

Curator's Statement | Peer Review Guide

By nature, a curator's statement resembles a welter weight boxer: it's compact, but packs a punch. It introduces viewers to the project, directs them to pay attention to particular aspects of the exhibition, and offers questions for viewers to carry with them as they work through the examples. Read your colleague's essay from start to finish, then go back through the draft to comment on these features:

Central Claim

Highlight the sentence or two where the writer articulates the guiding idea, thesis, or central claim about beauty that the exhibition exposes, examines, or otherwise supports. If you cannot find such a sentence, let the writer know where you expect this statement to appear and, as best you can, try drafting such a statement. Indicate for the writer any ways that you believe the central claim could be enhanced, extended, or improved.

Significance of the Approach

Highlight the place in the essay where the writer talks about the significance of thinking about or investigating beauty in the way the exhibition intends to do. For example, how does thinking about beauty in terms of decay enhance or improve our traditional concepts of beauty? Or, how does paying attention to children's recognitions of beauty extend or confirm the importance of attending to how beauty affects humans? What, in essence, does the exhibition's approach help us to do better or differently when it comes to contemplating beauty? If you think this section of the essay could be improved, give the writer your suggestions.

Examples

Highlight (and number 1, 2, 3...) each of the places in the essay where the exhibition's examples are introduced. Does the writer say something about why each has been chosen, or summarize the function of each? Do they, individually and together seem to support the central claim? Can you recommend any changes to the way they get introduced or talked about here?

Key Questions

Highlight the key questions associated with the exhibition. These are intended to "accompany" the viewer as he/she looks at the examples and considers them individually and as a group. Do these questions challenge the viewer with provocative concerns about the category of beauty being addressed in the exhibition? Can you recommend changes to any of the questions, or new questions altogether?

Any other recommendations?