

Albert Barnes and the Rejection of History¹

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May I express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, and to the members of the American Philosophical Society, for honoring the Barnes Foundation by making it the focus of this afternoon's session. Neil Rudenstine has been a trustee of mine at the Barnes for the past six years, but he has also become a friend and a wise counselor. Evidence of wisdom transmitted is that I insisted on speaking before him, rather than after.

Let me begin with a not untypical letter from the Barnes Foundation, written in 1934 to the distinguished art historian Meyer Schapiro, who had requested access to the remarkable collection formed by Dr. Albert Barnes. The response purportedly came from one Peter Kelly, who in fact was no more than a cipher for Barnes himself: "I read your letter of April 12th to Dr. Barnes, and he said: 'Tell little Jack Horner that his use of the names of two universities as proof of his capacity is in reality merely additional evidence of the educational bankruptcy prevalent in existing institutions.'"

The two institutions cited by Schapiro were New York University and Columbia University, the latter of course the academic home of John Dewey, a former president of the American Philosophical Society and a close friend of Barnes's. Schapiro was still unsuccessfully attempting to visit in 1958, seven years after the founder had died.

The collection of postimpressionist and early modern masterpieces had been proudly built through the accumulation of capital by A. C. Barnes and Company, specifically from the manufacture of the antiseptic Argyrol. Through the progressive influence of Dewey, when

¹ Read 8 November 2012, as part of a symposium on the Barnes Foundation.

the Foundation opened its doors in 1925, these splendid works were now to be shared with young artists, with art history students, and with the actual producers of capital, who included African-American workers employed by Barnes in his factory. In promoting the appreciation of modern art—conventionally the province of owners of capital—Dewey and Barnes were subverting polite, leisured, East Coast American conventions about the production and reception of painting, and offering entry to the young, the industrious, and the disenfranchised. Dewey's version of American pragmatism focused on lived experience, particularly on the life of the "ordinary man," and Barnes's early experiences as a student in Germany at the close of the nineteenth century may well have fed into this, as that country was even then deeply infiltrated with the idea of "workers' culture."² He believed that his new educational institution would promote democracy by virtue of encouraging people to look at works of art analytically and at length, which in turn would more broadly enrich their lives.

Meyer Schapiro, the target of Albert Barnes's venom in 1934, was part of an art world with which Barnes was deeply engaged, often contentiously. It was a world that assigned works of art within categories of the fine arts, decorative arts, archaeology, and anthropology, and displayed them either within single institutions, such as the Penn Museum; or within departments of encyclopedic collections, such as the British Museum; or within ethnographic museums such as the Museum of Natural History in New York, where non-Western cultures were displayed alongside flora and fauna, as they still are there. An overarching practice of these institutions was to create historical or ethnographic relationships around culture, region, and period, or relationships based upon function. By and large, we in Europe and America haven't diverged much from that model, even though certain galleries have experimented for two decades with thematic displays as an alternative to traditional hangs, the Tate being one such.

The Barnes Foundation isn't a museum in that sense, just as its founder wished it not to be. The ensembles (wall compositions) of art and craft put together by Barnes, first for his house, and then for the Foundation in Merion, subverted historical, ethnographic, and functional relationships in favor of formally composed displays that not only had no use for context, but also actively suppressed it (Figure 1). Albert Barnes came to believe that to appreciate modern art (indeed, any art), we have only to look intently at the formal elements of a

2 It has been suggested that Barnes was influenced by an American tradition of educating workers, initiated with factory women in nineteenth-century mills in Lowell, Massachusetts; see Jay Martin, *The Education of John Dewey: A Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 398.



FIGURE 1. Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, Room 22, south wall. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the Barnes Foundation)

particular work as they relate to the experience of “ordinary life.” By refusing to provide a grand historical narrative, or even contextual labels for specific works, he attended just to the formal similarities between works, placed within harmonious, rhythmic, and finely balanced wall compositions. Barnes’s walls were even more compulsively symmetrical than those he encountered in European homes and museums, such as the Wallace Collection.

As far as I’m aware, Barnes was the first to build a collection intended to demonstrate the application of modernist principles to the display of exemplary works of art and design from across the world. He regarded the walls at Merion as blank canvases on which he could compose, creating new and unexpected relationships between his paintings, ceramics, ironwork, and furniture. Such relationships encouraged students to identify and explore the use of light, line, color, and space, elements that Barnes believed all artists employed, whether well or badly, consciously or unconsciously. He hoped that in the process of looking intently at the works themselves, but also at the harmonious relationships between them, as hung at the Foundation, students would develop a greater sensitivity to visual language and thus learn to see “like artists.” He and his wife, Laura, ensured that there

were close parallels between the gallery courses and the horticulture courses devised for the Foundation's grounds, which also emphasized an appreciation of form, color, and composition within the landscape.

During the early years of his own art education, Barnes certainly acknowledged the influence of Clive Bell's *Art* and Roger Fry's *Vision and Design*, published in 1913 and 1920, respectively. Bell and Fry stood in a lineage of critics, including Edgar Allen Poe, Charles Baudelaire, Oscar Wilde, Ernest Fenollosa, Arthur Dow, Denman Ross, and Benedetto Croce, all of whom had contributed to a discourse in which color, line, form, light, space, vitality, and rhythm became the most appropriate means through which art should be experienced—as opposed to history, context, narrative, and meaning.³ At the opening of *Vision and Design*, Fry witheringly describes the paucity of the historical lens: “It is indeed this view of works of art as crystallized history that accounts for much of the interest felt in ancient art by those who have but little aesthetic feeling and who find nothing to interest them in the work of their contemporaries, where the historical motive is lacking, and where they are left face to face with bare aesthetic values.”⁴

The non-narrative, ahistorical qualities that modernist art critics sought in painting found their parallels in music: in harmony, composition, balance, and particularly rhythm, the latter term being widely used in progressive writings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to describe the virtues of many forms of art.⁵ Appreciation of art should properly depend on common human capacities to measure differences in light, color, shape, mass, and sound. And we do now know that at least some of these capacities are not just learned, but truly rooted in a shared biology: our sense of rhythm, for example, which Oliver Sacks argues is an integral component of our motor system.⁶ Barnes was convinced that art drew on discoverable universal instincts and motives, and that Salomon van Ruysdael, Matisse, Picasso, a seventeenth-century Chinese painter, a nineteenth-century West African carver, and a Pennsylvania German cabinet maker shared common mental and visual mechanisms, and common dispositions to

3 See M. H. Abrams, “From Addison to Kant: Modern Aesthetics and the Exemplary Art,” *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), and also Rachel Gottlieb, “‘Vitality’ in British Art Pottery and Studio Pottery,” *Apollo* 127, no. 313 (1988): 165.

4 “Art and Life,” in *Vision and Design* (London, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981), 1. Sir Robert Sainsbury, whose collection is at the University of East Anglia, wrote in the same vein about art not being regarded as just the “evidence of history.”

5 For usage of the term *rhythm* among modernist critics, see also Dee Reynolds, *Symbolist Aesthetics and Early Abstract Art: Sites of Imaginary Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

6 Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 233–42.

rhythm and physical balance (Figure 2).⁷ He argued that his particular approach objectively corresponded to facts about not only the natural, but also the social, worlds—facts he believed to hold across time and space.⁸ Thus one could legitimately talk about European paintings in terms of universal human experience.



FIGURE 2. Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, Room 15, south wall. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the Barnes Foundation)

Through his American painter friends and other contacts—Leo Stein and Paul Guillaume in particular—Barnes became familiar with the Parisian avant-garde and its anti-bourgeois, anti-mimetic program. The journey from imitative representation to abstraction was complete by the time that Barnes started collecting; although, joined as he was to Leo Stein's ideological program, generally he stayed clear of the most radical contemporary painting. Still, almost from the beginning of his collecting, Barnes allied himself with those early twentieth-century

⁷ In 1876 the German psychologist Gustav Fechner sought to establish an inductive aesthetics, devising tests to discern the quantity of pleasure evinced by colors, shapes, and lines; see Lynn Gamwell, *Exploring the Invisible: Art, Science, and the Spiritual* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 96–97.

⁸ “The artist illuminates the objective world for us, exactly as does the scientist, different as the terms are in which he envisages it . . .” (Albert C. Barnes, *The Art in Painting*, 3rd ed. [Merion: The Barnes Foundation Press, 1937], 7).

critics and collectors who downplayed the significance of narrative. So to appreciate *Guernica* (Picasso's great monochromatic mural on the bombing of the Basque town in 1937), for example, it wasn't necessary to know the historical circumstances. Not that the study of history wasn't valuable in itself, but for Barnes it wasn't crucial to the appreciation and formal evaluation of any particular work of art.⁹ His view was that an individual artist's use of subject matter or allegory wasn't germane to how we should, properly, experience the work.¹⁰ What *was* important to Barnes, however, was the way in which the artist intensely re-engaged us with the experience of real life, of walking, sitting, eating, playing, etc. "Above a certain level," he wrote, "appreciation is always in part the creative appreciation of one who is acutely sensitive to forms or who has a large mass of funded experience."¹¹

Paintings at the Barnes were allowed their labels, with the artist's name and sometimes an attributed date of production, but nothing more. Thus one long-standing Barnes adult education course has focused on how the Foundation's paintings were embedded within an artistic tradition, such as Venetian painting, yet never focused on the historical circumstances in which works were called into being, either through patronage or the personal motives of the artists, let alone larger social, economic, or political factors. Instead of seeking to understand the context-specific motives of modern artists, who employed strategies that were often quite different from those of their predecessors, Barnes's focus was to discern underlying dispositions that he felt were common to all great artists and designers across time and cultures, and to establish common standards for judging their work.¹²

One benefit of this approach, in which formal excellence was central, was to undermine conventional hierarchies of Western art, at the top of which sat history painting. It created a level field for all works, irrespective of origin, with the criteria for appreciation remaining the same for all forms of art. This explains why the Barnes ensembles juxtapose modern painting and sculpture with Old Masters,

9 "If he [the average person] turns for enlightenment to what usually passes for education in art, he is only too likely to be . . . led to the additional error of supposing that the biography of the artist, and the technical means of putting paint on canvas, are the key to the understanding he seeks" (Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia, *The Art of Renoir* [Merion: The Barnes Foundation Press, 1935], 3).

10 "When Gauguin's work stimulates a spectator to the point of esthetic fulness, we have clearly a case of temperamental preference for subject-matter usurping the function of an external stimulus of a purely plastic nature" (Barnes, *The Art in Painting*, 38).

11 *Ibid.*, 37.

12 "The student . . . begins to discern similarities in line, shape, color or rhythm between the apparently dissimilar objects [in the ensembles]; that is, he discovers their common denominator of human values and meanings and their common source in human nature" (Violette de Mazia, "The Barnes Foundation," *House and Garden* [December 1942], 40).

antiquities from different cultures, tribal art, folk furniture, and metalwork.¹³ Pre-industrial works of art from across the world were not to be regarded as a manifestation of local conditions, but as the products of a common sensibility that united and integrated mankind, rather than dividing and separating it. By including in his collection certain artists and excluding others, by including certain evaluative criteria and excluding others, Barnes was able to create an ordered and regulated environment that, he argued, objectively reflected the best in art and horticulture. It was an environment in which artists and genres that didn't conform to his standards of excellence were simply edited out (Turner, for instance, was roundly dismissed).

And yet, although we live in a common physical world, we are encompassed by diverse social worlds. So, for example, from around the beginning of the fifteenth century, there is a crucial difference between European art—in which architects, painters, and sculptors acknowledged a shared interest in spatial order—and the visual arts in China, where leading literati artists linked painting just to calligraphy, and where for a painter, performance skills in wielding the brush were more critical even than design skills.¹⁴ Chinese calligraphy, regarded for over a thousand years by connoisseurs as the highest of all art forms, has no color or dimensional space to speak of, and so it would be difficult to appreciate particular pieces in a Barnesean way, other than to make the fairly obvious points that they are linearly rhythmic, and that there is tonal variety in individual strokes. For Barnes, however, the experience of the true artist is universal and so is the capacity to share in it: “The experience of the artist arises out of a particular background, a set of interests and habits of perception, which, like the scientist's habits of thought, are potentially sharable by other individuals. They are only sharable, however, if one is willing to make the effort involved in acquiring a comparable set of habits and background.”¹⁵

13 Design and pattern-making studies flourished during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both in Europe and America, such as Alois Riegl's work on Middle Eastern rugs, which demonstrated the stability of certain ubiquitous designs, from the classical world to the present. Riegl's 1901 study of openwork techniques in metalwork foreshadows the placement of strongly linear ironwork seen at the Barnes, placed like punctuation marks between and above the paintings. See E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1984), 196.

14 Barnes writes as follows: “Painting which makes no attempt to portray spatial depth, that is, the third dimension, represents plastic form at its simplest. It may embody fluid graceful line, harmonious color, flat masses and surface-space, all so composed that the relations establish plastic form of a high order, even though quite simple. . . . While the design in flat painting may be satisfying, such plastic forms remain comparatively meager and correspondingly deficient in reality” (Barnes, *The Art in Painting*, 63).

15 Ibid., 7.

But can we take as a given the motives, interests, and habits of perception of all artists? Indeed, can we truly empathize with other people if we don't attempt to understand the context of their lives? I hope I may be forgiven for expressing a degree of skepticism about whether we can in fact fully appreciate what individual artists from other times and cultures were trying to achieve (in doing what they did) if we don't attempt to understand the rules, conventions, and expectations of the artistic and social worlds in which they worked, and to what in particular they were responding.¹⁶ I am not sure there is a universal language of art—no matter how desirable one might be—or that there are common standards for judging art.¹⁷ And by excluding historical context, we limit our understanding of what an artist is doing, in making a work. This is not to say that appreciating art through its formal elements and learning about the history of art as an academic subject are mutually exclusive approaches. Indeed, anyone wanting to understand the history of art would be foolhardy not to submit to some intensive course of study in the formal components of art.

As I've noted already, modernist sensibility was framed before Albert Barnes embarked on his journey of collecting. In 1891 Ernest Fenollosa declared, in a lecture at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, that "we ought to recognize that lines and shades and colors may have one harmonic charm of their own, a beauty and infinity of pure visual idea, as absolute as the sound idea in music."¹⁸ Fenollosa went on to assert that "representation is not art, it is literature. That a picture represents a man does not interest us. . . . It is a question of spacing, of how the pattern is worked out, that interests us."¹⁹ What was important to the modernists from the 1890s onward was not representation, narrative, or history, but facets of experience and the perceived world that could be analyzed and reconstructed by artists.

Barnes's fellow modernists were as vulnerable to his famous proclivity for insulting others as were philistines in general, and art historians in particular. Two notable targets were associates of Fenollosa in Boston: Denman Waldo Ross and Arthur Wesley Dow, the latter subsequently moving to New York to head the art department at Teacher's

16 Barnes does allow artists to be representative of "the spirit of the age," so for example, he notes that "Claude lived in the century of Milton; and Manet in that of Maupassant" (ibid., 30).

17 On evaluating art, see Joseph Raz, *The Practice of Value*, ed. R. Jay Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 15–36, where he proposes that we judge "using the full range of concepts, information, and rules of inference at our disposal."

18 "The Lessons of Japanese Art," November 1891, in Marie Frank, *Denman Ross and American Design Theory* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2011), 70–71.

19 Ibid., 70.

College, Columbia, where he was a colleague of Dewey's. Both Ross and Dow learned much from Fenollosa, who had spent time in Japan studying East Asian art and teaching, and Dow's own epiphany came from Japanese prints, which deeply affected his practice as an artist, bringing him to a reading of art and design through tone, line, and color—an approach that spread widely with his reputation as the most influential art educator in America following the publication in 1899 of his textbook *Composition: A Series of Exercises Selected from a New System of Art Education*.

Ross's 1905 text *A Theory of Pure Design: Harmony, Balance, Rhythm* also influenced the ways in which progressive Americans thought about the visual arts. He was an early champion of the formalist approach to art set out by George Santayana, a Harvard colleague, whose works were used by Barnes in his factory classes in Philadelphia.²⁰ In Ross's case, design led him back to Florentine painting, as it did Roger Fry, but that brought them into direct conflict with Barnes, who was passionate about the Venetians and the richness and possibilities of color.²¹ As much as design was important to Barnes, in the sense of *disegno*, color trumped it. We see this on the east wall in the main gallery, where Renoir's *Family Portrait* is flanked by two smaller Venetian pictures: Tintoretto's *Two Apostles* to the right, and a painting attributed to Bonifazio Veronese. As a pinnacle of artistic achievement, Renoir sits on the shoulders of Venice (Figure 3).

But Ross was guilty of an equally grave error for Barnes, in rejecting both impressionism (which he had first enthusiastically embraced) and postimpressionism, to which Barnes himself was absolutely and obviously committed. Ross wrote that "the key note of postimpressionists is self-expression; with the will to be unprecedented and shocking. The result is disorder, lawlessness and possibly crime."²² Dewey came to stand with Barnes in his antipathy toward Ross, both as a friend and from a philosophical perspective. For Dewey, the "aesthetic" was not something that had to be designed before being realized. It wasn't a "transcendent ideality," as he put it in *Art and Education*, but rather "the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normal complete experience."

One core idea for Barnes and Dewey was that a good life was a unified and harmonious life, an ideal the Foundation was intended to help

20 Ibid., 114–21.

21 We should remember that sixteenth-century Florentine and Venetian writing (e.g., Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* and Lodovico Dolce's *Dialogue on Painting*) created this regional distinction to separate and champion their own artists and practices, not just ideologically but economically.

22 Ibid., 132–33.



FIGURE 3. Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, Main Room, east wall. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the Barnes Foundation)

people realize, with an appreciation of art as the gateway. Dewey's thinking about the relationship between imagination, harmony, and unity was in part inspired by the romantic poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. As he wrote, "The idea of a whole, whether of the whole personal being, or of the world, is an imaginative, not a literal, idea."²³ In a similar vein, Barnes wrote in the opening

²³ See Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 1995), 271. In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge writes that "the primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge

pages of *The Art in Painting*, "In general, the ideal is approached as our instinctive promptings are harmoniously united in every act."²⁴ And again:

In all human experiences, in so far as there is truly harmony, the self is expanded, and the mystical emotion has play. . . . The material things of life and the contrivances by which material ends are achieved thus remain impotent to evoke our profounder and more personal emotions. Deeper harmonies can be set up only by objects embodying feeling and imagination, as well as inventiveness. It is these deeper harmonies, frustrated by our life in a world so indifferent to our feelings, that art sets in vibration.²⁵

In this spirit, he sought to compose rooms that were not only varied but also harmonious, juxtaposing works from different cultures and milieux.²⁶ We can perceive a sense of harmony and balance within the axial symmetry of the wall ensembles, which in their density and symmetry are by no means unique for their time, but stand in marked contrast, for example, to the asymmetrical display of Braque, Picasso, and African art at Stieglitz's Gallery 291, in 1914–15, and the Victorian clutter of paintings, antiquities, and non-Western objects in a number of contemporary French and British artists' studios.²⁷ Some tension might be supposed between Barnes's preference for the objective, ordered, and measurable, and at the same time for genuine feeling, authenticity, and rhythmic vitality. This is perhaps reconciled by observing that Barnes was most attracted to those versions of modernism that remained rooted in Renaissance order.²⁸ Aside from Lipchitz's free-standing cubist sculptures, and bas-reliefs depicting music and musicians on the façade, the only significant body of abstract art in the collection is Klee's, most of which was acquired in 1949–50.²⁹

University Press, 1989), 379. Dewey was also much attracted by Robert Browning; see Martin, *The Education of John Dewey*, 400.

24 Barnes, *The Art in Painting*, 9.

25 Ibid., 46.

26 The association of harmony and order appears in the philosophical texts of both ancient Greece and China, where what is especially desired is political order, achieved by a combination of inclusion and exclusion, and what is feared is disunity and disorder. The relationship between music and geometrical ratios informed classical Greek and Roman assertions about harmony and good political order. See Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 27.

27 Bilateral symmetry was, for Goethe, the perfect visual arrangement.

28 Renoir's in particular, but also Cézanne's, Picasso's blue and rose periods, and Matisse's non-abstract work.

29 The first three were acquired in 1930.

Cret's gallery building for Barnes is itself symmetrical, a Beaux-Arts interpretation of Italian Renaissance architectural forms. Furthermore, the Barnes Foundation at Merion, with its picturesque landscape, shared with many large suburban villas in America and Britain the organization of the great country estate, echoed on a smaller scale. In re-imagining this post-Renaissance British ideal—of the country house, its art collection, and carefully laid-out grounds and plantings—we connect with a classicizing desire for harmony with nature and our fellow men. And of course Palladio himself calculated the relationships between the rooms of his villas by means of classical harmonic theory.³⁰

I want to conclude by returning to a theme that has arisen several times already: the relation of the visual arts to music. In analyzing his collection of African sculpture in 1928, Barnes related visual rhythms to musical beats, and the following passage surely also applies to the goal Barnes sets himself in constructing his wall compositions:

The repetition of similar lines, planes and masses gives an effect of rhythmic sequence, as of beats in music, which satisfies the instinctive craving for rhythm which all human beings possess innately. When a characteristic rhythm pervades the various parts of an object, we feel a harmonious unity, and this satisfies another universal, natural desire, that of order and equilibrium. But if the similarity of parts is too close, the design tends to become monotonous; consequently an imaginative artist introduces unexpected and surprising variations and contrasts, but without destroying the underlying sense of harmony.³¹

The main gallery at Merion was designed by Paul Cret to be used also as a music room, and it houses what is now a rather curious object—perhaps the only thing in the Barnes that, to me, feels truly out of its time in the digital age: a Victrola phonograph.³² And yet it is a potent symbol of the marriage of two traditionally distinct forms of art. It is our understanding that Barnes often used the Victrola to play pieces of music that he thought were particularly relevant to the paintings he was discussing in the Foundation's art appreciation classes. Such a focus on the immediately experienced world has no need for

30 Stephen R. Wassell notes that Rudolph Wittkower traced the evolution of this idea back to the Pythagoreans through Plato, who "in his *Timaeus* explained that cosmic order and harmony are contained in certain numbers" ("The Mathematics of Palladio's Villas: Workshop '98," *Nexus Network Journal* 1 (1999): 121–28).

31 "Primitive Negro Sculpture and its Influence on Modern Civilization," *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life* (May 1928), 140. From this article, Barnes believed that all the works he had bought in 1923 from Paul Guillaume dated from before the Portuguese arrival in Africa in the sixteenth century, whereas, apart from the Benin piece, they are mostly of the nineteenth century.

32 Associated with His Master's Voice, the logo of which was a phonograph and dog that looked rather like Barnes's own terrier, Fidèle.

narrative or history, which merely gets in the way, as it did for Albert Barnes and his method of art education.

In this new century, the arts are rapidly moving to the edges of school curricula, if they are present at all—and by no means only in Europe and America. When mathematics and the applied sciences are critical economic drivers, it's easy to pick off the arts one at a time. And so what of Barnes's art education in the twenty-first century? Let me propose two possible directions among several. The first continues the theme of music, and relates specifically to the arts. I'm pleased with the first iteration of a new program, initiated during the past year before we opened on the Parkway. *The Art of Looking* is a fifth- and sixth-grade program that takes teaching artists into Philadelphia public school classrooms, and then brings the students back to the Parkway. The point of note here is that our first teaching artist is a dancer, who has introduced her students to art through music and dance. Students respond to images in the collection—van Gogh, Cézanne, Horace Pippin, for example—by creating dance sequences that require them to understand composition, balance, and rhythm.

Without abandoning the specific practices of each art form, which I much hope will continue to be taught within our schools, I believe there is an important place within school curricula for courses that bring together the different arts, if for no other reason than to save them. I imagine the Barnes providing new programs, for students of all ages, which combine several forms—visual art, music, dance, poetry—to explain the universal importance of composition, rhythm, and balance, taught by teams of practicing artists, musicians, dancers, and poets. It would be a great boon to our students to appreciate how these elements unfold within different forms of creativity, in different cultures. And indeed, how, with discipline, they can unfold in their own lives. It may be that Barnes's modernist agenda of focusing on common elements of human experience can have a new life, long after its fire was thought to be spent.

The second would build upon Barnes's own career as a scientist, his wife's passion for horticulture, and the recent award to the Foundation of LEED Platinum, the highest possible environmental certification for the new Parkway building. An educational initiative that linked art with our urgent need to study, and better understand, the natural environment would be entirely consistent with the Barnes Foundation's mission and, I imagine, would evoke interest from inquiring minds, such as those present this afternoon.