



19

THE MODERN ERA

Most painting in the European tradition was painting the mask. Modern art rejected all that. Our subject matter was the person behind the mask.

— ROBERT MOTHERWELL



HISTORIANS OF modern art have repeatedly posed the question, “When did modern art begin?” Some link the beginnings of modern painting to the French Revolution in 1789. Others have chosen 1863, the year of a landmark exhibition of “modern” painting in Paris.

Another issue of interest has been “Just what is modern about modern art?” The artists of the mid-fifteenth century looked upon their art as modern. They chose new subjects, materials, and techniques that signaled a radical change from a medieval past. Their development of one-point linear perspective altered the face of painting completely. From our perspective, modern art begins with the changes in the representation of space as introduced by artists of the late eighteenth century. Unlike the Renaissance masters, who sought to open up endless vistas within the canvas, the artists of the latter 1700s thrust all of the imagery toward the picture plane. The flatness or two-dimensionality of the canvas surface was asserted by the use of planar recession rather than linear recession. Not all artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries abided by this novel treatment of space, but with this innovation, the die was cast for the future of painting. In short, what was modern about the modern art of the eighteenth century in France was its concept of space. In a very real sense, the history of modern art is the history of two differing perceptions and renderings of that space.

As we will see in this chapter, the flattening of pictorial space begins in the late eighteenth century with Jacques-Louis David and Neoclassicism. Romanticism followed closely in its wake, at times displaying stylistic continuity with its predecessor and at

◀ BERTHE MORISOT, *Young Girl by the Window* (1878). Oil on canvas, 20 1/2" x 24". Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.

417

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times diametrically opposing it. We will discuss the survival of Academic painting in the nineteenth century and consider the relationship between art, politics, and social consciousness. In the mid-nineteenth century, change was everywhere. Realist artists rejected the content of Academic art and took to the subjects of life around them. The Impressionists rejected the isolation of the artist's studio and took to the outdoors to paint, recording the fleeting optical impressions of light and atmosphere. The new medium of photography experienced technical strides, and its growing familiarity had a marked influence on later-nineteenth-century painting. Paris had become the center of the art world.

NEOCLASSICISM

Modern art declared its opposition to the whimsy of the late Rococo style with Neoclassical art. The Neoclassical style is characterized by harsh sculptural lines, a subdued palette, and for the most part, planar instead of linear recession into space. The subject matter of Neoclassicism was inspired by the French Revolution and designed to heighten moral standards. The new morality sought to replace the corruption and decadence of Louis XVI's France. The Roman Empire was often chosen as the model to emulate. For this reason, the artists of the Napoleonic era imitated the form and content of Classical works of

art. This interest in antiquity was fueled by contemporaneous archeological finds at sites such as Pompeii, as well as by numerous excavations in Greece.

Neoclassical Painting

JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID The sterling proponent of the Neoclassical style and official painter of the French Revolution was Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825). David literally gave postrevolutionary France a new look. He designed everything from clothing to coiffures. David also set the course for modern art with a sudden and decisive break from the ornateness and frivolity of the Rococo.

In *The Oath of the Horatii* (Fig. 19.1), David portrayed a dramatic event from Roman history to heighten patriotism and courage. Three brothers prepare to fight an enemy of Rome, swearing an oath to the empire on swords upheld by their father. To the right, their mother and other relatives collapse in despair. They weep for the men's safety but are also distraught because one of the enemy men is engaged to a sister of the Horatii. Family is pitted against family in a conflict that no one can win. Such a subject could descend into pathos, but David controlled any tendency toward sentimentality by reviving the Classical balance of emotion and restraint. The emotionality of the theme is countered by David's cool rendition of forms. The elements of the composition further work to harness emotionalism. Harsh sculptural lines



▲ 19.1 JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID, *The Oath of the Horatii* (1784). Oil on canvas, 11' x 14'. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

David was one of the leaders of the French Revolution, and his political life underwent curious turns. Although he painted *The Oath of the Horatii* for Louis XVI, he supported the faction that deposed him. Later he was to find himself painting a work commemorating the coronation of Napoleon. Having struggled against the French monarchy and then living to see it restored, David chose to spend his last years in exile in Brussels.

ANGELICA KAUFFMAN Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807) was another leading Neoclassical painter, an exact contemporary of David. Born in Switzerland and educated in the Neoclassical circles

in Rome, Kauffman was responsible for the dissemination of the style in England. She is known for her portraiture, history painting, and narrative works such as *The Artist in the Character of Design Listening to the Inspiration of Poetry* (Fig. 19.2). In this allegorical work, Kauffman paints her

define the figures and setting. The palette is reduced to muted blues and grays, with an occasional splash of deep red. Emotional response is barely evident in the idealized Classical faces of the figures.

Several Classical devices in David's compositional format also function to balance emotion and restraint. The figural groups form a rough triangle. Their apex—the clasped swords of the Horatii—is the most important point of the composition. In the same way that Leonardo used three windows in his *Last Supper*, David silhouetted his dramatic moment against the central opening of three arches in the background. David further imitated Renaissance canvases by presenting cues for a linear perspective in the patterning of the floor. But unlike sixteenth-century artists, David led his orthogonals into a flattened space instead of a vanishing point on a horizon line. The closing off of this background space forces the viewer's eye to the front of the picture plane, where it encounters the action of the composition and the canvas surface. No longer does the artist desire to trick observers into believing they are looking through a window frame into the distance. Now the reality of the two-dimensionality of the canvas is asserted.



▶ 19.2 ANGELICA KAUFFMAN, *The Artist in the Character of Design Listening to the Inspiration of Poetry* (1785). Oil on canvas, 24" x 24". Kenwood House, Hampstead, London, England.

Neoclassicism | 419



4 19.3 ANTONIO CANOVA, *Pauline Borghese as Venus* (1805). Marble, life-sized. Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.

own features in the person of the muse of design, who is listening attentively with paper and pencil in hand to her companion, the muse of poetry. Poetry's idealized facial features, along with the severe architecture, classically rendered drapery, and rich palette, place the work firmly in the Neoclassical style.

JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES David abstracted space by using planar rather than linear recession. His most prodigious student, Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), created sensuous, though pristinely Classical, compositions in which line functions as an abstract element. Above all else, Ingres was a magnificent draftsman. Ingres's work is a combination of harsh linearity and sculptural smoothness on the one hand, and delicacy and sensuality on the other. His *Grande Odalisque* (Fig. 19.7 in the nearby Compare + Contrast feature) portrays a Turkish harem mistress in the tradition of the great reclining Venuses of the Venetian Renaissance. Yet how different it is, for example, from Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (See the Compare + Contrast feature later in the chapter). The elongation of her spine, her attenuated limbs, and odd fullness of form recall the distortions and abstractions of Mannerist art. In the *Grande Odalisque*, Ingres also delights in the differing qualities of line. The articulation of heavy drapery contrasts markedly with the staccato treatment of the bed linens and the languid, sensual lines of the mistress's body. Like David's, Ingres's forms are smooth and sculptural, and his palette is muted. Ingres also flattens space in his composition by placing his imagery in the foreground, as in a relief. Ingres's exotic nudes were a popular type of imagery in the late eighteenth century, but other artists often

rendered such subjects quite differently. The popular style during this period was similar to that of the Baroque era. On the one hand were artists such as David and Ingres, who represented the linear style. On the other hand were artists whose works were painterly. The foremost proponents of the painterly style were Géricault and Delacroix. The linear artists, called Poussinists, followed in the footsteps of Classicism with their subdued palette and emphasis on draftsmanship and sculptural forms. The painterly artists, termed the Rubenists, adopted the vibrant palette and aggressive brushstroke of the Baroque artist. The two factions argued vehemently about the merits and the shortcomings of their respective styles. No artists were more deeply entrenched in this feud than the leaders of the camps, Ingres and Delacroix.

Neoclassical Sculpture

The principles of Neoclassicism were embraced by sculptors working in France, England, and the United States. It was the style of choice for official portraits, relief sculptures, and monuments of all sorts. Antonio Canova (1757–1822), trained in Italy, wrote of having to “[sweat] day and night over the Greek models, imbibing their style, turning it into one's own blood.” He became the sculptor to Napoleon Bonaparte and was responsible for numerous portraits of the emperor and members of his family, including his sister, Pauline Borghese (Fig. 19.3). Just as Napoleon chose a Zeus-like pose for his coronation painting by Ingres, Pauline had herself portrayed as the goddess of love—Venus. The reclining figure clearly references Classical Greek prototypes, although his is a combination of realism and idealism. Pauline's face has the

character of a portrait, however modified or improved, and the finely carved details of the elaborate lounge can almost be described as *trompe l'oeil*.

Neoclassical Architecture

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Neoclassicism also dominated architectural design in France, England, and America. The architects and visionaries of the U.S. capital—Thomas Jefferson included—embraced Classical models for their aesthetic beauty and simplicity. The reference to ancient Greece also befitted the young democracy. From Pierre Charles L'Enfant's plan for Washington, D.C., with its radiating boulevards, geometric spaces, and vistas culminating in Classical monuments, to Cass Gilbert's design of the U.S. Supreme Court Building (see Fig. 1.2), the city was awash in the serenity and monumentality of columns, pediments, and pristine marble facades. Latrobe especially was a stickler for purity of Greek forms. He combined elements of the Ionic order for the Senate chamber and Corinthian capitals for the House of Representatives. Also of interest is Latrobe's contribution to the White House—an oval room

with a columned portico that would come to symbolize the hub of presidential power.

ROMANTICISM

Both Neoclassicism and Romanticism reflected the revolutionary spirit of the times. Neoclassicism emphasized restraint of emotion, purity of form, and subjects that inspired morality, whereas Romantic art sought extremes of emotion enhanced by virtuosic brushwork and a brilliant palette. The two major proponents of the romantic style in France were Théodore Géricault and Eugène Delacroix.

THÉODORE GÉRICAUT The depiction of nature as unpredictable and uncontrollable—in the words of the French philosopher Denis Diderot, as stunning the soul and imparting feelings of terror—was a favorite theme of the Romantic artist. Many French and British paintings of the period reveal a particular fascination with the destructive power of nature at sea, perhaps none as intensely as Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (Fig. 19.4). Based



4 19.4 THÉODORE GÉRICAUT, *Raft of the Medusa* (1818–1819). Oil on canvas, approximately 16' x 22'. Louvre, Paris, France.

Romanticism | 421

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The first virtue of a painting is to be a feast for the eyes.
—EUGÈNE DELACROIX



4 19.5 EUGÈNE DELACROIX, *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1826). Oil on canvas, 12' 11" x 16' 10". Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, France.

on a shipwreck off the coast of West Africa in 1816, during which a makeshift raft laden with Algerian immigrants was set adrift by the captain and crew of the crippled French ship, *Medusa*, the painting is viewed as Géricault's most controversial and political work.

Like many of his liberal contemporaries, Géricault (1791–1824) opposed the French monarchy and used the tragedy of the *Medusa* to call attention to the mismanagement and ineffectual policies of the French government, as well as the practice of slavery. The plight of the survivors and victims of the *Medusa* became a national scandal, and Géricault's authentic documentation—based on interviews with survivors and visits to the morgue—was intended as a direct attack on the government. The powerful composition is full of realistic detail and explores the full gamut of human emotion under extreme hardship and duress. Much of the drama of Géricault's composition occurs along a diagonal configuration of figures, from the corpse in the lower left that will soon slip into

the dark abyss of the ocean, upward along a crescendo that culminates in the muscular torso of a black man waving a flag toward a barely visible rescue ship on the horizon. The fractured raft is tossed about mercilessly by the winds and waves; humans battle against nature, and their own, for sheer survival.

EUGÈNE DELACROIX The most famous Rubenist—and Ingres's archrival—was Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863). Whereas Ingres believed that a painting was nothing without drawing, Delacroix advocated the spontaneity of painting directly on a canvas without the tyranny of meticulous preparatory sketches. Ingres believed that color ought to be subordinated to line, but Delacroix maintained that compositions should be constructed of color. Their contrasting approaches to painting can be seen clearly in the *Odalisque* by each artist (Figs. 19.7 and 19.8 in the Compare + Contrast feature), fine examples of the difference between the Neoclassical and Romantic styles.

One of Delacroix's most dynamic statements of the Romantic style occurs in one of his many compositions devoted to the more exciting themes from literary history. *The Death of Sardanapalus* (Fig. 19.5), inspired by a tragedy by Lord Byron, depicts the murder outside of an Assyrian king who, rather than surrender to his attackers, set fire to himself and his entourage. All of the monarch's earthly possessions, including concubines, servants, and Arabian stallions, are heaped upon his lavish gold and velvet bed, now turned funeral pyre. The chaos and terror of the event are rendered by Delacroix with all the vigor and passion of a Baroque composition.

The explicit contrast between the voluptuous women and the brute strength of the king's executioners brings to mind *The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus* by Rubens (see Fig. 18.11). Arms reach helplessly in all directions, and backs arch in hopeless defiance or pitiful submission before the passive Sardanapalus. Delacroix's unleashed energy and assaulting palette were strongly criticized by his contemporaries, who felt that there was no excuse for such a blatant depiction of violence. But his use of bold colors and freely applied pigment, along with the

observations on art and nature that he recorded in his journal, were an important influence on the young artists of the nineteenth century who were destined to transform artistic tradition.

FRANCISCO GOYA Ironically, the man considered the greatest painter of the Neoclassical and Romantic periods belonged to neither artistic group. He never visited France, the center of the art world at the time, and he was virtually unknown to painters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Yet his paintings and prints foreshadowed the art of the nineteenth-century Impressionists. Francisco Goya (1746–1828) was born in Spain and, except for an academic excursion to Rome, spent his life there. He enjoyed a great reputation in his native country and was awarded many important commissions, including religious frescoes and portraits of Spanish royalty.

But Goya is best known for his works with political overtones, ranging from social satire to savage condemnation of the disasters of war. One of his most famous depictions of war is *The Third of May, 1808* (Fig. 19.6). The painting commemorates the massacre of the peasant-citizens of



4 19.6 FRANCISCO GOYA, *The Third of May, 1808* (1814–1815). Oil on canvas, 8' 9" x 12' 4". Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain.

Romanticism | 423

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COMPARE & CONTRAST

Ingres's *Grande Odalisque* with Delacroix's *Odalisque*

COMPARE-AND-CONTRAST EXERCISES are often used to stimulate a student's powers of visual recognition and discrimination, to test the student's ability to characterize and categorize, and to force the student to think critically about the content and context of the work. If put together just right, they ought also to act as a springboard for discussion of issues that push beyond the discipline of art. "Tell us!" you tell.

You can write paragraphs on the stylistic differences alone between the *Odalisque* paintings by Ingres (Fig. 19.7) and by Delacroix (Fig. 19.8). They are arch examples of the contrast between a linear and painterly approach to the same subject; they offer clear evidence of the "battle" between the Poussinists and the Rubenists during the Romantic period. Those whose patronage was inspired by the Classical Baroque artist Nicolas Poussin versus those who "went to school" on the Flemish Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens. On the other hand, they have one very important thing in common: Both bespeak an enormous fascination with the exotic, with the "Orient," with the other; a seemingly insatiable fascination not only with the trappings of an exotic sensuality—turban, silken scarves, peacock feathers, opium pipes—but with what was perceived as an unrestrained and exotic sexuality. These two works are in abundant company in nineteenth-century France. Can you do a lot of research and find out what circumstances (historical, political, and sociological) prevailed at this moment in time that might have led to a market for such paintings? Why did these very different artists find the same subject so captivating, so fashionable?

Nineteenth-century art historian and feminist scholar Linda Nochlin has suggested that such paintings speak volumes about contemporary ideology and gender discourse:

the ways in which representations of women in art are founded upon and serve to reproduce indisputably accepted assumptions held by society in general, artists in particular, and some artists more than others about men's power over, superiority to, difference from, and necessary control of women; assumptions which are manifested in the visual structures as well as the thematic choices of the pictures in question.

Among several that Nochlin lists are assumptions about women's weakness and passivity and availability to satisfy men's sexual needs.

The works in this feature also speak to the tradition of the idealizing nude in Western art. In another Compare + Contrast feature



▲ 19.7 JEAN-AUGUSTE-DOMINIQUE INGRES, *Grande Odalisque* (1814). Oil on canvas, 50 1/4" x 60 1/2". Louvre Museum, Paris, France.



▲ 19.8 EUGÈNE DELACROIX, *Odalisque* (1820-1823). Oil on canvas, 14 1/2" x 16 1/2".

In this chapter, you can see some other examples of this tradition and are asked for whose "gaze" you think they were intended. In fact, the concept of the "male gaze" has been central to feminist theory for the past decade. In a landmark article written in 1973, the filmmaker Laura Mulvey explained the roles of the viewer and the viewed in art, literature, and film this way: Men are in the position of looking, and women are "passive, powerless objects of their controlling gaze."

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Madrid after the city fell to the French. Reflecting the procedures of Velázquez and Rembrandt—two Baroque masters whom Goya acknowledged as influential in the development of his style—Goya focuses the viewer's attention on a single moment in the violent episode. A Spaniard thrusts his arms upward in surrender to the bayonets of the faceless enemy. The brusqueness of the application of pigment corresponds to the harshness of the subject. The dutiful and regimented procedure of the executioners, dressed in long coats, contrasts visually and psychologically with the expressions of horror, fear, and helplessness on the faces of the ragged peasants. The emotion is heightened by the use of acerbic tones and by a strong chiaroscuro that illuminates the pitiful victims while relegating all other details to darkness.

Goya devoted much of his life to the graphic representation of man's inhumanity to man. Toward the end of his life, he was afflicted with deafness and plagued with bitterness and depression over the atrocities he had witnessed. These feelings were manifested in macabre paintings and lithographs, which pre-empted the style of the great painters of the nineteenth century.

The Academy

Ingres's paintings spoke of a calm, though exotic, Classicism. Delacroix retrieved the dynamism of the Baroque. Goya seethed his canvases with the spirit of revolution. Ironically, the style of painting that had the least impact on the development of modern art was the most popular type of painting in its day. This was *Academic art*, so called because its style and subject matter were derived from conventions established by the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in Paris.

Established in 1648, the Academy had maintained a firm grip on artistic production for more than two centuries. Many artists steeped in this tradition were followers rather than innovators, and the quality of their production left something to be desired. Some, however, like David and Ingres, worked within the confines of a style acceptable to the Academy but rose above the generally rampant mediocrity.

ADOLPHE WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU One of the more popular and accomplished

Academic painters was Adolphe William Bouguereau (1825-1905). Included among his oeuvre are religious and historical paintings in a grand Classical manner, although he is most famous for his meticulously painted nudes and mythological subjects. *Nymphs and Satyr* (Fig. 19.9) is nearly photographic in its refined technique and attention to detail. Four sprightly and sensuous wood nymphs corral a hesitant satyr and tug him into the water. Their innocent playfulness would have appealed to the Frenchman on the street, although the saccharine character of the subject matter and the extreme light-handness with which the work was painted served also as a model against which the new wave of painters rebelled.



▲ 19.9 ADOLPHE WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU, *Nymphs and Satyr* (1873). Oil on canvas, 102 1/4" x 70 1/2". Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts.

14.

Romanticism | 425

424 | CHAPTER 19 The Modern Era

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To record the manners, ideas, and aspects of the age as I myself saw them—to be a man as well as a painter—in short to create a living art—that is my aim.

—GUSTAVE COURBET



▲ 19.10 HONORÉ DAUMIER, *The Third-Class Carriage* (1865). Oil on canvas, 25 1/2" x 35 1/2". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

REALISM

The "modern" painters of the nineteenth century objected to Academic art on two levels: The subject matter did not represent real life; nor did the manner in which the subjects were rendered reflect reality as it was observed by the naked eye.

The modern artists chose to depict subjects that were evident in everyday life. The way in which they rendered these subjects also differed from that of Academic painters. They attempted to render on canvas objects as they saw them—optically—rather than as they knew them to be—conceptually. In addition, they respected the reality of the medium they worked with. Instead of using pigment merely as a tool to provide an illusion of three-dimensional reality, they emphasized the two-dimensionality of the canvas and asserted the painting process itself. The physical properties of the pigments were highlighted. Artists who took these ideas to heart were known as the Realists. They include Honoré Daumier and two painters whose work stands on the threshold of the Impressionist movement: Gustave Courbet and Édouard Manet.

HONORÉ DAUMIER Of all of the modern artists of the mid-nineteenth century, Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) was perhaps the most concerned with bringing to light the very real subject of the plight of the masses. Daumier worked as a caricaturist for Parisian journals, and he used his cartoons to convey his disgust with the monarchy and contemporary bourgeois society. His public ridicule of King Louis Philippe landed him in prison for six months.

One of Daumier's most famous compositions is *The Third-Class Carriage* (Fig. 19.10). His caricaturist style is evident in the flowing dark outlines and exaggerated features and gestures. The peasants are crowded into the car, their clothing poor and rumpled, their faces wide and expressionless. They contrast markedly with bourgeois commuters, whose felt top hats tower above the kerchiefed heads. Wrapped up in their own thoughts and disappointments, they live their quite ordinary lives from day to day, without significance and without notice.

GUSTAVE COURBET The term *realist*, when it applies to art, is synonymous with Gustave Courbet (1819-1877). Considered to be the "father" of the Realist movement, Courbet used the term *realism* to describe his own work and even issued a manifesto on the subject.

Paintings such as *The Stone-Breakers* (Fig. 19.11) were the objects of public derision. Courbet was moved to paint the work after seeing an old man and a young boy breaking stones on a roadside. So common a subject was naturally criticized by contemporary critics, who favored



▲ 19.11 GUSTAVE COURBET, *The Stone-Breakers* (1848). Oil on canvas, 60 1/2" x 102". Formerly Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (acquired in World War II). Galerie Neue Meister, Dresden, Germany.

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▲ 19.12 EDOUARD MANET, *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe (Lunch on the Grass)* (1865). Oil on canvas, 7 1/2" x 11 1/2". Musée d'Orsay, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, France.

mythological or idealistic subjects. It was not only the artist's subject matter, however, that the critics found offensive. They also spurned his painting technique. Although his choice of colors was fairly traditional—muted tones of browns and ochres—their quick application with a palette knife resulted in a coarsely textured surface that could not have been further removed from the glossy finish of an Academic painting. Curiously, although Courbet believed that this type of painting was more realistic than that of the salons, in fact the reverse is closer to the truth. The Academic painter strove for what we would today consider to be an almost photographically exact representation of the figure, whereas Courbet attempted quickly to jot down his impressions of the scene in an often spontaneous flurry of strokes. Despite Courbet's advocacy of hard-core realism, the observer of *The Stone-Breakers* was presented ultimately with the artist's subjective view of the world.

EDOUARD MANET

Courbet's painting may have laid the groundwork for Impressionism, but he was not to be a part of the new wave. His old age brought conservatism, and with it

disapproval of the younger generation's painting techniques. One of the targets of Courbet's derision was Édouard Manet (1832-1883). Yet according to some art historians, Manet is the artist most responsible for changing the course of the history of painting.

What was modern about Manet's painting was his technique. Instead of beginning with a dark underpainting and building up to bright highlights—a method used since the Renaissance—Manet began with a white surface and worked to build up dark tones. This approach lent a greater luminosity to the work, one that depicted sunlight as closely as possible. Manet also did not model his figures with a traditional chiaroscuro. Instead, he applied his pigments flatly and broadly. With these techniques, he attempted to capture an impression of a fleeting moment, to duplicate on canvas what the eye would perceive within that collapsed time frame.

All too predictably, these innovations met with disapproval from critics and the public alike. Manet's subjects were found to be equally abrasive. One of his most shocking paintings, *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe (Lunch on the Grass)* (Fig. 19.12), stands as a pivotal work in the rise of the Impressionist movement. Manet's hunches taken

Realism | 427

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COMPARE & CONTRAST

Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, Manet's *Olympia*, Gauguin's *Te Arii Vahine*, and Valadon's *The Blue Room*

"WE NEVER ENCOUNTER the body unmediated by the meanings that cultures give to it." Right out of the starting gate, can you challenge yourself to support or contest this statement with reference to the four works in this exercise? The words are Gayle Rubin's, and they can be found in her essay "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." Which of these works, in your view, are about "thinking sex"? Which address the "politics of sexuality"?

Titian's reclining nude (Fig. 18.13) was commissioned by the duke of Urbino for his private quarters. There was a considerable market for erotic paintings in the sixteenth century. One point of view maintains that many of the "great nudes" of Western art were, in essence, created for the same purpose as the pinup. Yet there is also no doubt that this particular reclining nude has had an undisputed place in the canon of great art. And this much, at least, has been reaffirmed by the reinterpretations and revisions the work has inspired into contemporary times.

One of the first artists to use Titian's *Venus* as a point of departure for his own masterpiece was Édouard Manet. In his *Olympia* (Fig. 18.14), Manet intentionally mimicked the Renaissance composition as a way of challenging the notion that modern art lacked credibility when brought face-to-face with the "old masters." In effect, Manet seemed to be saying, "You want a *Venus*? I'll give you a *Venus*." And just where do you find a *Venus* in nineteenth-century Paris? In the bordellos of the Parisian demi-monde. What do these paintings have in common? Where do they depart? What details does Titian use to create an air of innocence and vulnerability? What details does Manet use to do just the opposite?



▲ 18.13 TITIAN, *Venus of Urbino* (1538). Oil on canvas, 47" x 65". Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.



▲ 18.14 ÉDOUARD MANET, *Olympia* (1865). Oil on canvas, 51 1/2" x 74 1/2". Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Paul Gauguin, the nineteenth-century French painter who moved to Tahiti, was also inspired by the tradition of the Western reclining nude in the creation of *Te Arii Vahine* (The Noble Woman) (Fig. 18.15). The artist certainly knew Manet's revision of the work; in fact, he had a photograph of *Olympia* tacked on the wall of his hut. How does this Tahitian *Venus* fit into the mix? All three of these works have a sense of self-display. In which do the women solicit our gaze? Refuse our gaze? How do the stylistic differences influence our interpretation of the women and our relationship to them? How is the flesh modeled in each work? What overall effects are provided by the different palettes? And the \$64,000 question: Are these paintings intended for the "male gaze," "the female gaze," or both?

Suzanne Valadon would probably say that such an image is not one that appeals equally to men and women. More to the point, Valadon would argue that the painting of such subjects is not at all of interest to women artists. Perhaps this belief was the incentive behind her own revision of the reclining nude: *The Blue Room* (Fig. 18.16). With this work, she seems to be informing the world that when women relax, they really don't look like the *Veneruses* of Titian, or Manet, or Gauguin. Instead, they get into their loose-fitting clothes, curl up with a good book, and sometimes treat themselves to a bit of tobacco.



▲ 18.15 PAUL GAUGUIN, *Te Arii Vahine* (The Noble Woman) (1899). Oil on canvas, 38 1/4" x 52 1/4". Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia.



▲ 18.16 SUZANNE VALADON, *The Blue Room* (1925). Oil on canvas, 35 1/2" x 40 1/4". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.



▲ 19.17 ROSA BONHEUR, *The Horse Fair* (1855). Oil on canvas, 6' 1/4" x 10' 7 1/2". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

place in a lush woodland setting. Its guests are ordinary members of the French middle class. It is culled from a tradition of Venetian Renaissance pastoral scenes common to the masters Giorgione and Titian. The composition is rather traditional. The figural group forms a stable pyramidal structure that is set firmly in the middle ground of the canvas. In fact, the group is derived from an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi, *The Judgment of Paris*, after a painting by Raphael.

What was so alarming to the Parisian spectator, and remains so to this day, is that there is no explanation for the behavior of the picnickers. Why are the men clothed and the women undraped to varying degrees? Why are the men chatting between themselves, seemingly unaware of the women? The public was quite used to the painting of nudes, but they were not prepared to witness one of their fold—an ordinary citizen—displayed so shamefully on such a grand scale. The painting was further intolerable because the seated woman meets the viewer's stare, as if the viewer had intruded on their gathering in a voyeuristic fashion.

Viewers expecting another pastoral scene replete with nymphs and satyrs got, instead, portraits of Manet's model (Victorine Meurent), his brother, and a sculptor friend. In lieu of a highly polished Academic painting, they found a broadly brushed application of flat, barely modeled hues that sat squarely on the canvas with no regard for illusionism. With this shocking subject and unconventional technique, Modernism was on its way.

Manet submitted the work to the 1863 Salon, and it was categorically rejected. He and other artists whose works were rejected that year rebelled so vehemently

that Napoleon III allowed them to exhibit their work in what was known as the *Salon des Refusés*, or Salon of the Rejected Painters. It was one of the most important gatherings of *avant-garde* painters in the century.

Although Manet was trying to deliver a message to the art world with his *Dejeuner*, it was not his wish to be ostracized. He was just as interested as the next painter in earning recognition and acceptance. Commissioners went to artists whose style was sanctioned by the academics, and painting salon pictures was, after all, a livelihood. Fortunately, Manet had the private means by which he could continue painting in the manner he desired.

Manet was perhaps the most important influence on the French Impressionist painters, a group of artists who advocated the direct painting of optical impressions. *Dejeuner* began a decade of exploration of these new ideas that culminated in the first Impressionist exhibition of 1874. Although considered by his followers to be one of the Impressionists, Manet declined to exhibit with that *avant-garde* group. A quarter of a century later, only seventeen years after his death, Manet's works were shown at the prestigious Louvre Museum.

ROSA BONHEUR Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899) was one of the most successful artists working in the second half of the nineteenth century. In terms of style, she is most closely related to Courbet and the other Realist painters, although for the most part she shunned human subjects in favor of animals—domesticated and wild. She was an artist who insisted on getting close to her subject; she revealed in working "in the trenches." Bonheur was seen

I have no other wish than a close fusion with nature, and I desire no other fate than to have worked and lived in harmony with her laws. Beside her grandeur, her power, and her immortality, the human creature seems but a miserable atom.

—CLAUDE MONET

in men's clothing and hip boots, plodding through the bloody floors of slaughterhouses in her struggle to understand the anatomy of her subjects.

The Horse Fair (Fig. 19.17) is a panoramic scene of extraordinary power, inspired by the Parthenon's horsemen frieze. The dimensions—more than twice as long as it is high—compel the viewer to perceive the work as just a small portion of a vast scene in which continuation of action beyond the left and right borders of the canvas is implied. The dramatic contrasts of light and dark underscore the struggle between man and beast, while the painterly brushwork heightens the emotional energy in the painting. *The Horse Fair* was an extremely popular work, which was bought widely in engraved reproductions, cementing Bonheur's fame and popularity.



▲ 19.18 CLAUDE MONET, *Impression: Sunrise* (1872). Oil on canvas, 18 1/2" x 25 1/2". Musée Marmottin, Paris, France.

IMPRESSIONISM

While Bonheur won quick acceptance by the Academy, a group of younger artists were banding together against the French art establishment. Suffering from lack of recognition and vicious criticism, many of them lived in abject poverty for lack of commissions. Yet they stand today as some of the most significant, and certainly among the most popular, artists in the history of art. They were called the *Impressionists*. The very name of their movement was coined by a hostile critic and intended to malign their work. The word *impressionist* suggests a lack of realism, and realistic representation was the standard of the day.

The Impressionist artists had common philosophies about painting, although their styles differed widely. They all reacted against the constraints of the Academic style and subject matter. They advocated painting outdoors and chose to render subjects found in nature. They studied the dramatic effects of atmosphere and light on people and objects and, through a varied palette, attempted to duplicate these effects on canvas.

Through intensive investigation, they arrived at awareness of certain visual phenomena. When bathed in sunlight, objects are optically reduced to facets of pure color. The actual color—or local color—of these objects is altered by different lighting effects. Solids tend to dissolve into color fields. Shadows are not black or gray but a combination of colors.

Technical discoveries accompanied these revelations. The Impressionists duplicated the glimmering effect of light bouncing off the surface of an object by applying their pigments in short, choppy strokes. They juxtaposed complementary colors such as red and green to reproduce the optical vibrations perceived when one is looking at an object in full sunlight. Toward this end, they also juxtaposed primary colors such as red and yellow to produce, in the eye of the spectator, the secondary color orange.

CLAUDE MONET The most fervent follower of Impressionist techniques was the painter Claude Monet (1840–1926). His canvas *Impression: Sunrise* (Fig. 19.18) inspired the epithet *impressionist* when it was exhibited at the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874. Fishing vessels

One morning, one of us, lacking black, used blue: Impressionism was born.
—PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR



▲ 18.19 CLAUDE MONET, *Rouen Cathedral* (1893). Oil on canvas, 29 1/2" x 25 1/2". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

seasons and times of day. The harsh stone façade of the cathedral dissolves in a bath of sunlight, its finer details obscured by the bevy of brushstrokes crowding the surface. Dark shadows have been transformed into patches of bright blue and splashes of yellow and red. With these delicate touches, Monet has recorded for us the feeling of a single moment in time. He offers us his impressions as eyewitnesses to a set of circumstances that will never be duplicated.

PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR Most Impressionists counted among their subject matter landscape scenes or members of the middle class enjoying leisure-time activities. Of all the Impressionists, however, Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) was perhaps the most significant figure painter. Like his peers, Renoir was interested primarily in the effect of light as it played across the surface of objects. He illustrated his preoccupation in one of the most wonderful paintings of the Impressionist period, *Le Moulin de la Galette* (Fig. 18.20). With characteristic feathery strokes, Renoir communicated all of the charm and

sail from the port of Le Havre toward the morning sun, which rises in a foggy sky to cast its copper beams on the choppy, pale blue water. The warm blanket of the atmosphere envelops the figures, their significance having paled in the wake of nature's beauty.

The dissolution of surfaces and the separation of light into its spectral components remain central to Monet's art. They are dramatically evident in a series of canvases depicting *Rouen Cathedral* (Fig. 18.19) from a variety of angles, during different



► 18.20 PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR, *Le Moulin de la Galette* (1876). Oil on canvas, 51 1/2" x 69". Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

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It is very good to copy what one sees; it is much better to draw what you can't see anymore but is in your memory. It is a transformation in which imagination and memory work together. You only reproduce what struck you; that is to say, the necessary.
—EDGAR DEGAS

gaiety of an afternoon dance. Men and women caress and converse in frocks that are dappled with sunlight filtering through the trees. All of the spirit of the event is as fresh as if it were yesterday. From the billowing skirts and ruffled dresses to the rakish derbies, top hats, and skimmers, Renoir painted all of the details that imprint forever such a scene upon the mind.

BERTHE MORISOT Like other Impressionists, Berthe Morisot (1841–1895) exhibited at the Salon early in her career, but she surrendered the safe path as an expression of her allegiance to the new. Morisot was a granddaughter of the eighteenth-century painter Jean-Honoré Fragonard (see Chapter 18) and the sister-in-law of Édouard Manet. Manet painted her quite often. In fact, Morisot is the seated figure in his painting *The Balcony*.

In Morisot's *Young Girl by the Window* (Fig. 18.21), surfaces dissolve into an array of loose brushstrokes, applied, it would seem, at a frantic pace. The vigor of these strokes contrasts markedly with the tranquility of the woman's face. The head is strongly modeled, and several structural lines, such as the back of the chair, the contour of her right arm, the blue parasol astride her lap, and the vertical edge of drapery to the right, anchor the figure in space. Yet in this, as in most of Morisot's works, we are most impressed by her ingenious ability to suggest complete forms through a few well-placed strokes of pigment.

EDGAR DEGAS We can see the vastness of the age of Impressionism when we look at the work of Edgar Degas (1834–1917), whose approach to painting differed considerably from that of his peers. Degas, like Morisot, had exhibited at the Salon for many years before joining the movement. He was a superb draftsman who studied under Ingres. While in Italy, he copied the Renaissance masters. He was also intrigued by Japanese prints and the new art of photography.

The Impressionists, beginning with Manet, were strongly influenced by



▲ 18.21 BERTHE MORISOT, *Young Girl by the Window* (1876). Oil on canvas, 29 1/4" x 24". Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.

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▲ 18.22 EDGAR DEGAS, *The Rehearsal (Adagio)* (1877). Oil on canvas, 26" x 36 1/2". The Burrell Collection, Culture and Sport Glasgow (Museum), Scotland.

Postimpressionist period, the influence of Japanese artists remained strong.

Degas was also strongly influenced by the developing art of photography, and the camera's exclusive visual field served as a model for the way in which he framed his own paintings. *The Rehearsal (Adagio)* (Fig. 18.22) contains elements both of photographs and of Japanese prints. Degas draws us into the composition with an unusual and vast off-center space that curves around from the viewer's space to the background of the canvas. The diagonals of the floorboards carry our eyes briskly from outside the canvas to the points at which the groups of dancers congregate. The imagery is placed at eye level so that we feel we are part of the scene. This feeling is enhanced by the fact that our "seats" at the rehearsal are less than adequate; a spiral staircase to the left blocks our view of the ballerinas. In characteristic camera fashion, the borders of the canvas slice off the forms and figures in a seemingly arbitrary manner. Although it appears as if Degas has failed to frame his subject correctly or has accidentally cut off the more important parts of the scene, he carefully planned the placement of his imagery. These

techniques are what render his asymmetrical compositions so dynamic and, in the spirit of Impressionism, so immediate.

POSTIMPRESSIONISM

The Impressionists were united in their rejection of many of the styles and subjects of the art that preceded them. These included Academic painting, the emotionalism of Romanticism, and even the depressing subject matter of some of the Realist artists. During the latter years of the nineteenth century, a group of artists who came to be called Postimpressionists were also united in their rebellion against that which came before them—in this case, Impressionism. The Postimpressionists were drawn together by their rebellion against what they considered an excessive concern for fleeting impressions and a disregard for traditional compositional elements.

Although they were united in their rejection of Impressionism, their individual styles differed considerably.

Postimpressionists fell into two groups that in some ways paralleled the stylistic polarities of the Baroque period as well as the Neoclassical-Romantic period. On the one hand, the work of Georges Seurat and Paul Cézanne had at its core a more systematic approach to compositional structure, brushwork, and color. On the other hand, the lavishly brushed canvases of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin coordinated line and color with symbolism and emotion.

GEORGES SEURAT At first glance, the paintings by Georges Seurat (1859–1891), such as *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (Fig. 18.23), have the feeling of Impressionism "tidied up." The small brushstrokes are there, as are the juxtapositions of complementary colors. The subject matter is entirely acceptable within the framework of Impressionism. However, the spontaneity of direct painting found in Impressionism is relinquished in favor of a more tightly controlled, "scientific" approach to painting.

Seurat's technique has also been called *Pointillism*, after his application of pigment in small dabs, or points, of pure color. Upon close inspection, the painting appears to be a collection of dots of vibrant hues—complementary colors abutting one another, primary colors placed side-by-side. These hues intensify or blend to form yet another color in the eye of the viewer, who beholds the canvas from a distance.

Seurat's meticulous color application was derived from the color theories and studies of color contrasts by the scientists Hermann von Helmholtz and Michel-Eugène Chevreul. He used these theories to restore a more intellectual approach to painting that countered nearly two decades of works that focused wholly on optical effects.

PAUL CÉZANNE From the time of Manet, there was a movement away from a realistic representation of subjects toward one that was abstracted. Early methods of abstraction assumed different forms. Manet used a flatly painted form, Monet a disintegrating light, and Seurat a



▲ 18.23 GEORGES SEURAT, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1884–1886). Oil on canvas, 81" x 120 1/2". The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

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The same subject seen from a different angle gives a subject for study of the highest interest and so varied that I think I could be occupied for months without changing my place, simply bending a little more to the right or left.

—PAUL CÉZANNE

tightly painted and highly patterned composition. Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), a Postimpressionist who shared with Seurat an intellectual approach to painting, is credited with having led the revolution of abstraction in modern art from those first steps. Cézanne's method for accomplishing this radical departure from tradition did not disregard the old masters. Although he allied himself originally with the Impressionists and accepted their palette and subject matter, he drew from old masters in the Louvre and desired somehow to reconcile their lessons with the thrust of Modernism, saying, "I want to make of Impressionism something solid and lasting like the art in the museums." Cézanne's innovations include a structural use of color and brushwork that appeals to the intellect, and a solidity of composition enhanced by a fluid application of pigment that delights the senses.

Cézanne's most significant stride toward Modernism, however, was a drastic collapsing of space, seen in works such as *Still Life with Basket of Apples* (Fig. 19.24). All of

the imagery is forced to the picture plane. The tabletop is tilted toward us, and we simultaneously view the basket, plate, and wine bottle from front and top angles. Cézanne did not paint the still-life arrangement from one vantage point either. He moved around his subject, painting not only the objects but also the relationships between them. He focused on solids as well as on the void spaces between two objects. If you run your finger along the tabletop in the background of the painting, you will see that it is not possible to trace a continuous line. This discontinuity follows from Cézanne's movement around his subject. Despite this spatial inconsistency, the overall feeling of the composition is one of completeness.

Cézanne's painting technique is also innovative. The sensuously rumpled fabric and lusciously round fruits are constructed of small patches of pigment crowded within dark outlines. The apples look as if they would roll off the table, were it not for the supportive facets of the tabletop.



◀ 19.24 PAUL CÉZANNE, *Still Life with Basket of Apples* (c. 1895). Oil on canvas, 2' 5/8" x 2' 7". The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

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◀ 19.25 VINCENT VAN GOGH, *Starry Night* (1889). Oil on canvas, 29" x 36 1/2". The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.

Cézanne can be seen as advancing the flatness of planar recession begun by David more than a century earlier. Cézanne asserted the flatness of the two-dimensional canvas by eliminating the distinction between foreground and background, and at times merging the two. This was perhaps his most significant contribution to future modern movements.

VINCENT VAN GOGH One of the most tragic and best-known figures in the history of art is the Dutch Postimpressionist Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890). We associate him with bizarre and painful acts, such as the mutilation of his ear and his suicide. With these events, as well as his tortured, eccentric painting, he typifies the impression of the mad, artistic talent. Van Gogh also epitomizes the cliché of the artist who achieves recognition only after death: just one of his paintings was sold during his lifetime.

"Vincent," as he signed his paintings, decided to become an artist only ten years before his death. His most beloved canvases were created during his last twenty-nine months. He began his career painting in the dark manner of the Dutch Baroque, only to adopt the Impressionist palette and brushstroke after he settled in Paris with his brother Theo. Feeling that he was a constant burden on his brother, he left Paris for Arles, where

he began to paint his most significant Postimpressionist works. Both his life and his compositions from this period were tortured, as Vincent suffered from what may have been bouts of epilepsy and mental illness. He was eventually hospitalized in an asylum at Saint-Rémy, where he painted the famous *Starry Night* (Fig. 19.25).

In *Starry Night*, an ordinary painted record of a sleepy valley town is transformed into a cosmic display of swirling fireballs that assault the blackened sky and command the hills and cypresses to undulate to their sweeping rhythms. Vincent's palette is laden with vibrant yellows, blues, and greens. His brushstroke is at once restrained and dynamic. His characteristic long, thin strokes define the forms but also create the emotionism in the work. He presents his subject not as we see it, but as he would like us to experience it. His is a feverish application of paint, an ecstatic kind of drawing, reflecting at the same time his joys, hopes, anxieties, and despair. Vincent wrote in a letter to his brother Theo, "I paint as a means to make life bearable. . . . Really, we can speak only through our paintings."

PAUL GAUGUIN Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) shared with van Gogh the desire to express his emotions on canvas. But whereas the Dutchman's brushstroke was the primary means to that end, Gauguin relied on broad areas

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A CLOSER LOOK

Why Did van Gogh Cut Off His Ear?

TWO DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS 1888, the 35-year-old Vincent van Gogh cut off the lower half of his left ear (Fig. 19.26). He took the ear to a brothel, asked for a prostitute by the name of Rachel, and handed it to her. "Keep this object carefully," he said. How do we account for this extraordinary event? Over the years, many explanations have been advanced. Many of them are psychoanalytic in nature. "That is, they argue that van Gogh fell prey to unconscious primitive impulses.

As you consider the following suggestions, keep in mind that van Gogh's bizarre act occurred during the 1880s, and that we have no way today to determine which, if any, of them is accurate. Perhaps one of them cuts to the core of van Gogh's urgent needs; perhaps several of them contain a kernel of truth. But it could also be that all of them fly far from the mark. In any event, here are the explanations suggested in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.¹

- Van Gogh was frustrated by his brother's engagement and his failure to establish a close relationship with Gauguin. The aggressive impulses stemming from the frustrations were turned inward and expressed in self-mutilation.
- Van Gogh was punishing himself for experiencing homosexual impulses toward Gauguin.
- Van Gogh identified with his father, toward whom he felt resentment and hatred, and cutting off his own ear was a symbolic punishment of his father.
- Van Gogh was influenced by the practice of awarding the bull's ear to the matador after a bullfight. In effect, he was presenting such an "award" to the lady of his choice.
- Van Gogh was influenced by newspaper accounts of Jack the Ripper, who mutilated prostitutes. Van Gogh was imitating the "ripper," but his self-hatred led him to mutilate himself rather than others.
- Van Gogh was seeking his brother's attention.
- Van Gogh was seeking to earn the sympathy of substitute parents. (The mother figure would have been a model he had recently painted rocking a cradle.)
- Van Gogh was expressing his sympathy for prostitutes, with whom he identified as social outcasts.

¹William McKinley Runyan, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* June 1981, 1845.

- Van Gogh was symbolically emasculating himself so that his mother would not perceive him as an unlikely "rough" boy. (Chronically, the prostitute was a substitute for his mother.)
- Van Gogh was troubled by auditory hallucinations (hearing things that were not there) as a result of his mental state. He cut off his ear to put an end to disturbing sounds.
- In his troubled mental state, van Gogh may have been acting out a biblical scene he had been trying to paint. According to the New Testament, Simon Peter cut off the ear of the servant Malchus to protect Christ.
- Van Gogh was acting out the Crucifixion of Jesus, with himself as victim.



◀ 19.26 VINCENT VAN GOGH, *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* (1889). Oil on canvas, 23 1/4" x 19 1/4". The Courtauld Gallery, London, England.

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Art is either plagiarism or revolution.

—PAUL GAUGUIN

of intense color to transpire his innermost feelings to canvas.

Gauguin, a stockbroker by profession, began his artistic career as a weekend painter. At age 35, he devoted himself full time to his art, leaving his wife and five children to do so. Gauguin identified early with the Impressionists, adopting their techniques and participating in their exhibitions. But Gauguin was a restless soul. Soon he decided to leave France for Panama and Martinique, primitive places where he hoped to purge the civilization from his art and life. The years until his death were spent between France and the South Seas, where he finally died of syphilis five years after a failed attempt to take his own life.

Gauguin developed a theory of art called *Synthetism*, in which he advocated the use of broad areas of unnaturalistic color and primitive or symbolic subject matter. His *Vision after the Sermon (Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)* (Fig. 19.27), one of the first canvases to illustrate his theory, combines reality with symbolism. After hearing a sermon on the subject, a group of Breton women believed they had a vision of Jacob, ancestor of the Hebrews, wrestling with an angel. In a daring composition that cancels pictorial depth by thrusting all elements to the front of the canvas, Gauguin presented all details of the event, actual and symbolic. An animal in the upper left portion

of the canvas walks near a tree that interrupts a bright vermillion field with a slashing diagonal. The Bible tells us that Jacob had wrestled with an angel on the banks of the Jabbok River in Jordan. Caught, then, in a moment of religious fervor, the Breton women may have imagined the animal's four legs to have been those of the wrestling couple, and the tree trunk might have been visually analogous to the river.

Gauguin's contribution to the development of modern art lay largely in his use of color. Writing on the subject, he said, "How does that tree look to you? Green? All right, then use green, the greenest on your palette. And that shadow, a little bluish? Don't be afraid. Paint it as blue as you can." He intensified the colors he observed in nature to the point where they became unnatural. He exaggerated his lines and patterns until they became abstract. He learned these lessons from the primitive surroundings of which he was so fond. They were his legacy to art.

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901), along with van Gogh, is one of the best-known nineteenth-century European artists—both for his art and for the troubled aspects of his personal life. Born into a noble French family, Toulouse-Lautrec broke his legs during adolescence, and they failed to develop correctly. This deformity resulted in alienation from his



◀ 19.27 PAUL GAUGUIN, *Vision after the Sermon (Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)* (1888). Oil on canvas, 26 1/2" x 36 1/2". National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland.

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The sky was suddenly blood-red—I stopped and leaned against the fence, dead tired. I saw the flaming clouds like blood and a sword—the bluish-black fjord and town—my friends walked on—I stood there, trembling with anxiety—and I felt as though Nature were convulsed by a great unending scream.

—EDVARD MUNCH



19.30 HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC, *At the Moulin Rouge* (1890). Oil on canvas, 4' x 7". The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

family. He turned to painting and took refuge in the demimonde of Paris, at one point taking up residence in a brothel. In this world of social outcasts, Toulouse-Lautrec, the dwarflike scion of a noble family, apparently felt at home.

He used his talents to portray life as it was in this caracade of cabarets, theaters, cafes, and bordellos—sort of seamy, but also vibrant and entertaining, and populated by “real” people. He made numerous posters to advertise cabaret acts and numerous paintings of his world of night and artificial light. In *At the Moulin Rouge* (Fig. 19.30), we find something of the Japanese-inspired oblique perspective we found earlier in his poster work. The extension of the picture to include the balustrade on the bottom and the heavily powdered entertainer on the right is reminiscent of those “poorly cropped snapshots” of Degas, who had influenced Toulouse-Lautrec. The fabric of the entertainer’s dress is constructed of fluid Impressionistic

brushstrokes, as are the contents of the bottles, the lamps in the background, and the amorphous overall backdrop—lost suddenly in the unit recesses of the Moulin Rouge. But the strong outlining, as in the entertainer’s face, marks the work of a Postimpressionist.

The artist’s palette is limited and muted, except for a few accents, as found in the hair of the woman in the center of the composition and the bright mouth of the entertainer. The entertainer’s face is harshly sculpted by artificial light from beneath, rendering the shadows a grotesque but not ugly green. The green and red mouth clash, of course, as green and red are complementary colors, giving further intensity to the entertainer’s masklike visage. But despite her powdered harshness, the entertainer remains human—certainly as human as her audience. Toulouse-Lautrec was accepting of all his creators, just as he hoped that they would be accepting of him. The artist is portrayed within this work as well, his bearded profile facing left, toward the upper part of the composition, just left of center—a part of things, but not at the heart of things, certainly out of the glare of the spotlight. There, so to speak, the artist remained for many of his brief thirty-seven years.

See more of Paris in the online Art Tour.

EXPRESSIONISM

A polarity existed in Postimpressionism that was like the polarity of the Neoclassical-Romantic period. On the one hand were artists who sought a more scientific or intellectual approach to painting. On the other were artists whose works were more emotional, expressive, and laden with symbolism. The latter trend was exemplified by van Gogh and particularly Gauguin. These artists used color

Where do all the women who have watched so carefully over the lives of their beloved ones get the heroism to send them to face the cannon?

—KÄTHE KOLLWITZ

and line to express their inner feelings. In their vibrant palettes and bravura brushwork, van Gogh and Gauguin foreshadowed Expressionism.

EDVARD MUNCH The Expressionistic painting of Gauguin was adopted by the Norwegian Edvard Munch (1862–1944), who studied the Frenchman’s works in Paris. Munch’s early work was Impressionistic, but during the 1890s, he abandoned a light palette and lively subject matter in favor of a more somber style that reflected an anguished preoccupation with fear and death.

The Scream (Fig. 19.29) is one of Munch’s best-known works. It portrays the pain and isolation that became his central themes. A skeletal figure walks across a bridge toward the viewer, cupping his ears and screaming. Two figures in the background walk in the opposite direction, unaware of or uninterested in the sounds of desperation



19.29 KÄTHE KOLLWITZ, *The Outbreak* (1903). Plate no. 5 from *The Peasants’ War*. Drawing, dry point, aquatint, and softground, 8" x 9 1/2". Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

piercing the atmosphere. Munch transformed the placid landscape into one that echoes in waves the high-pitched tones that emanate from the sunken head. We are reminded of the swirling forms of van Gogh’s *Starry Night*, but the intensity and horror pervading Munch’s composition speak of his view of humanity as being consumed by an increasingly dehumanized society.

KÄTHE KOLLWITZ It is not often in the history of art that we find two artists whose backgrounds are so similar that we can account for just about every variable except for personality when comparing their work. But such is the case with Edvard Munch and Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945). They were born and died within a few years of each other. They both lived through two world wars; Kollwitz lost a son in World War I and a grandson in World War II. Both are Expressionist artists. Yet their choice of subjects speaks of their idiosyncratic concerns. Whereas Munch looked for symbols of isolation that would underscore his own sense of loneliness, or themes of violence and perverse sexuality that reflected his own psychological problems, Kollwitz sought universal symbols for inhumanity, injustice, and humankind’s destruction of itself. *The Outbreak* (Fig. 19.30) is one of a series of seven prints by Kollwitz representing the sixteenth-century Peasants’ War. In this print, Black Anna, a woman who



19.29 EDVARD MUNCH, *The Scream* (1893). Cassel on paper, 35 1/2" x 28 1/2". National Gallery, Oslo, Norway.

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I will not admit that a woman can draw so well.

—EDGAR DEGAS, OF MARY CASSATT

led the laborers in their struggle against their oppressors, incites an angry throng of peasants to action. Her back is toward us, her head down, as she raises her gaunt hands in inspiration. The peasants rush forward in a torrent, bodies and weapons lunging at Anna’s command. Although the work records a specific historical incident, it stands as an inspiration to all those who strive for freedom against the odds. There are few more forceful images in the history of art.

The styles of these early Expressionists would be adopted in the twentieth century by younger German artists who shared their view of the world. Many revived the woodcut medium to complement their expressive subjects. This younger generation of artists worked in various styles, but collectively were known as the Expressionists. We will examine their work in Chapter 20.

AMERICAN EXPATRIATES

Until the twentieth century, art in the United States remained fairly provincial. Striving artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would go abroad for extended pilgrimages to study the old masters and mingle with the avant-garde. In some cases, they immigrated to Europe permanently. These artists, among them Mary Cassatt and James Abbott McNeill Whistler, are called the American Expatriates.

MARY CASSATT Mary Cassatt (1844–1926) was born in Pittsburgh but spent most of her life in France, where she was part of the inner circle of Impressionists. The artists Manet and Degas, photography, and Japanese prints influenced Cassatt’s early career. She was a figure painter whose subjects centered on women and children.

A painting such as *The Boating Party* (Fig. 19.31), with its flat planes, broad areas of color, and bold lines and shapes, illustrates Cassatt’s interest and skill in merging French Impressionism with elements



19.31 MARY CASSATT, *The Boating Party* (1890–1894). Oil on canvas, 30 1/2" x 40 1/2". National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

of Japanese art. Like many of her contemporaries in Paris, she became aware of Japanese prints and art objects after trade was established between Japan and Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. In their solidly constructed compositions and collapsed space, Cassatt’s lithographs, in particular, stand out from the more ethereal images of other Impressionists.

JAMES ABBOTT MCNEILL WHISTLER In the same year that Monet painted his *Impression: Sunrise* and launched the movement of Impressionism, the American artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) painted one of the best-known compositions in the history of art. Who among us has not seen “Whistler’s Mother,” whether on posters, billboards, or television commercials? *Arrangement in Black and Gray: The Artist’s Mother* (Fig. 19.32) exhibits a combination of candid realism and abstraction that indicates two strong influences on Whistler’s art: Courbet and Japanese prints. Whistler’s mother is silhouetted against a quiet backdrop in the right portion of the composition. The strong contours of her black dress are balanced by an oriental drape and simple rectangular picture on the left. The subject is rendered in a harsh realism reminiscent of northern Renaissance portrait painting. However, the composition is seen first as a logical and pleasing arrangement of shapes in tones of black, gray, and white that work together in pure harmony.

Well, not bad, but there are decidedly too many of them, and they are not very well arranged. I would have done it differently.

—JAMES ABBOTT MCNEILL WHISTLER, WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE STARS WERE BEAUTIFUL ONE EVENING



19.32 JAMES ABBOTT MCNEILL WHISTLER, *Arrangement in Black and Gray: The Artist’s Mother* (1871). Oil on canvas, 52" x 64 1/2". Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

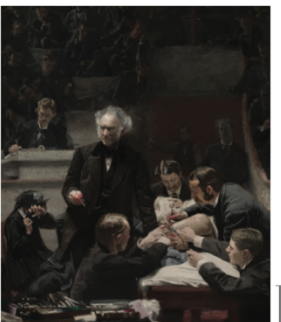
colleagues and ultimately forced his resignation from a teaching post at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art.

The Gross Clinic—no pun intended—depicts the surgeon Dr. Samuel Gross operating on a young boy at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. Eakins thrusts the brutal imagery to the foreground of the painting, spotlighting the surgical procedure and Dr. Gross’s bloody scalpel, while casting the observing medical students in the background into darkness. The painting was deemed so shockingly realistic that it was rejected by the jury for an exhibition. Part of the impact of the work lies in the contrast between the matter-of-fact discourse of the surgeon and the torment of the boy’s mother. She sits in the

AMERICANS IN AMERICA

While Whistler and Cassatt were working in Europe, several American artists of note remained at home working in the Realist tradition. This realism can be detected in figure painting and landscape painting, both of which were tinted with Romanticism.

THOMAS EAKINS The most important American portrait painter of the nineteenth century was Thomas Eakins (1844–1916). Although his early artistic training took place in the United States, his study in Paris with painters who depicted historical events provided the major influence on his work. The penetrating realism of a work such as *The Gross Clinic* (Fig. 19.33) stems from Eakins’s endeavors to become fully acquainted with human anatomy by working from live models and dissecting corpses. Eakins’s dedication to these practices met with disapproval from his



19.33 THOMAS EAKINS, *The Gross Clinic* (1878). Oil on canvas, 50" x 70". The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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▲ 19.34 THOMAS COLE, *The Oxbow* (Connecticut River near Northampton) (1836). Oil on canvas, 51 1/2" x 70". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

lower left corner of the painting, shielding her eyes with whitened knuckles. In brush technique, Eakins is close to the fluidity of Courbet, although his compositional arrangement and dramatic lighting are surely indebted to Rembrandt. Eakins devoted his career to increasingly realistic portraits. Their haunting veracity often disappointed sitters who would have preferred more flattering renditions. The artist's passion for realism led him to use photography extensively as a point of departure for his paintings as well as an art form in itself. Eakins's style and ideas influenced American artists of the early twentieth century who also worked in a Realist vein.

THOMAS COLE During the nineteenth century, American artists turned, for the first time, from the tradition of portraiture to landscape painting. Inspired by French landscape painting of the Baroque period, these artists fused this style with a pride in the beauty of their native United States and a Romantic vision that was embodied in the writings of James Fenimore Cooper.

One such artist was Thomas Cole (1801–1848), who was born in England and immigrated to the United States at the age of 17. Cole was always fond of landscape painting and settled in New York, where there was a ready audience for this genre. Cole became the leader of the Hudson River School—a group of artists whose favorite subjects included the scenery of the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains in New York State. *The Oxbow* (Fig. 19.34) is typical of such paintings. It records a natural oxbow formation in the Connecticut River Valley. Cole combines a vast, sun-drenched space with meticulously detailed foliage and farmland. There is a contrast in moods between the lazy movement of the river, which meanders diagonally into the distance, and the more vigorous diagonal of the gnarled tree trunk in the left foreground. Half of the canvas space is devoted to the sky, whose storm clouds roll back to reveal rays of intense light. These atmospheric effects, coupled with our “crow’s-nest” vantage point, magnify the awesome grandeur of nature and force us to contemplate the relative insignificance of humans.

A CLOSER LOOK

Weaving Together Biblical and Personal Stories

IN 1859, HARRIET BEECHER STONE, renowned author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, described the quilting bee:

The day was spent in friendly gossip as they rolled and talked and laughed. . . . One might have learned in that instructive assembly how best to keep moth-eaten old blankets; how to make fitters of Indian corn undistinguishable from oysters; how to bring up babies by hand; how to mend a cracked teapot; how to take grease from a brocade; how to reconcile absolute decrees with free will; how to make five yards of cloth answer the purpose of six; and how to put down the Democratic party.¹

Many years later, an author on quilting quoted her great-grandmother: “My whole life is in that quilt. It scares me sometimes when I look at it. All my joys and all my sorrows are stitched into those little pieces.”²

The art of quilting was clearly not only an acceptable vehicle for women’s artistic expression but also an arena for consciousness-raising on the practical and political problems of the day. Beyond this, the object recorded family history, kept memory alive, and ensured the survival of the matrarchy/quilt through that historical record.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, African American quilt-maker Harriet Powers created her *Bible Quilt*. Its fifteen squares of cotton appliqué weave together stories from the Bible with significant events from the family and community of the artist (Fig. 19.35).

For example, reading left to right, the fourth square is a symbolic depiction of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. A serpent tempts Eve beneath God’s all-seeing eye and benevolent hand. In the sixth square, Jonah is swallowed by a whale. The last square is a stylized depiction of the Crucifixion. And the religious subjects are records of meaningful days. For example, the eleventh square was described by Powers as “Cold Thursday.”

February 10, 1895. A woman is shown frozen at a gateway while at prayer. Ickies form from the breath of a mule. All bluebirds are killed.³

The fourteenth square includes an “Independent” frog that was said to have run 500 miles from Georgia to Virginia, and the fourteenth square depicts the creation of animals in pairs.

Unity in the quilt is created by a subtle palette of complementary hues and by simple, cutout shapes that define celestial ovals, biblical and familial characters, and biblical and local animals. The quilt has an arresting combination of widely known themes and private events known to the artist and her family. The juxtaposition establishes an equivalence between biblical and personal stories. The work personalizes the religious events and imbues the personal and provincial events with universal meaning. Because of the hardness of the times, the artist sold the quilt for five dollars.⁴



▲ 19.35 HARRIET POWERS, *Bible Quilt: The Creation of the Animals* (1850–1860). Pieced, appliquéd, and printed cotton embroidered with cotton and metallic yarns, 60" x 100". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.

¹ Harriet Beecher Stone, *The Minister’s Wooing* (New York: Delly and Jackson, 1859).

² Margaret Kilis, *The Standard Book of Quilting and Collecting* (New York: Dove, 1985).

³ Harriet Powers, *Pieced Quilt*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, <http://www.mfa.org/object/object/object-quilt-116106>.

⁴ In Mira Bark, *Anonymous Wives of Women New York*, St. Martin’s Press, 1978, 118.

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The only thing is to see.
—AUGUSTE RODIN

THE BIRTH OF MODERN SCULPTURE

Some of the most notable characteristics of modern painting include a newfound realism of subject and technique; a more fluid, or impressionistic handling of the medium; and a new treatment of space. Nineteenth-century sculpture, for the most part, continued stylistic traditions that artists saw as complementing the inherent permanence of the medium with which they worked. It would seem that working on a large scale with materials such as marble or bronze was not well suited to the spontaneous technique that captured fleeting impressions. One nineteenth-century artist, however, changed the course of the history of sculpture by applying to his work the very principles on which modern painting was based, including Realism, Symbolism, and Impressionism—Auguste Rodin.

AUGUSTE RODIN Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) devoted his life almost solely to the representation of the

human figure. His figures were imbued with a realism so startlingly intense that he was accused of casting the sculptures from live models. (It is interesting to note that casting of live models is used today without criticism.) Rodin’s *The Burghers of Calais* (Figs. 19.36 and 19.37) represents all of the innovations of Modernism thrust into three dimensions. The work commemorates a historical event in which six prominent citizens of Calais offered their lives to the conquering English so that their fellow townspeople might be spared. They present themselves in coarse robes with nooses around their necks. Their psychological states range from quiet defiance to frantic desperation. The reality of the scene is achieved in part by the odd placement of the figures. They are not a symmetrical or cohesive group. Rather, they are a scattered collection of individuals, who were meant to be seen at street level. Captured as they are, at a particular moment in time, Rodin ensured that spectators would partake of the tragic emotion of the scene for centuries to come.



▲ 19.36 AUGUSTE RODIN, *The Burghers of Calais* (1884–1895). Bronze, 79 1/2" x 80 1/2" x 77 1/2". Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



▲ 19.37 *The Burghers of Calais*, Detail of hand.



▲ 19.38 VICTOR HORTA, Interior of the Tassel House, Brussels, Belgium (1893).

Rodin preferred modeling soft materials to carving because they enabled him to achieve highly textured surfaces that captured the play of light, much as in an Impressionist painting. As his career progressed, Rodin’s sculptures took on an abstract quality. Distinct features were abandoned in favor of solids and voids that, together with light, constructed the image of a human being. Such works were outrageous in their own day—audacious and quite new. Their abstract features set the stage for yet newer and more audacious art forms that would rise with the dawn of the twentieth century.

ART NOUVEAU

In looking at examples of French, Norwegian, and American art of the nineteenth century, we witnessed a collection of disparate styles that reflected the artists’ unique situations or personalities. Given the broad range of circumstances that give rise to a work of art, it would seem unlikely that a cross-cultural style could ever evolve. However, as the nineteenth century turned to the twentieth, there arose a style called *Art Nouveau* whose influence extended from Europe to the United States. Its idiosyncratic characteristics could be found in painting and sculpture, as well as architecture, furniture, jewelry, fashion, and glassware.

Art Nouveau is marked by a lyrical linearity, the use of symbolism, and rich ornamentation. There is an overriding sense of the organic in all of the arts of this style, with many of the forms, such as those in Victor Horta’s (1861–1947) foyer and staircase of the Tassel House (Fig. 19.38), reminiscent of exotic plant life. Antoni Gaudí’s (1852–1926) apartment house in Barcelona, Spain (Fig. 19.39), shows an obsessive avoidance of straight lines and flat surfaces. The material looks as if it had grown in place or handwoven in malleable wood forms, as would cement, in actuality, it is cut stone. The rhythmic roof is wavelike, and the chimneys seem dispensed like shaving cream or soft ice cream. Nor are any two rooms on a floor alike. This multistory organic hive is clearly the antithesis of the steel-cage construction that was coming into its own at the same time.



▲ 19.39 ANTONI GAUDÍ, Casa Mila Apartment House, Barcelona, Spain (1906–1907).

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Art Nouveau originated in England. It was part of an arts-and-crafts movement that arose in rebellion against the pretensions of nineteenth-century art. Although it continued into the early years of the twentieth century, the style disappeared with the onset of World War I. At that time, art began to reflect the needs and fears of humanity faced with self-destruction.

THE WIDER WORLD

The wider world in the nineteenth century is defined, in many, many cases by the expansionism of colonial empires and their effect on indigenous cultures. In the arts, that effect can be detected in the mixing of indigenous and colonial styles and, sometimes, in the continued adherence to traditions in spite of the encroachment of the West. The Wider World section in this chapter begins with Africa and moves east until we get reach the Americas.

Africa

It is only in the nineteenth century—concurrent with the European conquest of Africa—that anthropologists and other scholars began to consider sculpture and other objects that were created by Africans for commemorative or ritualistic purposes as “art.” The march of colonialism in Africa yield so-called “primitive” works of art that appeared in European museum collections and on the open art-market (some of it was looted and some was legitimately purchased). At the beginning of the twentieth century, avant-garde European artists began to



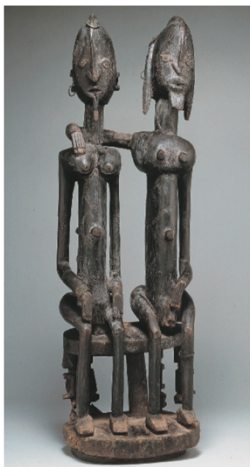
▲ 19.40 Nkisi (Nkondi) figure (Nkisi), Democratic Republic of Congo (looted ca. 1900). Wood, nails, iron, hair; 38 1/2" x 19" high.

collect pieces of African statuary and masks and began to incorporate some of their formal elements into their paintings and sculpture. Of course, these artists—and collectors and museum curators—were looking at these African pieces from a perspective that had little or nothing to do with their original purposes. It also bears reminding that Africa is an expansive continent with many nations and ethnic groups and the art and artifacts are equally widely diverse in style and function. Thus, any examples we may discuss represent just the smallest fraction of the wealth of material from which we may choose.

Africans created sacred objects (and still do), among other reasons, to honor ancestors and rulers, to beseech and propitiate spirits, and to serve as mediators between living and the dead, between humans and the powers beyond them. The function of a nail figure like Nkisi (Fig. 19.40) from the Congo might be as broad as protecting a village from enemies or as specific as solving villagers' disputes or punishing ordinary evil-doers.



▲ 19.41 Yombe mother and child (Nkisi), Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (late 19th century). Wood, glass, beads, brass bells, and pigment; 10 1/2" high. National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.



▲ 19.42 Ancestral couple, Congo, Mali (c. 1800–1850). Wood; 2' 4" high. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

Power figures are riddled with nails or other sharp implements and can take human or animal form. The mother and child image (Nkisi) is a common one in African art (Fig. 19.41). An example from the Yombe, also peoples of the Republic of Congo, is typical: a beautiful woman adorned with jewelry, body scarification, and sharpened teeth sits cross-legged with an infant cradled in her lap. Her regal bearing suggests that she likely represents an important maternal ancestor.

The seated couple (Fig. 19.42) from the Dogon people of Mali in the western part of the continent represents

NINETEENTH-CENTURY ART IN THE WIDER WORLD

1800–1850	1850–1875	1875–1900
In 1800 and Northwest Coast Indians fashion elaborate masks for rituals. Oceanic art forms include sculptures and masks of ancestors and deities, painted wood prow ornaments, and communal men's houses. Hokusai prints the woodblock of <i>The Great Wave</i> in Japan in 1831.	U.S. Commodore Perry opens trade with Japan in 1853. Hiroshige prints the woodblock <i>Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake</i> in 1857. In Japan, the Edo period ends in 1868 and the Meiji period begins. The Meiji period introduces Western styles and art techniques to Japan. The French establish the Second Mexican Empire in 1862 with Austrian Ferdinand Maximilian. Emperor Maximilian is executed in 1867.	In 1877 Queen Victoria becomes empress of India. Victoria Terminus is constructed in India, 1879–1887. The Meiji period brings Japan into the industrial age, creates an elected parliament, and initiates universal education. Congolese artists create power figures with hammered nails to ward off evil. Yombe and Dogon sculptors carve wood groups of mothers and children or of men and women.



▲ 19.43 FREDERICK W. STEVENS, *Victoria Terminus (now Chhatrapati Shivaj Maharaj Terminus)*, Mumbai (Bombay), India (1879–1887). Albumen silver print from glass negative; 7 1/2" x 9 1/2". Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

Revival architecture popular in Europe and the U.S. but its motifs and details—as well as the sandstone construction—are unmistakably “local.” The station is only one example of the hybridization—or fusion of styles east and west—evident in India during colonial rule. Subtly-pointed arches frame the arcades and windows of the railway station, calling to mind architecture such as the Cathedral of Florence (see Fig. 16.18), although the meandering floor plan bears close resemblance to Indian palace designs; medieval turrets are juxtaposed with domes and minaret shapes that are consistent with those found in subcontinent Hindu and Mughal architecture. As we have seen in other examples of architecture in India, the exterior of the Terminus is embellished with carvings of allegorical figures, gargoyles, animals and plants, portraits, and other human faces.

The blend of European and indigenous art forms also can be seen in a portrait of Maharaja Jawant Singh, a

another common image in African art. Although it is not entirely clear why this statue was created, a few details suggest that gender roles are an important part of the piece. The male figure places his arm around the female as if to protect her, touching her breast. Although it cannot be seen from this perspective in the photograph, the man has a quiver on his back that suggests he provides for the family, and the woman carries a baby on her back. Unlike the more naturalistic, rounded forms of the Yombe statue, these abstract figures are stick-like, and details such as the breasts, hands, hair, noses, and more are highly stylized.

India

Through out the nineteenth century, India remained under the hegemony of Britain, whose influence extended to the arts and architecture. Victoria Terminus (designed by the British architect, Frederick W. Stevens during the Victorian Era of the late nineteenth century and renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in 1996 to honor the founder of the Maratha Empire) (Fig. 19.43), exhibits a strong stylistic connection to nineteenth-century Italianate Gothic



▲ 19.44 Mahappa Jawant Singh of Marwar (c. 1885). Oil on paper; 11 1/2" x 11 1/2". Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York.

local ruler of Jodhpur in Rajasthan (Fig. 19.44), painted in the late 1800s. The pose—that of a refined and relaxed Englishman amid the standard props of a conventional colonial portrait—places the portrait unmistakably in India's colonial period. And yet, the artist has taken great pains to distinguish his sitter from his Western counterparts—from his turbaned head and curly beard to his magnificent emerald belt necklace. The brushwork in this small portrait is fine and meticulous, as it is in traditional Indian miniature painting. The artist captures the detail of the Maharaja's face and clothing with exceptional realism, conveys a presence of power and grandeur.

Japan

During the nineteenth century, the Edo period—with its shogun rule—drew to a close (1868) and the Meiji period began (1868–1912). Japan had remained insular throughout the Edo period, resisting trade with the West—and its influences. But in 1853, U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry sailed into Tokyo harbor with a small fleet and demanded

that Japan open trade with the West. Navies from other Western nations followed, and during the middle-to-late 1850s, Japan signed trade treaties with several Western powers and Russia. The Meiji emperor (Meiji translates as “enlightened rule”) followed the treaties with measures to modernize Japan and within some forty years, the nation boasted universal education, a constitution with an elected parliament, a bureaucracy that would survive a change of ministers, modern communication and transportation, and a strong army and navy. This was not the Japan that had wined at Commodore Perry's threat of force. This was the Japan that would, in a few years, not an expansionist Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905.

During the Edo period, the innovative woodblock technique made it possible for artists like Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) to create multiple copies of prints for a growing audience of collectors. His image of a monstrous crashing wave with a distant, diminutive, but enduring Mount Fuji is one of the best-known Japanese works of art in the West (Fig. 19.45). The



▲ 19.45 KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa (also known as The Great Wave)* (Edo period, c. 1831). Polychrome woodblock print; 8 7/8" x 14 1/8". Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France.



▲ 18.46 ANDO HIROSHIGE, *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake* (1857). Color woodblock print, 13 1/2" x 16 1/2". The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio.



▲ 18.47 VINCENT VAN GOGH, *Bridge in the Rain*, copy after Ando Hiroshige (1887). Oil on canvas, 20 1/2" x 18 1/2". Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

ominous claws of the whitecap seem certain to capsize the trading boats below and drown the sailors, who bend to gouge their oars into the rough waters to try to propel themselves past the wave. The vantage point from which we observe the unfolding drama is low in the water, such that we may feel vulnerable to the wave ourselves.

The opening of trade between Japan and the West revealed new artistic worlds to the artists of Western Europe as Japanese prints and objects darted flowed into Paris and other cities. Edgar Degas, in fact, hung a bathhouse scene by Torii Kiyonaga in his bedroom and Manet incorporated one by Utamaro Kuniaki II in his portrait of the French writer, Emile Zola. Modern artists were intrigued by the flatness of space, decorative patterns, brilliant palette, and off-center compositions in Japanese woodcuts such as Hiroshige's *Sudden Shower*

over *Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake* (Fig. 18.46). Vincent Van Gogh copied the image in an oil painting, adding a decorative frame complete with calligraphy (Fig. 18.47). The ordinateness of Japanese subjects also struck a chord among the Modernists, who were trying to escape the grip of Academic Art.

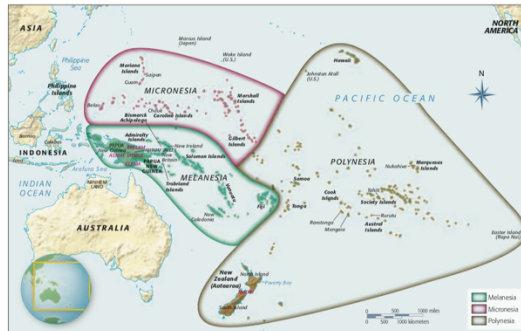
Japanese artists studied with western artists living in Japan, and some Japanese artists visited cultural centers in Europe. In his portrait of an *oiran*—a woman of pleasure—Takahashi Yūichi (Fig. 18.48) forgoes the flat, unmodulated features of a typical idealized Japanese woman (see Fig. 18.20) in favor of painting techniques more characteristic of his late-nineteenth-century peers. Yūichi painted his portrait in 1872, less than 10 years after Edouard Manet submitted his scandalous *Olympia* (see Fig. 18.14) to the Salon des Refusés in Paris.



▲ 18.48 TAKAHASHI YŪICHI, *Oiran* (Grand Courtesan) (Mid-period, 1872). Oil on canvas, 2' 6 1/2" x 1' 9 1/2". Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France.

Oceania

For some of us, the words, "South Pacific" bring to mind the famed Rodgers and Hammerstein 1949 musical (made into a Hollywood feature film in 1958) about U.S. naval forces engaged in the South Pacific during World War II. It was based on stories in a novel by James Michener called *Tales of the South Pacific*. For most of us, the words conjure a picture of exotic life in warm tropical climates on exotic islands (and tourist destinations) such as Tahiti. The cultures of Oceania go back centuries—indeed millennia—although the West's consciousness of them only goes back as far as the early 1500s when European exploration got its real footing (think of the Columbus expedition in 1492 or Cortés's conquest of Mexico in 1519). The division of the territory collectively known as Oceania, however, only dates back to the first third of the nineteenth century; it includes the islands of Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia—which also includes New Zealand.



▲ MAP 18.1 Oceania.



▲ 18.49 WIREMU KINGI TE RANGITAKE, CHIEF OF THE TE ATE AWA, *Baifo* (war canoe prow) (early 19th century). Carving.

The canoe was the basic means of transportation and communication among the Oceanic peoples who fitted the prows of their vessels with fearsome-looking figures intended to strike fear into the hearts of enemies and what they believed to be the ominous spirits of the sea. The canoe prow (Fig. 18.49) carved by the Polynesian Maori of New Zealand possesses an intricacy and vitality that is characteristic of their wooden sculptures as well as their body art (Fig. 18.50).



▲ 18.50 THOMAS RYAN, *Tapaue* (late 19th century). Watercolor on paper.

The islands of New Zealand may be better known to you, but that of New Guinea is much larger and more complex. The island is divided into three geographical regions (see map). Papua New Guinea and West Papua and Papua—provinces that are actually part of Indonesia (the archipelago to the west). The carved wooden poles in Figure 18.51 were created by the Asmat peoples of Papua, who inhabit the southwest coastal region of the island. A close look at the poles reveals closely carved figures stacked one on top of the other; projections with airy, decorative openwork extend from the abdomens of the topmost figures. Carved from a single mangrove tree, the poles, whose sharpened points were thrust into the ground, are related to a once-common practice of headhunting to avenge the death of community men by enemies. These poles date from the mid-20th century; headhunting ended in the 1960s.

The Uli figure from Papua New Ireland (Fig. 18.52) represents an ancestral ruler and was used in rites intended



▲ 18.51 Ancestral poles, New Guinea (19th century). Wood, paint, and fiber. Height of tallest pole: 17' 11". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

▲ 18.52 Uli statue, from New Ireland, Papua New Guinea (18th or early 19th century). Wood, ochre, and charcoal, 4' 11 1/2" high. Musée du quai Branly, Paris, France.



to smooth the transmigration of the souls of the departed to the realm of the dead. As the Uli statue "presided," skulls of deceased ancestors were unearthed then reinterred with fresh plants. Like most similar rites found around the world, a subtext was to reinvigorate the social connectedness and common purpose of the community. This Uli figure as many people is androgynous; it has a man's genitals and a woman's breasts. In terms of stereotypical gender roles, the figure has the fierceness of the warrior along with the capacity to nurture his people.

The cultures of Oceania are numerous and highly diverse. Students are encouraged to explore them more fully on their own; unfortunately, adequate coverage of the history of the region is impossible in a book of this scope.

The Americas

During the nineteenth century, the Americas—including the American Southwest and Great Plains as well as Central America and the Caribbean—continued to be impacted by European contact, conquest, and colonial ambitions.

The Navajo people of the American Southwest, using weaving techniques learned from their Pueblo neighbors along with European synthetic dyes (as opposed to traditional dyes derived from plants), fed a growing appetite for their textiles among the first groups of tourists.

The Native Americans of the Great Plains, living a nomadic existence after their communities were destroyed by settlers, created nature and war paintings on buffalo hide that incorporated some European stylistic, along with assorted leather garments, accessories, and portable objects embellished with beads and feathers. A painted muslin tipi lining from the Crow peoples of the Sioux nation (Fig. 18.53) depicts the deadly combat



▲ 18.53 Crow's Last Stand (late 19th century). Beeswax lining. Painted muslin, 35" x 80". National Museum of Natural History, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



▲ 19.54 *The Execution of Maximilian I*
Mexican School, 1890s (artist, Juan Cárdenas).
Museo Nacional de Historia, Castillo de Chapultepec, Mexico.

between the Native Americans and U.S. cavalry under the leadership of General George Custer in the Battle of Little Bighorn during the Great Sioux War of 1878. Custer's forces (most are dead or dismounted) are met on the battlefield by superior opponents who advance rhythmically from the right, shooting arrows as they ride.

In Mexico, the shackles of Spanish rule were broken, and although the nation won independence, it entered a period of disorder that ended only with the radical reforms, separation of church and state, and new constitution established under the leadership of Benito Juárez. At the same time, Mexico lost nearly half of its territory (stretching from Texas to California) by the mid-nineteenth century and, in the opening decade of the twentieth, it would be on the threshold of a revolution. One of the seminal events of the period was the French Intervention in Mexico (1862) that forced Juárez into exile and established (very temporarily) the Second Mexican Empire with Austrian Ferdinand Maximilian appointed as emperor by France's Napoleon III. Maximilian and his loyalist Mexican forces would fall in May of 1867, and, one month later, he would be executed by firing squad on Juárez's order. An oil-on-canvas painting by an artist from the Mexican school portrays the execution (Fig. 19.54). The composition is divided into thirds: Maximilian (in the right background baring the white of his shirt) and two loyalists (with their hands on their hearts) stand tall before rigid lines of rifled soldiers and helmeted guards separating the soon-to-be victims from the crowd of

assorted, ordinary Mexicans who have come witness the act. The simple shapes and bright, flat colors of the people in the foreground are a preview of a similar stylistic approach that would characterize the work of the internationally acclaimed Mexican muralists of the twentieth century.

At the very end of the nineteenth century, the Spanish would be driven from Cuba after the breakout of its final independence war in 1895 although throughout most of the century, it maintained a largely white or *mulatto* (mixed) population—the result of aggressive efforts on the part of the Spanish to “whiten” the Cuban population with waves of immigrants. Adding to the island's mixed heritage were black slaves and free blacks as well as Chinese immigrants who took the place of slave laborers when the institution was abolished in the late 1880s. Among the genres of Cuban painting during this period are views of colonialized Havana, rural landscapes intended to illustrate the progress of the sugar industry on the island, exotic vegetation in the tropical sunlight, and scenes of local customs that juxtapose white Hispanic privilege and “savage” rituals connected to the indigenous and African traditions.

The arrival of European explorers in the Northwest coastal regions of North America (such as what is now Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and Alaska) did not have the impact on the Native American peoples that it did elsewhere in the wider world. Much of the indigenous population remained isolated during the nineteenth



▲ 19.55 *Eskimo mask representing a moon goddess* (before 1800). Photo by A. Heard Museum of Anthropology, The University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, California.

century, their traditions and art forms intact. Eskimo, or Inuit, sculpture often exhibits a simplicity and elegant refinement, as in a mask representing a moon goddess (Fig. 19.55). Such masks, worn by shamans in ritual ceremonies, were carved of ivory or wood; some had movable parts that added to the realism of the image.

The carved wood and muslin Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakwaka'wakw) “transformation mask” representing the sun and other spirits (Fig. 19.56), is vividly painted with abstract human and animal forms. Like the Inuit moon goddess mask, it too has movable parts. When the string



▲ 19.56 *Transformation mask representing the sun* (1870–1910). Wood, paint, cotton cloth, metal hinges, iron nails, whale cotton cord; cordage, 48" x 52". Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian.

hanging from the inner mask is pulled, the two profiles to the sides are drawn together, forming another mask. It is an extraordinary composition that features the symmetry, balance, and repetition characteristic of Northwest Coast style. As is often the case in ethnographic art, the embellishment of the work reflects traditional body decoration, such as painting, tattooing, or scarification.