

Week 3-Using Edinburgh as a mirror, we examine the invisible boundaries of public spaces.

Category: Uncategorised

written by s2814160 | 2 February 2026



This week's course, through further study of exhibition ethics and the inspiring personal insights of Talbot Rice gallery's curator, James, on exhibition curation, has led me to have a deeper reflection on my exhibition project. I intend to clarify my third-week exhibition thinking by answering the five questions posed by James in class.



Princes Street,
Edinburgh, 2025

1. **Why exhibit?** After reflecting on the exhibition form I conceived last week, I chose the structural imbalance of equality rights in public spaces in Edinburgh as the exhibition theme. This is not an abstract discussion but a reality confirmed by official policies. The new policy of the city council to [increase tourist taxes](#) starting from July 2026 has acknowledged the burden on public spaces caused by tourism growth. The implicit transfer of space usage rights during the Edinburgh Arts Festival also made the invisible boundaries of public spaces real. Inspired by the concept of “rejecting political silence” discussed in class, I hope to use art as a medium to awaken public reflection on the ownership of public space. This is a discussion without a standard answer.
2. **What makes the exhibition interesting?** I set the

exhibition route map as an autonomous check-in form, marking a point for each location visited. The interpretation rights are returned to the audience. And using the Edinburgh public transportation network as a connection form, a daily pass for public transportation can cover the entire route, which is both suitable for the relatively complete accessibility of the public transportation system in the local area and makes the exhibition an immersive experience. Taking a ride on the bus itself is also a way to perceive the power of public space.

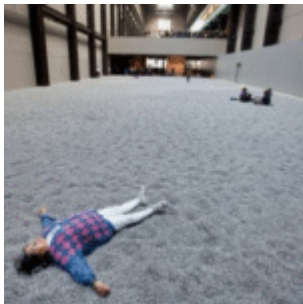
3. **Related to which main issues?** As Edinburgh is a local manifestation of the universal problem of “global public space equity”, its predicament is not an isolated case but a common contradiction of tourist cities worldwide. I hope to use Edinburgh as an entry point to explore the question of “for whom should public space serve”, rather than limiting the complaint to a single city.
4. **Who is the target audience?** The core target audience I set is local residents who have experienced the changes in space rights. They are the most sensitive to the changes in space rights. Next is foreign tourists, who can discover the neglected boundaries from a stranger’s perspective. At the same time, students, researchers, and the disabled community who are concerned about social justice are also welcome.
5. **The set criteria and moral red lines?** The moral line I set for myself is not to extend to sensitive political issues, not to spectacleize any group, and to reject ethical compromise. In terms of criteria, all exhibition points are adapted to public transportation and accessibility needs; the logic of choosing public exhibition points and the sources of evidence; equal presentation of all audience feedback, and rejection of value judgment. This is also the thinking I gained from

the discussion on “dynamic balance of power and inclusiveness” in this week’s class.

Week 2-Preliminary Exploration of the Roaming Outdoor Exhibition

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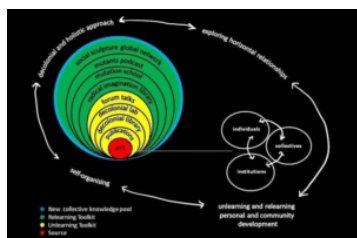


During the Week 2 course, I noticed several key words. Here, I would like to share with you my thoughts on the deep connection of phrases, some issues I discovered, and some inspirations for my own curatorial ideas.

The first one is “dematerialization”, which marks a shift in artistic practice. Art is no longer confined to physical objects but focuses more on concepts and processes. This transformation has opened up new channels for artists and groups that have been marginalized in the traditional art system to express themselves, and to some extent, has loosened the inherent “central-periphery” model.

Then there is “Contemporaneity”, a theory that precisely depicts the current diverse but unequal global situation. This

complex reality has given rise to new forms, such as organized Networks, and some large group exhibitions, especially international ones, respond to the challenges brought by globalization by establishing decentralized connections.



Counterspace:
Cultural Strategy
by Cristina
Morales, London,
2021

“Decoloniality” and “Intersectionality” are important tools for implementing ideas. Platforms, such as [“Counterspace”](#), not only build a decolonisation toolkit and resource network, but also want to fundamentally change the power structure of the art world.

Based on these understandings, I also raised a question for further reflection. When to go to a settlement as the core concept of curatorial practice, such as [“Documenta Fifteen”](#), into a large institutional framework, how can such “radical” ideas avoid being diluted by institutionalization? How can one effectively collaborate with mainstream art institutions to expand their influence without losing critical thinking?

In the afternoon group discussion, everyone shared their curatorial ideas. I also shared mine, although it’s still just an unfinished concept. I want to create a new style of exhibition viewing. My initial idea is to hold the exhibition outdoors, create a check-in map and distribute it to the audience, and connect multiple exhibition sites into a route. The audience can experience each recommended route one by one,

just like completing a travel list, or they can design their own route. And finally reach the destination, connect the routes to complete your own storyline. This can enhance the audience's sense of participation and autonomy, and at the same time guide them to think actively rather than passively accept preconceived viewpoints.



Ai Weiwei, Sunflower Seeds,
Tate Modern, London, 2010

Finally, when looking for an artist for the class discussion in week 3, I noticed that Ai Weiwei's work "[Sunflower Seeds](#)". This work, which was exhibited in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in London in 2010, has greatly inspired me. It explores issues such as the individual and the collective, labor and power, with 100 million handcrafted ceramic sunflower seeds. The artist's placement of the "sunflower", a metaphor for the people in Chinese political propaganda, within the context of Western art galleries is itself a critical response to ethics and institutions, fully experiencing the profound thinking beneath the surface of the artwork.

Week 1-Break away from one-sided thinking when looking at problems.

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To understand issues, we must break free from a one-dimensional perspective.

When I was studying the course, I found that there were three terms that hindered my understanding: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and The Billion Black Anthropocenes. After establishing a clear understanding, I connected the internal relationships among these three phrases, which form a progressively deepening internal logic.

The concept of the “Anthropocene” (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000) was introduced at the end of the 20th century, in the context of escalating global ecological crises, to address the core issue of who is shaping the future of the Earth. The ecological crisis was attributed to “the human race as a whole”.

After 2010, with the questioning of the notion that “humans as a whole are guilty”, in 2014, the concept of “Capitalocene” (Moore 2014) was systematically expounded to explain “which human activities and what systems led to the crisis”, clearly identifying the institutional root of the ecological crisis.

In 2018, people again proposed that the crisis should not be solely attributed to the economic dimension. It is also necessary to consider the relationship between capital accumulation and racial oppression. Subsequently, to clearly define that the crisis is a dual product of capital and racial oppression, the concept of “The Billion Black Anthropocenes” (Yusoff 2018) was proposed.

From “phenomenological description” to “institutional roots” and then to “justice dimension”, it delves deeper layer by layer. This realization led me to understand that for comprehending phenomena, it is necessary to break away from a single dimension.



Project Paradise, Edinburgh, 2023–2024

With this mindset, I analyzed the case of Sarah Wood’s “Project Paradise” mentioned in class.

<https://vimeo.com/893289187?fl=pl&fe=sh>

I summarized this exhibition as “reconstruction of existing images + presentation from an all-seeing perspective”. The artist used existing images combined with drone perspectives to create a film, highlighting the integration of historical fragments and personal memories.

However, I identified two issues. Firstly, the exhibition failed to take into account the racial power dynamics emphasized by The Billion Black Anthropocenes, so the “Paradise” discussed in this context was not profound enough. Secondly, the selection of films in the exhibition was subjective and fragmented. It relied solely on fragmented archival image collation for narration, without questioning elements such as the filmmaker’s stance or the historical context of image production. These fragments were unable to interpret the complex connotations of “Paradise”, such as ecology, justice, and history.

The innovation and limitations of “Project Paradise” made me reflect: The charm of curating lies in awakening thoughts through unique forms, and depth stems from the respect for diverse perspectives and historical contexts.

Also, as the group discussion for the first week, everyone introduced themselves and their specialties. It was great to hear that the group members have specialties in installation, editing, communication and modeling. We are looking forward to working together in the future.

Reference

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Zalasiewicz, Jan, et al. "Are We Now Living in the Anthropocene?" GSA Today 18, no. 2 (2008): 4-8.

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