African Visual Cultures  
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Aluka Final Project: Part II

Now that you are all set with your curatorial teams and have developed a topic for your virtual exhibition, I wanted to provide a bit more information about the project, including deadlines and more specific criteria for the project.

**Deadlines and important dates:**

Thursday November 20: This will be a group working day for your projects. You can get together with your groups this day and meet individually with me or with Elliot on your projects. There won't be additional homework assigned for this day.

Tuesday November 27, Thursday November 29, Tuesday December 4: Presentations!!! On these days you should be prepared to do a 20 minute in-class presentation with your group. Here, you will introduce your project to the class and take us on a virtual tour of your wiki and exhibition. Although your project is not “due” on this day, you should have most of your text written and all of your image links ready for us to look at.

Saturday, December 15: Due date for final projects. This is the date that our final exam is scheduled for, which is why I’ve chosen it as the due date for your projects. At this time, all materials will be due. You may also turn in your work earlier, if your entire group agrees on an earlier due date.

**Further advice about Research, Writing, and Images:**

**Images:**

Given that you have already determined the focus of your exhibition, I think that you should turn to the images FIRST, rather than starting with more research. Remember that in art history we form our arguments with images, and so I’d like to see you turn there, first. The best way to approach this is to do exactly what most of you did last week when we worked together at the library. Look, look, look! Be sure to begin with the Aluka database, as these materials will form the bulk of your wiki, and you should structure your themes around Aluka’s offerings. When you are done with that, you can also use visual materials from MDID that we have looked at in class (try searching with “South Africa” or “South African” in the keyword section). You will also want to utilize our great collection of books on South African art in the library. Feel free to pull images from there – if you give the slide library enough notice, they can scan the images for you and add them to MDID.

When you are searching for images, especially on Aluka, please think broadly about what visual culture is. For example, if you go to the Aluka site and type in “women”, you’ll find a lot of material that is visual, but which might not be considered “art”. For example, there are dozens of booklets and pamphlets for *The Black Sash*, or *Sechaba*, which were resistance publications that included important and powerful images on their covers. You may absolutely include things like this, as they were part of the visual culture of the resistance movement. It is also great to use documents from Aluka.

The images will be the basis for your argument and will be what makes your exhibition GREAT, rather than just good. When you look through the images, ask yourself questions like: what do these images express about the liberation movement (or about your topic)?
You should be gathering as many images as you can now.

**Research:** As we’ve discussed earlier, you will need to do additional research for your projects. Once you’ve clarified your topic and argument through images, you will need to turn to outside research to provide you with more context to support your visual evidence, just as you would if you were writing a research paper in art history.

Elliot provided some good suggestions on the blue sheet that he handed out last week. I’m not sure that the encyclopedias and basic references will be very helpful here, given that you already have specific topics. I also recommend the following:

Two special issues of the journal *African Arts* that are devoted to art and politics in Africa (with most articles about South Africa). Both also have great images:
- *African Arts* Winter 2004
- *African Arts* Autumn 2005
- *African Arts* vol. 40 issue 2 (Summer 2007) also has a good article by Ruth Kerkham Simbao on “The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Soweto Uprisings: Reading the Shadow in Sam Nzima’s Iconic Photograph of Hector Pieterson”

Don’t forget the books on South African arts in our library. Please make use of them. It is also always a good idea to make use of the bibliographies of your sources to guide you to other relevant research on your topic.

When your final projects need to be submitted (in December), you will need to include a bibliography and a list of images that are included in your exhibition. You can look at your Blier book, or other art history texts, for examples on how to do this.

**Organizing and Writing your Wiki**

There are certain things that **should** be included in your wiki. They include:

- **Introduction:** Your wiki should include a **scholarly introduction** to your exhibition, which should be about 1,000 words in length. Here, you will present the argument of your exhibition, include citations to scholarly sources, and show evidence of outside research. Last week I gave you copies of the introduction to *The Short Century* catalogue as an example, and you can use this as a model. This should be similar to the introduction to an exhibition catalogue, or the wall text at the entrance of a special exhibition. This is what people will read to introduce them to your work.

  Following the introduction, you will want to organize your wiki into sub-sections, like chapters in a book or different rooms in an exhibition. Each section should have its own introductory text, which will not be as extensive as the main introduction, but should introduce viewers/readers to the section in terms of content and historical context. My suggested length for these separate sections is about 500 words, and I imagine you will have between 3-5 sub-sections of your exhibition. You might want to divide up your group and assign one or two people to work on and write each section.

  The rest of the organization is up to you! You will want to include as much visual material in the introduction and in each section as possible, and you get to decide how you will work in this material. Please remember to somehow “label” the images with titles, artists or source, and date.
I also know that some of you are including links to music, film clips, and other media. I think that’s great!