

MODERN ART AND IDEAS 3
1907–1914

A Guide for Educators

Department of Education at The Museum of Modern Art

CUBISM AND FUTURISM

Artists included in this guide:

Umberto Boccioni, Georges Braque, Robert Delaunay, Roger de La Fresnaye, Fernand Léger, Étienne-Jules Marey, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Pablo Picasso, Gino Severini

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A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

This is the third 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 context, with attention to the contribution of specific artists. The guide is informed by issues posed by the selected works in a variety of mediums (painting, sculpture, prints, photography, film, and architecture and design), 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 goal of this guide is to introduce students to Cubism and Futurism, two movements in modern Western art, and to demonstrate to teachers the variety of ways in which art can be used in the classroom. Through guided discussions and supplemental activities, students will be able to draw parallels between their own experiences and those of the artists featured here. The guide's purpose is not just to explicate works of art, but also to demonstrate how images and historical information can be integrated in numerous subject areas and skill bases taught in the classroom.

The works featured in this guide span the years 1907 to 1914, a period marked by artistic innovation and artists' responses to the changing world around them. "Cubism" is a term applied to a range of art, produced mostly in France at the beginning of the twentieth century, that abandoned traditional methods of creating the illusion of space and concerned itself with the geometric depiction of three-dimensional forms. Futurism was a movement in art and literature devoted to the glorification of war, the mechanical world, and dynamic speed. Students will be introduced to significant ideas in art and culture from this period. 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.

This 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. Modern art is not solely the product of artists who seek to overthrow convention at all cost. As Kirk Varnedoe suggested, it "has been the product of individual decisions to reconsider the complex possibilities within the traditions available to them, and to act on basic options that were, and remain, broadly available and unconcealed."¹ Indeed, a work of art may be viewed as a locus that invites numerous approaches and offers multiple ways of understanding the historical moment in which it was made and the individual who created it.

1. Kirk Varnedoe, *A Fine Disregard: What Makes Modern Art Modern* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 22.

USING THE EDUCATORS GUIDE

The four lessons that comprise this guide—**Painting Modern Life**, **Rise of the Modern World**, **Art and Movement**, and **Art and War**—may be used sequentially or as independent units. An introduction to the key principles of each lesson is followed by a close examination of each work, including formal analysis, historical context, and information about the artist. Discussion questions based on the artwork lead students through a formal analysis 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 carries the lesson to the broader curriculum or skills students are practicing in the classroom.

Encourage dialogue and debate by asking your students to respond to one another’s 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 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 in the classroom.

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.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

The materials in this guide provide opportunities for in-depth research on specific artists or artistic movements. We have suggested some topics, to which we encourage you to add your own.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

Additional discussion questions and research projects 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

1. BREAKING OUT: CREATING A NEW VISION

Cubism and Futurism involved new ways of looking at and representing everyday things like the human figure and common objects, as well as ephemeral subjects like movement. To depict the world in a new way, artists devised innovative technical methods in painting, sculpture, and collage.

To experience representing a subject in a different way, break your students into groups of five or six and develop a new set of rules for writing or drawing. For example, students might specify that objects can only be drawn using geometric shapes or lines or using the side of a pencil instead of the point, or that all the sentences in a writing assignment must include a certain number of adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs, or that every other letter must be written backward, or that every other word must be nonsense. Students should challenge other groups to complete writing and drawing assignments following one another's rules. Encourage students to discuss what was challenging or surprising about the assignment and how clear or appealing the results would be to someone who didn't know the rules.

2. TECHNOLOGY AND RESPONSE

Many of the artists in this guide were affected by world events and by exciting new technological innovations. For better or worse, these developments drastically changed the lives of ordinary people.

Have your students think about **innovations** that have had a major impact on the world, such as stem cell research, cloning, nuclear weapons, and digital information. Ask students to debate the pros and cons of these innovations, using background information from the Internet and newspaper and magazine articles. Students can respond to the issue through writing or art and identify other students' positions by looking at and reading what they have created.

LESSONS

LESSON ONE: Painting Modern Life



IMAGE ONE: Pablo Picasso. Spanish, 1881–1973. *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)*. 1907. Oil on canvas, 8' x 8" (243.9 x 233.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © 2006 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

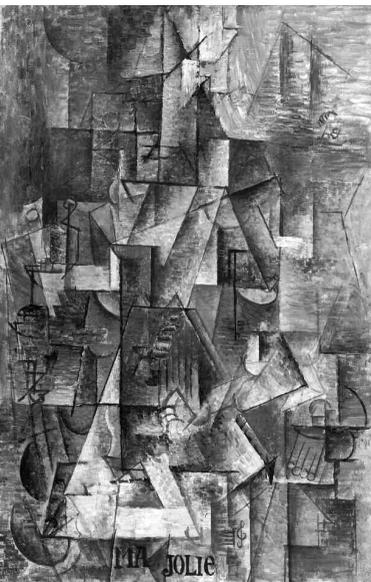


IMAGE TWO: Pablo Picasso. Spanish, 1881–1973. *Ma Jolie*. 1911–12. Oil on canvas, 39 3/4 x 25 3/4" (100 x 64.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © 2006 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

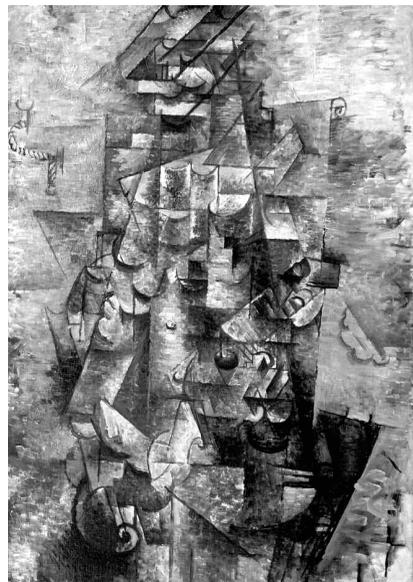


IMAGE THREE: Georges Braque. French, 1882–1963. *Man with a Guitar*. 1911–12. Oil on canvas, 45 3/4 x 31 7/8" (116.2 x 80.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

INTRODUCTION

The artists associated with Cubism were interested in creating new methods of representation. In depicting the world around them, these artists included multiple viewpoints, distorted forms, and ambiguous spatial relationships in their artworks. The traditional use of perspective, which creates a convincing three-dimensional illusion of space, was abandoned, challenging viewers to understand a subject broken down into its geometrical components and often represented from several angles at once.

All three works in this lesson depict the human figure, a classic subject for artists, and were painted by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, pioneers of Cubism. The first work students will look at, Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)*, shocked and even repulsed the artist's contemporaries with its style and subject. The second and third works demonstrate the creative relationship that developed between Picasso and Braque as they experimented with this new style of painting, which was named after a critic's derogatory remark.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will examine the ways in which an artwork is innovative or daring for its time.
- Students will investigate how a new style was furthered by the exchange of ideas between Picasso and Braque.
- Students will compare and contrast Cubist works depicting the human figure.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Artists often inspire and influence each other. An artist who does or makes something entirely radical may have an effect on the style of other artists and create a new movement. Ask your students to remember a time when they encountered something new and radical—like a fashion trend, a new popular gadget, or new slang. Ask students to recall how the new trend spread, whether it replaced an old trend, and what their reactions were.
- The work of art we encounter in a museum (or, as a reproduction, in a book) is very often the result of revisions and modifications. Artists may work on a painting over a period of time; some create many sketches and drafts before arriving at the final work. Have your students pick a subject and make at least three or four sketches of it before completing a final work. Ask them to think about the process of creation, about how the drawing changed with each draft, and about what was left out or emphasized and why.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Give your class a few minutes to look at *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)*. Ask them to describe what they see in the work. Have them observe the figures carefully, noting what each is doing and comparing them to each other. Ask your students to describe the figures' **body language**, facial expressions, and relationships to each other.
- Tell your class that Picasso based this work on his memory of the women in a brothel on Avignon Street (Carrer d'Avinyó) in Barcelona, Spain, that he had visited in his youth with his friends. The painting depicts five women, but in his many sketches and drafts, Picasso had included two male characters, a medical student and a sailor. Eventually he decided that the men were not necessary for the final work. Ask your students how they would describe the figures' relationship to the viewer and discuss how Picasso's treatment of each figure varies. Ask them how their interpretation of the work would change if there were any male figures in it.

- **Turn your students’ attention to the painting’s background and ask them if they can tell where the painting is set. Ask students how the style of representation makes the setting difficult to identify. Explain to them that Picasso fragmented and fractured the space in part by breaking the curtains in the background into splintered planes.**

Many people were outraged when this painting was first shown to the public, and the controversy sparked a number of rivalries between Picasso and his contemporaries. The artist Henri Matisse was described as “angry” about this work and others: “His immediate reaction was that the picture was an outrage, an attempt to ridicule the modern movement. He vowed he would find some means to ‘sink’ Picasso and make him sorry for his audacious hoax.”² Even his contemporary Braque disliked and was offended by *Les Demoiselles*.

Picasso, as well as many of his contemporaries, drew inspiration from non-European sources. He incorporated African masks into *Les Demoiselles* after he saw them on a visit to the Palais du Trocadéro, a Paris museum. Masks, particularly from Africa, fascinated certain avant-garde artists. The masks’ radical simplification and stylization of human features, along with the alternative they suggested to traditional Western painting practices, challenged these artists to develop new forms of representation. The two figures on the painting’s right both have masklike faces.

- **Ask your students what effect the masks create. Ask them to think of a time when they used imagery from a museum or an event from their personal lives as inspiration for an art project or writing assignment. Encourage them to think about how their work compared with the source material.**
- **Ask students to look at “*Ma Jolie*” and describe what they see. Discuss which parts of the painting are easy to identify and which are not.**
- **Now turn students’ attention to *Man with a Guitar* by Georges Braque. Have students discuss with a partner the similarities and differences between *Man with a Guitar* and “*Ma Jolie*.”**

Man with a Guitar and “*Ma Jolie*,” like *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon*, are representations of the human figure—a man and a woman, respectively. Both paintings were inspired by the vibrant café culture of early-twentieth-century Paris, in which artists, dancers, musicians, and celebrities would all gather in cafés to socialize, dance, debate, and exchange ideas. The expression “*ma jolie*,” which means “my pretty” in French, comes from a popular 1911 song and was Picasso’s pet name for Eva Gouel, his girlfriend at the time.

- **In both works, the artists obscure their subjects, but certain identifiable objects remain—a facial feature, the neck of the guitar, a wine glass, text, the work’s title. Ask your students how an artist other than Picasso or Braque might have depicted Parisian café culture. Ask them why these two works may be difficult for viewers to decipher. Tell them that Picasso and Braque, in creating a new style of representation, wanted their viewers to be challenged in precisely this way.**
- **Explain to students that both works were the result of an intense collaboration and friendship between Picasso and Braque as they explored their new style, developing the foundations of Cubism by exchanging ideas and artworks, often painting side by side.**
- **Ask students to think of a time when they collaborated on a project with someone. Ask them what each partner brought to the project, whether there were disagreements, and how those disagreements were resolved. Ask students what was enjoyable or challenging about the collaboration, and how their experience would compare with Picasso and Braque’s.**

2. William Rubin, Hélène Seckel, and Judith Cousins, *Studies in Modern Art 3: Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 244.

Picasso and Braque worked together so closely that many people had trouble distinguishing their work, and the artists often left the signatures off their canvases in order to encourage the confusion. Braque described their relationship as that of two mountaineers roped together.

ACTIVITIES

Have your students explore the idea of multiple perspectives by taking pictures of the same subject from many different angles. Using these pictures or parts of them, students should make a single two-dimensional collage that depicts the subject from various viewpoints.

To explore the idea of artistic collaboration in the spirit of Picasso and Braque's projects, have your students write a letter or e-mail to a partner about a new or past artwork. The letter should describe what the work looks like, what message it conveys, and what process they used in creating it. The partner then writes a letter in response and shares a work of his or her own. Proceed with a few rounds of exchange. Through these letters, students may decide to collaborate on a joint work or project.

LESSON TWO: Rise of the Modern World



IMAGE FOUR: Robert Delaunay. French, 1885–1941. *The Tower*. 1911 (inscribed 1910). Ink and pencil on paper, 21¼ x 19¼" (53.9 x 48.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund



IMAGE FIVE: Roger de La Fresnaye. French, 1885–1925. *The Conquest of the Air*. 1913. Oil on canvas, 7' 8⅞" x 6' 5" (235.9 x 195.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund



IMAGE SIX: Fernand Léger. French, 1881–1955. *Propellers*. 1918. Oil on canvas, 31⅞ x 25¼" (80.9 x 65.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Katherine S. Dreier Bequest. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

INTRODUCTION

The early-twentieth century was marked by great changes in history and technology. Artists were deeply affected by the many innovations around them and made these innovations the subjects of many of their artworks; many artists continued to explore Cubism and other new forms of representation.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will consider the ways in which the contemporary world and events affect artists, and how artists respond to and record these effects.
- Students will investigate how artists use symbols to convey meaning.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Discuss the idea of technological innovation with your students. Have them compile a list of all the technological innovations used today, including cell phones, digital clocks, calculators, MP3 players, and video games. Ask them what the technological predecessors of these innovations were and what they think will come next. Engage students in a discussion of how their lives are different because of these innovations.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Have your students look at *The Tower*, a drawing by Robert Delaunay that depicts the Eiffel Tower.

The Eiffel Tower was designed for the 1889 World's Fair in Paris by French engineer Gustave Eiffel. At the time it was built, the tower was the tallest structure in the world and gave Parisians a view of their city they had never seen before.

- Ask your students to imagine surveying the city from the top of the brand-new Eiffel Tower. Ask them to consider how that experience might affect the way Parisians in the late-nineteenth century felt about their city and about the tower itself.
- Ask your students to look carefully at Delaunay's drawing. Discuss the lines and shapes they see, and have them compare the buildings on the edges of the drawing to the Eiffel Tower in the center. Ask students how they would describe Delaunay's treatment of space. Ask them if they find anything surprising in the way he has represented the buildings.
- Give students time to look at *The Conquest of the Air*, but do not give them any information about the work. Divide them into small groups or partners and have them develop a narrative based on what they see the painting. Ask them to create their own titles for the work, and have them share their ideas with the class.
- Tell your students the painting's title and discuss what it could mean. Ask them what they see in the painting that supports the title.

The work's title refers to the era's advances in aviation. La Fresnaye was a French artist who took great pride in France's contribution to aviation history, including the 1783 invention of the hot-air balloon by the brothers Joseph Michel Montgolfier and Jacques Étienne Montgolfier. In 1908 American aviator Wilbur Wright broke records for distance, duration, and altitude with a fifty-six mile flight from Le Mans, France, where La Fresnaye was born, to Paris. A year later, French aviator Louis Blériot made the first complete flight across the English Channel.

- **Ask your students how La Fresnaye glorifies French aviation in his painting. Discuss how the artist arranges the picture and uses symbols to tell the story of French aviation history.**

The two men in the painting are most likely the artist and his brother Henri, who was the director of an important aircraft-manufacturing plant. The French flag and balloon highlight French aviation accomplishments, and the sailboat could indicate human mastery over wind and air.

- **Turn your students' attention to *Propellers*, and ask them what they think is going on in the painting.**

Fernand Léger was another artist who was fascinated with modern life, especially with the mechanical world and particularly with the propellers that were the inspiration for and title of this work. He was greatly influenced by his experiences as a soldier during World War I (1914–18), of which he wrote, “I discovered the meaning of machines through artillery and through the engines of war. The breech-block of a 75mm cannon lying out in the sun did more for my development as a painter than have all the museums in the world. There I was really able to grasp the object.”³

To Léger and other artists, the propeller, an attractive object that embodied movement, was the perfect symbol of the modern mechanical world. The propeller facilitated combat in World War I and reflected the early-twentieth-century obsession with the development of rapid land, sea, and air transportation.

- **Léger wrote, “Aeroplane propellers . . . strike everyone as being objects of beauty, and they are very close to certain modern sculptures.”⁴ Ask your students if they think mechanical objects can be beautiful. Extend the debate to such items as a clock mechanism, a bridge, and a can opener.**
- **Have your students compare *Propellers* with *The Conquest of the Air*. Encourage them to think about how each artist glorifies his subject.**

ACTIVITIES

Have your students return to the list of technological innovations they assembled earlier and consider the different attributes of each. For each innovation, have them design a symbol that captures its unique and powerful qualities.

Have students interview an older friend or family member about innovations that had an impact on their lives, and then compare their responses with your own experiences. As a class, create a list of technological advances in order of importance, debating when necessary.

3. Christoph Asendorf, “The Propeller and the Avant-Garde: Léger, Duchamp, Brancusi,” in *Fernand Léger, 1911–1924: The Rhythm of Modern Life*, ed. Dorothy Kosinski, exh. cat. (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1994), 206.

4. Carolyn Lanchner et al., *Fernand Léger*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1998), 176.

LESSON THREE: Art and Movement

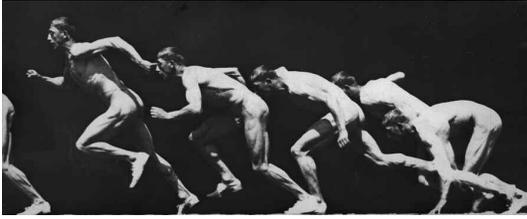


IMAGE SEVEN: Étienne-Jules Marey, French, 1830–1904, and Georges Demeny, French, 1850–1917. *Untitled (Sprinter)*. c. 1890–1900. Gelatin silver print, $6\frac{1}{16} \times 14\frac{5}{8}$ " (15.4 x 37.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Paul F. Walter



IMAGE EIGHT: Gino Severini. Italian, 1883–1966. *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*. 1912. Oil on canvas with sequins, $63\frac{3}{8} \times 61\frac{1}{2}$ " (161.6 x 156.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP



IMAGE NINE: Umberto Boccioni. Italian, 1882–1916. *States of Mind I: The Farewells*. 1911. Oil on canvas, $27\frac{7}{8} \times 37\frac{3}{4}$ " (70.5 x 96.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller

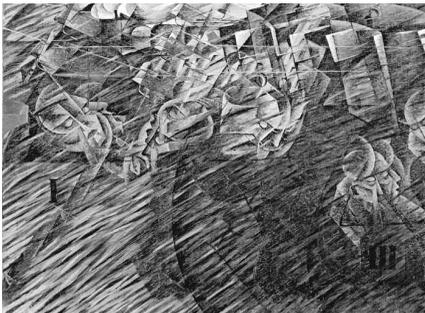


IMAGE TEN: Umberto Boccioni. Italian, 1882–1916. *States of Mind II: Those Who Go*. 1911. Oil on canvas, $27\frac{7}{8} \times 37\frac{3}{4}$ " (70.5 x 96.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller



IMAGE ELEVEN: Umberto Boccioni. Italian, 1882–1916. *States of Mind III: Those Who Stay*. 1911. Oil on canvas, $27\frac{7}{8} \times 37\frac{3}{4}$ " (70.5 x 96.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller

INTRODUCTION

The artists in this lesson were interested in depicting the sensation of motion. Inspired by advanced photographic techniques and other new forms of technology and transportation, these artists chose dynamic, active subjects like the hubbub of a train station and the energy of a nightclub.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore different artistic techniques for communicating motion.
- Students will analyze how a work in series can depict narrative and motion.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Explain to students that before the advent of photography, human and animal movement could only be studied by observing an action as it happened in front of you. Show students the photograph of the sprinter and ask them to describe what's happening in it. Tell them that Étienne-Jules Marey invented a technique he called "chronophotography," meaning the photography of time. This photographic process allowed him to record a rapid succession of exposures on a single photographic plate, making it possible, essentially, to stop time. With this technique, the movement of a running horse or flying pigeon was revealed. Marey's work greatly influenced the history of cinematography. Ask students to imagine what discoveries would have been made by people viewing these photographs. Ask them to consider what impact photographs like these had on artists.
- Have students create flipbooks using small blank books made of paper cut into small squares and bound together. Challenge them to depict a figure in the greatest possible range of motion, bearing in mind how the figure will change from page to page. Have students compare and contrast their finished works with Marey's photograph, and discuss how the movement created by a flipbook is similar to the process of animation.
- Have each student choose and bring in a comic strip. Explain to students that in comics, artists create a visual narrative that unfolds over sequential panels. Engage students in a discussion of the choices made by the artists in these comic strips. Discuss characters, settings, and why specific narrative moments in the story might have been chosen.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Give students some time to look at *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*, but don't tell them the work's title. Ask them to describe what they see, either as a class or with a partner.
- Tell your students the title of the work and ask them to define "dynamic" and "hieroglyphic." Explain to them that this painting by Gino Severini depicts Bal Tabarin, a famous nightclub in Paris, as it was remembered by the artist. Ask students to compile a list of the words that come to mind when they think about the sensory and visual experience of nightclubs and nightlife, and to discuss how *Bal Tabarin* relates to those associations. Discuss how the artist depicts the rhythm, energy, and movement of the environment.

Severini was an Italian artist who moved to Paris in his early twenties. He was a member of the Futurist movement, which was devoted to celebrating speed and the modern machine. He was also influenced by the Cubist works of Braque and Picasso, which he had seen in Paris. In *Bal Tabarin*, Severini includes dancers, top hats, instruments, drinks, and club décor, as well as allusions to the era's political climate; the colorful flags and the Arab riding a camel refer to the Turco-Italian War of 1911–12, in which Italy gained control over Libya.

- Have students, working in groups of three or four, write a sentence or poem featuring the words they came up with to describe the sensations of nightclubs and nightlife. They may add other words as needed to complete their poems.
- Tell your students that the next works they'll look at, the *States of Mind* series by Umberto Boccioni, depict a departure from a train station. Before you show them the works, have them sketch their own drawings for each of the three titles: *The Farewells*, *Those Who Depart*, and *Those Who Stay*. Ask students to share their series with the class and discuss the choices they made.
- Show your students each of the works in the *States of Mind* series. For each one, have students describe what's going on and compare their own drawings with Boccioni's. Discuss the choices the artist made in depicting action and atmosphere, and what students find that is similar or different in the three works.

Describing this series to the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire, Boccioni wrote, "one expressing departure, the other arrival . . . To mark the difference in feeling I have not used in my painting of arrival a single line from the painting of departure."⁵

Boccioni was one of many artists profoundly affected by the technological changes in the world around him. Although many of his Futurist colleagues embraced and glorified the new mechanical era, in the *States of Mind* series Boccioni reveals his own anxiety about the drastic changes made to daily existence.

- Turn your students' attention back to *Bal Tabarin*. Have them compare and contrast Boccioni's treatment of movement and mood with Severini's.

ACTIVITIES

Have your students make two kinds of drawings that focus on capturing movement or the sensation of movement. Possible subjects include children playing at a playground, or a sporting event or dance performance on television. See how many different kinds of movements—running, jumping, standing, sliding, and so forth—they can depict on a page. For the first drawing, they should make quick, small sketches of figures in motion. For the second drawing, they should use different shapes, lines, and symbols to indicate the same kinds of movements sketched in the first drawing.

Have your students write a narrative of a trip from beginning to end, including as much visual information and description (such as sounds, smells, and feelings) as possible. Afterward, have them translate their experiences into three sequential drawings and give the series a title. Have them share their work with the rest of the class.

5. John Elderfield, ed., *Modern Painting and Sculpture: 1880 to the Present at The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 123.

LESSON FOUR: Art and War

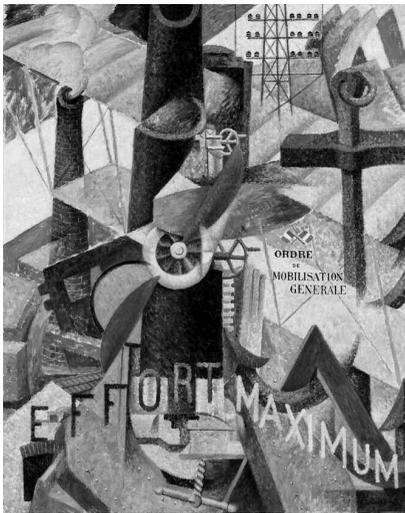


IMAGE TWELVE: Gino Severini. Italian. 1883–1966. *Visual Synthesis of the Idea: “War.”* 1914. Oil on canvas, 36½ x 28¾" (92.7 x 73 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Bequest of Sylvia Slifka. © 2006 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

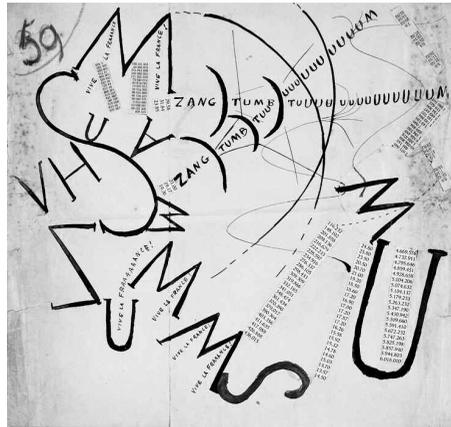


IMAGE THIRTEEN: Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. Italian, 1876–1944. *Vive la France.* 1914–15. Ink, crayon, and cut-and-pasted printed paper on paper, 12½ x 12¾" (30.9 x 32.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Benjamin and Frances Benenson Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Artists have used their work for social and political commentary—protesting, dissenting, questioning, and depicting the world around them—over the last century. In the early 1900s, when entire nations were mobilizing against each other, individuals banded together to make their voices and opinions heard, and artists responded with works about war, both for and against.

The Futurist movement, in addition to exploring concepts of simultaneity, dynamism, and speed in life and art, was aggressively political and glorified war as a way of obtaining national supremacy for Italy. In 1909 the group’s leader, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, wrote a **manifesto** declaring the beliefs and intentions of the movement.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will be introduced to the concept of the manifesto and will investigate its relationship to an artistic movement.
- Students will explore how art can be used as a response to political and social issues.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Ask your students to discuss the clubs or groups they belong to. Break the class into partners and have them interview each other about how their club was established, what happens in it, what unifies the club's members, what the club rules are and how they are recorded and disseminated, and how the club is structured and led.
- Define manifesto as a class. Have the class write its own manifesto, with bullet points outlining what the class is for and against. Include what the class thinks the future should hold and what actions it might take toward creating that future. Post the manifesto in a public place, such as a school hallway, and invite other classes either to join the movement or to dissent and create a rival manifesto.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Turn your students' attention to *Visual Synthesis of the Idea: "War"* and have them come up with as many observations as they can about the painting. Have students take turns contributing a new observation, one going after another without repeating anything that has already been said. Any student can contest another student's observation. See how many rounds the class can complete.
- Tell students the title of the work and ask them what they think it means. Engage them in a discussion of the visual symbols the artist has included that represent aspects of war as he might have experienced them in 1914.
- Ask students what words they see in the work. Ask them what the text represents and what other text Severini could have included in the work.
- Turn students' attention to what is missing from this painting about war. Ask them why Severini might have left out the human presence.
- Show students *Vive la France*. Ask them to describe what they see. Explain to students that this work is a poem created by Marinetti, author of the Futurist Manifesto. Ask them to describe how Marinetti's poem is different from traditional poems written in verse form.

Vive la France is a word poem written in the "free word" method, which was invented by Marinetti. In this method, words are freed from syntax and the rules of grammar and are no longer elements in linear sentences strung together to make paragraphs. Instead, they are organized across the page to form evocative shapes much like brush strokes create objects in a painting. Marinetti was inspired to invent this kind of writing by his experiences in the cockpit of a biplane, hearing the roar of the aircraft's propellers and seeing the exciting new views of cities from the air. After these episodes, he wrote, "I sensed the ridiculous inanity of the old syntax inherited from Homer. A pressing need to liberate words, to drag them out of their prison . . . This is what the whirling propeller told me, when I flew two hundred meters above the mighty chimney pots of Milan."⁶

- Marinetti's free-word poems, which he often performed, were governed by strict rules including phonetic spelling, no punctuation, and mathematical symbols used as conjunctions. Bold type and varying font sizes were used for emphasis. Have students take turns reading the text parts of *Vive la France* out loud. Encourage them to look for visual clues, such as the size, spelling, and repetition of words, to guide their decisions about tone and volume as they read aloud.

6. Jodi Hauptman, *Drawing from the Modern, 1880–1945* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 14.

- Explain to students that Marinetti was a reporter during the Balkan Wars of 1912, and that *Vive la France* was written as a response to his experiences. Discuss the ways in which the work is reminiscent of war, paying attention to the work's different parts and its composition. Encourage students to think about the sights, sounds, and smells that Marinetti might have encountered. Ask them to think about how Marinetti's interpretation of a war-related subject differs from Severini's.

ACTIVITIES

Have your students look in newspapers and magazines and on the Internet for articles about and pictures of war, and bring what they find into class. Have them make a list of all the words that occurred to them while looking at the articles and pictures; the list may also include words from the articles themselves. Then ask them to choose words from this list and write two poems, one in linear or prose form and another in which the words are arranged creatively on the page, akin to Marinetti's word poems. Have your students share their poem with the class and discuss the different creative choices everyone made.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

Ask your students to make a list of any remaining questions about the artists featured in this guide. To facilitate further research, organize their questions into categories such as artists' lives, why or how the artists made their works, and historical events.

Have students research artists who are associated with Cubism or Futurism but who are not included in this guide. Ask them to select a work by one of the artists and compare it to a work examined in one of the lessons, looking for similarities and differences between the works and discussing why the artists belong to the same group. Many of the artists associated with these movements shared and exchanged ideas, but some of them may not have agreed with each other or gotten along. Have them look for evidence of a relationship between artists and research the friendships or rivalries the artist may have had with others.

Visit The Museum of Modern Art and locate an artwork included in this guide. Encourage students to consider the work's size and scale, and discuss any details they would not have noticed in the reproduction, such as the texture of the surface. Ask students how their understanding of the work has or has not changed.

Works in the Museum's galleries usually have some connection to other works exhibited around them. Discuss what kinds of connections the curators who designed the exhibit might be making between this work's style, artist, or theme, and the other works shown around it. Think about how the physical layout of the gallery determines certain curatorial choices.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Looking Ahead

Have students select one of the artists in this guide and investigate his career after 1914, researching what kind of art he made and what mediums he used. Have students compare and contrast several works made by the same artist at different times, looking in particular at how the work developed or changed, and then have them present the research to the class, including information about how people reacted to the artist's work at the time and any factors that played an important role in the artist's later work, such as historical events or personal experiences.

Point of View

As a class, research the artists or art critics most commonly associated with Cubism or Futurism. Each student chooses one figure, researches his or her work, and presents one or two of the artworks or articles to the class in the artist or critic's voice. Students should consider historical context and biographical information in order to understand the artist's personality and beliefs. Students may debate each other as their characters would have.

Manifesto

Manifestos have been an integral part of the development of many artist's careers and artistic movements. Have students research different art-related manifestos by reading a manifesto and investigating connections between it and the artwork it relates to. Possible research subjects include Tristan Tzara's 1918 Dada Manifesto or André Breton's 1929 Second Manifesto of Surrealism.

Art and Text

Several of the artists in this guide created works of art that contain text (Picasso's "Ma Jolie," Severini's *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin* and *Visual Synthesis of the Idea: "War,"* Boccioni's States of Mind series, and Marinetti's *Vive la France*). Have students examine what a selected word refers to and why the artist included it, considering whether the text is used purely as a visual element or if it signifies the subject of the work. Have students research how other artists in this and other time periods have used text in art.

GLOSSARY

Body language: The gestures, facial expression, and postures that convey a person's physical, mental, or emotional state.

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

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.

Hieroglyphics: A writing system, like that of the ancient Egyptians, that is made up of stylized pictorial symbols.

Innovation: A new invention or idea.

Manifesto: A public declaration, often political in nature, of a group or individual's principles, beliefs, and intended courses of action.

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

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ONLINE RESOURCES

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

www.moma.org

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon: Conserving a Modern Masterpiece

www.moma.org/collection/conservation/demoiselles/index.html

Red Studio: A Site for Teens

www.moma.org/redstudio

Grove Dictionary of Art Online (requires subscription)

www.groveart.com

Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm?HomePageLink=toah_1

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