

The Subjects and Vocabulary of Art History

1. Describe the following:

Composition:

Form:

Hue:

Intensity/Saturation:

Line:

Mass:

Material:

Space:

Technique:

Value/Tonality:

1. Describe the following terms in sculpture:

Additive sculpture:

High relief:

Low relief/bas relief:

Subtractive sculpture:

Define the following in architecture:

Elevation:

Plan:

Section:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What factors does an art historian consider when answering the question "How old is it?" How do those factors relate to the question?
2. Why is the establishment of a correct chronological sequence important to art historians?
3. What is the significance of context in the study of art history?
4. What is iconography and what are its functions in art-historical study?

BONUS!

At the end of the 1st quarter, I will drop your lowest quiz score.

Visit a museum this summer! Take a look at some art- ANY art! If you go on vacation, virtually every major city has an art museum.

No matter how good a reproduction you can find in your text or web, experiencing a real work of art is a different experience, and it is one that your instructor is preparing you for. The first thing that will strike you is the scale of the work; objects that appeared to be the same size on a projection may be only a few inches tall while others may be over 40 feet high.

After you have walked through the collection, select the work you want to write about and look at it very very carefully. If it is a piece of sculpture walk all around it and if it is a painting or graphic go up close to it and look at the brushstrokes or other marks. Purchase a postcard of the work or make a photograph of it if photography is permitted. There are many different ways to analyze works of art, but here is one scheme which you might want to use.

1. Write down the museum you are visiting, then the name of the work, the artist who created it, the date, the place where it was made, and the size. What technique and what materials did the artist use?
2. Write down why you selected that particular work of art? What made it attractive to you? What sort of emotional reaction did you have to the work?
3. Next describe the subject matter. What is actually represented? Is the work a portrait, a still life, a landscape? Is it a religious or mythological image? Is it telling a story? If so, what is the source of the story? Are there any symbols in the work? What do they mean? What do you think the work meant to the people who created the work?
4. Analyze the formal elements of the work using the terms that you will find later in this chapter: form and composition, line, texture, mass and volume. Study the color, describing the hues the artist used, the value, saturation and intensity of the hues, and whether the artist emphasized contrasting colors or colors that were very

close to each other. Consider how the artist organized the forms: the so-called design principles of balance, rhythm, proportion, etc. Is there a focal point or do the forms seem randomly placed? Do diagonal lines or verticals and horizontals dominate? Do the forms seem smooth or jagged, regular or irregular, symmetrical or asymmetrical, dynamic or static? Do the forms seem to stay on the surface or recede into the picture space? Is the space shallow or deep? Did the artist use perspective and foreshortening to create recession?

5. Last consider how effectively the artist used the materials and the formal elements to create a particular impression or to illustrate the theme of the work. How successful do you think the artist was?