Workshop on History and Design of Exhibition Systems

## Prof. Alessandra Squizzato

COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The workshop, which covers a total of 15h, aims to teach students some of the historical aspects of the exhibition space as well as certain fundamental dynamics of its design in relation to both the layout of museums and that of exhibitions and temporary events.

At the end of the course, students will:

– be able to historically place exhibition phenomena by identifying the languages gradually experimented with, along with the cultural, economic and social elements that are related to the phenomena themselves;

* possess some of the fundamental tools of museological and museographic planning, and be able to describe, analyse and critically understand the exhibition language and its implementations.

COURSE CONTENT

The setting up of a museum creates a work-space relationship and represents a form of communication addressed to visitors that uses a visual rather than verbal grammar, one that is made of light, colour, volume and matter. It has assumed increasing importance in the life of museums and exhibition institutions and is the subject of critical reflections and increasingly specialised technical knowledge by professionals in the sector, such as the curator and the designer.

The course aims to introduce this complex range of competences, and is divided into two sections. The first is of a historical-theoretical nature where the following will be analysed: the birth and development of the exhibition language; the museum concept, the selection of exhibits, the criteria for exhibition ordering, the itinerary of the visit; the function of the exhibition; exhibition philosophies and non-verbal communication. A second part will take place directly in the field through the viewing and critical analysis of specific cases.

**Part 1 (A. Squizzato)**

The exhibiting intention yesterday and today; the elements of museographic communication; historical exhibition set-ups between the 18th and the 19th century: from the Incrustation style of Baroque painting collections to Universal Exhibitions; an outline of the works of the great Italian masters of the post-war period, with a focus on the Milanese context.

*Reading list of reference*

-F. Haskell, *Ephemeral museum. La nascita delle mostre: i dipinti degli antichi maestri e l’origine delle esposizioni d’arte*, Italian translation by F. Ammiraglio and R. D’Adda, Milan Skira 2016.

-F. Dal Co, *Mostrare, Allestire, Esporre* in S. Polano, *Mostrare. L'allestimento in Italia dagli anni Venti agli anni Ottanta*, Milan Edizioni Lybra Immagine (I ed. 1988) 2000, pp. 10-25.

*-Musei della Ricostruzione in Italia, tra disfatta e rivincita della storia*, in M. Dalai Emiliani, *Per una critica della museografia del Novecento in Italia. Il “saper mostrare” di Carlo Scarpa*, Venice Marsilio 2008, p. 77-119

**Part 2**

*From the period following the Second World War to the present day. Exhibition systems such as gestures, actions, works, spaces, displays, and architectures*

During the second part of the course, after acquiring a good knowledge of the topics of the first lectures, students will have the opportunity to study, from a problem-oriented perspective, the concepts related to set-up and display in relation to their historicisation, the evolution of the languages of contemporary art, and the transformation of exhibiting spaces.The in-depth analyses carried out during the course will be focused on three specific topics. Lecture 1: Rehang; Lecture 2: Set-ups and galleries as gestures; Lecture 3: Museum architecture.

*Reading list of reference*

P. Bianchi, *Dressing Up Spaces. Ibridazioni espositive tra display e design*, Postmedia Books, Milan 2021

J. Holten (edited by), Exhibiting the Exhibition: From the Cabinet of Curiosity to the Curatorial Situation, Hatje Cantz, Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden 2018

F. Poli, F. Bernardelli. *Mettere in scena l’arte contemporanea. Dallo spazio dell’opera allo spazio intorno all’opera*, Johan & Levi, Milan 2016

B. O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. L’ideologia dello spazio espositivo*, Johan & Levi, Milan 2012

Other more specific readings will be indicated during the course.

TEACHING METHOD

Frontal lectures in the classroom with the support of multimedia materials (reading texts on video, projection of images and films, website navigation); educational visits to museum institutes and exhibition venues, both in and outside the city, which will involve the active collaboration of students; seminar lectures with specialists in the sector.

All teaching materials (including lecture slides) will be made available on the course's Blackboard platform.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

In order to be awarded with the number of ECTS provided by the course, students will have to submit a written essay that will be discussed on official exam dates. The choice and development of the subject of the essay must be carried out in collaboration with the lecturers and will have to be coherent with the topics analysed in class. Students will also be given the possibility to join group works.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

There are no course prerequisites. The course is designed in particular for students of the three-year degree and for those who want to acquire initial competences in the field of museography.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=Eng or on the Faculty notice board.