APA Article Review: Netherlandish Art

The work of Jan van Eyck has provoked some of the most extensive scholarship in art history. His extraordinary detail and use of symbolism have enthralled viewers since his work first emerged in the 15th century. In the early 20th century, the art historian Erwin Panofsky detailed the use of disguised symbolism in van Eyck’s work and offered a comprehensive method for the consideration of his paintings. Panofsky’s seminal work, Early Netherlandish Painting, specifically interpreted the double portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, offering the most influential interpretation of the work. Since then, every art historical investigation of the piece has had to account for Panofsky; no interpretation exists outside the shadow that Early Netherlandish Painting cast.

Your assignment is to read and respond to at least two articles related to van Eyck’s work. This is very much like what you will be expected to do next year as you move on to your post-secondary education. Approach this as a practice experience for college.

I have listed below a series of articles related to van Eyck located on JSTOR. Select TWO essays to read thoroughly. They are not short, and not all are equally engaging, but each has something unique and interesting to say about van Eyck. Take notes as you read. Find the thesis. Identify the argument and supporting evidence. Evaluate the conclusions.

Your written critique of each article should be about two pages in length (assuming normal margins and font size). It should have several organized paragraphs and be well written. As always, typed double-spaced, please. Although you are summarizing a lot of material, the writing should not sound like a report. I have also linked a guide to writing a critique – please take a moment to read through it before you begin your article reading. (You should also have read the section on Netherlandish art in your textbook!)

[How to write a critique: Look at the assignments page]

Article suggestions on the Arnolfini portrait:

- “Jan van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait.” Panofsky, Erwin.
- “‘In the Name of God and Profit’: Jan van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait.” Carroll, Margaret D. Disguised “Symbolism as Enactive Symbolism in Van Eyck’s Paintings.” Ward, John L.

Other options on van Eyck – The Virgin and Chancellor Rolin:

- “Van Eyck's Chancellor Rolin and the Blessed Virgin.” Ward, John L.
- “The Canonical Office in Renaissance Painting, Part II: More about the Rolin Madonna.” Van Buren, Anne Hagopian.

The school is connected to the JSTOR database which indexes academic articles from a wide variety of journals, and you can access this database and the articles from home. Use the following directions:

1. Go to: www.jstor.org
2. Username/Password
3. In the navigation bar select “Search” and then “Basic”
4. Enter the title in quotes

There you go!