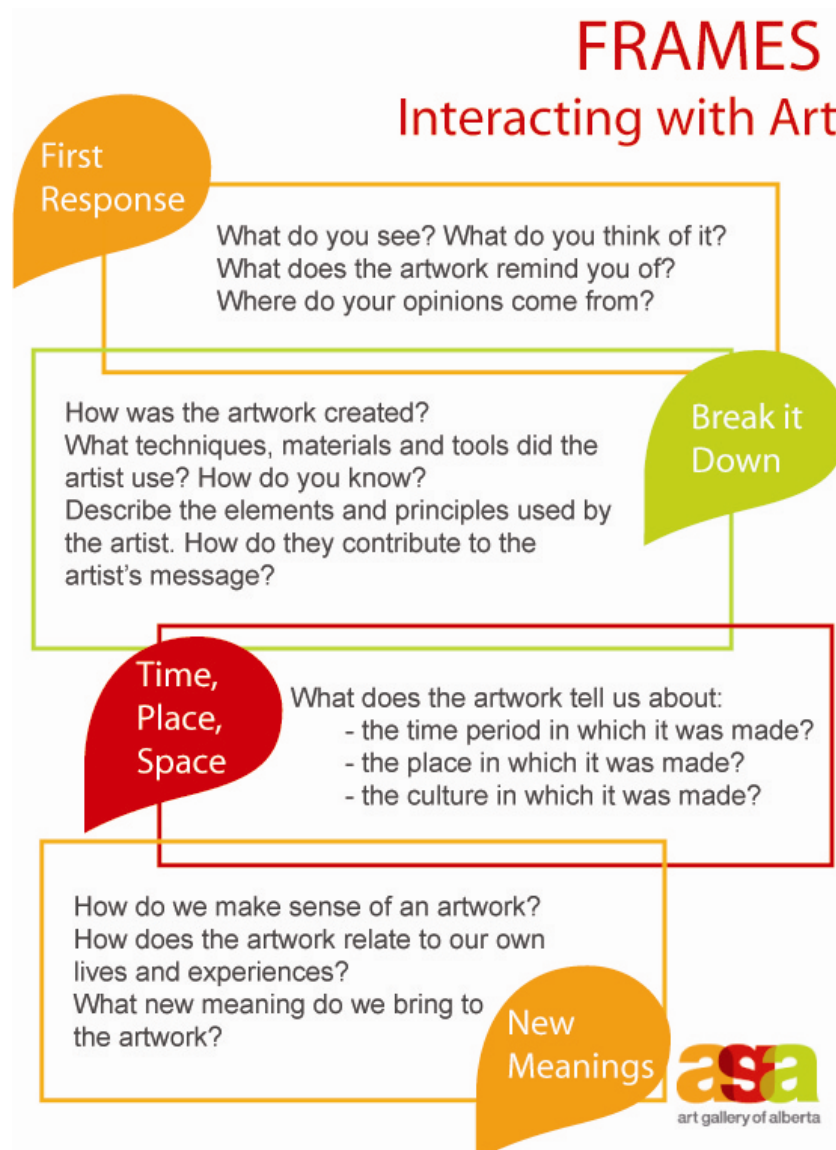


# Interacting with Art using 'The FRAMES'

## Why learn to look at art?

In an image-dominated society, it is important for students to develop the ability to create their own context for the unavoidable flow of images they are faced with daily. As viewer-consumers of the media, students must learn to "read" the language of visual images in order to develop critical awareness of the world around them. Looking at art is one way in which students can develop the skills necessary to make sense of their visual world.

Practice visual literacy in your classroom. Here are some activities to help you work through 'The FRAMES' with your class.



## First Response

Each of us has our own 'initial reaction' when we see images. These reactions are informed by the personal experiences we have had in our lives. The following activities will help your class explore the 'initial reaction' or first response to an image.

### 30 Second Look

**What you need:** Artwork or Image on the projector or print off a few copies

**What you do:** Challenge students to think about the time needed to explore an image.

1. Ask students to estimate how long they think the average museum visitor spends looking at a work of art. One minute? 10 minutes? An hour? What do they think? Ask students to record their responses and tell them that museum studies have determined that the average viewer spends about 30 seconds looking at a work of art.
2. Tell students that they will have only 30 seconds to look at an image. Give them 30 seconds to look at it. After 30 seconds are up remove the image from the view of the students.
3. Ask each student to name one thing they saw in the image. Ask students not to repeat answers. If necessary, prompt your students with questions: Did you see any people in the picture? Is the scene orderly or chaotic? Did anyone see animals? What kind of fruit did you see? Then ask students to describe the one aspect of the work that they remember most vividly. Does everyone have the same recollection? Comment on the variety of responses. Did they all look at the same artwork?!
4. Ask your students, if they had more time and took a second look, do they think they would see more? Present students with the same image and look at the image again. Do they see anything new or something that was not mentioned before? Guide the students through a careful re-examination. How much longer did they spend looking at the image the second time? Was their first glance sufficient? Ask students if discussing their observations with their peers helped them see and understand the work of art better. Why or why not?

### Sensory Exploration

**What you need:** Artwork or Image on the projector or print off a few copies, Your body!

**What you do:** 'Enter' an image with students and explore using all your senses!

1. Choose a work of art or an image and brainstorm the 5 senses: sight, smell, sound, touch, taste. Can we look at art using our five senses?
2. Standing up as a group, pretend to enter the image/artwork/space with the students. (Use play and your imagination!)
3. Look all around! Look closely at the artwork. Ask students the following questions:
  - What do you see around you? What colours, lines, shapes, textures, etc...?
  - What can you hear? What clues tell you this?
  - What can you smell? What clues tell you this?
  - What can you feel? What clues tell you this?
  - What could you taste?! What would the colours taste like? Use your imagination.

## Break it Down

In order to build upon the first response and further understand an image, look closely at the way it has been constructed. By examining the structural elements of an image we can better understand the message of the artist and the reason why an artist would choose to execute the elements and principles of design in different ways.

### See and Sketch/See and Move

**What you need:** Artwork or Image on the projector or print off a few copies, Paper & Drawing tools (for See & Sketch), Your body (for See and Move)

**What you do:** This activity can be used with many subjects including talking about the Elements and Principles of Art.

1. Explain that artists use many things to create art. Ask students what artists need to create art?
2. Introduce the 4 Main Elements (Line, Shape, Colour, Texture) and ask students to give examples for each. Add principles for students with more knowledge of the E&P (i.e. balance, proportion, rhythm, movement, etc...).
3. Explain that you are going to work together to find out how the artist has used these things to tell us something in their artwork.
4. Line- Ask each student to find one line in the work of art and draw (or move like) the line. Ask each student to compare the line they drew (moved like) with a partner and to explain where they found the line. What is the most common line they found?
5. Repeat the above process, drawing (moving like) Shapes, Colours, & Textures.
6. Ask the students why they think the artist made the choices they did? Go through each element/principle if necessary.

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

**What you need:** Paper, drawing tools, Artwork or Image on the projector or print off a few copies

**What you do:** Students explore the connection between words and images while challenging their listening, comprehension and questioning skills.

1. Begin with the quote: *A picture is worth a thousand words*

Ask the following questions:

What does this quote mean to you?

Do you agree with the quote? Why or why not?

2. Explain to the students that you are going to test this idea. One person, the Describer, will describe a work of art while the Listener(s) draws using the oral description. To add an element of questioning skills, Listeners can pose questions to the Describer to try to gather more information.

3. Once the description is complete, the Listener (s) compares their work to the original work of art and other Listeners' works looking for similarities and differences.

4. Reflect on the challenge:

- Was it difficult to draw using only words? Why? What would have made it easier?
- What clues gave the most information? What clues were the least helpful?
- Is it easier to communicate with words or pictures? Why?

This activity can be adapted in several different ways depending on the age, language and knowledge level of students:

1. Educator is the Describer and all students are Listeners.

2. One student is Describer and all other students are Listeners.

3. Students work in pairs: one student is a Describer and one student is a Listener. Students take turns.

## Questions for reflection

- How do you think this work was made? Why?
- What materials and techniques are being used? How do the materials and techniques contribute to the meaning?
- How would the work change if the artist used different materials or different elements/principles? Why?

## Time, Place, Space

Artists provide clues to help us understand the time, place and space within which a work of art was created. The ability to read these clues is valuable in informing us of the culture and time period of the artist.

### Interview with an Artwork

**What you need:** Artwork or image on the projector or print off a few copies, paper, pencils

**What you do:** Explore a work of art through interview questions in order to learn more about the artist's intent.

1. Explain to students:

Imagine that the person/object in this artwork came to life. What would it say? (If there are no people in the work of art, ask the students to imagine that the object or artwork itself came to life). Give students the role of a news reporter for a local news station to help them engage with the task.

2. Answer questions about the artwork in order to find out more. This activity can be done in several ways:

- Work as a group to brainstorm interview questions with students using who, what, where, when, and why question starters. Work as a group to answer the questions from the point of view of the artwork.
- Work as a group to brainstorm interview questions with students using who, what, where, when, and why question starters. Students work on their own or in partners to choose an artwork and answer the questions from the point of view of the artwork. Share responses.

3. Interview questions could include:

- Who is the person/object? What are three words that best describe you? Why?
- What is your favourite kind of music? Why?
- What are some things you like to do on the weekend? Why?
- What is your biggest secret? Why?
- What do you eat for breakfast/lunch?
- Where is the person/object?

## Dialogue!

**What you need:** Paper, pencils, print off images for students to work from

**What you do:** Students respond to an image through imagination by creating a dialogue between two elements within the work. (This activity is great for second language learners)

1. Direct students to choose a work of art in pairs. Look closely at the work and choose two elements (people, animals, inanimate objects) that will have a short dialogue.
2. Students work together to create a short dialogue between the two elements. The content of the dialogue will depend on the language level of students but the goal is for students to use the visual clues in the work to create a dialogue that reflects the artist's ideas/message.
3. Students record their dialogue on paper.
4. Once complete, students gather and share their dialogues. Students may choose to 'perform' the dialogue in partners or read it straight through.

## Questions for Reflection

- What is culture? What makes culture? What is the connection between art and culture?
- What does this work tell you about...
  - The time period in which it was made?
  - The physical and geographical place in which it was made?
  - The culture in which it was made?
  - What clues tell you so?
- What can an artwork/image tell us about the worldview of a culture?
- How does the artist show their point of view in the work?
- How does artwork/artifacts from the past influence culture today?

## New Meanings

Explore the way we all construct meaning when looking at images. As viewers we are key players in meaning – making; we bring our own experiences, opinions and repertoires to the images we see everyday. By exploring this process of meaning – making we can better understand why we may be influenced or affected by the images we encounter.

### Concept Map/Story Map

**What you need:** Artwork or Image on the projector or print off a few copies, sticky notes, Pencils

**What you do:** Each student creates a concept map based on a question related to a work of art and the 'New Meanings' FRAME. For Students grade 1 – 6 create a story map related to a work of art.

1. Choose a work of art on which to focus and pose a question to the students. The question should relate to the 'New Meanings' frame and should aim to get students to explore how they connect to a work of art in their own lives. Example:
  - Where do we see images/concepts/ideas like this in our contemporary society?
2. Students record one idea per sticky note and place this in front of them. Challenge students to come up with as many ideas as possible within a given time frame.
3. As a group, begin to share the ideas. Compile the sticky notes and work as a group to organize all of the responses into different themes/categories. These categories will not be established until the ideas have been shared. Students should lead this part as much as possible.
4. Name the different themes/categories and explore the connections between them using the following questions:
  - Are the categories connected? Why or why not?
  - Are there categories with many ideas? Few ideas? Why do you think that it is?
  - Are there any ideas that you thought of after seeing other people's responses?
5. Look back at the original artwork and discuss what new meaning you bring to the work after completing the Concept Map activity.

#### **\*Story Map Adaptation for steps 1 – 3 as follows:**

1. Choose a work of art on which to focus and have students think about the story that is taking place in the work. Introduce story by referencing stories you are currently reading in class or ones that are popular with your students. Ask students what a story needs? How do we create a story?
2. Students record one story idea per sticky note and place this in front of them. Challenge students to come up with as many ideas about the elements of the story as possible within a given time frame.
3. As a group, begin to share ideas. Compile the sticky notes and work as a group to organize all of the responses into different elements of story (ie. Character, setting, action, etc.). Students should lead this part as much as possible.
4. Once all the sticky notes have been categorized have each student choose a sticky note in order to create the story.

## Movie Poster/Album Cover Design

**What you need:** Paper, drawing tools, artwork or image on the projector or print off a few copies

**What you do:** Students design a movie poster or album cover inspired by a work of art using images, text and their imagination.

1. Explore the concept of visual communication by posing the following questions (if you have already practiced the Break it Down, and Time, Place and Space frames review key concepts): How do artists communicate? What tools do they use? How do we make meaning when we look at a work of art? Can we make new meaning?
2. Give students the role of designers. Each student will choose an artwork and create a movie poster or album cover inspired by the artwork. Encourage students to look closely to gather clues about the artwork to inform their design.
3. Each poster needs:
  - A title (this can be different than the title of the artwork)
  - An image of some sort that conveys the mood/message of the movie or album
  - Additional text (words or sentences depending on language level) that describes what the movie or album is about
4. Once complete, share designs with the group and explore chosen artwork together.

## Questions for Reflection

- How do we make sense of art? How do we figure things out?
- What repertoires of meaning-making are we employing?
- How does the art relate to our lives today? Where do you experience or see art like this in your day to day life?
- How do we make meaning of our own identity through looking at art images?
- How does your interpretation of the work differ from others' interpretation? Why are or aren't there differences?