

Learning Places Fall 2018

SITE REPORT #2A

name of site report

NAMING PROTOCOL. When saving and posting your site reports on OpenLab, please follow the following format: SiteReport#Letter.LastnameFirstname.Here's an example: **SiteReport2B.SwiftChristopher**

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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**.



Picture 1: The Welcoming steps



Picture 2: Modernized ceilings

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

Picture one was selected due to its fine traditional architecture resemblance to the Roman era. The long staircase that leads to the entrance of the museum almost seems inviting. It was used as a place where people sat before/after entering the museum to discuss their experiences/expectations. Picture two was chosen due to the fact that past the brick exterior, a beautiful glass ceiling was presented to the eye. Since this was the first time I entered the Brooklyn Museum it threw me off. I was expecting a plain traditional ceiling just the same way the outside was. This shows that even though the major components of the museum's architecture were traditional, it also introduced a non-traditional modern architecture with the usage of those glass ceilings.

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 is America”

The image that I selected expands my vision of the world, but more specifically America. When looking at the image one can notice that the American flag has many components that have hidden meanings. The three interlocked figures was the first thing that caught my attention. In the painting, a young female figure is in the center between a black man and a white man, functioning as a bridge between both men. However, the black man has his left hand over his bleeding chest for the pledge of allegiance, giving the illusion that the blood is seeping out of the flag. Looking closer, the wounded black man is armed with a bloody knife. This expands my insight of the world because the image replicates how this country is functioning behind closed doors. Although, this flag represents the “land of the free” and “opportunity” it only refers to one side of the nation, a powerful white male structure. People tend to forget that just a few decades ago racial segregation was occurring. Race is a cultural construction, which suggests how the characteristics people attribute to race are culturally distinct. This causes some to grow a hatred or intolerance of another race or other races due to the fact they may think highly of themselves or their own culture. Racism tells us that there are societal patterns, structures that have the consequence of striking unjust and oppressive conditions against distinguishable groups on the origin of race. The blood that was shed from the black community was brushed away. Instead of assisting them, the world portrays them as slaves and thugs even in today’s society. They apply these types of stereotypes of other backgrounds and cultures into their

views of individuals who do not have the same background and culture as them, leading to racism. White Supremacy is the belief that white individuals are superior in certain characteristics, traits, and attributes to people of other races. They seem to enjoy a structural advantage over other non-white groups. In the United States, white people are the dominant racial group. Of course, there are white individuals who commit active and intentionally racist acts. The United States would not have prospered if establishments hadn't continued discrimination against people of color for centuries. Slavery continues to fuel racist attitudes and racial discrimination throughout the world but in different types of forms. The flag is a false representation of the land of the free and I feel like this image exposes that false illusion.

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 space arranged in the exhibit was indeed setup to create a “courageous conversations” , where areas of the exhibit had certain themes. In one room there was a whole subsection where the theme was all black and white photos of African americans in their daily routines. Each artwork is placed with the intention of telling a story by manipulating space. Another section presented artwork that spoke about topics that people try to forget, such as the room with *The bleeding flag*. The arrangement of varied from themes, locations and messages. The conversations between spaces made me think of how a picture is worth a thousand words. With the usage of these artworks it sparks conversations that cover political , social and economical issues.

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 first thing that I seen when I entered this room of the exhibit was the bleeding American Flag. The room overall was spacious with plain white walls. Once I entered my attention was drawn to the flag which hung directly in front of the point eye view. However, the placement of the bronze fist on a pedestal was in the center of the exhibit. This arrangement seemed powerful due to the fact that I recognized that this fist was used as a symbol of black empowerment. Through this exhibit the curator aligned their work in

a way that history and present day clash. The bleeding flag was directly facing the fist which were the two most powerful works in the room. The arrangement was purposely placed in that order to give the visitors a sense of black history and their struggles to get to where they are today. This whole subsection of the exhibit was organized in such a way to show current injustices within the black community.



Silenced discrimination

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?

In Half the Picture Exhibition the arrangement of artwork displayed political issues such as race, gender, and social class. This exhibit contains a lot of images supporting the feminist movement that is occurring in modern society. Over 100 artworks are arranged to zoom in on the social movement.. There were intense photos of nude women of various backgrounds. Controversies were accepted with in the exhibit, because it was organized in way that people really think and respond to these reoccurring issues. The exploitation of these females encourages courageous conversations, discussing the social issue and how it should not be minimized. Viewing this exhibition, it raises questions regarding social and political issues. It provides awareness of what is happening on a day to day basis.