The Object Speaks. An analytical essay of 1000-1200 words

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A survey text tries to cover major art movements by talking about the most influential artists, and illustrating their significance with one or two examples of their work. You will create a textbook-styled essay on an Italian renaissance work that is not found in any of the assigned readings, but is significant enough to be included. Need an example? In Stokstad, read about Brunelleschi's ‘Foundling Hospital' for a good example of an analytical essay on a single work of art.

Getting Started

1. Choose a work you would like to write about from the list below. You can use Artstor or the World Gallery of Art (http://www.wga.hu) to find images. Be very careful when using Google, as there are many works with identical titles, and lots of misattribution.

2. Begin your research with museum websites, books and scholarly articles. Have our librarians help you, if you aren’t sure how to use the library databases. An analytical essay depends upon doing enough reading, and making sure your sources are appropriate for academic work. I will put some good books on reserve for you at the library. Don't waste your time with superficial websites or fake on-line museums and galleries.

3. It’s a good idea to brainstorm, and then outline before you start writing. I find that it’s easier to write the introductory and concluding paragraphs last.

What should you write about? Requirements of this assignment.

1.

 Discussion of the iconography of the work.

What is the subject of this work? What symbols are used? How is the story told?

2.

 The historical context of the work.

How does this work reflect the society it comes from? What historical events had an effect on the artist and this work? Discuss the religious or philosophical background of this work.

3.

 Analysis rather than description.

Description just points out the details. Analysis goes further--it interprets the details and

explains why they are significant. How does the artist use techniques such as light, line, color or composition to help communicate the meaning of the work?

4.

 Footnotes or endnotes and a works cited page are required.

I prefer MLA style. Limit direct quotations to less than 1” per page of original writing. I will be checking for plagiarism, so cite everything! If you need help consult the Online Writing Lab:

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

5.

 Don't forget the captioned illustration. The caption must include: title, artist, date, current

location, mediums and measurements. If you are talking about a sculpture or building, include more than one view. Use ArtStor or World Gallery of Art for your image resources.

6.

 Edit!!!!!!!! This is not a long essay, so stay focused on what is significant. Edit out

unimportant details (“this is an oil painting”), generalities (“everyone dies”), and empty value

judgments (“this is a great work of art”). It is smart to read your work out loud to someone you trust. They can point out places where your essay is not clear, or where you’ve made

mistakes in grammar or usage.

The art work that I have chosen is Donatello, Mary Magdalene, 1457, museo del Duomo, Florence.

There are three resources that I want to include in the paper.

-Donatello’s Sublime Enigma. Freudenheim, Tom L. Wall Street Journal - Online Edition.

-Donatello, Mary Magdalene (video) | Khan Academy

-Mary Magdalen, Donatello, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-116135