

CROSSROADS

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter May, 2015

PAINTING IN 4 DIMENSIONS

Painting, from caveman times to the present day has been, in one way or another, an effort by man to gain some degree of control over life by capturing its essence. Cave drawings of animals, some researchers surmise, may have been an attempt by the artist to capture, and control, the spirit of the animals depicted, thus enabling the tribe's hunters to have some level of control over the animals being hunted.



In Greek and Roman art, the gods were personified to help people understand and so, to some degree, control the great forces of nature that dictate man's destiny.

Prehistoric paintings on cave walls and murals and mosaics on walls or floors from Greek and Roman times are rendered in flat two-dimensional images. European painting in the middle-ages followed in this tradition both in style and in the artists' intent as they actively searched for ways to understand life from a "spiritual" point of view.

Then came the renaissance. If nothing else, the "age of enlightenment" brought about a revolution in the way artists sought to represent the "reality" of the objects they were observing. Perspective was born. Now, like sculptors, painters would depict images in three dimensions. Perspective was an extraordinary development in art, but was it only a three dimensional illusion on a two-dimensional surface?

Whatever the case, artists would not be satisfied with a mere three dimensional representation of objects/life and, so, from the renaissance through to the early 20th century, and beyond, they searched for ways to better depict the "reality" in the objects they wished to represent.

Scientists, over the centuries, have also tried to make sense of, and explain, our world to us. According to the latest theories we live in an eleven dimensional universe, but we are only aware of interacting with three of these dimensions in our daily lives. That is, three dimensions if you do not include *time* as the 4th dimension. But some scientists, and artists, do consider time to be the 4th dimension, and also a measurable part of our reality. So, in an attempt to represent a truer "reality" in their subjects, artists in the early 20th century went about including the 4th dimension, i.e. *time*, in their paintings.

Four dimensions on a two-dimensional surface! How does this work? Take any sculpture, say, Michelangelo's David. This is an object you can walk around. And as you do so, your image of it changes at every angle you observe it from. It takes time to walk around an object. Thus, a free-standing object, in a way, includes the dimension of *time* – at least from the observer's point of view. So, if you wish to take in multi-images of an object, you have to move around it, or the object itself has to move as you observe it. Either way, time passes as you observe it.

This works for sculpture, but what about paintings on a flat surface? Enter early 20th century cubism, Picasso and Braque. In pursuit of a more complete interpretation of the objects they were representing, these artists tried, in part, to immerse their objects in "time". They interwove a number of views of an object into one another, just like the multi-images one gets by circling a sculpture. In this



"Violin" by Braque



"Dora Maar, Sitting" by Picasso

way, objects could be represented from many angles as if the viewer was moving around them. Thus "time", the fourth dimension, was also being represented on the two-dimensional surface of a painting!

Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons through the net!*

SITE OF THE MONTH:

Here is a good site on cubism with lots of reproductions:

http://www.artfactory.com/art_appreciation/art_movements/cubism.htm

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: It's been just over a year since we moved to Ichiban-cho. Settling in hasn't been difficult, and it really feels like we have been here much longer than we actually have been. In fact, our new location seems to suit our present mood, style and persona very well. It seems to reflect how we have matured over the years. Of course, all four locations we have been in up to now, including this one, have each had a very distinct character. But, I believe, each move has also been an indication of our constant growth.

Junko Says: Recently, I read a newspaper article saying some Japanese elementary and middle schools will use English math textbooks to teach math. These books are English translations of Japanese textbooks originally made for international schools or for foreign teachers to learn Japanese methods. But now usual Japanese schools will start to use them. Teachers have now started to realize students can learn English by simply repeating English phrases and expressions.



Mark Says Warmer weather has arrived and with the Golden Week holiday it is a great opportunity to spend some time outdoors. I stayed local during my break, so in addition to some quality time with my daughter I explored some of the sites and experiences that Matsuyama has to offer. I hope you all enjoyed your Golden Week holiday as well.

Aaron Says: This year has been a year of firsts for me in Japan. My first cherry blossom viewing, my first time eating pickled plums and my first golden week! It is always nice to experience something for the first time. What have you done for the first time this year? Something interesting, I hope!



Danielle dit; Le 1^{er} mai en France est un jour férié, la Fête du Travail. C'est donc un jour où pour commémorer la journée de travail, on ne travaille pas ! Le matin du 1^{er}, beaucoup de monde va cueillir du muguet dans la forêt. Le muguet est une plante avec des fleurs en forme de clochettes blanches qui sentent très bon et c'est une très bonne période pour en faire de jolis bouquets.

ACROSS

- 3 beyond ordinary or usual
- 5 imagine to be the case
- 6 an early 20th century art movement
- 7 make capable or possible
- 8 therefore
- 10 shown as in a drawing or picture
- 12 length, width, height, time (and beyond)
- 14 to cover or sink completely
- 15 attribute human qualities to something

DOWN

- 1 a representation of 3-dimensional objects
- 2 before recorded history
- 4 command and control
- 9 (in art) to show, e.g. as in a picture
- 10 that which will happen, predetermined
- 11 locked together as if by weaving
- 13 art work made with small colored stones, etc. [\(print version here\)](#)

Play A Game!

