

**Museum Paper Assignment
Exhibition Review**

Papers are due in class **Thursday, April 5**

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)?

Choose **ONE** of the following exhibitions to review.

- Museum of Modern Art: *Cindy Sherman* (Feb 26-Jun 11)
*closed Tues, **FREE with CUNY student ID**, www.moma.org
- Whitney Museum of American Art: *2012 Whitney Biennial* (Mar 1-May 27) (this is a very large exhibit and will take careful consideration to draw out the major themes presented)
*closed Mon and Tues, **FREE with CUNY student ID**, www.whitney.org
- Metropolitan Museum of Art: *The Steins Collect: Matisse, Picasso, and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Feb 23-Jun 3)
or
Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition (Mar 14-Jul 8) *Stieglitz and His Artists: Matisse to O'Keeffe* (Oct 13-Jan 2)
*closed Mon, \$12 recommended admission, www.metmuseum.org
- Brooklyn Museum of Art: *Keith Haring: 1978–1982* (Mar 16-Jul 8) *closed Mon and Tues, \$8 suggested contribution, www.brooklynmuseum.org

- El Museo del Barrio: *TESTIMONIOS: 100 Years of Popular Expression* (Feb 1-May 6)
*closed Mon, \$5 suggested admission, www.elmuseo.org
- Jewish Museum: Kehinde Wiley / The World Stage: Israel (Mar 9-Jul 29)
*closed Weds, \$7.50 with student ID or **FREE on Saturdays**, www.thejewishmuseum.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?
- Is 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 art?
- What do you think could be improved or changed?
- What images affected you?
 - **Choose 2 images to describe in detail:** write a one-paragraph description for each image. Describe the work thoroughly so that a new visitor can pick out your work without having to read the wall labels
- Were you impressed or disappointed?
- Lastly, you must address how this exhibition contributes to your knowledge of the history of art.

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 works to support your argument and assertions. This is not a research paper, therefore, do not include more than one paragraph on the biography of individual artists.

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

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY FORM.

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.