

# Futurism

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

There were many influences on the development of futurism. In this lesson, you will cover:

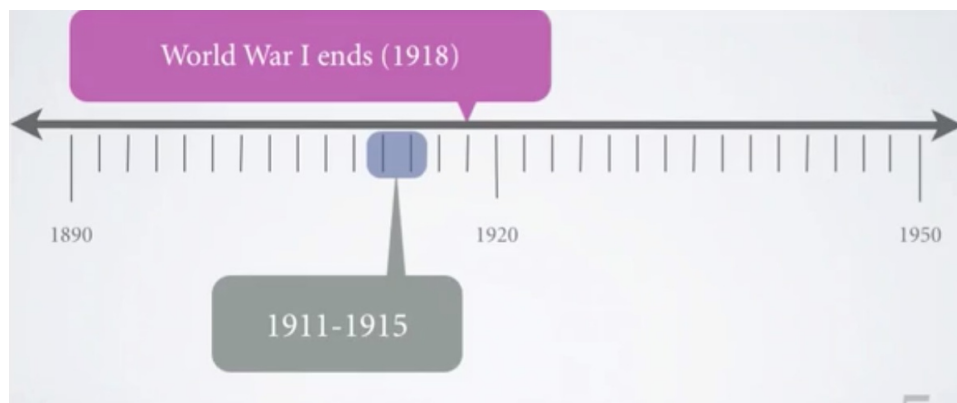


### BIG IDEA

Futurism began as a literary movement in 1909 with Filippo Marinetti's *The Futurist Manifesto*.

## 1. Period and Location: Futurism

The artwork in this lesson is from the years 1911 to 1915, as highlighted in the timeline below. It is geographically located in Rome, Italy.



## 2. Futurism

**Futurism** was an artistic movement that began and developed mostly within Italy, although its influence spread to Russia in the form of Russian futurism. It expanded into England in the form of British **Vorticism**, which was a hybrid that combined the geometry of Cubism and the dynamism of Futurism. Futurism also spread into architecture; futurist architecture is a separate genre in and of itself, not to be confused with art deco architecture, which, though considered futurist in its time, is not directly related to futurism. As a style, futurism involves elements of light, shape, essential forms, and revealed architectural elements.

Futurism began as a literary movement in 1909 with *The Futurist Manifesto* by Filippo Marinetti. This movement praised the future, youth, speed, technology, imagery of mechanical objects, such as airplanes and cars, imagery of industry and industrial cities, and violence. It distanced itself from the past with such notable quotations as: "A speeding automobile is more beautiful than the Nike of Samothrace." It was influential on

the development of fascism in Italy.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### **Futurism**

An early 20th-century art movement characterized by themes that celebrate technology.

##### **Vorticism**

An artistic and literary movement in England that was influenced by Futurism and was most active before WWI.

## **2a. “Unique Forms of Continuity in Space”**

This first image is an example of futurist sculpture and one of the most important at that.



**Unique Forms of Continuity in Space by Umberto Boccioni**

**1913**

**Bronze**

Titled “Unique Forms of Continuity in Space,” the above image shows the influence of Cubism and how it breaks the image apart into more discrete elements, creating multiple views. Each of the views contributes to the whole in how they depict speed, movement, and a certain flow.



#### DID YOU KNOW

“Unique Forms of Continuity in Space” is similar to the Nike of Samothrace. Sometimes it may be

compared to the Heisman football trophy awarded in American college football.

Inspired by synthetic Cubism's use of unconventional materials, this statue was originally made of plaster before being cast in bronze after Boccioni's enlistment in the Italian army and death in World War I. Boccioni began his career in painting, and, after being exposed to Cubism while in Paris, he developed his style, which has come to be so closely associated with Futurism.

## 2b. "The Street Enters the House"

Below is an example of "The Street Enters the House."



The Street Enters the House by Umberto Boccioni

1911

Oil on canvas

Boccioni combines the geometric forms of Cubism with the sensation of dynamism in how the forms and figures seem to move and bend around the figure of a woman in the foreground. There is a sense of anxiety, noise, and energy in the image, and it captures the spirit of revolution, violence, and social upheaval that was closely tied to the futurist movement.

## 2c. "Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash"

Boccioni was trained in the divisionist technique of Post-Impressionism by the Italian artist Giacomo Balla, who also taught Gino Severini this same technique. It involves separating brush strokes into individual blotches of color that blend together from a distance.



Balla's painting of dynamism, sometimes just called "Dog on a Leash," is a humorous example of important defining elements of Futurism, specifically speed and dynamism.



**Dog on a Leash by Giacomo Balla**

**1912**

**Oil on canvas**

To articulate this, instead of using a car, airplane, or another fast object, he chose a dachshund going on a walk with his master. The dog's cute little legs, ears, and tail are a flurry of activity that mirrors the action of its master.

Boccioni was inspired by the chronophotography work of Étienne-Jules Marey. By incorporating motion blur into his painting, as well as the striation of the ground underneath the subjects, Boccioni convincingly captures the appearance of speed and motion. Gino Severini was a student of Boccioni, and he signed *The Futurist Manifesto*. This **manifesto** asserted his belief in what Futurism represented, along with the unsettling belief in war as a sort of social cleansing.



#### **TERM TO KNOW**

##### **Manifesto**

A public announcement.

## **2d. "The Armored Train"**

Below is a painting titled "The Armored Train," by Severini.



The Armored Train by Gino Severini

1915

Oil on canvas

This painting uses the geometric forms of Cubism to break the imagery apart and create a somewhat disorienting portrayal that captures the violence and dynamism of the train's artillery and the soldiers engaging with some force that's outside of the canvas. Severini's apparent fascination with the glorification of war was sharply contrasted by the philosophy of the Dada movement that was forming in nearby Switzerland.



## SUMMARY

Futurism had many influences. In this lesson, you learned about the **period and location of Futurism**. In doing so, you explored **Futurism**, which is an art movement of the 20th century characterized by the celebration of technology.

You looked at works of art to include:

- "Unique Forms of Continuity in Space"
- "The Street Enters the House"
- "Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash"
- "The Armored Train"



## TERMS TO KNOW

**Futurism**

An early 20th-century art movement, characterized by having themes that celebrate technology.

**Manifesto**

A public announcement.

**Vorticism**

An artistic and literary movement in England that was influenced by Futurism and was most active before WWI.