

This PDF is a selection from a published volume from the National Bureau of Economic Research

Volume Title: Conceptual Revolutions in Twentieth-Century Art

Volume Author/Editor: David W. Galenson

Volume Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Volume ISBN: 978-0-521-11232-1

Volume URL: <http://www.nber.org/books/gale08-1>

Publication Date: October 2009

Title: Creating New Genres: Conceptual Artists at Work and Play in the Twentieth Century

Author: David W. Galenson

URL: <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c5789>

Chapter 6: Creating New Genres: Conceptual Artists at Work and Play in the Twentieth Century

Introduction

What is sculpture? What is painting?
Everyone's still clinging to outdated
ideas, obsolete definitions, as if the
artist's role was not precisely to offer
new ones.

Pablo Picasso¹

The twentieth century was a time of extremely rapid and sustained artistic innovation. One striking feature of this is the increase in the number of kinds of art that occurred during the century. Even casual observers of the art world are aware that some of the most popular forms among contemporary artists, including video and installation, are of recent vintage. Yet although all narratives of the art of the past century discuss many new art forms, none has systematically surveyed these innovations. Doing so shows that dozens of new genres of art were invented during the twentieth century, and reveals some surprisingly strong general characteristics that unite what have usually been considered as widely disparate artistic forms, lacking any overall coherence or commonality. Overall, this survey clarifies our understanding of how and why the art of the twentieth century stands apart from earlier art.

Format

This chapter will present a chronological narrative of 48 artistic genres that were invented during the twentieth century. These vary considerably in importance: some are widely used today, while others are rare or extinct. Of the 48 genres, 22 are contained as entries in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Each of these, when first mentioned, will be footnoted to its *OED* entry. Another 26 genres are included in this chapter: all of these are discussed in a leading textbook of art history. When first mentioned, each of these nine genres will be footnoted to the relevant discussion in the fifth edition of H. H. Arnason's *History of Modern Art*. To facilitate locating all the genres discussed within this chapter, each of the 22 that appears in the *OED* will be marked by a single asterisk the first time it appears in the text, while each of the other 26 genres will be marked by two asterisks.

A note is in order here on the precise nature of the terms selected for discussion. "Genre" can be used to refer to the style of works of art, but this is not the concern here: this chapter is *not* about the invention of Fauvism, Cubism, and the many other schools or styles of art invented in the last century. Rather, this chapter is concerned with new *categories* of art. Each of these constitutes a new art form. In each case, the words included in the chapter can be applied not only to a type of art in general, but can designate a single work – for example a collage, or a joiner, to anticipate the first and last genres chronologically.

The Beginning

Early in 1912, Pablo Picasso made a small oval painting that included a piece of oil cloth, printed to imitate chair caning, glued to the canvas. As John Golding later explained, "This was

1. Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 69.

the first *collage*,* that is to say the first painting in which extraneous objects or materials are applied to the picture surface.”² The invention of collage “struck the most violent blow yet at traditional painting,” because it violated a fundamental tradition that had been honored since the Renaissance, that nothing other than paint should be placed on the two-dimensional surface of the support, and because it did this in a particularly irreverent way, by using “bits of rubbish.”³

Art historians have long considered collage a far-reaching innovation: so for example Golding commented that “The aesthetic implications of *collage* as a whole were vast, and its invention was to lead to a whole series of developments in twentieth-century art.”⁴ In the myopic discipline of art history, however, it has not generally been appreciated just how vast the implications of the innovation of collage have been, for these go far beyond aesthetic considerations. When he made *Still Life with Chair Caning*, Picasso set in motion a remarkable series of events that would make the art of the twentieth century fundamentally different from that of all earlier centuries. During the next six decades, the invention of dozens of new artistic genres would radically transform the functions as well as the appearance of art.

That collage initiated this process is fitting for a number of reasons. The inventor himself was an archetype. Not only was Picasso the most important artist of the twentieth century, but when he made *Still Life with Chair Caning* at the age of 31, he became the first in the line of

-
2. John Golding, *Cubism*, revised American edition (Boston: Boston Book and Art Shop, 1968), p. 103; J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Vol. 3, p. 469.
 3. Golding, *Cubism*, p. 103.
 4. Golding, *Cubism*, p. 105.

dozens of young innovators who would transform twentieth-century art by creating new genres.⁵ And like virtually all of those later innovators, Picasso was a conceptual artist, whose contributions were the embodiments of new ideas. Collage was an archetypal conceptual innovation, for it dramatically and decisively broke the rules of an existing art form. And it was also an archetype in that, like many of the later conceptual innovations in twentieth-century art, it was synthetic, and involved combining previously disparate elements into a single work.

The 1910s

The impact of Picasso's example in creating a new genre was almost immediate. Since 1909, Picasso had worked closely with Georges Braque in developing Cubism. The two spent August of 1912 working together in Sorgues, a small town in the South of France. Picasso left to return to Paris at the beginning of September. In Picasso's absence, within the next few weeks, Braque created the first papier collé,* *Fruit Dish and Glass*, by attaching three pieces of wallpaper, printed to resemble wood-grain, to a charcoal still life.⁶ Braque later recalled, "After having made the [first] papier collé I felt a great shock, and it was an even greater shock for Picasso when I showed it to him."⁷ Papier collé was obviously related to the innovation of collage, but it produced an effect that Picasso had not recognized. In the earlier stages of Cubism, Picasso and Braque had largely abandoned color as a result of their concern with using shading to give solidity to the flat planes of the fragments into which they broke the objects they

5. David W. Galenson, "The Greatest Artists of the Twentieth Century," NBER Working Paper 11899 (2005).

6. *OED*, Vol. 11, p. 166.

represented. Papier collé presented a way to reintroduce color into their art, for it showed how they could symbolize objects through the use of flat colored planes. This ushered in a new synthetic phase in the two artists' development of Cubism. Thus George Heard Hamilton pointed to the rapid development from Braque's innovation: "The skill and authority with which both artists manipulated their discoveries can be seen in *papier collés* executed only a few months later, where an 'analytical' fragmentation of objects was succeeded by their 'synthetic' construction from forms not originally derived from them."⁸

A trip to Paris in 1913 prompted the young Russian artist Vladimir Tatlin to give up painting in favor of sculpture. His key experience in Paris was a visit to Picasso's studio, where Tatlin saw some small three-dimensional works that Picasso had made, in a Cubist idiom, from pieces of paper, sheet metal, and wire. Upon his return to Moscow later in 1913, Tatlin began to make sculptures with the same kinds of scrap materials Picasso had used, but which Tatlin systematically organized into forms through the use of geometric planning. Searching for a name for his new works, Tatlin tried several, including painterly relief – signifying the works' intermediate position between painting and sculpture – before settling on the name counter-relief.⁹ Tatlin chose this name to emphasize his objection to traditional sculptural relief, and it

-
7. John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso*, Vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1996), p. 249.
 8. George Heard Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880-1940* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 247.
 9. H. H. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, fifth ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004), pp. 208-09; also see Sam Hunter, John Jacobus, and Daniel Wheeler, *Modern Art*, third ed. (New York: Vendome Press, 2004), p. 159.

has become associated with his innovation.¹⁰ Tatlin's emphasis on the use of common materials that were not associated with the tradition of fine art struck a responsive chord with a number of young Russian artists who wanted to create forms for a new mass audience, and over the course of the next few years the concept of construction* came to be associated with Tatlin's work.^k The precise date when this began is unclear, but by 1920 the term construction was used by Russian artists to refer both to a process for making art works and to the final result of that process.^l By that time, Tatlin had been recognized as the founder of Constructivism, with followers who included Naum Gabo and Alexander Rodchenko. In keeping with Tatlin's initial concerns, Constructivism used mathematical planning and modern technology to explore the artistic qualities of common materials.

Late in his life, Marcel Duchamp recalled:

In 1913 I had the happy idea to fasten a bicycle wheel to a kitchen stool and watch it turn...

In New York in 1915 I bought at a hardware store a snow shovel on which I wrote "In Advance of the Broken Arm."

10. Richard Andrews, *Art Into Life* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), p. 21.

k. *OED*, Vol. 3, p. 794.

l. Magdalena Dabrowski, "The Russian Contribution to Modernism: 'Construction' as Realization of Innovative Aesthetic Concepts of the Russian Avant-Garde," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1990), Chaps 2-3.

It was around that time that the word “readymade”^{*} came to mind to designate this form of manifestation.^m

m. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989), p. 141; *OED*, Vol. 13, p. 270.

The real fame of the readymade dates from 1917, when the American Society of Independent Artists declined to exhibit a porcelain urinal that Duchamp had purchased, signed with the fictitious name R. Mutt, and titled *Fountain*. The ensuing controversy produced a heated debate over the boundaries of art that became a central issue in generating the art of the second half of the twentieth century. It is primarily because of this that many art critics consider Duchamp the greatest influence on the art of that era.ⁿ

The highly conceptual nature of Duchamp's work has proved irresistible to many conceptual art scholars, and there has been a vast outpouring of analysis of his art, and his life. An issue that has been relatively neglected, however, in this great body of work is that of the origins of the readymade. Duchamp himself did not discuss the inspiration for this innovation, beyond describing it as a "happy idea" he had in 1913, in the passage quoted above. Few scholars appear to have considered whether Duchamp's idea might have been related to Picasso's innovation of collage just one year earlier. In 1971, the critic Clement Greenberg did make this connection, writing of Duchamp that:

n. E.g. Calvin Tomkins, *Off the Wall* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), p. 125.

He would seem to have attributed the impact of Cubism – and particularly of Picasso’s first collage-constructions – to what he saw as its startling difficulty; and it’s as though the bicycle wheel mounted upside-down on a stool and the store-bought bottle rack he produced in 1913 were designed to go Picasso one better in this direction.^o

o. Joseph Masheck, ed., *Marcel Duchamp in Perspective* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2002), p. 126; also see p. 11.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that although *Fountain* was effectively unaltered from the object Duchamp purchased, the same was not true of the first readymade, in which Duchamp fastened together, or collaged, two disparate objects. Although there is no evidence that Duchamp saw Picasso's collage, an obvious feature of conceptual art is that it is often not necessary to see an innovation in order to understand its significance, and this is clearly true for collage.^p It appears likely that Duchamp's enormous influence on the art of the late twentieth century was made possible by Picasso's key early innovation.

A number of artists associated with the Dada movement began to create new genres during World War I. In several cases, these artists and their innovations subsequently became important in Surrealism. An example of this is the biomorph,* that Jean Arp first created in 1915 or 1916.^q Arp was one of the founders of the first Dada group, in Zurich, and he later became an influential Surrealist. The shapes of the biomorphs came from Arp's interest in automatism, and appear to be related to plants or primitive animal forms. William Rubin observed that Arp's biomorphism gained currency as "the nearest thing to a common form-language for the painter-poets of the Surrealist generations."^r

During this same time Arp was devising a new type of relief, intermediate between

p. For discussion see David W. Galenson, *Old Masters and Young Geniuses* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 86-93.

q. *OED*, Vol. 2, p. 209.

r. William Rubin, *Dada Surrealism, and Their Heritage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968), p. 40-41.

painting and sculpture, that he called constructed paintings.**^s These were Arp's response to Cubist collages. He would make drawings, usually using organic forms like the biomorphs, then give them to a carpenter who would cut the shapes from thin layers of wood. Arp painted each of the pieces, then glued a number of them together, often superimposing them to create reliefs of varying depths. Although these reliefs were always abstract, they suggested plants or primitive animal forms, and Arp used the term "earthly forms" to describe them.^t

Arp's interest in automatism soon produced another new genre. In 1916 and 1917 he began to make collages in which torn pieces of paper were fixed to a support in the positions they supposedly fell into when dropped from above.^u Although Arp's greatest concern with these collages was in the use of accident in creating works of art, just as the Dada poet Tristan Tzara made poems from words cut out of newspapers and drawn from a hat or scattered on a table, it was a different aspect of the creation of these works – the tearing of the pieces of paper – that resulted in their designation as the first examples of a new genre, *papier déchiré*.^v

In the winter of 1918-19 the German artist Kurt Schwitters began to make collages from scraps of waste paper and other discarded material. When these were first exhibited in 1919

s. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 245.

t. Jane Hancock and Stefanie Poley, *Arp, 1886-1966* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 62-67.

u. That the papers were not actually placed in this way is confirmed by Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, p. 41.

v. *OED*, Vol. 11, p. 166; Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 292.

Schwitters chose the word merz** to describe them.^w The term originated from one of the first such collages, *Merzbild*, which was titled from a scrap of paper that had been cut from an advertisement for a bank – the Kommerz-und Privatbank – in which the syllable “merz” could be read. Schwitters declared that “*Merzbilder* are abstract works of art. The word Merz denotes essentially the combination of all conceivable materials for artistic purposes.” Over time, Schwitters came to apply the term to nearly all his works, as he considered merz a principle of working, using individual units of diverse materials in a constructive way: “Merz stands for freedom from all fetters, for the sake of artistic creation.”^x

Photomontage* was invented by Dada artists in Berlin by 1919 in an attempt to create a new art form, based on photography, that would replace easel painting.^y Although it failed to achieve this goal, it quickly spread from its initial use, of creating biting political and social commentary and satire, to the commercial advertising profession. William Rubin argued that photomontage was a misnomer for photo-collage, since the images were not montaged in a darkroom but were instead made by pasting superimposed photographs onto a support, but photomontage nonetheless came to be the accepted term for the works of a number of Berlin Dadaists, especially John Heartfield, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, and Hannah Höch.^z

In the Vitebsk art school in 1919, the Russian artist El Lissitzky, who was a Suprematist

w. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, pp. 256-57.

x. John Elderfield, *Kurt Schwitters* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), pp. 12, 27, 50, 94.

y. *OED*, Vol. 11, p. 725.

z. Rubin, *Dada Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, p. 42; David Evans and Sylvia Gohl, *Photomontage: A Political Weapon* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1986), pp. 10-16.

disciple of his fellow faculty member Kazimir Malevich, developed his own form of abstract painting. He called it Proun,** the title he subsequently gave to all his abstract paintings.^{aa} The exact source of the term Proun is uncertain, but it appears to have been an acronym referring both to new art and to the name of the Vitebsk art school. Lissitzky's paintings were strongly architectural, and he explained that "A Proun is a station for changing trains from architecture to painting."^{bb} He later expanded Proun to include sculpture, and a room-sized work he created for a Berlin art exhibition in 1923.^{cc}

The 1920s

In Paris late in 1921, the American Dada painter and photographer Man Ray began to make photographs without a camera. Under the influence of Duchamp, Man Ray had become interested in making works of art without traditional means. After using an airbrush to make paintings without touching the canvas, Man Ray began to make photographs by placing objects on photographic paper and exposing it to light. This was not a new process, for it had been used in the nineteenth century. But instead of making static images, as in the earlier instances, Man Ray moved the light source and shifted the objects, creating new visual effects suggesting depth and movement. To honor his invention of this new practice, Man Ray named his new works

aa. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 205; George Heard Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880-1940* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 317.

bb. Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe*, p. 317.

cc. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 205; Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe*, pp. 317-18.

rayograms.*^{dd}

In early 1922, apparently unaware of Man Ray's invention, in Berlin the Hungarian artist Laszlo Moholy-Nagy independently made works using virtually the same process, which he called photograms.*^{ee} Moholy-Nagy was a Constructivist, and was interested in mechanical interactions of light and motion. The images he produced differed considerably in appearance from those of Man Ray, but they were basically similar in consisting of photographs made without a camera.

The German artist Max Ernst discovered frottage* in 1925.^{ff} As a Surrealist, Ernst was always alert to new ways of drawing on the subconscious, and he later recorded an experience he had on August 10, 1925:

dd. Neil Baldwin, *Man Ray* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1988), p. 96; *OED*, Vol. 13, p. 243.

ee. *OED*, Vol. 11, p. 721; Baldwin, *Man Ray*, pp. 98-99.

ff. *OED*, Vol. 6, p. 223.

Finding myself one rainy evening in a seaside inn, I was struck by the obsession that showed to my excited gaze the floor-boards upon which a thousand scrubbings had deepened the groove. I decided then to investigate the symbolism of this obsession and, in order to aid my meditative and hallucinatory faculties, I made from the boards a series of drawings by placing on them, at random, sheets of paper which I undertook to rub with black lead.^{gg}

gg. Max Ernst, *Beyond Painting* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1948), p. 7.

The success of this new means of producing images prompted Ernst to extend it, and to make rubbings of a wide range of objects. He concluded that frottage was “the real equivalent of that which is already known by the term *automatic writing*.” Like Rimbaud’s desire to allow his subconscious to write poetry, Ernst believed his subconscious could now create images: “by widening in this way the active part of the mind’s hallucinatory faculties I came to assist *as spectator* at the birth of all my works, from the tenth of August, 1925, memorable day of the discovery of *frottage*.”^{hh}

Exquisite corpse** was invented in 1925 by the Surrealist poet André Breton.ⁱⁱ It originated in a word game motivated by the Surrealists’ love of accidental and irrational effects. Each of a group of friends would write a word or phrase on a piece of paper, then fold the paper so the next participant could not see the previous entries. The first result obtained in this way gave the game its name: “The exquisite/corpse/shall drink/ the young/wine.”^{jj} The game was readily extended to drawing, and provided a means for creating composite irrational images: Breton remarked that “With the *Exquisite Corpse* we had at our disposal – at last – an infallible means of sending the mind’s critical mechanism away on vacation and fully releasing its metaphorical potentialities.”^{kk}

1930s

In 1922, while working as a professor at the Weimar Bauhaus, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy

hh. Ernst, *Beyond Painting*, pp. 8-9.

ii. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 288.

jj. André Breton, *Surrealism and Painting* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2002), p. 288-89.

conceived the idea of a light-and-motion machine. After eight years of calculation and design, Moholy-Nagy produced a kinetic, motor-driven construction that he named a light-space modulator.**^{ll} These machines were made with metal and glass, and when they were set in motion their rotation produced silhouette displays on objects that surrounded them. The light-space modulator combined both Constructivist concerns with working mechanisms and Suprematist interests in the machine as spectacle, while its conception and creation typified the artist-engineer ideal of the Bauhaus.^{mm}

In 1930, the young American sculptor Alexander Calder visited the Paris studio of Piet Mondrian. Calder later recalled that the sight of Mondrian's colored rectangles gave him a shock. He suggested to Mondrian that "perhaps it would be fun to make these rectangles oscillate," and although the painter immediately rejected the suggestion, Calder seized on this goal, of combining abstraction and movement.ⁿⁿ Calder began to make wire sculptures with revolving elements; some were driven by small electric motors, others with hand cranks. In 1932, a friend brought Marcel Duchamp to see these sculptures. Duchamp liked them, and arranged for Calder to exhibit them at a Paris gallery. Calder later wrote: "I asked him what sort of a name I could give these things and he at once produced 'Mobile'*... Duchamp also suggested that on my invitation card [for the exhibition] I make a drawing of the motor-driven object and print:

kk. Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, p. 290.

ll. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 344.

mm. Krisztina Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp. 53-55.

nn. Alexander Calder, *Calder* (New York: Pantheon, 1966), p. 113.

CALDER: SES MOBILES.”^{oo} The term mobile was later extended to the wire sculptures that Calder began to make later in 1932 that did not have motors, but that were instead moved by air currents.

Many of Calder’s fellow artists attended his exhibition of mobiles. Calder recalled that in reacting to the mobiles, one of them had retrospectively named another genre: “Jean Arp said to me, ‘Well, what were those things you did last year – stables?’* Whereupon, I seized the term and applied it first to all the things previously shown at Percier’s [gallery] and later to the large steel objects I am involved in now.”^{pp}

In Paris in 1933, the photographer Brassai began to publish pictures of such discarded objects as crumpled bus or Metro tickets, or lumps of toothpaste or shaving cream. Brassai’s close-up photographs transformed these chance shapes into evocative images. The Surrealist painter Salvador Dali declared that these forms were subconsciously made art, and named them involuntary sculptures.^{**qq}

Surrealism had a particular concern with objects that were not intended to be artistic. As early as 1923, Breton had called for “the concrete realization... of objects perceived only in dreams.”^{rr} An exhibition in Paris in 1936 dedicated to the Surrealist object included a number of types of objects, including “natural objects, interpreted natural objects, perturbed objects, found

oo. Calder, *Calder*, p. 127; *OED*, Vol. 9, p. 929.

pp. Calder, *Calder*, p. 130; *OED*, Vol. 16, p. 429.

qq. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 326; Anne Wilkes Tucker, *Brassai* (New York: Harry N. Abrams. 1999), p. 76.

objects,* mathematical objects, Readymades, etc.”^{ss} In an essay written for the exhibition, Breton described “the surrealist aim of bringing about *a total revolution of the object* through various measures, including: ... showing it in whatever state external forces such as earthquake, fire or water may have left it; retaining it just because of the doubt surrounding its original function; or because of the ambiguity resulting from its totally or partially irrational conditioning by the elements, entailing its dignification through chance discovery (the ‘found object’).”^{tt} Found objects could be natural objects, such as stones or plants, or such manufactured objects as a shoe, a toy, or a loaf of bread.^{uu}

1940s

No In 1946 the Argentine artist Lucio Fontana began to call his works of all kinds – paintings, sculptures, and architecture – spatial concepts.^{**vv} Fontana wanted to eliminate the barriers among the genres of art, to emphasize that what mattered in any format was the primacy

rr. Rubin, *Dada Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, p. 143.

ss. Rubin, *Dada Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, p. 211; John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, eds., *Oxford English Dictionary Additions Series*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 97.

tt. Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, p. 280. Duchamp later explained that the readymades were not related to found objects: “My Ready-Mades have nothing to do with the *objet trouvé* because the so-called ‘found object’ is completely directed by personal taste. Personal taste decides that this is a beautiful object and is unique. That most of my Ready-Mades were mass produced and could be duplicated is another important difference;” Katharine Kuh, *The Artist’s Voice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 90-92.

uu. Rubin, *Dada Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, p. 144.

vv. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 465; Enrico Crispolti and Olivier Meessen, *Lucio Fontana* (Saint Paul de Vence: Galerie Pascal Retelet, 2000), p. 136.

of mental conception, before the manual realization occurred. All of Fontana's art was intended to represent a new idea of space.

In 1949, two young French artists proposed a new form of collage that came from the streets of Paris. In that year Raymond Hains and Jacques de la Mahé Villeglé first dismantled a long section of torn posters from their original locations on walls and fences and transferred them to canvas.^{ww} In tribute to the process of removal, they named their new work *décollage*.^{**xx}

The same year marked the first appearance of the environment.^{*yy} Early in 1949, in a Milan gallery Lucio Fontana exhibited *Ambiente nero*, or *Black Environment*, in which an abstract shape covered with phosphorescent varnish hung from the ceiling, lit only by black light. The work consisted of the entire space of the gallery, which surrounded the viewer.^{zz} This was part of Fontana's Spatialist program aimed at transcending painting and sculpture by developing color and form into surrounding space. During the 1960s, the term environment was extended to a wide variety of works of art that the spectator had to walk into.^{aaa}

1950s

Assemblage* is perhaps the single exception to the rule that the new genres of the

ww. Brandon Taylor, *Collage* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), p. 148.

xx. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 515; Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler, *Modern Art*, p. 331.

yy. *OED*, Vol. 5, p. 315.

zz. Enrico Crispolti and Olivier Meessen, *Lucio Fontana* (Saint Paul de Vence: Galerie Pascal Retelet, 2000), pp. 142-43; Gill Perry and Paul Wood, eds., *Themes in Contemporary Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 199.

aaa. Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings* (New York: Harry N.

twentieth century were all invented by conceptual artists.^{bbb} In 1953, the experimental painter Jean Dubuffet began to make lithographs from collages of torn fragments of a variety of colored and printed papers.^{ccc} In the belief that the term “collage” should be reserved for works made during the 1910s and ‘20s, Dubuffet gave his works the new name of assemblages d’empreintes (imprint assemblages).^{ddd} In 1955 Dubuffet extended this technique to oil paintings: he would begin by making a large number of paintings, then cut them into pieces, and create new works by fitting these pieces together and gluing them onto clean canvases. He called the resulting works tableaux d’assemblages (painting assemblages).^{eee} True to his experimental nature, Dubuffet made his assemblages to achieve a visual effect, for he found that combinations of small pieces of paper or canvas covered with many different colors achieved a “lively scintillation” that he could not obtain through other means. Equally experimental was his attitude that the works he produced in this way were “not so much undertaken with the idea of realization as in the spirit of preliminary research, with a view to future realizations.”^{fff}

Assemblage came to be used to describe a wide range of works of art, but its typical application was not to the collages of pieces of paper or canvas that Dubuffet had made. Instead,

Abrams, 1966), p. 159.

bbb. *OED*, Vol. 1, p. 705.

ccc. David W. Galenson, *Artistic Capital* (London: Routledge, 2006) pp. 73-77; Peter Selz, *The Work of Jean Dubuffet* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1962), pp. 84-85.

ddd. William Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), p. 150; Selz, *The Work of Jean Dubuffet*, p. 84.

eee. Selz, *The Work of Jean Dubuffet*, pp. 116-23.

in the catalogue for a major exhibition titled “The Art of Assemblage,” presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1962, William Seitz explained that the works included nearly all shared two characteristics: “1. They are primarily *assembled* rather than painted, drawn, modeled, or carved. 2. Entirely, or in part, their constituent elements are preformed natural or manufactured materials, objects or fragments not intended as art materials.”^{ggg} Interestingly, therefore, the three-dimensional works made of manufactured objects that are now commonly called assemblages are far in spirit and appearance from the two-dimensional works of paper and canvas to which Dubuffet first gave the name.^{hhh}

In 1954, the young artist Robert Rauschenberg began using the term combine-painting, or simply combine**, to refer to paintings to which he attached real objects.ⁱⁱⁱ Initially the combines were intended to be mounted on walls, but over time some came to be free-standing. Two combines – *Bed* (1955) and *Monogram* (1959) – are among the five works made by American artists in the 1950s that are most frequently reproduced in textbooks of art history.^{jjj} The term combine has never been extended to works by artists other than Rauschenberg, and is in fact generally restricted to works he made during 1954-64.^{kkk} But the combines are widely considered

fff. Selz, *The Work of Jean Dubuffet*, pp. 121, 105.

ggg. Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage*, p. 6.

hhh. Amy Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002), pp. 215-16.

iii. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 484; Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler, *Modern Art*, pp. 300-01; Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era*, p. 205.

jjj. Galenson, *Artistic Capital*, p. 50.

kkk. Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era*, p. 206.

the most important works ever made by Rauschenberg, who is in turn considered one of the most influential artists of his generation.^{lll} One indication of their importance is that New York's Metropolitan Museum, which rarely presents exhibitions of the work of living artists, recently hosted a show titled "Robert Rauschenberg Combines," which included 170 of the works.^{mmm} Arthur Danto contended that the combine *Bed* (1955) was a pivotal work between the past and the future of advanced art, "pointing in one direction back to the metaphysics of paint, which defined Abstract Expressionism ... and, in the other, to the uninflected display of commonplace objects, which in various ways was to define Pop."ⁿⁿⁿ

Early in his career the Swiss artist Jean Tinguely became fascinated with making kinetic sculptures that would incorporate chance into the process of making art. In 1955 Tinguely made a drawing machine that, in the words of his friend Pontus Holten, "demonstrated that a work of art is not something finished or final, but something that makes its own life ... [T]he work of art itself has creative powers."^{ooo} Tinguely later made a series of machines that produced drawings, as well as others that made paintings, that he called meta-matics.^{**ppp} The meta-matics could produce thousands of works of art without ever making two identical images.

lll. E.g. Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 85-90; Arthur Danto, *The Madonna of the Future* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 273-78; Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era*, p. 206.

mmm. Paul Schimmel, *Robert Rauschenberg Combines* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006).

nnn. Danto, *The Madonna of the Future*, p. 278.

ooo. Pontus Hulten, *Jean Tinguely* (New York: Abbeville Press 1987), p. 28.

ppp. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 510.

The Italian conceptual artist Piero Manzoni began to make works he called achromes** in 1957.^{qqq} The first achromes were made with kaolin – white clay – on canvas, but later Manzoni extended the name to white works made from other materials, including plaster or cotton balls. Whatever the medium, the achromes were “monochrome works with neutral surfaces that were emphatically devoid of any imagery.”^{ttt} The achromes were motivated by Manzoni’s concern with the infinite. Their white surface was not a symbol, “just a white surface that is simply a white surface and nothing else;” although the achrome could not actually be infinite, it was “repeatable to infinity.”^{sss}

In 1958 Lucio Fontana began to make *tagli*** (slashes, or cuts).^{ttt} These were monochrome paintings on canvas that Fontana slashed one or more times with a razor blade. Following Fontana’s practice since 1946, all were titled *Spatial Concepts*, then the tagli were given subtitles – *Expectation* for those with a single cut, and *Expectations* for those with two or more. The cuts were a logical extension of an earlier set of paintings in which Fontana had made holes in the canvases. The laceration was a precise and calculated gesture that took only a moment, and was irreversible. For Fontana, cutting into the featureless monochrome canvas was analogous to cutting into all of cosmic space.^{uuu}

qqq. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 516; Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler, *Modern Art*, p. 360.

rrr. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 516.

sss. Germano Celant, *Piero Manzoni* (Milan: Edizioni Charta, 1998), p. 132.

ttt. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 465.

uuu. Crispolti and Meessen, *Lucio Fontana*, pp. 146-47.

One of the cultural trademarks of the early 1960s was baptized in 1958, when Allan Kaprow coined the term “happening”^{*} to refer to a new form of performance.^{vvv} As a young artist in the ‘50s, Kaprow was preoccupied with the Duchampian question, What is art? He began to fill gallery spaces with trash and other real objects, in keeping with one current view that art was anything, but he soon tired of this permissiveness: “‘anything’ was too easy. If anything was art, nothing was art.”^{www} His new answer was to invent the happening, “a collage of rather abstract events for moveable audiences.” The first happening, titled *Eighteen Happenings in Six Parts*, was presented in October, 1959, at the Reuben Gallery in New York. For Kaprow,

vvv. *OED*, Vol. 6, p. 1097; Jeff Kelley, *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 1.

www. Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, expanded ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. xxvii.

The Happening seemed to me a new art form that couldn't be confused with paintings, poetry, architecture, music, dance, or plays. As residues of a European past, these old forms of art had lost their artness for me by overexposure and empty worship. Happenings were fresh.^{xxx}

xxx. Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, p. xxvii-xxviii.

Over time, Kaprow became disturbed when his new happenings began to settle into conventions, and became “just another version of vanguard theater.” He decided to avoid this by doing events only once, and by encouraging spontaneity in their execution.^{yyy} Happenings subsequently had no structured beginning, middle, or end; they were fluid and open-ended. They had no plot, and were improvised. Chance played a key role in happenings, and they could not be reproduced.^{zzz} However, the author or authors of any particular happening did present a program and a sequence of events for viewing, and the actions could often be interpreted as symbolic.^{aaaa}

Happenings came to be emblematic of popular culture in the early '60s, and were promoted by the mass media as evidence of the emergence of new and more accessible forms of art; it was in this spirit that the Supremes released a song titled “The Happening” in 1966. Happenings could easily be emulated, and they spread rapidly around the world, in the process influencing the work of artists as diverse as Robert Rauschenberg, Joseph Beuys, and Yves Klein. The highly conceptual nature of the genre was particularly attractive to artists who, like Kaprow, were also cultural critics, and Kaprow was proud of the large body of writing that quickly grew up around happenings.^{bbbb}

In 1959, Wolf Vostell and Nam June Paik began to include televisions in their environmental works; this marked the first use of the twentieth-century's new mass medium in

yyy. Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, p. xxviii.

zzz. Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, p. 15-26.

aaaa. Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler, *Modern Art*, p. 314.

bbbb. Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, p. 61; Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler,

advanced art. Yet Amy Dempsey argues that “the symbolic birth of Video* Art occurred later in 1965 when Paik purchased Sony’s new Portapak hand-held video camera.”^{cccc} Paik predicted that “as collage techniques replaced oil paint, the cathode ray tube will replace the canvas.”^{dddd} Video has become an important medium in advanced art, through the work of Paik, Ana Mendieta, Bruce Nauman, Bill Viola, Tony Oursler, and others. Many young artists today work primarily or exclusively in video, including such prominent figures as Pipilotti Rist, Steve McQueen, who won England’s Turner Prize in 1999, and Matthew Barney.

In 1959, Gustav Metzger published “Auto-Destructive Art,” a manifesto on the relationship between creation and destruction in art. In his scheme auto-destructives* were to be public monuments, created by collaborations between artists and scientists, that would symbolize the decay and disaster that resulted from the political and technological developments of the Cold War.^{eeee} Metzger did not actually build these monuments, but in 1960 the sculptor Jean Tinguely made what would become the most celebrated artistic auto-destructive, *Homage to New York*, “a kinetic assemblage of junk and found objects meant to destroy itself in a performance that took place in MOMA’s [Museum of Modern Art’s] sculpture garden.”^{ffff} Tinguely stopped making auto-destructives in 1964, and the genre did not spread among visual artists. Metzger’s

Modern Art, p. 314.

cccc. *OED*, Vol. 6, p. 614; Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era*, p. 257.

dddd. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 594.

eeee. *OED Additions Series*, Vol. 1, p. 11; Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 385-86.

ffff. Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, p. 386.

influence might have been greater in another of the arts, however. Thus the English musician Pete Townshend, who had learned Metzger's theory as a student at Ealing Art College, made his show-ending auto-destructive act of smashing his guitar the trademark of his rock band, The Who. Townshend began the practice in 1964, and it quickly became famous; the band's singer, Roger Daltrey, later recalled that "After two years, people were just coming to see us smash up all our gear. The music meant nothing."^{gggg}

The 1960s

The French conceptual artist Yves Klein dreamed of flying effortlessly into the void, and in 1960 he devised a new means of creating images that represented weightless human bodies in space. Under his direction, nude models would apply his trademark blue paint to their bodies, then press themselves against large sheets of paper tacked to the wall or spread on the floor. These paintings were first made at Klein's Paris apartment, in front of a small number of his friends. One of those present, the critic Pierre Restany, gave the works the name Klein subsequently adopted, of anthropometries.^{*h h h h} The use of "living brushes" was consistent with Klein's conceptual belief that the artist should conceive works of art but not personally produce them: "True 'painters and poets' don't paint and don't write poems."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

Also in 1960, Klein began to make cosmogonies^{**} – paintings created by natural

gggg. Larry Smith, *Pete Townshend* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), pp. 14-15.

h h h h. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 510; Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler, *Modern Art*, p. 330.

iiii. N. Charlet, *Yves Klein* (Paris: Adam Biro, 2000), p. 170.

forces.^{jjjj} These were produced by painting leaves, grass, and plants and imprinting them on canvases, or by coloring sheets of paper or canvases with pigment, then exposing them to rain or wind.^{kkkk} Klein recalled one trip from Paris to Nice: “I placed a canvas, freshly coated with paint, upon the roof of my white Citroen. As I zoomed down Route Nationale 7 at the speed of 100 kilometers an hour, the heat, the cold, the light, the wind, and the rain all combined to age my canvas prematurely.”^{llll} Like the anthropometries, the cosmogonies were conceived but not directly produced by the artist.

In 1958, Klein’s obsession with space had led him to present an exhibition at Iris Clert’s Paris gallery titled “Le Vide” (The Void) that consisted of empty space. The French artist Arman, a friend of Klein’s, proposed that Klein’s show should logically be followed by “Le Plein” (The Full), but it took two years to convince Clert, so Arman’s show appeared in 1960, when he filled the gallery with trash.^{mmmm} This initiated Arman’s production of poubelles** (trash cans), usually smaller, table-top works, consisting of discarded objects encased in plexiglass boxes.ⁿⁿⁿⁿ Some of these were portraits of friends, for which the artist coaxed people to give up their favorite possessions to be permanently preserved. Arman’s use of trash to make works of art symbolized the transience of men’s lives, while the personalized collections further

jjjj. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 510.

kkkk. Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein* (Stuttgart: Cantz Verlag, 1994), p. 198.

llll. Yves Klein, *Le Dépassement de la problématique de l’art et d’autres écrits* (Paris: Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 2003), p. 295.

mmmm. Jan van der Marck, *Arman* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), pp. 59-63.

nnnn. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 513.

reflected the tastes and interests of individuals.

Arman also began making accumulations** in 1960.^{oooo} Each of these comprised a large collection of a single type of manufactured object – e.g. headlights, alarm clocks, padlocks, ladies shoes, or bottle caps – in a wooden box. Initially the objects were used domestic goods, while over time Arman began to choose new industrial goods. The size of the accumulations varied, depending on the artist’s judgment of what constituted a “critical mass.” Arman contended that he did not discover accumulation, but that it discovered him, for he saw spontaneous, man-made accumulations at flea markets, junk yards, and hardware stores. Accumulations were intended to display the power contained in masses of similar objects.^{pppp}

Klein and Arman were both members of a group of young French artists that Pierre Restany named the Nouveaux Réalistes (New Realists). In 1960 another member of the group, César, exhibited sculptures he called compressions,**made by crushing automobile bodies into brightly colored blocks of steel.^{qqqq} Compressions might be made with whole auto bodies, or with collections of a single body part, such as bumpers. Crushing auto bodies allowed César to avoid the gestural methods of the Abstract Expressionists and the Tachistes, for the compressions were the product of a mechanical gesture of only one moment.^{rrrr}

In 1961, the French artist Niki de Saint Phalle began to make shot-reliefs** by shooting a

oooo. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 511.

pppp. van der Marck, *Arman*, pp. 63-72.

qqqq. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 452; Anna Baldaccini-Puigsegur, *César* (Paris: Images en Manoeuvres Editions, 2002), p. 115.

rrrr. François Mathey, *Trois sculpteurs* (Paris: Musée des arts décoratifs, 1965), not paginated.

rifle at bags of liquid paint suspended above reliefs made with plaster and other objects on wood.^{ssss} When hit by bullets, the bags dripped paint down onto the plaster – in the words of Pierre Restany, “in a colorful fashion worthy of Pollock’s best.”^{tttt} For de Saint Phalle, the act was symbolic: “I was shooting at my own violence and the violence of the times. By shooting at my own violence I no longer had to carry it inside of me like a burden.”^{uuuu} She considered painting a communal activity, so she invited others to shoot; among those who participated in making shot-reliefs were Jean Tinguely, Yves Klein, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg.^{vvvv}

In Rome in 1961, Piero Manzoni first signed human beings and declared them to be works of art, or living sculptures.^{****} An accompanying certificate of authenticity specified whether the individual was a work of art in whole, or only in the (body) part signed, and whether the person was always a work of art or only during certain activities. Among those in the highest category of works of art, in whole until death, were the artist Marcel Broodthaers and the linguist Umberto Eco.^{xxxx} Manzoni’s action effectively extended Duchamp’s readymades from manufactured objects to human beings. In 1969, the London-based artists Gilbert and George

ssss. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 511.

tttt. Gilbert Perlein, ed., *Niki de Saint Phalle* (Nice: Musée d’art modern et d’art contemporain, 2002), p. 32

uuuu. Perlein, *Niki de Saint Phalle* , p. 33.

vvvv. John Ashbery, *Reported Sightings* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 146; Perlein, *Niki de Saint Phalle* , pp. 106, 112.

****. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 515; Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler, *Modern Art*, p. 368.

xxxx. Celant, *Piero Manzoni*, p. 32.

pronounced themselves living sculptures. Their art was initially made up of performances they called actions, the first of which, *The Singing Sculpture*, consisted of singing a music hall song, *Underneath the Arches*, for eight hours on each of two consecutive days. Subsequently they have worked in a wide variety of forms, consistently aimed at making art more widely accessible and at breaking down artistic and societal taboos. Their art is always based on their own experiences, and they consider themselves to be living sculptures at all times. Gilbert and George have influenced Damien Hirst and other young British artists in their example of artists as performers, and in their enthusiasm for making art from everyday urban life.^{yyyy}

The Pop artist Claes Oldenburg made the first soft sculpture* in 1962.^{zzzz} These were originally made as props for happenings Oldenburg produced, but Oldenburg soon began to make large stuffed cloth articles of food, including hamburgers, ice cream cones, and slices of cake, which he presented at an exhibition at a New York gallery in 1962. Soft sculpture was quickly perceived as a radical challenge to traditional conceptions of sculpture, for instead of being rigid and resistant, Oldenburg's stuffed works were malleable and pliable.^{aaaaa} The humor of Oldenburg's soft sculptures, and their surprising consistency, helped to make them one of the most distinctive contributions to early Pop art.

In 1962, Gerhard Richter made his first photopainting.^{.*.bbbb} He later recalled that "I had

yyyy. Louisa Buck, *Moving Targets 2* (London: Tate Publishing, 2000), pp. 19-22; Virginia Button, *The Turner Prize: Twenty Years* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003), pp. 44-48.

zzzz. *OED*, Vol. 15, p. 930.

aaaaa. Steven Madoff, ed., *Pop Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 228-33.

bbbb. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 698.

had enough of bloody painting, and painting from a photograph seemed to me the most moronic and inartistic thing that anyone could do.” Working from photographs reduced the number of necessary decisions: “Not having to invent anything any more, forgetting everything you meant by painting – color, composition, space – and all the things you previously knew and thought.”^{cccc} Richter’s photo paintings characteristically included the blurring and graininess of old photographs or amateur snapshots.

One of the most esoteric new genres was the creation of an English conceptual artist named John Latham. Latham developed a philosophy that held in part that instrumental reason and its tool, language, played a central role in the creation of social oppression and war. Beginning in 1964 his attack on language, and its institutionalization in books, was embodied in towers of books, or skoobs* (books spelled backwards), that he burned.^{dddd} Book burning did not become popular among artists, and Latham appears to have been the sole artistic creator of skoobs.

It is not known exactly when the term installation* began to be used for art works, but sometime in the mid-1960s it emerged as a general name for environmental works, including assemblages and happenings.^{eeee} Today many artists produce large, often room-sized works they call installations. These are extremely varied in intent and appearance, and share only the two

cccc. Gerhard Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 22, 33-34.

dddd. *OED*, Vol. 15, p. 627; Stiles and Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, pp. 811-12.

eeee. *OED Additions Series*, Vol. 2, p. 167; Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era*, p. 247.

characteristics that they usually involve a number of disparate objects, and they surround the viewer. Prominent artists whose current output consists primarily or entirely of installations include Christian Boltanski, Maurizio Cattelan, Tracey Emin, Roni Horn, Yayoi Kusama, and Bill Viola. Kristine Stiles observed that “By 1970, installation had become so prevalent and multifaceted that the French artist Daniel Buren would observe: ‘Hasn’t the term *installation* come to replace [the term] *exhibition*?’”^{fffff}

Another label that first began to be used for works by visual artists during the mid-1960s is performance.^{*ggggg} This grew out of a tradition that included the work of Futurist and Dada artists early in the twentieth century, as well as collaborative works created by the composer John Cage, the choreographer Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and others at Black Mountain College in North Carolina in the early 1950s.^{hhhhh} It is uncertain when the term performance began to be used for these multi-disciplinary activities, but the published notebooks of Carolee Schneeman, who became an important performance artist, contain discussions using the name performance art written in 1962-63.ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ Several of the most influential artists of the late 1960s and the 1970s became known for their live or videotaped performance works, including notably Joseph Beuys, Bruce Nauman, and Gilbert and George.

Two new genres originated in the art of Robert Smithson. The broader of the two,

fffff. Gill Perry and Paul Wood, eds., *Themes in Contemporary Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 202.

ggggg. *OED*, Vol. 11, p. 544.

hhhhh. Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era*, p. 222.

iiiiii. Carolee Schneeman, *More than Meat Joy* (New Paltz, NY: Documentext, 1979), pp. 9-

earthwork,** was first named by Smithson in a 1969 article, and came to be widely used to refer to the large landscape works he and such other artists as Walter De Maria and Michael Heizer constructed in remote areas.^{jjjjj} The name appears to have been taken from the title of a science fiction novel, Brian Aldiss' *Earthworks*, that Smithson bought in the course of a documented excursion he had made in 1967.^{kkkkk} The narrower and more specific term, non-site,** was devised by Smithson in 1968 to refer to the works he made for display in art galleries.^{lllll} In Smithson's usage, the site works were the large-scale projects he created in, and from, the landscape, which could only be viewed in their original locations, while the non-sites were made up of documentation and natural material taken from those sites, to be displayed indoors.^{mmmmm}

The 1970s

In 1970, the Minimalist artist Sol LeWitt began to make wall drawings.^{**nnnnn} LeWitt explained that he "wanted to do a work of art that was as two-dimensional as possible," and that it consequently seemed "more natural to work directly on walls than to make a construction ... and then put the construction on the wall." In LeWitt's scheme, "the artist conceives and plans

11.

jjjjj. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 614; Hunter, Jacobus, and Wheeler, *Modern Art*, p. 372; Robert Smithson, *The Collected Writings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 116.

kkkkk. Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, p. 68.

lllll. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 614.

mmmmm. Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, p. 104.

nnnnn. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, p. 552.

the wall drawing,” which is then “realized by draftsmen.”^{ooooo} Wall drawings can be moved from place to place, by recreating the work in a new location, but each is supposed to exist in only one place at a time, so when a new version is made, the old one is supposed to be painted over.

In 1973, while using the newly-invented Polaroid SX-70 camera, Lucas Samaras discovered that while the photograph developed, its surface remained soft, and that he could manipulate the image by pressing and pushing the emulsion.^{ppppp} This allowed him to combine his earlier interests in transformation and photographic self-portraits.^{qqqqq} The result was the photo-transformation,** in which Samaras’ face and body appear distorted and mutilated.^{rrrrr} Samaras has explained these images as the product of the fears that haunted him from his childhood in wartime Macedonia.^{sssss}

The 1980s

In 1982, David Hockney began to use a Polaroid camera to make series of photographs of selected subjects, taken from different angles. He then assembled these series into composite images he called joiners.**^{ttttt} Hockney’s purpose was to pursue Cubist discoveries about pictorial space, dispensing with the one-point perspective established in the Renaissance in favor

ooooo. Adachiara Zevi, ed., *Sol LeWitt Critical Texts* (Rome: Editrice Inonia, 1994), pp. 91, 95.

ppppp. Ben Lifson, *Samaras* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1987), p. 43.

qqqqq. Kim Levin, *Lucas Samaras* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), pp. 23, 83; Lifson, *Samaras*, pp. 13-14.

rrrrr. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, pp. 494-95.

sssss. John Gruen, *The Artist Observed* (Chicago: A Cappella Books, 1991), p. 235.

ttttt. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, pp. 481-82.

of images that more accurately mimicked actual human perception, with “many points of focus and many moments.”^{uuuuu}

Young Geniuses

For of the new genres discussed above, it is possible to identify a particular innovator (or innovators, in the case of Hains and Villeglé) and a date of first appearance with reasonable confidence. For these genres, Table 1 shows the ages of these artists at the time of the innovations.

Pablo Picasso initiated this stream of innovations when he was 31 years old, and perhaps appropriately this is just below the overall median age of the 44 artists listed in Table 1 when they created their new genres. Thirty-five of the 44 innovators, or 80%, were below the age of 35; apart from the experimental Dubuffet, only Lucio Fontana was above the age of 50 when he made an innovation. Table 1 thus confirms that new genres are generally created by the young conceptual innovators.

Conclusion

The twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of artistic genres. In 1910, visual art consisted primarily of painting, and to a lesser extent sculpture. Today, less than one hundred years later, many visual artists spend most or all of their time making installations, videos, collages, performances, and a host of other types of work that did not exist in 1910. This has had profound implications for artists and their roles. Apart from the enormous changes in the appearance of art, the proliferation of genres has fragmented the art world. Early in the twentieth

uuuuu. Marco Livingstone, *David Hockney* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), pp. 235-38.

century, a great artist could influence nearly all advanced visual artists, but in contrast, a century later it is virtually impossible for any one artist to influence artists making such different types of art as painting, videos, and installation.

Surprisingly, very few of the new genres were the result of new technology. Video was of course a twentieth-century invention, but nearly all the other genres described above use technologies available in 1900.

The dramatic increase in new artistic genres was a product of both new practices and new attitudes. Not only did many artists want to do new things, but they often wanted to underscore the novelty of these new things, by giving them new names. The self-consciousness with which many artists devised new practices, as well as the attitude that celebrated the novelty of those practices, was a feature of the conceptual approach to art that accounted for nearly all the new genres discussed above. To a greater extent than had ever before been true, the art of the twentieth century was dominated by a rapid succession of conceptual movements, from Fauvism and Cubism onward. All of these movements were dominated by young artists. It is young practitioners who generally break rules most decisively and conspicuously in all intellectual disciplines. This is true not only because young practitioners, who are new to a field, may have less respect for its traditions, but also because their elders have often become so accustomed to the rules of an activity that they are often hardly aware of the rules' existence, and impact. Seeing these rules with a fresh eye, brash young members of a discipline may consciously decide to depart from them. Creating a new genre is one obvious way of violating the existing rules.

The enumeration of new genres presented in this chapter raises some puzzles that have not been analyzed, or even recognized, by art scholars. A striking puzzle involves chronology.

The roll call of young conceptual innovators carried out above ends abruptly with the 1960s: only a few aging conceptual artists named new genres in the '70s, and only the middle-aged David Hockney in the '80s. Thus the '60s, which witnessed the creation of more than a dozen new genres, was followed by three decades that together produced only three. It would appear that artists working in the '70s, '80s, and '90s were no longer concerned with creating new genre trademarks for their movements or their own work. It should be emphasized that the small number of new genres christened after 1970 does not mean that the creation of new art forms that violated the boundaries of existing genres had ceased. Important young conceptual artists in fact continued to create new forms. It is easy to imagine the 23-year-old Cindy Sherman, beginning to make the *Untitled Film Stills* in 1977, declaring that she had invented the un-self-portrait; or the 26-year-old Jeff Koons, putting a Hoover vacuum in an acrylic box in 1981 and naming it a consumer case; or the 26-year-old Damien Hirst, suspending a tiger shark in a vitrine in 1991 and calling it an animal house. That neither these artists nor their admirers gave genre names to these novel art forms may have been a product of the general recognition that it was no longer necessary. Thus perhaps by 1970 the creation of new genres had become so commonplace in the art world that there was no longer a need to call attention to it: photographs of the artist in disguise are automatically associated with Sherman, just as consumer goods and dead animals in vitrines are automatically associated with Koons and Hirst, respectively, even without the self-conscious device of a genre name. Novelty is so pervasive that it is almost taken for granted that important conceptual artists will produce a new genre.

Early in the twentieth century, the explosion of new genres was triggered by the young genius who became the most dominant artist of the century. When Picasso invented collage in

1912, he not only made a specific contribution that soon led to extensions by Braque, Tatlin, Duchamp, and other young conceptual artists, but he also provided a new model of artistic behavior that became an inspiration for many other young artists throughout the century, of the daring and protean young innovator. As early as 1912, the older, experimental artist Wassily Kandinsky could already foresee what he considered the unfortunate consequences of the younger artist's versatile brilliance, as he described Picasso as a fearless mountain climber: "often driven wildly onward, Picasso throws himself from one external means to another. If a chasm lies between them, Picasso makes a wild leap, and there he is, standing on the other side, much to the horror of his incredibly numerous followers."^{vvvvv} From Duchamp and Arp through Manzoni, Smithson, and beyond, many young conceptual artists learned the lesson that was a key part of Picasso's legacy, that horrifying the art world could be a direct route to success.

vvvvv. Kenneth Lindsay and Peter Vergo, eds., *Kandinsky* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), p. 152.

Footnotes

Table 1: Ages of Artists at Time of Inventing New Genres

Date	Genre	Artist	Age
1912	collage	Picasso	31
1912	papier collé	Braque	30
1913	counter-relief	Tatlin	28
1915	readymade	Duchamp	28
1916	biomorph	Arp	30
1916	papier déchiré	Arp	30
1916	constructed paintings	Arp	30
1919	merz	Schwitters	32
1919	Proun	Lissitzky	29
1921	rayogram	Man Ray	31
1922	photogram	Moholy-Nagy	27
1925	frottage	Ernst	34
1925	exquisite corpse	Breton	29
1930	light-space modulator	Moholy-Nagy	35
1932	mobile	Calder	34
1932	stabile	Calder	34
1933	involuntary sculptures	Brassaï	34
1946	spatial concepts	Fontana	47
1949	décollage	Hains Villeglé	23 23
1949	environment	Fontana	50
1953	assemblage	Dubuffet	52
1954	combine	Rauschenberg	29
1955	meta-matic	Tinguely	30
1957	achrome	Manzoni	24
1958	happening	Kaprow	31
1958	tagli	Fontana	59

1959	auto-destructive	Metzger	33
1960	cosmogonies	Klein	32
1960	poubelles	Arman	32
1960	accumulations	Arman	32
1960	compressions	César	32
1960	anthropometry	Klein	32
1961	living sculpture	Manzoni	28
1961	shot-reliefs	Saint Phalle	31
1962	photo paintings	Richter	30
1962	soft sculpture	Oldenburg	33
1964	skoob	Latham	43
1965	video	Paik	33
1968	non-site	Smithson	30
1969	earthwork	Smithson	31
1970	wall drawing	LeWitt	42
1973	photo-transformations	Samaras	37
1982	joiners	Hockney	45

Source: see text.