

Prompt for Homage/Parody Project

For this project, you'll draw on your evolving understanding of your artist's body of work to create a miniature riff on it, in the form of an **homage** or a **style parody**. The more of your artist's work you've encountered, the better you'll be able to do this.

The general definition of "homage" (silent h) is "something that is said or done to show respect for someone" (Oxford English Dictionary). In the arts, it's used to describe a work that alludes to, or imitates, another artist's style or another specific work, without crossing into outright plagiarism. For example, the TV show *Stranger Things* is, in part, an homage to sci-fi and paranormal films of the late '70s and early '80s, including *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Gremlins*, *E.T.*, *Poltergeist*, etc. The Season 1 [Stranger Things poster](#) bears a deliberate resemblance to a famous original [Star Wars poster](#). (For a video montage of more *Stranger Things* homage moments, [click here](#).)

Parody is a more familiar concept. As we noted in Eddie Murphy's "James Brown's Celebrity Hot Tub Party," it's primarily a play on form. The form of a particular work or artistic style is compressed, heightened, and/or grafted onto arbitrary or incongruous subject matter for a comic effect. "Celebrity Hot Tub Party" is an example of a *style parody* – it mimics the *effect* of a James Brown song and performance in a holistic sense – as opposed to what one might call "direct parody," like goofy lyrics set to the tune of Brown's "I Feel Good", or a skit in which Marvel's Avengers try to manage a Burger King. If you choose to do a parody, you'll be going for a style parody of the artist's body of work, not a direct parody of one particular work.

The line between homage and parody is blurry. Often, the funniest parodies show an underlying respect for and understanding of its subject; conversely, homages are often at least somewhat funny if the style is immediately recognizable. You might set out to make an homage and actually make a parody, or vice versa. If that's what happens, that's totally fine! Choose whichever approach (homage or parody) feels more helpful to you from a creative standpoint, and let the product become what it is.

Here's what you're being asked to do: Get into the mindset of your artist and make an homage or style parody of their work. You have a lot of leeway in how you do it. The most obvious example is to create your own "work" by the artist that doesn't actually exist. But you're also not limited to the artist's original medium. For example, you could make a photographic montage in homage to a choreographer, sketch out a set design for an imaginary new play by a playwright, show us what a country & western song written by a particular filmmaker might sound like, etc.

You may present your exhibit as a stand-alone piece, or as an "excerpt" from an imaginary larger work. (If you choose the latter, you don't need to explain or map out the larger work in detail; just acknowledge what it is.)

Some types of exhibits you might submit for this project:

- A one-minute film, or one-minute trailer for, or “excerpt” from, an imaginary new film/TV show by the artist
- A photograph, or series of up to 5 photographs (more isn’t necessarily better; it depends on what you’re trying to put across)
- A drawing, painting, or sculpture
- A 2–3-page written scene in screenplay, teleplay, or stage play format
- A one-minute recorded song or song “excerpt”
- A one-minute monologue (as a script, and/or performed on video)
- A one-minute dance sequence (on video)
- A one-minute “pitch” for a new video game (accompanied by some sample artwork and/or simple animation)
- A simple interactive online experience
- Anything else you’re inspired to make!

Along with your homage/style parody exhibit, you must submit a short commentary (at least 200 words) explaining the choices you made in creating your homage/parody exhibit, and how those choices reflect your artist’s work and interests.

Goals for this assignment:

- To articulate typical, prominent, or distinctive elements of form and/or content that characterize your artist’s body of work.
- To think about your artist’s body of work in a new way by attempting to create something that resembles it.
- To create your own reference point for your artist’s body of work that you can continue to expand, develop, and complicate as you draft your essay.
- To do something hopefully a little bit fun for credit.

A successful project will creatively capture or allude to multiple elements of the artist’s work, and clearly explain/contextualize the allusions in the commentary (which should be written for someone who isn’t familiar with the artist’s work).

Again, you should not parody just a *single* work by the artist –try to reflect their body of work as a whole. Similarly, avoid collage/copy and paste jobs that just string literal bits of specific works together. You may, however, include elements that playfully *suggest* specific works, and/or evoke quintessential images/motifs/themes/tropes found across their body of work (like Yinka Shonibare’s Dutch wax fabrics and headless mannequins, for example).

Both the project and the commentary should be uploaded in a format that’s readable or playable by most computers. We will share some of these in class!

Deliverables: Your very own homemade parody or homage exhibit (see various suggestions above, feel free to email with questions) plus a 200-word commentary (doc, pdf, etc).