

## ARTH 191A: Issues in Contemporary Art (The Thing)

### Response Paper Assignment

Due 2/20/2020 on Canvas the Beginning of class

One page double-spaced, 1" margins, spell and grammar checked. This is a response paper. The paper will be based on your educated but subjective response to one object in Mark Dion's exhibition *The Melancholy Museum* at the Cantor Museum at Stanford University. If you are unable to visit the Cantor on 2/6 with the class, or on your own, then study the website information:

<https://news.stanford.edu/2019/09/17/compelling-origin-story-stanford-museum-university-silicon-valley/>

and

<https://museum.stanford.edu/exhibitions/melancholy-museum-love-death-and-mourning-stanford/dackerman-essay>

After looking over this information, take a close look at one part of the Dion exhibition, the *Mourning Cabinet*, at: <http://cantorcollection.stanford.edu/index-tree/tree/287>. Pick one of the objects in the *Mourning Cabinet* and, after studying it:

- 1) Describe your chosen object. Be sure to include your observations of it, as well as relevant information about it included in the exhibition material.
- 2) Explain the object's relationship to the category under which it is placed in the mourning cabinet (earth, air, underworld, water, or fire) and its relationship to the other objects therein.
- 3) Explore the object's relationship to the exhibition theme and title (*The Melancholy Museum*). What does it tell us about melancholy? About Leland Stanford? The period? The museum?

For an example of this sort of a response to a singular object see: Watercolor set:

<https://museum.stanford.edu/exhibitions/melancholy-museum-love-death-and-mourning-stanford/watercolor>