

The Frames and Critical and Historical Questions

The following questions show how the frames can be used to focus different types of critical and historical inquiries in Visual Arts.

The Subjective Frame

What feelings does this artwork evoke?

How does your immediate experience of this work make you feel?

What do you intuitively feel is the meaning of this artwork?

Using your imagination, what other ideas or experiences can you relate to this work?

What are the qualities of the artwork that make you feel this way?

Do you think this is a successful artwork? Why? How does it capture your imagination?

The Cultural Frame

How does the work reflect or challenge issues in the culture of the time?

Is the artist, craftsperson or designer part of a movement or style?

How has this artist, craftsperson or designer been influenced by other artists, craftspeople or designers?

What are the ideological views, values and beliefs of the society that surround the work?

What influence has the work of this artist or designer had on other artists or designers?

What principles and interests govern the stylistic qualities of the work?

What evidence is there of technological innovation in the work?

How has the work been influenced by political and economic factors?

The Structural Frame

How can the artwork be read as a system of signs?

What are the visual and formal qualities that constitute a system of signs in the work?

What are the conventions, traditions or rules that construct the codes, symbols or signs that are used in the artwork?

What values and beliefs are represented by the signs in the work?

How can meaning in the work be read by an audience?

What rules are in circulation that make meaning possible in the work?

How do the signs in the work refer to the world?

The Postmodern Frame

What text, artwork, theory or idea has the artist appropriated in the work?

Trace the history of the text. What other text is it a part of?

How has the meaning of the text changed in its different context?

How has the new context of the text changed its meaning?

How has the recontextualisation challenged an established pattern of authority?

What does an analysis of other types of texts reveal about the motivations controlling the interpretation of the text that constitutes the meaning of the work?

Expose the disjunctions between texts in the artwork.