

Another Perspective: Cell phone tour to accompany the exhibition *Paint Made Flesh*
At the Memorial Art Gallery from October 25, 2009-January 3, 2010
585-627-4132

Stop #1

Director's Welcome

Grant Holcomb, Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director, Memorial Art Gallery

I'm Grant Holcomb, director of the Memorial Art Gallery. Welcome to *Paint Made Flesh*, an exhibition that brings together 34 powerful American and European paintings, and to this special cell phone tour, *Another Perspective*.

The work in this exhibition - all created since the 1950s - explores the biological, psychological and spiritual volatility of the human figure. Painters such as Pablo Picasso, Willem de Kooning, Lucien Freud, Alice Neel and others employ a wide range of painterly effects to suggest the physical properties of human flesh, and its metaphorical significance.

This cell phone tour brings together the voices and insights of several area figure painters, physicians and friends of the Gallery, and they will share with you their responses to a selection of works on view.

Organized by the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, Tennessee, the exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities. In Rochester, the exhibition is made possible by Victoria and William Cherry, with additional support from the George D. and Freida B. Abraham Foundation, the Herdle-Moore Fund and an anonymous donor. The John Steuart Curry Foundation has underwritten this audio tour.

Thank you for supporting the Gallery, and enjoy the exhibition.

Stop #2

Tour Instructions

Patti Giordano, Marketing Manager, Memorial Art Gallery

Throughout the exhibition you will see several signs that indicate a cell phone audio stop. Call the telephone number listed and enter the stop number to hear the artists talk about the highlighted work. When the stop concludes, you may simply enter the next stop number, or hang up and call the tour number back when you're ready. To interrupt a stop, press # and then the next stop number.

You also have the opportunity to share your thoughts with us about this tour, or your overall experience at the Gallery today. We encourage you to enter *0 (star 0) at any time during your tour to leave us your feedback.

This cell phone tour is free, but *please be aware that your normal plan minutes will apply*. Thank you for visiting the Memorial Art Gallery.

Stop #3

Pablo Picasso, *The Artist and His Model*, 1964

George Abraham, MD, Professor Emeritus, University of Rochester

My name is Dr. George Abraham and I will give you my impressions of the Picasso painting “Artist and his Model” which you see before you. This is a recurring theme of Picasso, and in these paintings he is nearly always the artist and the subjects are generally the women in his life at the time the painting was done. I believe the woman in painting is Jacqueline Roque whom Picasso met in the 1940s and married in 1961 at age 80. I find this painting somewhat disturbing. Some feel Picasso is staring at the viewer who is looking at the model. However, I am drawn to the blankness in Picasso’s face, and feel he depicts his old age and is staring into the unknown abyss of his unknown future. He is not ignoring but seems emotionally distracted from his work to paint the model. The colors in the painting are muted except for the flesh tones of the model. The brush strokes are coarse and unrefined. The painting gives me a feeling of emptiness and despite his depiction of a dissociated nude figure, there is a decided lack of sensuality.

Stop #4

David Park, *Male Nudes at the Water*, 1957

Rachael Baldanza, Curriculum Director, Creative Workshop, Memorial Art Gallery

Around 1953, David Park stopped making abstract symbolic paintings because he thought that they hadn't worked. He threw out many of his old paintings and began painting the human figure again while still thinking about the ideals he had previously tried to symbolize; these were "vitality, energy, profundity, and warmth." Park found a way to make paintings that reward the viewer with familiar forms not idealized or over-detailed but palpably painted in rich colors with exuberance and restraint.

As Park wrote in 1957, “Perhaps the most exciting and challenging thing about the art of painting is that it is one medium in which so many varying elements, often contradictory, may exist together in one form and be seen all at once: discipline and abandon, sensitivity and crudity, intelligence, patience, impatience, anger, accuracy and falsification. Such elements become acknowledged without any moralizing as part of the fabric of painting, and [are] made to exist in the single experience of looking.”

This--like most of the late paintings by David Park--is a good, bold, human painting that asks to be looked at longer. Enjoy.

Stop #5

Hyman Bloom, *The Hull*, 1952

Jean DeHaven, painter and former Memorial Art Gallery docent

It was interesting to find out that in 1940, Jackson Pollack, and Willem de Kooning, one of my favorite artists, declared this artist, Hyman Bloom, as “the first Abstract Expressionist in America,” and “the greatest artist in America.”

I’m an oil painter and a figurative painter of much greater age than experience, and I have little knowledge of the reclusive Bloom or his source of inspiration. So why then, should I say that I’m so attracted to this painting of flesh and blood? Even his splayed corpse doesn’t titillate or shock me.

I look at most paintings, and first see the relationships of the shapes and how the painting is broken up, then the color, its application, and the light and dark values. All this, long, before I pay any attention to the subject matter.

Bloom divides this canvas into horizontal thirds, with the upper third in a smooth warm neutral color, which is in strong contrast to the extremely active lower 2/3’s with its jewel-like hues. These pigments are: rich with deep shadows of blue-black and browns; bright moving shapes of oranges and reds; and include strident pastels of yellows, pinks, blues and greens all strewn about. All these beautifully manipulated colors sit forward on that single colored, uninterrupted background. Now that’s visually exciting!

Yes, that knife looks scary, but only now do I notice it...and the ribs and the legs, and the head.

Stop #6

Philip Guston, *Web*, 1975

Paul Dodd, painter

I’m Paul Dodd and I’m happy to say a few words about Philip Guston's painting entitled "Web."

After a very successful run as a painter of gorgeous abstracts, Philip Guston decided that he wanted to "tell stories" and he returned to the figure. These late paintings are blunt, humorous and dark. Here he depicts himself face down on the ground, his monstrous, bloodshot eye has looked too much or seen too much, yet he is still looking, eye wide open. He poured his entire life into painting and he confronted it head on. He recognized the absurdity of it all and he had the graphic skills to express it, often painting about the act of painting itself.

You might have to move back a bit to take in the scope of this landscape, the dramatic advance of the spiders capitalizing on the artist's inertia and the blood pool that stops abruptly and floats in transparent space while his wife, Musa, his life-affirming source, pops up at his side.

I find Guston's late work to be heroic in its openness and thrilling in its directness. And I hope you enjoy it.

Stop # 7

Philip Guston, *Web*, 1975

Fritz Lipp, painter

Ah Guston! This guy is a painter's painter! A pro! For me, a pro is someone who makes the difficult seem easy. He loves painting and speaks it fluently! Disarmingly!

To appreciate this work you must clear your mind of pre-conceptions. Allow your eyes to be drawn into the painting. Let it speak to you!

Guston can be lyrical, dramatic, sensual, subtle, blatant, political or humorous. He mixes all of those ingredients here. All in the same piece!!! I feast upon his delicious concoctions! Thanks, Phil!

I'm Fritz Lipp. A painter/sculptor & professor. Enjoy!

Stop # 8

Richard Diebenkorn, *Woman by a Window*, 1957

Fritz Lipp, painter

I'm Fritz Lipp. A painter/sculptor and professor.

As an undergraduate art student struggling with my own abstract painting development, I had also been studying Matisse paintings. By luck or fate, I saw this very painting and several other new Diebenkorn works at a national invitational show. I immediately recognized a kindred spirit.

This painting strongly portends Diebenkorn's future abstractions. The figure here is almost in our peripheral vision. As we are drawn into the geometric interactions of light and dark, the painting becomes a dramatic expression of mood.

Enjoy!

Stop # 9

Ivan Albright, *Self Portrait in Georgia*, 1967-68

Seymour Schwartz, MD, Professor, University of Rochester

This somewhat grotesque self-portrait of an artist whom I associate with his famous portrait of Dorian Grey and my favorite of his works entitled "And God Created Man in His Own Image," touches a poignant pressure point for me as a physician. It highlights the fact that disfigurement—either physical or mental, anatomic or physiologic, overt or beneath the surface of the skin—is pervasive. It is in fact the soil that we as physicians till on a daily basis.

Stop #10

Ivan Albright, *Self-Portrait in Georgia*, 1967-68

Hannah J. Solky, MD, Associate Professor, University of Rochester and Memorial Art Gallery docent

Ivan Albright presents us with a landscape of his aging face. He accomplishes this by incorporating into his skin tones the colors of the background and his shirt, and exaggerating the grooves and contours of his face with dark shadows and surface highlights. In this way, we are able to see his bulbous nose and the deep furrows of his forehead. The fleshy folds of his cheek and neck hang like drapery, and the tissue beneath his eyes puddles into puffy sacs. Through the use of layers of paint, Albright suggests the hills and valleys of the underlying muscles and skull, and molds his unsmiling fleshy lips and inward looking eyes. With a fine brush he captures the wisps of white and grey hairs which encircle his balding head and emerge as bushy eyebrows and stubble on his cheeks and chin. The painting reveals a strong-willed and determined man, still engaged in life but very aware of his mortality.

Stop #11

Jenny Saville, *Hyphen*, 1999

Marilyn Feinberg, painter

Power and sensuality strike me viscerally the moment I begin to encounter this piece. Like Jonah and the whale, the sheer size swallows me whole. Once I adjust to this feeling I become aware of reasons other than its overwhelming size that have lured me. Saville beautifully harmonizes opposites throughout this canvas. At close range I see energetic brushstrokes that border on violent but, at a distance, these same energetic brushstrokes transform into soft, lush, comfortable flesh. The similarity in the girls' features is quickly countered by how different they are in temperament. The sister on the left is lethargic and somewhat annoyed while the sister on the right is vital and pleasant. I interpret this through their opposing gestures. Their difference is further enhanced by the dominant color of their skin tones. The lethargic girl is cast in cool pasty reds while the warm cheery reds dominate the girl on the right. Even though the size is captivating, the ability of the piece to communicate and unify opposites is its power.

Stop #12

Jenny Saville, *Hyphen*, 1999

Joy Adams, painter

Jenny Saville's lush Rubenesque figures are gargantuan in scale, they are daring and audacious in style and magnitude, and more than a bit kinky. "Hyphen" is a corpulent self-portrait of Saville and her sister, it brings to mind co-enjoined twins, or as I read somewhere, "like slabs of meat on a butchers block." The painting has a feeling of claustrophobia, augmented by heavy pigmentation. Jenny Saville's paintings express an intense sexual psychology, having more to do with sensation than the intellect. They have a single-minded purpose fully intended to both startle, and to shock.

Stop #13

Lisa Yuskavage, *Babie I*, 2003

Sari Gaby, painter

Hello, I'm Sari Gaby, a portrait painter and artist in here in Rochester. I find Lisa Yuskavage's painting "Babie I" a fascinating and unique portrait.

At first glance, it looks like a beautifully painted portrait of a child holding flowers. Then you notice the girl's facial expression.

Her eyes strain to the edge of the frame as if to jump out, away from whatever just happened, or is about to happen. Her flowers, "Black-eyed Susans," mimicking her own eyes, seem to lean in all directions, to escape with her.

Looking further, we notice what appears to be a wedding ring on her left hand, and the transparent blouse reveals a more developed shape than that of a child.

Is there something her tightly closed mouth dares not tell? Could that be her own bridal bouquet she holds? I want to know who is "Babie I"?

Stop #14

Eric Fischl, *Frailty is a Moment of Self-Reflection*, 1996

Susan Dodge-Peters Daiss, McPherson Director of Education, Memorial Art Gallery

Lovingly naked—no pretense, no gloss (and there never is in Eric Fischl's work), the figure of the artist's father moves forward, focused on the step-by-step action—lift, steady, foot placement— of walking. Head down, one arm out for balance—the figure has already descended a treacherously steep set of stairs to a flat stretch of corridor—narrow, but lighted by windows on one side. A tentative young walker we might imagine if the body weren't so clearly that of an elderly man...

Knowing this was painted a year after the artist's father died, is this figure perhaps practicing a once familiar act—and coming in a dream—to visit his son?

Stop #15

Daniel Richter, *Duisen*, 2004

Melissa Sarat, painter

This first part is written by Leah Sarat, my daughter, a PhD candidate focusing on religion and migration at the University of Florida, and she writes:

Richter draws the human contradictions of globalization from the shadows and renders them viscerally accessible. While trans-national corporations and global media dance a web of power

beyond the confines of nations and borders, the presence of refugees and undocumented immigrants is a persistent reminder that the benefits of globalization do not come equally to all. Richter paints those “ghosts in our midst,” the human subjects who carry the stigma of illegality in their flesh.

And I write, Born in 1962, Richter makes his large-scale paintings in a Gothic-style former postal-service carriage house in Berlin. And like his monumental paintings, Richter is tall and limber, athletically built, articulate and compelling, mischievous, disarming and humorous, yet dead serious about social justice issues, especially in his country of Germany.

Firmly in succession to artist giants Ensor, Nolde, Goya and Munch, Richter transforms media images to reconfigure current events into timeless fables. His cartoonish caricatured figures, often depicted as double-exposed masked specters, are imbued with movement, tension and mysterious purpose.

Richter’s painted, graffiti-permeated, raw, grand dramas in dynamic contained worlds of surreal spectacle are believable because he has invented and adhered to his own idiosyncratic rules of image making.

Stop # 16

Wangechi Mutu, *Squiggly Wiggly Demon Hair*, 2004

Stephanie Brown Clark, MD, PhD. Associate Professor, Medical Humanities, University of Rochester Medical Center

As a physician and a medical historian, I am normally more comfortable with conventional European paintings from 17th and 18th centuries, but for me Mutu’s contemporary portrait of a woman is fascinating, witty and full of surprises.

It is composed of two sheets of paper within the frame, there’s no attempt to line up the edges; there are slim gaps where the two sheets are joined in the middle as if to reinforce for the viewer that this artwork is composed, “made up” of incongruous pieces. The woman’s face is part collage—the white ear, the red lips, the two eyes are clipped from a magazine; her skin is made up of many shades—white, yellow, beige, brown. Her hair flows in long, meticulously rendered squiggles of gray, brown and black. That hair is not artlessly tousled or messy; it has been arranged to look wild. Beneath the demon hair is visible the flesh and bone of her skull. There is a lot of energy and sensuality in that hair and in that face. Those red lips are vibrant and the color resonates with the red splatter of paint in the lower left corner. In its shape and colors and texture, the area resembles a blood stain—perhaps a reminder that under the lipstick and eye shadow there lives a body of flesh.

Unlike traditional portraiture, this woman appears in pieces. To the right of the head are more collage bits that look at first like squiggles of mottled paper, or cells under a microscope. Superimposed is a lipstick-red motorcycle and another, smaller collage of a woman’s face, upside down with a blond mane of hair. I look, and I see it really **is** a mane of hair and that the mottled squiggles are the legs of a horse upended. This creature is part human, part animal and

part mechanical. We don't see a heart; we see instead a red motorcycle engine –this woman has got considerable horsepower! Just below her are a pair of disembodied, naked legs-not those of a horse, but those of a woman, and they are demurely crossed.

The different materials of this artwork—the magazine clippings, the paint, splatters and the wiggly lines and the deliberately separated “parts” of this woman, and maybe women in general, playfully remind us that female identity has many different layers. The woman depicted here is made-up, with plenty of artifice, as fake as her hair. But she is also real, made up of cells, tissues, skin, bone, and blood.