A **CRASH COURSE** IN THE **SCIENCE OF CREATION**
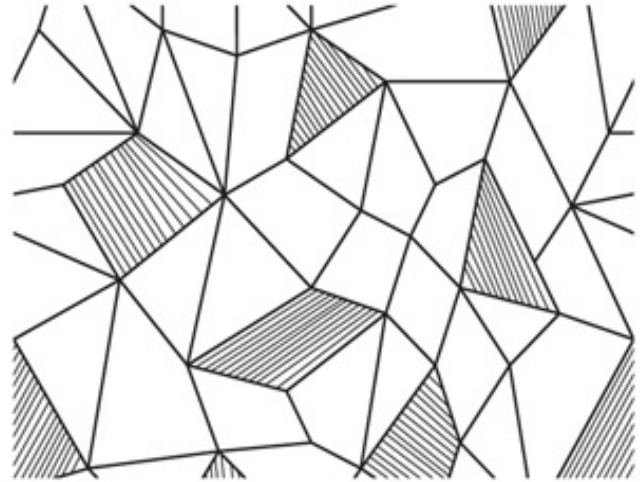
CUBISM IS AN EARLY-20TH-CENTURY AVANT-GARDE ART MOVEMENT PIONEERED BY GEORGES BRAQUE AND PABLO PICASSO. BY 1911 PICASSO WAS RECOGNIZED AS THE INVENTOR OF CUBISM.
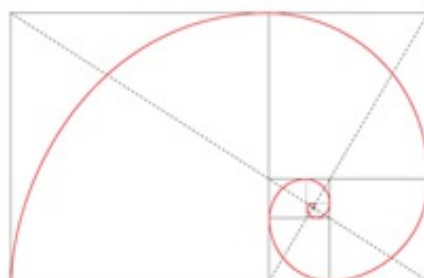
ART 101

FROM **VINCENT VAN GOGH** TO **ANDY WARHOL,** KEY PEOPLE, IDEAS, AND MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ART

ÉDOUARD MANET WAS A FRENCH PAINTER. HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST 19TH-CENTURY ARTISTS TO APPROACH MODERN AND POSTMODERN LIFE SUBJECTS.

THE LENGTH OF THE SIDE OF ONE SQUARE DIVIDED BY THAT OF THE NEXT SMALLER SQUARE IS THE GOLDEN RATIO. THE GOLDEN RATIO IS ALSO CALLED THE DIVINE PROPORTION.

ERIC GRZYMKOWSKI

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Aadamsmedia

Avon, Massachusetts

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INTRODUCTION

Many people are intimidated by "art books." And rightfully so: Too often, the writer assumes that the reader possesses a level of technical skill and knowledge far beyond that of the casual art enthusiast. "Simple" concepts like perspective, color theory, and the process of combining lines to create shapes are glossed over (or omitted entirely). The beauty of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is presented as indisputable fact, without any explanation as to why it is supposed to be the greatest painting ever created.

Not *Art 101*, however. Here, you'll be able to learn about art without feeling like you're reading a textbook for advanced art students. You'll find art techniques, movements, and mediums as well as the fascinating stories of famous artists presented in such a way that you can understand and appreciate them—and maybe throw around a few key terms at museums or cocktail parties.

While it would take tens of thousands—possibly even millions—of pages to cover *every* aspect of art, the topics featured in this book encompass a large swathe of art history, theory, and technique. Many of the entries directly relate to one another (such as Henri Matisse and Modern Art), but you can also pick and choose the topics you find most compelling and skip around at your leisure. You can read about Van Gogh's struggles for notoriety and transition straight to ancient cave art. Maybe you're interested in sculpture or want to brush up on the history of typography. Just like a museum, this book contains "rooms" of myriad topics from around the world and throughout time. After reading *Art 101*, you'll

finally be able to fully appreciate what's hanging on the walls and sitting behind glass ...

COLOR THEORY
Why we like what we see

Color is one of the essential building blocks for creating works of art, along with line, texture, shape, and a few other elements. Color can be used to alter the mood of a piece, draw the viewer's eye to a certain portion of the canvas, and define the various objects within a work of art. The decisions an artist makes in regard to color may appear random, but they are often quite purposeful and are almost as much a science as an art.

COMBINING COLORS

Most children are taught three primary colors: red, yellow, and blue (RYB). By combining these three colors in different proportions, it is assumed any imaginable color could be created. While this is mostly true, RYB is actually just one set of primary colors. Other color combinations can also be used to produce an array of other colors, such as red, green, blue (RGB) and cyan, magenta, yellow (CMY). For most artists, however, red, yellow, and blue remain the most popular primary colors.

Colors created by combining two primary colors, such as purple from mixing red and blue, are referred to as secondary colors. Those colors created by mixing a primary color with a secondary color, or by mixing two secondary colors, are known as tertiary colors, such as with mixing blue and green to create blue-green.

COMPLEMENTARY COLORS

The concept of complementary colors first began to take shape when Aristotle noted that the viewer's impression of a color could change depending on the way light hit that color. Saint Thomas Aquinas would later expand on this in the thirteenth century, when he noted that certain colors appeared more pleasing when placed next to certain other colors. For example, purple appeared more pleasant next to white than it did next to black. During the Renaissance, artists such as Leonardo da Vinci also noted that certain colors, such as red and green, looked particularly pleasing when placed alongside one another, but they did not understand why.

In 1704, Isaac Newton expanded on the observations of Renaissance artists to create a circle divided into seven colors. Those colors opposite each other were the most contrasting, with those next to each other being the least contrasting. His circle would later be divided into twelve sections to produce the "color wheel" recognizable by today's artists.

The term "complementary colors" was first introduced by an American scientist living in Britain named Benjamin Thompson. While observing lit candles, he discovered that the colored light produced by the candle and the shadow it produced contained colors that "complement" one another. (Although shadows may appear gray or black, they are actually made up of a combination of complex colors that are directly affected by the light that casts them.) He determined that this must be true with all colors of the spectrum, and that each individual color had its perfect counterpoint.

Artists and scientists later discovered that the attributes of complementary colors go well beyond the simple matter of being pleasing to the eye when adjacent to one another. For one, when a color appears on top of another, it takes on elements of the color that is complementary to the background. For example, a red ribbon placed on a yellow background will take on a slightly purple hue, because purple is the complementary color to yellow.

Additive Versus Subtractive Colors

While experimenting with different color combinations and how colors interacted, artists and scientists discovered that colors behave differently depending on the medium. This lead to two classifications of color: additive color and subtractive color. Additive color generally refers to light and can be observed on modern televisions and projectors. In essence, the complete absence of light creates a dark "blackness" that is altered when colored light of particular wavelengths is added. By contrast, subtractive color refers to pigments and dyes that are added to block or "subtract" certain wavelengths of light to display the desired color. For example, red paint on a canvas actually absorbs or "subtracts" all other colors of the spectrum and leaves the viewer with the color red.

THE TEMPERATURE OF COLORS

It is generally believed that certain colors can evoke particular moods and emotions in the viewer. When referred to in this manner, colors can roughly be broken down into cool colors and warm colors:

- The cool colors generally consist of blues, greens, and grays and are believed to relax the viewer and recede into the background.
- By contrast, warm colors like reds, yellows, and browns imply motion and excite the viewer.

THE COLOR OF COLOR

The way a color appears to the viewer is greatly dependent on how deep the color is, also known as "saturation." In a simple sense, how red is a particular red? An artist can adjust the appearance of a color by adding different colors. For example, adding a little black paint to blue paint creates a darker shade of blue, while adding white paint to orange paint produces a lighter tint. The artist is not limited to just black and white, however, and can use any range of colors to lighten or darken colors. He or she could also mix the paint with both light and dark colors to produce a tone, which is created by adding grey or with a combination of shading and tinting.

The Eye of the Beholder

The average human can distinguish between approximately one million distinct colors, but some people might be able to see as many as 100 times that amount. These people,

known as tetrachromats or "superseers," possess an additional photoreceptor cone in their eyes, which theoretically gives them access to a color spectrum imperceptible to most humans.

BAUHAUS

Art at the service of industry

The Bauhaus was both a school and a movement in Germany founded by Walter Gropius in 1919. Gropius maintained a utopian vision of a unification between fine art (such as painting) and craftsmanship (such as woodworking). This daring new design philosophy attempted to place both types of artists on equal footing and combine their disparate skills in the pursuit of the ultimate art form. As it evolved, Bauhaus worked hand in hand with the growth of industry, training its artists to meet the new modern challenge of designing for mass production. Bauhaus pottery, furniture, sculpture, and architecture emerged in a style known for its clean lines and simple, geometric shapes.

THE ROOTS OF BAUHAUS

History and politics paved the way for the Bauhaus movement. Here are some of the key factors that art historians deem influential to the movement:

- The fall of the German monarchy after World War I brought freedom from censorship. Thanks to this new sense of freedom, the art world was open to new experiments.
- The notion that art could be the perfect marriage of form and function was one of the foundations of the Bauhaus school of thought, but it was not a new

concept. The English designer William Morris had been a firm believer in the concept several decades earlier during the nineteenth century.

- Modernism had been seeping into the cultural fabric of Germany since before World War I. German architectural Modernism (also known as Neues Bauen) in particular likely influenced the rational, simplified design of Bauhaus art. It also demonstrated that art and mass production could successfully merge.

FOUNDING PHILOSOPHY OF BAUHAUS

The German architect Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus school in 1919. Bauhaus (which translates to "house of construction") was more than an abstract philosophy of art: It was the name for a new school of design—the first of its kind—in Weimar, Germany. In Gropius's Proclamation of the Bauhaus, he delivered the school's mission statement: to create a collaborative society of crafters, each skilled in areas as diverse as architecture, pottery, painting, and sculpture. To Gropius, the beauty of art lay in its usefulness and its relevance to daily life as well as its visual appeal.

Having seen the work of Russian and Dutch designers, Gropius taught artists that mass production did not mean the end of individual creativity but rather an artistic challenge that could deepen the significance of art in daily life. Because a great number of countries and philosophies were represented within its faculty, Bauhaus became a center of collaboration and debate regarding the role of art in modern society. The term *Bauhaus* evolved as well. It

came to define the many clean, geometrically balanced works of art that grew out of the school's teachings.

THE MAKING OF A BAUHAUS ARTIST

Bauhaus shaped its artists by instilling in them the skills of both fine art and design. Before students were allowed to focus on their specialized coursework, they were required to take an introductory course in materials, color theory, and design principles. Some of the famous visual artists who taught the course included:

- Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky
- Multitalented, German-born artist Josef Albers
- Swiss painter Paul Klee

Once students passed the intro course, they could move on to classes as diverse as metalworking, cabinetmaking, weaving, pottery, typography, or wall painting. Teaching such a wide range of crafts at the school eventually became a financial burden. By 1923, philosophical and practical forces aligned to shift the focus of the school from the integration of all crafts to an emphasis on designing for mass production. The school's slogan became "Art into industry."

THE END OF THE BAUHAUS SCHOOL

Eventually, the school struggled financially, though its biggest threat was a politically turbulent environment that forced the

constant movement of the school from city to city. Due to pressure from the Nazi party, its doors officially closed in 1933.

THE NEW BAUHAUS SCHOOL

Thanks to the emigration of many of its teachers to American universities, the teachings of the Bauhaus school managed to live on. The New Bauhaus school was established four years later in 1937 in Chicago. The name has since been changed to the Illinois Institute of Design, which remains open to this day.

FAMOUS BAUHAUS DESIGNS

The Bauhaus style, also called the International Style, is characterized by its lack of ornamentation, its minimal form, and the way in which its design serves its function. Some of the most famous examples of Bauhaus style are:

- Invented by Marcel Breuer in the mid-1920s, the "Wassily" chair is an excellent and lasting example of the Bauhaus style. The chair's exposed steel and canvas gave it a futuristic look that is still popular today.
- Marianne Brandt's silver teapot, with its geometric components, nondrip spout, and heat-resistant handle, is another notable emblem of Bauhaus's practical leanings.
- Wilhelm Wagenfeld's 1924 table lamp is known for its simple, straightforward styling. Made while he was a

student at the Weimer school, it has since earned the name, "Bauhaus Lamp."
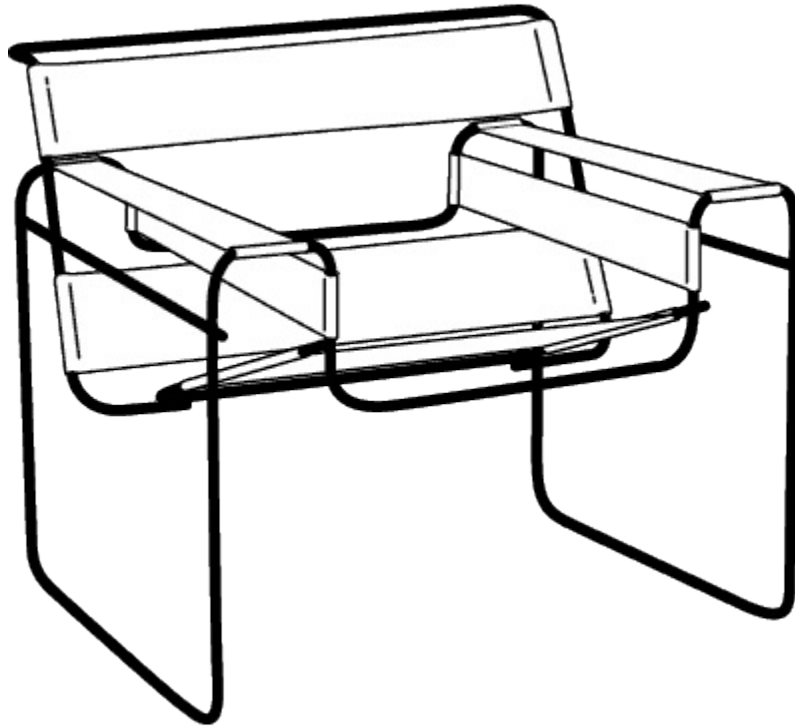
Wassily chair

Architecture in this style is often cubic in shape, eliminates unnecessary ornamentation, is made for open floor plans, and features basic colors like white and gray. Glass is used liberally, often replacing walls, and roofs are flat instead of pitched. The museums and schools within Bauhaus, like the Dessau school (1925) with its open feel and pinwheel arrangement, were some of the first examples of Bauhaus architecture. It would later inform town and cityscapes in Europe, America, and beyond.

In the decades following the closing of the school, examples of Bauhaus architecture included the United Nations Secretariat Building in New York City, which was completed in 1952; Houston, Texas's Transco Tower, constructed in 1983 (now known as the Williams Tower); and numerous small buildings in Israel.

ART THERAPY
The healing power of creation

For many artists, the very act of creating art can serve as an outlet for the stress, anxiety, confusion, and dissatisfaction they experience in their daily lives. They can express themselves with their art in ways that simply aren't possible using any other method. Artists have been aware of the benefits of self-expression for centuries, but it was not until relatively recently that those outside the artistic community began to take notice.

HILL'S ART THERAPY: THE JOY OF PAINTING

The first of two schools of art therapy began in the middle of the twentieth century with a British military painter named Adrian Hill. While recovering from tuberculosis in 1938, Hill discovered that painting helped him keep his mind off his illness and appeared to aid in his recovery. He shared his love of painting with other patients at King Edward VII Sanatorium, many of whom also reported the act of painting improved their mood and helped relieve stress.

Once he recovered, Hill worked to spread the message of his new form of therapy throughout England. He recruited other artists to travel to hospitals and paint with patients, especially soldiers returning from war. Hill's form of art therapy was primarily concerned with the act of creation rather than the actual works produced. He, as well as other early adopters of his method,

refrained from analyzing the work of their patients in search of any deeper meaning.

The program spread to 200 hospitals around Britain by 1950 and Hill would later establish the British Association of Art Therapists in 1964 to continue to spread the benefits of art therapy. The patients seemed to enjoy creating artwork, and that was enough for Hill.

NAUMBURG'S ART THERAPY: THE SYMBOLISM OF ART

Around the same time that Hill practiced his laissez-faire approach to art therapy, an American psychologist named Margaret Naumburg was developing an approach that used art as a communication tool between patient and therapist. She was not the first to use art therapy in this way, but she was the first to use it as the primary focus of the interaction between doctor and patient.

Naumburg's work was centered around symbolism and the subconscious desires of her patients expressed through drawing. Her preferred technique was to have her patients close their eyes and scribble a drawing on a piece of paper. She then asked them to identify the objects they had drawn and express their feelings about them. Rather than interpret the images herself, Naumburg instead relied on the patients to express their own inner desires while interpreting their art. In fact, she felt it was counterproductive to offer any analysis herself. Once any subconscious problems were brought to light through the act of drawing and interpreting, they could be addressed and treated by the therapist.

METHODS

In the years since Hill and Naumburg popularized art therapy among the medical community, several methods for using art as a means to diagnose and treat patients have emerged.

Diagnostic Drawing Series

One of the most popular forms of modern art therapy was first introduced in 1982 and consists of three separate drawings, each of which must be completed by the patient using only pastels and paper. The instructions are very rigid and must be delivered precisely as they are written below:

- **First picture:** "Make a picture using these materials."
- **Second picture:** "Draw a picture of a tree."
- **Third picture:** "Make a picture of how you are feeling using lines, shapes, and colors."

Once the exercise has been completed, it is up to the therapist to interpret the work of the patient. Everything from the colors selected to where on the page the patient chose to draw can provide the therapist with valuable information to help the patient work through his or her issue.

The Mandala Assessment Research Instrument

In this exercise, the patient selects a card containing a mandala (an intricate image contained in a geometric shape). The patient then selects a card depicting a solid color and uses oil pastels corresponding with that color to re-create the mandala. During the process, the patient is asked to draw on personal experience to describe any significance that particular mandala might have to his or her own life. The significance of the mandala is purely subjective —the shapes and patterns on a particular mandala might evoke different feelings and emotions depending on who is looking at it.