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Archives of American Art

Interview with Ansel Adams, 1976 December

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WEBVTT

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<i>Ansel Adams</i>: diary pure diary and the image began to mean something other than just diary

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: And can you remember paintings or painters in particular in that 1915 show that made a difference to you?

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<i>Ansel Adams</i>: Uh I can't remember their names

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<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: But it had to do with a sense of, modernity in terms of

00:00:27.000 --> 00:00:28.000

<i>Ansel Adams</i>: Oh yes.

00:00:28.000 --> 00:00:30.000

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: Where, where, it was very interesting times!

00:00:30.000 --> 00:00:36.000

<i>Ansel Adams</i>: Uh, the Cubists. Yeah

<i>Unknown</i>: And the Nude Descending the Stairs.

<i>Ansel Adams</i>: And the Nude Descending the Stairs.

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<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: And all the Futurists were in that show, which I just found out recently, I didn't know that.

00:00:41.000 --> 00:00:51.000

<i>Ansel Adams</i>:[[?]] Brancusi I think, but I'm not sure of that-- There was a very stunning Gershwin sculptures

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: And how old were you then?

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<i>Ansel Adams</i>: Fifteen.

00:00:53.000 --> 00:01:11.000

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: You must have had incredible parents. I can't imagine a father, when, my child who is sixteen now and would dearly love to be dropped off every day if a phenomenon such as that happened to exist, I don't think I would be that good a parent. Now obviously you had private training at home--

00:01:11.000 --> 00:01:19.000

<i>Ansel Adams</i>: Yeah, anybody's strict that way, but, uh, but 'course in those days you couldn't take somebody out of school. That may be illegal

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>:

00:01:19.000 --> 00:01:25.000

But he also knew you were going to get something out of it somehow.

<i>Ansel Adams</i>: But I said I want go into music, College of Music, well of course you'd have to study a language and study math

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<i>Unknown</i>: Ansel the fact that you were an only child makes --

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: makes a difference

<i>Unknown</i>: of older parents and you didn't fit in with the routine, kids at school and things like that. So this was the --

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<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: Gifted children never do. That's one of the great crises I think of --

<i>Ansel Adams</i>: I'd have been in a retarded school [[laughter]] I mean [[laughter]]

00:01:46.000 --> 00:02:06.000

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: But, don't, isn't that, you're laughing but it that's often true. That is true of at least three painters I know who are among the most brilliant people of their era and of their profession who can barely read and write because they never put the emphasis in that direction. Not even, not at all. We are still not set up to do that.

00:02:06.000 --> 00:02:12.101

<i>Jan Butterfield</i>: To this day Lowell, the best high school we have in the city, is teaching rote academics.



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