

criticism: the only limits here are set by YOUR own imagination.

**5.
DO NOT EVER CREATE ANYTHING
WHOLLY ORIGINAL.**

You are not an artist. And even if you are, how will anyone know what you're talking about? Draw upon the massive associative power of shared culture, the true reserve of global capitalism. Herein lies the secret magic of connotation, and references and quotations are drowning in it. When you balance the amount communicated with the economy of energy, what's not to like?



THE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION TITLING

Or Five Easy
Guidelines to Help
You Name Your Next
Cultural Endeavor

1. BORROW LIBERALLY FROM BLACK SABBATH

This is fairly straight forward. Everyone likes Black Sabbath, and if someone tells you they don't, they are either lying or they should be lying. The song and album titles are evocative enough to stand out and deceptively vague enough to cover a broad range of ideas. Some highlights:

Behind the Wall of Sleep
Electric Funeral
Master of Reality
After Forever
Into the Void
Wheels of Confusion
Tomorrow's Dream

2. THE COLON IS YOUR FRIEND

This is not fiber advocacy, but punctuation relativism. When titling, the first thing to remember is that a subtitle, when following a colon, adds an intellectual air to your entire enterprise. The two ideas, when linked by the colon, need not be logically connected. In fact, this can lead to a rather dry title, and if you're too clear it is easy to dismantle your suspect argument before you even begin. Better to keep poetry to the left of the colon and facts—even if stated with some rhetorical flourish—on the right. In general, it is good to include a recognizable medium/movement/name/idea. Date ranges always make things

seem well researched and historically viable. A well placed definite article ("the" being a popular favorite) before an adjective conveys confidence and an air of mystery, as the audience will undoubtedly wonder why the grammatically correct noun form was not used. Now, to combine guidelines one and two:

After Forever: Durational Performance 1962-1979
Master of Reality: Lacan In and Out of Context
Electric Funeral: The Gothic in Recent Sculpture and Video
Tomorrow's Dream: Relational Aesthetics and a Critique of the Utopian

3. A RANKING ORDER AND TAXONOMY OF REFERENCES

Each category can be subdivided into two subclasses: obscure and popular. Each of these subdivisions can be further classified as having street cred, hipster cred, or no cred (unclassified). For example:

Music
 Obscure
 Obscure with street cred
 Obscure with hipster cred
 Popular
 Popular with street cred
 Popular with hipster cred

As it is understood that each of these categories can be broken down as in the above example, what follows is preliminary list, in ranked order, of reference types:

Music
Historically Relevant Works of Art
Recent Works of Art
Historically Relevant Exhibitions
Recent Exhibitions
Literary Works
Avant-garde Film
Narrative Cinema
Television
Advertising Slogans
Corporate Trademarks
Titles of Your Own Devising

It is outside of the scope of this pamphlet to definitively state whether it is indeed preferable to borrow liberally from the Smiths instead of Black Sabbath, as has no doubt been suggested by a certain subset of readers at this point.

4. "PUNNY PUNNY PUNNY, MUST BE FUNNY, IN A RICH MAN'S WORLD."

Portmanteaus and puns show that you're creative and quick-witted. Take an existed title or concept—either by using the guidelines above or by applying your own methodology—and twist it to create your own cheeky turn of phrase. Hard-Edged Abstraction is descriptive and references a historically defined movement. Hard-Edged Distraction, on the other hand, is clever, poetic, and vague enough to cover everything from the geometric abstraction that the original phrase references to performance, conceptual art practice, the influence of animation in contemporary video work, the crisis of art