

Theme	General area	Specific questions you can ask of yourself (not all of these will be relevant)	Notes
<b>Personal responses</b>	Emotional response	What is your immediate reaction to this object? Do you like it? Dislike it? Does it make you feel uncomfortable in any way? Or does it make you happy?	
	Physical response	Do you feel stimulated or aroused by your experience of engaging with this object? Can you explore what is going on in your body? Do you feel calm? Or is your heart rate increasing? What about your breathing? What does your bodily reaction reveal about what is going on in your mind?	
<b>Relationship to previous experience</b>	Memory	What does this object remind you of? What else does it make you think of? Does it evoke positive or negative memories? And how does that influence the way you encounter the object?	
	Cultural and social	Can you relate this object to yourself or your life? Or does the object sit outside your experience? What impact does this have on the way you feel about the object?	
	Unconscious bias and habituated responses	If you have had a strong reaction to the object, what do you think is driving that response? Dig deep into all the preconceptions you might have around race, gender, culture, and identity and try to challenge that thinking.	
<b>Empathy for objects</b>	Imagination	Imagination is an important part of experience. What are you imagining when you see and feel this object? Are you confusing your imaginings with reality? And how does that shape your perception of the object?	
	Feeling and meaning	What might it mean to you to be able to touch and hold this object? Do you think you would feel a connection with the maker or those who have used or viewed the object?	

(Willcocks, 2020)

**Further thoughts and provocations:**

'In *Museum Objects, Health and Healing*, Cowans et al (2020) presents a series of thought-provoking arguments for the psychotherapeutic role of object interactions via a series of case studies derived from their interactions in a number of settings (...) at the root of their new theory they argue that 'one overarching and resounding theme has emerged: the humanity of our shared experiences in interpretation relationship and connections. The multi-sensory nature of object interactions both in terms of people's relationship with the object, but also with each other via the object's capacity to provoke, stimulate, inspire and act as a conduit for emotions, ideas, meaning-making, self-exploration and creativity; all of which are vital aspects of human well-being.' (p.3, Cowan et. al, 2019)

'To some degree, teaching amidst my children's chatter has been a challenge, but one with its own sweetness and comfort. I think my students accept such interruptions because we all need now to be more fully human for each other. I miss my students. I sense they are hurting. I see that they are stressed, and the distance makes it harder to know what I can do to help or how I can help them find a respite amidst all the anxiety that is outside their door and sometimes inside their space. We can extend deadlines and adjust assignments, reduce our expectations of the outputs of scholarly work, all of which we should be doing — but none of this exactly helps us find new ways to be there for each other as human beings.' (Brand, 2020)

**References:**

Brand, A. S. (2020) 'Field Notes on Pandemic Teaching', *Places Journal*. Available at: <https://placesjournal.org/article/field-notes-on-pandemic-teaching-1/> (Accessed: 9 February 2022)

Cowan, B. Laird, R. and McKeown, J. (2019) *Museum Objects, Health and Healing: The Relationship between Exhibition and Wellness*. London: Routledge

Willcocks, J. (2020) 'Emotional or extra-rational reading of an object', *Central Saint Martin's Museum and Study Collection*. Available at: <https://arts.ac.libguides.com/c.php?g=686452&p=4906489> (Accessed: 9 February 2022)