



ESL Podcast 30 – At the Art Exhibit

GLOSSARY

exhibit – a display, usually of artwork; a collection of artwork shown for others to see

* Several photographs that Masako took were included in an art exhibit that many people from the community went to see.

contemporary – of the current time period; created in recent years, from the 1950s through today

* Gavin did not like contemporary art much, and he preferred older artwork from the late 1800s and early 1900s.

up and coming – new but becoming more popular or more successful

* Lizzy was an up and coming singer who already had many fans.

retrospective – a display that shows a range of artwork created over many years; an art display that shows how an artist's work has developed over his or her lifetime

* The retrospective included artwork that the artist first created over 15 years ago.

painting – images created on a flat surface using paint, a type of liquid coloring that dries to create a more permanent image

* The colors in Leroy's painting were very calming because he wanted to create a relaxing mood.

sculpture – a figure, which usually has height, width, and depth, that is carved or molded into a form from a material like clay, wood, or stone

* The artist was able to create very realistic sculptures of people and animals using clay.

mixed media – art that is created from a combination of different artistic techniques or practices

* Caterina worked with mixed media, usually using a combination of paint, ink, and clay to create her artwork.

versatile – able to work with many different types; able to adapt or be altered to be suitable

* Tomatoes are a versatile food that can be used in many types of dishes.

opening – the first day that an artistic display is able to be viewed

* Many important people in the art field went to the opening of the artist's show.



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wine and cheese reception – a short formal party in which wine (an alcoholic drink made from grapes) and cubes of cheese (a solid food made of cow's milk) are served as guests walk around and talk

* After the play, the actors were invited to socialize at a wine and cheese reception.

gallery – a room filled with artwork at a museum or exhibit (an art display), especially when multiple rooms of artwork exist in the same building

* Each gallery contained the artwork of a different Chinese artist.

art critic – someone whose job is to judge artwork; a person who develops a professional opinion about artwork, and who shares that opinion with others

* After viewing many of Damien's pieces, the art critic gave her opinion that Damien was a very talented artist.

collector – someone who buys and owns artwork for his or her own enjoyment or as an investment (spending money to earn more money)

* Antoinette was a collector of expensive vases and glass sculptures.

curator – someone who takes care of a collection of artwork at a museum or display; someone who protects and organizes artwork at a display

* The curator knew a lot about every piece of artwork in the display and was happy to share his knowledge with people who came to view them.

gracious – polite; pleasant to talk to and be around; kind and pleasant

* Even though Ellis was very wealthy, he was also gracious and never acted as though he was better than anyone else.

talent – skill; the ability to do something well

* Ramona had a real talent for cooking, and the food she made always tasted great.

still to come – going to happen in the future; a phrase used to state that something has not occurred yet, but will come in the future

* Ken was very busy and had a large number of tasks to finish, but busier days were still to come.



CULTURE NOTE

Why Starving Artists are Starving

We sometimes describe “artists” – painters, writers, sculptors, and more – as “starving artists.” “To starve” means to be very hungry, so hungry that you are slowly dying. To say “I’m starving,” however, usually just means “I’m very, very hungry.” But we describe artists as starving because they often don’t make very much money, and so don’t have money to buy food.

A 2012 article in the *New York Times* may help explain why artists don’t have any money, at least the ones that go to college to study art. The newspaper article listed the most expensive and least expensive “public” (owned or supported by the government) and “private” (not owned or supported by the government) universities in the United States for both tuition and room and board. “Tuition” is the price you pay to take classes. “Room and board” includes the money for where you live (room) and what you eat (board). The *New York Times*’ calculations take the total price you would pay for college and then subtract the average amount of “scholarships and grants” (money given to you that is not a loan) students receive. So, for example, if the total price of going to Podunk University is \$60,000, and the average student gets \$40,000 in grants, the “net” price is \$20,000.

Here are the five most expensive private colleges in the United States, along with the “net price” (total cost minus average scholarships and grants) per year:

School of the Art Institute of Chicago: \$41,433
Rhode Island School of Design: \$38,872
The New School (New York): \$38,497
Art Center College of Design (California): \$38,256
Ringling College of Art and Design: \$37,222

You can see what four of the five schools have “in common” (ways they are alike): they’re all universities “dedicated to” (devoted to; which specialize in) art and design. A student who attends one of these art colleges will pay more than nearly any other type of school, including world-famous universities like Harvard or Yale. But the reason isn’t that schools like Harvard and Yale have cheaper tuition. It’s because schools of art and design don’t usually give very many scholarships or grants to students the way other universities do. Students in art schools have to take loans or get the money themselves, meaning of course they may have more “debt” (money one owes to someone else) when they graduate.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 30 – At the Art Exhibit.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 30. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this episode, we're going to discuss taking a trip to a museum. Let's get started.

[start of story]

I really wanted to see the new exhibit at the art museum, and I invited Lucy to come along. We both like contemporary art, and this was an exhibition by an artist we've both liked ever since she was up-and-coming 10 years ago.

This exhibit was a retrospective, so there was going to be a lot of different types of work by the artist. There would be some of the artist's paintings, her early work. There would also be some of her sculptures. Her most recent work is mixed-media. She is very versatile, and that's one of the reasons I like her work so much.

We were going to the opening of the exhibition, with a wine and cheese reception for the artist. When we arrived in the main gallery, there were already a lot of people there. Looking around, I could see that some of the people were artists themselves and others were art critics. I'm sure there were collectors there, too. I knew the curator and looked around for him. I spotted him talking with a group of people in the corner.

After a little while, the curator said a few words and then introduced the artist. We got a chance to meet her briefly and she was very gracious. I'm glad that someone with her talent has made it in the art world. That's not easy to do. And I think her best work is still to come.

[end of story]

Today we enter the world of art and art exhibits. I talked about a trip that Lucy and I took to see an "exhibit at the art museum." An "exhibit" (exhibit) is a special collection of art that you go to see. Sometimes exhibits are of one particular artist's work, like the exhibit in the story. And sometimes, they are of art from a



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certain a period of time. For example, here in Los Angeles, a few years ago, there was an art exhibit about King Tut and ancient Egypt; that was a special exhibit.

I said, “I invited Lucy to come along.” To ask someone “to come along” means to ask that person to go somewhere with you. The type of exhibit that Lucy and I saw was “contemporary art.” “Contemporary” (contemporary) means of the current time period. So, “contemporary art” would be art that was made within the last 10 years or so. Contemporary art is also sometimes called “modern art,” although the term “modern” can refer to anything from the 20th century or, now, the 21st century.

I said that we had both liked this artist “ever since she was up-and-coming 10 years ago.” “Ever since” means after a certain time. For example, “Ever since I got back to Los Angeles, the weather has been beautiful” means that the weather has been beautiful from the time I returned until now. “Up-and-coming” (up-and-coming) is an expression we use for anyone – an artist, an actor, a politician – who is not yet famous or successful but will be in the future. Usually, we say this about a young artist or a young actor or anyone who is just starting out but who will probably become very popular.

I said that the exhibit or “show” we went to see “was a retrospective.” A “retrospective” (retrospective) is an exhibit that shows you the history of an artist’s work from the beginning. So, for example, a retrospective of movies by the famous Japanese director Kurosawa would include his early films, such as Rashomon, as well as later films like The Seven Samurai. If you’ve never seen these movies, I can highly recommend them. And my apologies to our Japanese listeners if I have mispronounced those names.

Back to our story, I said that this exhibit was a retrospective, and that it included “some of the artist’s paintings.” “Paintings” (paintings) are pictures that are made with paint: water-based paint, oil-based paint, acrylic paint, and so forth. I said that the paintings were part of her “early work.” When talking about art, we use the word “work” to mean the things that the artist has produced. The exhibit also had some of the artist’s “sculptures.” “Sculptures” (sculptures) can be made from many different materials. The “Venus de Milo,” the famous Greek statue in the Louvre Museum in Paris, was made from marble.

The most recent work by the artist we went to see was “mixed-media.” In modern art, many times the artist will combine different types of art: movies and music and pictures and so forth. When there are different art media used at the same time, we say it is “mixed-media.” I said that the artist we saw was “versatile.” “To



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be versatile” (versatile) means to be able to do many different things. I am not very versatile, for example.

The exhibit included a special party to celebrate the start of the exhibit, called an “opening” (opening). In the movie world, the first time a movie is shown is called a “premier.” But for a painter or a sculptor or anyone whose work is shown in a museum, it is called an “opening.” You can have an opening at a museum. You can also have an opening at an art gallery. A “gallery” (gallery) of art is a store that sells art, and it can also be part of a museum. So, we can use the term “gallery” to mean either part of a museum or a store that sells art.

At most openings, there is some sort of food and something to drink. The most common food and drinks, or “refreshments,” at an art opening are “wine and cheese.” “Wine” (wine) is, of course, something that you shouldn’t drink too much of, and “cheese” (cheese) is something very delicious that is made from cow or goat milk. We would call this a “wine and cheese reception.” “Reception” (reception) is just another word for a celebration or a party. An “art reception” is a very “low-key” party; there is not a lot of dancing or loud music. An art reception is much quieter than a wedding reception, for example.

I said that I saw many different people at the opening, and that some of the people I saw were “art critics.” A “critic” (critic) is anyone who writes for the newspaper or is on television and comments or gives an opinion about how good a movie is or how good a piece of art is.

I said that there were also probably “collectors” at the opening. “Art collectors” (collectors) are usually people who have a lot of money who buy art to put in their homes. They call these people “collectors” because they collect the art – they keep the art. We also use the term “collectors” to refer to anyone who likes to collect certain things. For example, there are some people who like to collect dolls and some people who like to collect famous photographs. These are also collectors.

The person at the museum who organizes the exhibits is called a “curator.” The “curator” (curator) decides which pieces of art to show and how they will be displayed. I said that I knew the curator and that I “spotted him talking with a group of people.” “To spot” (spot) someone means to find or to see the person you’re looking for in a large crowd or in a large room. For example, “I can’t find my wife in this crowded room, but then I spot her – she’s the beautiful woman standing at the door.” That’s what “to spot” means. You can also spot a thing: “I was walking down the street and I spotted a penny.” So, I picked it up and put it in my pocket.



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The curator “said a few words.” The expression “to say a few words” means to stand up in front of a group of people and say something, but not for very long. That’s why we say “a few” words – not many words. Often you will hear this expression at a party like a birthday party. Someone will say to the person whose birthday it is, “Would you say a few words?” This means, “Will you stand up and say something to everyone?”

I said we were able to meet the artist, and that she was “very gracious.” “To be gracious” (gracious) means to be polite, to be kind, to be nice. I said that I was happy that “someone with her talent” had “made it in the art world.” “Talent” (talent) is an ability or a gift. Usually, we talk about talent when we are talking about some special ability that someone has. “To make it” means to be successful. “I hope to make it in the acting world” means I hope to be successful in that area.

Finally, I said that I thought this artist’s best work was “still to come.” “Still to come” means that we’re still expecting it – it hasn’t happened yet. “The end of this television series is still to come.” It’s in the future.

Now let’s listen to our story, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

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[end of story]

Thanks to our wonderful scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, for her hard work. And thanks to you for listening. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Come back and listen to us again here on ESL Podcast.

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