

LOOKING AT PHOTOS IN THE GALLERY

A talk by Doug Spowart



In association with the exhibition
THE MUSEUM PROJECT

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LISMORE
REGIONAL
GALLERY

1. I'M GOING TO VISIT AN EXHIBITION

Making the decision to visit the gallery
– planning factors

2. ON ENTERING THE EXHIBITION SPACE

The overall impact of the space...
– What is before me...?

How are the photographs hung
– as a line or random or as a salon hang...?

What is the scale of the works...?

Are there other art objects or elements included in the show...?

Is the gallery busy with lots of people ...

Or ...

Am I the only one...?

3. EXHIBITION INFORMATION

What is title for the show...?

Are there are info panels (didactics) on the walls or next to the works...?

Should I take note of these and read them...?

4. WHO IS THE ARTIST & WHAT IS THE SHOW ABOUT?

Do I have any knowledge or understanding of the subject matter...?

Do I know the artist...?

Is it a tightly themed show by one artist?

Is it a group show by a few artists?

Is it a show where every work is by a different artist?

5. HOW DO I START LOOKING?

Should I stand before each frame to take it all in or should I walk through the space first to get a feel for the work and then spend time interrogating each element further...?

6. WHAT IS THE ARTIST/CURATOR PRESENTING ME WITH?

Is it a random collection of images or is there a specific narrative...?

Are the photographs monochromatic (B&W) or are they colour...?

Analogue of Digital...?

How do these factors influence your viewing and interpretation of the works...?

7. ABOUT WHAT I AM ENCOUNTERING

What do I know about the subject...?

How am I reacting to the content of the work...?

Do I find it interesting? Am I offended?
OR ... Am I ambivalent to it?

Do the artworks relate to each other...?

Am I engaging in a story that is being presenting...?

Should I be interested in how (the technical side) the photos were made or just concentrate on the communication (the content side) of the work...?

Should I have read the didactic panels...?

Should I laugh or cry if the works emotionally connect with me...?

Should I talk with others (strangers) in the space if I get the feeling that they want to connect...?

8. HOW LONG SHOULD MY EXHIBITION VIEWING BE?

Do I have any encumbrances that will control my time in the gallery...?

Family, friends, children with me in the gallery or waiting... somewhere.

Is there a place to sit...?

Should I take a break and have coffee in the café downstairs...?

9. MAKING A PERSONAL REFERENCE

Can I take photographs, sketch or draw or make notes so I can reconnect with the artworks later – maybe share on Social Media, write a personal reflection or review...?

10. WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I LEAVE THE GALLERY?

One more thing...

Maybe before you go thank the staff at reception and, as some galleries have visitor's books – write a comment...



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