

# Crits and Docs

Regardless of the medium or process, every artist and art student needs to be able to

1. **Document art work** via audio, photography or video, recognizing that the documentation of the art work will become more important than the work itself.
2. **Offer and accept criticism.** This can be a sore spot for some, but if we can see our artwork as something other than who we are, then it becomes easier to listen to the insights and perceptions of others and to take something valuable from it.



## Documenting art.

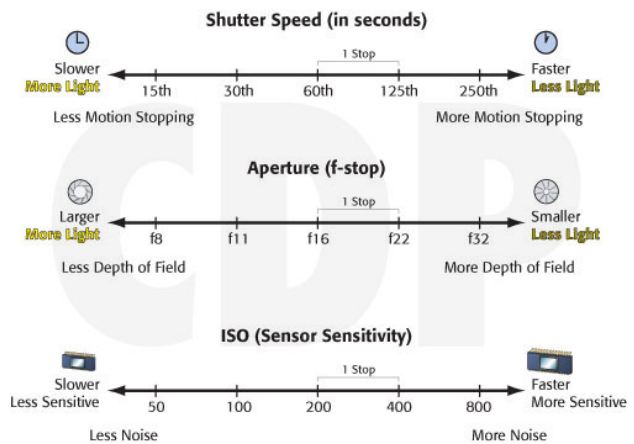
To document 2D art, the artist needs to be able to control:

**Lighting**, for evenness and sufficient intensity. A camera adapts to light by an aperture or f-stop (the eye of a lens); ISO setting (lower the number the crisper the image but the less light sensitive); shutter speed or exposure time (the more time of exposure, the more light is captured); or by a flash (a flash makes hot spots, not good for a lot of studio photography). Shots are too dim or too bright. If you shot in RAW then making exposure adjustments in a computer photo editor should help a lot.

**Focus.** This cannot be corrected by a computer. Ensure you have ample distance to take the shot you need. Shoot and shoot again until you have perfect focus.

**Colour temperature.** Shooting indoors? Ensure your White Balance (WB) is set to florescent or tungsten to suit your indoor lighting. Same for outdoor shots, set the WB for overcast or sunny day, depending on what you have. A bright overcast day is ideal for documenting art work. If this is not adjusted in camera, then it must be done in your computer photo editor.

**The rectangle.** Also known as the *keystone*, the camera needs to be placed in the centre of the subject and they should be level and plumb with each other. In your viewfinder, ensure that the image appears parallel to the edges of your frame. If this cannot be achieved through the lens, then in must be corrected in Photoshop.



# Art Criticism<sup>1</sup>

Art criticism involves a specific way of looking at a work of art. You can make discernment about art without being a professional artist, all you need to do is learn to look (see) and think about what you are seeing.

Learning how to criticize artwork properly will allow you to better understand works of art and why they have become important.

The process of art criticism involves 4 actions. They are: describe, analyze, interpret and decide. Some guidelines to help you are below:



**Describe** - what things are in the painting? Think of things like clothing, environment, etc.

**Analyze** - how are the elements of line, shape, form, texture, space and value used? How are the principles of unity pattern, rhythm, variety, balance, emphasis and proportion used?

**Interpret** - what is the artist trying to say to you? What is going on in the picture or artwork?

**Decide**- What do I think about this artwork? Do I like it? Why or why not? How do I feel about whether the artist was successful in conveying an idea?

To better understand about deciding about how you feel about an artwork, it may help to take a look at the three common aesthetic theories below.

## Is the artwork successful because:

**Observational** - The artist rendered the images in a realistic manner. It is easy to discern the subject because of the realistic quality of the art.

**Symbolic or Formalism/Composition** - The artist was adept in using the elements and principles of design in the artwork. (This also refers to the placement, contrast, and interaction of all parts of the work.)

**Expressive / Emotionalism/Feelings**- The artist did a good job of evoking an emotion or feeling from me.

See examples of these here  
[http://www.horton.ednet.ns.ca/staff/syme/Art\\_Category\\_site/web/index.html](http://www.horton.ednet.ns.ca/staff/syme/Art_Category_site/web/index.html)

**Remember, your art work is not you! It is something you made in an attempt to explore, learn, probe or understand an idea, medium or process. With this in mind, be open to other people's interpretation and responses and don't wear what others say about your artworks.**

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Betsy Larson... <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/criticism2.htm>