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English 3

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Raising Awareness Lowering Barriers

In “Naming the Disappeared, Raising the Dead,” Doris Salcedo, an eminent political artist renowned for her work during Colombia's prolonged armed conflict, emphasizes the transformative power of artistic expression. Salcedo contends that art serves as a vital tool, particularly in times of crisis and political violence, allowing for the articulation and materialization of painful experiences that often remain unspoken. Through her work, Salcedo endeavors to give voice to the oppressed and shed light on the plight of vulnerable victims of political violence; by challenging established power structures, art becomes a medium to raise awareness, fight for change, and expand society's understanding of humanity. This profound ability of art to confront ignored or invisible aspects of reality makes it a potent force for social transformation, enabling the marginalized to be heard and acknowledged.

Salcedo's assertion finds compelling support in the artwork of Keith Haring, particularly in his iconic mural "Crack is Wack" (1986)(see fig. 1), situated near Central Harlem, New York. This large-scale mural serves as a potent cautionary symbol against the widespread use of crack cocaine during the 1980s, embodying the spirit of anti-drug activism. Haring's piece employs bold, powerful lines to delineate both the message and the underlying chaos, creating a visually striking yet almost flat composition. The phrase

"CRACK IS WACK" is rendered in bold letters, imbuing it with a sense of urgency and significance. Despite the limited color palette of black and orange, the mural conveys a compelling sense of immediacy, with the orange reminiscent of traffic cones and warning signs, amplifying the message further. Haring ingeniously utilizes negative space between the strokes, evoking a feeling of chaos where individual elements blur together, mirroring the disarray of the era. The slogan stands out distinctly, visually separated from the rest of the artwork through deliberate spacing and bubble lettering. Additionally, the rhythmic patterns within the lines and shapes create a sense of unity, emphasizing the diverse yet harmonious elements. The repetition within the mural imparts a lively, dynamic quality, intensifying the urgency and chaos embedded in the artwork's core message.



Fig. 1. Keith, Haring. *Crack Is Wack*

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/crack-is-wack-keith-haring-mural-in-new-york-city-gets-second-life>

Keith Haring's significant work, "Ignorance = Fear" (1989), encapsulates the essence of activism through art in the form of a compelling poster. This piece stands as a call to arms against the AIDS epidemic, a pressing issue of the 1980s that deeply affected Haring and numerous others. As a gay man, Haring felt a profound responsibility to mobilize society in the battle against AIDS, employing his distinct style to create a visually striking and emotionally charged message. The poster utilizes a cartoony aesthetic, employing short lines around caricatures to convey movement and distress, notably mimicking the "See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil" Monkeys while emphasizing the message "Silence = Death," symbolized by a pink mark representing AIDS. Intense colors and bold outlines draw viewers' attention to the distressed figures, highlighting the urgency of the issue. Haring's deliberate use of balance, with thick borders on the top and bottom, imparts a sense of pressure, emphasizing the weight of the subject matter. Inspired by the New York graffiti scene, Haring employs thick black lines to emphasize both the message and the affected individuals equally, underscoring the importance of acknowledging both. Furthermore, Haring's rejection of unity in favor of individual emphasis and his choice to maintain a flat composition resonate with his commitment to making high art accessible to the public. Through this deliberate simplicity and directness, Haring's work serves as a powerful example of art's potential to spark social change and raise awareness on critical issues.



Fig. 2. Keith, Haring. *Crack Is Wack*. Keith Haring Foundation
<https://www.haring.com/!/art-work/253>

Keith Haring's global activism is evident in his profound artwork addressing the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In his iconic print, "Free South Africa" (1985), Haring boldly confronted the deeply entrenched racial segregation and institutionalized discrimination prevailing under apartheid. South Africa, during this period, was marred by severe racial and social disparities, exacerbating divisions along racial lines. Haring's distinctive artistic style, characterized by thick black lines outlining figures and shapes, imparts a sense of urgency and significance to his work. Vivid and striking colors, a hallmark of Haring's repertoire, are strategically employed in a limited palette of red, yellow, and black, intensifying the visual impact and focusing attention on the subject matter. The composition of "Free South Africa" is dynamic and straightforward, employing geometric shapes and simplified human figures to convey a powerful message. At the heart of the artwork stands a prominent figure, visibly captive,

symbolized by a noose and rope around the neck—an unmistakable representation of oppression and confinement. The figure on the right, holding the rope, epitomizes the oppressor, further emphasizing the struggle faced by the captive individual. The use of bold, heavily weighted lines accentuates the figure's fight against oppression, infusing the artwork with a palpable sense of resilience and determination. The artwork's unequivocal message is underscored by the text "Free South Africa" at the bottom, leaving no room for ambiguity. It serves as a resounding call to action, advocating for the immediate cessation of apartheid and the release of political prisoners in South Africa. Through this powerful visual narrative, Haring not only raises awareness about a critical global issue but also echoes the collective plea for justice, freedom, and equality, demonstrating art's unparalleled ability to inspire change and challenge oppressive systems.



FREE SOUTH AFRICA

Fig. 3. Keith, Haring. *Free South Africa* . Myartbroker

<https://www.myartbroker.com/artist-keith-haring/series-free-south-africa>

This sample of Haring's work illustrates his commitment to bring forms of art into digestible and accessible pieces for the public. Although his artworks have been featured in a number of museums and galleries, he stayed true to his word and brought important pieces of political activism and social commentary into the hands of the public. Similar to Salcedo, Haring's work brings important social problems and lets the viewer experience them secondhand from someone who is also affected by those same issues. Through Haring, we are able to recognize the significance of events that are occurring in our day to day, many of which you don't get to see or feel firsthand.

Work Cited

Doris, Salcedo. "Naming the Disappeared, Raising the Dead." *The New York Times*, May 25, 2020,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/25/opinion/colombia-violence-art.html>.

Accessed 15 September 2023.

"Bio" The Keith Haring Foundation, <https://www.haring.com/!/about-haring/bio>

Accessed 17 September 2023.

Note about artworks: Since I provided full source information about each artwork with each figure caption, I do not need to provide this information on the Works Cited page.

Note on the use of generative AI:

I used ChatGPT in the process of writing this paper. While I did not borrow directly from the results, I used the following prompts to expand my awareness of how the various Elements of Art and Principles of Design could be applied to a formal analysis of each work. The results helped me make decisions about which elements and principles to emphasize, according to my own process of viewing and interpreting the meaning of each work:

- Apply the elements of art and the principles of design to a formal analysis of Pieter Bruegel's "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus."
- Apply the elements of art and the principles of design to a formal analysis of Pieter Bruegel's "The Peasant Wedding."
- Apply the elements of art and the principles of design to a formal analysis of Pieter Bruegel's "The Triumph of Death."

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Introduction	<p>Summary thoroughly encapsulates the article's primary claim and supporting details.</p> <p>Thesis clearly and precisely states why the artist further illustrates and/or challenges the article's primary claim.</p>	<p>Summary reflects a clear understanding of the article's primary claim but could be more thorough in connecting the author's supporting points.</p> <p>Thesis is clear but could more precisely relate the artist's work to the article's primary claim.</p>	<p>Summary reflects some understanding of the article's primary claim but omits some significant supporting points or includes irrelevant information.</p> <p>Thesis is somewhat clear but lacks precision about how the artist's work relates to the article's primary claim.</p>	<p>Summary is missing significant details or lacks a clear understanding of the article's primary claim and supporting points.</p> <p>Thesis is unclear or vague, making it difficult to understand how the writer is relating an artist's work to the article's primary claim.</p>
Development	<p>Body paragraphs thoroughly support the thesis through insightful analysis, moving from an interpretation of the overall meaning of each artwork to specific examination of visual artistic techniques, themes, and/or symbolism.</p>	<p>Body paragraphs develop the thesis through some insightful analysis. Some interpretations of the overall meaning of 1-2 artworks could be stronger or better supported through more specific examination of visual artistic techniques, themes, and/or symbolism.</p>	<p>Body paragraphs provide a basic level of analysis but generally need a stronger level of interpretation and more specific examinations of visual artistic techniques, themes, and/or symbolism.</p>	<p>Body paragraphs lack development: analysis is thin due to underdeveloped or missing interpretations of each artwork; or, the writer doesn't examine visual artistic techniques, themes, and/or symbolism.</p>
Coherence + Closure	<p>Writer uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. The concluding paragraph articulates an insightful connection between the opinion</p>	<p>Writer mostly uses appropriate transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, although there may be occasional lapses in variety or effectiveness. The concluding paragraph articulates a connection between the opinion article and a pattern of</p>	<p>The writer uses transitions and syntax to some extent, but there are significant gaps in their use, leading to issues with cohesion and clarity in the text. The concluding paragraph attempts to establish a connection between the opinion article and</p>	<p>The writer does not effectively utilize transitions and syntax to connect sections of the text, resulting in a lack of cohesion and poor clarity regarding the relationships between ideas and concepts. The concluding paragraph fails to articulate a meaningful</p>

	<p>article and a pattern of meaning derived from the analysis, leaving the reader with a compelling sense of why the writer thinks art matters in the context of the discussion.</p>	<p>meaning derived from the analysis, leaving the reader with a sense of why the writer thinks art matters in the context of the discussion (although it could be more insightful).</p>	<p>a pattern of meaning derived from the analysis but falls somewhat short in clarity or insight, leaving the reader with some questions or uncertainties.</p>	<p>connection between the opinion article and a pattern of meaning derived from the analysis, leaving the reader without a clear understanding of why the writer believes art matters in the context of the discussion.</p>
<p>MLA Format + Citation</p>	<p><u>MLA format, Works Cited page, and in-text citation</u> are all perfect by MLA standards.</p> <p>The analysis of each of 3 required artworks is accompanied by a clear, high-quality image. Each image is formatted as an <u>"illustration," which includes a label, a number, a caption and/or source information.</u></p> <p>Use of AI: Include a note at the very end of the essay explaining how you used ChatGPT or any other AI tools to develop this essay. If you decide to cite ChatGPT as a source, you must follow these <u>MLA guidelines for citing generative AI.</u></p>	<p><u>MLA format, Works Cited page, and/or in-text citation</u> are close to meeting MLA standards but have some inaccuracies*.</p> <p>*Including MLA formatting of 3 required artwork images and / or citations of AI sources and use.</p>	<p><u>MLA format, Works Cited page, and/or in-text citation</u> are not yet close to meeting MLA standards*.</p> <p>*Including MLA formatting of 3 required artwork images and / or citations of AI sources and use.</p>	<p><u>MLA format, Works Cited page, and in-text citation</u> are missing.*</p> <p>*Note: failure to cite sources or honestly explain use of AI in the writing of this essay are violations of District's Cheating and Plagiarism Policies and will trigger its intervention protocol.</p>
<p>Mechanics</p>	<p>Writing is polished, free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.</p>	<p>Writing contains some spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors. However, these errors do not impact</p>	<p>Writing contains numerous spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors. These errors impact the reader's understanding.</p>	<p>Frequent errors accumulate, impairing the reader's ability to understand the essay.</p>

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