

Art Essay Presentation Guide Using MLA Formatting and Style

MLA (Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities.

Below are some basic guidelines for presenting your paper in MLA style.

- Type your paper on a computer using a text friendly program which allows for setting changes (Micro-Soft Word is preferred).
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- Use Times New Roman font style. (MLA requires that the regular and italics type styles contrast enough that they are recognizable one from another, Time New Roman does this.)
- Double-space the text lines of your paper.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin. (MLA recommends that you use the Tab key as opposed to pushing the Space Bar five times.)
- Use *italics* throughout your paper for the title of the artwork (only).
- First person singular (for example “I” or “My”) should not be used within the text of the paper. Exceptions are within the title of the artwork or when quoting the artist.
- An Artwork image should be presented after the conclusion on a separate page and before the list of sources page. Below the artwork image, the title of the artwork, the artists name, date of artwork, media and location art is displayed (if available) should be presented centered.
- List of sources utilized should be on a separate page at the end of the paper.

Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- Do not make a separate title page for your paper.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. (be sure to use double-spaced text lines)
- Center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
- Triple space between the title and the first line of the text.

On the following pages you will find a sample paper written by a student.

Student Name

Professor Taylor

Art 101G / Orientation in Art

Date

Exploring the Elements and Principles of Design through *Noli Me Tangere* by Tiziano Vecellio

Tiziano Vecellio, otherwise known as Titian, created a work of art titled *Noli Me Tangere*, a 110.5 x 91.9 cm oil on canvas painting created about 1514 which is on display at The National Gallery in London England. Within this essay we will cover the elements of art and principles of design as a whole, and those incorporated by Titian through his painting. Additionally, we will explore how the understanding of particular elements and principles of design utilized in the creation of the artwork can help in the experience of this work of art.

When looking at a work of art, there are many facets to consider when thinking of the processes leading up to completion. These facets that art is built upon are principles of design and elements of art. When considering art elements, we are talking about line, shape, value, color, texture and space. The first element is line. Lines can be curvy, zigzag, implied or dotted. Line is the boundary that defines a shape. Next we have shape. Shape is used to build form and create patterns. Shapes can be either positive or negative. A shape is an area that is enclosed by a line. Shapes can either enhance an object or move the viewer's eye through and around the image. After shape we have value. Value is the lightness and darkness of an object. Different degrees of value can be achieved by varying the lightness and darkness of a color which bring

contrast to the image. Along with value, we have color. Color has two basic properties; hue and intensity or saturation. Hue is the actual color. An example of this would be the actual hue for pink is red. The intensity refers to how saturated the hue is (or its richness). Color can be used to bring about a certain emotion in an image. It is often the foremost element used in art. Texture can be used to give life like details to an image. Texture can be used to simulate a specific surface. Space can be positive or negative. It can be thought of as size and scale. Then when we consider the principles of design, which are balance, space, contrast, rhythm, scale, movement, emphasis and subordination. Balance provides stability and structure to art. Space in art refers to the distance or area between, around, above, below, or within elements. Contrast refers to the arrangement of opposite elements and effects. For example, light and dark colors, smooth and rough textures, large and small shapes. Contrast can be used to create variety, visual interest, and drama in an artwork. Rhythm is a principle of design that suggests movement or action. Rhythm is usually achieved through repetition of lines, shapes, colors, and more. It creates a visual tempo in artworks and provides a path for the viewer's eye to follow. Scale and proportion is the size relationship between the various parts of an artwork. Scale in art describes the size of one object in relation to another and also refers to our perception of perspective and proportion. Emphasis refers to the area of an artwork that dominates attention or draws interest. Subordination is defined as minimizing or toning down other compositional elements in order to bring attention to the focal point. Artists tend to utilize some of these elements and principles to great works of art. Titian is one of those artists.

Noli Me Tangere a interesting painting by Titian and it has an interesting story to tell. Christ appears to the Magdalen after the Resurrection to comfort her. At first, she thinks he is a gardener; when she recognizes him he tells her not to touch him - 'noli me tangere' (let no one

touch me), because Christ will soon ascend to heaven and send the Holy Spirit down to his followers and he does not want them to cling to his physical presence. Titian used principles of design with expertise to tell this story. Particularly balance, symmetry and subordination. According to Patrick Frank, and Preble Duane, balance is "the achievement of equilibrium, in which acting influences are held in check by opening forces" (pg72). Balance was portrayed in this painting in many aspects. Mary Magdalene and the newly risen Christ are important aspects of the painting that are held in emphasized through different color saturations and color contrasts. The color saturations of warm to cool colors and color contrasts between green and red colors creates a visual energy between Mary and Christ. The energy of the color dynamics is forceful and the creates an energy between Mary and Christ. Body language also creates energy for the viewer to absorb, Christ as standing with a vertical thrust to show importance and Mary in a kneeling position is creating a counter balance of support on the left side of the painting, Also, balance is carried out by placing Mary's head, left arm, and hand on the vertical line of the central tree, establishing an axis in the lower portion of the painting. Symmetry is maintained through the near matching of left and right sides of the painting in terms of intentional visual activity. The Principle of subordination is a technique used by artist that ranks certain areas within the painting as lesser, through color, size and placement. Titian uses this technique as he paints the landscape in the background with muted colors, as the muted colors create a path around the artwork and leading the viewer back in space. Symmetry and balance go hand in hand with this painting as equilibrium is masterfully developed before your eyes. Titian keeps your eye fixed within the painting by using color play and composition. Creating a stage for Christ and Mary.

The understanding of these elements helped us understand how visual stimulation is created within Titian's painting. Through the use of color, balance, symmetry and subordination, Titian is able to make his painting visually appealing. Titian's painting *Noli Me Tangere* is a masterful utilization of particular elements and principles of design. It is amazing that the elements and principles of design can help the viewer understand what went into the making of the artwork and further appreciate the thought Titian put into his painting. Although Mary, Christ and the tree placed just above could have been overpowering in real life, Titian's expert use of the design elements and principles make the artwork feel calm and soothing to look at and experience.



Noli Me Tangere by Tiziano Vecellio (Titian)

110.5 x 91.9 cm, oil on canvas, 1514

on display at The National Gallery in London England

Works Cited / Sources

Patrick Frank, and Duane Preble. *Prebles' Artforms: An Introduction to the Visual Arts*. 11th ed.

Boston: Pearson, 2014. Print.

"Noli Me Tangere." *The National Gallery*. N.p., n.d. Web. Date accessed: 07 Oct. 2017.

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/titian-noli-me-tangere>

"Titian, Noli Me Tangere." *ColourLex*. Science and Art Initiative , 29 Sept. 2017. Web. Date

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