

Artist Report 4 Interpretations and Inspirations

Objectives

This assignment draws from one of the artists cited in the second report that is designed to encourage a deeper engagement of identifying stylistic trends, and to articulate ideas about a specific body of work. The analysis of the work selected is intended to develop critical thinking skills by using some basic techniques in the visual arts: descriptions, assessments of content, forming non-prejudiced opinions, asking questions, and seeking resolve of the questions. The product of this research is a 300-500 word, written summary that must be word processed and turned-in electronically. The ideas expressed in this report are to explore both objective and subjective interpretations of a selected body of work, and must be organized regarding sentence structure, grammar, spelling, & punctuation.

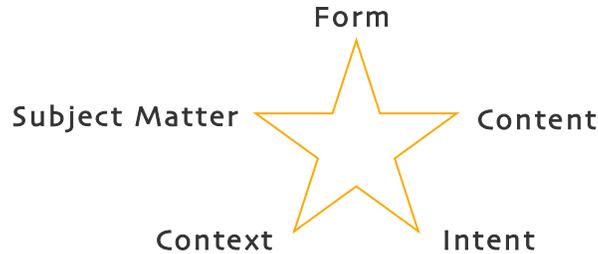
Procedures

Microsoft Word documents must be submitted for evaluation in our Class Folder / Turn-in Work. Other word-processing application's document formats are not accepted. Hand-written responses are not accepted. Electronic submission via eMail is not accepted. Make sure the document is saved as a Microsoft Word document with a *.doc* or *.docx* extension.

1. Identify who the artist is and describe the *subject matter* and *formal properties* of this collection of images. **Describe what you see**, and remain objective; do not form opinions about the work yet. Limit the commentary to how the images appear to the eye, how you think they have been constructed, the tools and techniques utilized, and their stylization.
2. Based on the procedures outlined for AR1, it is already known that you enjoy viewing the work, and that it is inspiring you in some capacity, therefore remarks about whether you like or dislike the work are wasted efforts, and do not garner credit. Now is the opportunity to **express an opinion**, a point of view, and/or visceral response about the body of work.
3. This body of work should be compelling you to ask questions. Compose a thoughtful articulation of ideas, and **ask at least one evaluative question** about the work. An evaluative question is one in which the response makes a judgment about the object of the inquiry.

Example Scenario: A brilliant, sun-lit afternoon offered a delightful crunch, crackle and swoosh under foot walking through a deep layer of red, orange, and yellow leaves. A student photographed the color cacophony of leaves with ants-eye point of view, and captured several images with magnificent, but mostly defoliated trees in the background. S/he then chose to process the images in black and white, instead of color.

- A *literal question* can be answered solely by referencing the scenario itself. An example of a literal question for the above scenario is, "What type of tree[s] are the leaves from?" [most likely maple, but not known until we see the actual leaf shapes].
 - An *inferential question* cannot be answered by looking at the scenario itself, but can be answered by inferring or referencing some outside information. An example of an inferential question for the above scenario is, "What season was it?" [autumn].
 - An *evaluative question* seeks a judgment from the person responding, such as the value, worth, or intent of the scenario, or its contents. An example of an evaluative question for the above scenario is, "Why didn't the photographer choose to interpret these images in color?" [the response demands critical thinking and ideation]
4. After raising the evaluative question, are you compelled to gather more information about the work to further interpret it, and inform your image making process? If not, describe why. If so, describe why, and describe how this work influences and inspires the production of your own work.
 5. Compose a well-reasoned conclusion and/or potential solutions to your questions.
 6. Find your announcement *AR4* — *LastName.First* posted on our class Google Group. Post a reply with the Web URL of the artist's work, to facilitate class discussion time. Copy and paste the exact same Web URL into a footnote at the bottom of the written report. Citing sources for researching the artist is required. Use APA style footnotes. **Artist Report 4 is valued at 80 possible points.**



Subject Matter — Quite simply, this is what the image is *of*. Most of us shy away from describing subject matter because it appears to be too obvious to discuss, too embarrassing to admit that we don't understand what we are seeing, and/or assume that the person standing next to us, looking at the exact same artwork, is seeing the exact same thing. Subject matter is the figure/ground relationship of the objects, the people, the place, etc., etc. Ask yourself, "what is this artist literally looking at — what is s/he *seeing*?" When describing the subject matter, you must remain simply objective, and descriptive to what you see. Withhold any opinions about the artwork for another part of the process that is to follow. Another person's perception of the artwork can offer you insight that agrees, differs, or enlightens.

Form — Also referred to as *formal properties*. These are the ways that the artist has chosen to interpret the subject matter. The list is infinite, but is inclusive of density, contrast, motion blur, depth-of-field, design elements, color strategy, light quality; and media such as film choice or digital capture, developers, inks, output media, presentation materials, etc. An artist's choice of tools, techniques, and materials are what create an image of subject matter.

Content — In contemporary image making this is determined by the viewer, not the artist: *Subject Matter + Form = Content*. This aspect of the viewing experience makes you a direct participant in the creation of the artwork, potentially giving the work meaning. Expressing an idea, personal point of view, emotion, visceral response, or description of how another sensory experience such as hearing, touching, smelling, or tasting is triggered because of viewing the artwork, are excellent ways to articulate the premise of content. Once these aspects have been considered and fathomed by the viewer, asking evaluative questions about the artwork is integral to their process of critically thinking, and forming opinions about it.

Intent — Why is the artist showing this? What is s/he attempting to/wanting to say? It will behoove you as the viewer to think and speculate about the work, ask questions about it, and perhaps arrive at your own answer. Reading an artist statement can help provide clues from the artist as to what you are looking at, and perhaps, how to engage with the work.

Context — Where is the work being viewed: in a museum, at a presentation in the studio, in a magazine or book, on a Web site at home, or on a cell phone? The possibilities seem to be immeasurable. Where, when, and how the work is being viewed can change its meaning. Being very mindful of the original situations that the work was created are important too.

Be Mindful of These Visual Elements²

- Direction and intensity of light
- Direction and intensity of shadow
- Reflected light
- Color balance
- Time / Motion
- Linear perspective
- Atmospheric perspective
- Proportion / Scale
- Repetition
- Noise
- Depth of field
- Interaction / Overlap
- Texture gradients
- Edges / Blending
- Gravity

¹ Barrett, Terry. *Criticizing Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*, 3rd Edition (McGraw-Hill, 2000), adapted from pages 180-182.

² Caponigro, John Paul. *Adobe Photoshop Master Class* (Adobe Press, 2000), Chapter sub-headers on pages 97-102.