

Betty Gilson
<http://www.artistrue.com>
ARH 1000
02/21/2001
Term Paper

A visit to Lowe Art Museum

I come from Europe. What is great about Europe is the fact that history surrounds you wherever you go. There is a museum at every corner...almost—and if there isn't one, then you might run into a very old building that “speaks” to you about the old and glorious times of the past. If the United States, a very young country, is well known for its advanced technology and strong economy, Europe is well known for its rich history and especially for its art.

Visiting Lowe Art Museum proved to be a pleasant surprise. In the middle of the modern and “young” city, Miami, lie the hidden treasures of the past.

Since it was my first visit to the Lowe Art Museum, I started on the left side. My attention was caught, right away, by Albrecht Durer's (1471-1528) print, “The Apocalypse Woman”—among other interesting oil paintings.

After passing through a little vestibule, I entered a small room where, to my surprise, I found the Picasso ceramics. This limited edition is a gift to Lowe Art Museum by South Florida collector Bernie Bercuson. These ceramics offer a stunning example of Picasso's creative and prolific nature.

Picasso began making ceramics in 1947 in Vallauris, France. His initial work included mostly plates and dishes, decorated like a canvas with faces, still life, landscapes, animals, and bull-fighting scenes. After 1950, he started to produce jugs, pitchers, vases, and bowls of various shapes and sizes. Jugs—"Face," "Four Faces"—vases—"Large Bird, Black Face"—dishes—"Landscape" (1953), "Fruit from Provence" (1948), "Engraved Bull," "Corrida on Black Ground" can all be seen at Lowe Museum.

The other pleasant surprise was a Sunday afternoon concert, which made my visit an even better experience. The music added a special aura to the art displayed and shaped my disposition to fit the beautiful art.

Because of the concert, which was taken place in the following room, I had to turn around—although I could see a painting portraying Marlin Monroe and her beautiful smile, hanging on the wall (in a Pop Art room, I assume).

I entered the gallery through the right side. A beautiful acrylic painting, "Paradiso Stagionale," (1990) by Mario Bencomo caught my attention. I was in heaven, indeed.

Beautiful colors, with an almost airbrushed effect that added a special softness to the presented subject, “caressed” my eyes—while the dimmed music sounds “tickled” my ears.

I kept wandering around until I reached Stanczak Julian’s room, filled with 50 years of retrospective Abstract Expressionism art. When I saw his beautiful artwork, I have to admit that I almost forgot why I came there for. I stared and stared, wondered and wondered, wandered and wandered. The light loved my eyes and my eyes surrendered to the illusion of light. If I were French, I would have exclaimed, “C’est très magnifique!!!” “Offering Green” (1970), “Pulsating I, II, III, IV” (1984), “Boreal” (1984), “Windows to the Past” and especially “Fire Dance” (1999)— which created the illusion of dancing through hypnotic curves—filled my **self** with the colors of the rainbow until I, **myself**, became a rainbow. I had to move on and continue my wonderful experience. After all, I had to write a term-paper, eventually.

The Lowe Art Museum is actually quite unique for its refined collection of art from all times: Egyptian, Greek, Roman, European, Native American, Asian, African, and so much more.

From the Classic period, through a prestigious grant from the Museum Loan Network, I had the opportunity to see “Fragment of an architectural relief” (Greek, from Sicily, 300 B.C.), “Statuette of Venus” (Roman, first century B.C.)—Roman, “Torso of an athlete” (first-second century A.D.) and especially, “Statue of Faustina the Elder” (140-160 A.D.),

a monumental sculpture in marble of Annia Galeria Faustina, the wife of Antoninus Pius, emperor of the Roman Empire (137-161 A.D.).

There were also some pieces from Lowe's private collection on display. "Standing Kore" (Rhodian style, 500 B.C., Greek earthenware) and the other similarly looking "Standing Kore (525-500 B.C.) captured my eyes with their beautiful posture and facial expression.

Visiting the Lowe Art Museum is a great opportunity to get "acquainted" with the wonders of the "Art of the Western World." The visitor has also the opportunity to view a refined collection of beautiful paintings and sculpture from the Renaissance and Baroque period. Famous artists from that period include Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678) with "The Judgement of Paris," Jacoppo Tintoretto (1518-1894) with "Appollo and Marsyas" (1545) and "Bust Portrait of a Young Man in Black" (1560), and Pietro Dandini (1646-1712)—as well as many others—have some of their masterpieces displayed in this museum.

I have to admit that I like "The judgement of Paris" for its interesting subject. The story tells that all the gods and goddesses, except Eris (Strife), were invited to attend the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. Strife, offended that she was overlooked, threw among the wedding guests a golden apple inscribed with the words, "Let the fair one take it," or "The apple for the fair." Three goddesses, Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, all claimed this prize of beauty, and Zeus referred the disputants to the judgment of Paris, who would choose Aphrodite.

Moving closer in time, I was impressed with the museum's European Collection. To my surprise, among all of those talented artists, I even found an abstract painting, "Untitled," from 1908 by a Romanian artist, Sandu Darie—residing in Cuba. Other famous artists such as Pablo Picasso (representing the cubist period) are also represented at the Lowe Art Museum by their beautiful works. The magical tones, colors and textures caress the eyes. What more could one wish for?

Moving closer in time, one more time, with the American Collection from 19th and 20th Centuries the visitor has the opportunity to get acquainted with masterpieces by some of the great American Artists.

A new addition to the Lowe's collection is the Art of the Ancient Americas represented by Ecuadorian and Colombian art—also, diverse cultures from Mexico to Chile in all media (ceramic, stone, bone, metal, wood, textiles) and more are on display.

Native American Art is also portrayed here. A collection of Southwest Indian art, representative for an early period in the history of the United States, contains works that include textiles, baskets and other utilitarian objects. Some textiles are extremely rare examples of the Navajo, Pueblo, and Rio Grande weaving traditions.

The Guatemalan textile collection, started in 1958, contains around 505 examples and represents a new addition to North American native and pre-Columbian collections.

Asian and African art are also on display at the Lowe Art Museum; and although they are not representative of the study of the “Art of the Western World” course, they are an important part of our human history and deserve to be mentioned.

Over all, after visiting the Lowe Art Museum, I understood why it is rated as one of the best museums—not only in Florida, but across the country. I really enjoyed my visit, and I will definitely return for new exhibitions as well to view the private collection, which increases with every year.