



## Exhibitions and exhibits. Perspectives on Curating

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Spring Term 2023: 8 February – 19 May 2023

### CATEGORY

Urban and Cultural Studies

### COURSE STRUCTURE

3 contact hours à 45 min per week (14 weeks)

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

#### Time

Wednesday, 4:00 pm -6:30 pm

#### Place

t.b.a.

### COURSE LANGUAGE

English

**Language requirements** (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)  
English B2

### TARGET GROUP

International exchange students of all subjects with a strong interest in the course topic. Humboldt Perspectives Study Abroad courses are designed for undergraduate students. Master students may participate if their home university agrees. The course is designed for any student interested in learning contemporary curating strategies by engaging as cultural creators. The class is structured through readings, visits to Berlin exhibitions, including guided tours, guest talks, and working on a case study of an exhibition site related to Berlin culture, history, and politics.

### CREDITS = 6 ECTS

All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Registration on Moodle (HU's e-learning platform)

## in case of online classes

- Fully functional device (laptop, tablet, PC)
- Stable internet connection
- Software: Zoom (video/audio)
- *Recommended* hardware: external headset for better sound quality

### EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

**Preparation for lively discussions:** be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

**Assignments:** complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

**Commitment:** pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers).

**Academic guidelines:** Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

**Attendance policy:** Students must contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the lecturer.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This seminar proposes a reflection on perspectives of curating and making exhibitions in Berlin. The course involves site visits to Berlin's museums, galleries, and project spaces. The seminar provides conversations with Berlin based-curators and artists. It allows students to explore and understand the contemporary curatorial practice of the city by visiting and analyzing different institutions, reading theoretical texts, and developing a practical case study. The topics focus on urban culture, contemporary arts, and queer studies. The course is ideal for future researchers and cultural workers that want to explore the work of curatorial research and exhibition-making. The work performed by the student includes readings, group discussions, and curatorial writing strategies, and it concludes with a conceptualization of making an exhibition proposal as a final project in a group.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This BA- and MA-level course aims to develop a critical position in understanding curatorial research, taking Berlin as a case study. Students fulfill with an overview of the cultural projects of the city. The course will enable its participants to sense the city through visiting ongoing exhibitions and reflecting by making an exhibition proposal as the final project. The central discussion of the course is critically articulated contemporary issues of curating now. Previous knowledge or practical experience in curating or producing exhibitions is not required.

### **-Knowledge**

- Analyze the exhibition scene in Berlin.
- Interpret and contextualize curatorial research.
- Identify the social and political interactions in terms of curating.
- Examine the city as a cultural space for different forms of curating.
- Reflect on critical thinking as a tool for analyzing the social space contained in exhibitions.

### **-Academic/Analytical Skills**

- Critically reflect on the contemporary academic discussion.
- Analyze academic articles.
- Adopt and implement academic writing.
- Proceed and apply curatorial research and practice-based projects.

### **-Achievement**

- Produce academic work, and differentiate strategies on writing and research styles.
- Basic in writing proposal exhibition texts and spatial design.
- To be able to use alternative research methods.
- Understand and interpret cultural production by approaching exhibitions and documents like plans, cost estimations, and funding applications while enhancing academic writing and artistic research skills.
- Professional overview of curating, managing, and producing exhibitions.

### **Requirements and assessment:**

This course offers students diverse options for understanding curatorial practice in Berlin. Therefore, I strongly encourage full participation. We are holding the course in-person and online; you must join group discussions. Please be prepared to write about curatorial methods and your interest in researching and producing a proposal for an exhibition or publication. There will be reading material for each class. There will be assignments and a Final Project. Each has a different percentage of your note. Please see the grading section below.

### **In Class Expectations**

**Open invitation to Diversity:** The class is open to multiple cultures and choices. It is an inclusive space for exchange, collaboration, engagement, and participation. There is also a place for discussion and disagreement. Therefore, please come with an open mind and never bring any shaming, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, transphobia, or other hate.

**Plagiarism:** Copying someone else's ideas or words is unacceptable without properly crediting the source. Be sure you are using citations. In other cases, you will be dismissed from this course.

### **READINGS**

**Birnbaum & Wallenstein**, Daniel & Sven-Olov. (2021). **'A New Curatorial Toolbox: A Conversation'**. Part of "Breaking Glass. Spatial Fabulations & Other Tales of Representation in Virtual Reality". Pp 68-71.

**Dyangani Ose**, Elvira. (2008). **'And What Are You Looking At? Formulas for Making the Invisible Visible'**. Part of Nka, Journal of Contemporary African Art, 2008 (22-23). Pp 94-103.

**Kelly**, Caleb. (2017). **'The empty-sounding gallery'**. Part of "Gallery Sound". Print. Ex:centrics. Pp 25-29.

**Neuhart**, John & Marilyn. (1989). **'Exhibitions'**. Part of Eames Design. The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames. Published by Wilhelm Ernst & Sohn Verlag für Architektur und technische Wissenschaften, Berli. Pp 294-300; 400-404;412-414; 416-426.

**Ndikung**, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng. (2020). **'The Globalized Museum? Decanonization as Method. A Reflection in Three Act'**. Part of "In a While or Two We Will Find The Tone. Essays and Proposals Curatorial Concepts and Critiques". Archive Books. Pp 183-191.

**Obrist**, Hans Ulrich. (2014). **Ways of Curating**. Faber and Faber, Inc. New York, NY. Pp 81-87.

**Sauerländer & Schönege**, Tina & Peggy. (2019). **'The Value of Virtual Art'**. Part of "Virtual Reality. Edition Digital Culture 6" edited by Dominik Landwehr, Migros-Kulturprozent. Pp 270-278.

## ASSIGNMENT INFO

### Workload and assignments

To be granted 6 ECTS, participants will be asked to

- actively attend all sessions (a minimum of 75% attendance is required for classroom and online sessions)
- hand **exercises**, and the **final project**.

We will have several exercises using virtual tools (Moodle and Zoom.) Depending on the circumstances and regulations, virtual tours can differ from online to on-site excursions. That will be announced at the beginning of the semester.

### EXERCISES

#### **Presentations, summaries, and discussions about the required readings**

There are different mandatory readings for each week. Each participant should lead the discussion of one of the readings during the semester. The short presentation should include a summary, opinion, questions, and keywords of the reading to initiate a group discussion.

As well, each student should write a summary after each exhibition visit. (each 1000 characters long). Deadlines about presentations and summaries will be informed at the beginning of the semester.

### FINAL PROJECTS

- **Option 1** - Exhibition design proposal. In the form of a portfolio of several multimodal work performances (e.g., audio or video material, internet pages, written proposal) (without a precise length definition). Explanatory text approx. 2500 character with references and bibliography.
- **Option 2** - A written paper of approx. 25,000 characters, including spaces (bibliography not included for characters account.)

Both options will be presented within 15 minutes in the last session. The final project should be written in English. For option 1, the student should develop a "curatorial research and exhibition design proposal" using the class methodologies, including curatorial research, exhibition design, and management. The aim is to generate an exhibition proposal that includes the main text, exhibits text, spatial distribution, cost estimation, and schedule (option 1). Theoretical research in the form of an academic paper is also allowed (option 2).

For option 1, the student should present a central text of the curatorial research, a max of 10 exhibits with medium, year, photography, and small text, sketches of ideas about spatial design in the exhibition space, cost-estimation and time schedule. A layout will be provided for the student that includes word and excels files.

Suppose it is an academic essay, option 2, the written requirements are 25,000 characters, including spaces. In that case, the students must reflect on the research question, methodologies, objectives, aims, etc., till styling, citing, paraphrasing, referencing, etc.

Please be aware that the course is theory and practice-oriented. The student should engage in discussion in classes, attend excursions in the city, do small presentations during the course, and be actively working and presenting the ongoing work of the final project. We will be working in different steps to proceed and prepare the final project during the course. At the halftime of the course, we will discuss how to proceed and prepare this final project. The last seven classes of the course will be dedicated to combining theory, talks, and visits with corrections of the final projects. The project could be performed individually or in groups. These sections will cover the research question, objectives, aims, research methodologies, etc.s

## **Assessment Components**

The final grade will be composed of the abovementioned assignments and exercises.

**Contributions and summaries about the required readings** 20%

**Summaries of exhibition visit** 30%

**Final project** 50%

Failure to fulfill one of the mentioned components fail the class.

## **Teaching tools**

### **MOODLE**

Reading materials will be available via the Moodle page. The course key (password) for self-enrollment will be sent to registered students before the beginning of the semester. If you have trouble finding the course or cannot get the password on time, please write an e-mail to **samuel.perea-diaz@hu-berlin.de** and I will provide you with the password.

### **ZOOM**

We will meet in exceptional cases in Zoom.

## YOUR INSTRUCTOR

**Samuel Perea-Díaz** is an architect and researcher based in Berlin. Along with architecture and spatial design, Samuel's practice incorporates exhibition scenography, curating, and sound art. Samuel holds a degree in Architecture from the University of Seville and a MA in Sound Studies and Sonic Arts from the Berlin University of the Arts.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Block 1 / Theory on curatorial practice**

#### **Week 1: Introduction to Curating and Exhibition Making**

Including the exercises, assignments, and final project that students are responsible for throughout the semester—presentation of participants, their backgrounds, and motivations.

#### **Week 2 + 3: Introduction to Berlin Museum and Exhibitions**

In these two sessions, we will talk about Berlin's history and analyze different curatorial approaches over the last years by looking at examples of Berlin's contemporary exhibitions and museums. During these two weeks, students will be asked to do a presentation about the museum that we will visit during block 2.

#### **Week 4: Forms of Curating and strategies**

In this session, we will discuss different curatorial research formats and themes. This class aims to question how to navigate contemporary exhibitions and the emergence of new formats as Virtual Reality.

### **Block 2 Excursions**

During this part, we will explore contemporary curatorial issues by visiting different exhibitions. Some of the visits will be accompanied by guided tours. The student should document each visit in a diary submitted after each visit. The summary should include an analysis of the curatorial theme, opinion about the emergence of the topic, the relation with Berlin, and analysis of the exhibits and exhibition scenography. The summary should have approximately two pages, including photos and text.

#### **Week 5: Excursion DAAD + Bethanien Kunstraum**

#### **Week 6: Excursion SAVVY CONTEMPORARY**

#### **Week 7: Excursion Schwules Museum**

#### **Week 8: Excursion Floating University (guest talk)**

## **Block 3 Practice on curating**

### **Week 9: Curatorial Theme**

Kick-off, presentation of individual or group research theme, topic, and goals. Including feedback and corrections. Explanation of a curatorial project, including text, research questions, interviews, archiving information, project management, cost estimation, and realization.

### **Week 10: Visit Project Space (guest talk - Yelta Köm)**

Site visit to the project space Top. eV, including a guest talk with curator Yelta Köm.

### **Week 11: Curatorial Proposal**

Presentation of individual or group work-in-process. The presentation should include a max 10 exhibits, primary texts, and picture materials using the provided layout.

### **Week 12: Exhibition Design**

Presentation of individual or group work-in-process. The presentation should include spatial scenography of the exhibition, including the location of the texts in the room and the location of the exhibits. It is a mixed-media installation explaining how digital display works.

### **Week 13: Corrections**

Presentation of individual or group work-in-process. Review of all mandatory documents for final presentation.

### **Week 14: Final Presentations**

Each student or group should present for 15 minutes their project, and this will be followed by 10 minutes of Q&A.

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The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 18 June 2022