

Formal analysis of an artwork

suggestions for writing and sketching

Write the credit line of the artwork (name of the artist, title, date, medium, size, location).

On what elements (line, shape, form, color, value and texture) is the work based ?

What kind of line/shapes/forms do you see? Are they geometric or amorphous, sharp or blurred?

Are the forms realistically modeled or flat? Does the space look deep or shallow?

Can you recognize some geometrical structure the composition of the different parts of the work?

Are some lines/shapes/forms repeated or echoed in other parts of the work?

Does the whole composition look full of energy and movement or still and peaceful? Why?

Squint through your eyelashes. Is there a wide range of tonal contrast (very light highlight and very dark shadows) or is there tonal range quite narrow (i.e. mostly similar tones)?

Describe the color palette used by the artist: is it bright or dull, strong or weak?

Are colors mostly complementary or do they create an harmony of similar hues?

What is the function of color : imitational, expressive, formal?

How has the artist used the medium?

Did the artist personally make the artwork or was that made by assistants or other professionals?

Can you see brushstrokes, mark making or texture? Describe the direction of the marks.

What is notable about the artist's choice of materials?

Did the artist use the material in a unique way and/or was he/she influenced by previous artists?

How does the artwork interacts with the surrounding?

How does its surface interact with light? Is it glossy or matt?

What is the center of interest in the composition? How did the artist draw your attention to it?