

Museum Report – Composition Study

(worth 50 points)

Part One - Written Paper:

Write a two-page minimum paper on a two-dimensional work of art from a local museum. Choose a painting or drawing that was completed before 1900. When writing remember to focus on the formal issues of design that we have been studying (elements and principles of design). Why is the composition visually engaging and how do you think the artist is organizing elements in the picture plane? Take a picture of the work that you are researching, print it, and attach it to your paper.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Getty and the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena all have very good collections of work. They allow photography of their permanent collections, but not of special exhibitions. Remember to submit your photo of the work and attach your museum ticket or receipt to the paper. (Do not get the image off of the museum website. You must visit the museum in person).

Part Two - Visual Analysis:

Create two study drawings of the image. (approx. 8" x 10" each, but make sure that your study drawing is proportional to the original image). Ex. If the original art work is 2' x 2', then your study drawing should be 8" x 8" – 10" x 10".

1st Study Drawing: Materials – Graphite Pencil, HB – 2B

Create one value study with a range of five values, simplifying the image to its basic elements, as shown in the Titian example.

Create a value scale in graphite to use as reference for the study drawing. Each value should be 1" x 1" (the entire value scale, 1" x 5").

2nd Study Drawing: Create one version that simplifies the image to simple geometric shapes, as shown in the Titian example. In this study, you may use a simplified range of 4 to 5 values.

List of Recommended Museums:

Los Angeles County Museum of Art- 5905 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles 90036

The Getty Museum- 1200 Getty Center Drive Los Angeles, California 90049

The Norton Simon Museum- 411 W. Colorado Boulevard Pasadena, CA 91105-1825

Composition Questions to Consider when writing about your work of art:

Which **elements of design** have been used?

Point, Line, Shape, Space, Pattern/Texture, Value/Mass, Color

How are the **principles of design** working?

(Harmony, Balance, Proportion, Repetition, Rhythm/Movement,
Emphasis/ Focal Point)

Where is the heaviest visual weight/ focal point? What makes it the heaviest area?
How does it affect the design as a whole?

How is the negative space working in relation to the principles of design?

Is the image symmetrically based or asymmetrically based?

Are any areas receiving too much attention? If so, what makes the area receive too much attention?

How does the value pattern affect the design as a whole?
(read the attached value pattern handout)

Why do you think the composition is visually engaging?