



Art History I: A Century of Modern Art

Art, World History, U.S. History

AIMS 1988

10 15-minute programs for grades 6-12
Unrestricted Use for Educational Purposes

Haystacks composed of flickering light, anxious bodies compressed into space, bridges rising like dark cathedrals: these programs illustrate modern American and European movements through the work of 60 influential artists. With a lighthearted enthusiasm, host Denise Hicks discusses selected works, commenting on the artists' personal histories and pointing out their distinctive styles and subjects. The story begins with the French artist Edouard Manet's break from tradition in the 19th century (which earned him the title, "father of modern art") and continues through to Pop Art in America. To conclude each program, the host quickly reviews the artists before flashing a work by each on the screen for students to identify for themselves. This series was designed to meet the National Art Education Association's guidelines for a quality art program, which emphasizes the importance of art history in the curriculum.

EUROPEAN ARTISTS

101 Impressionism Manet is introduced as the Father of Modern Art and is credited with inspiring other nineteenth century artists to emphasize their talents and techniques, rather than lofty subject matter. Manet's followers, the Impressionists, were painters who tried to render the play of light on the surfaces of objects with flickering touch and bright-colored dabs. Five Impressionist masters; Manet, Monet, Renoir, Degas, and Cassatt, are presented. Post-Impressionism is explored through the works of Seurat and Toulouse-Lautrec.

102 The Fauves Van Gogh and Gauguin are presented through some of their most colorful works. Selections of their paintings reveal how both used color to express emotions, memories, moods, and fantasies, rather than to represent objects precisely as they appear in nature. Exhilarated by this exciting new art, the Fauves brought new life through color to French painting. The Fauves, or "Wild Beasts" represented here are Matisse,

Derain, Vlaminck, and Dufy. Viewers see how Van Gogh's influence appears in the work of Vlaminck and how Matisse adopted some of the qualities of his line from Gauguin.

103 Expressionism

Expressionism in art is the communication of feelings. Northern artists, in general, adopted eerie forms and colors that were dictated by cold weather, isolation, and the struggle to make a living. Their feelings regarding these circumstances are seen through works by the Norwegian Munch; the Russians Kandinsky and Jawlensky; and the Germans Kirchner, Marc, and Beckmann. Expressionist works date from the turn of the century to the post-war years of the 1940s. Two major Expressionist groups are discussed. The first is Die Brücke (The Bridge), a band of artists including Kirchner that formed around 1905 and sought to unite a new generation of northern artists. Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), which formed around 1911, was a more intellectual and

experimental group including Kandinsky, Marc, and Jawlensky. The program describes the Expressionist's gradual movement toward abstraction. Paintings by Marc and Beckmann demonstrate how social and political factors also influenced the artists.

104 Cubism In abbreviated terms, Cubism is a style composed of cubes, cones, and cylinders. It is presented here as the blockbuster of modern art. Picasso is hailed as the genius behind Cubism. The program describes how Cezanne's paintings, with their architectural and geometrical qualities, inspired Picasso, Braque, and Gris to create a new art capable of interpreting the new ideas of the century. Selections from these artists' works illustrate some characteristics of Cubism: multiple and mixed perspectives, emphasis on multi-dimensions, abstraction, and monochromatic palettes. The works of Delaunay, Leger, Duchamp, and Mondrian demonstrate the breadth of the movement and illustrate how it reflected the upheavals of the twentieth century.

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105 Surrealism Surrealism is the name given to the exploration of dreams, thought, and the unconscious mind through art. The lush fantasy paintings of the French artist Rousseau—an important early forerunner of the Surrealists—show the beginnings of fantasy and of inner and other reality in Surrealist paintings. Through the works of the Spaniards Dali and Miro, the program demonstrates how the Surrealists developed original and often highly personal vocabularies of imagery. The program illustrates the variety of styles and concerns of the Surrealists through the provocative canvases of Magritte, de Chirico, and Chagall. The narrator suggests that Surrealism reflects an early twentieth century obsession with the unconscious mind and psychology, and with the absurdity and irrationality of war.

106 Modern Mavericks Many European artists are overlooked because they do not fall under specific categories. Often these artists are left out because they belong to bizarre, or brief movements. "Modern Mavericks" examines six such Europeans through artistic style and influence. Klimt's unique decorative Expressionist figure paintings and portraits are compared to works of Art Nouveau: Munch, Gauguin, and Matisse. Paul Klee's gift of innovation and his role in every major twentieth century art movement is discussed. Selected paintings of Rouault depict the hideousness of his early works and the more compassionate, religious spirit of his later ones. Balia's Futurist paintings suggest the importance of the machine in twentieth century art. Modigliani's elegant portraits and Kokoschka's expressionistic city portraits are also featured.

AMERICAN ARTISTS

107 American Landscapes This program features seascapes, skylscapes, and cityscapes from Maine to Manhattan to New Mexico. Viewers see how Cubism influenced Stella through examples of his

vertical abstract paintings of the Brooklyn Bridge. The factories, grain elevators, and warehouses of Precisionists Demuth and Sheeler illustrate their interest in America's new industrial landscape. The more abstract and organic aspects of the landscape are seen in the paintings of O'Keeffe and Dove. Marin, a New England painter whose expressionistic images are compared to "painted music," is also featured.

108 Realism American artists portrayed the struggles of the 1930s and 40s in regional paintings that are not only realistic, but also romantic in their mystery, exoticism, and nostalgia. Hopper's stark, brooding paintings reveal the isolation of life in the inner cities. Shahn drew upon German Expressionism to make his artistic commentary on the political and social injustices of the day. Levine, a social satirist, pokes fun at government officials and mobsters alike, using distortion and exaggeration. Pippin's interiors reflect his black, rural heritage; he strikes a balance between primitivism and sophistication. The influence of Matisse is obvious, yet thoroughly reworked in Avery's unique abstract landscapes. The landscapes and portraits of Wyeth, Wood, and Benton illustrate their unique and separate, yet related visions of rural American life; a kind of new regional realism.

109 Abstract Expressionism Post-World War II painters communicated their frustrations and struggles through a new, underivative art that usually did not portray recognizable forms. It got across feelings through gestures, motion, and graphic shorthand in a "knock-em-dead style" that outraged the public. Abstract Expressionism, sometimes called Action Painting, or The New York School, led to Color Field and Hard-Edge painting. The bold, gestural paintings of Pollock, Kline, de Kooning, and Gootlieb demonstrate the early movement's preoccupation with automatic writing, motion, and chaos. Pollock's technique of spattering paint with brushes and dribbling it from pails is

presented. The importance of color as a powerful emotive element that can stand on its own is demonstrated through works by Rothko, Frankenthaler, and Louis. The precise, hard, and immaculate shaped canvases of Stella suggest a reaction to the emotional outbursts of Abstract Expressionism.

110 Pop Pop is an art movement that satirizes American advertising, politics, movie stars, TV, magazines, billboards, soup cans, cosmetics, and fast foods. Painters and sculptors of the 1960s spoofed familiar people, pastimes, pleasures, and products. Pop artists shocked the public into seeing these subjects in a new way. They reprimanded the public for putting too much emphasis on money and material things. Lichtenstein's comic book images, Warhol's instantly recognizable faces, and Rosenquist's day-glo canvases illustrate Pop's spirit and typical subject matter. Thiebaud's paintings of cakes and pies and Oldenburg's burger sculptures emphasize Pop's obsession with common place objects. Indiana's work with letters, words, numbers, and signs is also featured.