

9.3 PROPAGANDA, PERSUASION, POLITICS, AND POWER

The word **propaganda** has gotten a bad reputation. The Latin origin of the word propaganda is *propagare*, meaning “to spread or disseminate.” As it is used today, the word mainly refers to promoting information—often biased or misleading, sometimes hidden—in order to influence views, beliefs, or behavior. Originally, the word was not associated with politics, as it is generally today, nor did it imply lies or bad faith; propaganda was simply a means of publicly communicating ideas, instruction, and the like. In such a case, we now are more likely to use the word **persuasion**, which has a more neutral connotation and suggests convincing rather than coercing. For example, advertising tries to persuade—or entice—the consumer to make a choice or purchase. To many, however, there is a fine line between propaganda and persuasion. They are separated more by purpose and intention—good, bad, or neutral—than how they are carried out. Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell describe the fine but crucial differences between the two words:

Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist. Persuasion is interactive and attempts to satisfy the needs of both persuader and persuadee.¹

King Darius I (r. 522-486 BCE) had both persuasion and propaganda in mind when he built the Apadana at Persepolis, today Iran. (Figure 9.1) Darius I was the first king of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550-330 BCE) to have royal structures erected on the site, but construction would continue under succeeding Persian kings for approximately one hundred years. The Apadana was begun in 515 BCE and completed thirty years later by Darius I’s son, Xerxes I. Apadana means hypostyle hall, a stone building with a roof supported by columns. It originally had seventy-two columns—thirteen still stand—each sixty-two feet tall in a grand hall that was 200 x 200 feet, or 4,000 square feet. Needless to say, a building of such monumental proportions was an overwhelming sight for those who approached it. Brightly painted in many colors and raised on a platform with the Kuh-e Rahmat or Mountain of Mercy rising behind it, the towering structure could be seen for miles from the sparsely vegetated plain to the east.

For King Darius I, the Apadana and Persepolis—the city of Persians—as a whole was a statement of propaganda. The hypostyle hall and the city were awe-inspiring and intimidating; they in no uncertain terms let the viewer know the King had formidable power and tremendous resources. Upon entering the King’s hall, the viewer was surrounded by his strength in the form of columns the height of a modern six-story building, holding up a ceiling of incalculable weight. How small and powerless the visitor was in the midst of such force. But Darius I, whose empire stretched from Egypt in the west to the Indus Valley, today Pakistan, to the east, knew that he could not effectively rule through domination and fear. So, he had elements of persuasion included at Persepolis, as well.

In addition to the building’s resplendent majesty, it was adorned with sumptuous and masterful frescoes, glazed brickwork, and relief sculpture. Two staircases led up to the platform on

1 Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 6th ed. (California: Sage Publications, 2014), 7



Figure 9.2 | Reliefs at Persepolis

Author: User "Ziegler175"
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which the Apadana was built, on the north and east sides, but only the north staircase was completed during Darius's lifetime. That staircase and the platform walls to either side are covered with reliefs: figures in even, orderly rows as they approach the Persian King's hall. (Figure 9.2) They are representatives of the twenty-three countries within the Achaemenid Empire, coming to pay homage to the King during festivals for the New Year, carrying gifts. Accompanying them are Persian dignitaries, followed by soldiers with their weaponry, horses, and chariots. The native Persian and foreign-born

delegates are shown together in these **friezes**, or rows, of relief sculpture. (Figure 9.3) They have facial features that correspond with their ethnicity, and hair, clothing, and accessories that indicate what region they are from. Even the gifts are objects and animals from their own countries. Rather than showing the foreigners as subservient to the Persians, they mingle with one another and at times appear to be in conversation.

The staircase reliefs, as opposed to the magnificent building as a whole, can be seen as a form of persuasion. It was in the king's better interests to win over his subjects, to gain their trust, allegiance, and cooperation, than to bend them to his will through force and subjugation. Having already demonstrated from a distance that he had the power to defeat his enemies, Darius I could, as the delegates ascended the stairs to his great hall, literally show them the respect with which he treated his loyal subjects.

In more recent history, Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825, France) painted five versions of *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* between 1801 and 1805. (Figure 9.4) David was born and raised in Paris and entered the École des Beaux-Arts in 1866 at the age of eighteen. After eight years of mixed success in his studies there, David won the Prix de Rome in 1774, a prestigious government scholarship that also included travel to Italy. He lived in Rome from 1775 to 1780, studying the art of great masters from the classical past, through the Renaissance, and



Figure 9.3 | The Apadana Palace, Persepolis, Iran

Author: User "Happolati"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 9.4 | Napoleon Crossing the Alps

Artist: Jacques-Louis David
 Author: User "Garoutcha"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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to the present. But, he was most impressed with the philosophical and artistic ideals of some of his contemporaries, the Neoclassical thinkers and painters he met in Italy.

When he returned to France, he soon began exhibiting work in this new style; with their somber, moral tones, stories of family loyalty and patriotic duty, fine detail, and sharp focus, works in the Neoclassical style (c. 1765-1830) were in stark contrast to the frivolous, sentimental subjects and delicate, pastel hues of the prevailing Rococo style (c. 1700-1770s). Over the course of the 1780s, as social disconnect and political upheaval were building toward the French Revolution of 1789, the self-sacrificing, stoic heroes from classical and contemporary history David painted increasingly reflected the public desire for *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, or liberty, equality, and fraternity (universal brotherhood).

In the aftermath of the revolution, during the mercurial times of the 1790s, David was first a powerful figure in the short-lived Re-

public and then a jailed outcast. When Napoleon Bonaparte, named First Consul in 1799, commissioned David to paint his portrait in 1800, however, David's return to official favor was complete.

The commission came about this way: in the spring of 1800, Napoleon led troops south to support French troops already in Genoa, Italy, in an effort to take back land captured by the Austrians. He did so on June 9th at the Battle of Marengo. The victory led to France and Spain re-establishing diplomatic relations eleven years after the French Revolution and, as part of the formal exchange of gifts to mark the occasion, King Charles IV of Spain requested a portrait of Napoleon to hang in the Royal Palace of Madrid. Learning of this, Napoleon requested three more versions from David (and the painter independently created a fifth, which remained in his possession until his death.)

It was to be an equestrian portrait, Napoleon specified, that is, depicting him on horseback, crossing the Great St. Bernard Pass in the Alps, leading the Reserve Army south to Italy. David was to show Napoleon on a spirited, rearing horse as a calm and decisive leader, much like his heroes Hannibal and Charlemagne, who crossed the Alps before Napoleon and whose names are inscribed with his on rocks in the left foreground of the painting. In actuality, however, it did not happen that way at all: Napoleon crossed on the Alps on the back of a mule, in good weather, a few days after the soldiers went through the pass.

What Napoleon was asking David to paint was a piece of propaganda. And, the artist succeeded admirably. With the wind whipping his cloak around him, assuredly holding the reins of his wild-eyed horse in one hand while gesturing the way up and over the peaks with the other, and holding the viewer's gaze with his look of complete composure, David has shown Napoleon as a leader who guides his people to victory and who will be remembered as a hero throughout the ages. That was the story Napoleon wanted told: the timeless ideal of the great man, not the transitory pettiness of his physical likeness. For, as Napoleon is attributed with claiming, "History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon."

9.4 IMAGERY OF WAR

Considering the potential for art to give expressive form to ideas and emotions, it is not surprising that art has often been used to present a wide range of messages about war, one of the most dramatic of human events. All forms of art have been used for documenting war, stating reasons for supporting or opposing it, and showing reflections about its meanings, implications, and effects. On a broader scale, all human activities, of course, may be occasions for people to criticize one another, to condemn ideas, ideals, and actions, to promote or oppose causes that express cultural, societal, or individual values. We will examine a number of works that are concerned with these issues in various ways.

9.4.1 Historical/Documentary

From the earliest times, artists have responded to issues of war and conquest and their implications for the cultures in which they took place. Often, the art appears to have been created to mark a moment of triumph and to interpret the conquest as a validation of a leader's right to rule, established through the victory. Such was the case with the Palette of Narmer. (Figure 9.5) On the two-sided palette are relief-carved depictions of the subjugation of the



Figure 9.5 | Narmer Palette

Author: User "Nicolas Perrault III"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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enemy by Egyptian King Narmer (also referred to as Menes)—under the watchful protection of the deities—and a procession of the King and his attendants toward the decapitated bodies of ten of the defeated. On the first side, Narmer wears the crown of Upper Egypt and on the reverse he wears the crown of Lower Egypt, symbolizing the union of the two regions under one ruler (c. 3,100-3,050 BCE). He is depicted far larger than both his enemies and his own men, showing the figures' relative importance. Narmer is literally depicted as a powerful, firm, and resolute warrior who will be a strong and worthy leader.

Grand artistic depictions of rulers in battle have always been used to help form their reputations and to bolster the images of their good and wise rulership. Military success has long been equated, correctly or not, with political prowess. The heroic feats of Alexander the Great (r. 336-323 BCE) at the Battle of Issus (333 BCE) with the powerful Persian King Darius III (r. 336-330 BCE) were portrayed in a Greek painting that no longer exists. Like much of Greek art, though, it was copied by the Romans, so we do have a mosaic version of the tumultuous battle that was created for the House of the Faun in Pompeii, Italy. (Figure 9.6) This enormous depiction, although damaged and now incomplete, gives a lively, somewhat riotous account of the dramatic encounter of these two renowned warriors. Alexander can be seen to the left on his chestnut horse, staring with wide-eyed intensity at the fleeing Darius, who turns to look at his opponent with one arm extended as if pleading for mercy while the driver of his chariot whips the King's horses into a frenzy of motion.



Figure 9.6 | Alexander Mosaic

Author: User "Berthold Werner"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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We should consider to what extent these accounts are **documentary**, based on factual records, and what we can discern that is propagandistic in purpose. In many eras, the glorification of heroes and heroic deeds in war was perhaps paramount, not only from a political and patriotic standpoint, but also because these were the values promoted as part of artistic training in academic settings (values that prevailed for most successful artists at least through the middle of the nineteenth century, when anti-academic rebellions began in art circles).

American heroism in war was certainly envisioned in these terms, as evidenced in *Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker Hill* by John Trumbull. (Figure 9.7) As discussed in Chapter 8 Art and Identity, Trumbull was an aide-de-camp to General George Washington. After witnessing Warren's death in Boston, Trumbull was commissioned by Warren's family to immortalize the event. The Battle of



Figure 9.7 | *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775*

Artist: John Trumbull
 Author: Boston Museum of Fine Arts
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Bunker Hill took place in 1775, the first year of the American Revolutionary War. Although the colonialists were defeated, the British were stunned by their far greater number of casualties, boosting the morale of the young army. In his painting, Trumbull focused on the General's tragic death as the colonial forces retreated, as well as the compassion of British major John Small, who held back one of his men as the soldier was about to bayonet Warren. Doing so, Trumbull could celebrate the heroism of the Americans while also acknowledging the honor-



Figure 9.8 | *Washington Crossing the Delaware*

Artist: Emanuel Leutze
 Author: Google Cultural Institute
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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able behavior of the enemy, an expectation in eighteenth-century codes of conduct during pitched battles.

Trumbull's depiction of the battle scene is greatly romanticized: an historically accurate rendering of General Warren's death was neither expected nor desired by viewers of the day. Many questions have been asked, as well, about the accuracy of the grand tableau by Emanuel Leutze (1816-1868, Germany, lived USA) of *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, a painting that is an iconic

symbol of the American Revolutionary War and the first president of the United States. (Figure 9.8) Leutze created the work in 1851, seventy-five years after the Battle of Trenton occurred in 1776. Far from attempting to reconstruct the scene as it took place, Leutze intended his work to be an evocation of a grand and inspirational event, dramatically pictured.

By the time Frederic Remington (1861-1909, USA) painted *Charge of the Rough Riders* in 1898, warfare and depictions of it were much different. Remington gives us the spirit of the fray—more down to earth, momentary, and rough and tumble. (Figure 9.9) The implications are much less aggrandized and heroic, the viewer's sense of the event much more intimate. And by the time of the World War I appearance of *Gassed* by John Singer Sargent (1858-1925, USA, lived England), we see a different tenor altogether. (Figure 9.10) Here, we are privy to Sargent's personal response to the deadly aspects of war, to the after-effects for the individuals who were each physically assaulted by poison mustard gas and are showing its ill effects as they were weakened, nauseated, and felled.

The changes in interpretation are due in part to those changes towards realism in art during the nineteenth century that we have explored. Also, they were heightened by the advent and evolution of photography, which had enhanced potential for documentation of actual conditions. But

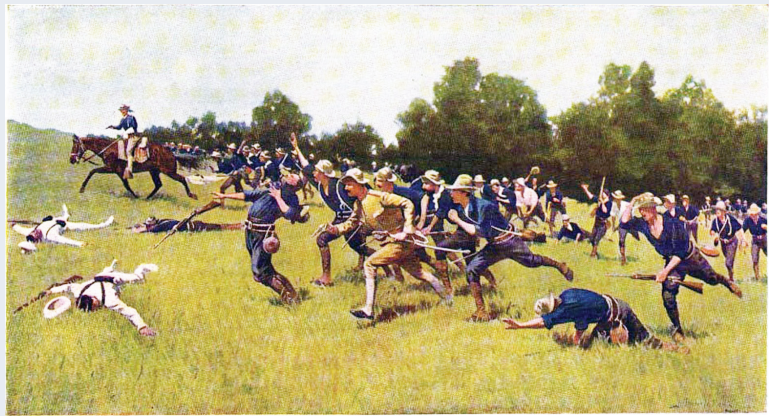


Figure 9.9 | *Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill*

Artist: Frederic Remington

Author: User "Julius Morton"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 9.10 | *Gassed*

Artist: John Singer Sargent

Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 9.11 | Photograph of bodies on the battlefield of Antietam during the American Civil War

Photographer: Alexander Gardner

Author: User "Shauni"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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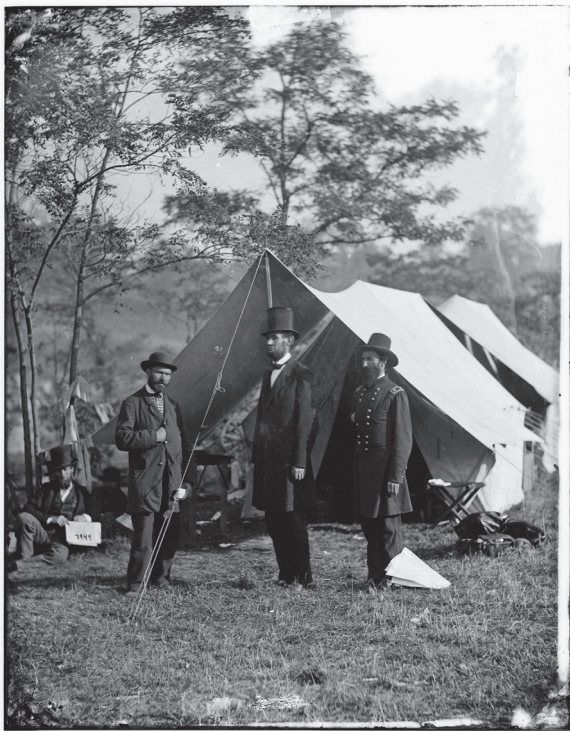


Figure 9.12 | Photograph of Allan Pinkerton, President Abraham Lincoln, and Major General John A. McClernand

Photographer: Alexander Gardner

Author: User "Bobanny"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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photography did not, by any means, always present the viewer with unvarnished truth, since it could, like painting, be manipulated in its effects. Nonetheless, the potential for a different view of war and its effects was ushered in with the advent of photography.

The American Civil War provided a venue for photographers to use the new medium in recording exactly what they were seeing, through the lens. But the processes were still not up to the task of capturing the actions, because equipment was cumbersome, and exposed photographic plates had to be developed on the spot in specially outfitted wagons. The result was that most of the photographs were of groups of dead bodies and battlefields laid waste, after the actual event. (Figure 9.11) The sights were nonetheless sobering to the viewers who had never before been privy to views of the result of war on such a scale. Alexander Gardner (1821-1882, Scotland, lived USA) was one of a number of photographers who captured many battlefield scenes, as well as views of campsites and many other details of the deployments, including visits from such dignitaries as President Lincoln. (Figure 9.12)

The potential for a more critical interpretation afforded by photography had in the past been taken at times, even though not as the norm. Notable examples come from several periods when artists responded to the horrors and agonies of war and injustice in various ways and created memorable interpretations that reveal their protests of conditions. In 1633, Jacques Callot (1592-1635, France) created a suite of panoramic etchings that dramatize *The Miseries of War*. (Figure 9.13) Francisco Goya's monumental *Third of May, 1808*, painted in 1814, showed the fear and horror of an encounter between Napoleon's troops and citizens of the town



Figure 9.13 | The miseries of war; No. 11, "The Hanging"

Artist: Jacques Callot

Author: artgallery.nsw.gov.au

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

of Medina del Rio Seco, where 3,500 Spaniards lost their lives. (Figure 9.14) Goya's sympathies are clear in his presentation of a terrified white-shirted martyr-like figure facing a firing squad while in the midst of his equally horrified compatriots.

Similarly, Honoré Daumier dramatized the injustice of a night raid in the home of a working-class family in Paris during protests in 1834. Following a shot having been fired from a window in the building where twelve members of the Breffort family lived, soldiers stormed their apartment and killed them all. Six months later, Daumier created, a stark lithograph depicting helpless family members as they fell. (Figure 9.15) Daumier had been jailed two years earlier, in 1832, for **caricatures** (portraits containing features or characteristics exaggerated for comic effect) he made ridiculing King Louis Phillippe I (r. 1830-1848). Immediately after the artist created *Rue Transnonain*, the street on which the Breffort family lived, the lithographic stones he used were confiscated by government officials and all copies of the print were destroyed. The following year, political caricatures were banned entirely. This indicates the power Daumier's work was perceived as having and the danger it could hold for those in power. As noted, the potential for a different view of war and its effects was ushered in with the advent of photography. The American Civil War in the 1860s provided a venue for photographers to use the new medium in recording exactly what they were seeing, through the lens. But the processes were still not up to the task of capturing the actions, because equipment was cumbersome and exposure



Figure 9.14 | The Third of May

Artist: Francisco de Goya y Lucientes

Author: Prado in Google Earth

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

times were still relatively long and slow. Alexander Gardner's photographic corps created many after battle scenes as well as portraits of generals, the president, campsites, and many other details of the deployments. (Figures 5.18 and 5.19) The potential for capturing action and momentary pathos only increased from then on, and the capacity for documenting graphic events has been used widely ever since. (Figures 5.20, 5.21, 5.22, 5.23) Compare the image of corpses being bulldozed and buried wholesale to the photos of Gardner and the previous painted glorifications of the battlefield.



Figure 9.15 | Rue Transnonain, le 15 Avril, 1834, Plate 24 of *l'Association mensuelle*

Artist: Honoré Daumier

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

9.4.2 Reflective/Reactionary and Anti-war

One of the most powerful anti-war statements ever painted was by Pablo Picasso, created in 1937 following the bombing of the town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. He was commissioned by the Spanish Republican Government to create a mural for that country's pavilion at the 1937

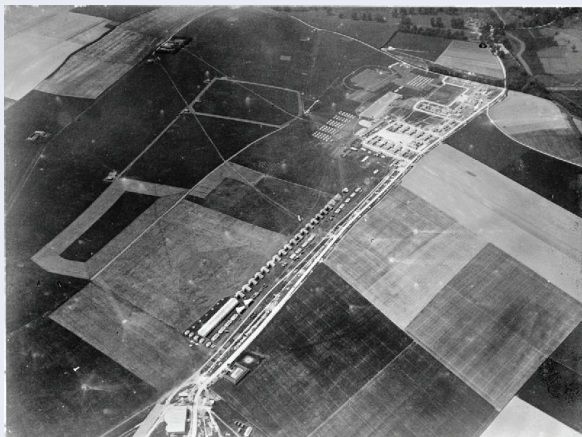


Figure 9.16 | Aerial Photography Before the First World War

Artist: Laws F C V (Sgt)

Author: User "Fae"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

World's Fair in Paris and, after learning of the attack, designed this poignant abstraction of symbolic and iconic motifs to express the horror of the event. (Pavilion of the Spanish Republic at the Paris International Exposition, 1937: <https://thespacearchitecture.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/int2.jpg>) His knowledge of the details had been gleaned from newspaper reporting, so he elected to create the imagery in the graphic black, gray, and white of the photographs through which he learned of the bombing and its impact. His dramatic distortions of form convey the deep anguish and disgust that had been engendered in him, his fellow Spaniards, and the world.

Over the course of the twentieth century, documentary photography was used not only to

capture the brutal events of war, but also to broadcast moments of utter horror in such graphic ways that they have influenced public sentiment, sometimes turning opinion from support to outrage. By the time of World War I, technology permitted the reproduction of photographs in newspapers, which meant that the average citizen had far greater access to visual news of the war than in earlier conflicts. Some leaders, such as German Kaiser Wilhelm II (r. 1888-1918), were in favor of using photographs as a means of bolstering public support for the war, but others restricted photographers' access and censored photographs, citing security concerns. Shortly before the beginning of World War I, the British Army was the first to realize the potential of photography for aerial reconnaissance, greatly expanding their research capabilities and troop maneuverability. (Figure 9.16)

During World War II, American military and government agencies tremendously expanded the use of photography for purposes ranging from conducting espionage and assisting training, to recording atrocities and providing documentation. (Figures 9.17 and 9.18) During the Vietnam War (USA involvement, 1955-1975), the American military gave unprecedented access to non-military reporters and photographers. As the war extended in the 1960s, far longer than the American people expected, images of conflict and suffering in the war-torn country began having an impact on public opinion. (Women and children crouch in a muddy canal as they take cover from intense Viet Cong fire, Horst Faas: <http://media2.s-nbcnews.com/j/streams/2013/october/131016/8c9400532-pb-131016-vietnam-01.nbcnews-ux-2880-1000.jpg>) By 1972, when Nick Ut (b. 1951, Vietnam, lives USA) photographed children fleeing their village after it was attacked with napalm, the tide had turned and many Americans no longer supported the Vietnam



Figure 9.17 | Bones of anti-Nazi German women in the crematoriums in the German concentration camp at Weimar (Buchenwald), Germany

Photographer: Pfc. W. Chichersky

Author: User "Petrusbarbygere"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 9.18 | Two enlisted men of the ill-fated U.S. Navy aircraft carrier LISCOMB BAY, torpedoed by a Japanese submarine in the Gilbert Islands, are buried at sea from the deck of a Coast Guard-manned assault transport.

Author: User "W.wolny"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

War. (Phan Thị Kim Phúc running down a road near Trảng Bàng, Vietnam, after a napalm bomb was dropped on the village of Trảng Bàng by a plane of the Vietnam Air Force, Huynh Cong Ut: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/d/d4/TrangBang.jpg>)

9.4.3 Prohibition or Destruction of Imagery: Iconoclas

Controversy over imagery and its use, especially in sacred contexts, also has a long history. Debates on the topic have, at times, erupted into deep and bitter arguments. It has often been thought that, because of the Old Testament statements forbidding the use of idols, the Jewish religion has never allowed pictorial or figural art as part of its religious expression. More current findings, though, lead to the conclusion that the biblical statements were actually pointedly made at times against the real danger of idolatry, or the



Figure 9.19 | Part of the fresco at the Dura-Europos synagogue

Author: User "Udimu"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 9.20 | Mara's assault on the Buddha

Author: User "Gurubrahma"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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worship of idol images, rather than being a broad prohibition of images altogether. Dura-Europos was a military outpost in Syria held by the Romans 114-257 CE where the garrisoned soldiers obviously practiced a wide variety of religions. The site has a great number of different pagan temples, a Christian house church, and a Jewish **synagogue**, or house of worship, that is decorated with a great array of lively figural frescoes that depict Old Testament stories. (Figure 9.19)

Early Buddhist art was, according to some, **aniconic**, or characterized by the avoidance of figural imagery that represented Sakyamuni Buddha, its fifth-century BCE founder. Others disagree. We have no examples of Buddhist art until the second century BCE, well after the death of Sakyamuni, probably because early works were of impermanent materials and have not endured. In the earliest we do have, the figure of the Buddha does not appear; rather, we see the seat where he achieved enlightenment and the Bodhi tree that shaded it (Figures 9.20) Scholars disagree as to whether the absence

of the Buddha confirms a prohibition of showing his figure.

On the contrary, we do know there is a general aversion to the use of figural imagery in sacred uses in Islam, although it is not universally heeded. There is no specific prohibition in the Koran, the central sacred scripture for Islam; however, there are authoritative statements among the writings of the Hadith, the commentaries on the Koran that supplement its teachings. The rationale is that the creation of human and animal form is reserved for God and should not be an act of man. Thus, the decorations of mosques and related structures are usually accomplished with lavish linear scripts, embellished with arabesques and vegetal and floral motifs. (Figure 9.21) The script is usually drawn from the Koran or is simple praise of Allah; this sort of design is often also applied to all sorts of goods and décor for the Muslim household. (Figure 9.22)

A dramatic example of the anti-imagery debate took place in the Byzantine Christian Church in the eighth and ninth centuries CE. Based on the perception of the biblical prohibition, an assault was mounted against all religious images, and much of the existing artwork was destroyed in an effort to eradicate what was considered an evil practice. The defenders of the use of imagery argued that the problem was not the images themselves, which could be positive aids to spiritual inspiration and religious devotion, but to their improper usage, which resulted in a sort of idolatry, akin to pagan idol worship. The images, according to proponents of their use, should be seen as tools, associated with understanding God and the saints, and as means of furthering the contemplation of Christian mysteries. Further, they argued, to obliterate existing images, to deface pictures and to destroy statues was to desecrate sacred things and, effectively, to disrespect the holy beings which they represented.

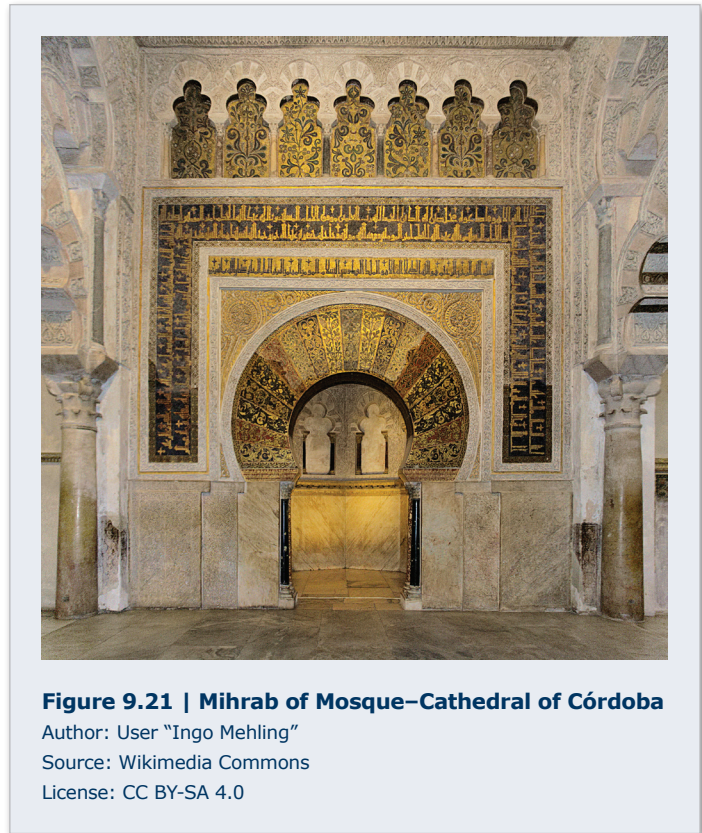


Figure 9.21 | Mihrab of Mosque–Cathedral of Córdoba

Author: User "Ingo Mehling"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 9.22 | Seventeenth-Century Persian Bowl

Author: User "Udimu"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

This notion was expressed in the mid-ninth-century Chludov Psalter with an illustration that equates



Figure 9.23 | Miniature from the 9th-century Chludov Psalter with scene of iconoclasm. Iconoclasts John Grammaticus and Anthony I of Constantinople.

Author: User "Shakko"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

the destruction of an icon with insulting Christ on the cross when he was forced to take gall (bile) and vinegar by the mocking Roman soldiers. (Figure 9.23) The controversy was settled in 843 and the use of icons and imagery thrived thereafter. Unfortunately, very little of the religious artwork that was produced prior to this time survived for us to examine.

Other chapters in the debate over imagery open in later centuries. For some Christians, it was one point of disagreement leading to the Protestant Reformation that began in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517. According to those protesting what they saw as abuses of power in the Roman Catholic Church, the proliferation of images of holy figures and stories from the Bible distracted the faithful from true worship: reading the word of God in the Bible. As new religious practices spread, there



Figure 9.24 | Iconoclasts in a church

Artist: Dirck van Delen
 Author: User "BoH"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain



Figure 9.25 | 16th-century iconoclasm in the Protestant Reformation. Relief statues in St. Stevenskerk in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, were attacked and defaced in the Beeldenstorm.

Author: User "Ziko"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 9.26 | Bronze head of a king, most likely Sargon of Akkad but possibly Naram-Sin.

Author: Iraqi Directorate General of Antiquities
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

was a widespread removal of religious paintings and sculpture from all churches and public buildings. (Figure 9.24) In the Wars of Religions that raged in many places in Europe (c. 1524-1648), the destruction of images was one of the violent forms of protest by angry crowds that railed against any and all prevailing practices and the powers they held responsible. A great many church portals (doors) were damaged by those who saw lopping off heads of sculptures above the doorways as a fitting expression of their anti-Church sentiment. (Figure 9.25)

Throughout history, such destruction has certainly not been restricted to religious controversies. From very early examples, we know of what is likely purposeful defacement of ruler images that were made either in protest or as a sort of proclamation of defeat and superiority. The gouging out of the jeweled eyes in this bronze head of Assyrian King Sargon II might have been for theft of the precious materials, but it may also indicate conquest over the man himself. (Figure 9.26) In recent times, we have seen the dramatic toppling in 2003 of the statue of Saddam Hussein in a public square in Baghdad, Iraq, as a symbolic overthrow of a despised and despotic ruler. (Figure 9.27) Further humiliation of him was clearly intended by the widespread publication of photos of captors picking lice from his head after his discovery in a spider hole.



Figure 9.27 | Statue of Saddam Hussein being toppled in Firdos Square after the US invasion of Iraq.

Photographer: U.S. military employee
Author: User "Ipankonin"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.28 | The taller Buddha of Bamiyan before (left) and after destruction (right).

Author: User "Tsui"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The power of such pointed symbolism in visual terms is employed to fight culture wars, as well. In Afghanistan, in 2001, the Taliban undertook to dynamite two colossal images of the Buddha dating to the sixth century CE that had been carved into the side of a cliff in the Bamyán valley of central Afghanistan. (Figure 9.28) Arguments came from all over the world, pleading with them to preserve monuments that were considered part of the cultural heritage of humankind. Nonetheless, they completed their task, declaring it a duty to eliminate an image that violated their spiritual beliefs.

A similar scenario unfolded more recently, when ISIS militants went on a destructive campaign to destroy historically and culturally valued artwork in the Mosul Museum, Iraq, despite pleas from curators and art lovers around the globe. (Extremists used sledgehammers and power drills to smash ancient artifacts at a museum in the northern city of Mosul: http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2015/02/26/261DB11500000578-2970270-image-a-1_1424957194042.jpg) This sort of protest is often made on a smaller scale, as well, when symbolic or iconic imagery is defaced or destroyed as a means of mocking its value to those who respect it, as with the Nazi symbols made on Jewish gravestones or the burning of the American flag. (Desecrated Jewish gravestones: <http://cdn.timesofisrael.com/uploads/2012/10/AP100127022968.jpg>) (Figure 9.29) All such incidents reinforce our understanding of the varieties of power that art and visual imagery can have.

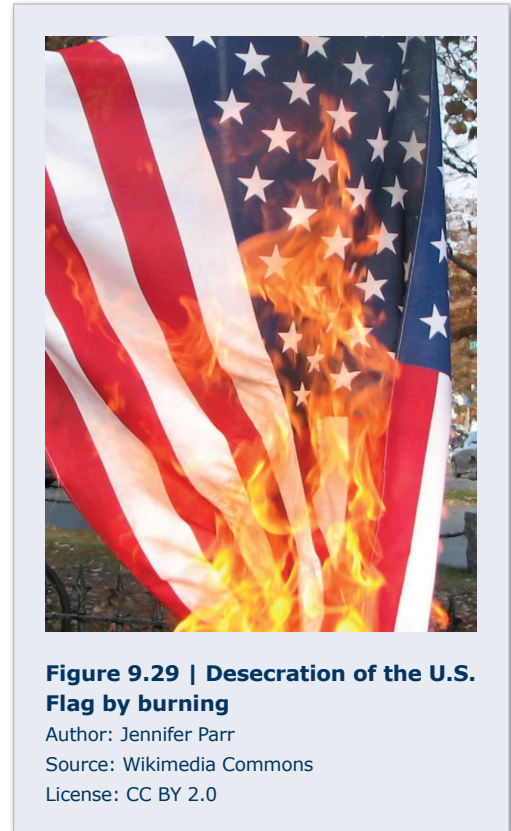


Figure 9.29 | Desecration of the U.S. Flag by burning

Author: Jennifer Parr

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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9.5 BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Key Concepts

Due to their ability to create art, throughout history artists have often been considered to have special and mysterious powers. Images can be used to enhance the power of an individual, system of government, or form of religion. Artists can use images to bring attention to and have an impact on social issues. Images of war can be used to validate and strengthen a ruler's authority and power. From the nineteenth century to the present, violent conflicts have been depicted with a greater range of imagery, in part due to technological advances and social attitudes toward the impact of war. Imagery is forbidden within some religions based on interpretations of religious texts. The destruction of images can be the result of religious, social, or political beliefs or protests.

Test Yourself

1. Describe why and how art and artists have in some cultures been considered to have exceptional power.
2. What are propaganda and persuasion, and what are some differences between them?
3. How did King Darius I use images of both persuasion and propaganda at the Apadana in Persepolis?
4. Describe how rulers have used images of them to enhance their authority.
5. How and why did images of war change in the United States from the time of Revolutionary War through World War I?
6. Give an example of an art work that was meant to protest war or social injustice, and describe how it did so.
7. Describe how and why Nick Ut and Pablo Picasso focused on the individual in their depictions of war.
8. Why are images forbidden within some religions? Give specific examples.
9. What prompted the destruction and avoidance of religious images during the Protestant Reformation?
10. Explain why images of a defeated or dead ruler or monuments of an occupied culture might be defaced or destroyed.

9.6 KEY TERMS

Aniconic: the avoidance of figural imagery within a religion

Caricature: portrait containing features or characteristics exaggerated for comic effect

Documentary: in artistic or written forms, work that records actual events as they happened

Frieze: a horizontal row of relief sculpture or painting on a building

Genius: (from the Latin *geniui*: to bring into being or create) a person of remarkable intelligence or with outstanding creative abilities

Muse: personification of knowledge and the arts, and inspiration to write, sculpt, and compose

Persuasion: the attempt to influence, convince or entice someone to make a choice (often a purchase)

Propaganda: information (written, verbal, artistic) that promotes a particular viewpoint or set of ideas about a person or event. The word indicates information that is biased, misleading, or sometimes hidden that is used in order to influence views, beliefs, or behavior

Synagogue: Jewish house of worship

10

Art and Ritual Life Symbolism of Space and Ritual Objects, Mortality, and Immortality

Jeffery LeMieux and Rita Tekippe

10.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify and describe the different architectural forms that are used for diverse ritual purposes and those associated with specific religious groups
- Recognize a variety of symbolic and functional components of architectural centers for worship, including building parts, auxiliary structures, and furniture, as well as to discuss its significance and uses
- Identify and describe sculpture, paintings, and a variety of religious objects that are used to express beliefs, to teach religious doctrine, and to perform ritual acts
- Recognize and discuss some of the specific forms of art associated with funerary and memorial functions in different belief systems

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Art and architecture have ever been used to express our deepest human interests, including the universal concerns with the meaning of human life itself and whether or not our spirit will continue in an afterlife. Thought and belief about these concerns have led individuals to create art about them; they also have led people to ally with like-minded individuals, forming philosophical and religious groups and institutions that have frequently further formalized their thought and belief concepts and contemplations and used art and architecture to give concrete form and image to these ethereal notions.

10.3 EXTERIOR RITUAL SPACES

The well-known site of Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, England, although not completely understood today, provides us with insight into the early evolution of a ritual location. (Figure 10.1) It



Figure 10.1 | Stonehenge

Author: User "garethwiscombe"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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was developed over the course of some 1,500 years (c. 3,000-1,600 BCE). The site's configuration has astronomical implications, with a design of a ritual offering or sacrifice table, and portal placed in relationship to the sunrise at the summer solstice. (Figure 10.2) Its concentric rings were made of wooden posts, earthen ditches, and thirty **megaliths**, or large stones, each of which is approximately thirteen feet high, seven feet wide, and weighing more than twenty-five tons. In places where two megaliths support another horizontal stone, a **dolmen** or **cromlech** is formed. (Figure 10.3) Other parts of stone, wood, and earth were placed in particular spots for which the choice of location and use are now unclear.

How could Stonehenge have been built with prehistoric knowledge and technology? It is believed that the large stones were quarried from twenty-five to 150 miles away, floated, and log rolled to the final site and then placed by creating inclined dirt ramps. (Figure 10.4) Once the upright stones were placed, the spaces were filled with dirt, the capstones rolled into place, and all the dirt removed. As is clear with these construction methods, it is important to recognize that prehistoric people did not lack in either clever mental ability or tireless devotion.

Many sites across England and other parts of Europe show a kinship to it in their use of space and materials and their desire to engage with the cosmos. Stonehenge is the largest of approximately 1,000 stone circles found on the British Isles. Their existence and the fact that these sites were used for such a long time gives us some insight into the ways our earliest known ancestors devised views of the universe and their place in it, as well as how they addressed such issues through artistic expression.

Human societies from widely separated times and locations have constructed strikingly similar forms

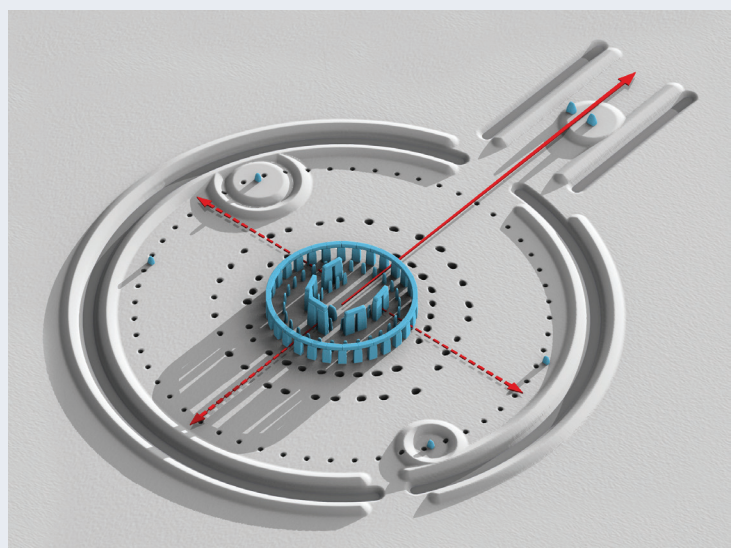


Figure 10.2 | Digital rendering of Stonehenge

Author: Joseph Lertola

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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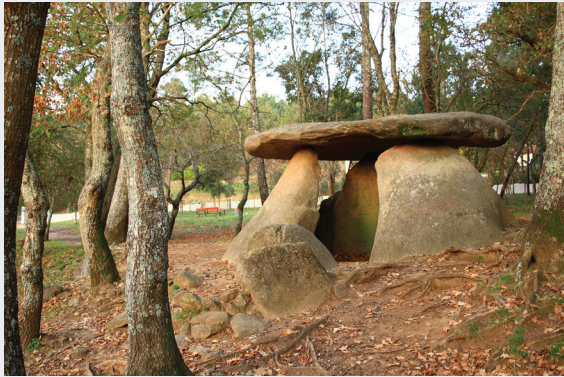


Figure 10.3 | Dolmen of Oleiros, Spain

Author: Arturo Nikolai
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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It is a short step to placing the altar on a built, raised platform to accentuate its status. For example, a **heiau** is a Hawaiian temple composed of a Polynesian raised earthen or stone temple platform in an enclosed area that might also contain stone markers and cult images. Heiau were used for a variety of reasons: to treat the sick, offer first fruits, control rain, and achieve success in war (for which human sacrifices were made). Heiau are found throughout the Pacific



Figure 10.5 | Drawing of Heiau at Wimea

Artist: John Webber
Author: User "KAVEBEAR"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

of symbolic or physical enclosure or elevation of the sacred. The altar is the most simple and expedient means. An altar, found in religious settings and structures to this day, is a piece of **liturgical** (religious ritual) furniture possessing ancient symbolism—primarily as the site of sacrifice, most often in the offering of animals ritually slain for the deity.

PLACING MEGALITHS

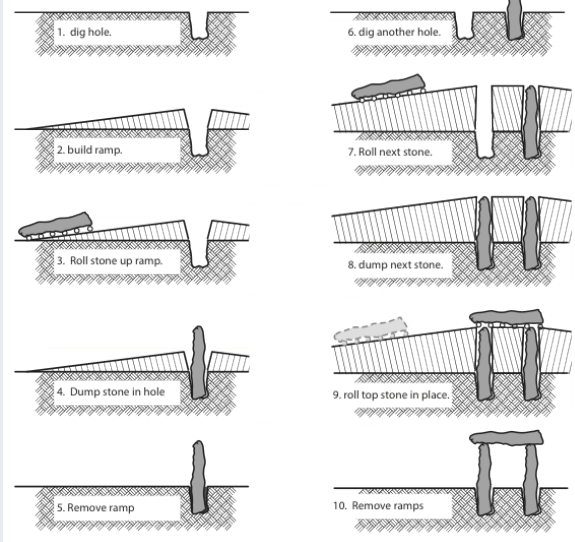


Figure 10.4 | Diagram Depicting Placement of Megaliths

Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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island. This print depicts the heiau at Waimea, on Kauai, one of the Hawaiian islands, as it existed prior to European occupation. (Figure 10.5) The print was created by artist John Webber (1751-1793, England), who accompanied British explorer Captain James Cook on this third Pacific expedition (1776-1779). Although many Hawaiian Heiau were deliberately destroyed at the official end of the Hawaiian religion in the nineteenth century, some have since been fully rebuilt and are now public attractions.

Olmec, Maya, and Aztec, built large temple complexes dedicated to religious worship, which included animal and human sacrifice. One such fine example of these large complexes is the Mayan temple at Chichen Itza. It is a four-sided pyramid with staircases of ninety-one steps on each side all leading to a temple at the top. The number ninety-one is no accident: four times ninety-one equals 364, which, paired with one final step at the top, represents the number of days in the solar year. Quetzalcoatl appears in succeeding Central American religions.

In the Aztec culture, Quetzalcoatl was related to gods of the wind, of the planet Venus, of the dawn, of merchants, and of arts, crafts, and knowledge. He was also the patron god of the Aztec priesthood, of learning and knowledge.

The gateway is another architectural method for creating or recognizing a ritual or sacred space. Ritual gateways are found more often in Asian religious settings, though with a broad view any entrance could be construed to be a marker for a physical and spiritual transition.

Shinto is an ancient religion native to Japan. The main focus of Shinto is the veneration of the deeds and images of ancestors in home shrines. In public places, **torii**, or Shinto gateways, are often found marking the sites of important ancient events or framing beautiful views. The “floating gate,” so named because when the tide is high, it is surrounded by water and appears to float, of the Itsukushima Shrine near Hiroshima is a good example. (Figures 10.6 and 10.7) The entrance gate was erected in 1168; it has been destroyed, redesigned, and rebuilt several times.



Figure 10.6 | The torii gate at Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Itsukushima at low tide

Author: Dariusz Jemielniak
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.7 | The torii gate at Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Itsukushima

Author: Jordy Meow
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10.4 THE SACRED INTERIOR

Sacred interior spaces offer several advantages over exterior sites such as platforms and gateways. In particular, they offer controlled access to the ritual space, for example, as we saw with complexes such as the Temple of Horus at Edfu (see Figure 7.42) and the Temple of Hephaestus

in Athens, Greece, (see Figure 7.44) and they permit a new level of control over who is admitted. The nature of an interior space may also act as a metaphor for a personal encounter with the sacred within oneself.

We have noted that architectural forms have often been adopted and adapted according to the ways they serve group or congregational needs. Many religious centers meet a variety of purposes and needs, so they might include spaces or separate buildings for schools, meeting rooms, and any type of subsidiary accommodations. We will look, however, primarily at the basic distinctions among architectural forms that articulate and address the ritual and practical needs of the group.

It should be added that many practices are personal and individual and so may not require any sort of separate building; some may use a space within another sort of building or a room or corner within the home. Also, many rituals have been conceived as addressing a natural setting, such as an open field, a sacred grove of trees, a grotto or cave, or a specific spring, lake, or seaside spot. (Figure 10.8)

Some of the basic features within many churches and temples reflect these notions. Although there are many exceptions, the layout of a structure most often relates to the four directions of the compass and the sites of most sacred precincts address the rising and setting of the sun. Altars are usually placed in the east. Over time, some adaptations have been made to accommodate other considerations; for example, a church or temple might be situated near a sacred mountain or a place where a miraculous occurrence took place. With these ideas in mind, we will briefly survey a few important types and features.

10.4.1 Features and Forms

Innumerable symbolic features are associated with worship; a few stand out as basic to identification of a building or site associated with a specific belief system. We quickly recognize and identify the distinctive implications of a **steeple** (church tower and spire) or a minaret, or the form of a stupa or pagoda, and we can sometimes discern how these and other such expressions came into use and accrued significance. (Figures 10.9 and 10.10) As discussed in Chapter Seven: Form in Architecture, the Islamic minaret was developed as a tower associated with a mosque that was used primarily to issue the call to prayer (and also to help ventilate the building). (see Figure 7.50) In the



Figure 10.8 | Nanzen-ji garden, Kyoto

Artist: Musō Soseki

Author: User "PlusMinus"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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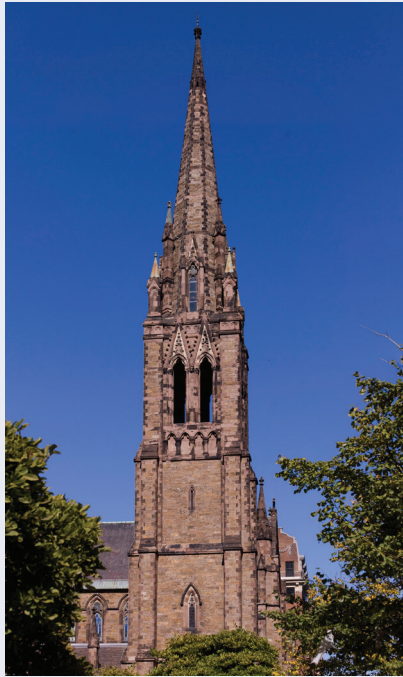


Figure 10.9 | Church of the Covenant

Author: User "Fcb981"
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past, the **imam**, or prayer leader, charged with the ritual task would climb to its summit and intone the *adhan* five times each day, making the call in all directions so that the surrounding community would be notified; now, electronic speaker systems achieve this function. But the minaret has other implications and uses, as well. (Figure 10.11) It has become a striking visual symbol of the very presence of the mosque and of Islam's presence in the community; over time, many mosque complex designs have incorporated multiple minarets—most often four, with one at each corner of the main structure. The visual significance may have been further accentuated to rival the Christian presence of a nearby steeple or bell tower.

The bell tower has been used similarly to announce the onset of Christian services by ringing at specific times. Public clocks are sometimes added, with the function of noting the time, ringing or chiming a tune on the hour, the half hour, or the quarter hour. Because churches were often community centers, the bells could also give public notice of celebration, mourning, or warnings of emergency like fire. In the Middle Ages, the control of the bell ringing was sometimes a political issue, especially as urban communities developed governments and sought independence from local churches



Figure 10.10 | Phoenix Hall

Artist: Musō Soseki
 Author: User "ういき野郎"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.11 | Minaret of the Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia

Author: Keith Roper
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.12 | Tournai, Belgium

Author: Jean-Pol GRANDMONT
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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in certain ways. At Tournai, Belgium, such struggles notably led to a sort of visual combat of towers on the town skyline. The city's civic leaders there were granted the right to control the bell ringing for community notices and built a separate tower away from the church located on the town square. The Church countered by renovating the church building to include four bell towers, seeking thereby to assert its own rights to identify itself with the task. (Figure 10.12)

The steeple or bell tower visually implies a Christian presence and is generally part of the church building, usually on the façade. Over time, builders have added multiple towers, as they did at Tournai and elsewhere. Doing so emphasized the width of the façade, or other parts of the building, such as the transept, the “arms” in a Latin cross plan church, or the **crossing**, where the “arms” meet. For example, at Lincoln Cathedral in England, towers are placed at either side of the façade and another marks the crossing. (Figure 10.13) Some steeples and towers associated with Christian use, however, have been erected independently of other buildings. For example, the Campanile, or bell-tower, by Giotto in Florence follows the Italian tradition of erecting the tower adjacent to the church. (Figure 10.14)

More specific features of church and stupa structures, among others, include space within or outside for circumambulating, walking around a sacred object. In medieval churches that



Figure 10.13 | Washington National Cathedral

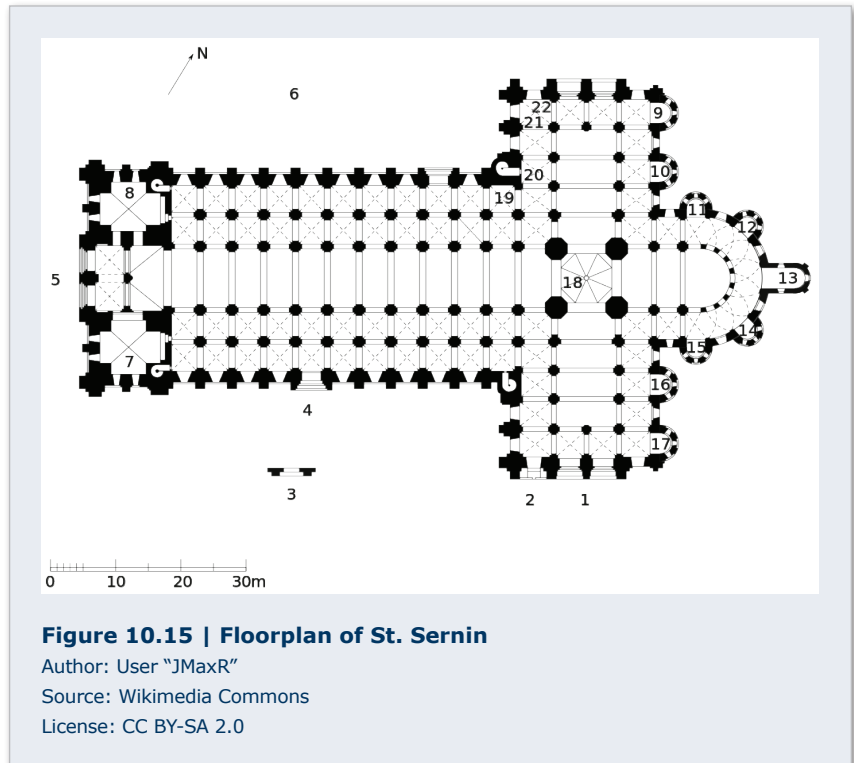
Author: Carol M. Highsmith
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Figure 10.14 | Giotto's Campanile

Author: Julie Anne Workman
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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featured display of relics and accommodated pilgrim visitation, the **ambulatory** might be altered to allow visitors to walk around a ring or succession of chapels at the end of the church where the apse was located. (Figure 10.15) As referred to in Chapter 7 Form in Architecture, at the Sanchi Stupa, provisions were made for the devotee to walk around the fence surrounding the stupa, then enter one of the gateways and circumambulate the mound on the ground level, then climb the stairs and circumambulate again on a walkway attached to its exterior surface. (see Figures 7.52) (Great Stupa at Sanchi: <https://s-media-cache-ako.pinimg.com/564x/e2/14/b2/e214b2c65c63f16198bf64b1dbc63d67.jpg>) Since the stupa is an earthen mound faced with masonry, it has no



interior space accessible to the practitioner and all of the rituals are accomplished outside.

The provisions for making an offering of animals ritually slain for the deity can be seen in the ruins of the Anu or White Temple in Uruk (c. 3,000 BCE), today Iraq, which stood atop the ziggurat there. (The White Temple floorplan: <https://classics.unc.edu/files/2014/02/UkWhTpl.gif>; Temple and Ziggurat: <https://classics.unc.edu/files/2014/02/UkWhTRecon.gif>) The sanctuary chamber included a large altar table with channels along a sloped ditch to carry away the blood and other fluids resulting from the ritual sacrifice. Other types of sacrificial altars were provided for fire rituals that involved making offerings to a deity of an animal, grain, oil, or other substances, as can be seen in this Roman relief depiction of the sacrifice of a bull. (Figure 10.16) Some of these altars were part of temple complexes, while others were found in homes and used for private devotions. Larger ritual fires are also part of the practices among some sects and are still in use; bonfires are a related practice.

Ritual ablutions, or cleansings, also have artistic accommodations in the forms of fountains and pools, which were once a standard part of Christian atrium courtyards that marked the entryways to churches and are frequently provided in courtyards for mosques. (Islamic Pre-Prayer Ablution Fountain in Kairaouine Mosque Courtyard in Fes, Morocco: <http://encircleworldphotos.photoshelter.com/image/I0000EvE9geT8XFA>) Vestiges are found in holy water fountains that still stand at portals to Catholic churches, where the practitioner dips the fingers and makes the sign of the cross. Also related are baptismal fonts or tanks used for the ritual cleansing, which, along with other ceremonial rites, signifies the entry into some faiths (Figure. 10.17) Another type of symbolic liturgical furniture that appears in many worship contexts and is given considerable artistic attention is the **pulpit**, or **minbar**, as is it called in Islamic centers. It is the site of preaching, reading scriptures, and other addresses to congregations, and is, sometimes, very elaborately adorned. (Figures 10.18 and 10.19)



Figure 10.18 | Baroque pulpit in the Amiens Cathedral, France

Author: User "Vassil"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 10.19 | Amr Ibn al-Aas Mosque (Cairo)

Author: User "Protious"

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10.4.2 Sculptural and Painted Expressions of Belief

Beyond the types of symbolic features and forms we have explored, there exists a tremendous variety of objects expressing common or personal belief and devotions. In many instances, they adorn temples, synagogues, and churches; at other times, they were designed to be used in private or family settings. Even the sects with the most austere attitudes about the use of art, such as the Shakers, have a design aesthetic that is related to the belief system of finding creative solutions in the functionality of the form. (Figure 10.20). A lot of artistic efforts have been applied to religious expression, often entailing the notion that the most lavish and sumptuous goods should be provided for these purposes.



Figure 10.21 | Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanshiyin), Shanxi Province, China

Author: Rebecca Arnett
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.20 | Rocker in the Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill

Author: User "Carl Wycoff"
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Sculptures, paintings, drawing, prints, film, video, performance art, visual demonstrations, all have been brought into service in this regard. They might vary as to whether they embody a point of doctrine or a shared tenet, or express a personal veneration for a deity or holy personage, or offer a viewpoint about exuberance or restraint; regardless, they have abounded. Often, they also epitomize the sentiment of a cultural moment in a particular place or the development of a particular line of thought in theology, philosophy, or devotional practice.



Figure 10.22 | Virgin and Child of Jeanne d'Evreux

Author: Ludwig Schneider
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.23 | The nave of Vézelay Abbey

Author: Francis Vérillon
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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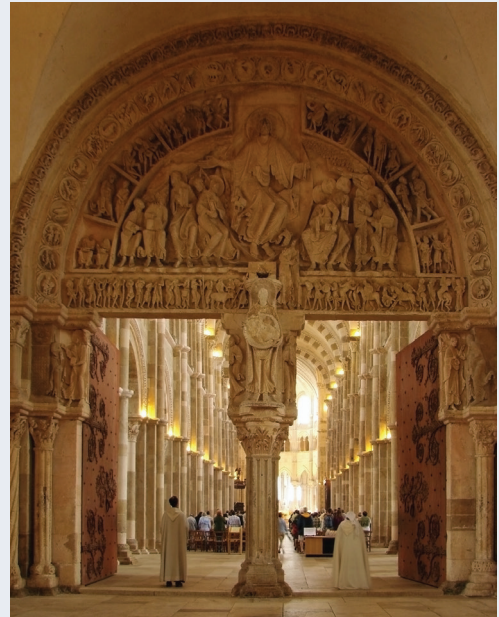


Figure 10.24 | The central portal of Vézelay Abbey

Author: User "Vassil"
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An example is the elegant and graceful Bodhisattva Guanyin, a spiritual figure of compassion and mercy, created in China in the eleventh or twelfth centuries during the Liao Dynasty (907-1125). (Figure 10.21) The sculpture acts as a compassionate guide for the Buddhist devotee who would look to such an elevated being for loving guidance on the spiritual journey. The ideas of patron saints or dedicated intercessors like the Virgin Mary were popular in the West, as well, especially during the Middle Ages, an era when great riches were often lavished on images of veneration for these spiritually accomplished models of sanctity. The graceful Virgin of Jeanne d'Evreux was a gift in the early twelfth century from the French queen to the Abbey of Saint-Denis, the site for royal burial at the time. (see Figure 7.64 and Figure 10.22) The young mother, playfully engaged with her divine infant son, was rendered with striking and inspiring emotional effect.

In Christian churches of the Middle Ages, and for some denominations today, the sculptural embellish-



Figure 10.25 | Lower Compartments Detail, Vézelay Abbey

Author: User "Vassil"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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ment of the interior not only showed the respect of believers but also provided considerable food for devotional thought, often in the form of Bible stories, tales of the saints, and theological ruminations. Such was the case at the French Romanesque Vézelay Abbey (1096-1150). (Figure 10.23) The tympanum above the portal contains a relief sculpture by Gislebertus depicting the Last Judgment, with Christ sitting in the center (Figures 10.24 and 10.25) The capitals on the piers in the interior have lively depictions of Old Testament tales such as Jacob and the Angel, and other scenes such as the Conversion of St. Eustace, a Roman general who while hunting saw a vision of a crucifix between a stag's antlers and adopted Christianity. (Figures 10.26 and 10.27) These are all told through delightful, puppet-like Romanesque figural forms. Visual stories such as these were meant to reinforce the importance of remaining true to God despite challenges to their faith in this lifetime.



Figure 10.26 | Reliefs in Vézelay Abbey

Author: User "Vassil"
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Figure 10.27 | Reliefs in Vézelay Abbey

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10.4.3 Ritual and Devotional Objects

In devotional centers where the philosophical or religious beliefs allow the use of figural imagery, the use of cult statues and other images of deities or persons associated with the ideology are important focal points for worshippers. Some, like the cross, are essential statements; others play subsidiary roles, designed for amplifying or enhancing the spiritual experience and providing additional opportunities for contemplation or stimulus of devotional response. As we have noted, Buddhist and Hindu temple complexes often have a great array of portrayals of deities and/or spiritual

leaders, as befits polytheistic religions. Part of the complaint of the Protestant revolt was that Christian churches had become too similar in spirit to polytheistic cults, with the wide selection of saints comprising a system that seemed no longer sufficiently focused on the central singular God. Part of the effect, in artistic terms, was that the decoration of many Protestant churches changed character—as well as liturgical focus—eliminating many of the lavish accouterments that had accrued around Catholic ritual.

While few general rules exist for Christian decoration, the Catholic churches usually have a large and prominent crucifix above the main altar where the **Mass/Eucharist**, the primary religious ritual for Catholics, is celebrated; Protestant sites are more likely to have a plainer cross or none at all, and are unlikely to have an altar. Throughout the ages, the character of the crucifix has seen tremendous variation, from an expression of the extreme suffering of Christ to a much more iconic expression of the belief behind the symbol. Between the time of Christianity's legitimization in 313 CE and the tenth century, for example, representations of Christ on the cross generally showed him as alive, hav-

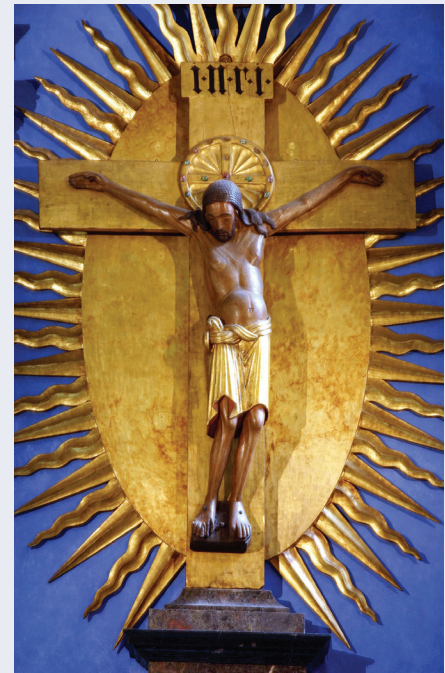


Figure 10.28 | The Gero Crucifix

Author: User "Elya"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 10.29 | Pietà

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

ing gloriously defied death. Crosses also varied considerably in scale. The Gero Crucifix (c. 965-970), now placed over a side altar in Cologne Cathedral, Germany, compared to others of its era was very large at six feet, two inches, and was considered to be provocative in eliciting contemplation of the suffering of Christ. (Figure 10.28) Over the next several centuries, depictions of Christ on the cross in northern Europe would increasingly emphasize the agony of the human being in the throes of death, as opposed to his everlasting triumph, in ever more graphic portrayals of the event central to Catholic worship and to the liturgy of the Mass. (Figure 10.29) The range of



Figure 10.30 | Replica of the Chalice of Doña Urraca

Artist: User "Locutus Borg"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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emotional content in Christian imagery is vast and ever changing. This diversity is a typical characteristic for objects that are related to devotional use, as the nature of active faith is to grow and change, ever producing fresh new expression.

The variety of liturgical equipment that was conceived for Christian ritual over the centuries provided great outlet for inventiveness. While some versions of ritual objects were simple and utilitarian in design, others clearly spurred flights of great fancy and flair. An important symbolic and functional object in all worship centers is the candlestick and a tremendous variety of these were created. One of the most elaborate was the enormous seven branched candelabra cast of gem studded bronze and covered with a mass of imagery of saints, plants, animals, and angels, with the whole immense and tangled array supported on four large dragon-form feet. (Duomo Milano - Candelabro Trivulzio: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candelabro_Trivulzio#/media/File:IMG_6849_-_Duomo_-_Menorah_Trivulzio_-_Foto_Giovanni_Dall%27Orto_3-Mar-2007.jpg; Candelabro Trivulzio base detail: <http://neuteboom.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/20121029-063521.jpg>) The complexity of the iconography, as well the intricacy of the work,

is befuddling. Candleholders were not simply basic pieces of equipment, but also carriers of implications for the spiritual quest and the nature of religious inspiration, at least in part based on the symbolism of light as a representation of the Holy Spirit, purity, and peace.

Service objects for the altar table also received a great deal of attention, respect, and their fair share of artistic ingenuity. The chalice of Doña Urraca, from Spain, exemplifies spolia, the re-use of precious objects and materials from the past.(Figure 10.30) As daughter and sister to kings, Doña Urraca oversaw monasteries and made provisions for their liturgies with lavish equipment. Made up of two antique onyx vessels for the base and cup, the chalice was fashioned with gem-studded bands and inscribed as a gift from Doña Urraca to the palace chapel in León, Spain. An ivory situla, or small bucket, is another liturgical object, used for sprinkling holy water in blessing at the Mass and other rituals, accomplished by dipping a sprinkler or a spray of leaves or straw into the vessel and flicking the water across the crowd. (Figure 10.31) This example is finely carved out of ivory with scenes from the



Figure 10.31 | Situla (Bucket for Holy Water)

Source: Met Museum
License: OASC



Figure 10.32 | Chasuble (Opus Anglicanum)

Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

life of Christ and supplied with bands and inlay of gilt copper. Additional liturgical equipment includes vestments; these often have received great attention, as well. (Figure 10.32) This fourteenth century example from England is of velvet embroidered with silk, metal thread, and seed pearls that ornament scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary.

Special attention was also paid to books of Scriptures, as well as those that were used for the Mass and other ceremonies. In the Middle Ages, the pages of books had to be created as manuscripts on parchment or vellum, as we have observed before; they were frequently supplied with lavish and showy covers, particularly those that might be used by important people or for important occasions. The commissioning of such was another deep and significant expression of faith due to the sacred writings they contained, the value of all liturgical equipment, and the merit accrued by donating riches for spiritual purposes.

The front and back covers of the Lindau Book Gospels were created at two different times and places with somewhat different design ideas. (Front Cover of the Lindau Gospels: <http://www.themorgan.org/sites/default/files/images/collection/download/m1-front-cover.jpg>; Back Cover of the Lindau Gospels: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rear_cover_of_Lindau_Gospels.jpg)

The front cover (c. 880 CE), which features a crucifix motif of the victorious Christ in gold repoussé, is further embellished with fluttering angels and an extraordinary encrustation of gems set with high prongs. The back cover dates to a century earlier and is thought to have been made for another (lost) manuscript. It is flatter, with engraved and enameled designs in the **Hiberno-Saxon** or **insular style**, which originated in the British Isles around 600 CE. The intricate serpentine and geometric patterns are similar to those found on the delicately crafted gold and cloisonné objects at the Sutton Hoo royal burial site in England. (see Figures 5.18 and 5.19)

The contents of such books also often warranted rich illumination, or illustration, as we see in the prayer book or book of hours called the *Trés Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. (Figure 10.33) It was created by the Limbourg Brothers (Herman, Paul, and Johan, active 1402-1416, Netherlands) for John, Duke of Berry, a French prince. Throughout its heavily illustrated pages or leaves, it is brightly colored, carefully inscribed,



Figure 10.33 | The Nativity

Artist: Limbourg Brothers
Author: User "Petrusbarbygere"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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and replete with depictions of the Duke and of his many architectural and land holdings. It is well known for its calendar pages that depict activities associated with the changing seasons of the year, such as this scene of January showing the Duke seated in resplendent blue to the right at a sumptuous feast. (Figure 10.34)

A significant visual spiritual event is the ritual creation of a sand mandala, often performed for a specific occasion by a group of Tibetan Buddhist monks, although there are other spiritual and cultural groups that create related works. (Figure 10.35) To systematically build a complex mandala involves a carefully planned and meticulously executed approach and one that has very specific pictorial implications. Basically a diagram of the Buddhist conception of the universe, mandalas might vary in expression of particular beliefs, teachings, or purposes. The process takes up to several weeks; surprisingly, at its completion, it is destroyed and ritually discarded, perhaps in a fire or a lake, to symbolize the fleeting nature of the material world. An impressive and colorful spectacle to witness, it is accompanied by additional sensual stimulation from the sounds of chanting and the scraping of the colors for the design, as well as the fragrance of flowers and incense.



Figure 10.34 | January

Artist: Limbourg Brothers

Author: User "Petrusbarbygere"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 10.35 | Mandala

Author: User "Ggvlad"

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10.5 MASKS AND RITUAL BEHAVIOR

Masks are found in all cultures throughout history. Early human cultures were primarily nomadic, so the portability of masks and other ritual objects may have been an important feature of their design and partly why they are so prevalent. Masks and the rituals in which they function may have been among the earliest ways in which humans acknowledged the objects and forces of nature as spirits or conscious beings.

The design of a mask is determined by its functions, and these functions are determined by the religious worldview of the culture in which they are made. In **animist** cultures, the forces of nature, objects, and animals are all thought to have spirits or essences. Rituals are performed that are aimed to please or guide these spirits in the hope that they will bring good fortune or that will help the culture avoid calamity.

Contemporary African tribal rituals generally center on a number of life issues: birth, puberty, courtship and marriage, the harvest, the hunt, illness, royalty, death, and ancestors. In Burkina Faso, animal masks enter the community to purify its members and protect them from harm. (Figure 10.36) In Nigeria, Yoruba **Egungun**, or



Figure 10.36 | Mask of Burkina Faso

Author: Andrea Praefcake

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Figure 10.37 | Yoruba Egungun Dance Costume

Author: User "Ngc15"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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masquerades, involve both masks and costumes. (Figure 10.37) Costumes are made from layers of cloth chosen not only to demonstrate the family's wealth and status, but also to connect the wearer to the spirits of ancestors who return to the community to advise and to punish wrongdoing. Once completely concealed, the wearer is possessed by and assumes the power of the ancestor through dance: as the pieces of cloth lift, they bestow blessings.

Due to a generally harsh climate not conducive to agriculture, Inuit cultures located in the Arctic regions of North



Figure 10.38 | Eskimo Medicine Man
 Photographer: Frank G. Carpenter
 Author: User "Yksin"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.39 | Havré (Belgium), chaussée du Roelux - The Gilles
 Author: Jean-Pol GRANDMONT
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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America subsisted mainly on fish and other sea dwelling animals, including whales. Early twentieth-century explorer and anthropologist Knud Rasmussen asked his guide, an Inuit shaman, about Inuit religious belief. His response was that “we don’t believe, we fear.”

While it is a myth that Inuit elders were sent off into the wild to die (elders were and still are highly valued

members of the tribe), many of the totemic and mask images of this culture are warnings against the dangers of making bad choices in a cold, harsh, and unforgiving environment. In this circa 1890 image, a Yupik (Eskimo) shaman exorcises evil spirits from a young boy; note the complex mask and large claws. (Figure 10.38)

Mardi Gras, which is French for “Fat Tuesday,” is the day of Christian celebrations immediately before Ash Wednesday. Today, it is commonly considered the season of festivals, or carnivals, extending from Epiphany (Three Kings’ Day, when the Magi attested to the infant Christ’s divinity) on January 6 each year to the actual day of Mardi Gras, that is, the day before Lent begins. Originally associated with pagan rites of spring—the renewal of life and fertility—Mardi Gras dates back as a Christian rite to the Middle Ages in Europe when people ate as plentifully as they were able before the fasting and lean eating that took place during Lent. The associated festivities were a time to



Figure 10.40 | Mardi Gras in Binche, Belgium
 Author: User "Marie-Claire"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
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ignore normal standards of behavior and celebrate the excesses of life. Often dressed in masks and costumes as a means of casting aside one's identity and social restrictions, the carnivals of Mardi Gras allowed a sense of freedom rarely known in societies that upheld a strict social hierarchy. (Figures 10.39 and 10.40) We could discuss many more such visual experiences in the context of spiritual and philosophical ideas about the artistic expressions we devise to reflect our beliefs about mortality and immortality and how we connect these notions for ourselves. Suffice it to say that we can stay aware of the pervasive nature of art and visual experience in reflecting them.

10.6 FUNERARY SPACES AND GRAVE GOODS



Figure 10.41 | Banditaccia (Cerveteri)

Author: User "Johnbod"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Archaeologists have dated the earliest burial sites found worldwide to around 100,000 BCE, though some argue that certain ones are as old as 300,000 BCE. A considerable body of art related to funerary customs and beliefs has been found at such sites, and in many instances it is much more extensive than other types of evidence of how people lived. This disparity is likely due to the general respect given to sites of tombs and burial grounds. Usually considered sacred places, they have often been left intact when other parts of a settlement have been destroyed and rebuilt. These places, the ways they are marked, decorated, and furnished, supply us with a good deal of data to explore for insights into beliefs and practices related to burial practices and the afterlife, including how

the people prepared for both during their lifetimes. Burial sites often include **grave goods**, such as personal possessions of the buried individual, as well as food, tools, objects of adornment, and even a variety of household goods.

The Etruscans and their culture, predecessors to the Romans on the Italian peninsula, existed from c. 800 BCE until conquered by the Romans in 264 BCE. They are well known for their highly developed burial practices and the elaborate provisions they made for the afterlife. They created a type of mound tomb known as a **tumulus**, made from **tufa**, a relatively soft mineral/rock



Figure 10.42 | Tomb of the Reliefs at Banditaccia necropolis

Author: Roberto Ferrari
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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substance that is easy to cut and carve, but hardens to become very strong. (Figure 10.41) Like the Egyptians, the Etruscans grouped their tombs into a necropolis, but they were not reserved for the highly born.

Within each tomb, the Etruscans created and decorated chambers in ways that showed what they expected would happen in a “next lifetime.” (Figure 10.42) They expected to rejoin their family and friends and to continue many of their ordinary activities and their celebrations. (Figure 10.43) Some tombs were supplied with a complete stock of household furnishings, while others showed scenes of athletic or leisure activities, and still others, ritual banquets.

Their terra cotta sarcophagi included portraits of individuals and couples who expected to reunite and continue their married life in the afterlife. (Figure 10.44)

In other cultures, as we have seen, the wealthy and powerful were provided with exquisitely detailed tombs and mausolea. The Samanid Mausoleum (892-943) was created in what is today Bukhara, Uzbekistan, for a Muslim amir, or prince, of the Persian Samanid dynasty (819-999). (Figure 10.45) Islamic religious traditions forbid the construction of a mausoleum over a burial site; this is the earliest existing departure from the tradition. The carved brickwork shows remarkably refined design and craftsmanship.

In ancient China, tombs for the important and the wealthy were very richly appointed and it is clear that the expectations for the afterlife included a need for food and other sustenance, as



Figure 10.43 | 5th century BC fresco of dancers and musicians, Tomb of the Leopards, Monterozzi necropolis, Tarquinia, Italy

Author: Yann Forget

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 10.44 | Sarcophagus of the Spouses, Cerveteri, 520 BCE

Author: User "saikko"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 10.45 | Samanid Mausoleum in Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Author: User "Apfel51"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC0 Public Domain



Figure 10.46 | Altar Set

Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

well as ongoing ritual appeasement of deities and evil spirits. Artisans' remarkable skills at casting bronze were put to use for a variety of fine vessels for food and wine, altars for ritual, and various other objects. (Figure 10.46) Also included were jade amulets, tools, and daggers. Some tombs were laid out like a household of the living, and nested coffins were decorated with mythological and philosophical motifs similar to those on the bronzes and jades. In the tomb of a woman known as Lady Dai (Xin Zhui, c. 213-163 BCE), a fine silk funerary banner carried mythological symbolism of her life and death as well as a depiction of her and her coffin. (Figure 10.47)

The expectation for musical enjoyment was exemplified in tombs that enclosed elaborate sets of tuned bells along with a carving showing how they would be arranged and played.

The Terracotta Army of Qin Shi Huang (r. 247-210 BCE), who unified China and ruled as the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE), is another dramatic example of craft, devotion, and ritual meant



Figure 10.47 | Western Han painting on silk was found draped over the coffin in the grave of Lady Dai

Author: User "Cold Season"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.48 | Terracotta Army

Author: Gveret Tered
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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to honor the dead. The figures were first uncovered in 1974 by local farmers in the Shaanxi Province. The Terracotta Army is a now famous collection of more than 8,000 life-sized, fired clay sculptures of warriors in battle dress standing at attention, along with numerous other figures, pieces of equipment, and animals such as horses, around the mausoleum of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, from whom China's name originates. (Figures 10.48 and 10.49) It is believed the figures were intended to protect the emperor in the afterlife.

Research has shown that the figures were created in local workshops in an assembly line fashion. Heads, arms, torsos, and legs were created separately, modified to give individual character, and assembled. The figures were then placed in rows according to rank. They were originally brightly colored and held weapons. It is believed that most of these weapons were looted shortly after the creation of the Terracotta Army.

Finally, we will take a brief glimpse at a remarkable tomb complex that was developed over time near Beijing, China, for the emperors of the Ming Dynasty (1369-1644). (Figure 10.50)



Figure 10.49 | Terracotta Soldier with his horse

Author: User "Robin Chen"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Figure 10.50 | Watercolor overview of the Ming Tombs

Author: User "Rosemania"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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A series of thirteen tomb complexes cover more than twenty-five square miles of land on a site nestled on the north side of a mountain, where, according to Feng Shui principles of harmonizing humans with their environment, it would be best situated to ward off evil spirits. The layout includes a number of ceremonial gateways leading to “spirit paths.” (Figures 10.51 and 10.52). The walkways are lined with various large sculptures of guardian animals that would also foster protection for the emperors, each of whom had a large and separate tomb complex within the precincts. Mostly unexcavated as yet, the findings so far reveal burial sites that resembled the imperial palaces in form with throne rooms, furnishings, and thousands of artifacts, including fine silks and porcelains. Again the expectation of continued power, prestige, and enjoyment of life’s pleasures is clear.



Figure 10.51 | Pavilion with “ways of souls” a turtle-borne stele at the tombs of the Emperors of the Ming Dynasty

Author: User “ofol”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 10.52 | The spirit way at the Ming Tombs

Author: User “Richardelainechambers”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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10.7 BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Key Concepts

As for the design of a building for sacred purposes, its many features will be determined by the requirements of specific rituals and cult usage. Meeting individual or community needs determines the most defining elements of design and plan. If a space is needed for a large gathering, it might be accomplished either out-of-doors or within a building. If an outdoor arrangement serves the purposes, it may or may not require a building, as well. For instance, as we noted with Greek temples, the cult rituals were performed in the open area outside the structure that housed the deity. Similarly, Buddhist stupas were set into a complex where devotees could approach the stupa itself, as well as visit any of the subsidiary shrines or other buildings around it. Some of them might house cult statues for deities or include libraries for scriptures, treasuries, dining halls, or

other features of use or interest. Often the grounds of a sacred complex will emphasize natural features of the settings used for contemplation, such as gardens or wooded pathways, fountains, pools, and lakes. These might include careful and meaningful arrangements of statues, iconic imagery, or rocks, trees, and plants. Monastery complexes often provide for all the activities needed to sustain the community, providing for their sacred and social activities in community and individually, while also making accommodation for visitors.

Art and architecture, from the earliest times, have been used to express human beliefs about life and death, as well as to provide for worship, burial, and memorial needs. Basic differences in worship centers are related to ritual purposes and the forms provide for rites that are performed by individuals or congregations. The settings and décor will express the distinctive doctrine and beliefs of the sect that worships there. Burial sites and centers reflect both the customs for treatment of human remains and the beliefs about what will happen to the individuals after death.

Objects created for worship centers and for individual contemplation and devotion are also designed to refer to specific beliefs and to inspire believers in religious practices. Both the religious architecture and the artworks also serve to emphasize and glorify the central beings and concepts of the belief system, often with elaborate or lavish artistic expression.

Test Yourself

1. Discuss some of the implications we can draw from the use of grave goods by citing three specific examples and their meanings.
2. Name several ways in which customs and practice for burial and commemoration affect the creation of art and architecture.
3. Describe the ritual use of tribal masks in different cultures.
4. Describe the specific features of artworks in two different cultures that show their belief that gods reside in the heavens.
5. Describe the uses and meanings of effigy mounds.
6. Discuss specific ways in which religious complexes address astronomical features at two or three different sites.
7. Discuss at least three art or architectural works that are specifically related to ritual use and describe the ways that they work in this regard.
8. Describe the ways and the reasons that some religious groups use or reject artwork that includes figural imagery for sacred context and its results for the artwork they use.
9. Consider the use of precious and luxurious materials for ritual art objects and cite examples, discussing their specific meanings.

10.8 KEY TERMS

Altar: a sacrificial or offertory table.

Animist: the belief that spirits are associated with objects in the natural world.

Burial Mounds: early cultural collections of skeletal remains and grave goods.

Cromlech: a circular arrangement of megaliths.

Dolmen: a large upright stone or marker.

Effigy Mounds: earth mounds formed in the shape of animals or symbols.

Egungun: a general term for Yoruba masquerade rituals.

Elevated Platform: a raised area intended to confer status.

Gateway: a structure intended to mark a passage from one state, world, or phase to another.

Grave Goods: artifacts interred with deceased members of family or tribes.

Imam: Islamic prayer leader, the one charged with the duty to issue the call to prayer at appointed times.

Mandala: a ritual diagram with cosmic significance. Used by many different religions, and either circular or containing circular components, often designed for contemplation of specific teachings or tenets related to the particular belief system. varieties are used in diverse sects of Hinduism, Buddhism, Native American tribal worship, and others.

Mausolea: plural of mausoleum. An above-ground structure designed for entombment of the deceased.

Megalith: literally, “large stone.”

Minaret: a tower, usually tall and slender, associated with a mosque and signifying Islamic presence in a location.

Pagoda: a Buddhist structure in China, Japan, elsewhere that signifies the practice of Buddhism in that place. The form evolved from the burial mound conception of the Stupa that appeared in India as the primary structural symbol of the belief system, as it spread to China and took on the native architectural form of the watchtower.

Portal: an exceptionally grand entrance, most often referring to cathedral or other church architecture.

Ritual Mask: masks designed to be used in religious or secular ceremonial events.

Sacred Interior: interior spaces devoted to ritual or ceremony invoking a highest good.

Sacred: held as a highest good.

Sarcophagi: plural of sarcophagus – a burial container, usually of stone or other masonry material, often embellished with sculptural decoration.

Stonehenge: a famous arrangement of vertical stones from prehistoric Britain.

Stupa: a Buddhist monument signifying the presence of relics of Sakyamuni Buddha or sacred objects associated with the beliefs. Formed of an earthen mound, faced with brick, stone, or stucco. Worshippers circumambulate outside the stupa, rather than enter it.

Temple Mound: earthen mounds formed to elevate a ceremony, ritual, or elite.

Terra Cotta: porous low fired ceramic.

Terracotta Army: famous arrangement of 6,000 clay soldiers meant to guard the grave of the first emperor of China.

Toranas: stone structures placed at the Buddhist Stupa at Sanchi and at other stupa sites which form gateways to the circular path around the stupa.

11

Art and Ethics

Peggy Blood and Pamela J. Sachant

11.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand why art and ethics are associated
- Identify works of art that were censored due to their failure to meet societal ethics
- Indicate why ethical values change over time by society
- Articulate why some societal groups may consider some works of art controversial
- Identify ethical considerations in the artist's use of others' art work in their own, the materials used in making art, manipulation of an image to alter its meaning or intent, and the artist's moral obligations as an observer
- Identify roles that museums play in the preservation, interpretation, and display of culturally significant objects

11.2 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the perception, susceptibility, and ethics of art. It will explore and analyze the moral responsibility of artists and their rights to represent and create without censorship.

Morality and art are connected usually in art that provokes and disturbs. Such art stirs up the artist's or viewer's personal beliefs, values, and morals due to what is depicted. Works that seem to purposely pursue or strongly communicate a message may cause controversies to flair up: controversies over the rights of artistic freedom or over how society evaluates art. That judgment of works created by artists has to do with society's value judgment in a given time in history.

The relationship between the artist and society is intertwined and sometimes at odds as it relates to art and ethics. Neither has to be sacrificed for the other, however, and neither needs to bend to the other in order to create or convey the work's message.

Art is subjective: it will be received or interpreted by different people in various ways. What may be unethical to one may be ethical to another. Because art is subjective, it is vulnerable to ethical judgment. It is most vulnerable when society does not have a historical context or understanding of art in order to appreciate a work's content or aesthetics. This lack does not make ethical judgment wrong or irrational; it shows that appreciation of art or styles changes over time and that new or different art or styles can come to be appreciated. The general negative taste of society usually changes with more exposure. Still, taste remains subjective.

Ethics has been a major consideration of the public and those in religious or political power throughout history. For many artists today, the first and major consideration is not ethics, but the platform from which to create and deliver the message through formal qualities and the medium. Consideration of ethics may be established by the artist but without hindrance of free expression. It is expected that in a work of art an artist's own beliefs, values, and ideology may contrast with societal values. It is the art that speaks and adds quality value to what is communicated. This is what makes the power of free artistic expression so important. The art is judged not by who created the work or the artist's character, but based on the merits of the work itself.

However, through this visual dialogue existing between artist and society, there must be some mutual understanding. Society needs to understand that freedom of expression in the arts encourages greatness while artists need to be mindful of and open to society's disposition. When the public values art as being a positive spiritual and physical addition to society, and the artist creates with ethical intentions, there is a connection between viewer and creator. An artist's depiction of a subject does not mean that the creator approves or disapproves of the subject being presented. The artist's purpose is to express, regardless of how the subject matter may be interpreted. Nevertheless, this freedom in interpretation does not mean that neither the artist nor society holds responsibility for their actions.

Art and ethics, in this respect, demands that artists use their intellectual faculties to create a true expressive representation or convey psychological meaning. This type of art demands a capability on the viewer's part to be moved by many sentiments from the artist. It demands the power of art to penetrate outward appearances, and seize and capture hidden thoughts and interpretations of the momentary or permanent emotions of a situation. While artists are creating, capturing visual images, and interpreting for their viewers, they are also giving them an unerring measure of the artists' own moral or ethical sensibilities.

Ethical dilemmas are not uncommon in the art world and often arise from the perception or interpretation of the artwork's content or message. Provocative themes of spirituality, sexuality, and politics can and may be interpreted in many ways and provoke debates as to their being unethical or without morality. For example, when Dada artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968, France) created *Fountain* in 1917, it was censored and rejected by contemporary connoisseurs of the arts and the public. (*Fountain*, Marcel Duchamp: <http://www.sfmoma.org/explore/collection/artwork/25853#ixzz3mwCWDOxZ>) A men's urinal turned on its side, Duchamp considered this work to be one of his *Readymade*, manufactured objects that were turned into or designated by him as art. Today, *Fountain* is one of Duchamp's most famous works and is widely considered an icon of twentieth-century art.

More recently, *The Holy Virgin Mary* by Chris Ofili (b. 1968, England) shocked viewers when it was included in the 1997-2000 *Sensation* exhibition in London, Berlin, and New York. (*The Holy Virgin Mary*, Chris Ofili: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/global-culture/identity-body/identity-body-europe/a/chris-ofili-the-holy-virgin-mary>) The image caused considerable outrage from some members of the public across the country, including then-mayor of New York City Rudolph Giuliani. With its collaged images of women's buttocks, glitter-mixed paint, and applied balls of elephant dung, many considered the painting blasphemous. Ofili stated that was not his intention; he wanted to acknowledge both the sacred and secular, even sensual, beauty of the Virgin Mary, and that the dung, in his parents' native country of Nigeria, symbolized fertility and the power of the elephant. Nevertheless, and probably unaware of the artist's meaning, people were outraged.

Traditionally, aesthetics in art has been associated with beauty, enjoyment, and the viewer's visual, intellectual, and emotional captivation. Scandalous art may not be beautiful, but it very well could be enjoyable and hold one captive. The viewer is taken in and is attracted to something that is neither routine nor ordinary. All are considered to be meaningful experiences that are distinctive to Fine Arts. Aesthetic judgment goes hand in hand with ethics. It is part of the decision-making process people use when they view a work of art and decide if it is "good" or "bad." The process of aesthetic judgment is a conceptual model that describes how people decide on the quality of artworks created and, for them individually or societally, makes an ethical decision about a certain work of art.

As we can see, art indubitably has had the power to shock and, as a source of social provocation, art will continue to shock unsuspecting viewers. Audiences will continue to feel scandalized, disturbed, or offended by art that is socially, politically, and religiously challenging. Being considered scandalous or radical, as already observed, does not take away from experiencing or appreciation of the art, nor do such responses speak to the artist's ethics or morality. Art may, however, fail in some eyes to offer an aesthetic experience. Such a failure also depends on the complex relationship between art and the viewer, living in a given moment of time.

11.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MAKING AND USING ART

11.3.1 Appropriation

Artists have always been inspired by the work of other artists; they have borrowed compositional devices, adopted stylistic elements, and taken up narrative details. In such cases, the artist incorporates these aspects of another's work into their own distinct creative endeavor. **Appropriation**, on the other hand, means taking existing objects or images and, with little or no change to them, using them in or as one's own artwork. Throughout the twentieth century and to the present day, appropriation of an object or image has come to be considered a legitimate role for art and artists to play. In the new context, the object or image is re-contextualized. This allows the artist to comment on the work's original meaning and bring new meaning to it. The viewer, recognizing the original work, layers additional meanings and associations. Thus, the work becomes different, in large part based on the artist's intent.

Sherrie Levine (b. 1947, USA) has spent her career prompting viewers to ask questions about what changes take place when she reproduces or makes slight alterations to a well-known work of art. For example, in 1981 Levine photographed images created by Walker Evans (1903-1975, USA) that had been reproduced in an exhibition catalogue. (*After Walker Evans: 4*, Sherrie Levine: <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/267214>) She titled her series *After Walker Evans*, freely acknowledging Evans as the creator of the “original” photographic works. And, she openly stated, the catalogue—containing reproductions of Evans’s photographs—was the source for her own “reproductions.” Levine created her photographs by photographing the reproduced photographs in the exhibition catalogue; the photographs in the catalogue were reproductions of the photographs in the exhibition.

Visitors to the exhibition who were familiar with Evans’s depictions of Alabama sharecropper families struggling to make a living during the Great Depression were being challenged to view Levine’s photographs, such as this one of Allie Mae Burroughs titled *After Walker Evans: 4*, independent of their historical, intellectual, and emotional significance. Without those connections, what story did the photograph tell? Did the photograph itself have meaning, or is its message the sum of what meanings the viewer ascribes to it? Levine’s work in the 1980s was part of the postmodern art movement that questioned cultural meaning over individual significance: was it possible to consider art in such broad categories any longer, or is there such a thing as one, agreed-upon, universal meaning? She was also questioning notions of “originality,” “creativity,” and “reproduction.” What product can truly be attributed to one individual’s thought processes and efforts, with no contribution from a collective of influences? If none exists, then we cannot state something is an original work of art, springing from a single source of creativity, after which all subsequent works are reproductions. One is not more authentic or valuable than the other.

In 1993, Levine was invited by the Philadelphia Museum of Art to be the first artist to participate in *Museum Studies*, a series of contemporary projects: “new works and installations created by artists specifically for the museum.” Levine created six translucent white glass “reproductions” of a 1915 marble sculpture by Constantine Brancusi (1876-1957, Romania), titled *Newborn I*. (*Crystal Newborn*, Sherrie Levine: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/classconnection/93/flashcards/7114093/jpg/thenewborn1334629599199-14C4CC989054F51F15F.jpg>) She titled her 1993 work *Crystal Newborn*; it is shown here along with *Black Newborn* of 1994. (*Crystal Newborn and Black Newborn*, Sherrie Levine: http://api.whitney.org/uploads/image/file/337061/xlarge_8._crystal_newborn_1993_black_newborn_1994.jpg) Both works are cast glass, which in the case of *Black Newborn*, has been sandblasted. (*Black Newborn*, Sherrie Levine: <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/89955?locale=en>)

Similar to her 1981 photograph *After Walker Evans: 4*, these works are meant to examine notions about something being an original or, instead, being a reproduction. Just as her earlier photographic reproductions of Evans’s work themselves could be reproduced, so also were these glass works part of a series; Levine cast a total of twelve versions from one (original?) mold. In addition, although sculpture such as Brancusi’s *Newborn I*, is generally displayed on a pedestal or stand that elevates the work to a comfortable viewing height and separates it from its surroundings, Levine had her work displayed on a grand piano. Doing so changed the setting from a more

conventional, expected, but consciously neutral mode of display, the pedestal, to the more nuanced, domesticated, yet sophisticated tone of a polished piano top. She wanted the difference to register in the viewer's mind and influence the viewer's response to the work, including thinking of the contrast: the typical museum display is masculine, that is, part of the male world of wealthy collectors and museum board members. The piano, on the other hand, brings to mind the feminine world of the comforting and comfortable home—it is a sculpture of a newborn, after all. But the cool, smooth, hard surface of Levine's glass, as was the case of Brancusi's marble, does not allow the infant head to descend to the level of maternal sentimentality.

Levine maintains tremendous similarities to the works preceding hers that she appropriates from, but she opens up their accumulated meanings to even more, new ones.

11.3.2 Use of Materials

The materials artists use to create their art throughout history have generally contributed to the value of the work. Using silver or ivory or gems or paint made from a rare mineral or numerous other materials that are costly and difficult to obtain literally raised the monetary value of the work produced. If the artwork was made for a political or religious leader, the cultural value of the work increased because it was associated with and owned by those of high status in society. On the other hand, using materials at odds with social values raises questions in the viewer's mind. For example, ivory was—and still is—a desirable material for carving, but it is illegal to trade in elephant ivory within the United States as African elephants are now an endangered species. Viewers' awareness of and sensitivity to the plant and animal life impacted in the production of art is increasing, and may actually be a factor in the materials an artist chooses to use.

Damien Hirst (b. 1965, England) began his career in the late 1980s associated with the Young British Artists (YBA). Hirst, along with others in the group, was known for his controversial subjects and approaches in his art. Much of his art from that time to the present has been concerned with spirituality—Hirst was raised Catholic—and with death as an end and a beginning, a boundary and a portal. One of the motifs he has returned to throughout his career is the butterfly. With its transformative life cycle, from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis to adult, the butterfly serves for Hirst as a “universal trigger.” That is, the symbolism associated with the butterfly's life cycle, linked by the ancient Greeks to the psyche, or soul, by early Christians to resurrection, and by many to this day to innocence and freedom, is so deeply imbedded in human consciousness that it springs to the viewer's mind automatically. In his art, those associations are the foundation upon which Hirst builds.

Hirst began his experimentations with butterflies in 1991 when he created a dual installation and exhibition, *In and Out of Love (White Paintings and Live Butterflies)* and *In and Out of Love (Butterfly Paintings and Ashtrays)*. Both contained living butterflies that were intended to and did die over the course of the five-week display. (<http://www.damienhirst.com/exhibitions/solo/1991/in-out-love>) His first solo show, *In and Out of Love*, set the stage for Hirst's career and reputation as an artist who confronts definitions of art and provokes the viewer to explain how art helps us to grapple with boundaries between and intersections of life and death, reason and faith, hope and despair.

Touching upon his interests in religion and science, including lepidoptery, the study of butterflies, Hirst often makes biblical references in the titles of his artwork, and he mimics aspects of how butterflies have traditionally been displayed in his compositions. He began the *Kaleidoscope* series in 2001, not using entire living or dead butterflies, but using only their wings, symbolizing for him a separation from the unavoidable ugliness and unpleasantness of life—the butterfly’s hairy body—to preserve only the fleeting beauty of the wings and their associations with the swift passing of time. *The Kingdom of the Father* is a later work in the series, dating to 2007. (*Kingdom of the Father*, Damien Hirst: http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/sites/default/files/Hirst-Kingdom%20of%20the%20Father_72.jpg?width=90%25&height=90%25) The title, compositional elements, and overall shape of the mixed-media work are directly linked to the artist’s absorption with religion: here, as with a number of works in the *Kaleidoscope* series, the work looks like a stained glass window found in the Gothic cathedrals that fascinated Hirst as a child.

Despite the splendid effect of their vivid colors, energized compositions, and iridescent glow, some viewers object to the materials Hirst uses: the beauty and luminosity is derived from thousands of butterflies killed so that their wings could be used in his work. In 2012, the Tate Modern in London mounted a retrospective of Hirst’s art, the first major exhibition in England to review work from his entire career. His 1991 installation, *In and Out of Love*, was recreated as part of the show. (<http://www.damienhirst.com/exhibitions/solo/2012/tate>) Some critics and animal rights activists lodged complaints about the estimated 9,000 butterflies that died over the course of the twenty-three week event. For example, a spokesperson for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) stated, “There would be national outcry if the exhibition involved any other animal, such as a dog. Just because it is butterflies, that does not mean they do not deserve to be treated with kindness.” The Tate Modern issued a statement that the butterflies were “sourced from reputable UK butterfly houses.” They also defended their use as integral to Hirst’s art, stating, “the themes of life and death as well as beauty and horror are highlighted, dualities that are prevalent in much of the artist’s work.”

In essence, the museum, along with many other individuals and institutions over the course of Hirst’s career, acknowledged the complaints, but accepted the artist’s actions as an acceptable part of his creative process, and determined his artistic intentions were of greater importance than any issues of morality raised. Simply, the butterflies were the means to a higher end, his artwork.

11.3.3 Digital Manipulation

Digital manipulation of photographs through the use of Adobe Photoshop and other computer software is so commonplace today it generally goes unnoticed or without comment. Digital manipulation is used by amateur and professional photographers alike, and can be a helpful, constructive tool. When photographs are manipulated with the aim of altering factual information, however, an ethical line has been crossed.

In 2006, freelance photographer Adnan Hajj made changes to a photograph, carried by Reuters Group, a news agency, of smoke rising in the midst of buildings in Beirut following an Israeli attack during the Israel-Lebanon conflict. (The Adnan Hajj photographs controversy revolving

around digitally manipulated photographs: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/o/of/Adnan_Hajj_Beirut_photo_comparison.jpg) A blogger commented that the photograph showed signs of manipulation. Comparing the unaltered photograph on the left to the published image on the right reveals that the smoke is obviously darker; in addition, the spreading smoke at the top of the photograph shows the telltale patterning, known as **cloning**, which indicates a digital effect that has been repeatedly duplicated. Reuters immediately retracted the photograph and issued the statement, “Reuters takes such matters extremely seriously as it is strictly against company editorial policy to alter pictures.”

The ethical premise is that photojournalists are expected to conform to accepted professional standards of conduct. In fact, the National Press Photographers Association has established a Code of Ethics that addresses the issue: “Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images’ content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.” Of importance here is that, as news, these images must remain factual, and must represent the events and people truthfully and faithfully. When a photograph is manipulated with the intent to deceive the viewer, as was the case with Hajj’s enhancement of the damage done by an Israeli strike against the Lebanese, it changes the historical record; it is unethical.

11.3.4 As an Observer

Photojournalists are expected to follow the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) Code of Ethics not only when it comes to the manipulation of news images, but also in the acquisition of those images. In times of war, political unrest, or natural disasters, for example, they may be in the midst of events that unfold in unexpected and disturbing ways. The photojournalist is an observer whose role is to make a record of the events, but as a fellow human being, should the photographer become involved or offer aid?

In 1993, photojournalist Kevin Carter (1960-1994, South Africa) photographed a starving young girl being watched by a vulture during a time of famine in Sudan. (*Vulture*, Kevin Carter: <http://theunsolicitedopinion.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/kevin-carter-vulture.jpg>) The photograph was sold to *The New York Times* and was featured in that newspaper and numerous others worldwide, generating tremendous concern about the fate of the child and commentary on the ethics of taking the photograph, especially as the scene was described as a toddler having collapsed on her way to a relief station for food. But, guidelines in the NPPA Code of Ethics state: “While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.” Many felt, however, that in light of the child’s condition and helplessness, the photographer had the responsibility to take action.

According to Carter and Joao Silva, a friend and fellow photographer, the situation and Carter’s responses were more nuanced than it may appear in the photograph. Carter and Silva arrived by airplane in the village of Ayod with United Nations personnel bringing provisions to the local feeding center. As women and children began gathering at the center, Carter photographed them. The child was a short distance away in the bush, approaching the center with difficulty on her own; as Carter watched, the vulture landed. As recounted later in *Time* magazine:

Careful not to disturb the bird, he positioned himself for the best possible image. He would later say he waited about 20 minutes, hoping the vulture would spread its wings. It did not, and after he took his photographs, he chased the bird away and watched as the little girl resumed her struggle. Afterward he sat under a tree, lit a cigarette, talked to God and cried. “He was depressed afterward,” Silva recalls. “He kept saying he wanted to hug his daughter.”¹

So while Carter did not otherwise aid the child, he did remove a source of immediate danger to her by waving away the vulture. He expressed regret he did not, and felt he could not, further help the girl and the many other victims he saw while on assignments. The unrelenting suffering he witnessed contributed to the depression he was subject to for years. A little more than a year after the photograph of the starving child was published, in April 1994, Carter received the Pulitzer Prize for the controversial image. A week later, Ken Oosterbroek, another friend and fellow photojournalist, was killed during a violent conflict they were photographing in their native South Africa. Haunted by sorrow, regret, atrocities he had witnessed, and the pain he felt, Carter committed suicide three months later.

11.4 CENSORSHIP

The word **copyright** brings up ideas of suppressing explicit, offensive images and written material, perhaps of a sexual or political nature, or accounts of violence. What is considered prurient or sacrilegious or barbarity is not universal, however, so what was acceptable during one era may be banned in the next.

Michelangelo was a sculptor, painter, and architect. He considered his sculptural and architectural works to be of far greater importance than his relatively few painted works. But many know him today as much for the two frescoes, or wall paintings, he completed in the Sistine Chapel in Rome as for the far greater number of marble figures and buildings he created. The chapel is within the Pope’s residence in Vatican City, the seat of the Roman



Figure 11.1 | The Last Judgement

Artist: Michelangelo

Author: User "Wallpaper"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

¹ Scott Macleod, “The Life and Death of Kevin Carter,” *Time*, 24 June 2001, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,165071,00.html>.

Catholic Church, in Rome. The first fresco Michelangelo painted on the 134-foot-long ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, from 1508 to 1512, is a complex series of nine scenes from the Book of Genesis, architectural elements, and figures. It was the first large-scale painting of his career. He returned to paint *The Last Judgment* on the wall behind the altar from 1535 to 1541. (Figure 11.1)

The Catholic Church had changed tremendously in the twenty-four years between when the first work was completed and the second one begun. In 1517, the singular authority of the Catholic Church was called into question when Martin Luther, a German monk, issued a series of complaints against Church practices, especially the selling of indulgences, or pardoning of sins. As opposed to the complex hierarchy of the Church, and an emphasis on its teachings as the only means to salvation, Luther championed personal faith and adherence to the word of the Bible. Although his beliefs were denounced, and Luther was excommunicated from the Church in 1521, the new Protestant faith swept through northern Europe. The Protestant Reformation, as Luther's attempts to revise the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church were known, was not just a serious threat to the Church's authority, it prompted the wholesale examination and revision of the Church's structure, activities, and methods.

Michelangelo began to paint *The Last Judgment* in 1535. In that time of upheaval and uncertainty, the subject of the faithful rising to their reward at Christ's side in eternity while those who doubt or turn away fall to their eternal damnation could have been intended to reassure those remaining true to the Church. Rather than sticking to a clearly structured and hierarchical organization of figures, however, Michelangelo broke from tradition to show dynamic groups of moving, gesturing, and emotion-filled angels, saints, blessed, and damned. Although Christ is in the center with His right arm raised, it is not clear if He is caught up in the erratic and chaotic swirl of the figures surrounding Him or confidently directing them according to their fates. The lack of distinction was originally heightened by the uniformity of clothing, or lack thereof, as Michelangelo painted the majority of figures nude, removing signs of earthly status and riches.

When completed, the fresco was hailed as a masterpiece, but in the following decades, it came under sharp criticism. As the Protestant Reformation by Martin Luther and his followers continued to revolutionize religious doctrine and practices throughout Europe, the Catholic Church formed The Council of Trent (1545-1563) in response. The Counter-Reformation remained adamant in condemning the new Protestant faith but did away with many excesses and leniencies that had grown within the Church, including art that served as a distraction from its proper use as a tool of worship. In its findings, The Council of Trent stated that used properly, art instructed the faithful to "order their own lives and manners in imitation of the saints; and may be excited to adore and love God; and to cultivate piety." Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* lacked the clarity of message and propriety now demanded in religious art so that, at odds with the Council's decree, "there be nothing seen that is disorderly, or that is unbecomingly or confusedly arranged, nothing that is profane, nothing indecorous, seeing that holiness becometh the house of God."

In 1565, two years after the Council's decree and the year after Michelangelo's death, Daniele da Volterra (1509-1566, Italy) was commissioned to paint drapery on the nude figures and alter the positions of some that were deemed too indelicate. Some of his modifications, and others carried out in the eighteenth century, were removed when the fresco was cleaned and restored between 1980 and 1994.

11.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE COLLECTING AND DISPLAY OF ART

11.5.1 Collecting/Holding

Art is part of the cultural heritage and identity of the society in which it is made. It shares characteristics with work made by other artists such as how figures of authority are depicted or what is considered appropriate subject matter in art. Because art is closely aligned with the history and values of the people in the society it comes from, individuals and governments alike take care to preserve and protect the cultural treasures in their possession. For the same reasons, invaders often loot and confiscate or destroy the works of art and architecture most cherished by those they have conquered to demoralize and subjugate them.

Representatives of the Nazi Party in Germany took art from its rightful owners, both museums and individuals, from 1933 until the end of World War II in 1945. When Adolf Hitler assumed the role of Chancellor of Germany in 1933, he began a campaign to sell or destroy art he did not approve of in the collections of German museums. Much of that art had been produced by artists who were part of twentieth-century art movements such as German Expressionism, Dadaism, Cubism, and Surrealism. Hitler objected to *avant garde*—experimental and innovative—art and to the artists who were part of those groups. By 1937, his agents had amassed nearly 16,000 works, 650 of which were included in the Degenerate Art Exhibition (*Die Ausstellung Entartete Kunst*) held in Munich that year and viewed by more than 2,000,000 people. Hitler condemned the degenerate art as contributing to, if not the cause of, the decay of German culture, and the artists as racially impure, mentally deficient, and morally bereft. Thousands of the works were then destroyed by fire, and thousands more were sold to collectors and museums worldwide.

The funds generated by works sold were earmarked for the purchase of more traditionally acclaimed artists and subjects that were to go into the *Führermuseum*, or Leader's Museum, in Linz, which Hitler intended to be the greatest collection of European art in the world but which was never built. Art for the Leader's Museum was purchased from museums, private owners, and art dealers, often under pressure to sell the work at a steep discount to Hitler's agents or risk arrest. And, the Nazis acquired



Figure 11.2 | German loot stored at Schlosskirche Ellingen

Author: Department of Defense

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

art by confiscating it from institutions and private owners, many of whom were Jewish. The Nazis purchased and looted work in every country they occupied during World War II. They had amassed 8,500 works intended for the *Führermuseum* by the time Hitler committed suicide in 1945.

They plundered tens of thousands more for the private collections of Hitler and a few of his top commanders, including Hermann Göring, who held approximately 2,000 works of art by the end of the war. Art and other cultural spoils of war (such as books) were stored in numerous locations throughout Germany and Austria, including air raid shelters, estates that had been seized by the Nazis, and salt mines. In the photograph shown here, hundreds of crates holding sculptures and cloth-wrapped paintings are stacked in the Palace Chapel (*Schlosskirche*) in the town of Ellingen, in Bavaria. (Figure 11.2) Standing guard is a United States soldier.

In 1943, Allied forces created an organization known as Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA). At first, the approximately 350 men and women from thirteen countries who were part of the “Monuments Men,” as they became known, worked to prevent damage to historically and culturally significant monuments. As the war was ending, they began locating and documenting art held by the Nazis and then led the effort to return art to the country from which it had been taken. By the time they completed their work in 1951, the Monuments Men had located and returned to their owners 5,000,000 works of art and other culturally significant items, as well as domestic objects of value such as silver, china, and jewelry. As of 1997, approximately 100,000 objects were still missing.

11.5.2 Display

Museums of all types play many roles. In the collections they hold, museums act as keepers of the public trust. The objects or artifacts have value to all, from the casual viewer to the avid scholar, in one or more realm: scientific, educational, cultural, social, historical, political. The objects help preserve our memories and carry them into the future; they also help us to understand the lives, thinking, and actions of others. Through the exhibitions they hold and objects they display, museums promote debate, encourage new ideas, and stimulate our imaginations. The objects in museums communicate with us by appealing to our senses, emotions, intellect, and creativity. That is why we continue to wonder about and ponder on what we see and experience in museum settings.

When objects are placed within a context in a museum display, it stimulates our ability to make connections and broaden our understanding. For example, if a historical museum presents information about the geography and history of an area as part of a display on canoes and river trading, we have a context in which to appreciate the objects and interpret the practices of the people in that place and time. That was the approach artist Fred Wilson (b. 1954, USA) took when asked to create an exhibition for the Maryland Historical Society (MHS) in 1992. He titled his show “Mining the Museum.” (Metalwork: <http://africanah.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/FredWilsonMiningTheMuseum2.jpg>)

The mission of the MHS is to collect, preserve, and study objects related to Maryland history. This is often accomplished through the display of objects in its collection. As the organizer of the

exhibition, or guest curator, Wilson was allowed to explore the thousands of artifacts in storage, many of which are seldom if ever displayed. He was seeking to bring to light, so to speak, objects rarely seen, and to present groupings of objects in unexpected ways, sometimes humorous and at other times disturbing. For example, with the label identifying the objects as “Metalwork 1793-1880,” Wilson placed iron slave shackles in the midst of ornately decorated silver tableware. No explanatory text accompanied these things; Wilson wanted viewers to contemplate what they saw and make connections without directions:

By displaying these artifacts side by side, Wilson created an atmosphere of unease and made apparent the link between the two kinds of metal works: The production of the one was made possible by the subjugation enforced by the other. When the audience made this connection, Wilson succeeded in creating awareness of the biases that often underlie historical exhibitions and, further, the way these biases shape the meaning we attach to what we are viewing.

So, in addition to asking viewers to question the meaning of the objects through his mode of display, he also wanted them to think about how history is made or constructed by what we include and omit; what we value, and why; and how we highlight objects and information of value in exhibitions within museum settings.

11.5.3 Property Rights, Copyright, and the First Amendment

Artist Shepard Fairey (b. 1970, USA) designed a poster with a portrait of President Barack Obama above the word “hope” in red, beige, and two tones of blue in 2008. (Barack Obama “HOPE” poster, Shepard Fairey: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepard_Fairey#/media/File:Barack_Obama_Hope_poster.jpg) Sometimes printed instead with the words “progress” or “change,” the poster and image quickly became associated with Obama’s campaign for presidency and was soon officially adopted as its symbol. After the election, the Smithsonian Institution acquired for the National Portrait Gallery a mixed-media version of the portrait.

It soon came to light, however, that the poster was based on a photograph taken by freelance photographer Mannie Garcia in 2006. The Associated Press (AP) stated they owned rights to the photograph and that Fairey had not obtained permission from AP for its use. The Associated Press claimed they owned the copyright on the photograph, having contracted ownership of the image from its creator, Mannie Garcia. Garcia, on the other hand, stated that according to his contract with AP, he still possessed the copyright. The exclusive legal right to print, publish, or otherwise reproduce a work of art or to authorize others to do so belongs to the artist who created it according to the U.S. Constitution, Article 1 Section 8: “The Congress shall have Power: To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.” That right, or copyright, remains in place for the artist’s lifetime plus seventy years, granting the artist the power to control their work, its use, and its reproduction.

Fairey, through his attorney Anthony Falzone, countered with the statement, “We believe fair use protects Shepard’s right to do what he did here.” Fair use allows for brief excerpts of copyright material to be used without permission of payment from the copyright holder under certain conditions: commentary and criticism, or parody. The idea behind allowing quotes and summaries of copyright material to be used freely is that what is written will add to public knowledge. Parody is referencing a well-known work clearly, but in a comic way; by its very nature, the original work is recognizable in a parody of it. Unfortunately, Fairey’s case was settled out of court, so the question of how his use of Garcia’s photograph in his poster was an example of fair use was not answered.

11.6 BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Key Concepts

Traditionally, art has a history of being judged and censored and more than likely in the future artists will continue to blur many boundaries, sometimes even offending the audience’s sensitivities. Offenses may address politics, social injustices, sexuality or nudity, among numerous other subjects and concerns. Contemporary societies, on the other hand, generally do not want to endorse any form of censorship; but, at times due to the sensitive nature of art, it happens. Some contemporary art is expected to make some groups in society uncomfortable. Artists over time have pushed many boundaries in society and have brought to the surface questions about a society’s moral beliefs. Just the questions alone have perhaps expanded the freedom of artistic manifestation. So, works such as Duchamp’s *Urinal*, or Ofili’s *The Holy Virgin Mary* challenge society’s moral beliefs and values by the nature of the art itself. They also shock segments of society by exploring the notion of aesthetic taste. Such works that challenge traditional notion of ethics and aesthetics, in fact, have led some to believe that contemporary art practices are based more on the idea than the object of art.

Nevertheless, artists do make ethical decisions in such areas as the appropriation of others’ work, what materials they use in their work and how they use them, the digital manipulation of their work, and what role they play as observers of the events they capture in their art. And, as we have seen, museums and other places in which art is exhibited play distinct roles and have responsibilities in how art is preserved, interpreted, and displayed.

Test Yourself

1. Is there a relationship between art and ethics? Defend your answer explaining why you agree or disagree. Select works not used in this text to clarify your stance. Attach selected works with captions. Add a commentary at the end of your response explaining why you selected the art works and their significance to the topic.
2. Select two ethically controversial works of art from different periods in history. Explain how each work was received at the time it was made, and how changes in societal values have impacted acceptance of the works today.

3. Should certain types of art be censored? Explain your answer and select at least two examples to assist in clarifying your statement. Give an opposing response with justifications and select works to describe and clarify your opinion.
4. Describe one way appropriation has become acceptable in contemporary art.
5. What does it mean when some contemporary artists question what is an “original” work of art, and what is a “reproduction?”
6. What concepts was Damien Hirst exploring in using butterflies in his artwork? What did the butterflies symbolize for Hirst?
7. Why is it important that news photographs not be altered?
8. What was the ethical dilemma photojournalist Kevin Carter faced when he photographed a child during the 1993 famine in Sudan?
9. What acts of censorship did Adolf Hitler and his associates engage in prior to and during World War II?
10. As guardians of culturally significant objects, what obligations do museums have?
11. Describe how claims of “copyright” and “fair use” came into play in relation to Shepard Fairey’s portrait of Barack Obama.

11.7 KEY TERMS

Appropriation: the use of pre-existing objects or images with little or no transformation applied to them.

Censorship: the suppression of art and other forms of communication considered to be objectionable or harmful for moral, political, or religious reasons.

Cloning: the repeated duplication of a digital effect.

Ethical Judgment: an alternative decision between being morally right or morally wrong.

Ethical Values: principles that determine one proper behavior in society.

Formal qualities: the elements and principles of design that make up a work of art.