

MODERN ART AND IDEAS 6
ART BETWEEN THE WARS

A Guide for Educators

Department of Education at The Museum of Modern Art

ART BETWEEN THE WARS

Artists included in this guide:

Otto Dix, Pablo Picasso, Dorothea Lange, Alberto Giacometti, Gustav Klucis, Jacob Lawrence, Max Beckmann, Fernand Léger, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Aleksandr Rodchenko, André Masson, Charles Sheeler, and Edward Hopper.

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A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

This is the sixth volume in the Modern Art and Ideas series for educators, which explores the history of modern art through The Museum of Modern Art's rich collection. While traditional art historical categories are the series' organizing principle, these parameters are used primarily as a means of exploring artistic developments and movements in conjunction with their social and historical contexts, with attention to the contributions of specific artists.

This guide is informed by issues posed by selected works in a variety of mediums (painting, sculpture, printmaking, graphic design, and photography), but its organization and lesson topics are created with the school curriculum in mind, with particular application to social studies, visual art, history, and language arts. Lessons are accompanied by writing, research, and hands-on art-based activities that encourage students to make connections between the visual arts and other disciplines.

The guide's purpose is not just to explicate works of art but also to demonstrate how images and historical information can be integrated into numerous subject areas and skill bases taught in the classroom. Students will be introduced to significant ideas in art and culture. By comparing a variety of mediums and artistic styles, students will be able to practice observation, articulation, and discussion skills, and to further develop their visual literacy.

The Modern Art and Ideas series was devised with the understanding that the history of modern art is not simply a progression of hermetic styles; rather, a complex matrix of intellectual, social, and historical factors have contributed to the creation of art. Furthermore, modern art is not solely the product of artists who seek to overthrow convention at all cost. A work of art may be understood through a variety of approaches and offers multiple ways of understanding the historical moment in which it was made as well as the individual who created it.

USING THE EDUCATORS GUIDE

The four lessons that compose this guide—**Identity, Modern Movements, Action/Reaction: Art and Politics**, and **Modern Landscapes**—may be used sequentially or as independent units. The lessons include an introduction to key principles followed by a close examination of each work, including the work's historical context and information on the artist. Discussion questions based on the image lead students through formal analysis of the artwork, and seek to create connections between information and visual evidence. The activities that conclude each lesson encourage students to synthesize what they have learned about the works and connect the lesson to the broader curriculum or relate it to skills students are practicing in the classroom.

We suggest that you encourage dialogue and debate by asking your students to respond to each others' observations and interpretations. Restating students' responses, periodically reviewing students' comments, and summarizing the discussion all help to validate students' thoughts, focus the discussion, and generate additional ideas about the artwork.

IMAGES

All of the questions, discussions, and activities in this guide are based on the images on the accompanying CD-ROM. Please examine the images carefully before showing them to your students. Your classroom should be equipped with a computer and LCD projector. You may also print images from the CD-ROM to transparency paper for overhead projection.

ACTIVITIES

The Activities sections encourage students to make connections between their own experiences and the concepts presented in the lessons. Through these activities, students will begin to develop a language for discussing and looking at art. Feel free to tailor the activities to the age level of your students.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

Additional discussion questions and ideas for field trips are included in this section. A bibliography and resources section has also been provided, for teachers and students to use in conducting research. The resources recommended in these pages provide further information on the artists and artworks in this guide, general historical topics, and additional classroom activities.

GLOSSARY

A glossary of art historical terms (bolded upon first mention in each lesson) is included at the end of the guide.

SETTING THE SCENE

The third and fourth decades of the twentieth century were years of great political, social, and intellectual change, influenced by such events as the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, the end of World War I in 1918, the rise of Benito Mussolini's Fascist party in Italy in the 1920s, the Nazi seizure of power in Germany in 1933, the Great Depression in the United States throughout the 1930s, and World War II looming on the horizon. It was also a time of prolific artistic activity; artists actively responded to the turmoil and change in their environments and throughout the world. Immediately after World War I, artists began to reject avant-garde styles, such as **Cubism** and **Futurism**, that had been at the epicenter of artistic activity in Europe prior to the onset of the war. In place of these movements, artists explored new forms of **Classicism**, **abstraction**, and **satire** in their work.

Rather than focusing on specific artistic movements during the interwar period, this guide looks at themes that emerged concurrently in art in Europe, North America, and South America during that period.

Between the wars, movements such as Dada, Surrealism, Suprematism, and Constructivism were developing in Europe, Russia, South America, and elsewhere. For further information on these artistic movements, we encourage you to explore the lessons in Modern Art and Ideas 4 and 5, now available at www.moma.org/modernteachers.

1. CREATE A TIMELINE

As a class, brainstorm what your students know about the social and political events of this time period. Based on their comments, begin to sketch out an initial timeline on the board. Break your class into groups of four to five students, and have each group research the major events that took place in European countries such as Germany, France, Italy, and Russia and in North and South America between 1918 and 1939. Encourage your students to use history texts, art history texts (consulting the bibliography at the end of this guide), and Internet resources.

Once each group's timeline has been created, make a photocopy for each student or post them all in a visible place in the classroom. Use them as a benchmark for your discussions as you move through the guide.

2. CURATE AN EXHIBITION

Inform your students that despite the diverse artistic activity during this period, social and political upheavals deeply impacted artists' lives and their ability to work. In 1933 the Nazi party took control of the German parliament. Soon after, Hitler (a failed artist himself) focused his attentions on the art world. In 1937 he opened the *Entartete Kunst* or *Degenerate Art* exhibition in Munich. The exhibition presented 650 of the 1,600 artworks that the Nazi regime had seized from public art museums since 1937; the represented artists were largely

of the avant-garde, with promising careers. The purpose of the exhibition was to display to the German public the art that the party deemed unacceptable and, essentially, to ridicule the artists. Eventually, many of the artworks in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition, which in the following years traveled throughout Germany, were destroyed.

The inclusion of their work in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition caused many artists to flee their homes, radically alter the way they created art, or abandon their creative practice altogether. Otto Dix and Max Beckmann, whose work is discussed in this guide, were included in the exhibition.

- **Ask your students to brainstorm reasons why art may be censored. Do they agree or disagree with the idea that art can be censored or considered unacceptable today? With your students, discuss examples of contemporary art that has been censored or considered unacceptable. Some examples that you can explore as a class include the *Sensation* exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1999 (now the Brooklyn Museum), the removal and destruction of Richard Serra's sculpture *Tilted Arc* from Federal Plaza in New York City in 1989, and public reaction to the work of British artists Damien Hirst and Tracy Emin. As a class, choose one of the above examples and have a debate about the topic of censorship in art as it relates to the individual case study.**
- **Ask your students to research an artist whose work was included in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition, such as George Grosz, Vasily Kandinsky, or Marc Chagall. Have each student write a one-page report about the artist and one of his or her artworks included in the exhibition, giving information on where the artist was from and how his or her inclusion in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition impacted the artist's work and life in general.**
- **As a class, create an exhibition that celebrates the work of these artists (or controversial contemporary artists) by posting color copies of the images selected by the students with each student's report next to it in your classroom or in a public area within the school.**

LESSONS

LESSON ONE: Identity



IMAGE ONE: Otto Dix. German, 1891–1969. *Dr. Mayer-Hermann*. 1926. Oil and tempera on wood, 58 ¾ x 39" (149.2 x 99.1 cm). Gift of Philip Johnson. © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn



IMAGE TWO: Pablo Picasso. Spanish, 1881–1973. *Girl before a Mirror*. 1932. Oil on canvas, 64 x 51 ¼" (162.3 x 130.2 cm). Gift of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim. © 2007 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

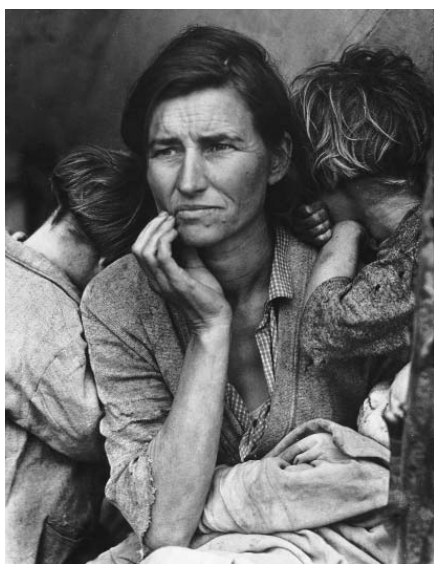


IMAGE THREE: Dorothea Lange. American, 1895–1965. *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*. 1936. Gelatin silver print, 11 ½ x 8 ⅝" (28.3 x 21.8 cm). Purchase



IMAGE FOUR: Alberto Giacometti. Swiss, 1901–1966. *Man Pointing*. 1947. Bronze, 70 ½ x 40 ¾ x 16 ⅜" (179 x 103.4 x 41.5 cm). Gift of Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller. © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

INTRODUCTION

During the interwar period, the idea of **identity**, both individual and social, came under scrutiny for intellectual and political reasons. In Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, and other European nations, governments enacted laws that penalized individuals based on their political and religious beliefs and identities. In France and Britain, intellectual developments in the fields of philosophy and psychoanalysis revolutionized the concept of identity.

In this lesson, students will discuss what identity means to them and will consider how their own identities are affected by the social and political realities of their time. They will then discuss how four artists—Otto Dix, Pablo Picasso, Dorothea Lange, and Alberto Giacometti—represent individual and universal identities in **portraiture**.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will consider the concept of identity in relation to their own experience.
- Students will consider and discuss portraiture.
- Students will discuss the **costume, pose, gesture, expression, and mood** in these portraits, and the artist's stylistic choices.
- Students will consider how artists represent individual and collective identity in portraits.
- Students will consider artistic choices in relation to historical context.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Ask your students to give some definitions of what the term “identity” means to them. How would they define their own identity? Ask students what political and social realities they face that have an impact on their identity. What other aspects of their lives impact their identity?
- Ask your students to explain the term “portrait.” On the board, create a class definition for this term using their comments. Once this definition is complete, have your students write it in their journals. As you move through the lesson, encourage your students to add to or change this definition. Ask your students to consider the choices people make when they know their portrait is being created or their picture is being taken, paying particular attention to costume, pose, and expression. Ask your students to collect old photographs of themselves or create new ones that capture them in different ways, and have each student create an individual identity **collage**.
- Inform your students that in this lesson they will be exploring the ways in which four different artists reflected on an individual's identity by creating a portrait that in some way captured the sitter's likeness.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Show your students the image of *Dr. Mayer-Hermann*, by Otto Dix (Image One). Ask your students to describe what they see in this portrait, paying particular attention to costume, pose, gesture, expression, and mood.

- **Ask your students to identify other elements in the painting that provide the viewer with clues about the subject of this portrait and his identity.**

Tell your students that Dix was a German artist who worked in an **Expressionist** style prior to his participation in World War I. In the years immediately following World War I, Dix and a number of his contemporaries in Berlin began to paint in a realistic style that came to be known as **Neue Sachlichkeit** (New Objectivity). In this realistic style they created social satires of postwar Germany. Dix said of these works, “I wanted to depict things as they really were.”¹ Later, in the 1920s, during the period in which he painted this portrait, Dix began to move away from political satire to focus on portraits of individuals in a highly realistic style of painting.

- **Ask your students if they consider this portrait to be a realistic painting. Make sure they support their answers with visual evidence.**
- **What reaction do they think the sitter, Dr. Mayer-Hermann, had when he first saw this image? Why do your students think he may have reacted this way?**

Dr. Wilhelm Mayer-Hermann was a prominent ear, nose, and throat doctor who **commissioned** Dix to paint his portrait, although he was aware of the objectively realistic, satirical-seeming style that Dix painted in at that time. Dix painted Mayer-Hermann in the doctor’s office with his professional accessories, such as the large circular X-ray apparatus above him and the circular light on his head that he most likely wore when examining patients. The blue ring on the doctor’s little finger is the only personal attribute depicted. It was presented to Mayer-Hermann upon his completion of medical school, by his father.

As a prominent Jewish figure in Berlin society, Mayer-Hermann was forced to leave Germany in 1934, fleeing Nazi rule. With his wife and daughters he moved to New York City, where he lived until his death, in 1945. At the time the doctor moved to New York, The Museum of Modern Art had already acquired his portrait and was displaying it to the public. The doctor greatly enjoyed visiting the Museum to view his portrait and to overhear comments that people made when looking at it. He said of these visits, “If anyone recognized me from the picture, they would never come to me as a patient!”²

- **Ask your students why the doctor may have felt this way about his portrait.**
- **Have your students take a moment to look closely at the image of Pablo Picasso’s *Girl before a Mirror* (Image Two). Ask your students to compare this painting to the portrait of Dr. Mayer-Hermann, in terms of the pose and expression of the figure and the overall mood of the painting.**
- **What do the clues of costume, pose, gesture, expression, and mood tell your students about the subject of this portrait?**

Inform your students that the portrait *Girl before a Mirror* depicts Picasso’s young girlfriend, Marie-Thérèse Walter. Picasso created many portraits of Walter. He painted this particular portrait in 1932 in his summer home in the South of France. It is thought that Walter may have been pregnant with the artist’s child when this portrait was painted.

- **This painting has been described as an image of dualities, meaning a representation of two sides or two ideas. Ask your students if they agree with this idea. Ask them to discuss any dual elements in this painting.**

1. Otto Dix, quoted in Jodi Hauptman, “Philip Johnson: MoMA’s Form Giver,” *MoMA: Magazine of The Museum of Modern Art* 22 (1996): 20.

2. Wilhelm Mayer-Hermann, quoted in Sabine Rewald, “How Can I Hurt You?” *Art in America* (April 2004): 111.

- Ask your students why Picasso may have chosen to create a portrait of Walter that incorporated these oppositional elements. How do these choices affect their interpretation of her image?
- Have your students describe the background of the image.

It has been suggested that the diamond-shaped pattern of the background refers to the costume of a harlequin, a motif that Picasso often used to represent or refer to himself. This idea of a hidden reference to Picasso is further supported in this portrait by the colors that the artist used for the diamond pattern. Yellow and red are the colors of the flag of Spain, Picasso's country of birth.

- Why may the artist have chosen to include this pattern in the portrait? What effect does the background pattern have on the overall image? Ensure that your students support their thoughts and ideas with evidence from the painting.
- We explored how Dix used a realistic style in his portrait of Dr. Mayer-Hermann. Ask your students how they would describe the style Picasso used to create this image. Ask them to support their responses with visual examples.

We just examined how Dix and Picasso depicted the identities of their sitters through portraiture. Now we will discuss how the artists Dorothea Lange and Alberto Giacometti used portraiture, in the mediums of photography and sculpture, to approach larger questions of identity—the identity of a social group and of people impacted by their historical contexts.

- Give your students a few minutes to take in the image of *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*, by Dorothea Lange (Image Three). Have your students describe the main figure depicted in this image.
- Give each student a sheet of paper. Have your students write down what they think the woman would say if she could speak.
- Have the students share their ideas and explain them in relation to their observations of the image.

Inform your students that the artist Dorothea Lange created *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California* in 1936, after she had begun photographing the harsh social realities of the Great Depression (1929–39) in America. At the time she took this photograph, she had been traveling in rural California photographing the difficult lives of migrant agricultural workers for the United States government's Resettlement Administration (RA) and the Farm Security Administration (FSA). The Information Division of the RA, later folded into the FSA, hired photographers to document the lives of agricultural workers who had been forced to leave their farms due to several factors, including the introduction of new industrial machinery, the Depression, and drought. In her RA and FSA photographs Lange created portraits of individuals that then become symbols for the larger community identity and its social concerns.

- Ask your students to discuss some of the concerns that they identified the migrant mother having in the above exercise. Do these seem like individual concerns or could they have also been the concerns of this woman's community? How could this image be reflective of a larger community identity? Ask them to explain their responses in relation to the image.

Share the following quote by Lange, explaining her working process at the time she created this work:

My own approach is based upon three considerations. First—hands off! Whatever I photograph, I do not . . . tamper with or arrange. Second—a sense of place. Whatever I photograph, I try to picture as a part of its surroundings, as having roots. Third—a sense of time. Whatever I photograph, I try to show as having its position in the past or in the present.³

- **Ask your students to discuss this work in terms of the pose and expression of the sitter, the setting and mood of the image, and the time period in which the image was taken—aspects that Lange stated, in the above quote, were central to her creative vision for her portraits.**

Lange later recounted her conversation with the subject of this portrait:

[The mother] was thirty-two and . . . she and her children had been living on frozen vegetables from the field and wild birds the children caught. The pea crop had frozen; there was no work. Yet they could not move on, for she had just sold the tires from the car to buy food.⁴

- **Ask your students to identify how Lange’s story about the subject of *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California* relates to their discussion of the image.**
- **Ask your students to define the term “sculpture.” Ask them to describe some differences between looking at a painting and looking at a sculpture. As a class, brainstorm some materials and techniques that sculptors use to create their artworks. Tell your students that the next image they will see will be of a sculpture created in 1947 by the artist Alberto Giacometti. Tell them that just as Lange created portraits of individuals that reflected larger social concerns, Giacometti was interested in creating sculptures that had meaning for all people.**
- **Show your students the image of the sculpture *Man Pointing*, by Giacometti (Image Four). Have them describe the figure depicted in the sculpture, paying attention to pose, gesture, expression, and mood.**
- **Based on their visual analysis of *Man Pointing*, ask your students if they can tell how Giacometti created this figure or identify the materials he used.**
- **Inform your students that the material is bronze, and that the artist first created a plaster mold to pour the bronze into and allow it to set. How does this description of the artist’s material and process match their own hypotheses?**

Giacometti created this sculpture in 1947, following the end of World War II, when he was living in Paris. At this time Giacometti was friendly with writers, artists, and philosophers who ascribed to Existential philosophy, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Samuel Beckett. **Existentialism** is a philosophy that developed out of a “crisis of the individual” during the interwar years and World War II. Existentialists were concerned with their relationships to themselves and to the external world, and with the increased sense of isolation in the modern environment. While Giacometti never officially declared himself an Existentialist, he did associate with many who did, and his sculptures are often interpreted as reflecting Existential philosophy.

3. Dorothea Lange, quoted in Therese Than Heyman, *Celebrating a Collection: The Work of Dorothea Lange* (Oakland, CA: The Oakland Museum, 1978), 60.

4. Dorothea Lange, paraphrased in Karin Becker Ohm, *Dorothea Lange and the Documentary Tradition* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 79.

Sartre, one of the leaders of the Existentialist movement, wrote about Giacometti's sculpture:

Before him men thought they were sculpturing being, and this absolute dissolved into an infinite number of appearances. . . . Each of [Giacometti's sculptures] reveals to us man as he is seen, as he is for other men, as he emerges into interhuman surroundings.⁵

- Give the above description of Existentialism to your students and ask them if there are any connections they can make between Existentialism and this sculpture.
- The tall figure in *Man Pointing*, like many in Giacometti's sculptures of the 1940s, is isolated, without any setting. Give each student either a piece of paper with a photocopy of the sculpture in the center or, alternatively, a blank piece of paper. Have students make a sketch or write a description of an imagined background that would be a suitable setting for this figure.
- As a group, have students discuss why they chose a particular setting to place this figure into, relating their ideas back to *Man Pointing*.
- Giacometti worked with live models to create studies for his sculptures and drawings. He also spoke of representing the underlying realism of all humankind, rather than one specific individual. Ask your students if *Man Pointing* fits their idea of a portrait. Ask them to explain their reasons.
- What qualities does the sculpture have that relate to an individual? What qualities seem more universal?
- As discussed, Lange and Giacometti were both interested in creating images of individuals that captured the essence of larger concepts of identity. Ask your students to compare and contrast the different ways in which Lange and Giacometti achieved this goal.

ACTIVITIES

1. Research a Portrait

Using Web resources, ask your students to research the subject of Lange's *Migrant Mother*, *Nipomo, California*, now known to have been Florence Owens Thompson. Ask your students to describe the ways in which their analysis of the image compares with their findings about Thompson's life.

2. Biographies and Portraits

Have each student choose one of the portraits in this lesson and write a one-page biography of the sitter based on their observations and discussions of the artwork.

Ask students who chose to write on the same artwork to organize themselves into groups of three. Have students discuss how their biographies are similar and different and back up their ideas with examples from the artwork.

Many other photographers have documented the lives and concerns of people in the United States and throughout the world. Have your students research the work of an artist such as Auguste Sander, Robert Frank, Diane Arbus, or Lee Friedlander, who documented the social and political realities of their times.

5. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Search for the Absolute," in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory: 1900–2000; An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 613.

3. Create a Portrait

Have your students each choose a friend or family member to create a portrait of. As a class, brainstorm the different mediums that students can use to create a portrait, including painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, and photography.

As a class, discuss the various stylistic choices students will need to make about how the portrait will appear—possibilities include realistic, abstract, caricature-like, and surreal—in order to represent the sitter the way they wish. Tell your students that all of the artists in this lesson based their artworks on sketches and studies of real people as well as their creative imaginations. Encourage students to make quick sketches of their sitters. Then have them create their portraits, either in class or as a take-home assignment.

Have students write short paragraphs to accompany their completed portraits, explaining their artistic choices and outlining how their portraits reflect their sitters' identities. Create an exhibition of these portraits in your classroom or another location in the school.

LESSON TWO: Modern Movements



IMAGE FIVE: Gustav Klucis. Latvian, 1895–1944. *The Development of Transportation, The Five-Year Plan.* 1929. Gravure, 28 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (73.3 x 50.5 cm). Purchase Fund, Jan Tschichold Collection



IMAGE SIX: Max Beckmann. German, 1884–1950. *Departure.* 1932/1933–35. Oil on canvas, three panels, side panels 7' $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (215.3 x 99.7 cm), center panel 7' $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 45 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (215.3 x 115.2 cm). Given anonymously (by exchange). © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

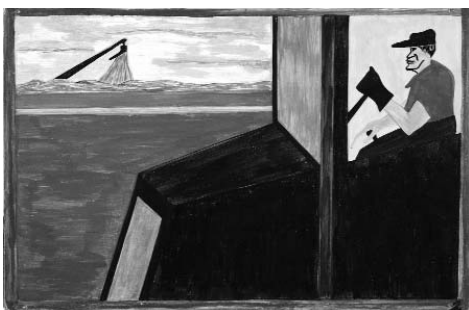


IMAGE SEVEN: Jacob Lawrence. American, 1917–2000. *The World War had caused a great shortage in Northern industry and also citizens of foreign countries were returning home.* 1940–41. Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 x 18" (30.5 x 45.7 cm). Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy. © 2007 Jacob Lawrence



IMAGE EIGHT: Jacob Lawrence. American, 1917–2000. *Another of the social causes of the migrants' leaving was that at times they did not feel safe, or it was not the best thing to be found on the streets late at night. They were arrested on the slightest provocation.* 1940–41. Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 x 18" (30.5 x 45.7 cm). Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy. © 2007 Jacob Lawrence



IMAGE NINE: Jacob Lawrence. American, 1917–2000. *The railroad stations in the South were crowded with people leaving for the North.* 1940–41. Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 x 18" (30.5 x 45.7 cm). Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy. © 2007 Jacob Lawrence

INTRODUCTION

During the interwar years there was an increase in the number of people who migrated and emigrated. Some people were forced to leave their homes for political or religious reasons, and others moved in the hope of a more prosperous life. Also, new developments in technology during and after World War I improved the possibilities for travel, allowing for a greater ease of movement and cultural exchange. Artists were among the people who migrated within one nation or emigrated between nations in search of freedom, hope, or new cultural experiences. This lesson considers how artists reflected upon these physical movements in their artworks and examines the role of narrative in artworks dealing with this theme.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will examine a poster and two paintings and consider how the artists who created these objects reflected upon movement through **subject matter, form, and technique**.
- Students will consider the varying experiences of viewing a **triptych**, a painting cycle, and a design object.
- Students will discuss multipanel artworks in terms of **narrative**.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Tell your students that in this lesson they will discuss works by artists who are concerned in some way with modern movements. Have your students brainstorm the reasons that people today move from house to house, city to city, and country to country, and their modes of movement.
- Ask your students to discuss how the ways people move in their daily lives and over long distances have changed since the interwar period.
- Tell your students that the first image they will view in this lesson is a poster. Ask your students where they most commonly encounter posters. Ask them to describe the types of imagery and messages posters contain and summarize the purpose of posters.
- Ask your students to discuss whether they think that posters can ever be considered works of art. Ask them to explain their ideas with examples.

Tell your students that posters are often seen as representing a meeting point between fine art and utilitarian art, as are many design objects. For this reason the Department of Architecture and Design at The Museum of Modern Art began collecting posters in 1935. The Museum now holds a vast collection of modern posters.

- Show your students the image of *The Development of Transportation, The Five-Year Plan*, by Gustav Klucis (Image Five). Give your students a few minutes to take in the image.
- Have your students work in pairs. Ask each pair of students to describe the message that this poster is communicating. Have each pair share their ideas, supporting them with evidence from the image.

Inform your students that Klucis, the Russian artist who created this poster, was a member of the **Communist Party**, and he participated in the October Revolution, in 1917. In 1929, when Klucis created *The Development of Transportation, The Five-Year Plan*, he was working in Joseph Stalin's regime in the State Publishing House. This poster was part of an official campaign to propagandize the advances being made in transport by Stalin's Five-Year Plan. The Five-Year Plan, implemented in 1928, contained measures to increase the production of steel, iron, and coal and to augment the industrialization of the Soviet Union to match the standards of other nations. The poster was designed to inform the public that due to the modernization of transportation in the Soviet Union, the production, transport, and sale of goods had increased.

- Ask your students how this description of the poster compares with their earlier discussion of the imagery.

- Have your students consult the timeline they created at the beginning of this guide. How does the imagery in this poster compare with what they know of Stalin’s regime during the late 1920s?

Tell your students that Klucis, in creating this poster, used a technique known as **photomontage**, in which he created an image by combining photographs, graphic images, and text in one composition. Photomontage was a popular technique for creating posters during the Russian avant-garde movement of the 1920s and 1930s.

- In keeping with the theme of movement and transportation, ask your students to use photographs, graphic images, and text to create a photomontage that tells the story of a move they experienced or a vacation in another place.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Show your students the image of Max Beckmann’s triptych *Departure* (Image Six). Ask them to describe some of the artwork’s elements.
- Beckmann said of this work, “The three [panels] belong together . . . the meaning can only be understood by the three parts together.”⁶ Divide your class into three groups. Have each group take one panel of the triptych and create a description of what is happening in the panel, paying particular attention to narrative, composition, and mood.
- Have each group present their description of their panel. As a class, discuss the similarities and differences between the panels.
- How do the narratives in each of the panels relate to each other and to the overall narrative of the triptych?

Inform your students that Beckmann was a German artist who briefly participated in World War I, an experience that had a profound effect on him. By the 1920s, museums and private collectors in Germany had begun to collect Beckmann’s artwork, which was very well received. However, when the Nazi party assumed power in Germany in 1933, Beckmann’s work and the work of many other avant-garde artists, including Otto Dix, were removed from public museums in Germany. Beckmann also lost his teaching position at the Städelsche Kunstinstitut (State Art Institute) in Frankfurt and was no longer permitted to exhibit his work in public collections. His paintings were later included in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition, in 1937.

By 1932, a year before the Nazi party censored Beckmann’s work, it was already clear to the artist that he would have to leave Frankfurt to find the safety and seclusion he needed to continue to paint. He found it first in Berlin, then in Amsterdam, and finally in the United States. Beckmann began to paint *Departure* before he left Frankfurt, and he later completed the work in Berlin. Today, the painting is considered to be a reflection of this period of movement in the artist’s life.

- Ask your students, based on their visual observation of the triptych *Departure* and their knowledge of Beckmann’s story, to speculate why many viewers have suggested that this painting is related to Beckmann’s personal life.

The artist said that rather than representing one story, *Departure*, like many of his works, speaks to the larger realities of all times and places. To achieve this universality in his work, Beckmann often used symbolic imagery based on mythology. In this way he could express

6. Max Beckmann, quoted in Charles Kessler, *Max Beckmann’s Triptychs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 16.

his view of world issues and the social and political realities of his own time and place. Read your students the following quote by Beckmann, which explains the figures of king, queen, and baby in the central panel of *Departure*:

The King and the Queen have freed themselves, freed themselves of the tortures of life—they have overcome them. The Queen carries the greatest treasure—Freedom—as her child in her lap. Freedom is the one thing that matters—it is departure, the new start.⁷

- **Due to his use of such symbols, it is often very difficult to interpret the narrative in Beckmann’s images. As a class, try to construct a narrative for this triptych that relates to the discussion of the visual elements of the three panels.**

Departure communicates one story, yet it is composed of three distinctive parts with their own narratives. Similarly, in *The Migration Series* (Images Seven, Eight, and Nine), American artist Jacob Lawrence tells a story over the course of sixty individual panels.

- **On the board, write the inscriptions that accompany the three panels of *The Migration Series*. Ask your students to copy the inscriptions and consider their meaning. Project images of the three panels and ask your students to match each inscription to an image. Ask your students to explain their reasoning using visual evidence.**
- **Ask your students to identify the themes or visual similarities that connect these three images together.**

Provide your students with the following information about Lawrence and *The Migration Series*. The series is a visual narration of the history of the mass migration of African Americans from southern states to northeastern urban centers, such as New York, Pittsburgh, and Atlantic City, between 1900 and 1930. Lawrence’s own family was part of the migration. As a young child, Lawrence lived in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, before his family finally settled in Harlem in New York City. In this series, Lawrence visually communicates the realities of this migration process as he had learned about it from listening to the recollections of family, neighbors, friends, and street orators.

There were a number of factors that contributed to the migration of African American people to the North. Many desired to escape the social structure of the South, which, in the early twentieth century, was still very much founded on racial segregation. They also wanted to pursue the better economic and social conditions offered by the industries of northern urban centers and by the railroad. In making this series, Lawrence gave a voice to individuals whose stories had not yet been told.

- **Divide the class into groups of three or four students, and ask each group to choose one of the three panels. Based on their visual analysis of the panel, its inscription, and the information provided about *The Migration Series*, ask your students to develop a hypothesis about the scenes that could directly precede and follow the panel they have chosen. Students must support their hypotheses with visual evidence.**
- **Both Beckmann and Lawrence tell stories of movement in their artworks, and their artworks reflect social realities. Have your students compare and contrast the ways the artists explore movement and social realities in *Departure* and *The Migration Series*. Make sure they support their comparisons and contrasts with examples from the paintings.**

7. Ibid., 16–17.

ACTIVITIES

1. Story-telling through images and words

Introduce your students to a selection of the other twenty-seven panels of *The Migration Series* in MoMA's collection, at www.moma.org/collection. Explain to your students that there are another thirty panels located in The Phillips Collection, in Washington, D.C. The panels in MoMA's collection narrate the story of the economic hardships and racial injustices that inspired African Americans to leave their homes in the South and migrate in search of more prosperous lives in the North. The panels in The Phillips Collection document the realities of the migrants' newly formed communities in northern urban centers, telling stories of hope and frustration. In narrating this story over sixty panels, Lawrence created an epic; each panel can also be read as an individual painting.

Have your students choose one image from the fifty-seven panels of *The Migration Series* not discussed in detail above. Have each student write a one-page essay describing the panel, summarizing the story it tells, and connecting it to the larger story of *The Migration Series*.

As a class, brainstorm about a time when the students traveled together, inside or outside the school; summarize the overall story and write it on the blackboard. Ask each student to create a three-part image or poem, using either drawings or words, that communicates the different phases of this story. Then ask each student to make a single panel with a short text that reveals where they go after school. In the classroom, create a display of the school-day images and the after-school images, and as a class discuss the diversity of student experiences within and beyond the school.

2. The Harlem Renaissance

Inform your students that many poets, writers, and artists lived in Harlem in the 1930s and 1940s, a period that has come to be known as the Harlem Renaissance due to the explosion of cultural and political activity at the time. Have your students research other prominent artists and writers who contributed to the Harlem Renaissance.

LESSON THREE: Action/Reaction: Art and Politics



IMAGE TEN: Fernand Léger. French, 1881–1955. *Three Women*. 1921. Oil on canvas, 6' ¼" x 8' 3" (183.5 x 251.5 cm). Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

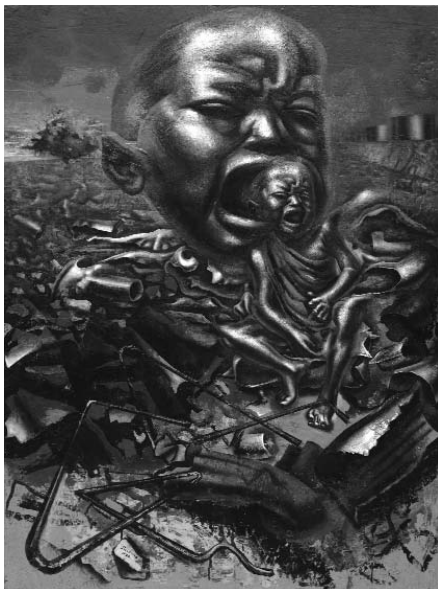


IMAGE ELEVEN: David Alfaro Siqueiros. Mexican, 1896–1974. *Echo of a Scream*. 1937. Enamel on wood, 48 x 36" (121.9 x 91.4 cm). Gift of Edward M. M. Warburg. © 2007 David Alfaro Siqueiros/Artist's Rights Society (ARS), New York/SOMAAP, Mexico



IMAGE TWELVE: Aleksandr Rodchenko. Russian, 1891–1956. *Assembling for a Demonstration*. 1928–30. Gelatin silver print, 19 ½" x 13 ¾" (49.5 x 35.3 cm). Mr. and Mrs. John Spencer Fund

INTRODUCTION

Following the outbreak of World War I, avant-garde artistic practices that had been developed to challenge traditional means of representation (Cubism, for example) lost their resonance with many artists, who felt that their abstract fissures and voids were too removed from current political and social realities. A number of artists, including Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger, rejected Cubism and sought a more suitable means of representing the world around them. This lesson takes as its focus works of art that were created by artists in direct response to the war and to social turmoil in their environments and in the world.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will examine three images that represent different ways that artists, in the years between World War I and World War II, responded to the social and political turmoil around them.
- Students will discuss these images in terms of subject matter, **composition, style, and representation.**

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Ask students to brainstorm ways artists can react against and/or respond to the social and political times they live in. Create a list of their responses on the board.
- Ask students if they have ever created a response to the wars or social turmoil of their times in their artwork. Ask them what decisions they made or might have to make. Where did they get their ideas and their information about the issue? What medium did they choose to represent their ideas?

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Ask your students to take a minute to look closely at the image of Fernand Léger’s painting *Three Women* (Image Ten). Ask your students to write down five words they immediately think of when they look at this work.
- Ask each student to tell the class one of the words they wrote down and to explain briefly why they chose that word based on what they see.
- Ask students to describe in greater detail the figures, objects, and background in *Three Women*. What are some of the stylistic choices that Léger made in creating this image? Students should support their ideas with evidence from the image.

Inform your students that prior to World War I, Léger was a leading Cubist painter. He created images of cities, people, and objects that were fractured into geometric shapes and juxtapositions of bright colors. *Three Women* represents a dramatic shift in Léger’s artistic style. It is thought that this shift was a direct result of the artist’s experiences in World War I, between 1914 and 1918. In the postwar years Léger looked to Classical art to inform a style of modern art that would be suitable for a new, more stable, machine age that would replace the “mechanical period” of World War I. Léger said of this shift, “I had broken down the human body, so I set about putting it together again and rediscovering the human face. . . . I wanted a rest, a breathing space. After the dynamism of the mechanical period, I felt a need for the staticity of large figures.”⁸

8. Fernand Léger, quoted in Carolyn Lanchner, *Fernand Léger* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 188.

- Ask students to discuss, in terms of the imagery in the painting, Léger’s use of the word “staticity” to describe the figures in *Three Women*.
- Before the war, Léger was very interested in abstraction in his painting. Ask your students to define the term “abstraction.” Ask them whether they consider any elements of this painting to be abstract.

Inform your students that Léger’s new style of painting in the postwar years came to be known as “a return to order” (*rappel à l’ordre*). Léger and other artists began to revisit art history and paint Classical or traditional subjects, such as nude female figures, still lifes, and portraits. For instance, for this image Léger chose the Classical subject of a reclining nude in a domestic setting. However, rather than reverting to a Classical style, Léger sought to represent traditional subjects with a modern, mechanized visual language. “The contemporary environment is clearly the manufactured and ‘mechanical’ object: this is slowly subjugating the breasts and curves of woman, fruit, the soft landscape—inspiration of painters since art began, he said.”⁹

- Ask your students whether they consider the subject of this image to be a traditional or modern scene. Have your students support their answers with visual evidence.
- As a class, refer back to the students’ lists of their five initial responses to this image. Are there any words that they would add to their lists after having looked at the work in more detail?
- Show your students the image of *Echo of a Scream*, by David Alfaro Siqueiros (Image Eleven). Ask your students to compare the imagery in this painting to Léger’s *Three Women*, paying particular attention to the composition of the image, the depiction of figures, and the setting.
- Inform your students that Siqueiros, one of the leading Mexican Muralists, was a very politically motivated artist. He said of this painting, “It is a call to all human beings so that they may end all wars.”¹⁰ Ask your students to comment on the artist’s statement. How does this statement relate to the visual evidence in the image? Do they think the artist was successful in achieving what he wished to in this painting?
- Based on a visual comparison of *Three Women* and *Echo of a Scream*, ask your students for their initial ideas about how Siqueiros’s reactions to his political and social times differed from Léger’s.
- In *Three Women* Léger wanted to re-create Classical or traditional subjects of art history for the modern machine age, through a new visual language. Siqueiros also included machine imagery in his painting. Ask your students how the artists’ use of the machine in their imagery differs and how their views on a postwar machine age may have differed. Do they think Léger and Siqueiros would have agreed or disagreed?

Create a list on the board to describe some of the differences and similarities between the experiences of creating and viewing photographs and paintings. Keep this list on the board as you move through the discussion of *Assembling for a Demonstration*, and refer to it when appropriate.

- Show your students the image of *Assembling for a Demonstration*, by Aleksandr Rodchenko (Image Twelve). Do not tell them the title.

9. Ibid., 190.

10. This quotation comes from the Artist Questionnaire Siqueiros filled out, in 1970, for the Department of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art.

- Ask your students to describe the scene in the photograph. Where is the artist in relation to the scene?
- What is the action that Rodchenko captured in this image?

Inform your students that Rodchenko was a Russian artist who, following the October Revolution of 1917, became a member of the Communist Party. Of his and fellow artists' political involvement, Rodchenko said, "We were for the new world, the world of industry, technology and science. We were for the new man; we felt him but did not imagine him clearly. . . . We created a new understanding of beauty, and enlarged the concept of art."¹¹ Rodchenko's art became increasingly political in its motivations and varied in its use of mediums. In 1921, he gave up painting, as he considered it to be too deeply rooted in the bourgeois society that he rejected. Instead, he explored the mediums of printmaking, film, collage, photomontage, and photography, all of which he considered to be more accessible to a broader public.

- Tell your students that Rodchenko titled this photograph *Assembling for a Demonstration*. Ask them if knowing the title changes their idea about what is depicted in this photograph.

Speaking of photography, Rodchenko said,

The modern city with its multistory buildings, the specially designed factories and plants, the two- and three-story windows, the streetcars, automobiles, illuminated signs and billboards, oceanliners, airplanes . . . have redirected (only a little, its true) the normal psychology of visual perception. It would seem that only the camera is capable of reflecting contemporary life.¹²

- Tell your students that Rodchenko was very interested in photography's ability to capture the real world through different vantage points, or points of view. Ask your students to identify where the artist was when he took this photograph. Tell your students that this type of photograph uses an aerial perspective and was popularized during the war as photographers began to take pictures from airplanes.
- How does Rodchenko's vantage point affect the composition and mood of this photograph?
- Léger, Rodchenko, and Siqueiros either reacted against or responded to contemporary social and political times in their artworks. Ask your students to discuss these works in terms of similarities and differences of approach.

ACTIVITIES

1. Create a Word Poem

Ask your students to each choose one word that they added to their word bank over the course of the lesson and write that word on a piece of white card. Divide your students into groups of six and ask them to share their cards with their groups. Have each group choose one of the artworks from this lesson and, assembling their words together, create a poem that is a response to or reaction against their chosen work. Ask each group to share their poem with the class.

11. Aleksandr Rodchenko, quoted in Magdalena Dabrowski, "Aleksandr Rodchenko: Innovation and Experiment," in Magdalena Dabrowski, Leah Dickerman, and Peter Galassi, *Aleksandr Rodchenko* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 23–24.

12. Aleksandr Rodchenko, quoted in Peter Galassi, "Rodchenko and Photography's Revolution," in Dabrowski, Dickerman, and Galassi, *Aleksandr Rodchenko*, 122.

2. Collage a Background

It is known that Siqueiros looked to photographic source material to create the image of the child in *Echo of a Scream*, although it is disputed whether the artist's source was a child screaming in a newspaper image of the Spanish Civil War that was reproduced in a newsreel or a photograph of a Kenyan woman in a 1925 *National Geographic* magazine. Have your students choose one image from a contemporary newspaper that they feel speaks to their own political and social times. Have your students create a new background for the image, as Siqueiros did with the image of the child in *Echo of a Scream*. Have your students display their collages and provide brief explanations for their artistic choices.

3. Create Your Own Political Artwork

Léger, Siqueiros, and Rodchenko responded to the wars and social turmoil of their times. Have your students create responses to their own times. Students can refer to source material such as newspaper and magazine imagery and artworks that inspire them. Revisit this lesson's introductory conversation regarding the decisions students made or might have to make in creating art that responds to current issues.

LESSON FOUR: Modern Landscapes



IMAGE THIRTEEN: André Masson. French, 1896–1987. *Battle of Fishes*. 1926. Sand, gesso, oil, pencil, and charcoal on canvas, 14 ¼ x 28 ¾" (36.2 x 73 cm). Purchase. © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

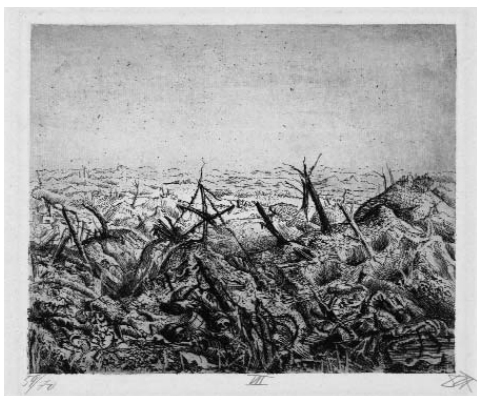


IMAGE FOURTEEN: Otto Dix. German, 1891–1969. *bei Langemarck (Februar 1918) (Near Langemarck [February 1918])* from *Der Krieg (The War)*. 1924. Etching and drypoint from a portfolio of fifty etchings some with aquatint and drypoint, plate: 9 ⅞ x 11 ½" (24 x 29.2 cm); sheet: 13 ¾ x 18 ½" (35 x 47 cm). Publisher: Karl Nierendorf, Berlin. Printer: Otto Felsing, Charlottenburg. Edition: 70. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. ©2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn



IMAGE FIFTEEN: Charles Sheeler. American, 1883–1965. *American Landscape*. 1930. Oil on canvas, 24 x 31" (61 x 78.8 cm). Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

INTRODUCTION

During the interwar period, the European and American **landscape** was transformed by several factors, including the lingering ravages of war (in Europe) and the increased industrialization of rural and urban areas. Industrialization created an increased sense of individualism and isolation in urban centers and contributed to increasingly urbanized landscapes. Artists made photographs, prints, paintings, and drawings that documented the impact of war on the land and the industrialization of the landscape throughout North America and Europe. The works in this lesson reflect several artistic responses to the changing landscape during the interwar period.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will discuss the ways paintings and prints created during the interwar years reflect changes to the landscape.
- Students will visually analyze landscape images, using such terms as **background, foreground, middle ground, medium, and composition**.
- Students will consider the different ways artists responded to the changing landscape.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Allow your students a few minutes to closely examine the image of *Battle of Fishes*, by André Masson (Image Thirteen), without telling them the title.
- Ask your students to describe what they see in this image, paying particular attention to the artist's choice of materials, colors, and subject matter.
- Ask your students to describe the arrangement of this landscape. Can this landscape be discussed in the conventional terms of foreground, middle ground, and background?

Inform your students that Masson created this painting in 1926, when he was a member of the Surrealist movement. Masson was particularly interested in a facet of Surrealism known as **automatism**, in which artists created artworks without conscious thought or intention. For Masson, this was achieved through automatic drawing. He would begin by putting a pencil to a piece of paper without any specific subject in mind, and allow his hand to move freely, believing that in doing so he was tapping into his subconscious thoughts. Only after a significant number of lines were made would he allow himself to develop images. However, he found it difficult to achieve automatism in his paintings, and in 1926 he began to apply paint directly from the paint tube and use glue and sand.

- Ask your students to brainstorm what techniques and materials they think Masson may have used to create this artwork, giving examples from the painting.
- Inform your students that the title of this painting is *Battle of Fishes*. Ask your students if the title seems appropriate.
- Ask your students to imagine that they had the opportunity to rename Masson's painting. What title would they give this work? Ask them to explain their reasons based on visual examples from the image.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

Inform your students that Masson fought in World War I and suffered a serious injury that left him emotionally unstable. Masson recounted the effects of his time injured on the battlefield:

The indescribable night of the battlefield, streaked in every direction by bright red and green rockets, striped by the wake and the flashes of the projectiles and rockets—all this fairy-tale-like entrenchment was orchestrated by the explosions of shells which literally encircled me with earth and shrapnel. To see all that, face upward, one's body immobilized on a stretcher, instead of head down as in the fighting where one burrows like a dog in the shell craters, constituted a rare and unwonted situation.¹³

- **Inform your students that many people believe that these and other wartime experiences emerge in Masson's automatic drawings. Ask your students if there is any evidence in this painting that Masson's wartime experiences influenced his artistic practice. Ask your students to support their responses with examples from the painting.**
- **Have your students create two-minute automatic drawings. Then have them spend another two minutes transforming their webs of lines into scenes. Have them share their final images with the entire group and discuss the types of scenes that they created. Do they agree that meanings can emerge from such drawings?**
- **Show your students the image of Otto Dix's print *bei Langemarck (Februar 1918)* (*Near Langemarck [February 1918]*) from *Der Krieg (The War)* (Image Fourteen).**
- **Ask your students what they think the print depicts, making sure that they support their interpretations with visual evidence from the image.**
- **Ask your students to compare and contrast this image with *Battle of Fishes*.**

Inform your students that Dix was a German artist and a volunteer machine-gunner in World War I. During his time in the war, Dix witnessed much fighting, including trench warfare, and documented these experiences in over six hundred drawings. This print, *Near Langemarck (February 1918)*, is part of a graphic series titled *The War*, created by Dix six years after the war ended. The series consists of fifty etchings in which the artist employed a realistic style to depict images of the war. To create the series, Dix drew on such resources as anatomy classes, visits to his local morgue, his wartime drawings, and many newspaper photographs documenting the horrors of the war.

- **Ask your students whether this information reinforces or changes their initial interpretations of Dix's work.**
- **Ask your students to comment on the type of message the image communicates about the war. Do you think the artist wanted to create an image that celebrated war or was critical of it? Ask your students to explain their responses in terms of the image.**
- **Read your students the following quote by the artist. After reading the quote, ask them to share their thoughts.**

War is something animal-like: hunger, lice, slime, these crazy sounds. . . . War was something horrible, but nonetheless something powerful. . . . Under no circumstances could I miss it! It is necessary to see people in this unchained condition in order to know something about man.¹⁴

13. André Masson, quoted in William Rubin and Carolyn Lanchner, *André Masson* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1976), 30.

14. Otto Dix, quoted in *Otto Dix, 1891–1969* (Munich: Museum Villa Stuck, 1985), 280.

- Compare Dix's reaction to war with Masson's, as evidenced in their work.

Inform your students that the next image they will see is called *American Landscape*. Have the class brainstorm what they think a painting with this title might depict. Encourage your students to consider how an image with this title made today would differ from a painting with the same title that was made in the 1930s.

- Show your students the image of *American Landscape*, by Charles Sheeler (Image Fifteen). Ask them how it relates to what they imagined a work with this title would depict.
- Ask your students to briefly compare and contrast the landscape depicted in this work with the landscape in *Battle of Fishes*, paying particular attention to the composition, lines, materials, and scene.

Tell your students that Sheeler painted *American Landscape* in 1938 when he was commissioned by Ford Motors to document the River Rouge Plant, a new Ford Model T production plant outside Detroit. Sheeler visited the plant for six weeks, documenting it through thirty-two official photographs that were subsequently printed in *Vanity Fair*, *Time*, and other magazines. He often used photographs as source material for paintings, including *American Landscape*. The realistic style he painted in came to be known as **Precisionism**. Of his work, Sheeler said,

My interest in photography, paralleling that in painting, has been based on admirations for its possibility of accounting for the visual world with an exactitude not equaled by any other medium. The difference in the manner of arrival at their destination—the painting being the result of a composite image and the photograph being a single image—prevents these media from being competitive.¹⁵

- Ask your students how *American Landscape* differs from a photograph. What elements might you expect to see in a photograph of this scene that are not present in this image?

To Sheeler, industry was an important subject for contemporary art:

Every age manifests the nature of its content by some external form of evidence. In a period such as ours, when only a few isolated individuals give evidence of religious content, some form other than that of the Gothic Cathedral must be found for our authentic expression. Since industry predominantly concerns the greatest number, finding an expression for it concerns the artist.¹⁶

Ask your students how they think the artist felt about the increasing industrialization of the American landscape, given this quote and the visual evidence of the painting.

- Ask your students if they can find a human figure in this image. Students may notice the one very small figure in the foreground of the image, on the railway tracks. Ask your students how their interpretation of this image would change if there were a greater number of people depicted, keeping in mind the work's composition and mood.
- How does Sheeler's response to the environment differ from Masson's or Dix's in terms of style?

15. Charles Sheeler, quoted in Mary Jane Jacob and Linda Downs, *The Rouge: The Image of Industry in the Art of Charles Sheeler and Diego Rivera* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Art, 1978), 12.

16. *Ibid.*, 11.

ACTIVITIES

1. Create a Postcard

Display all three images from this lesson. Give each student a sheet of paper. Ask your students to choose one artwork and imagine that they are visiting the place in the image. Have each student write an imaginary postcard from that place, telling a friend or relative what it is like, what happens there, how it feels, and if they are having a good time. Have each student give his or her completed postcard to the person at the next desk. Ask each student to guess which painting the postcard is about.

2. Research another artist

Painter Diego Rivera, part of the **Mexican Muralist movement**, also created images of the Ford Motor River Rouge Plant. Have your students research the artwork Rivera created in response to the industrial landscape of North America. As a class, discuss how the two artists' responses differed and were similar.

3. Write a Scenario

Show your students Edward Hopper's print *Night Shadows* (Image Sixteen). Ask each student to write down several words to describe the mood of this image. Hopper was often interested in capturing the fleeting moment in his artworks, as he has in *Night Shadows*. Ask your students to imagine what would happen next in the scene if the image were to come to life. Have each student write a scenario for the image that would come after *Night Shadows*, using and adding to the words they initially wrote down to express the mood of the print. Have each student create an image that visually expresses their written descriptions. Create a classroom exhibit of the students' visual and written responses, and encourage students to take note of the differences among their responses to the image.

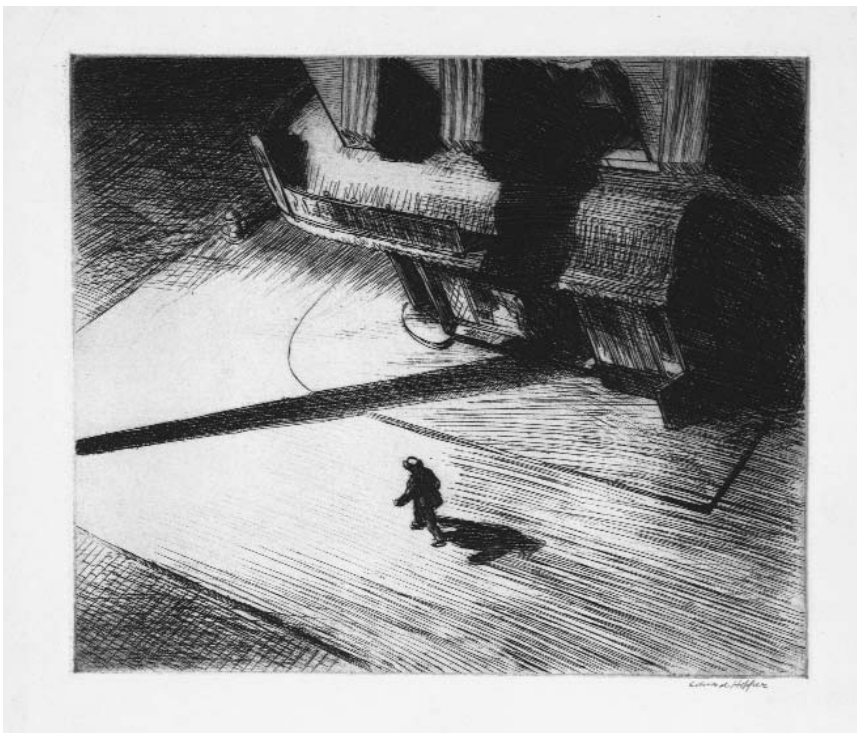


IMAGE SIXTEEN: Edward Hopper. American, 1882–1967. *Night Shadows* from *Six American Etchings*. 1921, published 1924. Etching from a portfolio by various artists, plate: 6 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (17.6 x 20.7 cm); sheet: 9 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (24 x 28.6 cm). Publisher: The New Republic, New York. Printer: Peter Platt, New York. Edition: approximately 500. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

After completing the lessons in this guide, ask your students to make a list of any questions they still have about one or more of the artists. Organize their questions into categories so that they can conduct their own research. Categories may include biographical questions; questions about a specific work of art, such as why the artist made it and what types of materials the artist used; and questions regarding historical events during the artist's life.

Visit MoMA

Organize a class visit to The Museum of Modern Art, and ask your students to identify an artwork that was included in this guide. Now that they are looking at the actual work, they should consider its size and scale. Ask them to compare the work in the Museum with the reproduction they saw in the classroom. Do they see any details now that they didn't notice originally, in the reproduction? Have their ideas about this work changed? Why or why not?

- **Ask your students to consider the works of art installed around the one they are viewing. How would they compare the works? Why do they think they were chosen to be exhibited together?**

Web Quest

Send students on a Web quest to MoMA's Online Collection at www.moma.org/collection. Ask your students to research other works by artists included in this guide. Students may also want to visit MoMA's teen site, Red Studio, to view online activities, the site's bulletin board "talk back," and teen-led interviews with artists and curators about issues in art and design.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Looking Ahead

The lessons in this guide prompt students to consider how artists during the interwar period responded to the social and political events of their times. Have your students research some contemporary artists who reflect upon war and social and political turmoil in the world today. Possible artists include William Kentridge, Sue Coe, Art Spiegelman, Leon Golub, and Doris Salcedo.

Looking Back

Have your students consider how artists from the past have reflected on war and political and social upheaval. Possible artists include Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Goya, Édouard Manet, and Käthe Kollwitz.

Art of Our Time

Have your students create responses to their own times, using photographs, newspapers, prints, and television images as source materials.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Using Modern Art and Ideas 4 and 5, explore interwar movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism, and Constructivism with your students. A number of artists discussed in this guide were active in these movements, including Picasso, Masson, and Dix.

GLOSSARY

Abstraction: The process of creating art that is not representational or based on external reality or nature.

Automatism: The process of creating an artwork devoid of conscious planning or design through the use of automatic techniques, popular among Surrealist artists.

Background: The area of an artwork that appears farthest away from the viewer; also, the area against which a figure or scene is placed.

Classical art: The arts of ancient Greece and Rome.

Classicism: The principles embodied in the styles, theories, or philosophies of the art of ancient Greece and Rome.

Collage: A technique of artmaking in which fragments of paper and other materials are glued to a supporting surface; also, the resulting work of art.

Commission: To request, or the request for, the production of a work of art.

Communist Party: A political party advocating communist principles and ideologies as developed by such political figures as Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin.

Composition: The arrangement of elements within a work of art.

Costume: What a figure is wearing.

Cubism: An early-twentieth-century style of representation that abandoned the traditional three-dimensional representation of space and objects and focused instead on the geometric depiction of three-dimensional form.

Existentialism: A philosophy that is concerned with the individual's relationship to the external world and that emphasizes the free will of the individual in determining his or her own development. Existentialism was developed in the early twentieth century by such figures as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir.

Expression: A facial aspect indicating an emotion; also, the means by which an artist communicates different ideas.

Expressionist: Art, music, or writing in which the artist expresses his or her inner emotional experience.

Figure: The representation of a human or animal form in an artwork.

Foreground: The part of a picture that appears closest to the viewer.

Form: The shape or structure of an object.

Futurism: A movement in art and literature that was launched in Italy in 1909 by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and was devoted to the glorification of the mechanical world, war, and dynamic speed.

Gesture: The placement of a figure's hands.

Harlequin: A clown figure traditionally presented in a mask and multicolored costume.

Identity: The characteristics that determine one's self.

Landscape: The natural landforms of a region; also, an image that has natural scenery as its primary focus.

Medium: The general or specific categorization of art based on the materials used (for example, painting, drawing, sculpture).

Mexican Muralist movement: This art movement began in Mexico in the early 1920s when Education Minister José Vasconcelos, in an effort to increase literacy, commissioned artists to create monumental didactic murals depicting Mexico's history on the walls of government buildings. Artists of the Mexican Muralist movement include José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Middle ground: The part of a picture that is between the foreground and background.

Mood: A state of mind or emotion; a pervading impression.

Motif: A distinctive and often recurring feature in a visual composition.

Narrative: A spoken, written, or visual account of an event or a series of connected events.

Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity): A representative style of art that was developed in the 1920s in Germany by artists including Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, and George Grosz in centers such as Berlin, Dresden, Hanover, and Munich. Artworks in this style can be characterized by satirical social realism that reflected upon the postwar society of Germany.

Pattern: A series of repeated elements.

Photomontage: A collage technique that typically combines photographs with graphic images and text.

Portrait: A representation of a particular individual.

Portraiture: The art of creating a representation of a particular individual.

Pose: The way a figure is positioned.

Precisionism: A style of painting in America in the 1930s in which meticulous pictorial means were employed to create highly realistic images.

Representation: The visual portrayal of someone or something.

Satire: A genre of visual art that uses humor, irony, ridicule, and/or caricature to expose or criticize someone or something.

Setting: The context or environment in which a situation occurs.

Style: The particular mode in which an artwork is created.

Subject matter: The visual and/or narrative focus of a work of art.

Symbol: Something that represents or stands for something else, either in pictorial or textual form.

Technique: The means employed to create a work of art.

Triptych: An image that is created using three panels.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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www.moma.org

MoMA's collection online
www.moma.org/collection

Red Studio: A Site for Teens
<http://redstudio.moma.org>

Modern Teachers
www.moma.org/modernteachers

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Grove Dictionary of Art Online (requires subscription)
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