

Welcome to the Stanley Museum of Art!

A contextual analysis can help us understand who made the object, what they made, how, why, and for whom they made it. **It always begins with what we see/the object itself.** We'll start examining what we see. Next, we'll ask questions to find out more.

1. Which work are you looking at?

Title:

Artist or Culture:

Date:

Medium (What is it made out of?):

2. What is the first thing you notice about the artwork?

How does the artist make this stand out?

3. How does the artist represent it?

Does it look like something you could encounter in the world (representational), or is it distorted (abstract)?

What are the main colors used?

Is anything bigger or smaller than expected?

How are they organized? What seems intentional about the colors?

What is in light? Concealed in shadows?
What questions do you have about what you see?

4. The choices artists make when constructing artworks can give us clues into why they made it, for whom, and for what occasion. Think about the observations you recorded above.

What clues might the artist be giving you about this object?

5. What do you know about:

The subject represented:

The time period:

The geographical area:

How might these issues be related to the object?

6. Why might have the artist have represented this subject matter at this time? Do you think there is a greater significance to the choice?

7. Why do you think the artist depicted the subject in this way? How does a representational or abstract style help the artist convey his or her meaning?

8. What questions do you have about the object, how it was made, why it was made, who made it, and for whom it was made?