Twentieth Century
Art Masterpieces

Teachers’ Guide
Introduction

The 20th century has been a period of tremendous change — perhaps the most rapid and widespread change in all of history. When the century began, the chief mode of transportation was the horse and buggy. Radio and television were unknown, as were now-commonplace devices such as air conditioners, fluorescent lights, satellites, and computers. Politically, the map of the world was redrawn in the 20th century. The 20th century saw the collapse of huge European empires, as well as the two costliest and most destructive wars in history. At the same time, we also saw great strides in the fields of health and medicine. The discovery of new methods of diagnosing and treating disease helped increase average life expectancy in this nation from 47 years to nearly 80 years.

Change in the art world has been just as rapid and profound. The 20th century has fundamentally altered the way art is created, viewed, thought about, and understood. The century created the modern idea of the artist as a cultural leader who must fight to overcome the rejection of a conservative audience. In actuality, this change began in the waning years of the 19th century, when a group of artists, led by Claude Monet, broke with long-accepted traditions in painting. Instead of realistically rendering objects and scenes, these artists sought to capture the constantly changing visual effects of nature. They did this by concentrating on the play of shimmering light and color rather than on form or volume. One critic derisively labeled these painters “impressionists,” and the name stuck. In subject matter, too, the impressionists broke with tradition. In place of noble scenes out of mythology or the Bible, the impressionists substituted simple depictions of nature and the everyday activities of ordinary people. Today, it is hard to imagine the shock and outrage this change provoked. But it was only the beginning.

The early years of the 20th century saw a virtual explosion in artistic experimentation in Europe. The great French painter Paul Cézanne took impressionism one step further, eschewing the atmospheric effects of artists like Monet and Pissarro in favor of a more analytical approach based on structure and geometry. This new kind of painting, called “postimpressionism,” paved the way for even more radical experiments, such as fauvism, expressionism, and cubism. Fauvism and expressionism relied on bold brush strokes and a nonrealistic use of color to portray a world of violent inner emotions. Cubism, the joint invention of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, reduced objects to a series of angular, interpenetrating planes. This new way of ordering reality marked the beginnings of truly abstract painting - painting in which no attempt is made to depict recognizable scenes or objects. As these new ideas about painting spread beyond Paris, new schools of art emerged. The 1920s saw the birth of a painting style that sprang from the notion that the images generated by dreams and the unconscious mind had a reality and power all their own, separate from and greater than that of conscious life. This movement, called “surrealism,” is epitomized in the works of the flamboyant Spanish painter Salvador Dali. Dali’s contemporary Joan Miró combined elements of surrealism with his own brand of playful, childlike imagery to create a totally unique painting style that defies categorization.
Meanwhile, in America, artists remained somewhat isolated from the rampant experimentation going on in Europe. And those who were aware of the new ideas often rejected them in favor of more traditional approaches. At the same time Picasso was exploring new ways of altering reality, American painters like John Sloan and Edward Hopper were creating realistic scenes of urban and rural life. These “social realists” often used their art to comment on and criticize contemporary society. Picasso, in such works as Guernica, also used art to serve a political purpose.

American art didn’t remain isolated for long. In the 1940s and 1950s, the European movements lost cohesion and New York became the new artistic center of the Western world. A new generation of painters combined elements of surrealism and expressionism to create an original style they called “abstract expressionism.” Using large canvases and broad, energetic brush strokes, artists such as Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko created works that challenged traditional notions of what painting should be. For the abstract expressionists, the viewer was an equal partner in the painting experience, and a successful painting was one that conveyed a certain feeling or mood to the viewer. In the 1960s and ’70s, painting reflected the growing influence of television and advertising. “Pop artists” like Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol turned banal images into art by greatly enlarging them or repeating them over and over again.

No one can accurately predict what changes lie ahead. But one thing is certain: painting remains a dynamic and important art form. The ten works in this poster series trace the history of 20th century painting, and they illustrate many of the most important movements mentioned in this introduction. It is our hope that these posters will help your students better understand and appreciate modern painting and perhaps be less intimidated by it. And we hope that the posters will whet their appetites for more and open the door to a lifetime enjoying the beauty that art has to offer.
Paul Cézanne  
(1839-1906)

The works of the French artist Paul Cézanne represent an important bridge between 19th and 20th century painting. While they are less realistic than the works of early 19th century painters like John Constable and Camille Corot, they are not as abstract as the works of 20th century painters like Picasso and Matisse. Cézanne was a contemporary of the impressionists, but he did not share their passionate interest in the effects of light on objects. Instead, he sought to create, in his words, “something more solid and durable, like the art of the museums.”

Cézanne was born in Aix-en-Provence, in the south of France. His father wanted him to become a lawyer, but Cézanne was determined to become a painter. He took drawing classes, but he was largely self-taught. In 1861, Cézanne moved to Paris, where he met the artist Camille Pissarro, one of the impressionists. Although Cézanne exhibited with the impressionists, he remained an outsider in many ways. Rather than concentrating on dissolving objects, as the impressionists did, he strove to add form, weight, and volume to his works. He was fascinated by the mathematical principles of geometry, and his stated goal, “to treat nature by the cylinder, the cone, and the sphere,” would later inspire the cubists.

Cézanne reached the peak of his powers in the works he executed between 1885 and 1905. These include studies of bathers, successive views of Mont Sainte-Victoire — which Cézanne could see from his studio window — and some of the greatest still lifes ever painted. Cézanne lived out his later years as a virtual recluse in Aix. At the time of his death, his works were just beginning to be shown and seen across Europe, and he proved to be a great influence on later artists like Matisse and Picasso.
Wassily Kandinsky
(1866-1944)

Wassily Kandinsky was in many ways a man ahead of his time. Although he began his artistic career at the height of the impressionist movement of the late 1800s, his work clearly belongs to the 20th century. In fact, he is often called the originator of modern abstract art.

Kandinsky was born in Moscow, Russia, on December 4, 1866. When he was 5 years old, his family moved to Odessa. But Kandinsky returned to Moscow each summer, and the colors and shapes he remembered from his childhood there later appeared in his paintings. Kandinsky was nearly 30 years old before he decided to become a painter, and his writings offer no clues as to what made him decide to give up his legal training to pursue art. Trips to Paris familiarized him with the works of the postimpressionists and the fauves. In 1907, he placed some of his works in an exhibition of German expressionist art. But it was in 1910 that Kandinsky took the step that was to revolutionize painting. That year he created his first entirely abstract work. The painting, done in watercolor and India ink, consists of thin, squiggly lines that trace out unrecognizable shapes. These shapes are filled in or highlighted by splashes of muted color. The painting, like much of Kandinsky’s work, provoked a great deal of controversy. Many people criticized it because, they said, it had no real subject. But for Kandinsky, a painting could be like a piece of music. That is, it didn’t have to show something or be about something. Its beauty could be derived simply from the arrangement of its elements, just as the beauty of a symphony derives from the arrangement of notes on a musical scale.

In his later years, Kandinsky’s works became more precise and geometric. But he retained his love of the abstract. His influence can clearly be seen in the works of artists like Joan Miró, Piet Mondrian, and Arshile Gorky.
Henri Matisse
(1869-1954)

Henri Matisse was the leader and most important member of a group of artists called “fauves.” Fauvism was the first important art movement of the 20th century. The fauves — “wild beasts” in French — used strokes of bright, often clashing color to create their images. Their use of color violated all traditional notions of competent painting and shocked the art world as well as the general public.

Matisse was born in Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France. Like Cézanne, Matisse studied law in school. But he took up painting to pass the time following an operation in 1890. The next year, he moved to Paris to begin a formal study of art. During the late 1890s, Matisse became acquainted with the work of Cézanne, which exerted a strong influence on his style. Together with other artists, including Maurice de Vlaminck and André Derain, Matisse began experimenting with nonrealistic depiction. Matisse wanted his painting to communicate the pleasures of pure color. The subjects of his paintings were still recognizable — portraits, still lifes, and interiors — but the colors were intense and unnatural. Matisse’s works were also highly decorative, with elaborate and colorful patterns of line and form. This aspect of his work was the result of his interest in Eastern art, particularly the tapestries of ancient Persia.

Matisse was more than a great painter. He was also a gifted sculptor, a skilled illustrator, and an architectural designer. In his later years, Matisse produced colorful works called decoupes, in which he cut shapes from colored paper and pasted them onto fields of white. Throughout his long and prolific career, Matisse never stopped experimenting. He took great joy in the act of creation. As one critic wrote of this remarkable artist, “a vase, a woman’s form, so small a thing as a leaf these were enough to awaken within him a sense of pleasure ... for he possessed a childish wonder which enabled him to look at the world with new eyes and a fresh sensation of discovery.”
More about the Artist

Pablo Picasso
(1881-1973)

“Of all the 20th century painters, the greatest was Pablo Picasso.” This is what one art critic wrote upon Picasso’s death in 1973. Pablo Picasso was arguably the boldest, most innovative, most enigmatic, and most versatile artist who ever lived. He could draw like Raphael, yet he destroyed traditional notions of beauty in art. Never content to stand still, he changed styles countless times throughout his life. He was a leader, not a follower, and his influence is still felt today.

Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain, in 1881. A child prodigy, he was already painting realistic works by age 14. He enrolled in the Barcelona Academy of Fine Arts as an advanced student and quickly began experimenting with most of the avant-garde styles prevalent at the turn of the century. In the early 1900s, Picasso moved to Paris, where he would remain for the rest of his life. Inspired and stimulated by Parisian life, Picasso entered the first of his famous artistic “periods” — his Blue Period. From 1901 to 1904, Picasso painted melancholy scenes of crippled or impoverished people in a predominantly blue palette. After 1904, Picasso began his Rose Period, in which he painted scenes of harlequins and circus performers in lighter and warmer colors. But in 1907, Picasso unveiled a work that shocked even his friends and forever changed the art of painting. It was called Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, and it showed five large, angular women with strange mask-like faces. This painting marked the emergence of a new style called “cubism.” Cubism was an attempt to explore the representation of three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface by reducing them to overlapping planes. Picasso’s experiments in cubism paved the way for later abstract painters and can be considered the basis for much of what we call modern art.

Throughout the 1920s and ’30s, Picasso continued to try new styles. He combined elements of cubism and surrealism to produce Guernica, a passionate anti-war painting that he completed in 1937. He also created startling, innovative works in ceramics and graphics. As he grew older, Picasso seemed to grow more content, and his art became more lyrical and less frenzied. But he never allowed his artistic impulse to stagnate, and by the time of his death many around the world hailed him as the foremost artist of the century.
Joan Miró (1893-1983)

Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso were friends and countrymen, but the two artists followed markedly different career paths. Whereas Picasso was influenced greatly by the analytical style of Cézanne, Miró was influenced much more by the fauves and by the primitive style of Henri Rousseau.

Miró was born near Barcelona, Spain, and he received his artistic training there. His earliest lessons stressed the romantic notion of love of landscape and the links between painting, music, and poetry. Miró’s early works, such as his Portrait of E.C. Ricart, make use of the wild, unnatural colors of the fauves. In 1919, Miró traveled to Paris, where he met and befriended Picasso. As a result of this meeting, Miró briefly experimented with a cubist approach to painting. But his efforts were highly academic and much less spontaneous than his earlier works.

Far more interesting to Miró were the ideas of the surrealists, whose works reflected a search for meaning in the images of dreams and the unconscious mind. From the surrealists, Miró learned to devote his art to what he called his “hallucinations.” His paintings became filled with strange, symbolic shapes, forms, and creatures that flowed from his unconscious. The results were works like The Harlequin’s Carnival and the Dutch Interior series, which contain bizarre, comical, and sometimes grotesque creatures of Miró’s imagination. Miró was intent on capturing in his paintings the joy a small child feels in creating images for the first time. This childlike sense of wonder and freshness of vision pervaded his works — from painting to ceramics to tapestry design — throughout the rest of his career.
More about the Artist

Salvador Dali (1904-1989)

Salvador Dali was one of the most controversial artists of the 20th century. His somewhat comical appearance, his extravagant behavior, and his notorious penchant for self-promotion have, at times, nearly overshadowed his art. A few critics have even dismissed Dali as a talented but overrated painter. But most say that he was an important figure in the development of modern art and that his works merit serious examination and discussion.

Salvador Dali was born in the Spanish town of Figueras. Because an older brother had died at the age of 7, Dali’s parents smothered him with affection. By his own admission, Dali was a spoiled child, and he often claimed that this accounted for his tremendous egoism. Dali showed artistic ability at an early age, and he began to teach himself painting at the age of 14. Already, Dali possessed great technical skill in painting as well as an ability to imitate many styles. Unfortunately, he also possessed the ability to drive his teachers crazy, and in 1924 he was thrown out of art school for “insubordination.”

Around this time, Dali read Sigmund Freud’s book Interpretation of Dreams and was intrigued by what it had to say about the symbolic imagery of the unconscious mind and its relationship to early childhood experiences. The result was that in 1927, Dali began to produce dreamlike landscapes filled with dream symbols such as skeletons, birds, parts of the human body, and objects that had meaning only for Dali.

Unlike Miró, whose approach to surrealism was to simplify forms down to their most primitive shapes, Dali painted in a highly detailed manner. The combination of his shocking imagery and his amazing technical skill produced some of the most memorable works of the 20th century. In his later years, Dali underwent a kind of religious conversion, and many of his works, such as Christ of St. John of the Cross and The Last Supper, contain religious symbols and themes. Poor health limited Dali’s output near the end of his life, and he died in 1989.
More about the Artist

John Sloan
(1871-1951)

When people think of great American painters, the name John Sloan is often not the first to come to mind. But while John Sloan is not as well-known as American artists like Edward Hopper, Winslow Homer, and Andrew Wyeth, he was an important figure in the history and development of 20th century painting. Along with several other young American artists, John Sloan led a movement away from the academic formalism of European painting. This break with Europe was an important first step in creating a true American style of painting — one that owed a debt to Dutch painting of the 17th century but that had an energy and outlook that was uniquely American.

John Sloan was born in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. His father ran a small stationery shop, and John grew up in the world of fine papers, books, illustration, and printing. As a child, John drew his own illustrations in favorite books such as Treasure Island. This prepared him well for his first job as an artist: working as a newspaper illustrator for the Philadelphia Inquirer. While he produced posters and illustrations for magazines and newspapers, John Sloan also studied to be a “serious” artist. In 1892, he was introduced to a painter named Robert Henri, who would have a great influence on Sloan’s style and career. Henri, a gifted teacher, urged his students to paint the everyday world in a relaxed, spontaneous style. Sloan followed his advice and began producing lively scenes of life in the back alleys and crowded streets of New York City.

Sloan’s cityscapes were part of a new school of painting: the “ashcan school,” so named because many of the paintings depicted ashcan-filled alleys. This style of art, which is also sometimes called “social realism,” represented something quite new in America. More than just a portrayal of the lives of ordinary people, the paintings were subtle and moving social commentaries. John Sloan was a socialist who believed strongly in the dignity and worth of people who lived lives of “quiet desperation.” His paintings were sympathetic but unsentimental portraits of a community that many people chose to overlook. In this respect, he had much in common with America’s other great social realist, Edward Hopper.

Later in his career, Sloan concentrated on nude studies and scenes of New Mexico, which he visited for the first time in 1919. Like his mentor, Robert Henri, Sloan became a teacher. He continued to paint right up until his death in 1951.
More about the Artist

Edward Hopper
(1882-1967)

Edward Hopper is one of America’s most celebrated artists. He is often compared to John Sloan and other members of Robert Henri’s “ashcan school” of painters. It is true that, like Sloan, Hopper was trained as an illustrator and was attracted to the idea of painting scenes of everyday life. But in many respects, the two artists were very different. Whereas the works of John Sloan are characterized by a kind of vitality and energy, the paintings of Edward Hopper are stark and suffused with loneliness and longing. His works have been described as psychological portraits of the American experience.

Edward Hopper was born in Nyack, New York, in 1882, but he lived most of his life in New York City. He studied at the New York School of Art under Robert Henri. In the early 1900s, he made several trips to Europe, but he was largely unaffected by the new developments in art — such as cubism and fauvism — that were sweeping the continent. Returning to his home turf, Hopper began to paint scenes of city and country life in the style that made him famous. American landscapes, both urban and rural, were the focus of many of his paintings. Many of these scenes were devoid of people. But even those that depicted men and women seemed somehow empty. Hopper used a cool palette, and as a result his paintings are bathed in a kind of cold light. He had a reporter’s eye for detail and the sensibility of a poet. This combination allowed him to reveal the psychological depths of his subjects, evoking sympathy but never pity in the viewer.

Hopper’s most famous works emphasize the loneliness and alienation of modern urban life. He believed that people were becoming more isolated as cities grew larger and more impersonal. His rural scenes evoke a vanishing, simpler way of life that had been all but destroyed by the ravages of the Great Depression. Although his works seem melancholy, their cold beauty makes them almost majestic.
Georgia O’Keeffe
(1887-1986)

Georgia O’Keeffe was a gifted artist and a remarkable woman. Fiercely independent, she lived and worked on her own terms. She never courted fame, yet she became one of the most celebrated and recognized painters of the 20th century. At the height of her fame and success, she abandoned the “high society” art world to live a reclusive life in the desert of New Mexico. She was, as one friend remarked, “a talented enigma.”

Georgia Totto O’Keeffe was born on November 15, 1887, in the small farming community of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Growing up in this rural area, she took careful notice of the natural world around her. Early on, she was given art books to read and study, and by age 13 she announced to friends that she was going to make her living as an artist. After a stint at boarding school, Georgia O’Keeffe enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago. But the figure drawing lessons there did not appeal to her, and in 1907 she moved to New York and enrolled in the Art Students League. It was in New York that O’Keeffe met the photographer Alfred Stieglitz, who was famous as a champion of modern art. He displayed abstract works by many painters at his gallery, “291.” Stieglitz became an important supporter of O’Keeffe and her work, and the two were married in 1924. While she was living in Manhattan, Georgia O’Keeffe began to paint large closeups of flowers such as calla lilies, poppies, petunias, and irises, concentrating on form and color. These works, which appear almost abstract, are among her most famous.

In 1929, O’Keeffe visited New Mexico for the first time. It was a visit that would change the direction of her life and her art. Thanks to her rural upbringing, she had always been interested in nature, and in the barren desert she found a wealth of new subject matter. Her paintings of this period featured rocks, mesas, clouds, and bleached animal bones. Following Stieglitz’s death in 1946, O’Keeffe took up permanent residence at Ghost Ranch, her home and studio near Taos, New Mexico. She died there in 1986 at the age of 98.

Throughout her long career, Georgia O’Keeffe remained something of a mystery — even to her closest friends. And evidently, she liked it that way. She had no patience with those who tried to analyze her life or her art, preferring instead to let the work speak for itself. She purposely cultivated an image as a cantankerous recluse in order to keep the curious at a distance. But despite her efforts to live in isolation, she was one of the most photographed artists of her time. And her paintings are so distinctive that even those who know little about art can easily identify her work. Georgia O’Keeffe remains one of the most admired and respected artists of our time.
More about the Artist

Mark Rothko
(1903-1970)

Mark Rothko’s life began and ended in tragedy. But in between, Rothko produced some of the most provocative, original artworks of the century. His luminous canvases are unlike anything anyone has done before or since, and they represent a new way of thinking about and looking at painting.

Marcus Rothkovitz was born in Russia in 1903, the son of a Jewish pharmacist. Life for Jews was harsh in czarist Russia, and the family immigrated to America in 1913. But only seven months after Marcus arrived in America, his father died and the family was left alone in a new and unfamiliar land. All the family members, including the children, were forced to go to work. Despite the hardships of this new life, Marcus excelled at school. He finished high school in only three years and won a scholarship to Yale University. For a time, he considered a career as an engineer. But in 1923, he dropped out of Yale to “burn about.” One day, wandering into a New York City art class to meet a friend, he observed the students sketching the model and immediately decided to pursue a career in art. He began taking anatomy classes while supporting himself with odd jobs. Looking back, Rothko would say, “I became a painter because I wanted to raise painting to the level of poignancy of music and poetry.”

Although early in his career Rothko painted primarily conventional landscapes and urban scenes, his work rapidly changed and matured. Heavily influenced by cubists like Picasso and Max Weber, Rothko developed an interest in abstract art. In the 1920s and 1930s, Rothko experimented with many different styles and media. His real breakthrough came in the late 1940s and early 1950s. During this period, Rothko began to replace objects and images with fields of pure color. To Rothko, color was a way to express, as he put it, “basic human emotion — tragedy, ecstasy, doom.” His mature works feature two or three rectangles of color stacked one above another. By virtually saturating the canvas in layer after layer of wash, Rothko was able to make the rectangles appear luminous. Through a rich and subtle variation in the sizes and colors of the rectangles, Rothko expressed a wide range of emotions, moods, and sensations. His best works seem to give off a kind of inner light, and they have been compared to the work of Rembrandt, whose paintings often emanated a “spiritual light.” Acutely aware of the important relationship between his paintings and the viewer, Rothko often demanded control over the setting in which his pictures were displayed. He once wrote, “A picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer. It dies by the same token. It is therefore a risky act to send it out into the world.”

Mark Rothko was subject to deep depressions, and his success as an artist did little to comfort him. He often questioned his talent and approach. On the morning of February 25, 1970, he committed suicide in his studio.
Activities

1. Georgia O’Keeffe created many of her best paintings by “blowing up,” or enlarging, one part of an object such as a flower. She concentrated on painting one small area of the flower as if she were looking through a magnifying glass. Create your own painting or drawing in the same way. Select some object that you find interesting or beautiful. Then draw or paint one small part of it in as much detail as you can. How does this change the way the object looks? How does it change the way you think about the object?

2. At some point in their careers, most artists paint a self-portrait. Whether on purpose or by accident, these portraits are often more than just a simple painting of the artist. They usually tell something about the artist as well. Create your own self-portrait, and don’t worry if you can’t draw well enough to really make it look like you. Instead, concentrate on making the portrait show something about you, so that people who look at it will feel like they know you a little better.

3. The artist Paul Cézanne studied geometry and used its ideas in his paintings. He took objects and turned them into simple shapes like circles, squares, and rectangles. For fun, make a drawing of objects or a scene using only simple shapes like circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles. Are there any objects that you absolutely cannot draw in this way? What does this teach you about most objects in our world?

4. Edward Hopper painted many scenes of life in America in the 1930s. Go to the library and check out a book on Edward Hopper that contains some of his paintings. Study the paintings carefully. Then write a few paragraphs comparing the world shown in Hopper’s paintings with today’s world. What things have changed? What things are the same?

5. Joan Miró’s painting Catalan Landscape (The Hunter) uses strange symbols and creatures to show viewers the world Miró imagined. Find a picture of this painting in a book and study it. If you wanted to give someone an idea of what the world you imagine is like, what would you draw? Make a list of all the things you would include in your drawing. If you like, you can even try to create a drawing out of the symbols and objects you have chosen.

6. Look closely at all of the paintings in this group of ten posters. Then write a short paragraph telling which of the ten paintings you like best and why.

7. Salvador Dali kept track of all of his dreams so he could use them in his paintings. Over the next five days, keep a small notepad next to your bed. If you have any interesting dreams, write them down on the pad as soon as you wake up so you don’t forget them. Later, try to use any ideas or images from your dreams to create a drawing. When you are finished, try to answer this question: How does the world of dreams differ from the “real” world?
Activities

8. The artists John Sloan and Edward Hopper lived and worked at the same time. And in some ways, their paintings are similar. But in other ways, their works are very different. Find whatever books you can on these two American artists and compare their work. Then write a short paper explaining how they are alike and how they are different. For example, did they both paint the same kinds of subjects? If so, did they paint them in different ways? Did they use different kinds of colors or different painting techniques? Whose work do you like better? Why?

9. Henri Matisse was a master of “composition” in painting. That is, he paid careful attention to the arrangement of objects in a scene. Sometimes, the arrangement of objects in a Matisse painting seems accidental or not very well thought out. But the truth is that Matisse spent a lot of time thinking about where to place objects when he painted them. Choose several objects and arrange them on a table in the way you think looks best. Make a quick sketch of this scene. Then pick up the objects and let them fall onto the table. Sketch this scene. Which sketch do you like best? Why?

10. In his Still Life, Picasso used many different shades of the same color. Create a painting of a scene using only one color. Mix it with different amounts of white or black to get as many shades of the color as possible. What does this teach you about the way color can be used?

11. Choose one of the artists in this poster series whose work you especially like. Make a visit to your school or public library and find a book on the artist’s life. Read the book and write a short book report. Be sure to include what you liked and didn’t like about the book and what the book taught you about this artist that you didn’t know.

12. The artists called “fauves” experimented with wild colors in their paintings. Make a drawing or sketch of a person, object, or scene. Then color it in with markers, crayons, or paints. But instead of using the “right” colors, experiment with different colors. For example, if you draw a still life of fruit in a bowl, you might want to make purple apples or blue pears. Use whatever colors feel right to you. When you are finished, study your work. Does it give you a different feeling than it might if you had used the “correct” colors? If so, how?

13. In his cubist paintings, Pablo Picasso played with perspectives by “flattening out” a three-dimensional object into two dimensions. But often, he started with a realistic sketch of the object before changing it and breaking it down into something almost unrecognizable. For fun, try to imitate Picasso’s style. First, make a realistic sketch of some object. Then make a few more quick drawings of the same object. But make each new drawing slightly more abstract, or unrealistic, than the one before. Stop when you have a drawing that barely looks like the object but still contains some recognizable parts.
14. One of the goals of the painter Mark Rothko was to create feelings or moods by combining large squares of different colors. You can do the same thing with pieces of colored construction paper. Get as many sheets of colored paper as you can in as many different colors as you can. Then start combining them in different ways. Do this by cutting rectangles of two different colors and gluing or taping them next to each other on a third piece of paper. Try as many combinations as you can. Then look closely at each one. Which ones do you like? Which ones don’t you like? Why? Do any of the combinations give you a certain feeling, such as calmness or excitement? If so, what colors make you feel a certain way?

15. The painter Wassily Kandinsky created abstract paintings by holding a brush and letting his hand wander all over a canvas. He tried to let his hand go wherever it seemed to want to go, and he did not try to make shapes or objects that looked real. Try to create your own “Kandinsky” painting on a large sheet of white paper. Get some crayons, paints, or markers and lay your paper on the floor on top of some old newspapers. Then select a color, close your eyes, and let your hand wander all over the paper. Try not to run off the edge if you can help it. Select another color and do the same thing, keeping your eyes closed and letting your hand go wherever it wants. Repeat this with as many colors as you want. Then look at your painting. Are you surprised by what you created?
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**Zino Press Children’s Books**

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