

**Writing Assignment #2
Exhibition Review**

Papers are due: **Thursday, November 15**

You must submit 2 copies (one hard copy and one electronic)! Attach entrance stub/receipt to paper copy. Submit a digital copy to scheng@citytech.cuny.edu.

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)?

BEFORE YOU START, please do the following:

- 1) define for yourself what a curator is and does, and***
- 2) locate the correct exhibition that you wish to review*** (ask a museum guard for help if you cannot find the exhibit)

Choose one of the following exhibitions to review:

- Metropolitan Museum of Art: *Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop* (Oct 11, 2012-Jan 27, 2013)
*closed Mon, \$12 recommended student admission (which means you can pay less than the suggested admission fee), www.metmuseum.org
- Museum of Modern Art (MoMA): *New Photography 2012* (Oct 3, 2012-Feb 4, 2013)
or
The Shaping of New Visions: Photography, Film, Photo-Book (Apr 11-Apr 29, 2013)
*closed Tues, **free with CUNY ID**, www.moma.org
- Bronx Museum of Art: *Urban Archives: The Rituals of Chaos* (Jul 19-Jan 6)
*closed Mon–Weds, **free admission**, www.bronxmuseum.org
- International Center of Photography (ICP): *Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life* (Sept 14, 2012-Jan 6, 2013)
*closed Mon, \$8 with student ID, pay-what-you-wish on Fridays 5-8 pm, www.icp.org
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture/NYPL: *Gordon Parks: 100 Moments* (now through Dec 1)
*closed Sun, **free admission**, www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg

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? (The curator is the person responsible for selecting works for display and organizing the exhibition).
- 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.

Please note: you must make sure that you select one of the above exhibitions to review. Unless you have made previous arrangements to review another exhibition, the highest possible grade for failing to follow the paper directions is a C.

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.