

DRAFT SYLLABUS

“Finding the Lost Museum”

AMST2660 Projects in Public Humanities
Spring 2014

Steven Lubar and Mark Dion

Friday 1:30-3:30

Finding the Lost Museum will engage students and faculty from across disciplines at Brown and RISD in the research, contemplation and creative reinterpretation of the Jenks Museum, Brown’s 19th-century museum of natural history and anthropology. Students will conduct historical research, identify remaining specimens, study the work of institutional critique artists, and, working under the direction of Mark Dion, design and create an original installation commemorating the Jenks Museum in Rhode Island Hall.

Class schedule

We’ll meet as a group every other week to discuss readings, and overall organization of the project. Subcommittees will meet the alternate weeks to work on their parts of the project.

Subcommittees (tentative)

History exhibit
Jenks office re-creation
Contemporary artists remaking the museum

Catalog

Publicity/Social Media

Programs including opening)

Class schedule

January 20 (Monday)
1:00 Mark Dion meeting

January 24

First class. Update on progress to date. Organizational meeting. Decide on exhibition project subcommittee organization. Schedule, budget overview.

January 31

Read Sally Gregory Kohlstadt, "Museums on Campus," in *The American Development of Biology*, edited by Keith R. Benson, Jane Maienschein, and Ronald Rainger

Read J. Walter Wilson, "The Jenks Museum of Brown University," in *Books at Brown*, vol. 22, 1969

February 7

Subcommittee meetings

February 14

Read Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual life, 1876-1926*, chapters 1-3; or Stephen T. Asma, *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums*; or Richard Fortey, *Dry Storeroom No. 1: The Secret Life of the Natural History Museum*; or Robert Kohler, *All Creatures: Naturalists, Collectors, and Biodiversity, 1850-1950*.

February 17 and 18

Mark Dion visit

February 21

Subcommittee meetings

February 28

Jenksapalooza! Read from "Report on the Food of the Robin"; *Hunting in Florida*; Steele and Jenks, *A Popular Zoology*; his unpublished autobiography; Reuben Guild, *Memorial Address on the Late J.W.P. Jenks*. For context, read Dallas Lore Sharp, "A Bed in the Museum," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1935; and Alfred Russel Wallace, "American Museums: The Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University"

March 7

Subcommittee meetings (Mark Dion may be here)

March 14

Read Pat Morris *A History of Taxidermy: Art, Science and Bad Taste*, or Rachel Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* or Christopher Stoate, *Taxidermy: The Revival of a Natural Art*

March 21

Subcommittee meetings

March 28

Spring break

April 4

Readings on Mark Dion and other artists that use the history of natural history?

Read from catalogs of his shows. Bergit Arends, "Contemporary arts in the Natural History Museum London: symbiosis and disruption," *Jcom* 08(02) (2009); and articles here: <http://blog.art21.org/?s=dion&x=-817&y=-62>

Or: Artists and making:

Read *The Art of Critical Making: Rhode Island School of Design on Creative Practice*, ed. Rosanne Somerson

Or: Relational Aesthetics.

Read Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *OCTOBER* 110, Fall 2004, pp. 51–79 and Toni Ross, "Aesthetic autonomy and interdisciplinarity: a response to Nicolas Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics'," [Journal of Visual Art Practice](#) January 2006

April 11 – April 30

Building and Installation!

May 1 Exhibition opening (tentative)

Note: All readings, and more, are in the bibliography at https://www.zotero.org/groups/jenks_museum_of_brown_university/items Add more as you find them!

Restricted enrollment. Interested? Apply with a brief statement of interest and C.V. to lubar@brown.edu. If you're interested in working on creating work for the installation, but not taking the course, please let me know, and I'll be in touch.