

MODERN ART COLLECTION

1905-1965

MUSÉE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE

The Musée National d'Art Moderne is inaugurating a new presentation of its modern collections. Their extraordinarily rich variety is highlighted by a circuit organised as historic sequences emphasising the landmarks and key figures of modern history, making it easier to grasp the various genealogies, transitions, crossings and points of contact. The presentation includes not only iconic works symbolic of the fundamental issues of modern art, but also recent acquisitions and a number of rare documents.

Indicated by grey-coloured walls, exhibition-dossiers in various formats can be found throughout the circuit, focusing on common issues. Designed as study and research areas by the museum's teams, these modules are renewed twice a year, enabling visitors to explore the complex history of the arts, and providing them with a wide range of interpretations.

After the Second World War, the debate was crystallised by the great **modernist** narrative of the radical, partisan American critic Clement Greenberg. In his view, "Purity in art consists in the acceptance, willing acceptance, of the limitations of the medium of the specific art (...)." So each art should be focused on its particular essence – painting, for instance, on the flatness of its medium. For Greenberg, Abstract Expressionism embodied his theory, particularly Jackson Pollock and his dripping technique. But there was far from being any consensus on this Formalist modernism. Numerous artistic scenes developed alternative practices between the 1940s and 1960s. Jean Dubuffet and the members of CoBrA used **mixed media** techniques, associating painting and sculpture with the environment, and mingling oil, wood, sand, gravel and straw. They criticised a navel-gazing elitist culture cut off from the sources of its vital impulse. Meanwhile, the Spatialists explored the links between architecture and sculpture, between buildings and their surroundings. They decompartmentalised living spaces and energised them with new materials. The everyday **object**, introduced into art with Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades at the beginning of the century, was central to the preoccupations of the New Realists throughout the Sixties, and of Pop artists like Andy Warhol. Used or new, anonymous or personal, popular or rare, found or bought, reproduced or used "as is", the object questioned the burgeoning consumer society and created a relationship between museums and the street, art and life, abandoning the principle of a medium's purity.

Artists, who were now blurring the borders conventionally assigned to art, increasingly encouraged **viewers** to abandon a contemplative attitude in favour of a more active role, and to explore their creativity. Particularly with the Minimalists, works put the spotlight on the exhibition space, and included the viewers as they strolled around. With kinetic art and then the performances of the Fluxus group, works could be handled, like games. Spectators became an intrinsic and essential part of a creative process undertaken with the artists in participatory actions. "Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler" ("Everyone is an artist") said Joseph Beuys, thus paving the way – along with others – for the contemporary epoch.

MODERN ART!

“**Modernity** is the transitory, the fleeting and the contingent, which make up one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable.”

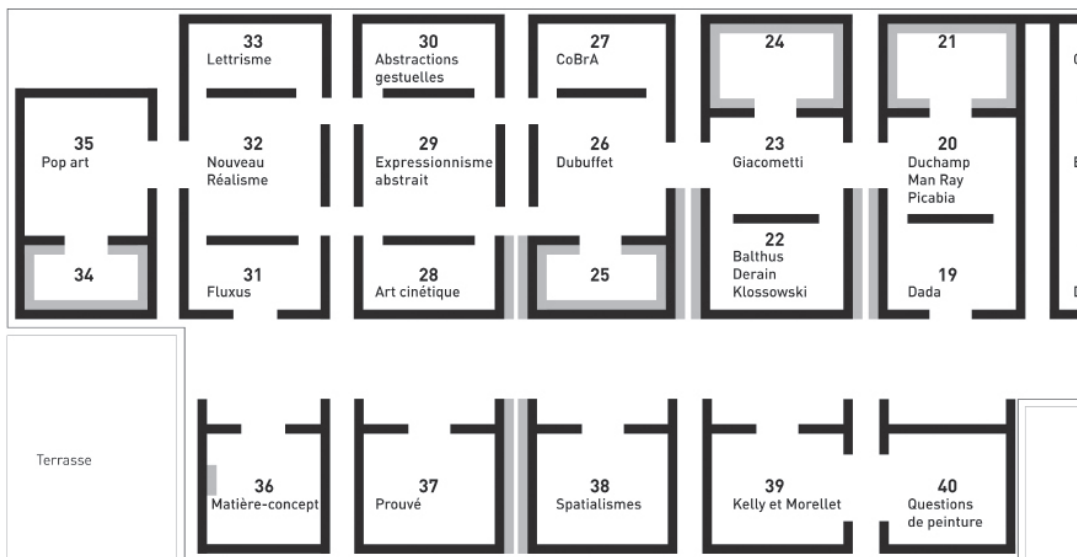
This was how Charles Baudelaire defined the order of a new aesthetic in *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* in 1863. The poet exhorted artists to appropriate the new features of their times, and move away from traditional rules in favour of experimentation, freedom and individual creativity.

In the early 20th century, modernity developed via the **avant-garde**. This idea, taken from military vocabulary, involved an art that progressed through the gradual “extension of limits”, sometimes in an offensive or subversive way. The radically new ideas of the avant-garde often mingled visual considerations with political and social issues, challenging the definition of art and asserting new conceptions of the world. Their visual approach led artists to gradually move away from the imitation of reality. Colour, line, volume and form, hitherto seen as means for representing external objects, became subjects in themselves. The bold exploration of colour by the Fauves (like Henri Matisse) and of spaces by the Cubists (like Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso) opened the way to **abstraction**: a radical outcome that found expression in the work of Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian and Kazimir Malevich.

In the early years of the century, abstract art was certainly not lacking in spiritual content or social demands. The exponents of De Stijl and the Bauhaus expressed their discoveries of abstraction in the fields of architecture, furniture and clothing. They aspired to merge art with other human activities, and make it accessible to everyone. The avant-garde was thus often synonymous with political **commitment**, with forces seeking an ideal or condemning the deficiencies of a regime. The devastating shock of the First World War, which involved numerous artists, pushed them to question the role of creators in society. Dada advocated doing away with all “petit-bourgeois” moral, religious and political values through liberating creative processes based on the irrational and chance. Surrealism, centred around

André Breton, proposed alternatives to the prevailing disenchantment, experimenting with the potential of the imagination, dreams and the subconscious, as in the work of Salvador Dalí and André Masson. In Russia, the call for a New Man was celebrated by the Constructivists before they fell prey to the repressive regime of Stalin. However as Baudelaire said, modernity did not only involve a succession of breaks. It could not be conceived without references to **tradition**, sometimes through the use of parody or criticism, as seen in André Derain’s works, reflecting the “return to order” movement, or those of Balthus, influenced by Surrealism. So the history of modern art is not linear, but involves a wide range of complex, sometimes contradictory proposals.

LEVEL 5





MUSEUM MODERN COLLECTIONS

DESIGNED BY...

The team of the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre de Création Industrielle

PRODUCED BY...

Numerous teams have contributed to this presentation, including the teams of the Collection, Architecture & Museographic Design, Artwork, Workshop & Technical Management and Audiovisual departments.

PUBLICATIONS

Series "La collection du Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne"

« Collection Art moderne »

Publication director: Brigitte Léal, 2007

« Collection Art contemporain »

Publication director: Sophie Duplaix, 2007

« Collection Photographies »

Publication directors: Quentin Bajac and Clément Chéroux, 2007

« Collection Nouveaux médias Installations »

Publication director: Christine Van Assche, 2007

« Collection Art graphique »

Publication director:

Agnès de La Beaumelle, 2008

« Films »

Publication director: Philippe-Alain Michaud, 2012

In partnership with the following media:



AROUND THE MUSEUM

GUIDED TOURS

Museum walks

Free visit with the "Museum & Exhibitions" ticket
Every Sunday except the first of the month at 4.00 p.m., level 5

"First Sundays" at the museum

Centre Pompidou lecturers take you on a highly original tour of the collections.
On the first Sunday every month at 3.30 p.m.
Free visit and access to Museum

TALKS

Un dimanche, une œuvre (A Sunday; a work)

These talks provide a remarkable in-depth look at a work chosen from the Musée National d'Art Moderne collections by an artist, curator, writer, historian or art critic.

MOBILE APP

The free Centre Pompidou app replaces the audioguide. This new app takes you on a tour of major exhibitions and the museum, with various themed circuits. Extend your visit through the personal space, and develop a privileged relationship with the Centre Pompidou. The free app, which comes in French, English and Spanish, can be downloaded for smartphones and tablets from the Google Play Store and Apple Store, and will be available for Windows devices from the summer of 2015.

INFORMATIONS

01 44 78 12 33
www.centrepompidou.fr

OPENING HOURS

Every day, from 11 am to 9 pm.
Closed on Tuesdays and 1st May, level 5
Ticket office closed at 8pm

PRICES

Admission with the "Museum & Exhibitions" ticket

Valid the same day for one admission to each area at the Museum, for all exhibitions, and for the View of Paris
€14; reduced price €11
Free with the annual Pass and for those under 18

ON-LINE TICKET PURCHASES AND PRINTING

(Full price only)
www.centrepompidou.fr/billetterie

MUSEUM AND PANORAMIC VIEWING BALCONY

Free for 18-25 years olds who are nationals or residents of the EU, Lichtenstein, Norway and Iceland.
Free on the first Sunday of each month.

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