

Aesthetics Project

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.”

Aristotle

Introduction

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy devoted to questions surrounding art and beauty. Can art be created by accident? Can animals create art? Is a rose beautiful if no one ever sees it; in other words, is beauty a property which possesses real existence? And in the case of this project—is a particular art object you enjoy beautiful? Why do you believe it is beautiful and why should others find it beautiful?

Selecting Your Art Object

For this project, you will choose 1 work of art to critique and share with the class. You may choose from any media, but you may NOT choose a work of music. Here are some examples of artistic media:

1. 2-dimensional (e.g. painting, drawing, etc.)
2. sculpture
3. film/television
4. architecture
5. literature/poetry
6. photography

You may choose either a single work or a collection of works within each medium. For example, you may choose “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost or the poetry of Robert Frost.

For the art object you choose, you must evaluate the work by answering three questions according to the criteria detailed in the evaluation rubric: 1) Describe the work in detail 2) What is the context of its creation? 3) Is it beautiful?

Part One: Presentation (10 points)

Each student will present the art object of her choosing on a date of her choosing. During your presentation, you will provide examples (photo or video no longer than 3 minutes) of your art object and you will lead a class discussion of your object. Your presentation should be 10-15 minutes long. If you are absent on the day you present, you must submit a narrated screencast of your presentation.

Part Two: Blog (30 points)

You will create a blog on the website Medium and create a blog post for your art object. Your blog post must include your 3-part evaluation according to the grading rubric below as well as examples of the work (e.g. images, text, etc.). You will submit your blog post to the Padlet linked on your Google Classroom assignment.

Part Three: Comments (5 points)

Finally, you will contribute comments to at least 3 of your classmates’ blog posts on Padlet. Each comment must be at least 4 sentences long and be thought-provoking and engaging.

Evaluation Rubric

For each work you choose, you must evaluate the piece by answering three questions (**250 words each**) on your blog post according to the criteria detailed in the evaluation rubric: **1)** Describe the object **2)** Describe its context and influences **3)** Why do you find it beautiful?

1. Describe the object

Describe the object in great detail, as if you are describing the object to someone who has not experienced the work. Pay close attention to the artistic elements that comprise the object (e.g. line, space, shapes, color, texture, size, etc.) as well as the techniques and materials used to create the object. Definitions of these elements can be found on the resource guide [here](#).

2. What is the context of the object's creation?

Provide any historical, biographical, or social-political information that you consider to be important for the viewer's understanding of the work. This might include information about the artist, his/her life, artistic influences, the time it took to create the work, or any social-political events that the work might be responding to. For example, *Star Wars* was heavily influenced by the politics of the space race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union as well as Joseph Campbell's 1949 book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Michelangelo's *David* was sculpted at a time when Florence was constantly threatened by larger, more powerful Italian city-states and therefore saw itself as a proverbial David fighting Goliath.

3. Why do you find it beautiful?

This is where you can reflect on the art object according to Immanuel Kant's definition of beauty. According to Kant, a judgement of beauty requires that the object stimulate your senses, emotions, and intellect. What does the object make you contemplate? What does the object make you think about? What does the object make you feel? And why do those reactions give you pleasure?

Submission Guidelines:

1. Blog Post:

- a. You will create a free account on the blog website Medium. Your blog post will include your three-part evaluation detailed above.
- b. You will share a link to your Medium blog by copying the URL at the top of your blog post and pasting it to the Padlet link provided on Google Classroom.
- c. Your post must be shared on Padlet by **Monday, May 7 at 7:55am**.
- d. You must also submit the text of your blog post to Turnitin by **Monday May 7 at 7:55am**.

2. Presentation:

- a. You must submit any slideshows, materials, or links to me by email prior to the class period you are scheduled to present.
- b. If you are **ABSENT** on the day of your presentation, you must submit a screencasted video of your presentation to me by Monday, May 14 at 7:55am. You may use either Quicktime or [Screencast-O-Matic](#).

3. Comments:

- a. You must submit 4+ sentence long comments on 3 of your classmate's blog by **Monday, May 14 at 7:55am**.