

Female painters across the French/ Spanish/German-speaking world

INTRODUCTION

Women are the subject of countless iconic paintings in art history. Depicted from every angle, they have been muses and sources of inspiration, often relegated to the shadow of male artists. While male painters forever gained fame and praise, women were remembered for no more than a silhouette or a smile on a canvas, often forgotten for who they were. ***Write down a list of famous paintings that you can think of. How many of them represent women? And how many were made by women? Why do you think we do not seem to know about many works by female artists?***

In reality, women have enjoyed the art and technical skill of painting as much as their male counterparts, but art history, up until recently, did not render an honest account of the full picture.

Ask yourself: why do we seem to think that prehistoric paintings were painted by men? Do you think they could have been created by women?

In this series, we will explore the lives and works of some talented French/Spanish/German-speaking female artists. We will discover the world from their angle and delve into their stories, following the creative force driving their hand on the canvas. ***Before moving on, have a think: do you know of any French/Spanish/German-speaking female painters?***



ACTIVITY 1

Before starting the topic, read these two articles and answer the question:

Why are women not as present as men in art history? Give at least three reasons.

[Google Art and Culture: the women painters overlooked by art history](#)

[National Geographic: Women handprints in neolithic cave](#)

1. _____

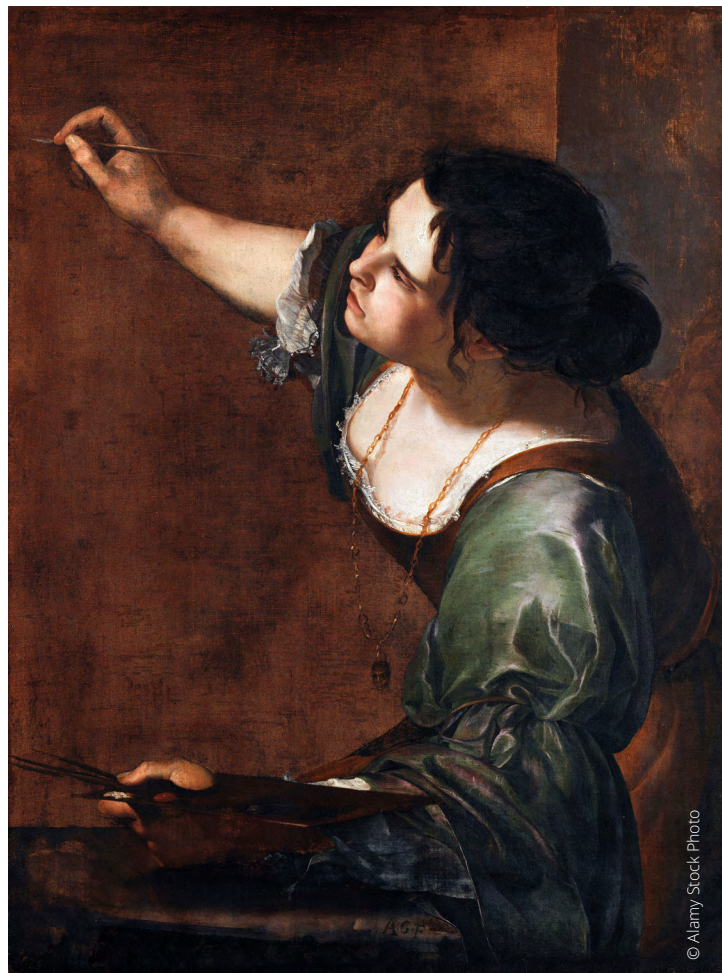
2. _____

3. _____

ACTIVITY 2

Look at this self-portrait by Artemisia Gentilleschi, painted in 1638–1639.

When you compare it to other women's portraits from that time, what do you think is so special about it?



BLANCHE HOSCHEDÉ MONET (1865-1947)

Dans l'ombre du maître impressionniste

Tout le monde connaît Claude Monet, mais avez-vous déjà entendu parler de Blanche Hoschedé Monet? Cette artiste peintre était à la fois la belle-fille, la bru, mais également l'assistante, le modèle et la seule élève du célèbre Claude Monet. Elle était si douée que parfois les experts se demandent si certaines œuvres attribuées à Monet ne sont pas, en fait, de la main de Blanche! Cependant, elle n'est pas du tout aussi connue que son beau-père... **Alors voici son histoire!**

LA VIE DE BLANCHE

Née à Paris en 1865, Blanche est la fille d'Alice et Ernest Hoschedé et a cinq frères et sœurs qui s'appellent Jean-Pierre, Jacques, Marthe, Germaine et Suzanne.

Ernest était un homme d'affaires qui collectionnait les peintures impressionnistes. Il était aussi un des mécènes de Claude Monet au début de sa carrière.

Mais, en 1877, c'est le drame: Ernest fait faillite et doit vendre ses peintures aux enchères!

Par conséquent, la famille de Blanche emménage chez Claude Monet et vit avec sa famille.

Dès ses 11 ans, Blanche développe une passion pour la peinture; elle apprend à peindre et visite même les ateliers de Monet et de Manet.

En 1883, ils s'installent tous dans la magnifique maison de Giverny. Mais Ernest n'étant pas souvent à la maison, Claude et Alice entretiennent une liaison...



C'est vers l'âge de 17 ans que Blanche devient la seule élève et assistante de Claude Monet. Elle peint avec lui, en plein air, à la manière des impressionnistes. Elle peint les mêmes sujets et avec les mêmes couleurs. À cette époque, Blanche rencontre le peintre américain John Leslie Breck mais Monet s'oppose à leur union. En 1891, Ernest meurt et en 1892, Alice, la mère de Blanche, épouse Claude Monet. Blanche devient ainsi la belle-fille de ce dernier.



Puis, en 1897, Blanche se marie avec Jean Monet, le fils de Claude Monet. Blanche devient donc la bru de Claude Monet!

L'année 1911 marque le décès d'Alice. En 1914, Jean meurt à son tour. Blanche s'occupe alors de son beau-père, Claude Monet, jusqu'à sa mort en 1926.

Pendant les 20 ans qui ont suivi la mort de Monet, elle est responsable de la maison et des jardins de Giverny. Elle continue à peindre pour le plaisir et de temps en temps elle expose ses œuvres. Elle meurt en 1947 à l'âge de 82 ans. Toutefois, ce n'est que dans les années 2000 que ses œuvres seront exposées dans de grands musées et qu'elle obtiendra enfin de la reconnaissance pour son art.



READING COMPREHENSION

ACTIVITY 1

Read the text and circle in red all the cognates. Think about how much they help you make sense of the text.

ACTIVITY 2

Find the French in the text for these phrases:

stepdaughter: _____

daughter-in-law: _____

stepdad/father-in-law: _____

gifted: _____

talented: _____

famous: _____

businessman: _____

to go bankrupt: _____

auctions: _____

painting: _____

to have an affair: _____

a career: _____

from time to time: _____

recognition: _____

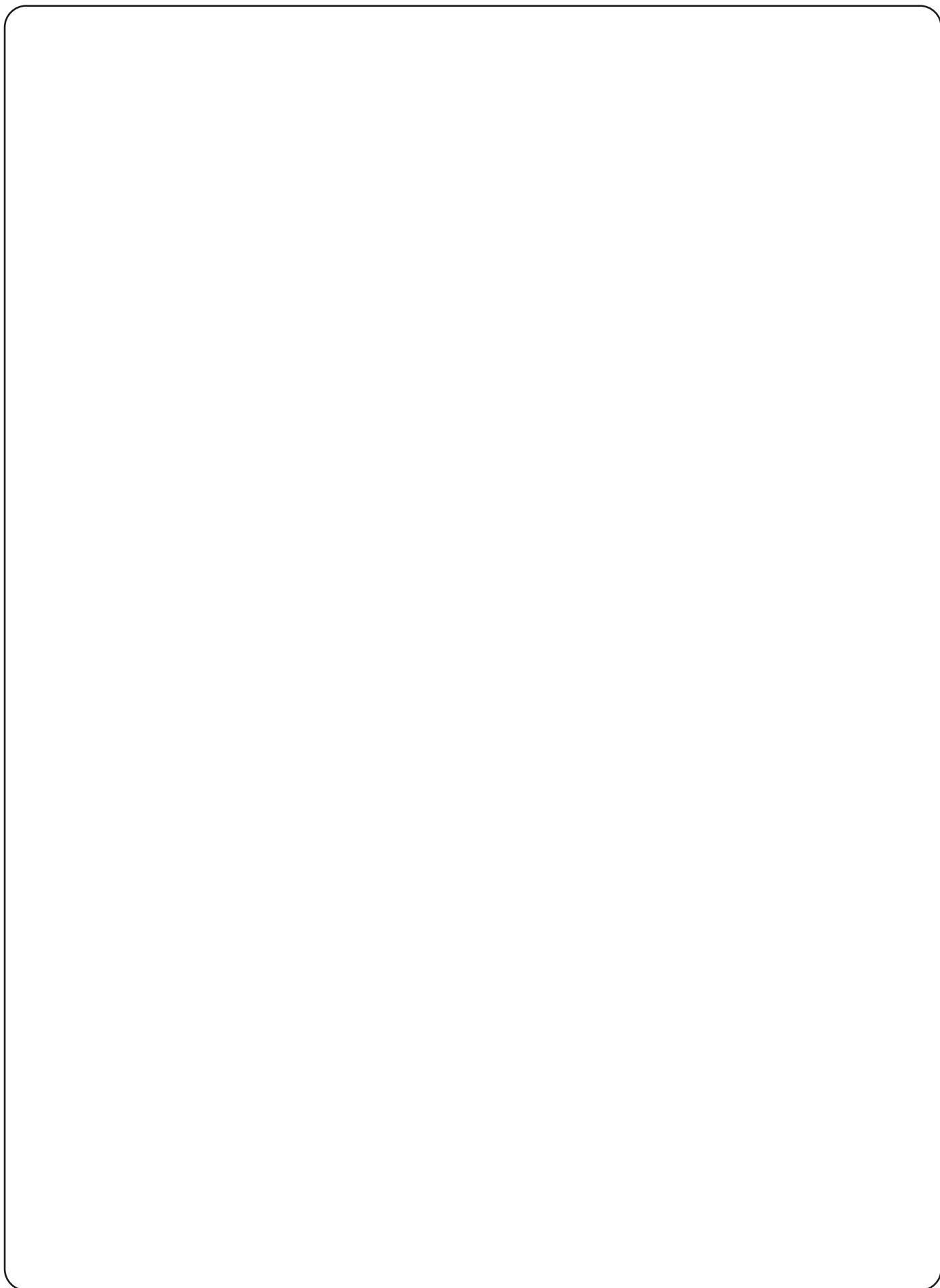
ACTIVITY 3

Answer these questions in English.

1. How many brothers and sisters did Blanche have?
2. What did Blanche's father collect?
3. At what age did Blanche start painting?
4. Which artists' studios did she visit?
5. When did Blanche's family move to Giverny?
6. Who did Blanche marry?
7. When did Claude Monet die?
8. When did Blanche finally receive some recognition for her art?

ACTIVITY 4

Draw Blanche's family tree.



L'ART DE BLANCHE

ACTIVITY 1

Look at these two paintings of Monet's house in Giverny. Try to guess which one was painted by Blanche and which one was painted by Claude. Can you detect any differences in the style?



Now research online who painted each painting. Were you right?

In French, write which one you prefer.

Je préfère la maison peinte par Blanche parce que...

Je préfère la maison peinte par Monet parce que...

ACTIVITY 2

Watch this [video](#) and find out which colours inspired the impressionists at the time. Write them in French.

ACTIVITY 3

Visit the website for [Monet's house](#) and find Blanche's bedroom. Now write a description of the bedroom. For example: *Les murs sont blancs avec des fleurs rouges et roses.*

ACTIVITY 4

Record at auction for Blanche: **\$197,000**

Record at auction for Claude: **\$110,700,000**

What do you think of these records ?

Write three sentences in French.



Exemples:

Je pense que.../Je crois que...

C'est bizarre/injuste parce que...

Je ne comprends pas cela parce que...

TAMARA DE LEMPICKA (1898–1980)

Dans le Paris des Années folles: un désir de liberté dans une société patriarcale

Look up the artworks that are mentioned in this artist introduction. What do you think about them? Do you like the style of this artist?



Tamara de Lempicka est une artiste d'origine polonaise qui a vécu à Paris pendant l'entre-deux-guerres (1918–1939). C'est une peintre majeure du mouvement 'Art déco'.

On reconnaît ce mouvement artistique né en France à son style néo-cubiste, son imaginaire futuriste et ses formes symétriques d'inspiration égyptienne ou aztèque. Dans ses tableaux, Tamara de Lempicka utilise beaucoup le gris du béton et des buildings, une couleur qui représente la modernité. Dans ses portraits, elle place souvent en arrière-plan des gratte-ciels new-yorkais, comme dans *La musicienne* (1929).

Dans le Paris de l'entre-deux-guerres, même si les femmes n'ont ni le droit de vote ni le droit d'ouvrir un compte en banque, souffle un vent d'émancipation et de liberté. Par exemple, les femmes se font couper les cheveux à la garçonne pour montrer leur indépendance et leur refus des dictats de la société. On retrouve ce paradoxe entre désir et manque de liberté dans les œuvres de Tamara de Lempicka. Dans ses toiles, on a l'impression que les modèles sont à l'étroit et doivent plier leur corps pour tenir dans le cadre, comme dans *Kizette en rose* (1926), sa fille. Elle emprunte cette méthode au cadre serré des affiches publicitaires de cinéma, donnant ainsi une dimension monumentale à ses modèles.

Tamara de Lempicka peint surtout des femmes de son entourage, comme sa fille, ses amies ou ses amantes. Dans un monde habitué au *male gaze*, il est révolutionnaire de voir le regard d'une femme sur d'autres femmes.

Ouvrtement bisexuelle, Tamara de Lempicka adopte un comportement scandaleux pour l'époque. Au cours de cette période d'après-guerre, les inquiétudes font place à la recherche des plaisirs et de Lempicka fait beaucoup la fête dans ce **Paris des Années folles!** Dans 'Autoportrait (Tamara dans une Bugatti verte)', peint en 1928 pour un magazine allemand afin de célébrer l'indépendance des femmes, on la voit au volant d'une Bugatti, le regard fier et défiant. C'est l'image d'une femme puissante, audacieuse et anticonformiste, au contrôle de sa voiture comme de sa vie.

READING COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions in English.

1. Where is Tamara de Lempicka from originally?
2. Where did the *Art déco* movement start?
3. What is often in the background of Tamara de Lempicka's paintings?
4. How is the paradoxical situation for women of the 'in-between-wars' represented in Tamara de Lempicka's artworks?
5. What is the name of Tamara de Lempicka's daughter?
6. How does Tamara de Lempicka create a monumental dimension of her portraits?
7. Why was Tamara de Lempicka scandalous at the time?
8. Give three adjectives to describe Tamara de Lempicka.

Two truths and one falsehood.

Read the three sentences below. Write F for 'faux' and V for 'vrai'.

- Tamara de Lempicka peignait surtout des femmes. ____
- Pour composer ses portraits, Tamara de Lempicka s'inspirait des affiches de cinéma de l'époque. ____
- Tamara de Lempicka était une peintre du mouvement d'art abstrait. ____

Histoire de l'art: pour aller plus loin...

Fill the gaps with words from the list.

cheveux

lèvres

contrastes

corps

exemple

Renaissance

s'affirme

Dans les portraits de Tamara de Lempicka, on retrouve des points communs avec des peintures de la _____ italienne (XVI^e siècle) et avec des portraits de femmes du mouvement préraphaélite du XIX^e siècle. Par _____, les couleurs vives, les tonalités de peau nacrée, les _____ entre l'ombre et la lumière, ou encore la représentation du _____ féminin, fort et en rondeur. Mais chez de Lempicka, chaque élément est résolument moderne: le regard est décidé, les _____ sont plus rouges et les _____ sont plus courts: le corps de la femme _____ et n'appartient qu'à elle.



Look up the artwork 'Young Lady with Gloves (Girl in a Green dress)'. Can you see similarities with the two other paintings to the left? Do you agree with the French text above?

CONTEXT RESEARCH

What is *le Paris des Années folles*? Do some research and write your findings in English.

Do some more research about Tamara de Lempicka's life and answer these questions in French:

1. Comment Tamara de Lempicka a-t-elle signé ses premières œuvres?
2. À quelle classe sociale appartiennent les modèles de Tamara de Lempicka?
3. Où Tamara de Lempicka a-t-elle émigré au début de la Seconde Guerre mondiale?
4. Où et quand Tamara de Lempicka est-elle décédée?
5. Où ses cendres ont-elles été dispersées?

Videos to watch for further research:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c59ck-Sndk>

LOÏS MAILOU JONES (1905–1998)

La traversée artistique du XXe siècle: se forger une carrière au sein des États-Unis ségrégationnistes

Loïs Mailou Jones n'est pas française mais, comme beaucoup d'autres artistes afro-américains de la Renaissance de Harlem, elle a vécu à Paris dans l'entre-deux-guerres. Au cours de sa vie, elle a fait de nombreux séjours en France et a parfois même peint à la manière des impressionnistes. Nous allons non seulement explorer sa carrière artistique qui a duré plus de soixante-dix ans, mais également évoquer ses liens avec la France.



'Look up 'Lois Mailou Jones, Self-portrait' to see how the artist painted herself. Do you like this style of self-portrait?'

ACTIVITY 1

In the paragraph above, highlight the present tense verbs in yellow, the past tense verbs in orange and the near future tense verbs in pink. Then write the verbs in the correct column of the table below and complete the other columns by conjugating the verb in other tenses, but in the same person.

Challenge: Translate the text into English.

INFINITIVE	PERFECT TENSE	PRESENT TENSE	NEAR FUTURE TENSE
être	elle a été	elle est	elle va être

ACTIVITY 2

Loïs Mailou Jones et Paris: Read this extract from an [interview](#) with Loïs Mailou Jones

The questions were written by the author of this piece to better understand the context of Mailou Jones' answers.

Why did you go to Paris ?

"They told me: 'Loïs, you're talented, but you're not gonna make it in this country. You're gonna have to go abroad. Because the establishment here in this country is not interested in the work of Black artists.'"

How was Paris at the time?

"That sense of freedom and people not isolating you because of your colour... It was your talent that counted. And so it was, with the musicians, the artists that went there..."

What happened when you came back to the States?

"I came back to the States and I went on 57th street with my beautiful paintings of Paris and they said: 'Your work is excellent but we can't show it, we just can't take your work,' and so I decided to put my works in crates and ship them to the national museums... And I made the shows! And I would go to the openings and see my work hung and feel happy about it. I remember how on one occasion, one of the white guards came up to me and saw me looking at my painting and looked at me and looked at my painting and said 'I guess you like art!'... but I didn't tell him it was mine."

ACTIVITY 3

Fill in the gaps with words from the table.

Challenge: Translate the text into English.

est née	exposition	encouragent	professeur	premier
voyages	peau	s'intéresse	masques	basketball
a exposé	impressionnistes	couleurs	contribution	

La vie de Loïs Mailou Jones

Loïs Mailou Jones _____ en 1905 à Boston. Son père est le _____ afro-américain diplômé en droit de la Suffolk Law School et sa mère est cosmétologue. Dès son enfance, ses parents l'_____ à peindre à l'aquarelle. De 1919 à 1927, elle étudie l'art et le design. En 1922, à seulement dix-sept ans, elle tient sa première _____.

Au début de sa carrière, elle _____ surtout au design, mais dès 1928, elle s'emploie exclusivement à la peinture. En plus d'être artiste à plein temps, elle devient aussi _____. Elle a notamment enseigné le _____!

En 1937, elle part vivre et peindre à Paris et produit de magnifiques œuvres _____. Au cours de sa vie, elle revient souvent en France et peint de nombreuses œuvres dans ce style. Elle est également inspirée par les _____ africains exposés au musée de l'Homme à Paris. C'est après ses _____ à Haïti dans les années 50 que ses peintures prennent des _____ plus vives, avec des motifs aux influences haïtiennes et africaines. On la connaît surtout pour ce style-là.

Pendant toute sa vie, elle a continué à étudier, enseigner et peindre. Elle _____ ses œuvres dans un grand nombre de musées américains, parfois sous un autre nom ou sans se montrer, par peur du rejet de ses œuvres à cause de la couleur de sa _____. Elle a dit que sa plus grande _____ au monde de l'art était "la preuve du talent des artistes noirs". Elle souhaitait être connue en tant que peintre américaine sans étiquette.

ACTIVITY 4

Lois Mailou Jones experimented with many styles and different media throughout her life, inspired by her travels in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean.

Match the years with the Loïs Mailou Jones artworks below:

1932, 1938, 1947, 1948, 1978, 1983

Challenge: Look up the following artworks by Lois Mailou Jones. Draw a sketch of the paintings in each box of the table and then add the year underneath.

<p>Street Vendors, Port-au-Prince, Haïti</p> <p>Année:</p>	<p>Jardin du Luxembourg</p> <p>Année:</p>	<p>Les Fétiches</p> <p>Année:</p>
<p>Les Clochards, Montmartre, Paris</p> <p>Année:</p>	<p>Initiation, Liberia</p> <p>Année:</p>	<p>The Ascent of Ethiopia</p> <p>Année:</p>

FRIDA KAHLO (1907–1954) – Transformar el dolor en arte para darse ánimo: la historia de una icona que quería compartir su amor de la vida

It is difficult to avoid Frida Kahlo's face on our 21st-century high streets. We see her everywhere in shops: on t-shirts, mugs, tote bags and even socks. But do you know who she was and what she stood for? Do you know why she had this unique style with flowers on her head and long, colourful dresses? Do you know what she painted and how? Before we start exploring these questions, note down five things you already know about Frida Kahlo.



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

ACTIVITY 1

These descriptions of five important stages in Frida Kahlo's life are half in Spanish and half in English. Translate them fully into English.

Challenge: Write each date in words in Spanish. For example: 1907 – *mil novecientos siete*.

1907: Frida Kahlo nació en 1907 en México, from a father of German origin y una madre de origen español e indígena. Sin embargo, as an adult, she used to say that ella nació en 1910. Por supuesto, 1910 was la fecha de la revolución mexicana, and Kahlo wanted her birth to be associated with esta revolución, which symbolised for her el comienzo del nuevo México.

1913: Kahlo contracts polio and, even though she is carefully treated for it, she develops a limp en su pierna derecha. As a result, her right leg grew más pequeña que la izquierda and she suffered from further complications all her life.

1925: Frida tuvo un accidente de bus muy grave, in which she almost died. She suffered many injuries and she had to stay en su cama por tres meses. She even had to llevar special corsets (that she sometimes painted) to support her espalda. Su padre installed a mirror above su cama so she could paint herself from bed. That's when she started painting her famous autorretratos, which became a recurring tema in her work. En total, she painted cincuenta y cinco autorretratos in her life. It was also around that time that she started wearing ropas tradicionales largas y muy coloradas, no sólo to distract from her impairment, sino también because era inspirada by the strong mujeres from Tehuantepec who llevaban these ropas too.

1929: Se casó con el pintor Diego Rivera. Their historia de amor is now famous but it is important to remember that it was muy complicada. They even divorced y luego remarried. Diego Rivera was very supportive of her work and encouraged her to continue painting, pero on the relationship side, no era fiel. Esta relación inspiró mucho su arte.

1954: Murió at the age of cuarenta y siete. She had treinta y dos operaciones in her life and, in 1953, tuvo que ser amputated from the knee down and was then in a wheelchair. However, the reason for su muerte was officially stated as pneumonia. One of her last works Viva la vida shows us how much le encantaba la vida.

Write your translation here :

ACTIVITY 2

Fill the gaps in these five facts about Frida with words from the table.

Estados Unidos

conocí

bandera

animales

doctor

hombre

1. Solía vestirse de _____.
2. Era comunista y la _____ comunista veló su ataúd en su funeral.
3. Antes de ser artista, quería ser _____.
4. Solía llamar a los _____: "Gringolandia".
_____ a Joséphine Baker cuando fui a París.

There is one word left over. Which one?

Now search online to find an image of Kahlo or a painting by Kahlo to match each sentence.

Challenge: Translate the sentences into English.

ACTIVITY 3

Look at the first column of the table below and translate these five recurring subjects in Kahlo's art and life into English.

Then read the definitions in Spanish.

Challenge: Translate the definitions to English.

ESPAÑOL	ENGLISH	DEFINICIÓN EN RELACIÓN CON EL ARTE DE FRIDA KAHLO
la Mexicanidad		La Mexicanidad es el hecho de sentirse orgulloso de ser mexicano. Este término empezó a desarrollarse después de la revolución mexicana, cuando los mexicanos querían reivindicar su mezcla de cultura indígena prehispánica con su pasado colonial, para definir lo único de su identidad moderna. Frida Kahlo, en su estilo de ropa como en sus obras, reivindicaba mucho su Mexicanidad.

ESPAÑOL	ENGLISH	DEFINICIÓN EN RELACIÓN CON EL ARTE DE FRIDA KAHLO
el dolor físico y la minusvalía		Frida Kahlo representaba mucho su dolor y su minusvalía en sus obras. Por ejemplo, se representó herida o encarcelada de varias maneras. También tenía que llevar corsés médicos y los decoraba con pinturas que significaban mucho para ella.
la imposibilidad de tener hijos		A causa de su accidente, Frida no podía tener hijos, aunque fue su deseo más profundo. Quería un 'Dieguito'. Tuvo unos malpartos y su tristeza fue enorme. Representaba mucho este drama en sus pinturas.
el amor y las dificultades de las relaciones amorosas		Con Diego, la relación no era fácil aunque el amor fuera grande. En algunas de sus pinturas, Frida se representó con Diego en la frente, como si fuera un componente esencial y onisciente que formaba parte de ella y de su epicentro creativo. Sin embargo, en una de las pinturas, podemos verla llorando. Pintó esta pintura cuando pensaba que Diego iba a llevarla.
la naturaleza y los animales		Frida tenía una pasión por el mundo natural. Le encantaba pintar los follajes y las flores, e incluso estudiaba libros botánicos para mejorar su representación. Para ella, la naturaleza salvaje simbolizaba la vida. En su casa azul, cultivaba muchas plantas en su jardín. También tenía muchas mascotas como sus monos y su perro, y por eso se representaba con ellas.

ACTIVITY 4

Read the Spanish definitions in activity 3 again and match each topic to one of the artworks or photos below. Some images may match to more than one topic, but try to match the most obvious ones first.

Challenge: One of these images also represents Frida's political convictions. Can you identify it and work out which party she supported?



ACTIVITY 5

Translate these six quotations by Frida Kahlo.

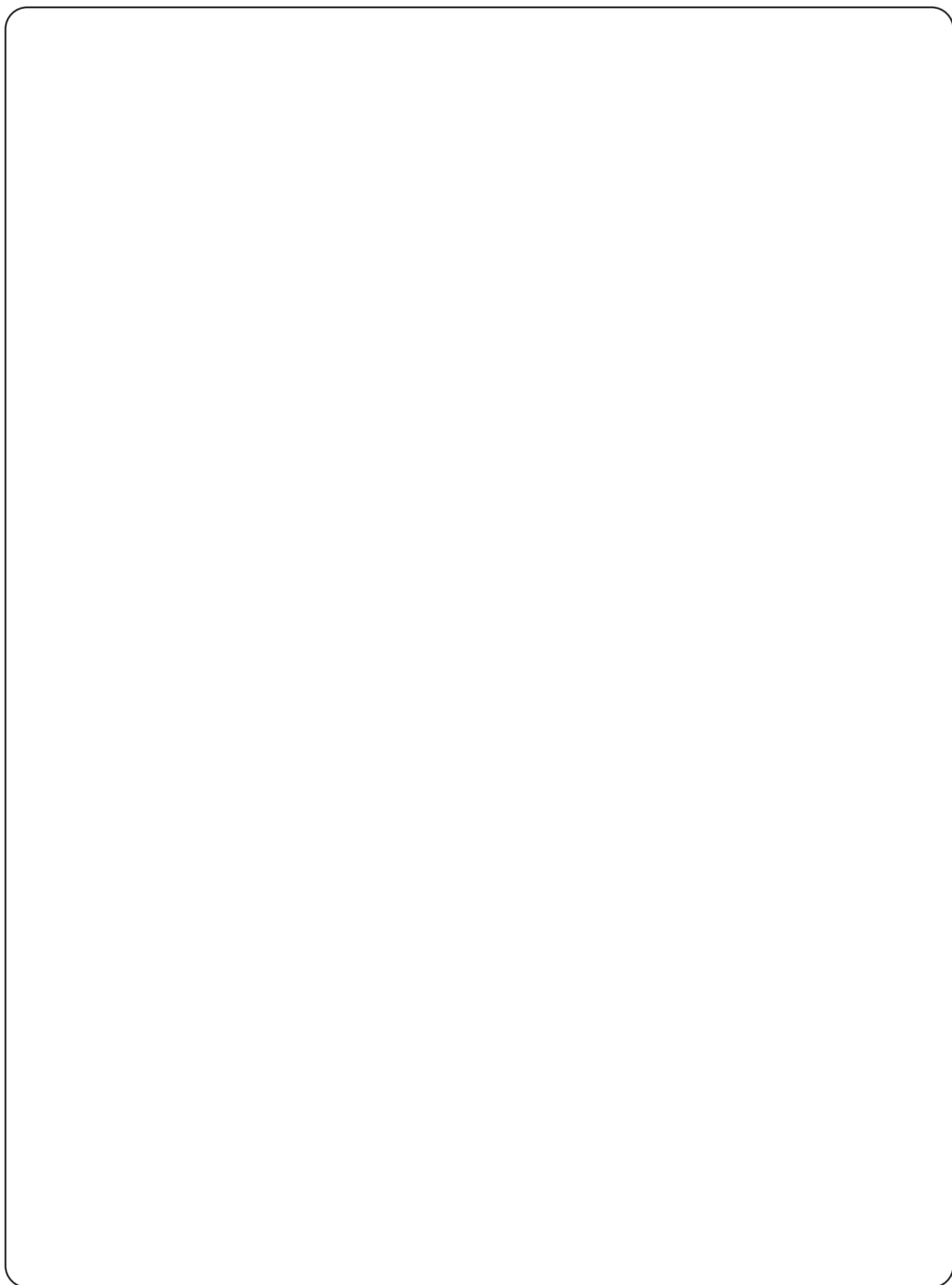
Challenge: Explain in English which area of Frida Kahlo's life or artworks each represents, in your opinion.

1. 'El arte más poderoso de la vida es hacer del dolor un talismán que cura, una mariposa que renace florecida en fiesta de colores'.
2. '¿Por qué le llamo mi Diego? Nunca fue ni será mío. Es de él mismo...!'
3. 'Pinto autorretratos porque estoy mucho tiempo sola. Me pinto a mí misma porque soy a quien mejor conozco'.
4. 'Nunca pinto sueños o pesadillas. Pinto mi propia realidad'.
5. 'Pinto flores para que no mueran'.
6. 'Yo sufrí dos accidentes graves en mi vida, uno en el que un autobús me tumbó al suelo... el otro accidente es Diego.'



Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera on each side of the same banknote. Do you think this symbolises their relationship and love story effectively?

Creative task: Now that you have studied Frida Kahlo in more detail, draw her portrait in the centre of the box below and the things that were important to her around her. Colour it in and try to draw in Frida Kahlo's style.



Extension activity: Write your own answers to these questions, in Spanish.

- 1 ¿Por qué piensas que Frida Kahlo decidió llevar un bigote y su uniceja?
- 2 ¿En tu opinión, de qué manera Frida Kahlo fue una feminista?
- 3 ¿Qué piensas de todos los productos derivados de Frida Kahlo? ¿Piensas que Frida Kahlo hubiera estado de acuerdo con la venta de su cara?

Links to explore Frida Kahlo's life and art further:

Watch this short video about her life.

Explore the *casa azul* in Mexico, where Frida Kahlo lived all her life.

Read the articles about her and look at her artworks

Explore the *Museo Frida Kahlo*.

CHARLOTTE SALOMON (1917–1943) – Leben? oder Theater?: die Geschichte einer vollendeten Künstlerin

Charlotte Salomon was a German-Jewish artist remembered for a series of paintings entitled *Leben? oder Theater? Ein Singspiel* (Life? or theatre? A song-play) that she created between 1941 and 1943, while hiding from the Nazis in the South of France. The story of her life is very dramatic and she decided to tell it in a unique way: through 769 A4 paintings to be viewed while listening to music (to make it even more dramatic), accompanied by written narration of the events. We can say she was a truly complete artist: a painter and a writer with a great musical ear, who left us with an extraordinarily rich, complex and referenced work, telling not only her story with imagination and sometimes humour, but also the history of modern Germany and the rise of fascism. Let's explore her life and work through some language activities in German.

ACTIVITY 1

These following five important stages of Salomon's life are half in German and half in English. Translate them fully into English.

Challenge: Write each date in words in German.

1. Charlotte Salomon was **geboren** in Berlin in 1917 to a wealthy **Familie**. **Ihre Mutter** committed suicide when Salomon was **jung** but she was made to believe that **ihre Mutter** had died of influenza.
2. Salomon **studierte Malerei** for two years bis 1938, when it became **zu gefährlich** for Jewish people to attend **Universität wegen** fascism in **Deutschland**.
3. In 1938, Salomon was sent to **Südfrankreich** to stay with her **Großeltern**. There, her **Großmutter** attempted and failed to take her own life and that is when Salomon's **Großvater** revealed the truth to her: her **Mutter** had killed herself and so had her **Großtante**, her **Großonkel** and her **Großmutter's Neffe**. Salomon was profoundly **schockiert** and started thinking that taking her own life would be her own **Schicksal, wie** a curse that her own **Großvater** believed in as well. Just after **der Beginn des Krieges**, in 1940, her **Großmutter** succeeded in taking her own life.
3. Salomon and her **Großvater** were then interned in a camp in France, but released because of her **Großvater's** poor **Gesundheit**. **Sie hasste ihren Großvater**. In 2015, the content of a 35-page letter written by Charlotte Salomon and sent to her former lover was revealed: she said in this letter that she had killed her **Großvater** with a poisoned omelet. **Wir werden nie wissen** if she actually did it or not as no postmortem was carried out.
4. In 1941, rejecting belief in the 'curse' and resisting thoughts of **Tod**, Salomon **entschied sich** to start her **unglaubliches** painting project. She rented a **Hotelzimmer**, took all her painting material with her and painted there frantically for months. She changed **die Namen** of the characters and **schrieb** in the third person. She actually **malte** around 2000 gouache paintings but selected 769 to be part of the final work. During that time, **sie hat** Alexander Nagler **geheiratet**, another German-Jewish refugee in **Frankreich**, and **sie wurde schwanger**. She was five months' pregnant when she was deported to Auschwitz und **sie** was **getötet** by the Nazis. Before leaving, she managed to give **ihre Gemälde** to **ihrem Arzt**, Dr Moridis, who then gave them back to **ihrem Vater** after the war.

ACTIVITY 2: A UNIQUE WAY OF MAKING ART!

It was discovered that Solomon made art in a unique way. In fact, she sang excerpts from Bach, Schubert or German folk songs related to the themes of her paintings while creating them. For her it was a therapeutic process.

Do you think that this unique way of making art could benefit the art assignments you create for school?

Give your opinion in German.

Ich denke ...

ACTIVITY 3

Describe this painting in German, giving as many details as possible, including colours. Use the help box if needed.



HELP BOX:

there is/are: es gibt

in the background: im Hintergrund

people: Menschen

buildings: Gebäude

square: der Platz

inscriptions: Inschriften

soldiers: Soldaten

ACTIVITY 4:

Research *Kristallnacht*, which is the title given to the painting above. How do your research findings change your understanding of the painting? What did Charlotte Salomon represent? Who are the people in the square? Write your answer in English.

ACTIVITY 5

It is important not to view *Leben? oder Theater?* solely as a holocaust narrative or a narrative about mental illness. Charlotte Salomon also deals with topics such as art, ideas and love, showing a determined will to continue living. How do you think the painting below illustrates this? Describe the painting in German and answer the question with your own opinion.

Challenge: Research the artistic movement behind this painting and Salomon's works in general.



Creative task: Depict an important event in your life in a painting, in the same way as Salomon did. Find a song to accompany the event.

Challenge: Using tracing paper, write a narrative to superimpose over your painting.

Further research:

Essential viewing: an interview in German with Salomon's father and stepmother, from 1963.

An interview with Griselda Pollock, who wrote a book about Salomon's work.

An article about Salomon's work.

HANNAH HÖCH (1889–1978) – Eine feministische Ikone und der erste Punk?

ACTIVITY 1

Match the German words to the English translations.

gender construction	die Rolle in der Gesellschaft
feminism	die Geschlechterkonstruktion
feminist	die Schönheitsnormen
women	der/die Feminist(in)
role in society	der Sexismus
sexism	bisexuell
norms of beauty	die Frauen
patriarchy	der Feminismus
bisexual	unabhängig
independent	das Patriarchat

WHO WAS HANNAH HÖCH?

Hannah Höch was a German artist, born in 1889 in Gotha, a town in central Germany. She is best known for photomontage, a type of artwork in which fragments of pictures are cut from magazines or newspapers and glued onto a new background to create a completely new and fragmented image.

Höch was the only female member of the Dada movement in Berlin and she had to deal with sexism from her fellow male artists. It was very hard for a woman to enter the art world at that time. In her life, as in her art, she challenged gender norms. She had short hair, was bisexual and was financially independent. In her art, she often questioned the feminist topics of the changing roles of women in society and the accepted norms of beauty. Other recurring themes in her art were sarcastic comments on the state of the economy and on social issues. She believed that art was rebellious and was supposed to help make positive changes to society. She did not adhere to any party but, instead, used her art to criticise all sides. In this way, some people think she was a precursor of the Punk movement.

ACTIVITY 2: READING COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions in German using full sentences.

1. Wo wurde Hannah geboren?

2. Wann wurde sie geboren?

3. Was ist eine Fotomontage?

4. Wie waren Hannahs Haare?

5. Was hat Hannah in ihrer Kunst oft hinterfragt?

ACTIVITY 3

Using the words from activity 1 and the text in English from activity 2, write three sentences in German about what you have understood about Hannah Höch and her art.

E.g.: Sie prangert das Patriarchat an.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ACTIVITY 4

Match the German words in the table to their definitions in relation to Hannah Höch. Write them into the correct row in the table and translate them into English.

Dadaismus

Neue Frau

Fotomontage

entartete Kunst

Industrialisierung

Weimarer Republik

GERMAN	ENGLISH	DEFINITION IN ENGLISH
		This is the name of the German government after the First World War. It lasted from 1919 to 1933, when Hitler came to power. The first five years were very difficult for Germany as the country struggled to recover from the defeat of the First World War. Germany had to pay reparations and was also suffering from hyperinflation and the rise of political extremism. In this context, Höch was able to make and exhibit her art, but this came to an end around 1932, when the Nazis prevented her from exhibiting her art.
		This is when a country goes through social and economic changes, typically converting from an agrarian society into an industrial society. For example, the main source of income of the country is no longer agriculture but the production of goods in factories. This was very important in Weimar Germany after the First World War as it was the key source of income other than foreign loans. For Höch, there was a direct link between capitalism and war, and she denounced the German industrial and financial elite in her art. In Dadaism, there was also a recurring topic of the blend between men and machines in the industrialised world, as lots of soldiers returned from the war with missing limbs and had to wear prosthetics.
		This is the word associated with the kind of art that the Nazis would not allow and would ban from museums. Höch's art was considered as such. She remained in Germany while Hitler was in power but had to assume a low profile from 1932 to 1945 and could not exhibit her art in Germany during that period.

GERMAN	ENGLISH	DEFINITION IN ENGLISH
		<p>This term refers to a feminist ideal that emerged at the end of the 19th century and continued to be relevant after the First World War as women had participated in the war effort and traditional gender roles were shifting. In Germany, for example, women gained the right to vote in 1918. This term is associated with the independence of women from the role that the patriarchy had assigned to them, the will to identify themselves beyond being a wife and a mother. We can also see it reflected in the androgynous style of women at the time (e.g. short hair) and the types of activities women were doing (e.g. cycling). Höch referred to this term a lot in her art. In her work <i>Cut with the Kitchen Knife Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany</i> (1919), she mentioned the kitchen knife in the title as a hint that it was no longer solely the object that women traditionally used in the kitchen to chop food. Instead, it had become a symbol of her creativity, as she used it to cut the fragments of pictures before putting them back together to create this unique piece.</p>
		<p>This is an art movement that started in 1915 and lasted until the mid-1920s. A famous artist from this movement included Marcel Duchamp and his famous <i>Urinoir</i>. This movement was anti-art, anti-bourgeois and rejected the traditional canons of art. It aimed to be fun, child-like and joyful. In Berlin, Höch was the only woman in this group of male artists.</p> <p>She wrote a text called <i>The Painter</i> that gives us an idea of how she felt about the men surrounding her in this art group. In this text, she denounces the hypocrisy of men (probably referring to her lover, Raul Haussman, another artist from this movement), who want the 'New Woman' but have too much ego and are not ready to make the necessary changes in themselves. It is a humorous text in which she mocks 'The Painter', who, for example, feels diminished when he has to do the dishes. It is a precursor of contemporary feminist topics such as the division of chores and mental load. One of the artists from the movement, Hans Richter, remembered her as the person who brought food and drink to the group. This indicates the male members' attitude towards women as artists: they were not taken seriously.</p>
		<p>This art technique was frequently used in the Dada movement. It consisted of creating an artwork using fragments of pictures, sometimes with added painting and drawing, to reflect the fragmented state of the world. It is a way of mocking society or making a comment on it, through the use of popular images revisited in an unexpected way. Höch frequently used this technique, and continued to do so years after the Dada movement had disbanded.</p>



In this photo showing Raul Hausman and Hannah Höch, we can see behind Hausman Höch's fragmented and intricate piece *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany* (1919).

Look up the painting 'The Bouquet', by Hannah Höch. It is a good example of what a photomontage is. This is not a traditional, beautiful flower bouquet: we would not expect a bouquet of flowers to contain eyes. When we look at it, we may start to feel uneasy: it is impossible to escape the gaze of eyes which are always looking at us. Could this be a metaphor for the way in which society observes and judges us at all times, especially as women? What do you think?

ACTIVITY 5

Look up this photomontage by Höch, called *Das schöne Mädchen*.

What does the title mean in English? _____

Now describe the picture in German and give your opinion of it. Do you like it?

HELP BOX:

im Bild: in the picture

Man kann ... sehen: you can see ...

Es gibt ...: there is ...

auf der rechten Seite: on the right-hand side

auf der linken Seite: on the left-hand side

in der Mitte: in the middle

im Vordergrund: in the foreground

im Hintergrund: in the background

das Rad: wheel

Now look back at activity 4. Which topics do you think this artwork encompasses?

Creative task: The fun thing about collage is that anyone can do it. Cut out some magazine pictures and create your own collage. For example, you could cut out parts of faces, and a car, to create a human-faced car!

Challenge: Cut out some letters and add a German word to your work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mathilde Hersart is a French and Spanish teacher. Born in France, she is currently working full time in a London school. After a 4-year career in the art industry, Mathilde decided to become a languages teacher and started studying for a PGCE at the Institute of Education (UCL). During her training year, she realised that she could teach MFL through art, thus blending her previous career with her new one. With a strong interest in art and, specifically, women's art, she is dedicated to enthusing this passion in her students as she believes that art is not only a great way to remember new vocabulary but also a fantastic tool with which to immerse ourselves in the target-language culture and history.

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