

Art, Protest, Activism and the Power of the Moving Image: Suggested Discussion Questions to Use in Conjunction with the Exhibition



Shiva Ahmadi, *Marooned*, 2021 (video still).

The following are examples of discussion questions faculty and TAs can use in conjunction with the exhibition *From Moment to Movement: Picturing Protest in the Kramlich Collection*. Additionally, UC Davis faculty members have written introductions and made recommendations for additional reading about the events and stories referenced by artists in the exhibition. Those resources can be found on the exhibition website.

The museum is open exclusively for UC Davis classes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays this winter and spring. Please contact MSM Academic Liaison Jennifer Wagelie at jjwagelie@ucdavis.edu for further information and we'll arrange time in the exhibitions especially for your class.

Questions

- In *From Moment to Movement*, artists Dara Birnbaum (*Tiananmen Square: Break-In Transmission*, 1988–90), Michael Subotzky (*CCTV*, 2011), and Kota Ezawa (*National Anthem*, 2018) incorporate news, surveillance and television footage into their film installations that include living people. Is it their right to do so? What is the responsibility of the artist if the topic of the work is not part of that person's culture, race or time period? Whose story is this to share?
 - Related question: The video recording by Darnella Frazier of George Floyd's murder in 2020 spurred protests against police brutality around the world and its existence is arguably the reason that the officers responsible for his death were convicted. What do you consider Frazier's film to be — a work of art, activism, journalism or something else? Explain.
 - Related question: What does it mean to see yourself or the culture you identify with represented in works of art or mass media? Who controls these representations and interpretations? How can you reclaim these interpretations and capture your own image?
- Can a work of art (or music, film or writing) be considered activism if the artist doesn't consider themselves an activist? Alternately, if an artist considers themselves an activist, is everything they produce an act of activism? Why or why not?
- If you or another viewer have a completely different experience with the work of art than the artist intended, have you missed the point? How much does artist intent matter in terms of the viewer's experience?
- Can art be an effective form of protest and a means for bringing about political and social change? Provide examples from the exhibition *From Moment to Movement* that support your position.
- The artists in this exhibition made a conscious choice to work within the medium of moving images as opposed to other art forms like painting, sculpture or photography. Choose a work from the exhibition that you really connect with. Is one of those reasons because of the medium it is in? If the event or topic referenced was presented in a static format, would it still resonate with you? Why or why not?