

Welcome to the Stanley Museum of Art!

Close looking helps us to understand what we can see, encouraging us to investigate works of art to find their message or ideas. Students can take ownership over their ideas by creating them through their own investigation, rather than being told “correct information,” and often deduce this information themselves. Close looking should be supplemented by instructors with pertinent information about the context of the work towards the end of discussion as it becomes relevant.

Guiding questions:

1. *Without looking at any labels or text about the work, just take roughly 40 seconds to look at the art, at the end, gather a single observation to share, which stood out to you.*
2. *Personal Connection: What was the experience like? Did the time pass slowly or quickly? Did you find new things the longer you looked? Did looking for a longer period of time change your initial impression of the work?*
3. *Observation: What is happening in the work? Did hearing others' observations change the way you saw the subject? How?*
4. *Visual Analysis: What are the color and shapes? What do you notice about the way things are arranged in the space?*
5. *Context: When do you think this could be from? Who made it and in what context? Why do you think that might be?*
 - a. Allow students to make their own guesses and justify them. All answers will give information about what they are seeing and can give depth to contextual information. Point out when a student has guessed correctly but refrain from elaborating unless it will add depth to the conversation, or students have lost steam. Small bits of interesting contextual information can reignite discussion after this stage.
6. *Interpretation: What are the messages or themes you're picking up on from this artist? What emotions is it conveying? How is it doing so? Could the work have broader symbolic meaning?*
7. *Judgment: What is the value of this work? What can we learn from it? Why might this object be in the museum's collection? To whom is it important? Why?*

This worksheet was created using the following resource as a guide:

Tam, Cheung-On. “Dialogue-and-Questioning Strategies in Art Classrooms and Museums.” *Studies in Art Education*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2022, pp. 202–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2022.2081029>.