

URBAN AND RURAL AMERICAN LIFE IN EDWARD HOPPER'S ART

Edward Hopper is a modern American painter. He was born on July 22nd 1882, in New York. He attended a New York school for illustrators and then the New York School of Art.

Between 1906 and 1910 Hopper made three long visits to Europe, spent mostly in France but also including travel to other countries.

In Paris he worked on his own, painting outdoor city scenes, and drawing Parisian types. Back home, from about 1908 Hopper began painting aspects of the native scene that few others attempted.

In 1915 Hopper took up etching and expressed in a mature style what he felt about the American scene. His prints presented everyday aspects of America with truthfulness, fresh direct vision, and an undertone of intense feeling. Hopper's subject matter can be divided into three main categories: the city, the small town, and the country.

Those prominent features of the American landscape, the railroad and the automobile highway, were essential elements in his works. He liked, in particular, the relation between the forms of nature and of manmade things. Instead of impressionist softness, he liked to picture the clear air, strong sunlight, and high cool skies of the Northeast.

His landscapes have a crystalline clarity and often a poignant sense of solitude and stillness.

Edward Hopper's city scenes are concerned not with the busy life of streets and crowds, but with the city itself as a physical organism, a huge complex of steel, stone, concrete, and glass. When one or two women do appear, they seem to embody the loneliness of so many city dwellers.

Often his city interiors at night are seen through windows, from the standpoint of an outside spectator. Light plays an essential role: sunlight and shadow on the city's massive structures, and the varied night lights-streetlamps, store windows, lighted interiors. This interplay of lights of differing colours and intensities turns familiar scenes into pictorial dramas.



Automat (1927) is a famous painting by Edward Hopper. An automat is a fast food restaurant where simple food and drinks are served by coin operated vending machines. The painting is housed at Des Moines Art Center.

PAINTING ANALYSIS

● Look at the painting above and answer the following questions.

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| ① Where does this scene take place? | ⑤ Where is the light coming from? |
| ② How many people can you see? | ⑥ What colours do you see in the painting? |
| ③ What is the woman doing? | ⑦ What time of day is it? |
| ④ What is she wearing? | ⑧ What is the focal point of the painting? |

