
Art Criticism & Aesthetic Judgment

Arttalk Chapter 2 Summary

- ❖ Have you ever seen - or skipped - a movie based on a friend's recommendation?
- ❖ We all make judgments about music, movies, television shows, clothes, etc.
- ❖ We share with others what we like and what we don't like.
- ❖ Making such *aesthetic judgments* about art is called *art criticism*.

In this chapter review, you will:

- ❖ Learn the purpose of art criticism.
- ❖ Analyze artworks using the steps of art criticism to form precise conclusions.
- ❖ Explain the 3 aesthetic theories of art.

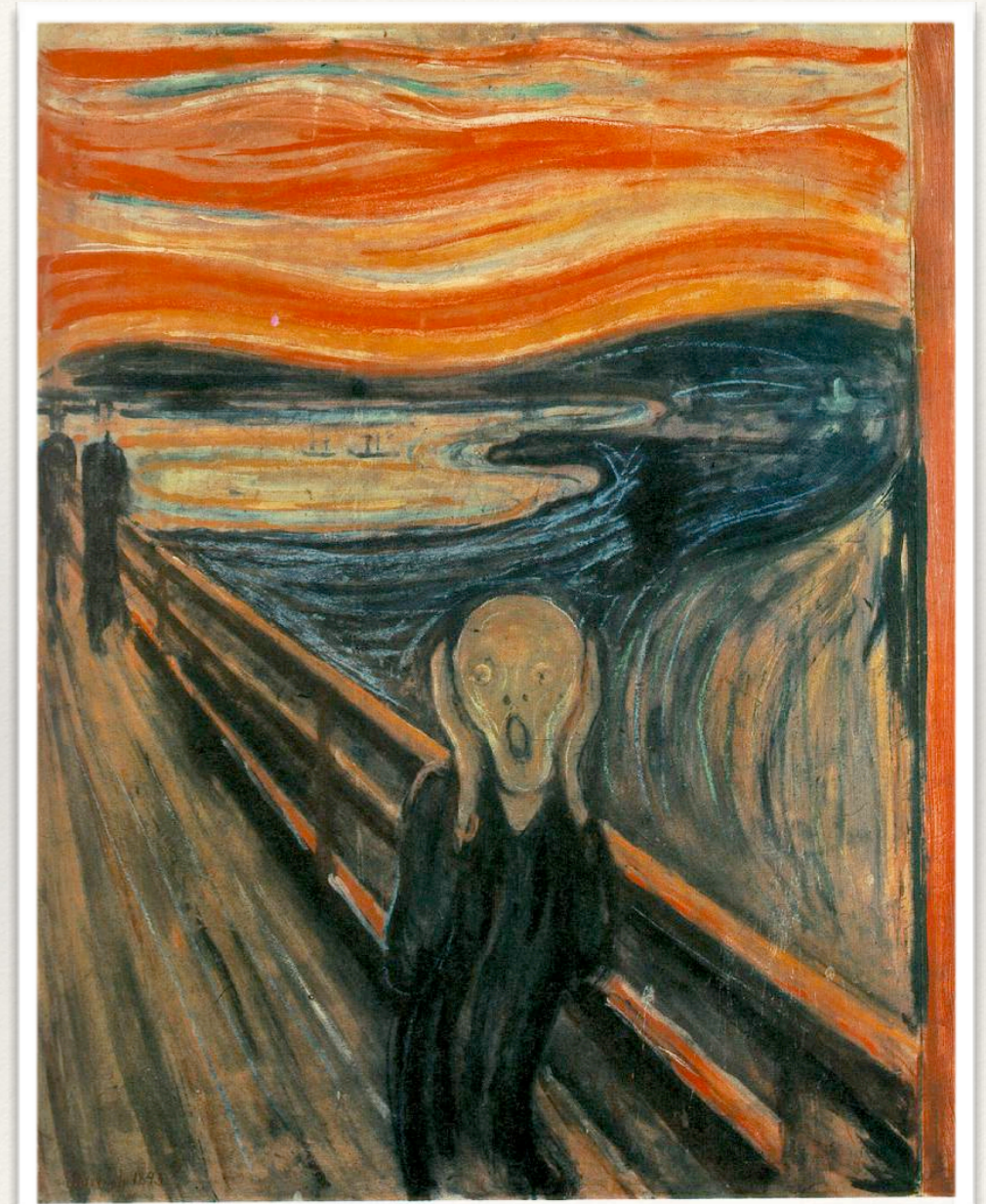
Learning from a work of Art

- ❖ **Art Criticism** - is an organized approach for studying a work of art made up a four areas.
 - ❖ *Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment*

Description

What do I see in this artwork?

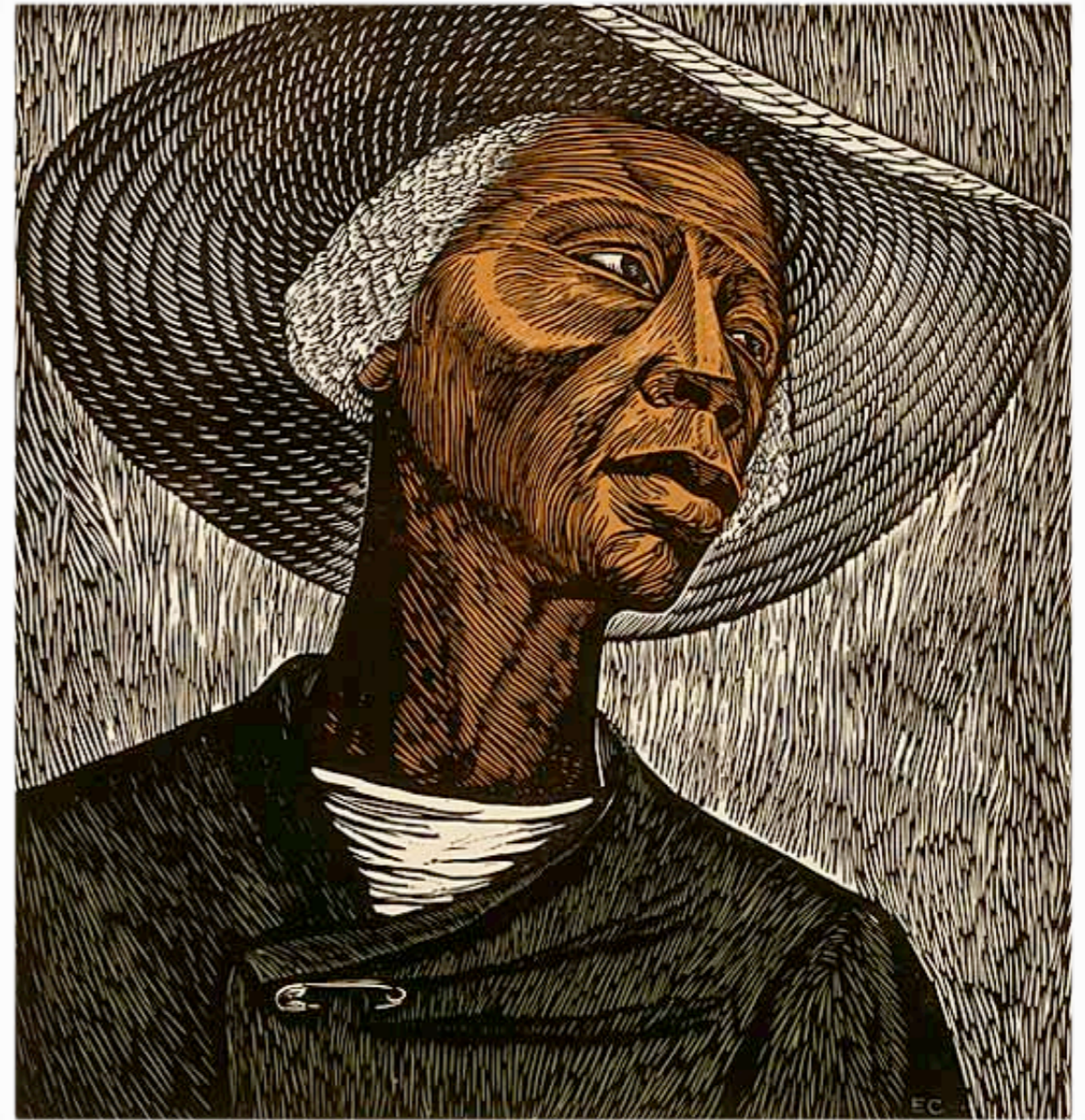
- ❖ Notice the subject, objects, and details.
- ❖ What can be seen in the work. *(people, bridge, river, etc.)*
- ❖ Size, medium & process used
(20 x 36 Oil on canvas. - found in the credit line.)



Analysis

*How is this work organized?
What art elements & principles
are used?*

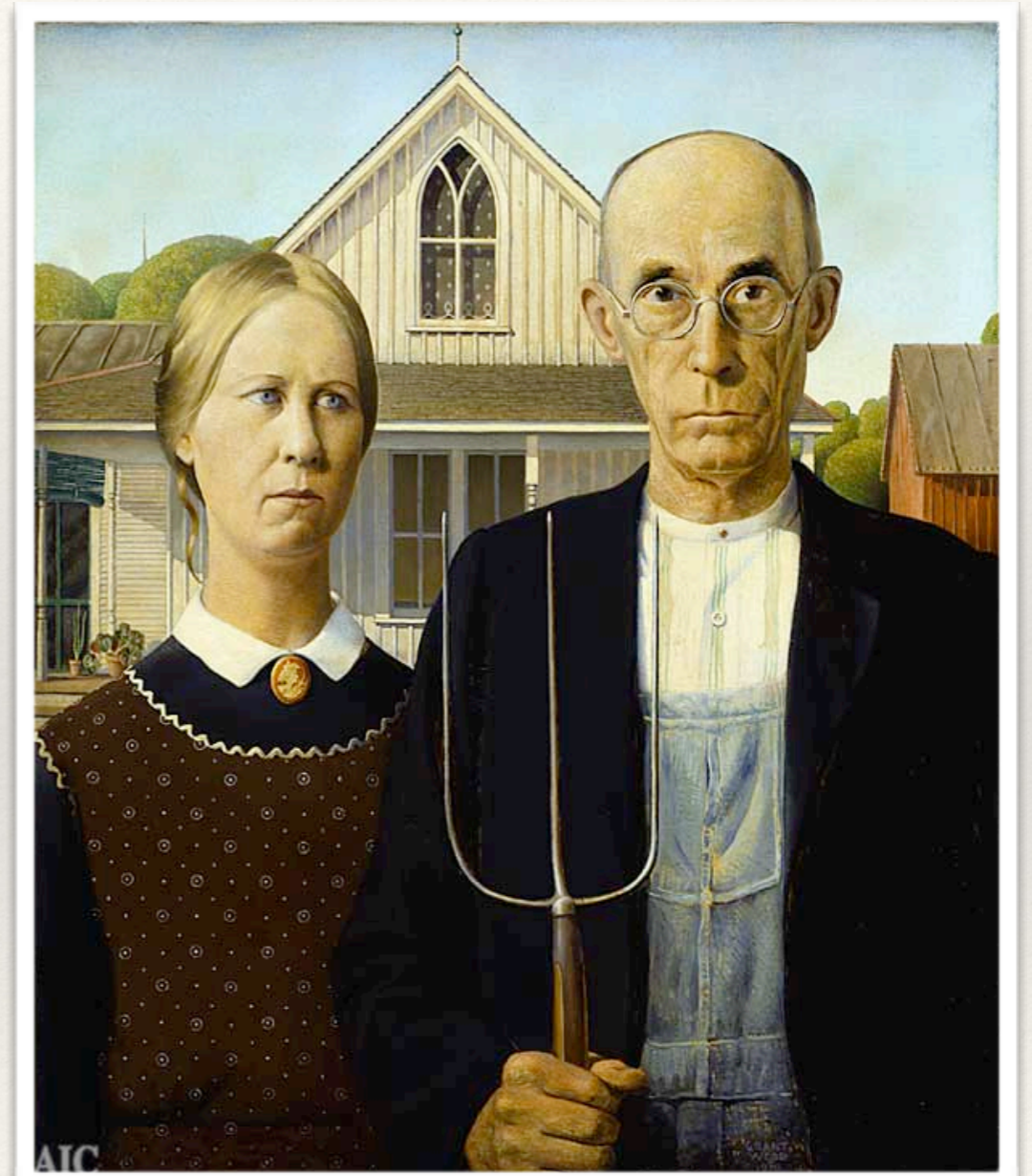
- ❖ What colors are used? Where are the darkest colors? Where are the lightest colors?
- ❖ What type of lines are used?
- ❖ Does it have any type of texture?



Interpretation

What is the artist trying to communicate?

- ❖ Make guesses about the work, supported by what you **see**.
- ❖ Use your imagination, and intelligence to make an interpretation.
- ❖ What is the meaning of the two people?



Judgment

Is this a successful work of art?

- ❖ This is the time to make your own decision.
- ❖ The **first level** is personal. Do you like the work? Yes, no?
- ❖ The **second level**, you use aesthetics to decide.
- ❖ A work may be very successful aesthetically, but you may still not like it personally.
- ❖ Ask yourself, is this a work of artistic merit? Is it successful?



Thinking about a work of art

- ❖ **Aesthetics**: is a branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and value of art.
- ❖ Today artwork is judged by a set of *criteria* and a good work of art is called successful.
- ❖ Some works of art may not look pretty, but they may be well-organized, and / or give an emotional responses to viewers that make them successful.

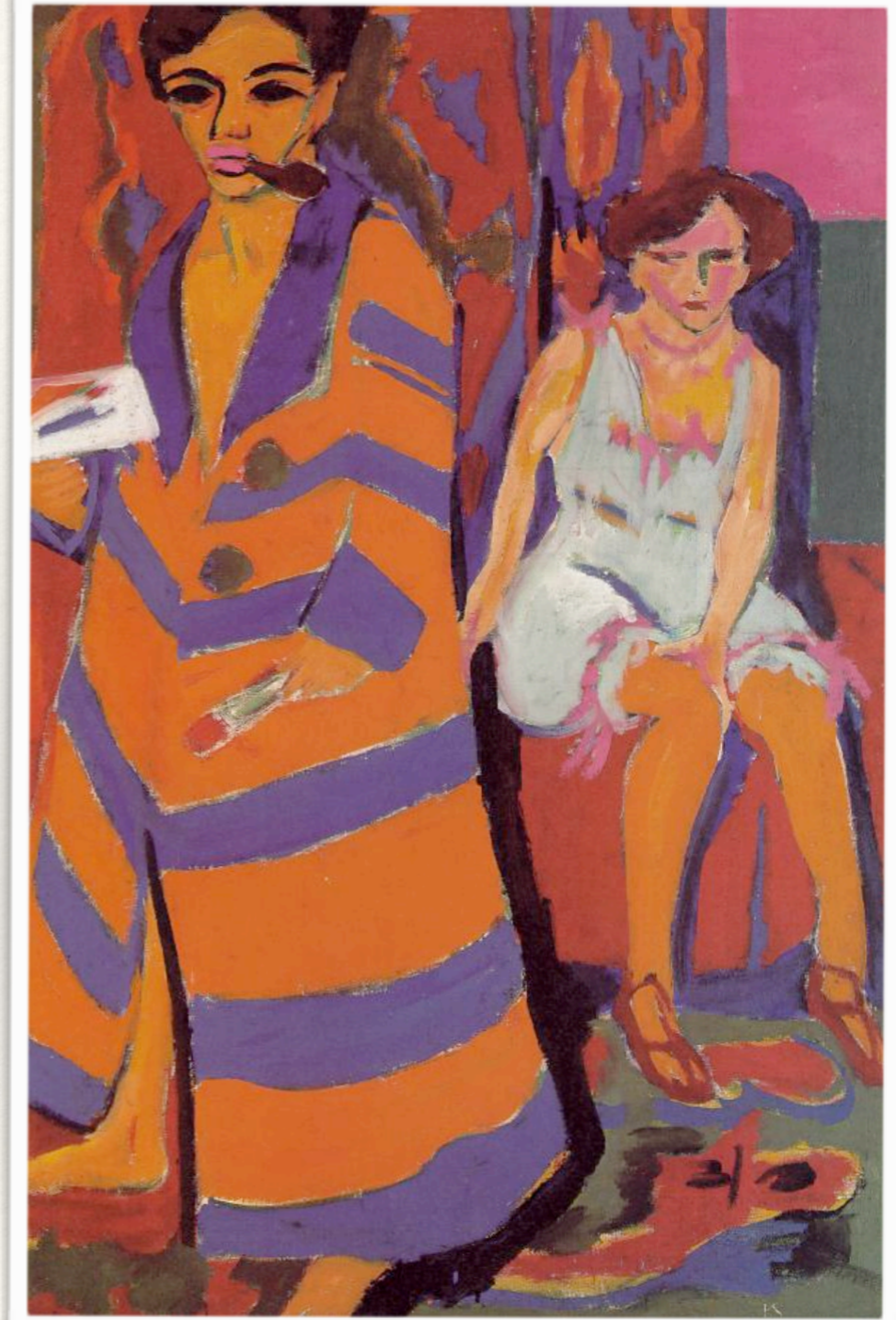
3 Qualities of Art

- ❖ When deciding on how successful a work of art is you will look at the *literal qualities*, the *formal qualities*, and the *expressive qualities* of works of art.
- ❖ These are directly related to the properties of art: *subject*, *composition* and *content* which you read about in the Arttalk book - Chapter 1.

3 Aesthetic Theories

The theories that rate these 3 different art qualities most highly are called:

- **Imitationalism and Literal Qualities**
- **Formalism and Formal Qualities**
- **Emotionalism and Expressive Qualities**



Imitationalism & Literal Qualities

Focuses on **realistic** representation in the artwork. It looks true to life.



Mary Cassatt
The Child's Bath, 1893
Oil on canvas

Formalism & Formal Qualities

Places emphasis on the **design qualities** of how the art elements & principles have been arranged in the artwork.



Georgia O'Keeffe
Black Iris
Oil on canvas

Emotionalism & Expressive Qualities

Requires that a work must arouse a response of **feelings, moods** or **emotions** from the viewer.



Pablo Picasso

The Tragedy, 1903

Oil on canvas