

Introduction to

ART

Design, Context, and Meaning

Editor-in-Chief | Pamela J. Sachant, Ph.D.

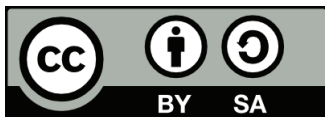
Peggy Blood, Ph.D. | Jeffery LeMieux, M.F.A | Rita Tekippe, Ph.D.

Introduction to
ART
Design, Context, and Meaning

Editor-in-Chief | Pamela J. Sachant, Ph.D.

Peggy Blood, Ph.D. | Jeffery LeMieux, M.F.A | Rita Tekippe, Ph.D.





Introduction to Art: Design, Context, and Meaning is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

This license allows you to remix, tweak, and build upon this work, even commercially, as long as you credit this original source for the creation and license the new creation under identical terms.

If you reuse this content elsewhere, in order to comply with the attribution requirements of the license please attribute the original source to the University System of Georgia.

NOTE: The above copyright license which University System of Georgia uses for their original content does not extend to or include content which was accessed and incorporated, and which is licensed under various other CC Licenses, such as ND licenses. Nor does it extend to or include any Special Permissions which were granted to us by the rightsholders for our use of their content.

Image Disclaimer: All images and figures in this book are believed to be (after a reasonable investigation) either public domain or carry a compatible Creative Commons license. If you are the copyright owner of images in this book and you have not authorized the use of your work under these terms, please contact the University of North Georgia Press at ungpress@ung.edu to have the content removed.

ISBN: 978-1-940771-29-8

Produced by:
University System of Georgia

Published by:
University of North Georgia Press
Dahlonega, Georgia

Cover Art:
The Burning of the Houses of Parliament (1834) by William Turner

Cover Design and Layout Design:
Corey Parson

For more information, please visit <http://ung.edu/university-press>
Or email ungpress@ung.edu

If you need this document in an alternate format for accessibility purposes (e.g. Braille, large print, audio, etc.), please contact Corey Parson at corey.parson@ung.edu or 706-864-1556.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS ART?	1
1.1 Learning Outcomes	1
1.2 Introduction	1
1.3 What is Visual Art?	3
1.4 Who is Considered an Artist? What Does It Mean To Be An Artist?	8
1.5 The Role of the Viewer	14
1.6 Why Do We Make Art?	17
1.7 Concepts Explored in Later Chapters	26
1.8 Before You Move On	29
1.9 Key Terms	30
CHAPTER TWO: THE STRUCTURE OF ART	31
2.1 Learning Outcomes	31
2.2 Introduction	31
2.3 Art Specific Vocabulary	32
2.4 Art Forms	32
2.5 Form and Composition	48
2.6 Before You Move On	67
2.7 Key Terms	68
CHAPTER THREE: SIGNIFICANCE OF MATERIALS USED IN ART	77
3.1 Learning Outcomes	77
3.2 Introduction	77
3.3 Utility and Value of Materials	78
3.4 Precious Materials, Spolia, and Borrowed Glory	82
3.5 Liquidation of Treasures	87
3.6 Wood, Inlay, and Lacquer	88
3.7 Intrinsic Values and Enhanced Worth of Metals	90
3.8 Rare Materials and Prohibited Uses	90
3.9 Material Connotations of Class or Station	91
3.10 Before You Move On	91
3.11 Key Terms	92

CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIBING ART	94
4.1 Learning Outcomes	94
4.2 Introduction	94
4.3 Formal or Critical Analysis	95
4.4 Types of Art	99
4.5 Styles of Art	106
4.6 Before You Move On	126
4.7 Key Terms	127
CHAPTER FIVE: MEANING IN ART	129
5.1 Learning Outcomes	129
5.2 Introduction	129
5.3 Socio-Cultural Contexts	129
5.4 Symbolism and Iconography	141
5.5 Before You Move On	155
5.6 Key Terms	156
CHAPTER SIX: CONNECTING ART TO OUR LIVES	158
6.1 Learning Outcomes	158
6.2 Introduction	158
6.3 Aesthetics	158
6.4 Expression (Philosophical, Political, Religious, Personal)	161
6.5 Unification/Exclusion	163
6.6 Communication	166
6.7 Protest and Shock	168
6.8 Celebration and Commemoration	169
6.9 Worship	170
6.10 Information, Education, and Inspiration	171
6.11 Before You Move On	172
6.12 Key Terms	173
CHAPTER SEVEN: FORM IN ARCHITECTURE	175
7.1 Learning Outcomes	175
7.2 Introduction	175
7.3 Residential Needs	176
7.4 Community and Government	188
7.5 Commerce	192
7.6 Worship	195
7.7 Before You Move On	207
7.8 Key Terms	207

CHAPTER EIGHT: ART AND IDENTITY	211
8.1 Learning Outcomes	211
8.2 Introduction	211
8.3 Individual vs Cultural Groups	214
8.4 Before You Move On	231
8.5 Key Terms	232
CHAPTER NINE: ART AND POWER	233
9.1 Learning Outcomes	233
9.2 Introduction	233
9.3 Propaganda, Persuasion, Politics, and Power	235
9.4 Imagery Of War	238
9.5 Before You Move On	250
9.6 Key Terms	251
CHAPTER 10: ART AND RITUAL LIFE	253
10.1 Learning Outcomes	253
10.2 Introduction	253
10.3 Exterior Ritual Spaces	253
10.4 The Sacred Interior	256
10.5 Masks and Ritual Behavior	269
10.6 Funerary Spaces and Grave Goods	271
10.7 Before You Move On	275
10.8 Key Terms	277
CHAPTER ELEVEN: ART AND ETHICS	279
11.1 Learning Outcomes	279
11.2 Introduction	279
11.3 Ethical Considerations in Making and Using Art	281
11.4 Censorship	286
11.5 Ethical Considerations in the Collecting and Display of Art	288
11.6 Before You Move On	291
11.7 Key Terms	292

1

What is Art?

Jeffrey LeMieux and Pamela J. Sachant

1.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize various historical arguments about the definition of art and who is an artist.
- Engage arguments that distinguish between art and craft.
- Critically evaluate claims about whether an object is or is not art from multiple points of view.
- Engage questions about who is considered an artist and the role of the viewer.
- Productively speculate about various reasons why people have made and continue to make art.
- Recognize your intuitive understanding of art, and potentially build a broader, more comprehensive view of the nature and definition of visual art, one which incorporates historically and culturally diverse art objects and answers conceptual challenges.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

We live in a rapidly changing world in which images play an important, even central, role. With widespread use of personal electronics, we instantaneously deliver and receive sound, video, and text messages. Corporations and governments worldwide recognize the power of advertising. Art museums worldwide are putting large parts of their collections online. Today we are seeing theater-quality movies made with inexpensive equipment that was unavailable ten years ago. Selfies, personal video, and memes are everywhere. In 1968, artist Andy Warhol (1928-1967, USA) said, “In the future everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes.” (*Self Portrait*, Andy Warhol: http://art.newcity.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Warhol_SelfPortrait.jpg) We are seeing that prediction come true with the advent of personal electronics that rival the sophistication of the most advanced professional studios of only twenty years ago. We are surrounded by images, but, for all of our clever technical abilities, the fundamental dynamics of visual art remain the same.



Figure 1.1 | *Blind Homer with Guide*

Artist: Bouguereau
 Author: User "Thebrid"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

Take a few minutes to look over the accompanying image, *Blind Homer and His Guide*. (Figure 1.1) It was painted in 1875 by a leading member of the French *École des Beaux Arts*, or School of Fine Arts, William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1925, France), and serves as a good example of the kinds of paintings made in Europe during that time. We might wonder what a painting made more than 100 years ago in a foreign country could have to do with us today.

The French Academic artist Bouguereau's painting is more than a literal presentation of a forgotten moment in ancient history. The painting challenges viewers from every age to go deeper, to see the symbolism behind the history. Homer, who is thought to have lived around 1000 BCE, was the chief poet of the ancient Greeks. Ancient Greek ideas about social roles and the nature of virtue come to us in part from Homer's epic poems the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*. In Bouguereau's painting, Homer symbolizes civilization and culture. Homer wanders blindly through a savage wilderness with only a youth to shelter him. In this way, Bouguereau implies that a wilderness can be not only physical but also cultural, and in that sense, all of us wander through a wilderness that threatens the human

spirit found in culture. His painting asks the question, "How are cultural values carried forward?" In Bouguereau's work, the young man has taken responsibility for protecting Homer, who symbolizes the refined wisdom of the past and the foundation of western culture. This image is a call to the youth of Bouguereau's generation (and to ours) to bring precious culture forward safely through an ever-threatening wilderness.

Wherever we find human beings, we find visual art. Works of visual art raise questions not only about our ancestors, but also about the nature of visual art itself. What is art? Who is an artist? Why do artists make art? What is the role of the viewer? Does everything count as art? How have people defined art through time? How do we define art today?

In this chapter, we will examine these questions in more detail. The purpose of this examination is twofold: to increase your awareness of the mechanics of those images and, thus, more effectively understand the visual art that we encounter in our daily lives. Images are powerful. Images are used in our culture in many ways, not all of them benign. When we enhance our visual literacy, we raise our awareness of the powerful images that surround us.

1.3 WHAT IS VISUAL ART?

To explore a subject, we need first to define it. Defining art, however, proves elusive. You may have heard it said (or even said it yourself) that “it might be art, but it’s not Art,” which means, “I might not know how to define it, but I know it when I see it.”

Everywhere we look, we see images designed to command our attention, including images of desire, images of power, religious images, images meant to recall memories, and images intended to manipulate our appetites. But are they art?

Some languages do not have a separate word for art. In those cultures, objects tend to be utilitarian in purpose but often include in their design the intent to delight, portray a special status, or commemorate an important event or ritual. Thus, while the objects are not considered art, they do have artistic functions.

1.3.1 Historic Development of the Idea of Art

The idea of art has developmentally progressed from human prehistory to the present day. Changes to the definition of art over time can be seen as attempts to resolve problems with earlier definitions. The ancient Greeks saw the goal of visual art as copying, or *mimesis*. Nineteenth-century art theorists promoted the idea that art is communication: it produces feelings in the viewer. In the early twentieth century, the idea of significant form, the quality shared by aesthetically pleasing objects, was proposed as a definition of art. Today, many artists and thinkers agree with the institutional theory of art, which shifts focus from the work of art itself to who has the power to decide what is and is not art. While this progression of definitions of art is not exhaustive, it is instructive.

1.3.1.1 *Mimesis*

The ancient Greek definition of art as **mimesis**, or imitation of the real world, appears in the myth of Zeuxis and Parhassios, rival painters from ancient Greece in the late fifth century BCE who competed for the title of greatest artist. (Figure 1.2) Zeuxis painted a bowl of grapes that was so lifelike that birds came down to peck at the image of fruit. Parhassios was unimpressed with this achievement. When viewing Parhassios’s work, Zeuxis, on his part, asked that the curtain over the painting be drawn back so he could see his rival’s work more



Figure 1.2 | Zeuxis conceding defeat: “I have deceived the birds, but Parhassios has deceived Zeuxis.”

Artist: Joachim von Sandrart; engraving by Johann Jakob von Sandrart

Author: User “Fae”

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

clearly. Parhassios declared himself the victor because the curtain *was* the painting, and while Zeuxis fooled the birds with his work, Parhassios fooled a thinking human being—a much more difficult feat.

The ancient Greeks felt that the visual artist’s goal was to copy visual experience. This approach appears in the realism of ancient Greek sculpture and pottery. We must sadly note that, due to the action of time and weather, no paintings from ancient Greek artists exist today. We can only surmise their quality based on tales such as that of Zeuxis and Parhassios, the obvious skill in ancient Greek sculpture, and in drawings that survive on ancient Greek pottery.

This definition of art as copying reality has a problem, though. Jackson Pollock (1912-1956, USA), a leader in the New York School of the 1950’s, intentionally did not copy existing objects in his art. (Figure 1.3) While painting these works, Pollock and his fellow artists would consciously avoid making marks or passages that resembled recognizable objects. They succeeded at making artwork that did not copy anything, thus demonstrating that the ancient Greek view of art as mimesis—simple copying—does not sufficiently define art.



Figure 1.3 | Left: *The She-Wolf*; Right: *Gothic*

Artist: Jackson Pollock

Author: Gorup de Besanez

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 4.0

1.3.1.2 Communication

A later attempt at defining art comes from the nineteenth-century Russian author Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy wrote on many subjects, and is the author of the great novel *War and Peace* (1869). He was also an art theorist. He proposed that art is the **communication of feeling**, stating, “Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them.”¹

This definition does not succeed because it is impossible to confirm that the feelings of the artist have been successfully conveyed to another person. Further, suppose an artist created a work of art that no one else ever saw. Since no feeling had been communicated through it, would it still be a work of art? The work did not “hand on to others” anything at all because it was never seen. Therefore, it would fail as art according to Tolstoy’s definition.

1 Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art? And Essays on Art*, trans. Aylmer Maude (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 123.

1.3.1.3 Significant Form

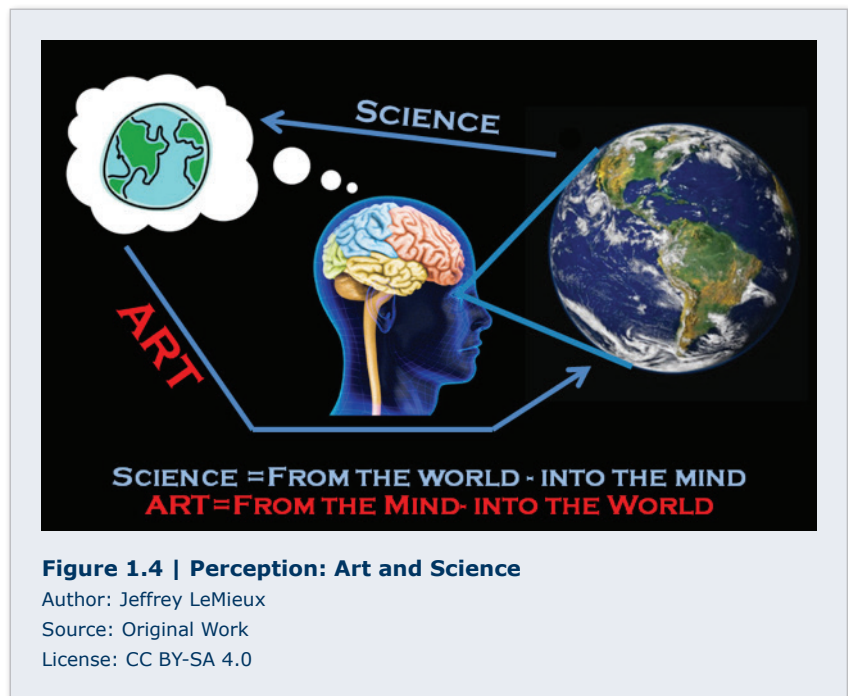
To address these limitations of existing definitions of art, in 1913 English art critic Clive Bell proposed that art is **significant form**, or the “quality that brings us aesthetic pleasure.” Bell stated, “to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing but a sense of form and colour.”² In Bell’s view, the term “form” simply means line, shape, mass, as well as color. Significant form is the collection of those elements that rises to the level of your awareness and gives you noticeable pleasure in its beauty. Unfortunately, **aesthetics**, pleasure in the beauty and appreciation of art, are impossible to measure or reliably define. What brings aesthetic pleasure to one person may not affect another. Aesthetic pleasure exists only in the viewer, not in the object. Thus significant form is purely subjective. While Clive Bell did advance the debate about art by moving it away from requiring strict representation, his definition gets us no closer to understanding what does or does not qualify as an art object.

1.3.1.4 Artworld

One definition of art widely held today was first promoted in the 1960s by American philosophers George Dickie and Arthur Danto, and is called the **institutional theory** of art, or the “Artworld” theory. In the simplest version of this theory, art is an object or set of conditions that has been designated as art by a “person or persons acting on behalf of the artworld,” and the artworld is a “complex field of forces” that determine what is and is not art.³ Unfortunately, this definition gets us no further along because it is not about art at all! Instead, it is about who has the power to define art, which is a political issue, not an aesthetic one.

1.3.2 Definition of Art

We each perceive the world from our own position or perspective and from that perception we make a mental image of the world. Science is the process of turning perceptions into a coherent mental picture of the universe through testing and observation. (Figure 1.4) Science moves concepts from the world into the mind. Science is vitally important because it allows us to understand how the world works and to use that understanding to make good predictions. Art is the other side of



2 Clive Bell, “Art and Significant Form,” in *Art* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1913), 2

3 George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 464.



Figure 1.5 | Portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley

Artist: Alfred Clint
 Author: User "Dcoetzee"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

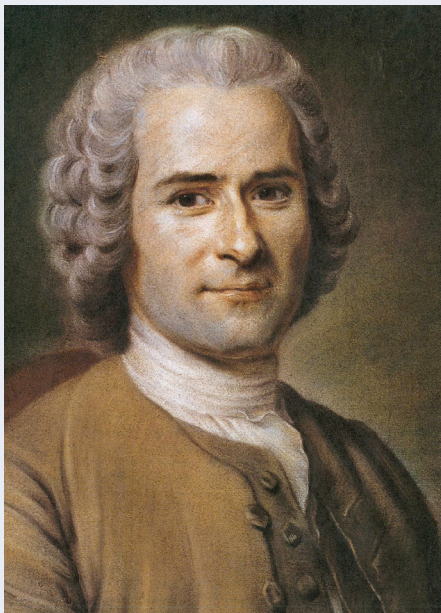


Figure 1.6 | Portrait of Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Artist: Maurice Quentin de La Tour
 Author: User "Maarten van Vliet"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

our experience with the world. *Art moves ideas from the mind into the world.*

We need both art and science to exist in the world. From our earliest age, we both observe the world and do things to change it. We are all both scientists and artists. Every human activity has both a science (observation) and an art (expression) to it. Anyone who has participated in the discipline of Yoga, for example, can see that even something as simple as breathing has both an art and a science to it.

This definition of art covers the wide variety of objects that we see in museums, on social media, or even in our daily walk to work. But this definition of art is not enough. The bigger question is: what art is worthy of our attention, and how do we know when we have found it? Ultimately, each of us must answer that question for ourselves.

But we do have help if we want it. People who have made a disciplined study of art can offer ideas about what art is important and why. In the course of this text, we will examine some of those ideas about art. Due to the importance of respecting the individual, the decision about what art is best must belong to the individual. We ask only that the student understand the ideas as presented.

When challenged with a question or problem about what is best, we first ask, "What do I personally know about it?" When we realize our personal resources are limited, we might ask friends, neighbors, and relatives what they know. In addition to these important resources, the educated person can refer to a larger body of possible solutions drawn from a study of the history of literature, philosophy, and art: What did the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley say about truth in his essay *Defense of Poetry* (1840)? (Figure 1.5) What did the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau claim about human nature in his treatise *Emile or On Education* (1762)? (Figure 1.6) What did Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675, Netherlands) show us about the quiet dignity of the domestic space in his painting *Woman Holding a Balance*? (Figure 1.7) Through experiencing these works of art and literature, our ideas about such things can be tested and validated or found wanting.

We will examine works of visual art from a diverse range of cultures and periods. The challenge for you as the reader

is to increase your ability to interpret works of art through the use of context, visual dynamics, and introspection, and to integrate them into a coherent worldview. The best outcome of an encounter with art is an awakening of the mind and spirit to a new point of view. A mind stretched beyond itself never returns to its original dimension.

1.3.3 The Distinction of Fine Art

From our definition of art proposed above, it would seem that craft and fine art are indistinguishable as both come from the mind into the world. But the distinction between craft and art is real and important. This distinction is most commonly understood as one based on the use or end purpose of an object, or as an effect of the material used. Clay, textiles, glass, and jewelry were long considered the province of craft, not art. If an object's intended use was a part of daily living, then it was generally thought to be the product of craft, not fine art. But many objects originally intended to be functional, such as quilts, are now thought to qualify as fine art. (Figure 1.8)

So what could be the difference between art and craft? Anyone who has been exposed to training in a craft such as carpentry or plumbing recognizes that craft follows a formula, that is, a set of rules that govern not only how the work is to be conducted but also what the outcome of that work must be. The level of craft is judged by how closely the end product matches the pre-determined outcome. We want our houses to stand and water to flow when we turn on our faucets. Fine art, on the other hand, results from a free and open-ended exploration that does not depend on a pre-determined formula for its outcome or validity. Its outcome is surprising and original. Almost all fine art objects are a combination of some level both of craft and art. Art stands on craft, but goes beyond it.



Figure 1.7 | *Woman Holding a Balance*

Artist: Johannes Vermeer

Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 1.8 | Quilt

Artist: Lucy Mingo

Author: User "Billvolckening"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 4.0

1.3.4 Why Art Matters

American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer is considered a “father of the atomic bomb” for the role he played in developing nuclear weapons as part of the Manhattan Project during World War II (1939-1945). (Figure 1.9) Upon completion of the project, quoting from the Hindu epic tale *Bhagavad Gita*, he stated, “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” Clearly, Oppenheimer had read more than physics texts in his education, which fit him well for his important role during World War II.

When we train in mathematics and the sciences, for example, we become very powerful. Power can be used well or badly. Where in our schools is the coursework on how to use power wisely? Today a liberal arts college education requires students to survey the arts and history of human cultures in order to examine a wide range of ideas about wisdom and to humanize the powerful. With that in mind, in every course taken in the university, it is hoped that you will recognize the need to couple your increasing intellectual power with a study of what is thought to be wisdom, and to view each educational experience in the humanities as part of the search for what is better in ourselves and our communities.

This text is not intended to determine what is or is not good art and why it matters. Rather, the point of this text is to equip you with intellectual tools that will enable you to analyze, decipher, and interpret works of art as bearers of meaning, to make *your own* decisions about the merit of those works, and then usefully to integrate those decisions into your daily lives.

1.4 WHO IS CONSIDERED AN ARTIST? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ARTIST?

In much of the world today, an artist is considered to be a person with the talent and the skills to conceptualize and make creative works. Such persons are singled out and prized for their artistic and original ideas. Their art works can take many forms and fit into numerous categories, such as architecture, ceramics, digital art, drawings, mixed media, paintings, photographs, prints, sculpture, and textiles. Of greater importance, artists are the individuals who have the desire and ability to envision, design, and fabricate the images, objects, and structures we all encounter, use, occupy, and enjoy every day of our lives.

Today, as has been the case throughout history and across cultures, there are different titles for those who make and build. An artisan or craftsperson, for example, may produce decorative or utilitarian arts, such as quilts or baskets. Often, an artisan or craftsperson is a skilled worker, but not the inventor of the original idea or form. An artisan or craftsperson can also be someone

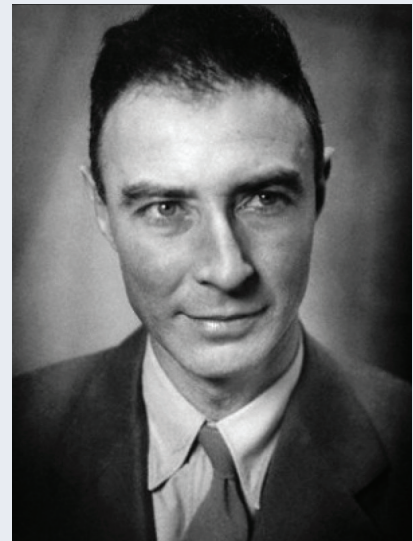


Figure 1.9 | J. Robert Oppenheimer
 Author: Los Alamos National Laboratory
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

who creates their own designs, but does not work in art forms or with materials traditionally associated with the so-called Fine Arts, such as painting and sculpture. A craftsperson might instead fashion jewelry, forge iron, or blow glass into patterns and objects of their own devising. Such inventive and skilled pieces are often categorized today as Fine Craft or Craft Art.

In many cultures throughout much of history, those who produced, embellished, painted, and built were not considered to be artists as we think of them now. They were artisans and craftspeople, and their role was to make the objects and build the structures for which they were hired, according to the design (their own or another's) agreed upon with those for whom they were working. That is not to say they were untrained. In Medieval Europe, or the Middle Ages (fifth-fifteenth centuries), for example, an artisan generally began around the age of twelve as an apprentice, that is, a student who learned all aspects of a profession from a master who had their own workshop. Apprenticeships lasted five to nine years or more, and included learning trades ranging from painting to baking, and masonry to candle making. At the end of that period, an apprentice became a journeyman and was allowed to become a member of the craft guild that supervised training and standards for those working in that trade. To achieve full status in the guild, a journeyman had to complete their "masterpiece," demonstrating sufficient skill and craftsmanship to be named a master.



Figure 1.10 | Gudea

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

We have little information about how artists trained in numerous other time periods and cultures, but we can gain some understanding of what it meant to be an artist by looking at examples of art work that were produced. *Seated Statue of Gudea* depicts the ruler of the state of Lagash in Southern Mesopotamia, today Iraq, during his reign, c. 2144-2124 BCE. (Figure 1.10)

Gudea is known for building temples, many in the kingdom's main city of Girsu (today Telloh, Iraq), with statues portraying himself in them. In these works, he is seated or standing with wide, staring eyes but otherwise a calm expression on his face and his hands folded in a gesture of prayer and greeting. Many of the statues, including the one pictured here, are carved from diorite, a very hard stone favored by rulers in ancient Egypt and the Near East for its rarity and the fine lines that can be cut into it. The ability to cut such precise lines allowed the craftsman who carved this work to distinguish between and emphasize each finger in Gudea's

clasped hands as well as the circular patterns on his stylized shepherd's hat, both of which indicate the leader's dedication to the well-being and safety of his people.

Although the sculpture of Gudea was clearly carved by a skilled artisan, we have no record of that person, or of the vast majority of the artisans and builders who worked in the ancient world. Who they worked for and what they created are the records of their lives and artistry. Artisans were not valued for taking an original approach and setting themselves apart when creating a statue of a ruler such as Gudea: their success was based on their ability to work within standards of how the human form was depicted and specifically how a leader should look within that culture at that time. The large, almond-shaped eyes and compact, block-like shape of the figure, for example, are typical of sculpture from that period. This sculpture is not intended to be an individual likeness of Gudea; rather, it is a depiction of the characteristic features, pose, and proportions found in all art of that time and place.

Objects made out of clay were far more common in the ancient world than those made of metal or stone, such as the *Seated Statue of Gudea*, which were far more costly, time-consuming, and difficult to make. Human figures modeled in clay dating back as far as 29,000-25,000 BCE have been found in Europe, and the earliest known pottery, found in Jiangxi Province, China, dates to c. 18,000 BCE. Vessels made of clay and baked in ovens were first made in the Near East c. 8,000 BCE, nearly 6,000 years before the *Seated Statue of Gudea* was carved. **Ceramic** (clay hardened by heat) pots were used for storage and numerous everyday needs. They were utilitarian objects made by anonymous artisans.



Figure 1.11 | Panathenaic Prize Amphora with Lid

Artist: Nikodemos

Source: The J. Paul Getty Museum

License: Open Content

Among the ancient Greeks, however, pottery rose to the level of an art form. But, the status of the individuals who created and painted the pots did not. Although their work may have been sought after, these potters and painters were still considered artisans. The origins of pottery that can be described as distinctively Greek dates to c. 1,000 BCE, in what is known as the Proto-geometric period. Over the next several hundred years, the shapes of the vessels and the types of decorative motifs and subjects painted on them became associated with the city where they were produced, and then specifically with the individuals who made and decorated the pots. The types of pots signed by the potter and the painter were generally large, elaborately decorated or otherwise specialized vessels that were used for ritual or ceremonial purposes.

That is the case with the *Panathenaic Prize Amphora*, 363-362 BCE, signed by Nikodemos, the potter, and attributed to the Painter of the Wedding Procession, whose name is not known but is identified through similarities to other painted pots. (Figure 1.11) The Panathenaia was a festival held every four years in honor of Athena, the patron goddess of Athens, Greece, who is depicted on the **amphora**, a tall, two-handled



Figure 1.12 | Pear Blossoms

Artist: Qian Xuan

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

jar with a narrow neck. On the other side of the storage jar, Nike, the goddess of victory, crowns the winner of the boxing competition for which this pot—containing precious olive oil from Athena’s sacred trees—was awarded by the city of Athens. Only the best potters and painters were hired to make pots that were part of such an important ceremony and holding such a significant prize. While the vast majority of artisans never identified themselves on their work, these noteworthy individuals were set apart and acknowledged by name. The makers’ signatures demonstrated the city’s desire to give an award of the highest quality; they acted as promotion for the potter and painter at that time, and they have immortalized them since. It must not be forgotten, however, that the prize inside the pot was considered far more important than the vessel or the skilled artisans who created it.

China was united and ruled by Mongols from the north, first under Kublai Kahn, in the period known as the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The hand scroll painting *Pear Blossoms* was created with ink and colors on paper around 1280 by Qian Xuan (c. 1235-before 1307, China). (Figure 1.12) After the establishment of the Mongolian government, Qian Xuan abandoned his goal of obtaining a position as a scholar-official, as the highly educated bureaucrats who governed China were known, and turned to painting. He was part of a group of artists known as scholar-painters, or literati. The work of scholar-painters was desirable to many admirers of art because it was considered more personal, expressive, and spontaneous than the uniform and realistic paintings by professional, trained artists. The scholar-painters’ sophisticated and deep knowledge of philosophy, culture, and the arts—including calligraphy—made them welcome among fellow scholars and at court. They were part of the elite class of leaders, who followed the long and noble traditions within Confucian teachings of expressing oneself with wisdom and grace, especially in the art of poetry.

Qian Xuan was one of the first scholar-painters to unite painting and poetry, as he does in *Pear Blossoms*:

All alone by the veranda railing,
teardrops drenching the branches,
Although her face is unadorned,
her old charms remain;
Behind the locked gate, on a rainy night,
how she is filled with sadness.
How differently she looked bathed in golden waves
of moonlight, before the darkness fell.

The poem is not meant to illustrate or describe his painting of the branch with its delicate, young foliage and flowers; rather, the swaying, irregular lines of the leaves and the gently unfurling curves of the blossoms are meant to suggest comparisons to how quickly time passes—delicate blooms will soon fade—and evoke memories of times past.

In thirteenth-century China, as has been the case throughout much of that country's history, the significance of a painting is closely associated with the identity of the artist, and with the scholars and collectors who owned the work over subsequent centuries. Their identities are known by the **seals**, or stamps in red acting as a signature, each added to the work of art. Specific subjects and how they were depicted were associated with the artist, and often referred back to in later works by other artists as a sign of respect and acknowledgment of the earlier master's skill and expertise. In *Pear Blossoms*, as was often the case, the poem, and the calligraphy in which the artist wrote it, were part of the original composition of the entire painted scroll. The seals appended and notes written by later scholars and collectors continued adding to the composition, and its beauty and meaning, over the next seven hundred years.

When James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903, USA, lived England) painted *Arrangement in Flesh Colour and Black: Portrait of Theodore Duret* in 1883, he was making references back to the makers' marks Chinese and Japanese potters used as signatures on their ceramics in the monogram he adopted for his work: a stylized design of a butterfly based on his initials. (Figure 1.13) Whistler began



Figure 1.13 | *Arrangement in Flesh Colour and Black: Portrait of Theodore Duret*

Artist: James Abbott McNeill Whistler

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

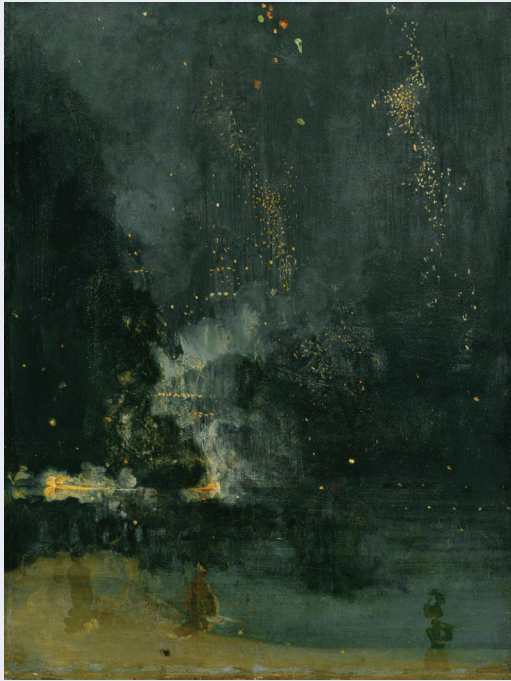


Figure 1.14 | Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket

Artist: James Abbott McNeill Whistler
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

signing his work with the recognizable but altered figure of a butterfly, which often appeared to be dancing, in the 1860s. He had begun collecting Japanese porcelain and prints, and was tremendously influenced by their colors, patterns, and compositions, which reflected Japanese principles of beauty in art, including elegant simplicity, tranquility, subtlety, naturalness, understated beauty, and asymmetry or irregularity.

Whistler was among numerous American and European artists in the second half of the nineteenth century who felt compelled to break away from what they believed were the inhibiting constraints in how and what art students were taught and in the system of traditional art exhibitions. For Whistler and others, such restrictions were intolerable; as artists, they must be allowed to freely follow their own creative voices and pursuits. In adopting Japanese principles of beauty in art, Whistler could pursue what he called “Art for art’s sake.” That is, he could create art that served no other purpose than to express what he, as the artist, found to be elevating, harmonious, and pleasing to the eye, the mind, and the soul:

Art should be independent of all claptrap—should stand alone, and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like. All these have no kind of concern with it; and that is why I insist on calling my works “arrangements” and “harmonies.”⁴

Setting the artist apart in this way, as someone with special qualifications and sensibilities at odds with the prevailing cultural and intellectual standards, was far from the role played by a scholar-painter such as Qian Xuan in thirteenth-century China. The work Qian Xuan created was in accord with prevailing standards, while Whistler often thought of himself and his art as conflicting with the conventions of his day. Continuing one notion or categorization of the artist that had been present in Europe since the sixteenth century (and, later, the United States), Whistler was the singular, creative genius, whose art was often misunderstood and not necessarily accepted.

That was indeed the case. In 1878, Whistler won a lawsuit for libel against the art critic John Ruskin, who described Whistler’s 1875 painting, *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*, as “flinging a pot of paint in the public’s face.” (Figure 1.14) By around 1880, in the aftermath of that rancorous proceeding, Whistler often added a long stinger to his butterfly monogram, symbolizing both the gentle beauty of his art as well as the forceful, at times stinging, nature of his personality.

⁴ James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (New York: Frederick Stokes & Brother, 1908), www.gutenberg.org/files/24650/24650-h/24650-h.htm

1.5 THE ROLE OF THE VIEWER

An artist or craftsperson has an audience in mind when creating a work of art. Sometimes the audience *is* the artist. Most of the time, however, the audience—the viewer—is someone else. It may be an individual or a group of people the artist personally knows, or people the artist knows will be viewing the work in a specific context or with a certain purpose. The artist may also consider what meaning or impact the work of art will have for people who view it at an unknown time or place in the future, perhaps with little information about the artist or the work itself. Or, the artist may feel the need or desire to express an emotion and have no concern for how the viewer will react to the work, or even if the viewer will understand the work and why it was created.

As the viewer of a work of art, then, we are often aware that we do not have full knowledge of what the artist intended or, at times, even what the artist depicted. Not having that information, however, is not necessarily frustrating nor does it dampen our enjoyment of the piece. Instead, we may find the colors vibrant, or the subject intriguing, or the composition relaxing; in other words, we may simply enjoy looking at the work of art without feeling the need for particulars about it or the artist. But, there are other times when it is helpful to have some information about the artist or artwork for us to better understand and appreciate what we are looking at.

Sites exist around the world where images were painted or inscribed on cave walls during the Upper Paleolithic Period, c. 40,000-12,000 BCE. The majority of the images are of animals, but outlines of hands, human figures, instruments such as bows and arrows, and designs such as spoked wheels or parallel lines can also be found. They possess a number of notable features, including the fact that these images were painted over tens of thousands of years on every continent except Antarctica. Despite significant differences, the types of subjects depicted during all that time and in all those places are remarkably similar. But, as they were made during the pre-historic period, that is, before humans kept written records, all we know about them is what we can interpret by looking at the images themselves and by studying other objects we have found from the same places and time periods.

Scholars have put forth numerous ideas about why the images were made and what they could mean. The animals depicted include horses, bulls, bison, and deer, all of which were hunted during that span of approximately 30,000 years. For that reason,



Figure 1.15 | Replica of the Pech-Merle de Cabrerets Cave painting

Author: User "HTO"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

some scholars hypothesize the paintings acted as a form of **sympathetic magic**, expressing the hope or giving thanks for a successful hunt by depicting the animals hunted. If the images were associated with such activities, crucial for the survival of those who created them, then their makers, as scholars further speculate, were **shamans**, or spiritual leaders of the group. A shaman is an individual with the power to interact with the physical world and the otherworld of spirits in order to maintain harmony between the two, predict the future, cast spells, and cure the sick.

Venturing into a cave, where all light from the outside world quickly disappears, is akin to a journey into another realm of existence. The images painted, seen only by fire, would have flickered and danced on the walls as if they depicted visitors from another world. We do not know who saw the paintings other than those who created them, but in the *Panel of Spotted Horses* within the Chapel of Bison in the Pech-Merle de Cabrerets Cave, France, the handprints also present are evidence that there were others who viewed them. (Figure 1.15) The prints were made by placing a hand on the wall and blowing paint around it, perhaps through a hollow, reed-like object. Are they meant to identify or document those who were present, to indicate their hoped-for powers as hunters or their inclusion as part of a shamanistic experience? We do not know, but even with the little information we have as viewers today, we can nevertheless enjoy the painting's beauty and mystery.

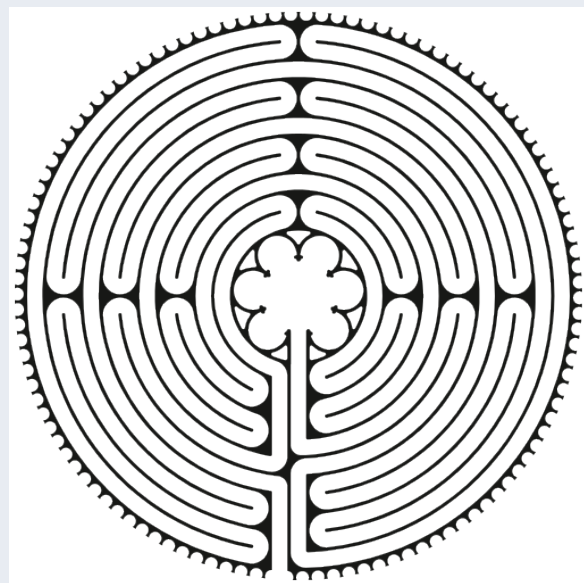


Figure 1.17 | Diagram of the Labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral

Author: User "Ssolbergj"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 1.16 | Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral

Author: User "Maksim"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

A **labyrinth**, or maze, such as the one in the floor of the nave of Chartres Cathedral (1194-1250), France, is another example of an image or object found in a number of places, but about which we have little information. (Figure 1.16) A labyrinth is similar to a maze but generally has only one intricate and twisting path to the center. (Figure 1.17) There are labyrinths in the floors of numerous medieval Gothic cathedrals in Europe that were built in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral was built in the thirteenth century and, at 42.3 feet in diameter, it fills the width of the

nave, or central area of a church. While there is documentation that clergy performed dances during Easter celebrations upon labyrinths found in other cathedrals in France, no such records exist regarding Chartres. What it does seem to have in common with other labyrinths, however, is being used as a path to **circumambulate**, or walk, by visitors to the church who were on a **pilgrimage** or journey of faith. As was true of many Gothic churches, Chartres Cathedral held a **relic**, an object thought to have belonged to or been part of a holy person's body, in this case, a garment believed to be the tunic worn by the Virgin Mary when she gave birth. Pilgrims traveled to Chartres to venerate this relic as a demonstration of their religious devotion. While there, pilgrims and other visitors might follow the stones of the labyrinth while in prayer or a state of meditation; the inevitable outcome of the complex and turning path leading to the center mirrors the certainty that prayer will lead the believer to God. The repetitive and focused movement of walking while absorbed in prayer enhanced the devotional experience for the worshiper—who was also the viewer of the labyrinth—on both a physical and a spiritual level.

John Haberle (1856-1933, USA) was a painter who was born and spent most of his life in New Haven, Connecticut. He was well known for his *trompe l'oeil* works such as *A Bachelor's Drawer*: paintings that were so realistic they “fooled the eye.” (Figure 1.18) Precisely rendering objects on a two-dimensional surface as if they were in three-dimensional space, he was able to create an illusion of reality that was meant to draw in his viewers, who were briefly unaware of the trick he was playing upon them. Quickly recognizing the painting was in truth an uncannily accurate semblance of actual objects, the viewer then became a participant in the artist's game of deception.



Figure 1.18 | *A Bachelor's Drawer*

Artist: John Haberle

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

The various objects in *A Bachelor's Drawer*, including photographs, paper currency, theater ticket stubs, newspaper clippings, a thermometer, and a hair comb, that appear to be haphazardly fixed to a wooden drawer front are visually interesting because they are so life-like. Once the viewer shifts focus to look at these everyday and commonplace items—the sorts of things you take out of your pocket at the end of the day, often intending to throw them away—and think about what they are, we also wonder what they might mean. And, that is exactly what Haberle intended his viewers to do.

The artist even rewards his viewers for their close attention to the many details in his painting by placing some important ones in the center: several fragments of newspaper articles, including one stating, “A New Haven artist has plunged himself into trouble by making too perfect greenbacks in oil.” Viewers who knew Haberle’s work would probably have been aware the statement was true. Haberle frequently depicted paper currency in his paintings, in spite of having been warned to stop doing so by the U.S. Secret Service, which was formed in 1865 to stop the distribution of counterfeit money. Those who appreciated his work knew Haberle took pleasure in making it clear he was ignoring that demand.

A Bachelor's Drawer, painted 1890-1894, would turn out to be the artist’s last *trompe l’oeil* painting of currency, though, as the exacting work had strained his eyes to the point that he could no longer paint such fine detail. Some of the other objects Haberle included, and the title of the work itself, seem to be referring to the end of an era. The pamphlet titled “How to Name the Baby,” prominently displayed in the upper right, partially covers the postcard showing a finely-dressed dandy with his dashing moustache that is placed directly above a discreetly covered photograph of a nude woman. They all lead down to a small photograph that appears to be stuck in the bottom (painted) frame, which is a portrait of the artist. Was he the bachelor who once had the freedom to attend the theatre, but is now taking up the life of a young father? This trail of clues is typical of the dry humor in Haberle’s work, here turned on himself, with an open invitation for his viewers to share the joke with him.

1.6 WHY DO WE MAKE ART?

Some of the earliest evidence of recognizable human activity includes not only practical things like stone tools and fire pits, but also decorative objects used for personal adornment. For example, these small beads made by piercing sea snail shells, found at the Blombos Cave on the southeastern coast of South Africa, are dated to the Middle Stone Age, 101,000-70,000 BCE. (Figure 1.19) We can only speculate about the intentions of our distant ancestors, but it is clear that their lives included the practice of conceiving and producing art objects. One thing we appear to share with those distant relatives is the urge to make art.



Figure 1.19 | Blombos Cave *Nassarius kraussianus* marine shell beads and reconstruction of bead stringing

Author: Marian Vanhaeren and Christopher S. Henshilwood

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 3.0

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL "MAP" SYMBOLS

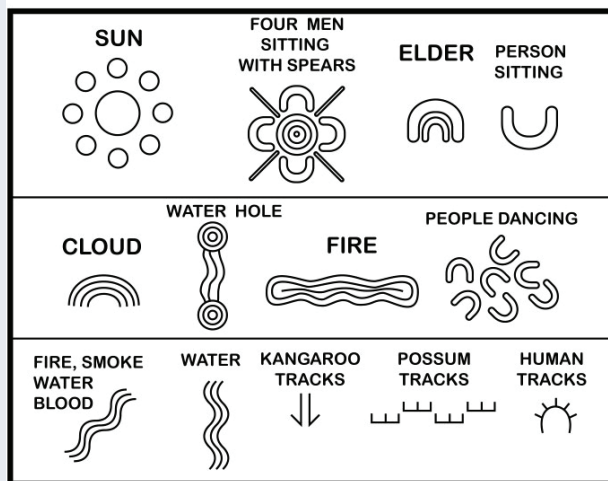


Figure 1.20 | Australian Aboriginal "Map" Symbols

Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
 Source: Original Work
 License: CC BY-SA 4.0

A culture can be defined as a group of people who agree about what is important. Today many different human cultures and sub-cultures co-exist; we can find in them a broad range of ideas about art and its place in daily living. One main goal of Australian Aboriginal artists, for example, is to “map” the world around them. (Figure 1.20) In this painting on bark, pictorial symbols tell the story of the great hunter snake in colors such as red for desert sand and yellow for the sun. (Figure 1.21) In a similar way, though with different materials, Buddhist sand paintings known as **mandalas** present a map of the cosmos. These circular diagrams also represent the relationship of the individual to the whole and levels of human awareness. (Figure 1.22)

The need to make art can be divided into two broad categories: the *personal need* to express ideas and feelings, and the *community’s needs* to assert common values. In the following sections, we’ll look at some of these motivations to more clearly understand and identify artist intent in the works of art that we encounter.

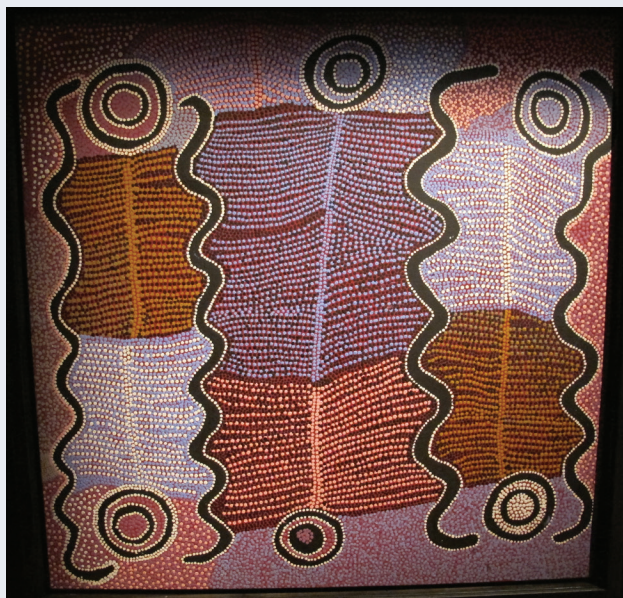


Figure 1.21 | Sand Painting

Author: Sailko
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 1.22 | Wheel of Time Kalachakra Sand Mandala

Artist: Losang Samten
 Author: Steve Osborne
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: CC BY-SA 3.0

We should recognize that every person has lived a unique life, so every person knows something about the world that no one else has seen. It is the job of artists today to tell us about what they have come to know—individually or as part their community—using the art material or medium most suited to their abilities. While copying the works of others is good training, it is merely re-working what has already been revealed. Originality, however, is more highly valued in contemporary art. Georgia O’Keeffe (1887-1986, USA) explained her view on this matter when she wrote: (Figure 1.23)

It was in the fall of 1915 that I first had the idea that what I had been taught was of little value to me except for the use of my materials as a language—charcoal, pencil, pen and ink, watercolor, pastel, and oil. I had become fluent with them when I was so young that they were simply another language that I handled easily. But what to say with them? I had been taught to work like others, and after careful thinking I decided that I wasn’t going to spend my life doing what had already been done. . . . I decided I was a very stupid fool for not to at last paint as I wanted to and say what I wanted to when I painted.⁵

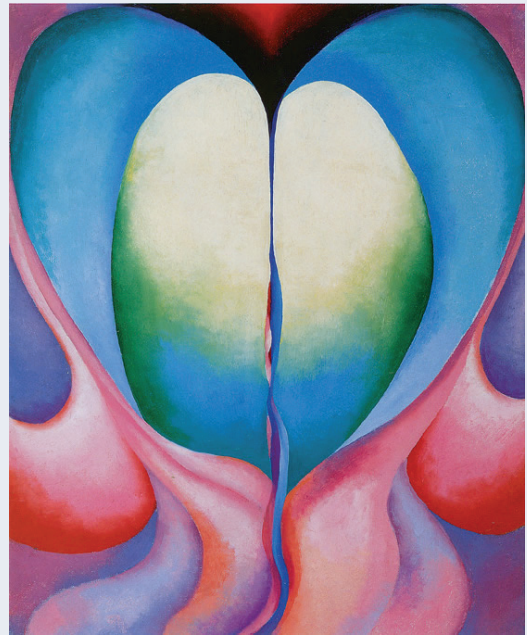


Figure 1.23 | Series 1, No. 8

Artist: Georgia O’Keeffe

Author: User “Prosfilaes”

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

1.6.1 The Personal Need to Create

Many works of art come out of a personal decision to put a feeling, idea, or concept into visual form. Since feelings vary widely, the resulting art takes a wide range of forms. This approach to art comes from the individual’s delight in the experience. Doodling comes to mind as one very basic example of such delight. Pollock’s Abstract Expressionist works, also known as action paintings, are much more than doodles, though they may resemble such on the surface. (Autumn Rhythm-Number 30, Jackson Pollock: <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/488978?=&imgno=0&tabname=online-resources>; *Number 10*, Jackson Pollock: <http://www.wikiart.org/en/jackson-pollock/number-10-1949>) They were the result of many levels of artistic thought but on a basic level were a combination of delight in the act of painting and in the personal discovery that act enabled.

Some art is intended to provide personal commentary. Artworks that illustrate a personal viewpoint or experience can fulfill this purpose. *Persepolis*, a graphic novel by Marjane Satrapi (b. 1969, Iran) published in 2000, recounts her experiences and thoughts during the 1979 Iranian revolution, and

5 O’Keeffe 1976, unpaginated.

is an example of such personal commentary. (*Keys to Paradise: <https://imaginedlandscapes.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/pi-102.jpg>*) Satrapi is a leading proponent of the graphic novel, a new approach to art making. In an ironic critique of how different parts of Iranian society were affected by war, Satrapi compares the contorted figures of Iranian youth dying in a combat zone explosion with the dance movements at her high school celebration.

Artworks can be created thus as a means of exploring one's own experience, a way of bringing hidden emotions to the surface so that they may be recognized and understood more clearly. The term for this process is **catharsis**.

Cathartic works of art can arise from perceptions of grief, good, evil, or injustice, as in *The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault (1791-1824, France), which was an indictment of the French government of his day following the sinking of a ship. (Figure 1.24) When Whistler, on the other hand, became a proponent of “Art for art’s sake,” he was rejecting outside influences such as contemporary artistic and social standards in order to “purify” art of external corruption. (see Figure 1.18) The idea of removing influence from the creation of art is a modern one. Much of the art made before the nineteenth century was produced with the support and under the direction of religious, political, and cultural authorities in the larger community.

1.6.2 Communal Needs and Purposes

Across history and geography, we see religious and political communities that remain stable despite constant pressure from both internal and external sources. One way in which communities maintain stability is in the production of works of art that identify common values and experiences within that community and thus bring people together.

Architecture, monuments, murals, and icons are visible guides to community participation in the arts and often use image-making conventions. A **convention** is an agreed upon way of thinking, speaking, or acting in a social context. There are many kinds of conventions, including visual conventions. A good example in visual art would be a conventional sense of direction. In Western cultures, text is generally read left to right. Therefore, when they look at artwork, Western viewers tend to “enter” a picture on the upper left and proceed to the right. Objects that appear on the left



Figure 1.24 | *The Raft of the Medusa*

Artist: Jean Louis Théodore Géricault

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

side of an image are thought to be “first,” while ones that appear on the right are thought to be “later.” Since Asian texts follow a different convention, and tend to be read right to left, an Asian viewer would unconsciously assume the opposite.

Architecture, especially of public buildings, is an expression of a community’s values. Courthouses, libraries, town halls, schools, banks, factories, and jails are all designed for community purposes, and their shapes become strongly associated with their function: the architectural shapes be-

come conventions. The use of older styles of architecture can be as references to the values of previous cultures. In the United States, for example, many government buildings are designed with imposing stone facades using classical Greek and Roman columns that symbolize strength and stability. Federal government buildings such as the United States Capitol and the Supreme Court (Figure 1.25) were designed so that the community would associate ancient Greek and Roman ideals of virtue and integrity with the activities inside those more modern buildings.



Figure 1.25 | U.S. Supreme Court Building

Photographer: US Government Employee

Source: Architect of the Capital

License: Public Domain



Figure 1.26 | The Bauhaus Building in Dessau, Germany

Author: User “Mewes”

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

Many twentieth-century architects, however, have followed the guiding principle of American architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924, USA), that “form follows function.” In his design of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius (1883-1969, Germany) rejected superfluous decoration and focused instead on the efficient and functional use of space and material. (Figure 1.26) The leading school of art, craft, and architecture in Germany from 1919-1933, the teachings of the Bauhaus, or “construction house,” have strongly influenced domestic and industrial design internationally since that time.



Figure 1.27 | Colleoni on Horseback

Artist: Andrea del Verrocchio
 Author: User "Waysider1925"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 1.28 | Burghers of Calais

Artist: Auguste Rodin
 Author: User "Razimantv"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: CC BY 3.0

Communities can remind citizens of public virtues by commemorating the individuals who displayed those qualities in **monuments**. Since ancient times, they have commonly been statues of such individuals placed on pedestals, columns, or inside architecture. The *Equestrian Statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni* by Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-1488, Italy) is a good example of this type of monument. (Figure 1.27) Created for the city of Venice, Italy, during the Italian Renaissance, the sculpture of Colleoni on horseback shows him as the bold and victorious warrior he was. But *The Burghers of Calais* by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917, France) and *Vietnam War Memorial* by Maya Lin (b. 1959, USA) are monuments that violate that long-standing norm. Rodin placed the burghers, or leading citizens, on ground level to humanize the six men who offered themselves as sacrifices to save their city; he did so in order to bring their internal struggles down to the viewer's eye level. (Figure 1.28) Lin's memorial is below ground level, and displays the names of the approximately 58,000 Americans who died in the Vietnam War. (Figure 1.29) These choices reflect the belief that the Vietnam War was initially conducted "beneath the surface," that is, unknown to most Americans, and to remind visitors that its cost was paid by real individuals, not anonymous soldiers. These two works of art are unconventional and original in their conception and execution.

Since ancient times, **murals**, paintings on walls, have been created in both public and private places. Ancient Egyptians combined images with writing in wall paintings to commemorate past leaders. Some of these murals were intentionally erased when the leader fell out of favor. Roman murals were more often found inside homes and temples. The Roman mural located in a bedroom of the Villa of P. Fannius

Synistor was unearthed in Pompeii, Italy. (Figure 1.30) It depicts landscape and architectural views between a row of (painted) columns, as if viewed from inside the **villa**, or country house.

The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519, Italy, France) and the Sistine Chapel ceiling by Michelangelo (1475-1564, Italy) are murals from the Italian Renaissance. They were created for a wall in a refectory, or dining hall, of a monastery (Figure 1.31) and for the ceiling of the Pope's chapel. (Figure 1.32) Both depict crucial scenes in the teachings of the Catholic Church, the leading European religious and political organization of the time. Because many people at the time were illiterate, images played an important role in educating them about their religious history and doctrines.



Figure 1.29 | Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall

Artist: Maya Lin

Author: User "Mariordo"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 1.30 | Cubiculum (bedroom) from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale

Author: Rogers Fund

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

More modern examples of murals can be found around the world today. Diego Rivera (1886-1967, Mexico) was a world-renowned artist who executed large-scale murals in Mexico and the United States. His *Detroit Industry* murals consist of twenty-seven panels originally installed at the Detroit Institute of Arts. (Figure 1.33) The two largest panels depict workers manufacturing a V8 engine at the Ford Motor Company factory. Other smaller panels show advances in science, technology, and medicine involved in modern industrial culture, portraying Rivera's belief that conceptual thinking and physical labor are interdependent. These works are now considered a National Landmark. *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* designed by Judith Baca (b. 1946, USA) and executed

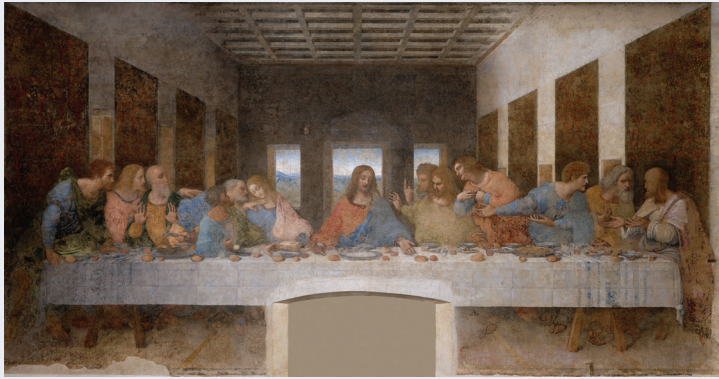


Figure 1.31 | *The Last Supper*

Artist: Leonardo da Vinci
 Author: User "Thebrid"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

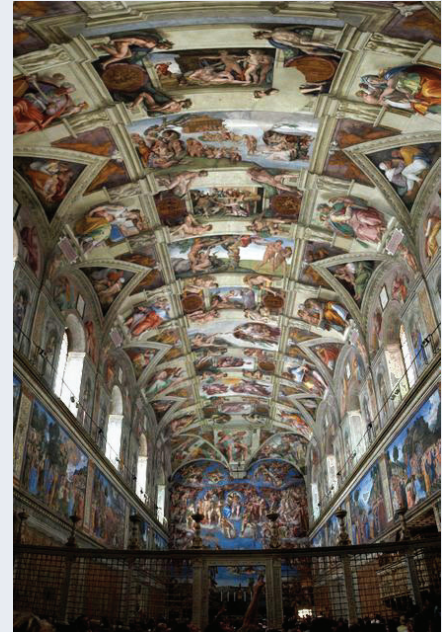


Figure 1.32 | *The Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel*

Artist: Michelangelo
 Author: Patrick Landy
 Source: Wikipedia
 License: CC BY 3.0



Figure 1.33 | *Detroit Industry, North Wall*

Artist: Diego Rivera
 Author: User "Cactus.man"
 Source: Wikipedia
 License: Public Domain

by hundreds of community members is thirteen feet high and runs for more than one half mile through the city. (*The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, Judith Baca: http://sparcinla.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/great-wall_m.jpg) Its subject is the history of Southern California “as seen through the eyes of women and minorities.”⁶ The mural is part of a larger push in Los Angeles to adorn public spaces with murals that inform and educate the populace.

The term **icon** comes from the Greek word *eikon*, or “to be like,” and refers to an image or likeness that is used as a guide to religious worship. The holy figures depicted in icons are thought by believers to have special powers of healing or other positive influence. An icon can also be a person or thing that symbolically represents a quality or virtue. A good example is the image of St. Sebastian. St. Sebastian was a captain of the Roman guard who converted to Chris-

6 Joyce Gregory Wyels, “Great Walls, Vibrant Voices,” *Americas* 52, no. 1 (2000): 22.

tianity and was sentenced to death before a squad of archers. (Figure 1.34) He survived his wounds, and early Christians attributed this miracle to the power of their religion. (He was later stoned to death.) In the late Middle Ages during widespread plague in Europe, images of St. Sebastian were regularly commissioned for hospitals because of the legend of his miraculous healing and the hope that the images would be curative.

An example of a non-religious or **secular** icon might be the bronze bust of the famous football coach Knute Rockne at Notre Dame University in Indiana. (Figure 1.35) The nose of the bronze sculpture is bright gold because many consider it good luck to rub it, so it receives constant polishing by students before exams.



Figure 1.35 | Knute Rockne

Artist: Nison Tregor
 Author: Matthew D. Britt
 Source: Flickr
 License: CC BY-SA-NC 3.0



Figure 1.34 | The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian

Artist: Giacinto Diana
 Source: Artstor.org
 License: Public Domain

We have touched only briefly on the questions of what art is, who an artist is, and why people make art. History shows us people have defined art and artists differently in various times and places, but that people everywhere make art for many different reasons. And, these art objects share a common purpose: they are all intended to express a feeling or idea that is valued either by the individual artist or by the larger community.

1.7 CONCEPTS EXPLORED IN LATER CHAPTERS

1.7.1 The Structure of Art: Form and Design

In order to read this you have spent considerable time and effort learning individual letters, combinations that form a word, the structure of a sentence, and the organization of multiple sentences to move from one idea to the next. You use all of those skills to make sense of and understand the written word. And from there, you can introduce your own ideas, knowledge, and experiences to expand upon and bring additional meanings to what you have read.

We follow a similar process in learning how to look at and understand art. In Chapter Two: The Structure of Art—Form and Design, we will first define forms of art and the materials and processes used in creating them. We will then examine the elements of art, such as line, color, and form, as well as the principles of design, or how those elements are combined to create a composition. With this new vocabulary we can better understand and talk about what we are looking at, enriching our experiences interacting with art and architecture in the world around us.

1.7.2 Significance of Materials Used in Art

One of the basic choices in creating any work of art is the material from which it will be made. The materials might make it more or less important, more or less valuable, or might bring a variety of associations not inherent in the actual form of the work. In Chapter Three: Significance of Materials Used in Art, we will examine both the monetary value and the cultural value of works of art based upon the media—the materials—employed, and some of the many sources from which those values are determined.

1.7.3 Describing Art: Formal Analysis, Types, and Styles

Taking the building blocks of the vocabulary we built in reading Chapter Two: The Structure of Art—Form and Design, in Chapter Four: Describing Art: Formal Analysis, Types, and Styles we will discuss how to critically analyze, or systematically describe, a work of art. We will examine the elements and principles of its design, the category in which it falls based on the relative representation of the natural world, and how we might group that work with others, or the work of other artists based on its appearance, or style.

These tools not only help us learn more about the work of art, they enhance our appreciation of art by providing us with a greater understanding of the individual work's components and its relationship with art in the same or other cultures and time periods.

1.7.4 Meaning in Art: Socio-Cultural Contexts, Symbolism, and Iconography

Studying the historical, social, personal, political, or scientific reasons a work of art was made provides us with further, and key, information in understanding its meaning and symbolism. A work of art is part of the culture in which it was made; all artists, even those who wish to rebel against some aspect of the time in which they live, are influenced (and perhaps constrained) by

the world around them. In Chapter Five: Meaning in Art– Socio-Cultural Context, Symbolism, and Iconography, we will consider the many factors that influence the creation and our comprehension of works of art. And, we will explore meanings within a work, its symbolism, as a way of providing us with deeper understanding of what the work meant within the culture it was made.

1.7.5 Connecting Art to Our Lives

For art to have meaning, it must have some connection to us and our lives. Artists and those who hire them to create works of art have myriad reasons for doing so. In Chapter Six: Connecting Art to Our Lives, we will first look at aesthetics, the study of the principles and appreciation of beauty in art, from an historical perspective to gain an understanding of another way in which the value of art has traditionally been determined. We will also explore roles that art plays: it can be a means of expression, a symbol of inclusion or exclusion, a tool of communication, or a medium of education. When we find our connection to a work of art, we are engaged with and enriched by it.

1.7.6 Form in Architecture

Human beings have created a wide variety of architecture forms from pre-historic times to the present across the entire world. The continuous presence of architecture in human history indicates the vital and numerous roles structures play for both the individual and the society in which they are made. In Chapter Seven: Form in Architecture, we will examine purpose, function, and meaning in design and construction of sites and buildings within a variety of cultures. What can the history of constructed forms tell us about the needs, beliefs, and principles of our near and distant ancestors? Answering these questions sheds light on the role of architecture throughout history, as well as how it functions in our own time.

1.7.7 Art and Identity

Often today, when we think of art and identity, we are referring to the artist's identity, and what we mean is the artist's personal identity and what the artist is trying to communicate on a personal level. The notion of personal identity quickly expands, however, to include aspects that link the artist to others with similar characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, spiritual beliefs, and nationality. From there, we can begin to talk about identity within a clan, culture, nation, and other groups that share like traits and properties.

In Chapter Eight: Art and Identity, we will look at how notions of identity influence artists and the art they create. Whether artists are attempting to express individual, private feelings, or capture the personality of a nation, they must first define what the characteristics are and determine how those chosen will be represented in the work of art. We will look at these visualizations of identity in a variety of forms, from small hand-held objects to large-scale works of architecture, to discuss the impact of materials, size, and audience. And, we will examine the circumstances surrounding the creation of these objects to investigate the role social, religious, and political forces play in defining and assigning identity in art.

1.7.8 Art and Power

Throughout history, art has been used as a means of communication by those in power. When rulers commission depictions of themselves, for example, they may or may not want them to be recognizable portraits, but the sculpture or painting will certainly communicate what the ruler wants those who see the work to know about the ruler's position, wealth, and attributes, that is, indications of the ruler's power. These signs of power can be used to reassure the ruler's own people or to warn potential adversaries of the forces at the ruler's disposal. Rulers and others in authority have the ability to enlarge a show of power beyond a bodily display of physical strength and dominance to more potent and permanent monuments such as murals, sculpture, and buildings.

The power of art extends far beyond uses by those in control. Art can be used to build influence, increase leverage, and give hope to those who possess little authority. It can be used as a form of protest against those in command. And, it can be used to induce change. In Chapter Nine: Art and Power, we will look at art as a tool to comment upon and garner power, and as a means of communicating power and power relations. We will identify common visual strategies, and note similarities and differences over time and in different cultures.

1.7.9 Art and Ritual Life: Symbolism of Space and Ritual Objects

Human beings possess the ability to project our thoughts forward to speculate about what will happen in our future. We can contemplate our own mortality and reflect on existence beyond our own lives. Doing so can plunge us into despair or elevate us to heights of exultation. In times of desperation, art can serve as a talisman, an object believed to have power to bring luck or offer protection, against those things or events we fear in hope the occurrence can be warded off. In the case of the inevitable, such as sickness and death, art is used to give comfort to the suffering and solace to the survivors. We also employ art to pay tribute to what we cherish and honor; with works made of the finest materials, crafted with ingenuity and the utmost skill we give expression not only to our fears, but also to our hopes.

In Chapter Ten: Art and Ritual Life—Symbolism of Space and Ritual Objects, we will look at how art helps us to understand ourselves as mortal creatures, and the role it plays in our spiritual lives as we strive to locate meaning and purpose in existence as a finite or infinite concept.

1.7.10 Art and Ethics

Art can introduce us to new ideas, and it can influence what we think about ourselves and others. Art informs us and it can change us. Does this potential for tremendous impact place an obligation upon the artist, the photojournalist, or the museum curator to act under certain guidelines of originality or truthfulness, for example? If so, how do we define what original art is, and whose truth are we telling?

Chapter Eleven: Art and Ethics introduces us to some of the issues facing artists and others in the world of art in how they present themselves and their art.

1.8 BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

Key Concepts

When studying a subject, it is important to have a working definition of that subject. Our subject is art. The four historical attempts at defining art surveyed here each had limitations. Ancient Greek mimesis excluded art that does not re-present objects. Tolstoy's communication theory is unverifiable and is spectator-dependent, Bell's significant form is circular reasoning, and Dickie's Artworld theory is about who has the power to decide what art is, not about art itself. The operating definition of art used in this text is "from the mind into the world." The images used in this survey are considered works of art. It is the task of the student to be able to recognize, analyze, and interpret works of art, and to integrate this understanding into a coherent worldview. The purpose of this effort at understanding is to practice recognizing value in new and diverse forms of visual art. One end result is to then have a greater appreciation of and to simply enjoy looking at art.

Art is found wherever we find human beings. Art fulfills a basic human need for expression. This need can be sub-divided into personal needs and needs of the community. Personal needs include art created for delight, decoration, for political and religious devotion, and for personal catharsis. Communal needs can include architecture, monuments, murals, and religious and secular icons.

Test Yourself

1. List and describe the four ways stated in the text in which people have defined art in the past.
2. Briefly re-state the operating definition of art for this text.
3. What is the significance of the ancient Greek myth of Zeuxis and Parhassios?
4. What do each of the four historical definitions of art reveal of how people thought about where truth is to be found?
5. Draw parallels between the sea snail shell necklace of c. 100,000 BCE and modern practices of personal decoration, for example, a pearl necklace.
6. Speculate about why images might be important in non-literate cultures? What might be one concern about images used in religious rituals? Can you identify an example of a non-religious icon other than the one noted in the text?
7. Speculate about why most early American federal buildings were built using classical Greek and Roman columns and imposing stone facades. Why were buildings in the twentieth century built with little reference to the architecture of classical antiquity? What ideas were lost and what ideas were gained with this shift in architecture?

8. Consider the change in the conventional presentation of public monuments by comparing how the monuments of Verrocchio and Rodin are presented, one on a high pedestal, the other at ground level. What does this change suggest about changing ideas about the heroic and monumental?

1.9 KEY TERMS

Architecture: the design and construction of buildings or other complex structures.

Artworld theory of art: an approach to defining art as whatever the artworld says it is.

Catharsis: the process of releasing pent up emotion resulting in personal change.

Circumambulate: to “walk around”—a ritual practice of circling a sacred site, following a set path either inside or outside of a structure.

Communication theory of art: an approach to defining art as a transfer of feeling from artist to spectator.

Convention: group consensus about the way something is usually done.

Icon: a person or thing regarded as representative of something, often religious.

Institutional theory of art: another name for the Artworld theory of art.

Labyrinth: similar to a maze, but generally has only one intricate and twisting path to the center.

Mimesis: an approach to defining art as a copy of perceived reality.

Monument: a statue or other structure meant to commemorate a famous person or event.

Mural: a work of art executed directly on a wall.

Relic: an object thought to have belonged to or been part of a holy person’s body.

Secular: lacking in religious or spiritual content, not bound by religious rule.

Significant Form: an approach to defining art as what we notice.

Symbolism: the use of images to represent ideas or qualities.

Trompe l’oeil: art so realistic that it “fools the eye.”

Zeuxis and Parhassios: an ancient Greek myth about two competing painters who vie for the title of greatest artist by copying reality most faithfully

2

The Structure of Art

Form and Design

Jeffrey LeMieux, Pamela J. Sachant, and Rita Tekippe

2.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between various materials, processes, and methods in the production of art objects.
- Identify the characteristics of different art forms and distinguish one from another.
- Explain the roles of elements and principles of design in creating forms and compositions.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

When we look at the art objects that people have made over the centuries and around the world, we find they share some basic elements. They exist; they have substance; they are either flat or “in the round”; they use (or do not use) perspective, line, shape, mass, value, color, texture, and so on. Over time, both artists and art critics have developed a set of terms to describe art objects and their design. In this chapter, we will develop an art-specific vocabulary to use in identifying different types of art forms, discerning the materials and processes used to create them, understanding how the elements and principles of design are used by artists, and recognizing how they convey meaning in visual art.

The possible combinations in visual art are infinite, but the visual arts have traditionally been practiced and categorized in only a few broadly termed ways. The primary distinction in the visual arts is dimension. Two-dimensional art consists of **drawing, painting, and printmaking**; three-dimensional art consists of **sculpture, including installation, and kinetic art**. In addition to these traditional types of art, new technologies and new ideas about art have given us four-dimensional **or** time-based art, such as **video and performance**. Such art depends on the use of technology and the passage of time for its effect. Most recently, time-based art has grown to encompass a category known as new media art, which includes digital art, computer animation, interactive art, video games, virtual reality, robotics, and 3D printing.

Today the separate categories of space and time are becoming blurred as artists seek ways to combine disparate approaches into a single, encompassing, and rich art experience. An important lesson from the modern approach to visual art for both artists and viewers is to recognize that each formal element and each approach to design has unique expressive power.

2.3 ART SPECIFIC VOCABULARY

Every discipline has its “jargon,” and the visual arts are no different. Visual artists use a variety of materials and processes to produce their work and art critics use specialized terms to describe that work. It is unavoidable that terms must be invented to serve the purposes of criticism and/or description. Many art terms are in common use and widely understood, some are less so. Some terms come from languages other than English. In the course of describing the different forms that visual art takes, this text will introduce terms by using a bold font, following them with explanations and definitions. As with any discipline, the goal in using specialized art terms here is to make things more clear and direct.

2.4 ART FORMS

Because of the limits of nature, art objects are limited to the dimensions of space—and time. For this reason, art objects fall into three categories: **two-dimensional art**, **three-dimensional art**, and **four-dimensional art**. Each category has divisions deriving primarily from differences between the materials and approaches used. Throughout history, art objects generally fit clearly into a discrete classification. In the nineteenth century, however, artists began exploring the limits of new materials as well as the boundaries of the categories into which they fell to see if they were real or arbitrary.

2.4.1 Two-Dimensional Art

Two-dimensional art occurs on flat surfaces, like paper, canvas, or even cave walls. This art can be further divided into three main categories: drawing, painting, and printmaking. All art that occurs on a flat surface is one or a combination of these three activities.

2.4.1.1 Drawing

The term **drawing** describes both a visual object and an activity. At first glance, drawing appears to consist of making contrasting marks on a flat surface. The term



Figure 2.1 | Replication of Chauvet Cave Lion Wall

Author: User “HTO”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

implies something more, however. One can “draw” water from a well or be “drawn” to a charismatic person. There is something in the word “draw” that is related to extracting or delineating, the “pulling out” of an essence. To draw an object is to observe its appearance and transfer that observation to a set of marks. Ancient cave painters truly “drew” the animals they saw around them based on their deep familiarity with their essential nature. (Figure 2.1) So in this context, drawing is a combination of observation and mark making.

Drawing is usually—but not always—done with **monochromatic** media, that is, with dry materials of a single color such as **charcoal**, **conté crayon**, **metalpoint**, or graphite. Color can be introduced using pastels. In addition to these dry materials, free-flowing ink can also be used to make drawings. These materials have been highly refined over centuries to serve specific artistic purposes.

Charcoal is made from wood or other organic material that has been burned in the absence of oxygen. This process leaves a relatively pure black carbon powder. Artists compress this dry powder, or **pigment**, with a **binder**, a sticky substance like pine resin or glue made from the collagen of animal hides, to make hand-held charcoal blocks of various strengths and degrees of hardness. This compressed charcoal is used to make very dark marks, usually on paper. Compressed charcoal is challenging to erase.

Charcoal also comes in a form called **willow** or **vine charcoal**. This form of drawing charcoal leaves a very light mark as it is simply burned twigs. It is generally used for impermanent sketches because it does not readily stick to paper or canvas and is easily erased. Both compressed and vine charcoal drawings are easily smudged and should be protected by a fixative that adheres the charcoal to the drawing surface and creates a barrier resistant to smudging.

Conté crayon is a hand-held drawing material similar to compressed charcoal. Conté crayons are sticks of graphite or charcoal combined with wax or clay that come in a variety of colors, from white to sanguine (deep red) to black, as well as a range of hardness. Harder conté is used for details and softer varieties for broad areas. This portrait by Georges-Pierre Seurat (1859-1891, France) was drawn in black conté crayon on textured paper in order to break the image into discrete marks. (Figure 2.2)

Metalpoint is the use of malleable metals like silver, pewter, and gold to make drawing

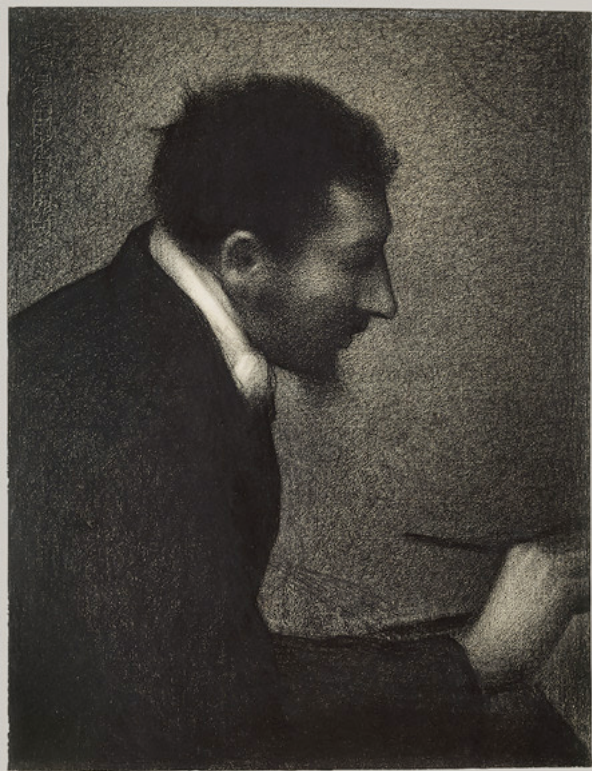


Figure 2.2 | Edmond Aman-Jean

Artist: Georges-Pierre Seurat
 Author: User “Pimbrils”
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain



Figure 2.3 | Head of a Girl

Artist: Leonardo da Vinci

Source: Wikiart

License: Public Domain

marks on prepared surfaces. (Figure 2.3) The surface must have a “tooth” or roughness to hold the marks. Any pure silver or gold object can be used for this, though artists today favor silver and gold wire held in mechanical pencils for the process.

Graphite is a crystalline form of carbon. In the sixteenth century, a large deposit of pure graphite was discovered in England, and it became the primary source for this drawing material. Because of its silvery color, it was originally thought to be a form of lead, though there is no actual lead in pencils. Today powdered graphite is mixed with clay to control hardness.

Pastels are similar to compressed charcoal but, instead of finely powdered carbon, finely ground colored pigment and a binder are used to create handheld colored blocks. (Figure 2.4) The powdery pigments smudge easily, so the image created must be displayed under glass or covered with a fixative. Edgar Degas (1834-1917, France) is famous for the subtle yet distinct layering of color he was able to achieve in his pastel drawings. (Figure 2.5)



Figure 2.4 | Pastels

Author: User “Tau1012”

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 2.5 | *Nach dem Bade sich abtrocknende Frau (After the Bath, Woman drying herself)*

Artist: Edgar Degas

Author: User “Crisco”

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

Oil pastels are semi-solid sticks of high pigment oil paint that are used like crayons. They were originally invented to mark livestock, but artists quickly realized their aesthetic potential. Oil pastels are a convenient way to apply and blend heavily textured oil-based pigment onto any surface without using traditional brushes. The colors are vibrant, and the marks are gestural and immediate so oil pastel drawings can show the “hand” of the artist in a direct way, as can be seen here in *East Palatka Onions*, a 1983 oil pastel drawing by Mary Ann Currier (b. 1927, USA). (*East Palatka Onions*, Mary Ann Currier: <https://ketorg.cdn.ket.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/currier-ep-onions1100px.jpg>)

Ink is the combination of a colored pigment, usually black carbon or graphite, and a binder suspended in a liquid and applied with a pen or brush. A wide range of substances have been used over time to make ink, including lamp black or soot, burned animal bones, gallnuts, and iron oxide. The pigment must be finely ground and held together with a binder.

There is a long tradition of fine art ink drawings.

Although the example given dates to the fourteenth century, the oldest ink drawings come from China in the third century BCE and are done on silk and paper. (Figure 2.6)

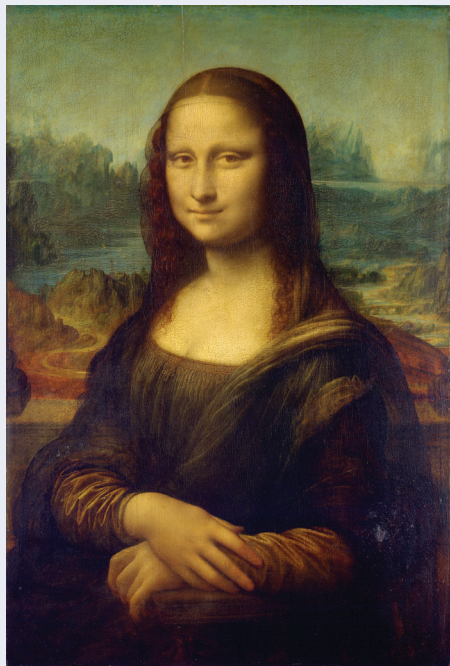


Figure 2.7 | Mona Lisa

Artist: Leonardo da Vinci
 Author: User “Dcoetzee”
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain



Figure 2.6 | Spring Dawn Over the Elixir Terrace

Artist: Lu Guang
 Source: Met Museum
 License: OASC

2.4.1.2 Painting

Painting is a specialized form of drawing that refers to using **brushes** to apply colored liquids to a **support**, usually canvas or paper, but sometimes wooden panels, metal plates, and walls. For example, Leonardo da Vinci painted *Mona Lisa* on a wood panel. (Figure 2.7) Paint is composed of three main ingredients: pigments, binders, and solvents. The colored pigments are suspended in a sticky binder in order to apply them and make them adhere to the support. **Solvents** dissolve the binder in order to remove it but can also be used in smaller quantities to make paint more fluid.

As with drawing, different kinds of painting have mostly to do with the material that is being used. Oil, acrylic,

watercolor, encaustic, fresco, and tempera are some of the different kinds of painting. For the most part, the pigments or coloring agents in paints remain the same. The thing that distinguishes one kind of painting from another is the binder.

Oil painting was discovered in the fifteenth century and uses vegetable oils, primarily linseed oil and walnut oil, as the binding agent. Linseed oil was chosen for its clear color and its ability to dry slowly and evenly. Turpentine is generally used as the solvent in oil painting. The medium has strict rules of application to avoid cracking or delamination (dividing into layers). Additionally, oil paint can oxidize and darken or yellow over time if not properly crafted. Some pigments have been found to be **fugitive**, meaning they lose their color over time, especially when exposed to direct sunlight. This can be seen in a detail of Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa* where the figure’s eyebrows and eye lashes are now “missing.” (Figure 2.8)

Acrylic painting is relatively modern and uses water-soluble acrylic polymer as the binding agent. Water is the solvent. Acrylic dries very quickly and can be used to build up thick layers of paint in a short time. One problem with acrylic is that the colors can subtly change as it dries, making this medium less suitable for portraiture or other projects where accurate color is vital. Nevertheless, acrylic paint is preferred over oil paint by many artists today, in part due to its greater ease of use and clean up, and because its rapid drying time allows the artist to work at a faster pace.

Watercolor painting suspends colored pigments in water-soluble **gum arabic** distilled from

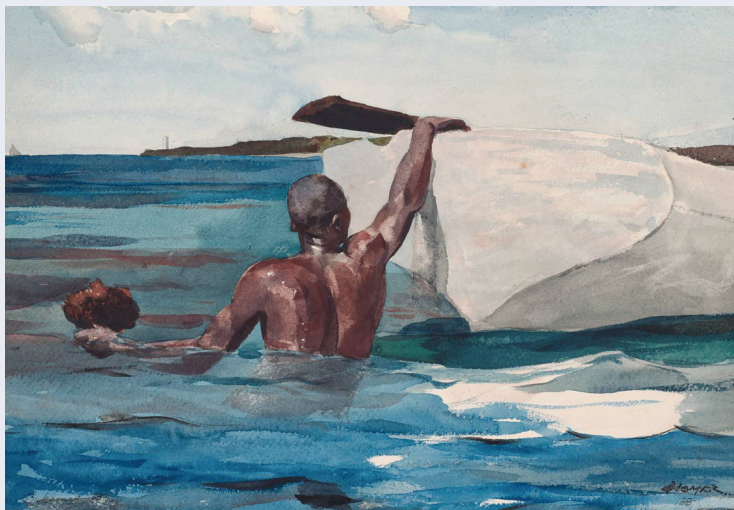


Figure 2.9 | *The Sponge Diver*

Artist: Winslow Homer
 Author: User “Botaurus”
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

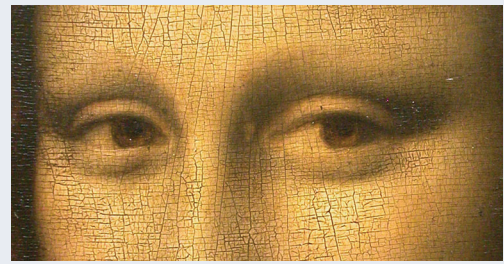


Figure 2.8 | Detail of the eyes of *Mona Lisa*

Artist: Leonardo da Vinci
 Author: User “Cantus”
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

the Acacia tree **as the binder**. Watercolor paints are mixed with water and brushed onto an absorbent surface, usually paper. Before the industrial era, watercolor was used as an outdoor sketching medium because it was more portable than oil paint, which had to be prepared for use and could not be preserved for long periods or easily transported. (Figure 2.9) Today, however, many artists use watercolor as their primary medium.

Encaustic uses melted beeswax as the binder and must be applied to rigid supports like wood with heated brushes. The advantage of encaustic is that it remains fresh and vi-

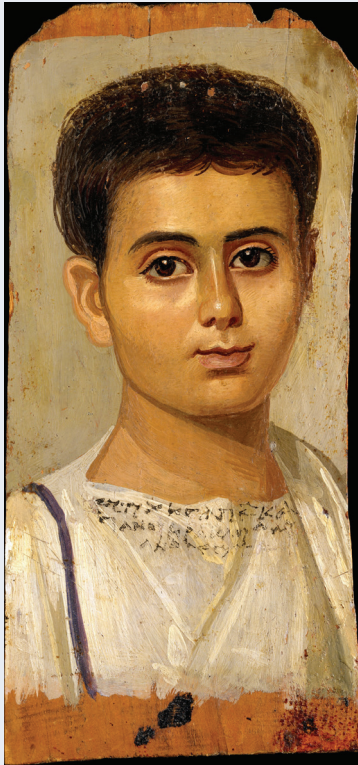


Figure 2.10 | Portrait of the Boy Eutyches

Source: Met Museum
License: OASC



Figure 2.11 | The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden

Artist: Masaccio
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

brant over centuries. Encaustic paintings from ancient Egypt dating to the period of Roman occupation (late first century BCE-third century CE) are as brilliantly colored as when they were first painted. (Figure 2.10)

Fresco is the process of painting onto plaster; it is a long-lasting technique. There are two kinds of fresco: **buon fresco**, or “good” fresco, is painting on wet plaster, and **fresco secco**, or dry fresco, is done after the plaster has dried. Paintings made using the buon fresco technique become part of the wall because the wet plaster absorbs the pigment as it is applied. (Figure 2.11) The only way to correct a buon fresco painting is to chip it off the wall and start over. Buon fresco must be done in sections. Each section is called a **giornate**, which is Italian for “a day’s work.” Because it is done on dry plaster, fresco secco is more forgiving, but also less permanent as changes in moisture levels or damage to the wall can harm the painting. Due

to the dry air and stable weather, there are fresco secco murals created as early as 3,000 BCE in ancient Egyptian tombs that remain largely intact. (Figure 2.12)

Tempera painting has been around for centuries. The most popular version of painting during the Middle Ages was **egg tempera**, in which dry colored pigments were mixed with egg yolk and applied quickly to a stable surface in layers of short brushstrokes. Egg tempera is a difficult medium to master because the egg yolk mixture dries very quickly, and mistakes cannot be corrected



Figure 2.12 | Nebamun Tomb Fresco Dancers and Musicians

Author: User “Fordmadoxfraud”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

without damaging the surface of the painting. *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510, Italy) is an egg tempera painting. (Figure 2.13)

2.4.1.3 Printmaking

A **print** is an image made by transferring pigment from a **matrix** to a final surface, often but not always paper. Printing allows multiple copies of an artwork to be made. Multiple copies of an individual artwork are called an **edition**.

There are four main types of printmaking: relief, intaglio, planographic, and stencil. **Relief** prints are made by removing material from the **matrix**, the surface the image has been carved into, which is often wood, linoleum, or metal. (Figure 2.14) The remaining surface is covered with ink or pigment, and then paper is pressed onto the surface, picking up the ink. **Letterpress** is a relief printing process that transfers ink to paper but also indents an impression into the surface of the paper, creating a texture to the print that is often considered a sign of high quality.

Intaglio prints are made when a design is scratched into a matrix, usually a metal plate. Ink is wiped across the surface, and collects in the scratches. Excess ink is wiped off and paper is pressed onto the plate, picking up the ink from the scratches. Intaglio prints may also include texture.

Planographic prints are made by chemically altering a matrix to selectively accept or reject water. Originally, limestone was used for this process since it naturally repels water but can

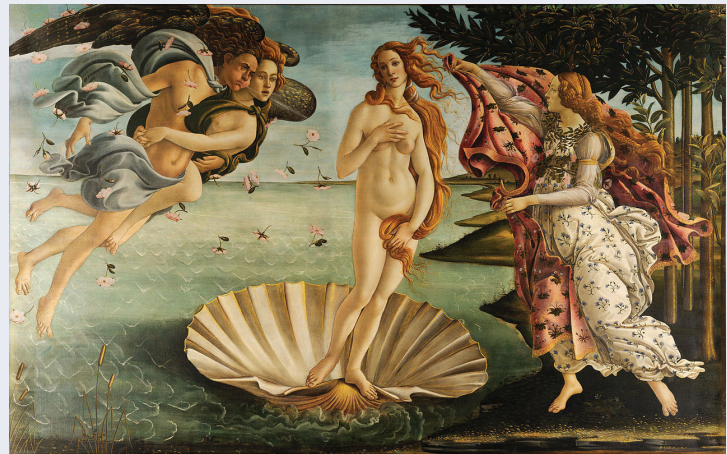


Figure 2.13 | *The Birth of Venus*

Artist: Sandro Botticelli

Author: User "Dcoetzee"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 2.14 | Relief Wood Carving

Author: User "Zephyris"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 2.15 | Stone used for lithography print

Author: User "AndreasPraefcke"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

be chemically changed to absorb it. In stone matrix **lithography**, black grease pencil drawings are made on a flat block of limestone, which is then treated with nitric acid. (Figure 2.15) The nitric acid does not dissolve the stone, but changes it chemically so that it absorbs water. The grease pencil is removed, and the stone wetted. Where the grease pencil protected the stone from the acid, the limestone repels water and remains dry. Next, oil-based ink is rolled over the stone. Where the stone is dry, the ink will stick, but where the stone is wet, the ink will not. The image is “brought up” to the desired darkness by passing an ink covered roller on it, then it is printed by pressing paper onto the surface to pick up the ink. Most commercial printing today is **lithographic printing**, using aluminum plates instead of limestone blocks, or offset printing, where the inked image is transferred from a metal plate to a rubber cylinder and then to paper. (Figure 2.16)



Figure 2.16 | Lithographic Press

Photographer: Clemens Pfeiffer

Author: User "Panoramafotors"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Copyright - Permissions Granted

Stencil prints are made by passing inks through a porous fine mesh matrix. In **silkscreen printmaking**, for example, silk fabric is mounted tightly on a rigid frame. Areas of the fabric are blocked off to form an image. The fabric-lined frame is placed on top of paper, canvas, or cloth. Ink is then pulled across the frame with a rubber blade. Where the fabric is blocked off, the ink does not transfer. Where the fabric is clear, ink is pushed through onto the receiving surface.

It is important to be able to distinguish between original prints and reproductions. **Original prints** are handmade prints. Since each print is subtly different due to its handmade character, each print is considered an original work of art. (Figure 2.17) Editions of original prints can range from a few to dozens or hundreds of copies. **Reproductions** are mechanically produced. An original artwork is photographed; the photograph is then transferred to a print-



Figure 2.17 | Artist Preparing Linoleum Prints

Author: Kyle Van Horn

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY 2.0



Figure 2.18 | Offset Press

Author: User "RémiH"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: CC BY-SA 3.0

ing plate on a mechanical press. Each print is nearly identical, and editions can run into the thousands or tens of thousands. (Figure 2.18)

The value of an individual print depends on a number of factors, including whether it is an original print or a reproduction and the number of prints in an edition. Recently a new kind of print has become popular, the **gicleé**. This is essentially a digital inkjet print. Those who buy gicleé prints should be careful that only acid-free paper and archival inks are used in its production. The fibers that make paper can come from many different sources, some of which contain acid that will turn the paper yellow with age. Over time, ink

pigments can be fugitive, lose color intensity or even shift in hue. These effects will lower the value of the print. Acid-free paper and archival inks resist these defects and preserve the original appearance of the art object, thus maintaining its value.

2.4.2 Three-Dimensional Art

Three-dimensional art goes beyond the flat surface to encompass height, width, and depth. There are four main methods used in producing art in three dimensions. All three-dimensional art uses one or a combination of these four methods: carving, modeling, casting, or assembly. A form of three-dimensional art that emerged in the twentieth century is installation, a work in which the viewer is surrounded within a space or moves through a space that has been modified by the artist.

Sculpture can be either **freestanding**—"in the round"—or it can be **relief**—sculpture that projects from a background surface. There are two categories of relief sculpture: low relief and high relief. In **low relief**, the amount of projection from the background surface is limited. A good example of low relief sculpture would be coins, such as these ancient Roman types dating from c. 300 BCE to c. 400 CE. (Figure 2.19) Also, much Egyptian

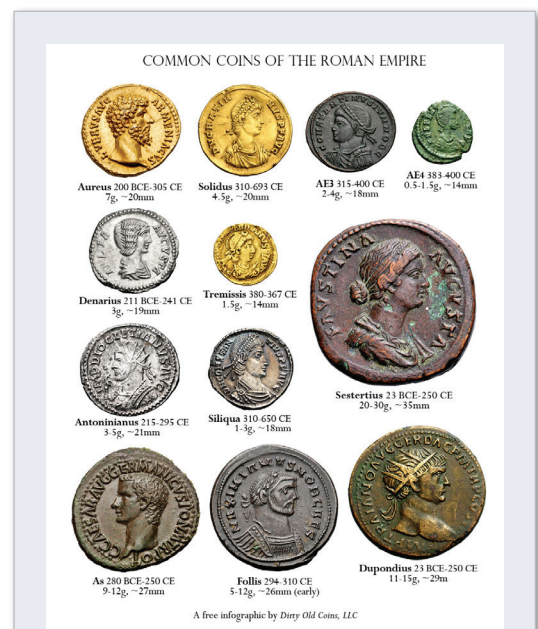


Figure 2.19 | Common Roman Coins

Creator: Rasiel Suarez
 Author: User "FSII"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: GFDL

wall art is low relief. (Figure 2.20) **High relief** sculpture is when more than half of the sculpted form projects from the background surface. This method generally creates an effect called **undercut**, in which some of the projected surface is separate from the background surface. Mythological scenes depicted on the Parthenon, an ancient Greek temple, (Figure 2.21) and the *Corporate Wars* series (*Corporate Wars*, Robert Longo: http://media.mutualart.com/Images/2009_07/24/0205/582184/49777ffa-d61f-42aa-a3f1-9c47ed564b05_g.Jpeg) by Robert Longo (b. 1953, USA) are both examples of high relief using undercut.

Modeling is an **additive** process in which easily shaped materials like clay or plaster are built up to create a final form. Some modeled



Figure 2.21 | Lapith fighting a centaur

Author: User "Jastrow"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 2.20 | Egyptian Relief Carving

Author: User "GDK"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 2.22 | Bust of Maximilien Robespierre

Artist: Claude-André Deseine

Author: User "Rama"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 2.0



Figure 2.23 | A selection of woodcarving gouges, chisels, and a mallet

Author: User "Aerolin55"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 2.24 | Sculptor Carving Stone

Author: Bain News Service

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 2.25 | Marble statue of Eirene (the personification of peace)

Artist: Kephisodotos

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

forms begin with an **armature**, or rigid inner support often made of wire. An armature allows a soft or fluid material like wet clay, which would collapse under its own weight, to be built up. This method of sculpting includes most classical portrait sculpture in **terra cotta**, or baked clay. (Figure 2.22) Clay lends itself to modeling and is thus a popular medium for work of this kind, although clay may also be carved and cast.

Carving is the removal of material to form an art object. Carving is a **subtractive** process that usually begins with a block of material, most commonly stone. Tools—usually metal or metal tipped—are used to chip away the stone until the final form emerges. (Figure 2.23) The



Figure 2.26 | Naophorous Block Statue of a Governor of Sais, Psamtik

Source: Met Museum
License: OASC



Figure 2.27 | Jade ornament of flowers with grape design

Author: User "Mountain"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

from not only the artist's intention, but also the subtle shifts caused by unpredictable variations in the stone causing the artist to "change course" when too much stone came away. This possibility is not to suggest that trained sculptors do not know the limits of their medium: artists often encounter surprises and innovative ones can sometimes work solutions that incorporate them.

Different kinds of stone vary in hardness as well as color and appearance. Not all stone is suitable for sculpting. Marble, a form of limestone, was preferred by the ancient Greeks and Romans for its softness and even color. (Figure 2.25) Diorite, schist (a form of slate), and Greywacke (a form of granite) were preferred by Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures for their hardness and permanence. (Figure 2.26) The Chinese have traditionally used jade, a hard, brittle stone found in numerous shades, most commonly green, to indicate wisdom, power, and wealth. (Figure 2.27)

Wood is also often used as a carving material. Because of variations in grain size and texture, different species of wood have different sculptural qualities. In general, wood is prized for its flexibility and ease of forming, though it reacts to changes in humidity and lacks permanence. During the Heian era (794-1185 CE), the Japanese artist Jocho used joined wood to construct his sculpture of the *Seated Buddha*. (Figure 2.28)

Casting is a process that replaces, or **substitutes**, an initial sculptural material such as wax or clay with another, usually more permanent, material such as **bronze**, an **alloy**, or mixture of copper and tin. Casting is also a process that makes it possible to create multiple versions of the same object.

In the **lost wax process**, an original sculpture is modeled, often in clay, coated in wax, and then covered in plaster to create a **mold**. When the plaster dries, it is heated to melt the wax, which is poured out of the mold. Molten metal is then poured into the space within the mold between the (now lost) wax coating and the original sculpted form. When the metal has cooled and solidified, the plaster is broken away to reveal the cast metal object. (Figure 2.29) In order to create multiple versions of the object, the mold must be made in such a way that it can be removed without being destroyed. (Figure 2.30) This operation is generally achieved by separating a mold into several sections while the original is being cast. Sectional molds are also used to cast original objects that cannot be melted or otherwise removed from the mold. To cast the form, the original is removed, and the sections are then re-fastened together. In some cases, complex sculptures are cast in several pieces and the resulting metal sections are welded together.

Assembly, or assemblage, is a fairly recent type of sculpture. Before the modern period, carv-



Figure 2.28 | Seated Buddha

Artist: Jōchō

Author: User "Kosigrim"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

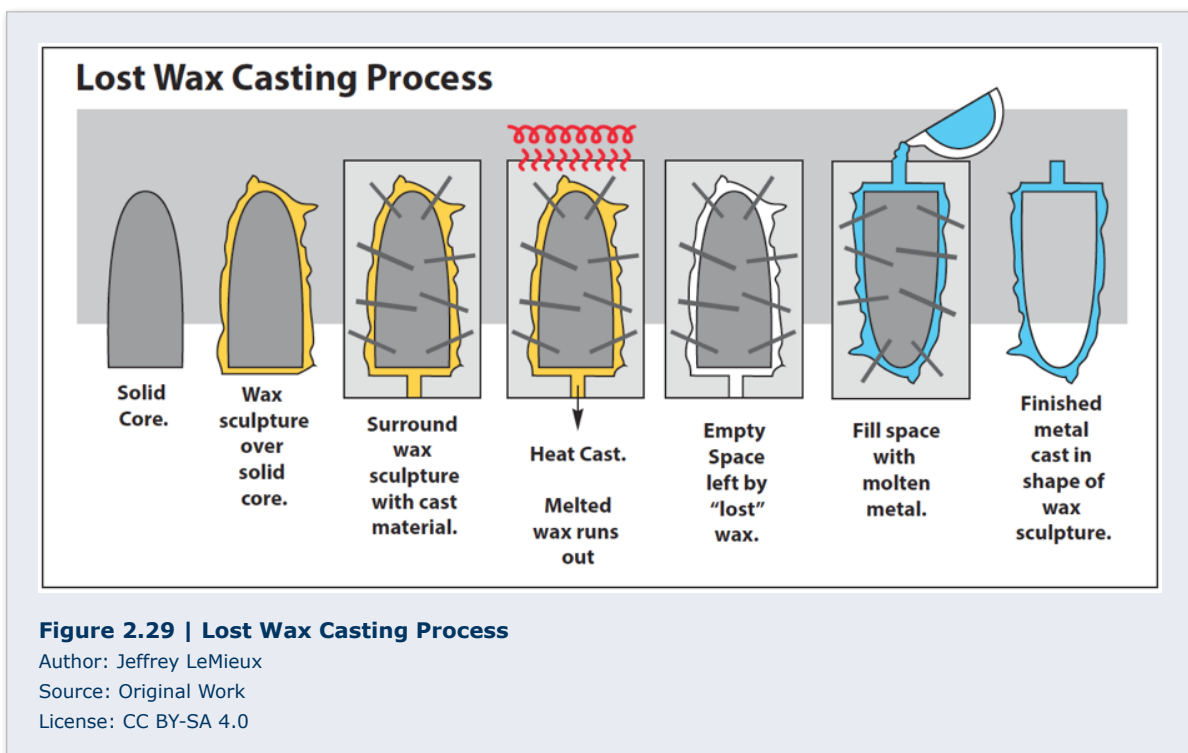
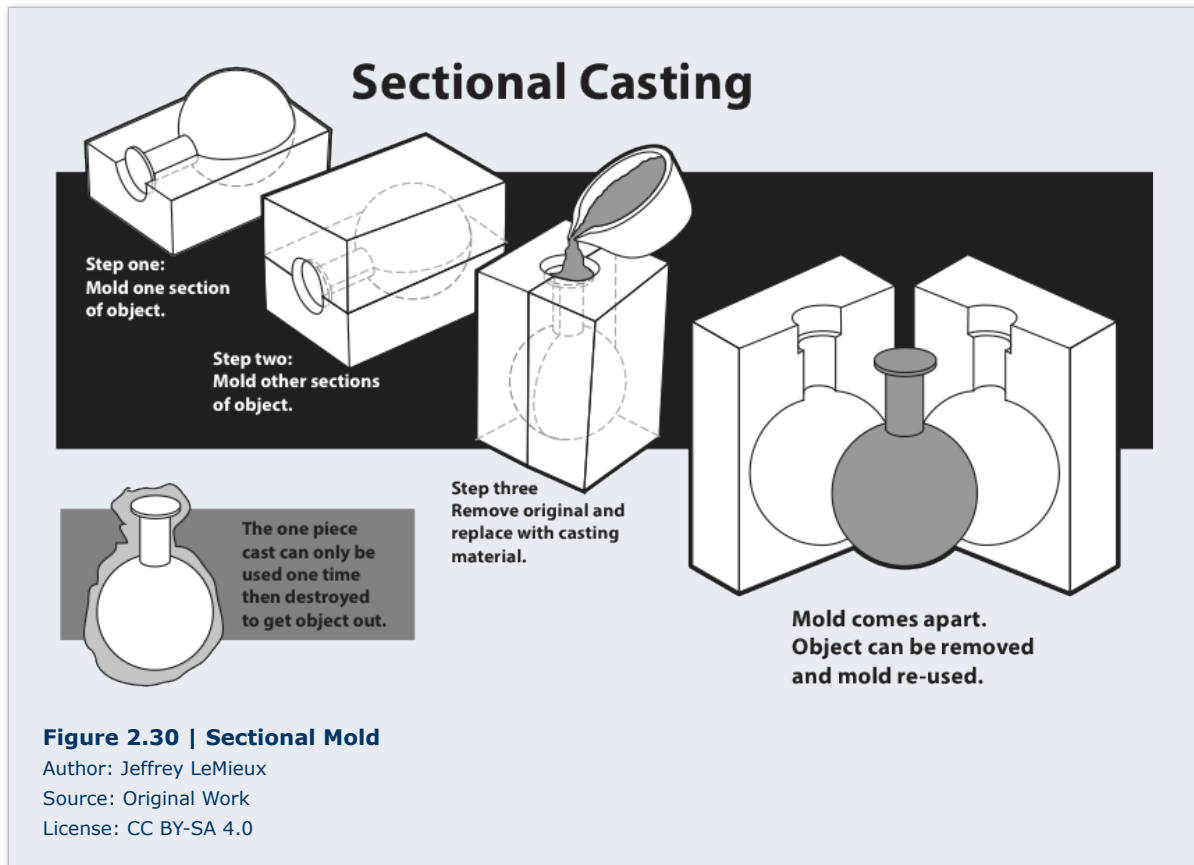


Figure 2.29 | Lost Wax Casting Process

Author: Jeffrey LeMieux

Source: Original Work

License: CC BY-SA 4.0



ing, casting, and modeling were the only accepted methods of making fine art sculpture. Recently, sculptors have enlarged their approach and turned to the process of **assembly**, manually attaching objects and materials together. Assemblies are often composed of **mixed media**, a process in which disparate objects and substances are used in order to achieve the desired effect.

Because she spent time near a cabinetry workshop, Louise Nevelson (1899-1988, Ukraine, lived USA) would retrieve wooden cut-offs and other discarded objects to use in her sculpture. Her art practice involved the use of **found objects**. Consider Nevelson's *Sky Cathedral*. (*Sky Cathedral*, Louise Nevelson: <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/81006>) She filled individual wooden boxes with found objects. She then arranged these boxes into large assemblies and painted them a single color, usually black or white. Each sub-unit box in the sculpture can be read as a separate point of view or separate world. The effect of the whole is to recognize that both unity and diversity are possible in a single artwork.

Installation is related to **assembly**, but the intent is to transform an interior or exterior space to create an experience that surrounds and involves the viewer in an unscripted interaction with the environment. The viewer is then immersed *in* the art, rather than experiencing the art from a distance. For example, Carsten Höller (b. 1961, Belgium, lives Sweden) installed *Test Site* in the Turbine Hall, a five-story open space, at the Tate Modern in London. (Figure 2.31) Part of a series of slides Höller created at museums worldwide, he wanted to encourage visitors

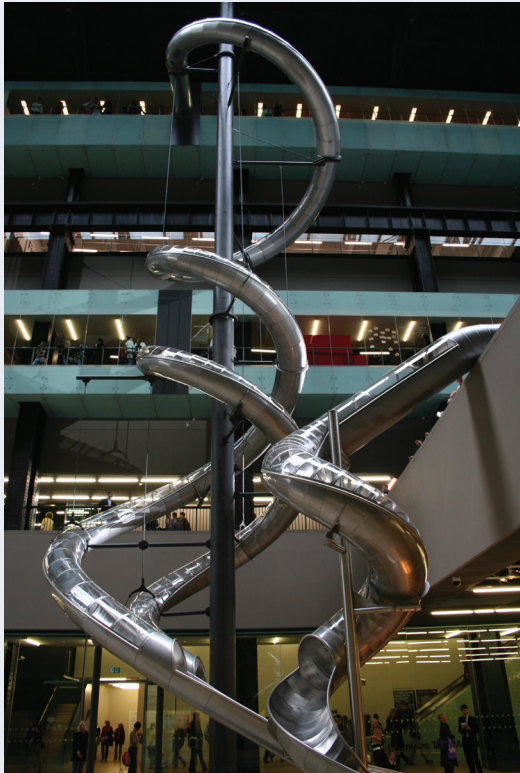


Figure 2.31 | Test Site

Artist: Carsten Höller
 Author: User "The Lud"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: Public Domain

to use the practical, though unconventional, means of transport, and, while doing so, to experience the momentary loss of control and whatever emotional response each individual felt.

An installation that is intended for a particular location is called a **site-specific** installation. Good examples of site-specific installations would be *Tilted Arc* by Richard Serra (b. 1939, USA), (*Tilted Arc*, Richard Serra: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tilted_arc_en.jpg); *Lightning Field* by Walter De Maria (1935-2013, USA), (*Lightning Field*, Walter de Maria: http://sculpture1.wikispaces.com/file/view/Walter_de_Maria_Lightning_Field_1977.jpg/310921734/800x686/Walter_de_Maria_Lightning_Field_1977.jpg); *Spiral Jetty* by Robert Smithson (1938-1973, USA), (Figure 2.32); and *Cadillac Ranch* by the art group known as Ant Farm. (Figure 2.33) In part because of the large scale of many of these works, installation is an increasingly popular form of public artwork.

Kinetic art is art that moves or appears to move. Generally this art is sculptural. Good examples of kinetic artworks are the suspended, freely moving **mobiles** of Alexander Calder (1898-1976, USA) that are meant to change shape as part of their design. (*Nénuphars Rouges*, Alexander Calder: http://www.wikiart.org/en/alexander-calder/red-lily-pads-n-nuphars-rouges-1956?utm_source=returned&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=referral) *Homage to New York* was a work of kinetic art Jean Tinguely (1925-1991, Switzerland) intended to self-destruct, although it never completed its purpose because a local



Figure 2.32 | Spiral Jetty

Artist: Robert Smithson
 Author: User "Yonidebest"
 Source: Wikimedia Commons
 License: CC BY-SA 2.0

fire department stepped in and stopped the process. (*Homage to New York*, Jean Tinguely: <http://www.wikiart.org/en/jean-tinguely/homage-to-new-york-1960>) Reuben Margolin (USA) is a contemporary artist who uses intersecting waves to create beautifully undulating sculptures. Click the following link to view a video of Margolin's *Square Wave*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UQtDbybSWc>. Beginning with simple materials like paper towel tubes, fishing swivels, and fishing line, and then moving to larger, more complex

sculptures using more permanent materials like wood, metal, and wire, Margolin has made a career of creating meditatively flowing sculptures.



Figure 2.33 | Cadillac Ranch, Amarillo

Artist: Ant Farm

Author: Richie Diesterheft

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: CC BY 2.0

2.4.3 Four-Dimensional Art

Four-dimensional art, or **time-based art** is a relatively new mode of art practice that includes video, projection mapping, performance, and new media art.

Video art uses the relatively new technology of projected moving images. These images can be displayed on electronic monitors or projected onto walls or even buildings; they use light as a medium. The early video constructions of Nam June Paik (1932–2006, South Korea, lived USA) are a good example. In *TV Cello*, video monitors are assembled in the shape of a cello. (*TV Cello*, Nam June Paik: <http://a141.idata.over-blog.com/356x499/1/96/04/42/s-rie-F/Paik-N.-J.-TV-Cello.jpg>) When a bow was drawn across this object, images of a woman playing a cello appeared on the screens.

Projection mapping is another use of video projection. One or more two- or three-dimensional objects (often buildings) are spatially mapped into a virtual program that then allows the image to conform to the surface of the object upon which it is projected. (Figure 2.34) Evan Roth (b. 1978, USA, lives France) creates graffiti as a video projection and then photographs the results; thus, the work is temporary. This method of spatially augmented reality has been used by numerous artists (and advertisers) to “tag” everything from public spaces to the human face, without leaving permanent marks.

Performance art is art in which the artist’s medium is an action. Performance artworks are generally documented by photography, but the artwork is in the act itself. *Cut Piece* is a performance work Yoko Ono (b. 1933, Japan, lives USA) originally created in 1964 in which audience members were given scissors to cut off pieces of her clothing while the artist sat on a stage.

(*Cut Piece*, Yoko Ono: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CutPieceOno.jpeg>) As the artist passively allowed her garments to fall away, the participants and viewers were in control of her transformation from whole to segmented.

New media art usually refers to interactive works such as digital art, computer animation, video games, robotics, and 3D printing, where artists explore the expressive potential of these new creative technologies. The international connectivity of the Internet has ushered in a globalization of information exchange which includes the arts. One example of the use of new media in art would be *10,000 Moving Cities* by Marc Lee (b. 1969, Switzerland). In this work, a viewer wears a video projection headset in which images from a chosen city are projected onto a digital urban architecture. The viewer can move within the new space through head motion. Real time social-media images and text from the chosen city are also captured and projected.

2.5 FORM AND COMPOSITION

When looking at art, many people today take a holistic or **gestalt** approach to understanding it. In this approach, the work of art is experienced as a single unified whole and an intuitive conclusion is drawn. This approach to art is a good place to start, but it can also be useful to examine the individual parts of an artwork and the relationships those parts have to the whole. When we examine an artwork by taking it apart, we are looking at its design. Design is divided into two broad categories: the elements of design and the principles of design. The **elements of design** are the physical parts of the artwork, or the **form**. The **principles of design** are the ways in which those parts are arranged or used, or the **composition**.

2.5.1 Elements of Design

A **design** is a governing plan or approach by which various parts of an artwork are created and assembled. It is rare to find a work of art that is entirely accidental or has come wholly out of the unconscious intuition of an artist. Further, looking at the way in which various parts of a work of art are arranged—even an intuitive or accidental work—can reveal clues to the goals and beliefs of the artist, the community in which the artist has worked, and the problems the work of art was meant to address.



Figure 2.34 | Cathédrale St Jean illuminée

Author: User "Gonedelyon"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: User "Gonedelyon"

There are six basic elements of design: line, shape, mass/volume, perspective, texture, and color. One way to think of these elements of design is to “walk up the ladder” of dimension. Our perceived world has three dimensions of space and one of time. Mathematically, a point has zero dimensions. A line has one dimension, length. A shape has two dimensions, length and height. A form with mass or volume has three dimensions, length, height, and width. In moving from points to volumes, we have “walked up the ladder” of dimension from zero to three. In addition to the three dimensions of physical space, there are two more things artists can incorporate into a given work. They can introduce texture, and they can introduce color.

Here is a brief explanation of the definition and dynamics of each element of design.

2.5.1.1 Line

Line is the first order element of design. A **line** is an infinite series of points that are arranged in a direction. The direction of a line may be straight (unchanging) or curved (changing). All kinds of objects are **linear**, or predominantly formed by using lines. **Calligraphy**, or “beautiful writing,” is one popular use of line. The character of line in writing has two main functions. First, the linear figure or shape of a written symbol denotes its meaning. Second, the manner in which the figure is created can be seen as expressive in itself. A **tughra**, or the calligraphic signature of a sultan, and the refined text of Arabic calligraphy are renowned for their expressive beauty, as are many works of Asian script. In many writing cultures, the beauty of the script is as important as the message the script contains. (Figure 2.35)



Figure 2.35 | Tughra (Official Signature) of Sultan Süleiman the Magnificent

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

One quality of line is gesture. **Gesture** is the line produced by the movement of the artist’s hand, arm, or body, of a kind of dance with the material, as can be seen in this photograph of Jackson Pollock in the midst of painting. (Jackson Pollock: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/b/b7/Jackson-Pollock.jpg>) For example, short, uneven staccato lines may be read as impatient, or lacking in confidence or grace. Evenly drawn horizontal lines express calm. Straight lines can represent rigidity, which is neither good nor bad, but depends on context. A rigid bridge is a good



Figure 2.36 | Nude Male Figure with a Sword

Artist: Alexandre Cabanel
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

or light and dark. These crosshatching lines generally follow the shape of an object. (Figures 2.4 and 2.36)

Some lines are not drawn at all. Instead, they are **implied** or suggested by an intentional alignment of shapes. The image of the square inside the circle is an example of implied line. (Figure 2.37) Lines that converge beyond the edge of an artwork are another because they imply a distant intersection. A third example of a line that is not actually there is **psychic** line. Two people looking at one another in an artwork create a psychic line between them.

Line has **expressive** content. By its nature, a line compels the viewer to follow

thing for those who depend on it not to give way. A rigid tree in a windstorm will sometimes be uprooted.

Contour is the line where differing areas meet and form edges. Human visual perception includes an enhanced ability to detect edges in nature. Contour lines follow the shapes of objects where they stand out from backgrounds. In mapmaking, contour lines indicate the shape of the landscape in regular increments of vertical height. On contour maps, lines that appear close together indicate a rapid change in height. Lines that are far apart indicate more gentle slopes. (GroundTruth Contours: http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/w/images/thumb/b/b5/GroundTruthContours_Detail.png/300px-GroundTruthContours_Detail.png)

Crosshatching is the use of uniformly spaced intersecting lines that create the perception of value

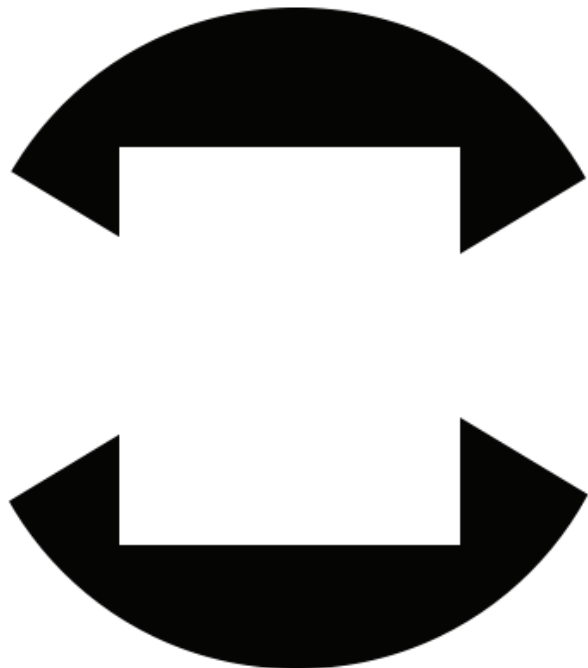


Figure 2.37 | Square inside a circle, demonstration of implied lines

Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
License: CC BY-SA 4.0

along its path. The character of the line can control the direction, speed, and attention of the viewer. The movement of a line can be curved or angular. It can progress smoothly or with a staccato rhythm. A line can be thick or thin, pale or bold. These qualities are “read” rationally and emotionally; thus, line can have an expressive and emotional content that can often be found by viewer introspection.

Line is not just a two-dimensional design element. For example, wire is a linear medium that can be extended into three dimensions. Alexander Calder’s wire sculptures and portraits are fine examples of the expressive power of line in three dimensions. (*Acrobats*, Alexander Calder: http://www.calder.org/system/post_images/images/000/001/082/medium/A00504.jpg?1352222725) Another example is Pablo Picasso drawing in space with light for photographer Gjon Mili (1904-1984, Albania, lived USA) for *Life* magazine in 1949. (Light Drawings, Pablo Picasso: <http://www.designboom.com/art/pablo-picassos-light-drawings-from-1949/>)

2.5.1.2 Shape

The design element of shape is the next element in the walk up the ladder of dimension. **Shape** has two dimensions, length and width. Shapes can be regular or irregular, simple or complex. Shapes can have hard or soft edges. **Hard-edged** shapes have clearly defined boundaries, while **soft-edged** shapes slowly fade into their backgrounds. There are two broad categories of shape: geometric and organic. **Geometric shapes** are regular and ordered shapes using straight lines and curves. **Organic shapes** are generally irregular and often chaotic. Hans Arp (1886-1966, France, lived Switzerland), in his work *Untitled*, used torn paper and cut shapes to create an abstract composition. While squares are geometric objects, Arp’s torn and irregular edges transform them into organic shapes. The orientation of those shapes roughly approximates a grid structure, but again, their deviation from a regular order implies a chaotic and accidental arrangement. In this work, Arp is dancing on the “edge of order.” (Figure 2.38)



In two-dimensional artworks, shapes are figures placed on a two-dimensional surface that is known as a **ground**. This creates a relationship between foreground and background known as the **figure/ground relation**. The **figure** is the object that appears to be in front of the ground. In some artworks this relationship is intentionally unclear. In this case, an effect known as figure/ground reversal can occur. In **figure/ground reversal**, what was seen as the positive shape of the figure can also be seen as the negative space of the ground. This effect disrupts the sense of space in an artwork and disorients the viewer. (*Escher Woodcut II Strip 3*, Maurits Cornelis Escher: <http://www.tau.ac.il/~tsurxx/FigureGround/Escher2.GIF>)

2.5.1.3 Mass/Volume

The next and final step up the dimensional ladder is volume **or** mass. **Volume** has three dimensions: length, width, and height. Volumes may have interior or exterior contours, and they may be closed or open in form. **Mass** is the quantity of matter, often meaning its weight. A **closed form** is a volume that is not pierced or perforated. One goal of ancient Egyptian sculpture was to last for eternity. Therefore, they used closed sculptural forms, which are more structurally robust and more resistant to wear or breakage. (Figures 2.26 and 2.39) Empty space surrounds a closed form but does not move through it. Conversely,

empty space surrounds but also moves through an **open form**. Open form sculptures are closer in shape to the figures they represent and thus are more lifelike or “true” to the original reference.

Modern sculptors such as Henry Moore (1898-1986, England) have explored the abstract use of closed and open forms, as well as negative and positive space. (*Reclining Figure 1969-70*, Henry Moore: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/o/o8/PikiWiki_Israel_12097_reclining_figure_by_henry_moore_in_tel_aviv.jpg) In three-dimensional art, **positive space** is the space occupied by a given volume, while **negative space** is the empty space within that volume. Notice how the figure twists around an imaginary boundary. The “saddle” in the middle suggests an invisible weight pressing down on the form there. This sculpture depends as much on the empty space around it as it does on the volume occupied by the bronze. In addition, its mass is lessened by the openness of its form, especially when compared to ancient Egyptian sculpture, an entirely closed form.

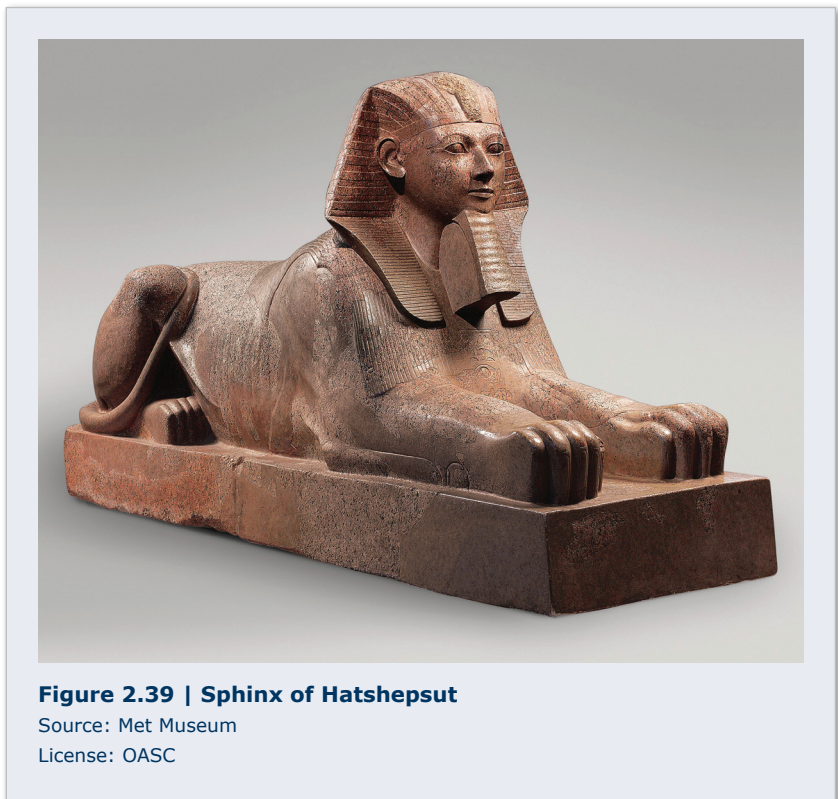


Figure 2.39 | Sphinx of Hatshepsut

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

To convey the three dimensionality, mass and volume, of forms on a flat surface, artists use **chiaroscuro** (Italian: “clear-dark”) or varying shades of light and dark. As a form turns toward a light source it appears brighter, and as it turns away from the light source it appears darker; the shift in light and shadow creates the illusion of volume in space. The face and hands of Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa* are considered masterpieces of chiaroscuro. (Figure 2.7)

2.5.1.4 Perspective

Perspective in art is the illusion of space on a flat surface. Before the discovery of the geometric system of linear perspective in fifteenth-century Italy, the illusion of space was created by using three main visual cues to the recession of space. These three cues are height, scale, and overlap. Objects that are higher on the drawing surface, objects that are smaller in scale, and objects that are partially obscured by other objects all appear further away in space. (Figure 2.40)

Linear perspective is based on the regular geometric recession of space. Linear perspective uses a vanishing point and horizon line. The **vanishing point** is the spot where all receding lines seem to converge on the horizon line. The **horizon line** is the set of all possible eye-level vanishing points. (Figure 2.41) **Orthogonal lines** are the lines that appear to meet at the vanishing point and imply the regular recession of space. Horizon lines and vanishing points can provide clues to the artist’s intent. In Leonardo’s *Last Supper*, for example, the artist has located the vanishing point directly behind the head of Jesus. (see Figure 1.25) Because the vanishing point is the viewer’s vision extended infinitely in one direction, Leonardo’s placement of the vanishing point behind the head of Jesus associates Him with the infinity of the Christian God.

Before linear perspective was formulated as a coherent geometric system, painters used intuitive perspective to portray receding space. **Intuitive perspective** acknowledges that receding lines converge, but does not recognize that they converge at a single horizon line and vanishing point. Nonetheless, even

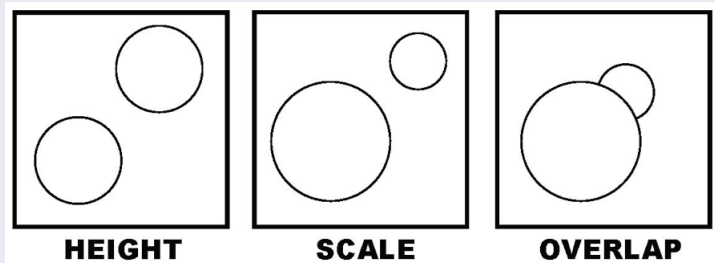


Figure 2.40 | Height, Scale, and Overlap

Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
License: CC BY-SA 4.0

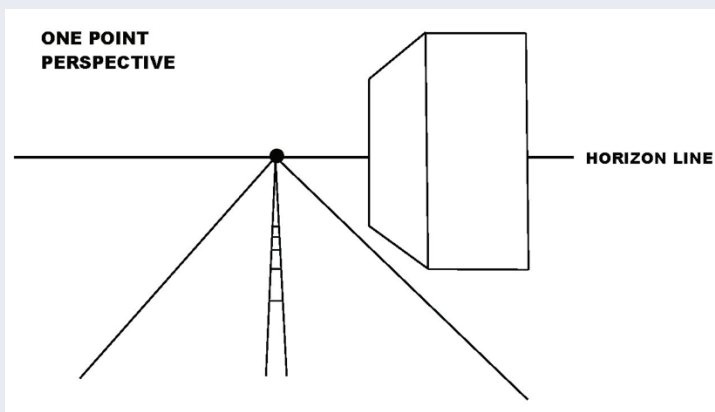


Figure 2.41 | Height, Scale, and Overlap

Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
License: CC BY-SA 4.0

when paintings lack a rigorously coherent geometric system of linear perspective, determining where the horizon would be can inform us about how the artist views the subject. Compare two paintings of the same name, *Madonna Enthroned*, one by Cimabue (1240-1302, Italy) and the other by Giotto (1266/7-1337, Italy). (Figures 2.42 and 2.43) Both paintings use intuitive perspective. In Cimabue's painting of 1285, the implied horizon is low and the viewer sits at the foot of the throne, while Giotto's image, painted in 1310, has the horizon higher, and thus the viewer is on the same level as the Madonna. This difference of viewpoint signifies changing ideas about the Madonna's relation to the individual. Cimabue's painting places the viewer in subservient homage, while Giotto's painting may be seen as more approachable, indicative of a tiny but significant shift in European thought that eventually blossomed into the Italian Renaissance.

There are different types of linear perspective. The main types are one-, two-, and three-point perspective. The distinction is in the number of vanishing points used. **One-point perspective** uses a horizon line and one main vanishing point and is normally used when simple views are



Figure 2.42 | Santa Trinita Madonna

Artist: Cimabue

Author: User "Eugene"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain



Figure 2.43 | The Ognissanti Madonna

Artist: Giotto

Author: User "Shizhao"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain