# Seeing, Knowing, Understanding, and Judging Art

## The Art-Criticism Approach

### I. Description: What Is in the Work, Discovered Through an Inventory of the Subject Matter and/or Elements of Art Found in the Work

#### 1. **Literal Qualities**
- **Balance**
- **Emphasis**
- **Movement**
- **Pattern**
- **Variety**
- **Unity**
- **Proportion**

#### 2. **Organizational Qualities**
- **Shape**
- **Form**
- **Texture**
- **Colour**
- **Value**

### II. Analysis: How the Work of Art Is Organized or Put Together, Focusing on How the Principles of Art Have Been Used to Arrange the Elements of Art

### III. Interpretation: Possible Feelings, Moods, and Ideas Communicated by the Work of Art

#### Expressive Qualities (based on information found in the artwork)

### IV. Judgment: Facts Relevant to Making a Decision about the Degree of Artistic Merit in the Work of Art

Consider the literal, visual, and expressive qualities to make your judgment.

**Example #1:** **Line & Movement:** "The illusion of movement was created by using wavy lines in the piece.

**Example #2:** **Value & Emphasis:** "The application of light and dark contrasting values emphasizes the central figure of the group.

**Example #3:** **Variety & Shape & Movement:** "The variety of shapes throughout the sculpture creates a sense of movement.

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Daily Written Art Critique - Examples

#1. Sculpture: Head of Constantine

Description: The work appears to be a stone sculpture of a head. The work looks like a young man with a strong jaw line with sharp emphasized eyes.

Analysis: The sculpture has smooth texture on the skin but a more detailed, rougher quality in the hair. An emphasized round shape is used for the eyes and a broad chin. The work has a very symmetrically balanced face making him appear very stable. The sculpture appears uniform in style from the texture used throughout most of the sculpture.

Interpretation: Because of the detailed features of the face which includes a stern expression and sharp eyes that appear to look upward, I would interpret the sculpture as being a portrait (bust) of a leader. The work gives a solemn, respectful feeling to the viewer through his strong jaw line and sharp emphasized eyes. The large proportioned eyes convey a somewhat sad feeling of compassion. The sculpture also creates a calm mood for the viewer as a result of the serene of a smile on his face.

Judgement: I would have to say the work is a successful portrait because it captures the detailed features of a particular person in a realistic manner with striking clarity, in particular the strong emphasized eyes and broad pronounced chin. The work gives off a respectful tone.