

**Digital Humanities Project Proposal: “Art in *transition*: Movements within Modernism as
Showcased by the Journal *transition*.”**

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Overview:

In 1929, Eugéné Jolas published a manifesto in the experimental journal *transition*, expressing a desire to “emancipate the creative element from the present ideology” (British Library). Because the Modernist era constitutes a time of experimentation, literary and artistic movements arose to challenge existing standards and established canons. Surrealism, expressionism, dadaism: these new concepts and more are all featured in *transition*, perhaps because they signaled a departure from the mainstream.

Studying Modernism, we need to have a grasp on the movements that began within it; to create a visual guide including the era’s more prevalent “isms,” artworks included in editions of *transition* would be each paired with a brief definition of the related movement. This project could involve an installation in McFarlin Library with a barcode to the digital equivalent. Keystone artworks would become mnemonic devices distinguishing, for example, fauvism from futurism.

This project would not only advertise the work currently being done at Modernist Journals Project, but also integrate TU’s Special Collections while providing resources for further research online or even in Tulsa’s museums. Additionally, “Art in *transition*” could feature somewhere on the Digital Humanities webpage once that is up and running. It might also function as a teaching tool. Highlighting Modernist studies as a burgeoning field of study at TU and an area in which Digital Humanities already has a foundation, this project supports and promotes the early stages of a Digital Humanities presence at the University of Tulsa.

Interdepartmental Benefits:

This project provides a connection to the modernist framework, or body of scholarship, that already exists as a cornerstone of the Digital Humanities initiative at TU. Alongside MJP, Special Collections will be cited as the initial source of *transition*’s physical volumes. In this way, collaboration occurs between digital and physical collections, the installation involves McFarlin staff with the DHI, and a precedent is set for student involvement in the program’s

development. “Art in *transition*” emphasizes TU’s resources, be they digital or physical; both forms of *transition* have been made available by the university. The project itself will serve as another addition to the DH page and might also be referenced under ‘teaching tools’ on the MJP website; its creation draws attention to the Digital Humanities initiative, McFarlin’s Special Collections, the Modernist Journals Project, and the important role literature plays in studying historical movements. Wherever it is featured, the digital site can be linked for continued ease of access—even after the physical installation is taken down.

Plan of Action:

- Stage One: Research “isms,” and take notes; compile sources that might be useful for the viewer’s reference. Outline content for the physical installation and digital site.
- Stage Two: Type up definitions. Write copy for both the physical installation and the digital medium: (1) the final definitions for *surrealism, cubism, fauvism, futurism, expressionism, primitivism, constructivism, neo-plasticism, dadaism, [more?]* (2) about “page” with overview of the project, (3) link to MJP as digital source of *transition* with brief description of the project, (4) potentially some form of biographical content for the featured artists, (5) description of *transition* and its relevance/importance to Modernist studies; allude to the first ten volumes being added to the MJP site, and (6) link to Special Collections as a resource for the physical copies; include a brief description of SC’s function and importance to scholarship at TU.
- Stage Three: Find visual examples in the artworks featured in *transition* magazine. Design a digital framework (WordPress) that showcases these visuals, organizes the terms defined, and connects to a barcode. In the digital guide, provide hyperlinks to additional resources for analysis below definitions.
- Stage Four: Reach out to McFarlin Library about some kind of showcase. Design a poster, display, or visual artifact of some kind. Connect the two products of the project. Consider textuality as something to be integrated without putting the copies in Special Collections physically on display; encourage viewers’ interaction with the physical text.

End Results:

The primary product would be the permanent web page that will serve as an “ism” guide, the secondary product being a temporary installation at McFarlin Library. It will add to the list of projects on the DH webpage, one that introduces many of this initiative’s key components and creates another visible connection between TU’s physical (Special Collections) and the digital (MJP) research resources. “Art in *transition*” also highlights the efforts of MJP in digitizing new material and making it more available as a resource; there would be a visual ‘advertisement’ for MJP’s upcoming addition in the library for as long as “Art in *translation*” was on display. Later on, it could be included on MJP’s page for teaching tools. This project involves multiple projects, departments, and mediums, creating just as many points of introduction to any and all of them.

Works Cited:

“Transition, No. 16-17, Featuring the Manifesto ‘Proclamation.’” British Library, www.bl.uk/collection-items/transition-no-16-17-featuring-the-manifesto-proclamation. Accessed 9 Sept. 2023.
