

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FUND PROPOSAL – SPRING 2006

1. TEACHING IN TEAMS: THE SKYBRIDGE CURATORIAL PROJECT

Main reference: Simonetta Moro, Eugene Lang College, Arts - Arts in Context
65 West 11th Street, room 350
212-229-5100 ext. 2258
moros@newschool.edu

Additional instructors: Ivan Raykoff, Eugene Lang College, Arts – Music Track
raykoffi@newschool.edu

Elena Climent, Parsons School of Design, Fine Arts
climente@newschool.edu

Working course title: The Skybridge Curatorial Project (or: Art on the Skybridge)

Rationale for proposed course:

The Skybridge Curatorial Project (SCP) revolves around the recently opened “Skybridge Arts Space” that runs across the third floor of the Lang and the New School buildings. This space provides an opportunity for multi-media exhibitions and curriculum-based projects in the arts. The third floor *Skybridge* has been designed to accommodate artwork that ranges from traditional two-dimensional work, such as drawing and painting, to site-specific installation, sonic sculpture, audio pieces, and eventually video projections (our goal in the near future). The focus is student work; however visiting artists shows, faculty work and broader curatorial projects are part of our program to make the space a truly vibrant and exciting laboratory for visual and critical thinking.

We want the Skybridge to be more than a gallery space: we want it to be the site in which students can experiment with ideas and learn the various skills that are essential requisites for organizing, installing, advertising and critiquing an art show. The Skybridge will provide the ideal site to gain hands-on experience in the practice of curating and at the same time act as a catalyst for different kind of activities, including discussions about the arts, site-specific performances, and open critiques, with the underlying aim to rise awareness of the rich panorama of artistic endeavors that permeates the School – in its students and faculty. The Skybridge, unlike most other gallery spaces, is also a public area with lots of traffic, and students would have to consider how to negotiate this "real-life" flow and activity as they imagine and implement uses for the space.

By having a **team of three faculty** - each with their different expertise in the visual arts and in music - the SCP will constitute a real *bridge* not only between the arts, but also between two of the most dynamic divisions of the New School, Lang and Parsons. We are expecting our students to come from both divisions, and particularly from the BAFA program; these students would benefit enormously from a cross-division course combining liberal arts with artistic and curatorial practices.

Specifically, Simonetta Moro will supervise conceptualization and installation of exhibitions, bringing her expertise in the field developed over the years as a visual artist and curator. She is currently doing this already in the Skybridge Art Space with a group of independent study Lang students. Ivan Raykoff would bring music composition, performance and recording expertise, also scholarly and practical applications of sound/space relations and "visual music" projects. Elena Climent will provide her unique knowledge of painting and specific time periods, and historical evocations through mixed media.

In terms of teaching load, and given the restricted number of students allowed (unless we choose the rotating option and make the course a 2 credit course for 7 weeks each group), we would probably count this as an overload, because it wouldn't count as a normal course. In this case, the grant money could be partly used to pay the instructors an extra fee. Or make it part of the IRT curriculum and substitute a course we are already teaching in this scheme.

A possible model for the course could be the following:

2 credits (7 weeks) or 4 credits (semester-long), meeting once a week, max 12 students (or even rotating students twice in the semester, thus 24 total); working on six exhibitions per semester (possibly including the 4th floor bridge), each focusing on a specific topic of research. Each instructor could lead two of the shows, and give his or her particular "tone" to the exhibition; or all instructors could work at the same time on each show, taking care of different tasks (sound element; concept; visuals). Assignments and research material will involve attending exhibitions and performances in the city, writing papers and reviews about them, and collaborating with other instructors who will be involved in some of the course-based shows each semester. Students will work in several distinct areas for the management of the gallery space, such as:

- 1. Curatorial activity** (conceptualization of exhibitions, arrangement of pieces in a show, preparation of texts, labels, plans, prints, handouts, etc.)
- 2. Press** (press release, advertisement, contact with Inprint, Lang College newspaper, and other New School publications)
- 3. Installation/renovation** (practical hands-on and building activities, framing, installing, disposing, renovate walls and structures)
- 4. Archive** (visual documentation, preparation of material for website, organization of final publication, book-keeping)

Concepts and ideas for the exhibitions will be taken collectively. Instructors will illustrate examples of successful exhibitions from art history and the contemporary art scene, through slide presentations and field trips to the numerous museums, art galleries and musical venues which make of New York City the art capital of the world.

Notions of total installation, sonic space, and multi-sensorial reconstructions of a particular theme embracing different fields and disciplines (such as literature, writing, dance, theatre, and the sciences) will be explored and tested in the space.

In terms of professional outcome, we would like to emphasize that hands-on curatorial experience is important and useful for students as a training for the professional world.