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Voices of the Exhibition:The Rise of Ekphrasis During the 20th Century Through Imagism and Visual Art Museums

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Voices of the Exhibition:
The Rise of Ekphrasis during the 20th Century
through Imagism and Visual Art Museums

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Humanities

By

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GRADUATE SCHOOL

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 I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
SUPERVISION BY Zachary Stephen Moore ENTITLED Voices of the Exhibition: The
Rise of Ekphrasis During the 20th Century Through Imagism and Visual Art BE
ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this research is to identify main causes for the expansion of ekphrastic poetry during the 20th century and how it became a more widely used genre. The goal is to show how ekphrasis contributed to the growth of the interdisciplinary partnership between museums and poets. By evaluating two factors that led to a growing interest in the genre and increased accessibility to poetry and the visual arts. This is done by looking at ekphrastic work by Imagist poets like Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington and H.D. as well as the growth of 20th century museum accessibility and educational practices. The expansion of ekphrasis' use resulted in a wider exposure to poetry, the visual arts and museums. Ekphrasis assisted in accomplishing mutual goals of exposing and educating the public to both mediums, which resulted in better understanding of the genre and its influence on museums throughout the 20th century.

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I.   <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

My experience and fascination with ekphrasis is connected to the use of the genre within museums. In my time interning at the Dayton Art Institute in Dayton, Ohio, I was able to experience firsthand how ekphrastic poetry enhanced an ongoing exhibition while educating and exposing the visitor and reader to the visual arts. The event brought together around a dozen poets from the community and invited them to the special exhibition *Andy Warhol: Athletes and the Art of Sport.* Poets selected a work or works to respond to and translated their experience using language. The event took place towards the end of the exhibition and welcomed guests from different demographics and levels of knowledge of both poetry and the visual arts. The ekphrastic poems informed, entertained and gave a voice and motion to the paintings, sculptures and artifacts within the exhibit. The audience left more aware of not just the visual art and artists but the historical background of the movements and the figures portrayed within them. Ekphrasis demonstrates the bond and partnership between the visual and literary arts that advanced the goals of museum practices. Ekphrasis developed into a tool, a technique and a genre that pulls from two mediums and displays the relationship between the visual world and that of language.

While the relationship between visual art and poetry dates back to the time of Homer, it wasn't until the 20th century that the visual arts impacted it on a greater scale. In the beginning, Greek sculpture depicting gods and heroes inspired poets, giving them a voice that would tell their story. These bronze and marble masterpieces powered poets'

inspiration just as medieval tapestries and painted landscapes did as time went on. As literature and visual arts scholar James A. W. Heffernan argues in his book *Museum of Words,* "The production of Ekphrastic poetry has become nothing less than a boom…ekphrasis in modern and post-modern poetry becomes still more striking when we consider that at least one poem about a work of visual art has come from almost every major poet of our time" (135). His argument centers on the increasing amount of ekphrastic work written over the course of the 20th century that is cataloged in chapbooks, anthologies and even museum collections. This ranges from Amy Lowell's ekphrastic series based on lacquer prints to Richard Aldington's poems from his visits to the British museum to later works like Anne Sexton's "Starry Night" and Wallace Stevens's Picasso-inspired "Man with the Blue Guitar". The sheer volume of ekphrastic poetry grew as the century progressed, the growth of museums expanded and the visual arts became more easily accessible within museums.

Heffernan is not alone. The interest in and use of ekphrasis proliferated during the last half of the 20th century as it began being used in museums, education programs and in publications. Poets, scholars and museum curators have all joined the growing interest in this genre as they trace back its influence throughout the last century. Scholar Barbara Fischer states, "Ekphrasis has become not simply a subgenre but a pervasive poetic strategy" (187). She says this in reflection of the growth of ekphrastic poetry from the opening stages of modernism to the later 20th century. The result was that ekphrasis, once considered a subgenre due to its minimal use, became something larger. Modernism, but primarily Imagism, attached itself to visuals or sensory ideals, which lay the groundwork

for ekphrasis to become a poetic genre in itself. It became a symbol of the growing relationship between the visual arts and poetry. The question is, why was this the case in the 20th century and not before?

Scholars assert multiple reasons for the rise of ekphrasis on a wide scale, including technology, easier country-to-country mobility, artistic movement and changing cultural and political landscapes. Advances in technology provided easier and faster capability to view and document the visual arts while giving the capability to preserve both visual and literary work. Technology also made travel from one location to another quicker and easier, be it miles or hundreds of miles. Technology provided increased mobility and distribution while artistic movements and the social and political landscapes allowed for ekphrasis and interest in the cross-disciplinary arts to grow. Literary and artistic modernism emphasized cooperation between the different arts, which is seen through movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism and Imagism. The social and political landscape contributed due to the rejection of elements of prior movements, and political and social events such as World War I. They looked towards new ways to represent and reflect on the modern world by using elements of the physical world, past and ancient cultures and relationships between the different creative disciplines.

All played a role in the development of 20th century ekphrasis; but why did it flourish so much in the 20th century and not earlier? I will argue for two factors. First, the rise of Imagism allowed poets to change the way they see the world, but also to document it. Second, in public museums, the changing curatorial, educational and exhibition practices gave these poets the objects, the environment and a growing mutual partnership

to use. Imagism provided a style that centered on tangible and concrete experiences and images for ekphrasis, while museums gave to ekphrasis an increase in accessibility to the visual arts, and a goal to promote awareness and education to the visual arts. Both provide essential components that allowed ekphrasis to expand its influence.

Scholars argue and highlight problems relating to the success of the genre. Arguments and contributing opinions include Stephen Cheeke's on the negative effects of museums' intrusion into ekphrasis or Murrey Krieger's on ekphrasis as more of an illusion to the reader and not a true representation. My argument relies on the origin story that laid the framework for the arguments of Cheeke and Krieger. The argument on the influence of Imagism on ekphrasis is supported by numerous scholars, including Slawomir Wacior, James Heffernan, Elizabeth Loizeaux and Catherine Paul. Their research into different issues provides similar support for the major role that I believe Imagism had on the initial attraction to the visual arts and how the style had a ripple effect across the artistic medium.

In the second part of my argument, Catherine Paul and Barbara Fischer provide support to similar ekphrastic components on the museum, in particular the effects of museum accessibility, education and exhibition practices on ekphrasis and its readers. Their research provides similar thoughts and theories behind the embrace of the cross-disciplinary method of exposing and educating the public, while also showing that accessibility was fundamental in marketing the modern museum. These scholars will provide the most support for my arguments due to their emphasis on ekphrasis and the connection with museums.

<u>The Rise of Imagism</u>

Imagism began as poets changed from Romantic ideals rooted in individualism, physical and emotional passion, and an interest in the mystic and supernatural to a focus on concrete images, details and physical experiences. Romantic poets used the power of internal components such as emotions, individual ideology and thought to advance the subject and theme of their poetry. The internal process of observing and commenting placed a distance from the external and tangible world that later movements would emphasize. In Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "To The Moon" and Amy Lowell's "Spring," the contrast between the styles is visible due to several components. The distance of the speaker and the object or scene that is constructed shows the varying emphasis on the connection to the physical world. The sense of closeness of the speaker to audience mirrors that of the image of the poet standing in front up or near the work of art, which provides a stark difference between the two. This is seen in poems like Amy Lowell's "Spring" and Ezra Pound's "The Picture."

In Shelley's poem, the speaker talks to the reader in the style of a monologue, while never actually setting the scene. The speaker is primarily telling the reader what he thinks or feels instead of showing the reader. He writes "Art thou pale for weariness/Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,/Wandering companionless,/Among the stars that have a different birth" (To the Moon 1-4). In contrast, Lowell paints a scene for the reader using details and physical objects. Her speaker and subject focus on the external setting and the details of the physical scene, which allows the reader to experience or recreate more elements of the precise scene or image. Lowell writes,

> He wore a coat
>
> With gold and red maple leaves,
>
> He was girt with the two swords,
>
> He carried a peony lantern.
>
> When I awoke,
>
> There was only the blue shadow of the plum-tree (Spring 1-6).

Lowell's use of concrete details and objects demonstrates how the external and physical world plays a larger role. The speaker becomes the observer and translator in interpreting what the poet saw or experienced. In contrast, Shelley and Romanticism used the speaker to relay the internal thoughts and feelings of the poet to convey the message.

The speaker treats the image in both poems differently as well. Shelley constructs a more generalized image, with language and the voice leading the reader through the poem. In the lines "Wandering companionless/Among the stars that have a different birth,/And ever changing, like a joyless eye" (2-5) Shelley avoids elevating a single image to the focus of the poem. The speaker becomes the main element that drives the poem. On the other hand, Lowell uses the direct connection the speaker has created by the closeness to emphasize key details of the image. In the lines "He wore a coat/With gold and red maple leaves" and "There was only the blue shadow of the plum-tree" Lowell uses the details to draw the reader's attention to the specifics of the image.

The direct connection or experience and close bond that is constructed using the image produces the shift that separated Imagism from the Romantics. Literary critic Slawomir Wacior states in *Explaining Imagism* that poetry "based on descriptiveness,

predictable visualization, sentimental emotions and regular rhythms was replaced by poems based on images which try to capture the unique nature of a singular experience in an objective, precise, condensed and fresh way" (41). Wacior highlights the differences between the Romantics and Imagists as seen with Shelley's and Lowell's poems. The "descriptiveness and predictable visualizations" provided the antithesis for the split between the two movements. Imagism was not a complete rejection of Romanticism but a refocusing on the object and an increase in descriptiveness and visualizations.

Poets such as Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, Amy Lowell and William Carlos Williams incorporated their everyday life in their work. They used detailed descriptions, a focus on objects and a tightness in their language to recreate their experiences and the images they encountered. Richard Aldington, who used his experience in the British Museum, wrote "At the British Museum" and "To a Greek Marble." Likewise, Ezra Pound wrote "To Whistler: American" because of a personal experience and reflection on an exhibit at the Tate Museum. Their personal and direct interaction with museums and exhibitions provided the close connection to the location and the images that were passed on to their speaker. Experience became the leading source for the interaction between the speaker and the reader by translating the physical experience into a visual one using language. A result was that the reader could seek out the location or object and create an interaction or experience similar to the poet.

Imagist poets documented their experience with a wide range of visual mediums. Greek sculptures from the British Museum influenced Hilda Doolittle (H.D.) and Richard Aldington on their regular visits. Amy Lowell wrote a whole series of ekphrastic poems

based on Japanese lacquer prints. William Carlos Williams shared an interest in paintings by artists such as Pieter Bruegel. Then there was Ezra Pound, who drew from many areas of the visual arts with poems about his interaction with paintings (by artists like James Abbot McNeill Whistler), Greek and Egyptian sculpture and cultural artifacts from China and Japan.

<center>Ekphrasis</center>

Ekphrastic poetry is defined and classified by a variety of scholars but most definitions contain three main components. The first component is concerned with the writer's response to the work of art. Poet Cole Swenson states that it is "the product of a writer's contemplation before painting, sculpture…or other specialty work (American Letters & Commentary 122). The reaction or experience of the writer represents the external and internal response to the visual art. The second is the act of imitating or recreating, which ekphrastic scholar Murrey Krieger highlights in his statement that ekphrasis "attempts to imitate in words an object of the plastic arts" (Cheeke 24). The second component advances the poet's reaction into the action of imitating or recreating using language. The final component is combining the two mediums by utilizing elements of both and creating a different representation. This is defined by James Heffernan when he states that it is a "verbal representation of visual representation, an exchange by which one medium is translated into the signs of another" (2). The reaction, the recreation and utilization of both mediums encompasses most definitions of ekphrasis and represents the foundation of the accepted definition.

In comparing Romantic ekphrasis to that of Lowell and Imagist ekphrasis, we see an even greater contrast in their approach. In John Keats's *Ode to a Grecian Urn,* the romantic style places the speaker far away from the object. The speaker uses the urn more as a symbol or metaphor then as a physical object. In doing so, Keats produces that distance from the work and emphasizes more on the internal environment of the speaker's thoughts, and emotions. The distance is seen in the opening lines when he writes,

>Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
>
>>Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
>
>Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
>
>>A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
>
>What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
>
>>Of deities or mortals, or of both, (1-8)

Keats doesn't produce a visual recreation of the urn in his poem. He focuses on the urn as a symbol or metaphor that creates the narrative for his poem. Additionally he doesn't identify a single urn besides general description like "What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape" or "Of deities or mortals." Both lines produce a vague description that enhances the distance the speaker has from the urn.

Imagist poets, on the other hand, may focus on the concise imagery of the urn, the aesthetics or even how it relates to the larger scene of the gallery or museum. Imagists place their speakers within the image or scene and allows the speaker's personal experience to be at the forefront of the poem. The speaker is directly interacting, in front

of or in close proximity to the work of art. This is what separates Romantic from Imagist ekphrasis: the personal experience and close proximity to the image or scene. The speaker is a part of the scene by conveying a closeness with the image unlike that of Romanticism, which will be a factor in the bond Imagism will have with museums during the early 20th century.

The focus on the image represents a bond between not just the Imagist poet and the object, but the poet and the physical world. In the use of the image and placing the speaker next to or a part of the image, it represents a closer attention to the world around them. Constructing an image that captures the visual through description becomes a trait in Imagism that will establish the relationship with museums. In conveying and describing their interaction with either the museum or visual art experience, the poet constructs a visual and sensory recreation. In doing so, the poet produces new meaning that can be manipulated in a variety of ways depending on how the image is viewed. The Imagist poet relies on description, perspective and other physical elements of the image. Humanities scholar Willard Spiegelman supports this by arguing that "Description makes difference; consequently, in poetry, it also makes meaning" (25). Dr. Spiegelman uses three words that hark back to Wacior's argument about Imagism, "description," "difference," and "meaning." Imagism relies on the visual recreation of an image through description and meaning, which produces a new perspective or way to view the world.

Lastly, the image that is so essential to Imagism is enhanced by the personal and direct experience and interaction of the poet. The poet constructs an intimate and unobstructed sense of how the poet experienced the work of art. The poet is a guide. The

key here is that the poet shows, unlike in Romantic ekphrasis, where the speaker told the reader and relied on language and a speaker who was some distance away from the subject. The direct personal experience is fundamental for Imagist ekphrastic poetry because it allows for the distance to be eliminated and thus provide a close interaction that the reader can feel. The direct personal experience will also be important in the growth of the relationship between poets and museums during the 20th century. The experience and interaction between images, or in the case of museums, the visual arts, is a factor which both areas heavily focus on to push forward and achieve their individual goals. As we progress, the individual personal experience will highlight the natural attraction between both groups and how the result of this was the growth and expansion of ekphrasis.

20th Century Museums

Museums began changing their curatorial and exhibition practices to better preserve their work, and to attract and educate a wider audience. Some initiatives included: paring down displayed materials to only the most noteworthy and influential (both historically and culturally), a new focus on special exhibitions, educating the community and constructing an inclusive atmosphere. All initiatives contributed to two primary factors: increasing accessibility to the visual arts and promoting awareness through education. This affected ekphrastic poetry by providing an easier accessibility and a more focused experience. The increase in awareness and education by the use of

informational panels, museum publications and in-house programs led to an audience that was more familiar with and knowledgeable about specific museums, visual art and artists.

The accessibility of museums and the visual arts were crucial in 20th century ekphrastic poetry. Museums since the 19th century have been shifting towards modernization in all aspects from presentation to preservation. As they entered the 20th century, emphasis on education and preserving artifacts and objects of visual arts became a main goal of museums. Likewise, museum culture (social, economic and political factors) was evolving to meet the new curatorial and educational goals. Museums broke down the exclusive culture that had promoted arts for the elite and educated during the 19th century. They replaced it with one that wanted to integrate all demographics from their communities. This made the visual arts more accessible in terms of seeing, understanding and recognizing.

The general public was at the heart of the educational goals and ambitions of 20th century museum practices. In *Museum Exhibition: Theory and Practice,* museum science critic David Dean notes that "People are the only reason for museums to exist" (19). This is why museums increased accessibility and wanted to educate the public on the visual arts. The changing political, social and economic landscape of the 20th century forced them to modify their collections and curatorial policies in order to increase their appeal. They worked with the community to educate and spread awareness through in-house informational features like publications and exhibition panels. They also incorporated special exhibitions like James Abbott McNeill Whistler Exhibit at the Tate Museum, which was documented by Ezra Pound in 1912 and educational lectures. Their

educational outreach and desire to spread awareness was aided by poets like Pound, who wrote ekphrastic poems and assisted in their educational goal. Imagist poets became a secondary educational source, a museum critic and a guide to the particular institution for other poets and potential visitors.

Ekphrastic poetry benefitted from this because as poetry and visual art scholar Elizabeth Loizeaux argues, "With the growth over the past 200 years of the museum as the primary place for viewing works of art, the experience of the museum culture…including reproductions and art-historical commentary, now typically informs the writing of ekphrastic poetry" (80). Loizeaux lists a set of expectations of the museum, which contribute to the overall experience. The words "now typically informs the writing of ekphrastic poetry" supports modern ekphrastic poetry by emphasizing the contributions museums have given to the genre.

II.   <u>IMAGISM</u>

The formation of Imagism is credited to Ezra Pound, who wrote the essay *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste*. His essay laid out the fundamental tenets of Imagism, which focused the poet on elements of the physical world. This included emphasis on images or objects, and a tightness of language, which positioned the poet in close proximity or as a part of the image. The poet's personal experience is reproduced or translated and thus the feeling of closeness to the object is created. Wacior provides support by stating that Imagism is "based on images which try to capture the unique nature of a singular experience in an objective, precise, condensed and fresh way" (41). He uses the phrase

"singular experience," which as with Lowell's poem, had an interaction or experience directly with the print. Lowell's poem uses a series of images throughout to manifest a recreation of the work, but also her experience, which is done as Wacior would say, "in an objective, precise, condensed and fresh way." Imagism is about using language to represent images in a different perspective, manner or style. This could include a direct focus on the object as seen in Lowell's recreation of the lacquer print, or as a reproduction of an experience like that in Richard Aldington's "At the British Museum." The key is emphasis on the tangible image and the recreation, translation or development of it using language.

Wacior continues to support by saying, "Imagism adapts the manner of looking and speaking about the surrounding world to the expectations of new reality. Because of the uniqueness the images created by the poets…were intended to intensify our cognitive capabilities in contact with the new, much more complex reality" (41). A single image can conjure countless experiences and interactions. The phrase "new reality" tied with "the surrounding world" emphasizes the concept of observing and evaluating images so that their full potential can be experienced. Imagists fully embraced the images, objects or scenes they were recreating because they became a part of it due to their personal experience and the connection with the image. Amy Lowell's "Spring Dawn" shows how Imagism became engrossed in the images by placing the speaker right next to them. The speaker reports to reader what she is physically seeing as if she is a part of it or just off to the side of the image.

In the physical sense of a photograph or painting, poets in the Imagist movement used similar compositional methods to those artists would use. Modernist scholar John Steven Child states that in modernist form, which Imagism is a part of, writers tend to place attention on the physical atmosphere, the characters and the settings over plot. In Imagist poetry this is accomplished by the poet using description and images. This is clearly seen in the opening stanza of Richard Aldington's poem "To a Greek Marble":

> I have whispered thee in thy solitudes
>
> Of our loves in Phrygia,
>
> The far ecstasy of burning noons
>
> When the fragile pipes
>
> Ceased in the cypress shade,
>
> And the brown fingers of the shepherd
>
> Moved over slim shoulders;
>
> And only the cicada sang. ("Greek Marble" 1-8)

Aldington emphasizes the atmosphere by using words like "whispered" and "solitudes," which produce an intimate and close feeling between the speaker and the image. The language selection enhances the scene by using precise details or actions that convey a sense of closeness to the object. The reader is respectful and appreciates the sculpture while the atmosphere provides clues to the speaker's passion for the visual art. Finally the scene is built from the atmosphere constructed by the speaker's interaction but also the physical details present in examples like "Ceased in the cypress shade" and the "cicada

song." Aldington uses features of the atmosphere, speaker and physical scene to translate an experience.

The capturing of the scene, image or experience within language is an essential quality in Imagism. The first two tenets emphasize the connection and focus on being in close proximity to the object while using language to describe and make the image the center of the poem. The image represents the connection and closeness of the poet to the physical world. It is also the tangible component for the physical reproduction, which translates the poet's experience to the reader. The focus of the images ties in with the use of concise language by polishing and creating a vibrant image. In Pound's essay *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste*, he states that "Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something" (A Few Don'ts). The use of only essential words that contribute to the image causes the physical details and position within the scene or experience to stand out. In Lowell's "Spring Dawn," the man's coat in contrast to the green and gold maple leaves produced a stark visual that highlights the setting and the character of the man.

Ekphrasis greatly benefitted from the first two tenets of Imagism. The works of visual art they used became the main characters within their poems. The physical object and experience with the lacquer print or Greek sculpture is captured by the language and is translated for the reader. Visual art is the foundation of the scene because it is the physical image that tethers the reader to the poet's experience in the medium. As literary critic Joseph Riddel argues in his essay *Decentering the Image: The 'Project' of 'American' Poetics* that, "the nature of the image…displaces time linearity (and succession) into a figural space (a moment in time, producing a formal mirage" (Childs

35). Riddel's argument emphasizes the idea of capturing or freezing the moment in place. Much like a painting, or better yet, a photograph where movement and action becomes static, the viewer sees only a moment in time. Riddel's use of the term "Image" relates to that of Ezra Pound in the sense that if used to its full power, an image can produce powerful translations of experiences. This is the core principle of the genre.

The Image

The image, in both the literary and artistic mediums, is the essential building block of Imagism and the visual arts. Pound argues that in Imagism the image "is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (A Few Don'ts). Pound opens by defining the image in this way to highlight its power and complexities. Pound defines the first tenet of Imagism and provides the answer to why the image is essential to the movement. The "Intellectual and emotional complex" relates to the many perspectives, relationships and translations an image can have on a single person. For example, William Carlos Williams's poem "Landscape with a Fall of Icarus" and W.H. Auden's "Musee Des Beaux Arts" are inspired by the same image, a work by Pieter Breughel the Elder. Their poems concentrate on different components, voices and compositional details of the Brueghel's work and yield completely different finished products. No two experiences or approaches will produce an identical result.

Charles Altieri, a 20th century poetry scholar, argues that the use of language enforced by Pound captures the world around the poet. The images that became a part of Imagist poetry were the reflections and interpretations of the physical world the poets

experienced. Altieri states in regards to Ezra Pound that "If we read him carefully we will see that as he worked on how language provided pictures of the world, he increasingly resisted any notion of the image at static or spatial or disembodied. Pound was committed to the author's picturing the world" (Altieri 19). Altieri uses the word "pictures" in connection to images to emphasize the idea of an expanded scene. Pound is "committed to the author's picturing the world," which leads to the poet to provide motion for an object that may not convey a sense of it.

Similar to Riddel and Child, Altieri homes in on the idea of capturing an image and providing movement that reflects the environment or world beyond the piece. In Aldington's "To a Greek Marble," the image is that of a person viewing a piece of sculpture. The speaker focuses on the singular act of viewing and the initial response to it. Aldington provides motion to the act of viewing by adding commentary and the sense of closeness between the speaker and the sculpture. He captures the environment, the characters and the setting to produce a scene from the world around him.

The first tenet relies heavily on the image component and states that the treatment of the image must be the focus. Images provide a physical element that constructs the environment, setting and characters for the poem. The focus on images produced the capability to convey the poet's experience with the visual arts. These experiences supply motion and a story to the visual arts by allowing the physical details and the work itself to say more. Works of visual art are pre-created, traditionally static images that are single illustrations to a much longer story contained within the work of art. Their environment, how they are displayed and what other objects populate the space around all contribute to

what they have to say. Murrey Krieger argues that poets find great benefits in using visual art as their inspiration in Imagism. He states that,

> "The advantage of having a work of art as an object of ekphrasis is I think, obvious. If an author is seeking to suspend the discourse for an extended, visually appealing descriptive interlude, is he not better off—…to describe an object that has already interrupted the flow of existence with its spatial completeness that has already been created" (8).

Krieger argues that visual art, being something that is motionless and unable to speak can only be translated by the interpretation or experience of the poet. Visual art influences the poet by how they respond to it through the specific images that they wish to focus on or branch out from. Objects that are moving, or capable of speaking, influence the initial reaction of the poet, whereas a silent work of art relies on the audience to say what it means or is doing.

Works of visual art depict ready-made scenes for the poet to explore, interpret and experience. Poets can visualize the scene the art work depicts or use it as an object within a larger place such as a museum or gallery. In both cases, they are static and unchanging, thus perfect for Imagists to use. Imagist poets will utilize visual art as a concrete image or as an object within an image and build a direct connection to the physical experience. The speaker observes and will provide motion or a story that takes place before or after the moment the visual art captures.

The use of Imagist poetry to provide motion for the visual arts displays the direct connection to the relationship between the two mediums. Imagist poetry and the visual arts construct a symbiotic relationship where both benefit from the incorporation of the other. The visual arts are confined within time by the scenes. They provide a single image within the single moment and create a narrative using elements only within the work. Imagism uses its partnership with the visual art to give power to the images within a larger setting, but also the concrete images within the visual work. Imagist poetry provides an extended narrative by focusing on the physical and concrete elements within the context of direct personal experience. Imagist poets receive a wide assortment of images from different locations, time periods and subject matter that they wouldn't normally experience from this relationship.

Literary theorist Michael P. Clarke provides support for this relationship by stating, "Poetry, unlike painting, stands outside time. While this has been parsed as paradigmatic of the rivalry between painting and poetry, it may just as logically be construed as postulating a partnership between the verbal and the visual" (96). At its core the rivalry between visual art and poetry comes from the competition between the acts of visual and verbal representation. Both mediums attempt to fully convey the artist's or author's idea or experience, yet each lacks the visual or verbal component to elevate it further. This rivalry brings the opportunity to remedy what each medium is missing. In Richard Aldington's "To a Greek Marble," we see the relationship and rivalry between Aldington and the sculpture. The sculpture depicts a Greek Goddess frozen in time. The

viewer has only the information which her body position, language and facial expression provides.

The speaker swoops in as the narrator, the storyteller to decide what information goes beyond the physical sculpture. Using his personal experience and the details of the physical object, the speaker translates the story of the sculpture. The speaker, by introducing the Goddess in his opening line "Pótuia, pótuia/White grave goddess,/Pity my sadness,/O silence of Paros" ("Greek Marble" 1-4) provides a personal connection and a stable image for the reader to grasp. The opening line pulls the sculpture from its static moment in time and integrates it into the current moment of the speaker. Aldington uses the lines "I have told thee of the hills/And the lisp of reeds/And the sun upon thy breasts," (18-20) to convey a sense of the present time for the speaker and the subject in the sculpture. It also grants motion to an inanimate object by placing motion around it from the speaker. The emphasis on the object and the personal closeness that Imagism gives, transfers motion from the speaker to the visual work of art.

American poet and literary critic John Hollander takes a similar stance. He argues that Imagist poets use their personal connection with the object and the physical world to provide movement and extend beyond the physical work of art. Like Childs and Riddel, he asserts that the poet translates a close connection with the concrete object through the many different personal experiences and approaches to the tangible image. Hollander argues that, "All the thoughts and experiences in the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have the power to refine and make expressive the outward form…The fancy of perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand

experiences…summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life" (237). He argues that

Imagist ekphrasis doesn't just provide a one-on-one interaction but a worldly experience.

The poem includes elements of both visual and verbal mediums that develop the reader's

connection to the visual arts, poetry and the topics connected to the work.

First Tenet: "The Emperor's Garden" and "The Picture"

The first tenet of Imagism focuses on the connection and concrete traits of objects

and images. The first tenet creates the foundation for the expanded dialogue and

partnership between poets and the visual arts. Works of visual art are in themselves often

objects that portray objects. Aldington's "To a Greek Marble" is inspired by a marble

sculpture that depicts a young Greek goddess. The object is the sculpture, but moving

deeper, it's an image of woman, a Greek deity with symbolic meaning. The physical

work can be put on stage by Imagist as a whole or fragmented out, allowing smaller

details or objects to speak.

Amy Lowell, who is considered an influential architect of the Imagist movement,

wrote a collection of nineteen ekphrastic poems based on oriental lacquer prints. These

poems, which appeared in the 1917 edition of *Some Imagist Poets* represents "a fine

attempt at creating subtle poetic equivalents for painterly pictures" (Wacior 240). This is

because Lowell attempts to reproduce the image of the prints in her poem by focusing on

the details of the image. She places the speaker as an observer of the physical scene of the

print and thus provides a close and trustworthy narrator to the reader. As in "Spring

Dawn," another entry in the lacquer print series, the speaker is seeing the scene within the

print. Lowell animates the print through the use of details and documentation of the image from the speaker's perspective. Additionally, the focus on details of the image forces the objects to take center stage. It becomes the main component of the poem, much like the lacquer prints which, as physical objects, portray a concrete visual for the viewer. The result is that Lowell produces an ekphrastic poem ripe with clear and defined imagery that mirrors the experience of looking at the lacquer print.

The first example of the first tenet comes from Lowell's lacquer print poem entitled "The Emperor's Garden." The artist is unknown but the prints depict specific images, scenes and settings of Japanese life and culture. The use of concrete details and a personal closeness to the subject provides motion for the simple and minimalistic qualities of the print. "The Emperor's Garden" emphasizes the main images of the garden and builds from it. In her poem, Lowell writes,

> Once, in the sultry heat of midsummer,
>
> An Emperor caused the miniature mountains in his garden
>
> To be covered with white silk,
>
> That so crowned,
>
> They might cool his eyes
>
> With the sparkle of snow (1-6)

The scene is built from the first line, which constructs the setting for the poem. The sultry midsummer day is followed by the concrete image of the Emperor in his garden. The image roots the "miniature mountains in his garden" so that it can be visualized by the reader. The last four lines bring a transition from the focus on the Emperor to the garden

to elements of the adjacent images. The garden being covered with "white silk" which will cool his eyes with the "sparkle of white snow" introduces a concrete visual. The use of white in a two different ways produces two images. The first image is of an aging emperor, who now has light or white hair. The use of the image "white silk" gives a feeling of age but strength due to the color and the material. The image of the emperor is not fully described, but because of the association with the "white silk," the reader is given an image to build the visual of him. The second contrasts the "sultry heat of midsummer" with the image of snow. In connection with the "miniature mountains covered with silk", alludes to Mount Fuji, a memorable and strong image that evokes a clear visual for the reader.

The speaker is an observer whose job is to analyze the object from different angles and perspectives. In addition they use their own person and direct interactions and experiences with the object to construct a close connection between them and the image or object. Lowell uses her experience viewing and analyzing the lacquer print to construct the intimate knowledge that the speaker has of the scene. The personal experience provides that close connection, which allows for the images to seem real and tangible. This results in the speaker guiding the reader through the scene, pointing out crucial images of the scene.

We may not be able to see the lacquer print, but the image of the white-haired emperor making the miniature mountains beneath the sultry midsummer heat can be seen. The power behind the images is that the speaker presents them as tangible, detailed. As James Heffernan's states, "To present a painting or sculptured figure in words is to evoke

its power—the power to fix, excite, amaze, entrance, disturb or intimidate the viewer"
(7). The power is in the capabilities that concrete images, and close connections to the
object has on the reader's construction of the visual as they read the poem. Concise
imagery paints a detailed scene for reader.

The second example of the first tenet, Ezra Pound's "The Picture", demonstrates
an intense focus and concentration of the image. It further establishes the speaker's role
as an observer by placing him just off to the side of the poem much like in Lowell's "The
Emperor's Garden." "The Picture" is inspired by Jacapo del Sallaio's painting *Venus
Reclining,* which is in the 15th century Florentine style similar to Sandro Botticelli. The
painting is ekphrasizes earth tones, with the main subject, a partially nude woman in a
reclining pose that appears forced or rigid. The woman becomes the main subject of the
poem, which the speaker addresses and provides motion for much like in Aldington's "To
a Greek Marble."

The speaker uses description to provide information about the woman and the
setting of the painting. The speaker is interpreting the painting, while simultaneously
translating Ezra Pound's direct experience with it. Hans Lund states that "Describing a
picture invariably means interpreting it" (33). The process of describing and pulling
specific details from a work of visual art reveals what the poet deems as essential,
important or interesting. In Pound's "The Picture," the woman's eyes stand out amongst
all the other details and the speaker uses them as the foundation of the translation.

Pound condenses his experience and interpretation down to four lines, which emphasizes the impact the words have on the image. The speaker becomes equally important due to how he interprets the experience.

> The eyes of this dead lady speak to me,
>
> For here was love, was not to be drowned out.
>
> And here desire, not to be kissed away.
>
> The eyes of this dead lady speak to me." (1-4)

Pound focuses in on one of the most complex yet telling traits in the painting, the eyes. He uses the eyes as a vehicle to anchor his first impression by highlighting their intensity. The woman's eyes become the image that drives the speaker and Pound's experience. The speaker positions the phrase "this dead lady" close to the word "eyes," with the result that they bear the sense of lifelessness or loneliness because of their position within the line. The second and third line support the emptiness by stating "For here was love, was not to be drowned out./And here desire, not to be kissed away." The close connection Pound creates for the speaker by placing him as an observer interacting with the painting draws out the emotional experience these lines evoke.

Pound uses the speaker to build upon the dominant image of the woman's eyes. The overall tone is essential to ekphrasis because it describes to the reader what type of light, shadow and feelings surround the images. The physical image is enhanced or dulled by the vibrance of the subject and setting. The earth-tones set a somber or dull atmosphere that Pound creates with "The eyes of this dead lady speak to me." The word "dead" alludes to darker and duller tones, which is continued into the middle section by

using words that indicate past motion like "was" and the phrase "not to be kissed away." Pound emphasizes the tone of the 15th century Florentine painting by maintaining its overall palette.

Pound places an emphasis on the tone and mood to develop the image further. The reader is drawn to the eyes of the lady due to the first and fourth lines. The details of the face are alluded to by the descriptions in middle when Pound writes, "For here was love, was not to be drowned out./ And here desire, not to be kissed away." The reader is offered these details so they can think outside of the static image that the painting captures. They envision the life that exist because of the eyes that Pound sculpted, yet the speaker's image of the woman brings them back to the painting. Pound blends his personal experience, the speaker's interaction and the actual painting to produce a layered image, which results in an enlargement of the painting's subject matter. The woman is the focal point but he presents to the reader a different image. The image that is received depends solely on how the reader interprets the painting and what is before and after the moment that is captured. As Stephen Cheeke states, "In the strongest examples of ekphrasis there is always therefore a sense of extension or enlargement" (3). Pound demonstrates this sense of extension by leading the reader to think beyond the visual of the woman. Cheeke's statement is validated due to the Imagist's use of the objects and the people that the artist provides and extending beyond the frame.

The final line repeats the first and returns the emphasis to the eyes. Pound does this so that the reader is brought back to the main image of the woman reclining. The eyes are the leading object that develops the rest of image visually, but the speaker's

close connection with the subject keeps the lady as the main character. Use of a painting a person or single object as the poet's main focus aids in developing the poem. The speaker can interact on a one-on-one basis and thus provide details solely on the particular work. The speaker's attention is on a single piece of visual art, which reduces the competition between subjects and objects for the reader's attention.

<div align="center">Second Tenet: "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" and "Autumn"</div>

The second major tenet of Imagism touches on the role of language predominately in the use of word restraint. Language was essential in the transition from Romantic ekphrasis to Imagist ekphrasis for to two reasons. Language with an emphasis on word restraint provided the ability for poets to shape their poems to reflect a concrete recreation and interpretation of their personal experience with the visual art. The physical images captured were brought to the full attention of the reader through concise description. Restraint eliminated any words that detracted from the solid image. In Lowell's "The Emperor's Garden," she uses short lines like "in the sultry heat of midsummer," and "miniature mountains in his garden" to produce a vivid and a concise image. The lack of weak or descriptively useless words allows the images to be the main emphasis of the poem.

The second reason is that language and word restraint develops the speaker's link or close connection with the physical work. The use of only words that provide substance, description or emphasis on the object contributes to this feeling that the reader believes that speaker is a part of the scene or just outside the frame. German anglist and

scholar Rainer Emig argues that Imagism shifts "the emphasis from the false alternative of materialist empiricism and idealism to aesthetics" (Emig 210)", which directly correlates to speaker's direct connection and interaction. The focus on the visual and physical composition of images replaces the distance and internal expression that Romanticism pursued. Through the use of word-restraint, the visual qualities of art and the poet's experience can be recreated for the reader.

The second tenet demonstrates how language begins taking charge over the physical objects and images. As Heffernan and Wacior have argued, the images and the tangible experience translated in Imagist poetry use language to shift and present a close connection to the image. The connection transports the reader to experience the visual art intimately and personally. Referencing Iris Murdoch, modernist scholar Jeff Wallace states that "Language...is no longer an empty vessel into which we pour our previously conceived thoughts and ideas; rather, it is the material *in and through which* these thoughts and ideas are conceived" (128). The substance that language installs into ekphrastic Imagism constructs visual recreations of physical experiences. It fills the "empty vessel" with concrete visuals and details while providing a direct and personal experience with visual art.

Murdoch argues that Modernism transformed language. An example comes from William Carlos Williams, who utilized language to strip away all words that do not contribute to the focused image. Every word in his ekphrastic poem must supply details of the visual object, support for the setting or add to the tone or mood. Williams uses the visual art as the template for his piece by transporting the essential images into his poem.

These images become markers that guide the reader from one image to another across the painting. The focused images connect to each other and fill in the spots of the painting that Williams doesn't focus on. The words that remain are concise visuals, details or images that construct the translated experience of the visual work.

In his poem "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" Williams focuses on key images throughout the painting. He uses the painting as the main focus and places the speaker observing and documenting what is happening much like Amy Lowell in her lacquer prints. William's access to the painting is stressed by his emphasis on the image captured instead of the painting being an object within the setting of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels, Belgium. He focuses on the visuals such as the character of Icarus or a boat sailing in the ocean instead of the larger image of the museum. He begins his poem by introducing the artist then repositioning to the main image of Icarus, he writes,

> According to Brueghel
>
> when Icarus fell
>
> it was spring
>
> a farmer was ploughing
>
> his field
>
> the whole pageantry

of the year was

awake tingling

with itself ("Landscape" 1-9)

The opening of the poem presents the reader with Pieter Brueghel, who is presented as the subject being addressed. After initiating the conversation, Williams progresses into presenting concrete visuals and images for the reader. This includes the falling Icarus, a farmer ploughing and the illusion of spring due to the words "awake" and "pageantry." The concise language used to introduce these subjects emphasizes the physical images. The reader begins with a concrete image and moves to another solid image to the next. The shortness of the lines and use of word restraint creates movement or a sense of urgency due to the distance between them.

The second half of the poem guides the reader from concrete visuals to developing the poet's personal connection to the painting. The speaker uses specific images to produce his translation, but by placing that emphasis, the reader views them as the essential component of the painting and bases their reaction on those images. Stephen Cheeke argues that ekphrasis "describes what it sees, but as with any description of a painting, it selects, edits, and reads the image even as it ostensibly goes about merely recording or transcribing its details" (34). The specific images that the speaker selects are major images that connect to their first reaction to the painting. By focusing on these images, the speaker is editing the experience to recreate his initial reaction to the work.

As Williams continues, he shapes his recreation of Pieter Breughel's painting by emphasizing visuals that produce a sense of motion. The shift from one image to the next

is similar to his initial response to viewing the painting. The eyes are drawn to certain

images and as the eyes are pulled around the painting, it fuses life into the painting by

incorporating an outsider's reaction. The effect is that the reader is placed in front of the

painting much like in Richard Aldington's "To a Greek Marble," but their reaction is

focused on the images that stand out. The motion is produced by the interaction between

the visuals and the movement of the eyes to specific images, such as Icarus falling and

the farmer ploughing. It recreates Williams' first response and interaction with the

painting. He writes,

> sweating in the sun
>
> that melted
>
> the wings' wax
>
> unsignificantly
>
> off the coast
>
> there was
>
>
> a splash quite unnoticed
>
> this was
>
> Icarus drowning ("Landscape" 13-21)

Williams use phrases like "sweating in the sun" and "a splash quite unnoticed" to

translate the static painting into an experience in motion. The attention to details of the

scene, characters, and the tone conveys a recreation of his initial response to the painting,

in a way like with Pound's "The Painting," extends beyond the image. The reader can visualize the farmer ploughing his field and going about his business while boats sail away into the distance. They can see the descent of Icarus, the eventual splash and the continuation of life after everything settles. All are components that translate the initial experience that Williams produces by using language to focus on the image.

Murrey Krieger argues that "Ekphrastic ambition gives to the language art the extraordinary assignment of seeking to represent the literally unrepresentable" (9). He claims that ekphrastic poetry cannot truly reproduce a physical image because it lacks the true nature of the natural sign. An object holds a distinct value due to its physical and descriptive properties. A tangible object like Pieter Brueghel's *Landscape with a Fall of Icarus* is a painting that produces a visual aesthetic that Williams tries to recreate his initial reaction using language. The poem cannot capture the full capabilities or meaning of the object. Ekphrasis is not a complete recreation of the visual work, but an attempted recreation of the poet's experience. Imagists use concrete and physical objects as the main stimulant while language constructs a translation and recreation of the experience. Ekphrasis provides a commentary on what and how the poet experiences the visual art while also editing and adding to the static object.

Williams's poem tests Krieger's argument about the recreation of a concrete image or object using language. The product of ekphrasis is rather the recreation of the experience with the visual arts. The physical painting uses specific images that may not be fully represented in language. Williams' initial reaction or response can be recreated using language to direct the reader to elements of his experience.

Amy Lowell provides another example that challenges Murrey Krieger's argument. Lowell's lacquer print series showcases the power that the focus image has on the translation of the poet's experience with the visual arts. Her use of language, like Williams's, provides movement and closeness with the visual art that aids in the personal recreation of the experience. Lowell's poem "Autumn" embraces the style of the lacquer prints (simple, image driven) and relies on an engaging speaker to guide the reader through the work. Her use of clear and concise language translates her experience with the lacquer print. Lowell writes,

> All day long I have watched the purple vine-leaves
>
> Fall into the water.
>
> And now in the moonlight they still fall,
>
> But each leaf is fringed with silver (1-4)

The speaker introduces herself as the observer. The result is that this becomes a first-person account of the image, which makes the reader view this in two different ways. First, being that the speaker as in "The Emperor's Garden" is relaying the images and scene to the reader as an observer. The first two lines, "All day long I have watched the purple vine-leaves/Fall into the water." This sets up a scene where the image is documented and captured using language to put it in motion. The result is that the lacquer print becomes a first-person physical experience.

Second is Lowell translates her reaction to the print by showing the reader what is seen and felt. The scene is therefore documented with the focus on direct personal experience and connection with the print. As Wacior states, "the focus is on the process

of observing, watching the colorful leaves and the visual effect of the change of colour

brought about by the moonlight" (235). He homes in on the key idea of observing

because the process of writing ekphrasis and responding to it requires observation to fully

experience the work. In order for a poet to translate an experience, they must observe the

piece and evaluate what contributes to that experience.

In "All day long I have watched the purple vine-leaves/ Fall into the water", the

speaker conveys the feeling of observing this scene in motion. The last lines "And now in

the moonlight they still fall,/But each leaf is fringed with silver" emphasizes the idea of

change. Both the speaker and Lowell play the role of the observer, watching the changing

scene that is in front of them. This connects to art critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's

observation that, "every detail, every combination of details by which the poet makes his

subject so palpable to us that we become more conscious of the subject than of his

words"(Lund 7). Lowell's language transforms the lacquer print into a concise visual

image that conveys a direct or close connection due to the close personal nature of the

speaker. Krieger's argument is valid in that this reproduction of a true, physical object of

visual art is an illusion. But the use of language and a direct connection and response

provided by the speaker creates a strong recreation to the physical object and experience.

"Autumn," like Williams's "Landscape with a Fall of Icarus," uses a high degree

of concise descriptive words to paint a vivid image for the reader. The minimal use of

words highlights the poet's experience to the reader. Williams uses images to guide the

reader from one point of concentration to the next, which fills in the details of the overall

scene. In the process, he creates movement between the images because of the shifting

focus of the speaker's eyes between images that eliminates space between the images. Likewise, Lowell uses the speaker to produce an observational scene where the motion is provided by the details and images complimenting or resisting one another. In both poems, the use of descriptive and image-specific words recreates the physical work while translating the poet's initial reaction and personal experience.

It is during Imagism that we saw the beginning of the expansion of ekphrasis due to the concentration on physical images and personal experiences. Imagism provided the tools to assist poets in embracing the visual arts and build a partnership between them. The tenets provided poets a new method for translating their personal experience both visually and physically with the visual arts. Imagist ekphrastic poetry presented readers physical connections, reactions and translation the poets had with the visual art. They captured initial responses including what caught their eye, what they liked and disliked, and what they felt was important.

Poetry and stylistic scholar Peter Verdonk highlights this relationship between the two mediums by stating that "in the history of Western art there has traditionally been a strong bond between poetry and visual art" (Language and Literature 234). There has been a natural gravitation of the two mediums towards one another, they share mutual benefits and ambitions. The bond grew stronger due to the shifting emphasis onto the physical and personal interactions and experiences of the poet with the object. The "strong bond between poetry and art" was recognized by the Imagists and greatly assisted in the progression and development of 20th century ekphrasis. But as with the partnership

between the mediums, Imagist needed a partner as well. They discovered one not too far away in the museum.

III.   __THE MUSEUM__

Twentieth century museums provided poets, and the expanding genre of ekphrasis, a greater accessibility to the visual arts. They had a goal to increase exposure to the public while educating them about the medium and the resources that museums had. This was accomplished through the marketing and emphasis on the museum's permanent collection, traveling exhibitions and educational goals, of which culminated in the increasingly connected and personal experiences of visitors and poets alike. The changing curatorial practices, which included the paring down of exhibited materials to the most culturally and historical important, crafted a focused experience for 20th century museum visitors. Museum pieces did not have to vie for attention like in the days of the Salons in Paris or the cabinets of curiosity in cultural and historical museums. The manner of exhibition became centered on providing information and creating a unique and personal experience. A decrease in exhibited materials allowed for focus on single objects or sets of objects, using text panels to highlight crucial information. The visitor, like the Imagist poet, was able to connect and interact without being overwhelmed or distracted by other works.

The large quantity of visual art could only be utilized to its full potential when the viewer understood, recognized and was able to construct their own personal experience.

Direct interaction and connection became a key concept for museums as they approached their audience during the early 20ᵗʰ century. Educational goals expanded the familiarity of the artist and works, which resulted in a more connected museum experience. As visual arts scholar Catherine Paul argues, "To an even greater degree than today, museums at the turn of the 20ᵗʰ century were important cultural institutions, responsible…for determining how people responded to and came to appreciate art" (2). Museums, being the protectors of art, had the responsibility to educate and expose the public to their individual collections. Through the process of updating their preservation, exhibition and educational models, visitors had the capability to create a personal connection and experience to the museum.

Accessibility was crucial to both 20ᵗʰ century ekphrasis and the advancing educational goals of museums. Elizabeth Loizeaux supports this claim by saying that "At the heart of twentieth-century ekphrasis is this growing familiarity of works of art among a broad reading public. Poets write on a Van Gogh or Brueghel or Monet or Hopper aware that those works are available to the eye and the mind's eye of an audience" (4). Familiarity directly relates to the accessibility of the collections and gives a nod towards the educational component of museums. The paring down of their collections allowed for the work that was the most recognizable to be seen. They increased accessibility of targeted works and artists to emphasize those of interest or appropriateness in the current cultural, social and political environment. The result was that the public became familiar with a wide range of artists and styles. Poets began writing about works of visual art and artifacts that the public could identify and become easily connected to.

The poem became an extension of the works of art or museum and provided
another method to experience them. Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington and H.D. imbedded
themselves in the museum landscape by either assisting in their education programs or
becoming frequent visitors. Fischer, in referencing Elizabeth Loizeaux, argues that "the
experience of the museum culture… including reproductions and art-historical
commentary, now typically informs the writing of ekphrastic poetry" (Fischer 3). The
20th century museum and its curatorial and educational practices directly affected these
poets. The expanded genre of ekphrasis was a direct response to the changing museum
landscape through accessibility and education.

A visitor finds a greater connection to and appreciation of work that they already
know or recognize. Museums and poets including Ezra Pound wanted to inspire and
nurture an understanding of and appreciation for works like a painting by Claude Monet
or a bronze statue of a Greek goddess. They believed that this would lead to a greater
interest in the arts and conversation about the educational and cultural importance of
them. The important questions that curators and imagists both were asking about this
included "How can we get people to come and look at the things we've collected? How
can we teach those people to appreciate what we have? What is the relationship between
our treasures and the nation that we represent? And how can we play with the principles
of collecting and curtain to create fresh ways of seeing" (Paul 2). These questions
encompass the educational goals of both museums and poets and lead to what defines the
increase in accessibility to the arts. By exposing and educating the community to the

visual arts and in extension, literary arts, the significance of their existence and collaberation can be seen and valued.

The initial shift towards the new scaled-down exhibition standards reflected how the museum was going to market itself. The highlights of their collection, the design and the atmosphere were all components of the modern museum that were crucial marketing points. As Catherine Paul would argue that "Museums changed the ways in which they displayed their collections, trying to appeal to changing museum audiences" (17). She provides further support by arguing "No longer was collection itself enough: the value of objects lay in what they could convey to the people looking at them. The process of digestion, of using objects to power stories and meanings" (18). The marketing of their collections or how and what was on exhibit, came from the curator, who became prominent during this time. The curator had to set a fire beneath their potential audience so that they would visit not just once but frequently. Art history scholar Kristina Wilson in referencing the Modernists, who had similar ambitions for museums at the time, argues that "Modernists were concerned to put their art in 'wide circulation'—they wanted to reach a broad audience and demonstrate the vitality of modern art for modern society" (2). The concept of putting work up for "wide circulation" links to the mutual goal of exposing and educating their audiences to the visual arts. Imagist did this through ekphrastic poetry and embedding themselves in museums, while museums through accessibility and educational components.

During the 20th century, a few major shifts in curatorial goals and collections practices created the blueprint for how and for whom the museum was going to operate.

Museums progressed away from a place to primarily see art and became a location to experience, interact and learn about it. Examples include: interactive and educational components of exhibitions like isolating specific works with informational text panels, informational publications and educational lectures by scholars and artists. The museum evolved into a place that "enhances the inherent visual power of an object to catch the viewer's attention and stimulate contemplation" (Putnam 36). Independent curator and writer James Putnam argues that the museum was able to utilize the sensory and visual stimulation that visual art had on their audience and provoke "contemplation." They harnessed the power of their collections to promote the personal and connected experience.

Curators also had to address the large extent of their collections and how they were being displayed. Collection preservation became a greater focus, which led to larger quantities of work being in storage and away from the general public. Curators played with the concept of a focused visitor experience by paring down what was on exhibition. The visitors experience needed to be well defined and enriched by those most easily and culturally significant and recognizable. Amy Woodson-Boulton, modern British and Irish history scholar, promotes this by arguing that "the art collections and educational policies of these museums…were amassed and organized not in terms of art history or art education, but to provide art as experience" (6). The experience is the underlying component of both Imagism and the 20th century museum. It connects the audience more closely to the visual art by providing an individual experience that could be shared and recreated.

Accessibility: "At the British Museum," "The Three Cantos" and "Sea-Heroes"

The museum collection enticed visitors to approach the museum and experience it in a different lens. Richard Aldington and H.D. are prime examples of how their experience at the British Museum was translated into their poems. Barbara Fischer states that "Poets, like artists, approach the museum as an arena of perception…They enter the provinces of the visual arts as observers, admirers, and interlopers, and they often tell about their encounters" (Fischer 2). Fischer, much like James Heffernan and Hans Lund, focused her argument on the encounter or experience with the physical object. The poet draws together their experience including the perspective, opinion and feeling towards the visual art into the poem's foundation. The act of "observers, admirers, and interlopers" allows them to view and interact in different manners and produce a layered and complex translation.

Fischer provides further support by narrowing the museum's influence on site specific ekphrasis. She argues that "These poems record sensory, emotive, and linguistic participation in a physical location. They are site specific, and compelling for their emphasis on the media of aesthetic experience, for the foregrounding of the institutional conditions that frame and illuminate" (144). Site-specific ekphrasis utilizes a specific location as the foundation of the poem. It utilizes architectural and sensory details of the physical location while including elements of their collections. The poem becomes a type of travel guide to the reader because all these elements are pulled from a specific site. In poems like Aldington's "At the British Museum," or Ezra Pound's "To Whistler, American," the poet is chronicling an experience at a single site or exhibition. The use of

a specific location enhances the authenticity of the poet's experience by providing

another concrete detail, which allows the experience to be recreated or experienced by

somebody else.

In their many visits to the British Museum, H.D. and Richard Aldington wrote

numerous ekphrastic poems about the visual art and objects they encountered. The

increase in accessibility caused the Greek, Roman and Egyptian sculptures and artifacts

to be readily and easily available for them to see. In his poem "At the British Museum,"

Richard Aldington uses his experience of the museum and its collections to construct a

poem based on his response to not only a single work but the museum itself. He uses the

tenets of Imagism to convey a connected and concise recreation of his visit at the British

Museum. Aldington utilizes the speaker's voice to cast the role of a museum goer or

observer to connect the reader with the museum. In taking this role, the speaker is able to

translate the personal experience more precisely by being a reliable connection with the

museum. Aldington writes,

I turn the page and read:

"I dream of silent verses where the rhyme

Glides noiseless as an oar."

The heavy musty air, the black desks,

The bent heads and the rustling noises

In the great dome

Vanish...

And

> The sun hangs in the cobalt-blue sky,
>
> The boat drifts over the lake shallows,
>
> The fishes skim like umber shades through the undulating
>
> weeds,
>
> The oleanders drop their rosy petals on the lawns,
>
> And the swallows dive and swirl and whistle
>
> About the cleft battlements of Can Grande's castle" ("At the
>
> British Museum"1-14).

He frames the experience of the speaker within the heavy description of the "heavy musty air" to the image of the "great dome." This is enhanced by visuals that populate the mind of the speaker from "cobalt-blue sky" and the image of the fish. Utilizing both the direct and indirect images associated with the museum, Aldington reconstructs his personal interaction. His poem provides evidence to support Fischer's claim about the poet playing the role as an "observers, admirers, and interlopers." He plays all three roles as he describes to us his encounter and interaction with the museum. Aldington's poem provides further support for Fischer's claim on site-specific ekphrasis by centralizing the speaker's experience in a single location. His experience is specifically crafted so that readers are placing themselves in the British Museum and only there.

Breaking down his poem, we see that Aldington places himself at a distance so he can fully embrace the museum as an observer. The opening line constructs this tone by stating a personal action followed by a concise and detailed experience involving what the speaker has read. "I turn the page and read:/ I dream of silent verses where the

rhyme/glides noiseless as an oar" (British Museum 1-3) sets up a scene which puts the readers in the speaker's spot. The simile in the last line produces a second image for the reader to grasp alongside the speaker reading from the book. The production of a direct action (reading from a book) with a secondary image that is concrete but not a direct experience creates layers to the broader image.

As the poem progresses, Aldington turns his observations to the interior of the museum. He writes "The sun hangs in the cobalt-blue sky/The boat drifts over the lake shallows,/The fishes skim like umber shades through the undulating weeds." In describing the interior, he uses a combination metaphor and simile to develop the visual that he is painting. It produces dueling images to correspond with the initial image of the speaker. It supports Barbara Fischer's assertion that "The acts of attention that ekphrasis entails lead these poets in their various ways to question the interplay of surface and circumstance, to reinvent the speaking and seeing self…to weave and unweave the threads of perception and cognition that comprises aesthetic experience" (188). She places the importance of museums and ekphrasis on the translation of museum interactions. Imagist poets like to construct new and translated experiences about specific sites and act as liaison or guides for the reader to the museum. The direct personal experience and connection they construct provide a link between the poet, the artwork, the museum and the reader.

Fischer's arguments line up with museum and smaller art gallery marketing concepts. Scholars and researchers on social impact Ruth Rentschler, Uma Jogulu, Anne Kershaw and Angela Osborne argue that "Art galleries aim to enable visitors to forge

new connections through engagement with and reflection upon the architecture, the experience and the objects" (Journal of Marketing Management 1468). In museums like the British Museum, its connection, created by the collections and curators is the same as the results of ekphrastic poetry. It provides another avenue for visitors to connect, learn and engage in the visual arts, which results in an easier accessibility and understanding. Fischer's argument mirrors that of Rentschler, Jogulu, Kershaw and Osborne by promoting the site specific experience that the museum develops. The connection that visitors form constructs personal experiences that promote specific institutions, and increase awareness of their individual collection.

Finally, the last three lines of "At the British Museum" provide more details that stem from the compounding of the initial direct and metaphoric images. Aldington writes "The oleanders drop their rosy petals on the lawns,/And the swallows dive and swirl and whistle/ About the cleft battlements of Can Grande's castle." The oleanders are referring to an image within a single work. This guides the reader further through the museum to a specific piece that connects to the conclusion. The "cleft battlements of Can Grande's castle," specifically refers to details or pieces within their collection. The focus on an individual object brings the lens of the poem from a wide-angle view back down to a close range. The poem concludes by bringing together Aldington's observation of himself thumbing through pages, to a broader visual of the British Museum. The overall collection is missing but the individual pieces and references produce a full visual of the museum experience. Aldington develops his poem into a site-specific analysis. The museum plays the main role while the speaker welcomes the reader to experience it as he

did. The speaker guides the reader through the museum like a tour group being led by a trained docent.

The increase in museum and collections accessibility was essential to sparking the interest and enthusiasm for the interdisciplinary work. Ezra Pound, who wrote his "Early Cantos" while researching and performing lectures at the British Museum, was inspired by the museum and its collections. He often played a part in the promotion of the visual arts and its connection with poetry. The Tate Gallery curated an exhibition that focused on Ezra Pound's connection and influence on the visual arts during the early 20th century. The exhibition, which was on view in 1985 contained letters, poems, essays, critiques, and visual art from artists that he collaborated with, influenced, it showcased his immense interest in the medium. This exhibition demonstrated that Pound embedded himself in the visual arts. This included writing art and gallery critiques to working with noted artists like Francis Picabia.

The gallery guide to this exhibition closely links Pound with the art and literary movements while displaying how he was involved in promoting the goals of Imagism and museums. The guide states that "Pound had a concept...of literature, painting, sculpture, and architecture as intimately linked, and in ways that perhaps had not been considered before" (33). The Tate exhibition supports this by highlighting his influence and connection on figures from each of these areas such as Francis Picabia, Wyndham Lewis, and T.S. Eliot. The collaboration between the different mediums became an underlining theme as he advanced the Imagist idea. Pound viewed the link between the

different mediums as essential to the growth of the movement but also the audience and society.

The statement from the Pound exhibition guide connects with Svetlana Alpers's argument in her essay *The Museum as a Way of Seeing*. Alpers argues for what she calls "The Museum Effect," which is "the tendency to isolate something from its world to offer it up for attentive looking and thus to transform it into art like our own." (Paul 8). The translation of the personal experience with everyday objects or situations into something new connects the Imagist poet's ambitions with the museum. It allowed for the object, scene or experience to be re-imagined by focusing on specific details or smaller objects within the experience.

Pound's work at the British Museum provided him a direct and personal interaction with the objects. It brought him in close contact with Greek Urns, Chinese and Japanese silk prints, Egyptian mummies and other artifacts, which influenced both his poetry and creative process. Catherine Paul argues that "part of Pound's larger project of developing people's artistic sensibility, these antiquities... retained their aesthetic appeal despite their age and remained vibrant for visitors encountering them" (72). She highlights Pound's educational ambitions with the museum to promote the visual and physical appeal ancient artifacts to the public. He desired to grow and develop artistic appreciation in museum visitors and exposed the public to the extensive resource that was the museum.

The visual art and artifacts he encountered during his work with the British Museum contributed to the development of his early Cantos. The historical and cultural

references that fill his early ekphrastic work directly correspond to how readily accessible

the art was for him. Pound spent countless days in the British Museum's library reading

room researching, translating poems and preparing his lectures, with the art always as an

inspiration. In the "Three Cantos," the exposure to the British Museum's collection is

highly visible due to the references to ancient art. Pound begins by writing,

> How shall we start hence, how begin the progress?
>
> *Pace* naïf Ficinus, say when Hotep-Hotep
>
> Was a king in Egypt—
>
> When Atlas sat down with his astrolabe,
>
>   He, brother to Prometheus, physicist—
>
> Say it was Moses' birth year?
>
> Exult with Shang in squatness? The sea-monster
>
> Bulges the squarish bronze (Cantos 136-143).

Pound uses historical elements and objects to connect directly to his interactions at the

British Museum. He ties Chinese, Egyptian, Greek art together with a reference to a

bronze artifact in the last line "Bulges the squarish bronze," which refers to physical

description of specific artifacts. He uses the different cultures to connect them

historically, much like a timeline. The layout of his opening lines acts similarly to how

museum exhibitions are planned to provide a visual link or guide.

Pound establishes a timeline that acts as a story to weave the stanzas together.

Using historical association and references, Pound provides what Stephen Cheeke calls is

"a gift which writing bestows on images, a way of helping the statue say that which it can

only suggests" (29). His statement emphasizes the power that poetry has to link together and brings movement to static objects. The use of Chinese, Egyptian and Greek culture and visual art establishes movement through the use of time. The allusion to a timeline produces a sense of motion due to the natural progression of time between the cultures. This is supported by the opening line "How shall we start hence, how begin the progress?" The speaker sets up a type of trajectory for how the objects are going to be placed in motion.

Cheeke's argument is further supported by Catherine Paul, who argues that Pound "creates an abstract synthesis…where all individual histories are combined into an expression of history by means of a single story" (105). The "single story" is similar to Hans Lund's point that visual works of art as objects, conceal a wealth of stories or experiences that poetry draws out. The capability of poetry to create a story or speak for the works of visual art mirrors how the curator lays out and plans exhibitions. The production of labels, copy and the visual layout of artwork establishes the story, the voice and how the collection will be experienced. Pound's use of these cultural locations and artifacts taps into the stories of these works by displaying them as if they are on exhibition with the poem. The first of the *Three Cantos* become an extension of his lectures by providing information about visual art and artifacts that he has researched and encountered.

Pound shifts his focus from the ancient Chinese and Egyptian cultures to specifically the classical Greek. He moves the timeline along to another era by

introducing a specific Renaissance painter, Sandro Botticelli, who utilized classical Greek

references and characters in his work. Pound writes,

> How many worlds we have! If Botticelli
>
> Brings her ashore in the great cockle-shell—
>
> His Venus (Simonetta?),
>
> And Spring and Aufidus fills all the air
>
> With their clear-outlined blossoms?
>
> World enough. Behold, I say, she comes (Cantos 180-185)

The selection of Botticelli produces a harmony between the Greek cultural references

from the beginning by alluding to the influence it had on the artist. His Italian origins and

early Renaissance painting style is rooted in classical Greek history with mythology links

the two together. The lines "If Botticelli/ Brings her ashore on the great cockle-shell-/His

Venus" establishes a specific work for the reader to build the connection, *The Birth of

Venus.* Pound, by specifically identifying this work, provides connection to the Greek

influence and creates a further point on the timeline.

The frequent reference to Botticelli in connection with the artifacts and references

mirrors the effects of one of his lectures by informing and educating the reader. Pound

uses the poem to introduce the reader to a vast amount of different cultures and images,

marketing the artists and the museum. He demonstrates the relationship between poetry

and the museum, which "can be read as commentaries upon nature of the encounter

between the verbal and the visual, or as broad allegories of this relationship" (Cheeke

13). The direct experiences he had with the artifacts over multiple encounters created the

interactions within his poem. This resulted in the multiple impressions at the British Museum from his lectures visits to the library room being condensed into a single experience for the reader.

His lectures, research and visits produced an experience that he translated within his first Cantos. Like Aldington, Pound used his experience at the British Museum to create a recreation of single or multiple experiences. 20th century poetry scholar Charles Altieri states that Pound "worked on how language provided pictures of the world, he increasingly resisted any notion of the image at static or spatial or disembodied. Pound was committed to the author's picturing the world" (9). How the poet sees the world directly influences the experience. In the example of Aldington's "At the British Museum" and Pound's cantos, we see two poets at the same location with different emphasis and stories being told. Their perspective and cumulative interactions shaped the experience translated in their poetry.

The British Museum provided the backdrop for numerous ekphrastic poems, including another site-specific example. H.D., like Pound and Aldington, had a direct connection with the British Museum due to her frequent visits with Richard Aldington. The access to Greek visual and cultural art that the British Museum provided is seen through her use of Greek mythology, famous figures, and fictional characters. Her ability to directly interact with the art allowed her to translate her encounters and interactions into her work. She was able analyze the pieces but also step away and create a story based on what she saw. Barbara Fischer supports this, stating that "Ekphrasis accentuates the separation between writer and the object of art. The writer…remains figuratively

outside the visual piece" (Fischer 150). Distance allows the poet to translate an initial reaction more independently. The poet can respond to the visual art either by connecting it to the surrounding pieces or approaching it individually and focusing only on the elements of the piece.

H.D. gives us an example that is rich with the influence of Greek culture that was influenced by her encounters at the British Museum. Her poem "Sea-Heroes," which appeared in the art, prose and poetry journal *Coterie*, was written around the same time as Aldington's "At the British Museum." H.D. uses the museum as the foundation for her work, but unlike Aldington, who used the museum as the central figure, she followed Pound in taking a more informational approach. She begins the poem like an Imagist by focusing on direct images to set up the scene. She writes,

> Crash on crash of the sea,
>
> straining to wreck men; sea-boards, continents,
>
> raging against the world, furious,
>
> stay at last, for against your fury
>
> and your mad fight,
>
> the line of heroes stands, godlike: (Sea-Heroes 1-6)

Her opening lines establishes the tone and mood of the poem. The first two lines, "Crash on crash of the sea/straining to wreck men: sea-boards, continents" places the speaker as an observer with some distance to the scene, similar to Aldington's poem. The details the speaker focuses on develops the image of a raging sea with a boat with countless men rowing with strength and courage that the speaker describes as "godlike." The first two

stanzas are heavy in imagery and act as the guide to the next stanza, which is heavy with

Greek references and culture. Like with Pound's Cantos, access to the museum leads to

the use of concise names and images in the next stanza.

    H.D. primarily focuses on Greek cultures which can be seen by the wide amount

of influence on her work ("Apollo at Delphi," "Leda," "Eurydice" to name a few poems).

The influence of the British Museum is seen through the abundant use of Greek

references and cultures, which is traced to her many visits. In "Sea-Heroes," H.D. uses

the speaker to articulate her interaction with the Greek cultural art from the museum by

writing,

> Akroneos, Oknolos, Elatreus,
>
> helm-of-boat, loosener-of-helm, dweller-by-sea,
>
> Nauteus, sea-man,
>
> Prumneos, stern-of-ship,
>
> Agchilalos, sea-girt,
>
> Elatreus, oar-shaft:..
>
> Eurualos, board sea-wrack,
>
> like Ares, man's death…
>
> and Naubolidos, best in shape,
>
> of all first in size:
>
> Phaekous, sea's thunderbolt—
>
> ah, crash on crash of great names— (7-12, 20-25)

She develops the primary image by having the speaker place names and faces to the heroes that "stood godlike" in the first two stanzas. The men in the scene now have specific details and personalities, where the reader can imagine a more detailed visual. These men now have a story that extends beyond the visual work they came from. H.D. pulls together an assortment of men who may only be rooted in a single piece or a back-story of a piece, but her poem becomes a composite of her encounters within at the museum.

H.D. and Ezra Pound utilized the British Museum's collections to develop a direct and personal experience that was transferred into their work. The goals of 20th century curator were to spread awareness, educate the public and produce a direct and individual experience with their collections. Through the example of Aldington, Pound and H.D., we have seen how museums both captivated and partnered with poets to assist in a mutual mission to bring awareness of the creative arts to the public. Accessibility and a focus on educating and providing information to the public established two elements that led to the expansion of ekphrasis.

<u>Exhibition Practices: "To Whistler: American"</u>

Early 20th century exhibition practices transformed the museum into a place that we know today. The visuals of walls lined with art much like the salons of the 19th century or the boxes of curiosity (exhibit boxes crammed with a wide variety of artifacts) become a thing of the past.. James Heffernan argues that "Since museums can seldom display any more than a small fraction of works required to tell such a stories in full, the

stories are typically signified by individual works" (138). There became a great emphasis on using fewer works to educate, tell a story, and establish an individual experience. The limited amount of exhibition space and fewer pieces allowed Imagist poets to focus on a single work.

Exhibiting permanent collection materials was a difficult task that became increasingly problematic as museums accessed new materials into their collection. Museum exhibition experts Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord state that museums have three primary functions during the 20th century: research, preservation and collecting. Exhibitions fall under the category of preservation and research with community education as a sub category of them. Barry and Gail Lord state "many museum workers…see museum exhibitions primarily as a method of education… exhibitions succeed if they educate visitors about their subject matter" (15). Exhibitions exist to educate, expose and inform the public. Exhibitions emphasizing permanent collections provided information about the individual museum. They told the public what the museum had, why they are important to the community and how they were a valuable resource. In contrast, traveling or special exhibitions brought a different layer of education and experience. They provided an awareness and exposure to the visual arts well beyond their museum's collections, capabilities and interests.

The Lords provide further support by homing in on the museum visitor's personal experience. They state "The inherent value of museum exhibitions has much to do with their presentation…one key to the success of museums is the remarkable fact that visitors... place all their confidence in the authenticity of the experience" (16).

Exhibitions rely on the individual visitor experience and reaction to dictate if they are presenting their collections appropriately and providing the needed information. Exhibitions gave a direction on how the public and poets could react or connect with the objects. The Lords follow up by stating that exhibitions cause visitors to "change in attitude, awareness or values about the objects or themes on display" (18). They provide the physical objects that stimulate and create a mental and emotional connection. The static objects needed the organization and visual layout that exhibitions gave in order to construct the connected and personal experience.

Traveling exhibitions brought poets closer to a larger range of art. Ezra Pound wrote an ekphrastic poem in response to an exhibition at the Tate Museum, where he came face to face with a collection of paintings by James Abbott McNeill Whistle. In his poem "To Whistler: American," Pound prefaces it with "On the loan exhibit of his paintings at the Tate Gallery," which directly tells the reader that it is in response to a specific exhibition. He states this to indicate the location and to provide background to the poem.

Pound's reaction to the Whistler exhibition is visible in the opening two stanzas. He established a close connection to the exhibition by placing himself within it. He becomes the speaker and talks directly to the exhibition as if he is speaking to Whistler. He opens the poem by writing,

> You also, our first great,
>
> Had tried all ways;
>
> Tested and pried and worked in many fashions,

And this much gives me heart to play the game.

Here is a part that's slight, and part gone wrong,

And much of little moment, and some few

Perfect as Dürer! (Whistler 1-7)

The opening stanzas reflect his experience into a monologue that recreates the reaction

and impact of the exhibition. The dialogue connects to Heffernan's argument involving

ekphrasis providing a voice art. Pound uses hius dialogue with the exhibition to provide a

voice by using his own. Pound's first line "You also, our first great" addresses Whistler

directly, which acts like an opening to a conversation. The reader takes the role of the

observer or eavesdropper, whereas the speaker becomes the person doing the action in the

poem. The speaker maintains the personal connection but acts as a guide to the

exhibition. In the next two stanzas, the speaker embraces this role by commentating on

Whistler as he speaks to him. Pound positions the conversation so that both sides are

heard.

The speaker transitions from the role as a guide to focusing more on the

personal interaction with Whistler and the exhibition. Pound displays his physical

experience with the exhibition by emphasizing visual images and objects. He shows this

by writing,

"In the Studio" and these two portraits, if I had my choice I

And then these sketches in the mood of Greece?

> You had your searches, your uncertainties,
>
> And this is good to know—for us, I mean,
>
> Who bear the brunt of our America
>
> And try to wrench her impulse into art. (Whistler 8-13)

The two stanzas creates a similar response like that of the Cantos where it contains more Information and concrete images. Visuals such as the "studio," "the sketches" and the tone of his style especially in the line "Who bear the brunt of our America" that constructs background information about Whistler and the exhibition. He mirrors Aldington's "To a Greek Marble" by emphasizing the entire exhibit and not just a single piece. This is seen specifically in the first of the two stanza's where he says "In the Studio" and "these two portraits, if I had my choice I/And then these sketches in the mood of Greece." The two portraits and multiple sketches allude to the exhibition as a whole.

The final stanzas focus on the personal connection with the artist and visual work by homing in on his personal thoughts and feeling. The poem concludes with a feeling similar to reading museum copy. The reader receives information about the artist and provokes the reader to contemplate what they just read. It establishes a set of information and interactions to take away from the exhibition experiences. This point becomes important because it enforces the education component of museums and exhibitions. It compels the reader to retain and interact with the material they just read or saw and relate it outside of the experience. Pound writes,

> You were not always sure, not always set
> To hiding night or tuning "symphonies";
> Had not one style from birth, but tried and pried
> And stretched and tampered with the media.
>
> You and Abe Lincoln from that mass of dolts
> Show us there's chance at least of winning through. (Whistler 14-19)

The final two stanzas provide a final response to the Whistler exhibition. They make use of the four modes of a successful exhibition that Barry and Gail Lord layout. This includes contemplation, comprehension, discovery and interaction, all of which Pound details within his poem. The accomplishment of utilizing these four modes shows how ekphrasis can promote the educational goals.

Museums at the beginning of the 20th century had a mission to expand the knowledge, exposure and the museum experience to a wider audience. Exhibitions gave poets a wider accessibility to works they would not normally come in contact with. Ekphrastic poetry became a way for them to respond and translate their experience in a medium. Permanent and traveling exhibitions promoted the curatorial goals of the early 20th century museum including spreading awareness and exposure of art to educating the public. Their goals created an environment that nurtured Imagist poet's fascination and growing curiosity. Museums through marketing of their collections became a greater part of their local and creative community. The influence of museums can be seen in the ekphrastoic poetry of Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington and H.D. Ekphrasis became a

symbol of that connection and would be a testament to their relationship up until the present day.

CONCLUSION

The vast quantity of ekphrastic work produced throughout the 20th century made their way into anthologies on specific artists, themes, in museums exhibitions and even cross media programs and events. In restating James Heffernan's original argument "The production of Ekphrastic poetry has become nothing less than a boom…ekphrasis in modern and post-modern poetry becomes still more striking when we consider that at least one poem about a work of visual art has come from almost every major poet of our time" (Heffernan 135). His statement carries immense weight when considering that during the 20th century, more museums were founded, and accessibility to the visual arts increase. The increase in ekphrastic work and recognition was a result of this.

Ekphrasis in the 20th century assisted in the mutual goals of museums and Imagist poet by bringing familiarity and exposure to the visual arts. Readers and visitors benefitted from this partnership because it allowed both art and poetry to be more easily accessible and understood. It provided another perspective and experience to build from. Ekphrasis provided Imagist poets the ability to translate their experiences with works from artists like Pablo Picasso, James Abbott McNeill Whistler and Vincent Van Gogh to the reader. It constructed an educational link by using the poet's experience and personal connections to provide commentary, informational narrative and extensions to the artist's

thoughts or themes. The direct personal experience gave imagist poets the ability to recreate the museum experience.

Accessibility is the common thread that wove the success of ekphrasis through the 20th century. Museums provided visitors a new way to experience, interact, learn and create a personal connection with their collections. The effect was that a new generation of museum visitor was established. Museums became in such high demand that by 2012, there were over 55,000 museums in 202 countries as stated in the 18th edition of *Museums of the World.* Ekphrasis benefited greatly from the growing museum audience. Potential readers were knowledgeable and aware of specific artists, works and museums than ever before. Ekphrastic poems provided a different perspective, story or experience that was relatable and intimate. Accessibility provided the ability for everyone to develop a personal link and connect with art, museums and ekphrasis.

It becomes striking in contemporary times how integrated ekphrasis has engrained itself in the museum landscape. Museums have constructed a wide range of events and contests to demonstrate the value of ekphrasis to their communities. The Dayton Art Institute, in Dayton, Ohio holds an ekphrastic reading in correlation with special exhibitions. These events provide an arena for poets to present their work in person while providing in person their own experience and reaction to the work. The Meier Museum at Randolph College, on the other hand, publishes poems focusing on their permanent collection on their website. The rolling submission process provides an open opportunity for all personal experiences and connections to be viewed over a long duration. Other museums embrace ekphrasis by organizing yearly contest, such as The Toledo Museum

of Art in Ohio or the Museum of Fine Art in Houston, to name a few, have yearly

ekphrastic poetry contests based on their permanent collections or special exhibitions.

The Toledo Museum of Art publishes winning entries side by side with the work

selected. It provides a double museum experience that demonstrates the cross-discipline

relationship that exists between mediums.

Ekphrasis scholar Tamar Yocabi argues for what he calls the double exposure that

happens in this inclusion. The side by side placement of ekphrasis in either anthologies

with the artwork pictured adjacent to the poem or in exhibitions provides a double

reading or a conjoined experience. It displays how "Ekphrastic poems can thus 'rise

above their status'…and not only 'deepen our reading of the art' but make 'their own

statement' and establish their own autonomy'" (Poetics Today 12). Ekphrasis presents a

singular experience of the poet based on the individual work, can exist entirely separately

from the art. Yocabi argues that it gives a deeper experience that covers different layers

of thought and understanding. The work of art and poem exists as individual experiences

and ideas but together provides a complementary story or experience. The personal

experience of the poet and artist become wrapped into a packaged experience.

The tradition of ekphrasis dates back to Greek poets but only early in the 20th

century did it finally achieve the perfect environment to flourish into a method of

educating, exposing a wider audience and a poetic genre and style of its own. James

Heffernan states that, "To present a painting or sculptured figure in words is to evoke its

power—the power to fix, excite, amaze, entrance, disturb or intimidate the viewer." (7).

My experience with ekphrastic poetry events at the Dayton Art Institute, but also at the

Robert and Elaine Stein Gallery at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, can validate

Heffernan's argument. The audience reacted to the recreation and translation of the initial

experience while responding to the image or scene the work of art portrayed. Ekphrasis

gives a voice, an extended story that provides movement and motion. It acts as a gallery

guide or docent within an exhibition to provide information or recommendations on how

the visitor can view the object. It lays the foundation of the visitor's personal experience

and connection to the work while inviting them to create their own connection, and

experience with the visual arts.

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