

Ferens Art Gallery - Ideas for self-directed visits

To support you with planning your self-directed visit around the Ferens Art Gallery, we have come up with some suggestions and key questions to help you and your colleagues support your students with engaging with the artworks.

We encourage self-directed groups to bring their own sketchbooks or paper and dry materials too – whether that's pencils, pens or crayons. We simply ask that any messy or wet materials, such as charcoal, pastels and paints, are left for you to do back at school.

Navigating around the gallery spaces in smaller groups, each supported by an adult, will enable your students (and other visitors) see the artworks better.

You can view some of the Ferens Art Gallery collection on the Art UK website:

<https://artuk.org/visit/venues/ferens-art-gallery-3518>

- Investigating an artwork as a group – this could be through simple discussion with the children about what they like or can see. Extend this further by getting the children to imagine they've stepped into the artwork – what could they smell or hear? How are their other senses stimulated? Use the questions on the next page to help direct the children and how they look at the work.
- Bring an artwork to life – those artworks which contain people can offer a range of speaking and listening activities. This could include getting the children to hotseat the people – what would they be saying? Could the other children ask the people in the painting questions?
- What artworks do the children like (and dislike) – get the children to look around all the artworks in the gallery space and decide which work they really like and which they don't. Get the children to explain their reasons for choosing these works.
- Creative writing – Whether it's planning a story, writing a poem or taking on the role of a journalist, our artworks can provide children with a range of creative writing opportunities. Artworks such as 'The Fish Market' in Gallery 2 that contain a lot of people or activity, can be good for inspiring a story (<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/the-fish-market-78274>)
- Drawing and creating their own art – use sketchbooks and art materials, allow the children time to practice their own drawing skills, taking inspiration from the works around the gallery. Creating simple viewfinders with card can help to focus children on key areas of artworks, instead of feeling daunted by creating the whole piece.
- Colour or shape hunt – for younger groups, why not get them to hunt around the gallery for items in works which are of a specific colour or shape. They could record these individually or as a group.

Question suggestions

To help support your groups with looking at the artworks, we've created a list of questions below to help the children look deeper into the work and share their ideas. You may choose to do this through group discussions or by getting the children to write their answers down.

OBSERVING THE WORK

- What shape is the artwork?
- What shapes can you see in the artwork?
- How big is the artwork?
- What colours can you see?
- What tones have been used?
- What kind of texture does the artwork have?
- What materials have been used to make the artwork?
- Has the artwork been painted, drawn or made in another way?
- What can you see in the artwork?
- What is in the foreground?
- What can you see in the background?
- What is the subject of the painting?
- How does the artwork make you feel?

THE CONTEXT OF THE WORK

- Why do you think this artwork is on display in the gallery? Why is it important to the gallery?
- Why do you think the artist made the artwork about this subject?
- Is it the same or different from the other artworks around it?
- What do I want to know about this artwork or artist? Make a list of three questions that you can follow up back at school.

PERSONAL RESPONSES

- What do you feel about it? How does it make you feel looking at it?
- What meaning/message does this artwork communicate to you?
- Why do you like it? Why don't you like it?
- What title would you give this artwork? Does it need a title? How does your title differ from the actual title for this artwork?
- Does this artwork remind you of anything that you have seen or experienced in your own life?

DESCRIBING THE WORK

- What words would you use to describe this artwork?
- Can you describe the brush marks/expression/pattern?
- What adjectives would you use to describe this artwork's ... (colour, texture, shapes, patterns, brushstrokes, etc)?
- What three words would you use to describe the form/shape/colour of this artwork?