

WOMEN ON WALLS

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Katherine is such an extraordinary person. She didn't let too much of the segregation in the black and white issue get to her, that wasn't her life. Maths was everything for her, so for her to prevail as an engineer in such a male industry, as well, or science it was extraordinary. I mean, her own father didn't want her to do it and she defied him. She was not just a hugely groundbreaking and important scientist, but she was also an activist in a couple of areas which were just as important a part of her life as her science career. Some of the work she did really affects public health today, and stuff that we all understand such as the effects of smoking and cholesterol, and heart disease. She had a role in helping the American military win a war, a real war, against fascism and Nazism. It was extraordinary, and for a woman to be in that position of kind of scientific powers and power was extraordinary.

She was a teacher, a mathematical teacher, and then she had her family, and she sat at home and looked after her family- and it wasn't until her 40s that she heard of the opportunity in Nasa looking for what they call female computers. At this time, she was also a widow rearing three daughters, so she had a lot on her hands. So, she got the job, she went into the black female computing ring and she was there a week and one of the engineers came and said, "I need some people to help with this particular project", and Catherine was chosen. Basically, she was meant to be unknown, she was meant to be there for just for a short amount of time to get what they needed done and then she would go back to the female computing ring- but she never went back, they kept her. Woman like her, she's all smiles- I'd know if I'm looking at her you don't mess with her, do you know what I mean? She has very bright, vivacious eyes and kind eyes. My mother didn't take nonsense and didn't take

prisoners- she knows what I mean, and I'd say she's the same. If she had to get a job done triangulating where the enemy was and calculating the speed of a shell because that was one of her jobs, I wouldn't like to be at the other end anyway.

Marie Maynard Daley has done some amazing work. First of all, she's quite well known as the first African American woman to get a PhD in chemistry. Also, her work on protein synthesis was cited by Watson and Crick when they received the Nobel prize for creating the DNA double helix structure- but more importantly some of the work she did really affects public health today and stuff that we all understand such as the effects of smoking and cholesterol and heart disease so some of these things are very tangible for us all.

What I found most interesting about Kathleen Lonsdale was that she was not just a hugely groundbreaking and important scientist but she was also an activist. So, although she discovered the molecular structure of the benzene ring which was completely pioneering and groundbreaking breaking piece of work, she also was a lifelong pacifist and she was an author. I think, I think apart from being an engineering innovator, she was an advocate for women. In her later life she worked with women in countries outside the U.S such as Mexico and South America to help them move forward in business and so on and also to be engineers and so on. So, she was a real advocate for women in her industry, you know, but for me uh what was very striking was I looked at a lot of footage looking for imagery basically around the Apollo 11 launch and there was an incredible amount of men in all this footage, and in fact, if you looked at the videos that I was looking at and you were an alien looking down on earth in



1968, you'd think there were no women at all the world.

Beatrice Hicks was in was incredibly male dominated world for so for her to prevail as an engineer in such a male industry as well or science was extraordinary I, mean her own father didn't want her to do it and she defied him. The fact that I could uh you know learn about the subject chemically, the fact that i could talk to her daughter Ginny, it all made it an interesting process, you know- but the most important thing is it's getting back to the original purpose of all this. It's to bring outstanding women who we've not heard about to before, you know, I only heard about McNulty two years ago. I think it's really important for future generations to be able to see that the important people we hang on walls don't all look the same that there's a variety of people who've made great achievements and who've contributed to the knowledge we have today. I think it's really important for young people, boys and girls, to see role models that are female and particularly women of color. As an artist it is a major opportunity to produce a you know an important piece of work that will be hanging in a collection that will create its own legacy. It's like you could kind of, I mean part of me starts getting really angry about it, but on the other hand like I'm just so happy to be part of the solution and you know there's just such an impetus now going forward that this situation is not going to arise again. Jumping way ahead here but that students women and girls will see that their gender is getting those accolades being you know honored and uh hung in the in these national collections. It is a really important mission that this painting is part of which is to make women visible in all walks of life and to allow them to have roles that are not predetermined by the patriarchy, which is true. So, luckily for me I wasn't too adversely affected by the pandemic. I wanted to make this painting accessible and fresh and something that would be understood by the young and would be appropriate for Marie Maynard Daly but also for the setting where the painting is intended for and I like the idea of this figure backlit by the big window with light shining all around her. I wanted this to sort of symbolize her general

openness and generosity and how she made a legacy for students who came after her because I've never met her and I don't know her and there are a lot of questions. So, to go online initially and to look at photographs of her from the past and present and then to find videos of her speaking in interviews to find articles written about her, I also downloaded her biography plus the book hidden figures which is a lot more detailed obviously than the film, so in terms of of the painting itself it was important. I wanted to portray her in a way that I felt that she would be happy with, that our family would be happy with, so everything in the painting from her clothing, her stance um and the background came from the research. In fact, for being a mathematician using the golden ratio in the background and one of the equations that she had written which I took from the film you know the painting does what I intended to do- it makes her look really strong and powerful. It also means that when somebody looks at this painting or sees this painting they go what are they all looking at that's what they're going to think they're going to think , "where are all these people looking?", and then they're going to go "who is she? What is she doing?", so I think it'll draw people into it and they'll come over and they'll go, you know, what is this about because there's a whole lot of unanswered questions in you know the narrative of what's going on in this image. Why are they all holding binoculars? Where are they looking? What's going on?

I wanted it to look like a real room in a real place and so I'm referencing furniture of the time and an interior that is alluding to University College London, where she was a professor. When I thought I was finished I thought it was just a bit flat- so I went on the balcony again more painting thrown out, more texture, and then I thought- now it looks good, but I nearly had to start again bringing up all the lines again but I could see them underneath. I left enough so I could see so that brought me up to the point where I had all the linear work finished. I'd love the viewer to stand in front of it and enjoy the painting and wonder who is this wonderful smiling radiant person and to go and find out more about Dr. Marie Maynard Daly. If people are standing in front of this painting in DCU and



looking up, I imagine it's that they will see a woman, a leader in science, a huge achiever, an activist, a person who is not dusted down from an ancient picture in the national gallery but that is looks like they could be a living breathing person. It's not just about the painting, I want the message to come across and I want to invoke a reaction in people and inspire. So, what I hope with this painting is that when somebody sees it they go, "who is that?", "What are they doing?", "What are all those people looking at?". When they see this painting I think they'll realize it's not just a painting- It's an attempt to put history and proper perspective and the history of women and history of women's achievements- and that's the point of Women On Walls, we need to find out about the people who have been absent from our walls up to now.

Copyright © 2021 Accenture
All rights reserved.

Accenture and its logo
are registered trademarks
of Accenture.