

Clues to Looking at Art

Modern Art:

Various sources define the term **Modern Art** as artwork from the latter part of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

Modern Art works can be grouped together by:

Artworks that look like something in the real world created during this time period
or

Artworks whose title is needed to suggest what the artist had in mind

Clues:

Lines and colors are 2 important clues an artist uses to create the mood of a painting.

Activities:

Choose one artwork with a subject that you recognize and one that seems to be just shapes and colors. Try to choose paintings that give you very different feelings. Answer the following:

1. **Your Initial response:** Analyze your reaction. Do you like the work of art in front of you? Does it make you think or does it encourage you to look? Does it do both?
2. **Type of work:** What kind of work do you think it is? Is it a painting, a sculpture, a collage, an installation, a three-dimensional design, architecture, or something else?
3. **Aesthetic and pictorial qualities:** Can you see any aesthetic qualities in it? This would include pictorial elements such as line, shape, space, color, and texture.
4. **Subject matter:** Does it have a subject? If so, what kind of subject? Is it a story? Is the subject the main figure or object depicted or is the subject the feelings of the viewer?
5. **The meaning:** How important is the meaning? Is thinking more important than looking in relation to this work? Are both equally important?
6. **The setting:** How important is the setting? How does it affect the work and your reaction to it?
7. **Spectator participation:** Think about your role as the spectator. How active are you meant to be?

After answering these questions, what similar questions come to mind that can be answered by works in this category?