

Eng 12/Art 34/SD 10

Duccio/Velazquez Assignment

**Prompt:** Do you agree or disagree with the acquisitions of Duccio's *Madonna and Child* (c. 1300) and Velázquez's *Juan de Pareja* (1650) by the Metropolitan Museum of Art? Come up with a thought-provoking thesis, one that indicates not only whether you agree or disagree, but why. Then use the rest of the essay to support and develop that thesis.

**Directions:** To complete this assignment you must answer the question **objectively**, using the facts from the written texts you read in ENG 12 and ART 34, **and subjectively**, using your experience with the paintings at the museum.

**Important for Art 34:** During the first week of class we had a discussion of different types of value, including intrinsic, material, sentimental/psychological, nationalistic, and value based on believe systems. While you must consider the prices paid for the two paintings in dollar amounts, please also consider what other types of value are inherent in these works. Apart from the money paid, what else makes these two works valuable to the Metropolitan Museum of Art? Additionally, please add any historical information about these two artists that you learned in Art 34, either from the course lectures or from the course textbook. Why are these two works historically important?

**Important for ENG 12:** There are many approaches that you could take in your discussion. For instance, based on your own aesthetic standards, you might feel that one or both of these works are not “great art” and thus were not worth the monetary price paid and the effort extended to acquire them. Or you might indeed believe that the works are great art, but that the financial cost was exorbitant, or that the ethical issues involved in the acquisition were too severe. Or you might feel that the Met is fortunate to have these works of art and you are glad they bought them “by any means necessary.” Also, as with all the essays you write in ENG 12, assume that there are many potential readers—some familiar with our course material, some not. That means you will need to write in a way that is intelligible to everyone. Don't assume that all your readers know about Hoving and de Montebello and Velazquez and Duccio already. Give just enough background information so that all your readers can follow along easily.

Required Sources:

- Hoving, “Truth, Not Art.” (*Making the Mummies Dance*)
- Tompkins, “The Missing Madonna.” (*The New Yorker*)
- Stokstad and Cothren, *Art History*, Vol. II (especially pages 540-545 and 731-734)

Optional Sources:

- [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org), in particular the pages on the website that discuss these two artworks.

- Danziger, *Museum* (especially the chapter on Keith Christiansen, where he talks about the Duccio painting; you might also include material from the chapter on Philippe de Montebello)
- Two additional written sources taken from the CUNY databases that you find on your own (this will be required for the revision of the essay, not the first version, but you are welcome to include those sources on the first version too if you wish).

Documentation: Paraphrase, quote and summarize in detail from your written sources, and include an accurate Works Cited page. Make extensive use of the notes you took at the museum when you saw these two paintings in person. Perhaps you'll even visit the Met again on your own to look once more at these two paintings—and at so much else that the museum has to offer!

Additional directions: This essay should be typed, double-spaced, with margins of about an inch on all four sides; page numbers should be in the upper-right-hand corner or bottom center. Remember to follow the guidelines (available on Course Documents in Blackboard) from your first paper about how the first page should look (with heading and title). This time, the last page of the paper will be your Works Cited.

Due date: Send your paper as a Word attachment via e-mail to Prof. Amarnick ([steven.amarnick@gmail.com](mailto:steven.amarnick@gmail.com)) and Prof. Pierre ([caterina.pierre@kbcc.cuny.edu](mailto:caterina.pierre@kbcc.cuny.edu)) no later than 10 a.m. Monday, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. (Prof. Pierre would also like a hard copy brought to class on October 27<sup>th</sup>.) Make sure that the subject line of the e-mail refers to this class and/or this assignment. In the body of the e-mail, please also address both of us by name, write a brief message, and sign your own name. The revision for this paper will be due no later than 10 a.m. Monday, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>.