

# LEARNING TO SEE



Many elements must come together to create a work of art. Truly *seeing* art in a meaningful way involves looking closely at these different components and thinking about how they interact. The tips below will help you do that!

## 1) *s l o w d o w n*

- Stand still in front of the work for a moment.
- Let your eye travel around all parts of the picture or sculpture.
- Take in the colors and textures that you see.
- Move forward and backward to see if distance changes the view.

## 2) Identify and describe the characteristics of the image. You can use the following art vocabulary to describe what you see:

- **Line** – a moving point that defines the edges of objects and spaces
- **Shape** – an area enclosed by a line
- **Form** – a shape that exists in three dimensions
- **Value** – refers to the lightness or darkness of a color
- **Color** – one of the most expressive elements of an image, it is a result of light bouncing off objects
- **Texture** – the surface quality of an artwork; it may be tangible or visible
- **Balance** – the distribution of visual weight
- **Movement** – the way a viewer's eye is drawn around the image to focal areas
- **Emphasis** – an area that stands out in the image and tends to hold the viewer's attention
- **Pattern** – the repetition of lines, shapes, forms, or colors
- **Rhythm** – a “visual beat,” often using repetition to create a controlled movement around the image

## 3) What do you think this work of art is about?

- Take a look at any characters you see. Who are they? What are they doing?
- What kind of setting is shown in the work?
- What mood do the colors, shapes, and textures create?
- What other things does this work make you think of?



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Look on the label next to your selected work to find the following information:

**Title of the work:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Artist's name and place of origin:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Stop and look

Write down your initial reactions to the artwork in front of you.

## Analyze

Pick 3 elements of art that you think stand out in the painting and describe them below. Use art vocabulary terms that you know (line, texture, balance, etc.). How do these 3 elements affect your understanding of the work?

## Interpret

Write down the details of the story playing out in front of you. What might be going on here? Take note of any parts of the story that you can see in the work (characters, setting, action, etc.).

## You be the judge

Now, give your judgment of the work of art. Do you think it is a successful piece? Why or why not? Be sure to refer to your earlier observations to back up your argument.

The Ringling

