

In the Photographer's Shoes



Imagine the moment a photograph was taken - what were the influences and challenges in that moment.

Choose an image and make a quick sketch *in the centre* of your paper. Then select one of the following -

Extending the image. Continue your sketch, this time drawing from your imagination to extend beyond the frame. What would you see if the work wasn't contained by its edges? What was cropped out - to the sides, above or below?

Makes more sense. Make a list of sounds (nearby or distant), words, conversations that might have occurred at the time the image was taken. What discussions might have taken place, or instructions given out? What about other senses, such as smell? How might the photographer be feeling, and why - *warm, cold, rushed, relaxed, calm, controlled, under stress?*

Mirror image. Complete a sketch imagining the view directly back towards the photographer. Was a tripod or lighting equipment present? What was the photographer wearing? Were they standing, crouching, moving? What view is behind the photographer?



You can find more activities at www.rct.uk/discover

Summer 2024

Visit an Exhibition!

Go on!



Pencil & Paper required

Perhaps the most important starting point for visiting an exhibition is to have an open-mind - a willingness to look slowly, to think and to question. This resource supports a visit to 'Royal Portraits—A century of Royal Photography' but could be used for exhibitions of other artwork too!

IT'S GOOD TO BE CURIOUS!

Curating an Exhibition - Have a think about.....



- Who is most likely to visit this exhibition and why?
- How many people do you think are involved in delivering this exhibition and what type of job roles might be involved?
- What decisions have been made by the curator and why? e.g. the layout of the gallery, the wall colours, the use of lighting, the amount of visitors
- Is the exhibition curated chronologically, organised by date; or thematically, grouped by topics, style, interpretation?
- Is there an obvious starting point, and end; directions of where to start and finish?
- Is there an introduction, guide or talk available? Would you rather see the work without context, to form your own thoughts?
- What words would you use to describe the work on show? *focused, abstract, contemporary, colourful, stylised, traditional, muted.* Are words always helpful?

Map a Gallery



Spend some time observing the space. how do visitors move and interact within the space.

- Use a continuous line drawing to chart your journey through the exhibition space. Do not lift your pencil off the page - but do look where you are going!
- Create a 'heat map' indicating the most popular spots where people dwell or gather in the exhibition space(s). Indicate which images/objects are attracting the most attention and consider why?

A Change of Title

The meanings of photographs are often shaped by their titles. Question, reconsider and experiment with the words that accompany artworks!

Titles can often be revealing and informative, but sometimes artists and photographers decide not to title their pictures, preferring 'Untitled'. Sometimes the subject of the picture even appears in brackets, for example, 'Untitled' (Lady in a Hat). Titles can be helpful or often not.

How might a different title influence the meaning of an image?
Imagine you are the exhibition curator. Look carefully at one of the artworks. Create a new title/caption for the image that captures your understanding of it. Repeat for other images. Could some titles seem to fit multiple images?



A Picture Interrupted!

Sometimes photographers place objects in front of the camera lens to disrupt our view. It can be a fun yet practical way of exploring the potential of photography to abstract and even deceive.

Photographs are flat, right? Of course! We usually view them on paper or a screen. Photography is great at compressing and flattening our 3-dimensional world. Lets interact with the work on show but remember not to touch!

Experiment with holding objects in front of your camera lens. Take a series of pictures within the exhibition that experiment with 'disrupting' a view. For example, how might an object (such as a pencil, your finger, a hairband or a door key) combine with or visually disrupt a displayed work?

- How much of the view you can obscure / what will you keep in and out of focus.
- Try poking a hole in a piece of paper or card and photographing through this hole. What new alternative views of the exhibition can you create?

Is this what you see?

This activity challenges us to look and listen carefully.

Work in twos. Choose an artwork/photograph that interests you—don't tell your partner. Ask your partner to close their eyes. Guide them carefully to a space in front of the work. Stand back-to-back so that only you are looking at the photograph.



Describe the photograph as carefully as possible without mentioning recognisable things. Only use words that describe the picture's qualities - its colour, texture, tone, line, form, space, pattern, contrast etc
Your partner's task is to draw your description. (30—60 seconds) When you are done, take a look at what you have made together and discuss. Swap roles.

Wandering Eyes

How do you look at a photo - how do your eyes move and explore an image?

Select an image in the exhibition that intrigues you. It can be helpful and revealing to look carefully at something you don't initially understand.



Take some paper of a similar ratio or shape to the image. Without looking at your piece of paper, place your pencil on the surface and begin to trace the journey your eye makes across the picture. Importantly, remember you are not drawing what you see but how you look - a continuous line to show your eye movements.

Keep looking and drawing until your eye comes to a natural rest. Now look at the drawing you have made. What does it reveal about the way in which you looked at the photograph?

