

KINGSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN HISTORY
BA (Hons) History of Art, Architecture & Design
Semester B 2002-2003, Level 1
Fran Lloyd and Helen Potkin

EXPLORING CONTEXTS

Contents:

Introduction	p. 2
Module outline	p. 3
Bibliography	p. 4
Assessment	p.5
Preparation for workshops, visits and seminar presentations	p. 6
Briefs during visits	p. 7

EXPLORING CONTEXTS

The module focuses on the resources of London and its environs. It investigates the different ways in which these may be used to enhance a critical understanding of the objects of visual and material culture and their mediation in contemporary culture. This will include assessing key research resources, including internet sources, close analysis of particular works, objects or sites, and the study of different modes of visual and critical presentation.

Introductory lectures and workshops will introduce key themes and issues. Visits to public and commercial galleries, public sites of interest, auction houses, museums, key archives, specialist collections and research resources will form the central part of the learning experience and are therefore a compulsory element.

Discussion based workshops and seminars with an emphasis on group work will provide opportunities to explore these resources and the ideas of context further and enable students to present informed and critical research. The Preparation & Seminars document will provide advice on how to prepare for each study visit, workshop or seminar.

By the end of the module you should:

- have developed a confident working knowledge of the range of resources for the study of visual and material culture in London and its environs;
- be critically aware of a range of contexts and different forms of mediation which directly or indirectly affect the spectator's understanding of visual and material culture;
- have developed a range of research and resource study skills and the ability to work both independently and as part of a group;
- be able to observe, describe and analyse different forms of visual and material culture through written and oral work.

ASSESSMENT

This module is assessed by three forms of in course work: a short visual analysis/review of a key resource, a group presentation and an essay. Together they assess a range of written, verbal, research and analytical skills.

- 500-700 word analysis – hand-in date 5 March 2003
- group seminar presentation – 2 April
- 1,200-1,500 word essay - hand-in date 30 April

The three pieces of assessed work are equally weighted.

MODULE OUTLINE

Week 1

Introduction to the course

Workshop: Identifying Resources

Preparation for Visits & Seminar presentations on Bentalls

Week 2

Lecture: Critical Reflections on Use of Resources

Workshop: Synopsis of Research Findings

Week 3

Visit: Tate Britain, including Library & Archive

Week 4

Visit: The Imperial War Museum

Week 5

Lecture: Contexts of Production, Mediation & Consumption

Workshop: Text on 19th Department Store, Rudi Laermans, 'Learning to Consume: Early Department Stores and the Shaping of the Modern Consumer Culture (1860-1914)', in *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 10, 1993, pp 19-102.

Hand-in: short critical analysis

Week 6

Visit: The Museum of London, including library & archives

Week 7

Visit: Broadgate, City of London

Week 8

Visit: Commercial Galleries

Week 9

Student Presentations on Bentall's

Week 10

Reading Week

Easter Break

Week 11

Visit: Auction House

(Christies, South Kensington: Pop Memorabilia and Indian and Islamic Art)

Essay Hand-in

Week 12

Feedback and Review

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The literature on individual resources in and around London is immense and easily accessible in directories, guides, and via the internet. The following bibliography therefore focuses on how such resources may be approached and used in the study of visual and material culture.

Core Texts:

- L. Buck, *Target 2: A Users Guide to British Art Now*, London: Tate Publications, 2001
- G. Doy, *Black Visual Culture*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2000
- A. Forty, *Objects of Desire*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1986
- S. Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, Leicester and London: Leicester Museum Studies and Routledge, 1994
- M. Pointon, *History of Art, A Student Handbook*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1980
- M. Sturken & L. Cartwright, *Practices of Looking, an Introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001
- J. Walker, *Design History & the History of Design*, London: Pluto, 1989

Recommended Reading:

- M. Barnard, *Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture*, Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001
- J. Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain 1880-1980*, London: Longman, 1994
- J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972
- I. Borden, *Architecture & Sites of History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997
- P. Jobling & David Crowley, *Graphics Design: Reproduction and Representation Since 1800*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996
- G. Julier, *The Culture of Design*, London: Sage, 2000
- M. B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981
- E.D. Rappaport, *Shopping For Pleasure, Women in the Making of London's West End*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000
- A.L. Rees & F. Borzello, *The New Art History*, London: Camden Press, 1986
- T. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England 1850-1914*, London: Verso, 1989

Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996

ASSESSMENTS

Short Analysis:

500-700 word analysis

Select **one** object, photograph, drawing, painting or site that you can visit and consider its possible meanings in relation to its context of presentation or mediation. This is a focused and analytical piece of writing that should go beyond description. It is also a short piece so avoid the temptation to cover too much and focus instead on a key aspect or debate.

Group Seminar Presentation

In groups of 4-5, students should choose a specific aspect of Bentalls Department Store in Kingston to research and analysis. It may be research into the original building; its significance within a broader history of retail developments; the significance of its location in Kingston; an analysis of different parts of the existing building, including the sculpture on the façade; changing patterns of consumption, or how the function and/or meanings of the site has changed. The aim of this project is that you research and analyse your chosen aspect in a number of different ways.

In week 9 each group is required to give a 10 minute presentation on their research on an aspect of Bentalls. The notes and images should be presented and submitted as part of the assessment. Each group will be awarded a single group mark for the presentation.

Essay submission:

1,200-1,500 word essay

You are required to answer **one** of the following questions. Your essay must include a bibliography of all source material, including film or internet sources. All essays must be typed, double-spaced and illustrated appropriately.

1. Write a critical account of ONE aspect of a collection, site or research archive you have visited.
2. Select one site or resource in London and identify and discuss at least two different ways in which it could be used in the study of visual and material culture.
3. Present an outline of an exhibition proposal of your choice which draws upon at least two different specific research resources of London or its environs. Briefly discuss how you would use these resources and what they would add to the exhibition.

PREPARATION FOR WORKSHOPS, VISITS AND SEMINAR PRESENTATION

Week 2

Workshop: Synopsis of Research Findings

Following the workshop in week one, each group to work on three aspects of their selected site to present to the group using visual aids. The presentation should be no more than 10 minutes. In making your choice of points please consider the following:

What are the most distinctive aspects of the building/collection/resource?

How is it presented to the public via web/promotional material?

In what ways might it be useful to you as a student?

What unexpected elements have you discovered about it?

The selected sites will include: The Museum of London, The Imperial War Museum, INIVA archive and Black Art Archive, Tate Britain, including Library & Archive, Sothebys and Christies, the Photographers Gallery, and Broadgate.

Week 3 & 4

Visits: Tate Britain & The Imperial War Museum

Identify which aspects of the collection or a theme that you are interested in before the visit & during the visit select one object, image or installation to analyse in depth. Identify its key characteristics and why it holds interest for you as spectator. You may use one of these examples as the basis for your first assessment.

Week 5

Lecture: Contexts of Production, Mediation and Consumption

Workshop: Preparation for seminar presentations

Please read the two texts handed out in class in advance of this session and identify three points about each that are of importance for you in preparation for group discussions.

Week 6 - 8

Prepare research & group presentation.

Week 9

Student Presentations on Bentalls

Week 12

Feedback and Review

In preparation for this session please reflect upon what you have learnt from this module and identify what are the key issues that you have become aware of through the module.

BRIEFS DURING VISITS

Tate Gallery

Visit: Tate Britain, Millbank (nearest train/tube station Vauxhall and just walk over the bridge or short walk along river.

Meet: 10.30 inside foyer by main entrance on Millbank.

Please work in small groups on the following rooms:

Room 15 Art & Victorian Society

Room 19 & 20 War & Memory

Room 21 Modern Art & Tradition

Room 24 1950s Art & Mythology

Ambulatory – Jacob Epstein

Please consider the following:

How is the work in this room mediated or framed by the gallery?

For example, by the works hung together, by lighting, architecture/decoration of room, through the text panels

What are the major points that are stressed about the works?

What questions are not addressed?

I will move around the various groups to see how you are getting on and to take small groups to the recently opened Hyman Kreitman Research Centre.

You may also wish to use this visit to prepare for your first assignment. Details below.

Short Analysis

500-700 word analysis – hand-in date 5 March 2003

Select one object, photograph, drawing, painting or site that you can visit and consider its possible meanings in relation to its context of presentation or mediation.

This is a focused and analytical piece of writing that should go beyond description. It is also a short piece so avoid the temptation to cover too much and focus instead on a key aspect or debate.

Museum of London

Selecting one of the galleries which focus on London from the Eighteenth Century onwards, consider how we are aware of *either* the cultural diversity of London at a specific time *or* of London as a colonising capital. What conclusions do you draw from this about the museum's display concerns and the histories represented?

Imperial War Museum

10.30-11.30 Film Archive

We will be introduced to the film archive collection and shown a selection of films as follows:

WW1 film showing naval battle

The Eternal Jew - anti-Semitic film 1940s

Calling Mr Smith 1943 - 'avant garde' film about persecution of the Jews. Censored in the UK

The House in the Middle - US Cold War info film - about how to survive Nuclear holocaust by keeping your house clean!

Operation Moneybags - 1960s about LSD trials on soldiers

The Imperial War Museum describes itself as 'the museum of everyone's story: the history of modern war and people's experience of war and wartime life in Britain and the Commonwealth.' Do you think that it is successful in achieving its aim?

As you move through the museum think about how war is represented:

- How are the military objects displayed, and what perspective do they offer
- How are the different wars characterised?
- What is the nature of the museum experience?

11.30 –12.30 please make your way to the two suites of galleries on the second floor.

EXHIBITION: Paul Seawright: Hidden, 5 February - 30 March

In June 2002 the Imperial War Museum commissioned photographer Paul Seawright to visit Afghanistan. The resulting exhibition consists of ten large format photographs which investigate the country's landscape. Areas contaminated with unexploded ordinance and mines, which also constitute the greatest barriers to the repatriation of displaced people on the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

- Can you characterise the museum's approach to representing war?
- Does it have a consistent view?

Commercial Galleries and Dealer

Meet at 10.30am Bond Street Station

We will visit galleries and dealers in Dering Street and then make our way to Cork Street. The purpose of the visit is to consider the ways in which contemporary art is presented in a commercial context and to think about the work and the spaces in the broader context of the gallery system. Listings: www.newexhibitions.com, www.artmonthly.co.uk

List of venues and exhibitions in expected order of visit (we'll see how far we get !)

DERING STREET

20 Anne Faggionato *Ellen Cantor*
 21 Chinese Contemporary www.chinesecontemporary.com *Group Exhibition*
 4th floor 23 Annely Juda www.annelyjudafineart.co.uk *Anthony Caro*

CORK STREET

33-34 Houldsworth www.houldsworth.co.uk *Laura Ford: Headthinkers*
 5a Robert Sandelson www.robertsandelson.com *Howard Hodgkin*
 5 Hirschel www.hirschelcontemporary.co.uk *Rebecca Salter*
 6 Entwistle
 31 Alan Cristea www.alancristea.com *Picasso & Matisse*
 1st floor 9 Art First www.artfirst.co.uk *Jack Milroy: Falling and Flying*
 22 Beaux Arts www.beauxartslondon.co.uk *Recent Acquisitions*
 22a the Mayor Gallery www.artnet.com/mayor.html *Peter Hutchinson*
 21 Flowers Central www.flowerseast.com *Jack Smith*
 1st floor 21 Michael Hue Williams www.mhwfineart.com
 20 Redfern www.redfern-gallery.com *Ffiona Lewis: from the Road*
 11&12 Waddingtons www.waddingtongalleries.com *Antoni Tapies*

In preparation for the visit you might wish to visit a selection of gallery websites. Also see what you can find out about any of the artists on show.

Issues to consider and for discussion on the visit:

- the significance of where the galleries are located
- the nature of the gallery spaces and the impact on the visitor (design, organisation, display, accessibility and so on)
- the differences between galleries in terms of the work shown and intended market
- does the fact the work is for sale change our relationship to viewing the work?
- What kind of information is available and how can you access it?

Visit to Broadgate

The purpose of this visit is to look at a site of public art. In this session we will consider a range of issues relating to viewing art in this context, such as what do we mean by 'public', what our relationship might be to the work in this space, as well the meanings generated by the work. In preparation for the visit, see what you can find out about the artists represented in Broadgate. List below:

Richard Serra, *Fulcrum*
 Barry Flanagan, *Leaping Hare on Crescent and Bell*
 Jacques Lipchitz, *Bellerophon Taming Pegasus*

George Segal, *Rush Hour*
Stephen Cox, *Ganapathi and Devi*
Fernando Botero, *Broadgate Venus*
Xavier Corbero, *The Broad Family*

Suggestions for reading:

Sara Selwood, *The Benefits of Public Art*, 1995
Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space & the City*, 1997

Here are some issues we will consider on the visit:

- What kind of space does the sculpture occupy?
- What do you think public art might be for?
- Does it 'improve' the environment?
- Why do you think the works at Broadgate were commissioned?
- Why do you think these particular works/artists were chosen?
- Richard Serra has said there was 'absolutely no aesthetic agenda' for Broadgate. What do you think?
- What do you understand by the term 'regeneration' and how does public sculpture fit into this scheme?
- What kind of social ideal is created at Broadgate and what do think of it?