

Hannah Hoch

Directions - Read the article about the featured artist. Answer the questions on a separate page. As you read make notes any words or concepts that you unsure of their meaning. Your will be working in the style of this artist. Please ask questions if you do not understand something.

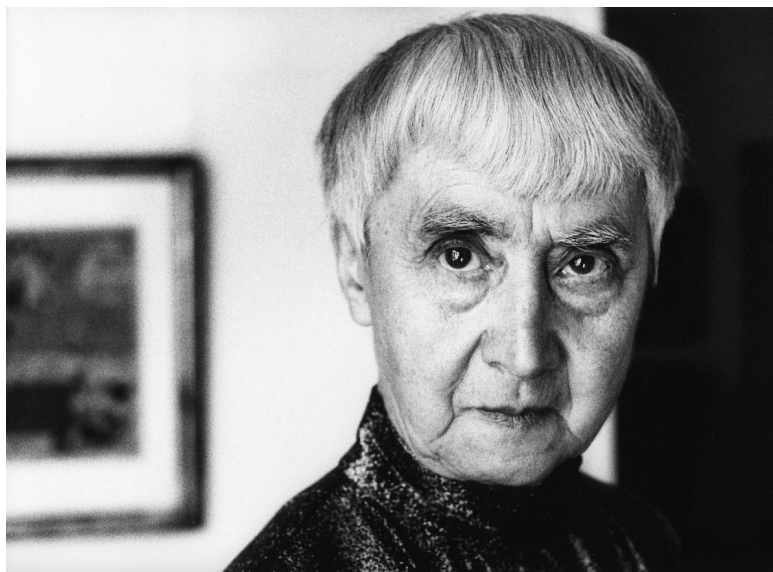
Vocabulary that you will see in this article -

Photomontages - Photomontage is the process and the result of making a composite photograph by cutting, gluing, rearranging and overlapping two or more photographs into a new image. Sometimes the resulting composite image is photographed so that a final image may appear as a seamless photographic print.

Dada - is an artistic movement in modern art that started around World War I. Its purpose was to ridicule the meaninglessness of the modern world. Dada artists worked with the absurd.

Hannah Hoch

Alina Cohen
Artsy.net



Photomontages were the original remix. In the early 20th century, a group of European artists spliced together images they'd found in popular media, creating singular artworks via a strategy of sampling. The results show both individual statements by their makers and cross-sections of visual culture from a particular historical moment. While these creators called their movement by the nonsense word "Dada" ("DADA, as for it, it smells of nothing, it is nothing, nothing, nothing," said artist Francis Picabia), their strange new artworks offered significant polemical ideas about gender, politics, and creativity during a particularly tumultuous era in Western history.

Hannah Höch, one of the few female members recognized by the movement, offered a refreshing antithesis to such macho constructions. Her own photomontages offer kaleidoscopic visions of German culture during the interwar era, often from a distinctly queer, feminist perspective.

Höch was born in 1889 in Gotha in central Germany. In 1912, she moved to Berlin to attend the School of Applied Arts. She studied glassworking and book arts design, but took a brief hiatus from her studies during the war, when she worked at

the Red Cross. After the war was over, in 1915, Höch met Hausmann, who introduced her to his circle of Dada artists and became her lover.

Despite Höch's significant skill, Hausmann's cohort didn't take her seriously, and nearly rejected her participation in the First International Dada Fair in Berlin in 1920, a major inaugural showcase for the movement. Painter Hans Richter, to cite one denigrating example, designated her a "good girl." But it wasn't only Dadaists who dismissed Höch because of her gender: As late as 1951, the American artist Robert Motherwell

failed to include her in his study of the movement, titled *Dada Painters and Poets*.

In a catalogue essay for a major 1997 Höch show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Kristin Makhholm describes how, after a 1918 vacation to the Baltic Sea, Höch and Hausmann began creating photomontages. In the aftermath of World War I, during Weimar rule, they were inundated with propaganda in the form of posters, pamphlets, and advertisements. "They discovered a type of commemorative military picture with the heads of different soldiers pasted in, a practice with deep roots in folk tradition and popular consumer imagery,"

Makholm writes. “With photomontage [Dada artists] could call into question the very ways that society viewed itself.”

One of Höch’s early works, *Cut with the Dada Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany* (1919), is among her most enduring. The poster-sized photomontage features a riot of overlapping images so diverse that the composition at first appears chaotic and impossible to parse—a perfect aesthetic for an artist concerned with the nonsensical noise of modern life, a sentiment reflected by the work’s title.

Upon closer inspection, two distinct groups of pictures emerge: those of people and those of machines. Both jostle for space, evoking the 20th-century tension between humanity and mechanization. Overall, the artwork exudes the frenetic energy of a society emerging from its deadliest conflict and contending with rapid industrialization. A map of Europe in the lower right corner indicates a distinctly Continental sense of angst (and also highlights, according to *The Guardian*, the countries where women could vote at the time).

Of course, Germany's problems were only just beginning. Throughout the 1920s, the country's finances became increasingly unstable, leading to mass inflation. Despite political and economic unrest, German women gained suffrage in 1918, and the Weimar Republic ushered in an era of somewhat greater gender equality. At least in the media, new images of liberated women began to appear (whether that portrayal was a reality is still up for debate). Although women could work, their labor conditions were often subpar. According to scholar Maud Lavin, "behind the New Woman myths of flexibility and women's economic opportunities, legal rights, and political participation continued to be circumscribed." Even as they entered the workforce, women received the lowest-paying jobs and often had to retain all their duties as homemakers.

Höch addressed such gendered discrimination in photomontages such as *The Beautiful Girl* (1920). In the work, a woman has not a head, but a lightbulb. A car tire and a lever box her in on either side. BMW logos multiply behind her, while a hand holding a circular pocket watch emerges from behind a pouf of hair. Corporations and new technologies, apparently, have overtaken the subject's individuality, while the clock suggests how time and labor were being monetized in new ways.



Hannah Höch

Cut with the Dada Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany, 1919

Name _____ Date _____ Per _____

Hannah Hoch

Words or Concepts that you are unsure of their meaning.

Review Questions - These questions are pulled directly out of the reading.

1. Artists spliced together images they'd found in _____.
2. The results show both _____ by their makers and cross-sections of _____ from a particular historical moment.
3. While these creators called their movement by the nonsense word " _____ " (" _____, as for it, it smells of nothing, it is nothing, nothing, nothing," said artist Francis Picabia), their strange new artworks offered **significant polemical ideas about gender, politics, and creativity** during a particularly tumultuous era in Western history.
4. Dadaists who dismissed Höch because of her _____.

Reflection questions NOT found in the reading.

5. What popular source of media would an artist today use to find images?

Name _____ Per _____ Date _____

Draw in the missing pieces for your creature.



Wo(Man) Meets Machine

Brainstorming

Make a list of 20 different types of machines

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Make a list of 20 different types of people. Examples -
Cowboy, Boy 5 years old, Rasta

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

If your Wo(Man) machine could have a super power what would it be? _____

Make a list of 5 emotions or character traits. Example - Cautious, sporty, frustrated, sweet.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

**Use the items in all these
list to help push your
ideas beyond the first
reaction.**

Wo(Man) Meets Machine

For this project you are required to work in the style of Hanah Hoch. Use sources from popular media (magazines) to find images that you will use to collage into **3 images** of Wo(Man) and machine.



Step 1 - Complete the brainstorming packet with the list of ideas for your pieces

Step 2 - You will need 3 pieces of 9" x 12" drawing paper.

Step 3 - Use magazines to find images of humans that you can turn into machines. Your images should not be too small. You may need to find several images of different objects or humans to complete each of the three images.

Step 4 - Collage your pieces together. You may need to draw in parts that you could not find in magazines or parts that do not exist.

Step 5 - Title each image in the three part series. Write the title and your name in the bottom right corner.