

PHOTOGRAPHY—EDAY #2
Madonna and Child, Julia Margaret Cameron



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?

GO TO WORKSHEET BELOW....

Name _____

View the image above. It was rotated purposely so image could be enlarged so it could be viewed easier. Read the accompanying information (also above) on how to write critiques. Answer the following questions based on the assigned image. **Four or more sentences are required per section.** Then print off the last two pages only to turn in to instructor.

DESCRIBE

Literally describe the whole image, what do you see? Be as detailed and literal as possible.

ANALYZE

Examine how the elements and principles of art used in the Art Work. Comment on the elements (line, shape, space, color, texture) you see and how they were organized within the artwork (contrast, proportion, repetition, variety, balance, emphasis, rhythm/movement, unity).

INTERPRET

Examine the image and explain what you think the artist is trying to say to you. Try to guess what the message of the picture is supposed to be.

JUDGEMENT

Examine the image and decide whether the art work is successful. Do you like the art work, and why? In your opinion, does the work convey a meaning or does it have a message? Does it arouse a feeling when you see it? Do you think the composition or design is successful, and why?