

Leaving Certificate Resource Pack

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Your Visit to Súil



Introduction

This resource pack has been designed to supplement a self-guided visit to exhibition at S uil. It contains suggested activities for students to complete before, during and after their visit. It is intended to assist students preparing for the Leaving Certificate Art Exam and does not replace a visit to the exhibition.

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Before your visit

Visit the Gallery's website. www.clarearts.ie

- What information can you find out about the exhibition or Gallery?
- Is it easy to find?
- How is it presented?
- Does it make you want to visit the exhibition?
- Is there enough/too much/not enough information?

Do some background research on the artist or artists featured in the exhibition.

- What kind of artworks do you think the exhibition will include?

There are often articles and reviews written about exhibitions at the Gallery.

- Do you think it is useful to read these before you visit?
- Do you think reading a review will have an impact on how you view the exhibition?

Consider the exhibition's title.

- How do you think the title sets your expectations for the visit?

During your visit

This resource includes prompts and activities to help you explore Súil's exhibition.

Remember to:

Observe & record

use a sketchbook or notebook to record your observations of your visit. Photography is not permitted in some exhibitions, so it is important that you can create an accurate record of your visit.

Form your own opinion & give examples

Every visitor to the exhibition will have a different experience. We bring our own backgrounds, histories, opinions, and perceptions to viewing works of art. Age, gender, education, nationality, and many other factors will impact how we perceive an exhibition. Everyone's opinion is equally valid; there is no right or wrong. It is important to give your own interpretation of the exhibition, but it is equally important to back up your opinions with examples to support your argument.

First impressions

Your experience will be influenced by a number of factors that may consciously or subconsciously affect how you engage with the exhibition. Some of these will have been deliberately created by the Gallery to create a comfortable environment for viewing art (eg the lighting, the way the paintings are hung), whilst others will be unique to you (eg your mood, previous positive or negative experiences at the Gallery). How other visitors are interacting with the space will also have an impact.

Before you enter the building, note down:

- External factors: time of day; weather
- Internal factors: your mood; energy levels; how your body feels
- Is this your first visit to the Gallery?
- Do you have any preconceptions about what your experience will be?
- What does the building look like?
- What is your first impression?

When you enter the building, note down:

- What can you hear? smell? see?
- What facilities are there? (eg information desk, cloakroom, toilets)
- Is there signage, maps, information about exhibitions?
- How can you move around the building? Are there stairs, lifts, escalators?
- Are there places to sit?
- What else can you observe?

Make an annotated sketch of the foyer showing these elements.

- Who else is in the Gallery? (eg staff, other visitors, members of your group)
- What are they doing? How are they interacting with the building?
- How does the Gallery make you feel?

Think critically about the elements that have been created by the Gallery.

- Why do you think they are there?
- How do they affect your experience?
- Do you feel any differently to before you walked through the door?
- Do you feel prepared and ready to view art?

The hang

A hang is how the paintings in an exhibition are arranged on the walls of the gallery. This refers to both the way they are physically displayed, and the order the curator has decided to put them in.

For example, an exhibition may be hung chronologically, where the paintings are displayed in order of when they were created, or thematically where they are grouped by similar subject matter. Shows may also be hung aesthetically, where paintings complement each other. Curators also have to take into account practical considerations – some paintings may be too big for certain walls or galleries

Observe & record:

For each element consider how it affects your viewing and interpretation of the paintings.

- What are your first impressions of the exhibition?
- What is the atmosphere like?
- What is the temperature of the room?
- What can you hear? What can you smell? What can you see?
- What is the architecture of the gallery?
- What materials, texture and colours are the walls? Ceilings? Floors?

The hang of the paintings or artworks.

- What height are they hung at?
- Are they close together or far apart?
- Are they grouped? Is
- your eye drawn to certain paintings?
- How are the paintings fixed to the walls?
- What frames are they in?
- Are they glazed?

The interpretation.

- Are there text panels? Signage? Labels?
- Where is the interpretation? What size is it? Colour? Design?
- The lighting. Is it natural? Artificial?
- The fixtures and fittings. Is there any furniture? Security devices? Light switches, fire extinguishers, etc?
- Do they enhance or detract from the paintings?
- How are visitors moving through the space?
- Are they following a set route?
- How are they interacting with each other?

Sketch:

- Create a floorplan and sketch the layout of the exhibition. Is it hung chronologically or thematically?

Interpretation

Exhibition text is written to convey complex information in a clear and accessible way, within strict word counts. A curator will often do a great deal of contextual research about a work or artist that they then have to condense into a short amount of space. When someone visits an exhibition, they don't want to read a book on a wall! The curator will have to decide what they have to leave out, as much as what they will write. This process can be very difficult, but curators have lots of practice in writing in this particular style. The text will also be proofread by a number of different people who will check for accuracy, clarity and style. The final text that you see in the exhibition will have gone through lots of drafts and edits before it is printed.

There are different layers to exhibition text.

This may include:

- An introduction panel for the whole exhibition
- Labels for each artwork
- Audioguide commentary

Is there anything more you would like to know about the artwork?

Is there any information you don't think should be included?

What information do you think is the most important?

Activity

Choose one of the paintings from the exhibition and write your own label.

Think about:

What is the most important piece of information you want to share with the visitor?

Use active rather than passive language. Don't just describe what's in the painting –

- include something that the viewer can't see for themselves.
- Use language a 10 year old would understand – keep it clear, accessible and interesting.
- Prompt the visitor to look deeper at the painting – you might want to ask a question.

Remember to stick to the word count – maximum of 80 words for the description

Activity

Design an event for young people that could accompany the exhibition.

Think about:

- Who is the target audience?
- What will appeal to them?
- What time of day should the event be?
- How long will it take? \ Where will the event be held?
- What is the event? Is it a talk, a performance, a workshop, or something else?
- Why this event?
- What will participants learn?
- How does the event enhance understanding of the exhibition?
- Do you need any materials?
- What other practical steps do you need to make the event happen?

Access

Súil is committed to providing a fully inclusive experience for all visitors.

Look at the Gallery's website and find four things that the Gallery provides to make a visit more accessible.

Choose two things that assist people with physical disabilities, and two that assist people with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

- How do you think it would be to experience the exhibition as someone with a disability?
- Is there anything else the Gallery could/should provide?

Glossary

Access	The ability and ease with which people can enter, navigate, and use the services or facilities provided by an institution
Catalogue	A printed list of exhibits at an exhibition
Contemporary Art	Art of the present day and of the relatively recent past, typically starting from the 1970s
Curator	A person who selects, organises, and manages collections in cultural institutions such as museums or galleries
Edition	A set of identical prints or reproductions, often limited and numbered, created or authorised by the artist
Exhibition	An organised presentation and display of a selection of artworks or other objects of interest
Installation Art	Three-dimensional artwork designed to transform a space and create an immersive experience, often for a temporary period of time
Interpretation	The process of analysing and explaining the meaning or significance of an artwork
Layout	The arrangement and organisation of the museum/gallery space which influences visitors' experience
Medium	The materials used to create an artwork
Modern Art	Art produced from the late 19 th to mid-20 th century, characterised by innovation, experimentation and abstraction
Perception	Initial impressions based on the sensory experience of an artwork
Series	A group of related artworks created by an artist that share common themes, techniques, or subjects
The Hang	The arrangement and display of artworks in a gallery or exhibition space, including layout, spacing, and overall presentation
Visual Impact	The effect or impression an artwork has on viewers

Sketches





