

Final Exam, due at 6 pm on Saturday (July 31): Abstraction versus Representation: the 20th century dialectic

Some critics have suggested that abstraction is art for art's sake and has no meaning. Many people agree with that statement. But many of the artists we've discussed this semester would argue to the contrary, saying that abstraction does have meaning, and in some cases, is more meaningful than representation. Your question to answer: Is it true that abstraction has no meaning? Your answer should be based on analysis of art works, references to the readings, class notes and website materials, and your own perceptions. Your thoughts do matter since this is not a question about fact, but they must be supported. Your argument is as important as your answer.

Your presentation should cover the developments of the century, with reference to art works from each of the image groups you created. Other images may also be used. Select your images to illustrate major themes or points – in some cases, you may want to group 2 or 3 images for a single point. Be sure to identify each image, even if it doesn't get its own analysis. A good rule of thumb would be to analyze one image in every set of 2 or 3; to have a minimum of 10 images reflecting the range of the semester, and at least 2 in-depth analyses.

The key readings for this question are Ortega y Gasset, Alfred Barr, C. Greenberg, H. Rosenberg, Franco Moretti, and others of your choice. Footnotes can be informal but you should indicate in some form which reading you are referring to.

If you find it easier to prepare your text on a separate page, indicate in the text which art work is relevant to your point. You might write in parentheses *see slide 1 here* and use the power point only for pictures. If you're comfortable adding text to your power point, then do it that way. I need to be able to follow it and to know that you've put together a thoughtful presentation!

Rubric for Final

18 - 20 Sufficient number of images used (meets or exceeds the minimum specified in directions). All the images are analyzed* and analysis is complete with respect to the questions. It may raise questions about the theme or argue against the theme but does so in a well-developed argument.

- *Adequate range of artists, covering century and image groups*
- *Some artists who were not included in image groups*
- *Builds convincing argument using references to course materials*
- *a lower score (18) indicates some slight imbalance in the discussion or in the images used*

14 - 16: Either everything has been addressed but overall the work is less complete, or answer relies too heavily on personal interpretation without support from literature or artworks

- *Discussion is weak because sources are used inadequately but images are good*
- *images do not meet specifications (image group, non- im group, numbers)*

11-13: Inconsistencies are evident in terms of not answering the question adequately or weaker analyses of some of the images chosen. Too few images used and readings are named but not discussed. One or two readings may have been referred to without correct understanding.

8-10: the project gives the impression of careless work, expressed through hasty writing, incorrect assumptions, and an inadequate number of examples. The work is incomplete in terms of number of images selected and in terms of answering the questions. The higher number indicates that a genuine attempt was made; the lower number indicates that only a minimal attempt was made.