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# Her life's a portrait of non-stop activity

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If Dr. Anne Coffin Hanson has a problem, it might be that she enjoys too many things.

As John Hay Whitney Professor in Yale University's art history department (her current title), chairman of Yale's art history department from 1974 to 1978 and a former artist and creative art teacher, Hanson's career has spanned her interests in management, in lecturing and writing on art history and in creative art.

*Anne Coffin Hanson*

"I'm just awfully busy," she said in a telephone interview.

"I enjoy most whatever I'm doing at the time. The way the three different types of things have linked together—it all comes together very nicely."

It is in the role of art historian that Hanson will visit Fort Worth. She will speak on "Edouard Manet Paints a Portrait" at 4 p.m. Sunday in the Kimbell Art Museum auditorium. The Kimbell's recently acquired *Portrait of Georges Clemenceau* will be a primary illustration.

Hanson's pursuit of art history actually constitutes a second career, one which she embarked upon at the age of 38. (Perhaps it would be more accurate to say third career; she already had three children.)

Having received her bachelor of fine arts degree in painting from the University of Southern California in 1943, she enjoyed moderate success as an abstract expressionist painter. She also earned a master of arts in creative art from the University of North Carolina.

But "I wasn't really satisfied with what I was achieving," she said. "I wanted to go back to school to learn more art history in a formal way.

"I never decide things; things just happen to me," she continued. "By a stroke of luck, Bryn Mawr needed a teaching assistant. I was admitted to graduate school." Because her bachelor's degree was in painting, not art history, "I was accepted on a tentative basis."

That was in 1958. Hanson learned enough Italian to read the material her studies required, spent a year in Florence with her three children studying Jacopo della Quercia's Fonte Gaia in nearby Siena and in 1962 earned her Ph.D. in art history.

In 1965 she was invited to write the catalog for a Manet exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She embarked upon a serious study to complement her long-term interest in the artist.

At approximately the same time, with a National Endowment for the Arts grant in hand, she was preparing to spend another year abroad

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# Kimbell Art Museum lecturer is a woman of many interests

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studying Italian art when her second husband had a heart attack, so she decided to remain home with him.

"I wrote the government to turn down the fellowship, and they said, 'Haven't you got some other project you could work on?' " She selected Manet.

"I was always fond of the works of Edouard Manet; that's not unusual for painters," she said. "He had so much understanding of paint — the thrill of the handling of paint, making it into a language."

Hanson's lecture at the Kimbell will use the museum's recent acquisition as an example in a study of the artist's painting technique. "The general impression the public has is that he painted quickly, with one layer of freely applied paint. That's a misconception. The paint would have cracked quickly."

Instead, the art historian said, the 19th century painter used the traditional method of carefully building up layers of paint but managed to retain a "fresh, free, loose, open surface although he had worked many, many times over the same canvas."

He thereby "modernized these (painting) traditions to express modern life."

She will compare the Kimbell's painting to a version owned by the Louvre, and will discuss the artist's attitudes toward his models. "He captures not just facial expressions," because sometimes his subjects are in repose, showing little emotion, "but he also captures a great deal in the stance of the body — who he (the subject) is, what he does, what he thinks of himself.

"Many people think Manet's figures lack expression, but I feel that's the opposite of true."

Hanson's career has thrived despite the warning of a graduate school professor. Because she was a woman, she was unlikely to find a job in the art history field, he told her.

Not only did she find a job, she racked up several "firsts" along the way: First woman president of the College Art Association of America, first woman at Yale to be hired with tenure, first woman department chairman at Yale.

"They just offered it to me," she commented. "I never sought it out. But I guess I'm fairly aggressive with the way I go about selling myself, so I've never had trouble getting a job."

She no longer paints, because "once I started writing, I found that it takes the same kind of energy as painting."

Her resume lists numerous awards (including the prestigious Charles Rufus Morey Book Award for Scholarship in the History of Art), fellowships and professional activities such as membership in the CAA.

"In the art world, many people are busy with their own work and don't want to spend time with community service," Hanson said. "I enjoy it. The problem with me is that I enjoy almost anything. I like to stay busy and active.

"These are all things one needs to do in my position, so I might as well enjoy them all."

## Tribune competition entries on display here 'til Dec. 16

Large-scale architectural drawings, submitted in the 1922 Chicago Tribune international architectural competition, are on display at the Fort Worth Art Museum until Dec. 16. Since the designs were not for a structure intended to be built, some are pure fantasy and whimsy. Architect Frank Kelly of Houston will speak at an architectural symposium Tuesday, Nov. 17. Call the museum at 738-9215 for more inforamtion.