

# Formal Analysis Lecture

Midterm Paper

# Writing a Formal Analysis

- Writing a Formal Analysis in Art.
  - The goal of a formal analysis is to explain how the formal elements of a work of art affect the representation of the subject matter and expressive content.
  - The emphasis should be on analyzing the formal elements and principles—not interpreting the artwork.

# Getting Started:

- Have your book and go through the Intro and Chapters 1.1 to 1.10 to utilize vocabulary to develop your thoughts over the artwork you are analyzing.
  - You will then start making notes in an outline form to organize your thoughts. Use the next few slides to decide what your main talking points will be.

*The ten elements of art are:*

Color

Form

Line

Mass

Motion and Time

Shape

Space

Texture

Value

Volume

# The Elements and Principles of Art

- **Formal:** in art, refers to the visual elements and principles in a work.
- **Formal analysis:** a visual study that includes careful description of the artwork and its use of elements and principles.

*The ten principles of art are:*

Balance

Contrast

Emphasis

Focal Point

Pattern

Proportion

Rhythm

Scale

Unity

Variety

# Introduction Vocabulary to Consider from *Gateways to Art* :

- subject, subject matter
- Style
- Composition
- Medium
- Context (you may only very briefly touch on context if it is conducive to do so but not required in a formal analysis).
- Content
- Representational
- Non-objective
- Abstraction
- Foreground, Middleground, background

# Ch. 1.1: Line, Shape, and Contrast Vocabulary to Consider from *Gateways to Art*

- Lines: outline, actual contour, implied, directional, etc.
- Shapes: geometric and organic, implied
- Contrast: positive shapes, negative shapes, silhouette, figure-ground reversal

# Ch. 1.2: Form, Volume, Mass, and Texture from *Gateways to Art* :

- Shapes are two-dimensional
- Forms are three-dimensional, 3-D modeling, scale, geometric forms, organic forms
- Plane
- Volume: open volume, negative space, contrasts
- Mass
- Space
- Texture: Actual, Subversive texture
- Sculpture terms: relief, in the round, facade, high relief, bas-relief stela, freestanding
- composition

# Ch. 1.3: Implied Depth: Value and Space from *Gateways to Art*

- Value: plane, chiaroscuro, highlight, tenebrism, emphasis, hatching, cross-hatching, shape
- Style
- Space: size, overlapping, position, picture plane, relative placement,
- Perspective: atmospheric, isometric, linear, actual lines, implied lines, vanishing point, orthogonals, one-point perspective, fresco, multiple-point perspective, three-point perspective, foreshortening,

# Ch. 1.4: Color from *Gateways to Art*

- Color
- Color and light: wavelength, prisma, pigment, additive and subtractive color, binder
- Color wheels: hue, primary colors, secondary colors, tertiary colors, complementary colors, analogous colors
- Properties of color: hue, value, tints, shades, neutral, monochromatic, chroma, saturation, tone
- Palette
- Sensation of Color: temperature
- Psychology of Color, expressive aspects of color, interpreting color symbolism

## Ch. 1.5: Motion and Time from *Gateways to Art*

( we skipped this chapter originally due to Hurricane Laura but you can reference it if you'd like but it is not required).

# Ch. 1.6: Unity, Variety, and Balance from *Gateways to Art*

- Unity, oneness and harmony, compositional unity, conceptual unity, gestalt unity, grid
- Variety: color, value, shapes, textures, etc.
- Balance: motif, symmetrical balance, asymmetrical balance, radial balance, mandala

# Ch. 1.7: Scale and Proportion from *Gateways to Art*

- Scale: hierarchical scale, distorted scale
- Proportion: format, human proportion, classical period, Renaissance, the Golden Section, Proportional Ratios,

# Ch. 1.8: Focal Point and Emphasis from *Gateways to Art*

- Focal Point: composition, line, implied line, contrast
- Emphasis
- Subordination
- Contrast, color, line, placement, rhythm, outline

## Ch. 1.9: Pattern and Rhythm from *Gateways to Art*

- Pattern: element, repetition, unity, rhythm, composition, shape, value, color, contrast, motif, abstract, texture
- Rhythm: foreground, middle ground, background, focal point, simple repetitive rhythm, progressive rhythm, alternating rhythm, facade, rhythmic design structure, emphasis, triptych

# Ch. 1.10: Engaging with Form and Content from *Gateways to Art*

- Formal analysis
- Elements
- Principles

(there are other types of analyses in this chapter - please do not get confused. This is not a research paper where you are trying to research content. You do not have to do research to conduct a formal analysis on a work of art. You will need to understand the vocabulary used in the chapters that we have covered so far to be able to conduct a formal analysis.

# Formal Analysis Midterm Paper Requirements

- Choose artworks from options at the end of this presentation.
- Write a 5 paragraphs paper typed including the image of the painting you are formal analyzing. Organizing the following content in the paragraphs below:
- Body Paragraphs:
  - First Paragraph: Artwork Identification and Description.
  - Second Paragraph: Formal Analysis of the Elements and Principles of Design (largest paragraph - main content I am grading!)
  - Third Paragraph: Personal Response
- Keep this paper between 800-1200 words.

# Formal Analysis Midterm Paper Requirements

- MLA Format: 1 inch margins, 12 pt Times New Roman Font, Double spaced, etc.
- If you plan on using any quotes from our book you will need to cite the quote. If you do not know how to do this try to reformat your paper as you should not have to do any research or use citations.
  - The Owl Purdue can help you if you plan on using citations.

# First Paragraph - Artwork Identification

- *First*, an art critique must have the artwork identification.
- This is the name of the art piece, artist, media, year. You can mention what art movement it belongs to. You can mention if it is realistic, expressionistic, abstract, representational, and so on.
- Describe what the subject matter is. What do you see?
- The main content of the paper is paragraph 2 - STOP DOING RESEARCH IT'S NOT A RESEARCH PAPER!

## Second Paragraph - Formal Criticism over the Elements and Principles of Art and Design

- *Second*, the formal analysis of how the art elements are present in the art; what is noticeable, what is interesting, what is emphasized. Not all elements require the same attention. The design principles must also be included in this analysis. Remember; just as in the art elements, not all design principles require the same attention.
- Go through your book and make an outline of what the most important elements and principles you see in the artwork then formulate your sentences from there.

## Third Paragraph - Personal Feedback

- *Finally*, provide your personal feedback about the artwork. What happens when you see the art? What do you think? What does the art express to you? How does it make you feel? Is the artwork effective in communicating the artist's message?

PICK AN ARTWORK FROM THE CHOICES BELOW  
TO WRITE YOUR FORMAL ANALYSIS ON.

- ALL OF THE IMAGES ARE FROM THE FIRST PART OF OUR CLASS BOOK.
- You can add the image at the front of the paper before the intro and after the header.

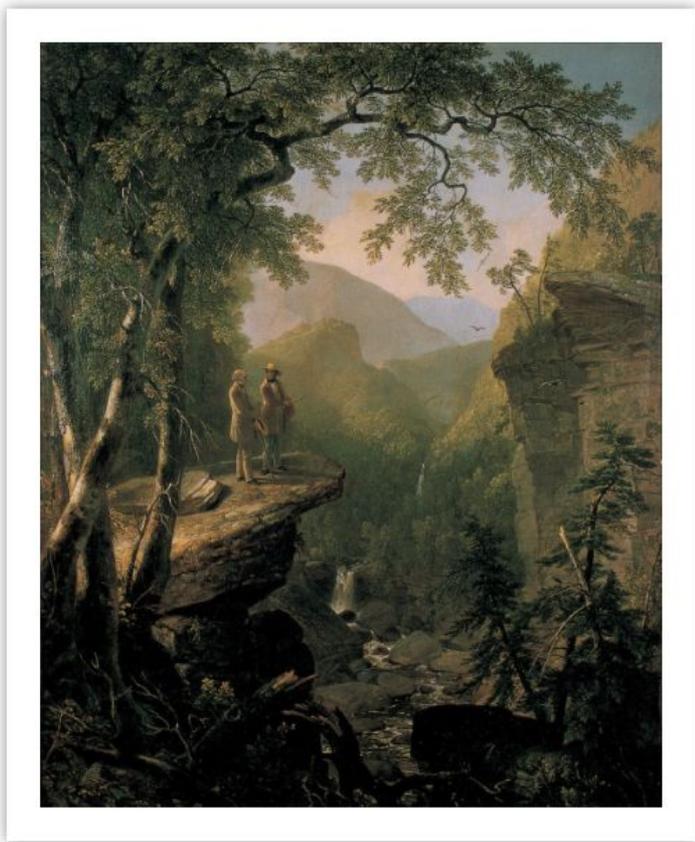


**0.0.1** *The Journey of the Sun God Re*, detail from the inner coffin of Nespawershefi, Third Intermediate Period, 990–969 BCE.

Plastered and painted wood. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England



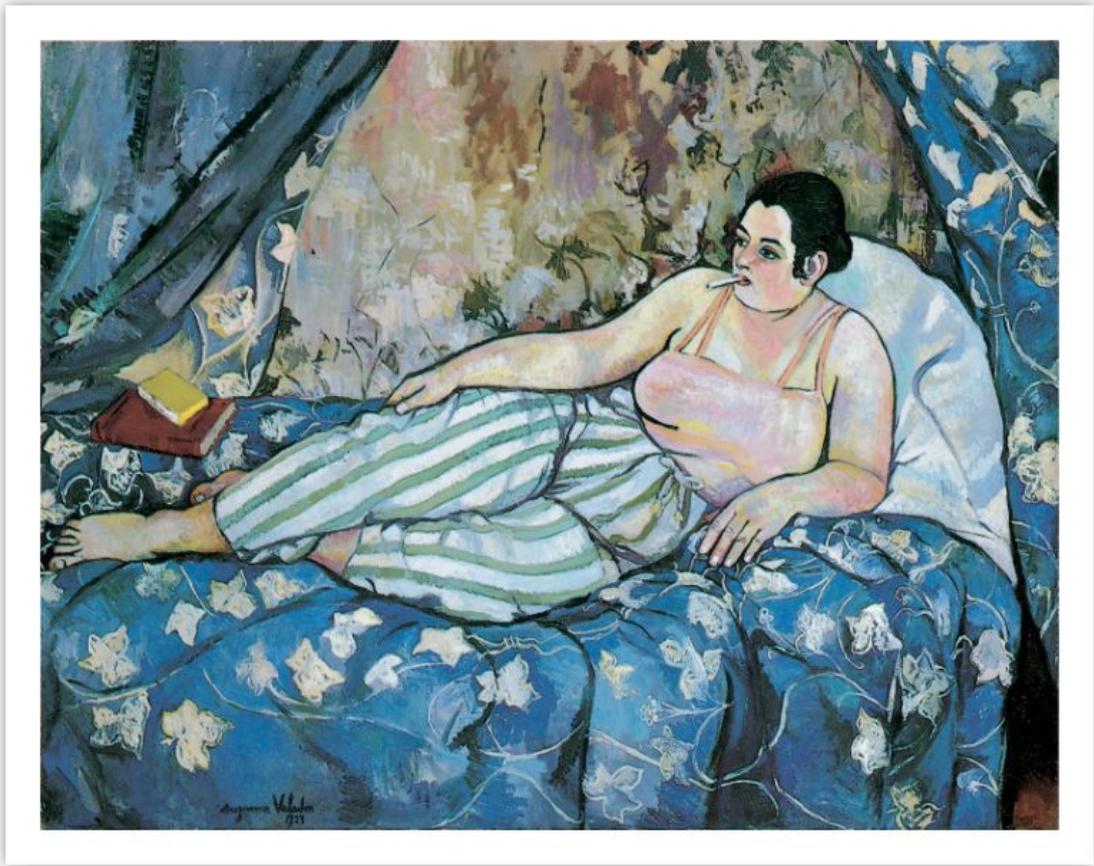
**1.3.6** Caravaggio, *The Calling of St. Matthew*, c. 1599–1600. Oil on canvas, 11'1" × 11'5". Contarelli Chapel, San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, Italy



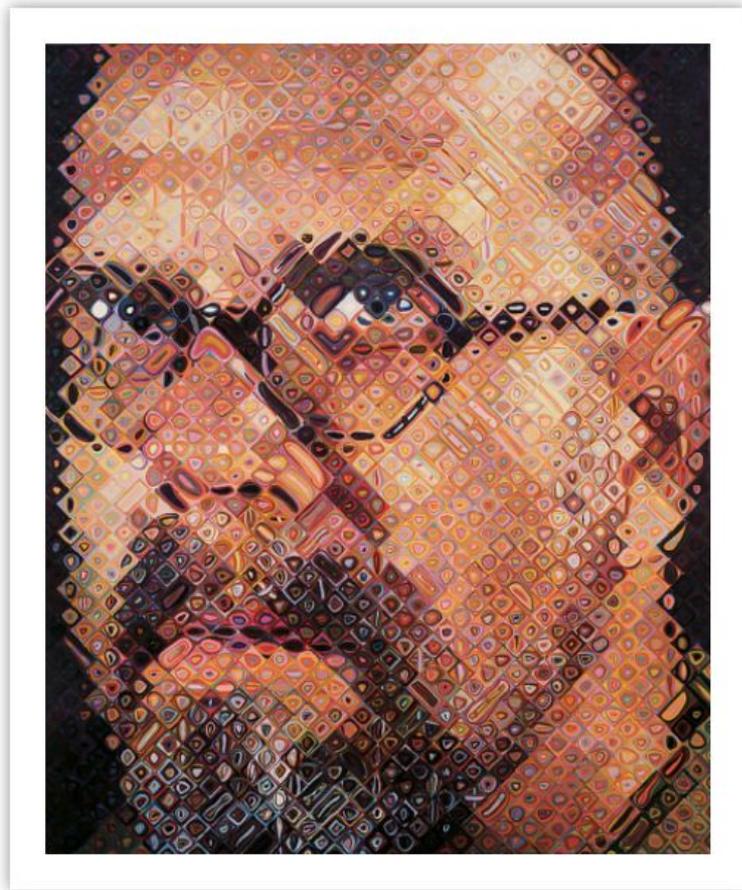
**1.3.13** Asher Brown Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849. Oil on canvas, 44 × 36". Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas



**1.8.3** Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Decapitating Holofernes*, c. 1620. Oil on canvas, 6'6 $\frac{3}{8}$ "  $\times$  5'3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy



**1.9.2** Suzanne Valadon, *The Blue Room*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 35½ × 45⅝". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France



**1.9.7a** Chuck Close, *Self-Portrait*, 1997. Oil on canvas, 8'6" × 7'. MoMA, New York

## Other Formal Analysis resources in our book...

- Pg. 38-39: Formal Analysis on David Hockney's *Portrait of an Artist* (Pool with two figures), 1972.
- Pg. 170-172 Bust of Queen Nefertiti
- Pg. 183-184: Diego Velasquez's *Las Meninas*
- Pg. 187-188: Clive King's *Chaos Machine*

Other resources you may want to look at but do not forget the format requirements of our paper:

- [Writingaboutart.org](http://Writingaboutart.org) - specifically formal analysis