

EXHIBITION ANALYSIS

Write a 5-page double-spaced analysis of an exhibition of your choice at the Henry, SAM, SAAM, or the Burke. Consider such tangible and intangible factors and be guided by ALL those noted on the list on the reverse of this sheet. These issues include conceptual organization; clarity of goals; grouping and installation of objects; wall/graphic colors and their effectiveness (or not); relationship of installed work to architecture and spaces; lighting; placement of key objects; label content, style, and impact; atmosphere; traffic flow; cultural and other messages conveyed; visitor responses (based on your observations); and other things you may want to raise.

Also note any PROBLEMS you wish to criticize, and conversely, any SUCCESSES emerging from the points raised above. You might even address what YOU might have done differently if you were the curator of exhibition designer in charge of installing the show.

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CURATORIAL ACQUISITIONS REPORT

Imagine you are given a HYPOTHETICAL sum of \$50,000 to purchase one or more potential objects (be sure to include images of these) for a LOCAL museum such as SAM, SAAM, MOHAI, the Frye, or the Henry. Write a 3 page double spaced report explaining WHY this object or objects would be a suitable acquisition for the institution you haven chosen. Address your remarks to a board of trustees knowledgeable about art but requiring persuasion as well as details about the object/s in question.

Be specific—e.g., discuss gaps or strengths in the collection/institution and how this acquisition will help to rectify that situation or confirm or strengthen the assets of the museum. You may search online, in auction catalogues, or actually go visit local commercial art galleries (e.g., Martin-Zambito or Davidson Galleries) to gather information and ideas for your proposal.

Extra credit will be given to anyone who is willing to present your report in class, with Prof. Casteras as the head of the Board of Trustees.

MUSEUM & EXHIBITION DESIGN: SOME KEY ISSUES & PRINCIPLES

ENTRY: informal? Welcoming? Intimidating? Nondescript, etc.?

SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES: Underlying cultural or ideological assumptions or stereotypes> What groups are targeted? Are main goals of the exhibition/s clear?

RECEPTION/INFORMATION: Who?how welcomed? Directional clues given?

VIEWING STYLES: one-way direction, open plan, multiple, other?

CONTAINER/CONTAINED relationship: Enough space for works? Focus more on architecture or objects?

LABELS: individual and area? Clear, too much or too little info? Level of intellectual content, tone, messages? Good graphics?

HANGING OF PAINTINGS: At eye level? Attractive, balanced massings? Magnet pictures? What works are downplayed, highlighted, compared?

PRIMARY OF OBJECT: Can one "commune" with individual object? Is it shown to best advantage re: placement, lighting, labels, etc. ? Do neighboring objects clash, disappear, or vie for attention?

FRAMING: Distracting, period, neutral? Competing frames?

LIGHTING: Too harsh or bright or too dark, spotty halos, or just right?

WALL COLORS: bland, dramatic, jarring, appropriate, etc.?

DIRECTIONAL CUES: Do visitors know where to go? Do adjacent display areas overlap? Are distinctions clearly drawn? Any traffic flow problems?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: Objects grouped by chronology, history, style, school, nation, theme, etc.?

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS: Any interplay with permanent collection?

VISITOR NEEDS: Enough info, maps, labels, benches, etc.? Experience of museum fatigue, object satiation, dialogues? Overall experience, based on watching visitors.

CATALOGUE: Available or required? Relationship to exhibition—e.g., a clear mirror of contents or full of ancillary essay topics?

COMMERCIAL ASPECTS: Do contents of museum shop relate to exhibition or collection? Are there places to sit, relax, eat? How is viewer affected?

OTHER QUESTIONS TO PONDER: What communities are included or excluded? Effective publicity? Any surprises or final impressions you want to share?

EXHIBITION ANALYSIS: DUE WED., FEB. 23rd

Write a 5-page double-spaced analysis (8-10 pages for grad students) on SHADOWS OF A FLEETING WORLD: PICTORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE SEATTLE CAMERA CLUB, which opens at the Henry Art Gallery on Feb. 11th. At the opening (Fri., 2/11, 7-8:30) there will be a panel discussion by the curators of the show; some of you MAY be able to go if you inquire in advance, but space is limited and invitations have already been issued. It is not necessary to attend that event to do this assignment properly and well. Do keep in mind, however, that the Henry is closed on Mondays, so plan your time accordingly, since you will probably need to see the show more than once to write the analysis.

Consider such tangible and intangible factors as ALL those noted on the list I gave you. These issues include conceptual organization; grouping of objects; clarity of goals; wall/graphic colors and effectiveness; relationship of installed works to architecture and space/s; lighting; placement of key objects; label content, style, and impact; atmosphere; traffic flow; cultural and other messages conveyed; visitor responses (based on your observations); and other factors.

If you have the time, you might also analyze how the accompanying catalogue compares with the actual exhibition in terms or organization, levels of information, conceptual framework, new information presented, etc. Are the two very different in terms of content or presumed audience? If so, explain how and why, in your opinion.

Also note any PROBLEMS you wish to criticize, and conversely, any SUCCESSES re: the above or other points. You might even address what YOU might have done differently if you were the curator or exhibition designer in charge of installing the show. You are also welcome to mention other factors, of course.

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CURATORIAL ACQUISITIONS REPORT due WED., MAR. 2

You are being given a HYPOTHETICAL sum of \$50,000 to purchase one or more potential objects (include images of these) for a LOCAL museum such as the SAM, SAAM, MOHAI, the Frye, or the Henry. Please write a 3-5 double-spaced page report (8-10 for grad students) explaining WHY this object or objects would be a suitable acquisition for the institution you have chosen. Be specific--e.g., address gaps or strengths in the collection and how these objects respond to or rectify that situation. You may search online, in auction catalogues, or actually go visit local commercial art galleries to gather information re: your proposal.

FINAL PAPER FOR MUSEUM CLASS

Your final exercise for this class needs only to be about 5 pages long (10 pages for grad students), though you are welcome to write more if you like. As I've mentioned in class, you may write EITHER on a topic of your choosing--e.g., re: conservation of a particular category of objects, art and the law, museum architecture, repatriation of objects, educational matters, marketing, etc.--or on the subject of museums of the future. I especially recommend the latter, since I think it is your generation that will face the most transformational challenges re: what a museum or exhibition truly is or will be in twenty years and beyond. You may thus choose to write about some aspect of how computers and digital media may be utilized in future, e.g., to create virtual exhibitions, produce virtual catalogues, generate interaction with viewers, impact educational programs for children or others either (e.g., pre- or post-visit to a brick and mortar museum). What might such developments mean for traditional museums and their collections? Will they survive? Must they change? If so, how? Let your imagination be your guide, along with your readings thus far and the myriad perspectives of the museum culture that we have examined in class.