

## CRITICAL THEORY AVT 472 002

Instructor: Thomas Stanley

Due: 10/23/14

### Gallery Project

Your analysis must be based on a single work or set of works on display in a gallery (or museum) that is open to the public. (If you opt to analyze more than one work, all should be a part of the same exhibit.) In a well-prepared paper with proper references to any content that is not your own, focus on any **three** of the questions below as they apply to the art that you have chosen to analyze. If the art you would like to write about does not seem amenable to analysis under at least three of these questions, you should make another selection. Remember, this paper is in lieu of a midterm exam; therefore, think of it as an open book test – an opportunity to indicate that you can apply the concepts covered in the class lectures and assigned readings to a real world situation. Do feel free to support your analysis with any of the assigned readings *and related sources*. I will expect work of the highest caliber (i.e., A-work) to incorporate at least one unassigned author or reading that is germane to the theoretical questions at hand.

Your paper should use the format we adopted at the beginning of the semester. Please review the format guidelines and make sure you are adhering to them precisely. You are being asked to generate an extended essay. This will probably take a minimum of 5-6 pages to do well. It must adhere to the following structure:

In the first section you should carefully identify, situate, and describe the subject of your analysis. Clearly and succinctly, try to let me know what you know of the basic facts about the art you have chosen and the context of its presentation. This would include a synopsis of any statements or other literature that accompanies the art and an at least cursory accounting of the context of its presentation. Next, state the questions you will be addressing and provide a summary of the theoretical arguments that you will use to support your work. Finally, proceed with your analysis.

**1** “But if the entire cycle of any act or event is envisaged in a system where linear continuity and dialectical polarity no longer exist,” writes Baudrillard, “in a field unhinged by simulation, then all determination evaporates, every act terminates at the end of the cycle having benefited everyone and been scattered in all directions.” Does the work you have chosen in any way represent the scattering of an act? Explain. Show how your selected work(s) represent the replacement of a “logic of facts” by a “logic of simulation.”

**2** Douglas Crimp echoes Leo Steinberg in asserting that postmodernism reflects a “radical shift in the subject matter of art, the shift from nature to culture.” He also claims that the postmodern artist has dispensed with the “fiction of the creating subject.” Surely such erasures have left traces (as all erasures do). Please perform (in writing) a forensic investigation of your artwork for any lingering residue of nature or the creative subject. This exercise is obviously only significant when performed on art that might be categorized as contemporary or postmodern.

**3** Was your art found in a museum or a gallery? To what degree is its site of display (point of access) consistent with its terms of production? The museum has a different set of institutional priorities and claims a discursive role quite distinct from the gallery. Please refer to as many sources as is necessary to explain how the politics of presentation impacts the "mode of address" of the art under consideration.

**4** Arthur Danto provides a clear and compelling roadmap for teasing apart the definitional criteria that separate modern, postmodern, and contemporary as the comparative characterization of distinct discontinuities in consciousness. As such these three seemingly temporal adjectives, become less bound to changing times than changing thoughts. Drawing liberally from Danto's argument and language situate your work along a continuum of historical developments in consciousness.