Memorial Art Gallery
Final Assessment / Virtual Tour Assignment

The Happy Survivor by Gregory Van Maanen and The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien

Objectives:

- Students will experience the impact of the Vietnam War through multiple lenses: the study of history, reading literature and observing artwork inspired by the writer. (ELA Standard 1)
- Students will be able to articulate how the experience of the artwork affected them on multiple levels: intellectually, emotionally, and aesthetically. The response can be in a medium of their choosing. (ELA Standard 2)
- Students will explore how the experience of one art form-writing-can inform and enhance the experience of another-the visual arts. (ELA Standard 3)
- Students will experience how creative expression in the arts can help an individual make sense of profound and intensely lived experience. (ELA Standard 4)

Directions: Many of you have mentioned how you dread unit tests, so here is an opportunity for an alternative assessment, have fun and let your creativity shine through or continue improving your writing skills with a traditional English 11 writing assignment. We will be in the computer lab on 2/25 and 2/26 to begin the assignment. While in the computer lab, you must follow all of the directions for the online tour of Gregory Van Maanen’s exhibit listed on the next page. Remember to complete all of the steps of the virtual tour, take notes during the tour and complete the text before you begin the writing portion for this final assessment. Be sure to note assignment selection clearly on paper. Those of you who were able to visit the exhibit on your own make sure you provide me the exhibit ticket to get your extra credit points.

Assignment Due Date: Friday, March 6
Virtual Tour at the MAG
Assessment Directions

Step 1: Log on and go to: http://mag.rochester.edu/exhibitions/
Step 3: Read the text about the artist and the exhibit.
Step 4: Scroll down to the lecture notes and click on: Feb. 8 Dr. Jonathan Shay - Read the information about Dr. Shay and take appropriate notes. (Feel free to use the Cornell Note taking strategy for this assignment.)
Step 5: Click on the Youtube link and listen to his lecture (about 2:30min) - Take notes on his comments concerning how military institutions function and the psychological and moral injury soldiers have endured. In addition, Dr. Shay states that there are three simple strategies that will allow soldiers to function during war, list them in your notes.
Step 6: Click the back button to get back to Van Maanen’s exhibit.
Step 7: Once you’re back to the exhibit page click on the link: Learn more. Read the article titled “MAG Exhibition Explores Healing Power of Art”. Pay attention to the description of Gregory Van Maanen’s work as “powerful and haunting” and quickly read the back cover of the Tim O’Brien’s The Things They Carried. Tim O’Brien’s writing is similarly described as “powerful”. Both of these artists have managed to capture society’s emotional bond associated with the Vietnam War even after several decades have past.
Step 8: Using the back button, go back to Van Maanen’s exhibit page. Click on the link: View Selected Works. There are a total of 13 pieces featured on the exhibit page, clicking on the image twice will enlarge the artwork; at the top left-hand corner of the page click next > to view the additional images in the exhibit.

Note: You may want to take the tour several times during the writing process, as this will help you with the final product. In addition, you may come to me for suggestions and advice. I am available before, afterschool and during 4th period English DIC. Make sure to schedule a writing conference with me anytime before the due date.

Select one of the assignments listed below for your final unit assessment:

Selection 1: In class we have discussed the elements that Tim O’Brien argues a war story must have: complexity between a war experience and storytelling, a storyteller has the power to shape the listener’s opinions, storytelling may romanticize death, a true war story is connected to evil and obscenity, a true war story is about mislead anger and horrific experiences not courage and heroism, and a war story shows that physical suffering is easier to bear than the mental anguish of war. How do Gregory Van Maanen’s paintings also encompass the elements of a war story? Select one or more of the elements listed above to help prove your thesis. In addition, you may reference specific chapters from The Things They Carried to help support your thesis. The use of literary elements describing the artwork will support your claims. This assignment must be at least one full page double spaced and no more than two pages double spaced. Be sure to use MLA format and the class heading, note assignment selection on paper.
Selection 2: According to Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*: “I did not look on my work as therapy, and still don’t. Yet when I received Norman Bowker’s letter, it occurred to me that the act of writing had led me through a swirl of memories that might otherwise have ended in paralysis or worse. By telling stories, you objectify your own experience. You separate it from yourself.” Using your notes from Dr. Shay’s lecture and your observation of Gregory Van Maanen’s artwork, is Van Maanen able to objectify his experience through his artwork much like O’Brien was able to do through his writing? Explain. **This assignment must be at least one full page double spaced and no more than two pages double spaced. Be sure to use MLA format and the class heading, note assignment selection on paper.**

Selection 3: Using the historical information from class discussions and your knowledge of the text *The Things They Carried*, select one of the haunting figures in Gregory Van Maanen’s exhibit and identify that figure as if he were a character from the text. Make sure you provide a detailed sketch of the character. Use Van Maanen visionary response of war to help you connect one of his images to a character from the text. **This assignment must be at least one full page double spaced and no more than two pages double spaced. Be sure to use MLA format and the class heading, note assignment selection on paper.**

Selection 4: After attending the exhibit, reflect on your experience and presence during your visit. What did it feel like standing in the gallery surrounded by Van Maanen’s images? Were you able to view the exhibit as a whole after having read Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried* or were you reminded of the young soldiers in the text? Select one or two of the pieces that sparked some interest in you and write about that sensory connection. For this selection you may write in any creative mode that interests you, poetry, song lyrics, or perhaps a one act play that brings the images to life and provides insight on the sensory connection you experienced. **This assignment must be at least one full page double spaced and no more than two pages double spaced. Be sure to use MLA format and the class heading, note assignment selection on paper. The poetry and lyrical portions must be accompanied by a one paragraph analysis of the creative piece.**
Selection 5: This selection is modeled after a Regents Task IV, critical lens, writing assignment with one modification, you will use the text *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien and Gregory Van Maanen’s art exhibit *The Happy Survivor* to support your interpretation of the critical lens: “O’Brien and Van Maanen succeed as well as any artists in conveying the free-fall sensation of fear and the surrealism of combat.”

*Time*

**Be sure to**

- Provide a valid interpretation of the critical lens that clearly establishes the criteria for analysis.
- Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it.
- Use specific evidence from both *The Things They Carried* and *The Happy Survivor* Exhibit (*specific images connected to visual perceptions of war*) to support your position.
- Use the criteria suggested by the critical lens to analyze the works you have been assigned.
- Avoid plot summary. Instead, use specific references to appropriate literary elements and techniques (for example: theme, characterization, setting, point of view, symbolism, irony) to develop your analysis. For the art exhibit rely on visual elements (for example: imagery, allusion, symbolism, metaphors) to develop your analysis.
- Organize your ideas in a unified and coherent manner.
- Specify the title and author of the literature and the title and artist of the exhibit.
- Follow the conventions of standard written English.
- Use MLA format and the class heading.

The final assessment for *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien will be due on **Friday, March 6**. This must be submitted both electronically and a hard copy must be submitted at the start of class on March 6. You may email your electronic copy to me at: **dina_stathopoulos@penfield.monroe.edu** (Make sure you do this prior to the start of class on March 6)