ARTH | CHTE 386 | Art And Craft Of Curating: Making Sense Of Art In The 21st C. Spring 2025

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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 a 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) Fougaro is a contemporary art venue that you are encouraged to visit, 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)

Participation with active contribution to each lecture's topic: 10%. This involves critically processing assigned readings and presenting/commenting on their content during class and short reports.

An oral presentation of curatorial premises in exhibition visits: 10%. Each student is assigned one specific exhibition they will present in 5' in one of the course's site visits.

Debate: 15% In-class midterm exam: 20% In-class final exam: 20% Each exam comprises short identification of terms, artists' names, technical terms, and concepts; critical response essaytype 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.

Group term project presented in the end of the semester (for dates see below class schedule): 25%. Instructions are provided on a separate document on moodle.

Evaluation Criteria - Course Assignments

Assignment 1: term project, 25% TOPIC: Curate a group exhibition of contemporary art Criterion 1: originality and creativity (of idea and format) Criterion 2: coherence Criterion 3: relevance with the course matter

Assignment 2: debate, 15% TOPIC: specialized academic training in curating: for or against Criterion 1: Preparation of arguments Criterion 2: Timed and eloquent presentation of thesis Criterion 3: Speed of thought, based on sound preparation, to present counter-arguments

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.

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.

ePolicy 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.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as notetaking, 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 can be designated as laptop-free zone. This will be co-decided with the students on Day 1.

Class Schedule

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

Class Day	Day/Date	Topic / Readings / Assignments Due
1	Mon Jan 27	Classroom 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. <i>Required reading</i>
		No required reading for the first class
2	Wed Jan 29	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. <i>Required reading</i> Tokumitsu 2015, <u>https://newrepublic.com/article/122589/when-did-we-all-become-curators</u>
		Berger 1972, Ch. 1: 7-34; Ranciere 2007
		Recommended reading
		Süskind, 1985
3	Mon Feb 3	History of collections and museums
		<i>Description</i> How did collecting come about? The history of collections, exhibitions and their host institutions takes us to an unexpected journey all the way back to Classical Athens and the <i>Pinakotheke</i> 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 19 th 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 promise of the white cube
		museum and the premise of the white cube. <i>Required reading</i>
		Angelo Bennett, 1988; Bennett 1995, Ch. 3: 91-105; O' Doherty 1986, Introduction: 6-12; Ch. 1: 13-34; Draxler in Martinon 2013: 163-168
		<i>Recommended reading</i> Mango, 1963
4	Wed Feb 5	21 st century stakeholders for contemporary art
		Description What constitutes a contemporary art museum in the 21 st 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. <i>Required reading</i>
		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
	Man Fab 10	Altshuler in Altshuler 2005: 1-13
5	Mon Feb 10	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, 21 st century curators, to enjoy an unlimited field of inspiration, creation and communication with artists and audiences alike.
		<i>Required reading</i> Esche in Martinon 2013: 241-244; Obrist 2011, PREFACE AND POSTFACE; selection of 5
		interviews <i>Recommended reading</i>
		Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, The Guardian, 2014

		https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/23/hans-ulrich-obrist-art-curator
		<u>Short Assignment</u>
		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 Feb. 17
6 7	Wed Feb 12	TEMPORARY EXHIBITION VISIT TBA
7	Mon Feb 17	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. <i>Required reading</i>
		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
8	Mon Feb 24	National Museum of Contemporary Art
		(FIX metro station; a short ride; a c. 20 min. 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 and was irreparably wounded before it
		was revived; 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 (Daskalopoulos collection donation and integration). Temporary exhibitions
		currently on show will be explored also.
		Required reading
		hhttps://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/jgmc_00065_1
		Recommended reading
		EMST catalogue (reserve shelf at CYA library)
9	Wed Feb 26	National Gallery visit
		(a 5-10' walk N of CYA)
		Description
		Not an antagonist of the EMST, but a progressively stronger player in contemporary art, NG
		houses Greek art that spans c. 5 centuries, but its third floor is an homage to contemporary Greek
		art.
		This will be our focus, alongside a temporary exhibition that might be on show, provided it
		focuses on contemporary art.
		Required reading
		https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127368
		Recommended reading
		Link to temporary exhibition on view
10	Wed Mar 5	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 <i>curatorial</i> 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, <u>https://frieze.com/article/look-learn</u>

11	Mon Mar 10	Debate: parliamentary style
		(instructions on moodle; topic TBA)
		Midterm exam review: what to expect
12	Wed Mar 12	Midterm exam
13	Mon Mar 17	Exhibition visit TBA
14	Mon Mar 24	Classroom
14		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
15	Wed Mar 26	Classroom
15		Case study of a contemporary art exhibition: <i>The Body is Victory and Defeat of</i>
		Dreams 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. Aim is to understand in action the range of a curator's work.
		Required reading
		Hadji, 2017
		Recommended browsing
		Participating artists' websites, to form an idea of the range of their work, as relates to the
		artworks presented in my show
16	Mon Mar 31	Citronne Gallery visit
		EXHIBITION TBA
17	Wed Apr 2	Film screening
	·	The Artist is Present
		Artist-as-Curator
		Marina Abramovic at the MoMA
		Recommended reading
		M.A. (auto)biography, CYA LIBRARY, RESERVE SHELF
		Short report after viewing:
		how does M.A. curate herself? Comment critically with examples from the show in two
		paragraphs.
10	NA	(due before class Apr. 9 via email)
18	Mon Apr 7	Contemporary art and public display
		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 differs.
		Required readings
		https://www.tafterjournal.it/2014/06/10/decorating-the-athens-metro-a-matter-of-culture-or-
		<u>conventionality/</u>
		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)

19 Wed Apr 9 Temporary exhibition visit TBA 20 Wed Apr 23 Street art walk meeting point: metro station Monastiraki, by fruit stall Description 20 Wed Apr 23 Street art walk meeting point: metro station Monastiraki, by fruit stall Description 20 Wed Apr 23 Street art walk meeting point: metro station Monastiraki, by fruit stall Description 20 Wed Apr 23 Street art walk meeting point: metro station Monastiraki, by fruit stall Description 21 How do you curate street art? Or do you? We will discuss the integration of street art in Athens. Required reading Hadji, 2019 21 Mon Apr 28 Term project presentation, class discussion 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 22 Wed Apr 30 Term project presentation, class discussion 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 23 Mon May 5 ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE, THEME AND VENUE TBA 24 Wed May 7 Final exam review Finals Week FINAL EXAM			Recommended reading
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	24	Wed May 7	Final exam review
		Finals Week	FINAL EXAM

*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

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Websites:

Journals, platforms, fora

- 1. e-flux | <u>http://www.e-flux.com/</u>
- 2. frieze | <u>https://frieze.com/</u>
- 3. artforum | <u>https://www.artforum.com/</u>
- 4. mousse | <u>http://moussemagazine.it/</u>
- 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 | <u>https://www.stateofconcept.org/</u>
- 4. Eleni Koronaiou Gallery | <u>http://www.koroneougallery.com/</u>
- 5. Ileana Tounta Gallery | <u>https://art-tounta.gr/</u>
- 6. Vorres Museum | <u>http://www.vorresmuseum.gr/</u>
- 7. National Archaeological Museum | <u>http://www.namuseum.gr/</u>
- 8. Alex Mylona Museum | <u>http://mouseioalexmylona.blogspot.gr/</u>
- 9. MOMUS
- 10. Apexart | <u>https://apexart.org/</u>
- 11. NEON | <u>http://neon.org.gr/en/</u>
- 12. DESTE Foundation | <u>http://www.deste.gr</u>
- 13. Rodeo Gallery
- 14. Google Arts and Culture
- 15. Europeana project
- 16. artsy.net

Exhibitions and Fairs

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

Artists

- 1. Marina Abramovic Institute | <u>https://mai.art/</u>
- 2. Lydia Dambassina | <u>http://www.lydiadambassina.com/</u>
- 3. Tracey Emin | <u>http://www.traceyeminstudio.com/</u>

Videos:

John Berger, Ways of Seeing, 1972

Marina Abramovic, Balkan Baroque, 1977

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