“Waltz” (1891)
Anders Zorn
Oil on Canvas
Q: What is an ANALYSIS?

- An analysis takes something complex, and breaks it down
  - by identifying its component parts, and
  - by identifying relationships between the parts

Q: What types of components does a piece of art have?

Q: What sort of relationships can hold between these parts?
Q: What is an **ART** object?

- **Stokstad & Cothren 2010:**
  A work of art is a material object that has both
  1. form, and
  2. content

- So, to analyze an art object, you should
  (i) identify components of its FORM and CONTENT, and
  (ii) identify relationships between those elements
Q: What is an FORM? / What is CONTENT?

- **Stokstad & Cothren 2010:** FORM is the purely visual aspects of the object, eg.,
  1. lines, shapes
  2. colour, texture
  3. space, mass, volume
  4. composition

- So, to analyze an art object’s FORM, you should ask
  1. **What do the lines and shapes look like?**
    - Are the lines straight? curved? parallel? perpendicular? visible or implied?
      Long? Short?
    - Are the shapes open? Closed? Sharp? Rounded?
Q: What is an **FORM**? /What is **CONTENT**?

- **Stokstad & Cothren 2010:** **FORM** is the purely visual aspects of the object, eg.,
  1. lines, shapes
  2. colour, texture
  3. space, mass, volume
  4. composition

- So, to analyze an art object’s **FORM**, you should ask
  2. **What are the colour attributes?**
  - Which hues are present? R, O, Y, G, B, P?
  - What values are present? Low-values? mid-values? high-values
  - How chromatic/saturated are the colours? High-chroma? Mid-chroma? low-chroma?
Q: What is an FORM? /What is CONTENT?

Stokstad & Cothren 2010:
FORM is the purely visual aspects of the object, eg.,
1 lines, shapes
2 colour, texture
3 space, mass, volume
4 composition

So, to analyze an art object’s FORM, you should ask
3. What textures are present?
   - Do the elements look smooth? polished? rough? sharp? bumpy?
4. Is there (the illusion of) space? mass? volume?
   - What type of perspective is used?
   - How close together are the shapes/lines/how much space is there?
Q: What is an **FORM**? /What is **CONTENT**?

- **Stokstad & Cothren 2010:**
  - **FORM** is the purely visual aspects of the object, eg.,
    1. lines, shapes
    2. colour, texture
    3. space, mass, volume
    4. composition

- So, to analyze an art object’s **FORM**, you should ask
  5. **How are these elements (shapes/colours/space)**
     arranged in a composition?
    - Is the composition balanced? symmetrical?
    - Is there repetition of elements?
    - What is in the foreground? middle ground? background?
Practice Assessing the FORMAL Aspects of Art Objects

“Muddy Alligators” (1917)
John Singer Sargent
Watercolour and graphite

- lines, shapes
- colour, texture
- space, mass, volume
- composition
Practice Assessing the FORMAL Aspects of Art Objects

- **lines, shapes**
  - Straight or curved, visible or implied lines?
  - Open or closed shapes?
  - Angled or rounded?

- colour, texture
- space, mass, volume
- composition

“Muddy Alligators” (1917)
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Watercolour and graphite
Practice Assessing the FORMAL Aspects of Art Objects

“Muddy Alligators” (1917)
John Singer Sargent
Watercolour and graphite

- lines, shapes
- **colour**, texture
  - Values?
    High, mid, low?
  - Chroma?
    High, mid, low?
- space, mass, volume
- composition

Dr. Meagan Louie
Practice Assessing the FORMAL Aspects of Art Objects

- lines, shapes
- colour, **texture** (and interaction with light)
  - smooth?
  - rough? oily?
  - bubbly?
  - sharp?
- shiny? dull?
  - matte?
  - glossy?
  - glowing?
- space, mass, volume
- composition

“Muddy Alligators” (1917)  
*John Singer Sargent*  
*Watercolour and graphite*
Practice Assessing the FORMAL Aspects of Art Objects

“Muddy Alligators” (1917)
John Singer Sargent
Watercolour and graphite

- lines, shapes
- colour, texture
- **space, mass, volume**
  - Perspective?
  - Shape/size of space?
  - Solid, hollow? large, small?
- composition
Practice Assessing the FORMAL Aspects of Art Objects

“Muddy Alligators” (1917)
John Singer Sargent
Watercolour and graphite

- lines, shapes
- colour, texture
- space, mass, volume
- composition
  - symmetrical?
  - repetition of elements?
  - Foreground?
    Middle
    ground?
  - Background?
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Q: What is an ART object?

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  A work of art is a material object that has both
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Q: What is an **FORM**? /What is **CONTENT**?

- **Stokstad & Cothren 2010:**
  **CONTENT** is the meaning associated with the object
  - i.e., what it, and its components, depict

- **Irwin Panofsky** identified three steps for deriving meaning:

  1. **Identifying Natural subject matter**
     - Does it depict humans? animals? situations?
     - Things we recognize from our life experience?

  2. **Identifying Iconography**
     - Are the forms and figures **symbolic** of something else?
     - Were/are these subjects associated with conventional meanings?
Q: What is an FORM? / What is CONTENT?

- Stokstad & Cothren 2010: CONTENT is the meaning associated with the object - i.e., what it, and its components, depict

- Irwin Panofsky identified three steps for deriving meaning:

  3 ICONOLOGY

  How can the art object be understood as an “embodiment of its cultural situation”? i.e., what relationships does it have to its social, political, religious, intellectual context?
Q: What is CONTENT?

Panofsky took a Contextualist approach to art, the context of creation is crucial component for understanding the content of the art object.
To analyze an art object, you should

(i) identify components of its FORM and CONTENT, and

(ii) identify relationships between those elements, and elements of the context

Elements of context:
- The artist’s
  - external situation - eg., place, time
  - inner reality - eg., desires, emotions, moods, beliefs
- Events, situations, objects, people, ideas, beliefs, value-systems
  - Contemporary to the piece of art
  - Historical/prior to the piece of art
Q: What sort of relationships could you identify?

- Let $R(x,y)$ indicate a relationship between $x$ and $y$.

$R$ could be

- parallel($x,y$) or mirror($x,y$) or analogous-to($x,y$)
- opposite-of($x,y$) or contrast($x,y$), or clash($x,y$)
- part-of($x,y$) or example-of($x,y$),
- depict($x,y$) or represent($x,y$),
- symbolize($x,y$) or refer-to($x,y$)
- highlight($x,y$), or conceal($x,y$), idealize($x,y$), deprecate($x,y$)
- dependent-on($x,y$), or sufficient-for($x,y$)
- ...

- Don’t just say “is related to” - explain HOW it is related.
Steps for an ART ANALYSIS

1. Identify relevant ** Formal ** aspects
2. Identify ** natural subject matter **
3. Identify ** symbolic elements **
4. Identify relevant elements of the ** Context **
5. Identify ** relationships** between these components

- An analysis is necessary for a good argument
- You need to clearly identify components and relationships

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1 Context-of-creation (and/or the perciever’s context)
Steps to an ARGUMENT for an ART ANALYSIS

1. Identify relevant **Formal** aspects
2. Identify **natural subject matter**
3. Identify **symbolic elements**
4. Identify relevant elements of the **Context**
5. Identify **relationships** between these components

6. **Organize these to reason for, and support, your MAIN CLAIM**

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2 Context-of-creation (and/or the perciever’s context)
Components of an ARGUMENT

Recall: The components of an argument

- **Assertion**: Assertion/conclusion
- **Reasoning**: Premises and deduction
  → establish the **validity** of your argument
- **Evidence**: Justification of premises
  → establish the **soundness** of your argument
How to ARGUE for your answer

Two Basic Types of Questions:

1 **Consider this piece of art**;  
is it’s artistic value compatible with a ______ approach to art?  
is a judgement of it compatible with Kant’s ______‘s criterion?

2 **Consider this analysis of art**;  
is the analysis compatible with a ______ approach to art?  
does the analysis require a ______ approach to art?  
does the assessment of value satisfy Kant’s ______ criterion?
How to ARGUE for your answer

**Reasoning:**

1. Your reasoning should **identify a relationship** between
   1. the **conceptual definition** of the ________, and
   2. the **form** and **content** of the piece of art

2. Your reasoning should **identify a relationship** between
   1. the **conceptual definition** of the ________, and
   2. the **discussion of form and content** in the analysis

→ Providing the definition of the concept in your premises is a good way to show your recall, if nothing else
How to ARGUE for your answer

Evidence:

1. Your evidence should refer to specific components of the form and content of the piece of art.

2. Your evidence should refer to specific components of the discussion of form and content in the analysis.
What aspects of this piece of art are representational? What aspects are expressive?

Emanuelle Moureaux’s installation “Forest of Numbers,” consists of more than 60 000 rainbow-coloured numbers suspended from the ceiling.
What aspects of this piece of art are representational? What aspects are expressive?

The numbers are arranged by hue in 10 layers, each layer representing a year within the decade from 2017-2026 – eg., the layer for 2017 consists of the digits 2, 0, 1 and 7 in a random arrangement, and the layer for 2026 consists of the digits 2, 0, 2, and 6 in a random arrangement.
What aspects of this piece of art are representational? What aspects are expressive?

A section of these suspended numbers was removed, creating a path for the perceiver to walk through, as if they were time-travelling from 2017 to 2026.
How to ARGUE for your answer

Two Basic Types of Questions:

1. Consider this **piece of art**;
   is it’s artistic value compatible with a ______ approach to art?
   is a judgement of it compatible with Kant’s ______‘s criterion?

2. Consider this **analysis of art**;
   is the analysis compatible with a ______ approach to art?
   does the analysis use/require a ______ approach to art?
   does the assessment of value satisfy Kant’s ______ criterion?

→ https://www.instagram.com/swu_lci_afl/
How can a CONSTRUCTIVIST analysis add artistic value to these paintings?

The first image provided is “Medusas Raft” by Joran Roukes (2015, oil on linen). The second is “The Raft of the Medusa” by Théodore Géricault (1818/1819, oil on canvas).
How can a CONSTRUCTIVIST analysis add artistic value to these paintings?

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