

Greenblatt's resonance and wonder essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Written by Stephen Greenblatt, one interesting point in "Resonance and Wonder" is the idea of the need to distinguish what he labels as the two unique models with regard to the practice regarding museography. The first refers to resonance while the second refers to wonder. In his work, Greenblatt tells us that resonance points to the power or capacity of the object that is in display to transcend its formal or physical boundaries and reach outwards the bigger world and produce certain responses or emotions from the viewer.

Greenblatt tells us that the object, given its power, will evoke complex and dynamic forces from the viewer which the viewer will perceive as something that belongs to the object. At such an event, the object displayed will have the power to create its own context for itself even though the object might have already been removed from its original position. On the other hand, Greenblatt also refers to "wonder" as the displayed object's power to hinder the perceiver of the object from going about his current activity.

In that event, the attention of the viewer is glued to the object for the object's ability to stimulate an exalted attention after sending a unique impression from the viewer. Nevertheless, even though these two qualities differ in many ways, Greenblatt also maintains that there are certain underlying similarities between the two. Both resonance and wonder contain a certain history and that these two qualities are likewise bounded by the context of culture. Greenblatt also agrees that resonance and wonder can alter given a stretch of time.

On the part of the curators, they are the ones who will decide what specific forms are to be displayed. It is inevitable that the curators will then have to choose one over another, thus creating the impression that the qualities of wonder and resonance are closely linked to the curators' decisions. One illustration that Greenblatt provides in the essay is that of a museum. In certain settings of a museum display, there are instances where boutique lighting is observed, the method where lightings are fixed in certain positioning.

The fixations of the lights are aimed making the objects displayed call to mind the dream of possession. By doing so, it is expected that such a dream of possession will go beyond the object displayed and will then be placed onto the museum itself. The very essence of "Resonance and Wonder" can be easily identified in terms of the object and its surroundings. The object's surrounding may not necessarily be confined to the inorganic surroundings of the object as it can also include those who view the object displayed.

Given only the object, the focal point of attention of the perceiver will be locked towards the displayed object precisely because the object itself exudes certain evocative qualities. At such a moment, it can be said that the viewer of the object does not merely view; he is placed in a state of wonder towards the object. The instance of a viewer being 'wondered' by the object displayed can also be applied to museums which display such objects.

As Greenblatt points out, certain lighting styles can further transfer certain feelings towards the object and certain qualities emanating from the object to the immediate surrounding where the object is displayed. In the case of

museums, given the suitable conditions such as lighting fixtures, the evocative qualities can be transferred onto the atmosphere of the museum thereby making the museum a focal point of attention apart from the object. “ Resonance and Wonder” provides interesting insights into the domain of museographics in useful ways.