

Short Essay #1

Transnational Feminisms Through Art and Visual Culture

Paper length: 2-3 pages double-spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins

Due Date: Friday, October 12th, 2018 by email (cbello@cca.edu)

Please answer ONE of the questions below, avoiding long explanations or summaries of readings. I am interested in how you **directly** answer the question posed vis à vis the multiple readings and art works we have looked at thus far. **Limit your essay to 2-3 pages.** Please avoid generalizations and keep your analysis focused closely on the texts/art work you discuss. Be brief, lucid and specific! Please submit your paper as a PDF or Microsoft Word Document, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins on all sides.

Essay Prompts:

1. Discuss Lila Abu-Lughod's reflections on the politics of "veil" in relationship to the work of one of the artists we have discussed in this class. How do Abu-Lughod, and the work of the artist, problematize the ways in which "culture" is invoked in Western feminist discourses? How do they suggest we rethink binaries such as East/West, tradition/modernity, oppression/agency, etc.?
2. In her book *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, Angela Davis argues that an abolitionist approach to critiquing the prison system would "require us to imagine a constellation of alternative strategies and institutions, with the ultimate aim of removing the prison from the social and ideological landscapes of society" (Davis, 107).

How do you understand the project of prison abolition? What do you think is the role of art and visual culture in the work of "imagining" alternatives to the prison system? In your response, please reference 1-2 projects that engage the politics of policing and incarceration, providing a critical analysis of the ways in which they use art and visual culture to challenge the existing logics of the prison system, and provide alternative understandings of crime and punishment.

3. In the conclusion of her essay "Documentary Uncertainty," Hito Steryl argues that "the only possible critical documentary today is the presentation of an affective and political constellation which does not even exist, and which is yet to come."

What does she mean by this statement? How does this statement relate to her critiques and concerns about documentary practice that she articulates throughout the rest of her essay?

Relate Steryl's ideas to 1-2 documentaries that we've encountered in this class. Suggested films include *13* by Ava Duvernay and *(Almost) Freedom* by Puck Lo. To what degree do the aesthetics of these films reflect the "critical documentary" practice that Steryl promotes? How do the documentary practices of these films impact their representations of the issues they address?