HONOURS CURATORSHIP 2015

The Centre for Curating the Archive at the Michaelis School of Fine Art in collaboration with Iziko Museums of South Africa
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Honours in curatorship
PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The honours programme in Curatorship is offered by the Michaelis School of Fine Art’s Centre for Curating the Archive in close collaboration with Iziko Museums.

The programme offers courses in the theory and practice of curatorship, developing in students a sophisticated awareness of the practicalities, politics and poetics of working with collections of many kinds. Students are encouraged to bring the disciplinary insights of their undergraduate major (whether this be in the visual arts, the humanities or the sciences) to the curating of both material and virtual collections, and are offered opportunities to work on exhibitions in real spaces and in the digital realm. A major aim of this programme is to introduce students, through seminars, fieldwork and workshops, to the central skills of a curator: to understand objects and how to research them, to work with collections, articulating them in exhibitions, and to collaborate with artists, mediating their production. Students registered for the programme will be able to apply for internships, a conservation workshop and travel bursaries.

The course prepares students for further postgraduate study or possible work as curators, museum educators, collection managers, critics, dealers and for positions that require the use, interpretation, display and manipulation of collections.

COMPULSORY COMPONENTS
Critical thinking in curatorship
Research essay/project

ELECTIVE COURSES (three required)
Virtual display
Curating colonial connections
Local issues in curatorship
Practical communication
Working with museum collections

OTHER POSSIBLE ELECTIVES
An elective from another humanities faculty honours course may be chosen where appropriate to replace one of the above with permission from the programme convener.

WORKSHOPS
Students are required to attend a compulsory preventive conservation and curatorship workshop and may choose to attend a third themed workshop.

INTERNSHIPS
The programme includes a mandatory sixty-hour internship that will be supervised by a partner institution of the student’s choice (Iziko, UCT or other). Student’s performance will be evaluated by internal and external supervisors. A list of offerings should be provided to students at the beginning of the academic year.
CRITICAL THINKING IN CURATORSHIP
Convened by: Pippa Skotnes and Andrew Lamprecht
Duration: 1 double seminar per week x 10 (first semester)
The first part of this course will introduce students to the history and practice of curatorship, and interrogate the meaning of the term curatorship in different spaces and contexts with a focus on art collections and installations. Students will be exposed to curatorial practices and to the practicalities of mounting exhibitions and displays. Topics will include a history of art galleries and museums, with a focus on the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as the role of the catalogue in translating the visual content of the displays. The course will also examine the responsibilities of the curator to the public with a strong focus on South African issues and communities. In the second part of this course, students will deepen their critical understanding of the various intellectual frameworks that inform curatorship practices. Special attention will be given to the history of 20th and 21st century artists who have engaged with museums, as well as critical texts on these works. Creative and imaginative approaches to the museum and strategies of display will be explored and specific case studies, both local and foreign, will be examined. This course will include a workshop. Times to be agreed.

CURATING COLONIAL CONNECTIONS
Convened by: Carine Zaayman
Duration: 1 double seminar per week x 10 (first/second semester)
In this course students will be guided to explore, through a variety of media and texts, the global context of South Africa’s colonial past. The focus will be on critically engaging with the various dynamics and perspectives at play in the writing of colonial history, and ways in which responses to these may be presented in non-linear and visual ways. Contemporary perspectives on the
Enlightenment, scientific thought, exploration and imperialism as they pertain not only to South Africa, but also to other Dutch and British colonies, will be studied. The course will further require students to identify an historical figure from the colonial period and produce an essay as well as a booklet on the figure, in which they will need to critically engage with hierarchies of information and use of visual material to ‘curate’ a history.

LOCAL ISSUES IN CURATORSHIP
Convened by: Nina Liebenberg and Fabian Saptouw
Duration: 1 double seminar per week x 10 (second semester)
In this course students will focus on developing their engagement with local and contemporary issues around curatorship. Students will refer to existing collections in the Michaelis Collection, University of Cape Town collections and IZIKO collections, as well as current events and developments in the local context. With this focus on local issues, students will be required to conceptualise the specific relationship between the museum and its publics in a way that is sensitive to the South African and African context. Field trips will be organized with on-site discussions about current exhibitions and displays.

VIRTUAL DISPLAY
Convened by: Fabian Saptouw and Nina Liebenberg
Duration: 1 double seminar per week x 10 (first semester)
In this course students will be required to curate (or recurate) an institutional Iziko or University of Cape Town space in the virtual domain. They will need to take into account not only the context of the space but also the objects/art works, investigating different taxonomies and displays and various possible approaches to interpretation. A historical overview of the virtual, from the panorama and diorama to current artistic and curatorial practices in the virtual realm, will be discussed. Students will be supported by an IT specialist who will run a workshop on digital exhibition and facilitate their online exhibition.
PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION

Convened by: Hayden Proud

Duration: 1 double seminar per week x 10 (first semester)
Curatorship demands the skill of writing clearly in different registers for different purposes; whether for press releases, exhibition labels, text panels, internal reports or academic essays for publication in books or catalogues. This course aims at developing students’ capacities and awareness of the different approaches to writing demanded by professional curatorial work. Emphases will be on accuracy and objectivity, as well as the virtues of précis and creativity in the writing of engaging texts aimed at visitors to museums and galleries. Apart from formal lectures, students will be taken on field visits to view current exhibitions and challenged to critically evaluate their effectiveness in terms of communication and design. While the course is mainly object-centred in its approach, a study of the role of text and image in relation to ‘conceptual’ curatorial approaches will also be encouraged. Intensive study of the associated texts and display tactics in a number of key exhibitions in art history will also be undertaken. Students will be set a number of short projects which will be the subject of continuous feedback, discussion and revision. These projects will constitute a final portfolio to be submitted for examination at the end of the course.

WORKING WITH MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Convened by: Dr Patricia Davison

Duration: 1 double seminar per week x 10 (first semester)
This course will introduce students to museum collections as resources for research, interpretation and visual communication. Iziko’s art and social history collections will be used as a basis for elucidating multiple approaches to the understanding and interpretation of collections. The outcomes of this course will include: ability to apply research methodology in interpreting museum objects, tracing provenance and significance of collections; understanding the relationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of collections and hands-on experience of working with museum collections. Understanding the multiple meanings of objects in different contexts is an essential skill when working with collections. Students will have the opportunity to apply this concept in practice.
One of my earliest childhood memories is the smell of this doll. She was hardly ever removed from the display cabinet and I treasured those moments. For me, she became a tangible link to my ancestors, whom I was too young to have met, as well as to their stories and the South African history of that time.
The Honours in Curatorship programme has been a gateway to a whole new world. It's been exhilarating and the best year of my academic career.

Ayesha Hendricks (Class of 2013)  
BSc Chemistry, University of Cape Town

You experience where lines connect and disperse visually.

Khanyisile Mbongwa (Class of 2013)  
BA Humanities, University of Stellenbosch

A great framework for developing your curator-personality with freedom, a smile, advice, good vibes, a great library and mountain view all around.

Valeria Geselev (Class of 2013)  
BA International Relations and Journalism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The programme was a great opportunity to delve into the diverse arena that is curatorship by combining theory and practice in an insightful and interactive manner.

Ernestine White (Class of 2013)  
MFA, University of Cape Town
Admissions

ACADEMIC CRITERIA

Applications are invited from students who have completed an undergraduate degree in the visual arts or cognate fields, including such disciplines as art history, archaeology, visual studies, history and anthropology, as well as any of the sciences, who are interested in the work of a curator and curatorship, museology and working with collections.

Applicants are required to submit hard copies of the following before October 31:

01 a detailed narrative curriculum vitae;
02 a letter of no more than two pages detailing your background and reasons for wishing to study curatorship, as well as your special areas of interest relevant to the programme;
03 academic transcripts; and
04 the names and contact details of two academic referees.
05 a sample piece of academic writing.

Applications must be sent to:
Nancy Dantas, Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town
Enquiries: nancy.dantas@uct.ac.za
Telephone: 021 480 7151

In addition to the above, prospective students are required to apply on-line at www.uct.ac.za before October 31.

POSTGRADUATE BURSARIES

Applications are invited from students who would not be able to undertake the programme without some financial support. The value of the curatorship bursary will vary but will not usually exceed R40 000.

Students who wish to apply for a curatorship bursary should motivate to this effect. Candidates requiring additional funding or support should additionally consult the Postgraduate Funding Office before October 31. See http://www.uct.ac.za/apply/funding/postgraduate/applications

Conditions
Successful applicants will be required to:
(a) register for full-time study for the full curatorship programme at the Centre for Curating the Archive at the Michaelis School of Fine Art; and (b) comply with the university’s approved general rules and policies for the postgraduate sector.

Selection process
Bursaries will be awarded on the basis of both merit and need and will be judged according to faculty policy.

Tenure and conditions
This is a one-year programme. Bursaries are non-renewable.

TRAVEL
The programme includes an annual field trip for students who show signs of positive engagement, commitment and dedication and above-average academic results.
The Centre for Curating the Archive

The Centre for Curating the Archive was founded in the late 1990s as both a creative and scholarly initiative dedicated to the imaginative working with collections. It is a centre that actively engages with many different kinds of text-based, image and object collections, developing the visual and curatorship as active sites of knowledge. Projects, publications and courses aim, through practice, to open up novel combinations of the historically separated domains of the creative arts and the truth-claiming discourses of history and the social and natural sciences.

PIPPA SKOTNES

Director of the CCA, Professor of Fine Art and co-curator of the Katrine Harries Print Cabinet, Pippa Skotnes was born in Johannesburg and attended high school at Parktown Convent: the Order of the Holy Family. This experience provided a well-spring of ideas, some of which materialised in her continuing artwork, Lamb of God and the Book of iterations (2001-2012), which has been exhibited in South Africa, Europe and the USA.

She was educated at the University of Cape Town where she received Master of Fine Art and Doctor of Literature degrees. After she was sued by the South African Library for a copy of her artist’s book about Lucy Lloyd and the xam, Sound from the thinking strings, she became deeply interested in the nature of the book, producing several volumes inscribed on the bones of horses, leopards and blue cranes. She has also published a number of other books, more recently Claim to the country (Jacana 2007), Unconquerable spirit (Jacana 2008) and Book of iterations (Axeage Press 2009) and exhibited artwork widely.

ANDREW LAMPRECHT

Andrew Lamprecht teaches at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. He is active as a writer and critic and is known for curating exhibitions that sometimes challenge convention and expectations, such as Flip at the Iziko Michaelis Collection in 2004. He has served as an International Board Member of AICA (The International Association of Art Critics) and is currently a commissioner for Freedom of Expression for that organisation. He is well-known as a public speaker and populariser of contemporary South African art. He holds an MFA in Curatorship from Rhodes University.

CARINE ZAAYMAN

Carine Zaayman is a lecturer at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, specialising in teaching across various digital platforms and in the area of curatorship. She is currently completing her PhD in Fine Art, which deals with the lives of Krotoa and Lady Anne Barnard. A crucial concept in her research concerns the notion of an archive, which is explored in various ways in both her writing and her work.
FABIAN SAPTOUW

Fabian Saptouw completed his BAFA and MFA at the University of Cape Town. He is currently a lecturer at the Michaelis School of Fine Art and teaches the Foundation course, Printmaking and New Media. His research interests include process-based production, Process Art, materiality, bookmaking, text-image studies and the history of the printed word. Exhibitions include the solo show Unraveled and rewoven canvas at the Michael Stevenson Side Gallery, Cape Town (2007), the group show Open books at Brundyn & Gonsalves (2011), May exhibition at the Parking Gallery, Johannesburg and he recently curated Context at the Michaelis Gallery (2012).

NINA LIEBENBERG

Nina Liebenberg is a lecturer and project manager for the Honours in Curatorship programme. She completed her MFA with distinction at the University of Cape Town, under the supervision of Fritha Langerman (2011), and her BAFA from the University of Stellenbosch (2003). She is a practicing artist and has exhibited in a variety of shows.

Her most recent projects include creative consulting at the Pathology Learning Centre at The Faculty of Health Sciences at Groote Schuur Hospital. She is preparing an exhibition called Suspicious Minds which will coincide with a major international conference on neuropsychology on Hiddingh Campus.
Iziko Museums (Iziko) operates eleven national museums, a planetarium, the Social History Centre (resource archive) and three collection-specific libraries in Cape Town. Iziko’s museums were amalgamated by the Cultural Institutions Act of 1998 to drive development and transformation imperatives. Eleven years on, Iziko has emerged as a leading player in the heritage sector in Africa and is acknowledged as a benchmark for South African museums. Iziko art collections are housed in South Africa’s premier art museum, the Iziko South African National Gallery, as well as the Michaelis Collection at the Iziko Old Town House, comprising outstanding collections of traditional, modern, contemporary South African and African art as well as the work of British, French, Dutch and Flemish artists. The collection consists of approximately 9330 works of art (a continuously-increasing number) and is divided into six different sections: historical paintings and sculpture, traditional African art, modern art, prints and drawings, photography and new media, and contemporary art, with curators in charge of each individual collection.

HAYDEN PROUD
Hayden Proud has a BA (Fine Art) and HDE (P/G Sec) from the University of Cape Town, an honours degree from UNISA, and a MA from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. He is currently Curator of Historical Collections of Painting and Sculpture, Iziko Museums. He previously lectured in Art History at both the Michaelis School of Fine Art and the former UCT Department of History of Art. His postgraduate studies have encompassed Italian Renaissance art of the 16th century and Medieval art. In the Iziko Art Collections Department he has primary responsibility for the Michaelis Collection of Dutch and Flemish paintings at the Iziko Old Town House and other historical South African and European (primarily British) collections. Working on a broad front across Iziko’s historical and contemporary collections, he has extensive curatorial experience and has published a number of catalogues, books, reviews and essays. Titles include: The advancement of art: the SA Society of Artists and its exhibitors (2002); Revisions: expanding the narrative of South African art (2006)(as editor and author), and Scratches on the face: antiquity and contemporaneity in South African art (2007). He also recently contributed chapters on South African formalism and performance art to The visual century: South African art in context, 1907-2007 (2011).

PATRICIA DAVISON
Patricia Davison is an anthropologist with a particular interest in material culture and museum practice. She holds a doctorate from the University of Cape Town and had a long career at the South African Museum (now part of Iziko Museums) where she was head of the African Studies and Anthropology Department and, from 2002, Director of the Social History Collections division at Iziko. From 2005 to 2010 she held the position of Executive Director at Iziko Museums with responsibility for collections, research, education and exhibitions. She is currently an Honorary Research Associate of both Iziko Museums and the University of Cape Town.
Contact Details:

APPLICATIONS MUST BE DIRECTED TO:
Nancy Dantas, Liaison Officer, Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town

ENQUIRIES:
nancy.dantas@uct.ac.za

TELEPHONE:
+27 (0)21 480 7151

WEBSITE:
www.cca.uct.ac.za