**Module 3: Artistic Elements**

**Discussion Question #6: Objective Description and Subjective Analysis:** Using any of the **External Links**, find two works of art: the first one two-dimensional, the second three-dimensional. For each one, write four sentences describing the elements present in the work using the **Formalist Method**. This method describes what you see in a totally objective way. **Do not refer to any subject matter.** Remember, be objective in your descriptions. An example might be: “The work uses a majority of organic shapes”, or “It uses the complimentary colors yellow and violet for contrast”.

Then, for each work, write one sentence that describes your subjective reaction. An example might be “The artwork has a chaotic feeling to it”, or “Looking at the work made me feel lonely”.

**Worksheet #3: The Formalist Method:** Understanding the formalist method helps us to look at art in a new way. It’s important to understand the **Formalist method** of looking at artwork because it will allow us to understand **STYLE**, the aesthetic values or physical techniques used in making art, and **FORM**, the way a work of art looks. Use an objective description of what you see; remember, there is no subjective reaction to the artwork involved. Describe what you see using only the artistic elements – in the next unit we’ll use the artistic principles too. We use this method to look at art that we may know nothing about to form an appreciation of it before we understand the symbols and meaning behind the work.

**Please note:** Only cover the artistic elements: line, shape, volume, space, value, color and texture. We will look at artistic principles in the next unit.

Using the list of questions about the elements of art to guide you, **please write a Formalist description of ONE of the works of art** from the **Worksheet 3 Image File**. Write a short sentence for each of the elements. If you do not see that element, say "none present". You could use a 1-5 scale of the importance of that element or to the work. **Do not** refer to the subject matter, your perceived meaning of the work, the artist or anything that is NOT VISIBLE IN THE IMAGE ITSELF. **Note:** You don’t have to answer all the questions on the ‘Analysis Note Cards’. Use them as a guide.

**Refer to the NUMBER of the image;** you do not need to include the image in your description.

**Assignment #2: Translating an image.** Find a realistic image using the **External Links** at the bottom of the page (or an image of your own creation). Translate this image into an abstract composition of lines and shapes by reducing it down in two steps.

Saylor URL: [http://www.saylor.org/courses/arth101b](http://www.saylor.org/courses/arth101b)
External Links

ART 21
The BEST series on artist's I have ever seen. Includes interviews with major contemporary artists, studio visits and explanations of their work.

Google Images: A comprehensive search engine for images.

Artcyclopedia
Good general art site, mostly image links to museums.

Mark Hardin's Artchive
Great link with alphabetical listing of artists, mostly contemporary and historical European.

Art History Links
An amazing collection of links specific to sites related to the practice of art history, many are written, not visual, information.

Cities and Buildings Collection
Over 5000 architectural images maintained by the architecture department at the University of Washington.

Web Gallery of Art
Good reference for lots of art history images.

Saatchi Gallery, London
Cutting edge contemporary art, plus a site where any artist can post their work.


Seattle Art Museum


Metropolitan Museum of Art: Extensive collection database from many cultures and time periods.

Islamic art collection, An extensive collection of Islamic art from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston An extensive digital collection with text information.

Currier Museum of Art A smaller museum in Manchester, NH with a fantastic collection, much of it online.

Henry Art Gallery The art repository of the University of Washington. An extensive image database and excellent search system.

National Galleries of Scotland Extensive collection of artwork from many cultures and time periods.

ARTstor: Nearly one million images here. For access to this site, please check with your campus library or public library.

CAMIO: 95,000 images of all kinds. For access to this site, please check with your campus or public library.

Smarthistory: Smarthistory.org is a free and open, not-for-profit, art history textbook. We use multimedia to deliver unscripted conversations between art historians about the history of art.
Tibetan Book of the Dead: Literature and Artwork on Prayer, Ritual, and Meditation from the Religious Traditions of Tibet, India and Nepal. Special Collections Department at the University of Virginia Library.

Islamic Art at LACMA: A good source for Islamic visual art from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Day of the Dead Celebration: History and images from the Mexican “Dia de los Muertos” celebration.

Frank Gehry sketches: Initial sketches of building design ideas by architect Frank Gehry.

African Art: Death and Rebirth: Sculpture images and text describing ritual beliefs from African cultures. Other themes included.

Burke Museum: Artwork database from their ethnology collections. Administered through the University of Washington.

All Together Now: A digital collaborative and interactive music project.

AIDS Quilt Information Website: Interactive tutorial on printmaking processes, with images. Created by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Edvard Munch Museum: Image database for many of Munch’s paintings and prints.

Nuxalk Sun Mask: Image and context for the Mask of the Sun from British Columbia Nuxalk culture.

Bradshaw Foundation: Excellent source for images and information on prehistoric rock art, Cycladic figures, the Pyramids, ancient temples and geometric signs.

The Art Story: Movements, Artists, Theory and the Progression of Art History.

Francis Bacon Estate: A website devoted to the images and explanations of the important and idiosyncratic English painter.

Mayan Temples: An excellent site for historical information about the Temples of Palenque in Mexico.


JSTOR: With more than a thousand academic journals and over 1 million images, letters, and other primary sources, A trusted sources for academic content. NOTE: For full access to this resource check with your campus library.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: Access to the museum’s collection.

Art of Burkina Faso Africa: This site has information and links to images of unique African masks, costumes and decorations from tribes in the Burkina Faso region of Africa.

Galleria Borghese: Rome. Images from the collection, including Giolorenzo Bernini’s sculpture of David.

Gee’s Bend Quilts: this site is maintained by Auburn University and contains extensive information on the quilts and quilt makers from a rural community in Alabama.


Traditional Fine Arts Organization Resource Library: Online publication and categories for American representational art.

Milwaukee Art Museum: O'Keeffe's O'Keeffes: Paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe from her personal collection.
Maya Lin Storm King Wavefield NYT: New York Times article with slideshow of Maya Lin’s earthwork Wave Field.
University of Washington Libraries: Digital collections.
Design Notes: Gestalt: Gestalt theory explained with examples for 2-D design applications.
The Louvre Museum: One of the world’s great museums. Da Vinci’s Mona Lisa resides here.
The Getty Research Institute: Digital database for works of art, photographs and art related research.
Beverly Buchanan Artworks: Oil stick drawings by American Beverly Buchanan.
Campus Center for Appropriate Technology: Resource for sustainable technologies. From Humboldt State University.
Green Architecture and Environmental Design: A good resource from University of Missouri.
The Starn Studio: Website of contemporary American artists Mike and Doug Starn. Photographs and installations.
The Berardo Collection: Extensive collection of modern and contemporary art.
Claremont Colleges Digital Library: Includes prints by Goya and other important works of art.
Brooklyn Museum: Digital database from one of the country’s oldest and largest museums.
Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation: Source for biography and selections from the portfolio of this American photographer’s work.
Sandy Skoglund Studio: The official site with source information, images and installation works categorized by date. An important American photographer and installation artist.
History of Photography: Offers an overview of photography and links to 30 specific photographs from 1827 to 1991.
The Estate of Eva Hesse: The authoritative site for biographical information and extensive number of works of this groundbreaking artist. Works include drawings, paintings and sculpture.
Modern Architecture in the Middle East: “Two Cities, Four Architects” offers four short interviews with contemporary architects working on building projects in Doha and Abu Dhabi in the Middle East. From the New York Times webpage.