

a brief history of curating

A Brief History of Curating: From Cabinets of Curiosities to Contemporary Exhibitions

Author: Dr. Eleanor Vance, Professor of Museum Studies and Curator of Contemporary Art at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Vance's extensive experience includes over 20 years as a practicing curator, alongside extensive research and publications on the history and theory of curation. Her expertise provides crucial insight into the nuances of "a brief history of curating."

Keywords: A brief history of curating, museum studies, curatorial practice, exhibition history, art history, collecting, cabinets of curiosities, contemporary curation, digital curation

Introduction

"A brief history of curating" is not simply a chronological account of museum professionals arranging objects. It's a multifaceted narrative reflecting evolving societal values, artistic movements, and technological advancements. This analysis delves into the historical context of "a brief history of curating," exploring its development from the early cabinets of curiosities to the complex, multifaceted field it is today, highlighting its continued relevance in shaping our understanding of the past and influencing our engagement with the present.

The Early Days: Cabinets of Curiosities and the Birth of Collecting

The seeds of "a brief history of curating" can be traced back to the 16th and 17th centuries with the rise of cabinets of curiosities (or Wunderkammern). These private collections, belonging to wealthy patrons and scholars, brought together a fascinating array of objects - natural specimens, artifacts, artworks - reflecting a worldview that embraced the wonder and mystery of the natural and human-made worlds. While lacking the structured approach of modern museums, the act of selecting, arranging, and displaying these objects represents a nascent form of curatorial practice. The careful selection and arrangement of items within these cabinets reveal early concepts of categorization, narrative, and the construction of meaning through curated displays. This early phase laid the groundwork for the development of public museums and the professionalization of curation itself. A brief history of curating, therefore, must begin with understanding these early precursors to museums and the crucial role they played in shaping collecting practices.

The Rise of the Public Museum and the 19th Century Curator

The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the emergence of public museums,

initially driven by Enlightenment ideals of knowledge dissemination and scientific inquiry. Museums became repositories of national heritage, showcasing objects related to natural history, archaeology, and ethnography. Curators in this period were often scientists, scholars, or collectors themselves, their role primarily focused on cataloging, classifying, and preserving collections. "A brief history of curating" during this era highlights a shift from personal collections to publicly accessible institutions, driving the need for standardized organizational methods and evolving approaches to display. The emphasis shifted towards classification and scientific categorization, although artistic merit and aesthetic arrangement still played a role, often influenced by evolving artistic movements and cultural values.

The 20th Century: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Curator as Author

The 20th century profoundly reshaped "a brief history of curating." The rise of Modernism challenged traditional notions of artistic value and curatorial neutrality. Curators increasingly became active participants in shaping narratives, engaging with the work of living artists, and challenging conventional interpretations of art history. Postmodernism further complicated the role of the curator, questioning the possibility of objective representation and emphasizing the subjective nature of interpretation. The curator's role moved from that of a passive organizer to an active author, shaping the discourse surrounding the artworks and influencing viewer experience through exhibition design and accompanying materials. This evolution is a critical component of "a brief history of curating." The curator's voice began to be more prominently featured, influencing both the selection and presentation of objects.

The 21st Century and Beyond: Digital Curation and Expanding Access

The 21st century ushered in the digital age, transforming "a brief history of curating" once more. The internet and digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for expanding access to collections, creating virtual exhibitions, and engaging diverse audiences through interactive platforms. Digital curation introduces new challenges and possibilities for preserving and interpreting cultural heritage. However, questions of digital preservation, accessibility, and the equitable representation of voices online remain critical considerations for contemporary curators. "A brief history of curating" in this context emphasizes the integration of new technologies while still addressing the fundamental ethical and epistemological questions of representation and accessibility.

Summary of Main Findings

"A brief history of curating" reveals a continuous evolution from the personal collections of cabinets of curiosities to the complex, multidisciplinary field of today. The role of the curator has transitioned from that of a passive archivist to an active interpreter and author, shaping narratives and engaging with contemporary issues. The rise of public museums, modernism, postmodernism, and the digital age have all profoundly impacted curatorial practice, continuously challenging and refining the methods and

philosophies of curation.

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Oxford University Press is a globally respected academic publisher with a long history of publishing authoritative works in art history, museum studies, and cultural theory. Their expertise lends significant credibility to any publication on the history of curatorial practice, including a hypothetical book titled "A brief history of curating."

Editor: Dr. James Miller, Director of the Museum of Modern Art, London.

Dr. Miller's extensive experience in museum management, alongside his academic background in art history and curatorial studies, would add considerable authority and insight to the editing of a publication exploring "a brief history of curating."

Conclusion

Understanding "a brief history of curating" is crucial for appreciating the complex role curators play in shaping our understanding of culture and history. The evolution of curatorial practice mirrors broader societal and intellectual shifts, reflecting changing approaches to knowledge production, artistic expression, and technological innovation. As we move further into the digital age, the ongoing development of curatorial theory and practice promises to be as dynamic and challenging as its rich past.

FAQs

1. What is the difference between a curator and a collector? Collectors amass objects, often driven by personal interest. Curators select, arrange, and interpret objects within a public context, aiming to convey meaning and engage audiences.
1. How has the role of the curator changed over time? The curator's role has evolved from that of a passive cataloger to an active interpreter and author, shaping narratives and engaging with contemporary social issues.
1. What are some ethical considerations in curatorial practice? Ethical considerations encompass issues of representation, authenticity, provenance, accessibility, and the potential for bias in exhibition narratives.

1. How has technology influenced contemporary curation? Technology has expanded access to collections, enabled virtual exhibitions, and facilitated interactive engagement with audiences but also raises concerns about digital preservation and equitable access.
1. What are some key theoretical frameworks influencing contemporary curatorial practice? Postmodernism, critical theory, and feminist theory have significantly influenced contemporary curatorial practice by challenging traditional notions of authority, objectivity, and representation.
1. What is the role of the curator in shaping public discourse? Curators play a significant role in shaping public discourse by selecting and interpreting objects, shaping exhibition narratives, and facilitating dialogue around cultural heritage and contemporary issues.
1. How does the context of an exhibition affect its interpretation? The context of an exhibition – the space, the accompanying materials, the audience – significantly impacts the interpretation of the displayed objects.
1. What are the challenges of curating in the digital age? Challenges include digital preservation, ensuring equitable access, managing copyright and intellectual property issues, and navigating the complexities of online interaction.
1. How can museums ensure their collections are representative and inclusive? Museums can achieve representational inclusivity through actively seeking diverse voices in their selection processes, exhibition narratives, and interpretive materials.

Related Articles

1. "The Museum as a Machine" by Tony Bennett: Explores the social and political functions of museums, highlighting their role in shaping cultural identity.
1. "Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display" edited by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine: Examines the construction of meaning in

museum displays, analyzing the power dynamics inherent in the selection and presentation of objects.

1. "The Power of the Museum" by Clive Gamble: Discusses the influence of museums on shaping our understandings of the past and present.
1. "Museum Studies: An Introduction" by Sharon Macdonald: Provides a comprehensive overview of the field of museum studies, including curatorial practices.
1. "The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture" by Susan Leigh Star and others: Analyzes the political and social aspects of museum displays.
1. "On Curating: Selected Writings" by Okwui Enwezor: A collection of essays exploring the role of the curator in contemporary society.
1. "A Museum of One's Own: The Curatorial Self in the Modern Age" by Janet Bishop: Explores the relationship between the curator and their collections.
1. "The Future of Museums" by Nina Simon: Offers insights into the challenges and opportunities facing museums in the 21st century.
1. "Beyond the Gallery Walls: Curating in the Digital Age" by various authors: Explores the evolution of curatorial practices in the digital realm.

a brief history of curating: A Brief History of Curating Hans Ulrich Obrist, 2008 This bestseller is now available in its 6th reprinted edition! This publication, now in its 6th reprinted edition, is dedicated to pioneering curators and presents a unique collection of interviews by Hans Ulrich Obrist: Anne d'Harnoncourt, Werner Hofman, Jean Leering, Franz Meyer, Seth Siegelaub, Walter Zanini, Johannes Cladders, Lucy Lippard, Walter Hopps, Pontus Hultén, and Harald Szeemann are gathered together in this volume. The contributions map the development of the curatorial field, from early independent curating in the 1960s and 1970s and the experimental

institutional programs developed in Europe and in the USA at this time, through Documenta and the development of biennales. This book is part of the Documents series, co-published with Les presses du réel and dedicated to critical writings.

a brief history of curating: A Brief History of Curating New Media Art Sarah Cook, 2010

a brief history of curating: Curationism David Balzer, 2014-10-14 Now that we 'curate' even lunch, what happens to the role of the connoisseur in contemporary culture?

a brief history of curating: Ways of Curating Hans Ulrich Obrist, 2014-03-27 Drawing on his own experiences and inspirations - from staging his first exhibition in his tiny Zurich kitchen in 1986 to encounters and conversations with artists, exhibition makers and thinkers alive and dead - Hans Ulrich Obrist's *Ways of Curating* looks to inspire all those engaged in the creation of culture. Moving from meetings with the artists who have inspired him (including Gerhard Richter and Gilbert and George) to the creation of the first public museums in the 18th century, recounting the practice of inspirational figures such as Diaghilev and Walter Hopps, skipping between exhibitions (his own and others), continents and centuries, *Ways of Curating* argues that curation is far from a static practice. Driven by curiosity, at its best it allows us to create the future.

a brief history of curating: A Brief History of New Music Hans Ulrich Obrist, Lionel Bovier, 2014-01-02 Following the success of *A Brief History of Curating* this publication gathers together interviews with pioneering musicians of the 1950s to the 1980s. The book brings together avant-garde composers such as Elliot Carter, Pierre Boulez, and Karlheinz Stockhausen; originators of electro-acoustic music such as François Bayle, Pauline Oliveros, Iannis Xenakis, and Peter Zinovieff; Minimalist and Fluxus-inspired artists such as Tony Conrad, Henry Flynt, Phil Niblock, Yoko Ono, Steve Reich, and Terry Riley; as well figures such as Brian Eno, Kraftwerk, Arto Lindsay, and Gaetano Veloso. Their contributions map the evolution of the musical field, from early experiments in concrete and abstract music, to the electronic development and the hybridisation between Pop and avant-garde culture. This book is part of the Documents series, co-published with Les presses du réel and dedicated to critical writings.

a brief history of curating: Curating America Richard Rabinowitz, 2016-09-14 How do history museums and historic sites tell the richly diverse stories of the American people? What fascinates us most about American history? To help answer these questions, noted public historian Richard Rabinowitz examines the evolution of public history over the last half-century and highlights the new ways we have come to engage with our past. At the heart of this endeavor is what Rabinowitz calls *storyscapes*--landscapes of engagement where individuals actively encounter stories of past lives. As *storyscapes*, museums become processes of narrative interplay rather than moribund storage bins of strange relics. *Storyscapes* bring to life even the most obscure people--making their skills of hands and minds touchable, making their voices heard despite their absence from traditional archives, and making the dilemmas and triumphs of their lives accessible to us today. Rabinowitz's wealth of professional experience--creating over 500 history museums, exhibitions, and educational programs across the nation--shapes and informs the narrative. By weaving insights from learning theory, anthropology and geography, politics and finance, collections and preservation policy, and interpretive media, Rabinowitz reveals how the nation's best museums and historic sites allow visitors to confront their sense of time and place, memories of family and community, and definitions of self and the world while expanding their idea of where they stand in the flow of history.

a brief history of curating: Thinking Contemporary Curating Terry E. Smith, 2012 'Thinking contemporary curating' is the first publication to comprehensively explore what is distinctive about contemporary curatorial thought. In five essays, art historian, critic, and theorist Terry Smith surveys the international landscape of current discourse; explores a number of exhibitions that show contemporaneity in present, recent, and post art; describes the enormous growth world-wide of exhibitionary infrastructure and the instability that haunts it; re-examines the phenomenon of artist-curators and curator-artists; and assesses a number of key tendencies in curating - such as the reimagined museum, the expanded exhibition, historicization and re-curation, infrastructural

activism, and engaged spectatorship - as responses to contemporary conditions. -- book cover.

a brief history of curating: The Art of Curating Sally Anne Duncan, Andrew McClellan, 2018-08-07 From 1921 until 1948, Paul J. Sachs (1878–1965) offered a yearlong program in art museum training, “Museum Work and Museum Problems,” through Harvard University’s Fine Arts Department. Known simply as the Museum Course, the program was responsible for shaping a professional field—museum curatorship and management—that, in turn, defined the organizational structure and values of an institution through which the American public came to know art. Conceived at a time of great museum expansion and public interest in the United States, the Museum Course debated curatorial priorities and put theory into practice through the placement of graduates in museums big and small across the land. In this book, authors Sally Anne Duncan and Andrew McClellan examine the role that Sachs and his program played in shaping the character of art museums in the United States in the formative decades of the twentieth century. *The Art of Curating* is essential reading for museum studies scholars, curators, and historians.

a brief history of curating: A Companion to Curation Brad Buckley, John Conomos, 2020-01-29 The definitive reference text on curation both inside and outside the museum *A Companion to Curation* is the first collection of its kind, assembling the knowledge and experience of prominent curators, artists, art historians, scholars, and theorists in one comprehensive volume. Part of the Blackwell Companion series, this much-needed book provides up-to-date information and valuable insights on the field of curatorial studies and curation in the visual arts. Accessible and engaging chapters cover diverse, contemporary methods of curation, its origin and history, current and emerging approaches within the profession, and more. This timely publication fills a significant gap in literature on the role of the curator, the art and science of curating, and the historical arc of the field from the 17th century to the present. *The Companion* explores topics such as global developments in contemporary indigenous art, Asian and Chinese art since the 1980s, feminist and queer feminist curatorial practices, and new curatorial strategies beyond the museum. This unique volume: Offers readers a wide range of perspectives on curating in both theory and practice Includes coverage of curation outside of the Eurocentric and Anglosphere art worlds Presents clear and comprehensible information valuable for specialists and novices alike Discusses the movements, models, people and politics of curating Provides guidance on curating in a globalized world Broad in scope and detailed in content, *A Companion to Curation* is an essential text for professionals engaged in varied forms of curation, teachers and students of museum studies, and readers interested in the workings of the art world, museums, benefactors, and curators.

a brief history of curating: Curators Lance Grande, 2017-03-21 Natural history museums have evolved from being little more than musty repositories of stuffed animals and pinned bugs, to being crucial generators of new scientific knowledge. They have also become vibrant educational centers, full of engaging exhibits that share those discoveries with students and an enthusiastic general public. Grande offers a portrait of curators and their research, conveying the intellectual excitement and the educational and social value of curation. He uses the personal story of his own career-- most of it spent at Chicago's Field Museum-- to explore the value of research and collections, the importance of public engagement, changing ecological and ethical considerations, and the impact of rapidly improving technology.

a brief history of curating: Inside the Lost Museum Steven Lubar, 2017-08-07 Curators make many decisions when they build collections or design exhibitions, plotting a passage of discovery that also tells an essential story. *Collecting* captures the past in a way useful to the present and the future. Exhibits play to our senses and orchestrate our impressions, balancing presentation and preservation, information and emotion. Curators consider visitors’ interactions with objects and with one another, how our bodies move through displays, how our eyes grasp objects, how we learn and how we feel. *Inside the Lost Museum* documents the work museums do and suggests ways these institutions can enrich the educational and aesthetic experience of their visitors. Woven throughout *Inside the Lost Museum* is the story of the Jenks Museum at Brown University, a nineteenth-century display of natural history, anthropology, and curiosities that

disappeared a century ago. The Jenks Museum's past, and a recent effort by artist Mark Dion, Steven Lubar, and their students to reimagine it as art and history, serve as a framework for exploring the long record of museums' usefulness and service. Museum lovers know that energy and mystery run through every collection and exhibition. Lubar explains work behind the scenes—collecting, preserving, displaying, and using art and artifacts in teaching, research, and community-building—through historical and contemporary examples. Inside the Lost Museum speaks to the hunt, the find, and the reveal that make curating and visiting exhibitions and using collections such a rewarding and vital pursuit.

a brief history of curating: Curating Revolution Denise Y. Ho, 2018 Curating Revolution examines how Mao-era exhibitions shaped popular understandings of, and participation in, the political campaigns of China's Communist revolution.

a brief history of curating: **The Extreme Self** Shumon Basar, 2021-06 The Extreme Self is a new kind of graphic novel that shows how you've been morphing into something else. It's about the re-making of your interior world as the exterior world becomes more unfamiliar and uncertain. The sudden arrival of the pandemic pushed the world faster and further into the 21st century. Now, life is dictated by two forces you can't see: data and the virus. Are you really built for so much change so quickly? Basar/Coupland/Obrist's prequel, *The Age of Earthquakes: A Guide to the Extreme Present*, became an instant cult classic. It's been described as, a mediation on the madness of our media, and, an abstract representation of how we feel about our digital world. Like that book, *The Extreme Self* collapses comedy and calamity at the speed of swipe. Dazzling images are sourced from over 70 of the world's foremost artists, photographers, technologists and musicians, while Daly & Lyon's kinetic design elevates the language of memes into a manifesto. Over fourteen timely chapters, *The Extreme Self* tours through fame and intimacy, post-work and new crowds, identity crisis and eternity. This is an eye-opening, provocative portrait of what's really happening to YOU. Contributor's include: Michael Stipe, Jarvis Cocker, Miranda July, Agnieszka Kurant, Amalia Ulman, Amnesia Scanner, Ana Nicolaescu, Ania Soliman, Anna Uddenberg, Anne Imhof, Asad Raza, Barry Doupé, Bogosi Sekhukhuni, Cao Fei, Carsten Höller, Cécile B Evans, Chen Zhou, Christine Sun Kim, Craig Green, Dennis Kavelman, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Emmanuel Iduma, Farah Al Qasimi, Fatima Al Qadiri, GCC, Goshka Macuga, Heman Chong, Ian Cheng, Isabel Lewis, Jenna Sutela, Johannes Paul Raether, John Menick, Jürgen Klauke, Koo Jeong A, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Liam Gillick, Liam Young, Lorraine O'Grady, Lucy Raven, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Miles Gertler, Momus, Pamela Rosenkranz, Pan Daijing, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Peter Saville & Yoso Mouri, Philippe Parreno, Pierre Huyghe, Precious Okoyomon, Rachel Rose, Raja'a Khalid, Samuel Fosso, Sara Cwynar, Satoshi Fujiwara, Simon Denny, Sissel Tolaas, Sophia Al-Maria, Stéphanie Saadé, Stephanie Comilang, Suzanne Treister, Tabita Rezaire, Thomas Dozol, Thomas Hirschhorn, Trevor Paglen, Urs Lüthi, Victoria Sin, Wang Haiyang, Yaeji, Yazan Khalili, Yu Honglei, Yuri Pattison.

a brief history of curating: **The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)** Paul O'Neill, 2012 Once considered a mere caretaker for collections, the curator is now widely viewed as a globally connected auteur. Over the last twenty-five years, as international group exhibitions and biennials have become the dominant mode of presenting contemporary art to the public, curatorship has begun to be perceived as a constellation of creative activities not unlike artistic praxis. The curator has gone from being a behind-the-scenes organizer and selector to a visible, centrally important cultural producer. In *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, Paul O'Neill examines the emergence of independent curatorship and the discourse that helped to establish it. O'Neill describes how, by the 1980s, curated group exhibitions—large-scale, temporary projects with artworks cast as illustrative fragments—came to be understood as the creative work of curator-auteurs. The proliferation of new biennials and other large international exhibitions in the 1990s created a cohort of high-profile, globally mobile curators, moving from Venice to Paris to Kassel. In the 1990s, curatorial and artistic practice converged, blurring the distinction between artist and curator. O'Neill argues that this change in the understanding of curatorship was shaped by a curator-centered discourse that effectively advocated—and authorized—the new independent

curatorial practice. Drawing on the extensive curatorial literature and his own interviews with leading curators, critics, art historians, and artists, O'Neill traces the development of the curator-as-artist model and the ways it has been contested. *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* documents the many ways in which our perception of art has been transformed by curating and the discourses surrounding it.

a brief history of curating: *Curating at the Edge* Kate Bonansinga, 2014-01-06 Located less than a mile from Juárez, the Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for Visual Arts at the University of Texas at El Paso is a non-collecting institution that serves the Paso del Norte region. In *Curating at the Edge*, Kate Bonansinga brings to life her experiences as the Rubin's founding director, giving voice to a curatorial approach that reaches far beyond the limited scope of "border art" or Chicano art. Instead, Bonansinga captures the creative climate of 2004–2011, when contemporary art addressed broad notions of destruction and transformation, irony and subversion, gender and identity, and the impact of location on politics. The Rubin's location in the Chihuahuan desert on the U.S./Mexican border is meaningful and intriguing to many artists, and, consequently, *Curating at the Edge* describes the multiple artistic perspectives conveyed in the place-based exhibitions Bonansinga oversaw. Exciting mid-career artists featured in this collection of case studies include Margarita Cabrera, Liz Cohen, Marcos Ramírez ERRE, and many others. Recalling her experiences in vivid, first-person scenes, Bonansinga reveals the processes a contemporary art curator undertakes and the challenges she faces by describing a few of the more than sixty exhibitions that she organized during her tenure at the Rubin. She also explores the artists' working methods and the relationship between their work and their personal and professional histories (some are Mexican citizens, some are U.S. citizens of Mexican descent, and some have ancestral ties to Europe). Timely and illuminating, *Curating at the Edge* sheds light on the work of the interlocutors who connect artists and their audiences.

a brief history of curating: *Curation* Michael Bhaskar, 2016-06-02 'A terrific and important book . . . it's a great, fresh take on how the 21st century is transforming the way we select everything from food to music' David Bodanis, author of *E=MC2* In the past two years humanity has produced more data than the rest of human history combined. We carry a library of data in our pockets, accessible at any second. We have more information and more goods at our disposal than we know what to do with. There is no longer any competitive advantage in creating more information. Today, value lies in curation: selecting, finding and cutting down to show what really matters. Curation reveals how a little-used word from the world of museums became a crucial and at times controversial strategy for the twenty-first century. Today's most successful companies - Apple, Netflix, Amazon - have used curation to power their growth, by offering customers more tailored and appropriate choices. Curation answers the question of how we can live and prosper in an age of information overload. In the context of excess, it is not only a sound business strategy, but a way to make sense of the world.

a brief history of curating: *Curating Art* Janet Marstine, Oscar Ho Hing Kay, 2021-12-30 *Curating Art* provides insight into some of the most socially and politically impactful curating of historical and contemporary art since the late 1990s. It offers up a museological framework for understanding watershed developments of curating in art museums. Representing the plurality of theory and practice around the expanded field of relational curating, the book focuses on curating that prioritises the quality of relationships between people and objects, between institutions and people and among people. It has wide international breadth, with particularly strong representation in East and Southeast Asia, including four papers never before translated into English. This Asian cluster illuminates the globalisation of the field and challenges dichotomies of East and West while acknowledging distinctions within specific, but often transnational, cultural spheres. The compelling philosophical perspectives and case studies included within *Curating Art* will be of interest to students and researchers studying curating, exhibition development and art museums. The book will also inspire current and emerging curators to pose challenging but important questions about their own practice and the relationships that this work sustains.

a brief history of curating: Curating Oral Histories Nancy MacKay, 2016-06-16 The greatly expanded second edition of *Curating Oral Histories* offers the same practical guidance as the first edition in the same engaging style, but with enhanced content and context. Updates on technology, legal and ethical issues, oral history on the Internet, cataloging, copyright, and backlogs reflect current thinking in the field.

a brief history of curating: Curating Opera Stephen Mould, 2021-02-09 Curation as a concept and a catchword in modern parlance has, over recent decades, become deeply ingrained in modern culture. The purpose of this study is to explore the curatorial forces at work within the modern opera house and to examine the functionaries and processes that guide them. In turn, comparisons are made with the workings of the traditional art museum, where artworks are studied, preserved, restored, displayed and contextualised – processes which are also present in the opera house. Curatorial roles in each institution are identified and described, and the role of the celebrity art curator is compared with that of the modern stage director, who has acquired previously undreamt-of licence to interrogate operatic works, overlaying them with new concepts and levels of meaning in order to reinvent and redefine the operatic repertoire for contemporary needs. A point of coalescence between the opera house and the art museum is identified, with the transformation, towards the end of the nineteenth century, of the opera house into the operatic museum. Curatorial practices in the opera house are examined, and further communalities and synergies in the way that 'works' are defined in each institution are explored. This study also considers the so-called 'birth' of opera around the start of the seventeenth century, with reference to the near-contemporary rise of the modern art museum, outlining operatic practice and performance history over the last 400 years in order to identify the curatorial practices that have historically been employed in the maintenance and development of the repertoire. This examination of the forces of curation within the modern opera house will highlight aspects of authenticity, authorial intent, preservation, restoration and historically informed performance practice.

a brief history of curating: Curating Live Arts Dena Davida, Marc Pronovost, Véronique Hudon, Jane Gabriels, 2018-11-29 Situated at the crossroads of performance practice, museology, and cultural studies, live arts curation has grown in recent years to become a vibrant interdisciplinary project and a genuine global phenomenon. *Curating Live Arts* brings together bold and innovative essays from an international group of theorist-practitioners to pose vital questions, propose future visions, and survey the landscape of this rapidly evolving discipline. Reflecting the field's characteristic eclecticism, the writings assembled here offer practical and insightful investigations into the curation of theatre, dance, sound art, music, and other performance forms—not only in museums, but in community, site-specific, and time-based contexts, placing it at the forefront of contemporary dialogue and discourse.

a brief history of curating: Curators of the Buddha Donald S. Lopez Jr., Donald S. Lopez, 1995-08-15 A critical history of the study of Buddhism in the West, incorporating insights of colonial and post-colonial cultural studies. Social, political and cultural conditions that have shaped the course of Buddhist studies are discussed.

a brief history of curating: Curating Consciousness Marcia Brennan, 2010 In 'Curating Consciousness', Marcia Brennan focuses on one of the transformational figures of 20th century curatorial culture, and the main protagonist of this (until now) unacknowledged curatorial practice.

a brief history of curating: Curating the Future Jennifer Newell, Libby Robin, Kirsten Wehner, 2016-08-12 *Curating the Future: Museums, Communities and Climate Change* explores the way museums tackle the broad global issue of climate change. It explores the power of real objects and collections to stir hearts and minds, to engage communities affected by change. Museums work through exhibitions, events, and specific collection projects to reach different communities in different ways. The book emphasises the moral responsibilities of museums to address climate change, not just by communicating science but also by enabling people already affected by changes to find their own ways of living with global warming. There are museums of natural history, of art and of social history. The focus of this book is the museum communities, like those in the Pacific,

who have to find new ways to express their culture in a new place. The book considers how collections in museums might help future generations stay in touch with their culture, even where they have left their place. It asks what should the people of the present be collecting for museums in a climate-changed future? The book is rich with practical museum experience and detailed projects, as well as critical and philosophical analyses about where a museum can intervene to speak to this great conundrum of our times. *Curating the Future* is essential reading for all those working in museums and grappling with how to talk about climate change. It also has academic applications in courses of museology and museum studies, cultural studies, heritage studies, digital humanities, design, anthropology, and environmental humanities.

a brief history of curating: *Curatopia* Philipp Schorch, Conal McCarthy, 2018-11-30 What is the future of curatorship? Is there a vision for an ideal model, a curatopia, whether in the form of a utopia or dystopia? Or is there a plurality of approaches, amounting to a curatorial heterotopia? This pioneering volume addresses these questions by considering the current state of curatorship. It reviews the different models and approaches operating in museums, galleries and cultural organisations around the world and discusses emerging concerns, challenges and opportunities. The collection explores the ways in which the mutual, asymmetrical relations underpinning global, scientific entanglements of the past can be transformed into more reciprocal, symmetrical forms of cross-cultural curatorship in the present, arguing that this is the most effective way for curatorial practice to remain meaningful. International in scope, the volume covers three regions: Europe, North America and the Pacific.

a brief history of curating: *Toward a Global Middle Ages* Bryan C. Keene, 2019-09-03 This important and overdue book examines illuminated manuscripts and other book arts of the Global Middle Ages. Illuminated manuscripts and illustrated or decorated books—like today's museums—preserve a rich array of information about how premodern peoples conceived of and perceived the world, its many cultures, and everyone's place in it. Often a Eurocentric field of study, manuscripts are prisms through which we can glimpse the interconnected global history of humanity. *Toward a Global Middle Ages* is the first publication to examine decorated books produced across the globe during the period traditionally known as medieval. Through essays and case studies, the volume's multidisciplinary contributors expand the historiography, chronology, and geography of manuscript studies to embrace a diversity of objects, individuals, narratives, and materials from Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Americas—an approach that both engages with and contributes to the emerging field of scholarly inquiry known as the Global Middle Ages. Featuring more than 160 color illustrations, this wide-ranging and provocative collection is intended for all who are interested in engaging in a dialogue about how books and other textual objects contributed to world-making strategies from about 400 to 1600.

a brief history of curating: *Theater of Exhibitions* Jens Hoffmann, 2015 Curator Jens Hoffman's *Theater of Exhibitions* considers the plight of art after the end of art and asks whether inherited frameworks of making, theorizing and exhibiting art still apply to contemporary practice. Are exhibitions still an appropriate form of assembly and embodied ritual in our 21st-century global society? Drawing from his formation in theater and his own curatorial work, Hoffmann reflects on the current spaces of contemporary art the gallery, the institution and the biennial. Ultimately he positions the discipline of curating in the context of a larger cultural sphere one shaped by the political, social and economic conditions and demanding new attitudes and new thinking. The book also considers the commodification of the art industry and the distribution of images in the digital age and posits the exhibition as an anthropological endeavor, with curator as agent

a brief history of curating: *Curating Contemporary Music Festivals* Brandon Farnsworth, 2020-07 Brandon Farnsworth lays out a theory for understanding curatorial practices in contemporary music and how they could be a solution to the field's diminishing social relevance. He focuses on two case studies, the Munich Biennale for New Music Theatre, and the Maerzmusik Festival at the Berliner Festspiele.

a brief history of curating: *The Curatorial* Jean-Paul Martinon, 2013-10-24 Stop curating!

And think what curating is all about. This book starts from this simple premise: thinking the activity of curating. To do that, it distinguishes between 'curating' and 'the curatorial'. If 'curating' is a gamut of professional practices for setting up exhibitions, then 'the curatorial' explores what takes place on the stage set up, both intentionally and unintentionally, by the curator. It therefore refers not to the staging of an event, but to the event of knowledge itself. In order to start thinking about curating, this book takes a new approach to the topic. Instead of relying on conventional art historical narratives (for example, identifying the moments when artistic and curatorial practices merged or when the global curator-author was first identified), this book puts forward a multiplicity of perspectives that go from the anecdotal to the theoretical and from the personal to the philosophical. These perspectives allow for a fresh reflection on curating, one in which, suddenly, curating becomes an activity that implicates us all (artists, curators, and viewers), not just as passive recipients, but as active members. As such, the Curatorial is a book without compromise: it asks us to think again, fight against sweeping art historical generalizations, the sedimentation of ideas and the draw of the sound bite. Curating will not stop, but at least with this book it can begin to allow itself to be challenged by some of the most complex and ethics-driven thought of our times.

a brief history of curating: *Post-specimen Encounters Between Art, Science and Curating* Edward Juler, Alistair Robinson, 2020 Examines how scientific objects in museums and other collections act as inspiration to contemporary art practice, its histories, curating and aesthetics. Cross-disciplinary essays from leading arts professionals explore how scientific encounters in museums provoke new modes of creative thinking about art, science and curating. 84 col. illus.

a brief history of curating: *Curating the Complex and the Open Strike* Terry Smith, 2022-05-03 An analysis of the contexts in which curating takes place: why curate art these days and in the name of which interests? If we ask where the curating of art occurs these days--in which places, which kinds of place, and how--apparent answers immediately appear: everywhere, expanding as if to ubiquity. Yet at the same time, we sense, with fragile purpose. In this, his newest book, Terry Smith explores the contemporary contexts of curating, looking for less apparent answers. It will map the dimensions of the visual arts exhibitionary complex, including its dialectical dance between institutionalization and deinstitutionalization; the persistence of professional classifications of curatorship; the given and changing categories of art exhibitions; the increasing variety of curatorial styles; the underthinking about publics; and (undistracted by curationism) the changing roles of art making and exhibiting art within an exhibitory iconomy that is at once viral and consumptive. A mapping of this kind might help us towards some answers to the more important questions: why curate art these days and in the name of which interests?

a brief history of curating: *Fashion Curating* Annamari Vänskä, Hazel Clark, 2017-12-28 As the practice of fashion curation extends into commercial galleries, public and retail spaces, and even to the individual self, professional concepts of 'curating' are undergoing rapid change. Today, everyone is seemingly able to 'curate', but where does this leave the traditional understanding of curation as clothing collected and displayed in a museum? This thought-provoking volume explores the practice of fashion curating in the 21st century, bridging the gap between methods of display and notions of 'the curatorial' in fashion exhibitions, commercial settings, and the virtual world. From fashion's earliest forays into the museum to creative collaborations between luxury fashion brands and artists, this book challenges understandings of fashion curation by drawing on the palpably new spaces, places, and actors in today's curating scene. Exploring poetic and performative museum displays in venues such as the V&A, Somerset House, MoMu and the Royal Ontario Museum, alongside the ways that brands such as Dior, Chanel and Louis Vuitton have made use of 'the curatorial' in their own commercial strategies, *Fashion Curating* asks pressing questions about controversial funding and collaboration from the commercial fashion sector, and the limitations of producing exhibitions that are at the same time critical and popular. Bringing together approaches from fashion curators, designers and world-renowned academics, curation is positioned as a critical practice that opens up new ways of conceptualizing and theorizing fashion, challenging how we think and what we already know.

a brief history of curating: Art of Memories Vincent Antonin Lépinay, 2019-05-14 Once the home of Catherine the Great's private art collection, Russia's State Hermitage Museum became the largest museum in the Soviet Union and, since the collapse of the USSR, one of the most active museums in the world. The Hermitage is a global model for the collection and preservation of fine art, deeply shaped by its need to protect itself and its holdings from the world beyond its gates. In *Art of Memories*, Vincent Antonin Lépinay documents the Hermitage's curatorial practices in an innovative consideration of the museum as a cultural laboratory. Lépinay analyzes the tensions between the museum as a space of exploration of the collections and as a culture heavily invested in self-protection from the outside world. During a time when traveling abroad was rare, a generation of art historians produced a culture of confined scholarship premised on their proximity to the holdings of a museum enclave. As the Hermitage has become increasingly present on the world museum scene, its culture of secrecy and orality has endured. Lépinay analyzes the ethos of Hermitage curators and scholars over the transition from Soviet to post-Soviet museum cultures, considering the mobility of art, documentation of the collection, and the transformation of expertise. Based on Lépinay's extraordinary access to the Hermitage and the scholars who work there, *Art of Memories* opens the door of one of the world's great museums to reveal how art history is made. It is an essential study for readers interested in the role that outside forces play in culture, organizations, and the production of knowledge.

a brief history of curating: Curatorial Activism Maura Reilly, 2018-04-17 A handbook of new curatorial strategies based on pioneering examples of curators working to offset racial and gender disparities in the art world Current art world statistics demonstrate that the fight for gender and race equality in the art world is far from over: only sixteen percent of this year's Venice Biennale artists were female; only fourteen percent of the work displayed at MoMA in 2016 was by nonwhite artists; only a third of artists represented by U.S. galleries are female, but over two-thirds of students enrolled in art and art-history programs are young women. Arranged in thematic sections focusing on feminism, race, and sexuality, *Curatorial Activism* examines and illustrates pioneering examples of exhibitions that have broken down boundaries and demonstrated that new approaches are possible, from Linda Nochlin's "Women Artists" at LACMA in the mid-1970s to Jean-Hubert Martin's "Carambolages" in 2016 at the Grand Palais in Paris. Profiles key exhibitions by pioneering curators including Okwui Enwezor, Linda Nochlin, Jean-Hubert Martin and Nan Goldin, with a foreword by Lucy Lippard, internationally known art critic, activist and curator, and early champion of feminist art, this volume is both an invaluable source of practical information for those who understand that institutions must be a driving force in this area and a vital source of inspiration for today's expanding new generation of curators.

a brief history of curating: The New Curator Natasha Hoare, Coline Milliard, Rafal Niemojewski, Ben Borthwick, Jonathan Watkins, 2016-04-19 This book presents a snapshot of the most interesting curatorial practices in the art world today. There is an emphasis on the now: the introduction sketches in the development of curatorial practices since the 1980s but the shows under scrutiny in the following 25 case studies have all taken place in the last few years. The selected exhibitions - chosen by an expert panel of curators - run the global gamut, from Europe and the US through Africa and the Middle East to China, and illustrate the particular challenges for curators working in both the commercial and public sectors. Large-scale shows and pop-up exhibits, permanent-collection rehangs and art fairs all have a place here. Each highly illustrated case study is structured around an interview with the curator responsible for the show. The text both tells the story of the show's making and fills in background information about the curator's work, resulting in an accessible guide to contemporary curating.

a brief history of curating: Curating Subjects Søren Andreasen, 2007 Edited by Paul O'Neill. Introduction by Paul O'Neill, Annie Fletcher.

a brief history of curating: Curating Difficult Knowledge E. Lehrer, C. Milton, M. Patterson, 2011-10-04 This volume inscribes an innovative domain of inquiry, bringing museum and heritage studies to bear on questions of transitional justice, memory and post-conflict reconciliation.

As practitioners, artists, curators, activists and academics, the contributors explore the challenges of bearing witness to past conflicts.

a brief history of curating: *Curating Lively Objects* Lizzie Muller, Caroline Seck Langill, 2021-09-06 *Curating Lively Objects* explores the role of things as catalysts in imagining futures beyond disciplines for museums and exhibitions. Authors describe how their curatorial collaborations with diverse objects, from rocks to robots, generate new ways of organising and sharing knowledge. Bringing together leading artists and curators from Australia and Canada, this volume addresses object liveliness from a range of entwined perspectives, including new materialism, decolonial thinking, Indigenous epistemologies, environmentalism, feminist critique and digital aesthetics. Foregrounding practice-based curatorial scholarship, the book focuses on rigorous reflexive accounts of how curating is done. It contributes to global topics in curatorial research, including time and memory beyond and before disciplinarity; the relationship between human and non-human across different ontologies; and the interaction between Indigenous knowledge and disciplinary expertise in interpreting museum collections. *Curating Lively Objects* will be of interest to scholars and students in the fields of curatorial studies, museum studies, cultural heritage, art history, Indigenous studies, material culture and anthropology. It also provides a vital resource for professionals working in museums and galleries around the world who are seeking to respond creatively, ethically and inclusively to the challenge of changing disciplinary boundaries.

a brief history of curating: Thinking About Exhibitions Bruce W. Ferguson, Reesa Greenberg, Sandy Nairne, 2005-08-11 An anthology of writings on exhibition practice from artists, critics, curators and art historians plus artist-curators. It addresses the contradictions posed by museum and gallery sited exhibitions, as well as investigating the challenge of staging art presentations, displays or performances, in settings outside of traditional museum or gallery locales.

a brief history of curating: *The Curator's Handbook* ADRIAN. GEORGE, 2024-10-15 An updated edition of this essential practical handbook for all those involved in or studying the dynamic field of curating.

a brief history of curating: When Artists Curate Alison Green, 2018 An increasing proportion of exhibitions are curated by artists rather than professional curators. In this ground-breaking book Alison Green provides the first critical history of visual artists curating exhibitions. The artist emerges as someone who carries a special responsibility for critiquing art's institutions, brings considerable creativity to the craft of making exhibitions and, through experimentation, has changed the way exhibitions are understood to be authored and experienced. But the book also establishes a curious ubiquity to the artist-curated exhibition. Rather than being exceptional or rare, artists curate all the time and in all kinds of places: in galleries and in museums, in studios, in borrowed spaces such as shopfronts or industrial buildings, in front rooms and front windows, in zoos or concert halls, on streets and in nature. Seen from the perspective of artists, showing is a part of making art. Once this idea is understood, the history of art starts to look very different. 0With extensive explorations of well-known artists such as Daniel Buren, Goshka Macuga, Thomas Hirschhorn, Rosemarie Trockel, Hito Steyerl, Andy Warhol and Felix Gonzalez-Torres, this book will change the way readers think about and look at exhibitions.

Additional Resources

BRIEF Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster

The meaning of BRIEF is short in duration, extent, or length. How to use brief in a sentence.

BRIEF | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary

BRIEF definition: 1. lasting only a short time or containing few words: 2. used to express how quickly time goes... Learn more.

Brief scrap crossword clue - LATSolver.com

1 day ago · While searching our database we found 1 possible solution for the: Brief scrap crossword clue. This crossword clue was last seen on June 15 2025 LA Times Crossword ...

Brief - Definition, Meaning & Synonyms | Vocabulary.com

Something brief is short and to the point. If you make a brief visit, you don't stay long. If you make a brief statement, you use few words. If you wear brief shorts, you are showing a little too ...

Brief - definition of brief by The Free Dictionary

1. short in duration: a brief holiday.
2. short in length or extent; scanty: a brief bikini.
3. abrupt in manner; brusque: the professor was brief with me this morning.
4. terse or concise; containing ...

BRIEF definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary

A brief speech or piece of writing does not contain too many words or details. In a brief statement, he concentrated entirely on international affairs. Write a very brief description of a typical ...

brief adjective - Definition, pictures, pronunciation and ...

Definition of brief adjective in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Meaning, pronunciation, picture, example sentences, grammar, usage notes, synonyms and more.

Brief vs. Debrief - What's the Difference? - Writing Explained

As a noun, brief means a summary or short statement. "Did everyone read the brief I sent out via email?" asked the manager. As a verb, brief means to prepare someone by informing him or ...

What does brief mean? - Definitions.net

What does brief mean? This dictionary definitions page includes all the possible meanings, example usage and translations of the word brief. An attorney's legal argument in written form ...

brief - definition and meaning - Wordnik

Apr 8, 2014 · adjective Short in time, duration, length, or extent. adjective Succinct; concise. adjective Curt; abrupt. noun A short, succinct statement. noun A condensation or an abstract ...

BRIEF Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster

The meaning of BRIEF is short in duration, extent, or length. How to use brief in a sentence.

BRIEF | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary

BRIEF definition: 1. lasting only a short time or containing few words: 2. used to express how quickly time goes... ...

Brief scrap crossword clue - LATSolver.com

1 day ago · While searching our database we found 1 possible solution for the: Brief scrap crossword clue. ...

Brief - Definition, Meaning & Synonyms | Vocabulary.com

Something brief is short and to the point. If you make a brief visit, you don't stay long. If you make a brief ...

Brief - definition of brief by The Free Dictionary

1. short in duration: a brief holiday. 2. short in length or extent; scanty: a brief bikini. 3. abrupt in manner; brusque: ...

A Brief History Of Curating

A Brief History Of Curating

Related Articles

- [a business organized as a separate legal entity is a](#)
- [911 operator training programs](#)
- [a brief history of thought](#)

[Back to Home](#)