

Learning Places Fall 2018

SITE REPORT #2A

STUDENT NAME: MELANIE GUABA

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**.



The Division



Intrusion

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, *The Division*, to me proves that even though architecture has changed as centuries pass by, traditional architecture can (and should) be preserved. In this image you can see how the inside brick structure is divided from the outside stucco-looking part of the building, by glass and metals. Even though this is happening, they coexist quite peacefully because both old and new are getting their way and being represented. The second image, *Intrusion*, shows an angled cantilevering piece of glass with metal mullions and tall forms behind it supporting it. This proves how the way of building has evolved. Also, it looks like the more modern materials caused a massive intrusion on history itself. Looking at both images, once you enter the building, you expect to encounter both ancient (or aged) and recent forms of art and news, to match the exterior facades.



Roy DeCarava
1919-2009
Coltrane on soprano,
Detail silver print
Courtesy of Sherry D.
DeCarava Archives

The Man Giving it His All

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.

This photograph by Roy DeCarava, titled “Coltrane on soprano, New York, 1963,” spoke to me. The man playing the instrument looks like he is playing it with all of him, and that he’s enjoying doing so. I think that everything (or at least most things) we do should be given our all. We shouldn’t half-do things because why do something in the first place if you won’t give it 100% of yourself? This man that looks like he is performing with all he’s got expands my vision of myself and the world and what I want both of us to do.



The Walls Are the Pages to the Book

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?

The spaces in the Brooklyn Museum are arranged like a book. The (unattached to the ceiling) walls look like (and are) the pages in the book and the art on those walls are the content inside of the book. Most books tell stories and the humongous ones that I have visualized/imagined in this museum are no different. Such stories in this exhibition create courageous conversations amongst the individuals walking through it and the space itself. The bigger the space, (usually) the bigger the art pieces, possibly the inclusion of 3D pieces towards the center of the area, and overall, there’s probably just more going on. This room would grasp more of your attention like the climax in a story.



Storyline

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.)

The arrangement of the art in a space emphasizes the concept of connection, especially if its display is kept consistent. Like in my image, if the frame type, color, and size, of several pieces are the same, they are linked and should then be thought of as a part of a storyline.

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?

The arrangements of the objects for the viewers in *Half the Picture* was beautifully set up. Aesthetically, it had vibrant colors, different frames of all sizes and materials, 3D pieces, pedestals that give pieces the attention they need, and video screens showing tapes that actually catch your attention. The arrangements themselves are controversies. They all contradict each other because there is so much going on in a small space compared to other exhibitions in the same building. Due to all this variety, they definitely do encourage courageous conversations.

SITE REPORT #2B

Based on your observations at the Brooklyn Museum, **develop a complex research question** about the relationship between 1 piece of art that you viewed and a social or political issue.

Remember, your research question should be specific and researchable.

Research Question:

Find 2 sources. *For this report, one of your sources **MUST** be an academic journal article. Your other source can be a news article, internet source, or book.

1 source should have to do with the **artwork, artist, artistic style, or some element of the work** you chose. For example, if you were interested in learning more about realistic photography depicting women engaged in domestic activities, you might search for sources about “domestic imagery AND photography” or “realistic photography” rather than sources about the specific artist.

1 source should be about the **social / political issue** that is articulated in your research question. This source may or may not have to do with art.

Write an MLA citation for each source:

Source 1

Source 2

Describe the process you used to find these sources including any **keywords** and the **specific search engine or tool** you used to search.

In a sentence or 2, describe the main point of each source. Then consider: how do these sources address all or part of your research question?

Source 1

Source 2

Describe ways the two sources you chose are similar and different. Would it be difficult to integrate these two sources into a single writing assignment? Why or why not?

What other sources or further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for that information?