



How Art Thou?

What is art? Why does a painting evoke certain emotions? How does a painter make people go to museums and art galleries and stand for hours on end staring at a portrait or a landscape? The answer is to be found possibly in the text below:

When analysing a painting, the first thing, as with any form of analysis or deconstruction, is the overall effect. This simply means what was the intention of the painter. What special moment or real emotion did they want to capture? Once this simple yet often complicated question has been answered, the next step is to uncover what tools the artist used in order to achieve their visual commentary.

An artist has many such tools in his selection box such as the colours he uses; pale or dark ones; bright or dull ones. Then there is the texture of the paint; smooth or thick. Oil paintings, for example, tend to have thick paint in them as this represents a more visceral experience for the viewer. Light is another source available to a painter and was used extensively by the American painter Edward Hopper.

Composition is another bullet in an artist's armoury. This is summed up as how the painting is arranged such as how the figures occupy space.

After unpicking the creative thinking and the methodology of the painter, the critique ends with an assessment as to whether the artist has managed to convey his meaning to both the viewer and the critic.

Comprehension Questions

- 1) How does a critique of a piece of art start?
- 2) Why do oil paintings tend to be painted using thick paint?
- 3) Who used light effectively in his work?
- 4) What is the meaning of composition?
- 5) How does a critique end?