

**“Critical Issues in Art Conservation”**  
**Johns Hopkins University, Spring 2021**  
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**Final Paper Description**

We’ve spent the entire semester looking at the many tangible, intangible, sensory, historical, cultural, memorial, aesthetic and other values associated with items, objects, sites and experiences we call “art” or “cultural heritage.” We’ve seen how contested these ideas are, how difficult it is to preserve all the values that an individual item/site hold, and we’ve also seen many interesting models for how to do preservation work that isn’t just about a static museum display. We’ve especially seen how important participation is in the way that cultural heritage is preserved more fully, and how collaboration, co-stewardship and more flexible and broad forms of preservation practices can bring more people into the process of conserving art and cultural heritage for the people of now and the future.

So, for the final paper, I want you to think about what kind of museum you could build given all the knowledge you have now. And I want you to think about it 50 years in the future, so far ahead that it is hard to imagine precisely what the world will be like, but with the assurance that it won’t be like ours. I’m also asking you to create a museum that feels personal to you, about some subject that you know the most about, i.e., some aspect of your life experience.

Your final paper is an invitation to the people of the future to visit the Museum of [\\_\[insert your name/experience here\]\\_](#) in the year 2071. Your paper has two key components—an introduction/welcome, and exhibits (a total of 3):

1. Introductory or welcome text giving the mission of the museum, introducing us to what the space/institution/experience looks and feels like. (You may choose to not have a physical space at all, but we do need to know what kind of environment we are in when we encounter your exhibits). Describe the “space,” what you want us to get out of it, maybe give us some insight as to why you chose this as an environment? If it is easier, imagine this similar to an introductory video you might see when you go to a museum, usually with a “talking head” describing the history of the museum, the extent of the physical space and collections, what the founder hoped, etc. (I’m open to you producing an actual video as well to go along with this!)
2. The next three pages describe three “Exhibits” or exhibit items, one page-ish each. You can choose any of the items you’ve already written about, or you can choose new ones. To help you, look over the syllabus and consider the different types of materials we’ve encountered. For more inspiration and reminders of where we’ve been, our class jamboard might be a place to review.
  - a. For each exhibit, write an exhibition label—these are the kinds of labels we find on “museum objects” that give us information on the item, but often they are sort of dull and brief such as “Sunflowers, Vincent Van Gogh, 1889, oil on

canvas.” What kind of exhibition label would you want for your item that would bring it to “life” for your viewer?

- b. For each exhibit, write a conservation directive—here, think back to the session on ephemeral art in particular where we read about the [replication committee](#) and all the questions that were asked of the contemporary artist Kline about when to reprint his art, what aspects were important to preserve, etc. Think about what aspects of your exhibit are important to preserve, replace, allow to disappear, might be touched, etc. by the visitor in order to preserve the meaning of that work.
3. THIS IS NOT REQUIRED BUT if you have time/energy at all, it would be fun to hear what kind of “souvenir” would be “the” souvenir that visitors might take home. We read about the proliferation of [David knock offs](#), and even [sketchy fence jewelry](#), but if you could make something that would capture the experience of the visit, what would it be?

**Logistics:**

5 typewritten pages total, 1” margins all around

Include relevant images/illustrations as possible—these should be in addition to the 5 written pages

**Questions?**

Get in touch and we can talk through stuff quickly on Zoom if that would help. Happy to have you run some ideas by me on either email or through Zoom. Excited to see what you come up with!