Photographic Exhibitions:

There are various types of exhibitions: one-person exhibitions, group shows centered around a particular theme or concept, juried and invitational exhibitions, exhibitions concerned with specific processes, exhibitions dealing with formal style or conceptual approaches. Some exhibitions may be specifically about content while other exhibitions are concerned with aesthetic issues. Commercial gallery exhibitions are often more concerned with selling the art while museums will usually provide more information about the artists, movements etc. in the form of wall labels, and catalogs for example.

Content of your paper:

To help you understand how to write a critical review, look for examples either in magazines or in the newspaper. Magazines such as ArtWeek, Art in America, Art Forum would also provide good examples.

Below is a list of questions to think about when you write your report.

1. What is the premise of the exhibition?
2. How is the exhibition mounted (the effectiveness of framing, lighting sequencing, gallery space, etc.)?
3. What were the curator’s intentions in organizing the exhibition? Is the exhibition successful in terms of the intentions?
4. Which are your favorites in terms of content, formal values, etc. (choose two or three art works to discuss)
5. What is the historical context of the images?
6. What have other critics written about this artists or exhibition?
7. What are the artist’s intentions in making these images? Is he/she successful in terms of the intentions?

Museums often employ individuals called “docents” who are trained to answer questions concerning the exhibition. Smaller galleries usually have gallery directors or attendants who are often willing to answer questions.

When you write your report, be sure to describe the specific photographs you are addressing. When you write about your subjective responses to an image or the exhibition as a whole, remember to continually return to the image itself for the evidence to support your ideas.

If you use quotations be sure to include the source. You may consult museum catalogs, periodicals, historical studies, monographs, or any other sources you find useful.

Your report should be 3 to 4 typed pages in 12 pt. typeface, and double-spaced.