

FLATPAGE

Sample Developmental Report

Developmental Edit Reader Report

Author: _____

Title: _____

Areas on which Author would like particular feedback/focus:

The author would like feedback on incorporating the reviewer reports and suggestions of the journal's editors (both of which will be supplied with the manuscript)

Intended audience: Readers of _____; academics, but not necessarily specialists.

Thesis: Is the thesis stated up front? Does the piece deliver on it?

YES -- it appears in the third paragraph of the essay. The thesis is referenced throughout, although I think the comparison/contrast with the murals could be amplified a bit.

Strengths & Weaknesses:

Strength: Overall, the quality of the writing is good; hardly even needs copyediting.

Weaknesses: Could take a slightly more authoritative tone, state claims more assertively.

What is present? What's absent? Are there subtexts or agendas?

Present: All the requisite theory and texts on "XXXXXXX" are there

Absent: I agree with the reviewers that there could be more discussion and description of the actual images in [the artist]'s studies, which are only mentioned in detail on page 17 (para 27).

Organization/structure:

I think the sections are pretty well organized as they are – they seem to hang together well, and I don't see a need for rearrangement.

Introduction/opening (paragraphs 1-3, pages 1-2)

Section 1: What Is [Type of Aesthetics]? (paragraphs 4-8, pages 3-5)

Section 2: The Photographs (paragraphs 9-22, pages 5-14)

Section 3: The Murals (paragraphs 23-28, pages 14-19)

Section 4: The Survey (paragraphs 29-38, pages 19-26)

Section 5: The Legacy of [Place] (paragraphs 39-42, pages 26-28)

Authorial tone/voice:

Solid, but a little "quiet": could take a more authoritative tone when staking claims and linking comparative cases. (See below for examples of how to improve this.)

Example: “Moreover, according to [the artist], incarcerated men in fact supported the plans.”

Stronger: “Incarcerated men actually supported the plans, according to [the artist].”

Example: “The erasure to which incarcerated people are vulnerable is not only bodily; it extends into narrative, history, the archive.”

Stronger: “Incarcerated people are vulnerable to an erasure that is not only bodily; it extends into narrative, history, and the archive.”

Please note how these examples are rearranged to **move the subject** closer to start of sentence; **eliminate “hedge” words** like “moreover” and **prepositional phrases** (“to which”) that complicate comprehension; and to place **greater emphasis on the action (verbs)**. These are subtle changes, but they will enhance the authority you convey when applied consistently.

Recurrent Style or Copyediting issues:

Some *very* long sentences – please review with an eye to breaking up those longer than five lines.

Next Steps / Revision Plan

Overall, I find the essay to be well-written, well supported, and well organized. It appears the author has done substantial revisions in response to the four reviews of the piece, and it shows in the essay’s improved flow and conceptual unity. There are still a few places that the text could be “tightened up” with attention to the following issues:

- 1) **Discussion of mural imagery:** I agree with the Reviewers that the actual images in the mural sketches and studies don’t get enough airtime. I would add more – maybe a short paragraph? – to **Section 3**, “The Murals,” where the entirety of the mural imagery is described systematically for the reader, in reference to the applicable Figures.
- 2) **Section subheads:** Although I love the brevity of these subheads, they could work harder for you: instead of “The Photographs,” think “Documentary Photography and the Agency of the Subject,” for example. I recommend using the subhead to briefly summarize/explain each of the three interior sections (“The Photographs,” “The Murals” and “The Survey”) to make them more meaningful as signposts for the reader.
- 3) **p. 5 – end of Section 1 (What Is Carceral Aesthetics?):** The discussion of Fleetwood’s work is well done, but seems to end rather abruptly before the next section turns in another direction. Add a final sentence that wraps up the discussion and ties it back to Shahn/the Rikers murals.
- 4) **p. 5 – Start of Section 2 (The Photographs):** It feels like it takes a while for this section’s relevance to become clear. Please consider moving **paragraph 18** (from page 11, beginning “Fleetwood devotes an entire chapter of *Marking Time* to photography...”) as it both links to the previous section, and helps frame the reader’s thinking about Shahn’s use of photography. I would then **follow it with paragraph 14** (p. 8, starting with “In a Smithsonian oral history interview from 1965...”) to bring the discussion back to Shahn and why realism was so important to the project for him.
- 5) **p. 25– last sentence of paragraph 27:** About MacCormick’s belief that colors were “useful... for the mental readjustment of prisoners”: I agree with one of the Reviewers that this remark seems “plunked” here, and it could use a little fleshing out (just a few descriptive words to explain *which* colors? How would “colors” be therapeutic? In the prison context, or more generally? Etc.). Keep it brief -- no more than one more sentence.
- 6) **p. 28, final paragraph:** I would weave in a final mention of “**aesthetics**” somehow here, the better to tie the whole article together. If possible, add a sentence or two that re-asserts and then “clinches” how the essay has demonstrated your thesis.

Editor's Conclusion

All in all, this piece feels very nearly "there": the thesis is well expressed, the writing is clear, the order of the sections makes sense, and the narrative is hanging together well. With the addition/ incorporation of the above suggestions (and a single pass of light copy editing), I think the revised piece will be in a very strong position for the resubmission to be accepted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Woodhouse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

~ Leslie Castro-Woodhouse, PhD