

The *Entry-Point* Test.

Six questions for anyone about to publish a ranked or list-format piece — an editor, a curator, a writer, a creator. Is your list a door, or a destination? Is it serving the audience, or extracting from them?

A WORKSHEET BY MORIAH ALISE · DEAR GLORY · MAY 2026 · [READ THE ARTICLE](#) →

A list is a *door*. Or it is *extraction*.

There is no third option. The format does honest work when it introduces a new audience to a field they did not know how to enter — and points them at the deeper work that lives on the other side. The format does damage when it pretends to be the room, harvests attention, and leaves the artists named with nothing more than a thumbnail.

How to use this. Run this audit *before* you publish. Six categories. Be honest about which side of the door you are on. The point is to know what your list is doing before the search engine starts doing it for you.

SECTION I · THE AUDIT

Six categories. *Door, or destination?*

For each area: name the real answer. Not the version of the answer you would give in a brief. The version you'd tell a friend over dinner.

01 AUDIENCE

Who is the list actually for? An audience genuinely new to the field, or your own audience already knowledgeable enough not to need it?

- I can name the *specific* reader I am picturing — what they know, what they don't, what they are searching for

- The reader I'm picturing would not be embarrassed to be told what's in the piece

- I am not writing primarily for the algorithm or the recommendation engine

- If three quarters of my existing audience already knows everything in the list, I have admitted that to myself

- The reader would describe the piece as *useful*, not just *well-titled*

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

02 CRITERIA

Are the criteria for inclusion named, defensible, and consistent? Or are they hidden, instinctive, or unstated?

- I can write the criteria for inclusion in one sentence

- I would say the criteria out loud on the record

- The criteria are applied *consistently* — I am not bending them to fit a name I want on the list

- I am not picking artists primarily because they will draw clicks

- I am willing to publish the criteria alongside the list itself

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

03 INCLUSION LOGIC

Who is on the list, and why? Beyond the famous names — have you picked people who deserve the introduction, or only the people whose names you already trust the audience to recognize?

- Every name on the list passes my criteria, not just the famous ones
- I have personally engaged with every person's work — books, shows, studio visits, primary writing
- I am not relying entirely on auction results, follower counts, or museum acquisitions to justify a name
- I have spelled and pronounced every name correctly — or asked someone who would know
- I am willing to tell each person on the list, in writing, that they are on it

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

04 EXCLUSION LOGIC

Who is not on the list, and why? Have you said that part out loud? This is the question lists most often refuse to answer.

- I can name who is missing from the list and why
- The exclusions are deliberate, not accidental
- I am willing to include a sentence in the piece itself about who and what is left out
- I am not over-relying on the people the institutions have already validated
- I have considered — and named — the artists working at the edge of the canon, even if they did not make this particular list

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

05 THE DEEPER WORK

What is on the other side of the door? A list as an entry point is only honest if it is followed by an apparatus that lets the reader graduate. A list as a destination is extraction.

- The piece links onward to longer, more rigorous work — a profile, an interview, an essay, an investigation

- If the deeper work does not yet exist, I have committed to making it

- Each person on the list has at least one named follow-up resource (a show, a book, an article) the reader can graduate to

- The piece does not pretend to be the complete picture

- I have a plan for what I publish *next* that builds on this introduction, not another list

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

06 WHAT THE LIST DOES FOR THE ARTISTS

Beyond the traffic to your own site — does the list move attention to the artists in a way that compounds? Or does it harvest attention from them in a way that doesn't?

- Naming an artist on this list is doing something *real* for them: sales, press, opportunity, audience

- I am not using their names primarily to drive my own search ranking

- I have a plan to send the people on the list a copy of the piece, name-by-name

- I would not be embarrassed if the artist's gallery, partner, or advisor read the piece

- The artists are presented as full practitioners, not as thumbnails or talking points

→ What is missing or uncertain here — and what's the first move to fix it?

Is this a *door*, or is it *extraction*?

Look across the six categories. Be honest with yourself about which side of the door you are on. The piece can still be published either way — but you should know which one you are publishing.

What *extraction* looks like.

Unnamed criteria. Famous names only. No exclusion logic. No links to deeper work. No plan for what comes next. Nothing real for the artists named. *If most of those are true of your list, the format is harvesting attention without paying for it. The piece may still publish. But you should call it what it is, at least to yourself.*

YOUR VERDICT ON THIS LIST

This list is best read as —

Three *commitments*. Before you publish.

Three concrete moves that turn an extraction into an entry point. Not abstract intentions — specific actions, with names and dates.

An entry-point commitment is a specific change you'll make to the piece, or a specific follow-on piece you'll publish, that turns the list from a destination into a door. Three.

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3	COMMITMENT THREE	BY WHEN
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CLOSE

If the list is the *door*, hold it *open*.

The audience who entered through your list is the audience who could go on to read everything you write. The artists you named are the artists whose work you could go on to support for

years. Lists are not the problem. Lists without a room behind them are. Build the room. Then the list earns its place.

Moriah Alise

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