

Introducing Modern Western Art : Movements and Artists
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Lecture - 03
Chronology of Modern Western Art

Hello viewers. Welcome to MOOCs online course on Introduction to Modern Western Art, Movements and Artists. So, this is the third module today of the first week. And today we will, may looking at the timeline or chronology of modern western art.

Now, there is a slight problem in studying the time line or chronology of modern western art. The problems are many for example: the most serious problem is where do you begin the history of modern western art. For many scholars modern western art begins to unfold itself from mid 19th century. More specifically from the period when the movements like romanticism or realism came in to beam. For some scholars known today from the perspective of today's visual culture when you look at Romantic Movement or the movement of realism of mid 19th century they do not look modern enough they look pretty traditional.

Now, according to this second group of scholars, the story of modern art begins from or ideally it should begin from early 20 century when most specifically from 1907 when Picasso painted his first cubist painting.

So, cubism seems to be for them the beginning of modern western art, So far So good. But then there is a third group of art historians who would left to identify neither realism and romanticism not cubism, but something in between famously known as impressionism and post impressionism as the beginning of modern art. So, what you do?

Now looking at the various positions proposed by different scholars and art historians over a long period of time; it appears that western art and particular modern western art has not one, but many beginnings. There are many beginnings really speaking many movements from which you can start your story of modern western art. It has to be your story how you look at modern western art, where you would like to start your story of modern western art. There is nothing So historically correct in the sense your idea of modernism may defer from my idea of modernism. Therefore, the story of beginning is

going to be different from each other. Never the less mid 19th century seems to be a fairly good idea to start looking at the history of modern western art.

Whether the modernity itself we can from that point or not as for as art is concerned that is a complex theoretically issue, but the story certainly begins from mid 19th century, because already 50 to 100 year before that modernism in the political in the social history had already become.

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Modernism, in general, began in the 18th century with industrialization and the French Revolution (1789) and brought fundamental change to all areas of society, causing a break with old traditions.



Therefore, modernism before we come to modern art let us look at the idea of modernism very briefly that is going to helps us to identify the story of modern art, within the historical panorama. Modernism in general began in the 18th century with industrialization and the French revolution in 1789 and brought fundamental change to all areas of society causing a break with old traditions.

So, break with old tradition seems to be a running theme a consistence feature whether you are taking about modernism in general or modern art in particular. And the accompanying painting that you see along with this slide is a wonderful defection of French revolution painted by the (Refer Time: 05:19).

So, these events like it is very important historical events like French revolution and industrialization also important, that artists or the focus of the artists rapidly shifted from the earlier traditional themes to this new contemporary themes the topical themes. The

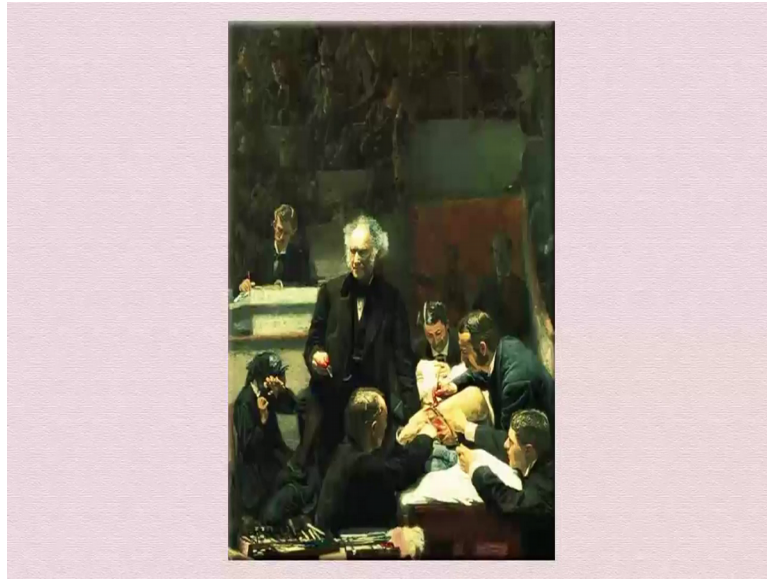
topical subject matters like French revolution here or industrial revolution in this painting.

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So, it is a deliberated attempt on part of the artists to begin the story of modern art, but at the same time we must not forget that the social political economic situation itself was changing So rapidly, And so deeply, And so affectively that artists who were receptive to the time who where sensitive to their own time. Where compel to of felt the earth a very sincere earth to paint the images of this time depicting these events. So, modernism in general and modern art in particular where pretty related to each other right from the beginning. So, you can also have a painting like this when the subject matter is all about medical study.

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A group of medical people doctors they are studying a body a corps, is part of the medical study and that becomes a subject matter of painting.

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Modernism established itself as an explicit model of thought in the 19th century, and from that time on, modern thinkers -- scientists, artists, musicians, authors, philosophers etc. -- began to perform a new task ; to be the pathfinder; make society progress; liberate society from the shackles of the past.

The modernists, in every field, were often misunderstood by their contemporaries but they went ahead with their works with undaunted spirit and enthusiasm.

So, modernism established itself as an explicit model of thought and ideas in the 19 century and from that time on modern thinkers scientists, artists, musicians, authors, philosophers all kinds of people began to perform a new task. They began to follow a new tragictry a new path. They became the pathfinders. And they were making some progress in the society they will be looking at a looking forward to make some progress

not to hold down to something that is traditional. So, a shift is visible from the age of conservatism to an age of progress to an age of liberal ideas, liberal thoughts.

So, these model thinkers they felt the earth to liberates society from the shackles of the past. The modernists in every field were often misunderstood this is also true an artist of course, visual artist were often misunderstood by their own contemporaries, because modern artists they looked and their art also looked outrageous, crazy and there is not comprehensible, difficult to understand. They were not in tandem with what a society expects them to be, but they didn't care they went ahead with their works with undaunted spirit and enthusiasm.

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Modern art followed this pattern of progress, encouraging artists and groups of artists not to align with common ideals or fashionable trends but to constantly seek out new and often uncomfortable territory, questioning and expanding the boundaries of artistic mediums, concepts and techniques.

In other words, with every phase in modern art, with every art-movement and individual artist, modern art was questioned and thus redefined.

So, certain spirit an element to spirit could be identified as a major driven force for this modern artists modern art and modernism in general. Form modern art naturally followed this pattern of progress, encouraging artists and groups of artists, not to align with common ideals or fashionable trends, but to constantly seek out new and often uncomfortable territory. Questioning and expanding the boundaries of artistic mediums concepts and techniques.

So, whereas, in traditional art despite different stylistic features and stylistic differences generally speaking the tendency was to hold on to something that was consider classical or tradition traditional, but in modern art the artist same to be continuously trying to push the limits the boundaries of artistic mediums artistic expressions, concepts, techniques.

And there by continuously redefining art questioning art. So, serio is a series of innovations, a series of discovery where taking place as you go along the time learned or as you follow the chronology of modern art.

In other words with every phase in modern art with every art movement and individual artist modern art was once again questioned and redefined. A none of this art movements were homogeneous whether We are taking about cubism or impressionism, post impressionism, futurism, surrealism, abstract expressionism, whatever pop art op art.

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None of these art movements were homogeneous. Each had its own time, own place and concerns and emerged from specific situation with strong artistic characters and personal styles. A constant drive for innovation, exploration and experimentation in modern art made the story of modern art extremely heterogeneous with constant shifts in ideology and style.

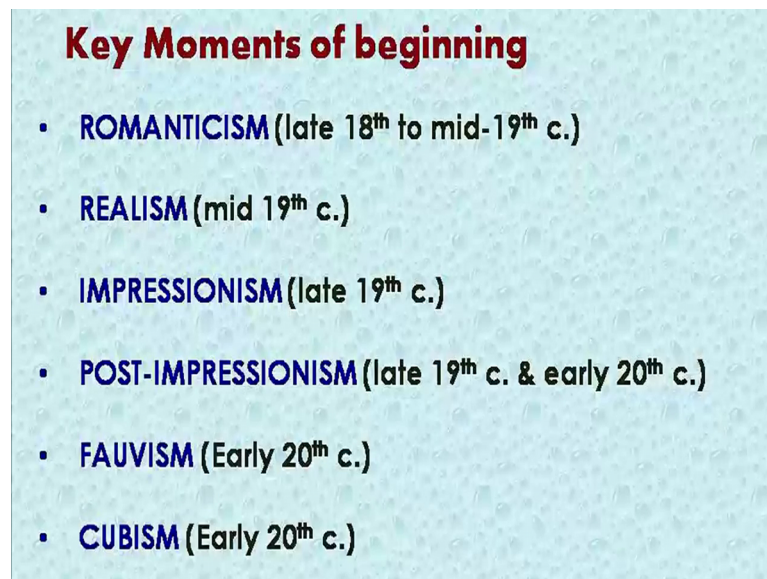
A timeline of modern art is thus never fully comprehensive but can provide a basic idea about the sequence of events.

As you go along and follow the journey of modern western art throughout this course. Gradually, it becomes very clear that never these art movements were homogeneous. Each had it is own time it is own movement of emergence, each had it is own place, it is own location to operate. And each had it is own concerns and they all emerge from specific situation with strong artistic character and personal styles.

With this is also what makes modern art very interesting. That despite sharing certain common ideas certain common features, modern art is extremely divers in it is forms in it is ideas. In it is techniques, in it is mediums, in it is philosophies, in it is ideologies, a constant drive for innovation exploration and experimentation in modern art made the story of modern art extremely heterogeneous. With constant shifts in ideology and style, because innovation was the key word invention was the main drive experimentation was the call of the day and most of the modern artists followed these ideas.

So, a timeline of modern art is thus never fully comprehensive or satisfied you know, but it can provide a basic idea about the sequence of events and that is exactly why we are looking at the time line, but a time line or a chorological study can never give you the complete story can never tell you the complete story, it can only give you a basic guideline of the way the sequence of events unfolded themselves.

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Now, the key moments of beginning the beginning as I was telling you the story of modern art seems to be having lot of beginnings many beginnings, and the key moments of these beginnings are romanticism that continued that took place between late at 18th to mid 19th century realism, which was a mid 19th century phenomenon. Impressionism late 19th century phenomenon, post impressionism late 19th century and early 20th century, phenomenon fauvism early 20th century cubism early 20, 20th century.

So, more or less from mid 19th century to early 20th century, we already see a number of important moments or movements. Or artistic innovations and all these innovations all these movements will have a claim certainly, to be considered or to be identified as the beginning of the story of modern art. But instead of going for any selection or preferences it would be rather useful for us to look at all the possible beginnings. And this is what we will be doing from our next that is the forth module.

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Now, apart from different beginnings or movements chronological speaking modern art location wise also differ a lot among themselves. For example: if from romanticism to cubism all these movements from late 18th to mid 19th to early 20th century after cubism. Have happened in France, then later we will come across many art movement which did not take place in France.

So, different movements and moments of modern art not only happened in different time, but they also happened in different places. So, these movements we mention right now. Romanticism, realism, impressionism, post impressionism, fauvism, and cubism in these movements took place in France. Then we also have other movements like German expressionism which took place in Germany as the name suggests. We have a very specific, but shortly movement, but it very important art movement in early 20th century call futurism, that happened in Italy.

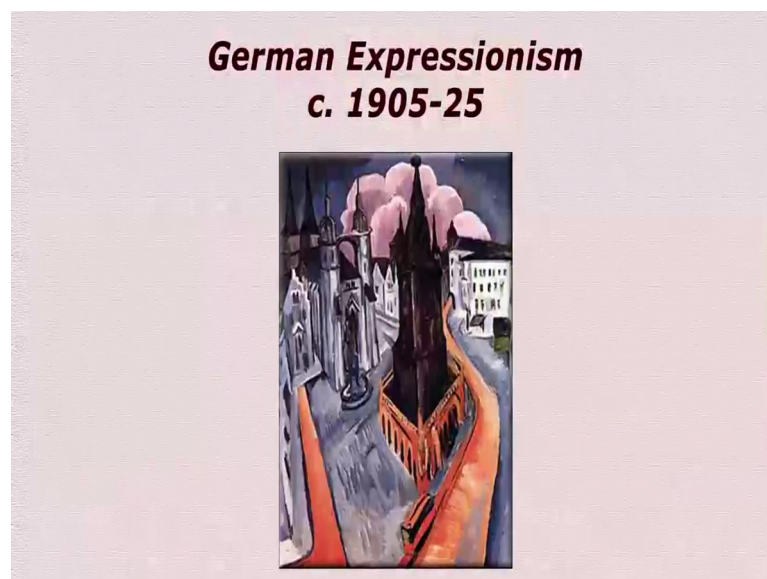
We have another very important art movement, which left a great impact on design that is called digital or the style movement. And that happened in Holland? So, not that everything happened in France or everything happened. In one place the story of modern art is not only spread over time it is also spread over different spaces.

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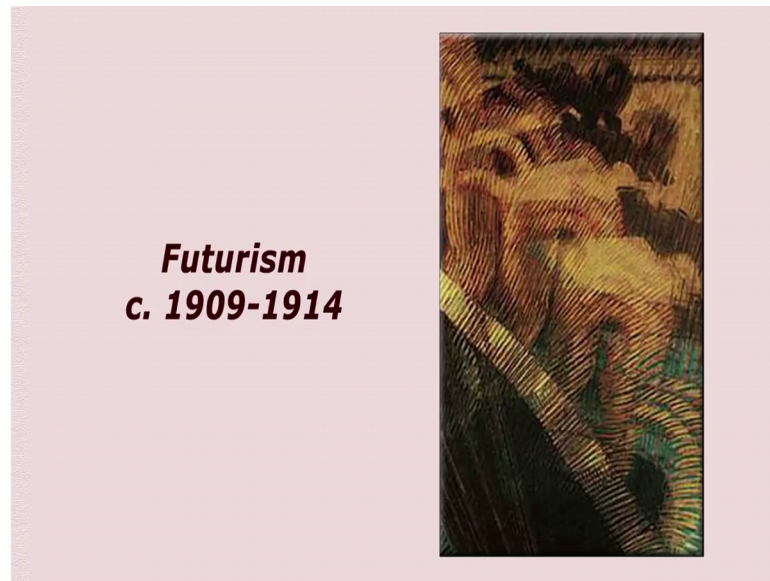
So, from romanticism till cubism France and specifically Paris seem to be the center of modern art. Then comes German expressionism, with as I told you as the name suggests that took place in Germany; in places like Berlin, in munich, in reisten.

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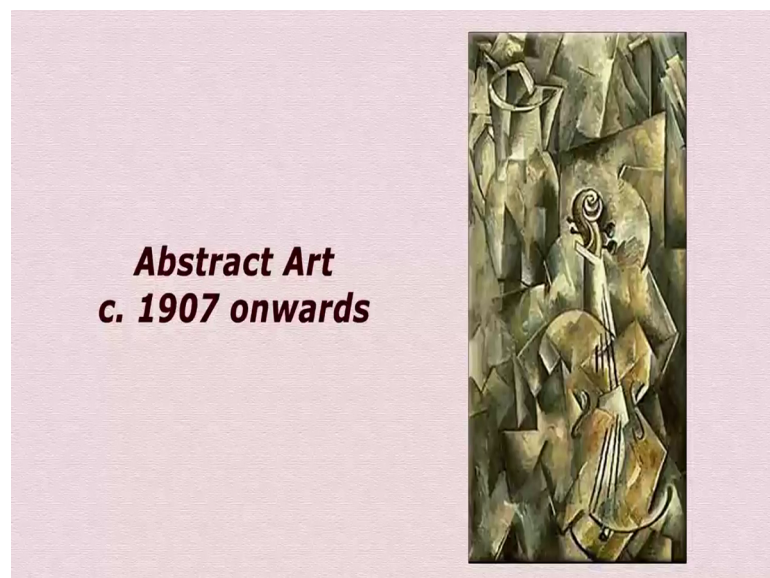


Then we have futurism again in early 20th century and futurism flourished in neither France nor Germany, but in Italy.

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So, what is shift of place from France to Germany to Italy? Then we have a abstract art 1907 onwards and though it started in parice by cubic painters artists like picasimpra, but it also it was spreading in other countries as well like Italy, and later in Germany and much later also outside Europe in America.

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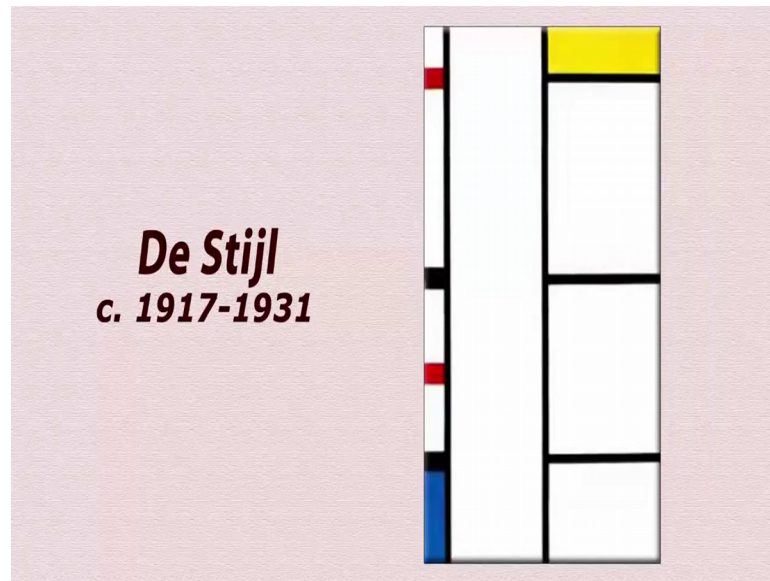
When we can come to another early 20 century very important movement called dada movement. And this took place neither in France nor in Italy nor in Germany nor in England, but in zooric completely a different place, and the moment that followed dada.

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Which is partly an extension of dada, but also by soon mary a completely different movement call surrealism that again at list the emergence the story of surrealism begins in France. We have these famous painters called Dali Spanish, painted called Dali the radium (Refer Time: 19:12).

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And others it started in France, but then of course, started spreading as well as well. Then we have this De Stijl art movement which happened in dach Holland.

So, entire youtube seems to be participating in the formation of modern art, not just France yes France and previously Italy. These 2 where the main centers of art movements in you refer long time, but we should not forget the way the other country other nations speaking from other places where also participating in the story of modern art, then the later part of this century from 1940s onwards.

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In 1940s, 50s, 60s, 3 very important art movements, like abstract expressionism op art and pop art: these 3 art movements not only share the common time frame mostly from 19 40's, 50s and 60s. But there also share a common space that is United States of America. In fact, the post war developments in modern western art. The most important developments that happen in the post war that is post Second World War of in 40's or it meet or late 40's, it is America it is USA; USA becomes the main center for the post war development in modern art. Then Europe because Europe was completely devastated in Second World War it took time to the select to come back. And once it was able to come back it followed suit.

So, a seem that at the end of the second world war in the 1940's. The story of modern western art was high jacked by the Americans; an America produced some of the greatest artists' of late modern art from that period onwards. This is what makes the chronology of modern art very interesting.

Even if we have managed to somehow negotiate with the beginnings of modern art, we yet do not know where to end the story of modern art. Usually we say around 1960s and 70s particularly at the end of these movements called abstract expressionism expressionism op art and pop art modern art. The main stream story of modern western art comes to end and this is the movement when post modernism fix up from around 1970s.

Once again another group of scholars would not be ready to subscribe to this view. They would rather say no even if post modern seems to be making expressions felt from 1970 onwards. It never means the end of modernism modernism countries, and simultaneously post modernism except it is speed and calumniates into contemporary art it is art of now the time that we are living in.

If you go back to the chronological order once again, I am sure even also notice another very interesting thing. That though we are through this chronology through this time line, we are trying to put the movements of modern art, or the events of modern art, in a sequence that is one after the other. But when you look at the dates when you look at the year you will certainly noticed that the gains overlap, the periods overlap, the time brackets overlap.

So, overlapping of different phases of modern art seems to be a part in parcel of the story. So, simultaneous things, simultaneous movements, simultaneous art, ideas, blooming in different places at the same time this is also reality of modern western art. And it is in that sense the timeline of modern western art the chronology of modern western art is little complex, that if you are expecting to see a linear story one thing happening after the other you will be very, very disappointed. No, cubism really did not wait for fauvism to come to an end. When cubism started the movement of the ideas began to generate itself from 1907 onwards futurism was also very active.

So, movements and art ideas could flourish simultaneously, not only different countries, but even in the same country in the same place. And that is the beauty that is the fun of reading or studying modern art this simultaneity; the different smaller stories different segments of the same story happening simultaneously in different places more or less in same time.

So, to summaries today's module we have observed a few important aspects few important issues which will have appearing on our future study of modern western art. When we are looking at chronology, at it is number one modern art has not one, but several beginnings. Similarly, it is very difficult to a certain a movement or a date or a year, to identify the end of modernism. The modern art has perhaps not come to an end according, to some view according to another point of view modern art is over post modern art has taken over.

We are not going to resolve this question right away, but we are looking at the scenario the different arguments. Secondly, modern art developed in different places in different countries at the same time. Thirdly the simultaneity of modern art, different movements different important artists being active working almost at the same time and may not be in different countries could be in the same place itself. So, we see overlaps the time brackets in modern art or constantly overlapping with each other.

Now with this idea of chronology or time line and with this idea of the pre history of modern art from the next module that is the 4th module onwards. Now we shall we tracking the story of modern art. And this is what we will be going to start from our forth module of the first week.

Thank you.