



# Learning from Looking

## Self-guided group activity

Grades 4-12

Plan on spending time with 8-10 artworks.

Many of these questions are designed to prompt close looking and critical thinking. Read each artwork's label to find answers to fact-based questions. Artwork not on view? Don't worry: There are plenty of others to visit!



India, *Shiva Nataraja (Lord of the Dance)* (detail), 29.2  
Gallery 211

What do you see that tells you Shiva is not human?

What do you see that tells you Shiva has super powers?

What can you find out about these powers from the label?





Djenne, Mali, *Equestrian figure* (detail), 83.168  
Gallery 250

What about this horse and rider shows they are powerful?

How do historians know this is authentic?

What do you suppose the artist needed to think about before beginning to carve this sculpture from a single piece of wood?



Benin, Nigeria, *Tusk* (detail), 56.33  
Gallery 250

Who are the most important people on this carved tusk? How can you tell?

What kinds of animals do you see?

What purpose does the tusk serve?

Find the Portuguese soldier. How did the artist show he was a foreigner?



Nayarit, Mexico, *House Group* (detail), 47.2.37  
Gallery 260

Look at this sculpture from all sides. What activities do you see taking place?

What do you see to support your ideas?

Based on this sculpture, what do you think the Nayarit people valued most?

Why do you suppose the artist showed some people on the upper level and others down below?



George Bellows, *Mrs. T. in Cream Silk, No. 2* (detail), 60.33  
Gallery 302

What surprises you most about this painting?

What are some possible reasons as to why this woman is dressed up?

What does this painting tell you about Mrs. T?

What do you see that makes you say that?





James B. Read, *Portrait of a Boy* (detail), 77.46  
 Gallery 304

What words would you use to describe this boy?

How do you think he feels?

What do you see that makes you say that?

The painting is filled with symbols. Read the label to find out what some of them are.



Vincenzo Coaci, *The Coaci Inkstand* (detail), 69.80.1a,b  
 Gallery 310

Look closely. Describe what you see.

What do you think the purpose of this object is?

What evidence do you have to support your theory?

What parts do you think are moveable?



Benjamin West, *Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet* (detail), 15.22  
 Gallery 321

What is going on in this painting?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What do you wonder about this painting?

Which title do you think best represents this painting:  
*Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet* or  
*The Messiah on a White Horse*? Why?



John Frederick Peto, *Reminiscences of 1865* (detail), 44.25  
 Gallery 323

Look closely.

What story is the artist trying to tell you?

What images did the artist include that makes you say that?

What did the artist do to make the objects shown in this painting look old?





England, *Puzzle Jug* (detail), 96.36.3  
Gallery 332

Look closely at this jug.

What prevents liquid from spilling out of the holes?

Why do you think the artist did that?

Do you think this is useful as an everyday object?

Why or why not?



Honoré Daumier, *The Fugitives* (detail), 54.16  
Gallery 357

Look closely at the painting.

Why do you suppose everyone is running?

Do you think they are running away from something—  
or toward something?

What do you see that makes you say that?

How does the artist show the refugees' emotions?



Raffaello Monti, *Veiled Lady* (detail), 70.60  
Gallery 357

At first glance, what does this look like it's made of?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What type of emotion do you think this woman is  
expressing?

How would you describe this sculpture to a friend?



James Ensor, *The Intrigue* (detail), 70.38  
Gallery 371

What appears to be going on here?

What do you see that makes you think that?

How would you describe the mood of the painting?

What are some reasons that people wear masks?

When have you worn a mask?



Chuck Close, *Frank* (detail), 69.137  
 Gallery 373

Look closely.

What about this artwork reminds you of a photograph?  
 What reminds you of a painting?

How does the size of this artwork make you feel? Why?

What can you learn about Frank by looking at the view reflected in his glasses?



Yves Tanguy, *Through Birds, Through Fire but Not Through Glass* (detail), 75.72.2  
 Gallery 376

How does this painting make you feel? Why?

What are some possible stories you could tell based on this painting?

Imagine you could enter this painting. What would you do in there?

What could you hear? Smell?