

Your Name _____

Questions in Visual Criticism:

The following is based on the author Terry Barrett's approach to art criticism.
His book is "Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary" 1994

Artwork you are evaluating:

Title _____ Artist _____

Medium _____ Date _____

1. Take at least 30 minutes to make a detailed sketch of the picture you are evaluating.



2. **Description:** What do I see (feel, hear, smell, taste)?

- a. Imagery: Does the artwork depict anything? If so, what?

- b. Medium: What tools, materials, or processes did the art maker use?

- c. Form: What formal elements did the maker choose and how did the maker organize the elements? This might include composition/framing, shape, color, texture within the image but can sometimes include physical properties such as the scale of a piece and its presentation.

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3. **Interpretation:** What is the artwork about?

a. Interpretive Statement: Can I express what I think the artwork is about in one sentence?

b. Evidence: What evidence within or outside of the artwork supports my interpretation?

4. **Judgement:** Is it a good artwork?

a. Criteria: What criteria do I think are most appropriate for judging the artwork?

b. Evidence: What evidence within or outside of the artwork relates to each criterion?

c. Judgement: Based on the criteria and evidence, is the artwork successful based on your criteria?

5. **Interpret the Image:** Using the notes on this sheet, write a **minimum of one page** interpreting your chosen image. Consider the following questions when writing your interpretation.

What does this image mean? How is this meaning manifested? Can you discern a difference between what was intended and the result? What questions would you have for the artist?

Are there any metaphors you can decipher? Do the objects/subjects depicted in the image have a connotation that owes its context to the nature of the materials they resemble, or is the connotation based in something else like light, shadow, form, composition, color/tones/contrast, etc.? Can you discern a difference between what was intended and the result?

Furthermore, from what perspective do you bring your interpretation to this work? **Comparative? Archetypal? Narrative? Feminist? Historical? Formalist? Psychoanalytic? Documentary? Biographical? Technical?** No work of art nor artist ever existed in a vacuum. Can you identify a combination of **approaches** or **cultural influences** in your interpretation?