

The Four Steps to Critiquing Art

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There is an accepted four step process for critiquing art. We generally go through these steps when we evaluate a work of art in our minds, but it's helpful to know exactly what is happening. And if you're teaching this process to students, it's important to teach them this process so that can use it to evaluate their own works and the works of others.

Understanding the steps to critiquing art allows you to evaluate a work in more objective manner. Whether you're an emotionalist, realist, or formalist, you can still appreciate the art - even though it may not be in the style that you enjoy the most.

The four-step approach is:

- Description
- Analysis
- Interpretation
- Judgment

Description

The first step in art criticism is description. When we look at a work of art, our minds naturally take notice of the general information that's present.

We start with just a simple statement of observation. We should try to keep ourselves from judging the quality of the work until we have gone through all of the steps.

¹ <https://thevirtualinstructor.com/blog/the-steps-to-art-criticism>

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Analysis

Analysis refers to how the elements and principles of art are used in the work. In this step, our minds take in the lines, values, and colors of the artwork. We also may take notice of the balance, proportion, rhythm, and unity found within the work.

In a critique, the artist should point out what is happening with these specific elements and principles. Many times, the formal qualities of the art are what makes the art successful. Artists should understand how these qualities work and what makes them successful in artwork. They should also be able to discern when these formal qualities are unsuccessful as well.

Interpretation

Often, we'll instinctively skip to this step. We look for meaning in everything, so this is perfectly natural. In this step, we explore the meaning of the art. What is the artist trying to communicate to us? There are no wrong responses here. The artist may have a meaning that they intended in the work, but how we interpret it is completely up to us.

Judgment

The last step in art criticism is judgment. Is this work of art successful? If we're teaching students, it's important to guide them in this step. Remind students that the work of art may not be their favorite, but it may still be successful. This way, we teach students to appreciate all forms of art, even if we personally do not like it.

Conclusion

Understanding the steps to art criticism and implementing them in a structured way in critique, will lead to stronger artworks. If you're teaching students, then these steps are vital. These steps help us to appreciate all

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forms of art, including the works that we may not appreciate at first glance. All forms of art have their place and all deserve a fair approach of evaluation