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## Analyzing Contemporary Philippine Art Forms and Critiquing available Local Materials and Appropriate Techniques used in Creating Art

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### Abstract

The way art is understood has been formalized. The primary objective of this paper is to acquaint the students with one of the methods in analyzing contemporary Philippine art forms and critiquing available local materials and appropriate techniques used in creating art. As part of the subject course in Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions, one of the core subjects in the Senior High School curriculum in the Philippines under the K-12 curriculum, one of the methods implemented in critiquing contemporary Philippine artworks is the Analysis-Interpretation-Discernment Method or the AID Method. This method will be carried out together with the description applied to contemporary art and the knowledge in the elements, principles, and contexts of arts. Criticism can be construed positively. Several critics discuss their reactions to various forms of art and weigh in on the works' merits. One may not always agree with their assessments, as the criteria or standards of evaluation may differ significantly from those of the professional critic. In this circumstance, visiting contemporary art exhibitions and conversing with living artists is critical for developing a knowledge and appreciation for the Philippine arts and culture. The purpose of art criticism gives a significant role in the process of inquiry in relation to contemporary arts, that is, to distinguish the different contexts of art to a familiar art form as well as to appraise the culture of the Philippine arts with awareness and appreciation.

**Keywords:** Analysis; Art; Contemporary Art; Criticism; Method; Philippine Art

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## 1. Introduction

Contemporary art is work created in the present day by artists who live in our time, as it allows for reflection on society and the issues that matter to us and the world (Art Education Definitions, 2020). Additionally, it is a component of a broader cultural discussion on broader contextual frameworks such as identity, family, community, and nation. Visiting contemporary art exhibitions and conversing with living artists is critical for developing a knowledge and appreciation for the Philippine arts and culture.

Contemporary art refers to the work of artists active in the twenty-first century (Art21, 2020). Modern art reflects contemporary culture and society, providing a rich resource for deliberating on contemporary issues and rethinking the familiar. Contemporary artists' work is a dynamic synthesis of materials, processes, concepts, and subjects that defy conventional categorization and resist easy definition. Contemporary art is diverse and eclectic in its absence of a unified organizing concept or ideology. Contemporary artists give voice to the vast and evolving cultural landscape of identities, values, and beliefs in a globally affected, culturally diverse, and technologically advanced society (Tabuena, 2021).

In this paper, the purpose of art criticism gives a significant role in the process of inquiry in relation to contemporary arts, that is, to distinguish the different contexts of art to a familiar art form as well as to appraise the culture of the Philippine arts with awareness and appreciation.

### 1.1. Characteristics of the Contemporary Arts

In the process, the most effective strategies for engaging with works of art are curiosity, openness, and discourse. Rather than debating the merits of an artwork, the study of contemporary art necessitates an open-ended methodology and an inquiry-based approach. Posing provocative questions that spark discussion and debate is a critical first step toward understanding and analyzing works of art that defy expectations, elicit emotional reactions, or challenge personal views or societal ideals.

### 1.2. Characteristics of the Philippine Contemporary Arts by Classification

Audiences are active participants in the process of meaning construction for works of art. According to certain artists, the audience adds to the artwork through his or her own reflections, experiences, opinions, and interpretations. Contemporary Philippine Art is art created in the twenty-first century by Filipino artists from various regions of the Philippines, representing cultural diversity and technological innovation. The following are the general characteristics of contemporary artworks in the Philippines, organized by classification as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** General Characteristics of the Philippine Contemporary Arts

Classifications	Description
Dominant (Mainstream)	It is a foreign-influenced, industry-driven, technology-assisted arts-oriented for mass-consumption (e.g., Ogie Alcasid, Sarah Geronimo).
Alternative	It is usually social realist or advocacy-oriented either individual (e.g., Joey Ayala, Grace Nono, Kidlat Tahimik) or collectives (artist groups) - collaborative and interdisciplinary practices (e.g. Ugatlahi Artist Collective, Sipat Lawin Ensemble, Gerilya).
Traditional (Indigenous)	It preserves local traditions (e.g., <i>Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan</i> [GAMABA] awardees like Samaon Sulaiman, Lang Dulay).

In this paper, exemplars of contemporary Philippine artworks more likely belong to dominant and alternative categories.

### **1.3. Philippine's Contexts**

In the Philippines, technological advancements continue to play a significant role in the routes followed by each of these creative genres. Exciting advancements in material manipulation, coloring and embellishing techniques, and development and production methods have resulted, which have been used in all of today's media—whether physical and real or virtual in cyberspace. These factors have facilitated the evolution of astoundingly new art forms far beyond traditional painting, sculpture, and architecture. As rapidly as new equipment and techniques are developed by technology, contemporary artists adopt them to enhance their artistic expression. Not only have contemporary techniques and trends in photography, film, print media, digital media, and product and industrial design brought Philippine artistry to the world's attention, but they have also created a plethora of opportunities for young Filipinos to develop and utilize their abilities.

## **2. Objectives**

The primary objective of this paper is to acquaint the students with one of the methods in analyzing contemporary Philippine art forms and critiquing available local materials and appropriate techniques used in creating art. The method is applied during the school year 2020-2021 in one of the subject courses in the Senior High School curriculum in the Philippines, Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions. Furthermore, this paper aimed to accomplish the following: distinguish the different contexts of art to a familiar art form, describe various contemporary art forms and practices from the various regions in the Philippines, analyze contemporary art forms based on the elements and principles, critique available local materials and techniques used in creating art, and appraise the culture of the Philippine arts with awareness and appreciation.

## **3. Methodology**

As part of the subject course in Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions, one of the core subjects in the Senior High School curriculum in the Philippines under the K-12 curriculum, one of the methods implemented in critiquing contemporary Philippine art forms is the Analysis-Interpretation-Discernment Method or the AID Method. On the other hand, art criticism is an organized approach in studying a work of art. Art analysis starts with a description of the artwork. Art interpretation is employed by the viewer after describing and analyzing an artwork. After they have done the tedious work of describing, analyzing, and interpreting contemporary artwork, one can now make a judgment: Is it a good artwork? In this case, discernment is the last step (judgment), after the analysis and interpretation of an artwork, in art criticism; the AID method for art criticism - analysis, interpretation, and discernment. This method will be carried out after the description is applied to contemporary art, as well as the knowledge in the elements, principles, and contexts of arts.

## **4. The Elements, Principles, and Contexts of Arts**

To understand an artwork using formal analysis, one must be able to examine it with the knowledge of the elements of art and the principles of design.

#### 4.1. The Elements of Visual Arts

The following are the elements of visual arts (Cerbo et al., 2010): (a) line - the path taken by a point as it traverses space. The width, direction, movement, length, curvature, and even color of the line can all be specified; (b) shape - a distinct spatial form portrayed in two dimensions and generated through the use of lines or by altering the color, shading, or material composition; (c) form - a unit in an artwork that is defined or distinguished by a distinct contour; occasionally used synonymously with shape, or to refer to a shape shown in three dimensions rather than two; (d) space - the visually or physically defined region included within and around shapes and forms. Positive space encloses the contents of a shape or form and is delimited by its edges or surfaces. Negative space refers to the "empty" area that surrounds a shape or form and also assists in defining the shape or form's borders; (e) texture - the appearance and feel of a surface, which can be defined in terms such as rough, smooth, hard, soft, scratchy, silky, fine, or coarse; (f) color - an object's hue, value, and intensity. The main colors are red, yellow, and blue; every color except white may be made by combining these three colors in a variety of ways; and (g) value - the degree to which tones or colors are relative to one another in terms of lightness or darkness. White and yellow, for example, have a light value; black and violet have a dark value.

#### 4.2. Principles of Design

On the other hand, the following are the principles of design: (a) balance - the arrangement of elements in a work of art in one of three ways: symmetry (formal balance), in which every element in the Work is perfectly balanced against every other element; asymmetry (informal balance), in which there is no one-to-one, even correspondence of elements; and radial (from the center) in which elements are balanced around a center, as In a circular mandala design; (b) variety - the assortment of lines, colors, forms, shapes, or textures in a work of art; (c) rhythm (movement) - regular repetition of lines, shapes, colors, or patterns; (d) emphasis - the accent, stress, or importance of a part of an artwork. Opposing sizes, shapes, and lines, contrasting colors, closer detail, and intense, bright color are all used to emphasize or draw attention to, certain areas or objects; (e) proportion - the relationship of the distance of objects in a composition, as in, for example, close up and far away; the relationship of the size of one part to another or the whole; (f) contrast - significant degrees of difference between lines, colors, shapes, values, forms, and/or textures; (g) unity - the interrelation, balance, and organization of all elements of an artwork to achieve a quality of oneness or a pleasing sense (note: a composition can be pleasingly exciting, pleasingly disturbing, pleasingly tranquil, and so on).

As an exemplar in applying the concepts of the elements and principles of arts, the following is an art observation of contemporary art from the artwork of Kiukok (1973) entitled *Last Supper* as shown in Figure 1.



**Fig 1** “Last Supper” (Kiukok, 1973)

#### 4.3. Art Observation

##### ***What are the dominant elements in the artwork?***

Different shapes and forms made out of lines are the elements most seen in the artwork; the artwork was created using the technique where different geometric shapes were used to form new figures such as humans, shapes were mostly used in making the entire art piece; moreover, different values and contrast in color was also noticeable in the art.

##### ***How are these used in the artwork?***

The shapes and lines were used in the whole artwork in forming the human figures and the background; they were also used in adding details, whereas contrasting colors and values were used to create depth and in adding highlights or shadows; nevertheless, the artwork was enhanced by these varieties.

##### ***How are line, shape, or volume used within the artistic frame?***

Numerous lines are very visible in the artwork, especially straight lines, they are the most used type of line to create the shapes which make up the whole artistic frame; straight lines were used in the background while curved lines can also be seen in forming the shape of the heads of the apostles and their bodies.

##### ***How are texture, movement, or space used within the artistic frame?***

The texture of the artistic frame was not that smooth, the colors in the piece were not smoothly applied; the way on how the movement or the rhythm and space was put into the art has a similar concept to each other, we can say that there is repetition in creating the shapes, the lines, and the figures in the artwork.

##### ***What are the unifying features in the artistic composition?***

The way that the shapes were repeatedly used and organized in the artistic composition, somehow made a uniform look throughout the whole art piece and made it looked great; also, the elements were used to keep balance in mind, if there are light colors, there are also dark colors; all

the elements in the artwork worked together and made the piece more beautiful and pleasing to the eye.

***Are there any variations among the repeated elements? How does the art form appeal to the visual sense?***

Yes, variations were still present in the entire artistic composition even though repetition is used; even when the shapes were repeated and are similar to each other, the colors used was different each time, which creates a whole new different look and vibe; moreover, one color is dominant in the artwork and with its different values and hues, it puts the whole art piece together and makes it visually appealing.

#### 4.4. The Context of Arts

Context refers to the locations, conditions, situations, and happenings that influence the development and reception of an artwork, as well as the audiences' response to it. It is a body of knowledge that enables us to construct meanings for works of art and to observe how context influences form (Datuin et al., 2016). One must distinguish various contexts in order to have a greater understanding of art's complexity and diversity, and ideally avoid assessing different forms, such as oil on canvas paintings, as superior to traditional indigenous forms, such as bulul carving or textile weaving, because these two forms originate in diverse contexts. The following contexts illustrate how they can influence how works of art are perceived:

##### ***a. Artist's Background***

Age, gender, culture, economic circumstances, social environment, and disposition all have an effect on artistic creativity. The mode of production, which includes the resources available to artists as well as the working environment, also influences the work produced by the artist. The materials available to a traditional artist are different from those available to an artist raised in a heavily urbanized area such as Manila. Additionally, the artist's start and training (formal or informal) in the art may differ.

##### ***b. Nature***

Nature can be seen as a source of inspiration and a wellspring of materials for art production. For example, Fernando Amorsolo (National Artist) paints beautiful landscapes, evoking the sun's warm warmth over verdant land or beautiful lakes.

##### ***c. Everyday Life***

Traditional art in the Philippines has always been an intrinsic component of daily life. Its significance is not only in terms of aesthetics but also in terms of functionality and utility to the community that created it. Due to the fact that traditional forms may be used in everyday private situations, they are more intimate and engage multiple senses concurrently. Along with the visual sense, the tactile, gustatory, and olfactory senses are stimulated.

##### ***d. Society, Politics and Economy, and History***

While art is a method of expression, not all works are created entirely on the artist's initiative. The creative process of the artist is influenced, if not compromised, by patronages such as those of the State or the Church. Art's communicative and emotive capacities have been tapped to advance the colonial system. Additionally, art was used to advance a political objective. However, this paper will also learn how artists have used the language of art to express their creative agency, to challenge ideological systems, inspire people, and instigate change.

##### ***e. Mode of Reception***

Apart from personal identification as an art perceiver and the surroundings stated previously, it is also necessary to evaluate when, where, and how art is encountered. Typically, art is encountered at

a museum; it is arranged and classified in front of the public for educational and recreational purposes. Due to the institution's lengthy history as a repository of art and other valuable artifacts, one might instinctively presume that what is displayed is valuable. The strength of the museum is in its capacity to construct knowledge for us.

As an exemplar in applying the concepts of the context of arts, the following is an art context of contemporary art from the artwork of Luz (2008) entitled *Imaginary Landscape* as shown in Figure 2.



**Fig 2** “Imaginary Landscape” (Luz, 2008)

#### 4.5. Self-Art Context and Explanation

The art context that I have thought of is “Feeling and Emotion” wherein the artist’s production of his/her art is affected by their emotions. What the artist is feeling at a certain time may influence them to create an art piece based on that emotion. For instance, if they are feeling sad or frustrated, they can let it all out through their work of art. Releasing these feelings through artistic compositions can give the artist comfort. To give an example, the *Starry Night* by Vincent van Gogh, when you see the painting, the color which is evident is the many shades of blue, we can interpret this color as the color of sadness; however, there are stars which has a bright yellow color, which can symbolize as happiness or hope amidst the darkness that he is feeling. Variety of emotions can be conveyed through an art piece when an artist for example is feeling happy at this time, if she paints something today it may become bright and colorful but if her emotions changed over the week and she decided to paint the same picture again, the painting may have a different vibe and feeling, surely different colors will be evident for every emotion.

#### 4.6. Relation of the Self-Art Context to the given Artwork (Imaginary Landscape)

In the given artwork, “Imaginary Landscape” by Luz, the emotion behind the artwork is not that evident; however, if I were to interpret it, I think the artist is somehow confused, slightly frustrated but still calm. Calmness is apparent in the background of the art piece because of its simplicity. The strokes on the other hand are arranged in a pattern but are also distorted by the different heights and shapes of the figures, the main figures in the artwork are messy and all over the place, it has many lines and a lot is happening in it; this contrasts the calmness in the background. The art piece as a whole is beautiful and it gives us an insight into the artist who made it. In my opinion, the artist had a lot of emotions while painting this artwork. Emotions and feelings greatly affect the outcome of the artistic framework that one is working on.

## 5. Description Applied to Contemporary Art

Describing an artwork, particularly one in a contemporary style, involves comprehension of art: its scope, principles, and production, as well as an awareness of the artist and the elements that influence art-making. Because many contemporary artists respond to social challenges, it's also beneficial to understand the community and context in which the artist works (Ramirez, 2016). A description of contemporary art is comprised of three components: what the artwork is about (subject matter), the materials/mediums employed in the art-making process, and the art form. One has not yet reached a discernment at this point.

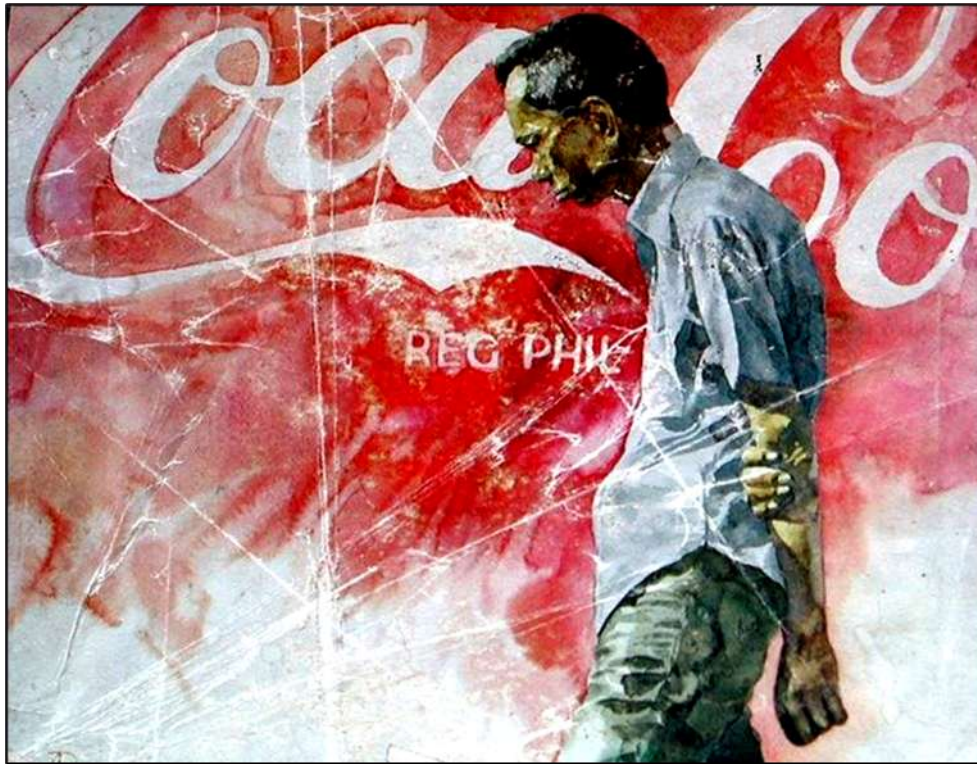
First, the subject matter is what you see that is depicted in the artwork. It may be a human form where the figures are engaged in an activity or a combination of texture and color. It may also be a figure made from found objects put together or assembled into a coherent whole. Second, the material is what the artwork is made of. It can also be a combination of objects used in the artwork. Lastly, art elements and principles refer to the physical qualities of the image. The artist uses color, lines, space, and other elements to create visual images. These are arranged in an organized manner that observes unity, harmony, rhythm, or other principles of design in a creative way. To guide the students in describing the contemporary artwork, there are some questions that one can answer under each element (Ramirez, 2016).

**Table 2** Guide Questions in Describing the Contemporary Artwork

Indicators	Guide Questions
Subject Matter	What is the main figure in the artwork? How is the main figure placed within the artistic frame? How do the other figures in the artwork relate to the main figure?
Materials	What are the materials or objects used by the artist? Do these materials bring out the intended effect of the artist? If the artist chose other materials, do you think the same effect will be achieved? Why and how?
Art Elements and Principles	What are the dominant elements in the artwork? How are these used in the artwork? How are line, shape, or volume used within the artistic frame? How are texture, movement, or space used within the artistic frame? What are the unifying features in the artistic composition? Are there any variations among the repeated elements? How does the art form appeal to the visual sense?

As an exemplar in applying the guidelines and questions above, the following is a description applied to contemporary art from the artwork of Delotavo (1978) entitled “*Itak sa Puso ni Mang Juan*” (Dagger at the Heart of Mang Juan) as shown in Figure 3.





**Fig 3** “Itak sa Puso ni Mang Juan” (Delotavo, 1978)

### 5.1. Subject Matter

The painting entitled with *Itak sa Puso ni Mang Juan*, features a man being its main figure, a human that is standing in front of a wall with a Coca-Cola advertisement. The man is dark-skinned, he has hints of white hair, and he is slouching. This can represent the Filipino laborers in big factories or companies. Mang Juan’s posture with his hunched back and a hand on the elbow shows that he is really tired and worn out. He is standing alone in the artwork but the white figures or splatter in the background look as if it’s a crowd. The advertisement behind him is very noticeable because of its bright red color, which if you look closely, may seem like his blood. It also involves a contrasting white text of the Coca-Cola ad; the tail of the letter C in the logo is sharply pointed at Mang Juan’s chest, like a knife or a sword stabbing him.

### 5.2. Materials

The artwork *Itak sa Puso ni Mang Juan* looks like it is painted on a piece of paper using watercolors. The social realist, Delotavo used watercolor paints as the medium to create the artwork. The effect that was produced in the background can be made using this kind of paint and it seems like it was also splashed with water. It is seen in the artwork that there are lines and wrinkles like a crumpled paper, this made the painting look old and aged. Bright colors were mostly used in the art and it is greatly detailed. The colors and how the artwork was created, complimented the main figure and made it more obvious or visible which allows the audience or the viewers to appreciate it more.

### 5.3. Art Elements and Principles

The art painted by Delotavo was magnificently made; the elements in the painting were placed and arranged perfectly, they are created in a manner that complements each other. The medium, which is watercolor, and the techniques that were used adds an effect appropriate to the art and enhances it. Also, the part where the paper used seemed wrinkled or crumpled up was a great way to achieve a better outcome and it made an effect that it looked like an old painting. The bright red color in the background contrasted with white colors is eye-catching but since it only used two colors, it also amplifies the main figure which is the man. The artwork was greatly detailed and made it pleasing to the eye. Overall, the painting was very well made; the techniques used were fitting, the colors were visually appealing, and not only it was created wonderfully, but it also has a significant meaning. This art deserves more appreciation and more people should see this masterpiece.

## 6. Interpretation and Analysis in Contemporary Art

To be able to study and interpret modern art, one must first recognize the artists' varied perspectives on life, ideas, and reality. According to some artists, the individual is influenced by language, social relationships, and the unconscious. They believe they are powerless to bring about change. Another set of artists, dubbed "structuralists," think that things can be explained by their relationship to other phenomena. These phenomena are governed by laws and signs, and the artist's task is to make them visible. They pursue objectivity (in contrast to subjectivity), coherence, and rigor, all of which are backed up by science and theories. They seek universal truth and believe in the unchanging character of human beings (Ramirez, 2016).

Historically, artists were reliant on benefactors such as the church, wealthy individuals, the state, or powerful institutions. However, this is no longer the case, and contemporary artists are free to experiment and create extremely personal work. They coined the tagline "Art for the sake of art" and self-identify as "avant-garde" as they experiment with new technologies, movement, and speed, as well as manufacturing and construction. Given the complexities of contemporary art, young viewers should be guided in their examination and understanding of art.

### 6.1. Art Analysis

The analysis of art begins with a description of the work of art. Here, the viewer's attention is drawn to an artwork's beauty, design attributes, and value. This is where viewers deduce what the features suggest and why the artist chose to utilize them to convey particular concepts. Analysis necessitates a knowledge of the content by dissecting it into its constituent pieces. This can assist in comprehending the organizational structure, nature, function, and value of the artwork. The numerous components of analysis include the following: (a) defining the subject matter of the artwork by naming events or issues linked with it; (b) discussing how the artwork's features contribute to its appearance; image, or function; and (c) the effect of the materials/medium utilized and the reaction to the artwork.

One can also answer the following questions: (a) How did the artist make the artwork? (b) Is it a good artwork? Do you like/dislike the artwork? Why? (c) How does it compare with other artworks in the same contemporary style? (d) What is the value of the artwork to you, the youth, or society?

As an exemplar in applying the guidelines and questions above, the following is an art analysis of contemporary art from the artwork of Tabuena (1957) entitled *Beggar* as shown in Figure 4.



**Fig 4** “Beggar” (Tabuena, 1957)

When you look at the artwork, the first thing that we can see is a man sitting down with a mug in his hand. If you look closely, the main figure, which is the man, looks very exhausted and worn out. Based on the artwork shown, he seems sad or unhappy with his current position in life. This artistic piece is somehow an abstract piece; it has thick harsh lines all over the whole art. The way that the art is made, the techniques used was very appropriate in expressing the message. Dark colors, dark values, and hues were mostly used throughout the art and very minimal light colors for the highlights are seen to show the audience the dark side of the issue that is being conveyed by the artist. The artists also made use of straight lines and very little curve lines that create different shapes, mostly triangles, to form the figure of the man. This technique along with the dark brown shades makes it seem like the man was crumpled like paper and thrown away.

The artist made the artwork very dark, depressing, and heartbreaking. It vividly shows the situation of the man that is suffering from the issue that is being discussed. The artistic piece “Beggar” exhibits the hardships of the people, the suffering of the poor who are being neglected and ignored. In my opinion, the artwork is very well made and it conveys a great message. It can raise awareness to the people who see it about certain issues in our society. Like the other social realist artists who also have their own advocacy and their own artworks, this art is a good example of contemporary art styles. These kinds of art pieces should be known by a lot of people; if many individuals get to appreciate this art maybe it can change how we view certain circumstances. Having the youth and the society sees this, can change their perspective on things and influence them to do good and better things.

## 6.2. Art Interpretation

After describing and analyzing an artwork, the observer employs art interpretation. The emphasis is on the artist's expressive abilities, the meaning, topic, emotion, or idea communicated. Several other components of interpretation are as follows: (a) the artwork's central idea and general meaning, (b) an interpretive statement: "Can I describe what I believe the artwork is about in a single sentence?" and (c) evidence within or outside the artwork that supports the interpretation.

One can also answer the following questions: (a) What is the artwork about? (b) What is it intending to communicate? (c) What statement is the artist putting forward through the artwork? (d) Are there objects within the artistic frame that symbolize something? What are these? (e) What is the meaning of the artwork?

As an exemplar in applying the guidelines and questions above, the following is an art interpretation of contemporary art from the artwork of Lluch (1988) entitled *Cutting Onions Always Makes Me Cry* as shown in Figure 5.



**Fig 5** “Cutting Onions Always Makes Me Cry” (Lluch, 1988)

The art piece “*Cutting Onions Always Makes Me Cry*” by Julie Lluch shows a woman crying as she continues to cut the onions. The artist relays the message where the woman is suffering from the oppressive systems of the society where men are dominating. The art piece is about women being trapped and enslaved by the systems implemented by our society; they abide and endure the duties of a woman set by the public even if they are already suffering. It clearly shows in the art made out of ceramic, that the woman is cooking which is a chore associated with a woman at home. It manifests an image where women are trapped with just these certain roles in our homes set by our society. If we look attentively at the art piece, we can see that the woman looks very exhausted, dull, drained, and almost unwell. The woman crying while cutting the onions as she cooks may interpret her suffering in her current situation.

The artwork made by Julie Lluch, “*Cutting Onions Always Makes Me Cry*” conveys a message that women are being enslaved by certain gender roles carried out by society. The contemporary artist, who made the art, created it her own portrait, her own image, which can mean that she is also bearing these sufferings. We can interpret that the artist is sending the message to stop imprisoning women within these stereotypical gender roles and encourage equal rights between men and women. She created a figure of herself, a self-portrait, cooking and crying while cutting the onions, these certain things may symbolize women who are experiencing this misery every day. The artwork is sending out a message to the people about these unacceptable issues that people today are still suffering from and are tolerated by society. If many people today get to know and learn about this art piece, it may influence them to change their views and stop contributing to the matter being discussed.

## **7. Different Contemporary Art Techniques and Practices**

A piece of art is the deft manipulation of a medium in order to communicate a concept or experience. To be perceived by the senses, a piece of art must have a physical expression. The medium is the substance that is manipulated, whereas the technique is the method by which the medium is processed. The methodology could involve the use of tools or technology. The medium and method used in the artwork are critical to its comprehension and enjoyment.

### **7.1. Local Materials used as Applied to Contemporary Art**

"Local" could mean easy to get items, like bamboo. The local may also mean wherever the artist finds themselves. For neo-ethnic musician-visual/performance artist Diokno Pasilan, "local" involves many localities, which include Baguio, Bicol, Palawan, and most recently Victoria, Western Australia, where he relocated. This involves interacting and immersing in the host community. For example, at a performance for the Third Bagasbas Beach International Environmental Art Festival in the Bicol region, Pasilan painted his body green, the color of the environmental movement. He bunged himself toward the gongs, which were connected to a bamboo framework and were abundant in Bagasbas's nearby fisherfolk villages. The Bagasbas residents assisted Pasilan and other participants in their performances and installations along the Bagasbas public beach.

### **7.2. Traditional Techniques Applied to Contemporary Creation**

Throughout history, clay, fiber, stone, wood, paint, and even the human body have been frequently employed as media. As new tools and technology are developed, new media emerge, such as photography, video, sound recording, digital imaging, and electronic music throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Natural or synthetic media are both acceptable, and so is media composed of a combination of diverse elements, referred to as mixed media. It is critical to be familiar with a variety of media and techniques in order to effectively advance an idea in visual arts, performing arts, and camera arts, such as: (a) Visual Arts - pottery, weaving, basketry, banig, textile art, woodcarving, metal craft, casting, printmaking, handmade paper-making, paper mache, paper cutting art, conceptual art, masonry, and other related techniques; (b) Performing Arts - theater, new music, popular music and jazz, folk and indigenous music, ballet, modern dance and theater, social dance, folk and indigenous dance, and others, and (c) Camera Arts - photography, digital media, cinema, and film.

As an exemplar in applying the guidelines above, the following is an art context and art interpretation to contemporary art from one of the artworks in the Pinto Art Museum using available local material as shown in Figure 6.



**Fig 6** One of the Artworks in the Pinto Art Museum using available Local materials

### 7.3. Art Context

I think that the contexts of arts that are evident in this piece are the context of its nature and the context of everyday life. I see the concept of the nature context in this artistic piece; it is because the artist seems to find a source of inspiration in creating this kind of art. This may be the type of art that the artist wants to make and maybe this is where she/he is comfortable with. I also see the concept of everyday life in this artwork because it manifests an image of a boy and a girl being together in which they seem to have a relationship with each other. Not only it is visually appealing, but it also has its value and influence on the audience. The art lets its audience see a scenario in our everyday life and it captures the many senses of a person; the sense of touch and the visual sense. It allows its viewers to connect with the art piece; it lets them feel certain emotions and feelings.

### 7.4. Art Interpretation

The artwork that is shown is a three-dimensional figure of a man and a woman facing each other. The artist made this artistic piece by using a medium that looks like many lines and strings that are put together; it seems that it may be made out of plastic, metal, or any type of medium. The artwork is good; you can see emotions in the faces of the figures if you look closely. I think this piece is about a man and a woman who are together and it looks as if they have argued and are making up with each other. Both of their heads are bowed down, which manifests them showing humility and being meek towards each other. It may tell us a message that a relationship requires the cooperation of both sides in order for the relationship to work; both of them need to take away their pride and be accepting of themselves and one another. The artistic piece may symbolize the love between partners. It is a wonderful piece that many people should acknowledge and appreciate.



## 8. Art Criticism: Valuing Contemporary Art

Art criticism is a systematic approach to the examination of works of art. When someone hears the word criticism, what comes to his/her mind? Do you believe it entails expressing an unfavorable opinion about a particular work? This is incorrect. Criticism can be interpreted positively. Some reviewers appear on television or YouTube, while others write reviews for new films, plays, television shows, videos, books, art exhibits, video games, and music in newspapers and online blogs. These critics discuss their reactions to various forms of art and weigh in on the works' merits. You may not always agree with their assessments, as the criteria or standards of evaluation may differ significantly from those of the professional critic.

After one has completed the tedious task of describing, analyzing, and interpreting contemporary artwork, he/she can now make a judgment: Is it a good work of art? In this example, discernment (judgment) is the final step in art criticism, following analysis and interpretation of an artwork; the AID method for art criticism is comprised of analysis, interpretation, and discernment. This phase will allow critics to express whether they believe the artwork is successful or not. Judging a work entails assigning it a position in relation to other works and defining its uniqueness within a body of work.

One can also answer the following questions: (a) Is it a good artwork? (b) What is the artwork's relevance to the art community and society as a whole? (c) Do you think this is a successful work of art? Why or why not? (d) What criteria do you think are most appropriate for judging the artwork? (e) What evidence inside or outside the artwork relates to each criterion?

As an exemplar in applying the guidelines and questions above, the following is an art criticism of contemporary art from one of the artworks of Legaspi (1949) entitled *Gadgets* as shown in Figure 7.



**Fig 7** “Gadgets” (Legaspi, 1949)

### 8.1. Art Analysis

In the artwork, “*Gadgets*” by Cesar Legaspi, it is shown there the people that look like they are workers in a factory. The workers are dark-skinned, they look exhausted, and their bodies are full of lean muscles and no fat because of the work that they do. It seems that they are working on some type of machines; massive pieces of machinery are also very evident in the painting. The art piece is rich in color, it mostly uses dark hues and values; chromatic colors are seen throughout the piece, shadows are also very prominent. The machines look like they were painted carefully and accurately; the edges and the lines are sharp, the circles and other shapes are made perfectly. The artwork looks magnificent, it is detailed and there is depth in the painting. I think the dark colors used were very appropriate and fitting. If compared to other contemporary works, this will be a great fit in this category, it sends out a message to us and allows us to understand and be more knowledgeable about certain issues. This art was made for the people in the post-war industrialization era.

### 8.2. Art Interpretation

In the painting made by Cesar Legaspi entitled “*Gadgets*”, machines were the figures that are mostly seen in the art. The theme and colors used were dark in order to create the mood of the art piece. This work intends to remind the people in the industrial period about the increasing importance of pieces of machinery and to inform them about his perspective of humans turning into machines. The mood in the painting was dark, depth was considered and a lot of shadows were put into the painting, this may represent the darkness and the dangers that humans and machines can make and let out into the world. Huge machines were apparent in the art, this may symbolize that the machines were dominating the humans and taking over their places. The artistic piece that was shown is about machines and humans, the artist aims to make the people knowledgeable about the topic of the essentiality of machines and their relationship to humans.

### 8.3. Art Discernment

In studying this art piece entitled “*Gadgets*” by Cesar Legaspi, it is clearly perceptible that the art was made beautifully, it was exceptional. The dark colors used in the painting were nice and appealing to the eye, it fits the mood greatly. The issue chosen to be discussed in the painting was very appropriate during the time that it was painted up until today. Overall, I think the art piece was made successfully as it is; however, if I were to make suggestions to make the work better, I would like to advise the painter to put more emotions on the faces of the people in the art. When you see the faces of the figures, you should be able to understand fully how they feel in their current situation, and seeing their faces should make you understand the painting as a whole. Also, maybe the painting’s colors were faded throughout the years thus, it would make a big difference to restore the painting and make the colors more vibrant. The art as it is truly wonderful, it deserves to be appraised and appreciated by many people.

## 9. Conclusion

Being granted the opportunity to critique an artwork is something special, and criticism is not only the act of taking a look at the work and explaining what you think of giving a negative appraisal. To deliver effective critique, one must first know and understand the work or piece you will be evaluating; you will have to study it completely before arriving at a clear interpretation of



the artist's intentions with regards to the artwork. Popular kinds of art, as opposed to obscure ones, are harder to criticize since individuals outside the art community are less likely to notice and think it is art. Admiring the beautiful things in life is quite alluring. The quality and artwork within these magnificent pieces bring to mind the thoughts of almost perfection, and critique is not necessary. Furthermore, complex artwork like abstract art or artwork that appears very cluttered when you look at it is tough to evaluate and study; one may not know what the artist wants to convey with the work.

In this case, the current way that art is viewed has been stagnant for a long time; the case art is understood has been standardized. The AID Method, or the Analysis-Interpretation-Discernment Method, has been employed as one of the approaches used in the analysis, interpretation, and discernment of contemporary Philippine artwork. By developing our grasp of contemporary art and depicting information on the various features, concepts, and locations of the area, critics will utilize this approach with contemporary art instruction and information on contemporary art pieces. Generally speaking, criticism has a net positive effect when it is utilized neutrally and without libelous intent. A lot of critics present a wide range of perspectives and ideas regarding different forms of art and the artistic quality of the works. While there may be differing points of view, one must acknowledge that there is always a distinct difference between professional critics' evaluation criteria and standards, and those of the general public. This effort is designed to create a respect and appreciation of Philippine arts and culture, which can be accomplished by for example by frequent engagement at art exhibitions and conversations with artists who are now living and practicing. Critical appraisal and critical discussion of contemporary art are both important components of the inquiry process because they enable the recognition of diverse contexts of contemporary art, including assisting identify the contexts of contemporary art in contexts that are already understood.

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