

## Art Criticism/History Worksheet

|  |  |                |
|--|--|----------------|
| Student Name:                                  |  |                |
| Class Code:                                    |  |                |
| Artwork Name:                                  |  |                |
| Artist if known:                               |  |                |
| When was it made:                              | _____th century or ____00's                                | Or exact date: |
| Where did it come from:                        |  |                |
| What is it made of:                            |  |                |
| Why is it valuable: (circle)                   | materials information fame beauty history usefulness other |                |
| What else was going on at this place and time: |  |                |
| Accession number:                              |  |                |

There are 5 parts to this worksheet: Identifying, Describing, Analyzing, Interpreting, and Judging. Each step will make the next one easy. Be sure to write in your own answers if they aren't listed – there are so many possibilities they can't all be put on a worksheet!

### Part One: Identifying information

We have most of the basic information above, let's get just a little more specific.

1. What do you see; What is the subject matter?
2. What materials were used? (What is the medium/media?)
3. What techniques do you think might have been used?
4. Do you notice a certain style from a time or place? Does it remind you of another artwork you have seen?

|   |                 |              |                  |
|---|-----------------|--------------|------------------|
| 5. Identification: What type of artwork do you think this is? Circle as many as you want. |                 |              |                  |
| Landscape   | Portrait        | Sculptural   | Jewelry          |
| Textiles or Fabric  | Pottery         | Metalwork    | Arms/Armour      |
| Furniture   | Decorative      | Painting     | Still Life       |
| Time-Arts<br>(video/animation)  | Functional      | Installation | Religious object |
| Abstractions  | Other: write in |              |                  |

6. Place an "X" where you think this work falls on the spectrum of realistic and abstract.

Realistic <-----> Abstract  
 (photo-realism) (feelings, colors, and shapes)

# Part Two: Describing what

Let's make a list of the subjects and elements (ingredients) used in this work. We are only making lists. Subjects are the nouns in an artwork.

Elements: COLOR, SHAPE, FORM, LINE, SPACE, VALUE, and TEXTURE.

Here we go:

|  |                    |           |                    |
|--|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 7. Describing: What things do you see in this artwork? Circle as many as you want. |                    |           |                    |
| People   | Animals            | Buildings | Boats              |
| Fantastic creatures  | Abstractions       | Food      | Flowers            |
| Plants   | Nature             | Symbols   | Numbers or letters |
| Famous people  | Musical Instrument | Furniture | Clothing           |
| Other: write in  |                    |           |                    |

|   |  |             |                    |
|---|--|-------------|--------------------|
| 8. Describing: What kinds of <b>colors</b> do you see in this work? Circle as many as you want. |  |             |                    |
| Warm (red, orange, yellow, pinks, peaches, some browns etc.)                                    | Cool (blues, greens, purples, some browns)                             | Strong      | Soft               |
| Saturated   | Light value  | Dark value  | Mid- value         |
| Neutral (black, white, grey, some browns)   | Complimentary or opposites (red-green blue-orange purple-yellow pairs) | Fluorescent | Metals or metallic |
| Other: write in   |  |             |                    |

|   |                 |           |            |
|---|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 9. Describing: What kinds of <b>shapes</b> do you see in this work? Circle as many as you want. |                 |           |            |
| Circles   | Squares         | Triangles | Rectangles |
| Organic   | Geometric       | Implied   | Varied     |
| Similar   | Other: write in |           |            |

|   |          |        |                  |
|---|----------|--------|------------------|
| 10. Describing: What kinds of <b>forms</b> do you see in this work? Circle as many as you want. |          |        |                  |
| Cone  | Cylinder | Sphere | Organic          |
| Geometric   | Cube     | Prism  | Amorphous/blobby |
| Other: write in   |          |        |                  |

|   |                 |            |         |
|---|-----------------|------------|---------|
| 11. Describing: What words describe the shapes and forms? Circle as many as you want. |                 |            |         |
| Curved  | Soft-edged      | Hard-edged | Angular |
| Organic   | Free-form       | Blended    | Perfect |
| Irregular   | Other: write in |            |         |

|   |         |         |          |
|---|---------|---------|----------|
| 12. Describing: What kinds of <b>lines</b> do you see in this work? Circle as many as you want. |         |         |          |
| Sharp   | Thick   | Heavy   | Angular  |
| Jagged  | Loopy   | Soft    | Vertical |
| Horizontal  | Angular | Implied | Wavy     |
| Dotted  | Fuzzy   | Smooth  | Straight |
| Diagonal  | Thin    | Choppy  | Strong   |
| Other: write in   |         |         |          |

|  |                    |         |            |
|--|--------------------|---------|------------|
| 13. Describing: What kind of <b>space</b> do you see in this work? Circle as many as you want. |                    |         |            |
| Shallow  | Deep               | Actual  | Visual     |
| Strong perspective   | Decorative/surface | Painted | Sculptural |
| Dark   | Illuminated        | Crowded | Empty      |
| Other: write in  |                    |         |            |

|  |           |               |                        |
|--|-----------|---------------|------------------------|
| 14. Describing: What kind of <b>value</b> do you see in this work? Circle as many as you want. |           |               |                        |
| Very light   | Very dark | In the middle | Made with a technique: |
| Other: write in  |           |               |                        |

|  |        |         |                 |
|--|--------|---------|-----------------|
| 15. Describing: What kind of <b>texture</b> do you see in this work? Circle as many as you want. |        |         |                 |
| Rough  | Smooth | Glassy  | Soft            |
| Fuzzy  | Hard   | Bumpy   | Scratchy        |
| Visual   | Actual | Organic | Other: write in |
|  |        |         |                 |

Wow, that is a lot of describing. Let's move on to...

## Part Three: Analyzing how

We have looked very closely at the separate ingredients (the elements) that make up the artwork. Now let's see how the artist used them to create an effect. What principles (recipes) are the most significant? Here are the principles of art: (Some are very similar, and not everyone agrees on all of them!) MOVEMENT, UNITY, VARIETY, BALANCE, CONTRAST, PROPORTION, HARMONY, RHYTHM-PATTERN-REPETITION

16. How did the chef create the recipe? By using ingredients. Just like there are lots of ways to combine ingredients like chicken to change the flavor, there are lots of ways to combine elements to give an artwork flavor.

How did the artist create the principle? By using an element.

Fill out the principles you can by listing elements. You might not see all of them, so don't try to stretch. If you see it, you'll really see it. How did the artist do it??!!?

| Principles  | Elements<br>pick from:<br>COLOR, SHAPE, FORM, LINE, SPACE, VALUE, and TEXTURE. Describe HOW!!!   |
|---|--|
| The artist shows movement with  |  |
| The artist shows unity of   |  |
| There are a lot of different varieties of   |  |
| The artist has balanced the amount and placement of   |  |
| The balance is structured   | ---Radially, in a circle<br>---left to right, or top to bottom, but not perfectly<br>---left to right or top to bottom, and perfectly or almost perfectly. |
| (contrast) The artist is showing how different things are by showing the opposites of   |  |
| (proportion) The artist is showing how big or little something is by comparing  |  |
| (harmony) the artist has made things go together  |  |
| (unity) these things look like they are part of a set somehow, because something is very alike  |  |
| (R,P,R) the artist has repeated something, either exactly, to make a pattern, or just repeated things to make your eye jump here and there. What is it? |  |

## Part Four: Interpreting

Okay, with the information you got in the first three steps, you can take a pretty good guess at what it all MEANS!

| 17. What words describe this artwork? Circle as many as you want. |            |                   |                   |
|---|------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strength  | Fearful    | Lonely            | Beautiful         |
| Mysterious  | Hopeful    | Loving            | Violent           |
| Peaceful  | Happy      | Sad               | Helpful           |
| Adventurous   | Courageous | Exciting          | Mad               |
| Caring  | Fun        | Interest in shape | Interest in color |
| Interest in lines   | Hateful    | Pretty            | Useful            |
| Other: write in   |            |                   |                   |

18. Now, in a few sentences, what do you think the artist was trying to say? Look back over your worksheet if you like.

## Part Five: Judging

So, what do you think? Do you like it? YES NO Circle one.  
Do you think it was successful?

What elements or principles help make it successful or not?

Do you think this work has a benefit for others? (For example, it is beautiful, it has an important message, it changes the way you see the world, it asks important questions, it makes connections, it reaffirms a religious belief, it is important to the owner's status, etc)