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Letter of Recommendation for Jonathan Fein

To Whom It May Concern:

On March 7-8, 2016, the Departments of History and Art, Graphic Design and Art History at Oklahoma State had the privilege of hosting filmmaker and producer Jon Fein's highly successful visit to the university. My colleague Teresa Holder and I have used Fein's excellent film "Objects and Memory" in our Introduction to Museum Studies class for the last two years, and we felt that this powerful work should be seen by a larger audience of students. Its lessons—historical, psychological, and museological—transcend the traditional boundaries of academic disciplines. In collaboration with faculty in the Public History Program in the History Department, we invited Mr. Fein to OSU to screen his film; participate in a panel discussion; give a public lecture; and make a series of classroom visits. Fein's visit was financially supported by the College of Arts and Sciences Humanities Speaker Series program at OSU.

Students from the Emergency Management and Fire Safety Program, the Museum Studies and Public History Program, American Studies, and a large number of our BA and BFA students from the Art Department all benefited greatly from Fein's wonderful visit to our campus. On the first night, Fein screened "Objects and Memory," which left many audience members in tears. We had over 70 students come out to see the film and participate in the panel discussion, which featured Fein, OSU professors, and Helen Steifmiller, Collections Manager at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. The panelists led an engaging, informative discussion, which garnered very good participation from the audience. The following day, Fein visited with graduate and undergraduate students in the Art History and the Public History programs. Students found him very approachable and really enjoyed talking to him about the projects that they were planning. He was able to give them excellent feedback on exhibitions focused on such disparate subjects as 1950s southwestern fashion and the *Great Gatsby*. That evening, Fein gave a lively public lecture in the School of Architecture on his work, which attracted an additional 80+ students, staff and faculty members from across the university. Using classroom technology, we were also able to include a number of our distance learning students, who usually attend class via Adobe Connect.

The events of September 11th resonate in a somewhat different way in Oklahoma than in other parts of the country because the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. While many of the students at OSU have taken

field trips as middle schoolers to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, Fein's film allowed them to think about tragedies of this nature in a different, more expansive way, through the stories told by the objects left behind.

Faculty members from across campus contacted me following Mr. Fein's visit, thanking me for arranging it and telling me how much both they and their students had gotten out of their interactions with him. They also told me that the film and presentations had resulted in thoughtful and engaging class discussions on the days following Fein's visit. On a personal note, I found Fein to be an exceptionally thoughtful and generous person. We had the opportunity to spend quite a bit of time together, both driving from the airport and touring the newly renovated Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum after his arrival.

Mr. Fein's visit was one of the highlights of my spring semester. I am looking forward to the completion of his new film project on social impact design so we can invite him out to OSU again!



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