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Podcast Project

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Final Transcript: Art and Nature

Lauren: We encounter nature everyday. From our morning commutes across campus to the food we purchase at lower, to an afternoon hike on the Arts Trail. But have you ever stopped to admire nature through an artistic lens? A simple act of encountering nature daily becomes significantly profound when we connect nature and art. My name is Lauren Hunt and I'm here with my co-host Stephanie Nickerson

Lauren: In today's podcast we will be taking a walking tour around Easton to help us better understand the relationship of art and nature.

Stephanie: "Looking down on the rushing water of The Delaware River from Gollub Park on a beautiful fall day, I see a beautiful scene of vibrant colors of the leaves on the trees. This is a view anyone with an appreciation of the beauty of nature would admire. From where we sit here at Gollub Park, a nature reserve with spectacular views of The Delaware River, we are forming mental images as we greet nature. When we greet picturesque scenes, like Gollub Park, or a painting of the Amazon Rainforest, we make connections between reality and our imagination. We see nature as divine, nature as ideology, and it allows us to better understand the environment around us.

Lauren: As we walk into downtown Easton to The Grossman Gallery, an art exhibit featuring paintings and sculptures, we are wondering if the nature you understand by looking at the sculptures and paintings in the gallery is different from that of the nature at Gollub Park?

Stephanie: So Lauren, what do you think?

Lauren: Well, looking specifically at the piece, “Curb” by Jamie Cabreza here in the gallery, I see the beauty of nature. Just like the view at Gollub Park of the change of seasons from summer to fall, the ice melting against the gutter and the tender, colorful wind-blown blossoms celebrate nature’s divine control and power. By framing the power of nature in its most mundane form, of ice melting on a gutter, for example, a person who views this piece gets inspired by the meaning behind the piece.

Lauren: Just a few steps away from Grossman Gallery is the Bushkill Curtain, an installation of strings and blue-painted buoys which are attached like a curtain and shift with the currents of the wind. People pass over the Bushkill Creek every day on their daily commutes, but how many stop to think about the function of this site-specific sculpture. Take a listen as Artist Stacy Levy explains how the dynamic changes in nature can be seen in her piece,

Stacy Levy’s speech

Lauren-As Stacy Levy explained, the changeability and unpredictability of nature are important to understanding our connection with nature. From the transition between two seasons, portrayed in the “Curb” piece and the view at Gollub Park, to the shifts in density and waterflow of the Bushkill Creek, change is a constant factor in nature which art can portray.

Stephanie: Now, we are going to travel to an outdoor art exhibit, Storm King, in the Lower Hudson Valley. we will provide insight into how the artists who have constructed the site-specific sculptures featured in the 500 acre landscape of fields, hills, and woodlands, have connected to nature through their work. One of the main exhibitions at Storm King is Andy Goldsworthy’s Storm King Wall.

Lauren: This sculpture took five men, seventeen days, and fifteen boulders to construct. Goldsworthy embraces the natural landscape of the woods and the found materials to create a playground in which the sculpture weaves in and out of the trees in the forest and through the small pond. It seems to not to disturb nature around it and feels rather natural. As it emerges into the water of the pond it continues to the other side as though that this wall is meant to be there for a reason.

Stephanie: Listen as one of our fellow classmates reflects on how his experience at Storm King influenced his perception of the relationship between Art and Nature.

Student: “When I first heard of the Storm King trip, I was expecting to see a field with a few large-scale sculptures that were strategically placed on top of the land. When we arrived, I was in awe of how the artists manipulated the natural resources and layout of the land in order to construct visual masterpieces that perfectly fit into their surroundings.

Because we went on a beautiful fall day, I specifically noticed how the vibrant red and black colors of the pieces in the main field stood out. Overall, I thought that my adventures at Storm King helped me better understand how to see nature through an artistic perspective, which I had never done before.”

Stephanie: Now Lauren since we have gone through a whole semester with our class what have you learned about nature through art that you didn't know before?

Lauren: “I have always been very active in nature, living in Northern New Jersey. I appreciate all elements of the natural world... from the changes of seasons in the mountains to the view of the Delaware River from our campus and especially the rhythmic flow of the waves on my favorite beach in Cape Cod. On the other hand, I have taken art classes my whole life and even took advanced sculpture last year. Through this class, I have learned how to interpret the nature in artwork and also the art in nature. In

each piece of artwork and each scenic location, I now ponder the meanings behind them of humanitarian purposes, nature as ideology, and functional art. What about you steph?

Stephanie: For me when first looking at nature I thought the only things that are related to nature was outdoor things I would never have thought that nature and art had such a close connection. I feel by going to the gallery it has really opened up my eyes that nature is always around us and in many ways that we don't even think. We have to realized that most of what artwork is based on is nature such as the photograph of the pink flower dying on the pavement. I believe nature is the basis of most of artists drawing ideas. In addition I see nature as a piece of art because of how picturesque it truly is I have to say by standing and looking over the gollub Park its hard not to want to take thousands of pictures because of how beautiful the view is.

Lauren: Well that is all the time that we have for today I hope that you have opened your eyes and seen the gorgeous connection between art and nature!