

Engaging with Art

The following questions should help you analyse any work of art you care to look at. Make notes based on these questions in your sketchbooks.

Always remember to **record the title, artist and year of the work** you

CONTENT

What is the subject matter of the work, what is it about?

Is the subject matter incidental or is it a vehicle for the social, religious, moral, or political, concerns of the artist or client? Was the subject matter observed directly, remembered or imagined?

Has it been treated representationally or is there deliberate exaggeration, distortion or abstraction, If so, why?

Is the subject matter surface deep or are there hidden, or not immediately apparent, meanings alluded to through the use of, for example symbol, analogy, metaphor?

FORM

How has the work been arranged? You will need to talk about composition here.

Is this in keeping with the content? Does it contradict or affirm the work's 'message'? What kind of colour scheme has been used? Is it, for example, a harmonious one or one built up of contrasts? Does one colour predominate or do two or more have equal significance? Is there one main overall shape or is it composed through interrelating sequences of shapes? Are there recurring shapes, lines, rhythms, forms, which determine the design of the work? Does the work have a variety or unity of texture? Does the work hold together as an overall entity, or is it pleasing in parts and yet unsatisfactory as a whole?

PROCESS

How was the work made and what was it made with? What materials, tools, processes and techniques did the artist use? How and where might the artist have commenced the work?

Through what stages did the work proceed from commencement to completion? Might the artist have made supporting studies sketches, photographs, maquettes, collages and stencils, for example? Was the work executed rapidly or did it evolve slowly over a long period? What skills must the artist have required to produce such a

MOOD

Does the work affect you, the viewer, in any way? Does it capture a mood feeling or emotion which you have already experienced? Does it convey feelings about life and nature? Can you imagine what the artist's feelings were while producing the work? Is the work quiet/noisy, soothing/disturbing, happy/sad, relaxed/jarring etc., in the mood which it conveys and the feeling it arouses?

Is your mood simply the one of the moment or has the work in question directly affected you?

