The "Muse of Painting":

The Timeless Representation of the Female Form

Artists through history have been fascinated with the female form. Though great painters have depicted innumerable face and body types, one particular "look" seems to be represented in a substantial proportion of masterpieces. Why this particular female visage holds such an attraction for the world's most brilliant painters is not entirely clear, although one fanciful theory suggests that she is, in fact, the "Muse of Painting": a goddess who directly inspires great artists with her beauty. The International Museum of Pretentious Art is proud to display an exhibit of all of the paintings known to contain the Muse.

*Note*: many second-rate art galleries display cheap imitations of these paintings, depicting other faces and bearing different titles. Some of these fraudulent works are even referenced online. These fakes can be of no interest to any serious art lover, and we urge you to pay no attention to them.

Ready Hearts Won by a Smile

1513

Female with a Parasol to Shade Her

1875

A Coquettish Foreplay

1876

Tensions Surging

1893

As Courtesans Luxuriate

1907

Basics of Love

1908

Abstract Nude Descends Forever

1912

Strict, Saturnine Man & Daughter

1930

Working to Win the War (Cathie the Carpenter)

1943

Unreal Wonderland

1944

Intensify Reality

1962

Unreal Wonderland

Namescan't be found for the bizarre elements of this surrealist masterpiece, such as giant pomegranates, flying tigers, and a woman sleeping on some sort of tidal divide in the surf. I veer between wonder and confusion when I view this painting.

Ready Hearts Won by a Smile

Of all masterpieces, this may be the most famous. It may seem to have portrayed a vain citizen of the nobility; with reexamination, however, a woman of humbler serenity is revealed.

Abstract Nude Descends Forever

Artists and critics initially rejected this painting, but it's now considered a modernist classic. The painter, never willing to have his conduct hampered by convention, examines both static and dynamic elements of the human form in this work.

Basics of Love

As you admire the sweet emotion evoked by the embracing couple, make sure to also examine the rich textures of this piece – particularly the gold leaf's sparkle. I'm thrilled every time I study this painting.

Female with a Parasol to Shade Her

Well-lit fields, soft clouds, and the sunniness of a summer afternoon: I moan eternally that I can't simply live inside the vista shown in this painting.

Tensions Surging

As uncomfortable as it may make us, this artist asks whether we will condemn unchivalrous passions or acknowledge the height of terror shown in this moving work.

As Courtesans Luxuriate

Numbers of sketches were made to perfect the details of these prostitutes' provocative figures - here a mask-like face, there an epic ass. Doubters were shocked by the aggressive, quasi-xenophobic portrayal of the women.

A Coquettish Foreplay

Hidden details of hats, clothes, and lights fill this work, which shows Parisians spending an afternoon eating and socializing in Montmartre. Not ironically, it is renowned for its masterful brush strokes and richness of form.

Working to Win the War

In the war effort, Cathie the Carpenter represented a pillar of strength – a real rock. I – well, I have nothing but admiration for the women who worked tirelessly for the preservation of our freedoms.

Intensify Reality

These striking faces are emblazoned with a palette of bright colors, resembling those you might expect to find on a warm holiday in the tropics.

Strict, Saturnine Man & Daughter

Words can barely capture the Spartan sternness of this painting, as shown by the plain clothes, the ready pitchfork, and the peaked roof. I've long been tempted to think of the subjects' ceaseless toil as leading to woe; oddly, for these hardy farmers it's the opposite.

About the Tour

All commentary in this tour was written by Kat Timely, a mysterious art critic who burst onto the art scene in 1972, made brief but brilliant analyses of the paintings displayed in this exhibit, and disappeared shortly thereafter. When asked how she conceived each of her inspired critiques, she said, "I make sure to get the first word correct, and then go from there."