

In and Around Abstract Expressionism

Fall 2017 || 612 Schermerhorn Hall || TR 1:10pm–2:25pm

First writing assignment: Visual Analysis

This course has introduced you to a variety of approaches to analyzing and contextualizing twentieth-century abstract painting and its immediate precedents. For your first assignment, please select a painting made between 1900 and 1945 currently on view in the Painting & Sculpture collection galleries at the Museum of Modern Art, or in the special exhibition “Max Ernst: Beyond Painting” (opening 9/23). A list of works on view of particular relevance to the course is provided below.

Then, in a short paper (800-1000 words), analyze your chosen artwork in two stages. In the first half (400-500 words), provide a precise and detailed description of your selected work vivid enough that your reader is able to “see” the work through your words. Then, in the second half (400-500 words), draw on the approach and insights of one assigned course reading to deepen your analysis.

Your paper need not open with a traditional introductory paragraph. Instead, launch immediately into your description of the work. Then, when you “pivot” halfway through, clearly indicate which article you are introducing into your discussion. Feel free to bring up other artworks shown in class or on view at the museum in order to make comparisons.

Please be sure to cite your sources conscientiously and consistently (MLA, Chicago, etc.) This applies to the course’s assigned articles as well as to any additional sources you consult. That said, this is not a research paper. Information from a museum wall label should be all the background you need on your specific painting.

The paper should be short but concise (800–1000 words). Make every word count! (And please do respect the word count.) Your paper will be graded for:

- 1) Visual Description (your ability to describe your artwork with clarity and precision);
- 2) Relevant References (your judicious application and citation of your chosen article’s approach and ideas);
- 3) Command of Material (the degree to which your discussion demonstrates an understanding of your selected artwork and article, as well as of the larger themes of the course).

Please include with your printed paper an image of your selected painting (a black-and-white printout is fine), and be sure to list the painting’s artist, title, and year. Assignments are due in class on **Thursday 10/5**.

Recommended works (based on consulting the MoMA website on 9/20):

Aleksandr Rodchenko, Non-Objective Painting no. 80 (Black on Black), 1918

Alexandra Exter, Theatrical Composition, c. 1925

André Derain, Charing Cross Bridge, London 1905-06

Arshile Gorky, Garden in Sochi, c. 1943

Clyfford Still, 1944-N No. 2, 1944

El Lissitzky, Proun 19D, 1920 or 1921

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Street, Dresden, 1908 (reworked 1919; dated on painting 1907)

Fernand Léger, Exit the Ballets Russes, 1914

Fernand Léger, Three Women, 1921-22

Frantisek Kupka, Mme Kupka among Verticals, 1910-11

Frida Kahlo, My Grandparents, My Parents, and I (Family Tree), 1936
 Georges Braque, Man with a Guitar, Céret, summer 1911-early 1912
 Georges Braque, The Large Trees, L'Estaque 1906-07
 Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, Silence, c. 1915
 Gino Severini, Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin, 1912
 Henri Matisse, Composition, Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1915
 Henri Matisse, Dance (I), Paris, Boulevard des Invalides, early 1909
 Henri Matisse, Interior with a Young Girl (Girl Reading), Paris 1905-06
 Henri Matisse, Music (Sketch), Collioure, spring-summer 1907
 Henri Matisse, Periwinkles / Moroccan Garden, Tangier, winter-spring 1912
 Henri Matisse, Still Life with Aubergines, Collioure, summer 1911
 Henri Matisse, The Blue Window, Issy-les-Moulineaux, summer 1913
 Henri Matisse, The Moroccans, Issy-les-Moulineaux, late 1915 and fall 1916
 Henri Matisse, The Piano Lesson, Issy-les-Moulineaux, late summer 1916
 Henri Matisse, The Red Studio, Issy-les-Moulineaux, fall 1911
 Henri Matisse, The Rose Marble Table, spring-summer 1917
 Jacob Lawrence, In the North the Negro had better educational facilities, 1940-41
 Joan Miró, The Birth of the World, late summer-fall 1925
 Joan Miró, The Hunter (Catalan Landscape), July 1923-winter 1924
 John Covert, "Ex Act", 1919
 Kazimir Malevich, Painterly Realism of a Boy with a Knapsack, 1915
 Kazimir Malevich, Reservist of the First Division, fall-winter 1914
 Kazimir Malevich, Suprematist Composition: Airplane Flying, 1915 (dated on reverse 1914)
 Kazimir Malevich, Suprematist Painting, 1916-17
 László Moholy-Nagy, EM 2 (Telephone Picture), 1923
 László Moholy-Nagy, EM 3 (Telephone Picture), 1923
 László Moholy-Nagy, Q 1 Suprematistic, 1923
 László Moholy-Nagy, Space Modulator L3, 1936
 László Moholy-Nagy, Z II, 1925
 Lyubov Popova, Painterly Architectonic, 1917
 Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky), The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows, 1916
 Marcel Duchamp, The Passage from Virgin to Bride, Munich, July-August 1912
 Pablo Picasso, "Ma Jolie", Paris, winter 1911-12
 Pablo Picasso, Bather, winter 1908-09
 Pablo Picasso, Green Still Life, Avignon, summer 1914
 Pablo Picasso, Harlequin, Paris, late 1915
 Pablo Picasso, Head of a Sleeping Woman (Study for Nude with Drapery), Paris, summer 1907
 Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Paris, June-July 1907
 Pablo Picasso, Night Fishing at Antibes, Antibes, August 1939
 Pablo Picasso, Repose, Paris, spring 1908
 Pablo Picasso, The Architect's Table, Paris, early 1912
 Pablo Picasso, The Reservoir, Horta de Ebro, Horta de San Joan, summer 1909
 Pablo Picasso, Three Musicians, summer 1921
 Pablo Picasso, Three Women at the Spring, summer 1921
 Pablo Picasso, Two Nudes, Paris, late 1906
 Pablo Picasso, Woman Plaiting Her Hair, Paris, late summer or fall 1906
 Paul Klee, Actor's Mask, 1924
 Paul Klee, Around the Fish, 1926
 Paul Klee, Portrait of an Equilibrist, 1927
 Pavel Tchelitchew, Hide-and-Seek, Derby, Vermont and New York, June 1940 - June 1942
 Piet Mondrian, Broadway Boogie Woogie, 1942-43
 Piet Mondrian, Tableau I: Lozenge with Four Lines and Gray, 1926
 Robert Delaunay, Simultaneous Contrasts: Sun and Moon, Paris 1913 (dated on painting 1912)
 Sonia Delaunay-Terk, Portuguese Market, 1915
 Umberto Boccioni, Dynamism of a Soccer Player, 1913
 Varvara Stepanova, Figure, 1921
 Vasily Kandinsky, Picture with an Archer, 1909