**Lesson 10**

**Abstract Expressionism**

**THE COURSE TEXT and WORKSHEET (required to be completed and submitted)**

**Name and parallel group (A or B): ……………………………………………………………………………..**

**Date of submission: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

*Before you read*

**Warm-up questions**

What is ‘Abstract Expressionism’ so important for American artists? Was

‘Abstract Expressionism’ the continuation of ‘Expressionism’? What are

the most important characteristics of ‘Abstract Expressionism’?

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

• Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

**Group work (classroom activity)**

Discuss the following terms in groups and compare your answers with

your partners.

• Universal acclaim • Artist’s identity

• Great depression • Imitation

• Action painting • Direct expression

*Part Ι. Reading*

**Abstract Expressionism**

[1] ‘Abstract Expressionism’ developed in the context of diverse, overlapping

sources and inspirations. Many of the young artists had made their start in

the 1930s. The ‘Great Depression’ yielded two popular art movements,

‘Regionalism’ and ‘Social Realism’, neither of which satisfied this group

of artists' desire to find a content rich with meaning and redolent of social

responsibility, yet free from explicit politics. But it was the exposure to

and assimilation of European modernism that set the stage for the most

advanced American art.

[2] The crisis of war was a key to understanding the concerns of the

‘Abstract Expressionists’. These young artists, troubled by man's dark side

and anxiously aware of human irrationality and vulnerability, wanted to

express their concerns in a new art of meaning and substance. Direct

contact with European artists had been increased as a result of World War

II, which caused so many to seek refuge in the U.S.

[3] Their early works of ‘Abstract Expressionist’ feature pictographic and

biomorphic elements transformed into personal code. Jungian psychology

was compelling too, in its assertion of the collective unconscious.

Directness of expression was paramount, best achieved through lack of

premeditation.

[4] The first generation of ‘Abstract Expressionism’ flourished between

1943 and the mid 50s. The movement effectively shifted the art world's

focus from Europe (specifically Paris) to New York in the post-war years.

The paintings were seen widely in traveling exhibitions and through

publications. In the wake of ‘Abstract Expressionism’, new generations of

artists—both American and European—were profoundly marked by the

breakthroughs made by the first generation, and went on to create their

own important expressions based on, but not imitative of, those who

planned the way.

[5] In 1947, *Pollock* developed a radical new technique, pouring and

dripping thinned paint onto raw canvas laid on the ground (instead of

traditional methods of painting in which pigment is applied by brush to

stretched canvas positioned on an easel). The paintings were entirely

nonobjective and shocking to many viewers. *De Kooning,* too, was

developing his own version of a highly gestural style, alternating between

abstract work and powerful figurative images. Other colleagues, including

*Krasner* and *Kline*, were equally engaged in creating an art of dynamic

gesture in which every inch of a picture is fully charged.

[6] For ‘Abstract Expressionists’, the authenticity or value of a work lay in

its directness and immediacy of expression. A painting is meant to be a

revelation of the artist's authentic identity. The gesture, the artist's

‘signature’, is evidence of the actual process of the work's creation. It is in

reference to this aspect of the work that critic *Harold Rosenberg* coined the

term ‘Action painting’ in 1952.

*Part ΙΙ. Word study: Pronunciations, definitions and examples*

**Anxious (adj.) /**ˈæŋ(k)ʃəs/

Experiencing worry, unease, or nervousness, typically about an imminent

event or something with an uncertain outcome.

*Don't be* ***anxious*** *about the exams; they would be easy if you study enough.*

**Assertion (n.) /**əˈsə(r)ʃ(ə)n/

(1) The action of stating something or exercising authority confidently and

forcefully. (2) A confident and forceful statement of fact or belief.

*This strong* ***assertion*** *caused a great uproar.*

**Authenticity (n.) /**ɔːθɛnˈtɪsɪti/

(1) Undisputed credibility. (2) Being able to control everything.

*She ignored your* ***authenticity*** *and told whatever she wanted.*

**Breakthrough (n.) /**ˈbreɪkθruː/

(1) A significant and dramatic overcoming of a perceived obstacle,

allowing the completion of a process. (2) An instance of achieving success

in a particular sphere or activity.

*After all these problems, the passing score was a real* ***breakthrough****.*

**Compel (v.) /**kəmˈpel/

Force or oblige (someone) to do something.

*She has a free will; do not* ***compel*** *her to marry him.*

**Drip (v.) /**drip/

Let fall or be so wet as to shed small drops of liquid.

*This nasal* ***drip*** *is the best known drug for your ailment.*

**Flourish (v.) /**ˈflʌrɪʃ/

(Of a person, animal) Grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way.

*Love is not a plant which will* ***flourish*** *naturally in human's soil; it must*

*be watered from above.*

**Irrationality (n.)** /irraˈənæliti/

The state of being irrational, lacking powers of understanding.

*Her behaviors are the real examples of absolute* ***irrationality****.*

**Pigment (n.) /**ˈpigmənt/

The natural coloring matter of animal or plant tissue.

*The color of skin depends mainly on melanin, which is a brownish*

***pigment*** *produced in the outer layer of skin.*

**Premeditation (n.) /**ˌpriːmɛdɪˈteɪʃn/

Planning or plotting in advance of acting.

*My behaviors were natural, spontaneous, requiring no* ***premeditation****s.*

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**Redolent (adj.) /**ˈredlənt/

(1) Strongly reminiscent or suggestive of (something). (2) Fragrant or

sweet-smelling.

*His office was* ***redolent*** *of Brazilian coffee.*

**Vulnerability (n.) /**ˈvəln(ə)rəbəliti/

(1) The state of being vulnerable or exposed. (2) The state of being

susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm.

*I am acutely aware of the* ***vulnerability*** *of my back.*

*Part ΙΙΙ. Exercises*

**A. Open questions**

Based on the text you have read, answer the following questions orally.

1- How did ‘Abstract Expressionism’ form in 1930s?

2- What is the difference between ‘Expressionism’ and ‘Abstract

Expressionism’?

3- Why did ‘Abstract Expressionism’ shift the art world's focus from

Paris to New York?

4- What is ‘Action painting’?

5- How were early works of ‘Abstract Expressionist’ painters?

**B. Comprehension check**

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T”

before true statements and “F” before false ones.

…..... 1. The Great depression and European modernism yielded

Abstract Expressionism in America.

……. 2. Abstract Expressionists were purely political artists.

……. 3. Abstract Expressionists troubled by man's dark side wanted to

express their concerns.

……. 4. Jungian psychology played an important role in formation of

Abstract Expressionism.

……. 5. The second generation of Abstract Expressionists went on to

create their own important expressions imitating the first

generation.

**C. Multiple choice questions**

Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate

answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items.

1- As the most advanced American art school, ‘Abstract Expressionism’

was …………….

A) against ‘Social Realism’ and ‘Regionalism’.

B) followed just by American artists.

C) a new way of expressing anti-bourgeois perspectives.

D) in favor of social responsibility.

2- ‘Abstract Expressionism’ was in its peak in …………….

A) 1910s. B) 1920s.

C) 1930s . D) 1940s.

3- ‘Code’ in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to …………….

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A) language. B) mode.

C) model. D) art.

4- All of the followings are the helpful factors for flourishing ‘Abstract

Expressionism’ except …………….

A) anti-war considerations.

B) immediacy of expression.

C) direct contact with European artists.

D) the period of ‘Great depression’.

**D. Word formation**

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the following table.

Make necessary changes.

**Noun Verb Adjective Adverb**

anxiety anxious anxiously

assertion assert assertive assertively

authenticity authenticate authentic authentically

(ir)rationality (ir)rationize (ir)rational (ir)rationally

1- I spent a(n) ……………. night waiting for the test results

2- When you have not seen the documents, you cannot judge so

…………….

3- The teacher ……………. me to correct the quiz papers

4- Many people still ……………. luxury purchases as life investments.

5- The boss ……………. that the salary would not be raised this year

due to economic problems of the company

**E. Synonym finding**

Find a single word in the passage which means:

1 various (para.1) ……………………..

2 duty, task (para.1) …………………….

3 disaster, big problem (para.2) …………………….

4 weakness (para.2) …………………….

5 forceful, undeniable (para.3) ……………………..

6 change, alter (para.3) ……………………..

7 center, heart (para.4) ……………………..

8 deeply (para.4) ……………………..

9 advance, success (para.4) …………………….

10 active, lively (para.5) ……………………..

**F. Matching**

Match the words in column Ι with their appropriate equivalents in

column ΙΙ. Insert the letters in the parentheses provided. There are more

choices in column ΙΙ than required.

**column Ι column ΙΙ**

1 redolent (……) a. contact

2 satisfy (……) b. widen, extend

3 exposure (……) c. wisdom

4 rationality (……) d. edition

5 stretch (……) e. personality

6 version (……) f. fragrant

7 identity (……) g. biomorphic

h. please, convince

**G. Cloze test (classroom activity)**

There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best

choice for each blank and mark it in your book.

During World War II modernist artists, writers, and poets, as well as

important collectors and dealers, …..(1)…. from Europe for safe refuge to

the United States. Many of those who did not flee perished. Among the

artists and collectors who …..(2)…. in New York during the war were

*Hans Namuth*, *Yves Tanguy* and *Kay Sage*. A few artists, notably Pablo

Picasso, Henri Matisse and Pierre Bonnard remained in France and …..

(3)….. The post-war period left the capitals of Europe in upheaval with an

urgency to economically and physically …..(4)….. and to politically

regroup. In Paris, formerly the center of European culture and capital of

the art world, the climate for art was a …..(5)….. and New York replaced

Paris as the new center of the art world.

**1**. A) found B) went C) escaped D) turned

**2**. A) arrived B) remained C) closed D) set

**3**. A) revived B) survived C) evolved D) revolved

**4**. A) review B) rewrite C) return D) rebuild

**5**. A) surprise B) disaster C) disease D) deformity

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