

# A Producer Prepares: Curation, Ethics, and the Entrepreneurial Practice of Arts Programming

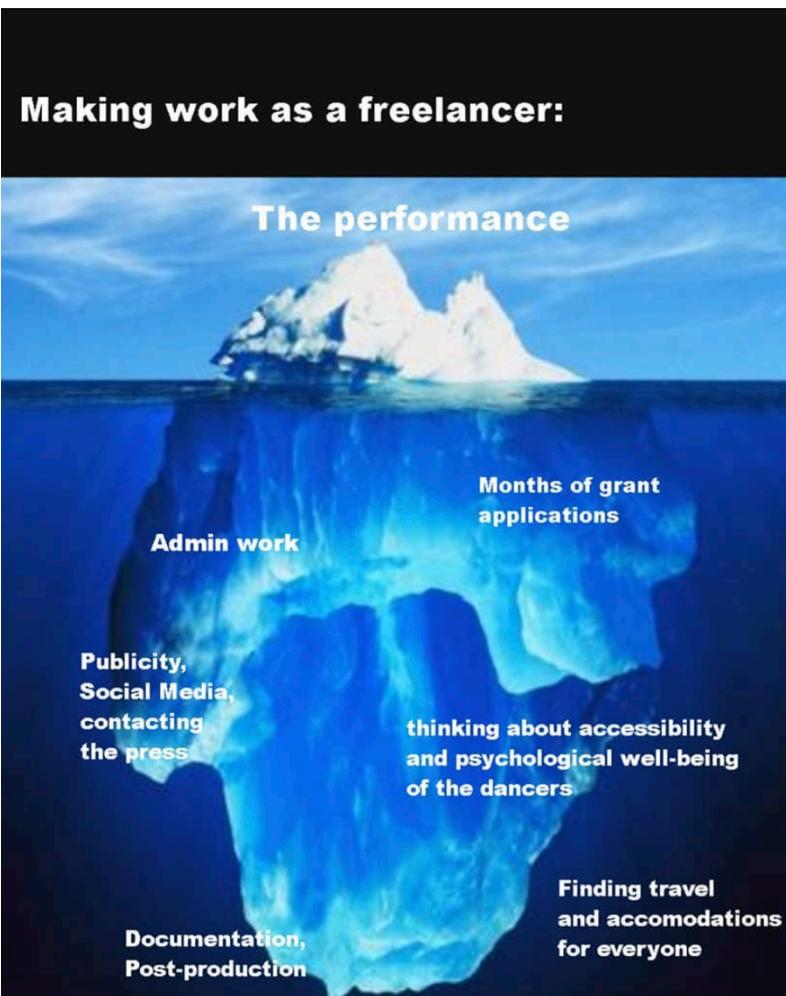
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Location: The Granoff

Office Hours: [By appointment only](#)

Note: Syllabus is \*categorically  
guaranteed\* to change.

“Work, work, work, work  
Work, work, work, work  
Work (work), work (work), work, work  
Work (work), work, work (work), work.”  
- Britney Spears, *Work Bitch*

“Are we a lost generation of our people?  
Add us to equations but they'll never make us equal  
She who writes the movie owns the script and the sequel  
So why ain't the stealing of my rights made illegal?”  
- Janelle Monae, *Q.U.E.E.N.*



“The anthropocene is melting my practice.” by [@somatic\\_based\\_content\\_only](#).

## So before *\*literally\** anything else:

To call the process here, we're still in the midst of a horrific global pandemic. I know you know this. But I want to acknowledge its traumatizing effects on you, and me, and everyone else taking this class. If you tell me that you're having trouble, there will be no judgement on my part.

You should know that:

- 1) Under no circumstances should you feel obligated to share personal information about your health, or anything else, at any time.
- 2) I am happy to discuss matters with you by appointment and over office hours. I'm here to be a resource and facilitator for you, though I should also note that as a professor, I am designated a "[Responsible Employee](#)" and am required to report "details of incidents or suspected incidents of sexual and gender-based harm or discrimination."
- 3) If I can't help you, or be of use or service, chances are good I can connect you to a university resource or person who *can* help, or be of use or service.
- 4) If you need extra time on anything, or help in some fashion, or need to miss class, just let me know. We'll figure it out. You got this.

## Course Description

This course introduces students to the complex relationships between cultural entrepreneurs, buyers, sellers, producers, managers, audiences and artists. Through readings, guest speakers and case studies, with particular emphasis on emerging media technologies, business practice and live art administration, "A Producer Prepares" will arm students with the critical, historical, managerial and curatorial tools necessary to produce work in the contemporary cultural economy. This class seeks to situate arts curation and production within histories of cultural practice, management and technology, and ultimately aims to endow student producers with the tactical, critical and strategic acumen necessary to thrive in an arts sector in flux.

## Class Structure:

This course meets once per week, with time allocated for media viewings, workshops and discussion. Please note that this is a reading intensive course, with a typical weekly reading load of over 100 pages. Over 12 weeks, participants will spend 2.5 hours per week in class (25 hours total). Required readings and collaborative project work is expected to take approximately 7.5 hours per week (115 hours). Additionally, researching and composing weekly responses and individual presentations is estimated at a total of approximately 50 hours over the course of the term.

## Projects and Grading:

### **Participation: 30%**

Participants are expected to complete all readings in a timely fashion, actively listen during lectures and presentations, ask questions and be fully engaged in class discussion and workshops. Classroom contributions can be in the form of posing critical questions to advance class conversation, sharing of key passages, responding to instructor prompts, or other means to be determined.

### **Group Presentations: 20%**

Groups will receive a shared grade and feedback on the basis of the effectiveness of their presentation, and facilitation of class discussion.

### **Individual Presentation: 30%**

Individuals will receive a grade and feedback on the basis of the effectiveness of their presentation, and facilitation of class discussion.

### **Weekly Responses: 20%**

## Absence and Presence:

This course will take place amidst an aforementioned global pandemic. At present, it is scheduled to take place synchronously and in-person. Asynchronous engagement with course material is absolutely fine, pending an individualized, agreed-upon plan and continuous communication with the instructor. While on a Zoom call, video participation is optional. Absence from scheduled zoom calls or class time will not result in a lowered grade, but lack of overall engagement and tardiness submitting course materials will. Please also be prepared for the possibility of class to move online with or without advance notice.

## Individual Presentations:

Course participants will receive class time to present on their work (through textual, critical, creative, compositional, discursive means or otherwise) and facilitate discussion in a fashion that is useful or interesting to them. This can take the form of an art crit, presentation of pre-published draft language for group consideration, a collaborative making of some thing, or pretty much anything else. Participants should review intended presentation plans over office hours in advance of presenting. Plan on presenting for no more than fifteen minutes, including ensuing facilitation of class conversation.

## Group Presentations:

Participants will be assigned to small groups to present on weekly texts and media. Groups should review draft presentation plans over office hours. These presentations must include:

- Contextual overview of agreed upon materials, including historical frame, authorial biodata, and cultural and theoretical usages.
- Analysis germane to that week's readings, emphasizing the means by which relevant materials were made, how they work, intended usages and creative applications.
- A group activity that explores a performative, formal, poetic, computational or choreographic vector pertaining to the week's readings and media.
- Facilitation of classroom discussion.

It is recommended that participants research varying modes of presentation and facilitation, like [this](#), for example. Note that the individuals you are facilitating may be connected to Zoom calls via audio only or audio + video. Plan on presenting for not more than 15 minutes, including the group's ensuing facilitation of class conversation.

## Weekly Responses to Readings

Each week, please upload a some sort of internally coherent response to Canvas by 5pm the evening before class. This response can take the form of any sort of media (visual, audio, textual, notational, archival) but should gesture towards questions that catalyze class discussion. If you are presenting that week, you do not need to compose an additional weekly response. For a sample of a reading response, see [here](#).

## Names and Pronouns:

If you would like to be called by a different name or wish to be referred to by a different gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please let me know. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by their names and pronouns in class.

## Academic Integrity:

Breaches of academic integrity will not be tolerated and will be reported immediately. Infringement on the academic code entails penalties ranging from reprimand to suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University. Please familiarize yourself with [Brown's Academic Code](#).

## Accessibility and Accommodations:

If you require any special accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible so that your learning needs can be met. To ensure accommodations, students are advised to contact the [Student and Employee Accessibility Services](#).

## Email:

You are welcome to email me with questions and concerns. Please note that requests or questions regarding scheduled assignments received after 5pm the night before that assignment is due may not receive a response. If you've read this far into the syllabus, email me your favorite animated gif by the second class.

## Media:

Media will be made available online, in the library, and by appointment, TBD. If you are unable to access any assigned material, let me know and we'll troubleshoot / workaround together. Additionally, for like, fun, I reserved a ton of \*excellent\* media that illustrate the reception of curation and producing within the larger cultural sector. Interested in dance? Check out *Frances Ha*. Theater world? Check out *Slings and Arrows*. Want something that's light and funny and super gay that has basically nothing to do with class at all? Check out *She Ra*. It's all on OCRA for your convenience.

Please also note that there are a TON of excellent films on Netflix that I'm not able to assign due to platform copy protection and our library's inability to negotiate access. For example, [Forty Year Old Version](#) is \*phenomenally written\* and \*painfully relevant\* to this class, but because it's only available via Netflix I can't assign it. So while for legal reasons I can't <officially> encourage you to, I dunno, organize among your classmates to use Zoom to simulcast copy protected material, and I can't <officially> suggest that you use [Tor](#) to access international media torrents, quis custodiet ipsos custodes et cetera.

## Required Texts:

Each participant will be required to acquire the following books. Additional texts will be assigned on the basis of individual projects and class interests.

Note that if your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes the Book/Course Material Support Pilot Program (BCMS), concerns or questions about the cost of books and course materials can be addressed to [bcms@brown.edu](mailto:bcms@brown.edu). For all other concerns related to non-tuition course-related expenses, whether or not your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes BCMS, please visit the Academic Emergency Fund in E-GAP (within the umbrella of "E-Gap Funds" in UFunds) to determine options for financing these costs, while ensuring your privacy.

If cost of / access to textbooks remains an issue, please let me know, and I will literally wield whatever professorial clout I have to get you what you need.

Note that there are also more books available on OCRA than are assigned. Looking to learn from the stories of other Producers? Check out "[The Producers: Alchemists of the Impossible](#)." Interested in Indigenous perspectives on philanthropy and finance? Read "[Decolonizing Wealth, Second Edition: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance](#)."

Apropos a conversation about access- some of these texts deal with questions of Theory with a capital 'T'. This entails a specialized sort of reading and writing that doesn't come like, naturally, and requires practice. We can discuss in class or office hours, but as a starting point, [check out this excellent twitter thread on the subject](#) by kickass queer scholar, Dr. Roy Pérez.

## Books:

- Baumol, Willam J. and Bowen, William G. "Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma." Hartford: Twentieth Century Fund, 1966. [AVAILABLE IN COURSE RESERVES]
- Costanza-Chock, Sasha. "Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need." Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020.
- Davida, Dena, et al. "Curating Live Arts: Critical Perspectives, Essays and Conversations on Theory and Practice." New York: Berghahn, 2019.
- Fisher, Anna Watkins. "The Play in the System: the Art of Parasitical Resistance." Duke University Press, 2020.
- hooks, bell. "Teaching to Transgress." Milton Park: Routledge, 2017.

- Horowitz, Noah. "Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market." Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Incite! Women of Color Against Violence. "The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex." Cambridge: South End Press, 2007. [AVAILABLE IN COURSE RESERVES]
- Kaiser, Michael M. "The Art of the Turnaround: Creating and Maintaining Healthy Arts Organizations." Lebanon: Brandeis University Press, 2008.
- Muñoz José Esteban. "Cruising Utopia: the Then and There of Queer Futurity." New York University Press, 2019.
- Russell, Legacy. "Glitch Feminism: a Manifesto." Verso, 2020.

#### Articles:

- "[4chan Users Launch Campaign to Shut Down DIY Venues in Aftermath of Oakland Fire](#)" by Gabrielle Canon, Vice.com.
- "[Advice for Artists Whose Parents Want Them to Be Engineers](#)" by Viet Thanh Nguyen, The New York Times.
- "[America's hollow middle class](#)" by Anne Helen Petersen.
- "[Art will never die. So why does it need philanthropy?](#)" by Elizabeth Alexander, Big Think.
- "[Author Roxane Gay, Who Loves Art But Dislikes the Art World, Has Some Advice for Galleries: 'Stop Being Terrible'](#)" by Noon Brara.
- "[A Brief Guide on How to Get Your Creative Work Seen, Funded, and Supported](#)" by Eva Recinos.
- "[Building the Middle Class of the Creator Economy](#)"
- "[Commensurate with Experience](#)" by Benjamin Akio Kimitch.
- "[Contracts for Artists: What They Are, When to Use Them, How They Can Protect You](#)" by Nina Berman.
- "[Elite philanthropy mainly self-serving](#)" by Zipporah Osei.
- "[EXCLUSIVE: The Sacklers' group chat of pain](#)" by Anand Giridharadas.
- "[Ghost Ship Trial: Jury Acquits Defendant but Can't Reach Verdict on Another](#)," by Thomas Fuller, Lauren Hepler and Tim Arango, The New York Times.
- "[Having a Coke With You](#)" by Frank O'Hara.
- "[He Helped Build an Artists' Utopia. Now He Faces Trial for 36 Deaths There](#)" by Elizabeth Weil, The New York Times.
- "[How White People Conquered the Non-Profit Industry](#)" by Anastasia Tomkin, Medium.
- "[Letter: Criticizing Kanders donations is self-righteous, misses point](#)" by Hugh Warrender, Brown Daily Herald.
- "[Letter: If the Sacklers must go, so too must Kanders](#)" by Abdullah Shhipar, Brown Daily Herald.
- "[Letter: Meyer's '17 column is offensive](#)" by Marty Granoff, Brown Daily Herald.
- "[Letter: Philanthropy comes in many forms](#)" by Thomas Tisch, Brown Daily Herald.
- "[Letter: Tisch '76 P'18 P'20 misses the mark](#)" by Margaret Shea, Brown Daily Herald.
- "[Letter: 'Untitled \(Lamp/Bear\)' has never been uglier](#)" by Margaret Shea, Brown Daily Herald.
- "[Maybe There's More Than Enough: Escaping the Scarcity Mindset in Nonprofit Theatre](#)" by Alix Rosenfeld, Howlround.
- "[Meyer '17: Lamp/Bear sucks](#)" by Daniel Meter, Brown Daily Herald.
- "[Million Dollar Voice](#)," by Zach Finkelstein, The Middle-class Artist.
- "[Most Art Gallery Assistants Earn Far Less Than a Living Wage, According to Our Exclusive Dealer Salary Survey](#)" by Zachary Small & Eileen Kinsella.
- "[Museums Are Never Neutral](#)" by Laura Raicovich, Frieze.
- "[Oakland Will Pay \\$32.7 Million to Settle Ghost Ship Fire Lawsuits](#)" by Bryan Pietsch, The New York Times.
- "[Philanthropic Monsters](#)" by Sarah Jones.
- "[Philanthropists Bench Women of Color, the M.V.P.s of Social Change](#)" by Vanessa Daniel.
- "[Statistical Fallacy of Sampling on the Dependent Variable](#)" by Arvind Narayanan.
- "[Study Finds Artists Become Famous through Their Friends, Not the Originality of Their Work](#)" by Casey Lesser.
- "[STRIKE MoMA](#)" by StrikeMOMA Working Group, International Imagination of Anti-National Anti-Imperialist Feelings (IIAAF).
- "[The Artists vs. the Flea Theater: 'We Will Burn It All Down'](#)" by Helen Shaw.
- "[Theater Artists of Color Enumerate Demands for Change](#)" by Michael Paulson, The New York Times.
- "[The Flea Theater Conflict Raises Questions of Equity and Exploitation](#)" by Diep Tran.
- "[The Oakland Fire: What Happened Inside the Ghost Ship](#)," by Ford Fessenden and Anjali Singhvi, The New York Times.

- "[These Drama Students Trained for Years. Then Theater Vanished](#)" by Michael Paulson, The New York Times.
- "[The Winner-Take-All Marketplace](#)" by Robert Frank, Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.
- "[We're Finally Starting to Revolt Against the Cult of Ambition](#)" by Kelli María Kordecki, The New York Times.
- "[What Kind of Job is Best to Support Your Art?](#)" by Nina Berman.
- "[What They Don't Tell You About Money](#)" by Lyz Lenz.
- "[Where is the Vision? A Future Without Artistic Directors](#)" by Regina Victor, Rescripted.
- "[Where next for museums? Four key takeaways from Louvre Abu Dhabi symposium on the post-pandemic future](#)" with Twitter commentary by [Kevin Murphy](#).
- "[Why Are Young People Pretending to Love Work?](#)" by Erin Griffith, The New York Times.
- "[Why So Many Organizations Stay White](#)" by Victor Ray, Harvard Business Review.
- "[Working Less Is a Matter of Life and Death](#)" by The Editorial Board, The New York Times.

#### Online Resources:

- @decolonizethisplace "[A nonprofit](#)"
- "[Artist Producer Resource](#)"
- "[Business Deductions](#)" by Amy Smith
- "[Creating New Futures](#)"
- "[Master Budget Template](#)" by Keira Chang.
- "[Pishke Business](#)"
- "[Ruthless Root Vegetables](#)"
- "[Single Project Template](#)" by Keira Chang.
- "[The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement](#)" by Bob Projansky.
- "[The Sunk Cost Fallacy](#)"
- "[Valuing Your Time](#)" by Amy Smith.
- "[We See You, White American Theater](#)"

#### Week to Week Schedule:

Readings and media listed under each heading are expected to be completed for that day. Be ready to discuss in class.

#### Class #1 // 9.8.21: *Introduction Slash WTF Are We Doing Here*

*What are we doing here? How does this work? (Note: articles are listed in suggested reading order)*

Readings to be completed before class:

- "[These Drama Students Trained for Years. Then Theater Vanished](#)"
- "[Advice for Artists Whose Parents Want Them to Be Engineers](#)"
- "[A Brief Guide on How to Get Your Creative Work Seen, Funded, and Supported](#)"
- "[What Kind of Job is Best to Support Your Art?](#)"
- "[Theater Artists of Color Enumerate Demands for Change](#)"
- "[We See You, White American Theater](#)"
- "[Where is the Vision? A Future Without Artistic Directors](#)"

#### Class #2 // 9.15.21: *IT'S A TRAP!!*

In class: Please [sign up here for one office hours slot per month](#), and [sign up here for group facilitation slots](#). Check out [this list](#) of podcasts, listservs, and Twitter handles to follow.

- From [The Revolution Will Not Be Funded](#):

PS: One of the founders of INCITE! is Dr. Andrea Smith, who has been revealed to have faked her Cherokee ancestry. [It's a complicated story](#) and important context for this week's readings.

- (-) "Introduction"
- (-) "The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex"
- (-) "Democratizing American Philanthropy"
- (-) "Non-Profits and the Autonomous Grassroots"
- "[How White People Conquered the Non-Profit Industry](#)"
- "[Philanthropists Bench Women of Color, the M.V.P.s of Social Change](#)"
- "[Ruthless Root Vegetables](#)"
- @decolonizethisplace "[A nonprofit](#)"

### Class #3 // 9.22.21: *This Is How We Do It*

- From [Design Justice](#):
- (-) "Acknowledgments"
- (-) "Preface"
- (-) "Introduction"
- (-) "Design Values"
- (-) "Design Narratives"
- (-) "Directions for Future Work"

### Class #4 // 9.29.21: *Follow the Money*

Readings:

- From [Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma](#):
- (-) "Introduction"
- "[Art will never die. So why does it need philanthropy?](#)"
- "[The Winner-Take-All Marketplace](#)"
- "[The Sunk Cost Fallacy](#)"
- "[Statistical Fallacy of Sampling on the Dependent Variable](#)"
- "[Study Finds Artists Become Famous through Their Friends, Not the Originality of Their Work](#)"

Media:

- "[Pishke Business](#)"

### Class #5 // 10.6.21: *All Yesterday's Parties*

Readings:

- [The Art of the Turnaround](#)
- "[The Oakland Fire: What Happened Inside the Ghost Ship](#)"
- "[He Helped Build an Artists' Utopia. Now He Faces Trial for 36 Deaths There](#)"
- "[Oakland Will Pay \\$32.7 Million to Settle Ghost Ship Fire Lawsuits](#)"
- "[Ghost Ship Trial: Jury Acquits Defendant but Can't Reach Verdict on Another](#)"
- "[4chan Users Launch Campaign to Shut Down DIY Venues in Aftermath of Oakland Fire](#)"

### Class #6 // 10.13.21: *It Gets Better Feat. Madeline Greenberg*

Readings:

- [Cruising Utopia](#):
- (-) Introduction
- "[Having a Coke with You](#)"
- "[Working Less Is a Matter of Life and Death](#)"
- "[Maybe There's More Than Enough: Escaping the Scarcity Mindset in Nonprofit Theatre](#)"
- "[Why Are Young People Pretending to Love Work?](#)"

- [“We’re Finally Starting to Revolt Against the Cult of Ambition”](#)

### Class #7 // 10.20.21: *The Big Money Day Feat. Amy Smith*

- In-class: Anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-hegemonic, libratory financial practices. Don’t miss.

#### Readings:

- [“America’s hollow middle class”](#)
- [“What They Don’t Tell You About Money”](#)
- [“Building the Middle Class of the Creator Economy”](#)
- [“Million Dollar Voice”](#)
- [“Contracts for Artists: What They Are, When to Use Them, How They Can Protect You”](#)
- [“Creating New Futures, Phase 1 and Phase 2 Documents”](#)
- [“Why So Many Organizations Stay White”](#)
- [“Artist Producer Resource”](#)
- [“Business Deductions”](#) by Amy Smith
- [“Master Budget Template”](#) by Keira Chang.
- [“Single Project Template”](#) by Keira Chang.
- [“The Artist’s Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement”](#) by Bob Projansky.
- [“Valuing Your Time”](#) by Amy Smith.

### Class #8 // 10.27.21: *Curatorial Approaches to Capitalist Metastasis*

Note: So this course is shaped by intersectional feminist approaches to technology, embodiment, surveillance and capitalism. A text that is intentionally \*not\* assigned is Shoshana Zuboff’s [The Age of Surveillance Capitalism](#). It’s an important book on a zeitgeist-y level, but ignores surveillance studies as a field and makes the argument that Surveillance Capitalism is like, the wrong capitalism, I guess? And what we really need is a better, different, new-and-improved capitalism. Which is bananas. Anyway. Read the book if you have the time and the stomach, but probably simpler to listen to this artful podcast takedown, [“Zuboff is a PSYOP”](#) and read Evgeny Morozov’s incredible, [“Capitalism’s New Clothes.”](#)

#### Readings:

- [Glitch Feminism](#):
- (-) TBD

### Class #9 // 11.3.21: *Art, Live! Feat. Andrew Schneider*

#### Readings:

- From [Curating Live Arts](#):
- (-) “Prologue”
- (-) “A Collective Introduction”
- (-) “Chapter One”
- (-) “Chapter Seven”
- (-) “Chapter Eight”
- (-) “Chapter Nine”
- (-) “Chapter Thirteen”
- (-) “Chapter Thirty Seven”
- (-) “Epilogue”

### Class #10 // 11.10.21: *Close to Home*

#### Readings:

- From [Teaching to Transgress](#)

- (-) TBD
- "[Meyer '17: Lamp/Bear sucks](#)"
- "[Letter: Meyer's '17 column is offensive](#)"
- "[Letter: Philanthropy comes in many forms](#)"
- "[Letter: Tisch '76 P'18 P'20 misses the mark](#)"
- "[Letter: 'Untitled \(Lamp/Bear\)' has never been uglier](#)"
- "[Museums Are Never Neutral](#)"
- "[Author Roxane Gay, Who Loves Art But Dislikes the Art World, Has Some Advice for Galleries: 'Stop Being Terrible'](#)"
- "[Where next for museums? Four key takeaways from Louvre Abu Dhabi symposium on the post-pandemic future](#)" with Twitter commentary by [Kevin Murphy](#).

## Class #11 // 11.17.21: *Blow Shit Up With Love Slash Hire These Nerds Expo!*

Readings:

- "[The Artists vs. the Flea Theater: 'We Will Burn It All Down'](#)"
- "[The Flea Theater Conflict Raises Questions of Equity and Exploitation](#)"
- "[EXCLUSIVE: The Sacklers' group chat of pain](#)"
- "[Letter: If the Sacklers must go, so too must Kanders](#)"
- "[Letter: Criticizing Kanders donations is self-righteous, misses point](#)"
- "[Elite philanthropy mainly self-serving](#)"
- "[Philanthropic Monsters](#)"
- "[STRIKE MoMA](#)"
- "[Most Art Gallery Assistants Earn Far Less Than a Living Wage, According to Our Exclusive Dealer Salary Survey](#)"
- "[Commensurate with Experience](#)"

## Class #12 // 12.1.21: *What to do / What do we do*

Readings:

- From [The Play in the System](#):
- (-) "Introduction: Toward a Theory of Parasitical Resistance"
- (-) "Interlude: Thresholds of Accommodation"
- (-) "Chapter 1: User Be Used: Leveraging the Coercive Hospitality of Corporate Platforms"
- (-) "Chapter 3: Hangers-On: Chris Kraus's Parasitical Feminism"
- (-) "Chapter 4: A Seat at the Table: Feminist Performance Art's Institutional Absorption and Parasitical Legacies"
- (-) "Acknowledgments"

Final Questions:

- What did you find most valuable in this class?