

Art of XX-XXI century

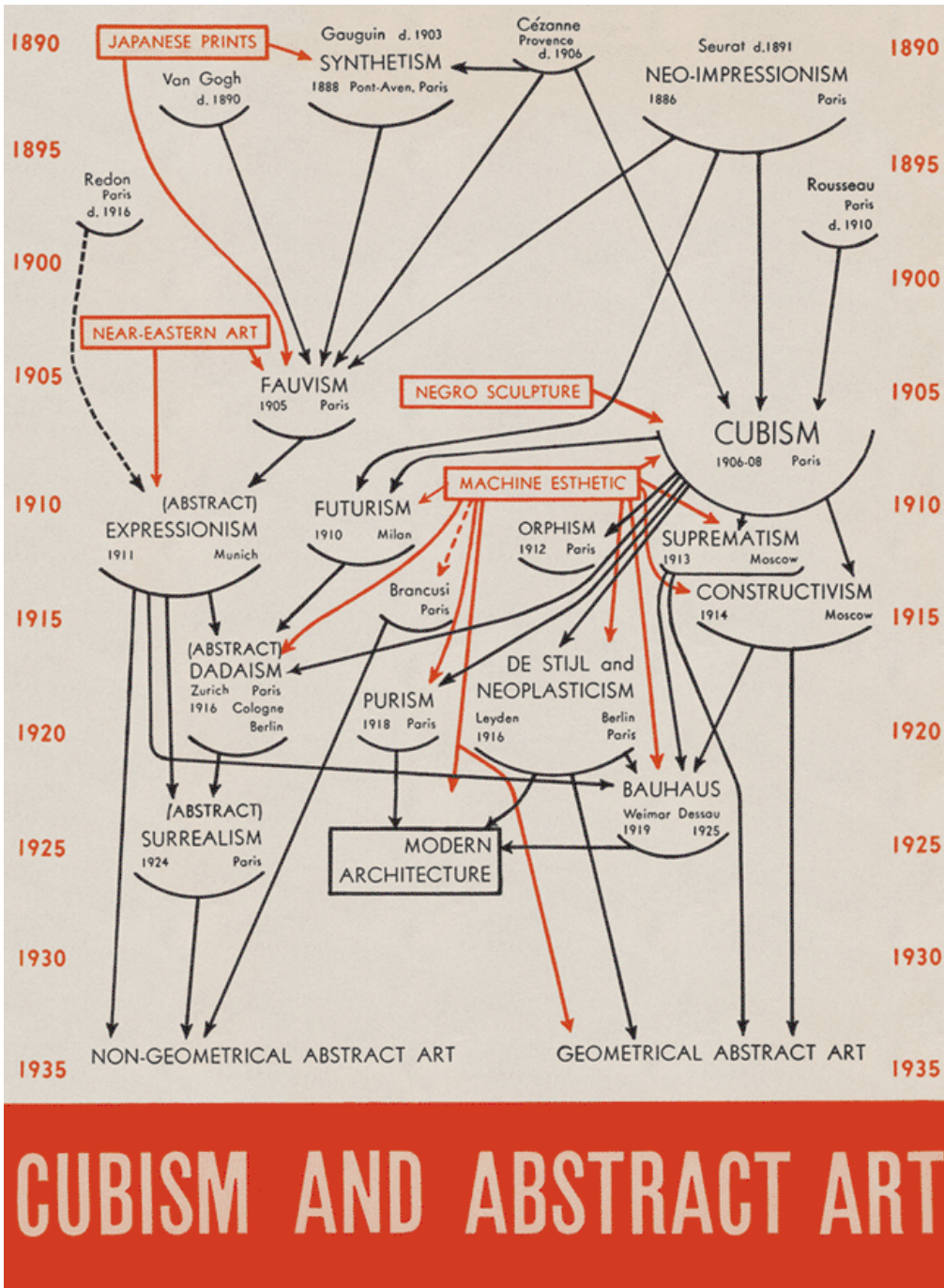
- What is the difference between modern and contemporary?
- When does contemporary begin?
- Does 'contemporary' art belong to history of art?
- Can we tell good from bad in contemporary art?



These questions are not value-neutral!

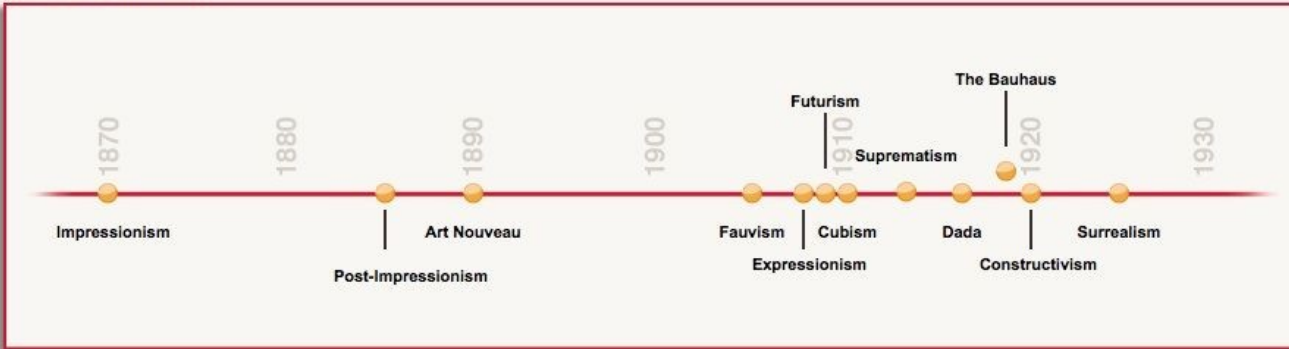
When modern was 'contemporary'

Alfred Barr Jr.

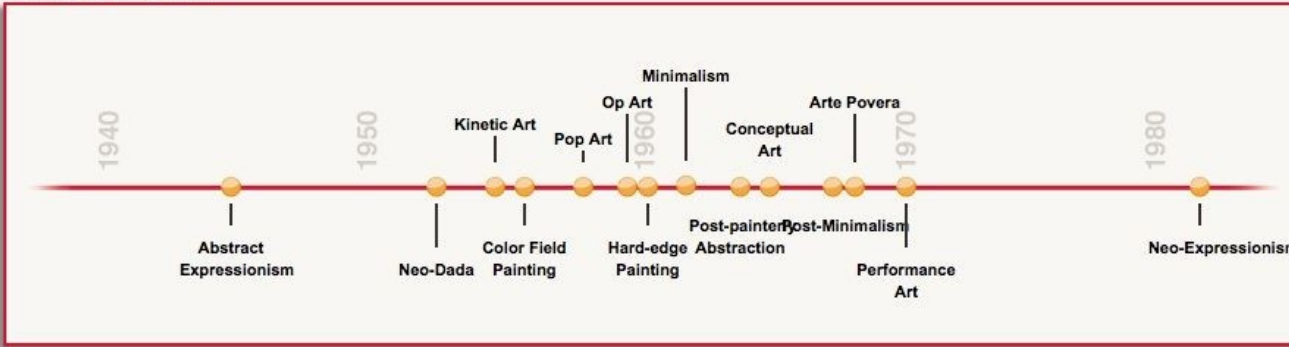


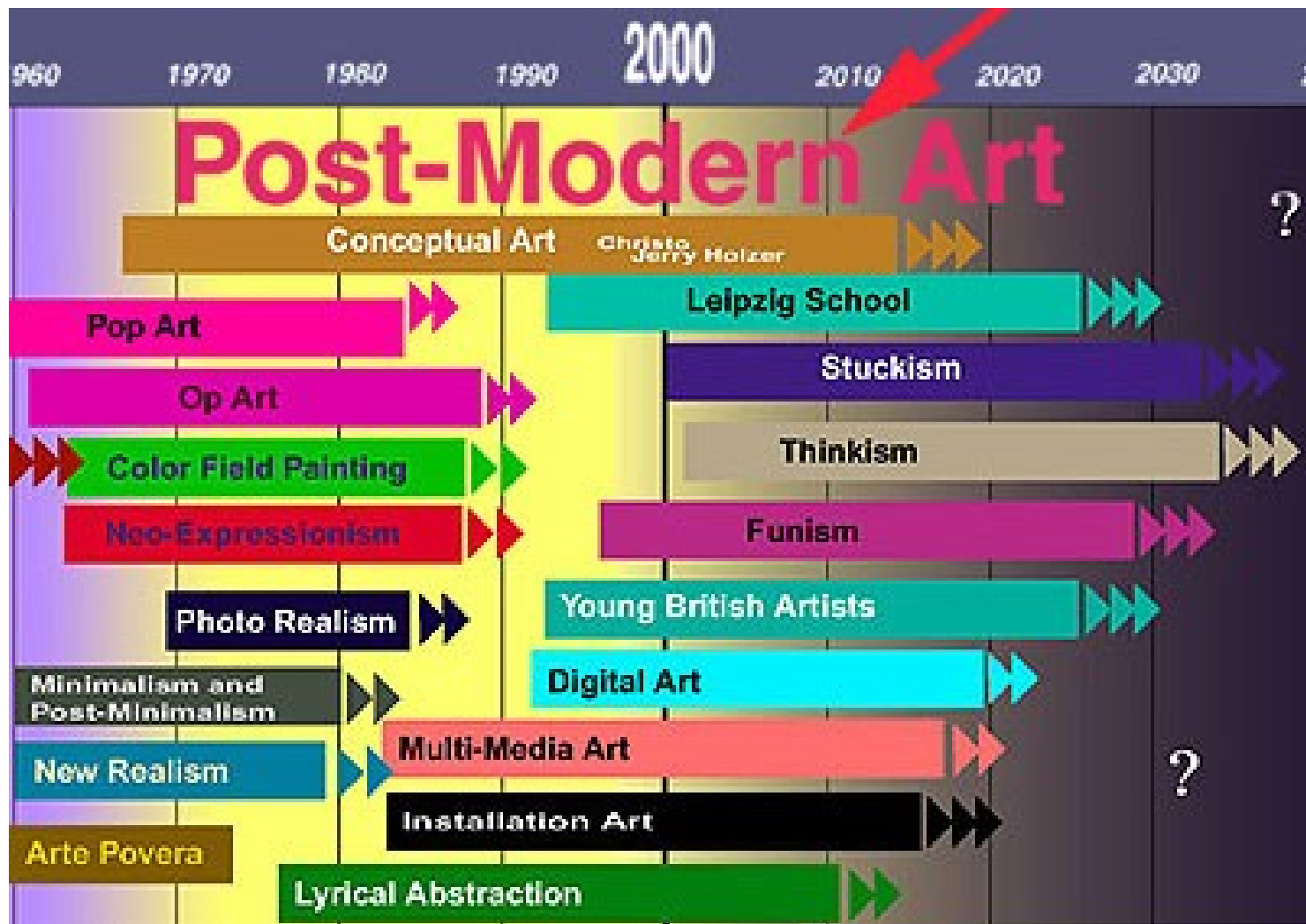
....after that?

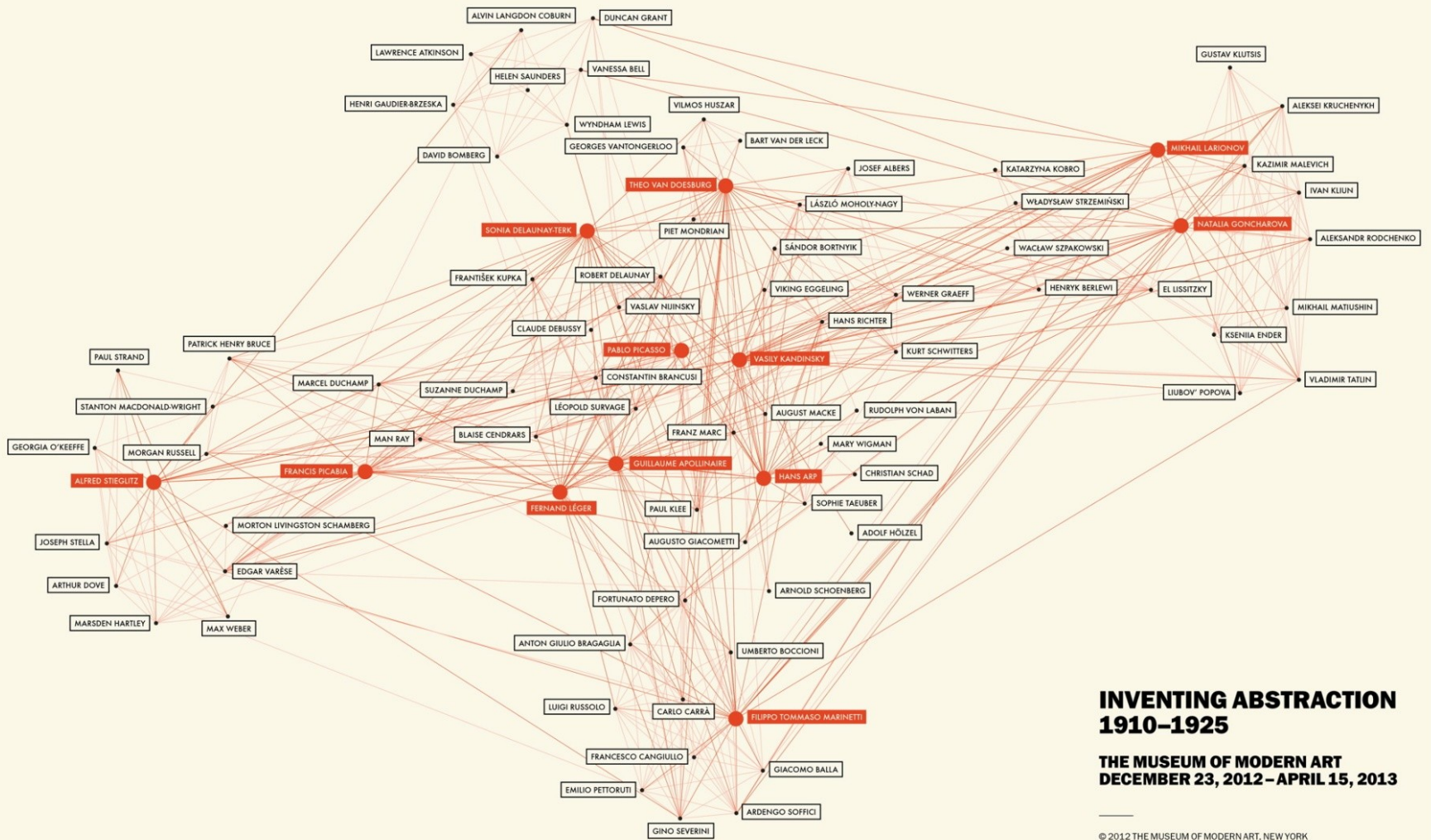
MOVEMENTS: 1870 to 1930



MOVEMENTS: 1940 to 1980



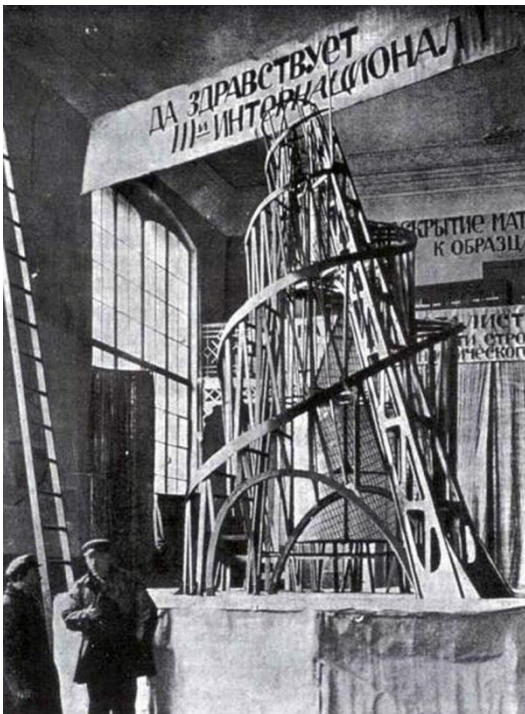




INVENTING ABSTRACTION 1910–1925

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
DECEMBER 23, 2012 – APRIL 15, 2013

What is modern art?



Modernism

- Art becomes its own subject
- Shift from mimetic to non-mimetic features

Clement Greenberg in *Modernist painting*

‘Manet’s became the first modernist pictures by virtue of the frankness with which they declared the flat surfaces on which they were painted.’



Modernism as a profound shift...

modernism is marked by an ascent to a **new level of consciousness**, which is reflected in painting as a kind of discontinuity, almost as if to emphasize that mimetic representation had become less important than some kind of reflection on the means and methods of representation

Arthur Danto

We will return to this later on!

Is there a similar break between modern and contemporary?

Modern vs Postmodern

- ✓ Formal purity
- ✓ Medium specificity
- ✓ Authenticity
- ✓ Originality
- ✓ Utopic ideals
- ✓ Linear concept of History
- ✓ Progress in art



Appropriation - borrowing

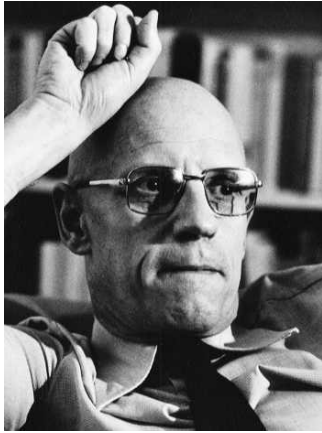
Copying

Irony, parody

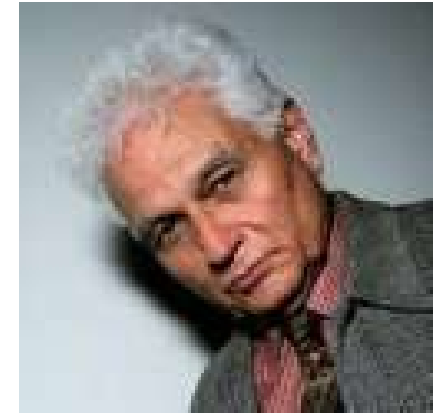
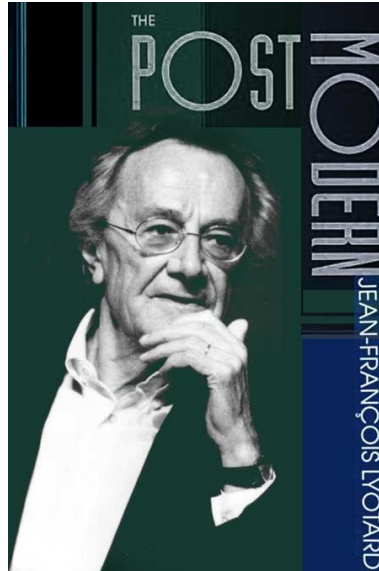
Pastiche

No master narratives

'Tyranny' of theory...



Michel Foucault



Jacques Derrida



Umberto Eco



Gilles Deleuze



Felix Guattari

Deconstruction

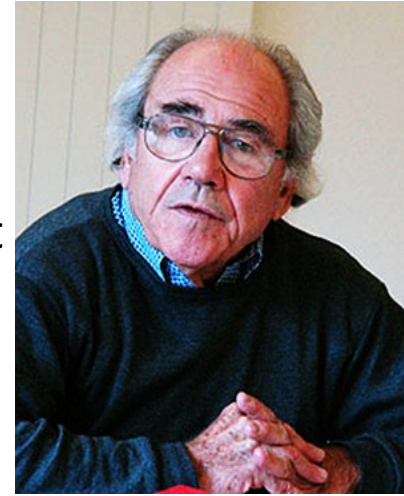
- Art works considered as text
- Texts have multiple meanings



Jean Baudrillard (1929- 2006)

when it comes to postmodern simulation and simulacra, “It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real”

- 1) first order of simulacra = the pre-modern period, the image is a clear counterfeit of the real; the image is recognized as just an illusion, a place marker for the real
- 2) the second order of simulacra = the industrial revolution, the distinctions between the image and the representation begin to break down because of mass production and the proliferation of copies
- 3) the third order of simulacra = the postmodern age,
- 4) we are confronted with a *precession* of simulacra; that is, the representation *precedes* and *determines* the real. There is no longer any distinction between reality and its representation; there is only the simulacrum.



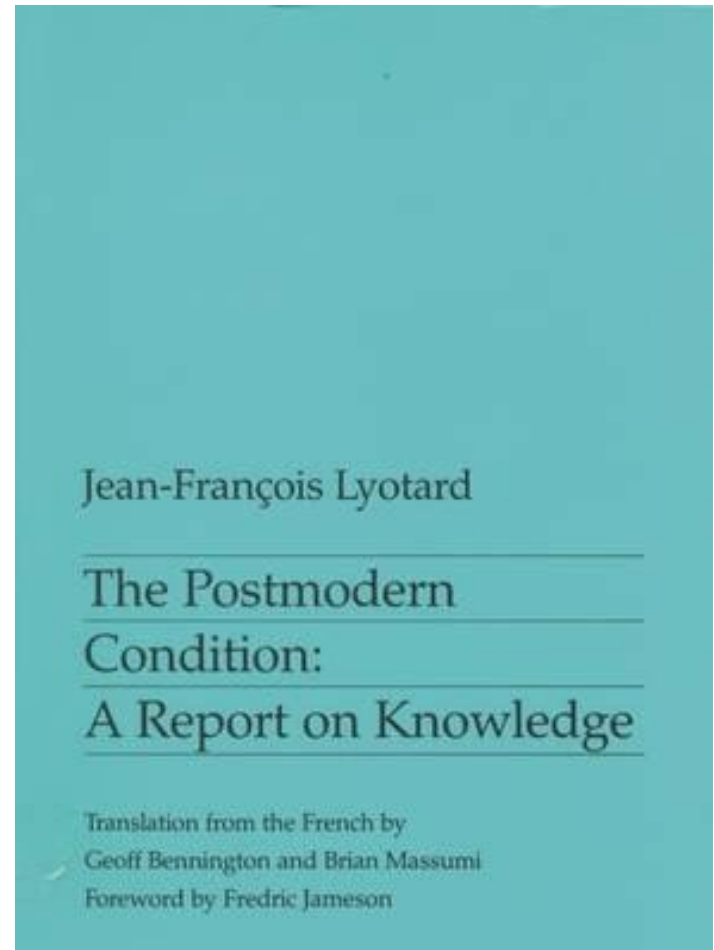
Simulacres et *Simulation*, 1981

Jean-François Lyotard:

"Simplifying to the extreme. I define the postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives."

The postmodern as a historical/cultural "condition" based on a dissolution of master narratives or metanarratives (totalizing narrative paradigms like progress and national histories), a crisis in ideology when ideology no longer seems transparent but contingent and constructed

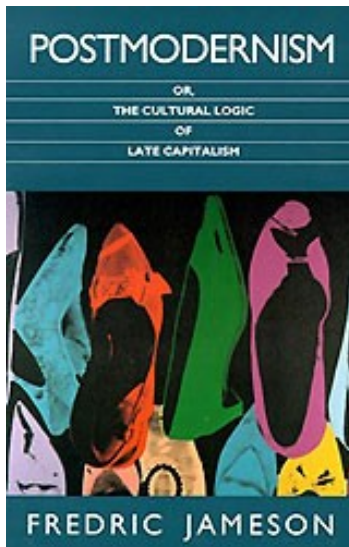
(The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge).



Fredric Jameson



- Postmodernism is an intensification and latest phase of global capitalism
- Reality is evaporating into mere images
- We're fixated on commodities and products
- There is no linguistic normality, only pastiche



- Postmodernism as a movement in arts and culture corresponding to a new configuration of politics and economics, "late capitalism"

Postmodernism? Postmodern condition

- ***after modernism***
subsumes, assumes, extends the modern or tendencies already present in modernism, not necessarily in strict chronological succession, or working out questions and problems implicit in modernism without a break from core assumptions
- ***contra modernism***
subverting, resisting, opposing, or countering features of modernism
- **equivalent to "late capitalism"**
culture dominated by post-industrial, consumerist, multi- and trans-national capitalism, beginnings of globalization
- **the historical era following the modern**
an historical time-period marker, recognizing cultural, ideological, and economic shifts without a new trajectory (triumphalism) or privileging of values
- **artistic and stylistic eclecticism (aesthetic postmodernism)**
hybridization of forms and genres, combining "high" and "low" cultural forms and sources, mixing styles of different cultures or time periods, dehistoricizing and re-contextualizing styles in architecture, visual arts, literature, film, photography
- **"global village" phenomena:**
globalization of cultures, races, images, capital, products"information age"
redefinition of nation-state identities, which were the foundation of the modern era; dissemination of images and information across national boundaries, a sense of erosion or breakdown of national, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identities;

Key features of postmodern styles

➤ Irony, parody

➤ Sampling

➤ Mixing of „high“ and „low“

➤ Appropriation and

Copying

➤ Pastiche

- Nostalgia, retro styles, recycling of genre and styles in new contexts
- "History" represented through nostalgic images of pop culture, fantasies of the past. History has become one of the styles; historical representations blend with nostalgia.
- "the disappearance of a sense of history, the way in which our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve...
- Culture on Fast Forward: Time and history replaced by speed, futureness, accelerated obsolescence.
- Critique: note the image of the past and origins presupposed in the view of history and the postmodern, the sense of Hegelian trajectories with no possible future in view to be argued for.

Postmodernism as (dominantly) architectural style



Retro-sensationalist (postmodern) art



We don't need another hero



Barbara Kruger (1945)



Cindy Sherman (1954)



<http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/cindysherman/#/0/>



Jeff Koons (1955)



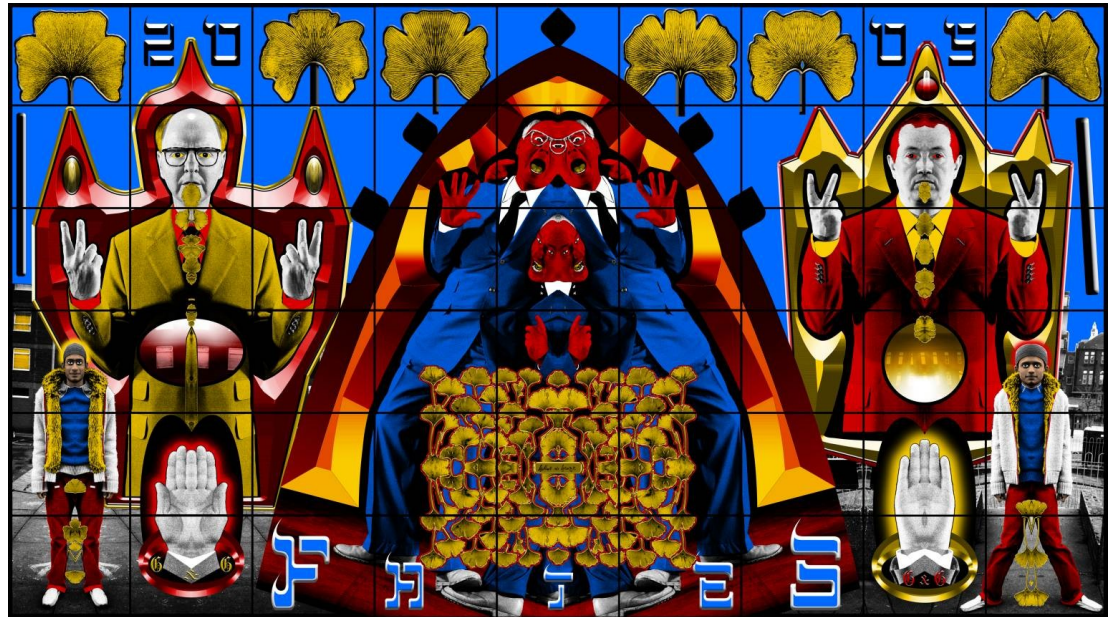
Ushering in Banality 1988



neo-pop, post-pop



Gilbert and George



Young British Artists

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRdpV7GqtrA>

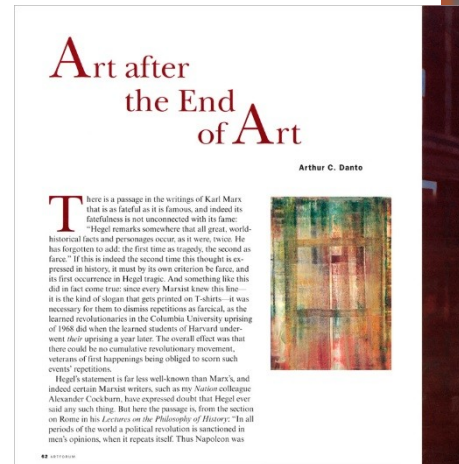
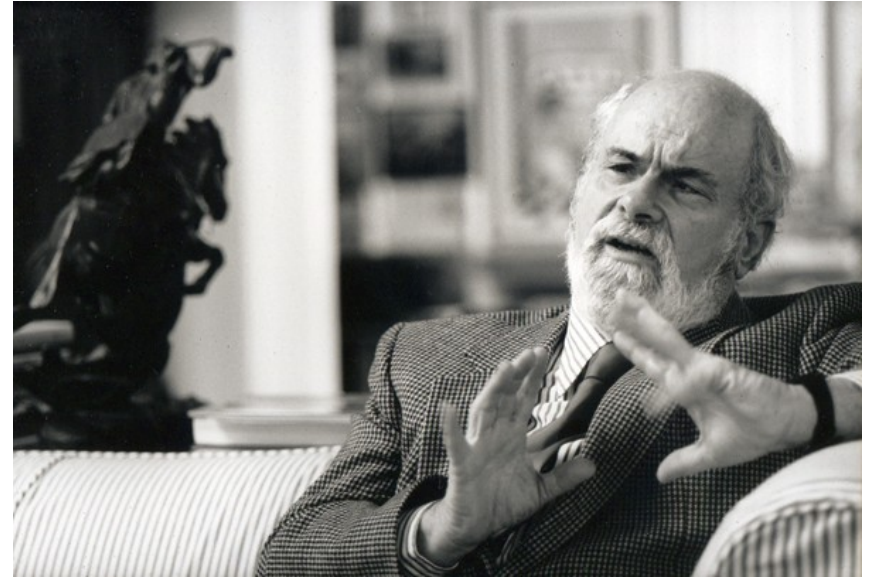


Tracey Emin (1993), My Bed

Damien Hirst (1965)



Modern / Contemporary



Contemporary

It designates less a period than what happens after there are no more period in master narrative of art and less a style of making than a style of using styles...

post-historical art

A state of being permanently out of time, suspended in a state after or beyond history

contemporary has come to designate something more than simply the art of the present...

art produced within certain structure of production never seen before

Contemporary art is different in kind from modern art?

Modern // contemporary

Common-sense:

What is happening now
Belonging to our times

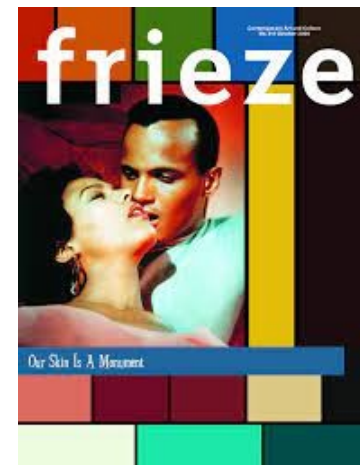
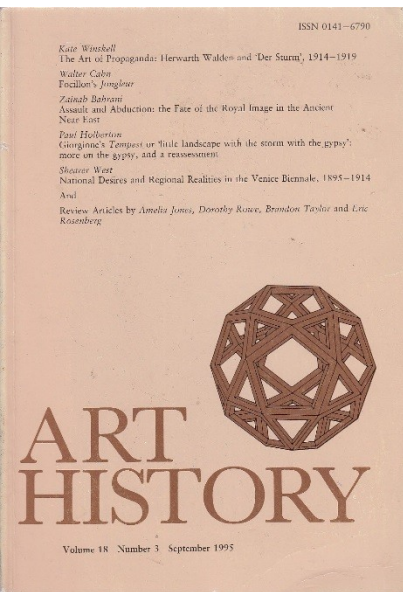
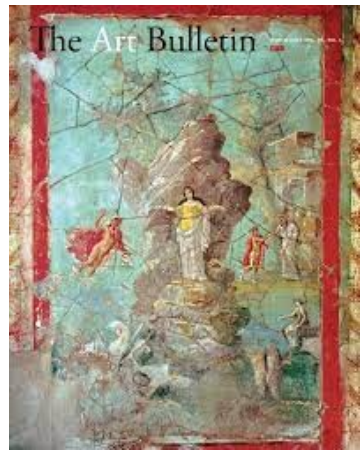
Art produced by our
contemporaries

(is it so simple?)

Or ?:

Artistic production which is different
in kind from
historical (including modernist) art

Is contemporary a part of history? In what sense?



Key to definition of contemporary art

globalization

Decentering

(Art is where money is)



Art market forces

- Commercial galleries
- Collectors
- Art fairs



Intense commodification

Art as investment



Damien Hirst, For the Love of God,
2007

Who is contemporary?

Who is part of history of art?

Antony Gormley 1954

Anish Kapoor 1954

Rachel Whiteread 1963

Thomas Schutte 1954

Vincent Desiderio 1955

Jaroslav Róna 1957

Marlene Dumas 1953

Anselm Kiefer 1945

Berlinde de Bruyckere 1964

Callum Innes 1962





Anselm Kiefer 2021

Documenta 15



Ruangruppa



SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART COMES FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY AND THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE.

THIS INVOLVES PARTICIPANTS IN A HORIZONTAL SITUATION WHERE THERE IS NO LEADER OR ARTIST.

THIS IS DIFFERENT TO THE EUROPEAN PARADIGM OF AESTHETICS WHICH PRIVILEGES THE ROLE OF THE SPECTATOR.

WE TRY TO PRODUCE A NEW AESTHETICS—AN ETHICAL PARADIGM WHERE THE VIEWER IS OBSOLETE.

THEY SHOULD NOT BE THERE TO OBSERVE BUT TO BE PART OF THE PROCESS.



SO WHAT ARE THE ETHICAL ELEMENTS THAT ANIMATE OUR PROJECTS?

HOW DO THOSE ELEMENTS TRANSLATE AESTHETICALLY?

WHAT IS THE ELEMENT OF YOUR ART THAT YOU WOULD NEVER COMPROMISE IN ORDER TO BE LIKED OR UNDERSTOOD?

OUR WORK SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED BY AN OUTSIDER BUT IN TERMS OF THE BENEFITS THAT IT BRINGS TO THE COMMUNITY WHICH CREATES IT.



Taring Padi, People's Justice, detail



1860 1900 1940 1975 2000 2020



MODERN

CONTEMPORARY

Classical
(high)
modernism

Late
modernism

Extended
contempo
rary

Present

Art // World Framework

1989-2010

- End of Cold War
- Economic globalization
- Dominance of economic neoliberalism
- Spread of integrated electronic culture

2010 –

- Return of cold war
- Raise of authoritarian regimes and tendencies
- Continuing crisis of neoliberal model
- Climate change
- COVID
- Spread of social platforms
- Spread of AI

Does a match between world historical epoch and universal art historical period remain viable in contemporary conditions?

Closed world of contemporary art

- Massive overproduction
- Loss of quality and banality
- Populist, yet at the same time inaccessible
- Competing fiercely for attention (attention economy)
- Pervasive influence of fashionable theories and discourses
- Dictate of art market forces
- Deskilling

“In the 1970s, there were hundreds of people in the art world. Now there are hundreds of thousands. The art world is so big that even people who’ve been collecting for thirty-five years are seeking help to navigate it.”



<https://magazin.aktualne.cz/umelec-odevzda-galerii-za-dva-miliony-jen-prazdne-ramy-ide/r~89957c24210411ec94d2ac1f6b220ee8/>