

LOOKING AT ART

Looking at and thinking carefully about the work of others helps you to understand it and then explore what you see through your own art. The examples below are all from the Storiel Museum / Bangor University collections available online at Art UK.

A response of 'I like this' or 'I don't like this' without explanation or justification is not analysis, it is personal opinion. Description is an important part of studying art, but it is not enough on its own.

Most works of art on display in galleries and museums will have information alongside them or at the start of an exhibition to give you some basic information about the artist and the work. When you approach a work of art, it is useful to consider when, why, where and how the work was created and how this may have affected the artwork.

- What particular 'mood' does the artwork have and what gives it a particular 'feeling'?
- Does the title of the piece make a difference to the way you view or understand the work?



Cwm Prysor - John Baum



Glaslyn Valley – Norah Lee



Rocks at Llandudno – Robert Fowler

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Subject:

Does the artwork belong to a 'genre' (i.e. portraiture; landscape; still life; fantasy; historical an so on)?

Are there any recognisable places, scenes or objects?
How are these presented (e.g. realistic; simplified etc)?



'Carnarvon Castle' - Frank Brangwyn



'Castell Caernarfon' - Dennis Creffield

Are there people shown or represented within the artwork? Who are they?
What can we tell about them?

Does the artwork tell a story or convey a message?

Are there other objects within the artwork that are there for a particular reason?
Do these objects have another meaning or symbolism?



Head No.6 - Alan Mc Pherson



Mrs Jane Jones of Ynysgain
and her daughter Anne



Eben Fardd – Evan Williams

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Use of media and materials

What has the artist used to make the artwork? Are the materials made obvious? Why were these mediums chosen?

How has the choice of materials contributed to the artwork?

Format and layout

What is the overall size, shape and layout of the artwork (i.e. vertical, horizontal, portrait, landscape round or square)? Is it in a frame on a panel or directly on the wall? Has this format been chosen for practical or aesthetic reasons?

Does this influence your response to the work, if it is very large or very small, an individual work or one of a series?

Marks and lines

What types of marks or lines have been made within the work, e.g. straight, smooth, spiky, thick, thin, light, heavy, free, elaborate? Why have they been used?

How does the use of such marks contribute to the artwork?

Can you identify what was used or how these marks were made?



Looking Down
Mary Fogg



The Wreckage on Carnedd Llewelyn
Dan Hall



Grey Breast
Brenda Chamberlain

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Texture and surface

Are there interesting textures or surfaces within the artwork, e.g. smooth, rough, shiny, dim, low, deep, ?

What effect does the texture or surface have on the artwork?

Can you identify with what or in what way this surface or texture was achieved?

Space

Is there space or depth / dimension relating to the work?

How does the artwork fit within the real space around it?

Is the viewer expected to move through the artwork?

Does the viewer need to look up high or low down to view the work?

Remember that all these questions are a guide to help you start to think about the art you experience. There can be many different answers to these questions, and people can often disagree about their responses to the artwork and about an artist's intentions. Many artists prefer not to explain their work and would rather that everyone was given the freedom to respond individually to their work without feeling that their reactions or conclusions were somehow 'wrong' because they were different to what the artist intended.