

FAH101

Tutorial 2

Formal analysis



Agenda

- Warm Up: Reading Artworks Up Close
- Introduction: Formal Elements
- Activity: Analyzing a Formal Analysis

Warm Up: Reading Pictures Up Close

- How do you “read” an art object?
- How do you engage with art objects?
- What questions come to mind when you interacting with art?



Warm Up: Reading Artworks



Let's practice asking questions about art:

Who...? What...?

When...? Where...?

Why...? How...?



Zhang Zeduan (attributed), *Along the River during Qingming Festival*, 11th–12th century.
Handscroll, ink and colour on silk, 24.8 x 528.7 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

Skills: Looking at how we look at art

Seeing

Describing

Observing

Analyzing

Examining

Interpreting



Skills: Describing, Analyzing, and Interpreting

Description is a way to identify and organize thoughts about what you have seen and noticed. It may help to think of it as a process of taking inventory of what you recognize in the work (what figures, objects, setting, etc).

Analysis takes the details you identified in your descriptions and applies reason to understand what role they play in the work. Analysis is an opportunity to consider how these parts work together create a cohesive work of art with its own meaning, style, etc.

Interpretation combines our descriptions and analysis with our previous knowledge (e.g. information we have about the artist and the work), which allows us to draw conclusions about the image or leads us to research new facts about it.

Formal elements of art and design



COLOR



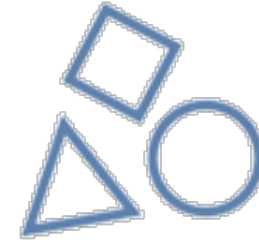
LINE



TEXTURE



SPACE



FORM



SHAPE

Visual/formal elements are like the building blocks of an image - the basic aesthetic ingredients that make up an artwork.

These are more objective qualities, specific things you can point to in a work.

Formal principles



BALANCE



EMPHASIS



HARMONY



MOVEMENT



PROPORTION



RHYTHM



VARIETY



UNITY

Visual/formal principles are the *effects* that are produced by formal elements. These are observable qualities that we perceive in the work, though they aren't as objective as formal elements.

Analyzing a formal analysis

A formal analysis studies the relationships among the work's visual elements and effects. It carefully describes the work by way of your observations.

From there, a formal analysis makes a claim about the work, says something about how the work is visually constructed and what kind of visual experience it creates (this claim is your *thesis*).



Activity: Analyzing a formal analysis

In small groups (roughly 2-3 people), read over this example of a formal analysis by a past student.

Take down notes about what about this essay works and what you might do differently.

- What was effective about the example?
- What was the essay's thesis?
- What elements of the example can be clarified, elaborated, included, or removed? What did you learn from this example?

Post your response on Quercus (go to discussion, open the thread for your tutorial section, and reply to the Week 2 post).



Tile panel with mihrab-shaped arch (assembled from various panels), 17th century AD