MA IN MODERN ART: CRITICAL AND CURATORIAL STUDIES
MASTERS THESIS APPLICATION FORM

___________________________________________           ______________________
NAME       EMAIL

Name of Faculty Advisor:_______________________________________

Signature of Faculty Advisor:________________________________________Date:______________________

Title of the Thesis:_______________________________________________________________________________

Begin Thesis: (Circle one)  fall  spring  Year:_______________

Thesis Option: (Circle one)  Written  Exhibition (Specify virtual or actual)

Please attach a proposal (400 words + bibliography) outlining the subject, goals, and methodology/curatorial strategy of the Thesis.

*If pursuing an actual exhibition, please include a detailed budget including all expenses (see below). Depending on available funds, the Department awards up to $1,000.00 for individual thesis exhibition projects. The exhibition must take place during the final academic year of study or within 3 months of graduation.

THE FINE PRINT FOR ALL THESES:

Your topic and advisor are approved only when a faculty member signs the form, thereby agreeing to be your advisor. Note that this form is only an application form, and therefore any faculty member to whom it is submitted may either decline to be your advisor or require that you resubmit your proposal with suggested changes before agreeing to sign this form.

Students should begin formulating their thesis topic and meeting with faculty in the semester prior to the semester in which they intend to begin researching their thesis. During the summer or winter breaks (according to thesis start date), students should prepare a thesis proposal to attach to this form and submit the form and proposal to the Graduate Coordinator on the designated deadline, which is normally during the first week of classes in the semester in which they intend to begin research. The forms will be distributed to the appropriate faculty members for review. Students should contact their intended advisors during the first two weeks of classes to discuss their proposal. In some cases faculty members may choose to contact students directly regarding their proposals and to schedule appointments. The Graduate Coordinator will make students aware of individual faculty members who wish to contact students rather than be contacted by students. If you are unsure of your advisor’s wishes, please contact the Graduate Coordinator.

All students should remember that AHIS G9900 “MA Thesis” is a required course that must be registered for in the first and second semesters during which the thesis is completed. When planning your courses, it is imperative that you remember to choose a registration category that permits you to register for the Thesis course. In most cases, students will not have confirmation of their advisor until after the change of program period, and so the department will register students for the appropriate thesis section.

Begin the thesis process early! Any student who does not have a confirmed advisor and topic by the fourth week of the first semester of the thesis should consider putting off their thesis until the following semester. The department does not advise students to proceed with research and writing until they have a confirmed advisor as the thesis cannot be read or approved without one.
Written Thesis guidelines

Students produce a written thesis based on a topic of their choosing. The length of the written MA thesis may vary according to the methodological approach and the subject matter involved. Most theses will be 40-100 pages, including images and bibliography. The style of the thesis need not conform to the requirements of the Columbia University dissertation office. A consistent and recognized format must be employed, however, especially with regard to citations and footnotes. Students are advised to employ such style as is standard for art history journals and seminar papers. Illustrations should be of excellent quality. Expectations vary between advisors; therefore it is imperative to discuss specific formal and organizational requirements with advisors early in the writing process.

Thesis Exhibition guidelines

Virtual Exhibition: Students may submit a virtual exhibition, either on paper or as a web design. The thesis exhibition should include the project title and a lengthy essay (similar in scope to a catalogue essay) that describes the exhibition’s main theme and/or concept. You may also consider, for example, how the exhibition engages with contemporary curatorial strategies; how your exhibition intervenes in a particular understanding of modern and contemporary art; and whether it develops upon previous exhibitions that broach similar issues. Describe the exhibition’s overall size and scope, including any information about design presentation or aspirations. You may provide a complete object checklist with the number and type of objects, images, mechanical or electronic interactive elements, and audio-visual components. The thesis exhibition may also provide a potential list of programs, publications, lectures or other accompanying materials. Expectations vary between advisors; therefore it is imperative to discuss specific formal and organizational requirements with advisors early in the conceptualization and writing process.

Actual Exhibition: Students may submit exhibition proposals to various spaces on- and off-campus. When a proposal has been accepted, precise dates are decided in consultation with the curator(s) and the venue’s staff. An installation plan, label texts, wall texts, and a catalogue are to be included in the actual exhibition thesis project. Students can work on exhibition projects in small groups; in that case the faculty advisor determines how to evaluate each student’s contribution.

*The Department has limited funds available to put toward actual exhibition projects. If you wish to request funds from the Department for publicity or refreshments, etc. you must submit a detailed show description and budget, which includes all revenue and costs, even those for which you are not seeking assistance. If you are working with a group, all members’ names must be on the budget proposal, though each group only needs to submit one copy. All materials must be attached to this form by the designated deadline.

A sample budget is available in hard copy from the department or by email from the Graduate Coordinator.