

ARTH/CHTE386 The Art and Craft of Curating: Making Sense of Art in the 21st C.

Fall 2023

Course Instructor: Dr. Athena Hadji

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

The course explores the world of curating art in the 21st century. The course combines theory and history of curating with regular scheduled visits to major shows as well as hands-on experience in curating a project with the Professor's guidance. The term curating is derived from Latin verb *curare* which translates as to heal/ to take care of/ to attend to. The course unravels the mechanisms through which curators make exhibitions happen whether they re-imagine contexts for existing works of art and/ or commission new artworks specifically produced/ installed for a show. Emphasis is placed on contemporary art and its curators, institutions, premises and principles, starting with the concept of the *curatorial*. Themes explored are, among others, history of museums and art institutions; theories of curating; the relationship between curator and artist; the premise of the white cube vs. the re-activation of historical spaces; curator-as-artist/ artist-as-curator; curator-artist-spectator. With visits to art spaces, from national museums, to privately owned galleries, and meetings with curators and artists, the students will learn first-hand how to curate an exhibition, covering all aspects, from coming up with a curatorial concept, to more practical issues, such as fund-raising, promotion, liaising with artists and galleries, insurance, budget, installing art and all constituent elements of a successful show.

Study Note: A considerable amount of work for class will be conducted in the field, i.e. in museums, galleries and contemporary art shows. The material covered there is study material. Students are strongly advised to take notes during class visits.

Course Approach

To investigate the issues outlined above, we will read; analyze and interpret texts, evidence, and experience; work and think with others; visit sites and museums; and write as follows:

<u>Reading:</u> We will read a wide variety of texts, from contemporary scholarship about curating, museums and art history to philosophy, sociology and related disciplines.

<u>Analyzing and interpreting:</u> We will critically analyze and interpret our first-hand experience from scheduled class visits to museums, galleries, and exhibitions where we will study curating of contemporary art in a visual, typological and contextual manner. Our tools will be field notes, student presentations and discussion on site followed by discussion in class and independent student work (individually and in groups) in the form of assignments.

<u>Working and thinking with others:</u> Art is a collective endeavor, so is education. Building the culture of the class so that genuine inquiry is possible will take all of our efforts. Because we rely on everyone's contribution, the course will follow the pedagogy of a seminar, focused on motivation for participation in an atmosphere where all (informed) opinions are encouraged.



<u>Writing:</u> This course involves a significant amount of writing of different kinds. You will take short field notes during visits, as mentioned above; you will write brief reports on selected readings to present to class as assigned. You will take scheduled written midterm and final exams. Finally, you will compose a term project to be submitted in written form (at least in part, see separate file on moodle re. term project instructions). Also, please consult essay and reading rubrics for more detailed instructions.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed ideally for students of archaeology, art history, fine arts, architecture, anthropology, design, communication, business, or any discipline with interest in the arts and art institutions.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Possess a firm knowledge of how curating, curators and the curatorial came about
- 2) Reflect on the role of the curator and the artist in 21st century art
- 3) Analyze the parameters that contribute to the making and staging of a contemporary art show
- 4) Critically assess and evaluate exhibitions and curatorial projects whether in museums and art institutions or elsewhere
- 5) Position themselves on the debate about art and society in the world of today
- 6) Experience all aspects of conceiving, designing and implementing a contemporary art show

Course Requirements

- Midterm and Final exams
- Participation with active contribution to each lecture's topic. This involves critically processing assigned readings and presenting/ commenting on their content during class
- An average of 50 pages of reading per week
- At least 10-15 pages of research work. If spacing is 1,5 and font size 12 Times New Roman, 4,000 words are 12,5 pages. This comprises notes for museum/ public art visits, field notes, reading notes, class notes and the term project
- Term project presented toward the end of the semester (for dates see below class schedule; instructions on moodle)

Assignments:

To receive credit for an assignment, you **must turn it in at the beginning of class on the due date,** unless otherwise noted. No late assignments will be accepted.

Exams:

- Midterm
- Final

Each exam can entail image identifications, descriptions and comparisons; short identification of terms, artists, curators, exhibitions, and concepts; critical response essay-type questions and commenting on quotes from texts studied for and discussed in class; and a short answers section, such as "fill in the blanks", "true/ false", multiple choice. There will be choice for every part of each exam. We will discuss the format further before the exams, in the respective review sessions.

Class Field Work

The course is taught in museums and exhibition venues to a considerable extent. In addition, art is integrated in the everyday life of Athens and its inhabitants and can and should mostly be experienced



where it is to be found which includes the public sphere.

CYA Field Study

As part of your CYA mandatory trips, you will encounter contemporary art in various capacities. For example, at Nafplion (Peloponnese trip) you will encounter Fougaro Contemporary Art venue, while in Heraklion (Crete trip), temporary exhibitions of contemporary art are hosted frequently in centrally located St. Mark's Basilica.

Evaluation and Grading

Percentages (and any breakdowns)

Midterm exam: 20% Final exam: 30%

Term project presentation and paper: 30% (15% each)

Participation and contribution with field notes and short assignments: 10%

Debate: 10%

Evaluation Criteria - Course Assignments

Assignment 1: term project, 30%

TOPIC: Curate an art exhibition.

- 1. Presentation of a coherent comprehensive curator proposal.
- 2. Paper submitted to the Professor (see below "Due Dates")

INSTRUCTIONS AND DESCRIPTION

Work will be conducted in <u>groups of</u> students (depending on number of enrolled students). All members of each group will be graded on an equal basis, therefore it is important that work is divided equally from the beginning.

Due Dates:

- Deadline I, Oct.20: send group registration email for term project with provisional exhibition project title.
- Deadline II (see lectures schedule below): 20-minute class presentation and final work, paper submitted at the beginning of class.
- Criterion 1: originality and creativity (of idea and format)
- Criterion 2: coherence
- Criterion 3: relevance with the course matter



Assignment 2: debate (10%)

TOPIC: TBA close to the debate date

Criterion 1: arguments

• Criterion 2: research and critical stance

Criterion 3: team work

For more detailed information about the kind of work to which each grade corresponds (for this particular course), please consult the **course rubrics**, available on moodle.

CYA Regulations and Accommodations

Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately to the Student Affairs Office.

Academic Accommodations

If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Office of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

Policy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided (Check the Student Handbook, pg. 7).

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. **Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.**

NOTE: one side of the classroom is designated laptop-free zone. Please sit accordingly.



Class Schedule

NOTE: readings will be assigned alphabetically to students for presentation and discussion in class, as soon as roster is finalized.

Class Day/Date Day	Topic / Readings / Assignments Due
Tue Sep 5	(in class)
Зер 3	Introduction: course specifics, course process and requirements.
	Short library tour.
	Description
	We begin the course by introducing ourselves and our intentions. We proceed with a thorough examination of the syllabus, analyzing the structure, aims, requirements and components of the course. We explore the rubrics and explain any necessary points. We look at the course bibliography and explain the assigned readings process.
	A short orientation tour of the library by CYA Librarian, Ms. Georgia Katsarou, completes the first day of instruction.
	Required reading No required reading for the first class
Thu Sep 7	Site visit
	SNFCC, Return to Sender
Tue Sep	(in class)
12	Curator collection spectator
	Description
	We enter the world of curating contemporary art by introducing basic concepts, derivations and stakeholders in the world of curating art. Why do we make a big deal about curating? Does art need to be curated? Is there anything that is <i>not</i> curated anymore? We will address these questions and pave the way to the theory and history sessions that follow in the first part of the course.
	Required reading
	Tokumitsu 2015, https://newrepublic.com/article/122589/when-did-we-all-become-curators



Berger	1972,	Ch.	1:	7-34;	Ranciere 2007

Recommended reading

Süskind, 1985

Short assignment

What can be curated? Short (two-paragraph) essay due at the beginning of next class (Sep. 19)

Sep 13-16	Crete trip
Sun Sep 17	Site visit
	ART ATHINA contemporary art fair, Zappeion Megaron (next to National Garden, a 5 min. walk from CYA), time TBA
	MEETING POINT: Zappeion monumental staircase
	Recommended reading
	CI catalogs on moodle
Tue	(in class)
Sep 19	History of collections and museums

Description

How did collecting come about? The history of collections, exhibitions and their host institutions takes us on an unexpected journey all the way back to Classical Athens and the *Pinakotheke* on the Athenian Acropolis. Subsequently, via Rome, the Renaissance, papal collections, cabinets of curiosities and seafarers bringing back exotica, we will witness the birth of the National Museum in the 19th century. We continue with the emergence of modern art and the creation and construction of a new kind of museum to accommodate this breakthrough in art: the modern art museum and the premise of the white cube.

Required reading

Bennett, 1988; Bennett 1995, Ch. 3: 91-105; O' Doherty 1986, Introduction: 6-12; Ch. 1: 13-34; Draxler in Martinon 2013: 163-168

Recommended reading

Mango, 1963



Thu Sep 21

(in class)

21st century stakeholders for contemporary art

Description

What constitutes a contemporary art museum in the 21st century? From National Museums of Contemporary Art to private enterprises to collections on view only occasionally, we discuss the institutions and their current variables.

Where is contemporary art stored? Where and how is it displayed and studied? Where can one buy it if one so wishes? We will explore the world of contemporary art institutions, major private collections, art initiatives, and important art fairs around the world.

Required reading

Groys 2009; Blazwick in Marincola 2006: 118-133; O' Neill 2012, Ch. 2: 51-86; Hughes 2005;

Dasgupta in Martinon 2013: 173-182; Madani in Martinon 2013: 197-206

Recommended reading

Altshuler in Altshuler 2005: 1-13No class (we went to Art Athina!)

Tue Sep 26

(in class)

Pioneers: the emergence of the art curator

Description

A class about the people behind the exhibitions. Every human endeavor has its pioneers, art curating is no exception. With none other than Hans Ulrich Obrist as our guide, we will meet the curators who acted as visionaries, in order for us, 21st century curators, to enjoy an unlimited field of inspiration, creation and communication with artists and audiences alike.

Required reading

Esche in Martinon 2013: 241-244; Obrist 2011, PREFACE AND POSTFACE; selection of 5 interviews

Recommended reading

Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, The Guardian, 2014

https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/23/hans-ulrich-obrist-art-curator

Short Assignment



	Are there any common threads/ trends among the interviewed pioneers in the		
	interviews you selected to read? A short essay on the things you observed (two		
	paragraphs), due at the beginning of class Oct. 4		
Thu Sep 28	ELEUSIS 2023 site visit, details TBA		
Tue	(in class)		
Oct 3	Principles of curating		
	Description		
	We will discuss and critically analyze the most influential trends in curating art since the 1960s, with an emphasis on current developments and future directions. Genres explored include, among others, monographic, thematic and collection exhibitions, projects, performances, (new) media-based and interactive approaches. We will explore the social dimensions of curating, based on the phenomenon of collaborative art and how to curate it.		
	Required reading		
	Bismarck et al. in Bismarck 2012: 21–40; Gronemeyer 2018, Introduction: 11-20; Smith 2012: 17-56; O' Neill 2012, Ch. 3: 87-130; Martinon in Martinon 2013: 25-34; Cramerotti and Martinon in Martinon 2013: 35-40		
	Recommended reading		
	Gaskill 2011; Smith 2012: 57-100; Kester 2012, Introduction: 1-17; Rogoff in Martinon 2013: 41-48		
Thu	(in class)		
Oct 5	Film screening		
	The Artist is Present (2012)		
	Recommended reading		
	Abramovic 2016		
	Short Assignment (two paragraphs)		
	Critically comment on the film watched. Emphasis should be given on the role of Abramovic as curator not solely of her art, but also of her life and ultimately of herself.		
	(Due Oct. 10 BEFORE class)		
Tue	National Museum of Contemporary Art		
Oct 10	(FIX metro station or a short walk from Pangrati)		



Description

A project that was in the making for far too long; a museum that was homeless for decades; a listed building that celebrates Greek modernism at its best; a museum that opened in the heart of the pandemic and managed to win our hearts. A tour of the permanent collection of the NMCA of Greece and a discussion of new developments (new Director's plan, Daskalopoulos donation).

Required reading

https://zkm.de/de/hans-belting-contemporary-art-and-the-museum-in-the-global-age

Recommended reading

EMST catalogue (reserve shelf at CYA library)

Preparation for debate (Tue Oct 17)

Thu Oct 12

(in class)

How are curators made? Programs, studies, backgrounds

Description

After a month-long inquiry into what curating is, where curators work, and what they do, it is now time to see curators-in-the-making. There is an ongoing debate on the necessity of curatorial studies programs, but also there is a proliferation thereof, clearly indicating that curators can be and are made through formal *curatorial* education. We will explore curricula and principles of curatorial studies and bring into class the debate on whether a curator is 'born' or made. From the independent curator to the global curator, curator as jet-set flaneur (Rugoff 1999)

Required reading

Beech in O' Neill and Wilson 2010: 47-60; Milevska in Martinon 2013: 65-72

Recommended reading

Lange, 2011, https://frieze.com/article/look-learn

Fri	HYDRA ISLAND DAY TRIP
Oct. 13	DESTE Slaughterhouse annual show
Tue	(in class)
Oct 17	Debate: parliamentary style
	(instructions on moodle; topic TBA)
	Midterm exam review: what to expect



Thu	(in class)
Oct 19	MIDTERM EXAM
Oct 20-29	Fall Break
Tue	(in class)
Oct 31	Inside the curator's mind: how an exhibition is conceived; how it is shaped and implemented
	Description
	The birth of the curatorial concept. How does a curator decide upon an idea for an exhibition? How can one know that this idea is viable and can support the legitimacy of – yet another – art show? What resources can a curator draw from? Where is inspiration to be found?
	The second part of the discussion on the multifaceted endeavor that is called "curating" revolves around the more practical aspects: liaise with artists and representing galleries; artwork loans; artwork commissions; fund raising; preparing an application; budget making; insurance and installation; a down-to-earth approach with practical advice on how to survive making an exhibition happen
	Required reading
	Crimp 1984; O' Neill in Rugg and Sedgwick 2007: 13-75;
	Hylton in Rugg and Sedgwick 2007: 113-127; Rendell in Rugg and Sedgwick 2007: 59-76; Dorsett in Rugg and Sedgwick 2007: 77-87
	Recommended reading
	Buchan in Rugg and Sedgwick 2007: 131-145
Thu Nov 2	No class (Art Athina Sunday Sep 17)
Nov 7-11	Peloponnese trip
Tue	(in class)
Nov 14	Case study of a contemporary art exhibition: <i>The Body is Victory and Defeat of Dreams</i> on Lesvos, Molivos Municipal Art Gallery, Lesvos
	Description
	We discuss and critically analyze the Professor's group show, staged at 2017, aiming at unraveling the curatorial process in its various parameters. We unravel concepts, themes, and processes with Tuesday's class case study. Ain is to understand in action the range of a curator's work.



	Required reading
	Hadji, 2017
Thu	Citronne Gallery visit
Nov 16	EXHIBITION TBA
	Required reading
	TBA
Fri Nov 17	Site visit TBA
Tue Nov 21	Site visit TBA
Nov 23-26	Thanksgiving break
Tue	Contemporary art and public display
Nov 28	Description
	We will visit public spaces that offer free access to and unlimited views of contemporary art in the city of Athens and observe how curatorial approaches to art placed in public spaces differ.
	Required readings
	https://www.tafterjournal.it/2014/06/10/decorating-the-athens-metro-a-matter-of-culture-or-conventionality/
	https://www.athensinsiders.com/blog/the-metro-of-athens-the-history-the-findings-and-the-art
	(a commercial source – in the end of the article they invite you to book a tour with them! – but: includes a list of artworks by artist and station, also useful for the archaeological finds, in case you are interested)
	Recommended reading
	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/20/runner-plan-move-athens-statue-skopje-angers-greeks-north-macedonia
Thu	Term project presentation, class discussion and evaluation
Nov 30	Description
	As stated above, the term project will revolve around a hypothetical exhibition. Detailed instructions for presentation and project write-up will be uploaded on moodle well in advance, so that you can prepare accordingly.



	Part of the presentation of each group is the other groups' active commentary and evaluation.
	Assignment for non-presenting groups
	Take notes as presentations unfold, make comments, evaluate and give a mock grade with substantiation. To be handed to the Professor at the end of class
Fri	Term project presentation, class discussion and evaluation
Dec 1	Description
	As stated above, the term project will revolve around a hypothetical exhibition. Detailed instructions for presentation and project write-up will be uploaded on moodle well in advance, so that you can prepare accordingly. Part of the presentation of each group is the other groups' active commentary and evaluation.
	Assignment for non-presenting groups
	Take notes as presentations unfold, make comments, evaluate and give a mock grade with substantiation. To be handed to the Professor at the end of class
Tue	Term project presentation, class discussion and evaluation
Dec 6	Description
	As stated above, the term project will revolve around a hypothetical exhibition. Detailed instructions for presentation and project write-up will be uploaded on moodle well in advance, so that you can prepare accordingly. Part of the presentation of each group is the other groups' active commentary and evaluation.
	Assignment for non-presenting groups
	Take notes as presentations unfold, make comments, evaluate and give a mock grade with substantiation. To be handed to the Professor at the end of
	class
Thu Dec 7	FINAL EXAM REVIEW: FORMAT AND CONTENT
Dec 11-14	In-class final exam, day and time TBA

^{*}Assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on due date, unless noted otherwise on syllabus

Course schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and in keeping up to date with current research



Course Readings: Full Bibliography

- Altshuler, B. (ed.) 2005. *Collecting the New: Museums and Contemporary Art.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Barrett, T. 2000. Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Bennett, T. 1988. The Exhibitionary Complex. *New Formations* 4: 73-102.
- Bennett, T. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics.* London & New York: Routledge.
- Berger, J. 1972. Ways of Seeing. New York: Penguin Books.
- Crimp, D. 1984." The Art of Exhibition", October 30: 49-81.
- Gaskill, K. 2011. Curatorial cultures: considering dynamic curatorial practice. In: ISEA The 17th International Symposium on Electronic Art, Istanbul, Turkey, 14-21 September 2011. (Unpublished), http://shura.shu.ac.uk/4441/
- Gronemeyer, W. 2018. *The Curatorial Complex: Social Dimensions of Knowledge Production.* Dusseldorf: Wilhelm Fink.
- Groys, B. 2009. The Politics of Installation. *e-flux* 2, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/02/68504/politics-of-installation/
- Hadji, A. 2017. *The Body is Victory and Defeat of Dreams*. Exhibition Catalog. Mytilene: Municipality of Lesvos.
- Hadji, A. 2019. Contemporary graffiti and street art in the city of Athens, ISRF Bulleting XVIII, https://issuu.com/isrf/docs/isrf bulletin issue xviii/s/84856
- Hughes, L. 2005. "Do we need new spaces for exhibiting contemporary art? A critique of curatorial practice in relation to the viewer's engagement with contemporary art", *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 4: 29-38.
- Jeffery, C. (ed.) 2015. Artist as Curator. Bristol: Intellect.
- Kester, Grant H. 2012. *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kwon, M. 2002. *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Lange, C. 2011. Look and Learn, https://frieze.com/article/look-learn
- Lind, Maria 2012. Performing the Curatorial: An Introduction. In *Performing the Curatorial: Within and Beyond Art*. Berlin: Sternberg Press: 9-20
- Mango, C. 1963. "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder", Dumbarton Oaks Papers 17: 53+55-75.
- Marincola, P. (ed.) 2006. What Makes a Great Exhibition? London: Reaktion Books.
- Martinon, J.-P. (ed.) 2013. The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating. London: Bloomsbury.
- Obrist, H.-U. 2011. A brief history of curating. Zurich: JRP/Ringier and Les Presses du reel.
- O' Doherty, B. 1986. *Inside the white cube: the ideology of the gallery space.* San Francisco: The Lapis Press.
- O'Neill, P. 2012. The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s). Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- O'Neill, P. and M. Wilson (eds.) 2010. *Curating and the educational turn.* Amsterdam and London: Open Editions & de Appel.
- Ranciere, J. 2007. "The Emancipated Spectator". Artforum, XLV: 270-281,
- Rugg, J. and M. Sedgwick (eds.) 2007. *Issues in curating contemporary art and performance*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Smith, T. 2012. *Thinking Contemporary Curating.* New York: ICI.
- Solomon, E. 2011. "Museums and the subversion of the exhibitionary order: Playing with Enlightenment values". *Reference/Representation*, 105-110. Athens: Futura Editions
- Sturken, M. and L. Cartwright. 2009. *Practices of Looking: an Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tokumitsu, M. 2015. The Politics of the Curation Craze, https://newrepublic.com/article/122589/when-did-we-all-become-curators



- Vidokle, A. 2010. Art without Artists?, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/16/61285/art-without-artists/
- Züskind, P. 1985. *The Perfume*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

Books, Course Materials, Moodle

Books (see Bibliography in the last section of the syllabus)

Websites:

Journals, platforms, fora

1. e-flux

http://www.e-flux.com/

2. frieze

https://frieze.com/

3. artforum

https://www.artforum.com/

4. mousse

http://moussemagazine.it/

5. on curating

http://www.on-curating.org/issues.html

Museums, galleries, institutions

1. National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens http://www.emst.gr/

2. The Breeder Gallery http://thebreedersystem.com/

3. State of Concept https://www.stateofconcept.org/

4. Eleni Koronaiou Gallery http://www.koroneougallery.com/

5. Ileana Tounta Gallery https://art-tounta.gr/

6. Vorres Museum http://www.vorresmuseum.gr/

7. National Archaeological Museum http://www.namuseum.gr/

8. Alex Mylona Museum http://mouseioalexmylona.blogspot.gr/



- 9. MOMUS
- 10. Apexart https://apexart.org/
- 11. NEON http://neon.org.gr/en/
- 12. DESTE Foundation http://www.deste.gr
 - 13. Rodeo Gallery
 - 14. Google Arts and Culture
 - 15. Europeana project
 - 16. artsy.net

Exhibitions and Fairs

- 1. Documenta 14 http://www.documenta14.de/en/
- 2. The Venice Biennale http://www.labiennale.org/en
- 3. Istanbul Biennale http://15b.iksv.org/home
- 4. Art Athina http://www.art-athina.gr/index.php/el/
- 5. Athens Biennale http://athensbiennale.org/
- 6. Frieze Art Fairs https://frieze.com/fairs
- 7. Art Basel https://artbasel.com/

Artists

1. Marina Abramovic Institute https://mai.art/



2. Lydia Dambassina http://www.lydiadambassina.com/

3. Tracey Emin http://www.traceyeminstudio.com/

Videos:

John Berger, Ways of Seeing, 1972

Marina Abramovic, Balkan Baroque, 1977

The way I think, an interview with George Condo, the Louisiana Chanel