FIELD STUDIES

Originally with support from the Division of Art’s Nebula Project, Field Studies have become an important part of the spring quarter ART 590 class, Interdisciplinary Graduate Seminar in Contemporary Practices, which all first-year MFA students attend. The goal of Field Studies has been to give students real-world exposure to exemplary non-traditional arts practices and spaces in the art world beyond Seattle. Field Studies were led by Scott Lawrimore from 2013–2016. Emily Zimmerman began leading them in 2017.

2018: SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

The first weekend in May was the timing of this year’s group trip. On Friday afternoon, they visited Yerba Buena Center for the Arts to tour the Futurefarmers exhibition with YBCA staff and 3D4M Assistant Professor Michael Swaine, who is a member of Futurefarmers. They moved on to the San Francisco Art Institute in the evening to see the Diego Rivera room and attend an event. The next day, they visited the David Ireland House then went to Southern Exposure for a meeting with the Projects and Exhibitions Program Director. They then visited the CCA Wattis Institute and attended a closing reception at the Catherine Clark Gallery. On Sunday, they went to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and then had several hours to explore on their own before flying home.

2017: PORTLAND, OREGON

The group took their trip to Portland on the Friday through Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. During the first afternoon, they met with Sara Krajewski, The Robert and Mercedes Eichholz curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Portland Art Museum; Jeanine Jablonski at Fourteen30 Gallery; and Jessica Latham, Gallery Manager at Disjecta. On Saturday, they visited Elizabeth Leach Gallery, PDX Contemporary, Adams and Ollman Gallery, Melanie Flood Projects, and Upfor Gallery. Students had some free time to explore on the last day before meeting with Aaron Flint Jamison and Hope Svenson at Yale Union. This was followed by a visit to Mother Foucault’s Bookshop before heading home.

2016: VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

One of the great benefits of living or studying in Seattle is that we are just a short three-hour drive from our international neighbor to the north, Vancouver, BC. Although close in proximity, the two art scenes seemingly could not be further apart conceptually and pragmatically. Lawrimore sought to introduce students to this different mode of artist practice exemplified by the diverse cultural producers and spaces of Vancouver in an attempt to prove how the same kind of state-funded, DIY spirit could be achievable and applicable to forward-thinking practices in the States. To that end, the group was fortunate to have private conversations with curators at artist-initiated exhibition spaces such as Pablo de Ocampo at Western Front and Erik F. Hood at ArtSpeak. In an attempt to connect with specific admirable art practices, the group conducted three wide-ranging studio visits with diverse artists such as Matt Browning (American, MFA student at UBC), Fabiola Carranza (Costa Rican-Canadian artist-in-residence at the Contemporary Art Gallery), and Babak Golkar (Iranian-Canadian). We also had an informal session with Raymond Boisjoly (Haida/Quebecois artist and Aboriginal Studies Assistant Professor at Emily Carr University). Taking full advantage of all that Vancouver had to offer, students were able to visit numerous commercial galleries; the inspiring Museum of Anthropology; and the massive, encyclopedic exhibition, Mash-Up, at the Vancouver Art Gallery. They also had a quiet, journaling morning at Jerry Pethick’s public sculpture, Time Top, and attended a rare screening of the four-hour masterpiece, El Norte—End of History, by Filipino filmmaker Lav Diaz.

2015: NEW YORK CITY

The group hit the ground running after taking the red-eye from Seattle, arriving at the Museum of Modern
Art at 9:30am for a special members-only preview of the Jacob Lawrence exhibition of all sixty paintings from his Migration Series. Over the next two days in Manhattan, walking shoes were worn out taking in the galleries in Chelsea and the Lower East Side (Hauser & Wirth, David Zwirner, Gagosian, Matthew Marks, Mary Boone, Barbara Gladstone, Tonya Bondaker, Marian Goodman, Paula Cooper, Casey Caplan, Canada, Mitchel Innes & Nash, 303, Sperone Westwater, Miguel Abreu, Reena Saplings, Simon Preston, Participant Inc., Laurel Gitlen, Derek Eller, Lisa Cooley, et al.); hitting must-see museums such as the Guggenheim, Met, Jewish Museum, New Museum (with a special tour of the Triennial with curator Sara O’Keefe), MoMA PS1, and the Studio Museum in Harlem (with a special, late-night tour led by new curator Amanda Hunt); and trekking to artist-run and alternative spaces such as Creative Time, the Swiss Institute, and Artists Space (especially noteworthy for its impressive Hito Steyerl exhibition). While the art scene in Manhattan is always impressive, if not daunting, a highlight of the trip was the day the group spent traveling up the Hudson to Dia Beacon and Storm King Sculpture Park. This outing proved there’s nothing better to promote camaraderie between peers than being crammed in a van together arguing about and celebrating all the challenging art you saw together.

2014: SAN ANTONIO + MARFA, TEXAS

Additional private funding allowed for a more distant Field Study. The trip began in San Antonio, where students met with representatives of Blue Star Contemporary, an alternative exhibition space and residency program; received a private tour of Artpace, one of the world’s most important artist-in-residency programs; and visited the newly-opened Space, a gallery dedicated to the private collection of arts philanthropist, Linda Pace (who also founded Artpace). They then drove the four hundred miles to Marfa, where the group spent three days touring and meeting representatives of the Chinati Foundation, the Judd Foundation, and Ballroom Marfa. The comprehensive, all-day private tours at the Chinati and Judd Foundations afforded the students a behind-the-scenes look at the home, studios, library, exhibition spaces, and private collection of Donald Judd as well as the permanently installed works of Judd, Dan Flavin, Carl Andre, John Chamberlain, Roni Horn, Ilya Kabakov, Claes Oldenburg & Coosje van Bruggen, and John Wesley. The trip also included studio visits with artists living and working in Marfa, tours of commercial galleries and the town’s great book store/gallery, in addition to requisite visits to every food truck in the city limits, Prada Marfa just outside of town, and the nearby McDonald Observatory for its popular Star Party. The return trip to San Antonio included a dip in the Amistad reservoir, which lies on the border of the USA and Mexico, a search for utopia (Utopia, TX), and a tour of the Alamo. See a few pictures and read student comments about this Field Study in this news post.

2013: PORTLAND, OREGON

Students met with internationally renowned artist, Aaron Flint Jamison, and got a private tour of Yale Union, an independent exhibition and programming space that he helped establish. Students had a lively conversation with Kristan Kennedy about the two sides of her practice—discussing her painting exhibition at Fourteen30 Contemporary and learning about her role as Visual Arts Curator for the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) and its annual TBA Festival. Students also received a tour of a private-collection-cum-public-exhibition-space, Lumber Room, from Travis Fitzgerald, a docent for the space and an artist involved in the ambitious alternative gallery, Appendix Project Space. This Field Study also included visits to traditional galleries and museums (PDX, Elizabeth Leach, Blue Sky, and the Portland Art Museum), one non-traditional museum (Portland Museum of Modern Art, located in the basement of a record store), college exhibition spaces (Pacific Northwest College of Art and Portland State University), and students were able to see the graduating MFA show from the University of Oregon at Disjecta, another vital alternative exhibition space for the region.