

Season 2, Episode 2 notes

Episode 11: On Disability

This episode of *Unboxing the Canon* introduces the topic of disability and the visual arts, looking at both historical and contemporary examples. We consider the near absence of visible disability in the history of Western art and discuss how some contemporary artists are representing disability in powerful ways. Beginning with Diego Velázquez's 1656 painting *Las Meninas*, this episode examines it and other historical works through the ideas of contemporary artist, writer and disability activist, Riva Lehrer. Then we turn towards the work of Persimmon Blackbridge, a Canadian artist whose work touches on disability, institutionalization, censorship, and queer identity. We demystify the artist-genius myth and end with a brief discussion about how curatorial choices can make art more accessible.

Sources + further reading:

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Music Credits:

Jaroslav Jezek, *Bugatti Step (1931)*.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jaroslav_Jezek_Orchestra_Bugatti_Step_1931.ogg.

Robert Schumann. *Scenes from Childhood, Op. 15 No. 3: Blind Man's Buff*, n.d.

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Credits

Season 2 of Unboxing the Canon is produced by Professor Linda Steer for her course "Introduction to the History of Western Art" in the Department of Visual Arts at Brock University. Our sound designer, co-host and contributing researcher is Madeline Collins.

Brock University is located on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

Our logo was created by Cherie Michels. The theme song has been adapted from “Night in Venice” Kevin MacLeod and is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution International 4.0.

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