

Art Appreciation
Fall 2012
M. Frank

Paper Guidelines

For this paper I would like you to visit the university art gallery in the McGauvran Student Center and study the images in the show, “Terrible Beauty” by artist Jennifer Nuss. The show runs from Nov. 5-30. **Your paper is due Nov. 12.**

Hours for the gallery are: **Mon – Thurs 10 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Fri 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

For your paper, pick the painting that interested you most and write a three-page, typed, proofread paper. In your paper, draw on what we have learned in class: terms, styles, even comparisons with works of art.

Do a formal analysis of the painting and then use that knowledge to discuss an interpretation of the painting.

Here are some ways to go about this:

Formal Analysis

When you write your formal analysis, you are writing about the formal components of the piece: the use of line, light, color, shape, and the rhythm, balance, and harmony of the composition. **Historical information is NOT the aim here.** Therefore, do not waste time surfing the internet for biographical information on Nuss or other people’s critiques—I am interested in knowing what you see and learn from the painting. If you do use outside sources be sure to cite them in your paper. **AVOID PLAGIARISM:** If you plagiarize you will fail the course.

For paintings or photographs consider the following:

How is the illusion of space created? Or is it denied? Consider aerial and linear perspective, overlapping, foreshortening, diminution in scale, etc.

How do lines organize the composition? Are lines important as silhouettes, as edges, as modeling lines? Do the lines create a sense of motion or rhythm in the composition?

How does the artist use color? Does he use it at all? Does he use bold color blocks or gradual transitions? How does this affect the sense of depth in the painting?

How does the artist use brushwork? Is it visible? Does it produce tight forms and contours, or free irregular shapes? How is it related to light, color or rhythm? What kind of surface texture does the brushwork create: smoothly finished, matte, glossy, patchy open?

How does the artist use light in the painting? Can a light source be localized? In what direction does light fall into the picture? What is its intensity and character: evenly

distributed, flickering, or no illumination. How does the use of light affect the illusion of space? What does it do to the forms in the picture?

Is there a sense of movement or of stasis?

The formal analysis should be followed by:

Interpretation

Does the artist create a particular effect or mood by the way he/she interrelates subject and form? By this treatment, does the artist put a special interpretation on the figure, place, or event? Why is the show called “Terrible Beauty”? Isn’t beauty something that is not terrible? Or consider other questions. Does the work of art reinforce social concerns? Artistic objectives have changed through time. Try to discover in the object what ideals might have guided the artist (or the patron). What is Nuss trying to get us to think about?