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 low traffic 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.
The Wattis Institute is located in the middle of the block between 16th and 17th street on Kansas street in Potrero Hill where it’s usually sunny with a breeze. Kansas St. slopes from 16th to 17th street and has a rise of 10 ft or 3 m.

The nearest bus stop is located on 16th street where it intersects with Rhode Island street, 479 feet from the front entrance. The entrance consists of large, floor to ceiling, glass double doors and sliding doors. Once you arrive, the gallery is step-free with level floors.

The outside of the Wattis is painted black and gray and the entrance is made up of glass doors. The curtains remain closed to control the amount of natural lighting allowed inside. The gallery is painted white and the floor is exposed concrete. In the ceiling there are large skylights which allows indirect natural light to flood the gallery. Artificial overhead spotlights and back lighting are used to illuminate Rodrigo Hernández’s artwork which includes earth tones as well as bright colors.
To the right, as you enter sits a gallery monitor at the front desk who will greet you and beyond that desk is a coat rack where you can place your hats, bags and coats. At this desk you can take a brochure with you, sign up for our mailing list and review and purchase books that the Wattis Institute has published. We can look at a brochure that 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.

If you need to use the restroom, go around the wall to the far right corner of the gallery and through the large opening and turn left and then right down the hallway. In this hallway, the lights are motion activated and will come on when we get close to the bathroom. We can find ADA bathrooms here. It may take a moment for the lights to come on. Here we can fill our water bottles with cold and hot filtered water.
The gallery is one large room with artwork in the center. The installation can be entered from any side. Mobility devices will fit and are welcome. Notice that the scale of the installation is table height, but please do not set any personal belongings or yourself on top of it or inside the windows. Around one of the corners is a piece of artwork resting on the ground, please be careful not to step on it.
Sometimes, a group of students from California College of the Arts will come to the gallery. That means the gallery will be full of people and it can be very loud when someone is giving a tour to a group of people. To reduce stimulation, we can step outside, through the front doors we came in and we will be on the sidewalk where we can still see into the gallery and re-enter when we’re ready or we can relax in the bar area and play music through the headphones.

When we’ve looked at all of the artwork, we can go to the Wattis Bar in the back left of the gallery through the dimly lit entryway and turn the corner. There will be a text on the wall describing the purpose of this space, and handouts you can take. We will hear the sound of a recorded lecture, or music coming from this room. This back room is very dark and there are no windows so we need to step slowly so our eyes can adjust. There will be different kinds of lights overhead and a few records on the walls, as well as a monitor on the wall.
The Wattis Research Institute

Each year, the Wattis Research Institute is dedicated to a single artist.

This artist’s work is not to be seen but to be heard, read, and smelt, as we are thinking.

"Our aim is not to make art an object of consumption, but to reflect on contemporary modes of engagement with art."

Captions for the recorded lectures are available, just ask the person sitting behind the counter, or at the front desk. Here you can also sit and relax while looking through some books, or play records on the two record players. You can play your music on the speakers or listen to it with our headphones.

In The Wattis Bar, you will see and experience some of the research artist’s many interests, including a glossary in the center table, faux bacterial petri dish wall stickers, and a perfume she made displayed on the wall. We'll get to spray using the small sample on the right on the provided handouts. We only spray the papers. We don’t want to spray it in our faces or at anyone else.
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!