



Early 20th Century

Unit Overview

In this unit you will be introduced to the changing artistic trends of the 20th century. First you will be introduced to Fauvism, German Expressionism, and then Pre-War Vienna. Techniques, such as guiding, will be discussed as well as an analysis of artist's changing views.

I. A Good Change?

Art changed completely in the 20th century. With the birth of Modernism, a rapid succession of “isms” followed, movements in which artists rejected naturalism- representing the physical world realistically- and academic art- with its emphasis on classical traditions. The artists of this period experimented with technique and form, questioning the very nature of art and humanity. In this unit, you will explore the following movements: Fauvism, German Expressionism, and Pre-War Vienna. The Fauves (“wild beasts”) gave rise to the first of the 20th century “isms” with their wild use of color. German Expressionists were equally wild with their choice of colors and distorted shapes. These strange shapes and colors, critics think, expressed their views on society.

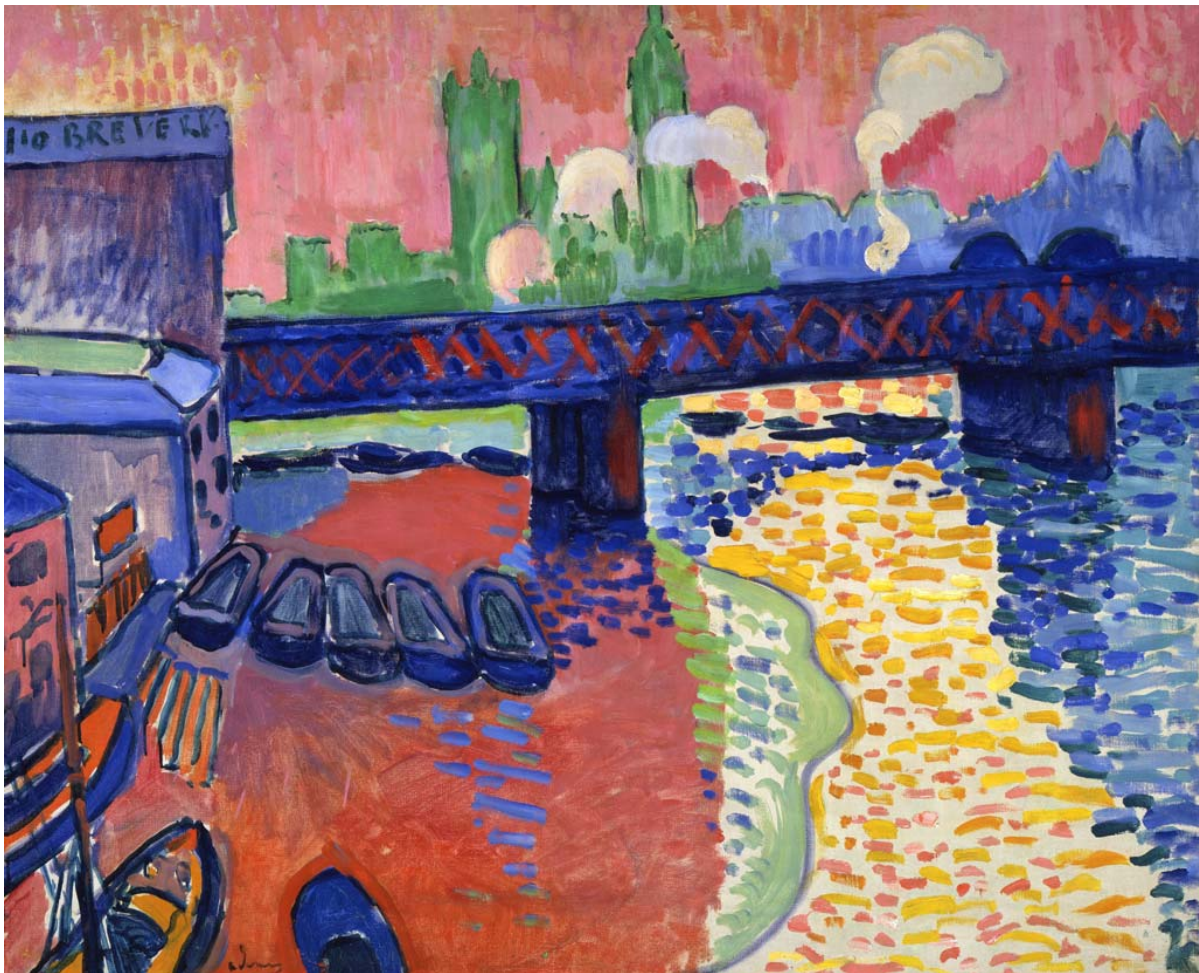
Fauvism exploded onto the Paris art scene in 1905. Its bright, pure colors and flattened perspective signaled a new era. Unwittingly, a small group of French artists had developed the first modern art movement.

(flipbook)

Andre Derain

Charing Cross Bridge, London (1906)

Derain abandoned his engineering studies for painting. He and fellow art-lover Henri Matisse worked together, and Fauvism was born. Derain visited London a few times in 1906 to paint the river.



Henri Matisse

Matisse once said “A work of art must carry in itself its complete significance and impose it upon the beholder, even before he can identify the subject matter.” Matisse produced many small, colorful works.

Woman with a hat (1905)



The Sadness of the King (1952)

Matisse began to cut designs from paper, a technique called *decoupage* in French. This technique allowed him to “paint” with scissors by cutting into a color and then manipulating the elements like a sculptor.



This piece was done for a limited-edition book called *Jazz* (1947). Matisse delighted in cutting out shapes. He intended for this piece to “soothe the brain.” The colors react with one another, creating a serene balance.

The green figure is probably a Turkish sultan slave, playing on a drum for the dancer. The figure with the guitar is Matisse’s self-portrait, surrounded by musical notes.

Maurice de Vlaminck

The River Seine at Chatou (1906)



Vlaminck was mostly self-taught, and he saw art as an outlet for his revolutionary zeal. Greatly influenced by van Gogh and Matisse, he became a collector of “primitive art.”

A Dancer at the Rat Mort (1906)



A dancer at the famous Paris café, Le Rat Mort, takes a break from the night's routine. Vlaminck uses the merest outline to suggest her body and dress.

German Expressionism

Emil Nolde

Nolde was an introverted painter. He taught ornamental design in Switzerland between 1892-97. His favorite scenes to depict were usually German countryside. His brushwork is very violent- a typical signature of the German Expressionist movement.

Blumengarten (1906)



Franz Marc

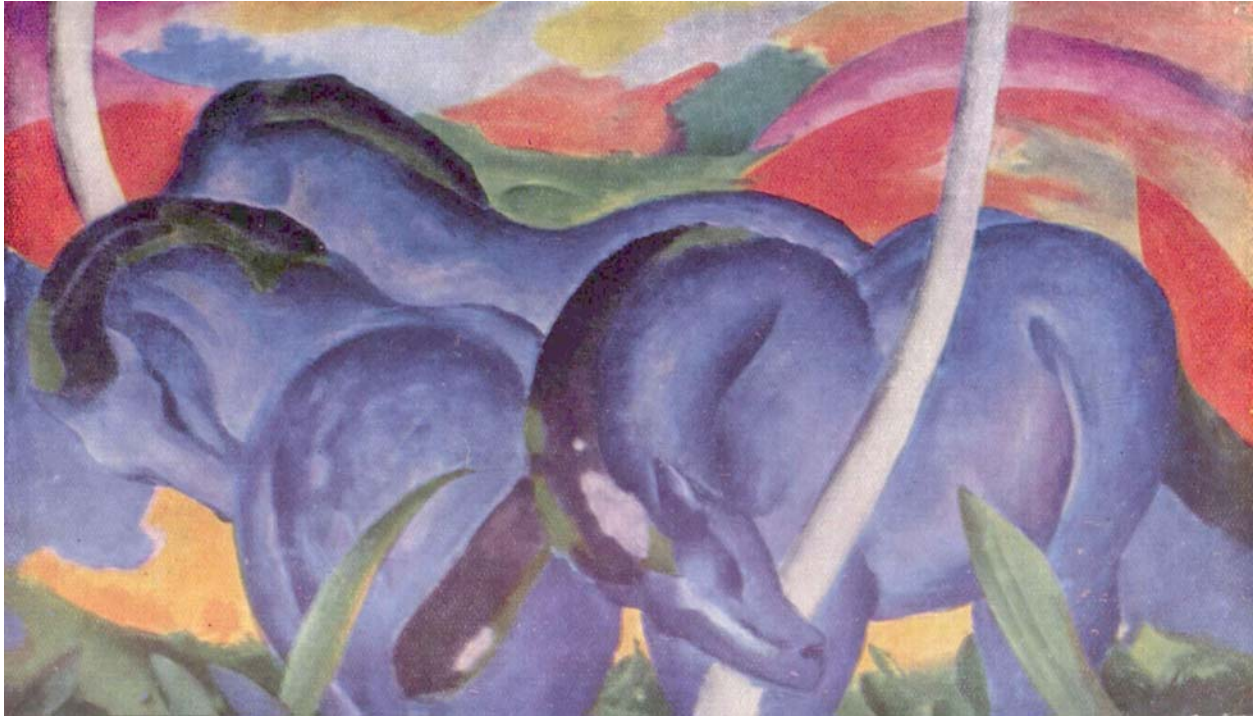
The Fate of Animals (1913)

This is a haunting image of pain and fear, depicting nature succumbing to an apocalyptic force. Franz Marc once said, “Is there any more mysterious idea for an artist than the conception of how nature is mirrored in the eyes of an animal?”



The Big Blue Horse (1911)

Living close to animals, Marc observed and sketched their mannerisms. Color and shape are reduced to the bare essentials, with a series of curved lines defining the horses and the surrounding trees.



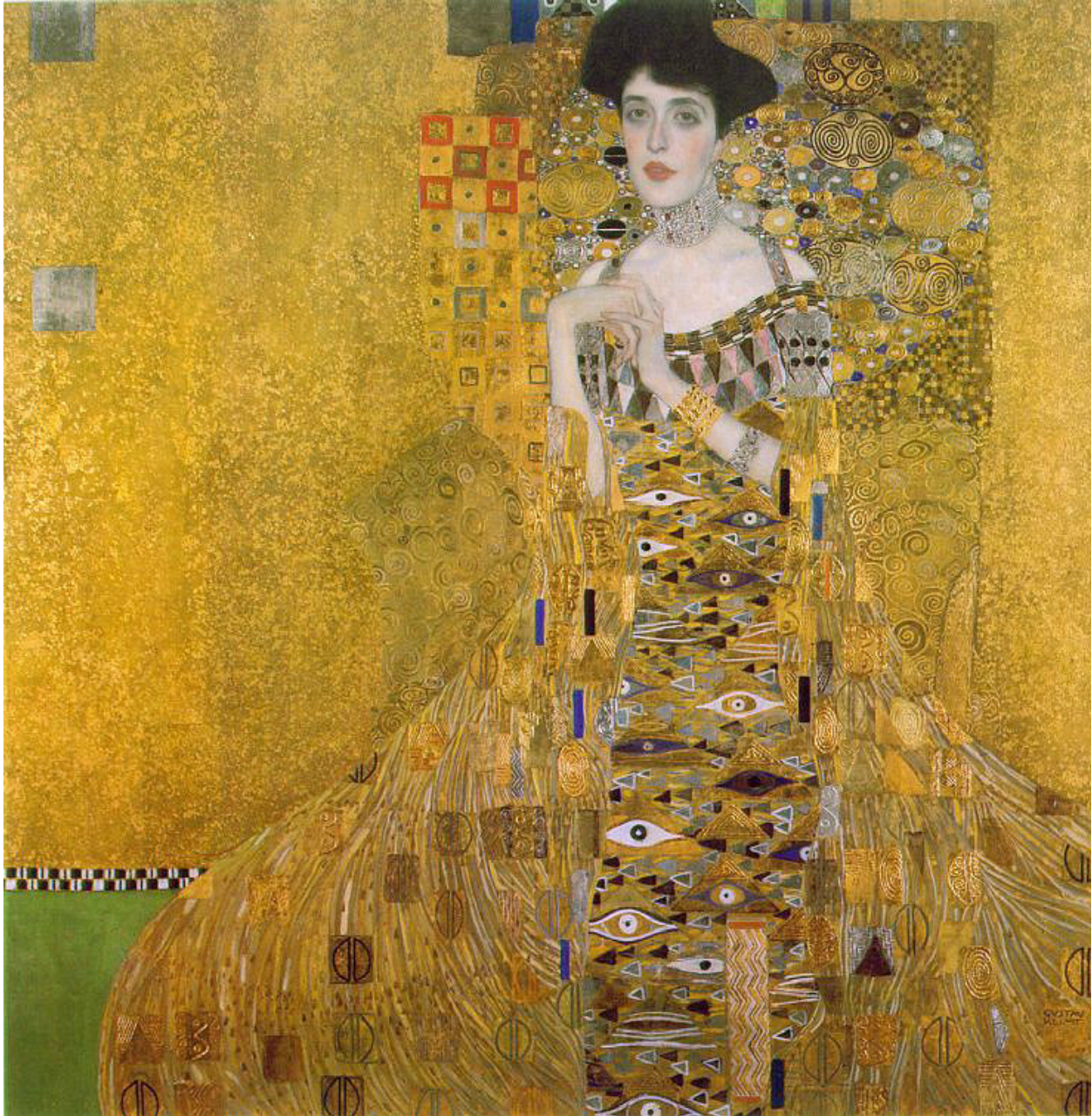
Pre-War Vienna

Gustav Klimt

Using symbolist imagery, gentle impressionism, and bold patterns, Klimt created a highly distinctive style.

Adele Bloch-Bauer's Portrait (1907)

Amid the rich patterns and geometric style is a fine portrait. The strong colors of the design dominate the picture, but the viewer's eye is drawn to the model's tender expression. This work sold for a record \$135 million in 2006.



The Kiss (1907)

There is perhaps no other painting in Western art so celebrated for its depiction of sensual love. Of the couple's bodies we see only the man's head and neck. The scene is dominated by elaborate decorative motifs made up of geometrical patterns and flowers.



Technique- Klimt uses both matt and shiny gold leaf, silver leaf, and silver thread. Gold dust covers the umber background. Klimt had studied the decorative arts as a student and was versed in gilding and mosaics. The flowers and flesh are oil paint.

II. Artist spotlight: Henri Matisse

History recalls Henri Matisse as one of the giants of twentieth-century art. Readily identified with the fauvist (wild beasts) art style and later with paper cutouts, Matisse continued experiments with color and line throughout his art career.

Henri Matisse was born on New Year's Eve of 1869 to a grain merchant father and a mother who was artistically inclined (she painted china and made hats). He lived in Bohain, France, until his father sent him to Paris to study law. At the age of 18 he was enrolled at the Faculty of Law in Paris, soon passed his law exams, and took a job as a law office clerk. It was a vocation that hardly interested the young man, as he preferred to spend most of his time at the Louvre. When Matisse was twenty, he went to St. Quentin and began drawing classes. Shortly after completing his first painting in 1890, he returned to Paris to study art despite his father's disapproval.



After a discouraging year at the Académie Julian, Matisse left in disgust at the overly perfectionist style of teaching there. The next year he met Gustave Moreau, who showed genuine interest in the personal attitudes and individualism of his students. Moreau stood as an encouraging force in his student's artwork, pushing Matisse to follow his own vision in hopes that the young student would "simplify painting." In the early 1890s, however, Matisse focused on neither vision nor simplification. Instead, he spent much of his time copying famous works of art at the Louvre, both to make money and to improve his technique.

(tea)



Matisse said, "In modern art, it is indubitably to Cézanne that I owe the most." By studying Cézanne's fragmented planes -- which stretched the idea of the still life to a forced contemplation of color surfaces themselves -- Matisse was able to reconstruct his own philosophy of the still life. In this way, his first paintings lay an appropriate foundation for later works; he sought to depict the emotions he felt in an object rather than just the mathematical dimensions of that object. "When you draw a tree," he often said, "you must feel yourself growing with it." By 1896, Matisse was successfully exhibiting his paintings in Paris. Within a decade, Matisse was the recognized leader of the art style known as *Fauvism*, a style characterized by its unusual use of bold and often illogical colors. It was during this period when Matisse met Picasso for the first time. Although the initial meeting was not especially cordial, a relationship of mutual respect and professional exchange later developed.

III. The Art of Gilding

Gilding is the process of applying a thin layer of gold, silver, or other metal leaf to a frame. Gustav Klimt used gold leaf to illuminate his famous decorative paintings. Gold leaf is 24 karat gold that is pounded into an extremely thin sheet.



Beating gold into leaves as thin as $\frac{1}{280,000}$ inch (0.00009 millimetre) is done by hand, although machines are used as well. The newly-beaten leaves are packed between tissue leaves in small books. The sheets are then able to be rolled onto a surface from the tissue book.

The gilder detaches the amount of gold leaf needed with a pointed tool. The leaf is held to the tip with static electricity; the gilder generates this by rubbing the tip over his hair. The gold leaf is then transferred to the design.

Gold leaf is sometimes run through a fine-mesh sieve, and turned into powder. Since powdered gold is so costly, bronze powders are usually substituted. Metallic powders are often mixed with a lacquer and applied as metallic paint.

IV. Timeline

You are required to pick TWO works of art from each unit and add them to your timeline. When you have done so, you will upload your word document to the question section so that your teacher can check on it. Add on to the timeline you received in the first unit.