

Advanced Art Notes: DAIO—How to Write an Essay about a Work of Art

DESCRIBE:

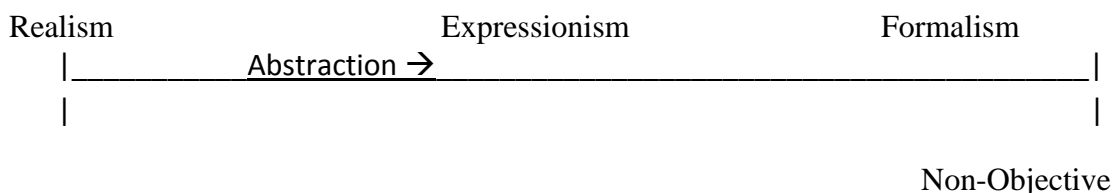
1. Credit line information—(Title, artist, date, materials, size, museum and city)
2. CAPTURE: The description is a hook to grab a reader's attention. Think of a blind date and all the information that would intrigue you about a date—intrigue us about your artwork
3. Denotation—describe exactly what you see
 - What is in the background?(Farthest away from the viewer)
 - What is in the middle ground? (Middle depth)
 - What is in the foreground? (Closest to the viewer)

ANALYZE: Break down the artwork and figure out how the artist put it together

1. Elements of Design: Building blocks of art (line, shape, form, space, color, texture, color, value)
2. Principles of Design: How the elements are arranged in an artwork or put together (see notes from Chapter 8)

INTERPRET:

1. Connotation—state the meaning of the things you see using “text-based” evidence (the text here is what you see, not what you read.)
2. Story behind the artwork (can be based on time period or artist's background if you know about it, the title of the work, or just based on what you see.)
3. Why would the artist make this work?
4. Why would the artist choose this style to communicate with? Knowledge of art periods and “art-isms” is helpful, but you can also use general categories (see continuum line below.)



Realism: Artwork that represents objects and scenes as they are from life

Abstraction: representing a scene with simplification, distortion, or exaggeration of reality. (Can range from a lesser degree to total abstraction or non-objective)

Expressionism: Artwork that focuses on feelings or moods with colors, shapes, or abstraction

Formalism: Creating an artwork that focuses on the formal elements of art like line, shape, color

Non-Objective: No recognizable objects or subject matter

OPINION/EVALUATION:

1. Do you like the work? How do you feel about the artwork? Explain.
2. Is the work successful? Talk about the quality and the lasting importance of it. Do you think it can communicate in different times and places as a finished work of art? Explain.