Architectural Design: Art Installation in Florence

Professor: Silvia Catitti, Ph.D., licensed architect
- Prerequisite: None (Previous drafting experience is helpful but not required)
- Class times: Tuesdays 3:00pm - 5:45pm (or as noted)
- Office hours: Tuesday before and after class by appointment
- E.mail: silvia.catitti@nyu.edu

Main goals:
- to develop a critical perspective on art installations, one which unites architecture, interior design, art history, and cultural anthropology;
- to investigate the different needs of viewers, curators, settings, and artworks;
- to learn architectural drawing techniques for analyzing and developing projects;
- to develop creativity for designing projects;
- to develop graphic, oral, and written skills to communicate project ideas;
- to design an art installation in a historic building in Florence.

Course description:
This course develops the students’ skill in using methods of graphic representation as a language to explore and express architectural projects. Each student designs an installation for a small group of works of art in a historic building in Florence. This gives students the opportunity to address a range of issues, including the needs of different audiences, of the hosting institution, of the curator, of the setting, and of the works themselves. Students explore the role of exhibition installations in the relationship between the exhibited works and space housing the show. They also study contemporary spaces for exhibitions.

In the first half, students explore Florence as a Museum-City, a city which traditionally displayed art. They analyze and discuss different displays and points of observation, then consider contemporary installations. Students learn about the principles and types of architectural drawings. They learn to look carefully by sketching with a range of techniques: diagrams, orthogonal projections (plan, section, and elevation), axonometric, and one-point perspective. The class visits a number of selected exhibitions currently in Florence, then students analyze one installation and present their critique.

In the second half, students select a group of works of visual art as well as a setting, in a historic building in Florence, and make their own installation proposals. They explore on site different types of Florentine spaces which traditionally housed art (churches, public buildings, private palaces, villas and gardens.) They conduct research on this art and the building, consider the needs of the audience and curator, and evaluate other installations as precedents or models. Most importantly, they use architectural drawing methods to develop and express their installation ideas. In addition, they learn how to present their ideas in a written statement, and to explain them during the final presentation.
Grading:
The following criteria will contribute to the grade: depth of analysis of design issues, concept and design development, quality of verbal presentation, quality of visual presentation. Evaluation of drawings is based on the student’s increase in ability, not on absolute standards.

1. Assignments (30%): Every week students submit their assignments (drawings or research.) Delay in submitting the assignments will lower the final grade.

2. Midterm (30%): Students play different roles (oral presentation) in analyzing the concept of a current exhibition and its installation. Students (single or teams of two) produce drawings and/or powerpoint slideshows (graphic + oral presentation) showing their analysis of a current art exhibition and its installation.

3. Final (30%): Students (single or teams of two) select a small group of works of visual art for their exhibition, write a manifesto of intentions, choose a historic building in Florence to house the exhibition, conduct research on works and setting, find a precedent (model) for the installation, use four basic drawing types to present the proposed installation. Students produce drawings and/or powerpoint slideshows (graphic + oral presentation) showing their art installation project.

4. Participation and discussion (10%): Students are required to participate in class discussions. For each thematic reading students are required to submit their replies to three questions (see guidelines below). The following criteria will contribute to the grade: depth of analysis of design issues, concept and design development, quality of verbal presentation, quality of visual presentation. Evaluation of drawings is based on the student’s increase in ability, not on absolute standards.

A few more details:
A. Attendance is required. If you miss class or site visits for any reason you must visit sites on your own and fulfill the sketching experience of that week. B. Absences: One absence (this may include travel time with friends or family) can be justified by a personal note without penalty. Additional absences will lower your grade. For medical absences, please submit a doctor’s note within one week after you return. C. Punctuality is required. If you are late on-site we will not be able to leave a ticket for you at the ticket office. Repeated lateness will lower your grade. D. Food and Drink. Please do not eat during class time. Feel free to drink but please do not take out bottles when we are on site. E. Phone calls. Please, no telephone calls during class time. F. Photos. Feel free to take photographs after class and site visits. G. Visitors. Unfortunately, visitors may not join our class.

Required Tools and Drawing Materials:
The list of required tools and materials will be provided the first day of school (tools and materials can be purchased at Zecchi, Via dello Studio 19/R, Florence, with 10% discount)

Required Text:
  (the book is available at Feltrinelli International, Via Cavour 12/20/r, Florence; copies are in our Library)
- Selected readings: students can make their own photocopies (a master copy is in our Library) or consult the sources available in our Library.
Recommended Texts:
- B. Kempers, Painting, Power and Patronage, London - New York, 1994

Guidelines for Additional Reading Dues:
For each of the following thematic reading please reply (in one or two sentences) to 3 questions:
1. the key idea of the article
2. one idea you learnt from the article
3. one point you did not understand or one point you disagree with.
Submit your replies via e.mail (to silvia.catitti@nyu.edu) by midnight the Monday before the indicated class.

thematic reading # 1: due Sep 14

thematic reading # 2: due Sep 21
- B.W. Ferguson, “Exhibition Rhetorics,” in Thinking about Exhibitions (see above), pp. 175-190 (CH. 9)

thematic reading # 3: due Sep 28
- N. Heinich-M. Pollak, “From Museum Curator to Exhibition Auteur,” in Thinking about Exhibitions (see above), 231-250 (CH. 13)

thematic reading # 4: due Nov 5

thematic reading # 5: due Nov 9

thematic reading # 6: due Nov 16
- G. McMaster, "Creating Spaces," in Thinking about Exhibitions (see above), pp. 191-200 (CH. 10)

thematic reading # 7: due Nov 23
- R. Greenberg, “The Exhibited Redistributed,” in Thinking about Exhibitions (see above), pp. 350-367 (CH. 22)

thematic reading # 8: due Nov 30
- J. Barry, “Dissenting Spaces,” in Thinking about Exhibitions (see above), pp. 307-312 (CH. 18)

thematic reading # 9: due Dec 7
WEEK 1  

Introduction: Drawing as “Seeing” + Past and Present Displays of Art

September 7, Tuesday
Graphical Interpretation of the Space: Conventional Methods of Graphical Representation + Signs.

readings: thematic reading #1 + F.Ching chaps. 1 + 2  
ASSIGNMENT 1: signs ("entrance/exit", "do not touch", "eye-stop")  
due: September 14

WEEK 2  

Graphical Representation: Orthogonal Projections + Diagrams

September 14, Tuesday
- Studio: Free-hand Drawing: Pin-up of Assignment 1. Orthogonal Projections, Diagrams
- Classroom: Installation as an Intermediary: Issues and Materials Involved in Planning a Temporary Installation. Explanation of the Midterm Project

reading: thematic reading #2  
ASSIGNMENT 2: orthogonal projections of our classroom  
due: September 21

WEEK 3  

Navigating an Exhibition and Analyzing its Installation

September 21, Tuesday
- Studio: Pin-up + Critique of the Exhibition of the Semester and of its Installation
- Classroom: Analysis and Criticism of Past Exhibitions and their Installations

readings: thematic reading #3; F.Ching chap. 3  
ASSIGNMENT 3: diagrams of circulation + eye-stops (of the space of the exhibition)  
due: September 28

September 24, Friday
- Site Visit: Three Temporary Exhibitions in Florence: Discussion + Sketching on site

reading: none  
ASSIGNMENT 4: choose a current exhibition as topic of mid-term exam (submit proposal)  
due: October 5

WEEK 4  

Graphical Representation: Axonometrics

September 28, Tuesday
- Site Visit: Palazzo Strozzi: “Bronzino. Artist and Poet at the Court of the Medici”
Sample Analysis of Concept and Installation of the Exhibition + Sketching
- 6 pm - 7pm Lecture @ VLP: After the Bronzino Drawing Exhibition:
Janet CoxRearick: “Style and Costume: Bronzino's Portraits of Women”

readings: F.Ching chaps. 4 + 5  
ASSIGNMENT 5: axonometrics + morphology diagrams (of the installation of the exhibition)  
due: October 5

WEEK 5  

Graphical Representation: Perspective

October 5, Tuesday
- Studio: Graphical Interpretation of the Space: Perspective
- Classroom: Discuss Students’ Choice of Topic of the Mid-term Exam

reading: F.Ching, chap. 7  
ASSIGNMENT 6: perspective at eye-level (of the space of the exhibition with the installation)  
due: October 12
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 6</th>
<th><strong>Expressing your Analysis of an Exhibition and its Installation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 12, Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>- Studio: Sketching + Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reading:</strong></td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong></td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 7</th>
<th><strong>Analysis of an Exhibition and Critique of its Installation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 19, Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>- Studio: Students Present their Analysis (PowerPoint presentations or boards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT 7:</strong></td>
<td>choose an idea for your exhibition and write a manifesto of intentions due: November 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 8</th>
<th>Midterm break</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 9</th>
<th><strong>Exploring Spaces for Art in Florence: Sacred, Public, and Private. I</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 2, Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>- Studio: Discussion of Mid-term Analysis + Explanation of the Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site Visit:</strong></td>
<td>Sub-Urban Spaces which Traditionally Housed Art in Florence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harold Acton’s Villa La Pietra and its Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reading:</strong></td>
<td>thematic reading # 4 due: November 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT 8:</strong></td>
<td>submit your choice (a group of works of visual art) due: November 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 5, Friday</strong></td>
<td>- Site Visit: Three Types of Spaces which Traditionally Housed Art in Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reading:</strong></td>
<td>thematic reading # 5 due: November 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT 9:</strong></td>
<td>submit your choice (a historical indoors space as a setting for your exhibition) due: November 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 10</th>
<th><strong>Exploring Spaces for Art in Florence: Sacred, Public and Private. II</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 9, Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>- Studio: Pin-up + How to Measure and Redraw the Rooms of a Historic Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom:</strong></td>
<td>Art in Context. Original Meanings and Viewing Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reading:</strong></td>
<td>thematic reading # 6 due: November 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT 10:</strong></td>
<td>submit your research (on a group of works of visual art) due: November 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT 11:</strong></td>
<td>submit your research (on the historical indoors space you chose as a setting) due: November 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 11</th>
<th><strong>Designing an Exhibition Installation: Orthogonal Projections + Scale</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 16, Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>- Studio: Plan, Elevation, and Section: Pin-up + Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom:</strong></td>
<td>Discussion of Students’ Ideas for an Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>reading:</strong></td>
<td>thematic reading # 7 due: November 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT 12:</strong></td>
<td>submit your survey (orthogonal projections of the space of your installation) due: November 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WEEK 12  Designing an Exhibition Installation: Axonometric Drawings

**November 23, Tuesday**
- **Studio:** Axonometric: Pin-up + How to Make Detail Drawings of Materials and Building Technique for Installation Using Axonometrics + Review
- **Classroom:** Creating Design Ideas: Successful and Unsuccessful Installations from Past Exhibitions in Florence

*reading:* thematic reading # 8  
*due:* November 30  
*ASSIGNMENT 13: axonometric and morphology (of the basic element of your installation) due: November 30

## WEEK 13  Designing an Exhibition Installation: Perspective

**November 30, Tuesday**
- **Studio:** Perspective: How to Make Perspectival Renderings of the Installation
- **Classroom:** Discussion. Sketching and Drafting Using One-point Perspective

*reading due:* thematic reading # 9  
*due:* December 7  
*ASSIGNMENT 14: perspective (of your space with the Exhibition installation) due: December 7

## WEEK 14  Designing an Exhibition Installation – Final Review

**December 7, Tuesday**
- **Studio:** Final Review

*reading:* none  
*ASSIGNMENT:* none

## WEEK 15  Presentation and Critique of Exhibition Installation

**December 14, Tuesday**
- **Studio:** Presentation of the Final Project: Your Art Installation in Florence  
  (PowerPoint presentations or boards)