

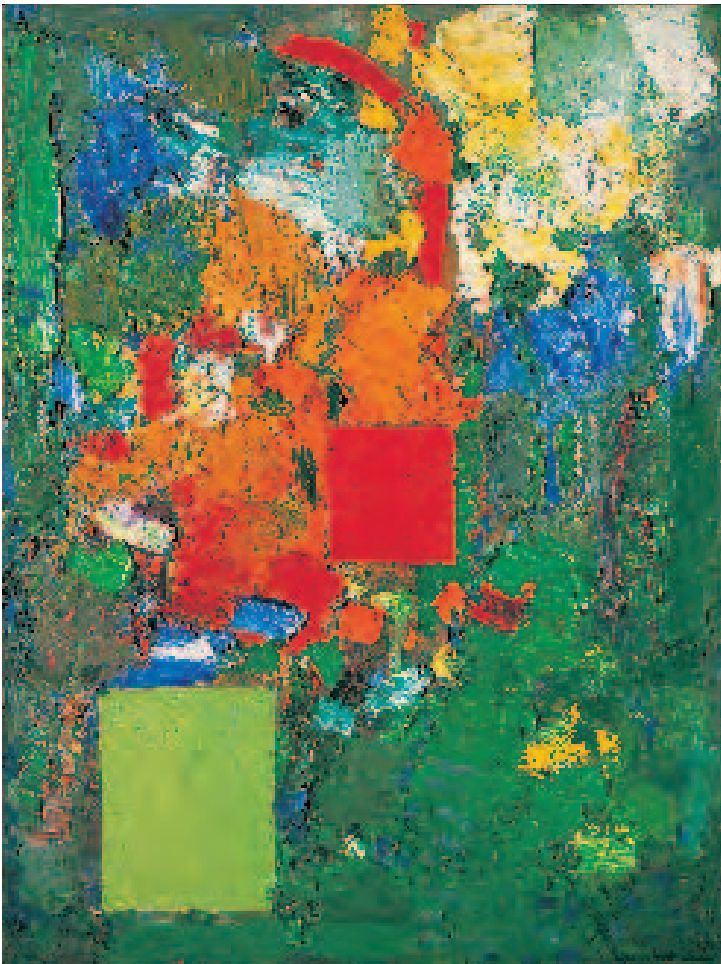
Vocabulary

Abstract
Expressionism
Minimalism
Super-Realism
Post-Modernism

Art After 1945

After World War II ended in 1945, the European art world was in disarray. Paris was no longer the center of artistic creativity. The war displaced many people. A number of artists who had fled Nazi Germany settled in New York City. They began teaching there and by the 1950s, they and their students established a new center for the arts. New York City became the new capital of the art world.

In the years since World War II, artists have created many changes in artistic approaches, styles, and techniques. A variety of art forms once considered minor, such as printmaking, weaving, ceramics, and jewelry making, have come to be considered art forms equal to painting and sculpture. New digital media, such as graphics programs and digital cameras, have had a powerful impact on the world of art.



▲ **FIGURE 13.31** Hofmann, who was inspirational to the Abstract Expressionist style that grew in New York, is best known for his use of brilliant colors and textures. What does the artist appear to be expressing here? What is the mood or feeling of this work?

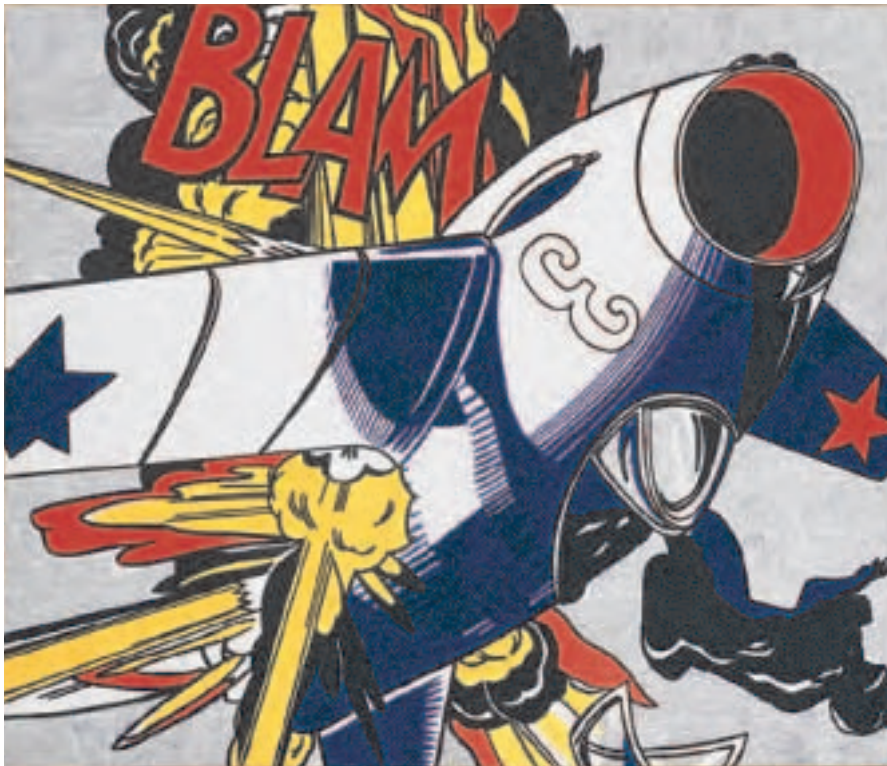
Hans Hofmann. *Flowering Swamp*. 1957. Oil on wood. 122 × 91.5 cm (48 1/8 × 36 1/8"). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 1966. © 2003 Estate of Hans Hofmann/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Abstract Expressionism

Abstract Expressionism, the first new style to arrive on the scene in New York in the years following World War II, *emphasized abstract elements of art rather than recognizable subject matter, and also stressed feelings and emotions*. Following in the tradition of German Expressionism, Abstract Expressionist artists believed that art should function as a spontaneous expression of emotion, and they did not necessarily rely on planned structure to organize the design of their paintings. Look at **Figure 13.31**. It is called *Flowering Swamp*, but you cannot see any realistically depicted flowers or swamps. If you use your imagination, however, you can see how the two rectangles seem to float over a background that suggests water and flowers.

Pop and Op Art

During the early 1960s, artists turned to the mass media, and especially to advertising, for subject matter. Pop art portrayed images of popular culture, such as soda bottles, soup cans, soap boxes, giant hamburgers, and comic strips, in a variety of art forms (Figure 1.18, page 20). Pop artists made people take a new look at everyday objects.

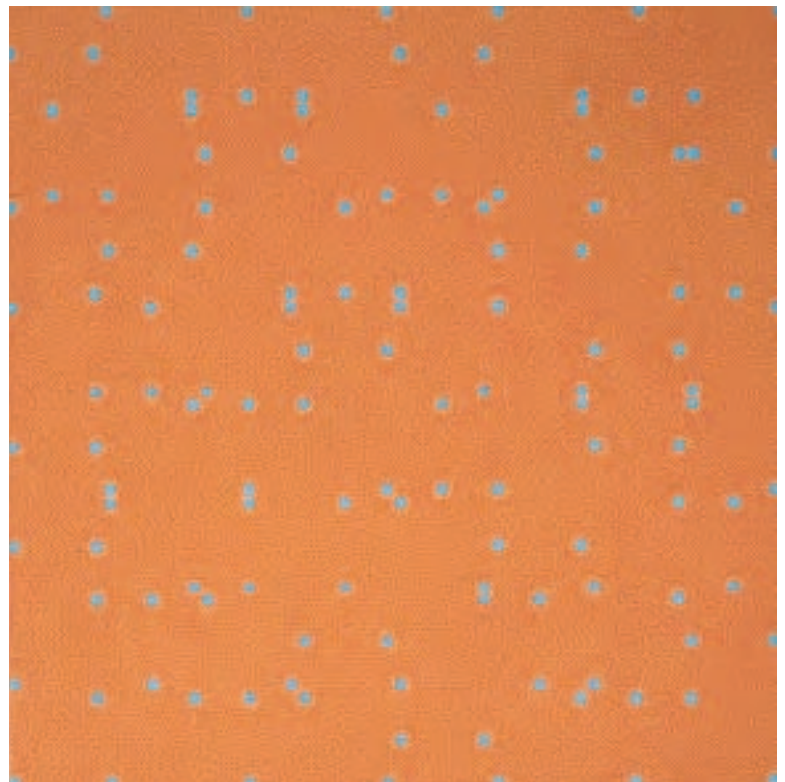


◀ **FIGURE 13.32** The comic book quality of this painting is captured in its strong black lines, limited use of color, and bold shapes. Lichtenstein calls what he does "quotation." What do you think he means by that?

Roy Lichtenstein. *Blam*. 1962. Oil on canvas. 172.7 × 203.2 cm. (68 × 80"). Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. Gift of Richard Brown Baker, B. A. 1935.

They often used bright colors and cartoonish graphics to depict their subject matter. **Figure 13.32** is an example of Pop art. Artist Roy Lichtenstein (**lick**-ten-steyn) used a strong sense of design, a limited color scheme, and bold shapes to create a painting that was based on a comic strip.

Another style of art popular in this period took advantage of people's fascination with visual illusions. Op art, or optical art, uses scientific knowledge about vision to create optical illusions of movement. Op art relies on the special arrangement of the art elements such as the precise arrangement of lines, or the placement of complementary colors next to each other to create the illusion of movement. If you look at **Figure 13.33**, you will notice the unusual orange color of the background. The blue-green dots seem to be placed in no apparent order, but in fact the artist carefully planned their arrangement. If you look at the dots for a few moments, they appear to vibrate because the after-image causes a visual response that creates the illusion of movement.



▲ **FIGURE 13.33** This piece of Op art is intended to cause a visual effect. Do you think the artwork has another purpose or meaning? Why or why not?

Larry Poons. *Orange Crush*. 1963. Acrylic on canvas. 203.2 × 203.2 cm (80 × 80"). Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Gift of Seymour H. Knox, 1964. © Larry Poons/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

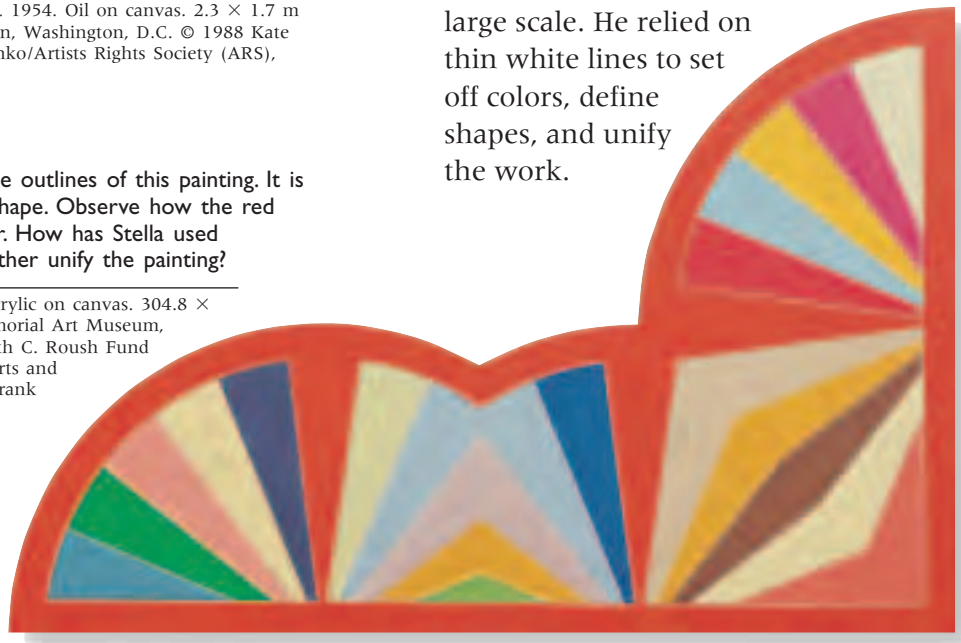


▲ **FIGURE 13.34** Rothko controlled the visual effect of his work by limiting the number of colors. Standing in front of this painting, which is over 7' tall, the viewer has an intense visual experience. Why do you think Rothko tried to evoke this kind of experience?

Mark Rothko. *Ochre and Red on Red*. 1954. Oil on canvas. 2.3 × 1.7 m (7'6" × 5'9"). The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. © 1988 Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

► **FIGURE 13.35** Notice the outlines of this painting. It is not a traditional rectangular shape. Observe how the red border ties the work together. How has Stella used repetition and contrast to further unify the painting?

Frank Stella. *Agbatana III*. 1968. Acrylic on canvas. 304.8 × 457.2 cm (120 × 180"). Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. Ruth C. Roush Fund and National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities Grant, 1968. © 2003 Frank Stella/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



Color-Field Painting

As artists experimented with a variety of new styles, they occasionally selected just one element of art to focus on in their work. An example, Color-Field painting, is art created using only flat fields of color. It is created without the precision of Op art and also without its interest in illusion. It is color for the pure sensation of color. Look at the example by Mark Rothko in **Figure 13.34**. His color areas have hazy edges that seem to float in space.

Minimalism

Some artists sought absolute simplicity in their art. This focus came to be known as **Minimalism**, or *art that uses a minimum of art elements*. Minimalists emphasized either color or shape as the dominant element in painting. In sculpture, they used the fewest possible geometric forms. They depicted art at its most austere, arranging only the simplest art elements. Minimalist painters who placed importance on the crisp, precise edges of the shapes in their paintings came to be known as Hard-edge painters. Frank Stella (**Figure 13.35**), used different canvas shapes for his works and created art on a large scale. He relied on thin white lines to set off colors, define shapes, and unify the work.

New Forms of Realism

Although modern American artists have created many abstract and non-objective artworks, Americans harbor a love for realism. Many American artists continue to portray subjects in a realistic style. This sculpture made by Duane Hanson (**Figure 13.36**) appears so life-like that it once fooled a gallery security guard. The guard thought that one of Hanson's motionless, seated figures looked ill and called for an ambulance. The painting in **Figure 13.37** looks so accurate in visual detail that a casual observer could easily mistake it for a photograph. This is how the style earned one of its names: Photo-Realism. It is also called Hyper-Realism and Super-Realism. **Super-Realism** is *art that depicts objects as precisely and accurately as they actually appear*.

Activity

Describing General Characteristics

Applying Your Skills. Look through this book to find five paintings from a variety of Western cultures. Select artworks created after 1950. For each, list the name of the artist, the title of the work, the style in which the work was painted, and other general characteristics.

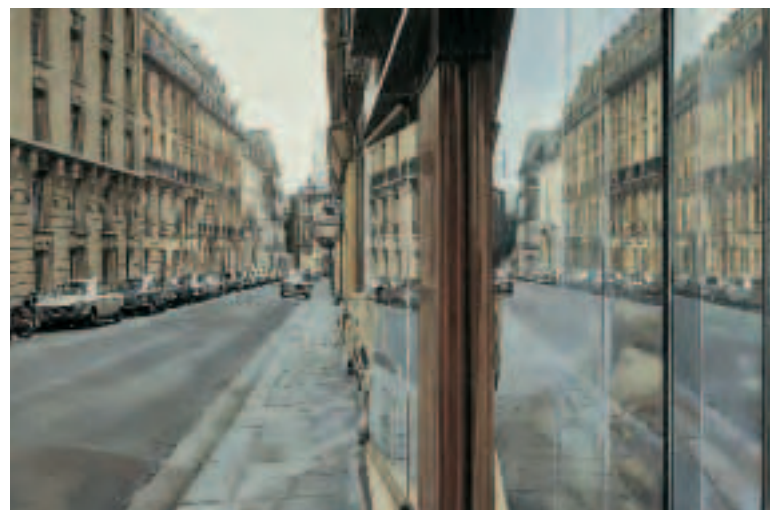
Architecture

After World War II, architects developed the International Style of architecture, a plain, austere building style. Its origins could be traced back to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan, who both designed buildings before



▲ **FIGURE 13.36** These figures are made of bronze painted to look lifelike. They are dressed in real clothes and accessories. If you walked up to them, do you think they would fool you? Why or why not?

Duane Hanson. *Old Couple on a Bench*. 1995. Bronze and mixed media with accessories. Life size. Collection of Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, California. Purchased with funds provided by Muriel and Bernard Myerson. © Estate of Duane Hanson/ Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



▲ **FIGURE 13.37** This street scene seems almost like a photograph although it is a painting. How does the artist create this illusion? What is the purpose of painting such an illusion when one could simply take a photograph?

Richard Estes. *Paris Street Scene*. 1972. Oil on canvas. 101.6 × 152.4 cm (40 × 60"). Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia. Gift of Sydney and Frances Lewis. © Richard Estes/ Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York/ Courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York.

► **FIGURE 13.38** This simple design, called International Style, appealed to architects as a reaction to the highly ornate Art Deco style that was popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Can you easily identify the purpose of the building? What is its purpose?

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson. *Seagram Building*. New York, 1958. © 2003 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.



World War II. In their Seagram Building, the architects Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (ludd-**vig** meez van der **row**) and Philip Johnson created a simple geometric glass box that exemplifies van der Rohe's favorite saying, "Less is more" (**Figure 13.38**).

Architects of the 1960s looked to the future as well as to the past. **Figure 13.39** shows an apartment complex that looks futuristic in its design but actually echoes the Pueblo apartment complexes built by Native Americans hundreds of years ago. The interlocking apartment units are designed to give occupants a sense of openness and space. Because the units are not lined up next to each other as in traditional apartment complexes, each apartment has plenty of windows that allow sunlight to enter and give the illusion that each apartment is a separate house.

Post-Modern Art

We are currently in a period of art that is rapidly evolving. Some say we are at the end of the modern era. Others insist that we have already entered the post-modern era. The subject is being hotly debated in artistic circles, but the answer is something that only time can judge.

► **FIGURE 13.39** This apartment complex uses space efficiently. Do you find the complex attractive? Why or why not? What are some of the personal touches the residents have added?

Moshe Safdie. *Habitat*. Montreal, 1967.



The term post-modernism first appeared in reference to architecture. **Post-Modernism** is an approach to art that incorporates traditional elements and techniques while retaining some characteristics of modern art styles or movements. Post-Modern architecture was a reaction to the plain glass boxes of the International Style. It incorporates decorative elements from the past and takes advantage of the flexibility of new materials (See Figure 14.1 on page 388.)

The Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame and Museum (Figure 14.16 on page 399), designed by I. M. Pei, is an example of architecture's break from the modern glass box. The museum contains a concert hall, a film and video display center, several sound chambers, and a party area as well as the usual glass display cases for showing off costumes, instruments, sheet music, and the personal belongings of famous musicians. The architect designed a building that reflects the freedom of rock-and-roll, but also functions as a museum to house its memorabilia.

Other Post-Modern artists are breaking traditional restrictions. Painters are creating three-dimensional paintings and sculptors are adding paint to their works. **Figure 13.40** is an example of a Post-Modern work with some identifiable subject matter. Is it a painted sculpture or a three-dimensional painting?

No one knows what will happen next in the art world. The acquisition of images from the past, and the incorporation of them into new works with new meanings, is only one facet of this new era. We have entered a time in art in which the diversity of ideas reflects the diversity of contemporary life.



▲ **FIGURE 13.40** This sculpture represents several musical instruments. Can you identify what these instruments are? Notice how big the sculpture is. Why do you suppose the artist chose to make it so large?

Frank Stella. *St. Michael's Counterguard (Malta Series)*. 1984. Mixed media on aluminum and fiberglass honeycomb. 396.2 × 342.9 × 274.3 cm (156 × 135 × 108"). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California. Gift of Anna Bing Arnold. © Frank Stella/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



Check Your Understanding

1. What is the subject matter of Pop Art?
2. How is Color-Field painting different from Op art?
3. Why is Super-Realism sometimes called Photo-Realism?
4. Describe Post-Modern architecture.
5. Compare and contrast the contemporary styles in Figure 13.32 on page 379 and Figure 13.37 on page 381 to identify general art trends.