

25 The changing role of the public in curation

written by Aobing Wang

The topic of this week's lecture is public projects in exhibitions. My undergraduate major is related to this, and I have certain experience in the design and implementation of public exhibition projects. However, in my previous experience, "public projects" are very rigid forms, such as lectures and workshops, which are very common forms. Therefore, I am looking forward to receiving some explanations on public exhibition activities from different cultural contexts. Gabi's lecture met my expectations. What she narrated told me that the Public Programme is not only an activity to support exhibition, but also a part of the exhibition itself. The Public is not only the audience to come to the exhibition, they can become the curators of the exhibition project and the co-producers of knowledge.

In my previous understanding, the public project of an exhibition is a one-way output of art education activities to participants. However, Gabi mentioned in the class that one of the responsibilities of curators is to create a truly meaningful public space, which made me realize that public projects should not be merely art education exported to the outside world, but rather the construction of educational relations negotiated with participants. This updated my consistent understanding of exhibition Public projects, and also changed my planning of the Public Programme in my personal curatorial projects. Originally, I planned to hold two simple art creation workshops as the public project of the exhibition, but now I am considering reducing the activity to one, recruiting participants in advance, collecting what they want to discuss or learn through the activity, and then further designing the activity (of course, I will prepare the basic framework of the activity in advance). In this process,

participants will no longer passively accept the content of the listener, but actively express their understanding of the exhibition, become the co-creator of the exhibition content.

23 The role of publishing in curating

written by Aobing Wang

The topic of this week's lecture is "Publishing as curatorial practice". Before that, my understanding of publications in curating exhibitions has always been a kind of auxiliary and extension of exhibitions, such as guide manuals, artist interview records, exhibition record books, etc., whose main function is to archive, disseminate or summarize exhibition experience. But this week's lecture gave me a new understanding of the role of "publishing" in curating, and the publication itself can be an independent and complete curatorial exhibition.

The lecture began with an introduction to Transmission Gallery's *The Phone is the Keyhole*; *The Penpot*, *The Heart*, published in collaboration with Ruine Munchen. I thought it was just a documentation of an exhibition, only to find it was not a record, but a complete curatorial project. The publication constructs a non-linear, decentralized publishing logic through artist interviews, in-committee conversations, and other textual content. This is different from what I used to understand as a publication, which does not seek to explain or summarize a certain concept, but always maintains an open, inclusive, unfinished state. Another case, *Give Birth to Me Tomorrow*, gave me a new understanding of the form of publication. Like the previous case, it is not a publication

in the traditional sense, but a multi-frequency curatorial form composed of sound, image, moment capture and connotation of emotions. The audience can enter and leave repeatedly as they read. The publication is constantly creating openness and malleability, making its content a device that can “breathe.”

17 How to arrange time in an exhibition

written by Aobing Wang

This week's lecture focuses on “Time-Based Media” (such as experimental film, video art, installation, immersive experience, performance video, etc.), in which Marcus analyzes how artists use these mediums to structure their exhibitions and shape their unique viewing mechanisms. “Time” is a realistic factor that cannot be ignored in curating exhibitions. How to control the rhythm of time and let the audience experience some transformation in the passage of time is one of the core issues that need to be considered in curating exhibitions.

Images, sounds, performances and other fluid works are not a single object, but more like an event, and these works may not have a clear beginning and end point, which requires the curator to no longer just arrange static objects, but to arrange the dynamic rhythm of time. In *Thoughts About Curating Moving Images*, Erika Balsom proposes that images are not suitable for frames; they are like a fluid that needs to be shaped by curators. I can't agree more with that. What a curator needs to do when arranging “Time-Based Media” in an exhibition is not only to display the content, but also to

design the audience's viewing experience.

16 One day fieldwork trip in Glasgow

written by Aobing Wang

On March 5, all of us went to Glasgow for a field trip with the purpose of studying and observing some practical curatorial methods and discourse. Since my exhibition project is still in the process of thinking about the ideal site and exhibition layout, I focused more on observing the site characteristics and exhibition layout planning of the museum during the field trip.

HunTERian Art Gallery

As part of the University of Glasgow, Hunterian Art Gallery has a strong academic atmosphere. The exhibition hall on the first floor of the venue is a very classic way of traditional academic exhibition, which may be related to the fact that most of the exhibits are oil paintings, prints and other paintings.



One of the galleries on the first floor of the Hunterian Art Gallery

The arrangement of these two landscapes is very interesting. The painting on the left is bright and full of the light of the day, depicting the harbor scene; The painting on the right shows the night atmosphere, with deep colors and an orange sun or moon. This contrast enhances the narrative of the exhibition and makes it easier for the audience to notice the differences in light, color and atmosphere between the two paintings. The two works complement each other, forming a visual comparison and dialogue. In my opinion, this kind of arrangement of comparing works of similar themes can lead the audience to think about different expressions of the same theme, such as how to express time and emotion through color and composition.



One of the galleries on the first floor of the Hunterian Art Gallery

In the exhibition hall on the first floor, this arrangement of many paintings of different sizes can also be seen everywhere. This way of display breaks the strict sense of symmetry and makes the arrangement of the exhibition more dynamic. During the tour, Kristeen asked us a question: Why are some of the frames on the walls empty and there are no paintings? Most of the students thought it was a painting being lent out or maintained, and I was no exception. But in retrospect, if this

was the curator's intention, what was it for? I think this may be a way for curators to try to increase the audience's participation in the exhibition. The empty frame itself, as part of the artwork, allows the audience to imagine what it should show. This open way of display can encourage the audience to actively think about the connotation of the work, rather than passively accept the information.

Tramway

Tramway is a former tram garage that has since been converted into a contemporary art center. The architectural style and spatial character of the venue itself retains many of the original structural and industrial features of a streetcar garage, such as soaring metal columns, exposed ceilings and wide-span open Spaces.



The naked deconstruction of the venue

The ceiling's heavily exposed walls, black metal beams and pipes echo Tramway's past as a tram garage. This unadorned design preserves the building's original appearance to the greatest extent possible, allowing visitors to experience the venue's past while visiting contemporary art exhibitions on Tramway. Tramway's curatorial concept of displaying avant-garde and experimental art works in historical space is in

line with the design language of preserving historical features, which can make the audience feel the sense of dialogue in time.



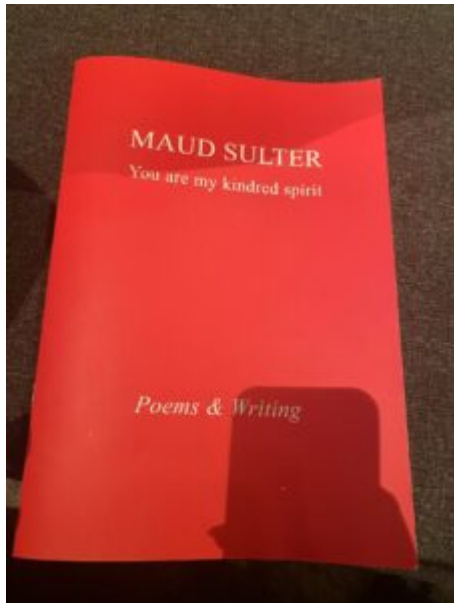
Exhibition space on the first floor of Tramway



A small white box space in the exhibition

Tramway's historic predecessor gave this exhibition space a very high height and wide open area, allowing the curators to arrange large-scale installations in this space. There is no fixed wall structure in the exhibition hall except for the four sides, so the curator can adjust the layout according to different curatorial needs. In the exhibition we visited, the curators did not use many fixed partition walls, but used the original metal columns, scattered small white box Spaces and

hanging translucent screens to divide the space between the exhibits. I think this has something to do with the fact that the exhibition is mostly video art and immersive installations. The multiple layers of walls and cloth add a sense of atmosphere to the display of video works. When the audience moves freely through the space, their shadows may also appear on the curtain or the wall, which also adds to the interactive nature of the exhibition.



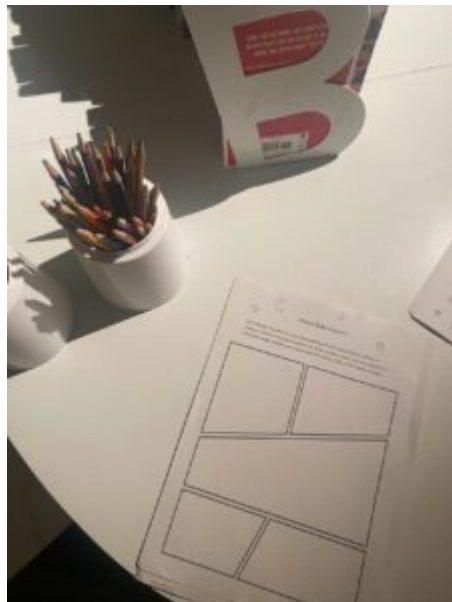
A collection of texts from the exhibition

As part of an immersive audiovisual installation, Maud Sulter loops recordings of herself reading her poems throughout the exhibition and organizes the texts into volumes for the audience to read. The extensive exhibition space on Tramway's ground floor makes the sound installation a more immersive experience for visitors.

Gallery of Modern Art GoMA



Banners hanging from the ceiling in the museum



An interactive area in the exhibition

As the building is a former merchant residence, the interior structure of GoMA does not have a very large exhibition hall like Tramway, but a very clear zoning for the exhibition. GoMA's moving line planning is more clear, and most of the visitors are guided by circular or linear paths to get a complete viewing experience. In addition, due to the limited indoor lighting, GoMA's lighting arrangement is very flexible. For example, in an audio work on the fourth floor of the exhibition hall, GoMA uses lights to frame the area where the

sound can be heard on both sides. GoMA's exhibition has a lot of interactive areas, basically using a piece of art as a sample, allowing the audience to imitate the content of the creation. There is also a desk in the center of the exhibition hall on the fourth floor, where visitors can read some books related to the exhibition.

Summary

After visiting three galleries of different styles in Glasgow, I understand the influence of different exhibition Spaces on the presentation of art works, as well as the considerations of curators in the layout of exhibition Spaces, the use of lighting and the audience experience. After comparing the exhibition strategies of the three galleries, I came up with several questions about the exhibition. The first is how does the exhibition space affect the way the audience sees it? The traditional academic exhibition hall of Hunter Gallery can present works intuitively, but it may limit the active exploration of the audience. The open space of Tramway gives the audience a flexible way of viewing the exhibition, but it is slightly weak in the aspect of structured narrative. GoMA encourages the viewer to follow the logic of a linear narrative, but some installations may be restrained by the constraints of the site. The form of the exhibition space should not become the constraint of the content, but should guide the audience to find a balance between immersion and logic through flexible curation to obtain the best viewing experience. Secondly, how does the lighting arrangement affect the shaping of the exhibition atmosphere? The light of Hunter Gallery is uniform and direct, which can show the details of the works to the greatest extent, but it is slightly boring. The exhibition hall of Tramway uses a local light source to create a dim environment, which enhances the immersive feeling of the exhibition, but may cause inconvenience for the audience to read the text and some details of the works. GoMA's lighting system is flexible and able to balance the needs of different exhibition contents. Exhibition lighting is

not only an auxiliary tool, but also a part of the narrative means of the exhibition. When designing lighting, curators should carefully analyze the characteristics of works, rather than simply apply standardized programs. Thirdly, how to balance the academic and interactive nature of the exhibition? The Hunter Gallery is undoubtedly the most academic of the three, but hardly interactive; Tramway's exhibitions are interactive but lack the academic framework in the traditional sense. GoMA tries to balance the two, but still prefers static viewing in the exhibition. The exhibition should not be just a static display board of works, but a field where academic knowledge and interactive experience of the audience can be blended. Finally, whether it is a traditional academic art museum or an experimental art space transformed by abandoned factories, stations and other buildings, it is necessary to consider how to make the audience participate in the exhibition more actively, break the single static viewing, and make the exhibition truly become a communication bridge between the audience and the work, the author and the space.

09 A space dominated by artists themselves

written by Aobing Wang

The lecture in this week's class was explained by Adam, which mentioned the concept of Artist-Run Spaces. Adam introduced that "artists-run Spaces" is essentially a curatorial platform initiated by and for Artists. Their purpose is not to cater to the needs of the market or art institutions, but to build a relationship network for the artist community, and to exist more as a tool for cooperation and expression. Taking the non-hierarchical structure in Transmission as an example, Adam

mentioned Artists-Run Spaces represents more of a sense of autonomy and flexibility, not just to display one's work, but to allow artists to form a support system for each other. In addition, Adam also emphasized the social responsibility of Artists-Run Spaces; Giving voice to marginalized groups; Actively break the exclusivity in the art system; Practice true inclusion and equity. I am deeply touched that curating exhibitions is not only about displaying works, but also about building a mechanism for the generation of certain cultural discourse. Who can get in? Whose voice can be heard? In my opinion, these issues are more important than form and aesthetics.

My personal curatorial project is stuck on a very real problem: there is only a temporary space. This week's lecture broke my previous inherent thinking about art exhibitions, and also provided me with a new idea to solve this problem, which is to transform this temporary into the characteristics of the exhibition, and plan an exhibition with decentralized and non-linear narrative. Adam also mentioned that the meaning of Artists-Run Spaces is not to make perfect exhibitions. Uncertainty, incompleteness and lack of professionalism are the normal characteristics of curating exhibitions. Therefore, the process of curating exhibitions is also a process of constant experimentation and repeated attempts. This gives the courage to go deeper into personal curatorial projects.

06 “Space” is not just a venue for curation

written by Aobing Wang

This week's lecture focused on ATLAS Arts. Frances introduced

this contemporary art organization to us and explained to us how curators should realize exhibition content as the carrier of stories, artworks and local culture through practice based on three representative projects of ATLAS Arts. The art projects of ATLAS Arts do not directly display certain objects to the audience, and they do not regard these contents as available resources in an overbearing manner when telling local cultural memories. Through their examples, I gradually began to understand the concept of “place-responsive curating”.

I am deeply inspired by ATLAS Arts’ curatorial thinking. They start not from “what I want to say,” but from “what the land is willing to say.” Lauren Gault’s work “CUINNEAG/BUCKET” in the lecture was very special. Using only an empty basin and a fossil to represent time and landscape, it does not attempt to interpret local cultural symbols, but communicates through the regional memory attached to the object. And the curatorial method of place-responsive curating gives me new ideas about my personal curatorial projects. Non-mainstream urban space is not a kind of “complementary culture”, these Spaces themselves have their own unique regional cultural memory. This reminds me that curating is not a simple application of curating methods in a certain space, perhaps it should be a reflection of the dialogue between regions and curators.

05 Sleep Walkers’ discussion and reflection on curation

written by Aobing Wang

Last week’s discussion focused on the ethics of curating and the innovation of curatorial forms. In the morning we will

focus on Jean-Paul Martinon and Maura Reilly from the pre-class readings. We first exchanged our understanding and feelings about the core points of both. Martinon's views reveal the deeper responsibility of curators as "cultural midwives." When the exhibition space is no longer limited to the "White Cube", but spreads to a wider range of shopping malls, parks and even virtual platforms such as social media, can the ethical issues of curation still rely solely on the norms of art institutions? Reilly's "curatorial activism" infuses a manifesto for curatorial ethics with a program of action: she argues that when 80% of museum collections are still dominated by white, male artists, curators are complicit in "open dialogue." Based on her views, we have a new thinking question in the discussion: What kind of curatorial form can make the cultural subject of the exhibition directly participate in the narrative construction, instead of being "represented" by occupying the right of narrative subject? After active discussion among the team members, we believe that the seemingly opposite perspectives of the two scholars are actually pointing to the ethics of contemporary curatorial work. On the one hand, the openness of flow is on the other hand, the urgency of change is on the other hand. Martinon uses speculation to structure the "ontological dilemma" of contemporary curatorial ethics. Reilly's activism directly addresses longstanding structural oppression in the art world.

The afternoon discussion revolved around our "The Sleepwalkers" group's own curatorial manifesto and expected curatorial form. JL first focuses on some indicative formats of contemporary curatorial exhibitions. During the group discussion, we will first discuss the group's declaration of curatorial ethics. Since we want every sleepwalker to participate in the group discussion, each person can only contribute one idea. I propose Accessibility & Openness, that is, art should be open to all, and we need to consider multi-sensory and digital accessibility strategies to ensure that exhibitions are friendly and open to people of different

abilities, languages and backgrounds. The opinions put forward by other students are also very interesting, such as Genuineness – sincerity and consistency between the works and the curatorial ideas. Although we are sleepwalkers, what we do is sincere and real, maintaining the original intention of artistic expression and maintaining the depth and intention of the works. We then discussed the curatorial forms of interest. Nonlinear Narratives and Multiple Storylines have been proposed, that is, visitors do not need to follow a single set tour order, but form completely different experiences of the exhibition according to their own moving routes. After the discussion we were inspired by a common item called a kaleidoscope. We assume that the exhibition has many entrances and exits, put an installation art in the center of the exhibition that can be reached in all directions, and then set the surrounding path into a similar style of passageway, and the audience can randomly choose a different route to enter. Of course, this scheme is still not perfect enough and needs further discussion and improvement. In the following courses, we will continue to supplement the details to support this scheme.

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04 Unconventional exhibition

space

written by Aobing Wang

* Cover image: Fran Cottell, Collecting Time: the Living and the Dead, 2005

This week we were privileged to hear from Fran Cottell. In the pre-class readings, I learned that Fran has launched a series of art installations and performance projects under the theme of “House Project” since 2001, among which the work that impressed me deeply was her 2005 work Collecting Time: the Living and the Dead, which Fran himself described in detail in his lecture. In this work, Fran changes the layout of the room to encourage the audience to re-experience the everyday environment from a non-everyday perspective. She regards her home as the field of an overall installation, not only paying attention to the work itself, but also paying attention to every detail in the field, such as life dynamics, architectural structure, and the audience’s movement and interaction in the space.

Fran’s “House Projects” break the traditional solidification of art exhibition space, transform the private family space into an exhibition space with a critical perspective, build the connection between art practice and daily life, and emphasize the interaction between art exhibition content and reality rather than the material properties of the exhibition itself. I think this is a curatorial practice that is very much in line with contemporary curatorial trends, so I have tried to combine the theoretical framework therein with the curatorial theme of “Dreams and the subconscious” (which, as I wrote last week, is the theme I would eventually like to pursue). Within the framework of the exhibition “Dreams and the Unconscious Mind”, Fran’s series of House Projects can be read as a kind of spatial psychoanalysis that simulates the fragmented, non-linear perceptual logic of dreams. As Fred mentioned, dreams are the manifestation of people’s

subconscious desires after they are operated through the displacement and condensation mechanism.

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03 Changeable curatorial mode

written by Aobing Wang

This week's lecture discusses how contemporary curatorial platforms can transcend the limitations of traditional exhibition Spaces to reflect their functional diversity and political tension through several examples. What impressed me most was proppaNOW, an organization composed of Australian Aborigine, in which Gordon Hookey's work touched me very much. This flag with yellow heart is not only a symbolic re-creation, but also a strategy to reshape "radical" through vision. It retains the political nature of the Aboriginal flag while adding the personal emotions of the artist. From this, I realized that the curator organization is not a passive space container, but also a platform for curators to share their own values.

Another case that struck me is SVAOs. This small-scale, localized and participatory curatorial mode reminds me of a community project I participated in when I was an undergraduate. The main content is that our students cooperate with local businesses and neighbors in the community to plan exhibition activities that can show community culture. At the same time, this flexible curatorial mode also gave me a preliminary idea for the curation of the final assignment, even if I did not choose a specific theme: I think my personal curatorial project should be an open, multi-party co-creation place where problems can be accommodated and discussed, rather than a platform for my unilateral output of conclusions.

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