

VISUAL ANALYSIS PAPER

One of the more traditional assignments that students encounter in an introductory Art History class is to go to a museum to observe an object(s) and write a paper that details its stylistic features. Since the Lowe Art Museum on the University of Miami campus has a very fine collection of Renaissance to Rococo paintings, select one painting from this time span to concentrate on.

Once having selected the painting from the Lowe's collection, pay close attention to stylistic features (i.e., composition, color, use of light/shadow, perspective, figures, pose, gestures, et al). Describe the object and compare/contrast it to pieces we have studied in class, whether in the PowerPoint lectures or in the textbook. When selecting objects to compare the museum piece to, be discerning. That is, try to find objects that share more characteristics than not. The aim of this assignment is for students to develop an eye for style and to locate the subtle differences that distinguish one technique or tendency from another.

Organize the paper, which should be five to seven (5-7) pages in length, into an introductory paragraph, body, and conclusion. The introduction may include some general information (e.g., historical, economic, cultural) about the object's specific time period, the technique utilized to create the object, etc. More importantly, the introduction should include a thesis statement about the object's overall aesthetic. Then organize the body in a logical, analytic fashion, and conclude the paper with some remarks about the significance of the object -- that is, how it fits into a larger Renaissance to Rococo art historical framework.

Remember, this is NOT a research paper; however, if you quote a source (e.g., a placard or web site from the museum), be sure to cite it.

JH