

LESSON: ICONOGRAPHY, and ICONOLOGY**Iconography**

- the study of images
- in art: identification of such images in art
- not limited to the subject and can also be to the background
- Involves identification of images and symbols

Iconology

- involves finding out why such images and symbols are relevant and how they fit into the bigger context of the artwork
- the interpretation of the identified symbols and allegories found through iconographic methods
- Iconological Interpretation investigates the meaning of motifs, symbols, and allegories in their cultural context

Erwin Panofsky(1892-1968) - form can not be separated from content, visual elements carry a deeper meaning. He wrote *Studies in Iconology* (1939) and *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (1955), detailing three levels of iconographic or iconological analysis:

a. Pre-Iconographic Analysis

- very basic formal analysis
- taking in what they can see
- not meant to be influenced by outside sources
 - *What does this (art) represent on the most simple level?*

b. Iconographic Analysis

- identify the image they see as a known story or a recognizable character
 - *Who/what are these figures/image?*

c. Iconological Analysis

- decipher the image based on the time/place the artwork was made, cultural style/style of the artist, wishes of the patron, etc.
 - *How is this artist's depiction of the subject similar to or different from other artists' depictions at the time this was made, or at different times?*
 - *Did this image inspire, or was it inspired by, literary representations of this theme or subject?*
 - *How is it similar to or different from such literary representations?*
 - *Compare the work with textual sources.*

LESSON: VISUAL ARTS IN ACTION**OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE MEANING**

Subjective most commonly means based on the personal perspective or preferences of a person—the subject who's observing something. In contrast, **Objective** most commonly means not influenced by or based on a personal viewpoint—based on the analysis of an object of observation only.

CONTENT FRAMING QUESTION

- **Wonder:** What do you notice and wonder about this work of art?
- **Organize:** What is happening in this work of art?
- **Reveal:** What does a deeper exploration of [a specific artistic element or technique] reveal about this work of art?
- **Distill:** What is the essential meaning of this work of art?
- **Know:** How does this work of art build my knowledge of [specific topic]?

STEP 1: DESCRIPTION

The first step in art criticism is description. When we look at a work of art, our minds naturally take notice of the general information that's present. We start with just a simple statement of observation.

What do you see?

What is the subject matter?

STEP 2: ANALYSIS

Analysis refers to how the elements and principles of art are used in the work. In a critique, students should point out what is happening with these specific elements and principles. Many times, the formal qualities of the art are what makes the art successful. Students should understand how these qualities work and what makes them successful in artwork. They should also be able to discern when these formal qualities are unsuccessful as well.

What elements are being used?

What principles are being created?

STEP 3: INTERPRETATION

Often times, we'll instinctively skip to this step. We look for meaning in everything, so this is perfectly natural. In this step, we explore the meaning of the art. What is the artist trying to communicate to us? There are no wrong responses here. The artist may have a meaning that they intended in the work, but how we interpret it is completely up to us.

What is the mood?

What is the meaning?

Is there a theme?

Is there any symbolism?

STEP 4: JUDGMENT

The viewer takes all of the prior knowledge and information and puts it all together into a cohesive opinion. This is where the viewer finally states whether they like or do not like the artwork and why. For whatever answer or opinion they have, they must be able to support their response.

Do you like this work? Why?

Why do you not like this work? Why?

Is this a successful piece of art? Why?

Do you think the artist communicated their message? Why and How?

PERSPECTIVES AND CRITICISM

Perspectives can be thought of as different viewpoints when appreciating or trying to understand art, for example people from one culture or background might think of certain artworks differently than people from a different culture or background.

Three General Types of Perspective

1. **Cultural Perspective** - It refers to the way that individuals are shaped by their environments as well as social and cultural factors. Such factors include a person's nationality, race and gender.
2. **Historical Perspective** - Taking historical perspective means understanding the social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional settings that shaped people's lives and actions in the past.
3. **Personal Perspective** - It is formed by the layered aspects that form our individual identities. This could be any number of defining aspects that form our unique biographical experiences that constitute our identities and color our personal point of view or the way we interpret our life experiences. You may find that your personal response to art and artworks will change as you learn more about design, art making, and the history of art in general. Knowledge and/or education about art usually helps us appreciate and understand art.