

Curating Moving Images

Meetings: Tuesdays, 12:30 – 4:30 pm
Classroom: 721 B'way, room 674
Lab (required): April 7-10, at the Visual Arts Theater (333 W. 23rd St.)
Instructor: Dan.Streible@nyu.edu
Web site: nyu.edu/orphanfilm
G-site: sites.google.com/site/orphans7
Blog: orphanfilmsymposium.blogspot.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=21030320635&ref=ts

Description: The word *curating* differs in meaning in different contexts. This course embraces a broad conception of curating as the treatment of materials from their acquisition, archiving, preservation, restoration, and reformatting, through their screening, programming, use, re-use, exploitation, translation, and interpretation.

This course focuses on the practices of film and video exhibition in museums, archives, cinemathèques, and other venues. It examines the goals of public programming, its constituencies, and the curatorial and archival challenges of presenting film, video, and new media. We study how archives and sister institutions present their work through exhibitions, events, publications, and media productions. We also examine how these presentations provoke uses of moving image collections.

However. . . this semester the course departs from previous offerings. Much of it is a practicum. You will work closely with the instructor to organize and execute the 7th Orphan Film Symposium, an intensive event in which some 250 registered symposiasts watch and discuss dozens of films and videos. The event is a true symposium: professionals from diverse backgrounds each speak about a central topic, with no concurrent panels, everyone listening to and watching everything together; a convivial atmosphere created by music, movies, food & drink sparks refectory-style interaction.

This year's symposium is entitled "Moving Pictures Around the World."
From the website (which you should have read some weeks ago, yes?):

"Orphans 7" focuses on transnational and global issues. How have moving images circulated across national and other boundaries? How are neglected archival materials accessed and used across borders? Presenters address topics including film repatriation; mobility, distribution, and travel; regional and transnational cinemas; and neglected archival material that sheds light on international aspects of history and archiving. Screenings also feature new works by media artists, including the recipients of the 2010 Helen Hill Award.

Required reading:

- Paolo Cherchi Usai, David Francis, Alexander Horwath, and Michael Loebenstein, *Film Curatorship: Archives, Museums, and the Digital Marketplace* (2008).
- Essays, web-based texts, and other documents on the course's Blackboard site. Note that I have also given you access to the readings assigned for the 2009 version of this course. We will only read a few of these, but they are there for your perusal.
- Other readings will be given to you via e-mail or on paper.

Course grades [A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.] determined by performance on these two things.

Attendance and Participation (65%) Attend all meetings of the course of course. Contribute actively to discussions. Arrive prepared. Be a symposiast. Become an *orphanista* -- a passionate advocate for saving, studying and screening orphan films. Consider yourself responsible for the success of this event.

Final project (35%): Do 1 of 2 options. Due MAY 10.

(1) A report documenting and assessing work you (or a group of which you are a part) do for Orphans 7. This will take varying forms, depending upon the nature of your project. Ideally, your "deliverables" should help extend the reach of the Orphan Film Project writ large. Documenting what happens April 7-10 is important. It is in fact part of the symposium. Access to your work is also key, therefore most projects will have something to add to the Orphans website, or to a linked site (such as archive.org). Examples might include:

- production of a DVD of orphan film material
- production of audio recordings of the symposium and web-posting of the resulting MP3 files
- compilation and annotation of a filmography of works shown at this (and/or past) symposium
- report on the music prepared, performed, or played back for Orphans 7, including live accompaniment for silent films and pre-recorded music
- recording of interviews with participants and an access plan for them
- a written analysis or evaluation of all or part of the symposium
- a comprehensive bibliography of publications (including web-based ones) related to the orphan film phenomenon
- your own great idea

Group projects are encouraged.

If you really need to go your own way, there is another option. Understand that this second option will require additional research time, since it requires work outside of your symposium tasks.

(2) **Prospectus for Curated Series** a substantive, in-depth research project. Create a document (illustrated to some degree) that would persuade a potential funder to support the curated exhibition you are proposing. Program five sessions of approximately two hours each. Identify, research, and put in context the material to be screened, the venue for presentation. Identify appropriate speakers. Describe the supporting elements of the presentations (performance, music, text, slides, lighting, audio, etc.), and the audience being addressed. Append a budget and a filmography. Assess which versions of films and videos are available and justify the one you choose. This will include discussing the preservation status of the works. Give your series a title. Give each session a title. Include well-researched, salient notes for each screening. Your vision can be as fantastical or ambitious as you choose, but all of the details must be concrete. You will give a short presentation at the last class meeting.

JAN 19 **What is curating? what does a curator do?**
What is an ‘orphan film’? What is an Orphan Film Symposium?
Meet Jeff Richardson (Special Events Coordinator)
Read: www.nyu.edu/orphanfilm & www.sc.edu/filmsymposium
Screen: *Film Ist.* (1998-2003, Gustav Deutsch); [Orphan Film Ist. \(2006\)](#) + other orphans

JAN 26 **Meet at the SVA Theatre.** Meet Gene Stavis (Director, SVA Theater).
Read: Reports on past symposia: Orgeron6, Horak5, Longo5, Bowen4, Coffey3,
Cullum2, Streible1
• Emily Cohen, “The Orphanista Manifesto,” *American Anthropologist* (Dec. 2004): 719-31.
• “The Anarchivists’ Manifesto” (2000)
• School of Visual Arts website, <http://www.svatheatre.com>
Screen: Projection tests.

FEB 2 **Curatorial values and arguments**
• Paolo Cherchi Usai, “A Charter of Curatorial Values,” *NFSA Journal* 1.1 (2006): 1-10.
• Laura U. Marks, “The Ethical Presenter,” *The Moving Image* 4.1 (2004): 34-47.
• Chapters 1 and 2, *Film Curatorship*

FEB 9 **Debate: What should the Kinsey Institute do with its films?**
Read: <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/library/film.html>
• Linda Williams, “‘White Slavery’ versus the Ethnography of ‘Sexworkers’: Women in Stag Films at the Kinsey Archive,” *The Moving Image* 5.2 (2006): 106-35.
• Tom Gunnings, essay and notes on *Film ist.*
• Scott MacDonald interview with Gustav Deutsch, in *Gustav Deutsch*, ed. Wilbirg Brainin-Donnenberg and Michael Loebenstein (Wallflower Press, 2009).
Screen: *A Girl and a Gun* (2009, Gustav Deutsch), excerpt

FEB 16	Discuss <i>Film Curatorship</i> , Ch. 3-4; screen <i>Kilroy Was Is Here</i> (1946)
FEB 23	Discuss <i>Film Curatorship</i> , Ch. 5-6; screen <i>A Poet from the Sea</i> (1927)
MAR 2	Final book discussion; screen <i>Die Entdeckung Wiens am Nordpol</i> (1923)
MAR 9	discussion and demos of practicum work
MAR 23	discussion and demos of practicum work
MAR 30	discussion and demos of practicum work
APR 6	SVA Theatre rehearsals; transport of gear
APR 7-10	THE SYMPOSIUM
APR 13	no class meeting
APR 20	finalizing projects; debriefing and critique
APR 27	last class meeting: screen videotaped interviews

MIAP Digital Archive: All course work must be submitted with accompanying electronic copies. These will be part of the web-accessible MIAP digital archive. Name your files thusly: s08_1806_Sur na ne_a1.suffi x

Tasks ahead:

- print trafficking: Ramesh Kumar and Joseph Gallucci
- writing program notes: Eric Kohn
- bios: Alexandra Frank, Hayley Roberts, Isabel Lamberti
- web documentation : Ben Strassfeld, Cullen Gallagher
- DVD production: Walter Forsberg, Jonah Volk, Stefan Elnabli
- audio recording and archiving: Stefan Elnabli
- house sound and lighting; computer projection: Jonah Volk
- videotaping with LOC/Intelligent TV: Alexandra Frank, Hayley Roberts, Isabel Lamberti
- graphic design and program production: Ts, poster, etc.: Siobhan Hagan, Sandra Gibson
- music coordination (Ron Sadoff, NYU Film Scoring; Julie Hubbert) Noelle Griffis
- PPT production: interstitial slides and video trailers: Russell Sheaffer and Jim Bittl
- photo documentation: capture, caption, upload, curate: Jennifer Blaylock
- publicity, promotion, press, social media coordination: Cullen Gallagher