John Berger

The first thing that piqued my interest in Ways of Seeing was how Berger describes the power of the silence of a painting, and the way the silence of a museum transports you and connects you with that piece. He describes this as a corridor opening between you and the painting. There is a connection between the stillness of the unmoving paint on the canvas and the unmoving airways in your ears that folds you entirely into the world of the painting for a moment.

He also describes how we use images like words, and how we talk with images. When this series was filmed, he was primarily describing how images in advertising convey meaning based on context, but now we use images to talk every day in the form of emojis and reaction gifs. Humans have spent a much longer time evolving to extract meaning from images than we have spent understanding written language.

Similar to this is how he discusses the way context gives images meaning, and how we understand images based on context, as in the example of “This is the last picture Van Gogh painted before he killed himself.”

Berger spends a lot of time discussing how nudity and the female body have been and still are portrayed in art and the media. One woman he talked to presented the idea of nudity as a form of disguise When a person is drawn as a nude, the focus is no longer on the human but on the shape and texture of their flesh - the *person* is hidden behind the *body*.