Alternatives to Visual Analysis: Museum Activities

Portland Art Museum Education
Grade Level: Scalable

1. Introduction to forms of interpretation other than verbal and those that rely on visual analysis.

SKETCHING & SOUNDSCAPE:
1. Sculpture Landing: participants take a stool to one of the sculptures and sit with it for two minutes, slow looking. Everyone receives a piece of white paper and does a one minute drawing of what they see, in full.
2. Participants move around the sculptures, take a close look then back up and get a far-away look. Back to stools, tracing paper is handed out. Place the tracing paper on top of your original sketch and draw the inner sound of the sculpture.
3. Second piece of tracing paper is handed out. Draw the outer sound.
4. Make the inner sound.
5. Make the outer sound.
6. Everyone make the sound at once.
7. Crumple up the sketching paper, unwrap the paper slowly. Write a message to your sculpture.

METAPHOR GAME (A VERSION OF THIS IS NOT A ROLL OF TAPE):
1. Little Pastry Chef: participants slow look, describe and analyze. What questions do they have?
2. Metaphor game is a pair share: Get into pairs of two, make a metaphor for the Little Pastry Chef. He is not a little pastry chef he is: a half burned cigarette, a firecracker about to launch, a lizard in the sun, etc.
3. Share the metaphors.

COMPARE & CONTRAST (VOTE WITH YOUR FEET
and small group discussion):
1. Brancusi’s Muse and Picasso’s Head of Fernande. Vote with your feet: point out three places on a line, or in a circle, with areas for strongly agree, somewhere in the middle, strongly disagree.
   a. I have a head. (strongly agree in the area where there is the most room.)
   b. My head is more like the Muse by Brancusi than it is like the Head of Fernande, by Picasso.
   c. My head is more like the head of Picasso’s Fernande than it is like the Muse.
   d. If one of these heads could talk I would choose the Muse.
   e. If one of these heads could talk I would choose Fernande.
   f. I wish one of these heads could talk.
2. Ask participants to choose one head to spend more time with, split into two groups.
3. In small groups: explain WHY you were drawn to the head you chose. Talk about the issues you think the work raises. And the questions or wonderings you have about the work. Discuss the artist’s choice to portray the head that way.
4. Docent tells the story of Picasso on the train.
5. Appoint one person to be the spokesperson for your head. The appointed person should speak as the head to the other head, about what it heard the group saying about it.

PANTOUM:

1. Participants move their stools to the area in front of the Monet. Gaze into the lake as I give you the next prompt. I am going to pass out a piece of paper and I want you to reflect on the characters you have met on this tour. There were the sculptures you sang to, the Little Pastry Chef and the two heads. With them in mind and the simple prompt CHARACTER I would like you to write down eight lines. These should be simple sentences.
2. Pass out Pantoum form (see following page) and have everyone place their character lines into order. Some people should share.
   - Five Stanzas
   - Each Stanza is a quatrain – 4 lines
   - Each Stanza rhymes – ABAB
   - Final line of the poem repeats the first line
   - 1st line of the quatrain is the 2nd line in the quatrain before
   - 3rd line of the quatrain is the 4th line in the quatrain before

   **On Beauty**

   No, we could not itemize the list
   of sins they can’t forgive us.
   The beautiful don’t lack the wound.
   It is always beginning to snow.

   Of sins they can’t forgive us
   speech is beautifully useless.
   It is always beginning to snow.
   The beautiful know this.

   Speech is beautifully useless.
   They are the damned.
   The beautiful know this.
   They stand around unnatural as statuary.

   They are the damned.
   and so their sadness is perfect,
   delicate as an egg placed in your palm.
   Hard, it is decorated with their face

   and so their sadness is perfect.
   The beautiful don’t lack the wound.
   Hard, it is decorated with their face.
   No, we could not itemize the list
Pantoum

1. _________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________
3. _________________________________________________________
4. _________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________
5. _________________________________________________________
4. _________________________________________________________
6. _________________________________________________________

5. _________________________________________________________
6. _________________________________________________________
8. _________________________________________________________
7. _________________________________________________________

7. _________________________________________________________
3. _________________________________________________________
8. _________________________________________________________
1. _________________________________________________________