

VISA 1206 Intro to Art History & Visual Culture

Final Assignment Details

Assignment: Final Visual Analysis Project

Project grade weight: 30%

FINAL due date: August 4, 2026 11:59 PM

(no exceptions, no late submissions, FINAL due date)

Format: 3 items*

- Submit as .pdf on Brightspace - emailed submissions NOT accepted.
- Share your **google docs** document with me (katy.huckson@algomau.ca) - ensure that I have access to the file **as an editor**, ensure “notify people” is selected*.
- You MUST write the paper in google docs. I may review your version edits to ensure you have written the paper yourself and have not copied/pasted from AI generators or copied verbatim from another source.
- Include a selfie of you in the exhibition in your paper - at the end of the paper - as evidence that you visited the exhibition in person.

** Papers submitted without this photo will be deducted 10%.

Project Description:

You are to complete a 1000 - 1500 word essay as a visual analysis of a (pre-approved) local art exhibition. More details below.

You MUST attend the gallery and view the exhibition in person.

Submission Materials:

1. 1000 - 1500 words essay (slightly more is fine, no more than 2000 words)
 2. Works Cited/Bibliography/Reference page (properly formatted in consistent style - your choice of APA or MLA, but be consistent)
 - Please include a reference line in your bibliography/works cited for the exhibition itself.
 3. Required: Selfie or photo of yourself in the exhibition - proof you attended in person.
Optional: images from exhibition may be included in your essay to illustrate the work you're discussing
- These are all to be submitted as a single PDF document.

Other Requirements:

- You MUST work on the paper in google docs and you must share your finished paper with me from google docs.
- Any use of AI / ChatGPT to review your work must be documented (screenshots or copy/paste text prompts - You do not need to submit this documentation, but should have this ready and available in case I ask for it. I will ask if I have questions or concerns about your use of AI and/or academic dishonesty.

Detailed Guidelines:

INTRODUCTION:

Begin your essay with an **introduction** that briefly describes the exhibition you attended, including the title, artists (if relevant), venue, and date of your visit.

BODY - Visual Analysis:

- Provide a detailed visual analysis of selected artworks from the exhibition. Discuss elements such as composition, colour, texture, scale, line. Discuss principles of art achieved through these elements.
- Describe how these formal and visual characteristics are achieved in terms of technique and materials used.
- Describe how formal and visual elements and the technologies or media used are experienced, felt, or if and how they impact you as a viewer.
- Draw on your personal experience - you are the expert on how you understand and experience an exhibition or artwork! What did you notice first?
- **These visual and formal qualities should be woven into the contextual factors you articulate and their supposed communication/purpose to achieve top marks.**

*BODY - Contextual Factors: (NOTE - **you cannot touch on ALL these factors**, choose which make the most sense to discuss for your chosen exhibition and your interests)*

- Analyze and discuss several of the following contextual factors that influence your reading/understanding of the exhibition:
 - Culture: How does the artwork relate to or reflect elements of contemporary or historical culture(s)?
 - Political aspects: Are there any political themes or messages conveyed by the artists' work?
 - Social messaging: What social issues or messages are addressed in the exhibition?
 - Artists' previous work (if relevant): How does the current work compare to the artist's earlier creations?
 - OR (if relevant): related artworks or exhibitions on a similar theme (do not spend too much time, but show research has gone into understanding this exhibition within the context of related exhibitions)
 - Institution and its history: BRIEFLY articulate the history and mandate of the institution where the exhibition is displayed. How does this affect your interpretation of the artwork? How does this influence how the artwork or exhibition is framed and presented?
 - Statements by the artist (if possible/relevant): Examine any statements or interviews in which the artist discusses this body of artwork. How does this shed light on their intentions?
 - Broader art and visual culture conversations: Analyze the relationship between the exhibition or artwork and broader discussions in the art world and visual culture. Is the exhibition tied to themes of social justice,

ecological topics, feminist themes, identity politics - just to name a few possibilities. Provide a deeper analysis, rather than just stating the possible category this exhibition might fall into.

BODY - Communication and Purpose:

- Explore what is being communicated by the artist(s) through the artwork. Why did they create it? What message or emotion are they trying to convey?

CONCLUSION:

- Summarize your findings and provide your **personal** interpretation and evaluation of the exhibition's impact and significance.

Additional Guidelines:

- Your essay should be well-structured with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use proper citations when you reference external sources or quotes.
 - Use citations for any/all information you pull from an external source - this is **IMPORTANT** and an issue of academic integrity - names, dates, facts, figures***
- Include high-quality images of the artworks you analyze, properly captioned, if possible. These can be added into the body of the paper or in a separate appendix at the end of the paper.
- Use a consistent citation style (e.g., MLA, APA) for external sources / references.

Submission Guidelines:

- Submit your essay & photos as a digital document (**PDF**) under Final Visual Analysis Project in Brightspace (under assignments)
- Include your name and student number on your title page.
- You **MUST** also share your google docs document and allow me permission as an editor.

Grading Criteria:

Your project will be evaluated based on the depth of your analysis, your ability to connect the artwork to relevant contextual factors, evidence of critical thinking, the clarity of your writing, adherence to academic formatting, and the overall quality of your argument and insights.

Note: It's essential to emphasize the importance of visiting the exhibition in person, **as this personal experience is a critical aspect of the assignment.**

A detailed rubric will be provided.

* Reach out with questions well in advance of the deadline. I will be unavailable between July 31 until August 3 so questions about the final must be addressed before July 31.

* Do not be afraid to ask questions - questions help everyone, myself and your fellow students included!

APPROVED EXHIBITION OPTIONS

Brampton students - Peel Art Gallery, Museum, and Archives

Approved exhibitions: (select one of the following - do not write about both)

1. Witness Blanket - Installation by Carey Newman
2. Abstract Art in Canada

Sault students - Approved exhibitions: (select one of the following options)

1. Art Gallery of Algoma Approved exhibitions: Galleries 1, 2, or 3 (please choose one exhibition and focus on the works within one of the three gallery spaces, not all three)
2. Public Art - Downtown Mural project - write about 4 or more of the downtown mural paintings - I recommend you reference, for context, the history of street art and public art, as well as the growing trend of curated public art or murals particularly in small and northern communities over the past decade.

Timmins students - Approved exhibitions: (select one of the following options)

1. Write about the various public art murals that have gone up around the city in recent years - I recommend you reference, for context, the history of street art and public art, as well as the growing trend of curated public art or murals particularly in small and northern communities over the past decade.
2. Write about the NISKA Indigenous makers showcase in the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) - this is a showroom and sale, so different than a typical art exhibition, but was the only visual arts exhibit I could find for Timmins students to write about.
3. Timmins National Exhibition Centre - Check with them to see their current exhibit options.

Toronto based students - Visit and write about one of the two options listed.

1. The Powerplant - Colourful Parachutes (group exhibition)
2. MOCA Toronto - Sara Cwynar - Baby Blue Benzo Beta (Opens May 15)

Chatham/Kent

- Thames Gallery - HYPHENATED by Lana Matskiv
(CLOSES JULY 5 - would need to visit before this date)

Windsor Area Students

- Ink, Charcoal, and Jet (Opens July 16)
Curated by Talysha Bujold-Abu - <https://artwindsorsex.ca/exhibitions/ink-charcoal-jet/>

Students not based in any of these locations must contact the instructor for an alternative option before July 3.