

MAD Drawing Room

SLOW CLOSE LOOKING and LISTENING

Self-guided experience

Take a look at these prompts if you would like a self-guided experience of slow close looking and listening. All art supplies are provided - select paper and drawing tools and a hand held magnifier. Pull up a stool to one of the eight study tables. Use a sheet of hard foamboard on your lap as a surface for your drawing or writing. Slow down and take the time to examine what you see and what you listen to. This moment is for you!

BLIND CONTOUR DRAWING

Looking through a hand magnifier, keep your eyes focused on one fragment. Slowly draw around all the inner and outer edges that you see without looking directly at the drawing itself. Focus on irregularities, holes, and variances in density.

CONTINUOUS LINE DRAWING

Once the pencil or pen hits the page, do not lift it up until the drawing is complete.

DRAWING DETAIL

Without magnification, draw one fragment to scale with as much detail as possible.

MAGNIFIED DRAWING DETAIL

Looking through a magnifier, draw a magnified section with as much detail as possible.

LISTENING TO YOUR DRAWINGS

Once you have sketched a few fragments, go over to Shawn Decker's listening area and identify how the sounds connect with your drawings. How would your drawings move with what you are listening to?

EXTEND WITH COLOR, TEXTURE, PATTERN

Add more information to the fragment structure (pattern, color, texture). Invent a new image.

RHYTHMS

Pay attention to the rhythms and patterns of Shawn's sounds. Then, return to your drawings and contemplate how these rhythms align or contrast with the textures and shapes you've captured from the fragments.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Make a suite of still photographs with your camera by shooting through a hand magnifier.

MICRO/MACRO WRITING

Make an open inventory of all describable features of one fragment. Begin with the whole piece and note its properties: color, shape, texture, weight, irregularities and edges. Then, using a hand magnifier, follow a single thread-line. How does it move? How does it join other threads? Consider the relationship of parts to the whole.

WRITING SMILE AND METAPHOR

Make comparisons between two unlike things that evoke new meaning using “like” or “as” (simile) or by direct comparisons (metaphor). “This linen is mended like a botched scar. It’s as opaque as a fugue state. This stitch is a wandering stream.” You may also try negation: “This lace is not chaotic like disaster. It’s not as black as my mother’s hair.”

ASSOCIATIVE WRITING

Beginning with a single feature of the textile fragment, create a chain of associations: “The circular pattern of this lace reminds me of a puddle, which reminds me of the green house by the lake...” &. Start over with a new fragment feature every three minutes. Let intuition and pleasure guide your leaping.

NARRATIVE IMAGINATION

Close your eyes and listen to Shawn Decker's sound sources. As you immerse yourself in the sound, try to visualize a scene with your sketches. How does the sound influence the way you perceive these fragments? Does it bring significance to the textile fragments? Explore the intersection of storytelling and visual representation in your drawings.

POINT OF VIEW WRITING

Consider the signs of life in the textile fragment: holes, frayed edges, color. Imagine the person who made or used it, or write from the perspective of the textile itself. What has the fragment witnessed? What kind of space did it exist in?

QUESTIONS

Questions addressed to the fragment, about it, around it; all you do not know and wish to know and will never know.

CONTEXT

Consider a fragment within a cultural context, either a piece on one of the study tables or something related to your own familial or cultural background. Extend, subvert, imagine, invent. Bring your knowledge of history, architecture, or science to a drawing, diagram, illustration, or writing. Feel free to consult books in the MAD Drawing Room library.

FRAGMENT IDENTIFICATION

Pick a fragment, try and decipher some of the following questions: What is the origin? Who made it? What was it used for? Do you know the technique? Was it hand or machine-made? What is the material content? Country or culture? When was it made? Once you have made your guesses, locate the binder titled “Catalog of Identification of Lace and Openwork” in the library, organized by study table number. Find your fragment and verify your answers. Note: in some cases there is a lot of information on a given fragment; in other cases, there is no information.

EMOTIONAL SOUNDSCAPE

Sit quietly with your sketches and writing, listen to a selection of sound sources. As you listen, observe how the emotional tones of the sounds influence your perception of the fragments you've drawn or written about. Does it evoke certain feelings or memories that resonate with the textures or patterns in your sketches? Reflect on how the auditory experience enhances or alters your visual interpretation.