

NIGHT PAINTINGS

MAX WEBER (1881-1961)

Max Weber was one of the most talented avant-garde American artists. He was born in Bialystock, Russia, in a Jewish family that moved to America when he was a child.

Adoration of the Moon, 1944

As a child in the Jewish town Weber's early memories were centered in old world religious customs and traditions. His father, Morris Weber, left the family for America, when Max was five years old. The artist later recalled the personal significance of the monthly celebrations of the new moon: as the men gathered to pray, he thought of his father who could see the same crescent from his home in New York. The family reunited in New York when Max was ten. In his later years, Weber turned away from abstraction in favor of figurative paintings that often drew inspiration from his Jewish heritage and childhood memories. Here, the four men gathered have an otherworldly shape, their elongated bodies recalling the Byzantine decorations common in Weber's hometown.

New York at Night, 1915

Between 1905 and 1908 Weber tried the new style of Cubists and the Fauves in Paris. When Weber returned to the United States in 1909, he was dismayed that the exciting new art he had seen in Paris was unknown in America. He introduced his cubist paintings in Younger

American Painters, a ground-breaking exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz's gallery 291, and he was vilified in the press. Weber's reputation grew with subsequent exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe, and in 1930 he became the first American artist to receive a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.





DAVID GILMOUR BLYTHE (1815-1865)

Blythe was born in Ohio, the USA, but most of his life and career was spent in Pittsburgh. He was sure that the society preferred favored landlords rather than talented artists, therefore, a noble painter used genre type to point up critical social injustices.

Corn husking, 1863-64

Blythe painted satires mainly of urban ills, however, here he depicts the rural area. The work illustrates a group of boys engaged in the tough task of husking recently harvested corn during the moonlight night. The farm looks dilapidated and the farming equipment is carelessly laid around the property, and the child labor prove the harsh reality of the setting. The main point of the painting is the poverty and discord.



George Luks (1867-1933)

Luks was born in Williamsport, the USA. He was one of the members of Ashcan school and the famous painter of realism. One of the main subjects in his works was daily city street life.

Armistice Night, 1918

Luks captured the scene on the night World War I ended. Luks's skill at capturing the essence of

an event in a few swift strokes was honed during his years as a newspaper illustrator in

Philadelphia at the turn of the twentieth century, when he was often dispatched to sketch scenes of breaking news. As in his earlier illustrations, Luks does not deliberate over particulars: the painting is a blur of American and Allied flags, faces, and fireworks. “Typically, Luks was more committed to capturing the spirit of the moment than to transcribing visual facts, in this case the action and human drama in a celebratory crowd.” states the Whitney Museum of Art. This painting also reminds me Frederick Childe Hassam’s work “the fourth of July”.



Joseph Stella (1877-1946)

Stella grew up in the small mountain village of Muro Lucano, Italy. When he was nineteen, he moved to New York to study medicine and pharmacology, but became an eminent painter of futurism and precisionism instead. Stella adopted the Americanized version of his name, which before was Giuseppe Michele Stella.

Before the early-20th century such industrial and utilitarian structures were not typical subjects for artists, but, with the help of artists like Stella, industrial architecture became a powerful symbol of the distinct textures of American life for many artists.

By-products Plants, 1923-26

In this painting, Stella depicts factories that extract chemicals that are released when coal is burned. Such mechanical processes fascinated Stella, and he once recalled, "Opposite my studio was a huge factory . . . towering with the gloom of a prison. At night fires gave to innumerable windows menacing blazing looks of demons." Imposing, shadowy buildings, tanks, and chimneys are interspersed with radiant, intersecting beams of light, a contrast that gives the painting a mystery that hints at the complex chemical processes occurring within the factories. There is a captivating hint of danger that is intriguing, but also oddly beautiful. The shining spotlights give a sense of expectation of

something wondrous occurring - such as the announcement of new product release or a movie presentation.

Luna Park, 1913

In 1913, Stella turned his eye toward Coney Island. His abstract work displays the icons of an energetic, industrialized 20th century modern city in fantastical, kaleidoscopic colors. At the same time, the composition's bold, bright colors, sense of movement, and contrast between light and shadow reveal Stella's debt to the Futurists.



While Thomas Cole (1801-1848)

The so-called founder of the American school of landscape painting. Thomas was an English-born (Bolton le Moors, England) American painter that emigrated with family and settled in Ohio, the USA.

Expulsion. Moon and Firelight, 1928

This work marks a shift of a direction towards an allegorical type of landscape. The central motif is a bridge suspended over a great drop, which the artist saw in the White Mountains in New Hampshire in 1827. Starting with this element, Cole made use of his imagination to create the setting for the Expulsion of Adam and Eve, both

are not presented in the painting. The composition is symmetrically structured around the cross shape created by the waterfall and bridge. On the right is Paradise and on the left the world after the Fall. The pronounced contrast between the glowing light inside the arch and the

shadow around it emphasizes the allegorical character of the scene.



Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917)

Ryder was raised up in New Bedford, the USA. Albert, the youngest of four sons, began attending a public grammar school for boys, but had to finish due to poor eyesight resulting from a vaccination that went wrong. This visual impairment was never completely healed, and Ryder perceived colors and depth in a slightly altered way, contributing to his distinctive style.

Toilers of the Sea, 1880-85

This is a relatively small painting. However, the size adds to its feeling of concentrated intensity. The painting shows Albert Ryder's characteristically sure-handed compositional skill. Although the little boat is cresting a wave, the moment feels frozen in time, because the strong compositional balance holds the pictorial and simplified forms in place: the shape of the boat and sail, the strong horizon line, the placement of the moon and clouds, the contours of the waves all suggest a consideration of abstract elements. The picture itself holds a romantic evocation and keeps a kind of mystery. Maybe the painting is somehow connected to Victor Hugo's novel of 1866 as they have the same names where the man deals with powerful forces of the sea at night.

