw.edu

This class examines the production of exhibitions from both theoretical and practical standpoints. We will look at exhibitions as a vehicle for the reception of art, philosophies of aesthetic experience, knowledge production, and cultural politics. In order to do so, we will study curatorial methodologies, historical exhibition formats, watershed exhibitions that changed the dialog on the practice, as well as the practical skills associated with realizing an exhibition. Special attention will be paid to artist-curated exhibitions, which make up many of the most important experimental exhibitions over the last 50 years.

### **Class #1: Hello**

Review of syllabus, tour of the Jacob Lawrence Gallery & review of the gallery's history and mission, and set gallery sitting schedule.

### **Class #2: Setting the Stage**

Review the basics of gallery preparation and hanging artwork.

Required Readings:

Peter Smithson, "Stage 1," "Stage 2," "Stage 3," "Stage 4," in *Installing Exhibitions: A Practical Guide* (London: A&C Black Publishers, 2009), p. 1 - 75.

### **Class #3: Setting the Stage, Part II**

Art Handling 101

Required Readings:

Peter Smithson, "Stage 5," "Stage 6," "Stage 7," in *Installing Exhibitions: A Practical Guide* (London: A&C Black Publishers, 2009), p. 76-140.

## **Class #4: Thinking About Space**

The origin of museums & the historic conventions of display from the Cabinet of Curiosities to the White Cube/Black Box/Grey Cube.

### Required Readings:

Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing" in *Exhibiting Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), p.25 - 32.

Henri Focillion, "Form in the Realm of Space" in *The Life of Forms in Art* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), p.65-66.

Hal Foster, "After the White Cube" *London Review of Books* (Vol. 37 No. 6, March 19, 2015) pgs. 25-26.

## **Class #5: Curatorial Research**

Studio visits, travel, artist registries, archives, publications, etc.

### Required Readings:

Adrian George, "Introduction" "Starting Off" and "From Idea to Reality" in *The Curator's Handbook* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2015), p. 2-66.

## **Class #6: Exhibition Design**

### Required Readings:

Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).

Adrian George, "Putting a Show Together" in *The Curator's Handbook* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2015), p. 152-182.

## **Class #7: Contracts, Loan Forms, Budgets, and Condition Reports**

Review of forms, workshop on condition reporting.

### Required Readings:

Adrian George, "Contracts, Negotiations, Obligations, and Evaluations" p. 110-119 and "Putting a Show Together" in *The Curator's Handbook* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2015), p. 183-206.

## **Class #8: Notable Exhibitions 1960 - present**

*Primary Structures* (The Jewish Museum, 1966) curated by Kynaston McShine.

*Cybernetic Serendipity* (ICA London, 1969) curated by Jasia Reichardt.

*Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (Kunsthalle Bern, 1969) curated by Harald Szeeman.

*Information* (Museum of Modern Art, 1970) curated by Kynaston McShine.

*Les Immaterieux* (1985, Centre Pompidou) curated by French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard and Thierry Chaput.

*Les Magicienne de la Terre* (Centre Georges Pompidou, 1989) curated by Jean-Hubert Martin.

1993 Whitney Biennial (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993) curated by Elizabeth Sussman, Thelma Golden, Lisa Phillips, and John G. Hanhardt.

*inSITE97* (Various sites in Tijuana, Mexico and San Diego, California, 1997) curated by Jessica Bradley, Olivier Debroye, Ivo Mesquita, Sally Yard.

*Documenta 11* (City of Kassel, 2002) curated by Okwe Enwezor.

*WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (MOCA, 2007) curated by Connie Butler.

Required Readings:

Harald Szeeman, *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1969).

### **Class #9: DEINSTALL DAY**

Come to class with painting clothes

### **Class #10: INSTALL DAY**

Come to class with painting clothes

### **Class #11: INSTALL DAY**

Come to class with painting clothes

### **Class #12: Artist Curated Exhibitions**

Required Readings:

Jean-Hubert Martin, "The 'Musée Sentimental' of Daniel Spoerri" in *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances* (New York: The New Press, 1999).

Elena Filipovic, "When Exhibitions Become Form: On the History of the Artist as Curator" *Mousse*, no. 41.

### **Class #13: Printed Materials & Exhibition Prosthetics**

Required Readings:

Gilda Williams, "Introduction" and "Chapter 1" in *How to Write about Contemporary Art* p. 9 - 41.

Joseph Grigley, *Exhibition Prosthetics* (Bedford Press, 2010) p. 1 - 64.

"Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition 2017" American Association of Museums <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017-2.pdf>

Optional reading:

Aram Moshayedi, "The Narrative Conceit" in *Stories of Almost Everyone*, p. 14-23.

## **Class #14: Education & Public Programs**

Required Readings:

Liam Gillick "Educational Turns: Part One" in Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson, eds. *Curating and the Educational Turn*

Luis Camnitzer, Pablo Helguera, and Betty Martin, eds. *Art and Education* (Portland: PSU Art and Social Practice, 2014).

Mark Allan, "Machine Project Guide to Planning and Curating Events"

Hito Steyerl, "The Terror of Total Dasein" *DIS Magazine*:

<http://dismagazine.com/discussion/78352/the-terror-of-total-dasein-hito-steyerl/>

## **Class #15: Curatorial Ethics**

Required Readings:

Maura Reilly "Foreword," "Chapter 1," "Chapter 5: A Call to Arms," in *Curatorial Activism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018).

Helen Molesworth, "How to Install Art Like a Feminist" in *Modern Women: Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art*, edited by Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz (New York: MoMA, 2010), 499-512.

Autry, LaTanya and others, Museums and Social Justice Resource List, 2015-present.

Optional reading:

Lynne Cooke, "In Lieu of Higher Ground" in *What Makes a Great Exhibition?* p.32-43.

## **Class #16: Seattle Art Museum visit + discussion with Curators**

## **Class #17: Archiving & The Future**

Required Readings:

Claire Bishop. *Radical Museology: Or What's Contemporary in Museums of Contemporary Art?* (London: Walther König, Köln, 2014).

James McAnally, "The Work of the Institution in the Age of Professionalization"  
<http://temporaryartreview.com/the-work-of-the-institution-in-an-age-of-professionalization/>

Pepe Karmel, "The Circus Museum" in *Reshuffle: Notions of an Itinerant Museum* (Annandale-on-Hudson: Bard College, 2006).

Optional reading:

Rita McBride, *Futureways* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2005)

## **Class #18: Goodbye**

Final presentations

Students prepare a 15-minute presentation on their exhibition to present to the class.