

Art140 / CSUN / FALL 2016 / MW 2pm / OMID
What is Critique?

CRITIQUE in 4 Steps

1. Describe: Tell exactly what you see

Describe the work without using value words such as "beautiful" or "ugly":

What is the written description on the label or in the program about the work?

What is the title and who is (are) the artist(s)?

When and where was the work created?

Describe the elements of the work (i.e., line movement, light, space).

Describe the technical qualities of the work (i.e., tools, materials, instruments).

Describe the subject matter. What is it all about? Are there recognizable images?

Example:

Starry Night, Vincent Van Gogh, 1832, size, media..... I see a large cypress tree in the foreground. The majority of the picture plane is occupied by an evening sky. There are many stars in the sky. There is a village behind the cypress tree. Etc.....



2. Analyze: Use the elements/principles to reflect upon the art form
Focus on how the elements and principles have been used to organize the work.
This is a clue-collecting step, no guesses. Study in detail, how the elements and principles were used. How have the principles organized the elements? Cite specific examples from the artwork. Analyze how the elements are put together. This step helps you discover how the artist created any moods, messages or ideas in the work.

Use vocabulary of art to analyze the artwork.

Elements of Art

Line Shape Texture Value Space Form Color

Principles of Design

Balance Emphasis Movement Variety Contrast Harmony
Rhythm Proportion Pattern Unity

Example:

The night sky is dark blue. The sky is filled with vibrant yellow stars. The pattern of the stars moves the viewer's eye back and forth through the painting. The small buildings of the village have small glowing yellow lights which mimic the color found in the stars; this repetition of the yellow creates harmony helping unify the picture. The image is made up of short brush strokes that create a heavy actual texture. Etc...

3. Interpret: Consider the following

- What is the artist trying to say?
- What caused the artist to say it?
- What is the historical milieu that surrounds the work of art?
- Why was the work of art created in this particular style?

Example:

I think that the artist is trying to convey a connection between a sleepy peaceful mood and the quietness of the little town found behind the cypress tree. In contrast the movement of the night sky is exciting and is dotted with bright yellow stars...etc.

4. Evaluate: How successful or important is the work of art?

Now you can actually express your opinion about the success of the work. Your opinion is based however on what you discovered in the description, analysis and interpretation. You must be able to back up your opinion using the language of art. This is a carefully thought out decision in which you make a personal decision about an artwork's success or lack of success (**NOT** like or dislike), preparing reasons to support your judgment.

Example:

I think this work is successful because it is wonderfully organized making it visually interesting. The cypress tree in the middle-ground has a powerful presence that grabs the viewers attention. The stars in the dark blue sky twinkle and dance across the surface of the painting creating steps to follow like musical notes. The visual tempo of the picture is intriguing; the image successfully combines the fast rhythm of the short choppy brush strokes and slower rhythm with gently swirling stars. This picture reminds me of a peaceful late night spent looking up at the stars. Etc....

