

Chapter 1 : Art Criticism – DBHS Visual Arts

Art criticism is responding to, interpreting meaning, and making critical judgments about specific works of art. Art critics help viewers perceive, interpret, and judge artworks. Critics tend to focus more on modern and contemporary art from cultures close to their own.

Art criticism in the 20th century Critical response to early avant-garde art In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many critics continued to grapple with the newness of the generation of artists inspired by Impressionism. A Study of His Development , of his painting made clear. Writing is clearly not the only means open to an art critic. Bell famously dismissed representational content as incidental anecdote , irrelevant to visual experience. His assertion was the final stamp of approval on what might be called abstract primitivism in art and on the new School of Paris led by Picasso. The early 20th-century manifestos – in effect, critical statements – of the Constructivist and De Stijl movements on the one hand and Dadaism and Surrealism on the other grounded art on conceptual rather than formal concerns. Although they professed conceptual aims, these movements in fact helped broaden expression. Despite the conceptual nature of their critical statements, therefore, these movements resisted being easily categorized as purely formal or conceptual. The dual paths these movements embodied – art oriented toward formal innovation and expression versus art oriented toward conceptual aims – would remain central to the major approaches to critical practice and art making throughout the 20th century. Avant-garde art comes to America As the century progressed, art criticism grew in part because of the explosive growth of avant-garde art but also because the new art became newsworthy enough to be covered by the media, especially when big money invested in it. The New York Armory Show of made a big public splash – President Theodore Roosevelt visited it and remarked that he preferred the Navajo rugs he collected he was ahead of his time to the abstract art on display. Reaction to the work was generally mixed. Major private collections of avant-garde art emerged – perhaps most notably that of Albert C. Barnes – further legitimating it. The founding of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in under the auspices of the Rockefeller family was the consummate sign of the social and economic success of avant-garde art. Under the leadership of Alfred H. This became the orthodox formal high line. German Expressionism, Dadaism, and Surrealism are shunted to the side, falsifying their influence and significance. Again, the power of an institution to dictate and legislate art history is clear: Barr was in effect a modern Le Brun, and the Museum of Modern Art became the avant-garde academy, seeming to have more authority than the art itself. The formal abstraction initiated by Picasso and the Cubists reached its extreme in the emergence of the avant-garde American art, Abstract Expressionism , in the s. Abstract artists themselves became critics in an attempt to clarify and justify their work. The issue of this exchange is not whether Canada was right or wrong but rather the seriousness with which his views were taken, indicating that criticism had become an indispensable part of the art scene and as controversial as the art with which it dealt. Clement Greenberg However, just as the newness of Cubism was accepted and then canonized by Barr and the Museum of Modern Art, so the revolutionary abstraction of Abstract Expressionism was quickly codified and elevated – and elevated above Picasso and the School of Paris – through the efforts of the American critic Clement Greenberg. No figure so dominated the art criticism scene at mid-century as Greenberg, who was the standard-bearer of formalism in the United States and who developed the most sophisticated rationalization of it since Roger Fry and Clive Bell. In the essays collected in Art and Culture , Greenberg argued that what mattered most in a work was its articulation of the medium, more particularly, its finessing of the terms of the material medium, and the progressive elimination of those elements that were beside its point. For Greenberg, a consummately formal, purely material, nonsymbolic work – for example, a painting finessing its flatness in the act of acknowledging it – was an exemplification of positivism, which he saw as the reigning ideology of the modern world. What counted in a Morris Louis painting, for example, was the way the colours stained the canvas, confirming its flatness while seeming to levitate above it. The painting had presumably no other meaning than the sheer matter-of-factness of its colours and their movement on the canvas. He posited that, after an inaugural period of innovation in Europe, Modernist painting became sublime

in Abstract Expressionism, beautiful in the postpainterlyâ€”nongesturalâ€”abstraction of such artists as Louis, and then declined in imitative, all-too-reductionist Minimalism. This idea of an organic sequence of eventsâ€”birth, peak, and declineâ€”also clearly built upon the ideas of Winckelmann. Henri Matisse, a member of the aging School of Paris, stands behind Picasso, while up-and-coming New Yorkers such as the painter Jackson Pollock and the critic Harold Rosenberg look on behind Greenberg. Courtesy of Mark Tansey

If criticism is in dialectical relationship with the art it studies, and analytic understanding is a kind of negation of the object understood, as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel thought, then the abiding problem of art criticism is to restore the art object to concreteness and particularity. Beyond ignoring the culture surrounding the artist, formalism can also miss the context of the art world surrounding the artist. It often elevates one kind of art over other kinds in an attempt to establish a preemptive hierarchy of value. This often results in the flawed tendency, present throughout the history of art criticism, to view artistic development as operating in two distinctly different and opposing currentsâ€”e. From this perspective, the dialectic between the ostensible opposites is ignored, and the complexity of art and the contemporary scene can never be appreciated. For Rosenberg, art reflected an individualistic attempt by an artist to express himself, rather than simply to build on the formal achievements of those before him. Art was self-expression in the deepest senseâ€”self-creation. It is worth noting that Rosenberg has been criticized for not attending to particular works the way Greenberg did, but then he attended to psychosocial context in a way Greenberg never did. He truly rebelled against Greenbergian formalism, although, as he acknowledged, he was initially a convinced Greenbergian. He used theories of mass communication and social behaviour to analyze art, as opposed to using purely formal, material bases of analysis. It is worth noting that the integration of high and low art has been understood by some to be the gist of postmodern art. He held that art has sociohistorical content and that it is made by artists with a vital interest in the outcome of the issues it addresses. Art criticism is concerned with meaning, at a social and academic level, as sharable commentary. As such, it does not pre-empt other readings; it co-exists with them. Greenberg, Rosenberg, and Alloway represent an important phenomenon of the 20th century: They practiced art criticism assiduously and regularly and even earned income from itâ€”Greenberg wrote for the Nation, and Rosenberg was a longtime critic for The New Yorker. A number of art historians also became critics, further professionalizingâ€”indeed, academicizingâ€”art criticism. Wolfe argues that they did not simply make a case for a certain reading of modern art, but their influence was such that contemporary painters obediently submitted to their ideas, showing the power of critical theory over art a phenomenon prevalent since the 17th century, when Le Brun set the standard of Poussin for the Academy. Wolfe proposes that, during the heyday of such critics as Greenberg and Rosenberg, criticism no longer simply interpreted art, enlightening the viewer about it, but rather dictated to it, like an ideology: In other words, at a certain point conformity to critical theory became more important than creative nonconformity, suggesting the truth of the art historian Max J. For Fried, the audience is implicated in theatre, while pure art rises above the audience to assert its own hermetic integrity. Presumably these works alone seemed formally self-sufficientâ€”aesthetically pure. Starting in the s, another one-time Greenberg devotee, American critic Rosalind Krauss, also looked for a way to move formalism forward. Her appropriation of the ideas and terminology of various French theoristsâ€” Jacques Derrida as well as Barthes and Lacanâ€”became fashionable among postmodern artists and critics from the s onward. No matter how much critical writing by artistsâ€”perhaps most noteworthy, from the s on, by Donald Judd, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Morris, and Robert Rauschenbergâ€”staked out subtle avant-garde positions, their art and ideas were quickly assimilated, becoming trendy, marketable, and reputable. To some critics, this turn of events was not surprising. Avant-garde art, which once seemed illegitimate, became as legitimate as gold in the bank. In this way, the stakes for art criticismâ€”once a force that sought to gain acceptance for avant-garde artâ€”radically changed. Indeed, in *From Manet to Manhattan: The Rise of the Modern Art Market*, journalist Peter Watson points out that art criticism, however high-minded, serves the art market, which is part of the prevailing consumer society a reality especially prevalent after the art boom of the s. Watson suggests that, in a capitalist society, art is above all a luxury commodity, and art criticism is the packaging designed to create a taste for it.

Chapter 2 : Guidelines for Analysis of Art - Department of Art and Design

Ideological criticism deals with a work of art's _____ significance. political Structuralists believe that the study of art _____ focus only on the significance of any one artwork.

What is the name of the artist who created the artwork? What kind of an artwork is it? What is the name of the artwork? When was the artwork created? Name some other major events in history that occurred at the same time this artwork was created. List the literal objects in the painting trees, people, animals, mountains, rivers, etc. What do you notice first when you look at the work s? What kinds of colors do you see? How would you describe them? What shapes can we see? What kind of edges do the shapes have? Are there lines in the work s? If so, what kinds of lines are they? What sort of textures do you see? How can we tell? What is the overall visual effect or mood of the work s? In this step consider the most significant art principles that were used in the artwork. Describe how the artist used them to organize the elements. Suggested questions to help with analysis: How has the artist used colors in the work s? What sort of effect do the colors have on the artwork? How as the artist used shapes within the work of art? How have lines been used in the work s? Has the artist used them as an important or dominant part of the work, or do they play a different roll? What role does texture play in the work s? Has the artist used the illusion of texture or has the artist used actual texture? How has texture been used within the work s. How has the artist used light in the work s? Is there the illusion of a scene with lights and shadows, or does the artist use light and dark values in a more abstracted way? How has the overall visual effect or mood of the work s? How were the artists design tools used to achieve a particular look or focus? An interpretation seeks to explain the meaning of the work based on what you have learned so far about the artwork, what do you think the artist was trying to say? What do you think it means? What does it mean to you? How does this relate to you and your life? What feelings do you have when looking at this artwork? Do you think there are things in the artwork that represent other things-symbols? Why do you think that the artist chose to work in this manner and made these kinds of artistic decisions? Why did the artist create this artwork? After careful observation, analysis, and interpretation of an artwork, you are ready to make your own judgment. This is your personal evaluation based on the understandings of the work s. Here are questions you might consider: Why do you think that this work has intrinsic value or worth? What is the value that you find in the work s? For example, it is a beautiful work of art, conveys an important social message, affects the way that I see the world, makes insightful connections, reaffirms a religious belief, etc. Do you think that the work s has a benefit for others? Do you find that the work communicates an idea, feeling or principle that would have value for others? What kind of an effect do you think the work could have for others? Does the work lack value or worth? Why do you think this is so? Could the reason you find the work lacking come from a poor use of the elements of art? Could the subject matter be unappealing, unimaginative, or repulsive? Rather than seeing the work as being very effective or without total value, does the work fall somewhere in-between? Do you think that the work is just o. What do you base this opinion on? The use of elements of art? Lack of personal expression? The work lacks a major focus? Explore your criticism of the work s as much as you would any positive perceptions. Realize that your own tastes and prejudices may enter into your criticism. Give your positive and negative perceptions.

Chapter 3 : The 4 Steps of Art Criticism by on Prezi

Art criticism involves analyzing and evaluating every type of art that you can imagine. Find out how to apply it to the art that you want to study, whether it's photography, music, film, sculpture.

All aesthetic experience, whether of art or nature, seems to be informed by and dependent upon an exercise of taste. We choose the object of aesthetic experience, and often do so carefully and deliberately. The critic is often faced with a choice: Extreme innovators—artists whose work is radically different, even revolutionary—pose the greatest challenge to the critic. It should be a matter of considered choice rather than arbitrary in its decisions of significance, but an emotional factor necessarily enters, as Baudelaire readily admitted. This can make criticism impressionistic or poetic as well as descriptive, analytic, and scholarly. Even the most journalistic criticism—and modern criticism is often a species of journalism—is rarely neutral and detached. Critical recognition and advocacy, as Jausss says, is a complicated response to an often complicated art. The history of art criticism is a narrative of the responses that made an aesthetic as well as social difference in the general perception and conception of art, often legitimating its change in direction.

Foundations of art criticism in antiquity and the Middle Ages Since antiquity, philosophers have been theorizing about art, as well as criticizing it. Plato, for example, regarded art as an inferior form of knowledge, indeed, no more than an illusion of knowledge. According to this understanding, the painter deals with the image rather than the thing, let alone the idea of the thing. Thus, art is deception: Aristotle took a somewhat different approach to his theory of art, although he also regarded art as a form of imitation. In his *Poetics*, perhaps the most influential work on art ever written, he makes it clear that art is a moral issue, since it deals with human character. Such works of art are evocative and cathartic; the viewer identifies and empathizes with the human beings and human situations depicted, feeling what they felt, and learning from their experience, which is an essentialized imitation of what all might experience. For Aristotle, art is a lesson in life and, as such, is of great social and broadly human value. He was the first psychologically minded critic, and his idea of the inseparability of art and morality—of art in the service of moral teaching—remained influential into the modern period. The ancient philosopher Plotinus saw art as more mystical than mundane. He was the founder of Roman Neoplatonism, and his thinking about art reflects that of Plato, with important, influential differences: Plotinus introduced the idea that art can be beautiful and that its worldly beauty is a reflection of a higher, spiritual beauty. Plotinus connects art directly with the higher realm of ideas from which Plato excluded it and characterizes that realm as spiritual as well as intellectual—that is, he emphasizes the spiritual aspiration involved in intellectual analysis and intuition. It is a view that was present, though latent, in Plato. For Plotinus, art was an enigmatic embodiment of pure spirit, which is why artistic beauty has something sacred and abstract about it. Yet, while these thinkers established important, lasting ideas about the philosophy of art, they were not true art critics. Art criticism is necessarily less general than philosophical theorizing about art, however informed by theoretical generalizations it may be. The writers Lucian and Kallistratos declared: Although there was a certain awareness of the material character of medieval art, philosophers made no serious effort to synthesize the material with the theoretical, nor did they illustrate their theories by discussing particular artists. Also, like Plato, they distinguished between the judgment of the senses and the judgment of reason, the latter being superior because it is based on laws of beauty given by God. Augustine used his Christian faith as a theoretical tool. In *De natura boni*, among other writings, he elaborates the ideas of Plotinus, emphasizing the transcendence or sublimity of absolute beauty, of which the beauty of the work of art is a reflection albeit a pale one. He discusses the formal character of pictures, often in terms that indicate his religious concerns: In *Summa theologiae* c. Thomas Aquinas, also using Christianity as his theoretical model, distinguishes between the higher senses—sight and hearing—which are a means to organized knowledge, and the lower senses—touch, smell, and taste—which are not. Thomas moves beyond the usual tenets of Christian theory when he suggests that beauty is admirable because it stimulates theoretical thinking and pleasurable because it satisfies desire—a very modern idea. Renaissance art criticism Despite such theorizing, no definite critical tradition emerged until the Renaissance, when art criticism came into its

own—that is, when detailed analysis and deliberate evaluation of artists began. Villani discusses the lives of famous men, including some artists. His writing set an important precedent: Villani went even further, elevating painters over other practitioners of the liberal arts, which set the stage for more analytic, in-depth considerations of art. Indeed, treatises on art flourished in the 15th and 16th centuries. Ghiberti also summarizes the ideas of various ancient writers on art. In his treatise, Alberti was the first critic to recognize that a renaissance of art had occurred in Florence and the first to state the humanistic principles and artistic ideals that motivated it—namely, perspectival space and the perfect rendering of the plasticity of human form. For Vasari, himself an architect and painter, his native Tuscany was the epicentre of the Italian Renaissance. He carefully differentiates between artistic styles, developing a theory of artistic progress the imperfect 14th century, the improved 15th century, and the perfect 16th century—that is, the bronze, silver, and golden ages of art. In the *Lives*, Vasari elevates Michelangelo as “the only living artist he mentions” as the grand climax of the Italian Renaissance. His views have become gospel in the popular and critical understanding of the period, indicating the enduring influence of art criticism on the reading of history.

Art criticism in the 17th century: The Academy taught that Classical art, not nature, was the model for artists. This Classicism was reduced to tasteful authority and empty rhetoric in the artistic output of the Academy members, however, who often made dogmatic and prescriptive what Poussin had meant to be a rational and disciplined approach. At the same time, there was a certain rebellion against this rigidity, perhaps in recognition of the fact that the rule of theory inhibited creativity and especially because it had become authoritarian. In other words, he saw that there were two kinds of art and artists, not readily reconcilable with one another. Dare one call them depressive and manic? This polarization of artistic theory—the recognition that there are two fundamentally different modes of art, whichever the critic prefers and theoretically justifies—recalls the ancient distinction between an art that is more rational than sensuous and an art that is more pleasing to the senses than to reason. It is in effect a distinction between painting that adheres to the rules of reason—evident in proportion and perspective and reinforced by linear clarity, that is, pure drawing—and painting that indulges in artistic license, which in practice means that it is colourful and painterly and thus erotically stimulating. These two approaches inspired the development of two camps in the Academy: The debate between the two approaches came to a head when critic Roger de Piles published a series of theoretical pamphlets setting forth an argument for the Rubenists in This distinction between procrustean and independent judgment reflects the distinction between an official academic Poussinist and an independent nonacademic Rubenist. Courtesy of the Alte Pinakothek, Munich Page 1 of 4.

Chapter 4 : Art Criticism and Formal Analysis Outline | Art Criticism

The elements of art are components or parts of a work of art that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art. The list below describes each element of art.

Objects, figures, colors, shapes, objects, background, etc. Imagine you are describing it to a blind person. Do this in as much detail as possible and use art terms. Composition organization of shapes What types of shapes are used in this artwork i. Is there a mixture of different types of shapes or are all the shapes similar? Are some parts of the composition full of shapes and some parts empty, or are the shapes spread evenly across the artwork? Are some shapes repeated or echoed in other parts of the artwork? Does the whole composition look full of energy and movement, or does it look still and peaceful? What is the center of interest in the composition? How does the artist draw your attention to it? Selection of most distinctive features or characteristics whether line, shape, color, texture, etc. Analysis of the principles of design or composition, e. Discussion of how elements or structural system contribute to appearance of image or function Analysis of use of light and role of color, e. Treatment of space and landscape, both real and illusionary including use of perspective , e. What does it mean? What is the main theme or idea behind this piece? Does the artwork have a narrative tell a story? Is it a religious artwork? How would you explain this artwork to someone else? What evidence inside or outside the artwork supports your interpretation? Based upon what you have observed already, give your opinion of the artwork and the reasons why you have formed the opinion. Use aesthetic theories to help evaluate Is it a good artwork? What criteria do I think are most appropriate for judging the artwork? What evidence inside or outside the artwork relates to each criterion? Based on the criteria and evidence, what is my judgment about the quality of the artwork? Dark tones would develop the feeling of fear and loneliness in this image. This artwork contains a sad little girl that is bleeding from the nose and holding a teddy bear, all while she is standing in a landscape of rubble. There are five people in the background that are looking directly at the little girl; two men are photographing her, a woman with a clip board and headphones has her arm extended that prevents two men wearing red crosses from interfering with the sad event that is occurring. The artist used jagged lines to create the disorder and destruction surrounding the little girl. The little girl is placed slightly off-center in the foreground for the viewer in order to place greater emphasis on her, while placing the observers in the background. The most noticeable use of the elements of art is the use of only one color, red. The destruction surrounding the child, blood on her face, and her facial expression tells us that it is a sad and uncomfortable environment. The scene is also disturbing because the adults are not helping the innocent and crying child. Instead, they are taking advantage of her situation and documenting it for their own benefit. This artwork is very powerful and thought provoking because the artist provides a different perspective for his audience about the news media. He confronts the viewer with a dramatic scene of helplessness in order to get his social message across. Therefore, this artwork successfully achieves and meets the criteria for the aesthetic theory of instrumentalism.

Analysis of the principles of design or composition, e.g., stable, repetitious, rhythmic, unified, symmetrical, harmonious, geometric, varied, chaotic, horizontal or vertically oriented, etc. Discussion of how elements or structural system contribute to appearance of image or function.

After a decade of relative peace and wealth, at least from a Western perspective, the world is in all kinds of disarray. In , the global debt crisis put an end to the myth of the middle classes, exposing the monumental gap previously papered over by debt between the one percent and the rest of us. Meanwhile, political stability was fractured by oil crises and Wikileaks, the Occupy movement and the rise of populist extremism. There have been uprisings and demonstrations, hacked email accounts and successful Twitter petitions. The arts have changed as well, perhaps as a consequence, perhaps coincidentally. But changed they have. In stark contrast with the art of the s, which tended to be characterized by irony, cynicism and deconstruction, contemporary practices are often discussed in terms of affection, sincerity and hopefulness. The current paradigm has been variously called altermodernism curator Nicolas Bourriaud , cosmodernism literary theorist Christian Moraru , hypermodernism philosopher Alan Kirby and automodernism cultural theorist Robert Samuels. We ourselves, linking the social and aesthetic changes to changes in capitalism, have argued for the use of the term metamodernism to describe the dominant structure of feeling of the early 21st century. But whatever the precise nature of the changes, and regardless of the label we stick to them, it is evident that a new experiential register requires a novel critical vernacular. Different registers demand different critical discourses. What follows below is our attempt to sketch out-roughly, cautiously-the contours of such a language. In doing so, we generalize and gloss over differences. Conversely, we at times state the perfectly obvious, ideas that others have expressed much more eloquently. But what we hope to achieve, to establish, is a line of flight: For art critics are not just arbiters of quality, they are also interpreters of change-in sentiment, in thinking, in taste. The ideological struggle was over, philosophers cried out triumphantly; politicians agreed that the battle between nations had finally been decided. This did not mean that the natural cycle of birth, life, and death would end, that important events would no longer happen, or that newspapers reporting them would cease to be published. It meant, rather, that there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all of the really big questions had been settled. Indeed, as Fukuyama himself grudgingly admitted in , maybe all those proclamations of the end of history had been a bit opportunistic. It had merely paused. All these developments, however, would still amount to nothing but a series of unrelated events which, when seen in isolation, do not amass, to refer to that classic Baudrillardian pun, the energy to reach the escape velocity needed to break out of the post-historical deadlock. If we say that history has entered a new stage, we need to attempt to think about the present historically, to periodize. This requires that we conceptualize these developments together. Unfortunately, we have to save the extended version of our attempt to periodize the present for another book and another time. The general sense of an ending-i. First of all, the emergence of a truly globalized world market, from the Second World War onwards, makes an even further expansion and penetration of capitalism impossible. Capital had simply reached its spatial limits. Under the postmodern, there simply is no region left untouched by the process of commodification; even our unconscious has been colonized. Are we not witnessing yet another set of mutations in capitalism? It has become polycentric. The rise of the BRICs is only the most superficial symptom of this multipolar world system. Far more interesting is how various versions of capitalism compete for influence and resources in their overlapping regions, from the Confucian China and the Mafia Russia to the Islamic Turkey and the sectarian India and, yes, still, the neo liberal democratic. The financial crises, which affected everyone from banks and states to homeowners and students, the looming catastrophe of the various ecological crises, and the increasing interconnectedness of our social lives, all contributed in one way or another to our capacity to conceive of capitalism as one of many-instead of the only, let alone best-possible worlds. Besides the current, worldwide wave of protests, the most clear example here is the increasing prevalence of the notion of the commons, which cuts transversally across these themes, as an ideological

framework that addresses the historical process of the enclosure of communal resources i. Art is free from all restraints. Today, after all, everything can be art: Further, to suggest that pluralism and freedom are one and the same thing carries in it a misunderstanding of freedom. The pluralism of the s and s merely operated under other kinds of restrictions, just as the Romanticism and Classicism Danto discusses, too, functioned under alternative constraints. It is possible that art will diversify even more the next few years, but it is also imaginable that it will become more specific. Whatever its course, we should not simply assume that it has played its part-in terms of affinity, identity, spirituality or otherwise-in our development; it has simply changed its appearance. Courtesy of Maureen Paley, London. For many postmodern artists, or at least the particular group of artists that have been theorized by Eagleton, Jameson, Foster et al. During much of the s and s, artists eclectically reappropriated stylistic registers and methods from earlier artistic and popular cultural expressions. Some artists, such as Wim Delvoeye and Cindy Sherman, did this to critique those registers, or the reality those registers purportedly represented. Others, foremost among them Jeff Koons and Richard Hamilton, arguably, simply rehashed signifiers because they wanted to celebrate their formal aspects, regardless of their original context. But for whatever reason and in whatever manner these artists drew on intertextual references, they emptied or discarded the original. Artists like David Thorpe and Rob Voerman, for instance, reuse anything from scrap metal and cardboard to plastic, paper, wood, sand, glass and straw. They also draw on numerous aesthetic and political strategies, such as New Ageism and science fiction, Japanese woodcutting and collage, hippie culture and 19th-century philosophy. This is not yet another form of historicism, though it is that, too; much rather, it is to take the lessons from the past and incorporate them into a present, or future, that is as of yet unattainable. Here, the process has more in common with upcycling. To illustrate this shift in the strategies used by artists to reflect or comment on both the artistic tradition and social developments, it might be insightful to briefly compare a postmodern work with a typically metamodern one. Both artists use similar techniques to recycle the scrapheap of history, and even the composition of the works show an uncanny resemblance with those sloping lines on the left side of their frames that cut the somewhat horizontal plateaus supporting their respective worlds. Yet there are plenty of differences. Other references include, of course, the tropes of an emerging consumerist lifestyle, as symbolized by images taken from the popular press. In stylistic terms, the world literally hovers somewhere between Star Trek, New Ageism, the Far West, grand ideologies and the hobos without landing anywhere in particular. It hovers in a zone that is instantly recognizable, as it were, because it reminds one of all these earlier traditions, yet also strange, since its logic adheres to no one specific tradition in particular. Whereas Hamilton knowingly deconstructs an everyday life devoid of utopian aspirations, Thorpe seeks to reconstruct and reimagine from former utopias and fictional worlds-none of which can be ascertained, some of which have been proven impossible or dangerous-another utopia that is literally nowhere, a no-place. Indeed, science fiction and Romanticism, New Ageism and Christianity, however much they may have in common, however much they may historically be related, they cannot coexist. Each offers its own version of utopia, of transcendence, that is mutually exclusive. Yet somehow he creates an impossible unity, imagines a harmony that cannot be. Thorpe reappropriates conventions and techniques associated with postmodernism, yet redirects and resignifies them towards new horizons. His eclecticism is not, however, simply a matter of ahistorical nostalgia or disaffected futurism. This practice, then, does not take the form of quotation, parody or pastiche, but something altogether different. The term needs to be decided upon still, but it is important that we begin to think beyond the parameters of the postmodern. Grundig Super Color , 1 of two versions, 3: If the modern artists have come to be historicized as an earnest bunch whether correctly or unfairly is another question , and the postmoderns go into the books as jokers, the current generation of artists attracts descriptions that speak of earnestness and irony in equal measure. But what does it mean to say something is both sincere and ironic? How should we conceive, critically, of a work of art that is as hopeful as it is cynical? Perhaps we should revise the annals of German Romanticism, the writings of Schlegel and Schiller and Novalis. For here, too, the emphasis lies with the oscillation between opposing values. It is true that each work of art necessitates its own unique discursive approach, but just as the earnestness of Modernism and the irony of postmodern art revived and gave birth to particular theorems by which to frame, or with which to support, those approaches, so, too, the metamodern

metaxis requires a new knowledge of theories and a new critical vernacular. They do, however, change the rules of the game. Just as there are certain things a newspaper does better than a monthly magazine and vice versa, there are things more befitting a blog than a printed piece. A couple of years ago we reopened the debate on post-postmodernism, which was all over the place, yet seemed to be going nowhere, by publishing an overtly naive and obviously flawed article that goes by the same name. This could have only been possible precisely because the initial article-cum-stub was intended not as an authoritarian voice but rather as an open invitation to discuss the matter anew, and, ironically, because it was quite obviously still very much flawed, leaving many issues in contemporary aesthetics and culture underdeveloped or unexplored. There are many benefits to this type of open source criticism. It allows for the inclusion of a plurality of voices from experts within specific disciplines as much as it promises a discussion of the crossovers, similarities and differences between the disciplines. It also provides the flexibility needed to come to terms with our rapidly changing, interconnected world, as individual pieces are adjustable and expandable when new insights and developments arise. Yet it can also be an excruciating experience. Whatever its benefits, limitations and pitfalls, the emergence of collaborative research projects signal that the age of the individual genius, authoritarian voice and ivory tower intellectual is waning. It merely is an observation. Our 21st-century networked mediascape, meanwhile, is changing the ways in which we perceive, think and, most importantly, act in a world that requires acting more than ever. This is a commonplace occurrence, of course. Yet the proliferation of information, and communication technologies, and of its associated plethora of screens large and small, is ushering in a network logic that is decidedly different than the television logic of postmodern times. Any proper analysis of the effects of these new technologies on the arts and our culture and vice versa would require a lengthier entry. What interests us, here, however, is how new media are affecting our politics or, rather, our capacities to make the decision to act politically in the first place. To illustrate our point, it would be particularly instructive to compare, yet again, a postmodern text and a metamodern piece. It is, indeed, a massive piece, which even in the s conveyed the sense of exhilarating, mindboggling newness that the television screen, and its constant flow of images, must have evoked in and for the postmoderns. It encapsulates, quite nicely, a postmodern relativism that preempts any necessity to choose one narrative or perspective over another, either as some kind of Lyotardian strategy to keep sailing across an archipelago of epistemological islands with equally attractive coastlines or as some kind of choice to not make any choices at all, because, well, things are going great in the mass-mediatised comfort zone of postmodern times. In both cases, we are, of course, back at the end of history. That Paik represents the U. And the differences are striking. Here, the television does not appear as a new, exciting, image-spitting piece of consumer electronics. Not even outdated but pre-dated. Not even the subtle lines of a facial expression. It shows a still image of something that reminds us of a confession screen. As you come closer, you hear a tape recording. The question is straightforward.

Chapter 6 : Analyzing Artwork (Art Criticism) - IB Art

Art Criticism Viewing is an interaction between the viewer and the art object. Although most art works are constant, the interaction varies with each viewer because of the viewer's own varied perspectives and associations.

Definition[edit] The history of art criticism as we know it in the 21st century began in the 19th century but has precedents that date to the ancient world. Like the analysis of historical trends in politics, literature, and the sciences, the discipline benefits from the clarity and portability of the written word, but art historians also rely on formal analysis , semiotics , psychoanalysis and iconography. Advances in photographic reproduction and printing techniques after World War II increased the ability of reproductions of artworks. Such technologies have helped to advance the discipline in profound ways, as they have enabled easy comparisons of objects. The study of visual art thus described, can be a practice that involves understanding context , form , and social significance. Methodologies[edit] Art historians, in performing their assessment within the history of art criticism, employ a number of methods in their research into the ontology and history of objects. Practitioners of art criticism often examine work in the context of its time. In short, this approach examines the work of art in the context of the world within which it was created. This approach examines how the artist uses a two-dimensional picture plane or the three dimensions of sculptural or architectural space to create his or her art. The way these individual elements are employed results in representational or non-representational art. Is the artist imitating an object or image found in nature? If so, it is representational. The closer the art hews to perfect imitation, the more the art is realistic. If so the art is non-representationalâ€”also called abstract. Realism and abstraction exist on a continuum. Impressionism is an example of a representational style that was not directly imitative, but strove to create an "impression" of nature. An iconographical analysis is one which focuses on particular design elements of an object. Through a close reading of such elements, it is possible to trace their lineage, and with it draw conclusions regarding the origins and trajectory of these motifs. In turn, it is possible to make any number of observations regarding the social, cultural, economic, and aesthetic values of those responsible for producing the object. Many practitioners of art criticism use critical theory to frame their inquiries into objects. Theory is most often used when dealing with more recent objects, those from the late 19th century onward. Critical theory in art history is often borrowed from literary scholars , and it involves the application of a non-artistic analytical framework to the study of art objects. Feminist , Marxist , critical race , queer , and postcolonial theories are all well established in the discipline. As in literary studies, there is an interest among scholars in nature and the environment, but the direction that this will take in the discipline has yet to be determined. More recently, media and digital technology introduced possibilities of visual, spatial and experiential analyses. The relevant forms vary from movies, to interactive forms, including virtual environments, augmented environments, situated media, networked media, etc. The methods enabled by such techniques are in active development and promise to include qualitative approaches that can emphasize narrative, dramatic, emotional and ludic characteristics of history and art. AD , concerning the development of Greek sculpture and painting. Passages about techniques used by the painter Apelles c. Similar, though independent, developments occurred in the 6th century China, where a canon of worthy artists was established by writers in the scholar-official class. These writers, being necessarily proficient in calligraphy, were artists themselves. His was a personal and a historical account, featuring biographies of individual Italian artists, many of whom were his contemporaries and personal acquaintances. From Winckelmann until the midth century, the field of art history was dominated by German-speaking academics. Winckelmann was read avidly by Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich Schiller , both of whom began to write on the history of art, and his account of the Laocoon occasioned a response by Lessing. A number of students went on to distinguished careers in art history, including Jakob Rosenberg and Frida Schottmuller. He introduced a scientific approach to the history of art, focusing on three concepts. Firstly, he attempted to study art using psychology, particularly by applying the work of Wilhelm Wundt. He argued, among other things, that art and architecture are good if they resemble the human body. Secondly, he introduced the idea of studying art through comparison. By comparing individual paintings to each other, he was able to make

distinctions of style. His book *Renaissance and Baroque* developed this idea, and was the first to show how these stylistic periods differed from one another. In fact he proposed the creation of an "art history without names. He was particularly interested in whether there was an inherently "Italian" and an inherently "German" style. Riegl, Wickhoff, and the Vienna School[edit] Main article: The first generation of the Vienna School was dominated by Alois Riegl and Franz Wickhoff , both students of Moritz Thausing , and was characterized by a tendency to reassess neglected or disparaged periods in the history of art. Riegl and Wickhoff both wrote extensively on the art of late antiquity , which before them had been considered as a period of decline from the classical ideal. Riegl also contributed to the revaluation of the Baroque. A number of the most important twentieth-century art historians, including Ernst Gombrich , received their degrees at Vienna at this time. These scholars began in the s to return to the work of the first generation, particularly to Riegl and his concept of *Kunstwollen*, and attempted to develop it into a full-blown art-historical methodology. Sedlmayr, in particular, rejected the minute study of iconography, patronage, and other approaches grounded in historical context, preferring instead to concentrate on the aesthetic qualities of a work of art. Panofsky and iconography[edit] Photographer unknown, Aby Warburg c. Together they developed much of the vocabulary that continues to be used in the 21st century by art historians. Today art historians sometimes use these terms interchangeably. Panofsky, in his early work, also developed the theories of Riegl, but became eventually more preoccupied with iconography, and in particular with the transmission of themes related to classical antiquity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In this respect his interests coincided with those of Warburg, the son of a wealthy family who had assembled an impressive library in Hamburg devoted to the study of the classical tradition in later art and culture. Warburg died in , and in the s Saxl and Panofsky, both Jewish, were forced to leave Hamburg. Panofsky settled in Princeton at the Institute for Advanced Study. In this respect they were part of an extraordinary influx of German art historians into the English-speaking academy in the s. Freud inferred from his analysis that Leonardo was probably homosexual. Group photo in front of Clark University. One of the best-known psychoanalytic scholars is Laurie Schneider Adams, who wrote a popular textbook, *Art Across Time*, and a book *Art and Psychoanalysis*. For unknown purposes, Freud originally published the article anonymously. Jung and archetypes[edit] Carl Jung also applied psychoanalytic theory to art. Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist , an influential thinker, and founder of analytical psychology. His most notable contributions include his concept of the psychological archetype , the collective unconscious , and his theory of synchronicity. Jung believed that many experiences perceived as coincidence were not merely due to chance but, instead, suggested the manifestation of parallel events or circumstances reflecting this governing dynamic. His ideas were particularly popular among American Abstract expressionists in the s and s. Jung emphasized the importance of balance and harmony. He cautioned that modern humans rely too heavily on science and logic and would benefit from integrating spirituality and appreciation of the unconscious realm. His work not only triggered analytical work by art historians, but it became an integral part of art-making. Jackson Pollock , for example, famously created a series of drawings to accompany his psychoanalytic sessions with his Jungian psychoanalyst, Dr. The prominent feminist art historian Griselda Pollock, for example, draws upon psychoanalysis both in her reading into contemporary art and in her rereading of modernist art. Marx and ideology[edit] During the midth century, art historians embraced social history by using critical approaches. The goal was to show how art interacts with power structures in society. One critical approach that art historians[who? Marxist art history attempted to show how art was tied to specific classes, how images contain information about the economy, and how images can make the status quo seem natural ideology. Greenberg further claimed that avant-garde and Modernist art was a means to resist the leveling of culture produced by capitalist propaganda. Although he wrote about numerous time periods and themes in art, he is best remembered for his commentary on sculpture from the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance , at which time he saw evidence of capitalism emerging and feudalism declining. He attempted to show how class consciousness was reflected in major art periods. The book was controversial when published during the s since it makes generalizations about entire eras, a strategy now called "vulgar Marxism". Werckmeister, David Kunzle, Theodor W. Adorno, and Max Horkheimer. Clark was the first art historian writing from a Marxist perspective to abandon vulgar Marxism. These books focused closely on the political and economic

climates in which the art was created. In it she applies a feminist critical framework to show systematic exclusion of women from art training. Nochlin argues that exclusion from practicing art as well as the canonical history of art was the consequence of cultural conditions which curtailed and restricted women from art producing fields. The few who did succeed were treated as anomalies and did not provide a model for subsequent success. Griselda Pollock is another prominent feminist art historian, whose use of psychoanalytic theory is described above. While feminist art history can focus on any time period and location, much attention has been given to the Modern era. Some of this scholarship centers on the feminist art movement, which referred specifically to the experience of women. Barthes and semiotics[edit] As opposed to iconography which seeks to identify meaning, semiotics is concerned with how meaning is created. In any particular work of art, an interpretation depends on the identification of denoted meaning – the recognition of a visual sign, and the connoted meaning – the instant cultural associations that come with recognition. The main concern of the semiotic art historian is to come up with ways to navigate and interpret connoted meaning. Schapiro combined this method with the work of Charles Sanders Peirce whose object, sign, and interpretant provided a structure for his approach. By seeing the Mona Lisa, for example, as something beyond its materiality is to identify it as a sign. It is then recognized as referring to an object outside of itself, a woman, or Mona Lisa. The image does not seem to denote religious meaning and can therefore be assumed to be a portrait. This interpretation leads to a chain of possible interpretations: What significance did she have to him?

Chapter 7 : Art criticism - Wikipedia

LESSON 1 Art Criticism: Learning from a Work of Art There are professional critics who appear on television or write reviews about new movies, plays, television shows, videos, books, art exhibits.

Written for the general public, includes reviews of art exhibitions in galleries and museums. Scholarly art criticism Written for a more specialized art audience and appears in art journals. It answers the question, "What do you see? Form of art whether architecture, sculpture, painting or one of the minor arts b. Medium of work whether clay, stone, steel, paint, etc. Elements or general shapes architectural structural system within the composition, including building of post-lintel construction or painting with several figures lined up in a row; identification of objects e. Description of axis whether vertical, diagonal, horizontal, etc. Description of line, including contour as soft, planar, jagged, etc. Description of how line describes shape and space volume ; distinguish between lines of objects and lines of composition, e. Relationships between shapes, e. Texture of surface or other comments about execution of work k. Determination of subject matter through naming iconographic elements, e. Selection of most distinctive features or characteristics whether line, shape, color, texture, etc. Analysis of the principles of design or composition, e. Discussion of how elements or structural system contribute to appearance of image or function e. Analysis of use of light and role of color, e. Treatment of space and landscape, both real and illusionary including use of perspective , e. Portrayal of movement and how it is achieved h. Effect of particular medium s used i. Your perceptions of balance, proportion and scale relationships of each part of the composition to the whole and to each other part and your emotional j. Reaction to object or monument 3. Main idea, overall meaning of the work. Can I express what I think the artwork is about in one sentence? What evidence inside or outside the artwork supports my interpretation? Judging a piece of work means giving it rank in relation to other works and of course considering a very important aspect of the visual arts; its originality. What criteria do I think are most appropriate for judging the artwork? What evidence inside or outside the artwork relates to each criterion? Based on the criteria and evidence, what is my judgment about the quality of the artwork? Artworks have "aboutness" and demand interpretation. Interpretations are persuasive arguments. Some interpretations are better than others. Good interpretations of art tell more about the artwork than they tell about the critic. Feelings are guides to interpretations. There can be different, competing, and contradictory interpretations of the same artwork. Interpretations are often based on a worldview. Interpretations are not so much absolutely right, but more or less reasonable, convincing, enlightening, and informative. Interpretations can be judged by coherence, correspondence, and inclusiveness. An artwork is not necessarily about what the artist wanted it to be about. A critic ought not to be the spokesperson for the artist. Interpretations ought to present the work in its best rather than its weakest light. The objects of interpretation are artworks, not artists. All art is in part about the world in which it emerged. All art is in part about other art. No single interpretation is exhaustive of the meaning of an artwork. The meanings of an artwork may be different from its significance to the viewer. Interpretation is ultimately a communal endeavor, and the community is ultimately self- corrective. Good interpretations invite us to see for ourselves and to continue on our own.

Chapter 8 : History of art criticism - Wikipedia

Art Criticism- The Formal Critique Process. Art Criticism is the process of studying a work of art. When you become involved in the process of art criticism, you learn from the work of art.

Description It answers the question, "What do you see? Objects, figures, colors, shapes, objects, background, etc. Imagine you are describing it to a blind person. Do this in as much detail as possible and use art terms.

Analyze It answers the question, "How did the artist do it? Composition organization of shapes What types of shapes are used in this artwork i. Is there a mixture of different types of shapes or are all the shapes similar? Are some parts of the composition full of shapes and some parts empty, or are the shapes spread evenly across the artwork? Are some shapes repeated or echoed in other parts of the artwork? Does the whole composition look full of energy and movement, or does it look still and peaceful? What is the center of interest in the composition? How does the artist draw your attention to it? Selection of most distinctive features or characteristics whether line, shape, color, texture, etc. Analysis of the principles of design or composition, e. Discussion of how elements or structural system contribute to appearance of image or function Analysis of use of light and role of color, e. Treatment of space and landscape, both real and illusionary including use of perspective , e. Interpretation It answers the question, "What is the artist trying to say? What is going on in the picture" 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? Does the artwork have a narrative tell a story? Is it a religious artwork? How would you explain this artwork to someone else? What evidence inside or outside the artwork supports your interpretation? Based upon what you have observed already, give your opinion of the artwork. You **MUST** give reason. Use aesthetic theories to help evaluate Is it a good artwork? What criteria do I think are most appropriate for judging the artwork? What evidence inside or outside the artwork relates to each criterion? Based on the criteria and evidence, what is my judgment about the quality of the artwork? Dark tones would develop the feeling of fear and loneliness in this image. This artwork contains a sad little girl that is bleeding from the nose and holding a teddy bear, all while she is standing in a landscape of rubble. There are five people in the background that are looking directly at the little girl; two men are photographing her, a woman with a clip board and headphones has her arm extended that prevents two men wearing red crosses from interfering with the sad event that is occurring. The artist used jagged lines to create the disorder and destruction surrounding the little girl. The little girl is placed slightly off-center in the foreground for the viewer in order to place greater emphasis on her, while placing the observers in the background. The most noticeable use of the elements of art is the use of only one color, red. The destruction surrounding the child, blood on her face, and her facial expression tells us that it is a sad and uncomfortable environment. The scene is also disturbing because the adults are not helping the innocent and crying child. Instead, they are taking advantage of her situation and documenting it for their own benefit. This artwork is very powerful and thought provoking because the artist provides a different perspective for his audience about the news media. He confronts the viewer with a dramatic scene of helplessness in order to get his social message across. Therefore, this artwork successfully achieves and meets the criteria for the aesthetic theory of instrumentalism.

Chapter 9 : Understanding Formal Analysis

Start studying 4 steps of art criticism. Learn vocabulary, terms, and more with flashcards, games, and other study tools.

Viewing is an interaction between the viewer and the art object. Preparation - participate in viewing art works and discussing them in class; have an open mind about artwork. Assume that the artist had something to communicate. Label - list name of artist, title of work, and gallery visited or location of artwork. Use the questions provided Q as a guide to provide you with information for your paragraph. First Impression - record your first spontaneous reaction to the artwork. By the end of the process you may understand your first impression better or you may even change your mind. There are no wrong answers. Unfortunately, this step is where many people stop when they are looking at artworks. What is your immediate reaction to the work? List any words that come to mind Description - this stage is like taking inventory. You want to come up with a list of everything you see in the work. The key here is to stick to the facts. Imagine that you are describing the artwork to someone over the telephone. This is a long and detailed section. Refer to the word bank below as needed. Analysis - Try to figure out what the artist has done to achieve certain effects. You should refer to your first impressions and try to explain how the artwork achieves that reaction. What grabs your attention in the work? Do you see any relationship between the things you listed during the description stage? What mood or feeling do you get when you look at this work of art? What "qualities" do you see in this work? Interpretation - try to figure out what the artwork is about. Your own perspectives, associations and experiences meet with "the evidence" found in the work of art. All art works are about something. Some art works are about colour, their subject matter, and social or cultural issues. Some art works are very accessible - that is relatively easy for the viewer to understand what the artist was doing. Other works are highly intellectual, and might not be as easy for us to readily know what the artist was thinking about. What is the theme or subject of the work? What is the work about; what so you think it means? Why do you think that artist created this work? Background Information - find out as much about the work and the artist as you can. It is important to complete this stage after having completed the other five. Art works should provoke thought in the viewer. If you are given the thought or the answer before you experience the artwork, your own creative thinking might be bypassed and your experience with the artwork will be lessened. Research information in the library about the artist. Art Galleries and gallery educators are good sources of information about art and artists. Informed Judgment - this is a culminating and reflecting activity. You need to come to some conclusions about the artwork based on all the information you have gathered and on your interpretations. Have your thoughts or feelings about the artwork changed since your first impression? What made you change your mind? If not, can you now explain your first reaction to the work? What have you seen or learned from this work that you might apply to your own art work or your own thinking?