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Looking and Finding

Corita Art Center

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Looking and “Finding”

Introduction to Corita: See bio

Introduction to finders:
“A tool for looking is a finder. This is a device which does the same thing as the camera lens or viewfinder. It helps take things out of context, allows us to see for the sake of seeing, and enhances our quick-looking and decision-making skills.”

Corita referred to this method of looking as “slow looking” because it allows the viewer to select, isolate, and examine details within a large visual field, rather than attempting to take in everything at once. Using a finder, the viewer is able to identify and appreciate interesting shapes and forms within a portion of the whole, and is less distracted by content or context.

Goals: To improve powers of observation. To begin to see things in a different way, or to see things that may have been missed before. To appreciate details such as, shape, form, and/or design, regardless of the content or an appreciation of the whole object or picture.

“One purpose of art is to alert people to things they might have missed” – Corita

Examples:

Framing – see example images (67-12, 67-05, 64-16, 64-11 and source images)

Many of Corita’s works from the 1960s use advertising and street signs that were seen around the neighborhood in which she taught. She and her students would take their finders into the street. By framing sections of the street or the market they could focus on elements that were interesting to them and remove the pieces that weren’t. In this way they could also take things out of context and reframe them with other “findings” to create new images and meanings.

Focusing – see example images (76-19, 76-20, 76-23)

Here, Corita used shells as her source material. But instead of showing the entire shell, she focuses on the details. While Corita was producing this series of prints she photographed each of her shells, enlarged the photographs, and then used a finder to select portions she liked. The final prints may not be recognizable as shells, but the viewer can still appreciate the shapes and the pattern found in each shell.
Making your own finder

Materials:
Index cards or paper cut to approximately 4 x 6"
Ruler
Pencil

Using your pencil and ruler draw a rectangle in the center of your card or paper (approximately 1 x 1.5”). Fold along the lines of the rectangle. Lightly moisten the folds and tear each fold gently until you are left with a rectangular opening in your card paper.

Exercises with your finder

Materials:
Finder
Pencil

1. Practice looking with your finder. This can be done anywhere. Look at the floor, the surface of a table, a portion of the wall, through a window, etc. Notice the cracks, shadows, and shapes that appear through your finder. Draw your findings.

This exercise can also be done for five minutes each day for a week (or twice in one class session, once at the beginning and once at the end). Use your finder at different times of the day but use it on the same section of floor, table, wall, etc. Draw your finding at each session, but notice differences based on the effects of light and shadow.

2. Select a large, full-page picture, preferably of a scene with figures in action and/or several visual elements.

Using your finder, do ten contour drawings of “findings” selected from this picture. Each drawing should fill a full page.

Using your finder again, frame and draw ten new full-size pictures, one for each of your original drawings.

Finally, use your finder to frame the new works, which you will now draw.

*Number of drawings can be adjusted in the interest of time.

Reference: Learning by Heart by Corita Kent and Jan Steward. Page 26-27; 34-36
Mary does laugh, and she sings and runs and wears bright orange.
Today she'd probably do her shopping at the market basket.
KEEP
OUT
RIGHT
And if only we arrange our life according to that principle which counsels us that we must always hold to the difficult, then that which now seems to us the most abhorred will become what we most trust and find most fitting. How should we be able to forget those ancient myths that are at the beginning of all peoples, the myths about dragons that at the last moment turn into princesses; perhaps all the dragons of our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave.

Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being something that wants help from us.
The rose is a rose and we must assume that it is so.

But the apple is an apple, and so the plum.

I know not what it is, but I know it is not a rose.

Suppose that the dear is a rose. What will next prove are a rose.

Of course we are a rose, but we were always a rose.
all things are full of gods

thunder
I am the sacred words of the earth. It is lovely indeed, it is lovely indeed.
This that is beautiful, it shows my way

navajo chant