

# primary facts

Collage/Photomontage: Hannah Höch

Hannah Höch (1889 – 1978) was born in Gotha, Germany.

She was a German **Dada** artist best known for being one of the originators of **photomontage**.

Dada or **Dadaism** was an art movement of the early 20th century. It began in New York in 1915 and made its way to Europe in 1916.

Dada was born out of negative reaction to World War I. Dada rejected reason and logic and **praised nonsense**.

Dada is the groundwork to **abstract** art.

Photomontage is a type of **collage** in which the pasted items are actual photographs, or photographic reproductions pulled from the press and other widely produced media (like magazines).

Höch's artwork showed her interest in **social roles** (cultural expectations), specifically equality between men and women.

Her photomontages were a critique of current society. Photomontage was the **art of protest**, but Höch made it a thing of beauty, too.

The power of her artwork came from the **intentional** deconstruction and reconstruction of the found images.

She was influenced by avant-garde artist **Pablo Picasso**.

## What does avant-garde mean in the art world?

- **Avant-garde** refers to the social power of the arts. The term is credited to influential thinker Henri de Saint-Simon who believed artists, scientists and industrialists would lead a new society with "new ideas [inscribed] on marble or canvas".
- It is synonymous with **modern art**
- Two examples of avant-garde art movements would be:
  - **Cubism** - different views of subjects (usually objects or figures) together in the same picture, resulting in paintings that appear abstracted invented in 1907 by artists **Pablo Picasso** and Georges Braque.
  - **Dadaism** - although not at first an art movement, it did influence art greatly. Its artists rejected modern capitalist society. They used **nonsense** in their works. Key figures in the movement included **Hannah Hoch**, Max Ernst, and Marcel Duchamp.
- The term **avant-garde** applies to all art that pushes the boundaries of ideas, creativity and originality.



*Modenschau (Fashion Show),  
1925-35 (detail)  
by Hannah Höch*

## Photomontage versus Collage

- **Collage** is an abstract form of art. It can be made from any artistic medium like pieces of paper, newspaper, cuttings, photographs, and drawings. Collage is an arrangement of said pieces with little to no logic in placing them. It is more artful than logical.
- **Photomontage** creates a story with an arrangement of multiple images. It explores social issues and allows the artist to express their dissent through the workings of their unconscious mind.

## Hannah Höch

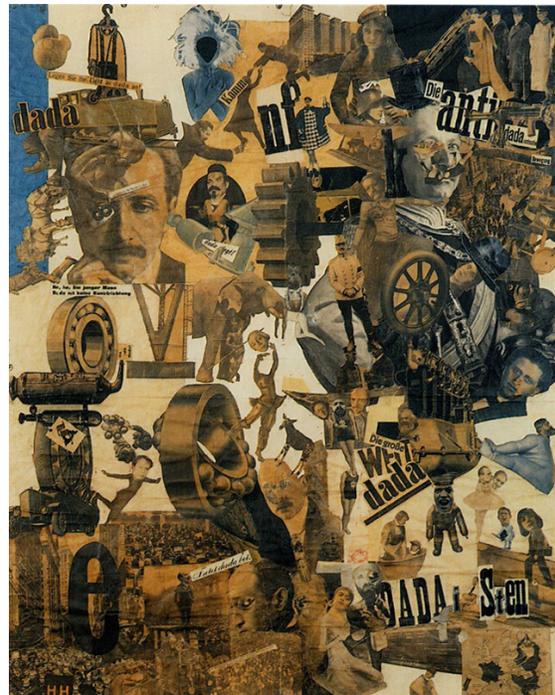
- Hannah Höch recombined images and text from mass media to critique popular culture through her photomontage artworks.
- She explored the socially constructed roles of women.
- She took photographs or photographic reproductions she cut from popular magazines and gave them a new context through a collaged format.

### Examples of her artwork



*Indian Dancer: From an Ethnographic Museum (Indische Tänzerin: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum), 1930  
by Hannah Höch*

*Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Beer-Belly of the Weimar Republic, 1919  
by Hannah Höch*





Alan Magee, *Portrait of Hannah Höch* (1992)



Student interpretation of '*Portrait of Hannah Höch*'

## Let's Try It!

### What You'll Need:

- Colored construction paper
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue

### The execution of this lesson is simple!

Grab a piece construction paper, scissors, glue and a stack of magazines. Have your child cut out figures, facial features, objects and more. Construct your own version of '*Portrait of Hannah Höch*' with a story and interpretation of Höch. Remember that it's important to create a cohesive composition that tells a story.

**All done! Hang the finished masterpiece. Now your child knows about an art movement, a famous artist, and how to create a photomontage!**