

# BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

## Teaching Tips and Tools for Discussion

Here are some tips and tools for leading an inquiry-based discussion provided by the Buffalo AKG's Education & Community Engagement Department.

Begin by asking your student to look over the whole work of art, quietly, before they share anything. It is important to let your students really take a moment to look before you begin asking them questions. Sometimes children can get right into what they see and they get very excited about it. Sometimes, it's crickets!

Now it's time to get the conversation started:

- **What do you see? (Or, what's going on?)** Encourage them to be specific about what they see. Often, particularly at the beginning of a discussion, the observations will be very concrete (e.g., "I see a house with a man in front of it"). Sometimes, students will offer a more interpretive observation (e.g., "The man in front of the house looks sad or melancholy"). If they have offered an interpretive observation, ask them "What do you see that makes you say that?" Remember, they should be providing visual evidence for what they observe in a work of art. "What clues within this work of art makes you think that?"
- **Make a list of words that come to your mind when you look at this work of art.** Look over those words—do they have anything in common?
- **What is your favorite part of this work of art? Why?**
- **What more can we find?** Ask the group "What more can we find?" several times until you feel that the group has covered everything within the work of art.

Next, share information about the work of art. Make sure you go through the process described above before giving information. This is critical for signaling that the starting place is their own observations and exploration, and for building critical thinking and observational skills.

- Tell them a little bit about the artist (information is included with each lesson), and a couple interesting tidbits about the work of art. This works best when it corresponds with something they observed or shared. Examples are listed under each lesson.

Now you can ask more open-ended follow-up questions:

- Do you like the material the artist chose for this work of art?
- Why do you think the artist chose to focus on that topic/idea/thought?
- If you could display this work of art anywhere, where would that be? (In your home? At a museum? Outside? In a store? At a library?)

# AKG: