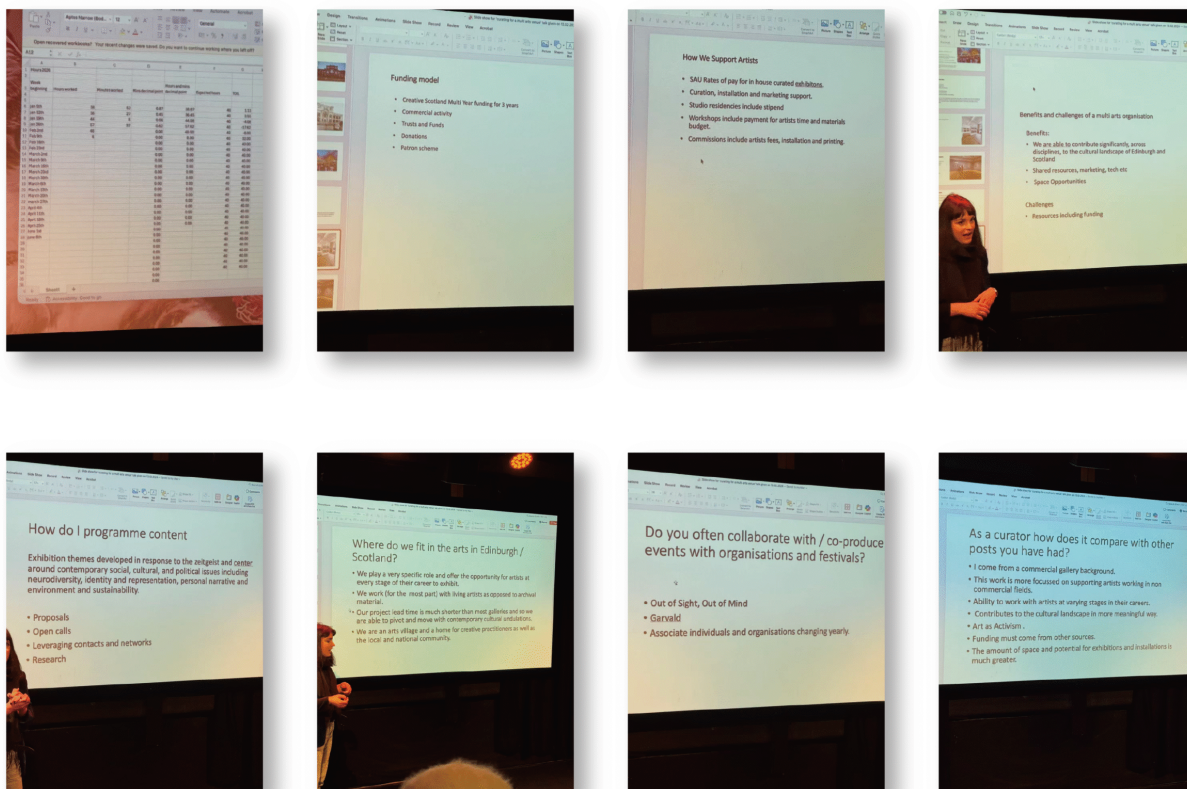


WEEK 4: Institutional Reality and Curatorial Ideals

Overview

In the fourth week of the course, we visited Summerhall Arts. Sam Chapman will give a presentation on Summerhall Arts as a multi-arts curatorial space. Sam's presentation covered viewpoints from aspects such as funding, artist support, and institutional characteristics. Meanwhile, the curatorial collective conducted a peer review of the exhibition themes and curatorial ideas of the members, and through collective decision-making, they determined the group name "No Heroes", and formulated the Curatorial Collective Manifesto and statement.

The Execution in Institutional Reality



Sam Chapman's Presentation
Photos by Tianshun Zhao

▪ Multi-source Funding

Through a combination of public funding, commercial activities, foundations, donations and donor programs, the institution can maintain its sustainable operation and relative independence.

▪ Artist Centred Support

In accordance with industry payment standards, we provide remuneration, production and professional support to artists in exhibitions, residencies, workshops and commissioned projects.

▪ Flexible Multi-Arts Structure

Shared spaces and resources, along with shorter project

cycles, enable institutions to respond quickly to cultural changes and support interdisciplinary practices.

- **Non-Commercial Positioning**

Unlike commercial galleries, it focuses on supporting non-commercial, experimental and socially engaged art, emphasizing the public and action-oriented of art.

The Group Collection of Curatorial Ideals

Curatorial Collective Manifesto

01 Democratic Participation

We uphold equal participation in all curatorial decisions, fostering open and transparent discussions.

02 Mutual Support and Sharing

We share resources, knowledge, and ideas regardless of differing goals, enhancing collective practice through collaboration.

03 Shared Goals and Compromise

We set collective goals together and embrace compromise when necessary to serve the greater good of the group.

04 Respect and Critical Thinking

We respect all viewpoints while maintaining critical thinking, encouraging constructive feedback on ideas and processes.

05 Collaborative Sub-Groups

Through working in sub-groups and combining diverse ideas, we create richer and more dynamic curatorial projects.

06 Encouraging Diverse Voices

We actively invite and value different perspectives, strengthening our curatorial work through inclusivity and multifaceted practices.

07 Mapping Abilities

We identify and map members' skills to allocate tasks effectively, enhancing collective efficiency.

08 Active Listening

We prioritize listening to understand different perspectives, fostering deeper reflection and creative exchange.

09 Collective Celebration

We celebrate achievements together, recognizing each member's contribution to the collective effort.

10 Flexibility and Adaptation

We remain open to evolving plans and ideas, ensuring our curatorial practice adapts to new insights and circumstances.

No
Heroes

Statement

We take the name No Heroes to reject human-centered curatorial authority and the heroic narratives attached to curatorship. We do not produce idols, nor do we submit to predetermined standards.

Confronting the performative condition of non-heroic ethics within a technologically overloaded and performance-driven society, we seek to release curating from the formal constraints of the “myth of healing.”

By acknowledging bias and prioritizing a collective power, we remain skeptical and clear-minded within a constantly shifting reality. We conceive the exhibition as a temporary open site in which creators and viewers jointly assume uncertainty, continuously dismantling preconceived perspectives in order to interrupt the solidification of collective paradigms.

No Heroes Curatorial Collective

• Anti-authoriality

Inspired by Roland Barthes' “The Death of the Author” (1977),

curating is no longer regarded as the expression of an individual's intention, but rather as the temporary occupation of a discourse position.

▪ **Collective Subjectivity**

In response to Haraway's (1988) concept of situated knowledge and Latour's (2005) theory of actor-networks, the curatorial subject is composed of people, institutions, objects, and relationships.

▪ **Critical Co-existence**

In relation to Chantal Mouffe's (2021) concept of antagonistic public space, curating is understood as a political arena that accommodates conflicts and differences, rather than a consensus-producing machine.

▪ **Anti-performative Logic**

Based on the performance social critique by Byung-Chul Han (2015) and Andrea Fraser's (2005) analysis of institutionalized artistic value, we reject the measurement of curatorial value by output and visibility.

Thoughts on Personal Curatorial Projects



KV DUONG, Bomb Pond (Crater), 2025, Acrylic on latex, painted wooden stretcher 198 x 100 cm (x2),

- DUONG KV is a Vietnamese artist born in Ho Chi Minh City and currently working in the UK.
- He creates using latex, evoking the image of rubber plantations during French colonial rule in Vietnam. In “Bomb Pond”, he traced the scars of bomb craters during the Vietnam War, which have now turned into ponds, serving to awaken collective memories of the war.
- He also possesses the identity attributes of the southern part of Vietnam and the global south.

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WEEK 3: Curatorial Ethics & Practice Aspects

Overview

In the third week of the curatorial course, into the research aspect, curatorial ethics is not a set of fixed rules, but an ongoing, situational practice influenced by power, relationships, labor, politics, and responsibility in every curatorial decision. On the practical level, James Clegg began his discussion from the conceptual origin of the exhibition to

the specific skills, covering aspects such as work analysis, target audience, exhibition budget, and required skills.

The Exploring of Curatorial Ethics

Text / Essay	Core Concern	Curatorial Ethics Understood	Role of Curator	Key Contribution	Critical Reflection
Curating with Care (Krasny & Perry, 2023)	Social & ecological care curatorial labour	Relational ethics curating as care maintenance interdependence	Care-giver mediator of relationships long-term respons holder	Reframes curating as ethical labour grounded in care, ecology, affect and social relations	Can "care" become a moralised discourse that masks structural exploitation and unpaid labour?
Curatorial Activism (Reilly, 2018)	Structural inequality in art history and institutions	Responsibility ethics curating as political and corrective action	Activist, advocate mediator of relationships rewriter of dominant narratives	Rejects curatorial neutrality asserts ethical obligation to address exclusion and injustice	Risks reducing ethics to political stanceor instrumentalising art through identity correction
Ethics of Curating (MengShi Chen, 2021)	Ethical problem of speaking for / about others	Ethics of the Other curating as an ethical relation to alterity	Self-reflexive mediator position-aware interpreter	Centers ethics on positionality, authority, and relational responsibility	Strong philosophically but less attentive to institutional and structural constraints
Curating as Ethics (Martinon, 2020)	De-institutionalisation and expansion of curating	Ethics as ontology curating itself is an ethical act	Ethical decision-maker bearer of responsibility for selection	Radically redefines curating beyond rules or codes into ongoing ethical judgment	Abstraction may weaken attention to concrete political, social, and institutional power
Instituting Feminism (On Curating 52, 2021)	Feminist ethics absorbed and neutralised by institutions	Institutional ethics ethics embedded in structures and labour conditions	Institutional critic and structural reformer	Shifts ethics from exhibition content to organisational practices and working conditions	Feminist ethics risk becoming mainstreamed, depoliticised, or rhetorically performative

Drew by Tianshun Zhao

- Curatorial ethics is non-standard and uncertain.
- In my opinion, this is a non-curator-centered concept.
- When "ethics" becomes the dominant discourse in the field of curating, is it losing its true critical power over power, institutions and capital?
- This requires emphasizing the positionality of the curator.

The Suppose of Curatorial Practice



Photos by Tianshun Zhao

I plan to research and plan an exhibition project focusing on **contemporary art from Vietnam**. This idea originated from an ECA lecture last semester, where **Vietnamese artist Mai Nguyen-Long** presented his creations that revolve around the history of the Vietnam War and handmade ceramics.



Lam Na's residency at the open studio "After the Great Harmony, Qian Ting Enters Dreams"

VAC Hanoi, from June 13th to July 6th, 2025

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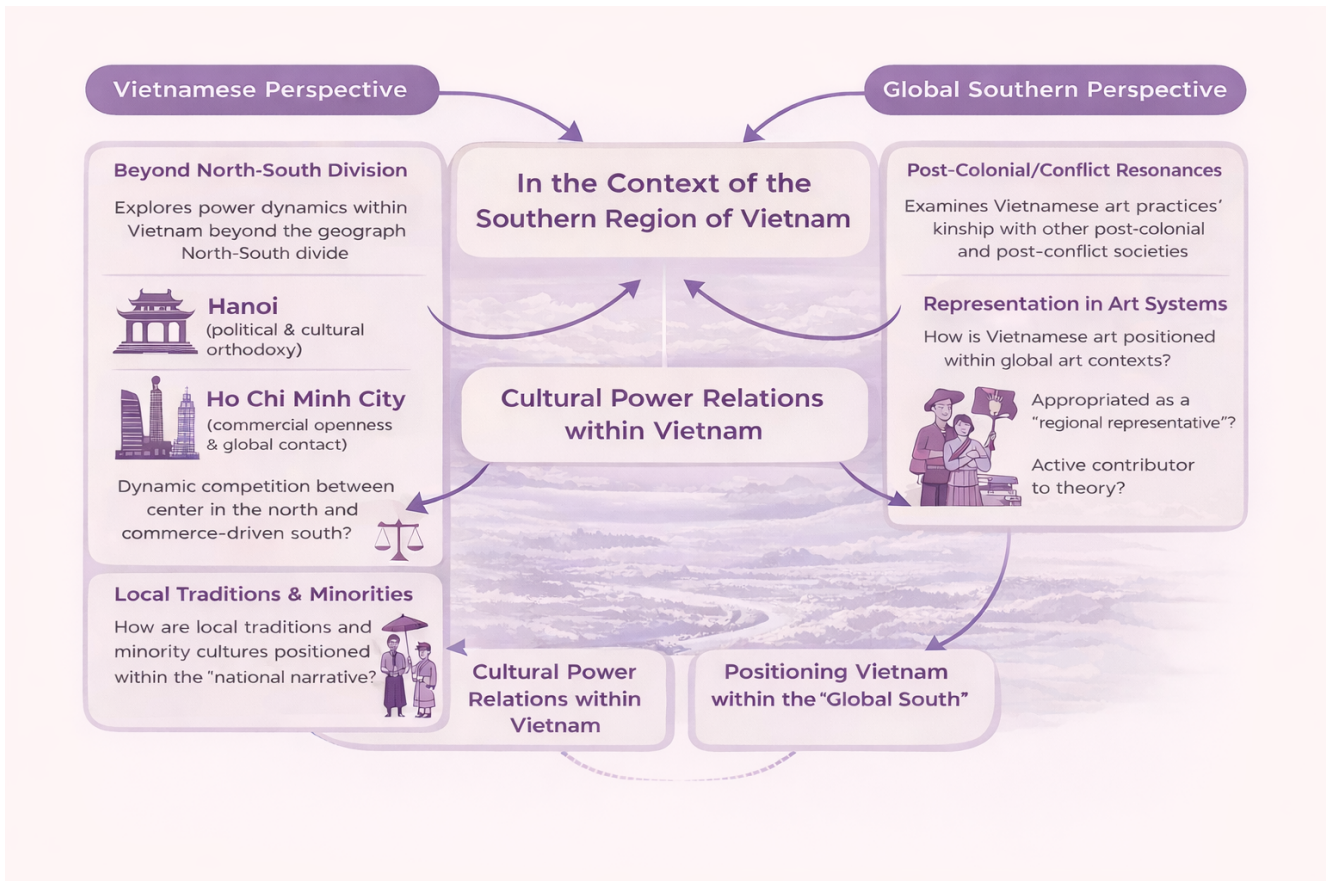


Tang Jianrong (KV Duong) is exhibiting at the Open Studio "Welcome Home"

VAC Hanoi, from September 3rd to 14th, 2025

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In my opinion, Vietnamese art is still in a state of waiting to be discovered at present. The emergence of the **Vietnam Art Collection** has made people start to pay attention to the parallelism of Vietnamese narratives. The **local narratives and those of the overseas dispersed groups** (such as Mai Nguyen-Long) jointly shape the image of Vietnam.



Southernness of Contemporary Vietnam

Image by: Tianshun Zhao

- **Research Path:** The Domestic Southernness and Global Southernness of Vietnamese Art
- **Research Perspective:** Local Narratives and Overseas Dispersed Narratives (Vietnam War, French Colonization)
- Examine the curatorial **presentation methods and narrative frameworks** of Vietnamese art in major international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and Documenta.
- Place Vietnamese contemporary art within the **theoretical discourse of post-colonialism and global south**, and investigate its international positioning and agency.

At the same time, from the perspective of the recent hot topic of **southernness**, how are the differences in the representation of contemporary Vietnamese art in the **Global South and the Domestic South**? We all know about Vietnam's north-south issue.

Can it be extended from its domestic southernness to the context of the Global South? This might be what I want to explore in the exhibition.

And given the current state of Vietnamese politics, there has been a shift from a balance between the north and south to a balance among the various institutions. **What impact will this have on cultural tendencies?**

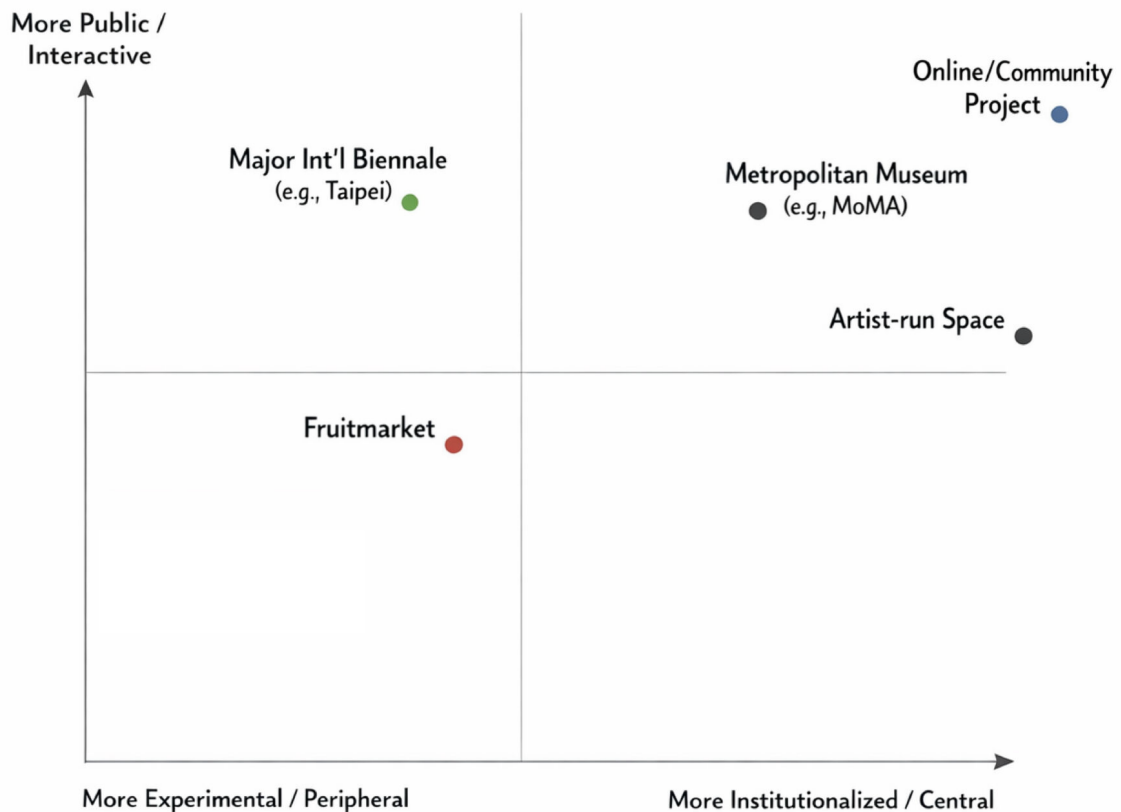
WEEK 2: Diversity of Curating Platforms & Organisations

Overview

In the second week of the curatorial course, curating was presented as moving towards cultural practices with social participation and political reflection through diverse platforms and organizational forms, by critical perspectives and collective collaboration. In the Peer discussion, we discussed “Visual Arts Exhibitionary Complex” at the Fruitmarket Gallery, and in the afternoon, we added Gabi’s Group to the discussion, exploring “The Indigenous Curatorial Collective”.

The VAEC Analysis of Fruitmarket Gallery

Positioning Fruitmarket within the VAEC: Institutionalization vs. Public Interaction



The Positioning Fruitmarket within the VAEC

Image by: Tianshun Zhao

- A contemporary art gallery that is open to the public **for free**.
- The core of its curatorial work: continuously establishing a space **between artistic production and the public**.
- Through David Sherry's solo exhibition of video works and the annual artist book fair, it can be seen that its focus is not only on the selection of artists, but also on designing **diverse forms of interaction**. The exhibition extends into live performances, and the book fair expands into workshops, making it a complex space that combines production, display, and social functions, reflecting **continuous experimentation with public forms**.
- The chart shows that it achieves a balance between

institutional stability and public openness, and directly influences the curatorial decisions.

- As a registered charity organization, free access has shaped the project content and participation methods, prompting the curators to prioritize **accessibility and community connection**.
- The inspiration lies in **transforming space infrastructures** such as bookstores and coffee shops into relational projects.
- However, due to the lack of consideration for **the impact of different funding sources and budget allocations**, it can only indicate that it has reached a **certain balance from the perspective of VAEC**, rather than being the best example.

Thinking as a Curatorial Collective



Drew by Tianshun Zhao
Text Posted by Houde Chen & Tianshun Zhao
Information Collected from Curating(2025-2026), CAT in Uniniversity of Edinburgh
<https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVGO4j0Ro=>

- Builds an ecosystem to **support indigenous curators** through various forms like podcasts, gatherings and

publications.

- The Core Decisions: fostering a **professional community and promoting critical dialogue**, seeking plans for art producers with indigenous identities to have more opportunities to present their works to the public, and providing institutional support (Let Wanda speak).
- Inspires my personal research: how to build a **sustainable and specific creative community** with a **limited budget**.
- I will draw on its **ecological construction logic**, but shift to a more lightweight form, such as planning a series of podcasts combined with mini roundtable discussions, focusing on documenting the formation process of **conversations and relationship networks**, which will serve as the core of my curatorial practice.

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