

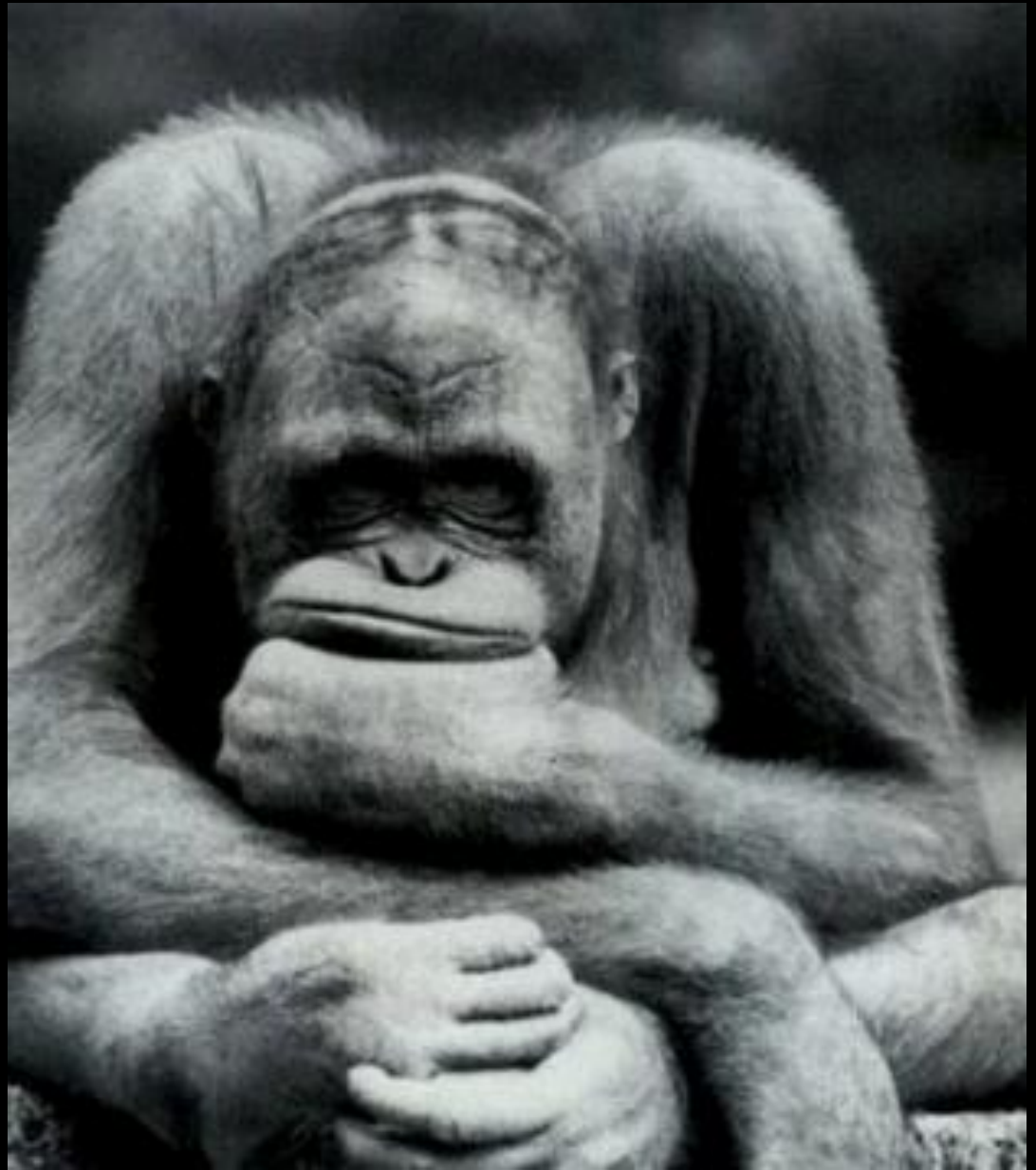
# Art Criticism

Why  
Critique?



Well.....?

That's why Critical Thinking matters.....in its broadest sense it can be described as *purposeful reflective judgment concerning what to believe or what to do.*



I don't know anything about art,  
but I know what I like.

And I really don't need a class to help me with this...

# Taste



# Taste

Taste as an aesthetic, sociological, economic and anthropological concept refers to cultural patterns of choice and preference regarding aesthetic judgments.















What determines aesthetic judgments?

Is it really just a function  
of our biases?





And why should we even care about things we don't like ?



Well, for one....because art exists  
for more than one subgroup or  
individual...

# Art is part of our Public (shared) Experience





**ART is reflective of the  
HUMAN EXPERIENCE...good  
and bad.**



Edvard Munch, "The Scream"  
1893, National Gallery, Oslo Norway.

ART is not just for interior design and  
we are not just “CONSUMERS”!



.....and this is why Museums and  
Galleries are so important.

ITS GOOD TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE and AWAY  
FROM THE MARKETERS!!!



AND REMEMBER

# What are our VALUES

- Personal Values
- Political Values
- Cultural Values
- Sub-Cultural Values
- Class Values
- National Values
- Religious Values
- Spiritual Values

## ART IS POWERFUL

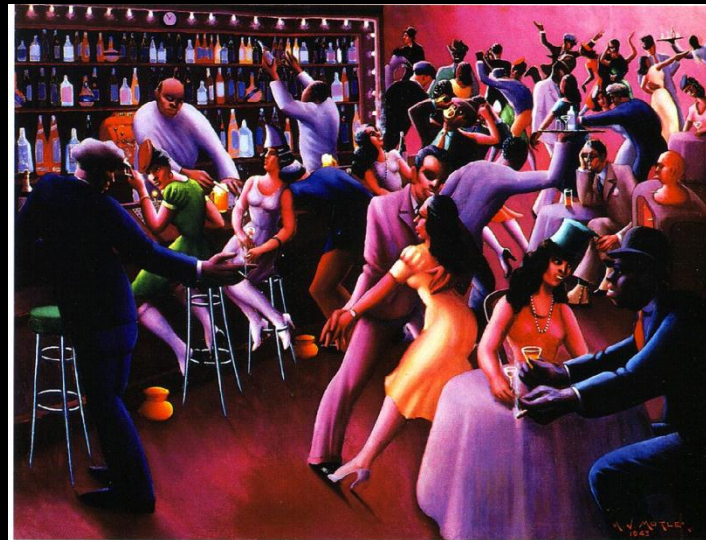
The reason art can please, is also because it can displease.....



## ART IS POWERFUL

.... it can alternately challenge or reinforce the value system of any given culture.

It is one of many place where a peoples discovers who they wish to be....





## ART and BEAUTY

Art can be beautiful.  
But what is Beauty?  
Who gets to decide?



## **ART and BEAUTY**

Art should comfort the  
disturbed and disturb  
the comfortable!

It has **MANY** purposes.





Socialist Realism.....pretty as a picture???



## NOT SO PRETTY

**Soviet Union, Stalin's regime  
(1924-53): 20 million DEAD.**

“As long as art is the beauty  
parlor of civilization, neither  
art nor civilization is secure.”

-John Dewey





ART CHANGES CULTURE

ALL TRUTH PASSES  
THROUGH THREE STAGES:

**FIRST**

It is ridiculed.

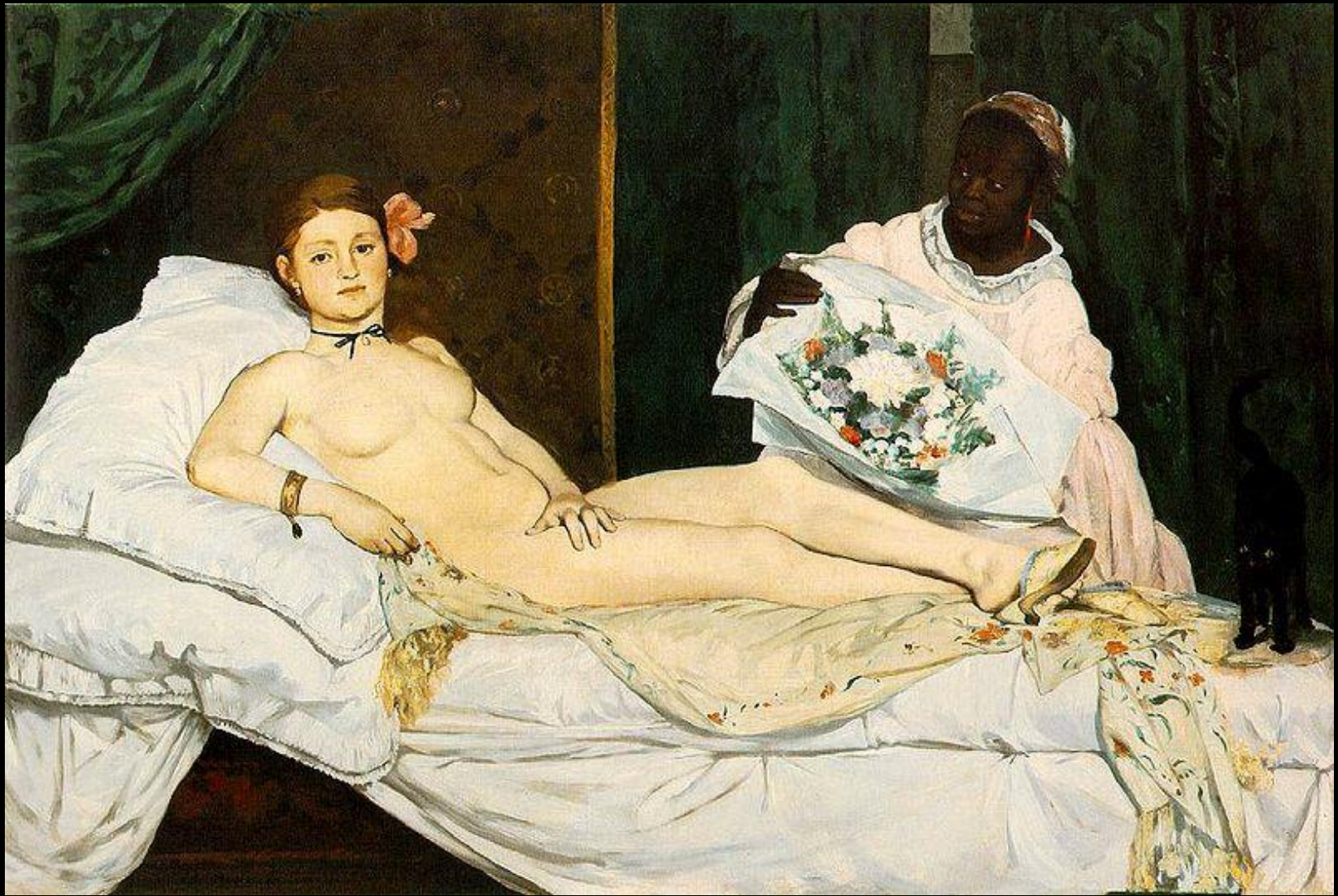
**SECOND**

It is violently  
opposed.

**THIRD**

It is accepted as  
being self-evident.

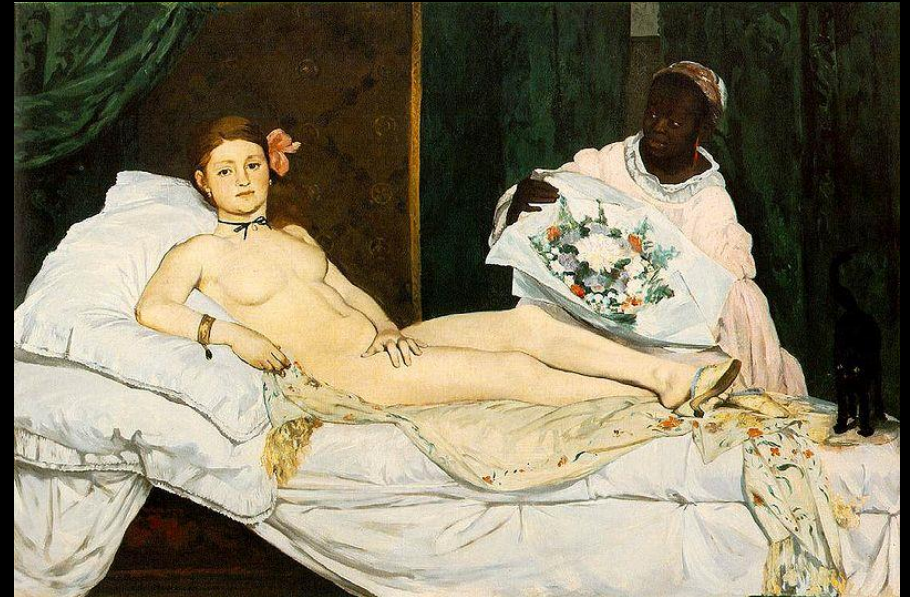
*Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860).*



Édouard Manet, Olympia, oil on canvas, 1863.

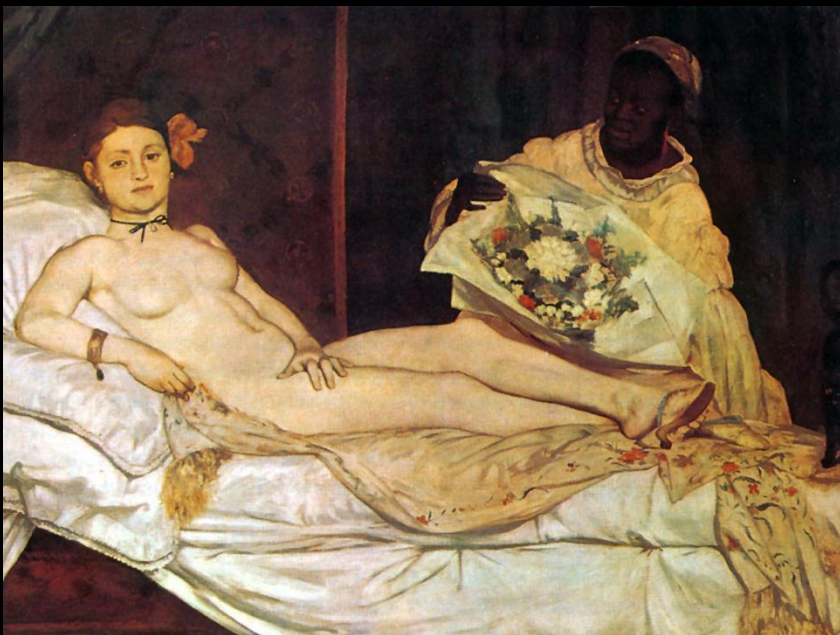


- Olympia stirred an enormous uproar when it was first exhibited at the 1865 Paris Salon. Conservatives condemned the work as "immoral" and "vulgar." One journalist later recalled, "If the canvas of the Olympia was not destroyed, it is only because of the precautions that were taken by the administration."
- However, the work had proponents as well. Emile Zola quickly proclaimed it Manet's "masterpiece" and added, "When other artists correct nature by painting Venus they lie. Manet asked himself why he should lie. Why not tell the truth?"





BAD



GOOD



# “Degenerate Art”



BAD



GOOD



# “Quality”

- Is Relative
- Is Subjective
- Is hard to measure
- Is related to personal taste....

- How does society *seem* to measure the quality of art if quality is so SUBJECTIVE?



# MONEY





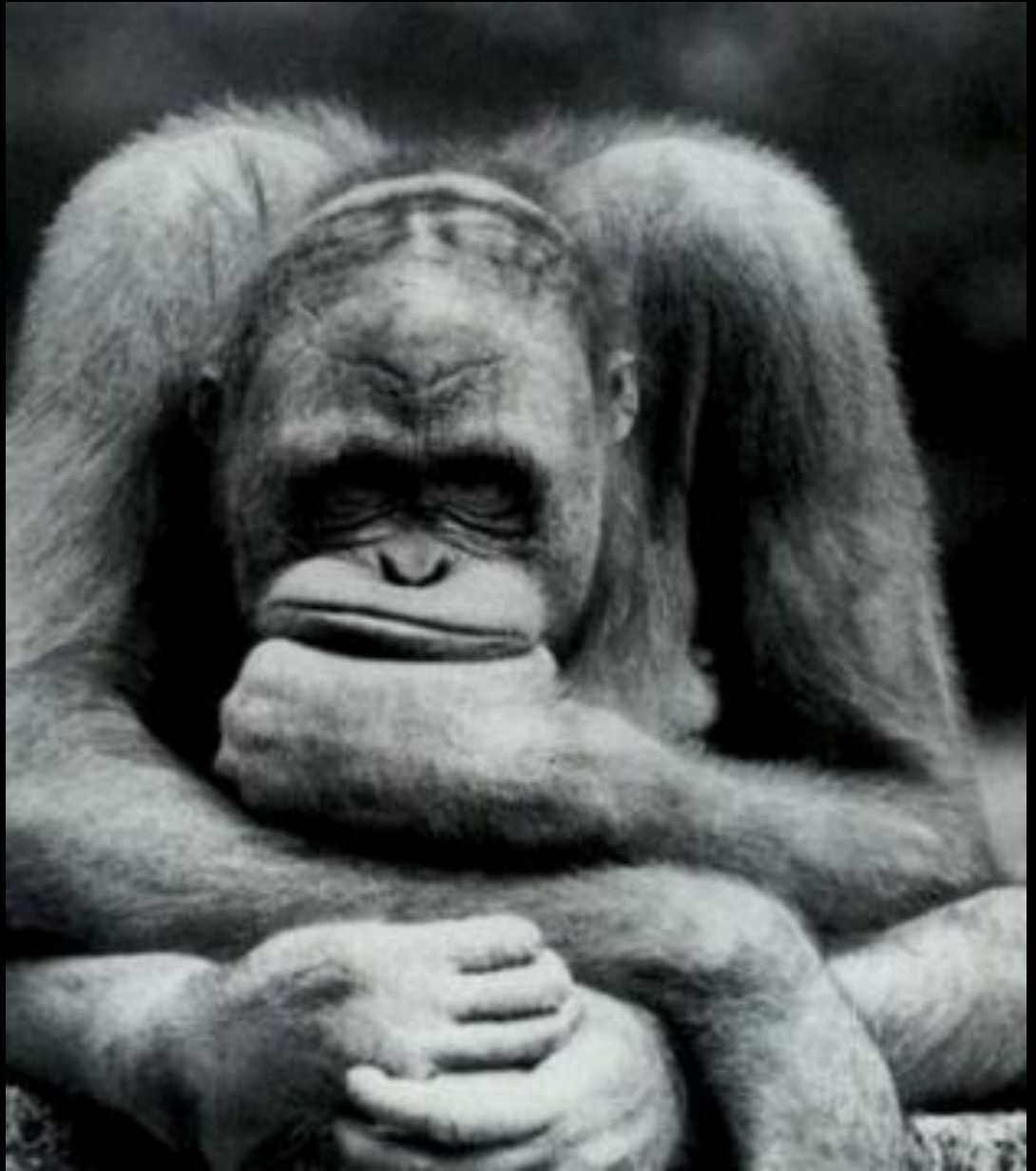


Mark Rothko, "White Center (Yellow, Pink and Lavender on Rose)" (1950)

**\$72.84 MILLION**

## ONE MORE TIME

That's why Critical Thinking matters.....in its broadest sense it can be described as *purposeful reflective judgment concerning what to believe or what to do.*





# 3 Types of Art Criticism

- Formal Theories
- Socio-cultural Theories
- Expressive Theories

# Formal Theories

- Form over Content.
- Style and Innovation are valued.

# Socio-cultural Theories

- Political, Cultural, Social Values
- Historical Context is emphasized.
- Art embodies or resists dominant cultural attitudes and themes.

# Expressive Theories

- Artist's Biography is Primary.
- Psychology and Intent are emphasized.
- Humanistic and Individualistic.



# The Feldman Method

- Description
- Analysis
- Interpretation
- Evaluation



# Description

## Visual Elements:

- Line, Implied Line
- Shape
- Mass/Volume
- Illusion of Space
- Time/Motion
- Color Scheme
- Texture

# Description

Question to ask:

- What is the subject of the work?
- What media is the work executed in?
- What is the size/scale ?





# Analysis

## Design Principles:

- Unity and Variety
- Balance
- Emphasis/Subordination
- Directional Forces
- Contrast
- Repetition and Rhythm
- Scale and Proportion

# Analysis

Some questions to consider:

- How do the visual elements contribute to a mood?
- What is the internal relationship between the objects or subjects depicted?
- How does the form communicate the content?



# Interpretation

- Formal
- Socio-cultural
- Expressive

# Interpretation

Some questions to consider:

- How does the work relate to the world it was made (historical context)?
- How does the work relate to today's world?
- What does the piece remind you of, how does it make you feel?
- What is the MEANING of the piece?



# ARTIST STATEMENT:

## Karla Walter

- As an artist, it is important to recognize a message and seize that moment. Crows are messengers, omens for change. Several personal encounters with crows have compelled me to express my personal creativity through this messenger. This body of work explores the similarities between the social interactions among crows and that of humans. To know the crow is to know ourselves. This is the journey I have taken with this body of work.
- The common crow maintains a unique place in our ecosystem thanks to their intelligence and strong family values. They are social, opportunistic, vocal, visual, shrewd, and reliant on memory and individual recognition. Crows are tricksters and the wise guys of the bird world. We all know someone who has these traits. I believe that this is why we relate to them and maybe see ourselves in



# Evaluation

Some questions to consider:

- Why does this work have (or not have) “value”?
- What is it that makes the work worth considering among others? What is valuable to you in a work of art?
- Are there things that others may value that you do not?
- Does the piece communicate an idea or feeling well, or do you remain unmoved?
- If it fails or succeeds in your estimation, can you point to specific remarks you noticed earlier in our criticism to emphasize your evaluation?

