

VTS for Visitors With Memory Loss (Session C), Wilson Pavilion, Incubator

Session Host and Moderator- Ruth Caccavale, Reflections Gallery Guide, Nasher Museum
Session Host and Moderator – Maggie Griffin, Reflections Gallery Guide, Nasher Museum

VTS demonstration at Henry Schnakenberg's South Beach, Staten Island **Ruth Caccavale**

Discussion of Artwork:

** Gallery Guide comments are in italics.

- *Put yourself into the role of an older person who has memory loss.*
- *First, look at the painting.*
- *What is the first thing you notice in this painting?*
 - o Participant: Describing what it would feel like to be in the scene
 - o Participant: Noticed that the clothing does not look modern
- *Does anyone have a sense of when this might have been painted? (1919)*
- Participant: A lot of people are wearing black bathing costumes
- Participant: The top 2/3 of the painting are very calm and quiet
- Participant: I wouldn't want to be one of the people on the beach.
 - o *Why do you say that?*
- *What else do you notice?*
- *Can you tell me what that child is holding?*
 - o Ruth pulls out plastic bucket and a bag of sand to be passed around (engaging another sense).
 - o *Besides the sand pail, what other things have people brought with them to the beach?*
- *What might it be like on the beach today versus back then?*
- *Are there other things you notice in the painting?*
- Ruth points out the Ferris wheel: *What associations do you have with Ferris wheels?*
- *Does anyone have an idea where this painting might be depicting?*
- *We've talked about some of the things that might be at the beach. How might it feel to be at the beach?*
 - o *What sounds might you hear? What smells?*
- *What other thoughts do you have about the painting?*
 - o Participant: Nobody is eating.
- *Does anyone have a favorite beach they have been to or would like to go to?*
- *Is this the kind of painting that you would want to have in your home?*
- Artist background: *The artist went to an arts show in the armory in NY to see European Art. It inspired him to become an artist and join the Ashcan School.*
 - o *What does that suggest to you?*
- *Anything else that you see?*
 - o Participant: Lights and shadows on figures.

Conversation Debrief:

- *Tell me how this conversation was. What worked and what didn't work?*
 - Participant: This was a great piece to talk about, because there was so much in it.
 - Participant: On my tours, I find that portraits work well.
 - Participant: I like talking about abstract art, because you can go so many places with it.
 - Participant: Rather than identifying the beach, could you have gone further with participant's comments about Santa Monica Beach, Jones Beach?
- *How much did I ask about memory?*
 - Participant: You allowed for the past or the present, and managed to stay away from memory.
- Participant question: Do you prefer to stand or sit when you lead tours?
 - Ruth likes to stand- she's enthusiastic and moves around a lot.
 - *Some people prefer to sit (so that they are in the group with the participants).*
- *As a guide, I often rephrase and repeat what others have said, so the whole group can hear.*
- Participant: Balance VTS with balancing info- sliding in a little information when participants want it.
- Participants: Activity was not done using pure VTS.
- Participant: Ruth used storytelling to tell us about the painting. Ex: How the artist decided to become an artist after the Armory Show.



VTS demonstration at Chung Sang-Hwa's, *Untitled 88-9-4* **Ruth Caccavale**

Discussion of Artwork:

** Gallery Guide comments are in italics.

- *Let's first take a moment to look at the piece together.*
 - o *This work is from the exhibition *All Matherings of Mind*.*
 - *AMOM focuses on transcendentalism and mindfulness.*
- *Let's try some mindful breathing while we're looking at this work of art.*
- *First question for you – after breathing does the piece look different to you? After you looked at it for a while?*
 - o Participant: I see squares.
- *What else did you notice?*
- *I like the idea of discussing what this work could be made of.*
 - o Participant: The work looks like thin pieces of rope dragged through the paint.
- Participant: It's hard to find a calm place in the work.
- Participant: From far away the photo reminds me of childhood. From close-up, it reminds me of teacher who helped me to meditate.
 - o *The way that this participant is making associations is wonderful.*
- *Other things that you notice about this work?*
 - o Participant: Notices the color. Points out the blue and orange in the piece.
- *What are you wondering about now?*
- *Ruth explains how the canvas was stretched.*
- *Does anybody else have an association to this work?*
 - o Participant: toothpaste
- Participant: Does anyone think this is restful?
 - o *We are seeing differences depending on where we are standing where we are focusing our attention.*
- *What do we think of when we think of transcendentalism?*
 - o Transcendentalism: "Going beyond"
 - o Mindfulness
- *If you were going to name this work what would you call it?*
 - o *The title is Untitled 88-9-4.*
 - o *The artist was expressing an idea – you may have to see more of his work to understand the themes.*
- *After the Korean War, artists created work that were existential.*
- Participant: Do you ever use tactile and sensory items when looking at this kind of painting?
 - o *Ex. Cotton*
 - o Participant: It would be nice to have different textures for participants to feel and then things to smell.
 - o Scents – related to meditation.
 - Can use smells with aging people

Discussion of VTS

Other conversations you want to have about using VTS?

- Participant: When if someone doesn't like the art? What conversation do you have at this point?
- Participant: How many people do you have on a tour?
 - o *Usually between 10-12 visitors on each tours (1:1 ratio of care partner to individual with dementia).*
 - o *Some tours have two groups running at the same time.*
 - o *Each group is led by two Gallery Guides.*
- *What suggestions do you have?*
 - o Participant: 1/2 hour is a long time at one work.
 - o Participant: Arms on chairs would be helpful.
 - o Participant: Look at four things in one gallery (instead of moving between galleries).

