

PAUL PFEIFFER

VITRUVIAN FIGURE

STUDY GUIDE

MCAD

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY
ART & DESIGN

VITRUVIAN FIGURE (2015)

Vitruvian Figure (2015) is a combination of plywood, mirror, and wood with the measurements of 960 x 500 x 210 cm. *Vitruvian Figure* is also based on the Philippine Arena. There are many perspectives on what is perfect and what is not perfect. A discussion about this is on the perspective of what the ideal body. Some will say that the ideal body type would be someone with a petite figure or another would say that the ideal would be someone with a broader figure. It is discussion like this though that helps people evolve and be more open-minded about themselves and other things that happen in life.



- Re-define perfection. Make a paper and artwork about how the world sees perfection and how you see perfection. Compare and contrast the two views and reflect about these.

Vitruvian Figure (2015) it is a two-channel synced video with sound on a 30 minute loop. What Paul Pfeiffer did was make a replica of the Philippine Arena but miniaturized. The illusion of it is that the miniature version of the arena looks so much like the actual version until one sees the hand come in and adjust a part of the area.

- Create your own optical illusion. Research about what illusions you can make and then display your work to other people, see if you fool them. Look also into the way illusions have been created by artists. Then, write about what optical illusion you used and explain why you used that type of illusion.
- Get pictures of different stadia from around the world and using these pictures, make a mosaic of a stadium of your own. Get inspiration or research material from different types of stadia around the world, you can even base it off ancient stadia as well.



- Re-invent the Philippine Arena: how would you have made the stadium? Design a stadium and then explain why you used that type of design. Research different types of stadia around the world, particular, Greek or Roman designs.

DESIDERATA

Desiderata portrays the desire for the American dream (this refers to the United States of America where the nation has freedom and equal opportunities for prosperity and success; it is also a set of ideals which can be achieved through hard work in a society where everyone is born equal and free), the desire to win hence the game show (*The Price is Right*) in the video Paul Pfeiffer made.

- Express through the medium you like using what you want or what you desire and then discuss. You can also discuss why you desire or like this object so much. It can be about anything, a contest that you participated in for the prize, a limited edition item, or a person you desired. Discuss your feelings when you saw what you desired, and when you got what your desired or did not get your desire.
- Make a video story or presentation about a person's desire. Look into TV shows like *Top Model*, *American Ninja Warrior*, *A Minute to Win it*, and other TV shows similar to that for references. You can go into what the contestants desire and what the audience desires, compare and contrast these.
- Compare and contrast the poem *Desiderata* with the artwork. What do you think is the effect of the poem on one's desires? Write a reaction paper about this.



According to the Spinoza's Psychological Theory humans have desires for finite objects and their ambitions and actions go towards these desires.

More information

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza-psychological/>

There are so many things that people desire. It can be something so fantastic and even the drollest object in the entire world. It's not even limited to objects; it can be a place or person.

FRAGMENT OF A CRUCIFIXION (AFTER FRANCIS BACON)

In *Fragment of a Crucifixion (after Francis Bacon)* one sees the basketball player, Larry Johnson, in a video loop of his triumph in his basketball game. All of the players have been digitally erased by Paul Pfeiffer and one can only see Larry Johnson's reaction to his victory. In Paul Pfeiffer's video, Larry Johnson becomes the projection of triumphal male fantasy.



- Who in your mind is a projection of triumphal male/female fantasy? Print a picture, show a video, or do a power point presentation about him/her and explain why for you he/she is the symbol of triumph.
- Reflect on what kind of triumphs you had years ago. If you have any objects or things related to that triumph bring them and explain to your class why that item is related to the triumph you achieved. If you don't have such an item write about the time you triumphed over something.
- Form a group and make a video about someone who has triumphed over a fear, obstacle, whatever you may think of. The video should be 2-3 minutes, make sure you record the main character's reaction, and put it in a loop.

BOOMERANG (1974)

In Richard Serra/Nancy Holt *Boomerang* (1974), one can hear Nancy Holt speak but at the same time hear the words she says. It's a different take on how one listens to a person's voice because one realizes that one is just hearing the vibrations made by the throat of the person.



This artwork portrays how words can be manipulated to form ideas and thoughts, to make us think about our humanity

Hearing a person talk can trigger different reactions depending on the person who is listening or who is talking. In the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication, communication is a two-way process where there is a sender and a receiver

More information

<http://communicationtheory.org/shannon-and-weaver-model-of-communication>

- Keeping the message of the artwork in mind, what do you think makes you human or keeps your humanity? Do an artwork or paper about it.

- Record your voice and manipulate it so that we can hear the vibrations or echo of the speech as well. You can use a speech, rhyme, song, or poem but the subject should be something that questions one's perspectives or humanity (examples: Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, et cetera)

- Make a medley of songs by different artists of your choice and manipulate it so that we can hear the vibrations and echo of the person/people singing. Explain why you used this combination of songs and your artist(s) choice. You can include a discussion on the individuality of voice or personality of a voice.

BOOMERANG (2015)

Boomerang (2015), is a single-channel video with a one-way mirror in a surround sound room and on a 10 minute loop. Instead of Nancy Holt speaking, a speech choir is the one on video/performing. One hears the echo of their voices but unlike Nancy Holt, it is not just your ear that receives the sound, but your body can feel the vibrations all around as the sound echoes in the room. An instrument that projects the sound like a microphone or the computer program that enables Stephen Hawking to speak to people is somewhat similar to what Paul Pfeiffer did in this work.

- Form a speech choir.

Use any speech or poem that is for a speech choir competition (make sure to apply a little theatrical effects but only using the manipulation of your voices) after you have chosen a work. Document the group saying the speech and then manipulate the video so that we can hear their voices echo and vibrate.

- Get videos of speech choir competitions and manipulate the videos so that we can hear the echo and hear their voices vibrate.



24 LANDSCAPES

There are some things that become significant when there is a symbol of something or someone inspirational or remarkable. When one looks at *24 Landscapes* one sees the beauty of the land and the sea combined in pictures that are beautiful and almost peaceful to look at, but when one finds out that the iconic model and performer, Marilyn Monroe, had been the subject of the original photographs reworked by Paul Pfeiffer in *24 Landscapes*, the significance changes. It makes one question how important an area, place, object, or person is depending on the situation. So, consider the following:

- Study the photos and reflect on the difference of significance when the figure is in the photos and when she is not. Then express what you think of these differences by using what medium you feel comfortable with (writing, drawing, film, photography, etc.)
- Note that when you stand in front of these photographs, your reflection may be seen. Would you like to recreate the poses of Marilyn Monroe? How would you pose if you were in front of these landscapes? Go to social media and find out how many photos were taken in front of this work. What do you think is the significance of this work to those who were photographed in front of it?



- Research about historic events or places and write about what might have happened if those circumstances were different. When Marilyn Monroe was photographed in those areas the main focus was her and the photos became significant because these were last shots taken of her before she died.
- Remembering or documenting something is a very important practice even more so if the object one is taking a picture of is significant. What makes an item or person worthwhile to document or remember? What do you do to document them, if you document or record them at all?
- In museum practice, documentation is important. There are instances though that artifacts have incomplete information. You can go into the collection database of museums, and find out what information is there, noting when these were added/inputted. Were there changes, and if yes, how did these affect the significance/value of that artifact? Discuss how value or significance is attached to an object, person, place, etc, by whom and why.
- Take 24 pictures of someone you care about in different areas then crop his or her figure out of the photos, and then make a comparison between the picture without the person and with the person. Does it still signify something? Also, reflect on this: why only 24 pictures?

EMPIRE

The artwork, *Empire* is supposed to make you think of those ambitions.

- Also look into how long wasp's nests last. Do you think the effort is worth it, if you were the wasp? Recall something that you have been wanting to create/build, and the effort this would require. Is this worth it for you? Why or why not?
- Read about how a wasp builds its nest and how long it takes to build its home

More information

<http://insects.about.com/od/antsbeeswasps/qt/how-wasp-nests-are-made.htm>

<http://www.wasp-removal.com/wasp-nest.php>

- Make your own wasp's nest using any materials you think is best, and then on that nest design/write your ambitions and goals.
- Compare the artwork *Empire* with any literary work on ambition (literary works such as *Macbeth*, *Genesis*, *Things Fall Apart*, *The story of Phaethon*, et cetra. Write a reaction paper about this.

More information

<http://literacle.com/literary-themes-ambition/>
and reflect about these.



Most people have varied perspectives about a sunrise and sunset. For example, in Egyptian mythology whenever the sun rose it was a beginning of a new day and life for the sun god Ra was able to overcome the dangers of the night. But there is no doubt that whenever the sunrises or sets it can be a breathtaking phenomenon.

Some people underestimate how beautiful a sunset or sunrise could be, and how it can affect a person much like in the poem of Peter S. Quinn:

Sunrise sunset in the mood of the way
In the colors of flame and darkish hour
Every shine time of night and the day
Like golden horizon of a new flower

Together to fill up the dream flight time
Of call from alone in the distant past
Where flow of the glimmering is in prime
When moon and the stars show off in their cast

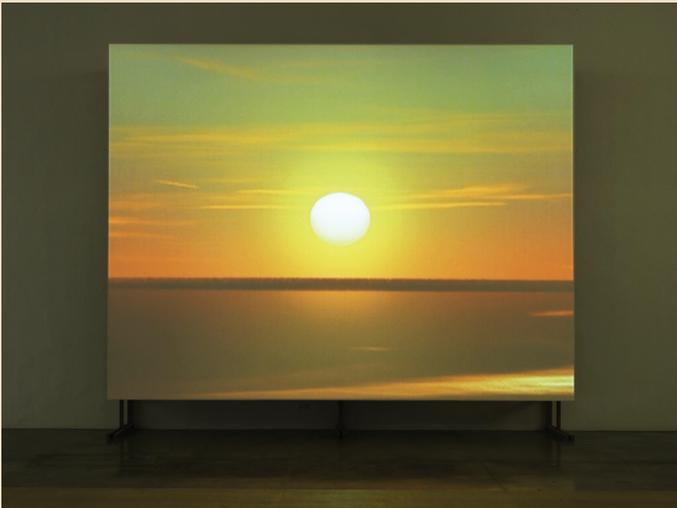
With love so tender in splendor and spark
Of night in the twilight after sunset
Its glistening glowing to deepness dark
With colors of heaven in glow alphabet

Till sunrise in the morning comes new
To dawn of the rising on to a day true

MORNING AFTER THE DELUGE

In Paul Pfeiffer's *Morning After the Deluge* one sees the sun slowly rising. The artwork is based on Joseph William Turner's 1843 painting, *Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory) – the Morning after the Deluge - Moses Writing the Book of Genesis*.

- Read Genesis 5:32-10:1 (Noah's story). Apart from the image of the flood, the rainbow is what strikes readers. How does the text make you imagine the sunrise?
- Make a paper about what you would have done if you were in the same situation as Noah characters of any stories about a great flood. You can go into different mythologies, folklore, myths, or tales from different countries or cultures. Look into the similarities and differences of the stories. Also, write about how you would feel or react to seeing the sunrise after the storm.
- Paint your own sunrise or sunset using different colors. Don't be limited to the basic colors of a sunrise or sunset, use what colors you want and then explain why you used those colors. Reflect on your experience when watching the sunrise or set. What did you feel?



Most people would agree that making a piece of art is not an easy task but the thought of replicating another work is something that can even take longer, depending on how committed the person is to making the work.

Find out the difference between copy, replica and forgery. Museum ethics also state something about displaying a copy, replica or forgery which you can research on. There is also the practice of appropriation. What are the challenges faced by the artist in this case (appropriation)?



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