

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS -- APRIL 2010



The Silver Bean, Millennium Park, Chicago Illinois

Day 2 post: I haven't been able to sleep tonight, so I thought I'd put together a quick post of my first day and a half here in Chicago. So far, it's been a good trip.

After a long day of travel yesterday, I arrived at my hotel at about 4pm and immediately set out for a walk around downtown. Chicago is a very big city, and it's downtown is big and bustling and the number of sky scrapers is astounding. From my window where I sit now, I can see the Sears Tower -- the tallest building in the world when I was a kid -- though I'm told it goes by a different name these days. Such massive buildings stretch for a mile or two in all directions, and down in the central areas, there are old (80-100 years) sky scrapers, with impressive art nouveau architecture.

It's always so great to spend time in a city such as this. You realize what we humans can do when we put our minds to it. It's hard to imagine the effort, ambition, restlessness, sleeplessness, joy, love, and sorrow that went into building this city.

While the conference was stimulating today, even better was my morning walk, where I went through the gorgeous Millennium Park, and then the Art Institute of Chicago, which is one of the finest art museums in the world. I saw a tremendous amount of great art. They had a big Matisse exhibit going and have a great collection of impressionist work, but my favorite section was the American modern and contemporary art. A few of my favorite pieces are below.

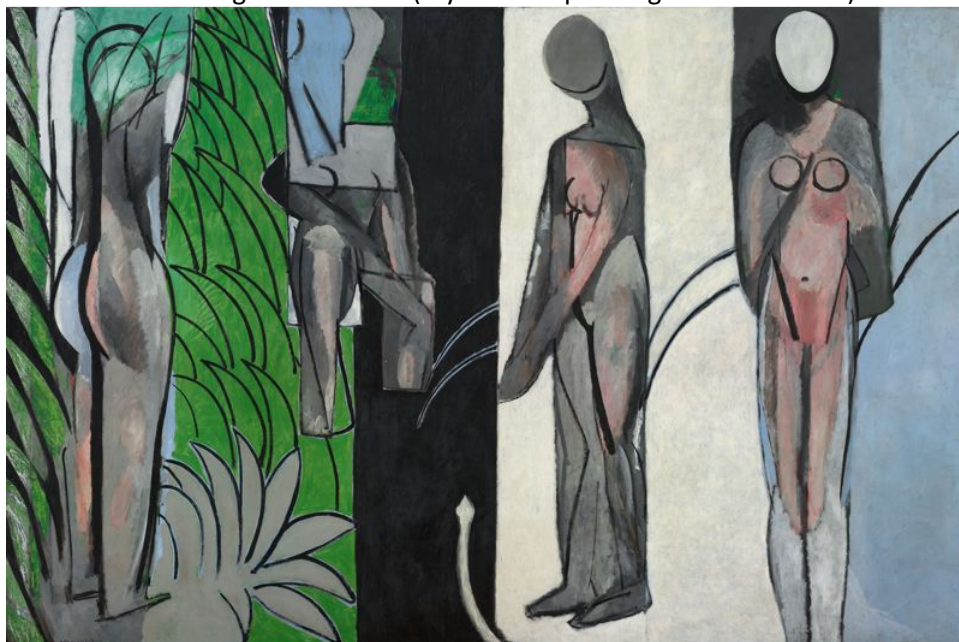
Day 5 Post: I'm sitting in the airport, waiting for my flight out of Chicago. I'm actually off to Houston, where I'm going to drive to visit my grandmother about a 2 hour drive from there, but my visit won't be worth writing about, so I'll sign off here.

The conference was good--my talk went well yesterday--and though I was able to get out for some more walks in the city, I didn't have time to do anything substantial. It would have been nice to have another day to spend exploring. I probably would have returned to the Art Institute again.

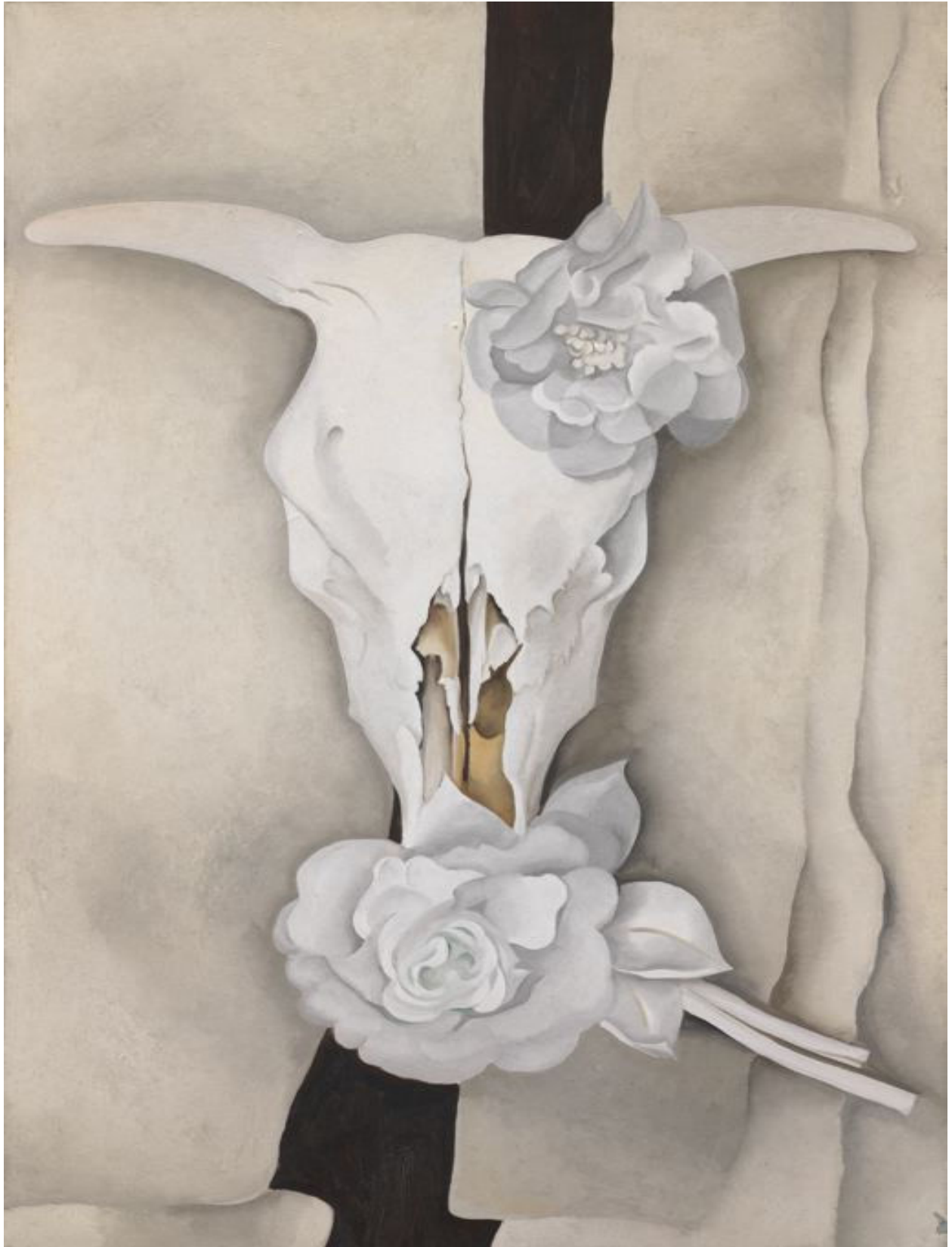
I was able to eat some good meals. I went for Chicago style pizza three times, which was one time too many, but you make sacrifices for the social aspect of these conferences. Networking (a word I dislike) is definitely an important part of these conferences.



de Kooning -- Excavation (my favorite painting in the museum)



Matisse -- Bathers by a River



O'Keefe -- Cow Skull with Calico Rose