

These remarks were quoted extensively in The Washington Times, September 24, 2007 in an article entitled, "Gallery Toasts American Original"

Edward Hopper Exhibition – Opening Event
National Gallery of Art -- September 19, 2007

The Power of Place

Remarks by Ralph W. Shrader
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Back in April, [National Gallery Director] Rusty Powell invited me down here for lunch to talk about Edward Hopper and more broadly, about the intersection of business and the arts. It was fascinating – and totally new -- since this exhibition is Booz Allen Hamilton's first major sponsorship of the fine arts.

Curator Frank Kelly was with us, and he brought a mock-up of the Hopper exhibition catalog. At that point, it was a hand-assembled proof copy and a bit fragile to handle, but I couldn't stop turning the pages. The power of the images and the personal memories they evoked came through so strongly – even in the small reproductions.

Gas immediately captured my attention. It took me back in an instant to when I was 10 years old, riding in the car with my parents and sister, on back roads to visit relatives near Roanoke. We stopped at an old gas station and general store in Parisburg, Virginia. I got a cold Dr. Pepper – and looked out on *that* place – the place Edward Hopper captured in *Gas*.

To me, Hopper's paintings and drawings truly evoke the power of place – places that live in our own memories, and places that live in the collective consciousness of the American experience.

And, while the gas stations, diners, and drug stores, the houses and beach scenes seem quintessentially American, I've been fascinated by the excitement of Booz Allen partners and employees outside the US about our sponsorship of this exhibition. I've gotten e-mails from our people in Amsterdam and Stockholm telling me that Hopper is their favorite painter, and the largest request we got for Hopper catalogs to mail to clients came from our Tokyo office.

So, it seems that whether we grew up traveling the back roads of America or walking the streets of Europe or Asia, we've all *been there* – to the places in Hopper's paintings. And, we can relate personally to the power of place he stirs in our memories and imagination.

The power of place matters in Booz Allen's consulting work as well. We strive to help clients and communities build a stronger place in the world in the form of effective, enduring institutions. We take that mission very seriously.

And what could be a more fitting place for this exhibition than this extraordinary institution – the National Gallery of Art, and its landmark East Building -- where we see, room by room, Hopper's special places transcending time and distance.

Hopper has been described as a painter of the melancholy and "noir" – but I feel wonder in his places. *Gas* reminds me of when oil was a symbol of adventure – not a matter of global security. It makes me feel happy and hopeful. From the excitement of this evening, I think Hopper's paintings make many of you feel the same way.

-- Thank you, Rusty, Frank, and the National Gallery Trustees for giving Booz Allen the opportunity to help bring Edward Hopper to Washington. And, thank you all for sharing this excitement with us.