

OLLI Sonoma State Winter 2021

Reading Art: Your GPS for Visual Literacy Heidi Chretien, Charlie Goldberg

Class Description:

How many times have you said, "I love looking at art but I'm not really sure what it means. How do I move past just looking into really seeing?" Reading art is like learning a foreign language only much easier. To practice one need only visit a local museum or gallery. This class will prepare you for those visits by exploring the elements of visual literacy and helping you SEE how the visual elements of line, light, color, space and texture work to create the composition. We will guide you as you learn these basic tools and insights into learning how to make sense of what you are seeing, then putting it all together into your understanding of composition and design. You the viewer will then make your own assessment of the works of art that you will be discovering. Since looking at art is ultimately a subjective experience, we will be encouraging you to respond and reflect your own observations. At the beginning of each class, we will provide you with vocabulary and concepts so that you may more easily apply them to the art works which we are exploring.

Week 1 Line: How is line created; kinds of lines and how do we respond to them; how do they move our eye through a work of art.

Week 2 Light: How is light manipulated in a work of art and how does the play of light and shade help us understand the "mood" of a work of art.

Week 3 Color: This is the most forceful of the visual elements since it effects our eyes physically. How does color do this; how

do different colors and color combinations influence our understanding of a work of art.

Week 4 Space: In this class we will be discussing actual space created by three dimensional works of sculpture and architecture as well as the illusion of space on a two dimensional surface of paintings, photographs and collage.

Week 5 Texture: How do textural effects, either actual or illusional, create the responses of smooth, rough, soft or hard, heat or cold, and speed and motion.

Week 6 Putting it All Together: How do we take what we have learned about the vocabulary of the visual experience and apply it to our understanding of composition and design thereby gaining insight into READING ART.

Partial Bibliography:

These are only a bare minimum of books available on visual language. The internet has more sources that we can ever list here.

The Art Of Seeing. Paul Zelinsky and Mary Pat Fisher

The Visual Dialogue. Nathan Knobler

Varities of Visual Experience. Edmund Burke Feldman

Color in Art. Stefano Zuffi

Color. Victoria Finlay

Ways of Seeing. Thomas Berger