Objectives

- Students will learn about the different roles of exhibition planning, including that of curator, educator, marketer, and registrar, and how those roles function in an exhibition.
- Students will curate and develop mini-exhibitions based on relevant and current issues.
- Students will analyze, select, curate, and present relevant artwork.
- Students will learn skills necessary to develop and curate their own thesis-driven exhibitions.

Introduction

Begin by asking students what have been their favorite art exhibits they have visited. This could include Museum Exhibitions, Gallery Exhibitions, or local shops with original art displays.

- What was their favorite part of the exhibition?
- What made the artwork so memorable?
- On the contrary, what would make an art exhibition boring or unimpressive?

Explain to students how a thoughtful art exhibition requires a lot of coordination and thoughtful preparation. As artists, it is a valuable skill to learn how to develop thoughtful and relevant art exhibitions. Conduct a brainstorm of ways they could use curation and exhibition development in their careers. (AP portfolios, resume building, BFA projects, marketing and promotion etc.)

Spend some time discussing the different roles of the Exhibition Team. (Curator, Registrar, Educator, Marketer, Event Planner, Project Manager etc). You can refer to the resource guide and the Springville Museum of Art’s website (www.smofa.org/student-curators) for videos and other supplementary information to show your students.

Curator: The Curator is responsible for generating the big ideas for an exhibition. They spend time developing an idea, researching, presenting, and leading the exhibition team to make sure deadlines are met and to ensure that their thesis is supported by the Exhibition.

- Ask your students what they might curate? (ie: Pinterest boards, collections, music playlists, clothing)

Materials

- Student Curators Exhibition Roles Power Point (Included in the Student Curator’s Resource Guide)
- Student Curators Resource Videos
- Several Packets of Postcard Sets from the Springville Museum of Art (Available for free from SMA)
- Exhibition space in the classroom to display mini-exhibitions.
- Exhibition Evaluation Worksheet (Included in the Student Curator’s Resource Guide)

Utah Core Standards

Standard L3.V.P.1: Critique, justify, and present choices in the process of analyzing, selecting, curating, and presenting artwork for a specific exhibit or event.

Standard L3.V.P.3: Curate a collection of objects, artifacts, or artwork to affect the viewer’s understanding of social, cultural, and/or political experiences.

Standard L3.V.R.4: Construct evaluations of a work of art or collection of works based on differing sets of criteria.

Standard L3.V.CO.2: Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society.

Explain to students that the process of curating involves choosing an idea or topic, and selecting, organizing and presenting objects that support your main idea.
Registrar: The Registrar is responsible for caring for the actual art pieces in an exhibition. They prepare artwork for display (matting and framing), install and deinstall the artwork onto the walls of an exhibition space, store and transport the art if necessary, and are responsible for any paperwork or forms for keeping the artwork organized.

- Ask your students when they might act in the role of a registrar? (ie. Matting and framing their work, filling out paperwork for scholarships or exhibitions, hanging artwork in their classrooms)

Educator: The Educator is responsible for helping visitors understand and connect with the artwork in an exhibition. They create labels or gallery signage to help people understand what they are looking at. They are responsible for any exhibit interactives (hands on activities in the galleries). They plan events and give tours of the exhibition.

- Ask your students when they might act in the role of an Educator? (ie. Writing artist statements, talking about an artwork with peers via peer evaluations, conversations about art etc.)

Marketer: The Marketer is responsible for telling people about the exhibition. They need to make sure people know about it and show up to see it. They may do this by creating a brand (look and feel) for the exhibition. They also promote the exhibition via social media, posters and print media, and other creative sources.

- Ask your students when they might act in the role of a Marketer? (ie. Using social media, spreading the word about a party etc.)

Event Planner: The Event Planner is in charge of planning an Opening Reception for an Exhibition. They will coordinate details such as music, food, performers, flowers, décor etc. They will work with the exhibition team to ensure the “vibe” of the Opening Reception reflects the ideas and branding of the exhibition. (This role can be combined with the Educator role)

- Ask your students when they might act in the role of an Event Planner? (ie. Planning a party etc.)

Project Manager: The Project Manager works with the Curator to ensure that the team is working efficiently together and that deadlines are being met in a timely manner. (This position can be combined with the Curator Role)

- Ask your students when they have worked as a Project Manager? (ie. Group projects etc.)

Learning Activity:

After watching the Exhibition Roles videos and discussing the various exhibition roles, have the students divide into groups of 4. Each student will choose an exhibition role from the following:
- Curator
- Registrar
- Educator
- Marketer

Pass out a packet of postcards from the Springville Museum of Art’s Permanent Collection and explain to the students they will be curating a mini-exhibition from the Postcard set.
Activity Timing and Guidelines:

1. **5 mins:** The Registrar will be the only person allowed to handle the artwork (postcards).

2. **10-15 mins:** Exhibitions should be centered on a specific topic. The Curator will work with a group to write a thesis statement for their exhibition. The thesis statement should be well written and in full sentences. (*Lesson 2 will explore the idea of thesis statements more thoroughly*)

3. **10-15 mins:** Once the team has their big idea and thesis statement, the team should work together to select 10-15 images for their exhibition. This will be their object list. Be sure that all images relate back to the thesis.

4. **10-20 mins:** Next, the exhibition team, led by the curator, will design the exhibition. They should consider where they will hang the works and how they would like the works displayed. The Registrar will hang the works on the wall. The Marketer will lead the team in choosing a catchy title for their exhibition. The Educator will lead the team in choosing any gallery signage, labels, interactives etc. The students can use paper to create any gallery signage for their exhibition.

5. **10 mins:** Next, the educator will lead the team in planning an Opening Reception for their event. They should consider the intended tone or vibe for the event. Will they have refreshments and/or entertainment? The Marketer should discuss how they will publicize this event.

6. **20 mins:** The Educator of each group will then lead classroom tours through the exhibition, explaining the title, the thesis and why they selected the works they did. They can also talk about their team’s plan for an opening reception.

**Assessment:**

After the assignment, discuss with students their exhibition experience. What was easy? What was difficult? Did they see classroom trends with the exhibitions? What would they do differently the second time around?

Ask students what might be done differently when a Museum curates an exhibition? What might be done the same?

**Variations:**

This lesson plan may be implemented over a period of several class periods, or in one class period. It may be adjusted according to your class schedule.

**Extensions:**

Before or after the Learning Activity, invite your students to visit an art gallery or exhibition space to evaluate an exhibition. This can be at a local museum, gallery, or local shop with a display of original art. Student should use the Exhibition Evaluation Worksheet included in the Resource Guide. After the assignment is completed, have students share their experiences. Lead a discussion about what they liked or didn’t like about the exhibition. What would they do differently if they were on the exhibition team?