

Encouraging the Museum Mindset

by Shannon Morris

Objective

This activity provides a platform for students to look deeply, to see multiple possibilities, to wonder and to reflect upon observations. It may also be used as an individual assignment, a group assignment or as a combination of the two.



image above: Marcus Kenney, "I Ain't Tryin To Be A Hater," 2007.

Worksheets created for students must follow the outline listed below. Leaders may annotate the questions as needed.

Look

What do you see?

List five single words that describe the main parts of the painting.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

See

Look Again

This time list five phrases that describe other interesting details in the painting.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Wonder

Brainstorm a list of five questions about the work. You may use the following prompts to stimulate your thought processes.

I wonder, why?

What is the purpose of ...

I am most curious about... who? where? when?

How would it be different if?

If I could interview the artist, I would ask

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Reflect

Please reflect upon your observations and share them in two paragraphs five to seven sentences in length. Describe what you saw (paragraph one) and reflect upon any new ideas you observed about the topic (paragraph two).

Reflections may also be visual works or employ “design thinking” skills.

Materials

Students should have access to an image and a Look/See/Wonder/Reflect worksheet.

The image may be either an original work of art, a slide or a printed image.

Procedures

One possible procedure is to allow the students to begin observations individually and then together in small groups to share their thoughts in small groups and begin reflecting within the larger group.

“Engaging the Museum Mindset” is an adaptation from the Look/See/Wonder/Reflect worksheet created by the National Gallery of Art, which is based on a Harvard University Graduate School of Education’s Project Zero experience.

Shannon Morris, curator of the Georgia College Museum has used this process to engage undergraduate students enrolled in Understanding Visual Culture. Students engaged in the activity are invited to Tweet their ideas to using the classroom hashtag. As a result, students are less hesitant to share their ideas within the larger group.