

## MODULE TEN

### The Artist's Process

The selected works were created with unconventional methods, creating a context for an exploration of various artistic processes. Arranged chronologically, they demonstrate how artists have built upon and broken with tradition by developing new approaches to making art. Throughout, consider how these processes deviate from traditional modes of art-making and the degree to which the methods are revealed in the finished work.

**Jean (Hans) Arp. *Untitled (Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance)*. 1916–1917**

- Describe how the squares are arranged in this work. How are they positioned in relation to one another?
- The title of this work is *Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance*. How do you think chance was employed in the creation of this work?
- How is Arp's method different from traditional ways of making art?

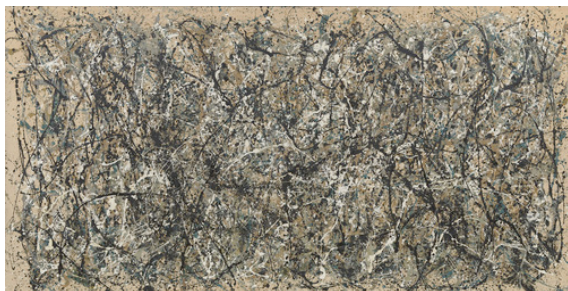


Jean (Hans) Arp (1886–1966) was a member of Zurich Dada, one of the most influential avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century. Dadaists were critical of objectivity and conscious control, and they embraced accidental processes in their work.

Arp claimed that he created this collage by dropping squares of paper onto a paper surface and then affixing them as they had fallen. The title reveals that in making this work Arp relied on chance, relinquishing the control an artist typically exercises over the final product.

**Jackson Pollock. *One: Number 31*, 1950. 1950**

- Describe the lines that compose this painting. What clues do they provide about how the work was made?
- How would you describe the mood of this work? Consider the lines, palette, and overall composition.
- The painting's title is *One: Number 31*, 1950. If you could rename it, what title would you choose?



*One: Number 31, 1950* is a masterpiece of the "drip" technique, pioneered by Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) around 1947. To make it Pollock laid a large piece of canvas on the floor of his studio and dripped paint onto it from all sides using sticks and turkey basters, among other tools. At times, he also poured it directly from the can. Though Pollock embraced mechanisms involving chance in his artistic production, he also famously remarked, "I can control the flow of paint: there is no accident."

### Yves Klein. *Anthropometry: Princess Helena*. 1960

- How do you think Klein made this work?
- The artist considered this work to be a portrait. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Do you associate this color with any particular emotion? How does it make you feel?

In his *Anthropometry* series, of which *Anthropometry: Princess Helena* is a part, Yves Klein (1928–1962) used female models as "living paintbrushes," directing them to press their paint-covered bodies against large sheets of paper. Klein used his own patented paint color, International Klein Blue, in all the works in the series. He took pains to reveal the artistic process in his work: he staged the making of these paintings as elaborate performances for large audiences.



**Turn and Talk:** If you were having a portrait made, how would you want it to look? What would you want your portrait to capture about you?

### Andy Warhol. *Campbell's Soup Cans*. 1962

- Is the design of Campbell's Soup cans familiar to you? If so, where have you seen it before?
- Why do you think Warhol chose Campbell's soup cans as his subject? Why do you think he included multiple cans in one work?
- How do you think Warhol was able to produce so many nearly identical images within this work? How might his work relate to mass production?



Andy Warhol (1928–1987) used imagery that was already familiar to the general public. "I don't think art should be only for the select few," he explained. "I think it should be for the mass of the American people." In *Campbell's Soup Cans* his artistic strategy mirrors his subject matter: he has reproduced the soup cans, objects of mass production and consumption, using silkscreening, a process developed for industry to facilitate replication. By incorporating silkscreening and repeated imagery into his work, Warhol

highlights intersections between consumer culture and high art and questions the notion of originality in painting.

**Cai Guo-Qiang. *Drawing for Transient Rainbow*. 2003**

- Describe the marks that form this image. How do you think they were made?
- This work is about fourteen feet high and thirteen feet wide. How does knowing the size affect your interpretation of the work?
- The title of this work is *Drawing for Transient Rainbow*. How do you think the title relates to the image?



To make this work and others like it, Cai Guo-Qiang (born 1957) lit small packets of gunpowder that he had placed between two pieces of large paper on a fire-resistant floor. His process refers to firework displays, which accompany certain celebrations in China, where Cai spent his childhood. The series of explosions that creates his imagery is unpredictable. Cai explains, "I spend so much time preplanning how to lay the fuses so as to have control and play against the power of the powder and the fuses. But . . . it doesn't always happen as expected, even if preplanned." Although fireworks are associated with bright colors and a fleeting experience, *Drawing for Transient Rainbow* is a colorless and permanent record of the event.

**Turn and Talk:** Fireworks are associated with celebrations. What was the most important celebration in your life? How did you mark the occasion?

## **Art-Making Activity**

In this module we considered artwork created through unusual or innovative processes. With the works of Pollock and Klein in mind, ask participants to create paintings using unconventional methods. Provide watercolor or acrylic paint and large paper. Instead of paintbrushes, have participants apply the paint using everyday or found objects. Suggest a variety of possible actions, such as dripping or dabbing. Participants can work abstractly or figuratively. Emphasize that in this module the process is more important than the final product.