

Fall 2022

MW 2-3:20 pm



Ann Gunter

318-0 Ancient Art and its Modern Classification and Display

Exhibiting Antiquity: The Culture and Politics of Display

How do institutions such as museums, along with other created contexts such as websites and archaeological sites developed as tourist destinations, shape and construct our notions of the past? How are these institutions enmeshed with broader cultural and political agendas regarding cultural identity and otherness, the formation of artistic canons, and even the concept of ancient art? This course explores modern strategies of collecting and display of material culture from ancient Egypt, the Middle East, Greece, and Rome, both in Europe and the United States and in their present-day homelands.

The course approaches the construction of ancient Mediterranean, Egyptian, and Near Eastern art through modes of reception over the past two centuries. By analyzing programs of collecting and display, it seeks to understand both the development of modern scholarship in ancient art and the intersection of institutional and scholarly programs. Topics examined include the historical development of modern display practices in public and private museums; notions of authenticity and identity; issues of cultural heritage and patrimony; temporary and “blockbuster” shows; virtual exhibitions and museums; and the archaeological site as a locus of display. Chicago-area museums will provide important resources for studying firsthand examples of temporary and long-term installations.

Required Textbooks: NA

Assessments: attendance, class participation, final project, readings, writing assignments

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