

The impact of industrial revolution on modern art

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Impact of Industrial Revolution on Modern Art at the turn of the 20th Century.

To understand most period and movements in modern art, one must first understand the context in which they occurred. When one looks at the various artistic styles, one will realize how artists react to historical and cultural changes and how artists perceive their relation to society.

The transition between the 19th and 20th century has brought further development of modernistic ideas, concepts and techniques in art. Inspired by Cezanne's idea, saying that all nature objects can be illustrated with just three geometrical figures: cube, sphere and cone, Pablo Picasso created his first paintings, which became the icons of modern art and cubism movement in particular. The industrial revolution and the early 20th century introduced fauvism with its expressively vivid colours verging on aggression in the works of Henri Matisse, Andre Derain, Maurice de Vlaminch and Raoul Dufy.

German painters Franz Marc, August Macke, Gabriele Münter and others developed their own version of fauvism and called it expressionism. Italian artists, refusing everything with old roots and inspired by the rapid development of technology, appearance of first cars and airplanes, developed in their turn the art movement under the name " futurism". Finally, surrealism, exploring the secrets of dreams and filling art with psychological meaning, reached its apogee during the early 20th century with the works of Marc Chagall, Joan Miro, Rene Margritte and fantastic Salvador Dali.

Origins of Modern Art In the second half of the 19th century painters began to revolt against the classic codes of composition, careful execution, harmonious colouring, and heroic subject matter. Patronage by the church and state sharply declined at the same time that artists' views became more independent and subjective. Such artists as Courbet, Corot and others of the Barbizon School, Manet, Degas, and Toulouse-Lautrec chose to paint scenes of ordinary daily and nocturnal life that often offended the sense of decorum of their contemporaries.

Impressionism Monet, Renoir, and Pissarro, the great masters of impressionism, painted café and city life, as well as landscapes, working most often directly from nature and using new modes of representation. While art had always been to a certain extent abstract in that formal considerations had frequently been of primary importance, painters, beginning with the impressionists in the 1870s, took new delight in freedom of brushwork. They made random spots of colour and encrusted the canvas with strokes that did not always correspond to the object that they were depicting but that formed coherent internal relationships. Thus began a definite separation of the image and the subject. The impressionists exploited the range of the colour spectrum, directly applying strokes of pure pigment to the canvas rather than mixing colours on the palette. In sculpture, dynamic forms and variations of impressionism were created by Rodin, Renoir, Degas, and the Italian Medardo Rosso.

Nineteenth-Century Painting after Impressionism In the 1880s, Seurat and Signac developed the more detailed and systematic approach of neo-

impressionism, while Van Gogh and Gauguin, using bold masses, gave to colour an unprecedented excitement and emotional intensity (see postimpressionism). At the same time, Cézanne painted subtler nuances of tone and sought to achieve greater structural clarity. Flouting the laws of perspective, he extracted geometrical forms from nature and created radically new spatial patterns in his landscapes and still lifes. Other important innovations of the late 19th century can be seen in the starkly expressionistic paintings of the Norwegian Edvard Munch and the vivid fantasies of the Belgian James Ensor. In the 1890s the Nabis developed pictorial ideas from Gauguin, while sinuous linear decorations were produced throughout Europe by the designers of art nouveau.

The Isms of Early Twentieth-Century Art From the early 20th century colour reigned supreme and invaded the contours of recognizable objects with the brilliant patterns of fauvism (1905—8), dominated by Matisse and Rouault in France, the orphism of Robert Delaunay and Frank Kupka, and the explosive hues of the German group Die Brücke, which included such practitioners of expressionism as Kirchner and Nolde. Kandinsky transformed colour into a completely abstract art absolutely divorced from subject matter. The fauvists and expressionists shared an appreciation of the pure and simplified shapes of various examples of primitive art, an enthusiasm that was generated by Gauguin and extended to Picasso, Brancusi, Modigliani, Derain, and others.

Cubism About 1909 the implications of Cézanne's highly organized yet revolutionary spatial structures were expanded by Picasso and Braque, who invented an abstract art of still lifes converted into shifting volumes and

planes. Cubism, developed by the artists of the school of Paris, went through several stages and had an enormous influence on European and American painting and sculpture. In sculpture its notable exponents included Picasso, Duchamp-Villon, Lipchitz, González, and Archipenko, who began to realize the possibilities of convex and concave volumes. Cubism was absorbed in Italy by the exponents of futurism and in Germany by the Blaue Reiter group; both these movements were cut short by the advent of World War I. Fauvism and cubism were introduced by members of the Eight to a generally shocked American audience in the Armory Show of 1913, and from then on Americans began to participate significantly in the development of modern art

Geometric Abstraction At roughly the same time as cubism was developing, Russia made extraordinary contributions to the current of nonfigurative art. The sculptors Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner joined the movement known as constructivism, and the painter Casimir Malevich founded suprematism (1913). In Holland members of the Stijl group (1917-1931), including Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg, created a disciplined, nonobjective art. These Russian and Dutch developments in the second decade of the 20th century were applicable to many varieties of art and industrial design, and their principles converged in the teachings of the Bauhaus in the 1920s. Kandinsky, the highly imaginative Paul Klee, and the American Lyonel Feininger were among the celebrated exponents of the Bauhaus.

Other Modes of Modern Art A more fanciful sort of modern art was created by Jean Arp, Marcel Duchamp, and Kurt Schwitters in the irreverent manifestations of the Dada movement. Dada artists devised “ready-mades”

and collage objects from diverse bits of material. The movement was linked with Freudianism in the 1920s, producing the wild imagery of surrealism and verism, as seen in the paintings of Salvador Dalí, Yves Tanguy, Max Ernst, and Joan Miró. The 1920s also saw the beginning of an art of social protest by exponents of new objectivity, among them George Grosz, Otto Dix, and Max Beckmann. With the rise of fascism and the Great Depression of the 1930s, the protest increased in intensity. The Mexicans Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros painted murals in which the human figure was made monumental and heroic.

Post-war Modern Art and the Rejection of Modernism The development of a new American art movement was held in abeyance until after World War II, when the United States took the lead in the formation of a vigorous new art known as abstract expressionism with the impetus of such artists as Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, and Willem de Kooning. Action painting, as the movement was also known, made its impact felt throughout the world in the 1950s. A number of notable developments were led by artists associated with these and other New York school artists. As the influence of abstract expressionism waned in the 1960s, artists came to question the very philosophy underlying modernism. A vast variety of new movements and styles came to dominate the art world that, in the aggregate, can now be seen to mark the beginnings of artistic postmodernism and the post-mid-century shift from modern to contemporary art.

Modern Sculpture In sculpture the explorations of Julio González led to abstract configurations of welded metal that can be seen in the works of

Americans such as David Smith, Theodore Roszak, Seymour Lipton, and Herbert Ferber. This tradition has been a lasting one, and contemporary examples of large abstract compositions of welded metal can be found in the work of many later sculptors, including Mark di Suvero and Beverly Pepper. Alexander Calder largely stood apart from other modernist sculptors with his brightly colored mobiles and stabiles, which have since been widely influential, as in the large, brightly coloured sculpture of Albert Paley. Meanwhile, the early-20th-century tradition of Brancusi's organic abstract forms was inventively exploited in mid-century by Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth in England and by Jean Arp in France, while the Swiss Alberto Giacometti and the Italians Giacomo Manzù and Marino Marini each achieved a distinctive sculptural style. Later 20th-century sculpture has followed the patterns of the various postmodern art movements and is described in the article on contemporary art.