**How to Stop Pretending and Actually Enjoy Art**

*By* Herbert Lui

1. You might roll your eyes when your in-laws want to visit the art gallery. You might also get anxious and start thinking of things to say so you don’t look dumb. But art doesn’t have to be a chore. Here’s how you can better consume art so you can have a shot at enjoying the experience.

**Read the Explainers and Pay for Voice Guides**

2. Whether it’s a painting, recording, sculpture, building, or some other art form, a piece of art is the result of feelings from a certain time and place in history. Even just a brief explanation of that history empowers us, as an audience, to understand and empathize with artists more.

3. It helps to follow experts as they explain their interpretations of art pieces, because they’ve spent more time with it, and likely have studied the field. Similar to how a chef takes raw ingredients and prepares food, an art expert spends time with a piece and prepares explanations so you can consume art more easily. For example, have a look at *Art as Therapy*.

**Pay Attention to Your Reactions: Consume Art Consciously and Mindfully**

4. A lot of times, we try to examine a piece of art based on skill (e.g., “Wow, I could never do that,” or, “Oh, my kid could have made that”). However, it’s important to remember that judging a piece of art takes your attention away from your reaction to, and feelings about, the actual piece. Instead, shift your attention to your reaction to the art. How are you feeling when you hear the piece, or see it, or walk through an incredible piece of interior design or architecture?

5. This is why exploring abstract art can be so challenging. Many people quickly dismiss abstract art as something elementary, vague, and/or pretentious. This makes it the perfect practice for being mindful as you consume it. Don’t judge it. Immerse yourself in it and feel it.

**Think About Art: Ask Guiding Questions**

6. Questions can be great guides to focus your mind as it processes the art piece. There are different things to be sensitive to in each art form. For example, in visual arts, you’ll want to look for symbols. Consider the color palettes and combinations. When walking through a piece of architecture, ask yourself why the artist designed certain details or nuances. When you’re listening to a live performance or a soundtrack, think about the beat, tempo, and mood changes throughout the songs. In some cases, listen to the lyrics and think about their possible meanings (or double and triple meanings).

**Learn How People Make Art**

7. The final product of art may look like it’s easy to make. However, you never truly grasp the difficulties and nuances of a process until you learn about — and ultimately try — it. For example, rap may not sound like anything more than simple rhyme schemes and poems. A good first step to understanding how people make art could be to simply watch the process. For example, one of my favorites is watching how much work actually goes into producing what some may call a “simple” beat.

8. Once you explore the process behind the art, you may grow to appreciate the dedication and work ethic that goes into each piece even more.

## You Might Eventually Even Like Art

9. Hopefully, some of these techniques will enable you to hate art less (and maybe even grow to appreciate certain forms). Enjoying art doesn’t take a completely different way of thinking. Instead, it takes a bit of empathy and understanding, and a lot more focus and being mindful of the experience. In today’s fast-paced world, simply consuming art can be a challenging experience, but it's one that is also extremely rewarding.

(629 words)

***Each of the following eight statements contains information given in one of the paragraphs (1-9) in the text. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once.***

1. The reason why exploring abstract art can be challenging.
2. A piece of art indicates the feelings from a certain time and place in history.
3. Simply consuming art can be extremely rewarding.
4. It’s helpful if an expert explains his or her interpretations of art pieces.
5. Understanding how people make art could help you appreciate the art piece.
6. Questions can help to focus your mind as it processes the art piece.

***Translate the following sentences into Chinese.***

1. Even just a brief explanation of that history empowers us, as an audience, to understand and empathize with artists more.

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1. However, it’s important to remember that judging a piece of art takes your attention away from your reaction to, and feelings about, the actual piece.

1. Once you explore the process behind the art, you may grow to appreciate the dedication and work ethic that goes into each piece even more.