

Fall 2019 Thursday Lecture Series

Thursdays, October 17 to December 5 10:00 A.M. to 12 noon
Fairfield Senior's Centre, 80 Lothian Avenue, Etobicoke

Understanding Modern Art, From Manet And the Impressionists to the Present

Coordinator and Presenter: Ken Carpenter York University

Course Overview: This course presents the occasionally flamboyant lives, the often puzzling work, and the challenging times of the great modern artists. You will learn about the major movements from Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism and so on, up to our day. What did the artists hope to accomplish, and how did their lives and times affect their work? Just what is it that makes painters like Picasso, Matisse, Miro and Pollock, or sculptors like Brancusi and David Smith, seem so strange and yet be so rewarding? We will examine some of the controversies around them, and you will be invited to develop your own opinion of the artists' accomplishments and merits.

October 17 Manet, Impressionism and the Beginnings of Modernism

This lecture examines some of the most beloved artists of the modern era, especially Manet, Monet and Renoir. What was "modern" about them? Why were they deemed so radical when their aim was to defend the values of traditional painting? Are they now dated, superficial and sexist, or are they still relevant and rewarding today?

October 24 Post-Impressionism

This lecture explodes with the colour of Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cezanne. It considers how these artists were drawn to the principles of Impressionism but reacted against its apparent "formlessness." How did their sometimes chaotic lives affect their work, and what did they accomplish?

October 31 Redon, Bonnard, Matisse and the Fauves

How did the brilliant colours of the Post-Impressionists affect the next generation of painters? Why did an art critic call the sophisticated Henri Matisse and his associates Wild Beasts? What did they accomplish and why has Matisse been a lasting influence on later artists, even unto today?

November 7 German Expressionism and the Invention of Abstraction

This lecture explains how German painting erupted with the apparent violence of the Expressionists, why some of them decided that a subject in the visible world was no longer necessary and why even their figurative work was offensive to their more conservative fellow citizens.

November 14 Picasso and Braque: Founders of Cubism

Why did Picasso and Braque shatter the object with their cubist paintings? Is this the most important movement of the twentieth century, bound to affect art for centuries to come, or just an annoying "explosion in a shingle factory"? And how did Picasso's turbulent life affect his art?

November 21 Dadaism and Surrealism

Why do so many artists still revere Marcel Duchamp today as one of the great forefathers of contemporary artistic practice? And should they? Was Dadaism just a terrible joke on the art audience, or was it the forerunner of one of the greatest movements of the twentieth century, Surrealism, with its engaging and controversial artists, Salvador Dalí, Joàn Miro, and Max Ernst? What were their innovative ideas concerning the unconscious and creativity?

November 28 Abstract Expressionism and the Triumph of New York

How was New York able to supplant Paris as the world's leading art centre? Was Jackson Pollock "Jack the Dripper" or, rather, the greatest artist of his generation? Was David Smith the greatest sculptor of his age? And how can we relate to the abstract art of Gottlieb, Rothko and Hofmann?

December 5 Breakthroughs of the 1960s

The 1960s were every bit as tumultuous in the arts as in society at large. There was colour-field painting, Pop Art, Happenings, and much else, and the ongoing modern tradition began to disintegrate. Where does the true value lie in the work of this time?

Researcher/Committee Contact and Chair: Jo Ann Wilton