Isabel Bishop, 1959

Henry Varnum Poor? -- family at Skowhegan, because it's tough moving forward, and we have a lot of things to talk about, private subject matters. But, Isabel, I suppose logically, or theoretically, between Louis [NAME UNCLEAR]'s being here last week, and Isabel being here this week, we should have had a wild or [WORD UNCLEAR] painter in between, you know, to try to keep the talent clean [?]. But we have to, we have to take our friends and the artists who come here when we can get them, and so this is the way it happened. And, so, the important thing is to get to know the people who do come here, and to recognize the integrity of each point of view that is introduced, and here is an ambitious painter, who is a very honest person that continues to paint in the integrity of the work and that she has, she has listened to, and developed a palette, or a point of view, that's [WORD UNCLEAR], and really a beautiful thing, and beautiful drawings, and, and just all together [PHRASE UNCLEAR] personality who points to something helpful, until you get a painter of complete sensitivity and integrity. Here she is. Thank you. [applause]

Isabel Bishop Thank you very much, Henry. It's an active joy to be here again. I wasn't here last summer, but before that, I completely delight in being at Skowhegan.

Now, I want to put you before you something that I've really been working on lately in my thoughts, and that is a concept of image. And I want to talk to you about the nude, which has been a great concept – a great, a great subject, for image. Now, it's a happy time when assumptions, basic assumptions can be challenged, I think, and Skowhegan is a wonderful place to challenge them.

When I was eight to sixteen years old, I came to New York – I have to just say this quickly. This was 1918, and it was five years after the Armory Show, the war was just over – the First World War – and questions about form were in the air. Abstract Cubism had been met, and various degrees of abstraction were accepted and considered valid, all that time ago, which I think is, is of interest. But, subject matter, whilst taken for granted – we're really coming to a point that I really am eager to discuss it, but subject matter was taken for granted, no questions about it were raised. Exhibitions were aligned with, of course there were some abstractions, not a great many, but otherwise the exhibitions were lined with the same old heads with or without necks and shoulders, you know, some just floating, and so – and girls in fancy dress, and nudes, of course, and there were apples, and oranges, and mandolins and guitars and rooftop landscapes. And these were not questioned at all. But experiments with form, vivid experiments were being made. And these experiments pulled the subjects about, you see, and distorted them. But there they were, same old subjects, and their meaningless wasn't noticed, and that they added perhaps nothing to the often sensuous and lively form.

But, on the basis of – and I think this is so important – on the basis of Occam's razor, which is, the terms in an argument may not be multiplied except out of necessity. On the basis of Occam's razor, the revolt against subject was overdue. And this revolt has been gaining momentum to this day. Think of that long time in which this revolt against subject, and it was, you see, it was, it really amounted to a shaving away of what had become inert

and dead. And this shaving away of subject, minimizing of subject, put the arts of painting and sculpture in a sounder position. Now, this position has become accepted and established. And I think the moment has come when its assumptions can be challenged, at least can be looked at, can be scrutinized and assessed. And possibly this position can be moved out from, possibly - this is the hardest thing - can be moved out from, toward that most potent and rare of visual presentations, the image. Now non-objective painting without semblance is by no means without content. It can be most expressive - of mood, of attitude, of energy. This content is entirely within the form. It is entirely implied content. Now, if you haven't an image of man, or of the world, you haven't. And that's that. And there is no use pretending. And that is the worst thing. And that, you see, really, the utter weakness of. So that can't be.

But image, the power of image. Now, we're coming, I'm going to try to build this up for you. The, the power of image can be judged by, it not having one content alone, but two contents. Now this is the thing that, that I want to try to show you. I want to try to define image. Image is semblance, but not semblance alone. Image contains two, two contents in a state of tension. And that I don't really, I haven't truly understood this, but perhaps you can discuss it with me after because I think there's something in it, that there are two contents in a state of tension, implicit content and explicit content. Now we'll work in later what these two contents, what I mean by them.

But first, I want to go into this with you, but first I want to tell you that if you accept the challenge of moving toward image, you have to make up your minds to bring everything you have to bear on it. Your analytical judgment as well as your invention, imagination and your deepest instinctual drives.

Now, whatever shapes these images may have that you may arrive at can't be predicted because the content can't be predicted, but that they will connect somewhere. No matter how different they may look, they, I say, surely will connect somewhere with man's past expressions. And, as for instance, I want to look at a few past expressions with you. To the slide, please. [slide advances]

Well, this is a prehistoric woman. A mighty impressive piece of expression. We are so fortunate today in that we don't have to feel that we derive from the Greeks. This is something that's been very limiting to the, to Western art, I feel. And here at last, perhaps through non-objective art, they're at last I think free of the feeling that we must derive from the Greeks. Next slide. [slide advances]

This is very fake, I'm sorry to say, because it is faded. I had the slide made from the drawing of a Japanese scene, in which there are, there are nudes, can you see anything? At any rate, even though it's very faint, I think I just want to emphasize this possibility for our images, your images, which you may arrive at, can connect anywhere, you see, if they can connect with the far east, they can connect with ancient prehistoric images. Next slide. [slide advances]

Or, or with a great maker of, Renaissance maker of image. Senior [WORD UNCLEAR]. Next slide. [slide advances]

Now this Picasso, the reason, especially, that I had wanted to show it is because of his, of the beginning of his, I think it is considered to be one of those pictures that show the beginning of his influence by Negro sculpture. On those right hand figures. I just want to show a little bit of, which we all know, but just to show a little bit of the connections that artists of today have made with the past. Next slide. [slide advances]

Or with India. Isn't that a stunning nude? Really the vitality of that. The substantialism of it. And it really isn't Greek, though, of course, it was influenced, I believe, by, by Greek art, curiously enough. The great flowering of Greek art came after Alexander. And, but what they did with it! Next slide. (00:09:59) [slide advances]

And this Greek being so austere, isn't it? Very restrained, aus, austere expression. Next slide. [slide advances]

And this [WORD UNCLEAR], you see, I'll show because its connecting back, this time, to Greece. Next slide. [slide advances]

And this ancient Chinese piece, the only one that really isn't a nude, but still above [WORD UNCLEAR]. It's so powerful, so sensual. But it's so marvelous that, the, that the images that you, if you do work toward them, that they will be, can't possibly be known. That's the thrilling part of it. But that they can get their connection so wide, over such a wide range, it, it's wonderful. Next slide. [slide advances]

And this, [PHRASE UNCLEAR] that's there's a connection. Next slide. [slide advances]

Indian. So, so starkly and so mysterious. So powerful. Very potent, I feel. The next slide. [slide advances]

Well, this is an early Apollo. This is early sixth century. And I wanted to show it because I wanted to speak of Kenneth Clark's controversial definition of the nude, in which he asserts that the nude is not a subject, but an art form invented by the Greeks in the fifth century, as opera is an art form invented by the Italian in the 17th century. So this is, this would not be accepted as a nude by Kenneth Clark. I must say, I think it's a very stunning nude. Can we have the next slide? [slide advances]

And this is 2,500 years BC. 2,500 years B.C. And they may have loincloths on, but to me they're nudes and extremely expressive of, of grandeur and power. 2,500 B.C. Next slide. [slide advances]

This is an image of the nude by primitive people, the bushmen of Africa, who didn't have the benefit of the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. I think the dress [?] hanging out on ropes is such an original idea. Next slide. [laughter] Next slide. [slide advances]

This is also 2,500 years B.C. Isn't that an impressive image of man? Next slide, please. [slide advances]

Now this Apollo is a little later than the first one and is at the turn of the century, from the fifth, sixth of the fifth century to B.C. And this, I understand that the Greeks had an absolute passion for mathematics and that this, this feeling, the development that they made of mathematical relationships in, among the members of the body, parts of the body, it's a big part of what we feel in the great impression that we get from them, from these works. Now the next slide is only twenty years later. Oh this is next, in the wrong position. This is this [WORD UNCLEAR], I just wanted, this is the Renaissance version of what sort of mathematical analysis the Greeks made. And the Renaissance never found it out. Nobody ever found it out. But they were preoccupied with it. Next slide. [slide advances]

The next slide, this is [WORD UNCLEAR] youth. Only, possibly only thirty years after, after this, what we think of now as an archaic figure we just saw. And this, well as Clark says, the Greeks had the idea of order and expressed order before they expressed beauty. But they began expressing beauty right here in this piece. And there's something extraordinary about this development of this muscle, external of life, muscle, and in it, the archaic figures never had it. And it seemed as though somehow happening on that or dividing it or inventing it because it doesn't happen that often. I don't know how many of you have this shape, but not perhaps everyone, by any means. But, it became, then, an architectural device. And how fascinating, because if you remember the other figure with the legs beginning at the top of the iliac crest really, the feeling of the legs being there made the torso far less impressive. But making this, this bulb, exaggerating those muscles made up an end, a place where the torso ended and sat on the legs like some architectural inventions that had been made and gone on and on. And so they carried that on right down through to the Hellenistic world. And I think it was not especially naturalistic. Next. [slide advances]

This is Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, showing again how the Renaissance artists was preoccupied with trying to figure out what this subtle order was. It's been suggested that it was geometric and not arithmetical, and that this has made it even more difficult to, to find. Next slide. [slide advances]

So this I think is a very restrained, noble relief, and amazed me to read that the Greeks, after this lyrical youth you just saw, where charm and grace have entered, that the Greek sculptors, [PHRASE UNCLEAR], who came thirty years afterwards, held back on that as it were a trend toward beauty. They held it back towards a further austerity of mathematical canon and full, full of the Greek sculpture, the followers also following in it toward an austere pattern toward the archaic again. As though they were defending themselves against the *shhh* downhill to the pretty triviality of the Hellenistic art. Slide. Slide, please. [slide advances]

And this is so austere and beautiful. These are fifth century. These are fifth century. And whether the fifth century began the nude or not in thirty minutes. But the trouble was

that it made such a development effort that it just cast a spell on the whole Western world and we're only coming out of it now I think. Slide, please. [slide advances]

And then this extraordinary piece really is, you know, and the still order, order is, austerity of order is so pronounced, isn't it? And to express a violent motion in a form that can be contemplated and expressed emotion at the same time is such an achievement. Slide, please. [slide advances]

Well, this is all the way down to the bottom I think, don't you? In the Hellenistic trivial, trivial kind of quote beauty unquote. What a decline, don't you think? I want to tell you that it's a great surprise to me to learn that in 1760, this was considered the highest point of antique art. It was considered the most beautiful thing in Rome. And when Benjamin West came to Rome from this country, he paid his first visit there, he found in his body when he arrived, a note from one of the great scholars of Rome asking him to come within the next day to the Vatican to see the *Apollo Belvedere*. So this was done and West went, went there. And, outside the Vatican, on that morning were thirty carriages drawn up in which the elite of Rome had come to watch this woodsman from America, this man from the backwoods confront, see him confronted by this apex of antique art. And so they stood around and Benjamin West confronted the *Apollo Belvedere* and they all listened and he said, "How like a Mohawk warrior." [laughter] I think that they were very happy. He said just the right thing.

Well now I want to try this hard thing of trying to say to you what I mean by implicit and explicit content. Now, explicit content - now this, this is hard. Explicit content I think is, is three things. It is, first of all, the story, that's obvious. Secondly, explicit symbol, such as the olive branch in the mouth of the dove of peace. That is an explicit symbol. Third, direct statement, which needs no explanation. Now, Christian, of the explicit symbol abounds in Christian art, of course, and also I believe in Indian art. But explicit in Christian art, if a man holds a knife, he's Saint Bartholomew. He holds a corkscrew, he's not Saint Bartholomew. If a woman holds a peach in her hand, she personifies veracity. If two men are standing in certain relations to each other, they are the combat between vice and virtue. If a certain number of people are sitting around a table in a certain way, that is the last supper. [laughter] That's explicit symbol. (00:20:00)

Now, implicit content is what I take Ben Shahn to mean when he says form is the shape of content. Now Ben Shahn I know includes explicit symbol without saying so. I mean, he does, form is the shape of content, Saint Bartholomew holding the knife is - but I think I manage to totally disagree with him in that that's not the same thing. Implicit content, as I take him really to me, is the content that is within the form, which is its shape, and can't, is not separable from it. As when Mozart, he was asked by his benefactor what the meaning of, was, of what he had just played. Mozart is said to have said, "Oh, it means..." And he played it through again. [laughter] And that's what it meant. That's implicit content. You play it through again, and that's what it means. And that's the, that's the only way it could be said.

Now the arts, the various arts have different proportions between implicit and explicit, different characteristic proportions between these two contents. Now, some have a wide range, and between the extremes of the two contents, some have a short range, near one or the other extreme. And by extreme, I mean coming close to having only one content, you see. I think the art always had two, but, but they come close to having one, that, that's being on what I'm call an extreme. Well now, I took it that music - we just mentioned Mozart - that music, I thought, you'd say was the farthest, I would say - this is this way. Now this is implicit content and this is explicit content. Now there's kind of a balance you see. Now they have a characteristic range. Now music, I thought, was way over on the implicit side. Since, programmatic music, though it introduces some element of explicit meaning, is not governed by that. It's a trivial aspect. [PHRASE UNCLEAR] So I though music would be the farthest over [PHRASE UNCLEAR], least, including least, almost nothing of the explicit. Then I realized that mathematics, which is an important element of music, is all the way over on the implicit side, because it has no explicit meaning, but implies that great content, order. Well now music, the range of music, would you say, just for illustration, could be said to be from, we'll say on the explicit side would say Berlioz, *Harold en Italie*. I'm not a musician. You can give me better examples. But, that, and over on the implicit side, well, I suppose Bach maybe, or Beethoven's *132 Quartet* on the, on the implicit side. And the range would be, would be there, between the, about somewhere like that.

Well now, prose writing. Prose writing is, has a long range and it's far, quite far, it reaches into the explicit side very far because it usually deals in direct statement. But there is always an element of implicit content in prose writing. Now if I said to you the range, I would take it, let's say the range would be on the explicit side, we'll say a treatise on raising corn on the explicit side. The implicit side we'll say, well, *Finnegan's Wake* on the implicit side. Now, you just look at that, words you see have adambrations of other meanings than the one you're using and even faint adambrations of the opposite meaning so that there's always more than the direct statement. For instance, you say raising corn, treatise on raising corn, well, raising has a lot of other meanings. [laughs] Raising, you think that of other meanings for raising. And corn has slang meanings, corn has slang meanings and sort of like raising cane, and [laughs] I mean, it has other implications, and that would be the, and yet that'd be as direct as you could get. That is, as direct statement as you could get would be say a treatise on raising corn or something like that.

And then on the implicit side, you have something that, *Finnegan's Wake*, which probably partly deals in words where the explicit meaning is, is not given. Only the, some of the overtone. So that there's quite a range in there.

Well now poetry, of course, is farther over on the implicit side than, than prose writing. It doesn't deal nearly so much in direct statement. And it's on the implicit side, even in spite of narrative verse, because the effects are so important in poetry of the sound and rhythm and even the look on the page. As, as I would show you, in, if I have, show you a poem of e.e. cummings. Now I would say that poetry, the range in poetry was, say, would be from Ballard and, or Thomas Hardy would say on the explicit side, over, let's say, to e.e. cummings over on the implicit side. And this poem by cummings, can you see it? This is a stanza of a poem by cummings in which he had used implicit meaning, visual. A lot of visual

implicit meaning. I mean, the shape of that thing, I mean, I don't know what it is, but he made it that way. And the words are broken up for what? I mean for visual implicit meaning.

Now there was something about prose writing that I wanted to say. And that was that prose, about's having always implicit content. Even in the extreme, even if only in the impression made by the letters, by the formation of the letters apart from the sense. The letters of which a word is made, apart from the sense. And I brought this work not because it has any special interest in the printing and I cut it off just arbitrarily, but the, the impression made by that different from that. You know. And there's, typographers say that there's rich content in the way letters are formed. And types, after all, different periods like certain types, and they don't like other types. But they're all having to say the same thing. The words are there. There's a great deal of implicit meaning. So, that, that, it comes out in that way.

Well now, experiments in poetry have taken poetry far more over toward the implicit side than e.e. cummings, of course. I mean, they take, experiments have taken over to the point where words are used without any relevant explicit meaning, nonsense words and syllables. Now, my point is, and this is, is the thing, that power is lost when an art presents outside or beyond its characteristic range. And you can't say why. It's purely empirical. Arts generates power. They generate power in their characteristic range. It, it may be a very wide range. It may be a narrower range. Poetry had a narrower range than prose had, but power is generated within, within that characteristic range.

Now, certainly it's true of music. That music, when power is certainly lost in music when music tries to be explicit. When music tries to tell you somebody's experiences walking down the street, that's, that's, that's not important. I mean, you see it, music, that's all right in prose writing, it's coming out of the range in which music generates power, or, or, say imitate the sounds heard on the spring day or, or something of that sort.

Well now the arts of painting and sculpture are farther over toward the implicit side than poetry. And you see this at once when you recognize that abstract painting works much better than abstract poetry. You see, you just feel, well, power goes down with abstract poetry. Well, power doesn't go down to that, or in fact at all with, with abstract painting, so that that - it's more on the implicit side, you see? Painting I think has a range a little further toward the explicit than sculpture. Now, I may be not agreed with about this. I'll tell you, it seems to me that sculpture usually can't carry as much direct statement as painting can. I don't say painting should, or always does, but it can. In its characteristic range, it can carry some degree of direct statement, and I don't think sculpture usually can.

Well now the nude in both arts I think has a rather narrow range. I don't think the nude had as wide a range as, as other, if you want to call it subject or art form. And I think that it's, it's further toward the implicit than painting is otherwise, than when the nude is painted. I don't, in sculpture, perhaps it's just in the characteristic range of sculpture. But this short range of the nude seems to me maybe accounts for the having been created relatively few with very potent images of the nude.

Now, recent experiments with painting and sculpture have taken them very far over toward the implicit side. And so far over that the implicit is almost the only content in it. And at that point, image is lost with all its powers and image for image cannot, cannot exist, I just say this arbitrarily, but I hope that you'll feel this with me or if not, tell me that you don't. (00:29:59) Image must contain two contents, explicit content and implicit content. Implicit content alone will not reach image. That's just absolutely impossible.

Now I do want to show some slides, which, some works show varying proportions between, between these two contents. [PHRASE UNCLEAR]

Now this is just a slide, a piece of architecture. Now, somebody might well say, well, this has carving on it, that architecture, certainly you'll agree, is mostly implicit. An architecture piece doesn't tell a story usually and the effect it makes is in its shape and in its form. Next slide. [slide advances]

And in the case of the jar, this has a picture on it, but the shape of the jar itself is only partly for the use it had, and largely for delight. And that delight is the content, the implicit content, and, which is all it has, which is implicit content and use. Could I have another slide? Another slide. [slide advances]

Now this is a photograph and it's an early photograph by a man named Rejlander. And I put it in because a, he, as you'll see by the next slide, was trying for an image that a painter made. In other words, he, he couldn't. I think, I think, I think with photography that the content is so largely explicit. I don't say that there isn't any implicit content, but I think there is so little possible to photography that to make image, you see, you have to have a healthy proportion of both contents. It couldn't be done. So he imitated the picture, which you'll show, next slide. [slide advances]

You see this nude by [NAME UNCLEAR], which I don't think rises to tremendous height either, really. But at any rate it was image, you know, to some extent and the photographer approached it, tried to. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well now implicit content, right? I mean there isn't anything particular - it has semblance. You see. I'll make my definition again. Image has semblance, but not semblance alone, because it contains two contents in a state of tension. And you see with the subject matter, which was, which was shaved away with the revolt, revolt against subject matter, there was no tension in it. There was no tension between the implicit and explicit content. And so it was, it was a bore. [laughs] We have the next slide. [slide advances]

Well this is so full of explicit meaning that it really seems as though it was almost toward literature and that's why I showed it to you. I don't know what these things mean, but I've seen them. I've read, you know, analyses of them and every last thing in there has pages and pages and pages of print to explain it. I mean, you need pages and pages of print to explain it, but it has tremendous implicit content too. You don't have to know these things. But if you said, if you said, well I'm going to take out the ingredients from this

picture and I'm going to weigh them. So, you know, weigh, you'd find you had a big block or a big hunk of explicit content, and a great big hunk too of implicit. But it's more toward the range of literature in that way. All right, let's have another one. [slide advances]

Well, this is explicit also. I think. I mean it's full of iconography [laughs] and implicit content is of course there, but I think it's, I put these two explicit ones together, you see, to build up the explicit side a little bit. I think it has quite a big proportion of explicit content. Another side. [slide advances]

And this de Kooning I think is implicit. I mean it has just that much explicit – just as much explicit content, I feel, to make it reach toward image. And I think it's very stirring. That woman series has stirred me very much and I've been more moved by that than I have been by his work, which didn't try for image. I felt that he had really, in these things, was engaging in a battle for image. You know? And it has to be because nobody, you can't just see an image and think - it has to be something created. And all the image of the past won't do it for us. Even though I say we will find that we will connect with them somewhere. Can't do it by looking at it. All right, let's have a next slide. [slide advances]

Well, I believe that this is full of iconography that the Indian sculpture and yet what a beautiful implicit content it has. But, again, everything in it has great deal of explicit meaning. Explicit. So that it used a wide range there. And so I think I, I wasn't thinking of Indian sculpture when I said that I though the sculpture was farther over on the implicit side. I think Western sculpture perhaps can't carry so much explicit symbol, but certainly Eastern sculpture can. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well this is a Paul Trigos [?]. The one later than that charming nude in which austerity again was asserted. And the content I'm saying is implicit. I suppose it's a god, I think it's [WORD UNCLEAR] or something, but I, I think it's an implicit content. Next slide. Of course it has semblance.

Well this I think is very explicit. I mean, jealousy [?], and it has a beautiful implicit impact on you, but same time it has quite a large proportion, quite a big lump of explicit content there in the balance. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well, that's implicit, isn't it. I mean it has some iconography. You can see there's some story, and perhaps [PHRASE UNCLEAR]. And there's semblance, but the impact is by means of implicitness. Isn't it? I think so. Tremendous. Tremendously. I, you can't say, it's just in there! You can't say well this does it or that does it. It's just in the form. You know. The shape of the form. I mean the whole form, not just the nude, but - next slide.
Now, I put, the card players, upside there, it shows, I think what I mean by saying the range of the nude is shorter. Now this ranges, you know, it has a big range over toward the explicit. It has the implicit content of great beauty. And finally I, I don't think you'd think of many nudes that had that much explicit content. You know? Next slide will show what I mean.

You see, you knew who those men were, you know, what, they were peasants. And you know they were playing cards, what the whole situation was, and here you don't. I mean you don't know who those nudes are at all. You have any idea. It's basically, it's a more - and I think that contest shows a little bit what I mean by saying range of the nude is shorter, I think, between these two contents, in both eyes. Next slide. [slide advances]

Now in this slide, as I say then, I had the temerity to feel that he didn't reach image. I don't think he reached image in this one, probably a slight study, but the one before I think he did, you know. But in this one I think he didn't reach image. It doesn't have, I think a strong enough implicit content, or perhaps even probably not strong enough implicit content. It probably has a strong enough explicit content. All right, let's have the next slide. [slide advances]

Well I shared this because it does certainly rise to image. I mean there it is. It's, I think [WORD UNCLEAR] is just packed with, what? Implicit content. And some explicit too, which I don't especially understand, but I see it there. Oh, I see some drama there. But in any case it has a tremendous wallop, I think, on the implicit side. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well, an Indian sculpture again. It's still, I believe it's very explicit. I mean, I think all these details have a great deal of explicit meaning, and it has a beautiful implicit wallop there, I think. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well this is a first version of *Nude Descending a Staircase*. And I think it has a very striped and very beautiful implicit effect. But I thought, I thought perhaps this would indicate to you a little bit what I feel about the power of image. It's a slight connection with the explicit. It hasn't much. But if you take that away, if you look at it, and you just take that away, you just look at it and you say, well no, it has no relation to semblance at all. Don't you, I find that takes something away, takes away some of its power. So I think it trains on a semblance, [PHRASE UNCLEAR], it adds directly to its power. The next slide. [slide advances]

Well this crown of course couldn't be more explicit, I guess. [laughter] It's funny [?], but it's called charity. Charity. [laughter] Charity. And I want you to compare it to the next slide. Next slide. [slide advances]

Which is, this is quite a contrast, in which, [PHRASE UNCLEAR] de Kooning. (00:39:59) And, again, I feel that this man in this, in this series has undertaken this, a great attempt to forge image. I mean, then, well, image, image has to be created. It doesn't exist unless it's made. And how well the battle came out. I don't know, but it's most impressive. Next slide. [slide advances]

Here is one that has a basic implicit countered with so much explicit. But yet it takes volumes to explain that picture. Really, I mean it's, everything means something, it's all very explicit, like the, you know, olive branch in the gull's beak. I mean in the dove's beak. It

has explicit meaning. And this is all you can't see, but you know the picture very well. The whole world under there. Next slide. [slide advances]

Next slide. [slide advances]

And this I think is implicit. I mean it has a, it has semblance. Beyond that, it has no explicit meaning. But it makes it implicit. It makes an effective implicit meaning. It has semblance and this keeps image. And in fact, it is an image, in my opinion. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well here's another crowd, and this is for the sake of, I just want to look, look at it and then I take it to be extremely explicit. I mean, it's charming, and a beautiful painting with a lot of explicit content. And the next one, of the same subject, a judgment of Paris, can't see it so well, of [WORD UNCLEAR]. Wouldn't you say that the explicit element is much less. I mean it's there, you can see all the people. But it's this back, nude, it was for the sake of its implicit impact I think you feel, don't you? I do. Much, much more than in the crowd. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well this is Picasso. I don't know whether this was making the battle for image or against it. I don't know. Perhaps it was against it. But it was concerned with it. It was really concerned with it. And the last of this series I want to show you is the next one, which is one of the great, most moving images, I think. Very explicit and tremendously interesting. And it is, as you know, that great [WORD UNCLEAR] of [PHRASE UNCLEAR]. And I would say this, just an added thing about its explicit quality, that it came at a time not so very long after the black death swept Europe and Europe suffered and was decimated by this plague. And that the, the horror, horror of physical suffering expressed in this is very remarkable and perhaps connected with this time in Europe's life. A very impressive, beautiful work with great content on both implicit and explicit sides. That's all that seriously.

Edmund Spencer, the poet, has said, "For soul, for the soul is formed and doth the body make." Kenneth Clark pointed out that the image of the nude, even at the point of its greatest exuberance in the classical Renaissance, when there was no, no subject was so sublime that it could be expressed by the naked body, and no object of use, however trivial, but could take human form, even candelabra, knives and forks and door knockers. But even then, motifs were repeated over and over. Clark has said, also, the nude is the most complete example of the transmutation of matter into form. But this is hard. It's shown, I think, by the persistence over long periods of certain parts of, of image, certain patterns which retained plastic vitality and finally lost it. They all lost it, finally, I think. But I want to, on the next slides, please, show you some of these motifs which had a certain life, quite a long life.

Now this is Greco Roman. This is, this is mainly, I, the three graces [?]. And here is the Greco Roman. Now, next slide. [slide advances]

Now, this is arachnid. [?] Greco Roman. Rapid [?]. I mean the [WORD UNCLEAR] of the [WORD UNCLEAR] is the same. Armies. It's remarkable. And, after all, three women could take a lot of different poses from that. Next slide. [slide advances]

Greco Roman. Greco Roman. Next slide. I just want you to have an impression of each of these images, continuing of the motif. Next. [slide advances]

Those are Greco Roman paintings. Next. [slide advances]

I just want you to have an impression. Oh, change it. Next. [slide advances]

Oh, the slide is faded, but you know the picture. I mean, there it is again. Ruben just in the product. Three graces. There it is. Over and over and over. It's amazing. It's very, it's very meaningful. It's important to know. All right. Next slide. [slide advances]

Ah, thank you – oh yes, that's the next one. This is very funny, I think. Clark says about Dürer, and most of you, in fact, he says that Dürer had an awfully hard time facing the nude. He feels that, that he was, that he, he looked at it with, with horror and curiosity. And that in order to attack the nude, he had to brace himself with some, with some circles and squares and things, you know, and make it mathematical, in order to, to, to face it. So let's have the next slide. [slide advances]

In which the three graces became the four witches. [laughter] And there you have the status of the four witches. They're the three graces. [laughter] I don't know. Well, the next series, it has to do with a theme of, from a Greek, beginning with a Greek sarcophagus, if you could have the next – this is a different series now, this is the death of a warrior. Or the death of a soldier. No one knows exactly what, but it's a Greek sarcophagus and interestingly enough it's supposed to be a copy in marble of an earlier painting. So this was, this was early, early. I just, I just have to point out a certain thing. Notice the dropped arm. Notice the other arm is held up by someone who looks into the face of the warrior, perhaps to see if he's alive or not, but holds, holds his hand up. Now the next slide. [slide advances]

Here's the [WORD UNCLEAR]. Arm is down, the hand is held up. The person is looking into the face of Christ. And there you are. Now each motif continues. Another slide please. [slide advances]

Now it's reversed, but there it is. Petition intonement [?]. Petition intunement. Invention is very hard. No doubt about it. And it, there it is again. Very fascinating, I think. Now we have another series which is Aphrodite. Now here is the Aphro, the Knidian Aphrodite, with a gesture which, with a little bit of change, went oh, oh, oh! And you'll see the little bit of change that happened, right? I don't think that she's especially embarrassed. Do you? I mean, I don't think she's especially embarrassed [PHRASE UNCLEAR]. But then the next one, next slide. [laughter] [slide advances]

But that went on and on, while you can see acres of, of this. Just acres of it. It went on and on. All right. Next one. [slide advances]

Then we have [WORD UNCLEAR], the expulsion, and there it is. Doesn't it? Same, same motif in, in, in these. There it is. And finally we reduce it down to the absurd in the next slide. [laughter] [slide advances]

[PHRASE UNCLEAR] Oh! If she isn't embarrassed, she really should be. [laughter] So the next, the next, the next series is Venus on the Couch. Now this, I didn't have the Giorgione, but as you know, this is oh so similar to the Giorgione Venus on the couch. And no doubt there were endless, well, I guess, earlier than Giorgione. Venus on the couch. Now let's have another one. [slide advances]

[WORD UNCLEAR] Of course there, let me say this, all of you can recall many a Titian painting. We know that Venus was the organ player, and Venus was the lute player and all this, Venus is on the couch, he did great many women, and the same motif at the time. And here it's the - next slide. (00:49:57) [slide advances]

And he's Modigliani. And there's Venus again, on the couch. Very similar, I think, in motif. Next slide. [slide advances]

Well, this I really am so happy to - I never noticed it. I was looking through the slides and then I said, "Well, there it is again." And this is Dawn on the Medici tune [?] and there it is, Venus on the couch. There it is again. Well, now I'd like to have the slide of the [WORD UNCLEAR], which is the last slide. [slide advances]

And this suggests to me, again, what I feel is the greatest thing. And that is passionate attempts towards image. I think the content is really implicit. I mean, it has explicit meaning too. I mean, a terrifying explicit meaning. But the implicit meaning is the greater art, I feel. And I do want to say to you that if the aim of the life class is to bring the nude again powerfully into art, it will prepare for the hardest thing of all, and that is to create image. What shape these images may take, whatever shape they may take, if they rise to power, they will contain two essentials. They will, in Clark's words, relate to the austere tradition of design, order, and to that antique religion of sensuality from which the nude, in the end, derives its authority and momentum. [applause]

Poor Isabel says she would be very happy to have an inspection about what she's just talked --

Bishop I wish you would.

Poor So, please, ask us questions, or question you.

Bishop Sure.

Audience member Well –

Bishop Yes.

Audience member It seems to me that the division here, you've made explicit content entirely too reliant upon content that can be paraphrased in verbal symbols.

Bishop Yes, it's very odd, but I think it's the case. There's something about --

Audience member I don't think so. I think that Roualt, for instance, has tremendous explicit content.

Bishop It does.

Audience member Not in any verbal paraphrase, but in the kind of color. I mean, I think a form, in the sense that you isolate a form, can have terrific explicit content. Not as an aesthetic hold, but as a social comment, as a connotation, as an emotional overtone, which is as –

Bishop Well, I –

Audience member -- symbolic and as explicit as anything in the Dürer that you can translate into iconography.

Bishop But you think it can't be verbalized.

Audience member No.

Bishop Really?

Audience member I think it's like the Mozart.

Bishop But you're verbalizing. You're saying it has social -

Audience member Oh, well I'm not verbalizing in any parallel sense of what's going on up there.

Bishop Not in detail, it's true. Well, that's an interesting thought, now, maybe it's true. Maybe the, maybe, maybe it's true that explicit counter, why should every, everything that's explicit thought to be verbalizable? Language is so, people decided we have words, [laughs], you know, too many of them. It's an interesting point, I'd like to think about it.

Anybody have another thought, or about that?

Audience member Yeah, I didn't want to, I didn't want to get into it so soon, but you might say that there's a distinction between idea and story. And that idea can often be created in image much more effectively than it can be verbalized. For example –

Bishop Yeah, but then it's implicit. Then the form is the shape itself.

Audience member Not, not exactly.

Bishop No?

Audience member For instance, the crucifixion you liked by Grünewald. Well, there was explicitly, okay, another crucifixion, two people walking, and so forth.

Bishop Well, then, and, in every bit of the torture –

Audience member Yeah, but through the quality of the form or quality of the explicit, implicit content, they made the explicit content more effective –

Bishop Oh, yes!

Audience member -- in a way that you couldn't do verbally. [CROSSTALK]

Bishop -- you're discussing, if you think there's any sense to it, that you don't.And my feeling that there must be a tension between them. I don't know. Maybe tension isn't the right word, but there has to be something between them. I mean, they can't go like this and they can't be irrelevant to each other. And they really were, I think, in the '30s. I think we had acres of –

Audience member Explicit content.

Bishop -- irrelevant explicit content.

Audience member Okay –

Bishop **--** but only it wasn't content. It wasn't content.

Audience member Could you say unless the idea, the human or the non-plastic idea were translated into a completely plastic form? So it should be exciting in a plastic way in a way it couldn't be any other way, it, it shouldn't be used.

Bishop Yeah. Ideally. Sure.

Do you, do you think that what you're saying really is explicit?

Audience member I think so. I think so.

Bishop I thought, you see I thought that maybe you don't agree with my definition of explicit. see I though both stories and direct statement, let's say direct statement certainly would be verbalizable, wouldn't it? I mean a direct statement. Yeah, that's verbal. So it's an explicit symbol, you see, it was - I think I might have mentioned the [WORD UNCLEAR], it's another division.

Audience member I think, I think so.

Bishop There's another division to it.

Audience member I mean, I think in a Dürer might put in a certain sprig of something, which meant this was a fallen woman.

Bishop Yeah.

Audience member Roualt, there's no sprig of something.

Bishop No.

Audience member But there's these colors, these acid biting colors. There's these distorted forms.

Bishop Oh, that's implicit, I think.

Audience member I think it's explicit. I think it has as definite a meaning as, as the Dürer sprig of, of –

Bishop But [CROSSTALK] I mean, I have [CROSSTALK]

Audience member I think it's related. I think it's a kind of literature.

Bishop But no, what you said is that the form enters the color. I don't mean form that isn't color. I mean, you know, whatever hits you. This, this content that you speak of is in that. That's implicit. It's in it.

Audience member Yeah, it's in it.

Bishop You can't take it out. It's in there. It affects you, I don't mean it doesn't affect you, it's that, so that you know it's acid in there. Of course it does.

Audience member Well, I just think the implicit [CROSSTALK] take it out only because you can say it. You can, you can write your pages translating the iconography of Dürer.

Bishop Yes.

Audience member And it's very difficult to write intelligent pages –

Bishop Yes.

Audience member -- translating the iconography of the forms of a wall. But I, I think this is the only difference between the two. I think basically that there are explicit content.

Bishop I think so too. I said, I think so too. I mean I think that Roualt has a lot of explicit content, but that, but we're just probably shifting a little bit. I think it has both. And I don't think - this is what I want you to discuss and not, is, is, does an image, am I right in saying image must have these two things? I saw, you know, if you just copy an appearance that isn't image and it can't be image. It just can't ever get to image unless there's something else entirely. Which is the implicit content. It never will be got by copying nature. Never. Never. You see. And so I really think, now this was kind of a hard thing to kind of think through and I thought I'd got something with it in finding that, that this is what it has to have is these two things. It won't ever happen without explicit content. It won't happen without semblance. It'll never have image without semblance. Semblance won't do it, of course. But implicit content will never, never, never do it alone. Never. And it won't matter how powerful. And it isn't that, that art, that non-objective art isn't expressive. It is. But it will never make image with implicit content alone. And image happens, I think, [CROSSTALK] -- power.

Audience member I, see, this is, I do disagree with this. And I do disagree with, just because I, I think you're right, really, in saying that there are explicit and implicit content. But I think that an image with no symbolism can have a conflict between implicit and explicit.

Bishop No. I absolutely don't think so. And I've tried, I assume that --

Audience member Right.

Bishop [laughs] I want to hear what somebody else thinks!

Do you think it can, image?

Audience member Nope.

Bishop Do you?

Audience member Well, I've gone through the same argument myself, but I've used a different set of terms.

Bishop Yeah, yeah.

Audience member I'm busy –

Bishop Yeah.

Audience member -- translating your words into mine, so they're not [PHRASE UNCLEAR] the ones I'm used to. And I always call what you call explicit content content image.

Bishop Oh, I see. [CROSSTALK] [laughter] --

Audience member What you call implicit content I call form.

Bishop Well, it's confusing –

Audience member Yeah.

Bishop -- because we use the word image, right –

Audience member Yeah.

Bishop -- and you say, well, it's an image of a, I mean, you say there was a screen, and then an image of a head appeared --

Audience member Cause often I think in some of those things you showed me –

Bishop Yeah.

Audience member -- the, what you called explicit –

Bishop Yeah.

Audience member -- image was the obvious, almost literary, content that the guy was forced to employ. And running through it like a happy feeling was both an idea, a human idea, and also a plastic –

Bishop Yes.

Audience member -- solution, which would have been fun to look at, and exciting to look at, and a good piece of work.

Bishop You said.

Audience member I still am not clear what you mean by implicit content. Do you mean --

Bishop Well it's the content that's within the form and then Mozart, when he had to, he said, well it means, yes, he said, it means, and he played it through again because it's in there. It isn't something you can verbalize out or get out of it all, it's just in the form. And it's just a tremendous part of, as I said, about, painting and sculpture are far over on the implicit side. I mean compared with prose writing, they're way over on the implicit side.

They're more over on the implicit side than poetry, much further. You see. So that there's a great big, big, there has to be a great big implicit content in painting and sculpture or else it just isn't.

Audience member Did you say, classify mathematics on the implicit side? (00:59:59)

Bishop Yeah, entirely implicit.

Audience member Well, would you consider a story or a pattern to mathematics, whereas usually the implicit is a more spiritual, intangible [PHRASE UNCLEAR]?

Bishop No, I think the implicit is in the form. I mean, I don't know anything about mathematics, [laughs] but I think that it implies order. It has a great content and implying order that has no explicit meaning. It has no explicit meaning at all. I mean it has patterns, but the patterns don't have explicit meaning, but they do imply order. They're very orderly, certain. And I think that order, that order and that sensuality, that thing that Clark said, that deep sensuality and deep passion for order are the two things that, when they do happen, make great image.

Audience member Could you define order?

Bishop No, I can't. [laughter]

Anybody else?

Audience member How would you relate representation and image, semblance?

Bishop Well, representation I take to be explicit content. And - you said representation and explicit suitable, did you?

Audience member Semblance --

Bishop Oh, semblance.

Audience member -- and image.

Bishop Well, semblance, it's the same thing as representation, I think. And image, I think, I think representation will never make image, just never. Yeah.

Audience member Well, it seemed to me that, that the tension of, between the semblance and the implicit rather than anything to do with explicit.

Bishop Well, semblance is explicit. I mean, that's true. I think that's true. I think the semblance, I think the semblance and the [WORD UNCLEAR] within the form [WORD

UNCLEAR] do have tension. I think that's true, but I think that is explicit. When you say, 'This is an apple,' I mean, that's semblance, isn't it? And that's explicit.

But don't you think, don't you think power is lost in poetry when it, when it goes so far over that, you know, you can't, where there's no explicit meaning in the words at all. And I just think it was a good experiment, I'm glad somebody did it, but you don't feel it's in a powerful way.

Yeah.

Audience member I would like to know what this is for.

Bishop This is an exhortation. [laughter]

Audience member No, I mean, is this going to, is this going to help you decide anything when you see something from, a new, something that's just implicit for you?

Bishop No. I'm not doing it to be cryptic, I mean, I think it could. I think it could be useful that way, but I imagine that you are a doer, and you're a maker and you're not perhaps, first of all, a critic, I should hope. And so I hope that you could use it because I think that this is so difficult. You see, these motifs have run out, and the images that have been made aren't our images anymore. And so there is this job to be done and it's terrific. And maybe it can't be done, but of course it can be. You know, you all can, can do it. You all will, if you want to, really, throw everything into it, including your judgment. And that's why I think this has to be analyzed, because I think –

Auedience member But not this way. Not this way, never this way, I mean this --

Bishop No.

Audience member But what you're saying, what you're saying is always after the fact.

Bishop Exactly.

Audience member I was just being [PHRASE UNCLEAR].

Bishop No, that's true. It's after the fact. I only thought that, that I don't want to bring, bring to you that you have to use more, even, than your imagination and your energy. You also have to use analytical judgment.

Audience member No –

Bishop I think. Well, maybe not. I think you do.

Yeah.

Audience member I, have an idea now that what you're getting at is that it's up to us as at the present to develop images.

Bishop Fight for it. I mean, you have to fight for it. You can't just do it, you have to work to it.

Audience member Without images which are consistent with the philosophical ideas [WORD UNCLEAR] with the times –

Bishop Well, you're still, of course, the real fallacy, now nobody's pointed out what I think is the real fallacy in my argument. [laughter] So I'll tell you what it is. [laughs] It's in talking about art instead of just individual artists. And that is the fallacy. And it's just a way of talking in order to bring something out. But truly you would have to make an image. It isn't going to be consistent with anything at all, but you, really. Of course, you know, you are also a human being. So we hope that we share enough to understand it, but you can't say about making something according to the philosophy of the time or anything. You would reach that if you could, you know, do it, if you could make an image, but would have to - in other words, all this whole thing I've spoken about, about the revolt against subject, some artists have gone plodding ahead and tried a little bit for image all the time, and haven't, you see - so the individual artists are really the only true thing. So it's all there is. Is, it's individual art works and individual artists and there isn't any art, you know, that –

Audience member I wish –

Bishop **--** and that was the fallacy.

Audience member I wish you had shown us more artists that didn't succeed in getting the image, because --

Bishop Oh, have I not showed you a lot that did? [laughs]

Audience member [PHRASE UNCLEAR]

Bishop Well, I showed you that lovely September morn [?], didn't I? [laughter] Yes, I did.

Well, perhaps that's all the questions. There are more?

Audience member Would you say that there were, that there's a great range? We want to produce a change in a time and do something very revolutionary with image?

Bishop You mean change in image or change?

Audience member How much of a change [WORD UNCLEAR].

Bishop Oh, well I, I don't know. I think, it could be anything. I think maybe you'd have to, if you're working with the body, maybe you'd have to dismember it. I don't know. And put it together a different way. I don't know. Oh, or maybe you wouldn't have to do that. I mean, maybe if you strongly believed and felt something about a small change in the image, it could be revolutionary. Terrific, you know, if it was really deeply felt. I mean, for instance, that really was a big change in twenty years there. I mean not only in the sense of progress, but just the change in that archaic image of the power [?], you know. And then there was that *Kritios Boy*, big muscles here. It was completely different. Completely different, well some, that artist didn't take the body all apart and put it together differently. He just, just did a few things. He just thought to balance it a little bit differently and develop these muscles, and it came out something that just swept the whole Western world. You know? Just a little change, you can't tell. Or it might be a terrific change. I mean, I think, I think de Kooning was working with big, sort of big changes. You know, at least in - you can't tell whether it was a lot of change or only a little change, right? But I think that, I think it's the great challenge now, without a doubt. I mean, it is. And I think that you're in a strong position to do it, you all. I think you all have the discipline in the fundamental problem so that you could move out, you know. And you're familiar with making the walls strong, you know, and I think you move out from them. [applause]

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