

## The Role of Curator

There are still examples to be found in more traditional galleries where the role of a curator is little different to the role of a curator in a museum. A museum curator is characterized as the custodian or keeper of objects or artefacts' and it is their job to maintain the integrity of the collection by preserving, exhibiting and studying those objects. Traditionally a gallery curator is also considered an 'object specialist' working with educators to develop public programmes and publicity, and although in charge of selecting the work on display, their presentation is still determined by similar criteria such as grouping according to medium, geography or chronology.

The contemporary curator belongs to a different discipline. It is often claimed that we owe our idea of the contemporary exhibition to Harald Szeemann - the first independent curator. Szeemann held the position that exhibitions could be 'poems in space', with the power to conjure alternative ways of organizing thought and opening the minds of viewers who experienced them. Most significantly, he devised the thematic art exhibition (Großausstellung or Great Exhibition), in which the artworks are tied to a central concept causing their re-interpretation within a given context and leading to previously unknown interrelationships.

Szeemann was a scout who restlessly toured the world looking for significant trends and patterns between art and culture. His groundbreaking exhibition of 1969, 'Live in your head: when attitudes become form', was the first major survey of conceptual art to take place in Europe, in which he experimented with non-museum spaces.

His theory of curation was strongly influenced by Foucault's 'archaeology of knowledge' and the belief that it is statements that express meaning, not utterances or speech acts but the way in which they are housed, the delivery of information that is responsible for setting up the network of rules that establishes what is meaningful about it. This more persuasive, active role of the curator is standard today, and as curators become more engaged with cultural meaning and the production of the work, boundaries between artist and curator become blurred. The role of curator becomes much closer to that of the artists themselves as a consequence, the artist must be aware of this change if their intent is not to be subsumed under another's intension.

Proposition Eight explores how drawing can begin to establish the presentation of artworks and therefore deliver the final 'statement' in delivering meaning behind it.

### CORE CHARACTERISTICS

**Space as an aesthetic property:** prompts you to consider how the meaning of an artwork or works can be reinforced or dramatically altered by changing objects placement, proximity and order. Begin by asking yourself what it is you want the work to communicate.

**Making for display:** should be considered carefully as it could be a dictate to a viewer either offering design ideas or limiting your market. Consideration. needs to be in terms of how appropriate the dictate is to the underlying theme or qualities of the work.

**Permeations on a theme:** allows a clear structure in which to explore and organize ideas and to reach a depth of understanding sometimes lost or confused in single pieces. There is liberation from one piece having to carry all your ideas at once instead, possibilities can be

spread out across several pieces or small bodies of work each concentrating on subtly different aspects of an idea.

**Clear visual access:** the exhibition is almost another artwork comprised of your pieces so needs to be considered in terms of composition, groupings, sequence or theme. This is difficult to do before you enter the exhibition space but you can begin to map out possibilities two dimensionally or in the studio according to the type of work you are producing and what would best show its qualities.