

Key Principles for Looking at Contemporary Art

from the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

- **Form Matters – media, materials, size, shape, and scale**
 - What artists use and how they relate it to their ideas
 - Presentation and manifestation of work
 - Size and scale
- **Ideas Matter – ideas are integral to contemporary art and the intent of the artist is crucial**
 - The goal is about the critical analysis or exploration of an idea
 - Art often addresses political or social issues
- **Context Matters – objects can have multiple meanings, so the context in which they are presented matters**
 - It was not Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" that was so controversial, but the fact that he presented it as an object in a museum
 - New ideas in new ways
- **Culture Matters – artists may not create or engage us in the ways we expect**
 - They clarify, complicate, or contradict culture
- **Who Matters -it is more difficult to separate the art and the artist**
- **You Matter - the viewer can be intimately involved with the work –literally by participating with the artwork or being engaged through their reaction to the work**