

Journal of Curatorial Studies, Issue: The Curated Body

Deadline: Nov 15, 2017

Jim Drobnick

Call for proposals

Journal of Curatorial Studies 7.2

Special Issue: The Curated Body

This issue investigates the aesthetics and politics of curating the bodies of living persons. The word "curator" can be traced to "caregiver." In Roman law the "curatore" oversaw public works or served as protectors of children and disabled individuals. Subsequently, the Christian church adopted the term "curate" to designate the duties of priests to care for the souls of their parish. With the rise of secular museums, the role of curator later developed as those individuals who cared for and exhibited the collections. This special issue focuses on the "curated body" whether one's own body or those of others. Michel Foucault's latter work on the "care of the self" examined the ethico-aesthetic techniques of self-transformation. Caring for the self, in this sense, can describe practices of "the curated body" where a person exercises discipline over their physical, mental and behavioral habits in order to transform into a particular kind of being.

Curating other people, by contrast, encompasses a different power dynamics and ethics. Individuals have been incorporated into exhibitions in a wide variety of manners, such as living creches, Renaissance ceremonial pageants and tableaux vivants. These displays provided religious instruction, demonstrated respect, and offered moral entertainment. Yet other types of live display were less benign. Carnival sideshows, punishment spectacles, and colonial showcases often exploited individuals as curiosities and exotica. In the contemporary era, museums and galleries have featured performances that deliberately sought to confront such abusive practices and to critique negative cultural attitudes through the exhibition of living bodies.

We invite papers that explore the curated body, whether of the self, of others or both. Case studies are invited that explore how the curatorial serves to mediate the relationships between bodies, exhibitionary contexts, aesthetics and corporeal traditions.

Potential topics include:

- histories of the display of living beings: living creches, royal entries, tableaux vivants, etc.
- political, legal and normative frameworks regarding the exhibition of living persons
- case studies of human exhibition in art and popular culture
- live displays and the cultural politics of alterity, sexuality, gender, or ethnicity
- self-formation pertaining to curatorial or aesthetic identity

- self-curation on social media platforms
- self-curation in aesthetic subcultures: bohemianism, artistic dress, flaneurs, dandies, gallerinas, collectors
- auto-ethnographies of living history museum interpreters, historical re-enactors, etc.
- how the dynamics of live displays in museums, galleries and exhibitions impact upon aesthetic experience
- curatorial epistemologies deriving from contexts of embodiment and experience
- ethical issues regarding the repatriation of human remains held by museums

Send a 250-word abstract and bio by November 15, 2017 to the JCS editors:

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The Journal of Curatorial Studies is an international, peer-reviewed publication that explores the increasing relevance of curating and exhibitions and their impact on institutions, audiences, aesthetics and display culture. Inviting perspectives from multiple academic fields, the journal welcomes a diversity of disciplinary approaches on curating and exhibitions broadly defined. By catalyzing debate and serving as a venue for the emerging discipline of curatorial studies, this journal encourages the development of the theory, practice and history of curating, as well as the analysis of exhibitions and display culture in general.

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Reference:

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