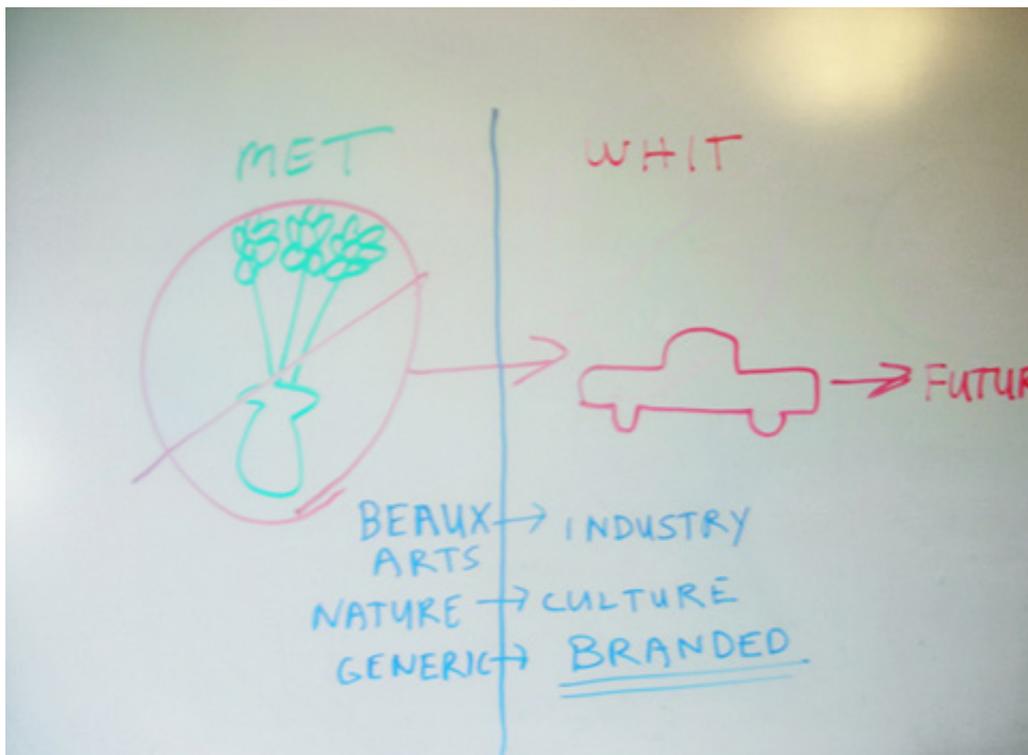


## The Highlights - Report To The Committee On Periodical Group Exhibitions

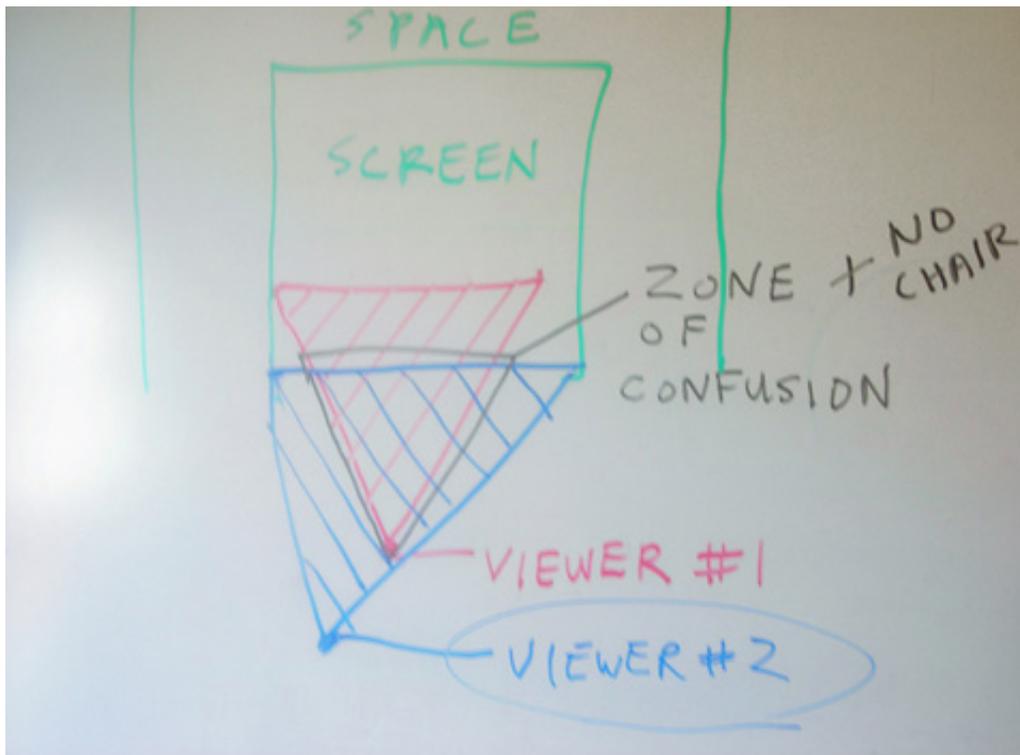
To: The Whitney People  
From: Monument Consultancy, LLC  
April 31, 2010



First things first, so let's get right down to it. The flowers at the Metropolitan, so festive and appealing, are placed in gigantic vases near the grand staircase at the entrance. Why? To garner the most attention from the most people. If the Whitney Biennial is to **include at least one automobile per exhibition**, why not put those cars right by the elevator? BANG! Who cares about flowers when you're standing in front of a big, beautiful American machine?

Success means *maximizing impact*: It's time contemporary art jumped into the exhilarating, inevitable world of product placement and positive co-branding. These cars didn't *build themselves*, and, chances are, manufacturers will be more than happy to subsidize their display. Think: What announces "periodical domestic production" better than the automobile? What says "American ingenuity" better than the Whitney?

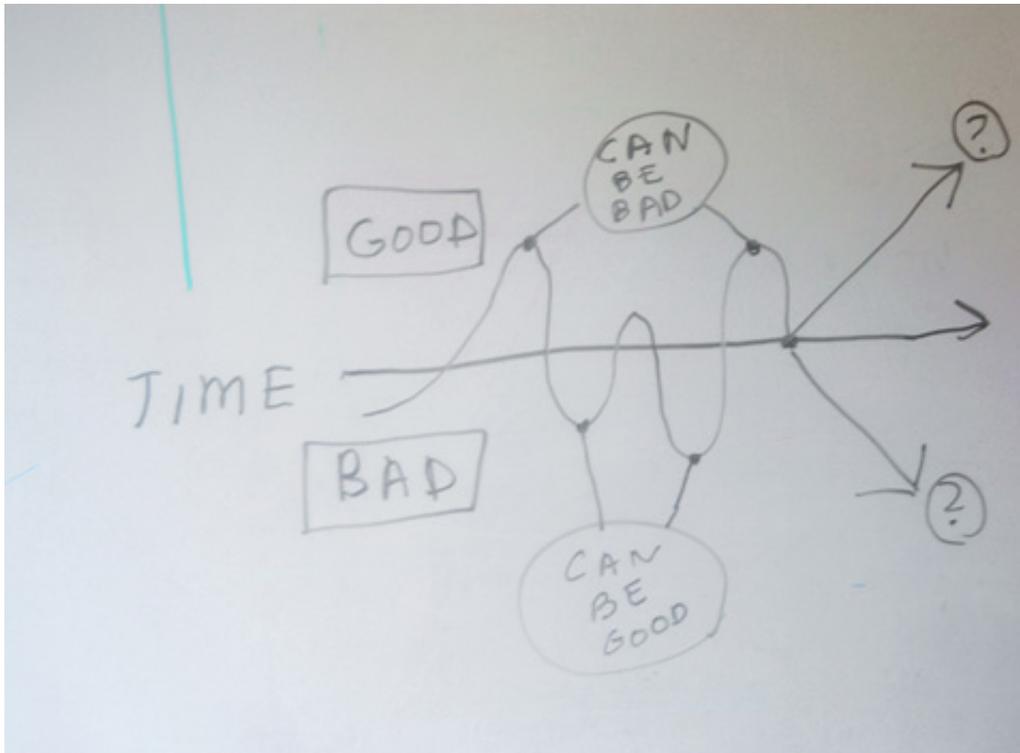
- ? Transform curatorial habits into *mutually beneficial* opportunities.
- ? Use a symbol of American resilience and resurgence to strengthen the Whitney's profile. And vice versa.
- ? Seek out diversified sponsorship options.



We also discovered inefficiencies in the display of video art, and not for the first time. For example: At what time do the works begin? Why can't the museum place a little green light outside the room, to indicate the start time? Also, must we stand to watch them? If we sit down, are we then watching a film? We were confused on this point, and have been for some time. Why not arrange a **sensible, comfortable viewing environment?**

We feel the optimal display of videos is a question that should be revisited more frequently. Your institution is in a unique position not only to identify and publicize important trends in exhibition strategy, but also to initiate them. Imagine the textbooks: "Prior to the Biennial of 2012, videos were often shown in cramped, unpleasant rooms, with no seating or start times."

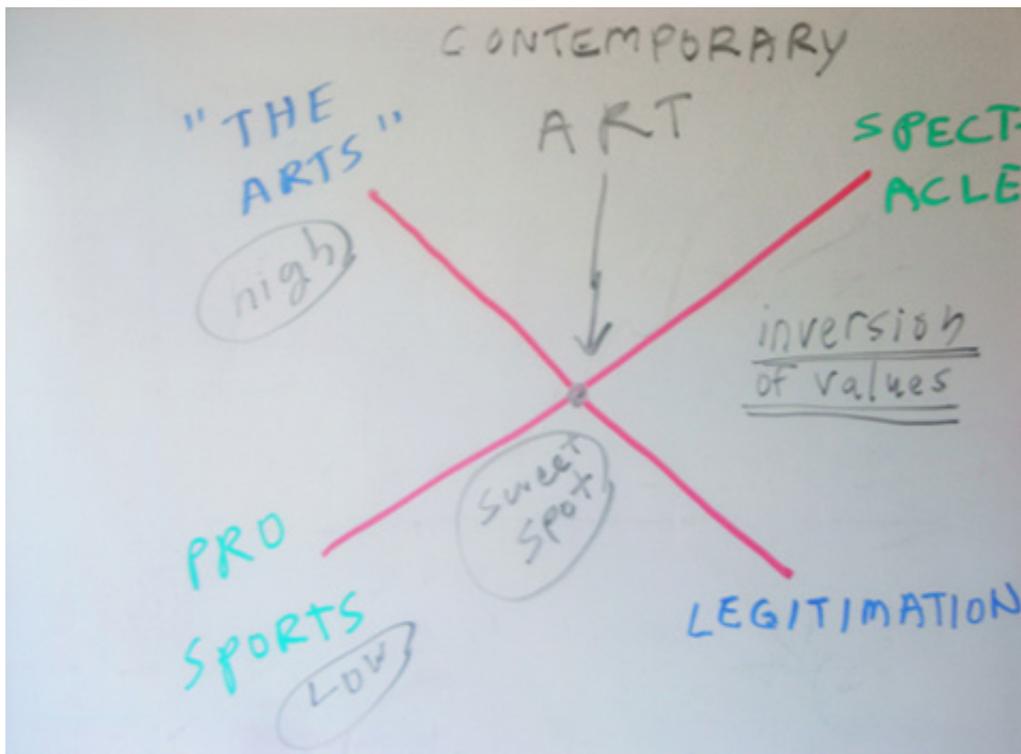
- ? Assure your clients they are seeing the whole video, start to finish.
- ? Provide a satisfying viewing experience.
- ? Change history.



Our informal studies have shown that seeing bad art is as edifying as seeing good art. We therefore recommend replacing the survey of past Biennial highlights currently on display with a collection of historical low-to-medium lights. People already know about Edward Hopper; they would like to learn what *everyone else* was doing in the 1950s. Give them the mindless trends, the bad decisions, the imitations and failures.

A premium on everlasting excellence places too much pressure on the current show. We feel that the goal should be instead to release pressure. Today's artists will feel more confident about entering history if history is full of **mediocre cubist still lifes and bad, imitation de Koonings.**

- ? Represent the fullness of previous epochs in the detail they deserve.
- ? Render institutional history transparent.
- ? Make the living feel good, not the dead.



Any periodical group exhibition on the scale of the Biennial is a *quantitative* as well as a *qualitative* phenomenon. Too many artists? Your viewers won't know where to look. The zeitgeist goes out of focus. Too few? How will collectors know who is *just about* to be famous? The engines of the art market sputter, then grind to a halt.

Contemporary art combines the **aesthetic richness and socioeconomic profile** of contemporary classical music with the **competitive and spectacular appeal** of professional sports. With this in mind, we have determined that the number of artists in the Whitney Biennial should be calculated as the arithmetic mean between *the number of players on a basketball team and the number of members of an orchestra*.

- ? Lubricate the wheels of industry.
- ? Less is always more.
- ? Unless it's less.



The term "contemporary art " implies that art should be contemporary. With what? With the news. With what is happening in the world. With *life*.

But consider this: it has been statistically proven that *more things happened today than have ever happened on any given day in the past*. And yet, major periodical group exhibitions still occur every 2 or 3 years, at most. This made sense in 1932, when newspapers came out once a day, paintings took 6 months (or more) to make, and people slept soundly between the hours of 6 PM and 9 AM. But in 2010? Contemporary art finds itself facing a *contemporaneity gap*. No sooner has an exhibition been installed than the entire epistemic frame surrounding our culture has been replaced, like an empty toner cartridge.

Therefore, in order to adjust to the accelerating temporality of the present, and taking into account recent, dramatic changes in the production and reception of contemporary art, we propose that a totally new installment of the Whitney Biennial commence **every 7 to 10 minutes**.

- ? Don't put on a 20th-century show in the 21st!
- ? "Contemporary" means ahead of the game.
- ? There's no time like the present.

