**Critical Analysis Guidance**

**You should read this extra guidance in conjunction with the coursework requirements as set out in the ‘Coursework and Assessment Guidelines’ document.**

**ART CRITICISM**

* Art criticism is responding to, interpreting meaning, and making critical judgements about specific works of art.
* There are four basic elements to art criticism: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgement.
* You will now be familiar with how I approach analysing and describing individual pieces on the class slides – theses critical analysis assignments are essentially your change to do this type of analysis on a bigger scale – it’s a “deep dive” into your chosen piece ☺

Description

This element answers the question “what do you see?” The various elements that \*may\* constitute a description include:

* Form of the work – art, architecture, sculpture, minor arts, etc.
* Medium of the work – clay, stone, marble, paint etc. – and technique.
* Size and scale of the work.
* Elements or general shapes (especially in relation to architectural forms).
* Formal style – classical, archaic, Etruscan, Hellenistic etc.
* Original location and date.

Analysis

This element determines what the features outlined in your description suggest, and considers why the artist used such features to convey specific ideas. The various elements that \*may\* constitute your analysis are:

* Determination of subject matter through naming iconographic elements – e.g. is it a historical event, allegory, mythology, etc.
* Selection of the most distinctive features or characteristics of the work.
* Discussion of how individual elements or structural systems contribute to appearance of the work or its function.
* Treatment of space and landscape, both real and illusionary (including use of perspective).
* Portrayal of movement and how it is achieved.
* Perceptions of balance, proportion, and scale i.e. relationships of each part of the composition to the whole and to each other part.
* Your emotional response to the work.

Interpretation

This element establishing the broader context for the work and answers the question “why did the artist create it and what does it mean?” The various elements that \*may\* constitute your interpretation include:

* Main idea and overall meaning of the work.
* Interpretive statement – can I express what I think the work is about in one sentence?
* Evidence – what evidence inside or outside the work supports my interpretation?

Judgement

This element gives the work a ranking in relation to other works and considers its originality i.e. is it a “good” piece of art/architecture? Questions you may wish to ask yourself as part of the judgement:

* Criteria – what criteria do I think are most appropriate for judging the work?
* Evidence – what evidence inside or outside the work relates to each criterion?
* Judgement – based on the criteria and evidence, what is my judgment about the quality of the artwork?

**Please note: this is not an exhaustive list of criteria for analysing your chosen piece – there may be things you wish to discuss not covered here and/or some questions will not be relevant to your chosen piece. However, you can use these four areas as a template guide to start thinking about your chosen piece for the critical analysis.**