

COURSE TITLE	20TH CENTURY UNITED STATES ART (FROM THE ASHCAN SCHOOL TO CONTEMPORARY ART)
COURSE CODE	OC2302AH03
TUTOR	DANIEL GREANEY
START DATE	08/01/2024
DAY & TIME	MONDAYS, 6.30PM - 8.00PM
LEVEL	ALL LEVELS
LOCATION	ONLINE

DAILY BREAKDOWN

Date	Topics/ Skills covered
8 January 2024	<p>Ashcan School and American Realism</p> <p>The influence of French Impressionism on American painters at the outset of the 20th Century remained strong, however many practitioners wished to develop styles which were independent of trends coming from the continent. An increase in the population of cities such as New York had led to overcrowding, high unemployment and poor living and working conditions for those people who had flocked to this land of opportunity. Artists of the derogatorily named 'Ashcan School', including Robert Henri, George Luks and George Bellows, documented such scenes of urban life in a frank, unidealised manner, their painting techniques at odds with academic standards. The realism with which Ashcan artists treated their subjects would continue during the inter and postwar years in the works of Edward Hopper, Andrew Wyeth and Grant Wood, albeit in a less politicised, sometimes poetic manner.</p>
15 January 2024	<p>Harlem Renaissance</p> <p>A celebration of 'black art', had in the first decades of the 20th Century, been confined primarily to white European artists who took inspiration from the art and artefacts of 'primitive' cultures. By the 1920s, figures such as the writer Langston Hughes made concerted efforts to have the works of contemporary African-Americans acknowledged and disseminated. Originating in Harlem, a New York neighbourhood with a large African-American population, the Harlem Renaissance encompassed not only the visual arts, but also the music, fashion, dance and literature of Black Americans keen to express their identity and culture. Those active in this movement strove to challenge the negative stereotypes and restrictions placed upon them. Sculptors such as Richmond Barthé and Augusta Savage, and painters including Aaron Douglas succeeded in an era still largely hostile to the advancement of African Americans.</p>
22 January 2024	<p>Abstract Expressionism</p> <p>A number of European émigrés, including Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko and Hans Hofmann settled in New York during the interwar years and there developed a technique known as 'action painting'. This process rejected figuration in favour of large, expressive canvases which placed an emphasis on gesture and the application of paint ahead of recognisable subject matter. The first truly American movement in painting, Abstract Expressionism saw New York now replace Paris in terms of artistic prestige. Championed by the prominent critic Clement Greenberg, and supported by society figures such as Peggy Guggenheim, this movement occupied the mid decades of the 20th Century and made household names of artists such as Jackson Pollock. Often considered a male dominated movement, Abstract Expressionism nevertheless produced many important women painters including Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler and Joan Mitchell.</p>
29 January 2024	<p>Pop</p> <p>Post-war America experienced a boom both in terms of economy and population. A newfound confidence in their place on the world stage gave American citizens the assurance to invest in their homes and lifestyles. There was an increase in advertising during this period, both in the printed media and TV commercials. The rise of television and its appearance in households brought famous figures into the homes of Americans. These developments led to a rise in celebrity culture which coincided with mass-consumerism, making these distinct topics often interchangeable. Visual artists alienated by Abstract Expressionism, instead looked to these recognisable subjects for inspiration. The antithesis of abstraction, Pop Artists such as Andy Warhol, James Rosenquist and Roy Lichtenstein replicated in their works, the mundane, slick, mass-produced detritus and imagery of everyday life.</p>
5 February 2024	<p>Contemporary Art</p> <p>The Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s were just two of many seismic events which altered the political and social structure of America. Visual artists responded to these and used a variety of media, particularly photography, performance and video, alongside more traditional processes, to express support for these concerns into the 1970s. Judy Chicago and Cindy Sherman are two figures synonymous with that era, their works in striking contrast to their male peers. By the 1980s, painting was once again in vogue, with Neo-Expressionism popular with galleries and collectors. 'Street Art' and graffiti also came to the fore in that decade with both Jean Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring blurring the lines between 'high' and 'low' art whilst also contributing to the progress of painting as a medium.</p>