

1: Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America

Focusing on the work of forty-three important artists, this study analyzes the impact of a key generation of American modernists and offers an incisive look at a variety of artistic styles, methods, and artists.

Some of these types are less abstract than others, but all are concerned with separating art from reality.

Curvilinear Abstract Art This type of curvilinear abstraction is strongly associated with Celtic Art , which employed a range of abstract motifs including knots eight basic types , interlace patterns, and spirals including the triskele, or the triskelion. These motifs were not original to the Celts - many other early cultures had been utilizing these Celtic designs for centuries: However, it is fair to say that Celtic designers breathed new life into these patterns, making them much more intricate and sophisticated in the process. These patterns later re-emerged as decorative elements in early illuminated manuscripts c. Later they returned during the 19th century Celtic Revival Movement, and the influential 20th century Art Nouveau movement: Curvilinear abstraction is also exemplified by the "infinite pattern", a widespread feature of Islamic Art.

Colour-Related or Light-Related Abstract Art This type is exemplified in works by Turner and Monet, that use colour or light in such a way as to detach the work of art from reality, as the object dissolves in a swirl of pigment. The Czech painter Frank Kupka produced some of the first highly coloured abstract paintings, which influenced Robert Delaunay who also relied on colour in his Cubist-inspired style of Orphism. Colour-related abstraction re-emerged in the late s and 50s in the form of Colour Field Painting, developed by Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman

In s France, a parallel type of colour-related abstract painting sprang up, known as Lyrical Abstraction.

Geometric Abstraction This type of intellectual abstract art emerged from about onwards. An early rudimentary form was Cubism , specifically analytical Cubism - which rejected linear perspective and the illusion of spatial depth in a painting, in order to focus on its 2-D aspects. As you might expect, it is characterized by non-naturalistic imagery, typically geometrical shapes such as circles, squares, triangles, rectangles, and so forth. In a sense - by containing absolutely no reference to, or association with, the natural world - it is the purest form of abstraction. One might say that concrete art is to abstraction, what veganism is to vegetarianism.

Emotional or Intuitional Abstract Art This type of intuitional art embraces a mix of styles, whose common theme is a naturalistic tendency. This naturalism is visible in the type of shapes and colours employed. Unlike Geometric Abstraction, which is almost anti-nature, intuitional abstraction often evokes nature, but in less representational ways. Two important sources for this type of abstract art are: Organic Abstraction also called Biomorphic abstraction and Surrealism. Arguably, the most celebrated painter specializing in this type of art was the Russian-born Mark Rothko - see: Other examples include canvases by Kandinsky like Composition No.

Gestural Abstract Art This is a form of abstract expressionism, where the process of making the painting becomes more important than usual. Paint may be applied in unusual ways, brushwork is often very loose, and rapid. Famous American exponents of gestural painting include Jackson Pollock , the inventor of Action-Painting, and his wife Lee Krasner who inspired him with her own form of drip-painting; Willem de Kooning , famous for his Woman series of works; and Robert Motherwell , noted for his Elegy to the Spanish Republic series.

Minimalist Abstract Art This type of abstraction was a back-to-basics sort of avant-garde art , stripped of all external references and associations. It is what you see - nothing else. It often takes a geometrical form, and is dominated by sculptors, although it also includes some great painters. For more information on minimalist art, see below "Postmodernist Abstraction".

Origins and History Stone Age Abstract Paintings As far as we can tell, abstract art first began some 70, years ago with prehistoric engravings: Thereafter, abstract symbols became the predominant form of Paleolithic cave art , outnumbering figurative images by 2:

From Academic Realism to Abstraction Up until the late 19th century, most painting and sculpture followed the traditional principles of Classical Realism, as taught in the great Academies of Europe. However much affected by the demands of style or medium, a work of art had to imitate or represent external reality. However, during the last quarter of the 19th century, things began to change. Impressionist art demonstrated that the strict academic style of naturalistic painting was no longer the only authentic way of doing things. Then, during the period , developments in other areas of modern art

provided additional techniques involving colour, a rejection of 3-D perspective, and new shapes, which would be used to further the quest for abstraction. Artists Start To Move Away From Reality The first of the major modern art movements to subvert the academic style of classical realism was Impressionism. The emergence of abstract art was also influenced by the Art Nouveau movement. Impressionism, including the variants of Neo-Impressionist Pointillism and Post-Impressionism, had already drawn attention to the power of colour, but German Expressionism made it the cornerstone of painting. Kandinsky was convinced by the emotional properties of shape, line and above all, colour in painting. He had an abnormal sensitivity to colour, which he could hear as well as see, a condition called synaesthesia. He believed a painting should not be analyzed intellectually but allowed to reach those parts of the brain that connect with music. Even so, he warned that serious art must not be led by the desire for abstraction into becoming mere decoration. Most German Expressionists eg. Cubism Rejects Perspective and Pictorial Depth Cubism was a reaction against the decorative prettiness of Impressionism. Picasso and Georges Braque developed this new style in stages: Their basic concept was to move away from the pretty but trivial art of Impressionism, towards a more intellectual form of art which explored new methods of portraying reality. In particular, they rejected the academic method of representing reality through the use of linear perspective depth to create the usual three-dimensional effect in a painting. This method of using a flat surface to depict 3-D reality, rocked art to its foundations. Cubist-inspired abstract sculptors include: Constantin Brancusi, who was also influenced by African and Oriental art. Raymond Duchamp-Villon, who used Cubist devices to represent movement, and Jacques Lipchitz. For an early 20th century abstract style of painting which attempted to blend Cubist composition with colour and music, see: A British pre-war art movement which was strongly influenced by the Cubist idiom, was Vorticism, founded by Percy Wyndham Lewis. The Italian Futurism movement, founded by Marinetti and exemplified by Gino Severini and Giacomo Balla, was also influenced by Cubism, and in turn inspired numerous painters with its emphasis on movement and technology. See, for example, works like: Suprematism and De Stijl Introduce New Geometric Shapes Traditional fine art painting and sculpture relies on shapes taken from the real world, of which there are limitless examples. In contrast, abstract artists are obliged to rely on artificial, non-natural forms. Thus abstract art is typically concerned with the production of various geometric shapes. And the size and character of these shapes, their relationship to each other, as well as the colours used throughout the work, become the defining motifs of abstraction. Russian Suprematism The Russian abstract art movement known as Suprematism, which was named by its leader Kasimir Malevich for its assertion of the supremacy of sensation in art, appeared in. No doubt influenced by Kandinsky who had already begun to produce a range of concretist works, Malevich produced a series of outstanding avant-garde abstract paintings - rectangular blocks of plain colour floating on a white background - which were decades ahead of his time. He saw them as successors to the traditional icon-imagery of the Russian Orthodox Church in the flat Byzantine style of Antiquity. Lyubov Popova, along with Alexander Rodchenko considered one of the co-founders of the Russian style of Constructivism a school concerned with space, new materials, 3-D form, as well as science and social reform was another important member of the Suprematist movement. Another interesting Russian art movement which introduced new imagery was Rayonism or Luchism, founded by Mikhail Larionov and Natalya Goncharova. De Stijl De Stijl was the name of a Dutch design and aesthetics journal and avant-garde art movement, devoted to geometric abstraction non-objective art, which was founded and led by Theo Van Doesburg. Its leading figure was Piet Mondrian, who is famous for his series of simple rectangular grids, using only black, white and primary colours - a style he called Neo-Plasticism Nieuwe Beelding. One of the most influential pioneers of concrete art during the period, he developed his precise geometric style as a counter-statement to the emotional chaos and uncertainty of the first half of the twentieth century. Involved with the abstract group Cercle et Carré, as well as the Abstraction-Creation Group, he moved to New York in, and was allegedly the first painter to work to gramophone music. Van Doesburg was less dogmatic, introducing a more relaxed form of Neo-Plasticism, called Elementarism. He was also responsible, in, for coining the term "Concrete Art". Sadly he died in, but his ideas were continued not only by students of the Bauhaus design school where he had lectured, but also by the Abstraction-Creation group - led by the Belgian artist Georges Vantongerloo and the French painters Jean

Helion and Auguste Herbin The Swiss ex-Bauhaus architect, sculptor and designer Max Bill was another follower who helped to promote the genre in Switzerland, Italy, Argentina and Brazil. Surrealist and Organic Abstraction In parallel with the development of geometric-style concretism, during the 1920s and 1930s, exponents of Surrealism began to produce a range of fantasy-like, quasi-naturalistic images. Jean Arp was also an active sculptor who specialized in Organic Abstraction, as did the English sculptors Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth Modern British Sculpture A number of European abstract artists later sought sanctuary in America, where they encountered and influenced a new generation of indigenous abstract painters. For two collectors of abstract painting and sculpture of the first half of the 20th century, see: Solomon Guggenheim and Peggy Guggenheim For avant-garde abstraction in Britain c. The next generation included painters such as Robert Motherwell. The name of the movement was coined by Robert Coates, art critic of the New Yorker. Abstract Expressionist Painting remains a vague term - often confusingly applied to artists who are neither truly abstract, nor expressionist - which describes a form of abstract painting non-figurative, non-naturalistic in which colour takes precedence over shape; the latter being no longer geometric. Early works in this style typically filled large scale canvases, whose size was designed to overwhelm spectators and draw them into another world. The preoccupation of abstract expressionists with visual effects, especially the impact of colour, was a reflection of their main goal - to involve and explore basic human emotions. Thus an abstract expressionist painting is best felt intuitively rather than understood: For two interesting early works that illustrate the differing styles of these two artists, see: The fact that it was the first major art movement born in the USA, gave it added weight and significance: Later, Abstract Expressionism spawned a number of individual styles under the umbrella of Post-painterly abstraction , an anti-gesturalist trend. These individual styles included: Abstract Expressionism also provoked avant-garde responses from several other artists including Cy Twombly , whose calligraphic scribbling is part-drawing, part-graffiti; and the Californian abstract sculptor Mark Di Suvero b. Seen as the European version of abstract expressionism, it was in reality an umbrella movement with a number of sub-variants. A key influence was the avant-garde American artist Mark Tobey , whose all-over calligraphic painting style anticipated that of Pollock. It was founded by painters, sculptors and graphic artists from the Danish group Host, the Dutch group Reflex, and the Belgian Revolutionary Surrealist Group, including: Pol Bury was also a member, but in he quit painting to explore kinetic sculpture. Leading members included the Hungarian painter and graphic designer Victor Vasarely , and the English painter Bridget Riley b. The movement disappeared by the early 1950s. Postmodernist Abstraction Since the start of postmodernism since the mid-20th century contemporary art has tended to fragment into smaller, more local schools.

2: Abstract painting and sculpture in America, | Palos Verdes Library District

*Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America, [John R. Lane, Carnegie Institute Museum of Art, Susan C. Larsen] on www.enganchecubano.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Focusing on the work of forty-three important artists, this study analyzes the impact of a key generation of American modernists and offers an incisive look at a variety of.*

Foreword by John R. Larsen Art and Artists: During the s and early s, AAA provided exhibition opportunities when few existed. Its publishing, panels and lectures provided a forum for discussion and gave abstract art theoretical support in the United States. By the fact of their active existence and production, the American Abstract Artists express the authenticity and autonomy of the modern art movement in the United States. The word abstract is incorporated into our title as a provisional gesture so that we can be identified as a particular group in our effort to clarify growing and actively significant concepts of art. Abstract, like so many other words, is too often used as an idiosyncratic suggestion, rather than as a concept which defines particular values. To understand abstract art is, in reality, no more a problem than understanding any and all art. And this depends upon the ability of the individual to perceive essentials, to perceive that which is called universally significant, and to evaluate the unity and relationship that is contained in any work. As the first and only comprehensive organization of its type in the United States, we are faced with the familiar problem of a largely unsympathetic and biased criticism, a criticism which merely negates, condemns, or ridicules. There is, however, a more encouraging response to our exhibitions and lectures, a response that could be especially experienced only by the form and action of a representative and authentic organization. Individuals working and studying against the odds of isolation can now be articulate and related to others working in similar directions. The membership of this group is homogeneous to the extent of its recognition of the mutual problems and limitations, and in its willingness to cooperate in the presentation and solution of these problems. We are, as in any group, heterogeneous and diverse in our concepts. To place artistic, or any cultural effort on the level of a competition is to negate the method and meaning of knowledge. American Abstract Artists dedicates itself to the problems of the artist and student, presented in the terms of method and activity that define the artist; and limits itself accordingly for the purpose of clarification. As to the question of which aspects of life affect the artist in his effort, this is demonstrated by the character and efficacy of his activity and production; for this we present the individual artist. No educated intelligence can draw the so-called line of national culture as an ambition and objective, without discerning its ambiguity. Beside being impossible, such a misconception is a negation of the very essence of cultural effort; the general heightening and application of knowledge. To make this negation may be politically expedient but it serves only to preserve and sway ignorance. While knowledge belongs to no nationality, particular nations do exist, and each nation has, and is, a peculiar and limited cultural development. Considering the tempo of present political history and the importance of the various fields of knowledge in relationship to it, we can do nothing better than emphasize tha the contemporary must respect the interpretation and concatenation of all culture. True culture is recognizable when established from the standpoint of scientific thought and effort. For us it is established through the freedom to develop facilities and to maintain their proportional distribution, as civilized achievements, toward the enlivenment of existenceâ€”an unequivocal application toward the physical and psychic benefit of all humanity. For these reasons, American Abstract Artists was formed in November of It has now attained a national scope and is more active in

3: Abstract art - Wikipedia

Accompanies the exhibition: Abstract painting and sculpture in America,

American abstract art July 30, By Theodore F. By that time, abstraction was firmly established in Europe, and had already been responsible for numerous excellent and important works there. The delay here was because American artists hesitated to carry modernist ideas and theories to their logical formal conclusion and preferred instead to take only what they needed and to adapt that to their own ends. The situation changed rather quickly, however, as the s drew to a close, and more and more Americans committed themselves exclusively to abstract art. Even so, abstract painters and sculptors remained very much in the minority since the American public and most of the New York art world preferred the Regionalist and American Scene work also being produced at that time. This condition prevailed well into the s, but even when nonrepresentational modernism did finally receive widespread approval, it was not in the form of the severely geometric kind of abstraction that had first appeared in this country, but the newer, more free-spirited and improvisational sort later known as Abstract Expressionism that got the nod. It was organized originally by the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, comprising works by 43 artists. The exhibition begins in , the year A. The stars of the show are an artist and a painting: Lane, co-curator together with Susan C. He was also the artist who convincingly broke the pattern of American dependency on European leadership when, in , he abandoned late Cubism and biomorphic abstraction in favor of a freer and looser Expressionist style that carried American painting beyond its provincial and dependent state, setting the stage for the ascendancy of Abstract Expressionism. The exhibition helps illuminate a fascinating time when not only Gorky but de Kooning, Hans Hofmann, Ad Reinhardt, David Smith, and Josef Albers all of whom are included were laying the groundwork for their major contributions to the art of the period. This was also the time when such famous Europeans as Moholy-Nagy, Mondrian, and Leger who are also represented lived and worked in the US and shared some of their insights and experiences with their American colleagues. The show does raise some interesting questions, chief among them being the degree to which American abstractionists merely reflected European models and ideas and the degree to which this form of art was accepted beyond the circles of the artists and their supporters. Art history has made it very clear that modernism was a European idea. And so, without any public support to speak of, early American abstract artists could only look to one another, to a few sympathetic critics, curators and collectors, and to Europe for help and guidance. The results were predictable: American abstract painting and sculpture remained quite insular and largely dependent upon European ideas and examples for inspiraiton. There were dramatic exceptions, however. Stuart Davis almost single-handedly created a highly personal modernist style and produced some excellent abstract and near-abstract images. No, American abstract art of the period was not merely a carbon copy of similar work being produced overseas. Profound parallels existed, of course, but then, much of what was fashioned here derived from European sources. The rest of it, however, emerged from American roots and experience, and some of it especially the work of Davis, Gorky, Calder, de Kooning, Hofmann, Noguchi, and Reinhardt had sufficient character and drive to have significant influence on the course of post-World War II international art. At the Whitney Museum through Sept.

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Pictures of nothing: abstract art since Pollock / Kirk Varnedoe. N A2 V37 Art deco and the Cincinnati Union Terminal / an exhibition organized by the Art History Dept., University of Cincinnati, in cooperation with the Contemporary Arts Center, January 11 to February 10,

Prehistoric art and Eastern art history Much of the art of earlier cultures " signs and marks on pottery, textiles, and inscriptions and paintings on rock " used simple, geometric and linear forms which might have had a symbolic or decorative purpose. A late Song painter named Yu Jian, adept to Tiantai buddhism , created a series of splashed ink landscapes that eventually inspired many Japanese zen painters. His paintings show heavily misty mountains in which the shapes of the objects are barely visible and extremely simplified. This type of painting was continued by Sesshu Toyo in his later years. On the left side of this painting is a pine tree in rocky soil, its branches laced with vines that extend in a disorderly manner to the right side of the painting in which a perfect circle probably made with help of a compass [9] floats in the void. The painting is a reflection of the Daoist metaphysics in which chaos and reality are complementary stages of the regular course of nature. In Tokugawa Japan some zen monk-painters created Enso , a circle who represents the absolute enlightenment. Usually made in one spontaneous brush stroke, it became the paradigm of the minimalist aesthetic that guided part of the zen painting. Romanticism , Impressionism , Post-Impressionism , and Expressionism Patronage from the church diminished and private patronage from the public became more capable of providing a livelihood for artists. Artistic independence for artists was advanced during the 19th century. An objective interest in what is seen, can be discerned from the paintings of John Constable , J M W Turner , Camille Corot and from them to the Impressionists who continued the plein air painting of the Barbizon school. A near abstraction, in Whistler sued the art critic John Ruskin for libel after the critic condemned this painting. The falling Rocket , , placed greater emphasis on visual sensation than the depiction of objects. Expressionist painters explored the bold use of paint surface, drawing distortions and exaggerations, and intense color. Expressionists produced emotionally charged paintings that were reactions to and perceptions of contemporary experience; and reactions to Impressionism and other more conservative directions of late 19th-century painting. The Expressionists drastically changed the emphasis on subject matter in favor of the portrayal of psychological states of being. Although artists like Edvard Munch and James Ensor drew influences principally from the work of the Post-Impressionists they were instrumental to the advent of abstraction in the 20th century. Henri Matisse , The Yellow Curtain , With his Fauvist color and drawing Matisse comes very close to pure abstraction. Additionally in the late 19th century in Eastern Europe mysticism and early modernist religious philosophy as expressed by theosophist Mme. Blavatsky had a profound impact on pioneer geometric artists like Hilma af Klint and Wassily Kandinsky. The mystical teaching of Georges Gurdjieff and P. Ouspensky also had an important influence on the early formations of the geometric abstract styles of Piet Mondrian and his colleagues in the early 20th century. With his expressive use of color and his free and imaginative drawing Henri Matisse comes very close to pure abstraction in French Window at Collioure , View of Notre-Dame , and The Yellow Curtain from The raw language of color as developed by the Fauves directly influenced another pioneer of abstraction, Wassily Kandinsky. Although Cubism ultimately depends upon subject matter, it became, along with Fauvism , the art movement that directly opened the door to abstraction in the 20th century. Analytic cubism was jointly developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque , from about through The collage artists like Kurt Schwitters and Man Ray and others taking the clue from Cubism were instrumental to the development of the movement called Dada. The following extract from The World Backwards gives some impression of the inter-connectedness of culture at the time: During the Spring David Burliuk gave two lectures on cubism and planned a polemical publication, which the Knave of Diamonds was to finance. He went abroad in May and came back determined to rival the almanac Der Blaue Reiter which had emerged from the printers while he was in Germany". The Rayist Luchizm drawings of Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov , used lines like rays of light to make a construction. Kasimir Malevich completed his first entirely abstract work, the

Suprematist , Black Square, in Piet Mondrian was evolving his abstract language, of horizontal and vertical lines with rectangles of color, between and , Neo-Plasticism was the aesthetic which Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg and other in the group De Stijl intended to reshape the environment of the future. Music[edit] As visual art becomes more abstract, it develops some characteristics of music: Wassily Kandinsky , himself an amateur musician, [31] [32] [33] was inspired by the possibility of marks and associative color resounding in the soul. The idea had been put forward by Charles Baudelaire , that all our senses respond to various stimuli but the senses are connected at a deeper aesthetic level. The Theosophical Society popularized the ancient wisdom of the sacred books of India and China in the early years of the century. The universal and timeless shapes found in geometry:

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