

The Don Difference Series
Audrey Ushenko

0:00-0:28 Well, what's central to my work is individuality. I'm interested in depicting people. Virtually everybody I see, I would like to depict. When you look at another person and they're looking back at you, and you realize the entire universe is behind those eyes, it's an authentic miracle. Individuality is such an incredible thing. Everybody is so different.

0:29-0:59 So everybody said to me, 'You are really going to paint in public and people can talk to you and ask questions and stuff?' and I said, 'Whatever it takes, I will do it.' But once I started doing it, I realized that this is something I'd really, really been waiting for, largely because I was just in the stream of life. And I realized also that most of the world's great art was done in public places, not in proud isolation.

1:00-1:26 I really... uh, love the fact that people really enjoy art projects going on in museums, in schools, in hospitals... Lots of times people talk to you because you're a captive audience. Other people would just watch—particularly children—and spend an incredible amount of time watching. And so, I felt as if I was doing something useful.

1:27-1:59 I believe in the liberal education. Like, most people come just because they want to buy the credits because they think they'll get a better job, but all the sudden then they realize it's about what it is to be a human being, and the way human beings deal with reality. It's a window on the way different mental disciplines think and it tells people much more about themselves and about the world around them, and then you see people suddenly getting it. They may not even put it that way to themselves, but you see them starting to function. It's really wonderful.

2:00-2:43 Well, I think it's tremendously important for students to realize that the idea of art is creating these exquisite things in proud isolation for its own sake is only a very, very tiny portion of the world's history. That art has been used in the service of something else—religion, science and technology, politics, communication—and that it also can be beautiful art. And in fact, art is not just easel painting and sculpture. It's not only carved stylizing, but the design of motors.

2:44-3:11 Art has many manifolds and it has a million different forms according to its function. But in order to be fulfilled as an artist and successful in any way, it's absolutely necessary in my opinion to realize that this is not just self-expression. In fact, frankly I don't think art is self-expression at all. I think it's a search for truth like any other mental discipline, which becomes self-expression because it's through your own eyes and not others.

3:12-3:20 (Music)

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