

AMEDEO MODIGLIANI

1884-1920

1. Introduction

Words we will use today:

- Figurative art: art which has features that can be related to the real world
- elongation: lengthening or stretching

2. Photograph of Modigliani & Self-Portrait, 1919

Amedeo Modigliani was an Italian artist who worked in France. Known as a figurative artist, he became known for paintings and sculptures in a modern style which included mask-like and elongated faces. He died in Paris at the early age of 36 of many reasons; but in part because he was poor, had addictions, and worked too hard.

Modigliani is known to have drawn and painted from a very early age; and his mother helped by taking him to Florence to see the famous Italian Renaissance artists, and later signed him up with the best painting artist in Livorno.

This is a self-portrait, or a painting that Modigliani drew of himself. What do you think he is doing in this painting? Does the painting look like the photograph? What is different about him in the self portrait? ... (elongated and more oval shaped face, almond shaped eyes, thinner arched eyebrows, some features are erased).

3. Caryatid, 1913 (carry-ah-tid)

Modigliani created many drawings of women with their arms above their heads as if supporting something, all of which were titled “caryatid”. This is a column in the form of a sculptured female figure, sometimes shown in buildings in Greece. This work shows a female form holding something up or being crushed by it.

4. Head, 1911-1913

Many of Modigliani’s carvings are tall and long, like a column, and resemble heads of caryatids—they seem to have been done with buildings or architecture in mind. Like other artists of this time, Modigliani dreamed of doing great things, and had great ideas but never completed what he wanted to do. The closest he came to it was when he had an art show of seven stone heads together at the Paris Salon in 1912, which he titled simply “Heads – a decorative ensemble.” What do you notice about this stone sculpture? ... (long nose, almond shaped eyes, pursed together lips, shape of head is not life-like)

5. Head, 1911-12

This may be even more simple in design, this carving looks more like an African tribal carving. Modigliani once said, “To do any work, I must have a living person. I must be able to see him

opposite me.” Do you think the the artist created these stone heads to look like people he knew? What things about this head make it look different than someone you see in real life?

6. Women’s Head, 1912

How would you be able to tell you that this is a woman?(her hair)

7. Madame Pompadour, 1915 & Paul Guillaume (art dealer, 1916

After 1915, Modigliani only painted, and made some of his best work.

What do you notice in these portraits? ...(the faces are flat, shape of eyes, twisted noses, pinched lips and long necks)

His interest in African masks shows- with the almond eye shapes and flat faces, and he picked dark browns and gray backgrounds, but the people he painted show much personality. What details are interesting in these portraits? ...(the feathers on the woman’s hat, her necklace, the man’s hands)

8. The Sculptor Lipchitz & His Wife, 1916 & The Young Apprentice, 1918

8a) Lipchitz was an artist in Paris, who paid Modigliani to paint a picture of him and his wife on the day they were married.

8b) Modigliani travelled to southern France in 1918, which changed his style of art some. What do you see in the picture of the Young Apprentice that is different than in some of his other works?

...(Brighter colors, child looks more bored instead of having a larger personality which is more Modigliani’s style)

9. Mario, 1920

This portrait of Mario Varvogli, a musician and friend in Paris, was his last painting – it was on his easel when he died.

What do you notice in this painting?

...(downward curve of left shoulder and arm, dark and blended in background, sitting not upright but to the side)

What details do you notice?

(long nose arches some, puffy face, hasn’t shaved his face)

10. Portrait of Hanka Zborowska, 1917

Do you think the woman who sat for this painting really looked like this or is this Modigliani’s way of expressing how she looked?

This painting is a good example of the long stretched out figures which we will be exploring in our self-portraits

11. Self Portrait Inspired by Modigliani

Imagine you were stretched out like taffy, or looked into a fun house mirror - how would you look different? What would be the same? We will show you the steps to create your own Modigliani inspired self-portrait!