LOOKING PROMPTS

Look closely at this work of art.

What do you wonder about?

What might you learn about the person who is the subject of this sculpture by looking closely?

If you were able to travel back in time and watch this sculptor at work, what questions would you ask her?

Imagine if the figure’s arms and hands were visible. Strike a pose that reveals ways the arms and hands could enhance the figure’s pose. Why did you choose this particular movement?

Imagine the artist had sculpted the entire body of James Peck Thomas. If you’re comfortable, demonstrate how the figure would stand, walk, or dance. What do you see that informs your ideas?

Looking extension:

If you were to sculpt a bust of someone you knew, who would it be? Where would you display it and why would you display it in this way? Sketch an image of your sculpture on display.

Edmonia Lewis, American, 1844–1907; Bust of James Peck Thomas, 1874; marble; 22 x 18 x 10 inches; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH; R. T. Miller Jr. Fund; 2021.155
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If this image were the inspiration for a story, what type of story would it be?
What do you see that makes you say that?

How does this space make you feel? What emotions arise while you are looking closely? What do you see that makes you say that?

Imagine drifting in a boat through this scene.
How would you describe your surroundings?

Write a letter home and describe what you see, hear, and smell around you in this scene.
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Imagine sitting in the location of this painting.

What would the air feel like?
What sounds would you hear?
What would you smell?
What activities would you engage in if you were in this place?

If you could insert one thing into this landscape, what would it be and why?
Sketch an image of your addition to this landscape.
LOOKING PROMPTS

Look closely at this work of art.
Let your eyes wander up and down and side to side.
Select one of the words below that you feel connects to the artwork.
Or choose your own word.

- shiny
- joyful
- dreamy
- complex
- detailed
- textured
- stiff
- soft
- whimsical
- fun
- heavy
- loud
- wild
- peaceful
- solemn
- story
- bold
- gentle
- imaginary
- musical
- rhythmic
- quiet
- lonely
- warm
- cold
- mellow
- lively
- vivid
- colorful
- abstract
- realistic
- slick
- rough
- mysterious
- care
- labor
- curious
- memory
- fuzzy
- home
- course
- smooth
- patterns
- happy

What do you see that inspired your word?
Write a poem inspired by the painting and the word you chose.

As you look at this painting, what do you imagine will happen next? Write a very short story or draw a picture to describe what will happen next.
LOOKING PROMPTS

When looking at these objects, what stands out to you the most?

Compare and contrast these two baskets. Describe what is similar about them. Then, describe what is different.

What would you like to learn about these baskets?

Pala’wan artist, Philippines; Baskets, before 1904; rattan and nito; top basket: 9 x 10 5/8 x 8 7/8 inches; bottom basket: 9 11/16 x 11 1/8 x 11 inches; Loaned by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, PA. Gift of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum (also known as the Philadelphia Civic Center Museum), 2003 2021.179-.180
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Set a timer for 60 seconds. Look closely at these two images for one minute.

What do you notice?

What do you wonder about the materials or the process for making these objects?

The artists who created these artworks incorporated intricate patterns and weaving techniques. Think about fabric or cloth that you have or wear. What types of patterns do they have?

If you could create your own pattern for a cloth, what would you include?

Draw your pattern.
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After looking closely at this basket, what questions would you ask of the artist who made it?

Imagine you were an ant eagerly exploring this object. What would the materials feel like under your feet? What sounds would you hear as you explore? What else would you discover?

Imagine being able to peek inside the basket. What do you imagine it would look like on the inside?

This basket is about the size of a school backpack. If it were your basket, what is something you would put inside? Write a list of items you might keep in this basket or sketch the items you would include.
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Select either the full view of the artwork or the detail image to explore in depth.
Write a caption for the image you chose to view that describes what is going on and what message you find in this work of art.

What do you see that supports your caption?

Stephanie Syjuco, American (born Philippines), born 1974; Block Out the Sun, 2019; pigment prints, mounted on aluminum; approximate case dimensions: 36 x 84 x 48 inches, image (individual prints): 8 x 10 inches; Courtesy of the artist, Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; 2021.185.1-.30; © Stephanie Syjuco