

International Conference
Contemporary Museum and Gallery Education Practices:
Local Communities meet Global Narratives

Workshop
Saturday, 23 May, 9:30 – 11:15 a.m.

Gender in the Cyprus Museum: Towards an Open Educational Package | A Re Aphrodite project*
proposed by ChrystalleniLoizidou, DespoPasia, EvanthiaTselika.

Venue: The Cyprus Museum, 1 Mouseiou Str., Nicosia (9:30am sharp at the Museum, or 9:10 at Point to be guided)

Workshop Description

You are invited to actively explore the Archaeological Museum (the Cyprus Museum), a historic institution in terms of its archaeological wealth and its colonial heritage, and which may also be considered, as some have argued, a valuable example of a “museum within a museum,” due to the fact that it has remained curatorially intact for a number of years, with only a few isolated recent attempts to update it to modern exhibition-design standards. Treating the Museum as a largely untouched educational resource, the workshop is proposed as an opportunity for international experts to collaborate towards an open source, independently produced educational package that will be made freely available online. As a starting-place, it proposes a re-reading of the collection through the lens of non-prescribed gendered identities, as well as issues of the body on a more general sense. Participants are invited to divide into teams and work freely together to consider and propose activities, and ways the collection could be approached. The results of the Workshop (the second in a series) will be made freely available online and contributors will be credited as co-authors.

* <http://reaphrodite.org>

Point Centre for
Contemporary Art



1



Mission:

- Brainstorm and suggest best practices for collaboration between the/a museum and a social group of interest
- Begin to develop a programme or an activity considering gender, tailored to this collaboration.

Food for Thought

- How we might use the museum for the development of a collaboration-driven gender-focused educational package?
- How can an educational package be inclusive of different types of community groups?
- How can it promote collaboration between individuals, institutions and social groups?
- Suggested thematic focus: Gender and its interpretations

Suggested Methodology

Choose two groups/ institutions or add yours:

NGOs, Schools, Parents, Museums, Marginalized social groups, Children, Educators, State, Community groups,

Possible types of activities to develop

- Museum-focused learning activities for students and other community groups
- Collaboration-focused creative activities
- Effective ways of collaborating with different groups: How do we bring people in who don't feel that this museum belongs to them at all?
- How do we facilitate new interpretations of the museum?
- Reflections and suggestions on how we could inclusively develop this open access educational package?

Critical Pedagogy

bell hooks discusses the classroom as a source of constraint but also a potential source of liberation. She argues that teachers' use of control and power over students dulls the students' enthusiasm and teaches obedience to authority, "confin[ing] each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning." Hooks advocates that schools encourage students and teachers to transgress, and seeks ways to use collaboration to make learning more relaxing and exciting. She described teaching as "a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged".

(bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, 1994)

Gender

- Idea of biology as (not) destiny
- 'male' and 'female' bodies
- Butler prefers 'those historical and anthropological positions that understand gender as a relation among socially constituted subjects in specifiable contexts'. In other words, rather than being a fixed attribute in a person, gender should be seen as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times.
- But Butler argues that sex (male, female) is seen to cause gender (masculine, feminine) which is seen to cause desire (towards the other gender). This is seen as a kind of continuum. Butler's approach is to question the supposed links between these. She argues that gender and desire are flexible, free-floating and not 'caused' by other stable factors.
- Subjects of Sex, Gender, Desire
- Sex, sex, sex, and sex: Dealing with sex in the curriculum
- 'There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results.' (Gender Trouble, p. 25). In other words, gender is a performance; it's what you do at particular times, rather than a universal who you are.
- Gender performativity

Collaboration

- Collaboration vs participation vs facilitation vs mediation
- "In contrast to cooperation, collaboration is driven by complex realities rather than romantic notions of a common ground or commonality. It is an ambivalent process constituted by a set of paradoxical relationships between co-producers who affect each other." (Schneider, F. (2006). *Collaboration: The Dark Site of the Multitude*)
- Paulo Freire's pedagogical framework where "the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease(s) to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers" (Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. p.80).



For Brainstorming....

