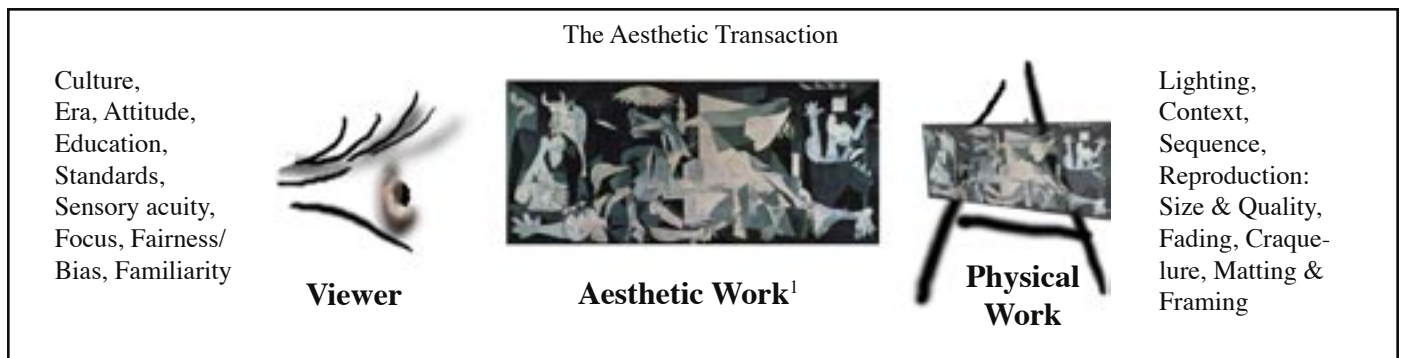


Preliminary Statement



Aesthetic transactions are dynamic: as factors influencing the viewer (above left) or the physical work (above right) change, the aesthetic work (which is what we really appreciate) changes as well. Chances are good that the same viewer will not have exactly the same transaction with a given artwork twice in a lifetime.

Judging art is not a science. There's no simple yardstick. Art is slippery - it evolves and surprises. Our understanding of art frequently must play catch-up.

There can be many reasons why a particular art work is good. Different works have different strengths and weaknesses. Every new work is a new combination.

Art is more than the physical work - it transcends its materials, colors, techniques (characteristics that can be described and measured) to become something more. Computers can't judge art.

Those who "don't know art but know what they like" have it backwards and miss most of the fun. First calm yourself (some meditate) then:

Feldman's Critical Process²

Description - colors, shapes, textures - value neutral!

Analysis - relationships of above and with other artworks.

Interpretation - meaning of above (not in the literal sense!)

Judgment - value (not monetary) for one's self, and perhaps society

Keep it positive. These are skills that require thought and practice! It's worth the effort.

I believe good jurors should suspend judgments up to the very last second to give individual works the time and attention they need. Some works whisper, some shout. Some take a while to speak.

Prizes represent a juror's best efforts on a given day, in a given place with a given field of entries. Awards made on that day carry no guarantees to the next show, where the process begins anew.

First I do a quick walk-through to sense the range and scope of the works. Next I spend quality time with each work, not necessarily in order of hanging - I bounce from wall to wall.

I don't read or talk. I use post-it notes to mark candidates. I review and move stickers. When I think I'm through, I take a break. Then I come back and look again, imagining that I'm seeing all the pieces for the first time. I may make changes. If so, there's another break and another review.

I respond to works that call out to me from a distance, invite closer inspection, reward repeat visits, evoke an emotional response, have technical merit, make me want to crawl around in them, make me smile...

After the moment for judgment has passed, it can be hard to explain why I made some choices, especially if the reasons were non-verbal. I always try to emphasize the positive.

I'm honored to be asked, humbled by the responsibility, and I hope to serve you well.

Leslye Bloom, PhD, ATC

¹ GUERNICA, Pablo Picasso (1937), Oil on canvas (349 x 776 cm) Reina Sofía National Museum (<http://www.spanisharts.com/reinasofia/reinasofia.htm>)

² Edmund Burke Feldman, *Varieties of Visual Experience* (Prentice Hall, 1972) (<http://www.ksu.edu/artsci/artcrit.html>) (<http://www.art.unt.edu/ntieva/artcurr/crit/>)