

# Look Group Guide



# What is a Look Group?

Look Groups are a fun way to meet new people and talk about art. Based on the idea of a book group, Look Groups are a network of informal groups throughout Cornwall whose members meet once a month to talk about art, artists and ideas. You don't need to have any knowledge about art to get involved. Look Groups are friendly and open, and always happy to welcome new members.

The Look Group project is led by Tate St Ives, but each community runs its own group. Cornwall-based Look Groups enjoy regular visits to exhibitions at Tate St Ives, special Look Group events, offers and activities. Look Groups meet in their local communities using a wide range of venues, from local libraries and schools to artists' studios and cafés.

Look Groups have been meeting throughout Cornwall since 2009. By late 2016 there will be 25 groups.

To join a group near you, please email [lookgroups@tate.org.uk](mailto:lookgroups@tate.org.uk)

# What Look Groups Do

Look Groups are led by their members. There's no set way of doing things. Some groups only have discussions about art or artists, other groups sometimes use meetings for making art, and others go on outings to exhibitions and art events.

Each Look Group has their own way of organising their meetings. Some meetings might focus on a particular artist; others may discuss a particular idea or theme around art. Some groups are led by one person; others share the responsibility of organising meetings and staying in touch with the Assistant Learning Curator at Tate St Ives between some or all of the members.

Often, group members take it in turns to decide on a topic and to chair each meeting. As long as your group is happy to welcome new members, Tate St Ives is happy for your group to be part of the Look Group network.

# Talking About Art

You don't need any previous knowledge about art in order to set up, or be a member of a Look Group. You're definitely not expected to be an expert in art history! Different Look Groups have slightly different ways of talking about art.

Look Groups are about sharing opinions and feelings about art, and having conversations where there are no right or wrong answers. There are lots of ways of deciding on, and talking about, a particular subject.

## How Meetings Work

Groups usually plan topics for their meetings in advance. Some groups find it easiest to plan the topic for meetings six months or a year in advance, others decide on a month-to-month basis.

Meetings usually involve each person bringing something to show the rest of the group that relates to the theme for that month. Everyone generally takes it in turns to say a little bit about what they've brought, which is followed by general discussion. It doesn't matter if you don't always have time to prepare, you can still take part. So, a group might, for example, choose a question to discuss, such as 'What is bad art?' Members might select an example of a work that they think is 'bad art' to show the group, and the examples of bad art that everyone brings become part of the conversation about what might be 'bad art'. Other themed discussions could be something like 'animals in art', or 'the art of protest'. Alternatively, a topic might be based on a movement or period in art, such as abstract expressionism or the Pre-Raphaelites. Each member might choose a particular artist or artwork from this movement to find out about to bring to the discussion. They'll explain the reason for their choice, why they like it, or don't like it.

Look Groups generally use images to help with discussion. This might be books, printed images or using laptops or tablets to search for or display images online. Having an internet connection and a tablet or computer can be useful at meetings, as you can easily look something up or find an image of something to refer to if it comes up during a discussion.

Most meetings are about an hour and a half to two hours long. Groups often have tea and cake during their meetings.

# Setting Up a Look Group

You can find out if there is already a Look Group in your area by emailing [lookgroups@tate.org.uk](mailto:lookgroups@tate.org.uk)

If there isn't a Look Group near where you live, this guide will help you to set one up. Get in touch with the Assistant Learning Curator for Look Groups at Tate St Ives through the email address above. She will be able to help you and answer any questions you might have.

Already have a few friends that you want to set a group up with? Great! Get together and decide when and where you want to meet, and how your group will work. The Assistant Learning Curator for Look Groups can help you find a venue in your area.

Live outside Cornwall, but still want to set up a Look Group? We'd like to hear from you. Contact [lookgroups@tate.org.uk](mailto:lookgroups@tate.org.uk)

## Steps to setting up a group

- 1** Contact the Assistant Learning Curator for Look Groups at [lookgroups@tate.org.uk](mailto:lookgroups@tate.org.uk). She may have some suggestions for local venues, or may have a list of people in your area who are already interested in Look Groups. She can also help you to advertise for members.
- 2** Find a suitable venue. A lot of venues will offer community groups free use of spaces.
- 3** Pick a meeting date and advertise for members. Put an ad in a local paper or put up a poster in the local library, community centre or shop. Share it on twitter or facebook. Tell your friends.
- 4** At your first meeting clarify what the group will be doing – meeting to talk about art once a month. Then, decide as a group how you would like to run meetings and choose topics. How will you keep each other informed about meetings? How will you decide what to talk about?
- 5** Set a meeting date – decide with the group when the next meeting date will be. Some groups have a set date (i.e. the third Thursday of the month), others decide their date on month-by-month basis.
- 6** At the first meeting make sure a topic for discussion is chosen for the next meeting.
- 7** Have fun talking about art, and let Tate St Ives know how it went!

# Visiting Tate St Ives

Look Groups get to visit Tate St Ives up to three times a year as a group, with no charge for entry. To book a visit, contact [lookgroups@tate.org.uk](mailto:lookgroups@tate.org.uk) and the Assistant Learning Curator will arrange your visit for you. If she is available, she can give you a tour of the exhibition, and arrange a space for your Look Group to have a discussion.

There is also an annual Look Groups event for members. Look Groups from all over Cornwall come to Tate St Ives to see exhibitions, enjoy gallery talks, activities, and conversations about art with other Look Groups from across the county.