

Collection in Focus Guide Program

Contemporary World Art 2015

7- minute Gallery Presentation

On Saturday, February 21, you will present a **7-minute** discussion in the gallery, during which you are encouraged to use open-ended questions to engage your group in a dialogue about your assigned art object.

The purpose of this first gallery talk is to become aware of some of the issues you will encounter when talking about objects in the galleries (your position in relationship to the object and the audience, group management, acoustics, distractions, etc.). It is also intended to help you feel comfortable using open-ended questions to engage with visitors and to explore the role of facilitator rather than lecturer.

1. Begin by spending some time in the gallery looking closely at this object and getting to know it visually. You will find you (and your audience) can discover so much just by looking.

While knowing a bit about your object is important, your focus should be on the development of good open-ended questions and how you will go about facilitating a discussion. This is not a “show all you know” presentation.

2. You should integrate a few of the key points you cull from these sources of information into your discussion of the object. Resources of information when preparing for your talk include:
 - Object label copy (available in the gallery and sometimes at www.artsconnected.org)
 - Audio guide (free to volunteers; available in the 3rd Avenue Lobby when you show your volunteer badge)
 - Class notes, assigned readings, and handouts
3. Develop 4-6 open-ended questions or prompts (e.g. Describe...) that you think will focus your group, provide opportunities for careful observation, and allow for interesting discussion. You may want to “test” your questions on friends, family, or classmates as you develop them to see if they produce the kinds of responses you had intended.

You may not get to ask all of your questions during your allotted time, but it is important to have backup questions ready in case you need them.

4. As you begin your presentation, focus your group by pointing out the object you will be discussing and by allowing the group time to look before asking your first question about the object. Don't be afraid of silence!
5. Try to be flexible and to let the discussion take its natural course. When appropriate, ask follow-up questions like "What do you see that makes you say that?"
6. Actively listen to your audience's comments and questions. Use pointing and other kinds of body language to show you are listening and understanding what each person is saying. Help keep the dialogue going by asking new questions and paraphrasing and linking ideas.
7. Integrate information about the object that is relevant to the ideas being raised by audience members in response to your open-ended questions. Take your cues from the things that interest them. Try to resist the temptation to "purge" everything you know about the object. You should not be the only one talking!
8. Conclude your presentation by transitioning to the next object. This may be the object of next person presenting in your group, or just an object that you admire.
9. Do your best to keep track of time during your presentation. You will be given periodic cues as to how much time is remaining. If your talk exceeds seven minutes, you will be asked to wrap-up even if you have not finished so others have sufficient time for their talks.
10. Immediately following your talk, your group leader (MIA staff) will facilitate a brief coaching/feedback process. Feel free to ask your group leader for additional feedback after class, if you have specific questions or concerns.
11. Be creative and have fun with this! We are all here to support and encourage you!