

essay #4: final project

proposal due: Wednesday, 3/12

rough draft due: Wednesday, 4/7

final draft due: Monday, 4/14

All semester we've been discussing the visual and how to respond to the visual in writing. For your final project you will create an original piece of visual art and write an essay to go with it.

Appropriately, part of creating this visual piece will be a response. Respond to anything we have read or seen this semester. Use your coursepack and the blog to prompt your memory. Some authors and artists you might consider are:

Seamus Heaney "Postscript"
Elizabeth Bishop
Robert Hass
John Berger
Arundhati Roy
Mark Doty
W.H. Auden
Keats
Anything in the Weschler book

Gerhard Richter
Edward Hopper
Anything in the Berger essay
Dutch still life
Rothko
Tina Barney
Joel Meyerowitz
Joseph Cornell (coming up)
Pierre Bonnard (also coming up)

Obviously this is a partial list. The only things off limits are the "Learning to Love You More" assignments (you've done that already, although Miranda July or Harrell Fletcher's other work is fair game) and your DIA piece (same reason). That said, you might draw on your experience doing the "Learning to Love You More" assignments for inspiration. You might also let the topic/style of your personal narrative essay inspire you to create something connected to the themes and concerns that arise from that assignment.

Your creation could be a respond to either a visual piece or to a piece of writing. You can use any medium you want: photography, painting, sculpture, collage, paper mache, made of found objects, pen and ink, a movie, etc. It can be large or small, digital or concrete. If you need help getting materials, come see me.

To accompany your piece you will write two things.

1. A gallery card that contains one paragraph about the piece and a description of the materials you used to make it. You will submit this digitally and I will print it on an index card.
2. An essay, described below.

The essay will consist of the following parts:

- 3-4 pages educating the audience about the author or artist you chose and giving some background about the aspects of their work to which you are responding. Research the topic carefully. Your research must be cited in MLA format and you should use at least three sources. Provide a works cited page at the end of the essay.
- 3-4 pages discussing the process of making the visual piece—a written response to the visual response. This doesn't have to be explication. It could be a story, it could be a meditation on the themes you want the reader to notice in the visual piece, it could be a description of the “convergence” between your creation and the one to which you are responding. Whatever it is these 3-4 pages must be polished, thoughtful, and well-written. This is not an informal description, it is an artist's statement. That said, it can be cohesive in a number of different ways. I encourage you to be creative with this aspect of the written response. We'll discuss it in more detail in class.

You will write a 1-2 page proposal of this project, describing both the visual and written components, and turn it in on March 12th. You and I will each meet to talk about this proposal in detail.

We will decide together how to display this objects, their gallery cards and the accompanying essays at the end of the semester. A requirement of the class is that we have an event and invite the rest of the dorm. What should we do?

I realize that creating a visual piece is a lot to ask of a non-studio class. Your “Learning to Love You More” pieces were so wonderful that I feel sure you are up to the challenge. I am totally open to innovative/crazy ideas for this assignment, so think big.

I'm giving you this assignment early because I hope that you will think through your response very carefully and give yourself enough time to create something really wonderful, and that takes time. I never do that well with deadlines that are far-off myself, however. Let me know how I can help you figure out what you want to do and keep you motivated to work on it.