

Introduction to the History of Art
ARTH 1103
VISUAL ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

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Without performing any outside research, answer the following questions about the Prompt Object provided. Your answers need not be “right” – in many cases, there might not be a correct answer – but whatever you hypothesize in answering the questions below should be supported with “evidence” taken from careful examination of the Prompt Object or otherwise supported with a well-reasoned justification. This is a critical thinking exercise designed to make you look/read closely, not meant to test your ability to guess what the Prompt Object actually is.

1. Describe the Prompt Object in the greatest detail possible, using the Formal Elements terms that we have discussed in class and that are posted on Blackboard (discuss *style* as well as *content*). (c. 500 words)

The prompt object's technique is applying paint to a canvas. The artist used space when painting globes, an instrument, a book, and other objects that are three-dimensional in the painting. From the viewer's perspective, the artist makes the illusion of the painting being as real life-like as possible with the different techniques and colors in the painting. For example, the green curtains in the background seem to look as if they were real and almost as if they were photographed. Another example of the artist creating such an effect is how they used colors on the reddish garment on the man on the left side of the painting. The colors of white brought out the lighting that was present in the time of making the painting and shows even the texture of the garment that the man in the painting is wearing. In my opinion, the garment looks as if it were made out of silk because of how the sleeves are wrinkled around the man's arms; cotton and other types of fabrics usually don't have a "shiny" look. The attention to detail of the fur on the same man's cloak shows almost how soft it could've been. Though there are many reasons why I thought this was a picture because of how three-dimensional it looked, the hands are another example on the man on the left look as if they were real and not painted. Even the artist's attention the lighting by creating a shadows by the two men and other places around the painting are impressive. Guessing by the lighting, the texture of the curtains in the background and the garment the man is wearing on the right which almost looks like a coat, seem as if they were made of a velvet fabric. Also, the skull-like figure on the floor looks like it would've been a two-dimensional object while the painting was going on and it also has a shadow on the floor making it seem as if it was standing up. The artist was so detailed that I could tell what type of flooring was present. Inside two of the circles on the floor, there are lines that could give off the idea that at least that part of the flooring is made up of marble. The artist even gives away the shininess in the marble with the colors they use making an effect that shows a reflection of whatever is above the surface of the floor. The table that is present in the painting is made up of wood. On the left leg of the table, the artist creates lines that resemble

those of lines that would be present on any type of wood. The two globes that are placed on the top and bottom part of the table have shadows which helped in figuring out that they were spheres. Lastly, even though I do not know the object the man on the left is holding, the details put into the object makes me guess that it could have some types of stings made of thread.

2. What might the Prompt Object be (specifically)? That is, what is its purpose? How was/is it used? Who created it? Who is it for? Why (specifically) do you think so? What evidence/visual details/inferences/comparisons did you use to arrive at this hypothesis? (c. 300 words)

I believe that the prompt object might be a painting of two men that had some influence on the study of science. The purpose of this painting might have been to document the two men while recognizable for the work that they were doing at that present time. This painting could've been used in order for people to educate themselves on who these men were and what they did that could've contributed to things now or in the past. Whoever created it could've been someone who was talented in art specifically in painting portraits of well-known people of higher class, and therefore took interest in painting them. Maybe this person admired the work that the men in the painting had done and offered to paint them. Depending on if the artist was just an admirer, the painting could have been made just for them to have. If that wasn't just the case or not the case at all, maybe the artist was well known and was offered by the two men the opportunity to paint them for educational value or even personal value. I believe that this painting was made for educational purposes in order to document the two men and who they were and what they did in order to teach people in the future about them. The visual details that made me arrive at this hypothesis were the objects in the painting and the clothing that the men are wearing. As soon as I saw their clothing, I thought Shakespearean time. When I saw the objects on the table I thought to myself that these men could be studying some form of science. The painting makes me question when it had been taken and if it had any connections to Galileo Galilei since he was the known as the "father of modern science".

3. What information do you expect this object can provide about the past, and is the information this object can provide different from that provided by other types of resources?

I expect this object can provide history of the past specifically the history of scientists. I do believe that the information this object can provide is different from that provided by other types of resources because it is just a painting which documents a person or people in the time that they lived in order to be passed down so that people could visualize how they looked like in their time and also recognize them for who they were. Other types of resources could be more helpful such as of written documents that are more detailed and helpful in explaining exactly what a person did in the past, how they did it and why they did it.

4. What informs your responses to the above questions (for example, comparison to contemporary art and culture; outside knowledge; pop culture representations of the past, such as movies, etc.)?

Outside knowledge, films, and learning about history and science throughout my education has informed my responses. Learning about Shakespeare in school and the fashion of his time by watching Franco Zeffirelli's film *Romeo and Juliet*, helped me think about what time period these men were living in because of how they are dressed and the similarities of what they are wearing and the costumes that were used in the film.