

The Art Gallery is the New Gym:

Exercise creativity,
Get smarter!



Brian Evans

brianevans.net



Pixabay.com

- go to the gym
- exercise your muscles
- get stronger

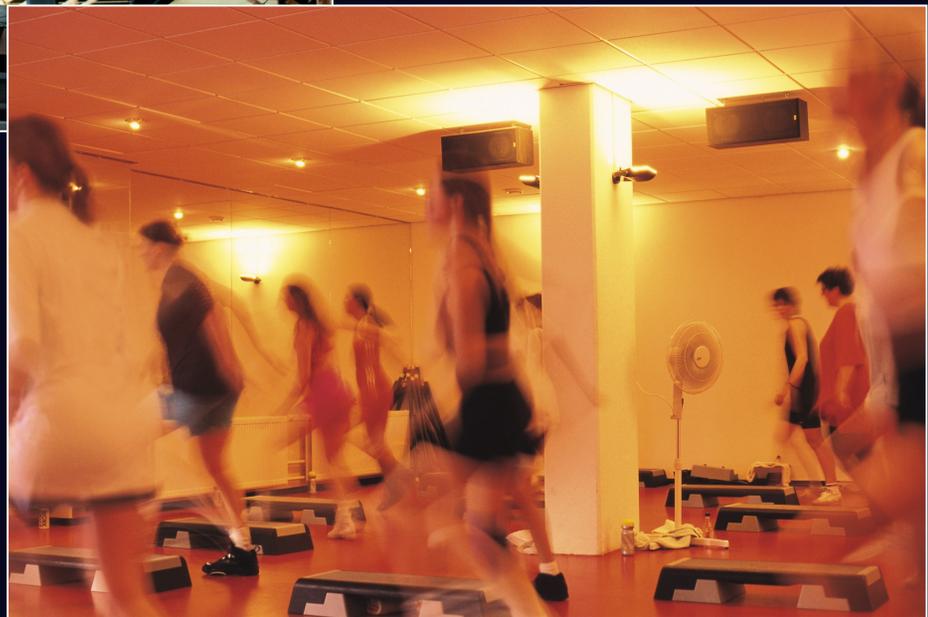
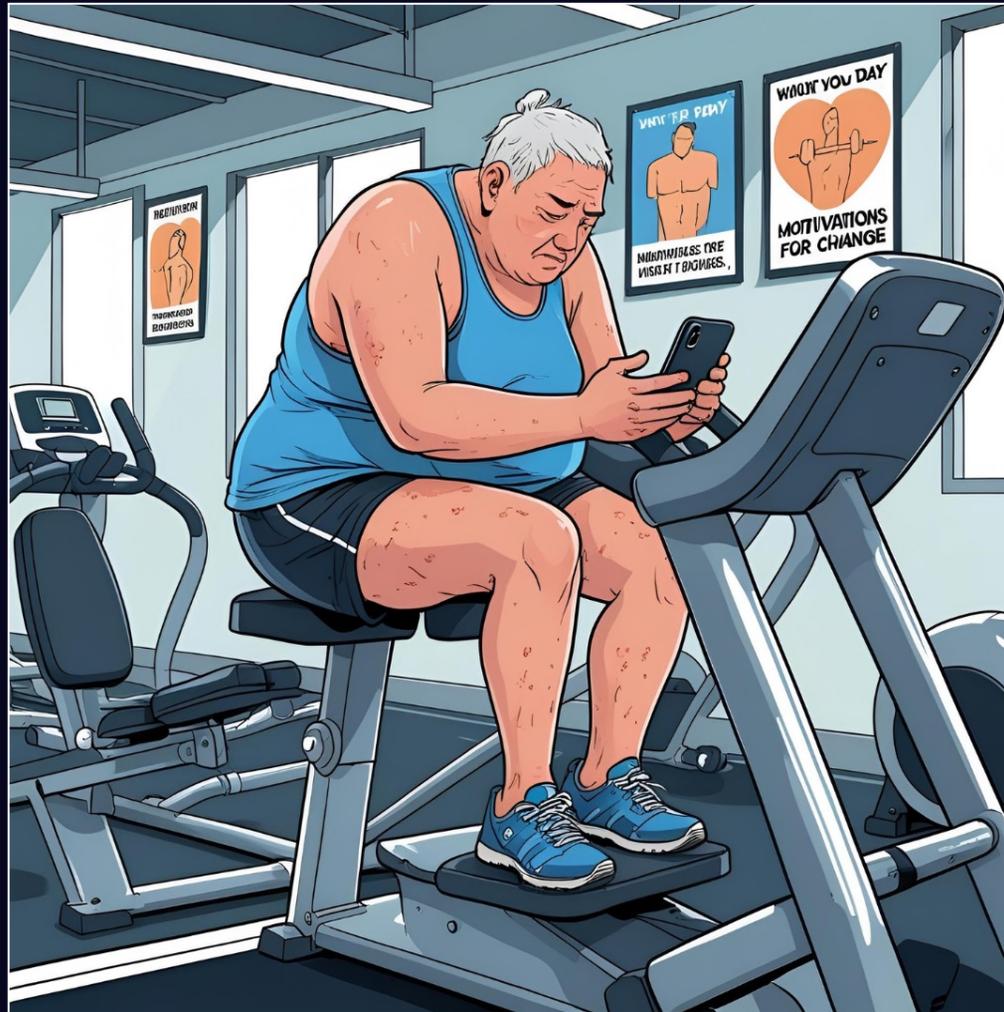


Photo by John Foxx on Freeimages.com



There's a right way and a wrong way to use exercise equipment.



National Archives of Australia: A6135, K18/11/82/87

- go to an art gallery
- engage art (exercise creativity)
- get smarter (maybe happier)



Courtesy / Grand Rapids Public Museum



There are probably better and worse ways to engage art too.

quick start (step 1)

- Don't be in a hurry,
take your time,
really look.
Think.

quick start (step 2)

- *Describe* what you see.
Be specific,
use sense-based language.

Write it down
(with pencil and paper).

quick start (step 3)

- As you describe,
connect what you see
to what you know,
to who you are.

Make it personally meaningful.

quick start (step 3, cont.)

- What do you see?
(Maybe make a list.)
- What does it remind you of?
(Make connections.)

There are no rules.

Creativity is an artifact of diversity

- choose a work that's different
- art isn't a puzzle to solve
- artists don't own the interpretation of their work



Josiah McElheny. *Modernity circa 1952 Mirrored and Reflected Infinitely* (Detail).
2004. JSTOR.

“The experience of art is a kind of fusion of your experience of yourself and of the object.”

—Josiah McElheny (Art 21)

- *making connections* from the domain of the object to the domain of self

Metaphors are abstracted *connections*—
mappings across different conceptual
domains. *

- *making connections* from the
domain of the object to the
domain of self and/or culture

* See George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, et al.

The Art Gallery is the New Gym

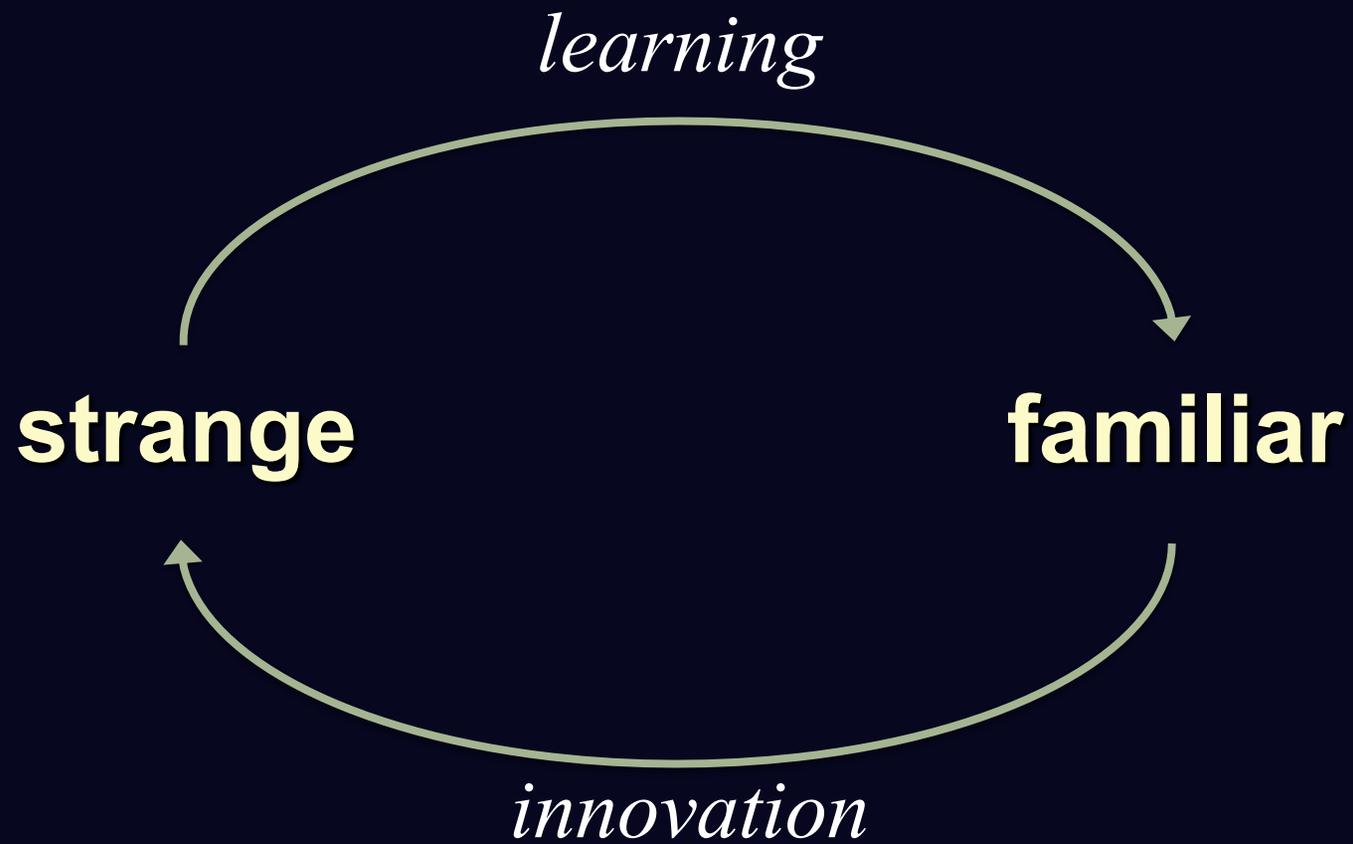


“...in regards to
cognition analogy
is everything.”

—Douglas Hofstadter

building metaphoric muscle

- conceptual metaphor
- analogic thinking
- making associations



—William J. J. Gordon
Synergetics

“All that you can imagine you already know.”

—Stephen Spender

- Creativity comes from seeing things in new ways.
- Making new connections.
- Finding new relationships.
- Seeing new patterns.

the three intelligences*

- neural intelligence
- *experiential intelligence*
- *reflective intelligence*

*see *The Intelligent Eye (Learning to Think by Looking at Art)*
by David Perkins

3 intelligences
+ disposition*

= *smart*

**see Beyond Abilities: A Dispositional Theory of Thinking,*
D. N. Perkins, Eileen Jay and Shari Tishman

Frida Kahlo
Carma II (Karma II)
1946, Graphite
10 13/16 × 8 3/16 in.
Blanton Museum of Art
The Univ. of Texas at Austin
Gift of Judy S. and
Charles W. Tate



I see Frida, looking at me.

I think she's smiling,
playful. It's a quirky surreal
image. I see whimsy.

I see pain, sutures, thorny
bushes, one growing out of
a hand. Another hand with
a wedding band is a vase of
flowers. Is she happy?

And I see the sun looking
over her shoulder.



What do I see?

What does it remind me of?

Chaos and joy?

Squiggle art in b&w.

Squiggle art...Mrs. Seamans (3rd grade) taught me to draw squiggles and color them in. She also told me I couldn't draw and I couldn't sing. (Has my whole life been a rebuff of idle comments from my 3rd grade teacher!?)



welcometonanas.com

Engaging art is a creative act!

Engaging life is a creative act!

You have to *interpret* the world
to effectively function within it.



Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.* (postcard), 1919

What do you see?

- describe / make a list
- *interpret*
- link, make connections
- “... it reminds me of...?”

- analogic thinking
- conceptual metaphor

- have fun!

fun books I reference all the time

Rico, Gabriele *Creating Re-creations: Inspiration From the Source* (out of print but findable, my favorite book)

Pattison, Pat *Writing Better Lyrics* (google 'Pattison object writing')

Ruef, Kerry *The Private Eye® 5X Looking/Thinking by Analogy*

Barrett, Terry *Criticizing Art*

Perkins, David *The Intelligent Eye (Learning to Think by Looking at Art)*

Art Appreciation Handout

Object Writing

(a great warmup exercise)

The Art Gallery is the New Gym:

Exercise creativity,
Get smarter!



Brian Evans

brianevans.net