

Carol Ehlers, art history speaker, presents lecture on Impressionism

Written by Lynn Bartenhagen
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The public is invited to join the Muscatine Art Center in welcoming Carol Ehlers, art history speaker, as she presents a 45 minute lecture on Impressionism and its influence on 19th Century modernity and fashion. The lecture will take place Thursday, July 25 at 5:30 pm in the Muscatine Art Center's Music Room. Admission is free.

From the mid-1860's to the 1880's, Paris was emerging as the style capital of the world, just when the artists who called themselves the Impressionists gained notoriety within the artistic community. The Impressionists, with their love of movement, color and light, and contemporary life, set out to capture modern life in its elemental form. This "snapshot" of society included all the nuances of the day; most specifically the fashions and trends of the time.

The mid-1880's saw the rise of the department store and the increasing presence of the fashion magazine- a possible reflection upon the pastimes of the burgeoning society in Paris, from the operatic and yachting scenes to views of the Siene River. The Impressionists were keen to represent the sordid underworld of the glitzy Paris above, often depicting women in the cabarets dancing the Can-Can and the Bolero, with their ruffled skirts and plumed hairpieces, as well as the patrons in raggedy clothes in back rooms of the taverns sipping Absinthe. Their clothing, though not as opulent as those who frequented the ballets (another favorite subject of the Impressionists, most notably Edgar Degas), nonetheless reflected the ever changing fashion of the day.

Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity is the name of the world-traveled exhibit that has now made its way to its final stop at the Art Institute of Chicago, after having been realized at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and traveled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

After having visited the exhibit in Chicago, our speaker Carol Ehlers will use the exhibit in Chicago as a starting point to her discussion about the French Impressionists and their influence on modern society and fashion in mid-19th century Paris.

In 1992 the Muscatine Art Center's collections were significantly enriched by a gift of twenty-seven works of art by Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse, Degas, Boudin, Chagall, Renoir, and other European artists. The collection was a gift from the estate of Mary Musser Gilmore in honor of her parents, Richard Drew Musser and Sarah Walker Musser. The paintings are on permanent display in the Laura Musser Mansion.

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