

Theme: LACMA: California Design: Living in a Modern Way  
Medium: Exhibition Design // Social Practice // Interactive-Art  
Course: Re-designing Modern Exhibition  
Instructor: Nina T. Becker

Modern design philosophy from the 1930's to the 1980's dictates that we apply advancements in technology and thought to increase the accessibility of art and design in every day living. This course will examine the legacy of this ethos in Southern California, asking, what does it mean to engage art in a modern way in Los Angeles? Together, we will re-imagine possibilities for viewing and interacting with art, specifically leveraging the unique qualities of Los Angeles and recent advancements in media and technology. Students will design their own innovative spaces for exhibition, working through the complete design process of research, ideation, and design presentation.

The structure of the course will combine hands-on instruction of modernist design aspirations, class exercises to accustom students to visually representing their ideas, and a final group project where students will design an innovative exhibition to be displayed at LACMA. We will begin by using Los Angeles's modern design marvels as our visual classroom and point of departure. Through instruction and observation of modernist design aspirations, we will investigate how these visions for the future can re-invigorate our contemporary experience with art. We will identify technological, cultural and geographic resources that are specific to Los Angeles. The students will break into groups of three, each addressing one type of innovation – technological, geographical, or conceptual.<sup>1</sup> Each of these groups will take the collective research from the initial third of the class to carry out the remainder of the design process, culminating in a design presentation that illustrates their proposed exhibition space or concept. The finished products will clearly illustrate each group's concept in a visually stimulating manner. As a contribution to the student exhibition at LACMA, the students' design projects will reflect a thoughtful examination of modern design and ideals exhibited in the concurrent show. Further, their projects will specifically utilize the exhibition space itself, the museum, as a relevant and stimulating context for presenting innovative – *modern* – proposals for engaging art. Through this course, students will be empowered with the developmental and technical skills to bring future ideas to fruition.

I am eager to use my professional training and experience educating young people to ensure this course fulfills its objectives. I hold a B.A. and professional experience in Architecture and Urbanism, and an M.F.A in Studio Art. In addition to my personal work, I am dedicated to making rigorous visual education accessible. I teach art to both youth and university-level students, most recently at the University of California, Irvine and the International Center for Photography youth outreach program in the Bronx, NY. My current project involves using a van-turned-pinhole-camera to instruct photography to youth in neighborhoods across the city of Los Angeles. Teaching this course will allow me to apply my own interests and expertise, in combination with an ongoing exhibition at LACMA, to empower students to create their own modern visions for engaging art in 21<sup>st</sup> century LA.

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<sup>1</sup> Technological innovation includes using mobile technology, bus TVs, or other technological advances; geographical innovation includes looking at new spaces, public and private, for interacting with art such as expanding traditional art centers to better reach the city's neighborhoods; conceptual innovation includes expanding exhibition methods to promote participatory art and other non-traditional cultural contributions.