

Flatness - Good painters have always made their paintings cohere as flat designs, however concerned they may have been with creating an illusion of space. In modern paintings there tends to be little illusion of space, as of the space in a proscenium stage or the space framed by a window. The fact that the canvas is a flat surface is emphasized. For example, there is a reluctance to use light-and-shade so that the forms in the picture become sculptural. Space and volume tend to be suggested through the interaction of areas of colour rather than described through gradations of tone.

Truth to material - Artists in the past have often tried to use the materials they were working in to test their virtuosity, doing precisely those things which the materials made difficult--e.g. giving marble the texture of skin or of lace. Many 20th century artists--especially sculptors such as Brancusi--have believed that they ought to emphasize the inherent qualities of their material. They have aimed to create shapes and surfaces which show off those qualities rather than defy them. They have maintained, for example, that an artist ought to use quite different shapes when carving in stone than he would use in wood.

Assemblage - A 20th-century approach to making pictures and sculptures, assemblage differs from painting, carving, modelling as a film differs from a stage play: the work is put together from parts made beforehand. Collage, montage and papier collé (pasted paper) are terms used for various types of pictorial assemblage. The parts may all have been made by the artist in order to be put together, or the parts (as when a film incorporates bits of old films) may be things already made and used for another purpose--printed matter (such as words and pictures from newspapers), bits of old iron or driftwood, fragments of fabric, etc. Generally they are used in conjunction with paint.

Assemblage began in 1912-13 when Picasso and Braque incorporated fragments of the real world into their Cubist still-lives--fragments such as cigarette packets, sheet music, wall paper, newspaper, playing-cards, American cloth imitating chair-caning. In earlier centuries artists had painted illusionistic still-lives capable of persuading the spectator that he was looking at real things in space. Picasso and Braque, who believed that verisimilitude in art was a trick which had nothing to do with artistic quality, took over real things and made them part of what was clearly a surface covered with flat shapes.

Since then, a high proportion of painters and sculptors have used assemblage in one way or another. Matisse painted sheets of paper and cut out shapes for pasting together. Max Ernst has made 'collage novels' from Victorian magazine illustrations. Robert Rauschenberg has built every kind of junk into his 'combines'. Some of the more common motives for assemblage have been: to create surprise through the way in which something changes in meaning when taken from its usual context and put in a new one; to prove that art can be made, not only from materials expressly designed to make art, but from the cheap, massproduced stuff of everyday life; nostalgic love for a cigarette that bears a lipstick's traces, an airline ticket to romantic places... these foolish things. And assemblage has been used because it is demanded by some of the new materials worked in: iron, steel, plastics.

Simultaneity - One of the altogether new things done in modern art is to combine in one image different views of an object. In the 1880's Marey did this in photography, taking consecutive shots of a figure in motion on one plate, with the shots overlapping. About 1911 the Italian Futurists began to do precisely this in painting. Two or three years earlier, Picasso and Braque, during the Analytical phase of Cubism, had done something similar from a different point of departure. They superimposed views of an object from different angles. Here it was not stages of an object's motion that were presented simultaneously, but stages of the observer's sensations when moving round an object.

Fragmentation - 20th-century art tends to disintegrate whole objects or figures to focus attention on a part or to combine the parts in a new way--as when Picasso puts both eyes to the same side of the nose. Furthermore it tends to isolate a single aesthetic quality and push it to an extreme--to create a work concerned with, say, colour relations or with texture or with geometry, to the exclusion of all else. In the past, artists tried to deal with several different problems at the same time, reconciling their conflicting demands (most obviously, those of representation and those of design). Modern art has made a virtue of doing one thing at a time. Art itself is fragmented.

Scale - Once painting had stopped being primarily a view of something--once, that is, the picture-frame was no longer a kind of ideal window-frame--it became increasingly