

## **MAM 599: Directions in Gallery Management**

Professor Claire Huschle

Spring 2009

Tuesdays: 4:30-7:10 pm

3 credits

Arlington Arts Center. 3550 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA. We are one block south of the Virginia Square-GMU Metro station. We also have on-site parking.

Please note that at least one session will take place off site at area galleries.

**Office Hours:** 30 minutes before classes at the AAC, or by appointment.

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course discusses the many facets of visual art gallery management, from the practical considerations of daily operations to the broader examination of the gallery's role in art education, criticism, and the art market.

Gallery Management students will develop an understanding of a wide range of internal practices, including exhibition coordination and installation, contracts, artist representation, fine art insurance, exhibition policies, budgets, and marketing. We will also discuss location, audience, community outreach and related programming, and mission identification.

After addressing these practical concerns, we will explore the role of contemporary galleries in the understanding of culture, how galleries are affected by (or help determine) trends in the art market, the importance of criticism and art history, and the responsibility of educating a diverse public, among other issues.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will be asked to visit area galleries, produce a variety of written documents, and coordinate a "virtual" exhibition to include all appropriate images and documentation. By the end of this class, students should have a good understanding of the diversity of the gallery world and have a series of documents and models which can be adapted to professional purposes as needed.

### **COURSE TEXTS & MATERIALS**

There are two required texts:

*The Law in Plain English for Galleries*, Leonard D. Duboff, Allworth Press, 1999

*The Artist-Gallery Partnership*, Tad Crawford and Susan Mellon, Allworth Press 1998.

And one optional:

*A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, ninth ed., Sylvan Barnet, Prentice Hall, 2007

In addition, students are required to read the following each week and be prepared to discuss one item from one of the following each week:

**New York Times Art Review columns.** Gallery reviews always published on Fridays, with other reviews sporadically during the week. Focus on the Friday Weekend Arts column, but other relevant art stories are welcome.

**Washington Post, Style Section, Galleries column** (alternate Fridays), or **Washington Post, Weekend Section, On Exhibit** column. Other Washington Post visual art stories, which generally appear in the Style section, are also welcome.

**Modern Art Notes (MAN).** <http://www.artsjournal.com/man>. This daily blog by local writer Tyler Green discusses art museums and galleries on a national scale.

Other readings will be distributed as the class progresses and will include readings on the art market, the growth of visual art fairs and biennials, museum competition/ partnership, gallery ethics, advice for establishing relationships with artists, and management challenges in visual art galleries.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING**

In the gallery world, you will find that writing skills are extremely important. Gallerists and arts managers must often take abstract concepts and theories and transform them into understandable language for statements, press releases, pedagogical texts, and reviews. Moreover, contracts and correspondence are a vital part of dealing with artists and collectors. As such, students in this class will be required to do a substantial amount of writing. In the case of the Exhibition Critical Review, a draft will be **required**. In all other instances, a draft can be submitted for review two weeks prior to final due date. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this option. Deadlines are firm; points will be deducted for late papers.

As important as writing is the ability to discuss art works and exhibitions in a cogent way. Readings and gallery visits in this class will serve as a basis for discussion and students are expected to actively participate.

**PARTICIPATION:** 25%

### **WRITING**

Artwork Comparison (based on gallery visit): 5%

Exhibition Critical Review (based on a different gallery visit): 10% (draft is not graded)

Review of Arts Related Programming (lecture, performance, etc): 10%

Gallery Packet (contracts, loan agreements, etc.): 5%

Written Materials in **Final Presentation** (statements, press materials, and essay): 25%

**FINAL PRESENTATION:** 20%

Students will be asked to put together an exhibition using one of the gallery models we will cover in class. Exhibitions **must** include at least one studio visit, statements describing the work of the artist(s), an essay, press materials, gallery lists, contracts, and a planning calendar, with other options possible. Presentation will include a virtual “walk through” of the exhibition as well as an explanation of the planning process.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

1) Tuesday, January 27. Introduction and goals, gallery experiences, and definitions. Talking and writing about the visual arts.

**Assignment for next week: Artwork comparisons based on a gallery visit.**

2) Tuesday, February 3. The Gallery Exhibition: Determining what an exhibition should say, and how to say it. Practical considerations (from staff to budget) and aesthetic concerns (from labels to lighting).

**Artwork comparisons are due today. Assignment for next week: carefully read arts reviews in *Washington Post* and local papers. Prepare for gallery visits by looking at selected websites and thinking of questions to ask.**

3) Tuesday, February 10. Review of artwork comparisons. This session will be an off-campus field trip to area galleries as an application of last week's discussion and next week's writing assignment.

**Assignment for next week: Gallery review based on a gallery visit.**

4) Tuesday, February 17. Artists: Where to find them, what to look for in a studio visit, how to build a relationship with them. We will do studio visits at the AAC.

**Drafts of gallery reviews are due today.**

**Assignment for next week: selected readings from *Partnership* and *The Law*.**

5) Tuesday, February 24. Nuts and Bolts: Part I. From opening the crate to making a sale. Contracts, commissions, insurance, taxes, and other not-so-creative responsibilities.

**Drafts of gallery reviews returned.**

**Assignment of Gallery Package project (Due March 17), discussion of final project.**

**Assignment for next week: Final versions of gallery reviews are due, plus selected readings from *Partnership* and *The Law*.**

6) Tuesday, March 3: Nuts and Bolts: Part II. Making it shine to the outside: press packages, resumes, statements, and other slightly-more-creative responsibilities.

**Final draft of Gallery Review Due today.**

**Assignment of arts-related programming review (due March 24).**

**Readings for next session will be assigned.**

**(Spring Break: March 10)**

7) Tuesday, March 17: The Market: The strength and weaknesses of galleries, curators, and collectors, as well as ethical and legal concerns. The class will include visits by an area dealer and an area collector.

**Gallery Packages are due today.**

**Readings for next week will be assigned.**

8) Tuesday, March 24. A Broader View: Audience and Community. Thinking outside the box to find new audiences, collaborate across disciplines, and plan for the future.

**Readings for next week will be assigned.**

9) Tuesday, March 31. Art Education: How galleries pick up where formal institutions leave off.  
**Readings for next week will be assigned.**

10) Tuesday, April 7: Alternative spaces and adaptive reuse of space.

11) Tuesday, April 14: Criticism and Galleries, and remaining issues

12) *Tuesday, April 21: Presentations 1-5*

13) *Tuesday, April 28: Presentations 6-10*

14) *Tuesday, May 5: Presentations 11-14*

### **Academic Integrity and Conduct**

It should go without saying that in this course, as with all others, you should conduct yourself and your research with the highest level of integrity and ethics. Cite others when appropriate in written work and oral presentations, listen to the opinions of classmates with an open mind, and generally treat others (and the work of others) as you would like to be treated. To review the Honor Code of George Mason university, please visit: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/index.html#Anchor12>

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities may self-disclose at any point while enrolled at the University. Students are encouraged to disclose their first semester at the University. Upon self-identification you will register with the Disability Resource Center (993-2474). The DRC staff will work collaboratively with you to choose the most appropriate and effective accommodations and resources.

**An incomplete grade (IN)** is used only if you request it in writing. An IN counts as a failing grade until completed, and it automatically turns into an F if a grade is not turned in by the deadline in the Schedule of Classes.

**You are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert System** by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu>.