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**HOW TO ANALYSE A WORK OF ART?**

**A Short Guideline for the Analysis of an Artwork**

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**IMPORTANT: CHOOSE AN ARTWORK WHICH IS NOT IN OUR BOOK!!!**

**Step I – Basic Information**

1. Choice of the artifact: HOW and WHY is this considered a significant work of art?  
Subject Matter (Topic): Who or What is represented?)
2. Artist or Architect (Who made it?)
3. Date (When was it made? Is it a copy or an original work? Was it made before or after other similar works?)
4. Origin (Where was it made? For whom? Is it typical of the art of a period and/or geographical area?)
5. Location (Where is the work of art now? Where was its original location? If the work of art is displaced, did its perception change? Could and can it be seen on all sides, or just on one? (Original location-current location)
6. Technique and Material (What materials is it made of? How was it executed? Size?)
7. Where did you take this information from? (Museum, gallery, artist's statement...) Indicate in a foot- or endnote.

**Step II – Short Description**

Describe the work in a few sentences. What do you see – what does it look like? Is it a representation of something, an abstraction or a non-objective work?

**Step III – Form**

Describe the formal features of the artifact with the help of the vocabulary you learned throughout the course.

**Art Elements:**

1. Line (straight, curved, angular, flowing, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, contour, thick, thin, implied etc.)
2. Shape (what shapes are created and how)
3. Light and Value (source, flat, strong, contrasting, even, values, emphasis, shadows)
4. Color (primary, secondary, mixed, complementary, warm, cool, decorative, values)
5. Texture and Pattern (real, implied, repeating)
6. Space (depth, overlapping, kinds of perspective)
7. Time and Motion

[https://twp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/visual\\_analysis.pdf](https://twp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/visual_analysis.pdf)

<https://artcritic101.wordpress.com/formal-art-critique/>

<http://ualr.edu/art/art-history-resources/papers-and-projects/guidelines-for-analysis-of-art/>

## Principles of Design

1. Unity and Variety
2. Balance (symmetry, asymmetry)
3. Emphasis and Subordination
4. Scale and Proportion (weight, how objects or figures relate to each other and the setting)
5. Mass/Volume (three-dimensional art)
6. Rhythm
7. Function/Setting (architecture)
8. Interior/Exterior Relationship (architecture)

## Step IV – Conclusion Remarks and Opinions

After you have completed your analysis and inferred on it, elaborate by including some conclusive remarks. This is the part of the paper where you can give your personal informed opinion on the artwork based on your description and analysis.

1. Discuss how and why the artist uses basic elements and principles of art to create meaning.
2. Support your discussion and conclusive remarks with facts about the work.

## Conclusion 2<sup>nd</sup> part:

1. Discuss shortly the purpose your artwork was made for according to your analysis. (We have discussed various purposes in class; i.e. art and beauty, art and glory, art and power, art and ideology, art and religion, art and the cultural context, art and experience and memory, art as self-expression of the artist, art as a healing process ...)

## General Remarks

1. Pay attention to the date the paper is due. **Due date: March 18, 2020 (submission on Turnitin).**
2. Guidelines for assignment: **(3-4 pages, double spaced, in Times or Times New Roman, 12 t. font)**
3. **Include an image of the discussed artwork.**
4. Tense: use the present tense in describing works of art.
5. **Any information you use from another source must be documented with a footnote.** Failure to do so is considered plagiarism. **You have to give at least three bibliographical references.**
6. Ask your instructor or the teaching assistants for help if needed.