

Pairs with Julie Mehretu, *Transcending: The New International*, 2003

[[Optional Description Copy]] Gallery Assistant Diane Mullen always started her gallery tours with this painting. Listen to her remember the effect it had on students.

[[Transcript]]

My name is Diane Mullen. I'm a Gallery Assistant here at the Walker. I've actually been here for about 12 years. I started as a Gallery Assistant, and then I did a lot of training of brand-new Gallery Assistants. I also was in the professional educator group, and I did that—gosh, I would say probably about 3, 4 years, but never giving up my job as a Gallery Assistant as well.

So now here we are with a Julie Mehretu piece. It's a huge, absolutely huge painting taking up one whole wall. I was an Educator at the time when this piece was up. So I was working with kids from kindergarten all the way through 12th grade, sometimes a little bit older. But it didn't matter what the group was. It didn't matter how old they were. I would take them to the gallery that this piece was in and I would ask them all to sit on the floor. And I would say, "OK, we're just going to spend some time with this and then we're going to talk about this. And I want you to really look closely, and I want you come up with a piece that you really like, and then you could tell us why you like it."

Every single time, every kid participated. No one sat off to the side. Everyone had an answer and had a reason for the answer. And that doesn't happen all the time with tours. That's why I always started with that piece. Because then I would also have a conversation, you know, "And how did you feel?", all those types of things. And then I would say, "OK, now you're all art experts. So now that you're the experts as well, let's start and go look at some other pieces of art." And every one of them was on board! Every one of them. It was like they believed enough in themselves to say "Look what I just did, and no one laughed at me. And what I had to say was important." So yeah, that's... that's... that's a pretty great thing.