Art Criticism

Why

Critique?
Well.........?

That’s why Critical Thinking matters.....in its broadest sense it can be described as purposeful reflective judgment concerning what to believe or what to do.
I don’t know anything about art, but I know what I like.

And I really don’t need a class to help me with this...
Taste

Taste as an aesthetic, sociological, economic and anthropological concept refers to cultural patterns of choice and preference regarding aesthetic judgments.
What determines aesthetic judgments?
Is it really just a function of our biases?
And why should we even care about things we don’t like?
Well, for one.....because art exists for more than one subgroup or individual....
Art is part of our Public (shared) Experience
ART is reflective of the HUMAN EXPERIENCE...good and bad.

Edvard Munch, “The Scream”
1893, National Gallery, Oslo Norway.
ART is not just for interior design and we are not just “CONSUMERS”!
....and this is why Museums and Galleries are so important.

IT'S GOOD TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE and AWAY FROM THE MARKETERS!!!
AND REMEMBER
What are our VALUES

- Personal Values
- Political Values
- Cultural Values
- Sub-Cultural Values
- Class Values
- National Values
- Religious Values
- Spiritual Values
ART IS POWERFUL

The reason art can please, is also because it can displease.....
ART IS POWERFUL

.... it can alternately challenge or reinforce the value system of any given culture.

It is one of many place where a peoples discovers who they wish to be....
ART and BEAUTY

Art can be beautiful. But what is Beauty? Who gets to decide?
Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable!

It has MANY purposes.
Socialist Realism......pretty as a picture???
NOT SO PRETTY

Soviet Union, Stalin's regime (1924-53): **20 million DEAD.**

“As long as art is the beauty parlor of civilization, neither art nor civilization is secure.”

-John Dewey
ART CHANGES CULTURE
ALL TRUTH PASSES THROUGH THREE STAGES:

FIRST  It is ridiculed.  
SECOND  It is violently opposed.  
THIRD  It is accepted as being self-evident.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860).
Édouard Manet, Olympia, oil on canvas, 1863.
Olympia stirred an enormous uproar when it was first exhibited at the 1865 Paris Salon. Conservatives condemned the work as "immoral" and "vulgar." One journalist later recalled, "If the canvas of the Olympia was not destroyed, it is only because of the precautions that were taken by the administration."

However, the work had proponents as well. Emile Zola quickly proclaimed it Manet's "masterpiece" and added, "When other artists correct nature by painting Venus they lie. Manet asked himself why he should lie. Why not tell the truth?"
“Degenerate Art”
BAD

GOOD
“Quality”

- Is Relative
- Is Subjective
- Is hard to measure
- Is related to personal taste....
• How does society *seem* to measure the quality of art if quality is so SUBJECTIVE?
MONEY
Mark Rothko, "White Center (Yellow, Pink and Lavender on Rose)" (1950)
$72.84 MILLION
ONE MORE TIME

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3 Types of Art Criticism

• Formal Theories
• Socio-cultural Theories
• Expressive Theories
Formal Theories

• Form over Content.
• Style and Innovation are valued.
Socio-cultural Theories

- Political, Cultural, Social Values
- Historical Context is emphasized.
- Art embodies or resists dominant cultural attitudes and themes.
Expressive Theories

• Artist’s Biography is Primary.
• Psychology and Intent are emphasized.
• Humanistic and Individualistic.
The Feldman Method

- Description
- Analysis
- Interpretation
- Evaluation
Description

Visual Elements:
• Line, Implied Line
• Shape
• Mass/Volume
• Illusion of Space
• Time/Motion
• Color Scheme
• Texture
Description

Question to ask:

• What is the subject of the work?
• What media is the work executed in?
• What is the size/scale?
Analysis

Design Principles:
• Unity and Variety
• Balance
• Emphasis/Subordination
• Directional Forces
• Contrast
• Repetition and Rhythm
• Scale and Proportion
Analysis

Some questions to consider:

• How do the visual elements contribute to a mood?
• What is the internal relationship between the objects or subjects depicted?
• How does the form communicate the content?
Interpretation

- Formal
- Socio-cultural
- Expressive
Interpretation

Some questions to consider:

• How does the work relate to the world it was made (historical context)?
• How does the work relate to today’s world?
• What does the piece remind you of, how does it make you feel?
• What is the MEANING of the piece?
As an artist, it is important to recognize a message and seize that moment. Crows are messengers, omens for change. Several personal encounters with crows have compelled me to express my personal creativity through this messenger. This body of work explores the similarities between the social interactions among crows and that of humans. To know the crow is to know ourselves. This is the journey I have taken with this body of work.

The common crow maintains a unique place in our ecosystem thanks to their intelligence and strong family values. They are social, opportunistic, vocal, visual, shrewd, and reliant on memory and individual recognition. Crows are tricksters and the wise guys of the bird world. We all know someone who has these traits. I believe that this is why we relate to them and maybe see ourselves in
Evaluation

Some questions to consider:

• Why does this work have (or not have) “value”?
• What is it that makes the work worth considering among others? What is valuable to you in a work of art?
• Are there things that others may value that you do not?
• Does the piece communicate an idea or feeling well, or do you remain unmoved?
• If it fails or succeeds in your estimation, can you point to specific remarks you noticed earlier in our criticism to emphasize your evaluation?