

Writing Assignment #2
Exhibition Review

Papers are due in class **Thursday, Nov 17** (*please attach entrance stub/receipt to paper*)

Your paper should be 4 double-spaced pages (4 pages does not mean a 3-page paper plus cover), 1" margins, 12-point type (Please use Arial, Helvetica or Times).

Write a review of the exhibition based on your interpretation and analysis. A key element of this review will be to determine the goal of the curators in putting the exhibition together and then to evaluate the extent to which the curators were successful in achieving this goal. This means you must examine the exhibition carefully. Don't simply walk through the exhibition. In order to critique the show, you should devote enough time to read all the wall texts, to view each work of art carefully, and become conscious of how you and other visitors interact with the works of art and exhibition space. The review should analyze the organization, design, themes, and issues raised in the show. How is the theme of the exhibition conveyed through the objects, design, and subsidiary text (i.e., the wall labels)?

Choose one of the following exhibitions to review:

- Museum of Modern Art: *Talk to Me: Design and the Communication between People and Objects* (Jul 24-Nov 7)
or
Harun Farocki: Images of War (at a Distance) (Jun 29-Jan 2, Farocki's works in the Projects Gallery closes Oct 17)
*closed Tues, free with CUNY ID, www.moma.org
- MoMA PS1: *September 11* (Sept 11-Jan 9)
*closed Tues and Weds, FREE with CUNY ID, www.ps1.org
- Metropolitan Museum of Art: *After the Gold Rush: Contemporary Photographs from the Collection* (Mar 22–Jan 2)
or
Photographic Treasures from the Collection of Alfred Stieglitz (Oct 11–Feb 26) and First and Last room of *Stieglitz and His Artists: Matisse to O'Keeffe* (Oct 13–Jan 2)
*closed Mon, suggested admission, www.metmuseum.org
- International Center of Photography (ICP): *Remembering 9/11* or *Harper's Bazaar: A Decade of Style* (Sept 9-Jan 8)
*closed Mon, \$8 with student ID, pay-what-you-wish on Fridays 5-8 pm, www.icp.org

Your review should give the reader an overall impression of the exhibition and your responses to it. Please do not be afraid to take a critical stand but be sure to justify your opinions. Do not simply express an opinion, you must explain why. Most importantly, I am interested in *your* personal review of the show. If you quote other reviews, be sure to cite your sources, otherwise you are plagiarizing someone else's work.

Address the following questions in your paper:

- What were the curator's objectives for the show?
- Was the organization of the exhibition logical?
- Were materials in the exhibition presented in an appealing fashion? How did the design shape the visitor's experience of the exhibition?
- What was emphasized, and how? and what impact does that have on the visitor?
- How effective were the displays (i.e., tables in the middle of the rooms)? Did they add or detract from the visitor's viewing of the photographs?
- What do you think could be improved or changed?
- What images affected you and how did the presentation of the photographs in the exhibition affect your response to it?
- Were you impressed or disappointed?
- Lastly, you must address how this exhibition contributes to your knowledge of the history of photography

Please do not simply summarize what you saw. You must write a review that presents a **critical analysis** of the exhibition. Start with a thesis about how you plan to interpret the exhibition then provide a short introductory paragraph that outlines the show giving your reader enough enticing information to continue reading your review. Be selective! Please do not feel compelled to address everything that was included in the exhibition. Use analysis of specific photographic works to support your argument and assertions. This is not a research paper, therefore, do not include more than a paragraph on the biography of individual artists (it will lower your grade).

Your grade is based on how thorough and how well your review is written and supported.

An important note on plagiarism

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY FORM AND WILL RESULT UNCONDITIONALLY IN A FAILING GRADE.

To "plagiarize" is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as:

Take and use as one's own (the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc., of another person); copy (literary works, ideas, etc.) improperly or without acknowledgment; pass off the thoughts, work, etc., of (another person) as one's own. [Lesley Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Oxford: 1993), 2:2231]

If you do additional research for the essay, you must cite all sources for your work, not just books and articles but also internet and non-traditional media sources. If you have any doubts or questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me in class, in office hours or via e-mail.