How to Analyse a Photograph

As a class group, in pairs or individually, choose a photograph from the exhibition and analyse it.

Remember! A photograph is a 2-D image of a 3-D scene. Analysing a photograph looks at different characteristics compared to how we analyse other 2-D artwork.

Exhibition: ____________________________
Artist: ____________________________ Artwork title: ____________________________
Date created: _____________ Medium: ____________________________

SUBJECT

1. Describe the photograph’s subject matter, is it a: Person, Place, Object, Thing or Idea? What do you see?

_________________________________________________________________________________

2. Does the image look realistic or abstract? Has there been any manipulation of the scene using camera techniques such as lighting, movement etc. Explain your answer?

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CAMERA SHOTS & ANGLES

The point of view determines what angle the photo was taken from therefore it alters perspective. Was the photo taken at eye level, from a bird’s eye view, from ground level, from the side etc.

3. Draw the angle with your ruler at which you think the photographer took this picture.
Label it: Top View (Bird’s Eye), High level, Eye level, Low level, Bottom View (Worm’s eye).

_________________________________________________________________________________

4. Tick which camera shot has been used?
☐ Extreme Close up (Macro)
☐ Close up/ Short
☐ Medium
☐ Long
☐ Extreme Long
☐ Wide angle.

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5. Describe the use of **Depth of field** (how blurry or sharp the **foreground or background**) is) the photographer has used. Explain what effect it has on the photograph.

6. Has the photograph been **framed** by using the camera or the objects in the scene? For example, has the photograph been cropped by using a close-up shot, or has an archway been used to focus on the subject matter?

**COMPOSITION**

7. **Draw in the box the composition’s shape used in the photograph.**

   For example, are the objects in the composition in the shape of e.g. a triangle, a circle, a square, a rectangle, an “S”, a “V”, an “L”.

**Shade in negative space:**

8. **Draw in the box the outline of objects in the photograph. Shade in the negative spaces.**

9. **How is the photograph balanced?** (Circle) Is it **symmetrical** or **asymmetrical**?

**LIGHTING**

10. (Circle) Is the lighting **natural** or **artificial**?

11. **Draw in the box the photograph’s focal point and an arrow showing where the lighting source is coming from?** (Is it front-lit, side-lit, back-lit, from above down or from below up?)

12. (Circle) Is the photograph **overexposed** (very bright photo) or **underexposed** (very dark photo) or **equal** in **contrast** of light and dark areas?

13. Describe the **mood** of the photograph using 5 **adjectives**. For example; is the photograph dark and sombre, or bright and happy etc.
EXTENSION QUESTIONS

CONTEXT
14. Describe any social, political, historical, or religious ideas represented in this artwork.

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____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

15. What do you think the artist was trying to communicate? What is the message or meaning behind this photograph?

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____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

16. Overall, do you think the artist was successful or not in communicating his message? Why/Why not? What could have been done differently?

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