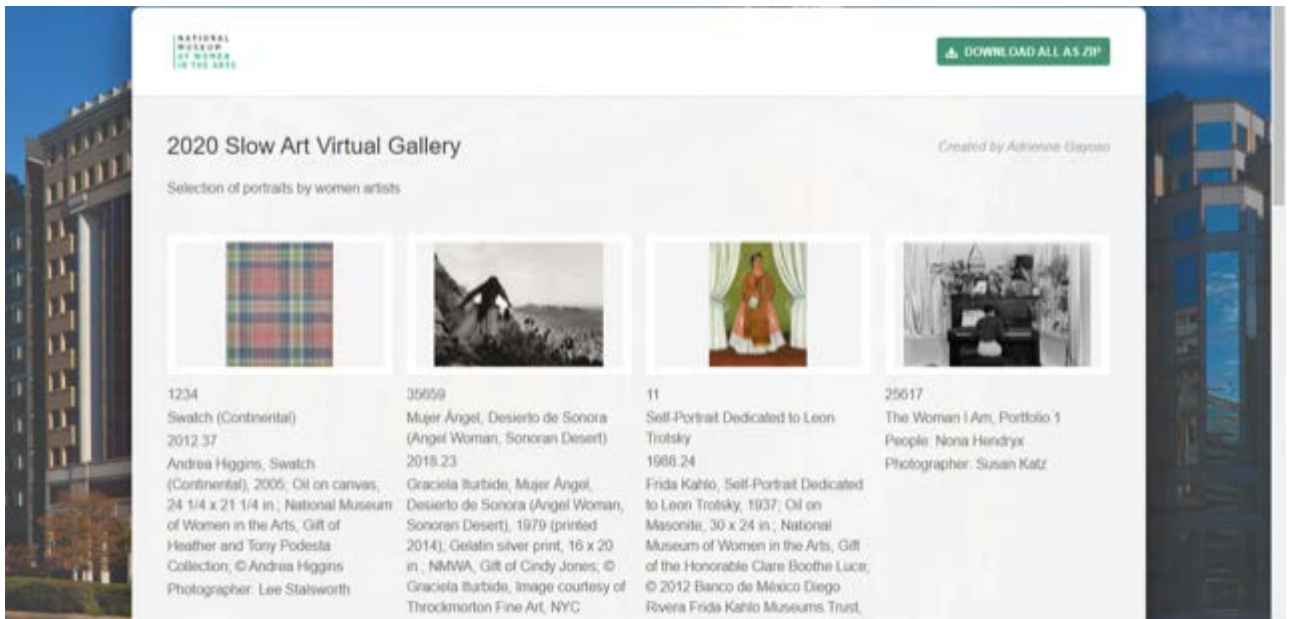


Slow Looking How-Tos

[Did you know museum visitors spend an average of only 15 to 30 seconds looking at a work of art?](#) Artist [Georgia O'Keeffe](#) (1887–1986) said, “...to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.” By investing more time looking, pondering, and responding to a smaller selection of objects, you will develop a better understanding of those works. This guide introduces you to simple slow looking prompts that you can practice from home. When used regularly, these prompts will transform your relationships with objects in our world.

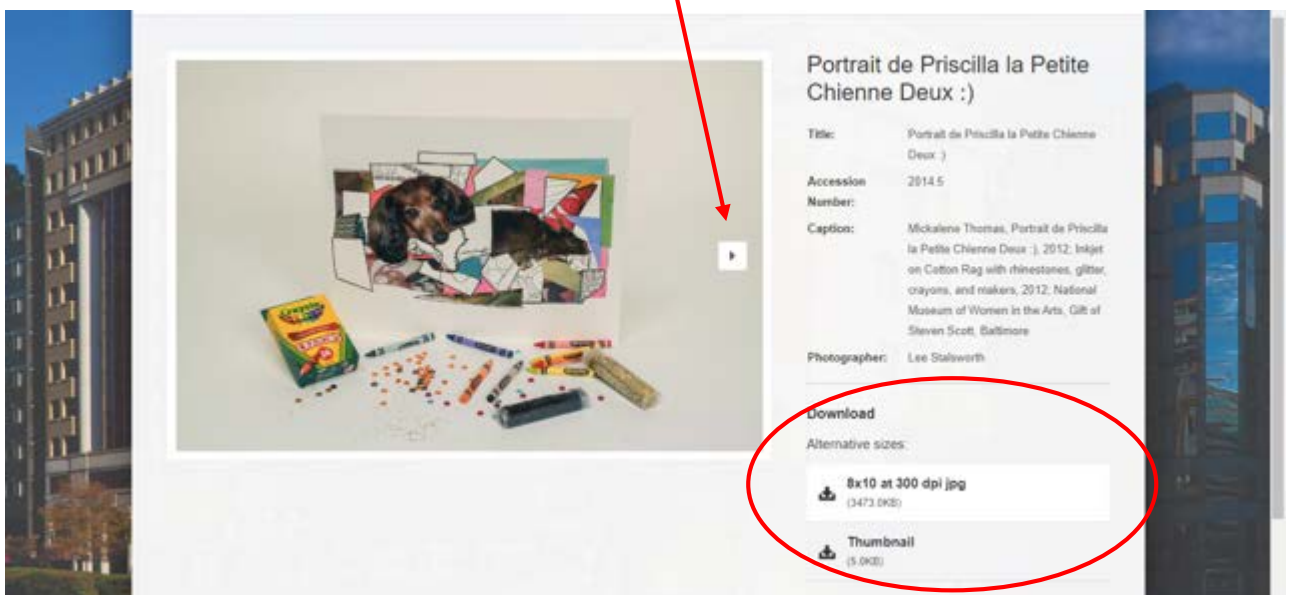
1. Gather materials: pen/pencil, paper, computer with internet access, phone. Optional: color printer and art materials like colored pencils.
2. Get familiar with our theme: **“Staying connected and creative,”** which you'll approach through the lens of portraiture. Before you look at art, consider the following questions, and jot down answers.
 - During this period of physical distancing, whose faces do you miss seeing in person? How have you been engaging with others?
 - Who have you connected with virtually this week? How did it feel to see their face?
 - What calms you or brings you peace right now?
 - How have you expressed yourself creatively over the last few weeks? How have you centered yourself? Calmed yourself?
 - How would you define the term “portrait”?
3. Consider this selection of 12 portraits by women artists: [2020 Slow Art Virtual Gallery \[https://nmwa.assetbank-server.com/assetbank-nmwa/images/assetbox/8006ab6e-6388-4fc9-9e9a-2eb537c4cf3f/assetbox.html\]](https://nmwa.assetbank-server.com/assetbank-nmwa/images/assetbox/8006ab6e-6388-4fc9-9e9a-2eb537c4cf3f/assetbox.html)

This link provides you access to a virtual gallery of portraits selected for this experience. The portraits are organized alphabetically by artist's last name. This gallery also includes a caption for each work, which is similar to an object label you would see at the museum. It reveals information like the artist's name, artwork title, and medium, or materials used by the artist.



When you click on an image in the virtual gallery, you will be directed to a page like the one below. From there you can see a larger version of the artwork.

Advance to the next image by clicking on the arrow.



Click on the buttons at the bottom right of the screen to download the image.

If you have access to a color printer, make your own in-home gallery! Print the works and post them in your house so that you can live with them for a few days.

- After reviewing the portrait options in the virtual gallery, **pick 5 artworks** that spark your curiosity. Your challenge: **spend 10 minutes looking closely at each** of your selections.

For each artwork, set your timer, settle in, and let your eyes explore. Focus first on the artwork, *then* read the caption. Make mental or actual notes of your *initial reactions, observations, and questions*.

For a more structured experience, consider the following prompts.

(Keep in mind there are no wrong answers or responses to artworks.)

Want some questions to *ponder* or *pose* about each work?

- What do you see? What do you think about what you see?
- What did you notice first? What did you discover after looking longer?
- What makes sense? What confuses you? What questions does this work elicit?
- Do you like this work more or less the longer you spend with it? Why?
- What do you wonder about this work? The artist? Given the chance, what one question would you ask her?
- Since you are viewing this work virtually, what do you wonder about the physical qualities of this artwork? Its scale? Its texture? Its materials?
- After looking for a bit, READ THE ARTWORK'S CAPTION. Does knowing more help you appreciate the work more? Why or why not?

Want to get *physical*?

- Embody the artwork.
 - Strike the pose of a figure depicted.
 - Mimic the shape of the work with your body.
 - Dance with the artwork. How does it inspire you to move? What type of music do you hear, if any?
- Consider the artwork's details. Roll up a sheet of paper. Look through it at the artwork to isolate and consider its parts.

More of a *visual* thinker?

- Does this piece inspire you to create? If so, create a mini studio for yourself. Take a moment to grab a shoebox and place in it the materials you will need.
- Try sketching what you see. What aspects of the work did you choose as your focus? What did you omit?
- Create a self-portrait or take a selfie. How do you want to be seen? Remembered? Share your creation with us. Post on social media and don't forget to tag **@WomenInTheArts, #SlowArtDay, and #NMWAatHome.**

Enjoy *writing*?

- In 30 seconds, create a word bank of words or phrases that come to mind as you look at an artwork.
- Did you know April is National Poetry Month? One of our selections even features a poet, Alice Walker. Try writing an ekphrastic poem—a poem inspired by art. Read samples here: <https://www.thoughtco.com/ekphrastic-poetry-definition-examples-4174699>. You can even use your word bank to jumpstart your writing.

Want to get *emotional*?

- How might this work relate to you and your life?

- Does it speak to your current experiences? Feelings? How?
- Does this work remind you of someone you love? Who? Why?

Want to *reflect* on your overall experience?

- Given our focus on portraiture, were there some artworks that you felt didn't belong in this grouping? Why?
 - Compare your 5 selections. What's similar? What's different? What themes or big ideas connect them?
 - Did you appreciate a work for its discrete parts but not in its entirety? Vice versa? Why?
 - Of the works you closely considered, which:
 - Would you most like to own? Why?
 - Are you most likely to think about later? What makes it memorable?
 - Do you most relate to? Why?
 - What questions do you still have about these works?
5. Want to learn more? Check out these resources (organized alphabetical by last name of artist or sitter):
- **Andrea Higgins (b. 1970)—painter**
 - NMWA's artist profile: <https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/andrea-higgins>
 - Website: <http://www.andreahiggins.com/>
 - Video (8:35 minutes), KQED's "Spark" artist interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Spej6pW7Bzw>
 - **Nona Hendryx (b. 1944)—musician**
 - Website: <https://nona-hendryx.squarespace.com/home>
 - Music, Pandora: <https://www.pandora.com/station/play/4466193603589323032>
 - **Graciela Iturbide (b. 1942)—photographer**
 - NMWA's artist profile: <https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/graciela-iturbide>
 - Website: <http://www.gracielaiturbide.org/en/>
 - Online exhibition: <https://nmwa.org/graciela-iturbides-mexico-online-exhibition>
 - Video (17:01 minutes), Art21's "Investigation:" <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s7/graciela-iturbide-in-investigation-segment/>
 - Video (4:10 minutes), Art21's "Photographing Mexico:" <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/graciela-iturbide-photographing-mexico-short/>
 - **Frida Kahlo (1907–1954)—painter**
 - NMWA's artist profile: <https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/frida-kahlo>
 - Online exhibition, "*Self-portrait Dedicated to Leon Trotsky, 1937:*" https://artsandculture.google.com/story/self-portrait-dedicated-to-leon-trotsky-1937/aQJSTAMvX_lCLw

- Article, "How Frida Kahlo's Love Affair with a Communist Revolutionary Impacted Her Art:" <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-frida-kahlos-love-affair-communist-revolutionary-impacted-art>
- **Susan Katz (b. 1947)—photographer**
 - NMWA's Broad Strokes blog post, "Portraits with Voices: Susan Katz's 'The Woman I Am' Project:" <https://blog.nmwa.org/2018/07/23/portraits-with-voices-susan-katzs-the-woman-i-am-project/>
 - Finding Aid to the Susan Katz "The Woman I Am" Collection, ca. 1973–1975 Archives of Women Artists: https://nmwa.org/sites/default/files/shared/susan_katz_finding_aid.pdf
- **Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929)—artist**
 - Website: <http://yayoi-kusama.jp/e/information/>
 - Video (7:23 minutes), Tate's "Obsessed with polka dots:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRZR3nsileA>
- **Amy Lamb (b. 1944)—photographer**
 - NMWA's artist profile: <https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/amy-lamb>
 - Website: <https://www.amylamb.com/>
- **Delita Martin (b. 1972)—artist**
 - Online exhibition: <https://nmwa.org/delita-martin-online-exhibition>
 - Website: <http://galeriemyrtis.net/delita-martin/>
- **Joan Miller (1936–2014)—dancer, choreographer**
 - Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Miller_\(choreographer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Miller_(choreographer))
- **Alison Saar (b. 1956)—artist**
 - NMWA's artist profile: <https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/alison-saar>
 - Website: http://www.lalouer.com/artist.cfm?tArtist_id=263
 - Video (1:11 minutes), NMWA's "#5WomenArtists Spotlight: Alison Saar:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBAZstBcxsA&list=TLPQMjcwMzlwMjAgYFu02hweYg&index=2>
 - Video (3:16 minutes), University of North Texas Art Gallery exhibition "Mirror, Mirror: The Prints of Alison Saar" artist interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QFRzH2V9Lw>
- **Amy Sherald (b. 1973)—painter**
 - NMWA's artist profile: <https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/amy-sherald>
 - Website: <http://www.amysherard.com/>
 - Video (4:24 minutes), HauserWirth's "Amy Sherald: In the Studio:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPQSKQ7Rnyo>
- **Mickalene Thomas (b. 1971)—artist**
 - NMWA's artist profile: <https://nmwa.org/explore/artist-profiles/mickalene-thomas>

- Website: <https://www.mickalenethomas.com/>
- Video (4:31 minutes), Soul Kitchen's "Live + Times" artist interview: <https://www.artstar.com/collections/mickalene-thomas>

- **Alice Walker (b. 1944)—Pulitzer Prize winning author**
 - Website: <https://alicewalkersgarden.com/>
 - Video (1:12 minutes), Walker reading her poem "Every Revolution Needs Fresh Poems:" <https://www.splitthisrock.org/poetry-database/poem/every-revolution-needs-fresh-poems>
 - Video (3:03 minutes), Walker reading her poem "Broken Things:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OqWCOQre6g>