

Commonwealth and Council Summer School Session 1 Course Listings

Institutions in the Art World: Critique and Imagination

Led by **Alison O'Daniel** and **Kibum Kim**

The discussion group will examine the various institutions that make up the art world (schools, galleries, museums) and explore how these systems inform art-making, exhibition-making, marketization of art, and institutional validation. Some issues that will be discussed include: systems of exchange in the art world, pedagogical ethos in/ neoliberalization of art education, legibility of artworks in the market, the artist as "brand," globalization and its manifestations in homogenization and colonialism, issues of the archive, and the notion of the "canon."

Duration: Three 2 hr-long sessions; August 5th, 12th, and 19th at 4pm PT

Session 1

For the first session, we will be discussing the education system in the art world. Some topics for discussion include:

The mind/body dichotomy in the classroom and how it reinforces extant power structures, often resulting in further marginalization of the oppressed
Growth of the MFA industry and the professionalization of the artist in the age of globalization and neoliberalism (*Paul Freire's banking model of education)
Current education system/art market trends and MFA programs
Other forms of legitimating institutional markers (e.g. the residency circuit)
Alternative models

The artist Maura Brewer, who co-founded the experimental school Arts Research Collective, will join the conversation. Several California College of the Arts Student Union members will also offer a teach-in on inclusive zoom communication practices and facilitate the conversation.

Session 2

For the second session, we will be discussing the museum sphere in the art world. Many of us have been reading and engaging in great, incisive, and much needed discussions about systemic inequities ingrained and sustained in museums. We would like to consider how such colonial, patriarchal, and white supremacist tendencies may manifest in everyday operations in museums today. Some topics for discussion include:

The Imperialist genesis of museums and ties to the Enlightenment/modernity/Anthropocene drive
The raison d'etre of museums and the public good
The collection—the archive, the record. What gets preserved, historicized, and institutionally validated through museums, and how?
How are knowledge and truth shaped through museological practices?
What should be collected in museums in 2020? And how?
How can we (re)think the repatriation question?
Contemporary trends:
Proliferation of private museums; increasing influence of collector patrons
Boom in interest in contemporary art

The artist Gala Porras-Kim, from the Commonwealth and Council family, will join the conversation to speak on her recent projects working with collections at LACMA and MOCA. Several California College of the Arts Student Union members will also offer a teach-in on inclusive zoom communication practices and facilitate the conversation.

Session 3

For the third session, we will be discussing the market, in particular how primary market galleries work with artists today. Here we return to our original assumption that framed our discussions this past month: that the art world is

an industry that is profoundly ambivalent about its commercial, transactional aspects. Art dealers often walk a tightrope—working to create markets for their artists while emphasizing that the work does not capitulate to commercial taste. The art-for-art's-sake myth in turn helps build more market demand. We will consider how the growth of the contemporary art market in the new millenium has chipped away at the art world's anti-market stance and imagine how the art world can still be a liberated laboratory in which to explore alternatives to capitalist models.

Some topics for discussion include:

Denegation of the market in the art world

Hostile worlds view v. neoclassical view

Gift economy in art world

How the emphasis on fostering non-transactional relationships has made the art world an industry rife with unpaid labor

PROPERTY

Why do we buy art? What does it mean to own art?

Ownership. Alienation (property defined by right to alienate)

What is "stewardship"

Globalization and neoliberalism

Flattening of contemporary artmaking

The colonial extraction in the Global South as the art market tries at "diversification"

If you would like to peruse what we have been reading and thinking about, below are some links and pdfs.

RESOURCES:

Goodbye Art World, Hello Art Industry - Tim Schneider

READINGS available here: drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I8pn6ZNqDW6KMBWWGe7GubkHd91xKUU0?usp=sharing

The Revolution: Operation Scrooge and League of Superheroes

Facilitated by **Jennifer Moon**, custodian of The Revolution

Following the lead of Black liberation revolutions, and amidst Covid, both of which urge us to take down failed systems and start building radically different ones, this group will meet to form two action teams:

1. *League of Superheroes*: This is a militant (including militant with abundance and love) vigilante team that will train and propose alternatives to policing. Calling ex-military, chemists, engineers, game strategists, healers, psychokinetics, etc., and people who get a high from choreographed group dancing (we are not necessarily going to dance but it's a similar precision of choreography and collective merging towards a death of the individual).
- 2.
3. *Operation Scrooge*: This is also a militant vigilante team but in a more covert, sneaky way (and also infused with abundance and love). Operation Scrooge is a conning and hacking mission to redistribute wealth and is in need of hackers, actors, thieves, magicians, empaths, etc., and people who have befriended their traumas so they can lovingly coax it out of other people.

4.

At this initial first meeting, as a group, we will decide on a regular meeting day and time through August and beyond ✍️🌀

First meeting date: Tuesday, August 4, 2020, 6–8 PT

Principles of The Revolution:

1. Always* operate from a place of abundance**
2. Always choose the most expansive*** route

*Always means pertaining to any manner of actions that can be deemed revolutionary.

** Abundance is knowing you are enough for the mere fact that you exist.

*** Expansive is reaching beyond binaries, hierarchies, and capital.

Madeline Gins Reading Group

A reading group on *Madeline Gins: The Saddest Thing Is That I Have Had To Use Words: A Madeline Gins Reader*, ed. Lucy Ives, led by **Alice Könitz**

Madeline Gins and Shusaku Arakawa collaborated on art, architecture and writing for forty years. Their experiential architecture promotes longevity, their stated goal was not to die. Gins published three books: the experimental novel *Word Rain (or a Discursive Introduction of G,R,E,T,A, G,A,R,B,O, It Says)* (New York: Grossman Publishers 1969); *What The President Will Say And Do!!* (New York: Station Hill 1984), an excursion into identity, language and free speech using the devices of political rhetoric; and *Helen Keller or Arakawa* (Santa Fe: Burning Books with East/West Cultural Studies, 1994), an art historical novel that took on the form of speculative fiction. With Arakawa, Gins developed the philosophy of 'procedural architecture' to further its impact on human lives. These ideas were explored through three books that they coauthored: *Pour ne Pas Mourir/To not Die* (Éditions de la Différance, Paris 1987); *Architectural Body* (University of Alabama Press, 2002); and *Making Dying Illegal - Architecture Against Death: Original to the 21st Century* (Roof Books, New York, 2006).

A new Madeline Gins reader, edited by Lucy Ives, came out this April. I just started exploring their work and I'm blown away. If you would like, please join me for the reading group. We'll read from *THE_SADDEST_THING_IS_THAT_I_HAVE_HAD_TO_USE_WORDS: A Madeline Gins Reader*, published by Siglio Press. You can find a lot of information about their work on www.reversibledestiny.org

Duration: Three sessions; August 10, 17th, and 24th, 2020, 7 PM PT

Course capacity: 15 people*

***Please note that as this course is limited to fifteen participants, we will be following a first-come first-serve registration.**

Link to purchase from publisher: <http://sigliopress.com/book/madeline-gins-reader/>

Mutant Salon: Objecthood and the Performance of Race, Gender, & Sexuality

Led by **Young Joon Kwak**

The course is a space for POC/Womxn/queer artists to share tactics for performing objecthood as a way toward agency rather than seeing objecthood as merely the primal site of injury of our bodies. We will theorize, perform, and discuss processes of self/collective/mutual objectification that may act as a means of countering/repairing the harmful effects of the systemic objectification, surveillance, and policing of marginalized bodies in the present. During each session we will be joined by different members of Mutant Salon and other artists TBA.

Duration: Three 1.5 hr-long sessions; August 15th, 16th, and 22nd at 3PM PT

A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None

Led by **Danielle Dean** and **Nikita Gale**

Danielle Dean and Nikita Gale will facilitate an informal discussion that takes Kathryn Yusoff's *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* as a point of departure. Participants will be invited to explore ideas presented in Yusoff's text, some of which include antiblackness and the legacy of colonialism; western understandings of environment, land and property; extraction, and the production of value.

Date: Wednesday, August 19th, 11 AM PT

Link to read online: <https://manifold.umn.edu/projects/a-billion-black-anthropocenes-or-none>

Danielle Dean and Nikita Gale facilitate an informal discussion that takes Kathryn Yusoff's *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* as a point of departure. Participants were invited to explore ideas presented in Yusoff's text, some of which include antiblackness and the legacy of colonialism; western understandings of environment, land and property; extraction, and the production of value.

Below, please find a few notes that we hope will guide our thinking during this session. As we were talking about the book, a few things seemed to emerge as primary ideas that interested us in relation to our artistic practices. Here is a smattering of notes from one of our conversations which we hope to elaborate upon in collaboration with you as participants in this discussion:

Yusoff's argument can be applied to most colonial systems--the subject is always white and male.

What are the possibilities of considering Humans and Non-humans as material/matter--as rocks, plants, objects, or non-life forms?

The history of slavery and its relationship to gold/minerals; in particular, Elmina Castle in Ghana

The use of categories and categorization in the technique of geology. What is the process of defining biological and geological?

"Rethinking the earth"

Black bodies as properties of "enjoyment... labor, violence, energy..."

Extraction of material from the earth and extraction of creative labor/energy

... what about fossils (and fuel and energy)

Chat transcript available [here](#).

Discussion video available [here](#).

Civic Art Discussion

An open conversation led by **Olga Koumoundouros** and **Sandra de la Loza**.

Join us in a group conversation about what artists embedded in civic institutions can do to enact socio-political change. This discussion will focus explicitly on the ways that civic involvement and activism are particularly conducive to art collaboration.

Some questions we will explore are:

- How can change be enacted?
- What are strategies for intervening, interrupting, navigating rigid, hierarchical structures?
- What are the possibilities for systemic change through work inside vs outside institutional structures?
- How can we enact change on an institutional level, and what are some of the pitfalls and landmines encountered in such work?
- How do non-linear and non-binary beliefs produce methodologies that, when applied to groups, can shift calcified or hierarchical situations and institutions?
- Are there ways to not cause harm while allowing space for change and non-linear outcomes to happen?
- How does risk-averse ideology have the right intention but struggle with practices that lead to deep pluralistic inclusion?
- How are artists able to hold space for places where conflict occurs and then can be generative?

Sandra de la Loza was an artist in residence with the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (2019-2020) in which she developed an arts and cultural framework, implementation plan and toolkit. She is a third generation Angeleno, whose work investigates the underlayers of our present landscape as a means to decolonize, heal ancestral trauma and create circles that enable other social and environmental relations to happen.

Olga Koumoundouros is the artist in residence with LA County Office of Violence Prevention as part of the Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health. She is soon launching the *Solutions to Violence Community Storytelling Project* where protocols will be generated that will inform positive systemic change based on the narratives and input shared by an outreach structure with community members.

Date: Wednesday, August 26, 5:30 PM PT