

StoryCorps Interview at Columbus Museum of Art

Bryan Moss and Kyle Lemstrom

KL: Well, the funny thing is working in security, working in the galleries regularly, is that I feel it's a lot to say to put out there, but I feel like these are our peers.

BM: Right.

KL: If you're walking in the galleries and you're looking at art it's not competitive, it's not I want to knock you off the wall and I want to be in this museum one day. It's these are my peers, these are people to learn from, these are people that have achieved in the past. And I think the difference between a lot of the people that work at the museum in security, for instance, or in education or in other departments that are regularly in the museum, is they don't perceive it as a collection of art or artifacts to be looked at. They perceive it as something that they are interacting with on a daily basis that they're learning from, that they're growing from, or they're speaking to individually so I don't know if you feel that way.

BM: I couldn't have said it better.

KL: It's interesting to have those conversations because we're regularly having conversations about art.

BM: We'll talk about an artist exclusively for months. We would go back and forth about Picasso all the time. Picasso he's a little rascal. He likes to cause trouble.

KL: But I don't feel like I'm being disrespectful if you call Picasso a rascal, he was. He's a jerk but I love him. I love him like a friend. Because if you were to compete with Picasso you're always gonna lose.

BM: The great thing about the security department is that everyone is heavy into the arts and they're active. It feels kinda like a fight club to me. Yeah, we're the artists, we're rebellious. We're gonna do things by our own means. We love art, we're here all the time, but when we go to other museums do you get really scared or sensitive to the guards and security? Because I'm very respectful and always : "Okay I know the rules, I'm not gonna break them," and I end up breaking the rules because I want to get close to the painting. It's "Oh wow they have a Goya I want to get close to that and look at it." "No, back up, buddy." "I should know better, sir, I'm really sorry."

KL: Because I study painting, I romanticize painting, oil painting in particular. I have a strange habit of smelling paintings and I've been caught smelling paintings in galleries and museums before, so I actually, usually when I go into museums, I try to be very respectful of the staff and mindful of the rules. So, in the past where I might have been a bad patron and taken photos on the sly and broken some rules, I never touched paintings. I never did that but I do remember being yelled at for smelling a Van Gogh. I got yelled at for that in the Museum of Modern Art.

BM: Nice. Was it Starry Night or everyone there for [laughter] [inaudible]

KL: No, it wasn't even one of the major Van Goghs. I mean, all the Van Goghs are major, but it was one of the Van Goghs people didn't even recognize. It looked like chalk and I wanted to know if it smelled like oils 100 years later.

BM: Did it?

KL: No, it didn't.

BM: Were you let down?

KL: I was embarrassed more than anything. I was drawn in without realizing. I don't have control of my own body.

KL: That just shows how much you enjoy art. I can dig it, definitely. That's a great story.