ARTh 434/3.0
Non-Western Art in Western Collections

ARTh 876/3.0: Studies in Cultural Policy I.

Decolonizing the Museum – Cultural Heritage and First Peoples

Instructor: Professor Norman Vorano
Time: TBD
Location: TBD
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CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:
A consideration of the history of collecting and public collections; of museum policy and practice; and of Western notions of art and culture as they are applied in the museum to non-Western art.

Prerequisites: For ARTH 434: Level 4 and registration in an ARTH Major or Medial Plan and a GPA of 1.9 and 24.0 units in ARTH.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Given the colonial roots of western museums, the historical relationship between museums and Indigenous communities has been fraught with conflict, disjuncture, and political interventions. Over the past several decades, new exhibitions and curatorial practices have attempted to “decolonize” museums. This has fostered new understandings of collections, insights into the core function of contemporary curatorial work, innovative models of partnerships, progressive policies, and collaborations. These encounters have called into question the role of museums, and the disciplinary formations that are associated with them. Is it even possible to “decolonize” the western museum or art gallery? To what degree is power shifted or shared in these new arrangements? How do cultural institutions navigate an ethical minefield to find workable pathways to reconciliation? Drawing upon Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, this course explores different case-studies, theories, and histories to track and critically appraise the evolving relationship between Museums and Indigenous peoples in order to contextualize and understand the emerging issues in contemporary curatorial and museum practice. Topics covered include representation, repatriation, sacred materials, and the management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
A detailed list of readings and requirements will be available during the first class. This course will be a seminar, and students will be graded upon their participation in the discussions, timely completion of writing exercises, and a research-based written work at the end of the term. All of the readings can be found on the course OnQ page.