



VISUAL LITERACY: How to Look at Art

HANDOUT

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Robert Atkins, *ArtSpeak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords, 1945 to the Present* (3rd ed., 2013, Abbeville Press)
- “ ” , *ArtSpoke: A Guide to Modern Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords, 1848-1944* (1993, Abbeville Press)
- Michael Cothran and Anne D’Alleva, *Methods and Theories of Art History* (3rd ed., 2021, Laurence King Publishing)
- James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (2nd. ed.) (Routledge, 2014)
- Nancy G. Heller, *Why a Painting is Like a Pizza: A Guide to Understanding and Enjoying Modern Art* (Princeton University Press, 2002)
- W. Eugene Kleinbauer, *Modern Perspectives in Art History* (1971, Holt, Rinehart, & Winston; reprinted by MART in 1989)

NAMES, TERMS, & CONCEPTS

Session #1:

- visual literacy/art appreciation/art history
- formalism
- visual elements of art (line, shape, texture, space, color)
- printmaking techniques (relief [woodcuts, linoleum cuts]; intaglio [etching]; lithography)
- linear vs. painterly
- a dancer’s “line”
- geometric vs. organic forms
- Dr. A. Richard Turner
- sfumato*
- the Northern (vs. Italian) Renaissance
- grisaille*, *odalisque*
- color in classical Greco-Roman sculpture

Session #2:

art, visual arts, the arts (including performing arts), fine art, “commercial” art (graphic design)
 principles of design (unity, balance, scale, emphasis)
 Pointillism
 symmetrical, asymmetrical composition
 pyramidal composition
tondo
ikebana
 alloverness
 context (where the artwork was originally intended to be seen)
 motion (actual, and implied); Italian Futurism
 late 19th-century experimental photography (Eadweard Muybridge, Étienne-Jules Marey)
 Howard Edgerton (stroboscopic photography)
 Op Art (optical illusions, “psychedelic” art)
 kinetic sculpture

SESSION #3:

iconography (in art-historical usage)
 story-quilt
 mythology (vs. “religion”)
 attributes (noun)
 Virgin of Guadalupe
 The Annunciation
 triptych
 Flemish, Netherlandish art
 aerial perspective in visual art
 donors (toward a major artwork)
 eucharistic doves
 gilded (gilt) copper
 enamel work (*champlevé*, + other techniques)
 pyx
 Vanitas paintings
 symbolism of dancers’ hands (classical ballet mime; Bharatanatyam *mudras*; flamenco)

SESSION #4:

New Yorker magazine covers and cartoons
 “Eustace Tilley”
 monotypes (a.k.a. monoprints)
 Japanese *sumi-e* ink paintings

Mary Boone
 Jeff Koons
 Bepko and N.F.T.s (non-fungible tokens); A.I.-related issues
 encyclopedic vs. specialized museums
 permanent collections; acquiring and de-accessioning art
 temporary, site-specific installations
 illustration
 self-taught (naïve, outsider, folk, “primitive”) artists
 Gee’s Bend quilts
 academic painting
 Orientalism, colonialism
 Rococo, Baroque styles
 The Elgin marbles; Melina Mercouri
 repatriation of artworks
 1913 Armory Show (NYC)
 Georg Baselitz

[N.B.: my TSA handouts normally include a section of “Principal Artworks Discussed.”
 However, since this seminar is about quick visual comparisons among a great many different
 artworks, vs. in-depth discussions of just a few, such a list proved untenable. Feel free to email
 me with any questions, at NGHeller@aol.com.]

OTHER RESOURCES

2010 play, “Red” by John Logan (about Mark Rothko)
 2007 documentary film, “Ellsworth Kelly: Fragments,” by Edgar Howard & Tom Piper
 2018 documentary about the art market, “The Price of Everything,” by Nathaniel Kahn
 anything on the art21.org website (artist interviews and short documentaries)

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