

## Questions to be answered on *Painting: The Task of Mourning*.

Group Work Assessment Task II.

I

For Bois the feeling of the ‘end of art’ or ‘end of painting’ is historically determined by industrialization, the birth of photography, and the rise of commodity fetishism. How do these things precipitate the ‘end’ of painting, and how have artists responded?

II

How does Ryman, according to Bois, deliver painting to the conditions of photography?

III

What does Duchamp’s work (the readymade most notably) have to do with commodity fetishism? Secondly, why is Duchamp’s deconstruction of the imaginary aspect of painting considered by Bois as ‘conservative’ or ‘cynical’?

IV

What does Rodchenko’s deconstruction of the ‘real’ and Mondrian’s deconstruction of the ‘symbolic’ aspects of painting have to do with the impending sense of the end of painting? How do these artists respond to this end? Secondly, what do their responses have to do with a supposedly ‘revolutionary aesthetics’?

V

What is the ‘apocalyptic myth’ that Bois believes characterizes modernism? How might Duchamp, Mondrian, and Rodchenko be seen to embody this this apocalyptic myth, this ‘millenarianist feeling of closure’?

VI

Bois offers Hubert Damisch’s theory of games as a means of escaping overly affirmative and overly negative attitudes toward the end of painting. How does Damisch’s theory of games provide Bois with an alternative to these reductive interpretations of ‘the end’? Be sure to tell us what Bois proposes as the ‘game’ and alternatively as the ‘match’?

VII

Bois is critical of post-modernism’s ‘manic mourners’, but he recognizes also that modern painting involves a ‘difficult task of mourning’ as a means of working through the end of painting. What is the nuance here in his argument? Why is the ‘mourning’ of the eighties less preferable than that of artists such as Duchamp, Rodchenko, Mondrian or Ryman?

## VIII

We have seen that Bois and Danto provide two different ways of conceiving the 'end of art' and/or the 'end of painting' – compare and contrast these different positions, and argue for one over the other.

## IX

In *Painting: The Task of Mourning* Bois explores three models that respond to the impending sense of paintings 'end' or 'closure' – namely, the imaginary (Duchamp), the real (Rodchenko) and the symbolic (Mondrian). Compare and contrast each of these three models.