

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF AN ARTWORK

1. DESCRIBE

(WHAT DO I SEE?)

- Landscape, portrait, people, still, animals, religious, historic
- Foreground / background
- Time of day / season
- Place or setting / inside or outside
- Abstract / realistic
- Horizontal / vertical
- Old vs. modern / historic vs. contemporary
- Action - what is going on?
- Story?

3. INTERPRET

(WHAT IS HAPPENING?)

- The artwork is about..
- It makes me think about...
- The artist is saying...
- Mood and feeling: (calm, violent, sad, joyful, angry, hopeful, sacred, etc.)
- The artist wants you to see...
- The artist wants you to think about...
- The artwork reminds me of...
- I want to know...
- If I could ask the artist a question, I would ask...
- Symbols
- Metaphors
- Context
- Relationships between all the individual parts of the work

2. ANALYZE

(HOW IS THE WORK ORGANIZED?)

- **Line:** strong, dominant, thin, directional, broken, outline, structural, curved
- **Color and value:** warm, cool, light, dark, solid, transparent, bright, dull, monochromatic, realistic or abstract
- **Texture:** smooth, rough, coarse, soft
- **Space:** perspective, foreground, middle-ground, background, point of view
- **Form:** 2D vs 3D form on flat surface, sculptural form
- Contrast, emphasis, rhythm, pattern, movement, balance, unity, repetition
- How do the elements and principles of design work together?
- How does the artist use the elements / principles to get your attention?
- Composition

4. JUDGE

(WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT IT?)

- The best part of the work is...
- The strengths of the work are...
- The weaknesses of the work are...
- The artist communicates ideas by...
- I learned...
- I like because...
- I dislike because...
- I would(n't) choose to hang this work in my room because...
- This work has survived the test of time because...
- Why do different people see and understand artwork differently?



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