Asian History 490: Exhibition Theory and Practice

See also: Art History Student Comments

Syllabus and Schedule - Winter 2008
Julia Sapin

Course Description

This course offers a chance to think about the ways in which museums, galleries, and other sites of exhibition have functioned and continue to function in society. What is exhibited and why? Who is doing the exhibiting? How are the objects that are exhibited being interpreted and why? How does the stage of the exhibition change one’s perspective about what is being viewed?

While developing consciousness of these and other questions through readings, field trips, and class discussions, we will be staging an exhibition ourselves with the help of Western Gallery Director Dr. Sarah Clark-Langager and Western Gallery Preparator Paul Brower. Preparing the exhibition will involve learning different types of writing and other forms of communication used in exhibition settings, such as lighting, construction of gallery space, and arrangement of objects. The exhibition will be held Spring 2008 in one room of the Western Gallery.

The objects will be chosen from the Al and Vera Leese Collection, which was recently gifted to Western by their daughter, Mrs. Marian Boylan. We will be collaborating with photographer Dianne Kornberg and with Montréal Danse Artistic Director Kathy Casey. Kornberg's work will be the subject of a traveling exhibition in the larger of the exhibition rooms Spring 2008. Montréal Danse will be in residence at WWU during Spring 2008 and will use the Western Gallery as a performance and dialogue space.

Course Objectives

Investigate theories and histories of exhibition practices
Expand writing skills in a variety of different art-related genres
Develop skills in exhibition planning and preparation

Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs (8)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of current or historical exhibition practice</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation for exhibition:</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>120 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short research papers on objects to be exhibited</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wall texts (exhibition labels) Group theme wall text (written jointly by group)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (½ gauged by me, ½ by group members)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>400 points</td>
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Provisos

*NO WIKIPEDIA OR OTHER ENCYCLOPEDIA, DICTIONARY OR OTHER SUPERFICIAL WEB SOURCE TO BE INCLUDED AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH
*WORK MUST BE SUBMITTED ON THE DUE DATE, unless there is an emergency verifiable by the Student Health Center or Office of the Dean of Students. 5 points off /day late
Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376-400</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>336-351</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>296-311</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>360-375</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>320-335</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>280-295</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>352-359</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312-319</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>240-279</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>239 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Schedule:

**Tues., Jan. 8: Introduction**

**Thurs., Jan. 10: Developing a Framework: Questions and Considerations**
Introduce Presentation Assignment

**Tues., Jan. 15: Histories of the Marvelous and Wondrous and Politically Expedient**
Visit from Dr. Sarah Clark-Langager, Western Gallery Director, 2:30-3:20

**Thurs., Jan. 17: Exhibition Groundwork**
In class, watch:
Montréal Danse (Kathy Casey, Artistic Director), *Furies Alpha 1/24 (The Monsters Within)*

**Tues., Jan. 22: Photographer Dianne Kornberg and Kathy Casey, Artistic Director, Montréal Danse, in class**

**Thurs., Jan 24:** Debrief artist visits, then choose first of two works; discuss research assignment.

**Tues., Jan. 29: Theorizing Representation in the Nineteenth Century**
*Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (originally published in1936).* http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html

**Thurs., Jan. 31: Museums and Cultural Appropriation**

**Tues., Feb. 5:** Discuss sub-themes of exhibition; choose second work.
Thurs., Feb. 7: Conceptualizing Display  
**Visit from Paul Brower, Gallery Preparator, Western Gallery**  

Tues., Feb. 12: Field trip to Museum of Anthropology, UBC, Vancouver  

Thurs., Feb. 14: Practicing Postcolonialism  
**Group meetings (What is your "big idea"?); ideas for title**

Tues., Feb. 19: Work on writing "wall text"  
**DUE: Research papers**  
**Visit from Mr. William J. Rathbun, former Curator of Japanese Art, Seattle Art Museum**

Thurs., Feb. 21: Art and Commerce: Branding the Exhibition  
**Group meetings; work on group wall text**

Tues., Feb. 26:  
**Workshop and Finalize Group Wall Text**

Thurs., Feb. 28:  
**DUE: Individual wall texts (first draft)**  
Work on publicity and other

Tues., March 4:  
**DUE: Individual wall texts (second draft)**

Thurs., March 6: First Thursday: Field trip to Seattle

Tues., March 11:  
**DUE: Individual wall texts (FINAL draft)**  
Visit gallery space and think about physical layout of exhibition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs., March 13</td>
<td>Place works in the gallery space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>possible back-up day for exhibition hanging, final touches...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues., March 18, 1-3pm</td>
<td>Exhibition installation</td>
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<td>(during scheduled final)</td>
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began publishing journals in 1970 with the first volumes of Linguistic Inquiry and the Journal of Interdisciplinary History. Today we publish over 30 titles in the arts and humanities, social sciences, and science and technology. MIT Press Journals.

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