

# FELDMAN'S FOUR-STEP ART ANALYSIS

To be delivered after visiting the [Esker Foundation](#), either in person or digitally. The Esker Foundation is in Calgary, Alberta.

## ANTHONY CUDAHY – BAD NEWS DELIVERED (THE VEIL)



Anthony Cudahy, *bad news delivered (the veil)*, 2025, Oil on Linen,  
(Photograph taken by Ms. Pie when attending the exhibition in person)

In this assignment, you will analyze *bad news delivered (the veil)* by Anthony Cudahy using Edmund Feldman’s Four-Step Method of Art Criticism.

This analysis method helps us look at work, interpret it, and transform our thinking from “I like it” to “I like it because”. Feldman’s Model also helps us to use subject-specific language and structure our judgments in informed and disciplined ways. Each stage builds on the previous one.

You must complete all four sections.

## FELDMAN’S MODEL

### USING FELDMAN’S CRITIQUE MODEL to Talk About Art

Feldman’s Critique Model helps you break down and talk about artwork in a clear, thoughtful way.

It gives you a step-by-step method to help you look closely, think critically, and express your own ideas about what an artwork is doing and why it matters. By following the four stages - Describe, Analyze, Interpret, and Evaluate-- you’ll be able to build stronger art vocabulary, make more meaningful connections, and explain your ideas with confidence.

#### 1. Describe

What do I see?

- ✓ What’s in the artwork? (People, objects, setting, materials?)
- ✓ What’s happening in the image?
- ✓ What do I notice first?
- ✓ Have I written at least two clear, factual sentences without guessing or interpreting yet?

#### 2. Analyze

How did the artist organize it?

- ✓ Which elements of art can I see? (Line, shape, color, value, texture, space, form)
- ✓ Which principles of design are being used? (Balance, contrast, movement, unity, rhythm, emphasis, pattern)
- ✓ How do these choices affect how the artwork looks and feels?

#### 3. Interpret

What do I think it means?

- ✓ What mood, message, or story do I think the artist is trying to share?
- ✓ Are there any symbols or clues that help me understand the meaning?
- ✓ How does this artwork connect to bigger ideas, the world, or my own experiences?

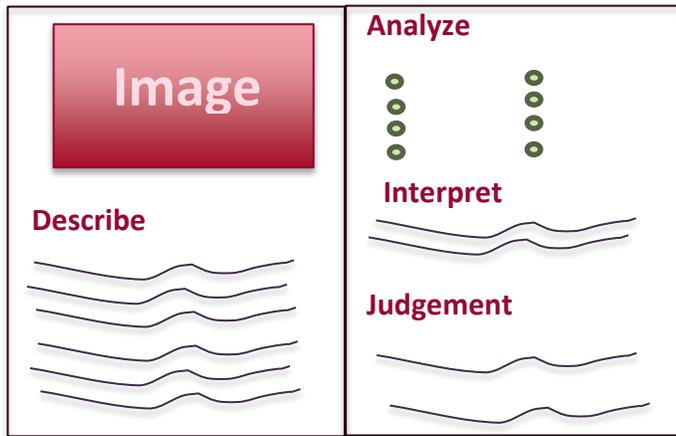
#### 4. Evaluate

What’s my opinion?

- ✓ Do I think this artwork is effective or successful? Why?
- ✓ What stands out to me about how it’s made or what it’s saying?
- ✓ Do I think the artist achieved their goal or intention?
- ✓ Have I clearly explained my personal opinion with at least one reason?

Stage	What This Means	Guiding Questions	What Students Should Do
<b>Describe</b>	What you can see	What objects, people, colours, and materials are visible? What is happening?	List facts only—no opinions or meaning yet.
<b>Analyze</b>	How the artwork is made	How are the <b>elements of art</b> and <b>principles of design</b> used?	Use art vocabulary to explain composition, colour, line, balance, contrast, etc.
<b>Interpret</b>	What it might mean	What message, mood, or idea is suggested? What clues support this idea?	Explain the meaning using evidence from the artwork.
<b>Evaluate</b>	What do you think and why	How effective is the artwork? Why?	Make a judgment and support it with reasons and visual evidence.

## SETTING UP YOUR SKETCH BOOK:



Glue in the image provided

Title the separate sections in your book.

Step 1 – Describe: 6–8 complete sentences

Step 2 – Analyze: Minimum 8 bullet points

Step 3 – Interpret: 6–8 complete sentences

Step 4 – Evaluate: 5–6 complete sentences

**You may annotate the image glued into your sketchbook. This may help you look more deeply at the image. Colour-code your annotations for clarity.**

## STEP 1: DESCRIBE (WHAT DO YOU SEE?)

**WHAT DO YOU SEE!** This step focuses only on observation.

Include:

- Subject matter (objects, figures, setting)
- Colour palette
- Shapes and forms
- Texture and surface qualities
- Scale and proportion
- Spatial relationships

**MINIMUM: 6–8 COMPLETE SENTENCES.**

Avoid phrases like:

- “I think.”
- “It looks like it means.”

Describe only what is visible in the painting. These statements are declarative. All responses should refer to the painting and its subject matter and provide evidence.

## STEP 2: ANALYZE (HOW IS THE ARTWORK ORGANIZED?)

Now examine how the elements are arranged.

We are using **the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design**.

Element of Art	Definition	Guiding Questions
<b>Line</b>	A mark with length and direction. Can be straight, curved, thick, thin, implied, or actual.	Where do lines guide your eye? Are they soft or sharp? Controlled or expressive?
<b>Shape</b>	A flat, two-dimensional area enclosed by a line or colour.	Are shapes geometric or organic? How do shapes interact?

<b>Form</b>	A three-dimensional object or the illusion of depth.	Does the work feel flat or dimensional? How is volume suggested?
<b>Color</b>	Hue, value (light/dark), and intensity (brightness/dullness).	Is the palette warm or cool? High contrast or muted?
<b>Value</b>	The lightness or darkness of a colour or tone.	Where is the contrast strongest? What areas feel illuminated or shadowed?
<b>Texture</b>	The surface quality (actual or implied).	Does the surface look smooth, rough, layered, or glossy?
<b>Space</b>	The area around, between, and within objects.	Is space shallow or deep? Where is negative space used?

Principle of Design	Definition	Guiding Questions
<b>Balance</b>	The distribution of visual weight in a composition.	Is it symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial? Does it feel stable?
<b>Contrast</b>	Differences between elements (light/dark, large/small, smooth/rough).	Where do big differences create emphasis?
<b>Emphasis</b>	The focal point or area of importance.	Where does your eye go first? Why?
<b>Movement</b>	The path the viewer's eye follows.	How does the composition guide you visually?
<b>Pattern</b>	Repetition of elements in a predictable way.	Where do you see repeated shapes, colours, or marks?
<b>Rhythm</b>	Visual tempo is created through repetition and variation.	Does the work feel calm, dynamic, chaotic, or steady?
<b>Unity</b>	A sense of cohesion or wholeness.	Do all parts feel connected?
<b>Variety</b>	Differences that create visual interest.	What prevents the work from feeling monotonous?
<b>Proportion</b>	The relationship of size between parts of a whole.	Are objects realistically scaled or intentionally distorted?

When you are analyzing, discuss the elements as they appear in the painting.

Think about:

- Balance (symmetrical or asymmetrical)
- Contrast (light/dark, colour, scale)
- Repetition or pattern
- Rhythm
- Focal point
- Positive and negative space

- Layering or overlapping
- Transparency and opacity

Write in bullet form.

**MINIMUM: 8 BULLET POINTS. (4 ELEMENTS & 4 PRINCIPLES)**

**BE SPECIFIC.**

**EXAMPLE:**

You think:	Write:
<p>“Good use of colour.”</p> <p>Good is arbitrary- What you think is “good” may not be what I think is “good.”</p>	<p>“High contrast between transparent background tones and saturated bright objects creates emphasis in the center of the composition through the use of colour.”</p>



### STEP 3: INTERPRET (WHAT MIGHT IT MEAN?)

Now form a supported interpretation.

**YOU MUST USE EVIDENCE FROM STEPS 1 AND 2.**

Consider:

- What themes might be present?
- Does the painting suggest memory, domestic life, stillness, movement, tension, or order?
- How does layering affect meaning?
- What emotional atmosphere is created?

**MINIMUM: 6–8 SENTENCES.**

**REMEMBER!**

WE PERCEIVE, INTERPRET, AND UNDERSTAND ART THROUGH A RICH, INTERSECTIONAL LENS. FACTORS SUCH AS AGE, CULTURE, AND MORAL UPBRINGING SHAPE HOW EACH OF US EXPERIENCES WORKS OF ART AND CREATES MEANING FROM THEM.

THERE IS NO WRONG ANSWER WHEN FORMING PERSONAL INTERPRETATIONS OR JUDGMENTS.

### STEP 4: EVALUATE (IS IT SUCCESSFUL?)

Form a judgment and justify it.

Discuss:

- Is the composition effective?
- Does the layering strengthen the work?
- Is the balance resolved or intentionally unresolved?
- Does the painting feel contemporary? Why?
- Do you like the painting? Why?

**MINIMUM: 5–6 SENTENCES.**

**Your evaluation must be supported with visual evidence.**

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

You will be assessed on:

- ✓ Accuracy of observation
- ✓ Use of art vocabulary
- ✓ Depth of analysis
- ✓ Evidence-based interpretation
- ✓ Justified evaluation
- ✓ Completion of all four stages

## RUBRIC

Criteria (Alberta Art 10–12 Alignment)	Exemplary (91–100%)	Proficient (71–90%)	Developing (50–70%)	Beginning (0–49%)
<b>Encounters – Observation &amp; Description</b> (Perceiving and responding to visual form and subject matter)	Detailed and precise visual description. Demonstrates careful observation without interpretation. All required elements included.	Clear description with minor omissions. Mostly observational.	Basic description with limited detail. Some interpretation included.	Incomplete or vague description. Significant interpretation instead of observation.
<b>Composition – Analysis of Visual Organization</b> (Identifying elements and principles in constructed imagery)	Thorough analysis (8+ strong bullet points). Accurate and specific use of art vocabulary—clear understanding of balance, contrast, layering, and spatial organization.	Adequate analysis with correct vocabulary. Some specificity.	Limited analysis. Vocabulary is inconsistently used or generalized.	Minimal analysis. Little or incorrect use of art terminology.
<b>Encounters – Interpretation of Meaning</b> (Interpreting visual relationships and symbolic content)	Interpretation is thoughtful and well supported by strong visual evidence. Demonstrates depth and insight.	Interpretation supported with some visual evidence. Reasonable depth.	Interpretation is present but loosely supported or predictable.	Interpretation is unclear, unsupported, or missing.
<b>Encounters – Critical Evaluation</b> (Forming and justifying informed judgments about artworks)	Clear and confident judgment. Strong justification using compositional and visual evidence.	Clear judgment with some justification.	Basic judgment with limited evidence.	Opinion stated with no justification or incomplete response.
<b>Encounters – Communication &amp; Completion</b> (Articulating informed responses using appropriate terminology)	All sections complete. Meets sentence requirements. Writing is clear, structured, and uses appropriate art vocabulary.	All sections complete. Minor clarity or grammar issues.	One section is incomplete or below the sentence requirement. Noticeable writing issues.	Multiple sections are incomplete. Does not meet the required length.