

# Art Movements

## The Ashcan School

Imagine an art critic helping to give recognition to a painting movement based completely upon the artists' choices of subject matter. That is what happened in the early twentieth century when a revolutionary group of realist painters chose as their material the everyday life of New York. The painters took the ordinary elements of alleys, tenements and slum dwellers and filled canvases with their simplicity and reality. A critic disliked the material so much that he dubbed the work of these eight artists the "Ashcan School."

Conservative in style, the Ashcan paintings were revolutionary in content. Gone were the stoic portraiture that had before been accepted by both critics and the public. Also absent were the landscape paintings of the nineteenth century. The Ashcan artists focused on a totally urban vitality. Their intention was not to flaunt the depictions, but to bring an awareness and reality to painting.

