

Critical Method

Description: Just the **FACTS**

Identify things about the work that you can see, name, and describe.

(Record what is there, no opinions or interpretations.)

Category, Artist, Title, Date, Size, Medium, Process

(Found in the credit line or label under the work)

Subject Matter

- **Describe** all recognizable images such as people, buildings, hills, etc

- **Describe** what living forms are doing.

- What is near/far, large/small, in front/behind?

- Choose **3 Elements of Art** from list below that you think were important to this work.

- **Line** -straight, curved, wavy, jagged, horizontal, diagonal, vertical

- **Color or Value** – warm, cool, bold, muted, dark, light, opaque, transparent? Is there a dominant color? Strong value contrasts?

- **Shapes or Forms** – organic, geometric, representational, abstract?

- **Textures** -simulated or actual, rough, smooth, hairy, sandy, shiny?

- **Space** - 2-D or 3-D, deep or shallow, spatial techniques?

for evaluating artwork

Analysis:

Composition: How have the subject matter and elements been **organized**?
How do they work together?

Choose **3 Principles of Design** and explain how the artist created each **principle** using an **element of art** listed above.

Write 3 sentences to explain how the artist used each principle with an element of art. Give Examples.

- **Balance** – What helps to balance things in the artwork?
Is the balance symmetrical/asymmetrical, radial?

- **Emphasis** – focal point? Dominance?
Is there some area or element that seems most important?

- **Contrast** - Are there differences in value, in color, in shape, size?

- **Proportion** – relationships between parts and whole?
Media and subject? Subject and art elements?

- **Movement** – which devices has the artist used to create it?
repetition, progression, patterns, rhythm, living forms doing something?

Unity and Variety - how has either been created?

Interpretation:

Use the information from your description and analysis to help you identify the *meaning* of the work. What *feeling* is the artist trying to express? What *ideas* are being communicated?

Describe the expressive mood of the work:

Sad, happy, calm, chaotic, ominous, angry, tense, relaxed

Explain what in the work makes you feel that way.

Try using **metaphor** in your description to help communicate visually.

Form a **Hypothesis** about the meaning of the artwork.

Defend your hypothesis with specific evidence from the artwork.

Evaluation:

Based on your analysis in the first 3 stages, how would you judge the quality or success of the work? Judgment may be affected by the following criteria:

Craftsmanship – skilled use of materials and processes.

Design Quality – Visual organization of materials and elements in the work. Consider unity, variety, balance, contrast, movement, emphasis.

Expressiveness – How well does the artwork express its subject, idea or theme?

Personal Response – Does the artwork provoke a personal response that could be shared with others?

Originality – Is the work unique, imaginative?

Comparison – How does it compare with similar works?