

## MA Curating course (Univ. Sunderland)

Beryl Graham

### MA CURATING AT SUNDERLAND

#### DESCRIPTION

Being a successful curator in the 21st Century can involve organisation, management, display and production across a wide range of fields - from contemporary art exhibitions to musical events, from museum displays to practical workshops. Like artists, curators develop their own practice at individual and collaborative levels.

MA Curating at the University of Sunderland is the only course in the UK to specialise in the concerns of curating across the fields of Art, Design, Media & Culture. This innovative and ground-breaking post-graduate programme (incorporating Post-Graduate Certificate, Post-Graduate Diploma and Masters levels) is also the only one of its type internationally to combine the curation of artefacts and objects from the worlds of Fine Art and Applied Art and Design alongside the initiation and organisation of projects, exhibitions and events by (and with) contemporary artists and cultural practitioners.

This new programme will highlight the histories of how people have collected and displayed culture whilst investigating and testing the methods and skills needed to be a curator today. It is designed to accommodate many kinds of curator; from the arts administrator and events co-ordinator to the artist-curator and curator-artist; from the design exhibitor to the gallery education worker; from the new media curator to those individuals who work in alternative and ad hoc contexts of cultural organisation and event programming.

#### AREAS OF EXPERTISE IN CONTEXT

MA Curating complements other initiatives at the University of Sunderland such as the ongoing investigation into curating new media art ([www.crumbweb.org](http://www.crumbweb.org) - an international resource

for curators). The University of Sunderland has become a leading centre in academic and professional research on exhibiting digital and new media contemporary art. MA Curating draws on the wide range of professional curating experience and expertise of staff from Glass to Fine Art, Design History to Performance. The programme puts the expanding culture of the North East of England in an international context. It offers the student a dynamic learning environment close to BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, The Sage and a host of other galleries, projects and freelance initiatives across the region. In addition, MA Curating offers the skills necessary to impact upon practice via its international networks.

#### AIM OF THE PROGRAMME

The Programme provides a breadth of knowledge and expertise necessary to critically navigate the multifaceted and expanding field of curating in the current climate. MA Curating focuses on the practice of its participants via individual and collaborative projects and offers a far reaching historical and theoretical programme through writing and debate.

#### TEACHING STAFF

The course offers expertise from curators and academics at the forefront of their discipline:

- Prof. Beryl Graham, Programme Leader (curator of 'Serious Games', co-author of 'Rethinking Curating', co-editor of CRUMB).
- Dr. Tim Brennan, Head of Department, Arts & Design (artist and curator).
- Mike Collier, Lecturer (curator, artist and consultant).
- Dr. Sarah Cook, post-doctoral research fellow, co-curator of 'Database Imaginary', co-author of 'Rethinking Curating', and co-editor of CRUMB).
- Dr. Carol McKay, Senior Lecturer, Photography, Video and Digital Imaging (writer and academic).

Additional contributing staff include:

- Prof. Sylva Petrova, (specialism: glass)
- Jack Dawson, Senior Lecturer (specialism: Design History and Theory)
- Neil Ewins, Lecturer (specialism: Design History and Theory)
- Prof. Peter Davies, (Art Consultant)

Visiting Speakers have included:

- Kathy Rae Huffman, formerly Curator at the Long Beach Museum of Art, California, director of Hull Time Based Arts, and Director of Visual Arts at Cornerhouse, Manchester.
- Caitlin Jones, formerly of Guggenheim Museum, New York, and curator of Seeing Double, now director of Western Front, Vancouver.

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

### Description

This programme involves a practice-based approach to learning whilst providing a thorough understanding of the theoretical and historical underpinnings of curating. MA Curating is structured through 5 modules (also incorporating postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma levels of attainment).

The following is a brief description of the modules:

### Modules

#### Genealogies of Curating(CURM01, Postgraduate Certificate)

This module studies a range of histories connected to the development of contemporary curating. This initial seminar and lecture based module establishes a substantial basis for the practice of curating in all its forms and begins by introducing contemporary curating as a multi-faceted and historically deep-rooted concept.

#### Mechanics of Curating(CURM02, Postgraduate Certificate)

This module brings together the main procedures of exhibition organizing as objects of study. It looks at a range of practical aspects that form the professional basis of any curator whether they are working or intend to work in the public or private sectors. The module establishes this via a combination of workshops led by professionals working in the field, group visits to cultural organizations in the region and keynote presentations by core staff.

#### Curating a Region(CURM03, Postgraduate Diploma)

This module builds on the practical concerns of Contemporary Art & Design infrastructures in a region. It will examine the relationship of local/regional production to an international market and global culture. It takes as its

main object of study the environment of the North-East and investigates the role artists have played in the growth of arts provision. Curating a Region is delivered via a combination of field trips and lecture/seminars.

#### Visions of Curating(CURM04, Postgraduate Diploma)

This module interrogates models of curatorial practice both in and out of the museum. It looks, in particular, at the ways in which artists have adopted the ideas and practices of curating into their work, the role of the collection, and models of the distribution of art derived from media. The module provides a platform for further enquiry into new and emerging models of curatorial practice. It asks: What are the possible future models of curating contemporary art? The module is delivered via lecture/seminars including case studies.

#### Curatorial Practice(CURM05, Masters level)

In this final module, students work either individually or collaboratively on a project of their own, either in association with a regional cultural institution or independently in the region (or further a field if applicable). Projects do not necessarily have to be realized as completed cultural events/exhibitions but exist as 'display' [presentation of advanced research]. The written aspects of the module (Project Report) contextualise the practical aspect with any topic covered previously in the programme.

#### Assessment

Each module involves a submission of an essay, written case study (with visual material) or in the case of Curatorial Practice (CURM05) a Project Report.

#### APPLICATION

Through application form and interview or in the case of overseas candidates by written application, telephone interview and or written correspondence. (For more detailed information on applications please contact Tim Brennan (Programme Leader) or the School of Art, Design, Media & Culture office, University of Sunderland (contact details below)

#### COURSE DURATION

The duration of the course is: one year full-time, 2 years

part-time.

It is modular in structure offering Post-graduate Certificate, Diploma, and Masters levels.

## CONTACT

If you are interested in being part of this new and dynamic research culture of curating at the University of Sunderland please contact:

Beryl Graham

MA Curating Programme Leader

University of Sunderland

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or Tim Brennan tim.brennan@sunderland.ac.uk

Further details:

url: <http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/study/coursedetails/index.php?cid=611>

### Reference:

ANN: MA Curating course (Univ. Sunderland). In: ArHist.net, Sep 3, 2010 (accessed Jun 30, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/32941>>.