



# 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!



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

- 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?



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

- 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?



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

- 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?



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

- 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?



**GALLERY 210** China, *Jade Mountain Illustrating the Gathering of Scholars at the Lanting Pavillion (detail)*, 92.103.13

- Look closely. What details do you notice?
- Take a moment to walk around the sculpture. What else do you see?
- What is the story being told?
- Find two poems cut into the jade.



**GALLERY 322** Josiah Wedgwood; designer: Henry Webber; modeler: William Hackwood; Wedgwood, England, 1730–1795, *Writing Box with Wedgwood Antislavery Medallion*, rolled paper on wood with stoneware (jasper) medallion, 95.19

- What do you notice first?
- How does this image communicate a message about ending slavery?
- Look closely at this box made of paper. Take a minute to look for wavy and rolled paper. Can you find the floral designs made by the rolls of paper?



**GALLERY 322** Vincenzo Coaci, *The Coaci Inkstand* (detail), 69.80.1a,b

- 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?



**GALLERY 322** Benjamin West, *Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet* (detail), 15.22

- 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?



**GALLERY 304** Lola Pettway, *Housetop variation quilt* 2019.16.16, © Lola Pettway / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

- Look closely at the fabric. What does it remind you of?
- What shapes do you see?
- Why do you think this might be called a housetop quilt?
- Imagine you are floating above your neighborhood. Below you are the streets, apartment buildings, stores, and houses. What colors would you use for your quilt?
- How many squares would you need? What structures would they represent?



**GALLERY 324** Honoré Daumier, *The Fugitives* (detail), 54.16

- 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?



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

- 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?



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

- 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?



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

- 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?