

ARTIST PUTS TIME IN PERSPECTIVE BY PAINTING SUN'S RISE AND FALL

by Judy Woodruff



Nicolas Party, 'Sunrise, Sunset', 2017, installation view

JUDY WOODRUFF: A new exhibit, *Sunrise, Sunset*, by Swiss artist Nicolas Party, recently opened at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C.

Party, known for his large works of public art, painted directly on 400 feet of the museum's circular walls.

We tracked his progress over two weeks.

Party told the NewsHour he was inspired by the notion that, no matter what happens, the sun will rise in the morning.

NICOLAS PARTY, Artist: I was aware of the circle shape of the building, and that influenced my decision.

So I decided to do a show about sunsets and sunrises, which is this kind of end and beginning that happens every day, but also implied this idea of this very, very long timeline that just shows the rotation of every element in the universe.

And let's give a perspective of maybe, like, seeing history and things in a much bigger way, and maybe not being always focused on the daily.

The circle aspect really defines the project. And then, after, I'm trying to kind of build up a rhythm into this space. Every wall is a different color, but also every shape of the paintings that I'm doing on the wall also has a different format to give like a rhythm and an energy to the wall.

I like to improvise. So there's an element of freedom when I work on the walls. So I use the wall almost as a piece of paper. Sometimes, of course, I have sketches, but, yes, I work very organically, so there's an element of surprise.

It's really exciting. I mean, yes, it's really exciting to have all this space. In a matter of seven days, I will do like 30 different paintings. A lot of art that I love, they feel really alive and energetic. And so you need to be in that stage when you're doing them.

A lot of landscape painting. I have been obviously painting sunsets and sunrises. It's the only moment during the day that you can really see, visually, how the entire universe functions. You can really see the rotation of Earth at that moment. Right now, we can't see it. But during those 30 minutes of a sunset or a sunrise, you can actually feel it, and you can see it very clearly.

And all those kind of different reasons that the color change the sky, that's the physical reaction of the light going through different kind of angles and stuff. And I thought that's fascinating.

Obviously, the daily life and our little preoccupations that are very important, but so it's interesting to put them in perspective with this big thing.

There's very different stages when I do those murals. There's like the beginning that is very slow and allow myself a lot of time. Then there's a moment when it's — everything is beginning to build up, and I realize, oh, I made mistakes in the placements or the size, colors or whatever. It's getting very stressful.

And so then there's a moment it's very difficult, usually, because it's not going how I want to go. Also, just like coming to a space, doing something and this thing will disappear or more or less being covered up, so it will still be here, but it will be covered by a layer of paint.

It's like ruins that are underneath. Like the cave painting, you don't see, but I'm sure there's a lot of them that we don't see or we don't know about, but still they exist. There's very different steps between the moment you start, to run to the moment it's extremely difficult, to the end, when you feel totally fine just running through the line.

And it's all those moments that are very exciting, yes, to look forward to do.

You don't need to change the world. You can just change your few meters around you. And so I did change the circle.

That's what I did.