



Iconic Objects: White Rhino
Judith Eger, Curator, Mammalogy
Royal Ontario Museum

[Podcast begins with music and Iconic Objects logo, title reads: Iconic: The Must-See Treasures of the ROM]

[Fade to still image of rhino on a black background; Title appears: White Rhino]

[Cut to satellite image of southern Africa; zoom out to show animated spinning globe; Globe turns and camera zooms in on Toronto; Dissolve to close-up of rhino's eye]

*[Zoom out to show the front of the rhino; Large letters appear superimposed upon the screen: Bull] **Judith Eger, Curator, Mammalogy:** Bull came to Toronto in 1974 and lived at the Toronto Zoo for thirty-four years until 2008.*

*[Cut to shot of Judith standing in front of Bull in the Schad Gallery of Biodiversity at the ROM] **Judith:** At that time, the senior veterinarian at the zoo called and said he was ailing *[Cut to still image of Bull at the Toronto Zoo]* and they were going to euthanize the animal and would we have any interest in having him? *[Cut to still image of taxidermist working on the model core that would support Bull's skin]* Then he was taken to the taxidermist and *[Cut to still image of preparators installing Bull at the ROM]* about a year and a quarter later, we were presented with Bull, *[Cut to shot of Judith as seen from the side, standing by Bull in the Schad Gallery]* the white rhino that stands behind me.*

[Cut to slowly zooming shot of Bull in his case at the entrance to the Schad Gallery]

*[Cut to still image of a rhino in a natural environment] **Brian Oliveri, Zookeeper, Toronto Zoo:** Bull actually came from South Africa. *[Cut to shot of Brian with a rhino in an enclosure at the Toronto Zoo]* After being here at the zoo, he did sire four kids, and Shaboola being one of them. *[Cut to close-up of the Shaboola]* And she's been with us at the zoo since she was born here, almost thirty years now. Because Bull was a wild-caught animal, *[Cut to shot of Brian next to Shaboola's enclosure]* we can only make an educated guess as to how old he*

was so we put him at around nine or ten when he ended up coming [*camera pans to show Shaboola's head*] and when he passed away, [*Cut to close-up of Shaboola's face*] our guess put him at around forty-five, forty-six, [*Cut to shot of Shaboola in her enclosure*] which is a really good age for these guys.

[*Cut to still image of Bull on a black background*] **Brian:** And they have that name, "white rhino" because of what their face looks like. It's flat right across the front and weit [*the letters appear across the screen as he spells it*] w-e-i-t was a Dutch-Afrikaans word meaning kind of flat face, [*Dissolve to shot of Brian*] square face, wide face.

[*Cut to panning shot of Bull installed in the Schad Gallery*] **Judith:** The outside skin of Bull [*Cut to close-up of Bull's eye*] is Bull and [*Cut to shot of Judith standing in the Schad Gallery*] the rest of it is more or less man-made, starting with an inside Styrofoam core, [*Cut to still image of a man creating the Styrofoam core*] paper maché is the next layer [*Cut to still image of the model*] to build up the size of Styrofoam [*Cut to a still image of people applying modelling clay*] followed by a layer of modelling clay [*Cut to still image of a man sculpting Bull's face*] used to shape the muscles and finally [*Cut to still image of a man applying the skin*] the skin is sewn, stapled into place and painted [*Cut to still image of a man painting the skin*] and at the same time they're applying [*Cut to still image of Bull's head without a horn*] a new fibreglass horn.

[*Cut to profile shot of Bull's head with horns in place*] **Judith:** His original horn was misshapen because as he aged, [*Cut to shot of two horns on a board*] he wasn't able to keep it trimmed by [*Cut to shot of a rhino resting his snout between the bars of its enclosure*] rubbing it on enclosures or rocks [*Cut to shot of Judith in the Schad Gallery*] and that's what gives it that natural shape that you see in a wild animal.

[*Cut to shot of a rhino emerging into an outdoor enclosure at the Toronto Zoo*]

[*Cut to close-up of the wrinkles between a rhino's ears*] **Brian:** The most distinctive thing about the rhino is that horn, [*Zoom out to show the rhino's face*] they have those two horns and that actually grows right out of the skin and it's made of keratin—so that's what our fingernails are made of.

[*Cut to shot of Brian standing beside a rhino enclosure*] **Brian:** Back in the 19th century, they were pretty hunted to extinction because of that horn.

[Cut to panning close-up of Bull's horn] **Judith:** One of the reasons we wanted to show Bull in this gallery *[Cut to shot of Judith in the Schad Gallery]* is because he's a success story as far as conservation is concerned.

[Cut to an image of many, many tightly packed images of rhinos] **Judith:** The white rhino numbers were reduced by the late 1800s to a herd *[One by one the rhino's disappear; dissolve to an image of larger rhinos with the number "50"]* of fifty or so animals. Today, some people claim there're as many as 17,000 in the world. *[Small rhinos begin to appear, filling the screen]* Now these animals have been protected in Africa, they've also been sent to zoos around the world so that the species would continue on *[Cut to shot of Judith in the Schad Gallery]* if something were to happen to the main populations in Africa.

[Cut to shot of a rhino in an enclosure at the Toronto Zoo]

[Cut to shot of Bull installed in the Schad Gallery]

[Cut to shot of Brian standing beside a rhino enclosure at the Toronto Zoo] **Brian:** Because he was so special, the keepers that took care of Bull, it was kind of an honour for us.

[Cut to close-up of Bull's eye; Camera zooms out to show Bull's face] There's not that many of these guys left on the planet. To have Bull live on *[Cut to shot of Brian next to a rhino enclosure]* at the ROM and to have him carry that message is a very important thing.

[Music cuts in; Cut to shot of Bull installed at the entrance to the Schad Gallery; Zoom out to show the entrance to the gallery; Fade to black as music stops and podcast ends]