

Some Twentieth Century Art Movements

This glossary provides a brief description of the twentieth century art movements that are referenced in the display. Although it is useful to outline these art movements, it is also important to remember that many artists took inspiration from multiple sources. Some artists may also have been aligned with a certain group, only to later disassociate themselves from it. For example, although Christopher Nevinson was an early proponent of Futurism in Britain, he later renounced this label. Max Beckmann, too, is frequently classified as an Expressionist artist, yet he supposedly rejected the term.

Cubism was invented in around 1907–08 by artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. The movement marked a break with traditional European art, which used perspective to create the illusion of depth on a two-dimensional surface. Rather, Cubist artists depicted subjects from multiple viewpoints simultaneously on the same canvas, to reflect the shifts in perspective that occur in the process of viewing. This was considered to be a more 'truthful' representation of a subject, and is what gives Cubist works their characteristic fragmented style.

Futurism was launched by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in 1909. Fundamentally, Futurist artists embraced and celebrated the modern world of industry and technology. They sought to capture the energy, speed and dynamism of the modern experience within their art. Blurring, overlapping and repeating parallel lines are just some of the techniques that were used to achieve this sense of motion.

'**Dada** wished to replace the logical nonsense of the men of today with an illogical nonsense', wrote Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, an art critic and writer affiliated with the movement. Dadaists responded to what they viewed as the senselessness and absurdity of the First World War by creating irrational 'anti-art'. Dada not only rejected traditional definitions of art, but reason itself. This manifested in a variety of experimental forms, including collage, poetry, and performance art. The founder of Dada was a writer, Hugo Ball. In 1916 he started a satirical night-club in Zurich, the Cabaret Voltaire, and a magazine which, wrote Ball, 'will bear the name "Dada". Dada, Dada, Dada, Dada.' This was the first of many Dada publications.

Surrealism: Like the Dadaists, Surrealist artists rejected the traditional values and morals that they believed had led to the First World War. However, rather than creating anti-art, the Surrealists sought to 'free' the unconscious mind to discover 'the actual functioning of thought'. In order to achieve this, experimental techniques such as 'automatic' drawing were used. Here, the artist would enter a meditative state, undergoing a process of subconscious mark-making. This created works that were, theoretically, without reason or conscious thought. The word 'surrealist' (suggesting 'beyond reality') was coined by the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire in 1917 but it was André Breton, leader of a new group of poets and artists in Paris, who in 1924 defined Surrealism in his *Surrealist Manifesto*.

Expressionism emphasised emotion or inner feelings over objective depictions of reality. For example, a figure in an Expressionist work may appear distorted, simplified, or misshapen, in order to convey particular feelings, emotions or ideas. Although the term Expressionist can be applied to artworks from any era, it is

generally applied to art of the twentieth century. There were many different groups of Expressionist artists, particularly in Germany, who varied in their stylistic approaches.