

# Critique Cheat Sheet

## Questions to Challenge your thinking:

- **Description** (Take an inventory of what you see)
  - Name Objects
  - Describe elements of art
  - Identify Principles of design
  - Identify Techniques used
  - Identify Genre (portrait, landscape, container, etc)
- **Formal Analysis** (discovering Relationships)
  - Find examples of unity through repetition of elements or ideas
  - Look for variety though contrast of shapes, lines, etc.
  - Look for a focal point (aka center of interest)
  - Look for balance and rhythms
- **Interpretation** (figure out the meaning)
  - Using evidence from previous 2 sections to figure out a visual message or meaning the art is representing.
  - What do you think the artist is saying? What are your reasons?
- **Evaluation** (forming an assessment and an opinion)
  - Do you think the artist effectively met their goals? Explain...
  - Do you think this represents high quality work? (*objective appreciation*)
  - What other works of art or experiences does it remind you of? Explain
  - Do you like this work of art? (*personal aesthetics*)

## Tips on how to be specific:

- **Avoid using the word "it"**. Say what "it" is instead!
  - **Good:** The line quality in your main figure looks awesome! I like how the curvy lines of the hair lead you to other things in your composition.
  - **Bad:** The line quality in your main figure looks awesome! I like how it looks.
    - What about the line quality?
    - Why do you like it?
- **State the element of art and follow up with a more specific description** of what it looks like and where it is in relation to other things in the piece.
  - **Good:** The lines in this piece all seem to work together to unify the pond, trees, and the boat in your composition. The style of the hatching lines is repeated throughout your pieces and add some distinct values to the tree in the foreground and add some nice contrast to what looks like your focal point, the boat.
  - **Bad:** I like how you use line and value to bring out your focal point.
    - What kinds of line? Where?
    - How did they use line?

## What to do when something looks "Perfect"

**1st: STOP Comparing your work to theirs!** It's easy to get wrapped up in "it looks better than what I could do". This isn't about you, it's about them!

**2nd: There is no such thing as "perfect"** in anything in life. The real question you should be asking: "how effective was this artist at meeting their goals"?

**Use the key's to success to help you look for ...**

- skills they could tweak or push further
- craftsmanship they could tighten up
- maybe they need to step up their effort- it's ok to call them out on it if you know they're not using class time as much as they could be (just be considerate with your phrasing).
- are their ideas *really* unique? What could they do to push their ideas more? Are they thinking inside/outside the box too much?
- If you really think it's a very strong piece of art: try **challenging the way they are thinking or are approaching their visual message**. Use the brainstorming trick "What if" ... what if they added... What if they changed... What if they simplified...

## What to do when something is unfinished

- Try to critique as best you can with what they do have done. Does it look like they left things intentionally unpolished or just straight up incomplete?
- Do they have enough done you can tell what they were trying to do with their final project?
- If you think it really looks unfinished tell them! and explain why using specific evidence in their work.
- Give them suggestions on how you would have addressed challenges you think they may have encountered in their process. Put yourself in their shoes- how would you have addressed the problems that came up?
  - Time- what could they have changed to make more efficient use of time?
  - Does it look like they liked their idea or what could they have done to be more inspired by their content?
  - Ideas too complex for the time given or current personal skill level
    - What could they do to simplify their design?
    - What skills could they practice more?
  - How have you dealt with "Blank Canvas Syndrome", Writer's Block, Artist's Block, etc?
  - What do you do when you get behind on a project?