

Museum and Collections (A005500)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0

Study time 150 h

Contact hrs

50.0h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2022-2023

A (Year)

English

Gent

seminar

20.0h

guided self-study

15.0h

self-reliant study activities

100.0h

lecture

15.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2022-2023

Guerrero, Inti

H-HOGENT lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2022-2023

[Postgraduate Curatorial Studies](#)

crdts

6

offering

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

museums, collections, cultural institutions, institutional critique, collecting, collecting contemporary art, collection history, collection theory, collection display, museum display, exhibitions and display, collection policy, museum policy, museum management, museum studies, museology, contemporary art, art market, galleries, libraries and archives, cultural heritage, canonization, globalization, decolonization, (new) art history

Position of the course

Development of a coherent and substantiated view on the history and theory of contemporary art museums and collections; with attention to both the internal and external *modi operandi* that lead to their irreducible particularity. To gain insight into the political, socio-economic and cultural influence of museums and collections, and expound on the theoretical and practical consequences of that insight. Ability to further develop and present, in discourse as well as practice, the gained insight and perspective.

Contents

Central to this course is the question as to how the cultural, socio-political, and economic functions of museums and collections have developed since the late 18th century, and how their current impact is changing under various circumstances.

Historically, the museum is essentially oriented towards encyclopedic completeness, neutrality, and limitlessness. While in the age of modernity the ideal was cherished of a total, limitless freedom from the very beginning, the museum became the emblematic modern institution and epitomization of what we may call 'the machinery of the modern gaze.' Yet, the policy of an open, public, and democratic museum institution can only be maintained if it communicates its outer limits – the criteria of its inevitable exclusivity – as clearly as possible. A viable museum and collection policy should thus also register and converse the limits of its freedom continually to open up the discussion with others.

Today, globalized markets, mass media and the internet have become the terrains best suited, as Boris Groys has claimed, to mitigate the modernist longing for universality and totality. Current museum policies are subject to strong social

pressures to incorporate the characteristics and laws of these domains. To many actors in and outside the art world the contemporary museum should be the place of a boundless inclusiveness, both in terms of the art on display, and the audiences it activates. Within this field of tension the challenge of a consistent museum and collection policy is to find a balance between the actuality of the museum's individual, specific situation on the one hand, and the abstractions and global aspects of the contemporary (art) world on the other.

In this course we will study and discuss these social and ethical issues, and gain an understanding of the methodologies of museums and collections and how to work with that.

Particular points of interest are:

- The particularity of various typologies of contemporary art collections is elucidated by studying specific cases, and by positions and reflections of leading protagonists on collection policies, or by visiting collections under their guidance.
- The impact of (social) media, galleries and the art market on the functioning and reception of art collections.
- The inherent qualities and problems of the museum as prototypical modern institution (i.e. deaccessioning, decolonizing).
- The specific type of art historical knowledge and research that may only be developed by closely dealing with a collection, working with libraries and archives, and, subsequently, the differences and similarities between the status of an 'artwork' and that of a 'document'.
- The question as to how museums of contemporary art may fulfill their task of collecting 'masterpieces' within the current context of the art world.
- The role and position of the artist (or estate) in the development of strategies concerning acquisition, conservation, research and presentation of works in a collection.

Initial competences

Meeting the program's admission requirements.

Final competences

- 1 Having knowledge of current insights in collection strategies, and collection and museum policy.
- 2 Having an awareness of the historical, institutional, and socio-political responsibilities of actors in the contemporary museum world.
- 3 Being able to (self-)critically reflect: students are aware of different typologies of collections and views on museum policy within a broader cultural and socio-economic context and can express this in spoken and written language.

Conditions for credit contract

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Guided self-study, Seminar, Lecture, Self-reliant study activities

Learning materials and price

Primary and secondary literature and other sources.

Costs:

Learning materials: digital

Excursions: transportation + admission: max. 100 EUR

Estimated total: max. 100 EUR

References

Course content-related study coaching

Group sessions and individual feedback (by appointment)

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Oral examination

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Oral presentations, end-of-term assessment: paper assignment.

Retake during the second examination period is possible.

Calculation of the examination mark