

George Ciscle

George Ciscle has mounted groundbreaking exhibitions and taught courses in the fine arts and humanities for 45 years. He was the founder and director of The Contemporary, an “un-museum,” which challenges existing conventions for exhibiting art in temporary non-traditional sites. In 1996 he introduced and taught MICA’s Exhibition Development Seminar until 2008 and since 1997 has served as Curator-in-Residence, consulting on the development of community-based and public programming concentrating on exploring new models for connecting art, artists, and audiences. From 2011 -16 Ciscle directed the new MFA in Curatorial Practice.

In his work at MICA, George Ciscle is continuing a career that has evolved to concentrate particularly on developing new models for connecting art, artists, and audiences. He trained as a sculptor, studying with artist Isamu Noguchi, and worked for seven years as a studio artist before turning to focus on balancing his interest in educating artists and on creating new models for exhibiting and experiencing art. Teaching art and theater at Baltimore’s Cardinal Gibbons High School, Ciscle developed an interdisciplinary pilot program that brought together faculty from art, theater, religion, and other fields to teach a course that revealed the connections between art and culture at many levels. For ten years, he taught in a program in the Baltimore County schools for emotionally disadvantaged children, which combined classroom study with real-world work experiences.

In 1985, he founded the George Ciscle Gallery, where for four years he promoted the careers of young and emerging artists, whom he often scouted by visiting artist’s colonies and graduate schools. Working with young artists and students as a gallery director inspired Ciscle to conceive an “un-museum,” which would challenge existing conventions for exhibiting art. The Contemporary, the museum Ciscle founded in 1989 and directed until 1996, focused in its exhibitions, educational programming, and community outreach on connecting the artist’s work with people’s everyday lives through artist residencies, by commissioning new work for temporary non-traditional sites, and by making contextual connections between contemporary art and other disciplines

Working with student interns at The Contemporary provided Ciscle with the inspiration for the unique multi-semester Exhibition Development Seminar he developed at MICA, subtitled The Curatorial Experience. The seminar has brought together diverse teams of students from the College’s undergraduate, graduate, and continuing studies programs to develop and implement exhibitions in museums and galleries across Baltimore. Each seminar promotes an atmosphere that encourages hands-on interaction between artists, curators, designers, writers, educators, and other professionals. In 2008 he introduced a Curatorial Studies Concentration at MICA that provides additional professional learning opportunities for students at the College

Since it began in 1997, the Exhibition Development Seminar’s ten exhibitions under Ciscle’s instruction included:

Eyewinkers, Tumbleturds, and Candlebugs: The Art of Elizabeth Talford Scott (MICA, traveled to Smithsonian Institution, New England Quilt Museum and Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art);
The Marlborough Art Project (Marlborough Apartments);
Subject to Change, Parts I and II: Linda Bills, Jann Rosen-Queralt, Jason Swift (MICA);
Joyce J. Scott Kickin’ It with the Old Masters (The Baltimore Museum of Art, traveled to 10 museums);
Situated Realities: Where Technology and Imagination Intersect (MICA, Art Center College of Design, Minneapolis College of Art & Design; guest curator Will Larson);
Everlasting: A Multimedia Sound + Video Installation by Ann Fessler (MICA);
Comics on the Verge (MICA; guest curator Paul Candler);
Lawson Oyekan and the spirit of nature (MICA);
At Freedom’s Door: Challenging Slavery in Maryland (Maryland Historical Society and Reginald F. Lewis African American Museum);
Beyond the Compass, Beyond the Square (Mount Vernon Place)

Ciscle organized and/or curated numerous innovative exhibitions at The Contemporary including *Mining the Museum*, *Catfish Dreamin'*, *Going for Baroque*, and *Ignisfatuus*. Additional curatorial experience include *A 15-Year Survey of Baltimore Art* (Artscape, Baltimore, Maryland), *Delaware Art Museum Biennial* and *White :White Day, Wedding and Women* (Seoul, Korea). He received a B.A. in English from Loyola College in Maryland and a M.Ed. in Human Development and Learning from the University of North Carolina.

Ciscle has been a founding trustee on the boards of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA) and the American Visionary Museum. Awards include the Distinguished Arts Administrator Award (NCAA), Governor's Citation of Maryland, and the Mayor's and Presidential Citations from the City of Baltimore. He served on the museum grants jury for the NEA, and as a member of the National Register of Peer Professionals advises the General Services Administration's Art and Architecture Program. Recent speaking engagements include the Victoria & Albert Museum (London), Keisho Art Association (Japan), American Association of Museums, National Academy of Sciences, and the Museo da Republica (Brazil).