

Art 370
Contemporary Art: 1945 to 1970

Due: Thursday, December 7
25 points Extra Credit

Extra Credit

View Simon Schama's *The Power of Art* episode on Picasso's *Guernica* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tl4OABAP4ls>) and answer the following questions.

To introduce the series, art historian Simon Schama asks, "What can art really do in the fall of an atrocity?" What answer does he offer, or do you glean, by the end of the Picasso episode? Before painting *Guernica* in 1937, Picasso's work largely avoided politics. What events and personal connections stirred the artist to devote a significant commission to a very political event? On the other hand, many art historians describe the painting as refusing to take a side. In what ways has Picasso attempted neutrality? How is it, as Schama argues, that art has the ability to break "the habit of taking violent evil in our stride?" The documentary ends with the tale of the cover-up of the *Guernica* reproduction in the United Nations building in February 2003 when the American case to intervene in Iraq was heard. Given this incident, has the power of Picasso's work diminished over time, or does it seem ever more relevant today?

- or -

View Simon Schama's *The Power of Art* episode on Mark Rothko (<https://vimeo.com/109120958>) and answer the following questions.

As Schama argues, what did the "dimness" in Rothko's paintings do? How was Rothko influenced by Matisse? How did Rothko make his painting his own place? What human emotions did Rothko want the viewer to experience? What values did Rothko seem to uphold through his work? Why did Rothko give up the contract worth two-and-a-half million in today's money? What are Simon Schama's views on Rothko's role as an artist?