

What can an object tell you?

- Size
 - How big is it?
 - Can it be easily moved?
 - Where would you put it?
 - What kind of space would be needed to accommodate it?
- Form
 - What is it?
 - What is the shape of it? Is it a whole or a fragment?
 - Is it completely finished?
 - Has it been damaged or worn?
- Material
 - What is it made of?
 - Were these materials locally available?
 - How are these materials prepared? By whom?
 - How were the materials used? How difficult to manipulate are these materials?
- Technique
 - How much work went into creating this?
 - Is this time consuming?
 - Did this require multiple specialists?
 - Is this cutting edge technology for the time, or established methods and execution?
 - What quality is the workmanship?
- Subject matter
 - What is happening?
 - What is represented?
 - Is it realistic or abstract?
 - How much specialized knowledge or imagination and creativity would have been necessary to depict this?
- Use
 - Are there signs of wear and tear?
 - What work did this object do? What was its job? What was its function?
 - What kind of setting or circumstance might this object have been placed in?
 - How frequently was this used?
- What does this tell you about
 - The people who
 - Made it?
 - Bought it?
 - Used it?
 - The society in which this was made and used?
 - The technology available to make it?
 - Trade, commerce, and communication at the time?

What can you learn from an object?

Material (ceramic, glass, stone, metal, organic, synthetic) _____

Size _____

Shape _____

Parts _____

Colors _____

Decoration _____

Other marks (tool marks, maker marks, usewear)

What questions does this object provoke?

What questions would you like answered?

What specific sources would you turn to for more information?

sketch



Suggestions for experiencing video art

Come in and out when you like

It can feel overwhelming to enter in the middle of a video, but the work is played on a loop, allowing you to discover moments rather than linear narratives.

Allow yourself to be immersed in the experience

Try to watch uncritically and just let it flow over you

Watch it through a few times if you can, and start to pay attention to details

What do you see? What do you hear?

How did the artist frame a scene or focus your attention?

Try watching from different places in the room

The artist intended for viewers to sit on a carpet in front of the video, as you might have done as a child.

Try sitting close to the screen. Try sitting in front of the speakers.

Try laying down.

Focus on your experience and feelings with curiosity

What kinds of feelings do you have?

What do you think provoked these responses?

Be honest

As with all artwork, not everything is for everyone. Maybe this work is for you and maybe it's for someone else.

Would you recommend it to a friend?

What would you tell them?

How do you look?

Studying visual evidence

<http://hdyl.nasher.duke.edu/>

Look long. Look at the image or object for a full minute. Try five minutes. Try an hour.

Look close. What do you see? Use words that are as precise, descriptive, and vivid as possible.

- What is the form?
- What is the subject matter? How is it represented? Is it realistic or abstract, stereotypical or unique, exaggerated or minimized?
- What colors do you see? Which are most prevalent? Are they bold, vibrant, and highly saturated or are they muted and subdued? Do the colors appear natural or artificial?
- Is the work textured or smooth? Can you see evidence of the technique the artist used to create the work?
- Are there any recurring patterns or motifs?
- Is the work symmetrical or asymmetrical? Does it look organic or geometric?
- What condition is the work in? Does it appear old or new, tarnished or polished, well-crafted or roughly made, etc.?
- Is the work two- or three-dimensional? Does it convey a sense of depth or three-dimensional space, or does it appear flat?
- Does it move or convey a sense of movement, or does it appear stable and static?
- Is the work contained within a frame, or does it seem to continue beyond its edges? Is it on a pedestal or on the floor?

Look again. Try drawing the work. You will notice details you missed before.

- Where do you feel like you have to stand to get the best perspective of the work?

Look critically. What do you think of the work? Why do you think so?

- What is your emotional reaction? What is your intellectual reaction? Why do you think you are you reacting in such a way?
- Does the work remind you of any other works of art? If so, which ones and how so?

Look thoughtfully. What do you think the artist meant? What do you think the artist was trying to communicate through the work? Why do you think so?

- Why do you think the artist chose the medium (the material) s/he used? What do you think is the significance of the medium? What do you think is the relationship between the medium, the subject matter, and the message(s) the artist wanted to communicate? Consider the same questions for the technique and style.
- Do you think the artist had a particular audience in mind? If so, who? Why do you think this?
- Where do you think the work was originally meant to be seen? Why do you think so?
- What culture is the work from? How does this information contribute to your understanding of the work? What additional information would help you to better understand what the artist was trying to communicate?

Look with someone else. Talk to a friend, another visitor, or a museum guard. Tell them your thoughts. Ask what they think. What questions arise?

Look into it. Investigate the subject matter, the artist, the patron (the person or group who commissioned or financed the work), the culture, the medium, the technique, the style, the genre (type or kind), or the context.

- Look for basic information on the wall label and then get started on your research.

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine (vtshome.org)

3 open-ended questions:

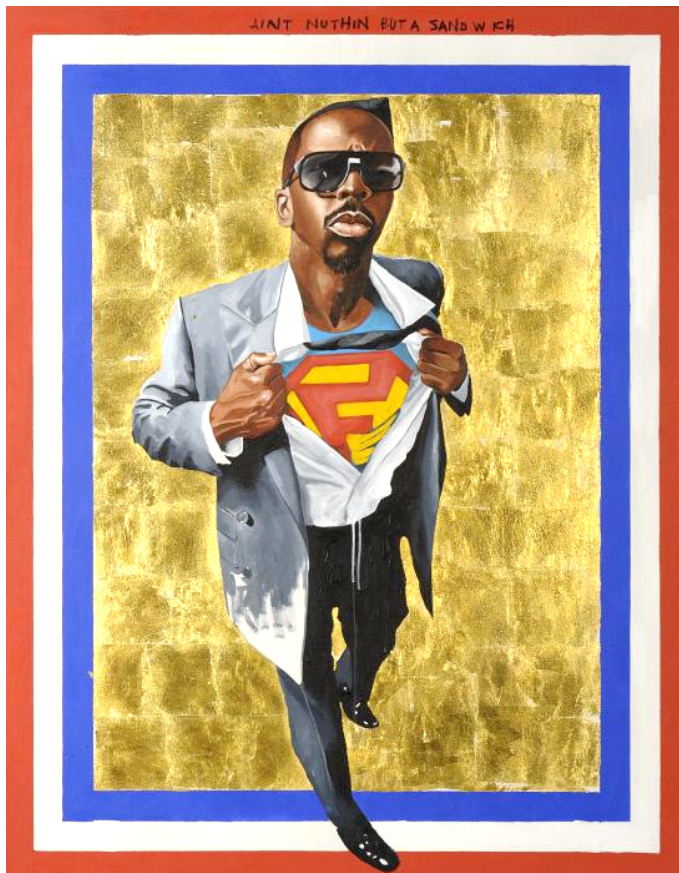
- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

3 Facilitation Techniques:

- Paraphrase comments neutrally
- Point at the area being discussed
- Linking and framing student comments

We are asked to:

- Look carefully at works of art
- Talk about what we observe
- Back up our ideas with evidence
- Listen to and consider the views of others
- Discuss many possible interpretations



Fahamu Pecou, *Nunna My Heros: After Barkley Hendricks' 'Icon for My Man Superman,' 1969*, 2011. Acrylic on canvas. 63 x 49 1/2 in. (160 x 125.7 cm). Nasher Museum of Art. Gift of Marjorie and Michael Levine (T'84, P'16, P'19,