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# Learning with Art

A guide by Anna Varna

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Who are you?

Teachers or Something else?

Primary/Secondary/Higher?

Transformative Learning?



# 1. Intro

Let me tell you a few things about myself .

- **Teacher of English**  
in a small rural school in Greece
- **Brussels**  
How did I come to know BELTA?
- **The twist**  
What happened in my personal life?



Morning  
primary  
School



Evening  
School  
for adults



Family Life



[Yo Yo Ma – Bach: Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, Prélude](#)

# How working with Art...

Helped me survive a difficult year and improve my lessons



Cotton pickers, 1945, Thomas Hart Benton, 1889–1975



## 2. Art as Transformation

- Critical Thinking
- Emotional Support
- Empathy



How do we  
choose our  
**THEMES**  
so that they are  
relevant?



Portrait of Mrs S. Rallis' and her daughter's, 1905, George Iakovidis, Larissa Municipal Art Gallery





### 3. Inspiration

- Learners' interests/questions
- Problematic situations
- News



## 4. Subtopics

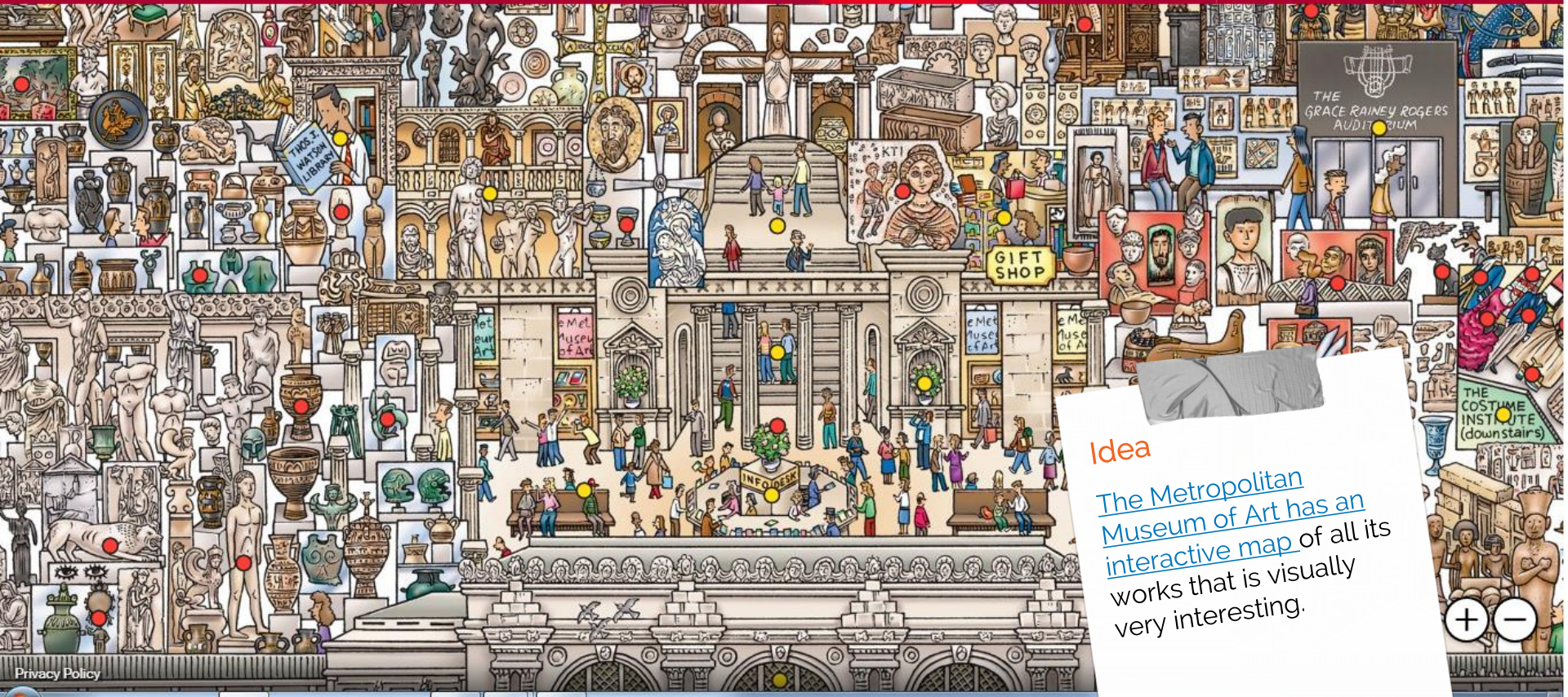
How can our clothes influence our lives?

Is fashion only for women?

Fashion industry

Courtiers in a rose garden – A lady and two gentlemen, tapestry ca 1440 -1450, South Netherlands





Idea

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has an interactive map of all its works that is visually very interesting.





## 5. Let's Practice Gender Stereotypes

Walker Evans, 1936. Floyd and Lucille Burroughs on Porch, Hale County, Alabama



Walker Evans

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6. If you were a student

What ideas might  
you have on this  
topic?



## 7. Examples

- Only girls wear pink
- Boys don't cry
- Women are more vain than men



I think that ~~can~~<sup>is</sup> big parents  
of women. women and children are  
always in fashion. from a very young age  
children demand from their parents to  
buy them the most expensive clothes  
~~the~~ best and boys to avoid the school  
bullying. ~~and~~ The ~~obsession~~<sup>obsession</sup> ~~is~~<sup>is</sup> a  
bad ~~with~~ influence in their life

### Shopping therapy

To avoid problems and make themselves  
feel better

How does fashion affects your life?

Fashion doesn't affect my life <sup>really</sup> ~~as~~ I believe that it  
depends on the personality of <sup>each</sup> ~~person~~ one. As far  
as I'm concerned it <sup>really</sup> has to do with what I like  
to wear and feel comfortable

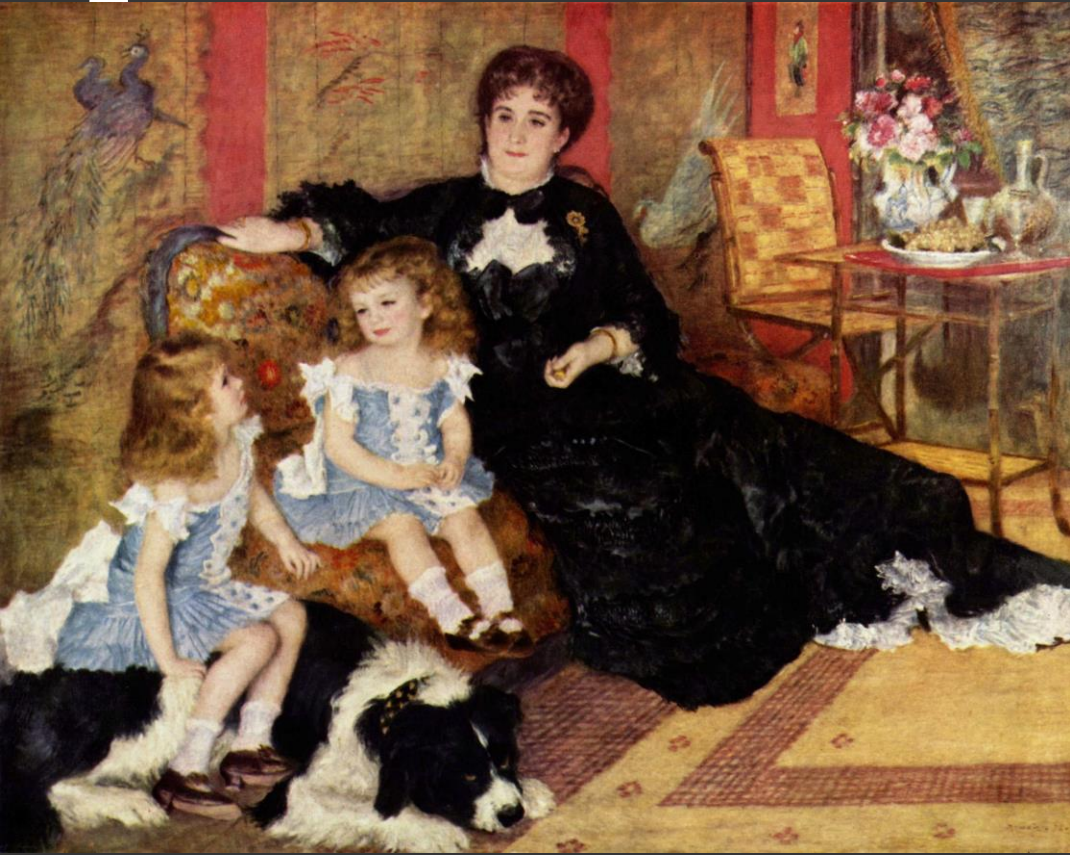
Women want to look beautiful and they believe  
that they manage to do it with fashion

Women are insecure and try to feel their  
void with fashion and shopping

## Some ideas before the exercise

*"Women are insecure and try to feel better with fashion and shopping"*

*"Women want to feel beautiful and they believe they do it with fashion"*



1



2





3

## 8. Discussion

What do you observe?

What is happening?

Why do you say that?

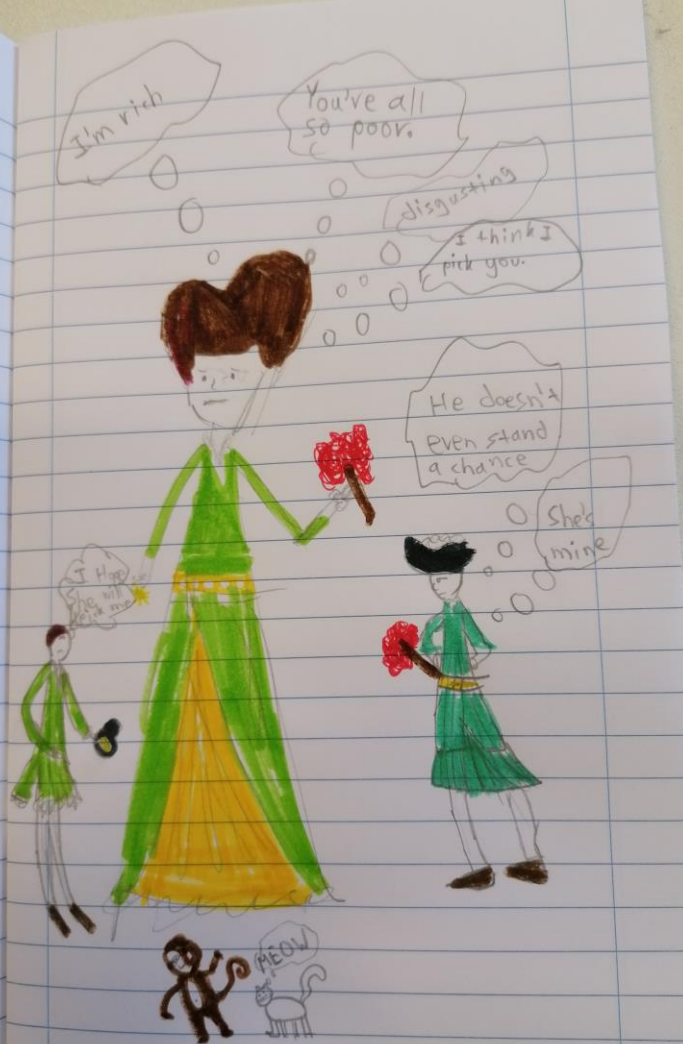
How does it make you  
feel?



## 9. Variations

Depending on what kind of resources you are using and what you want to achieve you can ask different questions .You can find great examples at the [Project Zero of Harvard Education school](#).

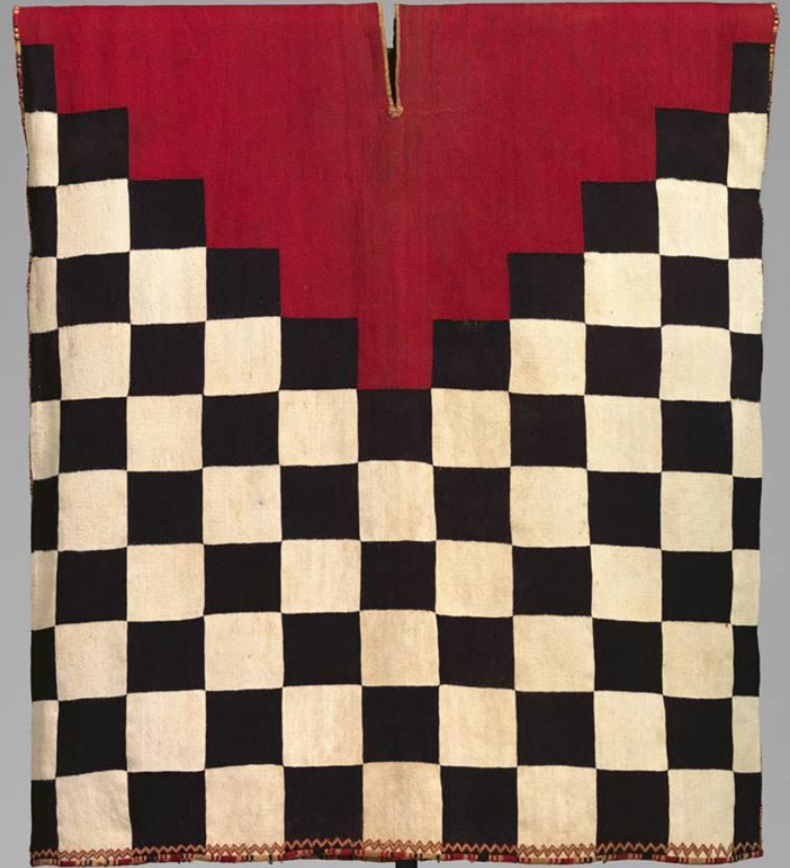




Samples of Children's work after working with The Lady and Two Gentlemen

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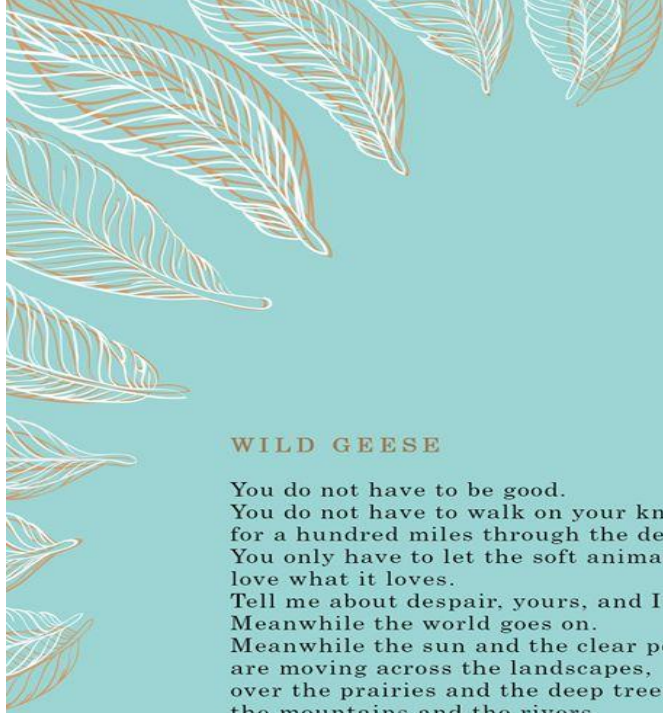
*"I'm a black man in Argentina and I created this dress for my wife so she can be comfortable when she rides. I used these colours so I can see her miles away and call her"*



Checkerboard Tunic, 16th century , Peru, Argentina, or Bolivia, Camelid fiber, The Met

## 10. Poetry

“Tomorrow when I will prepare the food I will remember from the poem of Mary Oliver the sentence: whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination and I will try to take place in the family of things”



### WILD GEESE

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

Mary Oliver





**Comprehension**  
involves a conflict and  
while this happens, a  
constructive act of  
imagination occurs,  
resulting in an  
interpretation, resulting  
in deeper learning.

# Thank you!

## Resources for Art:

- Online museums
- [Facebook Art Groups](#)
- [Art curators](#)
- [Larissa Municipal Gallery](#)
- [Tate's Art Walks](#)

## Resources for Theory:

- [Alex Kokkos book](#)
- [Jack Mezirow and transformative learning theory](#)

## Resources for asking questions:

- [James Taylor book](#)
- [Art criticism](#)
- [Mentals app](#) by Jedrek Stepien

