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*"The real voyage  
of discovery consists  
not in seeking new  
lands but seeing with  
new eyes."*

**Marcel Proust**

**modernism**

6

**history**

6

**cubism**

12

**expressionism**

14

**marxism**

19

**after WWII**

24

**minimalism**

28

**neo-dada**

30

**performance**

30

**intermedia**

32

**fluxus**

32

**late period**

34

**criticism**

36

**table of contents**

## MODERNISM

Modernism is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends and changes, arose from wide-scale and far-reaching transformations in Western society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the factors that shaped modernism were the development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed then by the horror of World War I. Modernism also rejected the certainty of Enlightenment thinking, and many modernists rejected religious belief.

Modernism, in general, includes the activities and creations of those who felt the traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, activities of daily life, and even the sciences, were becoming ill-fitted to their tasks and outdated in the new economic, social, and political environment of an emerging fully industrialized world. The poet Ezra Pound's 1934 injunction to "Make it new!" was the touchstone of the movement's approach towards what it saw as the now obsolete culture of the past. In this spirit, its innovations, like the stream-of-consciousness novel, atonal (or pantonal) and twelve-tone music, divisionist painting and abstract art, all had precursors in the 19th century.

A notable characteristic of modernism is selfconsciousness and irony concerning literary and social traditions, which often led to experiments with form, along with the use of techniques that drew attention to the processes and materials used in creating a painting, poem, building, etc. Modernism explicitly rejected the ideology of realism and makes use of the works of the past by the employment of reprise, incorporation, rewriting, recapitulation, revision and parody.

Some commentators define modernism as a mode of thinking—one or more philosophically defined characteristics, like self-consciousness or self-reference, that run across all the novelties in the arts and the disciplines. More common, especially in the West, are those who see it as a socially progressive trend of thought that affirms the power of human beings to create, improve and reshape their environment with the aid of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge, or technology.

From this perspective, modernism encouraged the re-examination of every aspect of existence, from commerce to philosophy, with the goal of finding that which was 'holding back' progress, and replacing it with new ways of reaching the same end. Others focus on modernism as an aesthetic introspection. This facilitates consideration of specific reactions to the use of technology in the First World War, and anti-technological and nihilistic aspects of the works of diverse thinkers and artists spanning the period from Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) to Samuel Beckett (1906–1989).

## HISTORY

### *Beginnings: the 19th century*

According to one critic, modernism developed out of Romanticism's revolt against the effects of the Industrial Revolution and bourgeois values: "The ground motive of modernism, Graff asserts, was criticism of the nineteenth-century bourgeois social order and its world view the modernists, carrying the torch of romanticism." While J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851), one of the greatest landscape painters of the 19th century, was a member of the Romantic movement, as "a pioneer in the study of light, color, and atmosphere," he "anticipated the French Impressionists"

# the 20th century

and therefore modernism “in breaking down conventional formulas of representation; [though] unlike them, he believed that his works should always express significant historical, mythological, literary, or other narrative themes.”

The dominant trends of industrial Victorian England were opposed, from about 1850, by the English poets and painters that constituted the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, because of their “opposition to technical skill without inspiration.” They were influenced by the writings of the art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900), who had strong feelings about the role of art in helping to improve the lives of the urban working classes, in the rapidly expanding industrial cities of Britain. Art critic Clement Greenberg describes the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as proto-Modernists: “There the proto-Modernists were, of all people, the pre-Raphaelites (and even before them, as proto-proto-Modernists, the German Nazarenes). The Pre-Raphaelites actually foreshadowed Manet (1832–83), with whom Modernist painting most definitely begins. They acted on a dissatisfaction with painting as practiced in their time, holding that its realism wasn’t truthful enough.” Rationalism has also had opponents in the philosophers Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55) and later Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), both of whom had significant influence on the existentialism.

However, the Industrial Revolution continued. Influential innovations included steam-powered industrialization, and especially the development of railways, starting in Britain in the 1830s, and the subsequent advancements in physics, engineering, and architecture associated with this. A major 19th-century engineering achievement was The Crystal Palace, the huge cast-iron and plate glass exhibition hall built for The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. Glass and iron were used in a similar monumental

style in the construction of major railway terminals in London, such as Paddington Station (1854) and King’s Cross Station (1852). These technological advances led to the building of later structures like the Brooklyn Bridge (1883) and the Eiffel Tower (1889).

The latter broke all previous limitations on how tall man-made objects could be. These engineering marvels radically altered the 19th-century urban environment and the daily lives of people. The human experience of time itself was altered, with the development of the electric telegraph from 1837, and the adoption of standard time by British railway companies from 1845, and in the rest of the world over the next fifty years.

But despite continuing technological advances, from the 1870s onward, the idea that history and civilization were inherently progressive, and that progress was always good, came under increasing attack. Arguments arose that the values of the artist and those of society were not merely different, but that Society was antithetical to Progress, and could not move forward in its present form. The philosopher Schopenhauer (1788–1860) (The World as Will and Representation, 1819) called into question the previous optimism, and his ideas had an important influence on later thinkers, including Nietzsche.

Two of the most significant thinkers of the period were biologist Charles Darwin (1809–82), author of On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection (1859), and political scientist Karl Marx (1818–83), author of Das Kapital (1867). Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection undermined religious certainty and the idea of human uniqueness. In particular, the notion that human beings were driven by the same impulses as “lower animals” proved to be difficult to reconcile with the idea of an ennobling

spirituality. Karl Marx argued that there were fundamental contradictions within the capitalist system, and that the workers were anything but free.

## Beginnings from the 19th century

# Beginnings from the 19th century

# modernism in france

## *The beginnings of modernism in France*

Historians, and writers from very different disciplines, have suggested various dates as starting points for modernism. Historian William Everdell, for example, argued that modernism began in the 1870s, when the metaphorical (or ontological) continuity began to yield to the discrete with mathematician Richard Dedekind's (1831–1916) Dedekind cut, and Ludwig Boltzmann's (1844–1906) statistical thermodynamics. Everdell also thinks modernism in painting began in 1885–86 with Seurat's Divisionism, the “dots” used to paint *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. On the other hand, visual art critic Clement Greenberg called Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) “the first real Modernist,” though he also wrote, “What can be safely called Modernism emerged in the middle of the last century—and rather locally, in France, with Baudelaire in literature and Manet in painting, and perhaps with Flaubert, too, in prose fiction. (It was a while later, and not so locally, that Modernism appeared in music and architecture).” The poet Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*), and Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* were both published in 1857.

In the arts and in letters, two important approaches developed separately in France. The first was Impressionism, a school of painting that initially focused on work done, not in studios, but outdoors. Impressionist paintings demonstrated that human beings do not see objects, but instead see light itself. The school gathered adherents despite the internal divisions among its leading practitioners, and became increasingly influential. Initially rejected from the most important commercial show of the time, the government-sponsored Paris Salon, the Impressionists organized yearly group exhibitions in commercial venues during the 1870s and 1880s, timing them to coincide with the official Salon. A significant event of 1863 was the Salon des Refusés, created by Emperor Napoleon III to display all of the paintings rejected by the Paris Salon. While most were in standard styles, but by inferior artists, the work of Manet attracted tremendous attention, and opened commercial doors to the movement.

Second French school was Symbolism, which literary historians see beginning with Charles Baudelaire (1821–67), and including the later poets, Arthur Rimbaud (1854–91) *Une Saison en Enfer* (*A Season*

*in Hell*, 1873), Paul Verlaine (1844–96), Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–98), and Paul Valéry (1871–1945). The symbolists “stressed the priority of suggestion and evocation over direct description and explicit analogy,” and were especially interested in “the musical properties of a language.” Cabaret, which gave birth to so many of the arts of modernism, including the immediate precursors of film, may be said to have begun in France, 1881 with the opening of the Black Cat in Montmartre, the beginning of the ironic monologue, and the founding of the Society of Incoherent Arts.

The theories of Sigmund Freud were very influential in the early days of modernism (1856–1939). Freud's first major work was *Studies on Hysteria* (with Josef Breuer, 1895). Central to Freud's thinking is the idea “of the primacy of the unconscious mind in mental life,” so that all subjective reality was based on the play of basic drives and instincts, through which the outside world was perceived. Freud's description of subjective states involved an unconscious mind full of primal impulses, and counterbalancing self-imposed restrictions derived from social values.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was another major precursor of modernism, with a philosophy in which psychological drives, specifically the “will to power” (*Wille zur Macht*), was of central importance: “Nietzsche often identified life itself with ‘will to power,’ that is, with an instinct for growth and durability.” Henri Bergson (1859–1941), on the other hand, emphasized the difference between scientific, clock time and the direct, subjective, human experience of time. His work on time and consciousness “had a great influence on twentieth-century novelists,” especially those Modernists who used the stream of consciousness technique, such as Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf (1882–1941). Also important in Bergson's philosophy was the idea of *élan vital*, the life force, which “brings about the creative evolution of everything.” His philosophy also placed a high value on intuition, though without rejecting the importance of the intellect.

The important literary precursors of modernism were Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–81), who wrote the novels *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880); Walt Whitman (1819–92), who published the poetry

collection *Leaves of Grass* (1855–91); and August Strindberg (1849–1912), especially his later plays, including the trilogy *To Damascus* 1898–1901, *A Dream Play* (1902) and *The Ghost Sonata* (1907). Henry James has also been suggested as a significant precursor, in a work as early as *The Portrait of a Lady*.

Out of the collision of ideals derived from Romanticism, and an attempt to find a way for knowledge to explain that which was as yet unknown, came the first wave of works in the first decade of the 20th century, which, while their authors considered them extensions of existing trends in art, broke the implicit contract with the general public that artists were the interpreters and representatives of bourgeois culture and ideas. These “Modernist” landmarks include the atonal ending of Arnold Schoenberg's *Second String Quartet* in 1908, the expressionist paintings of Wassily Kandinsky starting in 1903, and culminating with his first abstract painting and the founding of the Blue Rider group in Munich in 1911, and the rise of fauvism and the inventions of cubism from the studios of Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and others, in the years between 1900 and 1910.

## *Explosion, early 20th century to 1930*

An important aspect of modernism is how it relates to tradition through its adoption of techniques like reprise, incorporation, rewriting, recapitulation, revision and parody in new forms.

T. S. Eliot made significant comments on the relation of the artist to tradition, including: “We shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of [a poet's] work, may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.” However, the relationship of Modernism with tradition was complex, as literary scholar Peter Childs indicates: “There were paradoxical if not opposed trends towards revolutionary and reactionary positions, fear of the new and delight at the disappearance of the old, nihilism and fanatical enthusiasm, creativity and despair.”

Example of how Modernist art can be both revolutionary and yet be related to past tradition, is the music of the composer Arnold Schoenberg. On the other hand Schoenberg rejected traditional tonal harmony, the hierarchical system of organizing works of music that had

# Cubism

guided music making at least a century and a half. He believed he had discovered a wholly new way of organizing sound, based in the use of twelve-note rows. Yet while this was indeed wholly new, its origins can be traced back in the work of earlier composers, such as Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss and Max Reger. Furthermore, it must be noted that Schoenberg also wrote tonal music throughout his career.

In the world of art, in the first decade of the 20th century, young painters such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse were causing a shock with their rejection of traditional perspective as the means of structuring paintings, though the impressionist Monet had already been innovative in his use of perspective.

In 1907, as Picasso was painting the *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Oskar Kokoschka was writing *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (Murderer, Hope of Women), the first Expressionist play (produced with scandal in 1909), and Arnold Schoenberg was composing his *String Quartet No. 2* in F sharp minor (1908), his first composition without a tonal center.

## CUBISM

A primary influence that led to Cubism was the representation of three-dimensional form in the late works of Paul Cézanne, which were displayed in a retrospective at the 1907 Salon d'Automne. In Cubist artwork, objects are analyzed, broken up and reassembled in an abstracted form; instead of depicting objects from one viewpoint, the artist depicts the subject from a multitude of viewpoints to represent the subject in a greater context. Cubism was brought to the attention of the general public for the first time in 1911 at the *Salon des Indépendants* in Paris (held 21 April – 13 June). Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes, Henri Le Fauconnier, Robert Delaunay,

Fernand Léger and Roger de La Fresnaye were shown together in Room 41, provoking a 'scandal' out of which Cubism emerged and spread throughout Paris and beyond.

Also in 1911, Kandinsky painted *Bild mit Kreis* (Picture with a Circle), which he later called the first abstract painting. In 1912, Metzinger and Gleizes wrote the first (and only) major Cubist manifesto, *Du "Cubisme"*, published in time for the *Salon de la Section d'Or*, the largest Cubist exhibition to date. In 1912 Metzinger painted and exhibited his enchanting *La Femme au Cheval* (Woman with a Horse) and *Danseuse au Café* (Dancer in a Café). Albert Gleizes painted and exhibited his *Les Baigneuses* (The Bathers) and his monumental *Le Dépiquage des Moissons* (Harvest Threshing). This work, along with *La Ville de Paris* (City of Paris) by Robert Delaunay, was the largest and most ambitious Cubist painting undertaken during the pre-War Cubist period.

In 1905, a group of four German artists, led by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, formed *Die Brücke* (the Bridge) in the city of Dresden. This was arguably the founding organization for the German Expressionist movement, though they did not use the word itself. A few years later, in 1911, a like-minded group of young artists formed *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider) in Munich. The name came from Wassily Kandinsky's *Der Blaue Reiter* painting of 1903. Among their members were Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Paul Klee, and August Macke. However, the term "Expressionism" did not firmly establish itself until 1913. Though initially mainly a German artistic movement, most predominant in painting, poetry and the theatre between 1910 and 1930, most precursors of the movement were not German.

Furthermore, there have been other expressionist writers of prose fiction, as well as non-German speaking expres-

sionist writers, and, while the movement had declined in Germany with the rise of Adolf Hitler in the 1930s, there were subsequent expressionist works.





## EXPRESSIONISM

Expressionism is notoriously difficult to define, in part because it “overlapped with other major ‘isms’ of the modernist period: with Futurism, Vorticism, Cubism, Surrealism and Dada.” Richard Murphy also comments: “the search for an all-inclusive definition is problematic to the extent that the most challenging expressionists” such as the novelist Franz Kafka, poet Gottfried Benn, and novelist Alfred Döblin were simultaneously the most vociferous anti-expressionists. What, however, can be said, is that it

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was a movement that developed in the early 20th century mainly in Germany in reaction to the dehumanizing effect of industrialization and the growth of cities, and that “one of the central means by which expressionism identifies itself as an avant-garde movement, and by which it marks its distance to traditions and the cultural institution as a whole is through its relationship to realism and the dominant conventions of representation.” More explicitly: that the expressionists rejected the ideology of realism.

There was a concentrated Expressionist movement in early 20th century German theatre, of which Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller were the most famous playwrights. Other notable Expressionist dramatists included Reinhard Sorge, Walter Hasenclever, Hans Henny Jahnn, and Arnolt Bronnen. They looked back to Swedish playwright August Strindberg and German actor and dramatist Frank Wedekind as precursors of their dramaturgical experiments. Oskar Kokoschka’s *Murderer, the Hope of Women* was the first fully Expressionist work for the theatre, which opened on 4 July 1909 in Vienna.

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The extreme simplification of characters to mythic types, choral effects, declamatory dialogue and heightened intensity would become characteristic of later Expressionist plays. The first full-length Expressionist play was *The Son* by Walter Hasenclever, which was published in 1914 and first performed in 1916. Futurism is yet another modernist movement. In 1909, the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* published F. T. Marinetti’s first manifesto. Soon afterwards a group of painters co-signed the *Futurist Manifesto*. Modeled on Marx and Engels’ famous “Communist Manifesto” (1848), such manifestoes put

forward ideas that were meant to provoke and to gather followers. However, arguments in favor of geometric or purely abstract painting were, at this time, largely confined to “little magazines” which had only tiny circulations. Modernist primitivism and pessimism were controversial, and the mainstream in the first decade of the 20th century was still inclined towards a faith in progress and liberal optimism. Abstract artists, taking as their examples the impressionists, as well as Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) and Edvard Munch (1863–

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1944), began with the assumption that color and shape, not the depiction of the natural world, formed the essential characteristics of art. Western art had been, from the Renaissance up to the middle of the 19th century, underpinned by the logic of perspective and an attempt to reproduce an illusion of visible reality. The arts of cultures other than the European had become accessible and showed alternative ways of describing visual experience to the artist. By the end of the 19th century many artists felt a need to create a new kind of art which would encompass the fundamental changes taking place

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in technology, science and philosophy. The sources from which individual artists drew their theoretical arguments were diverse, and reflected the social and intellectual preoccupations in all areas of Western culture at that time. Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, and Kazimir Malevich all believed in redefining art as the arrangement of pure color. The use of photography, which had rendered much of the representational function of visual art obsolete, strongly affected this aspect of modernism.

Modernist architects and designers, such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, believed that technology rendered old styles of building obsolete. Le Corbusier thought that buildings should function as “machines for living in”, analogous to cars, which he saw as machines for traveling in. Just as cars had replaced the horse, so modernist design should reject the old styles and structures inherited from Ancient Greece or from the Middle Ages. Following this machine aesthetic, modernist designers typically rejected decorative motifs in design, preferring to emphasize the materials used and pure geometrical forms. The skyscraper is the archetypal modernist building, and the Wainwright Building, a 10-story office building built 1890-91, in St. Louis, Missouri, United States, is among the first skyscrapers in the world. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s Seagram Building in New York (1956–1958) is often regarded as the pinnacle of this modernist high-rise architecture. Many aspects of modernist design still persist within the mainstream of contemporary architecture, though previous dogmatism has given way to a more playful use of decoration, historical quotation, and spatial drama.

In 1913, which was the year of the philosopher Edmund Husserl’s Ideas, physicist Niels Bohr’s quantized atom, Ezra Pound’s founding of imagism, the Armory Show in New York and in Saint

Petersburg the “first futurist opera”, Mikhail Matyushin’s Victory over the Sun—another Russian composer, Igor Stravinsky, composed The Rite of Spring, a ballet that depicts human sacrifice, and has a musical score full of dissonance and primitive rhythm. This caused uproar on its first performance in Paris. At this time though modernism was still “progressive”, increasingly it saw traditional forms and traditional social arrangements as hindering progress, and was recasting the artist as a revolutionary, engaged in overthrowing rather than enlightening society. Also in 1913 a less violent event occurred in France with the publication of the first volume of Marcel Proust’s important novel sequence *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–1927) (In Search of Lost Time). This often presented as an early example of a writer using the stream-of-consciousness technique, but Robert Humphrey comments that Proust “is concerned only with the reminiscent aspect of consciousness” and that he “was deliberately recapturing the past for the purpose of communicating; hence he did not write a stream-of-consciousness novel.”

Stream of consciousness was a very important modernist literary innovation, and it has been suggested that Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931) was the first to make full use of it in his short story “Leutnant Gustl” (“None but the Brave”) (1900). Dorothy Richardson was the first English writer to use it, in the early volumes of her novel sequence *Pilgrimage* (1915–67). The other modernist novelists that are associated with the use of this narrative technique include James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922) and Italo Svevo in *La coscienza di Zeno* (1923).

However, with the coming of the Great War of 1914-18 and the Russian Revolution of 1917, the world was drastically changed and doubt cast on the beliefs and institutions of the past. Failure of the

Paul  
Rob  
Max  
Hans  
Anto  
Ray  
Joan  
Marc

Elaurd  
ert Desnos  
Ernst  
Arp  
nin Artaud  
mond Queneau  
Miro  
el Duchamp

# MARX WAR ism ism

previous status quo seemed self-evident to a generation that had seen millions die fighting over scraps of earth: prior to 1914 it had been argued that no one would fight such a war, since the cost was too high. The birth of a machine age which had made major changes in the conditions of daily life in the 19th century now had radically changed the nature of warfare.

The traumatic nature of recent experience altered basic assumptions, and realistic depiction of life in the arts seemed inadequate when faced with the fantastically surreal nature of trench warfare. The view that mankind was making steady moral progress now seemed ridiculous in the face of the senseless slaughter, described in works such as Erich Maria Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929). Therefore, modernism's view of reality, which had been a minority taste before the war, became more generally accepted in the 1920s.

In literature and visual art some of the Modernist artists sought to defy expectations mainly in order to make their art more vivid, or to force the audience to take the trouble to question their own preconceptions. This aspect of modernism has often seemed a reaction to consumer culture, which developed in Europe and North America in the late 19th century. Whereas most manufacturers try to make products that will be marketable by appealing to preferences and prejudices, high modernists rejected such consumerist attitudes in order to undermine conventional thinking. The art critic Clement Greenberg expounded this theory of modernism in his essay *Avant-Garde and Kitsch*. Greenberg labeled the products of consumer culture "kitsch", because their design aimed simply to have maximum appeal, with any difficult features removed. For Greenberg, modernism thus formed a reaction against the development of such examples of modern

consumer culture as the commercial popular music, Hollywood, and advertising. Greenberg associated this with the revolutionary rejection of capitalism.

Some Modernists saw themselves as part of a revolutionary culture that included political revolution. In Russia after the 1917 Revolution there was indeed initially a burgeoning of avant-garde cultural activity, which included Russian Futurism. However others rejected conventional politics as well as artistic conventions, believing that a revolution of political consciousness had greater importance than a change in political structures. But many modernists saw themselves as apolitical. Others, such as T. S. Eliot, rejected mass popular culture from a conservative position. Some even argue that modernism in literature and art functioned to sustain an elite culture which excluded the majority of the population.

Surrealism, which has originated in the early 1920s, came to be regarded by the public as the most extreme form of modernism, or "the avant-garde of Modernism". The word "surrealist" was coined by Guillaume Apollinaire and first appeared in the preface to his play *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, which was written in 1903 and first performed in 1917. Major surrealists include *Paul Éluard*, *Robert Desnos*, *Max Ernst*, *Hans Arp*, *Antonin Artaud*, *Raymond Queneau*, *Joan Miró*, and *Marcel Duchamp*.

By 1930, Modernism had won a place in the establishment, including the political and artistic establishment, although by this time Modernism itself had changed.

## ***Modernism continues: 1930–1945***

Modernism continued to evolve during the 1930s. Between 1930 and 1932 composer Arnold Schoenberg worked on *Moses und Aron*, one of the first operas to make use of the twelve-tone

technique, Pablo Picasso painted in 1937 *Guernica*, his cubist condemnation of fascism, while in 1939 James Joyce pushed the boundaries of the modern novel further with *Finnegans Wake*. Also by 1930 Modernism began to influence mainstream culture, so that, for example, *The New Yorker* magazine began publishing work, influenced by Modernism, by young writers and humorists like Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, E. B. White, S. J. Perelman, and James Thurber, amongst others. Perelman is highly regarded for his humorous short stories that he published in magazines in the 1930s and 1940s, most often in *The New Yorker*, which are considered to be the first examples of surrealist humor in America. Modern ideas in art also began to appear more frequently in commercials and logos, an early example of which, from 1919, is the famous London Underground logo designed by Edward Johnston.

One of the most visible changes of this period was the adoption of new technologies into daily life of ordinary people in Western Europe and North America. Electricity, the telephone, the radio, the automobile—and the need to work with them, repair them and live with them—created social change. The kind of disruptive moment that only a few knew in the 1880s became a common occurrence. For example, the speed of communication reserved for the stock brokers of 1890 became part of family life, at least in middle class North America. Associated with urbanization and changing social mores also came smaller families and changed relationships between parents and their children.

## **MARXISM**

Another strong influence at this time was Marxism. After the generally primitivistic/irrationalist aspect of pre-World War I Modernism, which for many Modernists precluded any attachment to merely

political solutions, and neoclassicism of the 1920s, as represented most famously by T. S. Eliot and Igor Stravinsky—which rejected popular solutions to modern problems—the rise of Fascism, the Great Depression, and the march to war helped to radicalize a generation. Bertolt Brecht, W. H. Auden, André Breton, Louis Aragon and the philosophers Antonio Gramsci and Walter Benjamin are perhaps the most famous exemplars of this Modernist form of Marxism. There were, however, also Modernists explicitly of ‘the right’, including Salvador Dalí, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, the Dutch author Menno ter Braak and others.

Significant Modernist literary works continued to be created in the 1920s and 1930s, including further novels by Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Robert Musil, and Dorothy Richardson. The American Modernist dramatist Eugene O’Neill’s career began in 1914, but his major works appeared in the 1920s, 1930s and early 1940s. Two other significant Modernist dramatists writing in the 1920s and 1930s were Bertolt Brecht and Federico García Lorca. D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* was privately published in 1928, while another important landmark for the history of the modern novel came with the publication of William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929. In the 1930s, in addition to further major works by Faulkner, Samuel Beckett published his first major work, the novel *Murphy* (1938). Then in 1939 James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* appeared. This is written in a largely idiosyncratic language, consisting of a mixture of standard English lexical items and neologistic multilingual puns and portmanteau words, which attempts to recreate experience of sleep and dreams.

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**This is one  
But know  
Shall pierce  
sudden**

**T.S Eliot**

**moment  
ow that another  
you with a  
painful joy**

”

In poetry T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings, and Wallace Stevens were writing from the 1920s until the 1950s. While Modernist poetry in English is often viewed as an American phenomenon, with leading-Modernist poets include Federico García Lorca, Anna Akhmatova, Constantine Cavafy, and Paul Valéry.

The Modernist movement continued during this period in Soviet Russia. In 1930 composer Dimitri Shostakovich’s (1906–75) opera *The Nose* was premiered, in which he uses a montage of different styles, including folk music, popular song and atonality. Amongst his influences was Alban Berg’s (1885–1935) opera *Wozzeck* (1925), which “had made a tremendous impression on Shostakovich when it was staged in Leningrad.” However, from 1932 Socialist realism began to oust Modernism in the Soviet Union, and in 1936 Shostakovich was attacked and forced to withdraw his 4th Symphony.

Alban Berg wrote another significant, though incomplete, Modernist opera, *Lulu*, which premiered in 1937. Berg’s *Violin Concerto* was first performed in 1935. Like Shostakovich, other composers faced difficulties in this period. In Germany Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) was forced to flee to the U.S. when Hitler came to power in 1933, because of his Modernist atonal style as well as his Jewish ancestry.

# great

depression

In painting, during the 1920s and the 1930s and the Great Depression, modernism is defined by Surrealism, late Cubism, Bauhaus, De Stijl, Dada, German Expressionism, and Modernist and masterful color painters like Henri Matisse and Pierre Bonnard as well as the abstractions of artists like Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky which characterized the European art scene. In Germany, Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz and others politicized their paintings, foreshadowing the coming of World War II, while in America, modernism is seen in the form of American Scene painting and the social realism and regionalism movements that contained both political and social commentary dominated the art world.

Artists like Ben Shahn, Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, George Tooker, John Steuart Curry, Reginald Marsh, and others became prominent. Modernism is defined in Latin America by painters Joaquín Torres García from Uruguay and Rufino Tamayo from Mexico, while the muralist movement with Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, Pedro Nel Gómez and Santiago Martínez Delgado, and Symbolist paintings by Frida Kahlo, began a renaissance of the arts for the region, characterized by a freer use of color and an emphasis on political messages.

Diego Rivera is perhaps best known by the public world for his 1933 mural, Man at the Crossroads, in the lobby of the RCA Building at Rockefeller Center. When his patron Nelson Rockefeller discovered that the mural included a portrait of Vladimir Lenin and other communist imagery, he fired Rivera, and the unfinished work was eventually destroyed by Rockefeller's staff. Frida Kahlo's (Rivera's wife's) works are often characterized by their stark portrayals of pain. Kahlo was deeply influenced by indigenous Mexican culture, which is apparent in her paintings' bright

colors and dramatic symbolism. Christian and Jewish themes are often depicted in her work as well; she combined elements of the classic religious Mexican tradition, which were often bloody and violent. Frida Kahlo's Symbolist works relate strongly to Surrealism and to the Magic Realism movement in literature.

Political activism was an important piece of David Siqueiros' life, and frequently inspired him to set aside his artistic career. His art was deeply rooted in the Mexican Revolution. The period from the 1920s to the 1950s is known as the Mexican Renaissance, and Siqueiros was active in the attempt to create an art that was at once Mexican and universal. The young Jackson Pollock attended the workshop and helped build floats for the parade. During the 1930s radical leftist politics characterized many of the artists connected to Surrealism, including Pablo Picasso. On 26 April 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, the Basque town of Gernika was bombed by Nazi Germany's Luftwaffe. The Germans were attacking to support the efforts of Francisco Franco to overthrow the Basque government and the Spanish Republican government. Pablo Picasso painted his mural-sized Guernica to commemorate the horrors of the bombing.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s and through the years of World War II, American art was characterized by Social Realism and American Scene Painting, in the work of Grant Wood, Edward Hopper, Ben Shahn, Thomas Hart Benton, and several others. Nighthawks (1942) is a painting by Edward Hopper that portrays people sitting in a downtown diner late at night. It is not only Hopper's most famous painting, but one of the most recognizable in American art. The scene was inspired by a diner in Greenwich Village. Hopper began painting it immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After this event there was a large feeling of gloominess over the country, a feeling that is portrayed in the painting. The urban street is empty outside the diner, and inside none of the three patrons is apparently looking or talking to the others but instead is lost in their own thoughts. This portrayal of modern urban life as empty or lonely is a common theme throughout Hopper's work.

American Gothic is a painting by Grant Wood from 1930. Portraying a pitchfork-holding farmer and a younger woman in front of a house of Carpenter Gothic style, it is one of the most familiar images in 20th-century American art. Art critics had favorable opinions about the painting; like Gertrude Stein and Christopher Morley, they assumed the painting was meant to be a satire of rural small-town life. It was thus seen as part of the trend towards increasingly critical depictions of rural America, along the lines of Sherwood Anderson's 1919 Winesburg, Ohio, Sinclair Lewis's 1920 Main Street, and Carl Van Vechten's The Tattooed Countess in literature. However, with the onset of the Great Depression, the painting came to be seen as a depiction of steadfast American pioneer spirit.

The situation for artists in Europe during the 1930s deteriorated rapidly as the Nazis' power in Germany and across Eastern Europe increased. Degenerate art was a term adopted by the Nazi regime in Germany for virtually all modern art. Such art was banned on the grounds that it was un-German or Jewish Bolshevik in nature, and those identified as degenerate artists were subjected to sanctions. These included being dismissed from teaching positions, being forbidden to exhibit or to sell their art, and in some cases being forbidden to produce art entirely. Degenerate Art was also the title of an exhibition, mounted by the Nazis in Munich in 1937. The climate became so hostile for artists and art associated



with modernism and abstraction that many left for the Americas. German artist Max Beckmann and scores of others fled Europe for New York. In New York City a new generation of young and exciting Modernist painters led by Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, and others were just beginning to come of age.

Arshile Gorky's portrait of someone who might be Willem de Kooning is an example of the evolution of abstract expressionism from the context of figure painting, cubism and surrealism. Along with his friends de Kooning and John D. Graham, Gorky created biomorphically shaped and abstracted figurative compositions that by the 1940s evolved into totally abstract paintings. Gorky's work seems to be a careful analysis of memory, emotion and shape, using line and color to express feeling and nature.

## AFTER WORLD WAR II (MAINLY THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS)

### *Introduction*

Though The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature sees modernism ending by c. 1939, with regard to British and American literature, "When Modernism petered out and postmodernism began has been contested almost as hotly as when the transition from Victorianism to Modernism occurred." Clement Greenberg sees modernism ending in the 1930s, with the exception of the visual and performing arts, but with regard to music, Paul Griffiths notes that, while Modernism "seemed to be a spent force" by the late 1920s, after World War II, "a new generation of composers—Boulez, Barraqué, Babbitt, Nono, Stockhausen, Xenakis" revived modernism."

In fact, many literary Modernists lived into the 1950s and 1960s, though generally they were no longer producing major

works. The term "late modernism" is also sometimes applied to Modernist works published after 1930. Among Modernists (or late Modernists) still publishing after 1945 were Wallace Stevens, Gottfried Benn, T. S. Eliot, Anna Akhmatova, William Faulkner, Dorothy Richardson, John Cowper Powys, and Ezra Pound. Basil Bunting, born in 1901, published his most important Modernist poem *Briggflatts* in 1965. In addition, Hermann Broch's *The Death of Virgil* was published in 1945 and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* in 1947.

Samuel Beckett, died in 1989, he has been described as a "later Modernist". Beckett is a writer with roots in the expressionist tradition of Modernism, who produced works from the 1930s until 1980s, including *Molloy* (1951), *Waiting for Godot* (1953), *Happy Days* (1961), and *Rockaby* (1981). The terms "minimalist" and "post-Modernist" have also been applied to his later works. The poets Charles Olson and J. H. Prynne (born 1936) are among the writers in the second half of the 20th century who have been described as the late Modernists.

More recently the term "late modernism" has been redefined by at least one critic and used to refer to works written after 1945, rather than 1930. With this usage goes the idea that the ideology of modernism was significantly re-shaped by the events of World War II, especially the Holocaust and the dropping of the atom bomb.

The postwar period left the capitals of Europe in upheaval with an urgency to economically and physically rebuild and to politically regroup. In Paris (the former center of European culture and the former capital of the art world) the climate for art was a disaster. Important collectors, dealers, and Modernist artists, writers, and poets had fled Europe for New York and America. The surrealists and modern artists from every cultural center

of Europe had fled the onslaught of the Nazis for safe haven in the United States. Many of those who didn't flee perished. A few artists, notably Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Pierre Bonnard, remained in France and survived.

The 1940s, New York City heralded the triumph of American abstract expressionism, a Modernist movement that combined lessons learned from artists like Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, surrealism, Joan Miró, cubism, Fauvism, and early modernism via great teachers in America like Hans Hofmann and John D. Graham. American artists benefited from the presence of Piet Mondrian, Fernand Léger, Max Ernst and the André Breton group, Pierre Matisse's gallery, and Peggy Guggenheim's gallery *The Art of This Century*, as well as other factors.

### *Theatre of the Absurd*

The term "Theatre of the Absurd" is applied to plays, written primarily by Europeans, that express the belief that human existence has no meaning or purpose and therefore all communication breaks down. Logical construction and argument gives way to irrational and illogical speech and to its ultimate conclusion, silence.

While there are significant precursors, including Alfred Jarry (1873–1907), the Theatre of the Absurd is generally seen as beginning in the 1950s with the plays of Samuel Beckett. Critic Martin Esslin coined the term in his 1960 essay "Theatre of the Absurd". He related these plays based on a broad theme of the Absurd, similar to the way Albert Camus uses the term in his 1942 essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

The Absurd in plays takes the form of man's reaction to a world apparently without meaning, and/or man as a puppet controlled or menaced by the invisible outside forces. Though the term

atomic

# abstract

is applied to a wide range of plays, some of the characteristics coincide in many of the plays: broad comedy, often similar to vaudeville, mixed with horrific or tragic images; characters caught in hopeless situations forced to do repetitive or to do meaningless actions; dialogue full of clichés, wordplay, and nonsense; plots that are cyclical or absurdly expansive; either a parody or dismissal of realism and the concept of the “well-made play”.

Playwrights commonly associated with the Theatre of the Absurd include Samuel Beckett (1906–1989), Eugène Ionesco (1909–94), Jean Genet (1910–86), Harold Pinter (1930–2008), Tom Stoppard (born 1937), Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–90), Alejandro Jodorowsky (born 1929), Fernando Arrabal (born 1932), Václav Havel (1936–2011) and Edward Albee.

## ***Pollock and abstract influences***

During the late 1940s Jackson Pollock’s radical approach to painting revolutionized the potential for all contemporary art that followed him. To some extent Pollock realized that the journey toward making a work of art was as important as the work of art itself. Like Pablo Picasso’s innovative reinventions of painting and sculpture in the early 20th century via Cubism and constructed sculpture, Pollock redefined the way art is made. His move away from easel painting and conventionality was a liberating signal to the artists of his era and to all who came after.

Artists realized that Jackson Pollock’s process—placing unstretched raw canvas on the floor where it could be attacked from all four sides using artistic and industrial materials; dripping and throwing linear skeins of paint; drawing, staining, and brushing; using imagery and non-imagery—essentially blasted artmaking beyond any prior boundary. Abstract expressionism generally expanded and developed the definitions and possibili-

ties available to artists for the creation of new works of art.

The other abstract expressionists who followed Jackson Pollock’s breakthrough with new breakthroughs of their own. In a sense the innovations of Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Mark Rothko, Philip Guston, Hans Hofmann, Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Motherwell, Peter Voulkos and others opened the floodgates to the diversity and scope of all the art that followed them. Rereadings into abstract art by art historians such as Linda Nochlin, Griselda Pollock and Catherine de Zegher critically show, however, that pioneering women artists who produced major innovations in the modern arts had been ignored by official accounts of its history.

## ***International figures from British art***

Henry Moore (1898–1986) emerged after World War II as Britain’s leading sculptor. He was best known for his semi-abstract monumental bronze sculptures which are located around the world as public works of art. His forms are usually abstractions of the human figure, typically depicting mother-and-child or reclining figures, usually suggestive of the female body, apart from a phase in the 1950s when he sculpted family groups.

His forms are generally contain hollow spaces. In the 1950s, Moore began to receive increasingly significant commissions, including a reclining figure for the UNESCO building in Paris in 1958. With many more public works of art, the scale of Moore’s sculptures grew significantly. The last three decades of Moore’s life continued in a similar vein, with several major retrospectives taking place around the world, notably a prominent exhibition in the summer of 1972 in the grounds of the Forte di Belvedere overlooking Florence. By the end of the 1970s, there were

some 40 exhibitions a year featuring his work. On the campus of the University of Chicago in December 1967, 25 years to the minute after the team of physicists led by Enrico Fermi achieved the first controlled, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction, Moore’s Nuclear Energy was unveiled. Also in Chicago, Moore commemorated science with a large bronze sundial, locally named Man Enters the Cosmos (1980), which was commissioned to recognise the space exploration program.

The “London School” of figurative painters, including Francis Bacon (1909–1992), Lucian Freud (1922–2011), Frank Auerbach (born 1931), Leon Kossoff (born 1926), and Michael Andrews (1928–1995), have received widespread international recognition.

Francis Bacon was an Irish-born British figurative painter known for his bold, graphic and emotionally raw imagery. His painterly but abstracted figures typically appear isolated in glass or in steel geometrical cages set against flat, nondescript backgrounds. Bacon began painting during his early 20s but worked only sporadically until his mid-30s. His breakthrough came with the 1944 triptych *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* which sealed his reputation as a uniquely bleak chronicler of the human condition. His output can be crudely described as consisting of sequences or variations on a single motif; beginning with the 1940s male heads isolated in rooms, the early 1950s screaming popes, and mid to late 1950s animals and lone figures suspended in geometric structures. These were followed by his early 1960s modern variations of the crucifixion in the triptych format. From the mid-1960s to early 1970s, Bacon mainly produced strikingly compassionate portraits of friends. Following the suicide of his lover George Dyer in 1971, his art became more per-

sonal, inward-looking, and preoccupied with themes and motifs of death. During his lifetime, Bacon was equally reviled and acclaimed.

Lucian Freud was a German-born British painter, known chiefly for his thickly impastoed portrait and figure paintings, who was widely considered the pre-eminent British artist of his time. His works are noted for their psychological penetration, and for their often discomfiting examination of the relationship between artist and model. According to William Grimes of the New York Times, "Lucien Freud and his contemporaries transformed figure painting in the 20th century. In paintings like *Girl with a White Dog* (1951-52), Freud put the pictorial language of traditional European painting in the service of an anti-romantic, confrontational style of portraiture that stripped bare the sitter's social facade. Ordinary people—many of them his friends—stared wide-eyed from the canvas, vulnerable to the artist's ruthless inspection."

#### ***In the 1960s after abstract expressionism***

In abstract painting during the 1950s and 1960s several new directions like hard-edge painting and other forms of geometric abstraction began to appear in artist studios and in radical avant-garde circles as a reaction against the subjectivism of abstract expressionism. Clement Greenberg became the voice of post-painterly abstraction when he curated an influential exhibition of new painting that toured important art museums throughout the United States in 1964. Color Field painting, hard-edge painting and lyrical abstraction emerged as radical new directions. By the late 1960s however, postminimalism, process art and Arte Povera also emerged as revolutionary concepts and movements that encompassed both painting and sculpture, via lyrical abstraction and the

postminimalist movement, and in early conceptual art. Process art as inspired by Pollock enabled artists to experiment with and make use of a diverse encyclopedia of style, content, material, placement, sense of time, and plastic and real space. Nancy Graves, Ronald Davis, Howard Hodgkin, Larry Poons, Jannis Kounellis, Brice Marden, Colin McCahon, Bruce Nauman, Richard Tuttle, Alan Saret, Walter Darby Bannard, Lynda Benglis, Dan Christensen, Larry Zox, Ronnie Landfield, Eva Hesse, Keith Sonnier, Richard Serra, Sam Gilliam, Mario Merz and Peter Reginato were some of the younger artists who emerged during the era of late modernism that spawned the heyday of the art the late 1960s.

#### ***Pop art***

In 1962 the Sidney Janis Gallery mounted *The New Realists*, the first major pop art group exhibition in an uptown art gallery in New York City. Janis mounted the exhibition in a 57th Street storefront near his gallery at 15 E. 57th Street. The show sent shockwaves through the New York School and reverberated worldwide. Earlier in England in 1958 the term "Pop Art" was used by Lawrence Alloway to describe paintings that celebrated the consumerism of the post World War II era. This movement rejected abstract expressionism and its focus on the hermetic and psychological interior in favor of art that depicted and often celebrated material consumer culture, advertising, and iconography of the mass production.

The early works of David Hockney and the works of Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi (who created the groundbreaking *I was a Rich Man's Plaything*, 1947) are considered seminal examples in the movement. Meanwhile, in the downtown scene in New York's East Village 10th Street galleries, artists were formulating an American version of pop art. Claes Oldenburg had his storefront, and

the Green Gallery on 57th Street began to show the works of Tom Wesselmann and James Rosenquist. Later Leo Castelli exhibited the works of other American artists, including those of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein for most of their careers. There is a connection between the radical works of Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, the rebellious Dadaists with a sense of humor, and pop artists like Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein, whose paintings reproduce the look of Ben-Day dots, a technique used in commercial reproduction.

#### **MINIMALISM**

Minimalism describes movements in various forms of art and design, especially visual art and music, wherein artists intend to expose the essence or identity of a subject through eliminating all nonessential forms, features, or concepts. Minimalism is any design or style wherein the simplest and fewest elements are used to create the maximum effect. As a specific movement in the arts it is identified with developments in post-World War II Western art, most strongly with American visual arts in the 1960s and early 1970s. Prominent artists associated with this movement include Donald Judd, John McCracken, Agnes Martin, Dan Flavin, Robert Morris, Ronald Bladen, Anne Truitt, and Frank Stella.

It derives from the reductive aspects of modernism and is often interpreted as a reaction against Abstract expressionism and a bridge to Postminimal art practices. By the early 1960s minimalism emerged as an abstract movement in art (with roots in the geometric abstraction of Kazimir Malevich, the Bauhaus and Piet Mondrian) that rejected the idea of relational and subjective painting, the complexity of abstract expressionist surfaces, and the emotional zeitgeist and polemics present in the arena of action painting.

POP

POP

POP

POP

POP

POP



Minimalism argued that extreme simplicity could capture all of the sublime representation needed in art. Minimalism is variously construed either as a precursor to postmodernism, or as a postmodern movement itself. In the latter perspective, early minimalism yielded advanced Modernist works, but the movement partially abandoned this direction when some artists like Robert Morris changed direction in favor of the anti-form movement.

Hal Foster, in his essay *The Crux of Minimalism*, examines the extent to which Donald Judd and Robert Morris both acknowledge and exceed Greenbergian Modernism in their published definitions of minimalism.[119] He argues that minimalism is not a “dead end” of Modernism, but a “paradigm shift toward postmodern practices that continue to be elaborated today.” The terms have expanded to encompass a movement in music that features such repetition and iteration as those of the compositions of La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and John Adams. Minimalist compositions are sometimes known as systems music. The term “minimalist” often colloquially refers to anything that is spare or stripped to its essentials. It has also been used to describe the plays and novels of Samuel Beckett, the films of Robert Bresson, the stories of Raymond Carver, and the automobile designs of Colin Chapman.

#### ***Postminimalism***

In the late 1960s, Robert Pincus-Witten coined the term “postminimalism” to describe minimalist-derived art which had content and contextual overtones that minimalism rejected. The term was applied by Pincus-Whitten to the work of Eva Hesse, Keith Sonnier, Richard Serra and new work by former minimalists Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, Sol LeWitt, Barry Le Va, and others. Other minimalists including Donald Judd, Dan

Flavin, Carl Andre, Agnes Martin, John McCracken and others continued to produce late Modernist paintings and sculpture for the remainders of their careers. Since then, many artists have embraced minimal or postminimal styles, and the label “Postmodern” has been attached to them.

#### ***Collage***

Related to abstract expressionism was the emergence of combining manufactured items with artist materials, moving away from previous conventions of painting and sculpture. The work of Robert Rauschenberg exemplifies this trend. His “combines” of the 1950s were forerunners of pop art and installation art, and used assemblages of large physical objects, including stuffed animals, birds and commercial photographs. Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Larry Rivers, John Chamberlain, Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, Jim Dine, and Edward Kienholz were among important pioneers of both abstraction and pop art. Creating new conventions of art-making, they made acceptable in serious contemporary art circles the radical inclusion in their works of unlikely materials. Another pioneer of collage was Joseph Cornell, whose more intimately scaled works were seen as radical because of both his personal iconography and his use of found objects.

#### **NEO-DADA**

In the early twentieth century Marcel Duchamp submitted for exhibition a urinal as a sculpture.[120] He professed his intent that people look at the urinal as if it were a work of art because he said it was a work of art. He referred to his work as “readymades”. *Fountain* was a urinal signed with the pseudonym “R. Mutt”, the exhibition of which shocked the art world in 1917. This and Duchamp’s other works are generally labelled as Dada. Duchamp can be seen as a pre-

cursor to conceptual art, other famous examples being John Cage’s *4’33”*, which is four minutes and thirty three seconds of silence, and Rauschenberg’s *Erased de Kooning Drawing*. Many conceptual works take the position that art is the result of the viewer viewing an object or act as art, not of the intrinsic qualities of the work itself. In choosing “an ordinary article of life” and creating “a new thought for that object” Duchamp invited onlookers to view *Fountain* as a sculpture.

Marcel Duchamp famously gave up “art” in favor of chess. Avant-garde composer David Tudor created a piece, *Reunion* (1968), written jointly with Lowell Cross, that features a chess game in which each move triggers a lighting effect or projection. Duchamp and Cage played the game at the work’s premier. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner identify Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns as part of the transitional phase, influenced by Duchamp, between Modernism and Postmodernism. Both used images of ordinary objects, or the objects themselves, in their work, while retaining the abstraction and painterly gestures of high Modernism.

#### **PERFORMANCE**

During the late 1950s and 1960s artists with a wide range of interests began to push the boundaries of contemporary art. Yves Klein in France, Carolee Schneemann, Yayoi Kusama, Charlotte Moorman and Yoko Ono in New York City, and Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell and Nam June Paik in Germany were pioneers of performance-based works of art. Groups like *The Living Theatre* with Julian Beck and Judith Malina collaborated with sculptors and painters creating environments, radically changing the relationship between audience and performer, especially in their piece *Paradise Now*. The Judson Dance Theater, located at the Judson Memorial Church, New York; and the Judson dancers, notably Yvonne



Rainer, Trisha Brown, Elaine Summers, Sally Gross, Simonne Forti, Deborah Hay, Lucinda Childs, Steve Paxton and others; collaborated with artists Robert Morris, Robert Whitman, John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and engineers like Billy Klüver. Park Place Gallery was a center for musical performances by electronic composers Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and other notable performance artists including Joan Jonas.

These performances were intended as works of a new art form combining sculpture, dance, and music or sound, often with audience participation. They were characterized by the reductive philosophies of minimalism and the spontaneous improvisation and expressivity of abstract expressionism. Images of Schneeman's performances of pieces meant to shock are occasionally used to illustrate these kinds of art, and she is often seen photographed while performing her piece Interior Scroll. However, the images of her performing this piece are illustrating precisely what performance art is not. In performance art, the performance itself is the medium. Other media cannot illustrate performance art. Performance art is performed, not captured. By its nature performance is momentary and evanescent, which is part of the point of the medium as art. Representations of performance art in other media, whether by image, video, narrative or otherwise, select certain points of view in space or time or otherwise involve the inherent limitations of each medium, and which therefore cannot truly illustrate the medium of performance as art. During the same period, various avant-garde artists created Happenings, mysterious and often spontaneous and unscripted gatherings of artists and their friends and relatives in various specified locations, often incorporating exercises in absurdity, physicality, costuming, spontaneous nudity, and various random or seemingly

disconnected acts. Notable creators of happenings included Allan Kaprow who first used the term in 1958, Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Red Grooms, and Robert Whitman.

## INTERMEDIA, MULTI-MEDIA

Another trend in art which has been associated with the term postmodern is the use of a number of different media together. Intermedia is a term coined by Dick Higgins and meant to convey new art forms along the lines of Fluxus, concrete poetry, found objects, performance art, and computer art. Higgins was the publisher of the Something Else Press, a concrete poet married to artist Alison Knowles and an admirer of Marcel Duchamp. Ihab Hassan includes "Intermedia, the fusion of forms, the confusion of realms," in his list of the characteristics of postmodern art. One of the most common forms of "multi-media art" is the use of video-tape and CRT monitors, termed video art. While the theory of combining multiple arts into one art is quite old, and has been revived periodically, the postmodern manifestation is often in combination with performance art, where the dramatic subtext is removed, and what is left is the specific statements of the artist in question or the conceptual statement of their action.

## FLUXUS

Fluxus was named and loosely organized in 1962 by George Maciunas (1931–78), a Lithuanian-born American artist. Fluxus traces its beginnings to John Cage's 1957 to 1959 Experimental Composition classes at the New School for Social Research in New York City. Many of his students were artists working in other media with little or no background in music. Cage's students included Fluxus founding members Jackson Mac Low, Al Hansen, George Brecht and Dick Higgins.

Fluxus encouraged a do-it-yourself aesthetic and valued simplicity over complexity. Like Dada before it, Fluxus included a strong current of anti-commercialism and an **anti-art sensibility**, xdisparaging the conventional market-driven art world in favor of an artist-centered creative practice. Fluxus artists preferred to work with whatever materials were at hand, and either created their own work or collaborated in the creation process with their colleagues.

Andreas Huyssen criticises attempts to claim Fluxus for Postmodernism as "either the master-code of postmodernism or the ultimately unrepresentable art movement – as it were, postmodernism's sublime." Instead he sees Fluxus as a major Neo-Dadaist phenomena within the avant-garde tradition. It did not represent a major advance in the development of artistic strategies, though it did express a rebellion against "the administered culture of the 1950s, in which a moderate, domesticated modernism served as ideological prop to the Cold War."

# ART

LATE PERIOD

Continuation of abstract expressionism, color field painting, lyrical abstraction, geometric abstraction, minimalism, abstract illusionism, process art, pop art, postminimalism, and other late 20th-century Modernist movements in both painting and sculpture continued through the first decade of the 21st century and constitute radical new directions in those mediums.

At the turn of the 21st century many well-established artists such as Sir Anthony Caro, Lucian Freud, Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Agnes Martin, Al Held, Ellsworth Kelly, Helen Frankenthaler, Frank Stella, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, James Rosenquist, Alex Katz, Philip Pearlstein, and younger artists including Brice Marden, Chuck Close, Sam Gilliam, Isaac Witkin, Sean Scully, Mahirwan Mamtani, Joseph Nechvatal, Elizabeth Murray, Larry Poons, Richard Serra, Walter Darby Bannard, Larry Zox,

Ronnie Landfield, Ronald Davis, Dan Christensen, Joel Shapiro, Tom Otterness, Joan Snyder, Ross Bleckner, Archie Rand, Susan Crile, and others continued to produce vital and influential paintings and sculpture.

Differences between modernism and postmodernism

By the early 1980s the Postmodern movement in art and architecture began to establish its position through various conceptual and intermedia formats. Postmodernism in music and literature began to take hold earlier. In music, postmodernism is described in one reference work, as a “term introduced in the 1970s”, while in British literature, The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature sees modernism “ceding its predominance to postmodernism” as early as 1939. However, dates are highly debatable, especially as according to Andreas Huyssen: “one critic’s postmodernism is another

critic’s modernism.” This includes those who are critical of the division between the two and see them as two aspects of the same movement, and believe that late Modernism continues. Modernism is an encompassing label for a wide variety of cultural movements. Postmodernism is essentially a centralized movement that named itself, based on sociopolitical theory, although the term is now used in a wider sense to refer to activities from the 20th century onwards which exhibit awareness of and reinterpret the modern.

Postmodern theory asserts that if the attempt to canonise Modernism “after the fact” is doomed to undisambiguable contradictions. In a narrower sense, what was Modernist was not necessarily also postmodern. Those elements of Modernism which accentuated the benefits of rationality and socio-technological progress were only Modernist.



CRITICISM

Modernism's stress on the freedom of expression, experimentation, radicalism, and primitivism disregards conventional expectations. In many art forms this often meant startling and alienating audiences with bizarre and unpredictable effects, as in the strange and disturbing combinations of motifs in Surrealism or the use of extreme dissonance and atonality in Modernist music. In literature this often involved the rejection of intelligible plots or characterization in novels, or the creation of poetry that defied clear interpretation. After the rise of Joseph Stalin, the Soviet government rejected mod-

the “canary in the coal mine”, whose repression by a government or other group with supposed authority represented a warning that individual liberties were being threatened. Louis A. Sass compared madness, specifically schizophrenia, and modernism in a less fascist manner by noting their shared disjunctive narratives, surreal images, and incoherence.

In fact, modernism flourished mainly in consumer/capitalist societies, despite the fact that its proponents often rejected consumerism itself. However, high modernism began to merge with

various Modernist musical effects on several albums, while musicians such as Frank Zappa, Syd Barrett and Captain Beefheart proved even more experimental. Modernist devices also started to appear in popular cinema, and later on in music videos. Modernist design also began to enter the mainstream of popular culture, as simplified and stylized forms became popular, often associated with dreams of a space age high-tech future. This merging of consumer and high versions of Modernist culture led to a radical transformation of the meaning of “Modernism”.

postmodernism represents an extension of modernism.

“Anti-modern” or “counter-modern” movements seek to emphasize holism, connection and spirituality as remedies or antidotes to modernism. Such movements see modernism as reductionist, and therefore subject to an inability to see systemic and emergent effects. Many Modernists came to this viewpoint, for example Paul Hindemith in his late turn towards mysticism. Writers such as Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson, in The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million

and more persistent than in others. Visual art has made the most complete break with its past. Most major capital cities have museums devoted to modern art as distinct from post-Renaissance art. Examples include the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Modern in London, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. These galleries make no distinction between modernist and Postmodernist phases, seeing both as developments within Modern Art.

CRITICISM

ernism on the grounds of alleged elitism, although it had previously endorsed Futurism and Constructivism. The Nazi government of Germany deemed modernism narcissistic and nonsensical, as well as “Jewish” (see Antisemitism) and “Negro”. The Nazis exhibited Modernist paintings alongside works by the mentally ill in an exhibition entitled “Degenerate Art”. Accusations of “formalism” could lead to the end of a career, or worse. For this reason many Modernists of the postwar generation felt that they were the most important bulwark against totalitarianism,

consumer culture after World War II, especially during the 1960s. In Britain, a youth subculture emerged calling itself “Modernist” (usually shortened to Mod), following such representative music groups as the Who and the Kinks. The likes of Bob Dylan, Serge Gainsbourg and the Rolling Stones combined popular musical traditions with Modernist verse, adopting literary devices derived from James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, James Thurber, T. S. Eliot, Guillaume Apollinaire, Allen Ginsberg, and others. The Beatles developed along similar lines, creating

First, it implied that a movement based on the rejection of tradition had become a tradition of its own. Second, it demonstrated that the distinction between elite Modernist and mass consumerist culture had lost its precision. Some writers declared that modernism had become so institutionalized that it was now “post avant-garde”, indicating that it had lost its power as a revolutionary movement. Many have interpreted this transformation as the beginning of the phase that became known as postmodernism. For others, such as art critic Robert Hughes,

People Are Changing the World (2000), Fredrick Turner in A Culture of Hope and Lester Brown in Plan B, have articulated a critique of the basic idea of modernism itself – that individual creative expression should conform to the realities of technology. Instead, they argue, individual creativity should make everyday life more emotionally acceptable. Some traditionalist artists like Alexander Stoddart reject modernism generally as the product of “an epoch of false money allied with false culture”. In some fields, the effects of modernism have remained stronger



