



# Exhibition and Curatorial Studies

CULS5318, 2025 Spring Semester



© Asia Diva: The Muse and the Monster exhibition, Seoul Museum of Art, Curated by Eunjin Regina Shin and Yongwoo Lee

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(Please allow at least 24 hours for a response to your email – longer on weekends)

**Class Time:** Tuesday 06:45PM - 09:30PM, Venue: Chen Kou Bun Building, CKB 122

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Haoqian Yu, haoqianyu@cuhk.edu.hk

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**Course Description:** One of the most challenging aspects of visual arts management is the practice of curatorship. With the rapid global growth of museums and the popularity of the biennale culture, curatorial interpretation has become an influential force in shaping the definition of art and museum. Exhibition venues are the places where various artistic practices and concepts intermingle and drift. Act of curating is not only administrative and managerial activities but becomes part of the exhibition itself nowadays. Thus, this course provides the idea of the curatorial and its history, theory, and praxis. This course nurtures students' creative and interpretive skills in conceiving and developing curatorial ideas, equips students with the technical, managerial, and communicative skills in planning, organizing, and interpreting exhibitions. It also introduces a critical study of practice of curatorship, reviewing its traditions, limitations and possibilities for abuses and development.

**Prerequisite course(s):** CULS5307 Visual Arts Management

Exception can be made if evidence of previous working experience in visual arts management is provided.

**Methodology:** Since this is an upper-level MA course, students are expected to read all the materials assigned for class in advance, and to come to class prepared to pose questions and discuss materials. Each section develops a specific theoretical and practical approach to the curation/curating/curatorial project of contemporary visual art in relation to Asian visual culture and its hegemonic formation, and the goal is to work within specific manners of thinking to explore their parameters and limitations in Asian/Hong Kong/Chinese context. The class consists mainly of lecture and discussion, which are intended to explicate and supplement the readings and students' presentation as a seminar style.



## Official Course Schedule and Bibliography

This is a guideline only. The official schedule will be in online and will likely change. Change will be announced in class and on the Blackboard.

### **Week 1: Introduction to Curating** (January 7)

- Introduction to the course, instructor, students
- Explanation of course assessment, schedule, and assignment
- What is the purpose of taking this course?

### **Week 2: Who is Curator?** (January 14)

#### **Key Themes:**

- Definitions of Curator
- Different types of Curators (subject specialist, collection-based, independent, artist, head of department)
- Why is curating flourishing nowadays?
- The curator as catalyst or conduit for ideas?
- The curator as author, editor, and critic
- Routes into curatorial practice

#### **Required Readings:**

- George, Adrian. *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces* (2015), Introduction. Print.
- Hoffmann, Jens, A certain tendency of curating in O'Neill, Paul., and Søren. Andreasen. *Curating Subjects: Occasional Table*. 2nd ed. London: Open Editions, 2011. Print. 137-142

### **Week 3: Ideas and Inspirations to Actualizing an Exhibition** (January 21)

#### **Key Themes:**

- How to find your own ideas and inspirations for making exhibition?
- Funder or sponsor's agenda
- Types of exhibitions
- Curating an art-fair stand

#### **Required Readings:**

- George, Adrian. *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces* (2015), chapter 1: Starting Off. Print.
- Wilson, Andrew. Making New in O'Neill, Paul., and Søren. Andreasen. *Curating Subjects: Occasional Table*. 2nd ed. London: Open Editions, 2011. Print. 194-200

### **January 28 - No Class (Lunar New Year Holiday)**

### **Week 4: The Emergence of Curatorial Discourse** (February 4)



**Key Themes:**

- History of curatorial discourse
- Curating as emergent practice from the 1970s Onward
- Curatorial anthologies and the emergence of a history of exhibitions

**Required Readings:**

- O'Neill, Paul. Chapter 1. The emergence of curatorial discourse from the late 1960s to the present, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2012. Print. 1-49

**Week 5: From Idea to Reality**

**(February 11)**

**Key Themes:**

- How to turn good ideas into real exhibitions
- The exhibition outline document
- Refining the theme of your show and compiling a list of works
- Space planning
- Touring Opportunities

**Required Readings:**

- George, Adrian. *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces* (2015), chapter 2: From Idea to Reality. Print.

**Week 6: Proposals, Pitching and Planning of Exhibition**

**(February 18)**

**Key Themes:**

- Targeting an initial proposal
- Making your exhibition pitch
- Securing touring venues
- Proposal documents / exhibition planning
- Working with other curators/ external curators/you as external curator

**Required Readings:**

- George, Adrian. *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces* (2015), chapter 3. Proposals, pitching and planning. Print.

**Week 7: Group Consultation session:**

**(February 25)**

**Students' group presentations on Exhibition Proposals**

**Week 8: Mid-Term Workshop: Group Exhibition Proposal**

Students' group presentations, Collaborative Paper due date

**(March 4)**

**Week 9: Biennial Culture and Globalized Curatorial Discourse**

**(March 11)**



### Key Themes:

- Definition of Biennial
- Construction of Biennial culture
- Biennial as a Glocal contemporary phenomenon
- Global curating from the 1990s onward

### Required Readings:

- O'Neill, Paul. Chapter 2. Biennial Culture and the Emergence of a Globalized Curatorial Discourse: Curating in the context of biennials and large-scale exhibition since 1989, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2012. Print. 51-85

## Week 10: Curating as a Medium of Artistic Practice

(March 18)

### Key Themes:

- Exhibition as Medium / Exhibition as Form
- Curating as a Medium of Self-Presentation
- Curating within the Field of Cultural Production
- Exhibition as Medium for both Artists and Curators
- The concept of Artist-Curator
- New Curatorial Rhetoric

### Required Readings:

- O'Neill, Paul. Chapter 3. Curating as a medium of artistic practice: the convergence of art and curatorial practice since the 1990s, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2012. Print. 87-129

## Week 11: **Field Trip:**

**Art Basel Hong Kong (March 28-30) : Date to be confirmed**

# Art | Basel Hong Kong

**No facilitation/inquisition/finder of the object**

### Required Readings:

- Beatrice von Bismarck, Constellations and Transpositions: On the Political Potential of Curatorial Practice, in *The Curatorial in Parallax*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, pp. 129-142

### Recommended reading

- Simon Sheikh, Thinking with Exhibitions, Thinking with People, in *The Curatorial in Parallax*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, pp.159-172



## Week 12: Actualizing Exhibition

(April 1)

### Key Themes:

- The venue and its architecture
- Exhibition design
- Technology and new media
- Building walls/ wall colors/display furniture / space and visitor access
- Negotiating with artists and lenders
- Working with artists on commissions (solo exhibition / group exhibition)
- What the registrar needs to know (insurance / indemnity / loan agreements and special conditions / shipping)
- Documenting the exhibition process / Installation

### Required Readings:

- George, Adrian. *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces* (2015), chapter 7. Putting a Show Together. Print.

### Further Reading:

- Staniszewski, Mary Anne., and Museum of Modern Art. *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*. Chapter 4. Installations for Political Persuasion, Chapter 5. Installation Design and Installation Art. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1998. 209-286
- George, Adrian. *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces* (2015), chapter 8. Installation. Print.

Guest Speaker : TBA

## Week 13: Who are the Curating Subjects?

(April 8)

### Key Themes:

- Politics of interpretation
- Performative roles of curator
- Modernity and Postcolonial ambivalence in curating: Indigenous culture, Otherness and postcolonial subjects
- Discursive curatorial rhetoric as Exhibitionary complex
- Curating in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### Required Readings:

- Hans Ulrich Obrist interviews Jean Leering, A Protest Against Forgetting in O'Neill, Paul., and Søren. Andreasen. *Curating Subjects: Occasional Table*. 2nd ed. London: Open Editions, 2011. Print. 148-158
- Simon Sheikh, Constitutive Effects: The Techniques of the Curator, in O'Neill, Paul., and Søren. Andreasen. *Curating Subjects: Occasional Table*. 2nd ed. London: Open Editions, 2011. Print. 174-185
- Mich Wilson, Curatorial Moments and Discursive Turns, in O'Neill, Paul., and Søren. Andreasen. *Curating Subjects: Occasional Table*. 2nd ed. London: Open Editions, 2011. Print. 201-2016

## Week 14: Students' Presentation, Final Discussion and Review (April 15)

Colloquium: Second round of student presentations: individual term paper topic



**Reading:** The reader for this course will be available on the Blackboard and CUHK library Online access, provided weekly bases on additional readings. Main text is *The curator's handbook: museums, commercial galleries, independent spaces* by Adrian George. You can access via CUHK library in this link (<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuhk-ebooks/detail.action?pq-origsite=primo&docID=5878065>)

Readings are usually fewer than 50 pages per week. For those who are not familiar with modern art history, the additional recommendable textbooks for the class are *Believing in Seeing: Creating the Culture of an Art* by Mary Anne Staniszewski, 1995, Viking Penguin, *Art Since 1980: Charting the Contemporary* by Peter R. Kalb, 2013, Laurence King Publishing.

## Evaluation (Grading and Assignments)

**(1) Participation 40%:** Class Attendance is significant in this class.

**Class participation: facilitator, inquisitor, finder of the object** (in each term, students are expected to participate once in each role: each note on the three roles will be graded separately as 5%, so prepare your facilitation notes well!) → **see the class format and class Attendance.** If you know you will be absent on a day for which you are obligated for presentation (facilitator/ Inquisitor/ Finder of Object), trade with one of your colleagues in advance and notice me via email as soon as possible.

**(2) Student Presentation and One group response paper**

**Group presentation: Presentation (10%) + Exhibition Proposal (10%) = 20%**

- On group project, group exhibition proposal will be graded as a group (each group member will receive the same grade, while presentation will be graded separately in each students' performance)

**Individual presentation + synthesis paper (final paper): Presentation (10%) + final paper (30%) = 40%**

During the semester, we will have two students' presentation days.

- (A) The first student presentation (group project): First one will be on March 5, 2025, on your group exhibition proposal. On this exhibition proposal workshop day, at least three students as a group to present on their collaborative response paper which is making an exhibition proposal. Provide many examples of the art works in relation to your curatorial intention.
- (B) Students are required to write one 5-page exhibition/exhibition proposal and present it verbally.
- (C) Exhibition Proposal Guideline: Despite formatting differences (your exhibition proposal format is up to your group), following topic and information need to be provided
  - ① **Initial Exhibition Proposal:** This should tell us what the physical work is, what the general theme is, and give a sense of scale of the exhibition (how many pieces, what sizes, which venue etc.).
  - ② **What main ideas, concepts, or experiences does this body of curatorial proposal communicate with each other?** This is the process of making narrative of exhibition. Thus, this part should embrace what the work gives the viewer (exhibition effect/ what curators want to show through the curatorial project, vision, praxis etc.)



- ③ **What inspirations or traditions guided or influenced this body of work?** Tell us about the influences or inspirations behind this work.
  - ④ **How are the methods or techniques you use important to this body of work?** Tell us how, or what, the choice of medium or process contributes to this exhibition proposal.
  - ⑤ **Any special installation needs or requirements?** If your work requires specific installation techniques or equipment, let us know what those are. For example, numerous electrical outlets, audio-visual equipment, or specialized lighting, wall mounts etc.
- (D) The second and final student presentation: On the last day, we will have another students' presentation on the exhibition proposals. Both classes will consist of presentations from students. The length of the presentations will depend on final enrollment (you will know in advance how much time you have), and time limits will be *strictly* enforced to allow for discussion and responses. The model for these presentations will be conference panels.
- (E) On group exhibition proposal: Students are required to write a collaborative exhibition proposal (except reference and endnote) regarding any type of exhibition that your group wants to actualize and make a clear exhibition proposal reflecting previous reading materials from the unit 1 you are interested in. Students summarize and articulate unit 1 reading materials about one page (critical summary for the unit) and then choose a topic to actualize an exhibition proposal your group want to actualize and propose. **March 4**

General guideline: In preparation for the first response paper presentation (group project) which is making an exhibition proposal, your group will write a 4-5-page exhibition proposal in relation to topic of Unit 1. A hard-copy version will be submitted to me at the beginning of class on the presentation day. Please stick to the readings from the course for these papers. On the second students' presentation (individual project), you will have an opportunity to present your initial synthesis paper/term paper topic and will have a chance to develop your term paper idea in advance.

#### **(4) Exhibition Proposal (30%):**

Students are required to write one **8 pages**, double-spaced term paper on an exhibition proposal with curatorial statement and/or a specific exhibition(s), and/or specific artist's work in relation to its curatorial approach(es) which in your view represents issues in relation to the class materials of curating.

The topic of your exhibition proposal is to allow you considerable freedom in the choice of topics but require that you clear the topic with me.

**The Final Exhibition Proposal is due on April 22, 2024. (Tuesday)** There is no final examination for this course. The instructor reserves the rights to adjust students' semester grades based on his evaluation of their overall performance.

#### **Class Format**

##### **(1) Participation in Class Discussions**

I expect everyone to participate regularly in class discussion. You should come every week ready to discuss the readings. Requirements for class discussion are as follows, good faith, attention to the readings, and relevance to the course.



## (2) Discussion Facilitation (Facilitator/Inquisitor/Finder of the Object)

**The Facilitator:** Each week, at least three students will help facilitating discussion. Both discussion leaders should spend extra time on the readings and be prepared to discuss them in depth. Make facilitation notes and submit it to the teaching assistant by each Friday (3 pm). Depending on enrollment and other factors, you may perform one role more than the other. NOTE: some weeks I may have something in mind for discussion, in which case I will collaborate with the facilitators.

**The Inquisitor** will bring in discussion questions and topics, and lead the discussion. He/She should send an email to Teaching Assistant the questions/topics submit it to the teaching assistant by each Friday (3 pm) to circulate to the whole classmates with a list of questions and topics to discuss. You should aim to get at the most important issues in the readings, which will also mean prioritizing them, since we will need get to every reading every week. Questions can be oriented around anything from basic content questions or all the way up to “big picture” issues that connect the week’s readings with other discussions we have had in the course. Please avoid as much as possible more than passing references to materials from other courses or other things you’ve read.

**The Finder of Objects** will bring in an object for us to discuss in relation to the readings. Your object may be an image, a sound recording, a photograph, a device, or anything else you think fit to bring in. If you need audiovisual equipment, please let me know as soon as possible, so that I can make arrangements. You may wish to present as ppt, submit it to the teaching assistant by each Friday (3 pm). Audiovisual material should be of short duration – no longer than approximately 8-10 minutes.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures.

### Recommended Texts:

- *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* By Staniszewski, Mary Anne., and Museum of Modern Art. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1998.
- *Believing in Seeing: Creating the Culture of an Art* by Mary Anne Staniszewski, Viking Penguin, 1995.
- *Art Since 1980: Charting the Contemporary* by Peter R. Kalb, Laurence King Publishing, 2013.

### Useful Links:

- Frieze magazine [www.frieze.com/magazine](http://www.frieze.com/magazine)
- Artforum [www.artforum.com](http://www.artforum.com)
- Arts Journal [www.artsjournal.com](http://www.artsjournal.com)
- e-flux: [www.e-flux.com](http://www.e-flux.com)
- Arts Management Networks: [www.artsmanagement.net](http://www.artsmanagement.net)
- Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association: [www.hkaaa.org.hk](http://www.hkaaa.org.hk)
- Hong Kong Arts Development Council: [www.hkadc.org.hk](http://www.hkadc.org.hk)
- Hong Kong Visual Arts Yearbook. Hong Kong: Department of Fine Arts, CUHK. <https://hkdbd.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/en/hkvayb/>
- ICOM & UNESCO. 2006. *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141067.locale=en>
- The Association of Art Museum Curators. 2007. *Practices for Art Museum Curators*. New York:





Association of Art Museum Curators.

[https://www.collegeart.org/pdf/AAMC\\_Professional\\_Practices.pdf](https://www.collegeart.org/pdf/AAMC_Professional_Practices.pdf)

- The Smithsonian Institution. 2002. *The Making of Exhibitions: Purpose, Structure, Roles and Process*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution. URL:  
<https://www.si.edu/Content/opanda/docs/Rpts2002/02.10.MakingExhibitions.Final.pdf>

## Policies, Expectations, Rules

1. **Attendance and Performance:** This course is designed for motivated students who attend all lectures. If you are absent more than three times without prior notification, regardless of your class performance and the quality of your paper, your mark will be failure. If you are absent for sickness, you must provide doctor's note in the next class. Preparation and attendance are required: 'Required readings' in the class schedule must be read before each class. Active participation in discussions is required.
2. **Late Arrivals and Early Departures:** Your instructor finds people entering and leaving the classroom during lecture to be quite unpleasant and distracting. If you know that you must leave early on a given day, please let me know before class. Repeat offenders will find their semester grades reduced.
3. **The classroom:** You are encouraged to raise your hand during seminar and ask questions, add comments, or ask for something you didn't understand to be repeated or clarified. Cell phones and other appliances that make noise are not welcome in the class.
4. **Assignments and Extensions:** Assignments will be announced well in advance of due dates. If you know in advance that you cannot make a due date for an assignment, please discuss it with me beforehand. Your instructor is under no obligation to accept late assignments; assignments that are accepted may suffer a significant grade penalty.
5. **Language:** The language of instruction at Chinese University of Hong Kong is English.
6. **Accommodations:** If you require special testing accommodations or other class modifications, please notify both the professor and the Support Center for Students with Disabilities(SCSD) by the end of the first week in which you are enrolled in the course.  
<https://www2.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/disability/en-GB/>
7. **Nondiscrimination Statement:** Your teacher values equality of opportunity and human dignity and diversity. In accordance with Chinese University of Hong Kong policy, I will not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on race, color, ethnic or national origin, civil status, religion, creed, political convictions, language, sex, sexual orientation, age, personal handicap, or the use of any means to palliate such a handicap. If there is something we can do to make the class more hospitable, please let me know.
8. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** The Chinese University of Hong Kong values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures. Please read Honesty in Academic Works at CUHK website.  
[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_htm\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/index\\_page2.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/index_page2.htm) (See the last page of the syllabus for the specifics)
9. **Communications Policy:** I would like to encourage questions and comments in class as well as face-to-face communication after the class. I'll try to answer email promptly (please don't expect immediate responses). As a general policy, to assure quality of communication, I would like you to speak with me in person during my office hour by appointment or after class, rather than flooding me with email. Please do not send a last-minute email requesting extensions. These will be ignored.

Copies of all these statements are included in the course development guidelines and appear on the Blackboard



## Use of AI Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Guide for students

[https://www.aqs.cuhk.edu.hk/documents/A-guide-for-students\\_use-of-AI-tools.pdf](https://www.aqs.cuhk.edu.hk/documents/A-guide-for-students_use-of-AI-tools.pdf)

This course is Approach 1 (by default), thus, prohibit all use of AI tools (excluding Grammar check)

## Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Students

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. Although cases of cheating or plagiarism are rare at the University, everyone should make himself/herself familiar with the content of this website and thereby help avoid any practice that would not be acceptable.

Section 1 What is plagiarism

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p01.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p01.htm)

Section 2 Proper use of source material

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p02.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p02.htm)

Section 3 Citation styles

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p03.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p03.htm)

Section 4 Plagiarism and copyright violation

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p04.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p04.htm)

Section 5 CUHK regulations on honesty in academic work

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p05.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p05.htm)

Section 6 CUHK disciplinary guidelines and procedures

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p06.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p06.htm)

Section 7 Guide for teachers and departments in handling of academic dishonesty

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p07.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p07.htm)

Section 8 Recommended material to be included in course outlines

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p08.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p08.htm)

Section 9 Electronic submission of assignments via VeriGuide

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p09.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p09.htm)

Section 10 Declaration to be included in assignments

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng\\_html\\_files\\_\(2013-14\)/p10.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_html_files_(2013-14)/p10.htm)

## Assessment Expectations

- Grade A ~ A-: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays /answers to exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.
- Grade B+ ~ B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated
  - the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.
- Grade B- ~ C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and needs improvement.
- Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be
  - a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.
- Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness, and the research is clearly negligible.