

**ATLANTA
CONTEMPORARY**



Educator Toolkit

ABOUT ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Atlanta Contemporary is eager to welcome students, educators, and life-long learners into our unique space! We are a nonprofit, free admission art center in Atlanta, Georgia with six exhibition spaces, artists' studios, and frequent programming that revolves around the presentation of contemporary art. It is our mission to engage the public through the creation, presentation, and advancement of contemporary art.

Founded in 1973 as Nexus, a grassroots artists' cooperative, Atlanta Contemporary has since become one of the southeast's leading contemporary art centers. We play a vital role in Atlanta's cultural landscape by presenting over 100 consequential artists from the local, national, and international art scenes through our various exhibition and project spaces each year.

Atlanta Contemporary is one of just a few free admission arts centers in the Metro-Atlanta area, giving us the opportunity to reach further. Since becoming free admission in 2014, visitorship has increased over 100%. We are proud to be an entry point for many who are interested in experiencing art for the first time. We hope this guide helps in introducing contemporary art to your own students in an engaging and unexpected way.



VISITING ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Admission

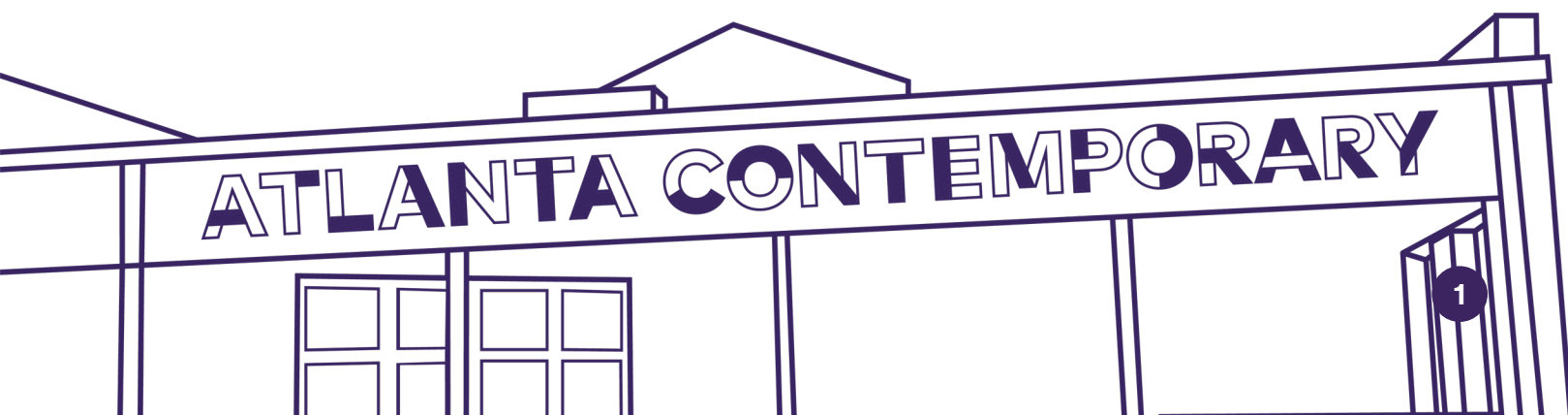
Atlanta Contemporary is always free admission! Please consider leaving a donation when you visit – donations help us stay free admission, every day.

Tours

Book a guided tour online at www.atlantaccontemporary.org/visit/ or email emma@atlantaccontemporary.org. Groups can also use on-site collateral to lead themselves through the galleries.

Hours

Sunday: 12pm—4pm
Monday: Closed
Tues & Wed: 11am—5pm
Thursday: 11am—8pm
Friday & Saturday: 11am—5pm



MUSEUM RULES

Visiting a museum, gallery, or arts center requires behavior that new visitors may not be familiar with. Review the rules below to understand how to engage with an arts space.

Be respectful artwork

1. Do not touch the artwork - look with your eyes, not your hands.
2. Stand 2 steps away from artwork.
3. Be gentle with interactive artwork.
4. Take pictures, but do not use flash.
5. No food or drink in the galleries.

Be respectful of other guests

1. Use indoor voices.
2. Take turns to look at art.

LET'S TALK
ABOUT ART

CONTEMPORARY ART

Contemporary art is the art of today, produced in the second half of the 20th century or in the 21st century. Contemporary artists work in a globally influenced, culturally diverse, and technologically advancing world. Their art is a dynamic combination of materials, methods, concepts, and subjects that continue the challenging of boundaries that was already well underway in the 20th century.

DISCUSSING ART

Contemporary art is best viewed with an open mind and a sense of curiosity. There may not be an obvious meaning or concept to the work, but that does not mean the artwork is good or bad. Contemporary artists are often trying to communicate a big idea; discussion can lead the viewer to explore ideas behind the work. Asking questions and finding context will help create connections with the work show how it relates to other artists, concepts, and artwork.

QUESTION PROMPTS

1

Basics

- a. What is the medium?
- b. What is the title?
- c. When was it made?
- d. What is the subject?

2

About the Artist

- a. Where is the artist from? What in the artwork reflects that?
- b. Why did the artist choose the materials they did?
- c. What do you think the artist is trying to communicate?
- d. How do you think the artist felt when making the piece?

3

About the Viewer

- a. What do you see?
- b. How does it make you feel and why?
- c. What about this artwork is meaningful to you?
- d. What parts of the art do you like? Which do you not like? Why?
- e. Can you think of a story art might be telling?
- f. What would you name the artwork?
- g. After reading the description, is this what you expected from the piece? Is the description different than the way you interpreted it?

The Elements of Art and Principles of Design are a framework often used to start conversations about artwork. These are building blocks - when using them, viewers can more easily identify the aspects of an artwork to discuss and apply in their own works.

Elements of Art

1. Line
2. Color
3. Shape
4. Form
5. Value
6. Space
7. Texture

Principles of Design

1. Emphasis
2. Balance and alignment
3. Contrast
4. Repetition
5. Proportion
6. Movement
7. Negative Space



ACTIVITIES

Below are some activities your participants can use to interact with artwork at Atlanta Contemporary or in the classroom. These activities are centered around learning to look at artwork and think creatively about it. Looking at art is an invitation to make connections – personal, historical, cultural, political, and more.

Slow Art Looking

IDEA

Most people spend 15 to 30 seconds looking at a piece of art. Slow art looking asks the viewer to look at a single artwork for a longer time.

OUTCOME

The viewer will learn to spend more time looking at and discovering new things about an artwork.

PROCESS

- Ask viewers to spend five minutes looking at a single artwork in silence– encourage viewers to get up close and observe from farther away as well.
- After five minutes, discuss the artwork. What did you first notice about the piece? What did you notice after looking for one minute? After looking for five minutes?
- After touring the rest of the museum or looking at other artwork at home/school, ask viewers to spend another five minutes with the first piece. Did they see something new? Did they make any connections with other works they saw?

Two Minute Life Story

IDEA

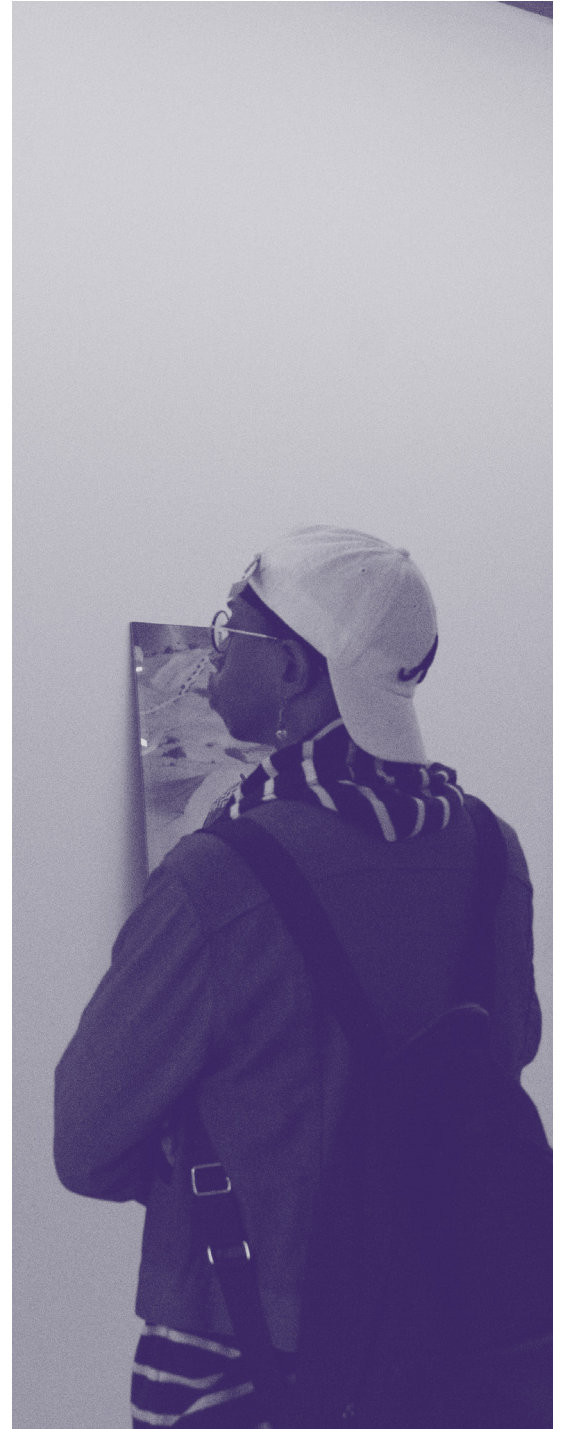
Viewers can understand how an artist thinks by creating their own backstory of an artwork.

OUTCOME

The viewers learn to make personal connections and interpretations of an artwork.

PROCESS

- Conduct slow looking with an artwork for 1 minute.
- Lead through thought process to speculate what artwork is about. Who? What? When? Where? Why?
- Summarize responses into the “life story” of the subject of the artwork.



Contour Drawing Activity

IDEA

Look deeper at an artwork by drawing it.

OUTCOME

Understand the elements line and shape, plus the principles proportion and negative space. Connect with the artist by looking at the artwork from the point of view of an artist.

PROCESS:

- Explain a contour drawing: a sketch a subject made by drawing lines that result in a drawing that is essentially an outline.
- Hand out paper and pencils and ask them to do a contour drawing of the object.
- Discuss. What parts of the artwork did everyone include in their drawing? How do lines convey emotion? How does the negative space work with the lines used to create space?

Blindfold Description Activity

IDEA

Viewers can show understanding of an artwork by describing it.

OUTCOME

Learn to observe an object and describe for clearer understanding.

PROCESS:

- One person is the “viewer” and the remainder of the group are “interpreters”.
- The viewer will see a chosen artwork and describe it to their group members, who do not see the artwork. Talk with them about subjects, textures, colors, shapes, etc.
- The interpreters will create a drawing based on the description.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Listed below are additional online resources we found helpful when creating this document.

Art Museum Teaching

Digital community and collaborative online forum for reflecting on issues of teaching, learning, and experimental practice in the field of art museum education. artmuseumteaching.com

Art 21

PBS television series and online content centered around teaching, discussing, and understanding contemporary art. art21.org; artmuseumteaching.com

Portland Museum of Art

Includes access to images of the PMA collection, suggested activities, guides to visiting a museum for the first time, and more. portlandartmuseum.org/learn/educators/resources

Google Arts and Culture

Resource for articles and images of content from museums and archives around the world. Explore topics from the Louvre art collections, the Pyramids, Japanese textiles, and more. artsandculture.google.com