

# A SLOW ART GUIDE

THINKING<sup>®</sup>  
MUSEUM

The next time you visit a museum, don't try to see everything in one go. Focus on a few specific artworks or objects.

By taking your time and looking at less, you will see much more.

Here is a simple guide to slow looking

## 1 CHOOSE AN ARTWORK OR OBJECT

Choose an artwork or object that **appeals** to you or **sparks** your interest. Maybe something that you have a **connection** with or something that has **meaning** for you. It might not necessarily be something you know a lot about. It could be something that **puzzles** you. Maybe you are drawn to an artwork with a comfy seat. Quite often artworks will choose you - as you browse you'll notice that your attention will be drawn towards something.

## 2 SET A TIME LIMIT

You can look for as long as you like. There are no hard and fast rules. If you are new to slow looking, consider setting a time limit of **3-5 minutes** to observe. This can feel like a long time when you start. Once you get used to slow looking, you can look for longer.

## 3 WONDER

Keep looking. Allow questions to form in your mind. Let your eyes do the work and questions will emerge. Your curiosity will be piqued. Think about what interests you. **What questions do you have?** Jot them down.

If the flow stops, look away briefly before looking back at the artwork or object again. You can also change your position to look from a different perspective. **What do you see now?**

As you keep looking you will discover and notice more features and details.

## 4 LOOK

Look at it carefully. Look at the artwork's size, the frame. Then move to the artwork or object itself: Look at shapes, colours, the figures, the story, the details etc.

Make notes if you want to. **What were your first impressions?** If you've got a notebook, you can jot down things you observe. You could even do some drawings of what you see.. If you don't have a pen and paper with you, simply label things you observe in your head.

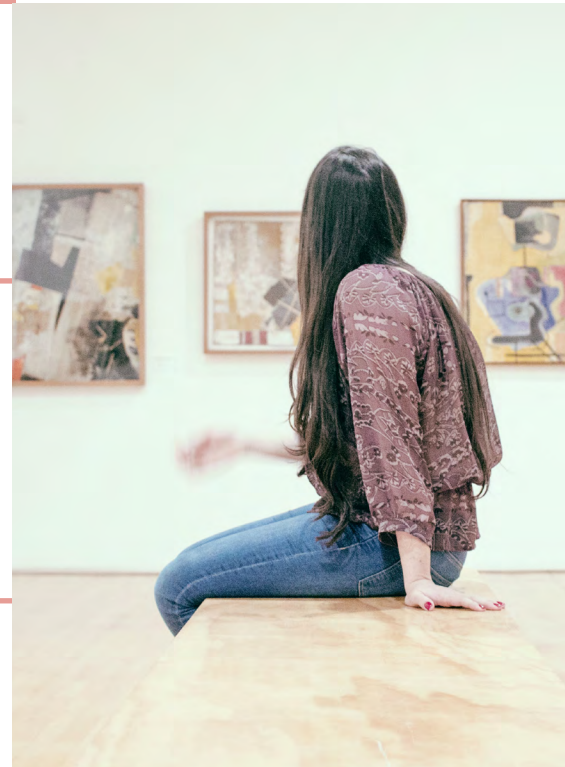
## 5 CHAT

If you're with others, talk through the things you see and notice. **What do you think the story is here? Does the artist have a message? Do you have any personal connections to the work?** Look for surprises, mood and motion. Or focus on categories such as colour, shapes or line.

If you're solo slow looking, ask yourself: **What are you thinking about as you look at this artwork? What do you think might be happening? Which parts puzzle me?**

## 6 FINISHED LOOKING?

Think about what made the most impression on you. **What surprised you? What still surprises you? What will you take away with you from this?**



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## TIPS

- ▶ Visit a museum or gallery **during the quiet periods** of the day - try first thing in the morning or late afternoon.
- ▶ Focus on the **quiet galleries** where there are the least people - you can find slow looking treasures there!
- ▶ Decide on **viewing less** - choose one gallery to see in detail or 3-4 objects.
- ▶ You don't have to spend hours in a museum. **You can see a lot in your lunch break** in 30-60 minutes. Or if you're really short on time, just spend time with one object or artwork.
- ▶ If you're intent on seeing as much of the museum as possible (i.e. you're visiting on holiday) **choose one object or artwork** during your visit for a longer look. With this one object, spend 5, 10 or even 15 minutes.
- ▶ Take advantage of any **discount cards** or **museum memberships** to your favourite place. This will allow you to pay up-front for admission and it will reduce the cost of your visit if admission prices apply. It may also give you priority time-slots.
- ▶ If you're visiting alone, try looking at your chosen artwork with your headphones on. **Play some music**. How does the music affect what you're seeing?
- ▶ If you're **visiting with children**, take small notepads and little pencils for them to sketch the things they are interested in. Make a viewfinder shape with your hands to view small details. Talk about what you see, what you think the story is and what you are wondering about.

