

How Do We Look At Contemporary Sculpture

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When we look at contemporary sculpture, how do we respond? What are we meant to think and how are we meant to feel?

There is of course no right or wrong answer to these questions, and everyone will approach a piece of sculpture in their own way. Many people find looking at contemporary sculpture to be challenging, but a few simple questions can help viewers find their way into an artwork.



Explore Sculpture by Victoria Rotaru



Explore Sculpture by Mel Woo



Explore Sculpture by Meg Klosterman

Head or Heart?

Sometimes when we look at art we have an immediate, instinctive, even heartfelt reaction. Sometimes there is a direct communication between the artwork, and us as viewer. And that instinctive reaction is perfect – whatever it is – because it is your connection, or your way in to understanding. It might be as simple as “I love it!” or it might be more complicated, and you

might not be able to voice your emotion in words.

Other times though, it feels like there is no connection. That's also fine – art is a very personal thing, and connections can't be forced. But when this is the case, asking simple questions to find out more about the artwork, and about your response to the artwork, can help you build understanding. A small amount of knowledge about the artists intention can help build that bridge. In this way you can use your head to help connect your heart with the artwork.

Questions

Try asking the following questions when looking at an artwork, either as a group or as an individual. Remember that there is no wrong or right response.

- What do you see? First of all, let's make sure we have really looked at the artwork. Keep it simple. Tell it as it is: Can you tell what it's made from? How big is it? What can you see? Ask these questions as a group and you'll find the hive mind helps individuals with the group see things they wouldn't have seen before.
- What do you like? What does it make you think about?
- What do you struggle with? Are there things which don't make sense to you?

Can you find out anything about the artist or artwork? Does the title help? Does the artist share why they made the piece and what they were thinking?

- Have your feelings changed towards the artwork since we started exploring it by asking questions?

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