Course Learning Outcomes for Unit V

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Discuss two-dimensional artwork.
    1.1   Describe the characteristics of collage.

2. Explain the characteristics of two-dimensional works of art.
    2.1   Arrange a two-dimensional collage.

Course/Unit Learning Outcomes	Learning Activity
1.1	Unit Lesson Chapter 21 Unit V Project
2.1	Unit Lesson Chapter 21 Video: *The Art of Mary Fedden RA* (Segment 4 of 7) Unit V Project

Required Unit Resources

Chapter 21: The Modern World: 1800–1945

In order to access the following resource, click the link below.

APV Films (Producer). (2000). *The art of Mary Fedden RA* (Segment 4 of 7) [Video file]. Retrieved from
https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?auth=CAS&url=https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPl
aylists.aspx?wID=273866&xtid=188426&loid=568690

The transcript for this video can be found by clicking on "Transcript" in the gray bar at the top of the video in the Films on Demand database.

Unit Lesson

Creating New Meaning with Collage

According the textbook, collage comes from the French term for "glue" and "is the practice of pasting shapes cut from real-world sources such as magazines, newspapers, wallpaper, and fabric into one surface" (Getlein, 2020, p. 557). As you see in this poster, now, instead of glue, Photoshop and other apps are used to assemble images and texture to make 2D art and design. If we were to dissect this poster, you can see it was made using layers in Photoshop. For the background layer, a photo of a pool is used. A filter was most likely applied to the photo to knock down the colors in the image. Then, in another layer, the logo was added as well as text announcing the pool is closing. On the bottom of the poster, you can see another layer was added for the white box with text describing why the pool was closing. Without these added layers, it would just be a photo of a pool, but with the added layers, it becomes a notice about a pool closing.

This digital collage is more pleasant and not as politically charged as collages of the past. Your textbook mentions how paper collage was first used by Picasso and George Braque to create a new visual reality (Getlein, 2020). Before Picasso and Braque, other artists used collage as well to create new realities and meanings.

In *Family Portrait* by W. L. Germon in 1855, we can see how multiple salted paper prints were cut and collaged together to create this family portrait. There is not much information on the artwork available, but we can project that the family might have chosen to do the collage, since in 1855, it took much longer to take a photograph, so the children could have been moving. The parents might have wanted to collage the best images from the shoot together. Another reason for the collage might have been because one of the children had died, so this was a way to combine all the children into one image. You can see how the artist made a new meaning out of the work by collaging the images together. Individually, they would have just been portraits of people, but collaged together, it is a portrait of a family.

(Germon, 1855)

(Anonymous, n.d.)

Another example of collage from the 1850s is this valentine made by an unknown artist. You can see how lace, paper prints of flowers, and people are used to create the card. This can be compared to modern-day scrapbooking. People often scrapbook to remember an event such as a birth of a child or a family trip in a one- or two-page layout. Scrapbooking, as in collage, is a way to incorporate many different paper elements, such as tickets, photos, gum wrappers, and craft paper into one layout. Collage also can be a form of entertainment and a source of joy. Like the scrapbookers, the creator of the valentine might have had a lot of joy as he or she made the valentine for their beloved.

Here is another example of how collage can be used to create new meaning and, in the process, fool the public. Aberdeen Portraits No. 1 was created by George Washington Wilson in 1857. Historical records note that Wilson had spent considerable time working on photo negatives of the city's elite. At the suggestion of his friend George Walker, a bookseller, Wilson cut out and pasted a selection of portrait heads in a tight oval, placing the largest and most important figures at the center; then he re-photographed the collage. Displayed in the window of Walker's bookshop, the completed photomontage attracted immediate attention. Remarkably, some passersby did not realize that the photograph was composed of separate portraits, and Wilson and Walker received inquiries about when, where, and how so many people were photographed. This can be compared to today how portraits of elite families, such as the Kardashians, are often composed of individual images taken separately of the family members and then Photoshopped together later.
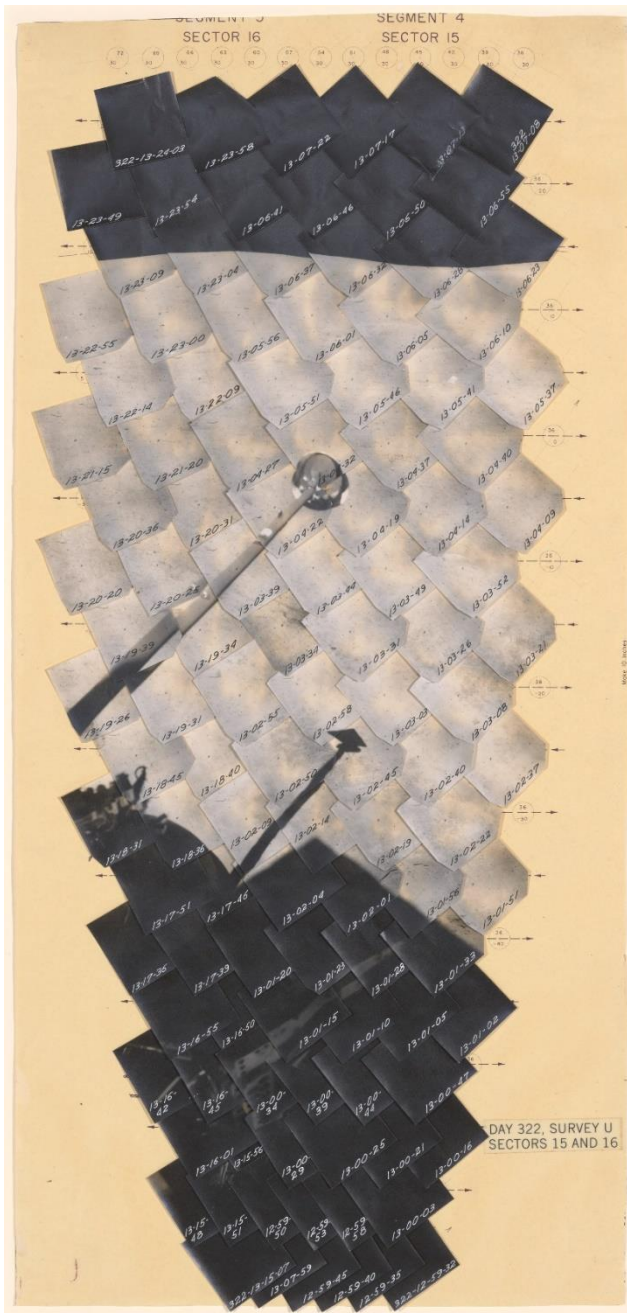

(Wilson, 1857)

Jumping forward to the 19th century, we can see how collage is used in political movements, such as the Dadaist movement. As described in your textbook, the Dadaist movement was formed in Switzerland in 1916. The Dadaist movement was against many things, including the Nazi regime. On this Dadaist poster to the left,

(Van Doesburg & Schwitters, 1922)

you can see written "Dada est contre le futur, Dada est mort, Dada est idiot, vive Dada!" ("Dada is against the future, Dada is dead, Dada is idiotic, Long live Dada!"). The bright red DADA text in the background with the black text layered over it also helps make the words more charged and unsetting to the eye.

To see one of the best examples of an anti-Nazi Dadist poster, look up *Adolf The Superman* by John Heartfield. In the work, Heartfield, collaged a portrait of Adolf Hitler with a chest X-ray and inserted an esophagus and belly full of gold. By combining these images together, Heartfield created a politically charged poster that infuriated the Nazis. Originally an AIZ Magazine cover, a German count printed the work on a poster and had it hung all over Berlin. Heartfield was subsequently beaten but was luckily able to flee Germany to Prague. His work shows how collaging images together can create new meaning and even evoke emotion, including rage.
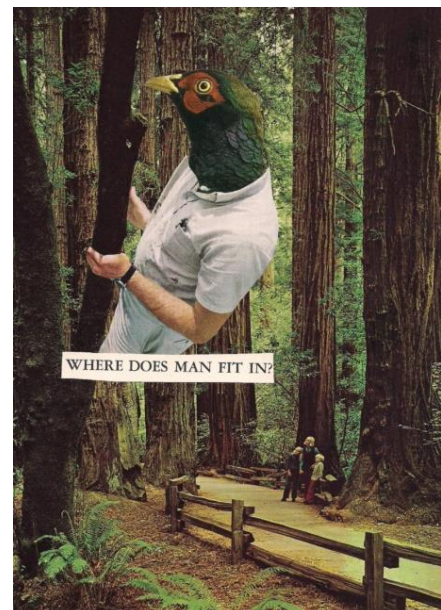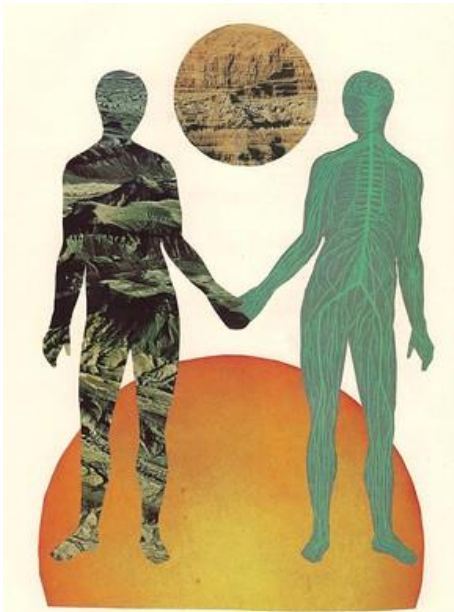
(United States Geological Survey, 1967)

Collage can also be used to document as seen in *Day 322, Survey U, Sectors 15 and 16* by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (n.d.), "Starting in 1966, NASA launched a series of unmanned expeditions called Surveyor that were intended to determine the character of the lunar terrain prior to the manned Apollo landings that began in 1969. During the Surveyor Missions, detailed topographic images (recorded by a tracking camera mounted to the lunar probe) were beamed to television monitors at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. The images on the monitors were then photographed, and the photographic prints were assembled into mosaics by members of the USGS at JPL" (para. 1).You can see how individually the images almost look like paint chips, but when collaged together, you can see the shadow and parts of the tracker camera and probe as well as the surface of the moon. This can be compared to modern panorama function found on cell phone cameras.

For this unit's assignment, you will make your own collage. For inspiration, here are collages by Gino Andres that were found on Flickr. Both collages were made in 2011 using magazine clipping. In the first collage, entitled, "Where does man fit in?", you can see how Andres created a surreal birdman by placing a larger-than-life man with a bird's head peeking behind a tree in the woods. Gino creates visual interest by placing the birdman in the line of sight of figures in the lower right corner of the collage. It is almost like the figures are observing the birdman and wondering, "Where does man fit in?" This is an approach you can use when creating your collage. You can incorporate text and images and create and new meaning or strengthen an existing message, in this case, "Where does man fit in?"

In his collage, *Friends*, you can see how Andres cut up images to create new shapes and textures. You can see on the top how he cut a photograph of a dessert landscape into a circle, so it now looks like a planet. He also cut two figures out and placed the figures so they are holding hands on what appears to be a sun. The sun looks like he either colored the gradient or found it pre-existing. Keep that in mind when you make your collage. It can be found material, but you can also draw or paint in elements. For example, you may want to cut out an image of a tree and then draw in a bird's nest and other wildlife.

(Andres, 2011-a)

(Andres, 2011-b)

You can be creative with your collage. Like the examples presented in this lesson, you can make a collage meant to inform or educate, like the pool closing poster. You could also create a collage that incorporates your family photographs like in *Family Portrait*, or maybe there is a holiday coming up, and you want to use this opportunity to create something for someone else like in the valentine example. You can be as crafty as you would like. Maybe you have a special interest like a musical group or sports team and would like to use this as an opportunity to create a work that incorporates your hobby. Maybe you have a message or belief that you want to get across like in the Dadaist example.

You can use whatever materials are available around you to create your collage by hand, or you can also create your collage digitally (like the poster about the pool closing), using PowerPoint or an application you may already use. Remember, whatever you create, you will be giving those materials new meaning.

References

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Anonymous. (n.d.). *Valentine* [Collage]. Retrieved from https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/711212?&searchField=All&ft=collage&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=4

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