**How to Critique and Write about Art**

The following steps—**description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation**—are the steps in a formal critique. It is called the Feldman method. It is an established critique method that has been used by students and professionals alike for over 50 years.

Please respond to the following sections in paragraph form, using complete sentences. Use the questions provided **as a guide** to provide you with information for your paragraphs.

**Describe.** This stage is like taking inventory. You may want to come up with a list of everything you see in the work. Imagine that you are describing the artwork to someone over the telephone.

* **List** the name of the artist; title of work; and the gallery, in this case, the National Gallery of Art.
* **Note your first impression.** Make a note of your first, spontaneous reaction to the artwork. By the end of the process, you may understand your first impression better or you may even change your mind. There are no wrong answers.

**Analyze**. Try to figure out what the artist has done to achieve certain effects. You should refer to your first impressions and try to explain how the artwork achieves that.

* How are the elements of art (color, shape, line, texture, space, form, value) and the principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, movement/rhythm, unity, variety) used in this artwork?
* What do you notice about the artist’s choice of materials?
* What grabs your attention in the work? Refer to your first impression.
* Do you see any relationship to the things you listed during the description stage?

**Interpret**. Try to figure out what the artwork is about. Your own perspectives, associations, and experiences meet with “the evidence” found in the work of art. All artworks are about something. Some artworks are about color, their subject matter, and social or cultural issues. What is the mythological story behind this art?

* What is the theme or subject of the work? What mood or emotions does

the artwork communicate?

* What is the work about? What do you think it means?
* Why do you think that artist created this work?
* What do you think the artist’s view of the world is?

**Evaluate**. This is the culminating and reflecting activity. You need to come to some conclusions about the artwork based on the information you have gathered and on your interpretations.

* Have your thoughts or feelings about the artwork changed since your first impression? If so, how? What made you change your mind?
* If not, can you now explain your first reaction to the work?
* What have you seen or learned about mythology from this work?