Seminar checklist for ARHA 301: The art of beholding

Six Steps toward the Threshold of Beholding (Threshold of our Being):

The “calculus” of beholding

Step One – Pre-condition: To be is to be separate; and to be separate is to long to be whole (mortal consciousness).

Focused Attention

Step Two – Work of Art: artist (dates, nationality, biography, training, etc.); object (painting, date, chronology in artist’s oeuvre; physical description (support - canvas, wood, paper, etc.); medium (oil, acrylic, tempera, watercolor, etc.); size (horizontal/vertical dimensions, etc.); structure (collage, multi-media, etc.); origin (initial location, studio, plein air, in situ – fresco, mural, etc); function (altar, public building, private home, museum); provenance from artist’s hand to current location and presentation; bibliography (monographs, articles, museum catalogs, etc.)

Step Three – Form: format (square, rectangle, circle, etc.); frame; edge; picture surface; picture plane; two-dimensional shapes (line, figure/ground, patterns, rhythms, etc.); picture plane organization (composition); three-dimensional forms; spatial organization; illusory space (foreground, middle ground, background); color (hue, value, intensity); brush-stroke/image continuum(!).

Step Four – Iconography: literal content (subject); narrative; symbolism; allegory; metaphorical subject/content; “pictorial gesture;” iconology (cultural context, particular and general (e.g., St. Peter’s keys/authority).

Step Five – Contradiction: form and content (“brushstroke”…”image”); interior/exterior; 2D/3D realities; picture surface/picture plane/illusory space; color (hue, value, intensity; e.g., red/green, intense/neutral; light/middle/dark); iconography (literal, allegorical, metaphorical; e.g. Vermeer’s muse/model); narrative (time/space, “light” and value, etc.); diachronic/synchronic realities; “center of pictorial gravity.”

Step Six -- Threshold of Beholding: Love the verb: contemplation with particular intimations of reconciliation of particular contradictory realities – form & content; “order/experience;” erōs/insight; circles of affection; I=You; the art of beholding.

Open Awareness

Release; Wholeness; Peace; Love the noun; Infinite Being