



TRT: N/A

TITLE: JILL DAWSEY:
AIR DATE: N/A
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TRANSCRIPT

ELIZABETH:

00:07

INTRODUCE YOURSELF. THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE AT HOME THAT DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CURATOR.

JILL DAWSEY:

00:24

WELL I'M JILL DAWSEY. I'M THE CURATOR OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART HERE AT THE UMFA. AND I AM, I SUPERVISE AND AM A CARETAKER FOR THE COLLECTIONS HERE. SO ANYTHING THAT PERTAINS TO THE REALM OF MODERN ART OR CONTEMPORARY ART OR MADE BY A LIVING ARTIST, UM, I OVERSEE EXHIBITIONS OF THAT WORK AND INSTALL THE PERMANENT COLLECTION FOR OUR VIEWERS.

ELIZABETH:

00:55

WHAT WAS YOUR RESPONSE WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY THAT THE MUSEUM HAD TO HOST THIS INCREDIBLE EXHIBITION?

JILL DAWSEY:

01:03

I WAS ECSTATIC BECAUSE WHAT THIS EXHIBITION REALLY ALLOWS US TO DO IS TO TELL THE STORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ART. ALL OF IT'S INNOVATIONS, ALL OF THE EXPERIMENTATION THAT TOOK PLACE. BEGINNING WITH THE IMPRESSIONISTS AND MOVING THROUGH POST-IMPRESSIONISM THROUGH CUBISM THE SURREALISM, UM AND SO AS SOMEBODY WHO IS INTERESTED IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART, ART BEING MADE TODAY, THIS IS THE BACK-STORY. THIS IS WHAT VISITORS NEED TO UNDERSTAND IF THEY WANT TO BE INFORMED ABOUT ART BEING MADE IN THE PRESENT. SO THIS TELLS THE WHOLE STORY OF MODERN ART.

ELIZABETH:

01:40

YOU WERE SAYING SOMETHING REALLY INTERESTING ABOUT THIS PERIOD THAT THIS EXHIBITION REPRESENTS, BEING THE BACK-STORY TO CONTEMPORARY OR MODERN ART. DESCRIBE THAT A LITTLE BIT TO ME. I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN, WHEN WE SAY THE WORD MODERN ART, BECAUSE THIS WAS MODERN ART AT SOMETIME.

JILL DAWSEY:

02:02

THIS IS MODERN ART STILL.

ELIZABETH:

02:04

AND THEN, BUT HOW DOES THAT CHANGE WHEN REFER TO CONTEMPORARY? IS THAT THE DISTINCTION THAT YOU WOULD MAKE?

JILL DAWSEY:

02:11

THAT'S REALLY THE DISTINCTION. MODERN ART REFERS TO ART THAT HAS BEEN MADE SINCE THE ADVENT OF MODERNITY. AND WE GENERALLY THINK ABOUT THAT AS A MOMENT WHEN CITIES WERE GROWING, THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION WAS TAKING PLACE AND THIS WORK GOES ALONG WITH THAT. IT IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE DEVELOPMENTS. IT'S ALSO A MOMENT WHEN THERE WERE MASSIVE PARADIGM SHIFTS TAKING PLACE. SO THE IMPRESSIONISTS WERE REALLY DEFINING WHAT IT MEANT TO MAKE A PAINTING. AND SINCE THEN YOU'VE HAD A SUCCESSION OF MOVEMENTS THAT HAVE EACH ATTEMPTED TO REDEFINE ART AND TO COME UP WITH NEW INNOVATIONS. NEW WAYS OF EXPERIMENTING AND EXPRESSING IDEAS AND FEELINGS ON A CANVAS OR IN A SCULPTURE. AND SO UM, SO WHEN WE TALK ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ART, WE ARE USUALLY REFERRING TO WORK THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE PAST 30 YEARS. THAT'S GENERALLY HOW WE DIVIDE UP THOSE CATEGORIES.

ELIZABETH:

03:08

...HOW DO THEY REPRESENT THIS TRANSFORMATIVE TIME IN HISTORY?

JILL DAWSEY:

03:14

WELL THEY SPAN AN ENTIRE CENTURY. SO YOU HAVE WORKS THAT UM, THAT ARE MADE IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY UM, STRETCHING THROUGH TO THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY. AND YOU HAVE A SUCCESSION OF MOVEMENTS THAT IS NARRATED HERE. AGAIN, BEGINNING WITH IMPRESSIONISM, MOVING THROUGH TO POST-IMPRESSIONISM, EACH OF THESE MOVEMENTS REALLY WAS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE MOMENT IN WHICH THEY WERE WORKING AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ARTISTS IN THE PAST. SO THERE KIND OF WAS AN ANTAGONISM SOMETIMES BETWEEN THEM OR RIVALRIES. AND SO THIS IS SORT OF THE STRUGGLE OF MOVING ART FORWARD IN A PROGRESSION, UNTIL YOU GET TO VERY ABSTRACT WORK IN THE MID-NINETE..IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY BUT THAT'S WHERE IT STARTED.

ELIZABETH:

04:03

THIS TRANSFORMATIVE PERIOD. HOW DID IT ALTER THE COURSE OF EUROPEAN ART? WHERE HAD IT BEEN HEADED AND THEN HOW DID THIS SHIFT GEARS?

JILL DAWSEY:

04:13

WELL THE IMPRESSIONISTS WERE WORKING IN RELATIONSHIP TO, IN UM, THEY WERE TRYING TO DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES FROM THE ACADEMIC PAINTING OF THE DAY. AND BY ACADEMIC I MEAN THE ART THAT WAS TAUGHT IN THE OFFICIAL ART SCHOOLS, THE ART THAT WAS SHOWN IN THE SALON, WHICH WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL EXHIBITION VENUE. THE IMPRESSIONISTS WANTED TO CAPTURE THE RAW EXPERIENCE OF EVERYDAY LIFE, THE IMPRESSIONS OF THE NATURAL WORLD, THE IMPRESSION OF THE CITIES AROUND THEM. AND TRADITIONALLY, THE SUBJECTS THAT WERE APPROPRIATE FOR ART WERE HISTORICAL IN NATURE. THEY WERE HISTORY SCENES, THEY WERE OFTEN SENTIMENTAL SCENES, UM, PORTRAITS. YOU DON'T HAVE A LOT OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING AT THAT MOMENT IN TIME. AND THE IMPRESSIONISTS WERE INTERESTED IN CAPTURING THESE FLEETING EFFECTS OF LIGHT MOVING ACROSS A

LANDSCAPE. THEY WERE ALSO INTERESTED IN THE PAINT ITSELF ON THE CANVAS. SO WHAT YOU HAVE IS THIS INNOVATION IN A WAY THAT, IN THE TECHNIQUE OF PAINTING. SO THAT THE IMPRESSIONISTS WOULD LEAVE DISCREET BRUSH STROKES, SKETCHY BRUSH STROKES, SIDE-BY-SIDE WITHOUT BLENDING THEM IN. THEY LET THE EYE BLEND IT, DO THE WORK OF BLENDING IT. NOW THAT'S IN CONTRAST TO THE MORE TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC WORK OF THE DAY, WHICH WOULD HAVE HAD A VERY REFINED FINISH, WOULD NOT DRAW ATTENTION TO THE BRUSH WORK IN ANY WAY. IT WANTS TO PRESENT ITSELF TO A NATURAL ILLUSION ON THE CANVAS, ALMOST A WINDOW ONTO ANOTHER WORLD. THE IMPRESSIONISTS WERE INTERESTED IN THE SURFACE OF THE PICTURE. AND THEY WANTED TO EXPLORE THE PROPERTIES OF COLOR AND LIGHT ON THE CANVAS. SO THIS WAS A RADICAL SHIFT AWAY FROM THE ART OF, THAT WAS OFFICIAL OF THE DAY.

ELIZABETH:

05:57

AND THEN WERE DID THE POST-IMPRESSIONISM TAKE THAT FROM IMPRESSIONISM?

JILL DAWSEY:

06:00

SO THE POST-IMPRESSIONISTS REALLY BUILT UPON THE IMPRESSIONIST LEGACY. THEY TOO WERE INTERESTED IN PAINT ON THE CANVAS, IN SORT OF VERY BRUSHY TECHNIQUE. BUT THEY WERE SORT OF INTERESTED IN SORT OF HEIGHTENING THE EMOTION AND UM, AND TRYING TO CREATE A SORT OF PRIMAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH PAINTING. SO THERE'S MUCH MORE TO DO WITH UM, WITH EMOTIONS, WITH STATES OF MIND, WITH MOOD, WITH CREATING AN OVERALL MOOD AS OPPOSED TO IMPRESSIONISTS THAT WERE REALLY PAINTING THEIR SURROUNDINGS IN MANY WAYS.

ELIZABETH:

06:47

AND ALMOST A CERTAIN WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS. WHICH KIND OF TAKES ME TO CUBISM. DESCRIBE HOW THAT WAS A PROCESS OR A WAY OF LOOKING AT THE OBJECT.

JILL DAWSEY:

06:55

WELL CUBISM COMPLETELY FRAGMENTS THE OBJECT. YOU HAVE, IF ARTISTS IN THE PAST HAD TRIED TO CREATE A PERFECT ILLUSION ON THE CANVAS, A WINDOW ONTO ANOTHER WORLD WHERE YOU WOULD FORGET WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT. WITH THE INNOVATIONS OF CUBISM, UM YOU AGAIN HAVE ATTENTION BEING PAID TO THE FLAT SURFACE OF THE CANVAS. HOW DO YOU PORTRAY A THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECT ON A TWO-DIMENSIONAL SURFACE? THIS IS ONE OF THE QUESTIONS BEING ASKED. AND SO THE CUBISTS, PICASSO AND BRAQUE, IT WAS THERE INNOVATION TO TRY AND PORTRAY AN OBJECT FROM MANY ANGLES SIMULTANEOUSLY. SO THE OBJECT SEEMS TO BE COMPLETELY FRACTURED AS IF YOU'RE SEEING IT FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES AT THE SAME MOMENT IN TIME WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE OF COURSE WE MOVE AROUND AND WE MOVE THROUGH SPACE AND SEEING TAKES TIME. SO IT'S THIS EXPERIENCE OF SIMULTANEITY.

ELIZABETH:

07:49

WHERE DOES SOMEONE LIKE MATISSE...

JILL DAWSEY:

07:49

MATISSE IS A WONDERFUL COLORIST. IN SOME WAYS HE WAS THE RIVAL OF PICASSO. SO HE WAS A GREAT INNOVATOR IN THE POST-IMPRESSIONIST TRADITION. BUT HIS EMPHASIS WAS REALLY ON COLOR AND FORM. YOU MIGHT SAY THAT HE WAS MORE OF A FORMALIST. HE DID GO THROUGH MANY PHASES BUT WHEREAS FOR PICASSO IT WAS SORT OF SHEER SORT OF INNOVATION AFTER INNOVATION, WITH MATISSE YOU HAVE MORE OF A WORKING THROUGH OF COLOR AND PATTERN AND DECORATION ON THE SURFACE OF THE CANVAS.

ELIZABETH:

08:29

TELL ME THE STORY OF THAT PIECE.

JILL DAWSEY:

08:33

WELL ONE OF MY FAVORITE PIECES ON THE EXHIBITION IS PAUL GAUGUIN'S "IN THE WAVES". WHICH WAS A WORK THAT HE PAINTED IN 1889. AND HE HAD GONE TO PONT-AVEN, WHICH IS A SMALL VILLAGE IN THE NORTHWEST OF FRANCE IN AN AREA CALLED BRITTANY. AND HE WENT THERE TO ESCAPE MODERN CIVILIZATION. AND HE WAS REALLY INTERESTED IN TRYING TO PAINT PRIMAL EMOTIONS ON THE CANVAS. SO WHAT YOU HAVE IN THIS PICTURE IS A WOMAN WHO IS ABANDONING HERSELF TO THE OCEAN. AND IT'S KIND OF AN AMBIGUOUS PICTURE. SHE RAISES HER ARM TO HER FACE. HER FACE IS CROPPED. WE CAN ONLY SEE HER NOSE AND THE EDGE OF HER FACE AND HER CHIN SO WE CAN'T SEE THE EXPRESSION. IT'S DIFFICULT TO KNOW IF SHE IS CRYING OUT IN ECSTASY OR WHETHER SHE IS SCREAMING IN DISTRESS. IT'S VERY AMBIGUOUS. WHAT I LOVE ABOUT IT ARE THE INTENSE COLORS.

ELIZABETH:

09:37

START OUT WITH WHAT I LOVE ABOUT IT ARE THE INTENSE COLORS.

JILL DAWSEY:

09:39

WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THIS PICTURE ARE THE INTENSE COLORS. AND GAUGUIN FELT THAT ARTISTS SHOULD NOT COPY FROM NATURE DIRECTLY BUT COLOR SHOULD BE EXAGGERATED, IT SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED, AND ALL OF THIS CREATES A HEIGHTENED EMOTION IN THE PICTURE.

ELIZABETH:

10:01

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OTHER TECHNIQUES?

JILL DAWSEY:

10:04

SO GAUGUIN IS PAINTING HERE WITH VERY BROAD BRUSH STOKES AND HARD LINES. THE PAINTING IS ALSO VERY FLAT AND BY THAT I MEAN THAT THERE'S NOT A LOT OF DEPTH OR PERSPECTIVE SHOWN. THESE ARE, PERSPECTIVE IS A TECHNIQUE THAT ARTISTS USE TO CONVEY THE RECEPTION OF SPACE. INSTEAD, HE PAINTS EVERYTHING IN THIS VERY FLAT WAY WITHOUT A LOT OF SHADOW AND SO IT APPEARS AS IF EVERYTHING IS ON THE SAME PLANE. THAT SHE IS COMPLETELY ON THE SAME SURFACE AS THE WAVES. SO IT'S AN ARTIFICIAL LOOK AND IT REALLY CALLS ATTENTION TO THE WAY IN WHICH HE MADE THE PICTURE. IT CALLS ATTENTION TO THE PAINT ITSELF AND THE ARTIFICE OF THE PICTURE. EVERYTHING IS ALSO VERY

CROPPED AND AGAIN FLATTENED AND THIS SHOWS THE INFLUENCE OF JAPANESE PRINTS. ANOTHER INFLUENCE FOR GAUGUIN.

ELIZABETH:

10:57

MY LAST QUESTION FOR. THIS EXHIBITION REPRESENTS THE BACK-STORY OF ARTS PROGRESSION AND CONTEMPORARY ART. FOR THE LAYPERSON AND THE PERSON WHO MIGHT BE COMING TO SEE THIS EXHIBIT OR WATCHING THE SHOW. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EFFECTS THAT THEY CAN SEE FROM THIS TRANSFORMATIVE PERIOD IN TODAY'S WORLD.

JILL DAWSEY:

11:23

IN TODAY'S WORLD, THAT'S A DIFFICULT QUESTION. SOME OF THE, SOME OF THE EFFECTS THAT YOU WILL SEE THAT.. CAN I START OVER?

ELIZABETH:

11:33

SURE. SO HOW DID THIS ART AFFECT ART AS WE KNOW IT TODAY?

JILL DAWSEY:

11:44

WELL THE IMPRESSIONISTS AGAIN PAINTED SCENES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE. THEY PAINTED THE WORLD AROUND THEM AS OPPOSED TO HISTORICAL THEMES, AS OPPOSED TO LOFTY OR SENTIMENTAL SCENES. SO THERE'S THIS IDEA OF SIMPLE OBSERVATION, DIRECT OBSERVATION OF LIFE AND THE IDEA THAT A SIMPLE FIELD OR A CITY STREET WAS APPROPRIATE SUBJECT MATTER FOR ART. THAT WAS REALLY RADICAL AT THE TIME. AND ARTISTS TODAY ARE NO LONGER SORT OF STUCK PAINT, EITHER PAINTING OR SCULPTING, THERE'S A WIDE ARRAY OF MEDIA. BUT THERE'S ALSO A WIDE ARRAY OF SUBJECT MATTER THAT'S APPROPRIATE TODAY. SO YOU HAVE ARTISTS MAKING WORK ABOUT POLITICS, ABOUT THE CITIES IN WHICH THEY LIVE. AND SO THIS IS REALLY WHERE ART BEGAN TO BE REDEFINED. YOU HAVE SO MANY PARADIGM SHIFTS AND A CONSTANT REDEFINITION OF ART SO THAT SOMETIMES IT MAY SEEM IN THE PRESENT MOMENT LIKE ANYTHING GOES AT THIS TIME.

ELIZABETH:

12:50

IF PEOPLE WERE ON THE FENCE ABOUT COMING TO THE MUSEUM, WHAT ARE THE TOP TEN PAINTINGS THAT THEY WOULD BE REMISED IF THEY DIDN'T TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE?

JILL DAWSEY:

13:08

WELL THERE ARE FEW VERY FAMOUS SCULPTURES IN THE EXHIBITION. ONE IN PARTICULAR IS RODIN'S "THE THINKER". SO IT'S AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THAT IN PERSON. WE HAVE A WHOLE ROOM ON RODIN SCULPTURES. THERE'S THE AGE OF BRONZE WHICH IS A WONDERFUL, FREE-STANDING FIGURE THAT YOUR WON'T WANT TO MISS. THERE ARE A SERIES OF WORKS BY CLAUDE MONET. A PAINTING OF HIS WHEAT FIELDS AND ANOTHER PICTURE OF THE TIDE COMING IN. THESE ARE WONDERFUL PICTURES THAT YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS. ONE THING THAT ALSO REALLY UNIQUE ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION IS THE WAY THAT IT'S ABLE TO HIGHLIGHT VARIOUS PHASES FROM PICASSO'S CAREER. SO YOU HAVE PICTURES FROM HIS EARLY POST-IMPRESSIONIST PHASE THAT HE MADE WHEN HE WAS JUST 18

OR 19 YEARS OLD THROUGH TO HIS ROSE PERIOD, HIS BLUE PERIOD. LA VIE IS THE MASTERPIECE OF HIS BLUE PERIOD AND THAT'S ON VIEW HERE. AS WELL AS MANY OF HIS CUBIST WORKS.

****THIS TRANSCRIPT HAS NOT BEEN EDITED FOR CONTENT OR GRAMMER****