

**FINAL EXAMINATION**

**ENG 1100 VV Workshop in Essay Writing**

**Instructor: Geraldine Arbach**

**Thurs., April 29, 2010 7 - 10 p.m.**

**NAME:**

**Read the article "Lawbreakers, Armed with Paint and Paste" by Kirk Semple.**

**Then do Part I, Reading Comprehension, and Part II, Writing, according to the instructions.**

**The text of the article begins on page 2.**

**I. Reading Comprehension. Answer the following questions in the exam booklet. Make sure to use your own words in your answers. Please allow yourself a maximum of one hour for this part of the exam. (35 points)**

1. Summarize Kirk Semple's arguments in a paragraph about 120 words long. (10 points)
  - Please double space and write in dark black or dark blue ink.
  - You must give the word count at the end of your summary.
2. Who is the author's intended audience? How do you know? Explain briefly. (5 points)
3. What is the "voice" mentioned in the last sentence of the article? Make sure to support your interpretation. (5 points)
4. How does the author use each of the three classical appeals? Explain briefly, for each type of appeal. (6 points)
5. Find three examples of parallel form in the text and explain how they contribute to the clarity of the essay. Your examples must illustrate three different types of parallelism. (9 points)

Lawbreakers, Armed with Paint and Paste  
. . . by Kirk Semple

(1) Swoon frontloads her days with caffeine and works on her art late into the night. It can take her two weeks to produce a series of the large, intricate paper cutouts and hand-pulled block prints that have gained her considerable renown in one particular sector of the art world. When she is done -- her arms aching and her clothes and skin speckled with paint and ink -- she takes her pieces outside, slaps them up on old walls around the city, then disappears on her bike.

(2) That is when her work, now left to the mercy of the elements and public taste, comes alive. "You know, it's weird, but I love it," she said. "I don't feel they need to be kept in a vault as precious art."

(3) Swoon, 26, is a luminary in a movement known, at least among many of its proponents, as street art. Two decades after the heyday of graffiti, the spray can has given way to posters, stickers, stencils and construction tools, and the streets of New York and other cities around the world vibrate more than ever with the work -- some say the destruction -- of guerilla artists like her. (Swoon is a nom de peinture; like many other artists interviewed for this article, she asked that her real name not be used for fear of prosecution because unauthorized graffiti is illegal.)

(4) The movement is sustained and driven by Web sites, magazines, word of mouth and its practitioners' self-righteousness.

(5) At one end of the spectrum are doodles, icons and designs, often drawn or printed on stickers, a medium that allows for pre-strike preparation at home and quick, furtive execution in public.

(6) Others are using more complicated art techniques, such as the meticulous printing and paperwork preferred by Swoon, ceramics, lithography, silk screening, painting, leathersmithing and woodworking. Some have even used welding torches, notably the once-ubiquitous New York graffiti writer known as Revs, who has installed three-dimensional versions of his stylized name, or "tag," around the city. Darius (also known by his graffiti tag, Verbs) and Downey, a Brooklyn tandem now living in London, turn old street signs into sculptures or small billboards for provocative messages and reinstall them, often in the plain light of day. "We're using the city against itself," Downey, 23, said in a recent interview.

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(7) Any surface goes; the more visible and the less frequently buffed the better: walls, doors, the backs of stop signs, the base of light poles, utility boxes, trash bins, sidewalks, rooftops, the frames of subway car advertisements.

(8) In New York, the streets of the Lower East Side and SoHo, Dumbo and Williamsburg are filled with fresh work. Even in the most closely policed neighborhoods, rare is the city block where some visual mischief has not been unleashed.

(9) "Size is not what it's about," said Marc Schiller, 40, a New York marketing executive who, as a hobby, runs the Wooster Collective, a curatorial web site for street art around the world. "It's about being clever. It's about being unique." (One unknown artist has arrayed 18 luggage locks, each decorated with a baby's picture, on a fence on Crosby Street in SoHo. Periodically the artist will rearrange the locks to make a new design.

(10) And while much of the work seems to be art for art's sake -- or at least humor's sake -- street art occasionally resonates with overt social and political commentary. In one arresting series that recently appeared (and just as quickly disappeared) in Lower Manhattan, an artist replaced the silhouetted dancers in the current iPod advertisement with silhouettes of Abu Ghraib torture victims. The tag line "10,000 songs in your pocket, Mac or PC" became "10,000 volts in your pocket, guilty or innocent."

(11) Like any artistic movement, the origins of street art are nebulous, though it is clearly an outgrowth of the stylized graffiti writing that began in New York in the 1960's and became emblematic of hip-hop culture. According to Tristan Manco, a graphic designer in Bristol, England, and author of the street art compendium "Street Logos," the term "street art" was first used in the 1980's in reference to urban guerrilla art that was not hip-hop graffiti, and described the pioneering work of New York painters like Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf, and Parisian stencil artists like Blek and Nemo.

(12) Street art has since spread around the world, from the East End of London to Tokyo, Moscow to Johannesburg, Melbourne, Australia, to São Paulo, Brazil. And in spite of the movement's underground nature, the work of today's most prominent street artists is increasingly sought by galleries and collectors around the world, though the pieces are not yet fetching the sums attached to the art of New York's graffiti pioneers. (Mr. Haring's chalk drawings on black subway-advertisement placeholders command thousands of dollars at auction.)

(13) Ask street artists to talk about why they do what they do, and brace for a torrent of rationalization. Shepard Fairey, a 34-year-old artist who is famous for his global "Obey Giant" sticker campaign featuring the glowering mug of the late World Wrestling Federation star Andre the Giant, has even published a manifesto in which he calls his work "an experiment in Phenomenology," the first aim of which, he says, "is to reawaken a sense of wonder about one's environment."

(14) Artists and their supporters say they are simply responding to what they regard as a visual assault by corporations and commercial interests. "Why is the ad I see in the Gap more acceptable than any art that I hang on a public lamppost?" Mr. Schiller asks. "Let's balance the scales a bit. We're talking about anybody having

the right to express themselves. (If Mr. Schiller's message seems incongruous with his profession -- marketing -- he says he hopes his passion for street art has made him better at his job by making him more sensitive to the negative effects of advertising.)

(15) But many street artists will admit to a less noble motivation: the urge to go out and break the law. The waft of fresh wheat paste, it seems, can inspire a night of vandalism. "That's something that people really love about it: getting over on the man," said Kelly Burns, 38, the author of the book "INY," a photographic exploration of New York street art.

(16) The law does not make a distinction between a tag scratched on a sticker or Swoon's cutouts. It is all vandalism. (The New York Police Department turned down a request for an interview.)

(17) Swoon, who has never been arrested, says she is "fully in touch with the ambiguity" of what she does -- by which she means the illegality. So she picks her spots carefully, exploring what she calls "third spaces" -- not really public, maybe private, undoubtedly neglected. Her backdrops include abandoned buildings, run-down warehouses, and broken walls. "There are so many spaces that don't really need to be brown," she said.

(18) Swoon first took her art to the street five years ago while she was a fine-arts student at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. She was compelled to take her work outside after suffering what she calls "the quiet, boring preciousness" of the gallery world.

(19) "I wanted to jump out of my skin," she said. But the streets were free and open to a wider range of expression. "Because it's kind of an outlaw thing, you don't have to go through official channels," she explained. "It's trying to create a visual commons out of the derelict walls of the city." (She has since returned to the gallery scene, as the star of her own shows in Berlin, Miami and Cincinnati. "I need to make a living," she shrugged.)

(20) On a recent afternoon, Swoon, a fit enthusiastic woman with wavy, straw-berry blond hair and a small silver nose ring, interrupted her work on her most recent project, which was a day or two away from completion, to give a brief bicycle tour of some of the pieces that have survived in Boerum Hill and Prospect Heights. Her recent and most famous work involved life-size cutouts and block prints of people with which, she says, she is "populating the city."

(21) She stopped in front of the trash-strewn loading dock of an old warehouse on Bergen Street near Flatbush Avenue, across the street from a police station in Prospect Heights. A worn silhouette of a hooded, hunched man lurked on the wall. "It's a good place for him to hang out," she said warmly. "I want them to become part of their space, to interact in a human way. A sticker can't do that."

(22) Swoon avoids sentimentality and regards her distribution method as a game of evolutionary fate. "I'm getting them out there and seeing which ones survive, like baby

sea turtles," she explained. Even her preferred paper -- newsprint, a highly fragile material -- limits the life expectancy of her work. But she loves how the paper curls and rots, giving the art character and a voice where there might otherwise be silence.

The article is taken from the Canadian edition of a book called Reasoning and Writing Well: A Rhetoric, Research Guide, Reader and Handbook.

The authors are Betty Mattix Dietsch, Lara Sauer, and Andrea Lovering.

The book was published in 2006 by McGraw-Hill Ryerson in Toronto. The article appeared on pages 443 to 445 of the book.

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**II. Writing. Please write a thoughtful, well-organized essay about 700 words long in answer to one of the following questions concerning the article. (65 points)**

1. Is street art vandalism or a fresh artistic vision?
2. Why is street art so important to the artists who practice it?
3. Why is street art spreading around the world?
  - You must provide at least two in-text citations and give the corresponding bibliographic references at the end of your essay. Use MLA or APA style, according to your field of study, as you have been doing all semester.
  - You may consult your textbooks, references, and course materials.
  - Please spend a maximum of two hours on this part of the exam.
  - Please give an accurate word count. There is a penalty if the word count is not provided or is not reasonably accurate.
  - Your essay will be evaluated on Content, Organization, Language Use, and Handling.