A Visual History of the Visual Arts

Part 2: From Abstract Art to Conceptual Art

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The Space Age

MOMA Flowchart for “Cubism and Abstract Art” (1936)
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• Painting
  – Abstract Expressionism
    • The center of mass of modernism shifts from Paris to New York
    • New York imports cubism (abstraction) and surrealism (automatism), which create the dialectic between the conscious (geometric shapes) and unconscious (spontaneous expression)
    • Alienation of humans from the technological world causes angst (while European abstract painters marvel and rejoice)
    • Little abstract expressionism in sculpture
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• Painting
  – From Surrealism to Abstract Expressionism
    • Rolph Scarlett (1891, USA)
    • Wilhelm de Kooning (1904, Holland)
    • Arshile Gorky (1905, Armenia)
    • Remedios Varo (1908, Spain)
    • Lawrence Kupferman (1909, USA)
    • Enrico Donati (1909, Italy)
    • Roberto Matta (1911, Chile)
    • William Baziotes (1912, USA)
    • Gerome Kamrowski (1914, USA)
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Rolph Scarlett: “Abstraction” (1934)

Lawrence Kupferman
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- Abstract Expressionism
  - Wilhelm de Kooning (1904, Holland)
    - More cubist than surrealist

“Excavation” (1950)

“Attic” (1949)
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- Abstract Expressionism
  - Arshile Gorky
    - Automatism but grounded in autobiography

“Garden in Sochi” series (1940-41)
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- Surrealism
  - Remedios Varo (1908, Spain)

“Sympathy” (1955)

“Solar Music” (1955)
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- Surrealism
  - Remedios Varo (1908, Spain)

"Harmony" (1956)

"Character" (1961)
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• Surrealism
  – Remedios Varo (1908, Spain)

“Tailleur pour Dames” (1957)
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- Abstract Expressionism
  - Roberto Matta (1911, Chile)

“The Earth Is a Man” (1942)

“Space Travel” (1938)
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- Painting
  - Abstract Expressionism/Action Painting
    - Hans Hofmann (1880, Germany): teaches in Berkeley in 1930 and New York in 1933
    - Adolph Gottlieb (1903, USA)
    - Jackson Pollock (1912, USA)
    - Robert Motherwell (1915, USA)
    - Joan Mitchell (1926, USA)
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• Abstract Expressionism
  – Jackson Pollock
  • The subconscious
  • Jung’s influence

“Male and Female” (1942)

“Lavender Mist” (1950)
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- Abstract Expressionism
  - Jackson Pollock
    - Action painting
    - Holistic
    - Non-referential

“Autumn Rhythm” (1950)

“Blue Poles” (1952)
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- Abstract Expressionism
  - Wilhelm de Kooning
  - And even expressionist

“Woman V” (1953)

“Woman I” (1952)
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• Abstract Expressionism/ Europe (Art Informel)
  – Reaction to cubism
  – Tachisme in France (1951)
  – COBRA (1948): Copenhagen (Co), Brussels (Br), Amsterdam (A)
  – Gutai in Japan (1954)
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- Abstract Expressionism/ Europe (Art Informel)
  - Shozo Shimamoto (1928, Japan) throws bottles of paint at canvases
  - Kazuo Shiraga (1924, Japan) paints with his feet
  - Yves Klein (1928, France) uses women's nude bodies as paintbrushes for his "anthropommetries"
  - Shigeko Kubota (1937, Japan) squats over a canvas to create "Vagina Painting" (1965)

This is a chapter in piero scaruffi’s “A Visual History of the Visual Arts”: http://www.scaruffi.com/art/history