

American International: Abstract Expressionism The Conscious/Unconscious Mind (wall 2)

This wall represents Freudian thought, German Expressionism, French Surrealism and American Abstract Expressionism; all of these movements played with the concept of what constitutes art.

The influence's of this wall starts with Sigmund Freud who changed the course of the art world when he published *The Interpretation of Dreams*. This book seeks to understand the unconscious through dreams. Dreams, according to Freud, are pure states of "wish fulfillment" that is uncensored by the preconscious, typically resulting in desires of a sexual nature. The German Expressionists drew on this concept of the unconscious state of desires with the French Surrealists taking it a step further into automatism.

Automatism is the practice of writing, drawing and painting in reduced states of consciousness. To be in a state of reduced consciousness, the artist would go through long periods of time without sleep and food, or by simply taking drugs. In this state, the artist would then be free to practice pure automatism in their work. The result of this practice is seen here on this wall.

Figurative nonrepresentational forms in limited color tap into the human unconsciousness expressing their deepest desires. This is exemplified on this wall by Robert Motherwell's work. Robert Motherwell was part of the group of artists who started the Abstract Expressionist movement (or the New York School), a post World War II American art movement.

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