

Learning Places Fall 2018

# SITE REPORT #2A

## Contested Spaces

STUDENT NAME: Aylin Cruz

### Thinking Frame:

In the reading, audio, and video assignments for this week a number of spaces for voices of protest are discussed. The Guerilla Girls broadcast their messages across a wide variety of media and places: posters on walls and billboards, handouts on the sidewalk, t-shirts on bodies, projections on walls, installations in abandoned buildings and art galleries, magazines, zines, websites, etc. Next Epoch produces ecological art in neglected urban wastelands. Decolonize This Place conducts protests in museums, without prior permission for use of the spaces. As a group, these interventions could be described as unsanctioned or subversive events performed in spaces that were not designed or curated specifically for protest.

In response to these kinds of activities (and perhaps in recognition--aesthetically or culturally of their importance), there have been increased efforts by community leaders and cultural institutions to create spaces for critical or dissenting voices. Landers, et al, describes strategies to create sanctioned spaces for protest in libraries, plazas, and parks. Similarly, the Brooklyn Museum now seeks to create spaces for alternative, minority, and resistant cultures and voices through curation and architectural interventions.

The question remains whether resistant practices, alternative performances, and protest are more effective when sanctioned or unsanctioned. Where is Dread Scott's *Impossibility of Freedom in a Country Founded on Slavery and Genocide* more effective, in the original 2014 performance on a street or represented in photographic form in a museum in 2018 as part of a curated exhibition?

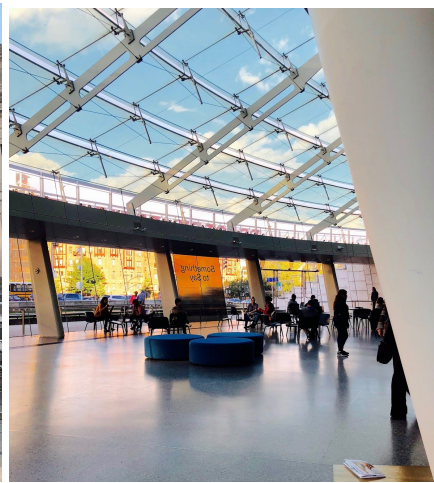
As you go through the site report collecting images and documenting your ideas, keep these tensions in mind.

## SITE OBSERVATIONS

Insert two images of Brooklyn Museum's facades. The first of a more **traditional architectural feature** for a public civic space and the second an **untraditional architectural feature**.



Overall image of the museum



Remodel entrance/lobby area

Why did you choose these images? As you look at each, what do you expect to encounter once you enter the building? Explain.

The first image reflects on the traditional architecture. I chose this picture because it highlights the Beaux-art Style architectural and the modern features of the entrance. The original building of the Brooklyn Museum is a steel frame structure encased with masonry.

The second picture highlights the untraditional architectural feature. This is the remodel entrance/ lobby of the museum. The addition of the museum uses glass and steel to create the lobby space. The lobby also features some of the traditional features by having some of the brick columns exposed.

The stated *mission* of the Brooklyn Museum is “to create inspiring encounters with art that expand the ways we see ourselves, the world and its possibilities.” Take a photo of one piece of artwork that expands the way you see yourself or the world. Give the photograph a caption and explain why it expands your vision of yourself or the world.



Portrait of Malcolm X

This painting done by Wadsworth Jarrell is an image of Malcolm X. The image stood out to me from the exhibit. The artist uses the letter B to create the portrait of Malcolm X. The letter b represents Black, Bad and Beautiful. On the bottom of the painting, Wadsworth used part of Malcolm X speech that states, “I believe in anything necessary to correct unjust conditions. Political, economic, social, physical. Anything, as long as it gets results.”. I think this statement still relevant to today’s and it’s a reflection on today world. We have many moments going on now like” black lives matter” and the “me too” moment. Both groups are promoting change like this painting.

The stated vision of the Brooklyn Museum is to create a place “where great art and courageous conversations are catalysts for a more connected, civic, and empathetic world.” Consider the curated areas of the museum. How is space arranged in order to create “courageous conversations”? Can you describe conversations between spaces?

Most of the artwork is display on the walls. For some of the artwork there tape on the floor. I’m not sure if that to create distance between the work and the person looking at the work. As well from tape so of the work has railed in front of them. I believe it’s to protect the work from being touched. Most of the artwork can stand out because the walls are white. Occasionally there work that is displayed in the center. I think the arrangement of the space can create “courageous conversations.” One reason I state that is because there was a large painting of the American Flag bleeding, it was the only artwork on the wall. The wall was placed in the center of the space. This painting stands out because of its context and

placement. If the art was located on the walls on the sides, I think it would have less of an impacted.

Insert an image of designed space (not art objects themselves) that suggest “connection.” How is the concept of “connection” articulated in the way art is arranged in space? (Consider the walls, walkways, display boards, pedestals, rooms, etc.)



Connection to the artwork

The connection that is seen from this image is how the audience experiences the artwork. On the floor, you can see the black tape. The black tape is referencing the audience to stay back, and that's precisely what happened here. Some of the work displayed had signed on not taking a picture of the work or even having a railing in front of the artwork.

Brooklyn Museum declares that “since we see ourselves as a conduit for open sharing and learning, we accept the controversies that may accompany courageous conversations.” Consider the way art objects are arranged in space for the *Half the Picture* exhibition in relation to viewers. How would you describe the arrangement of objects for viewers. Did the arrangements accept controversies? Did they encourage courageous conversations? If so, how? If not, why?

Half the Picture exhibition feature a different kind of artwork that can create conversation because of the contexts. The arrangement of the artwork accepts controversies. For example the exhibition display of the plates in the triangular space. This part of the exhibition stands out about of the unique arrangement and lighting of the room. The light is focused on the plates. The other arrangement display in the exhibition is placed on the wall linearly, for example, the Guerrilla Girls artwork. Overall the museum courageous conversations by having the context of the art to be shown.