

Analysing an Image

When looking at an image, consider the following:

1. Initial Reaction

- What is your first impression?
- What captures your attention?
- What does this work bring to mind?
- How does this work make you feel?
- What does this work remind you of?

2. Description

- What is happening in the work? What do you see (landscape, portrait, still, historic etc)? What is in the foreground/background? What is the setting? Is the work realistic or abstract? Old vs. Modern? Historic vs. Contemporary?
- What is the story?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What clues are provided to tell you more about the subject?
- What clues tell you when and where this work was made?
- What do you see, smell, taste, touch and hear when you examine the work using your senses?

3. Analysis & Interpretation

- What is the composition and how is it framed? (Balance, rule of thirds, golden mean etc.)
- How does the work evoke feelings, ideas and images?
- How has the artist achieved this using the elements and principles of design?

Line: strong, dominant, thin, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, directional, broken, structural, curved etc.

Colour & Value: warm, cool, light, dark, solid, transparent, bright, dull, monochromatic, realistic or abstract?

Texture: smooth, rough, soft etc.

Space: perspective, foreground, middle ground, background, point of view

Contrast: colour, scale, shape, tone, positive/negative space

Emphasis (how your eye is led)? **Rhythm? Pattern? Movement? Balance** (symmetrical, asymmetrical, radial)? **Unity? Repetition? Motifs?**

- What do you think is the theme or subject of the work? Why?
- What message or meaning do you think the work communicates?
- What do you think is the purpose of this work? What does it mean?
- What is the function of the work? (Political, social, religious etc.)
- What is the focus in the work and how is it achieved?
- Were technical skills highlighted?

4. Judge & Evaluate

- Have your perceptions/feelings towards the piece changed?
- Does the work possess a high technical or conceptual skill?
- Is this an effective piece of work? Why or why not?