

Example of Writing a Visual Analysis Essay

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## An Example of a Visual Analysis Essay



Otto Dix's (German, 1891–1969) *Liegenede auf Leopardenfell* (**Reclining Woman on a Leopard Skin**), 1927. Oil on panel (70 x 99 cm), 55.031.

**Topic:** Analysis of Reclining Woman on a Leopard Skin by Otto Dix

### I. Introduction Sample of a Visual Analysis Essay

Analyzing an image or visual display is an exciting and challenging academic undertaking for many students. Unlike other academic texts that focus on what other scholars have said, written, and documented through research studies, a visual analysis focuses on an image. As such, the student's work is to provide an in-depth description of how the artist has appropriated elements and principles of design in their work. Looking at Otto Dix's "Reclining Woman on a Leopard Skin" image above, it is evident the artist has appropriated contrast, color, size, and texture, among other elements and principles of design, to make a picture come to life.

## II. Example of a Body in a Visual Analysis Essay

### A. Reclining Position of a Woman

Dix's image above reflects a woman in a dress and stockings in a reclining position. Besides two different types of textile around her, there is a leopard fur beneath her body's upper side. Behind a woman is a snarling animal resembling a dog, and on the far right of the painting is wood flooring. Looking at the woman's face, one can notice that this the focal point. Basically, it is where the artist has concentrated sharp detail, thus making her face confront the audience instantly. Concerning principles of contrast and emphasis, a red lipstick contrasts sharply with the woman's light skin, while using her hand as a frame beneath her face emphasizes a focal point.

### B. Colors

When it comes to design elements, the artist has used the green, red, white, and brown colors to exemplify the image. In this case, a closer look indicates that Dix has contrasted red and green, a warm and cold color, respectively, particularly on the woman's skin and face. Moreover, he has contrasted dark and light, whereby her face and body exemplify a light theme, while other objects in a picture exemplify have a dark theme.

### C. Lines

Regarding a line element, Dix has used smooth curves around the woman's lower body, particularly around her hip and thighs. In particular, doing so has helped bring out the aspect of "femininity." Interestingly, the use of angular lines around the face, jaw, fingers, and shoulders emphasizes the "masculine" aspect. Besides strong lines that make the cheeks and jaw prominent, the artist has also used a line element to exaggerate the woman's eyes, which takes the shape of cat eyes or curved almonds.

#### D. Texture

About an element of texture, it is evident that the artist has gone into great lengths to create an illusion of texture. Notably, an image has no literal texture because it is a two-dimensional painting. Moreover, Dix's effort in creating texture is evident by many objects that he includes in his painting. In turn, these objects include the leopard fur; the woman's dress, stockings, and hair; the materials that look like velvet; and the fur of the dog-like animal. Besides, all these objects create a temptation to touch. In this case, the texture of the woman's evening wear and the curtain in the background with a velvet-look suggest a sense of costume and luxury. Collectively, they enhance a visual and material richness of an image.

#### III. Conclusion Sample of a Visual Analysis Essay

There is doubt that analyzing an image or a visual display is an exciting and challenging academic endeavor for students of art. In particular, Dix's "Reclining Woman on a Leopard Skin" image shows a master with which the artist has appropriated contrast, color, size, and texture, among other elements and principles of design to make his work come to life. About a painting, the artist has used these concepts to exemplify the woman's face, which is the painting's focal point.