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Art Theme Paper

History is an important theme in works of art. Art expresses history in ways writing cannot. Paintings and sculptures give visual depictions of historical events, or ideals. Since the beginning of time, art has been used to tell stories, and pass down knowledge to future generations. I have chosen pieces by Marina Abramović, and Glenn Ligon for my paper on the theme of history.

Marina Abramović's piece is stunning. According to *Art21.org*, Marina Abramović was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1946. A pioneer of performance as a visual art form, Abramović has used her body as both subject and medium of her performances to test her physical, mental, and emotional limits (*Art21.org*). Marina frequently incorporates the theme of death in her art. This particular piece is a photograph of her cleaning a muddy skeleton. This very graphic image, is what I believe, a representation of a woman that does not want to accept death. Death and history go together beautifully because history is basically the study of dead people, and their time on this earth.

The second piece I chose was by the talented Glenn Ligon. Ligon's paintings and sculptures examine cultural and social identity through literature and photographs (*Art21.org*). Glenn's pieces are mostly based on the civil rights movement. In this piece, he is using white neon lights that are painted black, to write a message. The lights spell, "Face me I face you". This relates to the civil rights movement because back then, whites did not treat blacks as equals. This is a message from the black community, to the white community, asking for equality.

These pieces are extremely different. Marina's piece represents death, and Glenn's piece represents equality. The only similarity in these pieces is that they are both photographs. Neither are cliché or boring, and both have important significances. I enjoy history, and art that represents the past. History is truly one of the most significant art themes.

