



### Inside Today's Museum course 2014: Tate Modern

This course examines Tate as an institution from its conception to plans for future development. It investigates how Tate develops and addresses its audiences both inside the gallery and online, as well as how it serves its visitors. From its acquisition policy, collection displays and exhibitions to its programmes for schools and community groups, as well as the relationships Tate has established with museums and galleries throughout the UK, this course considers the practical aspects of running Tate in the context of current theoretical debates around institutions, architecture, collections, displays, audiences, research and leisure.

The course is divided into eleven sessions including a half-term break. Each session encourages discussion around selected topics through 'in-conversation' style presentations with staff from a number of departments at Tate. **Please note that the following course outline is provisional and that the order of sessions and even their themes are subject to change depending upon staff availability.** A full reading list will be provided at the first session. Email [joseph.kendra@tate.org.uk](mailto:joseph.kendra@tate.org.uk) with any further questions you may have.

#### Objectives

- To provide an in-depth study of the workings of a major museum, exploring its range of public activities and the diversity of internal operations behind these.
- To develop awareness of and criticality towards debates and dialogues that relate to major museums of modern and contemporary art.
- To develop confidence and skills in research, study and presentation skills that will be useful for a career in arts administration.

#### Outcomes

At the end of the course participants will:

- Have developed the skills and contextual knowledge to critically assess different museum projects, from exhibitions to learning activities.
- Have developed a deeper understanding of the dynamics between different arts organisations, as well as their relationship to government, business, and local communities.
- Have gained further knowledge of how a large arts organisation operates and of the employment opportunities it provides.

### Week 1: Thursday 25 September - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern

#### **What makes a museum? History and architecture of the modern and contemporary art museum**

The course begins with an introductory lecture that examines the art museum as a cultural phenomenon. Until the 19th century, art was usually displayed and encountered in religious, political or domestic spaces. Before looking at Tate, we ask how the museum was born, what ambitions it had, whose interests it served and who comprised its publics. We also consider the strangeness of a 'museum' of 'modern' art: how are the traditional principles of a museum (the collection, conservation, and display of historical artefacts) at odds with the notion of the modern?

### Week 2: Thursday 2 October 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern

#### **Curating collections and temporary exhibitions**

This week's session explores the role of the curator and Tate's responsibility to create displays for current audiences as well as safeguarding the Collection for audiences of the future. We look at the range of curatorial roles available at Tate and examine how approaches have changed in the light of developments in contemporary art and curatorial practices. Curatorial roles at Tate are quite varied and range from curating collection displays to planning temporary exhibitions, live performances and the film programme. We discuss the considerations of Tate's curators in light of the preparations and presentation of its autumn programme.

### **Week 3: Thursday 9 October 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Conservation and Collection Care**

Today's session looks at another area of Tate's activities: the conservation of its artworks. What distinguishes current thinking about conserving and presenting objects from the past and how does this feed into ideas about 'the modern'?

The Conservation department at Tate cares for work in a range of media, from oil paintings to video installations. The gallery has a responsibility to conserve its collections for future generations, but what does this mean when the works are fragile or deliberately made from ephemeral materials? How do the artist's intentions influence the conservator's approach and what new challenges are presented by developments in contemporary arts practice?

We also discuss key works in Tate Collections which present particular problems for the conservators, including, for example, pieces by Joseph Beuys, Naum Gabo and Anselm Kiefer.

### **Week 4: Thursday 16 October 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Learning**

Historically, the roles of exhibition curators and learning specialists within the Museum have been complementary. With changes in contemporary artists' practice, together with new understandings of professional expertise within the Art Museum, the boundaries between these two roles are no longer quite so clear-cut.

How are audiences conceived and provided for and what does 'participation' mean within the context of today's museum? Do museums have a responsibility to 'educate' the public? What kinds of learning are prioritised and what is the role of the artist and the artwork in these processes?

### **Week 5: Thursday 23 October 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Audiences and communities**

This session looks at Museum audiences from several departmental perspectives, offering an overview of how Tate ensures that it is accessible to all. What impact do Government directives have on gallery provision and how has the 'social' model of disability influenced the way Tate supports its visitors?

Furthermore, Tate's website receives 18 million unique visits per year. In response to both changes in technology and the ways in which people engage with contemporary culture, Tate Media offers new ways to access its programme both inside and outside of the galleries through mobile apps, blogs and film content. Has the use of social media led to 'a museum without walls'? What implications does this have for the 'real' spaces of the museum and its art?

### **Week 6: No session - Reading Week**

**OPTIONAL STORE VISIT: There will be an optional visit to Tate Stores during this week, provisionally planned for Friday 31 October 2014.**

Only a fraction of Tate's collection is on display at any time. What happens to the work when it is not on display? Where and how is it stored? And who looks after it? Today we visit the Tate Store, the primary holding facility for Tate's collection. Get behind the scenes and learn what happens to a work of art, from the moment it leaves the walls of the gallery, while it is moved, documented and finally stored.

### **Week 7: Thursday 6 November 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Tate Modern's Inception and Fourteen Years On**

How did Tate Modern come about and what were the threats and opportunities at its inception? Looking back over the past fourteen years, how were expectations met and perhaps exceeded? This session compares two pivotal moments in the history of Tate to explore the gap between the vision that enabled the realisation of a major institution and the practicalities of the day-to-day running as well as long-term and future considerations.

### **Week 8: Thursday 13 November 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Development and public funding**

Today's session focuses on issues around cultural policy, public funding and corporate sponsorship. The debate about funding and fundraising is particularly pertinent in an uncertain economic climate. What are the new economies of arts funding and how is the culture of arts funding driven by economic and social targets? How has today's museum had to adapt, particularly in light of its historic function and relationship to the notion of 'the public good'?

### **Week 9: Thursday 20 November 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Business and Operations**

A major challenge faced by today's museum is to ensure the smooth-running of its various operations. These include the enjoyment, security, experience, well-being and safety of the Museum visitors, staff and contractors. The Duty Manager is responsible for ensuring that the level of service given by all Front of House teams meets the standards expected of a world class museum.

This session addresses this crucial role at the interface between the public and private realms of the Museum. It also considers the challenges presented when artworks elicit novel and sometimes unpredictable visitor responses and interactions.

### **Week 10: Thursday 27 November 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Tate Enterprises**

The art museum today is a complex public space that caters for a range of interests and needs. The contemporary visitor to the Gallery now expects to be able to shop, socialise and take part in wider cultural debates, beyond the walls of the museum. Today's discussion examines how these different strands of activity all co-exist within the Tate brand.

### **Week 11: Thursday 4 December 2014 - Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern**

#### **Course Review and Evaluation**

The final session will be an opportunity to evaluate the course and celebrate its conclusion, discussing what we have learned about Tate and museums as a whole.