

Manet: Model, Portraits, and “La Vie Moderne”

Dr. Nancy Locke

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Dallas Museum of Art
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Heather MacDonald: Good evening and welcome to the Dallas Museum of Arts. I am Heather MacDonald, The Lillian and James H. Clark Associate Curator of European Art, and I am so pleased to welcome you here this evening for this lecture by Dr. Nancy Locke, part of our 2009-2010 season of The Richard R. Brettell Lecture Series.

The Brettell Lecture Series was founded in 1993 with a generous gift from Carolyn and Roger Horchow in honor of the museum's former director Dr. Richard Brettell. The lecture series provides a regular public venue at the DMA for the presentation of the most important and innovative new scholarship on the history of 19th and 20th Century European art.

Over the history of The Brettell Lecture Series, we have been fortunate to share with our public some of the most illustrious and creative art historians working today, including Stephen Eisenman, Joachim Pissarro and most recently just last month, Richard Kendall.

This season we are presenting five major lectures, all focusing on French art of the late 19th century, and if you don't already have a brochure, you can pick one up on your way out and this is a good moment for me to thank our promotional sponsor WRR and our hotel partner The Adolphus.

This fall, to further explore the connections between the visual and performing arts, each lecture will be paired with a performance in The Stage, a special performance place that's within our current exhibition *All the World's a Stage* in our Chilton galleries, and you are invited to join us immediately after the lecture for a performance of 19th century French music of La Vie Moderne, as it is advertised.

So this evening we are here to hear a lecture by Dr. Nancy Locke, an associate professor of art history at Penn State. Dr. Locke received her B.A. from the University of Missouri, Columbia and her PhD from Harvard. Prior to her position at Penn State, she taught for 11 years at Wayne State University in Detroit.

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She has published and lectured widely on the history of 19th century European art, particularly on Impressionists and Post-Impressionist painting, including lectures this fall alone at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, at Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and next month at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

Much of her recent work has centered on the French painter Édouard Manet, including her 2001 book *Manet and the Family Romance* published by Princeton University Press. And it's about Manet's work that she will be speaking to us tonight in a lecture entitled "Manet: Models, Portraits and *La Vie Moderne*."

The Dallas Museum of Art is very fortunate to have a number of fascinating late works by Manet on view in our permanent collection galleries on the second floor, and in the Wendy and Emery Reves collection galleries on the third floor and I hope that you'll have an opportunity to visit these works after the lecture when I am certain that having heard Dr Locke speak tonight, we will all see the painting with new eyes.

So now please join me in welcoming to the podium Dr. Nancy Locke.

Dr. Nancy Locke: Thank you so much Heather for that really lovely introduction. Heather MacDonald has been a wonderful host and I would just like to thank her for all she has done to make this visit memorable and enjoyable, and I would also, just before I get started, like to thank several other people, Lisa Kays, Denise Holbing, Emily Vokt and of course Richard Brettell. It's a tremendous honor to be giving a lecture in this Richard Brettell Series and I hope I do justice to the name.

I like to acknowledge--this slide by the way, this is Manet's *Street Singer*, and it was just kind of ordinary slide, but about midway through my talk there are some really extraordinary original slides that were taken by my husband Christopher Campbell who always

contributes insights to my work that I just would like to acknowledge and you'll know his slides when you see them because they are quite special.

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And just one more thing, I am especially happy to be in Dallas. My father grew up just North of Dallas in Sherman. My grandmother loved to wake everyone up early and say, we are going to Dallas, we are going to Neiman Marcus today and it's just fun for me to finally get here and see so many great things.

Édouard Manet was always first and foremost a figure painter. Many of us, when we think of Manet, think first of his large single figure paintings, just under life-size.

The figures whether situated in an environment like *The Street Singer*, or against a black background like *The Philosopher* seem conjured out of nowhere and made present to us. Despite our awareness as viewers of Manet's painterly technique, many of us feel that we have had some sort of encounter with these persons, Manet's subjects.

I would go so far as to call this the “Manet effect” and would wager that it is not only scholars like me obsessed with me Manet who feel that if we could travel back in time to the rue Guyot, site of his studio in the 1860s, and it's now the rue Médéric.

This is just off of Google Earth, but to just kind of help us get there, just little bit. If we could travel back in time we could stake out Victorine Meurent, his model for Olympia, *The Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*, *The Street Singer* and so many other paintings and pick her out of the crowd.

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Once, while doing archival research, I had a kind of out-of-body experience while sifting through ordinary peoples' correspondence with the Ministry of Justice where Manet's father worked. I was holding in my hands a letter with the return address that had been Victorine Meurent 17 rue Maître Albert.

Alas! It was dated some 20 years before she lived there. No great discovery but evidence of how present Manet's figures continued

to be for us and I did get to contemplate the ghosts of this particular domestic drama haunting the apartment when Victorine did live there.

One might expect that an artist with this capacity for rendering the figure would be known for his portraits, but that was not the case. Manet's experience with portraits did not get off to a promising start.

In the early 1860s, a certain Madame Brunet posed for this portrait which strikes us now as very typical of Manet's work from the period, but Manet's friend Théodore Duret reports, "when she saw herself on the canvas and the way she looked there, she began to cry. It is Manet himself who told me about this and left the studio with her husband, wanting never to see the picture again."

In 1866, Manet wrote to his friend the poet Charles Baudelaire that he had sent two paintings to the annual Salon, "a portrait of the actor Philibert Rouviere in the role of Hamlet which I am calling *The Tragic Actor* to avoid the criticism of those who might not find it a good likeness and a fifer of Light Infantry Guard."

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These paintings are both quite well known. *The Tragic Actor* is in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. And *The Fifer* of course in the Musée d'Orsay, but both were refused by the Salon Jury that year.

In addition, Manet's comments about *The Tragic Actor* indicate that he struggled with the problem of likeness and wanted to avoid being constrained by the expectations many viewers bring when looking at portraits.

If any 19th century artist might have been expected to become a society portrait painter, it would be Édouard Manet. The son of a civil judge and descendant of a long line of mayors, lawyers, and magistrates with noble titles, Manet also had connections with the aristocracy on both sides of the family. This is the portrait of his parents, Auguste Manet who was at the Ministry of Justice and then a civil judge, and his mother Eugenie-Desiree Fournier Manet.

Manet's maternal grandfather was Vice Consul of France in Sweden, a man who helped Frenchmen Charles Bernadotte, also called Charles the XIV John, ascend the Swedish throne in 1810 and this is a sculpture of Charles Bernadotte in Stockholm.

Manet's maternal great grandfather was one of the nobility massacred in the French revolution. The Manet family owned a great deal of property in the town of Gennevilliers near Paris and summered there.

Manet had an independent income and a lot of well placed friends. Statesman Emile Ollivier, whose wedding he attended in Florence, future Prime Minister of the Republic, Georges Clemenceau and if you go over to the Kimbell there is the other very interesting version of this portrait which is at the Orsay.

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Fine Arts Minister Antonin Proust, seen here just to name a few prominent politicians in addition of course to people like Emil Zola, Nini de Callias, Stephane Mallarme and so many artists, journalists and hosts of well attended salons. The Manets themselves regularly received many such luminaries for their own soirees.

Yet if money and connections in addition to talent led to greatness in portrait painting for an artist like the American John Singer Sargent, it is interesting to note that the same cannot be said for Manet and this is Sargent's portrait of Madame Paul Poirson from the Detroit Institute of Arts.

What are portraits? What do they do? How do they function? It might be worth contemplating this question before we turn to the intriguing portrait in the DMA collection.

I think it is fair to say that three of the main functions of portraits are to represent a likeness, to display the sitter's social status, and to explore interiority or subjectivity in some way.

Let's take the second subject function first, the representation of social status. Jacques-Louis David's *Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier and His Wife* of 1788 now in the Met can serve as our example.

Lavoisier made key discoveries and conducted important experiments in the fields of chemistry and physics in the second half of the 18th century. He demonstrated many of the properties

of oxygen, an element he named, wrote Albert Boime. He also did important work on the idea of the conservation of matter.

Marie-Anne-Pierrette Paulze Lavoisier studied painting under David in order to illustrate her husband's scientific treatises and studied English in order to translate the work of Joseph Priestley and others to further Lavoisier's research.

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Although we see her drawing portfolio behind her husband, right back here, the focus is really on Lavoisier, quill in hand surrounded by implants of his scientific experiments. Marie-Anne is prominently featured but her pose is more that of muse and inspiration to him.

David, in addition to alluding to Lavoisier's work however, is very concerned to show us the couple's status. Lavoisier was a member of the Ferme Générale, an association of tax collectors. His noble status is readable via his velvet breeches, his ruffled shirt, his silk stockings, and the powdered wigs, both he and his wife sport.

Any viewer in 1788 would know that he occupied a privileged status in pre-revolutionary France. Unfortunately for him however his own liberal views in addition to those of his wife and her family would not count for much when the Revolution turned into the Reign of Terror and he was guillotined at the peak of executions of the nobility in 1794.

Even before the Terror issued its death sentence to Lavoisier, the paintings concerned with the signification of his status already spelled trouble. David had to withdraw it from the Salon in 1789 when Lavoisier's post as Commissioner of Gunpowder dragged him into scandal at the formative moment of the revolution.

In addition to status, likeness is of course a central concern of portraiture. When we look at a portrait, we expect to be able to pick out the individuality of the sitter and we expect her or his presence somehow captured for posterity.

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Ingres' portrait of Louis-François Bertin of 1832 from the Louvre comes to mind.

Bertin was a journalist whose support for liberal monarchy had him exiled under Napoleon and then tried under the conservative restoration monarchy. With the more moderate Louis-Philippe as king during the July Monarchy though 1830-1848 however, Bertin and his newspaper the *Journal des Débats* became quite successful.

Even if part of our interest in the portrait is the way in which it emblemizes its age and Manet himself refers to Bertin as the Buddha of the July Monarchy--prosperous, well-fed, triumphant.

We cannot deny that Ingres' primary interest as a painter is in likeness. Bertin's arched brows, his powerful nose, his serious demeanor, his jowly face and tussled hair, not to mention his girth in that pose leaning forward with his hands almost like claws in front of his knees.

The illusion of likeness is a powerful thing. Although portraiture as an art would not come to an end with the rise of photographic portraits at mid century, a look at Ingres' portraits reminds us of just how serious the business likeness was for Ingres and how ardently he pursued it.

He may have imagined himself to be the heir to the school of David as a painter, but in many ways he achieved his highest calling with portraits of the age in which those denied privilege in the old regime, the haute bourgeoisie asserted their claims in society.

We cannot entirely pry apart likeness and display of status, David and Ingres are in many ways doing both.

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But Ingres involves himself that much more in the minutiae of physiognomy. David, I think especially leans a little bit more on signifying status. His work is a bit more stylized along these lines.

Portraits can also cross over into history and genre painting. By Manet's time, modern life painting was moving into territories claimed by all three. In this, Manet had precedence with Rembrandt being a strong example. I mentioned the notion of portraits that moved in a more psychological dimension.

Rembrandt's portraits and self-portraits are known for this quality. I thought it would be interesting however to look at a work by like *Bathsheba* of 1654. This painting was a part of a large collection of 17th and 18th century paintings given to the Louvre in Manet's time by the physician Louis La Caze.

It was technically a history painting as it represents Bathsheba at her bath just after she has read a letter sent to her by King David. And it came to pass in an evening time that David arose from off his bed and walked upon the roof of the King's house and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

In the 19th century however viewers were attuned to its naturalism, to its portrait-like qualities. Rembrandt chooses to depict the moment in which Bathsheba, a married woman, contemplates King David's interest in her. When we look at Rembrandt's painting, we are not only aware of the complex psychological state, the conflicted feeling she experiences, we are also struck by her individuality.

Her body is that of a particular person and indeed Rembrandt had his girlfriend Hendrickje Stoffels as a model.

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In June 1654 Hendrickje Stoffel, living with though not married to Rembrandt and five months pregnant with their daughter Cornelia, was summoned by the Church council and accused of prostitution, Svetlana Alpers writes. Her status as an artist's model who was sexually available to Rembrandt has certain parallels with the Bathsheba story.

Critics in the 19th century honed in on the particularity of her features. Paul Mantz wrote in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* when the work went on display at the du Louvre, "the head is a portrait one guesses is faithful. The feet are a fright, the hands horrible", and then a bit later in this passage, "amidst the ugliness of these forms the great magician Rembrandt knew how to add the most engaging thing in the world, her feeling." *Sentiment*, of course, is the word.

The complex blending of portraiture and history painting that we see in Rembrandt becomes even more nuanced in the case of

Manet who knew the La Caz collection even before it was given to the Louvre in 1869. And I would like to add here that the donation of the La Caz collection to the Louvre had an enormous influence on 19th century French painters and Richard Brettell has noted La Caz's taste for works with a strongly sketch-like quality. Many of the painters we think of it Manet's masters, people like Chardin, Watteau, Franz Hals, Rembrandt these are paintings that as Dr. Brettell has noted come out of La Caz's collection that so that taste is a strong element.

Bathsheba informed a series of paintings in the early 1860s that featured a certain Suzanne Leenhoff.

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With the major canvas, here is a study and then here is the major canvas being *La Nymphe Surprise* now in Buenos Aires. Rembrandt's Susanna, a little play on the name Suzanne Leenhoff, the Susanna story. Rembrandt's Susanna from the Mauritshuis in The Hague was also an important model for *La Nymphe* as well as this Ruben's drawing Manet could have studied in the Louvre.

I won't repeat here the lengthy discussions of *La Nymphe*, put forward by Rosalind Krauss, Beatrice Farwell and others except to say that we come here to Manet's particular melange of portraiture and modern life painting, in this case still with a nod to old master history paintings.

The involvement of Suzanne Leenhoff, a Dutch born piano teacher who had been the mistress of Manet's father and who became Manet's wife in 1863, however, is similar to the biographical overlap between Hendrickje Stoffels, Rembrandt and Bathsheba. And blurring of the boundaries between portraiture and genre is something critics in Manet's time already attributed to the 17th century Dutch master.

Although many writers speak of Manet's contributions to what Baudelaire called the "painting of modern life", for Manet, modern life painting never merely consisted of fashion public culture and subjects whose interest was merely formal or topical.

Manet's version of *La Vie Moderne* was always inscribed with the private, and crossover of portraiture into genre or history was the manifestation of that interest or inscription.

With most artists, one can draw a line between portraits that were commissioned by the sitter, works that featured a paid model like

Victorine Meurent, and works that might appear to be portraits or contain an element of portraiture such as *Bathsheba* and *La Nymphe Surprise*, but which were posed by mistresses, wives or friends of the artist.

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A commissioned work needs to please the sitter to be successful. Renoir's *Portrait of Mademoiselle Irene Cahen d'Anvers* of 1880 is a good example. When an artist pays a model, it is generally the case that the artist calls the shots and can ask him or her to strike a pose, wear costume--this is Victorine Meurent in Spanish costume--or even pose nude. When portraits are painted within a social circle, there is a little of each and Manet's paintings of the artist Berthe Morisot come to mind.

In contrast to Victorine Meurent who dons the outfit of a male bullfighter and also poses nude for Manet, Berthe Morisot being an unmarried woman of Manet's class and social circle would never have taken off her clothes for a painting.

At the same time I have argued in *Manet and the Family Romance* that Manet's paintings of her are a highly experimental, that their relationship was such that Manet could take artistic liberties with the works even if certain notions of propriety had to be upheld. Her mother chaperoned the sittings.

Berthe Morisot commented about her likeness in *The Balcony* exhibited at the Salon of 1869, "I look strange rather than ugly. It seems the term *femme fatale* has been circulated among the curious." *Berthe Morisot with a Fan* goes so far as to block Morisot's face with the fan and not coyly or seductively as some genre painters of Manet's day might have suggested.

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These reflections all contain an element of biography. That is, I am drawing on knowledge we have through documentation of Rembrandt's relationship with Hendrickje Stoffels and Manet with Suzanne Leenhoff and Berthe Morisot. Biography here becomes part of the context that we need to investigate in order to understand the parameters of the representation.

Rembrandt could not have achieved the psychological complexity and the intimacy he imparts to his Bathsheba with a model he hired the day of the first sitting. Hendrickje's pregnancy and her precarious social status have distinct parallels with Bathsheba's, although in the Old Testament it is David who is rebuked by the Prophet Nathan and the offspring of their adulterous union who is stricken with the fetal illness.

Regardless, however, of any of these relationships for what we might imagine to have been Rembrandt's or Manet's desires for any of these models, I want to pause before leaving you with the impression that the linchpin of these works somehow lies in the realm of the artist's desire.

The historian and theorist Michel Foucault wrote on desire in ways that are worth recalling here as we look at Manet's work of the 1870s and I thought it would be fun to look at *The Railroad* of 1873 from the National Gallery of Art, another image of Victorine Meurent, about 10 years after *The Déjeuner* and the *Olympia*.

Foucault questions the emphasis we often give to desire as the great secret of the individual. He does not think desire is the source of sexuality that has to be liberated. He said in an interview that it is very interesting to note that for centuries, people generally, as well as doctors, psychiatrists. And even liberation movements have always spoken about desire and never about pleasure. We have to liberate our desire they say. No we have to create new pleasure and then maybe desire will follow.

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What is that stake in this shift of emphasis from desire to pleasure? What do we stand to gain from this stance in our art history? Well many things. For one we would not want account of Manet's portraits of certain individuals, whether a wife, paid model, or subject of flirtatious attention, to turn on whether in the end a certain kind of relationship took place.

I think we can agree that that is completely beside the point of our analysis of a painting. It is inaccessible to us and as Foucault argues it is all too easy for an account of desire to be medicalized, moralized, judged to be normal, abnormal, permissible, or not and the like.

Foucault's interest in pleasure is linked with an interest in tearing down rigid categories of identity in preventing personal identity from becoming the law, the principle, the rule of individual existence as David Halperin as written.

“Unlike desire, which expresses the subject's individuality, history, and identity as a subject, pleasure is desubjectivating, impersonal. It shatters identity, subjectivity, and dissolves the subject, however fleetingly, into the sensorial continuum of the body, into the unconscious dreaming of the mind,” that was David Halperin.

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How does Foucault's notion of pleasure square with Manet's approach to painting? Very closely and intricately I would say. Let's take Manet's *Cafe Concert* as an example. This is a painting from 1878 now in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.

We are looking into the interior of the Cabaret de Reichshoffen on the Boulevard Rochechouart which was also the setting for an even more ambitious painting that Manet cut into two separate paintings. The painting on the left, *At the Cafe* now in Winterthur and on the right, *Corner in a Café Concert* in the National Gallery London.

Both the London and the Walters canvases were included in Manet's 1880 exhibition at the Gallery of La Vie Moderne along with the portrait of Isabelle Lemonnier, closely related to the Dallas picture.

The Walters painting in many ways emblemizes Manet's work from the 1870s. The Cafe Concert, essentially an upscale cafe with live entertainment and often a cover charge, appears as a densely populated space. The central figure, this man of the world with his crisp collar—cravat--and elegant hat, his hand leaning diffidently on his walking stick. This man turns to look presumably towards the stage, towards the singer whose silvery reflection we see in the mirror. Behind him a waitress quaffs a mug as she surveys the room. Waitresses at Cafe Concert were asked to drink glasses of colored liquid as a way of encouraging consumption of drinks.

Next to him is a woman who appears down on her luck. She has hardly touched her drink and her downcast eyes, lack of interest in the performance, and cigarette suggests a woman who may not be able to make ends meet, as many working women in the 19th

century could not, who perhaps dabbles in clandestine prostitution. She may well be allowing the prosperous man to buy her more than a drink in exchange for the evening that lies ahead.

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Manet does not stop with his studies of the contrasting moral universes of these main figures. He gives us another figure with blue smock at the bar. This man, here is the smock and here is his hat and his face is completely cut off by the side of the canvas, as well as a woman here her blond hair in a kind of beehive glimpse to the right of the man. Her smudged makeup seems a very late addition to the painting, something Manet couldn't resist adding to this space between the figures.

There is even another women, we can glimpse behind the waitress' apron, right here and this is a little hard to see, but I think if you look a little bit and use your imagination, it is so summarily painted, you can either see, this is an eye, eye socket, eyebrow with her other eye being here, in other words she is either looking towards the stage like the man, and this is of course for her hat and her whole head facing this direction. I think it's also possible to see her face as much closer to us and outlined like this. So with a hat that comes more to the front of her head, this green, and so this becomes her left eye. So I think you can see almost a double figure there. So is she peering out toward us or toward the stage?

Manet seems to thrive on these kinds of ambiguities, space opening on to peering eyes, hat next to blond bun.

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The arm of the waitresses blocking, but also blending in with the arm of the singer's reflection. Manet's friend, Antonin Proust describe the artist's approach this way, "With Manet the pleasure of painting was so great that when faced with the spectacle that he had before his eyes whether a still life, a living being or a landscape, he couldn't stop himself from searching, for simplicity in disengaging it from the complicated and the dense."

Proust emphasizes the idea of simplicity in a way with which I do not entirely agree, but he too finds an essential quality in Manet to lie in his is teasing out of the possibility of perception amidst a dense thicket of forms, whether objects or figures.

The Walters picture is not anomalous. It joins not only the other Cafe Concert paintings of the late 70s, but also *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, and *Masked Ball at the Opera* in creating pictures of crowds that draw the viewer into a play of differentiation.

I would suggest that in these paintings of visual and moral instabilities in a crowd, Manet enables the viewer to experience a kind of intense and intoxicating pleasure, that comes out of the desubjectivization, to use Foucault's word, that the painting ascribes to the cafe atmosphere.

And this is Foucault, "it's not the affirmation of identity that's important, it's the affirmation of non-identity." It's an important experience in which one invents for as long as when one wants pleasures which one fabricates together with others." That is, this kind of discovery of others in the losing of the self, in these atmospheres that Foucault is talking about.

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It may seem strange to find acclaim for a kind of philosophy and what is that base a collection of momentary and fragmented perceptions, reenacted in a painting of even more ephemeral pleasures such as listening to music, having a cigarette, drinking or losing oneself in the glittering atmosphere of the cafe.

I am aware that I am giving a certain emphasis to an idea of pleasure here. I hope it is clear by now that I don't exactly take this lightly. The experience of the senses had long been integral to Manet's conception of what painting needed to explore, *Woman with a Parrot* being a good example.

It is in all likelihood the painting of Victorine Meurent that Manet does after the notorious *Olympia*. This by the way is a painting in the Met and it is resolutely not the nude Victorine, but the model in a dressing gown. Yet Manet also wants to put forward his particular take on 17th century Dutch painting that often allegorized sensual experience.

For Realist painters at mid-century, the experience of the senses was not something to be allegorized. It was something to be given to the viewer full-on. Such a statement became a philosophical position. It was part of the materialist view of the world and by

materialism, I mean the philosophical variety. Materialism is the opposite of spiritualism. Materialism as in the world is composed of matter.

Manet's striking stance against idealization, against metaphysics, places him in line politically with proponents of science, empiricism and progressive politics.

[00:36:01.09]

I want to argue that what most writers on Manet have long seen as his materialism also opens on to the notion of pleasure put forward in Foucault's late work and I mean to give this notion of pleasure the body of a philosophical stance or even philosophical activity.

We come back then to the question of portraiture and how Manet approaches it, and with this understanding of portraiture and of Manet's work behind us, I think we can begin to look at the Dallas Museum's *Isabelle Lemonnier with a Muff* [*Portrait of Isabelle Lemonnier*, 1978.1].

The work is one of at least six oil paintings as well as numerous drawings he does of Isabelle. It's worth saying a word or two about her. Isabelle was the daughter of a prominent jeweler who resided on the prestigious Place Vendôme in Paris.

Her older sister Marguerite Louise married the publisher George Charpentier. As the publisher of Zola, the Goncourts and others, Charpentier was not only important, but also politically aligned with realism and naturalism in literature.

Museum-goers know the family primarily through the famous portrait Renoir did of Isabelle's sister *Madame Charpentier and Her Children* of 1878 now in the Metropolitan museum and it's interesting to know that although the children are dressed alike and have similar hairstyles, the little girl, Georgette-Berthe, age six, is on the left sitting on the dog while it is the little boy Paul-Emile-Charles, three years younger than his sister who sits near his mother.

Georges Charpentier not only commissioned this work from Renoir but he also wanted to support the avant-garde painters of the day and he established a gallery aligned with the periodical *La*

Vie Moderne on the Boulevard des Italiens in Paris-- a period photograph just of the Boulevard.

[00:38:04.26]

Not far from his own jewelry business, the Garnier Opera House, the new department stores and Nadar's photographic studio, site of the first impressionist exhibition in 1874.

In April of 1880, Manet exhibited 25 works at La Vie Moderne, including several of the Cafe pictures. This sensitive genre portrait of his wife Suzanne and their son and her son Leon reading, now in the Musee d'Orsay, several pastel portraits including this one of the Irish critic and novelist George Moore, now in the Met, and along with the crowded Cafe scenes was this painting called *The Plum*, now in the National Gallery in Washington.

Most of the works exhibited at La Vie Moderne were new works and Manet had not had a solo exhibition at this scale since the show he staged at the time of the 1867 Universal Exposition. Another world's fair had come and gone in 1878 and Manet had hoped to put up another independent exhibition, but in the end he did not and he had withheld works from the judgment of the Salon jury that year.

Although he exhibited in a number of Salons in the late 70s, including the Salon that opened a month after the show at La Vie Moderne in 1880, he had also in the intervening years exhibited out of his studio, even if he decided not to exhibit with the Impressionists.

The show at La Vie Moderne then was the most important exhibition of Manet's later career and it was linked by familial ties with the model for the Dallas portrait.

Our first impressions of the Dallas picture are that it has a level of unfinish and that its subject is a woman of fashion.

[00:40:03.19]

An esthetic of the sketch has long been part of Manet's practice, and the light open facture had become integral to Berthe Morisot's style in the 1870s and the Dallas Museum's *Woman with a Muff* by Morisot from 1880, which is just to the right of the Manet upstairs in the gallery, confirms this.

I think that even a brief comparison of the two however, shows that Morisot makes a lattice-like open style consistent almost from corner-to-corner of her canvas. Manet's painting, by contrast, offers us a painting a distinctly different levels of finish, almost a catalog of the painting process itself. My slide of the Morisot is not that great. I encourage you to go look at it because it's factured, it is just right on the surface.

So looking then at the Isabelle Lemonnier, the head and bust of Isabelle present a great deal of three-dimensionality. We see the turn of the trim on her coat, a blue ribbon that secures her hat under her chin, curls of her hair on her forehead that catch the light.

Although there are unblended patches of paint on her face, the modeling is consistent and subtle gradations in value define her nose and model her cheek. Her upper body in its coat by contrast begins to flatten. There is an effect of shadow along her back but the main passage of painting of this bodice area is a brown that is quite flat and of course, looking at the painting one can see beautiful bits of scumbling here, strokes of green throughout.

[00:42:00.14]

But I would stand by the fact that the overall handling of the brown is relatively flat compared with the head.

Modernist critics are very fond of pointing out areas of Manet's paintings in which any kind of sculptural dimension is refused and in which the possibility of reading the illusion of the object, in this case coat, turns back into paint. The modernist reading is apposite here.

I think if we recall the extent to which Manet and the impressionist came under the spell of Japanese woodblock prints and frequently played off of similar effects of both contours and flatness, in many cases maximizing the viewer's recognition that we are looking at the translucency of oil paint and not at a print. We can appreciate the play of effects here.

Then there is the lower area of the painting in which we can see the canvas ground, the initial lay in and the drawing. It reads as an extremely raw exposure of the mechanics of painting. We can see not only where the flatness of the middle section comes from, but

also where the modeling of the upper section originates and we are seeing something else to, look at the blur of gray along the contour, especially here on the left.

Look at the overdrawing along the back of the coat, the doubling of contour around the muff. These additional shadows and contours have another reference point. The blur we often see in 19th century photographs with their long exposures.

Photography had by the late 1850s began to make going to make a significant contribution to the art of portraiture. A photographic portrait had the potential to be entirely a record of the subject's exteriority and physicality.

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Hence the efforts by Nadar, Julia Margaret Cameron and other great portraitists who worked with lighting and pose in order to convey some sense of artistic mood or interiority, and we are looking at Nadar, one of Nadar's portraits of Baudelaire I think it's interesting to see just that slight blur of the coat.

I owe this point by the way to more general point made by Kermit Champa in a lecture. Seen against Nadar's Baudelaire Manet's coat, seems both to recall the blur of the photograph as well as to propose a kind of deconstruction of painting's procedures and effects.

Isabelle Lemonnier's recollection of sitting for the portraits and this is by the way the Philadelphia portrait which is almost -- the face is almost entirely repainted, has come down to us in these remarks and this will tell you a little bit about the sitter:

"Manet didn't know how to draw." she said. "He was always beginning my portraits over again. He destroyed I don't know how many studies right in front of me. If I'd asked him for them, he would have certainly given them to me, but I already had so many portraits." Her experience tallies with that of other sitters, such as Berthe Morisot. I think that Manet's ceaseless recommencing of these portraits tells us something important that slips past Lemonnier's insouciance.

Looking at some of Manet's illustrated letters to Isabelle Lemonnier, and there are many of them and they contain many little, kind of flirtatious jokes and one he wrote her in home and

compared her to a mirabelle, one of those kind of yellow plums and they are flirtatious and lovely.

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But if you think for a moment about the kind of drawing that we see in these letters, we could say that in so much as Manet loved to draw and to define form with the certain directness and elegant, understatedness, a playful interest in abbreviating, summarizing, even almost caricaturing as in this representation of Isabelle diving, maybe not the most flattering portrait of Isabelle Lemonnier, Manet also loved to create a form that remained open.

We can see that in the distance between the watercolor sketches in the letters and the face of the DMA portrait. Lemonnier's arched brow, the upturned corners of her mouth, her gaze in our direction can all be seen as pleasant and engaging. At the same time, a slight air of detachment remains. Manet is often at pains as a painter to prohibit one reading from becoming dominant or stable. George Moore displays a relaxed, informality but also an alacrity.

This is no accident or product of a lack of finish or resolution. It is a deliberate technique on Manet's part as definite as his addition of extra figures in the spaces of his crowded cafe scenes. His play between definition and an undoing of definitiveness where an opening up of the picture to different readings lies at the heart of the experience of modernity, he wants to offer his viewers.

The Dallas portrait takes its place in an economy of friendship and gift giving as Barbara Whitman has recently written. Manet and Isabelle Lemonnier were friends.

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She was 19-years old and attractive. The painter was nearing 50 and already in poor health. He liked to flirt with her. The portrait cannot entirely be taken out of this context of gallant friendship, but nor can it be seen as merely a record of that friendship or the attraction of a middle-aged man for vivacious young woman and this is primarily in the literature on it kind of how people have accounted for it.

The engaging quality of her gaze and the openness of the work to more than one reading of her expression testified to Manet's stance as a modernist painter. He gives us not identities and the desires that reinforce them, but pleasures in the plural; his own and ours. Thank you.