

Contents for Part Two			
HISTORY			
Chapter	Title	Description	Reference: Main Artists
11	<i>Modernism and Abstraction</i>	Review of the extent of Modernism, and proposed abbreviation (1912-1950). Revision of concept of abstraction in depiction. Traced from the Orphists to Art Informel and Abstract Expressionism, to three-dimensional works, design and sampled materials by the middle of the century.	Kupka, Delaunay, Kandinsky, Klee, Mondrian, Malevich, Masson, Pollock, Masson, Tobey, Wols, Soulages, Kline, Constructivism, The Bauhaus, collage and Duchamp.
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12	<i>Modernism 1912-1950 'Simultaneous and Successive Depiction'</i>	Revision of competing styles to abstraction. Re-defines Cubism, as pre-Modernism, rejects label of 'Synthetic Cubism' for 'Overstyle', and redefines rival trend as 'Rerealism' (ignores Surrealism). Traces relation to abstraction, to the impasse of biomorphic abstraction, and to 'Rerealism's dependence upon three-dimensional geometry.	Picasso, Braque, Malevich, Futurism, Dada and Surrealism, Klee, Kandinsky, Miro, De Chirico, Chagall, Duchamp, Schwitters, Ernst, Dali, Magritte.
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13	<i>Late Modernism 1950-60 'Reciprocal Depiction'</i>	The convergence of abstraction, 'Overstyle' and 'Rerealism' results in a new style - 'Reciprocal Depiction', with versions variously stressing 'layout', 'traction' and 'interruption'.	Giacometti, Dubuffet, Fautrier, CoBrA Group, Tapies, De Kooning, Bacon, Rivers, Rauschenberg, Johns, Hamilton, Blake.
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14	<i>Pop Art and Post-Modernism: Painting Printing 1960-1970</i>	The shift in 'Reciprocal Depiction' to print sampling, or Pop Art. Basic graphics and text sources, link to expanded materials.	Warhol, Lichtenstein, Caulfield, Adami, Kitaj, Hockney, Rosenquist, Ruscha, Art and Language Group, Kossuth.
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15	<i>Post-Modernism Continued: Painting Photography 1962-78</i>	Painting of photography, and sampling related print processes. Photo-Realism and exhaustion of sample by late seventies.	Warhol, Rauschenberg, Laing, Polke, Richter, Close, Estes, McLean, Goings, Raphael, Richter, Morley,
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16	<i>The End of Post-Modernism: 1962-1985</i>	'Bad' Painting, Neo-Expressionism and New Image Painting. Traced both from 'Reciprocal Depiction' and print sampling, firstly in Germany, then the U.S. to dissipation in mid-eighties.	Polke, Penck, Immendorff, Kiefer, Clemente, Salle, Schnabel, Haring, Basquiat, Jenney, Bartlett, Lane, Green, True, Zucker, Hurson, Moscovitz, Rothenburg,
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17	<i>Abstraction in Late and Post-Modernism</i>	Shows how the distinction between Late and Post Modernism holds for abstraction. Traces structures for colour, in scale, symmetry and basic pattern to three-dimensionality, or material exemplification, finally to Pattern and Decoration, pastiche and simulation.	Rothko, Newman, Still, Albers, Noland, Gene Davis, Stella, De Feo, Olitski, Poons, Marden, Mangold, Bell, Ronald Davis, McCracken, Bell, Kozloff, Kushner, Zakanitch, Mullican, Halley, Taaffe, Levine, Bidlo
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18	<i>Expanded Materials in Late and Post-Modernism.</i>	Shows how the distinction between Late and Post Modernism holds for works of 'expanded materials'. The shift from kinetics and performance in the fifties to Conceptual Art. Sampling of script and score, performance, place, and recording, until the mid eighties.	Smith, Kenneth and Mary Martin, Tinguely, Hamilton, Fontana, Cage, Mathieu, The Gutai, Klein, Rauschenburg, Kapprow, Manzoni, Nauman, Gilbert and George, Schneeman, Christo, Bochner, Barry, Beuys, Andre, Serra, Morris, Kounellis, Fabro, Heizer, Oppenheim, Graham, Armajani, Acconci, Piper, Oiticica, Haacke, Boltanski, Kruger, Holzer
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19	<i>Globalism 1985 - 2000</i>	<p>All three strands, more concrete depiction, abstraction, and works of expanded materials are now traced within an open or incomplete period up until 2000.</p> <p>The shift from Conceptual Art to institutional sampling in expanded materials, the shift from basic pattern to more complex versions and layout in abstraction, the shift from Neo-Expressionism and allegory to broader genres are all shown to share crucial synchrony, in Globalist strategies or projects.</p>	<p>Koons, Steinbach, Lavier, Mucha, Cady Noland, Stockholder, Rhoades, Hirst, Orozco, Shaw, La Noue, Rae, Oehlen, Ackermann, Odita, Lasker, Aboriginal artists, Oulton, Wojnarowitz, Marshall, Occampo, Ritchie, Murakami, Pittman, Hume, Ritchie, Ruyter, Marshall, Walker, Tuymans, Doig, Neo Rauch, Scheibitz Currin, Peyton, Yuskavage, Loeb, Glenn Brown, Saville, Cecily Brown,</p>
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20	<i>Conclusion</i>	<p>Reviews distinctive features, compares prominent rival versions and registers unavoidable omissions.</p>	<p>Recent art histories by Marco Livingstone, Brandon Taylor, Edward Lucie-Smith, Daniel Wheeler, Jonathan Fineberg, Michael Archer, Hal Foster, David Hopkins, Mathew Collings, Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, Johanna Drucker.</p>
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<p>N.B. Figure numbers given in the following text relate to illustrations provided by link to other web sites.</p> <p>While every effort has been made to supply details of date, medium and dimensions, to the Illustrations page, where these are unavailable the abbreviation N.D.A. appears.</p>			



Modernism and Abstraction

Discussion so far has considered Modernism as a period dedicated to the progression of abstraction in painting, but emphasis is rarely upon only formal or stylistic developments of course, usually these are taken as an index to social, political, economic and other factors. Then again, some versions recognise other styles to the period, for example Futurism, Dada and Surrealism and so place less emphasis upon abstraction, while equally looking to significant factors at their historical source.¹⁷³ But however one augments the breadth of works to the period, there remains a problem with its length and the problem starts from an understanding of abstraction. As shown in Chapter Nine, the problem is firstly a stylistic one, concerning the basis of depiction underlying an explanation of abstraction. Unable to accurately, or even coherently explain abstraction, the careless stretching of the period according to a supposed tendency to flatness then makes problems for an historical analysis. Works share too little that is distinctive, cover a period where too much is vital. To begin this revision of Modernism, the chapter first outlines why source also suffers under inadequate stylistics.

¹⁷³ The many advocates for Dada and Surrealism range from Andre Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, (Paris, 1928) London, 1966, to Sir Herbert Read, *The Philosophy of Art*, London, 1964, to Dawn Ades, *Dada and Surrealism*, London, 1974, to Peter Bürger, *Theory of The Avant-Garde*, (Frankfurt, 1980) Minneapolis 1984, to Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, Cambridge/Mass., 1993 and Hal Foster, *Return of the real: the avant-garde at the end the century*, Cambridge/Mass./London, 1996, to offer only a brief cross-section. The movements are variously taken in opposition or alliance with abstraction. Read, for example, urges an underlying unity with abstraction and interesting parallels with Romanticism as an extreme version of the sublime. Bürger argues for them in support of a favoured social practice – ‘the avant-garde’. In as much as he concerns himself with painting, attribution rests on a meagre stylistic basis of collage and Duchamp’s readymades. A dubious distinction is proposed for the Modernist work, as a self-contained or autonomous object, opposed to the ‘avant-garde’ work as integrated with ‘life’. Some abstraction counts as ‘avant-garde’, such as Russian Constructivism, some counts as Modernism, such as the works of Kandinsky. Krauss and Foster argue for the importance of Dada and Surrealism as a response to intellectual trends of the time, such as psychoanalysis, (in Lacan as much as Freud), structuralism, as advanced by Levi-Strauss (in ethnographic studies and the appreciation of non-western depiction) and the criticism of Walter Benjamin, (especially on photography). However no advocate proposes the exclusion of abstraction from Modernism, or an end to Modernism with the appearance of Dada and Surrealism, and while mostly broadening the constitution of Modernism, attention to styles other than abstraction does not in itself remedy the inflated duration of Modernism at issue here.

The length of Modernism has interestingly tended to spread backwards, as art historians throughout the twentieth century sought to integrate more recent work.¹⁷⁴ From Alfred J. Barr Junior's starting point with the Post Impressionists, in his noted chart on the development of Abstract Art in 1936, the scope of Modernism has been variously redrawn to embrace Manet and Impressionism, Realism, Romanticism, Neo-Classicism, and as shown in Greenberg's version, even farther back.¹⁷⁵ Barr's history ends in two branches of abstraction for twentieth century painting by 1935, the geometric and non-geometric, while Greenberg's history ends in branches beyond traditional easel-scale and techniques by the nineteen fifties.¹⁷⁶ Modernism thus not only embraces more of the twentieth century with later versions but more of the past in order to do so. Modernism becomes a period of at least two hundred years by this, if it is also to embrace most of the twentieth century, as is generally accepted.

This far exceeds the length of any period since (and possibly including) the Renaissance, and paradoxically confers a unity or stability on the period at odds with preceding history and intuitions of accelerating change. Such intuitions are captured not only in the succession of lesser movements, such as Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Symbolism, Art Nouveau, Fauvism, Cubism and so forth but in the rapid transformation brought about by the industrial revolution, greater energy resources, new forms of transportation, greater democracy and education, the climax of colonialism, the spread of urbanisation,

¹⁷⁴ Taking the later eighteenth century as the cradle of Modernism is pervasive in recent art history. Michael Fried has pursued notions of Modernism in the eighteenth century in Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, Berkley/London, 1980. T.J. Clark maintains Modernism emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*, London/New York, 1985, and extends Modernism from 1793 to 1989 in Clark, *Farewell to an Idea; episodes in a history to modernism*, New Haven/ London, 1999. Other eminent authors of similar persuasion include Robert Rosenblum, Thomas Crow and Robert L. Herbert. By contrast, Richard R. Brettell, *Modern Art 1851-1929* Oxford/New York, 1999, argues for a shorter version, straddling the turn of the century, while including previously ignored work in eastern Europe and elsewhere.

¹⁷⁵ Alfred H. Barr Junior, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, New York, 1936. Barr does not strictly use the term Modernism however, and his chart tellingly ignores more concrete depiction of the period, such as the work of Ernst, Dali, Chagall, De Chirico and others. Yet in *Barr, Defining Modern Art* Irving Sandler and Amy Newman (eds.) New York, 1986, it is clear that Barr takes abstraction as synonymous with 'Modern Art' or Modernism.

¹⁷⁶ Greenberg's 'Modernist Painting' offers no canon of contemporary works, however essays such as 'The Crisis of the Easel Picture' (1948) and 'American-Type Painting' (1955-58) are consistent with this position and urge such recent inclusions. See Greenberg, 1961.

patterns of emigration and so on. Modernism conceals more than it reveals in such a sprawling version, strains the preceding structure of periods, or any single theme, such as socialism or capitalism. A remedy may seek either to start Modernism later than the eighteenth century, or to end it earlier in the twentieth century (or both).¹⁷⁷ As shown, earlier critics and historians were often intent upon demonstrating the validity of abstraction in painting through a close integration with its precedents, and as a result are caught up in a seamless transition backwards, from one precedent to another. Hence the difficulty in finding a starting point for Modernism. But the increasing lengths taken in history only alert us to a deep uneasiness with the stylistics of abstraction, as discussed in Chapter Nine, and which ultimately the length of Modernism can neither compensate, nor disguise. Stylistically, abstraction has problems, and it makes problems for Modernism, historically.

A remedy for Modernism must therefore rethink abstraction. While it is easy enough to point to where a complete or full abstraction first arises in painting, it is more difficult to say in what way it is complete or full, or to explain its basis in depiction. As shown in discussion of formalist criticism, the temptation is to exchange the picture plane (poorly grasped, in any case) with the picture surface, to assume a single, absolute picture plane for all objects depicted, all materials depicting. As also shown, this position cannot be sustained historically or stylistically. It fatally mistakes the basis of depiction and leads to a misguided intolerance. The task is therefore to say in what way full abstraction remains relative to depictive styles and to distinguish varieties of picture plane.

Of course none of this determines whether Modernism should be taken as the period leading up to or away from the emergence of full abstraction - and the term might usefully be adopted for the genre - but it will suffice to simply signal this

¹⁷⁷ Bernard Smith, *Modernism's History*, Sydney, 1998, introduces shorter divisions of period and puzzlingly renames Modernism 'The Formalesque', (although the etymology of 'form' is hardly less ambiguous or compromised than 'modern' 'modernity' or 'modernism') and actually signals an indifference to the problem of formal analysis for depiction and painting in the period. He is more concerned with introducing colonial and post-colonial contributions to accepted styles, and is content to gloss Greenberg, Fried, Krauss and others for stylistics, to inherit and compound the problems discussed in Chapter Nine. Other revisions to Modernism concerning ethnic, sexual, national and regional factors are not considered here for similar reasons. They too are concerned with tracing standard stylistics to such factors and often with thus extending Modernism through additional works, but not with the fundamental problem with depiction underlying the stylistics of abstraction. So, while the study addresses a popular topic in Modernism, concern with stylistics here presents a radical reversal of prevailing trends.

meaning for ‘abstraction’ here. Modernism in fact might as easily be divided into low and high periods, as with the Renaissance, with the appearance of abstraction marking the turning point. The merits of such an arrangement would then depend upon relations or relevance to adjoining periods. However this falls beyond the scope of even this broad study. What is needed here is a version of Modernism with which to frame just developments in the second half of the twentieth century, indeed this duration is chosen as a measure against such period frames, and so the convenient choice is for a Modernism that starts with the appearance of (full) abstraction and to leave questions of preceding periods to another study. Clearly the emphasis for this history is firstly upon period style, even at the expense of national, regional, school and individual styles, and the following account does no more than outline Modernism.

Abstraction is generally taken to emerge around 1912 with certain works by František Kupka (1871-57), Robert and Sonia Delaunay (1885–1941, 1885-1979), Stanton Macdonald-Wright (1890–1973), and Morgan Russell (1886-1953) amongst others, variously identified as Orphists and Synchronists. Less generally acknowledged is that abstraction also coincides with striking developments in more concrete depiction. It parallels the transition in the work of Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque (1882-1963) from so-called Analytic Cubism to Synthetic Cubism, as well as a shift in the work of artists including Giorgio De Chirico (1888-1978), Marc Chagall (1887-1985) and Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) toward a more complex use of perspective and its objects. These developments establish crucial relations with abstraction, channel its variety and restrict its influence, and together set the course of Modernism. However given the priority of abstraction to discussion thus far, this chapter is devoted to the revision of the concept. Competing styles are taken up in the following chapter.

As noted, abstraction is usually understood as a withdrawal from depiction, a dedication to schemes of non-depictive two-dimensionality, to formal or intrinsic properties of the medium. Here it is understood to remain depiction, and to picture only a sort of picture plane.¹⁷⁸ Abstraction to a lesser degree is familiar to depiction

¹⁷⁸ As with other instances of self-reference so far considered, while some parts or properties are sampled, others do the sampling. No paradox arises. The shape or sides of the picture plane are sampled for only those properties engaged by the pattern or ordering of its area, and not, for

in the sorts of objects and pictures discussed in chapter three under the issues of caricature and fiction. A picture of a young woman or a typical tiger are basically class terms or abstractions, and classing extends to fictive objects or null depiction and more elaborate arrangements of objects, to events and their necessary points of view, to their picture plane schemes, to genres and compositions. The object as a composition may then be sorted for global or general qualities, of light, motion, proportion or depth for example, so that the object then as light, motion, depth and so on, may in turn be classed as a matter of colour, line, tone, and other properties of depicting materials. In other words, the object is gradually assimilated to the picture plane and reduced to only an organisation of its sides or shape, the picture plane is as far or full as abstraction can go in depiction. Abstraction in depiction is hardly an idle exercise, of course. Establishing such patterns enables new and more complex or abstract reference, and prompts new directions in less abstract depiction, as shall be shown in the following chapter.¹⁷⁹

But an effective ordering to this end is not easily accomplished. It must negotiate constraints from established practices, within depiction and without. In Chapter Two, non-depictive two-dimensionality was acknowledged as pattern. Symmetry, repetition, alternation, progression, dispersal and so forth may be cultivated without depiction. Similarly, basic shapes such as a square or a circle resist more concrete depiction through entrenched use in a variety of practices, in fact may be considered as two-dimensional objects. An outline of a circle is therefore not necessarily a picture of a circle. Such practices suggest a way of avoiding depictive orderings but risk also avoiding the picture plane. Patterns establish geometric relations for a theme or *motif* that are theoretically boundless in extension. The framing of them is

example, their proportions to the width and height of the supporting wall, or their accommodation as whole numbers under a metric rather than imperial measurement. Self-reference is taken as always partial, and relative to reference scheme.

¹⁷⁹ Analysis of depiction *as* abstraction, or vice versa, surprisingly has received scant attention. Notable exceptions are Harold Osborne, *Abstraction and Artifice in Twentieth Century Art*, Oxford/New York, 1979, and Charles Harrison, 'Abstraction' in *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction*, Harrison, Francis Frascina, Gill Perry, (eds.) New Haven/London, 1993, pp. 184-262. Both offer rare precedents for the kind of study undertaken here. Osborne however does not proceed from a theory of depiction, and his distinction between *semantic* abstraction, derived from more concrete objects in depiction, and *non-iconic* abstraction, derived from a display of materials and techniques, while raising important questions of merit and criticism, begs closer attention to depiction (or the iconic), offers no clear history or engagement with more concrete depiction coinciding with abstraction. Harrison approaches depiction under a framework of intentional meaning, and of the concrete as mere resemblance, is more tied to a standard history of Modernism, less inclined to thoroughgoing revision.

therefore difficult to impose as a finite extension. Thus a square of polka dots is not generally seen as a picture of a given number of dots, or as a display of square-ness but rather as just a sample of the pattern. In such cases polka dots outweigh, or out-*project* the square or picture plane.¹⁸⁰ But ‘full abstraction’ is interested in precisely the picture of the pattern, or the pattern of the picture, and in a two-dimensionality that points *to* the picture plane rather than *through* it. For this reason abstraction does not initially adopt more obvious patterns, although later with its project more secured, it accommodates more of them in certain ways.

To start with however, the sampling of abstraction must carefully balance pattern against picture. Too little pattern may be too much picture or less than full abstraction. Success lies in finding how the frame may order basic elements without them amounting to an entrenched pattern, and what elements may be so ordered without falling into an obvious picture.¹⁸¹ It is not of course, without its grey areas and controversies. For example the detection of a figure/ground relation is sometimes held to offer a primitive scheme for depth and hence to amount to less than ‘full abstraction’. But an appeal to precedence of figure/ground schemes must also identify the object figured and its background. There is no depth without objects, so ‘depth’ cannot argue *a priori* for objects. More generally, ‘full abstraction’ does not rest upon the elimination of *any* resemblance between a two-dimensional ordering and a three-dimensional object, or of *any* version of depiction. Obviously that is impossible. Rather, its identity rests only with avoiding prior and prominent versions of depiction, using novel or unfamiliar versions of pattern. Works accepted as such moreover project their own resemblance and so rule out some options for less abstract depiction while attracting new versions of abstraction. No definitive list of features need be maintained, the grouping includes as opportunity allows.

Thus abstraction in depiction is taken as a sampling practice relative to established or entrenched pattern. If this view initially seems to trivialise or diminish the importance of abstraction, it is an impression to be quickly dispelled. As shall now

¹⁸⁰ Projection in this sense and projectability of predicates is dealt with extensively in Goodman’s writings, in particular Goodman, 1972, 1978 and 1983.

¹⁸¹ Thus anxiety with the decorative, noted in Greenberg, is rightly recognised as a failing of abstraction, but not as inevitable. On the contrary, the projection of abstraction steadily wins new object and meaning *from* the decorative, progressively converts the decorative with additional qualities of painting, or revised sampling. Threat of the decorative is not just allayed but diminished in further abstraction.

