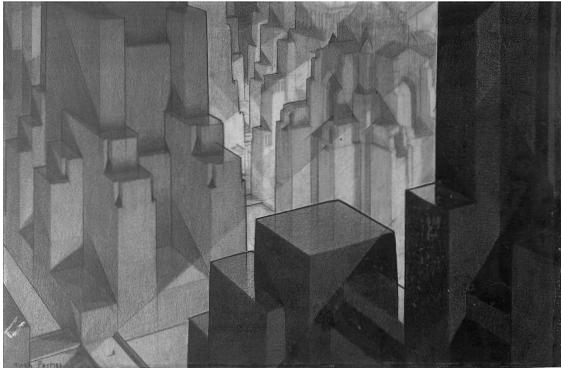


## LESSON TWO: Rise of the Modern City



**IMAGE FOUR:** Hugh Ferriss. American, 1889–1962. *Buildings in the Modeling*. Aerial perspective. 1924. Conté crayon on board, 12½ x 32" (31.8 x 81.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Hugh Ferriss, 1966



**IMAGE FIVE:** Heinz Schulz-Neudamm. German, 1899–1969. *Metropolis*. 1926. Lithograph, 36½ x 81" (92.7 x 205.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of UFA (Universum-Film-Aktiengesellschaft)



**IMAGE SIX:** E. McKnight Kauffer. American, 1890–1954. *Metropolis*. 1926. Gouache on paper, 29½ x 17" (74.9 x 43.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously

## INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the century, technology and mechanical engineering advanced at a rapid pace. Society quickly moved away from handmade objects and toward machine-based production. This changed the way everything was produced, including buildings. To accommodate the growing population, architects started designing taller structures that could house more people and more activities. Some people believed that these tall buildings would be the ideal structures with which to create a **utopian** society; others worried that, over time, human beings would be replaced by machines and buildings. Architects and artists responded to these hopes and anxieties not only by documenting what they saw, but also by rendering conceptual drawings of what these future cities might look like.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will become familiar with the industrial developments of the twentieth century and how they affected architecture and society.
- Students will explore the development of urban environments.
- Students will compare and contrast graphics and drawings.
- Students will create works of art that document their neighborhoods from their own perspectives.
- Students will learn the terms **utopian** and **conceptual**.

## INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Give your students some background information about the industrial developments of the twentieth century and their impact on the people who were alive then. To further establish the idea, visit the Skyscraper Museum's Web site ([www.skyscraper.org](http://www.skyscraper.org)) for a visual timeline of tall buildings.
- Have students describe any new technology they can think of, such as a computer program or communication systems such as cell phones and e-mail. Ask students to consider the effect these inventions have on their lives and whether it is a positive or negative effect.
- Have students imagine a world without elevators, refrigerators, or cars. Discuss what their lives would be like, whether they would be different, and why or why not.

## IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Begin by showing your students Ferriss's *Buildings in the Modeling*.
- Ask your students to describe what they see in this drawing. It may be helpful for them to imagine that they are describing the drawing to someone who cannot see it.
- Using the vocabulary (**line**, **shape**, and **form**) from previous lessons, give your students some background information on Ferriss's drawing, while continuing to discuss what they see.
- Ask students whether they think it is a real or imagined place.
- Ask them what material they think the artist used to make this drawing and why they think he chose it.

This is a **conceptual** drawing of a city scene—a hypothetical view of a city. Ferriss used Conté crayon, a kind of pastel that is rich in pigment and very smooth, to create this drawing. The richness of the Conté crayon helped him capture a particular mood or feeling.

- **Ask students to imagine what it would be like to step into this place. Ask them what they would see and hear and how they would feel—excited, scared, or bored.**
- **Have them write a first-person narrative of their imagined experiences.**

Ferriss often drew images of an endless series of skyscrapers hovering and surrounding a city's inhabitants. In some cases he was drawing what he actually saw; in others, he was creating imaginary cities of the future.

- **Before you show your students Neudamm's *Metropolis*, have them think about what life might be like one hundred years from now. Have them consider whether it would be different and how. Ask them what the people and the cities would look like. After they look at Neudamm's poster, have them compare their answers to what they see.**
- **Have them describe what they see in the poster's foreground, middle ground, and background.**

This is a poster advertising *Metropolis*, a 1926 film directed by Fritz Lang. The movie takes place in 2026, one hundred years from when it was made.

Like Ferriss, Lang created art that reflected what people feared would happen to the world. He chose the medium of film to imagine the year 2026. In *Metropolis*, machines have taken over the world. The setting is a futuristic **cityscape** in which things appear distorted. This was a choice the director made; by creating a place that seems familiar but isn't, he creates a foreboding mood.

- **Next, have your students look at Kauffer's *Metropolis* poster.**

Edward McKnight Kauffer was a painter and designer living and working in England during the early part of the twentieth century. He eventually gave up painting to focus exclusively on commercial art and design. He created graphic posters for many companies and organizations, including the London Underground and the Film Society, an organization that he founded in 1925.

- **Have your students describe in detail what they see in the poster's foreground, middle ground, and background.**

In 1926, Kauffer created posters based on the film *Metropolis*. In this preparatory study, he was interested in exploring the relationship between man and machine, as were Lang and Ferriss, and chose to illustrate this through the medium of graphic design.

- **Ask students to describe how Kauffer uses form, color, and type design (the specific shapes of the letters) to convey his ideas.**
- **Have your students compare Kauffer's poster to Neudamm's *Metropolis* poster.**
- **Have your students choose and write down five words that best describe each image, concentrating on the stylistic choices the artists made. Older students should be encouraged to use adjectives instead of nouns.**

- Next, have them write down five words that best describe the mood conveyed in each image.

To extend the lesson, obtain a copy of the film *Metropolis* and show it to your students. After viewing the film, have them compare the two posters again. Ask them to discuss which image most effectively conveys the mood or feeling of the film. Have them support their claims with visual evidence.

## ACTIVITIES

### Neighborhood Study

Lead your students on a walking tour of the neighborhood. Include perspectives from worm's eye to bird's eye—trying to look at the neighborhood from different places and heights to allow for multiple viewing perspectives. Have them observe and record their experiences in their design journals. Ask them to document the sights, sounds, and smells of the neighborhood, as well as the buildings, with drawing, writing, and photography (Polaroid, digital, or disposable cameras can be used). Students should pay close attention to building height and size. To provide primary source material for their studies, students may interview people from the community about how the neighborhood has changed over the years and which buildings they feel are most important. When you return to the classroom, have each student create a two-dimensional presentation based on their observations from the walk. This can take the form of maps, writing, collages, or drawings. Have the students post their work around the classroom and invite the rest of the school and community members to come see it. If you would like to extend this project, consult the For Further Consideration section of this guide for information about a participatory design project that the students can do as a group.

Have your students consider the following when compiling research for their study:

- **What different types of buildings are in the neighborhood? Row houses, skyscrapers, single-family homes?**
- **What are they made of? Brick, steel, concrete, other materials?**
- **What are the different activities that take place there? Working, shopping, playing?**
- **What is missing from the community?**