



Discussion Questions Used To Explore Art: In-SITE-Ful Journey: The Jewish Museum

September 24th, 2019

The Jewish Education Project Early Childhood Team loved sharing time together exploring, discussing and creating art. These questions were captured as they pertained to particular paintings; however, they are indicative of how we create an inquiry-based conversation using art as provocation.

Enjoy them, use them, and share with us how it goes!

Big thanks to Asya Gribov for creating this rich experience for us!

Big Question:

What is the difference between product-based and process-based art?

Questions while Examining: *The Return of the Volunteer from the Wars of Liberation to His Family Still Living in Accordance with Old Customs*; By Moritz Daniel Oppenheim

- What objects / Jewish ritual objects do you notice in this painting? What else? Anything else?
- What's happening here?
- What might this man be in relationship to that man?
- Can we make the facial expression that we see in the painting?
- Now that we know the title of the work what do we learn about this work?
- What time of the week might this be?
- What traditions do you have with your family?
- What do you have in your home that is a Jewish item?
- What is something that your family does that you enjoy doing?
- How might you feel when you do that activity?
- How is this home Jewish? What makes it Jewish?
- What are the relationships between the different figures?
- Why do you think the artist choose to paint this moment?
- What could have happened right before this moment?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What might the people be thinking in this moment?
- Do you think the artist had this product/painting in mind?
- What are other ways the artist could have portrayed the same themes/ideas
- Do you think this is a real family?





- Where did the artists get the ideas for these faces?

Questions while Examining: *Alms Container*; By Harriete Estel Berman

- What does this make you wonder?
- Are they arranged in a specific order?
- Are they made by the same person?
- What's inside
- Is there a reason why there are that many in this arrangement?
- Is there anything you recognize?
- Is there anything that looks familiar to you?
- Do you see anything that you have at your house?
- Where do you think you've seen this pattern before?
- How easy or difficult is it to make this object into an envelope?
- Thinking about materials we could use to make an envelope – what would be easy? What would be difficult? (paper, cardboard tine – passed them around)
- Can I fold this? Is this material foldable?
- Would you want a container made out of.....(tin, paper towel, tissue paper etc.)
- Are there materials that are better for the type of materials you might want to give?
- How might we want to display our objects?
- What message would you put in your envelope?

Questions teachers can ask themselves

- Could this be a collaborative project?
- How can we make this display interactive?
- What other materials could you experiment with?
- Could tzedakah be more than just money? What about gifts or promises for each other?
- How will your class arrange your products?
- How will you facilitate your class making these choices for themselves?
- What does tzedakah mean for a three-year-old?
- Does the concept of tzedakah get taught before or after examining the art?
- How do we keep engaging with the art work once we are done with the project?

Questions while Examining: *Being the Light*; By Matthew Mccaslin

- What do we see?
- What is this used for?
- Which one is the Shamash?
- How would you make this shape?





- What is the “bendability” of the material?
- How can we connect the shapes we made?

Resource: Materials for the Arts in Queens: <https://www.materialsforthearts.org/>

Questions While Examining: *Torah Ark Curtain*; Artist Unknown

- Is there anything that surprised you about this?
- Is there anything you notice about the images you see?
- How did a mosque end up on a Jewish ritual object?
- What element of your city might be a surprise to add on an ark cover?

Teacher thoughts:

- Do you want to include only religious objects/buildings in NYC?
- How are religious buildings different from city/secular landmarks?

Questions While Examining: *Menorah Memories*; by Larry Kagan

- Pick one and draw it – not for shape but for detail
- What do you notice?
- Did you discover something about the lamp through the sketching process – share it with someone next to you
- How are they arranged? (by material, thematic)
- Which ones are different?
- Is it a ritual object or a piece of art? What’s the difference?

Questions While Examining: (*wooden*) *Hanukkah Lamp*; by Arnold Zadikow

- What circumstances would one be in to be drawn to make a menorah out of wood?
- How can we inspire our students to interpret the meaning of the holiday?

After the Art Creation Process:

- What did you do to make your artwork?
- What did you do first, second, last etc?
- What was easy?
- What was hard?
- If you were going to make another what would you do next time?
- What materials would you use?
- How can you keep the process / objects as living additions to your classroom (dramatic play, book, museum shelf etc)

