

Questions to Ask Yourself at an Art Museum

1. Before entering the building:

- How does the museum relate to the surrounding buildings?
- What words describe the museum building and its exterior?
- What's my general impression of the museum building?
- What are my expectations of the interior based on my impressions of the outside of the building?

2. As you enter the museum:

- How does the space relate to my expectations?
- What has the museum done to make me feel welcomed into the building?
- Do I want to follow a floor plan or just wander around exploring the museum and be surprised (totally OK)?

3. In the galleries (as you enter one of the rooms or spaces):

- What is the mood of the gallery or museum space?
- What makes me say that? Is it due to the lighting, carpeting, crowds, lack of crowds, the artwork in the galleries, or something else?
- Is there one work of art that I feel is the focal point of the room or space?
- What makes me say that?

4. When you choose to stand before one work of art:

- Why did I select this one work of art to observe?
- How does it fit into the other works in the gallery or space?
(Museum staffs work to arrange works of art in very specific ways.)
- How could I describe this work to a visually impaired person?
- What questions do I have about this artwork? (This is not as easy as it seems!)

5. Be a people watcher: *

- Do other museum visitors seem to be gathering around one particular work of art?
- When I observe the people, are they mostly alone or in groups?
- Do people look like they are engaged in looking at the art?
- How are people spending most of their time: reading labels or actually looking at art?

*This is an optional piece; secondary students may enjoy approaching this through the lens of a sociologist!