

WRITING ABOUT ART

Here are some suggestions for writing about images

I. Describing Photographs: What do you see? Description is a data gathering process.

Descriptive information includes statements about the photographs subject matter, medium and form.

Subject matter: refers to persons or objects, places or event in a photograph. This differs from “subject” and is synonymous with theme or meaning and is more interpretive.

Medium: refers to what the art object is made of.

Form refers to how the subject matter is presented:

Traditional elements of design include: point, line, shape, light and value, color, texture, space and volume.

Photographic elements of design: tonal range, contrast, point of view. angle, frame and edge, depth of field (shallow or deep), sharpness of grain, focus.

How the elements are used is called the “**principles of design**” which include: scale, proportion, unity within variety, repetition, and rhythm, balance, directional forces, emphasis, etc.

-evaluate the technique. Does it work for you? How does the photographer choose to frame his photographs.

-Give your subjective reaction. What is your initial reaction, did it last? Did you find yourself thinking about this piece again?

-interpret the work: Why is it made in this particular way? What does it mean? What is your interpretation of the work, does this differ from the artist's intention? Does the image tell a narrative? Appeal to your emotions or intellect? Evaluate in terms of the individual image but also series. Look at other series of the artist work. Read the artist's statement.

-How does this work relate to other artist you have seen in class or in another exhibition. Compare and contrast.

1. Introduction- some ideas

1. Begin with a relevant and attention-getting quotation. For film topics, quotations from or about the film work very well. For exhibition reviews look for quotes in the curatorial statement or artist statement.
2. Pose an important question.
3. Begin with a brief descriptive or narrative passage.

4. Begin with a paraphrase of a commonly held view that you immediately question.

Thesis Statement usually is presented at the end of the first paragraph. The thesis statement should answer the question why? how? or to what effect?

2. Content: develop your argument through description, research and your opinion

3. The conclusion should fulfill ONE of the following operations:

1. Place the thesis in a larger context.
2. Reaffirm the significance of the thesis.
3. Synthesize the points in the paper, showing how they fit together.
4. Offer suggestions for further study.

In other words, the conclusion should answer the question "So what?"

adapted from <http://www.cod.edu/people/faculty/pruter/film/> and Robert Hirsch's Exploring Color Photography and Terry Barrett's, Criticizing Photographs