

# Amedeo modigliani

## essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Amadeo Modigliani was born in Livorno, Italy on July 12, 1884. He was a famous Jewish-Italian painter and sculptor. Modigliani was influenced heavily by African masks and primitivism. His paintings are characteristic of quick and precise brush strokes, deformations to the human figure and simplicity of shapes. Modigliani led a very self-destructive and eccentric lifestyle in which he frequently drank and smoked.

He was constantly in poverty, however women found him incredibly attractive and later he married a lady named Jeanne Hebuterne, with whom he had one daughter, who was also named Jeanne. He died of Tuberculosis on January 24, 1920 at the tender age of 35. His pregnant wife committed suicide the following day. His painting, entitled *Woman with Black Cravat* was created by Modigliani with oil on canvas in 1917. It currently resides in the Fujikawa Galleries, Tokyo.

I like this painting primarily for its messy and quick qualities. I like the way that this painting oozes with so many clues that tell us how he painted it. We can clearly tell that it was done quickly due to the way that the paint is applied and the brush strokes used. For example, if we observe the woman's tie we can see that the main part of it was done with a single brush stroke. The paint is applied sparingly onto the canvas and the white of the shirt below still shows through. The entire painting comes across as messy as Modigliani has splattered dark colours along the bottom of the painting and in the background.

*Woman with Black Cravat* has a very mundane feeling to it. This is achieved by the use of very dull colours such as greys, pale blues and blacks. The

woman stands out well with her rosy red cheeks and warm face. The subject matter of this painting is also very mundane.

The woman is not doing anything special, so it is really just a snapshot of common life. She is motionless, gazing at something out of the painting, she has her hair looking messy and her tie is loosened. Nevertheless Modigliani has still managed to capture her expression very well. To put it simply, she appears tired and distressed. It looks as though she has just come back from a hard day's work and she is sitting down to relax and reflect. Overall Woman with Black Cravat is a masterpiece because the way that it is painted directly relates to the subject matter.

The woman appears tired, distressed, messy and generally drained. The way that Modigliani has painted reflects this. He has painted messily, without too much care, there are blotches of paint on the bottom and he exercises sketchy brush strokes. He has also conveyed the woman's feeling of fatigue by using a mundane colour palette that subconsciously links our minds to feelings of tiredness. His sketch Studio Di Nudo II demonstrates the way in which Modigliani was able to draw consistently, accurately and with definition when he needed to.

In my opinion, the best thing about this sketch is the way that the lines are so hard and bold. Each line is drawn in one single motion and does not need to be gone over any harder. By doing this it is clear that Modigliani was very capable of freehand drawing and it proves that he was very skilled at creating exactly what he wanted, out of his mind. There is however a

shading around some of the lines, i. e. her back, her left forearm and her head.

I think that this would have been to make those areas stand out against the pale paper, and give them emphasis. The shapes that he uses to draw this piece are very simple. The only major detailing is in the face of the woman, and even then it is still simplistic. He only gives us enough detail to identify what it is we are looking at. The woman's figure is also distorted.

Her forearm seems to be out of proportion to her bicep and her entire face seems stretched out. All of the woman's body parts are also symmetrical. Each part of her body has a place where you can run a line through it and it would make a mirror image. I. e. Her face is symmetrical if a line is drawn vertically down her nose and her front-most calf is symmetrical if a line is drawn vertically from her knee to her foot.

Studio Di Nudo II appears to be influenced by African artworks. It has a very primitive and ancient feel to it. This is due to the combination of simplicity of the shapes used, elongation of the human figure, which are typical of the African art that Modigliani was interested in. Bibliography: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amedeo\\_Modigliani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amedeo_Modigliani) <http://www.expo-modigliani.net/2.cfm> Woman with Black Cravat [http://rdgallery.wz.cz/portret/modigliani\\_woman.jpg](http://rdgallery.wz.cz/portret/modigliani_woman.jpg) Studio Di Nudo II <http://www.expo-modigliani.net/painting/am098.jpg>