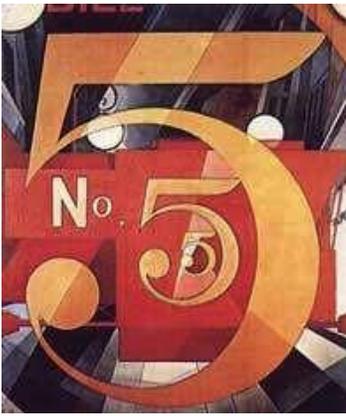


## Meet the Artist

Demuth vs. Picasso



**ARTIST: DEMUTH, CHARLES (1883-1935)**

**PRINT: FIGURE FIVE IN GOLD**                      20<sup>th</sup> Century America    Date: 1928

**Size: 36" X 29 ¾"**                      **Medium: Oil on composition board**

**ARTIST** Charles Demuth, the first American Cubist-Realist, was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Paris, London, and Berlin. Beginning with watercolor landscapes and flowers, Demuth moved on to book illustrations and theatrical works. Later he developed two distinct abstract styles. One style was soft, with symbolic forms that were often enclosed in circular frames. The other style was hard, encompassing flat, prismatic shapes, crisscrossing diagonals, and streams of light. His subjects were industrial motifs, ships, and simple country architecture. Using both oil and tempera, Demuth created a literal transposition of nature.

**PRINT** - The Figure Five in Gold was inspired by a poem by his friend, William Carlos Williams. The gold five echoes against three superimposed red rectangles. The blue and gray diagonals move toward the center of the piece. The lights, traffic signal, and theater marquee create a circular movement. This combination of movement gives the feeling of teetering on a curb amid light and noise. The effect resembles Dr. Williams' poetry.

This poem inspired the painting:

### The Great Figure

Among the rain  
And lights  
I saw the figure 5  
In gold  
On a red  
Firetruck  
Moving  
Tense  
Unheeded  
To gong clangs  
Siren howls  
And wheels rumbling  
Through the dark city.

**ARTIST: PICASSO, PABLO** (pi-KAHS-oh, PAH-blow) (1881-1973)

**PRINT: GUERNICA** Date: 1937

**Size: 131cmX175cm Medium: Oil on Canvas**

**ARTIST** - Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain. He lived a long and very productive life of 92 years. He experimented in painting, drawing, ceramics and sculpture.

Picasso's father, a professor at the Barcelona Academy of Art, was his first teacher. By the time he was 16 years old, he was working on his own. Throughout his career he passed through many periods which reflected what was going on in his own life. His 'blue period' from 1901-1909 for example, occurred when he was lonely, cold and hungry. His paintings of that period show very thin invalids, beggars and outcasts portrayed with only a few colors.

Between 1906-07, Picasso, and his friend, Georges Braque, invented Cubism, which led to modern art. Picasso wanted to 'free' the form in art. He achieved this in his paintings by breaking apart the object and assembling the parts in an odd way - emphasizing geometric shapes.

**PRINT** - Guernica was painted in 1937 to protest the Nazi bombing of the small town of Guernica in Spain. The painting is done entirely in black, white and gray. It places the visual emphasis on the message of man's unfairness to other men. The lack of color creates a sad mood.

Picasso used a system of symbols drawn from Spanish folk culture. By using flat symbols, which represent figures, Picasso could express extremes of pain. The people and animals are very important. Destruction is only seen in a flaming building and some crumbling walls. Pain, agony, and chaos are everywhere. The design is held together by the triangular shapes in the composition.

Guernica , Picasso's most dramatic work, combines elements of expressionism and cubism.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you see in each painting?
2. Do these objects look real? Explain.
3. Where do you see shapes? What kind?
4. What is different about these paintings?
5. What do you think the yellow circles represent in *FIGURE FIVE IN GOLD*?
6. How many numbers do you see in Demuth's picture?
7. What can you find in these two pictures?
8. Why do you think these artists painted their pictures this way?

#### RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Draw a picture using numbers as objects
2. Draw a face that shows feelings, like Picasso's faces in Guernica. Hint: show teeth, wide open eyes, hair standing up.
3. Make a picture where the objects are composed of circles, squares and/or triangles

Sources: <http://www.getinvolvedineducation.com/pdfs/For-Program-Managers/Meet-the-Masters-Program-Manual.pdf>