

## **The Logic of the Curatorial: Topics in Contemporary Art**

California College of the Arts, San Francisco  
Professor: James Voorhies

**Fall 2021**

CURPR 6300-2; FINAR 6020-3

**Tue, 5-7 p.m. PST**

**September 7 to December 14, 2021**

PDFs of course readings downloadable on the course website.

### **Description**

This seminar explores expansive and experimental methodologies of curating by focusing on three main areas of study—the archive, the curatorial, and the contemporary.

A series of graduate-level assignments—readings, digital exhibitions projects, group critique, and discussions—offer students opportunities to contemplate new modes of making work as they relate to research, knowledge production, aesthetics, and curating. The seminar seeks to broaden dialogue on the exhibition form, potentially issuing new debates on aesthetics as they relate to turns from the sensual to the cognitive in contemporary art. The course problematizes and raises questions about what is at stake in the field of art when artistic research mimes the methodologies of and aligns itself with other fields of scientific inquiry and academic knowledge production. Students study the relationship between contemporary art and the archive reflected in different methodologies of curating that in essence can provide the conceptual space for different methodologies of art-making.

Reading and analysis of texts by theorists and curators combine with a close study of artworks and exhibitions, *The Logic of the Curatorial* offers students a vocabulary to situate their practice within current debates in contemporary art while potentially imagining new forms for their participation in the field.

The online archival platform of [UbuWeb](#) complements reading assignments. The course is delivered online.

### **Goals**

Students become familiar with and proficient in a vocabulary for communicating about historical, aesthetic, and conceptual topics related to current issues in art, visual culture, and curating. They are introduced to a range of curatorial models and approaches in order to provide knowledge and insight into the working relationships among contemporary artists, curators, and institutions and the historical ideologies that characterize them.

### **Requirements**

#### Seminar Instagram

Each week every student is required to make an Instagram post on the seminar's Instagram profile (@logic\_of\_the\_curatorial; password: ccafall2021) in advance of each weekly seminar meeting. The Instagram posts draw exclusively from content on UbuWeb. The UbuWeb media—audio, video, text, or photographic—posted on Instagram must be accompanied by 250-word (no less) reflections about the work's relationship to the week's readings. (30%)

#### Participation

Each week, every student is required to participate in conversations about the readings and be prepared to occasionally talk about their Ubuweb selections within the context the week's readings. Participation

is defined by responding to peers' comments, engaging actively in dialogue with materials and readings, and overall contributing to a convivial academic atmosphere in higher education. (30%)

#### Case Studies: Exhibition Projects

The course concludes with individual student exhibition projects called "Case Studies" posted to the course Instagram. Each student creates 9 posts. Each post, or slide, is accompanied by a 250-word text from introducing the exhibition and artworks, to providing the underlying conceptual framework for the collection of media—audio, video, text, or photographic—drawn from [UbuWeb](#). Students must design the graphic identity of the exhibition project, including the introductory slide with title.

The final weeks of the seminar are dedicated to 20-minute student presentations and critiques. (40%)

#### Asynchronous

Review content on UbuWeb and post a 200-word summary / analysis on the course Instagram as described above.

#### Evaluation

Students are evaluated on the quality and frequency of participation in the course. Quality is based on organization, images, content, and delivery of ideas; regular, on-time attendance; consistent communication during each class session. Students are evaluated on in-class group presentations and written assignments.

#### Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. They will fail the course with more than three unexcused absences. Notification of absences must be given in advance by email. Three unexcused and/or late arrivals on screen equal one unexcused absence.

Students are expected to log into Zoom and prepared to begin at 5 p.m. PST. Students are expected to be visible on their screen and not use the screen avatar except when necessary.

#### Schedule

##### Sep 7      An Introduction

Alexander Alberro, "Specters of Provenance: National Loans, the Königsplatz, and Maria Eichhorn's 'Politics of Restitution,'" *Grey Room* 18 (Winter, 2004), 64-81.

Tom Holert, "Art in the Knowledge-based Polis," *e-flux journal*, no. 2, 2009.

Kenneth Goldsmith, "Letter to Bettina Funcke, No. 017" in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Chus Martínez, eds., *DOCUMENTA (13), The Book of Books, Catalog 1/3* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 147-49.

##### Sep 14      The Archive

Okwui Enwezor, "The Postcolonial Constellation: Contemporary Art in a State of Permanent Transition," *African Literatures* 34, no. 4 (Winter, 2003), 57-82.

Simon Sheikh, "Towards the Exhibition as Research," in Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., *Curating Research* (London: Open Editions, 2015), 32-46.

Martine Syms and Pip Wallis, "Sitting with Difference," in David Blamey and Brad Haylock, eds., *Distributed* (London: Open Editions, 2018), 67-74.

Sep 21      The Archive

Hyunjoo Byeon, "Evolving Archive: Asia Art Archive," in Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., *Curating Research* (London: Open Editions, 2015), 186-94.

Chus Martínez, "How a Tadpole Becomes a Frog—Belated Aesthetics, Politics, and Animated Matter: Toward a Theory of Artistic Research," in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Chus Martínez, eds., *DOCUMENTA (13): The Book of Books, Catalog 1/3* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 46-57.

Irit Rogoff, "Becoming Research," in hoi Jina, Helen Jungyeon Ku, eds., *What Museums Do: The Curatorial in Parallax* (Seoul: National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, 2018), 39-52.

Ian Wallace, "The First documenta, 1955" in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Chus Martínez, eds., *DOCUMENTA (13), The Book of Book, Catalog 1/3* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 65-73.

Sept 28      No Class Meeting. Students are expected to work on their Case Study exhibition projects

Oct 5      The Archive

Okwui Enwezor, excerpt from "Bio-Politics, Human Rights, and the Figure of 'Truth' in Contemporary Art," in Maria Lind and Hito Steyerl, eds., *The Green Room: Reconsidering the Documentary and Contemporary Art* (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: Center for Curatorial Studies, Berlin: Sternberg, 2008), 81-102.

Sofia Hernández Chong Guy, "What about Collecting?," in Jens Hoffmann, ed., *Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating* (Milan: Mousse, 2013), 57-72.

Simon Sheikh, "Letter to Jane (Investigation of a Function)," in Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., *Curating and the Educational Turn* (London: Open Editions, 2010), 61-75.

Oct 12      The Curatorial

Lucy Cotter, "Worlding Matter: A Dialogue with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev," in Lucy Cotter, ed., *Reclaiming Artistic Research* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2019), 239-62.

Maria Lind, "The Curatorial," *Artforum* 68, no. 2 (October 2009): 103. Reprinted in Brian Wood Kuan, ed., *Selected Maria Lind Writing* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2010), 63.

Irit Rogoff, "The Expanding Field," in Jean-Paul Martinon, ed., *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 41-48.

**Each student will present ideas / progress related to work on their Case Study exhibition.**

OPTIONAL READINGS: Beatrice von Bismarck, "Constellations and Transpositions: On the Political Potential of Curatorial Practice," in Choi Jina, Helen Jungyeon Ku, eds., *What Museums Do: The Curatorial in Parallax* (Seoul: National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, 2018), 129-40.

Heman Chong, "The Book of Drafts (Part 2)," in Nadine Ghandour and Uns Kattan, eds., *The Library of Unread Books. Heman Chong and Renée Staal* (Dubai: Art Jameel, 2020), 16-22.

Terry Smith, "Okwui Enwezor. World Platforms, Exhibiting Adjacency, and the Surplus Value of Art," in Leigh Markopoulos, ed., *Talking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2015), 85-113.

Maria Lind, "Why Mediate Art?," in Jens Hoffmann, ed., *Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating* (Milan: Mousse, 2013), 85-94.

Oct 26 The Curatorial

Christa Maria Lerm-Hayes, "The Library of Unread Books: Working for the Commons with Book," in Nadine Ghandour and Uns Kattan, eds., *The Library of Unread Books. Heman Chong and Renée Staal* (Dubai: Art Jameel, 2020), 27-43.

Lucy Cotter, "Art as Non-Knowledge: A Dialogue with Sarat Maharaj," in Lucy Cotter, ed., *Reclaiming Artistic Research* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2019), 193-217.

Lucy Cotter, "Making as Translation: A Dialogue with Christian Nyampeta," in Lucy Cotter, ed., *Reclaiming Artistic Research* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2019), 221-35.

Nov 2 The Curatorial

Kouoh, Koyo, "Filling the Void: The Emergence of Independent Contemporary Art Spaces in Africa," in Koyo Kouoh, ed., *Condition Report: Symposium on Building Art Institutions in Africa* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, Dakar: Raw Material Company, 2013), 15-18.

[Dig Where You Stand](#) by independent exhibition maker Koyo Kouoh, Carnegie International, 57th edition, March 2018.

Terry Smith, "Maria Lind. Stirring the Smooth Surfaces of the World: The Curatorial and the Translocal," in Leigh Markopoulos, ed., *Talking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2015), 319-42.

Suely Rolnik, "Archive Mania," in Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Chus Martínez, eds., *DOCUMENTA (13): The Book of Books* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 176-82.

Nov 9      The Contemporary

Maria Lind, "Contemporary art is an incredible form of understanding," interview by Natalia Schipakina, in *Curatorial Forum* (September 2020).

Peter Osborne, "Introduction," and "Chapter 1: The Fiction of Contemporary Art," in Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (New York: Verso, 2013), 1-36.

Irit Rogoff, interviewed by Füsün Türetken and Nick Axel, *Volume: The Research Turn* 48 (April 2016): 116-19.

Nov 16      The Contemporary

Terry Smith, "Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. On not Having an Idea: DOCUMENTA (13)," in Leigh Markopoulos, ed., *Talking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2015), 37-59.

Carol Yinghua Lu, "Back to Contemporary: One Contemporary Ambition, Many Worlds," in Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, and Anton Vidokle, eds., *What Is Contemporary Art?* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2010), 166-83.

David Teh, "Who Cares a Lot?: Ruangrupa as Curatorship," in Ute Meta Bauer and Brigitte Oetker, eds., *SoutheastAsia Spaces of the Curatorial* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2016), 170-78.

Reinaart Vanhoe, "Ruangrupa: An Artists' Initiative from Jakarta, Indonesia," in Reinaart Vanhoe, *Also-Space, From Hot to Something Else: How Indonesian Art Initiatives Have Reinvented Networking* (Eindhoven: Onomatopoe, 2016), 25-56.

Nov 23      The Contemporary

Maria Lind, "Situating the Curatorial," in *e-flux journal* 116 (March 2021).

Dieter Roelstraete, "What Is Not Contemporary?: The View from Jena," in Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, and Anton Vidokle, eds., *What Is Contemporary Art?* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2010), 184-95.

ruangrupa (farid rakun and Leonhard Bartolomeus), "Simply Stories: Not His, Hers, or—Worse—Theories," in Carolina Rito and Bill Balaskas, eds., *Institution as Praxis: New Curatorial Directions for Collaborative Research* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2020), 136-55.

ruangrupa, in conversation with Arjen Oosterman, *Volume: The Research Turn* 48 (April 2016): 120-25.

ruangrupa, in conversation with Dena Beard, [The Lab](#), July 29, 2020. Video.

Nov 30      Case Studies: Exhibition Project Presentations

Dec 7      Case Studies: Exhibition Project Presentations

Dec 14      Case Studies: Exhibition Project Presentations / Conclusion

**Course Learning Objectives**

Students can effectively defend arguments orally in critiques, and in discussions of contemporary curating practices and theory.

Students are versed in a range of current curatorial theories, and in issues more generally affecting the field as well as the role of the curator.

Students can apply their knowledge of broader cultural and theoretical phenomena to their understanding of current art and curatorial practice, and can articulate original connections between a range of ideas.