

**Faculty Seminar  
Program in Object Exhibition and Knowledge  
Spring 2005**

*Friday, January 28 – Sunday, January 30*

**Trip to Washington D.C. – Visit National Museum of the American Indian**

Faculty Discussants: Sue Bender and Alison Barnes

**Texts:**

The NMAI's website [www.nmai.si.edu](http://www.nmai.si.edu)

The NMAI's mission statement

Hayden, Thomas. "National Museum of the American Indian: By the People." Smithsonian Sept. 2004.

Rosoff, Nancy B. "Integrating Native Views into Museum Procedures." Museums and Source Communities. Eds. Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown. New York: Routledge, 2003. 77-79.

**Museum Reviews:**

Adams, Jim. "National Museum of the American Indian reviews: Ceremonies were nice but critics pan content" Indian Country Today 8 October 2004.

Rothstein, Edward. "Who Should Tell History: The Tribes or the Museums?" New York Times 21 Dec. 2004.

Trescott, Jacqueline. "History's New Look" Washington Post 13 Sept. 2004.

**Discussion Prompts:**

1. How does the museum make visible the process of consultation that is central to their mission?
2. Who are the curators? What are their display strategies?
3. To what extent are the issues of debate surrounding sacred objects visible in the museum?
4. Compare seeing similar objects in this museum vs. a traditional display in a museum of natural history or an art museum (visualize The Museum of Natural History and The Metropolitan Museum of Art).
5. What kind of museum is this?

*Tuesday, February 15*

**Dimensions of Exhibition Strategies: Art, Interdisciplinary & Natural History/Science**

Faculty Discussants: John Weber and Terry Diggory

**Texts:**

Staniszewski, Mary Anne. The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998. 61-81.

Vogel, Susan. "Always True to the Object, in Our Fashion." Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display. Eds. Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

**Sunday, February 27**

**Visit to MASS MoCA**

Faculty Discussants: Kate Leavitt and Debra Fernandez

**Texts:**

Mass MoCA's website [www.massmoca.org](http://www.massmoca.org)

Mass MoCA's mission statement

Glueck, Grace. "The Cars Aren't Really Exploding, but the Terrorist Metaphor Is." The New York Times 18 February 2005: E39.

"Mass MoCA Revitalizes Dying Mill Town, Celebrates the Arts." National Trust for Historic Preservation. 18 Oct. 2000.

<[http://www.nationaltrust.org/news/docs/20001018\\_award\\_massmoca.html](http://www.nationaltrust.org/news/docs/20001018_award_massmoca.html)>

**Discussion Prompts:**

1. How does the mission of Mass MoCA differ from that of the Native American Museum and the Tang Museum?
2. How interdisciplinary and approachable is this venue for contemporary art?
3. How does the wall text and supporting materials, including the website, support your understanding of the intent of the artists?
4. Is there a distinct difference between the art educated audience and the 'other' in this museum?
5. Is it necessary to water down an exhibition to reach a larger audience and how do those involved in contemporary art discourse fare if this is the case?
6. It is interesting that the revitalization that is taking place in North Adams is one of economic recovery for the area but does the museum affect the community in other ways?
7. How does the viewer respond to the difference between art that is hung traditionally, (Barr) and installation art? Are there new questions that need to be asked? Is it sculpture?

**Sunday, March 20**

**Russian Ark – Film Screening**

Faculty Discussant: Kate Graney

**Texts:**

Haltunen, Maria. "The Greater Hermitage: A Grand Future" Museum International 55.1(2003): 33-38

Harte, Tim. "A Visit to the Museum: Aleksandr Sokurov's Russian Ark and the Framing of the Eternal." Slavic Review 64.1 (Spring 2005): 42-58.

Lukin, Valerii. "Transforming Historic Architecture into Viable Museums: The Conservation Perspective." Museum International 55.1(2003): 39-45.

Rowe, Mark. "Palace Revolution." Museums Journal Jan. 2004.

Vilinbakhov, George. "The Hermitage...Diverse and Vast..." Museum International 55.1(2003): 12-19.

***Tuesday, March 22***

**Meanings of Museum Architecture**

Faculty Discussants: Leila Whittemore and Phyllis Roth

**Texts:**

Sirefman, Susanna. "Formed and Forming: Contemporary Museum Architecture." Daedalus 128.3 (Summer 1999): 297-319.

Newhouse, Victoria. Towards a New Museum. New York: The Montacelli Press, 1998. 148-161 & 220-260.

**Discussion Prompts:**

1. What, according to the different authors, seems to be the principal task(s) of the architect in museum design? What constitutes success or failure in these writers' view?
2. How might architects' notions of content/container in museum design differ from those of museum professionals, artists, or audiences?
3. How do the different designs address temporality, sequence, narrative?

***Tuesday, March 29***

**Discussion about Individual Museum Trips**

***Tuesday, April 5***

**Conversation about the play *Museum* with Tina Howe**

Faculty Discussant: Gary Wilson

**Text:**

Howe, Tina. Museum. New York: Samuel French Incorporated, 1975.

***Saturday, April 16***

**Group viewing of the play *Museum***

***Sunday, April 17***

**Visit to Olana State Historic Sight**

Faculty Discussant: Margo Mensing

**Texts:**

Diller, Elizabeth, and Ricardo Scofidio. Flesh: Architectural Probes: The Mutant Body of Architecture. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, Inc., 1994. 198-102.

Howett, Catherine. "Grounds for Interpretation: The Landscape Context of Historical House Museums." Interpreting Historic House Museums. Ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly. New York: Alta Mira Press, 2002. 111-127.

**Discussion Prompts:**

1. How illuminating is the guided tour? How and where did you feel restricted? After reading the article by Catherine Howett, what questions about the house and landscape do you want to ask the tour guide?
2. Concerning the interior of the house, consider whether there are ways through the material culture to discover new knowledge about Church as an artist, as a collector, as a man of his times. What did you learn about Church by looking at all of this stuff? What is missing that you'd like to see and know more about? What would make a visit to this site more redolent of the Churches? of this period? What would make you want to return to this scene?
3. WWD&SD (What would Diller & Scofidio) do with this house, this land to give us their perspective on tourism? What site in New York state would you pick for the Suitcases project? Would you choose a battlefield over a house with the owner's famous bed? Why or why not?
4. If you had several million that as a benefactor you wanted to bestow on this historic site, how would you request the Park Service to spend your money to energize this historical house museum?

*Tuesday, May 2*

**Discussion about individual museum trips and experiences in the Tang**

*Tuesday, May 10*

**Discussion about program assessment and future planning**