

Guernica

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Guernica Art has provided pleasure to many people all over the world. From Notre Dame in Paris, to a child's scribbles, art is all around us. With so many forms of art, we have to make sure that the way in which we judge art is concise. This guideline is called criteria, and it can be interpreted and translated as a way to judge every type of art. I have chosen to judge a painting, and after careful consideration, I have picked out three criterion I find are best used when judging this type of art. The three different criteria that I am going to use are composition, aesthetics, and realism. The painting "Guernica" is one of Pablo Picasso's most well known paintings. Picasso painted this after twenty-eight nazi German bombers unexpectedly dropped hundreds of bombs on Guernica, a town in Northern Spain. Earlier that year, the Spanish government had enlisted Picasso to create a painting to be hung in the Spanish slot at the World Fair of 1937. Pablo Picasso was unsure of the subject of the painting until the bombing occurred. The tragic bombing of Guernica was so inspirational it immediately became Picasso's focus, and only fifteen days after the bombing, he started painting. Picasso's painting "Guernica" is obviously a social statement about the bombings, but he never really explained exactly what he was trying to convey by using the elements that he does. This makes the painting very difficult to critique. The painting is recognized today as one of the major icons for peace. The first criteria I will be using to judge Picasso's "Guernica" is composition. Composition is considered by many to be one of the hardest criteria to describe, as many paintings are very detailed. I think of composition as the order of a painting. How the painting is situated, taking into consideration the foreground, background, and mid-ground. How are the figures in the painting arranged?

How does the order of the figures portray the artist's vision? Is the artist trying to tell us something by their groupings? All these factors combined add to the painting's overall composition. Picasso uses many different layers in this painting. Although the picture is full of figures, it seems like none of the characters are actually close to each other. They are separated by his perfect use of the background, foreground, and mid-ground. Every character seems to be lost in the chaos of their own little spot in the painting. Death is a main theme of "Guernica", from the dead bird in the background to the severed arm in the foreground. The mid-ground seems to be a blur of different characters. In most paintings that would be confusing, but Picasso does it in a way so that we can understand the drama and craziness that is going on in the scene. Aesthetics is another criteria I will be using to critique this painting. Aesthetics is a feeling one gets as they look at a painting. It can also be defined as the beauty of the painting, but we must always remember that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and therefore aesthetics is different for every single person. No two people will ever have the same exact aesthetic view from a painting. When looking at "Guernica", many emotions are present. The characters in the painting are distressed. There is no sense of order, and it appears as though Picasso is attempting to play to the viewer's emotions. An outstanding figure on the far left is a lady who looks disfigured and is crying, and in her arms a dead child. The mother is striped nude; she no longer cares for her looks or who can see her, because she has lost the greatest part of her life, her child. In the very front of the painting there is a dead soldier lying on the ground with his severed arm next to him. This represents the helplessness of the soldiers, as they had no warning

of the bombing and had no mode to fight back. In this way Picasso shows how soldiers and civilians alike are slaughtered and that there is no escape from the violence. Picasso portrays that by adding animals that are dying just like the humans. The chaos is overwhelming when observing this picture. One cannot help but feel for the people that are trapped in this scene, immortalized forever by Picassos brush strokes. The feeling I receive from this painting is one of forlornness and helplessness. It is a beautiful painting despite the sadness. Realism is the last criteria that I will be using. Realism is best described as how much a painting looks like the objects we encounter in our everyday life. Do the characters look human? On the other side of the spectrum, are the figures contorted, or even abstract, such as mythological creatures? Looking past the figures, does the environment of this painting appear out of this world, or does it look like a place that you could possibly visit someday? When using realism as part of a critique of a painting you must consider all of the questions stated above. In my opinion the painting does not seem to be very realistic. The forms in “ Guernica” resemble things we might encounter in every day life such as a bull, a person, or a horse, but they have been severely distorted. The near human characters are very contorted and in some cases completely disfigured and dismembered. But I believe this is probably what Picasso was going for. It seems Picasso was trying to show the harsh reality that these people had to endure as they were being bombed. The characters all have open mouths as if they were screaming; which is very similar to the reactions the victims of the Guernica bombings must have encountered. In this way the emotion portrayed is very realistic, while the forms in the painting are generally not.

To show the anguish they must be feeling, daggers are emanating from many figures mouths, which is very unrealistic. Many characters in "Guernica" are animals, but they appear almost humanlike. Upon close inspection one can notice that the bull and horses eyes display a sort of anguish. I believe Picasso created this effect to allow us, the viewer, to feel the emotions of beings who are often overlooked in disasters. Even though this painting does not show humans as realistic, the painting does seem to emanate very real feelings of pain, confusion, and suffering. The painting of Guernica is definitely one of a kind. Picasso took a horrid, despicable, ugly act and painted it into a picture that now stands for Peace and Prosperity. The people of Guernica will never be forgotten because of Picasso's dark yet inspiring painting. As time moves on we can now look back at this painting not only as a social statement but also for its aesthetic beauty, its composition, and its unrealistic portrayal of the bombing of Guernica.