Harn Museum of Art Instructional Resource: Thinking about Modernity

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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

"Give Me A Wilderness or A City": George Bellows's Rural Life

DESCRIPTION

This painting depicts the residence of the artist's neighbor, Jim Twadell, an accomplished horseman whose stables and hayloft appear in the middle ground, partially obstructing Woodstock, New York's Ohayo mountain in the distance. In the grassy foreground an apple tree bears fruit. The fallen apples, deepening shadows, and chicken's proximity to the barn indicate a late afternoon in mid-autumn. In front of the gabled farmhouse, an unidentified woman pours a bowl of water, her posture indicating work. Bellows's brushwork harkens back to impressionist technique, even as his use of Dynamic Symmetry and bold color theory place him squarely in modernist traditions.

George Wesley Bellows. *Jim Twadell's Place*. October 1924
Oil on canvas. 20 x 24 in. (50.8 x 61 cm)
Gift of William H. and Eloise R. Chandler
Object number: 1992.12

This resource is a graduate student project developed in a graduate seminar on "Modernist Studies & Pedagogy," taught by English Professor Marsha Bryant in Spring 2019. The resource is intended for college-level instruction but may also be useful for high-school teachers. In addition to Arts and Humanities, this Instructional Resource can also prompt conversations about the Sciences and Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and other fields of study. This material may be freely adapted for instructional purposes.

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COMMENTARY

George Bellows's "later" work is often overshadowed by his early fame, but his landscapes are actually examples of an artist in mid-career attempting to find his own aesthetic, separate from his mentor's artistic values (Robert Henri's journalistic realism inspired by transcendentalist writings). In 1915, while speaking with the *New York Sun* about his city paintings, Bellows described a philosophy that defined the latter half of his life: "The test of my success with a picture, to me, is whether I have been able to make other people feel from the picture what I felt from the reality. Even so abstract a message as a landscape may have is still an expression of feeling. My pictures are all expressions of emotional realism…" While Bellows's early career championed socialist themes, the work of European modernists such as Marcel Duchamp, as well as the atrocities of WWI, pushed him to seek new approaches to art that would reflect not only the conditions of marginalized communities, but also the experiences of the human heart.

BIOGRAPHY

"The artist," wrote George Bellows, "is the man who makes life more interesting or beautiful, more understandable or mysterious, or probably, in the best sense, more wonderful." Born in 1882, Bellows studied under Robert Henri at the New York School of Art and helped found the Ashcan movement, a group of artists famed for realistically depicting New York City's working classes. Bellows is widely known for painting celebrated boxing matches, though he also contributed heavily to American lithography. His work shifted dramatically from realism to expressionism during a career that was cut short in 1925, when he died at the age of 42.

This aesthetic came to full fruition as he began to spend more time in Woodstock, NY, focusing on portraiture and landscape. Bellows's use of light earned him comparisons with Renaissance masters, while his refusal to engage in the growing popularity of mainstream modernist conceits (such as Cubism and Surrealism) left him prematurely "out of date." However, as curator Marjorie Searl writes of the painter's last five years, "To judge Bellows's work of this period strictly in comparison with his boxing or urban scenes is to apply incorrect standards to it. During his Woodstock years, he created vibrant, strong landscapes while he was on his way to producing some of the most complex figural paintings of the period…Woodstock served as both his model and his muse." Though Bellows was ambivalent about the work he was producing at the time of his death, we know he was pleased with *Jim Twadell's*, as he chose to hang it above the mantel in his family home.

Ultimately, Bellows's explorations of emotional realism were at the cutting edge of the artistic movements of his day; compare *Jim Twadell's Place* with the following poem by Bellows's contemporary, D.H. Lawrence, who was branded as a pornographer before becoming one of the most celebrated English novelists of the century:

Mystic

They call all experience of the senses *mystic,* when the experience is considered.
So an apple becomes *mystic* when I taste in it
the summer and the snows, the wild welter of earth
and the insistence of the sun.

All of which things I can surely taste in a good apple.
Though some apples taste preponderantly of water, wet and sour
and some of too much sun, brackish sweet
like lagoon-water, that has been too much sunned.

If I say I taste these things in an apple, I am called *mystic,* which means a liar.
The only way to eat an apple is to hog it down like a pig
and taste nothing
that is *real.*

But if I eat an apple, I like to eat it with all my senses awake.
Hogging it down like a pig I call the feeding of corpses.

—D. H. Lawrence, *Last Poems* (1933)

TALKING POINTS

1. **Formal Elements**. Bellows used Dynamic Symmetry, a compositional technique based on the golden ratio, in his both his paintings and constructions. Other notable modernists, such as Salvador Dali, also frequently used the golden ratio in their works. Dynamic energy is created by dividing rectangles into symmetrical plains, which we see in the triangular cloud floating above the farmyard. The subversion of a traditional vanishing point in favor of developing a highly subjective intimacy also speaks to reflects modernist norms.

2. **Bending Modernism**. "Convention is a very shallow thing. I am perfectly willing to override it," Bellows told an interviewer in 1920. The artist broke from his contemporaries' aesthetics as modern art moved toward increasingly real and surreal depictions of the world, rejecting late-nineteenth-century impressionism. Bellows abandoned the Ashcan school's dark palettes in favor of bold reworkings of primary colors. By marrying new, modernist styles of perspective and subjectivity with older, more traditional techniques, he was able to create a style both unique and widely appealing.

3. **Make It New.** One destabilizing joy of artwork is that we get the rare opportunity to see the world from someone else's perspective. In Jim Twadell's Place, farmyard labor transforms into splendor under Bellows's appreciative eye. As writer Joyce Carol Oates notes, in Bellows's work "we see the very poetry of American realism of the early, turbulent years of the twentieth century—unless we are seeing a brilliantly premeditated painterly mysticism…Above all we see the volcanic purity of the 'creative impulse'—the primordial energy, excitation. What is art? Bellows described it as the marshaling of all one's faculties, including those we are unconscious of possessing."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The golden ratio has not only been used in painting and architecture, but also in poetry (John Ashbery) and music (Erik Satie). Do you see this mathematical relationship occurring in the composition of any other pieces in the Harn Museum of Art? How does the golden ratio manifest in your own field of study?

2. As America has moved farther and farther from an agricultural economy, scenes like those in *Jim Twadell's Place* have come to represent the idyllic past rather than our work-a-day reality. Our literary arts also reflect this shift in our thinking. Do artists have a responsibility to reflect the world realistically, like Bellows's mentor Robert Henri advocated, as a means to inspire social and political progress? How does contemporary art romanticize our current technological and "gig" economies?

3. From small-scale, urban operations to "small"-scale country farms of 500 acres, family-run, sustainable agriculture is having a resurgence in the United States. Are these alternative forms of food production sufficient to replace corporate agriculture? How does *Jim Twadell's Place* advocate for such a lifestyle?

USEFUL RESOURCES

George Bellows. National Gallery of Art. Video, 31:18. Accessed April 20, 2019. https://www.nga.gov/audio-video/video/bellows.html.

Oates, Joyce Carol. *George Bellows: American Artist*. Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1995.

Searl, Marjorie B. and Netsky, Ronald. *Leaving for The Country: George Bellows at Woodstock*. New York: Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, 2003.

HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Locating Monuments, Locating Modernity

DESCRIPTION

At the center of Jefferson Market Courthouse is the eponymous Greenwich Village landmark with its distinctive Victorian Gothic style and clock tower. Stranded, as it were, on a triangular base, the three-story, bright-red building appears three dimensional against its drab-colored background. The indistinct features of the high-rise buildings, skyscrapers, and a suspension bridge that recedes to the gray horizon contrast the courthouse's relatively stylized design. A few clouds spatter an otherwise clear yet monochrome sky. The rooftop corner of a brick building with an illegible advertisement emphasizes the viewer's higher vantage point, putting into perspective the spatial layout that encircles the courthouse.

Francis Criss. *Jefferson Market Courthouse*. 1935
Oil on canvas. 34 1/2 x 22 1/2 in. (87.6 x 57.2 cm).
Object number: PA-83-122

This resource is a graduate student project developed in a graduate seminar on "Modernist Studies & Pedagogy," taught by English Professor Marsha Bryant in Spring 2019. The resource is intended for college-level instruction but may also be useful for high-school teachers. In addition to Arts and Humanities, this Instructional Resource can also prompt conversations about the Sciences and Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and other fields of study. This material may be freely adapted for instructional purposes.

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COMMENTARY

In the first half of the twentieth century, no artist based in New York City would have difficulty identifying the main subject of Francis Criss' painting, *Jefferson Market Courthouse*. Located in the heart of Greenwich Village—a hub of residence and social activity for poets, writers, and painters alike—Jefferson Courthouse continues to be an NYC landmark with a distinct Victorian Gothic style and an adventurous history of its own. Currently a branch of the New York Public Library, the structure was built between 1875-1877 and functioned until the late 1940s as a courthouse that hosted among others: a 1896 prostitution case, in which the author Stephen Crane served as a character witness for the accused; the infamous Girl in the Velvet Swing Case (1906), where the millionaire Harry K. Thaw killed the architect Stanford White in a crime of passion; and the bitter conflict between the exploitative owner and the female employees of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in the aftermath of a workers' strike. While reflecting nothing of its tumultuous inner life, Criss' painting has indelibly etched the building's image on the American consciousness at a crucial transition point in the city's history.

BIOGRAPHY

The work of British-born American painter Hyman Francis Criss (1901-1973) registers the rapidly changing face of urban American landscapes from the 1920s to 1940s. His European influences range from Futurism and Cubism to Surrealism, helping Criss forge, in turn, a distinctly American modernist style that came to be known as Precisionism. Among the signature stylistic features of Criss' work are an authentic amalgam of Cubism's harsh architectonic lines and an elusive Surrealist dreamscape. Often bereft of human figures, Criss' eerie contrasts of style and color in a Futurist urban setting foreground quintessentially American modern infrastructures, skyscrapers, and transit vehicles.

Criss's post-Great Depression painting of New York City, a bustling center of cultural, social, and commercial activity, seems strangely uninhabited and alienating. Although at a distance from the courthouse, the modern high-rise buildings surrounding it convey the ominous impression of closing in. Intersecting the rigid, vertical movement of these indistinct structures are the horizontal, slightly curved lines of an elevated highway and a suspension bridge, both of which seem to disappear into infinity. The courthouse building at the painting's center punctures this apparently all-encompassing, timeless, and static urban panorama with its vivid color and playful Gothic details. Criss's juxtaposition of incongruous forms, styles, and colors—a strategy shared by other modernists—enhances the surreal dream-logic of his painting. Deeply unsettling the viewer, it renders "the Old Jeff" a relatively dynamic, humane, and inviting counterpart to the modern structures' anonymous, impenetrable, and forbidding (sur)faces. For a Precisionist work registering NYC's transition from the globe's periphery to its center as the new modern powerhouse, Criss's painting remains ambiguous in its stance towards urban development. It makes the viewer question: *if the landmark architectural achievements of modernity disenchant rather than meet the demands of humanity, do they not also fuel our bonfire of vanities?*

TALKING POINTS

1. The formal significance of *Jefferson Market Courthouse* (*JMC*) resides in its privileging of architectural figures over human ones in its composition. In capturing an image of New York in the process of urban renewal along modernist lines, Criss's painting bears witness to the incongruous coincidence of the structural layers—old and new—that give the city its unique cosmopolitan identity. Stripped of realist details as it may be, the more familiar sight of the courthouse at the painting's center serves as a signpost for the viewer, as they proceed to navigate the more estranging panorama of modern concrete monoliths.

2. The stylistic features of *JMC* merge in a concerted disregard for mimesis, or realist representation. The work rather displays the distinctive hallmarks of surrealism in its dream-like quality without using the illogical combination of elements we often find in this movement. Its "realist" content—an actual yet singularly whimsical building in NYC—neutralizes the work's formal dream impulse, projecting it, instead, onto the surrounding urban desert. Employing Cubism's angular lines to create a cartoonish minimalist effect here, Criss's painting invokes a jarring uncertainty as to what is real and unreal in this shape—shifting metropolis of dreams and nightmares.

3. A series of odd juxtapositions constitutes the main estrangement effect of *JMC*. The viewer's panoramic vantage point locates the eponymous building at their vision's center, pitting its vibrant colors and playful details against the dull, cardboard-like cluster of modern high-rises in proximity. In this landscape littered with functional modern structures, "Old Jeff" appears a solitary island unto itself, the vestige of a bygone era and sensibility. If its Gothic tower reminds us of pre-modern aspirations to reach the heaven, the large advertisement board to the viewer's right quickly deflates any naïve notion of transcendence by puncturing the sacred with the profane.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. **Research Assignment**. Francis Criss is considered a representative of the American Precisionist movement. Among others, modernist painters Charles Demuth, Charles Sheeler, and George Ault, as well as photographers Paul Strand and Lewis Hine were also associated with Precisionism. Research and find two artworks by Precisionists to compare/contrast their themes, styles, and formal approaches with Criss's in *JMC*. Compose a 1000-word essay responding to the following questions: What are the most evident differences? What do they have in common? How does the subject matter vary? What is the attitude of each artist towards his/her/their subject?

2. **Fieldtrip Assignment.** Read the instructional resource on Criss's *JMC*, paying attention to its exploration of space and history. Locate a 19th-century (or older) landmark in your town and learn about its history and function. Visit the site to observe what type of structures or spaces surround it and visually document your observations. Take notes on how people interact with the landmark and ask them questions about their relation to the site (never take pictures without permission nor inconvenience people if they're uncooperative). Having compiled enough visuals, fun/interesting facts, and insights, create an informative poster for the landmark to make it new and your own.

3. **Free-Association Assignment.** What kind of affective response does Criss's *JMC* elicit from *you*? List all the emotions you feel while looking at the painting and try to pinpoint their source. Does the painting's emotional impact remind you of an experience? Does it resemble a picture you've seen, a movie you've watched, or a text you've read? Compose a 500-word response to explore these emotions and personal connections.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Kowsky, Francis R. "The Architecture of Frederick C. Withers (1828 - 1901)." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35, no. 2 (1976): 83-107. doi:10.2307/989126.

"Jefferson Market Library." Google Maps. Accessed April 29, 2019, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Jefferson+Market+Library/@40.7345906,-74.0013514,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x89c25996eca3cc89:0x9fc513f0c1f9096a!8m2!3d40.7345866!4d-73.9991627?hl=en&authuser=0#googlemaps.

"Jefferson Market Library." New York Public Library. accessed April 20, 2019. https://www.nypl.org/locations/jefferson-market.

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Tonelli, Edith. "Precisionism and Modern Photography." *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (1982): 341-45. doi:10.2307/776697.

HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Seeing Beyond: Approaches to Teaching *Appollinaire*

DESCRIPTION

The first thing that catches your eye in *Appollinaire* is the centered tree towering over the small buildings and people. Not only does it stand out in size, but it is also one of the few objects in color. This aspect connects Dalí's tree to the other natural element—the water in the horizon. From the tree, a number of lengthy buildings branch out, and the two bottom rows are completed by a higher structure, similar to church towers. Although we cannot make out any faces, there are a few people present in the picture—as well as two unidentifiable objects in the sky.

Salvador Dalí. *Appollinaire*. n.d.
Hand colored etching on paper. 15 1/4 x 11 in.
(38.7 x 27.9 cm)
Object number: 1988.6.4

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COMMENTARY

Odd pairings are common in Dalí's work and compel us to rethink our assumptions of forms and structures we encounter every day. Here, he uses the placement of the buildings and the centered tree—as well as a particular angle—to help us see them as part of a whole, rather than individual objects. We find that together, the natural and man-made objects take the form of a human body. The buildings resemble a strikingly symmetrical pair of arms and legs, which are fittingly completed by elevated structures to resemble feet. The treetop, with its peculiar shape, reaches just high enough to be considered the head of the structure, while the body of the tree becomes the body of this hybrid of concrete and nature.

Notice, too, that Dalí makes use of common symbols to undermine our perception of the everyday. A good, sturdy tree stands for strength, stability, growth, and even immortality due to trees' remarkable lifespan. The life cycle of a tree also stands for transformation—e.g. leaves changing colors—and even rebirth, as trees "come alive" in the spring with a new set of beautiful leaves after the winter. We may also note the westward-facing shadows that indicate an early sunrise. Dawn, like the tree, is commonly associated with rebirth and a fresh, new beginning.

BIOGRAPHY

Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) is one of the key figures of *Surrealism*, an art movement that sought to express our subconscious mind. He developed the "paranoiac-critical method," which would allow one to connect unrelated things and undermine what is commonly perceived as "real." His most famous work remains the painting *Persistence of Memory* (1931). Dali also influenced filmmakers and worked for Walt Disney and Alfred Hitchcock. Later, the artist became deeply influenced by both religion and science. Dali was particularly fascinated by space, and his later art continues to go beyond perceived reality in its exploration of the fourth dimension—immortality.

In Dalí's piece, however, the houses branch out from the tree, possibly implying that it lends them its life and strength. The town is rebirthed through and in nature, but nature is similarly given a new form and life. The awe we feel for natural occurrences is seldom extended to a simple modern town and its buildings. The tree reminds us that transformation is a part of life, and that man's modern inventions, although not natural, are still part of that. We have learned from and copied many of nature's smart inventions, after all, so why should we view our inventions with less awe?

This response includes humanity and our relationship to art; the human body, in Dalí's vision, is made up of a natural body but with the extensions of man-made constructs. We cannot deny either part without feeling incomplete. Art is such a construct, and Dalí celebrates its rebirth through combining familiar shapes—a tree, houses, the human body—in an unexpected way. This helps us interrogate what we know and create a new understanding of ourselves and our surroundings.

TALKING POINTS

1. Dalí's piece highlights two important facets of modernism: the urban and the landscape. Rather than conceiving them as each other's opposites, Dalí merges both into a dynamic entity. At the center, however, is nature breathing life into its surroundings. The placing of the buildings lends them a kind of animacy, which runs contrary to how we conceive of buildings. As teachers, we can compel our students to rethink the nature-culture binary that this painting undermines by instead seeing nature and civilization as being able to coexist and work together.

2. While its style may not seem Surrealist at first, the painting carries a lot of Surrealist ideas. Most notably, there is a distortion of a familiar human concept that serves as the foundation of much of Dalí's work. We may not have melting clocks or stork-legged elephants, but we have a merging of nature with modern man-made inventions (buildings, clocks, etc) and a simplified backdrop that Dalí utilizes in some of his paintings, such as The Elephant. Familiar objects are thus combined in such a way that they become strange to us.

3. Like other modernists, Dalí was deeply influenced by Sigmund Freud's theories of the unconscious. For example, Freud's book Interpretation of Dreams featured strange dreams that he claimed reveal our unconscious desires repressed by society. We may note that the black lines hovering above the tree in Dalí's painting resemble the people's shadows: if we read them like a dream interpretation, they may represent something that was repressed but is now taking shape as an independent being. The tree standing oddly among the buildings surrounding it may be another expression of nature returning despite modern society's wish to dominate or expel it—another suggestion of human nature, perhaps.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

This activity is ideal for a field trip to the Harn Museum. To frame it, you may start off by asking your students about their experiences of watching cloud formations or other natural occurrences that resembled a face, an animal, or an object. Many will probably agree that this has happened at least once in their lifetime. Then ask if they have ever had a similar experience with man-made structures, such as buildings. Unless it was purposefully constructed to be such, students may have less experience with this since we often do not stop to gaze at buildings or other man-made constructions in awe—we simply use them.

Now ask the students to scout the Harn museum with plenty of sketch paper and a pencil, asking them to draw forms that they find intriguing. Note that this could be any object: art pieces on display, the gardens, the Café, chairs, the position of the walls, or how the artworks are arranged in a room. From their sketches, ask students to select 2-3 that they find most compelling, and to share their findings in a small group. In their groups, students should help each other consider how the different forms can be combined to create a Dalí-like painting or structure. For next class or during an additional class period, have students try combining their forms and discuss how this method may be used to create new perspectives of our surroundings.

USEFUL RESOURCES

"Timeline: A Century of Salvador Dali." The Salvador Dali Museum. Accessed April 23, 2019/ https://thedali.org/timeline/.

"Salvador Dali." Museum of Modern Art. Accessed April 23, 2019. https://www.moma.org/artists/1364.

HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

"On the Margins of Written Poetry": Pedro Figari

DESCRIPTION

Figari uses hazy color blocks to depict a gathering of women indoors. The women are primarily standing, grouped at the canvas' mid-level. Though we cannot see their specific features, each is clearly differentiated through their skin tone and dress style. In the center of the canvas, one woman is seated, wearing a bright orange dress. The painting's palette is mostly muted pinks and oranges, with blue accents. The colors are layered so that paint strokes are visible. There is no shading, but depth is implied through the overlapping of figures in space.

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Pedro Figari, *El Fantasma.* (n.d.)
Oil on board. 13 1/2 x 19 1/2 in. (34.3 x 49.5 cm)
Object number: 2008.23.2

COMMENTARY

El Fantasma's women are faceless. Around them, the scene's details are hinted at—a mirror behind the women, the indication of a bedroom in the far right, simple wall adornments—but not fully realized. Combined with the women's vague features, the painting feels dream-like, yet not made up. Instead, Figari's technique of painting from memory rather than from reference gives the scene an authentic feeling, like a hazy memory. El Fantasma's scene feels peaceful, or at least calm, and because we cannot make out specific identities, our witnessing does not feel voyeuristic. Instead, we are Figari's invited guests to his home community, and the pleasures of daily life within it.

BIOGRAPHY

Figari was a Uruguayan modernist painter, writer, lawyer, and politician. He began painting later in life, putting on his first exhibition at age sixty-one. Although he was influenced by the European Post-Impressionist movement, he wanted to develop a style that would be unique to Latin America. To do this, he painted scenes from his memory, emphasizing how these personal moments felt. His subject matter was mainly the local Afro-Uruguayan community and their customs, such as *candombe*, African-derived music and dance. His work helped begin a new identity movement within the Latin American art world.

Notably, each woman in the scene has a different color paint for her skin tone, conveying the richness of the Afro-Uruguayan community. We may be inclined to think that the women's lack of faces diminishes their humanity, as we often see faces (especially eyes) as central to empathy with depictions of people. Yet the women are portrayed with dignity. Rather than strip them of humanity, the painting's minimalism suggests a shared community that still offers each woman an individual identity. What details we can make out seem to highlight styles of dress: center frame, a woman in a rich orange dress broken by translucent blue ruffles sits in a chair of some kind. Underneath the hem of her dress, two marks in red paint suggest shoes. Similar marks in the approximate shape of heels appear under the pale pink dress of the woman opposite her, whose long braid breaks the flat shape of her dress and brings our eye back into the rest of the grouping. Behind the seated woman, perhaps speaking to her, a figure with dark skin gestures off canvas. The dark-skinned woman's dress is patterned with dabs of yellow paint, broken by the shape of a basket, and her gesture gives her the most dynamic pose of all the figures. It is this pose that really brings us into the scene—we don't need mouths or eyes to understand there is a conversation happening, each woman's body language hinting at their participation in the scene. While we cannot know for sure what is happening, Figari leaves us enough details to want to try and figure it out—and to experience a taste of his community's day-to-day existence.

TALKING POINTS

1. **Color**. Rather than attempting to realistically capture the scene, Figari implies detail through flat blocks of color and gestural brushstrokes. The visible brushstrokes and layering of colors draw attention to the nature of painting as an emotive act. This is furthered by the color choices as well–the soft, warm pinks and oranges, and accents of blue, give the painting a more intimate feeling. Rather than trying to faithfully record history, the painting shows a remembered moment that captures the essence of the community it depicts.

2. **Naïve Art**. Figari's technique of departs from the European Post-Impressionist lineage that influenced him. This painting in particular highlights a moment of everyday domesticity in Uruguay. The painterly qualities suggest a connection to Post-Impressionism, which emphasized emotion over realism. However, we can also see a more "naïve" style, meaning a style that is less perfect or polished, which emphasizes the memory-like qualities of the painting. This helps us see how the painting adapts and breaks from European traditions of art-making.

3. **Afro-Uruguayan Communities**. Within the painting we can see a range of skin tones and dress styles on the women, which may suggest different ethnic groups or classes they belong to. However, there does not seem to be a suggested hierarchy amongst them; although one woman is seated, they all occupy the space evenly. El Fantasma shows us a community that more traditional fine art has not elevated, offering the opportunity for discussion about non-Western ways of living.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Break students into small groups. Assign each group one of these keywords:

Identity
Community
Memory
Documentary

Then, have each group pick another Harn artwork from the Modern collection that pairs well with El Fantasma and their assigned keyword. Once they have gathered these materials, each group should develop a short presentation that addresses these questions (about 200 words per question):

1. How they interpreted their keyword in relationship to El Fantasma & their second artwork.
2. Why they chose their second artwork to pair with El Fantasma.

In addition, each group should offer a brief comparative analysis of the two artworks (about 300-500 words). Students may use their keyword in the analysis as a framework, or they may focus their interpretations on specific details from the artwork. The final word count should be around 700-900 words, including both the questions and the comparative analysis.

This assignment can be adapted to a written paper with a longer word count, or can be given as an individual assignment, depending on the level and needs of the class.

TEACHING RESOURCES

Baddeley, Oriana and Valerie Fraser. *Drawing the Line: Art and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Latin America.* New York: Verso, 1989.

Faget, Fernando Saavedra. "Pedro Figari." PedroFidari.com. Accessed April 20, 2019. http://www.pedrofigari.com/.

"Pedro Figari." Meural. Accessed April 20, 2019. https://my.meural.com/artists/292.

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"Pedro Figari: African Nostalgias." Sotheby's Museum Network. Accessed April 20, 2019. https://museumnetwork.sothebys.com/en/museums/museu-de-arte-de-sao-paulo/exhibitions/pedro-figari-african-nostalgias

HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Childe Hassam: American Impressionist and Preserver of Nature

DESCRIPTION

Childe Hassam designed *Northeast Gorge at Appledore* in 1912. The composition is an oil on canvas and includes cool color tones that contrast with warm variations. The artwork refrains from including the urban scene and instead works to maintain a purely aesthetic depiction of its rural environment, an island off the Maine coast. The subject matter includes a rocky terrain enveloped by shrubbery and a small stream emerging from the canvas' base. Hassam chooses to draw attention to the natural environment and its pure state by creating the human figure emerging from the water. This evokes an emotional connection between nature and humans in their most natural form.

Childe Hassam. *Northeast Gorge at Appledor*e. 1912
Oil on canvas. unframed: 24 1/2 x 26 1/2 in. (62.2 x 67.3 cm)
framed: 34 11/16 x 36 11/16 x 3 3/8 in. (88.1 x 93.2 x 8.6 cm)
Object number: 2004.22

This resource is a graduate student project developed in a graduate seminar on "Modernist Studies & Pedagogy," taught by English Professor Marsha Bryant in Spring 2019. The resource is intended for college-level instruction but may also be useful for high-school teachers. In addition to Arts and Humanities, this Instructional Resource can also prompt conversations about the Sciences and Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and other fields of study. This material may be freely adapted for instructional purposes.

Claire Beth Karnap is a Ph.D. student at the University of Florida and received her M.A. in English literature in 2018. She studies Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-century British literature involving spatial theory, nature, and novels.

COMMENTARY

Childe Hassam's *Northeast Gorge at Appledore* calls upon us to acknowledge the artwork's intricate details of nature and Impressionistic form. His style includes short brushstrokes that create vibrant colors and texture to depict the rocky terrain and the gentle flowing water. He shares similar style with French Impressionist by using landscapes and the natural environment. Curator H. Barbara Weinberg explains that Impressionists use "rapid brushwork, and a high-keyed palette" to create a realistic representation. Hassam embodies these methods as he forms connections between the human body and the natural world. Hassam's artwork asks that you examine the contrast between natural elements, such as the rocks, water, sky, and grass to understand the intricate relationship between humans and nature. He shares his interest in preserving the past's connection with nature by memorializing nature in his compositions. Hassam also represents the simple grandeur of the natural world. Among preserving the past and rural environments, the artwork establishes a commentary on human enjoyment of nature, nature's vastness in comparison to the human body, and the well-being that environmental spaces can offer.

BIOGRAPHY

Childe Hassam was born in 1859 in Dorchester, Massachusetts. While he is considered an American Impressionist, his style shares several similarities with French Impressionism and the modernist avant-garde. Hassam uses vibrant colors, intricate details, the cityscape, and the rural as inspiration in his artwork. Some of his most popular works include his depictions of nature and New York City. His artwork evokes familial emotions and patriotism in both his color palette and the rural and urban settings. Hassam's artwork includes an eclectic style ranging from etchings, pastels, oils on canvas, watercolors, and illustrations (Weinberg 2004). He remains a prominent figure in the history of American Impressionism.

As you study the artwork, you should use eye movement to consider the subject matter. Begin by examining the piece from bottom to top and consider how the vertical line creates a feeling of expansion within nature. As the eyes move from the water to the rocks, the human's body creates a disruption in the natural world. The subject matter also expands as the human emerges from the water and appears to climb up the rocks. The emerging human attempts to grip the rock's ridges to rise from the water. These actions encompass the strength of the human against the magnitude and grandeur of nature. Next, study the horizontal line from right to left and examine the movement from the rocky cliffs to an open meadow-like space. The horizontal spaces create a vast openness that is similar to the movement from the water to the sky on the vertical line. The vast landscape contrasts with the human's body, which depicts Hassam's Impressionistic style of representing the relationship between humans and the natural environment.

TALKING POINTS

1. **Formal Elements**. Childe Hassam's vast range of artwork encompasses both cityscapes and natural environments, which distinguishes his style during the modernist era. While the art piece mostly embodies nature, the human swimming in the water represents the city and its interactions with the natural world. The artist uses both to depict the natural sublimity vs. human interactions. Hassam's color scheme within the work's base includes a warm mixture of blue and brown to distinguish the water and rocks. The warm colors depict an activeness as the human emerges from the rippling water. Lastly, Hassam uses cool colors to represent the rocky terrain leading towards the whimsical sky.

2. **Artwork vs. Traditional Conventions.** Hassam's *Northeast Gorge at Appledore* adapts British Romanticism's perspective of nature to reflect on both the sublime and human interactions with the natural environment. Though Hassam incorporates Romantic style in the artwork's subject matter, he also chooses to create a new landscape form. By placing the subject in a remote and sublime environment, Hassam removes all forms of the city except for the individual emerging from the water. He includes Impressionist style and a nude human climbing towards a rocky terrain to both preserve the environment's image and to illustrate the relationship between nature and mankind.

3. **Defamiliarized Point of View**. Childe Hassam alters your perspective by making the landscape appear vast and distant. The observer appears to view the scene from upon a cliff as they watch the human emerging from the water. The artwork creates a distinctly personal moment of sunbathing as the observer views the small stream expanding towards the vast terrain and open skyline. Hassam makes you a participant in nature as you experience the cool and warm tones of the artwork.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. In Modernism we see a dramatic shift towards the cityscape; however, Hassam chooses to include both city and nature in many of his works. His respect and appreciation for the city appear similar to Walt Whitman's admiration and love for the city's environment. In fact, Childe Hassam completed an etching in 1927 titled Walt Whitman's Birthplace. The swimmer in Northeast Gorge at Appledore appears free and connected with nature. How are Hassam and Whitman similar in their depictions of nature and the human body?

2. Hassam and Whitman also share similar ideas about interconnectedness. Whitman's poem "I sing the body electric" praises human bodies and their capabilities. In section two of his poem Whitman describes a human body swimming in the water. Closely compare how Hassam and Whitman use similar modernist methods to praise human physicality.

3. Hassam's works share similarities with French Impressionist Claude Monet and his works of water lilies and gardens. Specifically, Hassam embraces the quick strokes and vibrant colors, but uses nature and the sublime to distinguish his artwork in the modernist era. In Northeast Gorge at Appledore he creates contrasts between the grandeur of nature and the minute figure of humans. In other works, such as his *The Avenue in the Rain and The Water Garden*, we perceive a strikingly similar design as Monet. However, Hassam uses natural elements such as rain to elucidate a different tone and vibrancy in his color schemes. Compare these painters' depictions of waterscapes and gardens.

USEFUL RESOURCES

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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Subtlety of Line: Palmer Hayden's Quiet Activism

DESCRIPTION

Southern Teamster focuses on the central figure of a smiling farmer on horseback who wears blue denim overalls, a red-printed long sleeve shirt, and a straw hat. Cast in near profile, this man sits proudly upon his horse. Gold accents on the riding crop the farmer carries, as well as the bridle gear adorning the handsome horse, complete the bright range of primary colors all set against a verdant landscape spiked with corn. Despite the painting's relatively flat, nearly primitive, shapes, its sense of movement is clear. The male figure is almost regal, on parade, and in full, unapologetic view.

Palmer Hayden. *Southern Teamster*. 1945
Oil on Canvas on cardboard. 12 1/4 x 17 1/4 in. (31.1 x 43.8 cm)
Object number: 2012.47

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Allen Thomas is an MFA candidate in poetry who paints on the side. His love for art matches his interests in 19th-century and modern literature.

COMMENTARY

In Hayden's paintings we see the emergence of a persona, a personality. The figure captured in *Southern Teamster* is front and center, planes of primary color vivid against the verticality of corn. As with some of Langston Hughes's poetry, one can almost sense Blues and Jazz intonations evolving from earlier African American music. *Southern Teamster* effectively fuses European and African traditions. The bold use of color and line expressing and yet expanding upon primitive American Folk Art proves to be surprisingly defiant.

Southern Teamster reflects the artist's care and an inherent pride of both race and place. While the painting does incorporate broad, flat sections of color, Hayden's skillful use of perspective and his unique, highly-stylized sense of composition elevate this work beyond such easy characterizations. Hayden has made specific choices here, all of which reveal the academic training he underwent first in New York, then in Maine, and later in Paris. *Southern Teamster* shows Hayden to be an artist in command of his brush.

BIOGRAPHY

Hailing from Widewater, Virginia, Hayden developed an interest in art thanks to an older brother's influence. A mistake in his enlistment papers renamed him as Palmer Cole Hayden. Hayden decided to keep the name. Once discharged, Hayden studied at the Cooper Union School of Art in New York and the Boothbay Art Colony in Maine before moving, briefly, to Paris. He began his career painting maritime seascapes but would find new subjects thanks to the socially conscious writings of educator Alain Locke. The Harlem Renaissance leader inspired Hayden to illuminate the lives of ordinary African Americans through a style all his own.

This period of Hayden's career saw a shift in subject matter away from landscapes. Around this time, Alain Locke edited *The New Negro* (1925), an anthology of essays and other literary writings that included his influential essay of the same name. Indeed, "The New Negro" became a defining manifesto for the Harlem Renaissance. Inspired, Palmer Hayden would go on to capture the sense of hope and optimism of a people who were discovering what Locke termed "a new vision of opportunity."

Hayden insisted on choosing unguarded moments from daily life as his subject matter. Some of his contemporary critics described Hayden's characterizations of rural African Americans as humorous, even unflattering, because of his use of the "faux naïf" style (derived from French, for *falsely naïve*). Other critics dismissed Hayden as an artist highlighting the picaresque, the primitive, and mundane. However, the painter insisted that he sought not satire but a new way of seeing.

Palmer Hayden was aware of the social impact his work could have. His desire to reshape and reclaim racial identity aligned him, in many ways, with the early 20th-century Modernist's search for an authentic voice. Today, Hayden's work is appreciated for its focus on African Americans' struggles and triumphs.

TALKING POINTS

1. Hayden's earliest works often depicted seascapes, birds, boats, and other nautical influences discovered during his time in Maine, creating near photographic snapshots of daily life. Following his brief stint in Paris, Hayden's work took on the intimacy and immediacy of illustration in which the presentation of the line became a compelling feature of his artworks. The flat areas of color recall the simplified forms of American Folk Art, and yet they owe much to the broad influences of the African and modern art that Hayden was exposed to while living in Paris.

2. Hayden's work provokes thought. In a 1969 interview, he described art as a form of "protest." The farmer in *Southern Teamster* is an excerpt from a larger work in which he becomes just one character in a parade of the everyday. Knowing this context creates a complicated narrative in which we might wonder whether we need to see these other figures to understand Hayden's intent. The choice seems clear; Hayden's farmer commands his space on the canvas unapologetically. Out front and proud, the teamster is driven by hard work and the desire to survive, much like Hayden himself

3. Although he began as a self-taught painter, Palmer Hayden's training in New York and Paris helped him develop a signature style that moves beyond the *primitive*—a term that many have used to characterize his work. Look closely at *Southern Teamster*. How does Hayden's composition help reframe historical ideas of African American rural life?

STUDENT ACTIVITY

In his essay "Enter the New Negro," originally published in a 1925 special issue of Survey Graphic magazine, Alain Locke described a sort of metamorphosis. He referred to The Old Negro as a creature of "moral debate and historical controversy…a stock figure perpetuated as an historical fiction partly in innocent sentimentalism, partly in deliberate reactionism." Locke declared that this distorted, patronizing, and dehumanizing image of Black men functioned as a formula for furthering social inequality. Turning away from such depictions, Locke encouraged his readers to focus on African American life as inspiration. Artist Palmer Hayden seems to have taken this message to heart.

Palmer Hayden took inspiration from the world around him. He captured the lives of African Americans living in the rural South and the urban backgrounds of New York City, specifically Harlem. Look closely at his paintings. Can you see instances of this perspective in Hayden's *Southern*

Teamster? Imagine the brushstrokes, the use of color, and the painting's composition as visual language.

Hayden is not alone. Compare Hayden's Southern Teamster to the poetry of Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes. In "I, Too" and "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," Hughes's speaker steps out of the shadows with vivid portrayals that bear affinities with Hayden's paintings. Write a critical analysis of 1500 words in which you explore the themes these works engage and consider how they support Locke's manifesto.

TEACHING RESOURCES

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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Modernist Erotica: André Kertész's *Distortion #128*

DESCRIPTION

Distortion #128 depicts a nude, female figure in black and white. The figure kneels on all fours with her torso perpendicular to the camera and her head facing down. The figure's distorted limbs dominate the center of the photograph, arms and legs stretching taffy-like to connect elbows to shoulders and knees to hips. The photograph also mirrors several parts of the figure's body, including her head and feet. The figure appears to be in a room with a rug and a fireplace, but Kertész's manipulation distorts the background.

André Kertész. *Distortion #128*, Paris. 1933.
Gelatin silver print, printed later; double weight air dried glossy. 8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm.)
Object number: 2018.79.12

This resource is a graduate student project developed in a graduate seminar on "Modernist Studies & Pedagogy," taught by English Professor Marsha Bryant in Spring 2019. The resource is intended for college-level instruction but may also be useful for high-school teachers. In addition to Arts and Humanities, this Instructional Resource can also prompt conversations about the Sciences and Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and other fields of study. This material may be freely adapted for instructional purposes.

Cassidy Sheehan is a PhD student in the English Department at the University of Florida. Her research interests include American studies, archival students, and queer and feminist theory.

COMMENTARY

Distortion #128 is one photograph in Kertész's series, *Distortions*. Working with a young and an older model, Kertész used funhouse mirrors and a glass-plate view camera to warp his subjects' bodies. Kertész's *Distortions* transformed his subjects to reveal multiple perspectives in a single flat image, much like Picasso's Cubist portraits cast three-dimensional objects onto two-dimensional planes. Kertész created the *Distortions* series for the risqué French magazine *Le Sourire* in 1933. Despite its publication in *Le Sourire*, Kertész's work defies easy classification as pornography, instead provoking viewers to reconsider the definition of art.

BIOGRAPHY

André Kertész was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1894. His earliest photographs capture the Hungarian countryside and the daily life of fellow WWI conscripts. In 1925, Kertész moved to Paris, where he befriended Gilberte Brassaï and worked alongside avant-garde artists. His well-known 1926 photograph *Chez Mondrian* depicts the studio of Piet Mondrian, a pioneer of abstract art. In 1936, Kertész settled in New York City, where he worked for popular magazines such as *Collier's* and *Harper's Bazaar*. He died in 1985 at 91. Kertész is well-known for his hand-held camera work, reportage style, and contributions to the photo-essay genre.

Distortion #128 challenges the traditional divide between the erotic and the pornographic. Philosopher of aesthetics Jerrold Levinson argues that both modes of representation stimulate viewers. However, erotic art allows viewers to retain the disinterested perspective required for aesthetic appreciation, whereas pornography impels viewers to consume the image for sexual release. In the Western tradition, the classical female nude encapsulates the artistic standard for beauty, though feminist scholars critique this tradition for upholding patriarchal power dynamics which cast women as objects for male consumption.

Readers of *Le Sourire* in 1933 may not have anticipated their encounter with Kertész's nontraditional nudes as they flipped through the pages of the magazine. Earlier nudes featured in *Le Sourire* during World War I drew from classical representations of beauty, portraying women as the conventional nymphs and Venuses of Greco-Roman myth. In Levinson's framework of the erotic and pornographic, these conventional nudes fall under the pornographic, inviting viewers to consume them without closer analysis.

Though many modernists found inspiration in the classics, Kertész diverges from the classical form illustrated in previous *Le Sourire* issues. Rather than representing an idealized female form, *Distortion #128* warps its subject's body, stretching and doubling its parts. The model's position, kneeling down and facing away from the viewer, also deviates from earlier classical forms, which depict the subject

facing the viewer with open arms. Thus, *Distortion #128* makes the photographer's manipulation through funhouse mirrors as much the subject of the photo as the model. By centering his manipulation, Kertész unsettles viewers and forces them to rethink this image's placement in the magazine: is the image erotic, pornographic, both, neither? Though Levinson and other scholars cast the erotic and the pornographic as ultimately antithetical, Kertész's *Distortion #128* suggests that viewers cannot always easily draw these boundaries.

TALKING POINTS

1. Kertész manipulates the figure *Distortion #128* represents by using funhouse mirrors. This manipulation reflects his approach to photography more broadly. Kertész emphasizes what he calls "reportage" over "documentation." Reportage allows him to "talk" through his photographs, rather than solely documenting or recording what appears in front of his camera. Kertész's distinction between reportage and documentation challenges the traditional connection between photography and realism. His distortion through funhouse mirrors calls attention to the photograph as a constructed form like any other.

2. *Distortion #128* reworks the classical female nude for a modernist audience. Kertész's reimagining may have reflected and responded to French gender anxieties during the interwar years, when *la garçonne*, or the bachelor girl, emerged. Like the New Woman, *la garçonne* encapsulated a new femininity for young, middle-class women who rejected prewar traditions and revelled in sexual experimentation. Stereotypically, *la garçonne* cut her hair short, like the model in *Distortion #128*. Mainstream French publications condemned la garçonne's lifestyle as decadent and a threat to traditional gender roles. Though Kertész's Distortions diverge from conventional nudes' traditional femininity, Distortion #128 neither condemns nor extols this new femininity.

3. In Distortion #128, Kertész defamiliarizes the body, rendering his subject a surreal representation of the female form. Surrealism emerged alongside modernism in the 1920s in Europe and celebrated literature and art which expressed the unconscious mind. Surrealists drew from psychoanalysts like Sigmund Freud to challenge the conscious minds' strictures and to decouple aesthetics from conventional beauty. Thus, a viewer accustomed to the classical nude may find Kertész's interpretation unnerving or even grotesque. Through his unsettling nude, Kertész responds to the modernist imperative to "make it new."

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Kertész famously distinguishes between reportage and documentation. In a 1982 interview, *Art Papers* reporter Tom Lyman asks Kertész, "Haven't some of the most memorable photos originated as documentation? What is the distinction between *reportage* and documentation?" (3). This activity asks students to use *Distortion #128* and another photograph from the Harn's Modern collection to answer Lyman's questions themselves. The activity encourages students to reflect on photographic conventions and to interrogate the purposes of photography in a short essay. This essay can stimulate class discussions about various approaches to photography. The activity may fit courses involving art, art history, or journalism.

Before beginning the activity, students may benefit from background information on documentary photography and photojournalism. Also of interest for this assignment is the National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics, which sets standards for visual journalists. To begin the activity, instructors may select a documentary photograph to pair with *Distortion #128* or allow students to select their own documentary photographs. Students may begin the activity in-person at the Harn or online using the Harn's eMuseum database.

Students will analyze their photographs and write a short essay (2-3 pages) that reflects on Lyman's questions. First, students will describe each photograph, taking into account the photographs' subjects, composition, and photographers' techniques. Then, students will compare Kertész's subject, composition, and techniques to the other photographers', noting similarities and differences. Though this comparison, students will develop their own critical definitions of "reportage" and "documentation" which outline the purposes and values of each photographic approach. Finally, students may compare their definitions in a whole-class discussion.

USEFUL RESOURCES

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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Helen Levitt: In the New York City Streets

DESCRIPTION

The image depicts a New York City street with five boys playing and tumbling over each other in the center. In the background, other city dwellers and their daily activities remain in focus. The candid photograph shows the boys in profile — a pile of arms, legs, hands, and feet. The camera captures the boys' movement and playful energy, blurring their hands and feet as they topple over one another.

Helen Levitt. *N.Y.C. (boys climbing on each other*). c. 1942.
Gelatin silver print
9 3/8 x 6 3/8 in.
Object number: 2018.63.2

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Lauren Burrell Cox is currently a PhD student in the Department of English at the University of Florida specializing in feminist film and media studies. Her research areas include gender, American film, documentary film, archival film, and photography.

COMMENTARY

Helen Levitt's *N.Y.C. (boys climbing on each other)* (1942) captures a moment of children's playtime in 1940s New York City. The photograph depicts the carefree pleasures of childhood in the delighted expressions on the children's faces. The children's playful energy connects them to the city's energy, a smaller social group within the larger metropolis. This liveliness comes across specifically through the blurring of the children's hands and feet in the image. The blurred hands and feet give the photograph an immediacy and liveliness that can be difficult to capture through the medium of still photography. The photograph reframes how we often see the street life as grimy and stifling, instead of emphasizing closeness in a confined space. Levitt extends this feeling of being on the street by using a deep depth of field, which captures the background activity. These multiple planes of action that feature other children, a conversation, and people walking on the street create an entire street scene.

BIOGRAPHY

Helen Levitt (August 31, 1913 – March 29, 2009) was an American photographer known for her street photography. Levitt began as a commercial portrait photographer. Henri Cartier-Bresson, a pioneer of street photography, influenced Levitt to see photography as art, and he became a major influence on her work. Levitt's other influences and peers include Walker Evans, James Agee, Janice Loeb, and Luis Buñuel. Levitt worked in both black and white and color photography. Much of her color photography from 1959 to 1960 was stolen in a 1970 burglary. Throughout her career, Levitt's work focused on New York City street culture.

Levitt's approach counters popular urban photography images through the ways in which she depicts children. She changes the idea of the city photograph by centering humans in the cityscape. Levitt's approach differs from early photographer Jacob Riis's images of the New York City street at the turn of the century. Riis's images were filled with destitute workers living in cramped and ramshackle tenements in his book How the Other Half Lives. Levitt's street photographs depict the joy and wonder of childhood. Levitt does this through a democratization of the image. Levitt's camera sits at the same level as the children, seeing the world from a child's perspective and appreciating its beauty and wonder.

The candid nature of the photograph adds a sense of authenticity. The boys are so engaged in their roughhousing that they do not notice or react to the camera, an authentic documentary image of city life. The image anticipates the 1960s documentary film movement Direct Cinema. This style employs an observational fly on the wall mode of documentary filmmaking in which participants ignore the presence of the camera. Like in Direct Cinema, none of the boys face the camera head on, playing as if the camera did not exist. Instead, the camera acts as merely a recorder of the event, documenting it as it happened.

TALKING POINTS

1. In *N.Y.C. (boys climbing on each other)*, Levitt pushes the bounds of still photography by including the blurred hands and feet of the children. This blurring of the image changes the photograph from an often more stagnant and unmoving image to one that comes alive through highlighting the limitations of its own medium. Levitt's use of deep depth of focus with the multiple planes of action adds to the cinematic quality of the photograph.

2. The artwork revises the traditional images of the working class and underprivileged in New York City, epitomized by the photographs of Jacob Riis. Typically, images of underprivileged children in the street often show the children as dirty, destitute, and living in derelict abodes. Rather, Levitt pushes back against that popular depiction by illuminating the beauty of the street and the pleasures of childhood. In Levitt's photograph, children spend carefree time playing with one another.

3. Levitt defamiliarizes our point of view to see the world in new ways through this photograph by angling the camera at the children's level. Photographing the children from a higher angle would position Levitt as an authority figure or an interloper into the children's intimate moment. Instead, showing the boys from their own level enables the viewer to connect with them and see the world from their point of view, asking the viewer to recall their own childhood and make new connections with the photograph.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. **Harn.** Take a look at a different New York City photograph in the Harn's collection, New York City, N.Y. by Louis Faurer. Although these two photographs were taken in the same decade, they present very different portraits of city life. How do these two images depict the people of New York? How do these images differ in their portrayal of gender? Both photographs have prominent blurred features. What are their effects? Write a response that considers some or all of these questions.

2. **Photography**. At the turn of the century, Jacob Riis photographed tenements in New York City. These photographs are very different from Levitt's street photography. Examine some of his photographs in his book *How the Other Half Lives* (1890). How are the people in Riis's photographs depicted? What formal aspects of his photographs reinforce this depiction? How does Levitt's photograph undermine these more canonical images of underprivileged urban communities? Write a response that considers some or all of these questions.

3. **Film**. View Marie Menken's film *Go Go Go* (1962). This experimental film presents the frenetic energy of the city and city life. How does Menken use formal aspects of film (cinematography, editing, etc.) to depict the city? Compare this film to the way Levitt imagines city life. Although photography and film are similar mediums, what are their strengths and weaknesses with depicting the city and its inhabitants? Write a response that considers some or all of these questions.

USEFUL RESOURCES

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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Happening Hats: Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Le chapeau épinglé*

DESCRIPTION

In this black-and-white etching, the woman on the left pins a hat onto a woman on the right. Line and shading are used to depict an overhead light source, implying that the scene takes place outdoors. A balance of dark lines and crosshatching patterns add a sleek texture to the dresses the women wear—and a soft, ornate quality to each hat. The elegant sloping shapes of the women's arms mirror the upward tilted angle of the hats, particularly that of the woman on the right.

This resource is a graduate student project developed in a graduate seminar on "Modernist Studies & Pedagogy," taught by English Professor Marsha Bryant in Spring 2019. The resource is intended for college-level instruction but may also be useful for high-school teachers. In addition to Arts and Humanities, this Instructional Resource can also prompt conversations about the Sciences and Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and other fields of study. This material may be freely adapted for instructional purposes.

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Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *The Ribbed Hat/Le chapeau épinglé*, 1894
Etching
6 1/2 x 5 in. (16.5 x 12.7 cm)
1989.10.2

COMMENTARY

By the time Renoir created this etching in 1894, he was already an established and incredibly successful painter. However, by the early 1890s, he had developed rheumatoid arthritis in his hands, making it difficult for him to paint comfortably throughout the remainder of his life. By creating an etching and making prints from it, Renoir was able to disseminate his work more widely in his later career.

Several versions of *Le chapeau épinglé* were made. This etching was the third version of the plate used for making the prints. In the following years, Renoir composed a color version of this image using pastels. The topic of the etching, a woman pinning on a hat outdoors, follows directly from his previous work which focused on everyday moments taking place outdoors. Notably, however, the medium of etching shifted Renoir's attention away from the vibrant saturated color of his paintings towards the effects and possibilities of line, even if these lines capture a sensuousness similar to his painting approach. While the sensual curving lines of the women's arms continue into the shape and details of the hats, the female figures themselves appear wooden or mask-like. Renoir intricately renders the shapes and details of the hats and dresses, while the right-most woman's face might be viewed as enigmatic, contemplative, or perhaps even empty.

BIOGRAPHY

Central to the French Impressionist movement of the 1870s and 80s, Pierre-Auguste Renoir began studying in the painter Charles Gleyre's studio in Paris during the early 1860s. There, he formed friendships with other foundational Impressionist painters, including Claude Monet, Frédéric Bazille, and Alfred Sisley. Known for his outdoor portraits and party scenes, Renoir painted in a smooth, light style that emphasized color over the use of harsh lines. Like the other Impressionists, he preferred to paint everyday life and landscapes. Both his style and choice of topics challenged the dominant tastes and expectations of the French painting world.

In addition to charting a particular moment in his long career, this etching carries with it a host of connections with other Impressionist painters and Renoir's personal life. The models for this etching were the daughter and cousin of fellow Impressionist painter Berthe Morisot. She was married to the brother of Édouard Manet, a trailblazing modernist painter who deeply influenced the Impressionists. Renoir had made a portrait in etching of Morisot herself only two years earlier in 1892. The careers of the Impressionist painters were thus deeply intertwined. Beyond similar commitments to formal and aesthetic innovation, the Impressionist movement spawned relationships that spanned decades. While the Impressionists failed to receive the art establishment's approval for a Salon for nearly a decade (until 1872), these early years provided the footing and relationships that would bear fruit in Renoir's late career.

One final detail of note is that the year the etching was made coincides with the birth of the artist's second son, Jean Renoir, who would go on to become one of the most significant French filmmakers of the 1930s.

TALKING POINTS

1. **Etching as a Medium.** As an etching, the work maximizes the techniques of line typically found in drawing. The delicate use of curves and detailed shading enable a complex approach to lighting, texture, and movement. A balance of dark lines and crosshatching patterns creates a sleek texture for the dresses the women wear and add a soft, ornate quality to each hat. The elegant sloping shapes of the women's arms mirror the upward tilted angle of the hats. In the absence of color, the etching establishes a visual continuity between composition of the women and the hats they wear through the use of line.

2. **Fashion and Everyday Life**. Although the etching is from 1894, much after the initial intervention of the Impressionist movement, its focus remains on everyday life. Rather than the vast historical events privileged in the Salons earlier in the century, this subject of this image centers on a mundane, female domestic gesture. The print, furthermore, recalls images of fashion and the purchase of such hats in stores. Approached from this perspective, the woman on the right, in particular, appears mannequin-like. The hats and dresses, seen in this way, appear more central than the women themselves.

3. **Cultural Context**. *Le chapeau épinglé* uses line, shading, and shape to add social and historical context to the image. While the effect of the image's content and presentation is not immediately a defamiliarization of the viewer's life or cultural values, it does offer a reminder of gendered social practice and class norms in the late 19th century. However, by comparing the stress laid on the clothing and hats to that of the women's bodies and faces, we could investigate this image in relationship to fashion and advertisement imagery.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. For this assignment, visit the Harn Museum and examine Jean Renoir's 1894 etching *Le chapeau épinglé*, as well as Diego Rivera's 1947 charcoal drawing, *Retrato de un hombre (Portrait of a Man)*, and Joaquín Torres-García's 1940 painting, *Rostro de mujer*. In a 300-word response, consider how each work considers hats differently, in terms of style, social and class context, and the choice of medium. How do gender roles and the way they are represented differ between the three

artworks? Do these two works from the 1940s have more in common with one another than with Renoir's etching?

2. The shading and crosshatching of Renoir's *Le chapeau épinglé* give the hats represented particular qualities, such as sleek and fluffy textures. For this activity, peruse social media (Instagram hashtags, for instance) to find three contemporary images of hats and three images of hats from before 1970 to contrast with Renoir's *Le chapeau épinglé*. Create a blogpost of around 600 words that walks your reader through the different stylistic trends represented by your hat choices. For instance, what texture, shape, and color do they have? Do they resemble other objects? While the bulk of your post should be spent identifying visual characteristics and trends between the images, your language itself does not need to be formal or rigorously academic. However, you should include the image, provide the dates, and include any other necessary identifying detail for each.

TEACHING RESOURCES

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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Diego Rivera: The People's Painter

DESCRIPTION

Diego Rivera's sketch, *Road Worker,* depicts a man bent over, toiling as he wields a pickaxe. Using only a few charcoal marks, Rivera shows the worker frozen in the moment between axe strikes. The worker's body dominates the page: confident, curved lines form his rounded back and the brim of his hat. The man's shoulder obscures his face. In this simple sketch, there is no background, but Rivera includes a thin line beneath the man's feet to indicate the ground. This black and white drawing recalls the studies Rivera created as plans for his murals.

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The author, Elizabeth Lambert, is a fourth-year PhD student at the University of Florida studying modernist literature.

Diego Rivera. *Road Worker*, c. 1945
Charcoal on rice paper
11 1/4 x 15 1/4 in. (28.6 x 38.7 cm)
Museum purchase, gift of private donors
Object Number: 2005.19.2

COMMENTARY

In *Road Worker* the prominence of the worker figure reflects the centrality of labor in Rivera's political and artistic vision. Because of the piece's simplicity, it is easy to overlook Rivera's radical political message which sets ordinary laborers against a brutal capitalist system. However, through his representations of the worker's body, Rivera demonstrates his reverence for the worker, while also insisting on political reforms to advance workers' rights.

As the worker in the drawing strikes the earth with his axe, he bends forward, yielding to the force of the physical labor he engages in. The worker's labor, Rivera shows, physically transforms him. Performing work on the road requires him to succumb to the impact of the axe on the ground. What's more, in performing his task, the road worker metaphorically bows down to the system that demands his labor. Through the worker's concave body, Rivera shows the profound effects of manual labor on the body and psyche.

Because he is faceless and placeless, Rivera's road worker becomes a symbol for all poor laborers. His hunched back and curved shoulder conceal his face, and he lacks any individuating characteristics that would identify him as a specific person. Rivera, however, encodes the worker's body with signs of his class and background. The worker's wide-brimmed hat, which peeps over his shoulder, indicates that he is a campesino, or peasant farmer. There are no background details or indications of the worker's location, and the image exists in an undefined setting. As an anonymous laborer toiling in an unspecified locale, the road worker becomes an "everyman" figure—he is a campesino who stands for all those who partake in the exertion of intense physical labor.

BIOGRAPHY

Diego Rivera (1886-1957) was one of the leading Mexican muralists of the twentieth-century and a key figure in the modern art movement. Inspired by the Mexican Revolution, Rivera's work celebrates Mexican history and culture, while also exploring the impact of technological advancements on agrarian society. His artwork draws on Aztec art and features bright, vivid colors and simple, bold shapes. The central images in Rivera's work are workers, politicians, indigenous peoples, his friends and family, and allegorical figures. An unabashed Marxist, Rivera chose murals as his primary medium to spread his political messages and to ensure ordinary people would have access to his art. He painted several murals in the United States, and his work has been credited with inspiring Franklin Roosevelt's depression-era Federal Arts Project.

Despite his struggles, the road worker in the sketch is far from dejected. Rivera renders the worker using a series of elegant, curved lines. The worker's back curves gracefully and the lines that form his shoulder and arm are similarly fluid, steady, and strong. In its delicate curves and arches, the worker's body resembles a mountainous terrain. The body becomes a substitute for the absent landscape in the picture. By illustrating the worker as a mountainous figure, Rivera highlights the connection between the worker and the land. In his connection with the earth, the worker takes on a spiritual quality. Though his task is unforgiving, Rivera's worker retains his dignity.

MODERNISM AND MODERNITY

What's Old is New: The Aztec Influence

In much of his artwork, Rivera revives ancient traditions by drawing on Mexican history, and on the Aztecs, in particular. His paintings glorify the indigenous Aztec's way of life and record the destructive impact of European colonizers. Aztec figures and deities often appear in his paintings and drawings, as do the simple, bold lines typical of Aztec iconography. While its subject is not directly related to Aztec culture, *Road Worker* demonstrates Rivera's preference for the simple, bold shapes and lines that characterize Aztec art. As in Aztec art, the figure of the road worker is relatively flat and composed using only simple shapes.

Diego Rivera. Detail from *The Market of Tlatelolco.*

Diego Rivera. *The Flower Carrier.*

The People's Painter: Murals as a Medium

As a public art form, murals appealed to Rivera's left-wing political sentiments. He strove to create artwork for and about the Mexican people, and his murals were often installed in public spaces and buildings where everyone could view them. To create his murals, he revived the centuries-old technique of fresco painting (applying colored pigments to wet plaster). Though Rivera is best-known for his large-scale murals, his sketches and drawings, like *Road Worker,* are also important. Before painting a mural, Rivera drafted a mural study to outline the composition of the piece. *Road Worker,* then, might be understood as a figure study for a larger piece, as the hunched, anonymous laborer is an archetype that appears in many of Rivera's murals.

A New World: The Mexican Renaissance

Following the Mexican Revolution, Rivera and other artists hoped to forge a new Mexican identity through their art. With financial backing from the Mexican government, Rivera and his compatriots created murals that offered a new vision of Mexico. This movement, known as the Mexican Renaissance, encouraged modern Mexicans to coalesce around their rich collective history and to embrace their mixed ethnic identities. While Mexican history was vital to Rivera's project, he was also forward-looking. For him, a post-revolutionary Mexico would embrace all Mexicans (even a humble road worker, as in his drawing) in a harmonious communist society. In portraying an ordinary laborer, Rivera's *Road Worker* hints at the revolutionary ideas fundamental to the Mexican Renaissance.

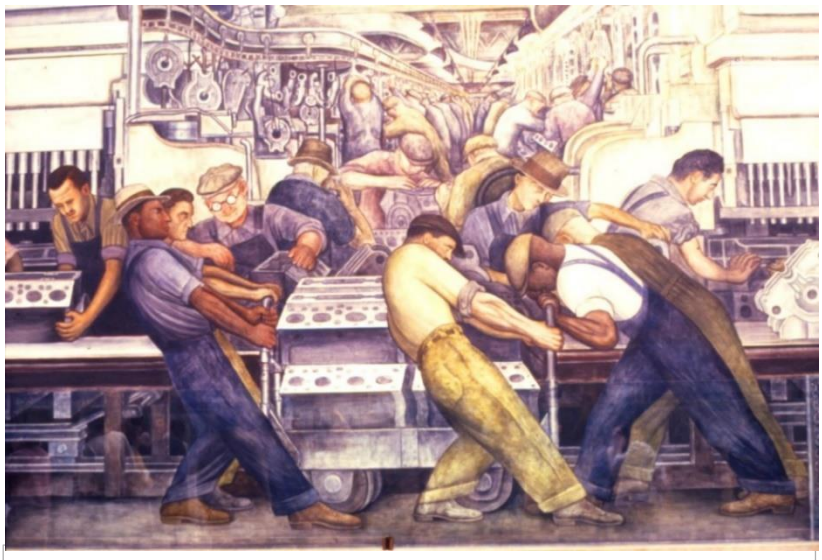
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Take a trip to the Harn Museum and examine Rivera's *Road Worker.* After examining the work, read over the following questions, and choose one to answer.

1. In *Road Worker,* the peasant laborer uses a rudimentary tool: the pickaxe. Rivera, however, was concerned with the way that emerging science and technology would impact workers. Take a look at Rivera's *Detroit Industry Murals* and consider how Rivera envisions labor and technological progress. In 250 words, compare the representations of labor and technology in the mural to those in *Road Worker*. In your response, you might consider how technology affects work today. Was Rivera's vision of emerging technology accurate?

2. In addition to *Road Worker,* The Harn Museum houses a second piece by Diego Rivera, *Retrato de un hombre* (*Portrait of a Man*). Do some research on Rivera's social and political concerns, and, in 250 words, write a comparative analysis in which you determine which piece best expresses Rivera's concerns about labor. Your response should consider how the stylistic differences between the two pieces contributes to the effectiveness of each one's message.

3. Look through the images of Diego Rivera's murals that are available on the *Artstor* database. Using *Road Worker* as a reference, identify one mural in which a version of Rivera's worker figure appears. In 250 words, compare the worker figure in the mural to the *Road Worker.* Explain what each says about labor. In composing your response, consider researching such topics as the Mexican Revolution, communism, and the indigenous peoples of Mexico.



Diego Rivera. Detail from *Detroit Industry Murals.*

TEACHING RESOURCES

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CREATIVE COMMONS IMAGE SOURCES

MUSEO DE ARTE HARN GUÍA EDUCATIVA: PENSAR LA MODERNIDAD

Diego Rivera: el pintor del pueblo

DESCRIPCIÓN

Diego El boceto de Diego Rivera, *Road Worker* (*Trabajador de caminos*), presenta a un hombre inclinado, esforzándose mientras sostiene un pico. Con unos cuantos trazos de carboncillo, Rivera muestra al trabajador inmóvil mientras la piqueta golpea el terreno. El cuerpo del obrero domina la página: líneas seguras y curvas dan forma a la espalda redondeada y al borde del sombrero. El hombro obscurece su cara. En este borrador simple, no hay un fondo evidente, pero Rivera incluye un trazo delicado bajo los pies del trabajador, para indicar lo que supondría el suelo. Este dibujo en blanco y negro trae a la memoria los bosquejos que Rivera diseñaba como planos para sus murales.

Diego Rivera. *Road Worker*, c. 1945
Carboncillo sobre papel de arroz
11 1/4 x 15 1/4 in. (28.6 x 38.7 cm)
Compra del Museo, donación privada
Número de objeto: 2005.19.2

Esta guía es un proyecto de estudiantes de posgrado, elaborado en el seminario de posgrado sobre "Estudios modernistas y pedagogía (Modernist Studies & Pedagogy)", instruido en primavera de 2019 por Marsha Bryant, Profesora de Literatura inglesa. Este medio está pensado principalmente para la instrucción universitaria, aunque también puede ser útil para la educación preuniversitaria. Además de las conversaciones que pueden resultar de esta guía sobre las artes y las humanidades, también invita a la conversación sobre ciencias naturales, ciencias sociales, temas de ingeniería, estudios de medicina y demás campos del conocimiento. Este material puede haberse adaptado a voluntad de la autora para fines educativos.

La autora, Elizabeth Lambert, es estudiante de segundo año de doctorado en la Universidad de Florida.

Traducción de esta guía por Ricardo Jasso Huezo. Maestro en Ciencia Política, The University of Chicago; Licenciado en Relaciones Internacionales, El Colegio de México.

COMENTARIO

En Road Worker, la figura prominente del obrero demuestra la importancia del trabajo en la visión política y artística de Rivera. Por la misma simpleza de esta pieza, se podría pasar por alto el mensaje político radical de Rivera, que buscaba poner a los trabajadores ordinarios en contra de un sistema capitalista brutal. Sin embargo, al examinar las representaciones de Rivera del cuerpo del jornalero, se puede entender mejor su respeto por el obrero y su voluntad para abogar por los derechos de los trabajadores.

Al hacer golpear su pico contra la tierra, el obrero se inclina hacia delante, rindiéndose a la fuerza del trabajo físico. La lucha del trabajador, Rivera demuestra, lo transforma físicamente. Trabajar en la construcción de la carretera lo hace sucumbir ante el impacto de su herramienta con el suelo. Aún más, llevando a cabo esta tarea, el trabajador de caminos, metafóricamente, se doblega frente al sistema que demanda su mano de obra. Mediante la forma cóncava del cuerpo del obrero, se pueden apreciar los efectos profundos que tiene el trabajo manual sobre el cuerpo y la psique.

Como no tiene cara y no se encuentra en un lugar claramente identificado, el trabajador de caminos de Rivera resulta un símbolo para todos los obreros marginados. Su espalda jorobada y su hombro curveado esconden su rostro; carece de las características individualizantes que lo identificarían como una persona en específico. Rivera, no obstante, codifica en el cuerpo del trabajador los signos de su clase y su origen. El sombrero de borde ancho que se asoma sobre el hombro indica que se trata de un campesino. No hay detalles en el fondo del dibujo ni indicación alguna sobre el lugar donde está el trabajador; la imagen se encuentra

BIOGRAPHY

Diego Rivera (1886-1957) fue uno de los muralistas mexicanos más destacados del siglo veinte y figura clave en el movimiento del arte moderto. Inspirado por la Revolución mexicana, el trabajo de Rivera celebra la historia y la cultura mexicanas, al mismo tiempo que explora los efectos de los avances tecnológicos sobre la sociedad agraria. Su obra se inspira en el arte azteca; plasma colores vivos y luminosos y presenta figuras simples y enérgicas. Las imágenes centrales en la obra de Rivera son trabajadores, políticos y personas indígenas, sus amigos y su familia, y figuras alegóricas. Abiertamente marxista, Rivera hizo de los murales el medio principal para difundir sus mensajes políticos y para asegurar el acceso a su arte a la gente común. Pintó diversos murales en Estados Unidos y su obra se considera la fuente de inspiración del Federal Arts Project de Franklin Roosevelt durante la época de la Depresión.

en un entorno indefinido. Al ser un obrero anónimo esforzándose en un lugar no especificado, el trabajador de caminos se convierte en una figura que puede representar a cualquiera —un campesino que se planta por todos los que se dedican al labor físico arduo.

A pesar de sus esfuerzos y su lucha, el trabajador de caminos no se abate, no se rinde. Rivera transforma al obrero humilde en figura de dignidad y fuerza mediante sus elecciones de estilo; lo representa con una serie de trazos curvos y elegantes, que descienden para reflejar el movimiento fluído de los movimientos del trabajador. La configuración triángular del cuerpo denota fortaleza, al mismo tiempo que evoca la imagen de un terreno montañoso. Al ilustrar al jornalero con la forma de una montaña, Rivera destaca su nexo con la tierra y lo dota de cualidades espirituales. Aunque su labor sea inmisericorde, el trabajador de Rivera conserva su dignidad.

MODERNISMO Y MODERNIDAD

Lo viejo es nuevo: la influencia azteca

En gran parte de su obra, Rivera revive las tradiciones antiguas, recurriendo a la historia mexicana y, en particular, a la época del Imperio azteca. Sus pinturas glorifican la forma de vida indígena de los aztecas y plasman la influencia destructiva de los colonizadores europeos. Figuras y deidades aztecas aparecen con frecuencia en sus pinturas y dibujos, al igual que las líneas simples y enérgicas, típicas de la iconografía azteca. A pesar de no estar directamente relacionado con la cultura azteca, *Road Worker* demuestra la preferencia de Rivera por las figuras y los trazos sencillos y vigorosos que caracterizan el arte azteca. Como en la tradición mesoamericana, la figura del trabajador de caminos es un tanto plana y se compone únicamente de formas austeras.

El pintor del pueblo: los murales como medio

Como forma pública de arte, los murales llamaban a los sentimientos de izquierda de Rivera. El pintor se esforzó en crear trabajos artísticos para y sobre el pueblo mexicano y sus murales generalmente se instalaron en espacios públicos y en edificios donde cualquiera pudiera verlos. Para hacer sus murales, el artista mexicano revivió la técnica centenaria del "fresco" (aplicando pigmentos coloridos sobre paredes cubiertas con capas húmedas de una mezcla de cal apagada y agua). A pesar de que la faceta de Rivera como pintor de murales monumentales se conoce de forma más amplia, sus bocetos y dibujos, como *Road Worker*, son también importantes. Antes de pintar un mural, Rivera esbozaba el estudio de la obra para diseñar la composición de la pieza. *Road Worker*, de esta forma, se puede entender como una figura-estudio para una obra mayor, pues el obrero anónimo es un arquetipo presente en varios de los murales de Rivera.

Un mundo nuevo: el Renacimiento mexicano

Después de la Revolución mexicana, Rivera y otros artistas buscaron forjar una nueva identidad mexicana mediante su arte. Con respaldo financiero del gobierno mexicano, Rivera y sus compatriotas hicieron murales que ofrecían una visión nueva de México. Este movimiento, conocido como el Renacimiento mexicano, alentó a los mexicanos modernos a unirse en torno a su rica historia colectiva y a aceptar con orgullo sus identidades étnicas diversas y meztizas. Aunque la historia mexicana fue vital en el proyecto de Rivera, también fue visionario. Para él, México posrevolucionario acogería gustoso a todos los mexicanos (incluso al humilde trabajador de caminos, como el de su dibujo) en una sociedad comunista harmoniosa. Al retratar al obrero común, *Road Worker* de Rivera insinúa las ideas revolucionarias fundamentales del Renacimiento mexicano.

ACTIVIDADES PARA ESTUDIANTES

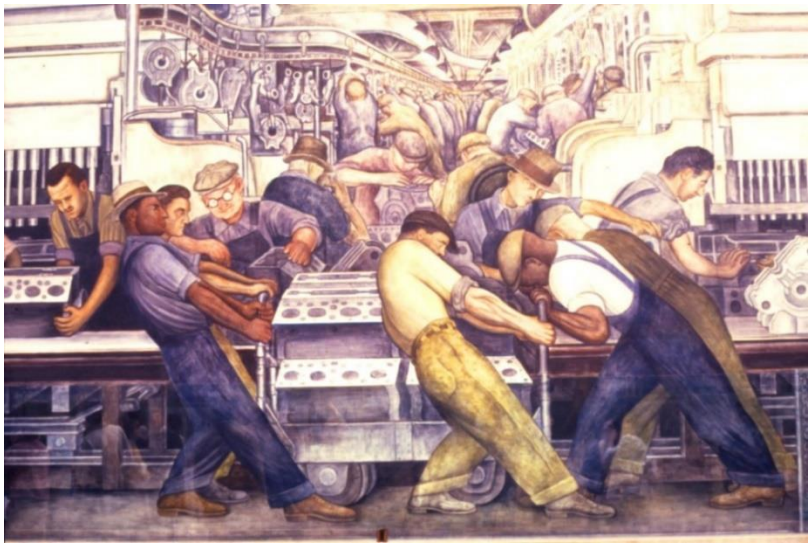
Visita el Museo Harn y analiza Road Worker de Diego Rivera. Después de examinar la obra, lee las preguntas siguientes, escoje una y respóndela.

1. En *Road Worker*, el trabajador campesino usa una herramienta rudimentaria: el pico. Rivera, sin embargo, se interesaba en la forma en la cual la ciencia creciente y la tecnología afectarían a los trabajadores. Echa un vistazo a sus *Murales de la industria de Detroit* y piensa cómo Rivera concebía el trabajo y el progreso tecnológico. En 250 palabras, compara las representaciones del trabajo y la

tecnología de ese mural con lo plasmado en *Road Worker*. En tu respuesta, sería buena idea considerar cómo la tecnología afecta el trabajo en la actualidad. ¿Fue certera la visión de Rivera sobre la tecnología naciente?

2. Además de *Road Worker*, el Museo Harn tiene otra pieza hecha por Diego Rivera, *Retrato de un hombre*. Investiga un poco sobre las preocupaciones y los intereses políticos y sociales de Rivera y, en 250 palabras, escribe un análisis comparativo en el cual seas tú quien determine cuál de las dos piezas expresa mejor las inquietudes de Rivera sobre el trabajo. En tu respuesta, deberías considerar cómo las diferencias de estilo entre ambas obras contribuyen a la eficiencia que tiene cada una para expresar sus mensajes.

3. Toma un tiempo para observar las imágenes de los murales de Diego Rivera disponibles en la base de datos *Artstor*. Tomando *Road Worker* como punto de referencia, identifica un mural en el cual aparezca una versión de la figura del obrero de Rivera. En 250 palabras, compara la figura del trabajador en el mural que hayas elegido con la presente en *Road Worker*. Explica lo que cada una representa acerca del trabajo. Cuando planees tu respuesta, considera investigar temas como la Revolución mexicana, el comunismo y los pueblos indígenas de México.



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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Household Modernism, Domestic Arts

DESCRIPTION

The *Eighteen-Light Pond Lily Lamp* has a bronze base adorned with Lily pads that wrap around it. Eighteen bronze stems rise from the base and reach upwards, curving back down at different heights. The bell-shaped flowers are made of Favrile glass, which contains iridescent-coloring. The flowers appear to be gold and orange, but at certain angles the iridescence reveals a gradient of colors. Tiffany's lamp is both decorative and functional.

Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Eighteen-Light Pond Lily Lamp*. 1902.
Favrile glass, bronze base. 20 1/4 x 19 in. (51.4 x 48.3 cm)
Object Number: 2015.7.26

This resource is a graduate student project developed in a graduate seminar on "Modernist Studies & Pedagogy," taught by English Professor Marsha Bryant in Spring 2019. The resource is intended for college-level instruction but may also be useful for high-school teachers. In addition to Arts and Humanities, this Instructional Resource can also prompt conversations about the Sciences and Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and other fields of study. This material may be freely adapted for instructional purposes.

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COMMENTARY

The *Eighteen-Light Pond Lily Lamp* is an example of Art Nouveau, a movement which spanned from the 1880s until the First World War; it was inspired by natural forms and structures—especially the curved lines of plants and flowers. This lamp's many curves and turns are characteristic of the movement, as pieces from Art Nouveau typically contained sinuous, or curved, lines. Such flowing lines can serve as a metaphor for freedom and release. Those involved in both Art Nouveau and modernism often demonstrated a resistance towards the weight of artistic tradition and critical expectations.

Recently, art historians have suggested that Louis Comfort Tiffany was not the sole designer of the Tiffany Lamps. Clara Driscoll and other "Tiffany Girls" likely played a large role in designing them. With the turn of the nineteenth century, more American women became employed outside of the home. However, women's inclusion in public labor did not eradicate the experience of erasure within the workplace. Not only does this piece serve as an important milestone in art history, but it speaks to the inequality that women face in the workforce.

BIOGRAPHY

Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) was a widely-known artist whose career spanned from the 1870s through the 1920s. Tiffany began his art career as a painter, but would go on to work in many different media. In the late 1870s, he started to design private interiors and public spaces for numerous clients. Tiffany then shifted towards working with lighting and lamps in 1889. He made lampshades with patterns, but each appeared unique given their varied and colors. Tiffany is most famous for his development of opalescent glass, where multiple colors were manipulated and combined. Tiffany once said he was on a lifelong "pursuit of beauty."

Decorative household objects, such as lamps, were not considered fine art in Tiffany's time. Artists who identified with Art Nouveau sought to break away from this bias, partially to emphasize the importance of other art forms (such as decorative art pieces). However, this lamp no longer functions as a domestic object, as it is now in the context of a public museum. Domesticity, or home and family life, takes on a new meaning in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The popular term "separate spheres," where the home and the public are considered independent from one another, restricted women to the home. Initially meant for the home but now considered an art piece, this Tiffany lamp can prompt us to link modernist art, domesticity, and women in a time when womanhood began to change as women entered the public sphere.

TALKING POINTS

1. In this Tiffany lamp, the creators' use of materials emphasizes the object's form. The lilies in this piece are made of Favrile glass, a special type of iridescent glass that Tiffany developed. Thus, the eighteen lilies look as though their surfaces are gradually changing color as the viewer's angle changes. This glass contributes to the form that most people associate with Tiffany lamps—a form that persists today.

2. This artwork revises, reinforces, adapts, and reworks traditional genres and social conventions. Lamps are traditionally domestic, household objects that serve an everyday function. Although this Tiffany lamp is a decorative piece presumably meant for the interior of the home, the nature motifs subvert this idea by suggesting a break from domesticity. Recently, letters have surfaced from Sarah Driscoll, indicating that she may have designed many of the Tiffany lamps. Driscoll and other "Tiffany Girls" were not given credit for their work, but they were able to move out of a strictly domestic role. Thus, the *Eighteen-Light Pond Lily Lamp* both reinforces and revises social conventions of the time.

3. The artwork defamiliarizes domesticity and makes its viewers see the world in new ways. Once everyday objects with little artistic renown, Tiffany lamps now sit in museums. Tiffany's work highlights the beauty in everyday objects. The *Eighteen-Light Pond Lily Lamp* is ornate while still serving its function, showing its viewers that art can be both breathtaking and operational. This piece promotes multiplicity— it subverts domesticity, revolutionizes glass-making with the use of favrile glass, and still illuminates a room.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. The *Eighteen-Light Pond Lily Lamp* pairs well with the poem, "Her Lips are Copper Wire" by Jean Toomer, a poet and novelist affiliated with the Harlem Renaissance. (Note that Toomer's poem has images of light fixtures.) By the end of the lesson, students will be able to analyze the representation of the subjects or scenes within the lamp and poem. There should be a particular focus on what each work emphasizes and what is absent in each.

2. Display the picture of the lamp and the poem one at a time and have students verbally analyze/close read them as a whole class. Pay particular attention to what the work highlights and what is missing from the work. Then, have students create a mind-map, either online or on large paper. Have them start by mapping the poem and lamp individually, noting literal aspects first, and moving to more abstract ideas, discuss emphasis, i.e., are there specific colors, textures, etc. that are highlighted in the lamp?,

and representation, i.e., what does the work represent?, as well as what is not pictured. Then, have students draw connections between the two.

Ultimately, the mind-map will serve both to help students synthesize the ideas they are extracting while close-reading. Educators can use this activity to bring two very different and distinctive works in conversation with one another. This student assignment also aligns to these Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Her Lips are Copper Wire

whisper of yellow globes
gleaming on lamp-posts that sway
like bootleg licker drinkers in the fog

and let your breath be moist against me
like bright beads on yellow globes

telephone the power-house
that the main wires are insulate

(her words play softly up and down
dewy corridors of billboards)

then with your tongue remove the tape
and press your lips to mine
till they are incandescent

—Jean Toomer (1921)

USEFUL RESOURCES

"A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls" (exhibit). New York Historical Society. Accessed April 20, 2019. https://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/a-new-light-on-tiffany#.

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HARN MUSEUM OF ART INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE: THINKING ABOUT MODERNITY

Modernism's Tense Vistas

DESCRIPTION

The painting captures a late evening scene of a New England farm. Instead of depicting the surroundings with all their intricate details, the artist only depicts their rough form in vivid colors. The farmhouse is prominently displayed in red in the foreground. Next to the farmhouse is a minuscule woman dressed in black who stands on a small patch of grass. Behind the farmhouse looms a hilly area that is cleared for farming. In the painting's nearer foreground, we see a roof-like structure that might be a barn, or some such farm building. A small pathway leads from the farmhouse.

Marguerite Zorach c. 1918
Oil on canvas mounted on wood panel
19 1/2 x 16 in. (49.5 x 40.6 cm)
Other (frame): 22 x 18 1/2 in. (55.9 x 47 cm)
Object Number: 1997.2

This resource is a graduate student project developed in a graduate seminar on "Modernist Studies & Pedagogy," taught by English Professor Marsha Bryant in Spring 2019. The resource is intended for college-level instruction but may also be useful for high-school teachers. In addition to Arts and Humanities, this Instructional Resource can also prompt conversations about the Sciences and Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and other fields of study. This material may be freely adapted for instructional purposes.

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COMMENTARY

Zorach's painting invites us to contemplate on the battle between the man-made environment and the natural environment. We might expect a painting of a New England farmhouse scene to conjure a sense of nostalgia. However, in this painting, the nostalgia is troubled by a sense of foreboding that is brought into the painting through Zorach's dark color palette. She has chosen to paint an evening scene. As a result, darkness broods over this painting. You can see that the shades of green are dominated by shades of red, brown and black.

Zorach draws our attention to the land behind the farmhouse - a hilly area where trees have been cleared for farming. The stripped, burnt-out tree trunks scattered throughout that clearing convey a sense of desolation. The little green patch of ground in front of the farmhouse, the cleared land, the doghouse and the barn, convey a sense of how the natural environment has been encroached on by the built environment. Zorach's farmhouse looms in red, its structure giving an impression of forbidding solidity. Overall, this painting compels us to think about the environmental costs of civilization.

BIOGRAPHY

Marguerite Zorach (née Thompson; September 25, 1887 – June 27, 1968) was a prolific American modernist painter, textile artist, and graphic designer. While at college, she travelled to Paris and became inspired by the bold painting style of the Fauvists. In Paris Zorach became acquainted with notable modernist figures like Picasso, Gertrude Stein and Henry Matisse. In 1912, she married William Zorach, another artist she met in Paris, and the couple moved to New York City. Their home in Greenwich Village became a place for artists to meet and share ideas. She also became a founding member and the first president of the New York Society of Women Artists. The family summers in New England and in Yosemite Valley inspired many of Zorach's landscape paintings.

The miniscule woman in the painting who stands beside the farmhouse makes us think about women's confinement to the domestic sphere. She appears right at the center of the picture, placed on the little green oasis. Compared to the environment that surrounds her, the figure of the woman is very small. The built environment dominates over and almost engulfs her, conveying a sense of entrapment, loneliness, and vulnerability. Do you feel the same way? Why do you think Zorach centered the figure of the miniscule woman?

TALKING POINTS

1. **Fauvism**. Zorach was a proponent of the modernist artistic style known as Fauvism—a style adopted by French artists in the early 20th-century. The leaders of this style were the notable modern artists Henri Matisse and Andre Derain.

   Fauvists valued an artist's individual and emotional response to an object over the compulsion to represent that object as realistically as possible. They used color to conjure a mood, not necessarily to represent an object as it existed in the natural/real world. They simplified the form of objects and did not represent the complex contours of objects as found in the real world. We can see Fauvist simplification of the form of the objects in Zorach's depiction of the farmhouse and its surroundings. Her painting retains these objects' essential form but does not represent them in all their realistic complexity. The dark tones that dominate her painting convey a sense of foreboding.

2. **Bringing the Rural into Modernism.** The twentieth century saw the massive expansion of cities and urban life. The Modernist artists were fascinated with the built environment and often depicted the urban environment in their art. Many modernist creations privileged the city and urban life. Although Zorach lived in big cities like Paris and New York, here she chooses to paint a New England farm. Her painting emphasizes the built environment of this rural setting over the nature and the natural way of life we typically associate with farming.

3. **Defamiliarizing Rural Landscape.** Zorach's Fauvist style reduces elements into basic forms. Her bold colors make us see the painting's elements in blocks. Consequently, the clearing, the farmhouse, the barn roof, the field all appear as disparate objects. Unlike the traditional landscape paintings which aim to present a viewpoint of the scenery as natural, Zorach's landscape is invested with an aura of artifice. It emphasizes the unnaturalness at the heart of the typical elements that make up the farmhouse scene. Additionally, this depiction creates the sense that the human figure at the center is about to be engulfed by various man-made objects.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Landscapes in Modernism: Cross-Genre Comparison

The impact of the built environment on the natural/human life is an interest that was shared by many modernist artists of different genres. For instance, let us consider the following poem by Robert Frost, a 20th century American poet who often expressed many modernist concerns through the idyllic New England landscapes he conjured through his poetry.

Out, Out

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.
And from there those that lifted eyes could count
Five mountain ranges one behind the other
Under the sunset far into Vermont.
And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,
As it ran light, or had to bear a load.
And nothing happened: day was all but done.
Call it a day, I wish they might have said
To please the boy by giving him the half hour
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.
His sister stood beside him in her apron
To tell them 'Supper.' At the word, the saw,
As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,
Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap—
He must have given the hand. However it was,
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!
The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh,
As he swung toward them holding up the hand
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—
Since he was old enough to know, big boy
Doing a man's work, though a child at heart—
He saw all spoiled. 'Don't let him cut my hand off—
The doctor, when he comes. Don't let him, sister!'
So. But the hand was gone already.
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.
And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.
No one believed. They listened at his heart.
Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.
No more to build on there. And they, since they
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

—Robert Frost (1916)

Questions

1. Describe the scene that is happening in the poem? What is the setting? What is the action?
2. How does Frost describe the natural landscape? How much space does he devote to it?
3. How does he bring in the man-made element/environment into the poem? How is that described?
4. What appears to be Frost's comment on human life? Do you see any similarity between the way Frost represents human life and the way Zorach represents the human figure in her painting?

Reflect: Either/Or

Either
Wander around the Harn modern collection and find another landscape painting. Comment on how the artist represents the chosen environment. Does he/she/they focus only on the built environment, the natural environment or both? With what effect does the painting bring these environments to life (consider the choice of color, dark/light contrast, stature of elements etc.)? Does the artist try to represent it as realistically as possible, or in more abstract terms? How does choice affect/shape the way the viewer understands the painting? What insights can we glean about modernism's engagement with the environment?

Now, in pairs please consider the painting below (Bertram Hartman's City Blocks) and compare Hartman's depiction of the built environment with Zorach's.

Describe the painting. What is the scenery? What are the elements you can see in the picture? What is their stature?

How is the built environment represented here? Do you find the representation to be imposing and majestic, or threatening and forbidding? Does it elicit any other feelings in you?

What can you say about the lack of human presence in this painting?

Or
Google "Eco-Friendly Buildings" and find a picture of a building designed with environmental sustainability in mind. Comment on the way the building focuses on the co-existence of the natural and the built environment. Do you feel that the effort is successful?

USEFUL RESOURCES

"Fauvism: Meet the 'Wild beasts' of the Early 20th Century Artwork." Museum of Modern Art. AccessedApril19,2019. https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/fauvism/.

"Marguerite Zorach: Biography." Michael Rosenfeld Gallery. Accessed April 19, 2019. http://www.michaelrosenfeldart.com/artists/marguerite-zorach-1887-1968.

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