Visual Narrative for Visiting the Wattis
Drum Listens to Heart Part II: Nov 9 - Dec 17

We are going to the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco. The Wattis shows all kinds of artworks like paintings, sculptures, videos, and installation art. All the artworks were made by artists who are alive now or were alive in the past 50 years.

The Wattis is located on a quiet street in a mixed industrial and residential neighborhood: this means that people live in this neighborhood and work and make things here too. There is a highway overpass near the art gallery where the cars go really fast. Sometimes, you can hear those cars even inside the art gallery.
There is often construction around the Wattis, which means you might hear a big “BOOM” every now and then, or the sound of drilling.

We have to put on our masks when we get to the Wattis!

We will see two big glass doors when we first arrive at the Wattis. When we open the doors, you will see a front desk on your right and a dark space with a large video work projected on the wall. The exhibition will continue as you walk into further rooms, which also contain video projections accompanied by audio available on headphones provided. Inside the gallery might feel very dark, as the skylights are covered by black fabric and all lights are turned off for the video projections.
There will be someone waiting at a desk to greet us when we go inside. They will tell us where the bathrooms are and other important things about the gallery. We might have to wait a few minutes. They can also provide you with an exhibition brochure or a face mask if you need one.

We can look at a brochure to tell us more about the art gallery. The brochure will tell us about the artists and why their artwork is at the gallery for this show. We can also read more about the exhibition and what some of the major themes are. You can find the names of the artists on the back of the booklet together with the locations of each artwork in the gallery.
The gallery is divided into four rooms: we can walk through the rooms however we like.

The first room has a photo animation video that shows people playing Alexander Calder’s red mobile sculpture as an instrument. You can hear the sound using the headphones connected to the bench.
To go to the bathrooms, we will have to go to the back of the gallery through the first room, and then through a doorway to the second room.

The second room is showing a video on the left side. The video shows a performance that took place in ruins of a Catholic church. People make different sounds by knocking down the doors, playing a cello, and singing.

The door to the bathroom will be at the end of the room. Move the sliding door by pushing the handle to the left. Then turn to your left. There is a door labeled with “RESTROOMS” and an arrow pointing to the right.
There will be a hallway where the lights are motion activated. The lights will come on when we get close to the bathroom. It may take a minute for the lights to come on. There is also a place to fill up our water bottles here.

In the second room, there will be another doorway to the right of the wall that shows the video. Walk through this doorway to get to the third room.

The third room has two hanging screens that show a video work, and a lighting sculpture hanging down from the ceiling. The light turns on after the video ends and the screen will show a countdown timer telling when the video will start again. The video shows two people playing a grand piano and a woman reading a speech out loud.
The Wattis Bar is in the back of this gallery. To enter, we will go through a dimly lit doorway and turn to the right. We will hear music coming from this room.

We will have to turn the corner to go into the bar. The bar is dimly lit compared. There are no windows. There will be different kinds of lights overhead, and lots of records on the walls we can listen to or books we can look at.
The bar has a table where you can sit and do some activities. There are stools at the bar where you can sit or two wooden benches in the corner of the room. There are lots of books in this room. We can pick up and touch the books but cannot take them home. We can listen to the records by using headphones.

In the third gallery, there will be another doorway to the right of the hanging screens. Walk through this doorway to the fourth room.

The fourth room has a video that shows British soldiers marching through the empty streets of London. They slowly join one another other until they form a group, and the sounds of marching change accordingly.
Sometimes, a group of students will come to the art gallery. That means the gallery will be full of people. It can be noisy when someone is giving a tour to a group of people. For a break, we can step outside onto the street.

When we are ready to leave, we can go to the doors we came through. We will push on the handles and be back on the sidewalk.

I hope we can go to the Wattis again and see more art!