Volume Title: Conceptual Revolutions in Twentieth-Century Art

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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

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URL: http://www.nber.org/chapters/c5797

# Chapter 14: The Globalization of Advanced Art in the Twentieth Century

Art and Globalization

> The whole work, called art, knows no borders or nations, only humanity.
>
> Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, 1911[1]

During the twentieth century, the center of the advanced art world shifted from Paris to New York. Yet Paris and New York were not the only places where important innovations were produced. A number of other major cities also served, more briefly, as centers of creative activity.

Throughout the modern era, important artists have originated in diverse places: no one nativity has had a monopoly. During the twentieth century, however, there was a marked increase in the diversity of the geographic origins of innovative artists.

Both the proliferation of artistic centers and the growing number of nationalities represented by important modern artists are important aspects of the globalization of advanced art in the twentieth century. Both are also consequences of the increased diffusion of artistic innovations. Over time, new artistic techniques and styles have spread both more rapidly and more widely than previously. This increased diffusion has in turn been a consequence of the increasingly conceptual nature of advanced art during the past century.

This paper will provide an overview of how and when the central locations of advanced art changed during the twentieth century. This will be done by surveying some of the key movements. For each, the sources and implications of its principal innovations will be considered. Before examining this chronology, however, it is necessary to understand the role of location: how does place matter to the creation of advanced art?

The Importance of Place

> No artist is known – at least not where the evidence is clear enough – to have arrived at important art without having effectively assimilated the best new art of the moment, or moments, just before his own.
>
> Clement Greenberg, 1971[2]

Globalization involves not only the movement of goods, but also the movement of people and ideas. For advanced art, a central element of globalization has been the spread of important innovations – the geographic diffusion of new techniques and styles. In considering the role of location, there are two basic questions. First, how does location affect the ability of artists to make new discoveries? And second, what affects the spread of these discoveries?

Art scholars typically contend that no general understanding of the conditions surrounding artistic innovation is possible: they argue that these innovations are too diverse and too idiosyncratic to be reduced to systematic patterns. Yet this is wrong: it is no more true of art than of any other intellectual activity. There are general conditions under which artistic innovations occur, and identifying these conditions leads to a recognition of how location matters for the production of advanced art.

Location matters to artists primarily early in their careers, because of the need for contact with other artists. Important contacts are of two types. Significant new contributions to advanced art – changes in existing practices – can only be made by artists who understand the advanced techniques or styles they are trying to add to, or replace. Apprenticeship with an important artist of an earlier generation is the best route to this understanding. These apprenticeships can occur within formal art schools or in informal relationships, but in either case they normally occur in artistic centers.

After they have learned the state of existing artistic practice from one or more older artists, young artists need to develop their art with other like-minded and talented artists of their own generation. The crucial role of collaboration in the development of all the important movements in the history of modern art has long been a commonplace of art history. The Abstract Expressionist Barnett Newman in fact argued that the first of these great movements set the pattern for later ambitious young artists, for "it was not until the impressionists that a group of artists set themselves a communal task: the exploration of a technical problem together."[3] Location matters for these collaborations because it is only in artistic centers that groups of talented young artists can be formed and sustained. Whether small or large, it is in these groups that young artists can develop, or begin to develop, the innovations that will become their contributions.

A key to understanding the accelerating pace of globalization of advanced art in the twentieth century lies in recognizing that both of these necessary forms of contact between artists can differ, depending on the nature of the art in question. The goals of experimental artists are imprecise, and not readily formulated or expressed, so older artists typically influence younger ones by demonstrating how they work. Instruction occurs gradually, face to face. In contrast, conceptual teachers can often simply tell their students why and how they work, and young artists can consequently learn conceptual approaches more quickly. For these same reasons, collaborations among young artists may proceed at very different rates. Experimental artists, who work by trial and error to develop new physical processes of making art – for example, devising new ways of applying paint to canvas to achieve a desired visual effect –develop their art more slowly than conceptual artists, who can exchange ideas and produce innovations more quickly.

As conceptual approaches become more extreme, these relationships can be altered even more. Most notably, direct contact between teacher and student might not only be reduced, but eliminated altogether, as craft and technique give way to ideas. A talented young conceptual artist might learn a new technique simply by visiting the studio of an older conceptual innovator. Direct contact between older and younger artists might not even be necessary: the younger artist might learn merely by seeing an innovative conceptual work, or even by hearing, or reading, a description of it. In these latter instances, the importance of location for apprenticeships can disappear, for conceptual artists can learn from artists they have never met, and this learning can occur anywhere.

The basic difference in the ways that experimental and conceptual innovations can be produced implies that conceptual innovations can not only be created more quickly, but can also be transmitted more quickly, than experimental contributions. This recognition provides a basis for understanding the accelerating pace of artistic globalization in the twentieth century.

## The Age of Manifestos[4]

> It is from Italy that we launch through the world this violently upsetting incendiary manifesto of ours.
>
> F.T. Marinetti, 1909[5]

In two leaflets published in 1910, five young Italian painters – Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, and Gino Severini – issued an artistic call to arms. Declaring that they would "Destroy the cult of the past, the obsession with the ancients, pedantry and academic formalism," and "Sweep the whole field of art clean of all themes and subjects which have been used in the past," they promised a new form of painting that would capture the speed of contemporary life: "The gesture which we would reproduce on canvas shall no longer be a fixed *moment* in universal dynamism. It shall simply be the *dynamic sensation* itself."[6]

George Heard Hamilton later observed that "These were brave words with which to attack academic idealism and naturalism, but the pictorial and sculptural correlatives for them had still to be found."[7]

These two leaflets, the first two manifestos of futurist painting, were the first instances of a novel conceptual device that would have a profound impact on the globalization of visual art for the next six decades. Futurism was the first important movement in visual art that began as a literary movement. It was founded by the Italian poet F.T. Marinetti, who made the manifesto, written with what he called "*precise* accusation, *well-defined* insult," into the characteristic literary form of the movement. Marjorie Perloff observed that "as what we now call a conceptual artist, Marinetti was incomparable … The novelty of Italian Futurist pronouncement, sufficiently aestheticized, can, in the eyes of the mass audience, all but take the place of the promised art work."[8]

As vivid descriptions of new – or intended – forms of conceptual art, the manifestos became powerful tools for the rapid diffusion of Futurist innovations. Thus John Golding noted that Kazimir Malevich and other Russian artists "first learned of Futurism through its pamphlets or manifestos. These were invariably blueprints for art that was about to be produced, rather than justifications or explanations of literature, painting and sculpture already in existence, and this explains why the influence of Italian Futurism was to be incalculable and yet entirely disproportionate to that of its artistic and intellectual achievements: it provided artists all over the world with instant aesthetic do-it-yourself kits."[9] As Golding implied, the Futurist manifestos' ideas were often more compelling to their audience than their associated works of art. So for example the German Expressionist painter Franz Marc wrote to his friend Wassily Kandinsky in

1912 that "I cannot free myself from the strange contradiction that I find their ideas, at least for the main part, brilliant, but am in no doubt whatsoever as to the mediocrity of their works."[10]

The key to the success of the Futurist manifestos stemmed from their ability to give verbal expression to visual art, and this was a direct consequence of the movement's highly conceptual motivations and methods. Perloff stressed that "it is not enough to say of … Futurist manifestos that theory preceded practice … For the real point is that the theory … *is* the practice … To talk about art becomes equivalent to making it."[11] And to read about art became equivalent to seeing it. Once this was true, artistic innovations could diffuse much more rapidly than previously, for mailing and reading pamphlets could be done much more quickly and inexpensively than transporting paintings and presenting them in formal exhibitions.

The Futurist manifesto proved a more influential innovation than Futurist painting. Malevich was among the earliest painters outside Italy to recognize the value of published statements to fledgling conceptual art movements. Thus in 1915, when he launched his own new movement in an exhibition in Petrograd, it was accompanied by a manifesto titled *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism*. Although he praised Futurism in his manifesto, Malevich was at pains to emphasize that he had now gone beyond it: "We have abandoned Futurism: and we, the most daring, *have spat on the altar of its art*" – in itself, as Golding noted, a very Futurist thing to say.[12] For decades thereafter, manifestos became a distinctive feature of nearly all self-respecting conceptual art movements, and the manifestos often contain echoes of Marinetti or his intellectual heirs. So for example Perloff remarked that "From [Marinetti's] *Down with the Tango and Parsifal* (1914) to Tristan Tzara's first Dada manifesto, the *Manifesto of Monsieur Antipyrine* (1916), is a shorter step than the Dadaists would have liked us to think," and in turn Tzara's manifesto influenced Dada's artistic successor: "its coterie address, its complex network

of concrete but ambivalent images, and its elaborate word play and structuring look ahead to André Breton's first Surrealist manifesto of 1924." Of a later era, Perloff observed of the 1967 essay in which Robert Smithson first published the word "earthworks," that was to become the emblem of his artistic movement, " 'The Monuments of Passaic' is reminiscent of Russian Futurist manifestos, especially Malevich's *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism*."[13]

Paris

> There is a theory I have heard you profess, that to paint it is absolutely necessary to live in Paris, so as to keep up with ideas.
>
> Paul Gauguin to Camille Pissarro, 1881[14]

Early in the modern era, Paris was the exclusive source of advanced art. Thus in 1913 the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, who was perhaps the most sophisticated critic of his time, could look back on the history of modern painting and conclude that "in the nineteenth century Paris was the capital of art." The credit went primarily to French citizens: "The greatest names in modern painting, from Courbet to Cézanne and from Delacroix to Matisse, are French." Yet Paris' artistic greatness was not exclusively a national achievement: "Englishmen like Constable and Turner, a German like Marées, a Dutchman like van Gogh, and a Spaniard like Picasso have all played major roles in this movement, which is a manifestation not so much of the French genius as of universal culture."[15]

No artist of the late nineteenth century who did not go to Paris to study the most advanced art of the moment could become an important figure in the development of modern art. The artistic education and maturation of Vincent van Gogh illustrate this necessity. As an aspiring artist in Holland in 1884, van Gogh had never seen Impressionist paintings, the most important recent advanced artistic innovation. Nor could he not understand Impressionism from the written descriptions he received from his brother Theo, who was an art dealer in Paris: "from

what you told me about ‘impressionism,’ I have indeed concluded that it is different from what I thought, but it’s not quite clear to me what it really is.”[16] Van Gogh joined his brother in Paris in 1886, and his art was transformed, as the instruction of Camille Pissarro changed not only his use of color but his entire conception of the possible uses of art. Thus Meyer Schapiro remarked that “In Paris he discovered the senses, the world of light and color which he had lacked, and which he now welcomed as a release from past repressions and a narrow, no longer vital, religion and village world.”[17] Van Gogh was fully aware of the importance of this education for his art, as early in his stay in Paris he wrote to a fellow painter who had remained in Antwerp that “There is but one Paris … What is to be gained is progress and what the deuce that is, it is to be found here.” He cautioned that living in Paris was costly, and that art dealers there neglected young artists in favor of established masters, “But for adventurers as myself, I think they lose nothing in risking more.”[18] In Paris, van Gogh also met Paul Gauguin, Emile Bernard, and a number of other young artists who were developing a new Symbolist art. Having accepted the brilliance of Impressionist color, these artists were beginning to use these colors for expressive purposes, and this adaptation became the basis for van Gogh’s distinctive contribution to modern art. He left Paris in 1888 for Arles, where he soon arrived at what Schapiro called “his first new art … transfigured by what he had learned in Paris, or could now learn by himself thanks to his Paris experience.”[19] Mark Roskill observed that for both van Gogh and Gauguin “impressionism provided a basic vocabulary … which they in turn built upon and manipulated for special purposes.”[20] Van Gogh realized that his teacher Pissarro would be dismayed by his departure from Impressionist goals and practices, as he wrote to Theo from Arles that “I should not be surprised if the impressionists soon find fault with my way of working … Because instead of

trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use color more arbitrarily, in order to express myself forcibly."[21]

Van Gogh's experience is remarkable for the astounding rate at which he assimilated the advanced art of the moment, and then used it as the basis for his own contribution. This speed is an obvious consequence not only of his great talent, but also of his highly conceptual approach to art. But his experience is typical in its structure, for ambitious young artists of his time needed to gain a Paris education in advanced art before going on to their personal achievements. Thus at the other end of the artistic spectrum, 14 years before van Gogh's arrival in Paris, Paul Cézanne left his home in Aix to live in Pontoise, a village near Paris, where, in Roger Fry's words, he "became in effect apprentice to Pissarro."[22] Just as he would later do for van Gogh, Pissarro initiated Cézanne into the motives and means of Impressionism, and Cézanne's palette and his conception of art were transformed. Fry explained that Pissarro's instruction "turned him away from the inner vision and showed him the marvelous territory of external vision, a country which invited his adventurous spirit to set out on the discovery of new experiences."[23] Because of Cézanne's visual and experimental approach, this discovery required not merely a few months or years, as for van Gogh, but instead decades, and Cézanne did not achieve his greatest innovations until more than 30 years after he first travelled to Pontoise. But throughout his life he remained acutely aware of the crucial role of the education he had received from "the humble and colossal Pissarro," as in an exhibition catalogue in Aix in 1902 he had himself listed as "Pupil of Pissarro," and in 1906, a month before his death, he wrote to his son "long live … Pissarro, and all those who have an impulse towards color."[24] The persistent gratitude of van Gogh and Cézanne to Pissarro did not arise from personal idiosyncrasies, but rather from their understanding that their education in the advanced art of the moment had been necessary for

their own artistic achievements. And the basis of that education was not created by one person, but by many artists working in one place, as Pissarro reflected when economic necessity forced him to give up his Paris studio: "I shall much regret no longer having one foot in Paris. This was very useful for me, since it enabled me to keep up with everything that concerns painting."[25]

Paris retained its position as the center of the advanced art world into the twentieth century. The first two important movements of the new century – Fauvism and Cubism – both originated there. Both were conceptual in nature, both were created by small groups of young artists, and both spread rapidly. Cubism proved to be the more influential of the two, and its career created a new model of artistic globalization.

Cubism

> This creative tendency is now spreading throughout the universe.
>
> Guillaume Apollinaire, 1913[26]

Cubism originated in a partnership between the young Spaniard Pablo Picasso and the young Frenchman Georges Braque. Picasso later stressed "how closely we worked together. At that time our work was a kind of laboratory research from which every pretension or individual vanity was excluded."[27] Braque similarly recalled that "Picasso and I were engaged in what we felt was a search for the anonymous personality. We were inclined to efface our own personalities in order to find originality."[28]

Several themes frequently recur in art scholars' discussions of Cubism. One is the great speed at which Cubism spread. A second is how widely it diffused. And a third is that many of the artists who adopted Cubism put it to uses very different from those for which it was initially developed. So for example all three of these themes appear in a brief introductory statement by Douglas Cooper to his book, *The Cubist Epoch*:

> Cubism originated in Paris between 1906 and 1908 and was the creation of Picasso and Braque … Within four years, however, the pictorial methods and technical innovations of those two young painters had been seized on by other artists – in France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Russia, America and, to a much lesser degree, in England – who either imitated them or tried to transform them by imaginative efforts into new types of artistic expression. A knowledge of Cubist methods and possibilities spread rapidly, and by this means Cubism played some part in the technical and stylistic adventures which constitute virtually all the avant-garde developments in western art between 1909 and 1914.[29]

These same themes also recur in discussions of one specific innovation of the Cubists, collage. So for example Marjorie Perloff wrote that "The rapid dissemination of [collage] … is in itself remarkable … [T]he first collages, Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Caning* and Braque's *Fruit Dish*, were both made in 1912 … Within a few years, collage and its cognates – montage, construction, assemblage – were playing a central role in the verbal as well as the visual arts."[30]

Cubism is a highly conceptual artistic language, based on the thoughts of artists rather than their perceptions. Thus John Golding remarked that "The Cubism of Picasso and Braque was to be essentially conceptual. Even in the initial stages of the movement, when the painters still relied to a large extent on visual models, their paintings are not so much records of the sensory appearance of their subjects, as expressions in pictorial terms of their idea or knowledge of them."[31] The shock that many contemporary artists and critics experienced upon first exposure to the radical appearance of Cubist paintings has often obscured the fact that the most distinctive stylistic devices of the new art – the faceting of objects, and the juxtapositions of images viewed from different vantage points – could quickly be understood and adopted by artists who wanted to work in a Cubist idiom. This understanding did not require contact with Picasso or Braque, but could be acquired simply by seeing Cubist paintings, and the rapid spread of Cubism was the product in large part of the display of paintings by Picasso, Braque, and their Paris followers at

exhibitions throughout Europe and the United States in the years between 1910 and the outbreak of World War I.[32]

The device of collage was even simpler, and even more readily adapted to alternative purposes, than the style of Cubism in general. Collage was so highly conceptual that it could be adopted by artists who had not even seen examples of its use, but who had merely heard descriptions of it. A remarkable demonstration of this is contained in a recollection by the Italian painter Gino Severini of his first acquaintance with collage (which he refers to by the name of its close relative, papier collé, the device in which Braque began to paste pieces of paper to his canvases, shortly after Picasso had created collage by pasting a piece of oil cloth to one of his paintings). Severini, who had been living in Paris at the time, provided a description of a sequence of conversations that served to carry the new technique from Paris to Italy, and to translate it from Cubism to Futurism:

> As regards the so-called *papiers collés* I can tell you with precision that they were born in 1912 in the zone of Montmartre. As I remember it, Apollinaire suggested the idea to me after having spoken of it to Picasso, who immediately painted a small still-life onto which he applied a small piece of waxed paper (the type that was used for the tablecloths in the bistros of Paris). I tried to glue some *paillettes* [spangles] and multicolored sequins onto forms of ballerinas in movement. I next saw a collage of Braque, perhaps the first, made of what seemed to be wood and large sheets of white paper on which he had sketched to a large extent with black crayon. During my trip to Italy in August of 1912 I naturally spoke about the technique to Boccioni and he, in turn, to Carrà. During 1913 the first futurist experiments in this field saw the light of day.[33]

Severini's narrative provides vivid evidence of the highly communicable nature of collage. Thus by his account his own first use of the technique resulted not from contact with Picasso, or even the sight of one of Picasso's works, but rather from a conversation with a friend of Picasso's, Guillaume Apollinaire, who was not a painter, but a poet. Severini could in turn pass on verbal

instructions that allowed Boccioni to make his own use of collage, and to continue the process of diffusion by word of mouth.

Severini's experience also demonstrates the extreme versatility of collage. In 1912, as he described, he attached sequins to a painting of dancers – *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*, which became his most celebrated painting.[34] Thus unlike Picasso and Braque, who consistently used fragments of newspaper, wallpaper, and other scraps of waste materials in their collages to evoke the dark and tranquil atmosphere of cafes, Severini used sparkling sequins to recreate the excitement of "the fairy ambiance of light and color" that he experienced in the night clubs of Paris.[35] And although collage was devised by Picasso and Braque for the purposes of Cubism, which was an art of still life and subdued colors, Severini could immediately adapt it to Futurism, which instead stressed speed, motion, and bright colors.

Futurism

> We may declare, without boasting, that the first Exhibition of Italian Futurist Painting … is the most important exhibition of Italian painting which has hitherto been offered to the judgment of Europe.
>
> For we are young and our art is violently revolutionary.
>
> Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, 1912[36]

Speed – the dynamism, excitement, and novelty of modern city life and technology – was the hallmark of Futurism. It was the theme of Marinetti's founding manifesto in 1909, and it later became the theme of Futurist painting and sculpture. Futurist painting rejected the aims of Cubism, but borrowed its formal devices. Unlike the Cubists, who painted still lifes by analyzing arrangements of studio props, the Futurists wanted to make art from the streets of the city, and to paint riots, carnivals, and speeding trams. Yet in creating images that would capture the

interaction of objects in motion, Futurist painters found the multiple viewpoints and intersecting planes of Cubism to be valuable tools.

Apart from Severini, who moved to Paris in 1906, the Futurist painters lived in Italy. Their knowledge of the innovations of Cubism was acquired primarily on short visits to Paris. An example of how quickly these young conceptual artists could assimilate the art of the moment is afforded by a brief visit Boccioni made to Severini in Paris early in 1912, on his way back to Milan from an exhibition in Berlin. Neither of the two painters had ever made sculptures, but Severini recalled that during this visit Boccioni "expressed a particular interest in sculpture. All day every day he would discuss the subject. To sate his appetite for exploring the problems of sculpture, I took him to visit Archipenko, Agero, Brancusi, and Duchamp-Villon, who were the most daring avant-garde sculptors of the moment." Severini and Boccioni were close friends, having met a dozen years earlier when both were teenaged art students in Rome, and Severini afforded Boccioni the full benefit of his knowledge of Paris: "I took him along, like a brother, everywhere I usually went myself … He lived like a real Parisian in Paris, not like a visitor."[37]

After a few frenetic days of visiting artists' studios by day and bars and clubs by night, Boccioni returned to Milan. Severini was stung when, only two weeks later, Boccioni published in Milan his *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture*: "During our discussions and visits to various sculptors in Paris, Boccioni had not once mentioned this manifesto, so it surprised and saddened me to have to acknowledge that these speed 'records,' these feverish searches for novelty for the sake of novelty itself, and a lack of sincerity on his part, would inevitably cause deep wounds in our relationship."[38] In typical Futurist fashion, Boccioni's manifesto stridently rejected the sculpture of the time – "All the sculpture … to be seen in all European cities presents such a pathetic spectacle of barbarism, ineptitude and tedious imitation that my Futurist eyes turn

away from it with the deepest loathing" – so Severini also felt deeply embarrassed before his colleagues in Paris: "it seemed to all my friends who had recently received him that I had been his accomplice, and I must confess that I found this very distasteful."[39]

The sculptors whose work Boccioni had seen in Paris were concerned with extending Cubism to three dimensions, and Boccioni wanted to go beyond their experiments to create the appearance of motion. Over the course of the next year, he completed 11 sculptures. Several of these were dramatically fragmented striding figures that appeared to be blown by powerful winds created by their own rapid progress. Boccioni arranged for these sculptures to be exhibited at a Paris gallery in June of 1913, barely a year after he had first taken up the art.

Apollinaire reviewed Boccioni's new work favorably, crediting him with introducing movement into sculpture: "Varied materials, sculptured simultaneity, violent movement – these are the innovations contributed by Boccioni's sculpture."[40] Boccioni was elated, writing to a friend that "Apollinaire is completely won over to Futurism." He described a dinner that he had had with Apollinaire and Marinetti: "We talked from seven until three in the morning. We came out drunk and exhausted. After these discussions, which are true conquests by magnetism, I end up sad and discouraged. I think about what I would have done by now if I had grown up with Paris or Berlin as my environment."[41]

This episode affords a number of insights into the progress of globalization in the highly charged European art world immediately before World War I. A few days of inspecting the most advanced sculpture of the time in Paris were sufficient to serve as the point of departure for Boccioni's own conceptual efforts to make new innovations in sculpture. He then accomplished this successfully – so successfully that one of these sculptures became one of the most important works of art of the twentieth century – in a period of barely more than one year, in spite of the

fact that he had never sculpted before.[42] Yet beyond the remarkable speed of Boccioni's internalization of the state of the art, and the no less remarkable speed of his own contribution, the episode also gives an interesting glimpse into the psychology of a young conceptual artist, who was willing to embarrass his closest friend in order to gain publicity for his own art, in pursuit of what Severini ruefully called "speed records" – "feverish searches for novelty." And finally, the highly pressured atmosphere of the art world is suggested by Boccioni's ambivalent reaction to his critical success in Paris. Although the artist was only 31 years old, he could not simply enjoy Apollinaire's praise and his own knowledge of his accomplishment, but instead immediately reflected sadly that he could have made greater contributions even earlier if he had grown up in a center of the art world.

Expressionism

> There is an artistic tension all over Europe. Everywhere new artists are greeting each other; a look, a handshake is enough for them to understand each other!
>
> Franz Marc, 1912[43]

The earliest of the groups that came to be identified with German Expressionism originated in Dresden in 1904, when four art students formed the Brücke, or Bridge. These young painters rejected the formal art of the academies, and wanted to create a more passionate art of self-expression, portraying the excitement and anxiety of modern urban life by devising new means that would replace description of contemporary subjects with psychological statements.

The artists of the Brücke were young revolutionaries, anxious to deny any influence of earlier artists in order to stress their own originality. Yet art scholars have found strong visual evidence of influence of a kind that underscores the rapid transmission of conceptual innovations. Thus late in 1905 a Dresden art gallery exhibited 50 paintings by Vincent van Gogh,

and early the next year a Dresden art association presented 20 paintings by Edvard Munch.[44] A biographer of Ernst Kirchner, the leading member of the Brücke, identified a series of specific influences of van Gogh and Munch on Kirchner's paintings of 1906-08, including his use of symbolism, his composition, the thick impasto of the paint surface, the large size and unusual length of brush strokes, and the expressive and often arbitrary use of color.[45] A historian of German Expressionism observed that in spite of the denials of the young painters, "it would seem that Munch and van Gogh influenced the Brücke artists in their formative years," and that when the Galerie Arnold exhibited van Gogh's work in 1905, "The violence of van Gogh's expression must have made an enormous impression on the young Dresden painters … The ecstatic expression of a personal symbolism, leading to a subjective unity of form and content, made van Gogh of the greatest importance to the expressionists."[46] The speed with which the innovations of van Gogh and Munch could be assimilated by the young conceptual painters simply upon seeing examples of their art was a direct result of the conceptual clarity of those innovations. Thus Robert Jensen has argued that van Gogh's art could become influential so rapidly throughout Europe precisely because of its highly conceptual nature: "much of van Gogh's stylistic contributions to modern art can be summarized by a few characteristics that could easily be taken up by other artists."[47] For young painters impatient to make a new art that allowed them to express powerful emotions, the innovations of van Gogh and Munch came as a powerful and immediate revelation of new means of expression.

Over time, the innovative bold use of color by Matisse and the Fauves also became a major influence on the Brücke and other German expressionist painters. Matisse was in fact invited, but declined, to contribute an essay to the *Blaue Reiter Almanac*, which was published in 1912 by a group of artists who collectively called themselves the Blue Rider. The *Almanac* was a

rare case in which an important experimental artist – Wassily Kandinsky – made common cause with a group of conceptual painters, most notably his younger co-editor Franz Marc, to produce a group manifesto. In keeping with the unusual intellectual basis of this alliance, the *Almanac* was an unusual manifesto. Rather than a highly focused and precise description of a new style or artistic project, the *Almanac* was eclectic in the extreme. Thus for example none of its 15 essays was coauthored, and less than half were written by members of the Blue Rider group. Four of the essays were about music rather than visual art, and the *Almanac* also included a poem, and a script for a stage performance written by Kandinsky. But perhaps the most remarkable dimension of the *Almanac's* eclecticism lay in its many illustrations, which totaled more than 140 images. George Heard Hamilton summarized them as follows:

> Reproductions of paintings and drawings by members of the group, principally the two editors, by Macke, Campendonk, Kubin, and Klee, and by the North German Expressionists were outnumbered three to one by illustrations of primitive, folk, and children's art. In addition to objects from Africa and the South Seas, examples of medieval German sculpture and woodcuts ("primitive" in the stylistic sense), Egyptian paper puppets, Japanese woodcuts and drawings, and Russian popular prints and sculpture, there were no less than seventeen examples of Bavarian *hinterglas* painting (devotional images painted on the reverse of panes of glass) and other votive paintings … Nine drawings by children constitute one of the first instances of the publication of such work for artistic reasons. There were also seven reproductions of paintings by Henri Rousseau … Of the Post-Impressionists there were only five reproductions after Cézanne, Gauguin, and van Gogh.

Hamilton's comment on this surprising collection of images was that "emphasis fell on the psychological immediacy of unsophisticated expression, supposedly to be found in the direct statements of persons artistically untrained or belonging to less complex societies."[48] Although neither Kandinsky nor Marc was directly influenced by most of the forms of primitive art illustrated in the *Almanac*, the selection did reflect the appreciation for Russian folk art that

Kandinsky had developed while doing ethnographic research in northern Russia during his university studies. More generally, the images may have been part of Kandinsky's justification for his challenge to conventional western art. When the *Almanac* was published, Kandinsky was in the process of abandoning representation, an iconoclastic act that he rationalized at the time as the product of his need to follow his own intuition: "*The most important thing in the question of form is whether or not the form has grown out of inner necessity*."[49] Decades later, in a memorial for Marc, Kandinsky explained that the artistic forms included in the *Almanac* demonstrated that what was important in art was not adherence to rules or conventional styles, but the expression of genuine feeling born of spiritual motivation: "My idea then was to point out by means of examples that the difference between 'official' and 'ethnographic' art had no reason to exist; that the pernicious habit of not seeing the organic inner root of art beneath outwardly different forms could, in general, result in total loss of reciprocal action between art and the life of mankind."[50] The many forms of primitive art illustrated in the *Almanac*, like the inclusion of music and poetry in the book, were thus a plea by the editors for tolerance and freedom in art. A new era of art lay ahead – Marc wrote in the *Almanac* that "we are standing today at the turning point of two long epochs" – but a genuinely spiritual art could emerge only with liberation from the restrictions of the past, as Kandinsky concluded that "*The future* can be received only through freedom."[51]

The *Blaue Reiter Almanac* was a product of the age of manifestos, but unlike those of the Futurists or Suprematists, it did not advocate a specific style or program, and it cannot have communicated equally specific ideas to its readers. Yet in spite of its diffuse message, its inclusive approach to art, not only over time but also across space, must have impressed many in its audience as a powerful appeal for the globalization of advanced art. As Kandinksy and Marc

wrote of their planned volume in 1911, "It should be almost superfluous to emphasize specifically that in our case the principle of internationalism is the only one possible."[52]

Moscow

> The center of political life has moved to Russia … A similar center must be formed for art and creativity.
>
> Kazimir Malevich, 1919[53]

Malevich left Russia only once, in 1927, when his greatest innovations were well in the past, and he never visited Paris. Yet early in his career, he worked in Moscow with a number of talented young artists, including the painters Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova, and Vladimir Tatlin, and his early development came at a time when two wealthy Russian merchants, Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov, were building great collections of modern French art in Moscow.[54]

Shchukin and Morozov made their collections available for young artists to study, and their impact on Russian art was considerable. Malevich was an extremely fast learner: John Golding commented that his "intellect, though untutored, was voracious and quick."[55] Within barely a decade, Malevich systematically worked his way through nearly every significant development of modern art, in chronological order. His paintings not only bear strong evidence of the influences he absorbed, but in many cases this influence can be traced to specific paintings he saw in Moscow. Thus for example two of Malevich's self-portraits, of 1907 and 1909, used colors and compositional devices favored by Gauguin, whose paintings filled a wall in Shchukin's mansion; Malevich's *Bather* of 1911 in subject and form resembled the recent work of Matisse, who carried out major commissions for Shchukin, and 21 of whose paintings hung in Shchukin's "Matisse room"; and by 1912 Malevich's paintings demonstrated an acquaintance with Cubist paintings owned by Shchukin and Morozov.[56] In 1912-13, the particular form of

Cubism developed by Fernand Legér in Paris became an important influence on Malevich's art. In this case, Malevich knew the geometric, tubular forms of Legér's recent work not only from paintings, but also from photographs carried from Paris to Moscow by a young Russian painter, Alexandra Exter, who divided her time between the cities, and who studied with Legér during her visits to Paris.[57] Malevich's *Woman at a Tram Stop* of 1913 clearly demonstrated an acquaintance with Picasso's recent synthetic Cubism, and his 1914 *Woman at a Poster Column* used Cubist collage forms and techniques.[58]

Malevich made his own artistic breakthrough in 1915, when he created his distinctive form of abstraction. Yet his paintings from the preceding decade clearly reveal the direct influence of the most recent innovations of the most important painters in Paris, in spite of the fact that he had never worked with, or even met, any of these artists. Even Malevich's radical leap of 1915, in which he launched the Suprematist movement with an exhibition that included his painting *Black Square*, demonstrated his full understanding of the process of conceptual innovation as it had developed in Western Europe. Thus not only did the flat geometric shapes of his abstractions reflect his analysis of the synthetic Cubist paintings and collages of Picasso and Braque, but the exhibition was accompanied by a Suprematist manifesto, which stated an ambitious intellectual rationale for the art, reflecting lessons Malevich had learned from the Futurists about the value of published theoretical declarations for new conceptual art movements.[59]

Malevich was the first major innovator of the modern era to make an important contribution to the mainstream of advanced art, based on a firm understanding of the most significant recent developments in that art, without having travelled to the center of the art world, or having contact with the artists whose work provided the basis for his own discoveries. He was

clearly aided in this by the stimulation and companionship of a number of other talented young artists who were going through a similar development. But that he was able to become a major innovator without ever leaving Moscow was due to his strong conceptual orientation, which allowed him to assimilate the conceptual innovations that dominated advanced art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without learning them at their source. And in this he became a prototype for other young conceptual innovators later in the century, whose ability to understand the conceptual innovations of others at a distance, and to use them as the basis for their own discoveries, would speed the globalization of advanced art.

Unlike Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin did visit Paris, where he spent one month in the spring of 1913. This brief visit not only changed the form of Tatlin's art, but also led to a fundamental change in his artistic philosophy.

John Milner wrote that Tatlin "travelled west as a mature painter. He returned the constructor of reliefs."[60] Tatlin was 28 at the time of his visit to Paris. He had been a boyhood friend of Mikhail Larionov, and since 1910 he had lived in Moscow studying art and working with Larionov and a group of his peers. Like Malevich and the other young Russian painters in this group, Tatlin had been influenced by the French paintings that had been brought to Moscow. The geometric forms of Cubism had a particularly large impact on Tatlin's painting, because of his conceptual orientation. Thus Milner observed that "The distinction between observing the visual world and constructing visual objects had become a recurrent dichotomy in Tatlin's painting and drawing by 1912 … As Tatlin grew less concerned with observation and the recording of visual impressions, his art became an investigation, in visual terms, of the process of creativity."[61]

Marjorie Perloff described Tatlin's visit to Picasso's Montparnasse studio in Paris in 1913 as "legendary."[62] In fact, he probably visited the studio several times, perhaps with the Lithuanian sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, who lived in Paris, as translator.[63] Upon his return to Moscow, Tatlin ceased making paintings, and began making sculptures, out of found materials, that appear to be based on small works that Picasso had made during the preceding year. George Heard Hamilton observed that one of these sculptures, Tatlin's *Relief,* of 1914, "composed of a worn board, a broken piece of glass, a bit of old iron, and a tin can with part of its label still attached, was, if the date is correct, one of the first 'works of art' in Western culture to have been assembled of untreated junk."[64]

Tatlin's conversion changed his career definitively, as he soon gained prominence as a sculptor. The ideas he had taken from Picasso's studio proved to be the key to the form of his sculptures, as he made what he called counter-reliefs in a Cubist idiom, and he followed Picasso's practice in making them from materials that had originally been intended for non-art purposes. These humble materials in turn came to be the basis for his new philosophy of art, which occasioned a break with Malevich. The Suprematist Malevich stood for the idea that painting could make a contribution to the new Soviet society by remaining apart from daily life, whereas Tatlin rejected painting as decadent and bourgeois, and advocated making art an immediate part of workers' daily lives. In the new art of Constructivism, works would be made from common materials, using industrial manufacturing techniques, and would consist of three-dimensional objects that would not hang flat on walls, but would instead project outward into real space.

Tatlin's trip to Paris, and particularly the visits he made to Picasso's studio, could change the course of his career so precipitously because of the highly conceptual nature of the Cubist

works he saw, and his own extremely conceptual approach to art. Scholars have consistently emphasized not only the speed with which Tatlin assimilated the Cubist innovations he saw in Paris, but also how quickly he adapted them to his own purposes, to make a closely related but clearly distinct contribution of his own. Thus whereas Picasso remained committed to representation, and used found objects to make visual puns that suggested recognizable forms, Tatlin constructed his works abstractly, so that scraps of wood, metal, or glass no longer suggested familiar objects.[65] But Tatlin did not simply make novel sculptures, for his conceptual inclination led him to create a philosophy and an entire artistic movement, Constructivism, based on the insights he had gained in a few visits to Picasso's studio.

Dada

> Dada was not an artistic movement in the accepted sense; it was a storm that broke over the world of art as the war did over nations.
>
> Hans Richter[66]

Like Futurism, Dada was a highly conceptual movement that originated in literature before spreading into visual art. Unlike Futurism and nearly all other previous movements, however, Dada did not begin with a positive program, but as a protest. One of the most important Dada painters, Jean Arp, explained that "Revolted by the butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts. While the guns rumbled in the distance, we sang, painted, made collages and wrote poems with all our might. We were seeking an art based on fundamentals, to cure the madness of the age."[67] Dada had no coherent philosophy. The painter Hans Richter described its goals as "riot, destruction, defiance, confusion … In art, anti-art."[68] Many Dadaists considered it their purpose to attack all conventional values and practices: thus Arp stated that "The Dadaist thought up tricks to rob the bourgeois of his sleep."[69] The poet Hugo Ball observed that "Art is for us an occasion for social criticism."[70] Although the Dadaists

would have liked to have an impact on society at large, their true target was advanced art. Thus the historian Dietmar Elger remarked that "While the Dadaists could not abolish war, the political power structures, or the class system in society, they could make their point by smashing the formal structure of pictures and poems."[71]

Because Dada was not tied to specific products or practices, there is considerable imprecision in tracing its origins. Thus in his history of Dada written in 1965, Richter remarked that "Where and how Dada began is already almost as hard to determine as Homer's birthplace." He explained that the uncertainty arose from the fact that "around the year 1915 or 1916, certain similar phenomena saw the light of day (or night) in different parts of the globe, and … the general label of 'Dada' can be applied to all of them." He continued, however, by remarking that "it was only in *one* of these that the magic fusion of personalities and ideas took place which is essential to the formation of a movement."[72] This was Zurich, where in February of 1916 Hugo Ball founded the Cabaret Voltaire, which he described in a public announcement as "a group of young artists and writers … whose aim is to create a center for artistic entertainment."[73] Ball was soon joined by the poet Tristan Tzara and a host of other enthusiastic young artists, so that within a month of the first performance at the Cabaret Voltaire, Ball recorded in his journal that "Everyone has been seized by an indefinable intoxication. The little cabaret is about to come apart at the seams and is getting to be a playground for crazy emotions."[74] Considerable debate would later arise over how and when the movement gained its name, but a widely accepted version is that Ball and the poet Richard Huelsenbeck found the word "dada" by chance in a French-German dictionary. Huelsenbeck later explained that "Dada means hobby-horse in French. We were impressed by its brevity and suggestivity, and in a short time dada became the label for all the artistic activities we were engaging in at the Cabaret Voltaire."[75] The Cabaret

Voltaire became associated with the outrageous and the absurd, as young artists created new forms, including the "simultaneous poem," which Ball described as "a contrapuntal recitative in which three or more voices speak, sing, whistle, etc., at the same time in such a way that the elegiac, humorous, or bizarre content of the piece is brought out by these combinations." From the beginning, however, the absurdity of Dada had a somber undertone, as Ball reflected that "What we are celebrating is both buffoonery and a requiem mass."[76]

Dada was created by young artists. Among the early members of the group in Zurich in 1916, Ball was 30, as was Tzara, Arp was 29, Huelsenbeck was 24, the Romanian painter Marcel Janco was 21, and Richter was 28. Richter reflected that this was not an accident: "we were all in our twenties and ready to defy all the fathers in the world in a way that would rejoice the heart of Freud's Oedipus."[77] Their defiant and iconoclastic attitude quickly produced a flow of conceptual innovations in literature and visual art, as Richter explained that "our freedom from preconceived ideas about processes and techniques frequently led us beyond the frontiers of individual artistic categories … As the boundaries between the arts became indistinct, painters turned to poetry and poets to painting. The destruction of the boundaries was reflected everywhere. The safety-valve was off."[78]

The rapid geographic spread of Dada has often been remarked by art scholars. So for example William Rubin observed that Dada "arose in a number of cities in Europe, and in New York, in part spontaneously and in part through the interchange of ideas."[79] Specific Dada techniques equally spread rapidly. So for example the Berlin Dada artist Hannah Höch reflected that "When, in 1919, the Dadaists grasped the possibility of forming new shapes and new works through photography and made their aggressive photomontages, it happened, strangely enough and simultaneously, in a number of quite diverse countries, in France, Germany, Russia, and

Switzerland."[80] Throughout Dada's history, the movement of ideas was facilitated by the many small magazines that the group's members produced. Table 1 presents a partial listing of Dada magazines. Some of these were published monthly, over several years, while others lasted only one or two issues. But the large numbers of both titles and editors clearly reflect the movement's enthusiasm for the genre, as the 25 magazines listed in Table 1 had almost as many different editors. Contributors to the magazines numbered in the hundreds: few Dada artists failed to contribute texts or images to Dada magazines, and many contributed both. In Zurich, Dada magazines began to appear within a few months after the opening of the Cabaret Voltaire, and Tzara soon emerged as the primary editor. Richter recalled that "Tzara was the ideal promoter of Dada, and his position as a modern poet enabled him to make contact with modern poets and writers in other countries … It was … through these contacts that Dada later became something more than a solitary Alpine flower, became in fact an international movement."[81]

Dada was also spread by the frequent travels of its rootless young practitioners. The movement was initially created by refugees from World War I, as Elger noted that it was no coincidence that the young artists who founded Dada in Zurich did not include a single native-born Swiss.[82] As they continued on their travels, they carried with them ideas and examples that could quickly influence young artists elsewhere. Thus Richter observed that "when Richard Huelsenbeck arrived in Berlin from Zurich at the beginning of 1917, he found the right setting and the right colleagues to set off the Dada bomb which had been perfected and tested in Zurich."[83] Dada had already effectively been created in America in 1915, when Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp, who had worked together as young artists in Paris, were reunited in New York, and were joined by the young American artist Man Ray as the central figures in what became an influential branch of the movement."[84]

Although Dada artists often attempted to avoid stylistic consistency, themes did appear in the art of the major Dada centers. In Zurich, accident played an important role in many of the literary improvisations of the Cabaret Voltaire, and chance also became a concern for a number of visual artists.[85] So for example Arp incorporated accident into his paintings and collages by allowing fragments of paper to fall freely onto a surface; although he adjusted their positions before fixing them in place, he contended that chance had influenced the final patterns. This innovation later influenced the Surrealist practice of beginning paintings with random markings. In New York, the interests of Duchamp and Picabia focused Dada on creating works that posed intellectual puzzles, often using enigmatic mechanical abstract forms. In Berlin, which suffered much more intensely than the neutral Zurich or New York, German artists responded to Richard Huelsenbeck's call "to make literature with a gun in hand," using their new technique of photomontage to make violent and bitter political statements.[86] In spite of these marked differences in the interests of artists in different places, however, many artists in all these cities consistently identified themselves as members of the international Dada movement, in recognition of the fact that they were united by a common attitude of protest that they expressed in highly conceptual approaches to art.

In an incisive analysis of the achievements of Dada, Werner Haftmann observed that Dada's formal innovations and techniques can be traced almost exclusively to three major movements that immediately preceded it. Thus Dada's improvisatory cabaret technique, its use of manifestos as a literary genre, the typography of its publications, and its development of photomontage all derived from Futurist practices and concepts; Dada's use of collage was inspired by Cubism; and Dada's free use of color and spontaneous use of artistic materials derived from Expressionism. Haftmann argued that Dada's originality lay in synthesis: "Dada

took up all these separate ideas, assembled them and established them as a unified expression of experiences and emotions that were wholly of the present." These connections produced Dada's most basic contribution: "Dada led to a new *image of the artist*."[87] George Heard Hamilton concluded that Dada, "as much as any artists since and more than most, proved that the artist's decision alone determines what art is, and what is art. They inserted deep in the aesthetic of modern times the inescapable conviction that even if the material existence of the work of art claims our attention first, the work itself originates only in the confrontation of matter with mind."[88] The conclusions of Haftmann and Hamilton underscore the fact that Dada was a quintessentially conceptual movement, that innovated in classic conceptual fashion by creating unexpected syntheses of elements drawn from earlier art.

The highly conceptual nature of Dada eventually resulted in a number of fundamental ironies. Dada was intended to be anarchic, spontaneous and ephemeral, without regard for history: Marcel Janco declared that "No Dadaist will write his memoirs!"[89] In fact, the literary orientation of the movement's members and the verbal character of many of its activities led to an outpouring of published memoirs and histories of the movement by former participants that is matched by few, if any, other artistic movements.[90] Dada was intended not as art, but as anti-art. So for example John Heartfield declared that Berlin Dada "was not, and did not want to be art or an art movement … it was a political renunciation of art," Georges Hugnet concluded that "Dada was against art," and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes described Dada as "a permanent revolt of the individual against art."[91] Yet as Richter recognized, the goal of making anti-art was impossible: "A work of art, even when intended as anti-art, asserts itself irresistibly as a work of art. In fact, Tzara's phrase 'the destruction of art by artistic means' means simply 'the destruction of art in order to build a new art.' This is precisely what happened."[92] Objects

produced by Dada artists rose inexorably in value, and hundreds of Dada works were exhibited at New York's orthodox Museum of Modern Art as early as 1936, when it presented an encyclopedic survey, "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism."[93] And finally, several basic ironies were caused by the effect stressed by the present study, that Dada could diffuse rapidly, often almost spontaneously, because of its highly conceptual nature. Thus for example a bitter dispute raged for decades over who founded the Dada movement.[94] Another, equally bitter, focused more narrowly on who first used the word "Dada" to refer to the movement.[95] And yet another was an extended argument over whether Raoul Hausmann and Hannah Höch or George Grosz and John Heartfield should be credited with the invention of photomontage.[96] The irony of these debates is considerable, for Dada was intended to abolish bourgeois values and traditional conceptions of artistic invention: in Jean Arp's account of the movement's youthful idealism, he recalled that "We wanted an anonymous and collective art."[97] But as in many other instances, youthful revolutionaries became aging reactionaries, and this manifested itself in a concern for property rights, the most bourgeois of values, as Elger observed that "In the battle of priorities – and not just in the disputes concerning the origins of the word Dada – most Dadaists suddenly became deadly serious."[98] The difficulty of establishing where and when the highly conceptual practices of Dada originated meant that, once begun, battles over intellectual property rights would be nearly impossible to resolve.

Surrealism

> *Surrealism* is not a new means of expression … It is a means of total liberation of the mind.
>
> We are determined to make a Revolution.
>
> Louis Aragon, André Breton, et al., *Declaration of the Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes*, 1925[99]

Although Dada outlived World War I, with the end of the war its true raison d'etre had disappeared, and the movement's energy quickly dissipated. Surrealism soon emerged as Dada's successor: in Hans Richter's succinct formulation, "Surrealism devoured and digested Dada."[100] In a number of ways, Surrealism resembled its predecessor. So for example Surrealism was also initiated as a literary project, and only later added visual art to its program. Unlike Dada, however, Surrealism was created primarily by a single poet, who remained firmly in charge of the movement throughout its career, formally recruiting new members to its cause, and excommunicating those who failed to conform to its requirements. Also unlike Dada, for most of its history Surrealism was located entirely in a single place.

André Breton, who was often called the pope of Surrealism, did not present Surrealism as simply a new artistic movement, but instead as a way of freeing artistic imagination from reason and convention. Thus in his initial *Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924, he defined Surrealism as "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express – verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern."[101] Breton did not restrict Surrealism to future actions, so he felt free retroactively to appropriate the work of earlier artists, as he did in his manifesto, describing such authors as Hugo, Poe, Rimbaud, and Jarry as Surrealists, as well as such painters as Seurat, Matisse, Picasso, Duchamp, and de Chirico.[102]

Breton created Surrealism in Paris, and the first visual artists who formally affiliated themselves with the movement were former Dada painters who returned to the city in the years following the end of World War I. Over time, Breton added a number of younger artists, including practitioners of such other arts as sculpture and photography. Although all

Surrealism's artists were recruited in Paris until World War II forced Breton to flee to New York, the visual movement of Surrealism was not dominated by French nationals. Of the most important Surrealist artists, only André Masson and Yves Tanguy were French, whereas Max Ernst and Jean Arp were German, Salvador Dali and Joan Miró were Spanish, René Magritte and Paul Delvaux were Belgian, Giorgio de Chirico was Italian, Alberto Giacometti was Swiss, Roberto Matta was Chilean, and Man Ray was American. Although Paris remained the center of the advanced art world during the 1920s and '30s by attracting talented artists from all over Europe, the heterogeneous origins of the artists who comprised its most important movement during these decades already pointed to France's decline as a producer of great modern artists.

Surrealism was exceptional among twentieth-century visual art movements in including both experimental and conceptual branches. George Heard Hamilton remarked that "There are such painters as Masson and Miró who have investigated the spontaneous reaction of the hand to the medium, and there are those who have found for their hallucinations visual metaphors of great clarity and precision, among them Tanguy, Dali, Magritte, Delvaux, and Brauner."[103] The first group, who stressed spontaneity, worked visually and experimentally, whereas the second, who privileged precision, carefully planned their conceptual works. As Hamilton's summary suggests, conceptual Surrealists predominated numerically over their experimental counterparts, though over time the experimentalists would prove at least as influential, if not more so.

William Rubin observed that "During the thirties Surrealist art sustained its position as the leading vanguard movement largely through default. Its pioneer years in the previous decade had witnessed a phenomenal variety of stylistic and iconographic inventions; but like many other modern movements, Surrealism could not sustain momentum for more than five or six years."[104] The lack of new art movements as challengers to Surrealism must have been in large part a

consequence of the great economic depression of the ’30s, while the decline of Surrealist creativity reflected the exhaustion of the early creativity of its many conceptual members. When Breton moved to New York in 1941, he officially took Surrealism with him, and several New York galleries exhibited the work of Surrealist artists in exile, including Ernst, Masson, Matta, and Tanguy. Yet the movement’s importance as a creator of new art lay in the past, as World War II produced a vacuum in the world of advanced art. The remaining significance of Surrealist artists would be in influencing a new generation of artists who would come to prominence after the war.

Abstract Expressionism

> Q: Would you like to go abroad?
> A: No. I don’t see why the problems of modern painting can’t be solved as well here as elsewhere.
>
> Interview with Jackson Pollock, 1944[105]

In 1946, the American critic Clement Greenberg respectfully declared that “The School of Paris remains still the creative fountainhead of modern art, and its every move is decisive for advanced artists everywhere else – who are advanced precisely because they show the capacity to absorb and extend the preoccupations of that nerve-center.”[106] Just two years later, however, new evidence from both sides of the Atlantic had caused Greenberg to change his mind, and in 1948 he proclaimed the fall of Paris and the rise of New York:

> If artists as great as Picasso, Braque, and Léger have declined so grievously, it can only be because the general social premises that used to guarantee their functioning have disappeared in Europe. And when one sees, on the other hand, how much the level of American art has risen in the last five years, with the emergence of new talents so full of energy and content as Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, David Smith … then the conclusion forces itself, much to our own surprise, that the main premises of Western art have at last

> migrated to the United States, along with the center of gravity of industrial production and political power.[107]

Not surprisingly, the emerging American artists were aware of this shift in the art world's center before it was recognized even by sympathetic critics. Thus in 1945 the painter Barnett Newman had observed that whereas Paris' status in the art world had been severely damaged by the war, New York's stature had actually been increased by the war's effects:

> With the large immigration of refugee painters who have acted as a stimulus, New York artists have begun to feel themselves the leaders and bearers of the artistic tradition of Europe instead of, as heretofore, only its reflection. The longstanding inhibiting position that made New York a mirror of Paris disappeared in 1940, and suddenly the artists of New York had to stand on their own feet.[108]

During the 1930s and '40s, New York was the scene of the development of the most important experimental art movement of the century, as a large group of painters gradually created a novel form of abstract art. They were aware that their progress was slow and painstaking, as for example in 1945 Mark Rothko wrote to Barnett Newman that the recent development of his work had been exhilarating even though it had caused him many headaches: "Unfortunately one can't think these things out with finality, but must endure a series of stumblings toward a clearer issue."[109] They were also aware that few outside their circle of fellow artists took any interest in their efforts. Adolph Gottlieb later recalled that "We were like the people who are nothing but chess players or tennis bums and who refuse to do anything useful. And we felt that we were willing to go all our lives and do this despised kind of painting without any hope of success."[110] Yet in retrospect the Abstract Expressionists recognized that the absence of attention to their work in the early years had allowed them the necessary time to develop their art without external pressure. Thus in 1969, when the famous 66-year-old Mark Rothko was honored with an honorary degree by Yale University – from which Rothko had

dropped out 46 years earlier, in anger at the school's anti-Semitism and anti-intellectualism – he spoke briefly and nostalgically of the golden age he had found in the art world of his youth, that no longer existed because of the very success of his own cohort:

> When I was a younger man, art was a lonely thing: no galleries, no collectors, no critics, no money. Yet it was a golden age, for then we had nothing to lose and a vision to gain. Today it is not quite the same. It is a time of tons of verbiage, activity, a consumption … I do know that many who are driven to this life are desperately searching for those pockets of silence where they can root and grow. We must all hope that they find them.[111]

The freedom afforded them by the art world's indifference to their early efforts was a common theme among the Abstract Expressionists. So for example Adolph Gottlieb recalled that "Nothing could have been worse than the situation in which we were, so we tried desperate things," and Robert Motherwell reflected that "No one thought we could ever produce truly great modern painting, only Europeans could. So we had nothing to lose by risking all."[112] But it wasn't merely critics, dealers, and collectors who lacked confidence in the young American artists, for they themselves were dogged by the persistent uncertainty of experimental innovators. Thus for example the experimental Abstract Expressionists failed to produce the manifestos that earlier conceptual movements had used to attract attention to their art, and Motherwell later explained that "the very nature of a manifesto is to affirm forcefully and unambiguously, and not to express the existential doubt and the anxiety that we all felt."[113]

Many of the leading Abstract Expressionists served informal apprenticeships in New York with a few key figures. Rothko, Gottlieb, Newman, and a number of their peers attended weekly sketching sessions throughout the 1930s and early '40s at the New York apartment of the older American painter Milton Avery. Avery was an experimental painter who had been deeply influenced by Matisse early in his career, and had spent decades developing his own mature style

based on the expressive use of subtle color harmonies. Although Avery never fully abandoned representation, the simplified shapes and blurred outlines of the objects in his images could be seen by his younger protégés as a step toward the creation of textured and flattened fields of color that were not constrained by figuration. The importance of the younger painters' direct contact with Avery was eloquently expressed in a eulogy in which Rothko paid tribute to his friend and teacher: "'This conviction of greatness, the feeling that one was in the presence of great events, was immediate on encountering his work. It was true for many of us who were younger, questioning, and looking for an anchor … The instruction, the example, the nearness in the flesh of this marvelous man – all this was a significant fact – one which I shall never forget."[114] Several others among the Abstract Expressionists were influenced by a painter closer to their own age, but who brought to New York a charismatic personality and an impressive Paris reputation as the youngest of André Breton's recruits to Surrealism. Motherwell described Roberto Matta as "the most energetic, enthusiastic, poetic, charming, brilliant young artist that I've ever met," and recalled that during a trip the artists made together to Mexico, "In the three months of that summer of 1941, Matta gave me a ten-year education in surrealism."[115] The Abstract Expressionists often spoke of their desire to create images from the subconscious, yet their interest in Surrealism was not in the work of the artists who produced precise dream images, but rather in that of those who used paint spontaneously. Thus they admired the paintings of Miró and Masson, and they learned about those painters' techniques from Matta, who had developed his personal experimental form of Surrealism using fluid color and shallow spaces in an abstract tradition that had been initiated by Kandinksy.[116] In addition to Motherwell, Matta's technique had a direct impact on Pollock, William Baziotes and Arshile Gorky. Motherwell gave credit to Matta for introducing the Abstract Expressionists to the use of

automatism, which he identified as the key to the development of their art: “my conviction is that, more than any other single thing, the introduction and acceptance of the theory of automatism brought about a different look into our painting … It was the germ, historically, of what later came to be called abstract expressionism.”[117]

In spite of the great differences in their mature styles, during the 1940s and early ’50s the Abstract Expressionists shared a strong common identity as members of a collective enterprise. In regular meetings at a series of galleries, cafeterias, and bars, including the now-legendary Cedar Street Tavern, the artists argued and discussed their work, and in the process both encouraged and challenged one another. In 1954, Baziotes described this: “Contact with other artists has always been of great importance to me. When the artists I know best used to meet ten or twelve years ago, the talk was mostly of ideas in painting. There was an unconscious collaboration between artists. Whether you agreed or disagreed was of no consequence. It was exciting and you were compelled to paint over your head. You had to stay on a high level or drown.”[118] Similarly, a biographer of Rothko observed that “all of these artists knew each other, viewed each other’s work and formed a social network … During the late forties, in the absence of sales and critical recognition, this loose field of social relations, with artists attending each other’s shows, engaging in conversations, spending Saturday afternoons at a gallery like Parsons’ or Saturday evenings in an apartment like Ferber’s – all these provided a stimulating, supportive context for innovation as well as relief from ‘crushing’ isolation.”[119]

The Abstract Expressionists were not concerned primarily with ideas or the philosophy of painting, but rather with the process of painting and the discovery of new images. For them, innovations emerged from physical activity: thus Robert Motherwell could declare that “I think the deepest discoveries in art have to do with the artist’s materials, the liquids, grounds,

instruments, brushes, sticks, palette knives, pen points, whatever."[120] The experimental art that emerged triumphant in New York in the early 1950s was widely copied by artists elsewhere. In 1955, for example, William Seitz observed that "it is impossible to convey fully the degree to which Abstract Expressionism has become a universal style," so that "the uniting features of the style can now be found in England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and even Japan."[121] Abstract Expressionism did not travel well, however. Only in Paris did an important group of painters emerge who shared the attitudes and values of the American Abstract Expressionists, and their art was developed independently of that of New York, with considerably less impact on the advanced art world than that of the Americans.[122] The only group of followers of the Abstract Expressionists who came to be considered important contributors to advanced art were the younger artists who worked in New York during the 1950s and '60s, who were labeled the second-generation Abstract Expressionists, and their importance was also considerably less than that of their first-generation predecessors.[123] The experimental character of Abstract Expressionism appears to account for the inability of artists outside New York to make important contributions by emulating the school's methods and images, for Abstract Expressionism was based on subtle and complex uses of materials, that could not be systematized or even precisely described. So for example in 1948, when four of the leading Abstract Expressionists established a school – that proved unsuccessful and short-lived – they offered no formal courses because, as Robert Motherwell explained, "The way to learn to paint … is to hang around artists."[124] Aspiring artists who were unable to hang around the pioneering Abstract Expressionists proved unable to use their discoveries as the basis for any significant new contributions to advanced art. And even those young experimental artists who were able to spend time with their first-

generation predecessors in New York quickly found their own innovative efforts overshadowed by the bolder and more radical innovations of a new generation of young conceptual artists.

## Pop Art

> Pop is Instant Art.
>
> Robert Indiana, 1963[125]

Pop Art burst on the New York art world in 1962. A *New York Times* review of one group exhibition in that year opened with the statement "It's mad, mad, wonderfully mad," and an article in *Art International*, titled "'Pop' Culture, Metaphysical Disgust, and the New Vulgarians," declared that "The truth is, the art galleries are being invaded by the pin-headed and contemptible style of gum chewers, bobby soxers, and worse, delinquents."[126]

The contrast between Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism could hardly have been greater. The Abstract Expressionists had complex and uncertain goals, and pursued them cautiously by developing highly personal gestures; the Pop artists had simple goals, which they accomplished summarily with straightforward execution. The Abstract Expressionists rejected all preconception, for they wanted to discover images, and their own identity, in the process of painting; the leading Pop artists reproduced existing images – often familiar, commercial products – using impersonal, and often actually mechanical, techniques. The Abstract Expressionists considered art to be an existentialist quest, with the goal of asserting the freedom of the individual; Pop was an art about mass production, that often used techniques of mass production in its own execution. Andy Warhol explained that "I'm for mechanical art. When I took up silk screening, it was to more fully exploit the preconceived image through the commercial techniques of multiple reproduction," while Roy Lichtenstein stated that "I want my painting to look as if it had been programmed. I want to hide the record of my hand."[127]

Unlike Abstract Expressionism, which depended critically on the subtleties of the application of paint and the creation of personal forms by the individual artist, Pop was so completely preconceived that a number of Pop artists, including Warhol, did not have to execute their own paintings. In view of the fact that the artists could fully communicate their intentions to assistants, it is not surprising that the work could readily be understood by others. Thus the Pop painter Robert Indiana described Pop as "straight-to-the-point, severely blunt, with as little 'artistic' transformation and delectation as possible," and he observed that "Its comprehension can be as immediate as a Crucifixion."[128] A younger artist, Larry Bell, remarked in 1963 on the rapid diffusion of Pop: "It is quite unique to these past few years that a generation of artists should have its influence on a second generation before it has even resolved its own philosophy. Modern means of communication and Pop Art are a romance that must have been made in heaven."[129] To understand and emulate Pop art, other artists not only didn't have to have direct contact with the innovative Pop artists, they didn't even have to see their original works: Pop's images were taken directly from magazines and other modern means of communication, and as Bell recognized, they were readily transmitted by those same means.

In 1963, Roy Lichtenstein predicted that Pop would spread to Europe: "Everybody has called Pop Art 'American' painting, but it's actually industrial painting … Europe will be the same way soon, so it won't be American; it will be universal."[130] Although Lichtenstein didn't know it at the time, his prediction had already come true. In 1962, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke were students at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art. The most influential teacher at the academy, Joseph Beuys, was proselytizing for his new conception of Social Sculpture, and he denounced painting as a reactionary activity. Richter and Polke reacted in the perverse fashion of young conceptual innovators: "Polke and Richter thought long and hard about whether they were

'allowed to paint,' decided they were not, and for that reason took it up with a vengeance."[131] The troublesome question remained, however, of how to paint without embracing past traditions. The key discovery occurred in 1962, when a fellow student, Konrad Lueg, showed Polke and Richter an art magazine that contained illustrations of Pop paintings by Lichtenstein and Warhol. Richter almost immediately began to base his paintings on photographs: "I had had enough of bloody painting, and painting from a photograph seemed to me the most moronic and inartistic thing that anyone could do … I simply copied the photographs in paint and aimed for the greatest possible likeness to photography."[132]

Working together, the young German painters created a new art they variously called Capitalist Realism, German Pop, or Pop Art. Richter noted that "We have worked out our ideas largely by talking them through … And so the exchange with other artists – and especially the collaboration with Lueg and Polke – matters a lot to me: it is part of the input that I need."[133] In the spring of 1963, Richter, Polke, Lueg, and a fourth young painter presented an exhibition of their work in Düsseldorf. In a press release, Richter declared this the "first exhibition of 'German Pop Art.'" He explained that Pop had inaugurated an aesthetic revolution: "Pop Art has rendered conventional painting … entirely obsolete, and has rapidly achieved international currency and recognition." Curiously, he went on to argue that "Pop Art is not an American invention, and we do not regard it as an import – though the concepts and terms were mostly coined in America and caught on more rapidly there than in Germany. This art is pursuing its own organic and autonomous growth in this country."[134]

Richter has not denied the importance of American Pop art for his early development.[135] Although he did not explain his claim that Pop was not an import to Germany, it is likely that what he had in mind was that he and Polke did not simply follow the styles of Warhol or

Lichtenstein, but that they adapted the innovations of the Americans to their own purposes. Thus although the Photo Paintings Richter began to produce in 1962 are generally recognized as his first significant contribution, they do not in any way resemble the paintings of any American Pop artist, and Richter went on in later years to make paintings, based on photographs, in a variety of other styles. Polke's early Pop paintings not only did not resemble American Pop, but also had little in common with those of Richter. Polke seized particularly on Lichtenstein's mimicry of the benday dots that create newspaper photographs, but his paintings were very different in appearance from those of Lichtenstein.[136] Thus Richter's claim that Pop art had had "its own organic and autonomous growth" in Germany may have been a reference to the flexibility of the ideas and techniques of Pop, for artists anywhere could readily understand the practices of Warhol and Lichtenstein, and could equally readily transform them according to their own tastes. Richter and Polke would go on to become two of the most important painters of the late twentieth century, and their success would rest largely on the practice of painting from photographs, with techniques that often imitated photographic elements, but both would use motifs and methods that made their paintings distinctively their own.

In an amusing anecdote, Arthur Danto reported a later instance of the diffusion of Pop, similar to that of its adoption by Richter and Polke, that underscores even more forcefully the unimportance of the actual appearance of the original art for its ability to influence artists in distant places:

> The dissident artists, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid told me that they discovered Pop Art from seeing it in half-tone illustrations in various art magazines that had clandestine circulation in the Soviet Union, and appropriated its strategies for their own subversive purposes in a movement they called "Zotz Art." One result of *Glasnost* was the ceremonial exchange of art exhibitions, which is one of the ways in which nations symbolically express friendship for one another; and the Zotz

> artists could scarcely contain their excitement when a show of American Pop Art in Moscow was announced. What they were unprepared for, Alex Melamid remembers, was how *beautiful* Pop Art was![137]

An early debate about Pop art, never resolved, concerned whether Pop was intended to celebrate or to mock contemporary commercial culture.[138] Another perennial dispute has questioned whether Pop's use of photography was sincere or ironic. The ambiguities that have fuelled these debates appear to have made a sizeable contribution to the influence of Pop art. Thus since the invention of Pop, commercial motifs could become subjects for artists with a wide range of ideologies. The Pop practice of painting from existing photographs equally created a vast new store of images for advanced artists: as David Sylvester observed, "all of Warhol's mature work is as if inspired by a revelation that a modern painter could and should exploit the photograph as Renaissance painters exploited classical antiquities."[139] It was because Pop opened up these new conceptual opportunities that its influence not only spread rapidly, but has continued to resonate in the advanced art world for decades.

Conceptual Art

> In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work.
>
> Sol LeWitt, 1967[140]

During the late 1960s a number of artists in New York began to identify their work as Conceptual Art. In a number of respects, Conceptual Art paralleled the earlier Dada movement. Like Dada, Conceptual Art was a protest. Thus in 1968 Sol LeWitt, a key member of the movement, observed that "American life is rapidly breaking down. We have riots, wars, etc. The middle class morality is breaking down … There is no reason that the artist should feel he is part of something that is so decadent and so completely without any purpose."[141] Another important Conceptual artist, Joseph Kosuth, later explained that Conceptual art was "the art of the Vietnam

war era."[142] Like Dada, Conceptual artists attacked the values of advanced art. The critic Lucy Lippard explained that "it was usually the form rather than the content of Conceptual art that carried a political message … Anti-establishment fervor in the 1960s focused on the de-mythologization and de-commodification of art, on the need for an independent (or 'alternative') art that could not be bought and sold by the greedy sector that owned everything that was exploiting the world and promoting the Vietnam war."[143] And like Dada, Conceptual art spread rapidly across space. The critic Peter Wollen observed that "To grasp the spread of conceptualism as a broad global movement, it is essential to understand both that it was multi-polar in its origins and that it was the creation of a very small, but very vocal and productive, phalanx of artists, strategically situated in New York and committed to a typically avant-garde strategy, complete with manifestos, journals and theoretical statements."[144]

Although its rhetoric often exceeded its practices, Conceptual art went beyond Dada in defining new artistic forms that would be more highly conceptual than any earlier art. In a famous early manifesto in 1967, LeWitt declared that in Conceptual Art execution would be strictly subordinated to conception: "When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art." Two years later, LeWitt explained that execution was in fact not a necessary element of art: "Ideas can be works of art … All ideas need not be made physical."[145] Kosuth made parallel statements, in 1967 declaring that "All I make are models. The actual works of art are ideas," and in 1969 observing that "art's viability is not connected to the presentation of visual (or other) kinds of experience."[146] On the basis of theoretical statements in this vein, in 1968 Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, two critics who were supporters of Conceptual Art, made a bold prediction: "a number of artists are losing

interest in the physical evolution of the work of art. The studio is again becoming a study. Such a trend appears to be provoking a profound dematerialization of art, especially of art as object, and if it continues to prevail, it may result in the object's becoming wholly obsolete."[147]

Inspired by the concept of dematerialization, in 1968 the dealer Seth Siegelaub created an exhibition titled *The Xerox Book*, that had no physical manifestation other than a Xeroxed book. Each of seven Conceptual artists – Kosuth, LeWitt, Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Robert Morris, and Lawrence Weiner – was asked to submit 25 pages of material on standard sheets of paper, with whatever texts or images they pleased, and their submissions were Xeroxed.[148] Siegelaub chose Xeroxing instead of higher quality reproduction because it was "really just for the exchange of information … Xerox just cuts down on the visual aspect of looking at the information." He believed that he had successfully dematerialized the art gallery: "I've just, in a sense, eliminated the idea of space. My gallery is the world now."[149]

The rapid geographic diffusion of Conceptual Art was highlighted by a 1970 exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, titled "Information." Intended as "'an international report' of the activity of younger artists," over 100 artists from more than a dozen countries were invited to submit their work. The show's curator, Kynaston McShine, observed that the artists shared a concern with "the general social, political, and economic crises that are almost universal phenomena of 1970. If you are an artist in Brazil, you know of at least one friend who is being tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has been in jail for having long hair, or for not being 'dressed' properly; and if you are living in the United States, you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the universities, in your bed, or more formally in Indochina."[150] The seven artists from the *Xerox Book* were all included in "Information," and they were joined by such other prominent artists as the Germans Bernd and Hilla Becher and

Joseph Beuys, the French Daniel Buren, the English Gilbert and George, the Dutch Jan Dibbets, the Italian Michelangelo Pistoletto, the Japanese On Kawara, and a host of other Americans including John Baldessari, Bruce Nauman, Yoko Ono, Ed Ruscha, and Robert Smithson. Many of the submissions consisted exclusively of written texts, while many combined texts and photographs.

In the catalogue for "Information," McShine observed that with modern technologies of communication and transportation, "it is now possible for artists to be truly international; exchange with their peers is now comparatively simple … It is no longer imperative for an artist to be in Paris or New York."[151] In an interview the previous year, Seth Siegelaub had given an enthusiastic and detailed analysis of the connection between the new Conceptual Art and globalization:

> I like the idea of things, information, people, ideas moving back and forth. And now that has much to do with a quality of the art, too. It can travel very easily, and it can be seen on a primary level, not just photographs of something but the something itself. The idea of primary information as opposed to secondary or tertiary information. Or hearsay. It's happening very, very quickly. And it makes communications even quicker. Just send a letter in the mail and you know what it's about. You don't have to wait for a painting to arrive, like someone in Paris wouldn't see a Pollock until the late fifties or early sixties, whenever the show took one over. Those days are over. And the idea that people can make art wherever they live, that they don't have to necessarily come to New York and be part of the scene, I like that too.[152]

Conceptual Art proved no more successful than Dada in destroying the commercial values of advanced art. As early as 1973, Lucy Lippard acknowledged her disappointment that "Hopes that 'conceptual art' would be able to avoid the general commercialization, the destructively 'progressive' approach of modernism were for the most part unfounded." The formerly anti-materialist Conceptual artists had been co-opted: "the major conceptualists are

selling work for substantial sums here and in Europe; they are represented by (and still more unexpected – showing in) the world's most prestigious galleries." Lippard was forced to concede that "art and artist in a capitalist society remain luxuries."[153] Yet although ideas had not replaced objects, texts had not replaced images, and Xeroxed copies had not replaced paintings, the Conceptual Art movement did demonstrate how rapidly highly conceptual artistic practices could spread. The catalogue of the Museum of Modern Art's 1970 "Information" show provides powerful evidence of this. Thus just a few years after New York artists had begun to provide formal definitions of Conceptual Art, the movement had made converts, or at least attracted adherents, in more than a dozen different countries, and artists throughout Western Europe and South America could use written texts, diagrams, and newspaper photographs to create works that can hardly be distinguished in style or substance from the products of the movement's pioneers in New York.

London

> The center of the f…ing art world's in England. You know that, don't you?
>
> Damien Hirst, 2000[154]

In the late 1990s, a number of English critics began to claim that London had displaced New York as the center of the advanced art world, as a result of the achievements of the young British artists, or yBas. The yBas first burst onto the art scene in 1988, in "Freeze," a group exhibition of 16 young artists held in the vacated Port of London Authority Building in London's Docklands. The show was curated by Damien Hirst, who was then an art student at London's Goldsmiths College, and the exhibitors were Hirst's fellow students or recent graduates of Goldsmiths.[155] "Freeze" was soon followed by a series of similar group exhibitions, which were held in empty warehouses, and the artists involved, with others of their generation, gained a

common identity as a new movement. The label for the group was cemented by a series of five group shows presented by the collector and dealer Charles Saatchi, beginning in 1992, titled "Young British Artists."

In 1995 Richard Cork, the art critic for *The Times*, wrote that "New art in this country enjoys an outstandingly high reputation today. Curators, critics and collectors in many different countries are excited about the vitality of British artists." With some surprise, Cork observed that the yBas "have proved that Britain is capable of producing a remarkably self-assured and inventive generation busily redefining accepted ideas about what art can be," and he speculated that "they may well go on to win for modern British art an even higher reputation than the one it already enjoys."[156] In 1997, London's Royal Academy of Arts hosted "Sensation," an exhibition of the work of 44 young British artists, drawn entirely from the collection of Charles Saatchi. In surveying the accomplishments of these artists, Norman Rosenthal, the Royal Academy's Exhibitions Secretary, observed that "the latest new generation of British artists is having considerably more impact than its predecessors." He cautiously raised the possibility that the yBas had already elevated London to art world preeminence:

> Can London become the unchallenged center for the practice and presentation of contemporary art? In the past, Paris, New York and even Düsseldorf have been able aggressively to claim this role, by virtue of the density of activity in each city over considerable periods of time, with many artists, as well as collectors and galleries, contributing to the debate with originality and daring. If London could now claim such a position, that would be a first, and surely grounds for celebration.[157]

And in 1998, in an early example of the definite assertion of English success, the critic Matthew Collings flatly declared: "Always remember, New Yorkers, young British art now dominates the world, even your world."[158]

The art of the yBas is extremely diverse, and does not share any common style. The critic Richard Shone generalized about the yBas:

> none was motivated by didactic, socio-political issues; all took for granted the lessons of conceptual and minimal art; none was … a legibly figurative artist; and many introduced autobiographical and personal elements into their work. Materials used were invariably demotic, drawn from their immediate environment … Most difficult of all to characterize is perhaps a shared directness and confidence in their imagery, whether dealing in grand, universal themes or in more particular observations from contemporary life.[159]

Michael Craig-Martin, an artist and teacher at Goldsmiths College who is often considered the godfather of contemporary British art because he was the key tutor for the "Freeze" exhibitors, stressed the clarity of their work in explaining its broad appeal: "In my view it never occurred to artists of this generation to make art that people wouldn't get and wouldn't like. They thought that if people didn't get it, then they must have done something wrong. Now that is not what artists of my generation behaved like. There is now a transparency to it all."[160] The art of many of the yBas was eclectic, moving freely from style to style, and often from one medium or genre to another. One source of this eclecticism was a decision by Goldsmiths College in the 1970s to abolish divisions between departments, so students would feel free to work in any medium they chose.[161]

The yBas were young and confident. Surveying their work in 1999, Arthur Danto saw "the brashness of art students the world around. There is an exuberance, a confidence, a swagger unfortunately not to be found in the demoralized American art world of today."[162] Damien Hirst epitomized this attitude, as in 1999 he looked back on the yBas' early achievements: "I mean, all us lot, we f…ing caned the f…ing art world. Absolutely totally phenomenal. We caned the f…ing art world as *kids*."[163] It was their brashness that allowed the highly conceptual yBas to

revolutionize British art, and to circumvent existing art world constraints by presenting their work directly to the public.

The art of the yBas had what Julian Stallabrass called “an accessible veneer,” with many references to mass culture that the general public would understand.[164] Beneath the veneer, however, the yBas made liberal use of art history. Nearly all the yBas were trained in art schools that stressed a highly conceptual approach to artistic practice, so they were thoroughly familiar with earlier art even though they often feigned ignorance of it. So for example Damien Hirst, who has cultivated a public image based on the oafish and boorish behavior of punk rock musicians, with an appropriately irreverent disrespect for artistic traditions, acknowledged that one of his most celebrated early works was influenced by several leading American conceptual artists: “in my fly-killer piece [*A Thousand Years*, 1990], the lights were like Dan Flavin and the box was like Sol LeWitt. I put all that in knowingly.” He explained that he and his peers did not base their art on a single predecessor, but on many: “at a certain point everyone at Goldsmiths believed that rather than avoiding taking directly, we could take from everybody … It was just getting all these influences and piling them together into our own thing.”[165] Like many other conceptual artists, the yBas consistently based their innovations on syntheses of earlier art. Thus Chris Townsend and Mandy Merck observed that “For a movement so relentlessly appraised in terms of novelty, … the yBas seemed to depend upon strategies of the ‘re.’ Think reprise; think reply; think repeat; think reinterpretation.”[166] And as is also common among conceptual artists, the yBas often based their innovations on the art of their immediate predecessors. So for example Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas both borrowed from the American conceptual artist Bruce Nauman in specific works, and Rachel Whiteread’s trademark practice of casting negative spaces, that runs through her entire oeuvre, has been seen as a reaction to a single work Nauman

made in 1968, *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair*.[167] In recognition of the yBas' debt to American artists of the generations preceding theirs, after Matthew Collings informed New York of the end of its reign over the world of advanced art, he added: "we bow the knee to you and salute you, for your past achievements. We got all the ideas for our present achievements from you."[168]

One of the most distinctive features of the yBas is their celebrity: few contemporary art movements have been of such great interest to so large a public. As one English journalist remarked, "Fame is part of their story."[169] This is not merely incidental, but is part of a conscious strategy. Damien Hirst, the most prominent yBa, explained that he deliberately set out to change the public's perception of artists: "I grew up in box office … When I decided I wanted to be an artist, art became box office. I went in there and thought, 'I want to entertain, with art.' Not: 'I want to rot in a garret and chop my ear off.'" Hirst's attitude toward publicity is simple: "I think all publicity helps everything."[170] But the celebrity of the yBas is not limited to Hirst. Michael Craig-Martin remarked on a change in emphasis: "British contemporary art has shifted its focus from an interest in the object itself to an interest in the artist as genius."[171]

Julian Stallabrass has argued that there is a paradox at the center of much of contemporary art: "while the means by which that art is pursued are steadily less expressive of the artist's personality, more reliant on conventional ideas than feelings, more the assemblage of ready-made elements than the creation of organic compositions, the personality of the artist, far from shrinking, has greatly expanded, sometimes overshadowing the work."[172] In fact, however, this is not at all paradoxical. In most cases, the fame of the yBas has been a direct product of shocking works of art, including Hirst's dead, often sectioned, animals, suspended in formaldehyde; Tracey Emin's soiled bed, littered with blood-stained underwear and used

condoms; Jake and Dinos Chapman's mocking images of mutilated corpses, taboo sexual fantasies, and Nazi symbolism; and Chris Ofili's painting of the Virgin Mary surrounded by lumps of dried elephant dung and pornographic photographs. The shocking content of these works raised the same question about the intentions of these artists that had echoed throughout the world of advanced art ever since Marcel Duchamp submitted a porcelain urinal to the first exhibition of the American Society of Independent Artists in 1917: is he serious or is he joking? For the yBas, as for Duchamp, Beuys, Warhol, and a series of later conceptual artistic tricksters, that question of intent necessarily led to a consideration of the personality of the artist.[173] As attentive students of art history, Hirst, Emin, and a number of their peers learned this lesson from their illustrious predecessors, just as they learned that the publicity value of the debate engendered by that question would grow over time if they could avoid resolving the issue. Hirst, Emin, the Chapmans, and Ofili are conspicuous among those yBas who have carefully constructed public personas that allow the debates over their sincerity to be rekindled with each new exhibition, and in the process raising their profiles ever higher among the British public.

In 2001, the American critic Jerry Saltz wrote of the yBas as a group in a way that is reminiscent of earlier descriptions of the Abstract Expressionists, an earlier group of important artists who did not share a common style: "the British have something we lack, and that is community, by which I mean a small group of people who spend a fair amount of time together, stay up late, and probably drink and argue about art with one another … [T]here's a sense of camaraderie that's absent here." In Saltz's account, the East End of London appears to have become as central to contemporary art as Greenwich Village was in the 1950s: "The Chapmans run a tiny gallery out of Jake's house, next door to Chris Ofili's, a block from Gilbert & George's. Tracey Emin lives nearby; so do Peter Doig, Marc Quinn, Gary Hume, Wolfgang

Tillmans, Tim Noble and Sue Webster, and Rachel Whiteread. Locals boast 'the highest concentration of working artists in Europe'."[174] There is little doubt that London has been a more important artistic center than New York for the cohort of artists born during the 1960s: Hirst, Whiteread, Emin, Lucas, the Chapmans, Ofili, and their peers have had considerably greater success than most of their American contemporaries.[175] Yet it may be premature to conclude that London has definitively replaced New York as the major generative center for advanced art. As Norman Rosenthal recognized, during the 1960s and early '70s Düsseldorf's Academy of Art produced a remarkable series of painters, including Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Blinky Palermo, Jörg Immendorff, Anselm Kiefer, and Markus Lüpertz. Yet Düsseldorf could not sustain this level, and is no longer considered a major artistic center. As a major international center for finance and culture, London has obvious advantages over Düsseldorf that bode well for its continued success in advanced art, but it will require at least another generation to demonstrate that London will become the next New York rather than the next Düsseldorf.

Globalization, Nativity, and Identity

> Basquiat was intent on being a mainstream artist. He didn't want to be a black artist.
>
> Arden Scott[176]

In recent decades, there has been a considerable amount of discussion in the art world about the globalization of advanced art. These discussions have often failed to distinguish among three separate phenomena.

One of these is a consequence of recent increases in the prosperity of a number of places that were traditionally not connected to mainstream western art. In these countries, including conspicuously China and India, increasing wealth has led to the rise of thriving markets for local

contemporary art. In a number of instances, young artists in these countries have created new forms of conceptual art, based in part on borrowing from western styles.

A prime example of this is the painter Wang Guangyi, who is a leading member of China's New Art Movement, that began in the late 1980s.[177] In 1988, at the age of 31, Wang established himself as a rebel artist with a daring series of eight large paintings of Chairman Mao, that mimicked the billboard portraits that had been widely displayed during Mao's reign, but had disappeared after his death. In 1990, Wang began a new series of large paintings that became his trademark works. These combined Chinese socialist propaganda with Pop art. The most famous of these juxtaposed an image of revolutionary soldiers with the Coca-Cola logo. Each painting in the series combined the main title *Great Criticism* – an ironic reference to Mao's constant criticism of bourgeois values – with a subtitle that was the name of a famous western brand– e.g. Canon, Swatch, and M&Ms. In a special tribute, one of the paintings was subtitled *Andy Warhol*. Wang's work became the basis for a new genre in Chinese art, Political Pop.

Wang Guangyi wanted to become famous in order to improve China's image: "From the start, I was determined to produce art that was contemporary, Chinese, and that would be accorded international respect." He believed that Chinese artists had to demonstrate their familiarity with western art to dispel the image of China as culturally backward: "We wanted to engage the West on equal terms. To do this we had to understand western art theories."[178] He and other contemporary Chinese artists did this, borrowing both the techniques and the ironic attitudes of American Pop art. Wang's work gained international recognition as a new and innovative form of Chinese art, and it has sold for high prices in both western and Chinese markets. Yet it has had little impact on western artists.[179] This has been a general pattern. Young

conceptual artists who have remained in their countries of origin have borrowed styles and techniques from advanced western art, and many have gained fame and fortune in their home countries. Yet to date few developments created by those working outside western centers have had a significant impact on the mainstream of advanced western art.

Two other facets of globalization have affected the form and content of recent western art, however. One of these is a continuation and extension of a process that has been important throughout the modern era, the migration to western artistic centers of young artists from an increasingly wide range of countries. Prominent recent examples include the Cuban-born Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957-96) , who spent his career in New York, and the Chinese artist Cai Guo Quiang (1957- ), who left his native country for Japan, and later New York. Other important contemporary artists, including the Italian Maurizio Cattelan (1960- ) and the Japanese Takashi Murakami (1963- ), have maintained studios both in their native countries and New York.

To date there has been no systematic study of the changing composition by nativity of leading contemporary artists, but there are some indications that this aspect of globalization has progressed in recent times. So for example Table 2 is based on an analysis of a textbook published in 2002 titled *Art Since 1960,* written by an English art historian named Michael Archer. The present analysis was done by identifying the country of birth of every artist mentioned in the text. Table 3 presents the number of different countries of origin of these artists, distributed according to the artists' birth cohorts. The evidence shows a substantial increase in the number of countries represented over time. So for example the artists considered in the book who were aged 41-50 in 1960, the book's starting point, had been born in a total of just eight different countries, whereas those aged 31-40 came from 18 different countries, and those aged 21-30 were from 27 different countries. Disaggregated analysis of the evidence reveals that a

number of Asian and African countries, including China, India, Korea, Morocco, and Tunisia, were represented for the first time in Archer's book by artists born in the 1930s, who were in their 20s and 30s during the 1960s, when conceptual approaches became dominant in advanced western art.

A third aspect of globalization that has become increasingly important in recent times is related to the last one mentioned, but is conceptually distinct from it. This is the adoption of visual elements from the art of places that have not been part of the western mainstream, by artists who are working in western centers. This practice has of course been present throughout the modern era, as Gauguin, Picasso, and others drew elements of their styles from art forms they considered "primitive."[180] The novel aspect of this practice in recent times, however, is that these borrowings have increasingly been done by artists who assert that they are reclaiming their own national or ethnic heritage. Thus whereas some of the artists who have engaged in this practice are themselves migrants to the West, others were born in the West, but are drawing on the art of their parents' countries of origin, or on their ethnic backgrounds more generally.

Consider several examples of immigrants who drew on the art of their countries of origin. Ana Mendieta (1948-85) arrived in the United States as a Cuban refugee at the age of 12. After attending art school, while working as an artist in New York she pursued her long-time interest in Afro-Cuban iconography, and her art was directly influenced by her study of the rituals of Santería. She explained that "In my work I am in a sense reliving my heritage. My sources are memories, images, experiences, and beliefs that have left their mark in me."[181]

Anish Kapoor (1954- ) was born in India, but attended art school in London, and settled permanently in England. On a trip to India in 1979, he saw the curved forms that Hindu art used to represent the feminine deity, and these had a major impact on the development of his style. He

has become one of the most important sculptors working today, and was awarded the Turner Prize in 1991.[182]

Takashi Murakami combined a childhood love of Japanese animation art with the Pop commercial aesthetic of Jeff Koons that he discovered in New York. As the self-proclaimed Japanese Andy Warhol, Murakami created a conceptual fusion of style and content that he calls "superflat," in a joint reference to the traditional flat appearance of Japanese visual art and to the Japanese tendency to flatten or disregard the boundaries between artistic genres.[183]

It is no more difficult to find significant examples of western-born artists who imported artistic elements they considered their inheritance. Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-88) was born in New York, but his art reflected both his father's Haitian nativity and his mother's Puerto Rican origins. Thus many of his paintings included words in the Caribbean Spanish his mother spoke to him, and a number of his paintings portrayed the suffering of Africans in the transatlantic slave trade.[184] Basquiat explained that these works were personal: "I've never been to Africa … But I have a cultural memory. I don't need to look for it; it exists. It's over there, in Africa. That doesn't mean that I have to go live there. Our cultural memory follows us everywhere."[185]

Yinka Shonibare (1962- ) was born in London to Nigerian parents. He attended art school in London, and settled there. In art school, he was doing a series of works about Soviet perestroika, when a tutor remarked that "it's not really you though, is it?" Thinking "Okay, you want ethnic, I'll give you ethnic," Shonibare went to Brixton Market, where he bought *ankara*, African-print cloth, and he has featured this cloth in nearly all his subsequent work. He has explained that although this cloth is African, it was originally made in Indonesia, and was later produced industrially in Manchester. Shonibare thus actually uses *ankara* "to challenge the idea

of authenticity in arts … so the fabrics are for me a metaphor for something which is multicultural and essentially hybrid like my own identity."[186]

Chris Ofili (1968- ) was born in Manchester, to parents who were natives of Nigeria. At the age of 24, as a student at London's Royal College of Art, Ofili visited Zimbabwe on a traveling scholarship. There he saw ancient cave paintings made with brightly colored dots. And it was in Zimbabwe that he had the idea of adding an African material – dried elephant dung – to his paintings, to lend an African element to his western surfaces. Both brightly colored dots and dried elephant dung subsequently became key characteristics of Ofili's paintings, which won him the Turner Prize in 1998.[187]

Globalization in a Conceptual Era

> The art of the world has come out of the capitals of the world, because it is only in the capitals of the world, at certain favored periods, that the best minds among the older men and the ready minds of the younger enthusiasts have mingled and taken fire from one another.
>
> Ezra Pound, 1913[188]

Overall, much of the twentieth century was a time of rapid globalization for advanced art. Artists who originated in a larger number of countries than in earlier periods made important contributions, and they did so in a larger number of places than their predecessors had earlier in the modern era. Many important innovations also diffused much more rapidly, and widely, than in earlier times.

The dominance of conceptual forms of art during most of the twentieth century was largely responsible not only for the increased speed with which innovations were made, but also for the greater speed with which they diffused geographically. Collage was an early example of a major innovation that was so highly conceptual, and so versatile in its uses, that artists could adapt it to their own purposes simply after hearing descriptions of it, without even seeing actual

examples. The innovations of such movements as Dada and Pop put greater emphasis on ideas relative to execution than virtually any earlier artistic movements, and this allowed many of their new practices to spread almost spontaneously. Throughout much of the century, the great importance of written manifestos was symptomatic of the centrality of conceptual innovation, and these manifestos contributed to the rapid spread of the conceptual practices of the movements that produced them.

The dominance of artistic centers was reduced by the progress of globalization. During the twentieth century it became possible, for the first time in the modern era, for artists to make important contributions to the artistic mainstream without working in the art world's central place. For most of the first century of modern art, Paris was the single source of important innovations in advanced art. Today, in an era of highly conceptual art, it appears unlikely that any one place could again hold this position so completely for so long. Yet predictions like those that some art scholars and critics made in the late 1960s, that place would no longer matter for artistic innovation, appear to have been wrong. As in the past, it remains true today that artists who have already created novel styles or methods can work nearly anywhere they please, but also as in the past, it is unlikely that any contemporary artist can develop, or at the very least begin to develop, significant innovations anywhere other than in one of the central locations of the art world. The mainstream of western art still runs through central places. There may no longer be one single central place: as discussed above, both New York and London have been places where artists could make important innovations in recent times. And it is possible that the number of these artistic centers may increase in future, particularly if advanced art remains highly conceptual. Yet it is unlikely that this number will increase greatly. With the highly conceptual emphasis of recent art, direct contact with the leading innovators of the preceding

generation has become less important for aspiring artists than in the past, but contact with talented peers is still essential, and the places where this is possible will remain limited.

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187. Button, *The Turner Prize*, pp. 144-46; Buck, *Moving Targets 2*, pp. 83-85.

188. Harriet Zinnes, ed., *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts* (New York: New Directions Books, 1980), p. 4.

Table 1: Dada Magazines

| Title | Editors | Place | Dates |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Cabaret Voltaire* | H. Ball | Zurich | 1916 |
| *Dada* | T. Tzara | Zurich | 1917-18 |
| *Anthologie Dada* | T. Tzara | Zurich | 1919 |
| *Bulletin Dada* | F. Picabia | Paris | 1920 |
| *Dadaphone* | T. Tzara | Paris | 1920 |
| *Dada Intirol* | T. Tzara | Tarrenz, Austria | 1921 |
| *Der Zeltweg* | O. Flake, W. Serner, T. Tzara | Zurich | 1919 |
| *The Blindman* | M. Duchamp, Man Ray | New York | 1917 |
| *Rongwrong* | M. Duchamp, Man Ray | New York | 1919 |
| *New York Dada* | M. Duchamp, Man Ray | New York | 1921 |
| *Club Dada* | R. Huelsenbeck, F. Jung, R. Hausmann | Berlin | 1918 |
| *Der Dada* | R. Hausmann,, J. Heartfield, G. Grosz | Berlin | 1919-20 |
| *Jedermann Sein Eigner Fussball* | W. Herzfelde | Berlin | 1919 |
| *Der Blutige Ernst* | J. Hoexter, C. Einstein, G. Grosz | Berlin | 1919-20 |
| *Die Pleite* | C. Einstein | Berlin | 1919-20 |
| *Die Freie Strasse* | J. Heartfield, J. Booder | Berlin | 1916-18 |
| *Der Ventilator* | J. Baargeld, M. Ernst | Cologne | 1919 |
| *Bulletin D* | J. Baargeld, M. Ernst | Cologne | 1919 |
| *Die Schammade* | J. Baargeld, M. Ernst | Cologne | 1920 |
| *Merz* | K. Schwitters, El Lissitzky | Hanover | 1923-32 |
| *391* | F. Picabia | Barcelona, New York, Zurich, Paris | 1917-20 |
| *Pilhao-Thibaou* | F. Picabia | Paris | 1921-24 |
| *Cannibale* | F. Picabia | Paris | 1920 |
| *La Pomme de Pins* | F. Picabia | St. Raphael | 1922 |
| *Littérature* | L. Aragon, A. Breton, P. Soupault | Paris | 1919-24 |

Sources: Dawn Ades, *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978); Hans Richter, *Dada* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965).

Table 2: Number of Different Countries of Birth of Artists Mentioned in *Art Since 1960*, by Birth Cohort

| Decade of Artist's Birth | Number of Countries |
|---|---|
| 1890-99 | 6 |
| 1900-09 | 5 |
| 1910-19 | 8 |
| 1920-29 | 18 |
| 1930-39 | 27 |
| 1940-49 | 22 |
| 1950-59 | 26 |
| 1960-69 | 23 |

Sources: Michael Archer, *Art Since 1960*, second ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002).