

What's going on in this picture?



Visual Thinking Strategies

- <https://vimeo.com/59412793> [demo of VTS]
- <https://vtshome.org>
- <http://z.umn.edu/vtsnytimes> [summary explanation; source of images]
- <http://z.umn.edu/weeklynytimesvts> [ongoing exercise]
- Philip Yenawine's book: *Visual Thinking Strategies* [is available through Amazon.]



Initial silent examination.

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find?

Paraphrase. Point. Link.



0

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0. The Subway, 1950, George Tooker.

00. *Las Meninas*, by Diego Velasquez, circa 1656. *Las Meninas* has long been recognised as one of the most important paintings in [Western art history](#). Its complex and enigmatic composition raises questions about reality and illusion, and creates an uncertain relationship between the viewer and the figures depicted. "Velázquez's supreme achievement, a highly self-conscious, calculated demonstration of what painting could achieve, and perhaps the most searching comment ever made on the possibilities of the easel painting".

1. Indonesians reclined on tracks in Rawa Buaya, West Java Province, in the belief that the energy from the tracks would cure them of various illnesses. This daily practice has caused problems for local train operators.

2. Fermin Pena attempts to repair a broken pipe in Caracas, Venezuela. We asked the photographer, Rodrigo Abd, for the backstory on this image:

I left the AP office in downtown Caracas, and I jumped on a motorbike taxi – the only way to move in Caracas as a journalist – to try to find some daily life pictures for the wire, basically trying to describe the mood of the people days before the presidential elections.

3. Too much sun in London? People standing up a new skyscraper known as the Walkie-Talkie; the glare off the building's skin is so intense that it apparently melted part of a Jaguar parked nearby. Bloomberg News reported in "[London's Walkie-Talkie 'Fryscraper' Draws Crowds in Heat](#)" that the beam of light radiating off the 37-story building "was measured at more than 110 degrees Celsius (230 degrees Fahrenheit)." The article also features a video.

4. A child jumps on the waste products that are used to make poultry feed as she plays in a tannery at Hazaribagh in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Oct. 9, 2012. Luxury leather goods sold across the world are produced in a slum area of Bangladesh's capital where workers, including children, are exposed to hazardous chemicals. None of the tanneries, packed cheek-by-jowl into Dhaka's Hazaribagh neighborhood, treat their waste water, which contains animal flesh, sulphuric acid, chromium and lead, leaving it to spew into open gutters and eventually the city's main river.

5. Hot rod and racing enthusiasts of all ages, in vehicles of all shapes and sizes, came to watch or to take part in the 65th Bonneville Speed Week, which ended Friday, at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah.

6 Hindu women worshiped the sun god Surya in the polluted waters of the Yamuna River during the Chhath Puja religious festival in New Delhi. Hindu women fast for the day for the betterment of their family and society. Ahmad Masood, the photographer, describes photographing this festival in the Reuters article, "[Man Against Foam.](#)" As for the mysterious foam in the image, he writes, "It looks like soap or a mountain of snow but actually it's all pollution from sewage waters flowing into the Yamuna river."