You need a pre-introduction that sets up the larger topic of authenticity. The remainder of this outline details the specificity of country music as the means to examining the topic of authenticity. I think it would be good to set up this larger umbrella prior to beginning the discussion of your Preservation Society. Use questions like:
- How are visual artist different than/similar to a singer/performer?
- How do you set the tone of your position?
- What are the strategies of museums? Of collections?
- Maybe think about the word “preservation?”
- Finally, reference some of the comments I made on your bibliography….

I. Introduction

a. This work is part of the Country Music Preservation Society of America, a collaboration between myself and Tyler Berrier, that evolved out of a desire to engage with and maintain a bygone era of country music culture, while also recognizing the artificiality and commercialism surrounding it.

b. Examination of the real vs. the constructed, emphasizing the paradoxical nature of country music, a genre that prides itself on authenticity.

c. Country music is a victim of the culture industry. Victim is a strong word. Can you explain your position on this? The stars and their songs are consciously constructed to convey a “realness” that may or may not be present, appealing to fans’ desire for authenticity and ultimately turning a profit.

II. Body of Thesis: The Real vs. the Constructed

a. Culture Industry

i. Notion developed by Theodor Adorno that suggests products are specifically made for the consumption of the masses. This is apparent in the country music business.

b. Country Music Institutions

i. Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum
1. Real institution that is an industry in its own right, commodifying history and promoting the myths of country music.

2. “Commercialism’s complex role in shaping country’s generic meanings continues to be embodied in the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum” (Pecknold 238).

ii. Country Music Preservation Society of America

1. Constructed institution mimicking country music’s blend of truth and fiction
2. Raises questions about the validity/sanctity of what are often mere myths shaped in order to entertain and earn money.

c. Personal Narratives

i. Celebrity/performative identities of country stars are meant to appeal to the working class, often following a “rags to riches” trajectory. These constructed personas often have characteristics that are contradictory to the reality of the singers’ lives.

1. Tammy Wynette
2. Loretta Lynn
3. Dolly Parton
4. Hank Williams

d. Wax Figures

i. Reproductions such as wax figures embody country music culture’s desire for the authentic, while also playing a role in the preservation of country music history. Wax museums’ “concern with authenticity reaches the point of reconstructive neurosis” (Eco 13).

ii. In the case of both wax museums and country music, when “the real thing” is unattainable, it is constructed. These are among several “instances where the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake” (Eco 8).

iii. Reflect a longing for the culture of country music culture of the past, rather than the homogenized world of contemporary country. “The frantic desire for the Almost Real arises only as a neurotic reaction to the vacuum of memories; the Absolute Fake is offspring of the unhappy awareness of a present without depth” (Eco 31).


e. **Artifacts**

i. **Ripley’s Museums**

1. Display an “uncritical accumulation of every curious find.” They rely not on historical, but visual authenticity. What looks real is assumed to actually be real (Eco 16).

ii. **Parafiction**

1. Term coined by Carrie Lambert-Beatty referencing artistic practices that straddle the line between the imaginary and the real. “In parafiction real and/or imaginary personages and stories intersect with the world as it is being lived.” They are fictions experienced as fact (Lambert-Beatty 54).

| III. **The Actual Work (idk because it’s not done)**

a. Photographs of wax figures, statues, cardboard standees depicting country stars

   i. Reveal artificiality

b. Sculptures incorporated mass-produced goods

   i. Indicates the commodity, commercialization

   1. Country music repeatedly references “its own position as cheap goods.” One way in which this is done is through a “stylistic insistence on the speaking object – the bottle, the empty house the half-smoked cigarette in the ashtray – which remind listeners of their own investments in the cultural texts that commercialism and commodities convey” (Pecknold 237).

   ii. Reduction of stars’ personas to generic, mass-produced elements

c. **Artifacts**

   i. Combining real and fake “artifacts” from country music history calls into question what is authentic and what is fabricated.

d. Pseudo-organization

   i. The mission of the Country Music Preservation Society of America is to identify and preserve the evolving history and traditions of Country Music and to educate its audiences. Functioning as a local historical society and as an international arts organization, the Country Music Preservation Society of America serves visiting and non-visiting audiences including fans, non-fans, students, non-students, scholars, non-scholars, and members of the music industry, affording them the opportunity to enjoy
the treasures of America’s music and continue the tradition of the preservation of the image of Country Music. A discussion of this is in your outline multiple times. Do you need it repeated this much—considering you are no longer using it’s mock set-up as part of your installation.

ii. The presentation of the work under the Country Music Preservation Society of America provides a semblance of authority, which is then negated by the work, exposing the façade.

IV. Conclusion

a. “Country music is three chords and the truth,” famed country songwriter Harlan Howard once said (Dansby). This axiom, however, is far from accurate, as country music has a long history of manipulating itself and its stars for commodification.

It’s a good and concise outline. The only worry is getting too specific to country music without setting up the discussion of authenticity and parafiction early on in the paper.