Student’s Name

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Course Name

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MOMA Visit

I went to see the “Forever Now” exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. It puts the present and the past side by side, showing that man has had the same behaviors and motivations since the cavemen with their ochre on cave walls and the time of the ancient cultures (i.e., Babylonians and Egyptians) with their chiseling of stone. I will talk about Laura Owens and Michael Williams.

Laura Owens’ work captures the childishness of the Gen Ys and Gen Zs, who grew up on Disney, “The Simpsons” and “Family Guy,” superhero and fairytale movies, and anime. They reach puberty and then adulthood, but they still have childish interests and minds. They collect and display toys, read comic books and/or graphic novels, dress up for Halloween, watch children’s movies in the theater and go to Disneyland even though they don’t have children. Owens shows this through a giant canvas with a page from a child’s composition book. The story is simple: A queen tells her daughter she must marry a monster. The princess says no and runs away. A child wrote this. The spelling is bad and there’s little detail. The solution is simple but ‘right’. The princess doesn’t want to be the object of the monster’s ‘Gase’, so she leaves. As with the “and they lived happily ever after” endings of fairytales, we don’t know how the princess survives after fleeing. She just does. This childish story is different though. We know a child could not have wrote it because of the complex understanding the author has about the frightening and limiting way patriarchy is. A woman subjects another woman to the male gaze, helping to objectify her. To get away from that, the princess has to leave her family and society.

Michael Williams *Wall Dog* shows a different aspect of contemporary life: the focus on self. Ever since the Internet was invented, we have found new ways to communicate and to share about ourselves and our lives: tumblr, Facebook, YouTube and twitter and many more. *Wall Dog* seems to show this trend through space, color and lines and even strange object placement. On a dull green canvas are figures, shapes, and lines in many, many, many bright colors, drawn with organic, geometric, and expressive lines. Some figures are upside down and backwards. This makes it seem like viewers are hanging from the ceiling and looking through a mirror (making a reflection). Whoever is on the other side sees this busy, confused mess in the mirror; they see us. Interestingly, because we are the reflection, we are also the “they” on the other side watching. We both project and examine ourselves. This seems to be the perfect way to represent a world in which we share the big moments of our lives through Facebook status updates and/or live tweeting.

Artists show us the wonder and simplicity of fairytale and the focus on self of the digital age. These are not new. The cavemen created bestiaries, particularly of animals they didn’t see every day, animals that inspired them. The Babylonians closely examined behavior, carefully carving 282 laws and punishments into a human-size stele. “The Forever Now” shows both the ‘feel’ of the present moment and of every point that came before.