

FRYE

ART MUSEUM

Guided Artwork Discussion: Julius Scheuerer

https://youtu.be/U-wJ1LeI_lk

Thank you for joining us for a virtual Artwork Discussion with the Frye Art Museum. My name is Caroline, and I am the Manager of Tours & Public Programs here at the Frye. I will be facilitating today's digital discussion. While we cannot be together in the galleries, we hope you will still enjoy the opportunity to slow down, look closely, and spend some time with a work from the Frye Collection.

It's always fun to look at art by yourself or invite a friend or family member to join you in this discussion. You might also choose to write down your observations or make a drawing in response. If this is the case, please gather your materials now.

We will begin each artwork discussion by taking a quiet moment to simply look at the work of art and observe. Remember there are no right or wrong answers—it's about what you notice or experience when looking. After you have taken a moment to observe on your own, I will ask some questions to guide your looking and provide information about the artwork before we end.

You can expand or minimize the video on your screen for the discussion. You can also access closed captioning through the settings tool. Take a moment to see what works best for your viewing.

Today's theme is **Animals in Art**. Animals have been inspiration for artists for centuries, appearing as companions, a labor force, or representing a symbolic idea. Some artists create animals as a display of artistic skill or complement to a landscape. Whatever reason it may be, the inclusion of animals in art allows us a peek into the natural world and our relationship to these creatures.

This is the artwork we will be looking at today. We will take pauses in between each set of questions to give you time to look closely at the artwork and think about your responses. Remember: you may pause this video at any time to spend more time on one of the slides.

To start our discussion, please 30 seconds to look quietly at this piece. You might start at the top corner of the canvas, moving across and down. You may move close to the screen to see details or step back for a new perspective. Your cursor is a great tool to trace and track details within the artwork.

Thank you for your quiet observation.

We will now move into our guided questions. If you are looking with a friend or family member, we hope you will share your observations, or consider writing down or sketching your answers.

1. What colors did you see first in this artwork? What colors do you notice now that you had not noticed before?
2. Do you recognize this bird or have you seen it before? If you have, share what you know about this animal.
3. Where do you think this might take place? Is this a scene you would normally see a peacock in? What do you see that makes you say that?
4. Why do you think the artist made this painting? Does it have a message for the audience?

Thank you for taking the time to share and reflect on your observations. I would now like to share some information on this piece.

Julius Scheuerer (German, 1859-1913)

Peacock, 1907

Oil on canvas

36 1/2 x 24 1/2 in.

Credit Line: Founding Collection, Gift of Charles and Emma Frye, 1952.148

Photo Credit: Jueqian Fang

Julius Scheuerer was a 19th-century German painter, most known for his paintings of poultry. His particular love for birds was fostered while working at his father's farm outside Munich during his childhood. Scheuerer was a talented student, who studied

briefly at the Art Academy in Munich, but was unable to complete his formal education due to the poverty his family experienced. Because of this, he was largely self-taught.

Scheuerer was inspired by his travels through Italy, Netherlands, and the Black Forest. In the 1870s, he displayed his animal paintings for educational and promotional purposes at a poultry fair. As his popularity rose, he received commissions for his artwork. Scheuerer settled in a village near Munich where he constructed a villa he named "Fauna." His land included a tree and plant nursery, as well as space for many different kinds of birds to live.

Scheuerer painted a variety of fowl, including roosters, chickens, peacocks, pigeons, ducks, pheasants, turkeys, and guinea fowls. Although birds were his focus, they were situated as part of a broader composition, often depicted in unspecified landscapes and occasionally alongside other animals.

In *Peacock*, Scheuerer masters the art of depicting feathers. The airiness of the feathers' texture and the multicolored beauty of each fine quill is captured in the majestic plumage of the bird. In fact, Scheuerer may have painted *Peacock* as a means for studying feather colors in the reflection of changing light.

The peacock is used as a symbol in many cultures and has been represented in art and fashion across time, often signifying beauty, wealth, vanity, and immortality. In early Christian art, the eye-shape pattern of the peacock's feathers was even interpreted as the "all-seeing" eye of God. Looking at how the peacock is depicted in this painting, what might it represent to you?

Thank you for joining us for a virtual artwork discussion. We can't wait to welcome you back to the Museum again soon.