Patrick Bade | Akseli Gallen Kallela: The Creation of Finnish Identity

– As you know, we're well into Finland this week, and following Dennis on the great Finnish composer Sibelius, I'm talking tonight about Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who the Finns regard as their great national painter. Really the equivalent of Sibelius. He may not be so familiar to you as Sibelius. He did have a world reputation. He was greatly admired, not just in Finland, but around the Western world in the early 1900s. Of course, Sibelius's reputation has had its ups and downs, but by and large, it's survived very well. There would be very few people today who doubt the genius of Sibelius. I don't think that Gallen-Kallela has lasted quite so well outside of his native country. Both men suffered, I think, from a kind of great man complex, Dennis stressing yesterday how it all got too much for Sibelius, really. And after the end of the 1920s, for the last 30 years of his life, there were no new works. He was apparently working on an eighth symphony that he finally decided to burn. Akseli Gallen-Kallela, I think a part of the problem is Nietzsche: there's this whole idea of the Superman and so on. And I think that that was very much in air at the time. And Gallen-Kallela said that he wanted to be the greatest painter in the world or nothing at all. And I think round about 1910, it became pretty obvious to everybody, including him, that he wasn't the greatest painter in the world and his work really declines. It might have been better if he had been as self critical as Sibelius and had either produced nothing or burned everything after about 1910. But before that, as we shall see, he did do some very interesting work.

Now, both Sibelius and Gallen-Kallela have to be seen in the context of the so-called Scandinavian Renaissance. The Scandinavian countries had been obviously at the top of Europe, on the fringe of Europe. Sweden, as you know, had from time to time played a role in European politics, particularly in the time of Gustavus Adolphus and the 30 Years' War. But really the Scandinavian countries were on the edge of things, particularly Norway and Finland. But suddenly in the last years of the 19th century, there is a tremendous cultural flowering that is important not just for the Scandinavian countries but for Western culture altogether. Of course there is the giant figure of Henry Ibsen, a Norwegian playwright who completely galvanises and changes the art of theatre. An huge figure, really, I would say on a level with Wagner for his very widespread influence. So the Scandinavian countries, which were backward, they were poor, they were largely rural; so it's strange that they played such a key role in the early history of Modernism and the Modern sensibility. And the Scandinavians had, and I think they still continue to have, an ability to deal with uncomfortable realities. Of course, Ibsen did it in plays like "The Doll's House" and "Ghosts." "Ghosts" is a play which deals with the great unmentionable of venereal disease or syphilis. Here's a painting by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch called "Heredity." It's a shocking, terrible image of a woman of weeping over a syphilitic baby.

You can't imagine a French artist, certainly not a British artist, not even maybe a German artist, being able to deal with such a shocking theme with such honesty. And this, again, plays with very uncomfortable things that other European playwrights would not have dared to do at the time. And so there's a Scandinavian context to Gallen-Kallela's art. There's also a specifically Finnish one. Sweden had its identity; it had a longstanding identity in its own monarchy and independence and so on. But Norway and Finland were new countries. Norway had to free itself from Swedish influence. Finland had long been under the yoke of Sweden, and in this period at the end of the 19th century, was trying to free itself from the domination of Russia. And the Russians were up to their usual tricks of trying to, to subjugate and Russify the Finns. This is a painting by Akseli Gallen-Kallela of 1894. The title is "Symposium." And it shows four leading figures in what was a kind of Finnish cultural revolution. There is Galen-Kallela himself on the left hand side. There is the composer Oskar Merikanto, who's slumped head down in a kind of drunken stupor. There is the conductor Kajanus. He was the great early interpreter of the Sibelius symphonies but he's more than that. He's a composer, but above all an advocate for Finnish independence and Finnish culture. And on the right hand side, also apparently in some kind of drunken stupor, is the composer Sibelius. Here we have the two, Sibelius on the left, Gallen-Kallela on the right. So they were friends, they knew each other. They were fighting a common struggle for Finnish independence and Finnish culture. Dennis last night began his talk with the rousing "Finlandia," which was composed in reaction to Russian attempts to suppress Finland. So that dates from 1899. Three years earlier, Gallen-Kallela created this stained glass window, symbolic image title being "Arise Finland." So there is an obvious comparison to be made between Gallen-Kallela, on the right hand side is a portrait, as the Finnish national painter, and Edvard Munch, on the left, as the Norwegian painter, national painter. They're very close, or close contemporaries. Of course Munch's reputation is a much more international one. Again, I think it's lasted rather better than Gallen-Kallela's. He's more of a pioneer; he's more of an originator. Gallen-Kallela to me is a very fascinating figure, particularly, say, between about 1818 and 1910, not because he originates anything new, but he's got his finger on the pulse. He's sensing what is new and he's picking it up from other people. He's constantly changing his style and his subject matter, and he's picking up on all the fashionable trends and ideas of the period. Anyway, this year there will have been a very interesting opportunity for those of you who visit Paris to make a comparison between these two national painters, because there's been a big show of Gallen-Kallela that's just finished at the Musée Jacquemart-André, and there's a big show of Munch which is just about to open at the Musée d'Orsay. Oh yes, this is really, again, to make that point. This is Gallen-Kallela's portrait of Munch on the left-hand side, a very fine painting, but not especially radical or original. "The Scream," which is course actually a self portrait, a kind of Expressionist self portrait, of Munch on the

right-hand side, which certainly is one of the most radical and influential paintings of early Modernism. So, Gallen-Kallela came from quite a comfortable middle class family. He was not the aristo that he sometimes claimed to be, but he grew up in comfortable circumstances. And like Sibelius, he was actually essentially a Swedish speaker, not a Finnish speaker. In fact, his mother spoke not a word of Finnish and regarded Finnish as being a language of peasants, not a language of intellectuals or the bourgeoisie. So Finland really was a very backward country culturally, and there wasn't a great deal of opportunity for training for a young artist.

But this is another Finnish artist; he's Albert Edelfelt. He's 11 years older than Gallen-Kallela. He also actually has just had an exhibition in Paris of his work at the Petit Palais. And he's a very accomplished artist, but working, I would say, in a completely French naturalist manner. And he acts initially as a mentor and a big influence on Gallen-Kallela. So before he ever got to France, I would say that Gallen-Kallela's style-- Oh, here we've got a comparison. Very famous, probably Edelfelt's most famous painting, which is a portrait of the great scientist and doctor, Louis Pasteur. That's on the right hand side. And a painting of a doctor Antell by Gallen-Kallela. The Edelfelt painting dates from 1885 and the Gallen-Kallela from the following year. And you can see there, in a very, very similar style. But this is perhaps the first significant painting by Gallen-Kallela, and it dates from 1884. It's just called "Boy and Crow." And he described how he came to paint this. He was observing a little Finnish peasant boy who was fascinated by some crows. And he told the boy that if he held salt in his hand, and he sprinkled salt, it would attract the crows. I don't know if this is true or not. But he watched the little boy doing this, and he created this picture. This is very much in the manner of a French artist who was at the height of his fame and influence in the 1880s called Jules Bastien-Lepage. And of course, it's fascinating how artistic reputations come and go. And Bastien-Lepage had this world reputation, world influence, and in the 1880s died very young of tuberculosis and became a largely forgotten figure. In as far as he's discussed at all these days, it's his influence on other artists. Here's another painting of a peasant. So you can see at this point, Gallen-Kallela's feeling for his native country is expressed through observing the life of the ordinary people, of the rural Finnish peasants. And the style, as I said, is completely French Naturalist style. Here is a painting by Jules Bastien-Lepage. You can see, very, very similar in style to Gallen-Kallela. And again, a comparison: Gallen-Kallela on the left-hand side, an image, I think, which has been directly inspired by one of the most famous paintings by Jules Bastien-Lepage on the right-hand side. So they're plan air pictures, but they're not Impressionist. You don't have very bright colours. And you have not really an Impressionist brushstroke either. And this is a very common international style in the 1880s. Here's a Swedish artist, Anders Zorn. Again, an exact contemporary or a year or so older than Gallen-

Kallela. This is a painting again of Swedish peasant life, of a young woman. She's either married or she's engaged to this man, who in a very Scandinavian way, on a midsummer's night when it's light or nearly all night long, has got completely drunk and collapsed face down in a field. Again a picture, I'd say, very much in the style of Jules Bastien-Lepage. And another comparison of a treatment of a very Scandinavian theme, "The Sauna." Scandinavians, like Germans, have a more comfortable relationship, I think, with their bodies and nudity than many other Europeans, particularly in the sauna.

So this is "The Sauna" by Anders Zorn on left-hand side, and by Gallen-Kallela on the right-hand side. And more images of rural Finnish life. This is a woman smoking fish and a young shepherd boy on the right-hand side, dating from the mid to late 1880s. And sometimes quite a gritty realism. I find this actually a rather moving painting, a rather beautiful painting, of a peasant who's injured his hand. And the title of this picture is "Silent Suffering." He was intensely ambitious. He wanted to become world famous. He wanted to think himself as a genius. And the only way you could do that in the 1880s was to go to Paris; so off he goes and spends the second half of the 1880s in Paris. What you would do as a foreign artist, you'd enrol yourself in the studio of a well known academic artist. Models would be provided for life drawing or painting from life. And the master would come round at regular intervals to comment on and correct your work. So Gallen-Kallela first enrolled in the studio of an artist called Cormon. This was in 1886. And in fact, he's very likely to have encountered van Gogh, who enrolled in the same studio at the same time. But he soon moved on to the Atelier Julian. This was quite a big enterprise in large studios at the foot of Montmarte; actually it's behind my flat in Paris, on the Boulevard de Clichy. And artists came from all over the world, from Britain, from Germany, from America, to study, and many from Scandinavia as well, to study at the Atelier Julian. This is a picture of the Atelier Julian. I know that Gallen-Kallela is in that picture somewhere, but I can't point him out to you. He's circled here in another image of the Academie Julian. And this is one of the exercises that he did there. Not just nude figures, but also draped figures. The problem, I would say, with studying somewhere like the Academie Julian, was that yes, you acquired a skill, but artists tended to lose their individuality, because it was a kind of uniform style that was imposed upon them. But he's picking up on what's going around him in Paris. These are two pictures he did soon after his arrival. That is the Boulevard de Clichy on the left-hand side. And on the right-hand side is a view of a Paris courtyard, probably the view from his apartment, that are in, you can see this is 1880s. This is a decade and a half after the birth of Impressionism. And he's still not, I would say, this is not a particularly advanced style for the 1880s. The 1880s, the new styles of course are Post-Impressionism; the new, really exciting innovatory artists are Cézanne, Seurat, van Gogh, and Gaughin. He's obviously quite unaware of them when he painted these pictures. But he is aware of artists

like Giuseppe Di Nittis. There are lots of artists painting these themes of the street life of Paris. This goes back, of course, actually to the 1860s and Baudelaire's famous essay, "The Painter of Modern Life," in which he said, you know, Paris offers the most fantastic spectacle. It must have been certainly an amazing spectacle, for a boy from rural Finland to land up in the centre of Paris. Baudelaire said, you know, let's not paint gods and goddesses and the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, let's look at the marvellous spectacle that is all around us. Another Italian who's arrived in Paris at just about the same time, Giovanni Boldini, on the right-hand side, painting in a very similar style, a similar kind of street scene, of fashionable people with top hats and elegant ladies with bustles and so on. And cafe life. This is actually a masquerade, a late night party. This is Gallen-Kallela again. So there's nothing Scandinavian about this. This is in a completely French style. And of course, the model for that is again, Manet on the left-hand side and Degas, who'd been painting these kind of urban scenes, cafes and cabarets and so on, for the past decade or so. And here is Gallen-Kallela doing the same kind of thing. This is clearly a cafe cabaret; again, probably on the Boulevard de Clichy. And for comparison, Gallen-Kallela on the left-hand side and Boldini again on the right-hand side, celebrating the rather raffish nightlife of the foot of Montmartre. This is a rather bolder picture. It's called "Unmasked," which I suppose gives it a slightly moralising connotation. And you can see the date on it: 1888. For those of you who study art history, of course, 1888 is a key year. It's the year of van Gogh's "Sunflowers." It's the year of Gaughin's "Vision after the Sermon." So it's a year in which radical stylistic changes were introduced into modern art. There's nothing stylistically radical about this picture. And again, it's a piece of, I think, Gallen-Kallela picking up on various fashionable things, you know, with the Aesthetic Movement. The rug on which the nude is sitting is actually a Finnish peasant rug. I'd imagine the Finn peasants who made that rug might be rather astonished at the use that's been made of it. And we see Japanese fans at the top and the lilies coming in on the left. So an element of Japanism and the Aesthetic Movement. What is bold about this nude is its realism, the fact that her face is not generalised or idealised. This is a portrait of somebody that we would recognise if we met her. And of course, the really shocking thing, I think, for many people when this was first exhibited, was the very frank depiction of female pubic hair, which was another great unmentionable, another great secret really, of the 19th century. Remember the story of Ruskin claiming that he was so shocked to discover his wife had pubic hair, because he'd only seen paintings and he didn't know that women had pubic hair. But again, Gallen-Kallela is picking up on what's going on around him. And here is a slightly earlier picture by Gustave Caillebotte, which again is a very uncomfortably, in a way, realistic depiction of a female nude with the pubic hair very much in evidence. And the insert at the top there is a famous painting by Cabanel, "The Birth of Venus," which is the kind of nude that you would've seen at

the salon, that people expected, where everything is smooth and bland and perfect and not too uncomfortably real. So in fact, he exhibited this picture, and you can imagine back in Finland, and you could imagine that in the 1880s it did actually cause quite a scandal. So he's begun to make a serious reputation for himself. I forgot to mention, of course, that he had a grant from the Finnish government, just as Sibelius had one too.

This new country in the making, not fully independent, of course, till 1918, was very keen to promote its own culture and its cultural reputation. So Gallen-Kallela had support from his government when he was in Paris, and he was very quickly recognised as an important rising talent. This is the Finnish Pavilion in the Paris World Fair of 1889. That's the Eiffel Tower World Fair. And his pictures were shown in this, and he was involved in the interior design of the pavilion. So he's beginning to want to move a new direction, not just painting scenes of Finnish rural life, but to somehow express Finnishness in a more profound way. And like Sibelius, he turns for inspiration to Finnish legends and to Finnish sagas. And here he's working on a painting that's in the form of, the final picture as you can see, it's the form of a triptych, like an altarpiece, but the subject matter is not Christian, it's pagan and it's taken from Finnish legends. You've got the, to us, rather disturbing symbol of the swastika all around it. But you have to remember, of course, the Nazis had purloined this symbol, which is a fairly universal one found in many, many different cultures and shouldn't necessarily have the evil connotations that it has for us now. But I see this as a transitional work, because although the subject matter is legendary, from the "Kalevala," like of course that inspired the tone poems of Sibelius that Dennis was talking about, but the style is, I would say, completely French salon academic, the treatment of the nudes, the drawing. It's a rather banal, Naturalist academic style. So nothing very new here. He's the panel on it on the left-hand side. And in 1890, an important event in his life. He marries a girl called Mary Sloor, who actually came from a wealthy upper class family. And the following year they have a child and he painted this picture. A great many artists of the 19th and early 20th century, when their wives gave birth to a child, they immediately thought of the Madonna and child image. And the title he gave to this picture of his wife and his first baby was "Madonna." So of course that obviously invites a comparison with the notorious "Madonna" of Munch. So I think Munch is, shall we say, way ahead of Gallen-Kallela here with this symbolic image of sexual ecstasy, conception and death. I suppose it's the chain of life, isn't it, with the moment of orgasm and the woman swirling in ecstasy, the little tadpole-like sperm cells whizzing around the edge and the foetus, which is also a kind of mummy or a death image. It's an incredibly powerful and disturbing image of Munch on the right-hand side. But as I said, Gallen-Kallela is very receptive to what's going on. Munch, he's a hard artist to define, but if you're going to put him into an artistic movement, you would describe him as a Symbolist with a

capital S, which is, the Symbolist Movement in the visual arts is a big reaction against the kind of Naturalism that is represented by Gallen-Kallela's "Madonna" picture on the left-hand side. And so we now find Gallen-Kallela, like by a number of artists of his generation, also reacting against Naturalism, moving towards a Symbolist aesthetic with a capital S. And "The Symposium," this is a sketch for the final picture. Here is the final picture, painted in the early 1890s; we've got these huge sphinx wings on the left-hand side. It's obviously not a Naturalistic representation of a late night drunken session. It contains Symbolist and symbolic elements. So it's in the second half of the 1890s and into the beginning of the 20th century that Gallen-Kallela paints the pictures for which he is best remembered and most admired, inspired by the "Kalevala," of legendary subjects. This is, the title is "The Defending of Sampo"; this dates from 1896. So this is clearly not a Naturalistic picture; it's very stylized. It's Symbolist with a capital S, and I would also say it has strongly Art Nouveau elements in the stylization, flattening of forms, the decorative use of patterning and contours there. This is a print made after the same image. This is "Lemminkainen's Mother." And so you probably know the famous Sibelius "Return of Lemminkainen" poem. So he is using the same legendary material that Sibelius uses. And this here, the depiction is of a moment where Lemminkainen's mother uses her powers to bring him back after he has been killed. Apparently Gallen-Kallela used his mother as a model for the mother of Lemminkainen. So you've got this high viewpoint, rather flattened space, elements of abstraction and stylization. As I said, these are his best known and most memorable pictures, but produced over, I would say, a fairly short period of time. This had the title, this is "The Vengeance of Kullervo," dating from 1899. And he's always an eclectic artist. I mean, that's not necessarily a bad thing. And I think during this period, I've always said that about Klimt, some of you may have heard me talking about Klimt, Klimt is also a great eclectic. He's looking at everything. He's looking at Monet; he's looking at Ravenna mosaics; he's looking at Renaissance paintings; he's looking at Milatkas; and he borrows, but he manages to fuse it into something that's very personal and individual. And I think during this period, in the late 1890s, Gallen-Kallela is able to do same. So here it's Gallen-Kallela on the right-hand side, and I made a comparison with the German, the Munich artist, Franz von Stuck, another artist who had an absolutely huge reputation around about 1900; people really also thought, and you can see from his self portraits, that he thought of himself as a great genius. People seriously compared him with Michelangelo and Shakespeare and so on. And he does these rather stylized kind of Jugendstil, Art Nouveau mythological scenes. You can see obvious stylistic similarities between these two.

So now we're up to 1900, and let's say 1900 is the peak of his reputation. He had a stunning success with his paintings in the Paris World Fair of 1900. This again is the Finnish Pavilion, which was largely decorated by Gallen-Kallela. He won a silver medal, I think.

Klimt of course won a gold medal for his mural "Medicine" that was shown in the same show. And this, it's the end of the nineties, just again, for a very short time that he is very influenced in the Art Nouveau style, which was at its peak. And he becomes evolved in the decorative arts. This is a design he made for a carpet. And this is an interior he designed for an exhibition round about this time. You can see that he's been very influenced by the English Arts and Crafts Movement. Of course, Morris, who really sets in train this idea that there shouldn't be a division between fine arts and decorative arts, and that artists should involve themselves in the decorative arts. One of his most important endeavours, he got a commission in 1901, and he worked on it over the next two years, to paint murals for a mausoleum of a young girl called Ingrid Juselius, who died at the age of 11 of tuberculosis. And her father commissioned Gallen-Kallela to paint these big murals. This this is in the ceiling, it's "The Cosmos." Again, the imagery comes from the "Kalevala." This is "The River of Tuonela." You probably all know the Sibelius symphonic poem "The Swan of Tuonela." What we're looking at here actually is not the final mural, it's a preparatory cartoon for the mural, because the chapel actually burned down in the 1930s, just after Gallen-Kallela's death. And his son was then commissioned to repaint the murals from his father's cartoons. And here is another one of the murals for the Juselius Mausoleum. And as well as thematic material from Finnish legend, there are representations of the four seasons. This is "Spring." There's a detail from "Spring," which was actually painted from Gallen-Kallela's daughter. This is "Autumn." And this is "Winter." And these are designs for decorative motifs in the ceiling of the mausoleum, which you can see, once again, are very Art Nouveau in style. Now, apart from the his scenes of Finnish legend, I think his best paintings are his landscapes inspired by the highly distinctive landscape of Sweden with many its lakes and forests. And these can be very beautiful. It's an interesting combination of Naturalism, I feel that this has been observed from life, but quite a strong element of stylization and abstraction. And this, I think, like so many artists in Europe at the end of the 19th century, he's looked hard and learned from Japanese woodcut prints. Here is the Hiroshige on the left-hand side and Gallen-Kallela on the right-hand side. This is very unusual, of course, for a landscape to have a vertical format like this. But you do find it in Japanese prints that are made for screens. And also the asymmetry, large areas of empty space, and the way the trees are cropped at top and bottom. So that creates again, a rather flattening effect. These are all very Japanese. And more of the same in this winter scene. This is perhaps one of his most famous pictures, of a woodpecker. Again, the vertical format. And this painting, which has been acquired by the National Gallery in London, where you have, again, this combination of observation of nature, but strong elements of abstraction and stylization. And again, he's not alone in this. Here we have a comparison: Gallen-Kallela on the left-hand side and the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler, again somebody with a huge reputation in the early 1900s. And he was an artist who'd

followed, I would say, a similar trajectory from Realism towards Symbolism and Art Nouveau. So, Gallen-Kallela on the left; Hodler on the right. This picture is called "The Faun." That is a reference of course the same faun that you get in the "Afternoon of the Faun" of Debussy, inspired by the poem of Mallarme, about a faun, a mythological creature who spies on and lusts after nymphs, although the whole thing here is translated into a rural, Finnish context. And so, a lot of very beautiful snow scenes. The palate of colours is certainly by this time indebted to Impressionism. He's looked at Monet; Monet was perhaps the first artist to understand that snow is not white, particularly not on a sunny day, that snow picks up colour and has a lot of colour in the shadows.

And so we're now moving into the early 1900s. And I would say he's an artist who, he's always picking up on new things where you can see, I think by this time he's seen both Cézanne and Gaughin, and he's really beginning to push the colours, exaggerate the colours. So he's moving away, I would say, from Symbolism towards a kind of Expressionism. So in 1909 he returned to Paris for a while. As I said, he's very famous at this time. When he visited cities like Vienna and Budapest and so on, he was received with great ceremony and pomp. This is a painting of 1909. And of course arriving in Paris in 1909, the fact Cubism was just getting way. But I think he's unlikely to have come across that. What he clearly has come across, as you can see in this picture, is Fauvism. Fauvism is really French Expressionism. Fauve Movement, launched in 1905. Key figures: Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck. So, these very crude colours and very simplified forms, I think, show him beginning to pick up, if slightly timidly, on French Expressionism, on Fauvism. But I think by this time, 1909, he sort of feels, oh, that somehow he's been left behind, that art has moved on. And from this time he really becomes a kind of slightly grumpy old git out of sympathy with the artists of the younger generation. And he's a rather restless figure. The same year, 1909, in May of 1909, he went off to Africa. He was actually based in Kenya; what's now Kenya was then a British colony. And he said that he found amongst the natives, the African natives, the kind of simplicity and authenticity which he had earlier found among the Finnish peasantry which he now felt was being lost. So here he is with an African holding up a sun shade for him, and living out in a camp in the bush in Kenya. Producing paintings, hmm yes, they're interesting. I wouldn't say they're masterpieces. But this is his response to the African landscape and the African people. As I said, it's a kind of Expressionism. So he's back in Finland in the First World War. And as the war draws to a close, a civil war breaks out in Finland, I'm sure William has talked about this with you, with a Communist, Russian-backed side against a "White Army," in inverted commas, that is backed by Kaiser Wilhelm II, by Wilhelmine Germany. He enlists as a volunteer and he fights with the White Army against the Communists, and they are eventually triumphant. And as a result of that, of course, Finland achieves its independence. Still, as I said, quite a restless figure, searching for something. Between

1923 and 1925, he goes to America, initially living in Chicago, and then goes down to Taos, where once again he's very fascinated by the native population of the region, and paints these rather illustrational pictures of them. I think this one's actually quite good. But he's become by this time a rather reactionary figure and controversial in not necessarily a very positive way. And he goes back to Finland and he's mainly engaged on reprises of his best works. These are ceiling paintings in the National Museum of Finland, which are really repeats of the legendary works that he produced in the 1890s. Here is another of the ceilings inside the National Museum. And he also built this studio house for himself, which decades after his death was turned into a museum dedicated to his work, this is is how it looks today, which has become actually one of the most popular tourist sites in Finland. So this is where I'm going to come to an end today, and let's see what you have to say.

Q & A and Comments

"Albert Edelfelt's style is rather similar to that." Yes, it certainly is. But in both cases, even though they're Scandinavian, it is an essentially French style that they're practising .

Q: "Ceramics by Arabia quite lovely; is this traditional art?"

A: I'm not sure about that.

Q: "Would you do a lecture on Anders Zorn?"

A: You know, I find Anders Zorn very fascinating. Because he has this period where he's painting the same kind of subject matter as Gallen-Kallela, peasant subject matter. But of course he goes a very different route and becomes a society portrait painter, perhaps the nearest rival to Sargent. And he's very brilliant and I think he can be an absolutely wonderful portrait painter. At some point, if it's appropriate and it fits in, I would be very happy to do a lecture on Anders Zorn.

This is Nanette who says, "While the paintings--"

I think, well I would agree with you really. I mean I find that the Parisian street scenes appeal to me because I really like the subject matter. But the best things really are just that group of legendary paintings he did in the 1890s. And yes, I can certainly see a similarity with Canada's Group of Seven in that combination of Abstraction and Naturalism.

Q: "Where can you see that works by this artist?"

A: As far as I know, there's only one in Britain, in the National

Gallery. There must be some, I would think, in America. I presume that Chicago has some, because he was very successful in Chicago and won medals. But otherwise I think you're just going to have to go to Finland to see his work.

"The snow paintings are--" Yes, they are; they are very beautiful. Thank you very much everybody.

I think that's it for today. Yes, actually, well I see Adriana, that little portrait, his most ravishing portrait that Anders Zorn did of Isabella Stewart Gardner in Venice. She's been watching a firework display on the Grand Canal and she turns around to talk to her guests, and you see her in the window with the firework display behind her. It's fabulous picture. I think that must be the one you are talking about.

So that's all for today; thank you very much everybody. It will be a couple of weeks I think before I speak to you again Good night.