A History of Western Art

FIFTH EDITION

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The Language of Art

The visual arts have their own language, and the artist thinks in terms of that language, just as a musician thinks in sounds and a mathematician thinks in numbers. The basic visual vocabulary consists of **formal elements,** which include line, shape, space, color, light, and dark. When artists combine these elements in a characteristic way, they are said to have a **style.** In order to describe and analyze a work of art, it is essential to be familiar with the artist's formal vocabulary.

See figure 1.2. Constantin Brancusi, *Bird in Space*, 1928.

Composition

The **composition** of a work of art is its overall plan or structure. Composition denotes the relationship among component parts and involves balance and harmony, the relationships of parts to each other and to the whole work, and the effect on the viewer. The composition of a work depends on how the formal elements are arranged and is distinct from subject matter, content, or theme.

See figure 1.3. René Magritte, *The Betrayal of Images* ("This is not a pipe."), 1928.

Plane

A **plane** is a flat surface having a direction in space. Brancusi's *Bird* (see fig. **1.2**) rises in a vertical plane, Magritte's pipe (see fig. **1.3**) lies in a horizontal plane, and the figure of God in *God as Architect* (see fig. **1.4**) bends over to create two diagonal planes.

See figure 1.4. *God as Architect (God Drawing the Universe with a Compass)*, mid-13th century.

Balance

In a successful composition, the harmonious blending of formal elements creates **balance.** The simplest form of balance is **symmetry,** in which there is an exact correspondence of parts on either side of a central axis—the left side of a work is a mirror image of the right side. The human body is an example of symmetry, as shown in Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man* (see fig. **16.1**).

See figure 16.1. Leonardo da Vinci, *Vitruvian Man*, c. 1485–90.

Balance can also be achieved by nonequivalent elements. In Bernini's *David* (see fig. **19.13**), the weight of the figure is not evenly distributed on either side of the central axis. However, although the parts are not arranged symmetrically, there is an equilibrium between them that produces an aesthetically satisfying result. This is known as **asymmetrical balance.**

See figure 19.13. Gianlorenzo Bernini, *David*, 1623.

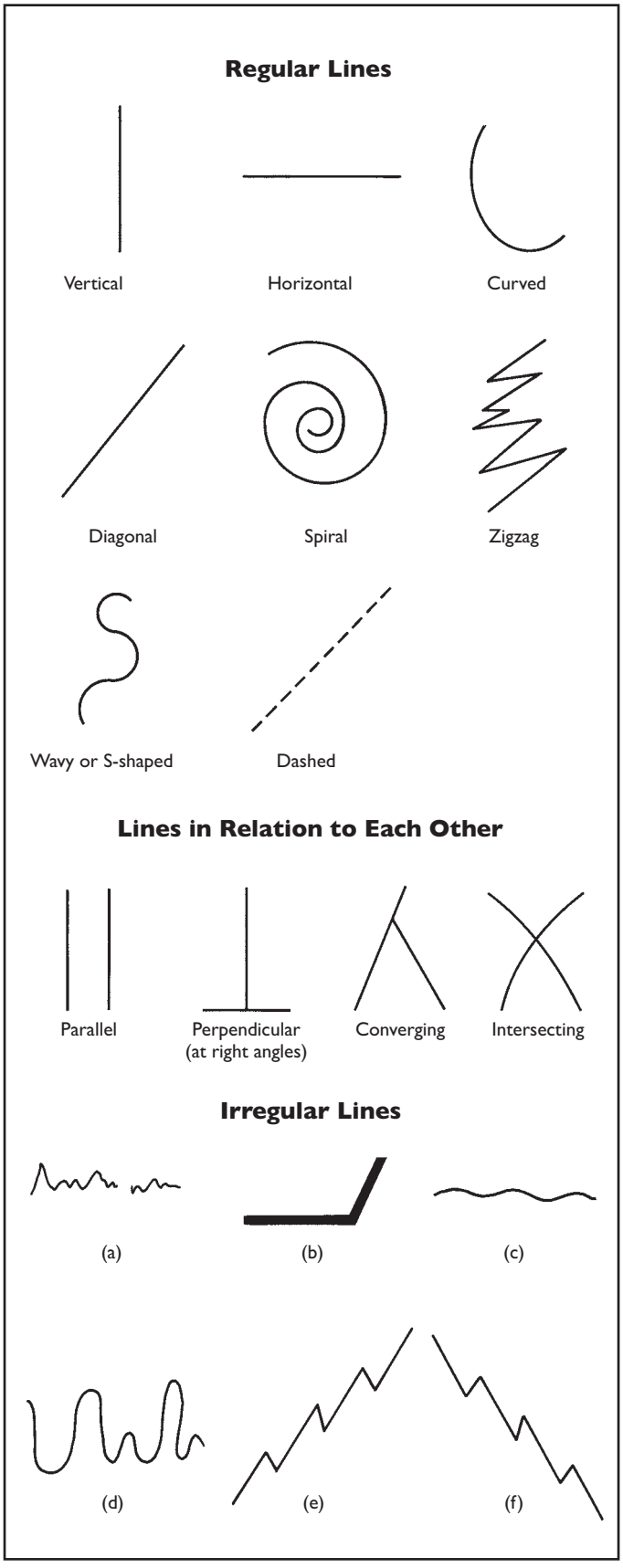
Line

A line is the path traced by a moving point. For the artist, the moving point is the tip of whatever instrument is used to create an image on a surface. In geometry, a line has no width or volume; it has only length and direction. In the language of art, however, a line can have many qualities, depending on how it is drawn (fig. **2.1**). A vertical line seems to stand stiffly at attention, a horizontal line lies down, and a diagonal seems to be falling over. Zigzags have an aggressive, sharp quality, whereas a wavy line is more graceful and, like a curve, more naturally associated with the outline of the human body. Parallel lines are balanced and harmonious, implying an endless, continuous movement. Perpendicular, converging, and intersecting lines meet and create a sense of force and counterforce. In figure **2.1**, the thin line (a) seems delicate, unassertive, even weak. The thick one (b) seems aggressive, forceful, and strong. The flat line (c) suggests calmness, like the surface of a quiet sea, whereas the wavy line (d) implies the reverse. The angular line (e) climbs upward like the edge of a rocky mountain. (Westerners understand (e) as going up and (f) as going down because we read from left to right.)

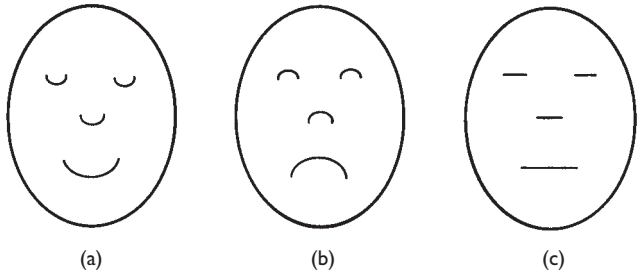
Expressive Qualities of Line

Many of the lines in figure **2.1** are familiar from geometry and can be described formally. But the formal qualities of line also convey an expressive character because we identify them with our bodies and our experience of nature. In math, for instance, a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; similarly, a person who follows a straight, clear line in thought or action is believed to have a sense of purpose. "Straight" is associated with rightness, honesty, and truth, while "crooked"—whether referring to a line or a person's character—denotes the opposite. When a baseball player hits a line drive, the bat connects firmly with the ball; and a "hard-liner" is a person who takes a strong position on an issue.

In the configuration of the face, it is especially easy to see the expressive impact of lines (fig. **2.2**). In (a), the upward curves create a happy face, and in (b) the downward curves create a sad one. These characteristics of upward and downward curves actually correspond to the emotions as expressed in natural physiognomy. They are



2.1 Lines.



2.2 Lines used to create facial expressions.

reflected in language when we speak of people having "ups and downs" or of events being "uppers" or "downers." The face in (c) is inscrutable.

Alexander Calder's (1898–1976) *Cat* (fig. **2.3**) merges the **linear** quality of the written word with the pictorial quality of what the word represents. The curve of the *c* outlines the face, a dot stands for the eye, and a slight diagonal of white in the curve suggests the mouth. The large *A* comprises the body, feet, and tail, while the tiny *t* completes the word, without interfering with reading the ensemble as a cat. The figure seems to be walking, because the left diagonal of the *A* is lower than the right one, and the short horizontals at the base of the *A* suggest feet. Not only is this cat a self-image—*C A* are the artist's initials reversed—but it defies the semiotic argument that signifier *(c-a-t)* and signified (the mental image of a cat) have no natural relation to each other.

2.3 Alexander Calder, *Cat* (detail from *Children's Page*), 1943, 22 × 30 in. (55.9 × 76.2 cm).

The importance of line in the artist's vocabulary is illustrated by the account of two ancient Greek painters, Apelles, who was Alexander the Great's personal artist, and his contemporary Protogenes. Apelles traveled to Rhodes to see Protogenes' work, but when he arrived at the studio, Protogenes was away. An old woman in charge of the studio asked Apelles to leave his name. Instead, Apelles took up a brush and painted a line of color on a panel prepared for painting. "Say it was this person," he instructed the woman.

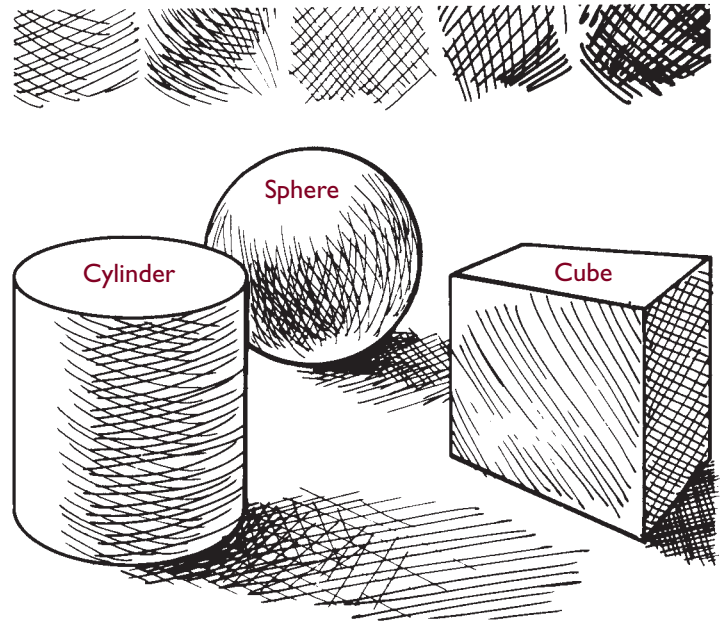
When Protogenes returned and saw the line, he immediately recognized that only Apelles could have painted it so perfectly. In response, Protogenes painted a second, and finer, line on top of it. Apelles returned and added a third line of color, leaving no more room on the original line. When Protogenes returned a second time, he admitted defeat and went to look for Apelles.

Protogenes decided to leave the panel to posterity as something for artists to marvel at. Later it was exhibited in Rome, where its nearly invisible lines on a vast surface impressed viewers. To many artists, the panel seemed a blank space, and because of that it was esteemed over other famous works. After his encounter with Protogenes, it was said that Apelles never let a day go by without drawing at least one line. His experience was the origin of an ancient proverb, "No day without a line."

Lines Used for Modeling

Even though drawn lines have only two dimensions—height and width—they can be used by an artist to make an object appear **three-dimensional** (fig. **2.4**).

The parallel **modeling** lines on the front surface of the cube are called **hatching.** If they intersect other parallel lines, as in the cylinder and the oblique surface of the cube, they are known as **crosshatching.** The closer the lines are to each other, the darker their surface. They suggest shade or **shading,** which is a gradual transition from light to dark. Shading appears on the side of the object that is turned away from the light source. A **shadow** is seen as dark and denotes the absence of light; it is cast onto a surface when the source of light is blocked by an object.

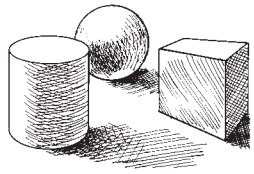


2.4 The lines on the sphere, cube, and cylinder create the illusion that these objects are solid. They also suggest that there is a source of light coming from the upper left and shining down on the objects. Such lines are called modeling lines.

The Illusion of Depth

Techniques for creating an illusion of three dimensions in a two-dimensional image include:

- Using modeling lines to simulate three-dimensionality (see fig. **2.4**).
- Making a nearer object overlap a more distant one.
- Depicting a nearer object as larger than a more distant one.
- Making the base of the nearer object closer to the lower edge of the picture.

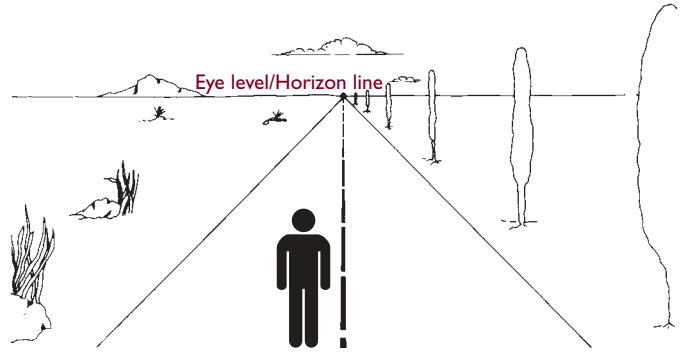


Note that in figure **2.4** the cylinder appears closer to us than the sphere, because the cylinder is larger and nearer the lower edge of the picture. It also overlaps part of the sphere.

Perspective

Artists have also developed mathematical systems, known as **perspective,** to aid them in creating the illusion of depth. The simplest system is **one-point perspective** (fig. **2.5**). Imagine a person standing in the middle of a straight road. As the road vanishes into the distance, it seems to the viewer to narrow, even though in reality its width is constant. The illusion of depth is enhanced by the fact that equal-sized and equally spaced objects along the side of the road seem to become smaller, and the spaces between them become shorter (**foreshortened**), as their distance from the viewer increases.

In early-fifteenth-century Italy (see Chapter 15), a system was developed to provide artists with a method for depicting figures and objects as if located at increasing distances from the viewer. The **picture plane** (the surface of a painting or relief sculpture) is conceived of as a window whose frame conforms to the frame of the painting. The edges of **rectilinear** objects in the picture are extended along imaginary "lines of sight." These lines, called **orthogonals** (from two Greek words—*orthos,* meaning "right" or "straight," and *gonia,* meaning "angle"), are perpendicular to the picture plane and parallel to each other. Although parallel lines never meet in reality, the orthogonals seem to converge at a point known as the **vanishing point**. In the simplest form of this method, the vanishing point is on the horizon, at the eye level of the viewer, but it can be anywhere inside the composition or even outside it. This system focuses attention on a single vanishing point and assumes that the viewer is standing at a single fixed spot. In figure **2.5** the vanishing point is at the center of the horizon line, where the sides of the road (the orthogonals) meet.

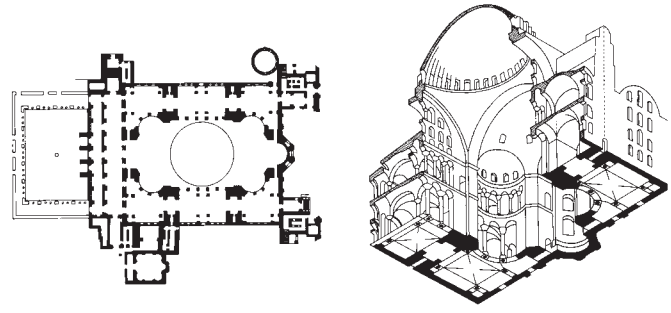


2.5 One-point perspective.

Space

In a picture, depth is an illusion. But in sculptures and buildings, depth is real, and that makes it more difficult to perceive the nature of these works in two-dimensional reproductions. In this text, therefore, sculptures are sometimes shown from two viewpoints. Buildings are diagrammed axonometrically, and their plans are illustrated.

A plan is a diagram of a building from just above ground level, indicating where the structural parts meet the ground. Taking the simple example of figure **2.4,** a plan of the cube would be a square; a plan of the cylinder would be a circle; and a plan of the sphere would be a point where the object makes contact with the surface on which it stands. **Axonometric** drawings are more complex; they diagram all the parts of a building as if it is turned at an oblique angle to the flat drawing surface. An example can be seen in Chapter 10, where an axonometric drawing of the Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia (see fig. **10.14**) shows its plan, its walls, its interior, and its dome.



See figure 10.14a, b. Plan and axonometric projection of Hagia Sophia.

Shape

When lines enclose a space, they create a shape, and the line that outlines the shape is called its **contour.**

Types of Shapes

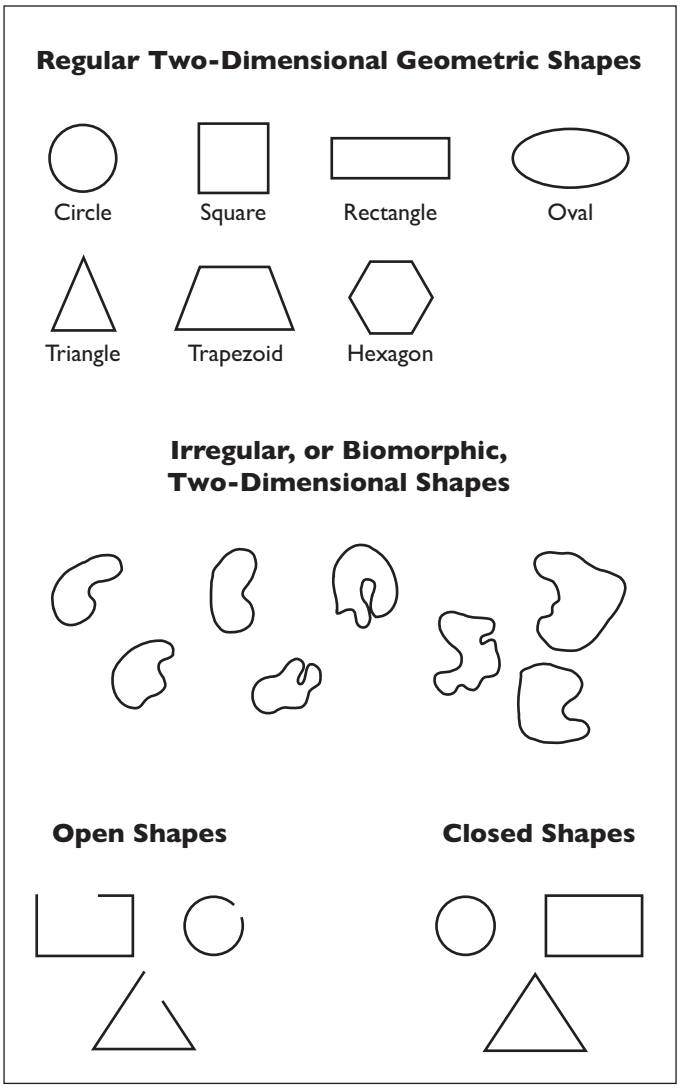
Regular shapes are **geometric** and have specific names. Irregular shapes are also called "biomorphs" or **biomorphic** (from the Greek words *bios,* meaning "life," and *morphe,* meaning "shape") because they seem to move like living **organic** matter. Shapes can be two-dimensional (fig. **2.6**) or three-dimensional, in which case they are solid or have volume (see fig. **2.4**).

Expressive Qualities of Shape

Like lines, shapes can be used by artists to convey ideas and emotions. Open shapes create a greater sense of movement than closed ones (fig. **2.6**). Similarly, we speak of open and closed minds. An open mind allows for a flow of ideas, flexibility, and willingness to entertain new possibilities. A closed mind, on the other hand, is inaccessible to new ideas.

Specific shapes can evoke associations with everyday experience. The square, for example, is a symbol of reliability, stability, and symmetry. If something is "all square," a certain equity or evenness is implied; a "square meal" is satisfying in both amount and content. But too much rectangularity can imply dullness or monotony—to call someone "a square" suggests overconservatism or conventionality.

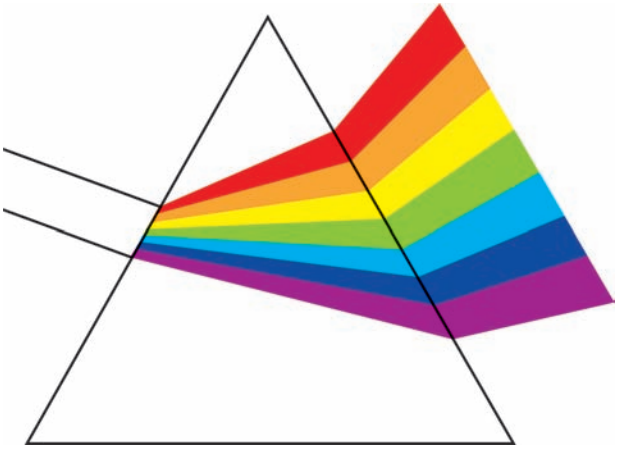
The circle has had a special significance for artists since the Neolithic era. In the Roman period, the circle was considered a divine shape and thus most suitable for temples. This view of the circle persisted in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when ideal church plans were also circular and the ideal city was designed according to a centralized plan.



2.6 Shapes.

Light and Color

The technical definition of light is electromagnetic energy of certain wavelengths, which produces visual sensations when it strikes the retina of the eye. The opposite, or the absence, of light is darkness. Color, one of the most powerful elements at the artist's disposal, is derived from light. Rays of light emanating from the sun are composed of waves with various wavelengths (i.e., they vibrate at various frequencies), and these are perceived by the human brain as different colors. This can be demonstrated by passing a beam of light through a prism (a triangular block of glass), which breaks the light down into its constituent **hues** (colors) (fig. **2.7**). This is the same phenomenon as a rainbow, in which rays of light from the sun are refracted through falling raindrops.



2.7 The **visible spectrum** has seven principal colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo (or blue-violet), and violet—that blend together in a continuum. Beyond the ends is a range of other colors, starting with infrared and ultraviolet, which are invisible to the human eye. If all the colors of the spectrum are recombined, white light is again produced.

Physical Properties of Color

There are seven principal colors in the spectrum. Each of the seven has many variations, which depend on the three physical properties of color: **hue, value,** and **intensity.**

Hue Hue is synonymous with color. Red is one hue, yellow is another. Each has a different wavelength. Mixing one color with another changes its wavelength and hence its hue. Red plus yellow, for example, produces orange; adding more red makes a reddish orange, and adding yellow makes a yellowish orange.

Red, yellow, and blue are **primary colors;** they cannot be produced by combining any other colors. However, all of the other colors can be created by mixing the primary colors either in pairs or all together. A mixture of two primary colors produces a **secondary color:** yellow and blue produce green, blue and red produce violet, red and yellow produce orange. A **tertiary** or **intermediate color** can be formed by combining a primary with an associated secondary color.

Hues containing a common color, although in different proportions, are known as **analogous hues,** and their combination produces a feeling of color harmony in a work of art. If only a single hue is used, the work is said to be **monochromatic** (from the Greek words *monos,* meaning "single," and ***chroma,*** meaning "color").

The conventional **color wheel** (fig. **2.8**) illustrates the relationships between colors. The farther hues are from each other, the less they have in common and the higher their contrast. Hues directly opposite each other (red and green, for example) are the most contrasting and are known as **complementary colors.** They are often juxtaposed when a strong, eye-catching contrast is desired. Mixing two complementary hues, on the other hand, has a neutralizing effect and lessens the intensity of each. This can be seen in figure **2.8** as you look across the wheel from red to green. Red's intensity decreases, and the gray circle in the center represents a "standoff" between all the complementary colors.

2.8 The color wheel. Note that the three primary (1) colors—red, yellow, and blue—are equally spaced around the circumference. They are separated by their secondary (2) colors. Between each primary and its two secondaries are their related tertiaries (3), giving a total of twelve hues on the rim of the wheel.

Value The relative lightness or darkness of an image is its value, also called brightness, shade, or tone. An object's value is a function of the amount of light reflected from its surface. Gray, for example, reflects more light than black but less than white, which makes gray lighter than black and darker than white. The **value scale** in figure **2.9** provides an absolute value for different shades.

Value is characteristic of both **achromatic** works of art—those with no color, consisting of black, white, and shades of gray—and **chromatic** ones. On a scale of color values (fig. **2.10**), yellow reflects a relatively large amount of light, approximately equivalent to "high light" on the **neutral** scale, whereas blue is equivalent to "high dark." The normal value of each color indicates the amount of light it reflects at its maximum intensity. The addition of white or black would alter its value (i.e., make it lighter or darker) but not its hue. The addition of one color to another would change not only the values of the two colors but also their hues.

Intensity In total darkness, colors are invisible; in dim light they are muted and difficult to distinguish; in bright light, color is at its most intense. Intensity (also known as **saturation**) refers to the brightness or dullness of a color. There are four methods of changing the intensity of colors. The first is to add white. Adding white to pure red creates light red or pink, which is lighter in value and less intense. If black is added, the result is darker in value and less intense. If gray of the same value as the red is added, the result is less intense but retains the same value. The fourth way of changing a color's intensity is to add its complementary hue. This makes the mixed color less intense and more neutral than the original.

Expressive Qualities of Color

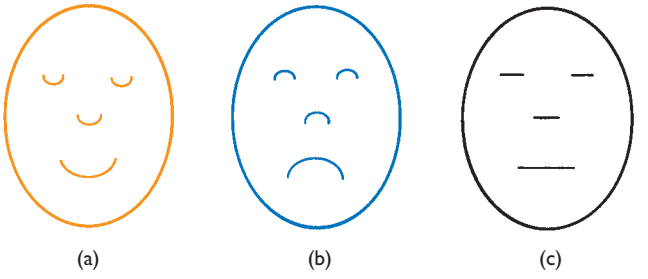
Just as lines and shapes have expressive qualities, so too do colors. Bright or warm colors convey a feeling of gaiety and happiness. Red, orange, and yellow are generally considered warm, perhaps because of their association with fire and the sun. It has been verified by psychological tests that the color red tends to produce feelings of happiness. Blue, and any other hue containing blue—green, violet, blue-green—is considered cool, possibly because of

2.9 This ten-step value scale breaks the various shades from white to black into ten gradations. The choice of ten is somewhat arbitrary because there are many more values between pure white and pure black. Nevertheless, it illustrates the principle of value gradations.

2.10 A color-value scale. The central row contains a range of neutrals from black to white; the rows above and below match the twelve colors from the color wheel with the neutrals in terms of the amount of light reflected by each.

its association with the sky and water. If we look at figure **2.2** with colors added (fig. **2.11**), we see that the orange brightens the happy face and that blue reinforces the sad face. The impassive face remains the same.

Colors can also have symbolic significance. Red, for example, can symbolize danger, as when one waves a red flag in front of a bull. But to "roll out the red carpet" means to welcome someone in an extravagant way, and we speak of a "red-letter day" when something particularly exciting has occurred. Yellow can be associated with cowardice, white with purity, and purple with luxury, wealth, and royalty. We might call people "green with envy," "purple with rage," or, if they are quietly gloomy, "in a brown study."



2.11 Color reinforcing the expressive quality of line.

Texture

Texture (from the Latin word *texo,* meaning "I weave") refers to the surface characteristics of an object. These are usually described by adjectives such as rough or polished, hard or soft, firm or fluffy, coarse or fine, cold (like steel) or warm (like wood), shiny or matte, stiff or pliable.

Texture is associated with the tactile sense (the sense of touch) and indirectly with vision. By touching or feeling an object, we experience its texture directly. But as soon as we see something, we either recognize its texture from experience or make an assumption based on how it looks. When we explore art, the senses of sight and touch interact.

It is necessary to distinguish between actual texture and simulated (or implied) texture. Actual texture is the surface quality of a real object. Van Gogh's jacket in figure **1.1** appears coarse; it is thus an example of simulated texture. But Oppenheim's *Fur-Covered Cup* (see fig. **1.8**) has an actual furry texture.

See figure 1.1. Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait before His Easel,* 1888.

See figure 1.8. Meret Oppenheim, *Fur-Covered Cup, Saucer, and Spoon (Le Déjeuner en Fourrure),* 1936.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, it was customary for painters to create illusions of texture. During the past 150 years, however, certain painters have incorporated the medium itself into the work's impact. Brushstrokes have intentionally been made visible so as to arouse the viewer's sense of touch. Since the late 1940s, many artists have emphasized the medium to the point where its literal tactile character is a central aspect of the image.

Stylistic Terminology

Subject matter refers to what is represented in a work of art. **Content** refers to themes, values, or ideas, as distinct from **form.** The following terms describe representational, or figurative, works of art, which depict recognizable subject matter:

- **Naturalistic:** depicting figures and objects more or less as we see them (see fig. **15.36**).

See figure 15.36. Jan van Eyck, *Man in a Red Turban,* 1433.

- **Realistic:** depicting figures and objects to resemble their actual appearances, rather than in a distorted or abstract way (see fig. **1.3**).

See figure 1.3. René Magritte, *The Betrayal of Images* ("This is not a pipe."), 1928.

- **Illusionistic:** depicting figures, objects, and the space they occupy so convincingly that an appearance of reality is achieved (see fig. **31.3**).

See figure 31.3. Duane Hanson, *The Cowboy*, 1995.

If an image is representational but not especially faithful to its subject, it may be described as follows:

- **Idealized:** depicting an object according to an accepted standard of beauty (see fig. **7.14**).

See figure 7.14. Polykleitos, *Doryphoros (Spear Bearer)*, c. 440 B.C.

- **Stylized:** depicting certain features as nonorganic surface elements rather than naturalistically or realistically (see fig. **4.12**).

See figure 4.12. Head of Gudea, c. 2100 B.C.

- **Romanticized:** depicting its subject in a nostalgic, emotional, fanciful, or mysterious way (see fig. **22.12**).

See figure 22.12. Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Executions of the Third of May, 1808*, 1814.

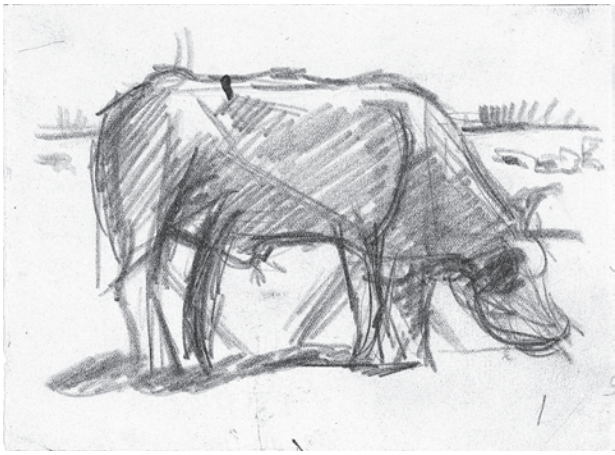
If the subject matter of a work has little or no relation to observable reality, it may be described as follows:

- **Nonrepresentational** or **nonfigurative:** the opposite of representational or figurative, implying that the work does not depict (or claim to depict) figures or objects (see fig. **29.5a**).

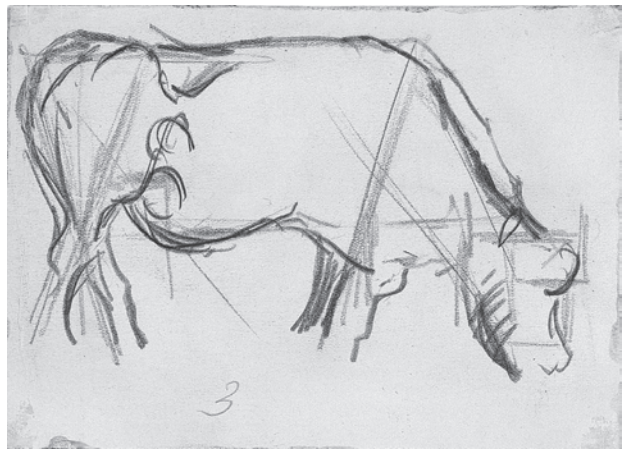
See figure 29.5a. Hans Namuth, *Jackson Pollock*, 1950.

- **Abstract:** describes forms that do not accurately depict real objects. The artist may be attempting to convey the essence of an object rather than its actual appearance. Note that the subject matter may be recognizable (making the work representational) but in a nonnaturalistic form (see fig. **1.2**).

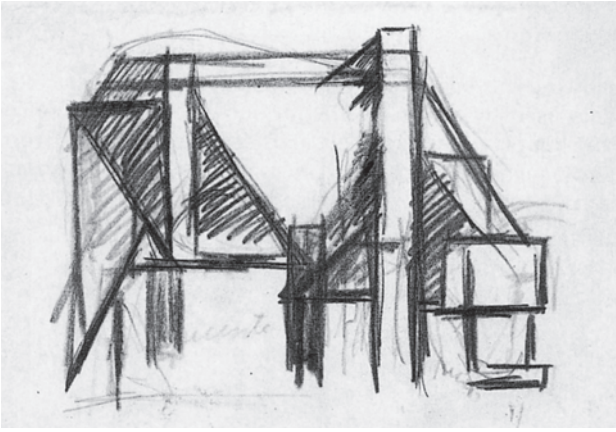
See figure 1.2. Constantin Brancusi, *Bird in Space*, 1928.



2.12a Theo van Doesburg, *Study 1 for Composition (The Cow)*, 1916. Pencil on paper, 4⅝ × 6¼ in. (11.7 × 15.9 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase.

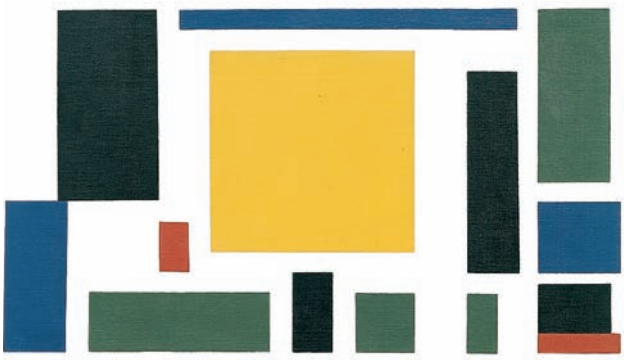


2.12b Theo van Doesburg, *Study 2 for Composition (The Cow)*, 1917. Pencil on paper, 4⅝ × 6¼ in. (11.7 × 15.9 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New New York. Purchase.



2.12c Theo van Doesburg, *Study 3 for Composition (The Cow)*, 1917. Pencil on paper, 4⅝ × 6¼ in. (11.7 × 15.9 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Nelly van Doesburg.

2.12d Theo van Doesburg, *Study for Composition (The Cow)*, c. 1917; dated 1916. Tempera, oil, and charcoal on paper, 15⅝ × 22¾ in. (39.7 × 57.8 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase.



2.12e Theo van Doesburg, *Study for Composition (The Cow)*, c. 1917. Oil on canvas, 14¾ × 25 in. (37.5 × 63.5 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase.

A transition from naturalism to geometric abstraction is demonstrated by the early-twentieth-century Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg in figure **2.12.** His drawing of a cow evolved from image (a), which could be called naturalistic, figurative, or representational, to the abstract arrangement of flat squares and rectangles in (e). In (a) and (b), the form is recognizable as that of a cow—it is composed of curved outlines and a shaded surface that create an illusion of three dimensions. In (c), the cow is still recognizable, but it is no longer naturalistic. It is now devoid of curves but is still shaded—it has become a series of solid geometric shapes. Even in (d), the general form of the cow is recognizable in terms of squares, rectangles, and triangles, but there is no longer any shading. As a result, each distinct color area is flat. Finally, in image (e) the shapes can no longer be related to the original natural form. It is thus a pure abstraction, which is also nonfigurative, even though it represents a cow.

22

Romanticism: The Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

The Romantic Movement

The Romantic movement, like Neoclassicism, swept through Western Europe and the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The term *Romantic* is derived from the Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian) and from medieval tales of chivalry and adventure written in those languages. Romantic literature shares with the so-called Gothic novels and poems by English writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a haunting nostalgia for the past. The Romantic aesthetic of "long ago" and "far away" is conveyed in works with locales and settings that indicate the passage of time, such as ruined buildings and broken sculptures. To the extent that Neoclassicism expresses a nostalgia for antiquity, it too may be said to have a "Romantic" quality.

Whereas Neoclassicism has roots in antiquity, the origins of Romanticism are no older than the eighteenth century. They can be found especially in the work of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). His writings inspired the French Revolution and provided the philosophical underpinning of the Romantic movement. Rousseau advocated a "return to nature" and believed in the concept of the "noble savage"—that humanity was born to live harmoniously with nature, free from vice, but had been corrupted by civilization and progress. Such ideas led to the political belief that people, rather than kings, should rule. The effect of the Romantic movement on early nineteenth-century culture is thus evident not only in the visual arts but also in politics, social philosophy, music, and literature (see Box).

In addition to their nostalgia for the past and their idealistic participation in current events, the Romantics were interested in the mind as the site of mysterious, unexplained, and possibly dangerous phenomena. For the first time in Western art, dreams and nightmares were depicted as internal events, with their source in the individual imagination, rather than as external, supernatural happenings. States of mind, including insanity, began to interest artists, whose imagery anticipated Freud's theories of psychoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century and the development of modern psychology in the twentieth.

Architecture

In architecture, the Romantic movement was marked by revivals of historical styles. The Gothic revival had begun in the late eighteenth century with such buildings as Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill (see fig. **20.17**) evoking the English past. Jefferson revived ancient Greek and Roman forms, which were ideologically appropriate for the newly founded American democracy.

The Romantic vision of the Far East as a distant, exotic locale also became a source for nineteenth-century art and architecture. The Royal Pavilion (fig. **22.1**) in Brighton, a fashionable English seaside resort, was constructed by John Nash (1752–1835) for the prince regent in the Indian Gothic style. A mixture of minarets and onion domes, borrowed from Islamic architecture such as the Taj Mahal (see Connection), covers a cast-iron framework. The Royal Pavilion echoes the eastern forms that attracted Coleridge, whose "Kubla Khan" incorporates the exotic sounds of faraway places and the characteristic Romantic taste for endless time and infinite spaces:

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree;
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea. (lines 1–5)

MUSIC AND POETRY
Romanticism in Music and Poetry

The various strains of Romanticism evident in the visual arts are also found in nineteenth-century music and poetry. In Romantic music, the expression of mood and feeling takes precedence over form and structure.

Romantic music was often based on literary themes, and literary or geographical references evoked various moods. Some of Hector Berlioz's overtures, for example, are based on Sir Walter Scott's historical novels, which are set in the Middle Ages. Felix Mendelssohn's "Italian" and "Scottish" symphonies were inspired by the composer's travels in Italy and Scotland. The Polish mazurkas of Frédéric Chopin and the Hungarian rhapsodies of Franz Liszt reflect the strong nationalistic strain in Romanticism. In opera, the emotional and nationalistic intensity of the Romantic movement found its fullest expression in the works of the German composer Richard Wagner.

In English poetry, the leaders of Romanticism were William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). In 1798 they jointly published a collection of poems, *Lyrical Ballads,* the introduction to which served as a manifesto for the English Romantics.

Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper" conveys a sense of the melancholy oneness of humanity with an all-encompassing nature. When seen by the poet, the reaper is alone in a vast expanse of land:

> Behold her, single in the field,
> Yon solitary Highland Lass!
> Reaping and singing by herself;
> Stop here, or gently pass!
> Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
> And sings a melancholy strain;
> O listen! for the Vale profound
> Is overflowing with the sound. (stanza I)

Other English poets of the Romantic movement included Lord Byron (1788–1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), and John Keats (1795–1821). Byron's nostalgic yearning for ancient Greece is evident in much of his poetry:

> The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
> Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
> Where grew the arts of war and peace,
> Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
> Eternal summer gilds them yet,
> But all, except their sun, is set.
> ("Don Juan" III.lxxxvi)

Shelley's "Ozymandias" evokes the attraction of exotic locales and explores our ability to communicate with the past through time-worn artifacts:

> I met a traveller from an antique land
> Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
> Stand in the desert . . .
> And on the pedestal these words appear:
> "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
> Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
> The lone and level sands stretch far away.

In 1819 Shelley visited the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, where he saw a painting of Medusa's head, then attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. The head lies on the ground, crawling with lizards, insects, and snakes. Shelley's poem expresses the Romantic taste for the macabre, the appeal of death, and the theme of the aloof, unattainable woman:

> It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
> Upon the cloudy mountain-peak supine;
> Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;
> Its horror and its beauty are divine.
> ("On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci in the Florentine Gallery," lines 1–4)

The aloof and unattainable woman, seen by the Romantics as cold and deathlike but nevertheless fascinating, is celebrated with a medieval flavor in Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci":

> I saw pale kings and princes too,
> Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
> Who cry'd—"La belle Dame sans merci
> Hath thee in thrall!" (lines 38–41)

22.1 John Nash, Royal Pavilion, Brighton, England, 1815–18.

CONNECTIONS

Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632–48.

Sculpture: François Rude

Romantic sculptors were generally less prominent than poets, painters, and architects. One sculpture inspired by Romantic ideals is François Rude's (1784–1855) stone relief of 1833–36 (fig. **22.2**). Originally titled the *Departure of the Volunteers of 1792* but generally known as *La Marseillaise,* it was one of four reliefs added to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris (see fig. **21.4**).

The relief shows a group of volunteers answering the call to arms in defense of France against foreign enemies. They seem caught up in the "romance" of their enthusiasm, as the rhythmic energy of their motion echoes the imaginary beat of military music (see caption). Rude's soldiers range from youths to old men, who are either nude or equipped with Classical armor. But unlike the sedate, orderly imagery of Neoclassical patriotism, Rude's volunteers seem carried away by the force of the crowd. Vigorously striding above the volunteers, and driving them on, is an allegory of Liberty, a nineteenth-century revolutionary version of the traditional winged Victory (see fig. **7.38**).

22.2 François Rude, *Departure of the Volunteers of 1792 (La Marseillaise)*, 1833–36. Limestone, approx. 42 ft. (12.8 m) high. Arc de Triomphe, Paris. The "Marseillaise," the French national anthem, was composed in 1792 by an army officer, Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle. Volunteers from the port of Marseille, who led the storming of the Tuilleries, brought the song to Paris.

CONNECTIONS

See figure 7.38. *Winged Nike (Winged Victory)*, c. 190 B.C.

CONNECTIONS

See figure 1.4. *God as Architect (God Drawing the Universe with a Compass).*

22.3 William Blake, *God Creating the Universe (Ancient of Days),* frontispiece of *Europe: A Prophecy,* 1794. Metal relief etching, hand-colored with watercolor and gouache, 12¼ × 9½ in. (31.1 × 24.1 cm). British Museum, London, England.

Painting in Europe

William Blake

There was a strong Christian strain in Romanticism. It was associated with a longing for a form of religious mysticism, which, from the Reformation onward, had been on the wane in Western Europe. This can be seen in the work of the English visionary artist and poet William Blake (1757–1827).

Blake was an engraver, painter, and poet whose work was little known until about a century after his death. From 1793 to 1796, Blake illuminated a group of so-called *Prophetic Books* dealing with visionary biblical themes. His watercolor and gouache (see Box) *God Creating the Universe* (fig. **22.3**), also called *Ancient of Days,* shows God organizing the world with a compass (see fig. **1.4**).

In this image, Blake's God is almost entirely enclosed in a circle. The light extending from each side of his hand forms the arms of a compass. The precision of the circle and triangle contrasts with the looser painting of clouds and light, and the frenetic quality of God's long white hair, blown sideways by an unseen wind.

Blake's nostalgic combination of medieval iconography and a Michelangelo-style God with a revival of mysticism is characteristic of the Romantic movement. His passionate yearning for a past (and largely imaginary) form of Christianity appears in his poems as well as in his pictures. It is exemplified by the opening lines of his hymn "Jerusalem":

> And did those feet in ancient time
> Walk upon England's mountains green?
> And was the holy Lamb of God
> On England's pleasant pastures seen?

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUE
Watercolor

In **watercolor,** powdered pigments are mixed with water, often with gum arabic used as a **binder** and drying agent. Watercolor is transparent, and so one color overlaid on another can create a **wash** effect. The most common **ground** for watercolor is paper. Because the medium is transparent, the natural color of the paper also contributes to the image.

Watercolor had been known in China as early as the third century, but it was used only occasionally in Europe before the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At that point it became popular, particularly with English artists such as Constable and Turner, for landscape paintings on a small scale. In the second half of the nineteenth century, watercolor also became popular among American artists. It was favored by those who preferred to paint directly from nature rather than in a studio and needed a more portable, quickly drying medium.

Gouache is a watercolor paint that becomes opaque when dry. It is commonly used on its own or in combination with transparent watercolor.

Théodore Géricault

Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) died at the age of only thirty-three, but his work was crucial to the development of Romantic painting, especially in France.

Géricault's commitment to social justice is reflected in his acknowledged masterpiece, the *Raft of the Medusa* (fig. **22.4**), which he began in 1818 and exhibited at the Salon (see Box) the following year. This picture commemorates a contemporary disaster at sea rather than a heroic example of Neoclassical patriotism. On July 2, 1816, the French frigate *Medusa* hit a reef off the west coast of Africa. The captain and senior officers boarded six lifeboats, saving themselves and some of the passengers. The 149 remaining passengers and crew were crammed onto a wooden raft, which the captain cut loose from a lifeboat. During the thirteen-day voyage that followed, the raft became a floating hell of death, disease, mutiny, starvation, and cannibalism. Only fifteen people survived.

The episode became a national scandal when it was discovered that the ship's captain owed his appointment to his

SOCIETY AND CULTURE
The Salon

The *Salon* refers to the official art exhibitions sponsored by the French authorities. The term is derived from the Salon d'Apollon in the Louvre. It was here, in 1667, that Louis XIV sponsored an exhibition of works by members of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. From 1737 the Salon was an annual event, and in 1748 selection by jury was introduced. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Salons were the only important exhibitions at which works of art could be shown. This made acceptance by the Salon jury crucial to an artist's career.

During the eighteenth century the influence of the Salon was largely beneficial and progressive. By the nineteenth century, however, despite the fact that during the Revolution the Salon was officially opened to all French artists, it was in effect controlled by Academicians, whose conservative taste resisted innovation.

22.4 Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa,* 1819. Oil on canvas, 16 ft. × 23 ft. 6 in. (4.88 × 7.16 m). Louvre, Paris, France. The mood of this painting is evoked by lines from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge, the English Romantic poet: "I looked upon the rotting deck and there the dead men lay." To ensure authenticity, Géricault spoke with survivors and made studies of the dead and dying in morgues and hospitals before executing the final painting.

monarchist sympathies rather than to merit. Furthermore, the French government had covered up the worst details of the incident. It was not until the ship's surgeon, one of the survivors from the raft, published his account of the disaster that the full extent of the tragedy became known. Géricault took up the cause of the individual against social injustice and translated it into a struggle of humanity against the elements.

The writhing forms, reminiscent of Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling figures from the Flood, echo the turbulence of sea and sky. In the foreground a father mourns his dead son. Other corpses hang over the edge of the raft, while in the background, to the right, frantic survivors wave hopefully at a distant ship. The raft itself tilts upward on the swell of a wave, and the sail billows in the wind. As a result, the viewer looks down on the raft, directly confronting the corpses. The gaze gradually moves upward, following the diagonals of the central figures, and finally reaches the waving drapery of the man standing upright. In this painting Géricault incorporates the Romantic taste for adventure and individual freedom into an actual event, in which victims of injustice fight to survive the primal forces of nature.

Figure **22.5** shows one of Géricault's many drawing studies for the *Raft*. It depicts the father mourning his son in a full-figure profile view and the head and arm in three-quarter view. The former is bearded, as is the painted version; the latter has a dark mustache. The strong hatching lines and bold anatomical structure of the kneeling father contribute to the forcefulness of his despair. In the other drawing, Géricault focuses on the shocked, wide-eyed horror registered by the father. There, the artist uses subtler tonal variations to create the facial expression and reveal character.

22.5 Théodore Géricault, figure study for *Raft of the Medusa*, 1819. Pen and pencil on paper, 9⅞ × 11¾ in. (25 × 30 cm). Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille, France.

22.6 Théodore Géricault, *Madwoman with a Mania of Envy*, 1822–23. Oil on canvas, 28⅜ × 22⅞ in. (72 × 58 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, France. Géricault was a man of paradoxes—a fashionable society figure and a political and social liberal who was active in exposing injustice. The subject of this portrait, which is also known as *L'Hyène de la Salpêtrière*, was a child murderer. La Salpêtrière was a mental hospital in Paris where Freud studied under the celebrated neuropathologist Jean-Martin Charcot and learned that hypnosis could temporarily relieve the symptoms of hysteria.

Géricault's interest in human psychology is evident in his studies of the insane, which he executed from 1822 to 1823. In these works he captured the mental disturbance of his subjects through pose and physiognomy. In the *Madwoman with a Mania of Envy* (fig. **22.6**), for example, the figure hunches forward and stares suspiciously off to the left, as if aware of some potential menace. The raising of one eyebrow and the lowering of the other, combined with the slight shift in the planes of her face, indicate the wariness of paranoia.

Géricault's loose brushstrokes create the textures of the woman's face, which is accentuated by light and framed by the ruffle of her cap. By the conscious organization of light and color, and the visibility of his brushwork, Géricault unifies the composition both formally and psychologically. The sweeping light-brown curve below the collar echoes the more tightly drawn curve of the mouth. Reds around the eyes and mouth are repeated in the collar, and the white of the cap ruffle recurs in the small triangle of the white undergarment. The untied cap laces and disheveled strands of hair are a metaphor for the woman's emotional state, as if she is "coming apart" and "unraveling" physically as well as mentally.

Eugène Delacroix

The most prominent figure in French Romantic painting was Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), who outlived Géricault by nearly forty years. In painting, Delacroix stood for color, just as Ingres, his contemporary and rival, championed line. In this theoretical opposition, Delacroix and Ingres transformed the traditional aesthetic quarrel between *colorito* and *disegno,* the Rubenists and the Poussinists, the Moderns and the Ancients, into Romanticists versus Classicists. Delacroix's paintings are characterized by broad sweeps of color, lively patterns, and energetic figural groups. His thick brushstrokes, like Géricault's, are in direct contrast to the precise edges and smooth surfaces of Neoclassical painting.

In the *Massacre at Chios* (fig. **22.7**) of 1822–24, Delacroix satisfied the Romantic interest in distant places and political freedom. In this he shared the views of Byron (see p. 399), who died of disease in 1824 while aiding the Greeks in their struggle for freedom from the Turks. Delacroix enlists the viewer's sympathy for Greece by showing the suffering and death of its people in the foreground. They are individualized and thus elicit identification with their plight. At the same time, Delacroix has concentrated attention on the details of their exotic dress. Two Turks—one holding a gun and the other on a rearing horse—threaten the Greeks, while scenes of burning villages and massacre are depicted in the distance.

22.7 Eugène Delacroix, *Massacre at Chios,* 1822–24. Oil on canvas, 13 ft. 10 in. × 11 ft. 7 in. (4.22 × 3.53 m). Louvre, Paris, France. Delacroix was rumored to be the illegitimate son of the French statesman Charles Talleyrand (whom he resembled physically), but he was brought up in the family of a French government official. His celebrated *Journal* is a useful source of information on the social context of his life, as well as on his philosophy of art.

22.8 Eugène Delacroix, *Death of Sardanapalus*, 1827–28. Oil on canvas, 12 ft. 11½ in. × 16 ft. 3 in. (3.95 × 4.95 m). Louvre, Paris, France. When the painting was exhibited at the Salon in February 1828, it was widely criticized. Delacroix was unable to sell it until 1845, and then the buyer was an English collector. The Louvre purchased the work in 1921.

The enormous *Death of Sardanapalus* (fig. **22.8**) inspired by Byron's play of the same subject, also reflects Delacroix's affinities for the poet. Both Byron and Delacroix portray the Assyrian king as a meditative figure in the midst of violence and debauchery. In the play, Sardanapalus accepts that his empire has fallen because his officials betrayed him, and he kills himself on a pyre with his favorite Ionian concubine, Myrrha. Delacroix's figure reclines on a large bed with a rich red covering that accentuates the sensuality of the scene and echoes the multiple reds thoughout the painting. The opulence associated with the East is shown in the jewels and objects of gold strewn on the floor, and in the exotic costumes. Only Sardanapalus and Myrrha, lying at the king's feet, are calm. They are surrounded by vignettes of murderous rage and helpless victims. At the lower left, a black man pulls a fallen horse decked out in elaborate trappings, and at the upper right the city is engulfed in smoke.

Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (fig. **22.9**), executed in 1830, applies Romantic principles to the revolutionary ideal. In contrast to Rude's *Marseillaise* on the Arc de Triomphe (see fig. **22.2**), whose figures are in side view, Delacroix's rebels march directly toward the viewer. Delacroix "romanticizes" the uprising by implying that

22.9 Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. 6 in. × 10 ft. 7 in. (2.59 × 3.23 m). Louvre, Paris, France. This painting refers to the July 1830 uprising against the Bourbon king Charles X, which led to his abdication. Louis Philippe, the "citizen-king," was installed in his place, though his powers were strictly limited.

the populace has spontaneously taken up arms, united in yearning for liberty (see caption). The figures emerge from a haze of smoke—a symbol of France's political emergence from the shackles of tyranny. Visible in the distance is the Paris skyline and the towers of Notre-Dame Cathedral. From here the rebels will fly the tricolor (the red, white, and blue French flag).

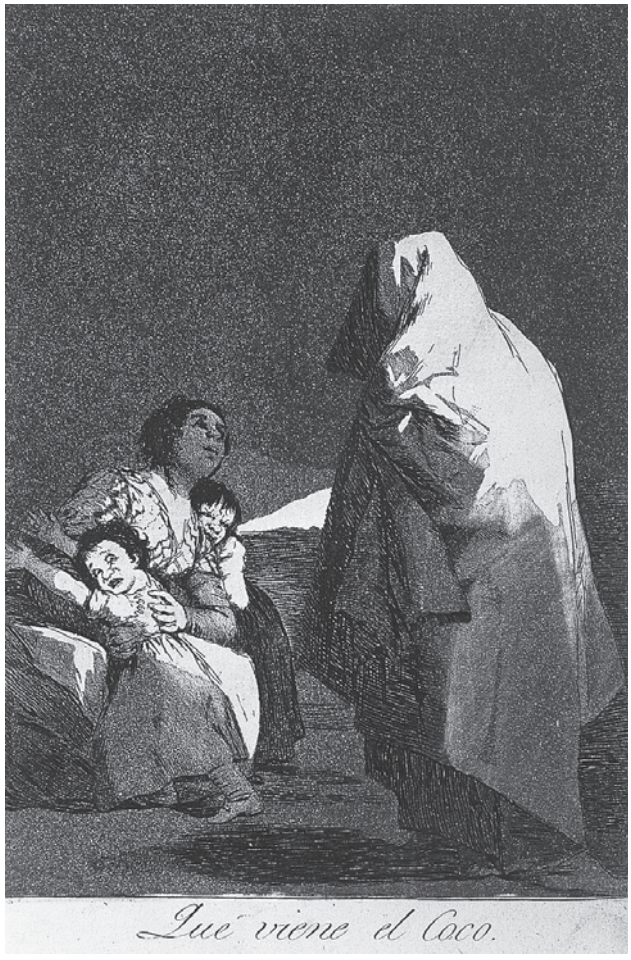
As in the *Raft of the Medusa* (see fig. **22.4**), Delacroix's corpses lie in contorted poses in the foreground. The diagonal of the kneeling boy leads upward to Liberty, whose raised hand, holding the flag aloft, forms the apex of a pyramidal composition. Her Greek profile and bare breasts recall ancient statuary, while her towering form and costume confirm her allegorical role. By incorporating antiquity into his figure of Liberty, Delacroix makes a nostalgic, "Romantic" appeal to republican sentiment. Among Liberty's followers are representatives of different social classes, who are united by their common cause. In their determined march forward, they trample the corpses beneath them. They are willing to die themselves, secure in the knowledge that others will arise to take their place.

A colorist in the tradition of Rubens, Delacroix integrates color with the painting's message. In an image that is primarily composed of brown tones and blacks, the colors that appear most vividly on the flag are repeated throughout the picture. Whites are more freely distributed. In the sky, reds and blues are muted. Denser blues are repeated in the stocking of the fallen man at the left and the shirt of the kneeling boy. His scarf and belt, like the small ribbon of the corpse at the right, are accents of red. In echoing the colors of the flag, which is at once a symbol of Liberty and of French republicanism, Delacroix paints a political manifesto.

Francisco de Goya y Lucientes

The leading Spanish painter of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Francisco de Goya y Lucientes ("Goya"; 1746–1828) was attracted by several Romantic themes. His compelling images reflect his remarkable psychological insights, and many also display his support for the causes of intellectual and political freedom.

In 1799 Goya published *Los Caprichos* (Caprices), a series of etchings combined with the new medium of **aquatint** (see Box, p. 408). In this series, he depicts psychological phenomena, often juxtaposing them with an educational or social message. In plate 3 (fig. **22.10**), for example, the title of which may be translated as "The Bogeyman Is Coming," Goya illustrates the nighttime fears of childhood. The mother's gaze is riveted on the unseen face of the Bogeyman, while her children cringe in fear. Their terrified faces, contrasted with the anonymity of the apparition, accentuate the uncanny character of the Bogeyman. Goya takes full advantage of the dramatic possibilities of the blacks and whites that are characteristic of the medium. The Bogeyman's sharply contrasting light and dark—his "dark side" turned toward the children, whose white faces and black features accentuate their terror—is a metaphor for his two-sided nature. Goya's enlightened view of child development is consistent with the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and was unusual in a country still haunted by the Inquisition.



22.10 Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *Los Caprichos*, plate 3, published 1799. Etching and aquatint. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Gift of M. Knoedler and Co., 1918). Inscribed on the plate (but not visible here) is Goya's warning against instilling needless fears in children: "Bad education. To bring up a child to fear a Bogeyman more than his own father is to make him afraid of something that does not exist."

22.11 Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Witches' Sabbath*, 1798–99. Oil on canvas, 17¼ × 12¼ in. (44 × 31 cm). Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid, Spain.

The Witches' Sabbath (fig. **22.11**) of 1798–99 satirizes the irrational belief in witchcraft by exaggerating the primitive quality of such thinking. Here, Goya indirectly attacks the Inquisition, which opposed the Enlightenment. He depicts the widespread fantasy that witches were old, ugly, deformed women who sucked the blood of children and fed infants to Satan. Goya's witches form a circle around a devil in the guise of a goat, and one witch offers him a bloodless, skeletal infant. The lascivious implications of the goat and the bacchanalian grape leaves on his horns refer to popular notions of the witches' sabbath as an orgiastic, cannibalistic ritual.

22.12 Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Executions of the Third of May, 1808,* 1814. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. 9 in. × 11 ft. 4 in. (2.67 × 3.45 m). Prado, Madrid, Spain. This painting depicts the aftermath of events that occurred on May 2 and 3, 1808. Two Spanish rebels fired on fifteen French soldiers from Napoleon's army. In response, the French troops rounded up and executed close to a thousand inhabitants of Madrid and other Spanish towns. Six years later, after the French were ousted, the liberal government of Spain commissioned a pair of paintings, of which this is one, to commemorate the atrocity.

In his images of war, Goya champions Enlightenment views of individual freedom against political oppression. In *The Executions of the Third of May, 1808* (fig. **22.12**), he dramatically juxtaposes the visible faces of the victims with the covered faces of the executioners. The firing squad is an anonymous but deadly force whose regular, repeated rhythms and dark mass contrast with the highlighted, disorderly victims. The emotional poses and gestures, accentuated by thick brushstrokes, and the stress on individual reactions to the "blind" brute force of the firing squad are characteristic of Goya's Romanticism. The raised arms of the central, illuminated victim about to be shot recall the death of Jesus. His pose and gesture, in turn, are repeated by the foremost corpse lying in a pool of blood. The lessons of the Crucifixion, Goya seems to be saying, are still unlearned. By mingling reds and browns in this section of the picture, Goya creates the impression that blood is flowing into the earth and literally dyeing it red. Somewhat muted by the night sky, a church rises in the background and towers over the scene. The black sky alludes to the tradition that the sky turned dark at the moment of Jesus's death.

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUE
Aquatint

Although etching was not new to the nineteenth century, its use in combination with aquatint was. In aquatint, the artist covers the spaces between etched lines with a layer of **rosin** (a form of powdered resin). This partially protects against the effects of the acid bath. Since the rosin is porous, the acid can penetrate to the metal, but the artist controls the acid's effect on the plate by treating the plate with varnish. This technique expands the range of grainy tones in finished prints. Aquatint thus combines the principles of engraving with the effects of a watercolor or wash drawing.

Caspar David Friedrich

In Germany, Caspar David Friedrich's (1774–1840) poetic landscapes express these Romantic trends. His *Two Men Contemplating the Moon* from his famous series of *Moonwatchers* (fig. **22.13**) exemplifies the merging of human form and mood with nature. The two men have no individual identity beyond their relationship to the landscape and their old German dress, which reflects Romantic nostalgia for the past. Their forms are nearly silhouettes, and they seem riveted to the distant moon illuminating them and the ghoulish oak tree. We, as viewers, look past the men (Friedrich himself is on the right) and identify with their gaze. They are nearly lost in nature, enveloped by the animated branches reaching toward them. In being engulfed by nature's darkness, in the mysterious quality of the light, and in their ancient mode of dress, Friedrich's figures embody the Romantic aesthetic of the sublime (see Box).

THEORY

The Aesthetic of the Sublime

In 1757 the British philosopher Edmund Burke (1729–97) published *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful.* Certain artists and writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries took up his views on the sublime, which reflect the ambivalent character of the Romantic aesthetic. According to Burke, the passions and the irrational exert a powerful, awesome force on people. These, he believed, explain the subjective reaction to art. Burke's aesthetic system describes the "irrational" attraction to fear, pain, ugliness, loss, hatred, and death (all of which are elements of the sublime), along with beauty, pleasure, joy, and love.

22.13 Caspar David Friedrich, *Two Men Contemplating the Moon,* 1819. Oil on canvas, 13¾ × 17½ in. (35.0 × 44.5 cm). Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Germany.

John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner

In England, the two greatest Romantic landscape painters, John Constable (1776–1837) and Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851), approached their subjects quite differently. Whereas Constable's images are clear and tend to focus on the details of English country life, Turner's are likely to become swept up in the paint.

In Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden* (fig. **22.14**), cows graze in the foreground as couples stroll calmly along pathways. The cathedral is framed by trees that echo its vertical spire. Nostalgia for the past is evident in the juxtaposition of the day-to-day activities of the present with the Gothic cathedral. Humanity, like the cathedral, is at one with nature, and there is no hint of the industrialization that in reality was encroaching on the pastoral landscape of nineteenth-century England. The atmosphere of this painting is echoed in the poems of Wordsworth, who wanted to break away from eighteenth-century literary forms and return to nature, to a "humble and rustic life." In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth evokes the Romantic sense of the sublime that is achieved by oneness with nature:

> . . . And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man. . . .
> (lines 93–99)

CONNECTIONS

See figure 13.26. Salisbury Cathedral, England, begun 1220.

22.14 John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden,* 1820. Oil on canvas, 2 ft. 10⅝ in. × 3 ft. 8 in. (0.91 × 1.12 m). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Bequest of Mary Stillman Harkness, 1950).

In contrast to the calm landscapes of Constable, Turner's approach to Romanticism is characterized by dynamic, sweeping brushstrokes and vivid colors that blur the forms. His *Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons* (fig. **22.15**) is a whirlwind of flame, water, and sky, structured mainly by the dark diagonal pier at the lower right, the bridge, and the barely visible towers of Parliament across the Thames. The luminous reds, yellows, and oranges of the fire dominate the sky and are reflected in the water below. In this work, architecture is in the process of dissolution, enveloped by the blazing lights and colors of the fire. The forces of nature let loose and their destruction of man-made structures are the primary theme of this painting. In Constable, on the other hand, nature is under control and in harmony with human creations.

22.15 Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, October 16, 1834*, 1835. Oil on fabric, 3 ft. ¼ in. × 4 ft. ½ in. (0.92 × 1.23 m). Cleveland Museum of Art (Bequest of John L. Severance, 42.647). The painting is based on an actual fire of 1834. Turner spent the entire night sketching the scene. After the fire, the new Houses of Parliament (still standing today) were built in the Gothic revival style, which was inspired by Romantic nostalgia for a medieval Christian past.

Painting in the United States

In the United States as well as Europe, the Romantic movement infiltrated both art and literature. The landscape of different parts of the country inspired artists, individually and in groups, to produce works that were often monumental in size and breathtaking in effect.

Thomas Cole

One such painting is *The Oxbow* (fig. **22.16**) by Thomas Cole (1801–48), which depicts a bend in the Connecticut River, near Northampton. (*Oxbow* is the term used to describe the crescent-shaped, almost circular, course of a river caused by its meandering.) One is struck by the abrupt contrast between the two sides of the painting. On the left is wilderness, where two blasted trees in the foreground bear witness to the power of the elements. A thunderstorm, an example of nature's dramatic, changing moods characteristic of the Romantic aesthetic, is passing over. The direction of the rain indicates that the storm is moving away to the left and that it has already passed the farmland to the right, which now lies serene and sunlit. A landscape of neatly arranged fields, dotted with haystacks, sheep, and other signs of cultivation, extends into the distance. Boats ply the river, and plumes of smoke rise from farmhouses. Barely visible in the foreground, just right of center, is a single figure, the artist at work before his easel. On a jutting rock are his umbrella and folding stool; leaning against them is a portfolio with the name T. Cole on its cover. Both artist and viewer have a panoramic view from the top of the mountain, a feature that became typical of the Hudson River school of painting, of which Cole was the acknowledged leader.

It was Cole's habit to journey on foot through the northeastern states, making pencil sketches of the landscape. He would then develop these sketches into finished paintings during the winter, and this was the case with *The Oxbow*. It is likely that Cole never actually witnessed the storm in the way he depicts it and that there is a large element of the artist's imagination at work. If so, why did Cole choose

22.16 Thomas Cole, *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm (The Oxbow)*, 1836. Oil on canvas, 4 ft. 3½ in. × 6 ft. 4 in. (1.31 × 1.93 m). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, 1908). Cole was born in England and emigrated to America with his family at the age of seventeen. In 1825 his work came to the attention of John Trumbull (see p. 396), then president of the American Academy, who is quoted as saying: "This youth has done at once, and without instruction, what I cannot do after fifty years' practice." This story, whether accurate or not, places Cole squarely in the tradition of other "boy wonders" such as Giotto and Picasso.

this particular image? An untitled poem, which he wrote in January 1835, a year before he completed *The Oxbow,* begins as follows:

> I sigh not for a stormless clime,
> Where drowsy quiet ever dwells,
> Where purling waters changeless chime
> Through soft and green unwinter'd dells—
>
> For storms bring beauty in their train;
> The hills that roar'd beneath the blast,
> The woods that welter'd in the rain
> Rejoice whene'er the tempest's past.

Cole's affinity for storms has been interpreted by some scholars as a metaphor for his inner life. It is also possible to see the painting as an allegory of civilization (the right) versus savagery (the left), which is consistent with Cole's own outlook. For although he made his reputation primarily as a landscape artist, Cole always aspired to a "higher style of landscape," a mode of painting that contained some additional moral or religious significance.

Albert Bierstadt

The interest in American landscape pushed west from the Hudson River and inspired paintings of panoramic spaces with spectacular views of nature. Variations of light play over mountains, trees, and lakes, the colors softening and changing with the time of day. This emphasis on light led to the term **luminism,** an example of which can be seen in Albert Bierstadt's (1830–1902) *Sunrise, Yosemite Valley* (fig. **22.17**).

Bierstadt was born in Germany but raised in Massachusetts. He combined the German taste for Romanticism and the sublime with an enthusiasm for the American West. In 1859 Bierstadt traveled west with European landscape painters in mind and an ambition to create a new vision in America. In *Sunrise, Yosemite Valley,* his rich yellow lighting is gradually transformed into muted grays as it moves left. The still lake is a mirror of change as it captures the fleeting sensations of nature. As with Friedrich (see fig. **22.13**), Bierstadt emphasizes nature's vastness compared with humanity's smallness.

22.17 Albert Bierstadt, *Sunrise, Yosemite Valley,* no date. Oil on canvas, 36½ × 52½ in. (92.7 × 133.4 cm). Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

Folk Art: Edward Hicks

Another view of nature in nineteenth-century American painting can be found in folk art. Typically folk artists are not academically trained; their forms are usually flattened, their proportions are unnatural, and their imagery is without reference to the Classical tradition. As a result, their works tend to have a spontaneous quality that can be refreshing compared with the more "finished" appearance of works by artists who have had formal training.

One example of this genre that embodies the Romantic ideal of a return to nature is *The Peaceable Kingdom* (fig. **22.18**) by Edward Hicks (1780–1849), who during his lifetime was celebrated more as a Quaker preacher than as an artist. Hicks based this painting on a passage from the Book of Isaiah (11:6–9): "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Rather than being drawn into a vast space, the viewer experiences an immediate confrontation with the image, especially the wild cats. Its impact is enhanced by the close-up view of wild animals coexisting peacefully with humans. Their careful, almost staged arrangement and immobile frontality endow them with a static quality. *The Peaceable Kingdom* merges the natural landscape with a utopian ideal related to the notion of a Garden of Eden. The background scene, also utopian, is a visual quotation of a scene in Benjamin West's *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*. In contrast to the capricious, dangerous, and constantly changing eruptions of nature that are captured in the work of Turner and Cole, Hicks's conception seems frozen in time.

LITERATURE
American Romantic Writers

Nineteenth-century America produced many important Romantic works of literature. The historical adventures of James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851), particularly *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), extol the American Indian as an example of the "noble savage." The supernatural poems and tales of Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49) contain uncanny portrayals of death and terror. Likewise, the Gothic novels and short stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–64) create a haunted, medieval atmosphere in which supernatural phenomena abound.

A characteristic American Romantic philosophy emerged in the Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803– 82) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–62), a doctrine that stressed the presence of God within the human soul as a source of truth and a moral guide. After a trip to England (where he met Coleridge and Wordsworth), Emerson became a spokesman for Romantic individualism, which he expressed in poems and essays. A more personal form of natural philosophy can be seen in Thoreau's experimental return to nature. He lived alone for two years in a hut at the edge of Walden Pond in Massachusetts and recorded his experience in *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854).

22.18 Edward Hicks, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, c. 1834. Oil on canvas, 29⅜ × 35½ in. (74.8 × 90.2 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch.)

c. 1790 **c. 1850**

ROMANTICISM: THE LATE 18TH AND EARLY 19TH CENTURIES

(22.2)

Wordsworth and Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798)

(22.12)

Napoleon abdicates (1814)

(22.1)

John Keats, *Endymion* (1818)

July Revolution in France (1830)

(22.9)

Charles Darwin begins voyage aboard the *Beagle* (1831)

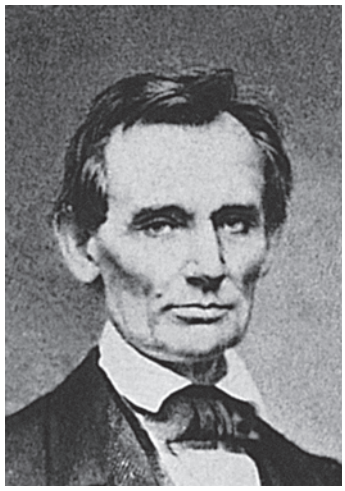
(22.15)

Slavery ends in British Empire (1834)

Queen Victoria rules in England (1837–1901)

(22.17)

California gold rush begins (1848)



23

Nineteenth-Century Realism

Culture and Politics

The nineteenth century was an age of revolution. Contemporary ideas about human rights can be traced to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Resulting conflicts between different classes of society were often implicit in works of art—usually depicted from the viewpoint of those rebelling against political oppression.

England led the Industrial Revolution, which transformed the economies, first of Western Europe, then of the United States and other parts of the world, from an agricultural to a primarily industrial base. The process of industrialization continued at breakneck speed. Inventions such as the steam engine and new materials such as iron and steel made mass manufacturing possible.

Factories were established, mainly in urban areas, and people moved to the cities in search of work. New social class divisions arose between factory owners and workers. Demands for individual freedom and citizens' rights were accompanied in many European countries by social and political movements for workers' rights. In 1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (see Box) published the most influential of all political tracts on behalf of workers—*The Communist Manifesto*. The same year, the first convention for women's rights was held in New York.

English and French literature of the nineteenth century is imbued with the currents of reform inspired by a new social consciousness. Novelists described the broad panorama of society, as well as the psychological motivation of their characters (see Box, p. 416). In science, the observation of nature led to new theories about the human species and its origin. In 1859, for example, the naturalist Charles Darwin (1809–92) published *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection,* written after a five-year sea voyage aboard the *Beagle*.

Newspapers and magazines reported scientific discoveries and also carried **cartoons** and **caricatures** satirizing political leaders, the professions, actors, and artists. The

THEORY

Marx and Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*

The political theory of communism was set out by Karl Marx (1818–83) and Friedrich Engels (1820–95) in *The Communist Manifesto*, published in England in 1848.

Marxism views history as a struggle to master the laws of nature and apply them to humanity. The *Manifesto* outlines the stages of human evolution, from primitive society to feudalism and then to capitalism, each phase being superseded by a higher one.

Marxists believed that bourgeois society had reached a period of decline; it was now time for the working class (or "proletariat") to seize power from the capitalist class and organize society in the interests of the majority. The next stage would be socialism under the rule of the working-class majority ("dictatorship of the proletariat"). This, in turn, would be followed by true communism, in which the guiding principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" would be realized. Part analysis, part rhetoric, the *Manifesto* ends: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!"

In his *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (1857–59), Marx argued that art is linked to its social context and should not be regarded in purely aesthetic terms. His primary interest was in the relationship of art production to the proletarian base of society and its exploitation by the superstructure (the bourgeoisie). For Marx, the arts were part of the superstructure, which comprises the patrons of art, while the artists were "workers." As a result, he believed that artists had become alienated from their own productions. His view of the class struggle has led to various so-called Marxist theories of art history, in which art is interpreted as a reflection of conflict between proletariat and bourgeoisie.

LITERATURE

Realism

The current of Realism and its related "-ism," Naturalism, flows through nineteenth-century literature, science, and the arts. In England, Charles Dickens (1812–70) described the dismal conditions of lower-class life. He drew on direct observation and personal experience, for as a boy he had worked in a factory while his father was in debtors' prison. His opening sentence in his novel of the French Revolution, *A Tale of Two Cities*, reflects his ambivalence toward contemporary society: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness."

In France, Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) wrote eighty novels, making up *La Comédie Humaine (The Human Comedy)*—a sweeping panorama of nineteenth-century French life. The novelists Gustave Flaubert (1821–80) and Émile Zola (1840–92) also focused on society and personality. In 1857 Flaubert published *Madame Bovary*, the story of the unfaithful wife of a French country doctor. The description of her suicide by arsenic poisoning is a classic example of naturalistic observation. Zola not only championed a Realist approach to the arts but was also a staunch defender of political and social justice.

proliferation of newspapers reflected the expanding communications technology, and advances in printing and photography made articles and images ever more accessible to a wider public. Inventions such as the telegraph (1837) and telephone (1876) increased the speed with which news could be delivered. Travel was also accelerated; the first passenger railroad, powered by steam, went into service in England in 1825.

Paralleling the more general social changes in the nineteenth century was the change in the social and economic structure of the art world that had begun in the previous century. Crafts were replaced by manufactured goods. Guilds were no longer important to an artist's training, status, or economic well-being. A new figure on the art scene was the critic, whose opinions, published in newspapers and journals, influenced buyers. Patronage became mainly the province of dealers, museums, and private collectors. Both the art gallery and the museum as they exist today originated in the nineteenth century.

In the visual arts, the style that corresponded best to the new social awareness is called Realism. The term was coined in 1840, although the style itself appeared well before that date. The primary concerns of the Realist movement in art were direct observation of society and nature, and political and social satire.

French Realism

Jean-François Millet

The Gleaners (fig. **23.1**), by Jean-François Millet (1814–75), illustrates the transition between Romanticism and Realism in painting. The heroic depiction of the three peasants in the foreground and their focus on their task recalls the Romantic sense of "oneness with nature." Two peasants in particular are monumentalized by their foreshortened forms, which convey a sense of powerful energy. Contrasted with the laborers gleaning the remains of the harvest is the prosperous farm in the background. The emphasis on class distinctions—the hard physical labor of the poor as opposed to the comfortable lifestyle of the wealthy—is characteristic of Realism. In addition to social observation, Millet uses light to highlight economic differences—the farm is illuminated in a golden glow of sunlight, while the three foreground figures and the earth from which they glean are in shadow.

Rosa Bonheur

Another approach to nature in which Realism and Romanticism are combined is found in the work of Rosa Bonheur (1822–99). Her painting *The Horse Fair* (fig. **23.2**) shows her close study of the anatomy and movement of horses galloping, rearing, and parading. Consistent with Realist interest in scientific observation, Bonheur dissected animals from butcher shops and slaughterhouses; she also visited horse fairs, such as this one, and cattle markets. In addition to the Realist qualities of *The Horse Fair,* the thundering energy of the horses and the efforts of their grooms to keep them under control have a Romantic character. Likewise, the turbulent sky echoes the dramatic (and Romantic) dynamism of the struggle between humanity and the untamed forces of nature.

23.1 Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners,* 1857. Oil on canvas, approx. 2 ft. 9 in. × 3 ft. 8 in. (0.84 × 1.12 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. Because of their powerful paintings of rural labor, Millet and his contemporary Courbet were suspected of harboring anarchist views. Both were members of the Barbizon school, a group of French artists who settled in the village of that name in the Fontainebleau Forest. They painted directly from nature, producing landscapes tinged with nostalgia for the countryside, which was receding before the advance of the Industrial Revolution.

23.2 Rosa Bonheur, *The Horse Fair,* 1853. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. ¼ in. × 16 ft. 7½ in. (2.44 × 5.07 m). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Gift of Cornelius Vanderbilt, 1887). Rosa Bonheur regularly exhibited in the Salons of the 1840s and achieved international renown as a painter of animals. In 1894 she was named the first woman artist of the Legion of Honor. Her father was a landscape painter, and a Saint-Simon socialist who favored women's rights and believed in a future female Messiah. Bonheur made a point of imitating the dress and behavior of men and lived only with women. In order to wear men's clothes in Paris—they were especially practical when she made sketches in slaughterhouses—she had to have a police permit, which was renewable every six months. *The Horse Fair* toured England and was privately exhibited in Windsor Castle at the behest of Queen Victoria. In 1887 Cornelius Vanderbilt donated it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. When "Buffalo Bill" Cody took his Wild West show to France, he brought Bonheur a gift of two mustangs from Wyoming.

Gustave Courbet

The painter most directly associated with Realism was Gustave Courbet (1819–77), who believed that artists could accurately represent only their own experience. He rejected historical painting, as well as the Romantic depiction of exotic locales and revivals of the past. Although he had studied the history of art, he claimed to have drawn from it only a greater sense of himself and his own experience. In 1861 he wrote that art could not be taught. One needed individual inspiration, he believed, fueled by study and observation. Courbet's Realist approach to his subject matter is expressed in the statement "Show me an angel and I'll paint one."

Courbet's *Stone Breakers* of 1849 (fig. **23.3**) reflects the impact of socialist ideas on his iconography. It depicts two workers, one breaking up stones with a hammer and the other lifting a heavy rock. Like Millet's *Gleaners,* these figures evoke the Romantic nostalgia for a simple existence, but also show the mindless, repetitive character of physical labor born of poverty. Both the *Gleaners* and the *Stone Breakers* are rendered anonymously—their faces are lost in shadow—and this allies them with a class of work rather than accentuating their human individuality.

A similar emphasis on repetitive sameness as an aspect of French society can be seen in Courbet's enormous friezelike painting *Burial at Ornans* (fig. **23.4**). Turning to his native town of Ornans, Courbet depicted the local bourgeoisie attending a funeral. At the right, female mourners in black attract the gaze of the dog in the foreground. A circle formed by male relatives, a group of beadles (local officials) in red, and a priest frames the newly dug grave. Churchmen occupy the far left. The long horizontal plane of figures is interrupted only by the vertical crucifix penetrating the somber sky. The dark colors that predominate are varied only by the red costume of the beadles and the blue stockings on the man by the dog.

This intensely Catholic group, its compact arrangement, and its minimal variety reflect the monotonous reality of life in rural nineteenth-century France. It is also possible that by equalizing his figures through the use of isocephaly, Courbet was making a revolutionary political statement in favor of egalitarianism. When the *Burial* was first exhibited in 1850, critics found it boring. They also objected to monumentalizing such an everyday occurrence.

Honoré Daumier

Honoré Daumier (1808–79), one of the most direct portrayers of social injustice, has been called both a Romantic and a Realist. In this chapter he is discussed in the context of Realism. His *Third-Class Carriage* (fig. **23.5**) illustrates his attention to Realist concerns. A section of society seems to have been framed unawares. Strong contrasts of light and dark, notably in the silhouetted top hats, create clear edges, in opposition to the looser brushwork elsewhere. The very setting, the interior of a railroad car, exemplifies the new industrial subject matter of nineteenth-century painting.

Although Daumier had painted for much of his life, he was not recognized as a painter before his first one-man show at the age of seventy. He earned his living by selling satirical drawings and cartoons to the Paris press and reproducing them in large numbers by **lithography** (see Box, p. 420, and figure **23.7**). His works usually appeared in *La Caricature,* a weekly paper founded in 1830 and

23.3 Gustave Courbet, *The Stone Breakers,* 1849. Oil on canvas, 5 ft. 3 in. × 8 ft. 6 in. (1.60 × 2.60 m). Whereabouts unknown since World War II.

23.4 (Above) Gustave Courbet, *Burial at Ornans,* 1849. Oil on canvas, 10 ft. 4 in. × 21 ft. 11 in. (3.15 × 6.68 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

23.5 Honoré Daumier, *Third-Class Carriage,* c. 1862. Oil on canvas, 25¾ × 35½ in. (65.4 × 90.2 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929). Lower-class figures crowd together in a dark, confined space. The three drably dressed passengers in the foreground slump slightly on a hard wooden bench. They seem resigned to their status and turn inward, as if to retreat from harsh economic reality. Their psychological isolation defends them from the crowded conditions in which they live.

23.6 Honoré Daumier, *The Freedom of the Press: Don't Meddle with It (Ne Vous y Frottez Pas),* 1834. Lithograph, 12 × 17 in. (30.5 × 43.2 cm). Private collection, France. The implication of this image is that the power of the press is ultimately greater than that of a king. Daumier's depiction of dress according to class distinctions is characteristic of 19th-century Realist social observation.

suppressed by the government in 1835, and *La Charivari,* a daily paper started in 1832. Daumier satirized corrupt politicians, judges, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, actors, and even the king himself (see fig. **23.8**).

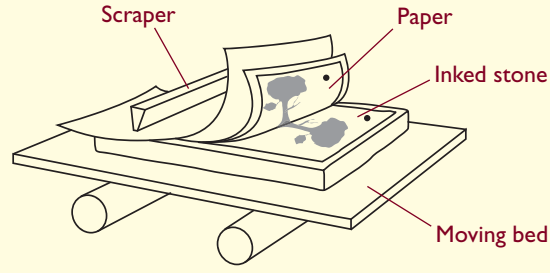
In 1834 *La Caricature* published Daumier's protest against censorship, titled *The Freedom of the Press: Don't Meddle with It* (fig. **23.6**). The foreground figure in working-class dress is Daumier's hero. He stands firm, with clenched fists and a set, determined jaw. Behind him "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS" is inscribed like raised type on a rocky terrain. He is flanked in the background by two groups of three social and political characters, who are the targets of Daumier's caricature. On the left, members of the bourgeoisie feebly brandish an umbrella. On the right, the dethroned and crownless figure of Charles X receives ineffectual aid from two other monarchs.

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUE
Lithography

A lithograph, literally a "stone (lith) writing or drawing (graph)," is a print technique first used at the end of the eighteenth century in France. In the nineteenth century, lithography became the most widely used print medium for illustrating books, periodicals, and newspapers, and for reproducing posters.

To create a lithograph (fig. **23.7**), the artist makes a picture with a grease **crayon** on a limestone surface. Alternatively, a pen or brush is used to apply ink to the stone. Since limestone is porous, it "holds" the image. The artist then adds water, which adheres only to the nongreased areas of the stone because the greasy texture of the image repels the moisture. The entire stone is rolled with a greasy ink that sticks only to the image. When a layer of damp paper is placed over the stone and both are pressed together, the image is transferred from the stone to the paper, thereby creating the lithograph. This original print can then be reproduced relatively cheaply and quickly, making it suitable for mass distribution. Since the stone does not wear out in the printing process, a large number of impressions can be taken from it.

In transfer lithography, a variant used by Daumier, the artist draws the image on paper and fixes it to the stone before printing. This retains the texture of the paper in the print and is more convenient for mass production.



23.7 Creating a lithograph.

So great was the impact of Daumier's caricatures that in 1835 France passed a law limiting freedom of the press to verbal rather than pictorial expression. The French authorities apparently felt that drawings were more apt to incite rebellion than words. Such laws, which are reminiscent of the ninth-century Iconoclastic Controversy (see p. 169), are another reflection of the power of images. Clearly, the nineteenth-century French censors felt more threatened by the proverbial "picture" than by the "thousand words."

SOCIETY AND CULTURE
Daumier and Satire

Gargantua, a good-natured giant in French folklore, became the main character in Rabelais' (c. 1494–1553) work on monastic and educational reform, *La Vie Très Horrifique du Grand Gargantua (The Very Horrific Life of the Great Gargantua)*. Rabelais' Gargantua is a gigantic prince with an equally enormous appetite. (The root word *garg* is related to "gargle" and "gorge," which is also French for "throat." In Greek, the word *gargar* means "a lot" or "heaps," and in English one who loves to eat is sometimes referred to as having a "gargantuan" appetite.)

In Daumier's print (fig. **23.8**), a gigantic Louis Philippe, the French king (1830–48), is seated on a throne before a starving crowd. A poverty-stricken woman tries to feed her infant, and a man in rags is forced to drop his last few coins into a basket. The coins are then carried up a ramp and fed to the king. Underneath the ramp, greedy but well-dressed figures grasp at falling coins. A group in front of the Chamber of Deputies, the French parliament, applauds Louis Philippe. The message of this caricature is clear: a never-satisfied king exploits his subjects and grows fat at their expense. Daumier explicitly identified Louis Philippe as Gargantua in the title of the print. In 1832 Daumier, along with his publisher and printer, was charged with inciting contempt and hatred for the French government and with insulting the person of the king. He was sentenced to six months in jail and fined one hundred francs.

23.8 Honoré Daumier, *Louis Philippe as Gargantua,* 1831. Lithograph, 8⅜ × 12 in. (21.4 × 30.5 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Photography

Another method of creating multiple images—and one that struggled to become an art form in its own right in the nineteenth century—was photography. It achieved great popularity, and its potential use for both portraiture and journalism was widely recognized. Many painters were also photographers, and from the nineteenth century the mutual influence of photography and painting has grown steadily.

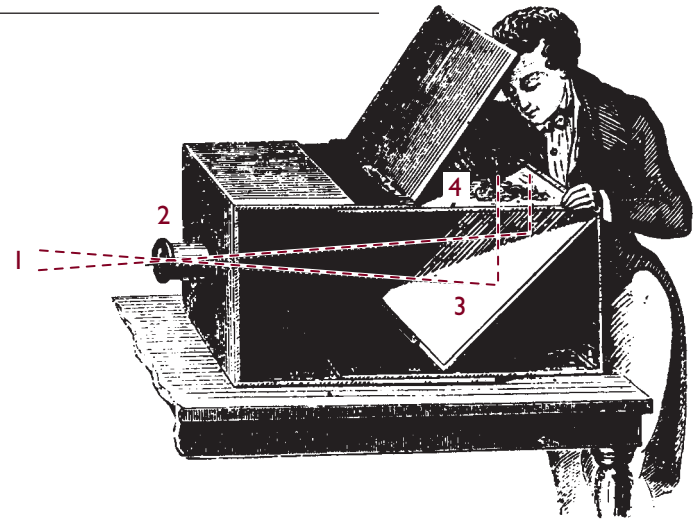
Photography means literally "drawing with light" (from the Greek word *phos,* "light," and *graphe,* "drawing" or "writing"). The basic principles may have been known in China as early as the fifth century B.C. The first recorded account of the **camera obscura** (fig. **23.9**), literally a "dark room," is by Leonardo da Vinci. He described how, when light is admitted through a small hole into a darkened room, an inverted image appears on the opposite wall or on any surface (for example, a piece of paper) interposed between the wall and the opening. In the early seventeenth century, the astronomer Johannes Kepler devised a portable camera obscura, resembling a tent. It has since been refined and reduced to create the pre-digital camera, the operation of which matches the principles of the original "dark room."

From the eighteenth century, discoveries in photochemistry accelerated the development of modern photography. It was found that silver salts, for example, were sensitive to light, and that an image could therefore be made with light on a surface coated with silver. In the 1820s a Frenchman, Joseph-Nicéphore Niépce (1765–1833), discovered a way to make the image remain on the surface. This process was called **fixing** the image; however, the need for a long exposure time (eight hours) made it impractical.

In the late 1830s another Frenchman, Louis Daguerre (1789–1851), discovered a procedure that reduced the exposure time to fifteen minutes. He inserted a copperplate coated with silver and chemicals into a camera obscura and focused through a lens onto a subject. The plate was then placed in a chemical solution (or "bath"), which "fixed" the image. Daguerre's photographs, called **daguerreotypes,** could not be reproduced, and each one was therefore unique. The final image reversed the real subject, however, and also contained a glare from the reflected light. In 1839 the French state purchased Daguerre's process and made the technical details public.

Improvements and refinements quickly followed. Contemporaneously with the development of the daguerreotype, the English photographer William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–77) invented "negative" film, which permitted multiple prints. The negative also solved the problem of Daguerre's reversed print image: since the negative was reversed, reprinting the negative onto light-sensitive paper reversed the image back again. By 1858 a shortened exposure time made it possible to capture motion in a still picture.

During the twentieth century, color photography developed. Still photography inspired the invention of "movies," first in black-and-white and then in color. Today, photography and the cinema have achieved the status of art forms in their own right.



23.9 Diagram of a camera obscura. Courtesy George Eastman House, Rochester, New York. Here the camera obscura has been reduced to a large box. Light reflected from the object (1) enters the camera through the lens (2) and is reflected by the mirror (3) onto the glass ground (4), where it is traced onto paper by the artist/photographer.

From its inception, photography has influenced artists. Italian Renaissance artists used the camera obscura to study perspective. Later artists, including Vermeer, are thought to have used it to enhance their treatment of light. In the mid-nineteenth century, artists such as Ingres and Delacroix used photographs to reduce the sitting time for portraits. Eakins was an expert photographer who used photographic experiments to clarify the nature of locomotion.

Black-and-white photography has an abstract character quite distinct from painting, which, like nature itself, usually has color. The black-and-white photograph creates an image with tonal ranges of gray rather than line or color. Certain photographic genres, such as the close-up, the candid shot, and the aerial view, have influenced painting considerably.

France: Nadar

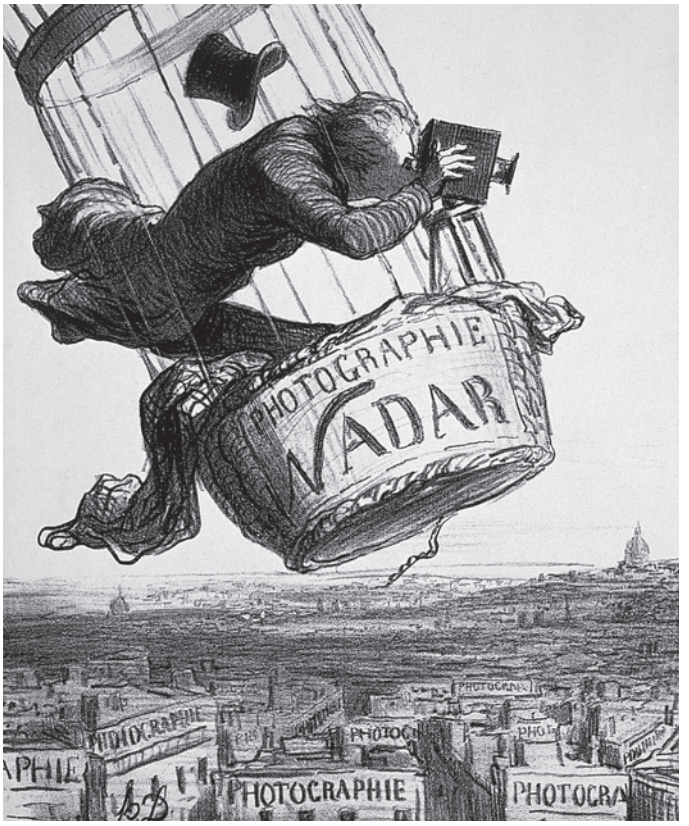
In France, the photographic portraits taken by the novelist and caricaturist Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, known as Nadar (1820–1910), were particularly insightful. His portrait of Sarah Bernhardt (fig. **23.10**), the renowned French actress, illustrates the subtle gradations of light and dark that are possible in the photographic medium. Nadar has captured Bernhardt in a pensive mood. Her piercing eyes stare at nothing in particular but seem capable of deep penetration.

In addition to portraiture, Nadar was a pioneer of aerial photography. He took the first pictures from a balloon in 1856, which demonstrated the potential of photography for creating panoramic vistas and new viewpoints. Nadar

then built his own balloon, which he named *Le Géant* (The Giant). In 1870, when France declared war on Prussia, Nadar helped organize the Paris balloon service for military observation.

From 1850 a new "quarrel" arose in the French art world over the status of photography. "Is it ART?" became a controversial issue, with the "nays" arguing that its mechanical technology made it an automatic, rather than an artistic, process. Because the artist's hand did not create the image directly, it was not "ART." Many adherents of this point of view did not, however, object to the use of photography for commerce, industry, journalism, or science. The exhibition of photography also became an issue, which was exemplified by the International Exhibition of 1855 in Paris. On the one hand, photography was brought before a wide public, and its advantages were recognized. But on the other hand, because it was not shown in the Palais des Beaux-Arts (Palace of Fine Arts), photography was allied with industry and science rather than with the arts. In 1859 the French Photographic Society negotiated an exhibition scheduled at the same time, and in the same building, as the Salon, but the two exhibitions were held in separate sections of the building.

23.10 Gaspard-Félix Tournachon (Nadar), *Sarah Bernhardt*, c. 1864. Photograph from a collodion negative. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France. In 1854 Nadar published *Le Panthéon Nadar*, a collection of his best works. The portrait of Bernhardt (at age nineteen) emphasizes her delicate features and quiet pose, in contrast to the large, voluminous, tasseled drapery folds.



23.11 Honoré Daumier, *Nadar Elevating Photography to the Height of Art*, 1862. Lithograph, 10¾ × 8¾ in. (27.2 × 22.2 cm).

In the 1860s several books were published that argued that photography should be accorded artistic status. To some extent, this debate continues even today. Its irony can be seen in the light of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century quarrels—in Venice and Spain, respectively—over the status of painting as a Liberal Art. In those instances, because the artist's hand *did* create the work, it was considered a craft, and not an art. With photography, the *absence* of the hand is used as an argument against artistic status.

This ongoing quarrel did not escape Daumier's penchant for satire. In 1862 he executed the caricature of *Nadar Elevating Photography to the Height of Art* (fig. **23.11**), showing Nadar inside *Le Géant,* photographing the rooftops of Paris. Each roof is inscribed with the word "PHOTOGRAPHIE." Daumier emphasizes Nadar's precarious position by a series of sharp diagonals—from his hat to his camera, which is parallel to his legs, and the line of his back, which repeats the basket and rim of the balloon. The force of the wind is indicated by the flying drapery, flowing hair, and hat about to be blown away. Height, in this image, is satirically equated with the lofty aspirations of photography to the status of ART.

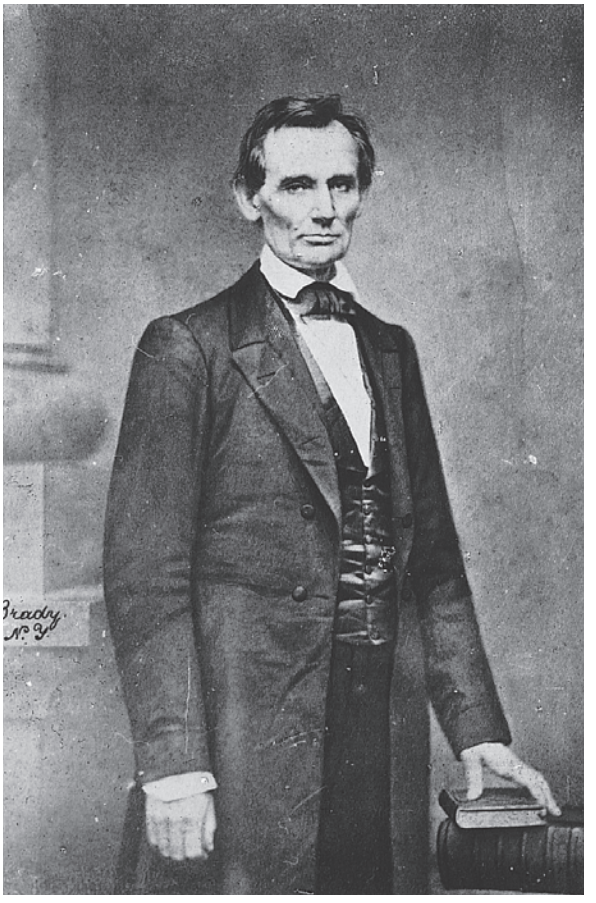
23.12 Julia Margaret Cameron, *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth*, 1867. Photograph. National Museum of Photography, Film & Television/ Science & Society Picture Library. Mrs. Duckworth, later Mrs. Leslie Stephen, was the mother of the English author Virginia Woolf.

England: Julia Margaret Cameron

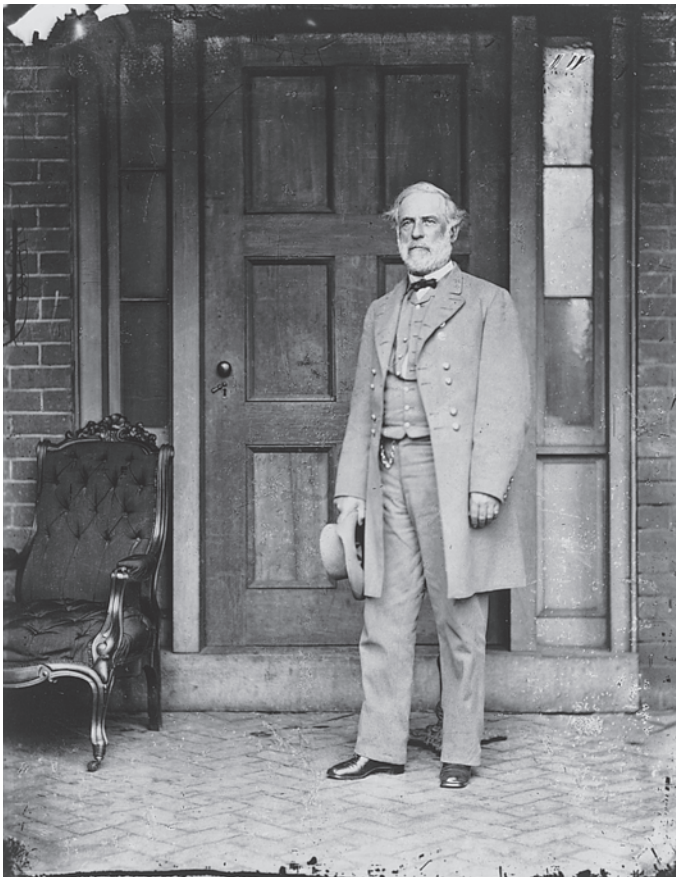
In England, the portrait photographer Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–79) insisted on the aesthetic qualities of photography. She manipulated techniques in order to achieve certain effects, preferring blurred edges and a dreamy atmosphere to precise outlines. Her 1867 portrait of Mrs. Herbert Duckworth (fig. **23.12**) illustrates these preferences. The softness of the face and collar, which emerge gradually from the darkness, seem literally "painted in light." Cameron conceived of photography almost with reverence, as a means to elicit the inner character of a talented sitter. She described this in her autobiography, *Annals of My Glass House,* as follows: "When I have had such men before my camera, my whole soul has endeavored to do its duty towards them in recording faithfully the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man. The photograph thus taken has been almost the embodiment of a prayer."[1]

America: Mathew Brady

In the United States, the photographs of Mathew Brady (c. 1822–96) combine portraiture with on-the-spot journalistic reportage. Of the one hundred or so known photographs of Lincoln, more than a third were taken by Brady. In his "Cooper Union" portrait (fig. **23.13**), Brady depicts Lincoln as a thoughtful, determined man. Lincoln's straightforward stare, as if gazing firmly down on the viewer, creates a very different impression from the dreamy, introspective characters of Nadar's *Sarah Bernhardt* and Cameron's *Mrs. Herbert Duckworth*. Lincoln stands before a column, which is both a studio prop and an architectural allusion. To foster the union of North and South, Lincoln cited the biblical metaphor, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." His hand rests on a pile of books, evoking his profound commitment to literature and intellectual truth.



23.13 Mathew B. Brady, *Lincoln "Cooper Union" Portrait*, 1860. Photograph. Library of Congress. Brady took this photograph on February 27 at the Tenth Street Gallery in New York City. Lincoln had just delivered his Cooper Union Speech to the members of the Young Men's Republican Club.



23.14 Mathew B. Brady, *Robert E. Lee,* 1865. Photograph. Library of Congress.

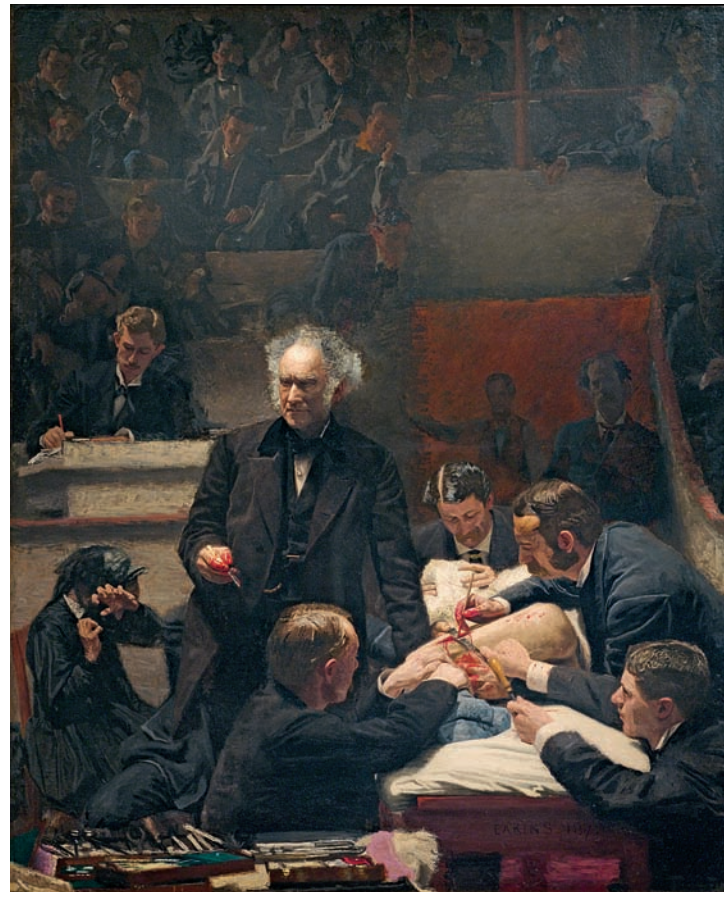
In April 1865 Brady photographed the Confederate general Robert E. Lee (fig. **23.14**). He portrayed the formally dressed and neatly groomed Lee as proud and dignified, despite defeat. Only a few creases in his clothing and under his eyes betray the years of suffering he has witnessed. His house in Richmond, like Lee himself, is shown still standing at the end of the war—he is framed by the rectangle of his back door. The elegant upholstered chair, half out of the picture, is a memento of the passing civilization for which he fought.

American Realist Painting

Thomas Eakins's *Gross Clinic*

One of the landmarks of Realist painting in America was *The Gross Clinic* (fig. **23.15**) by Thomas Eakins (1844–1916). It depicts a team of doctors led by Dr. Samuel D. Gross, an eminent surgeon at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. They are performing an operation while dressed in street clothes, as was the custom in the nineteenth century. Dr. Gross holds a scalpel and comments on the operation to the audience in the amphitheater.

Eakins uses atmospheric perspective (see p. 253) and highlights the surgical procedure. In his choice of subject, as well as his lighting, Eakins echoes Rembrandt, who had painted a well-known scene of a doctor dissecting a cadaver. Here, however, the patient is alive, and a female relative, probably his mother, sits at the left and hides her face. In addition to using light to highlight the surgery, Eakins endows it with symbolic meaning. The illumination on Gross's forehead and hand accentuates his "enlightened" mind and his manual skill.



23.15 Thomas Cowperthwait Eakins, *The Gross Clinic,* 1875–76. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. × 6 ft. 6 in. (243.8 × 198.1 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. As an art teacher, Eakins emphasized the study of anatomy, dissection, and scientific perspective. He clashed with the authorities of the Pennsylvania Academy over his policy that women students draw from the nude.

23.16 Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Annunciation*, 1898. Oil on canvas, 4 ft. 9 in. × 5 ft. 11½ in. (1.45 × 1.82 m). Philadelphia Museum of Art (W. P. Wilstach Collection). Tanner's mother was born a slave and remained so until her father was given his freedom. She moved to Pittsburgh, attended school, and eventually married the Reverend Benjamin Tucker Tanner, who became a bishop. Tanner's parents admired the abolitionist John Brown; they gave their son the middle name Ossawa after Osawatomie, Kansas, where John Brown killed several vigilantes who were fighting to preserve slavery.

Henry Ossawa Tanner

Eakins's student Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937) moved to Paris, where he was the first African American to exhibit at the Paris Salon. Tanner painted Realist scenes of African American life in the United States. Later he used his religious faith to express what he believed were universal emotions—the essential reality—in biblical stories. He traveled to the Middle East in January 1897 and absorbed the atmosphere that would provide the setting for his biblical pictures.

The next year, Tanner exhibited his *Annunciation* (fig. **23.16**) at the Salon. He shows Mary having just awakened and sitting up in bed. She tilts her head to stare at the appearance of a gold rectangle of light, which signifies a divine presence. The attention to realistic details such as Mary's dress, the stone floor, and the Near Eastern rug, is combined with mystical qualities of light. At the same time, Tanner depicts Mary as an apprehensive participant in the miraculous event.

French Realism in the 1860s

Édouard Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*

The work of Édouard Manet (1832–83) in Paris formed a transition from Realism to Impressionism (see Chapter 24). By and large, Manet's paintings of the 1860s are consistent with the principles of Realism, whereas in the 1870s and early 1880s he adopted a more Impressionist style.

In 1863 Manet shocked the French public by exhibiting his *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* ("Luncheon on the Grass") (fig. **23.17**). It is not a Realist painting in the social or political sense of Daumier, but it is a statement in favor of the artist's individual freedom. The shock value of a nude woman casually lunching with two fully dressed men, which was an affront to the propriety of the time, was accentuated by the recognizability of the figures. The nude, Manet's model Victorine Meurend, stares directly at the viewer. The two men are Manet's brother Gustave and his future brother-in-law, Ferdinand Leenhoff. In the background, a lightly clad woman wades in a stream.

Although Manet's *Déjeuner* contains several art-historical references to well-known Renaissance pictures, in particular to Giorgione's *Fête Champêtre* (see fig. **16.30**), they have been transformed in a way that was unacceptable to the nineteenth-century French public. The figures were not sufficiently Classical, or even close enough to their Renaissance prototypes, to pass muster with the prevailing taste. Certain details, such as the bottom of Victorine's bare foot and the unidealized rolls of fat around her waist, aroused the hostility of the critics. The seemingly cavalier application of paint also annoyed viewers, with one complaining, "I see fingers without bones and heads without skulls. I see sideburns painted like two strips of black cloth glued on the cheeks."

CONNECTIONS

See figure 16.30. Giorgione, *Fête Champêtre*, c. 1510.

23.17 Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe,* 1863. Oil on canvas, 7 × 9 ft. (2.13 × 2.69 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. The visual impact of the painting is partly a result of the shallow perspective. Rather than creating the illusion of a distant space, Manet, like Courbet and Eakins, builds up areas of color so that the forms seem to advance toward the viewer. The final effect of this technique is a direct confrontation between viewer and image, allowing little of the relief, or "breathing space," that comes with distance.

Manet's *Olympia*

Manet created an even more direct visual impact in his *Olympia* (fig. **23.18**), which also caused a scandal when first exhibited in 1865. Here again, Manet is inspired by the past—most obviously by Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* (see fig. **16.29**) and Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (see fig. **16.32**). But whereas the Italian Renaissance nudes are psychologically "distanced" from the viewer's everyday experience by their designation as Classical deities, Manet's figure (the same Victorine who posed for the *Déjeuner*) was widely assumed to represent a prostitute. As such, she raised the specter of venereal disease, which was rampant in Paris at the time. The reference to "Olympia" in such a context only served to accentuate the contrast between the social reality of nineteenth-century Paris and the more comfortably removed Classical ideal. Titian had also relieved the viewer's confrontation with his Venus by the spatial recession. In *Olympia,* however, the back wall of the room approaches the picture plane and is separated from it only by the bed and the black servant. Olympia is harshly illuminated, in contrast to the soft light and gradual, sensual shading of Titian's Venus. Furthermore, Olympia shows none of the traditional signs of modesty but instead stares boldly at the viewer.

In 1863 the Salon rejected the *Déjeuner,* but two years later it accepted the *Olympia*. It is impossible to overestimate not only the depth of feeling that surrounded the decisions of the Salon juries, but also the hostile criticism that generally greeted **avant-garde,** or modernist, works. The subsequent outcry following the rejection of more than four thousand canvases by the Salon jury prompted Napoleon III to authorize a special exhibition, the "Salon des Refusés," for the rejected works. Among the rejected were many artists who later gained international recognition.

Manet's *Olympia* caused dissension even among the ranks of the so-called Realists. It offended Courbet, who pronounced it "as flat as a playing card."

CONNECTIONS

See figure 16.29. Giorgione, *Sleeping Venus*, c. 1509.

CONNECTIONS

See figure 16.32. Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, c. 1538.

23.18 Édouard Manet, *Olympia,* 1865. Oil on canvas, 4 ft. 3 in. × 6 ft. 3 in. (1.3 × 1.9 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. Olympia is naked rather than nude, an impression emphasized by her bony, unclassical proportions. The sheets are slightly rumpled, and the flowers that her maid delivers have clearly been sent by a client. Olympia's shoes may refer to "streetwalking," and the alert black cat is a symbol of sexuality, no doubt because of the popular reputation of the alley cat. The term *cathouse* is commonly used for a brothel.

Architecture

By and large, nineteenth-century architects were not quick to adopt iron and steel, both of which had been recently developed, as building materials. At first they did not regard them as suitable for such use. The first major project making extensive use of iron was thus considered a utilitarian structure rather than a work of art.

Joseph Paxton: The Crystal Palace

In 1851 the "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations" was held in London. This was the first in a series of Universal, or International, Expositions ("Expos") and World's Fairs which continue to this day. Architects were invited to submit designs for a building in Hyde Park to house the exhibition.

When Joseph Paxton submitted his proposal, 245 designs had already been rejected. As a landscape gardener, Paxton had built large conservatories and greenhouses from iron and glass. Not only was his proposal less expensive than the others, but it could be completed within the nine-month deadline. The project was subdivided into a limited number of components and subcontracted out. Individual components were thus "prefabricated," made in advance and assembled on the actual site. Because of its extensive use of glass, the structure was dubbed the Crystal Palace (fig. **23.19**).

There were many advantages to this construction method. Above all, prefabrication meant that the structure could be treated as temporary. After the exhibition had ended, the building was taken apart and reassembled on a site in the south of London. But one alleged advantage of iron and glass—that they were fireproof—proved to be illusory. In 1936 the Crystal Palace was destroyed in a fire, the framework buckling and collapsing in the intense heat.

23.19 Joseph Paxton, Crystal Palace, London, 1850–51. Cast iron, wrought iron, and glass. Engraving (R. P. Cuff after W. B. Brounger). Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England. The Crystal Palace was 1,850 feet (564 m) long (perhaps an architect's pun on the year in which it was built) and 400 feet (122 m) wide. It covered an area of 18 acres (7.3 ha), enclosed 33 million cubic feet (934,000 m^3) of space (the largest enclosed space up to that time), and contained more than ten thousand exhibits of technology and handicrafts from all over the world.

Bridges: The Roeblings

The industrializing countries, particularly the United States with its great distances, needed better systems of transportation to keep up with advances in communication and commerce. Rivers and ravines had to be crossed by roads and railroads, and this led to new developments in nineteenth-century bridge construction. Until the 1850s bridges had been designed according to the **truss** method of construction, which utilized short components joined together to form a longer, rigid framework. Wooden truss bridges used by the Romans to cross the river Danube, for example, are illustrated on Trajan's Column (see fig. **9.23**). By the 1840s metal began to replace wood as the preferred material for such bridges.

The principle of the **suspension bridge** had been known for centuries, from the bridges of twisted ropes or vines used to cross ravines in Asia and South America. The superior span and height of the suspension bridge were appropriate for deep chasms or wide stretches of navigable water. Modern suspension bridges were built from the early 1800s using iron chains, but by the middle of the century engineers had begun to see the advantages of using flexible cable made of steel wire.

The greatest American bridge builders of the nineteenth century, John A. Roebling (1806–65) and his son, Washington A. Roebling (1837–1926), were responsible for the Brooklyn Bridge, shown in the old photograph in figure **23.20**. Two massive towers of granite were constructed at either end of the bridge. They were linked by four huge parallel cables, each containing more than five thousand strands of steel wire. The steel, which was spun on the site, supported the roadways and pedestrian walkways. It was the first time that steel had been used for this purpose. But in deference to architectural tradition, the shape of the arches was a return to Gothic.

23.20 John A. Roebling and Washington A. Roebling, Brooklyn Bridge, New York, 1869–83. Black-and-white photograph. Stone piers with steel cables, 1,595 ft. (486 m) span. This suspension bridge spanned the East River to connect Manhattan (New York City) and Brooklyn. Like the Crystal Palace, the Brooklyn Bridge was regarded at the time as a work of engineering rather than architecture.

The Eiffel Tower

Like the Crystal Palace, the Eiffel Tower in Paris (fig. **23.21**) was built as a temporary structure. It was designed as a landmark for the Universal Exposition of 1889, celebrating the centenary of the French Revolution. From the third and highest platform of the tower, visitors could enjoy a spectacular panorama of Paris, covering a radius of about 50 miles (80 km).

Named for its designer, Gustave Eiffel, the tower was a metal truss construction on a base of reinforced concrete. Through the curves of the elevation and the four semicircular curves of the base—all executed in open-lattice wrought iron—Eiffel transformed an engineering feat into an elegant architectural monument. An unusual feature of the Eiffel Tower was the design of its elevators (by the American Elisha Otis), which at the lowest level had to ascend in a curve.

23.21 Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, Eiffel Tower, Paris, 1887–89. Wrought-iron superstructure on a reinforced concrete base, 984 ft. (300 m) high; 1,052 ft. (320 m) including television mast. The Eiffel Tower was so controversial that a petition demanding its demolition was circulated. When the Exposition ended in 1909, the tower was saved because of its value as a radio antenna. Its original height, before the addition of a television mast, was twice that of the dome of St. Peter's or the Great Pyramid at Giza. Until the Empire State Building was built in New York in 1932, the Eiffel Tower was the highest man-made structure in the world.

23.22 Louis Sullivan, Wainwright Building, St. Louis, Missouri, 1890–91.

Origins of the Skyscraper: Louis Sullivan

By the second half of the nineteenth century, a new type of construction was needed to make more economical use of land. One of the drawbacks of masonry or brick construction is that the higher the building, the thicker the supporting walls have to be at the base. This increases the cost of materials, the overall weight of the structure, and the area that it occupies. The new materials—structural steel and concrete reinforced with steel wire or mesh—were stronger than the traditional materials. Their **tensile strength** (ability to withstand longitudinal stress) was also much greater, allowing flexibility in reaction to wind and other pressures. The power-driven electric elevator was another necessity for high-rise construction. All of the ingredients for the skyscraper were now in place. Skyscrapers could be used as apartment houses, office buildings, multistory factories, department stores, auditoriums, and other facilities for mass entertainment.

The Wainwright Building in St. Louis (fig. **23.22**), a nine-story office building built in 1890–91, is one of the finest examples of early high-rise building. It is based on the

steel frame method of construction, in which steel girders are joined horizontally and vertically to form a grid. The framework is strong enough for the outer and inner walls to be suspended from it without themselves performing any supporting function. Architectural features that had been used since Classical antiquity and the Gothic era—post-and-lintel, arch, vault, buttress—were now functionally superfluous.

The architect, Louis Sullivan, used a Classical motif to stress the verticality of the building and to disguise the fact that it was basically a rectangular block with nine similar horizontals superimposed on one another. He treated the first and second floors as a horizontal base. The next seven floors were punctuated vertically by transforming the wall areas between the windows into slender pilasters (every second one corresponding to a vertical steel beam), extending from the third to the ninth floor. The top floor, which contained the water tanks, elevator plant, and other functional units, was made into an overhanging cornice, with small circular windows blending into the ornamental reliefs. The Renaissance impression of the building is heightened by the brick, red granite, and terra-cotta facing. Although the Wainwright Building is not tall by contemporary standards, Sullivan's use of Classical features makes it seem taller than it actually is.

c. 1830 **c. 1900**

19TH-CENTURY REALISM

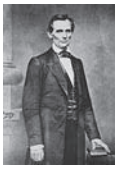
(23.6)

July Revolution in France (1830)

John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Volume I (1843)

(23.3)

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (1848)



(23.13)

Trade with Japan begins (1850s)

(23.17)

Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (1857)

(23.14)

Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (1859)

(23.21)

American Civil War (1861–1865)

(23.22)

Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871)

24

Nineteenth-Century Impressionism

Context and Style

The Impressionist style evolved in Paris in the 1860s and continued into the early twentieth century. Unlike Realism, Impressionism rarely responded to political events. The devastating effects of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, for example, had virtually no impact on Impressionist imagery. Impressionist painters preferred genre subjects, especially leisure activities, entertainment, landscape, and cityscape. Impressionism was also more influenced by Japanese prints and new developments in photography than by politics.

Despite the changing focus of its content, Impressionism was in some ways a logical development of Realism. But Impressionists were more concerned with optical realism and the natural properties of light. They studied changes in light and color caused by weather conditions, times of day, and seasons, making shadows and reflections important features of their iconography. Impressionists also studied the effects of artificial interior lighting, such as theater spotlights and café lanterns. Nevertheless, these formal concerns did not entirely eliminate the interest in observing society and the changes brought about by growing industrialization; subject matter included canals and barges, factories with smoking chimneys, and railway stations.

Although many Impressionists were from bourgeois families, they liked to exchange ideas in more bohemian surroundings. They gathered at the Café Guerbois in the Montmartre district of Paris, and because their paintings were initially, and vociferously, rejected by the French Academy as well as by the French public, the Impressionists became a group apart. They held eight exhibitions of their own work between 1874 and 1886. Ironically, despite the contemporary rejection of Impressionism, it had a greater international impact in the long run than previous styles that France had readily accepted.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Urban Renewal during the Second Empire

By 1853, Napoleon Bonaparte's nephew, Napoleon III, had been the self-proclaimed ruler of the Second Empire for two years. For political as well as aesthetic reasons, he decided to modernize Paris and adapt industrial developments to improve the lifestyle of the general population. New housing would eliminate slums, and wide boulevards would replace the old, narrow streets left over from the Middle Ages. Modern amenities such as drainage and sewer systems, clean water supplies, bridges, lamplighting along the streets, outdoor fountains, and public parks would give the citizens of Paris a renewed sense of civic pride. The emperor also believed that these renovations would discourage revolutionary activity and prevent uprisings of the kind that had swept Europe in 1848. With this in mind, he commissioned Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809–91) to plan and supervise the new urban design.

Haussmann was inspired by the Baroque grandeur of Bernini's Square of St. Peter's (see fig. **19.2**) and the layout of Versailles (see fig. **19.9**). His plan was to focus on important buildings or monuments, on which the boulevards converged (or *from* which they radiated).

From the point of view of the emperor, there were political advantages to Haussmann's renovations. Wide boulevards discouraged barricades and made it easier for troops to suppress uprisings. Slums were razed in the process, and this drove the potentially subversive lower classes out of the center of Paris and into the suburbs.

Painting in France

Édouard Manet: 1880s

At first Édouard Manet remained separate from the core of Impressionist painters who were his contemporaries. He did not adopt their interest in bright color and the study of light until the 1870s.

His *Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (fig. **24.1**) of 1881–82 depicts the figure close to the picture plane as in his *Olympia* (see fig. **23.18**), but he uses Impressionist color, light, and brushwork. By the device of the mirror in the

background, Manet simultaneously maintains a narrow space and expands it. The mirror reflects the back of the barmaid, her customer, and the interior of the music hall, which is in front of her and behind the viewer.

The bright oranges in the reflective glass bowl are the strongest color accent in the picture. Daubs of white paint create an impression of sparkling light. In contrast, the round lightbulbs on the pilasters seem flat because there is no tonal variation. Absorbing the light, on the other hand, is the smoke that rises from the audience, blocking out part of the pilaster's edge and obstructing our view. This detail exemplifies the Impressionist observation of the effect of atmospheric pollution—a feature of the industrial era—on light, color, and form.

A third kind of light can be seen in the chandeliers, whose blurred outlines create a sense of movement. The depiction of blurring is one aspect of Impressionism that can be related to photography as well as to the ways in which we see. When a photographic subject moves, a blur results. In Manet's painting, the figures reflected in the mirror are blurred, indicating that the members of the audience are milling around.

The formal opposite of blurred edges—the silhouette—is also an important feature of the Impressionist style. In its purest form, a silhouette is a flat, precisely outlined image, black on white or vice versa, as in the black ribbon around the barmaid's neck. Other, more muted silhouettes occur in the contrast of the round lightbulbs and the brown pilasters, the gold champagne foil against the dark green bottles, or the woman with the white blouse and yellow gloves in the audience on the left. Such juxtapositions, whether of pure black and white or of less contrasting lights and darks, also occur in certain Realist pictures, notably those by Daumier. They reflect the contrasts that are possible in black-and-white photography.

The impression that an image is one section of a larger scene—a "slice of life," or cropped view—is another characteristic of Impressionism that can be related to photography. Manet's customer is cut by the frame, as is the trapeze artist, whose legs and feet are visible in the upper left corner. The marble surface of the bar is also cut; it appears to continue indefinitely to the right and left of the observer.

In addition to the many formal innovations of Impressionism in Manet's *Bar,* the imagery of the painting is also

24.1 Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère,* 1881–82. Oil on canvas, 3 ft. 1½ in. × 4 ft. 3 in. (0.95 × 1.3 m). The Samuel Courtauld Trust, Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, London, England. The Folies-Bergère is a Paris music hall, which opened in 1869. Today it is a tourist attraction, offering lavish spectacles. In Manet's day it featured light opera, pantomime, and similar forms of entertainment.

significant. The structural fragmentation of the picture corresponds to the mood of the barmaid. In contrast to the energy and motion in the audience, the members of which interact with each other—or the gazes of which are riveted on the trapeze artist—the barmaid stares dully into space. Her immobility is accentuated by the clarity and sharp focus of her edges compared with those of the audience. Nor does she seem interested in her customer; the viewpoint shifts, and the customer is seen as if from an angle, whereas the barmaid and the mirror are seen from the front.

This image has evoked art-historical interpretation from several methodological viewpoints. As a social comment, Manet makes a distinction between the monotony of serving at a bar and the bourgeoisie enjoying leisure time. This effect continues the concerns of Courbet and the Realists.

Another way of reading this image is through its sexual subtext. When seen from the back, the girl seems engaged in conversation with the man. But from the front she is alienated—bored and vacant—and aligned with the objects on the bar. She herself becomes an object to be consumed, along with the fruit and the alcoholic beverages. The flowers on her lace collar, like those on the counter, may be read as *vanitas* symbols. Her corsage is roughly triangular and is echoed by the more precise gray triangle below her jacket. The sexual connotations of this triangle are fairly straightforward, and they reinforce the implication that the customer is propositioning the barmaid.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette* (fig. **24.2**) depicts a "slice of life," a scene of leisure in the courtyard of a Montmartre dance hall. In the foreground, a group of men and women gather around a table where their half-filled glasses reflect light. They are separated from the dancers by the strong diagonal of the bench, which blocks off a triangular space at the lower right. The dancers make up the background, along with the lamps and the architecture of the Moulin. Animating the scene are shifting shadows that create patterns of lights and darks. Characteristic of Renoir, even in this relatively early picture, is the soft, velvety texture of his brushstroke.

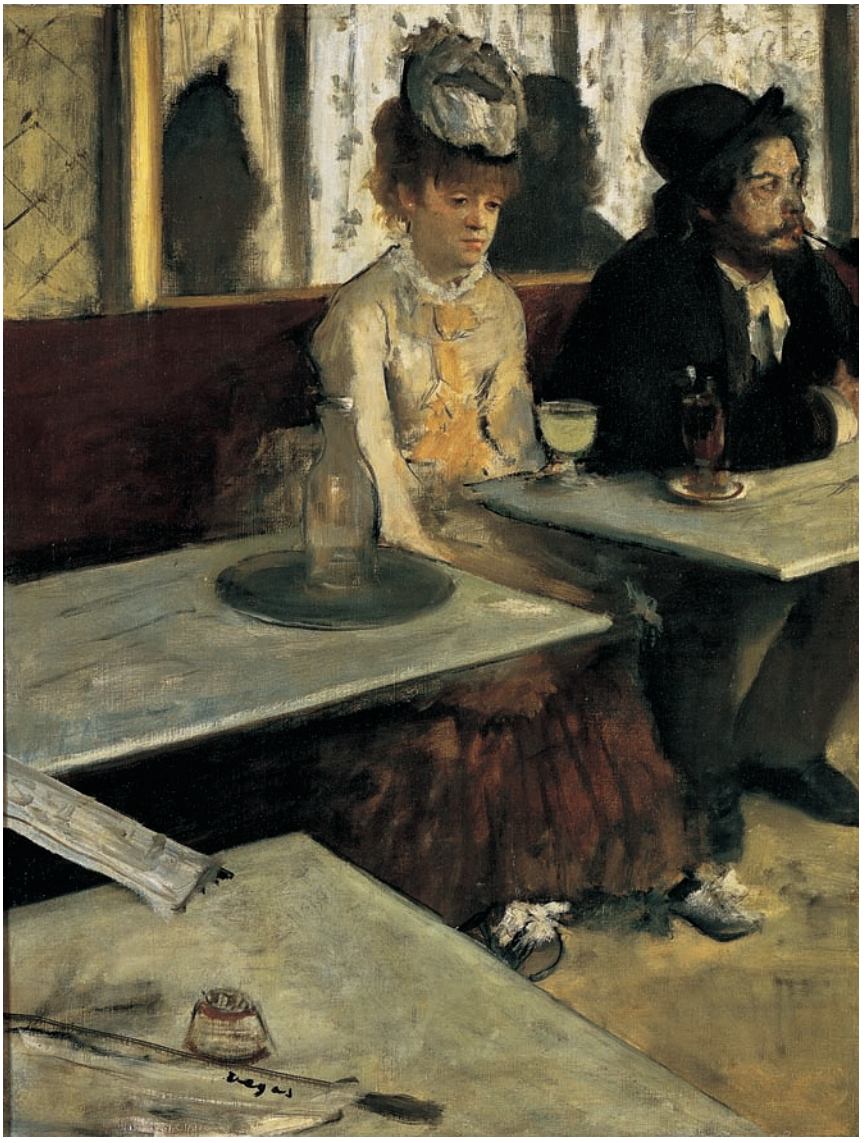
24.2 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Moulin de la Galette,* 1876. Oil on canvas, 4 ft. 3½ in. × 5 ft. 9 in. (1.31 × 1.75 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Edgar Degas

Absinthe (fig. **24.3**), by Edgar Degas (1834–1917), also represents a "slice of life," the boundaries of which are determined by the seemingly arbitrary placement of the frame. The zigzag construction of the composition creates a slanted viewpoint, rather like that of a candid photograph. It is as if the photographer had taken the picture without aligning the camera with the space being photographed. The two figures are "stoned"—the white liqueur in the woman's glass is absinthe—and, like Manet's barmaid, stare fixedly at nothing in particular. The poses and gestures convey psychological isolation and physical inertia.

By contrast, in his ballet pictures Degas expresses a wide range of movement. His dancers rest, stretch, exercise, and perform. In *Dancer with a Bouquet, Bowing* (fig. **24.4**), Degas shows a ballerina at the end of a performance. As in *Absinthe,* the floor tilts upward, and we view the figures from a lowered vantage point—in this case, that of the audience. The main dancer is illuminated from unseen floor lights below, giving her face a masklike appearance and accentuating the diaphanous quality of her costume. At the back of the stage and in the wings, dancers occupy various poses and create a sense of informal motion. Two static accents are provided by the vertical figures holding umbrellas. The flat orange triangles reflect the influence of Japanese prints (see Box, p. 444).

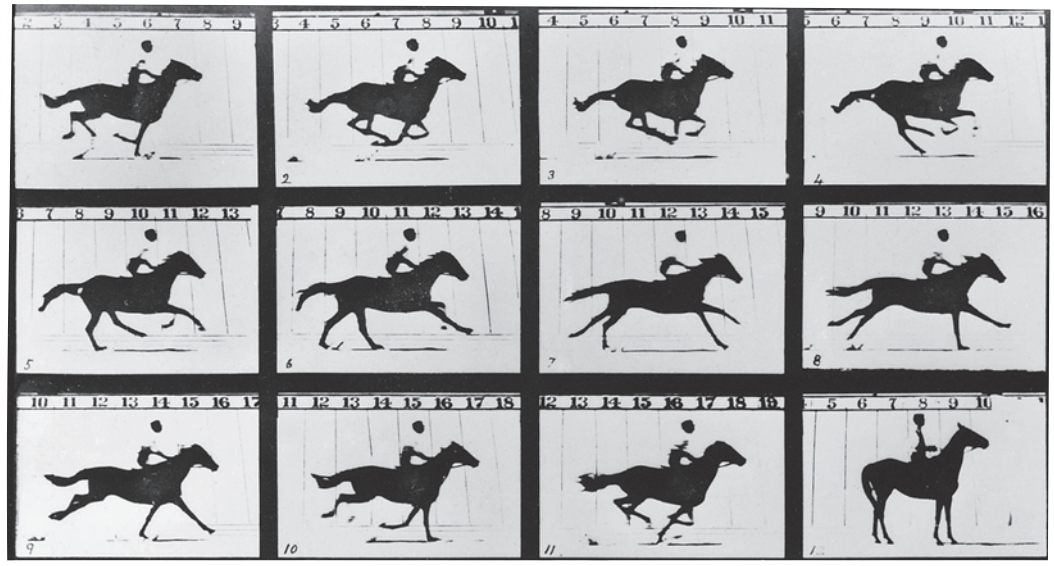
Degas was a devoted amateur photographer, and his passion for depicting forms moving through space can be related to his interest in photography. Other nineteenth-century photographers also explored the nature of motion. In 1878, for example, the American photographer Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904) recorded for the first time the actual movements of a galloping horse (fig. **24.5**). To do so, he set up along the side of a racetrack twelve cameras, the shutters of which were triggered as the horses passed. Muybridge discovered that all four feet are off the ground only when they are directly underneath the horse (as in the second and third frames) and not when they are extended, as they are in the flying gallop pose in ancient art (see fig. **6.5**).



24.3 Edgar Degas, *Absinthe,* 1876. Oil on canvas, 36¼ × 26¾ in. (92.1 × 67.9 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. Degas, the son of a wealthy Parisian banker, joined the Impressionists' circle around 1865 and exhibited in seven of their eight exhibitions between 1874 and 1886.

24.4 Edgar Degas, *Dancer with a Bouquet, Bowing,* c. 1877. Pastel and gouache on paper, 28⅜ × 30⅝ in. (72.0 × 77.5 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. Degas sketched ballerinas from the wings of the theater and in dance classes. His interest in depicting forms moving through space led him to paint horse races as well as various types of entertainers.

See figure 6.5. *Toreador Fresco* (also called the *Leaping Bull Fresco*), from Knossos, Crete, c. 1500 B.C.



24.5 Eadweard Muybridge, *Galloping Horse,* 1878. Albumen print. Eadweard Muybridge Collection, Kingston Museum and Heritage Service, Kingston upon Thames, England.

24.6 Mary Cassatt, *The Boating Party,* 1893–94. Oil on canvas, 35½ × 46⅛ in. (90 × 117 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Chester Dale Collection). Cassatt was from a well-to-do Pennsylvania family. For most of her career she lived in France, where she exhibited with the Impressionists and was a close friend of Degas. She fostered American interest in the Impressionists by urging her relatives and friends—particularly the Havemeyer family—to buy their works at a time when they were still unpopular.

Mary Cassatt

In *The Boating Party* (fig. **24.6**) of 1893–94, Mary Cassatt (1845–1926) uses the Impressionist "close-up," another pictorial device inspired by photography. She combines it with a slanting viewpoint to emphasize the intimacy between mother and child. The rower, on the other hand, is depicted in back view as a strong silhouette. More individualized are the mother and child, who gaze at the rower and are contrasted with his anonymity. Cassatt intensifies the tension among the three figures by flattening the space and foreshortening both child and rower. The compact forms create an image of powerful monumentality. Cassatt's bold planes of color, sharp outlines, and compressed spaces, as well as the *obi* (wide sash) worn by the rower, exemplify the influence of Japanese woodblocks on the Impressionist painters.

Berthe Morisot

Like the work of Cassatt, Berthe Morisot's (1841–95) *Cradle* of 1873 (fig. **24.7**) explores the theme of intimacy between mother and child through a close-up. Morisot does not, however, use oblique spatial shifts. Instead, she sets her figures on a horizontal surface within a rectangular composition. Curves and diagonals reinforce the relationship of the figures to each other. The mother's left arm connects her face with the baby's arm, which is bent back behind

24.7 Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle,* 1873. Oil on canvas, 22½ × 18½ in. (57 × 47 cm). Louvre, Paris, France. Morisot was one of five sisters, all of whom learned to paint. She married Eugène Manet, the brother of the artist, and had one daughter, Julie, whom she frequently used as a model in her paintings.

its head. The line of the mother's gaze, intently focused on the baby, is repeated by the diagonal curtain. On the left, the mother's right arm curves toward the picture plane and is counteracted by the slow curve of the cradle covering from top right to lower left. The baby's left arm also curves so that the unity of mother and child is here indicated by a series of formal repetitions in which both participate.

The loose brushwork, for which Morisot and her Impressionist colleagues were often criticized, is particularly apparent in the lighter areas of the painting. The translucent muslin invites the viewer to "look through" the material at the infant. Looking is also implied by the window and curtain, although in fact nothing is visible through the window. In these lighter areas, as in the edges of the mother's dress, the individual white brushstrokes seem to catch the available light and reflect it. Contrasting with the whites are the dark, silhouetted areas such as the wall, the chair, and the ribbon around the mother's neck. A transitional area is provided by the mother's dress, which, though dark, contains light highlights that create a shiny surface texture.

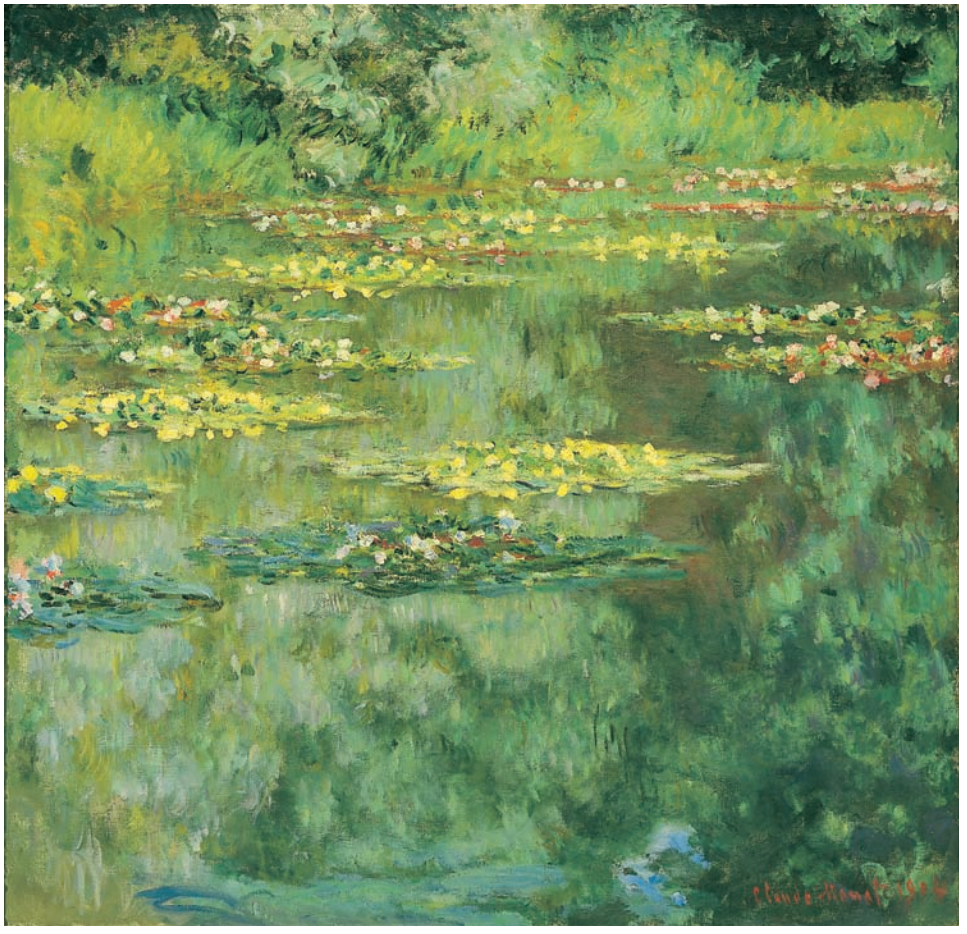
Claude Monet

The work of Claude Monet (1840–1926), more than any other nineteenth-century artist, embodied the technical principles of Impressionism. He was above all a painter of landscape who studied light and color with great intensity. In contrast to the Academic artists, Monet did much of his painting outdoors. As a result, he and the Impressionists were sometimes called *plein air,* or "open air," painters.

The term *Impressionism* is derived from a critic's negative view of Monet's *Impression: Sunrise* (fig. **24.8**), which was painted in 1872 and exhibited two years later. The critic declared Monet's picture and others like it "Impressionisms." By that he meant that the paint was sketchily applied and the work unfinished in appearance. In fact, however, Monet was striving for the transient effects of shifts in nature. He used the technique of "broken color" to show that the clear circle of orange sun is "broken" into individual brushstrokes when reflected in the water. The same is true of the dark, silhouetted boat. Both reflections are composed of horizontal daubs of paint to convey the leisurely motion of the water and the blurred forms that we would actually see.

24.8 Claude Monet, *Impression: Sunrise,* 1872. Oil on canvas, 19½ × 25½ in. (49.5 × 64.8 cm). Musée Marmottan, Paris, France.

24.9 Claude Monet, *Terrace at Sainte-Adresse,* c. 1866–67. Oil on canvas, 38⅝ × 51⅛ in. (98 × 130 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. In his youth Monet lived at Le Havre, a port town on the Normandy coast. It was here that he first became familiar with rapid changes in light and weather. In 1874 he exhibited in the show that launched the Impressionist movement. Until the 1880s his work was poorly received and he lived in extreme poverty.



From the 1860s, early in his career, Monet worked with a wide range of color. A comparison of an early and a late work by Monet illustrates the development of the Impressionist style. The *Terrace at Sainte-Adresse* (fig. **24.9**) of about 1866–67 is a leisure genre scene. In the distance, sailboats and steamships hint at the Industrial Revolution and changing times. The *Bassin des Nymphéas,* or *Water Lily Pond,* of 1904 (fig. **24.10**) illustrates Monet's style nearly forty years later.

Both pictures reflect Monet's concern with the direct observation of nature, and both are the result of his habit of painting outdoors with nature itself as his "model." In the *Water Lily Pond,* the lack of motion is indicated by the more vertical arrangement of the broken colors—greens, blues, yellows, and purples—that make up the

24.10 Claude Monet, *Bassin des Nymphéas (Water Lily Pond),* 1904. Oil on canvas, 34½ × 35¾ in. (87.6 × 90.8 cm). Denver Art Museum. In 1883 Monet moved to Giverny, a village about 50 miles (80 km) west of Paris, where he spent his later years. He built a water garden that inspired numerous "waterscape" paintings, including this one and a series of large water lily murals.

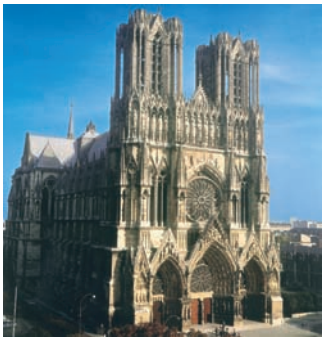
water's surface. Monet's method here reflects the way light strikes the eye—in patterns of color rather than in the relatively sharp focus of the *Terrace*. In the *Water Lily Pond* the observer's point of view is the same as in the *Terrace,* but the field of vision is much narrower.

These paintings also illustrate Monet's fidelity to optical experience through the depiction of colored shadows and reflections. In the *Terrace,* shadows on the pavement are dark gray, and creases in the flags are darker tones of their actual colors—red, yellow, and blue. Likewise, the reflection of the large dark-gray sailboat is composed of more densely distributed dark-green brushstrokes than the rest of the water. In the *Water Lily Pond,* reflected foliage is transformed into relatively formless patches of color. Without the lily pads and the edge of the pond, there would be no recognizable objects at all, and no way for viewers to orient themselves in relation to the picture's space.

Although even in late Impressionism there is never a complete absence of recognizable content, the comparison of these two pictures indicates a progressive dissolution of edges. The brushstrokes and the paint begin to assume an unprecedented prominence. As a result, instead of accepting a canvas as a convincing representation of reality, the viewer is forced to take account of the technique and medium in experiencing the picture. This is consistent with Monet's recommendation that artists focus on the color, form, and light of an object rather than its iconography. In that suggestion, Monet emphasized the essence of a painted object as an abstract form, not as a replica of the thing itself. In other words, a painted "tree" is not a tree at all but a vertical accent on a flat surface.

In studying the natural effects of light and color on surfaces, Monet painted several series of pictures representing one locale under different atmospheric conditions. In 1895 he exhibited eighteen canvases of Rouen Cathedral. *Rouen Cathedral, West Façade, Sunlight* of 1894 (fig. **24.11**) shows the myriad details of a Gothic cathedral dissolving into light and shadow, which are indicated by individual patches of color. The blue sky creates a cream-colored façade, the dark areas of which repeat the sky-blue combined with yellows and oranges. Here, as in the *Water Lily Pond,* viewers are made aware of the medium as much as of the subject matter. They are also reminded that our normal vision lacks sharp focus.

CONNECTIONS



See figure 13.20. West façade, Reims Cathedral, France, begun 1211.

24.11 Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, West Façade, Sunlight,* 1894. Oil on canvas, 39½ × 26 in. (1.00 × 0.66 m). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Chester Dale Collection).

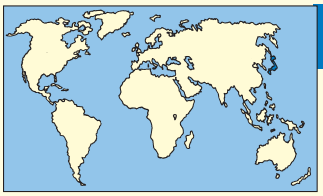
Views of Paris: Renoir and Pissarro

In Renoir's *Pont-Neuf* (fig. **24.12**) of 1872, the influence of photography can be seen in the somewhat elevated vantage point. The rhythms of the city, which became a favorite Impressionist subject, are indicated by the variety of human activity. The scene is a "slice" of a city street, but Renoir also presents a condensed panorama of different social classes. Mothers stroll with children, youths lean against the side of the bridge, some people carry bundles and push carts, and others walk their dogs or ride in carriages. Soldiers and policemen are among the crowd. At the far side of the bridge the familiar buildings of the Left Bank are visible. Because the sky is blue, the forms—like the day—are relatively clear, and figures cast dark shadows on the pavement. Their patterns, as well as the general view of a busy street, are reminiscent of Hiroshige's *Night View, Saruwaka Street at Night* (see fig. **24.16**). Hiroshige's print, in turn, reflects the influence of Western one-point perspective.

24.12 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *The Pont-Neuf,* 1872. Oil on canvas, 29⅝ × 36⅞ in. (75 × 93.7 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection).

The viewpoint of Camille Pissarro's (1830–1903) *Place du Théâtre Français* of 1898 (fig. **24.13**) is higher than that of Renoir's *Pont-Neuf*. In contrast to the Renoir, this picture depicts a rainy day, and the figures are in softer focus, which blurs their forms. Also blurred is the façade of the Paris Opéra at the end of the long Boulevard de l'Opéra. Both are rendered as patches of color and create dark accents against the lighter pavement. The effect of the gray sky is to drain the color from the street and dull it. At the same time, however, the street's surface is enlivened by visible brushstrokes and reflective shadows. Impressionist cityscapes offered artists an opportunity to explore the effects of outdoor light on the color and textures of the city. They also record the momentary and fugitive aspects of Haussmann's boulevards in ways that even photographs could not.

24.13 Camille Pissarro, *Place du Théâtre Français,* 1898. Oil on canvas, 29 × 36 in. (73.7 × 91.4 cm). Minneapolis Institute of Arts (William Hood Dunwoody Fund).



Japanese Woodblock Prints

From 1853 to 1854 Commodore Matthew Perry, a United States naval officer, led an expedition that forced Japan to end its policy of isolation. This opened up trade with the Far East and set the stage for cultural exchange. In the Paris Universal Exposition of 1867, many Japanese woodblock prints were on view. As a result, so-called ***japonisme,*** the French term for the Japanese aesthetic, became popular in fashionable Parisian circles. Japanese prints exerted considerable influence on Impressionist painters in France, the United States, and elsewhere.

Woodblock printing had begun in China in the fourth century. In the sixth century, Buddhist missionaries brought the technique to Japan. At first it was used for printing words, and only in the sixteenth century did artists begin to make woodblock images to illustrate texts. Originally the images were confined to black and white, but in the seventeenth century color was introduced. In order to create a woodblock print in color, the artist makes a separate block for each color and prints each block separately. The raised portions differ in each block and correspond to a different color in the final print. It is important, therefore, that the outlines of each block correspond exactly so that there is no unplanned overlapping or empty space between forms.

The prints that most influenced the Impressionist painters were made during the Edo period (1600–1868), when Edo (present-day Tokyo) became an urban center of feudalism in Japan. It was also the primary residence of the emperor. Nevertheless, a merchant class developed, which produced the main patrons of literature and the visual arts. Woodblock prints provided multiple images, which could be sold to a wide audience. As a result, publishers commissioned artists to prepare preliminary designs and then supervised the engraving, printing, and sale of the final works.

Japanese art students were apprenticed to master artists, just as in Western Europe during the Renaissance. The signatures on the prints reflect this system, for the artist had a chosen name (or *go*) as well as an apprentice name. The former was framed by a cartouche, while the latter was usually unframed and placed at the bottom of the page. A publisher's mark might also be stamped on the print. At the top of the page are the titles of the individual texts, or series of texts, that are illustrated. If the subject is an actor, his name or role is sometimes added.

Ukiyo-e The Golden Age of Japanese woodblock is identified with the Ukiyo-e school of painting. It was founded around the middle of the seventeenth century and lasted

24.14 Keisei Eisen, *Oiran on Parade*, c. 1830. Woodblock print, 29 × 9¾ in. (73.7 × 24.8 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England. An *oiran* is the highest-ranking Japanese courtesan.

24.15 Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave at Kanagawa*, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, ca. 1830–32. Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 10⅛ × 14 15/16 in. (25.7 × 37.9 cm). Published by Eiudo. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929).

until the end of the Edo period in 1868. The term *ukiyo-e* means "floating world" and refers to the transience of material existence. The most popular subjects were theater, dance, and various kinds of female services ranging from outright erotica to the high-class courtesan. Respectable middle-class women performing daily tasks were also depicted, but mythological and historical scenes were less popular, and landscape was used only as background until the nineteenth century. Both the stylistic techniques used in woodblock prints and their subject matter—leisure genre scenes, entertainment, courtesans, landscape and cityscape, aerial views, and so forth—have close affinities with French Impressionism.

Keisei Eisen *Oiran on Parade* (fig. **24.14**) by Keisei Eisen (1790–1848) illustrates one of the Edo period's high-ranking courtesans, and she is decked out in full regalia for public viewing. Her lofty position is reflected by her height, her massive proportions, and the attention to the design of her costume. Two birds embroidered on the kimono echo the woman herself: the bird at the left repeats the kimono's lower curve, and the other echoes her strutting posture. The repetition of orange and blue, and the subject itself have affinities with the chromatic unity of Impressionism. Prussian blue, which is used here, was a recent import from the West and is evidence of contacts between the East and Europe even before 1853.

Katsushika Hokusai Katsushika Hokusai's (1760–1849) *The Great Wave at Kanagawa* (fig. **24.15**), which made a great impact on the Impressionists, is from a series titled *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. Such series of scenes, in particular different views of the same place or similar views of the same place at different times of day and in different seasons, were also taken up by the Impressionists. The use of Prussian blue in this print enhances the wave's naturalism, but it is the dramatic rise of the wave and its nearness to the picture plane that create its impressive effect. It is a convincing portrayal of the rhythmic power of a swelling wave, even though the wave's flat, patternistic quality seems to arrest its movement. In the distance, the sacred Mount Fuji is small and insignificant by comparison.

Utagawa Hiroshige Utagawa Hiroshige's (1797–1858) last and most famous series of woodblock prints was titled *One Hundred Views of Edo*. *Night View, Saruwaka Street at Night* of 1856 (fig. **24.16**) shows a busy theater street at night. It is rendered in linear perspective, with the moon causing the figures to cast gray shadows. At the left, theater touts are trying to lure customers. The sense of a busy street, seen from an elevated vantage point, appeals to the same aesthetic as Renoir's *Pont-Neuf* (see fig. **24.12**) and Pissarro's *Place du Théâtre Français* (see fig. **24.13**). It thus reflects cross-cultural influences between Western Europe and the Far East.

24.16 Utagawa Hiroshige, *Night View, Saruwaka Street at Night*, 1856. Woodblock print, 14⅛ × 9¾ in. (35.9 × 24.8 cm). Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, England. Hiroshige was the son of a fire warden. Born in Edo, he was trained in the Ukiyo-e school and became one of the greatest masters of woodblock printing.

French Sculpture: Auguste Rodin

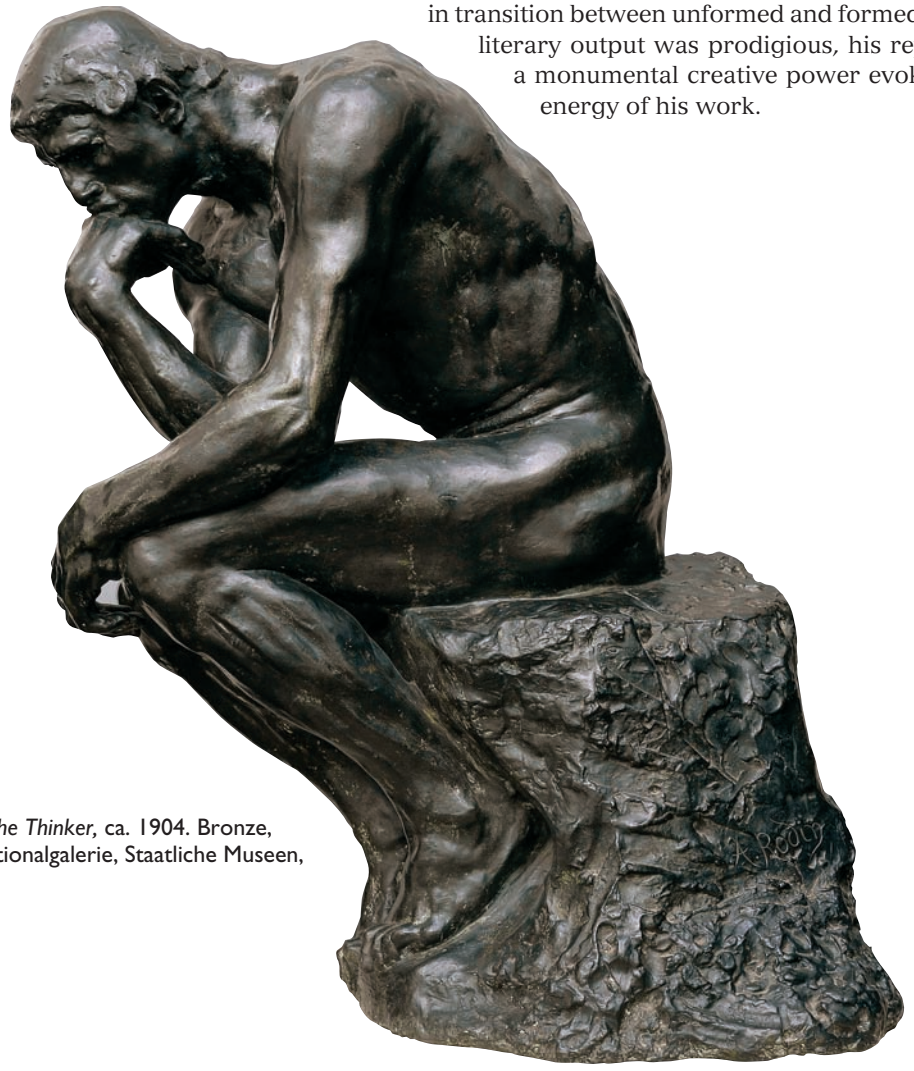
The acknowledged giant of nineteenth-century sculpture was Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). Rodin's influence on twentieth-century art parallels that of the Impressionist painters. Like Degas, Rodin built up forms in clay or wax before casting them. His characteristic medium was bronze, but he also made casts of plaster. *The Thinker* of 1879–89 (fig. **24.17**) reveals the influence of Italian Renaissance sculpture on Rodin's concept of the monumental human figure. The work actually evolved from what Rodin originally planned to be a representation of Dante. Its introspective power and large, muscular body are created by the figure's formal tension and sense of contained energy. Both are meditative figures, immobilized by thought.

In 1891 Zola asked Rodin to take over a commission from the French Society of Men of Letters for a monumental statue of the French novelist Honoré de Balzac. Rodin spent the last seven years of his life on the work, which was not cast until after his death. He called it the sum of his whole life.

The plaster version of Rodin's *Balzac* (fig. **24.18**) demonstrates his interest in conveying the dynamic, experimental *process* of sculpture, rather than in the finished work. The great novelist looms upward like a ghostly specter wrapped in a white robe.

Rodin's revolutionary working methods included the use of nonprofessional models in nontraditional poses. Apart from portrait busts, Rodin was the first major sculptor to create work consisting of less than the whole body—a headless torso, for example. In 1898, when the plaster *Balzac* was first exhibited, the public disliked it, and so did the Society of Men of Letters, which had commissioned it. Rodin never cast the work in bronze, and it is not known whether he ever intended to do so.

The *Balzac* has the Impressionist quality of pronounced surface texture, which in this case conveys the raw power and primal thrust characteristic of Rodin's style and also of Balzac's novels. Their surface motion creates a blurred effect similar to the prominence of Impressionist brushwork and mirrors Balzac's own dynamic spirit. The figure also seems to be in an unfinished state—a not-quite-human character in transition between unformed and formed. Since Balzac's literary output was prodigious, his representation as a monumental creative power evokes the timeless energy of his work.



24.17 Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*, ca. 1904. Bronze, 28⅜ in. (72 cm) high. Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany.

24.18 Auguste Rodin, *Balzac,* 1892–97. Plaster, 9 ft. 10 in. (3 m) high. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

American Painting at the Turn of the Century

Several important late-nineteenth-century American artists correspond chronologically to French Impressionism. Some, such as Cassatt, lived as expatriates in Europe and worked in the Impressionist style. Others stayed in the United States and continued in a more Realist vein.

Winslow Homer

Winslow Homer (1836–1910) visited Paris before the heyday of Impressionism, and his work can be regarded as transitional between Realism and Impressionism. A largely self-taught artist from Boston, Homer first worked as a magazine illustrator. At the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, he was sent by *Harper's Weekly* to make drawings at the front.

Homer's *Army of the Potomac—A Sharpshooter on Picket Duty* of 1862 (fig. **24.19**) exemplifies his visual recording of the war. He shows a soldier aiming at a potential adversary, his precarious position reinforced by the repeated diagonals. The soldier's intense concentration as he gazes through the viewfinder of his rifle echoes our own gaze as we watch him watching his enemy. Homer thus creates a strong sense that we are there, present at a moment of tension and danger.

24.19 (Above) Winslow Homer, *The Army of the Potomac—A Sharpshooter on Picket Duty*, from *Harper's Weekly*, November 15, 1862. Engraving, 9⅛ × 13¾ in. (23.2 × 34.9 cm). Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio.

After the Civil War, Homer spent a year in France. He returned to the United States and lived much of his later life in Maine, where he painted in both watercolor and oil. In *Breezing Up* (fig. **24.20**) of 1873–76, Homer's interest in the American identity of his subjects and their place in society is evident. At the same time, however, he has been influenced by the Impressionist interest in weather conditions and their effect on light and color. The sea, churned up by the wind, is rendered as broken color with visible brushstrokes. By tilting the boat in the foreground, Homer creates a slanted "floor" that is related to Degas' compositional technique. The interruption of the diagonal sail by the frame, the oblique viewpoint, and the sailors' apparent indifference to the observer suggest a fleeting moment captured by a camera.

24.20 Winslow Homer, *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*, 1873–76. Oil on canvas, 24¼ × 38⅛ in. (61.5 × 97.0 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Gift of the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation).

John Singer Sargent

John Singer Sargent (1856–1925), who lived in Paris in the early 1880s, espoused Impressionism wholeheartedly. But even though Sargent is sometimes considered an Impressionist, he did not allow form to dissolve into light, as did the French Impressionists. After his death, and with the advent of modernism, Sargent was dismissed, as a painter of elegant, superficial portraits, which

emphasized the rich materials worn by his society patrons. However, *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit* (fig. **24.21**), exhibited in the Salon of 1883, reveals the inner tensions of four young sisters, despite their comfortable lifestyle.

The girls occupy a fashionable room decorated with elements of *japonisme,* notably the large vases and the rug. The mirror, which recalls Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (see fig. **19.38**), complicates the spatial relationships within the picture, while the oblique view sets the figures above the observer. The cropped rug and vase evoke the Impressionist "slice of life," and the subjects seem frozen in time. Three gaze at the viewer, and one leans introspectively against a vase. Two are close together, and two, echoing the vases, are apart. The spaces separating the figures convey a sense of tension and create the impression of an internal subtext. Enhancing the psychological effect of the work is the fact that as the girls become older, they are more in shadow.

CONNECTIONS

See figure 19.38. Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas,* 1656.

24.21 John Singer Sargent, *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit,* 1882. Oil on canvas, 7 ft. 3 in. × 7 ft. 3 in. (2.21 × 2.21 m). Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Gift of Mary Louisa Boit, Florence D. Boit, Jane Hubbard Boit, and Julia Overing Boit, in memory of their father, Edward Darley Boit).

"Art for Art's Sake"

Whistler versus Ruskin

In Paris, widespread condemnation made it difficult for the Impressionists to sell their work. In London as well, there were aesthetic quarrels. One of these erupted into the celebrated libel trial between the American painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) and the reigning English art critic John Ruskin. In 1877 Ruskin published a scathing review of Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold (The Falling Rocket)* (fig. **24.22**), painted about two years earlier. The picture was on view at London's Grosvenor Gallery, and it threw Ruskin into a rage. He accused Whistler of flinging "a pot of paint . . . in the public's face." Whistler himself, Ruskin added, was a "coxcomb," guilty of "Cockney impudence" and "willful imposture."

Whistler, born in Lowell, Massachusetts, moved with his family to Russia, where his father designed the Moscow–St. Petersburg railroad. He set up art studios in Paris and London, finally settling in Chelsea. The author of *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies,* Whistler was known for his distinctive personality and biting wit. He dressed as a dandy, wearing pink ribbons on tight patent leather shoes and carrying two umbrellas as a precaution against the rain in London.

Whistler responded to Ruskin's review by suing him for libel, and the case went to trial in November 1878. Ruskin, who was in the throes of a psychotic breakdown, could not appear in court, but his views were presented by his attorney. According to Ruskin, Whistler's picture was outrageously overpriced at 200 guineas, quickly and sloppily executed, technically "unfinished," and devoid of recognizable form. Ruskin also objected to Whistler's musical titles (in this case "Nocturne") as pandering to the contemporary fad for the incomprehensible. The paintings themselves were not, he insisted, serious works of art. In his opening statement, the attorney general, acting for Ruskin, had this to say about musical titles:

> In the present mania for art it had become a kind of fashion among some people to admire the incomprehensible, to look upon the fantastic conceits of an artist like Mr. Whistler, his "nocturnes," "symphonies," "arrangements," and "harmonies," with delight and admiration; but the fact was that such productions were not worthy of the name of great works of art.

On cross-examination, Whistler was questioned about his subject matter:

> "What is the subject of the *Nocturne in Black and Gold*?" "It is a night piece," Whistler replied, "and represents fireworks at Cremorne."
> "Not a view of Cremorne?"
> "If it were a view of Cremorne, it would certainly bring about nothing but disappointment on the part of the beholders. It is an artistic arrangement. . . . It is as impossible for me to explain to you the beauty of that picture as it would be for a musician to explain to you the beauty of a harmony in a particular piece of music if you have no ear for music."

Ironically, Ruskin had once used his critical genius to further the public reception of Turner, himself a rather "Impressionistic" artist. Equally ironic, Whistler was quite capable of producing clear and precise images as he did in his etchings, as well as in some of his portraits. The famous portrait of Whistler's mother (see fig. **1.6**)—*Arrangement in Black and Gray*—is a remarkable psychological portrait and also satisfies Ruskin's requirement that works appear "finished." It conveys her dour, puritanical character, reflected in the assertion by one of Whistler's friends that she lived on the top floor of his London house in order to be closer to God.

Whistler countered Ruskin's position by stating what was essentially the formalist "art for art's sake" view of art: that art did not necessarily serve a utilitarian purpose. Whistler's *Nocturne* was a study in light, color, and form. The atmospheric effects of the cloudy night sky are contrasted with gold spots of light from the exploded rocket. When questioned about the identity of the black patch in the lower right corner, Whistler replied that it was a vertical, placed there for purely formal reasons. On the subject of money, Whistler testified that he had spent only a day and a half painting *Nocturne,* but was charging for a lifetime of experience.

The jury followed the judge's instructions and decided in Whistler's favor but awarded him only a farthing in damages. When it was over, the trial was extensively ridiculed in the English and American press. A *New York Times* critic complained (December 15, 1878) that "the world has been much afflicted of late with these slapdash productions of the paint-pot." In his view, musical titles were "exasperating nomenclature," and the "shadowy and unseen presences" of modern art were confusing. "Ordinary men and women in a state of health," he concluded, "prefer to have their pictures made for them." Nearly seventy years later, *Art Digest* reported that the Detroit Institute of Arts paid $12,000 for the infamous "pot of paint."

The significance of this absurd trial is its function as a window on aesthetic conflict in the late nineteenth century. It also proves that one cannot legislate taste. Whistler later called the trial a conflict between the "brush" and the "pen." It exemplified the rise of the critic as a potent force in the nineteenth-century art world.

We have seen that the history of Western art is fraught with aesthetic quarrels, but passions rose to new heights during the latter half of the nineteenth century. For the first time, the material of art became a subject of art, and content yielded to style. More than anything else, it was the dissolution of form that seems to have caused the intense critical outrage. But this was the very development that would prove to have the most lasting impact on the development of Western art.

24.22 James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in Black and Gold (The Falling Rocket)*, c. 1875. Oil on oak panel, 23⅝ × 18½ in. (60 × 47 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts (Gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr.).

c. 1860 **c. 1920**

19TH-CENTURY IMPRESSIONISM

(24.1)

Paris Opéra (1862–75)

(24.14)

End of Edo period in Japan (1868)

(24.8)

First Impressionist exhibition in Paris (1874)

(24.2)

Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone (1876)

(24.18)

Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Mikado* (1885)

(24.11)

Kodak box camera (1888)

(24.6)

Boxer Rebellion in China (1899–1900)

25

Post-Impressionism and the Late Nineteenth Century

The term *Post-Impressionism,* meaning "After Impressionism," designates the work of certain late-nineteenth-century painters, whose diverse styles were significantly influenced by Impressionism. Like the Impressionists, the Post-Impressionists were drawn to bright color and visible, distinctive brushstrokes. But Post-Impressionist forms do not dissolve, and their edges, whether outlined or defined by sharp color separations, are relatively clear.

Within Post-Impressionism two important trends evolved. These are exemplified on one hand by Cézanne and Seurat, who reassert formal and structural values, and on the other by Gauguin and van Gogh, who explore emotional content. Both trends set the stage for major trends in early-twentieth-century art. Certain Post-Impressionist artists were also influenced by the late-nineteenth-century Symbolist movement (see p. 463).

Post-Impressionist Painting

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901), who was inspired by Degas, based his most characteristic imagery on Parisian nightlife. He frequented dance halls, nightclubs, cafés, and bordellos in search of subject matter. Loose, sketchy brushwork, contained within clearly defined color areas, contributes to a sense of dynamic motion in his paintings. In *Quadrille at the Moulin Rouge* (fig. **25.1**), the woman facing the viewer exudes an air of determined, barely contained energy about to erupt in dance. Her stance is the opening position of a quadrille, and a challenge to the other figures. Like Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec favored partial, oblique views, which suggest photographic cropping. He was also, like Degas, influenced by Japanese prints, using strong silhouettes to offset the more textured areas of his painted surfaces.

In contrast to the textured surfaces of his paintings, Toulouse-Lautrec's lithograph posters consist of flat, unmodeled areas of color. The poster—which Lautrec popularized at the end of the nineteenth century—was not only

25.1 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Quadrille at the Moulin Rouge,* 1892. Oil on cardboard, 31⅜ × 23¾ in. (80 × 60.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Chester Dale Collection). The Moulin Rouge was (and still is) a popular music hall in Montmartre. It was here, in the artistic and entertainment center of Paris, that Toulouse-Lautrec lived and worked. He was descended from the counts of Toulouse, and although his family disapproved of his lifestyle, his wealth saved him from the poverty suffered by many artists of his generation. He died at age thirty-seven from the effects of alcoholism.

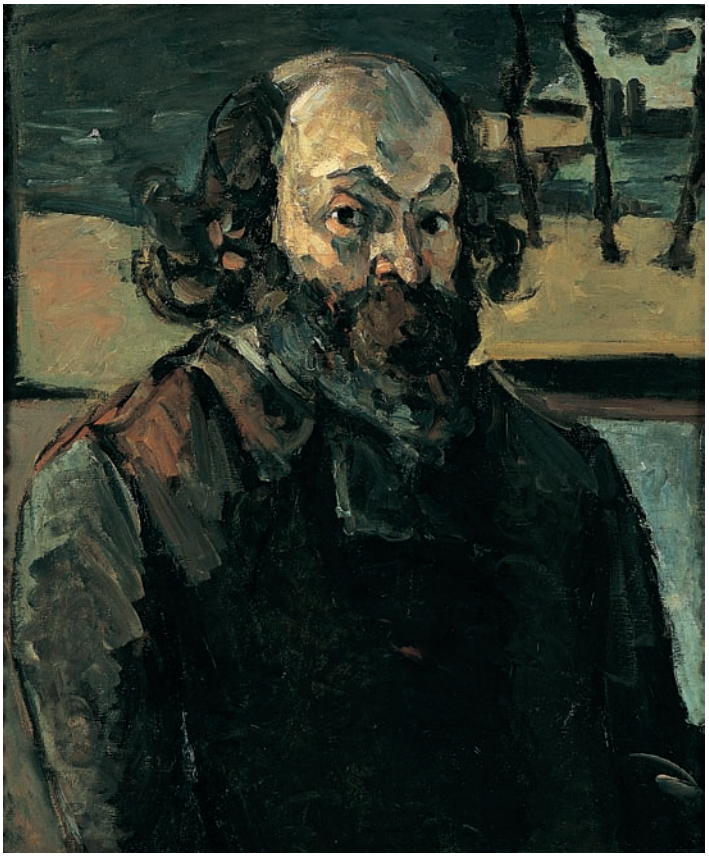
25.2 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge,* 1891. Poster, color lithograph, 74¾ × 45⅞ in. (190.0 × 116.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1932 (32.88.12). At age fifteen, Toulouse-Lautrec was left with permanently stunted legs as the result of two accidents. Perhaps because of this, dancers had a particular attraction for him. La Goulue was one of the professional dancers who, along with singers, circus performers, and prostitutes, were among his favorite subjects.

an art form. Like the print techniques used by the Realists for social and political ends, posters such as *La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge* (fig. **25.2**) disseminated information. Because the purpose of a poster is to advertise an event, words generally form part of the message. In *La Goulue,* the letters are integrated with the composition by repeating the lines and colors of the printed text in the image. The blacks of BAL ("dance") and LA GOULUE recur in the silhouetted background crowd and the stockings of the dancer. The flat red-orange of MOULIN ROUGE is echoed in the dress. And the thin, dark lines of TOUS LES SOIRS ("every evening") are repeated in the floorboards and the outlines of the figures.

Paul Cézanne

The Post-Impressionist who was to have the most powerful impact on the development of Western painting was Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). He, more than any artist before him, transformed paint into a visible structure. His early pictures were predominantly black and obsessed with erotic or violent themes.

Cézanne's *Self-Portrait* (fig. **25.3**) of around 1872 depicts a man of intense vitality. Although the colors are dark, the background landscape conveys Impressionist ideas. The thickly applied paint accentuates each brushstroke—short and determined—like the bricks of an architectural structure. The arched eyebrows frame diamond-shaped eye sockets, and the curved brushstrokes of the hair and beard create an impression of wavy, slightly unruly motion.



25.3 Paul Cézanne, *Self-Portrait,* c. 1872. Oil on canvas, 25¼ × 20½ in. (64 × 52 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. Cézanne was born and lived most of his life in Provence, in the south of France. He studied law before becoming a painter. In 1869 he began living with Hortense Fiquet, by whom he had a son in 1872. They married in 1886, the year his father died.

25.4 Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Apples*, c. 1875–77. Oil on canvas, 7½ × 10¾ in. (19.1 × 27.3 cm). By kind permission of the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge, England (Keynes Collection).

Cézanne exhibited with the Impressionists in 1873 and 1877, and, under the influence of Pissarro, his palette became brighter and his subject matter more restricted. In *Still Life with Apples* (fig. **25.4**), of about 1875–77, painted at the height of his Impressionist period, Cézanne subordinates narrative to form. He condenses the rich thematic associations of the apple in Western imagery with a new, structured abstraction. Cézanne's punning assertion that he wanted to "astonish Paris with an apple" (see Box) is nowhere more evident than in this work. Seven brightly colored apples are set on a slightly darker surface. Each is a sphere, outlined in black and built up with patches of color—reds, greens, yellows, and oranges—like the many facets of a crystal. Light and dark, as well as color, are created by the arrangement of the brushstrokes in rectangular shapes. The structural quality of the apples seems to echo Cézanne's assertion that the natural world can be "reduced to a cone, a sphere, and a cylinder."

The apples are endowed with a life of their own. Each seems to be jockeying for position, as if it has not quite settled in relation to its neighbors. The shifting, animated

SYMBOLISM

An Apple a Day . . .

Since its portrayal as the "forbidden fruit" in the Garden of Eden, the apple has had a prominent place in the Western imagination. The traditional associations of the apple with health ("an apple a day keeps the doctor away") and love ("the apple of one's eye") are still apparent in popular expressions. In Greek mythology, one of the Labors of Herakles required that he steal the Golden Apples of the Hesperides. Later a golden apple was awarded by Paris, the Trojan prince, to Aphrodite (Venus), who promised him the world's most beautiful woman. She turned out to be Helen of Troy and the legendary cause of the Trojan War.

Cézanne's pun condenses the Paris of Greek myth with Paris, the capital city of France. In astonishing "Paris" (in the latter sense), Cézanne wins the beauty contest and becomes a Hercules among painters.

25.5 Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, c. 1900. Oil on canvas, 30¾ × 39 in. (78 × 99 cm). Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia.

quality of these apples creates dynamic tension, as does the crystalline structure of the brushstrokes. Nor is it entirely clear just what the apples are resting on, for the unidentified surface beneath them also shifts. As a result, the very space of the picture is ambiguous, and the image has an abstract, iconic power.

In 1887 Cézanne's active involvement with the Impressionists in Paris ended, and he returned to his native Provence in the south of France. Having integrated Impressionism with his own objectives, he now focused most of his energy on the pursuit of a new way of representing space.

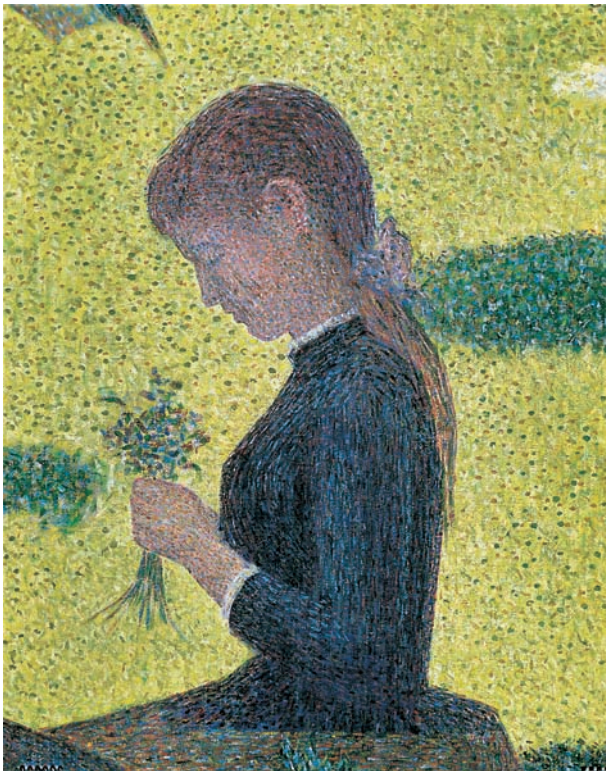
In *Mont Sainte-Victoire* of about 1900 (fig. **25.5**), Cézanne revisited a subject that had preoccupied him for years. His personal identification with the mountain is indicated by the anthropomorphism of the rich green tree in the right foreground—possibly a self-image. The landscape itself is a multifaceted patchwork of shifting color—greens, oranges, and blues. Geometry pervades the picture, not only in the cubic character of the brushstrokes but also in the trapezoidal mountain, the rectangular house in the middle ground, and the structured curve of the foreground road. Through Cézanne's faceted, crystalline forms, a breakdown and restructuring of Western spatial conventions are achieved. This was a revolution made possible by the Post-Impressionist synthesis of the prominent brushstrokes and the clarity of the edge.

25.6 Georges Seurat, *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, 1884–86. Oil on canvas, 6 ft. 9¾ in. × 10 ft. 1⅜ in. (2.08 × 3.08 m). Art Institute of Chicago (Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection). La Grande Jatte is an island in the river Seine that was popular with Parisians for weekend outings. Seurat's painstaking and systematic technique reflected his scientific approach to painting. For two years he made many small outdoor studies before painting the large final canvas of *La Grande Jatte* in his studio. In 1886 it was unveiled for the last Impressionist Exhibition.

Georges Seurat

In his own brand of Post-Impressionism, short-lived though it was, Georges Seurat (1851–91) combined Cézanne's interest in volume and structure with Impressionist subject matter. His most famous painting, *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (fig. **25.6**), monumentalizes a scene of leisure by filling the space with solid iconic forms. Human figures, animals, and trees are frozen in time and space. Motion is created formally, by contrasts of color, silhouettes, and repetition, rather than by the figures.

Seurat has been called a Neo-Impressionist and a Pointillist, after his process of building up color through dots, or points, of pure color; Seurat himself called this technique "divisionism." In contrast to Cézanne's outlined forms, Seurat's are separated from each other by the grouping of dots according to their color. In the detail of the girl holding the spray of flowers (fig. **25.7**), the individual dots are quite clear.



25.7 Detail of figure **25.6.**

25.8 Georges Seurat, *Monkey*, 1884. Conté crayon, 7 × 9¼ in. (17.7 × 23.7 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot, 1967).

Seurat's attention to detail is apparent from the many studies he made in preparation for the final painting. The little monkey, for example, which stands by the woman at the right, was the subject of several studies. The drawing in figure **25.8** shows a monkey in a different pose from that in the painting. It is also quickly drawn rather than being built up with dots. Here the texture of the paper surface contributes to the tactile quality of the animal. It has a light edge and face, with the inner form darkened to show contour. Endowed with a sense of inherent energy, this monkey seems tense and alert.

Seurat's divisionism was based on two relatively new theories of color. The first was that placing two colors side by side intensified the hue of each. There is in *La Grande Jatte* a shimmering quality in the areas of light and bright color, which tends to support this theory. The other theory, which is only partly confirmed by experience, asserted that the eye causes contiguous dots to merge into their combined color. Blue dots next to yellow dots would thus merge and be perceived as vivid green. If the painting is viewed from a distance or through half-closed eyes, this may be true. It is certainly not true if the viewer examines the picture closely, as the illustration of the detail confirms. True or not, such theories are characteristic of the search by nineteenth-century artists for new approaches to light and color based on scientific analysis.

Vincent van Gogh

Vincent van Gogh (1853–90), the greatest Dutch artist since the Baroque period, devoted only the last ten years of his short life to painting. He began with a dark palette and subjects that reflected a social consciousness reminiscent of nineteenth-century Realism. When he moved to Paris and met the Impressionists, however, his range of color expanded.

In 1888 van Gogh left Paris for Arles in the south of France. The following year he painted the famous *Bedroom at Arles* (fig. **25.9**), which is pervaded by isolation and tension and exemplifies the manifestly autobiographical character of his paintings. Figures who do not communicate are replaced by an absence of figures. The artist's existence, rather than the artist himself, is indicated by furnishings and clothing. Only the portraits on the wall, one of which is a self-portrait, contain human figures; they are arranged as a pair juxtaposed with a single landscape over the clothes rack. Likewise, two pillows lie side by side on a single bed. There are two chairs, but they are separated from each other. The same is true of the doors. There are two bottles on the table, and a double window next to a single mirror. Van Gogh's *Bedroom* is thus a psychological self-portrait, which records his efforts to achieve a fulfilling relationship with another person and his failure to do so.

25.9 Vincent van Gogh, *Bedroom at Arles*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 28⅜ × 35⅜ in. (72 × 90 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

25.10 Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 28¾ × 36½ in. (73 × 92 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss bequest.

The tension is reinforced by the color, particularly the intense hue of the red coverlet, which is the only pure color in the painting. In October 1888 Vincent described the colors in a letter to his younger brother, Theo:

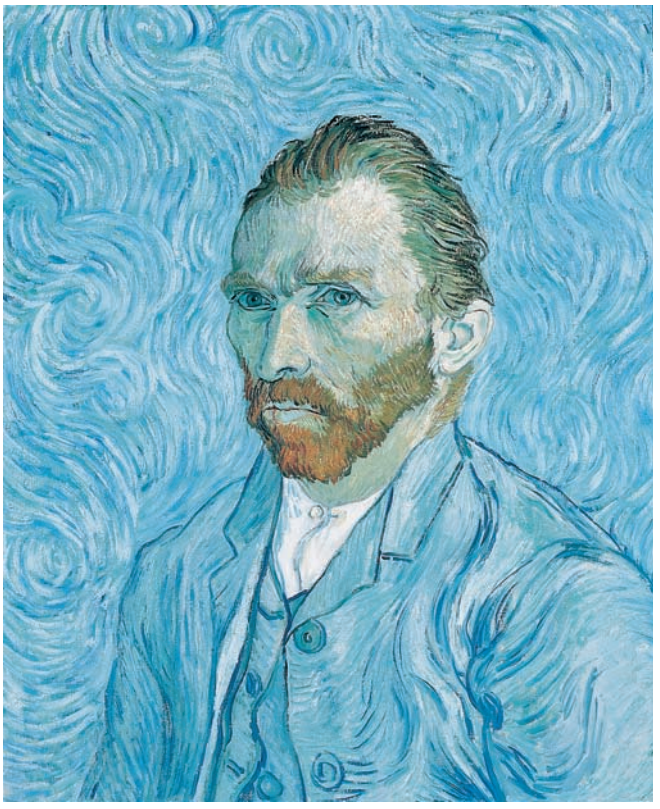
> The walls are pale violet. The floor is of red tiles. The wood of the bed and chairs is the yellow of fresh butter, the sheets and pillows very light greenish citron. The coverlet scarlet. The window green. The toilet table orange, the basin blue. The doors lilac. And that is all—there is nothing in this room with its closed shutters.[1]

Van Gogh shared the Impressionist passion for landscape. *The Starry Night* (fig. **25.10**) illustrates his genius for intense, expressive color, his powerful imagery, and his strong sense of line. Line becomes color in the energetic curves spiraling across the night sky. Their movement from left to right is counteracted by hills cascading in the opposite direction. Stabilizing the animated surface are the verticals of the two foreground cypress trees and the church spire. The church itself, as well as the small village, has been identified as van Gogh's memory of Dutch villages, merged here with the French landscape of Provence. Because he painted *The Starry Night* while in a mental asylum, it has been seen as the reflection of a disturbed mind. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth, for van Gogh's characteristic control of formal elements, his technical skill, and his intellectual clarity, radiate from every inch of the canvas.

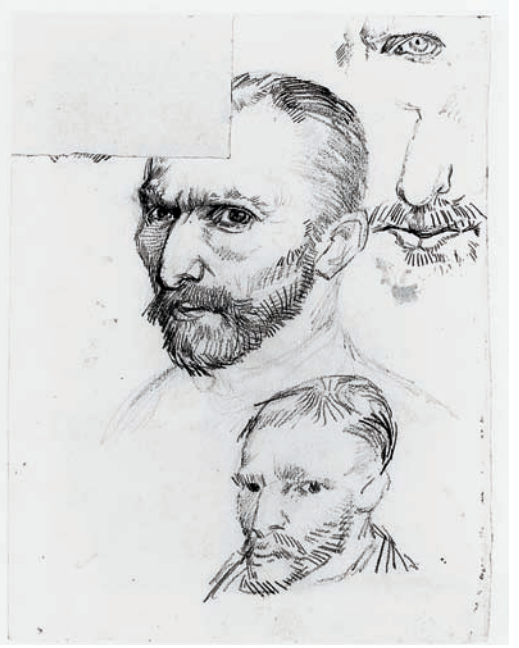
Like Rembrandt, whom he studied in his native Holland, van Gogh painted many self-portraits. Whereas Rembrandt created physiognomy primarily by variations in lightness and darkness, van Gogh did so with color. Aside from the yellows and oranges of the face and hair, this *Self-Portrait* (fig. **25.11**) is very nearly monochromatic. The main color is a pale blue-green, varying from light to dark in accordance with the individual brushstrokes. The jacket remains distinct from its background by its darkened outline.

Although the figure itself is immobile, the pronounced spiraling, wavy brushstrokes undulate over the surface of the picture. Yellow predominates in the depiction of van Gogh's head and is a component of both the orange and the blue-green. The intense gaze is also achieved through color, for the whites of the eyes are not white at all but rather the same blue-green as the background. As a result, the viewer has the impression of looking through van Gogh's skull at eyes set far back inside his head.

The drawing studies in figure **25.12** illustrate van Gogh's efforts to arrive at an expression. Each of the three faces on the sheet is seen from a slightly different angle, but all appear serious and thoughtful. The vigorous brushstrokes in the final painting are apparent in the sharp drawing lines, especially of the hair, mustache, and beard.



25.11 Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait,* 1889. Oil on canvas, 25½ × 21¼ in. (64.8 × 54.0 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.



25.12 Vincent van Gogh, studies for *Self-Portrait,* 1889. Pencil and pen drawing, 12⅝ × 9½ in. (32.1 × 24.1 cm). Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation).

PRIMARY SOURCE
"Dear Theo"—The Letters of Vincent van Gogh

Van Gogh's most penetrating exercise in self-portraiture was his correspondence with his younger brother, Theodorus van Gogh, known as Theo. The letters chronicle Vincent's life of poverty and despair, his efforts to find his life's calling, his tortured relationships with women, and his bouts of madness.

Van Gogh's father was a clergyman in Zundert, a small town in Holland. His mother was depressed by the death of her first son, after whom Vincent was named, and who was born on exactly the same day as the second Vincent. Van Gogh grew up with the grave of his older brother, which, located near the family house, was a constant presence. As an adult, he took several jobs before devoting himself exclusively to painting. At first, he aspired to follow his father as a minister in the Dutch Reform Church. He was sent by the Church to work with the coal miners in the Borinage district in the south of Belgium. Their poverty inspired *The Potato Eaters,* but van Gogh's religious zeal alarmed the church authorities and he was not ordained. He also worked in his uncle's art dealership (Goupil's) in Brussels and London, and taught school in England. He was a prodigious reader, fluent in English and French, as well as in Dutch.

Although van Gogh did not decide to be a painter until about 1884, he had—like most artists—begun drawing as a child. Once he settled on his career, he became dependent on Theo for money and emotional support. Virtually every letter details his expenditures on art supplies and complains about the cost of living. Often he went without food in order to paint. Aside from a few brief stints in formal art classes, van Gogh comes close to being a self-taught artist. His letters also describe his efforts to learn to draw, to capture a likeness, and his views on art and artists, particularly Delacroix, who exerted a major influence on his development.

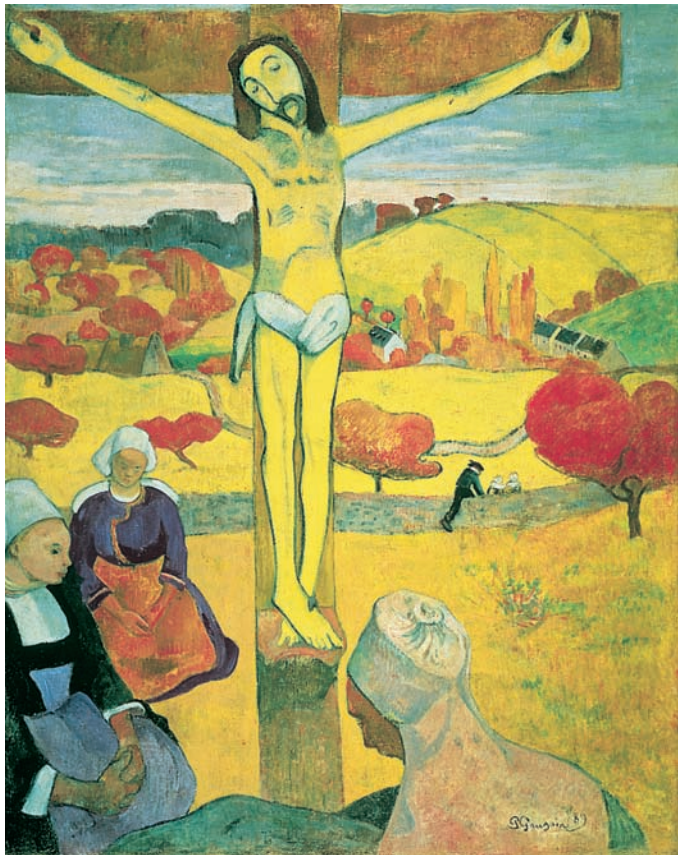
After two years in Paris, van Gogh moved to Arles, in the south of France. There he hoped to found a society of artists who would live and work in a communal setting. Gauguin joined him, but these two difficult personalities were not destined to coexist for long. When van Gogh cut off his earlobe in a fit of jealous despair and was hospitalized, Gauguin left. Van Gogh then suffered several episodes of mental breakdown, and on July 27, 1890, he shot himself, dying two days later. Six months after Vincent's death, Theo also died.

Van Gogh's clinical diagnosis has never been satisfactorily identified. Theories abound, however, and they range from epilepsy to childhood depression to lead poisoning from paint fumes. As van Gogh was unable to sell his pictures during his lifetime, his legacy of paintings went to Theo and then to Theo's son, also named Vincent. The young Vincent bequeathed the bulk of the collection to Holland, and most are now permanently exhibited in the Van Gogh Museum, in Amsterdam.

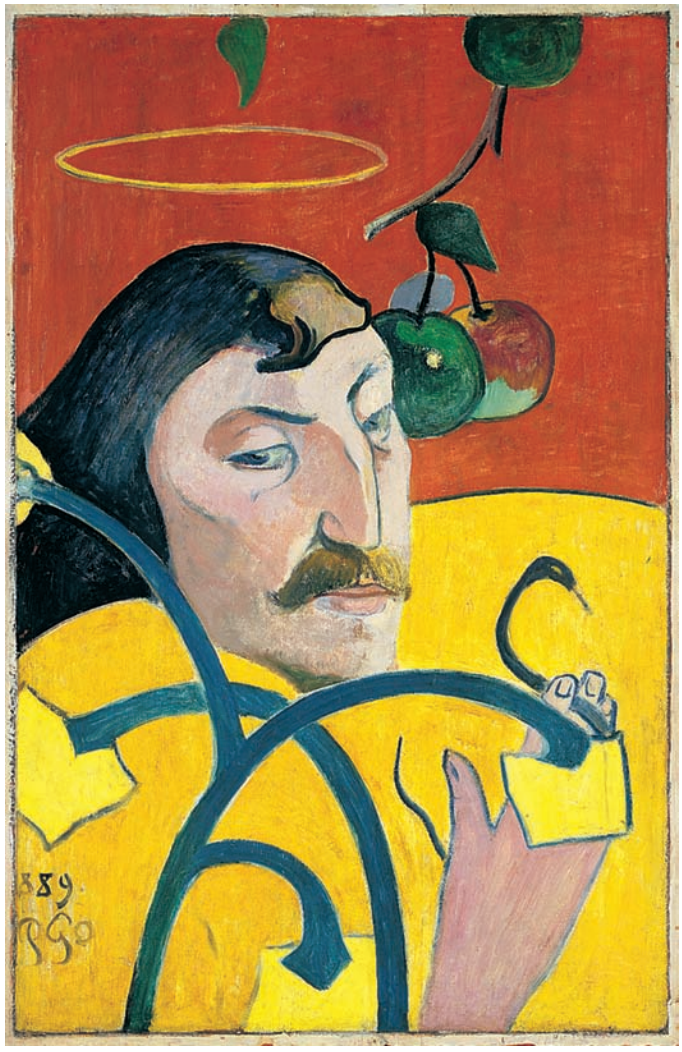
Paul Gauguin

Compared with van Gogh, whose pictorial surfaces have a dynamic character, Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) applied his paint smoothly. Although Gauguin's colors are bright, they are arranged as flat shapes, usually outlined in black. The surfaces of his pictures seem soft and smooth in contrast to the energetic rhythms of van Gogh's thick brushstrokes.

Gauguin began his career under the aegis of the Impressionists—he exhibited with them from 1879 to 1886—and then went on to explore new approaches to style. In *The Yellow Christ* (fig. **25.13**) of 1889, Gauguin identifies with the Symbolist movement (see p. 463). He sets the Crucifixion in a Breton landscape and depicts Christ in flattened yellows. Three women in local costume encircle the Cross—a reference to traditional Christian symbolism, in which the circle signifies the Church. In fact, the women of Brittany often prayed at large stone crosses in the countryside. The juxtaposition of the Crucifixion with the late-nineteenth-century landscape of northern France is a temporal and spatial condensation that is characteristic of the dreamworld depicted by the Symbolists. It is also intended to convey the hallucinatory aspects of prayer, indicating that through meditating on the scene of the Crucifixion the Breton women have conjured up an image of the event.



25.13 Paul Gauguin, *The Yellow Christ,* 1889. Oil on canvas, 36¼ × 28⅞ in. (92.1 × 73.3 cm). Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.



25.14 Paul Gauguin, *Self-Portrait with Halo,* 1889. Oil on wood, 31¼ × 20¼ in. (79.5 × 51.4 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Chester Dale Collection). In 1873 Gauguin, then working as a stockbroker, married a Danish piano teacher, with whom he led a middle-class life and had five children. In 1882 he became a full-time painter and deserted his family. After a turbulent year with van Gogh in Arles, in the south of France, Gauguin returned in 1889 to Brittany, where he was influenced by the Symbolists, and his work assumed a spiritual, self-consciously symbolic quality.

In *Self-Portrait with Halo* (fig. **25.14**) of the same year, two apples are suspended behind Gauguin's head. They, like the serpent rising through his hand, allude to the Fall of Man. The flat, curved plant stems in the foreground repeat the motion of the serpent, the outline of Gauguin's lock of hair, and the painting's date and signature. The clear division of the picture plane into red and yellow depicts the artist's divided sense of himself; his head is caught between the two colors, implying that his soul wavers between the polarities of good and evil. Gauguin combines Symbolist color with traditional motifs to convey this struggle. He is at once the tempted and the tempter, a saint and a sinner, an angel and a devil. An important feature of this *Self-Portrait* is Gauguin's contrast between himself as a physical entity and the red and yellow background. His hand and face, as well as the apples, are modeled three-

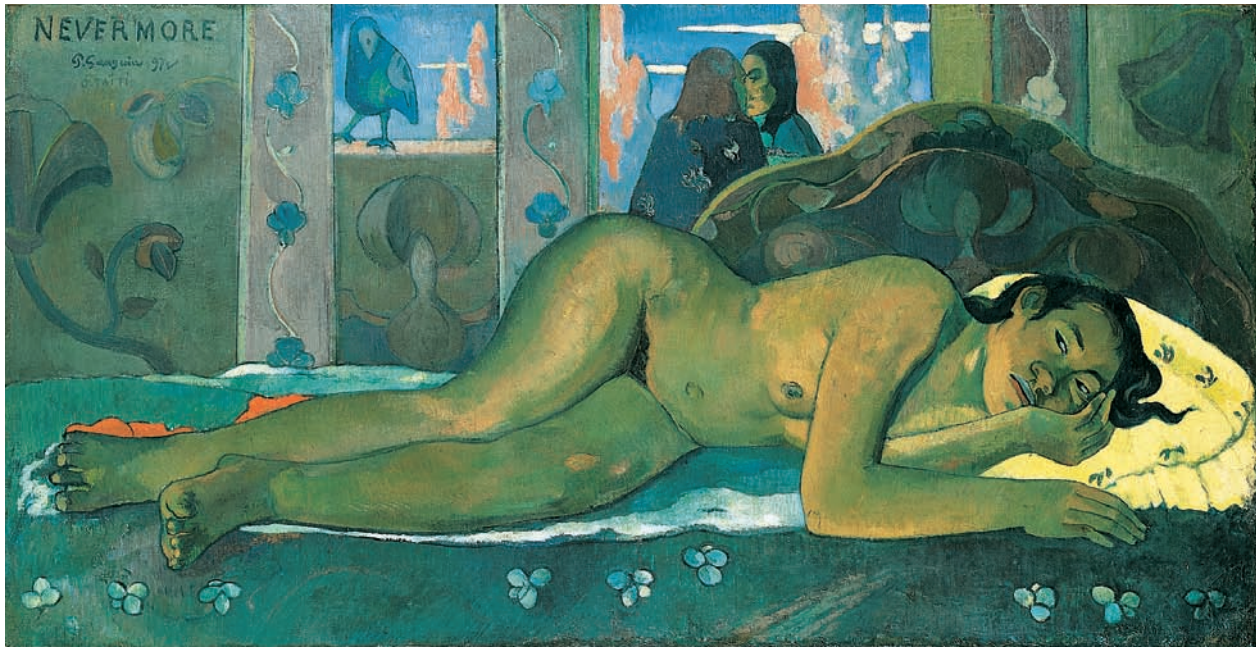
dimensionally, whereas the red and yellow are flat. These methods by which the artist depicted animate and inanimate objects continued to be used throughout his career.

In 1891 Gauguin sold thirty paintings to finance a trip to Tahiti (see Box, p. 462). Apart from an eighteen-month stay in France in 1895–96, he spent the rest of his life in the South Sea Islands. In his Tahitian paintings, Gauguin synthesized the Symbolist taste for dreams and myths with native subjects and traditional Western themes. *Nevermore* (fig. **25.15**), for example, depicts a Tahitian version of the reclining nude. The brightly colored patterns and silhouettes indicate the influence both of Japanese prints and of native designs. They enliven the composition and contrast with the immobility of the figures.

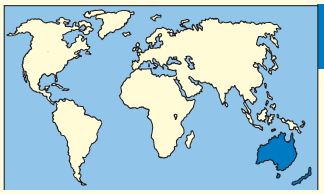
Gauguin has infused the traditional reclining nude with a sense of danger and suspicion. She evidently knows of the danger, since she rolls her eyes as if aware of the two women talking in the background. The title of the picture, spelled out in the upper left corner, echoes the refrain of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," which Gauguin knew from the French translation by the critic and poet Charles Baudelaire:

> Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
> weak and weary,
> Over many a quaint and curious volume of
> forgotten lore—
> While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there
> came a tapping,
> As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my
> chamber door.
> "'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my
> chamber door—
> Only this and nothing more." . . .
> "Prophet!" said I,
> "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
> Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed
> thee here ashore,
> Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land
> enchanted—
> On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly,
> I implore—
> Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me,
> I implore!"
> Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

In Gauguin's painting, the raven perches on a shelf between the title and the whispering women, and stares at the nude. The juxtaposition of raven, nude, and talking women hints at a silent, but sinister, communication. In this combination of Tahitian imagery and Western themes, self-consciously imbued with a psychic dimension, Gauguin merges his personal brand of Post-Impressionism with a Symbolist quality.



25.15 Paul Gauguin, *Nevermore,* 1897. Oil on canvas, 1 ft. 11⅞ in. × 3 ft. 9⅝ in. (61 × 116 cm). The Samuel Courtauld Trust, Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, London, England. Although Gauguin's style changed little after he left France, Polynesian life and culture became the subject of his work. Gradually, poverty, alcoholism, and syphilis undermined his health, and he died at age fifty-five, after at least one suicide attempt.



Gauguin and Oceania

Following the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, there developed a new interest in Oceania, which includes Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. The possibility that man existed there in the utopian state of nature posited by Jean-Jacques Rousseau intrigued Western Europe. Between 1768 and 1778, Captain Cook made three voyages to the South Seas. Collectors began to focus on Oceanic objects that had been brought back by explorers. Descriptions and drawings of the native populations—their artifacts, dwellings, and costumes, and even their tattoos—achieved a certain popularity in Europe.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, after the fashion for *japonisme* had been established, ethnology museums became more numerous and began to mount exhibits of Oceanic art. This was encouraged by French colonial expansion in Africa and the Far East (especially Indochina) in the 1880s. In 1882 the Musée d'Ethnographie (Musée de l'Homme) opened in Paris, and the arts of Polynesia were well represented. In an effort to provide "context," the Universal Exposition of 1889 exhibited Oceanic objects in reconstructed village settings.

Gauguin was one of the first major artists to become interested in Oceanic culture and to collect its art. The European fantasy of a "noble savage" appealed to him, and in 1891 he gave the following account of his intention to live and work in Tahiti:

> I am leaving in order to have peace and quiet, to be rid of the influence of civilization. I only want to do simple, very simple art, and to be able to do that, I have to immerse myself in virgin nature, see no one but savages, live their life, with no other thought in mind but to render, the way a child would, the concepts formed in my brain and to do this with the aid of nothing but the primitive means of art, the only means that are good and true.[2]

For Gauguin, Tahiti had many complex associations. It was one aspect of the ambivalent self he depicted in the *Self-Portrait* of 1889 (see fig. **25.14**). He saw Tahiti as a new Eden, an island paradise where nature took precedence over the corrupt, industrial, "civilized" West; and he described his trip as a return to the "childhood of mankind." The South Seas also fueled the eclectic character of his art. For he never renounced the Western tradition, in which he was deeply immersed. His affinity with late-nineteenth-century European abstraction is evident in his reply to a question about his "red dogs" and "pink skies":

> It's music, if you like! I borrow some subject or other from life or from nature as a pretext, I arrange lines and colors so as to obtain symphonies, harmonies that do not represent a thing that is real, in the vulgar sense of the word, and do not directly express any idea, but are supposed to make you think the way music is supposed to make you think, unaided by ideas or images, simply through the mysterious affinities that exist between our brains and such arrangements of colors and lines.[3]

Gauguin was a prodigious synthesizer of different artistic traditions, including those of Western Europe, Japanese woodblock, and the sculpture of Egypt, Oceania, Indonesia, and the Far East. For example, he combined Oceanic mythology with Christian and Buddhist iconography. In his *Idol with the Seashell* (fig. **25.16**) of about 1893, the figure represents Taaroa, who was worshiped on Easter Island as the divine creative force of the universe. The prominent teeth, made of inlaid bone, carry cannibalistic implications. But the idol occupies a traditional pose of Buddha, and the rounded, polished shell is reminiscent of the Christian halo. In such works as this, Gauguin helped to correct the popular misunderstanding of the tribal arts as primitive in the sense of regressive. For him, the incorporation of various non-Western forms and motifs into Western art expanded intellectual as well as aesthetic experience.

25.16 Paul Gauguin, *Idol with the Seashell*, c. 1893. Wood, 10⅝ in. (27 cm) high. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Symbolist Movement

Symbolism was particularly strong in France and Belgium in the late nineteenth century. It began as a literary movement, emphasizing internal psychological phenomena rather than objective descriptions of nature.

The English word *symbol* comes from the Greek word *sumbolon*, meaning "token." It originally referred to a sign that had been divided in two and could therefore be identified because the two halves fit together. A symbol thus signifies the matching part or other half. It is something that stands for something else. Symbols derive from myth, folklore, allegory, dreams, and other manifestations of the unconscious. The Symbolists believed that by focusing on the internal world of dreams, it was possible to rise above the here and now and arrive at the universal. It is no coincidence that the Symbolist movement in art and literature was contemporary with advances in psychology and the development of psychoanalysis.

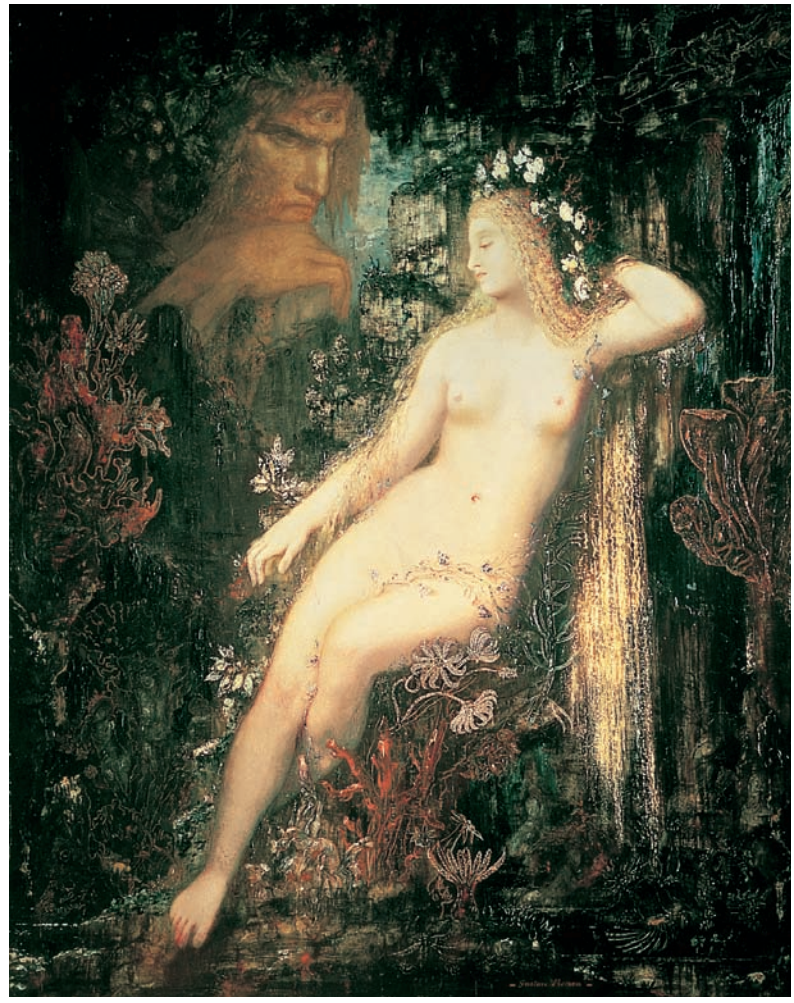
In literature, the poets' "Symbolist Manifesto" of 1886 rejected Zola's Naturalism in favor of the Idea and the Self. The French poets Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Paul Verlaine became cult figures for the Symbolists, as did the American writer Edgar Allan Poe and the Swedish philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg. Their literature of decadence, disintegration, and the macabre shares many qualities with Symbolist painting. An erotic subtext, often containing perverse overtones, pervades and haunts the imagery.

Symbolism

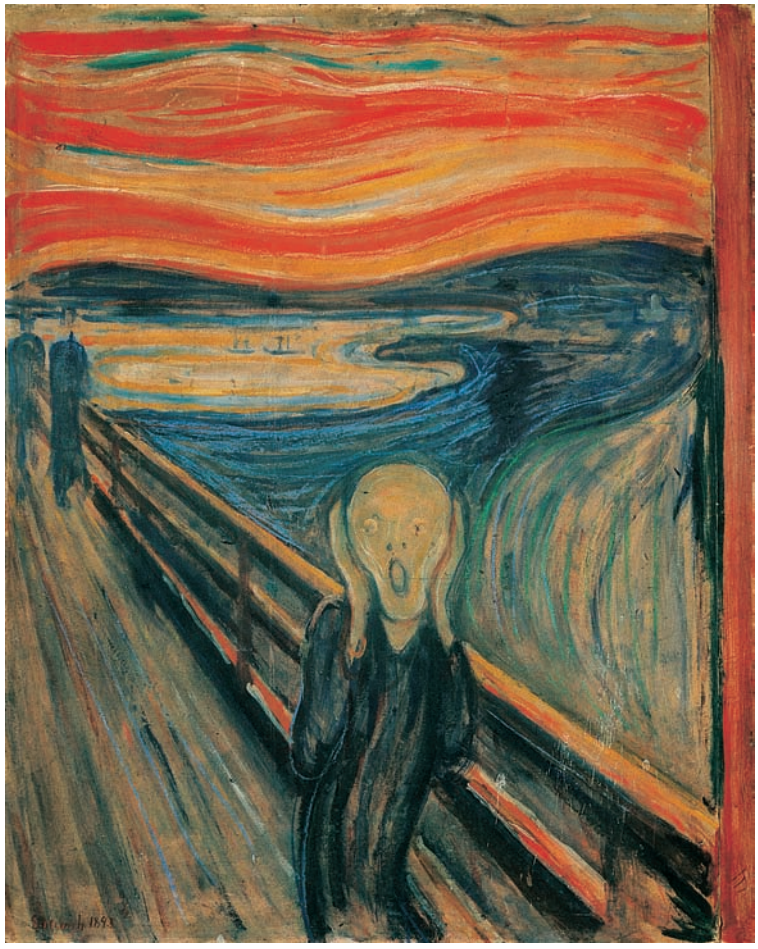
The Symbolists (see Box) rejected both the social consciousness of Realism and the Impressionist interest in nature and the outdoors. They were attracted instead by the internal world of the imagination and by images that portrayed the irrational. They were also drawn to mythological subject matter because of its affinity with dreaming, but their rendition of myth was neither heroic in character nor Classical in style. Rather, it was disturbed and poetic, and it contained more than a hint of perversity.

Gustave Moreau

Gustave Moreau (1826–98) was the leader of the Symbolist movement in France. His *Galatea* (fig. **25.17**) depicts an imaginary scene from Greek myth in which the Cyclops Polyphemos gazes at the dozing, idealized nude figure of his mortal beloved. He holds the stone with which he has killed her lover, Acis, because of his primitive longing for her, which is reflected in the abundance of rich but bizarre foliage. Polyphemos's power over Galatea is conveyed by his giant size and the alert gaze of his single eye—uncannily juxtaposed with her two closed eyes. The scene depicts a tale of unrequited love and passion turned to murder and is pervaded by a disturbing calm. An eerie, unreal light transports the *Galatea* into the realm of imagination: the Cyclops is bathed in orange light, while Galatea is illuminated by white light. Her pose recalls the traditional reclining nude, which enhances the impression of her vulnerability in the presence of Polyphemos.



25.17 Gustave Moreau, *Galatea*, 1880–81. Oil on panel, 33½ × 26¾ in. (85 × 67 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.



25.18 Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893. Oil, pastel, and casein on cardboard, 35¾ × 29 in. (90.8 × 73.7 cm). National Gallery, Oslo, Norway.

Edvard Munch

The Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944) went in 1889 to Paris, where he came into contact with Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. The combination of Symbolist content with Post-Impressionism was particularly suited to Munch's character. His mental suffering, like van Gogh's, was so openly acknowledged in his imagery and statements that it is unavoidable in considering his work. His pictures conform to Symbolist theory in that they depict states of mind, emotions, or ideas rather than observable physical reality. The style in which Munch's mental states are expressed, however, is Post-Impressionist in its expressive distortions of form and its use of nonlocal color.

In his best-known painting, *The Scream* (fig. **25.18**) of 1893, Munch represents his own sense of disintegration in a figure crossing the bridge over Oslo's Christianiafjord. The bright colors—reds, oranges, and yellows—intensify the sunset, with darker blues and pinks defining the water. Both sky and water seem caught up in an endless swirl echoing the artist's anguish. His fellow pedestrians at the far end of the bridge continue on ahead, whereas he stops to face the picture plane, simultaneously screaming and holding his ears. The action of blocking out the sound pushes in the sides of his face so that his head resembles a skull and repeats the landscape curves. Munch described the experience depicted in this painting as follows: "I felt as though a scream went through nature—I thought I heard a scream—I painted this picture—painted the clouds like real blood. The colors were screaming."[4] He thus joins the scream of nature as his form echoes the waving motion of the landscape.

The remainder of this text surveys the major styles of twentieth-century art, which derive from certain nineteenth-century developments. Realism had introduced a new social consciousness into the visual arts, and Impressionism had made artists and viewers alike aware of the expressive power of the medium. Post-Impressionists explored various ways in which the individual brushstrokes could enhance and construct images, even to the point where the paint intruded on the subject. At the same time, Symbolism took up the Romantic interest in giving visual form to states of mind. The nineteenth century ended and the twentieth century began with an artist in whose work the medium and the imagination were combined as new subjects in Western art.

Naïve Painting: Henri Rousseau

Although Henri Rousseau (1844–1910) worked largely during the latter part of the nineteenth century, his impact on Western art history must be seen in the context of the first half of the twentieth century. He has been called a **naïve** painter because he had no formal training. He spent most of his working life as a customs inspector near Paris—hence his nickname "Le Douanier" ("customs officer"). He painted in his spare time, exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants, and in 1885 retired from his job to become a full-time painter. At first mocked by the critics, Rousseau was later much admired. In 1908 Pablo Picasso (see Chapter 26) held a banquet at his Montmartre studio in Rousseau's honor.

Rousseau's last great work, *The Dream* (fig. **25.19**), was painted in 1910, shortly before his death and eleven years after the publication of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (see Box, p. 466). The painting shows a nude, reclining but alert, in a pose related to the Classical reclining Venus (see figs. **16.32** and **23.18**). Rousseau's figure has been transported on a Victorian couch to a jungle setting, complete with wild animals and abundant flowers and foliage. Emerging from the jungle depths is a dark-gray creature, clothed in a colorful tunic, who stands upright. He is simultaneously animal and human and plays a musical instrument. The bizarre gray of his face and skin contrasts with the bright jungle colors. The daytime sky is at odds with the normal time for dreaming, which is night.

CONNECTIONS

See figure 16.32.
Titian, *Venus of Urbino,* c. 1538.

CONNECTIONS

See figure 23.18.
Édouard Manet, *Olympia,* 1865.

25.19 Henri Rousseau, *The Dream,* 1910. Oil on canvas, 6 ft. 8½ in. × 9 ft. 9½ in. (2.05 × 2.99 m). Museum of Modern Art, New York (Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller).

When asked about the unlikely juxtaposition of the couch with the jungle in *The Dream,* Rousseau provided two different answers. In the first, he said that the woman is the dreamer; she is sleeping on the couch, and both have been transported to the jungle. In the second, he said that the couch was there simply because of its red color. In the French journal *Soirées de Paris* (January 15, 1914), Rousseau published the following inscription for the painting:

> In a beautiful dream
> Yadwigha gently sleeps
> Heard the sounds of a pipe
> Played by a sympathetic charmer
> While the moon reflects
> On the rivers and the verdant trees
> The serpents attend
> The gay tunes of the instrument.

In one sense *The Dream* can be regarded as a synthesis of the two main trends in Western European art at the turn of the twentieth century. For lack of better terminology, these trends may be described as "subjectivity" (one of the primary characteristics of Romanticism and Symbolism) and "objectivity" (the ideal aspired to by the Realists and Impressionists). In *The Dream,* Rousseau merges the visionary world of dream and imagination with a detailed depiction of reality. To this end, he made a careful study of leaves and flowers before painting them, although their very "reality" in this painting has an eerie quality. However, *The Dream* is remarkably consistent with Freud's account of the mechanisms of dreaming and, as such, looks forward to twentieth-century Surrealism (see Chapter 28). Rousseau's image combines the dream (the picture) with the dreamer (the nude inside the picture). The precise, clear edges contain the wild character of the jungle, which symbolizes the primitive forces revealed in dreams.

HISTORY
Freud on the Mechanisms of Dreaming

In 1899 Sigmund Freud published *The Interpretation of Dreams.* Although initially only a few copies were sold, its impact on Western thought has been enormous. As defined by Freud, there are four mechanisms of dreaming:

1. **Representability** means that an idea or feeling can be changed into a picture. Dream pictures are unconscious regressions from words to images, whereas works of art are consciously controlled by the artist.
2. **Condensation** merges two or more elements into a new, disguised form. In Rousseau's *Dream,* for example, the jungle is condensed with a European drawing room, and day is condensed with night.
3. **Displacement** means moving an element from its usual setting to another place. The dark musician in *The Dream* is an example, for nonhuman features have been displaced onto him. Displacement can result in condensation. Geographical condensation is achieved by displacing the couch into the jungle.
4. **Symbolization** is the process of making symbols. A symbol is something that stands for something else. In *The Dream* the flowers, fruit, serpent, musician, jungle setting, and nude may be interpreted as symbols of the dreamer's sexual fantasies.

c. 1870 **c. 1910**

POST-IMPRESSIONISM AND THE LATE 19TH CENTURY

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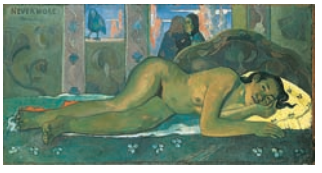
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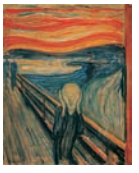
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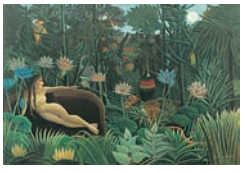

(25.19)

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1875)

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (1879)

Edison invents electric lightbulb (1879–80)

European colonization of Africa (1880s)

Brooklyn Bridge opens (1883)

Cinematograph invented (1894)

The Curies discover radium (1898)

Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899)

First Model T Ford (1908)

26

The Early Twentieth Century: Picasso, Fauvism, Expressionism, and Matisse

Culture and Context

Western history is traditionally divided into centuries, and historians tend to see significance in the "turn of a century." Given the span of human history from the Paleolithic era, in which the first known works of art were produced, a century represents a small, almost infinitesimal, fragment of time. Nevertheless, as we consider historical events that are closer to our own era, their significance seems to increase and time itself to expand. Although we measure the prehistoric era by millennia and later periods by centuries, we tend to measure our own century by decades—or less. Our perception of time depends upon its relation to ourselves.

From the perspective of the turn of the twenty-first century, it seems that rapid changes have occurred in many fields. Technological advances set in motion by the Industrial Revolution speeded up communication and travel to an unprecedented degree. Electric lights have been in use since the 1890s, radios since 1895, cars since the early 1900s, televisions and computers since the 1950s. The Wright brothers flew the first airplane in 1903. Sixty-six years later, in 1969, the United States put the first man on the moon. Great strides were made in medicine, Albert Einstein formulated the theory of relativity, and Sigmund Freud founded the psychoanalytic movement.

In politics, too, major changes took place. Lenin led the Russian Revolution in 1917; by 1991 the Soviet Union was dissolved. World War I (1914–18) decimated a generation of European men. Following the Great Depression of 1929, Europe witnessed the rise of Hitler and National Socialism in Germany, as well as Fascism in Italy and Spain, which culminated in World War II (1939–45). The end of that war ushered in the anxieties of the nuclear age and new concerns about the future of the environment.

In the arts as well, rapid changes are evident, as styles came and went, often merging into one another. For the purposes of this text, the twentieth century is divided by the marker of World War II. Up to that point, Paris had been the center of the Western art world. As Gertrude Stein (see p. 480) said, "Paris was where the twentieth century was." Paris exerted a strong pull on artists, who studied in its art schools, and on collectors and critics, who toured its studios, galleries, and museums. After the war, and partly because of it, many artists—indeed, entire schools of artists—were forced to flee Europe.

In 1900 works by Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists were shown at the World's Fair, or International Exposition, in Paris. These styles had emphasized the primacy of the medium. Building on this innovation, twentieth-century artists expanded into new areas, influenced in part by non-Western cultures. The nineteenth century had developed a taste for *japonisme* as a result of contact with Japanese woodblock prints. In the early twentieth century, there was a growing interest in African art, the geometric abstraction of which appealed to artists, collectors, and critics (see Box, p. 469).

Whereas the Impressionists extended the range of subject matter by expanding the range of social classes depicted by Neoclassical artists, twentieth-century artists developed a new iconography of everyday objects. They also began to use new materials, such as plastics, which resulted from advances in technology. New techniques for making art were developed, especially in the second half of the century. Technological developments also encouraged new directions in architecture.

The very idea of "newness" became one of the tenets of modernism. The so-called avant-garde (literally the "vanguard," or leaders, of artistic change) became a prominent force in Western art. Continual striving for avant-garde status contributed to the rapidity with which styles changed in the twentieth century.

Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse

In painting, two figures dominated the first half of the twentieth century: the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and the French artist Henri Matisse (1869–1954). Both made sculptures but were primarily painters. In contrast to the experience of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, the genius of Picasso and Matisse was recognized relatively

early in their careers. Their paths crossed at the Paris apartment of Gertrude Stein, the American expatriot author, who held regular gatherings of artists and intellectuals from Europe and the United States.

Picasso and Matisse began their careers in the nineteenth century under the influence of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Symbolism. They soon branched out—Picasso earlier than Matisse—and spearheaded the avant-garde, although their styles were quite distinct. Matisse began and ended as a colorist, with important evolutions along the way. Picasso, on the other hand, shifted from one style to another, often working in more than one mode at the same time (see Chapter 27). His first individual style was actually Symbolist; it is referred to as his "Blue Period."

Symbolism: Picasso's Blue Period

Picasso was born in Málaga on the south coast of Spain. His father, José Ruíz Blasco, was an art teacher devoted to furthering his son's career. (Picasso took his mother's family name.) From 1901 to 1904 Picasso moved between Paris, Barcelona, and Madrid, settling permanently in Paris in 1904. The subjects of Picasso's Blue Period, which lasted from approximately 1901 to 1904, were primarily the poor and unfortunate. Consistent with the Symbolist aesthetic, Picasso's "Blue" paintings depict a mood or state of mind—in this case, melancholy and pessimism (note, for example, the expressions "to be in a blue mood," "blue Monday," "to have the blues"). The predominance of blue as the mood-creating element reflects the liberation of color that had been effected by nineteenth-century Post-Impressionism.

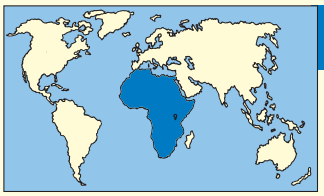
Picasso emphasizes the somber quality of *The Old Guitarist* (fig. **26.1**) with the all-pervasive blue color and the shimmering silver light (see Box). The guitarist's long, thin, bony form, tattered clothes, and downward curves convey dejection. His inward focus enhances the impression that he is listening intently, absorbed in his music, and also indicates that he is blind. The elongated forms and flickering silver light evoke the spirituality of El Greco.

26.1 Pablo Picasso, *The Old Guitarist,* 1903. Oil on panel, 4 ft. ⅝ in. × 2 ft. 8½ in. (1.23 × 0.83 m). Art Institute of Chicago (Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection).

LITERATURE
Wallace Stevens: "The Man with the Blue Guitar"

The Symbolist quality of Picasso's *Old Guitarist* appealed to the American poet Wallace Stevens (1879–1955), who wrote "The Man with the Blue Guitar" in 1937 in response to it:

> The man bent over his guitar,
> A shearsman of sorts. The day was green.
> They said, "You have a blue guitar,
> You do not play things as they are."
> The man replied, "Things as they are
> Are changed upon the blue guitar." [stanza I]
>
> And the color, the overcast blue
> Of the air, in which the blue guitar
> Is a form, described but difficult,
> And I am merely a shadow hunched
> Above the arrowy, still strings,
> The maker of a thing yet to be made;
> The color like a thought that grows
> Out of a mood, the tragic robe
> Of the actor, half his gesture, half
> His speech, the dress of his meaning, silk
> Sodden with his melancholy words,
> The weather of his stage, himself. [stanza IX][1]



African Art and the European Avant-Garde

With the increasing number of ethnological museums at the end of the nineteenth century, non-Western art was becoming an aesthetic force in Europe. Against the background of nineteenth-century *japonisme,* the influence of Oceanic art, revivals of interest in Egyptian and Iberian art, and the spatial revolution of Cézanne, the early-twentieth-century avant-garde was receptive to new formal ideas. One of the major sources for these ideas was the growing interest in African art. The interest in such cultures was known as "primitivism."

Most surviving African art is sculpture, which can be understood only in its cultural context. The cave paintings and glyptic arts of Africa were little known to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European artists, who rarely had contact with African architecture.

The Baule ancestor from the Ivory Coast (fig. **26.2**) typifies the African sculptures whose abstraction appealed to the Western avant-garde in the early twentieth century. Its surface is smooth and polished, with relief patterns of scarification on the face, neck, and torso. The hair is made of finely incised parallel lines. A mechanical effect is created by abrupt, nonorganic planar shifts, which contrast with Classical proportions. Compare figure **26.2** with figure **7.14.** Such objects offered Western artists new ways of approaching the human figure. At the same time, however, the proportions of African sculpture have meanings that vary from culture to culture, which were not understood by most Westerners in the early twentieth century.

The following quotations from European artists discussed in this text express the liberating effect of their encounter with African sculpture:

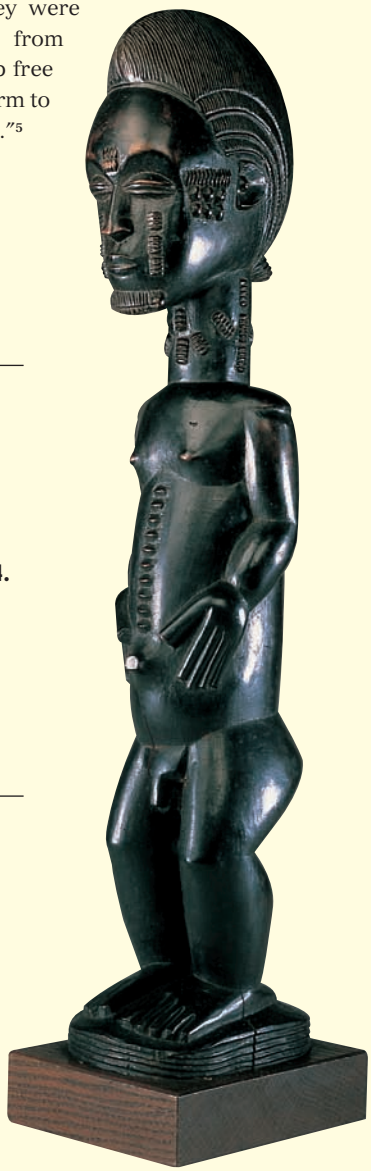
> Kandinsky (statement, published 1930): "the shattering impression made on me by Negro art, which I saw in [1907] in the Ethnographic Museum in Berlin."[2]

> Marc (1911): "I was finally caught up, astonished and shocked, by the carvings of the Cameroon people, carvings which can perhaps be surpassed only by the sublime works of the Incas. I find it so self-evident that we should seek the rebirth of our artistic feeling in this cold dawn of artistic intelligence, rather than in cultures that have already gone through a thousand-year cycle like the Japanese or the Italian Renaissance."[3]

> Matisse (on African sculptures in a shop on the rue de Rennes in Paris; interview recorded in 1941): "I was astonished to see how they were conceived from the point of view of sculptural language; how it was close to the Egyptians. . . . Compared to European sculpture, which always took its point of departure from musculature and started from the description of the object, these Negro statues were made in terms of their material, according to invented planes and proportions."[4]

> Picasso (on African masks): "For me the [tribal] masks were not just sculptures, they were magical objects . . . intercessors . . . against everything—against unknown, threatening spirits. . . . They were weapons—to keep people from being ruled by spirits, to help free themselves. . . . If we give a form to these spirits, we become free."[5]

See figure 7.14. Polykleitos, *Doryphoros (Spear Bearer),* c. 440 B.C.



26.2 Baule ancestor, Ivory Coast. Wood, 20½ in. (52.1 cm) high. British Museum, London, England.

Fauvism: Matisse in 1905–6

In 1905 a new generation of artists exhibited their paintings in Paris at the Salon d'Automne. Bright, vivid colors seemed to burst from their canvases and dominate the exhibition space. Forms were built purely from color, and vigorous patterns and unusual color combinations created startling effects. To a large extent, the works were derived from Gauguin's Symbolist use of color. The critic Louis Vauxcelles noticed a single traditional sculpture in the room, and exclaimed, "Donatello parmi les fauves!" ("Donatello among the wild beasts!"), because the color and movement of the paintings reminded him of the jungle. His term stuck, and the style of those pictures is still referred to as "Fauve."

Vauxcelles's observation of a traditional sculpture juxtaposed with the works of the young artists exhibiting in 1905 signaled the latest skirmish in the traditional Western European dispute over the primacy of line versus color. Although there was plenty of "line" in Fauve painting, it was the brilliant, nonnaturalistic color and emotional exuberance that struck viewers. In contrast, Classical restraint and harmony, which were associated with line, appeared more controlled and, by implication, more civilized.

26.3 (Right) Henri Matisse, *Woman with the Hat,* 1905. Oil on canvas, 2 ft. 7¾ in. × 1 ft. 11½ in. (81 × 65 cm). Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco (Bequest of Elise S. Haas).

26.4 Henri Matisse, *The Joy of Life,* 1905–6. Oil on canvas, 5 ft. 8½ in. × 7 ft. 9¾ in. (1.74 × 2.38 m). The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania. Archives Matisse.

The leading Fauve artist in France was Henri Matisse. Matisse was born in northern France. He reportedly decided to become a painter when his mother gave him a set of *chromos* (colors) while he was recuperating from surgery. His *Woman with the Hat* (a portrait of his wife) of 1905 (fig. **26.3**) is a construction in color—a concept that Matisse had learned from Cézanne. Throughout the picture plane, shading, modeling, and perspective are subordinate to color, which creates the features. The result is a nonorganic masklike quality. The background of the painting is identified only as patches of color. To the right of Madame Matisse (our left) are greens, yellows, blues, and oranges. At the opposite side, the background is mainly green and lavender. Variations on these colors recur in the face, creating a chromatic unity between figure and background.

The painting caused a scandal in the Paris art world for its unconventional use of color. But when purchased by Michael Stein, Gertrude's brother, the painting's reputation was saved. From that point on, Matisse's prices began to rise.

Matisse's *Joy of Life* (fig. **26.4**) shows his use of Fauve color to create a mood of exuberant, creative eroticism. The entire picture undulates with passionate enjoyment as figures dance, play music, and embrace. The "non-realistic" colors, especially the warm reds, yellows, and oranges, are as uninhibited as the figures. And the continually curving lines seem to dance and pulsate in time to music. Despite the overt modernity of the work, however, Matisse refers to the idyllic pastoral tradition of antiquity in the shepherd, to dancers circling Greek vases in the background, and to Classical nudes reclining and stretching.

Expressionism

In Germany, the artists most interested in the expressive possibilities of color—as derived from Post-Impressionism—were called Expressionists. They formed groups that outlasted the Fauves in France and styles that persisted until the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Expressionism, like Fauvism, used color to create mood and emotion but differed from Fauvism in its greater concern for the emotional and spiritual properties of color and form. Expressionists were also less concerned than the Fauves with the formal and structural composition of color.

The Bridge *(Die Brücke)*

In 1905, the year of the Fauve exhibition in Paris, four German architecture students in Dresden formed a group called *Die Brücke* (The Bridge), which lasted until 1913. The name was inspired by the artists' intention to create a "bridge," or link, between their own art and modern revolutionary ideas, and between tradition and the avant-garde. The notion of "bridging" modernity and the past derived from the philosophy of Frederick Nietzsche, who believed that civilized society continually wavers between progress and decline. The artists of The Bridge modernized both the spiritual abstraction of medieval art and the geometric aesthetic of African and Oceanic art by integrating them with the mechanical forms of the city. Expressionist color was typically brilliant, vivid, and sometimes garish. Paintings by these artists can be further energized by harsh, angular shapes that reflect a pessimistic view of society.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

The most important founding artist of The Bridge was Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938), who had been trained as an architect before becoming a painter. *The Street* of 1907 (fig. **26.5**) combines exuberant Expressionist color with undulating forms reminiscent of Munch. The flat color areas, on the other hand, can be related to Fauvism. Like Matisse's *Joy of Life, The Street* has a dreamlike quality created by unusual color and curvilinear, undulating forms.

26.5 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *The Street*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 4 ft. 11¼ in. × 6 ft. 6⅞ in. (1.5 × 2 m). Museum of Modern Art, New York. During World War I, Kirchner was sent from the front for psychiatric treatment. Repeated panic attacks landed him in a Swiss sanitorium, and a deep depression resulted in his suicide in 1938.

26.6a Emil Nolde, *Still Life with Masks*, 1911. Oil on canvas, 28¾ × 30½ in. (73.0 × 77.5 cm). Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Nolde's interest in ethnology inspired trips to New Guinea and other South Pacific islands as well as to the Far East.

26.6b Emil Nolde, drawing of an Oceanic canoe prow, for left-hand mask in fig. **26.6a,** 1911. Pencil drawing, 11⅞ × 7⅛ in. (30 × 18 cm). Stiftung Seebüll Ada und Emil Nolde.

Emil Nolde

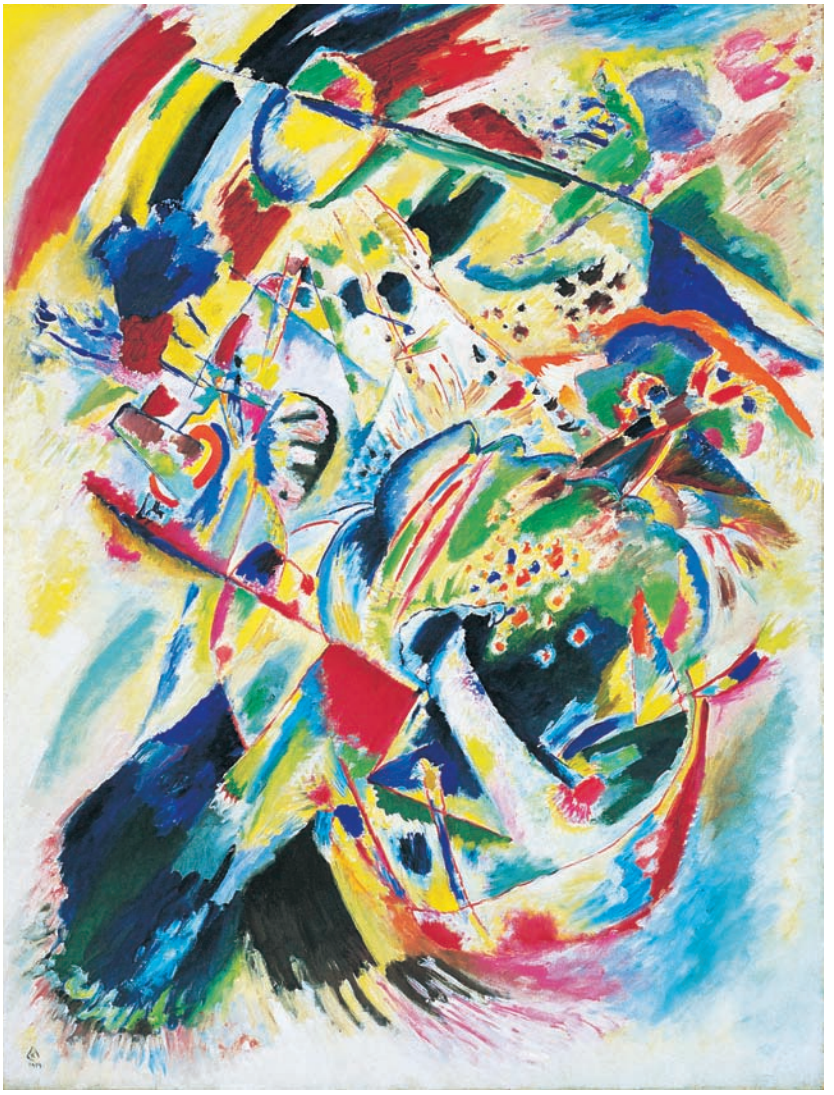
Another artist associated with German Expressionism, Emil Nolde (1867–1956), spent only a year as a member of The Bridge. His *Still Life with Masks* of 1911 (fig. **26.6a**) shows his combination of bright color with thickly applied paint to achieve intense, dynamic effects. The upside-down pink mask and the adjacent yellow one were inspired by northern European carnivals. But the red mask at the far left is based on Nolde's own drawing of an Oceanic canoe prow (fig. **26.6b**). The yellow skull is also derived from non-Western prototypes—in this case a shrunken head from Brazil, of which Nolde also made sketches. African examples probably inspired the green mask at the upper right, but the combination of a green surface with red outlining the features is an Expressionist use of color. Nolde's non-Western imagery served to express qualities that were finally more in tune with Expressionism than with the cultural or artistic intentions of the non-Western art he studied.

The Blue Rider *(Der Blaue Reiter)*

Another German Expressionist group, more drawn to nonfigurative abstraction than the members of The Bridge, was *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider), established in Munich in 1911. The name of the group, derived from the visionary language of the Book of Revelation, was inspired by the millennium and the notion that Moscow would be the new center of the world from 1900—as Rome had once been. "Blue Rider" referred to the emblem of the city of Moscow: Saint George (the "Rider") killing the dragon.

Vassily Kandinsky

The Russian artist Vassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) was among the first to eliminate recognizable objects from his paintings. He identified with The Blue Rider as the artist who would ride into the future of a spiritual, nonfigurative, and mystical art; for him the color blue signified the masculine aspect of spirituality (cf. fig. **26.9**). At the age of thirty, Kandinsky left Moscow, where he was a law student, and went to Munich to study painting. There he was a founder of the *Neue Künstler Vereinigung* (New Artists' Association), or NKV, whose aim was rebellion against tradition. A few artists split from the NKV to form The Blue Rider.



26.7 Vassily Kandinsky, *Panel for Edwin R. Campbell No. 4* (formerly *Painting Number 201, Winter*), 1914. Oil on canvas, 5 ft. 4¼ in. × 4 ft. ¼ in. (1.63 × 1.24 m). Museum of Modern Art, New York (Nelson A. Rockefeller Fund, by exchange).

For Kandinsky, art was a matter of rhythmic lines, colors, and shapes, rather than narrative. Like Whistler, Kandinsky gave his works musical titles intended to express their abstract qualities. By eliminating references to material reality, Kandinsky followed The Blue Rider's avoidance of the mundane in order to communicate the spiritual in art. Titles such as *Improvisation* evoked the dynamic spontaneity of creative activity, and the *Compositions* emphasized the organized abstraction of his lines, shapes, and colors.

In 1912 Kandinsky published *Concerning the Spiritual in Art,* in which he argued that music was intimately related to art. He was by temperament drawn to religious and philosophical thinking imbued with strains of mysticism and the occult, which can be related to the millennarian spirit reflected in The Blue Rider emblem. And he believed that art had a spiritual quality because it was the product of the artist's spirituality. The work of art, in turn, reflected this through musical harmonies created by form and color.

Panel for Edwin R. Campbell No. 4 (formerly *Painting Number 201, Winter*) of 1914 (fig. **26.7**) was one of four in a series representing the seasons—this one being winter. In it Kandinsky creates a swirling, curvilinear motion, within which there are varied lines and shapes. Lines range from thick to thin, color patches from plain to spotty, and hues from unmixed to blended. The most striking color is red, which is set off against yellows and softer blues and greens. The strongest accents are blacks with the sense of winter suggested by the whites, which occur in pure form and also blend with the colors. Blues become light blues and reds become pinks, creating an illusion of coldness associated with winter.

Later, in the 1920s, despite stylistic changes inspired by his association with the Moscow avant-garde, Kandinsky continued to pursue the notion of the spiritual in art. He did so by endowing delicate geometric shapes with a dynamic spatial tension. This is evident in *Several Circles, No. 323* (fig. **26.8**), in which translucent circles float in a swirling space. Some of the circles are isolated, others barely touch the edge of adjacent circles, while a few appear to skim over one another, their geometric purity contrasting with the textured background. Kandinsky's image has an "otherworldly" quality, evoking both the minutiae of the invisible molecular world and the vast distances of a solar system occupied by orbiting moons and planets.

26.8 Vassily Kandinsky, *Several Circles, No. 323*, 1926. Oil on canvas, 55⅛ × 55⅛ in. (140.0 × 140.0 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (Gift, 1941).

26.9 Franz Marc, *The Large Blue Horses,* 1911. Oil on canvas, 3 ft. 5⅝ in. × 5 ft. 11⁵⁄₁₆ in. (1.0 × 1.8 m). Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (Gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, Gilbert Walker Fund, 1942).

Franz Marc

The other major Blue Rider artist was Franz Marc (1880–1916), who joined Kandinsky in editing *The Blue Rider Yearbook* of 1912. This contained discussions of Picasso, Matisse, The Bridge, The Blue Rider itself, and the new interest in expanding aesthetic experience through contact with non-Western art. In contrast to Kandinsky, however, Marc did not entirely eliminate recognizable objects from his work, except in preliminary drawings made shortly before his premature death.

Marc's *Large Blue Horses* of 1911 (fig. **26.9**) combines geometry with rich color. Like Gauguin's "red dogs" and "pink skies" (see p. 462), Marc's animals and their setting can be considered in the abstract terms of musical composition. They are an arrangement in foreshortened blue forms, harmonizing with the brightly colored curvilinear landscape. Marc's use of animals reflects his belief that they are better suited than humans to the expression of cosmological ideas. The two gray curves representing slender tree trunks serve as structural anchors. They also create a sense of confinement, which compresses the space and enhances the monumentality of the horses.

Marc shared Kandinsky's spiritual attitude toward the formal qualities of painting, especially color. Like Kandinsky, he thought of blue as masculine; yellow, in Marc's view, has the calm sensuality of a woman, and red is aggressive. Mixed colors are endowed with additional meaning. For Marc, therefore, color functioned independently of narrative content.

Marc's *Small Yellow Horses* of 1912 (fig. **26.10**) lacks the structural elements of *The Large Blue Horses,* and the horses seem to flow into the landscape. The warm yellows, highlighted in places with oranges, correspond to the artist's association of yellow with female sensuality. The blues and greens of the horses' manes and contoured edges echo the landscape colors, whereas the blue horses contrast more sharply with the reds behind them. Marc thus juxtaposes the "masculine" blue with the "aggressive" reds, whereas the yellows are softer and have a more seductive character.

The Blue Rider, in contrast to The Bridge, was international in scope and had a greater impact on Western art. In particular, Kandinsky's nonfigurative imagery, which was among the first of its kind, was part of a revolutionary development that would remain an important current in twentieth-century art. Matisse and Picasso, for all their innovations, never completely renounced references to nature and to recognizable forms.

26.10 Franz Marc, *Small Yellow Horses,* 1912. Oil on canvas, 26 × 41 in. (66.0 × 104.0 cm). Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Germany.

Käthe Kollwitz

Although Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) was not a formal member of any artistic group, her *Whetting the Scythe* (fig. **26.11**) of 1904 conveys the direct emotional confrontation characteristic of Expressionism. Her harsh textures and preponderance of rich blacks enhance her typically depressive themes. The gnarled figure concentrating intently on her task is rendered in close-up, which accentuates the detailed depiction of the wrinkled hands and aged, slightly suspicious face. In the background, the cruciform arrangement of blacks reinforces the ominous associations of the image. The presence of the scythe, an attribute of the Grim Reaper, conforms to the woman's rather sinister quality and suggests impending death.

Although Kollwitz herself was financially comfortable, her imagery brings the viewer into contact with the emotional and material struggles of the working classes. This print is from a series published in 1904 to commemorate Germany's sixteenth-century peasant rebellion.

26.11 Käthe Kollwitz, *Whetting the Scythe,* 1904. Soft-ground 8th-state etching, 11 11/16 × 11 11/16 in. (29.7 × 29.7 cm). British Museum, London, England.

Matisse after Fauvism

Although Fauvism was short-lived, its impact, and that of Expressionism, laid the foundations of twentieth-century abstraction. Matisse reportedly said that "Fauvism is not everything, but it is the beginning of everything."

As Matisse developed, he was influenced by abstraction without embracing it completely. His sense of musical rhythm translated into line creates energetic, curvilinear biomorphic forms. On the other hand, the shapes and spaces of Matisse that are determined primarily by color and only secondarily by line are more static and geometric. These two tendencies—fluid line and flat color—create a dynamic tension that persists throughout his career.

Harmony in Red

In *Harmony in Red* of 1908–9 (fig. **26.12**), Matisse goes beyond the thick, constructive brushstrokes and unusual color juxtapositions of his Fauve period. The subject of the painting, a woman placing a bowl of fruit on a table, seems secondary to its formal arrangement. Within the room, the sense of perspective has been minimized because the table and wall are of the same red. The demarcation between them is indicated not by a constructed illusion of space but by a dark outline and by the bright still-life arrangements on the surface of the table. The effect is reinforced by the tilting plates and bowls. Linear perspective is confined to the chair at the left and the window frame behind it. But despite the flattening of the form by minimal modeling, Matisse endows the woman and the still-life objects with a sense of volume.

The landscape, visible through the open window, relieves the confined quality of the close-up interior view. It is related to the interior by the repetition of energetic black

26.12 Henri Matisse, *Harmony in Red,* 1908–9. Oil on canvas, 5 ft. 11 in. × 8 ft. 1 in. (1.80 × 2.46 m). State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

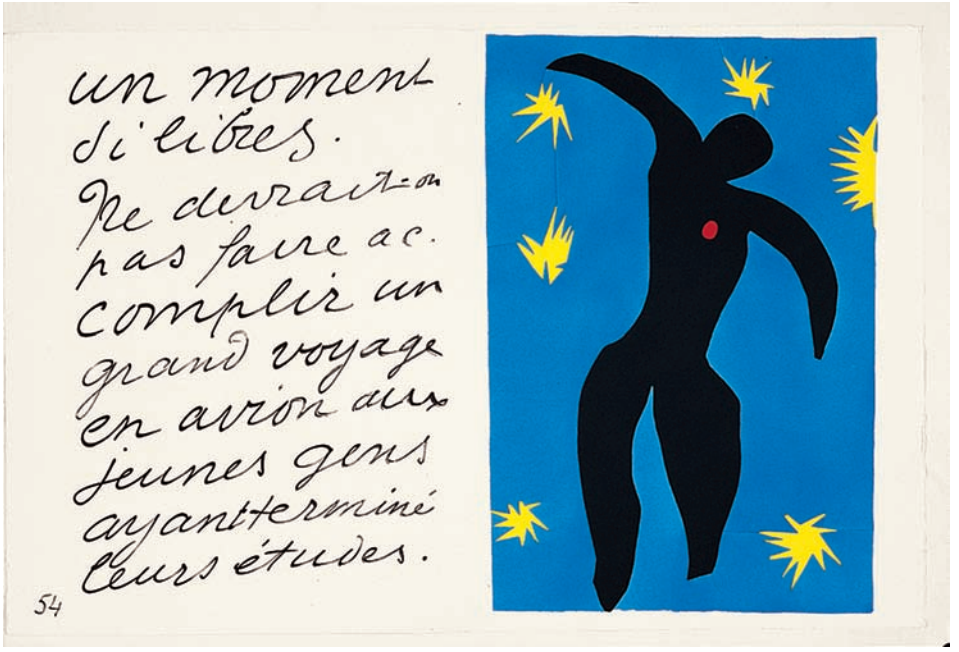
curves, which Matisse referred to as his "**arabesques.**" The inside curves create branchlike forms that animate the table and wall, while those outside form branches and tree trunks. Smaller arabesques define the flower stems and the outline of the woman's hair.

The title *Harmony in Red* evokes the musical abstraction of Matisse's picture. It refers to the predominant color, the flat planes of which "harmonize" the wall and table into a shared space. Matisse builds a second, more animated "movement" in the fluid arabesques harmonizing interior with exterior. Finally, the bright patches on the woman, the still-life objects, and the floral designs create a more staccato rhythm composed of individual accented forms. Matisse's ability to harmonize these different formal modes within a static pictorial space represents a synthesis of three artistic currents: the Post-Impressionist liberation of color, the Symbolist creation of mood, and the twentieth-century trend toward abstraction.

Dance I

In *Dance I* of 1909 (fig. **26.13**), it is the figures, rather than the arabesques, that dance. The black outlines define the dancers, who twist and turn, jump and stretch. Their rhythmic, circular motion has been compared to dancers on the surface of a Greek vase, and their poses replicate those in the background of *The Joy of Life* (see fig. **26.4**). Although the blue and green background is composed of flat colors, Matisse creates a three-dimensional illusion in the dancers themselves. This is enhanced by the warm pinks that make the dancers appear to advance, while the cool background colors recede. Although the individual movements of the dancers vary, together they form a harmonious continuum.

26.13 Henri Matisse, *Dance I*, 1909. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. 6½ in. × 12 ft. 9½ in. (2.6 × 3.9 m). Museum of Modern Art, New York (Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller in honor of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.).



See figure 18.3. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,* c. 1554–55.

26.14 Henri Matisse, *Icarus,* plate 8 from *Jazz,* Paris, E. Tériade, 1947. Pochoir, printed in color, each double page 16⅝ × 25⅝ in. (42.2 × 65.1 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York (Louis E. Stern Collection). The *Jazz* series is composed of individual book-size cutouts printed in book form to accompany Matisse's own text.

Icarus

During the last decade of his life, Matisse gave up painting, partly because of cancer. Instead, he grappled directly with the problem of creating a three-dimensional illusion from absolutely flat forms. His medium was the so-called *découpage,* or "cutout," an image created by pasting pieces of colored paper onto a flat surface. An early series of cutouts, titled *Jazz,* indicates Matisse's continuing interest in synthesizing musical with pictorial elements. His cutout of *Icarus* of 1947 (fig. **26.14**), from the *Jazz* series, combines the Greek myth with modern style and technique. By curving the edges and expanding or narrowing the forms, Matisse gives the silhouetted Icarus (see Bruegel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,* fig. **18.3**) the illusion of three-dimensional volume. His outstretched, winglike arms and tilting head create an impression that, although he is falling through space, he is not plummeting down to the sea as is Bruegel's Icarus but rather floats gracefully downward in slow motion.

Entirely different in character are the zigzagging bright-yellow stars that surround Icarus. Their points shoot off in various directions, and their vivid color is more energetic than the languid figure of Icarus. There are thus two musical "movements" in this cutout—the slower curvilinear motion of Icarus and the rapid angular motion of the stars. Staccato and adagio are combined against the deep, resonant blue sky.

The drive toward new techniques and media for image-making, which is evident in Matisse's cutouts, will be seen to characterize many of the innovations of twentieth-century art.

c. 1900 **c. 1945**

THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY: PICASSO, FAUVISM, EXPRESSIONISM, AND MATISSE

(26.1)

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(26.6a)

(26.12)

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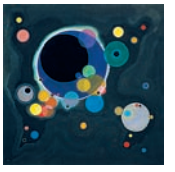
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World's Fair (1900) | Theodore Roosevelt U.S. president (1901–9) | Einstein's theory of relativity (1905) | Fauvism exhibition in Paris (1905) | *Titanic* sinks (1912) | World War I (1914–18) | Bolshevik Revolution in Russia (1917) | League of Nations established (1919) | The Jazz Age (1920s) | U.S. stock market crash (1929)

27

Cubism, Futurism, and Related Twentieth-Century Styles

The most influential style of the early twentieth century was Cubism, which, like Fauvism, developed in Paris. Cubism was essentially a revolution in the artist's approach to space, both on the flat surface of the picture and in sculpture. The nonnaturalistic colorism of the Fauves can be seen as synthesizing nineteenth-century Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Symbolism. Cubism, however, together with the nonfigurative innovations of Expressionism, soon became the wave of the artistic future.

The main European impetus for Cubism came from Cézanne's new spatial organization, in which he built up images from constructions of color. Other decisive currents of influence came from tribal and Iberian art. These offered European artists unfamiliar, non-Classical ways to represent the human figure.

Cubism

Precursors

Picasso's 1906 portrait of Gertrude Stein (fig. **27.1**; see Box, p. 480) is composed of the dark-red hues that mark the end of his Rose Period, which followed the Blue Period discussed in Chapter 26. The emphasis on color is consistent with contemporary Fauve interests, but a comparison with *The Old Guitarist* of the Blue Period (see fig. **26.1**) indicates that more than color has changed. In *Gertrude Stein,* there are new spatial and planar shifts that herald the beginning of the development of Cubism.

See figure 26.1. Pablo Picasso, *The Old Guitarist*, 1903.

Stein's right arm and hand, for example, are organically shaded and contoured. But her left hand is flatter, and her arm looks as if it were constructed of cardboard. Picasso reportedly needed more than eighty sittings to finish the picture, the main stumbling block being the face. In the final result, Stein stares impassively as if from behind a mask. The hair does not grow organically from the scalp, and the ears are flat. The sharp separations between light and dark at the eyebrows, the black outlines around the eyes, and the disparity in the size of the eyes detract from the impression of a flesh-and-blood face.

27.1 Pablo Picasso, *Gertrude Stein*, 1906. Oil on canvas, 39⅜ × 32 in. (100.0 × 81.3 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Bequest of Gertrude Stein, 1947). In 1909 Gertrude Stein wrote *Prose Portraits*, the literary parallel of Analytic Cubism. Her unpunctuated repetition reads like free association. The following is from her *Portrait* of Picasso: "One whom some were certainly following was one working and certain was one bringing something out of himself then and was one who had been all his living had been one having something coming out of him. . . . This one was one who was working."[1]

HISTORY

Gertrude Stein

Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) was an expatriate American art collector and writer. She moved to Paris in 1903, after studying psychology at Radcliffe and medicine at Johns Hopkins. Her Paris apartment became a salon for the leading intellectuals of the post–World War I era, whom she dubbed the "lost generation." Her most popular book, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (Stein's companion), is actually her own autobiography.

Stein and her two brothers were among the earliest collectors of paintings by avant-garde artists. History has vindicated her judgment, for she left an art collection worth several million dollars. Ernest Hemingway, in *A Moveable Feast*, wrote that he had been mistaken not to heed Stein's advice to buy Picassos instead of clothes.

Even more like masks are the faces in Picasso's pivotal picture *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (The Women of Avignon)* of 1907 (fig. **27.2**). With this representation of five nudes and a still life, Picasso launched a spatial revolution. The subject itself was hardly new, and Picasso had adapted traditional poses from earlier periods of Western art. On the far left, for example, the standing figure nearly replicates the pose of ancient Egyptian kings (see Chapter 5). The left leg is forward, the right arm is extended, and the fist is clenched. Also borrowed from Egypt is the pictorial convention of rendering the face in profile and the eye in front view. Picasso's two central figures, whose arms stretch behind their heads, are based on traditional poses of Venus. Of all the figures, the faces of the seated and standing nudes on the far right are most obviously based on African prototypes. The wooden mask from the Congo in figure **27.3**, for example, shares an elongated, geometric quality with the face of the standing figure. Here Picasso has abandoned *chiaroscuro* in favor of the Fauve preference for bold strokes of color. The nose resembles the long, curved, solid wedge of the mask's nose.

Like the mask, Picasso's faces disrupt nature and defy the Classical ideal and are influenced by the contemporary vogue for so-called primitivism. The nose curves to one side, while the mouth shifts to the other. In

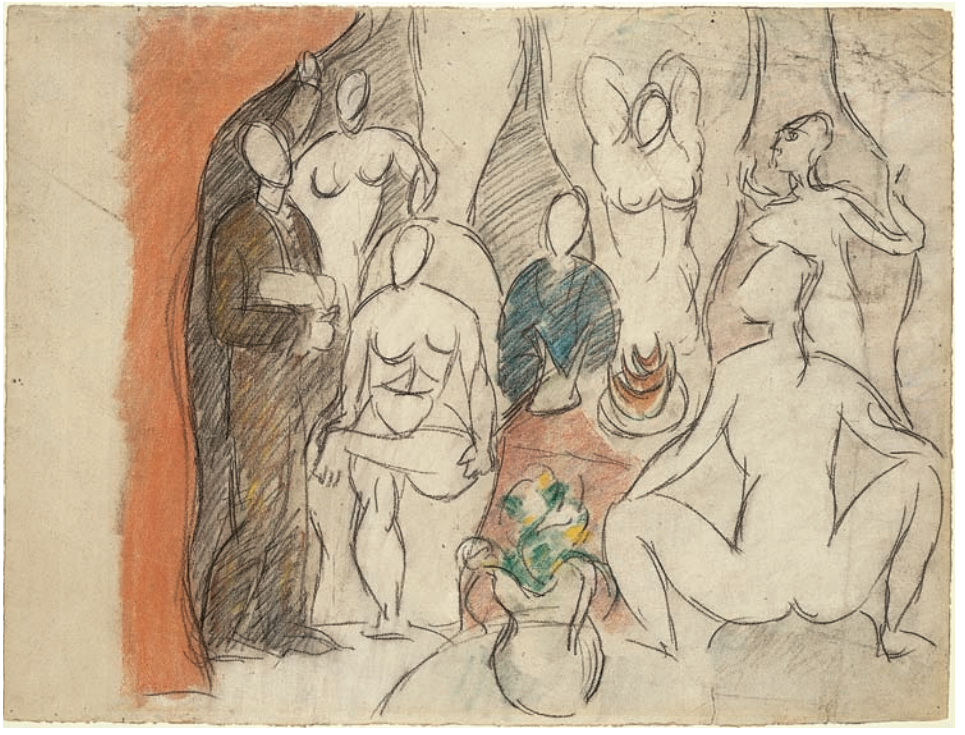
27.2 Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* Paris, June–July 1907. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. × 7 ft. 8 in. (2.44 × 2.34 m). Museum of Modern Art, New York (acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest). This painting was named for a bordello in the Carrer d'Avinyo (Avignon Street), Barcelona's red-light district. Earlier versions had a seated sailor and a medical student carrying a skull. Both were aspects of Picasso himself. By removing them from the final painting, Picasso shifted from a personal narrative to a more powerful mythic image.

27.3 Mask from the Etoumbi region, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Wood, 14 in. (35.6 cm) high. Musée Barbier-Müller, Geneva, Switzerland.

the two central nudes one eye is slightly above the other, the nose is no longer directly above the mouth, and the ears are asymmetrical. Still more radical is the depiction of the body of the seated figure, the so-called squatter. She looks toward the picture plane while simultaneously turning her body in the opposite direction so that her face and back are visible at the same time. In this figure, Picasso has broken from tradition by abandoning the single vantage point of the observer in favor of multiple vantage points along the lines pioneered by Cézanne. The so-called simultaneous view was to become an important visual effect of Cubism.

In *Les Demoiselles,* Picasso fragments the figures into solid geometric constructions with sharp edges and angles. They interact spatially with the background shapes, blurring the distinction between foreground and background. Such distortion of the human figure is particularly startling because it assaults our bodily identity. Light, as well as form, is fragmented into multiple sources so that the observer's point of view is constantly shifting. Because of its revolutionary approach to space and its psychological power, *Les Demoiselles* represented the greatest expressive challenge to the traditional, Classical ideal of beauty and harmony since the Middle Ages.

As with his portrait of Gertrude Stein, Picasso struggled to arrive at the final iconography and figural poses in *Les Demoiselles.* He made many drawing studies, such as the one in figure **27.4.** Here, in a preliminary version of the image, Picasso depicted a man—in some drawings he is a medical student carrying a skull—entering the brothel from the left. Another figure, not present in the painting, is seated at the center in a dark jacket. The five nude women reappear in the final picture, where the other two have been eliminated. In addition, the nudes in the drawing turn to look at the man who enters. But that has changed in the painting, so that three nudes gaze out of the picture to face the viewer and two focus on the center. In these changes, Picasso has gone from a narrative to a more intense, iconic, even threatening image imbued with greater power and forcing us to confront the scene directly.



27.4 Pablo Picasso, study with seven figures for *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* March–April 1907. Pencil and pastel on paper, 18¾ × 25 in. (47.7 × 63.5 cm). Öffentliche Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Switzerland.

Analytic Cubism: Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque

In 1907 Picasso met the French painter Georges Braque (1882–1963), who had studied the works of Cézanne and had been overwhelmed by *Les Demoiselles*. Braque is reported to have declared, when he first saw it, that looking at it was like drinking kerosene. For several years Braque worked so closely with Picasso that it can be difficult to distinguish their pictures during the period known as Analytic Cubism. Braque's *Violin and Pitcher* (fig. **27.5**) of 1909–10 is very much like Picasso's works of that time and will serve as an example of the style.

27.5 Georges Braque, *Violin and Pitcher*, 1909–10. Oil on canvas, 3 ft. 10 in. × 2 ft. 4¾ in. (1.17 × 0.73 m). Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (Gift of Dr. H. C. Raoul La Roche, 1952). Braque was born in Argenteuil, France, and moved to Paris in 1900. There he joined the Fauves and established a collaborative friendship with Picasso. They worked closely together until World War I and were jointly responsible for the development of Cubism. In 1908, on seeing a painting by Braque, Matisse reportedly remarked that it had been painted "with little cubes." This is credited with being the origin of the term Cubism.

27.6 Pablo Picasso, *Head of a Woman*, 1909. Bronze (cast), 16³⁄₁₆ × 9⅝ × 10½ in. (41.1 × 24.5 × 26.7 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Both the subject matter and the expressive possibilities of color—here limited to dark greens and browns—are subordinated to a geometric exploration of three-dimensional space. The only reminders of natural space and of the objects that occupy it are the violin and pitcher, a brief reference to the horizontal surface of a table, and a vertical architectural support on the right. Most of the picture is a jumble of fragmented cubes and other solid geometric shapes. What would, in reality, be air space is filled up, in Cubism, with multiple lines, planes, and geometric solids. The sense of three-dimensional form is achieved by combining shading with bold strokes of color. Despite the crisp edges of the individual shapes in Analytic Cubist pictures such as this one, the painted images lose parts of their outlines. Whereas in Impressionism edges dissolve into prominent brushstrokes, in Cubism they dissolve into shared geometric shapes. No matter how closely the forms approach dissolution, however, they never dissolve completely.

In 1909 Picasso produced the first Cubist sculpture, the bronze *Head of a Woman* (fig. **27.6**), in which he shifted the natural relationship between head and neck, creating two diagonal planes. The hair, as in Analytic Cubist paintings, is multifaceted, and the facial features are geometric rather than organic.

In 1911 two Cubist exhibitions held in Paris brought the work of avant-garde artists to the attention of the general

public. The year 1911 also marked the culmination of Analytic Cubism. Although this phase of Cubism was brief, its impact on Western art was enormous. It stimulated the emergence of new and related styles, along with original techniques of image-making.

Collage

Picasso's Cubist *Man with a Hat* (fig. **27.7**) of 1912 is an early example of **collage** (see Box), which was a logical outgrowth of Analytic Cubism and marked the beginning of the shift to Synthetic Cubism. Pieces of colored paper and newspaper are pasted onto paper to form geometric representations of a head and neck; the remainder of the image is drawn in charcoal. The use of newspaper, which seems textured because of the newsprint, was a common feature of early collages. Words and letters, which are themselves abstract signs, often formed part of the overall design. Collage, like Cubism, involved disassembling aspects of the environment—just as one might take apart a machine, break up a piece of writing, or even divide a single word into letters—and then rearranging (or reassembling) the parts to form a new image.

27.7 Pablo Picasso, *Man with a Hat*, after December 3, 1912. Pasted paper, charcoal, and ink, 24½ × 18⅝ in. (62.2 × 47.3 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York (Purchase).

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUE
Collage and Assemblage

Collage (from the French word *coller*, meaning "to paste" or "to glue") developed in France from 1912. It is a technique that involves pasting lightweight materials or objects, such as newspaper and string, onto a flat surface. A technique related to collage, which developed slightly later, is **assemblage.** Here, heavier objects are brought together and arranged, or assembled, to form a three-dimensional image. Both techniques make use of **"found objects" *(objets trouvés),*** which are taken from everyday sources and incorporated into works of art.

Picasso's witty 1943 assemblage titled *Bull's Head* (fig. **27.8**) is a remarkable example of his genius for synthesis. He has fused the ancient motif of the bull and the traditional medium of bronze with modern steel and plastic. He has also conflated the bull's head with African masks and effected a new spatial juxtaposition by reversing the direction of the bicycle seat and eliminating the usual space between it and the handlebars. He cast the object in bronze and hung it on a wall. In this work, Picasso simultaneously explores the possibilities of new media, of conflated imagery, and of the spatial shifts introduced by Cubism.

27.8 Pablo Picasso, *Bull's Head,* 1943. Assemblage of bicycle saddle and handlebars, 13¼ × 17⅛ × 7½ in. (33.7 × 43.5 × 19 cm). Musée Picasso, Paris, France.

Synthetic Cubism

Synthetic Cubism marked a return to bright colors. Whereas Analytic Cubism fragmented objects into abstract geometric forms, Synthetic Cubism arranged flat shapes of color to form objects. Picasso's *Three Musicians* (fig. **27.9**)—a clarinetist on the left, a Harlequin playing a guitar in the center, and a monk—is built up from unmodeled shapes of color arranged into tilted planes. In addition, the flat shapes—such as the dog lying under the table—occupy a more traditional space than those of Analytic Cubism. The painted shapes resemble the flat paper pasted to form a collage. Simultaneity of viewpoint is preserved—for example, in the sheet of music. It is held by the monk and turned toward the viewer, who sees both the musician and what he is reading.

Picasso's Surrealism

Another stylistic shift in Picasso's work that was influenced by Cubism has been called Surrealism. This term (see Chapter 28) literally means "above realism" and denotes a truer reality than that of the visible world. In *Girl before a Mirror* (fig. **27.10**) of 1932, Picasso aims at psychological reality. He uses the multiple viewpoint in the service of symbolism, although the precise meaning of this picture has remained elusive and has been the subject of many interpretive discussions. The girl at the left combines frontal and profile views, but her mirror reflection is in profile. It is also darker than the "real" girl outside the mirror, and the torsos do not match.

The device of the mirror to create multiple views is not new. Picasso was certainly familiar with Manet's *Bar at*

27.9 Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians,* 1921. Oil on canvas, 6 ft. 7 in. × 7 ft. 3¾ in. (2.01 × 2.23 m). Museum of Modern Art, New York (Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund).

the Folies-Bergère (see fig. **24.1**), Velázquez's *Venus with a Mirror* (see fig. **19.37**) and *Las Meninas* (see fig. **19.38**), and Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (see fig. **15.37**), all of which use mirrors to expand the viewer's range of vision. Here, however, the formal differences between the girl and her reflection suggest that outer appearances are contrasted with an inner psychological state. One French term for "mirror" is *psyché,* which means "soul," and this provides a clue to the picture's significance. It reinforces the notion that Picasso transformed the multiple views of Cubism into multiple psychological views, which simultaneously show the girl's interior psychic reality and her exterior appearance.

27.10 Pablo Picasso, *Girl before a Mirror,* 1932. Oil on canvas, 5 ft. 4 in. × 4 ft. 3¼ in. (1.62 × 1.30 m). Museum of Modern Art, New York (Gift of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim).

CONNECTIONS

See figure 24.1. Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère,* 1881–82.

See figure 19.37. Diego Velázquez, *Venus with a Mirror (Rokeby Venus),* c. 1648.

See figure 19.38. Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas,* 1656.

See figure 15.37. Jan van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait,* 1434.

27.11 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937. Oil on canvas, 11 ft. 5½ in. × 25 ft. 5¾ in. (3.49 × 7.77 m). Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain. From 1936 to 1939 there was a civil war between Spanish Republicans and the Fascist army of General Franco. In April 1937 Franco's Nazi allies carried out saturation bombing over the town of Guernica. Picasso painted *Guernica* to protest this atrocity. He lent it to New York's Museum of Modern Art, stipulating that it remain there until democratic government was restored in Spain. In 1981 *Guernica* was returned to Madrid.

Picasso's *Guernica*

In his monumental work of 1937, *Guernica* (fig. **27.11**), Picasso combined both Analytic and Synthetic Cubist forms with several traditional motifs, which he juxtaposed in a new Surrealist way. The combination serves the political message of the painting—Picasso's powerful protest against the brutality of war and tyranny (see caption). Consistent with its theme of death and dying, the painting is nearly devoid of color, although there is considerable tonal variation within the range of black to white. The absence of color enhances the journalistic quality of the painting, relating it to the news accounts of the bombing.

Guernica is divided into three sections, a compositional structure that recalls the triptychs of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. There is a central triangle with an approximate rectangle on either side. The base of the triangle extends from the arm of the dismembered and decapitated soldier at the left to the foot of the running woman at the right. The dying horse represents the death of civilization, though it may be rescued by the woman with a lamp (Liberty) rushing toward it. Another expression of hope, as well as of the light of reason, appears in the motif combining the shape of an eye with the sun's rays and a lightbulb just above the horse's head. On the right, the pose and gesture of a falling woman suggest Christ's Crucifixion. On the left, a woman holds a dead baby on her lap in a pose reminiscent of Mary supporting the dead Christ in Michelangelo's *Pietà* in Rome (see fig. **16.14**). Behind the woman looms the specter of the Minotaur, the monstrous tyrant of ancient Crete, whose only human qualities are the flattened face and eyes. For Picasso, the Minotaur came to represent modern tyranny, as embodied by the Spanish dictator General Francisco Franco, who collaborated with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

These apparently disparate motifs are related by form and gesture, by their shared distortions, and by the power of their message. Cubist geometric shapes and sharp angles pervade the painting. Picasso's characteristic distortions emphasize the physical destruction of war. Eyes are twisted in and out of their sockets, ears and noses are slightly out of place, tongues are shaped like daggers, palms and feet are slashed. Although the integrity of the human form is maintained throughout, it is an object of attack and mutilation.

CONNECTIONS

See figure 16.14. Michelangelo, *Pietà*, 1498–1500.