

A WORKSHEET COMPANION TO PAINTING, DRAWING, AND PRINTMAKING

Artist: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____ Dimensions: _____

Location: _____

Medium: oil acrylic tempera fresco watercolor
 mixed media electronic media
 pencil charcoal pastel ink other: _____
 woodcut engraving etching lithograph
 silkscreen other: _____

Support: canvas wood paper wall other: _____

What is the **subject matter** of the work?

religious mythological portrait still life
 landscape history daily life (genre)
 nonrepresentational

- Consider the work's title.
- Does the title help you interpret what you see?
- Can you imagine different treatments of the same subject matter that would change the way you read the work?
- If the work is nonrepresentational, what feelings does it evoke?



Consider the **formal elements** of the work and how they relate to its subject matter.

- How is line employed in the work?
- Does it seem to regulate or order the composition?
- Does it seem to fragment the work?
- Is it consistent with traditional laws of perspective or does it violate them?
- What is the relation of shape to space in the work?
- How do light and dark function in the work? Is there a great deal of tonal contrast, or is it held to a minimum?
- What is the predominant color scheme of the work? Are complementary or analogous colors employed?
- What other elements seem important? Is your attention drawn to the work's texture? Does time seem an important factor in your experience of the work?

What **principles of design** are used to organize composition?

- Is there significant use of visual rhythm and repetition of elements?
- Is the composition balanced? Symmetrically? Asymmetrically?
- Do the work's various elements seem proportional, and how does the question of scale affect your perception?
- Does the composition seem unified or not?

Has the artist's choice of **medium** played a role in the presentation of the various elements and their organization or design?

- Are effects achieved that are realizable only in this particular medium?
- If more than one medium is involved, what is their relation?

What is the **meaning** of the work? What is its **content**, as opposed to its subject matter?

- What are the artist's intentions? How do these intentions manifest themselves in the composition? Are there other feelings or attitudes that the composition seems to evoke, and what specific elements or design choices account for those feelings?
- Are there symbolic meanings in the work?
- Does the work seem to have personal meaning to the artist—that is, is it biographical?
- Is the work a political or social commentary?
- Is there some larger philosophical, historical, or social context that informs the work?
- Finally, what does the work mean to you?

