

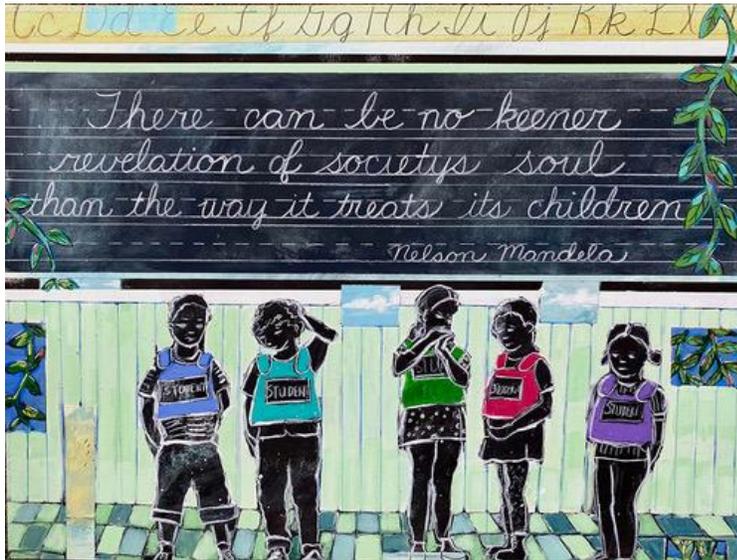
Onyedikachi Ohia-Enyia (he/him)
Exercise Sports Science Major
Class of '22
7/23/22
ARTH 250
Curatorial Project
Brantly Moore

Exhibition Catalog

The theme of my exhibition in general is senseless violence within the United States. Whether it is police brutality or the killing of small children in schools from mass shootings the socio economic message my exhibition is delivering is that it all needs to come to an end. Gun laws must be changed, police officers must be retrained and taught differently, and discrimination must cease to exist. My exhibition consists of various artworks and paintings that exemplify systemic racism, unnecessary and useless violence, and years of police brutality.

The idea that the exhibition includes contemporary art that spans various decades from the 1970s until the 2020s is important as it highlights how the theme of senseless violence persists with no improvement. The style of art is brought together through similar themes of minority depictions and a form of brutality. Each picture is a form of art used in different manners whether it's created to release trauma, for expression or to raise awareness for an issue. Despite all being created for different reasons, each of these works and works alike share a similar purpose, which is important when considering works outside of this curated exhibit. Art will always be a form of release whilst serving as a reminder about the past and even the present and the injustices that consume them.

#1



Karen Gutfreund 2021

“There can be no keener revelation of society's soul than the way it treats its children” -Nelson Mandela

This piece by Karen Gutfreund portrays the senseless violence going on in America. It takes place in a classroom filled with boys and girls and they are wearing bullet proof vests of various colors. We can see and feel the sadness, pain, and confusion in their eyes. The artists illustrate the colorless figures to instill in the audience the lack of life within the children. At the same time they could be perceived as black children. The quote from above reflects how gun laws to no avail remain the same and innocent people are dying in the crossfire. It also shines light on the importance of the removal of guns from inadequate people in society.

#2



Emery Douglas, 1975

This work was published in a 1975 newspaper as propaganda to perpetuate the ideals of ending police brutality while bringing awareness to the murder of minorities in the U.S. The quote: "For the young, the old, the poor and the black, living in America is brutal. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people, other people of color, all oppressed people inside the United States.", is the main point of the art and a common social injustice theme in the 20th century that persists today. This sentiment is enhanced by the pictures held up by the children and their perceived movement like they are marching is also influential. The idea that this brutality does not discriminate between age or minority status is an ideal that reaches beyond this ad.

#3



Karen Gutfreund “Disarm” (2021)

The image portrayed is a police officer pointing a gun at a black man who has his hands up. It is important to note the black man is unarmed, turned around, and in a helpless position yielding to the police officer. The police officer’s face almost resembles that of a skull or the grim reaper signifying one who controls life and death. The defunding of the police force is an important issue Americans have fought for. This artwork reflects the political and social climate of the United states. Disarming hostile police officers and personnel who use excessive force when dealing with unarmed victims should be at the center of attention.

#4



Leon Golub, "White Squad V," 1984

This picture is a part of a seven-painting series depicting the Salvadoran Death Squads. The title indicates the racial distinction of the policeman and tributes to the growing police brutality in America. The emotion and anguish depicted furthered the growing calls to defund the police. Golub, the artist deemed the work "barbaric realism" and says there needs to be more space for work like that which shows the abuses of power in America. He devotes a lot of his work to depicting political injustices and violence like shown here.

#5



"I can't breathe" by Láolú Senbanjo Credit: Láolú Senbanjo

This is a watercolor created by Láolú Senbanjo, an artist and former human rights lawyer based out of New York. He often shares works on instagram and posted a photo of his watercolor and charcoal painting that depicts Floyd with a target on his chest. This picture also shows faces crying out as well as relevant words to this moment like "Thug" and "I can't breathe", one which is a harmful stereotype that's perpetuated followed by the disregard of humanity. One of the most interesting parts of the piece is Donald Trump stating this famous controversial quote about the George Floyd protest: "When the looting starts, the shooting starts". Senbanjo, the artist said: "Every time there is a new senseless death, or blatant manifestation of harmful white supremacy, art can help us to instigate, remember, imagine, discuss, and express these complex experiences and feeling states.", which speaks to how art can be a form of processing trauma for people.

Journals

JOURNAL ENTRY #1

Reflecting on my first week of class I learned many new things and definitions I did not know before. I found our visit to the Wilson Library quite informative and interesting. Touching the 400 year old books was a newfound experience for me because before this I haven't really interacted with anything that old before. Our book was in Latin or Italian and although we couldn't understand everything quite clearly it was interesting to see the different pictures of creatures that the catalog had. The catalog was a tribute to someone in the man's family and it was cool to see how a piece of work this old could be preserved through time. I felt like this deepened my appreciation for art and museums because it made me think about how hard people work to make sure future generations will learn and get to experience history in an interactive way. I learned according to the International Council of Museums a museum is defined as a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. This made me think about if a museum is truly non-profit how does it get the funds to keep acquiring more pieces of art and even to stay open? I also enjoyed the "The System of Collecting" by Jean Baudrillard article because it gave me a new perspective on the word collection. Baudrillard specifically describes a collection as "anything which is the cause or subject of passion." Although it is a very broad definition it makes sense because the term "collection" is only a title. For example, it's similar to when you and a person have been in a relationship for several months

and all your friends refer to the person as your girlfriend or boyfriend but you technically haven't asked her/him out yet even though you guys do relationship-like things. The term boyfriend or girlfriend is only a title in the same way a collection is only a title. Therefore almost anything you are passionate about can be deemed a collection. The article by Susan Pearce "Interpreting objects and museums" also talks about everyday meanings attached to words and how we as humans find and place cultural value on objects found in the physical world. She defines many words like objects, goods and specimens but the one that stood out to me the most was her definition of the word "artifacts." Made by art or skill was how she defined it as this broad term again made me also think about how hundreds of thousands of years from now the people inhabiting the space we are in currently might even consider the dresser next to my bed or the tv stand in my living room an artifact. When we think of the word artifact we think about something that is old or ancient that has been saved or preserved through time. This made me think about the reading by Pomian Krzysztof "The Collection Between the Visible and Invisible" and how the author talks about although art does not seem the most useful or decorative all the time it takes enormous care to preserve them. The author states "the risk of corrosion caused by physical and chemical factors is reduced to a minimum by careful monitoring of variables such as light, humidity, temperature and levels of atmospheric pollution. Damaged objects are always restored to their former glory whenever possible, and every effort is made to ensure that the public's only contact with them is visual." Every time I have visited a museum I never thought about the work that goes into making sure the artwork that was created 100 of years ago looks like the same piece of work it once was. The last sentence of the quote made me feel saddened though because what if it was the artist's intention for his audience to interact physically with his work. By restricting it to only

a visual approach we are devaluing his work, time, and effort. We must take these things into account.

JOURNAL ENTRY #2

When reflecting on the discussion and reading this week I feel like defining the word craft was an important focus of emphasis in class. Craft is the intersection of materials, process, skill, and personal expression, expressly made by human hands. In the reading “Invention of Craft” by Glen Adamson he states “crafts is intrinsic to what it is to be human.” The word intrinsic denotes belonging to naturally or essential. Ultimately a person's craft is what makes them unique and what drives them in society. Similar to the word collection we could also describe a person's craft as an expressive outlet that one has great passion for. He also says crafts were invented by having positive qualities of creativity, rootedness, and positivity. In the article he claims “We must try to turn the clock back to revive craft's organic role in society or at least slow the pace of its vanishing.” This made me think about how fast society is moving and how everybody is working a 9-5 and nobody truly has time for the things that they love. They say “money makes the world go round” but at the end of the day money will make you truly happy. For example, a person may take a job that makes a lot of money but they aren't truly interested in what they are doing so it seems like a chore. Although they are making a lot of money it may keep them happy for a year, maybe 5 years or even 10 years but everybody will come to a certain point where the money won't be worth it anymore and this is where craft comes in. It's important to do what makes you happy and you shouldn't sacrifice your craft for other things in life that won't ultimately bring you that same gratitude. The author also talks about this divergence between fine art and craft at the start of the Renaissance. He states authors like Larry Shiner say there is a clear distinction between fine art and craft and we are more likely to encounter crafts in

museums and galleries because it's only in these circumstances that it can achieve economic viability. I never thought about it like this but fine art would be fine art even if it weren't in a museum and still be worth a lot of money but crafts lose value outside of these spaces.

Nowadays everything is associated with an economical value and crafts seem to be tied with an ancient “prehistoric” cultural value while fine arts seem to be more of a modern terminology dealing with some sort of financial gain or worth.

An interesting theory that deepened my thoughts about the way I view art and challenged my thinking about collections and objects was in the Arts vs Artifacts reading by Arthur Danto. He proposed the idea that an artist must have the idea of creating art before he does it in order to give art a stable identity. People try to give anything the title of art even when it did not have the exalted title when it first was created and this ultimately de-appreciates and bends the boundary between art and reality. The question I had when I first began to read this section was “what happens when you discover something to be art without having the intention of making it art” and he says this is fine but the population of art is a mutually self enriching system of objects and that gains enrichment due to the other pieces around it rather than if it would have existed alone. But the key part he states is “something must have already been an artwork to benefit from this enrichment.” I love this argument because I 100% agree. For years I have seen people going around calling anything and everything art but this ultimately in my eyes is disrespectful to artists who work on their craft and spend hours, days, and months creating magnificent paintings, sculptures, etc.. Art can't be wrong or right but I feel like it should achieve the goal the artists had in mind and if it does that you can call it a success.

JOURNAL ENTRY #3

This week's discussion about museum etiquette was very informative. I enjoyed reading *Museum Manner's* by Constance Classen because it differentiated the difference between a museum and a gallery. It starts off telling the story about a boy who breathed on glass and got arrested for it in a museum in order to emphasize how untouchable these spaces are. The visitor is restricted from experiencing the art in order to preserve its value over time. I learned that many contemporary museums are challenging the "traditional hands off" ethos with interactive and innovative museums. I feel like this is a good idea and may draw more people into attending museums. The only issue with this is that only certain pieces of art should be touched due to age, fragility, and wear and tear. Not all art is meant to be touched but if museums incorporated more interactive aspects they could potentially get more business and expand. The author uses interesting word choices when describing how artifacts are to be dealt with. "Artifacts for the most part are only meant to be seen, not felt, smelt, sounded, and certainly not tasted." It overall just describes how visitors to museums were ultimately distanced and separated from the art. He is portraying how our senses are being starved from actually experiencing the art. He claims museums and galleries are similar in the sense that they allow visitors to gather around and appreciate their works of art. People who have a greater affinity towards galleries complain a lot about walking in museums but the first galleries were added in private houses that were made for walking. Later paintings were added to give people something to look at while they walked. This was something new I learned. Museums to me seem to give off more of a formal setting than galleries. In the reading by John Walsh "Pictures, Tears, Lights and Seats" he repeats a quote by

James Cuano that stood out to me . It reads “In the end, this is what our visitors most want from us: to have access of works of art in order to change them, to alter their experience of the world, to sharpen and heighten their sensibilities to it, to make it come alive anew for them so they can walk away at a different angle to the world.” I loved this quote because I feel like if you enter a museum and your perspective about a topic or piece of work wasn't challenged or at least intrigued you were not one with the art. This honestly changed my view on how I looked at museums. Now when I walk into one I'll try to go home with a greater sense or appreciation for something. Museums seek to educate their visitors with the history of art, they entertain them with films, food, shopping, fun, and boost civic awareness. The article definitely makes museums sound more fun than they actually are but it is cool to see the many different ways they can affect humans. They also build bonds and bring people together or they can provide refuge and reassurance to people disheveled from incomprehensible events. I never thought about how a museum could help people who have been through trauma find peace and consolation. I also like how the article uses the simile: attending an art museum is like listening to a great composition beautifully played. It can shake us, disorient us, and give us a stark sense of loss and make us feel a variety of emotions we did not even know existed.

JOURNAL ENTRY #4

How do Museums define other cultures? I thought this reading by Ivan Karp was quite interesting because he talks about a strategy used when representing the artwork from different cultures. He says exoticizing showcases the differences between the cultural group being displayed and the cultural group doing the viewing. Also, finding similarities from the artwork

that may resonate with you at the same time highlights the parallels from each culture. I thought it was very true and interesting how he mentions otherness is either made strange by exoticizing or made familiar by assimilating. When people first come in contact with a foreign object our first reactions are either that's really weird or that's really cool. Usually the things we find interest in are the things we find resemblance in or things that resonate with us. When something is weird to us it is usually something we have never seen before or are very unfamiliar with. In our subconscious it is these little subtle biases that cause one in my opinion to exoticize or assimilate with an object. He claims when "exoticizing the differences of the other, they are portrayed as an absence of qualities the dominant cultural group possesses." When reading this I thought otherness does not always have to be negative though. It can be seen as a positive thing. The author also touches on this. He believed assigning positive values to the other is a difficult but possible thing to do but racial and ethnic stereotypes are preventing this. This makes sense because when I am unfamiliar about a topic or subject as a human my brain assigns it the first well known stereotype associated with it. This can be toxic and devaluing to a work of art. Assigning positive values is important because it helps combat the negative stereotypes. Like Ivan Karp states "negative images need positive associations." The whole point of using familiar devices in pieces of art is to give the audience something to grasp on. If this doesn't occur the audience the work was intended for would have nothing to use to discern cultural, racial, and ethnic differences. The danger of this in my opinion is when an artist has the intention of making a painting or sculpture in order to please a certain crowd, the artist loses himself and his creativity. Now his original idea becomes skewed due to the need to find a commonality with his consumers. "The politics of producing the image of the other requires a poetics of difference and similarity. The familiar becomes the bridge through which we understand the exotic." This quote

is interesting because I interpreted it as once you understand why the artist created a figure you can easily acknowledge and appreciate the work. The piece now goes from exotic to eloquent. He also says exoticizing works by inverting the familiar. We are so quick to call something weird because it is foreign instead of finding a common ground with the piece. It is interesting because people's first instinct is to find what's wrong with something instead of appreciating that "thing." For instance, somebody could have cleaned your car and done a 98% job on it but we are first to notice the one little spot in the back that the worker may have missed. It may be just how our brains are wired or because we are paying for something and expect it to be done thoroughly.