

ART CRITICISM

Art criticism is an organized system for looking at and talking about art. The purpose of art criticism is to get the viewer involved in a perception process that delays judgement until all aspects of a work of art has been studied. Learning art criticism also gives each viewer the confidence to discuss a work of art without worrying what other people might think.

DESCRIBE: WHAT you SEE?

During this step, the viewer lists all the obvious things, objects, in the art work. Objectivity is important. List and describe everything you see in the artwork. Answers may include a literal description of the subject and what is "going on."

Include small details, and observations.

ANALYZE: HOW IS THE WORK ORGANIZED?

During this step the viewer examines how the elements and principles of art are used in the art work.

Elements of Art: color, line, shape / form, space, texture, value

Principles of Art: balance, emphasis, movement, repetition, rhythm, pattern, proportion, unity, variety

INTERPRET: WHAT IS THE ARTIST SAYING TO ME?

During interpretation, viewers will make inferences about the message in the art work. Each interpretation can be different because each is based upon the feelings and life experience of the viewer.

What is the artist trying to tell you?

DECIDE / JUDGE: IS THE WORK SUCCESSFUL?

This is when the viewer decides whether or not the art work is successful. There are two levels of judgement:

The first is personal: do you like the art work?

The second level is subjective, but it uses aesthetic theories, the list of three possibilities below, to help the viewer decide whether the work is successful. More than one theory may be used to judge the art work.

Realism or Imitationalism: Is the art a realistic presentation?

Formalism or composition: Emphasizes the design qualities and use of the elements and principles

Expressionism or emotionalism: concerned with the meaning or content of art, does it arouse feeling

JUDGEMENTS ABOUT FUNCTIONAL ART

To criticize functional art, start with: **Describe** and Analyze. To **Interpret** consider the purpose of the piece as its "meaning." Does it look like it will do its intended function? Finally, **Decide / Judge:**

Consider whether the object "works." Does it do its intended job or serve its function?