Making Conversation July 2020
Created by artists Naomi Kendrick and Helen Newman.

Pre lockdown Making Conversation was a monthly workshop that took place in our galleries and creative studios, was open to all adults, was planned with blind and visually impaired people in mind, and open to all.

We hope you can enjoy these ideas from home. To share what you have made and to be added to our mailing list please email images and comments to k.day1@manchester.gov.uk

We think now may be a good time to reflect on and share your different experiences of life during lockdown. Of course, if you don't feel you want to go there, simply enjoy and respond to these fantastic artworks in whichever way you wish.

What to do

This activity has three simple steps 1. Spend time with the artworks 2. Think about what they mean to you 3. Make something in response. As ever don't feel pressure to make anything precious, there is no right or wrong here, just enjoy the art works and the process of playing with materials.

Click on the link above to see a larger version of the artwork
Interior with Figure by Francis Cambell Boileau Cadell 1883 - 1937

Click on the link above to see a larger version of the artwork
Theatre Group No 3 by Dame Barbara Hepworth 1903 - 1975

Click on the link above to see a larger version of the artwork Music Hath Charms by Alfred Rankley 1819 – 1872

Spend time with the art work

Grab a cuppa and a biscuit, sit comfortably and allow yourself to spend time with the painting. You might want to write down notes about what you notice, but you don't have to.

First of all, just notice your first impressions of the painting, do you like it, does it remind you of anything, does it make you feel a certain way, do you have questions about it?

Then, take your time to notice the following aspects of the painting, one by one:

Composition – what shapes make up the painting, how much space is around them?

Colour – you could try focusing on one colour at a time, for example, noticing all the different shades of green in the painting, and then all the different shades of white.

Light and shadow – scan the painting looking first for all the brightest parts, and then explore all the areas of shadow.

Texture – notice the different textures in the painting, are they soft, shiny, scratchy, or smooth?

Let your mind wander

What might the story of this artwork be? Why do you think the artist has created this and what might they be trying to say? (it doesn't matter if you don't think you know this!) Does the artwork relate to you and your life recently in anyway?

Starting to make

What you make is entirely up to you, you could start to play around with some materials and see what emerges. This can take time, start by making a mark, add to it, change material, add something more, decide to continue or take something away. Can you make a connection between these emerging images and your life? See where the art making takes you.

Here are a few suggested materials you could use from around the house to make your artwork with:
Loo roll tubes, envelopes/junk mail, old magazines, packaging, biro, pencil, string, rubber band, tape, scissors, wrapping paper, camera/smartphone, old fabric/clothes, wool things from the garden/pot plants and of course anything else you might want to use….

A few reminders of different types of art you could try should you want a prompt: Poems, songs, letters, drawings, costume, photography, collages, rubbings, prints, sculptures…

And don't forget to share – our monthly workshops include a lot of discussion about what we have seen and made. You can email (address above) us your work and we'll include it in our Making Conversation monthly newsletter and share to the mailing list. Or tweet @mcrartgallery.