

UTILIZING VISUAL MATERIALS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOSE LOOKING

THE PROJECT
RUBIN HIMALAYAN
ART

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UTILIZING VISUAL MATERIALS

- I. Centers the visual material as a primary source for student research and engagement
- II. Structured looking activities
- III. Using the digital platform to establish multiple modes of engagement
- IV. Opportunities for universal design, experiential learning, and engaging all types of learning abilities

CLOSE LOOKING EXERCISES



These exercises are opportunities to learn **HOW** to look and encourages students to ask questions.

1. Identifying formal visual features
2. Identifying visual evidence of possible symbols or narrative content that may communicate meaning
3. Writing simple questions that arise while looking

BENEFITS:

- At its most basic level this is simply looking, describing, and asking questions.
- Removes the need for any background information.
- Provides a starting point for research and analysis.

OBJECT No. 85:

Plaque Commemorating the Bhimaratha Old Age Ritual, Nepal.
Copper (repoussé); Rubin Museum of Art; Gift of Shelley and Donald Rubin; C2006.66.63 (HAR 700095)

CLOSE LOOKING EXERCISES



TWO PRIMARY CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

1. IMAGE MAPPING
2. DIRECTED OBSERVATION

EASILY ADAPTED TO LARGE LECTURE HALLS, SMALL SEMINARS,
OR ONLINE COURSES

OBJECT No. 85:

Plaque Commemorating the Bhimaratha Old Age Ritual, Nepal.

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IMAGE MAPPING

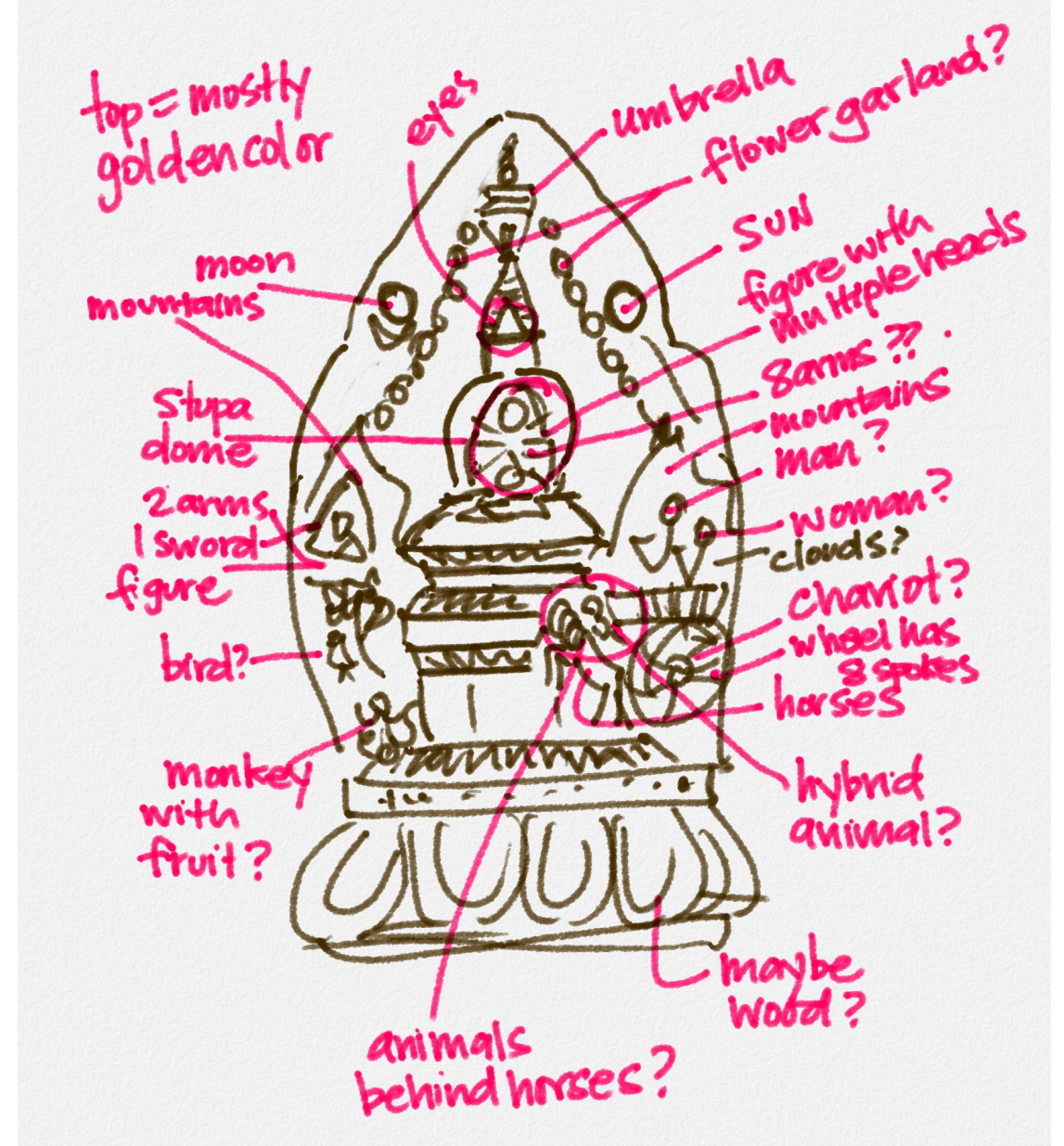
1. Start with asking students to sketch an unknown and unidentified object.
2. As they work, have them identify the visual features they can recognize (drawing lines and writing names of features).
3. Add question marks if they aren't sure about elements, or circle components they have questions about.
4. When time is over, students share features they have identified with the class or in groups.

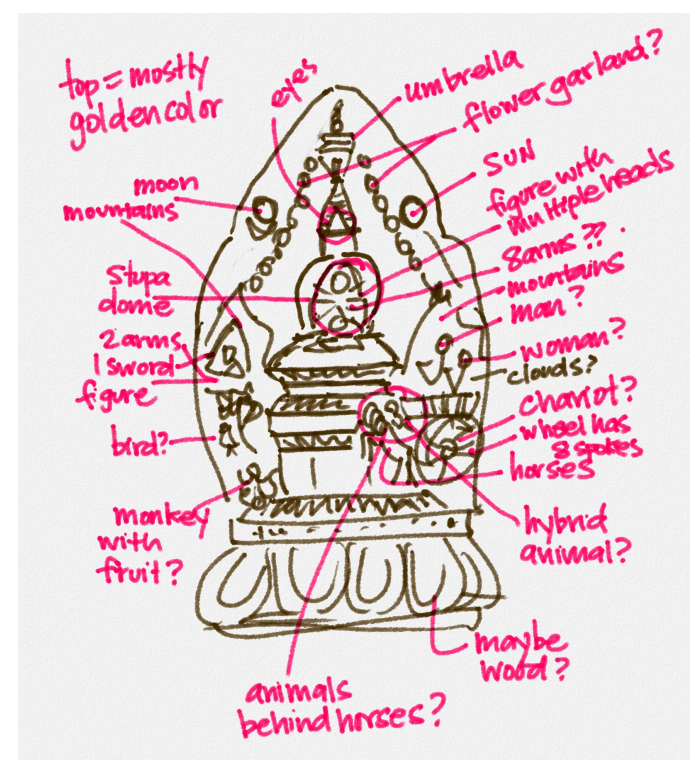
BENEFITS:

- Does not require any background knowledge.
- Gives students permission to be curious.
- Gives the instructor permission to NOT be the expert in the room.
- Demonstrates different ways of "SEEING".



DETAILED SKETCH WITH NOTATIONS
AND QUESTIONS MARKS





DISCUSSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Share your sketches with your peers and compare the features identified. Using your observations as evidence, what are some of the stories the work might be telling?

It's okay to be unsure about the meaning!

This is about interpreting using the observations you made.

DIRECTED OBSERVATION



CLOSE LOOKING PRACTICE

Student Name: _____

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS. Use descriptive language to communicate your observations. Do not interpret, only describe the formal elements you can see.

SCALE • SPACE • FORM/SHAPE • LINE • COLOR • LIGHT • TONE • TEXTURE • PATTERN

SAMPLE CLASS HANDOUT

DETAIL #1: New observations & descriptions	DETAIL #2: New observations & descriptions
DETAIL #3: New observations & descriptions	DETAIL #4: New observations & descriptions

REFLECT. Following the instructor's prompt, add your ideas below.

1ST SLIDE:

Provides an overview of the image without any identifying information

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS:

For 3 minutes, write down your observations about this work of art. Find descriptive language to communicate your observations.

Describe, but do not analyze.



2ND SLIDE:
Provides a closer detail



Detail #1.
For the next 30 seconds, focus on some details of the work. See if you can observe any new information. **Describe, but do not analyze.**



3RD SLIDE:
Provides a closer detail

Detail #2.
For the next 30 seconds, focus on some details of the work. See if you can observe any new information. **Describe, but do not analyze.**



4TH SLIDE:
Provides an even tighter detail

Detail #3.
For the next 30 seconds, focus on some details of the work. See if you can observe any new information. **Describe, but do not analyze.**



5TH SLIDE:
Provides an even tighter detail

Detail #4.
For the next 30 seconds, focus on some details of the work. See if you can observe any new information. **Describe, but do not analyze.**

6TH SLIDE:

Returns to the overview and asks students to interpret the work in some way

DISCUSSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Using your observations as evidence to support your claims, what are some of the stories the artwork might be telling? What theme(s) might the artist be exploring?

It's okay to be unsure about the meaning!

This is about interpreting using the observations you can see.



7TH SLIDE:

Introduce the work AFTER students have compiled their viewing notes



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8th and 9th SLIDES:
Provides visual context(s) for students



Newar Janku Celebrations (Bhimaratha Ritual)

THE RUBIN USING DIGITAL RESOURCES TO PROVIDE CONTEXT



Key figural forms, such as buddhas, bodhisattvas, female deities, wrathful deities, and humans are represented in paintings, sculptures, and graphic panels

An **audio guide** for each type

Examples on the digital resources platform: **essays** from the publication (QR code)

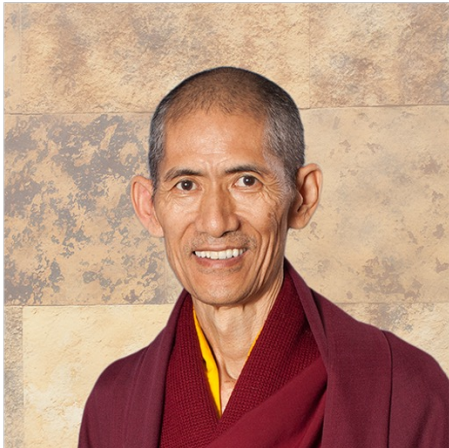
Connections to contemplative practices, mindfulness, Buddhism, and philosophy

First-person story from a Buddhist practitioner of taking bodhisattva vows (QR code)

THE RUBIN FINDING CONNECTIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES WITH VISUAL MATERIAL

HIMALAYAN VOICES: A practitioner talking about three deities of longevity

Speaker:
Khenpo Pema Wagndak



White Tara; Rubin Museum of Art; C2006.66.285 (HAR 658)



HIMALAYAN VOICES: A Tibetan doctor talking about diet illustrated in medical painting

Speaker:
Dr. Kunga Wangdue



Medical painting on Prophylactics, Diagnosis, and Therapeutic Principles (Blue Beryl chapters 23 - 28) Rubin Museum of Art C2006.66.514 (HAR 983)



Interactive maps, clean layouts, and curated selection of related media/articles reduce distractions, allowing students to stay focused.

THE RUBIN PROJECT HIMALAYAN ART /ESSAYS

KASHMIRI "LOVING-KINDNESS" IN LADAKH: A TALL ORDER?

ROB LINROTHE

ROCK CARVING OF FOUR-ARMED BODHISATTVA MAITREYA

Mulbekh, Ladakh ca. 10th-11th century

Download

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other sculptures and with studies of the development of Kashmiri art provides some guidance in the absence of inscriptive or textual documentation. The rendering of the slender and elongated limbs without sacrificing the articulation of a nuanced body structure suggests a working date of the late tenth or early eleventh century.

Notes

1. See Linrothe, Kerin, and Luccanits 2015. --
2. These include Dras, Karfai, and Apati on the border areas and a few sculptures in Leh and Shey, all sites in greater Ladakh. See Linrothe 2016, Alexander and van Schaik 2011, Denwood 2007. --
3. See Luccanits 2008, 245, fig. 4, and 250, fig. 1; also Linrothe 2016, 172. --
4. Siudmak 2013. --
5. Linrothe 2016, 179-80. --
6. Bowring et al. 2019, 305. Akira Miyaji, who gives the height of the Maitreya at Mulbekh as nine meters, connects the "cult of Maitreya" to "the divinity of the Cakravartin" and "adoration for emperors related to the enormous Buddha." Miyaji 2004, 91, 98. Julia Shaw also points to "the Dharmraja being easily appropriated by kings who sought to draw on analogies between themselves and the Buddha as Dharmaraja and Cakravartin"; Shaw 1999, 10. --
7. Wood 2019, 22. --
8. Luccanits 2008, 250-51. --
9. Alexander and van Schaik 2011, 438. --
10. Denwood 2008, 9. --
11. "The inscription is probably not a formal record of the creation and dedication of the image, but a later 'graffiti'; Alexander and van Schaik 2011, 428. Inscriptions recorded by A. H. Francke at Mulbekh are all fifteenth-century or later; see Francke 1906. --
12. Dar 1985, 182. --
13. Wilson 1841, 1:343. --
14. Leoshko 2003, 61, 99. --

Further Reading +

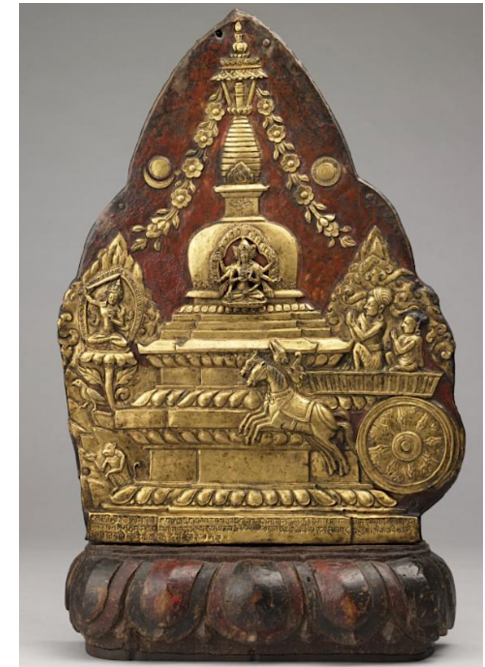
Essay Citation +

INTERACTIVE DIGITAL PLATFORM

ENGAGES STUDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF LEARNING STYLES AND NEEDS

RELATED OBJECTS

All Related Objects Taxonomy Term A (Material/Tech) Taxonomy Term B (Time Period) Taxonomy Term C (Theme/Subject) Taxonomy Term D



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