

VISUAL ANALYSIS PAPER

One of the more traditional assignments that students encounter in an Art History class is to go to a museum and/or gallery to observe an object(s) and write a paper that details its stylistic features. The greater Miami area has very fine collections of Contemporary art, including the cluster of galleries in Wynwood, The Margulies Collection, the Rubell Family Collection in Wynwood, as well as The Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami (MOCA NoMi), the Miami Art Museum (MAM), and the Frost Art Museum on the University Park campus of Florida International University (FIU). Any of these venues will serve as an effective means for selecting an object, whether a painting, sculpture, combine, installation, et al.

Select an object, paying close attention to its stylistic features. Describe it, and then compare/contrast it to pieces we have studied in class, whether in the PowerPoint lectures or in the textbook. When selecting objects to compare, be discerning. That is, try to find objects that share more characteristics than not. The aim of this assignment is for students to develop an eye for style and to locate the subtle differences that distinguish one technique or tendency from another.

Organize the paper, which should be five (5) pages in length (excluding imagery), into an introductory paragraph, body, and conclusion. The introduction may include some general information (e.g., historical, economic, cultural) about the object's specific time period, the technique utilized to create the object, etc. More importantly, the introduction should include a thesis statement about the object's overall aesthetic. Then organize the body in a logical, analytic fashion, and conclude the paper with some remarks about the significance of the object -- that is, how it fits into a larger, contemporary art historical framework.

Remember, this is NOT a research paper; however, if you quote a source (e.g., a placard from the museum/gallery or web site), be sure to cite it.