

Critical Analysis in Art

Use these questions as a starting point to develop your Comparative Study and Process Portfolio.

- What do you think the artist is trying to say in this artwork? What does it mean?
- What is the main theme or idea behind this piece?
- If you were inside this artwork, what would you be feeling/ thinking?
- Does the artwork have a narrative (tell a story)? Is it a religious artwork?
- Is it abstract? Is it realistic? Why?
- How would you explain this artwork to someone else?
- Evidence: What evidence inside or outside the artwork supports your interpretation?
- Use [aesthetic theories](#) to help you evaluate
- Is it a good artwork?
- Criteria: What criteria do I think are most appropriate for judging the artwork?
- Evidence: What evidence inside or outside the artwork relates to each criterion?
- Judgment: Based on the criteria and evidence, what is my judgment about the quality of the artwork?
 - “Franz Marc has created an effective expressive painting because the hot colors and lively brush marks he has used add to the overall feeling of energy and excitement he is trying to create.”
 - “The overall mood of this drawing would be improved if Kathe Kollowitz had used strong, dramatic shadows, instead of pale tones. Dark tones would develop the feeling of fear and loneliness in this image.”
- Describe how the work is organized as a complete composition.
- How is the work constructed or planned (i.e., acts, movements, lines)?
- Identify some of the similarities throughout the work.
- Identify some of the points of emphasis in the work (i.e., specific scene, figure, movement).
- If the work has subjects or characters, what are the relationships between or among them?
- Describe how the work makes you think or feel. Support your statement with what in the work leads you to feel those emotions
- Describe the expressive qualities you find in the work. What expressive language would you use to describe the qualities?
- Does the work remind you of other things you have experienced (i.e., analogy or metaphor)?
- How does the work relate to other ideas or events in the world and/or in your other studies?
- Present your opinion of the work's success or failure.
- What qualities of the work make you feel it is a success or failure?
- What criteria can you list to help others judge this work?
- How original is the work? Why do you feel this work is original or not original?