

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

Tom S. Hageman

Picasso's bull



7 chapters on fine art

I Art & duality

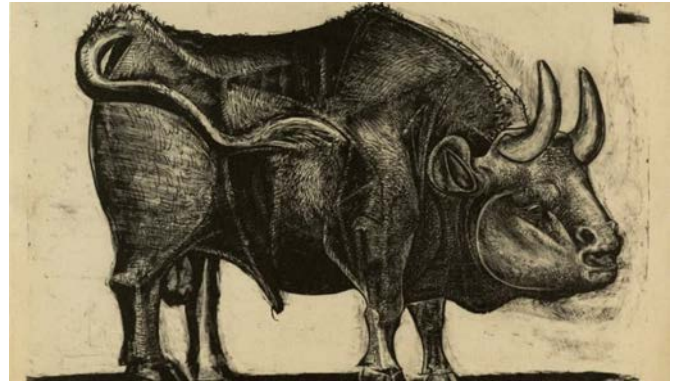
Articles on historical art appreciation are normally written by theorists; in earlier times the artist wrote these himself, 'Le vite' by Giorgio Vasari in 1568 and 'het Schilderboeck' (the Painting Book) by Karel van Mander in 1604, to name a few. Artists write from a practical point of view: how and why does art come to exist?

Prologue

When Pablo Picasso saw the cave paintings of Altamira (15.000 years old) he was deeply impressed.



Altamira



Pablo Picasso

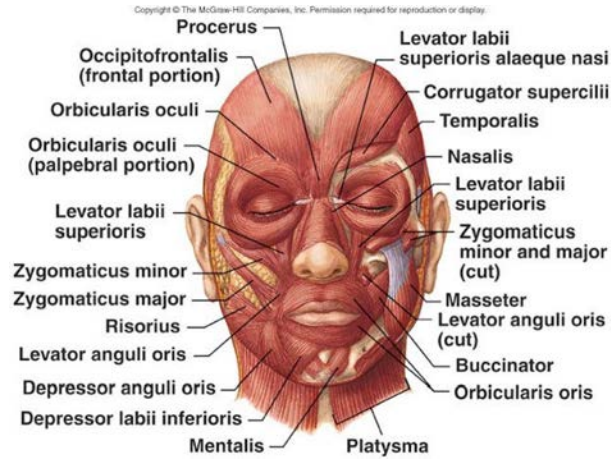
"None of us could ever paint like that" he said, "After Altamira everything is decadence."

He had a point. Unlike knowledge, the source of science, where an obvious development can be seen in the course of time, this is not the case with art. There is a definite difference between a hand axe and a computer but the Altamira bull and Picasso's interpretation differ in concept not in visual quality.

There have been changes in art and improvements in technique; there were times when art reached a peak but these would always be followed by a decline the reason being that the essence of art is the mirror of mankind.

Expression

Art can be explained by looking at a human face. In that face are 25 muscles without any practical use. They can wrinkle the skin, moving eyebrows or the corners of the mouth, and that's all.



They are unique to the human species and their only goal is the transfer of emotions.



Thanks to these facial muscles we can express appreciation or contempt, showing joy or sorrow, disappointment or interest, and much more. Art is similar, there is no practical use at all, but it is full of meaning.

What the facial muscles do for the individual, the art does for society.

In other words, art is the expression of a society.

Form and content

The content is what the artist wants to express, the form is the way in which this is done. The content is multifarious: the representation of an intimate experience or of a noisy spectacle: one praises pure beauty, the other mocks the establishment. The form is the messenger, the bearer of the content: the more adequate the form the greater the chance that the content will be delivered; it is possible for a mediocre play or piece of music to become more alluring by an excellent execution, whereas a performance of excellent quality can be ruined by poor execution; the same applies of course to visual art.

Duality

Art also can be explained by thinking of a human brain.

The human being is a mixture of reason, emotion, instinct and sensitivity.

Mathematical reasoning and discoveries in physics can be based on intuition. Some people live to the extreme: the one in continual chaos and the other in dull discipline. These poles exist in our own brains, the left side governs our rational thoughts, the right side our more holistic thoughts and feelings; these poles, albeit on a larger scale, are reflected in society.



Human brain, outside

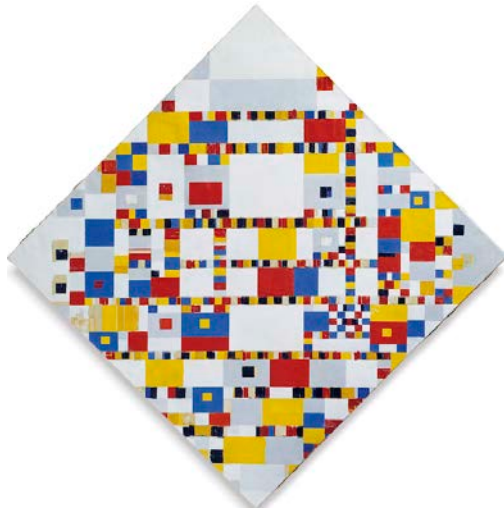


inside

Art is the expression of the human being and all aspects of society and consequently varies from person to person and society to society. There is a tension that lies between freedom and order, between feeling and understanding, between imagination and facts and between audacity and timidity. It is from this tension that good art

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

emanates. In short, art interprets the paradox of the human being himself, relying as such on two components i.e. the form and the content.



Mondriaan



De Kooning

In the 20th century a lot of visual research was done around the question on how close you can get to one of these poles with preservation of the artistical tension.

Perception versus concept

The oldest preserved art can be found on two continents: Europe and Australia, opposites globally and artistically.



Europe, Lascaux, horse



Australia, Worora country, the Python River

Perception

Perception dominates the European cave paintings in Lascaux. The paintings undoubtedly had a meaning and a mysterious intent leaving us to wonder what that may have been. We can clearly recognise the form of a horse, sharply observed and anatomically correct, albeit slightly caricatural.

Concept

The issue in the Australian cave painting "The python river" is its _meaning, the concept: *Groups of large pythons came from the east and glided like rivers through the landscape. They arrived in Worora country. The rock python was tired and her children were crying so she rested in a cave and painted herself there.*

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

It takes some effort to recognise the physical shape of the python because of the stylised symbolic shapes which are quite beautiful but of a completely different origin.



Tjalf Sparnaay, hyperrealism



Berlinde De Bruyckere, conceptual art

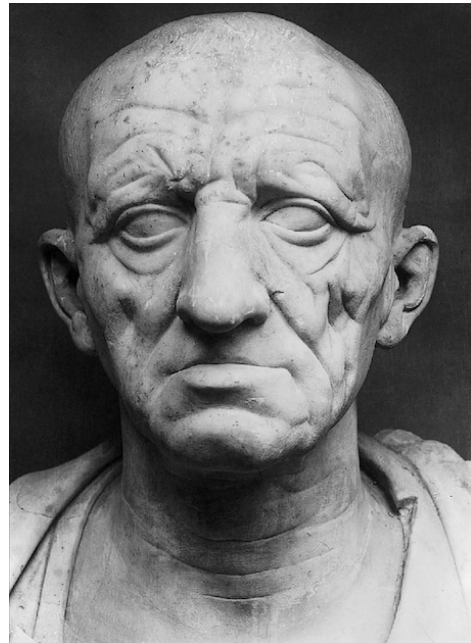
25.000 years later the difference between perceptual and conceptual is still a topic in the visual arts.

Idealism versus realism

In perceptual art there is sort of duality, because what is it that the artist wants to portray? Reality as it really is with all its ugly aspects? Or reality as we might wish it to be: a perfect, idealised reality?



Greek portrait



Roman portrait

The Greeks produced idealised images in which gods and people were portrayed in perfect form whereas the Romans were unforgiving in their true-to-life portraits which would include warts and wrinkles: 'Verism' (according to verity).

Imagination versus simplification

In conceptual art are similar questions: how to give form to an idea in a way that the idea is made clear and understandable.



Lionman 30.000 BC



Head, Cyclads, 2000 BC



The sun cross, Scandinavia, 1500 BC

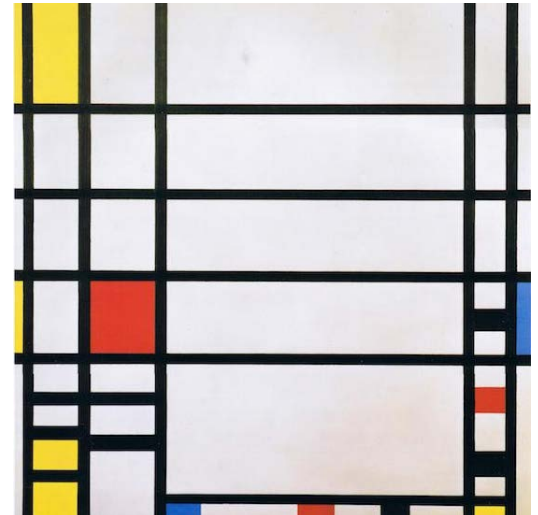
One way is to create symbolic forms (partly by observation, partly with imagination), another way is to simplify observed forms to its essence. Both paths may lead to an abstraction.



Picasso, 1937



Brancusi, 1912

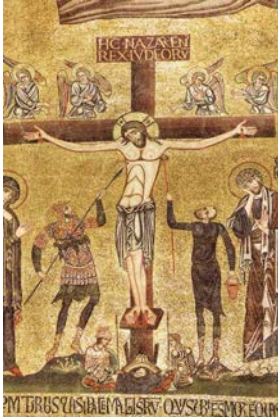


Mondriaan, 1939

This goes for prehistorical art as well as for modern art.

Abstraction versus realism

Throughout the centuries both concept as perception have been elevated within the visual arts. Concepts were often magical or religious, or narrating. In modern concepts it is mostly strictly the artist's personal idea.



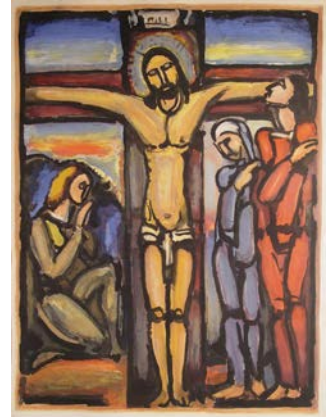
San Marco 1200/20



Russia, 17th C



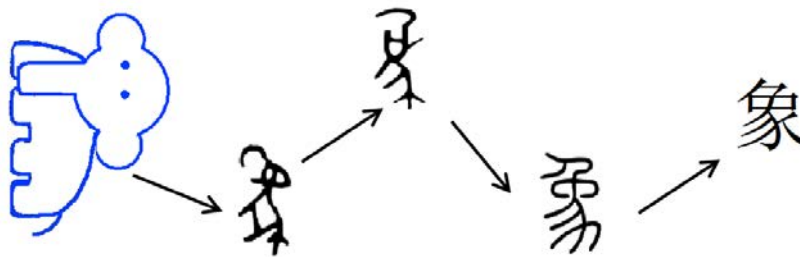
Memling 1472



Rouault, 1936

Perception varies from utmost detailed observations to stylized symbols.

Pure abstraction

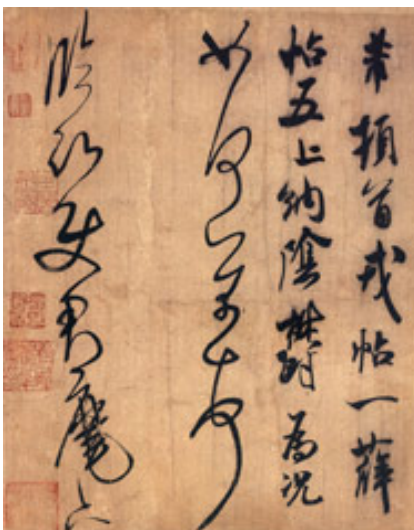


Evolution of the word 'elephant' in Chinese characters



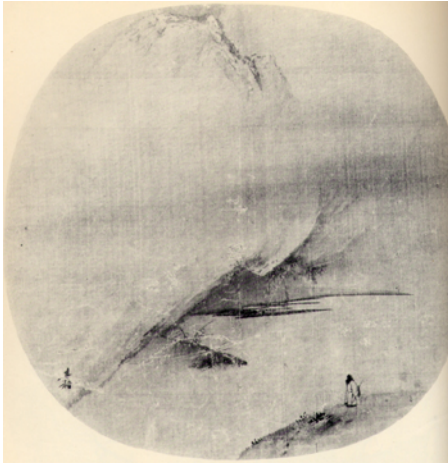
Cuneiform script

One can find the purest form of abstraction in scriptures. Perceptual basic forms can be found in Chinese characters or hieroglyphs. Other scripts are pure abstract: a symbol for a sound or a combination of sounds.



Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

In many written cultures the execution of script characters, the calligraphy, plays an important role. In the past calligraphy in books gained more prestige in the Middle East than illustration and calligraphy and painting stood very close to each other in China and Japan.



Liang Kai 13th C (Ch'an Buddhism)



Sesshu, 1495 (Zen Buddhism)



Franz Kline, 1956

Handwritings can also play an important role in the modern Western art.



Iran, Damghan 1267



Tibet, Mandala, 19th C



Vasarely, 1969

A different direction in the abstract arts is geometric stylization. This direction is mainly used in cultures with a religious ban on perceptual art (Judaism, Islam), or with types of mystique in which the perceptual form is insufficient or too distracting.



Altamira 15.000 BC



Turner 1846



Schwitters, 1920

Another version is art in which a texture, the paint surface, plays the leading role. This version is already seen in prehistorical cave paintings in which the artist deliberately drew upon the reliefs of the rocks. Nevertheless, texture has had a predominantly minor role. Only since the twentieth century has it been applied as an autonomous principle.

Pure perception

Pure perception in the history of Art is rather rare as well. The most adamant type arose in the nineteenth century when photography was discovered. This technique mechanically reacts to nuances in light and shadow in a fraction of time, which results in a correct registration of a situation (or even the snapshot of a movement).



Muybridge 1886

From that moment on artists are able to find out how horses gallop for example.



Sargent, 1884



Kuindzhi, 1880



Manet, 1872

Perception can be the principle in paintings or sculptures without any concept, but in addition to that the artists' personal -knowingly or unknowingly- plays a crucial role. Especially with perceptual art, which is still validated in later times. Most common forms are portraits, still-lives and landscapes.

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Ensor, 1883



Cezanne, 1894



Monet, 1893



The personal choices of artist can be unconscious (inadvertent personal preferences), deliberately expressive (wanting to accentuate elements like beauty or dynamics) or are enforced by time (for example: because of the sun's movement light and shadow changes every minute).



Bastien-Lepage. 1878



Zorn, 1886



Breitner, 1893

One version in concept less art is the depiction of meaningless situations, like scenes out of daily life or nudes without biblical or mythological references.

Note

Art resembles electricity: there is an energy generated by a tension between two opposite poles. The difference is that art can sometimes be closer to one pole or another, but the tension is always somewhere in between. Naturally; the more tension, the more power.

II Art & society

Art is a universal need of humankind.

There is no culture on this world, no matter how isolated, where there is no singing, dancing or making of images. On the contrary, the history of civilization is measured by its art – rather than by its technical inventions like those of tools or making a fire. The history of civilization is ongoing for over 40.00 years and shows a large number of variations and developments. Mostly in visual arts, because, unlike song and dance, it has remained sustainable over these thousands of years.

The origins

In the beginning art was mostly of religious nature, animists and shamans had magical meaning and purpose; polytheists viewed images as housing for their Gods, monotheists provided religious histories with illustrations.



Africa: Fetish



India: Durga



Orient: Gabriel & Mohammed

Later on more subjects came up. For example, the depicting of myths by the Greek and Romans or the Medieval Persian legendary histories.



Brjullof, Last day of Pompeji, 1833



Qipei, fingerpainting, 1684

Societies as well chose to prioritize. Historical paintings were the highest validated form of art in old Europe, for old China those were the landscapes.

Societies and its art

However, economic factors were meaningful as well. History supplies us with four main types (and its hybrids):

Hunter-gatherers

Often lead a nomadic life (herds migrate, as do hunter), their stone or ivory sculptures are therefore small and transportable.



Hohle Fels' Venus _



Australia, Wandjina



Africa, San (Bushmen)

Sometimes there are holy caves (at least in Australia and maybe once in Europe as well) that are regularly visited, which is where cave paintings are found.

Nomadic livestock farmers

Goats are domesticated approximately 10.000 b.c., sheep, pigs and cows followed at 8.000 b.c.

But mainly the domestication of horses (ca. 4000 b.c) lead to revolutionary developments. Horsemen from Central-Asia periodically invade agricultural lands in the Middle East, Europe, India and China, sometimes to settle in indefinitely.



Scythian gold



Pazyryk, felt

Livestock farmers migrate from one pasture to another. They are most likely the inventors of the wheel and definitely those of the chariot. Their existence – and their art- was made for transportation: with tents, carpets, felts and small ornamental ironwork.

Sedentary farmers

Have a permanent residence and have ownership of the lands they work. Agriculture started around 13.000 years ago in the Middle East. Not by chance, of the 56 known species of grass with edible seeds (grains), 32 grow in this area.



Mesopotamia



Indus culture



Egypt



China

Their cultures are located along side big rivers: Euphrates, Tigris, Nile, Indus, Yang tse Kiang.

They build permanent sanctuaries, at first in villages, later on increasingly big temples in cities. Those sanctuaries or temples are embellished with frescos, reliefs and big or very big sculptures.

Autonomous city dwellers.

Except as center of an agricultural acreage and as political and religious centers, over time cities serve more and more as center for industry, services and trade.



Pompeii, brothel scene



Antwerp, Van Reyerswael, tax officials



Milan, Solari, music

After the invention of money in Lydia (ca 700 b.C.) some cities become more and more autonomous as trading cities, along with the formation of a bourgeois class besides the peasantry and the religious and noble castes. Here are, besides religious, as well profane forms of art made.

Art in commission

Centuries ago artists were seen as ennobled craftsmen, they produced works of art in exchange for money. Artists' studios were rather unromantic, they were production units: like factories they took on orders fulfilling the wishes of their clients.

Art and servitude

Often a client's status would be reflected in the splendor and magnificence of a commissioned work. Political propaganda would be used too, for example, a temple relief in Abu Simbel shows the glorious victory of Ramesses II over the Hittites at the battle of Kadesh whilst in reality the Egyptians were forced to flee leaving Kadesh in Hittite hands.



Holbein, Henri VIII, 1537



Ramses II, Battle of Kadesh, 1257 BC



Wieskirche high baroque, 1740

Religious propaganda is commonplace; the high Baroque was more luxurious and excessive in central Europe than anywhere else: Bavaria, Austria and Bohemia, exactly those areas where the counter-reformation was fought out. There the Catholic churches offered their believers a glimpse of the "Kingdom of Heaven".



Fra Angelico, The hell, 1431



Memling, The last judgement, 1471

And lots of 'commissioned art' was illustrative: for example, portraying religious stories (especially important in an illiterate society).

Art in the free market

The Low Countries became exceedingly rich in the 16th century, mostly through maritime trade with the Baltic States and distributive trade with Mediterranean countries. They were the bankers of Europe and the founders of capitalism.



Bosschaert, Flowers 1621



Van Honthorst, The fleahunt 1625



Van Ryck, kitchenmaid 1628

Circa 1500 artists in Antwerp started to offer their works for sale at their own expense and risk: portable altars, images of saints and other religious paraphernalia.



Ter Brugghen, The duet, 1628



Duyster, drunk, ca 1630



Molenaer, 5 senses (touch), 1637



Wtewael, Bacchus 1638



Wouwerman, Coastal landscape, 1650



De Witte, Church, 1660

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Brizé, Trompe de l'oeil 1660_



Vrel, Street, 1660



Avercamp , Skating, 1665

This began with some market stalls near to the Antwerp's Cathedral-of-our-Lady, the trade tapped in to the demands of the Middle Class and spread rapidly throughout the Low Countries.



Metsu, Viola da Gamba, 1663



Ochterveld, Brothel ca 1670



Van der Velde , The gust 1680

The demand was great and varied and so were the goods on offer: still life paintings, cityscapes, Bible stories, landscapes, winter scenes, drinking parties, interiors, comical anecdotes, group portraits, etc.. A variety of subjects, from the elevated to the banal, which up to now had been unheard of.



Van Wijnen, scene of sorcery, 1685



De Coorte, Asparagus, 1696



Weenix, stillife with hare, 1697

That 'free market' brought artists financial insecurity, but also a lot of artistic freedom.

III Art & development

Introduction

Developments in art rely on the transmission of knowledge from one artist to another and from one generation to the next; this is how both static and dynamic traditions evolve.



Egypt, c. 2480 BC



Egypt, c. 640 BC



Thessaloniki, c. 700



Russia, 1830

Ancient Egyptian art for example was quite static; for thousands of years the visual language remained approximately the same, something that is also the case with Tibetan or Byzantine art, the reason being that the art there was produced in accordance with strict rules or canons.

Classical art and the art that evolved from this throughout Europe is characterized by a dynamic tradition:



Cranach 1531



Rembrandt 1629



Renoir, 1876



Freud, 1989

Knowledge is transmitted. We learn from our predecessors, as well as from our colleagues and we try to supplement that as much as possible. A development process is formed which is able to follow up in multiple directions: back and forth (with the benefit of hindsight).

The old tradition, 600 BC - 1400

Greece



Kouros, c. 600 BC



Charioteer, c. 550 BC



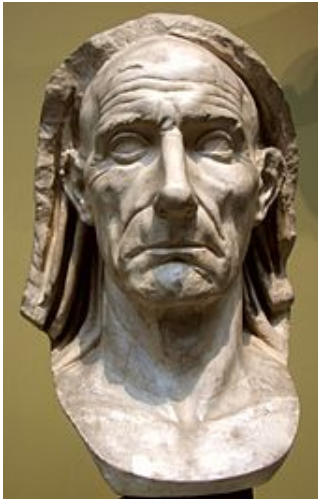
Discobolus, c. 400 BC



Nike, c. 300 BC

2500 years ago, a cultural revolution began in Greece. Philosophy, art and science took off in a new direction. Analytical thinking conquered philosophy, thesis and anti-thesis drove science and pure perception became the basis for art. During the centuries that art continued to develop with increasing perfection in both form and vitality.

Rome



Rome ca 100 BC



Marcellus ca 0



Commodus ca 180

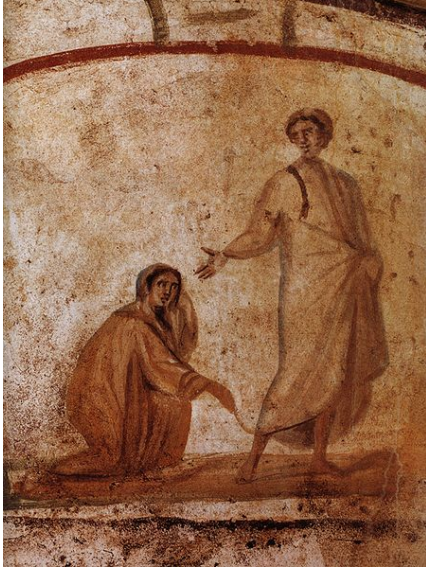


4 Tetrarchs ca 300

The Romans were more business-like, they invented the portrait bust and individual likeness. They also invented the serial product: the god Hermes for instance was produced in series, the portrait head of a patron was attached later. The Romans continued to develop from Verism to baroque forms until they took another approach in the 4th century.

The Eastern Roman Empire

The Roman empire was divided in 395 in a western and eastern part. The western part was trampled underfoot in 475 by northern Germanic tribes and Asian Huns; however, the eastern part continued to exist for an additional 1000 years until Constantinople was conquered by the Turks in 1457.

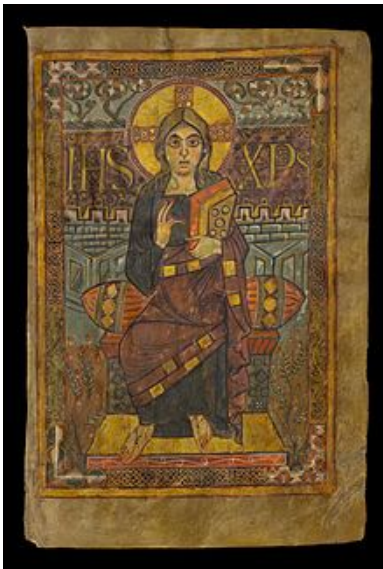


Catacombs, ca 300



Ravenna, 547

Early Christian art around 300 AD was still being produced in the style of the Romans
but after Christianity became the official state religion in 380 under emperor Theodosius I, the style changed from being perceptual to conceptual, characterized by stylized and ornamental form.



Godescalc-evangelistarium, 782



Evangelium of Otto III, ±1000



Munich golden psalter, ca 1230

This "Byzantine style" became the example for all art in the European Middle Ages.

The Caliphate

United by a new religion in the Judeo-Christian tradition – Islam – Arab tribes conquered in the 7th century the area between Himalayas and Pyrenees.

In that huge Caliphate flourished a particular civilization, with in a single city more libraries than were found throughout Western Europe, with dozens of universities and with a remarkable flowering of knowledge.

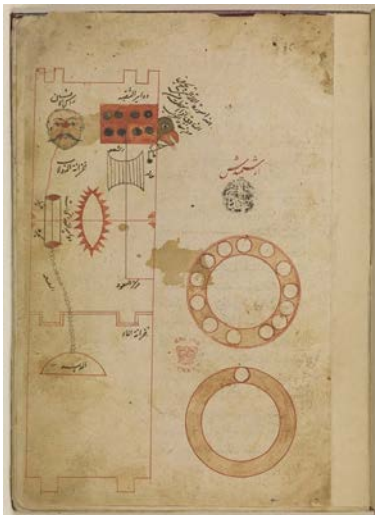


Bayt al-Hikam

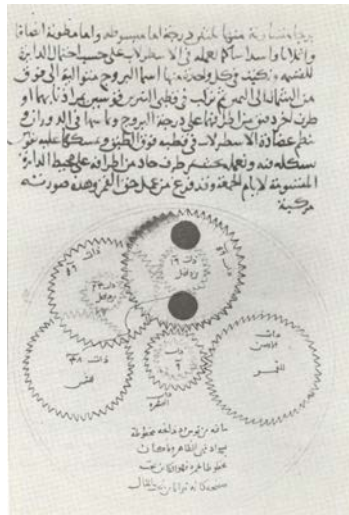


Students

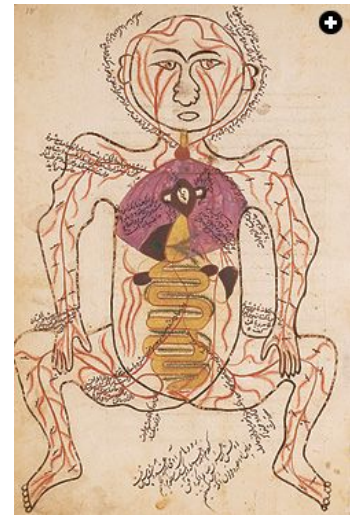
In the "House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-Hikam*), created in 825, were made translations of works of classical Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle. Mathematicians imported the digit 0 from India and developed algebra, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), wrote a standard work on medicine that lasted centuries, the poet Omar Khayyam improved the Persian calendar, and so on.



Archimedes waterclock, 9th C



Astrolabe calendar, 13th C



Mansur ibn Ilyas anatomy, 14th C

Europeans who wanted to study science had a choice either the university in Constantinople or the universities (Medresses) in Moorish Spain: Cordoba, Toledo or Sevilla. For example, pope Sylvester II (946-1003), who had studied in Barcelona (and perhaps Sevilla), introduced the arabic numeric system in Europe. The eldest European university is found in Bologna, Italy (since 1088) By trade, but especially because of the Crusades (1096-1271) also the common

habitants of Western Europe became acquainted with this superior civilization.

Gothic style

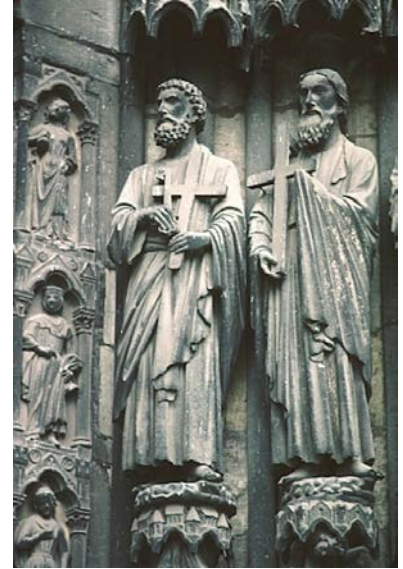
By the use of pointed arch or vault (from ca 1140), the downward pressure of roofs is of laterally moved vertically downwards. Result was a much lighter architecture, with large windows and reduced wall parties.



Chartres, ca 1190



Reims 1255



Amiens ca 1270

For Italians this style was barbaric or 'gothic' but in northern Europe this new architecture called for new ways in sculpture, later followed by new forms of painting.



Martini , Italië, 1333



Bondol, Nederland, 1333



Serra, Spanje, 1390

Among artists an interest in perceptual art grew. In the 14th century, an 'international style' was developed which gradually became more and more realistic.

The young tradition 1400-1750

Around the year 1400 classical art was “reborn” partially through excavations revealing ancient statues but also due to a number of revolutionary inventions.

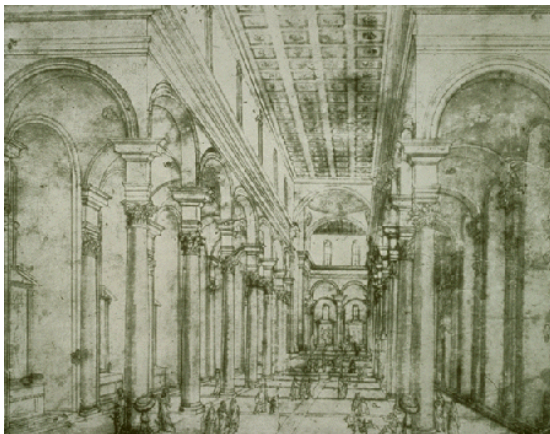
Between 1370 and 1390 both woodcut and engraving techniques were practised for the first time, circa 1410 Jan van Eyck was the first to paint with oil paint (with astounding technique), in about 1415 Brunelleschi invented the rules of linear perspective and around 1480 Da Vinci drew up the first anatomical atlas.

Perspective



Masolino, 1425

One of the first paintings with the central vanishing point was made in 1425 by Masolino da Panicale (1383-c. 1440), which has a strong perspective construction



Brunelleschi, ca 1420



Uccello, 1430

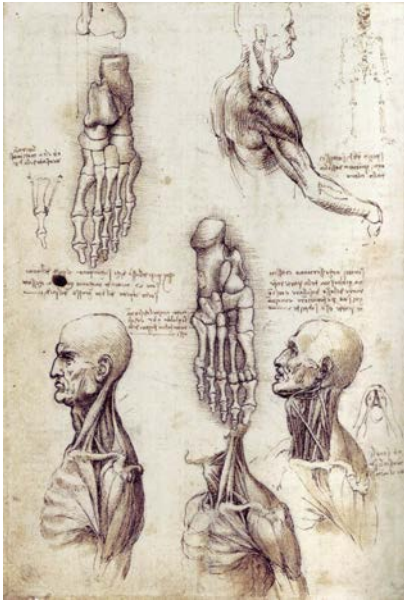


Mantegna, 1470

Perception is developed and further perfected through, amongst other things, anatomical knowledge and additionally by creating the illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat surface, using light and shadow and all their variations (tonal values) and by the development of perspective (both atmospheric and geometric) plus the use of materials (texture) and the increasingly refined use of colour and by utilising light as a compositional element, etc.

Anatomy

Anatomical research began with artists. For this purpose, they sometimes stole bodies from the gallows field to open them at home. Which of course was strictly forbidden.



Da Vinci, 1482



Michelangelo, 1504



Vesalius, 1543

The first known anatomical atlas was drawn by Leonardo da Vinci. The first physician who composed an anatomical atlas was Vesalius, half a century later.

Grounds

Painting is the application of pigments onto a surface. First grounds for painting were walls, in the beginning of grotto's, later of buildings. Other antique grounds were wood, papyrus and parchment.



The first printed book : the '[Diamond Sutra](#)' China 868



Malouel, 1410

According to the tradition, paper was invented in China by Cai Lun in 105, who had been watching the art of wasps, which are producing a kind of cardboard for their nests. In any case paper was known in China since the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). In the battle of Talas (751) between Chinese and Arab troops some Chinese papermakers were captured and that's how paper was introduced in the Arab world.

It was an export article for a long time, the first European paper mill dates to 1282 in the Spanish Kingdom of Aragon. In the 14th century the knowledge spread over Europe.

Wood is an inadequate ground for large paintings. That's why artists started to paint on canvas. One of the earliest surviving paintings on canvas is a 'Madonna with angels' Malouel, 1410

Paint

To attach colours to a surface a binding agent is required. Depending on the binder a certain paint type evolves: Arabic gum leads to watercolour, dextrin to gouache and egg leads to tempera. These sorts of paint are diluted with water to make them spreadable



Semitecolo, tempera, 1367



Van Eyck, linseed oilpaint 1436

In Flanders around the year 1400 linseed oil was used as a binding agent for artists' paints: it dried more slowly and could be used to create smooth color transitions and it was very durable.

Oil paint is diluted with oil types such as oil of turpentine (later mineral turpentine). More modern binders such as acrylics and alkyds are based on synthetic materials.

Printing techniques

Other inventions include various techniques with which an image could be replicated. The oldest known technique, the woodcut, was used for the first time around 870 in China, 500 years later (in about 1370) Europe followed suit. In woodcut everything that has to remain white has to be cut away, the remaining lines and areas are rolled with ink and then printed onto paper.

Engraving works the opposite way: lines are cut into a metal plate with a sharp tool called a burin. The plate is covered with ink which is then cleaned off again. The ink remaining in the incised lines is then printed onto paper.

Blade smiths in Germany around 1400 - who also decorated armour - invented an easier method of engraving; the sheet metal was covered with a coating of wax and the design would be scratched with a pointed tool into the coating. By applying acid, the lines were etched out in the metal (wax is acid-resistant, metal is not).



Le Bois Protat, woodcut 1370



Harnas with engraving, Germany



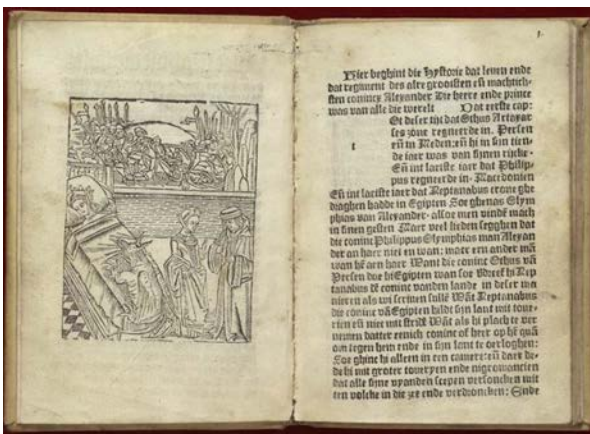
Schongauer, gengraving 1480

The smiths printed their designs to advertise their business and these techniques, both engraving and etching, were soon adopted by artists.

Book printing

Even more revolutionary was the invention of book printing with loose letters.

Pi Chang was the first to print with individual characters in China, around 1040 a.C..



Incunabel 1491



Postincunabel, 1530

Johannes Gutenberg was Europe's first book printer (ca 1450). Book printing turned out to correlate excellently with graphic reproduction techniques. Therewith the first mass medium came along.

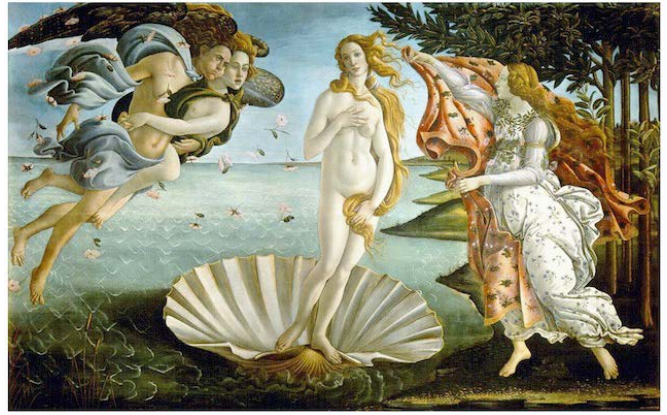
Style development 1400-1750

Development of style are very well visible in periods of about half a century. Next to Italy the Netherlands (southern and later northern) were capital center in visual art.

Style development in Italy



Fra Angelico, 1432



Botticelli, 1486



Titiaan 1538



Caravaggio 1601

Caravaggio introduced an extreme light-dark contrast and an extreme realism (he used farmers as model for holy men). It was of great influence in the 17th century Baroque style.



Rosa 1645



il Baciccio 1685



Tiepolo 1738

Style development in the Netherlands



Van der Weyden, ca 1435



Jheronimus Bosch, ca 1485



Van Hemessen 1540



Van Haarlem, 1588

The 17th century, the Dutch Golden Age, offered an unprecedented amount of visual art of unprecedented quality. There were about 3,000 artists working on a population of less than 2 million inhabitants in that century. They have made millions of paintings now in museums all over the world. Art was also an export article. For example, the Dutch painted portraits to all European royal houses. And many European artists went to the Netherlands for study. In the 18th century it suddenly ended.



Rembrandt, 1636



de Laire, 1680



Troost 1736

Theory & art in practice

Shape can be expressed on a flat surface in two ways: by using an outline or by defining the shape's area by patches of colour or shading. This led to a great deal of discussion among artists – but as well to political stance.



Michelangelo: Sixtijnse kapel, 1510



Titian, Adam & Eva, 1550

When Michelangelo saw Titian's work he said: "The colour is good, but it doesn't have the linear quality of the Florentines." Indeed, the Venetians like Titian and Tintoretto used colour to represent form, the Florentines took a linear approach.



Poussin: Venus & Mercurius 1638



Rubens: Venus & Adonis 1616

A similar debate took place in 17th century France: the "Poussinists" argued that line should be used to depict form in the style of Poussin, while the "Rubenists" argued that form should be built up with patches of colour in the way Rubens did. In practice it wasn't a matter of painting technique but of form and expression. The sharp contour defining the sublime and depicting exaltation making it perfect for the illustration of angels and monarchs. Patches of colour lead to an earthlier expression, a

more direct and physical depiction of emotion and the spectacular.

Louis XIV led the debate with the establishment of the '*Academie Royale de peinture et sculpture*' packed with (Poussinistic) artists whom enjoyed the Royal favors. 13 years later, in 1661, Jean-Baptiste Colbert gained authority over the *Academie* and he promoted the '*Louis Quatorze-style*' to glorify the king and his institutions. Directed by Charles Lebrun 'Classicism' became France's official form of art..



David: Socrates, 1787



Fragonard: spelende vrouw, 1765

Nevertheless, the Rubenism remained of big influence. Like in 18th-century High Baroque or Rococo, in which both religious as profane subjects were provided with a lavish luxury of shapes and colours. However, halfway during the 18th century the Neoclassicism became the dominant trend.

Artists theories

Giorgio Vasari, Carel van Mander and Samuel Hoogstraten were important theoretics among artists. According to Vasari, apart from concept and perception, the handwriting, the style, the 'maniera' were a necessary ingredient to making 'good' art. During the Dutch Golden Age artist created several ideas about painting. These were mostly about painting techniques: the numerical reduction of incident light in a room for example, or how to create a suggestion of air around objects. It was called 'Kenlijkheit' or 'perceptibility', and it was a part of the suggestion of three dimension on a two-dimensional surface. They created the diagonal perspective with multiple vanishing points (when viewing a building from its corner instead of from the front such as with the central perspective for example). In short, art theory often came very close to natural science – which was a very active practice at that time in the Netherlands.

The Italians criticised the far-reaching Dutch Realism: according to them art served as an improvement over reality, not over the representation. On top of that the subjects were deemed banal and even vulgar. In reply, Carel van Mander said: there is no better textbook than the 'book of nature' Beauty is confined in reality, because reality was created by God.

About 'Maniera' he posed: no concoctions "gaet van de vercieringhe totter waerheit" Painters shouldn't stylize or idealize, they should characterize...

In short, a contradiction that resembles the one between the Greek Idealism and the Roman 'Verism'.

(with thanks to Gezien van de Riet: '*Imitatio et Inventio*')

IV Art & diversity

After 1750 various revolutions take place simultaneously.

The invention of the steam engine leads to 'the industrial revolution'. The rebellion of the French bourgeoisie against the monarchy and aristocracy causes political turmoil in Europe and philosophers are advocating reason as opposed to religion.

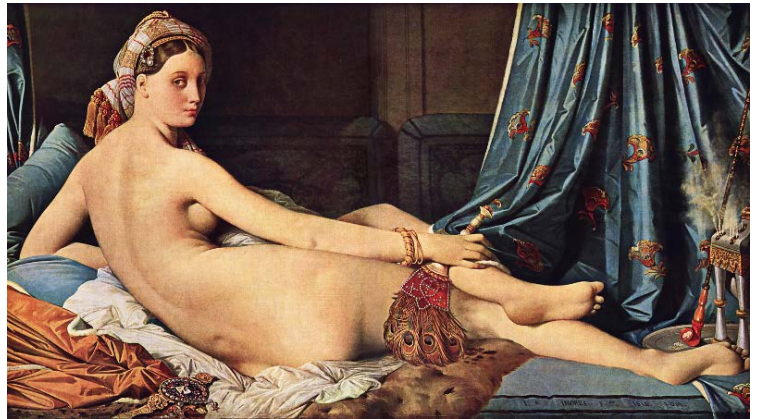
In the 19th century art starts to diverge. Movements that used to fall under a common denominator are now strictly separated style directions.

Neoclassicism

The elaborate High Baroque was superseded by the more austere Neoclassicism which was sharp and polished with elevated themes from history or mythology echoing the virtues of ancient Rome.



David, 1784



Ingres, 1814

Neoclassicism became the leading directive in the art world and the education at the 'Academie des Beaux Arts' in Paris (1816) became the blueprint for the whole of Europe. This approach was so dominant and arrogant that it caused many reactions in the early 19th century, the most important of which were Romanticism and Realism.

Romanticism

In Romanticism sentiment opposes reason whilst loose brushwork opposes strictly defined form and dramatic expression is at odds with the sublime.



Turner, 1812



Friedrich, 1817

Romanticism glorifies sentiment as being an attitude of life, it introduces themes of passion, heroism, abandonment and the onset of death. It defines the power of nature, the spirit of youth, the joy of love but it also has a dark side full of tragedy, pain and damnation.

Realism

Realism rejected the sublime as subject matter and chose for the everyday reality of people and landscape.



Courbet, 1854



Rousseau, 1854

As far as the latter is concerned the invention of paint in a tube by John Goffe Rand in 1841 meant that it was suddenly possible for artists to work with oil paint outside in the open air.

If landscapes had up to now been largely the background for wandering travellers, hunters, nymphs or bathing goddesses, now with the emergence of open-air painting the beauty of nature became a subject matter in its own right.

Lithography

In 1786 Alois Senefelder had developed a new graphic technique called Lithography. The basis was a plate of limestone and the technique relies on the fact that water repels grease and vice versa. The porous surface of the stone retained the water, the drawing was applied using greasy ink or chalk. When greasy printing ink was rolled over it, it adhered to the drawing and not to the wet stone.



Lithografie



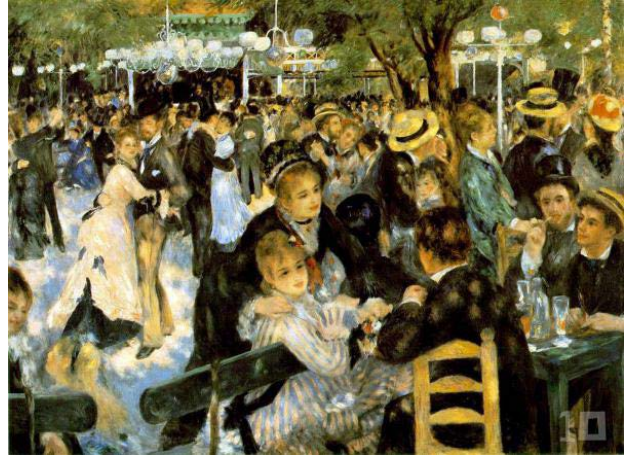
Daumier, litho, 1834

Photography

The world's first permanent photographic image was created by Joseph Niépce in 1826. The photographic revolution continues to develop and becomes more widespread when the Kodak photographic film camera is invented in 1888. Photography has a great impact on painting and this can be seen where figures are partially cut off at the side of a painting.



Niépce 1826



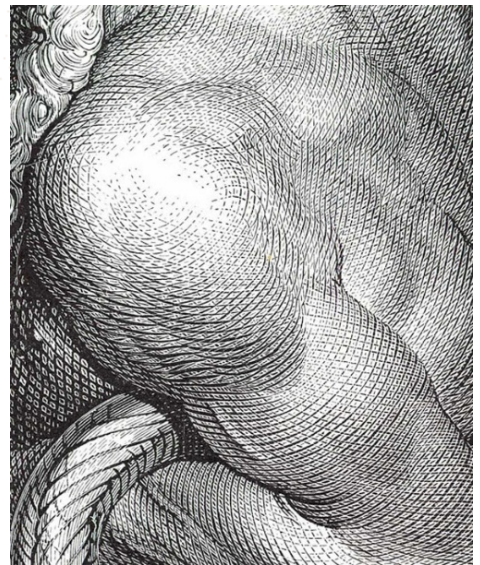
Renoir 1876

Wood and steel engraving

The printing techniques which saw a huge development in the 19th century were woodblock and steel engraving.



Steel engraving, 1878



Wood engraving Doré, 1870

But by the end of the 19th century these techniques were largely replaced by photographic reproduction. The steel engraving continued to survive in banknote printing and the wood engraving as an autonomous art form.

Academism

Originally, artists were trained at a master's studio.

The first art academy, the *Accademia dell'Arte del Disegno* was founded in 1562 by Giorgio Vasari in Florence. Rome followed in 1593 with the *Accademia di San Luca* and Paris in 1648 with the *Académie royale de peinture et sculpture*. The first academy in the Netherlands was the *Haagsche Teeken-Academie* in 1682.



Drawing to gypsum model

For centuries, art academies were drawn to gypsum castings of famous statues. These castings were made since the 16th century, initially mainly from ancient statues that were excavated in Italy.

Drawing to gypsum model is the ideal combination of simultaneous shape and tone study. In the form study, draw your exact replica of masterpieces from art history. As a tone study, gypsum is ideally suited for learning all grey values between the highest light and the deepest shadow. Tonality is a foundation of classical painting: creating a spatial illusion on a flat surface.



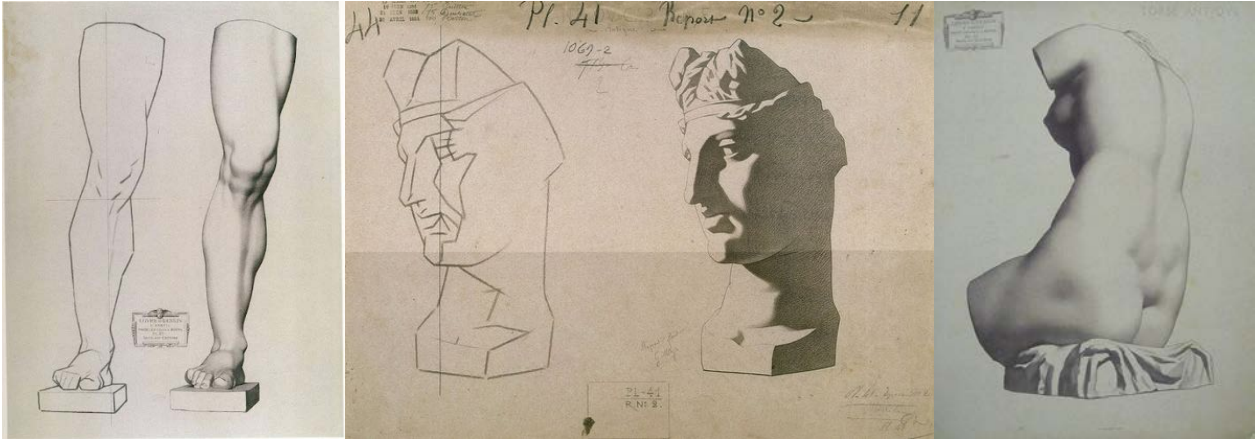
Drawing to gypsum model

From 1816, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris became the standard for all art education in Europe. A standard based on 'Poussinism' and Neoclassicism

It was a strict education, accessible only on the recommendation of a professor. You studied only to draw, not to paint.

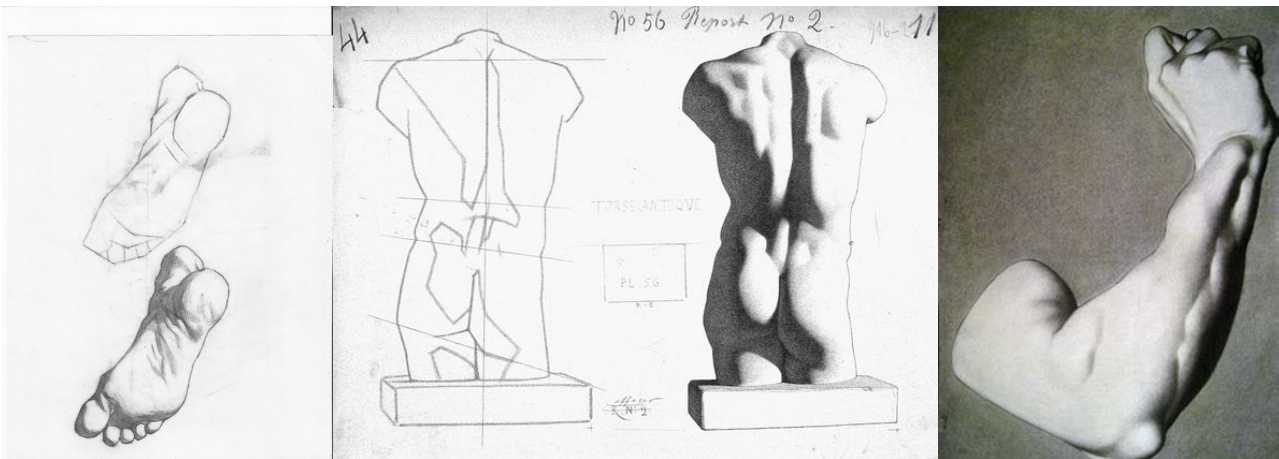
Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

You started copying old masters to understand their methods and artificial grips and to learn to compose. If you succeeded in this part, you could proceed with drawing to gypsum model. If you succeeded in doing this also, you might continue drawing a living model. Painting taught you later on at the studio of an established "Academicist". Only after 1863 was the painting included in the program of the Academy itself.



Between 1866 and 1871 this education method was made available to a wider audience by the *Cours de Dessin*: a type of written course of 197 lithographs, with examples and exercises, signed by painter Charles Bargue, in collaboration with his teacher Jean-Leon Gerome.

In any way, the 'Academic' lesson had only one goal: achieving the highest possible professional perfection, without much consideration for the student's own character.



Individual expression became the criterion in the many currents that emerged after 1870: Impressionism, Symbolism, Pointillism, Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism, Constructivism, and so forth. But those generation of artists were academically trained: they understood their subject.

Theory & art in practice

Thus far the theoretical concepts behind artworks were mostly an issue of and for artists. However, since the 18th century philosophers started creating several art theories as well.

Philosophy

For centuries it was assumed that art should serve to convey a meaning or a message. It could have a magical function or a symbolic language, it could portray religious or mythological stories, propaganda or historical scenes. In short, the artwork itself is inspired by an outside source.

However, during the early 19th century there was a growing awareness that art could be valuable as art itself; it could have intrinsic value and not only serve to tell a story or paint a picture, it concerned the power of the image itself and did not have to be justified by any concept or theme. A work of art could stand alone, be autonomous, could be prized for its own characteristics: composition, colour and brushwork and not for any sort of 'content' or concept. This idea appealed particularly to the supporters of romance and realism but it also met with criticism: George Sand said that 'art for art's sake' was an empty phrase and Friederich Nietzsche firmly believed that art had to have a purpose.

Esoterica

The switch from religion to philosophy brought along other effects, among which an increasing interest for esoterica.

Helena Blavatsky among others started the 'Theosophical Society' in New York in 1875. Her most important piece appeared in 1888: 'The Secret Doctrine'. A worldwide esoteric movement arose alongside the domiciled religions, which as well left deep traces in the arts.



logo theosophical society



Ceiling first Goetheanum, 1919

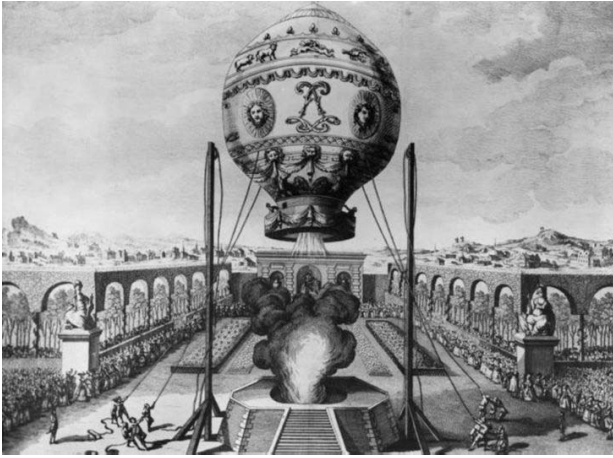
Especially after the 'Antroposophical Society' was started solely by Rudolf Steiner, the European representative of the Theosophists, in 1912. The society carried out inter alia various art theoretical concepts.

Progressive thinking

The industrial revolution led to numerous of technical developments, in an increasingly higher pace. Even though there were social downsides, the switch from steam engine to

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

combustion engine, from candle light to electricity, was considered as progression. Even in other branches of science developments were pouring down, on different terrains, from medical care to astronomy.



Montgolfiere 1783



Wright brothers, 1903

These progressions were received with optimism, not so much because of inventive studies, but it was seen as an autonomous pursued purpose.

Artists' theories

Often in the form of a manifest artist as well formulated theories.



Courbet, 1849



When the Salon de Paris declined Gustave Courbet's painting 'The stone breakers' in 1855, he rented a wooden hut, baptized it the 'Pavillon du Realisme' and wrote a 'Realist Manifesto'. "No myths" he argued, and "Angels? I've never seen them". "Take a look at the common everyday reality, at common people." "There is no need for make-believe." After Courbet, many manifestos would follow, especially around the 1900s.

V Art & research

The period between the Franco-German war of 1870-'71 and the beginning of the first World War in 1914 is known as the "Belle Époque". Within one generation many simultaneous innovations occurred forming the basis of today's art.

Academicism and synthesis

The style of painting taught at art academies throughout Europe was based on Neoclassicism which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, resulted in the style becoming known as 'Academicism'.



Albert Bierstadt: 1870



Alma Tadema: 1888

Increasingly the aim of Academicism was to achieve a synthesis between line and colour and Classicism and Romanticism. Thomas Couture was not the only one to suggest that "*colour is a way to define the value of a form*".

'Academic' paintings were still based on sharp contours but had become much more colourful than at the beginning of the century.



Debat-Ponsan 1883



Henri Cervex, 1878

The 'elevated message' became more flexible, the allegory of the landscape disappeared and the virtues of the Roman Republic were gradually replaced by orgies and other entertainment and Orientalism became focused on the erotic fantasies associated with harems.

Academicism was becoming more and more frivolous...

Naturalism and engagement

Half way through the 19th century Karl Marx published the 'Communist Manifest', slavery was abolished and there was increasing awareness, as a direct result of the Industrial Revolution, of the dire circumstances of working class people; not only did philosophers take notice, so did artists, novelists, painters and sculptors.



Fernand Pelez, 1885



Jules Adler, 1899



Edouard Kaiser, 1893

Naturalism followed the Realism of Courbet and his supporters, the subject matter, with absolutely no embellishments, being the daily life of peasants and labourers. As a socially engaged variant it was the champion of the lower class, exposing poverty and deprivation, it had a social conscience.



Jozef Israels 1861



Ilya Repin 1873

Impressionism and free perception

The emergence of Impressionism was more radical.

Impressionism caused scandal for two reasons: firstly, everything was based on the unhindered application of a personal style and the free use of colours, for instance shadows were no longer painted in dark tints but now appeared in cool colours (blues and violets). The established order considered this to be a superficial and informal painting method 'no more than an impression', said one critic thus naming the movement.



Monet, 1890



Renoir, 1884

Furthermore, it was perceived to be meaningless: people on a terrace, boating on the river, young girls bathing with no mythological reference, landscapes where colour was king; it was pure perception with no idea of concept.

Towards the end of the 19th century there were more experiments with form. Van Gogh and Cezanne produced unconventional interpretations of their observations, with no deeper meaning than transforming a vase of sunflowers or a bowl of apples into an unusual picture using colourful patches of paint. The interpretation made every known concept redundant.



Cezanne, 1895



Van Gogh, 1888



Seurat, 1884

The definite breakthrough came in 1897 when in the Palais de Luxembourg an alternative Salon was held with painters like Cezanne, Degas, Monet and Manet. Jean-Léon Gérôme, Professor at the Académie des Beaux-Arts, warned of the demise of art, indeed, of the whole French nation, but it was to no avail, Impressionism became the 'mainstream art' in the first half of the 20th century and pushed Academicism off the stage.

Symbolism and free concept



von Stuck, 1893



James Ensor, 1891



Odilon Redon, 1893

However, the concept as a source of art was certainly not disregarded. Previously 'elevated' ideas were derived from the Bible, from mythology or from historical events, ie of an illustrative nature, but now there was an art movement that was based on fantasy: Symbolism.



Edvard Munch, 1894



Leon Spilliaert, 1910



Frantisek Kupka, 1912

Based on imagination and not visual observation some artists indulged their fantasies in academic forms whilst others were experimenting in forms that went way beyond that of their Post-impressionistic colleagues. In this environment, everything and anything became possible. These artists with a symbolist background took the first steps in abstraction making compositions without recognisable forms i.e. "Abstract Art". The Symbolist Frantisek Kupka made the first purely abstract paintings.

Expressionism and free emotion



Matisse, 1905



Kirchner, 1910



Kandinsky, 1913

The emancipation of perception and concept gave birth to a new freedom of expression which was characterized by a deformation of form and a completely new autonomous use of colour.

The Impressionists based their work on the 'natural spectrum' which exists due to refraction of light as demonstrated by a rainbow; they made conscious use of complementary colours and of the contrast of warm and cold colours.

The French Fauvists and German Expressionists developed their own colour systems that were more in line with the individualistic colour schemes of the Symbolists, just as the use of distorted forms replicated the illustrative language of some of these artists.

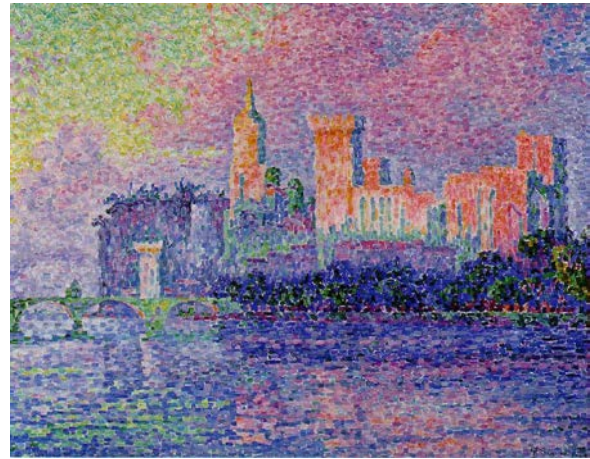
Colour Mix

Technical aspects such as colour mixing are also being further investigated.

When you mix blue with yellow, green is created. This also happens when you paint it in transparent layers over each other (glacis). And a third possibility is to place blue and yellow dots next and through each other (optical mixing).



Seurat 1888



Signac 1900

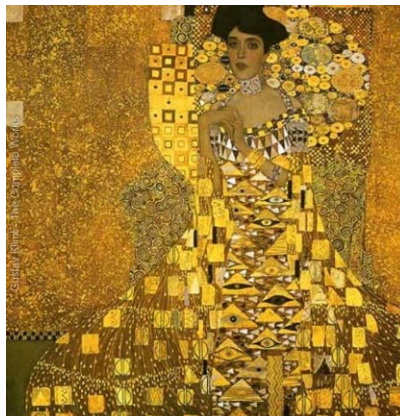
The latter is tested by the 'pointillists'.

This optical blending will later be applied in photomechanical reproduction techniques: relief printing, copper rotogravure, offset, to the current inkjet. All possible colours here are made up of pixels of only four colours of ink: magenta, cyan, yellow and black.

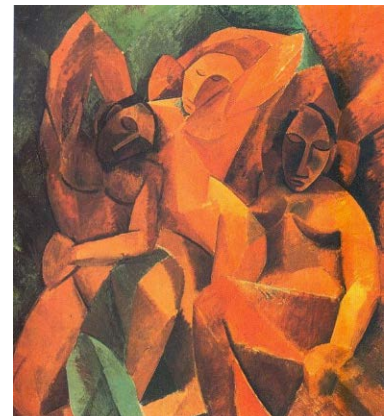
Crossovers, exotic sources of inspiration



Toorop, 1892



Klimt, 1907



Picasso, 1908

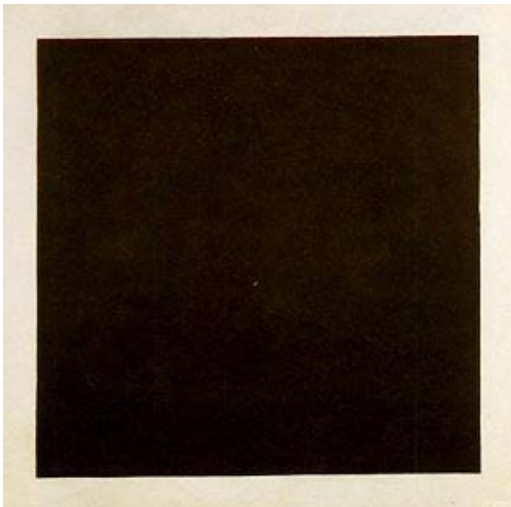
At the end of the nineteenth century three quarters of the world was in the hands of Europeans. Some continents were demanding independence the United States having already done so in 1793, however the established culture remained European and was the norm in the Americas, Australia, most of Africa and the greatest part of Asia. From a European perspective, this was quite natural; Europe would continue to spread her culture whether it was welcome or not and either with or without the aid of violence. There was cultural interaction and crossovers and the exotic cultures did make an impression.

For example, the crossover with Japanese art led in the nineteenth century to Art Nouveau (in German: 'Jugendstil'), a movement with great decorative qualities which blossomed especially within arts and crafts, graphic design and architecture and also leaving its mark on the autonomous visual arts.

According to hearsay Matisse showed the young Picasso an African sculpture, the faceted form in African art in which the front and side views are shown simultaneously. This is said to have inspired Picasso to cubism and that in turn inspired others.

Esoterica and the absolute

In 1875 Helena Blavatsky co-founded the "Theosophical Society" in New York, in 1888 her most important work was published, 'the Secret Doctrine'. Simultaneously a worldwide esoteric movement developed alongside the established religions greatly influencing the arts, followed by Rudolf Steiner, a leading European theosophist who in 1912 established an anthroposophical movement that generated a variety of art theoretical concepts.



Malevich 1915



Tantra, India, 17th Century



Mondriaan 1914

The Russian Supremacists with their most prominent representative Malevich were in fact a theosophical movement; the abstractions of Malevich can be seen as milestones in the search of the absolute and the only truth. But he was not the only one, nor the first, who found the path to the same result. And by the way, Piet Mondriaan was a follower of anthroposophy too.

Progressive thinking in art

Revolutionary technical inventions such as the electric light bulb, telegraphy, the automobile, the airplane, etc. brought about a wave of optimism. Every innovation was looked upon as progression and progressive thinking became an ideology in its own right; everything conservative was cast off and everything new was embraced.



Carra 1910



Balla, 1911

Progressive thinking was represented in a movement called Futurism. Emerging in Italy in 1909 it focussed on the glorification of dynamics and movement, of machines and fast transport, and of war as an annihilator and therefore liberator from the old regime. The First World War saw many Futuristic artists lose their lives; the real future offered less reason for optimism.

The bloom of art

All in all, art flourished during the 'Belle époque'. So, how is it that art (and science) in any period comes to high prosperity in any country, only to fade again? This occurred in the 5th to 3th centuries BC in Greece, in the 15th and 16th centuries in Italy, in the 16th and 17th centuries in the Netherlands and in the 18th and 19th centuries in France.

Bourgeoisie

In addition to a strong tradition of knowledge transfer, the social context plays a role. All of the above-mentioned 'bloom' cultures were urban cultures. Money economies with a large, wealthy middle class willing to invest in art. And so, bourgeoisie and blossom of art appear to be connected. They are the mainstays of a dynamic tradition and developments, rather than princes and prelates who have more static preferences (For those who want to study it, we see the same with Japanese Ukiyo-e art).

The collector



Francken, 1625, A collector's cabinet



Teniers, 1640, Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in his gallery

Protectors of art can be governments and individuals. They can be divided into two categories: stakeholders and lovers. Both collect art, the first for reasons of prestige or propaganda (or investment and speculation), the second of genuine love for art. But whatever the background may be, collectors were - and are - chasers on the market, and thereby potential causes of bloom.

The museum

Collectors are also the cradle of the first museums that emerge in the 18th century. Elias Ashmole donated his collection at Oxford University, who built the first museum in the world: her Ashmolean Museum (1683).

Museums were also set up for other collections: the collection of the king of Saxony went to the Dresden Museum (1744), the collection of Sir Hans Sloane led to the foundation of the British Museum, London (1759), the collection of the Popes came in The Vatican Museum in Rome (1784), from Pieter Teylers van der Hulst in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem (1784) and the collection of the French Kings ended in the Louvre, Paris (1793).

The Salon de Paris

An important contribution to the success of French art in the 18th and especially in the 19th century provided the annual *Salon de Paris*.



Heim, the Salon of 1824



Dantan, the Salon of 1880

It began in 1667 as a graduation show of the 'Academie Royale de Peinture et sculpture' training under the patronage of Louis XIV thus wanted to control the arts.

The annual Salon began quite modest, in 1761 there were 33 painters, 9 sculptors and 11 graphic artists.

But it grew into the world's largest art event in the 19th century. In 1887 there were 5318 works of art from 3963 artists. A salon lasted several months and attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors.

In addition to organizers, the French state was also a market party, the Salons were regularly buying works to decorate government buildings in the province.

Admission to the Salon was a prerequisite for a career as an artist.

However, the ballotation was conservative: when new currents emerged as the Impressionists, they were refused, and were still housed in a *Salon des Refusees*.

In 1881 the state retired and the organization was held by artists, the Société des Arts et des Lettres Français. They lasted a few decades, but in the early 20th century, the importance of the Salon decreased.

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Daumier: "Still more Venusses this year" The free admission day



"At least have a look at this Courbet"

Comments on the work showed rise to the art criticism, Charles Baudelaire is one of the first art critics.

The World Wars 1914-1945

The course of events that lead to the outbreak of World War 1 follow a complicated scenario. A crown prince is assassinated and there is a chain reaction of international treaties. The dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire are struggling to survive. There is frustration in Germany, having missed the colonial boat (the world was already divided up between other European nations) and in France too having been defeated by Germany in 1871.



Singer Sargent, "Gassed" 1919

The First World War can be described as a badly orchestrated mass murder, young men dying in their thousands in the trenches and on the battlefields. Governments sent artists to the front to register it all:

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Stanley Spencer, 1919



Edward Wadsworth, 1919



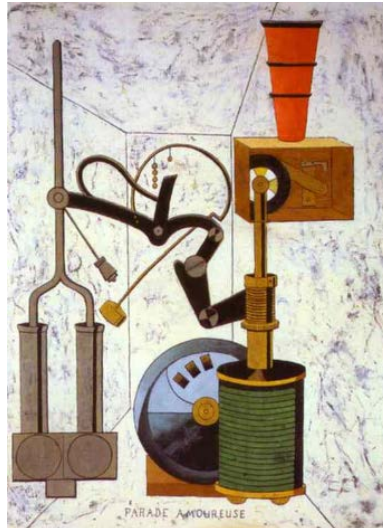
Paul Nash, 1918

The absurd versus absurdity

The horrors of war were so absurd that artists reacted with absurdity. In Zurich in neutral Switzerland the Dada movement was founded around 1916 being a mixture of theatre, cabaret, literature and visual arts it was a direct attack on western culture and its fake values including art itself.



Hans Arp, 1917



Francis Picabia, 1917



Marcel Duchamp, 1917

The Interbellum 1918-1939

After the First World War experimental art spreads across Europe and at the same time, as a reaction to expressionism and abstraction, there is a revival in figurative art, largely enforced by government, since a great deal of Europe was in the grip of totalitarianism.

Mainstream

Often overlooked is the fact that after "the Great War" most artists continued to work in the prevailing pre-war styles.

Impressionism had become particularly popular. Some artists still worked in the academic style and others were influenced by a new decorative style (after Jugendstil) called 'Art Deco'.



Utrillo 1922



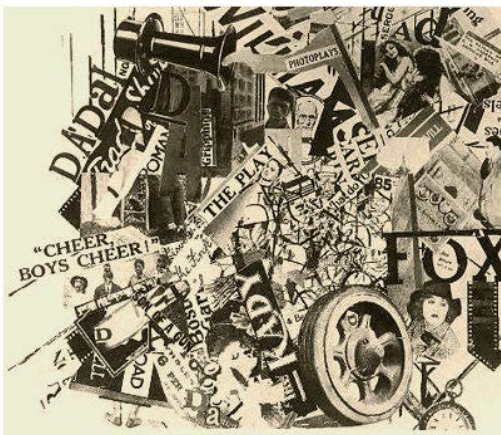
Van Rysselberghe 1925



Lempicka 1925

Dada

Post revolution the victory itself becomes the established order so the struggle against the establishment is therefore never-ending. After the war Dada became an international movement with groups in New York and Berlin.



Georg Grosz en Heartfield, 1919



Kurt Schwitters, 1920



Hannah Hoch, 1920

L'armee tas

The most experimental forms of art in the late Belle Epoque were later known by the military term 'Avant Garde'.

In military terms, the 'advance-guard' is followed by the 'Armee tas' or baggage train. The forms which developed in France, Italy, Germany and Russia spread internationally. For example, in 1914 war broke out whilst the French 'Fauvist' Henri le Fauconnier was staying in the Netherlands. To avoid being called up for duty he remained in the Netherlands and became the founder of the 'Bergen School'.

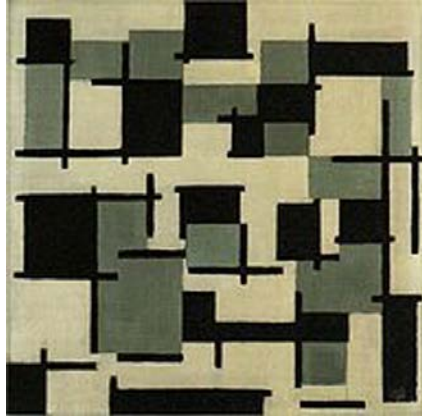
In 1917 a new movement emerged initiated by Theo van Doesburg in the wake of his magazine 'De Stijl', focussing on the use of primary colours and elementary form, with Bart van der Leek and Piet Mondriaan as the most important representatives.

In 1921 the Groningen painter Jan Wiegiers met the German expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in a sanatorium in Davos. This led to the introduction of expressionism via the Groningen artists' collective 'de Ploeg' from Germany to the Netherlands.

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Le Fauconnier 1915



Van Doesburg 1918



Wiegiers 1925

The spirit in art

Scientists such as Freud and Jung had laid the foundations for psychology, artists were fascinated by this new form of research, it gave Symbolism a new drive. The world of dreams and estrangement was headed by the Italian Pittura Metafisica, followed closely on the heels by Surrealism.



De Chirico, 1914



Ernst, 1921



Dali, 1931

Film



Murnau, Nosferatu, 1922



Wiene, Das Cabinet des dr. Caligari, 1920

The Lumière brothers showed the first motion picture “*La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon*” on the 22nd March 1885 in Paris. Twenty-five years later the motion picture had become a form of public entertainment and cinemas were opening everywhere. The photography of early films in the 1920's still relied greatly on the visual arts so much so that sometimes even the distortions of Expressionism were integrated into films.

European dictatorships

Russia and Communism

Karl Marx championed the masses seeing class struggles as the oppressed fighting against their oppressor, i.e. the rebellion of the working class against capitalists whilst building a social system with more equally shared prosperity. By the end of the first World War the time had come: in Russia the revolution broke out and Tsarism was replaced by the 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Russian Art

Initially the communist regime in Russia took a positive view of modernism in the arts, particularly Constructivism. Developed circa 1915 this became the official art of the revolution from 1917 to 1921; after all, Modernism stood for Progress.



Tatlin: design for the monument to the third, 1919



Lissitzky: Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge, 1919

This lasted until Stalin came to power; he believed that modern art was too far removed from the people and he introduced “Socialist Realism” as the official State Art.



Gerasimov, 1929



Deineka, 1934



Pimenov, 1937

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

This art was in line with 'Naturalism' with the accent on social engagement. But this engagement served here purely as a form of propaganda.

Italy and fascism

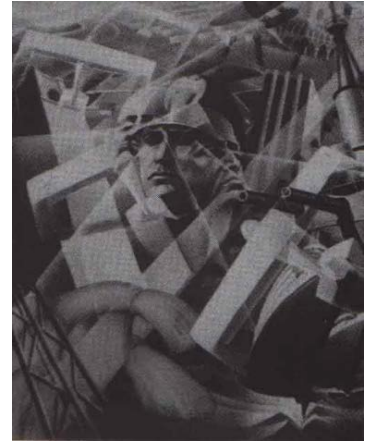
Fascism started in Italy where it promoted a corporate state with an authoritarian and hierarchical structure the core being collectivism; an individual's view did not count, only that of the collective i.e. the state as articulated through the leader, Il Duce, Mussolini, he came to power in 1922 and founded a dictatorship with strong nationalistic features.



Paladini, 1932



Bertelli, 1933



Bruschetti, 1935

For the Italian fascists art was also a means of propaganda; unlike Hitler, Mussolini was not really interested in the visual arts so artists in fascist Italy enjoyed relative freedom.

Germany and National Socialism

Germany was badly damaged after the First World War. Until 1933 the Weimar Republic governed under difficult circumstances: hyper-inflation, massive unemployment. In 1933 the National Socialists came to power under the leadership of Adolf Hitler.

National Socialism shared many of the same ideals as Fascism but differed in that it believed that the Germanic race was superior to all others and that some races, Jews, Gypsies were so repulsive that they needed to be eliminated. German aggression fired the Second World War in 1939.

Weimar Republic.



Georg Grosz, 1920



Kathe Kolwitz, 1922



Otto Dix, 1922

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

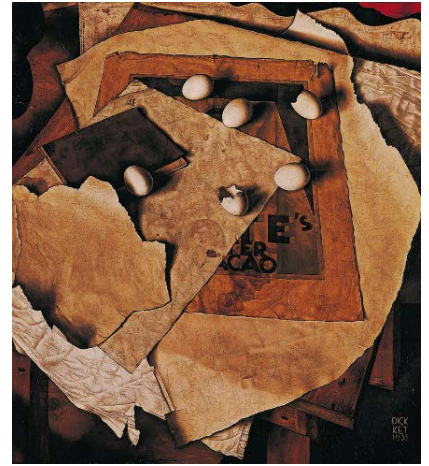
Following the end of WW2 the arts in Germany recovered producing lauded authors for example Mann and Remarque in theatre, in music Brecht and Weill and visual art too. . Following the Parisian '*Academie des Beaux Arts*' a new trend appeared, especially in architecture and design namely the '*Bauhaus*' in Weimar



Kanoldt 1922



Hynckes 1925



Ket 1935

Following on from the Bauhaus came 'New Objectivity', a development with a strong commitment, a variant of which was 'Magical Realism' which also attracted followers in The Netherlands.

National Socialism

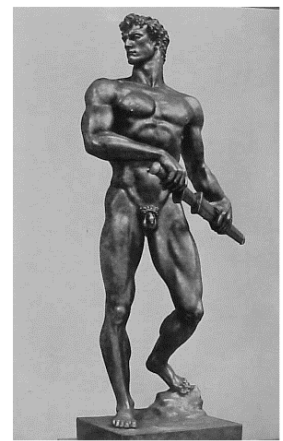
After the National Socialist takeover the vitality ceased, Adolf Hitler labelled modernism and anything that resembled it as 'degenerate art' and had it burned. He declared 'Naturalism' as did Stalin, as being the officially approved art of the state.



Lanzinger, 1934



Schmutzler, 1940



Breker, 1939

National socialists and communists were sworn enemies but artistically they shared the same interests for athletically built labourers, cheerful blond peasant girls, and the rhetoric of war.

VI Art & boundaries

Like every other war, the World War II was a humanitarian and cultural catastrophe. Nor was there any joy, artistically. After the war it was no question to the artist; That what Hitler had said was right, was wrong and vice versa. Hitler's 'degenerate art' was the only right course, the 'true art'.

The discourse

An interesting aspect of art in the cold war was the intellectual discourse. In the name of freedom, the art was divided into good and wrong art. Good art was shown in museums, wrong art was all that recalled the 19th century 'bourgeois art', especially at Academism. To the dismay of connoisseurs, wrong art was reproduced on biscuit tins and Christmas cards, even worse, it was validated by the ignorant public.

Kitsch

The intellectual discourse in question used little or no arguments, but relied on statements. As a rule, these were taunts, accusations and insults. Everything that did not fit in the field of modernism was renounced as "kitsch" (bad fake).



Ivan Choultsé



Louis Douzette

Thus, natural phenomena like moonlight or sunsets were declared kitsch.



Joseph Farquharson



Herman Herzog

As well as herding cattle, or nature scenes in general.

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



George Edward Robertson



Lourens Alma Tadema

Historical illustrations were also kitsch.



Hans Zatzka



Alexandre Cabanel

And of the human emotions, everything situated between sweet and sentimentally was defined as kitsch.



Odd Nerdrum



Tom Hageman

Of course, this led to an opposition among artists. The Norwegian painter Odd Nerdrum, for example, declared his entire oeuvre prior to kitsch and the author of this essay is also tempted to move in that area.

Modernism

The 'Cold War' between the communist east and the capitalist west was mainly a propaganda war (in which mankind got off lightly), art was an important weapon in the battle. The 'Social Realism' of the communists was juxtaposed by 'Modernism' as a symbol of tolerance and the freedom of the 'Free West'.

The ultimate material

The freer style of Impressionism appears easier to produce than Academism with its stringent rules, but with quality art the opposite seems to be the case; painting with looser brushstrokes demands greater virtuosity in the handling of a brush and paint.



Pollock, 1946



Rothko 1949



Newman 1948

The material aspect of painting received much attention in post-war art partially in an autonomous variant i.e. paint for paint's sake and colour for colour's sake.

Intense emotion

Ultimate expression was sought after by using a pronounced personal signature and a simplified form, for example Picasso recommended the naive candour of a child as the artistic norm.



Jacobsen 1946



Gotz 1947



Constant 1949

Everything revolved around 'emotion', though generally there was no concrete definition or interpretation of the word.

The rise of the media and mass culture

The post-war years from 1945 to the present witness an unprecedented rise of art and culture, partially aided by a number of technical innovations in art distribution. Various new visual cultures have emerged: photos and illustrations in newspapers and magazines, comic strips, posters and billboards in all sorts of places, even along the motorways and an expansion of galleries, exhibition halls and museums.



Norman Rockwell 1956



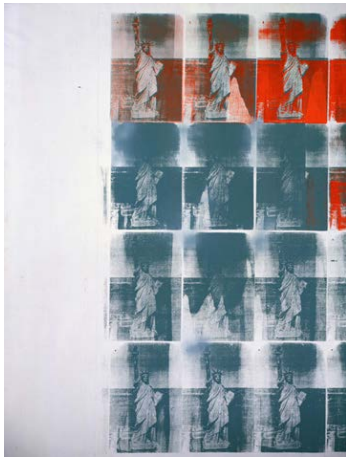
Coca Cola 1951



Elvgren 1950

Music culture follows in 1956, with the invention of the transistor radio helping to spread pop music across the globe, vinyl records, CD, iPod etc. followed by an increase in the number of pop venues as well as serious concerts. From 1960 dance and drama flourish once more when television becomes commonplace with people spending their leisure time enjoying drama, music and dance.

Popart



Warhol, 1962



Liechtenstein, 1964



Wesselmann, 1964

The United States had a head-start on Europe with the popularisation of culture, the morals of America played a role and many new cultures emerged, such as Jazz, Rock 'n Roll, Hollywood films, TV-series, the visual arts also took this mass culture movement as a lead

Pop art was an abbreviation for 'popular mass culture', introduced in 1949 by the British critic Lawrence Alloway. The movement reacted against expressionism and abstraction and attracted worldwide attention in the sixties.

Dismantling of the class society

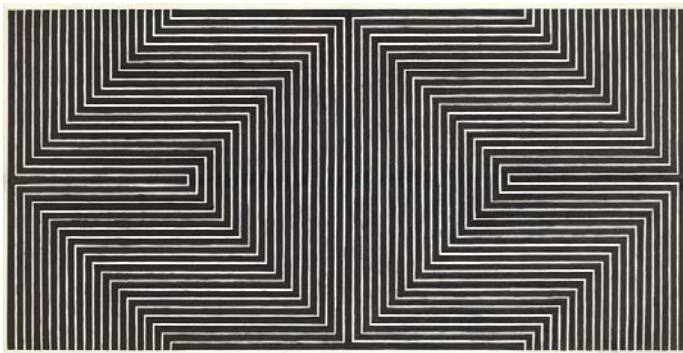
A class society existed in Europe until the sixties. The 'upper class', often the wealthier citizens, had the first and last word and the rest of the population was expected to listen and obey politely.

After WW2 prosperity grew but more significantly higher education became more available to the lower classes enabling them to create a better future for themselves and their families. In the period between 1965 and 1975 a worldwide revolt took place which can be described as the dismantling of the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois culture was also a target, the limitation of outer formality was exchanged for the breakdown of barriers and taboos resulting in more relaxed social interaction, freer sexual morality and the use of coarse language.



Within art these changes occurred earlier, in the 1950s, firstly aimed at 'Academism' in general with all forms of perception included and at Academic art education in particular.

The stringency of 19th century art education had already weakened, most artists during the first half of the 20th century were neither 'Academic' nor 'Modern', rather impressionistic and were educated as such, but the old core subjects of cast drawing, perspective drawing, anatomy and figure drawing were still on the curriculum. Between 1955 and 1965 this was all thrown overboard in exchange for modernistic values such as matter and feeling; during this period changes in ideology were quite drastic and many skills were discarded.



Stella 1968



Judd 1973

Museums however had their own ideas about the 'Zeitgeist' or spirit of the age. In their point of view, it was represented by 'minimal art'. Apparently the 'spirit of age' in that period inside or outside the museum walls didn't fit.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is a movement in philosophy which departs from the convictions of Modernism.

While Modernists claim that knowledge is the basis of science, Postmodernists believe there is no unequivocal path to reality: man is irrational, so is his way of thinking. Modernists believe that knowledge leads to universal principles and truths; the Postmodernists believe that knowledge is a construction of thought: there is no universal truth. The Modernists believe that set targets can be realised; progress results from a rational process. Postmodernists claim that progress as such is a relative concept, moreover it is subject to complications in the world of reality.



Koons 1984



Scholte 1995



Haring 1985

In visual art Postmodernism is also a reaction against radical post-war modernism, it questions the Moderns' yearning for 'truth', 'purity' and 'authenticity' and challenges it with eclecticism and irony.

One of the results is that visual expressions in Modernism, which were earlier considered to be inferior eg kitsch and graffiti are now considered objects of art.

Underground realism

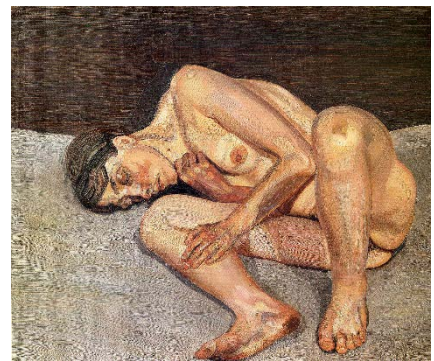
Naturally there was more traditional figurative art produced after the war; in Western Europe, particularly in the Netherlands, it was, officially at least, underappreciated despite it appearing to have a broad audience.



Wyeth 1948



Willink 1967



Freud 1973

It is not until after 1989, after the decline of Communism and the end of the Cold War, that museums reluctantly begin to pay more attention to Realism; the movement is a crowd pleaser and ticks all the boxes for government funding.

Theory & art in practice

The art theorist and the art practitioner are each other's counterparts.

The theorist seeks the ordering, structures and wants to capture the art in canons and then lock it in boxes.

The artist is looking for freedom, anarchy and hate any form of imprisonment.

The basis of theoretical thinking is the system, the basis of creative thinking is the chaos.

Because art is also based on ordering, but from chaos there is a lot to order, from a pre-ordered order, nothing at all.

Borderline art

In the Belle Époque, some artists were exploring the borderlines of art.

In form and composition, what resulted in abstraction. Then they discovered that any good painting is a good abstract painting too, due to elements as linear or colour composition, the tension of form ends the use of tonality. and clair-obscur. They discovered new possibilities in expression by exaggerating, transformation or reduction of forms. They even invented new non-prismatic colour systems to emphasize expressions. They experimented with texture, with vertexes, thick paint layers or weathering. And along those borders they found many extremes from Constructivism to Expressionism.

But also, the meaning of art was investigated. Some ways lead to the personal interpretation of the perception as they did in Realism, Naturalism and Impressionism, more abstractive in Cubism and Futurism.

Another route was more introspective, the representation of personal ideas, dreams and imagination as they did in Symbolism, Pittura metafisica, Surrealism, Magic realism. Or in the search to the divine as in Supremacism.

In all those directions art styles developed from a general via a group to an individual approach.

In the Cold War period, all this has been redone in a more extreme but in principle no different way.

More interesting in this period is that this 'borderline art' got the status of official art, excluding all other forms, certainly the traditional.

The canon of correct art

Theorists are inclined to simplify processes into linear developments (one thing results from another) and to canonise the achieved milestones.



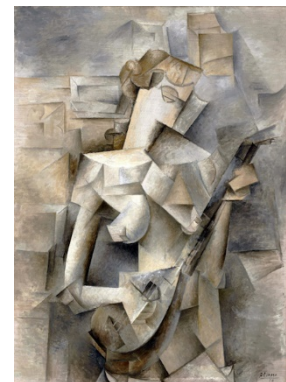
Monet 1870



Cezanne 1892

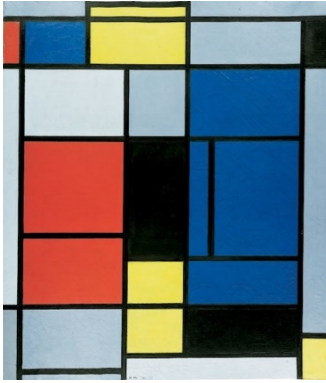


Matisse 1905



Picasso 1910

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Mondriaan 1925



Rothko 1950



Warhol 1968



Koons 1988

The American Clement Greenberg was an influential Modernist theorist, he compiled a development line of almost Biblical genealogy: Monet to Cezanne to Matisse to Picasso to Mondriaan to Rothko to Warhol, to Koons whereby every step would be an advance on the previous step.

However, artists are not concerned about integrating into any sort of art-historical structure. One artist could invent it, another could be occupied with something else, a third could be inspired by both, whilst the fourth rejects the idea completely.

The propaganda war

The only development in which there is more-or-less a line is that of the attentional mechanism: how and why is one artist or movement in the spotlight and not the other? Shortly after the war there was political guidance; a former prominent member of the American CIA, Donald Jameson, explains as follows: *"It was recognised that Abstract Expressionism was the kind of art that made Socialist Realism look even more stylised and more rigid and confined than it was. And that relationship was exploited."*



Rockwell *The connoisseur* 1962



Komar & Melamid *The origins of socialist realism* 1982

The CIA initiated and financed exhibitions as 'Masterpieces of the 20th century' (1952), 'Modern Art in the United States' (1955) and in all the large European cities 'The new American painting' (1958-59).

Interestingly the CIA operated against public opinion, U.S. president Harry Truman expressed this as follows: *"If that's art, then I'm a Hottentot"*.

Art and reverse

The shift in the free market

Both the secret services and art historians embraced, en masse, post war Modernism. The theories of Greenberg and his supporters became commonplace in all European universities.

The museums for modern art played a central role in the attentional mechanism; after 1945, they rapidly increased in number and influence replacing the art trade as the leading authority.



Guggenheim museum New York, 1959



Guggenheim museum Bilbao, 1997

Thus, theoretical and ideological thought replaced the laws of supply and demand. The market was turned around: ideology becoming the driving force in the supply that created demand.

With the exception of old core collectors, modern art received the attention of investors. These investors understood that art is a commodity where value can increase in thousands of percentage points. Works of art which are bought for tens of thousands can in a short period of time be worth hundreds of thousands, even millions. Museums, especially in America, are largely dependent on sponsors so ideology and speculation walk hand in hand.

With the development of subsidies, Governments became part of the attentional mechanism; art and its platforms, i.e. museums were increasingly subsidised and Governments, seeing a political advantage in subsidy, went with the flow.

The inversion of artistic values

A remarkable effect within this attentional mechanism was that in certain artistic features many artists inverted cause and effect. The following are some examples.

Own style

There are artists who are immediately recognised by a wide public, for instance Rembrandt, Van Gogh or Picasso.

In modernism a conspicuous “own style”, often forced, was a must for the artist. The fact was overlooked that in 17th century Netherlands about 3000 artists were at work (within a population of a million and a half), of which perhaps 30 are directly recognisable.

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Rembrandt 1654



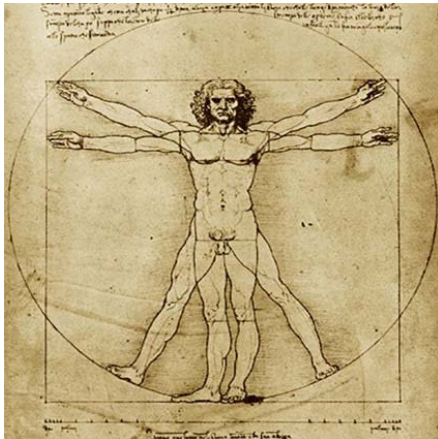
Van Gogh 1889



Picasso 1938

The other 99% fill the museums worldwide, they are the 'small masters' who have always formed the greater part of the artist population, not unique geniuses but they were of special artistic quality.

Attention value



da Vinci 1492



Michelangelo 1510

The work of the great artists readily attracts attention, it has great 'attention value' as they say in advertising, so much so that they can become icons in advertising. In post-war Modernism artists often sought after this attention value rather than the artistic value, this art is no more than a gimmick.

Scandalous success



Courbet 1866



Duchamp 1966

The realist Courbet was a scandal merchant; the first exhibitions of the impressionists caused a scandal, so did Marcel Duchamp. Scandals have high attention value. Artists sought scandal to push back boundaries and to break taboos, until populist TV-programs took over from them.

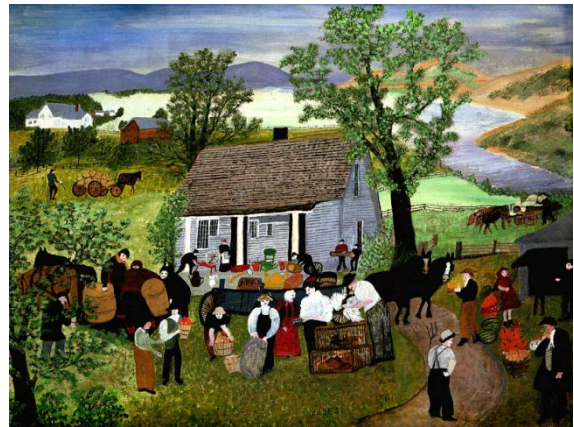
The charm of the naive

Paintings of Rousseau le Douanier were greatly admired by the 'modern' artists of the time, although the style was seemingly childish; Rousseau aspired to be an Academic artist.

Naivety does have its charm, but in post-war Modernism, and driven by the aversion to Bourgeois Academism and by complacency, this naivety became the norm.



Rousseau le Douanier 1897



Grandma Moses 1944

Consequently, it is not understood that the paintings of Rousseau exhibit a bizarre world which, by way of naivety, is quite adequately presented, at the same time there is a certain magic which is the result of an academic technique ie layered painting. If the magic is missing then a naive painting will never be anything but a naive painting. In technical terms it is paint on canvas.

The reversal of artistic practice

The value of incompetence

In the second half of the 20th century, competence was seen as a questionable concept.

Craftmanship, full knowledge of the facts, the whole 'Academic' education was interpreted as conflicting with the 'true' artistic purposes.

Initially, in the 50's and 60's it was thought that it would stand in the way of the freedom of emotion. Later on, it was seen as an irrelevant aspect of idea or concept. Virtually every art school, at least those in the Western world, went along with this way of thinking and abandoned the traditional education. Whereby, especially after three quarter of a century, an irreconcilable break from tradition was arisen.

Incompetence and ineptitude became artistic goals.

One of the consequences was that the practice of art became accessible to large groups of less to untalented people. At the same time, a fading of distinction between professional and amateurish was occurring. The question remains if this is an advantage or disadvantage, and/or a logical result, given the rapidly changing society with the broadening of the middle class and the rise of mass media.

We can see, within music, that although pop music's structure is considerably less complex than Classical music, it is able to reach millions of men and even to thrill them.

The latter isn't the case with modern visual art, on the contrary, the mass has turned their backs on it. Some even speak of a great loss in respect besides indifference. The museum modern art functions for a relatively small, conditioned crowd. In the last decade however, it became clear that the mass does approach museum presentations, like the 19th-century Academic Painting- which had gone unseen for a long time.

The value of incomprehension

The appreciation of art lies mainly in the expectation. Art which does not meet with the expectation can, at least in the beginning, encounter incomprehension. This happened to the impressionists, Van Gogh and to all experimental art forms in the Belle Époque. After a period of incubation, the comprehension automatically spread.



After the war there emerged a belief amongst artists and art lovers that good art had to be incomprehensible for the public at large and could only be accessible for a small elite; one had to have an 'understanding' of art. Amazingly this 'understanding' was limited to visual art and did not pertain to music or literature.

To the present day this misunderstanding still leads to the pompous presentation of the obscure, accompanied by numerous pages of explanatory notes in hermetic prose.

In fact, it's the inversion of the profession: conceptual art usually isn't much more than the – often superficial – visualisation of a – often superficial – art theory.

VII Art & resurrection

Apart from the end of the Cold War the year 1990 marks two other developments: the end of the socio-cultural revolution which began in the mid-sixties, and the emergence of the personal computer.

Subcultural freedom

The first is best illustrated in youth culture.



Greasers dancing in the street



Dam sleepers

In the 50's and 60's there was a strict social dividing line in youth culture: the working-class youth read Tarzan and danced Rock 'n Roll, the middle class read Sartre and listened to Jazz.



Punk



Hiphop



Gothic

But around 1990 youth culture split into 'identity groups' such as Punk, Hip-hop, Gothic etc. regardless of any social division.

Digital freedom

The digital-cultural breakthrough is based on new technical possibilities and applications (particularly in photography and film as well as in music) but above all on the spread of the Internet. Here too a democratisation process starts, completely in line with the above.

After the war, culture worldwide was subject to centralised control, which

somewhat resembled a communist 'planned economy'. This was partly carried by ideology (as in the visual arts), partly by the interests of industry (especially film, TV and pop music).

Digital techniques and internet dismantle rapidly. Global companies such as Kodak topple, the film and music industry have to adjust to the practice of consumer downloading whilst publishers switch to producing eBooks or books 'on command' the outcome being that every citizen suddenly has the chance to become world-famous with a 2-minute film. The access and diversity of the cultural offerings are no longer filtered by museum curators or account managers.

The resurrection of representational art



Rauch, Germany



Van Hove, France



Chrobak, Poland



Zhang, China



Nerdrum, Norway



Remnev, Russia



Ferri, Italy



Vetriciano Great Britain



Borremans, Belgium



Rego, Portugal



Kalaizis, Germany



Oaxaca, USA

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull

After the fall of the 'Berlin Wall' in 1989 we witness a renewal of the classical tradition. First of all, in the public interest: exhibitions of 19th century artists such as Alma Tadema, Repin or Waterhouse are blockbusters but also in art production and in the art trade.



Javier Marin



Pedro Requejo



Ralph Brown

Artists worldwide focussed again on the original craftsmanship of art and founded specialised private art academies, for example in Groningen, Florence, Barcelona and in various places in the USA all committed to the revival of visual quality as a norm which is best developed by the transfer of knowledge.

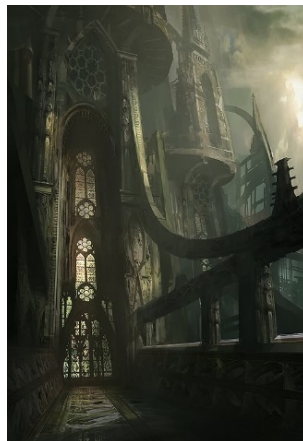
Imaginary art

In old times art was mostly illustrative. Inspiring books could be the Bible or Ovidius' Metamorphosis as well. In contemporary art new inspirations are coming up: Fantasy art arises from the science fiction and fantasy literature.

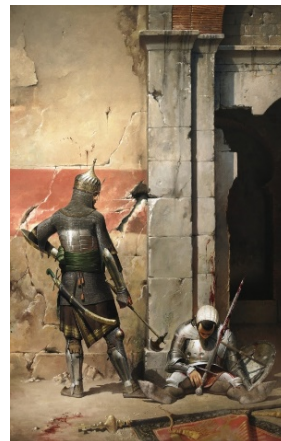
Originally started as illustrations (and in many cases, it still is) it has also a life of its own as a variation in visual arts.



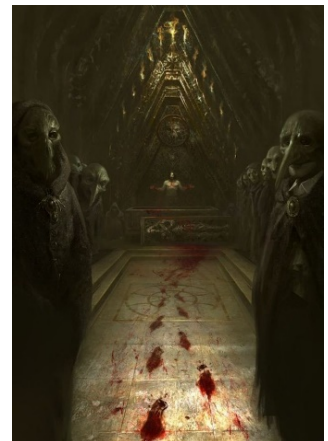
Paquette



Wang Ling



Cabrera Peña



Manzanedo

Technically it is found on the cutting edge from classical to hypermodern. Used techniques range from oil paintings, through edited photographs to fully digitally-featured performances. For this, the same skills and technical insights are required as with traditional painting. (For example: claire-obscure, perspective, anatomy).

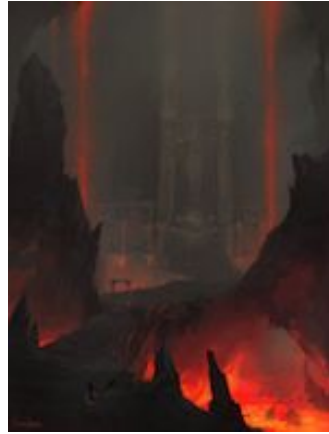
Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Lee



Bathory



HeeWann Kim



Herczog

Informal art

Graffiti are of all ages and all cultures, but nowadays it developed to a serious artform.



Lowell



Cordal



Banksy.



Wenn

Most of it is known as 'Street-art' with unexpected 3-dimensional forms in public places or paintings on the surface of a street who gives a 3-dimensional illusion. Sometimes they are made anonymously, other artists are well known in their circles.



Cordal



Müller



Epilogue

The northern Dutch stronghold

In the last half century, a tradition of high standard classical figurative art has developed in the northern provinces of the Netherlands.

Initially thanks to the Groningen art academy 'Minerva', which in the 70's and 80's of the last century offered a classical education program as well as post-modern. In doing so, Minerva was the only art academy in the Netherlands (and far beyond that).



Diederik Kraaijpoel



Matthijs Röling

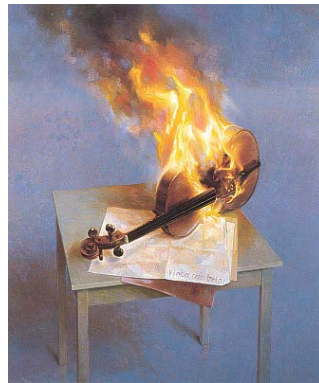


Wout Muller

The driving force behind it was a tutor, Diederik Kraaijpoel, thanks to him teachers were attracted, such as Matthijs Röling and Wout Muller, and they taught new generations of artists who largely remained in the north of the Netherlands. Early 90's Minerva discontinued the perceptual curriculum and in conformity with the study programmes of that time, turned the focus on conceptual art.



Henk Helmantel



Rein Pol



Piet Sebens



Paul Boswijk



Chris Herenius



Tom Hageman

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Jan van der Kooi



Pieter Pander



Douwe Elias



Jan van Loon



Gerard van der Weerd



Siemen Dijkstra

The Classical Academy

Meanwhile, a tradition had taken shape: in 2005 the baton was passed and a private initiative created the 'Classical Academy of fine art' offering a five-year course with 40 artists/teachers and ca 150 students, which delivers 10 to 15 alumni annually. A large number of them quickly making their appearance on the art market.



Jantien de Boer



Elvira Dik



Keimpe van der Kooi



Milan Smidt



Svetlana Tartakovska



Marten Huitsing

Tom S. Hageman: Picasso's bull



Nick Willems



Klaas Koops



Ans Smits



Anne Rixt Kuik



Minke Gravers



Diane Brodie



Randolph Algera



Marian Gerrits



Mitzy Renooy



Jan Willem Eskes

The result of this tradition is that these northern provinces are home to the largest concentration of classically educated artists in the whole of Western Europe.

