

Project Book

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Week 1: Curatorial Concept: Female Anxiety in Contemporary Photograph

Curatorial Concept: Female Anxiety in Contemporary Photography

From a feminist perspective, this explores the predicaments contemporary women face under social pressure. Through photographic works, it presents women's anxiety and unease, their resistance to social expectations, and how they seek self-identity in the interplay of gazing and being gazed at. It aims to break the stereotypes society holds about women and discuss how to express emotions through artistic creation, provoking social reflection and resonance. It records, reveals and resists those intangible pressures and anxieties through visual forms.

Micro-Curating argues the concept of "micro-curating" SVAOs, typically long-term, ongoing non-profit small-scale art institutions. Such institutions are typically embedded within everyday urban life rather than relying on traditional exhibition spaces, thereby redefining the relationship between art and the public (Bilbao Yarto, 2018). They emphasise decentralised, flexible and participatory curation, focusing on long-neglected issues. Through micro-curating, women's persistent anxieties are continuously and closely visible to the public, creating interactive spaces where audiences can engage in discussion and creation.

On Curating argues that the curator acts as a mediator between the artist, the artwork, and the public (Thea, 2009) ; similarly, exhibitions are not containers for artworks but spaces where meaning is reproduced. Exhibitions possess artistic interactivity and participatory qualities, enabling social and cultural discussions while connecting exhibitions to urban life and local communities. Curators no longer speak solely for women but create conditions for a 'multivocal' space through exhibitions, making invisible female pressures and anxieties visible.

Complex Constellations explores and redefines the concepts of "centre" and "margins" within contemporary art curation, challenging fixed notions. This curatorial project regards female anxiety as a constellation of states shaped by interwoven social, cultural and visual mechanisms. The project adopts "multiple viewpoints rather than a single narrative," presenting complexity through a multifocal structure (Kolb et al., 2019). Challenging traditional art world hegemony, it seeks to excavate marginalised female issues and artists.

Why choose photographic works:

As a medium highly dependent on viewing behavior, photography has an inherent connection with the gender power structure. Women's anxiety often stems from being stared at and being defined by society. Photography is both a part of the problem and can also serve as a mechanism for reflection. Moreover, women's anxiety rarely manifests as a single "event", but exists through repetition, mundanity, and persistence. Photography has the ability to capture these overlooked moments and, through artistic works, enables us to recognize the universality of these issues, thereby making those intangible social norms concrete.

Selection of Works:

Select representative works by female photographers, or works by male photographers addressing women's issues. The works should demonstrate depth and diversity, encompassing women of varying ages, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds, thereby provoking reflection and resonance with the audience.

References

Bilbao Yarto, Ana Edurne. *Micro-Curating: The Role of SVAOs (Small Visual Arts Organisations) in the History of Exhibition-Making*. December 30, 2018.

Thea, Carolee, and Thomas Micchelli. *On Curating : Interviews with Ten International Curators*. First edition. New York, N.Y: D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2009.

Kolb, Ronald, Ella Krivanek, Camille Regli, and Dorothee Richter. "Centres Peripheries—Complex Constellations." (2019).