# Introduction to Visual Arts Management

## Course Identification

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| **Course Title:** | **Introduction to Visual Arts Management** |
| **Course Code:** | **ACM203 (SMU-X)** |
| **School:** | Arts and Culture Management Programme<br>School of Social Sciences<br>Singapore Management University |
| **Course Teaching Period:** | AY2024/25, T1 |
| **Course Schedule:** | Thursdays, 3:30 pm - 6:45 pm |
| **Class Venue:** | SMU Connexions CR3-1 |
| **Course Instructor:** | Assistant Professor Hoe Su Fern<br>Email: sfhoe@smu.edu.sg |
| **Consultation** | Schedule an appointment here: https://tinyurl.com/ACMconsult |
| **SMU-X Industry Partner** | Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film |
| **Course Advisories:** | ☑No prerequisites but most suitable for students majoring in arts and culture management<br>☑This is **not** a general arts appreciation module! Students should minimally possess an interest in the managerial aspects of the visual arts ecosystem in Singapore<br>☑This is a SMU-X course with real stakes, and students should be prepared to invest ample effort to maximise their learning and reap the fulfilling rewards of learning. This is an **intensive course** but one which rewards students for the effort they put into it. |
| **Emergency Preparedness for Teaching and Learning** | Instructors may conduct lessons online, to prepare students for online learning. During an actual emergency, students will be notified to access the Zoom platform for their online lessons. |
| **Accessibility and Accommodations:** | SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability, please let me know asap. You are also welcome to contact the university's disability support team if you have questions or concerns about academic accommodations: dss@smu.edu.sg |

## Course Synopsis

This module is designed as a Level 2 practical foundation to the Arts and Culture Management second major and aims to equip students with an expansive and inclusive knowledge of the key processes, practices and principles affecting the current and future directions of visual arts management in Singapore.

Balancing conceptual analysis of past and existing institutional models with practical steps towards creating new approaches, students will engage critically and experientially with the structures, operations and management of the artists, organisations and stakeholders that present or produce visual artworks on various settings and scales. Strong emphasis will be placed on interrogating exhibition-making as material, embodied and dialogic practices, as well as considering the influences and issues arising from the proliferation of artistic and curatorial activities that have moved beyond the gallery to the street, heartlands, festivals and the internet.

Ultimately, this module is aimed at enabling the Arts and Culture Management student in cultivating the competences required to support and respond to our fast-changing visual arts ecosystem challenged by various artistic, systemic, and audience-related issues.

## SMU-X Industry Partner



Established in 2003, Objectifs is a visual arts space in Singapore that is dedicated to film and photography. Their goal is to cultivate original voices in visual storytelling, and to inspire and broaden perspectives through the power of images.

They do this by presenting a year round programme of exhibitions, screenings, workshops, talks, mentorships and residencies, aimed at fostering dialogue about visual culture, and advancing the practice and appreciation of photography and film.

Objectifs is a non-profit registered charity with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status and is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme.

For more, do visit: https://www.objectifs.com.sg/

**For the AY2024/25 edition, the class will work together to produce and implement an actual mini festival programme with and for Objectifs. This is intended to impart project and programming management skills, while working closely with a key stakeholder in the contemporary art world of Singapore.**

*More specific details will be shared in class.*

## Course Goals

For AY24/25, the primary focus of this course is two fold:
‣ Experiencing professional project management within the Contemporary Art World
‣ Understanding the key stakeholders, professional activities and aesthetic vocabulary of the Contemporary Art World, especially in the Singapore context.

Critical questions to be explored include:
‣ **What are the stakeholders, professional activities and specialised areas of activity in the contemporary art world today, especially within the context of Singapore?**
‣ **What are the roles and responsibilities of arts managers in the contemporary art world?**
‣ **How do arts managers develop, engage and enrich the experiences of contemporary art audiences?**
‣ **How do arts managers manage differing interests and stakeholders, while striving for financial sustainability in the contemporary art world?**
‣ **What is the best way - if any - to frame and promote a particular contemporary art exhibition?**
‣ **What role does the public have in engaging with the objects and ideas in exhibitions?**

Students who complete this course should acquire the following course-specific skills :
‣ Be familiar with the scope and function of the various bodies, industries and organisations involved in the promotion, collection and presentation of contemporary visual culture, especially in the SG context.
‣ Understand what is involved in the roles and responsibilities of arts managers and intermediaries working behind the scenes to enable the local visual arts world
‣ Obtain familiarity with the aesthetic vocabulary of the contemporary art world from provenance to compliance and connoisseurship
‣ Be able to engage critically with a range of curatorial and exhibition strategies in varying display settings
‣ Be able to apply a range of critical, theoretical, art historical and museological approaches to the study of exhibitions and displays in contemporary settings
‣ Be keenly aware of the changing nature of exhibiting contemporary art, including peripatetic, freelance and nomadic models
‣ Be able to critical assess the potential impact of different and varied influences on changing nature contemporary art, including ethical issues and growing crises

## Overall Learning Objectives

On completion of this course, students should acquire the following skills, attributes and outcomes:
- Strengthened ability as a critical and creative thinker with strong reasoning skills
- Motivation, self-direction and self-organisational skills, with the ability to set goals and manage time and priorities
- Skills in self-awareness and self-assessment, and able to place great importance on personal and professional integrity
- Willingness to explore, experiment and learn from mistakes, and to derive great joy in the learning process rather than chasing for grades
- Receptiveness to new ideas, differing opinions and alternative perspectives
- A keen openness to new ideas, differing opinions and alternative perspectives
- An increased capacity  to work collaboratively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Information management and information literacy through the competent use of the library and other sound and reliable information sources
- A strong ability to effectively prepare and present their ideas in both verbal and written mode at a competent level

## Course Programme

To facilitate learning, this course has been organised thematically into **Three Blocks:**

1. **Block One** will provide an overview of the key concepts and components of the course, with a focus on breaking down the key structures and practices of the contemporary art world, as well as an introduction to the industry partner and project.

2. **Block Two** will explore the role of the arts manager in the contemporary art world.  Through real-life case studies and practice-focussed workshops, this block will develop understandings on the institutions,  structures and professional activities of the contemporary art world, as well as highlight growing crises and dramatic changes affecting labour and management in the contemporary art world.

3. **Block Three** will build on the knowledge acquired in the first two blocks and advance understanding by focussing on actual project implementation and delivery of the festival.

Across the 13 weeks, each session offers a unique and rounded balance of theoretical and conceptual context, as well as practice-focused sessions with the industry partner, and opportunities to engage in dialogue with the key professionals in the contemporary art world. To encourage continuous project work, time will also be provided to workshopping and discussing the industry project.

## Course Teaching Schedule

*\*Students should note that session topics and dates may change accordingly to the overall class learning requirements as well as the schedule of the course partners and collaborators*

**Block One:       Basics**

Week 1        22 Aug 2024        Introduction to Visual Arts Management and Overview of the Contemporary Art World in Sg

Week 2        29 Aug 2024        Understanding Non-Profit Institutions as Key Stakeholders
Industry Project Clinic 1: Introduction to Industry Partner and Project

**Block Two:       Breaking Down and Working Together**

Week 3        05 Sept 2024       Understanding the Museum as Key Stakeholder: Old Histories, Old Masters and the Challenge of Relevance

Week 4        12 Sept 2024       Understanding the Exhibition as Key Format: The Curatorial Turn and the Rise of the Exhibition as Critical Form

Week 5        19 Sept 2024       Industry Project Clinic 2: Project Pitches and Discussion

Week 6        26 Sept 2024       Realities of Managing in the Contemporary Art World I: Working with Artists

Week 7        03 Oct 2024        Realities of Managing in the Contemporary Art World II: Resource and Financial Management

Week 8        10 Oct 2024        Recess Week

Week 9        17 Oct  2024       Industry Project Clinic 3: Updates to Client and Discussion

Week 10       24 Oct 2024        Contemplating Futures: Chips, Galleries and Contemporary Art as a Business

Week 11       *02 Nov 2024       Contemplating Possible Futures of a Globalised and Changing Contemporary Art World

**Block Three:    Bringing it All Together**

Week 12       07 Nov 2024        Industry Project Implementation and Delivery

Week 13       14 Nov 2024        Industry Project Clinic 4: Debriefs and Conclusion

## Assessment
(More details will be elaborated and discussed during class)

**Overview of Assessment:**

The summative assessments are designed to ensure that you develop a personal interest and understanding of the Singapore Art World, as well as obtain keen insights into what goes on behind the scenes, and the significance of the roles and responsibilities of the arts manager.

The grading is based on **continual learning**. The assessment criterion aims to reward not only your ability to research and present information but also your ability to synthesise and present arguments. Please note that no questions verbatim from past year papers or published test banks will be used for the graded continuous assessments and examinations in this course. There are FOUR components to

| Assignment No. | Area/Topic | Description | Weighting (%) | Due Date: |
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| 1 | In-Class Behaviour | Attendance and Participation | 10 | Throughout |
| 2(A) | Individual | Field Notes 1: Class Learnings | 10 | Week 3 - 11 |
| 2(B) | | Field Notes 2: Exhibition analysis | 20 | Week 10 |
| 2(C) | | Field Notes 3: Industry Festival | 15 | Week 14 |
| 3(A) | SMU-X Group Project | Project Pitch Proposal | 10 | Week 4 |
| 3(B) | | Action Plan + Budget | 15 | Week 8 |
| 3(C) | | Project Implementation | 10 | Week 12 |
| 4 | SMU-X Class | Final Festival Production (includes Peer Evaluation of Contribution) | 10 | Week 12 |

*Academic Integrity*
All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorised possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences. All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offence. If you are unsure if an action might constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, speak with me. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx as well as http://researchguides.smu.edu.sg/plagiarism.

*Use of Generative AI Tools*
To ensure a fair, equitable and transparent assessment, any use of AI tool should be for assisting you in generating ideas, providing additional information or improving the clarity and coherence of your answers. It should not be used to solely generate complete answers or replace your own analysis. If you have incorporated text generated by AI tools into your assessment, there must be proper citation and acknowledgement of the tool's contribution.

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