Towards Tomorrow’s Museum 2016

Tate Modern, Level 1 Seminar Room
Thursdays, 21 January – 31 March 2016, 14.00–17.00

There is no session on 25 February
The sessions on 12 March and 31 March take place in the Manton Studio, Tate Britain
The sessions on 17 March and 24 March take place in the McAulay Gallery, Tate Modern

Outline

What will be the priorities and policies of museums in the future? Who will be the audiences and how will they engage with institutions? Towards Tomorrow’s Museum examines current questions and new models for the art museum. Over ten sessions, the course considers the major issues involved in rethinking the role of the museum, its programme and collection, and how its activities sit within a shifting cultural landscape.

Organised around a series of unique presentations by Tate staff on emergent programmes and practices, the course introduces and analyses key themes concerning the future of the museum. Modes of experimentation, critique and participation, and the role of architecture, globalization, digital technology and government policy, are all addressed in a detailed examination of how museums might develop and the transformation of Tate Modern in particular.

The course emphasises an international perspective, assessing Tate and other institutions within the global social and cultural dynamics of the early twenty-first century. Tate’s own prospects for the future are explored in discussion and engagement with key members of staff, from departments including Curatorial, Learning, Development and Research. Visits to the collection displays at both Tate Modern and Tate Britain accompany the seminar discussions.

Format

No prior knowledge of art history or museum studies is necessary. Participants will be encouraged to engage with a variety of written and visual material, and to discuss their own interpretations in a warm, dynamic and supportive setting.

The course consists of ten three-hour sessions plus a reading week. Sessions will involve short lectures, group discussions, participant presentations, and talks by Tate staff members. Visits to exhibitions, collection displays and other facilities at Tate Modern and Tate Britain will be arranged, and participants will also be encouraged to make independent visits to other galleries and exhibitions.

The course is led by Dr. Richard Martin in collaboration with the Public Programmes team at Tate Modern, and the Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries, King’s College London.
Objectives

- To give a broad overview and deep insight into the current issues affecting a major art museum, considering contemporary and emerging influences on institutional responsibilities.
- To provide an understanding of areas that have significant impact on the museum, and to support a critical engagement with these themes.
- To consider how the many internal and external influences on the art museum may be coherently conceptualised into a plan for future activities.
- To establish skills and confidence in research, study and presentation, and in team-work, discussion and collaboration.

Participants

- The group is composed of students enrolled on the MA in Cultural and Creative Industries at King’s College London (KCL) and members of the public.

Assessment

- KCL students are each asked to submit one essay of approximately 4,000 words at the end of the course (submission date to be confirmed). They must attend 75% of class hours to be eligible for assessment, and the weekly ‘essential reading’ is compulsory.
- For participants not enrolled at KCL, the essay and reading are optional.

Contacts

- Dr. Richard Martin (course tutor): rgmartin81@yahoo.co.uk
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- Dr. Ruth Adams (Programme Director, MA in Cultural and Creative Industries, King’s College London): ruth.3.adams@kcl.ac.uk
Week One: Imagining the Future  
21 January 2016, 14.00–17.00  
Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern

How do we think about the future? What historical models, forms of memory and current resources might we draw on when imagining new possibilities for the museum? Are there particular strategies that Tate should develop and implement to remain at the forefront of contemporary art, nationally and internationally? In this first session, the course will be introduced and contextualised, with a discussion of how fresh ambitions for the museum might be identified. We will be joined by members of Tate’s Public Programmes team to discuss how this course relates to wider concerns and emerging debates at Tate. We also visit the collection displays at Tate Modern to help us decide on our own key objectives for the coming weeks.

Essential reading

- Hal Foster, ‘After the White Cube’, *London Review of Books*, vol.37, no.6 (19 March 2015), pp.25–6: [http://www.lrb.co.uk/v37/n06/hal-foster/after-the-white-cube](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v37/n06/hal-foster/after-the-white-cube)

Further reading

- Hendrik Folkerts, Christoph Lindner and Margriet Schavemaker (eds.), *Facing Forward: Art and Theory from a Future Perspective* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015).
Week Two: Curating the New  
28 January 2016, 14.00–17.00  
Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern

New artistic practices demand new modes of display. Installation art, site-specific, performance, ephemeral and durational works not only raise questions of display, but also of documentation, acquisition and conservation. This session will address key issues that arise in curating new types of work, with reference to the exhibitions programme at Tate Modern. How do ‘expanded’ artistic practices negotiate with the architectural and conceptual spaces of the museum? What impact has a space like the Tanks at Tate Modern had on the presentation and perception of new work? And how might these issues change the museum’s relationship with its publics? We will also consider Tate’s focus on acquiring works from regions other than Europe and North America.

Essential reading


Further reading

- Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook, Rethinking Curating: Art After New Media (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010).
- Nicholas Serota, Experience or Interpretation: The Dilemma of Museums of Modern Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006).
Week Three: International Partnerships  
4 February 2016, 14.00–17.00  
Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern

This session will focus on the increasingly global context in which art institutions are situated, with a particular emphasis on international partnerships. We will consider a range of models, including Tate’s strategies and initiatives for institutional partnerships, as well as the ways in which artists and smaller organisations participate in collaborative practices. We will consider the financial and strategic aspects of working in partnership alongside other practical considerations. International partnerships also raise important questions concerning post-colonialism, cultural difference, political geography and the global circulation of culture. How might an institution like Tate engage critically with processes of globalisation?

Essential reading


Further reading

- Former West: http://www.formerwest.org
Since the 1960s, the work of artists examining the structures and ideologies underpinning museums and galleries has been categorised as institutional critique. In this session, we'll assess how figures such as Andrea Fraser and Hans Haacke have shaped debates concerning the status and function of museums, as well as how museums have developed modes of critique via the emergence of new institutionalism. Has the power of these critiques been enhanced or neutralised as they have been absorbed into everyday institutional practices? How might the issues raised in relation to institutional policies speak to wider political and social concerns outside of the gallery? What form or function might future critiques take?

**Essential reading**


**Further reading**

Week Five: Architecture  
18 February 2016, 14.00–17.00  
Level 1 Seminar Room, Tate Modern

This session considers the role of architecture in shaping the programmes and status of the contemporary museum. How does architecture frame and enable activities in the museum? Can buildings create new audiences? And what is the relationship between the design of a building and the displays housed within it? With visits to key spaces inside and outside the building, we will take a close look at Tate Modern’s physical evolution, and specifically the extension of the current building, due for completion in June 2016. We will explore the rationale and the plans for the new spaces, and how they will affect the existing gallery.

Essential reading

- The Tate Modern Project: [http://www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/tate-modern-project](http://www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/tate-modern-project)

Further reading


Week Six: Reading week: no session  
25 February 2016
In this session, we will consider the possibilities created by digital media, especially in the engagement of audiences, and the specific role of Tate Media in the outreach and visibility of Tate’s activities. What implications do online audiences have for museums? How are international audiences actively engaged with institutions through digital media? We will also think about audiences within the physical spaces of the gallery and how digital media might shape the visitor experience in the future.

Essential reading


Further reading

- Ross Parry (ed.), *Museums in a Digital Age* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
Week Eight: Research, Archives, Theory
10 March 2016, 14.00–17.00
Manton Studio, Tate Britain

Research is central to all Tate’s programmes and plays a key role in developing museum policies, understanding the institution’s publics and planning new services. The Research Department also has its own programme and publications disseminating work to a wide audience. What is the role of research in the museum? How might museums work with universities and other research centres? And how can a museum’s library and archive support an institution’s attempt to reinvent itself? Our response to these questions will also bring in broader issues concerning institutional language, the status of art history within a museum setting, and the role of critical theory in enhancing or restricting public debate.

Essential reading


Further reading

- Tate In Focus series: http://www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/focus
Week Nine: Transforming the Social  
17 March 2016, 14.00–17.00  
McAulay Gallery, Tate Modern

How are museums situated in relation to existing communities, and how can they be instrumental in forming new publics? How does the museum relate to processes of gentrification? And how might a museum facilitate or provoke new ways of engaging with art? This session provides the opportunity to consider wider social and political issues, extending beyond the exhibition spaces into the surrounding urban environment. We will consider the impact of Tate Modern (and its extension) on the environment, and on local communities in London, as well as thinking about its policies in relation to questions of equality, diversity and accessibility.

Essential reading


Further reading

- Miwon Kiwon, One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
In this session, we will discuss a range of emerging and alternate ideas in gallery learning and programming. Our focus will fall on the plans for Tate Modern’s extension and specifically the Tate Exchange project, as well as wider developments across London such as the School of the Damned, Open School East and the Silent University. We will also devise experimental programmes of our own in response to the new exhibition *Performing for the Camera* at Tate Modern.

**Essential reading**


**Further reading**

Week Eleven: Discussion, Review and Evaluation  
31 March 2016, 14.00–17.00  
Manton Studio, Tate Britain  

This final session will allow us to review the preceding weeks and evaluate the ideas and themes that have emerged throughout the course. There will be an opportunity to survey the issues identified during the seminars, to revisit key questions about the institutional responsibilities of the museum, and to produce a manifesto outlining the group’s priorities for the museum of the future.