

# **IMAGE DESCRIPTION**

**TRAINING SESSION**

# HELLO!

## AGENDA FOR TODAY:

- **Background on accessibility history**
- **Accessibility at the Hirshhorn**
- **Image description project overview**
- **What is image description?**
- **How to write an image description**
- **Writing exercise**
- **Next steps**

# **Disability Rights Movement (a brief history)**

- **Early 20th Century - discriminatory laws**
- **1930s/1940s - National Federation of the Blind and American Federation of the Physically Handicapped fought to end job discrimination**
- **1960s - Ed Roberts and the birth of the independent living movement in Berkeley**
- **1970s - Rehabilitation Act, continued protests for accessible public transit and more employment opportunities**
- **1980s - continued protests regarding public accessibility and better access to healthcare**
- **1990 - Protests on Capitol Hill, ADA signed into law**
- **2000s to today - continued protests for equity, healthcare, inclusion, and representation**

# Accessibility at the Hirshhorn

- **Accessibility Task Force**
- **Exhibitions**
- **Programs**
- **Digital Inclusion**

# **Image Description Project Overview**

- **Take advantage of this time to work on a backlog of image descriptions, an important aspect of digital inclusion**
- **Cross-departmental effort at the Hirshhorn and may contribute to a larger Smithsonian-wide image description effort**
- **Image descriptions will be put to use both online and in future programs, such as visual description tours.**
- **You are a part of our pilot team! And this is a pilot! So you'll help us learn how to build and implement future work.**

# What is image description?

“Image descriptions help visitors who are blind or have low-vision access the information contained in images. Description also makes it easier to find images through the image’s content as opposed to the caption or title of the object that it depicts.”

- **COOPER HEWITT GUIDELINES FOR IMAGE DESCRIPTION**

# **Write what you see!**

**Subject**

**Size**

**Color**

**Orientation and relationships**

**Medium and style**

# Alt text vs. long description

## Alt Text:

Shortened from “alternative text,” this is a short visual description that provides a general sense of the content of an image. It is often structured as a sentence fragment that indicates the most important content of the image. Usually it is no longer than 15 words.

## Long Description:

A long description sets out to provide more extensive and detailed visual information. It can be thought of as the analog version of the sighted users’ lightbox view of an image as it provides a closer look at the image. Long descriptions can be anywhere from a couple of sentences to multiple paragraphs, written in complete sentences. The complexity of the image will contribute to the length of the description. Long descriptions should comprehensively describe the most important content of the image augmented by details.



# Example:



**Jimmie Durham, *Still Life with Xitle and Spirit***

## **Alt text**

A large boulder with a painted smirking face crushes the roof of a black sedan

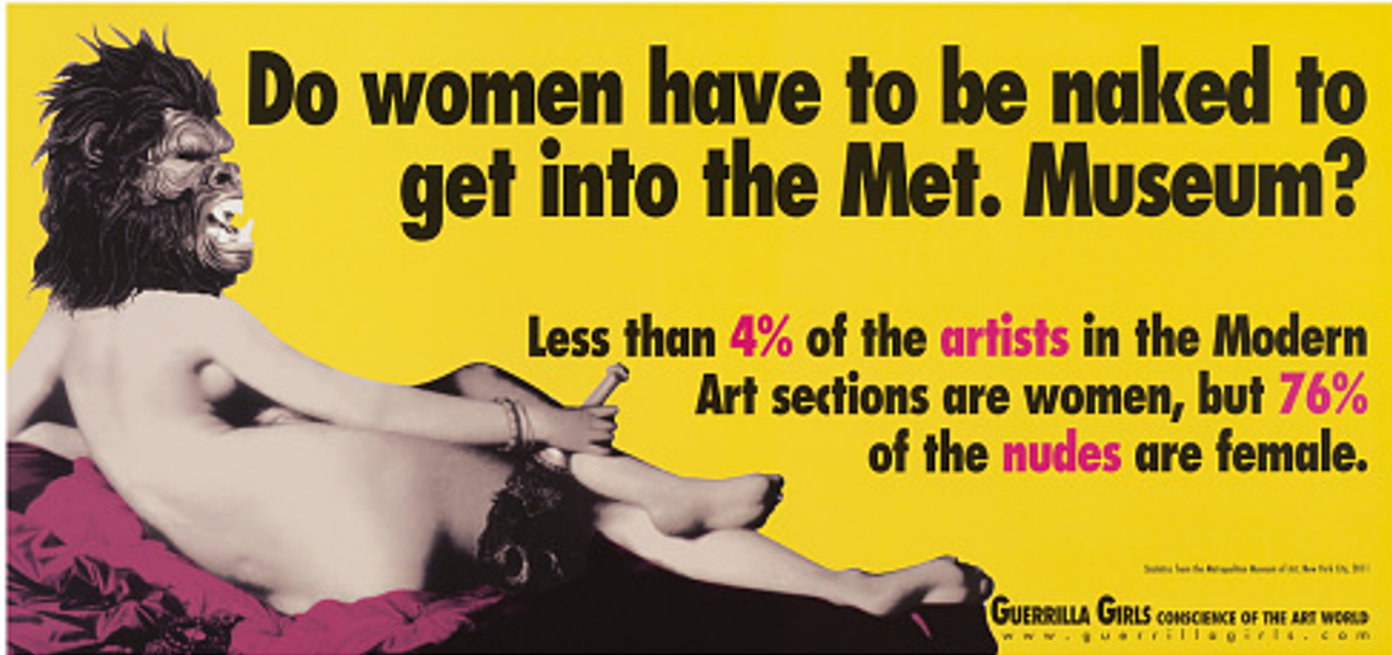
## **Long description**

This sculpture is a large boulder smashed on top of the roof of a car. The boulder is 9 tons and is roughly the size of a baby elephant. The boulder has a deep reddish brown hue and a rough, jagged texture. Durham painted a face on the boulder, placing it so that pointed end becomes the face's nose. It is a cartoon-like face. The mouth is a straight line and resembles a smug smirk. The car is a black Dodge Spirit, a sedan about 15 feet long. It is similar to a Honda Accord. The car's roof is entirely caved in. The entire car bows in towards the center from the weight of the boulder.

# Practice – write an alt-text and long description:

Alt text

Long description



**Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?**

Less than **4%** of the **artists** in the Modern Art sections are women, but **76%** of the **nudes** are female.

Statistics from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, 2011

**GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD  
[www.guerrillagirls.com](http://www.guerrillagirls.com)

Guerrilla Girls, *Do women Have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?*

# Next steps...

- Read - [COOPER HEWITT GUIDELINES FOR IMAGE DESCRIPTION](#)
- **Description writing practice:**
  - Select an image from our folder to describe
  - Draft an alt text and long description for that image in our shared document
- **Meet next week at \_\_\_\_\_ to share and workshop descriptions**
- **Extra credit: Check out the [Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago's described media page](#) for their recent Mika Rottenberg show (spoiler alert: full-length video art with captions and visual descriptions!)**