Summer Session II 2014  
CAT Practicum: Public Art in San Diego: Curating in and out of the Gallery Space

Course Description:

Are you intrigued by public art spaces and performances? Are you interested in putting an art exhibition together? This course will engage students in the process of putting together a community-based art exhibition. In the practicum, students will be researching, planning, proposing and curating and installing a community based arts exhibition. Students will gain knowledge about how public gallery spaces function, how art centers have been utilized by San Diego communities, and learn about successful practices for putting together an interesting, engaging art exhibition. The students will put into action the knowledge gained by the reading about curatorial practices and site visits by working together and with community partners to execute an original art exhibition.

This course will work with local San Diego arts organizations, Young Audiences of San Diego and Aja Projects to examine recent, yet not widely viewed, community based art projects and artist residencies. Young Audiences is the largest arts education center in San Diego. They send teaching artists to work in primary and secondary school classrooms to create original and contemporary works of art. Young Audiences also works with the communities by hosting free public performances by local theater and dance companies, and free family arts programming. In similar vein, Aja Projects is an arts organization that works with San Diego’s refugee community on unforgettable photo projects and installations.

Students in the course will work with Young Audiences and Aja Projects on the blueprint for a summer arts exhibition. Students will conceptualize, research and propose an appropriate theme for the show, work on promoting the exhibition in the community and also on social media and online networks, and work together with the community partners to install and de-install the exhibition. In addition, students will propose a way for this exhibition to be translated at a later date for the Artifact Gallery at Sixth College.

Classes will consist of: required reading discussions, site visits to local museums and art exhibitions, proposal planning meetings, on-site curatorial planning and on-site install. As a practicum participant, students will be supported to learn about, practice and critically interact with every aspect of this course. Practicum participants must be willing to engage with large theoretical questions, interact with community partners, work together to curate and install an arts exhibition, and complete the final portfolio. Students do not have to have an arts background to be a part of this practicum—but they must be willing to contribute to our environment by critically engaging with the topics at hand and thoughtfully and creatively engaging with the project.

Expectations, students in this practicum will:

-- Be open to learning, teaching and engaging  
-- Work together to research, plan, propose, curate, promote and install a community
based arts exhibition
--Work together to propose an additional exhibition at the Artifact Gallery, Sixth College
--Maintain an interesting and critical reading and writing journal
--Read the assigned readings (To be finalized)
--Attend all off site visits to local museums, and art spaces
--Attend community partner discussions, planning meetings and exhibition installation dates (There will be 4-5 off site visits)
--Interview a local, national teaching artist, curator or arts professional (The practicum will facilitate possible candidates)
--Respectfully engage with community partners and students
--Document observations and interviews in an ethical manner utilizing photography, video and audio
--Critically research public art history, particularly of local programs
--Engage in critical discussions about the function of public arts education, teaching artists, and students

Required Readings (subject to change):

Selections from:


Beyond the Box: Diverging Curatorial Practices Edited by Melanie Townsend

Example exhibitions:

http://thewalters.org/exhibitions/public-property/

http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/go/
Final Project:

In this practicum each student will craft a final portfolio that consists of: photo/video documentation of the final art exhibition, a short reflective paper on the student’s roles and responsibilities in the project, and short research paper that looks into further into questions of public and community based art exhibitions and their possibilities.