

A Quantitative Analysis of Critical Posture in Art Writing, 1980-2025 (Dataset - 20 Critical Texts 1980–2025)

Author: Dorian Vale

Affiliation: Museum of One — Registered Archive and Independent Research Institute for Contemporary Aesthetics

Museum of One|Written at the Threshold#

Dataset: 20 Critical Texts (1980–2025)

Methodology: Sentence-by-sentence coding for Rhetorical Density (**RD**), Interpretive Load (**ILI**), Viewer Displacement (**VDR**), Ethical Proximity (**EPS**), and Institutional Alignment (**IAI**).

Sample 1: Artnet News — “Worst Art of 2024”

Text Segment (~150 words): “Lest this entry read as a cop out... Bull makes perfectly fine paintings by slicing and dicing... acclaim is completely out of proportion... razzle-dazzle pictures... fundamentally cheesy.”

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀**: $D = 8$ (Metaphors/Intensifiers), $W = 150$.

$$RD = \frac{8}{150} \times 100 = \mathbf{5.33}$$

- **ILI**: $MAC = 6$ ("fine paintings," "out of proportion," "overworked," "telling you," "piling up," "cheesy"); $EBS = 2$ ("slicing and dicing," "razzle-dazzle" [visual]).

$$ILI = \left(\frac{6}{6+2}\right) \times 100 = \mathbf{75\%}$$
 (High)

- **VDR**: $U = 4$ ("insist on telling you," "for your consumption," "fundamentally cheesy," "acclaim out of proportion"); $S = 0$ (No "I saw" or "We felt").

$$VDR = \frac{4}{0} = \infty$$
 (Total Displacement)

- **EPS**: $R = 1$ ("Lest this read as cop out"); $C = 5$ ("completely," "fundamentally," "worst," "insist," "perfectly fine").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{5} = \mathbf{0.20}$$
 (Low)

- **IAI:** $M = 6$ ("ICA Miami," "MOCA," "LACMA," "Hirshhorn," "collectors," "lenders").

$$IAI = \frac{6}{150} \times 100 = 4.00 \text{ (High)}$$

Profile 1:

Metric	Score	Band
RD_{100}	5.33	Moderate
ILI	75%	High (Extraction)
VDR	∞	Total Displacement
EPS	0.20	Low (Verdict)
IAI	4.00	High (Market)

Sample 2: ArtNews — Art Basel Review

Text Segment (~180 words): "Staring at Lucy Bull's recent abstract paintings... found it tough to forget... Is her latest work \$1.81 million good? I doubt it... swoops of black writhe against a pine-green void."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD_{100} :** $D = 8, W = 180$.

$$RD = \frac{8}{180} \times 100 = 4.44$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 5$ ("not entirely fair," "rarely align," "suggest talent," "evident," "1.81m good?"); $\$EBS = 4$ ("staring at," "swoops writhe," "pine-green void," "scraping away").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{5}{5 + 4} \right) \times 100 = 55.5\% \text{ (Moderate)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 2$ ("monetary valuations rarely align," "bigger is not always better"); $S = 4$ ("I found," "I doubt," "Staring at," "here").

$$VDR = \frac{2}{4} = 0.50 \text{ (Low - Situated)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 3$ ("not entirely fair," "I doubt it," "suggest that"); $C = 3$ ("certainly huge," "evident," "rarely").

$$EPS = \frac{3}{3} = 1.00 \text{ (Balanced)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 5$ ("\$1.81 million," "auction records," "art-historical worth," "museum," "market-driven").

$$IAI = \frac{5}{180} \times 100 = \mathbf{2.77} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

Profile 2:

Metric	Score	Band
RD_{100}	4.44	Low
ILI	55.5%	Moderate
VDR	0.50	Low (Situated)
EPS	1.00	Balanced
IAI	2.77	Moderate

Sample 3: ICA Miami — Press Release

Text Segment (~160 words): "Known for visceral works... appeal directly to the senses... edge of language... momentary coagulations... 'singular voice in contemporary abstract painting'..."

CALCULATIONS

- RD_{100} : $D = 10$, $W = 160$.

$$RD = \frac{10}{160} \times 100 = \mathbf{6.25}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 7$ ("visceral," "appeal directly," "singular voice," "genre-defining," "distinct perspective," "constant tension," "rapidly evolve"); $EBS = 3$ ("swap places," "morph into," "settle back").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{7}{7+3} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{70\%} \text{ (High)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 5$ ("the viewer's perception," "singular voice," "contemporary painting," "internal psychic spaces," "appeal to senses"); $S = 0$.

$$VDR = \frac{5}{0} = \infty \text{ (Universal)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 0$; $C = 6$ ("Known for," "singular," "defining," "constantly," "disrupts," "creates").

$$EPS = \frac{0}{6} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (No Restraint)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 8$ ("ICA Miami," "Artistic Director," "contemporary abstract painting," "genre-defining," "practice," "perspective," "dynamic," "singular").

$$IAI = \frac{8}{160} \times 100 = \mathbf{5.00} \text{ (Very High)}$$

Profile 3:

Metric	Score	Band
RD_{100}	6.25	Moderate
ILI	70%	High
VDR	∞	Universal
EPS	0.00	Very Low
IAI	5.00	Very High

Sample 4: FAD Magazine — Anish Kapoor

Text Segment (~140 words): "Big, bold sculpture... you know the drill... more than seven metres cubed... sits beneath a stained-glass window... guides our gaze upwards."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD_{100} :** $D = 7, W = 140$.

$$RD = \frac{7}{140} \times 100 = \mathbf{5.00}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 4$ ("impactful," "know the drill," "stunning," "hold its own"); $EBS = 4$ ("seven metres cubed," "beneath window," "red and black," "openings on all sides").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{4}{4+4} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{50\%} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 3$ ("you know the drill," "usually outside," "stunning architecture"); $S = 2$ ("when we look," "guides our gaze").

$$VDR = \frac{3}{2} = \mathbf{1.50} \text{ (Moderate-High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 1$ ("more than [approx]"); $C = 3$ ("impactful," "stunning," "trademark").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{3} = \mathbf{0.33} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 2$ ("Liverpool Cathedral," "Kapoor's art").

$$IAI = \frac{2}{140} \times 100 = \mathbf{1.42} \text{ (Low)}$$

Profile 4:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	5.00	Descriptive
ILI	50%	Moderate
VDR	.50	Mixed
EPS	0.33	Low
IAI	1.42	Low

Sample 5: ArtReview — “Politics Silenced Criticism?”

Text Segment (~165 words): “Contemporary artists are now under pressure to conform... lauded for their political qualities... you surely can’t be racist if you believe... context matters.”

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 9, W = 165$.

$$RD = \frac{9}{165} \times 100 = \mathbf{5.45}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 8$ (Entire text is argumentation: "under pressure," "lauded," "aligning," "taken as statement," "balance context," etc.); $EBS = 0$.

$$ILI = \left(\frac{8}{8 + 0} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{100\%} \text{ (Pure Theory)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 6$ ("Contemporary artists," "those on the left," "moral imperatives," "you surely can't," "Great artworks," "bad ones"); $S = 0$.

$$VDR = \frac{6}{0} = \infty \text{ (Omniscient)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 1$ ("Don't get me wrong"); $C = 5$ ("surely can't," "taken as," "balance," "must," "end up").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{5} = \mathbf{0.20} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 5$ ("Contemporary artists," "political spectrum," "Black figurative artist," "art-historical," "success").

$$IAI = \frac{5}{165} \times 100 = \mathbf{3.03} \text{ (Moderate-High)}$$

Profile 5:

Metric	Score	Band
RD_{100}	5.45	Analytical
ILI	100%	Theoretical
VDR	∞	Omniscient
EPS	0.20	Low
IAI	3.03	Mod-High

Sample 6: BOMB Magazine — Artist Interview

Text Segment (~130 words): "Lucy Bull's paintings erupt beyond their flat surfaces... resemble sublime landscapes... belies an arduous process... painstakingly etches into them."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD_{100} :** $D = 11, W = 130$.

$$RD = \frac{11}{130} \times 100 = \mathbf{8.46}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 5$ ("erupt beyond," "sublime landscapes," "chaotic worlds," "monumental quality," "new avenues"); $EBS = 3$ ("flat surfaces," "builds up layers," "etches into").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{5}{5+3} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{62.5\%} \text{ (Mod-High)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 2$ ("engulfing their viewers," "our psyches"); $S = 2$ ("she calls," "Bull made").
Note: Artist-mediated situatedness.

$$VDR = \frac{2}{2} = \mathbf{1.00} \text{ (Balanced)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 2$ ("seeming fluidity," "what she calls"); $C = 3$ ("undoubtedly," "manage to," "only grown").

$$EPS = \frac{2}{3} = \mathbf{0.66} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 3$ ("abstract," "diptychs," "sublime").

$$IAI = \frac{3}{130} \times 100 = \mathbf{2.30} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

Profile 6:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	8.46	Expressive
ILI	62.5%	Mod-High
VDR	1.00	Balanced
EPS	0.66	Moderate
IAI	2.30	Moderate

Sample 7: Montreal — Theoretical Essay

Text Segment (~170 words): "...ontological possibility of culture does not exist... strategic form of self-demolition... de-contemporize Contemporary Art... seeds for destroying it."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 12, W = 170$.

$$RD = \frac{12}{170} \times 100 = \mathbf{7.06}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 9$ ("figure/ground collapsed," "ontological possibility," "strategic form," "challenges," "prevent," "seeds for destroying," "role of critic," "de-contemporize," "de-naturalize"); $EBS = 0$.

$$ILI = \left(\frac{9}{9 + 0} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{100\%} \text{ (Theoretical)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 5$ ("Pretty much all," "role of the critic," "fantasy of culture," "Contemporary Art," "ontological possibility"); $S = 0$.

$$VDR = \frac{5}{0} = \infty \text{ (Omniscient)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 1$ ("One way... another is" [structure implies options]); $C = 6$ ("does not exist," "is to," "must," "primary," "only," "collapsed").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{6} = \mathbf{0.16} \text{ (Very Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 8$ ("ontological," "Contemporary Art," "institution," "Fred Jameson," "referents," "culture," "figure and ground").

$$IAI = \frac{8}{170} \times 100 = \mathbf{4.70} \text{ (High)}$$

Profile 7:

Metric	Score	Band
RD_{100}	7.06	High
ILI	100%	V. High
VDR	∞	V. High
EPS	0.16	V. Low
IAI	4.70	High

Sample 8: Cultured Magazine — “Psychomachia”

Text Segment (~145 words): “...anesthetized by 10-second videos... pander to shortened attention spans... But after viewers are wowed, then what? ...essence of awe.”

CALCULATIONS

- **RD_{100} :** $D = 10, W = 145$.

$$RD = \frac{10}{145} \times 100 = \mathbf{6.90}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 6$ ("anesthetized," "need special training," "speak to broad public," "pander to," "essence of awe," "tweaked techniques"); $EBS = 1$ ("surrounding us with motion and color").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{6}{6 + 1} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{85.7\%} \text{ (High)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 3$ ("broad public," "shortened attention spans," "spectacles these days"); $S = 2$ ("make us feel," "surrounding us").

$$VDR = \frac{3}{2} = \mathbf{1.50} \text{ (Moderate-High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 3$ (Questions: "What must...?", "Which forms...?", "Then what?"); $C = 3$ ("anesthetized," "pander," "answer is").

$$EPS = \frac{3}{3} = 1.00 \text{ (Moderate)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 3$ ("immersive experiences," "Mark Leckey," "Cory Arcangel").

$$IAI = \frac{3}{145} \times 100 = 2.06 \text{ (Moderate)}$$

Profile 8:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	6.90	Expressive
ILI	85.7%	High
VDR	1.50	Mod-High
EPS	1.00	Moderate
IAI	2.06	Moderate

Sample 9: Lisson Gallery — Anish Kapoor

Text Segment (~135 words): "...deep-rooted impulse to experiment... forcing the viewer to reassess... flawed concave surfaces subtly warp one's perception... metres in front of the mirror."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 9, W = 135$.

$$RD = \frac{9}{135} \times 100 = 6.67$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 5$ ("impulse to experiment," "embraced," "forcing to reassess," "embodying journey," "engrossing viewer"); $EBS = 4$ ("mirrored surface," "concave surfaces," "reflecting light," "metres in front").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{5}{5+4} \right) \times 100 = 55.5\% \text{ (Moderate)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 3$ ("forcing the viewer," "engrossing the viewer," "one's perception"); $S = 1$ ("metres in front" [implies situated body]).

$$VDR = \frac{3}{1} = 3.00 \text{ (High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 1$ ("subtly warp"); $C = 4$ ("forcing," "embodying," "flawless," "engrossing").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{4} = \mathbf{0.25} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 6$ ("phenomenology," "oeuvre," "pictorial plane," "three-dimensional," "painterly," "mediums").

$$IAI = \frac{6}{135} \times 100 = \mathbf{4.44} \text{ (High)}$$

Profile 9:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	6.67	Expressive
ILI	55.5%	Moderate
VDR	3.00	High
EPS	0.25	Low
IAI	4.44	High

Sample 10: Art & Object — “Must-See Pieces”

Text Segment (~120 words): “Swirling studies of exuberant colors... half-form into faint shapes like clouds... tubular coils, and triangular edges spiral out...”

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 14$, $W = 120$.

$$RD = \frac{14}{120} \times 100 = \mathbf{11.67}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 2$ ("atmospheric experiences," "dynamic abstractions"); $EBS = 6$ ("swirling studies," "tubular coils," "triangular edges," "dark center," "hazy glinting field," "bright red/yellow").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{2}{2+6} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{25\%} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 0$; $S = 3$ ("in one's imagination," "reminiscent of," "surrounded by").

$$VDR = \frac{0}{3} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (Very Low)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 4$ ("half-form," "like clouds," "if they were," "vaguely circular"); $C = 2$ ("showcases," "depicts").

$$EPS = \frac{4}{2} = \mathbf{2.00} \text{ (High)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 2$ ("ICA Miami," "Must-See").

$$IAI = \frac{2}{120} \times 100 = \mathbf{1.66} \text{ (Low)}$$

Profile 10:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	11.67	V. High
ILI	25%	Low
VDR	0.00	Low
EPS	2.00	High
IAI	1.66	Low

Sample 11: The Guardian — “RA Summer Exhibition”

Text Segment (~140 words): “...mirror of the numbed, aimless condition... gasping death-rattle of mediocrity... leaden one-note wordplay.”

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 9, W = 140$.

$$RD = \frac{9}{140} \times 100 = \mathbf{6.42}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 6$ ("best enjoyed as mirror," "death-rattle," "mediocrity," "vapid," "no laughs," "pointless"); $EBS = 1$ ("sculpture of two model ships").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{6}{6+1} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{85.7\%} \text{ (High)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 4$ ("condition of Britain," "Nothing points," "almost all," "best enjoyed as"); $S = 0$.

$$VDR = \frac{4}{0} = \infty \text{ (High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 0$; $C = 5$ ("mediocrity," "pointless," "nothing," "leadens," "miserable").

$$EPS = \frac{0}{5} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (Very Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 3$ ("Royal Academy," "Summer Exhibition," "Conservative government").

$$IAI = \frac{3}{140} \times 100 = \mathbf{2.14} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

Profile 11:

Metric	Score	Band
RD_{100}	6.42	Expressive
ILI	85.7%	V. High
VDR	∞	High
EPS	0.00	V. Low
IAI	2.14	Moderate

Sample 12: The Brooklyn Rail — “Joop Sanders”

Text Segment (~145 words): “Striated carmine crashes into soot-edged flaxen forms... The work suggests (though only suggests) naturalism dissolved...”

CALCULATIONS

- **RD_{100} :** $D = 12$, $W = 145$.

$$RD = \frac{12}{145} \times 100 = \mathbf{8.27}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 3$ ("allude to squalor," "proves effective," "hold space"); $EBS = 7$ ("carmine crashes," "eggshell white," "breakaway bulbs," "petal-like orb," "swoops," "shards," "white fog").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{3}{3+7} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{30\%} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 0$; $S = 2$ ("Here we find," "swoops into corner").

$$VDR = \frac{0}{2} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 3$ ("though only suggests," "glimpses," "allude to"); $C = 1$ ("proves").

$$EPS = \frac{3}{1} = \mathbf{3.00} \text{ (Very High)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 6$ ("de Kooning," "pictorial space," "oil-on-canvas," "naturalism," "painterly flow," "no-environment").

$$IAI = \frac{6}{145} \times 100 = \mathbf{4.13} \text{ (High)}$$

Profile 12:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	8.27	V. High
ILI	30%	Low
VDR	0.00	Low
EPS	3.00	V. High
IAI	4.13	High

Sample 13: White Cube — Frieze Press Release

Text Segment (~120 words): "...highlights include a new work by Marguerite Humeau... critically acclaimed solo exhibition... ahead of her first solo exhibition in Korea."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 1, W = 120$.

$$RD = \frac{1}{120} \times 100 = \mathbf{0.83}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 3$ ("highlights," "critically acclaimed," "notable"); $EBS = 0$ (pure logistics).

$$ILI = \left(\frac{3}{3+0} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{100\%} \text{ (Extrinsic)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 4$ (Implicit universal validation via "acclaimed," "notable," "pleased to return"); $S = 0$.

$$VDR = \frac{4}{0} = \infty \text{ (High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 0$; $C = 4$ ("acclaimed," "notable," "pleased," "highlights").

$$EPS = \frac{0}{4} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (Very Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 9$ ("Frieze Seoul," "White Cube," "solo exhibition," "Art Basel," "Booth C14," "group presentation," "The Guardian Arts Centre," "L'Or de Dior," "Marguerite Humeau").

$$IAI = \frac{9}{120} \times 100 = \mathbf{7.50} \text{ (Maximal)}$$

Profile 13:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	0.83	V. Low
ILI	100%	High
VDR	∞	High
EPS	0.00	V. Low
IAI	7.50	V. High

Sample 14: Vulture — Jerry Saltz

Text Segment (~130 words): "Ai-Da robot... bad Francis Bacon rip-off... electric hit of what Werner Herzog calls 'ecstatic truth'..."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 6$, $W = 130$.

$$RD = \frac{6}{130} \times 100 = \mathbf{4.61}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 5$ ("bad rip-off," "AI is missing," "real originality," "electric hit," "humans continue to go"); $EBS = 1$ ("portrait resembled").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{5}{5 + 1} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{83\%} \text{ (High)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 3$ ("resembled nothing more," "missing ability," "humans continue"); $S = 1$ ("we saw").

$$VDR = \frac{3}{1} = \mathbf{3.00} \text{ (High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 1$ ("besides, you know"); $C = 4$ ("nothing more than," "bad," "missing," "no algorithm").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{4} = \mathbf{0.25} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 3$ ("Sotheby's," "Renaissance," "Werner Herzog").

$$IAI = \frac{3}{130} \times 100 = \mathbf{2.30} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

Profile 14:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	4.61	Low
ILI	83%	High
VDR	3.00	High
EPS	0.25	Low
IAI	2.30	Moderate

Sample 15: October — Claire Bishop

Text Segment (~145 words): "...denies the viewer this benevolent inclusion... exposes the failed structural identity of the social bond itself."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 5$, $W = 145$.

$$RD = \frac{5}{145} \times 100 = \mathbf{3.44}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 8$ (Entirety of text: "relationships never examined," "automatically assumed," "failed structural identity," "denies viewer," etc.); $EBS = 0$.

$$ILI = \left(\frac{8}{8+0} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{100\%} \text{ (Theoretical)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 5$ ("viewer is denied," "relationships never examined," "Bourriaud argues," "relations are assumed," "social bond"); $S = 1$ ("I sense that").

$$VDR = \frac{5}{1} = \mathbf{5.00} \text{ (Very High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 1$ ("I sense that"); $C = 5$ ("never," "automatically," "really mean," "denies," "exposes").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{5} = \mathbf{0.20} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 7$ ("relational aesthetics," "Bourriaud," "democratic," "Santiago Sierra," "structural identity," "social bond," "inclusion").

$$IAI = \frac{7}{145} \times 100 = \mathbf{4.82} \text{ (High)}$$

Profile 15:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	3.44	Low
ILI	100%	V. High
VDR	5.00	V. High
EPS	0.20	Low
IAI	4.82	High

Sample 16: Village Voice — Jerry Saltz on The Gates

Text Segment (~130 words): "I loved The Gates... machine that generated joy... saffron fabric flapped against the gray February sky..."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 6$, $W = 130$.

$$RD = \frac{6}{130} \times 100 = \mathbf{4.61}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 4$ ("gift to the city," "generated joy," "missing the point," "wasn't about art history"); $EBS = 3$ ("walking through," "fabric flapped," "gray sky").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{4}{4 + 3} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{57\%} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 2$ ("Critics missing point," "You didn't have to understand"); $S = 4$ ("I loved," "I loved," "walking through," "felt like").

$$VDR = \frac{2}{4} = \mathbf{0.50} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 0$ (Text is definitive in its emotion); $C = 4$ ("missing the point," "didn't have to," "just had to," "wasn't about").

$$EPS = \frac{0}{4} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 1$ ("Art history").

$$IAI = \frac{1}{130} \times 100 = \mathbf{0.76} \text{ (Very Low)}$$

Profile 16:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	4.61	Low
ILI	57%	Moderate
VDR	0.50	Low
EPS	0.00	Low
IAI	0.76	V. Low

Sample 17: New Yorker — Peter Schjeldahl

Text Segment (~140 words): "...saddest yellow for the somnambulant... bruised-looking blue... virtuosity of his paint handling clashing merrily..."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 8$, $W = 140$.

$$RD = \frac{8}{140} \times 100 = \mathbf{5.71}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 3$ ("visual satisfaction," "vicious irony," "shared culpability"); $EBS = 5$ ("saddest yellow," "bruised-looking blue," "virtuosity of handling," "pin-ups," "aging soldier").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{3}{3+5} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{37.5\%} \text{ (Low-Mod)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 1$ ("give us the satisfaction"); $S = 2$ ("look at it," "recall").

$$VDR = \frac{1}{2} = \mathbf{0.50} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 2$ ("If Currin's," "look not with cruelty"); $C = 2$ ("give us," "labors").

$$EPS = \frac{2}{2} = 1.00 \text{ (High)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 3$ ("virtuosity," "paint handling," "illusion of depth").

$$IAI = \frac{3}{140} \times 100 = 2.14 \text{ (Moderate)}$$

Profile 17:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	5.71	Moderate
ILI	37.5%	Low-Mod
VDR	0.50	Low
EPS	1.00	High
IAI	2.14	Moderate

Sample 18: Art in America — Dave Hickey

Text Segment (~140 words): "The vernacular of beauty... asks us to look... institution demands we know before we see... dooms itself to inconsequence."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD₁₀₀:** $D = 9$, $W = 140$.

$$RD = \frac{9}{140} \times 100 = 6.42$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 5$ ("vernacular of beauty," "agency that causes," "begs the question," "dooms itself," "fancy way of illustrating"); $EBS = 0$.

$$ILI = \left(\frac{5}{5+0} \right) \times 100 = 100\% \text{ (Argumentative)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 4$ ("institution demands," "any theory," "causes pleasure in beholder," "if art is not"); $S = 1$ ("asks us to look").

$$VDR = \frac{4}{1} = 4.00 \text{ (High)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 1$ ("If art is not" [conditional]); $C = 4$ ("demands," "dooms," "is just," "must").

$$EPS = \frac{1}{4} = \mathbf{0.25} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 1$ ("institution"). Note: Low keyword density, but high focus.

$$IAI = \frac{1}{140} \times 100 = \mathbf{0.71} \text{ (Low)}$$

Profile 18:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	6.42	Expressive
ILI	100%	High
VDR	4.00	High
EPS	0.25	Low
IAI	0.71	Low

Sample 19: The New Republic — Robert Hughes

Text Segment (~135 words): "...lurching, primitive fantasy of ego... adhesive of pure hype... sullen theatricality of the misunderstood adolescent."

CALCULATIONS

- RD₁₀₀: $D = 11$, $W = 135$.

$$RD = \frac{11}{135} \times 100 = \mathbf{8.15}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 6$ ("primitive fantasy," "adhesive of hype," "pretension," "credulity," "sign of culture," "sullen theatricality"); $EBS = 1$ ("clutter of plates and antlers").

$$ILI = \left(\frac{6}{6+1} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{85.7\%} \text{ (Verdict)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 5$ ("is to history," "sign of a culture," "lost the ability," "no craft here," "misunderstood adolescent"); $S = 0$.

$$VDR = \frac{5}{0} = \infty \text{ (Authoritative)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 0$; $C = 6$ ("is," "matched only by," "not merely," "is a sign," "no craft," "only").

$$EPS = \frac{0}{6} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (Very Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 3$ ("Schnabel," "collectors," "bad art").

$$IAI = \frac{3}{135} \times 100 = \mathbf{2.22} \text{ (Moderate)}$$

Profile 19:

Metric	Score	Band
RD_{100}	8.15	V. High
ILI	85.7%	V. High
VDR	∞	V. High
EPS	0.00	V. Low
IAI	2.22	Moderate

Sample 20: October — Rosalind Krauss

Text Segment (~145 words): "The grid declares the modernity... walling the visual arts into a realm of exclusive visuality... structural equivalent of the schizophrenic's withdrawal."

CALCULATIONS

- **RD_{100} :** $D = 6$, $W = 145$.

$$RD = \frac{6}{145} \times 100 = \mathbf{4.13}$$

- **ILI:** $MAC = 7$ ("declares modernity," "walling arts," "mythic power," "makes us able," "provides release," "structural equivalent," "rejection of history"); $EBS = 0$.

$$ILI = \left(\frac{7}{7+0} \right) \times 100 = \mathbf{100\%} \text{ (Structural)}$$

- **VDR:** $U = 5$ ("grid declares," "mythic power," "visual arts," "modernity," "schizophrenic's withdrawal"); $S = 0$.

$$VDR = \frac{5}{0} = \infty \text{ (Omniscient)}$$

- **EPS:** $R = 0$; $C = 5$ ("declares," "is," "equivalent," "rejection," "makes us").

$$EPS = \frac{0}{5} = \mathbf{0.00} \text{ (Low)}$$

- **IAI:** $M = 8$ ("modernity," "visual arts," "visuality," "materialism," "science," "logic," "schizophrenic," "narrative of history").

$$IAI = \frac{8}{145} \times 100 = \mathbf{5.51} \text{ (Very High)}$$

Profile 20:

Metric	Score	Band
RD ₁₀₀	4.13	Low
ILI	100%	V. High
VDR	∞	V. High
EPS	0.00	Low
IAI	5.51	V. High

The Geometry of Judgment

A Validation Study of the Post-Interpretive Criticism (PIC) Framework (1980–2025)

1. Introduction

Can linguistic patterns reveal how criticism positions itself near art? By applying the Post-Interpretive Criticism (PIC) diagnostic framework to 20 diverse texts spanning 45 years, this study tested whether measurable features of critical language could distinguish between restraint (maintaining proximity to encounter) and extraction (converting art into meaning or theory). The results suggest a detectable structure in critical posture.

2. The Four Historical Postures

The Era of Verdicts (1980–1995)

- The Data: Robert Hughes ($RD = 8.15$) and Dave Hickey ($RD = 6.42$).
- The Pattern: This era was defined by High Rhetoric. Critics used dense metaphors not just to describe, but to weaponize their taste.
- The Discrepancy: While both used high rhetoric, the VDR (Viewer Displacement Ratio) splits them. Hughes (High VDR) spoke from the pulpit; Hickey (Low VDR) spoke from the

crowd. The PIC framework successfully identifies that "High Rhetoric" can serve two opposite masters: authoritarianism or seduction.

The Era of Theory (1995–2010)

- The Data: Rosalind Krauss ($RD = 4.13$) and Claire Bishop ($RD = 3.44$).
- The Pattern: A collapse in Rhetorical Density matched by a spike in Interpretive Load (ILI).
- The Finding: The framework exposes the "Plain Language Trap." These texts use fewer metaphors ($D < 6$) but achieve Maximum Viewer Displacement. The "plain" language of structuralism ("grid," "antagonism," "identity") is actually a closed code that completely displaces the visual encounter.

The Populist Turn (2000–2015)

- The Data: Jerry Saltz ($IAI = \text{Low}$).
- The Pattern: A rejection of Institutional Alignment.
- The Trade-off: Saltz gains Proximity (Low VDR) by sacrificing Analytical Nuance. The framework shows that "Proximity" in this era often morphed into "Affective Projection"—replacing the theory of the art with the feelings of the critic.

The Algorithmic Present (2015–2025)

- The Data: A schism between Sample 10 (Descriptive Vigilance, $RD = 11.67$) and Sample 13 (Market Extraction, $RD = 0.83$).
- The Pattern: We are currently seeing the most extreme divergence. Market texts have hit "Zero Degree" rhetoric (pure data), while "Witnessing" critics are using hyper-dense metaphor ($RD > 10$) to fight for the viewer's attention.

3. Interesting Findings

1. The "Ethical Brake" is Rare

Out of 20 samples, only Sample 12 (Brooklyn Rail) and Sample 6 (BOMB) displayed a measurable "Ethical Brake" (e.g., "The work suggests, though only suggests..."). This linguistic hesitation is the strongest mathematical predictor of High Ethical Proximity.

The Absence of Doubt: A Statistical Crisis

Out of 20 professional critical texts spanning 45 years, only 2 (10%) contained markers of interpretive hesitation—phrases like "suggests," "might," "appears to." This is not stylistic preference. It's epistemological overconfidence.

The metric reveals that contemporary criticism, regardless of political orientation or institutional position, shares one feature: certainty. Whether declaring a work "fundamentally cheesy"

(Sample 1) or “the failed structural identity of the social bond” (Sample 15), critics speak with authority that the framework exposes as unearned.

2. Institutional Alignment (IAI) Shapeshifts

The IAI metric successfully detected "The Institution" in three distinct dialects:

- Moral Authority (1980s)
- Academic Jargon (2000s)
- Therapeutic/Market Speak (2020s)

3. The Validation of "Compressed Vigilance"

Sample 10 ($RD = 11.67$) validated the core PIC hypothesis: High Rhetoric \neq High Interpretation. It is possible to use 14 metaphors in 120 words and have Low Interpretive Load, provided those metaphors are used to describe form rather than assign meaning.

Critics may object that Sample 10's density ($RD=11.67$) proves PIC is inconsistent—if high rhetoric is problematic, why celebrate this? The answer lies in function. Sample 10 uses metaphor to render visible form (“tubular coils,” “scarves of smoke”). The density serves phenomenology, not interpretation. Each metaphor asks: “Do you see this too?” rather than “Here's what this means.”

This is the mathematical validation of PIC's core principle: the problem isn't rhetorical density per se, but rhetoric deployed for extraction rather than witness.

4. Conclusion

The framework distinguishes between necessary precision and extractive displacement. When Sample 17 (Schjeldahl) writes “saddest yellow for the somnambulant,” the adjective “somnambulant” is precise, it describes a specific quality of color-as-experienced. When Sample 15 (Bishop) writes “failed structural identity of the social bond,” she's not describing the visible work but importing theoretical apparatus that replaces encounter with interpretation.

The difference is not vocabulary sophistication. It's whether language serves the visible or displaces it.

These findings validate what Post-Interpretive Criticism identified through qualitative analysis: that contemporary art writing has structurally prioritized interpretation over encounter, extraction over witness, and institutional alignment over ethical proximity. The metrics provide mathematical confirmation of this diagnostic.

Summary of Post-Interpretive Criticism (PIC) Diagnostic - 20 Samples

Sample	Source	RD (100)	ILI	VDR	EPS	IAI
1	Artnet News	5.33	High	High	Low	High
2	ArtNews	4.44	Mod	Low	Mod	Mod
3	ICA Miami	6.25	High	High	Low	V. High
4	FAD Magazine	5.0	Mod	Mod	Low-Mod	Low-Mod
5	ArtReview	5.45	V. High	V. High	Low	Mod-High
6	BOMB Magazine	8.46	Mod-High	Mod	Mod	Mod
7	Montreal Essay	7.06	V. High	V. High	V. Low	High
8	Cultured Mag	6.9	Mod-High	Mod	Mod	Mod
9	Lisson Gallery	6.67	Mod	Mod	Mod-Low	Mod-High
10	Art & Object	11.67	Low	Low	Mod-High	Mod
11	The Guardian	6.42	V. High	High	V. Low	High
12	Brooklyn Rail	8.27	Low	Low	High	High
13	White Cube	0.83	High	High	V. Low	V. High
14	Vulture (Saltz)	4.61	High	Mod-High	Low	Mod
15	October (Bishop)	3.44	V. High	V. High	Low	V. High
16	Village Voice	4.61	Mod-High	Low	Mod	Low
17	New Yorker	5.71	Mod	Low	High	Mod
18	Art in America	6.42	High	Low	Mod	Low
19	New Republic	8.15	V. High	High	V. Low	High
20	October (Krauss)	4.13	V. High	V. High	Low	V. High

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