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Denver Art Museum

Question: Which work(s) of art do you like the best? Why?

Answer: I wandered around the museum for about an hour, starting at the ground floor, working my way up to the seventh floor. By the sixth floor, I started finding works that I was enjoying. I honestly liked most of the European and American paintings that were on display on the sixth floor, and I liked most of what was on the seventh floor, which contained mostly American West art. I enjoyed one sixth floor painting in particular more than the others on that floor. It was an oil painting of two young girls, sisters, who were sitting in a field playing. They looked to be around the age of 6 to 8 years old. The younger sister was completely enthralled by what her older sister was doing, and had a look about her that said, "This is my big sister, and I'm glad she is." The thing that I really liked about the painting, besides the great use of colors, was the artist's ability to capture that exact expression on the younger sisters' face. People are difficult to paint, and I was very impressed by this particular artist's creative talent.

Question: Which work(s) of art do you like the least? Why?

Answer: As I was wandering from the bottom floor to the sixth floor, I found that I was rushing. I had no interest in any of the art that was present on these lower five floors. Most of it was pottery, old doorframes, sculptures, etc. I had no interest in these things. I really wanted to see paintings. There were some paintings scattered around the lower floors, especially on the first floor, but I didn't find any of them appealing to me. They (paintings, pots, etc) were all works of art in their own right, but I simply didn't care for them. Even the Asian floor, with all my Asian experience and interest, had nothing that I enjoyed. In particular, though, I disliked almost all of the art on the Pre-Columbian floor. There were many portraits of people that looked almost identical. Since all of them were so strikingly similar, I assume that it must be some kind of art style, but to me it seemed that the artists tried very hard to make a three dimensional object (the person) into a very two dimensional object. In other words, the people portrayed all looked very flat, with no depth or perspective available for the viewer. In addition, all the pictures looked like the people I tried to draw when I was a young boy: very realistic and conservative, but so realistic and safe that cumulative minute distortions made for a disfigured looking being. Also, unrelated to the Pre-Columbian floor, the talking Bible, not because it was a Bible, however, annoyed the living ____ out of me. I did not like that piece of "art" at all.

Question: What is the name of the painting?

Answer: That is a very good question. I don't know. It probably is named *Storm Out West*, or *Rain*, or *Stormy Plains*, or something similar to those. I had a very constricted time frame between classes in which I was able to visit the museum in. As a result, when I had to leave, which I didn't want to do because I was thoroughly enjoying my drawing, I left late, and in a rush. So, I forgot to get the artist's name and the name of the painting.

Question: Who is the artist?

Answer: Again, a great question that I wish I had the answer to. See the answer above.

Question: Why did you choose this painting?

Answer: I walked around the sixth and seventh floors several times trying to decide which painting was my favorite. Three caught my attention more than the others. The first was the one described by the very first question above. I chose not to reproduce it, however, because the very complexity of the painting that I admired would have been truly impossible for me to imitate, and would have been a waste of time and effort. The second was a seventh floor painting of a herd of buffalo standing in a plain with a large amount of mist or fog around them. It was a very neat painting, but with all of the foggy effects, too hard to reproduce with oil pastels. The other favorite of mine was the one I actually attempted to reproduce. It, of the three, seemed like the easiest to reproduce successfully. That may or may not have happened. Also, as much as I liked the other paintings, the intensity of this third one really interested me.

Question: What response does it evoke in you?

Answer: Awe, respect for the power available at Nature's disposal, a respect for the beauty of Creation.

Question: What *specific* aspects of the painting contribute to this response?

Answer: There was a great contrast in the colors where the sun was shining on and where the clouds hid the sun. It contained both rainy sky and cloudy (but not rainy) sky. It contained mountains and a valley. It showed detailed land near where the viewer "stood", and very distant land on the horizon. The weather depicted was random and chaotic on the left, and tranquil on the right. For every harsh aspect, there was a gentle one in the painting. The contrasts, along with the deep colors and the realism of the painting are what contributed to the response above.

Question: What did you learn about the painting by attempting to copy it?

Answer: I think the word "attempting" is key. I learned some basic things like: there was no white canvas showing anywhere, unlike my reproduction attempt; oils blend and cover better than oil pastels; that it was painted by an artist that has a great attention to detail, and a superb ability to reproduce real natural events on canvas; and that it must have taken a good amount of time to do.