

Media Studies Focus Statement Sample 2

I would like to concentrate on the general aestheticization of the public sphere, as it has been present and becoming more apparent in advertising, television, film, architecture, fashion, journalism and the internet. The trend toward the eventual goal of beauty in all parts of our life and experience is something of interest to me. The integration of the artist into the business world has occurred; middle class artists coming out of art schools are entering the business world with a mental concept of correct aesthetics. Their contribution to the overall look of the daily public sphere is becoming more and more apparent. Previously “trashy” businesses such as K-Mart and Target have changed their branding. Whose idea of aesthetic appeal is being applied? My ultimate goal after leaving Vassar is to be able to contribute to the development of aesthetics in our daily culture both here and abroad, perhaps eventually as a designer myself. I will explore these ideas through a mix of courses in art history, anthropology and sociology to develop an overall curriculum that explores the link between culture and art.

My studies at Vassar up to this point have focused on media in general with an emphasis on visual culture, including film, studio art, French, psychology and various other related courses. Next semester I will continue with Art History 106 and Sculpture I, both full year courses. Sculpture gives me a foundation in art, a concept of aesthetic space, and insight into the process of creation and therefore a training of an “eye.” Art History is necessary as a foundation to understand the state of art today as it relates to culture, and by understanding the evolution up to this point, I will be able to better understand the direction in which we are going. I will begin Architecture after Modernism. Having never taken an architecture course, I think that this will give me a perspective on art and design outside the realm of the canvas and the sculpture, and begin

my exploration of aestheticization of public spaces. I will continue with the required Media Studies courses and will in addition take other courses that will help me define a concentration. Modern Art and the Mass Media will be taken in the spring of my junior year, and will allow me a greater understanding of the relation of art to the media, and analyze a critical period in which art and mass culture became further intertwined. I will follow that in the fall of my senior year with The Times, 1960-Now and hope these two courses will supplement my preexisting knowledge of art history and give me a solid perspective on the state of art as it exists in our contemporary world. This will be a stepping-stone towards the study of art as it relates to the mediated world today. I will take sociology courses to give myself insight as to how art relates to culture. Sociology of Consumption will help me relate the art background that I have to present consumer culture and allow me to include the important aspect of consumerism in my examination of advertising, as will Mass Media and Society. Similarly, the Anthropology of Art will allow me examine the consumption of art as a social force and hopefully its presence in society as a whole, which should springboard as well into the ideas of the Senior Seminar in Twentieth Century Art, which will continue in the vein of Modern Art and the Mass Media and The Times 1960-Now. I also plan on taking a personal leave during the fall of my junior year and attend Central Saint Martins in London in a program that examines spatial design, known as the BA Honours program in Arts, Design and Environment. All of these will, I believe, be relatable to each other and further my knowledge of visual culture in modern times so as to form a cohesive and solid direction to take as a senior project. I plan to be equipped with strong knowledge of both art and culture so as to be able to understand the state of art as it relates to aestheticization of the contemporary public sphere.

I am interested doing my senior project on the creation of a visual culture as it is rooted in history, as it is present in our contemporary world, and in what direction it is going. I will examine aesthetic trends in an effort to conclude what influence those with “an eye” have on society, specifically in advertising. I would like to examine how advertising is the mediator between the art world and the general public, and how advertising, in its growing omnipresence, creates visual culture.