

# Asian History 490: Exhibition Theory and Practice

See also: [Art History Student Comments](#)

## Syllabus and Schedule - Winter 2008

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### Course Description

This course offers a chance to think about the ways in which museums, galleries, and other sites of exhibition have functioned and continue to function in society. What is exhibited and why? Who is doing the exhibiting? How are the objects that are exhibited being interpreted and why? How does the stage of the exhibition change one's perspective about what is being viewed?

While developing consciousness of these and other questions through readings, field trips, and class discussions, we will be staging an exhibition ourselves with the help of Western Gallery Director Dr. Sarah Clark-Langager and Western Gallery Preparator Paul Brower. Preparing the exhibition will involve learning different types of writing and other forms of communication used in exhibition settings, such as lighting, construction of gallery space, and arrangement of objects. The exhibition will be held Spring 2008 in one room of the Western Gallery.

The objects will be chosen from the Al and Vera Leese Collection, which was recently gifted to Western by their daughter, Mrs. Marian Boylan. We will be collaborating with photographer Dianne Kornberg and with Montréal Danse Artistic Director Kathy Casey. Kornberg's work will be the subject of a traveling exhibition in the larger of the exhibition rooms Spring 2008. Montréal Danse will be in residence at WWU during Spring 2008 and will use the Western Gallery as a performance and dialogue space.

### Course Objectives

Investigate theories and histories of exhibition practices  
Expand writing skills in a variety of different art-related genres  
Develop skills in exhibition planning and preparation

### Course Requirements

Blogs (8)	20%	80 points
Presentation of current or historical exhibition practice	10%	40 points
Preparation for exhibition: Short research papers on objects to be exhibited Wall texts (exhibition labels) Group theme wall text (written jointly by group)	30% 20% 10%	120 points 80 points 40 points
Participation (½ gauged by me, ½ by group members)	<u>10%</u>	<u>40 points</u>
	100%	400 points

### Provisos

\*NO WIKIPEDIA OR OTHER ENCYCLOPEDIA, DICTIONARY OR OTHER SUPERFICIAL WEB SOURCE TO BE INCLUDED AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH

\*WORK MUST BE SUBMITTED ON THE DUE DATE, unless there is an emergency verifiable by the Student Health Center or Office of the Dean of Students. 5 points off /day late

## Grade Scale

376-400=A	336-351=B	296-311=C	
360-375=A-	320-335=B-	280-295=C-	
352-359=B+	312-319=C+	240-279=D	239 and below=F

## Schedule:

<b>Tues., Jan. 8: Introduction</b>
<b>Thurs., Jan. 10: Developing a Framework: Questions and Considerations</b> Andrew McClellan, ed., <i>Art and its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium</i> (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 1-49. Introduce Presentation Assignment
<b>Tues., Jan. 15: Histories of the Marvelous and Wondrous and Politically Expedient</b> Anthony Alan Shelton, "Cabinets of Transgression: Renaissance Collections and the Incorporation of the New World," in <i>The Cultures of Collecting</i> , eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 177-203, 288-91 (endnotes). Lawrence Weschler, <i>Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology</i> (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995), 3-25. <b>Visit from Dr. Sarah Clark-Langager, Western Gallery Director, 2:30-3:20</b>
<b>Thurs., Jan. 17: Exhibition Groundwork</b> <b>**REQUIRED:</b> Terry Toedtemeier, "Still Life: Objects, Apprehensions, and the Photography of Dianne Kornberg," in <i>Field Notes: Photographes by Dianne Kornberg, 1992-2007</i> (Marylhurst, OR: Marylhurst University, 2007)1-5. <b>In class, watch:</b> Montréal Danse (Kathy Casey, Artistic Director), <i>Furies Alpha 1/24 (The Monsters Within)</i>
<b>Tues., Jan. 22: Photographer Dianne Kornberg and Kathy Casey, Artistic Director, Montréal Danse, in class</b>
<b>Thurs., Jan 24:</b> Debrief artist visits, then choose first of two works; discuss research assignment.
<b>Tues., Jan. 29: Theorizing Representation in the Nineteenth Century</b> *Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," in <i>The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology</i> , ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 455-72; 559-60 (endnotes). *Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (originally published in 1936). <a href="http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html">http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html</a>
<b>Thurs., Jan. 31: Museums and Cultural Appropriation</b> *James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in <i>Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures</i> , Russell Ferguson et al., eds. (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, and Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 140-69.
<b>Tues., Feb. 5:</b> Discuss sub-themes of exhibition; choose second work.

**Thurs., Feb. 7: Conceptualizing Display**

**Visit from Paul Brower, Gallery Preparator, Western Gallery**

\*Sharon MacDonald, "Exhibitions of Power and Powers of Exhibition: An Introduction to the Politics of Display," in *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*, ed. Sharon MacDonald (London: Routledge, 1998), 1-24.

\*Michael Belcher, "Exhibition as a Medium of Communication," in *Exhibitions in Museums* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 37-43.

\*Julia Noordegraaf, "The Museum as Visual Culture," in *Strategies of Display: Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Visual Culture* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2004), 246-250.

**Tues., Feb. 12: Field trip to Museum of Anthropology, UBC, Vancouver**

Michael M. Ames, "How to Decorate a House: The Renegotiation of Cultural Representations at the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology," in *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, eds. Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown (London: Routledge, 2003), 171-80.

**Thurs., Feb. 14: Practicing Postcolonialism**

\*Homi Bhabha, "The White Stuff," in *Artforum International* vol. 36, issue 9 (May 1998): 21-23. <http://www.highbeam.com/library/docFree.asp?DOCID=1G1:20757304>

\*Annie Coombes, "Inventing the 'Postcolonial': Hybridity and Constituency in Contemporary Curating," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, Donald Preziosi, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 486-97, 562-4 (endnotes).

**Group meetings (What is your "big idea?"); ideas for title**

**Tues., Feb. 19: Work on writing "wall text"**

**DUE: Research papers**

Beverly Serrel, "What are Interpretive Labels?," in *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach* (London: Altamira Press, 1996), 9-19. **(cannot be blogged)**

**Visit from Mr. William J. Rathbun, former Curator of Japanese Art, Seattle Art Museum**

**Thurs., Feb. 21: Art and Commerce: Branding the Exhibition**

\*Stephen Hayward, "The Branding of Modern British Culture: Consumer Citizenship and the Age of Anxiety, A Response to the Exhibition *brand.new* at the V & A," *Journal of Design History*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2001):141-149.

**Group meetings; work on group wall text**

**Tues., Feb. 26:**

\*James Cuno, "Introduction," in *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*, ed. James Cuno (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11-25.

**Workshop and Finalize Group Wall Text**

**Thurs., Feb. 28:**

**DUE: Individual wall texts (first draft)**

**Work on publicity and other**

**Tues., March 4:**

**DUE: Individual wall texts (second draft)**

**Thurs., March 6: First Thursday: Field trip to Seattle**

**Tues., March 11:**

**DUE: Individual wall texts (FINAL draft)**

Visit gallery space and think about physical layout of exhibition

Thurs., March 13: Place works in the gallery space

Monday: possible back-up day for exhibition hanging, final touches...

Tues., March 18, 1-3pm (during scheduled final): Exhibition installation