

Curatorial Experiments: an event series

June 2015, School of Arts at Birkbeck, University of London



Per Huttner, installation view from *I am a Curator*, Chisenhale, 14.12.2003
(feat. Lisa Maddigan and Fuyubi Nakamura as 'Curators of the Day')

Part of the AHRC-funded [Arts of Experiment project](#), run by the [ArtLess group at Birkbeck](#), University of London, this series of five events focuses on experimental aspects of curating and exhibition-making, as well as on the meaning of the lexicon of 'experimentation' when used in the field of art. Each of these features curators working in a highly experimental mode, or scholars in this field, each briefly presenting selected examples of their practice. At the end, the question of experimentation in artistic and curatorial practices will become the starting point for a moderated Q&A / panel discussion.

Manipulating variables: playing with the exhibition format

Monday 8th June, 18.30, Keynes Library, 43-46 Gordon Square

If a scientific experiment tests out what happens in a given scenario when a particular factor is manipulated, similar strategies have been applied to exhibition-making time and time again in the past hundred years as curators set out to disrupt established rules or parameters governing the display and reception of art. The spatial and temporal boundaries of the exhibition format have been bent, modes of production and consumption of art blurred, the connections between artworks shifted between expository, fictitious, choreographic and contingent modes.

With **Francesco Manacorda** (Artistic Director, Tate Liverpool) and freelance curator **Mathieu Copeland**; chaired by **Fiona Candlin** (Birkbeck).

Constructing scenarios: re-inventing the public art gallery

Friday 12th June, 18.30, Room 101, 30 Russell Square

An in-depth look at Eastside Projects, a “free public gallery imagined and organized by artists” which has become an extraordinary catalyst for contemporary artistic practices, based in Birmingham and reaching far beyond “the region”. Eastside Projects’ mission is to demonstrate ways in which art may be useful as part of society, providing vital infrastructure and supporting best practice by establishing and exercising new models for artists and curators to research, produce and thrive.

With **Gavin Wade** (Director, Eastside Projects, Birmingham); chaired by **Gerrie van Noord** (Birkbeck).

Research and replication: looking back at exhibition histories

Friday 19th June, 18.30, Room 101, 30 Russell Square

In the past few years, interest in the field of exhibition histories has seen a dramatic growth, both as an academic subject and as a curatorial strategy. Reinterpreting past exhibitions in a new light has become a common practice, between reenactment and revision in the light of contemporary debates, expanding the remit of cultural history to more and more aspects of its everyday practice and intermediate stages. What happens when you reconstruct an experiment, moving backwards from supposedly known results to retrace overlooked steps and question the origins of familiar notions? With **Dr Lucy Steeds** (University of the Arts, London) and **Prof Victoria Walsh** (Royal College of Arts); chaired by **Dr Ben Cranfield** (Birkbeck).

Field testing: taking the curatorial outside the gallery

Friday 26th June, 18.30, Keynes Library, 43-46 Gordon Square

Like the laboratory, the exhibition space is a highly controlled, closed environment, a self-contained universe that functions according to its own set of pre-determined rules, a function of the contemporary art world applied to a particular time and space. It is however possible to put art to the test in a “naturally occurring” environment, be it a rural or urban landscape, a social or political context, or any unpredictable set of confounding factors and background noises. How do notions of the curatorial change when applied to such expanded fields?

With **Ele Carpenter** (Associate Curator, The Arts Catalyst) and **Sophie Hope** (Birkbeck).

Laboratory environments: spaces for making / displaying / testing

Monday 29th June, 18.30, Keynes Library, 43-46 Gordon Square

The lexicon of scientific experimentation has become a source of inspiration for the growing trend of process-based, collaborative initiatives bridging the gap between the exhibition space and the studio: Paris’ Palais de Tokyo, for example, describes its residencies programme as a “creative laboratory”. The guest speakers for this event will present their positions on such hybrid spaces for the production and display of art, and discuss possible future developments for collaborative, boundary-crossing practices.

With **Kate Cooper** (Director, Auto Italia South East, London) and **Paul Pieroni** (Senior Curator, Glasgow GoMA).

Venues

All events will take place at venues within the School of Arts in Bloomsbury, London: either the Keynes Library (43 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PD) or in Room 101, 30 Russell Square (WC1B).

Attendance is free, but booking is essential. To book a place, please email val.ravaglia@gmail.com



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