

Maya Lin - A Clear Strong Vision
Discussion Questions

1. How might the Aesthetic theories we have just discussed be used a way to critique Maya Lin's memorial? Are there some that are more relevant than others? Think about this as you answer the following question: How does one judge the quality of art? Why is the wall "not just an average piece of art?" Is the wall beautiful? By what standard?
2. Describe the conflict that occurs over the nature of art in this film. Where position would you have taken in this conflict?
3. Is art more capable of honesty and truth than other areas of knowledge?
4. Given what we have discussed about the nature of art and its function, was the committee set up to select the memorial's design properly constituted? (ie: a panel of experts) Should the selection committee have been a committee made up only of Vietnam Veterans as the speaker indicated? Does one have to be an "art expert" to pass effective judgment on a work of art? If this is true, what implications does it have for art as a way of knowing?
5. Should the flag and statue have been added to the memorial? How important is integrity (that the work of art is constructed exactly as the artist intended without modification) to a work of art?
6. Should memorial art always be representational (should it look like the thing depicted - not be abstract)? Why or why not?
7. Who is a more important voice determining the nature of public art: the artist or the community in which the art will be located? What does this conflict say about art as an area of knowledge? Of truth?
8. What does this film tell us about the relationship between art and history as ways of knowing? Can art help us know history more effectively than traditional forms of historical inquiry?
9. If Tolstoy were to visit the memorial, how would he judge it? This questions should draw on the Tolstoy document we read?
10. What ethical obligations did Maya Lin have when designing the monument? Did she fulfill, these obligations?