

To: Re-Shuffle Contributors

From: First-Year Graduate Students at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College
(http://www.bard.edu/ccs/ReShuffle/ReShuffle_Catalogue.pdf)

Are museums necessary? Is the museum still a relevant cultural institution?
Do museums support or weaken contemporary practices? Can they be altered, replaced, reinvented? How might a museum behave as it transits from one context to the next, mutating in relation to distinct situations? How would transience affect the process of collecting? Or, is an itinerant museum problematic, a contradiction in terms, a paradox waiting to happen?

We are calling for a different type of museum—specifically, an itinerant museum. A museum that is mobile, flexible and spontaneous rather than stationary, responsive as opposed to didactic, that goes beyond merely an interdisciplinary restructuring of institutional compartmentalization. Could or should the museum function as a malleable edifice that operates in a situational way?

We invite you to respond to these ideas by producing an artwork, visual response, text, gesture, or other articulation for an experimental publication. These pages will be compiled into a publication with the characteristics of an itinerant museum: fluidity, reactivity, and portability. To enable this versatility, we are collaborating with a designer to produce an exhibition constructed to encourage viewers to rearrange and reshuffle the artists' contributions.

The exhibition-as-publication will be installed in Gallery 4 at Art in General, in New York City from February 24 to March 18, 2006. A series of informal roundtable discussions with scholars, curators, and artists will also take place during the exhibition.

There will be an opportunity to present other materials in digital format during our public programs. Our primary goal in this project is to trigger dialogue, debate, and new types of visual and textual production. Anything is possible, even a critique of this framework!

Format: Please respond with a contribution (image, text, etc.) that can take form on a square page. Each participant will be given one page in the publication-as-exhibition.

Published on the occasion of Re-Shuffle: Notions of an Itinerant Museum, an exhibition-as-publication, organized by Markús Thór Andrésson, Kirin Buckley, Max Hernández Calvo, Özkan Cangüven, Ruba Katrib, Florencia Malbrán, Kate McNamara, Laura Mott, Rebeca Noriega-Costas, Amy Owen, Chen Tamir, and Emily Zimmerman, first-year students in the master's degree program at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College. They developed the publication-as-exhibition with Joshua Decter, an independent curator and faculty member at CCS. Re-Shuffle: Notions of an Itinerant Museum was presented at Art in General in New York City from February 24-March 18, 2006 and also distributed to other locations.

RE-SHUFFLE: NOTIONS OF AN ITINERANT MUSEUM is a project wherein forty-seven cultural producers consider the possibilities of a mobile, reactive museum. This exhibition-as-publication was organized by first-year students in the master's degree program at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York (CCS). We encourage you to re-shuffle it and pass it on! When I was invited by Norton Batkin to develop a framework for the fall 2005 Curatorial Studies Practicum, the Center for Curatorial Studies was in the midst of an important transition—specifically, the construction of a new museum building.

This meant that neither the museum's collection nor the museum's galleries would be available to the first-year graduate students for the development of their exhibition project. With these parameters established in advance, an opportunity arose to develop a somewhat unusual structure for the practicum, indicative of another model of curatorial practice: the class would be challenged to conceptualize and implement an exhibition in the form of a publication or document. To initiate this process, the class began thinking critically about the function of collections in museums, and we had meetings with a number of institutional curators.

As the practicum sessions proceeded during September and October, the students became increasingly interested in rethinking the museum in terms of mobility—to explore the notion of an itinerant institution, and to create an exhibition-as-publication that would be emblematic of these hypothetical institutional conditions.

Pushing the conceptual envelope a bit further, I asked the students to re-articulate this exhibition-as-publication in relation to an actual space (specifically, a gallery at Art in General in New York City). To add another layer of complexity, I interjected a number of intellectual "obstructions" (loosely based upon the methodology used by Lars von Trier in his film *The Five Obstructions*), which were designed to challenge the students as they engaged in a process of conceptualizing their exhibition project.

The young curators from diverse cultural locations that comprise this graduate practicum at CCS met each of these challenges, each of the obstructions, with creative vigor. They have done an outstanding job of working together to organize all aspects of this complex project. They have invited a wide range of emerging and established artists, curators, critics, and other cultural producers to respond to a series of important questions in regard to notions of an itinerant museum; they've engaged in a unique working process with an outside design team to create the publication (and to generate a design for the Art in General space), and they've developed a compelling series of public programs at different locations in New York City and at Bard College. Most significantly, all the students have expressed, from the start, a genuine openness, enthusiasm, and commitment to engaging in this unique curatorial process, and it has been a pleasure to work with them.