

IMMA HORIZONS | SLOW ART

A GUIDE TO SLOW LOOKING

Take a walk around your chosen exhibition, without pressure. Let your eye come to rest on something you find interesting, intriguing or that you have a reaction to.

Folding Stools are available throughout the exhibition – grab one and find a spot to sit in front of your chosen artwork. Feel free to pause this audio at any point, if you need more time.

Our aim is to experience this artwork with fresh eyes. I would like to invite you to transition from a state of thinking, planning and problem-solving to one of just sensing. This will help us to clear the mind and be more present to the artwork.

While you are free to keep your eyes open, when eyes are closed it is easier to focus on other senses. You can close your eyes now if you like.

Sense the contact of your feet with the floor

The contact of your body's weight on the chair, wriggle your fingers and toes, notice the sensations there.

Sense the rooms' temperature and the contact of your skin with your clothes.

Notice your breath, without trying to change it/breathe correctly. Where in your body can you sense your breath? Where else?

What can you hear: In the room, outside the room, outside the building. Listen inwards: Can you hear your breath? Can you "hear" your thoughts/ inner dialogue?

Imagine smelling coffee, a rose, your favourite food or your favourite perfume. Smell is intimately connected to taste (70% of tasting is actually smell) and it is known to evoke memories. Do you notice any smells right now?

Imagine being under a shower or a waterfall of light, let this light pour from the crown of your head and out through your hands and feet, washing out any tensions.

Slowly open your eyes, feel free to stretch or yawn as if just waking up from a restful sleep.

Are you comfortable?

LOOK at your chosen artwork without putting yourself under pressure to figure anything out. Too often we try to interpret an artwork before we have even had time to visually take it in.

Let's slow this process down and start by looking closely...

What can you see? What colours, shapes, textures, materials do you notice?

Let your eye scan the work, moving from top to bottom, from left to right? Is there a particular part of the work that catches your attention?

Stand up and move to a different spot. LOOK again. Do you notice anything more? Anything different?

What word comes to mind when you look at the work?

Is the work engaging with any particular sense more than others?

If you find it becoming challenging to continue looking, take a break. Turn away from the work and think about what stays in your mind. Change the position of your head – look up at the ceiling, then down at the floor. Now, when you're ready, look back at your chosen work.

Do you notice anything new or different?

Take the next few moments to draw an element of the work that interests you – a small detail or overall view – its up to you. Don't worry about the end result, the process of drawing should help you connect and look in a different way.

If you would rather, begin listing any words that come to you when looking at the work – these could be descriptive words, or a response to how you feel about the work – allow yourself some time to explore your stream of consciousness and see where it takes you.

How would you describe the mood of the work? How does it make YOU feel?

Are there any questions that you would like to ask the artist, if you had a chance? What are you curious about?

Sometimes an artwork's title can give us an interesting insight – take a look at the wall label to find out what the artist has called this work. Does this introduce anything new to your thinking?

If you had to think of an alternative title for the work, what would you choose?

Do you feel differently about the work now than when you started? How so?

Thank you for listening, I hope that this has offered you a different way to connect with your chosen artwork.

If you enjoyed this process, why not try one of our Slow Art sessions. These are free, in-person slow art tours that take place twice a month, on the first Saturday and third Thursday at 11am. For more information, see www.imma.ie/immahorizons

We love hearing what you think, so if there are any thoughts you would like to share with us, please email us at talkingart@imma.ie. Thanks again.