

ruangrupa, Sarrum and Grafis Huru Hara, Gudskul, Documenta 15, Kassel

Redesigning Museums

The last forty years have been a great success for museums and for museum architects. Never have so many of these institutions been constructed in so many different places. Their popularity reflects the global expansion of tourism and the pressure for cities and towns to develop their attractions. The financialization of art has meant that as collectors and their collections have immeasurably expanded, so too must the provision of museums.

Zurich has three significant examples of this phenomenon; Museum Rietberg (Grazioli and Krischanitz 2007), the Löwenbräu Areal (Gigon Guyer 2014) and the Kunsthaus (Chipperfield 2020) Each was expanded and restructured in response to specific conditions, yet all are part of this general global tendency. Whilst museum extensions are always sold as being about making more of the collection accessible to a wider public (and thanks to the support of generous benefactors), in the last decade the critique of these platitudes has intensified. The continued elitism of most cultural institutions, both in terms of their staff and their audiences, the racism and sexism inherent in their collections and institutional structures, and the nefarious origins of their collections, are now impossible to avoid and museums themselves have acknowledged that things must change.

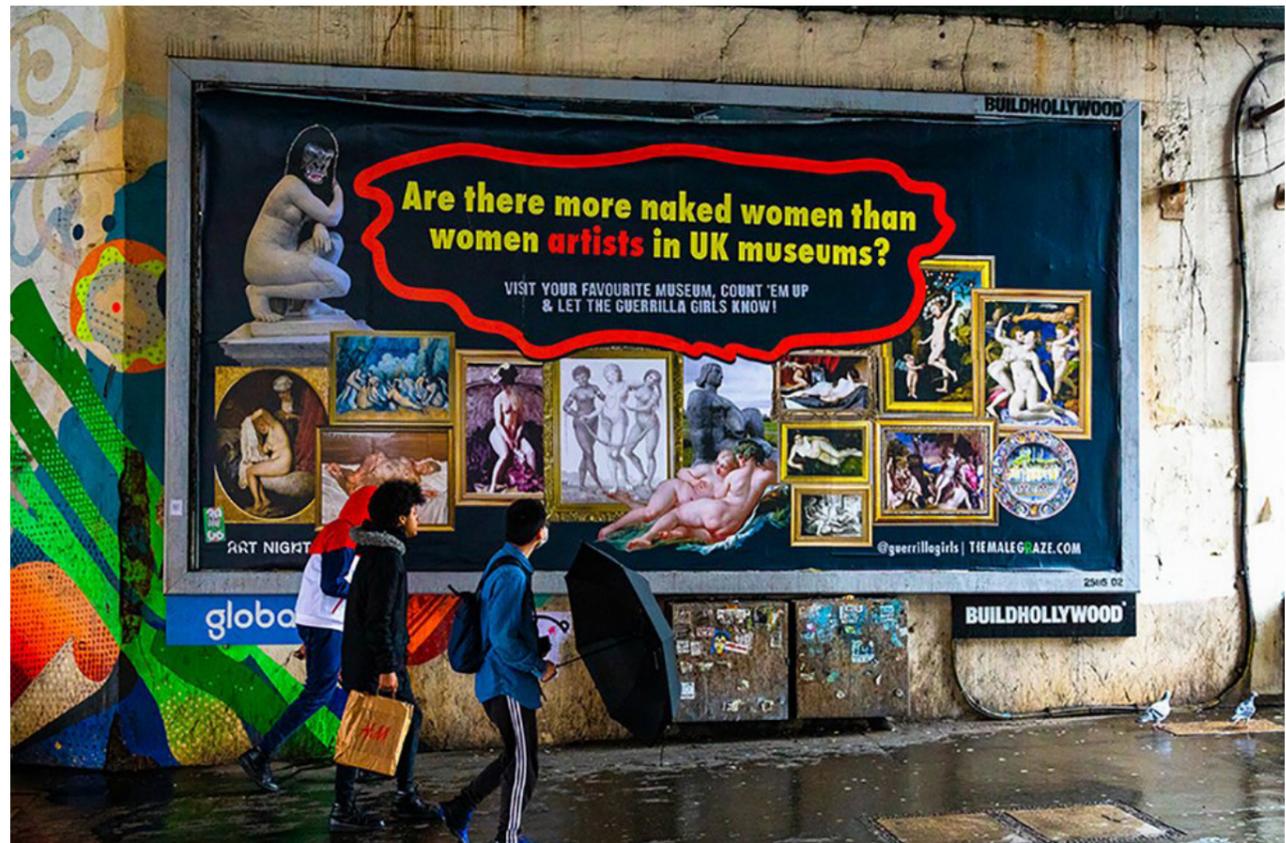
So, what can we do about a problem like museums?

We could just blow them up and start again, but that would not be very sustainable, and confronting historical problems is always more productive than erasing them. This semester we will redesign the museum, making projects that test the capacity of architecture to address historic bias in the content of museums, and social exclusion in their buildings. We will not embark on a search for the ideal museum but will rather closely engage with the trio of Zurich museums; talking to the people who run them, participating as visitors in their exhibitions and programmes. Guided by past and present disruptors in the art world, for example, the Guerrilla Girls (1985-), Group Material (1979-96), and ruangrupa (2000-) we will make concrete proposals to 'hack' both the organisation as well as the architecture of the museums. Our aim is to make projects where the museum and its collections more closely reflect and engage with the societies that they are a part of - with the community of Zurich in 2023.

Introduction: 19 September 2023, 9.30 am, location to be announced

The integrated discipline Construction is included in this course.

HS 2023, ETH Zürich, Studio Caruso
Emilie Appercé, Tibor Bielicky, Adam Caruso,
Claudio Schneider, Barbara Thüler



Guerrilla Girls, Billboard, London Bridge, 2021

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Group Material, Democracy: Education and Democracy, New York City, 1988

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