

Note Well

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A book for teachers, educators and artists. Ideas, activities, discussions and suggested ways to creatively explore the Tate collection, building and exhibitions.

Nota bene (pronounced /ˈnoʊtə ˈbɛnɛ/; alternate pronunciations /ˈnoʊtə beɪni, ˈbɛni, ˈbɪni/; plural form **notate bene**) is an Italian and Latin phrase meaning ‘note well’. The phrase first appeared in writing circa 1721.

Often abbreviated as ‘**N.B.**’, *nota bene* comes from the Latin roots *notāre* (‘to note’) and *bene* (‘well’). It is in the singular imperative mood, instructing one individual to note well the matter at hand. In present-day English it is used, particularly in legal papers, to draw the attention of the reader to a certain (side) aspect or detail of the subject on hand, translating it as ‘pay attention’ or ‘take notice’. While ‘N.B.’ is often used in academic writing, ‘note’ is a common substitute.

Deliberately unstructured, this resource is designed to act as a collection of prompts to inspire ideas for working with a group visiting the gallery. You are invited to dip in and out of the activities and thoughts, before, during and after your visit, developing and adapting them to suit your particular group.

The activities are intended to recognise and allow space for your own interests, expertise and knowledge, inviting you to explore Tate in a diversity of ways.

N.B. On a number of pages we have included suggestions for how you might use or extend these ideas.

Footnotes indicate artists whose practice relates to the activities. Some of the artists listed may be on display at the time of your visit.



N.B. Make a scribble on the first page of a sketchbook to encourage you to be less precious about your work.

Spend 10 minutes writing a stream of consciousness about the room or space you are in

Don't stop writing even if you run out of things to say

Pick 3 words that stand out in describing the space

Share your words with a partner

With others

With the space

Repeat out loud

Draw a place a space or an artwork you know well without looking at the paper
Include as much detail as possible

When
you
look
again
add
anything
you
might have forgotten

Without speaking
group the words
from the most to
the least important

Remove 3 words which aren't relevant

If necessary have a silent argument about the finished order

N.B. Use long strips of paper, perhaps a receipt roll, along a corridor. Or cover the space you choose with paper on the floor and try this out as a whole group, aiming to fill the paper in ten minutes.

Group some
everyday objects
together in a
public place

Leave them for
other people to
find

Consider how you might place yourself

N.B. Record this activity in different ways by photographing, sketching or filming the objects in situ.
Record them both with and without an audience. If they get moved record them again.

Tony Cragg
Ian Kiaer
Lamia Joreige

Cathy Wilkes

Think
Consider
Reconsider
Try
Do
Imagine
Find
Draw
Make
Fold
Stop
Start
Be

N.B. Use plasticine to explore this list, consider its material qualities and functions. Reconsider it.
Make this list with a different material.

Eva Hesse
Bruce Nauman

List everything that you can hear
right now

Place something out of context

An object

A sound

A colour

Use different methods or
materials to respond to a
space, a place or room

Try plasticine, ribbon or a
single sheet of paper

Think about these
materials differently

Fold Curl Roll Escape

Make a 5 minute drawing every hour, on the hour, during your visit
Try to capture a gesture in a line

Consider your direction of travel and reverse it

Make opposite decisions

Make 2 marks
Make 3 gestures

Repeat something
an action
a drawing
a mark
a sound
a mechanical technique
an element of something bigger

Use carbon paper
Use a video camera

Make multiples of a small object – think about displaying them in a particular way

N.B. This activity can be adapted according to how much time you have. You might repeat your actions over the course of a lesson, a day, a week, a month or even a term. Do your marks change, can you replicate a gesture? If you record using a video camera you could edit the results together to animate the sequence into a short film.

Allan Kaprow
Victor Pasmore
Yvonne Rainer

Francis Alÿs
Richard Long
Robert Morris

Write or draw your
expectations of a place or a
room you are about to go into

Use the gallery or room title to
direct your conceptual
thinking and ideas

Seal them in an envelope

Much later, open the envelope
and consider what you wrote
and how it might have
changed

Describe everything you can see from where you are right now
Use as much detail as possible

Make a three-dimensional representation of something flat
Use only the things you have with you

Observe someone you don't know looking around the gallery
Take note of how they move
When they stop

What are they looking at, what might they be thinking?

Listen to someone else's conversation
Imagine what you would say to them if you joined in

Find an artist who you think you can relate to

N.B. Consider the different methods you could use to record this activity; you could use notebooks, include times and dates, use a camera or a voice recorder. How would you then display this information for an audience?

Ian Breakwell
Thomas Struth

Louise Bourgeois
Sophie Calle
Douglas Huebler

Lie down

Close your eyes

Change

Alter

Become

Don't fear spending time with an artwork

Look longer

Look again

Look closer

Look differently

Look until your eyes hurt

Look until you see things that aren't actually there

Choose an artwork at random to go and look at

Put a pin into the Tate map

Spend an hour with a single artwork

Get to know it

Spend time together

List the artworks in the collection that don't interest you

Find something in the Tate that you think no-one else will have noticed
Highlight it in some way
Now look for something you might have missed out

Interview other gallery visitors
Ask them about what they have seen
Ask a visitor assistant which artwork they think is best

Find an artwork you think is difficult and stay with it until you begin to make sense of it

Consider why it is in the Tate collection

Consider taste and opinion

Who decides?

N.B. When you have completed this activity try having a balloon debate. Imagine one artwork needs to be removed from the Tate balloon in order to keep it in the air. Everyone must argue for why their chosen artwork should be jettisoned. Which artwork will be thrown out of the balloon?

Martin Creed
Ceal Floyer

Carl Andre
Turner Prize

Share a conversation with a group of others standing closely together

Walk slowly backwards away from each other and continue the discussion but without raising your voices

Continue backwards as far as you can go

Then walk slowly back together still continuing the conversation

How do you feel?

What did you hear?

What do you imagine you missed?

N.B. Consider ways in which meaning gets changed e.g. by time, context or interpretation.
Pass a sentence along a line using Chinese Whispers. What is the result?

Use the windows
Consider the building
Do something unexpected
Draw attention to the architecture
using performance

Cut out
Tear
Rip
Shuffle
Re-arrange

Try and do it using action and no sound

Try and do it using sound but no action

Come up with 10 words to describe an artwork

Write them down

Arrange them

Re-arrange them

Swap words with someone else

Look for the spaces between artworks

Draw attention to negative space

Look through
Look around
Move towards

N.B. Explore the negative space in your setting before you come to the gallery. Experiment with filling spaces with different materials. Can the same materials fill both big and small spaces? Find different spaces and use your bodies to inhabit them. Record negative space by sketching or using photography. In the gallery work together to try and fill a space. Use your voices.

Paola Pivi
Rachel Whiteread

Barbara Hepworth
Carsten Höller

Ask someone
you don't know
to draw
something in
your
sketchbook

Find an image in your sketchbook and look for an artwork that connects to it in some way

Think about

Form
Surface
Concept
Presence
Subject

N.B. Use this drawing as a starting point. Whose drawing is it now? How does the drawing differ to other drawings in your sketchbook?

Jean-Michel Basquiat

List things around you that are made of wood

Take your time

List as many white things
as you can see

Measure
something
without using
a ruler
a tape measure
or a clock

Look for lines

Draw all the straight lines you can see

Make a drawing using coloured tape or masking tape

N.B. This activity can be done in a variety of locations, think big! A corridor, a sports hall or outside.
Photograph your drawing from different perspectives. When the artwork has gone, exhibit the photographs.
Are they now the artwork?

Patrick Caulfield
Jim Lambie
Piet Mondrian

N.B. Ask the group to collect things that share a particular quality, such as colour, material or function.
What are their differences, what are their similarities? Thinking about how curators make decisions,
arrange and display according to different criteria such as scale or importance.

Marcel Duchamp
Cildo Meireles
Robert Ryman

Think about form

How can you represent something in as few lines as possible?

What is the most basic way to remember something?

Breathe on a window

Draw in your own mist

Leave a disappearing image behind

Think about the idea of

temporary

and

contemporary

Found elements

Look for a discarded object that will remind you of your visit

Leave something behind

Consider what could happen to it

Write down its continuing story

Find an artwork you think you could have made yourself

Later, try and re-make it better

Find a conceptual artwork you think you could have come up with yourself

Later, try and re-think it better

What do you mean by better?

What does someone else mean?

Tackle an installation
Consider a space, a place, an environment
Alter a space somehow
Inhabit it
Project onto it
Project into it
Place something unexpected there
Take something away
Move something
How do rules affect a place?
How do expected behaviours change perceptions?

Respond to your experiences

Make an exhibition
in a small or
abandoned space

Perhaps inside a
cupboard or
under a stairwell

Invite people to the
opening of
your exhibition

Reflect and Project

Interaction
isn't always
about action

Tie yourself to a partner with ribbon or fabric
Without using spoken language, guide them around a space
How else can you communicate without talking?

Tell whoever you are with that
you don't know the answer to
a question they ask

Use ten different techniques to
draw or create an image of the
same thing

Create a texture
Make something shiny

Gesture a mark
Suggest a shape

Create a surface
Leave a residue

Create a curve
Bend a page
Score and fold

Turn something flat into something solid

N.B. Use painting to investigate these instructions. Consider the diversity of media and techniques used by artists. Explore processes and inspirations.

Frank Auerbach
David Batchelor
Jean Dubuffet

Felix Gonzalas
Gary Hume
Donald Judd

Franz Kline
Susumu Koshimizu
Leon Kossoff

Piero Manzoni
Robert Morris
Paul Neagu

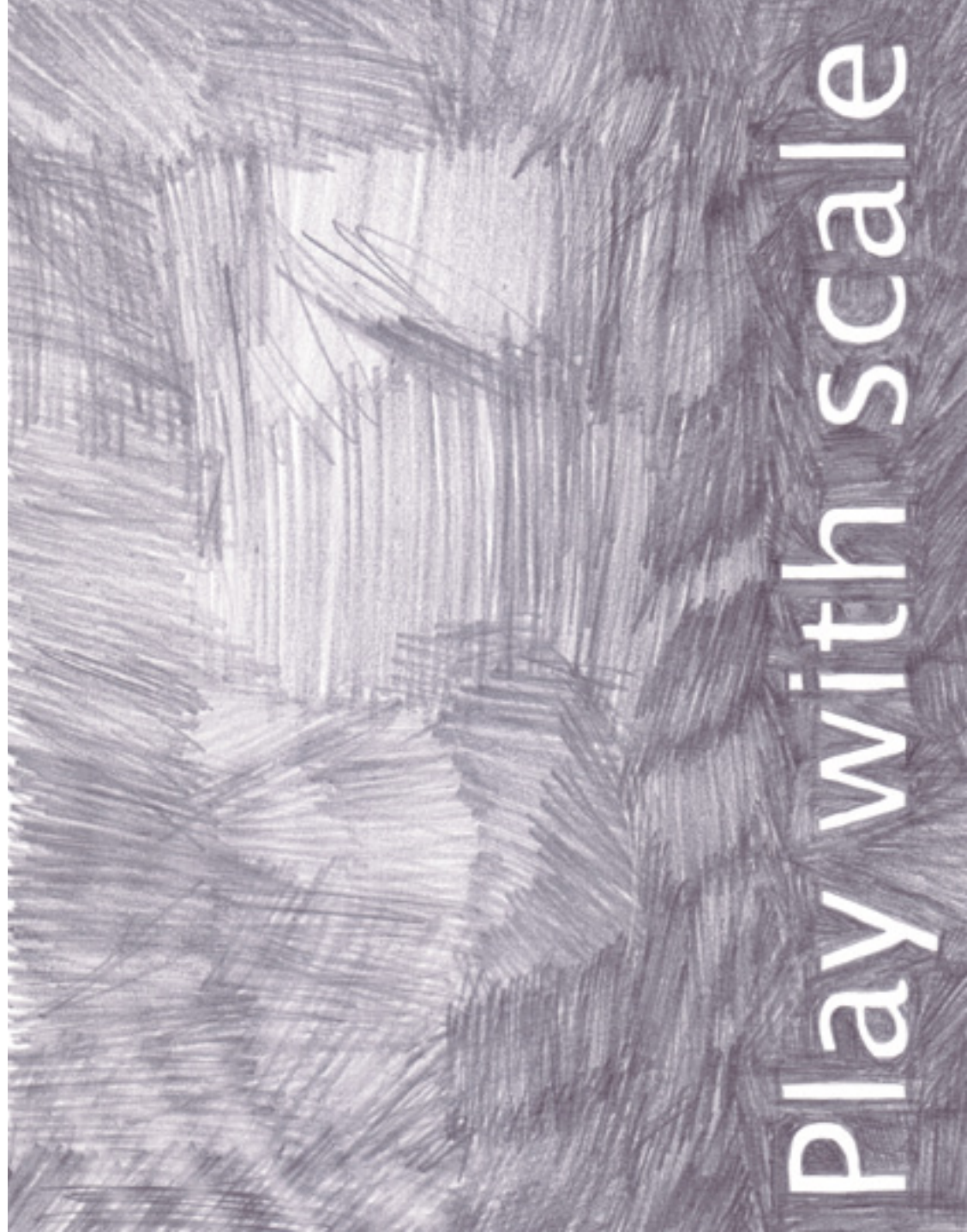
Line something up with your eyes

Look through something
Tear something so you can see through it

Represent the whole of Tate
as a single image

N.B. Use a postcard, a drawing or a photograph to take an artwork home. How does scale and context affect your reading of it? Try photocopying, projecting or drawing using a grid to change the scale.

Ron Mueck
Claes Oldenburg



Describe something to someone else using only drawing

Bring together a collection of objects which remind you of your visit
Anything from a paper napkin, a Tate map, a pencil sharpening, a
sweet wrapper, a tube ticket, a photograph taken on your mobile
phone

Display the objects in a museum like collection
Make labels for them
Make a box or plinth for them
Photograph your collection

TATE