

CRITICAL ANALYSIS / how to see

Dissection of an Image – Guide

1) DESCRIBE SPECIFICS:

The more specifics the better -- study the details, it forces you to spend time with the image.

- What is the image of? Describe the details within the scene.
- What colors is it using and why?
- What is the lighting like (Dark shadows? Bright sunlight? Studio set-up?)
- What objects are included in the image? Faces? People? Buildings? Abstractions? Describe them.
- What is happening in the image?

2) DESCRIBE FORM

Focus on how the image is composed.

- How does the composition function? Is it pleasing to look at? Why?
- Is the rule of thirds being used? Describe how it looks.
- What is the point of view? From what angle did the photographer take the photograph?
- What depth of field is being used?
- What is the focal point? Is it framed? What is it framed by?
- Where are the lines, and how do the lines direct your eye?
- Is the image balanced? Symmetrical/asymmetrical? Describe.
- Does the subject fill the frame or is there extra space?
- What is at the edge of image (and what does the frame crop off)?
- Where is the negative and positive space?

3) DESCRIBE CONTENT

- What are the themes/ideas that are in the image?
- Is there a story being told in the image?
- Why did the artist make this image? What is his/her intention?
- Does the image remind you of anything? (A dream you once had? Movies? Stories? Books? Childhood memory? Someone you might know)?
- Does it question or challenge beliefs or assumptions (political, ethical, social)?
- Is the image interesting? Beautiful? Noteworthy?

4) EVALUATE

- Do you like it? Do you hate it? Why?
- Is the photograph successful or unsuccessful? Why?