
Syllabus

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Abstract

During the course of this seminar, we will examine the cultural work of art museums in the US by way of talking about recent issues in US art museums. We will discuss the cultural, societal, and political status of art museums within the US and explore what they do and how they work. Firstly, we will critically engage in the idea of the art museum within Western thought on a theoretical level. Secondly, we will trace the history of the American art museum throughout the 20th and 21st century and discuss different approaches to art presentation and education to contextualize the art museum within US society and explore how it has changed over time. Thirdly, we will look at specific museums and their contexts in New York City, Miami, Chicago, etc. to talk about different aspects of museum practice such as exhibition making, art collecting, civic engagement, urban planning/architecture, and philanthropy. The goal in this course will be to analyze and interrogate factors and features of the US art museums that make them distinctly American. In this way it will also be possible to consider the art museum's role as a cultural agent involved in broader structural and institutional issues such as knowledge mediation, identity politics, and/or power relations and canonization.


Subjects:
American Studies
Cultural Studies
History
Postcolonial Studies

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