

Caricature: Exaggeration and Distortion



Activity page for:

Image 18: Otto Dix, *Anna Grünebaum*, 1926

Image 15: Max Beckman, *Der Zeichner in Gesellschaft (Rudolf Grossmann)/The Artist in Society (Rudolf Grossmann)*, 1922



Have you ever flipped through the editorial section of a newspaper or magazine to chuckle at an exaggerated drawing of a celebrity? If so, you've probably realized that **caricature representation** can be an excellent way to get your point across. A caricature artist might choose to exaggerate or distort certain features to produce a humorous, mocking, or other (!) effect.

Click on this link to read up about some interesting uses of caricature in art history: <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/c/caricature.html>

Think about it:

Discuss the following questions with a partner. Refer to the gallery notes for more information.

1. What sort of mood or tone (if any) do you think Otto Dix has attempted to communicate with this representation of *Anna Grünebaum*?
2. How has Dix used specific elements of caricature to enhance the emotions (expressive qualities) of his subject?
3. Compare the figure in Dix's painting with those in Max Beckmann's *The Artist in Society (Rudolf Grossmann)*. Discuss similarities and differences. In your opinion, which piece uses caricature more effectively (and/or more *appropriately*) to convey a mood? Explain.

Try this:

Option A (for everyone)

Google search "caricature drawings of celebrities". Choose one image that appeals to you. Consider what the artist may have been attempting to communicate with the drawing, and think about how it is accomplished. Think about how this artist's intent might have been different from Otto Dix's.

Option B (for everyone/ quick & easy) Follow this link to the Galleries at Moore website. You'll use the goo applet to exaggerate and distort your own caricature of a donkey, an elephant, or an U.S. president. Have fun!

<http://thegalleriesatmoore.org/activities/goo/politicalmascots.shtml>

Option C (for the more artistically inclined)

Create a caricature progression of your own. Start with an image of a friend or family member. Think about the expressive qualities you will be trying to emphasize, then use collage or other media to enhance or adjust your subject's features. If you have digital media available, you might try the process on Photoshop.