

A Tool Kit for Educators

Gallery Teaching Techniques

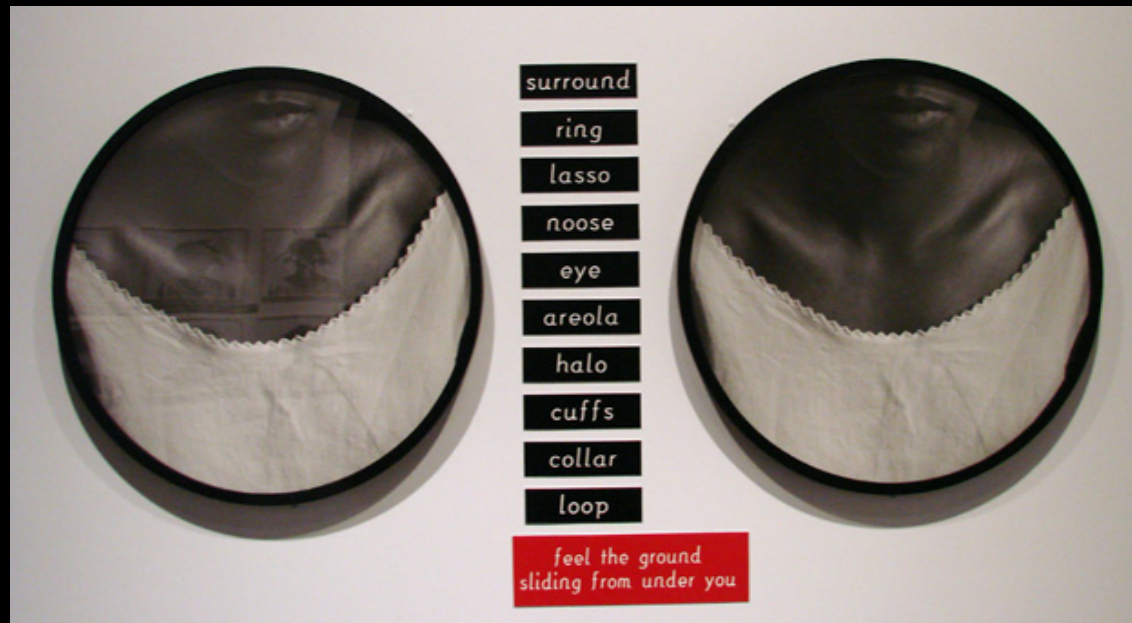




What is Contemporary Art?



PAR
ANO
LIAC





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Some Challenges of Contemporary Art

- “Why is this art?” or “This isn’t art”
- What does it mean?
- Non-traditional materials
- Shock Value or repulsion
- Contemporary Art is about Ideas

Role of the Gallery Educator

- Create a welcoming and conversational environment
- Offer visitor-centered, inquiry-based tours
- Facilitate viewer's process of Discovery.
- Inspire new ways and processes of looking
- Represent our institutions in a meaningful way
- “Comfort and Confront” Contemporary Art

How We Learn and Retain Information

- 10 % of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30 % of what we see
- 50 % of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we say and discuss with others
- 80% of what we experience personally
- 90% of what we say and do
- 95% of what we teach someone else

What is Inquiry Based teaching?

- Questions that are open-ended and invite conversation
- Actively looking and listening
- Open to multiple interpretations
- Paraphrasing / validating discussion
- Taking it apart and putting it back together to create meaning(s)
- Scaffolding questions and linking comments

Constructing Meaningful Questions

Inquiry Methods: Your Toolkit

- Visual Thinking Strategies (Hybridized)
 - Paraphrasing and linking
- Directed Looking
 - Details to whole (constructing meaning)
 - Comparing and contrasting
- Bloom's taxonomy / Socratic Method
- Scaffolding questions and constructing meaning

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

- **What's going on here?**
- **What do you see that makes you say that?**
- **What more can we find?**

All comments must be paraphrased and ideally linked to previous comments.

Object selection is very important.

Cannot use VTS with abstract works.

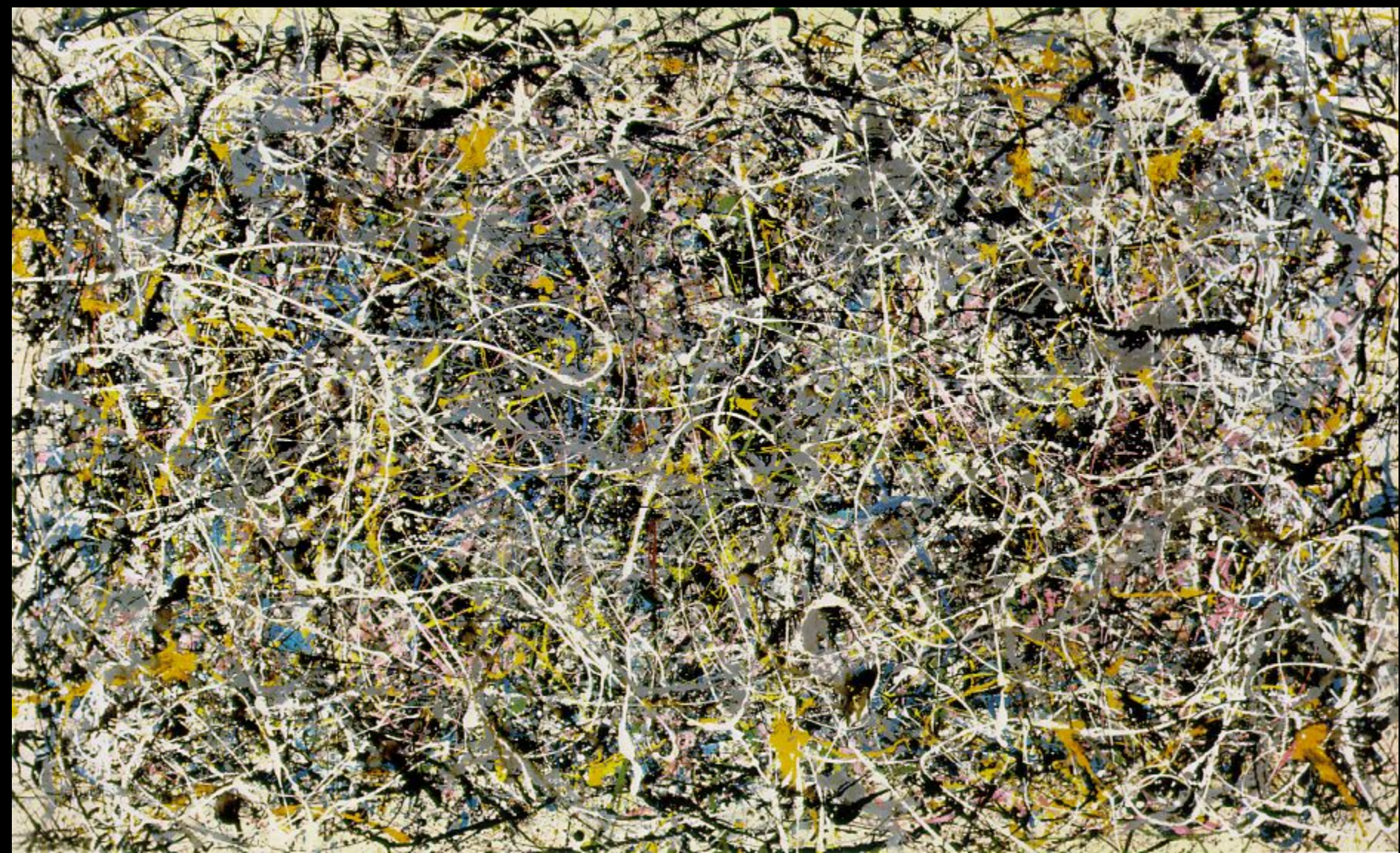






Directed Looking Method

- Directing the sequence of looking
- From details to a whole (constructing meaning)
- Compare and contrast
- Scaffolding or sequencing questions to construct meaning.





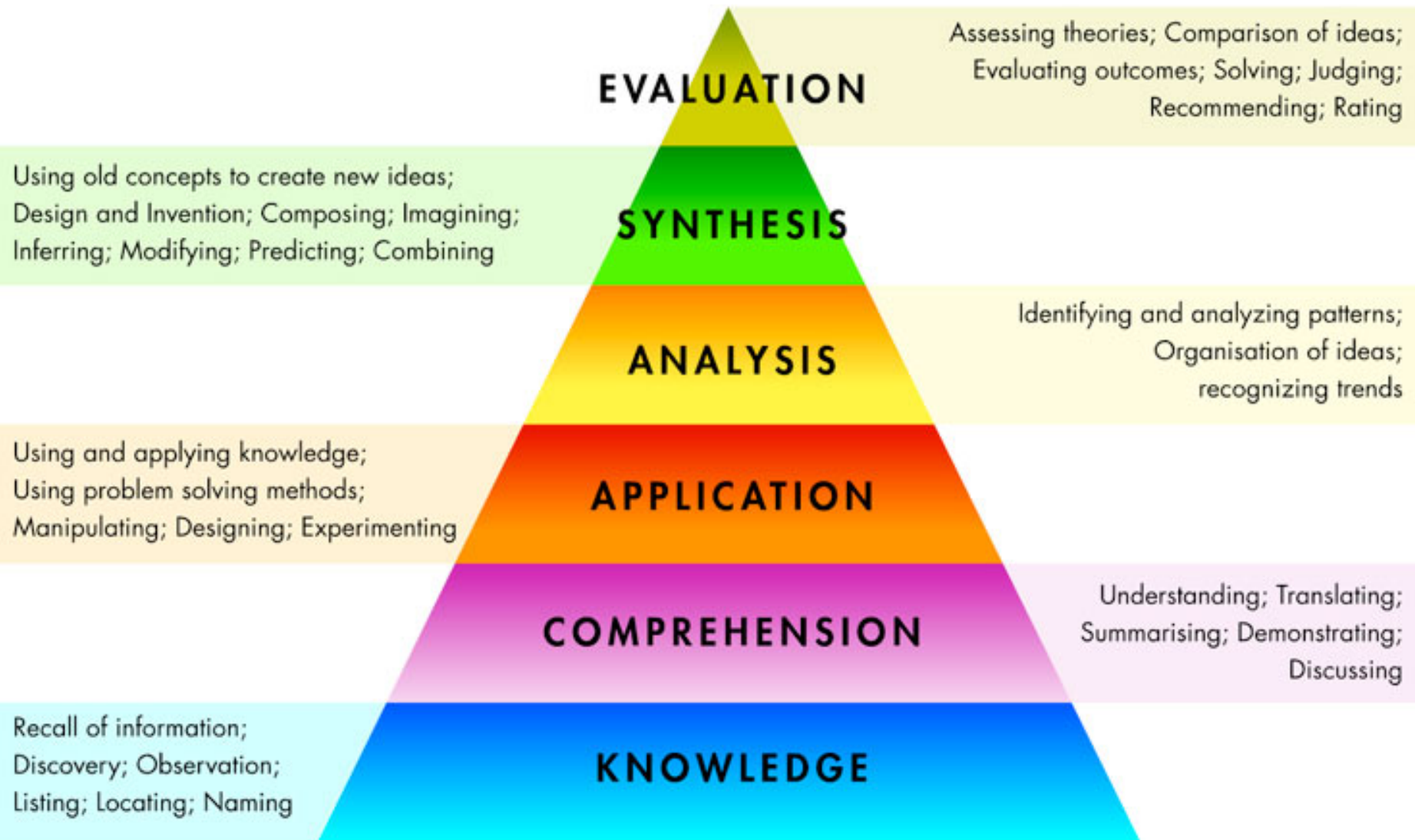
Information and Facts: When to use them?

- Sometimes stating facts at the beginning of the conversation can kill the process of discovery for the viewer or intimidate them.
- Interjecting facts as they come up in conversation empowers the viewer
- Answer direct questions about facts
- If you're asked your opinion, try to redirect conversation back to the work through questioning.

Bloom's and Socratic Method

- Speculative/Analytical/Evaluative
 - Stimulate discussion with probing questions
 - Periodically summarize what has and what hasn't been resolved.
 - What if ... ?
 - What is the significance of ... ?
 - What is the relationship between ...?
 - How would you prioritize elements ...?
 - Does your perception change if ...?
 - What symbolism do you attach to ... ?

B L O O M S T A X O N O M Y







Your Toolkit of Inquiry-based Methods

- **Visual Thinking Strategies** (Hybridized)
 - Paraphrasing and linking
- **Directed Looking**
 - Details to whole (constructing meaning)
 - Comparing and contrasting
 - Scaffolding /sequencing questions to constructing meaning
- **Bloom's taxonomy / Socratic Method**

Touring Tips

- Keep discussion on the works of art by responding with “What do you see that makes you say that?” in response to viewers statements such as “he looks sad”. This encourages critical and analytical thinking to identify the thought behind their statements.
- Paraphrase responses so that others in the group can hear what was said. Paraphrasing also allows the facilitator to clarify or state in different words what the group member has said and perhaps link it to something said earlier by another member of the group.
- If someone asks a questions you’re not quite sure how to answer, I ask them “I’m curious about your thinking behind that question. What are you thinking about?”
- Paraphrasing also helps the facilitator to “scaffold” and transition the next question.

Putting it all together: Constructing your Tour

- Welcome, introduction, and assessment of group. Tell them tour logistics & style.
- Think about “big ideas” or themes you might want to introduce at the beginning
 - What is contemporary art ?
- Create an outline of objects you’ll be touring
- Allow time to reflect with visitors at the end of your tour.

The art isn't in the object.
If you go to a museum and you look
at a Van Gogh or you look at a
Picasso or you look at a piece like
this, the art is not there.
The art happens inside you the
viewer, and the art is your own sense
of your own potential as a person.
That's where the art is.



Our tour was great! Our guide was inclusive and informative. I felt more engaged and interested in the art here than ever before. Thanks!”

-MOCA Visitor Sophie Ballmer

I've stared at these paintings for years and never understood them. [The educator's] method of guiding us to a better understanding was exemplary, and exceptionally edifying.”

- MOCA Visitor Garrett Cry edifying.”

LOVED the guided tours-
made the work more
accessible, invited me to
have an opinion. Very
important to have a
personal touch.”

- MOCA Visitor Sheiaigh
Weymount