

Here There

NEW PERSPECTIVES from the Collection

Objectives:

- Describe and interpret imagery featured in artwork
- Support answers and ideas using context within artwork
- Summarize emotional response to artwork
- Create an artistic representation of a memory
- Explain how the objects or images chosen represent their memory

This teaching guide is intended for educators visiting the *Here, There* exhibition with their students as a way to engage with the art.

Exhibition Context:

Here, There: New Perspectives on the Collection captures stories of place, time, memory, and people. Museums have not always included the stories and perspectives of diverse cultures and people, instead telling very simple histories. Because of this, visitors often miss out on important histories and artwork from historically marginalized communities. The Illinois State Museum has a wide collection of artworks from artists of diverse backgrounds. These artists have used their craft to tell important stories about the past and about lived experiences.

Guest curators Mariela Acuña, Sheridan Tucker Anderson, and Allison Lacher gathered together a series of artworks that help tell us stories that we don't often hear. The exhibit acts as a storyteller, presenting both good and bad memories from the artists' experiences, challenging visitors to think about how stories are remembered.

As you navigate the *Here, There* exhibition, use this guide to facilitate conversation with your students.

Using **Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)**, you and your students will closely examine the art and discuss what you see.

For this guide, we have selected three artworks to be the focus of the VTS exercise. While visiting the gallery, stop at these pieces and engage your students in conversation.



Alberto Aguilar
03.24.2020, 2020



Jin Lee
Untitled (Great Water Series), 2017, printed 2020



N. Masani Landfair
Resilience III, 2020

Engage:

Prior to visiting *Here, There*, begin a conversation with your students to gauge their experience in visiting art galleries or engaging with art.

- Has anyone visited an art museum or gallery before?
- What museums or galleries did you visit?
- What kind of art did you see? Sculpture? Paintings? Photography?
- What was the experience like?
- What did you see in the art? Can you remember specific pieces?
What made them stand out?
- What did you feel when you looked at the art?
- What questions did you have about the art?

Once you have heard from the students about their personal experiences with art, brief them on the upcoming field trip. Share with them information about the Lockport gallery.

The Lockport Gallery is a branch of the Illinois State Museum in Springfield. The gallery features changing exhibitions of art created by past and contemporary Illinois artists and artisans.

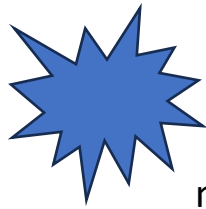
Provide them with background information on the exhibit they will be visiting. Explain that the focus of this particular exhibit is to highlight stories and experiences that are often left out of traditional art galleries. Discuss how curators were invited to explore the Illinois State Museum's art collection and pick pieces that share stories of personal experience and memories.

The exhibition *Here, There: New Perspectives on the Collection* features modern and contemporary artworks from the Illinois State Museum's collection.

Guest curators Mariela Acuña, Sheridan Tucker Anderson, and Allison Lacher chose artworks that speak to themes of nostalgia, belonging, and untold stories. The exhibit challenges traditional narratives in American art through diverse artistic expressions.

Explore:

Upon arrival to the gallery, ensure your students understand the rules of the space. Explain that during the field trip, they will be able to explore the gallery independently when they first arrive.



Let students know that not all of the memories and stories captured in the art are positive or happy, but that showing both troubling and treasured memories helps us learn more about other people.

Remind students that the gallery is rooted in memories and personal stories, and to consider their own experiences while viewing the art.

After 15 minutes of independent exploration in the gallery, call your students back together and make your way to the first artwork on the list below. At the artwork, you will ask the following questions in this order:

- What is going on in this image?
 - What do you see that makes you say that?
 - What more can we find?
- Question 1 can be asked multiple times.

- As the student answers Question 1, use your finger to point to anything they may be referencing. For example, if a student says, “There is a woman in a red dress looking out a big window at a cloudy sky.” You will point to each of these things in the painting so that the group can understand what the student is looking at.
- After they make their statement, rephrase their statement back to them. For instance, a good response to the sentence above would be, “You said that there is a person in this painting that appears to be a woman. You’ve told us that she is wearing a red dress and is focused on looking out of this large window. You’ve also shared that you see what appears to be a cloudy sky. What more can we find?”
- As the facilitator of the conversation, you can choose when to ask question 2 if you wish to have the student elaborate and support their statement. It does not have to be used every time a student presents an idea. Instead, it can encourage students to think deeper about their statement and seek evidence by examining the image closely.
- Students may contradict each other with their statements. This is perfectly appropriate as it can lead to interesting discourse.
- Before moving on to the next piece, thank the group for sharing their thoughts with the group. It is important to acknowledge your appreciation for their participation and willingness to share their thoughts.
- Spend between 3 and 5 minutes at each artwork.

Elaborate:

Before leaving the gallery, take your students to the Post-It Board. Have your students select a partner and instruct them to discuss the two questions on the board. Give students two minutes to talk. After two minutes, instruct the students to spend a moment reflecting on their experience. Students will use the provided post it notes to write down how the exhibit made them feel.

Evaluation:

Following the field trip, revisit the experience by asking your students the following questions:

- What did you learn about preserving memories?
- Why is it important to learn from the experiences of other people?
- How can museums do a better job of telling more stories?

Ask the students to think of a favorite memory or a special story they want to save and share.

Ask students, “How much space do you think your memory takes up?”

Provide students with a small container such a shoe box, covered or lidded container or jar.

- Challenge your students to preserve their memory or story by placing items in the box that tell that story.
- Consider texture. For example, a piece of lace to represent a formal occasion like a wedding or a recital.
- Incorporate scent. Add fresh blades of grass to capture a summer afternoon or a cinnamon stick to take you back to a warm drink on a cold day. Be mindful not to include perishable items that could rot or mold.
- Think about symbols or representations. A keychain can represent a place you visited at during a road trip. A marble could represent an event like a competition.

Upon completion, students will present their memory box/jar to the class. They will tell their story while showing what items they chose and what they represent.

Students will conclude their presentation by explaining why they chose this memory to preserve.

Reflection Prompts for Discussion:

“Which piece in this collection brought out your biggest reaction? Why do you think it made you feel that way?”

“How would you capture a memory through art? Would you paint the memory? Sculpt it? Or would you create a video or small performance?”

“Why is it so important to preserve all of our memories, both good and bad?”

Questions?

Contact DNR.ISM.Events@Illinois.gov or (217) 782-6044.