**Writing Guidelines**

Location of Art Analysis Paper:

State the name and location of the museum (or virtual museum website) that you have visited for this assignment at the top of your paper with your name and the date. Also list the artwork title, artist name, medium, and date of creation.

Introduction Paragraph:

Begin writing and state the name of the artist, title of the artwork, measurements (estimate if needed), art medium, and the date created. For this paper, biographical information about the artist is not to be used-period. The only exception would be when a particular biographical detail relates specifically to some image or form in your chosen artwork. For example, the native scenes in Paul Gauguin’s Tahitian series of prints and paintings could lead the student to insert a BRIEF line about the artist’s decision to move to Tahiti to paint these expressive, tribal subjects. You are discussing the artwork only not the artist.

Art Media and Process:

Many students overlook the art media used and the techniques required by the artist to produce a work of art. Discussing the art materials and the different art processes adds great interest to a paper, and can help students explain certain facts about the works appearance. Take time to explore the media used, and specific techniques required by your artist to create the work. If it is oil painting, discuss how the artist may have used oil glazing to create realism. Use the appropriate terminology that you have learned about when discussing different media such as watercolor washes or oil glazing. When discussing, sculpture discuss the material processes of stone carving, bronze casting, or the glass making process. Also use the appropriate terminology, such metal casting, clay modeling, or metal patina. Do not underestimate the interest that the art process can bring to the reader (and writer!).

Form and Content:

Composition:

Describe your chosen work’s composition. Describe the shapes (images), colors and how they have been composed. Is the work vertically or horizontally oriented toward the viewer? Are there dominant shapes or forms in this work of art?

Subject Matter/Function:

What is the subject matter of this artwork? Is it a religious, genre landscape, portrait, nonobjective abstraction, political/social work? If unable to decipher the work’s apparent subject, briefly describe it the painting and based on your observations draw a conclusion about the subject matter. Consider the intended function of your work. Is this a religious, sacred object? How is its construction and design related to its functional use (in dance, in worship, etc.?)

Style:

How did the artist approach the form? Is the work realistic, naturalistic or abstract?

Form:

Shape and Depth:

What are the bold shapes or forms of the work? How are these shapes or forms arranged to guide the viewer’s eye through the composition?

Is this a realistic work? How has the artist created the illusion of depth and reality? Address the use (or possible non-use) of techniques used to create the illusion of depth. Terms and concepts to be considered are: linear perspective, atmospheric perspective, foreshortening, shape placement, shape size, shape overlap, shape texture or shape color. Did the artist reject wholly or partly these methods of creating the illusion of depth?

Color:

Describe the colors used in the work? Are the colors intense or life-like? In analyzing color, consider the following types of color characteristics that may be of use in your work: color intensity, monochromatic color, analogous color, complementary color, warm color, cool color or dull color. All of these may not apply to your work.

In the case of sculpture, how has the artist maximized the materials used to give a sense of color and pattern to the sculptural form? For example, how does Dale Chihuly use color to reinforce the idea of organic plant forms or sea life forms in his glass sculptures? How does the material of white marble affect the carved forms of a figure? How does the warm bronze surfaces create textures or reflection of light?

Light:

How is light (and value) used in the work? If the work is realistic, how did the artist produce an illusion of light, shadow, and visual depth? If the work is stylized or abstracted in some way, do certain shapes or forms still appear closer or further away? Explain how the artist produced this depth? Terms that may apply are: value, contrast, chiaroscuro, and atmospheric perspective.

Texture:

Does this work explore texture? Is it smooth or rough textured? Terms that might apply to your work are: visual textures, actual/real textures, impasto, pattern, or implied textures. Some artists create more detailed implied textures in the foreground and less in the background to create a sense of visual depth in a realistic painting. Has your artist worked in the way to create depth?

Scale:

How does the scale of this particular artwork affect the viewer? Is it a small, intimate work that draws the viewer in? Is it a miniature scaled down reality of our world? Or is this a large-scale work commandin a large space?

In discussing installation art: how does the work evolve as you walk around it in space? Does there appear to be various themed components to the installation? Describe them. How does one physically navigate the work? Are you engaged in the environment in some way (through movement, direction, lighting, spatial confinement, etc.?)

Movement: Students may have discussed movement in relationship to a painting or static sculpture in an earlier stage of their paper under Composition or in discussion of shape. For a kinetic sculpture or art installation, movement would be a major consideration to address your paper.