

ART CRITICISM ESSAY PROMPT

Write a 6-8 page essay that critically interprets a work of contemporary (post-1960) visual art.

Rough draft: 2/4 by 11:59 PM to Carmen

Final: Wed. 2/10 by 11:59 PM to Carmen

Bring a hard copy to class 2/9 for Peer Review

A successful essay will:

- **Present a specific critical interpretation of a work of contemporary (post-1960) visual or media art (in photography, video, painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, ceramics, glass, new media, printmaking)**
 - Remember that an interpretation is your way of finding meaning and making sense of the work; if someone couldn't reasonably disagree with your idea, it's not an interpretation.
If you are having trouble finding a specific artist that you would like to investigate, see resources in [Fine Arts Library](#). Here are the books on library reserve that feature hundreds of examples from contemporary artists:
Sculpture Today
Vitamin 3-D: New Perspectives in Sculpture
PhotoArt: Photography in the 21st Century
Vitamin Ph: New Perspectives in Photography
Vitamin P: New Perspectives in Painting
Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing
 - or search the following contemporary art sites/blogs for artists you might be interested in:
[Artsy](#), [I Like This Art](#), [Contemporary Art Daily](#), [Rhizome](#), [Art F City](#)
- **Begin with a thesis statement in the introduction that clearly articulates what your critical idea/problem/question is about this artwork AND how your essay intends to address it through your interpretation and your dialogue with the interpretation of your sources.**
- **Logically follow the introductory paragraph / thesis statement with paragraphs that support your ideas. This includes a paragraph or two describing the work. Then two or three paragraphs with your interpretation of the work. And finally resources from outside sources that offer interpretations of the work, and how you can build upon or contrast your ideas with theirs.**
- **Follow the tenets of APA Formatting**
- **Support your interpretation with relevant visual, historical, or biographical evidence (description) drawn from observation of the work, from research and from personal reflection (I want to know how YOU interact with the art)**
 - Include at least 2 scholarly, trustworthy sources beyond the Barrett book, or articles we've read in class.

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- Remember that the stronger your sources are, the stronger your paper will be. Seek out peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and major art museum websites.
- Personal experience and reflection will make your paper a whole argument. No one can argue with how you feel your personal experience and reflection interact with the piece.
- **Integrate all research into your interpretation**
 - Integrating research means that whenever you include someone else's language or idea, you explain to your reader why you've added the information, what you think of it, and discuss its relevance to your interpretation.
 - If you include a quote, make sure to discuss the specific language and ideas of the quote, instead of letting another scholar speak for you.
- **Have a clear and logical structure that makes your interpretation stronger and more compelling**
- **Demonstrate thoughtful revision.**
 - Revision is not just fixing grammatical mistakes and making phrasing more interesting, but the clarification and expansion of your ideas.
- **Use vivid, specific language,**
 - Your reader should be able to understand and follow how you viewed the artwork and visualize the areas of focus in your interpretation.
- **Present a concluding paragraph that restates your thesis statement and then summarizes how you have addressed that statement in the previous paragraphs.**
- **Include an image of the artwork (If a film is selected, please place a link in your work)**