ART 104: INTRODUCTION TO ART



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Art 104: Introduction To Art

This is the course reader for Southwestern College's Art 104-507

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Detailed Licensing

Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: What is Art?

Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe the different functions and expressions in the visual arts.
- Describe and define the power and value of art
- Explain why it is important to study and experience works of art
- Understand and apply art historical vocabulary

1.1: What Is Art Appreciation?

1.2: Art of the Past and the Origins of Creativity

1.3: What is an Artist

1.4: Types of Art (Media)

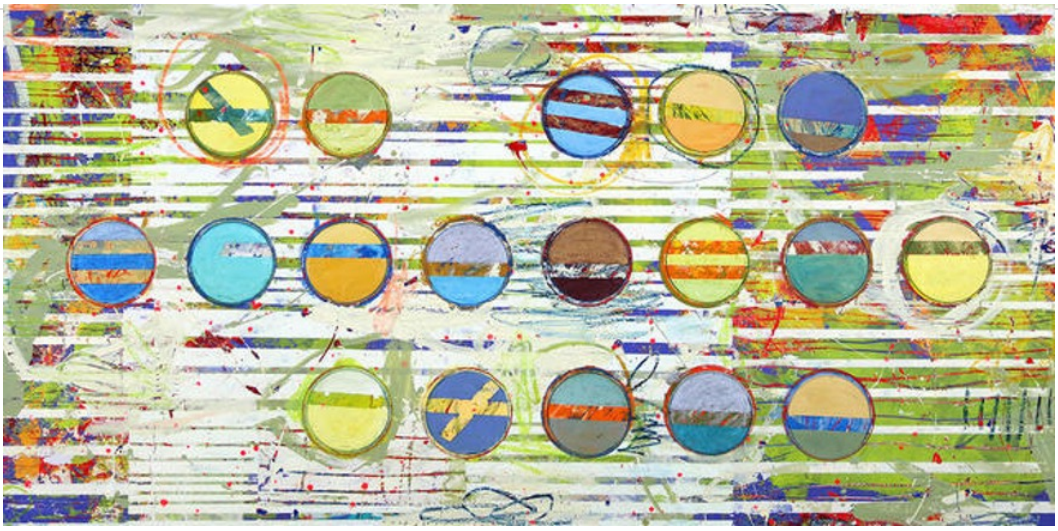
1.5: What are BCE and CE?

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1.1: What Is Art Appreciation?



1.1 *Fibonacci 413*

What Is Art Appreciation?

Appreciation of the visual arts goes beyond staring at a painting hanging on the wall of a museum—art is in everything and everywhere you look. Opening your eyes to the world of art is essential in understanding the world around you. Art is more than pretentious museums; only a few enter and comprehend. Instead, art appreciation is:

- Gaining the knowledge to understand the art.
- Acquire the art methods and materials to discuss art verbally or by the written word.
- Ability to identify the movements from ancient cultures to today's contemporary art.

Learning how to appreciate art is a necessary cultural foundation enabling people to critically analyze art, art forms, and how cultures used art. All it takes to understand the art is just to look!

Art appreciation centers on the ability to view art throughout history, focusing on the cultures and the people, and how art developed in the specific periods. It is difficult to understand art without understanding the culture, their use of materials, and a sense of beauty. Art is conveyed by the simple act of creating art for art's sake. Every person is born with the innate desire to create art, and similar to other professions, training is essential in honing skills to produce art. Art education broadens a person's comprehension, development, and visions of art. Art brings an understanding of diversity, how people lived in the past, and connects the issues concerning contemporary life and art today.

The history of the world is similarly the history of art, continually intertwined. For millions of years, as humans roamed the earth, evolution, and environment shaped many different cultures depending on location, weather, natural resources, and food. These cultures formed the foundation of all art today. Art appreciation analyzes art using the methods and materials, allowing people to make connections to the context of art and the interactions of societies.

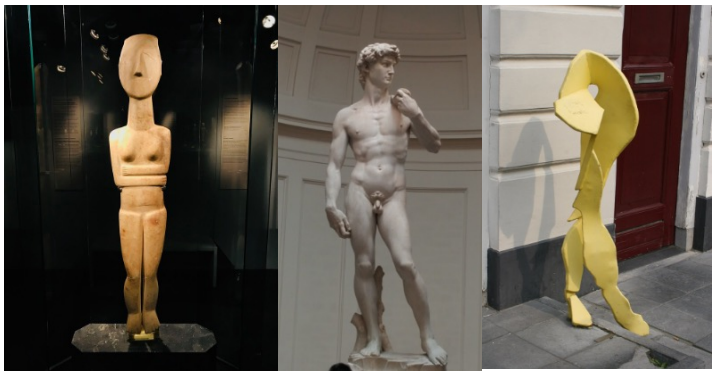
It is difficult to understand the art without understanding the culture.

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1.2: Art of the Past and the Origins of Creativity

A common saying is, 'history always repeats itself'. Art history and art movements also repeat; artists are influenced by the past and present; the Romans copied the Greeks, and earlier styles inspired art movements. The early Cycladic (1.2) carved simple forms with static arms and legs, David (1.3) by Michelangelo uses contrapposto positioning and realistic details, and the yellow modern art sculpture (1.4) is free form yet based upon a human figure and the interpretation in different millennia, referred to as 'artistic' recurrence.



1.2 Cycladic 1.3 *David* 1.4 Yellow Figure

Artists get their ideas from many places, have you ever wondered where? Why are they creating art, and what is the driving force behind their creation? Is it political, sacred, dreamscape, ceremonial, cultural, expression, therapy, illustrative, historical, literature, poetry, musical, theatrical, nature, narrative, exposing, thought-provoking, or experimental, whatever it is, it must come from within the artist. The process is part of the journey, and the journey is the process. If a mistake happens, paint over it. There is no such thing as a mistake in art; it is just not finished. Art is only complete when the artist believes it is finished!



1.5 Painting from the tomb of Petrosiris at Muzawaka

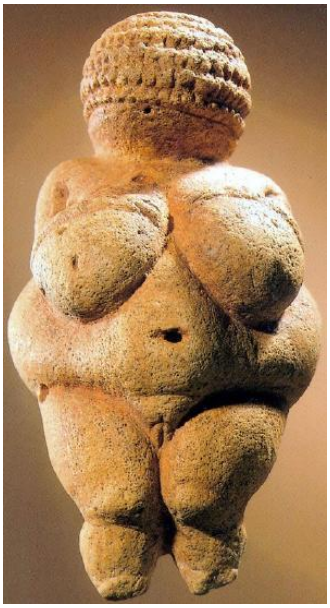
Over 4 million years, humans evolved into the unique Homo Sapiens—modern human brains have increased in size leading to creative and organized groups of prehistoric people. The discovery of fire was perhaps one of the greatest achievements of the Stone Age, and scholarly evidence supports the practice of fire around 400,000 years ago, although some scholars believe it might have been much earlier. The human brain divided between the humanities and science began to evolve as complementary divisions eons ago. Fire is at the heart of our creativity.



1.6 Campfire

Everyone loves a campfire; it brings people together when the skies darken, and long nights ensue. Research indicates that adding protein to a diet allowed the brain to increase in size. Protein, an essential element for the evolution of the human brain, fire likewise allowed the cooking of protein, eliminating the restriction of raw foods. This increase of protein in the prehistoric diet lead to the development of a larger front lobe brain creating more empathy, problem-solving, and social intelligence. Did the stories told around the chiaroscuro firelight, with singing, dancing, and chanting, lead to drawing on the walls of caves or rock outcrops, recording their epic hunts or daily lives? The unification of small nomadic groups of people required rules and regulations which may have begun around the campfire.

According to carbon dating methods, the earliest known artwork is 30,000 years old (Venus of Willendorf 1.7) and associated with those who created cave art. Previously, anthropologists considered Mesopotamia as the "Cradle of Civilization" home to the oldest culture in the world. Cultural anthropologists have defined the Cradle of Civilization to signify the period of written language, agriculture, raising animals, and public buildings. This list was used by most cultures and now defines Ancient Egypt along the Nile, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, Ancient China in the Yellow River region, the Central Andes and Mesoamerica as centers where different civilizations started independently.



1.7 *Venus of Willendorf*

Creativity continued to grow among cultures, and depending on the natural resources, grand palaces, tombs, and structures rose out of the earth. Art appreciation usually focuses on Egypt, Greek, Roman, Renaissance, and modern art. This textbook covers cultures

well beyond classical art and delves into the numerous societies of people and their culture from the six continents. Exploring art outside the norm, understand the origins of creativity, and how it connects the art of the past in all cultures across the world is critical in art appreciation.

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1.3: What is an Artist

An artist is any person from any culture engaged in one or more activities to create art or practice art. Artists do not have to be a professional to design art; most of the time, art is very relaxing and enjoyable, creating sense and meaning in one's life. Artists throughout time were generally called an artisan, a term used for someone who labored with their hands producing art. However, art can be utilitarian, although very beautiful. For example, the pots the Jomon culture produced over 10,000 years ago were very utilitarian, yet they added unusual decorations to the outside of the pots with rope impressions in different patterns.

Art historians have divided art into categories called art movements. A famous art movement known to many is the Renaissance. The Renaissance encompasses the art in Italy during the 14th and 15th centuries. The name Renaissance means "Rebirth," and it seemed an appropriate term to describe the dramatic evolution in art. Art movements usually consisted of the same style or philosophy during a period. The movements usually were not named during the time it occurred; later, art historians arbitrarily assigned names based on similar styles and geographical groupings. Art movements have only been classified as movements by the artists or commentators in the last 150 years, beginning with the Impressionists. Most art periods in the last 150 years have been short, around ten years or less, the periods of art before modern art usually lasted 25-50 years.

Not all artists are famous or make a living selling art, but they still create interesting or different art. There are multiple employment opportunities in the art field, for example, teaching, writer, museum curator, art therapists, music, theater, education, and many more. Even the computer industry has designers on staff, so the design of the final product is aesthetically appealing and commercially compelling.

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1.4: Types of Art (Media)

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 iden- tifying 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 visu- al arts is dimension. Two-dimensional art consists of **drawing, painting, and printmaking**; three-dimensional art consists of **sculpture, including installation, and kinetic art**. In ad- dition 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**. **S**uch 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.

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1.5: What are BCE and CE?

Over time, ancient civilizations calculated and wrote about the passing of time differently than we do today. In Mesopotamia and Egypt, they based the calendar upon the king, or the seasons set by their various gods. In Rome, time was counted from the founding of Rome and changed periodically by rulers. In Mesoamerica, the Aztec Calendar (1.8) was the system used by the Pre-Columbian people, a 365-day calendar defining a century as 52 years long and based on the sun, a sacred symbol. Since time was established thousands of years ago by many different cultures, one system was not in use.

In the 6th century, Dionysius Exiguus, who was a Christian monk, established the Anno Domino (AD) and Before Christ (BC) as the reference date for the year zero in Europe based on the tenets of Christianity. Other religions also developed their calendars, and some are still in use today. The scholarly alternative to the current Christian designations for time is named Before the Common Era (BCE) and Common Era (CE) and has been adopted by academic and scientific publications and studies to emphasize secularism and inclusiveness. The new designation removed the specific religious designation from the calendar; instead, the new naming convention is more meaningful across the globe.



1.8 Stone of Five Suns

Scholars have readily adopted the new BCE/CE designation for communication and modernizing a worldwide standard. Many cultures today use a dual calendar designation, the BCE/CE standard, and their historical calendars. This textbook uses BCE and CE as a contemporary designation for all cultures around the world. For example, if art were discussed from Mesopotamia 5,000 years ago, it would state "in Mesopotamia, 3,000 BCE…". If discussing Gothic art, it would state "Gothic art, 1342 CE, the architectural style…". Using BCE for all dates to the year zero, and CE for all the dates after year zero is a simple clarification.

All dates, regardless of calendars, are based upon estimations since no one is sure when the year zero started. We are into the 2020th year now and cannot change the system to begin at a new date, and it would cause chaos in the computer systems. Year 2K was enough of a coding problem just moving from the 1900s to 2000, let alone moving the world to a new date.

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1.6: Key Terms

2-Dimensional Art: art that is executed on a two dimensional surface that has length and width; a flat (or nearly flat) surface. These include, but are not limited to, paintings, drawings, and prints.

3-Dimensional Art: art that is executed in the three dimensions of length, width, and height. These include, but are not limited to, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, glass, textiles, assembly, and installation.

4-Dimensional Art: art that is executed in, and depends upon, both space and time, which is considered the "fourth dimension." Examples include but are not limited to performance art and video art.

Abstract Expressionism: or ABEX; this art historical term is specific to a group of painters working in New York after the Second World War. This group includes Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, and Helen Frankenthaler. Their primary approach to painting was gestural, and "all over," a condition in which no single part of the work is visually predominant.

Acrylic: a fast drying water-soluble petroleum based painting medium.

Actual Texture: the condition in which texture is created, not represented. Actual texture is the opposite of simulated texture or the illusion of texture. Examples include brushstrokes, impasto, collage, and inclusion.

Additive Color: color based on projected light.

Additive: a sculptural process in which material is added.

Afterimage: the optical sensation that occurs after a visual stimulus is removed. The afterimage is a quickly fading complement of the original stimulus.

Analogous Color: a color scheme that uses colors adjacent to an initial point on the color wheel. For example, if an artist chose red for the initial color, then an analogous color scheme would employ the color range that occurs between orange, red, and purple.

Armature: a wire or wood substructure used to support a clay sculpture while it is being worked.

Assembly: a sculptural process in which disparate materials are combined to form the final artwork.

Asymmetric: lacking symmetry.

Atmospheric Perspective: the use of color to simulate the illusion of space.

Axis: an imaginary line around which objects are arranged.

Balance: the property of equality in visual weight.

Binder: a transparent fluid used to suspend colored pigment and attach it to a support.

Brush: tools used to apply paint to a support, usually hair or fiber attached to a wooden or plastic handle.

Buon Fresco: literally, "good fresco." A mural process in which pigment is painted on and absorbed into wet plaster.

Calligraphy: beautiful writing.

Carving: a sculptural process in which material is removed to reveal the final artwork.

Casting: a sculptural process in which material is substituted to form the final artwork.

Charcoal: an art medium made from burned wood used to make dark black marks usually on paper.

Closed Form: sculptural forms that are not penetrated by exterior space.

Color Scheme: an organized or formulaic approach to the selection of color. For example, Monochromatic (one color), Complementary (opposite colors), and Analogous (adjacent colors) color schemes.

Color Temperature: in visual art, the sensation of "warm" or "cool" relative to a given color. Warm colors tend toward red/orange, while cool colors tend toward blue/white. Every color, when compared to another can be seen to be either more warm or more cool.

Color: the sensation caused by differing qualities of light.

Complementary Color: colors that when blended together create a neutral gray. On a color wheel, complementary colors appear opposite to one another. Examples of a complementary color pair would be blue and orange or red and green.

Composition: the arrangement of visual elements.

Conte Crayons: in drawing, square sticks of compressed charcoal or pigment and wax or clay.

Conte: a mixture of pigment and clay used to make colored marks, usually on paper. Traditionally manufactured in black, white, and sanguine (red) colors.

Contour: the exterior boundary of a form.

Contrast: areas with a high difference in value, color, texture, or other scale.

Cool Color: a color that tends toward blue/white in hue. A cool color can be any color that tends toward blue/white when compared to another color. For example, alizarin crimson is a cool red when compared to cadmium red medium.

Crosshatching: intersecting marks that create value on a form.

Description: the process of enumerating the various elements of an artwork.

Design: a plan for the arrangement of visual elements.

Drawing: the process of making marks on a support, often but not always representative of an idea or object.

Edge: exterior boundary of a shape.

Edition: a series of prints made from a single matrix.

Electromagnetic Spectrum: continuous range of radioactive energy by wavelength.

Elements of Design: the physical components of visual art.

Emphasis: the strategy of directing attention with the use of high contrast.

Encaustic: a painting process which uses wax as the binder.

Figure/Ground Relation: the figure in front of the ground. Used to specify which objects qualify as figures.

Figure/Ground Reversal: ambiguous figure ground relation in which figures can be alternately seen as grounds and vice versa.

Figure: a shape that appears in front of a background.

Forced Perspective: use of perspective to create a distorted or unnatural scale relation.

Form: the physical components of visual art.

Found Objects: material incorporated into artwork that is not normally considered an artistic medium. Found objects serve the same purpose in sculpture that magazine cutouts serve in collage.

Freestanding: sculpture that can be viewed from all angles.

Fresco Secco: the process of painting on dry plaster.

Fresco: the process of painting on wet or dry plaster.

Fugitive: pigments that change color or become transparent with time or weathering.

Geometric: a shape with mathematically regular contours.

Gestalt: intuitive perception of an artwork as a single whole experience.

Gesture: direction interpreted as movement.

Gicleé: an Ink-Jet print, usually on acid free paper with archival inks.

Graphite: a carbon-based mineral mixed with clay to make pencil leads of varying hardness.

Ground: the stage on which a figure resides.

Gum Arabic: a water-soluble resin from the Gum tree used as a binder in watercolor.

Hard-Edged: a shape with clearly defined boundaries.

Height: vertical distance or measurement.

High Relief: sculpture that remains attached to a base, but uses undercut. Opposite of low relief.

Horizon Line: the visual limit of space where sky and land or water meet. In linear perspective, the vanishing point rotated 360 degrees.

Hue: the quality of wavelength in color; the color name.

Impasto: thick application of paint.

Implied Line: invisible line perceived by alignment of unrelated shapes.

Impressionism: a nineteenth century art movement, originating in Paris, in which changing variations of light become a principal subject. Examples include the work of Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Mary Cassatt.

Ink: a liquid pigment traditionally used with pens of various manufacture.

Installation: an art practice that surrounds the viewer in an environment.

Intaglio: a printing process in which a metal plate is scratched with a steel point to produce printed images.

Interactive: artwork in which the viewer is expected to participate.

Interval: the space between elements of an artwork.

Intuitive Color: an approach to the selection of color that relies on intuition or other internal state rather than observation of an external condition.

Kinetic Art: art that incorporates motion into its design.

Line: an infinite series of points with limited length.

Linear Perspective: geometrically constructed illusion of the recession of space.

Linear: of or pertaining to the quality of line.

Lithograph: a printing process that relies on the repulsion between oil-based ink and water. A stone (or aluminum plate) is drawn on and etched. Where the stone is etched will absorb water. Where the stone is not etched (protected by the drawing or image) the stone will remain dry. Water is applied to the stone. Ink is then rolled over the stone. Where the stone is wet, ink is repelled. Where the stone is dry, ink adheres. Paper is then pressed onto the inked stone resulting in a print.

Local Color: the color of an object under even illumination.

Lost Wax: a casting process in which a wax original is molded, then wax is melted out and replaced with metal.

Low Relief: sculpture that remains attached to a base and does not use undercut. Opposite of high relief.

Mass: the quality of possessing three dimensions.

Matrix: in printmaking, any material used to produce an image. For example, in relief printing, the matrix is usually a carved linoleum or wood block.

Metalpoint: drawing using ductile metal such as silver, gold, or pewter as the pigment. Usually on paper or gessoed panel.

Mixed Media: the use of unconventional or unusual combinations of materials in a single artwork.

Mobile: in sculpture, a kinetic artwork moved by wind or gravity.

Modeling: a sculptural process in which material is added to form the final artwork.

Mold: a hollow form used to shape a fluid or plastic substance.

Monochromatic: of or using a single color.

Motion: movement or change in position over time.

Negative Space: the absence of mass in space.

Non-Objective Art: art that does not have direct pictorial reference to objects seen.

Observed Color: the perception of color on an object illuminated by a directional light source. The perceived color of such an object varies as it tends toward highlight or shadow.

Oil Pastels: paper covered sticks of solid pigment and oil-based binder originally used to mark livestock.

Oil: in painting, a solvent soluble binder that dries slowly, usually linseed oil.

One-point perspective: a mathematical drawing system with the intention of making three dimensional objects and space look realistic in appearance as they converge on a single vanishing point.

Open Form: sculptural forms that are penetrated by exterior space.

Organic: shapes or forms that are loose or undefined.

Original Print: a handmade print.

Orthogonal: in perspective, lines that recede to the vanishing point.

Overlap: a shape or object which obscures or lies over something else.

Painting: the process of applying liquid pigment to a surface, or an art object resulting from this process.

Pastel: solid sticks of pigment.

Performance Art: an approach to art in which the object is an action by participants.

Performance: artworks consisting of actions, usually documented photographically.

Perspective: in art a system that portrays three dimensions on a flat surface.

Pigment: in art, the substance with gives color to a medium.

Pigment: the coloring agent in paints, pastels, inks, and other art media.

Planographic: a printing process which occurs on a flat surface, originally limestone.

Point: in perspective, an object with zero dimension.

Positive Space: the area occupied by a solid or filled object.

Primary Colors: in art the three basic colors by which all other colors are mixed, i.e., red, yellow, and blue.

Principles of Design: the strategies by which the elements of art are arranged to create a desired visual effect.

Print: an artwork produced by transferring pigment from a matrix to a support, usually paper. Most often done in a series of identical impressions. See “edition.”

Printmaking: the process of producing multiple identical or nearly identical images from a single print matrix or set of matrices.

Psychic Line: in art, line that is understood without being seen by the eye.

Refracted Light: light that has been separated into distinct colors after having been passed through a prism.

Relief: the physical projection of an artwork beyond the support or base.

Reproduction: a mechanically produced print.

Rhythm: in art, a pattern formed by repeated objects.

Scale: the size of an object.

Sculpture: the production of artwork that exists in three dimensions. Examples are carving, casting, modelling, or assembly.

Secondary Colors: in art, the three colors formed by mixing two primary colors, i.e., green, orange, and purple.

Shape: an area of two dimensional space.

Simulated Texture: a visual representation of a tactile experience.

Site Specific: installations which use their location as part of the intended effect.

Soft-Edged: lacking a definite boundary.

Solvents: substances usually liquid, which dissolve a given paint binder.

Stencil: a printing process in which pigment passes through a mask onto a support.

Substitutes: in sculpture, replacing one substance with another. In casting, hot liquid metal is substituted for melted wax.

Subtractive Color: sensation of color created by reflection of light off of a surface.

Subtractive: a sculptural process in which material is removed.

Support: the surface on which an artwork is created.

Symmetric: shapes reflected equally about an axis.

Technological Change: notable shifts in available technology and science that play a part in the shift of culture and determine the availability of new artistic media.

Texture: the tactile quality of a surface.

Three-Point Perspective: a system of perspective that uses a third point above or below the horizon line to indicate the recession of space above the viewer.

Time Arts: the use of change as an element in art, usually performance art, kinetic art, or video.

Tughra: Islamic calligraphic device designating a high status individual.

Two-Point Perspective: a system of perspective that uses two points on the horizon to indicate the recession of space on either side of the viewer.

Undercut: in sculpture, an overhang created by removing material from underneath an object without detaching it from the base or support.

Value: in visual art, the characteristic of lightness or darkness of a color, ranging from near-white to black.

Vanishing Point: the point on the horizon where orthogonals meet, representing the viewer's vision extended infinitely in one direction.

Vector: the characteristic of having direction.

Video: moving images recorded and projected or displayed on a monitor.

Visible Light: the portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that can be seen by the human eye.

Volume: a bounded three dimensional area.

Warm Color: a color that tends toward red/orange in hue. A warm color can be any color that tends toward red/orange when compared to another color. For example, ultramarine is a warm blue when compared to cobalt blue.

Watercolor: a water soluble painting medium that uses gum arabic as binder.

Willow/Vine Charcoal: a drawing medium made from burned willow twigs, and used primarily for initial layout of paintings as it does not adhere well to drawing surfaces.

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1.S: What is Art? (Summary)

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.

Glossary

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

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?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: The Visual Elements and Design Principles

Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe the functions of the visual elements.
- Define and describe the artistic elements: line, shape, contrast, form, volume, mass, texture, value, space, color, time and motion.
- Use the visual elements to describe images.Explain how the visual elements are used in art historical images.
- Compare and contrast artworks using the visual elements.

2.1: Art Forms and Media (Overview)
2.2: Form and Composition
2.3: Visual Elements
2.4: Before You Move On (Visual Elements and Design Principles)

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2.1: Art Forms and Media (Overview)

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.

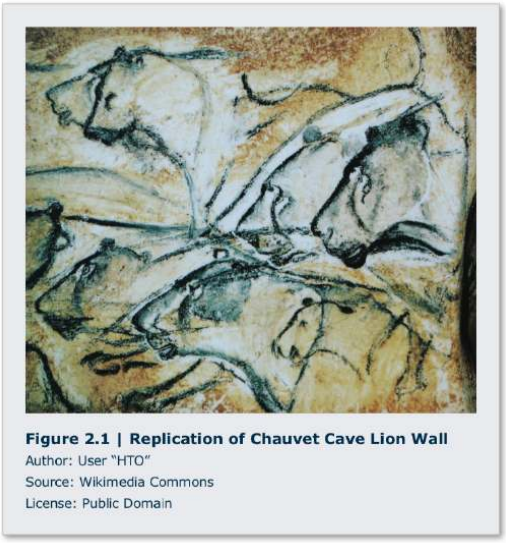


Figure 2.1 | Replication of Chauvet Cave Lion Wall
Author: User "HTO"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Figure 2.1 | Replication of Chauvet Cave Lion Wall. Author: User "HTO" Source: Wikimedia Commons License: Public Domain

2.3.1 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.

2.3.1.1 Drawing

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

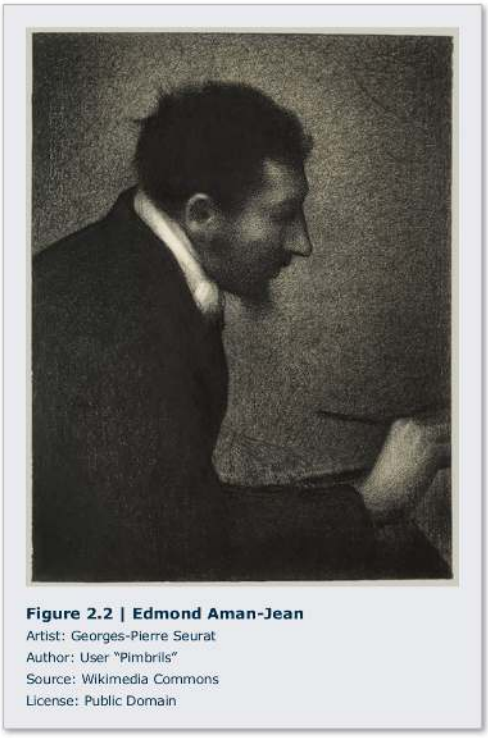


Figure 2.2 | Edmond Aman-Jean
Artist: Georges-Pierre Seurat
Author: User "Pimbrils"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Figure 2.2 | Edmond Aman-Jean

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 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.



Figure 2.3 | Head of a Girl
Artist: Leonardo da Vinci
Source: Wikiart
License: Public Domain

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 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 in- vented 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: ketorg.cdn.ket.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/curri- er-ep-onions1100px.jpg)



Figure 2.6 | *Spring Dawn Over the Elixir Terrace*
Artist: Lu Guang
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

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, gall- nuts, 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

2.3.1.2 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.



Figure 2.8 | Detail of the eyes of *Mona Lisa*
Artist: Leonardo da Vinci
Author: User "Cantus"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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 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.



Figure 2.9 | *The Sponge Diver*
Artist: Winslow Homer
Author: User "Botaurus"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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 vibrant 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)



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

Fresco is the process of painting onto plaster; it is a long-lasting tech- nique. 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 paint- ing 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)



Figure 2.12 | Nebamun Tomb Fresco Dancers and Musicians
Author: User "Fordmadoxfraud"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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



Figure 2.13 | *The Birth of Venus*
Artist: Sandro Botticelli
Author: User "Dcoetzee"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

2.3.1.3 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 art- work 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. (Fig- ure 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.



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

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 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 wet- ted. 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 surfaceto 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
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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 printing plate on a mechanical press. Each print is nearly identical, and editions can run into the thousands or tens ofthousands. (Figure 2.18)



Figure 2.18 | Offset Press
Author: User "Rémih"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

The value of an individual print de- pends on a number of factors, includ- ing 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.

2.3.2 Three-Dimensional Art

Three-dimensional art goes beyond the flat sur- face 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 combina- tion 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.



Figure 2.19 | Common Roman Coins
Creator: Rasiel Suarez
Author: User "FSII"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: GFDL

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 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: media.mutualart.com/Images/2 009_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.

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Modeling is an **additive** process in which easily shaped materials like clay or plaster are built up to create a final form. Some modeled forms begin with an **armature**, or rigid inner support often made of wire. An ar- mature 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.



Figure 2.20 | Egyptian Relief Carving
Author: User "GDK"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 2.21 | Lapith fighting a centaur
Author: User "Jastrow"
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

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 main concern in carving, aside from achieving the correct form, is to be careful not to chip away too much material, as it cannot be replaced once it has been removed. (Figure 2.24) It is possible that the final shape of some carved stone sculptures result 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 suit- able 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



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

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 re- moved 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.



Figure 2.28 | *Seated Buddha*
Artist: Jōchō
Author: User "Kosigrim"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Assembly, or assemblage, is a fairly recent type of sculpture. Before the modern period, carving, 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

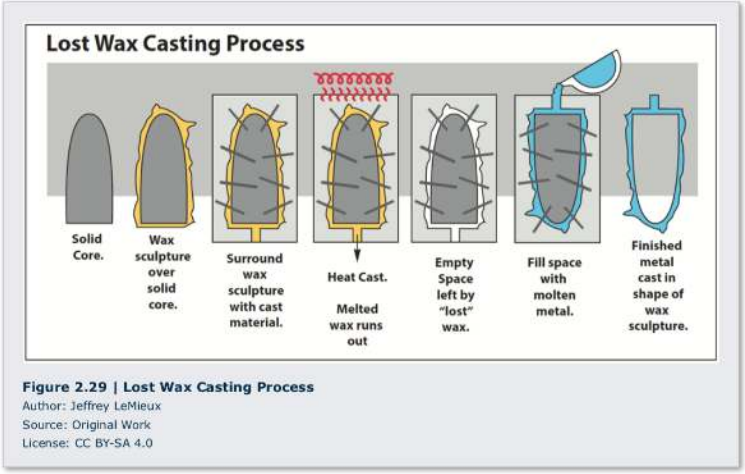


Figure 2.29 | Lost Wax Casting Process
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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museums worldwide, he wanted to encourage visitors to use the practical, though unconventional, means of transport, and, while doing so, to experience the momentary 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: 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.



Figure 2.31 | *Test Site*
Artist: Carsten Höller
Author: User "The Lud"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

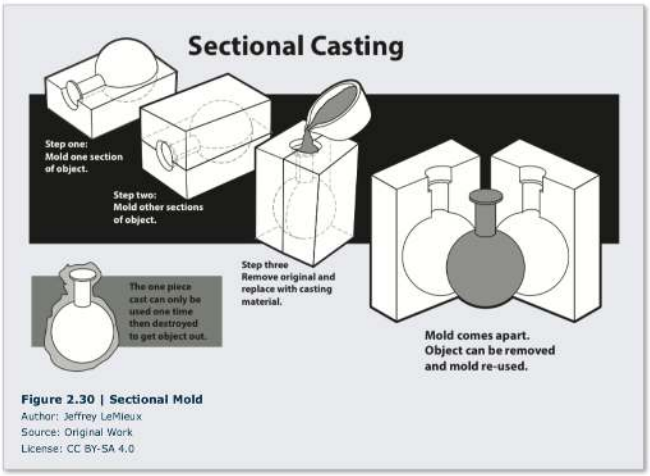


Figure 2.30 | Sectional Mold
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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Kinetic art is art that moves or appears to move. Generally this art is sculptural. Good examples of kinetic artworks are the suspended, freely moving **mobiles** of Alexander 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)



Figure 2.32 | *Spiral Jetty*
Artist: Robert Smithson
Author: User "Yonidebest"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.0

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 fire department stepped in and stopped the process. (*Homage to New York*, Jean Tinguely: http://www.wikiart.org/en/jean-tingu...-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

2.3.3 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/356x....-TV-Cello.jpg) When a bow was drawn across this object, images of a woman playing a cello appeared on the screens.

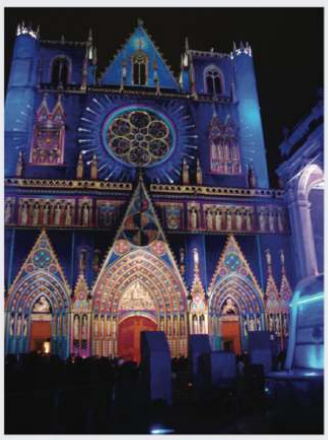


Figure 2.34 | *Cathédrale St Jean illuminée*
Author: User "Gonedelyon"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: User "Gonedelyon"

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: 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.

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2.2: 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**.

2.4.1 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.

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.

2.4.1.1 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 sig- nature of a sultan, and the re- fined 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)

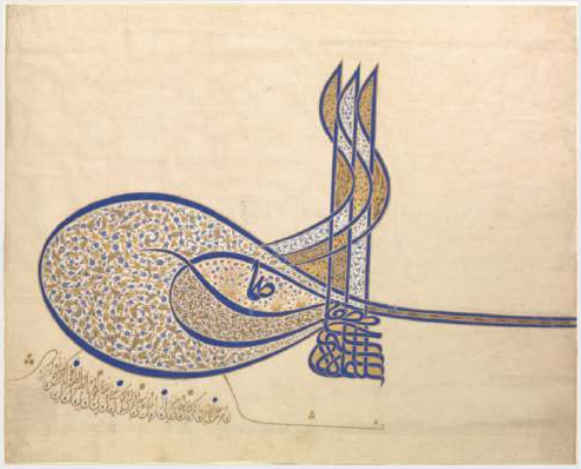


Figure 2.35 | Tughra (Official Signature) of Sultan Süleiman the Magnificent
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

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 Jack- son Pollock in the midst of painting. (Jackson Pollock: 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 thing for those who depend on it not to give way. A rigid tree in a windstorm will sometimes be uprooted.



Figure 2.36 | Nude Male Figure with a Sword
Artist: Alexandre Cabanel
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

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 map making, 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).

Crosshatching is the use of uniformly spaced intersecting lines that create the perception of value 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 im- plied 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 actual- ly 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 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). 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(opens in new window).

2.4.1.2 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).

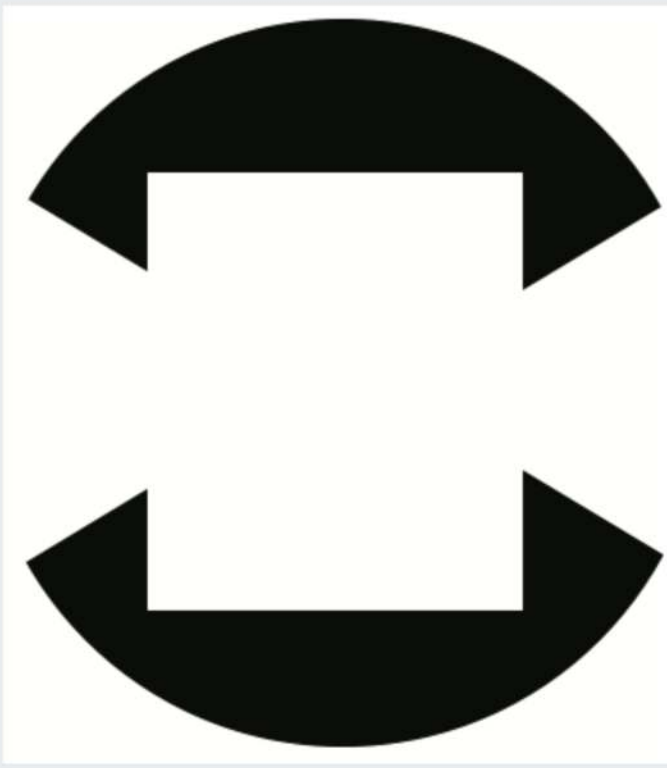


Figure 2.37 | Square inside a circle, demonstration of implied lines
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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2.4.1.3 Mass/Volume

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: upload.wikimedia.org/wikiped..._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.

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)

2.4.1.4 Perspective

Perspective in art is the illusion of space on a flat surface. Before the discovery of the geo- metric 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



Figure 2.38 | Untitled (Collage with Squares Arranged according to the Laws of Chance)
Artist: Jean Hans Arp
Source: MoMA
License: Public Domain

are height, scale, and over-lap. 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)



Figure 2.39 | Sphinx of Hatshepsut
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

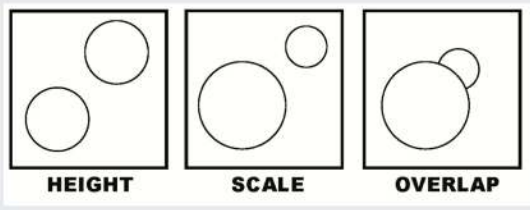


Figure 2.40 | Height, Scale, and Overlap
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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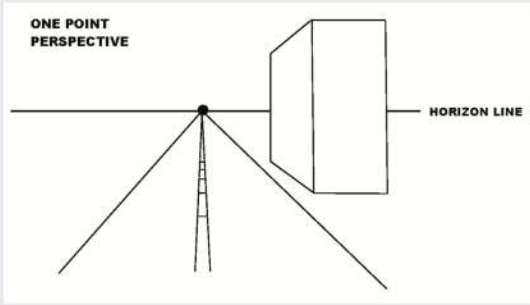


Figure 2.41 | Height, Scale, and Overlap
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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Linear perspective is based on the regular geometric recession of space. Linear perspective uses a vanishing point and horizon line. The **vanishing point** is the 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 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

depicted, such as a railway track disappearing into the distance directly in front of the spectator. **Two-point perspective** uses a horizon line and two separated vanishing points to present the illusion of a space that recedes in two directions. (Figure 2.44) **Three-point perspective** incorporates the recession of space in a third, vertical direction above or below the horizon line as well as the two horizontal directions in two-point perspective. As tall buildings recede upward from street level, they also diminish in apparent size in the same way railroad tracks appear to converge in the distance toward the horizon. (Figure 2.45)



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

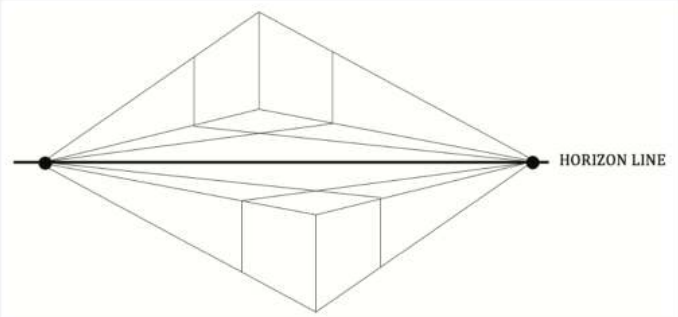


Figure 2.44 | Two-Point Perspective
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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Many people make the mistake of thinking that lin- ear perspective gives a completely accurate picture of the world. It does not. Linear perspective is a limited tool for representing how the world looks. It is considered sufficiently "accurate" only within a limited "cone of perception" of about 60 degrees. So while linear perspective is an excellent tool to represent our experience of space, it has limitations that should be recognized.



Figure 2.45 | *New York Daily News Building*
Artist: Hugh Ferriss
Author: Dover Publications
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: OASC

Atmospheric perspective is the way in which the illusion of distance is created on a flat surface through the use of color and focus. In a landscape that extends into the distance, the haze of the intervening air alters the colors and clarity of objects. The further away an object is from the viewer, the more it approaches the color of air, which is a light blue-gray tone. Dark objects become lighter and more blue as they recede from the viewer. Additionally, the contrast between light and dark colored objects and the perception of detail decrease with in- creasing distance. Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902, Germany, lived USA) used this effect in his painting *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* to give a sense of monumental space. (Figure 2.46)

2.4.1.5 Texture

The term **texture** describes the surface quality of an artwork. Texture is an important element of design because it engages the sense of touch as well as vision. Objects can be rough or smooth, wet or dry, sticky or slick, hard or soft, brittle or flexible. The two main approaches to texture are *actual* texture and *implied* or simulated texture. **Actual texture** is primarily—though not exclusively—sculptural, while **implied texture** is primarily used in two-dimensional works of art.

The painters of the Northern Renaissance and the Dutch Golden Age, the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, were very interested in the simulation of a wide variety of textures. One main goal of artists from those periods was to excel at telling the truth about the material world. They worked to capture the full visual range of the sense of touch. Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669, Netherlands) is well known for his use of **impasto**, or very thick application of paint, in order to heighten the sense of reality in many of his paintings by adding actual texture. This can be seen in his handling of flesh on some of his self-portraits, as well as his rendering of metal and jewelry in his painting of *Belshazzar's Feast*. (Figure 2.47)



Figure 2.46 | *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*
Artist: Albert Bierstadt
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

2.4.1.6 Color

Color is the most prominent element of design and is one of the most powerful and yet subjective elements in art. The nineteenth-century American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson noted this subjective quality of color when he wrote, "nature always wears the col- ors of the spirit."1 Ideas about color can be grouped into three broad categories: the histo- ry of color, physics of color, and perception of color.

The earliest use of color was limited to what kinds of pigments or coloring agents could be found in the local environment: ochres (yellow-browns) from various colors of earth, blacks and grays from ashes and burned wood or charcoal, reds and yellows from minerals, plants, and insects. Paleolithic cave paint- ers used these materials for their murals. In addition to natural pigments, ancient Egyptians formulated synthetic pigments such as powdered glass to create Egyptian blue, a distinctive hue used on statues, walls, and monuments. In the Roman Empire, a rare form of purple was extracted from a particular kind of snail and, because of its rarity, was used primarily for royal garments. During the Renaissance, a deep blue was made from a finely ground gemstone, lapis lazuli.



Figure 2.47 | *Belshazzar's Feast*
Artist: Rembrandt van Rijn
Source: Wikiart
License: Public Domain

Egyptians associated colors with the gods; the god Amon had blue skin, and Osiris had green. The ancient Greeks took a more scientific approach to color. The ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles thought that color fell into four categories: white/light, dark/black, yellow, and red. The ancient Chinese associated color with the five elements taught in traditional physics: water (black), metal (white), wood (green), earth (yellow), and fire (red). In a number of Asian traditions, black is the col- or of heaven and white is the color of death or mourning. In western culture the opposite is the case.

Modern ideas about color were greatly refined beginning in the fifteenth century by architect and art theorist Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472, Italy). In his treatise *Della pittura* (*On Paint- ing*), published in 1435, Alberti stated:

> *Through the mixing of colors infinite other hues are born, but there are only four true col- ors from which more and more other kinds of colors may be thus created. Red is the color of fire, blue of the air, green of the water, and grey of the earth . . . white and black are not true colors but are alterations of other colors.*[2]

1. *C. A. Bartol, Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Discourse in West Church (Boston, Mass: A. Williams & Co., 1882), 14.*
2. *Leon Battista Alberti, On Painting, trans. John R. Spencer (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1956), 49-50.*

From this early framework, others made further discoveries.

The term “color” describes the sensation caused by variations in the wavelength and intensity of light as it interacts with the human eye. **Visible light** is the small portion of the **electromagnetic spectrum** that can be seen by humans. When the white light of the sun is passed through a prism, it is **refracted** into the colors of the rainbow from red through orange, yellow, green, and blue to violet. (Figure 2.48)

Color as perceived by humans can be bro- ken into three discrete parts: hue, saturation, and brightness. (Figure 2.49) **Hue** is the wave- length of a given color. Longer wavelength col- ors appear on the red end of the spectrum, while shorter wavelength colors are on the violet end. Hue is the color “name,” e.g., red, yellow, blue, green, etc. Color can be either subtractive or additive. **Saturation** is the purity of a color and ranges from a neutral gray to the pure color while holding brightness as a constant. **Brightness** is the lightness or darkness of a color and ranges from fully illuminated (the pure hue) to fully darkened (black). Each pure hue also has a relative brightness, for example, pure yellow has a greater brightness than pure blue.

Subtractive color, or reflective color, occurs when white light is reflected off a surface, and all the colors of the spectrum are absorbed by that surface except for the color that is reflected back to the viewer. Subtractive color mixing starts with the **primary colors** of red, yellow, and blue. When these colors are mixed, the **secondary colors** of green, orange, and purple, are created. Mixing yellow and blue makes green, mixing red and yellow makes orange, and mixing red and blue makes purple.

The English mathematician and physicist Sir Isaac Newton demonstrated in the seventeenth century that white light, when refracted through a prism, could be separated into the visible spectrum. In the nineteenth century, writer and statesmen Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and chemist Michel Eugène Chevruel separately published research that concluded that red, yellow, and blue were primary colors and that all other colors could be mixed from them. At the beginning of the twentieth century, industrial chemists further refined the understanding of printing inks and derived the CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) subtractive color model: beginning with white, as one adds color, the mixture moves toward black. (Figure 2.50)



Figure 2.48 | Prism
Author: User "D-Kuru"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

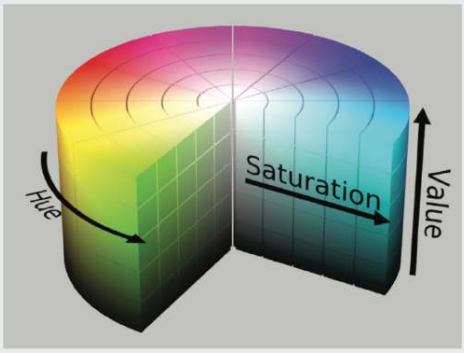


Figure 2.49 | HSV Color Model
Author: User "SharkD"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

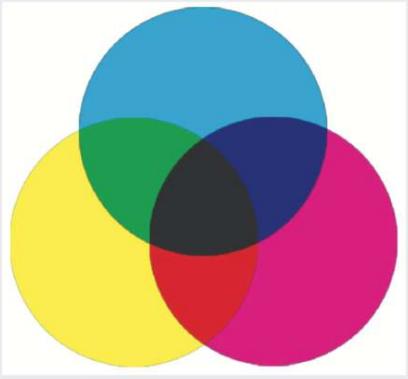


Figure 2.50 | Subtractive Color Mixing
Author: User "Ntozis"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

With the advent of television, computers and digital imaging, the additive model of RGB (red, green, blue) in which colors are added together and the HSB (hue, saturation, and brightness) color system, based on human perception, have become industry standards. **Additive color**, or transmission color, occurs when light of different colors is projected. The primary hues of additive color are red, green,and blue. This is the RGB color model. (Figure 2.51) When red and green lights overlap, yellow is seen. When red and blue lights overlap, magenta is seen, and when green and blue lights overlap, cyan appears. These are the secondary hues of additive color. When red, green, and blue lights all overlap, white light is seen. Tele- vision screens are actually tiny dots, or pixels, of red, green, and blue glowing lights. The colors we see coming off those screens are additive.

Our RGB model of additive color is directly dependent on how human eyes function. The human retina is a sheet of neurons that coats the inside of the eye. Within this sheet of neurons, there are specialized neurons called rods and cones. Rods are neurons that are sensitive to changes in light intensity, and cones are sensitive to red, green, or blue light. The reason we have RGB computer monitors is because we have RGB eyes.

Artists sometimes intentionally exploit the physiology of human vision. Because human vision is limited by unique biology, certain effects become possible. Neurons store chemical neurotransmitters to send signals. If a neuron must continually "fire" because it is being continuously stimulated, it can deplete its supply of neurotransmitter. There is a slight delay between the depletion and restoration of this chemical supply within the neuron. In the interim, an **afterimage** occurs. Look at the green, orange, and black flag for 10 seconds, then look at a blank wall or empty white space. (Figure 2.52) For a few moments, you will see the **complement**, or opposite, of green (red), the complement of orange (blue), and the complement of black (white) in their correct place on the American flag. The fading of this image indicates that the neurotransmitters in the retina have been replenished.

This effect was regularly used by artists during the Impressionist movement (c. 1870-1886). Consider *Impression Sunrise* by Claude Monet (1840-1926, France), one of the first Impressionist paintings. (Figure 2.53) Looking for more than a moment at the



Figure 2.52 | U.S. Flag with Inverted Color
Author: User "Mike"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

expanse of blue in the painting "exhausts" the sensation of blue and creates a complementary afterimage response, which is orange. Then when we look at the orange of the rising sun, we see not only the orange pigment on the painting itself, we also have the additional effect of "tired blue" in our retina. For this reason, the orange paint of the sun looks brighter than it would if we saw that color by itself. Many Impressionist artists intentionally used this effect, and this is one reason why Impressionist paintings tend to look so vibrantly colored.

In his *Homage to the Square* series of paintings that he began in 1949, the Bauhaus artist Josef Albers (1888-1967, Germany, lived USA) experimented with the relative perception of color. (*Homage to the Square*, Josef Albers: upload.wikimedia.org/wikiped...0/Josef_Albers's_ painting_'Homage_to_the_Square'%2C_1965.jpg) His main interest was to demonstrate how a color can be affected by other colors that surround it. His book, Interaction of Color (1963), showed that perception of a single color can change depending on context. To demonstrate this, look at the accompanying image. (Figure 2.54) The band of gray in the center is one single color, but it appears to shift when placed on a contrasting background.

Contemporary artists employ specific terms for different uses of color. Natural, or **local color**, describes the body color of a given object. **Observed color**, on the other hand, is how the perception of that local color changes as light shifts on an object. In Monet's series of paintings of the Rouen Cathedral, his depictions of different lighting conditions are a good example of the difference between local color and observed color. The color of the stone of the Cathedral is a medium gray. But at different times of day, such as the waning light of sunset, it will reflect the oranges and blues of the lingering sun and the growing shadows. (Figure 2.55)



Figure 2.55 | *Rouen Cathedral, Facade (Sunset)*
Artist: Claude Monet
Author: User "RIbberlin"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

The Fauves were a group of artists in the early twentieth century who used **intuitive color** as the basis of their approach to making art. They were more interested in the expressive power of color than robotically reporting the local or observed color of their subjects. Consider this portrait by Henri Matisse (1869-1954, France) of his wife, Amélie Matisse. (Figure 2.56) Clearly she did not in reality have a green stripe running down the center of her face. The colors chosen by the artist were meant to express something other than simple visual observation.



Figure 2.56 | *Portrait of Madame Matisse (The green line)*
Artist: Henri Matisse
Author: User "Sparkit"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Another aspect of color used by artists is **color temperature**. Colors can be either warm or cool. The **warm** end of the spectrum includes red, orange, and yellow. The **cool** end of the visible spectrum contains green, blue, and purple. That said, even yellow can be cool, and even blue can be warm. Warm and cool colors interact in different ways and artists are trained to notice and use this difference; for example, warm colors seem to "advance" while cool colors "recede" in space and consequently shapes represented in those colors appear to be at different depths.

In organizing ideas about color, artists and art theorists have evolved a series of color schemes, or ordered relations between different colors. A

monochromatic color scheme uses a single color. *The Old Guitarist* by Picasso is a good example of a monochromatic color scheme. (Figure 2.57) The pose of the figure, the texture of the ragged clothing and hair, and the dominating use of blue work together to create a unified emotional response of weariness and loneliness to the image.

A **complementary** color scheme uses colors opposite to each other on the color wheel. As mentioned earlier, Impressionist painters exploited the effect of complementary color schemes to heighten the brilliance of their color palettes. While not an Impressionist, in his painting *The Starry Night*, Van Gogh (1853-1890, Netherlands, lived France) uses the blue of the night sky to charge the orange of his crescent moon. (Figure 2.58)

An **analogous** color scheme uses only one area of the color wheel. If the color green is chosen as the anchor color for the scheme, for example, the artist will use colors that occur between the yellow and blue points on the wheel. *Still Life with a Glass and Oysters* by Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1684, Netherlands, lived Belgium) is a good example of an orange/yellow/green analogous scheme. (Figure 2.59*)* There are many other color schemes that are used for various applications, but these three suffice to illustrate the idea.



Figure 2.57 | *The Old Guitarist*
Artist: Pablo Picasso
Author: User "Chimino"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 2.58 | *Starry Night*
Artist: Vincent van Gogh
Author: User "Dcoetzee"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

2.4.2 Principles of Design

The elements of design are the visual components that artists use to make artworks. The principles of design are the various ways in which those elements or components are arranged to produce a desired effect. There are as many ways to approach the arrangement of the elements of art as there are artists. Each work of art is unique in its conception, design, and execution. Recent developments in the visual arts have introduced accidental and irrational approaches to art making. In these approaches, the outcome of the work of art is not planned. While these works of art may be said to lack conscious design, sometimes they are successful. It is often possible to attribute the success of irrationally or accidentally produced works of art to one or more operating principles of organization. Becoming aware of the principles of design in a work of art allows the viewer to add depth to the analysis of those works. What follows are five principles of design. The list is not exhaustive but is a good place to start.



Figure 2.59 | *Still Life with a Glass and Oysters*
Artist: Jan Davidszoon de Heem
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

2.4.2.1 Unity/Variety

Unity is found in similarity, while variety is found in difference. A design that shows **unity** is one in which the elements of the work or relations between the elements are similar or identical. Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* (see Figure 2.7) is considered a breakthrough in Italian Renaissance art because the soft edges of the figure are similar in approach to the soft tones of the muted background, thus unifying the image. A design that shows **variety** is one in which the elements of the work are varied in size, color, shape, or some other attribute. One concern with the overuse of unity in design is visual monotony. Visual unity may occur on a **conceptual** level as well as a physical one. Elements that are chosen based on a theme can display conceptual unity and yet display a variety of form.

A work of art that lacks variety may be monotonous and lack interest. Many artists introduce variety into their compositions by making sure that no two intervals are the same. An **interval** is the space between elements, figures, or objects in a work of art.



Figure 2.60 | *Pietà*
Artist: Michelangelo
Author: User "Juan M Romero"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 4.0

The design principle of **scale** and **proportion** is the issue of size of elements both individually and in relation to other elements. A famous example of the subtle use of scale is the relative size of the figures in Michelangelo's *Piet*à. (Figure 2.60) The sculpture is a depiction of Mary hold- ing the body of her son Jesus after His crucifixion. If we measure the bodies of Jesus and Mary from heel to knee, knee to hip, and so on, and then compare them, we find that Mary is larger than Jesus. In addition, the figure of Mary is out of proportion, that is, the sizes of the parts of her body are not in alignment. This unusual use of scale and proportion serves to infantilize Jesus in order to subtly emphasize the mother/child relationship. Another use of scale and proportion is the use of forced perspective. (Figure 2.61) **Forced perspective** is the arrangement of figure and ground that distorts the scale of objects, making small objects appear large or large objects appear small by juxtaposing them with opposites. Forced perspective is most convincing when done photographically.

2.4.2.3 Balance

The design principle of **balance** is the issue of visual "weight." Design elements like lines and shapes can attract our attention in a number of ways. For example, they can be brightly colored, they can be large in relation to other similar shapes, or they can be textured in unusual ways. Compositional balance is achieved when these competing visual weights are roughly equivalent. There are two kinds of compositional balance: symmetrical and asymmetrical**.**

The lines and shapes in a composition that uses the principle of **symmetrical** balance are usually equally arranged around an **axis**, or central line. In *The Sacrament of the Last Supper* by Salvador Dali (1904-1989, Spain), notice the balance of like forms to the left and right of the central figure of Jesus. (*The Sacrament of the Last Supper*, Salvador Dali: upload. wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/f/f1/ Dali_-_The_Sacrament_of_the_Last_ Supper_-_lowres.jpg) Vertical and horizontal axes are generally reserved for very stable compositions, and this strategy is often used in a religious context to imply unchanging truth.



Figure 2.62 | *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*
Artist: Katsushika Hokusai
Author: User "Durova"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Asymmetrical balance is achieved when visual weights do not correspond to one an- other in shape, size, or placement; they are not distributed equally in a composition. The woodblock print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849, Japan) and Still Life with Apples and a Pot of Primroses by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906, France) are good examples of asymmetrical compositions. The large space to the right of the Hokusai's Great Wave "offsets" the approaching wave in the left half of the composition. (Figure 2.62) In a similar way, the large gray wall to the left in Cézanne's *Still Life with Apples* serves to offset the visually complex flowerpot on the right. (Figure 2.63) In each work, nearly one third of the composition (the sky and the wall) is unoccupied, so to speak; there are no objects in those areas. Within the two-dimensional space of the work, however, we "read" each blank area as having a visual weight that counterbalances the forms in the remainder of the compositional space.

It is not always necessary for an artwork to be balanced. An obvious imbalance can produce the effect of unsteadiness, disorientation or distress, which can become a useful part of the larger idea within the work of art. The large empty spaces in the painting by Odd Nerdrum (b. 1944, Norway) carry substantial visual weight and imply both physical and psychological isolation.

(*Man and Abandoned Landscape*, Odd Nerdrum: s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/27/a3/3b/27a33b6c5d3c9e087d20f7cb3c34296a.jpg)

2.4.2.4 Emphasis/Movement

The design principle of emphasis or movement is the intentional use of directional forces to move the viewer's attention through a work of art. When we see a color shift within a shape, this implies movement. And, when we see a line in a work of art, we are compelled to follow it. For example, arrows of any shape will signify direction and are widely used in advertising to attract and direct the attention of potential customers.

There are more subtle means of moving a viewer's attention through a work of art. *Descent from the Cross* by Rogier van der Weyden (1404-1464, Belgium) uses the positions of the figures' arms, legs, and heads to trace the infinity symbol, which resembles the number 8 laying on its side. (Figure 2.64) This subtle reminder of Christ's everlasting life is meant to reassure and give hope to the faithful gazing upon this scene of death and grieving.

2.4.2.5 Rhythm/Repetition

The design principle of **rhythm** is the repetition of visual elements to establish a pattern. This pattern can then be used to provide a stage for a special object, or the pattern can be interrupted to direct attention to the change. In his commentary of mass consumer culture, Andy Warhol's use of repetition compels us to notice the small differences between the apparently identical elements of his installation of paintings, *32 Campbell's Soup Cans*. (Figure 2.65)



Figure 2.65 | *Campbell's Soup Cans*
Artist: Andy Warhol
Author: User "Gorup de Besanez"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 4.0

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2.3: Visual Elements

Line

A line is defined as a mark that connects the space between two points, taking any form along the way.

Learning Objectives

Compare and contrast different uses of line in art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- *Actual lines* are lines that are physically present, existing as solid connections between one or more points.
- *Implied line* refers to the path that the viewer ‘s eye takes as it follows shapes, colors, and forms along any given path.
- S*traight* or *classic* lines provide stability and structure to a composition and can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal on a work’s surface.
- *Expressive lines* refer to curved marks that increase the sense of dynamism of a work of art.
- The *outline* or *contour* lines create a border or path around the edge of a shape, thereby outlining and defining it. “Cross contour lines” delineate differences in the features of a surface.
- *Hatch lines* are a series of short lines repeated in intervals, typically in a single direction, and are used to add shading and texture to surfaces, while *cross-hatch lines* provide additional texture and tone to the image surface and can be oriented in any direction.

Key Terms

- **texture**:The feel or shape of a surface or substance; the smoothness, roughness, softness, etc. of something.
- **cross-hatching**:A method of showing shading by means of multiple small lines that intersect.
- **line**:A path through two or more points.

The line is an essential element of art, defined as a mark that connects the space between two points, taking any form along the way. Lines are used most often to define shape in two-dimensional works and could be called the most ancient, as well as the most universal, forms of mark making.

There are many different types of lines, all characterized by their lengths being greater than their width, as well as by the paths that they take. Depending on how they are used, lines help to determine the motion, direction, and energy of a work of art. The quality of a line refers to the character that is presented by a line in order to animate a surface to varying degrees.

Actual lines are lines that are physically present, existing as solid connections between one or more points, while *implied lines* refer to the path that the viewer’s eye takes as it follows shape, color, and form within an art work. *Implied lines* give works of art a sense of motion and keep the viewer engaged in a composition. We can see numerous implied lines in Jacques-Louis David’s *Oath of the Horatii*, connecting the figures and actions of the piece by leading the eye of the viewer through the unfolding drama.



Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784: Many implied lines connect the figures and action of the piece by leading the eye of the viewer through the unfolding drama.

Straight or *classic* lines add stability and structure to a composition and can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal on the surface of the work. *Expressive lines* refer to curved marks that increase the sense of dynamism of a work of art. These types of lines often follow an undetermined path of sinuous curves. The *outline* or *contour* lines create a border or path around the edge of a shape, thereby outlining and defining it. *Cross contour lines* delineate differences in the features of a surface and can give the illusion of three dimensions or a sense of form or shading.

Hatch lines are a series of short lines repeated in intervals, typically in a single direction, and are used to add shading and texture to surfaces. *Cross-hatch lines* provide additional texture and tone to the image surface and can be oriented in any direction. Layers of cross-hatching can add rich texture and volume to image surfaces.

Light and Value

Value refers to the use of light and dark in art.

Learning Objectives

Explain the artistic use of light and dark (also known as “value”)

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- In painting, value changes are achieved by adding black or white to a color.
- Value in art is also sometimes referred to as ” tint ” for light hues and “shade” for dark hues.
- Values near the lighter end of the spectrum are termed “high-keyed” while those on the darker end are called “low-keyed.”
- In two-dimensional art works, the use of value can help to give a shape the illusion of mass or volume .
- Chiaroscuro was a common technique in Baroque painting and refers to clear tonal contrasts exemplified by very high-keyed whites, placed directly against very low-keyed darks.

Key Terms

- **chiaroscuro**:An artistic technique popularized during the Renaissance, referring to the use of exaggerated light contrasts in order to create the illusion of volume.

The use of light and dark in art is called value. Value can be subdivided into tint (light hues) and shade (dark hues). In painting, which uses subtractive color, value changes are achieved by adding black or white to a color. Artists may also employ shading, which refers to a more subtle manipulation of value. The value scale is used to show the standard variations in tones . Values near the lighter end of the spectrum are termed high-keyed, while those on the darker end are low-keyed.



Value scale: The value scale represents different degrees of light used in artwork.

In two-dimensional artworks, the use of value can help to give a shape the illusion of mass or volume. It will also give the entire composition a sense of lighting. High contrast refers to the placing of lighter areas directly against much darker ones, so their difference is showcased, creating a dramatic effect. High contrast also refers to the presence of more blacks than white or grey. Low-contrast images result from placing mid-range values together so there is not much visible difference between them, creating a more subtle mood.

In Baroque painting, the technique of chiaroscuro was used to produce highly dramatic effects in art. Chiaroscuro, which means literally “light-dark” in Italian, refers to clear tonal contrasts exemplified by very high-keyed whites, placed directly against very low-keyed darks. Candlelit scenes were common in Baroque painting as they effectively produced this dramatic type of effect. Caravaggio used a high contrast palette in such works as *The Denial of St. Peter* to create his expressive chiaroscuro scene.



Caravaggio, *The Denial of St. Peter*, 1610: Caravaggio’s *The Denial of St. Peter* is an excellent example of how light can be manipulated in artwork.

Color

In the visual arts, color theory is a body of practical guidance to color mixing and the visual impacts of specific color combinations.

Learning Objectives

Express the most important elements of color theory and artists’ use of color

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Color theory first appeared in the 17th century, when Isaac Newton discovered that white light could be passed through a prism and divided into the full spectrum of colors.
- The spectrum of colors contained in white light are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo , and violet.
- Color theory divides color into the ” primary colors ” of red, yellow, and blue, which cannot be mixed from other pigments, and the “secondary colors” of green, orange, and violet, which result from different combinations of the primary colors.
- Primary and secondary colors are combined in various mixtures to create tertiary colors.
- Complementary colors are found opposite each other on the color wheel and represent the strongest contrast for those particular two colors.

Key Terms

- **complementary color**:A color which is regarded as the opposite of another on the color wheel (i.e., red and green, yellow and purple, and orange and blue).
- **value**:The relative darkness or lightness of a color in a specific area of a painting or other visual art.
- **primary color**:Any of three colors which, when added to or subtracted from others in different amounts, can generate all other colors.
- **tint**:A color considered with reference to other very similar colors. Red and blue are different colors, but two shades of scarlet are different tints.
- **gradation**:A passing by small degrees from one tone or shade, as of color, to another.
- **hue**:A color, or shade of color.

Color is a fundamental artistic element which refers to the use of hue in art and design. It is the most complex of the elements because of the wide array of combinations inherent to it. Color theory first appeared in the 17th century when Isaac Newton discovered that white light could be passed through a prism and divided into the full spectrum of colors. The spectrum of colors contained in white light are, in order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

Color theory subdivides color into the “primary colors” of red, yellow, and blue, which cannot be mixed from other pigments; and the “secondary colors” of green, orange and violet, which result from different combinations of the primary colors. Primary and secondary colors are combined in various mixtures to create “tertiary colors.” Color theory is centered around the color wheel, a diagram that shows the relationship of the various colors to each other .



Color wheel: The color wheel is a diagram that shows the relationship of the various colors to each other.

Color ” value ” refers to the relative lightness or darkness of a color. In addition, “tint” and “shade” are important aspects of color theory and result from lighter and darker variations in value, respectively. “Tone” refers to the gradation or subtle changes of a color on a lighter or darker scale. “Saturation” refers to the intensity of a color.

Additive and Subtractive Color

Additive color is color created by mixing red, green, and blue lights. Television screens, for example, use additive color as they are made up of the primary colors of red, blue and green (RGB). Subtractive color, or “process color,” works as the reverse of additive color and the primary colors become cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK). Common applications of subtractive color can be found in printing and photography.

Complementary Color

Complementary colors can be found directly opposite each other on the color wheel (purple and yellow, green and red, orange and blue). When placed next to each other, these pairs create the strongest contrast for those particular two colors.

Warm and Cool Color

The distinction between warm and cool colors has been important since at least the late 18th century. The contrast, as traced by etymologies in the Oxford English Dictionary, seems related to the observed contrast in landscape light, between the “warm” colors associated with daylight or sunset and the “cool” colors associated with a gray or overcast day. Warm colors are the hues from red through yellow, browns and tans included. Cool colors, on the other hand, are the hues from blue green through blue violet, with

most grays included. Color theory has described perceptual and psychological effects to this contrast. Warm colors are said to advance or appear more active in a painting, while cool colors tend to recede. Used in interior design or fashion, warm colors are said to arouse or stimulate the viewer , while cool colors calm and relax.

Texture

Texture refers to the tactile quality of the surface of an art object.

Learning Objectives

Recognize the use of texture in art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Visual texture refers to an implied sense of texture that the artist creates through the use of various artistic elements such as line , shading, and color.
- Actual texture refers to the physical rendering or the real surface qualities we can notice by touching an object.
- Visible brushstrokes and different amounts of paint will create a physical texture that can add to the expressiveness of a painting and draw attention to specific areas within it.
- It is possible for an artwork to contain numerous visual textures but still remain smooth to the touch.

Key Terms

- **tactile**:Tangible; perceptible to the sense of touch.

Texture

Texture in art stimulates the senses of sight and touch and refers to the tactile quality of the surface of the art. It is based on the perceived texture of the canvas or surface, which includes the application of the paint. In the context of artwork, there are two types of texture: visual and actual. Visual texture refers to an implied sense of texture that the artist creates through the use of various artistic elements such as line, shading and color. Actual texture refers to the physical rendering or the real surface qualities we can notice by touching an object, such as paint application or three-dimensional art.

It is possible for an artwork to contain numerous visual textures, yet still remain smooth to the touch. Take for example Realist or Illusionist works, which rely on the heavy use of paint and varnish, yet maintain an utterly smooth surface. In Jan Van Eyck’s painting “The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin” we can notice a great deal of texture in the clothing and robes especially, while the surface of the work remains very smooth .



Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin*, 1435: *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin* has a great deal of texture in the clothing and robes, but the actual surface of the work is very smooth.

Paintings often use actual texture as well, which we can observe in the physical application of paint. Visible brushstrokes and different amounts of paint will create a texture that adds to the expressiveness of a painting and draw attention to specific areas within it. The artist Vincent van Gogh is known to have used a great deal of actual texture in his paintings, noticeable in the thick application of paint in such paintings as *Starry Night*.



Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889: *The Starry Night* contains a great deal of actual texture through the thick application of paint.

Shape and Volume

Shape refers to an area in a two-dimensional space that is defined by edges; volume is three-dimensional, exhibiting height, width, and depth.

Learning Objectives

Define shape and volume and identify ways they are represented in art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- “Positive space ” refers to the space of the defined shape or figure.
- “Negative space” refers to the space that exists around and between one or more shapes.
- A ” plane ” in art refers to any surface area within space.
- ” Form ” is a concept that is related to shape and can be created by combining two or more shapes, resulting in a three-dimensional shape.
- Art makes use of both actual and implied volume .
- Shape, volume, and space, whether actual or implied, are the basis of the perception of reality.

Key Terms

- **form**:The shape or visible structure of an artistic expression.
- **volume**:A unit of three-dimensional measure of space that comprises a length, a width, and a height.
- **plane**:A flat surface extending infinitely in all directions (e.g., horizontal or vertical plane).

Shape refers to an area in two-dimensional space that is defined by edges. Shapes are, by definition, always flat in nature and can be geometric (e.g., a circle, square, or pyramid) or organic (e.g., a leaf or a chair). Shapes can be created by placing two different textures , or shape-groups, next to each other, thereby creating an enclosed area, such as a painting of an object floating in water.

“Positive space” refers to the space of the defined shape, or figure. Typically, the positive space is the subject of an artwork. “Negative space” refers to the space that exists around and between one or more shapes. Positive and negative space can become difficult to distinguish from each other in more abstract works.

A “plane” refers to any surface area within space. In two-dimensional art, the ” picture plane ” is the flat surface that the image is created upon, such as paper, canvas, or wood. Three-dimensional figures may be depicted on the flat picture plane through the use of the artistic elements to imply depth and volume, as seen in the painting *Small Bouquet of Flowers in a Ceramic Vase* by Jan Brueghel the Elder.



Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Small Bouquet of Flowers in a Ceramic Vase*, 1599: Three-dimensional figures may be depicted on the flat picture plane through the use of the artistic elements to imply depth and volume.

"Form" is a concept that is related to shape. Combining two or more shapes can create a three-dimensional shape. Form is always considered three-dimensional as it exhibits volume—or height, width, and depth. Art makes use of both actual and implied volume.

While three-dimensional forms, such as sculpture, have volume inherently, volume can also be simulated, or implied, in a two-dimensional work such as a painting. Shape, volume, and space—whether actual or implied—are the basis of the perception of reality.

Time and Motion

Motion, a principle of art, is a tool artists use to organize the artistic elements in a work; it is employed in both static and time-based mediums.

Learning Objectives

Name some techniques and mediums used by artists to convey motion in both static and time-based art forms

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Techniques such as scale and proportion are used to create the feeling of motion or the passing of time in static a visual piece.
- The placement of a repeated element in different area within an artwork is another way to imply motion and the passing of time.
- Visual experiments in time and motion were first produced in the mid-19th century, and the photographer Eadweard Muybridge is well-known for his sequential shots.
- The time-based mediums of film, video, kinetic sculpture , and performance art employ time and motion by their very definitions.

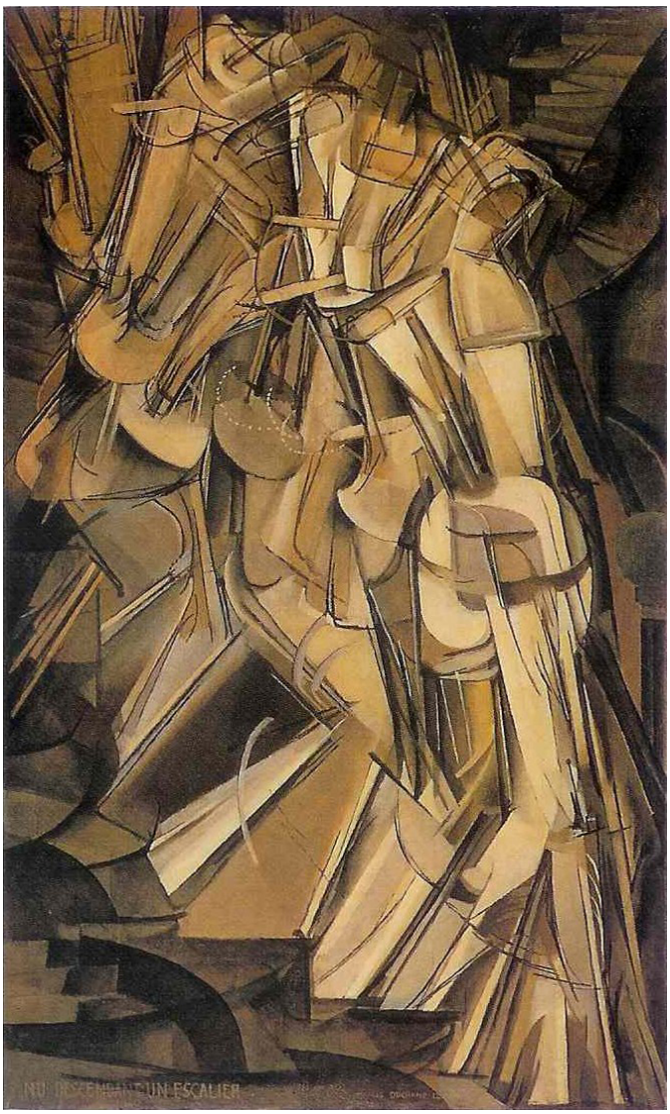
Key Terms

- **frames per second**:The number of times an imaging device produces unique consecutive images (frames) in one second. Abbreviation: FPS.
- **static**:Fixed in place; having no motion.

Motion, or movement, is considered to be one of the “principles of art”; that is, one of the tools artists use to organize the artistic elements in a work of art. Motion is employed in both static and in time-based mediums and can show a direct action or the intended path for the viewer ‘s eye to follow through a piece.

Techniques such as scale and proportion are used to create the feeling of motion or the passing of time in static visual artwork. For example, on a flat picture plane , an image that is smaller and lighter colored than its surroundings will appear to be in the background. Another technique for implying motion and/or time is the placement of a repeated element in different areas within an artwork.

Visual experiments in time and motion were first produced in the mid-19th century. The photographer Eadweard Muybridge is well known for his sequential shots of humans and animals walking, running, and jumping, which he displayed together to illustrate the motion of his subjects. Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* exemplifies an absolute feeling of motion from the upper left to lower right corner of the piece.



Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, 1912: This work represents Duchamp’s conception of motion and time.

While static art forms have the ability to imply or suggest time and motion, the time-based mediums of film, video, kinetic sculpture, and performance art demonstrate time and motion by their very definitions. Film is many static images that are quickly passed through a lens. Video is essentially the same process, but digitally-based and with fewer frames per second . Performance art takes place in real time and makes use of real people and objects, much like theater. Kinetic art is art that moves, or depends on movement, for its effect. All of these mediums use time and motion as a key aspect of their forms of expression.

Chance, Improvisation, and Spontaneity

Dadaism, Surrealism, and the Fluxus movement all relied on the elements of chance, improvisation, and spontaneity as tools for making art works.

Learning Objectives

Describe how Dadaism, Surrealism, and the Fluxus movement relied on chance, improvisation, and spontaneity

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Dadaists are known for their “automatic writing” or stream of consciousness writing, which highlights the creativity of the unconscious mind.
- Surrealist works, much like Dadaist works, often feature an element of surprise, unexpected juxtaposition , and tapping into the unconscious mind.
- Surrealists are known for having invented ” exquisite corpse” drawing.
- The Fluxus movement was known for its ” happenings ,” which were performance events or situations that could take place anywhere, in any form , and relied heavily on chance, improvisation, and audience participation.

Key Terms

- **happening**:A spontaneous or improvised event, especially one that involves audience participation.
- **assemblage**:A collection of things which have been gathered together..

Chance, improvisation, and spontaneity are elements that can be used to create art, or they can be the very purpose of the artwork itself. Any medium can employ these elements at any point within the artistic process.



Marcel Duchamp, *Urinal*, 1917: Marcel Duchamp’s *Urinal* is an example of a “ready-made,” which were objects that were purchased or found and then declared art.

Dadaism

Dadaism was an art movement popular in Europe in the early 20th century. It was started by artists and poets in Zurich, Switzerland with strong anti-war and left-leaning sentiments. The movement rejected logic and reason and instead prized irrationality, nonsense, and intuition. Marcel Duchamp was a dominant member of the Dadaist movement, known for exhibiting “ready-mades,” which were objects that were purchased or found and then declared art.

Dadaists used what was readily available to create what was termed an “assemblage,” using items such as photographs, trash, stickers, bus passes, and notes. The work of the Dadaists involved chance, improvisation, and spontaneity to create art. They are known for using “automatic writing” or stream of consciousness writing, which often took nonsensical forms, but allowed for the opportunity of potentially surprising juxtapositions and unconscious creativity.

Surrealism

The Surrealist movement, which developed out of Dadaism primarily as a political movement, featured an element of surprise, unexpected juxtaposition and the tapping of the unconscious mind. Andre Breton, an important member of the movement, wrote the Surrealist manifesto, defining it as follows:

“Surrealism, n. Pure psychic automatism , by which one proposes to express, either verbally, in writing, or by any other manner, the real functioning of thought. Dictation of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason, outside of all aesthetic and moral preoccupation. “

Like Dadaism before it, the Surrealist movement stressed the unimportance of reason and planning and instead relied heavily upon chance and surprise as a tool to harness the creativity of the unconscious mind. Surrealists are known for having invented “exquisite corpse” drawing, an exercise where words and images are collaboratively assembled, one after another. Many Surrealist techniques, including exquisite corpse drawing, allowed for the playful creation of art through assigning value to spontaneous production.

The Fluxus movement

The Fluxus movement of the 1960s was highly influenced by Dadaism. Fluxus was an international network of artists that skillfully blended together many different disciplines, and whose work was characterized by the use of an extreme do-it-yourself (DIY) aesthetic and heavily intermedia artworks. In addition, Fluxus was known for its “happenings,” which were multi-disciplinary performance events or situations that could take place anywhere. Audience participation was essential in a happening, and therefore relied on a great deal of surprise and improvisation. Key elements of happenings were often planned, but artists left room for improvisation, which eliminated the boundary between the artwork and the viewer , thus making the audience an important part of the art.

Inclusion of All Five Senses

The inclusion of the five human senses in a single work takes place most often in installation and performance art.

Learning Objectives

Explain how installation and performance art include the five senses of the viewer

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- In contemporary art, it is quite common for work to cater to the senses of sight, touch, and hearing, while it is somewhat less common to address smell and taste.
- “Gesamtkunstwerk,” or “total work of art,” is a German word that refers to an artwork that attempts to address all five human senses.
- Installation art is a genre of three-dimensional artwork that is designed to transform the viewer ‘s perception of a space .
- Virtual reality is a term that refers to computer-simulated environments.

Key Terms

- **happening**:A spontaneous or improvised event, especially one that involves audience participation.
- **virtual reality**:A reality based in the computer.

The inclusion of the five human senses in a single work takes place most often in installation and performance-based art. In addition, works that strive to include all senses at once generally make use of some form of interactivity, as the sense of taste clearly must involve the participation of the viewer. Historically, this attention to all senses was reserved to ritual and ceremony . In contemporary art, it is quite common for work to cater to the senses of sight, touch, and hearing, while somewhat less common for art to address the senses of smell and taste.

The German word "Gesamtkunstwerk," meaning "total work of art," refers to a genre of artwork that attempts to address all five human senses. The concept was brought to prominence by the German opera composer Richard Wagner in 1849. Wagner staged an opera that sought to unite the art forms, which he felt had become overly disparate. Wagner's operas paid great attention to every detail in order to achieve a state of total artistic immersion. "Gesamkunstwerk" is now an accepted English term relating to aesthetics , but has evolved from Wagner's definition to mean the inclusion of the five senses in art.

Installation art is a genre of three-dimensional artwork that is designed to transform the viewer's perception of a space. *Embankment* by Rachel Whiteread exemplifies this type of transformation. The term generally pertains to an interior space, while Land Art typically refers to an outdoor space, though there is some overlap between these terms. The Fluxus movement of the 1960s is key to the development of installation and performance art as mediums.



Rachel Whiteread, *Embankment*, 2005: Whiteread's installation *Embankment* is a type of art designed to transform the viewer's perception of space.

"Virtual reality" is a term that refers to computer-simulated environments. Currently, most virtual reality environments are visual experiences, but some simulations include additional sensory information. Immersive virtual reality has developed in recent years with the improvement of technology and is increasingly addressing the five senses within a virtual realm. Artists have been exploring the possibilities of these simulated and virtual realities with the expansion of the discipline of cyberarts, though what constitutes cyberart continues to be up for debate. Environments such as the virtual world of Second Life are generally accepted, but whether or not video games should be considered art remains undecided.

Compositional Balance

Compositional balance refers to the placement of the artistic elements in relation to each other within a work of art.

Learning Objectives

Categorize the elements of compositional balance in a work of art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

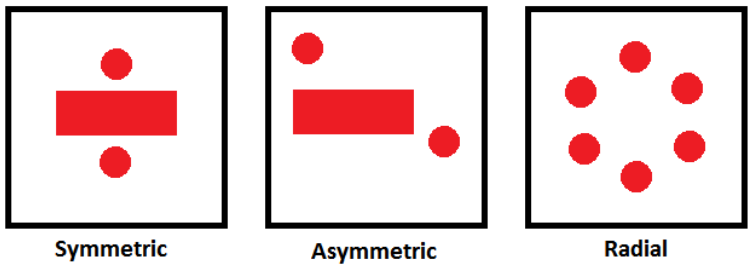
- A harmonious compositional balance involves arranging elements so that no one part of a work overpowers or seems heavier than any other part.
- The three most common types of compositional balance are symmetrical, asymmetrical, and radial .
- When balanced, a composition appears stable and visually right. Just as symmetry relates to aesthetic preference and reflects an intuitive sense for how things “should” appear, the overall balance of a given composition contributes to outside judgments of the work.

Key Terms

- **radial**:Arranged like rays that radiate from, or converge to, a common center.
- **symmetry**:Exact correspondence on either side of a dividing line, plane, center, or axis. The satisfying arrangement of a balanced distribution of the elements of a whole.
- **asymmetry**:Want of symmetry, or proportion between the parts of a thing, especially want of bilateral symmetry. Lacking a common measure between two objects or quantities; Incommensurability. That which causes something to not be symmetrical.

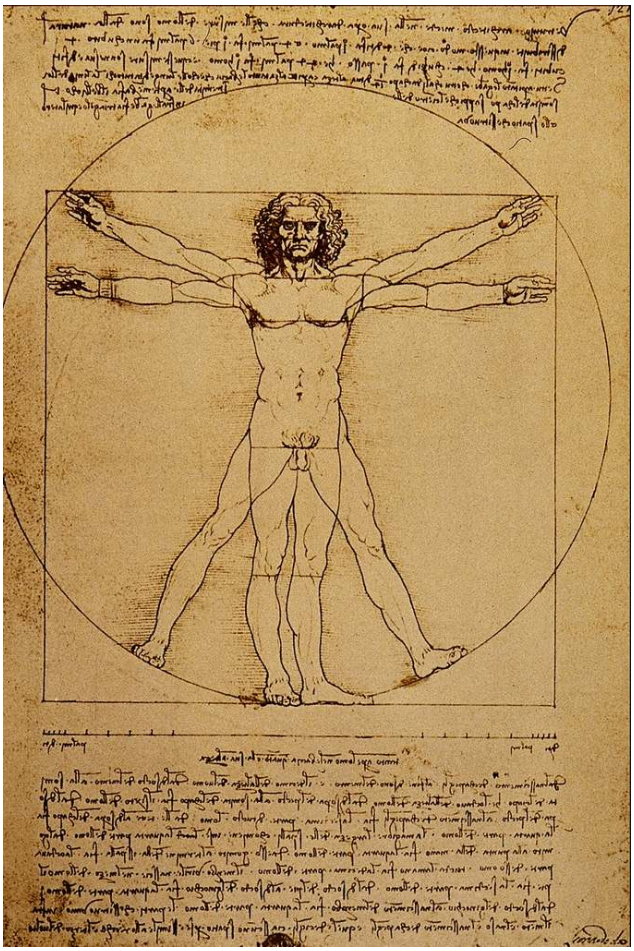
Compositional balance refers to the placement of the elements of art (color, form , line , shape, space , texture , and value) in relation to each other. When balanced, a composition appears more stable and visually pleasing. Just as symmetry relates to aesthetic preference and reflects an intuitive sense for how things “should” appear, the overall balance of a given composition contributes to outside judgments of the work.

Creating a harmonious compositional balance involves arranging elements so that no single part of a work overpowers or seems heavier than any other part. The three most common types of compositional balance are symmetrical, asymmetrical, and radial.



Compositional balance: The three common types of balance are symmetric, asymmetric, and radial.

Symmetrical balance is the most stable, in a visual sense, and generally conveys a sense of harmonious or aesthetically pleasing proportionality. When both sides of an artwork on either side of the horizontal or vertical axis of the picture plane are the same in terms of the sense that is created by the arrangement of the elements of art, the work is said to exhibit this type of balance. The opposite of symmetry is asymmetry .



Leonardo da Vinci, *Vitruvian Man*, 1487: Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* is often used as a representation of symmetry in the human body and, by extension, the natural universe.

Asymmetry is defined as the absence of, or a violation of, the principles of symmetry. Examples of asymmetry appear commonly in architecture. Although pre-modern architectural styles tended to place an emphasis on symmetry (except where extreme site conditions or historical developments lead away from this classical ideal), modern and postmodern architects frequently used asymmetry as a design element. For instance, while most bridges employ a symmetrical form due to intrinsic simplicities of design, analysis, fabrication, and economical use of materials, a number of modern bridges have deliberately departed from this, either in response to site-specific considerations or to create a dramatic design statement. .



Oakland Bay Bridge: Eastern span replacement of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge reflects asymmetrical architectural design.

Radial balance refers to circular elements in compositions. In classical geometry, a radius of a circle or sphere is any line segment from its center to its perimeter. By extension, the radius of a circle or sphere is the length of any such segment, which is half the diameter. The radius may be more than half the diameter, which is usually defined as the maximum distance between any two points of the figure. The inradius of a geometric figure is usually the radius of the largest circle or sphere contained in it. The inner

radius of a ring, tube or other hollow object is the radius of its cavity. The name “radial” or “radius” comes from Latin *radius*, meaning “ray” but also the spoke of a circular chariot wheel.

Rhythm

Artists use rhythm as a tool to guide the eye of the viewer through works of art.

Learning Objectives

Recognize and interpret the use of rhythm in a work of art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Rhythm may be generally defined as a “movement marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements, or of opposite or different conditions” (Anon. 1971).
- Rhythm may also refer to visual presentation as “timed movement through space ” (Jirousek 1995), and a common language of pattern unites rhythm with geometry.
- For instance, placing a red spiral at the bottom left and top right, for example, will cause the eye to move from one spiral, to the other, and everything in between. It is indicating movement in the piece by the repetition of elements and, therefore, can make artwork seem active.

Key Terms

- **symmetry**:Exact correspondence on either side of a dividing line, plane, center or axis. The satisfying arrangement of a balanced distribution of the elements of a whole.

The principles of visual art are the rules, tools, and guidelines that artists use to organize the elements of in a piece of artwork. When the principles and elements are successfully combined, they aid in creating an aesthetically pleasing or interesting work of art. While there is some variation among them, movement, unity, harmony, variety, balance, rhythm, emphasis, contrast , proportion, and pattern are commonly sited as principles of art.

Rhythm (from Greek *rhythmos*, “any regular recurring motion, symmetry ” (Liddell and Scott 1996)) may be generally defined as a “movement marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements, or of opposite or different conditions” (Anon. 1971). This general meaning of regular recurrence or pattern in time may be applied to a wide variety of cyclical natural phenomena having a periodicity or frequency of anything from microseconds to millions of years. In the performing arts, rhythm is the timing of events on a human scale, of musical sounds and silences, of the steps of a dance, or the meter of spoken language and poetry. Rhythm may also refer to visual presentation, as “timed movement through space” (Jirousek 1995), and a common language of pattern unites rhythm with geometry.

In a visual composition , pattern and rhythm are generally expressed by showing consistency with colors or lines . For instance, placing a red spiral at the bottom left and top right, for example, will cause the eye to move from one spiral, to the other, and then to the space in between. The repetition of elements creates movement of the viewer ‘s eye and can, therefore, make the artwork feel active. Hilma af Klint’s *Svanen (The Swan)* exemplifies the visual representation of rhythm using color and symmetry.



Hilma af Klint, *Svanen (The Swan)*, 1914: Color and symmetry work together in this painting to guide the eye of the viewer in a particular visual rhythm.

Proportion and Scale

Proportion is a measurement of the size and quantity of elements within a composition.

Learning Objectives

Apply the concept of proportion to different works of art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Hierarchical proportion is a technique used in art, mostly in sculpture and painting, in which the artist uses unnatural proportion or scale to depict the relative importance of the figures in the artwork.
- Mathematically, proportion is the relation between elements and a whole. In architecture, the whole is not just a building but the set and setting of the site.
- Among the various ancient artistic traditions, the harmonic proportions, human proportions, cosmic orientations, various aspects of sacred geometry , and small whole-number ratios were all applied as part of the practice of architectural design.

Key Terms

- **golden ratio**:The irrational number (approximately 1·618), usually denoted by the Greek letter φ (phi), which is equal to the sum of its own reciprocal and 1, or, equivalently, is such that the ratio of 1 to the number is equal to the ratio of its reciprocal to 1. Some twentieth-century artists and architects have proportioned their works to approximate this—especially in the form of the golden rectangle, in which the ratio of the longer side to the shorter equals this number—believing this proportion to be aesthetically pleasing.

Proportion is a measurement of the size and quantity of elements within a composition . Hierarchical proportion is a technique used in art, mostly in sculpture and painting, in which the artist uses unnatural proportion or scale to depict the relative importance of the figures in the artwork. In ancient Egyptian art, for example, gods and important political figures appear much larger than common people. Beginning with the Renaissance , artists recognized the connection between proportion and perspective , and the illusion of three-dimensional space . Images of the human body in exaggerated proportion were used to depict the reality an artist interpreted.



Depiction of Narmer from the Narmer Palette: Narmer, a Predynastic ruler, accompanied by men carrying the standards of various local gods. This piece demonstrates the ancient Egyptians' use of proportion, with Narmer appearing larger than the other figures depicted.

Mathematically, proportion is the relation between elements and a whole. In architecture, the whole is not just a building but the set and setting of the site. The things that make a building and its site "well shaped" include everything from the orientation of the site and the buildings on it, to the features of the grounds on which it is situated. Light, shade, wind, elevation , and choice of materials all relate to a standard of architectural proportion.

Architecture has often used proportional systems to generate or constrain the forms considered suitable for inclusion in a building. In almost every building tradition, there is a system of mathematical relations which governs the relationships between aspects of the design. These systems of proportion are often quite simple: whole number ratios or incommensurable ratios (such as the golden ratio) were determined using geometrical methods. Generally, the goal of a proportional system is to produce a sense of coherence and harmony among the elements of a building.

Among the various ancient artistic traditions, the harmonic proportions, human proportions, cosmic orientations, various aspects of sacred geometry, and small whole-number ratios were all applied as part of the practice of architectural design. For instance, the Greek classical architectural orders are all proportioned rather than dimensioned or measured modules, because the earliest modules were not based on body parts and their spans (fingers, palms, hands, and feet), but rather on column diameters and the widths of arcades and fenestrations .



Temple of Portanus: The Greek Temple of Portanus is an example of classical Greek architecture with its tetrastyle portico of four Ionic columns.

Typically, one set of column diameter modules used for casework and architectural moldings by the Egyptians and Romans is based on the proportions of the palm and the finger, while another less delicate module—used for door and window trim, tile work, and roofing in Mesopotamia and Greece—was based on the proportions of the hand and the thumb.

Dating back to the Pythagoreans, there was an idea that proportions should be related to standards, and that the more general and formulaic the standards, the better. This concept—that there should be beauty and elegance evidenced by a skillful composition of well understood elements—underlies mathematics, art, and architecture. The classical standards are a series of paired opposites designed to expand the dimensional constraints of harmony and proportion.

Space

Space in art can be defined as the area that exists between two identifiable points.

Learning Objectives

Define space in art and list ways it is employed by artists

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- The organization of space is referred to as composition and is an essential component to any work of art.
- The space of an artwork includes the background, foreground, and middle ground , as well as the distance between, around, and within things.
- There are two types of space: positive space and negative space.
- After spending hundreds of years developing linear perspective , Western artistic notions about the accurate depiction of space went through a radical shift at the beginning of the 20th century.
- Cubism and subsequent modernist movements represented an important shift in the use of space within Western art, which is still being felt today.

Key Terms

- **space**:The distance or empty area between things.
- **Cubism**:An artistic movement in the early 20th century characterized by the depiction of natural forms as geometric structures of planes.

The organization of space in art is referred to as composition, and is an essential component of any work of art. Space can be generally defined as the area that exists between any two identifiable points.

Space is conceived of differently in each medium . The space in a painting, for example, includes the background, foreground and middle ground, while three-dimensional space, like sculpture or installation , will involve the distance between, around, and within points of the work. Space is further categorized as positive or negative. “Positive space” can be defined as the subject of an artwork, while “negative space” can be defined as the space around the subject.

Over the ages, space has been conceived of in various ways. Artists have devoted a great deal of time to experimenting with perspectives and degrees of flatness of the pictorial plane .

The perspective system has been a highly employed convention in Western art. Visually, it is an illusionist phenomenon, well suited to realism and the depiction of reality as it appears. After spending hundreds of years developing linear perspective, Western artistic conventions about the accurate depiction of space went through a radical shift at the beginning of the 20th century. The innovations of Cubism and subsequent modernist movements represented an important shift in the use of space within Western art, the impact of which is still being felt.



Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* is an example of cubist art, which has a tendency to flatten the picture plane, and its use of abstract shapes and irregular forms suggest multiple points of view within a single image.

Two-Dimensional Space

Two-dimensional, or bi-dimensional, space is a geometric model of the planar projection of the physical universe in which we live.

Learning Objectives

Discuss two-dimensional space in art and the physical properties on which it is based

Key Takeaways

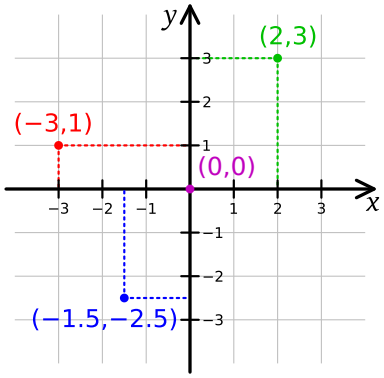
Key Points

- In physical terms, dimension refers to the constituent structure of all space and its position in time.
- Drawing is a form of visual art that makes use of any number of instruments to mark a two-dimensional medium .
- Almost any dimensional form can be represented by some combination of the cube, sphere, cylinder, and cone. Once these basic shapes have been assembled into a likeness, then the drawing can be refined into a more accurate and polished form.

Key Terms

- **dimension**:A single aspect of a given thing. A measure of spatial extent in a particular direction, such as height, width or breadth, or depth.
- **Two-Dimensional**:Existing in two dimensions. Not creating the illusion of depth.
- **Planar**:Of or pertaining to a plane. Flat, two-dimensional.

Two dimensional, or bi-dimensional, space is a geometric model of the planar projection of the physical universe in which we live. The two dimensions are commonly called length and width. Both directions lie on the same plane . In physics, our bi-dimensional space is viewed as a planar representation of the space in which we move.



Mathematical depiction of bi-dimensional space: Bi-dimensional Cartesian coordinate system.

In art composition , drawing is a form of visual art that makes use of any number of drawing instruments to mark a two-dimensional medium (meaning that the object does not have depth). One of the simplest and most efficient means of communicating visual ideas, the medium has been a popular and fundamental means of public expression throughout human history. Additionally, the relative availability of basic drawing instruments makes drawing more universal than most other media.

Measuring the dimensions of a subject while blocking in the drawing is an important step in producing a realistic rendition of a subject. Tools such as a compass can be used to measure the angles of different sides. These angles can be reproduced on the drawing surface and then rechecked to make sure they are accurate. Another form of measurement is to compare the relative sizes of different parts of the subject with each other. A finger placed at a point along the drawing implement can be used to compare that dimension with other parts of the image. A ruler can be used both as a straightedge and a device to compute proportions. When attempting to draw a complicated shape such as a human figure, it is helpful at first to represent the form with a set of primitive shapes.

Almost any dimensional form can be represented by some combination of the cube, sphere, cylinder, and cone. Once these basic shapes have been assembled into a likeness, then the drawing can be refined into a more accurate and polished form. The lines of the primitive shapes are removed and replaced by the final likeness. A more refined art of figure drawing relies upon the artist possessing a deep understanding of anatomy and the human proportions. A trained artist is familiar with the skeleton structure, joint location, muscle placement, tendon movement, and how the different parts work together during movement. This allows the artist to render more natural poses that do not appear artificially stiff. The artist is also familiar with how the proportions vary depending on the age of the subject, particularly when drawing a portrait.



Drawing human figures: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's *Madame Palmyre with Her Dog*, 1897.

Linear Perspective and Three-Dimensional Space

Perspective is an approximate representation on a flat surface of an image as it is seen by the eye.

Learning Objectives

Explain perspective and its impact on art composition

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Systematic attempts to evolve a system of perspective are usually considered to have begun around the 5th century B.C. in the art of Ancient Greece.
- The earliest art paintings and drawings typically sized objects and characters hierarchically according to their spiritual or thematic importance, not their distance from the viewer .
- In Medieval Europe, the use and sophistication of attempts to convey distance increased steadily but without a basis in a systematic theory.
- By the Renaissance , nearly every artist in Italy used geometrical perspective in their paintings, both to portray depth and also as a new and "of the moment" compositional method.

Key Terms

- **curvilinear**:Having bends; curved; formed by curved lines.
- **horizon line**:A horizontal line in perspective drawing, directly opposite the viewer's eye and often implied, that represents objects infinitely far away and determines the angle or perspective from which the viewer sees the work.
- **vanishing point**:The point in a perspective drawing at which parallel lines receding from an observer seem to converge.

- **Perspective**:The technique of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface.

In art, perspective is an approximate representation on a flat surface of an image as it is seen by the eye, calculated by assuming a particular vanishing point . Systematic attempts to evolve a system of perspective are usually considered to have begun around the 5th century BCE in the art of Ancient Greece. By the later periods of antiquity , artists—especially those in less popular traditions—were well aware that distant objects could be shown smaller than those close at hand for increased illusionism. But whether this convention was actually used in a work depended on many factors. Some of the paintings found in the ruins of Pompeii show a remarkable realism and perspective for their time.

The earliest art paintings and drawings typically sized objects and characters hierarchically according to their spiritual or thematic importance, not their distance from the viewer. The most important figures are often shown as the highest in a composition , also from hieratic motives, leading to the “vertical perspective” common in the art of Ancient Egypt , where a group of “nearer” figures are shown below the larger figure(s).

The art of the Migration Period had no tradition of attempting compositions of large numbers of figures, and Early Medieval art was slow and inconsistent in relearning the convention from classical models, though the process can be seen underway in Carolingian art. European Medieval artists were aware of the general principle of varying the relative size of elements according to distance, and use and sophistication of attempts to convey distance increased steadily during the period, but without a basis in a systematic theory.

By the Renaissance, however, nearly every artist in Italy used geometrical perspective in their paintings. Not only was this use of perspective a way to portray depth, but it was also a new method of composing a painting. Paintings began to show a single, unified scene, rather than a combination of several. For a while, perspective remained the domain of Florence. Gradually, and partly through the movement of academies of the arts, the Italian techniques became part of the training of artists across Europe and, later, other parts of the world.



Perspective in Renaissance Painting: Pietro Perugino’s usage of perspective in this fresco at the Sistine Chapel (1481–82) helped bring the Renaissance to Rome.

A drawing has one-point perspective when it contains only one vanishing point on the horizon line . This type of perspective is typically used for images of roads, railway tracks, hallways, or buildings viewed so that the front is directly facing the viewer. Any objects that are made up of lines either directly parallel with the viewer’s line of sight or directly perpendicular (the railroad slats) can be represented with one-point perspective. These parallel lines converge at the vanishing point.

Two-point perspective can be used to draw the same objects as one-point perspective, but rotated—such as looking at the corner of a house, or looking at two forked roads shrink into the distance. In looking at a house from the corner, for example, one wall would recede towards one vanishing point and the other wall would recede towards the opposite vanishing point.

Three-point perspective is used for buildings depicted from above or below. In addition to the two vanishing points from before, one for each wall, there is now a third one for how those walls recede into the ground . This third vanishing point would be below the ground.

Four-point perspective is the curvilinear variant of two-point perspective. The resulting elongated frame can be used both horizontally and vertically. Like all other foreshortened variants of perspective, four-point perspective starts off with a horizon line, followed by four equally spaced vanishing points to delineate four vertical lines. Because vanishing points exist only when parallel lines are present in the scene, a perspective with no vanishing points ("zero-point") occurs if the viewer is observing a non-rectilinear scene. The most common example of a nonlinear scene is a natural scene (e.g., a mountain range), which frequently does not contain any parallel lines. A perspective without vanishing points can still create a sense of depth.

Distortions of Space and Foreshortening

Distortion is used to create various representations of space in two-dimensional works of art.

Learning Objectives

Identify how distortion is both employed and avoided in works of art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Perspective projection distortion is the inevitable misrepresentation of three-dimensional space when drawn or "projected" onto a two-dimensional surface. It is impossible to accurately depict three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional plane .
- However, there are several constructs available which allow for seemingly accurate representation. Perspective projection can be used to mirror how the eye sees by the use of one or more vanishing points .
- Although distortion can be irregular or follow many patterns, the most commonly encountered distortions in composition , especially in photography, are radially symmetric, or approximately so, arising from the symmetry of a photographic lens.

Key Terms

- **radial**:Arranged like rays that radiate from, or converge into, a common center
- **projection**:The image that a translucent object casts onto another object.
- **foreshortening**:A technique for creating the appearance that the object of a drawing is extending into space by shortening the lines with which that object is drawn.

A distortion is the alteration of the original shape (or other characteristic) of an object, image, sound, or other form of information or representation. Distortion can be wanted or unwanted by the artist. Distortion is usually unwanted when it concerns physical degradation of a work. However, it is more commonly referred to in terms of perspective, where it is employed to create realistic representations of space in two-dimensional works of art.

Perspective Projection Distortion

Perspective projection distortion is the inevitable misrepresentation of three-dimensional space when drawn or "projected" onto a two-dimensional surface. It is impossible to accurately depict three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional plane. However, there are several constructs available that allow for seemingly accurate representation. The most common of these is perspective projection. Perspective projection can be used to mirror how the eye sees by making use of one or more vanishing points.



Giotto, *Lamentation (The Mourning of Christ)*, 1305–1306: Giotto is one of the most notable pre-Renaissance artists to recognize distortion on two-dimensional planes.

Foreshortening

Foreshortening is the visual effect or optical illusion that causes an object or distance to appear shorter than it actually is because it is angled toward the viewer . Although foreshortening is an important element in art where visual perspective is being depicted, foreshortening occurs in other types of two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional scenes, such as oblique parallel projection drawings.

The physiological basis of visual foreshortening was undefined until the year 1000 when the Arabian mathematician and philosopher, Alhazen, in his *Perspectiva*, first explained that light projects conically into the eye. A method for presenting foreshortened geometry systematically onto a plane surface was unknown for another 300 years. The artist Giotto may have been the first to recognize that the image beheld by the eye is distorted: to the eye, parallel lines appear to intersect (like the distant edges of a path or road), whereas in “undistorted” nature, they do not. In many of Giotto’s paintings, perspective is employed to achieve various distortion effects.



Foreshortening: This painting illustrates Melozzo da Forlì’s usage of upward foreshortening in his frescoes at The Basilica della Santa Casa.

Distortion in Photography

In photography, the projection mechanism is light reflected from an object. To execute a drawing using perspective projection, projectors emanate from all points of an object and intersect at a station point. These projectors intersect with an imaginary plane of projection and an image is created on the plane by the points of intersection. The resulting image on the projection plane reproduces the image of the object as it is beheld from the station point.

Radial distortion can usually be classified as one of two main types: barrel distortion and pincushion distortion. Barrel distortion occurs when image magnification decreases with distance from the optical axis. The apparent effect is that of an image which has been mapped around a sphere (or barrel). Fisheye lenses, which take hemispherical views, utilize this type of distortion as a way to map an infinitely wide object plane into a finite image area.

On the other hand, in pincushion distortion, the image magnification increases with the distance from the optical axis. The visible effect is that lines that do not go through the center of the image are bowed inwards, towards the center of the image, like a pincushion. A certain amount of pincushion distortion is often found with visual optical instruments (i.e., binoculars), where it serves to eliminate the globe effect.

Cylindrical perspective is a form of distortion caused by fisheye and panoramic lenses, which reproduce straight horizontal lines above and below the lens axis level as curved, while reproducing straight horizontal lines on lens axis level as straight. This is also a common feature of wide-angle anamorphic lenses of less than 40mm focal length in cinematography. Essentially it is just barrel distortion, but only in the horizontal plane. It is an artifact of the squeezing process that anamorphic lenses do to fit widescreen images onto standard-width film.

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2.4: Before You Move On (Visual Elements and Design Principles)

Key Concepts

Visual art can be divided into dimensional categories: two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and four-dimensional art. Each category has unique and specific approaches and materials. Two-dimensional art consists of drawing, painting, and printmaking. Three-dimensional art consists of sculpture, including installation, and kinetic art. Four-dimensional or time-based art includes video and performance and depends on the use of technology and the passage of time for its effect. Time-based art has grown today to encompass digital art, computer animation, interactive art, video games, virtual reality, robotics, and 3D printing.

The elements and principles of design are the components and their organization within visual art. Line, shape, mass/volume, perspective, texture, and color are the primary elements of design. Time is a recently recognized additional element of design. Principles of design include unity and variety, scale and proportion, balance, emphasis and movement, and rhythm and repetition.

In this chapter we have also outlined many of the materials and processes used in creating art. In Chapter 3 Significance of Material Used in Art, we will examine the impact and meaning of substances employed to create works of art. In Chapter 4 Describing Art: Formal Analysis, Types and Styles of Art, we will utilize our understanding of materials and processes, and elements and principles of design to describe and explore meaning in art.

Test Yourself

1. Historically, the term fine art was limited to mean painting, architecture, and sculpture. Today, other approaches to the production of art objects have been discovered and exploited. This process of evolution has had both drawbacks and advantages. Discuss.
2. **“**_____-dimensional art occurs on flat surfaces, like paper, canvas, or even cave walls.”
3. Art can be broken down into Form and _____
4. “To _____ an object is to observe its appearance and transfer that observation to a set of marks.”
5. “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 _____.”
6. The difference between open and closed sculptural forms is that closed forms are surrounded by _____, while open forms are penetrated by it.
7. Calligraphy is defined as “_____ writing.”
8. Perspective in art is the _____ of space on a flat surface.
9. The three main cues to the illusion of space on a flat surface are:
10. The five elements of design mentioned in the text are:
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____
    e. _____
11. The text mentions several principles of design. List and Describe three of them.

Space to list and describe 3 principles of design		
	Principle of Design:	Description:
a.	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____

12. The unique property of Kinetic sculpture is: _____
13. “The Fauves were a group of artists in the early twentieth century who used **_____ color**.”

14. Suggest one potential reason for the use of a monochromatic color scheme, a complementary color scheme, and an analogous color scheme.
    a. Monochromatic_____
    b. Complementary_____
    c. Analagous _____

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Art in Context

Learning Objectives

- Place works of art in historical, social, personal, political, or scientific contexts.
- Define and distinguish between symbolism and iconography.
- Identify changes in symbols and iconographic motifs over time and in different cultures.
- Relate iconography to visual literacy.
- Describe connections between symbolism, iconography, and storytelling.
- Recognize metaphorical meanings in art.

3.1: Introduction

3.2: Content

3.3: Art in Society

3.4: Historical Context

3.5: Socio-cultural Contexts

3.6: Symbolism and Iconography

3.7: Reading- Formalism and Content

3.8: Before You Move On (Art in Context)

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3.1: Introduction

The process we go through when we look at a work of art to determine if we recognize and can make sense of its content is not just a visual one. It is a mental process as well, largely based on the elements within and about the work we can identify and categorize. As we look and think, we may be given clues about what the work means by where it is, when it was made, what culture it came from, who created it, or why it was made. Any information we can gather helps us understand the work's context, that is, for what historical, social, personal, political, or scientific reasons the work of art was made. And then, using all the contextual information we have gathered, we interpret the work of art's content to discover what it means or symbolizes.

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3.2: Content

Types of Content

Content in art takes the form of portraits, landscapes, still-lifes, genre art, and narrative art.

Learning Objectives

Describe different categories of figurative or abstract art.

Key Takeaways

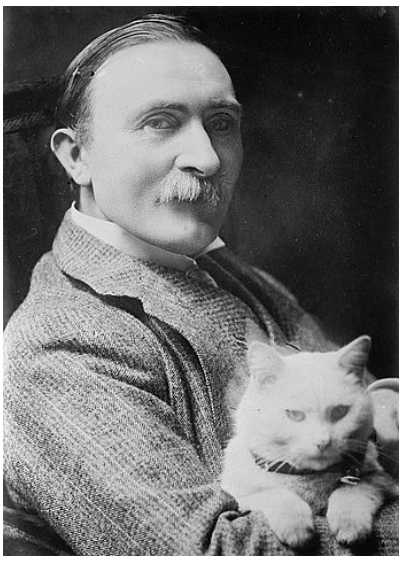
Key Points

- Content in a work of art refers to what is being depicted and might be helpful in deriving a basic meaning. It appears in the visual arts in several forms , all of which may be figurative (realistic) or abstract (distorted). Among them are portraits, landscapes, still-lifes, genre art, and narrative art.
- Portraits represents the likeness of a person and can include a study of the sitter's mood or personality.
- Landscapes depict natural scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, and forests, especially where the main subject is a wide view.
- A still-life is a work of art depicting mostly inanimate subject matter, typically commonplace objects that may be either natural or man-made.
- Genre art involves the pictorial representation in any of various media of scenes or events from everyday life, whereas narrative art tells a story that may be real or imagined.

Content in a work of art refers to what is being depicted and might be helpful in deriving a basic meaning. Sometimes content is straightforward; in other cases, however, it is less obvious and requires additional information. Content appears in the visual arts in several forms, all of which may be figurative (realistic) or abstract (distorted). Among them are portraits, landscapes, still-lifes, genre art, and narrative art.

Portraits

A portrait is a painting, photograph, sculpture, or other artistic representation of a person, in which the face and its expression are predominant. The intent is to display the likeness, personality, and even the mood of the person. For this reason, in photography a portrait is generally not a snapshot, but a composed image of a person in a still position. A portrait often shows a person looking directly at the painter or photographer in order to most successfully engage the subject with the viewer .



Philip Burne–*Jones Holding a Cat* : George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Landscapes

Landscape painting, also known as landscape art, is the depiction in art of landscapes—natural scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, and forests, especially where the main subject is a wide view—with its elements arranged into a coherent composition . In other works, landscape backgrounds for figures can still form an important part of the work. Sky is almost always included in the view, and weather is often an element of the composition. Detailed landscapes as a distinct subject are not found in all artistic traditions and develop when there is already a sophisticated tradition of representing other subjects.



Henri Matisse. *Landscape at Collioure* (1905): Oil on canvas. 38.8 x 46.6cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Matisse was a member of the Fauves (French for “wild beasts”), who used bold colors to convey emotions.

Still Lifes

A still life (plural still lifes) is a work of art depicting mostly inanimate subject matter, typically commonplace objects that may be either natural (food, flowers, dead animals, plants, rocks, or shells) or man-made (drinking glasses, books, vases, jewelry, coins, pipes, and so on). Early still-life paintings, particularly before 1700, often contained religious and allegorical symbolism relating to the objects depicted. Some modern still lifes break the two-dimensional barrier and employ three-dimensional mixed media, and use found objects, photography, computer graphics, as well as video and sound.



Maria van Oosterwijk. *Vanitas Still-Life* (1668): Oil on canvas. 73 x 88.5cm. Kunsthistorisches Musuem, Vienna.

Genre Art

Genre art is the pictorial representation in any of various media of scenes or events from everyday life, such as markets, domestic settings, interiors, parties, inn scenes, and street scenes. Such representations (also called genre works, genre scenes , or genre views) may be realistic, imagined, or romanticized by the artist.



Nicolaes Maes. *The Idle Servant (*1655): Oil on canvas. National Gallery, London. Dutch Baroque genre scenes often have important moral lessons as their subtexts.

Narrative Art

Narrative art is art that tells a story, either as a moment in an ongoing story or as a sequence of events unfolding over time. Some of the earliest evidence of human art suggests that people told stories with pictures. However, without some knowledge of the story being told, it is very hard to read ancient pictures because they are not organized in a systematic way like words on a page, but rather can unfold in many different directions at once.



Hagesandros, Athenedoros, and Polydoros. *Laocoön and His Sons* (First century BCE): Marble. Vatican Museum, Rome. This marble sculpture depicts a scene from Virgil's epic *The Aeneid*, in which the Trojan seer Laocoön foresees the Trojan Horse and the destruction of Troy by the Greeks. Before he can warn his fellow townspeople, the sea god Neptune (an ally of the Greeks) sends his serpents to kill Laocoön and his sons.

Figurative and Abstract Art

Art exists along a continuum from realistic representational work to fully non-representational work.

Learning Objectives

Distinguish between figurative and abstract art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Representational art, or figurative art, references objects or events in the real world.
- Romanticism , Impressionism , and Expressionism contributed to the emergence of abstract art in the nineteenth century.
- Even representational work is abstracted to some degree; entirely realistic art is elusive.

Key Terms

- **verisimilitude**:The property of seeming true, of resembling reality; resemblance to reality, realism.

Painting and sculpture can be divided into the categories of figurative (or representational) and abstract (or non-representational). Figurative art describes artwork – particularly paintings and sculptures – which are clearly derived from real object sources, and therefore are, by definition, representational. Since the arrival of abstract art in the early twentieth century, the term “figurative” has been used to refer to any form of modern art that retains strong references to the real world.



Johann Anton Eismann, *Ein Meerhafen*, 1600s: This figurative work from the 17th century depicts easily recognizable objects—ships, people, and buildings.

Artistic independence was advanced during the nineteenth century, resulting in the emergence of abstract art. Three movements which contributed heavily to the development of these styles were Romanticism, Impressionism, and Expressionism.

Abstraction indicates a departure from reality in its depiction of imagery . Abstraction exists along a continuum; it can formally refer to compositions that are derived (or abstracted) from figurative or other natural sources, or it can refer to non-representational art and non-objective art that has no derivation from figures or objects.

Even art that aims for verisimilitude of the highest degree can be said to be abstract, at least theoretically, since perfect representation is likely to be exceedingly elusive. Artwork which takes liberties, altering, for instance, color and form in ways that are conspicuous, can be said to be partially abstract.



Robert Delaunay, *Le Premier Disque*, 1912–1913: Delaunay's work is an example of early abstract art.

Non-representational art refers to total abstraction, bearing no trace of any reference to anything recognizable. In geometric abstraction, for instance, one is unlikely to find references to naturalistic entities. Figurative art and total abstraction are nearly mutually exclusive, but figurative or representational art often contains at least one element of abstraction.

Meaning in Nonrepresentational Art

Meaning in nonrepresentational art is highly subjective and can be difficult to define.

Learning Objectives

Relate the meaning of nonrepresentational art, its goals, and its specific expressions

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Nonrepresentational artwork refers to art that does not attempt to represent or reference reality.
- In the late 19th century, artists began to move toward increasing abstraction as a means of communicating subjective experience more personally and creatively.
- Artists such as Kandinsky and Mondrian viewed art as an expression of spirituality.

Key Terms

- **expressionism**:A movement in the arts in which the artist does not depict objective reality, but rather the subjective expression of inner experience.
- **nonrepresentational**:Not intended to represent a physical object in reality.

Nonrepresentational art refers to compositions which do not rely on representation or mimesis to any extent. Abstract art , nonfigurative art, nonobjective art, and nonrepresentational art are related terms that indicate a departure from reality in the depiction of imagery in art. Meaning in nonrepresentational art is highly subjective and can be difficult to define. We can focus on the elements of the artwork (form, shape, line , color, space , and texture) in terms of the aesthetic value of the work, but the *meaning* will always be personal to the viewer unless the artist has made a statement about his or her intentions.

Generally, we can look at nonrepresentational art as the personal expression of an artist's subjective experience. Certain movements have described their intentions as an aim to evoke moods or emotions in the viewer. A good example are the expressionists of the early 20th century, who aimed to present the world solely from a subjective perspective , distorting it radically for emotional effect.

Nonrepresentational art has often been explored by artists as a means to spiritual expression. Wassily Kandinsky, a Russian painter, printmaker, and art theorist, is one of the most famous 20th century artists and is generally considered the first important painter of modern abstract art. As an early modernist in search of new modes of visual expression and spiritual expression, he theorized (as did contemporary occultists and theosophists) that pure visual abstraction had corollary vibrations with sound and music. He posited that pure abstraction could express pure spirituality.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VII*, 1913: Kandinsky is recognized as the father of modern abstract art in the 20th century.

Piet Mondrian's art was also related to his spiritual and philosophical studies. In 1908 he became interested in the theosophical movement launched by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who believed that it was possible to attain a knowledge of nature more profound than that provided by empirical means, and much of Mondrian's work for the rest of his life was inspired by his search for that spiritual knowledge.

Iconography

Iconography is the scholarly study of the content of images, including identification, description, and interpretation.

Learning Objectives

Define iconography and interpret or perform an iconographical analysis of an image

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Academic studies of iconography in painting emerged in the 19th century in France and Germany.
- Iconographical scholarship became particularly prominent in art history after 1940.
- In the 20th century, studies of iconography have become of interest to a broad public beyond the scholarly community.

Key Terms

- **iconography**:The branch of art history which studies the identification, description, and interpretation of the content of images.

Iconography is the branch of art history which studies the identification, description, and interpretation of the content of images such as the subjects that are depicted, particulars of composition , and other elements that are distinct from artistic style .

Iconography as an academic art historical discipline developed in the nineteenth century in the works of scholars such as Adolphe Napoleon Didron (1806–1867), Anton Heinrich Springer (1825–1891), and Émile Mâle (1862–1954). Christian religious art was the main focus of study throughout this period, and French scholars were especially prominent. They looked back to earlier attempts to classify and organize subjects encyclopedically, as guides to understanding works of art, both religious and profane, in a more scientific manner than the popular aesthetic approach of the time. These early contributions paved the way for encyclopedias, manuals, and other publications useful in identifying the content of art.

In early twentieth-century Germany, Aby Warburg (1866–1929) and his followers Fritz Saxl (1890–1948) and Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968) elaborated the practice of identification and classification of motifs in images to using iconography as a means of understanding meaning. Panofsky codified an influential approach to iconography in his 1939 *Studies in Iconology*, where he defined it as "the branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to form". The distinction he and other scholars drew between particular definitions of "iconography" (put simply, the identification of visual content) and "iconology" (the analysis of the meaning of that content) has not been generally accepted, though it is still used by some writers.

While most iconographical scholarship remains highly dense and specialized, some analyses began to attract a much wider audience; for example, Panofsky's theory (now generally out of favor with specialists) is that the writing on the rear wall in *The Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck turned the painting into the record of a marriage contract. Holbein's *The Ambassadors* has been the subject of books for a general market with new theories as to its iconography; as well as being a double portrait, the painting contains a still life of several meticulously rendered objects, the meaning of which is the cause of much debate. The most notable and famous of Holbein's symbols in the work is the distorted skull which is placed in the bottom center of the composition. The skull, rendered in anamorphic perspective , another invention of the Early Renaissance , is speculated to have been a reminder of death and mortality.



Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434: The iconography in this work has historically been the subject of debate due to its many signifiers. Some scholars have theorized that the painting was actually a marriage contract due to the writing on the wall in the background.

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3.3: Art in Society

Religion as a Theme

Christian, Buddhist, and Islamic artistic traditions have used elements of symbolism, narrative, ritual, iconoclasm, and authorship to express the tenets of their beliefs throughout history.

Learning Objectives

Summarize the history and elements of Christian, Buddhist, and Islamic art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Christian sacred art is produced in an attempt to illustrate, supplement, and portray, in tangible form , the principles of Christianity; most Christian art is built around themes familiar to the intended observer.
- Buddhist art followed believers as the dharma spread and evolved in each new host country. It developed to the north through Central Asia and into Eastern Asia to form the Northern branch of Buddhist art; and to the east as far as Southeast Asia to form the Southern branch of Buddhist art.
- Islamic art prohibited the depiction of representational images in religious art . Therefore, the naturally decorative nature of Arabic script led to the use of calligraphic decorations, which usually involved repeating geometrical patterns that expressed ideals of order and nature.
- Religion and spirituality has been a theme in art throughout history and throughout many areas of the world, from Hinduism and Judaism to indigenous spiritual practices.

Key Terms

- **iconoclasm**:The deliberate destruction of religious icons and other symbols or monuments, usually with religious or political motives.
- **religious art**:Artistic imagery using religious inspiration and motifs, often intended to uplift the mind to the spiritual.

Religious art is art that makes use of religious inspiration and/or motifs . It is often intended to uplift the mind to the spiritual or communicate the principles of the religion. While incredibly large and varied individually, we can identify certain elements that Christian, Buddhist, and Islamic artistic traditions have used to express the tenets of their beliefs using symbolism , ritual , iconoclasm , and authorship.

Christian Art

Christian art is typically produced in order to illustrate the various principles and narratives of the religion. Throughout time, most Christian sects have used art to some extent, though there have been definite periods of iconoclasm within the history of the religion. Most Christian art alludes to themes that are familiar to a practicing Christian, such as the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus or the crucifixion. While Christianity is a monotheistic religion, Christians believe God is triune, meaning that the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are in one union in which each figure is also wholly God. Most Christian art focuses on Jesus, particularly at the Crucifixion or stories from the Bible, while the Holy Spirit is often depicted as a dove or tongue of fire. God as the Father of Jesus is rarely visually depicted.

Christianity has historically made use of an elaborate iconographic system, whereby each saint is associated with a particular object or animal. For example, Saint Peter is depicted with keys and Saint Patrick is depicted with a shamrock in order to quickly convey narratives to potentially illiterate audiences.



Virgin and Child. Wall painting from the early catacombs, Rome, 4th century.: One of the most common Christian themes is that of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus.

Buddhist Art

Buddhist art originated on the Indian subcontinent following the historical life of Siddhartha Gautama, also known as Gautama Buddha, in the sixth to fifth century BCE, evolving via contact with other cultures as it spread throughout Asia and the world. Buddhist art followed believers as the dharma spread, adapted, and evolved in each new host country. It developed to the north through Central Asia and into Eastern Asia to form the Northern branch of Buddhist art and to the east as far as Southeast Asia to form the Southern branch of Buddhist art. In India, Buddhist art flourished and even influenced the development of Hindu art, while Tibetan Buddhist art was created as a meditation practice. An important example of Tibetan meditation art is the sand mandala , made and used by monks for meditation.

Thematically, Buddhist art is typically comprised of devotional works depicting mythology and narratives associated with the Buddha and bodhisattvas . There is great variation in the types of Buddhist art as the religion is so vast. Some Buddhist art contains animist themes, meaning the depiction of natural elements (animals, nature, earth) as spiritual entities. The creation of art has traditionally been considered both a meditation itself, as well as a method to produce an object to aid others in meditation. Works are rarely, if ever, signed by the artist or group of artists, as the art-making process is considered sacred and communal.



Sand mandala: An example of Tibetan meditation art is the sand mandala, made by monks and used in meditation.

Islamic Art

Islamic art prohibits representational images in religious art, and evolved to be comprised mainly of calligraphic decorations and repetitive geometric patterns. Intended to express the ideals of order and of nature, these geometric patterns are used to adorn religious architecture, carpets, manuscripts, and other art objects. Sacred Islamic art reflects a worldview focused on spiritual essence as opposed to physical form.

Calligraphy is the most highly regarded and most fundamental element of Islamic art. The employment of calligraphy as ornament had a definite aesthetic appeal but often also included an underlying talismanic component. Geometric patterns make up one of the three non-figurative types of decoration in Islamic art, which also includes calligraphy and vegetal patterns. Abstract designs not only adorn the surfaces of monumental Islamic architecture but also function as the major decorative element on a vast array of objects of all types.



Islamic calligraphy: Eighteenth century writing in Ottoman calligraphy, depicting the phrase “In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Gracious”.

The Market

The key components of the art market are the gallery, curator, dealer, consultant, and collector.

Learning Objectives

Summarize the roles of the gallery, curator, dealer, consultant, and collector in the art market

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- The art market is an economic ecosystem that relies not only on supply and demand, but also on the fabrication of a work's predicted future monetary and/or cultural value .
- The primary art market refers to art that enters the market for the first time. The secondary market refers to artworks that have been sold at least once before.
- An art dealer is a person or company who buys and sells works of art.
- Art galleries are commercial or privately funded businesses that deal in artworks, typically made by contemporary artists.
- The curator is the manager or director of the gallery who traditionally programs the space and organizes art shows.
- Art fairs act as conventions or large-scale shows where galleries display the work of select artists whom they represent.

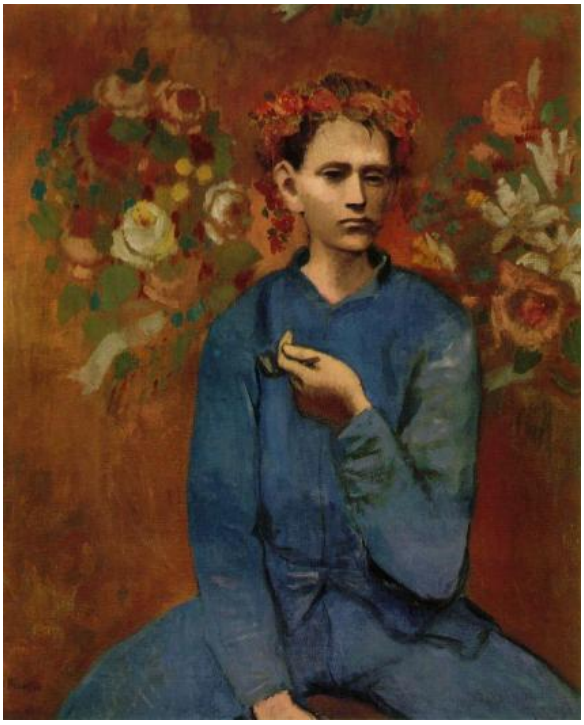
Key Terms

- **nonprofit**:An organization that exists for reasons other than to make a profit, such as a charitable, educational, or service organization.
- **curator**:A person who manages, administers, or organizes a collection, either independently or employed by a museum, library, archive, or zoo.

The art market is an economic ecosystem that relies not only on supply and demand, but on the fabrication of a work's predicted future monetary and/or cultural value. The art market can appear somewhat unclear, since artists do not make art with the sole intention of selling it, and buyers often have no idea of the value of their purchase.

The art market is made up of two parts: the primary market and the secondary market. The primary art market refers to art that enters the market for the first time, while the secondary market refers to artworks that have been sold at least once before.

Once a work is sold, it enters the secondary market and the price at which it sold has a direct influence on its subsequent price. For example, the Picasso painting *Garçon à la Pipe* sold for $104.2 million at auction, thereby setting its worth at $104.2 million. Supply and demand affects the secondary market more than the primary market, as contemporary art with no market history relies on speculative analysis to determine its value.



Picasso, *Garçon à la Pipe*, 1905: Picasso's "*Garçon à la Pipe* sold for, and is thereby valued at, $104.2 million.

The important players in the art market are the gallery, curator, dealer, consultant, and collector. Art galleries are commercial or privately funded businesses that deal in artworks, made by contemporary or historical artists. Nonprofit galleries are typically a step above commercial galleries, and include museums and galleries that are funded by the government or charity that do not sell artwork, such as the Tate Modern.

The curator is generally the manager of the gallery and the person who programs the space and organizes art shows. Curators at commercial galleries may have the responsibility of selling work, while those at museums generally maintain the organizational aspects of exhibitions.

Art dealers are persons or companies who buy and sell works of art. They typically seek out artists to represent while simultaneously building relationships with collectors and museums to whom they might be able to sell the work. Dealers are often able to anticipate market trends, and some prominent dealers might be able to influence the taste of the market. Many dealers specialize in a particular style , region, or time period and travel internationally to exhibitions, auctions, artists' studios, and art fairs to pick up new work. An example of a highly notable art dealer is Larry Gagosian, who also owns Gagosian Gallery, a highly influential art gallery.

Art fairs act as conventions or large-scale shows where galleries display the work of select artists whom they represent and are important to the structure of the contemporary art market. Prominent art fairs include Art Basel, Scope, Frieze Art Fair, NADA, and the Armory Show. The tradition of selling art at auction dates back to the 17th century and continues to thrive today. Art auctions deal in the most highly valued of art, such as works by Picasso, Manet, Jeff Koons, and Andy Warhol. The leading auction houses are Christie's and Sotheby's.

National Pride

Art can be used to advance nationalistic goals by providing a state or nation with political and social legitimacy.

Learning Objectives

Illustrate the relationship between certain types of artwork and national pride

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Romantic nationalism refers to the phenomenon by which a state derives power from the unity of those it governs, whether it be through culture , religion, customs, language, or race.
- Romantic nationalism was a key component of Romanticism as well as certain post-Enlightenment philosophies.
- National anthems, national epics, and national treasures are part of the language of Romantic nationalism, and date back to the 18th and 19th centuries.
- Today, cultural heritage—both tangible and intangible—is regarded as highly valuable.
- A "national treasure" refers to shared culture which has been deemed exceptionally valuable.
- Governments influence the artistic output of their regions by presenting grants and awards to artists whose careers they wish to support.

Key Terms

- **worldview**:The totality of one's beliefs about reality.
- **national treasure**:A person, place, or object that is deemed of great value to an entire nation, usually due to its cultural significance.

Art can be used to advance nationalistic goals by providing a state or nation with political and social legitimacy. "Romantic nationalism" refers to the phenomenon by which a state derives power from the unity of those it governs, whether it be through culture, religion, customs, language, or race. Romantic nationalism was a key component of Romanticism as well as certain post-Enlightenment philosophies that focused on the development of national language, folklore, and traditional customs. This form of nationalism arose in reaction to imperial and dynastic hegemony , which acquired legitimacy not from the bottom-up but from the

top-down; in other words, from the authority down to the people. National anthems, national epics, and national treasures are part of the language of Romantic nationalism, and date back to the 18th and 19th centuries.

After the 1870s, Romantic nationalism became a very familiar movement in the arts that allowed for a form of reinterpretation of the past, without being considered merely historicist. Nationalist movements for the separation of Finland and the kingdom of Bavaria from Germany proved successful, Czech and Serb nationalism created conflict, Welsh and Irish tongues experienced a poetic revival, and the Zionist movement both revived Hebrew and began immigration to Israel. In the first few decades of the 20th century, Romantic nationalism had exerted an important influence on political events. The belief that nation states forming around unities in culture and ethnicity was in some sense "natural" was prominently held. After the Second World War, however, Romantic nationalism took on a darker tone .

Some degree of art-based national pride still exists today. The age-old notion of the state gaining political prowess through its artistic output still holds true. Cultural heritage—both tangible and intangible—is regarded as highly valuable. It is not uncommon for museums and art galleries to be owned by the state, thereby imparting biased and/or nationalistic world views on exhibitions. A "national treasure" refers to shared culture which has been deemed exceptionally valuable and could be a skilled musician, such as Yo-Yo Ma, or a cultural object of great value , such as Britain's Bayeux tapestry . Governments influence the artistic output of their regions by presenting grants and awards to artists whose careers they wish to support—a model which is not unlike the dynastic patronage common throughout Europe in the past.



Bayeux Tapestry: The Bayeux Tapestry is an embroidered cloth—not an actual tapestry—nearly 70 metres (230 ft) long, which depicts the events leading up to the Norman conquest of England concerning William, Duke of Normandy and Harold, Earl of Wessex (later King of England) and culminating in the Battle of Hastings.

Museums and Private Collections

Museums and private collections are engaged in both the collection and display of works of art.

Learning Objectives

Discuss the history and role of museums and private collections in the consumption of art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Early museums began as the private collections of wealthy families and individuals.
- "Cabinets of curiosity," or cabinets that held collections of artifacts and art objects, were the beginnings of museums and private collections.
- The majority of significant museums were opened to the public in the 18th century Enlightenment Era, such as the Louvre and the Hermitage Museum.
- Numerous art works in museums today were donated from private collections.

- It is not uncommon to see a note next to a work of art in a temporary museum exhibition, stating that it is on loan from a particular private collection.

Key Terms

- **engaged**:Attached to a wall or sunk into it halfway.
- **Enlightenment**:A philosophical movement in 17th- and 18th-century Europe; the Age of Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, emphasized rationalism.
- **conservation**:The act of preserving, guarding, or protecting; the keeping (of a thing) in a safe or entire state; preservation.

Museums are institutions that collect art objects and make them available for public viewing through either permanent or temporary exhibitions. A museum does not sell works of art, but essentially holds them in public trust, and engages in varying levels of education and conservation practices. Private collections are privately owned works of art which may or may not be available for viewing by the public. Museums and private collections are both engaged in the collection and display of works of art.

Early museums began as the private collections of wealthy families and individuals. Originally, only nobility collected art, but soon the wealthy classes began to adopt the habit of collecting and displaying archaeological and art objects in their salons and living rooms. “Cabinets of curiosity,” or cabinets that held these collections of artifacts and art objects, became commonplace, and were the beginnings of museums and private collections. Often, these private collections were available for viewing by the so-called “respectable” public, but the majority did not become open to the public until the 18th century.

The majority of significant museums were opened to the public in the 18th century, or the Enlightenment era, a time known for its pursuit and dissemination of knowledge throughout society. The arts were especially important during the Enlightenment and viewed as a deeply noble pursuit. The Grand Tour , which became very popular during this time, solidified the habit of collecting works for display from these trips abroad. Many of the most significant private collections of art were opened to the public in the 18th century, such as the Uffizi gallery in Florence, Italy; The Louvre in Paris, France; and The Hermitage Museum, founded in 1764 by Catherine the Great.



The Louvre, Paris: The Louvre museum in Paris was a private collection opened to the public in the 18th century.

Numerous art works in museums today were in fact donations from private collections. In addition, commonly a note is posted next to a work of art in a temporary museum exhibition stating that it is on loan from a particular private collection. Currently, some private collections remain private, while some are available for public viewings. The Frick Collection in New York City is one of

the preeminent small art museums in the city. Housed in the mansion of its owner, Henry Clay Frick, the collection includes old master paintings by Jan van Eyck, Fragonard, Rembrandt, and others.

Preservation and Restoration

Preservation and restoration is a profession devoted to the conservation of cultural heritage, such as works of art, for future generations.

Learning Objectives

Examine the profession of preserving and restoring art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- The goal of the conservator is to attempt to maintain cultural heritage objects as close to their original condition as possible, for as long as possible.
- The tradition of conservation is considered by most to have begun in 1565, with the restoration of the Sistine Chapel frescoes .
- Today, all museums employ teams of conservators to keep their collections up to date, conduct frequent tests, and engage in analysis and documentation.
- Conservators are often involved in what is termed “preventative conservation,” which refers to protecting art and cultural works from damage from environmental conditions, such as temperature, humidity, and exposure to light.
- A guiding principle of conservation is the idea of “reversibility”; that is, any intervention with the object should be fully reversible.
- “Interventive conservation” refers to any act that involves a direct interaction between the conservator and the cultural material, such as cleaning, stabilizing, repairing, or replacing of parts.

Key Terms

- **fresco**:In painting, the technique of applying water-based pigment to wet or fresh lime mortar or plaster.
- **conservator**:A professional who works on the conservation and restoration of objects, particularly artistic objects.

Preservation and restoration is a profession devoted to the conservation of cultural heritage, such as works of art, for future generations. The activities involved in this profession include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventative conservation. The goal of the conservator is to attempt to maintain cultural heritage objects as close to their original condition as possible, for as long as possible. The conservator acts as a sort of steward for these objects, which range from archaeological to artistic.

The tradition of conservation is considered by most to have begun in 1565, with the restoration of the Sistine Chapel frescoes. During the 19th century, the fields of science and art became somewhat intertwined, and scientific processes were used to care for artistic objects. Today, all museums employ teams of conservators to keep their collections up-to-date, conduct frequent tests, and engage in analysis and documentation. In addition, numerous organizations create standardized methodologies for the conservation of art objects, such as the International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works and the American Institute for Conservation.



A painting, before and after restoration: This before-and-after image of a painting and frame exemplifies how art restoration can restore an art work to its original state.

The conservator's activities are guided by ethical standards. They must choose if, when, and how to alter a work of art in order to bring it closer to its original state. Since the original state is often beyond the conservator's lifetime, a certain degree of guesswork is required. Conservators are often involved in what is termed "preventative conservation," which refers to protecting art and cultural works from damage from environmental conditions, such as temperature, humidity, and exposure to light. This is why, for example, it is common to see textiles or photography exhibited in dimly-lit galleries.

A guiding principle of conservation is the idea of "reversibility"; that is, any intervention with the object should be fully reversible, and the object should be able to be returned to its original state. "Interventive conservation" refers to any act that involves a direct interaction between the conservator and the cultural material, such as cleaning, stabilizing, repairing, or replacing of parts. The conservator is required to fully justify any work of this sort and to complete documentation of the process before and after. Examples of interventive conservation include securing flaking paint and the tinted varnish treatment, whereby the restorer applies a tinted varnish over the original varnish, giving the illusion that spots on a work have been repainted.

Conflicts

Destruction, mislabeling, appropriation, and repossession can contribute to conflicts surrounding the preservation of art.

Learning Objectives

Summarize the events that can contribute to conflicts in terms of the preservation of art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- War, political unrest, accidents, and disaster are the typical outside factors that contribute to the non- preservation of art.
- Looting refers to when art is stolen during such times of conflict.
- Art repatriation refers to the process of returning artworks to their rightful owners.
- The use, or appropriation of, art has inspired much controversy and contributed to cultural subjugation. A prime example of appropriation and subjugation is seen in the appropriation of sacred Native American images, iconography , and sculptures for commercial use by non-natives.
- Copyright can give the creator of an original work exclusive rights to it, usually for a limited time.

Key Terms

- **Copyright**:The right by law to be the entity which determines who may publish, copy, and distribute a piece of writing, music, picture, or other work of authorship.
- **appropriation**:The use of pre-existing objects or images with little or no transformation applied to them.

While institutions and owners do their best to preserve works of art, it is not uncommon for conflicts to arise due to issues related to ownership, human error, destruction, and appropriation. War, political unrest, accidents, and disaster are the typical outside factors that contribute to preservation conflicts when it comes to works of art.

Ownership conflicts are common, especially during times of unrest, such as war, when there is a higher potential for unethical behavior. Art is often stolen, or looted, during periods of conflict, as well as destroyed. Plunder, appropriation, and spoliation are related terms that describe the process of looting. During World War II, the Nazis looted a lot of European art, much of which was eventually repatriated, or returned to, its rightful owners.

Appropriation is a complex issue in art. The appropriation of Native American iconography, sacred images, and sculptures for commercial use by non-natives has been a source of controversy, contributing to cultural subjugation. The Kachina doll, for example, is a sacred Hopi sculpture that was traditionally meant to be seen only during specific Hopi ritual events. Many commercial replicas have been created to sell to tourists, altering the original intent of the object.

Appropriation has been embraced in certain Western art movements. Dadaist and Surrealist works, for example, typically utilize a great deal of appropriation, as seen in Marcel Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.*



Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919: *L.H.O.O.Q.* is an example of appropriation deemed acceptable in art.

A copyright can give the creator of an original work exclusive rights to it, usually for a limited time. However, after that time is up, the work of art might be appropriated and used by others, thereby creating conflict. The internet has further complicated issues surrounding ownership and appropriation, especially in art.

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3.4: Historical Context

Context of Creation

The political, socioeconomic, and cultural setting that a work of art is created in will affect how it is perceived within art history.

Learning Objectives

Recognize the importance of an artwork's context of creation to art history

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Patronage of the arts, and art history by extension, has been used throughout history to endorse the ambitions and agenda of the dominant power of any given age. Art history is the academic study of objects of art in their historical development and stylistic contexts (i.e., genre , design, form , and style).
- Art conveys political, religious, and philosophical themes and judgments that arise as much from the artist's environment as they do from his or her creative impulse.
- Some of the contextual forces that shape artists and their work are their teachers and the influences of preceding styles; their patrons and their demands; their audiences; and their general socioeconomic, political, and cultural climate.

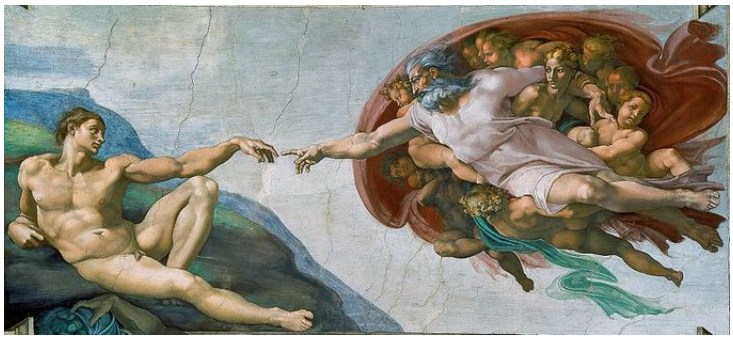
Key Terms

- **iconography**:The branch of art history which studies the identification, description, and the interpretation of the content of images.
- **oeuvre**:The complete body of an artist's work.

Art has existed almost as long as humankind itself and serves as a vehicle for the expression and communication of ideas and emotions. The canon of art history, however, has historically conveyed the political, religious, and philosophical ideals of the dominant power. Art history categorizes artworks and theories with a heavy reliance on the context or environment that the artwork was created in (i.e., its political, social, cultural, and economic settings).

Art history is the academic study of art objects in their historical development and stylistic contexts (i.e., genre, design, form, and style). A work of art from a particular historical period can be treated as an original source of information that was created at the time under study, and provides information about that time. Art historians study the contextual forces that shaped artists and their oeuvres , including their teachers and the influences of preceding styles; their patrons and their demands; their audiences; and their general socioeconomic, political, and cultural climate. These factors produce and influence different artistic styles and iconography , which are characteristic of their age and geographical location with reference to visual appearance, technique, and form.

In many ways, the historical backbone of art history is a celebratory chronology of beautiful creations of art commissioned by religious or civic institutions or wealthy individuals. Patronage of the arts has been used throughout history to endorse the ambitions and agenda of these institutions and individuals, and has been particularly important in the creation of religious art . For example, the Roman Catholic Church was an enthusiastic sponsor of the arts that resulted in a tremendous outpouring of architecture, painting, sculpture , and decorative crafts in medieval and Renaissance Europe.



The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel ceiling: Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City under the patronage of Pope Julius II between 1508 and 1512.

Intended Context of Reception

Art's context of reception depends on a variety of circumstances, both on the part of the artist as well as the artistic community the artist is participating in.

Learning Objectives

Identify the non-motivated, as well as motivated, factors that have given rise to art

Key Takeaways

Key Points

- Art arises from a combination of non-motivated factors driven by the intrinsic human impulse towards harmony and creativity as well as motivated factors, which consciously aim to communicate specific messages to other individuals.
- Art may be used to evoke particular emotions or moods, for social inquiry and political change, for questioning and criticizing society, or as a means of propaganda or commercial advertisement for influencing popular conceptions.
- Religious art uses religious inspiration and themes in order to illustrate the principles of the religion and to provide spiritual instruction to audiences.
- Patronage of the arts was typically used as a means of expressing and endorsing political, social, and cultural agendas and of displaying personal prestige. Works of art commissioned by wealthy patrons usually reflect their desires and aims.

Key Terms

- **patron**:An influential, wealthy person who supports an artist, craftsman, scholar, or aristocrat.
- **motif**:A recurring or dominant element in a work of art.

Art's context of reception depends on a variety of circumstances, both on the part of the artist as well as the artistic community and climate that the artist is participating in. Throughout human history, art has been created across a range of media for many different reasons and to serve many different functions. Some of these purposes are intrinsic to the human instinct for harmony and balance, as well as the human desire to experience mysterious things and express the human imagination. Art can transcend the concept of utility or external purpose. These ideas are called the non-motivated purposes of art. However, art also comes from intentional, conscious actions that aim towards specific external goals, and those qualify as the motivated purposes of art. Motivated purposes usually arise from the artwork's historical context, which consists of a multitude of different factors, including the social, political, economic, and cultural settings of the period; the artist's patrons; and the artist's intended audience.

Primarily, art is a form of communication, and like most forms of communication, has intents and goals directed toward other people. It may be used for entertainment, seeking to evoke particular emotions or moods in viewers , or for social inquiry and political change by portraying aspects of society in complimentary or critical ways.



Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830: This painting reflects contemporary events, commemorating the July Revolution of 1830, which toppled Charles X of France. A woman personifying liberty leads the people forward over the bodies of the fallen, holding the flag of the French Revolution in one hand and brandishing a musket with the other. The painting reflects the context of the time: namely, a shift towards representing political current events in art.

Similarly, art may also be used as a form of propaganda by subtly influencing popular conceptions, or for commercial purposes, by making specific products more attractive to potential consumers. Religious or sacred art uses religious inspiration and motifs in order to illustrate the principles of a religion in a tangible form, and is often intended to provide spiritual instruction and connection with believers.



Sandro Botticelli, *Madonna and Child with Eight Angels*, 1478: An example of religious art, this painting was commissioned by the Catholic Church during the Renaissance. Like a great deal of religious art, the painting is meant to communicate the spiritual beauty of the religious concept echoed in the aesthetic beauty of an oil painting. The work reflects the context of its time, in which art was driven nearly exclusively by religious institutions and used to illustrate and provide instruction about the principles of the religion.

Through the course of history, much of art has traditionally been patronized by wealthy and powerful individuals, including rulers and aristocrats, as well as various civic and religious institutions. Patronage of the arts was typically used as a means of expressing and endorsing political, social, and cultural agendas and of displaying personal prestige. Works of art commissioned by wealthy patrons usually reflect their desires and aims.

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3.5: Socio-cultural Contexts

5.2.1 Historical Context

We can learn about the historical context to help us interpret the content and understand the meaning of two seventeenth-century Dutch paintings. Willem Claesz. Heda (1594-1680, Netherlands) created *Still Life with a Gilt Cup* in 1635, and Jan Davidsz de Heem painted *Still Life with Flowers* around 1660. (Figures 5.1 and 5.2) Heda lived in his native Haarlem his entire life; de Heem was born in Utrecht but traveled in the Netherlands and then lived in Antwerp for the majority of his career, c. 1635 to 1667. He briefly returned to Utrecht but settled back in Antwerp in the 1670s where he remained until his death.



Figure 5.1 | *Still Life with Gilt Goblet*
Artist: Willem Claeszoon Heda
Author: Web Gallery of Art
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Although depicting different types of things, each of these paintings is a **still life**, an arrangement of objects both made by humans and found in nature, such as flowers, fruit, insects, sea creatures, and animals from the hunt. A still life falls into a subject category known as **genre** subjects or scenes of everyday life. Both Heda and de Heem specialized in painting still lifes that were beautifully arranged and stunningly lifelike. Each was well known for his ability to depict a variety of textures and surfaces often displayed side-by-side, as we can see here, to create a dazzling and sumptuous visual array.

There are a number of things going on in the Netherlands in the 1600s known as the Dutch Golden Age that can help explain why Heda and de Heem included some of the objects in their paintings. What is today the Netherlands (or Holland) and Belgium were together ruled first by the Dukes of Burgundy, the Burgundians, beginning in 1433 and then by Charles V of the Habsburg family in 1506. Charles V left the Netherlands in 1515, however, to become King of Spain. Tension created by family members who remained in place to rule led to friction with the Dutch and eventually to revolt beginning in 1566. At the same time, the Protestant Reformation that originated in Wittenberg, Germany, under Martin Luther in 1517 had spread through much of northern Europe, including parts of the Netherlands. Followers of the new Protestant faith were at first tolerated by the Catholic Spanish rulers, but they were soon treated as heretics, and their faith was seen as a rebellion to be crushed. William I, Prince of Orange, a Dutch nobleman, turned away from his position in the court of the Habsburg rulers to lead his country into the Dutch War for Independence from Spain, more commonly known as the Eighty Years War (1568-1648). In 1581, the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands were declared independent, forming what we still know as Holland today. The southern area that remained under Catholic Spanish rule was known as Flanders and is modern Belgium. Fighting continued on and off between the Dutch and Spanish until 1618 when they both became embroiled in a larger European War known as the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). With the signing of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the Spanish crown officially acknowledged the republic of Holland.

In the midst of this ongoing turmoil over politics and religion, as well as decades of disruption and destruction caused by war, the Netherlands also experienced a time of tremendous economic growth, revolutionary scientific exploration, dominance in worldwide trade, and flourishing of the arts. The rise of the merchant class (equivalent to today's middle class) led to the spread of education and wealth among new segments of society. Their knowledge of and appreciation for art, along with their discretionary income, in turn led to increased patronage. Patrons of art were not looking to purchase sculptures and paintings for churches, however, as Protestants do not embellish their houses of worship; they do not adorn the word of God as found in the Bible. This led to interest in new subjects in painting, such as genre and still life painting, as well as landscapes, city views, portraits, and religious subjects in works meant to hang in the home.

The subject of Heda's painting, *Still Life with a Gilt Cup*, is ostensibly the remains of a meal of oysters and bread, but it is even more about all the objects accompanying the food. (Figure 5.1) The tin plates and open-lidded pewter pitcher are relatively simply fashioned and could have been made by local craftsmen. But the remaining items, including a spiral ribbed clear glass cruet for oil or vinegar behind the tin bowl of oysters, the green glass wine römer, or goblet, decorated with **prunts** (applied blobs of molten glass, here drawn into points), and the tall, heavily ornamented, and gilded vessel topped by a lid with a figure of a warrior, are all

luxury goods. They indicate wealth and good taste, and they allude to Holland's importance as a nation of traders who import beautiful objects from around the world.



Figure 5.2 | *Vase of Flowers*
Artist: Jan Davidszoon de Heem
Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

We are not meant to look at this feast for the eyes and simply congratulate ourselves on our success and prosperity, though. The fact is the feast is over, and all we have here are the remains of what has too quickly passed. The richly decorated silver berkemeier, a wide-mouthed drinking vessel with a slender stem, is overturned. The oysters are a delicacy that retain their freshness and appeal only briefly, and the lemon, while beautiful, is actually bitter and will soon dry out. These are reminders that life is fleeting. No matter what material riches and comforts one accumulates on earth, it is more important to prepare one's soul for life everlasting.

In a similar fashion, in *Still Life with Flowers* de Heem sets before us, teeming with life and in abundant disarray, the beauty and bounty of nature. (Figure 5.2) But he also shows the swift passing of the seasons by depicting flowers, fruits, and vegetables that bloom and ripen throughout the year. The tulips from highly prized and costly bulbs imported by the Dutch from the Ottoman Empire (modern Turkey) honeysuckle, roses, carnations, peas, grapes, and corn introduced to Europe from the Americas are among the profusion of colors and forms that de Heem unrealistically depicts as all in season at the same time. The viewer would instead know that long before the orange carnation blossomed in the fall, the blood-red striped tulip would have withered in the spring. De Heem is reminding us in this ***vanitas*** (Latin: vanity) still life of our own mortality and the transience of life in the face of certain death.

Both paintings' messages reflect the importance in the Protestant faith, as practiced in Holland at the time, of the believer's direct connection to God without the need for intercessors. The faithful do not need the word of God to be interpreted for them, and the messages of God are everywhere. Both paintings are celebrations of riches and pleasures of life, but they are also reminders of its brevity and the unimportance of earthly possessions and human achievements in the face of eternity. So, while the works demonstrate the Dutch viewers' pride in themselves and their young nation's accomplishments in the face of tremendous obstacles, they also carry a word of caution and a reminder to be vigilant.

5.2.2 Social Context

Lilly Martin Spencer (1822-1902, USA) painted *Conversation Piece* around 1851-1852. (Figure 5.3) A **genre painting**, it depicts an everyday scene of a mother holding her infant in her lap while the father stands beside them playfully dangling some cherries above the baby's eager grasp. It is a quiet scene of family life, a moment of contentment and peace, with the dining table not yet cleared after a meal adding an even greater sense of intimacy and informality. Spencer was the only prominent female painter at that time in the United States, and the majority of her works are narrative genre pieces such as this one. They are scenes of domestic life, often suggesting a story told through the setting, the arrangement and gesture of the figures, and their facial expressions.

Elements in Spencer's work often seem to reflect her personal life. The artist depicted herself and her husband in *Conversation Piece*, as she did in many of her paintings. Not only was it unusual that she was a successful professional painter, when she married Benjamin Rush Spencer, he took on the household duties and aided his wife in pursuing her career. Over the course of their long (and what is believed to be happy) marriage, while also bearing thirteen children and raising seven to adulthood, Spencer remained the breadwinner of the family.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, a number of changes had been introduced into American industry and commerce that had far reaching effects on the roles women, men, and children played in the home and in the labor force. The advent of new machinery and production methods in the textile industry, for example, generated a need for mill workers that in turn fostered the growth and spread of urban centers. At the same time, both those who owned and managed the mill factories as well as those who worked in them became part of a wage-based economy, and the demand for goods and services to support them rose accordingly. In New



Figure 5.3 | *Conversation Piece*
Artist: Lilly Martin Spencer
Source: Met Museum
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England, the majority of the mill workers were young women who had been recruited from rural areas; the wages they earned were often saved in anticipation of marriage or to supplement their family's income. But critics feared the economic and social independence these young women gained would turn them against the often hard and isolated farm lives they left behind, and indeed many chose not to return. The greatest apprehension, however, was these women would turn away from their rightful place in the private sphere of home.

The growing industrialism of American society impacted men and their roles within and outside the home, as well. Men primarily worked in the public sphere, that is, outside the home in areas such as manufacturing, business, or commerce. Their roles were in sharp contrast to the domestic duties and roles of wife and mother played by women. This separation of obligations and expectations led to rigid gender roles in which both women and men were contained. The roles confined the woman to the protective environment of home, while the man sheltered her as he faced the harsh demands outside.

In Spencer's painting, the woman represents the feminine ideal of a nurturing and content mother. But rather than showing a father who holds himself apart from the womanly, domestic sphere—as was far more common at the time Spencer depicts the man in an equally caring and warm role. An oval is formed by the mother's bent head and arm which extends from her hand supporting the baby's head through the baby's upraised arm to the father's bent arm, his bowed head, and his left arm resting on the back of the mother's chair. At odds with many at the time who believed men and women existed in separate spheres, Spencer draws the family into one circle.

American industrialism worked hand-in-hand with American ingenuity. Steamboat routes on the Mississippi River and its tributaries substantially contributing to the growth of settlements and cities from New Orleans to Pittsburgh began in 1811. The first steamboat to make that run was the *New Orleans* designed by Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston, both key figures in the development of steamboat design and travel. As would be the case with the thousands of steamboats that would traverse the Mississippi over the next century, it was made of wood and propelled by a paddlewheel that was powered by a steam engine; the steam was made by heating water in boilers which had to be watched to avoid pressure building to the point of explosion, a very real and constant danger. In attempts to better travel time between landings or by engaging in races with other steamboats, however, it was not uncommon for the engineer to stoke the fires while keeping the boilers' safety valves closed, allowing steam pressure to build past safe levels.

Although 230 boats were destroyed due to boiler explosions between 1816 and 1848 with the loss of nearly 1,800 lives, one of the great attractions of steamboat travel remained its speed.[1] The excitement and the danger of a steamboat race are captured in a print published by Currier & Ives in 1866, *The Champions of the Mississippi: A Race for the Buckhorns.* (Figure 5.4) Nathaniel Currier (1813-1888, USA) and his brother-in-law James Merritt Ives (1824-1895, USA) formed the company Currier & Ives in 1857. They published black-and-white and hand-colored lithographs on numerous subjects meant to appeal to a broad spectrum of the American public, including landscapes, genre scenes, portraits, depictions of politics and current events, and the latest innovations in science, industry, and the arts.

The firm of Currier & Ives hired well-known artists of the day to create the drawings from which their lithographic prints were made. The artist who drew the *Champions of the Mississippi* was Frances Flora Bond Palmer (1812-1876, USA). Palmer, like Lilly Martin Spencer, supported her family as a full-time artist. Palmer produced hundreds of original drawings in the seventeen years she worked for Currier & Ives, more than any other artist they employed. She printed and hand-colored many of her own works, as well, parts of the lithographic process generally reserved for artists in the firm with less training and expertise. For example, the prints were usually painted in an assembly line, with one artisan applying a single color and passing the work on to the next for another color. That Palmer took part in all phases of creating the prints was an indication of her great skill and versatility.

As was the case with the majority of scenes Palmer created, she did not witness the race between the steamboats *Queen of the West* and *Morning Star* or the cheering crowd on the shore. She depicted numerous such scenes, however, as competitions such as this

were commonplace and prints commemorating them were popular and sold well. The races and the steamboats were a source of pride and a celebration of American ingenuity, competitiveness, and success. For those who owned a print such as *The Champions of the Mississippi*, the vast majority of whom had never seen the river or a steamboat competition, it represented the open possibilities of America's greatest waterway and indomitable spirit. As described by Mark Twain, who grew up in a town on the river's shore and spent four years as a riverboat pilot (1857-1861), there was a nearly magical quality to the allure and excitement of life on the river, especially when a steamboat race was coming. He related in his memoir *Life on the Mississippi* (1883):



Figure 5.4 | *The Champions of the Mississippi - "A Race for the Buckhorns"*
Artist: Frances Flora Bond Palmer
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

In the "flush times" of steam boating, a race between two notoriously fleet steamers was an event of vast importance. The date was set for it several weeks in advance, and from that time forward, the whole Mississippi Valley was in a state of consuming excitement. Politics and the weather were dropped, and people talked only of the coming race.

The chosen date being come, and all things in readiness, the two great steamers back into the stream, and lie there jockeying a moment, and apparently watching each other's slightest movement, like sentient creatures; flags drooping, the pent steam shrieking through safety-valves, the black smoke rolling and tumbling from the chimneys and darkening all the air. People, people everywhere; the shores, the house-tops, the steamboats, the ships, are packed with them, and you know that the borders of the broad Mississippi are going to be fringed with humanity thence northward twelve hundred miles, to welcome these racers.[2]

5.2.3 Personal or Creative Narrative Context

Charles Demuth (1883-1935, USA) painted *The Figure 5 in Gold* in 1928. (Figure 5.5) Demuth met poet and physician William Carlos Williams at the boarding house where they both lived in Philadelphia while studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Demuth's painting is one in a series of portraits of friends, paying homage to Williams and his 1916 poem "The Great Figure":

> *Among the rain and lights I saw the figure 5 in gold on a red firetruck moving tense unheeded to gong clangs siren howls and wheels rumbling through the dark city.*

Williams described the inspiration for his poem as an encounter with a fire truck as it noisily sped along the streets of New York, abruptly shaking him from his inner thoughts to a jarring awareness of what was going on around him. Demuth chose to paint his portrait of Williams not as a likeness but with references to his friend, the poet. The dark, shadowed diagonal lines radiating from the center of his painting, punctuated by bright white circles, capture the jolt of the charging truck accompanied by the clamor of its bells. The accelerating beat of the figure 5 echoes the pounding of Williams's heart as he was startled. It was the sight of the number in gold that Williams was first aware of at the scene, and Demuth uses the pulsing 5 to symbolically portray his friend, surrounded by the rush of red as bright as blood with his name, Bill, above as if flashing in red neon.

For Demuth, that connection between his friend and his poetry told us far more about who Williams *was* than his physical appearance. A traditional portrait would show us what Williams looked like, but Demuth wanted to share with the viewer the experience of the poem the artist closely identified with his friend so that we would have an inner, deeper understanding of the



Figure 5.5 | *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold*
Artist: Charles Demuth
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

poet. Demuth gave us his personal interpretation of Williams through the story, the narrative, that he tells us with the aid of "The Great Figure."

Georgia O'Keeffe gives us a portrait of the American landscape in a similar way in her painting *Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue* from 1931. (*Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue*, Georgia O'Keeffe:http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/.../search/488694) Throughout the nineteenth century and into the first decades of the twentieth century, the majority of artists depicted the American land through its mountains and forests, farmlands and prairies, rivers and waterfalls: the vast stretches, immense heights, bounty, variety, and majesty of the seemingly endless continent. In this painting, however, O'Keeffe chose to portray the beauty of the United States not through its fertile grasslands or rocky peaks but in the austerity and simplicity of the desert of the American Southwest that she had come to appreciate, as symbolized by the sharp lines of a bleached cow's skull set against patriotic red and blue.

O'Keeffe was born in 1887 near Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. After studying art and working as an art teacher in several areas of the United States, including Chicago, Illinois, Amarillo, Texas, and Columbia, South Carolina, O'Keeffe moved to New York City in 1918.

Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946, USA), a photographer, publisher, and art gallery owner who was instrumental in introducing audiences to and helping them appreciate European and American modernist art in this country in the first decades of the twentieth century, had exhibited O'Keeffe's drawings in his gallery 291 in 1917. The following year she accepted his offer of support so that she could devote herself to painting full-time. After more than ten years in New York, depicting streets and buildings of the city and at the Stieglitz family home on Lake George in upstate New York, O'Keeffe decided to spend the summer of 1929 with friends in Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico.

Painted after that trip, *Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue* shows the artist providing a contrast to traditional and popular landscape views. She is inviting the viewer to contemplate how nature can be daunting and uninviting and to remember the flinty strength of the pioneers who moved across and settled in the demanding climate and terrain of the Southwest. The harshness of that life can be seen in the jagged lines of splintered bone in the skull, a reminder of inevitable death— similar to a seventeenth-century Dutch *vanitas* piece such as de Heem's *Vase of Flowers*. But, the skull was also an object representing life to O'Keeffe:

> *To me they are as beautiful as anything I know. To me they are strangely more living than the animals walking around...The bones seem to cut sharply to the center of something that is keenly alive on the desert even tho' it is vast and empty and untouchable—and knows no kindness with all its beauty.*[3]

5.2.4 Political Context

As was the case with the painting *Pear Blossoms* by Qian Xuan (Figure 1.10), *Bamboo and Rocks* by Li Kan (1245-1320, China) was painted during the Yuan Dynasty when the Mongols ruled China. (Figure 5.6) There are similarities but also important differences between the works. *Pear Blossoms* was painted in 1280, shortly after the Mongols took power, and *Bamboo and Rocks* was painted nearly forty years later in 1318. During that period, the Mongolian leaders made substantial changes in the government, thrusting out those in imperial power and scholar officials, including painters. Those who had been at the top of the social and political hierarchy were now turned away from government positions and looked upon with distrust and distaste.

Although the Mongols appreciated Chinese painting and artists were commissioned to make (or appointed to produce) works for those in power, many were unwilling to paint for the foreign leaders. Kan's painting is interpreted as a reflection on China, its



Figure 5.6 | *Bamboo and Rocks*
Artist: Li Kan
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

people, and its traditions under Mongolian rule. *Bamboo and Rocks* is a pair of scrolls painted with ink and color on silk meant to be hung side-by-side. Unlike *Pear Blossoms*, which is a scroll meant to be unrolled in approximately twelve-inch segments on a table then rolled again to reveal the next segment and finally stored away between viewings, *Bamboo and Rocks* would remain in view hanging on a wall. Both are ink paintings capturing the simplicity of beauty in nature. But the objects depicted also have symbolic meaning going back to ancient Chinese culture. Bamboo symbolizes virtue, grace, and resilience, while rocks symbolize strength and power to endure. In Kan's painting, their contrasting forms, low and curvilinear against upright and angular, balance each other. The artist is indicating that during the Yuan Dynasty, under the rule of the Mongol, the Chinese people would be like bamboo; they would bow but not break in the uncertain climate of the rocky landscape of occupation.



Figure 5.7 | *Plate 15 from "The Disasters of War" (Los Desastres de la Guerra): And there is nothing to be done (Y no hai remedio)*
Artist: Francisco de Goya y Lucientes
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828, Spain) was court painter to King Charles IV from the beginning of his reign in 1789 until Napoleon ousted Charles from his throne in 1808 during the French invasion of Spain. Goya was hired the same year to make a visual record of the bravery of the Spanish people against the onslaught of the French invaders. The impact of what Goya saw, however, changed the direction and tone of the series of prints he made from the unflinching courage of his fellow citizens to despair over the barbarous atrocities committed and merciless suffering endured by all who are trampled in the path of war. He created the series of eighty-two etchings, *The Disasters of War*, between 1810 and 1823. *Y no hai Remedio (And There's Nothing to Be Done)* is the nineteenth print in the series; it reflects the hopelessness of war. (Figure 5.7) There is no escape, nor is there justice. Both civilians and soldiers become de-humanized and numb in the endless slaughter, here in the form of a firing squad.

The print series was not published until 1863, thirty-five years after Goya's death. There are theories why: the artist was fearful of political repercussions, the scenes were too graphic, or the wounds were too painful for public release in the immediate decades after the war. The artist himself gave no explanation. By the time *The Disasters of War* series was printed, the French and Spanish governments that had participated in and ruled immediately after the Peninsular War (1808-1814), as it came to be known, had both been superseded. Goya's documentation of and cry against human self-destruction had no impact at the time of the disasters themselves, but they are still among the most powerful images of political protest ever made.

5.2.5 Scientific Context

Art and science are inextricably linked. The words "technique" and "technology" both originate from the ancient Greek word ***tekhne***, which means art. For the Greeks, both art and science were the study, analysis, and classification of objects and ideas. Through the study of math and art, they arrived at the **golden ratio**: when dividing a line in two parts, the longer part divided by the smaller part is also equal to the whole length divided by the longer part. Expressed algebraically, that can be written as a/b = ab/a. The visual representation of the golden ratio, the Greeks determined, results in the most visually pleasing proportions within and of an object or figure. (Figure 5.8)

Leonardo da Vinci was fascinated by how things work. The mechanics of nature, machinery, and the human body were all worlds to be explored deeply in order to be understood at their most essential, truthful levels. Although he was interested in human anatomy throughout his career, he spent the last twelve years of his life systematically studying and documenting his findings. He began in the winter of 1507-08 with a series of pen-and-ink drawings that he made of a dissection he carried out on an old man. In the winter of 1510-11, he completed additional dissections, probably working with anatomy professor Marcantonio della Torre at the University of Pavia. (Figure 5.9)

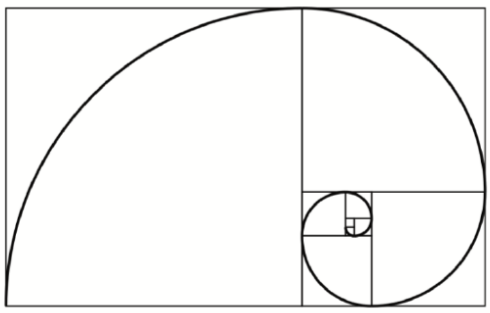


Figure 5.8 | Fibonacci Spiral: The Golden Ratio
Author: User "Dicklyon"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Leonardo intended to include his more than 240 drawings in a treatise on anatomy, but following Marcantonio's death from the plague in 1512 and political upheaval in the city of Milan where Leonardo lived, his focus shifted and he never completed and published his book. When he died in 1519, his drawings and notes on human anatomy along with approximately 6,500 pages from his other notebooks were dispersed and effectively lost to the world for 400 years. Leonardo's insights into such areas as the functioning of the heart and growth of a fetus, all completely accurate, had to be laboriously re-discovered by other artists and scientists in the succeeding centuries.



Figure 5.9 | Anatomical studies of muscles of the arm and shoulder, bones of the foot
Artist: Leonardo da Vinci
Author: User "Discovering da Vinci"
Source: Tumbler
License: Public Domain

Questions that had long intrigued artists and scientists but could not be answered by observation with the naked eye, such as details about a planetary body in space, a specimen under a microscope, or an animal in motion, were finally being answered in the nineteenth century with the invention of photography. Leland Stanford, head of the Union Pacific Railroad, former governor of California, and racehorse owner, in 1872 accepted the challenge to prove whether all four feet of a horse left the ground when galloping. He hired photographer Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904, England, lived USA) to conduct a study of the sequence of movement that is too rapid to be captured by the human eye. Muybridge experimented with setting up cameras along a track to photograph the horse and rider at evenly spaced intervals. He was soon able to prove that indeed all four hooves are in the air when the horse's legs are under its body not when the legs are fully extended to the front and rear as many had thought. (Figure 5.10)

While the first set of photographs Muybridge took for Stanford were lost, the industrialist (who with his wife Jane would found Stanford University in 1885) encouraged the photographer to continue his studies. Muybridge published his findings on the galloping horse in *Scientific American* in 1878. In the aftermath, Muybridge spoke frequently throughout the United States. He was invited to continue his studies at the University of Pennsylvania where his work was valued for the information it would provide in the areas of technology, science, and art. He conducted his photographic experiments there from 1884 to 1887, and the following year he published his book *Animal Locomotion*, which contained 781 photographic plates of a wide variety of motion studies including men, women, children, horses, lions, bison, ostriches, cranes, and cats.

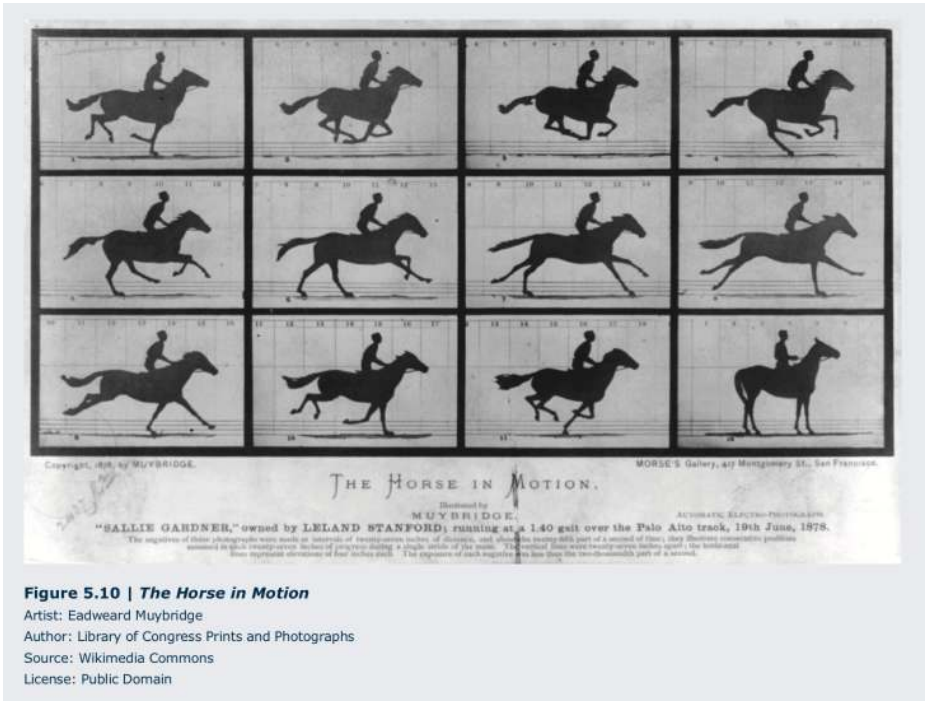


Figure 5.10 | *The Horse in Motion*
Artist: Eadweard Muybridge
Author: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

1. "Steamboats." American Eras. 1997. Encyclopedia.com. (June 22, 2015). http://www.encyclopedia.com/ doc/1G2-2536600971.html
2. Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.), 1883. Accessed from: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/245/245-h/245-h.htm
3. Georgia O'Keeffe, "About myself " in *Georgia O'Keeffe: Exhibition of oils and pastels* (New York: An American Place: 1939).

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3.6: Symbolism and Iconography

Symbolism refers to the use of specific figural or naturalistic images, or abstracted graphic signs that hold shared meaning within a group. A **symbol** is an image or sign that is understood by a group to stand for something. The symbol, however, does not have to have a direct connection to its meaning. For example, the letters of the alphabet, which are abstract graphic signs, are understood by those who use them to have individual sounds and meanings. The users have assigned meaning to them, as letters have no meaning in and of themselves. An example of a naturalistic image is a rose, which in most Western civilizations symbolizes love. When one person gives a rose to another, it is a symbol of the love the person feels.

Iconography is the broader study and interpretation of subject matter and pictorial themes in a work of art. This includes implied meanings and symbolism that are used to convey the group's shared experience and history—its familiar myths and stories. Iconography refers to the symbols used within a work of art and what they mean, or symbolize. For example, in different cultures a snake may stand for evil, temptation, wisdom, rebirth, or the circle of life. A depiction of a snake in a scene with Adam and Eve has specific meanings for those of the Christian faith or others who understand the snake stands for temptation within the context of that subject or story. In Chinese culture, however, a snake represents the power of nature and is said to bring good fortune to those who practice the snake's restraint and elegance of movement.

5.3.1 Changes in Meaning of Symbols and Iconography

While a symbol might have a common meaning for a certain group, it might be used with variations by or hold a different significance for other groups. Let us use the example of a cross. At its core, a cross is a simple intersection of vertical and horizontal lines that could refer to the meeting of celestial and terrestrial elements or forces or could lend itself to other variations of meaning. The cross most frequently associated with Christianity is the Latin Cross, with the long vertical bar intersected by a shorter horizontal one believed by many to be the form of the cross upon which Jesus Christ, the central figure of the faith, was crucified. (Variants of the Cross: http://wpmedia.vancouversun.com/2010...6.crosses1.png) But its simplicity of conception lends itself to various other readings, as well, and in pre Christian use it was related to sacred and cosmic beliefs.



Figure 5.11 | Celtic Cross
Author: User "Sitomon"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.0



Figure 5.12 | Ankh
Author: User "Alexi Helligar"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.0

Within Christian usage, the cross has taken a great number of different of forms, including the equal-armed Greek Cross, favored by the Byzantine Christians; Celtic crosses, with a circular addition to the crossing; X's and upside-down crosses associated with specific Christian **martyrs**, individuals who died for their faith, on such instruments of torture; and many others. In art, we might see them as simple flat graphic works, or decorated in two-dimensional renditions, or as fully developed three-dimensional interpretations, like the numerous grave markers in Irish cemeteries, where they are further embellished with intricate motifs and iconographic depictions of Bible stories. (Figure 5.11)

The Ankh, another cross form, with a looped handle, seems to have been devised by the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of the life-giving power of the Sun. (Figure 5.12) It was one of the numerous pictographic symbols they used both as a separate sign and as part of the hieroglyphic system of writing they developed.

Clearly, many other symbols have various meanings, especially when they are represented as more abstract graphic signs. To read their implications in any particular application will require your considering where it was made and for what specific purposes, as well as how it might have been adopted and turned to different use at that time or later. Sometimes the shifts in meaning may be radical, as in the form of the swastika, an ancient sacred sign used in many different cultures, including India and others throughout Asia, as well as the Near East, and Europe. (Figures 5.13, 5.14, and 5.15) It has historically been a very auspicious sign with implications of good fortune and positive movement, and was therefore adopted for the ground plan for Buddhist stupa worship centers. Of course, in the twentieth century, its appropriation by the Nazi Party as a symbol of the superiority of the Aryan heritage led to very different and now generally negative connotations.

Iconography is often more specific and definitive, with concrete reference to world experiences and, beyond that, to some form of narrative for the group involved. Again, analysis of the pictorial form requires examination of the context in which the artwork was created. We can and must look at the underlying narrative, but, as we shall discuss in the next several chapters, the pictorial expressions evolve both independently of the narrative sources and in response to narrative and artistic change.



Figure 5.13 | Hindu Swastika
Author: User "Masturbis"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 5.14 | Tian Tan Buddha
Author: User "Henry_Wang"
Source: Pixabay.com
License: CC0 Public Domain



Figure 5.15 | The Emblem of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP also known as the Nazi Party)
Author: User "RsVe"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

For example, Christians (more specifically that branch now known as Roman Catholics) debated the "true nature" of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. Among the points of debate was whether Mary was bodily in Heaven with her Son or whether she had to wait until the end of time when the whole of mankind would experience bodily resurrection, that is, at the time of the Second Coming and the Last Judgment, when everyone would have their lifetime of deeds assessed for purposes of learning whether they would spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. These Christian ideas are among those a great amount of art has been devoted to over time.

To illustrate, we can look at differences between two works about Mary and her place and role in Heaven that appeared in church relief sculpture during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These differing ideas focused on the implied elevation of Mary to a divine status, or to her not being seen as divine herself, in which case, the faithful needed to keep a view of her as being in a more subordinate or secondary status. The questions included consideration of Mary as the "Queen of Heaven," who might be ruling alongside her son. At Senlis Cathedral (1153-1181) in France, she was depicted as apparently a co-ruler with Christ, but ensuing theological discussion took issue with this possible over-elevation. (Figure 5.16) So, while the renditions of Mary as the celestial queen continued in popularity, they made it clear that she was only considered to be there at the bidding and will of Christ. This can be seen at Chartres Cathedral in France, where she bows her head to Jesus. (North Portal of Notre-Dame Cathedral: https://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/ chartresnorth/cportal.html)

What we see here, again, is that our full analysis of the artworks we encounter needs a complex approach that includes a variety of visual clues and a wide range of research on the contextual details of its creation and use. In contrast to the longstanding assertion that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," the appropriate interpretation according to the intended symbolism and/or iconography must take the society, culture, and related circumstances into account to accurately reflect its intended meaning or original meaning for viewers. We will be exploring these ideas in greater detail in the next several chapters.

5.3.2 Symbolism, Iconography, and Visual Literacy

Symbols like the cross or the swastika will only have shared meaning for those who agree upon and affirm a specific interpretation, which can be positive or negative for any particular group of people. This specific meaning in symbols is always going to be the case for viewing of any visual expression, whether in simplified graphic sign form or a more detailed pictorial rendition. Additionally, the viewers must also often have some measure of instruction about how to view a particular work so they can understand its meaning more fully.



Figure 5.17 | Seven Sacraments Altarpiece
Artist: Rogier van der Weyden
Author: Web Gallery of Art
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Also noteworthy is that members of any group use art as a means of sharing ideas and sentiment, as well as for expressing and teaching ideology. While the didactic uses of art have often been discussed in terms of instruction for the non-literate, we should recognize that the meanings of pictorial content and the tools used to create the picture must be learned as well. The apparent superficial meanings that are evident through unschooled visual examination do not produce the level of comprehension available in a more fully developed illustration of a tenet of a faith, political message, history lesson, or chart or graph of economic trends. So "visual literacy" should be considered a skill related to verbal and reading literacy for any didactic function. Only members of a group who have been led to understand and perceive the underlying principles will know how to "read" an illustrated message.

For example, we can look at the *Ritual Vase from Warka* (today Iraq) or the *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece* by Rogier van der Weyden. (The Warka Vase: http:// dieselpunk44.blogspot. com/2013/08/the-warka- vase.html) (Figure 5.17) One could likely identify the basic pictorial content of either work, but further knowledge would be needed to analyze them further. If you were a member of the intended audience, you might have a bit more insight into what each artist had created in pictorial terms, but even the initiated viewer would likely have a limited "reading" of the work.

In the case of the *Ritual Vase from Warka*, even if you had lived in ancient Sumer and had been a devotee of the goddess Inanna, you would likely need further instruction about how the carvings on the different registers of the vase were arranged to show the cosmological conception of the created world. That is, one starts at the bottom with the primordial earth and waters, moves to the plants and animals above them drawing sustenance so that they could be harvested and herded by the humans, who then offer part of their gleanings to the goddess serving them from the temple as seen in the upper realm of the middle photograph. This design would be further explained as a neatly **hierarchical** arrangement, in which the levels of the created world were presented in different sizes, according to their relative importance. Additional meanings could be layered upon this cursory explanation with repeated teaching occasions and viewings.

The *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece* was painted by Rogier van der Weyden in a region and an era of tremendously complicated iconography: Flanders during the Late Gothic/Northern Renaissance period. The presentation here includes detailed pictorial description of each of the seven sacraments that marked the stages and stations of Christian life. This symbolism again developed over time, and often in response to theological writings that informed the artist and the viewer about specific meanings. The written sources are detailed and complex, with the pictorial rendition richly reflecting what the well-instructed Christian would know about these important rituals and their effects.

The larger central panel of the **triptych**, or three-part, format was used by the artist to emphasize the Crucifixion as the dominant overarching event that is related to each of the sacraments. Additionally, he provided angels with scrolls to identify them as if speaking to the viewer. So, here the messages are both pictorial and inscribed, and the iconography is a complex program that relates all these ritual events to the whole of the Christian life and faith. Truly, the viewer must be an initiate to discern the meanings behind all the symbolism or a scholar to discover them. Nonetheless, even the casual or uninitiated can read much of what is present in the painting and can identify both familiar elements and those that might lead you to further investigation. This is often the task and the path in interpretation of iconography in art.

5.3.3 Symbolism and Iconography in Mythology and Storytelling

From early on, art contained expressions of mythical accounts that people shared about their beliefs and ways of living. From the time of the first great civilizations, for example, in Egypt, the Near East, China, Japan, and India, artwork related to the stories of

the people. The degree to which any contemporary written sources confirm these interpretations varies, but that these myths had commonly understood meanings for the people for whom they were made is confirmed by both their frequent appearance and their apparent places in their culture's artistic traditions, sometimes over centuries. Artistic iconographic traditions therefore show strong relationships to beliefs and practices known from written sources—although written documentation sometimes does not appear until later times.



Figure 5.18 | Belt Buckle from Sutton Hoo ship burial
Author: User "Jononmac46"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Because early stories were often passed along through oral tales, we do not always have a literary record of them until later times, even after the ideas had been expressed symbolically in pictorial art. An example of this symbolism may be found in the rich **hoard** (a collection of objects) known as the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, found in England and deriving from the early Middle Ages era known as the Migration period (300-700 CE). Although the wooden ship itself has disintegrated, the burial hoard it contained provides details that confirm and broaden our incomplete understating of the adventurous societies of that time and their beliefs about needs for the afterlife. The diverse objects also lend certain insights into the epic tales of such warrior kings as Beowulf, whose story seems to have been a long-standing oral tradition, one perhaps re-told for centuries before being committed to written form. The lavish ornaments, such as this belt buckle and purse cover, give visual testimony to the tales of dragons and heroes like Beowulf through their expressive and intricate patterns and rich materials. (Figures 5.18 and 5.19) The fine metalwork on the purse cover is ***cloisonné***,which is created by affixing gold or metal strips to the back surface, making compartments, that are filled with powder (in this case, ground garnets) and heated to 1,400-1,600 degrees F.



Figure 5.19 | Purse Lid from Sutton Hoo ship burial
Author: User "Jononmac46"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 5.20 | Terracotta Amphora (jar)
Artist: Andokides
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

The art of ancient Greece often showed great concern with the stories of Greek mythology as well. Tales of the gods and warriors abound, including those about great physical or intellectual contest, such as the well-known struggles of Herakles (known as Hercules under the Romans) one of which is seen on this amphora. (Figure 5.20) Such tales were very familiar, and viewers were expected to supply the details of the rest of the story through the parts that were shown. However, the skillful artist can enliven the presentation of the figures with posture, gesture, expression, and such symbolic props as the club and the tripod Herakles holds.

As with literary accounts, the artworks associated with historical and legendary events often include a very wide range of symbols and imagery to help convey ideas. These range from mundane details to grand historical moments, as in the Column of Trajan, nearly 100 feet in height, which commemorates the military campaigns of Roman Emperor Trajan (r. 98-117 CE) against the Dacians (101-102 and 105-106 CE) in 155 scenes. (Figure 5.21) Or as appear in the Bayeux Tapestry, an embroidered cloth 230 feet in length that pictorially recounts the events of the Norman Invasion and Battle of Hastings in 1066. (Figure 5.22) Each of these works shows decisive points in their respective historical events in army operations and in the details of the hard work involved in preparing for battle. (Figures 5.23 and 5.24) In this way, they provide us with glimpses of everyday life in the respective eras alongside specific details about the particular campaigns, the cultures in which they were significant, and the individuals who were key players in the

historical events. The details of arms and armor, organized troops and chaotic fighting, building of defensive structures and devices, moments of victory and defeat, and innumerable other items and activities—all are individually and collectively efficient means of recounting the evolution of the events which, in each of these works, is dramatically developed across a long scrolled compositional field that further emphasizes the lengthy narrative each one progressively disclosed.



Figure 5.21 | The Column of Trajan
Artist: Apollodorus of Damascus
Author: User "Alvesgaspar"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 4.0



Figure 5.22 | Section of the Bayeux Tapestry depicting the Battle of Hastings
Author: User "Thincat"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 5.23 | Detail of Plate XLVI, The Column of Trajan
Artist: Apollodorus of Damascus
Author: User "Gun Powder Ma"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Like many works of public art of the Roman Imperial era, the column glorifies not only Trajan (the base of the column was designed to contain his ashes) and his deeds, but also the ideas of imperial rule, the role of conquest in expanding the Empire, and the skilled work of Roman soldiers in battlements and tactics. By contrast, the Bayeux Tapestry has more emphasis on the actual tumultuous battle scenes replete with mounted cavalry in chain mail and elaborate helmets but it also includes a great deal more sense of historical context: events leading up to the 1066 Battle of Hastings after the death of King Edward the Confessor (r. 1042-1066) and his burial in the newly refurbished Westminster Abbey he had adopted as his royal church. Both of these works also include inscriptions that explicate ideas and events, as well as serve to further present the political messages about the battles presented on the tapestry in a sort of scene-by-scene narrative again, for each, underscoring the relationships between literary and pictorial presentations of ideas.

5.3.4 Exploring Symbolic and Iconographic Motifs

Such items as arms and armor are obvious sorts of symbols that clearly depict their purposes, but much symbolism that we see in other artworks has more veiled and variable meaning. Such simple items as flowers and candles can be used in very complex ways in pictures that carry diverse meanings, thus requiring careful study and even deep research in order to discern their implications in a particular work.



Figure 5.24 | Detail of the Bayeux Tapestry depicting Odo, half brother of William the Great, in battle
Author: User "LadyofHats"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

For example, the *Merode Altarpiece* by Robert Campin (c. 1375-1444, Belgium) depicts the Christian story of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by the Angel Gabriel that she will become the Mother of Christ, the son of God. (Figure 5.25) This work is full of symbols that have been widely studied to discern and interpret their messages. The lilies are generally interpreted to symbolize the purity and virginity of Mary in other pictures, though, they might have other meanings, including reference to death, resurrection, birth, motherhood, or other events or conditions. Within this one work, the use of the candle, just extinguished with a trail of smoke, is given several different meanings by diverse viewers and scholars. It might show the moment of acquiescence, when Mary agrees to bear the Christ child, in which

God takes human form. It has also been read as a foreshadowing of Christ's death, of human death in general, and of the fleeting nature of life for all.

In the time and place of the altarpiece's creation, symbolism in paintings was particularly apt to be rich and varied, offering the viewer/believer a lot to see and to contemplate further. In this way, if the symbols could be read in different ways, they could then provide ongoing stimulus for meditative reflection on the diverse levels of meaning.



Figure 5.25 | *Annunciation Triptych* (Merode Altarpiece)
Artist: Robert Campin
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC



Figure 5.26 | Terracotta Bobbin
Artist: Attributed to the Penthesilea Painter
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

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Figure 5.27 | Lamassu
Author: User "Trjames"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 5.28 | The Egyptian Goddess Isis
Author: The Yorck Project
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

And some symbolic **motifs**, distinguishing features or ideas, carry different meaning in one context from what they might in another. Most symbols are not universal, although they often bear

related meanings in diverse contexts. For instance, the sort of figure you might identify as an angel, that is, a winged creature with a human-like bodily form, has appeared in the art of many different cultures. They generally represent beings that can travel between the terrestrial and celestial realms, but their more specific roles can vary widely, for good or evil purposes. The Angel Gabriel, just seen in the *Merode Altarpiece*, was a messenger from God, according to the Christian tradition. This motif was built upon the Jewish tradition of angels sent from God for bringing news or instructions, or intervening as needed. Islamic interpretations, also building on the same traditions, are similar although the figural representation is less common in Muslim artwork.

Prior to such figures, winged creatures known as Nikes were depicted by ancient Greek and Roman artists to show a moment of victory, sometimes, as is the case here, further symbolized by the award of a fillet, a band wrapped around the head, or laurel wreath. (Figure 5.26) These winged figures were sometimes gods or goddesses. The genie figures that adorned palace walls in the ancient Near East, including horses, bulls, lions, and other animals, were also winged to show their superior and sometimes god-like powers or origins. (Figure 5.27) Other examples include the goddess Isis of ancient Egypt, and the Persian god Ahura Mazda. (Figures 5.28 and 5.29)



Figure 5.29 | The Egyptian Goddess Isis
Author: The Yorck Project
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Another set of prominent Christian iconographic motifs are the winged symbols which often represent the Four Evangelists in art: Matthew is the winged man or angel; Mark, the winged lion; Luke, a winged ox; and John, an eagle. (Figure 5.30) At the same time they refer to four key events in the life of Christ: the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension. Interpretations of these evangelist symbols are rooted in the Old Testament Vision of Ezekiel and the New Testament Book of Revelation, as related by the writings of St. Jerome in the fifth century CE. They accrued additional iconographic details over the centuries, with implications of their status as the special creatures who surround the celestial throne of God again, signifying that the wings facilitate movement between the realms traditionally ascribed to a **deity**, a god or goddess, and divinely related creatures. This use of wings clearly reflects human contemplation of the abilities that birds have to defy gravity and to express artistically the lofty aspirations of the earthbound.

Another frequently used iconographic motif that appears across the ages and across cultures is the **halo**, usually a circular area of light appearing behind the head of a person or creature. One example is the halo that appears behind the heads of Christ and the symbolic winged creatures in Figure 5.30. Note that Christ's halo has a cross form embedded in it, and his entire body is surrounded by a circle of light (made up of four arcs) known as an **aureole** or **mandorla**. Such devices, in many related forms, indicate a radiance that surrounds certain figures, showing their sanctity, divinity, or divine favor. It indicates their aura of holiness, with implications of their being infused with warmth, inflamed with divinity or with divine love. In some of the Asian versions, notably Hindu or Buddhist, the radiance is literally comprised of flames.

Frequently seen, as well, are such items as crowns, thrones, regalia like scepters, garments like official capes, monks' robes, or uniforms of all varieties indications of a person's belonging to a specific group, class, or office that lead the viewer to identify some specific aspect of who the person might be and what role they have in the depiction. The positioning of figures relative to one another should also be read in order to discern meaning, interactions, relative rank, and other implications. The types of garb, accompanying items, and positioning often relate the message to a specific time and place by giving historical and cultural context through details of style or motifs used.

For example, on the stele depicting his victory over the Lullubi, the Akkadian ruler Naram Sin (r. c. 2254-2218 BCE) wears a horned helmet and is much bigger than the men around him. (Figure 5.31) He ascends the mountain as his enemies beg for mercy under the watch of astral deities, and that shows his relationship to them as the source of his power and right to rule. In the *Ghent Altarpiece* by Jan van Eyck (c. 1390-1441, Belgium), we can also see a variety of such motifs: Christ, wearing the papal tiara as a crown; Mary, richly dressed and humbly reading; and John the Baptist, in his garment of penitence, and preaching. (Figure 5.32) Adorned with jewels and gold on his clothing, the throne on which he sits, and the crown at his feet, Christ is here being shown as the king of Heaven as well as Earth.

5.3.5 Metaphorical Meanings

The metaphorical meanings of specific artworks also depend upon a certain level of viewer knowledge and insight. A **metaphor** is a figure of speech in which one thing symbolically stands for another, perhaps unrelated, thing or idea.



Figure 5.30 | The Four Evangelists
Author: User "AnonMoos"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 5.31 | Victory Stele of Naram Sin
Author: User "AnonMoos"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

In *1550 Chairs Stacked Between Two City Buildings* by Doris Salcedo (b. 1958, Columbia), we see a metaphorical treatment of life change. (*1550 Chairs Stacked Between Two City Buildings*, Doris Salcedo: http://www.mymodernmet.com/profiles/...s-salcedo-1550 chairs-stacked) It is a view of displacement resulting from a 1985 uprising in her Colombian homeland that left many migrants displaced or dead, as well as similar catastrophic events in locales across the globe. The jumbled mass of furniture alludes to the upheaval of lives that are overturned by mass violence and terrorism, often of those already without roots, community, or stable lifestyles. The victims, frequently anonymous and relatively invisible in the site of such a revolt, nonetheless left some hints of their presence in the chaotic remnants of their fleeting existence, in a place where they had established so little sense of their individual identities. Her metaphorical expression gives a probing glimpse of the devastation such events have wrought around the world.



Figure 5.32 | The Ghent Altarpiece
Artist: Jan van Eyck
Author: Web Gallery of Art
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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3.7: Reading- Formalism and Content

This is an overview of some important terms related to writing about and discussing art. The term *formalism* comes from critical art theory, which resembles "aesthetics discussion." *Content* is one aspect of the artwork. This will also touch on point of view (POV), which is an important factor as we look at and discuss artworks.

Viewing Art

Personal Level

When we are looking at art, when we find or "run into" an artwork or exhibition, we typically have an initial response or impression. This response to what we see (or hear, etc.) is formed by a lifetime of knowledge and experience and the culture and time in which we live. The expression "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder" gets at the subjective and personal nature of perception—and of the "first impression," in particular. There's nothing wrong with one's first impression or response—it is, after all, a personal response. It's *your* point of view.

Formal Analysis

Formal analysis is a close and analytical way of looking at and discussing a work of art. It includes describing the work in terms of various design elements, such as color, shape, texture, line, lighting, mass, and space, as well as a discussion of how those elements have been used (the design principles). Formal analysis moves *beyond* description of the artwork and its content by linking the elements of the work to the effects that they have on the viewer. This is discussion of the artwork from the point of view of "here is the artwork, and this is what I see and can make sense of . . ." Formal analysis uses art terminology to consider the effects of an artwork the viewer (you), and it's a process that enables us to think about and consider the overall meaning of the artwork.

NOTE: Formal analysis does not use or require research and is based on your POV. The more informed you are, the deeper your analysis will go—but that depth depends on experience and knowledge, not on research.

Content

Content is simply the the subject matter of an artwork. It's the images you see—like the trees in a painting of a forest, or the town, the sky, and the moon in Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. Content can play a role in formal analysis, but the content aspect is less important than the "artwork" aspect.

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3.8: Before You Move On (Art in Context)

Key Concepts

Another way that we can consider art is to consider the context of its creation and use. Any work of art will reflect, to some extent, the cultural moment in which it appeared. This means that the artist and/or patron made choices that reflect the physical place and the cultural or subcultural group in which they lived and worked and the shared ways of being, living, or thinking that defined that group. The group's defining features might be national, regional, racial, ethnic, religious, economic, or related to gender, age, occupation, avocation, class, condition, or some other aspect(s) they have in common, by choice or by chance.

The artworks we encounter are filled with iconographic reference, symbols, and metaphorical allusions that give us clues to the broader and deeper meanings that were intended by the artist or patron. These prompt us to further investigation and/or contemplation that can lead us to those meanings. At the same time, they can also prompt insights beyond the original meaning, especially when they are presented as a partial statement of a larger myth or narrative we already know and understand or we might discover through further research. It is important for us to distinguish between those types of reading as we explore to carefully differentiate between what we can learn about the original meaning and our own responses to what we see. This is true of all sorts of symbolism, as we should avoid the temptation to ascribe a truly universal idea or meaning for a symbol or motif. This makes both the discovery process and the viewing experience endlessly interesting.

Some works purposefully oppose prevailing issues in the culture, and pointedly so. We will see these oppositions in detail when we look at works concerned with religion, war, race, gender, and other themes. Thus, in order to understand and analyze the full meaning of any specific artwork, we must take into account just where and when it was made and what sociocultural, symbolic, and iconographic features and meanings might be considered as relevant factors in its creation and use.

Test Yourself

1. How are seventeenth-century Dutch still life paintings related to historical events in the Netherlands at that time?
2. How did Lilly Martin Spencer counter social conventions of behavior at the time she was painting?
3. Describe an example of how industrial advances in the nineteenth century impacted art in the United States.
4. Give an example of how personal identity might be expressed in art.
5. Give an example of symbolism used and its meaning in Chinese painting during the Yuan Dynasty.
6. Give an example of art being used in scientific discoveries.
7. Give an example of a symbolic object and its meaning.
8. Define symbolism and iconography, and describe the difference between them.
9. Describe the relationship between symbolism and visual literacy.
10. What did objects found at the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial visually communicate?
11. What are some common alities in what is represented in the Column of Trajan and the Bayeux Tapestry?
12. Describe changes in the symbolic motif of winged creature in human form (today an angel) prior to Christianity.
13. Describe how symbolic motifs can be used to indicate divinity or a ruler.
14. Give an example of metaphoric meaning in art.

KEY TERMS

aureole or mandorla: a pointed circle of light or radiance surrounding a holy figure.

cloisonné: decorative work created by affixing metal strips to a surface, making compartments, that are filled with powdered material and melted at high temperatures.

deity: a divinity, a god or goddess.

genre: subjects or scenes of everyday life.

golden ratio: a relationship of parts achieved when the longer part divided by the smaller part is also equal to the whole length divided by the longer part; the golden ratio in art and architecture provides the most harmonious and visually pleasing proportions.

halo: usually a circular area of light appearing behind the head of a holy person or creature.

hierarchical arrangement: where the hierarchy or ranking of people or objects is represented by their different sizes, according to their relative importance.

hoard: a collection of objects.

iconography: the study and interpretation of subject matter and pictorial themes in a work of art.

mandorla: (see aureole).

martyr: individual who died for their faith.

metaphor: a figure of speech in which one thing symbolically stands for another, perhaps unrelated, thing or idea.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Visual Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Define and describe the different modes of analyzing a work of art.
- Use modes of analysis to draw conclusions about a work of art.
- Compare and contrast artworks.
- Identify and describe the different functions and expressions in the visual arts.
- Describe and define the power and value of art
- Understand and apply art historical vocabulary

4.1: Visual Analysis Overview

4.2: Formal or Critical Analysis

4.3: Types of Art

4.4: Styles of Art

4.5: How to Compare and Contrast Art

4.6: Before You Move On (Visual Analysis)

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4.1: Visual Analysis Overview

Developing the ability to examine and understand works of art makes sense for many good reasons. For one, art is powerful. In subtle but real ways, we are influenced by the visual culture that surrounds us.

In Chapter Two: The Structure of Art—Form and Design, we identified, defined, and discussed the elements and principles of design. Now, we will focus on the analysis of art. **Formal** or **critical analysis** is an examination of the elements and principles of design present in an artwork and the process of deriving meaning from how those elements and principles are used by visual artists to communicate a concept, idea, or emotion.

How and what is communicated in a work of art is linked to the type or category in which it falls: representational or non-representational. Within the broad category of **representation**, that is, a visual reference to the experiential world, we can further characterize the work of art using terms such as naturalistic, idealized, or abstract. Art that does not attempt to present an aspect of the recognizable world is **non-objective** or **non-representational**. In such work meaning is communicated through shapes, colors, and textures.

Style can refer to the general appearance of a work or a group of works that were created in accordance with a specific set of principles about form or appearance. Style can refer to the art as a whole that was made during a particular era and within a certain culture. More specifically, we can consider whether the artwork belongs to a stylistic movement such as the Italian Renaissance, Realism, or Abstract Expressionism. Style can also refer to how elements and principles of design are employed by an individual artist: the visual characteristics of that artist's work.

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4.2: Formal or Critical Analysis

While restricting our attention only to a description of the formal elements of an artwork may at first seem limited or even tedious, a careful and methodical examination of the physical components of an artwork is an important first step in “decoding” its meaning. It is useful, therefore, to begin at the beginning. There are four aspects of a formal analysis: **description, analysis, interpretation,** and **evaluation**. In addition to defining these terms, we will look at examples.

4.2.1 Description

What can we notice at first glance about a work of art? Is it two-dimensional or three-dimen- sional? What is the medium? What kinds of actions were required in its production? How big is the work? What are the elements of design used within it?

Starting with line: is it soft or hard, jagged or straight, expressive or mechanical? How is line being used to describe space?

Considering shape: are the shapes large or small, hard-edged or soft? What is the relationship between shapes? Do they compete with one another for prominence? What shapes are in front? Which ones fade into the background?

Indicating mass and volume: if two-dimensional, what means if any are used to give the illu- sion that the presented forms have weight and occupy space? If three-dimensional, what space is occupied or filled by the work? What is the mass of the work?

Organizing space: does the artist use perspective? If so, what kind? If the work uses linear perspective, where are the horizon line and vanishing point(s) located?

On texture: how is texture being used? Is it actual or implied texture?

In terms of color: what kinds of colors are used? Is there a color scheme? Is the image overall light, medium, or dark?

4.2.2 Analysis

Once the elements of the artwork have been identified, next come questions of how these ele- ments are related. How are the elements arranged? In other words, how have principles of design been employed?

What elements in the work were used to create unity and provide variety? How have the ele- ments been used to do so?

What is the scale of the work? Is it larger or smaller than what it represents (if it does depict someone or something)? Are the elements within the work in proportion to one another?

Is the work symmetrically or asymmetrically balanced?

What is used within the artwork to create emphasis? Where are the areas of emphasis? How has movement been conveyed in the work, for example, through line or placement of figures?

Are there any elements within the work that create rhythm? Are any shapes or colors repeated?

4.2.3 Interpretation

Interpretation comes as much from the individual viewer as it does from the artwork. It de- rives from the intersection of what an object symbolizes to the artist and what it means to the viewer. It also often records how the meaning of objects has been changed by time and culture. Interpretation, then, is a process of unfolding. A work that may seem to mean one thing on first inspection may come to mean something more when studied further. Just as when re-reading a favorite book or re-watching a favorite movie, we often notice things not seen on the first viewing; interpretations of art objects can also reveal themselves slowly. Claims about meaning can be made but are better when they are backed up with supporting evidence. Interpretations can also change and some interpretations are better than others.

4.2.4 Evaluation

All this work of description, analysis, and interpretation, is done with one goal in mind: to make an evaluation about a work of art. Just as interpretations vary, so do evaluations. Your evaluation includes what you have discovered about the work during your examination as well as what you have learned, about the work, yourself, and others in the process. Your reaction to the artwork is

an important component of your evaluation: what do you feel when you look at it? And, do you like the work? How and why do you find it visually pleasing, in some way disturbing, emotionally engaging?

Evaluating and judging contemporary works of art is more difficult than works that are hundreds or thousands of years old because the verdict of history has not yet been passed on them. Museums are full of paintings by contemporary artists who were considered the next Michelange- lo but who have since faded from the cultural forefront.

The best art of a culture and period is that work which exemplifies the thought of the age from which it derives. What we think about our own culture is probably not what will be thought of it a century from now. The art that we believe best embodies our time may or may not last. As time moves on, our evaluations and judgments of our own time may not prove to be the most accurate ones. We live in a world full of art, and it is almost impossible to avoid making evaluations—pos- sibly mistaken—about its value. Nonetheless, informed evaluations are still possible and useful even in the short term.

4.2.5 Examples of Formal Analysis

Snow Storm—Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth by J. M. W. Turner



Figure 4.1 | *Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*
Artist: J. M. W. Turner
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Snow Storm—Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth by Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775- 1851, England) is a chaotic, atmospheric oil on canvas painting. (Figure 4.1) First, on the level of description, the dark structure of the foundering steamboat is hinted at in the center of the work, while heavy smoke from the vessel, pitching waves, and swirling snow surround it. The brown and gray curving lines are created with long strokes of heavily applied paint that expand to the edges of the composition. Second, on the level of analysis, we note that the paint application, heavy, with long strokes, adds dramatic movement to the image. We see that the design principle of scale and proportion is being used in the small size of the steamboat in relation to the overall canvas. Now let us interpret these elements and their relation: The artist has emphasized the maelstrom of sea, snow, and wind. A glimpse of blue sky through the smoke and snow above the vessel is the only indication of space beyond this gripping scene of danger, and provides the only place for the viewer's eyes to rest from the tumult. This scene is of humanity's struggle for survival against powerful forces of nature. And finally, we are ready to evaluate this work. Is it powerfully effective in reminding us of the transitory nature of our own limited existence, a memento morii, perhaps? Or is it a wise caution of the limits of our human power to control our destiny? Does the work have sufficient power and value to be accepted by us as significant? The verdict of history tells us it is. J.M.W. Turner is considered a significant artist of his time, and this work is one that is thought to support that verdict. In the end, however, each of us can accept or reject this historical verdict for our own reasons. We may fear the sea. We may reject the use of technology as valiantly heroic. We may see the British colonial period as one of oppression and tyranny and this work as an illustration of the hubris of that time. Whatever we conclude, this work of art stands as a catalyst for this important dialogue.

Another example of formal analysis. Consider *Lady at the Tea Table* by Mary Cassatt Mary Cassatt (1844-1925, USA, lived France) is best known for her paintings, drawings, and prints of mothers and children. In those works, she focused on the bond between them as well as the strength and dignity of women within the predominantly domestic and maternal roles they played in the nineteenth century.

Lady at the Tea Table is a depiction of a woman in a later period of her life, and captures the sense of calm power a matriarch held within the home. (Figure 4.2) First, a description of the elements being used in this work: The white of the wall behind the woman and the tablecloth be- fore her provide a strong contrast to the black of her clothing and the blue of the tea set. The gold frame of the artwork on the wall, the gold rings on her fingers, and the gold bands on the china link those three main elements of the painting. Analysis shows the organizing principle of variety is employed in the rectangles behind the woman's head and the multiple circles and arcs of the individual pieces of the tea set. The composition is a stable triangle formed by the woman's head and body, and extending to the pieces of china that span the foreground from one edge of the composition to the other. Let us interpret these observations. There is little evidence of movement in the work other than the suggestion that the woman's hand,



Figure 4.2 | *Lady at the Tea Table*
Artist: Mary Cassatt
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

resting on the handle of the teapot, may soon move. Her gaze, directed away from the viewer and out of the picture frame, implies she is in the midst of pouring tea, but her stillness suggests she is lost in thought. How to evaluate this work? The artist expresses a restrained but powerful strength of character in her treatment of this subject. Is the lack of obvious movement in the work a comment on the emergence of women's roles in society, a hope or a demand for change? Or is it a monument to the quiet dignity of the domestic life of Victorian era Paris? The gold of the frame, the rings, and the china dishes appear to unify three disparate objects into one statement of value. Do they symbolize art, fidelity, and service? Is this a comment on the restrictions of French domestic society, or a claim to its strength? One indication of the quality of a work of art is its power to evoke multiple interpretations. This open and poetic richness is one reason why the work of Mary Cassatt is considered to be important. The above examples are only one of many ways in which we can interpret and evalu- ate works of art. We will examine a few more approaches to analysis and critique. The point of this exercise is to equip the interested student with tools to become more fully aware of the dynamics and content of works of art, not only in museums and textbooks, but in the world of images that continually surrounds us today.

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4.3: Types of Art

4.3.1 Representation and Abstraction

The most basic point of style, perhaps, is type or category, whether a work is **representational** or **abstract**. In the broadest terms, if the work has visual reference to the phenomenal world, we consider it to be representational. That definition suffers from over generality, though, since any physical or visual expression that has some reference to the physical world includes some aspect that we see as reflecting the physical world. And, to some extent, all works are also **abstract**, in that they might remind us of what we see in the phenomenal world by only reflecting some physical feature(s) rather than detailing the object, place, or person itself. Having said that, we can proceed to see art in terms of its relative representation or relative abstraction of the original form.

It may help to start here by examining a number of works; each is based on the artist's observations of cows but is distinctive in what the artist elected to convey in their artwork about cows on the continuum from representation to abstraction. The first of these works is by Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899, France), who depicted a variety of animals in great detail with regard to their anatomy and physiognomy, and took great care to render her illustrations with fidelity to the appearance to the actual animals she had observed. (Figure 4.3) Artistically gifted and thoroughly trained, she went on to deepen her own knowledge and to hone her skills by visiting farms, veterinarian dissections, and slaughterhouses in order to develop extensive knowledge of her preferred subject matter, with which she created imagery of animals and other features of rural farm life. Her cows would be correctly described as very **naturalistic** in appearance their forms are quite similar in appearance to actual cows.



Figure 4.3 | *Ploughing the Nevers*
Artist: Rosa Bonheur
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

In comparison, if we examine the renditions by folk artist Edward Hicks (1780-1849, USA), we see cows that are much less rigorous in their resemblance, most likely the result of his not having had exacting training and practice in precise replication. (Figure 4.4) A Quaker minister, Hicks treated his painting at first as a supplemental avocation, then as his primary means of supporting his family. He used it to express themes of spiritual and historical community events that interested him, generally in simplified landscape settings that emphasized narrative and symbolic messages rather than exact proportions and details.



Figure 4.4 | *The Residence of David Twining*
Artist: Edward Hicks
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

In some works, though, the difference in correspondence to natural appearance can be due to the artist's very different purpose for the work. *The Yellow Cow* by Franz Marc (1880-1916, Germany) clearly does not slavishly reproduce natural appearances but instead seeks to convey through abstraction a sense of light-hearted lyrical expression for the animal. (Figure 4.5) To achieve this end, Marc took great liberty in creating an image that went far beyond what he saw, to make an expression that carries messages of what he thought and felt about his subject. Marc created a great many images of animals in nature that were metaphorical reflections of his views of mankind and the human spirit. Such a movement towards abstraction often derives from the artist's wish to express an emotional or intellectual commentary on the subject, or to use the subject as a starting place to diverge from visual appearances of the purely physical phenomenal world in order to create a statement of some other ideas.



Figure 4.5 | *The Yellow Cow*
Artist: Franz Marc
Source: Wikiart
License: Public Domain

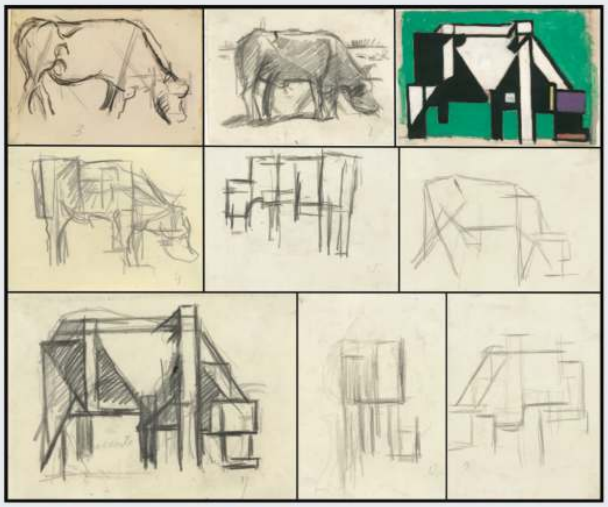


Figure 4.6 | *Composition (The Cow)*
Artist: Theo van Doesburg
Source: MoMA
License: Public Domain

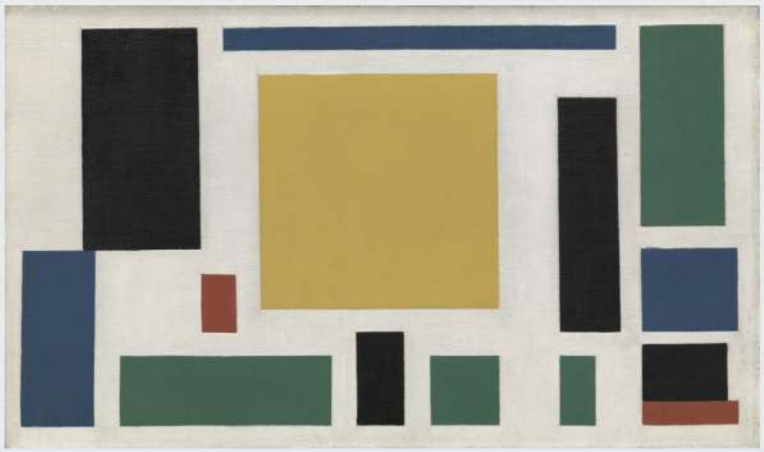


Figure 4.7 | *Composition VIII (The Cow)*
Artist: Theo van Doesburg
Source: MoMA
License: Public Domain

Another artist bearing investigation in this regard is Theo van Doesburg (1883- 1931, Netherlands), who used his own philosophical probing to frame a systematic path from naturalism in his renditions of the cow to an abstraction that is visually quite far removed from what most of us see in the phenomenal world. (Figure 4.6) Beginning with a series of exploratory sketches, he sought to reduce the linear forces of a cow's form to the three he thought were essential components of the physical and metaphysical world, that is, vertical, horizontal, and diagonal, while reducing the three dimensions of the cow's form to the painting's two-dimensional surface. At the same time, he tried to simplify the forms and volumes, progressively creating a strongly abstracted picture that few of us would likely recognize as of a cow if we were not led through the process by which he developed the image. Indeed, we have evidence of the process and its result in *Composition VIII (The Cow)*, a fully developed instruction that provides us with great insight into Van Doesburg's train of thought and work, as well as his process of abstraction. (Figure 4.7)

Representation, then, shows us some broad vision of what we see in the original, be it a person, landscape, interior, event, or such, with some level of detail. To one degree or another, all art is abstract in that it is not the original form but instead the artist's response to the original form rendered in artistic terms although, clearly, not all of it is so strongly abstracted that we lose the plainer references to the physical world.

4.3.2 Idealization

Sometimes artists create an **idealized** version of a natural form rather than truly reflecting its actual appearance. This was the norm, for example, in depictions of royal figures in ancient Egypt. There was a **canon**, or set of principles and norms, for the representation of royals that was very specific about just how they must look, including norms for the proportions of the different parts of the body to one another, their stance, and other details. The canon also set standards for their garments, headgear, the false beard, the arm and fist positions, and other details. The canon was remarkably conservative and unchanging, altering very little over the many centuries that ancient Egypt existed.

The figures of the Pharaoh Menkaure (r. c. 2530-c. 2510 BCE) and his Queen Khamerernebty are shown as being well proportioned, physically fit, and in young adulthood. (Figure 4.8) Because the king was regularly assessed with regard to his favor with the gods and fitness to rule, he was required to be in top physical condition or so he must appear in any official imagery. This necessity resulted in the **idealization** of the natural physical form. So, while it is a representational image of the royal body, the need to depict him as a fit and worthy ruler meant that he was generally shown as being in the prime of life, with a trim and perfectly proportioned physique, and with no apparent hint of weakness or vulnerability. By contrast, the image of an Egyptian state official, Ka-Aper, who was not of royal rank, was created with a different idea. (Statue of Ka'aper: http://www.museumsyndicate.com/item.php?item=27334) As a commoner, he is shown with a very different physique rather pudgy and more relaxed, certainly not governed by the rules for the royal imagery. It is more naturalistic, not idealized like the royal works.

To study idealization further, we will explore the evolution of nude male sculptural forms in ancient Greece. We know Greek sculptors began with ideas they gleaned from the Egyptian forms they knew but then altered them in some very significant ways that reflected their own distinctive culture. They presented the forms in the nude (only sculptures of males were nude at first, female sculpture remained clothed until the fourth century BCE) and, over time, they increasingly sought to capture more accurate physical details and the principles of movement in the body, rather than the static sense of permanence the Egyptians had favored.



Figure 4.9 | Scultpures of the human form demonstrating anatomical accuracy

Photo A | Marble statue of a kouros
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

Photo B | The Kroisos Kouros
Author: User "Mountain"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Photo C | Kritios Boy
Author: User "Tetraktys"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Photo D | Doryphoros from Pompeii
Artist: Polykleitos
Author: User "Tetraktys"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY 2.5

The turning point in this evolution—the moment when the achievement of naturalism was pronounced—was with the creation of the *Kritios Boy*, c. 480 BCE. (Figure 4.9c) At that point, the beginning of the Classical period in Greece, sculptors captured the

potential for naturalistic movement and the ***contrapposto*** or weight shift of the knees and hips that occurs when standing with one leg at ease or walking. This soon gave way, however, to a canon of art for the refined form. So, again, true naturalism gave way to a notion of the "perfect" or idealized form.

4.3.3 Non-Representational or Non-Objective

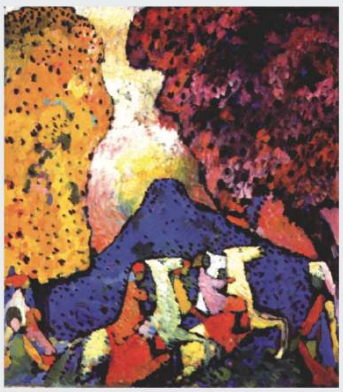


Figure 4.10 | *Blue Mountain*
Artist: Wassily Kandinsky
Source: Wikiart
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One further note is needed in consideration of the relationship of type to response to the phenomenal world. Recurrent strains of abstraction appear throughout the history of art, when artists elected to streamline, suppress, or de-emphasize reference to the phenomenal world. In the twentieth century, though, this approach took on different character in some instances, with a stated rejection of the art as related to the natural world and concerned instead with the art itself, to the processes by which it was made, and with the product as referring to these processes and artistic qualities rather than to some out- side phenomenon: the observed world.

Still, the art is never completely independent of some reference: the viewer might respond to the color, painterly effect, line quality, or some other aspect that is not necessarily associated with recognition of a particular physical object or "thing" but that relates to the qualities of the art in some way, that is, to some recognition of reference although this recognition may be ephemeral and may be nameless. The response might be quite visceral or intellectual, nonetheless. The development of this idea was perhaps an inevitable phase of the abstraction and explorations of the formal means that had been conducted by various movements that evolved in nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Stories abound about the era in art and the push from abstraction to non-representation, with several artists claiming to have led the breakthrough. The first artist to use the term **non- objective art, however,** seems to have been Aleksandr Rodchenko (1890-1956, Russia), (*Spatial Construction no. 12*, Aleksandr Rodchenko: http://www.moma.org/interactives/exh...truct_jpg.html; *Assembling for a Demonstration*, Aleksandr Rodchenko: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/45090?locale=en) and its most active early theorist and writer was probably Vasily Kandinsky (1866-1944, Russia, lived Germany and France). (Figures 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12)



Figure 4.11 | *Angel of the Last Judgment*
Artist: Wassily Kandinsky
Source: Wikiart
License: Public Domain



Figure 4.12 | *Red Spot II*
Artist: Wassily Kandinsky
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The artistic climate fostered widespread experimentation, and the synergistic atmosphere was a seedbed for new ideas and modes of working. Rodchenko sought to affirm the independence of artistic process and the "constructive" approach to creating artworks that were self-referential, and he explored the possibilities in painting, drawing, photography, sculpture and graphic arts. Kandinsky, also Russian but working in Germany, wrote an important treatise entitled *Concern- ing the Spiritual in Art* (1912) that was widely popular and soon translated from the original German into many languages. He explored color theory in relationship to

music, logic, human emotion, and the spiritual underpinnings of the abstractions that for centuries had been viewed and absorbed through religious icons and popular folk prints in his native Russia.

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4.4: Styles of Art

In addition to looking at where along the spectrum from representation to non-representation a work of art may fall, we can examine the style of the work. Style can encompass the principles about form and appearance shared within a certain culture or era. Style can refer to a movement or group of artists and their work, where the commonalities can range from employing like elements and principles of design, to using certain materials or processes, to following a set of religious, political, or ideological beliefs. Style also indicates the visual characteristics of an individual artist's work. We conduct a stylistic analysis by examining the artistic elements and considering how they have used, and how they relate to other works by that artist, group of artists, or in a certain time frame, culture, or region.

In general, artistic styles tend to fall into three broad categories: Period, Regional, and For- mal styles. Period styles are groups of art in which the works derive their characteristic structure from the culture prevalent during a particular time period. A good example of a period style would be Gothic Art or Ming dynasty Art. Regional styles are groups of art in which the works derive their structure from the culture prevalent in a particular place. A good example of a regional style would be Dutch Art or Latin American Art. Formal styles are groups of art in which the works derive their structure from principles that are not characteristic of either one place or one time. A good example of a Formal style would be Surrealism, Impressionism, or Modernism. Formal styles tend to be the "isms."

From the earliest times, we can see that some artists sought to make their depictions conform closely to what they saw in the world around them, but that for various reasons they often chose to emphasize certain aspects at the expense of great naturalism. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the degree of naturalism that you see in the artwork is necessarily and primarily related to the skill level of the artist.

Artistic and stylistic change is generally a matter of evolution, and often rather reactionary. The artistic choices about style (and other matters) made at any particular point are influenced by what other works of art look like at that moment. So the artist will likely try to create an expression that goes further in one direction, or changes directions in some way. Thus, art might become more naturalistic, as we have seen, or it might become less so, because the artist thinks the art might express the idea better by using a slightly different style or a radically different idea. The divergence is related to current "thinking" within the culture and other more specific circumstances.

4.4.1 Cultural Style

There are artistic choices with regard to style in every work. While these choices are generally made at the discretion of the individual artist today, for much of history style has been a reflection of the broader cultural currents that influence so much of life in any time and place. These cultural factors have often led to the general approaches to representation that art historians call "conventions of representation." To acquaint ourselves with these conventions and how they pertain to a cultural style, we will look at a few examples.

4.4.1.1 Ancient Near East

These conventions are evident to us when we examine a broad selection of works from those created in the ancient Near Eastern cultures during several centuries. Look at the way figures are depicted in a detail from the Standard of Ur (c. 2600-2400 BCE) from ancient Mesopotamia, to- day Iraq, a wooden box with scenes of war and peace made from inlaid pieces of iridescent shell, red limestone, and blue lapus lazuli. (Figure 4.13) We see the figures have sufficient naturalism to allow us to easily recognize the human body. But we also see that they include a range of natural- istic detail.

The figures appear static, even when they are shown to be moving through space. They are shown in a **composite view**, that is, with portions of the body shown in profile and others in frontal view so the artist can provide details that would not be visible in a strict profile. They turn the body in space so that the viewer sees the hips and shoulders, along with a twisted torso, turned slightly towards the viewer. For warriors and leaders, this is a heroic stance, showing power and command. The composite view is completed by giving a frontal view of the eye on the profile of the face and head shown.

This approach to figural forms continues in addition- al ancient Near Eastern works. The *Stele of Music* (c. 2120 BCE), depicting Gudea with attendants in one register and musicians below, shows the king ceremonially preparing to lay out a temple in the city of Girsu while accompanied by music and chanting. (Figure 4.14) In the relief of Sargon II, an Assyrian king who ruled 722-705



Figure 4.13 | Standard of Ur, 26th century BCE, "War" panel
Author: User "Dbachmann"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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BCE, created approximately 1,400 years later, we see the use of these devices again, along with more variations of costume and headgear. (Figure 4.15)

These instances drawn from across many centuries but from the same geographical region that is today Iraq, show the persistence of a set of conventions of representation shared by the related cultural groups. We can also observe here that, when there is more emphasis on naturalism of the human body, it is at the service of conveying a sense of power, usually to give more detail to musculature especially in the chest and shoulders. This slight abstraction or deviation from absolute naturalism is also used to create a sense of greater physical stature and presence, a manipulation of actual sizes known as **hierarchical proportion**, meant to show the fig- ures' relative importance. These conventions of representation serve to convey dignity and significance within the broad cultural style shared by these associated groups.



Figure 4.14 | Music Stele
Author: User "Jastrow"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 4.15 | Sargon II and dignitary
Author: User "Jastrow"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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As noted, **abstraction** is not a modern method of art, but has been used purposefully in many eras. Abstraction, simplification of naturalistic forms, appears in the conventions of representation in the ancient Near East; unlike most later instances of abstraction, however, these conventions did not follow up on and show a reactionary counter movement to a naturalistic approach, nor were they a stage that further amplified certain features for purposes of expression or emotional exaggeration.

4.5.1.2 Ancient Greece and Rome

We earlier discussed the progression of cultural style in ancient Greece from the Archaic period to the High Classical period. The latter was also the era when the Parthenon temple and the other structures on the Acropolis in Athens were rebuilt or renovated as a statement of the power of that city-state. (Figure 4.16) The work of this era of artistic pinnacle is called **classical**.

By extension, the ancient Roman work that was created to emulate the Greek Classical style is sometimes defined, as well, as classical art. Careful distinctions, though, need to be made amongst the strictly classical, the imitative, and the revival of classical form in later eras. Examining these styles further, let us first look at what happened after the Greek High Classical era. Art in

Greece, in what are called the Late Classical (400-323 BCE) and Helle- nistic (323-31 BCE) periods, shows changes that move away from the High Classical norms in becoming variously more dynamic, more expressive, more emotional, more dramatic. (Figures 4.17 and 4.18) That is, they are exaggerated in some way from the calm composure of the Classical style that had expressed the cultural value of complete balance achieved by “a sound mind in a sound body,” a rather sober and self-contained ideal.



Figure 4.16 | Acropolis of Athens
Author: User “A.Savin”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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In later Greek culture, we can see changes in an expansive political spirit, the influx of foreign cultural forces, the development of drama in theater, increasing materialism, and other factors that change the artistic and aesthetic spirit, consequently requiring different modes of artistic expression. The Romans, although deeply admiring the classical Greek art, held different cultural ideas and ideals, so Roman art, unless directly copying the Greek, would express their different views of life and the world. These included especially Roman worldliness, their boundless interest in expansion (which brought in a great variety of additional influences), their great ingenuity and inventiveness in such arenas as engineering and architecture, and their stress on individualism.



Figure 4.17 | Apollo Sauroctonus
Artist: Praxiteles
Author: User “Baldiri”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 4.18 | Hercules Farnese
Artist: Glycon of Athens
Author: User “Marie-Lan Nguyen”
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 4.19 | Togatus Barberini
Author: A. Hekler
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The Roman Republican period (509-27 BCE) overlaps the Greek late Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods. During the Republican period, Romans favored an anti-idealized approach to portrayal of people that went beyond simple naturalism to a very frank and unvarnished study of individuals, with a measure of veneration for the more mature citizens as models of an

accomplished life.(Figure 4.19) The Romans honored their ancestors and kept their venerable images as portrait heads, which they carried in funeral processions and kept in their homes; they valued the accomplishments of old age, so their views on aging and the aged were often expressed through **veristic** or truthful renditions of their likenesses.

However, the use of these unidealized depictions varied from one phase to another throughout ancient Roman history. It is especially noted that in the Early Imperial era (27 BCE-197 CE), with the rise of Augustus to Emperor, the practice of idealization in portraiture was again favored for the imperial likenesses, often seen clearly as part of the political propaganda used to promote the positive perception of the emperor and the promotion of his political goals and programs. The portrayal of the man Augustus, regardless of his age at the time of the creation of a portrait, was made to be the image of a powerful young man, heroic in stature, fit and fine. (Figure 4.20) Ensuing emperors varied their choices in this regard, some opting for a return to the age prior to the Imperial Age and notions of Republican virtue and the value of age and experience, others using the idealizing and propagandistic approach, to some degree.



Figure 4.20 | Augustus of Prima Porta
Author: User "Till Niermann"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 4.21 | The Tetrarchs
Author: User "Nino Barbieri"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 4.22 | Marble portrait head of the Emperor Constantine I
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

In the late Roman Empire (284-476 CE), though, we see suppression and streamlining of natural detail in art that followed and was a reaction to that long period of naturalistic representations of the human figure. Scholars interpret this abstraction as a means of stressing other-than-natural features that are ideological, spiritual, or philosophical in character. For example, in the *Portrait of the Four Tetrarchs* from c. 300 CE, we see that the *idea* of the **tetrarchs**, or four co-ruling emperors, working together to rule the four

divisions of the vast Roman Empire is more important than the *representation of likeness* of any one of these co-rulers as an individual. (Figure 4.21)

Naturalism has given way to uniformity, with nearly identical figures of men in the same costume, crown, armor, and stance, as they embrace one another to show their joint office and efforts in the service of the Roman citizenry. Even though there is considerable detail in their clothing that links their joint rule to Roman traditions of military rulers and leaders, the suppression of distinctive, individual physical characteristics is used convey the concept of how they will function as one.

A few years later, when the Roman Empire briefly re- turned to a singular rule under Constantine the Great, the new Emperor opted for an even more abstracted and simplified portrait representation. (Figure 4.22) He thus removed himself even further from the tradition of imperial portraits that had each varied in its extent of naturalism and idealization even though the head emulates some in being clean-shaven, with a fringed cap of hair, and having an air of imperial hauteur. But it is far less personal and less intimate in its address to the viewer, both in large part to its marked suppression of detail, than depictions of earlier rulers. Further, Constantine appears to be focused on the heavens above, towards which his gaze is directed. The portrayal has been read as being more spiritual, linking him to the emerging Christian faith. Thus, the portrait is associated with a societal and cultural turn from worldly to spiritual matters, and that is likely reflected in this change in artistic interpretation.

4.4.1.3 Indian Subcontinent

Strictly speaking, Greece and Rome were the classical civilizations of antiquity in the West, and some would even limit the use of the term “classical” in art to the High Classical period in Greece. The same principles and conventions of representation, however, include numerous works from other times and places. The revival of characteristics associated with the cultural styles associated with ancient Greece and Rome recur repeatedly throughout history in the West, and also appear sometimes in non-Western cultures. Becoming familiar with a few examples will make more apparent the variations of a naturalistic style, whether subtle or quite pronounced, that can be further investigated with regard for the cultural and individual values that are influential at the moment of the work’s creation and use.

In India, naturalism was not usually as restrained as those of the classical ideal we have been exploring. The Emperor Ashoka (r. 268-232 BCE), who reigned over most of the Indian sub- continent, oversaw the construction of 84,000 **stupas**, dome-shaped shrines, to house Buddhist relics. In this **Yakshi**, or female nature figure, guarding one of the fours gate at the Great Stupa at Sanchi, the emphasis is on fleshy form, voluptuous and prosperous, indicating a robust healthy physique with connotations of earthly blessing and prosperity. (Figure 4.23)

During Ashoka’s reign and in the succeeding centuries, influenced by increasing contact with Western cultures and artistic styles that came with both friendly trade and aggressive military incursions by Greeks and Romans, many changes occurred in Indian art. A notable example is the Buddhist sculpture of Maitreya from Gandhara (today Pakistan), dating to the third or fourth century CE. (Figure 4.24) Maitreya, de- rived from the Sanskrit word for “friend,” is a **bodhisattva**—a person who is able to reach nirvana but compassionately chooses to help others out of their human suffering. Maitreya, a successor to the current Buddha, will appear in the future.

The influence of Greek and Roman art can be seen in the treatment of drapery and the physical form. Although the figure is somewhat fleshier than Western counterparts, retaining the Indian penchant for more full-bodied physique, it is somewhat less substantial and certainly more concealed by the envelopment of abundant cloth than what had earlier been the norm for figural interpretation in India.

4.4.1.4 Romanesque and Gothic Eras in Europe

Returning to Europe, Romanesque art of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is noteworthy with regard to the idea of expressing a prevalent preoccupation among Christians about the ends of their lives and the end of time. For spiritual purposes, they often made a choice for greater abstraction and distortion, rather than the emphasis on a naturalistic depiction of the human form as seen in ancient Greek and Roman art. Their forms are not only simplified with suppression of naturalistic features in some ways, but are also twisted and turned in space, while their garments have a lot of linear detail that does not correspond well to the physical forms of the bodies they adorn. The effect is to remove their meaning from a focus on worldly phenomena, redirecting it to a sense of spiritual agitation.

Many of the depicted scenes re- late to the Christian expectations of the event of the Last Judgment, reflecting warnings to the devout that that their lives and deeds now will be assessed at that point in the future. At Autun Cathedral (1120-1132) in France, we see a graphic array of elongated figures in the Last Judgment within the **tympanum**, the space above the **portals**, or doors. (Figure 4.25) The scene and surrounding decorative reliefs, created by the sculptor Gislebertus (active c. 1115-c. 1135, France) between 1130 and 1135, are centered on the flattened figure of the judging Christ. He presides over the resurrection of the dead and the ensuing assignment to a heavenly welcome or a grotesque greeting by the denizens of Hell. Despite the lack of naturalism, the messages are clear in reference to human experience and prevalent beliefs of the era.



Figure 4.23 | Elephants on North Torana, Sanchi, India
Author: User "Bernard Gagnon"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 4.24 | Standing Bodhisattva Maitreya
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC



Figure 4.26 | Saints Martin, Jerome, and Gregory
Author: User "Jedhunsaker"
Source: Wikipedia
License: Public Domain

Following the Romanesque style in Europe was the Gothic era, which spanned the twelfth to fourteenth centuries in Italy and continued into the sixteenth century in northern Europe. The Gothic style included a return to greater naturalism, as focus shifted back to the natural world in many ways. (Figure 4.26) Figural forms began to reflect the observation of physical facts, and a phase of artistic evolution began that would eventually culminate in the intense naturalism of the Renaissance, especially in Italy from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

Along the way, however, conventions of representation in Italy and in northern Europe diverged, producing increasing different cultural styles. For example, the "Court Style" was prevalent in the royal works of the Late Gothic era (late fourteenth to sixteenth centuries), particularly in France, and lingered into the early Renaissance of the late fifteenth century in northern Europe. The approach reflected the prominence of aristocratic tastes and the exaltation of earthly rulers and the conception of God and the saints (especially the Virgin Mary) as the court in Heaven. (*The Virgin of Paris*, Notre-Dame, Paris: https://www.oneonta.edu/faculty/farberas/arth/Images/arth212images/gothic/notre_dame_madonna_child.jpg)

While there is a clear change from the Romanesque style, the figures are not yet really naturalistic, with an emphasis on elegance and aristocratic attitude dominating the figural imaginings. As seen here, there is often abundant drapery falling in rich and graceful folds, so exaggerated that one cannot discern the space for a full figure beneath. The hips and knees, rather than showing the classical contrapposto positioning that the ancient Greeks developed, are gracefully swayed into an S-curve, connoting sophistication and refinement.

4.4.2 Stylistic Periods or Movements

In addition to examining style as a broad expression and embodiment of cultural beliefs and values, we can focus more finely upon stylistic groups and artistic movements as artists and works grouped together due to similarities in subject matter, formal approach, spiritual or political beliefs, or other commonalities. A stylistic movement can be based upon a pointed and conscientious revival of visual and philosophical traits of an earlier style. An artistic movement can also reflect the cyclical and recurrent evolution of style,

with phases of moving gradually towards greater naturalism, and then rebounding towards some stylistic aberration that is less reflective of physical nature and instead expresses some other interest of human life and artistic attention.

4.4.2.1 Italian Renaissance

The first artistic era in the modern West that we can speak of as possessing more specific traits and commonalities than a more broadly defined cultural style is the period known as the Renaissance, which is French for "rebirth." Originating in Italy in the fourteenth century, the Renaissance was a period of conscious and purposeful revival of the ideas and ideals of the classical past. Within a shared cultural interest in **humanism**, the philosophical belief in the value of humans and their endeavors, artists of the Italian Renaissance sought ways to express themselves as individuals in their art. Through study of ancient art and close observation of the world around them, Renaissance artists as a group—but each characterized by singular traits—realized another pinnacle of natural- ism in the human form. Italian artists of the fifteenth century would also invent linear perspective, so that all lines parallel to the viewer's eye recede to a vanishing point on the horizon line.



Figure 4.27 | *Holy Trinity*
Artist: Masaccio
Author: Web Gallery of Art
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 4.28 | *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints*
Artist: Raphael
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC



Figure 4.29 | *Madonna and Child*
Artist: Titian
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

A good example of linear perspective is the fresco *The Holy Trinity* by Masaccio (1401-1428, Italy), the first painting in which the technique was systematically employed. (Figure 4.27) The work depicts the crucifixion of Christ, with God the Father behind and above him supporting the cross, and Mary and St. John the Baptist standing to either side. When we extend the **orthogonal lines** from the ceiling vault above the holy figures, we find they converge at a point on the floor where the images of the patrons kneel, below and outside the vaulted area. This line divides the fresco into two zones: the zone above that, which for Christians symbolized eternal life, and the skeleton beneath the line which symbolizes the waiting grave. The **vanishing point** and the attention of the viewer is on the line between them where the patrons kneel in prayer. It thus subtly but elegantly uses **linear perspective** to impart a message. The patrons and the viewer are "on the line between life and death" and have a religious decision to make.

During the preceding Romanesque and Gothic eras, philosophical thought was shifting from a focus on achieving everlasting life through devotion and considering humans and their feats to be weak and insignificant; however, the power of religion and religious beliefs had not diminished. Humanism of the Italian Renaissance both

celebrated hu- man intellectual and creative accomplishments as can be seen in use of linear perspective in *The Holy Trinity* and embraced the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church that emphasized the humanity of Christ.

As a result, there was a shift away from distinct physical and emotional separation of holy figures within works of art to depictions that emphasized their spiritual presence among the faithful. For example, in the *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints* by Raphael (1498-1520, Italy), a hierarchy of Mary as the Queen of Heaven seated high on her throne with a ceremonial canopy and hanging cloth emphasizing her majesty is maintained. (Figure 4.28) The steps before her, however, are open for the viewer to symbolically ascend through devotion, and the serene landscape behind her is clearly on this earth and not a vision of a celestial heaven.

Subjects such as the Madonna and Child, which allowed the artist to accentuate human qualities such as the love, mercy, and tenderness which these holy figures had in common with the worship- per, were favored during the Italian Renaissance. Not only did the choice of subject matter reflect the new value placed on human empathy and agency, the myriad approaches to such subjects indicate the new freedom artists felt to abandon a broad cultural style as seen in earlier eras. Instead, they adopted stylistic traits that embodied a collective desire to "rebirth" the forms and philosophy of art as practiced in Classical Greece and Rome. This resulted in artists accentuating the individual in their art making within the agreed upon stylistic standards and ideals of the period.

As an example, compare Raphael's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints* to *Madonna and Child* painted approximately six years later by Titian (c. 1488-1576, Italy). (Figure 4.29) Both artists stress the tender connection between mother and child. Looking closely at the faces of all three women in Raphael's work, however, we can see their features and the tilt of their heads are nearly identical, suggesting the artist chose to depict them in a similarly idealized manner. The Madonna in Titian's work, on the other hand, has more individualized facial features. Titian places a greater emphasis on the naturalistic folds and flow of drapery than Raphael does, highlighting the transparency of cloth across Mary's lap, for example. Last, Titian brings the detailed landscape behind the figures closer to the picture plane, situating the figures in nature; Raphael focuses upon the grouping of figures in the foreground with a distant view of the land. In this way through their art, we have a front row seat to a changing cultural view about the proper relation of religious figures to the everyday physical world during the Italian Renaissance.

4.4.2.2 Realism

We have already discussed naturalism as an approach to depicting objects that exist in the physical world in representational art. Now let us examine the terms naturalistic and realistic. These terms are often (incorrectly) used interchangeably, but their meanings and implications in art differ. Works that are **naturalistic** are those in which the appearance corresponds to nature, that is, to how the subject of the work looks in the natural, phenomenal world, such as the cows of Rosa Bonheur. In distinction, those that are correctly called **realistic** relay information or opinions about the underlying social or philosophical reality of the subject matter: they go beyond the natural appearance to express additional ideas.

Works created with a view to such real- ism may also be naturalistic in appearance, but they go beyond the naturalistic appearance to include social commentary in the pictorial message. Examples include works such as those by Gustave Courbet (1819- 1877, France, Switzerland) that were created to express the realities of the rural poor in mid nineteenth century France and that were partly artistic statements of rebellion against the prevailing norms of academically acceptable art. The ***École des Beaux Arts*** was the nationally institutionalized body in control of training and exhibition of art in France, and its conservative tendencies went against such frank treatment of mundane subject matter. Rather, they promoted lofty subject matter, refined treatments, and their most highly prized works dealt with topics like history, religion, heroic narratives, and the like. Here, in the *Burial at Ornans*, Courbet presented not a grand ceremonial event, but an ordinary country funeral. (Figure 4.30) The scene includes a disparate group of common folk standing awkwardly in disarray even though the grand size was associated with a more elevated subject and treatment.

The academic norms would have dictated that such a ritual event be presented with a greater sense of formality and pomp, emphasizing the coordination of activities in an uplifting and reverential manner. Since Courbet had trained and achieved mastery in the official French system, the painting was shown in the annual Salon, the official venue of the *École des Beaux-Arts*; nevertheless, it was widely criticized as lacking decorum and having too much **realism.**

Another of Courbet's works, *The Stone Breakers*, also shown at the Salon in 1851, garnered its share of the same sort of criticism, for it presented the hard labor of rural peasants as though it were a heroic activity. (Figure 4.31) Courbet again used realism to make a strong visual statement of the nobility of people and tasks that lay far outside the refined academic definitions of art. By

doing so, he condemned not only the Academy but also the societal standards that supported such judgment and ranking of art and human activity. Thus, the art movement known as Realism was begun. Many works created in this vein were condemned and refused for exhibition in the official Salons, resulting in an anti-Academic movement among artists and the quest of many for independence from the state controlled system for training and exhibition.



Figure 4.31 | *The Stone Breakers*
Artist: Gustave Courbet
Author: The Yorck Project
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Such subject matter and approach to making art appeared in many different places throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Such art work invariably was associated with other signs of social change and upheaval, frequently reflecting the lives and interests of the peasantry both rural and urban and highlighting the oppressive conditions of their lives. In Russia, among other places, the movement included a spirit of probing and of artists expressing the distinctive cultural characteristics and specific social is- sues of their countrymen. Ilya Repin (1844-1930, Russia), in *Barge Haulers on the Volga*, presented a realistic view of the arduous labor of men bringing the river barges to shore for unloading; the artist took great care to present each of them as an individual to be respected. (Figure 4.32) He also defined them in terms of age, physique, stature, and ethnicity, conveying the group as a sort of cross-section of Russian peasantry of the day.

In Germany, the influence of Courbet's Realism, coupled with study of portraits by Old Masters (European painters of renown c. 1200- 1800), appears in a study by Wilhelm Leibl (1844-1900, Germany) called *Three Women in the Church.* (Figure 4.33) In this painting, the detail of the individual women is remarkable, delineating as it does their rustic costumes, their strongly individual characters, their large work- worn hands, and their other physical features. Leibl had rendered these peasants with realistic attention to the effects of their hard life at their different ages, while conveying a great sense of respect for their traditions of family and faith. He sought to counter the legacy of glorified German history and myth with unflinching views of the ordinary people he knew.



Figure 4.33 | *Three Women in Church*
Artist: Wilhelm Leibl
Author: The Yorck Project
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Stylistic components of and ideas behind Realism were also used by American artists, notably in the early decades of the twentieth century, when the crowded urban centers fostered harsh living conditions for the poor working class citizens. One important group within that stylistic movement, known as the Ashcan School, included painters such George Bellows (1882-1925, USA), whose *Cliff Dwellers* shows the crowding and chaos in a Lower East Side New York City neighborhood on a hot summer day. (Figure 4.34)

These artists were often making commentary on the undesirable effects felt by newly arrived immigrants and the rural poor who had been lured into large metropolitan areas in hopes of better prosperity and lifestyle, especially as many remained on the lower rungs of the industrialized and commerce-oriented society. Again, the overall definition of form may be seen as naturalistic, but his efforts for realism led Bellows to a rather

painterly, brushy approach that does not have definitively naturalistic detail throughout.

One further particular point needs to be made about the idea of realism in art. It is a mistaken notion to believe that photographic works are inherently or necessarily more realistic than any other work because they record some actuality. The artist who uses photography has as ma- ny opportunities for choice as one who works in any other medium and can make choices that alter that actuality or its appearance. The photographer selects the subject matter and then can choose viewpoint, lighting, compositional field, a variety of photo processes and materials, and exposure time. The process of development and printing offers further options for manipulating the imagery, and sometimes changes are made after the printing process is complete. There is not necessarily any more "truth" or "realism" in a photo than in any other type of art.



Figure 4.32 | *Barge Haulers on the Volga*
Artist: Ilya Repin
Author: User "Thebrid"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 4.34 | *Cliff Dwellers*
Artist: George Bellows
Author: User "Achim Raschka"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 4.35 | *Moonlight: The Pond*
Artist: Edward Steichen
Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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For example, in the works of some photographers such as Edward Steichen (1879- 1973, Luxembourg, lived USA) and Lucas Samaras (b. 1936, Greece, lives USA) we see that the artists have manipulated the photographs to alter their appearances. Steichen used layers of **gum bichromate** to add color and to create a sense of hazy atmosphere for a mysterious nocturnal landscape. (Figure 4.35) Samaras, on the other hand, created a type of photography he called **Photo-Transformation** by using his fingers and a stylus to move and smear the dyes of a Polaroid print while still wet. (*Photo-Transformation*, Lucas Samaras: http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/ search/265049) Leaving the protruding hand untouched, Samaras altered the spatial relationships in his photograph by blurring the surrounding imagery, including his own face, which became quite indistinct in the process. The stages of creating photographs offer innumerable opportunities for altering the imagery from its "natural" appearances, while still often retaining the sense of "authenticity" of the photograph itself.



Figure 4.35 | *Moonlight: The Pond*
Artist: Edward Steichen
Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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4.4.2.3 Expression(ism)

As we have seen, choices made to move away from naturalism can reflect both the culture at large and the issues with which artists concern themselves as they seek to express ideas and/or feelings of the moment. **Expression** has been sought for many purposes related to thought, belief, emotional impetus, and any human concern that might prompt the creation of artistic articulation, in its various forms and media. Often, though, the idea of **expressionism** in art is more narrowly used to define the idea of foregoing a measure of naturalism in favor of the emotional content, emphasizing how the culture and the artist felt about the subject matter. This may be used in the West or East.

Examples are numerous in the illustrations of narratives, such as the Indian mythological story of the Hindu Goddess Durga, who dramatically slays the Buffalo Demon, using weapons borrowed from the male gods. (Figure 4.36) Such a story lends itself well to a dynamically expressive interpretation in art, as does the sort of devotional idea presented in the German works called ***andachtsbilder***, devotional images used to aid prayer, as seen in Figure 4.37. These works were created on both small and large scale to provoke contemplation of the sufferings of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ as prompted by the stories of the Passion of Christ. Such works were further inspired by the relation of the holy figures' sufferings to the physical effects of the Black Plague, rampant from Asia to Europe during the fourteenth century.

A more specific movement of Expressionism in Germany arose in the early twentieth century to give artistic form to the emotional and societal reactions to unrest caused by political and cultural upheavals. Reflecting the desire for social reform that was part of Realism as well as the long history of expressiveness in German art, the group was named the New Objectivity *(Neue Sachlichkeit).* In the aftermath of World War I (1914-1918), these artists presented harsh and piercing glimpses of the effects of the war's devastation on German society in the 1920s and of the ensuing societal unrest accompanying the emergence of the Nazis and the Third Reich in the 1930s. Artists such Max Beckmann (1844-1950, Germany, Netherlands, USA) and George Grosz (1893-1959, Germany) used their craft to level harsh and cynical criticism against what they saw in the society around them, at home and across Europe.

In *Paris Society*, Beckmann showed a group of businessmen, aristocrats, and intellectuals (many of whom emigrated to Paris to flee conditions at home) gathered for what ought to be an evening of social pleasantries, but was instead one clearly pervaded by a sense of foreboding and gloom. (*Paris Society*, Max Breckmann: http:// www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/ collection-online/artwork/503) The realism here shows the lack of connection among the partygoers, even to the extent that they apparently avoid or ignore one another, crowded as they are into an uncomfortable space. Beckmann himself, once a celebrated artist in Germany, became an object of censure and ridicule by the time of the Nazi regime, and his artwork is often full of a sense of the malaise of the age.

Grosz, also despised by the Nazis, tended to make much more specific use of his critical realism, delineating especially harsh condemnations of the military and governmental establishments. For example, in *The Hero*, Grosz used graphic realism to convey his view of the anti-heroic treatment of individuals—especially World War I veterans—that he saw all around him. (*The Hero*, George Grosz: http://www.moma.org/collection_ge/ob...bject_id=72585) In the work of these two artists, we can note that the realistic approach sometimes moves away from strong natural- ism. The artists seem to have deliberately chosen to make their renditions somewhat abstracted and unrefined—even crude—for the sake of expressive emphasis.

4.4.2.4 Abstract Expressionism

We examined differences between representational and abstract art when we explored Van Doesburg's exploration of cows and the work of other artists who manipulated form by reducing its visual components or altering its appearance so that the form did not conform to the ways it might appear in nature. These artists chose to limit the degree to which they would carry the investigation of abstraction, opting to avoid losing references that were more or less clearly recognizable.

In the middle of the twentieth century, based in New York City, a movement called **Abstract Expressionism** included works of drawing, painting, print, and sculpture that were focused on the physical properties of the medium used as opposed to pictorial narrative, although not all of them were without reference to the figure or the phenomenal world altogether. In the work *Untitled* of 1957 by Clyfford Still (1901-1980, USA), we see how the imagery can remind us of a jagged crevice in a mountain landscape, but without definitive representation, and the artist himself denied that there was such a subject there. (*PH-971*, Clyfford Still: https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/75.35)

Other artists associated with Abstract Expressionism used less sense of representation in their work. Included in the category were Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko (1903-1970, Latvia, lived USA). (*The Deep*, Jackson Pollock: http://www.wikiart.org/en/jackson-po.../the-deep-1953; *No. 61 (Rust and Blue)*, Mark Rothko: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:No_61_Mark_Rothko.jpg) Abstract Expressionist artists were more concerned with artistic process and formal means than with the creation of narrative pictures. In examining a small cross section of work by the Abstract Expressionist artists, we can see that it may not be appropriate, after all, to call this a stylistic category, as there is not really a stream of visual similarities among them; rather, they are characterized as much by their freedom from the constraints of stylistic rules and their lack of unifying visual features.



Figure 4.37 | Pieta Liebieghaus
Author: User "FA2010"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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4.4.3 Individual Style

Johannes (or Jan) Vermeer lived in the seventeenth century, a time of artistic flowering often referred to as the Golden Age of Dutch art. During his lifetime, Vermeer was a painter of some renown in his hometown of Delft whose work was purchased by a small number of collectors. After his death in 1675 at the age of forty-three, however, he and his work were largely forgotten, in part because the few works he painted were in private collections and rarely seen. For example, Vermeer's painting *The Geographer* was in the hands of more than two-dozen private owners before it was sold to the Städel Museum (Städelsches Kunstinstitut) in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1885. (Figure 4.38) And, Vermeer himself was not "re-discovered" until 1860, when museum director Gustav Waagen recognized a work attributed to another artist as a painting by Vermeer. Working with Waagen, art critic Théophile Thoré-Bürger published a **catalogue raisonné**, a detailed, comprehensive list of the artist's work, in 1866, launching Vermeer to ward the fame he and his thirty-four known paintings enjoy to this day.

After such a long period of obscurity, it is all the more interesting that Vermeer is considered today to have such a distinctive style. As in *The Geographer*, the great majority of his works are set in a domestic interior, strongly lit by a multi-paned window to the left. Sunlight washes across the table at the window and the figure standing there, to the floor and the wall behind. The objects in the room are both those commonly found in a Dutch household of the day and specific to the occupation of a geographer, namely, the celestial globe, charts, and compass the man holds. Vermeer achieved the luminosity of the scene, with small details warmly highlighted to a fine glow, by applying multiple layers of translucent glazes of paint. The palette of earth tones interspersed with the vivid blue of ground lapis lazuli and brilliant vermilion of powdered cinnabar provide a richness, clarity, and stillness that are distinctively Vermeer's, as well.

The life and work of Vincent van Gogh also provides us with a good example to talk about the individual style of an artist. In addition to what can be learned about the artist through his drawings and paintings, the more than 800 letters Van Gogh wrote to his brother, Theo, other family members, and friends, provide valuable information about his artistic intentions and thoughts about his art and life. After a childhood the artist described as troubled and lonely, he found happiness in 1869 at the age of sixteen when he took a position with the art dealer Goupil & Cie, first in the Dutch city of The Hague and then in London, England. After leaving the firm in 1876, however, he spent the next seven years in a series of vocational and romantic pursuits that left Van Gogh disillusioned and adrift. In 1883, he began to pursue drawing and painting, for which he had shown promise as a child. The two years he spent in Paris, 1886-1888, provided him with seemingly endless opportunities to study and grow as an artist.

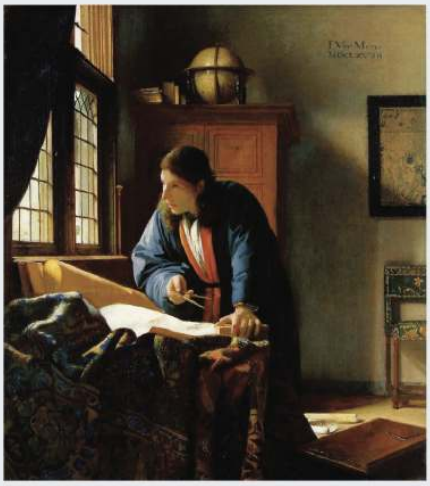


Figure 4.38 | *The Geographer*
Artist: Johannes Vermeer
Author: User "Hkgeogphr"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 4.39 | *Wheat Field with Cypresses*
Artist: Vincent van Gogh
Author: Met Museum
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Overwhelmed by the pace of life there, however, in 1888 he settled in Arles, a small town in the south of France, where he spent the last two years of his life.

Largely based on the prolific artistic output during and biographical details about those last two years, Van Gogh is well known as an emotionally troubled artist who struggled artistically, financially, and socially. His work from that period does not look like that of any of his contemporaries, so we feel confident that his choice of subject and technique reveals something personal and intimate rather than polished, distant, and conventional. (Figure 4.39) His swirling brush strokes and vivid colors seem to indicate the chaotic and emotionally turbulent life he was experi- encing. His choice of cypress trees as symbols of eternity reveal a concern with the spiritual that is well documented in his letters of the time. His passion, dedication to painting, and perhaps even a kind of desperation all seem to drive Van Gogh's individual stylistic approach.

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4.5: How to Compare and Contrast Art

Comparing modern paintings and historic paintings brings an understanding of how the past influences the present. Learning the elements of art, design, and art methods will help you communicate and write with a new language to compare and contrast art. In this textbook, we will be comparing and contrasting ordinary images of horses, figures, sunflowers, and dots. Like a new language, it becomes more familiar the more the terms used in written descriptions. Looking at art is the foundation of learning how to write descriptive essays. The longer you look, the more information you begin to see, like the brush marks. Asking yourself questions about the brush marks can help you define the type of art you are looking at: Impressionism uses significant broad-brush marks with visible slabs of paint. While Renaissance artists used oil paint with almost hidden brush marks giving a life-like look to the painting. These observations will help you decide what period of art painting can belong in when you do not know the answer.

Comparing Horses

The two paintings, *Relay Hunting* (1.9) and *Foundation Sire* (1.10) were created 170 years apart yet are as realistic as photographs taken yesterday. Similar instances, the horses predominantly face away from the viewer displaying the sturdy hind legs and taut muscles. The shining sun marks their coats, reflecting highlights and emphasizing the muscle structure of the animals. Both artists realistically depict the horses causing the viewer to take a second look at the exquisite details of the horses and the surroundings.

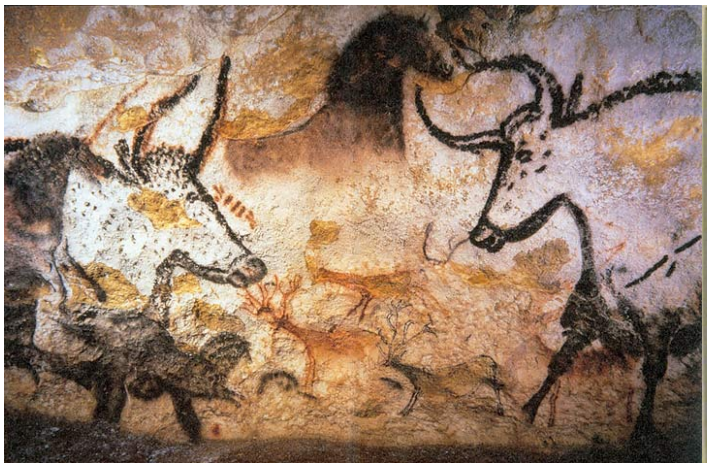


1.9 *Relay Hunting*



1.10 *Foundation Sire*

In realistic paintings, both artists focused on detail based upon their study of horse anatomy. Rosa Bonheur, who painted the three horses in *Relay Hunting* (1.9), actually went to meat processing plants and studied the anatomy of the horses while she dissected the animals. Most artists study human anatomy as part of their education. Understanding the body's muscle and bone structure benefits the artists' ability to draw realistic people and animals.

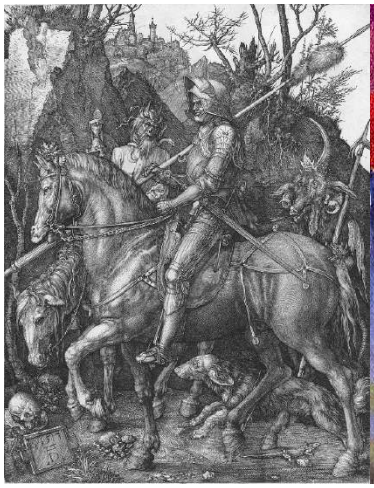


1.11 Image of a horse from Lascaux Caves



1.13 *Study of Horses*, Leonardo

The representation of horses throughout human time began on the cave wall, Image of Horse (1.11). We see horses immortalized in bronze statues, captured on film, or drawn in *Study of Horses* (1.13). Painted in *Blue Horses* (1.14), etched in *Knight, Death and the Devil* (1.12), and colored. Horses have been a mode of transportation for thousands of years, and the equine image has been traditional portraiture throughout the ages. These pictures of different types of horses demonstrate they can be drawn or painted in many types of styles. The details in the etched Knight, Death, and the Devil (1.12) establishes the artist as a detail orientated person as opposed to the Blue Horses (1.14), which has a looser painting style and bolder colors.



1.12 *Knight, Death and the Devil*



1.14 *Blue Horses*

Comparing Figures

At first glance, *The Birth of Venus* (1.15) and *Rara Avis 19* (1.16) look completely different from each other, or are they? Let us look closer at these two figures—what is the one object in both paintings that is similar? The woman in the center! Both poses are similar, expressionless except what the viewer reads into it, and they display no movement, a very static pose with elongated legs and feet. Neither one of the artists give any weight to the body or use any type of deep perspective space. Both figures have an impossible pose, the shifting of weight over one hip. They both appear to be emerging from the water as if being born from the sea.



1.15 *The Birth of Venus*



1.16 *Rara Avis 19*

They are both colorful and have the impression of a background; land, sea, and trees. However, these two paintings are over 500 years apart, the Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli in 1486 and Rara Avis 19 by Jylian Gustlin in 2014. Botticelli painted in oils on canvas, and his Venus is aloof and uninterested in her surroundings. Gustlin works in acrylic and oil paints on board, using the effects of layers to achieve her distinct and intricate paintings. The figures in the landscape frequently show a moody and brooding figure, yet at the same time, depicting a sense of future. One figure set in a literal translation and the other in a modern view, yet each one escapes from reality.

Comparing Sunflowers

These two pieces of art display the gorgeous sunflower at the height of its flowering. The yellow petals open up towards the sunshine, offering seeds to passing birds. The hint of brown color on the leaves tells the viewer that the fall weather is on its way. These two art pieces are about 140 years apart, one is in paint, and the other is painted fabric. The *Sunflowers* (1.17) in the vase is by Vincent Van Gogh in 1887, and the sunflower quilt (1.18) is by an unknown quilter, 2004.



1.17 S*unflowers*

The two pieces have many similar components, for example, the colors of the sunflowers are yellow, brown seed pods in the centers, both pictures fill the space, and both painted. The differences are more significant because the quilted sunflowers highly contrast against the dark brown fabric; the flowers in the vase are against a pale blue background. The quilt shows flowers arranged in space not anchored to stems or in a vase, as seen in the painting.

The painting process is also different. Van Gogh painted his sunflowers on canvas with oil paints. The painted quilt fabric became the palette for the sunflowers with mostly yellows, with browns, greens, and oranges in a random array of colors for highlights, cut into individual leaves, and arranged on the background fabric. Both pieces are similar works of art created in different periods with different materials.



1.18 Sunflower quilt

Comparing Dots

Dots or points are single primary forms in art. In art, dots can be one or many thousands of dots abstracted into images we may or may not recognize. The dots can be far apart or close together, different colors, monochromatic, or one color. All drawings begin

with a single dot from the point of the pencil, and as the pencil moves, it becomes a continuous line of dots, thereby making the dot one of the essential elements in art.

Dots become the focal point of the art, and space in-between the dots are as crucial as the dot itself. The dot can cause tension or harmony depending on the color, size, and how close the dot is to another dot. As dots placed closer together, they start to become an object, a recognizable form.

Yayoi Kusama (born 1929) is considered the 'Princess of Polka Dots' using large distinct polka dots in her two sculptures *Flowers* (1.19) and *Life is the Heart of a Rainbow* (1.20). They are red and white polka dots surrounding the trees or the entire room. The polka dots are distinctly circles, especially in the room, as they are far apart and only in two contrasting colors. The red wrapped trees with white polka dots are closer together but still distinct in various sizes in the high contrast. The dots are not touching, and the negative space between them is about the same size throughout.



1.19 *Flowers*



1.20 *Life is the Heart of a Rainbow*



1.21 *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*

George Seurat developed a technique of painting with tiny colored dots called Pointillism as he when he branched out from Impressionism. Pointillism relies on small dots of color that blend in the viewer's minds creating a large scene. Up close, each

colored dot and brush mark are visible; however, when the viewer steps back several feet, the viewer is surprised with a lifelike painting. The large-scale piece, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1.21), transformed art at the turn of the 20th century and inspired artists to work with dots.

The three paintings are all created from dots, small dots, large dots, colored dots on the canvas, on walls, suspended from the ceiling, or suspended in space. The size and color of the dot do matter and can give the viewer a completely different experience.



Video: How to do visual (formal) analysis in art history

Art is everywhere you look, everything you wear, and art is beauty. Just look around....

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4.6: Before You Move On (Visual Analysis)

Key Concepts

Visual art can be usefully interpreted using a variety of approaches to discovering meaning in the elements, principles, and relationships present in works of art. A structured approach using description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation is presented and exemplified as one mode for understanding how works of art can carry meaning.

Other modes of interpretation recognize many approaches to art-making. Works of art may be idealized, representational, non-objective, or abstract. Issues of historical and personal style also become important in understanding what artists hoped to communicate with their artwork.

Types of art revolve primarily around representation, abstraction, idealization, and nonobjective art, which is a rejection of representation.

The historical progression of artistic style simultaneously relies on and is limited by technology, socio-cultural, and religious constraints. Examples of cultural or Regional style are drawn from the ancient Near East, Ancient Greece and Rome, and the Indian sub-continent. Examples of period styles exemplified include the Romanesque and Gothic periods of Europe and the Italian Renaissance. Examples of formal styles, i.e., the “isms,” include nineteenth century realism, expressionism of Weimar Germany, and the Abstract Expressionism of the New York School.

Test Yourself

1. Discuss the difference between the categories of representational art, abstract art, and non- representational art.
2. Cite and briefly describe the four phases of critical analysis presented in this chapter.

	Phase	Description
a.	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____
d.	_____	_____

3. Cite one example of an idealized work of art and discuss potential reasons for and goals of this idealization, especially as relates to the work’s culture of origin.
4. Restate the three types of art historical **style** mentioned in this chapter, citing one example of each, and illustrate this example with a specific work of art

	Style	Example	Artwork
a.	_____	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____	_____
d.	_____	_____	_____

KEY TERMS

Abstract: in art, the property of representing selected essential features of a particular subject instead of relying on objective appearance alone.

Andachtsbilder: a German term to denote devotional images used to aid prayer.

Bodhisattva: in Buddhism, an enlightened person who remains in the world in order to help others attain enlightenment.

Catalogue Raisonné: a published collection of all the works of a given artist or art exhibition.

Composite view: the construction of a human figure from both profile and frontal views, for example, as in ancient Egyptian art.

Contrapposto: an asymmetrical arrangement of the human figure in which the line of the arms and shoulders contrasts with and balances the line of the hips and legs.

École des Beaux-Arts: an influential art school in France.

Expressionism: one of several art movements of the twentieth century that were concerned with conveying emotional and mental responses through art (German Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, Neo-Expressionism).

Gum Bichromate: a photographic print process which uses gum Arabic and bichromate.

Hierarchical proportion: the condition in which the size of figures is determined by social importance rather than observation.

Humanism: the belief that people are naturally good and that problems can be solved using reason instead of religion.

Idealized: an image that is represented as being ideal or perfected.

Linear perspective: a geometric system for representing the illusion of receding space.

Naturalistic: of or pertaining to the appearance of nature, without idealization.

Non-objective: unrelated to or exclusive of perceptions of objective external reality.

Non-representational: artwork which intentionally avoids the strategy of representation, instead selecting only novel and original experience as subject matter.

Orthogonal lines: in linear perspective, diagonal lines that recede into fictive space.

Photo-transformation: a type of photography created by Lucas Samaras which uses fingers and a stylus to move and smear the dyes of a Polaroid print while still wet.

Portals: in Gothic architecture, doorways, traditionally embellished with sculptural decoration.

Representation: in art, the use of signs or images which stand in for or take the place of something else.

Stupas: in Buddhist religious architecture, rounded mounds which contain religious relics, mark sacred places, or are used as sites of meditation.

Tetrarch: in Roman political history, the term for one of four co-emperors of the Roman Empire installed by Diocletian in 293 CE.

Tympanum: in Gothic Architecture, the semi-circular area above the Portal, traditionally embellished with sculptural decoration.

Vanishing point: in linear perspective, the point on the horizon to which orthogonal lines converge.

Yakshi: in Hindu and Buddhist mythologies, female counterparts to male Yaksha, who are both mythical beings that guard treasure hidden in the Earth.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Art and Identity

Learning Objectives

- Name and categorize ways that artists explore the concept of identity
- Understand how art serves as a commentary on society
- Analyze how politics and societal concerns may influence art
- Understand how art expresses individual and group identity
- Understand how art preserves national culture and personal identity

5.1: Introduction
5.2: Individual vs Cultural Groups
5.3: Identity Politics- From the Margins to the Mainstream
5.4: Modern Indigenous Art (1970-2000)
5.5: Harlem Renaissance (1918-1930)
5.6: Jordan Casteel paints her community
5.7: Stephanie Syjuco, The Visible Invisible
5.8: Identity and the body
5.9: Feminist Art (1970-2000)
5.10: Guerrilla Girls, 'You Have to Question What You See' (interview)
5.11: Before You Move On (Art and Identity)

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5.1: Introduction

One of the more important themes emerging from the last century has been the individual's search for identity. For example, genealogical websites have proliferated and special television programs are devoted to the subject. Since it first aired on PBS in 2012, Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *Finding Your Roots* has been a popular program. The British version, *The Guardian*, has been successful since 2006.

Some anthropologists suggest that the deep-rooted interest in identity or ancestry is partly shaped by evolutionary forces dating back to early humans supporting each other in extended family groups. Anthropologist Dwight Read theorizes that the Neolithic people were the first to understand the concept of the family tree and the perception of self in a family unit and in society.[1] If connected through blood, people have the tendency to be more willing to care for each other; a common interest and support system is readily realized within a clan or a group.

Early humans created two- and three-dimensional likenesses of themselves in their environment to help understand who they were in relation to the other members of their group. Con- temporary humans do the same; they make records of themselves with family members, most commonly in photographs and Selfies, and on Instagram. It is the same fundamental concept and placement in an environment that collectively identifies who we are in society, for example, in social gatherings, organizations, and religious settings. This means, above all, that we must place ourselves within the world in order to obtain identity. Children search for their identity at a very young age by observing and recognizing their parents and family members. Their markings with in a simple drawing of self and family similar to those of early humans help them to vindicateand confirm who they are and how they are perceived by their family group.

Like children, artists sometimes explore their identity through self-portraits and symbolically in works of art that relate to ancestry or culture. Doing so allows them to take a look inside their core and see how they fit within their contemporary culture; this investigation of self plays an important role in how artists understand their environment and the world.

Vincent van Gogh is known as a person who spent much of his time in solitude. He painted more than thirty self-portraits between the years 1886 and 1889, placing him among the most prolific self-portraitists of all time. Indeed, some of his most respected works are his self-portraits that trace his image throughout the last years of his life, the most crucial to his career. (Figures 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3) While Van Gogh used the study of his own image to help develop his skills as an artist, these self portraits also give us insights into the artist's life and well being, how he fit in society, and his place among the groups with whom he associated.



Figure 8.1 | *Self-Portrait with Straw Hat*
Artist: Vincent van Gogh
Author: Met Museum
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 8.2 | *Selt-portrait as a painter*
Artist: Vincent van Gogh
Author: Web Museum
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 8.3 | *Self-portrait with a bandaged ear*
Artist: Vincent van Gogh
Author: The Courtland Institute of Art
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Like Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso painted a number of self-portraits. Throughout his career, Picasso painted various likenesses that reflected changes in himself, his style, his artistic development, as well as in his life style and beliefs—all of which may be viewed closely from the content of his paintings. (Figures 8.4 and 8.5) The first self-portrait, painted in 1901 while he was establishing himself as an artist in Paris, France, and still spending time in Barcelona, Spain, reflects the somber mode and tones of his Blue Period (1901-1904). The second, dated to 1906, at the very end of his Rose Period (1904-1906), Picasso depicts himself as the artist who by that time was moving in artistic circles, gaining respect, and acquiring patrons.



Figure 8.4 | *Self-portrait*
Artist: Pablo Picasso
Source: WikiArt
License: Public Domain



Figure 8.5 | *Self-portrait*
Artist: Pablo Picasso
Source: WikiArt
License: Public Domain

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954, Mexico) used the iconography of her Mexican heritage to paint herself and the pain that had become an integral part of her life following a bus accident at the age of 18 in which she suffered numerous injuries. She identified as a group member of her country, with Mexican culture and ancestry, and as belonging to the female gender. Kahlo's self-portraits are dramatic, bloody, brutal, and at times overtly political. (*Self-Portrait*, Frida Kahlo: upload.wikimedia.org/Wikipedia/en/1/1e/Frida_Kahlo_%28self_portrait%29.jpg) In seeking her roots, she voiced concern for her country as it struggled for an independent cultural identity. She spoke to her country and people through her art. Kahlo's art was inspired by her public beliefs and personal sufferings; she wanted her art to speak from her consciousness.

Although self-portraits of today may be slightly different from those of earlier decades, they still depict self-exploration and identity through society and groups that communicate who we are. Cai Guo-Qiang (b. 1958, China, lives USA) exploded small charges of gunpowder to create an image of himself. (*Self- Portrait: A Subjugated Soul*, Cai Guo-Qiang: http://www.caiguoqiang.com/sites/default/files/styles/medium/public/1989_SelfPortrait_0389_001ltr-web. jpg) Different from those by Van Gogh, Picasso, and Kahlo, Cai's self-portrait does not have any likeness or resemblance to his personal features, but it too sends a message about our society and how Cai relates to it. For example, the artist associates the lack of identifying information, rendering him anonymous, with contemporary society, and the fired gunpowder with both chaos and transformation.

Despite the distance in time that separates early and modern humans, the search for their place in society and who they are remains of fascination and a mystery to all humans regardless of their time in history.

1. Ghose, Tia (Oct. 26, 2012). Why we care about our ancestry, Live Science. http://www.livescience.com/24313-why-ancestry.html

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5.2: Individual vs Cultural Groups



Figure 8.6 | *Oberon, Titania and Puck with Fairies Dancing*
Artist: William Blake
Author: Tate Britain
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Often when one thinks of an artist, the image is of someone doing solitary work in a studio. During the Romantic period of the late eighteenth century until around 1850, artists, writers, and composers were associated with individualism and with working alone; this trend continued to develop up until recent times. The Romantic period valued and celebrated individual originality with musical and literary geniuses such Ludwig van Beethoven, Frédéric Chopin, Robert Schumann, John Keats, Edgar Allen Poe, and Mary Shelley. The visual arts boasted such geniuses asFrancisco Goya, Eugène Delacroix, William Blake (1757-1827, England), and Antoine-Jean Gros (1771- 1835, France). (Figures 8.6 and 8.7) Artists of the period exemplified the Romanticvalues of the expression of the artists' feelings, personal imagination, and creative experimentation as opposed to accepting tradition or popular mass opinion. Artists in the period broke traditional rules; indeed, they considered it desirable to break the rules and overthrow tradition.

From the Medieval to the Baroque periods, however, artists worked together in workshops and guilds, and schools were formed that stressed the importance of
preserving heritage and history through rigorous and systematic artistic training.



Figure 8.7 | *The Battle of Abukir, 25 July 1799*
Artist: Antoine-Jean Gros
Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Large-scale commissions often required numerous hands to complete a work, emphasizing collaboration. Nevertheless, the artwork was expected to have a consistent style and quality of craftsmanship. To satisfy those various needs, artists often specialized in a particular type of subject matter. For example, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640, Germany, lived Flanders) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625, Flanders) collaborated on more than twenty paintings over twen-ty-five years. (Figure 8.8) In their *Madonna in a Garland of Roses*, Rubens's celebrated skill as a figurative painter can
be seen in the serenely glowing face of the Virgin Mary and energetic cavorting of the cherubs surrounding the circular arrangement of flowers painted with accuracy and delicacy by Brueghel, who was known for his lively nature scenes.

A recent study by a Yale University researcher found the perception of high quality art today is that it is produced by a single individual. If produced by two or three people, as in a mural or public work projects, the value of the art drops. For creative works, perceptions of quality therefore appear to be based on perceptions of individual, rather than total effort. Nevertheless, a new trend across the world in general suggests that this tradition, which first arose in the Westduring the Renaissance, is not the norm around the globe; that is, the value of art as located in the single artist who produces art individually and alone may be more specifically based in certain cultures. Artists in the twenty-first century are collaborating with others through social media and/or face-to-face encounters. It is interesting to remember that the word "art" derives from a root that means to "join" or fit together. A whole constellation of ideas and practices can be accomplished through networking and collaboration as artists participate in group residencies and apprenticeships similar to workshop traditions of centuries ago to learn the customary methods and advanced techniques of their art.

8.2.1 Nation

The Kingdom of Benin, located in the southern region of modern Nigeria and home to the Edo people, was ruled by a succession of **obas**, or divine kings. It grew from a city-state into an empire during the reign of Oba Ewuare the Great (r. 1440-1473). From 1440, obas ruled the kingdom until it was taken over by the British in 1897. Remarkably, the obas and people of Benin remained in



Figure 8.8 | *Madonna in a Garland of Flowers*
Artist: Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder
Author: The Bridgeman Art Library
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

control of their trading relations with Europeans and without interference from the rulers of the nations they traded with until the second half of the nineteenth century, prior to foreign rule. The city of Benin prospered and grew through trade with the Portuguese, Dutch, and British.

One of the benefits of dealing with merchants sailors who traveled the seas was the variety of goods they brought with them and were eager to trade for foodstuff grown or refined by the Edo people. In particular, the Edo treasured brass and coral, along with the ivory they acquired through elephant hunts. Those materials were reserved for the oba and his court, and were used in abundance in the wide array of ceremonial and sacred objects created under each ruler. Kingship was passed from father to firstborn son, and, upon ascending to the throne, the new oba was expected to create an altar made of brass for his father, as well as one for his mother, generally in ivory, if she had attained the status of queen mother. The new oba also created a brass head to honor his predecessor. (Figure 8.9) Over time, objects such as plaques, bells, masks, chests, and additional altars made of brass or ivory, some adorned with coral, were added. Some were used to commemorate momentous events and honor heroes, but the majority of royal objects were used in ceremonial and symbolic support of the oba, his ancestors and subjects, and the kingship itself.



Figure 8.9 | Head of an Oba
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

This nineteenth-century brass head of an oba, for example, is not meant to be a portrait of an individual king so much as a representation of the divine nature and power of being king. The oba derives his power from his interactions with and control over supernatural forces. He is allied with and assisted by his deified ancestors, whom he honors through rituals, offerings, and sacrifices. In stressing this continuity of kingship and his rightful place in that unbroken chain, the oba strengthens his own power and that of his people and nation.

The welfare of the kingdom rests on the oba's head, a heavy burden, which is emphasized in representations of him using a proliferation of objects weighing upon him (Oba Erediauwa: olivernwokedi.files.wordpres...45743558468606 60_n.jpg). But, he does not bear the weight of ruling alone; he works with and relies on his advisors and subjects as they support him. That support is shown literally when the oba is in full ceremonial regalia. In this photograph of the current oba, Erediauwa, the King is shown in his royal garb, heavily beaded in coral with ivory bracelets and plaques at his waist; an attendant, supporting his right arm, is helping Oba Erediauwa bear the weight of kingship on behalf of the nation of Edo people.

Following George Washington's celebratory visit to Charles- ton, South Carolina, in May 1791, the Charleston City Council voted to celebrate the national hero by having John Trumbull (1756-1843, USA) paint a life-size portrait of the President and hero of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) to "hand down to posterity the remembrance of the man to whom they are so much indebted for the blessings of peace, liberty and indepen- dence."[2] Having been Washington's aide-de-camp during the War of Independence, Trumbull chose to portray Washington as the steadfast and majestic general at the start of the Battle of Trenton, a pivotal engagement for colonial troops discouraged in the aftermath of several recent defeats. (Figure 8.10) The paint- ing depicts clouds in a dark, overcast sky turning pink with the rising sun juxtaposed with the general's horse, frightened by the ongoing battle, held tightly by his aide. Washington stands with confidence, one glove off to hold a spyglass in his right hand, looking in the distance as if heeding a faraway call for victory.

Trumbull was pleased with "the lofty expression of his an- imated expression, the high resolve to conquer or to perish" that he captured in *George Washington before the Battle of Trenton*.[3] His patrons in South Carolina were not, though, and rejected the



Figure 8.10 | *General George Washington at Trenton*
Artist: John Trumbull
Source: Art Gallery at Yale
License: Public Domain



Figure 8.11 | *Charles I at the Hunt*
Artist: Anthony van Dyck
Author: User "Tetraktys"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

portrait when he presented it to them in 1792. Speaking on behalf of the people of Charleston, South Caro- lina Congressman William Loughton Smith "thought the city would be better satisfied with a more matter-of-fact likeness, such as they had recently seen him calm, tranquil, peaceful."[4]

This was not an isolated occurrence: the question of how a statesman and military hero should be represented had not been resolved to the satisfaction of artists or patrons in the eigh- teenth century, in the years both before and after the founding of the United States. As a representative democracy, the coun- try's leaders should be depicted as a commander-in-chief who is also one of the people, many argued. But American artists unfortunately had no clear model for a "matter-of-fact likeness" in the portraits of European royalty and heads of state that they used as examples. Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641, Flanders), who was court painter to the King of England, around 1635painted *Charles I at the Hunt*. (Figure 8.11) The informal yet dignified stance van Dyck adopted for his image of the sovereign, a gentleman out in nature, quickly became the favorite pose for aristocrats and other dignitaries sitting for a non-ceremonial portrait. The pose still remained a standard at the time Trumbull painted *George Washington before the Battle of Trenton*, but, as indicated by the painting's reception, it was not considered appropriate in a representation of the leader of a democratic nation. In addition, as the portrait was to commem- orate Washington's visit to Charleston, townspeople thought the battle setting should be replaced with a view of that city.

Trumbull took note of his patrons' wishes and painted another version. (*General George Washington at Trenton*, John Trumbull: www.flickr.com/photos/35801169@ N00/6612343749) While Washington's pose remains virtually unchanged, Trumbull lightened the sky and inserted a view of Charleston Bay with the city on the far shore. Charleston leaders were satisfied and Trumbull promised delivery of the painting after some minor additions. The addition turned out to be the General's horse, but reversed from the original painting, with its hindquarters prominently displayed in the space between Washington's canary yellow breeches and his walking stick, and the distant city visible between the horse's legs. The painting still hangs in the Historic Council Chamber of Charleston City Hall.

8.2.2 Cultural Heritage and Ethnic Identity

One important aspect of cultural and ethnic identity is shared histories or common memories. Such histories are our heritage. However, heritage is not the full history. It connects to culture and ethnicity in order to convey the full story about who we were and who we have become as a society or individual. Self or national identity is built on its foundation. Defining terms will help in understanding how each interplay to identify who we are as an individual or nation.

Christian Ellers, a popular contemporary writer on cultures, defines identity as whatever a person may distinguish themselves by, whether it be a particular country, ethnicity, religion, or- ganization, or other position. Identity is one way among many to define oneself. Ellers defines ethnicity as a group that normally has some connections or common traits, such as a common language, common heritage, and or cultural similarities. *The American Dictionary* defines cul- ture as the way of life of a particular people, especially as shown in ordinary behavior, habits, and attitudes toward each other or one's moral and religious beliefs ("Culture"). We will look at these terms as they relate to artists, the visual documentarians of society.

Kimsooja (b. 1957, South Korea), a multi-disciplinary conceptual, reflects on her group identity by exploring the roots of her Korean culture. She draws upon tradition and history by selecting familiar everyday items such as fabric to communicate her message. Fabric wrapped into a bundle known as a "bottari" is commonly used to transport, carry, or store everyday objects in Korean culture. What is different is Kimsooja's use of fabric as an art form. Since 1991, Kimsooja has used fabric, sometimes in the form of a bottari, in an on-going series, *Deductive Objects*, exploring Korean folk customs, daily and common activities, and her cultural background and heritage in relation to her life and experience. (*Bottari Truck-Migrateurs*, "Je Reviendrai", Thierry

Depagne and Jaeho Chong: http://farm8.staticflickr.com/7368/1...99de3e56_z.jpg) In this example, she photographed figures draped in Korean printed fabric that conceals their ethnicity, culture, and identity. Their identity is left to the viewer's imagination, and their culture is left for the viewer to consider, using the print of the fabric as a clue.

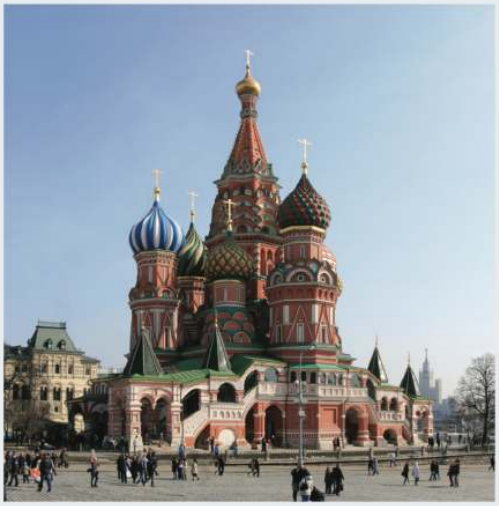


Figure 8.12 | St. Basil Cathedral, Moscow
Author: User "Ludvig14"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

A number of artists such as Kimsooja choose to communicate through their art who they are in relation to their culture and ethnicity. Their art becomes a means of validating their self-identity. Her Korean heritage represents a treasury of symbols that commemorates who they are as a people and a distinct culture with a common artistic sensibility. Their national self-image is, on one level, unambiguously defined by the convergence of territorial, ethnic, and cultural identities. The geographical conditions of the Korean Peninsula provide a self-contained nautical and continental environment with plenty of resources with which to create and be innovative. These conditions have given the people since prehistoric times a rich and unique culture to draw from and make contributions to humanity. Koreans take great pride in their homogeneous culture, and in their heritage.

Russia, similarly self-contained, for many centuries developed cultural characteristics and ethnic identities distinctly their own, as well. Russia's rich cultural heritage is visually stunning, from its vivid folk costumes to its elaborate religious symbols and churches. (Figure 8.12) Most Russians identify with the Eastern Orthodox (Christian) religion, but Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism are also practiced in Russia, making it a rich land of diverse ethnic groups and cultures. St. Basil's Cathedral, located on the grounds of the Kremlin in Moscow, and hundreds of other orthodox churches symbolize Russia's heritage; indeed, citizens proudly place pictures of the cathedrals in their homes and offices. The churches in Russia are astonishingly beautiful and very much a part of Russia's heritage.

Ironically, then, in light of such a rich internal history, why did Russia's rulers look to western European artists and artistic traditions to develop a new artistic identity in eighteenth century?

Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli (1675-1744, Italy, lived Russia), an Italian sculptor who moved to St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1716, is associated with the formation of Russia's "new" culture. As a young artist, Rastrelli moved from his native Florence during an economic downturn to Paris in search of greater opportunities. The lavish and majestic works he created there in the late Baroque style did not earn him the success he sought, but did bring him to the attention of Tsar (and later Emperor) Peter the Great (r. 1682-1725), who lured him and his son Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli (1700-1771,France, lived Russia) to the Russia court.

Peter the Great coruled with his brother, Ivan V, and other family members until 1696, when he was twenty-four years old. At that time, Russia was still very much tied to its internal religious, political, social, and cultural traditions.Peter the Great set out to modernize all aspects his country, from the structure of the military to education for children of the nobility. The Tsar traveled widely in Western Europe, implementing governmental reforms and adopting cultural norms he saw there. France was the model for



Figure 8.13 | Peter I
Author: User "shakko"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 8.14 | Bust of Louis XIV of France
Artist: Gian Lorenzo Bernini
Author: User "Coyau"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

sweeping changes he had carried out in court life, fashion, literature, music, art, architecture, and even language, with French becoming the language spoken at court over the course of the eighteenth century.

Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli and his son Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli were among the painters, sculptors, and architects, then, who were instrumental in introducing to Russia the new conventions and styles that supplanted Russia's cultural heritage and identity. For example, Carlo Rastrelli's portrait bust of Peter the Great bears a striking stylistic resemblance to a portrait bust of French King Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715) by sculptor and architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680, Italy). (Figures 8.13 and 8.14) Bernini's bust, created during a visit to Paris in 1665, shows Louis XIV as a visionary and majestic leader who is literal- ly above vagaries of human existence such as the wind that billows his drapery. Carlo Rastrelli's portrait of Peter the Great, completed posthumously in 1729, draws upon the same traditions dating back to images of Roman emperors such as Augustus (see Figure 3.23) of showing absolute authority through such devices as the lift of the head, eyes scanning the distance, and wearing of military armor.



Figure 8.15 | Winter Palace, St. Petersburg
Author: User "Florstein"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 4.0

His son Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli was an architect who also worked in the Baroque style. He received his first royal commission in 1721, at the age of twenty-one, but he is mainly known for opulent and impos- ing buildings he designed after Peter the Great's death in 1725. Continuing the modernization and transformation of St. Petersburg, Francesco Rastrelli's structures are associated with luxuriousexuberance of the Baroque, and Rus- sia's Romanov rulers of the eighteenth century. One of Francesco Rastrelli's most famous buildings is the Winter Palace, also bears a striking stylistic resemblance to a French palace: Ver- sailles, built for Louis XIV by architects Louis Le Vau (1612-1670, France) and Jules-Hardouin Mansart (1746-1708, France). (Figures 8.15 and 8.16)



Figure 8.16 | Versailles
Author: Marc Vassal
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

8.2.3 Sex/Gender Identity

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977, USA) is a contemporary portrait painter. In his work, he refers back to poses and other compositional elements used by earlier masters in much the same way that Trumbull did in his portrait of George Washington. Wiley means for his viewers to recognize the earlier work he has borrowed from in creating his painting, to make comparisons between the two, and to layer meaning from the earlier work into his own. Due to the strong contrasts between the sitters in Wiley's paintings and those who posed for the earlier portraitists, however, this comparison often makes for a complex interweaving of meanings.

Wiley's 2008 painting *Femme piquée par un serpent*, or *Woman bitten by a serpent*, (*Femme Piquée par un Serpent*, Kehinde Wiley: http://hyperallergic.com/wp-content/...ewRepublic.jpg) is based upon an 1847 marble work of the same name by French sculptor Auguste Clésinger (1814-1883, France). (Figure 8.17) When Clésinger's flagrantly sensual nude was exhibited, the public and critics alike were scandalized, and fascinated. It was not uncommon in European and American art of the nineteenth century to use the subject of the work as justification for depicting the female nude. For example, if the subject was a moral tale or a scene from classical mythology, that was an acceptable reason for showing a nude figure. In Clésinger's sculpture, the pretext for the woman's indecent writhing was the snake bite, which, coupled with the roses surrounding the woman, was meant to suggest an allegory of love or beauty lost in its prime rather than simply a salacious depiction of a nude. Unfortunately, the model was easily recognized as a real person, Apollonie Sabatier, a courtesan who was the writer Charles Baudelaire's mistress and well known among artists and writers of the day. Clésinger defended his sculpture as an artful study of the human form but, having used the features and body of a contemporary woman, his sculpture's viewers objected to the image as too real. Wiley's painting is the

opposite: it is clearly intended to be a portrait of one individual, but he is clothed and inexplicably lying with his back to the viewer while turning to look over his shoulder. In his painting, Wiley retains the extended arms, and twisted legs and torso of Clésinger's figure, but the sculpted woman's thrown back head and closed eyes are replaced by the man's turned head and mildly quizzical gaze.



Figure 8.17 | *Femme Piquée par un Serpent*
Artist: Auguste Clésinger
Author: User "Arnaud 25"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Wiley takes that pose and its meanings indecency, exposure, vulnerability, powerlessness and uses them in a context that seemingly makes no sense when the subject is a fully clothed black male. Or does it? By using the conventions for depicting the female nude, Wiley asks us to examine the following: what happens when the figure is clothed with a suggestion of eroticism in the glimpse of brown skin and white briefs above his low-riding jeans; what happens when a young man gazes at the viewer with an unguarded expression of open inquisitiveness; and what happens when a black male presents his body in a posture of weakness, potentially open to attack? The artist uses these juxtapositions of meaning to challenge our notions of identity and masculinity. By expanding his visual vocabulary to include traditions in portraiture going back hundreds of years, Wiley paints a young black man at odds with contemporary conventions of (male) physicality and sexuality.

Ideas about gender identity, that is, the gender one identifies with regardless of biological sex, have developed scientifically and socially, and have in recent years become both more complex and more fluid in numerous cultures. Within other cultures, however, in addition to male or fe- male, there has traditionally been a third gender, and gender fluidity has been part of the fabric of society for thousands of years. Among the ancient Greeks, for example, a hermaphrodite, an indi- vidual who has both male and female sex characteristics, was considered "a higher, more powerful form" that created "a third, transcendent gender."[5] In Samoa, there is a strong emphasis on one's role in the extended family, or *aiga*. Traditionally, if there are not enough females within an aiga to properly run the household or if there is a male child who is particularly drawn to domestic life, he is raised as *fa'afafine* or "in the manner of a woman." Thus, *fa'afafine* are male at birth but are raised as a third gender, taking on masculine and feminine behavioral traits.

In India, those of a third gender are known as *hijra*, which includes individuals who are eunuchs (men who have been castrated), hermaphrodites, and transgender (when gender identity does not match assigned sex). The role of *hijras* is traditionally related to spirituality, and they are often devotees of a god or goddess. For example, the *hijras* or devotees of the Hindu goddess Bahuchara Maja are often eunuchs, having had themselves castrated voluntarily to offer their manhood to the deity. Other *hijras* live as part of the mainstream community and dress as women to perform only during religious celebrations, such as a birth or wedding, where they are invited to participate and bestow blessings.

Although *hijras* had been a respected third gender in much of Southeast Asia for thousands of years, their status changed in late nineteenth-century India while under British rule. During the twentieth century, many *hijras* formed their own communities, with the protection of a guru, or mentor, to provide some financial security and safekeeping from the harassment and discrimination under which they lived. In 2014, the supreme court of India ruled that *hijras* should be officially recognized as a third gender, dramatically changing for the better the educational andoccupational opportunities for what is estimated to be half a million to two million individuals.[6]

Tejal Shah (b. 1979, India) is a multi-media artist who often works in photography, video, and installation pieces. She began the *Hijra Fantasy Series* in 2006, (*Southern Siren* - Maheshwari from Hijra Fantasy Series, Tejal Shah: tejalshah.in/wp-content/theme...11/10/Image-03. jpg&w=0&h=197&zc=1) creating "tableaux in which [three *hijras*] enact their own personal fantasies of themselves."[7] Shah was interested in how each woman—they all had transitioned from male to female—envisions her own sexuality, separate from the perceptions and projections of others. As described by Shah, "In *Southern Siren—Maheshwari*, the protagonist envisions herself as a classic heroine from South Indian cinema in the throes of a passionate romantic encounter with a typical male hero."[8]

In the **tableau**, or staged scene, Masheshwari sees herself as resplendently dressed in a blue sari, a traditional Indian draped gown, an object of admiration and desire. In this photograph and the others in the series, Shah found it noteworthy that each *hijra*, participating fully in the creative process, expressed feelings about herself by using visual cues and types from mainstream sources such as, in this example, Indian popular culture. How each hijra represented herself was the stuff of universal human fantasies, Shah found, regardless of sexual or gender identity: "beingbeautiful, glamourous and powerful, having a family, giving love and being loved in return."[9]

8.2.4 Class



Figure 8.18 | *Maria Luisa of Parma*
Artist: Laurent Pécheux
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

Maria Luisa of Parma was a member of the highest circles of European royalty. Born in 1751, she was the youngest daughter of Phillip, Duke of Parma, Italy, and his wife, Princess LouiseÉlisabeth of France, the eldest daughter of King Louis XV. In 1765, she married Charles IV, Prince of Asturias. She was the Queen consort of Spain from 1788, when her husband ascended to the throne, until 1808, when King Charles IV abdicated his throne under pressure from Napoleon.

Royal marriages were intended to foster allegiances and cement alliances. The bride and groom generally did not meet one another until after lengthy negotiations were completed and the wedding date was near. It was not uncommon for portraits of the prospective couple to be exchanged; in addition to the descriptions by the negotiators and others, an artist's representation was the only way to learn what one's possible spouse looked like at a time when journeys were not easily or quickly undertaken. At the time of their engagement, Laurent Pécheux (1729-1821, French) painted this portrait of Maria Luisa (Figure 8.18) in 1765 for Princess Maria Luisa fiancé's family.

Maria Luisa of Parma depicts the fourteen-year-old bride-to-be holding a snuffbox in her right hand containing a miniature portrait of her future husband inside its lid. This detail was a formula in formal engagement portraits: the sitter holds a gift such as this finely made and costly trinket to express appreciation and budding affection for one's betrothed. Additionally, to demonstrate her wealthy and cultured family background, Maria Luisa is posed within an interior setting displayed in a silk brocade gown trimmed with lengths of delicate, handmade lace, a medallion of the Order of the Starry Cross suspended from a diamond-encrusted bow on her breast, and diamond stars in her powdered hair. While this is indeed a likeness of the princess, the portrait is meant to convey far more than the color of her eyes or shape of her nose. This portrait is a statement about the prestige and power she will bring to the marriage, and a congratulatory note to the groom's family on the beauty and worth of the mutually beneficial asset they are gaining.

Maria Luisa's dress is the exclamation point to that visual statement. She is wearing a style known as a mantua or robe *a la française* (in the French style), a dress for formal court occasions, of silk brocade woven into alternating bands of gold thread and pink flowers on a cream field. This very costly fabric, probably made in France, is stretched over panniers, or fan-shaped hoops made of cane, metal or whale- bone extending side-to-side. The panniers create ahorizontal but flattened silhouette that allowed the tremendous quantity of magnificent fabric required to be fully displayed. To wear such a gown was a pronouncement of one's wealth and status, a sign of which was one's comportment, that is, one's bearing and behavior. And, it was indeed a challenge to stand or move with the grace expected of a highborn woman in eighteenth-century society while wearing such cumbersome, restrictive, and heavy clothing. Maria Luisa, however, is depicted as poised and charming, the perfect consort for a king.

Twenty-four years after her portrait by Pécheux, Maria Luisa was thirty-eight years old and had borne ten children, five of whom were still alive, when Francisco Goya created this portrait, *Maria Luisa Wearing Panniers*. (Figure 8.19) , Francisco Goya was named painter to the court of Charles IV and Maria Luisa in 1789, and in celebration of CharlesIV's ascension to the throne, created a portrait of the King, to go along with the Queen's portrait. Neither the years nor Goya were kind to Maria Luisa. (Between 1771 and 1799, she would have fourteen living children, six of whom grew to adulthood, and ten miscarriages.)

In Goya's depiction, she is even more richly dressed than in her earlier portrait, but her elaborate and sumptuous costume serves only to provide an unflattering contrast with the Queen's demeanor. Goya depicts Maria Luisa with her arms awkwardly held to



Figure 8.20 | *The Third Class Carriage*
Artist: Honoré Daumier
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

each side to accommodate her rigid, box-like tontillo (the Spanish variation of panniers); her plain, expressionless face is almost comically topped by a complexly constructed hat of lace, silk, and jewels. The hat represents one extravagant trend in women's fashion of the 1780s, and Goya did paint its proliferation of textures and surfaces with great skill and sensitivity, but the contrast between the Queen's hat and her features makes them appear even more coarse and unrefined, regardless of her wealth and class.



Figure 8.19 | *Maria Luisa of Parma Wearing Panniers*
Artist: Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes
Author: Prado Museum
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

What explanation could there have been for the court painter to create such an unflattering representation of Maria Luisa, Queen consort of Spain? In her years of living in her adopted country, she had not endeared herself to members of court or her subjects. Considering that the King preferred to hunt, running the country fell largely on the shoulders of Maria Luisa, who was vain and bad-tempered. Goya's presentation does not, in fact, contradict that assessment. The emphasis on her luxurious and elegant attire and on the robe and crown to Maria Luisa's right signaling her status as Queen consort represent that she is the individual who is literally in touch with the robes of state. This work and her engagement portrait of nearly twenty-five years earlier were not so much depictions of her as a person as they were means to communicate the power and prestige of her place and her role.

Honoré Daumier (1808-1879, France) in 1864 painted a different sign of prestige, or lack thereof, in *The Third-Class Carriage*; it was one of three paintings in a series commissioned by William Thomas Walters. (Figure 8.20) The other two paintings were *The First-Class Carriage* and *The Second-Class Carriage*, the only one in the series thought to be finished. (Figures 8.21 and 8.22) Walters, an American businessman and art collector, would later found the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, with work from his collection, including these three paintings.



Figure 8.21 | *The First Class Carriage*
Artist: Honoré Daumier
Author: Walters Art Museum
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 8.22 | *The Second Class Carriage*
Artist: Honoré Daumier
Author: Walters Art Museum
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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When Daumier created the works, he had been working prolifically as a painter, printmaker, and sculptor for forty years. In his lifetime, he would create ap- proximately 5,000 prints, 500 paintings, and 100 sculptures. From the beginning of his career, he was interested in the impact of industrialization on modern urban life, the plight of the poor, the quest for social equality, and the struggle for justice. He was especially known for his biting satire of politics and political figures, and his less stinging, ironic commentary on current society and events. Because of the subject matter he chose everyday people, contemporary life and the

straightforward, truthful, and sincere manner in which he depicted them, Daumier is considered to be part of the Realist movement or style in art.

In *The Third-Class Carriage*, the artist presents four figures in the foreground, bathed in light, with numerous, less individualized figures crowded in the background. The young mother nursing her baby, an elderly woman sitting with folded hands, and a boy sleeping with his hands in his pockets encompass four generations, as well as different stages of life. Although the passengers sit near one another, they appear isolated from each other. They, including the boy, are probably traveling to or from work in the city, and both their body postures and facial expressions convey the toll of hard labor and long hours. Daumier shows compassion for these workers whose lives hold nothing but repetitious drudgery.

Forever changing the mainly agricultural society that existed in much of Europe and the United States prior to the second half of the eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution is the start of the mechanization and manufacturing that would lead to people shifting from country to city life, and from farms to factories. While the shift to an industrial, money-based society improved the lives of many and created the middle class as we know it today, Daumier was well aware that others were being left behind and were essentially trapped in a cycle of little education, unskilled labor, and low wages.

The artist represents different life expectations based on class through the way he paints the windows and through his use of light in each of the three paintings. In *The Third Class Carriage*, the figures in the foreground have light shining on them from a window to the left, outside the picture plane. There are windows in the background, as well, but nothing can be seen outside of them. Daumier is implying there is nothing to be seen, especially in the case of the literally non-existent window. In *The Second Class Carriage*, a landscape can be seen through the window, and one of the figures looks out intently. The other three, paying no attention to the world outside, are cocooned in their winter clothes in an attempt to fend off the cold in their unheated train car. But the man who leans forward to observe the passing scenery appears to be younger and is perhaps more eager and capable of adapting to and moving upward in the world of business suggested by the bowler hat he is wearing, which at the time was associated in city life with civil servants and clerks. In *First-Class Carriage*, the passengers are all alert, each attending to their own business. One young woman looks out at a green landscape; considering her lightweight outerwear, it appears this is a springtime scene, which is suggested, as well, by the colorful ribbons on the two women's fashionable bonnets. With their relaxed postures and placid, composed expressions, these first class passengers give the impression of confidence. They are more secure in themselves and their places in the world than either the second-class or third-class passengers.

8.2.5 Group Affiliation



Figure 8.23 | *The Syndics of the Amsterdam Drapers' Guild, known as the "Sampling Officials"*
Artist: Rembrandt
Author: Google Cultural Institute
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 8.24 | *Officers of the St. George Civic Guard, Haarlem*
Artist: Frans Hals
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

History suggests that the quality of human survival is best when humans function as a group, allowing for collective support and interaction. Social psychological research indicates that people who are affiliated with groups are psychologically and physically stronger and better able to cope when faced with stressful situations. Gregory Walton, a social psychologist who studies group interaction, has concluded that one benefit individuals receive is the satisfaction of belonging (to a group, culture,

nation or) to a greater community that shares some common interests and aspirations. The unity of groups is achieved through members' similarities or their having experiences based on the history that brought them together.

Artists throughout history have been associated with groups, movements, and organizations that protect their interests, forward their cause, or promote them as a group or as individuals. The most visible groups during the Renaissance period in Italy, for example, were people belonging to the Catholic Church and other religious organizations, wealthy merchant families, civic and government groups, and guilds, including artists' guilds. (Figures 8.23 and 8.24)

8.2.6 Personal Identity

The city of Palmyra, in modern Syria, had long been at the crossroads of Western and Eastern political, religious, and cultural influences, as it was a caravan stop for traders traveling the Silk Road between the Mediterranean and the Far East. In the first century CE, the city came under Roman rule and under the Romans, the city prospered, and the arts flourished. Following a rebellion by Queen Zenobia of Palmyra in 273 CE, Roman Emperor Aurelian destroyed the city, ending the period of Roman control.

The Palmyrenes, or people of Palmyra, built three types of elaborate, large-scale monuments for their dead called houses of eternity. The first was a **tower tomb**, some as high as four stories. The second was a **hypogeum**, or underground tomb, and the third was a tomb built in the shape of a temple or house. All were used by many generations of the same extended family and were located in a necropolis, a city of the dead, what we today call a cemetery. Inside the tombs were **loculi**, or small, separate spaces, each of which formed an individual sarcophagus, or stone coffin. Inside the opening to the tomb, the first sarcophagus held the remains of the clan's founder; it was often faced with a stone relief sculpture depicting him as if attending a banquet and inviting others to join him. Surrounding the founder in the *loculi*, on the face of each family member's sarcophagus would be a relief portrait of each person interred there. (Loculi: romeartlover. tripod.com/Palmyra5.html)



Figure 8.25 | Funerary Relief
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

This stele, a portrait of a father, his son, and two daughters, dates to between 100 and 300 CE, sometime during the era of Roman rule. (Figure 8.25) The man is reclining on a couch decorated with flower motifs within circles and diamonds. He holds a bunch of grapes in his right hand and, in his left, a wine cup decorated with flowers similar to those on the couch. His two daughters flank his son in the background; the son holding grapes and a bird. The son and daughters all wear neck- laces. Additionally, the daughters wear pendant earrings and brooches holding the drapery at their left shoulders. The chiton, or tunic, and himation, or cloak, that each daughter wears has some affinities with Greco-Roman types of clothing, but the style of the ornamented veil covering their heads is a local type of garment, based on Parthian, or Persian, styles. Also wearing local garments, the two males wear a loose fitting tunic and trousers, each with a decorative border. The fine fabrics indicated by the embellished borders of both men and women's clothing indicate goods and wealth amassed from trade, as does the abundant use of precious metals and gems in the variety of jewelry adorned by the Palmyrenes. Thus, the stele is a blend of Greco-Roman and Palmyrene (and larger Parthian) styles and cultural influences.

Coupled upon many Palmyrenes grave steles are inscriptions of text in both Aramaic and Latin that give the person's name and genealogy, markers of distinctive individual and family traits. While many of the depictions of the frontal-facing, wide-eyed figures a defining feature of Palmyrene art show little individualization of features, the coupling with such inscriptions are evident signs that each stele was intended to denote the characteristics of the person entombed within. The figures actively engage the viewer, and provide the reminder that personal identity is an amalgamate of individual, socio cultural, spiritual, and historical influences.

In July 2015, the city of Palmyra, its people, and its art were again in danger. In April of 2015, Islamic State (ISIS) forces overtook the 3,000-year-old Assyrian city of Nimrud and destroyed its buildings and art. On May 21, 2015, ISIS overtook the city of Palmyra, inducing fear that they would destroy buildings and art there as they did in Nimrud. On July 2, 2015, ISIS was reported to have destroyed grave markers similar to the one discussed here. (Grave Marker Reliefs, http:// www.timesofisrael.com/is-destroys-iconic-lion-statue-at-syrias-palmyra-museum/) They lined up six bust-length reliefs of people who lived in Palmyra nearly 2,000 years ago, and smashed them, obliterating the visual and written record of each person. So many have had their portraits made for

posterity with the hopes of staying alive, against the odds. And, this is why we need art: it gives us memories of ourselves and our deeds, who we identify with, and how we identify others.

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2. *George and Martha Washington: Portraits from the Presidential Years*, exhibition, National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC, 1999, accessed July 6, 2015, http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/gw/trenton.htm
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Aileen Ajootian, "The Only Happy Couple: Hermaphrodites and Gender" in *Naked Truth: Women, Sexuality and Gender in Classical Art and Architecture*, ed. Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Claire L. Lyons (New York: Routledge, 1997), 228.
6. http://www.npr.org/sections/parallel...ender-in-india
7. Tejal Shah, Artist Statement, *Hijra Fantasy Series*, accessed July 7, 2015, http://tejalshah.in/project/what-are-you/hijra- fantasy-series/
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

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5.3: Identity Politics- From the Margins to the Mainstream

by **DR. JORDANA MOORE SAGGESE**

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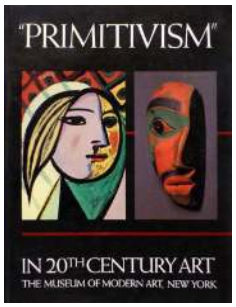


Figure **5.3.1**: Cover of volume 1 of the catalog to the exhibition, "*'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern*," 1984 (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Whose art history?

For most of the twentieth century, major American museums rarely exhibited the work of artists from underrepresented groups, preferring instead to privilege the dominant narratives of a white, male, heterosexual art history. The 1984 blockbuster exhibition "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern" at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, for example, juxtaposed the work of recognized masters of modern art with artifacts from nonwestern (mostly African or East Asian) populations. However, the relative positioning of the nonwestern works seemed to many observers to present these objects as inferior to the works of European and American artists.

Critics of the exhibition specifically took issue with MoMA's emphasis on formal comparisons of western objects by well-known modern and contemporary artists (e.g., Constantin Brancusi, Paul Gauguin, and Pablo Picasso) and nonwestern objects produced by unidentified artists and artisans. The exhibition failed to consider the significant political, ideological, and social contexts of its nonwestern objects—a presentation that some critics argued positioned the works of European and American artists as more "advanced." For many artists, critics, and curators positioned outside the so-called mainstream art world it was becoming increasingly clear that nonwhite artists were only included in major museum exhibitions if they reinforced these hierarchies.

Addressing a history of exclusion: "The Decade Show"

In response to this history of exclusion, and to MoMA's "Primitivism" show specifically, three cultural institutions in New York City collaborated on an exhibition that would recognize the perspectives of marginal groups and assign them a place in a mainstream. The landmark exhibition "The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s," organized by curators from The New Museum of Contemporary Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, opened in May 1990 and featured more than 200 objects by ninety-four artists of diverse heritage. According to the organizers, "The Decade Show" artists were connected by their willingness to address the phenomenon of exclusion in their work. This exhibition worked from the idea that as the perspectives of the marginalized entered the mainstream, they would likewise receive greater political agency.



Figure **5.3.2**: James Luna, *Artifact Piece*, 1987, photograph of performance 121.9 x 152.4 cm, courtesy of the artist © James Luna, photograph by Robin Holland (New Museum)

James Luna, a Pooyukitchum and Mexican-American artist included in "The Decade Show," was one of many artists working in this period to reconstruct a political position via representational visibility. For his performance *Artifact Piece*, the artist lay inside a display case at the Studio Museum in Harlem with his nude body covered only by a breechcloth. Small white cards with stories describing the origin of several body markings (scars, tan lines, etc.) and written in the third person were scattered alongside the artist's body. The perceived objectivity of the descriptive cards and Luna's own prone position in the display case, allows *Artifact Piece* to directly reference the history of ethnographic displays, which often positioned "other" bodies as objects to be looked at by a mainstream public.

As Luna explained in a 2008 interview: "I had long looked at representation of our peoples in museums and they all dwelled in the past. They were one-sided. We were simply objects among bones, bones among objects, and then signed and sealed with a date." Luna's inclusion of his own subjective narrative radically transforms the historically marginalized body of the "other" in the museum from a passive object to a speaking agent. *Artifact Piece* also played an important part in inverting the power dynamics between the observed and the observer. Here, Luna placed himself on display; his presence in an art museum creates an unsettling effect for the viewer, who is forced to consider their own relationship to this history of display and exploitation.

1993 Whitney Biennial

On the heels of "The Decade Show," several other institutions began to reconsider their relationship to artists outside the mainstream. Perhaps the most well known of these exhibitions was the 1993 Biennial exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, which many scholars consider to be the turning point for identity-based art discourse. The main theme of this exhibition, according to David Ross, the Whitney's director at the time, was "the construction of identity." Contemporary artists, Ross claimed, "insist on reinscribing the personal, political, and social back into the practice and history of art." Reviews of the exhibition show that the effects of this reinscription were received ambivalently; many critics praised the shows risk-taking, while others questioned the aesthetic merits of the works. Nevertheless, it was impossible to ignore the emergence of an entire generation of artists, including Renée Green, Byron Kim, Glenn Ligon, Pepón Osorio, and Lorna Simpson, who were explicitly working to de-center the institutional focus on whiteness.

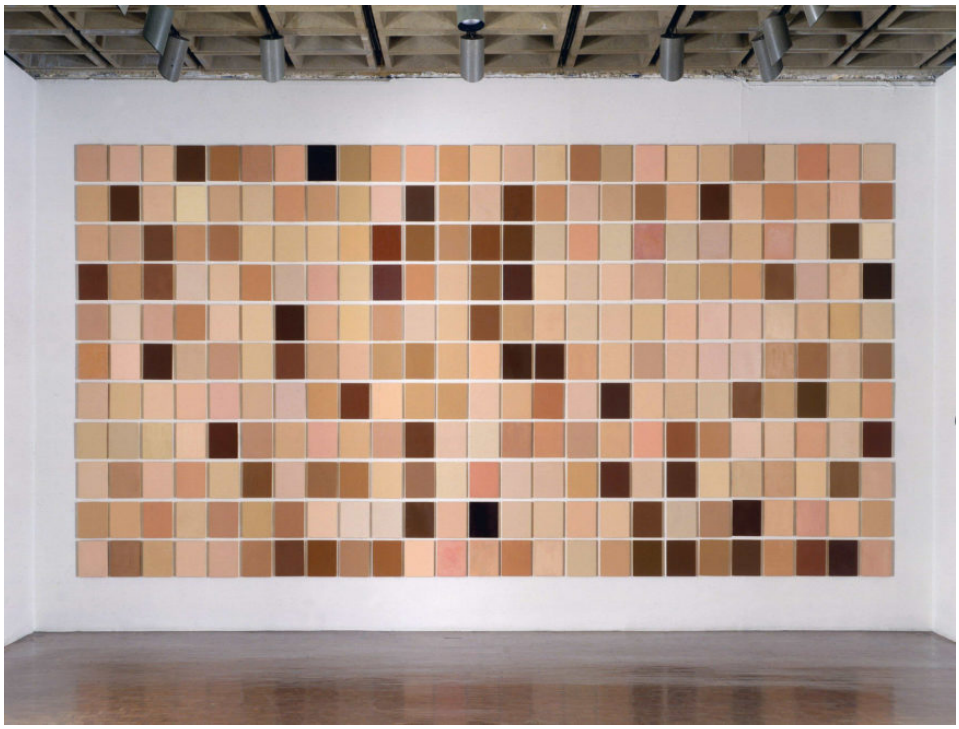


Figure **5.3.3**: Byron Kim, *Synecdoche*, 1991–present, oil and wax on 275 panels, each 25.4 x 20.32 cm, courtesy the artist and Max Protetch Gallery, New York © 2008 Byron Kim (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Byron Kim's contribution to the exhibition, a multi-paneled painting titled *Synecdoche*, 1991-present, captures both the aesthetic and political ambitions of art in this period. On first glance, Kim's monochromatic palette and his arrangement of small paintings into a grid seem to recall minimalist work of the 1960s. However, visitors to the exhibition quickly learned that *Synecdoche* was much more than an aesthetic exercise. To construct the work, Kim asked members of his community (friends, neighbors, strangers) to let him copy the color of their skin, which the artist then reproduced in oil on a ten-by-eight-inch canvas panel.

Far from an exercise in objectivity or geometry, each small painting is a portrait. The title of Kim's work refers to a figure of speech, in which a term for a part of something refers to the whole of something, or vice-versa (e.g., saying "all hands on deck" to refer to a group of sailors). In *Synecdoche*, each individual person pictured is reduced to and represented by skin color alone. But in highlighting the uniqueness and individuality of every skin tone, this painting provokes us to reconsider the ways in which skin color has been used to stereotype or otherwise marginalize individuals. In this way, *Synecdoche* set a standard for dealing with the complexity of the visual markers of identity.

Shifting art history

As the ideas and perspectives from non-white artists, queer artists, and those with other intersectional identities were given space in the museum throughout the 1990s, the terrain of art history began to shift as well. We are still seeing the effects of this today as more and more artists from the margins enter mainstream institutions and their histories. In the words of author and activist bell hooks, difference means not only exclusion but "the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance."

Additional resources

"The Decade Show", New Museum digital archive.

James Luna, *The Artifact Piece* at The Decade Show, New Museum digital archive.

Byron Kim discusses *Synecdoche*, MoMA audio.

Roberta Smith. "At the Whitney, A Biennial with a Social Conscience," NYTimes, March 5, 1993.

Elisabeth Sussman, one of four curators of the 1993 Whitney Biennial discusses the show, Whitney audio.

Press release for the MoMA exhibition, "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern."

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5.4: Modern Indigenous Art (1970-2000)

Introduction

The Indigenous Peoples of the world all have distinctive social and cultural groups with ancestral connections to the natural lands and resources they currently reside or where they were dislocated. These resources and locations are intimately part of their ancestral identities, spiritual well-being, financial assets, and cultures. Generally, most groups maintain their leaders and organizations separate from the majority of society and still have their ancestral languages.

> *Indigenous Peoples own, live on, or use a quarter of the world's surface area and safeguard eighty percent of the world's remaining biodiversity, retaining ancestral knowledge of land management.[1]*

Most of the land inhabited by Indigenous Peoples is based on customary ownership, as most governments only recognize a small portion of land as legally held by the Indigenous Peoples. Even in those places acknowledged as officially owned, ownership is insecure and often taken or infringed upon by most governments. The identity of the Indigenous Peoples is defined as descendants of peoples who inhabited the Americas, the Pacific, and some regions of Asia and Africa before European colonization.[2] This section discusses contemporary artists of the Indigenous Peoples found in Oceania, the United States, and Canada.

The region of Oceania is composed of thousands of islands in the Pacific Ocean. It includes the larger landmasses of Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea, independent islands, and those islands under other countries' oversight. Early Indigenous Peoples were developed as sea-faring cultures, traveling between islands, and establishing permanent communities still existing today. The expansion of European exploration and incursion into other places, the Japanese takeover of many islands, and the ensuing war led to control of the land by outsiders over economics, religion, government, and civil rights. As the largest landmass, Australia has hundreds of indigenous groups composing 2.5 percent of the total population. They are classified as Aboriginal Australians or Aborigines and have cultural and spiritual connections with their local environment. In 1992, the Australian courts recognized Aboriginal rights to land as defined as land owned before Captain Cook arrived, although they inhabited the land for 50,000 years. In New Zealand, the indigenous Māori are almost 15 percent of the population. New Zealand has established a tribunal to oversee Māori land claims and define outcomes. Seven hundred different Indigenous groups are found in Papua New Guinea and are recognized in their constitution with rights under the customary land title. Indigenous Peoples in Australia, New Zealand, and other Oceania areas are still working to codify their rights and treatment under existing governments as conflicts continue between the Indigenous Peoples and governmental and corporate entities.

In the United States, Indigenous Peoples are defined as Native American or American Indian and refers to those whose ancestors lived there before European incursion. American Indian is a specific legal determination by the laws of the United States. Between 2.5 and 6 million Indigenous Peoples live in the United States, with 20 percent residing directly in defined American Indian or Alaskan villages. The largest Indigenous population is in California.[3] The United States government has over 300 treaties with 574 American Indian nations with individuals recognized as citizens of an individual nation by legal definitions. Some states also have different treaties, and many nations remain unrecognized. Each treaty varies; however, they generally include land boundaries, hunting and fishing rights, and protection from domestic and foreign enemies. The treaties supposedly give the nations specific jurisdiction, responsibilities, and economic determinations. However, through the last two centuries, including currently, the United States does not always honor the treaties, and the individual nations have suffered from continued broken promises. In 1887, the Dawes Act broke up tribal lands and divided the land into separate sections. Over ninety million acres of tribal lands were taken and sold to non-native people. The ruling explicitly occurred to destroy Native societies and cultures. Today, the United States government rules require tribal consultation for most issues; however, the government still maintains plenary power, and tribal rights frequently must be handled in the courts. Although the United States government legal system refers to the Indigenous Peoples as Native Americans, they were here long before the country was named 'America.' The term is an example of white exceptionalism and the belief nothing existed on the continent before the Europeans.

Canadian constitution identifies three Indigenous Peoples groups: First Nations (Indians), Inuit, and Métis. Each grouping is based on history, language, culture, and spiritual beliefs. Over 1.5 million people identify with one of the groups. Canada has over 630 First Nation groups representing 50 Nations and languages. The approximately 65,000 Inuit live in 53 communities stretching

across the northern parts of Canada and speak Inuktut. Over 587,000 people identify as Métis and live throughout Canada.[4] Much like the United States, the European governments signed treaties with the people living in Canada. Most of the treaties covered hunting and fishing rights, religious practices, trade relations, fur trade, and military requirements. After the Revolutionary War, some treaties granted First Nation groups land; however, as outside immigration grew, land, governmental and religious relationships changed. Treaties were disregarded, the land was taken, and the Indian Act of 1876 imposed greater controls on the Indigenous Peoples. Today, a new methodology, the Inherent Right to Self-Government Policy, provides legal ways for First Nations to negotiate their claims.

Tlingit artist Nicholas Galanin created the following video: his message is universal to the issues and struggles of modern Indigenous populations. Western culture has appropriated symbolic art, sanitized it, and rendered it meaningless to its original meaning. The art of Indigenous people has also been frozen pre-20th century as though modern Indigenous artists did not exist. Current Indigenous artists are trying to bring their cultures back to life, reviving tribal customs using modern concepts, ideas, mediums, and tools. Galanin discusses the intersections of multiple issues as he works on his art. These intersections are common in Oceania, the United States, and Canada.

Oceania

Storytelling has been an essential part of the Aboriginal culture in Australia for thousands of years, and contemporary artists today use the same concepts in their colorful art. Artists incorporate traditional, sacred symbols, relating the practices and laws of past legends. The artwork usually represents aspects of the Dreaming, a concept of supernatural beings and the beginnings of their creation as part of the land and shape of Australia. In the 1970s, Aboriginal groups formed small community art centers in remote locations, beginning contemporary Aboriginal artists' works. Some art centers perform as community centers where painting is a social event, laying the canvas on the ground and painting directly without sketches or preliminary drawings. Artists use traditional materials or mediums found in the geographic areas along with today's commercially available media. Much of the Australian art features circles, wavy lines, or dots usually defined in earth tones. The paintings often reflected ritualistic rites; however, some images were forbidden to be seen and were hidden under the dots and swirls.

In the whole Oceanic region, including Australia and New Zealand, they have a Festival of Pacific Arts every four years, moving the host site each time to different locations. With the participation of artists from over twenty-five countries, the festival is an interchange and sharing of cultural and artistic ideas between the diverse Indigenous populations. The festival includes visual arts, performance arts, and other cultural forms. Participants from many remote island communities can maintain their cultural identities and the importance of retaining their heritage.

Albert Namatjira

Albert Namatjira (1902-1959) (Western Arrernte) was one of Australia's early notable artists, using watercolor to paint the landscapes of Central Australia, his work was different from the traditional artists. Namatjira learned to paint from missionaries, exploiting his natural gift. He highlighted the rugged features of the landscape and the characteristic flora found in the interiors. Namatjira used the sunlight to capture the deep shadows and crevasses or illumination on the trees. He painted the same ochre colors as his ancestors, reflecting the timelessness of the area. *Mt. Hermannsburg, James Range, Northern Territory* (7.5.1) portrays the dry, barren mountains found in the territory. The scrub trees survive along the riverbank, places for people to live and survive. Namatjira painted scenes recognizable by the outside world, and his artwork was very successful. Even with his money, he could not buy a house or land until his fame forced the government to grant him citizenship as an Australian in 1957. The rest of the Aboriginal population did not receive citizenship for ten more years, unable to own the land where they lived.



Figure 5.4.1: Mt. Hermannsburg, James Range, Northern Territory (watercolor) by Aussie~mobs, CC PDM 1.0

Gloria Petyarre

Gloria Petyarre (1942-) (Anmatyerre community) used her traditional leafy and feathery style to paint the very long painting of *Leaves* (7.5.2). The image projects the feelings of movement, the leaves on a tree, or endlessly falling. Petyarre started as a batik painter and, in the 1980s, started painting on canvas. Also hidden in the painting are references to ceremonies for women and body markings as part of the rituals. She originally started painting with dots before changing to the elongated feathery appearance. "Petyarre grew up learning traditional techniques of reading the landscape to identify foods, medicinal plants, and everything else that was needed to thrive. Sitting under mulga bushes, helping the elder women prepare their seeds for small cakes, she would see the leaves swirl overhead."[5] Many of the women in Petyarre's family are artists whose work is based on the surroundings and rituals of the central desert territory. Their Aboriginal world had existed for tens of thousands of years until pollution by the white cattle ranchers who took the land. Petyarre and the other artists began to paint and demonstrate their knowledge of the historical landscape and the importance of natural substances like leaves.

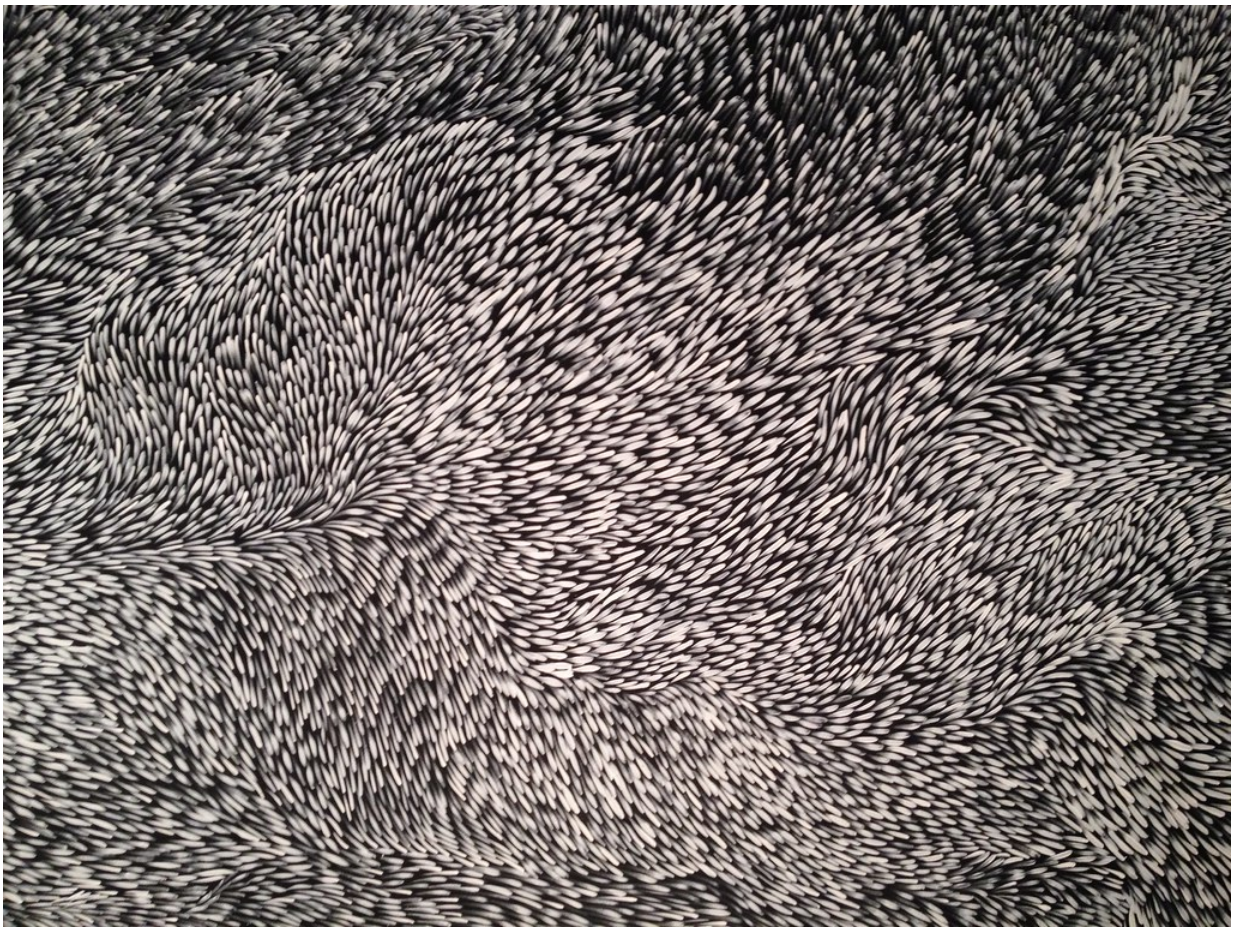


Figure 5.4.2: Leaves (2002, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 180.3 x 400 cm) by Alfred Hermida, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Emily Kame Kngwarreye

Anooralya (Wild Yam Dreaming) (7.5.3) by Emily Kame Kngwarreye (1910-1996) (Utopia community) represents the dry desert parts of central Australia, a place where outsiders only perceive broad stretches of red dirt. In 1988, Kngwarreye started painting with acrylics and discovered the fluid capabilities of the paint. The churning network of roots from the anooralya or yam plant in the painting demonstrates the vigorous growth in the dry, arid desert. The Aboriginal people understood the land and the resourceful plants able to sustain life. Kngwarreye is considered one of Australia's most important contemporary artists, starting at the age of eighty. She was extremely prolific and produced over 3,000 paintings in her short eight-year career. Her work was stimulated by her position as an Anmatyerre elder and her custodianship of the women's Dreaming sites. When asked to explain her images, she always replied the same: "Whole lot, that's whole lot, Awelye (my Dreaming), arlatyeye (pencil yam), arkerrthe (mountain devil lizard), ntange (grass seed), tingu (Dreamtime pup), ankerre (emu), intekwe (favourite food of emus, a small plant), atnwerle (green bean), and kame (yam seed). That's what I paint, whole lot."[6]



Figure **5.4.3**: Anooralya (Wild Yam Dreaming) (1995, polymer paint on canvas, 152 x 122 cm) by arcticpenguin, CC BY-NC 2.0

Dorothy Napangardi

Dorothy Napangardi (1956-2013) (Warlpiri speaking) painted *Salt on Mina Mina* (7.5.4), portraying ancestral women traveling on foot and marking their land with digging sticks. Even today, women gather at the Mina Mina, re-enacting the Dreaming story. The site of the Mina Mina and a stand of large numbers of Eucalyptus trees is where tradition believes the digging sticks came from the ground. Napangardi connected her designs to the traditional designs of Dreaming using interconnected lines and dots. Her works represent the land, the ancestral tracks, and the stories of her female ancestors as they moved through the landscape.

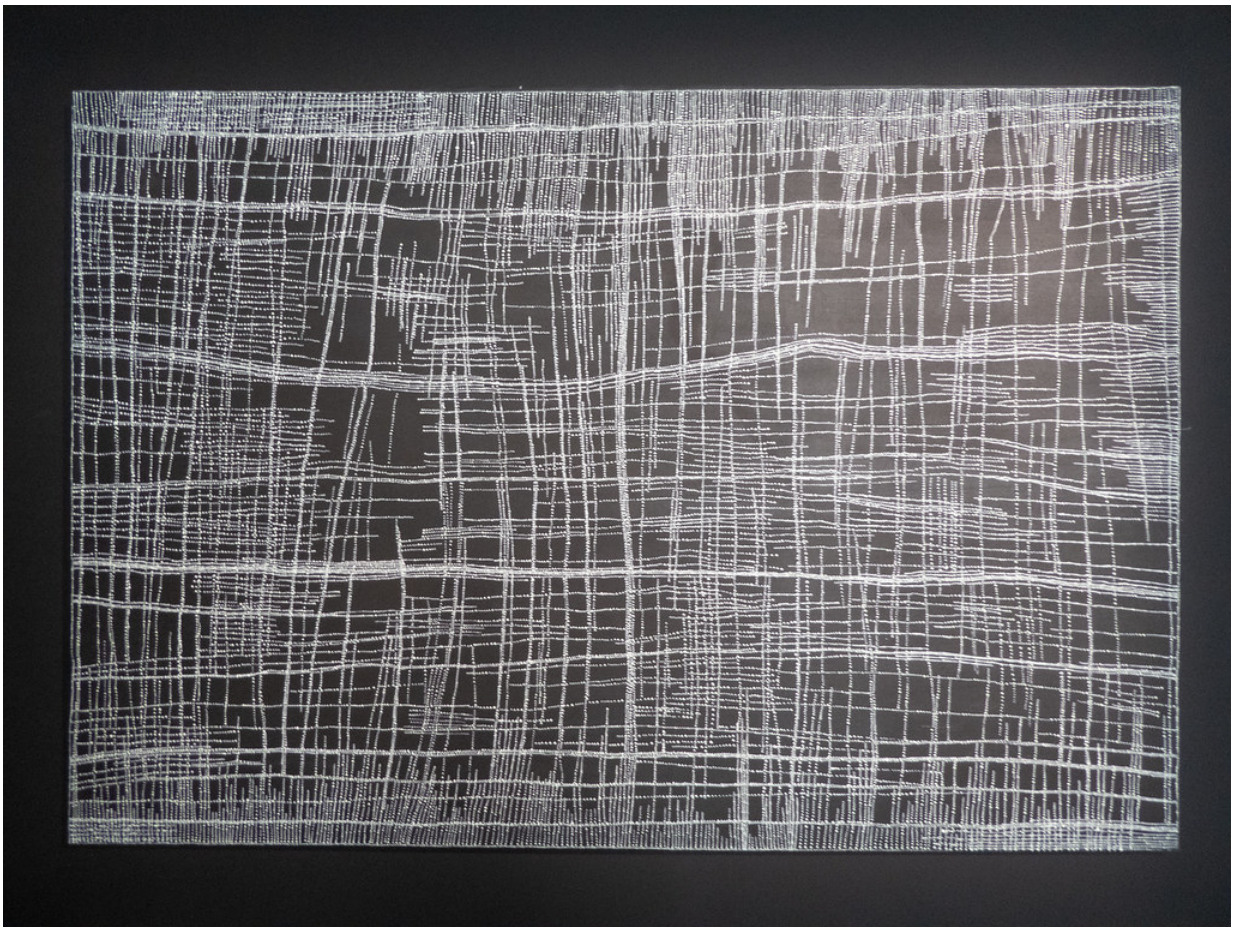


Figure 5.4.4: Salt on Mina Mina (acrylic on Belgian linen, 98 x 127 cm) by bpmm, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Paddy Nyunkuny Bedford

Although Paddy Nyunkuny Bedford (1922-2007) (Gija language group) was born in 1922, he did not start painting until 1998, when other artists in his area formed an art center. Bedford derived his name from Bedford Downs, where he was born, and his first name from the person who ran the cattle station. As with many other young Aboriginal men, Bedford worked on a cattle station, hard, dirty work. The Europeans took vast swaths of land controlled Australia and established cattle ranches throughout the country. In 1969, the government enacted equal pay legislation for the Aboriginals who worked alongside the white workers. Most of the Aboriginal people, who had been paid with rations instead of money, were fired because of the law, and the cattle station owners refused to give all the workers equal pay. Before Bedford started painting as an artist, he was involved with ceremonial painting. As an artist, he created loose depictions of the surrounding landscape. *Yoowageny-Mud Springs* (7.5.5) represents the region around water, creating events of the ancestral Dreaming stories and history of the area. Bedford used black and white with smaller amounts of color, a more minimal interpretation than other artists. Today, he is one of Australia's most sought-after artists.

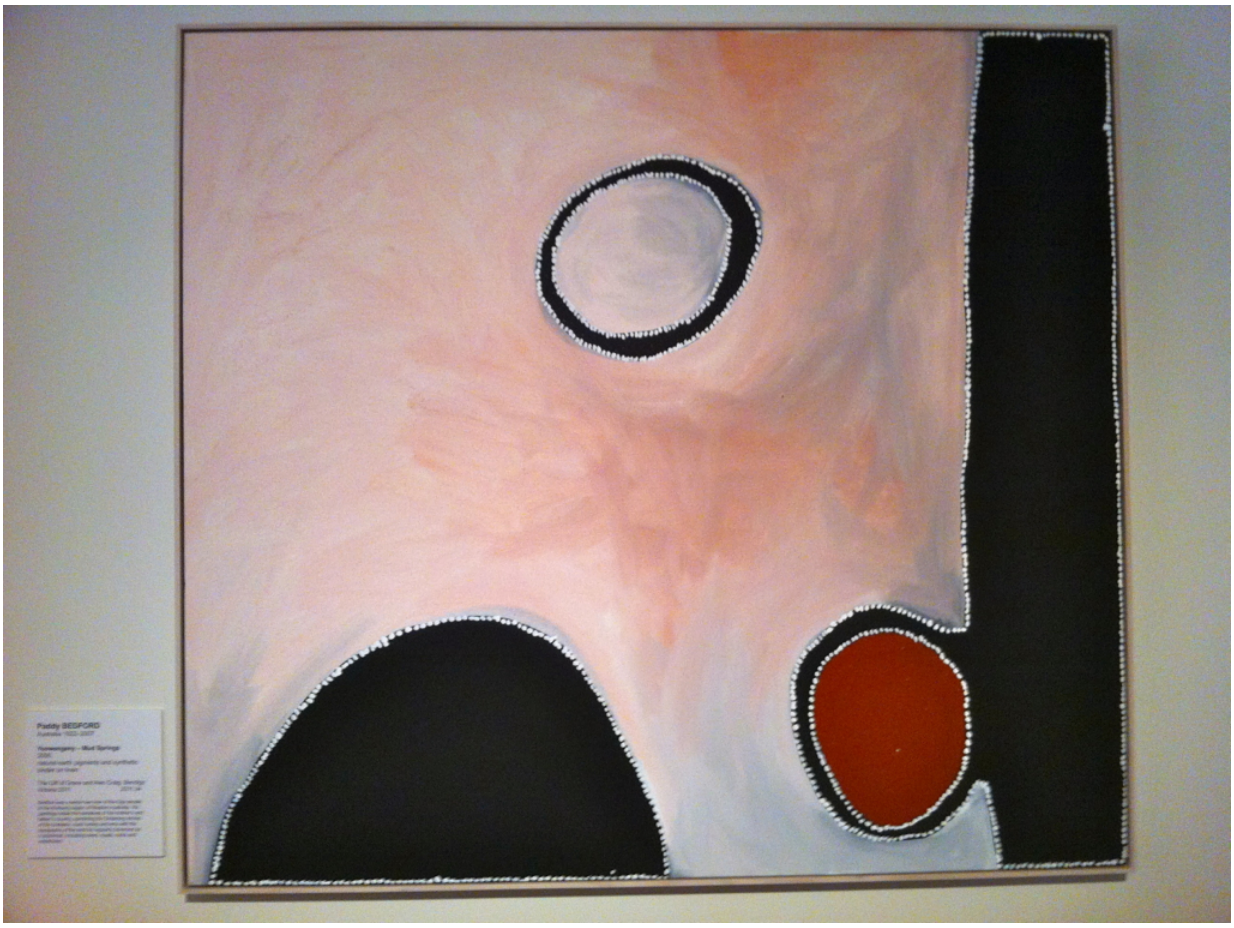


Figure 5.4.5: Yoowangeny – Mud Springs (2005, natural earth pigments, synthetic binder on Belgian linen, 122 x 135 cm) by Melanie Lazarow, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

John Mawurndjul

John Mawurndjul (1951-) (Kuninjku people) follows a tradition of painting from generations of people before him, telling stories of the Kuninjku culture and the surrounding land. He said, "The old ways of doing things have changed into the new ways. The new generation does things differently. But me, I have two ways. I am the old and the new."[7] Mawurndjul is considered a master of rarrk, the finely painted cross-hatching, based on the tradition of his ancestors. His images include sacred places and the animals or spirits inhabiting the sites, especially the rainbow serpents or ngalyod. Mawurndjul used the materials he found, including white clay, yellow and red ochres, and the bark of eucalyptus trees. He used the sedge plant to make single-strand brushes for the fine cross-hatching. *Ngalyod (Female Rainbow Serpent)* (7.5.6) is the image of the rainbow serpent, which rises and pulls people down into the ground, turning them into bones. The white clay of the earth is from the serpent's feces. During the wet season, she appears in the sky as a rainbow, making rain. The rainbow serpent is like a crocodile, dangerous, killing people and animals. Mawurndjul used rarrk or polychrome cross-hatching. The lines, dots, and circles form the snake's body that lies waiting, representing the Dreaming being, Ngalyod.

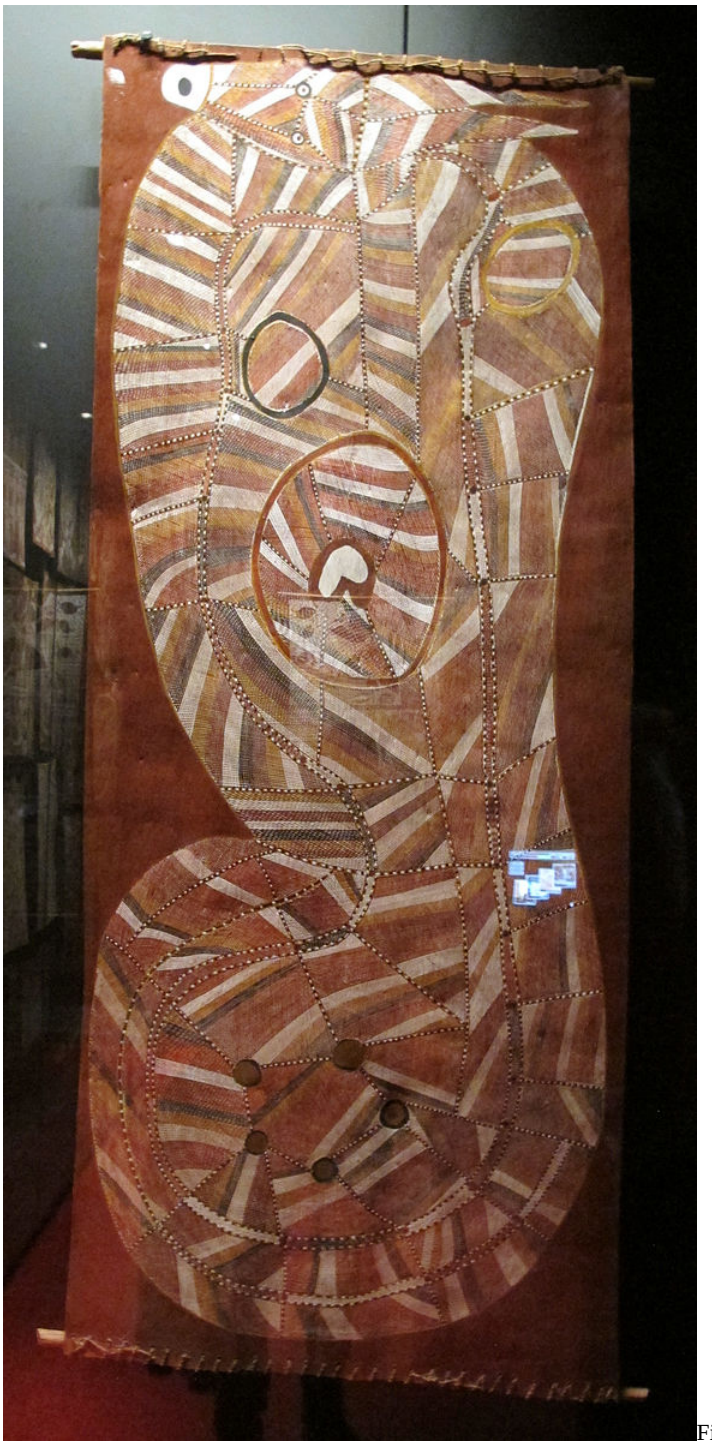


Figure 5.4.6: Ngalyod (Female Rainbow Serpent) (1991, bark, natural pigments) CC BY- SA 3.0

Vincent Namatjira

Vincent Namatjira (1983-) (Western Arrernte background), born in 1983, represents the newer generation of remote Aboriginal Australian artists. His great-grandfather was Albert Namatjira, who was famous for his watercolors. Vincent Namatjira's artwork is often called caricatures, sometimes considered by others as "outsider art." His work is based on historical colonial narratives, critiquing the struggles and controls of Australia's relationships with Europe, especially "the Empire" or England. Namatjira focuses on the connections between wealth and power.

Close Contact (7.5.7, 7.5.8) is double-sided on plywood instead of his usual canvas. On one side, there is an image of Captain Cook, who led the British invasion of Australia and was called the colonizer. On the other side is the Indigenous Australian, the colonized. The double-sided image defines the past and the present, like Namatjira's other paintings of political and historical figures from a modern Indigenous perspective. He used an ordinary jigsaw to cut the plywood and applied his trademark bold paint.



Figure **5.4.7**: Close Contact side 1 (acrylic on plywood) by Pat M2007, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Figure 5.4.8: Close Contact side 2 (acrylic on plywood) by Pat M2007, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Kaylene Whiskey

Kaylene Whiskey (1976) **(**Pitjantjatjara), a modern Aboriginal artist, creates her art in one of the remote communities in South Australia. She was the granddaughter of an earlier artist whom she used to watch paint in the art center. As Whiskey developed her style, she used bright colors while listening to American pop singers who inspired her work. She incorporated their images into her paintings. Whiskey stated she liked to have fun and painted people in interesting outfits combining contemporary life and her remote community. *Rikina Kungka Kutju (One Really Cool Lady)* (7.5.9) demonstrates her comic book style of painting illustrating popular western culture and her own Indulkana community with evident feminist undertones.



Figure 5.4.9: Rikina Kungka Kutju (One Really Cool Lady) (2015, acrylic on linen) by David McDonald45, CC BY-ND 2.0

Michel Tuffery

Michel Tuffery (1966-) (New Zealand) was born in New Zealand; his mother was Samoan, and his father was Tahitian; his work is based on his Polynesian legacy. Tuffery creates art from his heritage, the results of colonialism, and the polluted state of the environment. He is part of the new generation producing culturally based art using Western mediums. Tuffery's sculpture, *Pisupo Lua Afe* (7.5.10), was created from hundreds of corned beef tins he flattened and riveted together to shape a life-sized bull. The first canned food brought to the Pacific Islands by Europeans was pea soup called pisupo in Samoan. Today, pisupo is a generic word for any canned food, including corned beef. Canned corned beef is very popular and exceptionally high in salt and fat, contributing to the high rate of heart disease and diabetes in the Oceanic population, who previously ate local seafood and vegetables. Tuffery's sculpture reflects the unhealthy aspects of canned foods, the environmental damage of littered cans, and the negative impact of the imported cattle growing operations.



Figure **5.4.10**: Pisupo lua afe (Corned beef 2000) (1994, flattened corned beef tins, rivets) CC BY-SA 4.0

Nga Kina (7.5.11) is a tribute to the history of the New Zealand waterfront by the Kumutoto river. The giant shells are made of concrete and fiberglass against the river weighing five to seven tons. At low tide, the entire sculpture is visible, and only the tops of the shells are seen at high tide. The sculpture is a tribute to the Maori settlement and is based on the midden or shell mounds the local Maori made when they harvested the natural shell lifeforms from the local waters.



Figure **5.4.11**: Nga Kina (sea urchins) (2012, fiber-glass reinforced concrete, 11.6 x 3.2 x 2.2 meters) CC BY 2.0

John Pule

John Pule (1962) (Island of Niue) was from the tiny island of Niue, 2,400 kilometers from New Zealand, a self-governing state associated with New Zealand. Polynesians from other islands initially settled on the island; European contact first occurred when Captain Cook tried to land. Pule's family moved to New Zealand when he was two, where he grew up, returning to the island for visits. Pule's artwork is heavily influenced by colonialism while using mediums from both worlds, including canvas and bark cloth for painting. *Kehe tau hauaga foou (To all new arrivals)* (7.5.12) ambitious work covers the conflicts of human relationships from his perspective of people from the region. The painting is like a massive painting of Pacific ideas, contrasting colonialism, pollution, global warming, religion, and nuclear testing. Pule incorporated multiple world venues in the painting as though they were located together. He looked at the world as a mix of the mythic past integrated into the contemporary views of conflict.

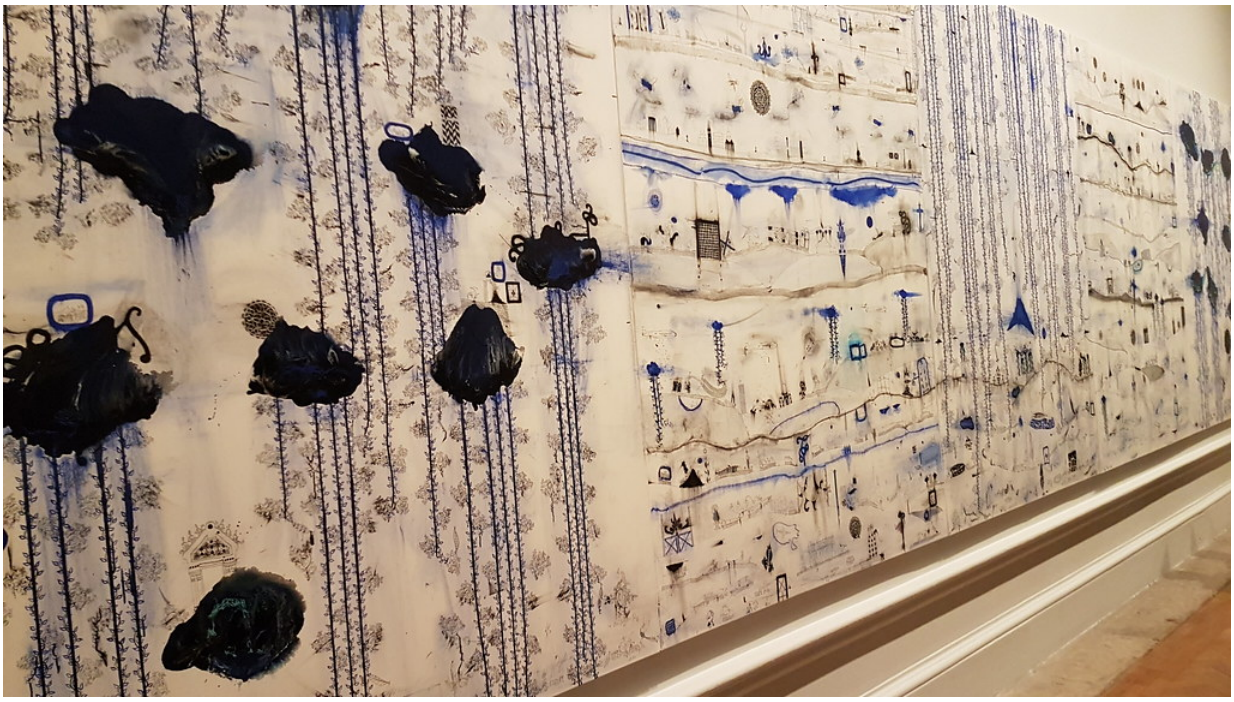


Figure 5.4.12: Kehe tau hauaga foou (To all new arrivals) (2007, enamel, oil, pencil, pastel, ink on canvas, 1000 x 270 cm) by Terry Hassan, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

United States

The Indigenous Peoples living in the United States are composed of multiple nations, tribes, and clans, and their artwork reflects the diversity of the people. In the past, indigenous art was classified as a craft because most surviving arts included clothing, baskets, or pottery created by women and anonymous. Today's modern female artists still maintain the connection with the past, their artwork recognized. The contemporary Native artists come from the hundreds of recognized tribes and nations and may work with materials of the past or modern materials. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Native children were taken from their homes and placed in boarding schools throughout the United States to assimilate into the white culture. Students' names were changed, their native dress was replaced, and they were forbidden to speak their native languages. The art and culture of the generations are lost. Many of the schools were open for over one hundred years, only closing in the late 1980s. Today, the scope of Native people's art has changed; even museums are holding exhibits among "traditional" art. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York stated: "The art of the indigenous peoples of North America have not historically been prioritized in these spaces. The longstanding curatorial practice of designating arts as "primitive" or as "ethnographic," or as "nonwestern" has limited our capacity to see a broader and more shared humanity…"[8] Modern and contemporary Indigenous artists work in the same range of artistic medium as other artists, and the omission of Indigenous art brings an incomplete picture of today's art.

Joe Feddersen

Joe Feddersen (1953) (Okanagan) is a photographer, sculptor, and painter who frequently bases his art on the geometric patterns found in the natural landscape and heritage. With a BFA and MFA degrees, he was a college professor before finally devoting himself to art. Feddersen stated: "My work investigates sign and cultural identity. This inquiry merges basic elements of basket designs from my ancestral home, the inland Plateau region of the Columbia Basin, with urban imagery to speak to perceptions of land."[9] Feddersen's work is non-representational, made from lines, shapes, colors, and texture, or viewed as symbolic of his heritage. His robust geometric patterns portray the relationship between his urban environment and the indigenous iconography of his culture.

Okanagan V (7.5.13) is a ninety-panel installation made with relief prints on paper and then mounted on board. The different panels are made with geometric patterns and highly contrasting colors. Each panel was assembled to form an overall geometric format. Feddersen is also a well-known basket maker after studying Colville's traditional basket patterns. The designs on the baskets were

made to tell stories as well as the practical use of storage. Feddersen started making baskets and used them to teach others about their culture. His interest in basket making expanded to glass, and he learned glass making. Feddersen creates patterns based on the images he sees in baskets and translates them into glass.



Figure 5.4.13: Okanagan V (2006, relief print on paper on panel, 90-panel installation, 177.8 x 685.8 cm) by Travel Salem, CC BY-ND 2.0

Fish Trap II (7.5.14) is based on the woven fish traps the Indigenous people made to catch the abundant fish in the rivers. The traps were loosely woven to let the water flow; the purple glass is marked with the woven lines.



Figure 5.4.14: Fish Trap II (2005, glass, 35.5 x 57.1 cm) by Travel Salem, CC BY-ND 2.0

Nicholas Galanin

Nicholas Galanin (1979) (Tlingit & Aleut) from Sitka, Alaska, learned art by working with his father to make jewelry, even earning a BFA in jewelry design. Galanin expanded his art portfolio after completing this MFA in visual arts at the university in New Zealand and became a multi-disciplinary artist. He also focused on the concepts of identity relationships between the Native communities and non-Native. One of Galanin's first series was based on sculptures using books. He used anthropological texts from the 19th century and carved them by hand and laser into faces. In *Medicine Man* (7.5.15), Galanin used over 1300 pages, some bound and others cut. He wanted to challenge all the words and texts defining a contemporary indigenous man he found when reading. Galanin found most of the information about his culture was related through oral recitations. Books were institutionalized, the writings about culture from people outside the culture.



Figure 5.4.15: Medicine Man (altered book, 35.6 x 30.5 x 12.7 cm) by Jeff Hester, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Things Are Looking Native, Native's Looking Whiter (7.5.16) is a photomontage Galanin created using the image from the Star Wars movie. In the film, Princess Leia wears a distinctive hairstyle. On one side of the photomontage, a Hopi-Tewa woman wears the traditional "squash blossom" hairstyle, and on the other side is the Star Wars princess with the same style. Galanin's work is a commentary on the Western media's cultural use of visual images from non-Western cultures, decontextualizing and removing crucial cultural context. He believed the appropriation of Indigenous culture was based on the past and had no existence in the current cultural presence.



Figure **5.4.16**: Things Are Looking Native, Native's Looking Whiter (2012, giclee print, 106.7 x 78.1 cm) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Nora Naranjo-Morse

Nora Naranjo-Morse (1953-) (Santa Clara Pueblo) was the youngest daughter of a well-known potter. She had eight siblings, and their mother gave each of them clay to play with when she was working, the inspiration for Naranjo-Morse to continue the tradition. She is also known for her writings as a poet. Although there isn't any word for an artist in her Tewa language, they did have a concept of the artful life. Naranjo-Morse believed her work with clay and writing poetry gave her creative expression. She used the traditional idea of Pueblo figurative statues created in a contemporary method. The female figure stands slightly in front of the male, acknowledging the role of women, a previously matrilineal government. The concept of leading females was changed when the society modeled Euro-American governments, a patrilineal model. Many tribal ruling structures reorganized when Congress enacted the Indian Reorganization Act in the 1940s, changing tribal life forever. The *Khwee-seng* (7.5.17) bronze sculptures are abstracted; the female has a turquoise necklace while the male wears a zig-zag pattern.



Figure 5.4.17: Khwee-seng (Woman-man) (1991, bronze, 123.1 x 147.3 x 27.94 cm) by veritatem, CC BY 2.0

Always Becoming (7.5.18, 7.5.19) is installed outside the National Museum of the American Indian. Naranjo-Morse made each statue from clay, stone, pottery shards, agave fiber, sand, wood, bamboo, and dirt, each sculpture changing and eroding over time from the weather. She stated in an interview, "I'm hoping the Native community sees themselves in this. [I want them to see themselves in a way] that's always changing that's always relating to the environment, and always adapting and transforming. And in that process being empowered."[10] Naranjo-Morse incorporated smaller pieces of shards, stones, and other materials, and part of the structures was based on small pieces eroding and falling to the ground, leaving them to become part of the earth again. In her book, *Mud Woman*, Naranjo-Morse wrote about the Pueblo people's long-term relationship with clay. "Veins of colored earth run along the hillsides of New Mexico, covering remote trails with golden flecks of mica. Channels of brown and scarlet mud wash across the valleys, dipping and climbing with the sprawling landscape. Intricately woven patterns of clay fan out under the topsoil, carrying the life of pottery to the Pueblo people."[11]



Figure 5.4.18: Always Becoming (2007, dirt, sand, straw, clay, stone, black locust wood, bamboo, grass, yam vines) by catface3, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Figure 5.4.19: Always Becoming, by catface3, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Roxanne Swentzell

Roxanne Swentzell (1962-) (Santa Clara Pueblo) was also from a family of artists, her aunt Nora Naranjo-Morse. She learned traditional pottery making from her mother, other family members, and local potters, playing with clay scraps as a child and turning them into little figures. Her artwork is based on her childhood memories and her own experiences to focus on female issues, politics, family, and identity. Swentzell learned how to make small coil pots as a child, the method she uses today to create her figures. However, she does not dig and process her clay. Instead, Swentzell uses commercially made clay. To construct a figure, Swentzell manipulates the clay into thick coils for the walls of her figures, then smoothing the sides. This process makes the statues hollow, except for the fingers and toes. She generally paints the finished clay figure.

Mud Woman Rolls On (7.5.20) is an immense sculpture. The figure has straw wattles (long tubes of straw) for the basic form, then covered with clay. The straw wattles are flexible and able to be shaped. *Mud Woman* has four children, each one holding the other. Swentzell used mud from different locations for the color of the figures. The mother's hair was composed of various grasses dyed with natural colors to make the hair strands. Swentzell wanted to celebrate the female body along with the nurturing relationship of mothers and the earth. She wrote, "The Mother holds the largest child, who's holding the next child, who's holding the next, and so on. I loved the perspective of understanding that we all come from the Earth, generation after generation; an endless family of life passing on the seed."[12]



Figure 5.4.20: Mud Woman Rolls On (2011, clay, plant fiber, 304.8 x 384.8 x 207 cm) by itonys, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The figure of Kosha is similar to the image of a clown who appears in ceremonial events, teaching others through their actions. In the Pueblo story of creation, the Kosha emerged first from the underworld. The statue, *Kosha Appreciating Anything* (7.5.21), depicts the clown gazing at his hands as though something important is happening, a reminder to think before making choices. The stripes on the Kosha symbolize balance, another of Kosha's lessons. The statue is hollow and made with coils, smoothed, and then fired.



Figure 5.4.21: Kosha Appreciating Anything (1997, clay and pigment, 40.6 x 33 x 43.1 cm) by Atomic Playboy, CC BY-NC 2.0

Allan Houser

Allan Houser (1914-1994) (Chiricahua Apache) from Oklahoma was the first person in the family from his Apache tribe to be born outside of captivity since the U.S. government imprisoned them. His father, a cousin of Geronimo, was part of the Chiricahua Apache tribe imprisoned after the defeat of Chief Geronimo by the U.S. government troops. The Apache children were taken from their parents and placed in a Pennsylvania boarding school to "have the Indian removed." Almost one-third of the children died. After 27 years of imprisonment, the remaining people of the tribe were freed from prison and sent to Oklahoma, where they were placed in different villages and where Houser was born. Houser was born in 1914 and is one of the older people in this section's writings. His early career was very successful in art and education; however, when Houser retired in 1975, he started the most significant prolific part of his career. During this time, until he died in 1994, he combined the concepts of Native subject matter and the general sleekness of Modernism, producing some of his most memorable works. In two decades, Houser created almost 1,000 Native people sculptures. Made of stone, wood, or bronze, the statues displaying compassion and dignity.

Homeward Bound (7.5.22) depicts a young Navajo woman holding a lamb as she and the dog take the sheep across the bridge. Her job is to take the sheep out to the pastures and bring them safely back at night. Sheep were essential to the life of the community; their wool was used for weaving. The woman is clad in traditional dress, including the Navajo hair bun and earrings.



Figure 5.4.22: Homeward Bound (1988, bronze, 222.2 x 388.6 x 58.4 cm) by John Harwood, CC BY 2.0

Reflections (7.5.23) is a sculpture made with thin bronze plates, cut into shape, and then hammered. The last step is to weld the parts together to form the expressive female figure. The work is one of Houser's most abstract sculptures, rendering the illusion of the woman whose stress or feelings remain unknown. Houser was close to his mother, and he used the concept of mother and child throughout his work.



Figure 5.4.23: Reflections (1994, fabricated bronze, 36.8 x 40.6 x 50.8 cm) by mharrsch, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Singing Heart (7.5.24) was made of stone and can also be seen in bronze. In most of his statues of mother and child, the mother is proportioned much larger than the child, who is almost joined as one, a protective position. Like his other mother and child figures, this one is organic, round, appearing soft yet robust. He used different types of stone, and like the others, this image has contrasting smooth and rough textures. Houser felt his images told the story of the Apache people, their relationship to Mother Earth, and their pride and spirit.



Figure 5.4.24: Singing Heart (1990) by John Harwood, CC BY 2.0

Truman Lowe

Truman Lowe (1944-) (Ho-Chunk) grew up on the Ho-Chunk reservation in Wisconsin, speaking Winnebago until he went to the mission school. Without art supplies, Lowe used rocks from the river to draw, even grinding them up for pigment. When he was in high school, he spent time outside drawing, especially exploring how snow looks on the branches of trees and how to translate that into a drawing. His family made baskets and did beadwork to sell to tourists for additional income, items used as part of everyday life, sold as tourist curios. While he was at the university, he began to learn the concept of art and art as a profession versus the common idea his parent's work was considered crafts and not valued. Throughout Lowe's university period, while he received a BFA and MFA, he worked with plastics and synthetic materials. The materials were popular at the time, and he experimented with various possibilities. However, after Lowe started teaching in Kansas, he reflected on the past, realizing his roots were in the woodlands and natural materials. Lowe used the traditions learned from his parents and blended them with modern ideas, always talking about how wood is alive. When Lowe was teaching, he brought his knowledge of nature and its relationship to Native cultures into the classes. Lowe was also a curator for the National Museum of the American Indian and brought his ideas to establish the concepts of contemporary Native art.

Many of Lowe's artwork used willow saplings as the material, collecting the saplings in the summer and peeling the bark off before storing them. Willow branches are flexible and strong, and Lowe was able to manipulate and bend them without breaking. During a visit to an archaeology site near the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, Lowe investigated the sand pedestals holding remains of the buried people. His artwork, *Wah-Du-Sheh* (7.5.25), means bundle. Bundles were special and held specific objects or medicine. The art portrays an illusion of humans who respect special objects, the spirit transcending the ordinary.



Figure 5.4.25: Wah-Du-Sheh (Bundle) (1997, willow saplings, brown paper, wax, leather thongs, 398.8 x 15 x 380.8 cm) by sarahstierch, CC BY 2.0

Lowe's love of the woodlands is reflected in all his work. He understood the land and water relationships and spent much of his time canoeing the local rivers. His work, *Water Whispers* (7.5.26), uses flowing glass to give the appearance of a waterfall, reflecting the importance of flowing water and the tenuousness of the environment. Lowe used stainless steel rods to hold the rippling glass in place.



Figure 5.4.26: Water Whispers (2005, stainless steel, formed glass, stone, concrete) by florador, CC BY-NC 2.0

Wendy Red Star

Wendy Red Star (1981-) (Apsáalooke-Crow) grew up on the Crow Reservation, uncomfortable with her "otherness" when she left the reservation until she learned to deal with it through her artwork. In college, she focused on sculpture, including painting, beadwork, fiber art, photography, even performance art. Red Star uses multiple media, frequently incorporating fiber work and photography to depict issues of Native cultures through disparate layers of images. Although Red Star combines stereotypical and authentic imageries in her work, she wanted to refer to and integrate modern and past, humanizing Native people as still relevant and authentic today. Red Star noted:

> *"It is critical to preserve and pass along culture, heritage, and shared values while also providing future generations with a sense of identity, solidarity, and empowerment."[13]*

Red Star believed the traditional photographs of Crow women were flat and colorless. She used herself and her daughter as models and took photographic images dressed in fashionable Apsáalooke (Crow) clothing. In *Apsáalooke Feminist #2* (7.5.27), bright blue blankets cover their laps, one with bold flowers, the other fringed. They are sitting on a modern yet plain white couch, a background for Red Star's decorative blankets folded and laid on the couch. She and her daughter wear clothing to honor the maker and wearer, the beaded belt, the elk tooth dress, and moccasins. Red Star even collaged the background and foreground into the pictures to add dimension, color, and interest. Red Star also named her photograph to connect gender and racial equality. She explained, "As a brown person, as a brown artist, your work is political."[14]



Figure **5.4.27**: Apsáalooke Feminist #2 (2016, pigment print, 106.6 x 139.7 cm) CC BY-SA 4.0

Red Star also supports the community, helping others to expand their knowledge of ancestral and present culture. Red Star helped high school girls make traditional shawls with modern materials as part of the shawls she makes. Each shawl in her display (7.5.28) has different symbols representing aspects of their culture with ribbons resembling fringe.



Figure 5.4.28: Fancy Shawl Project (2009, fabric, ribbon) by istorija, CC BY-NC 2.0

Teri Greeves

Teri Greeves (1970-) (Kiowa) was born on the Wind River Reservation, where her mother had a trading post. Greeves was exposed to multiple tribes' beadwork and methods as she heard her mother talking to customers. She learned beadwork skills from her mother and other beadwork masters who sold their work at the trading post. Although Greeves received her degree in American Studies, she continued her mastery of beads and focused on her art. She learned multiple methods to apply the beads, including a lane stitch, like quillwork with the design built from multiple rows. Greeves uses a loom for bracelets, and if she creates a large image on deer hide, she attaches the hide to a board. Asked about her work, Greeves stated, "I am a beadworker. I've been beading since I was about 8 years old. I am compelled to do it. I have no choice in the matter. I must express myself and my experience as a 21st Century Kiowa and I do it, like all those unknown artists before me, through beadwork. And though my medium may be considered 'craft' or 'traditional,' my stories are from the same source as the voice running through that first Kiowa beadworker's needles. It is the voice of my grandmothers."

When she was only thirteen, Greeves saw a set of beaded tennis shoes one of the Lakota artists brought for her mother to sell at the trading post, and Greeves loved them. When she was in college, her mother asked her to make a pair of beaded tennis shoes and has created them ever since that call. Instead of beading moccasins, Greeves uses tennis shoes to tell her Kiowa and cultural stories in a new way. She makes an original drawing before applying the basic lines on the shoes, then stitches on the beads. She generally uses both a lane stitch and two-needle applique to apply the beads. *Kiowa Aw-Day* (7.5.29) illustrates the children celebrating their day, the beaded young boy in his yellow buckskins. The images of the children contrast against the bright red shoe color.



Figure 5.4.29: Kiowa Aw-Day (2004, beaded sneakers) by afagen, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Greeves Great Lakes Girls (7.5.30) are beaded on high-heeled tennis shoes, the images inspired by the floral designs from the Great Lakes tribes. Although the dancers are beaded in traditional clothing, the images appear modern.[15]



Figure 5.4.30: Great Lakes Girls (2008, glass beads, bugle beads, Swarovski crystals, sterling silver stamped conchae, spiny oyster shell cabochons, canvas high-heeled sneakers, 29.2 x 22.9 x 7.6 cm) CC BY 3.0

Jaune Quick-to-see Smith

Jaune Quick-to-see Smith (1940-) (Salish and Kootenai) was from a small town on a reservation in Montana. Her childhood was one of poverty, moving from place to place and working summers as a migrant worker on the farms. Even as a child, Smith knew she wanted to draw, using sticks to create images in the dirt. When she started school, she remembered the first time she had crayons and paints, saying: "I loved the smell of them. It was a real awakening. I made a painting of children dancing around Mount Rainier. My teacher raved about it. Then with Valentine's Day approaching, I painted red hearts all over the sky. …I see it as my first abstract painting."[16] Throughout her education, including her eventual master's in art degree, Smith moved between Native and the non-Native cultures, producing art bridging the social and political issues between diverse cultures. Smith has always produced complex paintings and lithographs, highly textured images using mixed media. She also combines the abstract and representational in her work, portraying the myths of ancestors integrated with the issues facing Native Americans in the current world. Smith's work addresses the devastation of the environment and governmental oppression. Smith moved to New Mexico, a place she found deeply personal, like the artist Georgia O'Keeffe. "But while O'Keeffe focused her attention on the timeless uninhabited landscapes of her adopted home, Smith's 'inhabited landscapes' express the human conflicts marked on the land."[17]

Smith's work was always based on her ancestral background, integrating today's concepts. *Sticky Mouth* (7.5.31), the translated Blackfeet word for bear, is titled to reflect one of the bear's favorite foods - honey. The bear in Native mythology is a messenger at

times and sometimes considered an ancestral figure. Smith surrounded the bear with different images of Native people. A coyote is also depicted. Smith identified herself with the coyote who delivers warnings about the danger and bad behavior results, part of her role moving through and representing different cultural activities. The map of the United States is a frequent background Smith used, embedding the cultural and environmental issues she addressed.



Figure **5.4.31**: Sticky Mouth (1993, lithograph) by Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

State Names (7.5.32) defines how occupied land was taken by invading Europeans. Smith used paint dripping and collaged layers for the painting, leaving only the names visible based on indigenous sources, highlighting the historical injustices. Many of the names come from Native American words; Wyoming, a Delaware Indian word for "mountains and valleys alternating," or Kansas, a Sioux name for "people of the south wind." In the image of *State Names*, Smith displays her anger for land division without any regard for tribal lands. She stated, "We are the original owners of this country. Our land was stolen from us by Euro-American invaders…I can't say strongly enough that my maps are about stolen lands, our very heritage, our cultures, our worldview, our being…Every map is a political map and tells a story-that we are alive everywhere across this nation…"[18]



Figure 5.4.32: State Names (2000, oil, collage, mixed media on canvas, 121.9 x 182.9 cm) by afagen, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Rick Bartow

Rick Bartow (1946-2016) (Wiyot) was born in Oregon; his father's Wiyot Tribe was indigenous to California in Humboldt County. While the family lived in Oregon, they established a close relationship with the local Siletz Indian community. Bartow was interested in both art and music from an early age. Although no one in his family was artistic, he drew all the time. Bartow, drafted after college, was sent to Vietnam during the war, and after recovering from PTSD, alcoholism, and drug use, he started full-time on this art. His early work often reflected on his dark problems at the time. Bartow's work is more mystical, and he frequently portrayed transformational figures or humans becoming animals or birds. His art was expansive, and he made pastel and mixed media works, wood sculptures, etchings, and ceramics and continued with music. Bartow developed different approaches; his pastels were abstracted, acrylics were bold, wood sculptures were based on the innate texture of the material, and ceramics became fluid. Bartow's work can be radical and unconventional, and even his family disapproved. "I once did a picture of my old Indian uncle, who lived next door to me, and when I showed it to him, he said, 'Put it in the barn; it will keep the rats out.' Sometime later I went to an exhibit of Pacific art, and I was just knocked out by these African pieces that had nails in them. When I came home, the first piece of wood that I came across that had nails it in was an old fence post, so I started yanking up fence posts from my uncle's pasture and cutting them up. I was making dogs and people, and I started pounding more nails in. My uncle just thought it was crazy. He could barely contain himself when he saw those; they made him incensed. Then, when the first one sold for $1,500 at the gallery, he started *bringing* me fence posts. I knew then that I was amongst the counted."[19]

When Bartow was contacted to create a sculpture for the entrance to the American Indian Museum, he did not want to make a totem pole because they were not part of his Wiyot Tribe culture, and the totem pole has specific meanings and iconography. He agreed to make a pair of sculptures entitled, *We Were Always Here* (7.5.33) and involved the community in carving the undulating peaks and valleys. At the top, Bartow added native icons from the Northwestern region, including the raven, bear, salmon, and eagle. Each of the figures had a special meaning to Native cultures and Bartow himself. The poles were carved from 1000-year-old red cedar planks, the symbolic images at the top causing people to look up and see remembrance, hope, and survival in the face of adversities.



Figure 5.4.33: We Were Always Here (carved old-growth western red cedar, 822.9 x 78.7 x 38.1 cm) CC BY-SA 4.0

The sculpture *From the Mad River to the Little Salmon River or The Responsibility of Raising a Child* (7.5.34) depicts a baby-actually Bartow's daughter looking out of her Plateau basket. The basket is perilously perched on the back of Coyote, the trickster. The eagle, a salmon and raven, and other animals surround the child, guarding it. Different faces and animals from the Oregon coast also help to protect the child. The moon mask carved on the eagle's tail represents women, while the sun mark on the eagle's wing symbolizes men. The sculpture was personal to Bartow, and he thought of it as about "pride of place, love, lost and found, [and' survival," believing, "the trickster Coyote can create chaos and harm. Consequently, parents may need help, especially from the love and support of community members, in raising a child."[20]



Figure 5.4.34: From the Mad River to the Little Salmon River, or The Responsibility of Raising a Child (2004, wood carving, 251.4 x 68.5 x 101.6 cm) by florador, CC BY-NC 2.0

Deer Dancer for Hyacinth (7.5.35) is one of Bartow's most haunting works. After the Vietnam War, when he fought addiction, he created his darkest compositions. In this image, the misshapen male figure appears to be transforming as his head seems to be spouting antlers. The use of pastels and charcoal gives the portrait an intense feeling, almost mystical. The body appears to be fading away as the darker face provides a slight hint of emotions.



Figure 5.4.35: Deer Dancer for Hyacinth (2001, pastel, charcoal, graphite on paper, 87 x 203 cm) by Catchpenny, CC BY-ND 2.0

Canada

Canada has a vast and varied landscape, stretching from ocean to ocean and into the frozen lands of the north. Most of the inhabitants are found near the rivers and seas and along the southern border. First Nation people lived throughout the regions before the incursions of the Europeans, looking for new trade routes, land, fur, religious conversions, or other riches. Art was created before the European invasions by people, made with local materials based on historical customs. With the large numbers of Europeans and the total disruption of the Indigenous lifestyles, art became a way to make money from the tourist trade and those who thought of themselves as collectors of "native arts and crafts." By the early 1900s, most First Nations peoples were forced or migrated from historical lands, losing natural histories, cultures, and arts.

Norval Morrisseau is frequently credited with bringing back the cultural past through art. His vision and determination in the 1960s happened when he brought his unique artwork to a gallery, and started changing the concept of Native art. At this time, enforced assimilation was the Canadian practice, and First Nation peoples had just acquired the right to vote. Their artistic expressions were still thought of as artifacts. A few other artists formed the Indian Group of Seven in the 1970s, creating art based on their cultural traditions, portrayed in modern styles, and expanding the platform of opportunities for Indigenous artists. Today, contemporary

First Nation, Metis, and Inuit artists have established themselves. They use ancestral connections, continuing social conditions, and colonial histories to inform their artwork created in contemporary practices.

Norval Morrisseau

Norval Morrisseau (1932-2007) (Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek) was born on an Ojibwe reserve in Ontario. Raised by his grandparents, a common Anishinaabe tradition, he learned the legends of the Ojibwe from his shaman grandfather and the religious elements of Catholicism from his grandmother. Sent to a residential school, the Canadian government's system established in the 1880s, his culture and language was forbidden. Morrisseau wanted to draw and spent time alone; the school sent him home because he did not fit in. When he married in the 1950s, Morrisseau devoted more of his time to art, working in a mine to add income and meeting a European doctor who encouraged Morrisseau's art. The doctor bought him supplies and encouraged him as a professional artist. Morrisseau started selling his art and gained the support of others. In 1962, he exhibited his art in a gallery in Toronto, the first time a contemporary gallery displayed modern Indigenous art. He was criticized, and his art was criticized; however, others noticed, and the concept of quality, successful contemporary Indigenous art started to grow. Morrisseau had battled with alcoholism since he was a young teen, and in 1973 when he was arrested and jailed for six months, he had time to paint some of his most successful work. When he was released, two documentary films were made about him reflecting the assimilationist program, a plan "which aimed to extinguish Indigenous cultural distinctiveness." [21] However, the films also raised the interest in Morrisseau's artwork and started the beginning of public acceptance of Indigenous art.

Morrisseau believed his paintings had power in the sacred images, like an amulet. He sketched his basic scenes quickly and did not use color in any formula or relationship, only adding color where he wanted. In *Androgyny* (7.5.36), the snake symbolized how Morrisseau connected to the spiritual world as the snake reached upwards from the underworld. The dome of the cosmic universe covers the outstretched wings of the spirit Thunderbird. Other spirit beings are added as the life force of everything alive, animals, turtles, fish, frogs, birds, butterflies, and humanity of men, women, and children, all children of Mother Earth. Morrisseau used these familiar images in other paintings. The painting was installed in a remote building from 1983 until 2006 when it was shown in the National Gallery of Canada exhibition. Today, *Androgyny* is recognized as one of Canada's most significant pieces of art.



Figure **5.4.36**: Androgyny (1983, acrylic on canvas, 366 x 610 cm) by Prelèvman (écouvillon en créole), CC BY-NC 2.0

All Morrisseau's paintings were focused on Anishinaabe art, using heavy black lines to divide spaces for the dramatic clashing colors. He usually did not mix colors, only applied them directly from the tube with a brush or his fingers. He always used a balanced composition, a central image, or an asymmetrical formation for two images. *A Separate Reality* (7.5.37) depicts the

spiritual powers of humans, animals, plants, and the different celestial bodies all shared in the general universe. The shape of the dome encloses the four figures representing the directions of north, south, east, and west: the dome is also the shape of the sky. The dome shape is used in some homes or ritual sites. Outside of the dome are the spirits, animals, and people who are part of the universe. Morrisseau spent hours in his childhood learning about the guiding powers in life and the universe, and many of his works incorporate the concepts from his shaman grandfather.



Figure **5.4.37**: A Separate Reality (1984, acrylic on canvas, 3 x 6.4 meters) by Vlastula, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Daphne Odjig

Daphne Odjig (1919-2016) (Potawatomi & Odawa) painted before a contemporary Native art movement existed. Odjig is now thought of as the grandmother of Canadian Native art. Born on an Indian Reserve, her father was a descendent of the well-known Potawatomi Chief Black Partridge. Suffering from rheumatic fever when Odjig was a young girl, her grandfather, a stone carver, stayed with her, encouraging her artwork. She started creating art using multiple mediums while working in different jobs to support herself. Because of the racial discrimination Odjig encountered, she anglicized her name and suppressed her Indigenous identity. While attending a dance ceremony, the beat of the drums made Odjig realize her heritage, and she redirected her work to depict her traditions and history. In 1963, Odjig was recognized as a formal artist based on her pen and ink drawings to portray and preserve the Cree people and their traditional lifestyle. She started her store on the way to her success. In 1973, Odjig, Norval Morrisseau, and Alex Janvier started the Professional Native Indian Artist Association, commonly known as the Indian Group of Seven. Although the group did not last very long, they successfully broke through barriers as a united set of artists. Odjig stated, "If my work as an artist has somehow helped to open doors between our people and the non-native community, then I am glad. I am even more deeply pleased if it has helped to encourage the young people that have followed our generation to express their pride in our heritage more openly, more joyfully than I would have ever dared to think possible."[22]

Roots (7.5.38) became one of Odjig's most famous paintings. Created in three sections, the first one portrays the peaceful life on the reserve where she lived. The middle panel depicts the disorientation felt when leaving the natural home life of the reserve. The headless back of the woman appears to be moving towards the city, two floating heads wondering which world they live in. The third section is a complete woman, the trees in the background; she appears to know herself and is still attached to her roots. The sections are defined with strong lines to form the curved contours, the shapes overlapping. Odjig used bold, bright colors, ensuring each small section was distinguishable.



Figure 5.4.38: Roots (1979, acrylic on canvas, triptych, 1.52 x 1.21 m, each panel) by ArchivesOfOntario, CC BY-NC 2.0

Alex Janvier

Alex Janvier (1935-) (Dene Suline & Saulteaux) was born on Le Goff Reserve in the northern part of Alberta. He was sent to the residential school when he was eight, a place where the principal recognized his artistic abilities and encouraged Janvier to focus on art. He attended the now the Alberta University of the Arts and was the first of the First Nation artists to graduate from an art school. He was also an instructor at the school. In 1966, he was commissioned by the government to produce paintings. He joined Norval Morrisseau and Daphne Odjig to form the Indian Group of Seven. Janvier created a new type of abstraction based on his heritage and Alberta's natural and spiritual life. Many of his works were large-scale and followed abstract patterns he found in the traditional arts of First Nation people's beadwork, quillwork, and how hides were painted. Janvier incorporated many political statements in his work, protesting the governmental policies against First Nation people and their freedoms. Janvier helped develop other Indigenous artists throughout his life and worked with the government to understand and accept Indigenous art as equal to other art. Janvier said, "Art truly is a universal language that can communicate any idea, any feeling, of anyone, regardless of their social standing, their religious beliefs or the language they speak."[23]

Morning Star (7.5.39) is one of his large paintings for a wall in the Canadian Museum of History. Janvier used free-flowing lines, as seen in calligraphy with bright, vivid colors. The surface of the building had to be washed, sealed, and coated with gesso. They used nine coats of white paint as a primer before it was ready for color. After Janvier finished painting the mural, a sealer was applied. Janvier related that the morning star guided the people about when to leave camp in the morning and follow the direction of the selected star. The four areas of color, red, blue, yellow, and white, represent different times in his Native history. Yellow represented their early history when life was balanced with nature, the Great Spirit, and each other. The blue section stood for changes brought by the contact and invasion of Europeans, and the red was for revival and the feeling of optimism, a time of struggle yet a determination to define their future. White represented the promise of reconciliation, healing, renewed self-respect, and returning to a harmonious life in balance again. Janvier said of his work on the mural, "I am painting, and I am also telling the story of the way things happened to me and to my tribe and to my people and it's a true story."[24]

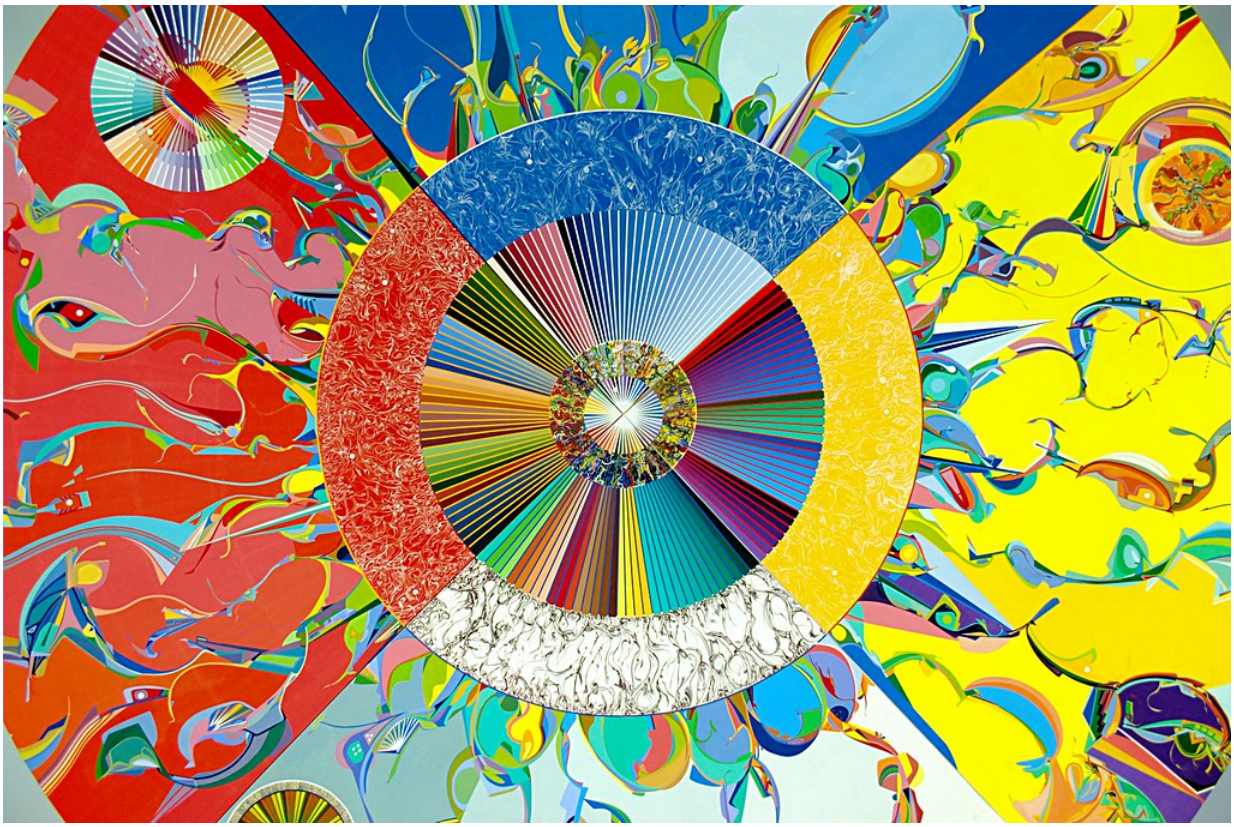


Figure 5.4.39: Morning Star (1993, gesso, sealer, primer, paint, 19 meters diameter, covers 418 square meters) by Ian Muttoo, CC BY-SA 2.0

Thirteen Moons (7.5.40) is a story about time and the people's lunar calendar. The large mural spans thirteen panels, each panel a month for the customary Indigenous lunar calendar. The calendar follows the moon's cycles based on the thirteen times the moon comes and how the Indigenous people coordinated their lives. Janvier talked about how the twelve-month calendar was forced on them; it is not the way they defined time. The panels were placed in a large circle; circles were a shape Janvier frequently used in his work because the sun and moon, and life are circular. The panels created an almost ceremonial site as the images surround the viewer. The set of panels was made to be portable and travel through the country, educating all people about the relationship humanity has with the earth and the timeless traditions of the Indigenous people.

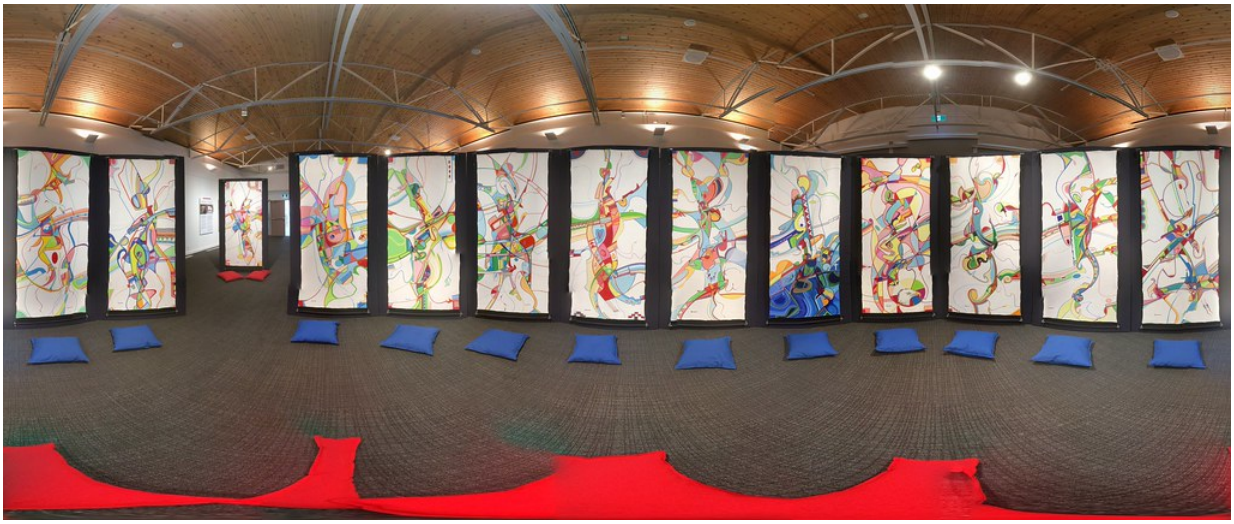


Figure 5.4.40: Thirteen Moons (acrylic on canvas, 13 panels) by AkaashMaharaj, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Bill Reid

Bill Reid (1920-1998) (Haida) was born to an American father in Victoria, British Columbia. His mother was a member of the Raven/Wolf Clan of T'anuu or Haida. Because of the oppressive laws from the Canadian Indian Act, Reid did not know anything about his Haida heritage. In his twenties, he went to his ancestral home to understand and connect with his family and Indigenous identity. Reid's maternal grandfather was a Haida silversmith and taught Reid about the ancestral art and traditions of the Haida. In 1951, Reid went to Vancouver with his wife, set up his studio, and salvaged artifacts, including old totem poles in abandoned sites. He also began making jewelry and sculptures in bronze and wood. Haida's essence, knowledge, and traditions were mainly lost from colonization and suppressive Canadian laws at the onset of his career. Reid spent a long time researching ethnographic information about the traditions of the Haida. He transferred the learned knowledge to his artwork based on Haida mythology, from jewelry to large sculptures. Reid took the information he found and brought back the fundamentals, beauty, and rich tapestry of the obscure and almost lost Nation. Although Reid lived with the results of colonialism, he tenaciously brought the Haida ways to life.

The Spirit of Haida Gwaii – The Jade Canoe (7.5.41) is Reid's most complex and largest sculpture. Thirteen different entities are crowded into the canoe, almost mythical Haida beings; Raven, Wolf, Eagle, Frog, Bear, Beaver, Dogfish, and Mouse. Three humans are also in the canoe, the Chief who sits in the center, the Bear Mother, and the person paddling the canoe. The occupants represent earth, sky, and the sea, linked and impacting the figure next to them. Wrapped in the skin of the Seawolf, the Chief in the center holds a staff carved with the Haida story of creation. Initially, the sculpture was commissioned in 1986 by the Canadian government for its embassy in Washington. However, at the time, the Haida people were protesting the government's practice of logging in the area, so Reid stopped the project to support the Haida. It wasn't until 1991 that the first casting occurred.



Figure **5.4.41**: Spirit of Haida Gwaii, the Black Canoe (1991, bronze, 605 x 389 x 348 cm) by strollerdos, CC BY-NC 2.0

In *Raven and the First Men* (7.5.42), the Haida creation myth believes the Raven was on the beach and heard creatures in the large clamshell making sounds. The Raven opened the shell with his beak, and the beings in the shell emerged and became the first Haida people. The Raven discovered all the beings were men, so the Raven opened a chiton holding the women and brought them to the men. Reid tried to carve the image from a cedar log, except too many places were rotten. Instead, he used laminated yellow

cedar beams, successfully creating the sculpture. When Reid talked about the beings in the shell, he said, "I see them as unformed, having all the potential of being human but having no way of achieving that until they emerged from the clamshell. And yet, of course, I depicted them as though they were of different personalities and different ages and so on."[25]



Figure 5.4.42: Raven and the First Men (1978, laminated yellow cedar, 1.88 x 1.92 m) CC BY-SA 3.0

Rebecca Belmore

Rebecca Belmore (1960-) (Ojibwe of Obishikokaang) is a multidisciplinary artist who focuses on identity and social issues for First Nation people. As a child, Belmore spent summers with her grandparents, learning about native foods found on the land and how to harvest them. As a teenager, she was sent off to high school and resided with a non-Native family, losing contact with her culture. When Belmore went to Toronto and the Ontario College of Art, she entered an environment of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, encountering racism and influencing her future artwork. Belmore uses multiple media types, including photography, video, sculptures, and performance, to address political and cultural dissonance. *Nuit Blanche* or *White Night* is celebrated throughout Toronto, running from sunset to sunrise in different city spaces. In her *Nuit Blanche* performance (7.5.43), Belmore sat in the middle of a basement floor located in an art gallery. She applied clay in a grid format to the floor's marble tiles. In some areas, the clay is drying, then re-applied with Belmore's hands. She wore plain black clothing stained with clay. Belmore worked and moved across the clay, only stepping on dry clay, disassociated with the space outside of the floor. Her performance art is subtle to the viewer as Belmore worked from sunset to sunrise. Frequently, she wrote words first before covering them; water, land, breathe. Belmore focused on identity, the continual destruction of Indigenous life, and how they are represented.



Figure 5.4.43: Nuit Blanche performance (2016, Red River Valley clay) by The City of Toronto, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Belmore generally used local or natural materials to create much of her artwork. *Marble Tent* (7.5.44) was constructed of marble in Greece near the Acropolis. At the time, the refugee crisis escalated in Greece by people forced to flee their homeland like the Anishinaabe people who were dispossessed of their lands in Canada. The tent has long been a symbol for refugees, a makeshift retreat; also, the tent provides a shelter for those who follow the food sources. Belmore stated, "The shape of the tent is, for me, reminiscent of the wigwam dwellings that are part of my history as an Indigenous person."[26] Belmore defined the historical and current issues with Indigenous populations in Canada within the crisis of worldwide events and problems.



Figure 5.4.44: Marble Tent (2017, marble, 140 x 200 x 200 cm) by aestheticsofcrisis, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Tarpaulin No. 2 (7.5.45) was created when Belmore responded to the homelessness issues and problems in Vancouver, Canada, after encountering a homeless man. She met the man in a parking lot and gave him food. She said, …he offered me a smoke. I declined. Before I turned to leave, he asked me if I wanted an "Indian blanket." I accepted his humble gift, a small, plaid-patterned fleece blanket like the ones you can buy at Walmart."[27] *Tarpaulin No. 2* represents the blanket in the story, suggesting a person

lying beneath the blanket as the sculpture sits alone in the middle of the space. The homeless suffer the same fate, alone and ignored by passersby. Belmore also captured the disproportionate inequities of the homeless Indigenous population. The patina on the blanket is mottled as Belmore illustrates how blankets containing the smallpox virus were deliberately given to Indigenous Peoples in the era of colonization, spreading the devastating disease. Racial injustice continuing today is represented through a blanket.



Figure 5.4.45: Tarpaulin No. 2 (2018, ceramic, 76.2 x 177.8 x 137.2 cm) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Faye Heavyshield

Faye Heavyshield (1953-) (Kainai-Blood) grew up on the Blood Reserve, one of twelve siblings. She went to a residential Catholic school when she was young, speaking English while maintaining her Blackfoot language. Heavyshield's grandmother was instrumental in teaching her about the traditions and history of the Blackfoot and Blood people. Her father managed a ranch, and Heavyshield was influenced by the geography of the land, its grasses, the river coulees, the flat plains, and blowing wind, all references she used in her art. After graduation with her BFA from the University of Calgary, Heavyshield focused her art on sculpture and installations. Heavyshield's heritage became a major inspiration for her work, along with feminism. She became one of Canada's leading feminist artists. Her work was also subjective of memories of the structure of bodies; the deer being skinned, the tepees' skin, and the bodies of the aged. Heavyshield stated, "When I began my formal art training, these influences surfaced in the form of biomorphic images, skeletal armatures with vestiges of flesh, using architectural and figurative language. Monochromatic, after the solitude and simplicity of the prairie. Sometimes building the surface up and then working back from there, peeling the layers."[28]

Kuto'iis (7.5.46) was inspired by the ancestral flow of history through Heavyshield's consciousness. She knotted hundreds of cloth pieces and attached them to an entire wall. The knots represent a blood clot and are randomly scattered; then, the whole installation was painted in red ochre. The repetitive knots represent the remembered knowledge of stories, language, and songs from multiple

levels of history and ancestry. Heavyshield's sculptures are composed of numerous small elements arranged in lines or spirals, frequently an allegory for the human body.

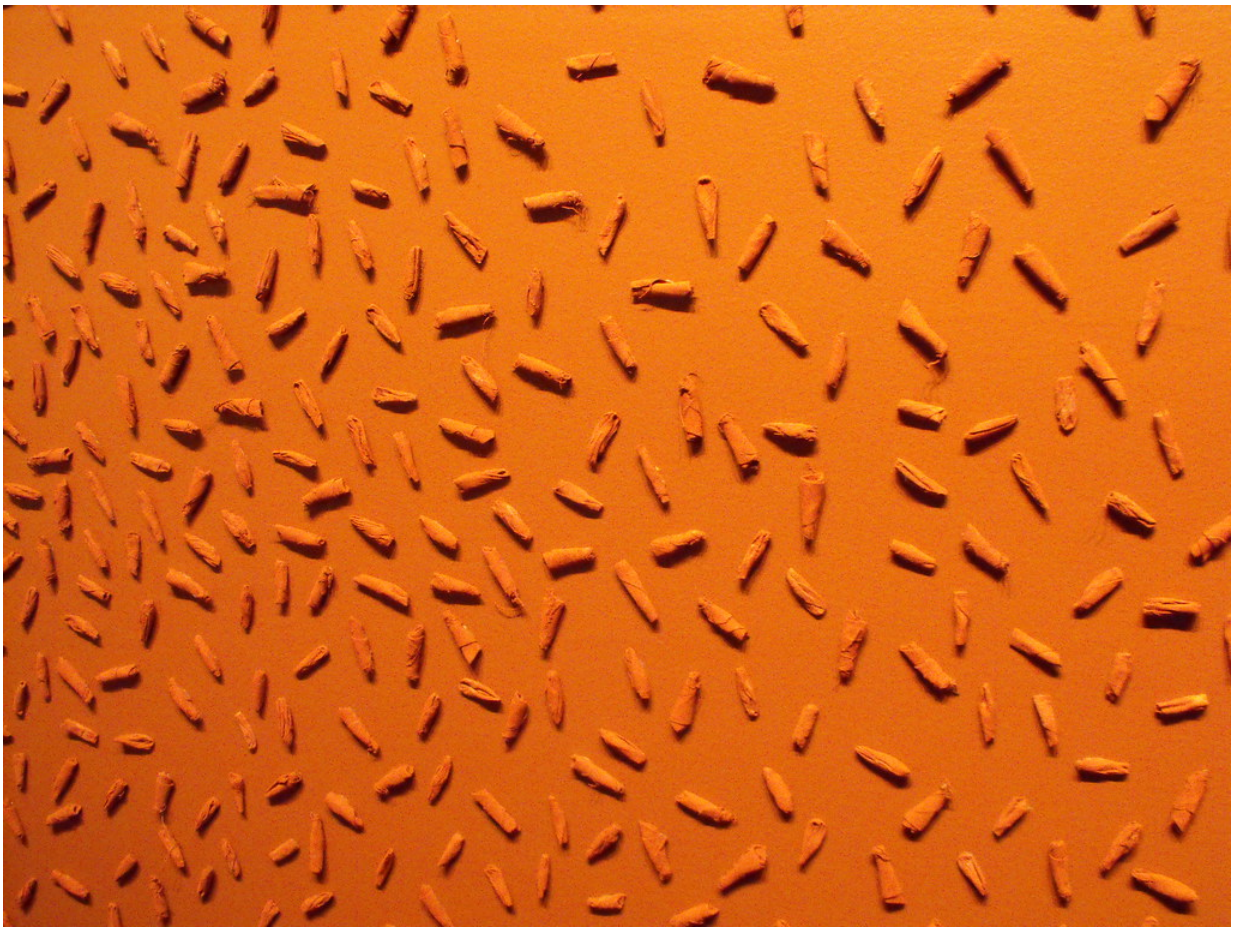


Figure 5.4.46: Kuto'iis (2004, cloth, red dye, installation) by istorija, CC BY-NC 2.0

Body of Land (7.5.47) is constructed of hundreds of close-up photographs of skin from hundreds of people. Heavyshield takes a photo, prints the photo, and rolls the image into a cone, spreading the cones along the wall in random colors. The soft rolling placement of the cones reminded her of the rippling hills of Alberta. Each cone is an exceptional closeup of skin linking the essential elements of the human experience, a sense of community interconnected. Heavyshield also felt the traditional wisdom of women was passed from mother to daughter, other female relatives, and the female connections with each other. Heavyshield said, "We are a product of Mother Earth, we come from her, we go back to her…As women, we are, in a sense, a smaller version of Mother Earth; we give life, we work, and protect."[29]



Figure 5.4.47: Body of Land (2002-2006, inkjet printer paper, installation) by istorija, CC BY-NC 2.0

Robert Davidson

Robert Davidson (1946-) (Haida) was born in Alaska; his family moved to the Haida village in British Columbia when Davidson was still an infant. He belongs to the Eagle moiety with multiple relations who were woodcarvers. He became an apprentice to Bill Reid and studied at the Vancouver School of Art during high school. At the age of only twenty-three, Davidson carved a Haida Gwaii totem pole for the village of Massett. It was the first totem pole the village erected in over ninety years, a pole installed with Haida raising ceremonies.

Along with carving, Davidson is a painter and printmaker consistently focusing on Haida traditions. One of Davidson's main artistic characteristics is his preservation and use of distinctive Haida visual language. The use of positive and negative spaces and the forming and ovoid shapes are found in his intensely graphic and abstracted style. Davidson claimed, "I draw on the lessons of our ancestors. Our ancestors left an incredible legacy of art and, to honor them, it's our responsibility to relearn that legacy…"[30] Haida art is characterized by broad and narrow flowing lines. The designs are flat, compact, and very organized with bright contrasting colors.

Davidson's *Killer Whale* (7.5.48) presents the ovoid-shaped staring eyes, the giant creature exposing his teeth. He follows the tradition of a form line with U-shaped figures joined and stacked as Davidson defined new shapes. Linked to different lineages, the killer whale is a famous crest and figure in Haida art and myths. Many believe the killer whale lives in the underwater realm, similar to humans on land as they travel in family groups. Davidson and others are part of a committee bringing claims against the Canadian government to repatriate ancestral artifacts, remains, and land taken from the Haida in the past.



Figure 5.4.48: Killer Whale (2004, serigraph, 76 x 101 cm) by Vaultboy, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Davidson had an exhibition entitled *The Abstract Edge*. One of the images, the *World is Sharp as a Knife* (7.5.49), is based on an old Haida expression meaning to move through life with balance. Davidson explored the world of abstraction within the constructs of traditional art images. Although abstracted using traditional forms, the image appears much like a conventional painting, with curvilinear shapes, lines, and colors.



Figure 5.4.49: World is Sharp as a Knife (1993, serigraph, 73.6 x 104.1 cm) by George, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Beau Dick

Beau Dick (1955-2017) (Kwakwaka'wakw) was born in northwest British Columbia and moved to Vancouver when he was six. His Kwakwaka'wakw name was Walas Gwa'yam, the word for Big Whale. Dick's small village homeland was very secluded; it is easiest to travel by boat even today. Because the area was so remote, during the Potlatch Ban of 1885-1951, the Kwakwaka'wakw people could still maintain their customs. Dick was immersed in their history. His grandfather and father were both woodcarvers who taught him the basics early before he started as an apprentice under master carvers in Victoria, BC. A commission to make a mask for Expo 86 in Vancouver encouraged him to focus on masks. His work was highly influenced by Kwakwaka'wakw history and traditional methods as he incorporated contemporary ideas and Western influences. Dick's masks were collected as art while still being used for ceremonial activities in the community. He believed if the mask was not used in a dance, the mask's spirit was not activated. DIck also was active in many of the region's activist groups, speaking and acting for his community. He always talked about responsibility and respect and how we need to strive for healing. Dick made all types of masks, some with his traditions and others based on Japanese anime, Halloween, or Noh masks. He carved the masks (7.5.50, 7.5.51) from wood and added different materials. Dick used all materials for his masks, including wood, string, straw, feathers, paint, leather, fur, horsehair, shells, copper, and bark. Some of his masks were made for ceremonial dances and were burned after four years. Other masks were sold or otherwise used.



Figure 5.4.50: Mask 1, by Kris Krug, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Figure 5.4.51: Mask 2, CC BY 1.0

For centuries, people have thought of Indigenous Peoples' art as part of the past ethnographic record of the cultures from the original peoples. By the beginning of the 20th century, Native arts were kept as a subtext of the past, outsiders controlling the narrative of art for Indigenous Peoples. Creating fine art with the ideals or constructs of modern theories was not acceptable. After World War II, the world changed, and as countries emerged from colonialism, the geography of the world transformed. Newly found freedoms and education led Indigenous artists to experiment with abstraction and emotional, challenging images, changing art for Native cultures worldwide. Some artists created art without any Indigenous themes. However, most Indigenous artists worldwide incorporated their past traditions and cultures into new concepts and artistic ideas, paying homage to the past and their lands with the contemporary visions of the future. However, the general future many Indigenous Peoples in all the regions still face is continually ranking below the general population in poverty, economic prospects, and educational opportunities. Even those with independent governments continue to encounter economic erosion, discrimination, environmental degradation, and the effects of climate change as sea levels rise.

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5.5: Harlem Renaissance (1918-1930)

Introduction

The Civil War ended in 1865 and hundreds of thousands of slaves were suddenly freed with the promise of participation in American life and an opportunity for self-determination. By the end of the 1870s, white supremacy restructured local and state laws, the "Jim Crow laws," taking away the right of African Americans for the promised freedom and relegating them to poverty and powerlessness. A few people escaped the legislated constrictions, but most former slaves had to work as sharecroppers. At the same time, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) terrorized the southern countryside with lynchings and intimidation. The fundamental rights of the African American population were destroyed, segregation became the law, and voting rights were erased.

In the beginning of the new 20th century, the economies in the northern and midwestern states were booming, and African Americans in the south saw the opportunity for economic advancement, jobs, education, and a more tolerant environment. Thousands of African Americans became part of the Great Migration, moving to the bigger cities in the north and west. A small region covering only a three-square-mile sector of Manhattan called Harlem developed into a significant location for African Americans moving from the south, people determined to build a new life and identity. Part of the migration included people of all backgrounds, talents, and abilities. Harlem became a major cross-disciplinary artistic center of African American artists, writers, and entertainers, developing one of the country's most critical cultural movements—the Harlem Renaissance. People in other cities also participated in the movement, but its heart was Harlem. The poet Langston Hughes wrote, "…artists who create now intend to express our dark-skinned selves without fear or shame."[1] During the period of the Harlem Renaissance, Harlem was known as an epicenter of American culture. "The neighborhood bustled with African American-owned and operated publishing houses and newspapers, music companies, playhouses, nightclubs, and cabarets. The literature, music, and fashion they created defined culture and "cool" for blacks and whites alike, in America and around the world."[2]

With the end of the 1920s and the stock market crash in 1929, the Great Depression brought an end to prosperity throughout the country and Harlem. The renaissance and culture developed in Harlem expanded worldwide, changed the perception of African Americans, challenged the racist stereotypes of southern Jim Crow, and illuminated the talents and capabilities of the people living in Harlem and other cities.

Aaron Douglas

Aaron Douglas (1899-1979) was born in Kansas, his mother was an amateur artist. While working multiple different jobs, he also graduated from the University of Nebraska with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He wanted to go to Paris to study, stopping in Harlem on his way where he remained. Douglas started as a landscape painter and muralist and was influenced by the other movements of the day. He studied Cubism's fractures and fragmented images, the bright colors and stylization of graphic designs, and the masks and sculptures of Western Africa. His paintings culminated in his investigation of art styles, and Douglas became known as one of the major inspirations of the new Harlem Renaissance art. He traveled extensively and taught at universities about African American history, experiences, and art.

Douglas developed different methods and styles, integrating techniques he learned painting portraits as a muralist and an illustrator combining them into an abstract style depicting African Americans in music, poetry, and action. He incorporated the concepts of Cubism with lines and planes, the female figures usually positioned as African dancers or crouched in position. His color range was limited to greens, mauves, and brown with black forming the darker regions. He generally represented figures with darker tones, the silhouettes depicting African American social lives and struggles. *Let My People Go* (5.8.1) demonstrates his flat style, the figures in silhouette. Douglas' work is similar to the story of Moses leading the Israelites from Egyptian captivity, relating the concept to the oppression of the African Americans. The painting was rendered in his traditional tones of mauve and yellow gold.



Figure 5.5.1: Let My People Go (1935-39, oil on Masonite, 121.9 x 91.4 cm) Public Domain

Aspiration (5.8.2) contains multiple symbols; the star represents the North Star, the guiding light for escaping slaves. The outlines of pyramids define the contributions of African civilizations as the two figures stare upwards at the city as they aspire to achieve future progress. The painting belonged to the set of four paintings for the "Hall of Negro Life" at the Texas Exposition in 1936, only *Aspiration and Into Bondage* survived.



Figure \(\PageIndex{2\): Let My People Go (1935-39, oil on Masonite, 121.9 x 91.4 cm) by daryl_mitchell CC BY-SA 2.0

William Johnson

William Johnson (1901-1970) was born in South Carolina before moving to New York City to attend the National Academy of Design. He moved to France to work, marrying a Danish artist and living in Scandinavia, influenced by their folk art. When Johnson moved back to the United States, he taught in Harlem. During this period, he studied the cultures and traditions of different African Americans, creating paintings using the simplicity of the folk-art style. Johnson painted images of ordinary people in both urban and rural settings, from working the fields to entertaining. Unfortunately, in 1942 the building where his studio was located burned. He lost some of his artwork, a tragedy followed by the death of his wife. A few years later, he was diagnosed with a debilitating mental disease and spent the next twenty-three years of his life in an institution, dying penniless. His work had been placed in storage and was almost destroyed while he was in the institution because he could not pay the fees for storage. Fortunately, the Harmon Foundation stepped in, gathering over 1,000 pieces of Johnson's artwork and donating them to the Smithsonian.

Three Friends (5.8.3) is a portrait of well-dressed women painted in Johnson's simpler folk-art style. Something caught the attention of the women as their eyes are all looking intently in the same direction. He used bright colors to paint each person's well-coordinated outfit, including their hats, a common accessory in this period. Johnson used simple geometric shapes.



Figure 5.5.3: Three Friends (circa 1944-45, screenprint on paper, 40.3 x 29.5 cm) Public Domain

In *Street Musicians* (5.8.4), the two men are entertaining with the typical instruments, a guitar, and violin, the light brown of the instruments against the darker browns. The guitar player has a light blue jacket, the only major opposing color in the painting. The nearby fire hydrant suggests they are playing on a street corner in front of a lighter wall. Both musicians are playing left-handed, a possible reversal by the printing process, or maybe they were both left-handed.



Figure 5.5.4: Street Musicians (1939-1940, screenprint and pochoir with hand additions, 45.1 x 35.6 cm) Public Domain

Sowing (5.8.5) might represent the time Johnson spent in South Carolina as a child. The man is plowing through the red-brown iron-suffused dirt, and the woman holds the bag of seeds, carefully releasing each one, an indication of the importance of the potential of each seed. The representation of the house is small, a view of poverty and limited resources. In all of the paintings, Johnson successfully used each person's eyes to portray the emotion of the scene. The three women are tense, staring at the unseen, the musicians appear insecure and worried and the farming couple seems tired, worn out by the arduous task of hand plowing. Johnson uses bright contrasting colors and positions the figures in emotional situations while the eyes complete the story.



Figure 5.5.5: Sowing (1939-1940, oil on canvas, 97.8 x 116.2 cm) Public Domain

Jacob Lawrence

Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) was born in New Jersey, where his parents and siblings moved from the rural areas of the south. In his after-school art and craft program, the teacher recognized his ability to draw patterns with crayons. He continued working and attending different art schools, including the Community Arts Center led by Augusta Savage, where he met his wife, also a painter. He spent decades documenting the African American history, experiences, and current concepts of life, including civil rights. His work included paintings, prints, large murals, and illustrations for books. When he moved to Seattle in 1971, he taught at the University of Washington for several years, demonstrating his use of visual language to describe and create images of the human condition.

The major masterpiece of Jacob Lawrence was a series of sixty panels depicting the Great Migration, the movement after World War I of almost a million African Americans from the restrictive southern states to the industrial opportunities of the north and west. The subject matter was broad, a complex, and challenging project, trying to incorporate the emotional journeys, the hopes, struggles, hardships, and achievements of the people in flight. Lawrence found sixty matching panels to use for the story and wrote the captions and descriptions for each panel before he started painting. He wanted the panels to tell a story, unified by theme and repetitive symbols with color bringing visual unity. Lawrence covered the panels with a layer of gesso and used casein tempera for the color. He mixed his dry pigments because he had so many panels to paint, and he wanted the color to be uniform throughout the work. Lawrence did not combine colors, only used the pure form to eliminate the variation between panels with a constant palette of oranges and yellow contrasted with blue-green and gray-browns. Lawrence laid all the panels out, and starting with black; he applied one color to all the panels before moving to the next color, working from dark to light. His style was based on synthetic Cubism with geometric forms and abstracted figures.

> *Lawrence stated, "To me, migration means movement. There was conflict and struggle. But out of the struggle came a kind of power and even beauty. 'And the migrants kept coming' is a refrain of triumph over adversity. If it rings true for you today, then it must still strike a chord in our American experience."[3]*

Each panel was numbered in a specific order. In the opening half of the series, Lawrence depicted the financial hardships, southern injustices, and migration as the second half illustrated the migrant's life in the north. *Number 3* (5.8.6) is labeled "From every southern town migrants left by the hundreds to travel north." The people are resolutely moving northwards, the flock of birds accompanying them. The bright blue of the sky and the freedom of the birds brings hope as the people carry their worldly belongings on the journey.



Figure 5.5.6: Number 3 (1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 30.48 x 45.72 cm) by profzucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Number 45 (5.8.7) is labeled, "The migrants arrived in Pittsburgh, one of the great industrial centers of the North." People arrived by train as they viewed the smokestacks of the city. They had long packed their food when traveling to avoid restrictive Jim Crow restaurant laws, and this painting displays the basket sitting on the table. Fried chicken, biscuits, cornbread, and other traditional southern foods were also brought to the north, food that became integrated into the cuisine of the north.



Figure 5.5.7: Number 45 (1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 30.48 x 45.72 cm) by profzucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Number 53 (5.8.8) is labeled, "African Americans, long-time residents of northern cities, met the migrants with aloofness and disdain." The couple in the painting are dressed for an evening of entertainment. The woman's clothing is depicted with swirls bringing the illusion of movement from the feathers of her cape, the man dressed elegantly, both portraying their wealth. They were probably long-term residents in the north, not part of the rural influx from the south.



Figure 5.5.8: Number 53 (1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 45.72 x 30.48 cm) by profzucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Number 59 (5.8.9) is labeled, "In the North they had the freedom to vote." The people are waiting to vote, one of the most restrictive parts of the southern Jim Crow laws constraining their rights as a citizen.



Figure **5.5.9**: Number 59 (1940-41, casein tempera on hardboard, 45.72 x 30.48 cm) by profzucker CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Laura Wheeler Waring

Laura Wheeler Waring (1887-1948) was born in Connecticut; her family ancestors had been active in anti-slavery events, her father a minister, her mother, an artist, and a graduate of Oberlin College. Waring graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1914, where she received a scholarship to study at an academy in Paris. However, her time in Paris was cut short when World War I started, and she returned to the United States. Waring married her husband, who was a university professor. After the war, she went back to Paris and enrolled in one of the academies, a time she started to paint portraits. Her style changed, becoming more realistic with vibrant colors. Her artwork focused on portraits of prominent African Americans who achieved success across multiple disciplines and illustrated numerous magazine covers and articles. In addition to pursuing her work as an artist, she also taught school during her long career.

One of her first successful portraits was of *Anna Washington Derry* (5.8.10), an older woman who lived at the school in Cheyney where Waring taught. The painting earned her $400 and a gold medal from the Harmon Foundation, at the time, the only woman to receive the award. The Harmon Foundation commissioned her to paint a series "Portraits of Outstanding American Citizens of

Negro Origin."[4] This set of portraits earned her the most recognition, and they toured the United States to fight stereotypical beliefs and demonstrate the careers and successes of the people in the portraits. The series also included work by Betsy Reyneau. Some of the paintings in the series included: *Alma Thomas* (5.8.11), a fellow artist; *W. E. B. Du Bois* (5.8.12), a writer, historian, civil rights activist, and a founder of the NAACP; and *James Weldon Johnson* (5.8.13), a writer and civil rights activist. The original paintings were completed in color.



Figure **5.5.10**: Anna Washington Derry (1927, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.5 cm) Smithsonian American Art Museum



Figure 5.5.11: Portrait of a Lady (1947, oil on canvas, 76.1 x 63.8 cm) Smithsonian American Art Museum



Figure 5.5.12: W. E. B. Du Bois (before 1948, oil on canvas, 81.9 x 63.5 cm) Public Domain

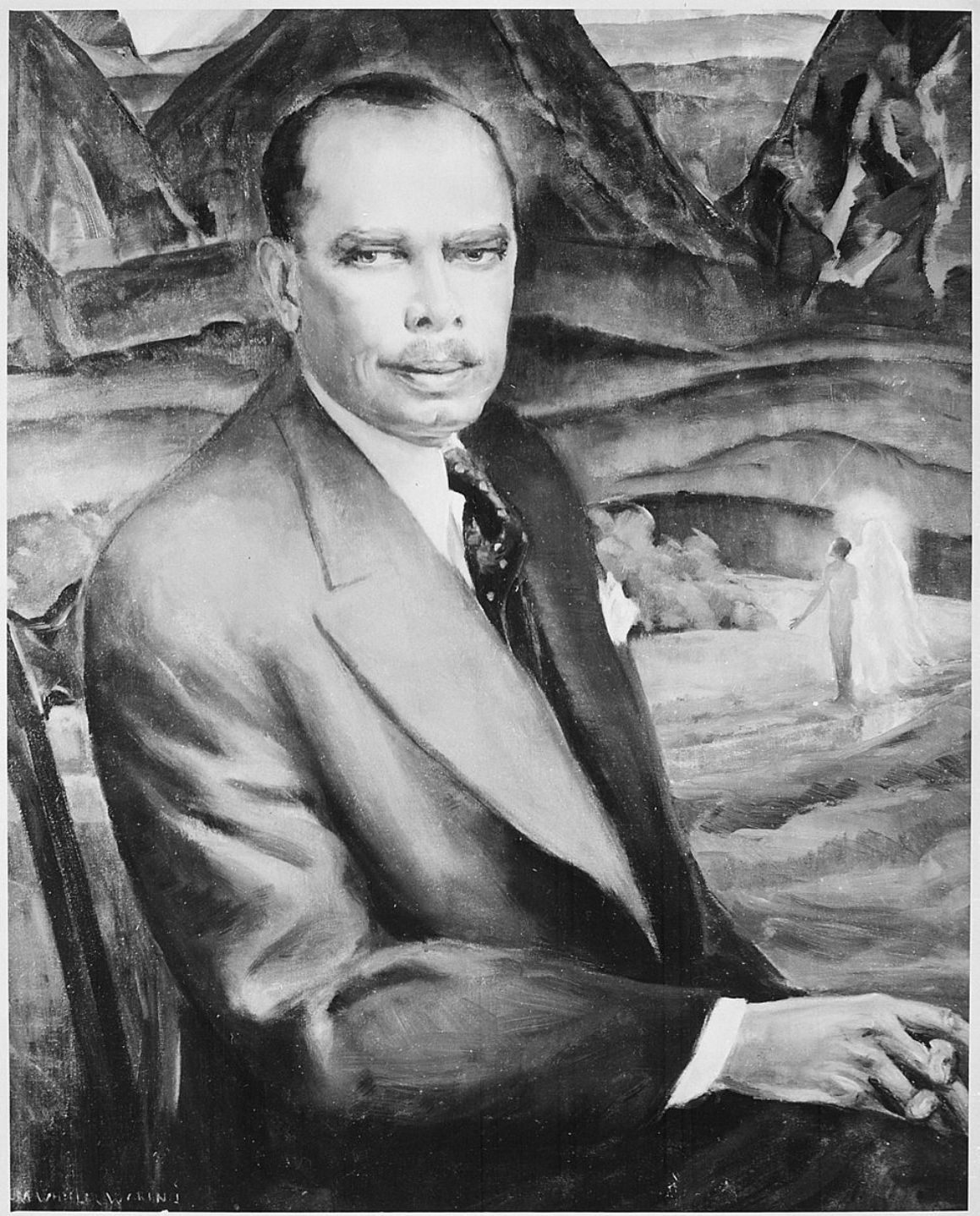


Figure 5.5.13: James Weldon Johnson (1943, oil on canvas, 92.7 x 76.2 cm) Public Domain

Archibald Motley

Archibald Motley (1891-1981) never resided in Harlem. He was born in New Orleans and moved to Chicago, attending a predominantly white prep school and then the Art Institute in Chicago. His training was classical, which he was forced to use while secretly painting more modern images he kept hidden. In 1929, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship. He went to France to study, mainly studying the old masters and genre works, gaining an understanding of how black bodies were stereotypically portrayed in paintings, inspiring him to change the way racial representation was expressed. Early in his career, he was successful and was the

first African American to exhibit in his one-man show in New York City. In 1920, he focused on portraits, shifting in the 1930s to non-traditional urban settings representing the activities and lives of the African American community.

Motley was mixed-race with lighter skin color, and he struggled with racial identity all his life. As part of the struggle, he also studied the concept of skin tone gradation and its effects on society. Motley tried to paint a broad representation of blackness and its diversity, a celebratory portrayal of people and their positive plurality. In an interview with the Smithsonian Institution, he described his concepts and the problem associated with painting the wide variety of skin tones of African Americans, "They're not all the same color, they're not all black, they're not all, as they used to say year ago, high yellow, they're not all brown. I try to give each one of them character as individuals. An that's hard to do when you have so many figures to do, putting them all together and still have them have their characteristics."[5] Motley believed by painting the different skin tones; he also defined the personalities of each person eliminating stereotypes.

Motley brought his concepts and ideas of skin tones to his vibrant paintings, celebrating the jazz culture and exuberant life of the urban culture of the African Americans, quite opposite from the typical views of rustic, poverty images of blacks in the south. *Nightlife* (5.8.14) shows people in the cabaret, couples dancing across the painting to the music of the jukebox on the far edge, and the bartenders busy mixing drinks in front of a well-stocked bar. The lighting is unnatural, a burgundy tone illuminating the lively scene.



Figure **5.5.14**: Nightlife (1943, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 121.3 cm) by dr. zaro CC BY-NC 2.0

Cocktails (5.8.15) is a very different scene; the women sit around the table as drinks are served, talking and laughing. Alcohol was illegal at the time; speakeasies were the typical establishment. The warm palette in the painting is enlivened with an abundance of reds and pinks. The women are all depicted with different skin tones, as the much darker-skinned waiter is serving them, the diversity of color, and economic status.



Figure 5.5.15: Cocktails (1926, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 101.6 cm) by hyperion327 CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Blues (5.8.16) is considered an iconic painting of the Harlem Renaissance. Although Motley did not live in Harlem, he did live in Paris, and the painting probably reflects some of the scenes he saw there. The nightclub is full of people dancing, smoking, and playing instruments. Different vibrant colors accent the image; the gold trombone, a red dress, yellow pants, a gray hat, a white hose, the brown suit, and a wide variation of skin tones. Motley flattened the figures into stylized versions with curved lines.



Figure **5.5.16**: Blues (1929, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 106.7 cm) by Tim Evanson CC BY-SA 2.0

His *Self Portrait* (5.8.17) was painted early in his career after he graduated from college to create a positive image of a poised, capable, young artist. Motley wore a dark suit jacket with the white-collar in high contrast, his tie held with a diamond horseshoe pin demonstrating assurance and success. He is holding a brush and palette denoting his talent as an artist. Motley wanted the painting to exhibit his success and to show the perception of a young African American man as a positive image.



Figure **5.5.17**: Self Portrait (1920, oil on canvas, 76.3 x 56 cm) Public Domain

James Richmond

James Richmond (1901-1989) was born in Mississippi; his father died when he was a few months old, forcing his mother to work as a dressmaker. Barthé's mother kept him entertained with paper and pencils while she worked and he learned to draw. He continued to draw throughout school until typhoid fever forced him to withdraw. When he recovered, he worked as a houseboy for a wealthy family who exposed him to a wide range of art and culture. At twenty-three, a local priest raised money for Barthé to attend the Art Institute of Chicago, training as a painter. He did have to take an anatomy class using clay to develop a three-dimensional form, an experience proving to be a turning point and a pathway to a career. When he moved to New York City, he could not afford to pay for models, so he went to the theatre, and studied performers and their movements to create sculptures based on his visual memory. He was very successful, receiving multiple awards and noticed as a leading modern artist during this period. He created sculptures of famous people, built numerous public works projects, and received extensive recognition throughout his life. Barthé sculpted in a realistic style producing sculptures of African Americans seldom seen before.

When Barthé was at the Art Institute in Chicago, he focused on developing expressive poses, giving the body movement. He watched boxing matches by the Cuban "Kid Chocolate," the inspiration for his sculpture of the *Boxer* (5.8.18). The lean, muscular boxer is posed on the balls of his feet, his arm ready for action. Barthé characterized the boxer as moving with the grace and movement of a ballet dancer.



Figure 5.5.18: Boxer (1942, bronze, 46.4 x 17.8 x 30.5 cm) Public Domain

Blackberry Woman (5.8.19) depicts an African American woman carefully balancing a basket as she walks to the market. The image was probably a familiar sight Barthé saw as a young man in Mississippi with her bare feet and simple dress. He named the sculpture after the title of a Wallace Thurman book about discrimination against darker-skinned women. Barthé always wanted to visit Africa, stating, "I'd really like to devote all my time to Negro subjects, and I plan shortly to spend a year and a half in Africa studying types, making sketches and models which I hope to finish off in Paris for a show there, and later in London and New York."[6] However, he was never able to travel to Africa.



Figure 5.5.19: Blackberry Woman (1932, bronze, 90.1 x 31.1 x 41.3 cm) Smithsonian American Art Museum

Booker T. Washington (5.8.20) was an educator, writer, and one of the foremost political leaders at the turn of the century. His father was white and unknown, so he gave himself the last name of Washington when he was in school. Barthé made the detailed bronze bust of him as part of the series about prominent African Americans.

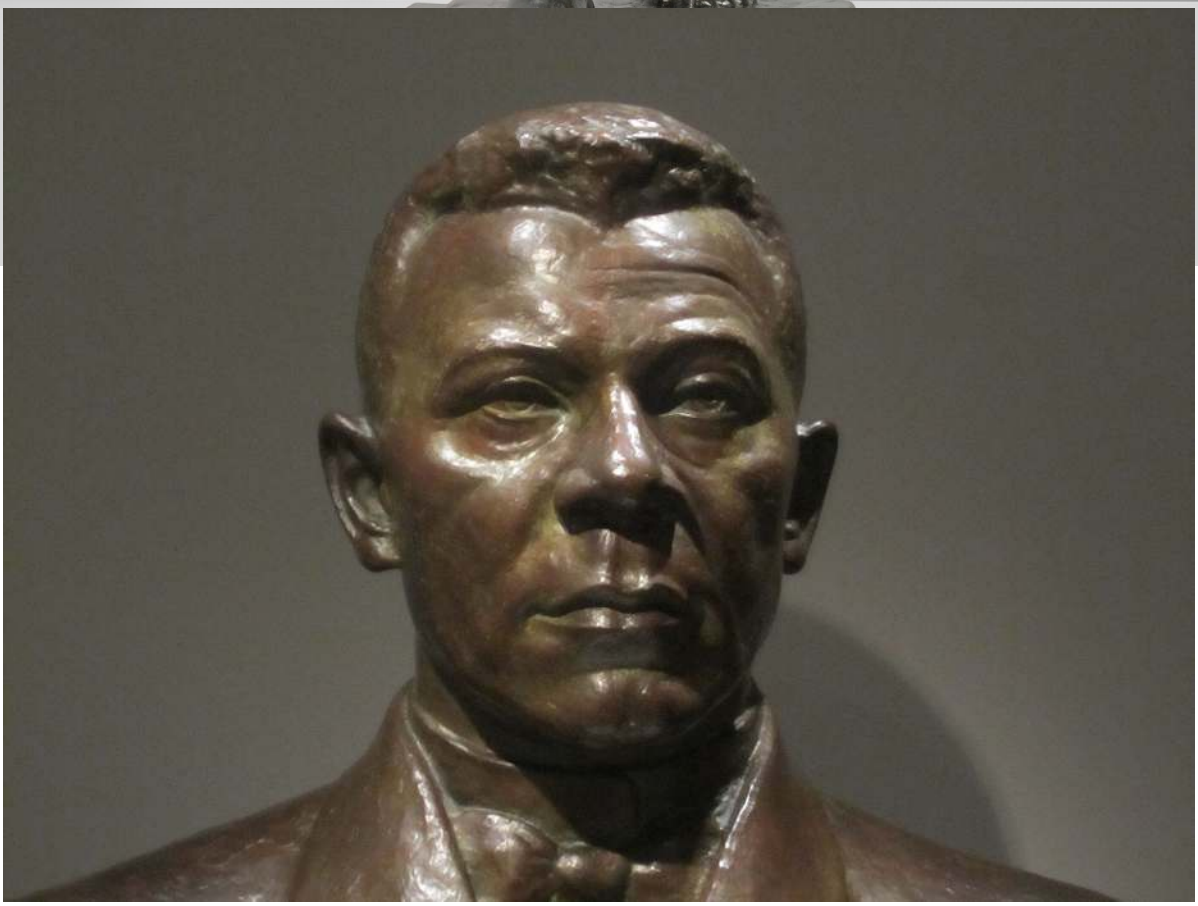


Figure 5.5.20: Booker T. Washington (1946, bronze) Public Domain

Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller

Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller (1877-1968) was born in Philadelphia; her mother was a hairdresser and a wig maker, and her father a barber. Her parents encouraged the family to visit museums, play musical instruments, sing and draw. When Warrick graduated from high school, she went to Philadelphia College of Art to study sculpture and even won first prize for her modeling work. As with many artists, she traveled to Paris to further her education, eventually working with Auguste Rodin as she developed a style of building expression and emotion into her work. When Fuller returned to the United States, she received a federal art commission, one of the first given to an African American woman. In 1901, she married a psychiatrist, and they moved to Massachusetts and faced an uprising from neighbors who did not want them to move into the suburb. Within a year, the building she stored her sculpture work from Paris was destroyed in a fire.

After a long hiatus and having three sons, she returned to sculpting and adopted African American-based concepts. *Ethiopia Awakening* (5.8.21) was cast in 1922 as a full-sized bronze sculpture for a New York City exhibit. The female, emerging from her mummy-like wrappings, wears an Egyptian royalty headdress, her face defined as an African woman. The upper part of the torso appears to be reaching upward, the emergence of the African spirit.



Figure 5.5.21: Ethiopia Awakening (1914, bronze) Public Domain

One of the most significant works by Fuller is the sculpture of *Mary Turner (As a Silent Protest Against Mob Violence)* (5.8.22). The work memorialized Mary Turner, who was brutally lynched when she was eight months pregnant. In the sculpture, she is holding an infant, the grasping hands around the base. Turner's husband had been lynched, and when she denounced the lynching, the mob took her and brutally hung her upside down on a tree where she and the infant died. The rough-hewn bronze on the bottom half shows the viciousness of the mob as she leans away from them. Fuller was a pioneer in depicting a lynching scene and continued creating many memorable sculptures.



Figure 5.5.22: Mary Turner (As a Silent Protest Against Mob Violence) (1919, painted plaster) Public Domain

Augusta Savage

Augusta Savage (1892-1962), born in Florida, was creative as a child using the local natural red clay to make small sculptures and animals. Her father was a minister who strongly disapproved of her making clay figures, claiming they were graven images. She recalled, "My father licked me four or five times a week and almost whipped all the art out of me."[7] Fortunately, a principal in the high school recognized her talent and had her teach a clay class, generating in her a love for teaching and art. She married at a young age and had one child, her husband dying right afterward. A few years later, she married again, divorcing after a few years. Savage continued to model clay figures, gathering prizes and commissions. By 1921, she left Florida for New York City and attended Cooper Union, graduating in three years. Savage applied for a summer art program in France and was rejected because she was a black person, a rejection spurring her interest in civil rights. She married again after graduation, her husband dying the next year. Although Savage received a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, she could not afford the living expenses or travel costs and had to turn down the opportunity. Savage was finally able to go to France in 1929 with the help of fundraising parties in Harlem and other support groups, enabling her to study, research and exhibit in Europe. When Savage returned to the United States, she established a studio for artists, facilitating education and support for many future artists.

Most of Savage's work is in clay or plaster, bronze an expensive medium and usually unaffordable. *Gamin* (5.8.23) was an image of a young boy whose personality is captured in his expressions and demeanor. His crumpled cap sits jauntily angled to one side as he tilts his head. His deeply set eyes and broad facial features give the boy a slightly defiant, appealing look. The boy was representative of the Harlem Renaissance concepts, a streetwise child defined by his African American heritage. The bust of the boy was made of painted plaster.



Figure 5.5.23: Gamin (1929, painted plaster, 22.9 x 14.7 x 11.2 cm) Smithsonian American Art Museum

Realization (5.8.24) only exists in photograph form. The project was commissioned by the Work Projects Administration in 1938, and its location is unknown. She made most of her work in clay and plaster, and unfortunately, a significant amount of her work is lost because it lacked the permanency of metal. Savage did not leave any notes about the work *Realization,* which appears to be

about slavery and the practice of splitting family members to sell to different slave owners, the woman's top forced off. In the photograph, Savage almost appears to be joining the trio, supporting them in their time of agony.



Figure **5.5.24**: Augusta Savage posing with her sculpture Realization (Photograph 1938 26 x 21 cm) Public Domain

The end of the Harlem Renaissance started with the depression and the stock market crash in 1929. Some elements continued until the end of prohibition in 1933, and the illegal alcohol so plentiful in the clubs was not necessary for the white patrons. Many influential and successful Harlem residents moved to find work in other places, and in 1935, after the Harlem Race Riot, the renaissance vanished. However, the time was a golden age for writers, musicians, and artists of the African American community, bringing their experiences into American culture.

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5.6: Jordan Casteel paints her community

- by **ART21**

Page ID

261779



By art21. Where does a painter find her subject matter? With a process that takes her from the streets of Harlem to her studio in DUMBO, Brooklyn, artist Jordan Casteel paints vibrant large scale portraits, making visible the often unrepresented humanity of Black men. At first struggling to find subject matter that could speak to the political realities of police violence and implicit bias, Casteel drew inspiration from her twin brother. “People follow me like I’m a threat,” the artist remembers her brother saying, “but they don’t know anything about me.” Together Casteel’s paintings illustrate the multiplicity of Black male experience; she began with nudes in domestic interiors before expanding to men on the sidewalk, the color and compositions celebrating the visual texture of her Harlem neighborhood. Casteel’s work is probing in its tender depiction of Black men who, although often strangers to the artist, gaze directly and intimately out at the viewer.

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5.7: Stephanie Syjuco, The Visible Invisible

- by **ART21**

Page ID

261780



By art21. At work in her Berkeley studio, Stephanie Syjuco navigates the deeply embedded visual tropes of American history applied in her practice. Describing the shift in priorities associated with progressing in a career as an artist, Syjuco notes a correlation in time spent between project management and art making. “My reality is,” she says, “it’s a lot more paperwork than I wish it were.” To center herself, Syjuco spends time in her garden, harvesting vegetables and “empire crops”—such as tobacco, corn, cotton, and indigo—as part of her research into colonialism and the writing of American history. Preparing an installation for the Renwick Invitational at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Syjuco lays out garment patterns for creating American-prairie- and Civil-War-antebellum style dresses. Though self-admittedly not historically accurate, the dresses serve to act as signifiers, conjuring images of specific time periods in American history, as well as the tropes of womanhood, Western expansion, and Puritanism that viewers may associate with such garments. The dresses are made with a chroma key green fabric, a color typically used as a temporary backdrop for photo and video shoots—replaced in post-production and never intended to be seen. “The idea of American history is so embedded in our national psyche that it’s almost invisible,” says Syjuco. “It’s like manifesting ghosts, hauling forward all of this American history.” Stephanie Syjuco was born in Manila, Philippines, in 1974. Syjuco works in photography, sculpture, and installation, moving from handmade and craft-inspired mediums to digital editing. Her work explores the tension between the authentic and the counterfeit, challenging deep-seated assumptions about history, race, and labor.

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5.8: Identity and the body

Identity and the body

Contemporary artists use the body as both medium and subject.

1980 - now

Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your gaze hits the side of my face)*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND

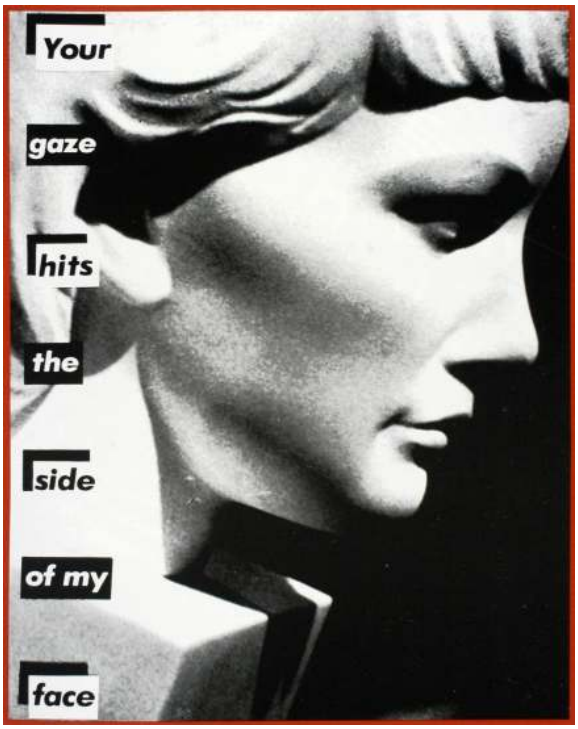


Figure 5.8.1: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your gaze hits the side of my face)*, 1981

Has an artwork ever been more direct in acknowledging that the simple act of looking is a gendered (and gendering) act? “Your gaze hits the side of my face,” admonishes Barbara Kruger in *Untitled* (1981). The phrase is made stark and impersonal by arranging the words in a vertical stack, like those of a ransom note, to the left of a photograph of a female portrait bust in profile. Notice how the head is equally depersonalized; a stylized version in the classical tradition whose neck disappears into a block of stone, the suggestion here is that women are rendered inert in the act of being looked at. With an assumed male viewer — the subject of the possessive phrase “your gaze” — the subject of the portrait bust readily conforms to patriarchal fantasies of the passive female object.

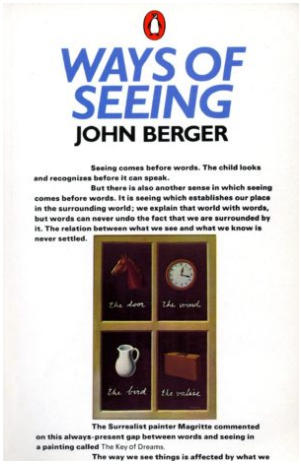


Figure **5.8.2**: John Berger, cover of *Ways of Seeing*, 1972

In 1981 the concept of the male gaze spelled out a crucial problematic of feminist theory. Could women truly be liberated from the objectification implied in this act of being looked at? John Berger in his 1972 book *Ways of Seeing* described the history of Western oil painting as a catalogue of submissive nude women arranged for the pleasure of male viewers. Kruger confronts this tradition head on. The phrase "male gaze" referenced in Kruger's title is taken from Laura Mulvey, who coined the phrase in her 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," a landmark text of feminist theory.

Kruger's art is characterized by a visual wit sharpened in the trenches of the advertising world where the savvy combination of graphic imagery and pithy phrasing targeted a growing population of consumers in the post-World War II years. The portrait bust she uses for *Untitled (Your gaze hits the side of my face)* is a found picture, one of any number the artist would have encountered in her early career in graphic design. This included a stint at *Mademoiselle* magazine, whose glossy pages were a virtual catalogue of stereotypical images of femininity. In the late 1970s, Kruger began to choose for her photomontages images of women that were often heightened examples of such stereotypes to which her addition of text would, often humorously, expose and thereby deconstruct the supposed realism of such imagery.



Figure **5.8.3**: Barbara Kruger, *Unititled (We have received orders not to move)*, 1982

A 1982 work, for example, shows a silhouette of a woman's body partially outlined by dressmaker's pins and leaning forward in a chair marked with the words "We have received orders not to move." The text here is laid across the body's midsection, adding another layer of the idea of being pinned in place. The sense that women were trapped or immobilized in the act of being seen runs

throughout her body of work from this period and underlines how common this kind of depiction of women was in advertising, particularly during the mid-twentieth century, the period from which many of Kruger's images were culled.

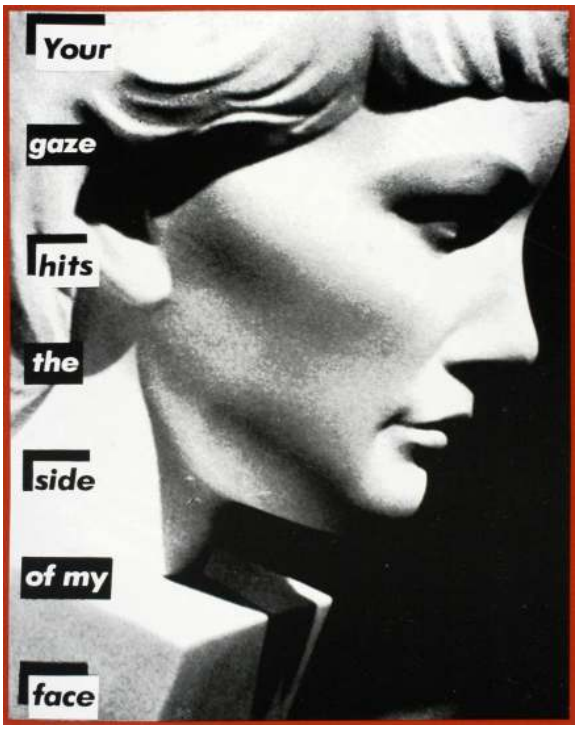


Figure 5.8.4: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your gaze hits the side of my face)*, 1981

Kruger offers some resistance to the objectifying gaze of the titular male viewer. Only hitting the side in *Untitled (Your gaze hits the side of my face)*, one imagines it bouncing off as if merely ricocheting. But it nevertheless makes strategically visible the tacit assumption of Western visual traditions: women are looked at; men do the looking. In feminist terms, this means that women are negatively defined as lacking subjectivity or agency. Kruger staged an intervention, one could say, and it is in this way that her work is considered part of the feminist art canon.



Figure 5.8.5: Left: Eleanor Antin, *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (detail), 1972 (**Henry Moore Foundation**); right: Sylvia Sleigh, *The Turkish Bath*, 1973 (**Smart Museum of Art**, The University of Chicago, Purchase, Paul and Miriam Kirkley Fund for Acquisitions, 2000.104)

During the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, women artists sought, in different ways, to confront the problem of women's representation in art. Sylvia Sleigh's painting *The Turkish Bath* (1973), for example, renders a group of nude men in a traditional portrait genre usually reserved for women typified by the Neoclassical painter **Jean-Dominque Ingres**. Other artists, like **Eleanor Antin** (who also riffs off the classical sculptural tradition in *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*, an important antecedent for Kruger) sought to subvert the usual depiction of women through unidealized and un-sexualized representations of the artist's own body.

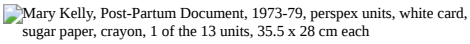

Mary Kelly, Post-Partum Document, 1973-79, perspex units, white card, sugar paper, crayon, 1 of the 13 units, 35.5 x 28 cm each

Figure **5.8.6**: Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-79, perspex units, white card, sugar paper, crayon, 1 of the 13 units, 35.5 x 28 cm each

A different tactic was to refuse representation of women's bodies altogether. **Mary Kelly**'s monumental *Post-Partum Document* (1975), while an extensive portrayal of female subjectivity in relation to the mother-child relationship in psychoanalytic terms, makes no visual reference to herself or her body. Yet another approach was to develop a separate aesthetic predicated entirely upon women's experiences: ***Womanhouse*** was created by Miriam Schapiro and **Judy Chicago** in the early 1970s as a space to showcase feminist performances about rape or installations about menstruation. Finally, there is the use of craft traditions typically associated with the domestic labor of women. Elevating "craft" to a fine art became a symbol of the elevation of women themselves as they strove for inclusion and representation. Kruger's first artworks, in fact, were wall hangings that reframed craft in feminist terms. Despite the variances in approaches, at issue in feminist art practice was the place of imagery of women and artwork by women within patriarchy and in dialogue with political issues around gender and sexuality.

Kruger's work differs from her predecessors whose work I have just briefly outlined. She came of age as an artist at a time when many were taking existing imagery and then re-staging it in slightly altered form. The term for this was "appropriation," and it defined the strategy of a new generation of artists who wanted to refute modernism through invalidating ideas of originality, uniqueness, and even authorship. They became known, as did Kruger, as postmodern artists. Interestingly, many of these artists were women. Already critical of modernism because of its male-centered ideology, they filled the ranks of postmodernism to such extent that the critic Craig Owens described this congruence as a "crossing of the feminist critique of patriarchy and the postmodernist critique of representation." **Sherrie Levine** re-photographed a suite of images by the photographer Walker Evans in order to void his authorship. **Cindy Sherman** appropriated the cinematic tropes of Hollywood whose stock and trade was the vulnerable female in trouble and re-staged them using herself as model. While feminist art (and postmodern art) was largely a white movement, later artists such as Lorna Simpson, **Carrie Mae Weems** or **Kara Walker** would expand upon these earlier artistic strategies to address the intersection of race and gender.



Figure 5.8.7: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, 1989

The art of the "**Pictures Generation**" as these postmodern artists came to be called, was glossier, slicker, and more enamored of media culture than what had come before, to such an extent that the cultural critic Fredric Jameson worried that art and advertising had become one. Of course the aim was to critically analyze such imagery; Kruger redeployed its seductive techniques, usually pressed into the service of enticing consumers (and historically much of it was aimed at women consumers), to expose the subtle and pervasive ways in which stereotypes of gender roles were reinforced through advertising and cinema (later works by Kruger would target consumerism directly).

Deconstructing the supposed naturalism or ordinariness of these cultural fictions of femininity took on, within the larger political context of the feminist movement, an often agitprop or activist gloss. *"Your body is a battleground"* was produced for a 1989 women's march on Washington. Confining her imagery to black and white with the eventual addition of red was clearly a nod to the **photomontages** of Russian avant-garde artists in the early twentieth century. In the first years after the Russian Revolution, artists sought to harness the power of technology using photography and film to reach mass audiences and unmask false ideologies.



Figure 5.8.8: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Questions)*, 1990/2018 (**Geffen Contemporary;** photo: **rocor**, CC BY-NC 2.0)



Figure 5.8.9: Logo for the clothing brand Supreme

Much like the factory murals and posters of Russian avant-garde art, Kruger sought a broader audience outside the gallery. Her work would appear on billboards, train station platforms, bus stops, public parks, and even matchbook covers. In the early 2000s

the street clothing brand Supreme acknowledged that Barbara Kruger was an inspiration for their logo, a white Futura font within a red box. Despite its critical stance toward the advertising industry, Kruger's unique graphic style couldn't help but ultimately become influential in packaging and product design. Had Jameson been right about the collapse of art and advertising? Did the promotional and publicity structures of a consumer society eventually absorb postmodernism and thereby render its critique neutral?

Additional resources:

1. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen*, Volume 16, Issue 3, (Autumn 1975): 6–18.
2. Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press 1983): 78.

Jane Alexander, *Butcher Boys*

by DR. AMY NYGAARD MICKELSON



Figure **5.8.9**: Jane Alexander, *Butcher Boys*, 1985/86, mixed media (Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, photo: **Goggins World**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Men or beasts?

Inside the Iziko South African National Gallery there are three monstrous figures that sit casually on a wooden bench thoroughly indifferent to their environment. Their indifference confounds gallery-goers who struggle to answer questions such as: Are these figures men or beasts? What do these figures represent? South African artist Jane Alexander created the life-sized sculpture, titled *Butcher Boys*, in 1985/86 while a graduate student at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The figures are composed of reinforced plaster, animal bones, horns, oil paint, and the wooden bench on which they sit.

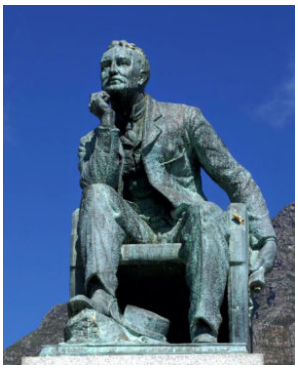


Figure 5.8.10: Marion Walgate, *Cecil John Rhodes*, 1934 (University of Capetown, photo: Danie van der Merwe, CC BY 2.0)

Uncanny resemblance

The forceful impact of the *Butcher Boys* resides in the figures' uncanny resemblance to us. Their figures are not all together unfamiliar within the history of art. There are flashes of resemblances to the familiar and celebrated figurative sculptures of the Greco-Roman tradition. The scale, definition in form, and physical proportions seen in Alexander's *Butcher Boys* echo those of the Hellenistic ***Boxer at Rest*** by Apollonius. Other stylistic associations to seated and contemplative figures, such as the now notorious monument to Cecil John Rhodes, can also be made.



Figure 5.8.11: Jane Alexander, *Butcher Boys*, 1985/86, mixed media (Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, photo: Ctac, CC BY-SA 3.0)

However, Alexander's figures are not, of course, continuations of these figurative traditions. Rather, hers are a critique in which she transforms the symbolic body of heroic/stately strength into a grotesque mockery of classicism. Their scarred flesh, exposed spinal bones, horned crania, and vacant black eyes undermine any sense of beauty to be found in their carefully modeled bodies. The *Butcher Boys* discomforts us because their form comes too close to that of humans, yet their anatomy is riddled with nonhuman elements and mutations. Alexander has eliminated, or grossly mutated, each figure's sense of sound, sight, smell, and taste. Each figure has irregular concavities where, perhaps, ears once protruded, but have otherwise been removed. They have the slightest suggestion of nasal cavities, which makes their lack of any oral cavity all the more prominent and perplexing. Additionally, deep scars traverse the larynx, past the heart and end just above the navel. Their limbs and torsos are decidedly human. Their arms and legs are without mutation, however, deep wounds down their spinal columns expose fragments of bones.

Viewers of the *Butcher Boys* confront an uncanny image of brutalization. The figures are not sympathetic victims or overtly threatening monsters. They are intimidating; yet, the violence against their bodies elicits a certain amount of empathy. They are unnamable beings without classification. They are neither man nor beast but rather both.



Figure **5.8.12**: Jane Alexander, *Butcher Boys*, detail, 1985/86, mixed media (Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, photo: **Goggins World**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Crime against humanity

The National Party in South Africa came to power in 1948 and was founded on white-supremacy and driven by an ideological platform of extreme segregation known as apartheid, or in Afrikaans, “apartness” or “apart-hood.” In 1985, the same year Alexander created *Butcher Boys*, South Africa was consumed by violent and non-violent resistance to apartheid. This was followed by a state of emergency (the second) issued by the National Party and state-sanctioned violence.

The earliest apartheid laws were distinctly concerned with the control and management of South Africans to assert and maintain white supremacy. The first two laws passed by the apartheid government were anti-miscegenation laws that criminalized marriage and sexual relations between “a European and a non-European.” The third, the “Population Registration Act” of 1950, forced citizens to register with the government according to its racial caste system. By 1973 the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized South African apartheid as a “crime against humanity.” This reality, of course, had long been recognized by those who fought against the regime. Despite growing international condemnation and internal resistance, the National Party continued to violently oppress any challenge to their power throughout the later decades of the 20th century. Given this context of brutality, Alexander’s *Butcher Boys* are commonly linked to the violence of apartheid and particularly the second state emergency. Art critic Ivor Powell wrote that “the *Butcher Boys* . . . [is] probably the most enduringly iconic image of the sinister and apocalyptic brutalisations of apartheid.”[1]

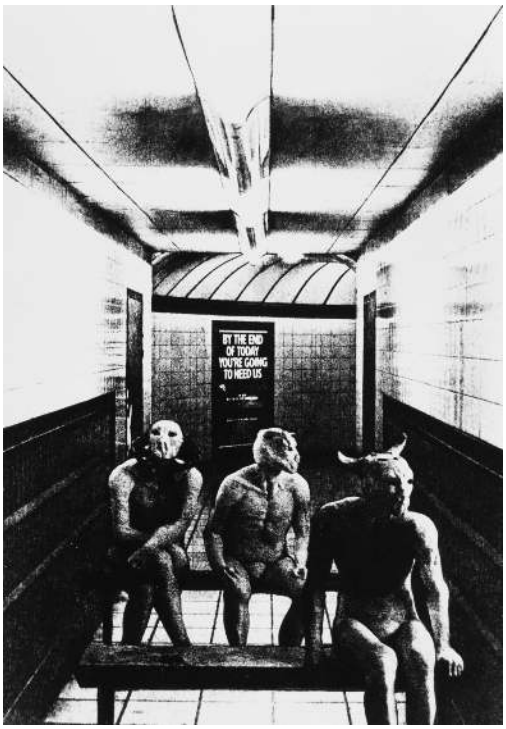


Figure **5.8.13**: Jane Alexander, *BY THE END OF TODAY YOU'RE GOING TO NEED US*, 1986, fibre-based silver print, 29 x 20 cm (**Stevenson**)



Figure **5.8.14**: Jane Alexander, *Ford, 1986*, 32 x 24 cm

Art, trauma, and political violence

Alexander, featured the *Butcher Boys* in photomontages, such as *BY THE END OF TODAY YOU'RE GOING TO NEED US* (1986), *Ford* (1986), and *Transmitter* (2007) among others. Since they are so commonly associated with apartheid violence and trauma, their presence becomes a potent symbol of that violence and trauma. Through the repetition of their image in photomontages, outside of the white-walled gallery space, Alexander appears to provide evidence of the *Butcher Boys'* existence within our world. In these photomontages, Alexander blurs and obscures the visual field just enough to give a candid or accidental aura to each image. It's as if the *Butcher Boys* are unwitting subjects within the series of photographs taken from everyday life.

By placing the *Butcher Boys* in a variety of scenes—on the outskirts of Cape Town, within a salvage yard, and waiting for a subway train—Alexander moves the audience beyond the physical components of the *Butcher Boys* and into a deeper consideration of their existence. This is the key to the work's iconic status. It is not just the shock of the physical, but even more so, the chilling recognition of the environment as the source of their trauma.



Figure 5.8.15: Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, 349 cm × 776 cm. (Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid)

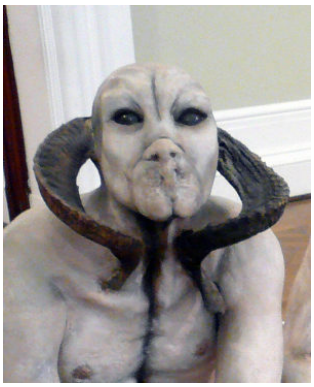


Figure 5.8.16: Jane Alexander, *Butcher Boys*, detail, 1985/86, mixed media (Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, photo: Ctac, CC BY-SA 3.0)

What Alexander achieved with *Butcher Boys* can be likened to Picasso's ***Guernica***. Both were created in the context of atrocities, which the governments (Franco's Spain and the National Party's South Africa respectively), inflicted on their own people. *Guernica* is so named because it depicts the bombing of a civilian target, the Basque city of Guernica in Spain. Its subject is local and specific; however, its reception propelled it into a totalizing indictment of fascism, much in the same way that Goya's ***Third of May, 1808*** depicts the events of a singular day of Napoleonic violence in Spain, but has come to represent the horrors of war more generally.



Figure 5.8.17: Francisco de Goya, *Third of May, 1808*, 1814, oil on canvas, 266 x 345.1 cm (Museo del Prado. Madrid)

Both Picasso's and Goya's paintings highlight an unsettling normalization of political violence. They give their viewers a chilling assessment of the unaffected banality of the environments from which these atrocities sprang. In so doing, these paintings resonate beyond their record of time and artistic movements as they reflect our seemingly endless slippage into enacting and accepting brutal violence. What sets Alexander's *Butcher Boys* apart from Picasso's and Goya's iconic paintings is that her work does not point to a singular event. Rather it is the totality of the apartheid's regime of violence that is called into question.

The *Butcher Boys* may be part man and part beast. Their identity as such, however, is less important than what they represent—violence and trauma. The *Butcher Boys* can be seen as a response to the public's willingness to depersonalize violence by ascribing such behavior to the monstrous. To acknowledge the truly violent nature of humankind is to implicate one's self in a relationship to such atrocities. These bodies visualize violence in a way that emphasizes how we dehumanize each other. It is easier to dehumanize violence than it is to see humanity in violence, and this transitional state of being between man and monster is where the *Butcher Boys* reside.

Notes:

1. Ivor Powell, "Inside and Outside of History," *Art South Africa* vol. 5, no. 4 (Winter 2007), pp. 32-38.

Additional resources:

Iziko South African National Gallery

Tate Modern, "Who is Jane Alexander?"

South African History Online, "Jane Alexander"

Pep Subirós, ed., *Jane Alexander: Surveys from the Cape of Good Hope* (New York: Museum of African Art, 2011).

Sophie Perryer, ed., *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art* (New York: Museum of African Art, 2004).

Sue Williamson, *Resistance Art in South Africa* (Southern Africa: David Philip, Publisher, 1989).

Jamie Wyeth, *Kalounna in Frogtown*

by TAYLOR L. POULIN and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **5.8.1**: Jamie Wyeth, *Kalounna in Frogtown*, 1986, oil on masonite, 91.4 x 127.3 cm (Terra Foundation for American Art, Daniel J. Terra Collection, 1992.163) ©Jamie Wyeth, a Seeing America video speakers: Taylor L. Poulin, Assistant Curator, Terra Foundation for American Art and Beth Harris

Additional resources

This painting at the Terra Foundation for American Art

Marc Quinn, *Self*

by MATTHEW WILSON



Figure 5.8.18: Marc Quinn, *Self*, 1991, blood (artist's), stainless steel, Perspex and refrigeration equipment, 208 x 63 x 63 cm (originally collection of Charles Saatchi, now collection of Steve Cohen, New York)

The shock of the new

Shock value has been an important aspect of art since the nineteenth century. But is provocation always merely a case of superficial attention-grabbing, or can it ever have depth? Marc Quinn's *Self*, a sculpture depicting the artist's head made from his own frozen blood, is a perfect artwork for mulling over such questions. Shock is the probably the foremost element in its success and lasting impact on viewers: once seen, *Self* is not easily forgotten. The sight of blood often has this effect. For some it is an extremely distressing spectacle in its own right, and even for those of us used to transgressive artistic acts, the public display of real bodily fluids still retains its sense of taboo. But once the shock wears off, what are we left with? Does its meaningfulness erode over time, like a joke whose amusement diminishes on each rehearing?

Process and meaning



Figure 5.8.19: Making *Self* (1991): collecting blood

It is probably wise to first acknowledge the extraordinary amount of preparation and the lengthy ordeal Quinn put himself through to create *Self*. First, he took blood from his body – as you would do during a blood donation – over five separate sessions to stockpile a total of ten pints (5.7 liters). He then made a cast of his head by covering it with an all-over mask of plaster of Paris

(leaving breathing holes for his nose). This perfect impression of the artist's facial features was then removed, filled with the blood and frozen. When it was solid, the blood head was mounted within a Perspex box filled with silicone oil at a subzero temperature.



Figure **5.8.20**: Making *Self* (1991): making the cast

This careful, quasi-medical process indicates the seriousness and meticulous planning that lie behind Quinn's shock tactics. Ten pints is the average amount of blood in a human body, so among the other effects of *Self* is to make the spectator aware of the modest volume of this vital substance required to sustain a life. The freezing process is also one that might trigger thoughts of other modern medical practises such as cryopreservation (the technique of storing biological samples — and sometimes whole bodies — by keeping them at low temperatures for future regeneration). Quinn's sculpture is, among other things, a life support system. It therefore suggests wider issues of life and healthcare in the modern world: *Self* is as dependent on science as our own lives are, and it leaves us space to contemplate the magical promises of medical technology, as well as its limits.



Figure **5.8.21**: Marc Quinn, *Self*, 1991, blood (artist's), stainless steel, Perspex and refrigeration equipment, 208 x 63 x 63 cm (originally collection of Charles Saatchi, now collection of Steve Cohen, New York)

Quinn's education as a student of History and History of Art at the University of Cambridge can be seen as a vital component of his work as a whole, and here his engagement appears to be with ancient tomb sculptures. Much of what we study as art from early civilizations (such as from **Egypt** and **China**) is from burial chambers, where the intention was to preserve bodies and spiritually conquer death. Also, one of the chief purposes of all portraits has been to conserve an individual's legacy. Quinn's engagement with cryopreservation in a gallery setting reminds us of art's ancient role in ensuring posterity.

Blood simple



Figure 5.8.22: Left: Marc Quinn, *Self*, 1991, blood (artist's), stainless steel, Perspex and refrigeration equipment, 208 x 63 x 63 cm (originally collection of Charles Saatchi, now collection of Steve Cohen, New York); Right: *Head of a Roman Patrician* from Otricoli, c. 75-50 BCE, marble (Palazzo Torlonia, Rome)

Disregarding the startling choice of sculptural material, there is little in the appearance of *Self* to cause alarm. In some respects, its presentation is rather archaic. It is a portrait bust, a format which originates in Europe with the **Romans**, and it sits on a plinth behind a glass case, much like an exhibit in a museum of antiquities. The head is subtly upturned with its lips pursed and eyes closed, giving it a sense of peacefulness and serenity — as if asleep or gracefully deceased. The casting process that Quinn used has picked up many tender textures from the surface of Quinn's face such as the eye lashes, creases on lips and the folds of flesh on the ears. A sense of the macabre is thus conveyed only through its bruised, red and blue coloration, and arguably also the surface texture which bears marks left behind from the mold used in the process of casting and makes the head look scarred or decayed. Casting is a very old sculpting technique, but it looks as though Quinn is making reference specifically to the tradition of death masks, which were used by the Romans to record the physiognomy of deceased family members.

A literal portrait

Unlike more traditional materials of western sculpture such as marble, blood is not durable and will decay if not frozen. Similarly, the process of casting is traditional, but usually it is done with bronze or other precious metals, and not a bodily fluid. Value therefore becomes a significant theme, as blood — unlike marble and bronze — lacks monetary worth and yet is essential to life. The use of bodily fluids increases the sculpture's status as a 'true' self-portrait in which the artwork serves not only to depict the artist but is also composed of a part of the artist's own body, his DNA. As mentioned before, the presence of a refrigeration unit underscores the sculpture's dependence on a source of power, arguably increasing its sense of vulnerability. Quinn has commented on the autobiographical dimension of *Self* saying that it reflects his alcoholism, as it is entirely dependent on electricity, just as he was reliant on alcohol. This self-expressive aim is also attested by Quinn's aim to pay homage to **Rembrandt, who repeatedly created self-portraits** in the latter stages of his career, by making a new 10-pint blood *Self* every 5 years.



Figure **5.8.23**: Rembrandt, *Self-portrait with Shaded Eyes*, 1634, oil on panel, 71.1 x 56 cm (The Leiden Collection)

Sacrifice

Historically, blood is associated with sacrifice and ritual, such as in the **Aztec Empire** and Mithraism (an ancient Roman mystery religion centered on the god Mithras), and in some religions had been applied to sculptures in order to "animate" them. In Christianity the blood of Christ is also sacred and celebrated at the **Eucharist**. In other contexts, blood is symbolic of truth and family lineage — one speaks of a "bloodline" and agreements have sometimes been sealed by mingling blood. Quinn's self-portrait can be identified in the crossroads of these various associations, indicating the potent, generative powers of blood, the veracity and individuality of the artist's personal identity, as well as his self-sacrifice in the name of art.

The trope of the artist as a suffering, outcast martyr has been with us since at least the **Romantic** period. And it is not unrelated to the trope that this essay began with: that of the artist as provocateur, intent on shock tactics to turn heads. According to this stereotype, **artists should behave like outsiders** who position themselves beyond society, only in order to castigate and shock it with their piercing commentary. This tradition was given its most forceful early voice with Manet and his provocative works of the 1860s with such works as ***Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe***. In the fierce competition of the art world every young artist needs to court notoriety if they want to be noticed — quiet conservatism seldom makes for front-page news. Causing shock is relatively easy, but the outrage quick wears off if the work lacks dimension, and there will be many forgotten names in the history of twentieth-century art, music and cinema who resorted to the kind of superficial shock whose impact petered out all too quickly.



Figure 5.8.24: Édouard Manet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe (Luncheon on the Grass)*, oil on canvas, 1863 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)

Does *Self* fall into this category? A defense of its merits would point to the breadth of themes addressed in this essay: its painstaking process, its appropriation of medical technology, its art-historical reference points and its aim to act as a vehicle of the artist's self-expression. *Self*, such an argument would run, serves as an example of provocation with a purpose, where medium, technique and message coalesce, and the art achieves both a memorable aesthetic and a satisfying quantity of conceptual ballast.

Additional resources:

The work of art at the artist's website

Making the work of art at the artist's website

Lucian Freud, *Standing by the Rags*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 5.8.2: Lucian Freud, *Standing by the Rags*, 1988-89, oil on canvas, 66.5 x 54.5″ / 168.9 x 138.4 cm (Tate Britain, London)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

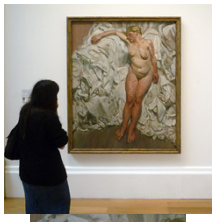







Figure 5.8.25: More Smarthistory images…

Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled (Woman Feeding Bird)*, from *The Kitchen Table Series*

by LAUREN HAYNES, CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART) and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 5.8.3: Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled (Woman Feeding Bird)*, *The Kitchen Table Series*, 1990, gelatin silver print (printed 2015), 27.94 x 27.94 cm @ Carrie Mae Weems (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art)

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *"Untitled" (billboard of an empty bed)*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND



Figure 5.8.26: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *"Untitled" (billboard of an empty bed)* 1991, printed billboard, dimensions variable © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation

Untitled (billboard of an empty bed) is a stark, black-and-white image of the rumpled sheets and pillows of an unmade bed. The depression in the center of each pillow, suggesting a recent presence, conveys a profound sense of intimacy. But this scenario is in jarring contrast to its public location—on a billboard. First exhibited on the streets of Manhattan, this evocation of absent bodies soon came to define all of Felix Gonzalez-Torres' work up until his death in 1996 from AIDS-related causes. The artist is most known for ephemeral installations: a pile of candy in a corner (below), a stack of posters on the floor, or strings of lights dangling from a ceiling—all of which recall the reduced visual and formal language of Conceptual and Minimalist art from the 1960s and 1970s.



Figure 5.8.27: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *"Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)*, 1991, multicolored candies, ideal weight 175 lbs., dimensions variable © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation (photo: **henskechristine**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure 5.8.28: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (for Stockholm)*, 1992, light bulbs, porcelain light sockets and extension cords, dimensions variable © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation (photo: **Andrew Russeth**, CC CC BY-SA 2.0)

Yet Gonzalez-Torres didn't merely reference the work of earlier Minimalist artists like Donald Judd and Dan Flavin—he introduced a specifically contemporary note into his work. In the late 1980s and early 1990s artists were asking new questions around the construction of identity—including gay identity. For instance, the lights in his work were redolent of the environment of a dance club (left), and the candy on the floor was a perverse reference to the drug AZT used to combat HIV. And the bed? Much like the paired wall clocks he created the same year entitled *Perfect Lovers* that marched slightly out of step with one another (one is a few seconds off), the censored image of same-sex love slowly makes its imprint.

Bed's sexual politics

By 1987, a new era of gay activism had begun. The Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (ACTUP) formed and suddenly old questions around the relationship between art and politics took on new significance for gay artists. Artist-collectives like Gran Fury used appropriated image and text to convey overt political messages around the politics of AIDS. But Gonzalez-Torres did not follow this route. His disappearing but perpetually replenished works (viewers were allowed to remove a poster or take a piece of candy) took a more elegiac path: it was one in which any direct representation of homosexuality was seldom apparent. Thus his art became an abstract memorialization of loss. Gonzalez-Torres' memorialization resonated especially during a time when Ronald Reagan (U.S. President from 1981 until 1989) notoriously never uttered the word "AIDS" because of its predominant association with homosexuality. Heads pressed onto pillows in the *Untitled* billboard thus becomes a simultaneous declaration and disavowal of same-sex love—writ large within an urban landscape.

As an artist, Gonzalez-Torres came of age during the 1980s (he was born in 1957 in Cuba). At that time, Postmodern artists often worked with existing imagery and text, appropriating and examining an increasingly media-saturated world. His earliest work was in that vein. In the manner of Jenny Holzer, who reproduced found slogans or random sentiments on wheat-pasted posters throughout the streets of lower Manhattan in the late 1970s, one of Gonzalez-Torres' earliest works is a framed photostat (an early version of a photocopy) from 1988 of a sentence. It's really a jumble of words—white letters on a black background that read "supreme 1986 court crash stock market crash 1929 sodomy stock market crash supreme 1987." In this way, he offered a poetic commentary on the erasure of gay history by sandwiching a reference to the 1986 Supreme Court ruling that upheld the state of Georgia's sodomy laws (which effectively criminalized homosexuality) between significant dates in economic history.[1]

Back to the future

Gonzalez-Torres' *Untitled (billboard of an empty bed)* marked an important threshold in contemporary art history. In the late 1980s the art world underwent significant changes. It seemed to many critics at the time that postmodern art existed only to illustrate complex philosophical concepts, while the felt aspects of experience, important for the renewed surge of identity politics (political alliances based on identity, like the women's movement), were ignored. Foregrounding the bodily dimension of experience, artists like Robert Gober, Kiki Smith and Jane Alexander created sculptural works with visceral impact. Artists began to return to discarded artistic strategies like narrative, constructed (rather than appropriated) forms—anything that would invoke a sense of the contemporary, lived aspect of everyday experience without mediation. Bodies were often splayed upon the gallery floor or its parts protruded from a wall.

Gonzalez-Torres' art had, in a sense, a foot in both camps: *Untitled (billboard of an empty bed)* bore resemblance to the billboards Barbara Kruger had done as early as 1985. Her *Surveillance is Your Busy Work* is one that was unveiled in Minneapolis that year and featured her trademark use of advertising imagery reconfigured with text to correspond to discussions around public space, gender and corporate culture. But Gonzalez-Torres's image of a disheveled bed was shorn of any textual or even didactic directive. Significantly, the image is of his own bed. *Untitled (billboard of an empty bed)* suggested—even if it did not portray—a tangible if disappearing presence.

1. This ruling was eventually overturned.

Additional resources:

Print/Out: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, on Inside/Out, MoMA's blog (April 4, 2012)

Biography of the artist from Oxford University Press on MoMA.org

The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation

Art and Photography: the 1980s on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Yinka Shonibare, *The Swing (After Fragonard)*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG



Figure **5.8.29**: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *The Swing (After Fragonard)*, 2001 (Tate, London) © Yinka Shonibare

With her fingers delicately grasping the thickly coiled rope of a swing suspended mid-flight, a life-sized female mannequin flirtatiously kicks up her left foot, projecting her slipper into the air where it hovers above a tangle of branches. Our gaze is directed from the arch of her foot towards the vibrant trim of her petticoat, gown and coat.

A recreation of a Rococo painting

The Swing (After Fragonard) is a three-dimensional recreation of the Rococo painting after which it was titled, which itself offers testimony to the opulence and frivolity of pre-Revolutionary France. Painted in 1767, Jean-Honoré Fragonard's *The Swing* depicts a coquettish young girl swinging in a lush and fertile forest and, of course, playfully kicking up her shoe. A sculpture of a bashful cherub looks on, but he is not alone; the female figure is flanked by two male figures lurking in the shadows, one seems to push her swing from behind, as the other mischievously glances up the layers of her dress to catch a glimpse of what is beneath.

> ***Living in England, with my colonial relationship to this country, one cannot escape all these Victorian things, because they are everywhere: in architecture, culture, attitude…***



Figure 5.8.30: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, oil on canvas, 1767 (Wallace Collection, London

Shonibare's quotations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century style and sensibility are visually captivating; at the same time, tableaux such as *The Swing* contain some dark undertones. To begin with, the beautiful young protagonist of Fragonard's painting has somehow become headless. This is likely a reference to the use of the guillotine during the Reign of Terror in the 1790s, when members of the French aristocracy were publicly beheaded. Drawing our attention to questions of excess, class and morality that were raised by revolutionaries two centuries ago, Shonibare invites us to also consider the increasing disparity between economic classes today, especially alongside the growing culture of paranoia, terror and xenophobia in global politics since 9/11.

As a British-born Nigerian, raised between Lagos and London, Shonibare is especially perceptive to the ways in which issues of access, nationalism and belonging have their roots in modern European history, particularly with regards to the United Kingdom and its relationship to its former colonies. Here is where the specific fabrics that Shonibare utilizes become more relevant, as their symbolism is steeped in histories of cultural appropriation, imperialism and power.

Indonesian motifs, made by Europeans, sold in West Africa

Though tailored in the fashion of eighteenth-century French aristocratic style, the costume that is modeled by Shonibare's protagonist has been sewn from colorful and abstractly patterned fabrics with quite different origins: the bright golds, reds and blues arranged in geometric motifs across her ruffled skirt are typical of the "African" Dutch wax fabrics that Shonibare has famously used to adorn his figural tableaux throughout his career.



Figure 5.8.31: Dutch wax print fabrics (photo: **ipercher**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

While these fabrics have come to signify African identity today, the patterns on Dutch wax fabrics were originally based on motifs found in Indonesian batiks, and were manufactured in England and Holland in the nineteenth-century. Predictably, the European imitations did not prove lucrative when sold in South Asian markets, so Dutch manufacturers then marketed the textiles to their West African colonies, where they have since been appropriated and integrated into local visual culture.

As such, Dutch wax fabrics as we know them today are the product of the complex economic and cultural entanglements that resulted from European imperialism. As curator Okwui Enwezor has explained, Shonibare uses the fabrics "as a tool to investigate the place of ethnicity and the stereotype in modernist representation. (…) The textile is neither Dutch nor African, therefore, the itinerary of ideas it circulates are never quite stable in their authority or meaning."

Aesthetics and Authenticity

As fictional as their "African-ness" may appear to be, however, the fabrics have now been completely assimilated in places like Nigeria, where Shonibare grew up. As Enwezor points out, the material is "both fake and authentic, both readymade and original," not to mention indisputably cosmopolitan.

The question of what is "authentically" African has personal resonance for Shonibare, who, as an art student in London, was shocked when one of his instructors suggested that he make work that expressed his African identity. This conversation prompted him to think about stereotypes and the areas that exist between categories of identity and culture. The artist began using the material in 1992.

In Pursuit of Leisure

What might Shonibare wish to communicate by bringing together these "African" textiles with Fragonard's Rococo images, or any of the other European masterpieces that the artist has appropriated in his sculptural installations?

In imaging this particular moment in European history, Shonibare wishes to forge connections between imperialism, the aristocracy, and the "colonized wealthy class." In *The Swing (After Fragonard)*, which is loaded with references to the French Revolution, the Age of Enlightenment and colonial expansion into Africa, Shonibare asks us to consider how a simple act of leisure can be so controversial.

> ***While the leisure pursuit might look frivolous (…) my depiction of it is a way of engaging in that power. It is actually an expression of something much more profoundly serious insofar as the accumulation of wealth and power that is personified in leisure was no doubt a product of exploiting people.***

In this and other works, Shonibare chooses stories—including biographies, world events, and works of art—which are already effective allegories concerning race, class, corruption and greed, calling our attention to some of the darker moments in Western history. However, his use of the Dutch Wax fabric, with its spurious origins and its misleading aesthetic identity, serve as a reminder that history and truth are also themselves constructions.

Rineke Dijkstra, *Odessa, Ukraine, August 4, 1993*

by JOSH R. ROSE



Figure 5.8.32: Rineke Dijkstra, *Odessa, Ukraine, August 4, 1993*, 1993, Chromogenic print, 153 x 128.9 cm, © Rineke Dijkstra, courtesy of the artist

What makes a portrait so compelling? Historically, portraits were reserved for the elite and wealthy, but with the advent of the camera in 1839 portraiture became increasingly democratized and accessible across social classes. Today, we all appear in numerous portraits: family photos, formal school pictures, even the increasingly common "selfie" created for social networks. In an age of ubiquitous portraiture, what makes Dutch artist Rineke Dijkstra's photograph of a teenage boy standing on a Ukrainian shoreline so evocative?

Working in series

Dijkstra's photograph *Odessa, Ukraine, August 4, 1993* comes from the series *Beaches*, which was created between 1992 and 1998 across locations as diverse as Poland, Great Britain, South Carolina, Belgium, Coney Island, and the Ukraine. Typically working in series, Dijkstra prefers single subjects documented over time or multiple subjects recorded after moments of intensity, such as new mothers in the days after giving birth or Portuguese bullfighters immediately after a match. Working in series necessitates revealing through comparison.

In *Beaches*, her earliest series, Dijkstra was interested not just in capturing young men and women on the cusp of adulthood, but the unexpected social and cultural nuances that became apparent by portraying teenagers from different parts of the world:

"I think that in Poland [the subjects' bathing suits] reminded me of the '60s, they have twenty-year old bathing suits and no one cares…They were very easygoing. The Americans had very fancy bathing costumes and the poses were more self-conscious. One girl was really holding her belly in and her mother was behind her yelling 'You're too fat.' She was so unhappy."[1]

These powerful emotional responses are expressed through intricately captured details across the series *Beaches* and in each of the individual portraits. Dijkstra draws us in with the details captured using a flash (even in sunlight), from the type of swimming garment (full length swimsuit, speedo, underwear, cut-off jeans) to the expressions on the subjects' faces (cool, pensive, inquisitive).

Standing on a beach

Dijkstra's process entailed asking unknown adolescents to pose for her at the shore, and while she set up lighting and prepared her camera on a tripod, her subjects assumed their own stance.[2] As with each photograph in this series, the anonymous boy's vertical body is set against the rigid horizontals of the shore and horizon. He stands in contrapposto, causing his angular shoulders to protrude up and out, and his gangly frame is sunken in at the torso.

The careful lighting, which one writer has described as "clinical," starkly contrasts his pale skin against the cool tones of sky, water, and sand. The overwhelming blues and greys are augmented by the boy's dark red trunks that extend to the sharp bend of his pelvis, appearing unnaturally flattened as if pasted on the image afterward. In contrast to his young body, his mature face stares outward unabashedly, which is daunting when seen in its six foot tall printed form.

Behind his emotionless expression is a self-awareness that appears mature, relaxed, and casual. Dijkstra often strives to capture self-consciousness: “People think that they present themselves one way,” the photographer once stated, “but they cannot help but show something else as well. It’s impossible to have everything under control.”[3] Dijkstra bridges the difficult gulf between self-presentation and photographic representation by allowing the subjects to assume their own pose. Despite choosing nearly identical settings for each photographs in the series, Dijkstra’s portraits transcend simple visual documentation and become revelatory images of the awkwardness and transitory nature of puberty.

Typologies?

Because her title emphasizes location and date but excludes the name, Dijkstra intends for her subject to remain unknown. This insistence on anonymity and working in series is suggestive of a typology, or a system of classification based on type. As Allen Sekula has discussed, photographic typologies became increasingly common at the end of the nineteenth century, linked to the popular pseudo-sciences of physiognomy and phrenology.[4] Another photographer, the German August Sander, is important here. Dijkstra has often stated that Sander was a primary influence on her work and methodology; moreover, he also produced typological photographs.



Figure **5.8.33**: August Sander, Sisters, 1927, gelatin silver print, 33 x 24.5 cm (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)

From 1910 to the early 1950s, Sander encyclopedically documented German people, emphasizing lifestyle and profession as an extensive photographic typology of *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts (People of the Twentieth Century)*. Although his visual approach was modified over time, Sander’s photographs emphasized clothing, tools, ephemera, and setting. In Sander’s 1927 photograph *Sisters*, the simple folk dresses of the young girls standing on a forest path suggest their lineage with traditional German customs and love of nature (though offset somewhat by their wristwatches!). Sander likely posed and carefully composed his portraits, evident by the visual alignment of the waistline embroidery on the sisters’ dresses.

While the influence of Sander on Dijkstra’s own work is important, there are some key differences, most notably her method of unifying the composition with the shoreline. This, along with allowing her subjects to settle into their own stance, does not classify as much as expose by focusing less on extraneous details and more on the expressions and bodies of her subjects.

Posing as art history

One interesting byproduct of Dijkstra’s method of allowing her portrait subjects to be conscious of the pose they strike is that at times her figures end up in stances that are remarkably similar to famous works of art. In one *Beaches* photograph from Poland, a young girl unconsciously mirrors a pose similar to that of Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus*. In the Odessa photograph, the young man’s contrapposto and nearly nude figure evokes the idealized youthful males of Early Classical Greek statuary.

These references, which Dijkstra states are unintended by her, are quite evocative, and suggest an ingrained, resonant sense of how late twentieth-century adolescents wish themselves to be portrayed when a Dutch photographer asks them to pose for her while spending their day at the beach.

Special thanks to Sandy Heller, The Heller Group, LLC

[1] As quoted in an interview with Jennifer Morgan, *Rineke Dijkstra: Portraits. Hatje Cantz* (Institute of Contemporary Art, 2001), p. 80.

[2] Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters As Art As Never Before* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2008), p. 206.

[3] As quoted in Katy Siegel, “Real People,” *Rineke Dijkstra: Portraits, Hatje Cantz* (Institute of Contemporary Art, 2001) p. 10.

[4] Allan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive,” *October* 39 (1986), p. 3.

Additional Resources:

Dijkstra’s work at the Saatchi Gallery

Dijkstra in conversation with Abigail Christenson (Tate video)

August Sander on The Museum of Modern Art website

Marlene Dumas, *Models*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND



Models, 1994, 100 drawings, watercolor and ink-wash on paper, each 24 7/16 x 19 11/16 inches / 62 x 50 cm (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven), installation view of the solo exhibition "Measuring your Own Grave," 2008, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, copyright Marlene Dumas © 2016" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-12338" height="500" sizes="(max-width: 823px) 100vw, 823px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...ve-2008-44.jpg
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823w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...44-300x182.jpg
300w" width="823">

Figure **5.8.34**: Models, 1994, 100 drawings, watercolor and ink-wash on paper, each 24 7/16 x 19 11/16 inches / 62 x 50 cm (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven), installation view of the solo exhibition “Measuring your Own Grave,” 2008, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, copyright Marlene Dumas © 2016

Painting Photography

The work of South African artist Marlene Dumas exists on a continuum between painting and photography. Simply put, she paints from photographic images. Or as she herself puts it: “I don’t paint people, I paint images.” Her sources range from the personal to the pornographic; from the medical to the political. Consisting of eerily rendered bodies and heads in thin washes of paint, ink or chalk, Dumas’s paintings approximate the genre of portraiture but her figures are stripped of any kind of individualizing features. Dumas’s portraits are, instead, rendered with a kind of dispassionate morbidity that is redolent of violence. A body or head in often sickly or garish colors and in broadly contoured outlines appears against a faint or blank backdrop. That her paintings seem bent on obliterating their photographic origins and reducing the figure to a lifeless prop, suggests that there is a profoundly social resonance to her work.



Figure 5.8.35: Single sheet from Marlene Dumas, *Models*, 1994, watercolor and ink wash on paper, 62 x 50 cm (Van Abbemuseum)

Models, 1994, is a case in point: it conjures up a catalogue of the dead and/or missing—an all too frequent reference point that underlines the global contemporary. Arranged in the form of a grid, *Models* presents 100 female faces as if they were the carefully laid out heads of a morgue. Positioned on blank surfaces and retaining only a minimum of individualized features, each "model" stares frontally or is rotated to profile or three-quarter pose. Faces vary from light skinned to dark and some have pastel colored eyes, but these are not the warms blues, greens and browns one might expect: lavender or lime-green instead serves to only heightens the disconcerting appearance of these disembodied figures. Who are these so-called "models?" As Dumas describes it: "There are pictures of the insane, pictures of fashion models, you have pictures of my friends…" In her description, as in her painting, Dumas gives them equal treatment: one becomes virtually indistinguishable from the other.

Against Beauty

To unravel the meaning of this work, we might start with the title. What are we to make of it? Surely it is ironic. "Model" has a number of meanings—prominent among them is the life model, a venerable tradition in studio art. But Dumas dispenses with this approach; her models are not sourced from life. They are taken from polaroids (the friends she mentions), book illustrations (the "insane") and other sundry sources where clippings are readily available. The grim visages on display, casually acquired but so carefully reworked, suggest that Dumas is also not interested in idealized forms of beauty, as "model" might also suggest. Fashion models are the unobtainable standard of idealized female bodies in contemporary culture and have long been a site of intervention for feminist art. The term "model" in both popular culture and art history functions as an indicator of the "beautiful"—it means the female body perpetually displayed for the presumed male viewer.

One of the faces in *Models* is taken from an image of the feminist author Simone de Beauvoir and although it should not be taken as an overt symbol, it is clear that Dumas's critical interrogation of the "beautiful" is part of a feminist lineage in art that includes, to take only but a few examples, the photo-documented performance ***Carving—A Traditional Sculpture* (1971) by Eleanor Antin**, the photo-text work of **Lorna Simpson ("Twenty Questions (A Sampler) (1986)**, the self-portraits of **Cindy Sherman** or even the 1990s performances by **Vanessa Beecroft** where standing live models (actual models) were posed clad in heels with little else and faced an often awkward audience. But unlike her feminist counterparts who abandoned or rejected painting, Dumas compels us to consider the specific social force painting might have in contemporary culture. "I wanted to give more attention to what the painting does to the image, not only to what the image does to the painting" (as quoted in "**Who is Marlene Dumas**?" from Tate).

There is a deconstructive impulse in Dumas's work: she de-eroticizes the pornographic imagery she appropriates; she de-personalizes portraits of friends; she turns the image of a celebrity icon like Naomi Campbell into something strange and unrecognizable. Even her portraits of children tack towards the monstrous.

Troubling and compelling

Comparisons are often made to the German painter Gerhard Richter (**his notable series on the imprisoned Bader-Meinhof terrorist group** for example) as well as to Dumas's contemporary **Lucs Tuyman** whose faded paintings (indeed they look as if they are drained of color) seem to speak to a contemporary painting's inability to fully invoke scenes of political life. But Dumas's works provoke strong reactions. Is it because they speak so forcefully of violence done to persons? Persuasive arguments have been

made that tie her work to the culture of apartheid she witnessed growing up as an Afrikaans-speaking Dutch descendant whose only access to the world was through print imagery (television did not come to South Africa until 1976). This certainly is a factor that underlines her work. But images of the dispossessed, the missing, and tortured are fairly routine fare in contemporary life.

Dumas's troubling images are compelling not because of the haunting figures they construct but because of her transformation of once discrete categories of portraiture into something almost unrecognizable. For example, we expect "model" as a term to not stray too far from a conventional meaning, and as an image we expect the subject to hew to certain conventions. In the interplay between photography and painting that exists in Dumas's work, the traditional function of portraiture is negated. It once served, in the history of oil painting, to commemorate the social status of an individual, to provide visual evidence of a marriage, or document the social bonds of family. In the nineteenth century photography usurped that job. The modern photographic portrait was supposed to capture something of the inner truth of the subject—one's psychological being. The poetic reveries of **Juliet Margaret Cameron** or the individualized studio portraits of **Felix Nadar** became the standard bearer for a newly emergent bourgeois identity where self trumped community. Photography's ability to capture likeness was soon harnessed by emerging ethnographic, psychological and jurisprudential discourses—criminals, and the insane all came under the powerful scientific gaze of the camera's lens.

The artist and critic Allan Sekula once described, in an influential essay, two exemplary modes of photographic representation, regimes of visibility one might say that determined, rather than represented, identity. One is honorific: the respectable bourgeois portrait. The other is repressive: the cold mug shot of the criminal. In Dumas's painted portraits the subject that emerges is at once both and neither of these. In an increasingly uncertain global culture, Dumas paints the indeterminacies and terrors of social identity.

Shirin Neshat, *Rebellious Silence, Women of Allah* series

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG

In *Rebellious Silence*, the central figure's portrait is bisected along a vertical seam created by the long barrel of a rifle. Presumably the rifle is clasped in her hands near her lap, but the image is cropped so that the gun rises perpendicular to the lower edge of the photo and grazes her face at the lips, nose, and forehead. The woman's eyes stare intensely towards the viewer from both sides of this divide.

Shirin Neshat's photographic series *Women of Allah* examines the complexities of women's identities in the midst of a changing cultural landscape in the Middle East—both through the lens of Western representations of Muslim women, and through the more intimate subject of personal and religious conviction.

While the composition—defined by the hard edge of her black chador against the bright white background—appears sparse, measured and symmetrical, the split created by the weapon implies a more violent rupture or psychic fragmentation. A single subject, it suggests, might be host to internal contradictions alongside binaries such as tradition and modernity, East and West, beauty and violence. In the artist's own words, "every image, every woman's submissive gaze, suggests a far more complex and paradoxical reality behind the surface." [1]



Figure 5.8.36: Shirin Neshat, *Rebellious Silence*, *Women of Allah* series, 1994, black and white RC print and ink, photo by Cynthia Preston ©Shirin Neshat (courtesy Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels)

The *Women of Allah* series confronts this "paradoxical reality" through a haunting suite of black-and-white images. Each contains a set of four symbols that are associated with Western representations of the Muslim world: the veil, the gun, the text and the gaze. While these symbols have taken on a particular charge since 9/11, the series was created earlier and reflects changes that have taken place in the region since 1979, the year of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Islamic Revolution

Iran had been ruled by the Shah (Mohammad Reza Pahlavi), who took power in 1941 during the Second World War and reigned as King until 1979, when the Persian monarchy was overthrown by revolutionaries. His dictatorship was known for the violent repression of political and religious freedom, but also for its modernization of the country along Western cultural models. Post-war Iran was an ally of Britain and the United States, and was markedly progressive with regards to women's rights. The Shah's regime, however, steadily grew more restrictive, and revolutionaries eventually rose to abolish the monarchy in favor of a conservative religious government headed by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Shirin Neshat was born in 1957 in the town of Qazvin. In line with the Shah's expansion of women's rights, her father prioritized his daughters' access to education, and the young artist attended a Catholic school where she learned about both Western and Iranian intellectual and cultural history. She left, however, in the mid-1970s, pursuing her studies in California as the environment in Iran grew increasingly hostile. It would be seventeen years before she returned to her homeland. When she did, she confronted a society that was completely opposed to the one that she had grown up in.

Looking back

One of the most visible signs of cultural change in Iran has been the requirement for all women to wear the veil in public. While many Muslim women find this practice empowering and affirmative of their religious identities, the veil has been coded in Western eyes as a sign of Islam's oppression of women. This opposition is made more clear, perhaps, when one considers the simultaneity of the Islamic Revolution with women's liberation movements in the U.S. and Europe, both developing throughout the 1970s. Neshat decided to explore this fraught symbol in her art as a way to reconcile her own conflicting feelings. In *Women of Allah*, initiated shortly after her return to Iran in 1991, the veil functions as both a symbol of freedom and of repression.

The veil and the gaze

The veil is intended to protect women's bodies from becoming the sexualized object of the male gaze, but it also protects women from being seen at all. The "gaze" in this context becomes a charged signifier of sexuality, sin, shame, and power. Neshat is cognizant of feminist theories that explain how the "male gaze" is normalized in visual and popular culture: Women's bodies are commonly paraded as objects of desire in advertising and film, available to be looked at without consequence. Many feminist artists have used the action of "gazing back" as a means to free the female body from this objectification. The gaze, here, might also reflect exotic fantasies of the East. In **Orientalist painting** of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for instance, Eastern women are often depicted nude, surrounded by richly colored and patterned textiles and decorations; women are envisaged

amongst other beautiful objects that can be possessed. In Neshat's images, women return the gaze, breaking free from centuries of subservience to male or European desire.



Figure **5.8.37**: Shirin Neshat, *Faceless*, *Women of Allah* series, 1994, black and white RC print and ink, photo by Cynthia Preston ©Shirin Neshat (courtesy Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels)

Most of the subjects in the series are photographed holding a gun, sometimes passively, as in *Rebellious Silence*, and sometimes threateningly, with the muzzle pointed directly towards the camera lens. With the complex ideas of the "gaze" in mind, we might reflect on the double meaning of the word "shoot," and consider that the camera—especially during the colonial era—was used to violate women's bodies. The gun, aside from its obvious references to control, also represents religious martyrdom, a subject about which the artist feels ambivalently, as an outsider to Iranian revolutionary culture.

Poetry

The contradictions between piety and violence, empowerment and suppression, are most prevalent in the use of calligraphic text that is applied to each photograph. Western viewers who do not read Farsi may understand the calligraphy as an aesthetic signifier, a reference to the **importance of text** in the long history of Islamic art. Yet, most of the texts are transcriptions of poetry and other writings by women, which express multiple viewpoints and date both before and after the Revolution. Some of the texts that Neshat has chosen are feminist in nature. However, in *Rebellious Silence*, the script that runs across the artist's face is from Tahereh Saffarzadeh's poem "Allegiance with Wakefulness" which honors the conviction and bravery of martyrdom. Reflecting the paradoxical nature of each of these themes, histories and discourses, the photograph is both melancholic and powerful—invoking the quiet and intense beauty for which Neshat's work has become known.

As an outspoken, feminist and progressive artist, Neshat is aware that it would be dangerous to show her work in conservative modern-day Iran, and she has been living in exile in the United States since the 1990s. For audiences in the West, the "Women of Allah" series has allowed a more nuanced contemplation of common stereotypes and assumptions about Muslim women, and serves to challenge the suppression of female voices in any community.

[1] **Shirin Neshat, "Artist Statement," *Signs Journal*** (accessed July 2015)



Video 5.8.4

Additional resources:

Neshat at Gladstone Gallery

Neshat on NPR (audio)

Neshat from LACMA

Interview with Neshat from PBS

Pepón Osorio, *En la barberia no se llora (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)*

by DR. MAYA JIMÉNEZ

The Puerto Rico born artist Pepón Osorio trained as a sociologist and became a social worker in the South Bronx. His work is inspired by each of these experiences and is rooted in the spaces, experiences, and people of American Latino culture, particularly Nuyorican communities (Nuyorican refers to the Puerto Rican diaspora living in New York, especially New York City). Osorio's large-scale installations are meant for a local audience, yet they have also been exhibited in mainstream cultural institutions (though after the 1993 Whitney Biennial, Osorio vowed to show his work first within the community, and then elsewhere).



Figure 5.8.38: Pepón Osorio, *En la barbaria no se llora (No Crying Allowed in the Barbershop)*, 1994 Installation at Real Art Ways, Hartford, Connecticut, mixed media installation with barbers' chairs, photographs, objects and videos (Collection of the Museum de Arte de Puerto Rico) (photo by Pepón Osorio)

Nuyorican

Puerto Rico is a United States territory. Its residents are United States citizens and carry an American passport, yet they cannot vote in presidential elections or have representatives voting for their interests in Washington. This sense of marginality is further complicated when one considers that Nuyoricans often retain a distinct sense of cultural pride that is informed by their dual American and Puerto Rican identities.

Having lived both experiences—that of a Puerto Rican and Nuyorican—Osorio is best known for large-scale installations that address street life, cultural clashes, and the rites of passage experienced by Puerto Ricans in the United States. Outside the traditional museum setting, and commissioned by Real Art Ways (RAW) from Hartford, Connecticut, *En la barberia no se llora*

(*No Crying Allowed in the Babershop*) is a mixed-media installation located in the Puerto Rican community of Park Street in Hartford. Created in collaboration with local residents, Osorio engaged the public through conversation, workshops, and artistic collaborations. The art itself is visually lavish—his installations have often been dubbed "Nuyorican Baroque" (a reference to the seventeenth-century style characterized by theatricality and opulence and found in both Europe and Latin America).

Masculinity

Inspired from his first haircut in Santurce, Puerto Rico, Osorio recreates the space of the barbershop as one that is intensely packed with "masculine" symbols like barber chairs, car seats, sports paraphernalia, depictions of sperm and a boy's circumcision, phallic symbols, and male action figurines. Osorio boldly challenges the idea of masculinity, and particularly of machismo (a strong sense of masculine pride), in Latino communities.

Chucherías



Figure **5.8.39**: Detail of Pepón Osorio, *The Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?)* installation at The New Museum, 1993 (photo: **Hrag Vartanian**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Spanish for trinkets or knick-knacks, and known to art historians as kitsch (mass produced objects characterized by—or ironically admired for—their bad taste), *chucherías* overpopulate Osorio's work. These include Puerto Rican flags, religious ornaments, plastic toys, dolls, ribbons, beads, etc., all of which function—to quote art historian Anna Indych-Lopez—as a "gesture of cultural resistance," presented as something universal yet personal.[1] The *chucherías* included in the installation *En la barberia no se llora*, (a flag, fake foliage, baseballs, framed portraits of famous Latin American and Latino men), serve to localize the work, yet these objects also raise issues of social class expressed here through taste, and the distinction between high and low art—effectively straddling a fine line between cultural celebration and social critique.

Video

One prominent aspect of *En la barberia no se llora* are the video installations featuring Latino men from Park Street in stereotypically "masculine" poses. The men vary in age. Osorio included older men from the retirement home, Casa del Elderly, presenting the issue of machismo as multi-generational and deeply ingrained in Nuyorican culture. As a foil to this construction, the artist also included videos of men crying, with the public reacting both in sympathy and disgust.

These same men then participated in workshops, in which they discussed how notions of masculinity had shaped their personal relationships as brothers, husbands, and fathers. Despite this participation of men, most of the visitors to the barbershop installation were, in fact, women.[2]

While *En la barberia no se llora (No Crying Allowed in the Babershop)* challenges definitions of masculinity, it also brings up—in a more subtle way—the relationship between machismo and homophobia, violence, and infidelity, and the ways in which popular culture, religion, and politics help craft these identities and issues.

1. "Nuyorican Baroque: Pepón Osorio's Chucherías," *Art Journal*, vol.60, issue 1, 2001, p. 75.

2. Erika Suderburg, Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art (University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 323.

Additional resources:

Pepón Osorio from art21 (video)

Pepón Osorio from the Ronald Feldman Gallery

Tracey Emin, *My Bed*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND

A Young British Artist



Figure 5.8.40: Tracey Emin, *My Bed*, 1998 (**Tate Britain**)

In 1998 the British artist Tracey Emin spent several days languishing in bed as the result of depression. When she emerged, she decided to turn the experience into art and the result was *My Bed*, an installation that consisted of her unmade bed and an assortment of sundry personal items associated with her time spent there. This was not the first time Emin made art about things that many would consider excruciatingly personal. She once exhibited, as art, a package of cigarettes belonging to an uncle killed in a car crash. In 1997, she created an installation entitled *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963–1995*, which was a tent appliquéd with the requisite names. Parts of *My Bed* were so shocking—it included soiled underwear for example—that she became a tabloid sensation.



Figure 5.8.41: Tracey Emin, *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963 – 1995*, 1995, appliquéd tent, mattress and light, 122 x 245 x 214 cm (**Saatchi Gallery**)

Emin was part of a group of artists who had studied at Goldsmith College and Royal College of Art in London and were dubbed the **YBAs** (Young British Artists). Members of this ad hoc group, including **Damien Hirst**, Sarah Lucas, Liam Gillick, and Gary Hume among others, very quickly coalesced into a movement, and began exhibiting together in warehouses and other informal spaces during the late 1980s. Hirst had organized the exhibition *Freeze*, widely acknowledged to have been the movement's origin, at an abandoned space in the London Docklands in 1988.



Figure **5.8.42**: Damien Hirst, *Mother and Child (Divided)*, exhibition copy 2007 (original 1993), glass, stainless steel, Perspex, acrylic paint, cow, calf and formaldehyde solution, 2 parts: 208.6 × 322.5 × 109.2 cm, 208.6 × 322.5 × 109.2 cm (**Tate Britain**)



Figure **5.8.43**: Sarah Lucas, *Self Portrait with Fried Eggs*, 1996, digital print on paper, 74.5 x 51.4 cm (**Tate Britain**)

YBA works quickly became associated with sensationalism and shock value, the impact of which was only heightened by the prevailing decade of **postmodern art** which, to a younger generation of artists, had increasingly become depersonalized and too reliant upon a dense theoretical framework. I remember an art school at the time in Canada issuing a call for work for a student exhibition with a list of caveats including "No hand wringing over the relationship between signifier and signified" (a reference to semiotic theory popular at the time). Everywhere it seemed a reaction to slick postmodernism was to be found in a return to a less technologically-mediated reality. The more visceral the better. Well-known YBA artworks include a calf suspended in formaldehyde (Damien Hirst), a sculpture of two fried eggs and a kebab arranged in the shape of a female body (Sarah Lucas) and of course Emin's *My Bed*, which scandalized a British public with its frank portrayal of the detritus of four days of depression spent in bed.

Shock value

Shock is of course not new in art; the art-going public have been routinely scandalized at least as far back as the nineteenth century, when artists first **went against accepted norms** for what constitutes art. The significance of Emin's installation, however, lies beyond its shock value. After all, shock is generally a short-lived phenomenon. Emin went on to become a nominee in 1999 for the Turner Prize, a prestigious visual arts award given annually in Britain. So what makes *My Bed* important as an artwork? Emin subjects to scrutiny one of the most abiding beliefs of art in Western modernism—the notion that art is always autobiographical, a reflection of the artist's inner being.



Figure 5.8.44: Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*,1514, engraving, 24 x 18.5 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

As Western art increasingly became governed by more individualistic approaches to style and as religious and royal patronage gave way to the marketplace in the nineteenth century, the association of art with individual identity became an accepted norm. “Every painter paints himself” is a phrase known since the renaissance and it is a metaphor of this very idea that art is always an expression of the self at its core. But what does it actually mean? What aspect of self is expressed? When pressed, one is hard put to offer anything other than the most generic response: it represents emotions or feelings and perhaps a sensibility. What Emin does is take the meaning of self at its most literal sense and in the most provocative way possible. She does however present a portrait of the melancholic artist that references a tradition stretching as far back as the German renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer’s 1514 engraving ***Melencolia I,*** an allegorical winged female figure in a state of pensive gloom considered to be a portrait of the artist himself. But Emin’s is an unvarnished and unidealized version of depression in which glorified myths of the artist are shed in favor of a frankly visceral portrait of an artist who has spent her days in bed drinking and having sex. Emin perverts that tradition and therein lies its challenge to conventional taste.

A new conceptual art



Figure 5.8.45: Chris Burden, *Through the Night Softly*, 1973, performance (**Gagosian**)

In the 1990s, as artists searched for new alternatives, many considered **conceptual art** of the 1970s an unfinished project. While rooted in conceptual art, postmodernism’s focus on media spectacle and consumer objects had become too tied to a market-oriented idea of the art world. Artists began revisiting the strategies of earlier artists, particularly the more visceral bodily experience that was an important aspect of conceptual art. The unflinching realness of Emin’s bed would not have been possible in the postmodern ‘80s but it certainly existed in the 1970s when artists like Chris Burden crawled through broken glass (*Through the Night Softly*, 1973), or had himself nailed to the front of a car (*Trans-fixed*, 1974).



Figure **5.8.46**: Vito Acconci, *Claim Performance*, 1971, graphite, pastel and black & white photograph collage mounted on board, 58 x 71 cm

From 1968 to 1971 **Valie Export** toured European cities with a structure made of styrofoam that allowed people to reach inside it and touch her breasts. The artist **Vito Acconci** had himself blindfolded in the basement of a gallery, and armed with metal pipes and a crowbar, would threaten to swing at anyone who came near (*Claim*, 1971). Challenging conventional ideas around artistic creativity, as these artists did, is, in fact, a venerable tradition in modern and contemporary art. Artists continually renew the conditions and parameters of what constitutes art or artistic authorship.

Much like conceptual artists who rejected the medium of painting as too conventional in favor of newer and more experimental forms and ideas, Emin had abandoned painting and even went so far as to destroy many of them. In a famous argument with artist and boyfriend Billy Childish, she referred to his paintings as "stuck" in time. In response, Childish formed a movement called "Stuckism" which promoted painting and creative expression while denouncing Emin's brand of conceptual art. "Stuckism" would prove to be short-lived, but Emin's *My Bed* would become one of the most resonant works of the 1990s.

Additional resources:

Read more about the YBAs at Smarthistory

Tracey Emin's works at Tate Britain

Kiki Smith, *Lying with the Wolf*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG



Figure **5.8.47**: Kiki Smith, *Lying with the Wolf*, 2001, ink and pencil on paper 88 x 73″ (Centre Pompidou, Paris) © Kiki Smith

This delicate but large-scale work on paper, which depicts a female nude reclining intimately alongside a wolf, represents the assimilation of several themes that Kiki Smith has explored throughout her decades-long career. Featuring an act of bonding between human and animal, the piece speaks not only to Smith's fascination with and reverence for the natural world, but also her noted interests in religious narratives and mythology, the history of figuration in western art, and contemporary notions of feminine domesticity, spiritual yearning, and sexual identity.

Lying with the Wolf is one in a short series of works executed between 2000 and 2002 that illustrates women's relationships with animals, drawing from representations found in visual, literary, and oral histories. Smith is most interested in narratives that speak to collectively shared mythologies; these include folk tales, biblical stories and Victorian literature, yet the once-familiar stories are then fragmented and conflated with one another to form new clusters of meaning and association.

Intimate Relationships with Nature



Figure 5.8.48: Kiki Smith, *Rapture*, 2001, bronze, 67-1/4 x 62 x 26-1/2″, edition of 3, © Kiki Smith

Many of Smith's works from this period feature a female protagonist who is based on Little Red Riding Hood as well Sainte Geneviève, the Patron Saint of Paris. Geneviève is herself often associated with Saint Francis of Assisi because of her close relationships with animals and her ability, in particular, to domesticate wolves.

Other works in the series include *Geneviève and the May Wolf*—a bronze sculpture in which a standing female figure calmly embraces the wolf—and *Rapture*, which is perhaps more closely aligned to Red Riding Hood, as it depicts a woman stepping out from the stomach of the recumbent creature.

The pair as depicted in *Lying with the Wolf*, however, seems locked in a more intimate embrace, as the wolf nuzzles affectionately into the nude woman's arms. She wraps herself around the animal's body in a gesture of comforting, her fingers stroking the soft fur beneath its ears and along the side of its stomach. The wolf's wildness is tamed, and both figures seem to nurture one another, floating within the abstract space of the textured paper surface upon which they are delicately drawn. Smith imbues a story that is normally quite violent with a kind of tenderness that is characteristic of her overall aesthetic.

Feminist Approaches to Narrative

It has been suggested by some critics that Smith's reinterpretations of Red Riding Hood and Sainte Geneviève represent a feminist approach to popular folktales. This is supported by her placement of "woman" amidst the natural world, but also, importantly, at a structural level: in the way in which the two narratives are fragmented and combined. Borrowing from divergent sources in order to forge a new storyline, Smith demonstrates the slippery relationship between a visual image and its multiple references, adopting a narrative style indebted to feminist re-writings of history.

As the curator Helaine Posner has explained: "Instead of presenting them in their traditional roles as predator and prey, Smith re-imagined these characters as companions, equals in purpose and scale." The distinction between "predator" and "prey" might be thought of as a metaphor for hierarchies of power in human relationships, which have traditionally been drawn along the lines of gender, race, and class. Because patriarchal societies typically grant more power to men, while requiring women to be submissive or dependent, we can think of this "overturning" in Smith's art as a political statement against such inequalities. The artistic

narratives portrayed in her work are ones in which binaries are flipped and opposing qualities are merged; in so doing, Smith asserts a critical feminist position that favors the articulation of multiple meanings.

"Walking Around in a Garden"

"My career has stopped being linear. A couple of years ago, the story line or narrative fell apart…"[1]

As is the case with *Lying with the Wolf*, several of Smith's works integrate a diverse list of themes and motifs that she has accumulated over the course of her career. The artist continuously re-imagines tropes she has used in past works, with the result that her practice does not seem to progress through discrete artistic stages. Rather, she works in cycles and layers; she has described her career as an act of meandering, or "walking around in a garden."

Kiki Smith grew up in a vibrant artistic family; she is the daughter of the sculptor Tony Smith and the opera singer Jane Lawrence Smith. She has spoken fondly of the Victorian house in which she was raised in South Orange, New Jersey, and how it captured her young imagination, as a historical artifact with its own memories and indices to the past. The notion of "home" has been central to her practice, and she likens it to the human body, a theme that is pervasive across her oeuvre. Domesticity, fragility, and the humble materials of craft and folk arts feature strongly in her work.

Abjection and The Body

While Kiki Smith's early work is aligned with the collaborative and activist art scene of the 1980s, she became known for intimate explorations of the human body in the following decade, often through life-sized sculpture that honored the figural tradition in Western art.



Figure 5.8.49: Kiki Smith, *Blood Pool*, 1992, wax, gauze, and pigment, 42 x 24 x 16″, © Kiki Smith

These works emphasized the body's vulnerability and made reference to feminist theories of the "abject," which conceived of the body as a messy, porous, and boundary-less system. *Blood Pool*, for instance, features a small, apparently violated figure, huddled into a fetal position on the floor . Many other works of this period feature bodily fluids or marks of injury.

Mysticism and Mythologies

Throughout the 1990s, Smith would come to embrace her religious upbringing, creating works that are spiritual, ethereal, and markedly more decorative. Celestial motifs and references to the natural world became ubiquitous, although these themes are still deeply connected to the body. As an investigation of the body in its capacity for fertility, reproduction, and nurturing, this turn towards the natural environment would eventually lead Smith to her interest in animals and our connections to them.

Lying with the Wolf is an extension of this yearning to connect the earthly with the spiritual and the personal with the collective.

1. As quoted in Christopher Lyon, "Free Fall: Kiki Smith on Her Art" in *Kiki Smith*, ed. Helaine Posner and Christopher Lyon, New York, NY: The Monacelli Press, Inc: page 37.

Wangechi Mutu, *Preying Mantra*

by DR. SHAWNYA L. HARRIS



Figure 5.8.50: Wangechi Mutu, *Preying Mantra*, 2006, mixed media on mylar (Brooklyn Museum) © Wangechi Mutu, all rights reserved

Using the medium of collage, the artist Wangechi Mutu creates new worlds that re-imagine culture through the realm of fantasy. Mutu was born in Nairobi, Kenya and educated in Europe and the United States. Her art is global in nature and she clearly relishes complicating both Western and non-Western cultural norms, questioning how we see gender, sexuality, and even cultural identity.

Wangechi Mutu's artistic practice includes video, installation, sculpture, and mixed-media collage. One of her recurrent themes concerns the violence of colonial domination in Africa (particularly in her native Kenya). Her images incorporate the female body, specifically an imagined "African" body, subjected to sexism and racism on a global scale.

Sources for Mutu's collages include fragments from fashion magazines, pornography, medical literature or even popular magazines such as National Geographic. Inspiration for her collages can be traced to the early photomontages of the German Dada artist Hannah Höch (below left) and the American artist Romare Bearden (below right). Mutu appreciates Bearden's use of collage—how it emphasizes community and the African American traditions found in jazz, while the spliced images in Höch's photomontages reflect Mutu's interest in disrupting societal convention in art. Mutu creates a space for exploring an informed consciousness about being "African" and female that incorporate these artists' techniques yet develops a new visual vocabulary.



Figure 5.8.50: Left: Hannah Höch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany*, collage, mixed media, 1919-1920 (Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin); right: Romare Bearden, *The Calabash*, 1970, collage (Library of Congress)

Preying Mantra centers on female subjectivity, exoticism and the notion of hybridity—both in concept and imagery. Hybridity is a concept often used in postcolonial studies. It describes how mixing the cultures of colonized and the colonizer can produce a third space for newer and often disruptive understanding of cultural identity. Colonialism in Africa, which began in earnest in the

nineteenth century, violently wrested power from Africans for the benefit of European nations through the enforcement of strict military and administrative controls. As colonialism waned during the mid-twentieth century, other social and political issues emerged. Mutu's work was shaped by this complex history and by issues such as the rights of women that came to the fore at the end of the century.

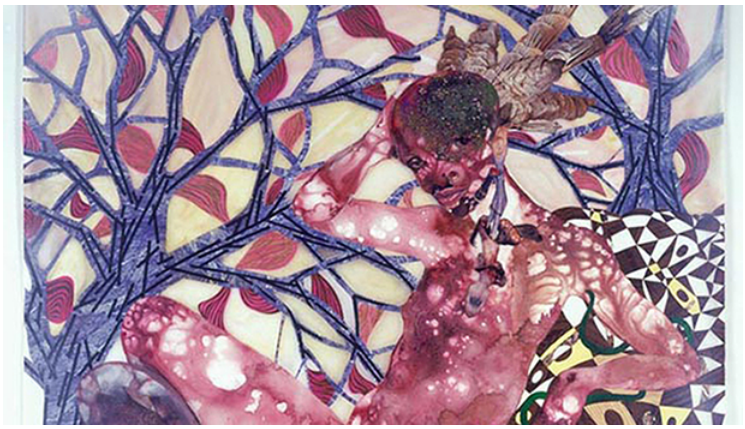


Figure 5.8.51: Wangechi Mutu, *Preying Mantra* (detail), 2006, mixed media on mylar (Brooklyn Museum) © Wangechi Mutu, all rights reserved

In Mutu's *Preying Mantra*, a female creature appears to recline on a geometrically patterned blanket that is sprawled between trees or perhaps on a tree branch. The blanket resembles a Kuba cloth (traditional fabric created by the Kuba people). Legs tightly crossed in front of her, the figure stares suggestively at the viewer with her right hand positioned behind her head, which is surmounted by a cone-like crown. Her relaxed posture is camouflaged by her skin, which appears dappled by sunlight and which mirrors the colors of the tree's leaves. Like the female body, the tree is emblematic of the creation myths found in many cultures, including Mutu's Kikuyu ancestors in Kenya. In her left hand, the figure holds a green serpent that rests on the blanket which fills much of the scene. The serpent, linked with the role of Eve in the biblical creation narrative, provides yet another cultural source for Mutu's protagonist. The tree envelops the female figure, reinforcing links between history and fiction, African and Non-African cultural myths as well as natural versus unnatural phenomena.



Figure 5.8.52: Wangechi Mutu, *Preying Mantra* (detail), 2006, mixed media on mylar (Brooklyn Museum) © Wangechi Mutu, all rights reserved

The title *Preying Mantra*, recalls the praying mantis—an insect that resembles the protagonist in Mutu's collage, with her prominently bent legs. As a carnivorous insect, praying mantises camouflage themselves to match their environment, snaring their prey with their enormous legs. During mating, the female can become a sexual cannibal—eating her submissive mate. Such imagery and its association with natural phenomena creates a primal sensibility. Despite this reference to a real praying mantis, Mutu's "preying mantra" is also vulnerable to our gaze, suggesting that the figure may be a victim that is "preyed" upon by "mantras." Mutu creates a natural, even primitive, fictional environment that entices and disturbs us even as she invites us to explore stereotypes about the African female body as explicitly sexual, dangerous, and aesthetically deformed in relation to Western standards. Given that elements of the collage are assembled from sociocultural documents found in popular literature from the West, the figure may be preying on the viewer's own fears and desires.



Video 5.8.5



Video 5.8.6

Additional resources:

This work at the Brooklyn Museum

Wangechi Mutu on Failure (Art21 Magazine)

Wangechi Mutu (Art21 Blog)

Wangechi Mutu + Santigold – The End of eating Everything – Nasher Museum at Duke, animated video by Mutu

Artist Breakfast With Wangechi Mutu (artnet video)

Wangechi Mutu: A Fantastic Journey (video from the Brooklyn Museum)

Trevor Schoonmaker, *Wangechi Mutu: A Fantastic Journey* (North Carolina: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, 2013)

Marina Abramović, *The Artist is Present*

by REBECCA TAYLOR



Figure 5.8.53: Marina Abramović sitting with Rebecca Taylor at *The Artist is Present* performance at The Museum of Modern Art, 2010

Transcendence

"Sit silently with the artist for a duration of your choosing"—so the instructions read on a small plaque in the second-floor atrium at The Museum of Modern Art. Behind the plaque, a queue of visitors forms, eager to enter a large square space—demarcated only by tape on the floor—to sit down at a wooden table across from a dark-haired woman in a navy-blue dress that conceals every part of her body save her face and her hands.

The woman is the pioneering artist Marina Abramović, but its likely that few of the people in line have any sense of this woman's indelible impact on contemporary art. As I wait, an anthology of her performances scrolling through my head. Watching her from afar, I look to see the courage and fearlessness in a woman capable of incising a five-pointed star on her own stomach, screaming until she loses consciousness, and living in a gallery for 12 days without food. Strangely, she doesn't seem reckless at all, but peaceful and wise. I then remember she trained with Tibetan Buddhists and has said she's able to transcend the limits of her own body and mind through meditation. She'll need these skills now more than ever as she attempts her longest performance-to-date, sitting at this table for every hour of every day that her retrospective is open at MoMA. No food. No water. No breaks.

My turn

So, I wait for my moment with the artist, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. A young girl is sitting across from Marina and the two seem engaged in a staring contest, though from that distance it's impossible to tell if they're actually making eye contact or simply staring ahead in a daze. Seventy-five minutes later she finally stands up and exits the square, declaring she lost all sense of time and thought it had only been a few minutes. Marina leans forward and closes her eyes, while the next sojourner steps forward and takes the empty seat. Marina sits up and another staring contest commences—this one lasting sixty-seven minutes. This process repeats—ten minutes, fifty-five minutes, twenty minutes, forty-five minutes, etc. Finally, the man in front of me takes the seat and I'm next. More than three hours from when I entered the succession I've seen only six people participate in the performance and more than thirty leave the line in frustration. The nameless, faceless strangers I queued with hours ago are now friends—an artist from Poughkeepsie, an art history undergrad from Chicago, a nurse from outside Philly—and we share our excitement as our turn approaches. Finally, after nearly four hours, my time has come.

I enter the square and approach the table, immediately noting the heat of the lights and the watchful eyes of the crowds gathered to gawk at the spectacle. I put my purse on the floor and take a seat. While Marina leans forward, I settle into the chair and imagine I'll last about ten minutes before I become either bored or totally uncomfortable. She begins to sit up and I try to prepare myself for the moment she opens her eyes. I have many skills, but sitting still and being silent are not traits I'm known for, so I was afraid: afraid of the judgment implicit in staring, afraid of the silence, afraid I wouldn't have the transformative experience that had captivated those before me, afraid, afraid, afraid. Her lids opened and our eyes locked, not in a stare but in a friendly gaze. For the first few minutes, I thought only about who this woman was—a renegade, a feminist, an inspiration—but quickly realized that those things were more about her persona than the person. I discarded my preconceived notions and expectations and, as soon as I stopped thinking of her as an artist-celebrity, saw the woman behind the legend. We sat absolutely still in deafening silence, exchanging energy, and just being with each other. I've heard it said that couples married for decades can sit in silence and understand one another perfectly, but I'd never imagine that sort of intimacy could be possible between two total strangers. It is.

I could have stayed in that moment for hours but thought of my fellow line-mates, now friends, and decided it would be selfish to bask in this experience any longer. But, could I leave? It felt as rude as leaving a lecture in the middle. How would I leave? Abruptly just wouldn't do, so I said good-bye and thanked her. More than thirty minutes had passed, thirty minutes of epic silence I'll never forget.

Additional Resources:

MoMA exhibition website

"Performance Art Preserved, in the Flesh," *New York Times* article, 2010

Turning Uncle Tom's Cabin upside down, Alison Saar's Topsy

by DR. HALONA NORTON-WESTBROOK, TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART and DR. BETH HARRIS

Jason and the Golden Fleece and the American anti-Slavery novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin combine to upend our own contemporary myths



Additional resources

This sculpture at the museum

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5.9: Feminist Art (1970-2000)

Introduction

Feminism is a French word, *feminisme*, and labeled the concept of social and political movements with ideologies for women's equality. Feminisme moved rapidly from Europe to the United States in the early 20th century and became synonymous with the Women's Movement. It means woman (femme) and a social movement (isme) and implied social change for women, culminating with their right to vote in 1920. The "women's movement," referred to in the United States, had a critical turning point in the 1960s when it expanded into women's liberation. This second wave of feminism was directly related to the "capitalist economies which had drawn millions of women into the paid labor force, and civil rights and anti-colonial movements had revived the politics of democratization."[1] The advent of the Feminist movement incited a wave of core female issues such as reproductive rights, equal rights, sexism, and gender roles through art activism. The 1970s conscious raising challenged the status quo, demanding the art world to change the inequality of art.

> *Feminist art challenges the domination of male artists to gain recognition and equality for women artists. (MOMA)*

The Women Who Defined Feminist Art

From the 1970s onward, women were expected to raise their children and work, while men only had to earn a living. The women's liberation movement demanded political and economic rights and expanded women's equality to equal pay for an equal job, equal help in the household, and equal opportunity. Along with the second wave of feminism, women are in the public arena remained marginal, and in the New York Whitney Museum, only 5% of the artists were female.[2] Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro created a project called the *Womanhouse* at the California Institute of the Arts. The project consisted of 17 rooms of visual representations of gender-stereotyped relationships.

Feminist artists began to explore women's spaces, using metaphors to create large installations like *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago. Chicago's installation created a large triangle table with genital imagery on the ceramic plates celebrating famous women in history. In the last 30 years, feminism has created opportunities for female artists regardless of if they are feminists or not (Freedman, 2000). The famous art historian Linda Nochlin published the influential "Why have there been no great female artists?" [3]

> *"The fault, dear brothers, lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education—education understood to include everything that happens to us from the moment we enter this world of meaningful symbols, signs, and signals. The miracle is, in fact, that given the overwhelming odds against women, or blacks, so many of both have managed to achieve so much sheer excellence in hose bailiwicks of white masculine prerogative like science, politics, or the arts."[4]*

The Guerrilla Girls were an American group of women activists exposing the domination of white male artists in the art world. Their mission was to elevate women artists and artists of color in the 1980s when a New York Museum exhibited an international painting and sculpture. Only 13 women out of 169 artists were in the exhibit. This disparity became the mantra (7.6.1) to eradicate sexism and racism in the art world.

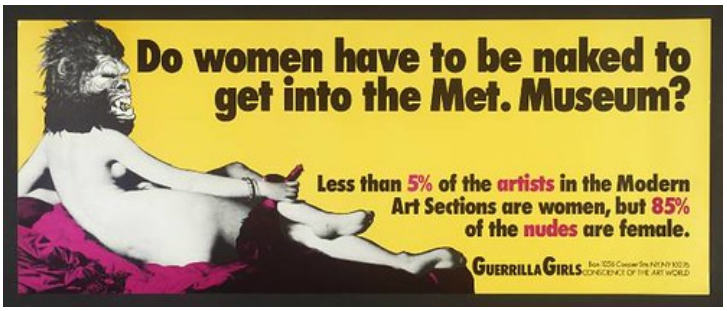


Figure 5.9.1: Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Museum?, by Colección Gráfica de Dibujo, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

From the perspective of women's issues, the next two decades began significant social changes, most of them toward greater freedom and opportunity. The Sixties saw the upheavals of sex, drugs, rock and roll—and approval of the first oral contraceptive. The Seventies ushered in "women's lib," women's "consciousness-raising," "no-fault" divorce, and Title IX, the provision of equal funding for women's sports. The Feminist Art Movement set out to connect the founding pillars of contemporary art and women. In its wake, the movement motivated for change, redesigned social attitudes, and improved gender stereotypes in the arts for the better.

Judy Chicago

Judy Chicago (1939-) is an American feminist artist well known for her large collaborative art installation called *The Dinner Party*. Chicago attended UCLA Art School and quickly became politically active, graduating with a master's in fine arts in 1964. She taught full-time at Fresno State College, teaching women how to express themselves in their artwork. It transformed into a Feminist Art Program and was widely popular with women. Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro created a project called the *Womanhouse* at the California Institute of the Arts, transformed an old house, and created different artistic representations of women's domestic work.

Feminist artists began to explore women's spaces, using metaphors to create large installations like *The Dinner Party* (7.6.2). Chicago's installation depicted a large triangle table with genital imagery on the ceramic plates celebrating famous women in history. The entire project took five years due to the large size, 14.6 by 13.1 by 10.9 meters, with 39 different place settings. An embroidered table runner corresponds to the female figure plate and is set with silverware and a goblet. The inspiration for the *Dinner Party* was devised during a male-dominated dinner party Chicago attended. She felt women needed to be recognized at the table as well since they are mostly overlooked. The 39 plates represent historical or mythical female figures set like the Last Supper with 13 people on each side of the triangle. Another notable 999 women's names are inscribed in gold on the exhibit floor. The meeting of 39 females was a powerful statement popular with the public; however, it was disparaged by the critics who called it "vaginas on plates."

> *"The Dinner Party's positive celebration of female bodies and sexuality, its consciousness-raising about women's history and reclamation of women artists, and its subversion and revision of masculinist historical narratives, was an enormous popular success."[5]*



Figure **5.9.2**: The Dinner Party (1974-79, mixed media, 14.6 x 13.1 x 10.9 meter) by @KevinCase, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Chicago's etched painting *Fused Mary Queen of Scots* (7.6.3) is a unique blend of fusing, etching, and kiln-fired spray paint that took over a year and a half to develop. Studying stained glass, she came across the Chinese art of painting on glass in sophisticated colors that replicated the look of porcelain. The piece is a mix of yellow and blue radiating spiral lines surrounded by a light purple frame with handwritten words. Mary Queen of Scots was an ambitious woman and held the title of Queen of Scotland, a title she acquired at six days old after her father died. She was found guilty of a plot to kill Queen Elizabeth and was beheaded shortly afterward, generating a divisive and highly romanticist historical character from the 16th century. The work brought ceramics forward from a craft to fine art using technical skills.



Figure **5.9.3**: Fused Mary Queen of Scots in Glass 2 (1999, etching and glass paint on fused glass, 55.8 x 55.8 cm) by pennstatenews, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The Birth Project was a conglomerate of artwork designed by Chicago and completed by needleworkers artists around the United States, Canada, and other localized places in the world. Needlework has always been considered women's work, a craft beneath most artists. Chicago led the collaborative project about women who created life and experienced childbirth from many points of view. The process of childbirth was not generally a subject brought up at parties or discussed at the dinner table, yet she brought the issue upfront and personally. "Through my art, this is a subject worth confronting, a subject rich in meaning and insignificance for women's lives, and—because women are over half the population, because everyone is born, and because children have to be raised—a subject worthy of attention of the entire human race" Judy Chicago, Birth Project, Doubleday, 1985. *Birth Tear Embroidery 3* (7.6.4) is a drawing with a sharpie of a woman during childbirth on a piece of pink silk later embroidered. The predominant color of red represents the tear during the birthing process, which fades out to purple and blue. The image also displays the pain of the woman during birth.



Figure **5.9.4**: Birth Tear Embroidery 3 (1984, sharpie, silk, embroidery, 49 x 62 cm) by benchilada, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Barbara Kruger

Barbara Kruger (1945-) is an American Feminist Artist who produced black and white photographs with declarative captions in red and white. She is a Distinguished Professor at the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture. Kruger creates large-scale digital installations combining photography and collage. "Overlaid with provocative graphics on authority, identity, and sexuality, her work confronts the power of mass media."[6] The silkscreen painting, *Untitled* (Your Body is a Battleground) (7.6.5), was originally a poster for a 1989 pro-choice march in Washington D.C. The poster depicts the artist's opinion about gender inequality. The black and white photographs are images of women from the 1950s contrasted with bold white text on red backgrounds. Focusing on the heated topic of reproductive rights, the text begins with 'Your' signaling the unification of women around America, telling the patriarchal society about the feminist struggle. Unfortunately, art from the 1970s is still a battleground in the 21st century.

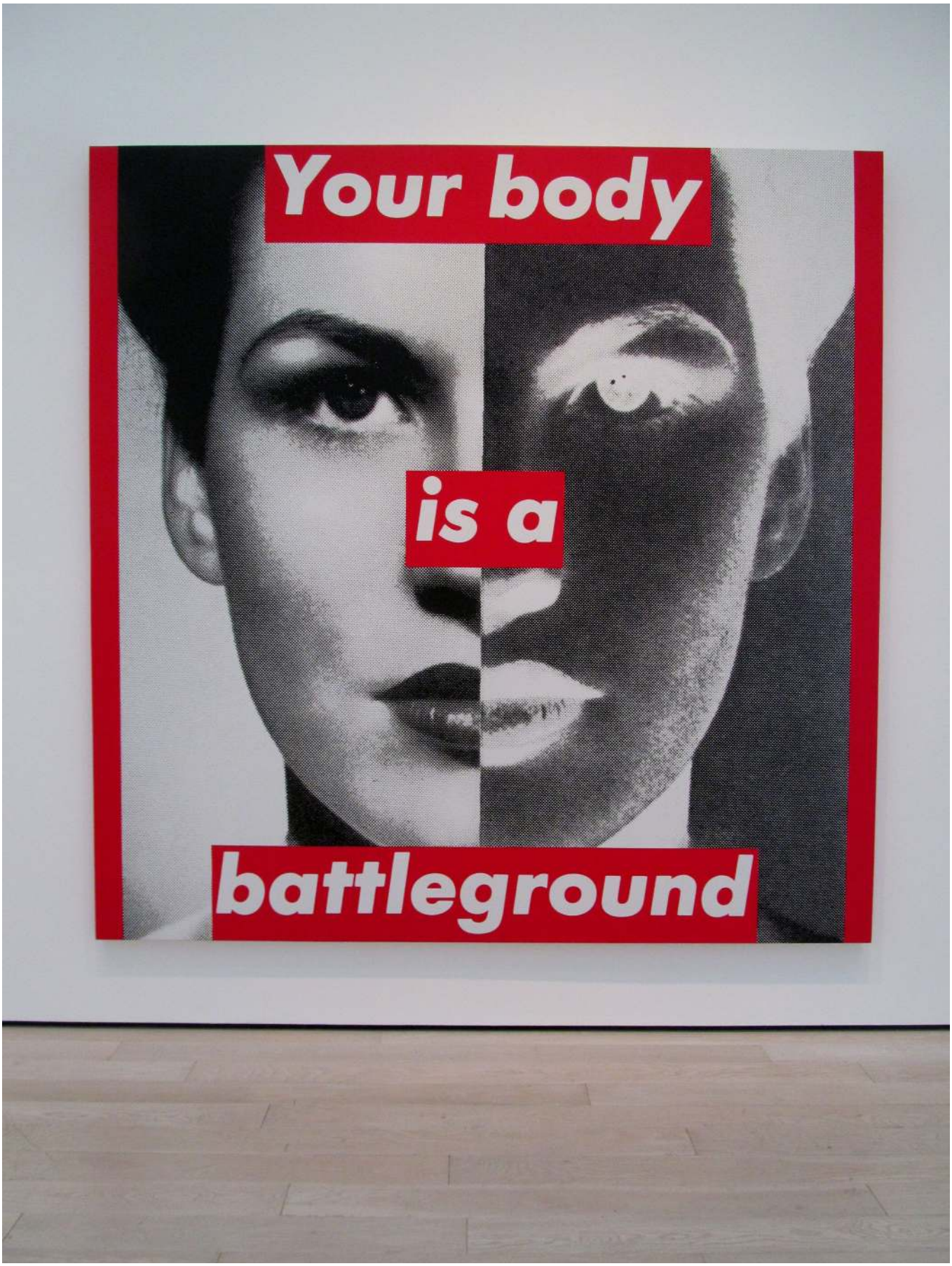

Your body
is a
battleground

Figure 5.9.5: Untitled (Your body is a battleground) (1989, photo and silkscreen) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Over the next two decades, Kruger focused on installations that immersed the viewer into the art. *Belief+Doubt* (7.6.6) fills the museum's lower level with a bold color scheme of black and white with splashes of red for emphasis. She focused on the themes of democracy, money, power, and belief, filling the entire space with text-printed vinyl immersing viewers into a world of text they must read, introducing doubt through questions. Kruger's visual communication began in her early career as a designer, and it carried on throughout her work for decades. The language of pop culture in magazines utilizes brief short sentences to convey messages and Kruger used the persuasive power of pop culture's images in her art.

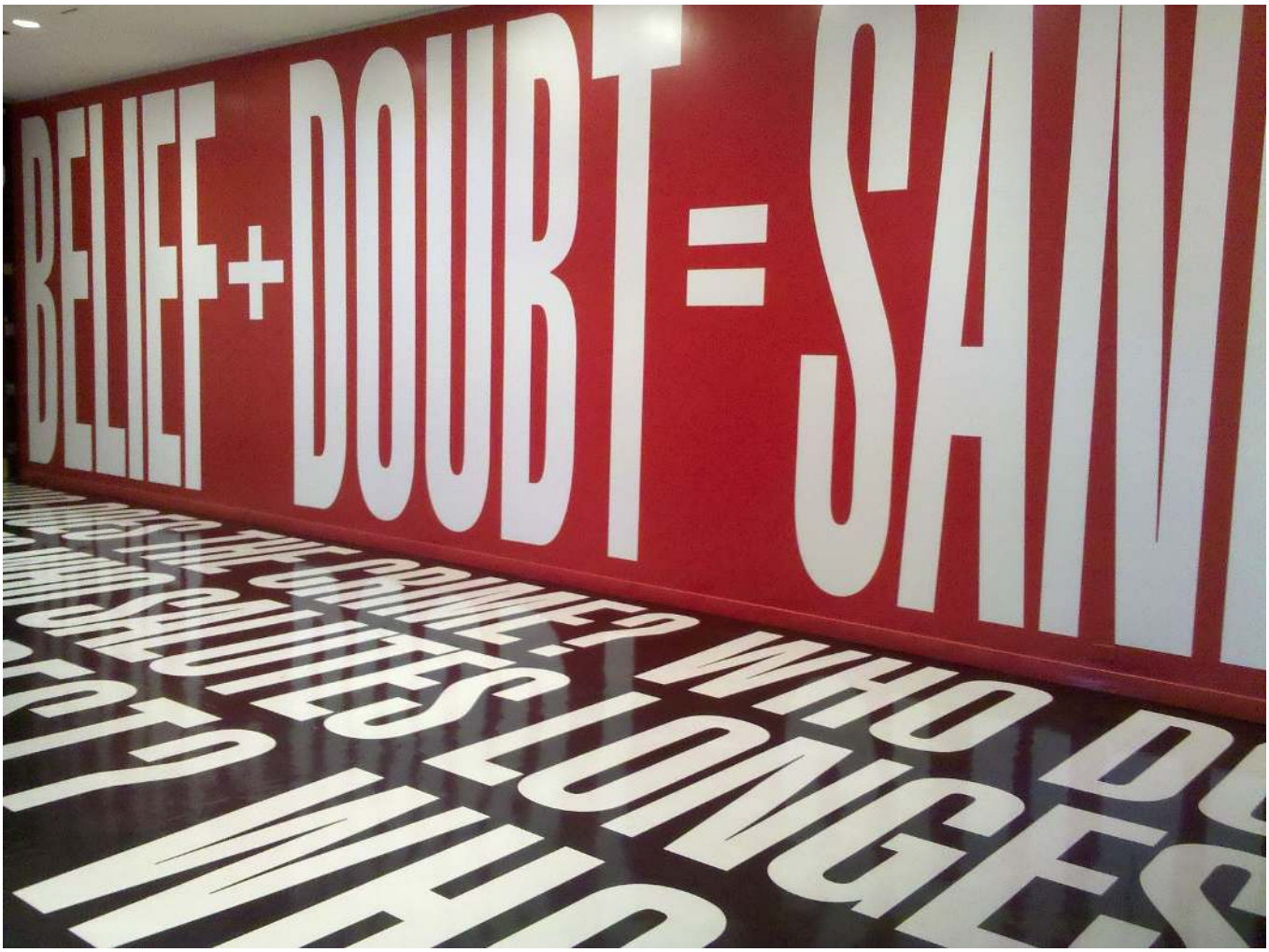


Figure 5.9.6: Belief+Doubt (2012, vinyl, 2042.1 meters) CC BY-SA 3.0.

Kruger became famous for her aphoristic declarations of feminist principles married with large photomontages. *Untitled (Now You See Us)* (7.6.7) is a change from the black, white, and red art and includes a deep lemon yellow in place of the white. The yellow represents a lightbulb glowing bright yellow against a dark grey background. The direct yellow words are still against a red background in large font, while the second declaration is small, on the bottom, and red against a dark grey background.



Figure **5.9.7**: Untitled (Now You See Us) (1984, gelatin silver print, 181.6 x 105.4 cm) by Cea, CC BY 2.0

Carolee Schneemann

Carolee Schneemann (1939-2019) was an American visual experimental artist who received an MFA degree from the University of Illinois. She began her career as an Abstract Expressionist painter but became disillusioned by the misogynistic heroism painters in New York City. Turning to artistic performance art, Schneemann became involved with feminist art and the exploration of the female body. A stage backdrop, *Four Fur Cutting Boards* (7.6.8), is an extension into time and space as a moving sculpture that viewers in the room can activate. The name of the artwork is from Schneemann's art studio, which was an old fur shop in Manhattan. The art is a conglomerate of oil paint, umbrellas, motors, lightbulbs, string lights, photographs, fabric, lace, hubcaps, printed papers, mirror, nylon stockings, nails, hinges, and staples on wood.[7] Schneemann painted her nude body and photographed herself interacting with the art becoming the subject and the object. Feminist art presents the female artist influenced by feminism—a double knowledge—of the female body.



Figure **5.9.8**: Four Fur Cutting Boards (1962-63, oil paint, lights, paper, nail, miscellaneous on wood, 229.9 x 332.7 x 132.1 cm) by benchilada, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

As technology exploded, Schneemann experimented with laser printers creating painted prints of vulva images, part of the female genitalia. *Vulva's Morphia* (7.6.9) is a set of thirty-six pieces of art displayed in a clear plexiglass display. The in-your-face up-front rudeness of the imagery is balanced by a bitterly ironic text: "Vulva recognizes the symbols and names on graffiti under the railroad: slit, snatch, enchilada, beaver, muff, coozie, fish and finger pie . . . Vulva deciphers Lacan and Baudrillard and discovers she is only a sign, a signification of the void, of absence, of what is not male . . . (she is given a pen for taking notes)".[8]

A visual grid with text, *Vulva's Morphia* are depictions of vulvas from an artist's point of view. The surrounding text is statements such as "Vulva decodes feminist constructivist semiotics and realizes she has no authentic feelings at all; even her erotic sensations are constructed by patriarchal projects, impositions, and conditioning." [9] Schneemann is taking back the female body and endorsing its powers without limits. For decades, she created art that challenged boundaries, attacked societal taboos, and kept it in our faces to ensure we do not forget.



Figure 5.9.9: *Vulvas Morphia* (1995, 36-panel hand painting, text inserts on wood, 243.8 x 152.4 cm) by nhighberg, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Jenny Holzer

Jenny Holzer (1950-) is an American neo-conceptual artist known for her text installations. A graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, she moved to New York City in the late 1970s, exploring social and cultural theory. Holzer began her art career with *Truisms*, public works offering simple statements Holzer printed out on paper and wheat-pasted to buildings. The list of words came from her philosophy and literature classes; she condensed the entire text into a sentence. Moving from paper, Holzer turned to LED signs to flash her text on buildings or billboards. *Stave* (7.6.10) presents an LED sign in seven curved double-sided text with red and blue diodes stating, "Would Like to Go Back Home." The delivery of words in large-scale installations earned her a spot in the famous The Times Square Show.

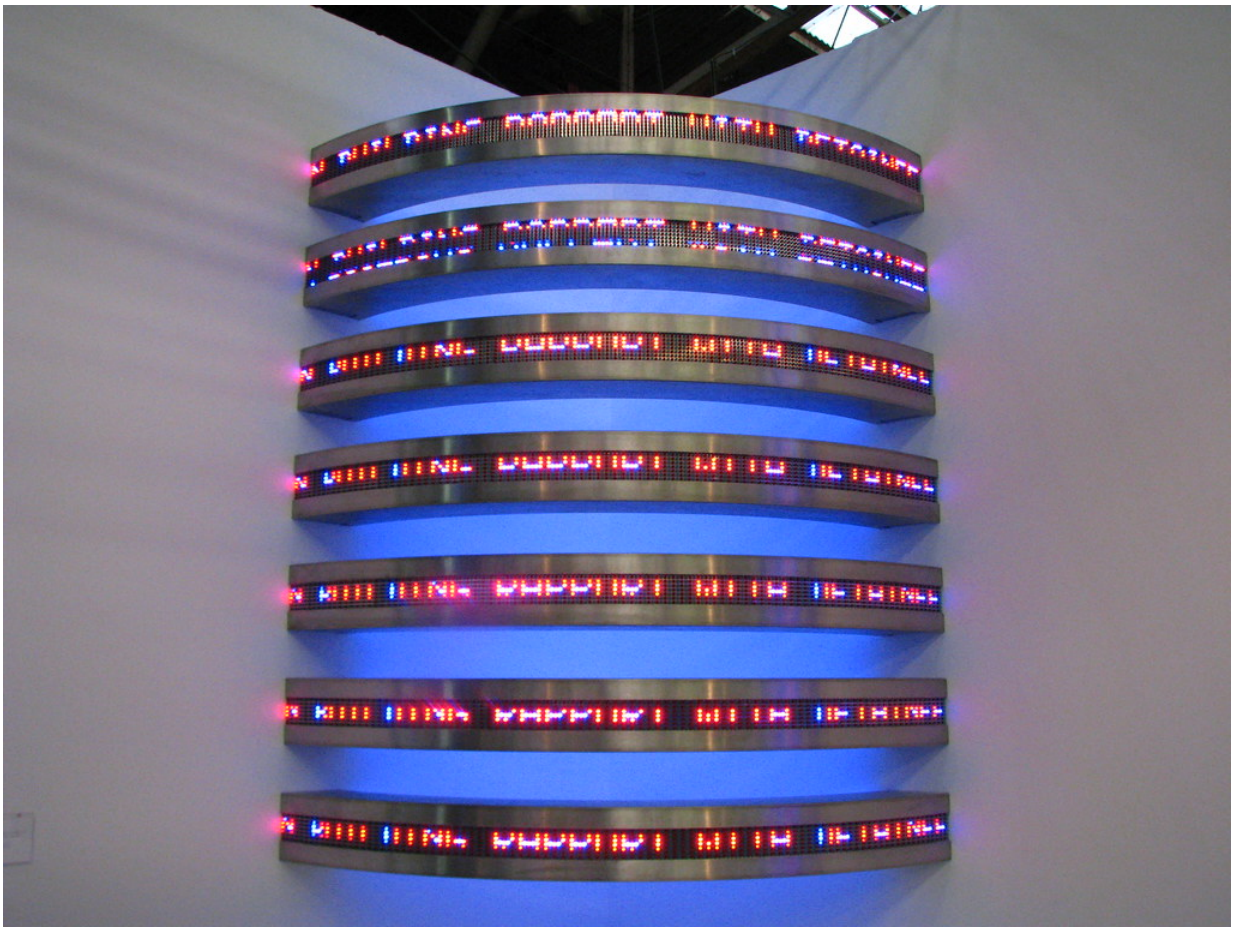


Figure 5.9.10: Stave (2008, curved LED signs, red and blue diodes, 13.3 x 146.6 x 15.2 cm) by C-Monster, CC BY-NC 2.0

A political activist, Holzer was looking to disrupt the passive information from sources that could be more damaging than helpful. In her *Living Series*, *Protect Me From What I Want* (7.6.11), are statements printed on stone, bronze, and aluminum plaques and placed on government buildings around New York City. These one-liner quotes were from a reading list while Holzer was a student. The short statements were about everyday necessities of life like breathing, sleeping, eating, and relationships. The messages represent the beginning of the information age and the jump start of social media.

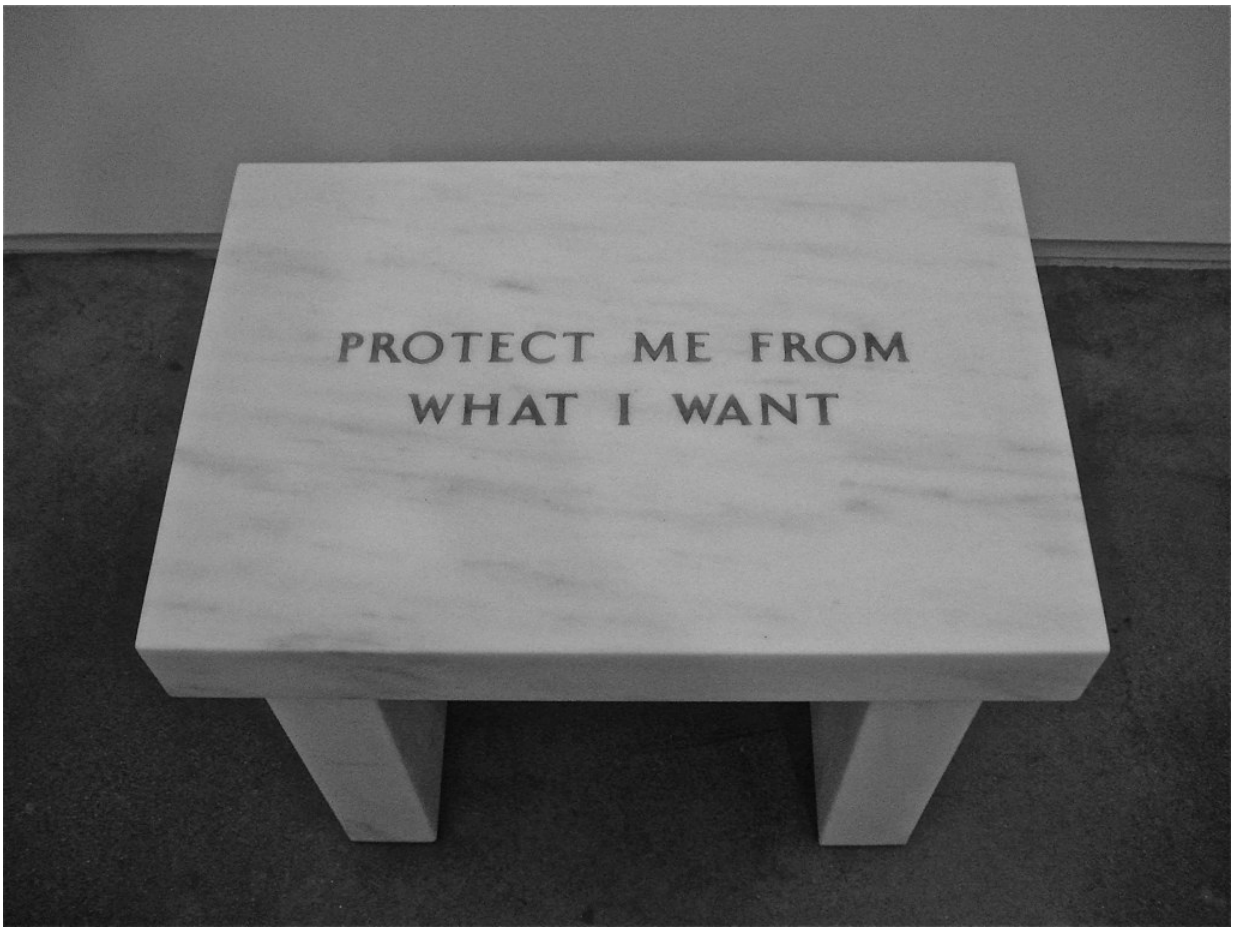


Figure **5.9.11**: Protect Me from What I Want (1985, stone, bronze) by happiercircumstance, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

During the early 1980s, Holzer created a body of work called *Inflammatory Essays* (7.6.12), consisting of posters influenced by political figures. Some of the excerpts read: "Rejoice! Our times are intolerable; Take courage, for the worst is a harbinger of the best; Only dire circumstance can precipitate the overthrow of oppressors; The old & corrupt must be laid to waste before the just can triumph; Contradiction will be heightened; The reckoning will be hastened by the staging of seed disturbances, and The apocalypse will blossom."[10] The posters have been recreated on colored paper and attached to the walls in lines of color for impact.



Figure 5.9.12: Inflammatory Essays (1979-1982, lithograph on paper, each 43.1 x 43.1 cm) by anokarina CC BY-SA 2.0

Faith Ringgold

Faith Ringgold (1930-) is an American artist born in Harlem during the Great Depression. Her parents were descendants of the Great Migration (the movement of six million African Americans from the rural south to the northeast, midwest, and west coast to escape the south's Jim Crow Laws). Ringgold's mother was a fashion designer, and her father was an avid storyteller. Ringgold inherited both qualities from her parents, and they are the driving force in her artwork. She was also influenced by the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural art revival of African American dance, music, and politics in Harlem, a predominantly African American neighborhood.

Ringgold began her painting career after graduating from art school, inspired by Pop Art, African art, Cubism, and Impressionism. Exploring self-portraits, she addresses some of the concurrent Black Power movements in the 1960s. *Early Works #25: Self Portrait* (7.6.13) is an oil painting on canvas in a tight red circle outlined in white. Circles dominate the portrait behind Ringgold, the string of pearls and the two circles on her chest. Her arms are folded across her waist, and she is wearing a multicolored blue dress with a very determined gaze on her face. Ringgold comments, "I was trying to find my voice, talking to myself through my art."[11] In the 1970s, Faith Ringgold collaborated with her mother, Willi Posey, a well-known tailor in Harlem, to make several textiles works.



Figure 5.9.13: Early Works #25: Self-Portrait (1965, oil on canvas, 127 x 101) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Echoes of Harlem (7.6.14) was Ringgold's first quilt and her final collaborative project with her mother. The composition unifies four different fabrics in a recurring rhythm and frames thirty faces, displaying a variety of individual expressions. Together, the faces represent the many life stories present in Harlem. In subsequent years Ringgold began constructing narrative quilts that portray different aspects of African American life in the United States.



Figure 5.9.14: Echoes of Harlem (1980, acrylic on cotton, 227.3 x 204.4 cm) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Ringgold and other black women artists pursued a black cultural consciousness grounded in the reclamation of black historical memory and pan-African spirituality.[12] Framing the issues from black female identity, Ringgold created art inspired by trips to Africa, creating crafts stitching together unique storytelling quilts. One of Ringgold's most famous pieces of art is *Tar Beach* (7.6.15), a painted scene on fabric then quilted the work. The quilt depicts a scene of a family on the roof of their apartment building in Harlem overlooking the George Washington Bridge. The flat roofs on buildings were usually finished in black tar to seal them from the rain and snow. The scene is after dinner, the adults sit around a card table, and the children are lying on blankets wishing they could fly over the city. The story is based upon Ringgold's family memories where "flying among the stars on a hot summer night, Cassie becomes a heroic explorer overcoming obstacles"[13] expresses freedom and self-possession.



Figure **5.9.15**: Tar Beach (1988, acrylic paint, canvas, fabric, ink, thread, 189.5 x 174 cm) by rverc, CC BY 2.0

Tar Beach (7.6.16) closeup depicts the attention to detail with the two children lying on the "tar beach" looking up at the sky. Ringgold is a significant contributor to feminist art and worked with Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), formed in 1969. The group seceded from the male-dominated Art Workers' Coalition (AWC). Ringgold was a professor in the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego, until 2002 when she retired. Her contribution to art is numerous, as is her publications of books.



Figure **5.9.16**: Tar Beach Closeup, by rverc, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Ana Mendieta

Ana Mendieta (1948-1985) The feminist art movement cultivated the expression of female artists and, by extension, has now given voice to countless previously marginalized female artists of color. The work of Ana Mendieta highlighted ethnic and racial expressions of different cultures. Born in Havana, Cuba, the Mendieta family moved to the United States under Operation Peter Pan during the Cuban Revolution. Completing her MFA from the /University of Iowa, Mendieta moved to New York City to pursue her art career. As a displaced Cuban, Mendieta created art focused on her history of displacement, concentrating on feminism, identity, and belonging themes inspired by the avant-garde community. The elements of nature creep into her art, displaying a spiritual and physical relationship with the earth.

> *"Through my earth/body sculptures, I become one with the earth…I become an extension of nature, and nature becomes an extension of my body. This obsessive act of reasserting my ties with the earth is really the reactivation of primeval beliefs…[in] an omnipresent female force, the after image of being encompassing within the womb, is a manifestation of my thirst for being".[14]*

Mendieta's *Silueta Series (Silhouette)* continued her fascination with the earth, mud, sand, and grass as her female silhouettes were created in nature and photographed. In *Untitled* (7.6.17), she created a sculpture with a naked earth-body lying in rock outcrops covered with twigs, weeds, and flowers, connecting with the earth. The contrast between the granite-colored rock, the light brown of the female body, and the green grass with white colors suggest a number of feminist art issues. The significance of a nude woman can exhibit a mother figure, a young woman, or possibly refer to a Mayan deity, lx Chel, which was a feminine life force throughout her work. A key figure in the Body Art Movement, Mendieta combined Land Art into an inextricably linked natural environment art process. Using found objects, she intended to incorporate humanity into one whole world, blurring the boundaries of art movements.



Figure 5.9.17: Untitled (from the Silueta series) (1973-1977, silver dye-bleach print, 50.5 x 40.3 cm) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

After visiting Pre-Columbian archeology in Mesoamerican areas, Mendieta interpolated the female theme into tombs, earth, and rocks. Craving her figure into the dirt, it was filled with blood, as *Silueta Works in Mexico* (7.6.18) displays. In the Mayan culture, blood was used as a source of nourishment for all the deities. The ephemeral artworks show just how fragile the human body is when pitted against nature. The earth body sculptures are a powerful depiction of feminist art installations. It is very unfortunate for the art world as we lost Mendieta at an early age. It is unknown if she was pushed or jumped to her death from the 34th floor of her high-rise apartment, and her husband of 8 months was acquitted for any part he may have played in Mendieta's death.



Figure 5.9.18: Silueta Works in Mexico (1976, red dye, dirt, water) by QRartguide - George Fishman, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Lorna Simpson

Lorna Simpson (1960-) is an American photographer and multimedia artist from New York and attended the High School of Art in Brooklyn. Simpson traveled to Europe to hone her skills of photography, where she documented people and then graduated from the School of Visual Arts with a BFA in painting. Continuing her education, she received an MFA from the University of California at San Diego, emerging with a style of her own called photo-text—photographs which included text—a pioneer of conceptual photography.

One of Simpson's most famous photo-text works is *Five Day Forecast* (7.6.19). A bold display of an African American woman with a cropped torso. She wore a white dress contrasting against the rich brown color of her arms folded across her chest. Words are displayed across the top and bottom of the pictures labeled Monday through Friday and ten white words—misdescription, misinformation, misidentify, misdiagnose, misfunction, mistranscribe, misremember, misgauge, misconstrue, and mistranslate—on black rectangles across the bottom of the display. The word mis/miss is an exchange in the power of words and a shower of recriminations.[15]



Figure 5.9.19: Five Day Forecast (1991, gelatin silver print on paper, 62.2 x 246.4 cm) by C-Monster, CC BY-NC 2.0

Flipside (7.6.20) pairs the art of an African mask with the art of photography but from the backside of each style. The woman has a black dress and black hair against a black background. The mask is set against a black background, hence the name *Flipside*. The curves in both photos relate to the popular hairstyle in the early 1960s traditionally worn by African American women. The plaque below reads: The neighbors were suspicious of her hairstyle. The hair and the mask are seen as primitive cultural pieces of art confirming the identity of African Americans as the flipside of a 45-vinyl record, with the topside being the hit of the time and the flipside being the lesser quality.



Figure **5.9.20**: Flipside (1991, gelatin silver prints and engraved plastic plaque, diptych, 130.8 x 177.8 cm) by ShanMcG213, CC BY-SA 2.0

Marlene Dumas

Marlene Dumas (1953-) was born in Cape Town, South Africa, spending her childhood by a river in Western Cape. Dumas attended the University of Cape Town to study art before moving to the Netherlands and transferring to the University of Amsterdam. She majored in psychology instead of art, planning to become an art therapist. Dumas still lives in the Netherlands and is one of the country's most prolific artists. During her life in South Africa, she identified as a white woman of Afrikaans descent and saw first-hand how Apartheid separated white from black people.

Dumas said she does not paint people; instead, she creates an emotional state focusing on race, violence, sex, death, the contrast of guilt or innocence, and even tenderness or shame. She frequently took photographs of friends and used them as reference material along with photos in magazines. Dumas did not paint using live models, only reference material. Her subjects were political, famous, or erotic, mostly controversial. *Albino* (7.6.21) is one of Dumas' psychologically charged painting with a grey-pink-blue face. The small red-brown eyes are set on each side of a large wide nose with full lips and a small chin. The large forehead is swathed in white light with a widow's peak at the hairline and painted with spontaneous brushwork. By choosing a subject whose very existence complicates the notion of racial categorization and by rendering his skin tone and hair color in a sickly green hue, Dumas insisted on destabilizing the division between black and white.[16]



Figure 5.9.21: Albino (1986, oil on canvas, 130 x 110 cm) by unbearable lightness, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Self Portrait at Noon (7.6.22) is a portrait of the painter with her well-known curly long hair. The ghostly look of silver and black is thematic in most of her work. The sickly green reappears on the body in coordination with a set of small beady eyes set apart over a small nose and little lips showing just a hint of teeth. The black shirt offsets the light colors, adding a contrast to an otherwise monotone painting.



Figure 5.9.22: Self Portrait at Noon (2008, oil on canvas, 90 x 100 cm) by PYL GALLERY, CC BY-NC 2.0

An interesting set of four paintings was created in the early 1990s called the *Four Virgins* (7.6.23, 7.6.24). The small figurative portraits are made from gouache and India ink and are unrecognized anonymous women. The name itself designates the virginal women, yet Dumas allows viewers to experience and make up their minds. Each portrait is similar in color and style of painting, making the group a set of black and white with blue highlights, which sets off each painting.



Figure 5.9.23: Four Virgins (1-4) (1993, gouache, india ink, 31 x 31 cm) by Prelèvman (écouvillon en créole), CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Figure 5.9.24: Four Virgins (1-4) (1993, gouache, india ink, 31 x 31 cm) by Prelèvman (écouvillon en créole), CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

After the Four Virgins, Dumas painted a child with green hair, brooding dark eyes, with red and blue colored hands called *Painter* (7.6.25). Her daughter was finger painting one day with paint all over her hands and an inspiration for the concept in the painting. The baby-like body with bluish skin tones reveals the combination of abstract painterly qualities of drawing and watercolor. The figure is incomplete, a concept Dumas used to remove any real context and inaugurate a more allegorical idea.



Figure 5.9.25: The Painter (1994, oil on canvas, 190.5 x 99 cm) by Steven van Welie, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Joan Semmel

Joan Semmel (1932-) is an American feminist art painter, teacher, and writer and is well-known for her large-scale portraits. Born in New York, she earned a BFA from the Pratt Institute and then spent the next decade in Spain "gradually developing broad gestural and spatially referenced painting to compositions of a somewhat surreal figure/ground composition…(her) highly saturated brilliant color separated (her) paintings from the leading Spanish artists whose work was darker, grayer and Goyaesque".[17] After returning to the states, she earned an MFA from Pratt Institute and started her unique figurative style of erotic themes.

Once back in New York, Semmel joined the feminist movement and devoted herself to gender equality for all. Semmel paints her nudes from a perspective of a women's point of view; they undermine the male stare and reclaim female subjectivity. Nudity in art has ebbed and flowed through thousands of years and across the globe. The tradition of nudity was broken with the fading of neoclassicism art in the 19th century, and "any artist in our culture to nakedly present herself to the public is a deliberate and studied act."[18] Using herself as a model, Semmel photographs the scene she wants to paint and abstracts the images with lines and color. In *Self-Made* (7.6.26), Semmel combined her feminist art ideas with sexual liberation and painted the nude forms in sexual poses. The combination of two female forms in a sexual encounter is rendered with one figure in bright colors foreshortened against

another in more skin tones of color. "Reclaiming the female body for women, Semmel asserted women's rights to create and control their representation and aesthetic pleasure."[19]



Figure **5.9.26**: Self-Made (1980, oil on canvas, 198.12 × 304.8 cm) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Another one of Semmel's paintings is *Touch* (7.6.27), from the female's perspective in the frame. Foreshortened, it is a moment of touch between two people. The erotically charged image subverts the usual position of a full-body female nude lying on a bed and provides the audience with a direct vision of the artist. The warm color tones of the two bodies contrast with the cool colors of the pillow and wall behind the couple. Semmel has continued to paint nudes into the 21st century, although her art is from the perspective of a reflection in the mirror. The paintings reflect an aging woman in a metaphysical state of exploration.



Figure 5.9.27: Touch (1975 oil on canvas 144 cm x 261 cm) by UGArdener, CC BY-NC 2.0

Yolanda López

Yolanda López (1942-2021) is a Mexican American artist, teacher, activist, and feminist. She was born in San Diego and lived with her working-class mother and grandparents. After high school, López enrolled in San Francisco State University. She became involved in student activist groups like the Third World Liberation Front, which led to the creation of the ethnic studies college, and the Los Siete defense committee, a group supporting the men who were unjustly accused of killing a police officer (the seven men were acquitted). Through Los Siete, López designed the community newspaper ¡Basta Ya! During the period, the artist came into political consciousness.

Lopez returned to San Diego and graduated from the San Diego State University in 1975. She received a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California San Diego in 1979. During this period, she created some of her most iconic works. Her series of Guadalupe celebrated working-class Chicanas of different ages and body types. Her Guadalupe series depicted herself, her mother, and her grandmother on separate canvases. In the painting, *Portrait of the Art as the Virgin of Guadalupe* (7.6.28), the artist is smiling broadly with an expression of joy spread across her face. Ultimately, the image is contextualized within the feminist movement of the 1970s.



Figure 5.9.28: Portrait of the Art as the Virgin of Guadalupe (1987, oil, pastel on rag paper, 55 x 76 cm) by gozamos, CC BY-SA 2.0

Late in her life, López was diagnosed with liver cancer, a diagnosis leading the artist to revisit her past experiences. She shared publicly that in the early 1970s, she was raped at gunpoint.[20] She was so hurt and hated the man so much she wanted to kill him; however, he later turned himself in, and she testified in court to convict the man. A viewer might wonder if the joy expressed in her self-portrait is a suggestion of her triumph over the hurt she felt from the rape. *The Portrait of the Art as the Virgin of Guadalupe*

depicts a young, powerful feminist, Chicana, artist. Another work created simultaneously as the *Guadalupe* series reflected the context of immigration issues and the U.S./Mexican border conflicts in the 1970s. In print, *Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?* (7.6.29) the text is written on the image, and the depiction of the man underscores the artist's concern of the hypocrisy in much of the anti-immigration ideology of the time.

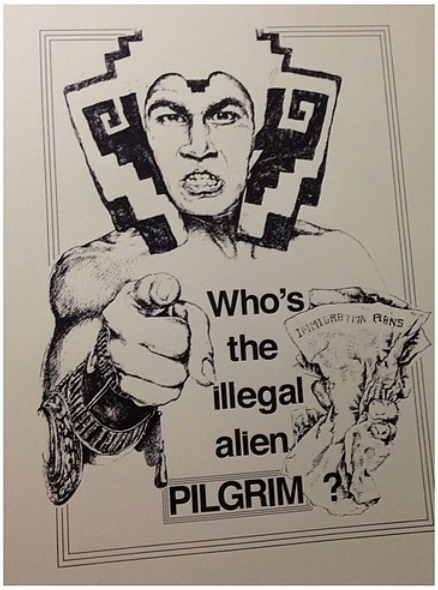


Figure 5.9.29: Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim? (1978, offset lithograph, 55.8 x 44.5 cm) by dignidadrebelde, CC BY 2.0

In one of her final public talks, she explained the Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim? print in the following way:

…I found with a lot of men, women as well, but a lot of men really react very strongly to *Who's the Illegal Alien, Pilgrim?* because it is a man who's got, sort of you know, Aztec Indigenous garb but he's got an expression because a lot of times even with our imagery in the whole pantheon of our heroes whether it was Cesar Chavez or Emilio Zapata or Pancho Villa…[depictions of them] were all very stoic looking, without expression. Here I wanted to portray…expression — anger, self-righteousness, but not only that but what does he have in his hand? He has a sheaf of papers talking about immigration plans. So, it's not like a big you know AK-47 or even like with Zapata, these big sort of ancient wooden rifles and guns, but this is a man…who is talking about ideas. So that the weaponry is not necessarily our guns, but the weaponry is we have a thinking population and that I think it's part of what's appealing to men. They are presented not only with a self-expression as fierce you know as fearsome and self-possessed but also with the kind of, "this is what needs to be done…" You understand the difference and that's where I think feminism comes into that imaging of the illegal alien, that it's a thinking man…I think that's a real gift of feminism, at the time especially, looking at the representation of women in particular and transferring it over to how men are portrayed as well.[21]

We can see the foundation of López's legacy and artistic message through these two works. Even in her final years, facing her impending death, Lopez continued to urge women and Chicanas to fight for their rights, explaining that "the revolution is incremental."

Miriam Schapiro

Miriam Schapiro (1923-2015) was a Canadian feminist artist who used a variety of mediums such as paint, print, and metal to create her art. Graduating from the State University of Iowa with a Ph.D., she moved to New York City to study with the Abstract Expressionists of New York. She has been coined 'the leader of the feminist art movement' and began her abstract expressionist art career after the birth of her first son. In 1967 she moved to California, becoming the first artist who used a computer in creating art. Schapiro collaborated with Judy Chicago opening the first feminist art program and the California Institute of the Arts and the *Womanhouse*, an installation about women and the female experience. Schapiro started experimenting and expand the materials she used in her art and included items that marginalized domestic craft. The assemblage *Barcelona Fan* (7.6.30) emphasizes Schapiro's interest in fabric and the art of sewing, creating a brilliant color fan using tactile materials. The open fan is constructed with alternating rows of red and white and additions of small uses of green and blue in this bigger-than-life fan. "I wanted to validate the

traditional activities of women, to connect myself to the unknown women artists…who had done the invisible 'women's work' of civilization. I wanted to acknowledge them, to honor them."[22]



Figure 5.9.30: Barcelona Fan (1979, fabric and acrylic on canvas,182.9 × 365.8 × 6.7 cm) by rverc, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

In the mid-1980s, Schapiro deviated from her natural materials and created a large-scale sculpture called *Anna and David* (7.6.31) on Wilson Boulevard in Arlington, Virginia. The sculpture was based on a painting called *Pas de Deux* and is over 3.5 meters high and weighs half a metric ton. The brightly painted aluminum is a whimsical pair of dancers that conveys movement in animated poses in unabashed pleasure. The primary colors are vibrant and rich in hues giving the sculpture an animated quality. Schapiro's career spanned over four decades, creating art in abstract expressionism, minimalism, computer art, and feminist art. One type of art she created was fabric collages or, as Schapiro calls it, 'femmages'—a combination of fabric and textiles—depicting women's work.



Figure **5.9.31**: Anna and David (1987, aluminum and paint, 3.5 meters) by Ron Cogswell, CC BY 2.0

Alma López

Alma López (1966-) is a Mexican-born self-identified, Queer Chicana artist raised in Los Angeles. López holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, Irvine. She is a lecturer at the University of California Los Angeles in the Department of Chicana/o Studies. López works in various mediums as a painter, printmaker, photographer, digital and video artist. Much like feminist Chicana artists before her, she reinterprets traditional imagery of historical, cultural, and religious figures such as the Virgin of Guadalupe in work titled, *Our Lady* (7.6.32).



Figure **5.9.32**: Our Lady (1999. Digital print, 35.5 x 44.5 cm) by gozamos, CC BY-SA 2.0

Though controversial, as the artist explains, "Catholic or not, Chicana/Latina/Hispana visual, literacy, or performance artists grew up with the image of the La Virgen de Guadalupe, therefore, entitling us to express our relationship to her in any which way relevant to our own experiences. Many artists, such as Yolanda M. López, Ester Hernández, Santa Barraza, Delilah Montoya, Yreina D. Cervantez, and Raquel Salinas, have shared their own personal experiences using La Virgen de Guadalupe."[23]

Additionally, "López claims that her image was meant to be empowering—a feminist statement and a declaration of indigenous pride…More than a religious symbol, the image-maker says she saw the icon as an artistic one—a public fixture whose roots are more cultural than spiritual 'So for me, she represented culture, community, and family.'"[24] Her feminism extended to Indigenous subjects. In her works of art, the imagery recalls the Aztec world by incorporating references to Aztec deities and other prominent symbols of Mexico. She incorporated themes of immigration, specifically through the imagery of the Monarch butterfly, which yearly travels unimpeded between Mexico and Canada.

From a 2014 exhibition, *The Power of Movement*, we see the theme of feminism, immigration, and self. The image on the left, *My Bad* (7.6.33), depicts a self-portrait of the artist, including a halo of roses as if she has tossed them above her head and a monarch butterfly. On the right side of the photograph is a series of six panels, entitled *Virgen/Lady* (7.6.33). The traditional iconography of Guadalupe is juxtaposed alongside painted images of her own reinterpreted version, *Our Lady* (7.6.33). In the traditional reference of Guadalupe, her head is bowed in a subservient posture (with text overlay, "Revolution is guided by great love"). In the reinterpreted image, the face of her model, Raquel Salinas from *Our Lady*, stares straight out at the viewer. "Raquel Salinas's pose and eyes in *Our Lady* epitomized the feminist return of the gaze that challenges the physical and discursive control over women's bodies, defying the containment of female agency within gendered objectifications" [25] The gaze here is a painted representation based on the original artwork.

The traditional reference shows hands clasped in prayer in front of a fully clothed body. In contrast, Lopez's painted reinterpretation depicts female hands with pink painted fingernails confidently placed on her hips, her midriff exposed. Some versions include an overlay of the outline of Coyolxauhqui (based on an Aztec sculpture of the goddess). Finally, the traditional iconography of the angel with eagle wings is on the traditional reference. The reinterpreted image depicts a bare-breasted woman with a monarch butterfly wing behind her. López's reinterpreted painted, and deconstructed image challenged the traditional image by juxtaposing three specific iconographic changes the artist made in her reinterpreted image.



Figure **5.9.33**: My Bad (2010, acrylic on canvas) by ubrayj02, CC BY 2.0

Shirin Neshat

Shirin Neshat (1957-) is an Iranian-born artist who fled the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and moved to the United States at seventeen. She graduated with an MFA from the University of California, Berkeley, moved to New York City, and worked at an independent gallery. Returning to Iran for the first time in 1990, Neshat was shocked by the social and political upheaval caused by the war. Returning to the states, she dove back into her art, mixing Farsi text with photographs based on her experience in Iran. The text is from female authors during the revolution, such as poet Tahereh Saffarzadeh (1935-2008).[26]

Neshat's early photographic work addressed the women's psychological experience in Islamic cultures. Exposing the issues of femininity and how women identify themselves, she captures the concepts of polemical essays. *Speechless* (7.6.34) is one of a group of formidable images Neshat has connected to Islamic fundamentalism. During her return to Iran, she faced a changing

country, men had taken control, and the once cosmopolitan women no longer existed. Staging photographs of women in chador dressings staring right at the viewer and holding guns with text on their faces were powerful pieces of art. The print *Speechless* is a close-up on a women's face with the barrel of a gun in place of an earring. The women do not appear weak; instead, Neshat has portrayed them as strong and heroic despite suffering through years of social persecution.

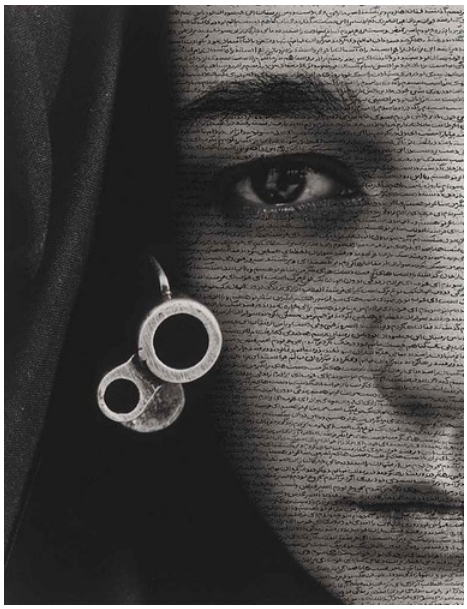


Figure 5.9.34: Speechless (1996, print and ink, 167.6 x 133.4 cm) by Cea, CC BY 2.0

Neshat created a series entitled *The Villains* (7.6.35), pictures of older men with calligraphic details across their chest and arms. The text represents metaphors from the Book of Kings—a Hebrew Bible written in two books. In Bahram, the scene depicts the king on a horse leading an army of men carrying a flag across the plains into battle. "Shirin's exhibit was motivated by the series of political uprisings, now commonly known as the Arab Spring, which took place throughout different Arab countries between 2011 and 2012. The Book of Kings explored the causal conditions of power within social and cultural structures in the modern society." [27]

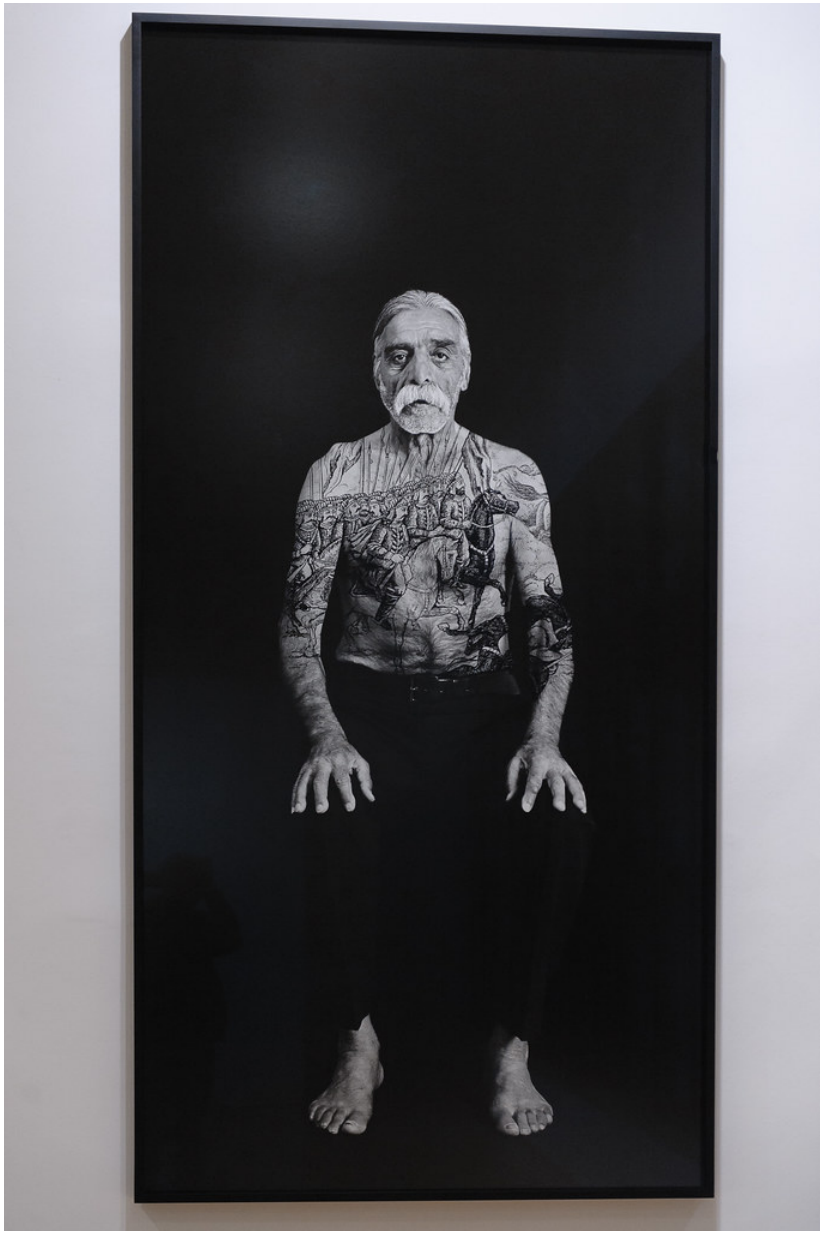


Figure 5.9.35: Bahram (Villians) (2012, gelatin silver print, acrylic, 251.7 x 126.3 cm) by Universalmuseum Joanneum, CC BY-NC 2.0

The paradigm shift in museums has started. Thanks to countless women artists during the last three decades of the 20th century, more women are represented in museums and galleries than nude women hanging on the walls. Without these feminist artists, the door opening for generations of young girls would not be open. The feminist artist gave a fresh and realistic perspective about the female body and art and rewrote art history at the same time. Post-modernism questioned everything about our society and the cultural changes which needed to be addressed. The men who wrote art history left women out of their books; why? Simply because they are women.

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5.10: Guerrilla Girls, ‘You Have to Question What You See’ (interview)

- by **TATE**

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The Guerrilla Girls are an anonymous group of feminist, female artists devoted to fighting sexism and racism within the art world. The group formed in New York City in 1985 with the mission of bringing gender and racial inequality into focus within the greater arts community. The group employs culture jamming in the form of posters, books, billboards, and public appearances to expose discrimination and corruption. To remain anonymous, members don gorilla masks and use pseudonyms that refer to deceased female artists.

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5.11: Before You Move On (Art and Identity)

Key Concepts

National and personal identities do not magically happen; they are built on and influenced by immediate and past events, environments, traditions, and cultural legacies. Artists capture and document not only the physical conditions of a society but also the emotional and mental conditions. They construct a sense of who we were and are as a person and as a nation. Society's identity is always fluid. When we see identity as static, we record people with stereotypes and do not see them for who they are. Art is one way to challenge static notions of identity by engaging the viewer in visual narratives that are unfamiliar to them, and that educate and challenge their previously held notions.

Since the 1970s, postmodern theories have challenged historical and traditional notions of ethnic and cultural identity by developing a model that views identity as being multifaceted, fluid, and socially constructed. Some scholars contend that we are in a period of post identity and post-ethnicity, repudiating the old essentialist view of identity. Globalization of people, the Internet, and travel have all brought about fluid cultures which may have contributed to people's more fluid sense of identity, and also to their interest in researching their heritage, culture, and ethnic identity. Heritage is the treasure and symbols of pride for an individual, country, and nation. Many works of art are seen as part of national heritage because they help citizens appreciate their past. Art provides life to the past, something that can be visualized, touched, walk through, and identified as being part of a legacy and culture.

Test Yourself

1. On the surface Kim Sooja's art seems simple, but underneath it is an enigma of traditions that make a metaphoric identity statement; for example, her use of fabric as an art form evokes intimacy and honor of her culture and history. Discuss and identify at-least two artists whose work makes a personal and historical statement. Be specific as you reference each image associated with your essay. (minimum of 500 words).
2. A number of circumstances throughout history have compelled artists to confront the context of social issues, select at-least two works of art that best describe an event or issue. Discuss the problems associated with the issue, and how the event and art shaped the legacy or identity of the country or nation. Describe the power the work communicates, discuss the significance of the work and how it convey a message, and identity of the people in that period of time. At the end of your essay make commentary on why you selected the art works what you think about the art. (Attach selected work with captions.) Answer to the question is located throughout the chapter).
3. Throughout history building were constructed in a manner to symbolize power; spirituality; and godlessness. Structures house institutions that guide, influence and shape a society's morals, values, politics, religious and social conditioning. Select 4 structures that best symbolize the identity or culture of a society. Describe its impact on influencing a nation, significance to the nation and how the structure contributes to national or individual identity. At the end of your essay discuss why you selected the structures and the aesthetics of the building. (Attach selected structures with captions.)
4. Compare and contrast four works of art that best describe a personal or national identity. Discuss with specifics how the artist is able to capture the character of the person or nation. At the end of your essay add a commentary why you selected the works and their significance. (Attach selected works with captions.)

KEY TERMS

Baroque: a style of architecture and art that originating in Italy in the early seventeenth century

Bottari: Cloth wrapped and tied around clothes , fabric, or/and items into a bundle for carry

Grave stele: is a stone or wooden slab, generally taller than it is wide, erected usually in Greek cemeteries as a monument, for funerary or commemorative purposes.

Hypogeum: an underground prehistoric burial site

Impressionism: is a nineteenth-century art movement that developed in France during the late nineteenth century by a group of artists called the Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors

Impressionist: A painter whose painting have characteristics of the impressionism movement, emphasizing accurate depiction of light in its changing qualities, uses small, thin, yet visible brush strokes, open composition,

Individualism: emphasizes potential of man and self development own beliefs. The Individualism during the Renaissance period became a prominent theme in Italy

Industrial Revolution: period during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in western Europe and the United States when industry quickly developed due to the invention of steam powered engines and the growth of factories. Fundamental changes occurred in agriculture, textile and metal manufacture, transportation, economic and policies, and had a major impact on how people lived

Obas: The title of "oba," or king, is passed on to the firstborn son of each successive king of Benin, Africa at the time of his death

Renaissance Period: a period of time from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century in Europe. The era bridged the time between the Middle Ages and modern

Tableau: is an incidental scene, as of a group of people

Tower tomb: are mausoleums, built in 1067 and 1093

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: 2D Media (Drawing, Painting and Printmaking)

Learning Objectives

- Explain why an artist would prefer one 2D medium over another.
- Define and describe the different drawing styles, materials and processes.
- Define and describe the different painting styles, materials and processes.
- Define and describe the different printmaking styles, materials and processes.

6.1: Drawing

6.2: Painting

6.3: First Nation Group of Seven

6.4: Contemporary Figurative

6.5: Printmaking

6.6: Japan's Edo Period

6.7: Quilting

6.8: Key Terms- Materials and Methods

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6.1: Drawing

Learning Objectives

- Identify and distinguish various drawing media and techniques.

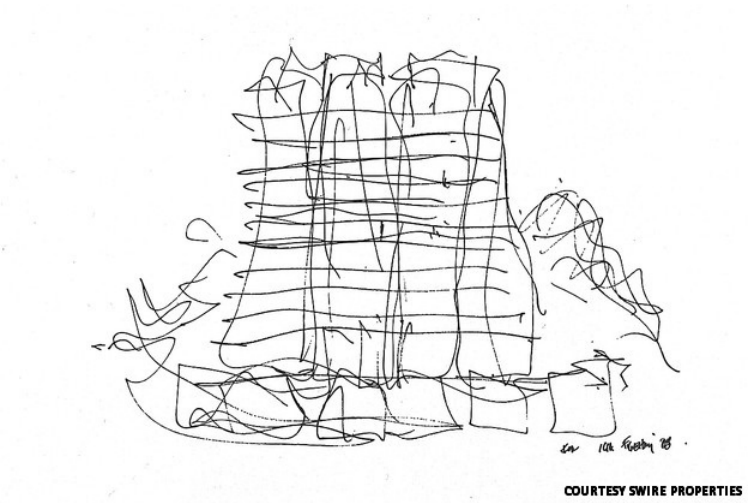
Drawing

For centuries charcoal, chalk, graphite and paper were adequate tools to launch some of the most profound images in art. Leonardo da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist* wraps all four figures together in what is essentially an extended family portrait. Da Vinci draws the figures in a spectacularly realistic style, one that emphasizes individual identities and surrounds the figures in a grand, unfinished landscape. He animates the scene with the Christ child pulling himself forward, trying to release himself from Mary's grasp to get closer to a young John the Baptist on the right, who himself is turning toward the Christ child with a look of curious interest in his younger cousin.



Leonardo da Vinci, The Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist, c. 1499-1500 or c. 1506-8, charcoal, black and white chalk on tinted paper mounted on canvas, 55.7 x 41.2". PD-US

The traditional role of drawing was to make sketches to plan the compositions that would finally be made manifest as paintings, sculpture or even architecture. Because of its relative immediacy, this function for drawing continues today. A **preliminary sketch** by the contemporary architect Frank Gehry captures the complex organic forms of the buildings he designs.



Taken on April 18, 2012, Some rights reserved 準建築人手札網站 Forgemind ArchiMedia | Frank Gehry – Opus Hong Kong 香港豪宅

Types of Drawing Media

Dry media includes charcoal, graphite, chalks and pastels. Most of these drawing media are made by combining **pigment** (the color source from materials like ground charcoal or minerals) with a binder which allows it to be formed into a stick or suspended in a liquid (for wet media like ink), and that let it adhere to the surface of paper. Each of these mediums gives the artist a wide range of mark-making capabilities and effects, from thin lines to large areas of color and tone. The artist can manipulate a drawing to achieve desired effects in many ways, including exerting different pressures on the medium against the drawing's surface, or by erasure, blotting or rubbing.

Artists use drawing in a number of ways. In art school, **gesture drawing** – quick, big movements that develop hand/eye coordination – is a standard. Artists often use similar quick drawings as preliminary sketches to capture the images they will further refine in a finished painting, sculpture or other work. Sometimes artists make finished drawings that are collectable pieces of art in their own right.

This process of drawing can instantly capture the sense of character in an image. From energetic to subtle, the immediate and unalloyed spirit of the artist's idea are apparent in the simplest works. You can see this in the self-portraits of two German artists: Kathe Kollwitz and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.



Kathe Kollwitz, Self-Portrait, 1933, charcoal on brown laid Ingres paper, 47.7 x 63.5 cm, National Gallery of Art. PD US http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Co...page.8139.html

Kollwitz was a German artist of the twentieth century. She was the first woman to be elected to the Prussian Academy of Arts. Her work records the suffering of common people, especially mothers, after WWI and II. Kollwitz' work in this self-portrait shows how expressive charcoal can be with an economy of means such as the quick gestures with which she has drawn her sleeve.

Wounded during the First World War, Kirchner's '*Self-Portrait Under the Influence of Morphine*' from about 1916 presents us with a nightmarish vision of himself wrapped in the fog of opiate drugs. His hollow eyes and the graphic dysfunction of his marks attest to the power of his drawing.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, ‘Self Portrait Under the Influence of Morphine’, around 1916, ink on paper

Graphite media includes pencils, powder or compressed sticks. Each one creates a range of **values** – or range of tones from light to dark suggesting light and shadow – depending on the hardness or softness inherent in the material. Hard graphite tones range from light to dark gray, while softer graphite allows a range from light gray to nearly black. James Ward captures the texture of this old tree using line, hatching, cross-hatching and areas of smudged shadow.



James Ward, an Old Oak Tree, n.d., graphite on medium, smooth, cream wove paper, 5.39 x 7.76”, Yale Center for British Art. PD US IgGeQ57T_CImmQ at Google Cultural Institute

Artists buy graphite pencils according to hardness – B suggests a level of softness which allows for very dark darks while HB or H usually indicates a very hard “lead” and a sharper, thinner, grayer line quality. Graphite is a naturally occurring form of carbon that was mined but now is extracted from various ores. Mixed with clay (the **binder**) and encased in a wooden tube it became the drawing medium we know today. As with the other dry media we will discuss, the higher the content of the **binder** the harder or less amount of **pigment** will be left behind on the **support** (paper or other material being drawn upon).

Metalpoint

Metalpoint was historically used in much the same way graphite or pencils are today. Some contemporary artists still work in metalpoint, but it is not common. During the Renaissance artists like Fra Fillippo Lippi made drawings using metalpoint on a prepared surface. The **support,** or drawing surface, must be covered with a **ground** – a preparation made in the Renaissance of

bone ash, glue, and white pigment in water. Other pigments can be added to give the surface a pale color like pink or, as in this case, ochre (yellowish brown). The metal – usually a silver wire encased in wood like the graphite in a pencil – would be drawn over the dry surface of the support leaving traces of the metal behind. Silver tarnishes and darkens when exposed to the light, and it does on paper as well. The big issue was erasing – this could only be done by painting over the image with the ground and starting again.



Filippino Lippi, Standing Male Figure, ca. 1480, soft metalpoint, highlighted with white gouache (some touches of black chalk probably added by later hand), on ochre prepared paper, 6 7/8 x 2 15/16", MET. This file is made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication. http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/335191

Charcoal

Charcoal, perhaps the oldest form of drawing media, is made by simply charring wooden sticks or small branches, called **vine charcoal**, but is also available in a mechanically compressed form. Vine charcoal comes in three densities: soft, medium and hard, each one handling a little differently than the other. Soft charcoals give a more velvety feel to a drawing. The artist doesn't have to apply as much pressure to the stick in order to get a solid mark. Hard vine charcoal offers more control but generally doesn't give the darkest tones. Compressed charcoals give deeper blacks than vine charcoal, but are more difficult to manipulate once they are applied to paper.



Left: vine charcoal sticks. Right: compressed charcoal squares.

Charcoal drawings can range in value from light grays to rich, velvety blacks. A charcoal drawing by American artist Georgia O'Keeffe is a good example.



Georgia O'Keeffe, Drawing XIII, 1915, Charcoal on paper, 24 3/8 x 18 1/2 in., MET PD US

Chalk

Artists can get a full range of color from chalk, pastel, and crayon. Chalk comes primarily from finely textured stone that can be combined with binders like clay. Red chalk like that Michelangelo used to create his study for the Libyan Sibyl on the Sistine Ceiling would have been made of iron oxide and clay. Artists often use a touch of white chalk or paint to create highlights in drawings in other mediums. Chalk is not as widely used today as it was in Michelangelo's day, but can still be found. Other varieties of chalk are black, made of a composite of carbon and clay, and the traditional white chalk made of calcite or calcium carbonate.



Michelangelo, Study for the Libyan Sibyl, ca. 1510. Red chalk on paper, MET. Public Domain.

https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibition...7/michelangelo

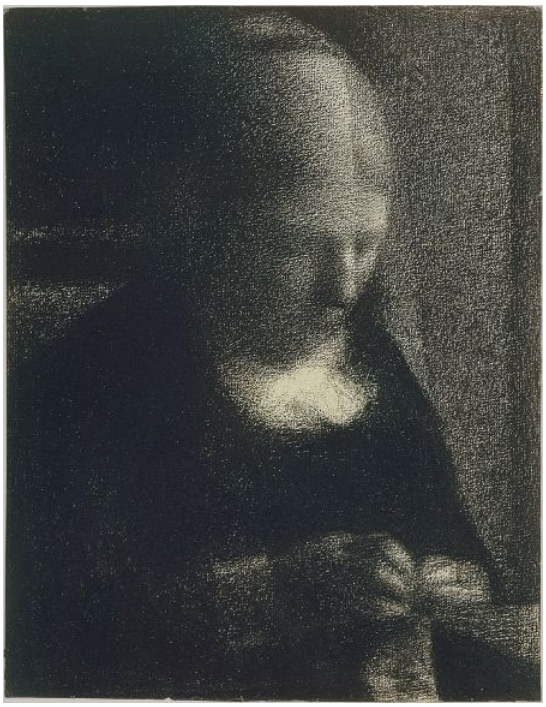
See the above link for a discussion of this image by a curator at the MET.

Crayon

Crayon and Pastels are essentially made of pigment combined with a waxy or greasy binder and usually compressed into stick form for better handling. With these a full range of hues (colors) becomes possible. Crayons use a binder of wax and oil – artists'

crayons come in a wider range than childrens' crayons and they are a little more dense, but the idea is the same. Because the binder is more substantial crayon is less easily blended than other media. A crayon with a creamier consistency that is blendable is called oil crayon or oil pastel. And the **conté crayon**, invented in 1795 by Nicolas-Jacques Conté, was created from a combination of clay and graphite in response to the shortage of graphite during the English blockade of France during the Napoleonic Wars.[1] Conté crayons were relatively cheap to manufacture and could be made in various degrees of hardness. Today conté crayons come in a variety of colors besides black including red and gray.

Georges Seurat, the inventor of the pointillist technique, used conté crayon on paper with a very raised "**tooth**" – or surface texture – to approximate his dot technique in drawing. The waxy crayon sits on the elevated weave of the paper leaving the valleys white creating a kind of automatic dot screen.



Georges Seurat, Embroidery, the Artist's Mother, 1882-83, conte crayon on Michallet paper, 12 5/16 x 9 7/16 in. MET PD-US http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/334652

Pastels

Pastels are like very soft chalk that come in a huge variety of colors. They are characterized by leaving soft, subtle changes in tone or color and give the effect of paint in many cases because of the possibility of blending. Pastel pigments allow for a resonant quality that is more difficult to obtain with graphite or charcoal. Picasso's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* from 1896 emphasizes these qualities.



Pablo Picasso, Portrait of the Artist's Mother, 1896, pastel on paper, Museo Picasso, Barcelona. PD US

You can see where Picasso has blended the pastel in her skin areas especially. It looks very much like an oil painting, but if you look closely at the hair that brushes her neck in back you can get a sense of the soft, dry chalky pigment going down on the paper surface. Paper used with pastels usually has more tooth, sometimes resembling velveteen with tiny hairs that allow the dry pigment to sit between them. Modern pastels are usually fixed with something like a spray-on acrylic to hold the pigment in place.



Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917). Dancer Onstage with a Bouquet, c.1876. Pastel over monotype on laid paper. Plate: 10 5/8 × 14 7/8 in. Private collection. PD-US; image taken from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/...b0c3ef5217b69a with credit to MoMA

Degas used pastels to create soft, painterly images, especially of dancers. The Phillips Collection has an informative short essay on his process here: http://blog.phillipscollection.org/2011/12/20/degas-and-pastels-part-i/



Clementina, ‘Pastels’

More recent developments in dry media are **oil pastels**, pigment mixed with an organic oil binder that deliver a heavier mark and lend themselves to more graphic and vibrant results. The drawings of Beverly Buchanan reflect this. Buchanan was an African-American artist whose work celebrates rural life of the south centered in the forms of old houses and shacks. The buildings stir memories and provide a sense of place, and are usually surrounded by people, flowers and bright landscapes. She also creates sculptures of the shacks, giving them an identity beyond their physical presence.



Beverly Buchanan, Ferry Road Shacks, 1988, Oil Pastel on Paper, 38″ x 50″. Courtesy The Estate of Beverly Buchanan, Jane Bridges

Drawings are also done in wet media. It is the linear quality of the work that determines its genre (drawing) even though the media is more like paint than pencil.

Wet Drawing Media

Pen and Ink

Drawings are also often done with a pen and ink. The ink again uses pigment, both colored and black, but suspended in a liquid medium. Sometimes gum arabic – the hardened sap of the acacia tree – is added to help with adhesion and viscosity. Many different cultures and throughout different periods in history pen and ink drawings have served to capture quick impressions of a scene or put down an artists initial ideas about a larger and more complex work. Some ink drawings are finished compositions in their own right.

Pen nibs are the point of the pen; metal pen nibs like those used today have been around for a relatively short time – only since the 19th century. Earlier versions of pens used things like reeds with one end sharpened to a point, or a bird’s quill similarly sharpened. More technical drawings are made today by a tool known as a rapidograph pen. Here the metal points allow ink to flow through them onto the paper. They come in a variety of thicknesses allowing for lines of varying widths.

Brush and Ink

Soft pointed brushes are also used to make drawings with ink. The artist’s dexterity with the brush allows for the variety in width of line. Drawings made with brush and ink is a tradition in the East in particular.



Bird bathing, Ten Bamboo collection of Calligraphy and Painting, vol. 5 and 6 (birds), leaf 11, ed. Hu Zhengyan, China, Nanjing, 1633, woodblock print of ink drawing. Photo: Daderot, This file is made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication

Paper and Erasers

Paper itself can be used to make drawings – or at least very linear images. Erasers also function in the drawing process for many artists. One artist, Robert Rauschenberg, made an entire "painting" or "drawing" with an eraser. We will see him explain it himself in a video in class.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/arthistory/?p=95

Papermaking has been around for literally hundreds of years. Historically it is traced back to 105 CE when Cai Lun, an official with the Han Dynasty in China, made paper with natural fibers and old fishing nets. From China it spread by way of the Silk Road to the Islamic world, and by way of the Crusaders, most likely, to the West.

Not surprisingly, the Kingdoms of Northern Spain in the 12th century were the first European areas to develop papermaking of their own, probably because of the Islamic heritage in that country. In Italy by the 13th century paper was made using rags, a rigid wire mold and gelatin sizing.[2]

Today papermaking is practiced by artists as a discrete artform. Necessary is some method of pulping organic rag material which is then poured onto the wire mesh frame molds and stacked to dry. The molds are called "deckles" and the word is then used to

describe the uneven end that is characteristic of hand-made paper.



The vatman about to dip a paper mould into the vat. From the Encyclopédie of Diderot, 1751-1777. PD US accessed 8/23/17: http://www.wovepaper.co.uk/background.html

Commercial papers are sold today by weight. 500 sheets of paper are called a ream; 500 sheets of a good, heavyweight paperstock weighs more than 500 sheets of a cheaper copy paper stock and costs accordingly. Good paper for wedding invitations and the like might be made on 100 lb. stock while copy paper is about 60 lb. or less.

Good quality paper is thick and holds up well to various wet media. It can also be used to create paper sculpture, a popular illustrative medium. Here are a few examples of the kind of work being done with – as opposed to on – paper.

Collage

Paper itself can become a drawing medium. Picasso and Matisse pioneered the "**papier collé**", or collage, in the early 20th century. In the middle of the 20th century artists like Romare Bearden, an early member of the Harlem Renaissance, used cut and pasted papers in a particularly expressive way to record the experience of African-American culture.



Romare Bearden, Spring Way, 1964, collage on paperboard sheet, 6 5/8 x 9 3/8" Smithsonian American Art Museum. americanart.si.edu/collections/rights/ Taken on March 4, 2010 Some rights reserved

Paper Sculpture

Paper itself can be the drawing medium. Paper, manipulated, glued, and sometimes painted has been a popular medium for illustration and gallery art. In this example, individual pieces of a heavy hand-made paper that could withstand soaking in water were cut out, bent and shaped, then pasted down on a black surface to create a Surrealist-inspired image for an album cover for a string quartet.



Muffet Jones, illustration for the Naumburg Foundation. Courtesy the artist

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Artist's Official Website: http://www.beverlybuchanan.com/

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1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cont%C3%A9
2 http://www.wovepaper.co.uk/background.html

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6.2: Painting

In his *NaturalisHistoria*, Pliny the Elder tells of a painting contest between the great Greek painter Zeuxis and his rival Parrhasius to decide who was the greatest artist. Zeuxis painted a still life of grapes that appeared so real birds flew down to peck at them. Parrhasius concealed his painting behind a curtain, and asked Zeuxis if he would please unveil it. When Zeuxis tried to pull the curtain aside it proved to be a painted illusion. Parrhasius was the winner, and Zeuxis was said to have generously exclaimed, "I have deceived the birds, but Parrhasius has deceived Zeuxis." This historical anecdote is probably not entirely true, but it seems that Zeuxis, at least, was a great Greek painter. Sadly, the only examples of painting from the Greeks that survive are those on ceramics and in the wall frescoes of Pompeii and Herculaneum, but descriptions of the work of Zeuxis suggests it was well-developed and innovative, exhibiting many of the skills artists would only rediscover during the Renaissance. This chapter will introduce the materials and techniques of painting, both historical and still employed today.

Painting is the application of pigments to a support surface that establishes an image, design or decoration. In art, the term 'painting' describes both the act and the result. Most painting is created with pigment in liquid form applied with a brush. Exceptions to this are found in Navajo sand painting and Tibetan mandala painting, where powdered pigments are used. Painting as a medium has survived for thousands of years and is, along with drawing and sculpture, one of the oldest creative mediums. It's used in some form by most cultures around the world.

Three of the most recognizable images in Western art history are paintings: Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, and Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night*. These three art works are examples of how painting can go beyond a simple mimetic function – that is, to only imitate what is seen. The power in great painting is that it transcends perceptions to reflect emotional, psychological, even spiritual levels of the human condition.

Painting mediums are extremely versatile because they can be applied to many different surfaces (called *supports*) including paper, wood, canvas, plaster, clay, lacquer, concrete and more. Because paint is usually applied in a liquid or semi-liquid state it has the ability to soak into porous support material, which can, over time, weaken and damage it. To prevent this a support is usually first covered with a *ground*, a mixture of binder and chalk that, when dry, creates a non-porous layer between the support and the painted surface. A typical ground is called "gesso".

There are six major painting mediums, each with specific individual characteristics:

- Encaustic
- Fresco
- Tempera
- Oil
- Watercolor and Gouache
- Acrylic

All of them use three basic ingredients:

- Pigment
- Binder
- Solvent

Pigments are granular solids incorporated into the paint to contribute color. The **binder**, commonly referred to as the *vehicle*, is the actual film-forming component of paint. The binder holds the pigment in solution until it's ready to be dispersed onto the surface. The **solvent** controls the flow and application of the paint. It's mixed into the paint, usually with a brush, to dilute it to the proper viscosity, or thickness, before it's applied to the surface. Once the solvent has evaporated from the surface the remaining paint is fixed there. Solvents range from water to oil-based products like linseed oil and mineral spirits. Let's look at each of the six main painting mediums:

Encaustic

Encaustic paint mixes dry pigment with a heated beeswax binder. The mixture is then brushed or spread across a support surface. Reheating allows for longer manipulation of the paint. Encaustic dates back to at least the first century C.E. and was used extensively in funerary mummy portraits from Fayum in Egypt. The characteristics of encaustic painting include strong, resonant

colors and extremely durable paintings. Because of the beeswax binder, when encaustic cools it forms a tough skin on the surface of the painting. Typically, the support used for encaustic must be rigid, like the wooden panels of the Fayum portraits, to keep the wax from cracking. Some modern artists have used more flexible supports, however, with mixed results.



Mummy-portrait, wax-tempera-made on wood. A young man in roman clothing. He belongs to the greco-roman upper-class. Early 3d Century, 37.5 cm high, Inv.-Nr. 15013. Photo by Matthias Kabel, Gnu Free Documentation License

The twentieth-century American artist, Jasper Johns used encaustic techniques in his compositions. In his work, '*Flag*' (1954-1955), Jasper used a combination of encaustic, oil, and collage on fabric mounted on plywood. In other works he used crumpled newsprint soaked in the encaustic, applied to the canvas, allowed to dry and then painted over. This technique, for Johns, suggested the exaggerated brushwork of the Abstract Expressionists without actually having done the brushwork. It was a cool, ironic employment of medium as "gesture."



'Flag', Jasper Johns, encaustic, oil, and collage on fabric mounted on plywood. CC by SA 2.0. Photo by Ed Schipul, taken at MoMA March 2007. https://www.flickr.com/photos/eschipul/2126206600



Duccio, ‘The Crevole Madonna’, c. 1280. Tempera on board. Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy. PD

Tempera paint combines pigment with an egg yolk binder, then thinned and released with water. Like encaustic, tempera has been used for thousands of years. It dries quickly to a durable matte finish. Tempera paintings are traditionally applied in successive thin layers, called glazes, painstakingly built up using networks of cross hatched lines. Because of this technique tempera paintings are known for their detail.

In early Christianity, tempera was used extensively to paint images of religious icons. The pre-Renaissance Italian artist Duccio (c. 1255–1318), one of the most influential artists of the time, used tempera paint in the creation of ‘*The CrevoleMadonna*‘ (above). You can see the sharpness of line and shape in this well-preserved work, and the detail he renders in the face and skin tones of the Madonna (see the detail below).



Contemporary painters still use tempera as a medium. American painter Koo Schadler uses traditional methods and materials to create her poetic paintings of rabbits, flowers, and other still life and portrait objects. She prepares the surface of the support with multiple layers of gesso, dried, sanded, and reapplied to create a velvety smooth surface on which the egg-based tempera is applied.



Koo Schadler, White Rabbit & Zinnias for Dorothy, Egg tempera, on true gesso panel, 11 ¼ x 10 ¾". Permission of the artist

Fresco

Fresco painting is used exclusively on plaster walls and ceilings. The medium of fresco has been used for thousands of years, but is most associated with its use in Christian images during the Renaissance period in Europe.

There are two forms of fresco: **buon** or "wet", and **secco**, meaning "dry".

Buon fresco technique consists of painting in pigment mixed with water on a thin layer of wet, fresh lime mortar or plaster. The pigment is applied to and absorbed by the wet plaster; after a number of hours, the plaster dries and reacts with the air: it is this chemical reaction that fixes the pigment particles in the plaster. Because of the chemical makeup of the plaster, a binder is not required. Buon fresco is more stable because the pigment becomes fused with the wall itself.

Domenico di Michelino's '*Dante and the Divine Comedy*' from 1465 (below) is a superb example of buon fresco. The colors and details are preserved in the dried plaster wall. Michelino shows the Italian author and poet Dante Aleghieri standing with a copy of the Divine Comedy open in his left hand, gesturing to the illustration of the story depicted around him. The artist shows us four different realms associated with the narrative: the mortal realm on the right depicting Florence, Italy; the heavenly realm indicated by the stepped mountain at the left center – you can see an angel greeting the saved souls as they enter from the base of the mountain; the realm of the damned to the left – with Satan surrounded by flames greeting them at the bottom of the painting; and the realm of the cosmos arching over the entire scene.



Domenico di Michelino, ‘Dante’s Divine Comedy’, 1465, buon fresco, the Duomo, Florence, Italy. Photo by Sailko Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported

Fresco secco refers to painting an image on the surface of a dry plaster wall. This medium requires a binder since the pigment is not mixed into the wet plaster. Egg tempera is the most common binder used for this purpose. It was common to use fresco secco over buon fresco murals in order to repair damage or make changes to the original.

Leonardo Da Vinci’s painting of ‘*The Last Supper*‘ (below) was done using fresco secco.



The Last Supper: Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper, although much deteriorated, demonstrates the painter’s mastery of the human form in figurative composition. PD-US

Unfortunately, Leonardo also experimented with other processes and media as he painted the work and almost immediately it began to dry and flake from the wall. It has been “in restauro”, or under restoration, for many years.

Oil

Oil paint is the most versatile of all the painting mediums. It uses pigment mixed with a binder of linseed oil. Linseed oil can also be used as the vehicle, along with mineral spirits or turpentine. Oil painting was thought to have developed in Europe during the 15th century, but recent research on murals found in Afghani caves show oil based paints were used there as early as the 7th century.

Some of the qualities of oil paint include a wide range of pigment choices, its ability to be thinned down and applied in almost transparent glazes as well as used straight from the tube (without the use of a vehicle), built up in thick layers called **impasto** (you can see this in many works by Vincent van Gogh). One drawback to the use of impasto is that over time the body of the paint can split, leaving networks of cracks along the thickest parts of the painting. Because oil paint dries slower than other mediums, it can

be blended on the support surface with meticulous detail. This extended working time also allows for adjustments and changes to be made without having to scrape off sections of dried paint.

In Jan Brueghel the Elder's still life oil painting you can see many of the qualities mentioned above. The richness of the paint itself is evident in both the resonant lights and inky dark colors of the work. The working of the paint allows for many different effects to be created, from the softness of the flower petals to the reflection on the vase and the many visual textures in between.



Jan Brueghel the Elder, Still-Life with Garland of flowers and Golden Tazza, 1618, oil on panel, 18.7 x 20.7", Museum of ancient Art. PD-US

Richard Diebenkorn's *Cityscape #1* from 1963 shows how the artist uses oil paint in a more fluid, expressive manner. He thins down the medium to obtain a quality and gesture that reflects the sunny, breezy atmosphere of a California morning. Diebenkorn used layers of oil paint, one over the other, to let the under painting show through and a flat, more geometric space that blurs the line between realism and abstraction.



Cityscape #1, Richard Diebenkorn, rocor; https://learn.saylor.org/mod/page/view.php?id=4371

Rembrandt was a master of paint-handling, and made more self-portraits than practically any other artist in history. This painting from around 1662 shows the technique of **impasto** used to build up a wrinkled and cratered surface that suggests the weathered skin of the artist in old age.



Rembrandt, Self-portrait, c. 1662, oil on canvas, 32.5 x 25.6", Wallraf-Richartz-Museum. PD US

The Abstract Expressionist painters pushed the limits of what oil paint could do. Their focus was in the *act* of painting as much as it was about the subject matter. Indeed, for many of them there was no distinction between the two. The work of Willem de Kooning leaves a record of oil paint being brushed, dripped, scraped and wiped away all in a frenzy of creative activity.



Willem de Kooning, Woman I, 1950-52, oil on canvas (MoMA). Photo Steven Zucker taken May 7, 2014. CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Acrylic

Acrylic paint became commercially available in the 1950's as an alternative to oils. Pigment is suspended in an acrylic polymer emulsion binder and uses water as the vehicle. The acrylic polymer has characteristics like rubber or plastic. Acrylic paints offer the body, color resonance and durability of oils without the expense, mess and toxicity issues of using heavy solvents to mix them. One major difference is the relatively fast drying time of acrylics. They are water soluble, but once dry become impervious to water or other solvents. Moreover, acrylic paints adhere to many different surfaces and are extremely durable. Acrylic impastos will not crack or yellow over time as oils sometimes do.

Beatriz Milhaze is a Brazilian artist who uses the unique properties of acrylic to create her intricate patterned surfaces. She paints a design on a sheet of plastic and presses it to a canvas which may already contain other painted areas or designs. When it has dried she peels away the plastic sheet leaving the acrylic form attached to the canvas.

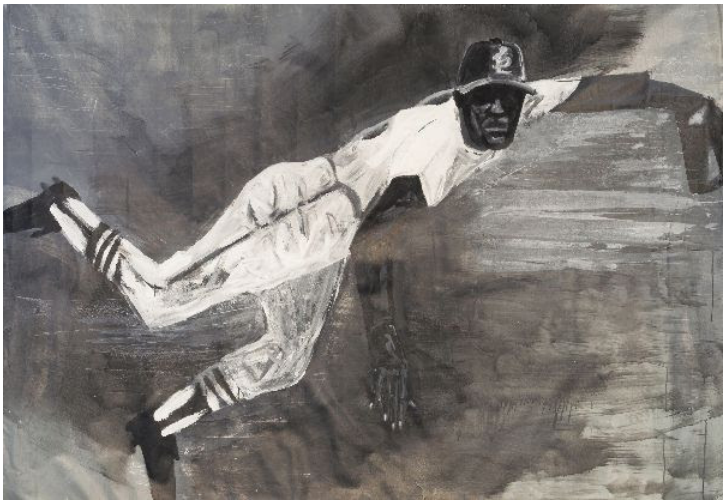


BEATRIZ MILHAZES, Mariposa, 2004, Acrylic on canvas, 98 X 98 in. Photo courtesy of James Cohen Gallery, New York.

Mixed Media

Portland artist Troy Mathews uses latex paint, acrylic paint, and welding crayon on an unstretched drop cloth in this painting of St. Louis Cardinal's pitcher Bob Gibson from 2016.

The painting is titled *The Black Body Problem*, a scientific term that refers to objects that absorb light without reflecting light back. German theoretical physicist Max Planck in ca. 1900 created a theory regarding "black-body radiation." His work was useful to Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Mathews uses the term to refer to America's "black-body problem" of race. Gibson played from 1959-1975 and was a nine-time All-Star, Two-time world Series champion and was awarded two Cy Young Awards during the era of the Civil Rights Movement.



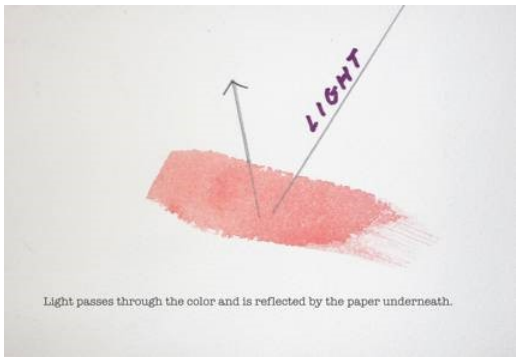
Troy Mathews, The Black Body Problem, 2016. Latex paint, acrylic paint, welding crayon on unstretched drop cloth, 183 x 153 cm. Permission of the artist

He was also subjected to discrimination by rival teams, fans, and some of his own team-members during his career. Mathews uses opaque paint media that tend to absorb light on a porous support – the canvas drop cloth – that also absorbs paint. His figure captures the dynamic energy of the athlete just after the pitch and the determination that the historical figure exhibited in confronting his social circumstances. Contemporary artists use various media to deepen the meaning of the images and subjects they represent, and Mathews' painting is a good example of how that works. See more of Mathews' work at https://www.hyperaccumulator.com/the-black-body-problem

Watercolor

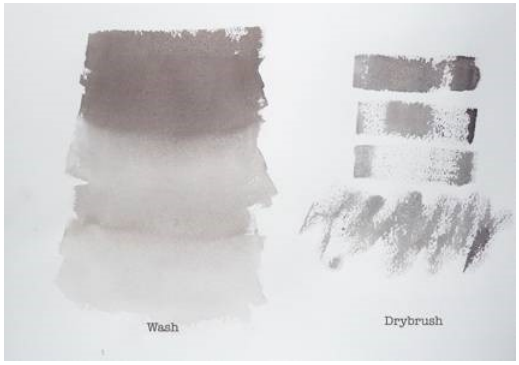
Watercolor is the most sensitive of the painting mediums. It reacts to the lightest touch of the artist and can become an over-worked mess in a moment. There are two kinds of watercolor media: **transparent,** and **opaque** or **gouache**. Transparent watercolor operates in a reverse relationship to the other painting mediums. It is traditionally applied to a paper support, and relies on the

whiteness of the paper to reflect light back through the applied color (see below), whereas opaque paints (including gouache) reflect light off the skin of the paint itself. Watercolor consists of pigment and a binder of gum arabic, a water-soluble compound made from the sap of the acacia tree. It dissolves easily in water. There is no white watercolor, but white gouache can be used to add highlights if necessary. Using the white ground of the paper is preferable.



Chris Gildow, 'Light passes through the color and is reflected by the paper underneath'

Watercolor paintings hold a sense of immediacy. The medium is extremely portable and excellent for small format paintings. The paper used for watercolor is generally of two types: hot pressed, which gives a smoother texture, and cold pressed, which results in a rougher texture. Transparent watercolor techniques include the use of **wash**; an area of color applied with a brush and diluted with water to let it flow across the paper. **Wet-in-wet** painting allows colors to flow and drift into each other, creating soft transitions between them. **Dry brush** painting uses little water and lets the brush run across the top ridges of the paper, resulting in a broken line of color and lots of visual texture.



Chris Gildow, 'Wash, Drybrush'; https://learn.saylor.org/mod/page/view.php?id=437

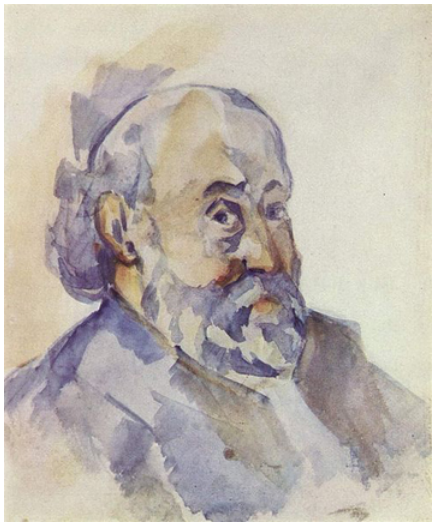
Examples of watercolor painting techniques: below, a painting done in the wash technique by John Marin. The Cezanne is created with more dry brush effects.



John Marin, Brooklyn Bridge, 1912, Watercolor and graphite on paper, 15 1/2 in. x 18 1/2 in. Gift of John Marin, Jr. and Norma B. Marin , Accession Number: 1973.042 http://www.colby.edu/museum/?s=John%...?sid=37&x=7627

John Marin's Brooklyn Bridge (1912) shows extensive use of wash. He renders the massive bridge almost invisible except for the support towers at both sides of the painting. Even the Manhattan skyline becomes enveloped in the misty, abstract shapes created by washes of color.

Self-portrait by French painter Paul Cezanne builds form through nuanced colors and tones. The way the watercolor is laid onto the paper reflects a sensitivity and deliberation common in Cezanne's paintings. The more planar areas of color and tone creates distinct shapes and can be done on dryer surfaces.



Paul Cezanne, Self-portrait, c. 1895. Watercolor on paper. PD_US; The reproduction is part of a collection of reproductions compiled by The Yorck Project. The compilation copyright is held by Zenodot Verlagsgesellschaft mbH and licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License

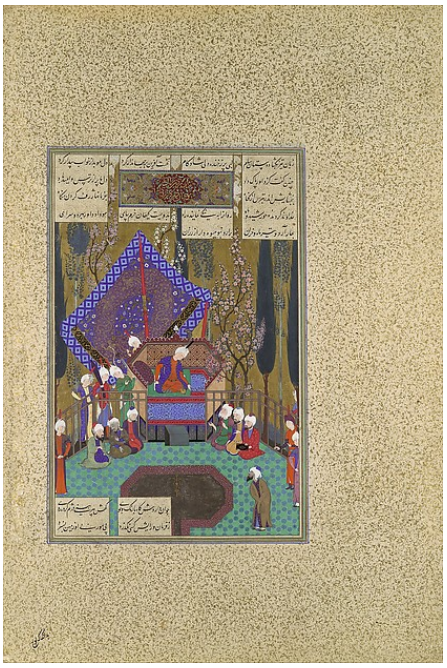
Opaque watercolor, also called **gouache**, differs from transparent watercolor in that the particles are larger, the ratio of pigment to water is much higher, and an additional, inert, white pigment such as chalk is also present. Because of this, gouache paint gives stronger color than transparent watercolor, although it tends to dry to a slightly lighter tone than when it is applied. Gouache paint doesn't hold up well as impasto, tending to crack and fall away from the surface. It holds up well in thinner applications and often is used to cover large areas with color. Like transparent watercolor, dried gouache paint will become soluble again in water.



Jacob Lawrence, Self-Portrait, 1977, Gouache and tempera on paper, 23 x 31", National Academy of Design, New York, Artwork copyright Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence, courtesy of the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation. http://whitney.org/www/jacoblawrence...43x251self.jpg

Jacob Lawrence's paintings use gouache to set the design of the composition. Large areas of color – including the complements blue and orange, dominate the figurative shapes in the foreground, while olive greens and neutral tones animate the background with smaller shapes depicting tools, benches and tables. The characteristics of gouache make it difficult to be used in areas of fine detail.

Gouache is a medium in traditional painting from other cultures too. *ZalConsults the Magi*, part of an illuminated manuscript form 16th century Iran, uses bright colors of gouache along with ink, silver and gold to construct a vibrant composition full of intricate patterns and contrasts. Ink is used to create lyrical calligraphic passages at the top and bottom of the work.



attr. Sultan Muhammad asst. by Abd al-Aziz, Zal Consults the Magi, Folio 73v from the Shahnama (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp, ca. 1530-35, Iran, opaque watercolor (gouache), ink, silver, & gold on paper, 11 1/16 x 7 ¼". PD –US http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/452117

Other Painting Mediums

Enamel paints form hard skins typically with a high-gloss finish. They use heavy solvents and are extremely durable.

Powder coat paints differ from conventional paints in that they do not require a solvent to keep the pigment and binder parts in suspension. They are applied to a surface as a powder then cured with heat to form a tough skin that is stronger than most other paints. Powder coats are applied mostly to metal surfaces and are often seen in automotive or furniture contexts.

Epoxy paints are polymers, created mixing pigment with two different chemicals: a resin and a hardener. The chemical reaction between the two creates heat that bonds them together. Epoxy paints, like powder coats and enamel, are extremely durable in both indoor and outdoor conditions.

These industrial-grade paints are used in sign painting, marine environments and aircraft painting among other uses.

Painting Beyond Painting

Historically other mediums have served the same purpose as painting in religious contexts and in the courts of nobility. Two of those are **mosaics** and **tapestries**.

Mosaic

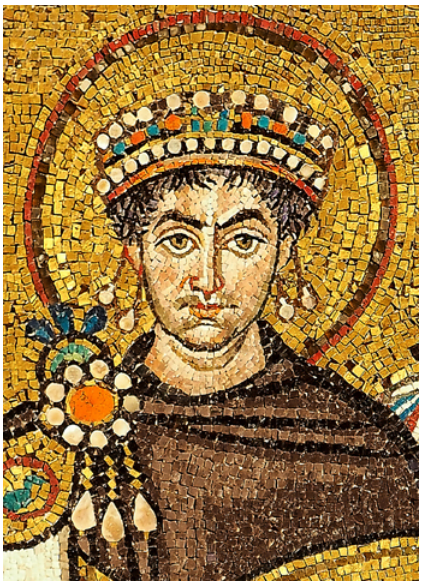
The Greeks and Romans used mosaics to decorate the floors of their homes and basilicas. Intricate designs made of small, individual bits of stone or glass called **tesserae** were embedded in plaster, mortar or cement. Later Byzantine churches were richly ornamented with tesserae fashioned from small bits of marble, stone, or glass with gold leaf sandwiched between the layers. During the Renaissance artists like Ghirlandaio and Raphael also designed mosaics, but the work was most likely carried out by their workshop artists. Fresco proved to be a faster and less costly form of wall decoration from that period forward, although mosaics continue to be made today.



Roman (?) mosaic from the Vatican Museum, Rome. PD-US. Photo: Wknight94 under GNU Free Documentation. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...m_mosaic_4.jpg



Emperor Justinian, Bishop Maximian and Retinue, ca. 547, mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna. PD US



Emperor Justinian (detail), ca. 547, mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna. PD-US

Tapestry

These fabric wall-hangings in Europe rivaled paintings in detail and preciousness. They were, in addition, practical in that they kept some drafts out of old castle walls. Many important artists have created the **cartoons** – or preliminary drawings/designs – for tapestries including Raphael, Goya, and Charles le Brun. Tapestries were often exchanged between kings as tokens of good will. There were royal tapestry factories like the Gobelins in France where the work was woven by hand with wool, silk, and precious metal-wrapped thread.



The Battle of Zama, Gobelin tapestry after Jules Romain, manufactured for Louis XI:V in 1688-90. Louvre. PD-US https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gobeli..._1688_1690.jpg

Some artists today still work in tapestry or other fiber arts, but now a loom is more likely to be programmed digitally to produce the object. Many other examples of fiber art can be found. Traditionally dismissed as “women’s craft”, works made of woven, tied, crocheted, or other processes are now a major and respected part of art-making.

In front of the NuEdge gallery in Montréal, Polish artist Olek creates a crocheted cover for an existing sculpture turning it into a colorful hybrid.



Photo Jeangagnon, CC-SA-SH-3.0

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6.3: First Nation Group of Seven

Artist	Native Group
Daphne Odjig	Ojibwa
Jackson Beardy	Anishinini
Alex Janvier	Dene Suline/Saulteaux
Eddy Cobiness	Ojibwa
Norval Morrisseau	Ojibwa
Carl Ray	Cree
William Ronald Reid Jr.	Haida

Founded in 1973, the Indian Group of Seven (Professional Native Indian Artists Association) was a group of professional artists from Canada. Daphne Odjig started the group after a successful joint exhibition with other artists in 1972 based upon the art of the indigenous peoples. The work in the exhibition was named with treaty numbers based on the Numbered Treaties between the Canadian government and the native groups. She invited Alex Janvier, Jackson Beardy, Eddy Cobiness, Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray, and Joseph Sanchez to create an artistic community. Bill Reid, a Haida artist, was added later.

Using an impressionistic style of painting for their Canadian landscapes, the group held successful joint exhibitions but only stayed together as a group for three years. They had joined forces to promote Native Peoples art in the Western art world wanting to move from just indigenous art to a recognized modern artistic value. They created funds that allowed artists to paint as a career and developed a marketing strategy to sell art, traveling to far-flung communities to encourage young artists and establishing trust funds and scholarship programs for young artists. In a short time, they brought indigenous peoples art into the more significant part of the Canadian art world and helped pave the way for younger generations.

Daphne Odjig (1919-2016) was an Ojibwa and the founding member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Association (Indian Group of Seven). Her first breakthrough work was pen and ink drawings of the native Cree people. She explored erotic themes in some of her work, which was very unusual in First Nations artwork. Odjig opened the first Canadian gallery to represent First Nations art exclusively.



Jackson Beardy (1944–1984) was an Anishinini whose works depicted Cree legends and stories he learned from his grandmother. He painted specific legends about the balance of nature and the interdependence of all things. Beardy used oil, acrylic, and tempura in a graphic style with defined areas of curving ribbons of paint and flat areas of warm color.



Alex Janvier (born 1935) of Dene Suline and Saulteaux descent and considered the first Canadian native modernist painter. He created his visual style based on the cultural and spiritual traditions of the Dene people in Alberta, Canada. Javier's work was abstracted, and he painted large scale works.

Morning Star (14.40) is painted in the dome of the Canadian Museum of History, a dome seven stories above the floor covering 418 square meters. The painting presents a guide to find directions, and each of the four areas of distinct colors represents a period in Native Peoples' history. The yellow quadrant depicts a time when First Peoples were in harmony with nature, the Great Spirit, and each other. The blue quadrant shows the weakness of the Native culture because of the influx of European culture. The red quadrant is the time of new optimism and struggles as the First People try to define their way, and in the last quadrant is the return to harmony through reconciliation, healing, and renewed self-respect.



14.40 *Morning Star*

Eddy Cobiness (1933–1996) was an Ojibwa who portrayed scenes from life outdoors and nature. Cobiness belonged to the Woodland School of Art and was a graphic designer. His work started realistically and moved to a more abstract style working mostly in ink and watercolor.



Norval Morrisseau (1932–2007), an Ojibwa, also known as Copper Thunderbird, and some considered him as the Picasso of the north. His paintings depicted legends of his people, especially the political and cultural tensions between European and native Canadian traditions. Morrisseau used thick black outlines in his painting with bright colors filling in-between the lines. He used any material he could find to paint on, especially moose hide or birch bark. Initially, he painted about the myths and traditions of the Anishnaabe and transitioned to his struggles.



Carl Ray (1943–1978) was a Canadian First Nations artist and a woodlands style painter. Ray was a member of the Cree community in Ontario and known as Tall Straight Poplar, a native name given to him as he was 6'4" tall. He painted scenes of sacred belief and stories of the Cree as well as wildlife and landscapes in a European style. Ray created powerful images with two or three colors, mostly brown, blue, and black, frequently mixing ink and watercolors. In his landscape paintings, he often used hues of electric blue to create the beauty of the Sandy Lake area. Sometimes he combined the two styles to paint images of Cree legends in electrifying color.



William (Bill) Ronald Reid, Jr. (1920 –1998) was born in Canada, his mother, a member of the Haida people from a region on the coast of British Columbia. He learned about the Haida heritage from his grandfather, also a Haida artist. Reid began making jewelry and then branched out into more significant works made of red and yellow cedar using concepts from Haida folklore and creating figures and animals in scenes to reflect his family traditions.



14.41 *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*

One of Reid's most well-known works is the bronze sculpture, the *Spirit of Haida Gwaii* (14.41), representing the First Peoples heritage of the Haida region. He made one in a green bronze placed in the Vancouver airport and one in black located at the Canadian embassy in Washington, D.C. The dugout canoe is six meters long and about four meters high, weighing 5000 kilograms. The canoe carries The Raven, a trickster; Mouse Woman sitting under Raven's tail; Grizzly Bear who is at the front and looking at Raven; Mother Bear, Grizzly Bear's wife, and the cubs Good Bear and Bad Bear; Raven's uncle, Beaver; Eagle; Frog; Wolf; a human paddler; and the main focal point, a Shaman who wears traditional Haida clothes. The variety of passengers in the canoe represents the Haida tradition of interdependence in the natural environment; they are not always in harmony but depend on each other in the world.

The bronze sculpture of the *Bear Mother* (14.41) represents the well-known Haida legend about a woman who disrespected the local bears and was forced to marry the bear's chief, a story and image frequently found on totem poles. Carved from a large piece of yellow cedar, Raven (14.43) is a powerful creature of a myth that plays tricks on the world.



14.42 *Bear Mother*



14.43 *The Raven*



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6.4: Contemporary Figurative

In the 20th century, figurative images were frequently ignored, the focus on the ever-changing abstract movements like Cubism or the Minimalists. As the 21st century began, figurative work resurged and expanded through multiple forms and expressions. Although the old masters set the standards, today's figurative artists use the concepts of the past and earlier abstract movements to depict their own unique identities for the figure.

Name	Native Country
Njideka Akunyili Crosby	Nigeria
Marlene Dumas	South Africa
Zhang Xiaogang	China
Kerry James Marshall	United States
Jylian Gustlin	United States
Jenny Saville	England
Eric Fischl	United States
Kehinde Wiley	United States
Pablita Velarde	United States
Faith Ringgold	United States
Fang Lijun	China
Chantal Joffe	England
Amy Sherald	United States

Njideka Akunyili Crosby (born 1983) is from Nigeria before moving to the United States and attending the university to study medicine following the footsteps of her parents before changing directions to become an artist. In her work, she uses multi-media materials of paint, photos, fabric, and pencils. Crosby depicted scenes of everyday life in different rooms of the house, the kitchen, the table and chairs in the dining room, all adorned with images, pictures and things as part of the small details of one's life. Many patterns on the clothing, walls, or part of the furnishings reflect the colors and styles of her native Nigeria. Each painting is a story of life's events as one travels from room to room. A painting (15.73) from the series Portals, appears to be a young woman pondering the future, bringing the viewer into her room. Crosby's work *(Before Now After (Mama, Mummy, and Mamma)* (15.74) depicts her relationship with her family, including images of her mother, grandmother, and sister, a table set with familiar family items and pictures.



15.73 From series Portal



15.74 Before Now After (Mama, Mummy, and Mamma)

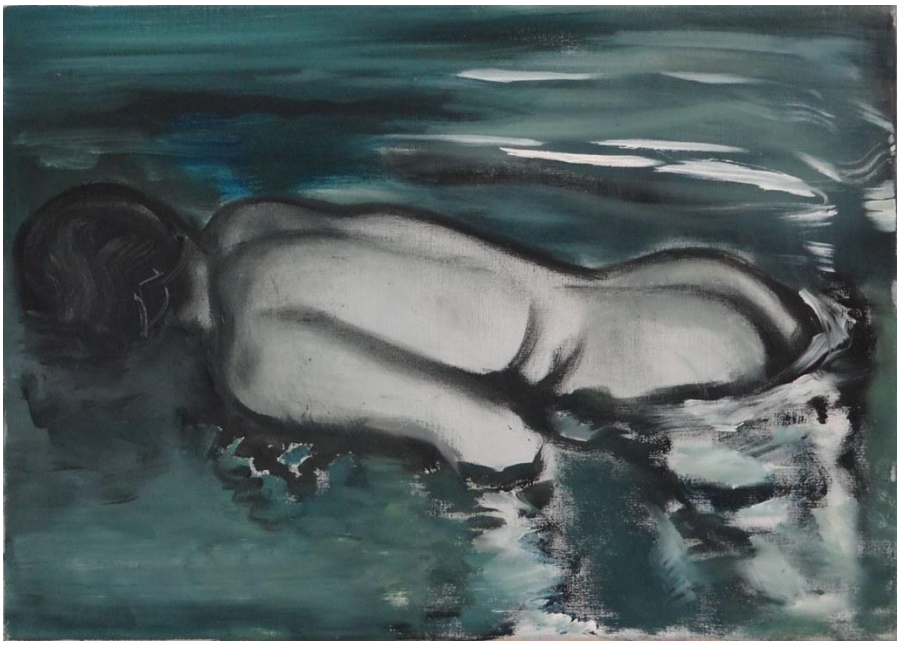
Marlene Dumas (born 1953) was born in Cape Town, South Africa, where she studied art before moving to the Netherlands to study psychology. Dumas depicts her figures in dramatic concepts of love, death, or sexuality, sometimes intimate and controversial. Her brushstrokes are broad and loose and along with dark, brooding colors enhancing a distorted feeling to create the psychological and emotional images seen in *Intimate Relations* (15.75). *Stern* (15.76) portrays a woman who may be sleeping or perhaps deceased, an image giving the viewers choices, as does *Losing (Her Meaning)* (15.77), is the figure swimming or perhaps deceased.



15.75 *Intimate Relations*



15.76 *Stern*



15.77 Losing (Her Meaning)

Zhang Xiaogang (born 1958) was born in China and said his parents taught him how to draw early in his life to give him something to do and stay out of trouble, a skill he continued as an adult. His parents were removed from their home and placed in a re-education camp during the Cultural Revolution in China, an experience influencing his artwork today. He was able to attend the university, although he suffered from alcoholism at the time, another life-altering problem changing his life. He became part of a group of artists who were considered avant-garde, setting up their exhibitions until the events at Tiananmen Square ended liberal ideas. Much of his work today is based on families and the influence of past events as he created the stoic, flat, compliant characters, adding contrast with splotches of color. *My Ideal* (15.78) depicts a family, controlled by soldiers, with oversized heads and long noses. In his close-ups of individuals, *Untitled* (15.79), he used shadows, making the image slightly clouded, their oversized eyes staring outward, the black and gray image only highlighted by a splash of yellow.



15.78 *My Ideal*



15.79 *Untitled*



Kerry James Marshall (born 1955) was born in Alabama but raised in Los Angeles. He received his BFA at Otis Art Institute and became a professor of art at the University of Illinois. The events of the time influenced Marshall, the Black Panthers, the Watts riots, the civil rights movements, and experiences of African Americans. His work reflects his study of history and the effects on the African American community, which he emphasizes by exaggerating the body with a deep black, a recognition of the usual recessed images of darker skin, bringing the color to the forefront. *Untitled* (15.80) depicts a female artist with an overly broad palette, facing the viewer with her painting behind her, a twist with the paint by number image. *The Actor Hezekiah Washington as Julian Carlton Taliesen Murderer of Frank Lloyd Wright Family* (15.81), is the image of an actor portraying a man who committed murder. The actor gazes out at the viewer, who is left with little knowledge of the person he pretends to be.



15.80 Untitled



15.81 *The Actor Hezekiah Washington as Julian Carlton Taliesen Murderer of Frank Lloyd Wright Family*



Jylian Gustlin (born 1960), born in California, lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she majored in art and mathematics before receiving her BFA. Although she includes mathematical expressions in her art, as seen in her Fibonacci series, her passion is the human figure and the fluidity and emotions of the figure. *Sirens 3* (15.82) leaves the viewer guessing about the feelings

exhibited between the three figures, all painted on a background of multiple layers of mixed media. *Icarus* (15.83) and *Aphrodite 3* (15.84) both demonstrate the emotions of the figures, clouded in the background, faces turned from the viewer.



15.82 *Sirens*

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/260391



15.83 *Icarus*



15.84 *Aphrodite 3*

Jenny Saville (born 1970), one of the Young British Artists, received her degree from Glasgow School of Art. She spent some time studying in the United States, developing her views of women based on the numbers of large women she saw and how physically interesting she found their body shapes. Saville took the concepts of the body further based on how deformities could be corrected or what liposuction meant or how diseases affect the body, all taking her paintings to unusual proportions. She used patches of color and brushstrokes on large-sized canvases to create sensual skin and fleshy bodies. *Strategy* (15.85) displays the ample female forms demonstrating how many women appear, disparaging the myth of the runway model.



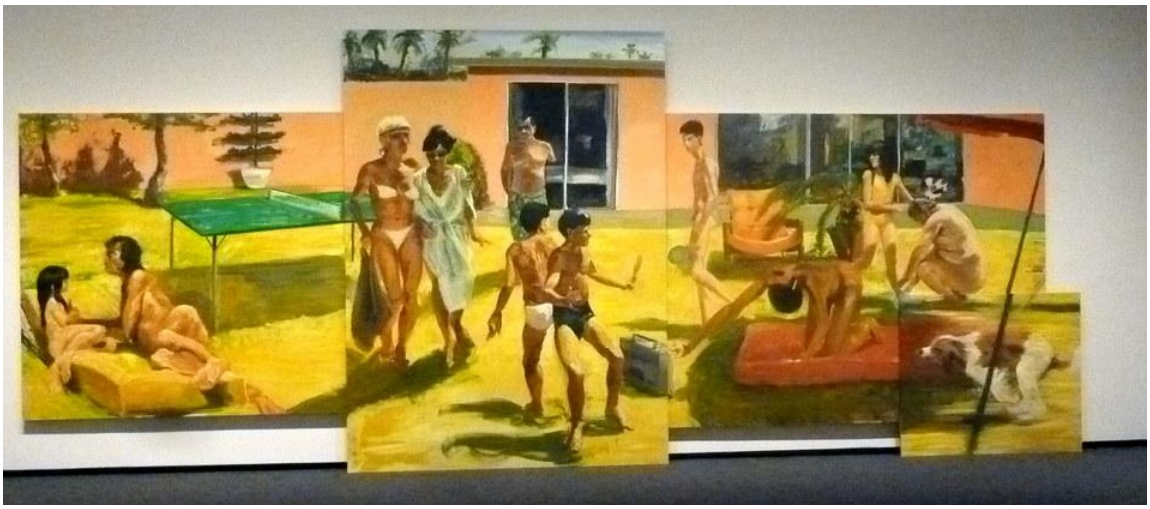
15.85 *Strategy*



Eric Fischl (born 1948) lived in several parts of the United States after he graduated from college, eventually even teaching art for a while. Fischl often painted subjects set in suburbia, seeming to be performing everyday actions; however, many images were based on voyeurism by adolescents, or alcoholism in the country club life, displaying the contradictions found in the suburbs. In the *Haircut* (15.86), the viewer seems to be looking through the window at the young lady cutting her hair while sitting provocatively on her bed. *Saigon, Minnesota* (15.87) is a set of four panels depicting several people in the backyard that appears to be near a pool. Some of the people have a bathing suit; others are nude, lying, or sitting daringly, leaving the viewer to wonder what each of the groups is doing. Oddly, the people are relatively static while the dog seems to be running through the yard.



15.86 *Haircut*



15.87 *Saigon, Minnesota*



Pablita Velarde (1918-2006) belonged to the Santa Clara Pueblos and was sent with her sisters at an early age to a boarding school. As a teenager, she was able to attend an art school, one of the few female students. Velarde learned to paint in a flat style and used her skills to paint images to document and preserve the history of her people. At first, she used watercolors and later used natural pigments found in her area to grind and mix her paints, making earth paintings and is considered one of the outstanding female artists of the southwest. *Basketmaking* (15.88) portrays a man making a basket from yucca leaves as the man behind weaves a twilled basket. The woman is seated and preparing the materials the two men in the background have collected.



15.88 *Basketmaking*

Kehinde Wiley (born 1977) was born in Los Angeles along with his twin brother, although early in their life, his father returned to Nigeria, leaving his mother to raise the children. Wiley was interested in art as a child and received a BFA from the Art Institute in San Francisco and an MFA from Yale. He was influenced by paintings from the old masters and incorporated their styles in combination with his interest in African and Islamic designs. *Coming to Richmond* (15.89) is an example of an African rider, sword in hand with horse rearing, very similar to paintings of Napoleon in the Alps. Wiley likes to use ordinary people as his models and often found people in the neighborhood to pose for him, then removing the person from the ordinary and placing the image in a composed environment with ornate backgrounds.

Mary Comforter of the Afflicted (15.90) is from a series of paintings Wiley created based on historical figures from old masters. He uses the images of young black men in similar poses who are standing in front of colorful backgrounds. Wiley was chosen to paint

the official portrait for President Barack Obama, the first African American president. Wiley did not use the usual presidential poses, instead of placing the president in an ordinary chair nestled into a background of flowers. The colorful flowers had specific meanings to the president; chrysanthemums were the flower of Chicago; jasmine represents his birthplace of Hawaii and blue lilies for his father, who was from Kenya.



15.89 Coming to Richmond



15.90
Mary Comforter of the Afflicted



Faith Ringgold (born 1930) was born in Harlem, New York City, living in an area filled with artists, poets, writers, and musicians; her mother was a fashion designer. She learned to work with fabric from her mother, a medium she used extensively in her later artwork. After receiving her master's degree, Ringgold traveled to Europe, especially Paris, where she found the inspiration for the series, *French Collection*, her quilt paintings. She also visited West Africa, which motivated her construction of sculptures and masks. Her early works were based on some of the political unrest of the 1960s, and she created several series about the issues and problems of black Americans. Ringgold became well-known for her quilt and fabric paintings, sculptures, and masks. One of Ringgold's *American People Series* paintings was *Die* (15.91), well-dressed people demonstrating the hidden hostility existing in society and as blood splatters across the entire image, indicating everyone is affected by racism.



15.91 *American People Series #20: Die*

Fang Lijun (born 1963) was born in China, his family comfortable with its well-placed social status. As a child, he was trained in art and graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts. He became a member of the group Cynical Realism, artists who incorporated political issues into their art, especially human rights and suppression. Lijun used the bald head of people, focusing on faces to bring his message and develop the emotions and stories of each person as they may feel somewhat helpless in the overall society. Both of his images (15.92, 15.93), portray different emotions open for interpretation by the viewer.



15.92 Series 1, No. 3



15.93 Water

Chantal Joffe (born 1969) studied at colleges in Scotland and England and currently paints women and children in large-scale works. She was inspired by the body positions and clothing of women and presented them in a form seemingly simplistic with unsettling characteristics, hinting at unseen and unsaid conflicts. She paints on oversized canvases with large brushstrokes, leaving drips of paints or outlines, the heads of her figures oddly shaped with piercing eyes. The woman in *Green Dress, Black Knickers* (15.94), appears to be looking into a mirror, or is there someone else in the room she sees. *The Squid and the Whale* (15.95), portrays a woman in her pants, sitting in front of a child. The feelings of the child are masked, a blanket held tightly. In the background, the green pillow anchors the two figures.



15.94 *Green Dress, Black Knickers*

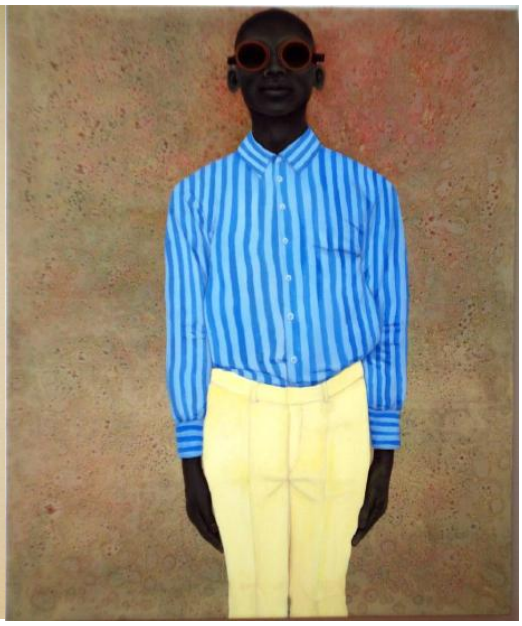


15.95 *The Squid and the Whale*

Amy Sherald (born 1973), who lives in Maryland, received her M.F.A. in painting, now focusing on documenting African Americans and their experiences in everyday life. She uses a form of grayscale or grisaille for the different skin tones of her images to defy the concept of color equals race. *Grand Dame Queenie* (15.96) depicts a woman holding a cup and saucer while she gazes at the viewer, her bright clothing symbolic of Sherald's color palette. *The Boy with No Past*(15.97) displays a young man standing stiffly in his colorful clothing against a muted background. Both images depict individuals as important in their own right, challenging the viewers to recognize them. Sherald was selected to paint the official portrait, *First Lady Michelle Obama* (15.98). She used gray shades for Obama's skin tones as she is sitting in front of a plain blue background. Obama's white dress is a foil for patches of color, some of the squares similar to the quilts of Gee's Bend.



15.96 *Grand Dame Queenie*



15.97 *The Boy with no Past*



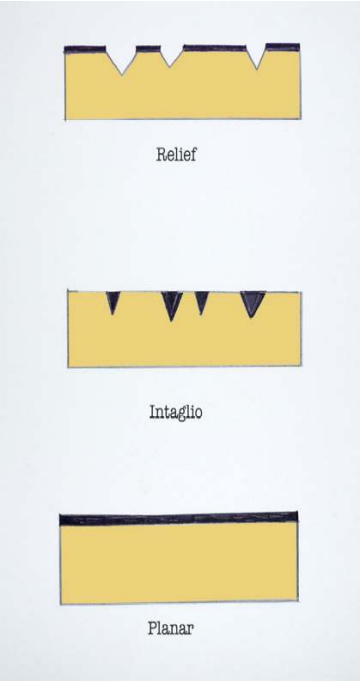
15.98 *Michelle Obama*

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6.5: Printmaking

Printmaking is a process of multiples. It uses a transfer process to make multiples from an original image or template. Each image, or individual print, is called an **impression**, and multiple impressions are printed in an **edition**, with each print signed and numbered by the artist. All printmaking mediums result in images reversed from the original. Print results depend on how the template (or **matrix**) is prepared. There are three basic techniques of printmaking: **Relief**, **Intaglio**, and **Planar(Lithography)**. You can get an idea of how they differ from the cross-section images below, and view how each technique works from this site – https://www.moma.org/interactives/projects/2001/whatisaprint/print.html – at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

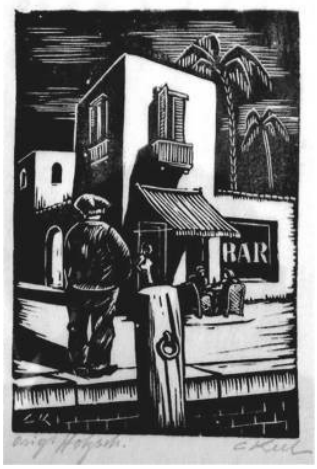


Chris Gildow. An illustration of the basic techniques used in printmaking. The black areas indicate the inked surface

Other printmaking processes are silkscreen printing and digital ink jet printing.

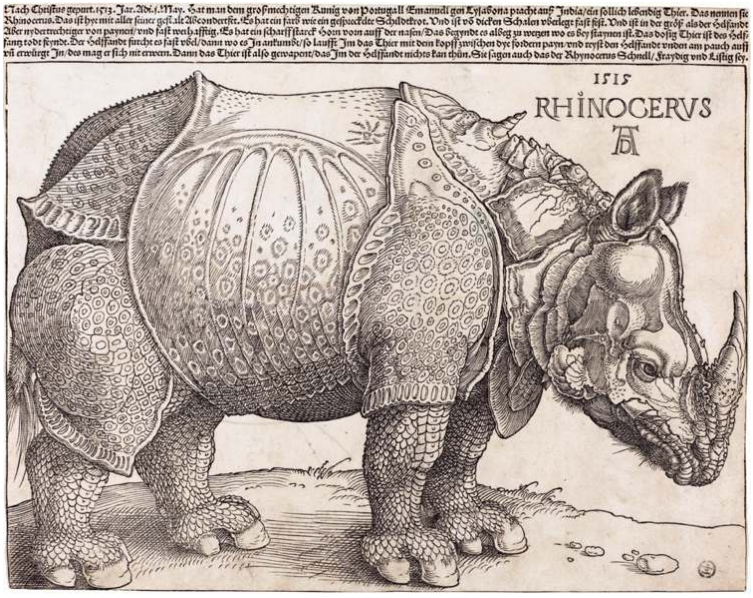
Relief Painting

A **relief print**, such as a woodcut or linoleum cut, is created when the areas of the matrix (plate or block) that are to show the printed image are *on the original surface*; the parts of the matrix that are to be ink free having been cut away, or otherwise removed. The printed surface is in **relief** from the cut away sections of the plate. Once the area around the image is cut away, the surface of the plate is rolled up with ink. Paper is laid over the matrix, and both are run through a press, transferring the ink from the surface of the matrix to the paper. The nature of the relief process doesn't allow for lots of detail, but does result in graphic images with strong contrasts. The bottom of your sneaker makes a relief print on the floor after you walk through mud. A rubber stamp makes a relief print. Carl Eugene Keel's '*Bar*' shows the effects of a woodcut printed in black ink.



Carl Eugene Keel, 'Bar', 2006, woodcut print on paper. Image from www.bucarotechelp.com/expressions/82101001.asp; Stephen Bucaro. Image provided by Carl Eugen Keel under Creative Commons Attribution license

In 1515, Albrecht Dürer made a woodcut showing an animal no one on the European continent – including Dürer himself – had ever seen. His *Rhinoceros* was based on a written description and brief sketch done by an unknown artists of an Indian rhinoceros that was shipped to Lisbon that year. Sadly, the rhino died in a shipwreck en route to Pope Leo X and another wasn't brought to Europe until 1577. Dürer's portrayal isn't accurate, but it does suggest the artist conflating an "armored" animal with the kind of armor worn by knights including a 'gorget' at the neck.[1]



Albrecht Dürer, The Rhinoceros, 1515, woodcut, 9.3 x 11/7", National Gallery , Washington DC. PD-US

Block printing developed in China hundreds of years ago and was common throughout East Asia. The Japanese woodblock print below shows dynamic effects of implied motion and the contrasts created using only one color and black. *Ukiyo-e*, or "floating world," prints became popular in the 19th century, even influencing European artists during the Industrial Revolution.

Relief printmakers can use a separate block or matrix for each color printed or, in **reduction prints** a single block is used, cutting away areas of color as the print develops. This method can result in a print with many colors.



Christopher Gildow, ‘Boathouse’, 2007, from the Stillaguamish Series, reduction woodcut print

Wood Engraving

The difference between a woodcut and a wood engraving is the part of the tree that is used as matrix. Instead of the soft horizontal wood a wood engraving is made on the harder end cut of the wood and results in shaper, crisper lines. Rockwell Kent’s image of a worker from the days of the labor union in the U.S. fighting back against the agents of capitalism (note the bayonets on the right) is much darker with greater contrasts of light and dark that you might expect to see in an ordinary woodcut.



Lynd Ward, Wood Engraving for Alec Waugh’s “Hot Countries”, 1930, wood engraving; Photo by Thomas Shahan, taken on October 5, 2011, CC-BY 2.0

Linocut

A linoleum cut, or linocut, is created using the same process as a woodcut, but the matrix is the very soft material of linoleum. Long a student favorite, many examples of high-quality linocut art can be found. The lines tend to be broad with stark areas of black and white, although linocuts can also be printed in colors.



Oaktree&mirrorimage.png|right|thumb|160px|Linocut, Johnbod 20:02, 2 December 2006 (UTC)

Intaglio Printing

Intaglio prints such as etchings, are made by incising channels into a copper or metal plate with a sharp instrument called a **burin** to create the image, inking the entire plate, then wiping the ink from the surface of the plate, leaving ink only in the incised channels *below* the surface. Paper is laid over the plate and put through a press under high pressure, forcing the ink to be transferred to the paper.

Engraving is the oldest of intaglio techniques and traces its history back to the intricate designs cut into metal armor by medieval armor-makers. This was the process used most often to create and disseminate images before mechanical methods of the 19th century arrived.

Once again, we see artist Albrecht Dürer turning his skill to another medium to create this image of St. Jerome in his study. Prints were a source of additional income for artists throughout history. You could spend months on one painting and sell it once, but you could create a plate and make a hundred prints to sell.



Albrecht Dürer, Saint Jerome in his Study, 1514, engraving, Dresden. PD US Photograph: http://www.deutschefotothek.de/obj30105649.html

In dry point, the artist creates an image by scratching the burin directly into a metal plate (usually copper) before inking and printing. Characteristically these prints have strong line quality and exhibit a slightly blurred edge to the line as the result of burrs created in the process of incising the plate, similar to clumps of soil laid to the edge of a furrowed trench. Today artists also use plexi-glass, a hard clear plastic, as plates. A fine example of dry point is seen in Rembrandt's *Clump of Trees with a Vista*. The velvety darks are created by the effect of the burred-edged lines.



Rembrandt, Clump of Trees with a Vista, 1652, drypoint; second state of two, sheet: 4 13/16 x 8 5/16", MET PD US http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/20.46.4/

Etched Printing

Etching begins by first applying a protective wax-based coating to a thin metal plate. The artist then scratches an image with a burin through the protective coating into the surface of the metal. The plate is then submersed in a strong acid bath, etching the exposed lines. The plate is removed from the acid and the protective coating is removed from the plate. Now the bare plate is inked,

wiped and printed. The image is created from the ink in the etched channels. The amount of time a plate is kept in the acid bath determines the quality of tones in the resulting print: the longer it is etched the darker the tones will be. '*Correccion*' by the Spanish master Francisco Goya shows the clear linear quality etching can produce. The acid bath removes any burrs created by the initial dry point work, leaving details and value contrasts consistent with the amount of lines and the distance between them. Goya presents a fantastic image of people, animals and strange winged creatures. His work often involved biting social commentary. '*Correccion*' is a contrast between the pious and the absurd.

Mezzotint

Mezzotint is the only process the inventor of which is actually recorded. In 17th century Utrecht, in the Netherlands, an artist named Ludwig von Seiden created a unique printmaking process and no one, he claimed, would be able to figure out how he did it. In fact, the image he sent to William VI, a nobleman of Hesse-Kassel, of his mother in 1642 is thought to be the first mezzotint ever made.



Ludwig von Seigen, Amelia Elisabetta von Hessen, mezzotint, 1642. PD US

Mezzotint is a tonal process made with a metal tool called a "rocker". By rocking the half moon shaped tool with tiny teeth or points across the metal plate areas that proceed from dark to light through a soft progression of values can be created.



https://www.slideshare.net/AimyAnneC...aglio-12150617



Francisco Goya, Correccion, 1799, etching and burnished aquatint on paper. PD US https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F...Correccion.jpg

Goya created editions of prints on a number of subjects. *Correccion* is #46 from Los Caprichos (The Caprices), 1799. The subject of this set of prints was the foibles and stupidities of the human race. Here we see him using a combination of etching for the fine line work and aquatint, a process that uses a powdered rosin, to create a tonal effect. The acid resistant rosin is usually dusted across the plate and heated to cause it to adhere. The plate can then be dipped in an acid bath for various periods of time and with different sections of plate exposed causing those areas to be more deeply "bitten" and hold more ink. This also results in a tonal product but areas of highlight usually are marked by a hard edge since it has to be painted or stopped out on the plate.

There are many different techniques associated with intaglio, including aquatint, scraping and burnishing.

Planar Printing

Planar prints like monoprints are created on the *surface* of the matrix without any cutting or incising. In this technique the surface of the matrix (usually a thin metal plate or Plexiglass) is completely covered with ink, then areas are partially removed by wiping, scratching away or otherwise removed to form the image. Paper is laid over the matrix, then run through a press to transfer the image to the paper. Monoprints (also *monotypes*) are the simplest and painterly of the printing mediums. By definition monotypes and monoprints cannot be reproduced in editions. It is a singular print-making process. Kathryn Trigg'shttp://www.kathryntrigg.com/gallery.html monotypes show how close this print medium is related to painting and drawing.

Lithography is another example of planar printmaking, developed in Germany in the late 18th century. "Litho" means "stone" and "graph" means "to draw". The traditional matrix for lithography is the smooth surface of a limestone block.

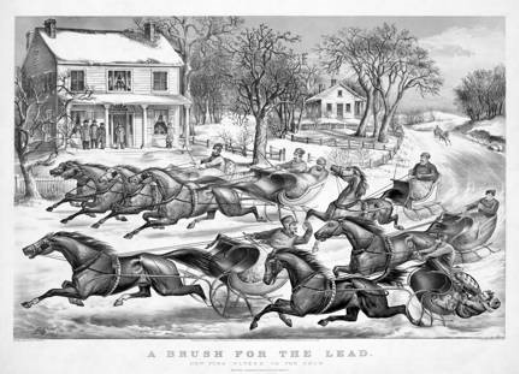


Chris73, Lithographic stone is on the left with the negative image. Printed positive image is on the right

While this matrix is still used extensively, thin zinc plates have also been introduced to the medium. They eliminate the bulk and weight of the limestone block but provide the same surface texture and characteristics. The lithographic process is based on the fact that grease repels water. In traditional lithography, an image is created on the surface of the stone or plate using grease pencils or wax crayons or a grease-based liquid medium called **tusche**. The finished image is covered in a thin layer of gum arabic that

includes a weak solution of nitric acid as an etching agent. The resulting chemical reaction divides the surface into two areas: the positive areas containing the image and that will repel water, and the negative areas surrounding the image that will be water receptive. In printing a lithograph, the gum arabic film is removed and the stone or metal surface is kept moist with water so when it's rolled up with an oil based ink the ink adheres to the positive (image) areas but not to the negative (wet) areas.

Because of the mediums used to create the imagery, lithographic images show characteristics much like drawings or paintings. In *A Brush for the Lead* by Currier and Ives (below), a full range of shading and more linear details of description combine to illustrate a winter's race down the town's main road.



Currier and Ives, 'A Brush for the Lead; New York Flyers on the Snow', 1867, lithograph. PD-US Library of Congress

Serigraphy, also known as **screen-printing**, is a third type of planar printing medium. Screen-printing is a printing technique that uses a woven mesh to support an ink-blocking stencil. The attached stencil forms open areas of mesh that transfer ink or other printable materials that can be pressed through the mesh as a sharp-edged image onto a substrate such as paper or fabric. A roller or squeegee is moved across the screen stencil, forcing or pumping ink past the threads of the woven mesh in the open areas. The image below shows how a stencil's positive (image) areas are isolated from the negative (non-image) areas.



Meul, 'TeeshirtCopyleft Cadre'

In serigraphy, each color needs a separate stencil. You can watch how this process develops in this video



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/arthistory/?p=156

Screen printing is an efficient way to print posters, announcements and other kinds of popular culture images. Andy Warhol began using the silk screen process in the 1960's. He was thrilled with the mechanical quality of the prints and the sometimes random results he got. He used silk screen images and iconography from popular culture and newspapers to play with the idea of popular versus high art.



On the far wall, Andy Warhol, Portrait of Mao Zedong, 1973, silkscreen, from an exhibition of the artist's work at the Hamburg Bahnhof, August 2011. Photo: dalbera from Paris, France

Digital Inkjet Prints

This twentieth century technique has made printmaking available to a wide range of art patrons and has allowed artists to do things that would not have been imaginable a few decades ago. What is the difference between an inkjet print made by an artist that sells for a thousand dollars and one from a big box store that sells for less than a hundred? There are several significant differences. First, the machine that makes art prints can handle very large format prints. Second, the artist is on hand to approve, sign, and number every print that comes off the "press". Finally, artists' inkjet prints are made with archival quality inks and papers that are intended to last much longer than commercial printing mediums. Another advantage to art inkjet printing is that it can be done on unusual materials. Betsabee Romero, a Mexican artist, prints on car tires (and with car tires, but that's another process), sunglasses and other objects.

New York artists Wade Guyton and Kelley Walker use the inkjet printer and scanner in their multi-media work. They have printed on objects like paint cans, mattresses, and drywall or furniture.



Guyton\Walker, Untitled, Sculpture, 2008, Digital inkjet prints on paint cans, Each can 7 5/8 x 7 x 7″, The Museum of Modern Art, Fund for the Twenty-First Century. http://library.artstor.org/#/asset/AMOMA_10312310614

Important artists are also making prints. One of the best printmaking facilities is Santa Fe Editions. Here artists like Caio Fonseca, Robert Kelly, and Ricardo Mazal have created images that are reproduced in small editions at prices far below that of their paintings. Here the artists work with a master printmaker to create original works, not reproductions, that are then signed and numbered by the artist. The average edition is 30 prints, printed and shipped flat, not rolled. Take a look at some of the work being done at Santa Fe Editions.

http://www.sfeditions.com/MainFrameset-30.htm

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%B...27s_Rhinoceros; accessed 9.16.2017.

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6.6: Japan's Edo Period

In Japan, the Edo Period lasted from 1603 to 1868, a period with expanded economic growth, flourishing arts and culture, and a strict societal structure for the people to follow. Controlled by a feudal system, two of the lower classes were local merchants and the artisans who produced art. At the beginning of the 19th century, three distinct styles of creativity emerged. The Heian culture perpetuated painting and changed the visual arts, the Ukiyo-e genre artists became the experts in the processes of woodblock prints, and with the spread of literature, the perfection of calligraphy was paramount to any composition.

Torii Kiyonaga (1752-1815) was one of the great masters who made full-color prints of courtesans and beautiful women. The process was complicated, and he carved a different woodblock for each color used in the image. The *Snowball Fight*(11.22) has multiple shades of gray, red, yellow, and black, each requiring a finely cut block. *Cooling on Riverside*(11.23), portrays three women, all dressed in colorful clothing, printed with a complicated set of blocks. The women in his prints were older and fuller than other artists. Frequently, he created diptychs or triptychs, making his work seem more significant and grander.



11.22 *Snowball Fight*



11.23 *Cooling on Riverside*

Ukiyo-e is a style of painting and printmaking based on several engraved plates, each color separately. **Katsushika Hokusai** (1760-1849) was a master Ukiyo-e painter and produced one of the most notable and recognized prints in the world, the *Great Wave off Kanagawa* (11.24). Hokusai loved Mount Fuji and often traveled to paint his beloved mountain in a series entitled Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji. The Great Wave depicts a tsunami type of wave threatening the boats in the water. Mt. Fuji is located on the coast near the center of the print, just under the soon to crash wave. Even though Mt. Fuji is Japan's tallest mountain, it appears small and unassuming under the wave. Hokusai uses perspective and delicate carvings, exposing the colors used to create this magnificent print.



11.24 The Great Wave Off Kanagawa



Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), another distinguished Ukiyo-e artist, journeyed throughout Japan, sketching landscapes. Hiroshige's most famous series, the Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaiko, was based on travels Hiroshige took on trains around the countryside. *Kanbara* (11.25), a dark winter scene and *Travelers Surprised by Sudden Rain* (11.26), are examples of the detail he added to the images based on weather, requiring multiple woodblocks for the background colors. He produced an extensive portfolio of work; however, he gave up art to become a Buddhist monk.



11.25 *Kanbara*



11.26 *Travelers Surprised by Sudden Rain*

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6.7: Quilting

Quilting is the use of fabric scraps stitched together into a design and sandwiched together with some type of paddings like wool or cotton and a backing fabric. The sandwiched fabric is then stitched together through all three layers and bound around the edges with a second piece of fabric for strength and durability. Many people believe it dates back to ancient Egypt; however, the fabric does not last long in the desert or against the elements, lasting maybe 2-300 years unless found inside a tomb. The first use of quilting in Europe was during the Crusades in the 12th century when they made quilted tops to be worn under armor to protect the wearer. Later it was worn as a doublet or coat. Although quilting has been in existence for a few centuries, during this period, quilting moved from organized and prescribed patterns and forms to abstract expressions, following the changes in painting.



The earliest surviving quilt is the *Tristan Quilt* (14.44) made in the late 14th century. The quilt depicted scenes from the romance story of Tristan and Isolde and was constructed by sewing two layers of linen with wadding in-between and stitched in brown thread. The scene in this picture is King Mark from scene seven.



14.44 *Tristan Quilt*

Early whole-cloth quilts were made from one solid piece of fabric or strips of fabric, sewn together, to appear as one piece. Because looms were not wide enough to make fabric for the surface of a bed, the central section was printed and the rest surrounded by other fabric pieces. The filler or padding was often wool as it was warmer in winter and cooler in summer. The quilt top, filler, and bottom were hand-stitched together, and over time, this hand stitching became an art form. This *Whole-Cloth Quilt* (14.45) was made in the 18th century in the Netherlands from textile made in India.



14.45 *Whole-Cloth Quilt*



14.46 *Medallion Quilt*

The Industrial Revolution gave people more time, and with more time, and quilting art began to flourish. Women did not have to shear sheep, spin the wool, or weave the cloth, and it was all available in the mercantile in town. Quilts went from utilitarian one-piece tops for beds to intricate piece tops sandwiched with backing and padding inside to be hand-stitched together. Instead of a functional straight stitch, stitching on top of the quilt was sewn in the form of designs.

Medallion quilts were made around a large-scale motif like the tree of life or an eagle or flowers in the center surrounded by pieced or appliques designs and two or more borders. The *Medallion Quilt* (14.46) was made by **Elizabeth Welsh** in 1830 from cotton fabric and is an example of a patriotic quilt used as bedding.

The civil war brought many changes in quilting. Quilts were stitched and auctioned to raise funds for the war costs at fairs the abolitionists held. Other quilts were shipped to the soldiers who were fighting the war and equipped with few supplies. This quilt (14.47) was made for a civil war soldier. Since the cots the soldiers used in the field were narrow, the women made narrow quilts so it would not drag on the floor. The quilt for the soldiers on both sides of the war received much heavy use, and very few survive today. This traditional pattern was the 'nine patch' because it could use small scraps from used clothing of any color.



14.47 *Nine patch quilt*

Harriet Powers (1837–1910) was an African-American slave who was considered a folk artist who made quilts. She recorded local legends, Bible stories, and astronomical occurrences on her traditionally appliqued quilts. The two quilts, *Bible Quilt 1896* (14.48) and the *Pictorial Quilt 1898* (14.49), are the only two of her quilts that have survived. Both quilts were machine and hand-stitched with applique. Through letters she wrote in the late 1800s, she describes other quilts she made, but they have not been located.



14.48 *Bible Quilt*



14.49 *Pictorial Quilt*

The Amish people are a religious community that settled in the Northeast part of the United States over 200 years ago. Quilts made in patterns and fabrics associated with individual communities were constructed from wool in Pennsylvania and cotton in Ohio. Quilting became a part of social life for the women and they made quilts to celebrate special occasions as well as everyday uses. The Amish women make bold designs (14.50) with distinctive color combinations and hand stitch the quilting patterns.



14.50 *Log cabin, barn raising variation*

A remarkable group of women from **Gee's Bend, Alabama**, have lived and quilted their entire life on the Alabama River. Isolated from much of the world, a small group of African-American people lived in the hamlet of Gee's Bend. Their contributions to quilting and art are considered to be one of the most exceptional and significant visual and cultural contributions to the history of art. The ancestors of Gee's Bend people were brought there as slaves to work the cotton plantation. After slavery ended, the people stayed on as freed slaves, growing and harvesting cotton until the 1930s, when the government purchased the land and allotted small parcels back to the people.



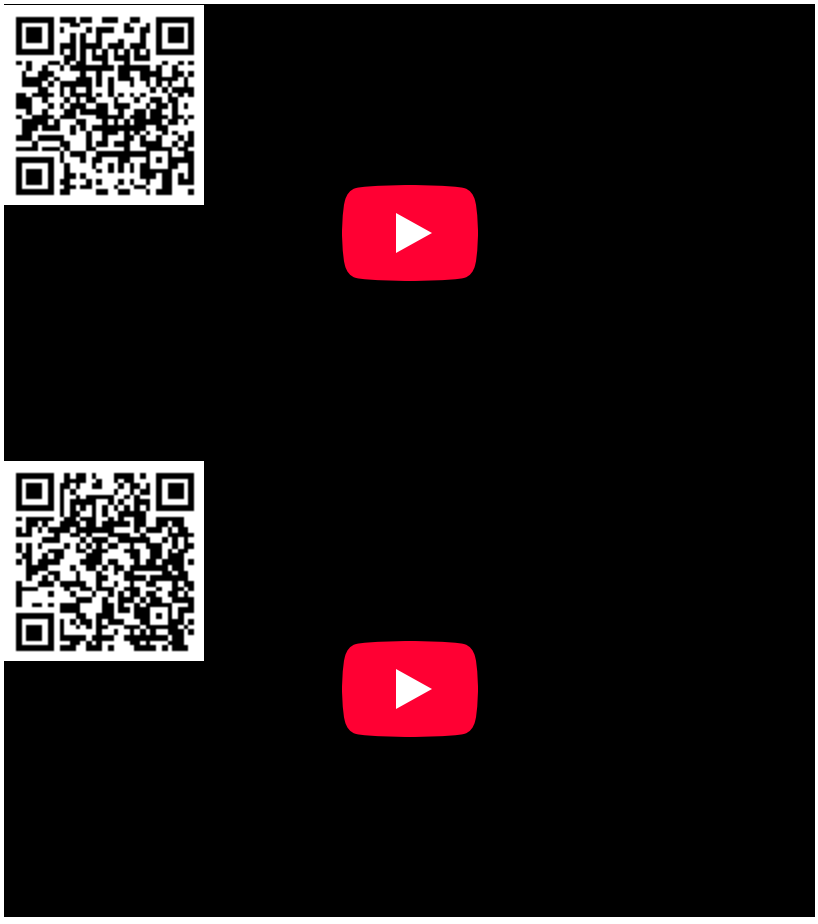
14.51 *Quilting in 1937*



14.52 *Quilting bee*



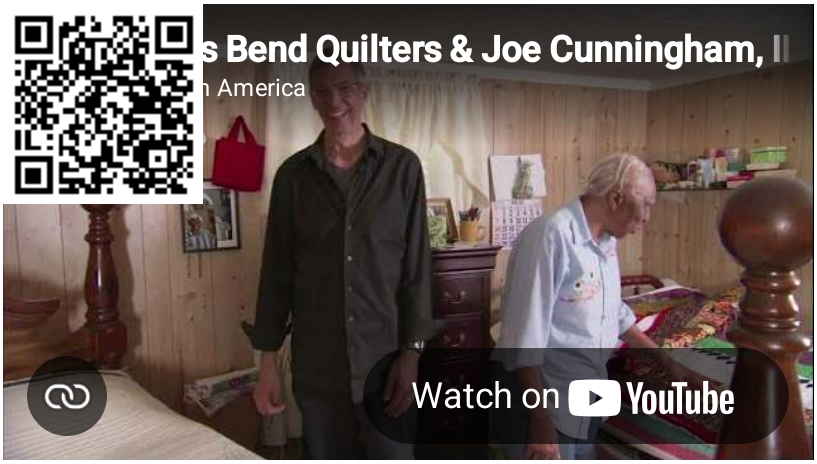
14.53 *Pieced Quilt*





Quilting started in the 19th century when they would piece strips of fabric (14.51) together to make bedding and quilts to keep their families warm on cold nights. Isolated from most people, they developed a lifestyle different from the surrounding areas. Their quilts became geometric and creative improvisations (14.52), depending on the materials at hand. Today, they sell quilts (14.53) to raise money to support themselves, and the quilts are shown in museums around the world.

The 20th century ushered in a consumerist society, and after the 1950s, most people would just buy a blanket and comforter from the local department store. Quilting became a dying art form in most places (except in isolated areas like Gee's Bend and the Amish), almost lost to future generations. During the 1990s, quilting made a resurgence, and the traditional quilt gave way to art quilts. The traditional three-piece quilt (top, padding, and bottom layers) to keep you warm at night, was replaced with wall art quilts. These smaller, usually landscapes, imagery, or abstracts became a sensation, and the world of quilting never looked back. The art quilt also evolved from the traditional form of quilting, combining known quilt patterns with art styles.



Quilting in America today is a $3.76-billion-dollar annual industry and has more than 16 million quilters or 1 of every 20 people in America quilts. Quilt shows have become increasingly common, and people will travel to shows around the world. Quilts entered into shows earn cash prices and ribbon awards. Contemporary art quilting is a fine art style of quilting, which can be abstract or photo quality. Many artists dye their fabrics or use alternative mediums to achieve the appearance as in the *Aspen Trees* (14.62) quilt; the fabric was painted before being cut apart. *Bivium* (14.63) is an example of using digital images and free-form cut fabric, placing the fabric as the quilt was created.



14.53 *Aspen Trees*



14.54 *Bivium*

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6.8: Key Terms- Materials and Methods

Art Materials and Methods

Art materials and methods are anything an artist uses to create art in any combination. Materials and methods also can be defined as the process of manufacturing or fabrication of a piece of art such as bronze that need to be melted and poured into a mold to be a finished piece of art. The stone must be quarried, transported, and carved before it can be considered a piece of art. Cotton will be picked, cleaned, wound into thread, dyed, and woven into the fabric before a quilter creates a quilt. Mined minerals are ground, mixed, and put into tubes before an artist creates a painting. Art materials are the tools of an artist. This list is by no means complete; however, it does cover most of the art in this textbook.

Aquatint: Aquatint is used in intaglio printmaking to create marks on the metal plate. The plate and paper press together to create a transfer of ink to paper. An artist uses mordant to etch a plate design, and then rosin is used to create a tonal effect. The tonal variation on the plate is the desired outcome.

Atmospheric perspective: The effect of perspective and distance occurs when the mountains in the background are painted a lighter and grayer color than the mountains in the foreground, a common technique by landscape painters.

Bas-relief: A French word meaning to carve in "low relief" in stone, wood, or rock, which gives the carving a three-dimensional look. The word relief is derived from a Latin verb "relevo" meaning to raise. A sculpture looks like it emerges above the background. However, the artist cuts away the background, adding different degrees of depth to determine how far the sculpted section stands out from the background.

Brick: Brick originated in Mesopotamia around 7500 BCE and is still used today in many shapes, made by mixing earth and water. In other civilizations, bricks were made from mud, loam, sand, and water and were sun-dried to harden.

Brush and ink: Brushes were made from many materials including bamboo, wood, bone, feathers with metal tips to control the flow of ink. Iron gall ink is purple-black and made from tannic acids and iron salts from various vegetables. Dip pens were used to transport the ink from the bottle to the paper for drawing.

Camera: The camera is a visual contraption to record images. The word camera comes from the Latin word 'camera obscura,' which means 'dark chamber.'

Carving: Carvers use a tool to shape material by cutting or scraping sections away from the original form making sculptures of wood, stone, clay, bone, ivory, or any suitable material. Several types of tools are used to carve, and different civilizations developed different tools depending on what natural resources are available.

Chalk: Chalk is very similar to pastels, but instead of grinding the rock into a fine powder, the chalk is in its natural state. Chalk is limestone made about 100 million years ago when it was initially under the sea. Today, chalk is mined from the earth, and the chalk is compacted into cylinder shapes familiar in classrooms today.

Charcoal: Charcoal is a common element throughout human life. Charcoal is the byproduct of burning wood.

Chiaroscuro: Chiaroscuro is the Italian word for "light-dark" and is the use of sharp contrasts between dark and light. The bold contrasts produced a dramatic composition and were used extensively by the Renaissance and Baroque artists. Dark colors made their paintings come to life, and the colors made shadows giving depth to the paintings. Dark colors made their paintings come to life, and the colors made shadows giving depth to the paintings. The deep colors contained more than just black, and the artists combined other colors with black depending on the desired outcomes.

Clay: Over millions of years, the earth's crust has been melted, moved, squeezed, cracked, pounded by weather to create a layer of topsoil with various deposits of rock, and clay. The rivers near the first civilizations cut through the topsoil, exposing the layers of clay and providing easy access to the raw product. The fine particles of silt in the clay give the material its plasticity, and when water is added, it is a cohesive product. Silt consists of feldspar (the most abundant mineral on earth), silica, and alkalis like iron which give clay its reddish-brown color.



Collage: From the French word coller "to glue," collage is an art technique of assembling different pieces of art into one cohesive art piece. The most common pieces are newspapers, magazines, paint, photographs, and found objects which are glued down to a piece of paper or canvas. Collage was invented right after the invention of paper in China around 300 BCE.

Composition: In the visual arts, composition refers to the placement of visual elements in a painting or work of art. It also denotes the organization of people, vignettes, and lighting. The composition is essential whether the artist is arranging people, fruit, or the view of a landscape.

Concrete: The use of lightweight concrete has been used for centuries in construction; however, in the last 100 years, it has become more reliable and predictable. Concrete is a mixture of lightweight coarse aggregate with fine aggregates like shale, clay, or slate. The advantages of the newer lightweight concrete include the reduction of load for faster building rates, longer-lasting, and is an excellent thermal protector compared to brick.

Cotton: has been around since 4500 BCE and is used for clothing or weaving. The cotton plant provides a cellulose thread washed and dyed to weave into cotton material. It does not stretch, making it a very durable fabric for clothes.

Drawing: Drawing is the foundation of all art. Drawing is intuitive and part of the function of our brains used to apply marks to a surface. Most people have drawn sometime in their lives, whether in school or at home. Drawing is a simple exercise to convey a thought or share an experience with another person. Drawing can also be challenging and complex, and only with time and practice could one get better.

En Plein Air: A French expression for artists painting out in the open air, also called Peinture Sur le motif, 'painting what the eyes see.'

Foreshortening: The use of foreshortening is a technique to create perspective by exaggerating the part of an object closer to the viewer.

Frescos: Fresco painting is an ancient painting technique created by troweling wet lime plaster on a wall or ceiling. When the plaster dries, the painting becomes permanent and will last until the plaster is damaged. The plaster is painted with a scene after it dries.

Function: When creating architectural drawings, a basic rule of design states form follows function. A visual principle for architecture designates the shape of the building or structure should be principally based upon its planned purpose. To create houses, villages, or the city layout, builders relied on lines, whether straight, angled, curved, or connected, and those planning the city generally used a grid system layout when planning settlements. Architects formulate ideas and define the concepts of the new buildings rendering the multiple layers of a building in three-dimensional concepts scratched in the dirt, written on paper, or today with a computer.

Gesso: Traditionally, gesso was made from a base of white pigment and the addition of chalk and a binder. The gesso was used to prepare the base on wood panels or canvas before the artist applied paint. Modern gesso uses acrylic polymers and latex along with pigments, giving the gesso more flexibility when it is applied.

Glass: Silica is the most common component in glass, an amorphous solid material, also known as sand, and when heated is transparent even with the addition of color. Glass can be floated in a flat frame to make a sheet of glass or blown. Glass blowing has been around for 3,000 years and is the art method of melting glass on the end of a long metal tube and blowing through the tube, causing the glass to expand.

Harmony: Scale is the relationship between the piece of art and its occurrence in the space. It can be significantly larger than life or smaller than life. Proportion is the relative size of the art and the harmony found in the piece.

Jade: The mineral jade is a metamorphic rock made up of different silicates, either nephrite made from a silicate combination of magnesium and calcium or jadeite, also a silicate made from sodium and aluminum.

Linear perspective: A set of parallel lines that recede into the horizon appearing to move closer and closer until they touch. Linear perspective can produce an illusion of three-dimensional space on a piece of paper or painting.

Linen: is made from flax plant fibers and is known around the world for its absorbency and ability to stay cooler in hot weather. It is also the oldest cultivated plant in the world. The durable flax fibers are woven into the most supple, fine, and highly sought-after material ever manufactured.

Lithography: A Greek word meaning "stone" and "writing." Lithography is a print of text or pictures from an etched stone or metal plate and is based on the principle that oil and water do not mix. Using a grease pen, the artist draws directly on the stone, adding acid to etch the unprotected parts of the design into the stone. Mixed ink is spread on the damp stone, and the water is attracted to the non-etched part of the stone, the ink is attracted to the etched portion. The stone and paper are pressed together, and the image is transferred to the paper.



Marble: Marble is formed when limestone is changed by heat and pressure and recrystallizes into a light-colored rock, frequently white. Marble usually is dolomite or calcite in origin and is a combination of recrystallized carbonate elements through heat, compression, or pressure to transform from one type of rock into harder rock. Impurities in the limestone cause the colorful markings. Marble is found in extensive deposits, generally hundreds of feet deep across a mountain. People have mined marble for hundreds of years in mines or open quarries and used the marble in buildings and sculptures.

Marble process: Marble is a metamorphic rock that used to be limestone. The marble usually is dolomite or calcite in origin and is a combination of recrystallized carbonate elements through heat, compression, or pressure to transform from one type of rock into

harder rock. Marble was soft enough to carve and a favorite material for sculptors. Marble is mined from quarries and used to create statues with a hammer and chisel to remove unwanted material to expose the figure as it emerges from the marble.

Mass: The mass is the three-dimensional volume of a piece of artwork. It is the volume and density, which give the art a perceived weight. One principle of architecture and a requirement for builders is the concept of the resistance of gravity and how to use natural materials in any culture to construct a building. Isaac Newton showed how gravity works as a force, and Albert Einstein theorized gravity is a curvature of space-time; however, the ancient civilizations did not have that information.

Metal casting process: The most common form of casting metal is the lost wax process and dates back to 4000 BCE. The casting of a bronze statue can be a complicated process; however, many sculptures can be made from one mold. Bronze is perhaps the most popular metal for casting sculpture. Typically, bronze is 10% tin, and 90% copper heated, mixed, and poured into molds. The early civilizations discovered bronze tools and weapons were more effective than Stone Age tools, leading to inventions advancing civilizations.

Modeling process: Modeling clay is any of a group of malleable substances such as plastic or clay, to build a sculpture. Modeling is an additive method as opposed to carving, and the artist adds material to the sculpture.

Mosaic: Mosaics are crafted by creating images using small pieces of colored tile, stone, or glass. The mosaics are used on walls, ceilings, and even floors as they are durable, lasting for centuries. Artists create mosaics by gluing small pieces of glass or stone to a wall and when it dries in place, spreading grout over the top, sealing the mosaics in place.

Paint: Paint is a combination of a binder and color, mixed to form a liquid drying as a solid. Various types of paint were invented throughout the centuries, including oil, acrylic, and watercolor, in addition to the traditional paints of early civilizations. Paint can also be contained in pressurized cans, released when the valve is pushed down, releasing a fine mist of paint.

Paper: Paper was invented in ancient China but did not become popular in Europe until the 14th century. Paper made from linen rags left to rot in large vats of water. They stamped until the linen became pulp, poured into molds, and left to dry. The results were large pieces of paper suitable to use in the newly invented printing press. Paper was also inexpensive to produce and was a way to create information for more people than the expensive vellum.

Pastels: A pastel is a finely ground powdered pigment mixed with some type of binder. Modern pastels invented in the 17th century were manufactured by machines yielding a standard product.

Perspective and Depth: An artist who paints landscapes on a two-dimensional piece of wood or panel uses the illusion of depth, a three-dimensional feeling, and the sense of reality, bringing the viewer into the scene.

Photography: Photography is the art of capturing a picture and producing a photograph from the picture. Photography captures light in a moment of time, recording the lights produced by an image on a highly sensitive material. Photographic plates were used to capture images before film was invented. The glass had an emulsion of sensitive silver salts in a thin layer. When the light hit the plate, it captured the image on the glass. Used widely for professionals seeking details, plates did not distort the image as the film could.

Photomontage: A photomontage is a group of photos made by cutting up photos and gluing them to a piece of paper, or the montage can be made in a digital photo program, like Adobe Photoshop. The montage can look like a realistic, seamless photo or be an abstract composition.

Pointillism: Pointillism is a form of painting using tiny dots instead of brush strokes. Pointillism is applied in small dots of pure color by juxtaposing complementary colors directly on the canvas, combining through the eye of the viewer to form an image.

Silk: is a fiber from the cocoon of a silkworm, which is on a diet of mulberry leaves and then spins a cocoon. The cocoon is washed in hot water, which kills the silkworm leaving a thin prism-like structure called silk thread. Rewashed and spun into silk thread and dyed thousands of colors. The thread ships on the Silk Road around Asia and Europe.

Silk Screening: Silk screening is a process of printing using a silk mesh in a wooden frame to transfer an image onto another surface, like a tee-shirt.

Sketching: Sketching is a freehand drawing representing what the artist is seeing, but not necessarily the finished work.



Stone: Stones are solid pieces of different types of solid mineral matter used for building structures. Stones are readily found throughout the planet, and many civilizations still use stone for construction. Limestone is a sedimentary rock primarily composed of calcite and aragonite and usually has skeletal pieces of marine organisms. Buildings were designed and engineered to accommodate corners, supports, open spaces, columns, roofs, height, width, all dependent on the variety of stones available. Quarry marks in surviving structures reveal how most people used wooden wedges soaked in water to split the stone on its natural fault lines. Stone lasts a long time, and some of the only surviving parts of civilization are the stone sculptures.

Terracotta: Terracotta means "baked earth" in Italian and is used to describe any type of earthenware that is clay-based.

Vellum: Vellum comes from the Latin word "vitulinum," meaning "made from the calf." They used calfskin vellum to produce books or scrolls. Vellum is smooth, durable, and usually white in color, an excellent medium to write on.

Volume: The volume of artwork can also have many meanings, especially if you are comparing a 2-dimensional painting to a 3-dimensional vessel. Volume usually applies to 3-dimensional work and denotes the amount of space it contains. A vessel will usually have the same volume for a vessel of like kind and size and may occupy the same amount of shelf space yet can still have space around it.

Weaving: Weaving is the art of textile production when two yarns are woven at a right angle to each other, producing some type of fabric or cloth. The warp is the yarn attached to the loom, and the weft is the yarn woven through the alternating warp yarns to create a pattern.

Welding: Welding is a sculptural fabrication process joining metal materials with solder and heat. Different sources of fuel can be used for welding, including gas, electricity, and laser. Forge welding has been used for thousands of years by blacksmiths to join iron and steel pieces together.

Wool: is a fiber from shearing sheep, llamas, or yak and woven into clothing that retains its warmth even when wet. The coats of the animals are sheared off, washed, and spun into yarn, which is one of the warmest fabrics even when wet. The wool is dyed and usually woven on large looms.

3-d drawings: Three-dimensional drawings usually represent a building, shape, or object that has more than one dimension

Art appreciation is a journey about learning, the discovery of cultures, and their art, which has survived after they have abandoned long-ago settlements. Art is a form of creative human expression, lasting longer than cultures, buildings, government, or religion and providing a window into the past. Art is a tangible element of a bygone culture we can hold today, even though it is 30,000 years old, a small remnant of past life.

We study art to learn how to be responsible for human cultural art and to accept the diversity of people and their lifestyles. Looking at the past, we can see the influence of civilizations and time on culture and art today. For example, silk was produced and woven in China, but how long did it take to spread across Asia and into Europe? The Silk Road was a commercial enterprise supporting the transportation and selling of art for thousands of miles. Today, the internet is our influence, and we have access to millions of products on our computers. Research is faster and travels in light seconds, letting us see the rest of the world and their art,

providing a way to learn and appreciate art and not just pass by with a preconceived judgment. When you understand the culture, you can understand the art, it applies to cave art, and it still pertains today in our technological culture.

JUST LOOK!

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Art and Power

Learning Objectives

- Describe why and how art and artists have in some cultures been considered to have exceptional power.
- Distinguish between images of persuasion and propaganda, and specify characteristics of each.
- Recognize how and why images are used for such purposes as to display power, influence society, and effect change.
- Indicate ways that images establish and enhance a ruler's position and authority.
- Identify changes in images of conflict, heroic action, and victims of violent confrontation in various cultures and time periods, including the artist's intentions as well as the public response.
- Distinguish between and describe the prohibition of images enforced within some religions.
- Describe why protestors or conquerors might destroy images and monuments of a past or defeated culture.

7.1: Introduction

7.2: Works Progress Administration Murals

7.3: Appropriation and ideological critique

7.4: Histories, real and imagined

7.5: Propaganda, Persuasion, Politics, and Power

7.6: Mexican Murals and Social Art

7.7: Imagery of War

7.8: Reading- David's Death of Marat

7.9: An-My Lê, 29 Palms

7.10: Before you Move on (Art and Power)

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7.1: Introduction

Art has always been associated with power. At times in history, the individuals who made art were seen as having special powers. They could conceptualize shapes and forms and then bring them into being. They could create images and objects from dirt, ashes, and stone that looked like living creatures. These individuals were set apart they could transform, they could give life. And the images and objects they created held powers, as well. They were a means of communication with an unseen world, of exerting influence over the well-being and actions of humans. So both the artists and their art were considered to be magical in that they were out of the realm of everyday, common, and shared existence: they were su- per-natural and extraordinary.



Figure 9.1 | Apadana staircase, Persepolis, Iran
Author: User "Fabienkhan"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The ancient Greeks believed the creativity artists possessed came to them from a **muse**, a personification of knowledge and the arts that inspired them to write, sculpt, and compose. The ancient Romans, who strongly believed in the family as the most basic and essential hub of societal organization, called its guiding spirit the *genius*, from the Latin verb meaning *genui* or "to bring into being or create." The word **genius** came to be associated with the arts during the Renaissance, when it took on the meaning of inspiration and ingenuity visited upon the artist, often as a form of possession, setting the artist apart from, and at odds with, non-geniuses.

In addition to the power of the artist, there is the power of the art itself to imitate or mimic life. Again, according to the ancient Greeks, art's power resides in its ability to represent nature; the closer, more real, and more natural the representation, the closer the art work is to truth, beauty and power. Among other cultures, especially those that avoid representation, art is still a means of aesthetic expression with considerable power, but with abstracted forms. For example, in Islamic cultures the human figure and forms based on direct observation are not used in religious art and architecture as only God has the ability to create living things. Instead, elaborate ornamentation based on the written word and human, animal, and plant forms is used to decorate surfaces with intricate motifs, or patterns.

The visual force of the image or object, whether representational or non-representational, has been used throughout the ages by those in power to give form to and communicate messages about themselves, their wishes or dictates, their accomplishments, and their very right to rule. Literacy has, until the recent past, in human history been a skill few had the means to develop, but leaders in secular and religious roles have fostered among their subjects and followers a visual literacy, the ability to "read" and understand images through a common "language" of subjects, symbols, and styles. Those who wish to use their art as a means of protest against an established power have traditionally used the same "vocabulary" to visually communicate their messages, as well. Especially in times of war and during periods of oppression, art has been used as a tool to protest, document, provide an alternative version, and communicate to others about people and events that become our historical record.

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7.2: Works Progress Administration Murals

Artist	Native Country
Doris Lee	United States
Julius Woeltz	United States
Victor Arnautoff	Russia
Maxine Albro	United States
Humbert Albrizio	Poland

The 1930s in American history will always be remembered as the Great Depression and how the federal government implemented WPA (Works Progress Administration) Art Projects. The WPA created more than 100,000 pieces of art and over 18,000 sculptures around America. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt conceived of the idea when he wanted to combine art with patriotic American values. The WPA was originally created to provide economic relief to the people in the U.S. suffering from the Great Depression. It started in 1935 and lasted eight years, employing over 10,000 artists. An American scene was the only requirement in the design and painting of the murals, the artists were free to interpret the scene how they chose, but it had to represent American values on the wall in paint.

Doris Lee (1905-1983) was an American painter known for her painting and printmaking skills, becoming one of the most successful artists during the depression. In *Country Post*, (13.71) Lee presents what she considers an idealized view of what farm life would be like in anywhere America, for example, the enjoyment of the people who are receiving mail from the town delivery person. Seeing two types of transportation, the traditional horse and a rare automobile might suggest the economy is going to pick up, and everyone can afford a modern form of transportation. The town church steeple in the background signified their faith and tradition while typical farm animals run through the foreground.



13.71 Country Post

Julius Woltz (1911-1956) was an American landscape painter and art teacher who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and painted the *Bauxite Mines* (13.72). Bauxite mining drove the economy of Benton, Arkansas, and after a tour of the mine, Woeltz designed this mural. Using a mixture of modern art movements, cubism, constructivism, and American scene painting, he created this exquisite painting of bauxite strip mining.



13.72 *The Bauxite Mines*

Coit Tower in San Francisco, California, is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the city. The tower was built by Lillie Coit, a philanthropist who wanted to dedicate a memorial to the firefighters of the 1906 earthquake and fire. The tower rises 210 feet and is made of reinforced concrete in the shape of an abstracted fire hose nozzle. The Coit Tower murals were completed in 1934 and created by many muralists, including Diego Rivera, Bernard Zakheim, Victor Arnautoff, John Langley Howard, and Maxine Albro.

Victor Arnautoff (1896 – 1979) painted *City Life*, (13.73), a generic city street scene with a traffic accident, leftist newspapers, a fire engine, armed robbery in progress, and the San Francisco Stock Exchange. Arnautoff painted himself at the newsstand reading left-wing papers while excluding the San Francisco Chronicle. The central theme of the painting shows disregard for other people when living in a large city and the lack of concern when an accident or mugging is occurring.



13.73 City Life

The *Library* (13.74) was painted by **Humbert Albrizio** (1901 – 1970), a Polish artist seeking asylum in America. An experienced muralist, Albrizio helped put together the project at Coit Tower. The scene is in a library with people reading an assortment of "questionable" books (according to the 1930s). The controversy around the mural began as soon as it was open for public viewing, and political debates continued for years.



13.74 *The Library*

Maxine Albro (1893-1966) was one of the leading female artists in America and painted *California* (13.75, 13.76) for the Coit Tower project. Although born in Iowa and living in Los Angeles as a child, she received her art education in multiple schools throughout the world. Some of her murals were controversial for this period of time and were destroyed, the same fate suffered by other artists. Her mural in the tower reflected the abundance of crops, fruit, and grain growing in California.



13.75 California (left side)



13.76 *California* (right side)



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7.3: Appropriation and ideological critique

Appropriation and ideological critique

Contemporary artists use copying and other visual methods to deconstruct the myths that inform our daily lives.

1980 - present

Masami Teraoka, *American Kabuki*

by EMMA ACKER AT THE FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 7.3.1: Masami Teraoka, *American Kabuki (Oishiiwa)*, 1986, watercolor and sumi ink on paper mounted on a four-panel screen, 196.9 x 393.7 x 3 cm (de Young Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco), © Masami Teraoka Seeing America video Speakers: Emma Acker, Associate Curator of American Art, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

This painted screen at the de Young Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Ai Weiwei

The Case for Ai Weiwei

by THE ART ASSIGNMENT



Video 7.3.2: Speaker: Sarah Urist Green

Additional resources:

Ai WeiWei's website

Ai WeiWei on Art21

Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*

by TIFFANY WAI-YING BERES

How can the destruction of an artifact also be an act of preservation? *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995) by **Ai Weiwei** is a highly provocative work of art. This series of three black and white photographs portray the artist holding a 2,000-year-old Han dynasty urn that, frame by frame, he drops, it falls, and shatters. As much a work of photography as a work of **performance art**, in each still an unaffected Ai looks directly at the camera aware of his destructiveness. In fact, to capture the action on film (rather than digital photography, which lets you review the image immediately), the artist actually broke two ceramic vessels, just in case. This kind of blatant destruction of artifacts may seem highly irreverent, yet it also forces viewers to consider issues of transformation and destruction of the past.



Figure **7.3.1**: Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*, 1995 (printed 2017), Three gelatin silver prints, 148 x 121 cm each (photo: © Ai Weiwei)

Ai Weiwei

Born in Beijing, China, in 1957, Ai Weiwei is an activist, filmmaker, curator and one of the world's most famous artists. Ai began his artistic career in New York City, where he lived from 1981 to 1993. When he returned to China in the mid-90s, a time of rapid modernization for his home country, he was shocked to discover that certain objects of **cultural patrimony** were not highly valued. Ai explains that when he came across these Han dynasty ceramic objects, they were just a dime a dozen: "I still have a photo of when I was in Xi'an. There was a farmer sleeping on top of these two urns waiting for someone to pay him a few hundred yuan. For him that was a few months' salary, but even then nobody wanted them." [1] Ai realized that during that period, most of his fellow countrymen were not nearly as interested in their country's historic art objects as he was. For this reason, Ai began collecting antiquities, particularly ancient vessels and furniture, and eventually began converting these objects into contemporary artworks. Whether he reworks a discarded four-hundred-year-old wooden stool into a standing sculpture or creates an installation from hundreds of salvaged blue and white ceramic shards, Ai is interested in giving these historical found objects a second life as contemporary art.



Figure **7.3.2**: Shang Dynasty jade from the tomb of Fu Hao, 1300-1046 B.C.E., Anyang, China (photo: © National Museum of China, Beijing)

Historical legacy

This kind of repurposing of the past also relates to Chinese aesthetics and culture. In China, there is a long and rarified tradition of collecting ancient material remains and transforming them into new art. For millennia before the advent of modern scientific archeology, rulers and elites collected ancient materials and acted to preserve them or emulate them in new works, whether it was preserving important documents by recording them on durable surfaces like stone steles or incorporating ancient designs into bronze or ceramics. For example, Fu Hao's tomb in Anyang, a Shang dynasty (1600-1046 B.C.E.) royal burial tomb excavated in the 1980s, enabled scholars to push the history of antique collecting in China back to the thirteenth century B.C.E. The 775 **jade** carvings found in this tomb of a powerful Shang queen included both a collection of prehistoric jades as well a collection made in her era but modeled on earlier **Neolithic** prototypes. [2] This is an important revelation because it suggests that more than three thousand years ago, antique collections were already providing references and inspirations for making new works of art. This tradition of collecting and revitalizing antiquity has encouraged generations of Chinese artists and craftsmen to look to the past in making contemporary art.



Figure **7.3.3**: Tomb of Fu Hao, late 13th century B.C.E., Shang dynasty, Anyang, China (photo: **Gary Todd**, CC0 1.0)



Figure **7.3.4**: Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (second image), 1995 (photo: © Ai Weiwei)

Act of revitalization?

Ai Weiwei has chosen an unusual way of continuing this legacy of transforming the material past while at the same time expressing dissent against a country that sometimes obliterates its own cultural heritage: through direct confrontation. On the one hand we can view his work as a destruction of another artist's work; on the other, Ai's act can also be thought of as a kind of collaboration with an ancient artist over thousands of years—a revitalization. Once an ancient receptacle, the urn in *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* takes on new meaning as contemporary art. In Ai's work, the object is less a vessel than an emblem of Chinese history. For this performance, it seems that the object selection is almost immaterial—it might as well have been any ancient object. However, in recognition of Ai's own celebrity, the artist has transformed this urn into something of great significance just by selecting it to become the subject of his art, by including its name in the title, and, of course, by destroying it. The sensationalism of breaking something so old and rare is what modern audiences find so compelling. Here the nostalgia for what once was serves as a mirror, reminding us that China's past remains important and relevant today.

Destruction as preservation

The event that Ai Weiwei created and captured in these photographs is one of violence. Many feel that it is unethical to destroy an artifact under any circumstances—that such an act indicates a lack of value and respect. Indeed, law professor Joseph Sax calls such destruction a kind of "unqualified ownership" because it enables "the indulgence of private vice to obliterate public benefits." [3] Certainly, the destruction of art for ideological or egoistic reasons reflects badly on a collector of ancient objects. Yet was *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* a true obliteration? The Han dynasty urn still exists for the public but it has been transformed into the form of captured film stills. The loss of one object gives the new artwork its potency.



Figure **7.3.5**: Ai Weiwei "According to What" exhibition, Art Gallery of Ontario, (photo: **Joseph Morris**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Ai himself says that he considers the act of dropping the urn one of creation rather than destruction: “People always ask me: how could you drop it? I say it’s a kind of love. At least there is a kind of attention to that piece [because of the photograph].” [4] From the artist’s point of view, his act was one of preservation through transformation. Indeed, this triptych (set of three photographs) and the shadow of the vessel captured within it now receive unprecedented attention. These photographs are displayed in museums and public institutions around the world. The work is widely available online, and even the focus of academic essays like this one. Given Ai’s own celebrity status and the significance of this artwork, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* is also now far more valuable than the original ceramic object. In 2016, this limited edition work **sold for nearly 1 million dollars** at Sotheby’s Auctions in London. [5]

Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn is one of many works by Ai Weiwei that focuses on heritage loss and the importance of the past. According to the artist, “the power [of my artwork] comes not from the act but from the audience’s attention, the challenge to their values. The act is easy—every day we can drop something, but it is when we are forced to come face to face with this action and make a judgment … that is the interesting part.” [6] Ultimately the work demands a judgment: was the provocation and the global attention Ai garnered for the urn worth the destruction of the urn itself? This set of photographs encourages its viewers to question value of antiquity in our modern world and whether it is worth preserving.

Notes:

1. Tiffany Wai-Ying Beres, “A Battlefield of Judgments: Ai Weiwei as Collector,” *Orientations* 46, no. 7 (2015), pp. 87–92.
2. Wu Hung, ed., *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2010), pp. 16–39.
3. Joseph L Sax, “Collectors: Private Vices, Public Benefits,” in *Playing Darts with a Rembrandt: Public and Private Rights in Cultural Treasures* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 63.
4. Beres, p. 92.
5. Sotheby’s Auction: www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.42.html/2016/contemporary-art-evening-auction-l16020
6. Beres, p. 92.

Additional resources:

Ai Weiwei’s website

The Art Assignment, “The Case for Ai Weiwei”

Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*

by MEGAN LORRAINE DEBIN



Video **7.3.3**: Video from **Tate**

Subversive seeds

Ai Weiwei often uses his art to critique political and economic injustice. This can be seen in work such as his 2010 installation, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)* at Tate Modern, London.



Figure **7.3.6**: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (photo: **Drew Bates**, CC BY 2.0)

Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds) consists of more than 100 million tiny, handmade porcelain sunflower seeds, originally weighing in at 150 tons. They filled the enormous Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, an industrial building-turned-contemporary art space. Sunflower seeds evokes a warm personal memory for the artist, who recalls that while he was growing up, even the poorest in China would share sunflower seeds as a treat among friends. The use of sunflower seeds as the basis of his installation was also designed to subvert popular imagery rooted in the artist's childhood. Communist propaganda optimistically depicted leader Mao Zedong as the sun and the citizens of the People's Republic of China as sunflowers, turning toward their chairman. Ai Weiwei reasserts the sunflower seed as a symbol of camaraderie during difficult times.



Figure **7.3.7**: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London)

Though each of the 100 million carefully crafted individual seeds can draw the viewer's attention, once arranged together in a neat rectangle, or covering the floor of an entire room, the hyper-realistic seeds create a sense of vastness. In the Tate installation, there was a sense of precision in the arrangement of the seeds, creating visual order and uniformity. The individual seed is lost among the millions, a critique of the conformity and censorship inherent in modern China.



Figure 7.3.8: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London) (photo: **Waldopepper**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Made In China

More than 1,600 artisans worked to make the individual porcelain seeds by hand in Jingdzhen, the city known as the "Porcelain Capital," where artists have been producing pottery for nearly 2000 years. Porcelain, first produced during the Han dynasty in about 200 B.C.E. and later mastered during the Tang dynasty, is made by heating white clay (kaolin) to a temperature over 1200 degrees Celsius. The fusion of the particles within the clay during firing allowed artists to create vessels with thin but strong walls. Porcelain— a symbol of imperial culture in China—was also made for export via the Silk Road and became important to the creation of the idea of China in the West.



Figure 7.3.9: Some of the 1,600 highly skilled craftspeople from Jingdezhen hired to create and paint porcelain sunflower seeds

Ai Weiwei's use of porcelain comments on the long history of this prized material while also rejecting the common negative connotations of the modern term "Made in China." Utilizing skilled artisans known for their exquisite craftsmanship to make objects that can only be differentiated one from another upon close inspection, alludes to the important porcelain tradition in Jingdzhen, as well as to the uniformity and diffusion of modern (cheap and fast) labor that is responsible for China's hard-won place in the world economy. *Sunflower Seeds* asks us to examine how our consumption of foreign-made goods affects the lives of others across the globe.

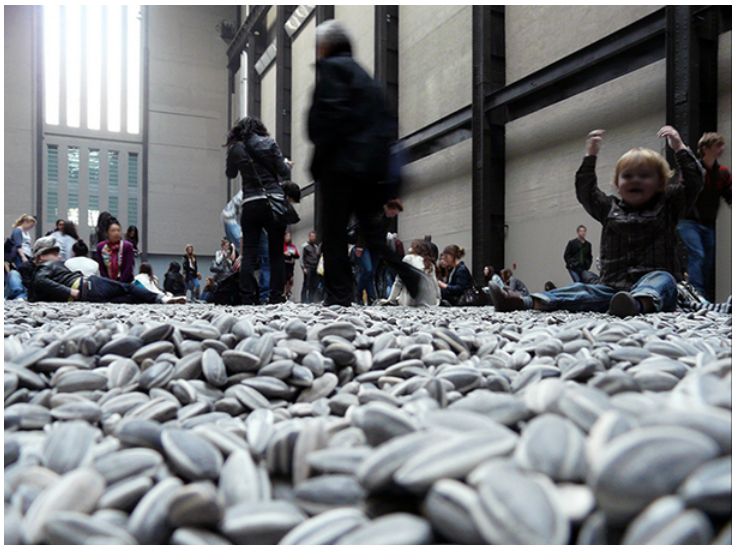


Figure 7.3.10: Ai Weiwei, Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds), 2010, one hundred million hand-painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London) (photo: Loz Flowers CC BY-SA 2.0)

How we experience an artwork impacts our perception of the work. In the tradition of participatory contemporary art, *Sunflower Seeds* asks the public to physically interact with the art. Initially, Tate visitors were invited to walk over and lie on the seeds, though the museum, in consultation with the artist, suspended this opportunity about a week into the exhibition because of safety concerns.

Art and activism

Ai Weiwei was arrested at the Beijing Capital International Airport on April 3, 2011 during his Tate exhibition.[1] He was detained for 81 days. The artist, along with many in the international community, asserted that his true offense was his political activism for democracy and human rights. Ai Weiwei had blogged for four years—investigating cover-ups and corruption in the government's handling of a devastating 2008 earthquake in Sichuan and the country's hosting of the Olympics. Ai Weiwei's blog was shut down in 2009. Since then, he has turned to Twitter and Instagram. During his detention, the international community, including major US art institutions, rallied for his release. Officials eventually released him, charging Ai Weiwei with tax evasion, but his passport was withheld, preventing him from leaving the country for four years. It was returned in 2015.



Figure 7.3.11: Ai Weiwei's continues to address issues of human rights in his work. The 2015 exhibit *@Large*, installed on Alcatraz, the former island prison in the San Francisco Bay, comments on surveillance, freedom, and political prisoners by mixing fine and traditional arts with pop culture materials including silk dragon kites and Lego portraits (above).

[1] Andrew Jacobs, "China Takes Dissident Artist Into Custody," *The New York Times*, 4/3/11, A4

Additional resources:

You can follow Ai Weiwei on Instagram and Twitter @aiww

More information on Ai Weiwei's Sunflower Seeds

Sunflower Seeds exhibition at the Tate

Ai Weiwei from art21

Ai Weiwei, *Remembering* and the Politics of Dissent

by JP MCMAHON



Figure **7.3.12**: Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

Dangerous Art

All art is political in the sense that all art takes place in the public arena and engages with an already existing ideology. Yet there are times when art becomes dangerously political for both the artist and the viewers who engage with that art. Think of Jacques-Louis David's involvement in the French Revolution—his individual investment in art following the bloodshed —and his imprisonment during the reign of terror. If it were not for certain sympathisers, David may well have ended up another victim of the guillotine. Goya is another example of an artist who fell foul of government power. There are instances in the 20th century when artists have faced down political power directly. Consider the photomontages of John Heartfield. Heartfield risked his life at times to produce covers for the magazine A/Z, which defied both Hitler and the Nazi Party.

Ai Weiwei

The Chinese artist, Ai Weiwei, offers is an important contemporary example. In 2011, Weiwei was arrested in China following a crack down by the government on so-called "political dissidents" (a specific category that the Chinese government uses to classify those who seek to subvert state power) for "alleged economic crimes" against the Chinese state. Weiwei has used his art to address both the corruption of the Chinese communist government and its outright neglect of human rights, particularly in the realm of the freedom of speech and thought. Weiwei has been successful in using the internet (which is severely restricted in China) as a medium for his art. His work is informed by two interconnected strands, his involvement with the Chinese avant-garde group "Stars" (which he helped found in 1978 during his time in the Beijing Film Academy) and the fact that he spent some of his formative years in New York, engaging there with the ideas of conceptual art, in particular the idea of the readymade. Many of the concepts and much of the material that Weiwei uses in his art practice are informed by post-conceptual thinking.



Figure **7.3.13**: Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern)

An International Audience



Figure **7.3.14**: Handpainted seeds (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern)

Weiwei has exhibited successfully in the West in many major shows, for example, the 48th Venice Biennale in Italy (1999) and Documenta 12 (2007). He also exhibited *Sunflower Seeds* (October, 2010) in the Turbine Hall in the Tate Modern. In this work, Weiwei filled the floor of the huge hall with one hundred million porcelain seeds, each individually hand-painted in the town of Jingdezhen by 1,600 Chinese artisans. Participants were encouraged to walk over the exhibited space (or even roll in the work) in order to experience the ideas of the effect of mass consumption on Chinese industry and 20th-century China's history of famine and collective work. However, on October 16, 2010, Tate Modern stopped people from walking on the exhibit due to health liability concerns over porcelain dust.

"…a natural disaster is a public matter."

Perhaps the work that contributed most to Weiwei's current imprisonment and the destruction of his studio was his investigation of corruption in the construction of the schools that collapsed during the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China. Like many others, Weiwei investigated how improper material and the contravention of civil engineering laws led to the wholesale destruction of schools (which led in turn to the deaths of thousands of children trapped within them), Weiwei has produced a list of all the victims of the earthquake on his blog. This act is typical Weiwei's use of the internet to communicate information. This information is his "art", in much the way that American artists of the late 1960s used words and ideas as art.



Figure 7.3.15: Visitors entering the Ai Weiwei show *So Sorry* in the Haus der Kunst (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

So Sorry

In his retrospective show *So Sorry* (October 2009 to January 2010, Munich, Germany), Weiwei created the installation *Remembering* on the façade of the Haus der Kunst. It was constructed from nine thousand children's backpacks. They spelled out the sentence "She lived happily for seven years in this world" in Chinese characters (this was a quote from a mother whose child died in the earthquake). Regarding this work, Weiwei said,

> ***The idea to use backpacks came from my visit to Sichuan after the earthquake in May 2008. During the earthquake many schools collapsed. Thousands of young students lost their lives, and you could see bags and study material everywhere. Then you realize individual life, media, and the lives of the students are serving very different purposes. The lives of the students disappeared within the state propaganda, and very soon everybody will forget everything.***

The title of the show referred to the apologies frequently expressed by governments and corporations when their negligence leads to tragedies, such as the collapse of schools during the earthquake. Two months before the opening of this exhibition Weiwei suffered a severe beating from Chinese police in Chengdu in August 2009, where he was trying to testify for Tan Zuoren, a fellow investigator of the shoddy construction and the student casualties. Weiwei underwent emergency brain surgery for internal bleeding as a result of the assault.

The Arrest



Figure **7.3.16**: Blue, yellow, and red backpacks (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

On April 3rd 2011, Weiwei was arrested at Beijing's airport while while waiting for a flight to Hong Kong. While his detention is broadly believed to be linked to his criticism of the Chinese government, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that he is "under investigation for alleged economic crimes." Weiwei's participation in the Jasmine Rallies, a series of peaceful protests which took place all over China in February, no doubt contributed to his arrest.

Additional Resources:

*Historical Note on the Haus der Kunst: The Haus der Kunst (designed by Paul Ludwig Troost, "first master builder to the führer") was sited by Adolf Hitler and sought to express Nazi ideology by using stone from German quarries and with its references to the work of Klenze and Schinkel. From its opening in 1937, the Haus der Kunst held exhibitions glorifying the "Blood and Soil" propaganda of the Nazi regime.

Ai Weiwei's TED Video

Tate Modern: Sunflower Seeds Video

Simon Elegant, "Ai Weiwei: Interview Transcript", *Time*, May 12, 2009

Roberta Smith, "12 Heads Do the Talking for a Silenced Artist," *The New York Times*, May 2011

Hans Haacke, *Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1884-1975*

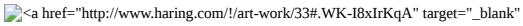
by SAL KHAN, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **7.3.4**: Hans Haacke, *Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1884-1975*, 1975

Keith Haring, *Subway Drawings*

by DR. AMY RAFFEL



Keith Haring,
Untitled
, 1984, chalk on paper, 88 1 /2 x 46 inches, photographer: Ivan Dalla Rana © Keith Haring Foundation" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-17760" height="200" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/.../subway_01.jpg
" width="157">

Figure **7.3.17**: **Keith Haring, *Untitled*, 1984, chalk on paper, 88 1 /2 x 46 inches, photographer: Ivan Dalla Rana © Keith Haring Foundation**

An international art star, Keith Haring and his work have often been characterized as quintessentially of the eighties—an embodiment of the decade's street art, hip hop, and urban energy in New York. While his career involved a diverse range of art making—painting, drawing, performance, video, murals, and art merchandising—his subway drawings stand among his most well-known and celebrated work.

Haring drew over 5,000 chalk drawings over a five-year period, from 1980 to 1985, in New York City subway stations (visit the **Keith Haring Foundation website** to see his work year by year). Since the beginning of his career, Haring was determined to create art that could be for everyone, both through an accessible style and by locating his work in easily reachable, public locations. Creating art on the street meant that a bigger audience could see his work, outside of the more insular space of an art gallery.

Previous Street Art

Haring's subway drawings were not his first intervention into public, urban space. In New York City, early in 1980, he began to subtly alter street advertisements, such as one for Chardón Jeans, in which he blocked out letters, so the ad read "hard on Jeans." He also posted small collages on street lamps made up of images appropriated from print media and bits of painted paper. In the summer of 1980, Haring made more overtly political collages by cutting and rearranging headlines from the *New York Post*, to say things like "**REAGAN SLAIN BY HERO COP**" and "POPE KILLED FOR FREED HOSTAGE." He xeroxed these works by the hundreds and posted them all over the city in an effort to undermine the political conservatism of the period. These early experiments helped set the stage for Haring's subway drawings.

Subway Drawings



Figure **7.3.18**: **Keith Haring working in the subway. Photographer, Chantal Regnault 1983**

In late 1980, Haring noticed that New York City subway's blank advertising spaces were covered with black matte paper when advertising subscriptions expired. He immediately purchased some chalk, and started drawing. Over the next five years, this became a daily, repetitive obsession: he would ride the subway, look for these empty spaces of black paper, and draw quickly—without any preparation—and then leave on the next train. Through incessant repetition,Haring's subway drawings allowed him to perfect his highly recognizable reduced linear vocabulary, and to create an inventory of images. Simplification was practical: he needed to complete his drawings as fast as possible to avoid being arrested. He created characters, such as the barking dog and the radiating baby, which he drew on flat planes with no spatial depth, often with only a horizon line or a staircase to suggest space. Drawn close to the surface like cartoons, his images had immediacy and impact, and could carry multiple meanings through various combinations.

The **radiant baby**, for example, could represent birth or purity, but could also be read as a symbol of nuclear energy or bodily corruption depending on what he drew around it. Haring intentionally sanitized the subject matter of his subway drawings, leaving out any explicit sexual and political imagery. He wanted his audience, which included children, to enjoy his works. This made his drawings more ambiguous to an extent, but also more outwardly positive and universal in theme. This work, though, while seemingly straightforward, did incorporate some darker references, including generalized themes of oppression and the abuse of power (image below left), but these were often simplified to such an extent that they remained open to multiple interpretations.



Figure **7.3.19**: **Keith Haring, *Untitled* (Subway Drawing), 1982, chalk on paper @ Keith Haring Foundation**

Graffiti scene

Haring's arrival in New York coincided with graffiti's peak in 1978-79, when artists covered subway cars, walls, and storefront gates throughout the city. Haring's well-defined style benefited from graffiti, which offered lessons in how to make graphic images visible in a cluttered urban environment and stressed the importance of motion, speed, and improvisation. Haring never considered himself to be a graffiti artist however. His subway drawings significantly differed from graffiti in location, timing, and medium. Haring often used white chalk and worked during the day so that he could interact with his audience. In contrast, graffiti artists usually used spray paint or markers, working at night. Graffiti encompassed a subculture at the social margins of New York City that excluded artists like Haring both racially and socio-economically.

Downtown Arts Scene

Other artists of Haring's generation worked within the public spaces of New York City to create and display art including **Jean-Michel Basquiat**, Kenny Scharf, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, and Richard Hambleton. In addition the artist collectives Colab, Fashion Moda, Gran Fury, and Group Material used the street as canvas. Like Haring, these artists experimented with alternate distribution systems to expand their reach outside of the commercial art world. Through posters, billboards, or small sculptures, or by engaging the community through artist-run events, pop-up exhibition spaces, or activist demonstrations, these downtown artists (like Haring) regularly put their art and ideas on the street to be enjoyed, and to inform and involve the public. Their intention was inclusion, rather than to alienate or confuse.

Burgeoning Celebrity

Haring drew several works of art every day, over many years in the New York City subway, a system used by millions of people. While he made his subway drawings for free, they proved to be a promotional tool that catapulted him into the public spotlight and helped launch his gallery career. In effect, he co-opted spots meant for advertising and campaigned for himself. His drawing was also performative—often attracting an audience captivated by his quick actions and improvisation. He promoted his subway work in other media, including one instance in which a friend taped one of his arrests by the MTA police, which was then featured on CBS News on a nationwide special. He also designed buttons illustrating his characters and gave away thousands to subway riders. Attached to shirts and bags, these buttons enhanced the visibility of his work.

In 1982, Haring joined the Tony Shafrazi gallery, but continued to work in the subway. This was a strategy he used throughout his career: operating in both the contemporary art world and in public spaces. His gallery career helped to fund his time making street art for free, and they both reinforced his public presence. Eventually, Haring's popularity meant that his work in the subways became so valuable that people began to steal panels as soon as he drew them, ending this phase of his work. He continued to create art for all through posters and prints, merchandising, and large scale public murals in cities around the world. Before Haring became a worldwide celebrity, however, he was a local celebrity—generating his first fame through his subway drawings.

Additional resources:

The Keith Haring Foundation

Henry Geldzhaler, Introduction to *Art in Transit*

Michael Auping, *Urban Theater: New York Art in the 1980s* (New York: Rizzoli, 2014).

Peter Belsito, *Notes from the Pop Underground* (Berkeley, CA: Last Gasp of San Francisco, 1985).

Jeffrey Deitch and Carlo McCormick. *Keith Haring: 31 Subway Drawings* (New York: Art Issue Editions, 2012).

John Gruen, *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991).

Keith Haring and Robert Harris Thompson, *Keith Haring Journals* (New York: Viking, 1996).

Tseng Kwong Chi and Henry Geldzahler, Keith Haring, *Art in Transit: Subway Drawings* (New York: Harmony Books, 1984).

Keith Haring: Journey of the Radiant Baby (Piermont, N.H.: Bunker Hill Pub., 2006).

Cedar Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution* (New York: Abrams, 2008).

Anselm Kiefer

Anselm Kiefer, *Shulamite*

by REBECCA TAYLOR



Figure **7.3.20**: Anselm Kiefer, *Shulamite*, 1983, oil, emulsion, woodcut, shellac, acrylic, and straw on canvas, 213 x 145″ / 541 x 368.3 cm (Doris and Donald Fisher Collection) © Anselm Kiefer, courtesy of the artist

> ***Black milk of morning we drink you at night***
> ***we drink you at noontime Death is a gang-boss aus Deutschland***
> ***we drink you at dusktime and dawntime***
> ***we drink and drink Death is a gang-boss aus Deutschland his eye is blue***
> ***he shoots you with leaden bullets his aim is true***
> ***there's a man in this house your golden hair Margareta***
> ***he sets his dogs on our trail he gives us a grave in the sky***
> ***he cultivates snakes and he dreams Death is a gang-boss aus Deutschland***
> ***your golden hair Margareta***
> ***your ashen hair Shulamite***

—the final lines of Paul Celan's poem, "Death Fugue," published 1947 (trans. Jerome Rothenberg)

Breaking postwar silence

Born in Germany just months shy of the end of World War II, Anselm Kiefer came of age in the late 1960s when the silence surrounding the crimes of the Nazi regime was ruptured by a vocal younger generation horrified by their collective German "past,"

struggling to reconcile such shame and redefine what it meant to be German in a post-Nazi world.

For Kiefer, who had studied with the artists Peter Dreher in Karlsruhe and Joseph Beuys in Dusseldorf, painting became the arena to vocalize and elucidate his contempt for the Nazis and their reprehensible legacy, instilling every brush stroke with palpable rage, grief, and shame. In the 1970s, Kiefer developed a signature style that was influenced in part by the Neo-expressionist style of Georg Baselitz, but also by his teacher Beuys, particularly Beuys's tendency to use commonplace materials, such as fat and felt within his artistic practice. Kiefer augmented his thick layers of impasto with lead, glass, straw, wood, dried flowers, and more, yielding highly textured, viscous surfaces. As his list of materials grew, so too did the scale of his canvases, which though large and formidable, felt ephemeral and fragile as a result of the materials he utilized.

A thick impasto

All of the canonical elements of Kiefer's work are present in *Shulamite*—a thick impasto resulting from a hardened mixture of oil, acrylic, emulsion, and shellac; a brittle, textured surface infused with commonplace materials (in this case, straw and ash); mythological or biblical references (Shulamite refers to the heroine in the Song of Solomon); a literary reference (Celan's "Death Fugue"); and a historical subject or location (a Nazi Memorial Hall in Berlin).

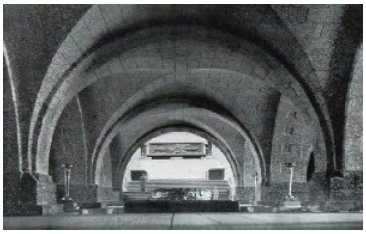


Figure **7.3.21**: Wilhelm Kreis, Funeral Hall for the Great German Soldier in the Hall of Soldiers, c. 1939 (Berlin)

Kiefer's hall is not a memorial to great men with patriotic flags waving boldly, but a gateway to damnation, a dark and foreboding road to hell, enclosed by low arches and paved with massive stones —the whole mise-en-scène (a stage set that tells a story) suggestive of an oven (immediately bringing to mind the hyperactivity of the crematoria at the Nazi death camps). Sulamith, is inscribed in the upper left hand corner, a graffiti-like testament in white paint upon the stone, to Celan's brave young Jewish girl consumed by this living hell, who came to her death in a chamber such as this because she had not the golden hair of Aryan Margarete but the dark "ashen hair" of Shulamite. Kiefer transformed architecture meant to honor Nazi heros into a memorial for their victims.

Emotional honesty

Comparisons to Jackson Pollock in terms of both scale and expressive, gestural style are understandable, but for me Kiefer's paint handling is even more reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh, in terms of raw beauty and emotional honesty. Just as van Gogh's paint can transport me into the Dutch or French countryside and fill my nose with the smell of fresh sunflowers or irises, so too can Kiefer transport me to another place in time and space—but rather than a hayfield in Holland it is the dark abyss of a concentration camp with the stomach-churning smell of burning flesh sullying the air.

Special thanks to Sandy Heller, The Heller Group, LLC

Additional Resources:

Paul Celan, Death Fugue, Copyright © 2005 by Paul Celan and Jerome Rothenberg. From Paul Celan: Selections. Reprinted with permission of the University of California Press. Poets.org

Nicolas Wroe, "Life in Art: Anselm Kiefer," essay in the Guardian Newspaper, March 18 2011

Anselm Kiefer, *Bohemia Lies by the Sea*

by COREY D'AUGUSTINE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 7.3.5: The conservator's eye: Anselm Kiefer, *Bohemia Lies by the Sea*, 1996, oil, emulsion, shellac, charcoal, and powdered paint on burlap, 75 1/4 in. × 18 ft. 5 inches / 191.1 × 561.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Corey D'Augustine and Steven Zucker.

Julie Mehretu, *Stadia II*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG



Figure 7.3.22

Opening / Ceremonies

When looking at *Stadia II*, first try to isolate the black lines from the rest of the composition. Does this centrifugal structure remind you of a sports arena, an amphitheater or opera house? Perhaps a political chamber? It could denote all of these, broadly invoking our experiences as individuals and collective bodies in such spaces. The built environment, for Mehretu, provides a setting in which people can gather, protest, pray, and riot in mass numbers.

Now, try to imagine yourself in a large stadium, at an important athletic championship such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympics. How do the crowds behave? What types of phrases or slogans are they shouting, and at what volume? Think about the matching clothing and the painted faces of spectators wearing team colors, or the flags and banners that they wave over their heads.

In her monumental paintings, murals, and works on paper, Julie Mehretu overlays architectural plans, diagrams, and maps of the urban environment with abstract forms and personal notations. The resulting compositions convey the energy and chaos of today's globalized world. *Stadia II* is part of a triptych of works created in 2004, and explores themes such as nationalism and revolution as they occur in the worlds of art, sports, and contemporary politics.

Gaze back into the painting and observe the various shards of color floating over the work's architectural skeleton. The scene, however abstract, could easily represent our visualization of the sports arena. Small circles, dots, and hash marks float through the open space at the center of the composition, resembling the eruption of confetti that announces a winning team's victory (or, alternately, that of a lucky political candidate on Election Day).



Figure **7.3.23**: Julie Mehretu, detail, *Stadia II*, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144″ (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)

Notice the larger circles, triangles, blocks and parallelograms that float across the upper register. Far from arbitrary, these basic pictorial elements could comprise the designs of nearly any country's national flag. The cluster of red and blue stripes, for instance, located along the top-right edge of the canvas, resemble the American flag, without necessarily resolving into a perfect match. We may also find corporate logos and religious symbols interspersed throughout; Mehretu is intentional in drawing analogies between these forms and the propagandistic ways in which they are often used.

Lastly, observe the painterly grey marks that seem to rise from the lower and central registers like plumes of smoke. Stadiums and capital buildings can represent triumph, pride and celebration, but they are also common targets for bombings and acts of terror, which are often motivated by a comparable degree of zealousness and ideological fervor.

Process

Mehretu's working process begins with the projection of maps and diagrams onto the work's blank surface. From these, the artist makes traces and hash marks that eventually grow into characters and communities. The first layer is coated with an acrylic-and-silica mixture that seals the drawing under a transparent ground. After drying, this ground is itself overlaid with more figures and photographs that are again assimilated into the composition.

The artist describes her final product as containing a "stratified, tectonic geology (…) with the characters themselves buried—as if they were fossils."[1] This distinct sense of temporality serves as a metaphor for history, memory, and the legacies of past cultural epochs that still influence contemporary life.

Utopian Abstraction

While nationalism, sports and global politics are key points of entry into the work, Mehretu also considers art historical precedents for these themes.

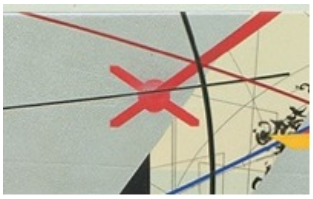


Figure **7.3.24**: Julie Mehretu, detail, *Stadia II*, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144″ (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)

Take a look at the orange diamonds at the side edges, the black quadrilaterals interspersed above, or the dynamic red "X" found at the top edge. These lines and shapes are unmistakable references to the Russian constructivist and Bauhaus movements of the early twentieth century, and to artists such as Alexandr Rodchenko, Kasmir Malevich, El Lissitzky, and Wassily Kandinsky. These artists conceived of pure abstraction as a way to wipe clean the slate of history and to promote universalism and collectivity in art, politics and culture.

Mehretu has long explored the use of abstraction in service of revolution and utopian politics throughout the history of Modernist art, "I am (…) interested in what Kandinsky referred to in 'The Great Utopia' when he talked about the inevitable implosion and/or explosion of our constructed spaces out of the sheer necessity of agency. So, for me, the coliseum, the amphitheater, and the

stadium are perfect metaphoric constructed spaces."[2] These can represent both the organized sterility of institutions and the "chaos, violence, and disorder" of revolution and mass gathering.

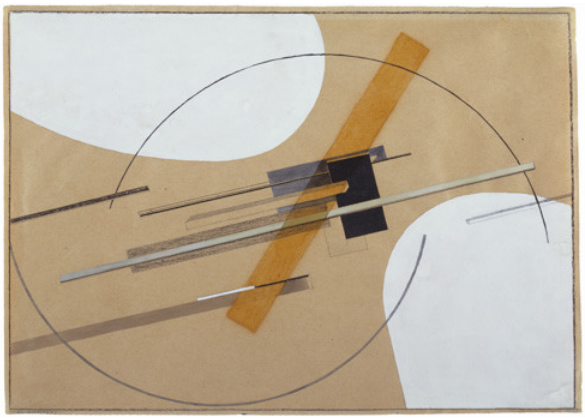


Figure **7.3.25**: El Lissitzky, *Proun (Entwurf zu Proun, S.K.)*, 1922-23, watercolor, gouache, india ink,graphite, conté crayon, and varnish on buff paper, 8 7/16 × 11 3/4″ / 21.4 × 29.7 cm (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York)

Global Networks

Because Mehretu builds her piece from multiple layers of figure and ground alike, the colors, shapes, and planar forms in *Stadia II* seem to be suspended between surfaces, and are often caught in a swirling motion around the axis of her compositions. The dynamism of the work makes reference to traffic patterns, wind and water currents, migrations, border crossings and travel.

Depicting patterns of movement, Mehretu emphasizes, on one hand, the militarization of bodies moving within and between national (or digital) spaces, and acknowledges the increasing speeds at which the world seems to be moving. Yet, while her compositions might be vertiginous and disorienting at times, we are given a chance to reflect on the potential and importance of such interconnectedness.

Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Mehretu has lived in Michigan, Rhode Island, and Dakar Senegal, and now resides in New York City.

1. Julie Mehretu, quoted in Thelma Golden, "Julie Mehretu's Eruptive Lines of Flight as Ethos of Revolution," in *Julie Mehretu: The Drawings*, ed. Catherine de Zegher and Thelma Golden, New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2007.

2. Julie Mehretu, "Looking Back: Email Interview between Julie Mehretu and Olukemi Ilesanmi, April 2003" in *Drawing into Painting*, Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2003: 13-14.

Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*

by DR. DORIS MARIA-REINA BRAVO

The Turbine Hall

Since 2000, the Tate Modern has commissioned installations (the Unilever series) for the museum's enormous Turbine Hall, including Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project* (2003) and Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds* (2010). In the eighth iteration, the Colombian artist Doris Salcedo produced *Shibboleth*, a deep meandering crack in the floor. Despite the unassuming nature of this work, it defies neat description and exists in a limbo between sculpture and installation; and the provocative title complicates the work instead of decoding it.

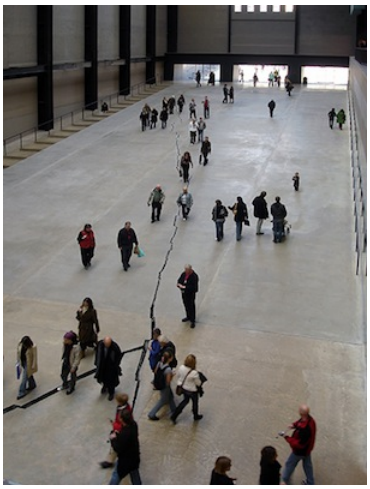


Figure 7.3.26: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, installation, Tate Modern © Doris Salcedo (photo: Nuno Nogueira/Nmnogueira, CC BY-SA 2.5-altered)

Salcedo has offered few explanations beyond stating how the fissure represents the immigrant experience in Europe. Though this theme is apparent in the work, it is by no means the only issue raised. As photographs of the installation demonstrate, visitors contorted their bodies in infinite ways as they tried to see below the crack. In *Shibboleth*, Salcedo elaborates a complex socio-political topic in a work with a tremendous formal presence.

Coded identification

Salcedo's installation requires attentive viewing. The rupture measures 548 feet in length but its width and depth vary (changing from a slight opening to one several inches wide and up to two feet in depth). The viewer's perception into the crevice alters, as he or she walks and shifts to better glimpse inside the cracks and appreciate the interior space, notably the wire mesh embedded along the sides.



Figure 7.3.27: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, installation, Tate Modern (photo: Chris Geatch, CC BY-NC 2.0-altered)

Change in perspective is one of Salcedo's goals. She quotes the Frankfurt School theorist Theodor Adorno: "We should all see the world from the perspective of the victim, like Jewish people that were killed with their head down in the Middle Ages. So he wonders, what is the perspective of a person that is agonizing in this position?"

To go from viewing this installation as a fissure in concrete to an artwork about the disenfranchised may seem like a big step. It is helpful to think of *Shibboleth* as a work of conceptual art since the ideas that frame the physical crack in the floor are of equal, if not greater importance than the material work itself. Salcedo's installation at the Tate Modern would be completely different if it were simply untitled; indeed, the analysis of the work would then settle exclusively on its formal qualities. But Salcedo has bestowed a curious and specific name: "Shibboleth," a codeword that distinguishes people who belong from those who do not.



Figure **7.3.28**: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, Tate Modern (photo: Dallas Ewing, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0-altered)

Every community, culture, and nation has its shibboleth. Among the U.S. military, “lollapalooza” was used during World War II since its tricky pronunciation could identify native, English-speaking Americans. But the sinister history of the word “shibboleth” illustrates how friends and enemies are separated by fine, linguistic lines. Any stranger in a foreign land appreciates the vulnerability this entails, especially the fear of being outed as a foreigner and exposed in a hostile environment.

Irrevocably “other”

Salcedo’s experience as a Colombian artist working abroad has made her especially sympathetic to the plight of marginalized people. Between 2002 and 2003, Salcedo completed two installations that make this clear. In the first work, the artist staged a performance where she lowered empty wooden chairs over the side of the Palace of Justice in Bogotá. The performance lasted 53 hours and commemorated the 1985 siege in that building where three hundred people were held hostage; the siege ended in a bloody confrontation between rebels and the military.

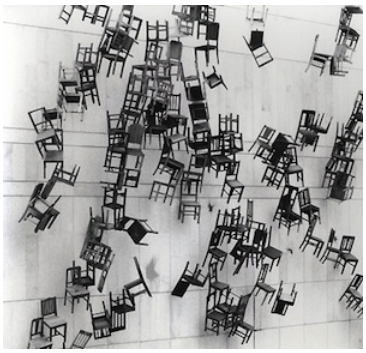


Figure **7.3.29**: Doris Salcedo, *Noviembre 6 y 7*, 2002, Supreme Court, Bogotá © Doris Salcedo

The second installation also honored the victims of senseless violence. Salcedo piled more than 1,500 chairs into a space between two buildings in Istanbul. The breathtaking sight of this nearly three-story sculpture highlighted how warfare disrupts everyday life and creates refugees out of ordinary citizens as it recalls the countless shoes discovered at concentration camps at the end of World War II.

For Salcedo, the ravine in the Tate Modern’s floor represents the immigrant experience in Europe, notably the racial segregation that marks people from the third-world as irrevocably “other,” a permanent state apart. Yet, the artist offers some hope. After seven months, the show ended and the Tate Modern filled the crack, leaving a scarred floor. This is a remarkable symbol of the possibility of healing through figurative and literal closure; however, the mark is also an obstacle to any attempts to erase the past.



Figure **7.3.30**: Shibboleth filled, Tate Modern (photo: Damien Everett, CC BY 2.0-altered)

Sources

From an institutional perspective, this scar is remarkable for other reasons: it is usually unimaginable for museum officials to permit an artist to permanently alter the exhibition space.



Figure **7.3.31**: Lucio Fontana, *Spatial Concept: Expectations*, 1960, slashed canvas and gauze, 100.3 x 80.3 cm (MoMA) © 2013 Fondation Lucio Fontana

Salcedo's act remains transgressive: the act of deliberately breaking one's media (in this case a concrete floor) is an act of rebellion. In this way, *Shibboleth* joins a tradition of artists experimenting with surface. In the late 1940s Lucio Fontana developed "Spazialismo," an approach to art-making that converted the two-dimensional canvas into a three-dimensional space. Fontana slashed his monochrome canvases, and revealed a new space underneath the gashes. The artist's bold move to disrupt the canvas's nearly sacred surface was revolutionary and influenced later artists.



Figure **7.3.32**: Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*, 1974

Throughout the 1970s Gordon Matta-Clark sawed into the walls, floors, and ceilings of buildings, often leaving cracks like the line of light in *Splitting* (1974). For centuries, a canvas was a flat plane, the support for an image rather than an object in its own right. A building by definition sought to be structurally sound; any structural damage makes it unstable and dangerous. To highlight their subversion, these artists flaunt the negative space made by their incisions: Matta-Clark's cuts in *Splitting* are illuminated by blinding light, while Fontana's slashes and Shibboleth each reveal a startlingly dark void previously unseen.

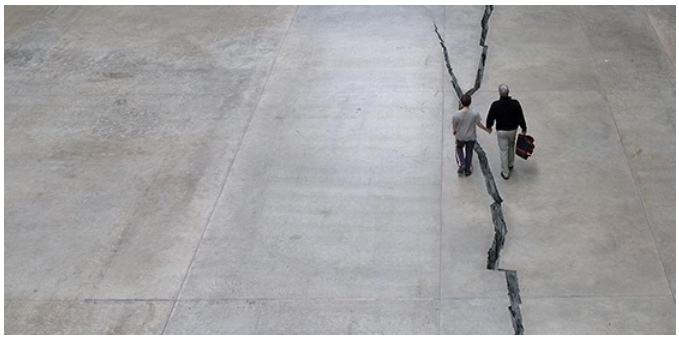


Figure **7.3.33**: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, Tate Modern (photo: Wonderferret, CC BY 2.0-altered)

Meanings

Matta-Clark, Fontana, and Salcedo create art that is difficult to classify. Is this painting? sculpture? architecture? installation? intervention? Salcedo's strength as an artist is her ability to balance the formal impact of *Shibboleth* with its message, while preventing one from overshadowing the other. Salcedo's reticence to discuss her process and meaning at length is our opportunity to develop infinite interpretations.

Cindy Sherman

Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #21*

by DR. SHANA GALLAGHER-LINDSAY and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **7.3.6**: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #21*, 1978, gelatin silver print, 7.5 x 9.5 inches or 19.1 x 24.1 cm (MoMA)

Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #228*

by MARY BETH LOONEY



Figure **7.3.34**: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #228*, from the History portraits series, 1990, chromogenic color print, 6′ 10 1/16″ x 48″ (208.4 x 122 cm) (The Museum of Modern Art)

This photograph is from Sherman's History Portraits series—where she draws inspiration from the history of art.

Description

The artist depicts herself in costume, standing in front of printed textiles parted slightly to reveal darkness beyond. She wears a red satin, full length dress, which is cinched by a dark blue sash across the shoulders, just under the bust line, and also well below a seemingly swollen abdomen. A gold sash wraps around her head and neck and drapes over each shoulder. In one hand she holds the head or mask of an old person, with a wrinkled, receding hairline, a large nose and bloodshot eyes. In the other hand, which is bloody, she holds a knife.

The figure tilts her head slightly to one side as she gazes at the viewer with a blank expression. The face is artificially made up with thin, arching brows and lips stained red in the center to suggest that they are puckered, as if about to kiss. Bare feet point outward, and appear enlarged in proportion to the rest of the figure.

Judith

In *Untitled #228*, Sherman cites the story of Judith and Holofernes—a popular subject during the Renaissance and Baroque periods (especially the 16th-17th century).

The Book of Judith (included In some versions of the Bible), recounts the story of Judith, who, to save her people (the Israelites in the town of Bethulia) from the Assyrian King Nebuchadnezzar, entered the tent of the invading general (named Holofernes), who found her attractive. She seduced him into drinking too much, and then beheaded him. In triumph, she brought the severed head back to the Jewish people.



Figure **7.3.35**: Elisabetta Sirani, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, 1638-55, oil on canvas, 129.5 x 91.7 cm (The Walters Art Museum)

For Renaissance and Baroque audiences, the story of Judith and Holofernes symbolized triumph over tyranny (much like the story of David and Goliath). Painters such as Caravaggio, Artemisia Gentileschi and Elisabetta Sirani provided patrons with select stages in the story—at times depicting Judith in the act of severing Holofernes' head, sneaking away from the darkened enemy encampment while carrying the severed head, or marching forward in triumph, holding aloft the head by the hair, as the citizens of Bethulia look on.

Sherman's photographic interpretation of this subject conflates two of those picture types. While Judith (enacted by Sherman herself) stands, holding the general's head in a fully lit space, the array of printed textiles draped behind her evokes a middle Eastern motif—referencing Holofernes' tent. The darkened parting between two cloths implies that Judith has just left.

The subject is pushed forward in the picture plane, backgrounded by the row of hanging textiles (this treatment of space is typical of Baroque art of the 17th century). She occupies a shallow stage. Her feet splay outwards, perhaps as a reminder of proto-Renaissance artists' struggles with foreshortening of forms intended to project towards the viewer (see frescos by Giotto, for example).



Figure **7.3.36**: Raphael, *The Small Cowper Madonna*, c. 1505, oil on panel, 59.5 x 44 cm (National Gallery of Art)

In a nod to Raphael's many High Renaissance Madonna images (right), the rich primary colors of red, blue and yellow figure prominently, and the two heads, arms and hand form a small, triangular composition within an otherwise vertically oriented format. The suggestion of a swollen abdomen may refer to Renaissance era fashion, in which women's empire-waisted garments deemphasized natural waists and hips. It may also be a way of conflating the figure of the Virgin Mary of the New Testament—typically portrayed in reds and blues in the Renaissance period—with the Old Testament heroine Judith.

Props

Sherman's work in this series is characterized by the blatant use of props and prosthetic devices. The full mask or head appears to be a store-bought "fright mask" typically used for Halloween. It is a jarringly out-of-place element in an image that historically featured a somewhat younger adult man. Both the rounded belly and the overly large feet are also obvious prosthetic enhancements. Sherman's facial makeup exaggerates the overall effect of artificiality.



Figure **7.3.37**: Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and Holofernes*, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Sherman asks the viewer to consider layers of un-realities, beginning with the props and prosthetics she has employed in the image. Sherman herself is a prop: a real stand-in for the idealized Judiths of art history. As the props undermine the seriousness with which we might consider the scene, the image also questions the complex implications of a violent murder. As in many of the historical paintings, Judith's hands are bloody, but her garments and face remain clean. Her face—like the bland faces of so many other images of Judith is matter-of-fact, revealing no trace of the grim act that was purportedly committed (the exception to this is Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith*). The direct studio lighting of Sherman's image dampens the drama and further heightens the artificiality of the scene.

The artist invites the viewer to consider how all of these matters converge in a photograph. In the early 19th century, painters struggled to supplant or utilize the technical advantages of photography. Both painting and photography can and do afford the opportunity for invention. By adopting contrivances from prior centuries and adding multiple contemporary contrivances to her interpretation, Sherman's *Untitled #228* both blatantly exposes and provides an art historical context for her contemplations on the nature of narrative and pictorial invention.

Additional resources:

Smarthistory essay on Gentileschi's *Judith Slaying Holofernes*

Cindy Sherman from Art21

Interview with Sherman from the Walker Art Center

Cindy Sherman at MoMA

Kara Walker, *Darkytown Rebellion*

by DR. DORIS MARIA-REINA BRAVO

Brilliant patterns

The Art of Kara Walker, a "PBS Culture Shock" web activity, tests the participant's tolerance for imagery that occupies the nebulous space between racism and race affirmation. Though the activity gives the participant only two options at the end (whether or not to feature one of Walker's silhouettes on the "Culture Shock" homepage), the activity explores the multiple and complex reactions Walker's work elicits. Yet to focus solely on the controversy Walker's art generates is a disservice to her artistic training and the strength of her art, especially in a stunning and absorbing installation like *Darkytown Rebellion*. Here, a brilliant pattern of colors washes over a wall full of silhouettes enacting a dramatic rebellion, giving the viewer the unforgettable experience of stepping into a work of art. Walker's talent is not about creating controversy for its own sake, but building a world that unleashes horrors even as it seduces viewers.



Figure **7.3.38**: Kara Walker, *Darkytown Rebellion*, 2001, cut paper and projection on wall, 4.3 x 11.3m, (Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg) © Kara Walker

In contrast to larger-scale works like the 85 foot, *Slavery! Slavery!* (1997), *Darkytown Rebellion* occupies a 37 foot wide corner of a gallery. This ensemble, made up of over a dozen characters, plays out a nightmarish scene on a single plane: one figure stands upright over his severed limb, despite his bleeding leg stump, with bones protruding from his hips; another figure, also exhibiting a severed limb, rolls on his back; a woman with a bonnet and voluminous hoop skirt may be attacking a smaller figure on its back, perhaps a crying baby, with a long, plunger-like instrument.

Silhouettes and concealment

What is most remarkable about these scenes is how much each silhouette conceals. Without interior detail, the viewer can lose the information needed to determine gender, gauge whether a left or right leg was severed, or discern what exactly is in the black puddle beneath the woman's murderous tool. The color projections, whose abstract shapes recall the 1960s liquid light shows projected with psychedelic music, heighten the surreality of the scene.

Walker is a well-rounded multimedia artist, having begun her career in painting and expanded into film as well as works on paper. The layering she achieves with the color projections and silhouettes in *Darkytown Rebellion* anticipates her later work with shadow puppet films.

In addition to creating a striking viewer experience, *Darkytown Rebellion* reflects on the historical representation of African Americans in American visual culture. From the infamous Brookes slave ship print (1789), to *Birth of a Nation* (1915) to the Aunt Jemima logo (c.1890-today), powerful visuals shape African-American stereotypes and inform how popular culture perceives this community. Walker is one of several African-American women who use art to engage with and challenge visualizations of race within popular culture; others include Renee Cox, Adrian Piper, and Faith Ringgold.

Perverse ingenuity

Walker anchors much of her work in documents reflecting life before and after the Civil War. *The Daily Constitution 1878* (2011) emerged after Walker read an 1878 article from the eponymous Atlanta newspaper about a mob lynching a black woman and the brutal way the tree flung the woman's body into the air. Walker converted the article into a drawing because, as she stated, "it's this completely absurd, extreme, violent situation that required so much perverse ingenuity."[1]

Darkytown Rebellion is also born from a desire to translate the past into visual form. Walker discovered a landscape painting in *American Primitive Painting*, a book featuring artwork by unschooled artists. One anonymous landscape, mysteriously titled *Darkytown*, intrigued Walker and inspired her to remove the over-sized African-American caricatures. She placed them, along with more figures (a jockey, a rebel, and others), within a scene of rebellion, hence the re-worked title of her 2001 installation. Through *Darkytown Rebellion*, Walker is not attempting to correct a late-nineteenth century depiction of African-Americans but rather to broach a discussion: are these merely images from the past or do these caricatures still resonate in the twenty-first century?

Incomplete histories

Walker's dedication to recovering lost histories through art is a way of battling the historical erasure that plagues African Americans, like the woman lynched by the mob in Atlanta. Though this lynching was published, how many more have been forgotten? Who was this woman, what did she look like, why was she murdered? The impossibility of answering these questions finds a visual equivalent in the silhouetted voids in Walker's artistic practice.

Silhouettes began as a courtly art form in sixteenth-century Europe and became a suitable hobby for ladies and an economical alternative to painted miniatures, before devolving into a craft in the twentieth century. Traditionally silhouettes were made of the sitter's bust profile, cut into paper, affixed to a non-black background, and framed. Except for the outline of a forehead, nose, lips, and chin all the subject's facial details are lost in a silhouette, thus reducing the sitter to a few personal characteristics. In Walker's hands the minimalist silhouette becomes a tool for exploring racial identification. All things being equal, what distinguishes the white master from his slave in *Darkytown Rebellion*? Walker forces the viewer to confront the visual cues that make up stereotypes: these cues distill human forms into basic and arbitrary shapes that compose the basis of racial discrimination.

Though *Darkytown Rebellion* is full of shapes lacking detail, Walker reserves sharp outlines for faces and limbs. Walker's silhouettes are (mostly) full-bodied figures, captured in various poses from the traditional profile, to a three-quarter turn, to full frontal. This plurality of poses, often in a single body, is another example of obscured detail within the silhouette tradition: here not only is the face absent, but the body's action is also ambiguous. As mentioned earlier, it is impossible to make out which leg is severed on the standing figure near the corner, yet Walker manages to give the gory details of that man's tragedy. If traditional silhouettes illustrated a contained shape, Walker's figures overflow these boundaries, whether through graphic violence or metaphorically, in terms of subject matter.

Getting at the truth

In contrast to *The Daily Constitution 1878*, which was born from a news article, Walker herself developed the narrative for the orphaned figures that compose *Darkytown Rebellion*. Though the title suggests a historical event, both the original nineteenth-century painting and Walker's response are visual inventions rather than documents in a traditional sense. Walker enjoys this ambiguity between history and fiction: "I'm not making work about reality; I'm making work about images. I'm making work about fictions that have been handed down to me, and I'm interested in those fictions because I'm an artist, and any sort of attempt at getting at the truth of a thing, you kind of have to wade through these levels of fictions, and that's where the work is coming from."[2]

Darkytown Rebellion does not attempt to stitch together facts, but rather to create something more potent, to imagine the unimaginable brutalities of an era in a single glance.

1. Laura Barnett, "**Kara Walker's Art: Shadows of Slavery**," *The Guardian* (October 10, 2013)

2. "**Kara Walker Rattles Art World Again**," NPR (March 07, 2008)

Art, Race, and the Internet: Mendi + Keith Obadike's *Black.Net.Art Actions*

by DR. MEGAN DRISCOLL



Figure **7.3.39**: Logo for *New Black Portraitures*, Rhizome website

Looking at the landscape of the internet today, it's hard to imagine conversations about race not being a central part of net culture. Consider "Black Twitter," a concept that goes beyond user demographics to describe the significant role the internet plays in promoting dialogues about race in all parts of our lives.[1] Or spend some time exploring the many social media accounts dedicated to the cultural heritage of specific racial and ethnic groups, from **influential Asian Pacific Islander women** to **artists of Africa and the African diaspora**. You'll also find these conversations happening in art-specific venues like Rhizome, which in 2017 hosted *First Look: New Black Portraitures*, a primarily online exhibition that links the history of portraiture to questions surrounding blackness, representation, and image making in our networked present.[2]

However, net culture looked very different back in the 1990s when internet use first started to become popular. It's not that no one was talking about race online—there were actually quite a few email lists and other proto-social networks focused on race and ethnicity—but these discussions tended to be ignored in the mainstream, or simply treated as peripheral.[3] Cyber enthusiasts had long promoted the misguided perception that virtual communication could allow users to interact without the prejudices associated with physical difference such as race, gender, or disability.[4] When advertisers seized on this premise as a strategy for making the strange new world of the internet seem more approachable, they popularized the idea that, to quote a **1997 internet ad for telecom MCI**, on the internet "there is no race." In fact, the notion that race was simply irrelevant to life online became so prevalent that sociologist Alondra Nelson once declared it the "founding fiction of the digital age."[5]

During this same period internet art, or net art, was becoming a more widely recognized category of artistic practice. Like in the rest of net culture, race was not a common topic in early net art—but that doesn't mean there weren't artists addressing it.[6] Here, we'll focus on Mendi + Keith Obadike's *Black.Net.Art Actions* (2001–2003), a suite of retroactively grouped artworks that argue that racial discourses aren't just relevant online, they are essential to how we interact with computer networks.



Figure **7.3.40**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *Blackness for Sale*, 2001, online performance from *Black.Net.Art.Actions* (**Rhizome**)

Blackness for Sale

In 2001 the Obadikes released ***Blackness for Sale***, an online performance in which they attempted to auction Keith's Blackness on eBay. It received twelve bids over four days before eBay shut the project down, calling it "inappropriate." The item description includes benefits like "This Blackness may be used for making jokes about black people and/or laughing at black humor comfortably" as well as warnings like "The Seller does not recommend that this Blackness be used while voting in the United States or Florida."[7] The work thus reminds us that "Blackness" never just refers to a value-neutral color or the hue of a person's skin. Rather, it is bound to a complex history, simultaneously recalling the experiences of one individual and the condition of race relations across the United States.

By highlighting the field of meaning that surrounds language, *Blackness for Sale* also directs attention to how we talk about the platform that hosted it: eBay. As Keith Obadike has pointed out, many of the words we use to describe our activities online also describe the activities of colonization and slavery.[8] We cross the new electronic frontier, taking browsers like Navigator, Explorer, and Safari to plunder the Amazon and trade in the eBay. There we find representations of the Black body returned to the auction block, not just in this artwork but in the mammy figurines and other racist memorabilia sold alongside it as "Fine Arts and Black Americana."[9] *Blackness for Sale* argues that this digital frontierism is ideologically linked to the "real world" histories of colonialism and the slave trade, histories that cannot be divorced from how we interact online. In other words, even though our internet exchanges may appear to be virtual and therefore disembodied, what MCI called "communicating mind to mind," we still come to those exchanges with the experiences of our bodies and all of the histories that shape them.



Figure **7.3.41**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum's Artport gate page program (**Rhizome**)

Website for the Whitney Museum

The Obadikes continued their investigation into how color and race signify online with ***The Interaction of Coloreds*** (2002), a website they originally produced for the Whitney Museum's now-defunct **Artport gate page program**. Both the work's title and the grid format of its opening page reference Josef Albers's *Interaction of Color* (1963), a modernist text that theorizes the relationship between color and personal preference. Moving your mouse over that grid reveals famous lyrics from a Big Bill Broonzy song that remind us how such color preferences emerge in our ideas about race: "if you're white you're right / if you're black get back / if you're brown stick around / if you're yellow you're mellow."



Figure **7.3.42**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, Color Check, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum's Artport gate page program (**Rhizome**)

When you enter the main site you find the IOC Color Check System®, which the artists describe as a "brown paper bag test for the internet."[10] Using photographs of applicants' skin alongside answers to a "Hyper-Race Analysis" questionnaire, the System promises to return a precise hexadecimal color for your skin. This is a six digit HTML (hypertext markup language) code that tells your web browser what color to show you—or, in this case, assigns a color value to a human being. Now, the System exults, "Websafe colors aren't just for webmasters," a reference to the fact that when IOC was produced there were only a limited number of "websafe" codes that would display consistently on all browsers. By proposing that the color of a person can also be used to designate her as "websafe," IOC demonstrates how social meanings are reasserted when human beings interpret the apparently neutral mathematical system of HTML. In the Color Check System® the "true white" of #FFFFFF is like the "right white" of the Big Bill Broonzy song, representing not just a full amount of additive light but also a full human being. And the #000000 of "absolute black" ("get back") doesn't just signify a lack of light; it signifies the lack of humanity too often associated with

blackness. (Or, as *Blackness for Sale* put it, “The Seller does not recommend that this Blackness be used while making intellectual claims.”)



Figure **7.3.43**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, top of System, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum’s Artport gate page program (**Rhizome**)

The IOC Color Check System® also invites us to consider for whom we are being designated “websafe.” In addition to wry mentions of dating websites and airlines hoping to “offer lower rates on the web to customers with non-threatening bodies,” the System suggests that it may be useful to a “new African-American web portal or an old Negro social club looking for a way to maintain your club’s discriminating tastes in the information age.” This is a reference to the racially oriented proto-social networks that flourished during the 1990s, such as the immensely popular BlackPlanet. Although these networks offered an important platform for many people who didn’t see themselves reflected in other areas of internet culture, IOC points out that they also threatened to exaggerate racial segmentation and reduce Black internet users to a consumer category. In this way, the Obadikes not only challenge the idea that race is irrelevant on the internet, they also critique the assumption that simply having more Black people online will make the internet a more equitable place.[11]



Figure **7.3.44**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Pink of Stealth*, 2003, web interactive (**Mendi + Kieth Obadike**)

The Pink of Stealth or *Keeping Up Appearances*

The final work the Obadikes choose to include in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* varies depending on the url where it is accessed. In some publications it’s ***The Pink of Stealth*** (2003); in others, it’s ***Keeping Up Appearances*** (2001).[12] What these two works share in common is an emphasis on the gender and sexual politics that are only hinted at in *Blackness for Sale* and *The Interaction of Coloreds*. *Keeping Up Appearances* is a hypertextimonial poem by Mendi Obadike that explores the relationship between Blackness and femininity, in part through the visual signifier of the color pink. This signifier is picked up by *The Pink of Stealth*, which integrates a website, hypertext poem, sound collage, and Flash game to play with the different class, gender, sexual, and even health-related meanings that have been associated with pinkness over time. The inclusion of either work in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* rounds out the suite’s focus on the multiple meanings of color language by insisting that racial discourses cannot be separated from their intersections with all of the other factors that influence our experiences—online as well as off.



Figure **7.3.45**: Mendi Obadike, *Keeping Up Appearances*, 2001, hypertextimonial poem (**Rhizome**)

As discussed at the beginning, the fact that race no longer feels peripheral on the internet is a dramatic change from the years when the *Black.Net.Art Actions* were being produced. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the myth that race disappears online still shaped how many people understood the emancipatory potential of computer networks. The Actions helped to counter that myth by revealing how the histories that influence our ideas and experiences of race persist throughout our encounters on the network. In the process, these artworks also demonstrated that the relationship between race and computer networks is an essential subject for internet-based art.

Notes:

1. Donovan X. Ramsey and Meredith D. Clark, "The Truth About Black Twitter," *The Atlantic* (April 10, 2015), https://www.theatlantic.com/technolo...witter/390120/
2. Aria Dean, "An Introduction to New Black Portraitures," *Rhizome* (blog), October 26, 2017, http://rhizome.org/editorial/2017/oc...-portraitures/.
3. Email lists like the Afro-Am Listserv started popping up in the early 1990s, and by the end of the decade commercial enterprises like Community Connect were launching racially oriented social networks such as AsianAvenue and BlackPlanet. The latter quickly became a sprawling platform that would only be eclipsed in size and popularity by the rise of MySpace.
4. Two of the most well-known promoters of the model of the internet as disembodied home of the mind are John Perry Barlow, co-founder of the internet advocacy group the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and Howard Rheingold, author of *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* (1993), an oft-cited book on The WELL, the internet's first social network. This well-meaning argument is based on the assumption that a world of the mind would be inherently more just. However, it ignores the reality that embodied experience does shape life online, for better and worse, as well as the fact that not everyone is able to shed the histories associated with their bodily characteristics even in an apparently all virtual environment—nor does everyone want to.
5. Alondra Nelson, "Introduction: FUTURE TEXTS," *Social Text* 20, no. 2 (71) (Summer 2002): 1, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-20-2_71-1. In 1998, Nelson founded the influential Afrofuturism online discussion group. While scholarship on race in early net culture was also relatively rare, she's not the only person working in this area. Other prominent voices include Lisa Nakamura, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Jennifer González, and Tara McPherson.
6. It's important to note that while race wasn't central to early net art, it wasn't entirely marginalized either. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the Mongrel group, Prema Murthy, Tana Hargest, and Mendi + Keith Obadike are just a few examples of artists who made relatively well-known work addressing the relationship between race and computer networks during the 1990s and early 2000s.
7. This is a reference to large-scale voter disenfranchisement in Florida during the 2000 US presidential election, which disproportionately affected Black voters. See Ari Berman, "How the 2000 Election in Florida Led to a New Wave of Voter Disenfranchisement," *The Nation*, July 28, 2015, https://www.thenation.com/article/ar...franchisement/.
8. Coco Fusco, "All Too Real: The Tale of an On-Line Black Sale; Coco Fusco Interviews Keith Townsend Obadike," September 24, 2001, http://blacknetart.com/coco.html.
9. This is the category to which the Obadikes submitted *Blackness for Sale* in 2001. eBay has since changed their categories, but a search for "Black Americana" still turns up plenty of racist memorabilia, much of it filed under "Ethnic & Cultural Collectibles."
10. The brown paper bag test is an historical form of colorism (racial prejudice within communities of color) that is said to have been used to admit—or deny—access to certain African American social institutions. Stories about this test claim that only those whose skin was lighter than a brown paper bag were allowed in.
11. The one area in which scholars did focus on the relationship between race and computer networks during this period was the question of access, often referred to as the "digital divide." While being able to use the internet had already become undeniably important, scholars such as Alondra Nelson argue that the digital divide narrative tends to frame Black people as inherently anti-technological while paying little attention to how race influences experience once people are online.
12. The Obadikes feature *The Pink of Stealth* as the third work in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* in Keith + Mendi Obadike, "The Black.Net.Art Actions: Blackness for Sale (2001), The Interaction of Coloreds (2002), and The Pink of Stealth (2003)," in *Re:Skin*, ed. Mary Flanagan and Austin. Booth (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 245–50. It was later replaced by *Keeping Up Appearances* in the *Black.Net.Art Actions*' **entry into the Rhizome Net Art Anthology**. Neither source is more

authoritative; rather, this reflects the fluidity of internet art, which, like performance art, is often characterized by change over time.

Nari Ward, *We the People* (black version)

by DR. MINDY BESAW, CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **7.3.7**: Nari Ward, *We the People (black version)*, 2015, shoelaces, 8 × 27 feet (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art), a Seeing America video

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

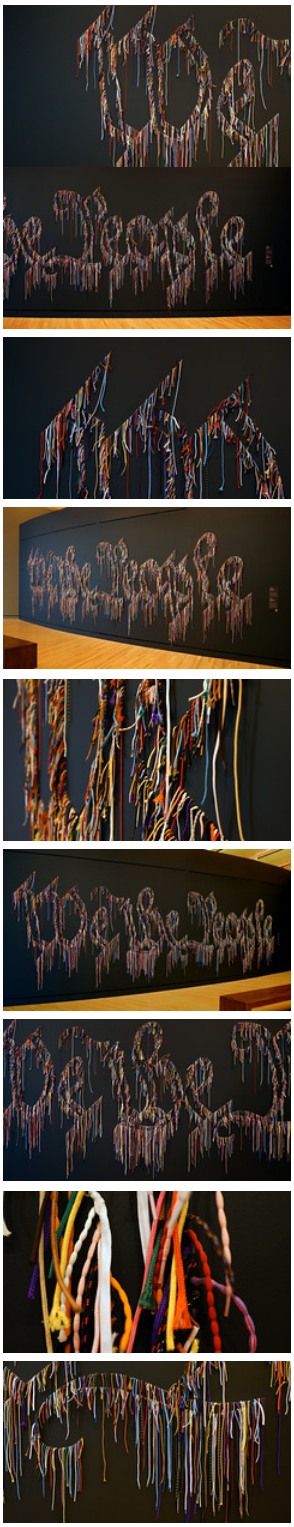


Figure **7.3.46**: More Smarthistory images…

Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*

by DR. DORIS MARIA-REINA BRAVO



Figure **7.3.47**: Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City, 42 seconds (photos: **Jane Dickson/Public Art Fund**)

In the spring of 1987, visitors to Times Square were confronted by a puzzling 45-second animation among the glittering billboards characteristic of this part of Manhattan. The animation consisted of three digital renderings that each combined images (maps and a flag) with simple lines of text. What mystified some viewers were not the images themselves, but the text that accompanied them: in the first frame, "This is Not America" was superimposed on a map of the United States; in the second frame, "This is Not America's Flag" was superimposed on the image of the United States flag; and in the last frame, the single word "AMERICA" was superimposed on the image of the North and South American continents together.

In less than a minute, artist Alfredo Jaar succeeded in provoking patriotic inhabitants of the United States by asserting that they are not the only "Americans." Jaar's message gave credence to a long-standing belief among Latin Americans in other countries that they, too, have the right to call themselves by that term. Nearly thirty years later, Jaar's *A Logo for America* remains a powerful example of art that uses the language of commercial advertising to convey a pointed political message.

Messages in Spectacolor



Figure **7.3.48**: Catalina Parra, *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City (photo: **Jane Dickson, Public Art Fund**)

In 1982, New York City's Public Art Fund launched the *Messages to the Public* program with the goal of exposing viewers to media-based artworks through Times Square's Spectacolor board. For nearly a decade, dozens of artists created short animations that would appear within loops of commercial advertising. A new "Message" would appear every month, providing the viewing public with a fresh animation. According to the project's originator, the painter Jane Dickson (who was working as a designer for Spectacolor at the time), the purpose was to inject a political message into daily life. "I picked that title," she said of *Messages to the Public*, "because I thought the propaganda potential from this project was terrific." [1] Other Latin American artists involved in the *Messages* project also used this opportunity to highlight their critical perspectives on U.S. culture. For example, Catalina Parra's *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue* (see image) critiques the promise of the modern immigrant experience using the country's most iconic symbol of liberty.

Jaar's message

Jaar illustrates two iconic symbols of the United States of America—the map of the country and the flag—and embeds them with messages that subvert their traditional meanings. The contrast is meant to pose the question, What exactly *is* America? As a potential answer, Jaar ends his animation with a rendering suggesting that the entire hemisphere is, in fact, "America." For those living in Mexico, Central, and South America, this is an argument that has often fallen on deaf ears. For example, it is common for someone from Chile—Jaar's country of birth—to simultaneously consider themselves a Chilean and an American. The distinction is simply the difference between national and continental affiliations. When Jaar was commissioned to create this work of art, he had only been living in the United States for a few years, and it would likely have struck him as odd to hear the term "America" being used to define only citizens of the United States.



Figure 7.3.49: Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City (Photos: Jane Dickson/Public Art Fund)

However, for many people living within the United States, this question is likely rarely, if ever considered: for them, “America” implies one country, one flag, and one nationality. According to Jaar, “Some of [the viewers] said live on national radio, ‘This is illegal. How could they let him do this?’ It is so embedded in their education that the U.S. is America, whereas the rest of the continent is erased.” [2] Jaar elicited this reaction by appropriating a national symbol to critique mainstream ideas about Americanness—not only about the definition of the term itself, but the ways that the term’s use in the United States implies superiority over other American countries and cultures. The final frame of his animation, which shows the outline of North, Central, and South America along with the word “AMERICA,” is the new “logo” referenced in Jaar’s title. It is a literal re-rendering—a “rebranding,” to use the language of advertising—of the American continents that **Europeans encountered** in the late fifteenth century. Afterall, the lands of the Western hemisphere which came to be called America after the explorer and mapmaker Amerigo Vespucci, were perceived as one geographic entity, despite political subdivisions.



Figure 7.3.50: The first map to name America (after the explorer and cartographer, Amerigo Vespucci) and to show America and Asia as separate continents. Martin Waldseemüller, *Universalis Cosmographia*, 1507, composite map, 128 x 233 cm (**Library of Congress, Washington D.C.**)

Pop and propaganda

What does it mean to make this logo for America, a type of symbol normally used to represent products or corporations? A useful example can be seen in the earlier movement, **Pop Art**, and its use of consumer culture as a source of inspiration. Artists like Richard Hamilton, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol appropriated the slick, graphic sensibility of mid-century advertising as well as the means and materials of industrial production. Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes*, for instance, perfectly mimicked factory-made boxes, simultaneously drawing attention to the aesthetic appeal of what might otherwise be passed over as an unremarkable, mass-produced package, while critiquing high-minded notions of art that fetishized unique, handmade objects.



Figure 7.3.51: Andy Warhol, *Brillo Boxes*, c. 1964, house paint and silkscreen on plywood (Whitney Museum of American Art, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker)

However, unlike Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* which are exhibited within galleries and museums, *Messages to the Public* existed within a stream of actual advertising, emphasizing its critical opposition. Like the Pop artists before him, Jaar not only made use of the formal language of advertising, but in taking it out of the object-centric realm of the gallery and into the virtual space of the advertising screen, he also questioned the very definition of art-making, which he described as primarily a process of thinking:

> ***I think that artists are thinkers, they're intellectuals. And art is about thinking. For me, art is about 99% thinking and 1% making. So I spend most of my time, and I ask my students to spend 99% of their time, thinking. […] Only at the end of a very long thinking process [do] we make something […] And in my case I do not work with a specific medium. The medium I use is the one that I feel speaks the better for the ideas I'm working with. [3]***

Just as Jaar asserted the importance of thinking in creating his art, the viewer is also rewarded for investing time considering it—something one might not normally do in the face of advertising.

A Logo for America is still considered a seminal work of Latin American Art. It was acquired by the Guggenheim Museum as part of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative and was featured in the museum's 2014 exhibition, *Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today*. Concurrent with this show, Jaar's video returned to Times Square for a month-long reenactment, playing every night on dozens of screens. Despite its simplicity, Jaar's message continues to stir emotions and serve as a daring intellectual exercise.

[1] Alfredo Jaar—Messages to the Public: A Logo for America," **Public Art Fund**.

[2] "In Conversation: Alfredo Jaar," **The Brooklyn Rail, April 6, 2009**.

[3] "Focus on: Alfredo Jaar," **Vogue Italia**.

Additional Resources:

This work at the Guggenheim

This work on the Public Art Fund website

Messages to the Public on the Public Art Fund website

Catalina Parra's *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue* on the Public Art Fund website

"A Logo for America" in the New Yorker, August 27, 2014

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7.4: Histories, real and imagined

Histories, real and imagined

Contemporary artists depict the realities and possibilities of the past, often as a commentary on the present.

1980 - present

El Anatsui

El Anatsui, *Untitled*

by DR. PERI KLEMM and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

The artist transforms metal from alcohol bottles into textiles that represent libations for ancestors.



Video **7.4.1**: El Anatsui, *Untitled*, 2009, repurposed printed aluminum, copper, 256.5 × 284.5 × 27.9 cm as installed (Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington D.C.)



Figure **7.4.1**: More Smarthistory images…

El Anatsui, *Old Man's Cloth*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG

Old Man's Cloth hangs like a large tapestry, but when we look closer, it's easy to become captivated by the small metal fragments that comprise the work in hundreds. Arranged within a shifting grid of stripes and blocks of color, the components form their own internal maps across the surface, melding into vertical gold bands, interlocking black and silver rows, or a deviant red piece floating in a field of black. While *Old Man's Cloth* would have been laid flat during its construction, it is contorted and manipulated during installation, so that the individual metal pieces can catch the light from every angle. This brilliant visual effect makes its humble origins all the more impressive.



Figure 7.4.2: El Anatsui, *Old Man's Cloth*, 2003, aluminum and copper wire, 16′ x 17′ 1″ / 487.7 x 520.7 cm (Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL)

The Medium or the Message?

Old Man's Cloth has been constructed from flattened liquor bottle labels that the artist collects near his home in Southern Nigeria. While critics often write about Anatsui's metal wall hangings using the language of textiles, the labels and bottle caps are typically fastened together with copper wire and attached corner-to-corner. As such, the issue of medium is one of the first to inspire debate amongst viewers—are the wall hangings two-dimensional or three-dimensional? Are they sculptures, even as they hang against the wall like paintings? Are they individual works or immersive installations? Lastly, are they "fine art" or simply an innovative form of "craft"?

Purposefully disregarding the limited categories imposed by Western art history, Anatsui's practice emerges from a more expanded understanding of what art can be that stems from both the radical practices of the late-1960s, and from a vantage point outside of the Western tradition completely. As scholar Susan Vogel has explained, "such categories did not exist in classic African traditions, which made no distinction between art and craft, high art and low."

Anatsui's choice of discarded liquor bottle caps as a medium has as much to do with their formal properties as with their historical associations. As an African artist whose career was forged during the utopia of mid-century African independence movements, his work has always engaged his region's history and culture. The bottle caps, for Anatsui, signify a fraught history of trade between Africa and Europe. As he explained,

Alcohol was one of the commodities brought with [Europeans] to exchange for goods in Africa. Eventually alcohol become one of the items used in the transatlantic slave trade. They made rum in the West Indies, took it to Liverpool, and then it made its way back to Africa. I thought that the bottle caps had a strong reference to the history of Africa.



Figure **7.4.3**

The luminescent gold colors also recall the colonial past of Anatsui's home country—modern Ghana was previously a British colony called The Gold Coast until its independence in 1957. The fluid movements of the work's surface remind us of the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, which carried slave-ships and traders between Africa, Europe and the New World. By bestowing his works with titles such as Man's Cloth and Woman's Cloth, Anatsui also makes reference to the significance of textiles in African societies, and their own historical role in trade networks.

Old Man's Cloth was included in one of Anatsui's first exhibitions of hanging metal sculptures. Held at London's October Gallery in 2004, the show was entitled "Gawu," which means "metal cloak" in Ewe. Old Man's Cloth is unique for its uneven and jagged edges as well as the "rough texture" of the recycled labels that are incorporated into the piece.

Modernism in Africa

El Anatsui was born in Ghana in 1944, and was trained in an academic European curriculum. In 1964, when he began his studies, many parts of Africa were experiencing a cultural renaissance associated with decolonization movements. Anatsui himself joined the unofficial "Sankofa" movement, which was invested in unearthing and reclaiming Africa's rich indigenous traditions and assimilating these with the European-influenced aspects of society. His earliest works, for example, included a series of wooden market trays into which he burned designs inspired by African graphic systems and adinkra motifs (symbols widely used by the Akan people of Ghana).

In 1975, Anatsui joined the faculty at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Nsukka was a vibrant creative capital for African artists and writers in the 1970s, many of whom spearheaded the Zaria Rebellion in the early 1960s and revived the traditional art form of uli wall and body painting in their contemporary works.

Anatsui's work differed slightly from that of his colleagues in his insistence on abstraction. In some of his first mature works, he used an electric chainsaw to slash geometric patterns into wood. Though abstract, these works were metaphorically rich; Anatsui chose woods of different colors to represent the diversity of African cultures, while the violence of the chainsaw enacted the ruptures imposed by European imperialist expansion.



Figure 7.4.4: El Anatsui, *Hovor II* (detail), 2004 showing tiny bits of scrap tin, woven pieced together with wire (Photo: Amy M. Youngs, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Critical Reception: African or Contemporary?

When two of Anatsui's metal wall hangings appeared in the 2007 Venice Biennale, they were lauded by the public and swiftly cemented his place as a leading international contemporary artist. He had, in fact, already shown in Venice almost two decades earlier in 1990, when he participated in a small exhibition surveying contemporary African art. During the time that lapsed between the two exhibitions, the art world became more receptive to artists outside of its Western centers, and by 2007, Anatsui could exhibit not only as a representative of the continent, but as an individual artist whose work was significant in its own right.

As such, his work provides an excellent opportunity for discussion about the relationships between artists at the center and at the periphery, and between the West and the Global South. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for instance, has now acquired two of Anatsui's metal wall hangings, but they are owned by two different curatorial departments: the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, and Modern and Contemporary Art. Both were recently on view at the same time, but in separate galleries. Visitors, students, and art historians should continue to ask themselves which designation seems more appropriate, and for what reasons. Should we understand his art as a product of its place, its time, or both? What do we see in Anatsui's work when it is placed among African masks and ritual objects, and how do our impressions change when this work is placed beside contemporary art from around the world?

There are no correct answers to these questions, but they are indicative of the changes that have taken place both in the art world, and in today's increasingly connected society at large.

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure **7.4.5**: More Smarthistory images…

Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Horn Players*

by DR. JORDANA MOORE SAGGESE



Figure **7.4.6**: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Horn Players*, 1983, acrylic and oilstick on three canvas panels mounted on wood supports, 243.8 x 190.5 cm (The Broad Art Foundation) © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat **(zoomable image here)**

Jean-Michel Basquiat's 1983 painting *Horn Players* shows us all the main stylistic features we have come to expect from this renowned American artist. In addition to half-length portraits on the left and right panels of this triptych (a painting consisting of three joined panels), the artist has included several drawings and words—many of which Basquiat drew and then crossed out. On each panel we also notice large swaths of white paint, which seem to simultaneously highlight the black background and obscure the drawings and/or words beneath. Most notable perhaps is the preponderance of repeated words like "DIZZY," "ORNITHOLOGY," "PREE" and "TEETH" that the artist has scattered across all three panels of this work.

Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie

Despite the seeming disorder of the composition, however, it is clear that the main subjects of *Horn Players* are two famous jazz musicians—the saxophonist Charlie Parker and the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, who Basquiat has depicted in both linguistic and visual portraits. On the left of the canvas, the artist has drawn the figure of Parker, holding his saxophone which emits several hot pink musical notes and distorted waves of sound. We see Dizzy Gillespie in the right panel, who holds a silent instrument alongside his torso. The words "DOH SHOO DE OBEE" that float to the left of the figure's head call to mind the scat (wordless improvisational) singing Gillespie often performed onstage.

Many of the words Basquiat has written on the canvas relate specifically to Charlie Parker, but they make sense only for those viewers with some knowledge of the musician's life. For example, the literal meaning of "ORNITHOLOGY" is "the study of birds," but this is also the title of a famous composition by Parker, who named the tune (first recorded in 1946) in reference to his own nickname "Bird." The words "PREE" and "CHAN" that we see written above and below the saxophonist's portrait refer to Parker's infant daughter and common-law wife, respectively.

Basquiat and wordplay



Figure **7.4.7**: Jean-Michel Basquiat posing next to SAMO graffiti

This kind of wordplay is a characteristic that extends across most of Jean-Michel Basquiat's work. One of the most recognizable features of the artist's more than 2000 paintings and drawings is the overwhelming abundance of written words on the canvas. The art historian Robert Farris Thompson once declared: "It's as if he were dripping letters." Before his success as a painter, Basquiat was famous for writing on the walls of lower Manhattan as a teenager when he and a high school friend, Al Diaz, left cryptic messages in spray paint under the name "SAMO" (an acronym for "Same Old Shit") from 1977 until 1979.

As SAMO, Basquiat and Diaz wrote maxims, jokes, and prophecies in marker and spray paint on subway trains throughout New York City (particularly the "D" train, which ran between downtown Manhattan and Basquiat's home in Brooklyn), as well as on the walls and sidewalks in the SoHo and Tribeca neighborhoods. Many of the locations where SAMO writings were to be found were in close proximity to prominent art galleries. Combined with these strategic positions, phrases like "SAMO AS AN END TO PLAYING ART" or "SAMO FOR THE SO-CALLED AVANT-GARDE" presented the "SAMO" persona as outside the commercial art world and critical of it. In fact, even after relinquishing the SAMO persona and emerging to the art world as Jean-Michel Basquiat, the artist remained an outsider to the mainstream art world, despite his meteoric rise on the art auction block.

"The Black Picasso"

Basquiat went from SAMO"to commercial success at warp speed in the early 1980s. He first exhibited (still under the name SAMO) at the Times Square Show—an exhibition in June 1980 that marked the genesis of the eighties art movement. He was later invited to exhibit in **New York/New Wave**, a group show of sixteen hundred works by 119 artists that opened at P.S. 1 on Valentine's Day. The show was affectionately called "The Armory Show" of the 1980s (the original Armory Show in 1913 was the first large exhibition of international modern art in America).

Almost immediately afterward, the young Basquiat (at this point just 20 years old) was invited to exhibit in his first solo show in Modena, Italy. The gallerist Annina Nosei, who showed more established artists like David Salle and Richard Prince, agreed to represent Basquiat, who had a one-man show at her gallery the next year. That same year, Basquiat had exhibitions in Los Angeles, Zurich, Rome, and Rotterdam and became the youngest artist invited to participate in Documenta 7 (an international contemporary art exhibition that takes place every five years). By 1983 the average sale price of Basquiat's work had increased by 600 percent, and his popularity (both in the auction house and in popular culture) persists even today. You can buy his images on shirts and hats from popular retail outlets and his large paintings sell at auction for more than $20 million.

Based on his meteoric success, critics referred to Jean-Michel Basquiat as "the black Picasso." The nickname was complicated for Basquiat, who never embraced it, but was nevertheless concerned with his own place within art history. He often relied on textbooks and other sources for his visual material; most biographies of the artist note his reliance on the medical textbook *Gray's Anatomy* (a gift from the artist's mother when Basquiat was hospitalized as a child) for the anatomical drawings and references we see on many of his surfaces. Basquiat also appropriated the work of Leonardo, Edouard Manet, and Pablo Picasso into his own compositions. These appropriations were in part an homage to the great painters Basquiat admired, but they also were a way for Basquiat to rewrite art history and insert himself into the canon.



Figure **7.4.8**: Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians*, 1921, oil on canvas, 200.7 x 222.9 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

Looking again at *Horn Players*, for example, reveals several connections to Picasso's *Three Musicians*. Basquiat's use of the triptych format—a popular device for the artist in this period—echoes the triple subjects of the Picasso image. The figure of Parker in Basquiat's composition is also reproduced in the same position as the standing figure (playing the clarinet) in Picasso's work.



Figure **7.4.9**: Right: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Horn Players* (detail), 1983, acrylic and oilstick on three canvas panels mounted on wood supports, 243.8 x 190.5 cm (The Broad Art Foundation) © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat; left: Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians* (detail), 1921, oil on canvas, 200.7 x 222.9 cm (The Museum of Modern Art)

The central panel of Basquiat's canvas, which does not show a portrait of an identifiable musician like the other two panels, but instead a distorted head with roughly outlined features, suddenly comes into focus via its comparison with *Three Musicians*. Here Picasso references in paint, his earlier experiments with paper collage especially in rendering the face and head of his central figure, whose jawline dramatically extends beyond what is anatomically possible to create an abstract, bulbous shape. Basquiat's central figure bears a similar protrusion—this time from the top of the head—which he fills in with hatch marks that are suggestive of the patterning of Picasso's "collaged" paper. Once again, Basquiat seems to be speaking in code. This time, we are being asked not only to draw upon our knowledge of music history but of modern painting to fully understand his work.

Basquiat's musicians

Musicians were a popular subject for Basquiat, who himself played briefly in a noise band called Gray—likely a reference to the *Gray's Anatomy* textbook. Jazz musicians began to appear in the artist's paintings around 1982; references to jazz musicians or recordings appear in more than thirty large-format paintings and twenty works on paper. Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie are the two musicians who appear most frequently, both as figures in the paintings and through linguistic references to their work. The artist painted canvases with figures playing the trumpet, the saxophone, and the drums. He also devoted several canvases to replicating the labels of jazz records or the discographies of musicians.

Many scholars have connected Basquiat's interest in jazz to a larger investment in African American popular culture (for example, he also painted famous African American athletes) but an alternative explanation is that the young Basquiat looked to jazz music for inspiration and for instruction, much in the same way that he looked to the modern masters of painting. Parker, Gillespie, and the other musicians of the bebop era infamously appropriated both the harmonic structures of jazz standards, using them as a structure for their own songs, and repeated similar note patterns across several improvisations. Basquiat used similar techniques of appropriation throughout his career as a painter.

Additional resources:

Basquiat from The Art Story

Sue Coe, Aids won't wait, the enemy is here not in Kuwait

by MONICA ZIMMERMAN, PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video: **7.4.2**: Sue Coe, *Aids won't wait, the enemy is here not in Kuwait*, 1990, photo-etching on paper, 23.8 x 32.5 cm (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, © Sue Coe)

Additional resources:

This work at PAFA

Andrew Sullivan, "Gay Life, Gay Death: The Siege of a Subculture," *The New Republic* (December 17, 1990) (reposting on June 26, 2013)

Thornton Dial, *Blood and Meat: Survival For The World*

by TIMOTHY ANGLIN BURGARD, FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **7.4.3**: Thornton Dial, *Blood and Meat: Survival For The World*, 1992, rope, carpet, copper Wire, metal, canvas scraps, enamel, and splash zone compound on canvas on wood, 165.1 x 241.3 x 27.9 cm (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, ©Thornton Dial), a Seeing America video

Titus Kaphar, *The Cost of Removal*

by LAUREN HAYNES, CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART) and DR. BETH HARRIS

Kaphar takes a violent history and renders it visible in this modified portrait of Andrew Jackson.



Video **7.4.4**: Titus Kaphar, *The Cost of Removal*, 2017, oil, canvas, and rusted nails on canvas, 274.3 x 213.4 x 3.8 cm, © Titus Kaphar (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art)

William Kentridge, drawing from *Tide Table (Soho in Deck Chair)*

by JOSH R. ROSE



Figure **7.4.10**: William Kentridge, Drawing from *Tide Table (Soho in Deck Chair)*, 2003, charcoal on paper, 81.28 x 121.92 cm (courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, NYC, © William Kentridge)

On the beach, but in a suit

It is a humorously discordant image: a man in a pinstriped suit sits on a deck chair at the beach, ignoring the overcast vista by reading a newspaper. The figure's balding head and newspaper are the brightest highlights against the smooth, rippling surf. South African artist William Kentridge has said the inspiration for this scene was a photograph of his grandfather similarly dressed at a beach near Capetown. The contrast of formal dress and beach setting—while whimsical—also suggests class distinctions and the disconnect between experiencing one's environment and codification as control: rather than watch the tide, the figure (as we come to find out) reads the newspaper's tide table (a chart that shows water heights over time for a particular location). The gulf separating understanding and experience in this drawing resonates in much of Kentridge's imagery and process.

"Successful Failures"

Kentridge was raised by two progressive lawyers in Johannesburg who actively helped disenfranchised South Africans navigate the legal system during the systemic inequalities of apartheid. The harsh racial and socioeconomic conditions in South Africa marked the earliest work Kentridge produced after studying visual art at the Johannesburg Art Foundation and theater at the L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

Kentridge's earliest passions were theater and opera (and he has continued working in these areas throughout his career), yet after realizing he was not cut out as an actor, he was "reduced to being an artist." As he has described it, "Every clear decision I have made was wrong. And the only thing that saved me was what I hadn't decided." This deceptively self-deprecating remark adequately describes the intentional openness and mutability of meaning Kentridge has built into his approach.

Process as Performance

The drawing above is the result of a film, *Tide Table*, the ninth film in the series "Drawings For Projection" begun in 1989. These films utilize a unique stop-motion technique: using a 16mm camera, Kentridge photographs each stage of a drawing on one sheet of paper as he continually modifies it through additions and erasures, often leaving ghostly remnants of previous marks on the page. He even periodically appears within the frame, such as by placing a new sheet in front of the camera when the previous drawing/scene is finished.



Figure **7.4.11**: William Kentridge, Drawing from *Tide Table*, 2003 © William Kentridge

The resulting work of art is generally comprised of two elements: an animated film and a series of drawings. Unlike traditional animation, which is painstakingly planned and comprised of thousands of single images each denoting a fraction of a second, Kentridge's films develop organically without any preparatory planning like storyboards, relying more on a stream-of-consciousness approach that strives for something between random chance and conscious premeditation. Kentridge associates this with the concept of "fortuna," in which his imagery and narrative are influenced by objects in his environment or ideas and motions that seem intrinsically related to—but independent of—the themes and narrative being tackled at the time. The relationship might be comparable to that of authors noting how their characters do something unexpected in the course of writing a novel. There is a performative quality to Kentridge's process, predicated by the spontaneity he fosters, his own appearances in the frame, and the film itself as a time-based record of his drawing process.

The Traces Always Remain

Kentridge's drawings for his films are often regarded as palimpsests. A palimpset is the word for a manuscript where the original text has been erased and overwritten (a practice common before paper was available and when parchment was expensive). In Kentridge's work, the sheet of paper becomes the locus for layer upon layer of images that evolve and shift, where the earlier states of the drawing exist only through traces intentionally left on the paper. In the film, these traces help intensify the movement of his figures, but also visually remark upon the process as a physical interaction of charcoal and eraser on paper.

The palimpsest quality to Kentridge's approach is one that many critics and historians have associated with his reaction to growing up during a turbulent and shifting period in South African history. Apartheid, legalized racial discrimination, dominated South African governance and society from 1948 until 1994. One way Kentridge has made overt reference to the atrocities of apartheid in his "Drawings for Projection" series is through the one pre-determined facet of these narratives: an established "cast" featuring the wealthy white real-estate developer and industrialist Soho Eckstein. Eckstein represents the authoritative oppressors ruling over black South Africans.



Figure **7.4.12**: William Kentridge, Drawing for the film *Monument*, 1990 © William Kentridge

In the 1990 film *Monument*, for example, Eckstein unveils a heroic monument showing a black worker struggling to carry a load of pristine marble objects. An ostensibly commemorative sculpture to the efforts of South Africans is revealed later to be an actual living person, not a sculpture. Racial discrimination is starkly reduced to the contrast between the "sculpted" worker's body and the white classically-styled load he bears.

In the 1991 film, *Mine*, a similar contrast is presented between Eckstein's white bed coverings and tray as he enjoys coffee, and the grueling, dank conditions of the mines that Eckstein owns. The two are linked visually by the downward action of the French-press coffee maker that becomes the elevator within the mines. Such contrasts seem intentionally provocative, both formally and thematically. Yet Kentridge admits that the decision to have the coffee plunger become the elevator shaft was another example of fortuna, inspired simply from the fact he had that type of coffee maker in his studio that day.



Figure **7.4.13**: William Kentridge, Drawing for the film *Mine*, 1991 © William Kentridge

A critical event linked to the legal dissolution of apartheid in the 1990s was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Commission was a five year investigation into the crimes and human rights abuses committed under apartheid from 1960 until May 10, 1994. The results of the investigation, broadcast on South African television, were intended to bring to light crimes committed and the breadth of the structure of racism and disenfranchisement.

Although Kentridge's process was established several years before the Commission, scholars like Jessica Dubow and Ruth Rosengarten have linked the palimpsest quality of Kentridge's "Drawings for Projection" with the contradictory nature of the Commission: although the broadcasts intended to reveal atrocities, they also established that the harrowing acts revealed were firmly "in the past" and therefore not reflective of the dawn of a post-apartheid South Africa. Dubow and Rosengarten suggest that Kentridge's palimpsest technique is reminiscent of the Commission's attempts to show—but also remove—traces of apartheid and that Kentridge's "finished" drawings similarly do not fully reveal everything that went into making them. The documentation of every stage of the drawing is only seen in the animated film, hence the reason the drawings and the films are intrinsically related and should not be separated.

Tide Table

The disconnect between documentation and direct experience seen in the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is also central to the drawing of Soho Eckstein sitting at the beach in a business suit. In the films he created after 1994, Kentridge presents Soho as a man whose life has fallen apart: between inexplicable health issues, violent nightmares, and the loss of his fortune, Kentridge portrays Eckstein's struggles in post-apartheid South Africa. Throughout Tide Table the artist provides a subtext that reflects upon youth, as a choir on the beach sings and a young boy dances and leaps in the surf. Often this occurs around Eckstein, as he sits in the deck chair, seeming to prefer the analytical table of tide flows in the newspaper and, in a later scene, pointedly placing the newspaper over his head to sleep (see above).

These images reinforce Eckstein's character as one who is more comfortable at a remove from human connection and the natural world, a portrayal that is common to many of the films in the series.

Eckstein's actions in *Tide Table* evoke a sense of loss for the comforts and advantages the character had during apartheid. Still, there is a glimmer of hope. Ultimately Eckstein observes those around him; he gets up, and playfully throws a rock into the water.

Additional Resources:

The artist discussing his 2003 film, *Tide Table* (SFMOMA)

The artist discusses his process (SFMOMA)

This film at SFMOMA

Interview with the artist

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice

by DR. RENÉE ATER

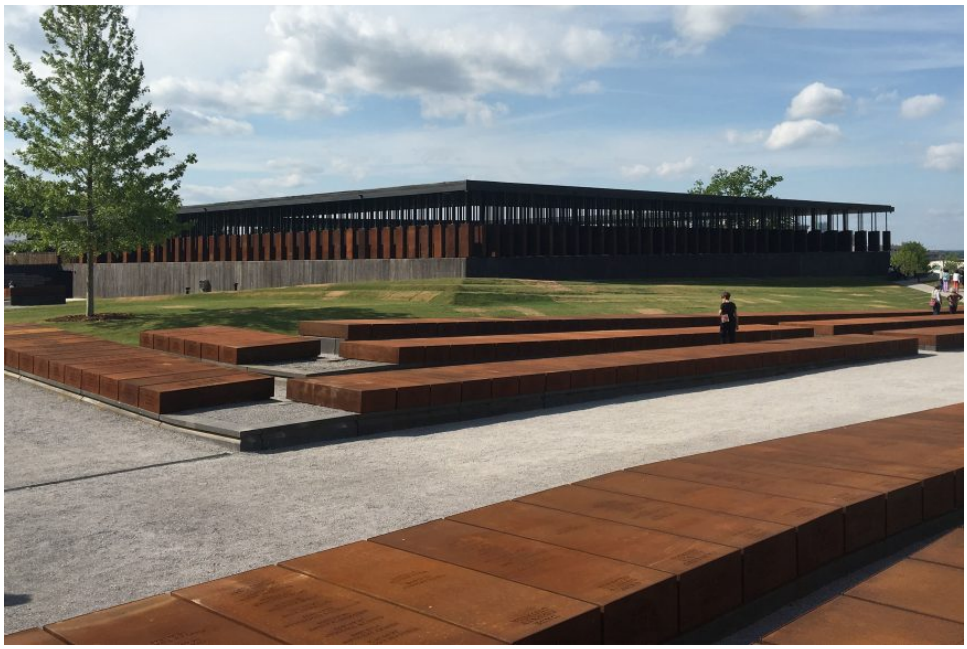


Figure 7.4.14: The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: **Shawn Calhoun**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Located in Montgomery, Alabama, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice is the first monument to commemorate the over 4,000 African Americans who were lynched in the United States between 1877 and 1950. The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) envisioned and realized the memorial as "a sacred space for truth-telling and reflection about racial terror in America and its legacy."



Figure 7.4.15: Meta Warrick Fuller, *In Memory of Mary Turner: As a Silent Protest Against Mob Violence*, 1919, painted plaster (Museum of African American History, Boston & Nantucket)

While writing my dissertation on the sculpture of Meta Warrick Fuller, I investigated the history of lynching in the United States. My research was motivated by the fact that Fuller had created a small painted plaster to honor the memory of Mary Turner, a pregnant woman who was lynched in Brooks County, Georgia, in 1918. I was interested to see if Turner was identified in the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which I discovered she was. I also was deeply curious as to how EJI would handle the visual representation of trauma and violence. At the end of April 2018, I flew to Atlanta, rented a car, and drove through the Georgia and Alabama countryside to Montgomery to participate in the opening ceremonies and the two-day social justice conference.



Figure 7.4.16: The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opened 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: **Soniakapadia**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Sited on six acres of land, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice is an arresting and emotionally powerful memorial to lynching victims. EJI with MASS Design Group conceived the memorial as a sober and sacred site where people can gather and reflect on America's history of slavery, lynching, and racial inequality. EJI believes that such a monument will allow for national reconciliation and redemption.



Figure 7.4.17: Peace and Justice Memorial Garden, The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Dr. Renée Ater)

Peace and Justice Memorial Garden

The memorial includes multiple components: a garden, four sculpture groupings, explanatory texts and quotations, and a temple-like structure with hanging rectangular boxes made of corten steel. Visitors first encounter the Peace and Justice Memorial Garden before entering the long hallway of the main entrance. Within the garden are native plantings of flowers and shrubs and the so-called "Memory Wall: Strength," a brick arched wall from the Montgomery Theater, built in 1860, which enslaved masons constructed. The garden is intended as a contemplative space as well as a place to acknowledge past and present African American laborers in Montgomery. From the garden, a serpentine pathway leads to the entrance of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

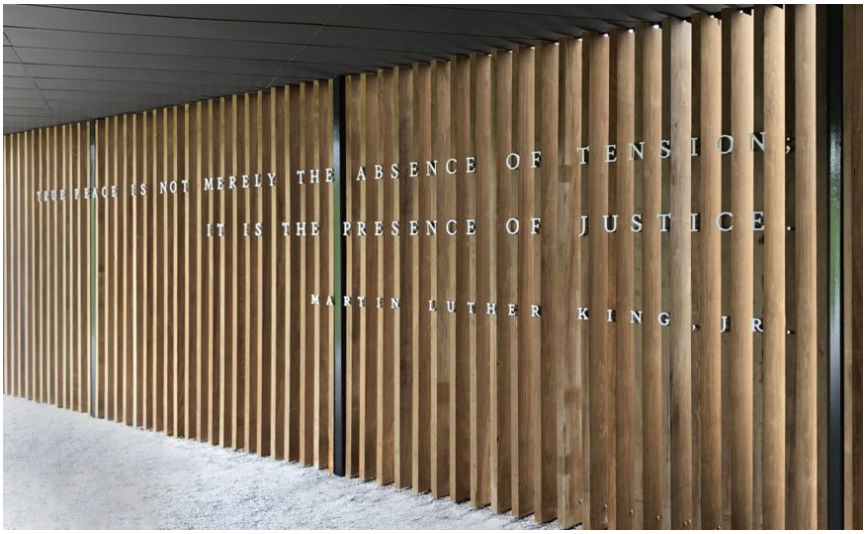


Figure 7.4.18: Entrance, National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Dr. Renée Ater)

Telling the story of slavery and lynching

A quotation from Martin Luther King Jr. greets you as you enter the memorial. Placed along a wooden slat wall, it reads: “True peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice.” This quotation frames the meaning of the memorial and the overall social activist and reparative justice mission of EJI. EJI is “committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.” The memorial space flows in one direction, with visitors passing King’s remarks to begin a slow climb up the gently sloped landscape to the main building of the memorial.



Figure **7.4.19**: Informational plaque in the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: **Judson McCranie**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Four large grey plaques with white lettering are attached to the concrete wall along the pathway. Evenly spaced, these texts outline a history of the transatlantic slave trade and the rise of violence in the post-Civil War period; Reconstruction and the rise of convict leasing in the South; racial terror lynching in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and the justifications that white Americans gave for lynching African American men and women. The texts use direct, concise language to describe the difficult historical facts of slavery and racial terror lynching.



Figure **7.4.20**: Kwame Akoto-Bamfo, *Nkyinkyim Installation*, 2018, National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: **Michael Delli Carpini**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Monument to the transatlantic slave trade

In front of the first plaque, the artist Kwame Akoto-Bamfo created a cast concrete, multi-figure, stand-alone monument to the transatlantic slave trade. Entitled *Nkyinkyim Installation*, this work presents seven semi-nude Africans who are enchained for the harrowing journey from the interior to the coast for transportation across the Atlantic. Based on the **slavery memorial in Stone Town, Zanzibar, Tanzania**, Akoto-Bamfo's memorial evokes the horror of slavery through the figures anguished expressions; chained necks and manacled hands and feet; and simulated slashed backs. The most sorrowful of these depictions is of a chained young mother holding a screaming baby as she reaches across to an older standing male figure.



Figure 7.4.21: Memorial Square, National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Michael Delli Carpini, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Sacred space dedicated to lynching victims

The memorial structure suggests the form of a temple with a large peristyle. At the center of the temple-like memorial is an open space, “Memorial Square,” reached by a series of aggregate concrete steps. The grassy knoll represents spaces such as town squares and courthouse lawns used for the public spectacle of lynching. Inside the memorial, over 800 rectangular corten steel boxes, six feet in height, hang by steel poles from the ceiling at even intervals. Each of these hanging forms represents a county in the United States where a lynching took place. Names of lynching victims and the dates of their murders are laser cut into the surfaces of the boxes.



Figure 7.4.22: National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Dr. Renée Ater)

On the interior of the memorial structure, you begin on even ground, your body parallel to the coffin-like forms. If you choose, you can lean into the monument and even trace a finger across the cutout letters or feel the uneven surface quality. As you descend into the memorial, the corten steel boxes rise high above, suspended in the air and no longer within your bodily space. These rusted stele evoke the image of black bodies hanging from trees.

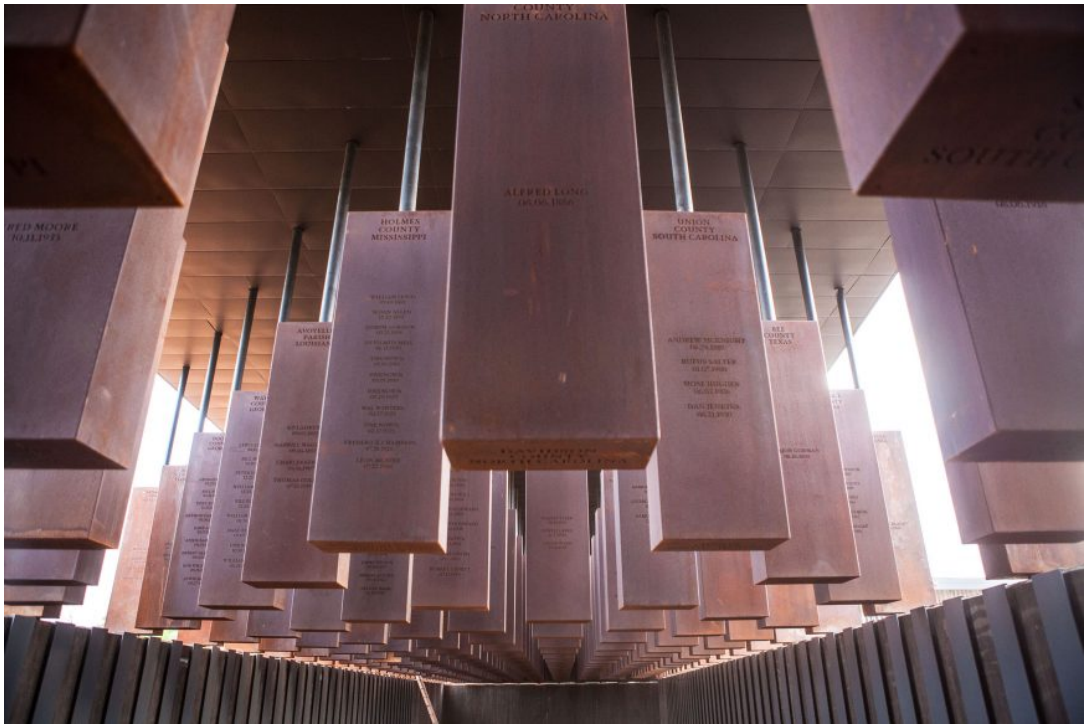


Figure 7.4.23: Memorial Corridor, National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Soniakapadia, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Along the third section of the memorial, bands of text panels in grey with white lettering identify the awful justifications for racial terror lynching including accusations of inappropriate conduct with white women, speaking out against lynching, and not showing

deference to whites. After reading these difficult texts, you encounter a message of reconciliation.

> ***For the hanged and beaten.***
> ***For the shot, drowned, and burned.***
> ***For the tortured, tormented, and terrorized.***
> ***For those abandoned by the Rule of Law.***
>
> ***We will remember.***
>
> ***With hope because hopelessness is the enemy of justice.***
> ***With courage because peace requires bravery.***
> ***With persistence because justice is a constant struggle.***
> ***With faith because we shall overcome.***

This text asserts unequivocally the power of this memorial to act as a remembrance device and as a space where the horror and trauma of lynching is framed in the context of peace.

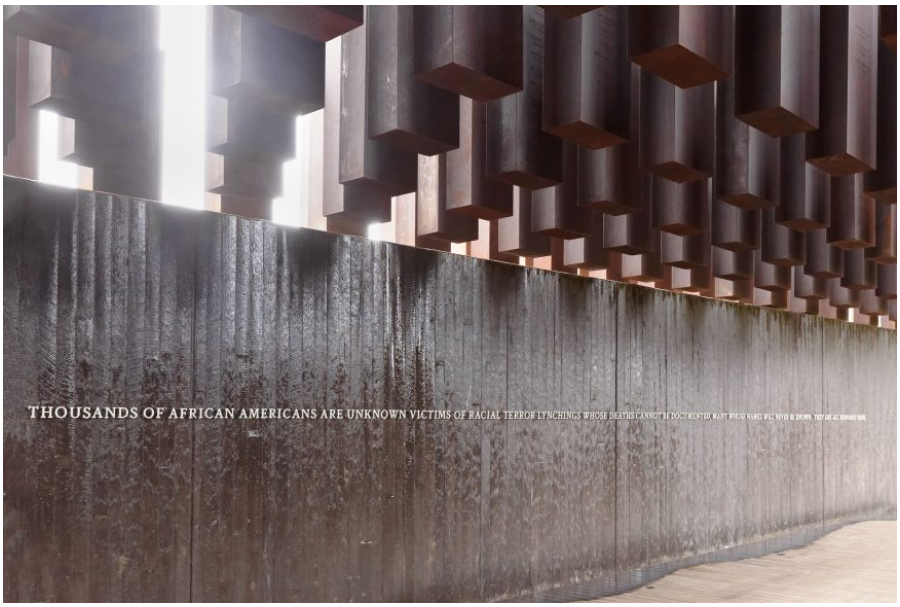


Figure **7.4.24**: Wall with flowing water, National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: **Judson McCranie**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Nearby, water flows down the final long wall of the memorial. Metal lettering asserts that all victims of lynching now will be remembered. “Thousands of African Americans are unknown victims of racial terror lynchings whose deaths cannot be documented, many whose names will never be known. They are all honored here.” The slow sound of water cascading down the wall allows space for contemplation, as you are able to sit along rough-hewn seating across from the water feature.

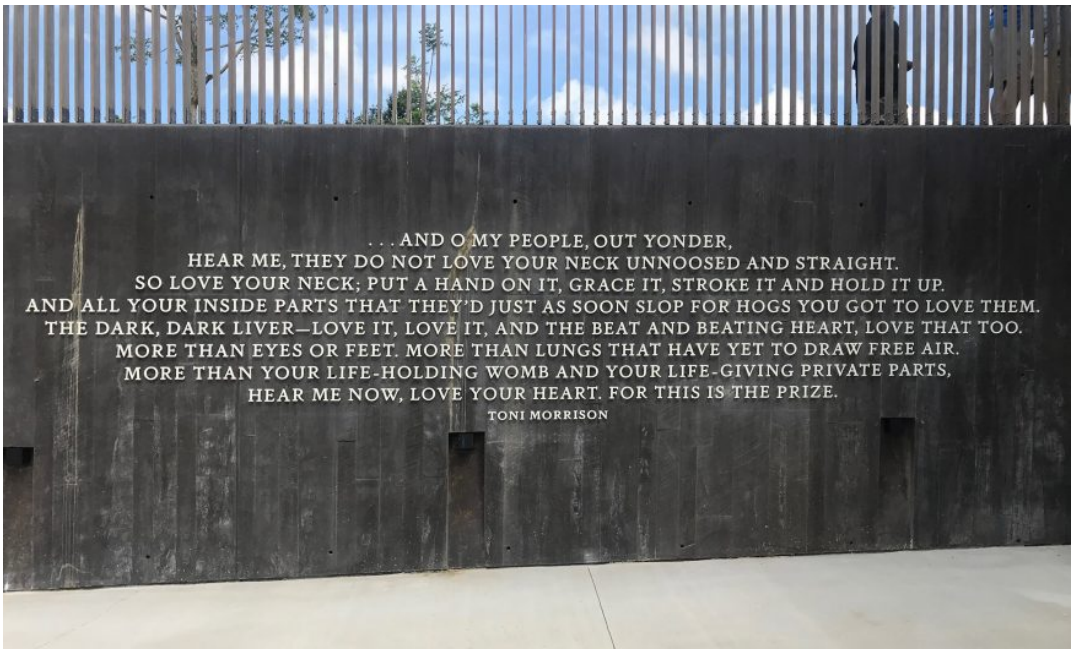


Figure 7.4.25: National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Michael Delli Carpini, CC BY-NC 2.0)

When you exit the memorial to the surrounding park, you encounter a final quotation from Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* that stresses the power of love.

> ***And O my people, out yonder, hear me, they do not love your neck unnoosed and straight. So love your neck; put a hand on it, grace it, stroke it and hold it up. And all your inside parts that they'd just as soon slop for hogs, you got to love them. The dark, dark liver—love it, love it, and the beat and beating heart, love that too. More than eyes or feet. More than lungs that have yet to draw free air. More than your life-holding womb and your life-giving private parts, hear me now, love your heart. For this is the prize.***



Figure 7.4.26: Duplicate monuments, National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Dr. Renée Ater)

Duplicate monuments

In the park, MASS and EJI included a field of duplicate monuments. Rather than hang from a roof, the corten steel boxes now serve as cenotaphs lying flat on the ground in long rows. They are waiting to be claimed and installed in the counties they represent. For EJI, the duplicate monuments serve as "a report" as to which counties have confronted the difficult history of lynching and which have chosen to not deal with such a painful legacy. EJI believes this process of claiming the duplicate monuments will "change the built environment of the Deep South and beyond to more honestly reflect our history."



Figure 7.4.27: Left: Ida B. Wells Memorial Grove; right: Dana King, *Guided by Justice*, 2018. National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photos: Dr. Renée Ater)

Sculpture in the park

Three additional groups of sculpture are integrated into the park. The Ida B. Wells Memorial Grove honors the early twentieth-century anti-lynching activist and writer. It contains over forty black granite cylinders of various heights that visitors can sit on and reflect. In *Guided by Justice*, Dana King created three life-size bronze statues of black women dressed in coats as they "walk" on the pathway. These three statues of women at various stages of life symbolize the women arrested in 1955 for challenging racial segregation on Montgomery's public buses.



Figure 7.4.28: Hank Willis Thomas, *Raise Up*, 2016, National Memorial for Peace and Justice, 2018, Montgomery, Alabama (photo: Dr. Renée Ater)

The final sculpture is by Hank Willis Thomas and represents systemized police violence directed towards African American men. *Raise Up* is a long horizontal, free-standing concrete wall with ten bronze portraits of black men shown from the neck up with their hands raised above their bald heads. These monuments with Akoto-Bamfo's multi-figure statue of enslaved persons underscore the main themes of the memorial and of EJI's work: slavery, lynching, segregation/resistance, and mass incarceration.

Elizabeth Alexander's "Invocation"

As visitors exit the National Memorial to Peace and Justice, they encounter the haunting lines of the poet Elizabeth Alexander's "Invocation." In the lines of her poem, Alexander asserts that the African American victims of racial terror lynching will not be forgotten, nor lost in the telling of U.S. history. Each name—"a holy word"— is forever etched on this memorial and into the nation's collective memory.

> ***The wind brings your names.***
> ***We will never dissever you names***
> ***nor your shadows beneath each branch and tree.***
>
> ***The truth comes in on the wind, is carried by water.***
> ***There is such a thing as the truth. Tell us***
> ***how you got over. Say, Soul look back in wonder.***
>
> ***Your names were never lost,***
> ***each name a holy word.***
> ***The rocks cry out—***
>
> ***call out each name to sanctify this place.***
> ***Sounds in human voices, silver and soil,***
> ***a moan, a sorrow song,***
>
> ***a keen, a cackle, harmony,***
> ***a hymnal, handbook, chart,***

a sacred text, a stomp, an exhortation.

Ancestors, you will find us still in cages,
despised and disciplined.
You will find us still mis-named.

Here you will find us despite.
You will not find us extinct.
You will find us here memoried and storied.

You will find us here mighty.
You will find us here divine.
You will find us where you left us, but not as you left us.

Here you endure and are luminous.
You are not lost to us.
The wind carries sorrows, sighs, and shouts.

The wind brings everything. Nothing is not lost.

Additional Resources:

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice on Equal Justice Initiative website

MASS Design group page on their design for the memorial

Renee Ater's public history blog

Julie Buckner Armstrong, *Mary Turner and the Memory of Lynching* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

Fritzhugh Brundage, *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South* (Durham, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.)

Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*

by TINA RIVERS RYAN



Figure **7.4.29**: Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, 1995, fifty-one channel video installation (including one closed-circuit television feed), custom electronics, neon lighting, steel and wood; color, sound, approx. 15 x 40 x 4′ (Smithsonian American Art Museum) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

Getting on the “Electronic Super Highway”

In 1974, artist Nam June Paik submitted a report to the Art Program of the Rockefeller Foundation, one of the first organizations to support artists working with new media, including television and video. Entitled “Media Planning for the Post Industrial Society—The 21st Century is now only 26 years away,” the report argued that media technologies would become increasingly prevalent in American society, and should be used to address pressing social problems, such as racial segregation, the modernization of the economy, and environmental pollution. Presciently, Paik’s report forecasted the emergence of what he called a “broadband communication network”—or “electronic super highway”—comprising not only television and video, but also “audio cassettes, telex, data pooling, continental satellites, micro-fiches, private microwaves and eventually, fiber optics on laser frequencies.” By the 1990s, Paik’s concept of an information “superhighway” had become associated with a new “world wide web” of electronic communication then emerging—just as he had predicted.

From Music to Fluxus

Paik was well-positioned to understand how media technologies were evolving: in the 1960s he was one of the very first people to use televisual technologies as an artistic medium, earning him the title of “father” of video art. Born in Seoul in 1932, Paik studied composition while attending college in Tokyo; he eventually travelled to Germany, where he hoped to encounter the leading composers of the day. He met John Cage in 1958, and soon became involved with the avant-garde Fluxus group, led by Cage’s student George Maciunas. Explain Fluxus.

Following the example of Cage’s oeuvre, many of Paik’s Fluxus works undermined accepted notions of musical composition or performance. This same irreverent spirit informed his use of television, to which he turned his attention in 1963 in his first one-man gallery show, “Exposition of Music—Electronic Television,” at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Germany. Here, Paik became the first artist to exhibit what would later become known as “video art” by scattering television sets across the floor of a room, thereby shifting our attention from the content on the screens to the sculptural forms of the sets.

The father of video art



Figure **7.4.30**: Nam June Paik, *Magnet TV*, 1965, modified black-and-white television set and magnet (Smithsonian American Art Museum) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

Paik moved to New York in 1964, where he came into contact with the downtown art scene. In 1965, he began collaborating with cellist Charlotte Moorman, who would wear and perform Paik's TV sculptures for many years; he also had a one-man show at the 57th Street Galeria Bonino, in which he exhibited modified or "prepared" television sets that upset the traditional TV-watching experience. One example is *Magnet TV*, in which an industrial magnet is placed on top of the TV set, distorting the broadcast image into abstract patterns of light.

According to an oft-cited story, on October 4th of that same year, Paik purchased the first commercially-available portable video system in America, the Sony Portapak, and immediately used it to record the arrival of Pope Paul VI at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Later that night, Paik showed the tape at the Café au Go Go in Greenwich Village, ushering in a new mode of video art based not on the subversion or distortion of television broadcasts, but on the possibilities of videotape. The evolution of these tendencies into a new movement was announced by a 1969 group show, "TV as a Creative Medium." Held at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York, the show included one of Paik's interactive TVs, and also premiered another one of his collaborations with Moorman.

TV as a Creative Medium

For Paik and other early adopters of video, this new artistic medium was well-suited to the speed of our increasingly electronic modern lives. It allowed artists to create moving images more quickly than recording on film (which required time for negatives to be developed), and unlike film, video could be edited in "real-time," using devices that altered the video's electronic signals. (Ever the pioneer, Paik created his own video synthesizer with engineer Shuya Abe in 1969.) Furthermore, because the image recorded by the video camera could be transmitted to and viewed almost instantaneously on a monitor, people could see themselves "live" on a TV screen, and even interact with their own TV image, in a process known as "feedback." In the years to come, the participatory nature of TV would be redefined by two-way cable networks, while the advent of global satellite broadcasts made TV a medium of instant global communication.



Figure 7.4.31: Nam June Paik, *TV Garden*, 1974 (image shows 2000 version), video installation with color television sets and live plants (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

As television continued to evolve from the late 1960s onward, Paik explored ways to disrupt it from both inside and outside of the institutional frameworks of galleries, museums, and emerging experimental TV labs. His major works from this period include *TV Garden* (1974), a sculptural installation of TV sets scattered among live plants in a museum (image above), and *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* (1984), a broadcast program that coordinated live feeds from around the world via satellite. In these and other projects, Paik's goal was to reflect upon how we interact with technology, and to imagine new ways of doing so. The many retrospectives of his work in recent decades, including one organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 2012, speak to the increasing relevance of his ideas for contemporary art.

The nation electric



Figure 7.4.32: Nam June Paik, *V-yramid* (detail), 1982, video installation, color, sound, with forty television sets (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York) (photo: Mark B. Schlemmer, CC BY 2.0) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

By the 1980s, Paik was building enormous, free-standing structures comprising dozens or even hundreds of TV screens, often organized into iconic shapes, as in the giant pyramid of *V-yramid* (1982). For the German Pavilion at the 1993 Venice Biennale, Paik produced a series of works about the relationship between Eastern and Western cultures, framed through the lens of Marco Polo; along with Hans Haacke, another artist representing Germany, Paik was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion. One of the works, *Electronic Superhighway*, was a towering bank of TVs that simultaneously screened multiple video clips (including one of John Cage) from a wide variety of sources. Two years later, Paik revisited this work in *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, placing over 300 TV screens into the overall formation of a map of the United States outlined in colored neon lights (see image at the top of the page and the detail below). Roughly forty feet long and fifteen feet high, the work is a monumental record of the physical and also cultural contours of America: within each state, the screens display video clips that resonate with that state's unique popular mythology. For example, Iowa (where each presidential election cycle begins) plays old news footage of various candidates, while Kansas presents the *Wizard of Oz*.



Figure **7.4.33**: Detail, Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, 1995, fifty-one channel video installation (including one closed-circuit television feed), custom electronics, neon lighting, steel and wood; color, sound, approx. 15 x 40 x 4′ (Smithsonian American Art Museum) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

The states are firmly defined, but also linked, by the network of neon lights, which echoes the network of interstate "superhighways" that economically and culturally unified the continental U.S. in the 1950s. However, whereas the highways facilitated the transportation of people and goods from coast to coast, the neon lights suggest that what unifies us now is not so much transportation, but electronic communication. Thanks to the screens of televisions and of the home computers that became popular in the 1990s, as well as the cables of the internet (which transmit information as light), most of us can access the same information at anytime and from any place. *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, which has been housed at the Smithsonian American Art Museum since 2002, has therefore become an icon of America in the information age.

While Paik's work is generally described as celebrating the fact that the "electronic superhighway" allows us to communicate with and understand each other across traditional boundaries, this particular work also can be read as posing some difficult questions about how that technology is impacting culture. For example, the physical scale of the work and number of simultaneous clips makes it difficult to absorb any details, resulting in what we now call "information overload," and the visual tension between the static brightness of the neons and the dynamic brightness of the screens points to a similar tension between national and local frames of reference.

Additional resources:

Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Nam June Paik, bio and collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Nam June Paik, *TV Garden* at the Guggenheim

Nam June Paik from the National Endowment for the Arts

Nam June Paik archive at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Nam June Paik from the Asia Society

Melissa Chiu and Michelle Yun, eds., *Nam June Paik: Becoming Robot* (New York: Asia Society Museum, 2014).

John G. Hanhardt and Ken Hakuta, *Nam June Paik: Global Visionary* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2012).

John G. Hanhardt and Jon Ippolito, *The Worlds of Nam June Paik* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2000).

Sigmar Polke, *Watchtower* series

by KATRINA KLAASMEYER

In the early 1980s, Sigmar Polke returned to painting. The ever-evolving artist had spent the previous decade experimenting with photography, inspired perhaps by his extensive travels through Asia and Australia. His interest in photography centered on the chemical processes of the darkroom and their potential for unpredictable results. Like his earlier *rasterbilder* (works that exposed the raster-dot technique of printing, such as *Bunnies*), Polke continued to delight in exposing the artistic process. As he began to use unconventional materials and chemicals across various media, viewers could see the artwork literally developing and changing in front of their eyes. These experiments have earned him the designation of alchemist—the ancient practitioner of magic, altering substances at the most fundamental levels.

Alchemy in painting



Figure **7.4.34**: Sigmar Polke, *Watchtower*, 1984, synthetic polymer paints and dry pigment on patterned fabric, 9′ 10″ x 7′ 4 1/2″ (The Museum of Modern Art) © 2015 Estate of Sigmar Polke

We can see Polke's play with alchemy in the series of five works centered on the watchtower theme completed from 1984-1988. Taken as a whole, the watchtower series consistently presents a tenuous balance between imagery that evokes both the ominous and the everyday.

In *Watchtower* (1984), we see the watchtower clearly with its distinctive white outline against the darker background fabrics. Gestural swirls of yellow paint add to the dreamlike haziness of the image. Two styles of textile have been used: on the left, a repetitive geometric pattern similar to a basketweave; on the right, large stylized flowers of yellow, red, and purple. These fabrics are nothing special—in fact, their very banality is what appealed to the artist. Rather than use the sanctified canvas of high art, Polke has instead chosen "bargain-bin" consumer textiles. Polke's use of these textiles alludes to a subtle type of alchemy: the transformation of a simple material widely available into the foundation for the genius of artistic expression. Through his manipulation, the fabric previously worth only dollars upon the yard has now transmuted into an artwork worth millions.

Polke's alchemical practices are most apparent in *Watchtower II* (1984-85, **Carnegie Museum of Art**) where he used silver oxide to create a ghost-like, hazy outline, resulting in a muted image. From certain angles, the watchtower is barely visible. We see another variant on this theme in *Watchtower with Geese* (1987-88, **Art Institute of Chicago**). Polke has prominently placed a gaggle of geese atop a fabric printed with beach umbrellas and sunglasses. In this context, the function of the watchtower becomes ambiguous. The fabric alludes to the beach, thereby suggesting this symbol could be a lifeguard tower, whereas the geese allude to hunting, providing yet another possibility for the tower—a hunter's blind. Indeed, the original German title *Hochsitz* translates

literally to “perch” (as in a high vantage point) and typically refers to the hunter’s blind, an elevated seat used in the German countryside as a lookout for hunting fowl. Ambiguity, banality, alchemical transformations—with these recurrent themes present in this series, Polke is consistent in his inconsistency.

Art after Auschwitz

Without question, the central symbol in this series evokes the horrific realities of concentration camps, the Nazi past, and government surveillance in a divided nation. As Germany struggled with reunification in the 1980s, the military watchtowers continued to stand, near the wall separating the communist East from the democratic West. For some Germans, these towers were part of everyday reality. By layering the watchtower symbol within the banal imagery of the preprinted textiles, Polke is symbolizing a layering of consciousness, disparate realities within a divided nation. Many artists have confronted these themes of postwar reality and the healing of wide-spread cultural trauma, most notably Joseph Beuys in his shamanistic workings with felt and fat, and Anselm Kiefer’s massive canvases exploring history and myth.

Polke addressed the issues of surveillance and slaughter in this watchtower series, as well as in his ominous painting *Camp* (1982, **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**), where the viewer is placed within a black mist set between two inwardly curving fences of barbed wire against a dark yellow sky. In these paintings, Polke does not diminish or attempt to hide the horrific realities of these symbols, yet he enshrouds them in dark uncertainties. The ghost-like haziness and mysterious mist are unpredictable and unbounded, forcing a shifting of perspective. Polke does not wish to erase the past, but perhaps something so complex can only be approached through the magic of alchemy, with its transformative powers and limitless potential.

Additional Resources:

Watchtower at the Museum of Modern Art

Watchtower II at the Carnegie Museum of Art

Watchtower with Geese at the Art Institute Chicago

Artist’s biography at Tate

Polke on the the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

What’s in a map? Jaune Quick-To-See Smith’s *State Names*

by DR. ANNE SHOWALTER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 7.4.5: Dr. Anne Showalter and Dr. Beth Harris discuss Jaune Quick-To-See Smith’s *State Names* (2000) at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

What’s in a map? With *State Names*, the Native American artist Jaune Quick-To-See Smith suggests that thinking about our history in a different way, helps us rethink our present.

Additional resources

State Names at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith's artist website

Artist interview with Jaune Quick-To-See Smith (The Smithsonian American Art Museum)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

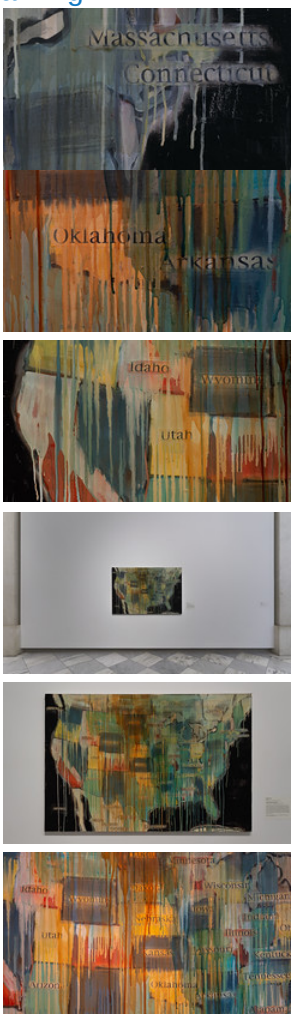


Figure **7.4.35**: More Smarthistory images…

Wendy Red Star, *1880 Crow Peace Delegation*

by WENDY RED STAR AT PORTLAND ART MUSEUM and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 7.4.6: Wendy Red Star, *1880 Crow Peace Delegation: Peelatchiwaaxpáash/Medicine Crow (Raven), Peelatchixaaliash/Old Crow (Raven), Déaxitchish/Pretty Eagle, Bia Eélisaash/Large Stomach Woman (Pregnant Woman) aka Two Belly, Alaxchiiaahush/Many War Achievements or Plenty Coups aka Chíilaphuchissaaleesh/Buffalo Bull Facing The Wind*, 2014, 10 inket prints and red ink on paper, 16 15/16 x 11 15/16 inches (each) © Wendy Red Star (Portland Art Museum)

Gerhard Richter

Gerhard Richter, The Cage Paintings (1-6)

by GERHARD RICHTER STUDIO



Video 7.4.7: Robert Storr talks about Gerhard Richter's Cage paintings.

Gerhard Richter, *Uncle Rudi*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Figure 7.4.36: Gerhard Richter, *Uncle Rudi*, 1965, oil on canvas, 87 x 50 cm (Lidice Gallery, Lidice, Czech Republic) used with permission of the Gerhard Richter studio

"I can't see it…is it me?" I watched a young woman step closer to the canvas titled, *Uncle Rudi*. She was now physically closer and she was looking hard, but the image kept its distance.

Refusing Style

Meaning in Gerhard Richter's art can also keep its distance. The elusiveness of meaning is, in some ways, a central subject of Richter's art. Since the early 1950s, Richter has painted a huge number of subjects in wildly conflicting styles. For most artists, one style emerges and evolves slowly, almost imperceptibly, over the course of their career. This is because artists often continue to work through problems that remain relevant and perhaps, because they achieve a degree of recognition and the market then demands that style. In other words, collectors often want what is known. Artists who abandon their signature style do so at some risk to future sales. Still, some artists do push in startlingly new directions. Willem de Kooning abandoned abstraction for the figure against the advice of his dealer, and Pablo Picasso famously pursued opposing styles simultaneously—think of his volumetric, even bloated Neoclassicism compared to the collages where he pressed flat every volume in sight.

The Impossibility of Meaning

During Richter's long career, he has produced art in an unprecedented number of conflicting styles starting with the propagandistic Social Realist art he made as a student at the Dresden Art Academy in Communist East Germany. After his move in 1961 to Düsseldorf in the West (via Berlin—the wall was begun the same year), he co-founded a German variant of Pop art which he, somewhat jokingly, termed Capitalist Realism. Since then he has painted high-pitched realism (sometimes blurred just enough to soften the image, or sometimes wiped or scraped beyond all recognition) and produced representations of abstraction (as opposed to abstraction itself). He has explored many of the most pressing visual issues of our time, the relationship of photography to painting, memory and the image, art's role in the representation of war and politics, and perhaps most importantly, the impossibility of fixed meaning.

Image and Ideology

Richter was born in Dresden, Germany on the eve of the Second World War. His two uncles were killed in the war and his father served, but survived. His schizophrenic aunt, Marianne, was murdered by the Nazis as part of their drive to euthanize the sick. Less than a week after his thirteenth birthday, Richter heard some 3,600 British and American planes drop more than half-a-million bombs on Dresden (he then lived just outside the city). 25,000 people were killed in these raids and the Soviets would quickly occupy Eastern Germany. Unlike the idealized, classicized nudes that Adolf Hitler had promulgated, the young Richter was taught Social Realism at the Dresden academy, a celebration of the heroism of communist workers. Once in the West, Richter found that the relationship between image and ideology reversed yet again. Here, images in advertising and popular culture celebrated material wealth and the culture of capitalism. Under the Nazis, under the Soviets, and in the West, Richter saw art used to express

political ideology. His art, while deeply concerned with politics and morality, rejects the very possibility of answers, even of the idea that we can know.

Uncle Rudi

Uncle Rudi, the painting the woman had stepped closer to see, is painted in the grays of a black and white photograph. It is small and has the intimacy of a family snapshot. We see a young man smiling proudly and awkwardly. He is clearly self-conscious as he poses in his new uniform. One has the sense that a moment before he was talking to the person behind the camera, likely a friend or family member. Rudi would die fighting soon after the photograph that is the basis for this painting was taken. This is the artist's uncle, the man his grandmother favored and the adult the young Richter was to model himself after. But nothing in this painting is clear. Not the relationship between the artist and his uncle, not the tension between Rudi's innocent awkwardness and his participation in Nazi violence, not even in the relationship between the photograph and Richter's painting. The artist has drawn a dry brush across the wet surface of the nearly finished painting, and by doing this, he obscures the clarity of the photograph, denying us the easy certainty we expect. Richter reminds us that *Uncle Rudi*, like all images, promise and then fail to bring us closer to the people, things or places represented.

Additional Resources:

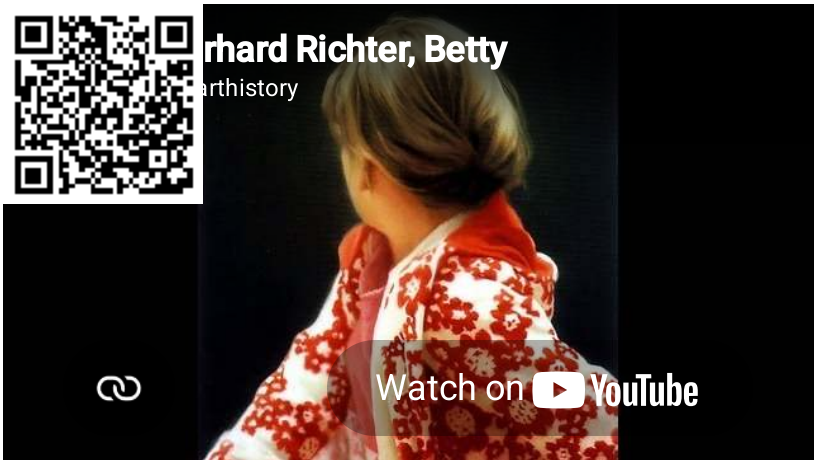
Uncle Rudi in the artist's website

Uncle Rudi at the Lidice Memorial Museum

Video of Richter painting

Gerhard Richter, *Betty*

by SAL KHAN and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **7.4.8**: Gerhard Richter, *Betty*, 1988, oil on canvas, 102 x 72cm (Saint Louis Art Museum)

Gerhard Richter, *September*

by GERHARD RICHTER STUDIO



Video 7.4.9: Robert Storr talks about Gerhard Richter's *September,* 2005, oil on canvas, 52 cm x 72 cm (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Superman, World War II, and Japanese-American experience

by DR. SARAH NEWMAN, SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM and DR. BETH HARRIS

Superman makes an appearance in what looks (at first sight) like a Japanese print.



Video 7.4.10: Roger Shimomura, *Diary: December 12, 1941*, 1980, acrylic on canvas, 127.6 x 152.4 cm (Smithsonian American Art Museum, gift of the artist, © Roger Shimomura). A conversation with Dr. Sarah Newman, James Dicke Curator of Contemporary Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, and Dr. Beth Harris.

This Seeing America video was made possible by a generous grant from the Terra Foundation and the Alice L. Walton Foundation.

Go deeper:

This work at The Smithsonian American Art Museum

Shimomura's website

Learn more about the role of Superman and other comic book heroes during World War II

Listen to actor and activist George Takei speak about his experiences as a child in an internment camp during World War II

Explore primary sources on the Japanese internment camps of the 1940s

Explore more primary sources on the Japanese internment camps of the 1940s

Learn more about Japanese culture and *ukiyo-e* prints in this online exhibition

Shimomura's *Diary* – American Experience in the Classroom (The Smithsonian American Art Museum)

Sebastião Salgado's Kuwait

by EVE SCHILLO, LACMA and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **7.4.11**: Sebastião Salgado's *Kuwait*, 1991, gelatin silver print, 45.24 × 30.1 cm (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Gary Sato, AC1998.162.1, ©Sebastião Salgado), a Seeing America video, speakers: Eve Schillo, Assistant Curator, Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Steven Zucker

Kehinde Wiley, *Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps*

by DR. GAYLE CLEMANS



Figure **7.4.37**: Kehinde Wiley, *Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps*, 2005, oil paint on canvas, 274.3 x 274.3 cm (108 x 108 in) (Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York) © Kehinde Wiley

Confronting Art History

In this large painting, Kehinde Wiley, an African-American artist, strategically re-creates a French masterpiece from two hundred years before but with key differences. This act of appropriation reveals issues about the tradition of portraiture and all that it implies about power and privilege. Wiley asks us to think about the biases of the art historical canon (the set of works that are regarded as "masterpieces"), representation in pop culture, and issues of race and gender. Here, Wiley replaces the original white subject—the French general-turned-emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (below)—with an anonymous black man whom Wiley approached on the street as part of his "street-casting process." Although Wiley does occasionally create paintings on commission, he typically asks everyday people of color to sit for photographs, which he then transforms into paintings. Along the way, he talks with those sitters, gathering their thoughts about what they should wear, how they might pose, and which historical paintings to reference.

Napoleon Leading the Army is a clear spin-off of Jacques-Louis David's painting of 1800-01 (below), which was commissioned by Charles IV, the King of Spain, to commemorate Napoleon's victorious military campaign against the Austrians. The original portrait smacks of propaganda. Napoleon, in fact, did not pose for the original painting nor did he lead his troops over the mountains into Austria. He sent his soldiers ahead on foot and followed a few days later, riding on a mule.

Choosing Symbolic Details



Figure **7.4.38**: Left: Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, 1803 version, oil on canvas 275 × 232 cm (Österreichische Galerie Belvedere); right: Kehinde Wiley, *Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps*, 2005, oil paint on canvas, 274.3 x 274.3 cm (108 x 108 in) (Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York)

Wiley calls attention to ideas about authority and historical representation, keeping many original elements and making significant alterations. The royal blue coat of the original makes an appearance (peeking out from the young man's camouflage shirt), as does the gold-encased sword (held in place by a red strap). But Wiley's subject wears an outfit that is completely contemporary and reflective of a culture notorious for flashy imagery and larger than life figures: hip hop culture. This young man wears camouflage fatigues, Timberland work boots, and a bandana—conjuring up militaristic associations with the original painting and with the violence of contemporary urban America, particularly as experienced by young black men. The subject of Wiley's painting reveals his tattoos and wears red wristbands from the Starter sportswear company, details that add to the sense that this is a real individual living in the early 21st century.

Instead of the naturalistic setting of David's painting, Wiley has inserted a decorative, unrealistic backdrop reminiscent of luxurious French fabric. This background, along with the high-keyed colors, and ornate frame (complete with faux family shields and the artist's self-portrait at the top) call attention to the artificiality and pompousness of image-making.



Figure 7.4.39: Sperm (detail), Kehinde Wiley, *Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps*, 2005, oil paint on canvas, 274.3 x 274.3 cm (108 x 108 in) (Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York) (photo: Gayle Clemans)

The background is also infused with tiny paintings of sperm—Wiley's way of poking fun at the highly charged masculinity and propagation of gendered identity that are involved in the Western tradition of portraiture. This particular subgenre of portraiture—the equestrian portrait—is particularly infused with the lineage of male power. From classical Rome to post-revolutionary France, political and military leaders on horseback have evoked and perpetuated social norms of masculine might and control (for example, this equestrian portrait of the **Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius**).

Through his demonstration of extraordinary painting skill and his use of famous portraits, Wiley could be seen as wryly placing himself in line with the history of great master painters. Here, for example, he has signed and dated the painting just as David did, painting his name and the date in Roman numerals onto the band around the horse's chest. Wiley makes another reference to lineage in the foreground where he retains the original painting's rocky surface and the carved names of illustrious leaders who led troops over the Alps: NAPOLEON, HANNIBAL, and KAROLUS MAGNUS (Charlemagne). But Wiley also includes the name WILLIAMS—another insistence on including ordinary people of color who are often left out of systems of representation and glorification. Not only is Williams a common African-American surname, it hints at the imposition of Anglo names on black people who were brought by force from Africa and stripped of their own histories.

About the Artist

Kehinde Wiley (American, born 1977) attracted media and art world attention almost immediately after earning his MFA from Yale University in 2001. He was an artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem and has been included in many significant group and solo exhibitions. Wiley now employs studio assistants who participate in his "street-casting" process and in the various stages of painting and sculpture fabrication. In addition to large-scale paintings, Wiley has created stained glass, painted altarpieces, and cast bronze sculptures, all of which examine of art history, race, gender, and the power of representation.

Additional Resources:

Gayle Clemans, "The Stunning and Subversive Pageantry of Artist Kehinde Wiley," *The Seattle Times*, February 16, 2016.

Shahrazad A. Shareef, "The Power of Decor: Kehinde Wiley's Interventions into the Construction of Black Masculine Identity" (UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2010).

Roberta Smith, "Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic at the Brooklyn Museum," *New York Times*, February 19, 2015.

Eugenie Tsai, ed., *Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic* (Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Museum, 2015).

History and deception: Kenseth Armstead's *Surrender Yorktown 1781*

by KENSETH ARMSTEAD and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 7.4.12: Kenseth Armstead and Steven Zucker discuss Kenseth's *Surrender Yorktown 1781* (2013) at the **Newark Museum**

How can we begin to correct the lies of history? Artist Kenseth Armstead suggests a poetic solution.

Additional resources

Kenseth Armstead's artist website

The American Revolution: A World War, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

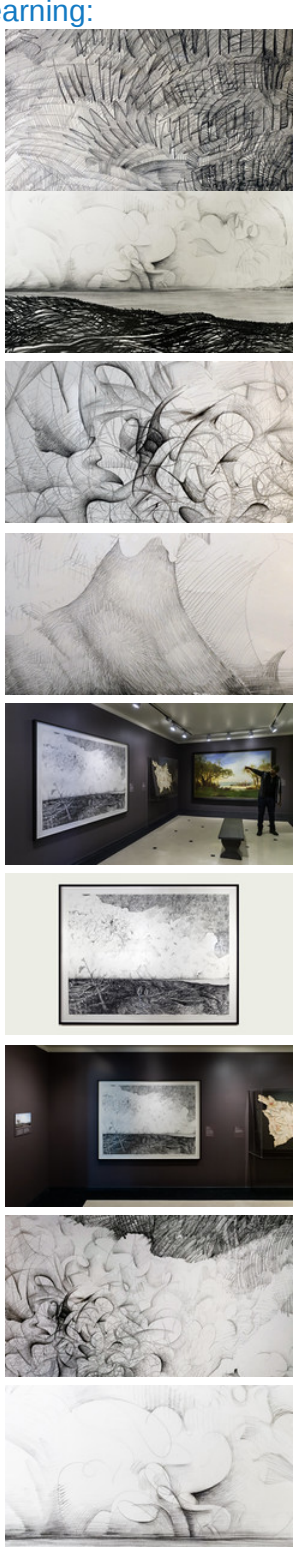


Figure **7.4.40:** More Smarthistory images…

Maya Lin's Silver Upper White River

by ALEJO BENEDETTI, CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 7.4.13: Maya Lin, *Silver Upper White River*, 2015, recycled silver, 332.7 x 609.6 x 1 cm (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, © Maya Lin) Speakers: Alejo Benedetti, Assistant Curator, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and Steven Zucker, a Seeing America video

Additional resources

This sculpture at Crystal Bridges

What Is Missing?

Maya Lin, *Folding the Chesapeake*, at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Maya Lin, Pin River-Yangtze at the United States Embassy in Beijing

Courtney Leonard, *ARTIFICE Ellipse*, 2016

by COURTNEY M. LEONARD and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 7.4.14: A conversation with Courtney M. Leonard and Beth Harris in front of Courtney Leonard's *ARTIFICE Ellipse | Log: 18-3*, coiled micaceous clay with glaze, 5 3/8 x 15 x 7 inches (Newark Museum of Art) © Courtney M. Leonard

Additional resources:

This work of art at the Newark Museum

The artist's website

Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds, *Native Hosts (Arkansas)*

by DR. MINDY BESAW, CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 7.4.15: Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds, *Native Hosts (Arkansas)*, 2018, aluminum sign, series of seven, 46.7 x 92.5 cm (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, ©Hock E Aye VI Edgar Heap of Birds), a Seeing America video Speakers: Dr. Mindy Besaw, Curator of American Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources

This work at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

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7.5: Propaganda, Persuasion, Politics, and Power

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

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

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

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

In addition to the building's resplendent majesty, it was adorned with sumptuous and masterful frescoes, glazed brickwork, and relief sculpture. Two staircases led up to the platform on which the Apadana was built, on the north and east sides, but only the north staircase was completed during Darius's lifetime. That staircase and the platform walls to either side are covered with reliefs: figures in even, orderly rows as they approach the Persian King's hall. (Figure 9.2) They are representatives of the twenty-three countries within the Achaemenid Empire, coming to pay homage to the King during festivals for the New Year, carrying gifts. Accompanying them are Persian dignitaries, followed by soldiers with their weaponry, horses, and chariots.

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

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

In more recent history, Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825, France) painted five versions of *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*between 1801 and 1805. (Figure 9.4) David was born and raised in Paris and entered the École des Beaux-Arts in 1866at the age of eighteen. After eight years of mixed success in his studies there, David won the Prix de Rome in 1774, a prestigious government

scholarship that also included travel to Italy. He lived in Rome from 1775 to 1780, studying the art of great masters from the classical past, through the Renaissance, and to the present. But, he was most impressed with the philosophical and artistic ideals of some of his contemporaries, the Neoclassical thinkers and painters he met in Italy.



Figure 9.2 | Reliefs at Persepholis
Author: User "Ziegler175"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 9.3 | The Apadana Palace, Persepolis, Iran
Author: User "Happolati"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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



Figure 9.4 | Napoleon Crossing the Alps
Artist: Jacques-Louis David
Author: User "Garoutcha"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

In the aftermath of the revolution, during the mercurial times of the 1790s, David was first a powerful figure in the short-lived Republic and then a jailed outcast. When Napoleon Bonaparte, named First Consul in 1799, commissioned David to paint his portrait in 1800, however, David's return to official favor was complete.

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

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

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

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

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7.6: Mexican Murals and Social Art

Artist	Native Country
José Clemente Orozco	Mexico
David Siqueiros	Mexico
Diego Rivera	Mexico
Jorge González Camarena	Mexico
Alfredo Zalce	Mexico

Mural painting in Mexico started in the 1920s to promote the political and social messages about the government. Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros were the artists who lead the mural movement. From the 1920s through the 1970s, many murals were created, and their influence can still be seen today throughout the Americas. Beginning with the Olmec civilization, Mexico has a long tradition of mural paintings. The conquering Spanish destroyed Tenochtitlan and their art, bringing the Christian doctrine and building churches. Artist were commissioned to paint murals to reinforce that religion, similar to Italy during the Renaissance. In the 20th century, murals were used for social and political themes, educating the population, the murals displaying messages from the government, or demonstrating protesting concepts.



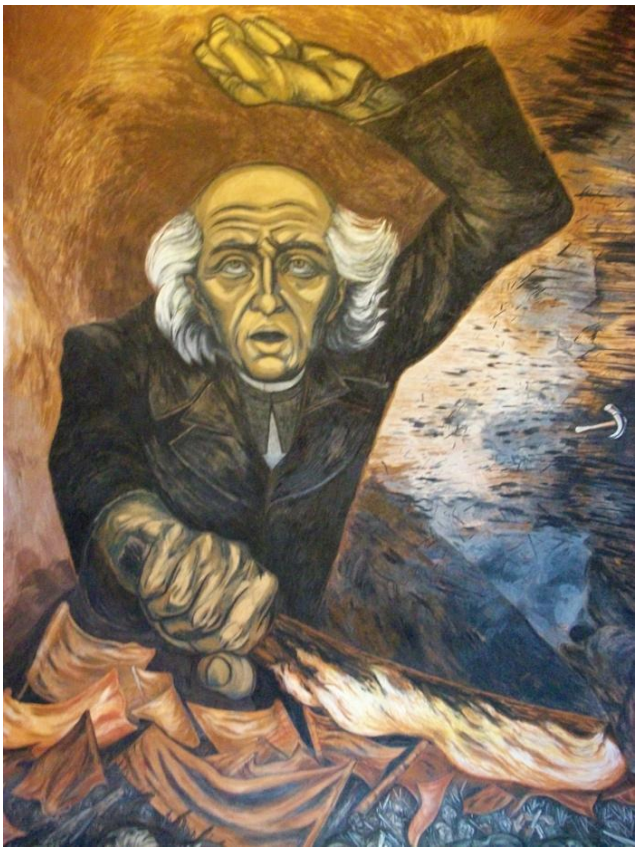
Los Tres Grandes

The three great mural artists were Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros and were considered “los tres grandes”. Although working on similar themes, each one had a different style of artistic expression. Siqueiros incorporated scientific concepts into his murals, Orozco was pessimistic in his approach with political paintings, while Rivera was idealistic and utopian, something the Mexican government favored.

José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949) was a product of the Mexican Revolution who overcame extreme poverty, fortunately discovering painting at an early age. He was influenced by Mexican cartoonist Jose Guadalupe Posada, who taught him art could become a powerful expression during a political revolution.

Orozco worked in somber colors and emphasized human suffering by distorting the human figure with slashing lines. Bringing his struggling social complexities, he did not glorify the war but focused his art on the horrors of war. The mural *The People and Its*

Leaders (13.61) depicts Miguel Hidalgo Costilla, the leader of Mexican Independence, walking up the stairs in the government palace in Guadalajara, Mexico. In *The Trench* (13.62), the bodies of the fallen soldiers of the revolution form a cross. Orozco used red and sharp diagonal lines to demonstrate the brutality of war.



13.61 *The People and Its Leaders*



13.62 *The Trench*

David Siqueiros (1886-1974) was a Mexican social realist painter who was known for his vast murals. The Polyforum Cultural (13.63) is part of the trade center in Mexico City built mid 20th century is covered with the most substantial mural work to date called *La Marchade la Humanidad* (March of Humanity) (13.64), measuring over 8,700 square meters. The overall arching theme revolves around humans' endless struggles for a better society.

Siqueiros was the most radical, and he used bold, sweeping lines and blurred techniques form to paint the mural on the Polyforum, considered to be a Siqueiros masterpiece. There are three sections: March of Humanity Towards Bourgeois Democratic Revolution; The March of Humanity to the Revolution of the Future; Peace, Culture, and Harmony, all depicting scenes of suffering, yet optimism for the future.



13.63 *Polyforum*



13.64 *March of Humanity*

READING: The March of Humanity

Diego Rivera (1886-1957) was one of the most famous Mexican painters and was responsible for the Mexican Mural Movement in Mexico City. Rivera painted murals with the intent of providing a pictorial history of his country. A defender of collective justice and his work can be found around Mexico, depicting cultural advancements. Rivera was trained at the San Carlos Academy of Fine Art in Mexico City, and traveled throughout Europe, studying the styles of famous painters. Inspired by Cubism, Rivera combined his grand use of color with larger than life murals expressing his interest in Marxism and radical politics.



13.65 Tenochtitlan



13.66 Mural in Mexico City

He followed the most traditional painting style from modernism and cubistic elements to paint his murals. Using bright colors with earthy tones to depict everyday life in ancient Mexico, he mainly promoted the indigenous people of Mexico. Diego Rivera's mural in the Palacio Nacional, Mexico City, depicts life in Aztec times in the old city of Tenochtitlan. Mexico City was built on top of the conquered town of Tenochtitlan. In the mural *Tenochtitlan* (13.65), the snowcapped mountains in the distance display atmospheric perspective. The center of the city shows how massive it was with the pyramid, stone bridges, water canals, a vast marketplace, and streets lined with flowers. It was a time when Moctezuma II came to power, the height of the great Tenochtitlan. The Aztecs influenced the flat perspective, colorful paintings, and simplified figures. Another Rivera's mural (13.66) at the Palacio Nacional depicts the exploitation and cruelty of the Spanish conquest, native hanging, forced slavery, and forced religion.



Man, Controller of the Universe (13.67) was first a fresco in Rockefeller Center, New York. The mural focused on new social and scientific changes and modern social life, including some of the images depicting Russian soldiers and Lenin (13.68). The mural was considered too controversial and destroyed before it was completed. Because of the ongoing controversy, Rivera had photographs taken of the unfinished mural and recreated the painting at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.



13.67 *Man, Controller of the Universe*



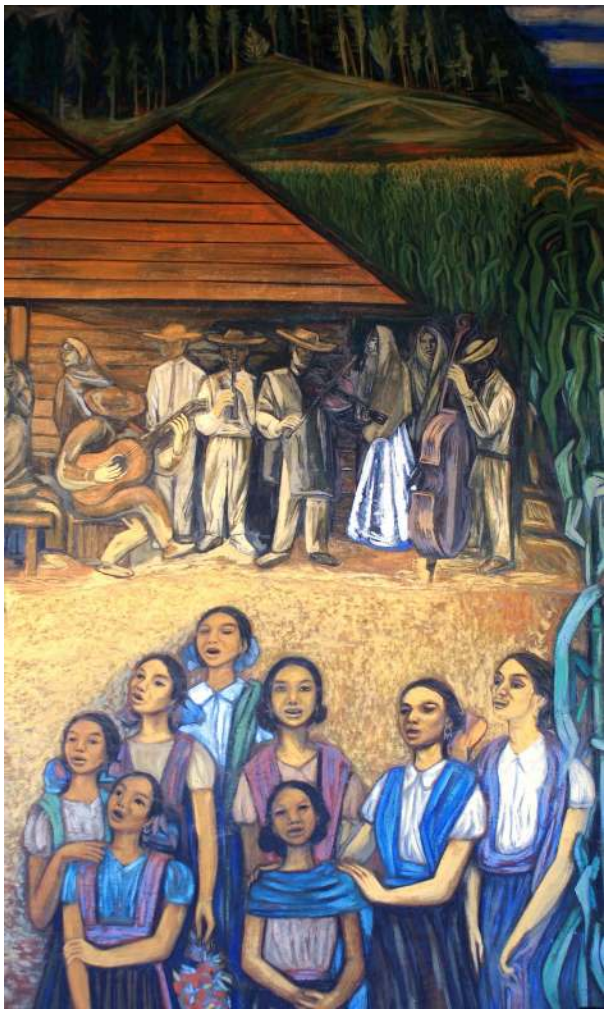
13.68 *Part of mural*

Jorge González Camarena (1908 – 1980) was a prominent Mexican painter and is best known as a muralist in Mexico City and referred to as the builder of mass, shape, and plane. His work was classified as Surrealism and Cubism using harmonic geometric shapes. *Liberacion* or *La Humanidad se Libera de la Miseria* (Man is released from misery) (13.69) is a mural is in the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.



13.69 *Liberacion*

Alfredo Zalce (1908 – 2003) was a Mexican artist and is best known for his murals. His art career started young, around six years old, when he was drawing on the chalkboards at school, illustrating what the teacher was writing. His mural (13.70) is in the state government palace in Morelia, where he lived with his wife. Zalce helped influence modern art in Mexico as one of the great post-revolutionary muralists depicting the historical period of reform.



13.70 Mural in Morelia

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7.7: Imagery of War

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

9.3.1 Historical/Documentary



Figure 9.5 | Narmer Palette
Author: User "Nicolas Perrault III"
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From the earliest times, artists have responded to issues of war and conquest and their implications for the cultures in which they took place. Often, the art ap- pears to have been created to mark a moment of triumph and to interpret the conquest as a validation of a leader's right to rule, established through the victory. Such was the case with the Palette of Narmer. (Figure 9.5) On the two-sided palette are relief-carved depictions of the subjugation of the enemy by Egyptian King Narmer (also referred to as Menes) under the watchful protection of the deities and a procession of the King and his attendants toward the decapitated bodies of ten of the defeated. On the first side, Narmer wears the crown of Upper Egypt and on the reverse he wears the crown of Lower Egypt, symbolizing the union of the two regions under one ruler (c. 3,100-3,050 BCE). He is depicted far larger than both his enemies and his own men, showing the figures' relative importance. Narmer is literally depicted as a powerful, firm, and resolute warrior who will be a strong and worthy leader.

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

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

American heroism in war was certainly envisioned in these terms, as evidenced in *Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker Hill* by John Trumbull. (Figure 9.7) As discussed in Chapter 8 Art and Identity, Trumbull was an aide-de-camp to General George Washington. After witnessing Warren's death in Boston, Trumbull was commissioned by Warren's family to immortalize the event. The Battle of Bunker Hill took place in 1775, the first year of the American Revolutionary War. Although the colonialists were defeated, the British were stunned by their far greater number of casualties, boosting the morale of the young army. In his painting, Trumbull focused on the General's tragic death as the colonial forces retreated, as well as the compassion of British major John Small, who held back one of his men as the soldier was about to bayonet Warren. Doing so, Trumbull could celebrate the heroism



Figure 9.6 | Alexander Mosaic
Author: User "Berthold Werner"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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of the Americans while also acknowledging the honorable behavior of the enemy, an expectation in eighteenth century codes of conduct during pitched battles.

Trumbull's depiction of the battle scene is greatly romanticized: an historically accurate rendering of General Warren's death was neither expected nor desired by viewers of the day. Many questions have been asked, as well, about the accuracy of the grand tableau by Emanuel Leutze (1816-1868, Germany, lived USA) of *Washington Crossing the Del-aware*, a painting that is an iconic symbol of the American Revolutionary War and the first president of the United States. (Figure 9.8) Leutze created the work in 1851, seventy-five years after the Battle of Trenton occurred in 1776. Far from attempting to reconstruct the scene as it took place, Leutze intended his work to be an evocation of a grand and inspirational event, dramatically pictured.



Figure 9.7 | *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775*
Artist: John Trumbull
Author: Boston Museum of Fine Arts
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.8 | *Washington Crossing the Delaware*
Artist: Emanuel Leutze
Author: Google Cultural Institute
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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



Figure 9.9 | *Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill*
Artist: Frederic Remington
Author: User "Julius Morton"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

The changes in interpretation are due in part to those changes towards realism in art during the nineteenth century that we have explored. Also, they were heightened by the advent and evolution of photography, which had enhanced potential for documentation of actual conditions. But photography did not, by any means, always present the viewer with unvarnished truth, since it could, like



Figure 9.10 | *Gassed*
Artist: John Singer Sargent
Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

painting, be manipulated in its effects. Nonetheless, the potential for a different view of war and its effects was ushered in with the advent of photography.

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



Figure 9.11 | Photograph of bodies on the battlefield of Antietam during the American Civil War
Photographer: Alexander Gardner
Author: User "Shauni"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

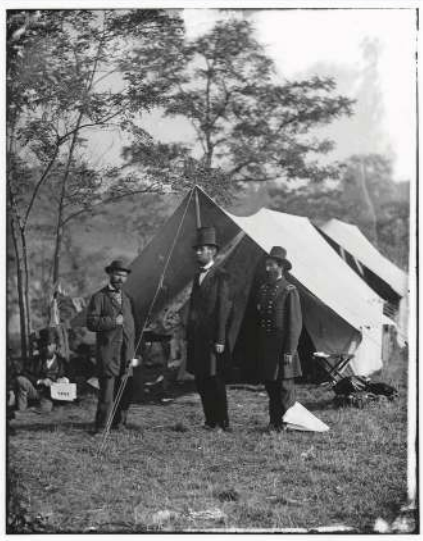


Figure 9.12 | Photograph of Allan Pinkerton, President Abraham Lincoln, and Major General John A. McClernand
Photographer: Alexander Gardner
Author: User "Bobanny"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

The potential for a more critical interpretation afforded by photography had in the past been taken at times, even though not as the norm. Notable examples come from several periods when artists responded to the horrors and agonies of war and injustice in various ways and created memorable interpretations that reveal their protests ofconditions. In 1633, Jacques Callot (1592- 1635, France) created a suite of panoramic etchings that dramatize *The Miseries of War*. (Figure 9.13) Francisco Goya's monumental *Third of May, 1808*, painted in 1814, showed the fear and horror of an encounter between Napoleon's troops and citizens of the town of Medina del Rio Seco, where 3,500 Spaniards lost their lives. (Figure 9.14) Goya's sympathies are clear in his presentation of a terrified white shirted martyr like figure facing a firing squad while in the midst of his equally horrified compatriots.



Figure 9.13 | *The miseries of war; No. 11, "The Hanging"*
Artist: Jacques Callot
Author: artgallery.nsw.gov.au
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Similarly, Honoré Daumier dramatized the injustice of a night raid in the home of a working class family in Paris during protests in 1834. Following a shot having been fired from a window in the building where twelve members of the Breffort family lived, soldiers stormed their apartment and killed them all. Six months later, Daumier created, a stark lithograph depicting helpless family members as they fell. (Figure 9.15) Daumier had been jailed two years earlier, in 1832, for **caricatures** (portraits containing features or characteristics exaggerated for comic effect) he made ridiculing King Louis Phillipe I (r. 1830-1848).

Immediately after the artist created *Rue Transnonain*, the street on which the Breffort family lived, the lithographic stones he used

were confiscated by government officials and all copies of the print were destroyed. The following year, political caricatures were banned entirely. This indicates the power Daumier's work was perceived as having and the danger it could hold for those in power. As noted, the potential for a different view of war and its effects was ushered in with the advent of photography. The American Civil War in the 1860s provided a venue for photographers to use the new medium in recording exactly what they were seeing, through the lens. But the processes were still not up to the task of capturing the actions, because equipment was cumbersome and exposure times were still relatively long and slow. Alexander Gardner's photo- graphic corps created many after battle scenes as well as portraits of generals, the president, campsites, and many other details of the deployments. (Figures 5.18 and 5.19) The potential for capturing action and momentary pathos only increased from then on, and the capacity for documenting graphic events has been used widely ever since. (Figures 5.20, 5.21, 5.22, 5.23) Compare the image of corpses being bulldozed and buried wholesale to the photos of Gardner and the previous painted glorifications of the battlefield.



Figure 9.14 | *The Third of May*
Artist: Francisco de Goya y Lucientes
Author: Prado in Google Earth
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.15 | *Rue Transnonain, le 15 Avril, 1834, Plate 24 of l'Association mensuelle*
Artist: Honoré Daumier
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

9.3.2 Reflective/Reactionary and Anti-war

One of the most powerful anti-war statements ever painted was by Pablo Picasso, created in 1937 following the bombing of the town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. He was commissioned by the Spanish Republican Government to create a mural for that country's pavilion at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris and, after learning of the attack, designed this poignant abstraction of symbolic and iconic motifs to express the horror of the event. (Pavilion of the Spanish Republic at the Paris International Exposition, 1937:thespacearchitecture.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/int2.jpg) His knowledge of the details had been gleaned from newspaper reporting, so he elected to create the imagery in the graphic black, gray, and white of the photographs through which he learned of the bombing and its impact. His dramatic distortions of form convey the deep anguish and disgust that had been engendered in him, his fellow Spaniards, and the world.

Over the course of the twentieth century, documentary photography was used not only to capture the brutal events of war, but also to broadcast moments of utter horror in such graphic ways that they have influenced public sentiment, sometimes turning opinion from support to outrage. By the time of World War I, technology permitted the reproduction of photographs in newspapers, which meant that the average citizen had far greater access to visual news of the war than in earlier conflicts. Some leaders, such as German Kaiser Wilhelm II (r. 1888-1918), were in favor of using photographs as a means of bolstering public support for the war, but othersrestricted photographers' access and censored photographs, citing security concerns. Shortly before the beginning of World War I, the British Army was the first to realize the potential of photography for aerial reconnaissance, greatly expanding their research capabilities and troop maneuverability. (Figure 9.16)

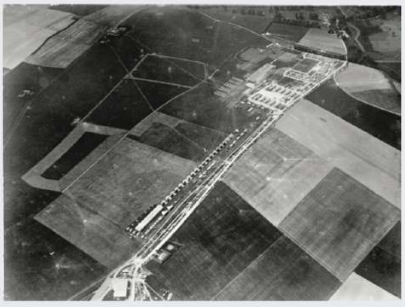


Figure 9.16 | Aerial Photography Before the First World War
Artist: Laws F C V (Sgt)
Author: User "Fae"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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During World War II, American military and government agencies tremendously expanded the use of photography for purposes ranging from conducting espionage and

assisting training, to recording atrocities and providing documentation. (Figures 9.17 and 9.18) During the Vietnam War (USA involvement, 1955-1975), the American military gave unprecedented access to non-military reporters and photographers. As the war extended in the 1960s, far longer than the American people expected, images of conflict and suffering in the war-torn country began having an impact on public opinion. (Women and children crouch in a muddy canal as they take cover from intense Viet Cong fire, Horst Faas: media2.s-nbcnews.com/j/streams/2013/ october/131016/8c9400532-pb-131016-vietnam-01.nbcnews-ux-2880-1000.jpg) By 1972, when Nick Ut (b. 1951, Vietnam, lives USA) photographed children fleeing their village after it was attacked with napalm, the tide had turned and many Americans no longer supported the Vietnam War. (Phan Thị Kim Phúc running down a road near Trảng Bàng, Vietnam, after a napalm bomb was dropped on the village of Trảng Bàng by a plane of the Vietnam Air Force, Huynh Cong Ut:https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikiped.../TrangBang.jpg)

9.3.3 Prohibition or Destruction of Imagery: Iconoclas



Figure 9.19 | Part of the fresco at the Dura-Europos synagogue
Author: User "Udimu"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.20 | Mara's assault on the Buddha
Author: User "Gurubrahma"
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Controversy over imagery and its use, especially in sacred contexts, also has a long history. Debates on the topic have, at times, erupted in- to deep and bitter arguments. It has often been thought that, because of the Old Testament statements for- bidding the use of idols, the Jewish religion has never allowed pictorial or figural art as part of its religious expression. More current findings, though, lead to the conclusion that the biblical statements were actually pointedly made at times against the real danger of idolatry, or the worship of idol images, rather than being a broad prohibition of images altogether. Dura-Europos was a military outpost in Syria held by the Romans 114-257 CE where the garrisoned sol- diers obviously practiced a wide variety of religions. The site has a great number of different pagan temples, a Christian house church, and a Jewish **synagogue**, or house of worship, that is decorated with a great array of lively figural frescoes that depict Old Testament stories. (Figure 9.19)

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

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

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

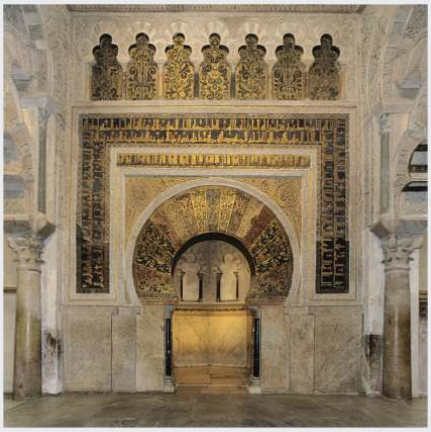


Figure 9.21 | Mihrab of Mosque–Cathedral of Córdoba
Author: User "Ingo Mehling"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Christian mysteries. Further, they argued, to obliterate existing images, to deface pictures and to destroy statues was to desecrate sacred things and, effectively, to disrespect the holy beings which they represented.



Figure 9.23 | Miniature from the 9th-century Chludov Psalter with scene of iconoclasm. Iconoclasts John Grammaticus and Anthony I of Constantinople.
Author: User "Shakko"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.22 | Seventeenth-Century Persian Bowl
Author: User "Udimu"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

This notion was expressed in the mid-ninth-century Chludov Psalter with an illustration that equates the destruction of an icon with insulting Christ on the cross when he was forced to take gall (bile) and vinegar by the mocking Roman soldiers. (Figure 9.23) The controversy was settled in 843 and the use of icons and imagery thrived thereafter. Unfortunately, very little of the religious art- work that was produced prior to this time survived for us to examine.

Other chapters in the debate over imagery open in later centuries. For some Christians, it was one point of disagreement leading to the Protestant Reformation that began in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517. According to those protesting what they saw as abuses of power in the Roman Catholic Church, the proliferation of images of holy figures and stories from the Bible distracted the faithful from true worship: reading the word of God in the Bible. As new religious practices spread, there was a widespread removal of religious paintings and sculpture from all churches and public buildings. (Figure 9.24) In the Wars of Religions that raged in many places in Europe (c. 1524-1648), the destruction of images was one of the violent forms of protest by angry crowds that railed against any and all prevailing practices and the powers they heldresponsible. A great many church portals (doors) were damaged by those who saw lopping off heads of sculptures above the doorways as a fitting expression of their anti-Church sentiment. (Figure 9.25)



Figure 9.24 | Iconoclasts in a church
Artist: Dirck van Delen
Author: User "BoH"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.25 | 16th-century iconoclasm in the Protestant Reformation. Relief statues in St. Stevenskerk in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, were attacked and defaced in the Beeldenstorm.
Author: User "Ziko"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Throughout history, such destruction has certainly not been restricted to religious controversies. From very early examples, we know of what is likely purposeful defacement of ruler images that were made either in protest or as a sort of proclamation of defeat and superiority. The gouging out of the jeweled eyes in this bronze head of Assyrian King Sargon II might have been for theft of



Figure 9.26 | Bronze head of a king, most likely Sargon of Akkad but possibly Naram-Sin.
Author: Iraqi Directorate General of Antiquities
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.27 | Statue of Saddam Hussein being toppled in Firdos Square after the US invasion of Iraq.
Photographer: U.S. military employee
Author: User "Ipankonin"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 9.28 | The taller Buddha of Bamiyan before (left) and after destruction (right).
Author: User "Tsui"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

the precious materials, but it may also indicate conquest over the man himself. (Figure 9.26) In recent times, we have seen the dramatic toppling in 2003 of the statue of Sadam Hussein in a public square in Baghdad, Iraq, as a symbolic overthrow of a despised and despotic ruler. (Figure 9.27) Further humiliation of him was clearly intended by the widespread publication of photos of captors picking lice from his head after his discovery in a spider hole.

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

A similar scenario unfolded more recently, when ISIS militants went on a destructive campaign to destroy historically and culturally valued artwork in the Mosul Museum, Iraq, despite pleas from curators and art lovers around the globe. (Extremists used sledgehammers and power drills to smash ancient artifacts at a museum in the northern city of Mosul: i.dailymail.co.uk/i/ pix/2015/02/26/261DB11500000578-2970270-image-a-1_1424957194042.jpg) This sort of protest is often made on a smaller scale, as well, when symbolic or iconic imagery is defaced or destroyed as a means of mocking its value to those who respect it, as with the Nazi symbols made on Jewish gravestones or the burning of the American flag. (Desecrated Jewish gravestones: http://cdn.timesofisrael.com/uploads...0127022968.jpg) (Figure 9.29) All such incidents reinforce our understanding of the varieties of power that art and visual imagery can have.



Figure 9.29 | Desecration of the U.S. Flag by burning
Author: Jennifer Parr
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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7.8: Reading- David's Death of Marat

By 1793, the violence of the Revolution dramatically increased until the beheadings at the Place de la Concorde became a constant, leading a certain Dr. Joseph Guillotine it invent a machine that would improve the efficiency of the ax and block and therefore make executions more humane. David was in thick of it. Early in the Revolution he had joined the Jacobins, a political club that would in time become the most rabid of the various rebel factions. Led by the ill-fated Georges Danton and the infamous Maximilien Robespierre, the Jacobins (including David) would eventually vote to execute Louis XVI and his Queen Marie Antionette who were caught attempting to escape across the border to the Austrian Empire.



Jacques-Louis David, The Death of Marat, oil on canvas, 1793 (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels)

At the height of the Reign of Terror in 1793, David painted a memorial to his great friend, the murdered publisher, Jean Marat. As in his Death of Socrates, David substitutes the iconography (symbolic forms) of Christian art for more contemporary issues. The Death of Marat, 1793 an idealized image of David's slain friend is shown holding his murderess's (Charlotte Corday) letter of introduction.



Jacques Louis David, The Death of Marat (detail), 1793 (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels)

The bloodied knife lays on the floor having opened a fatal gash that functions, as does Marat's very composition, as a reference to the entombment of Christ and a sort of secularized stigmata (reference to the wounds Christ is said to have received in his hands, feet and side while on the cross). Is David attempting now to find revolutionary martyrs to replace the saints of Catholicism (which had been outlawed)?

By 1794 the Reign of Terror had run its course. The Jacobins had begun to execute not only captured aristocrats but fellow revolutionaries as well. Eventually, Robespierre himself would die and the remaining Jacobins were likewise executed or imprisoned. David escaped death by renouncing his activities and was locked in a cell in the former palace, the Louvre, until his eventual release by France's brilliant new ruler, Napoleon Bonaparte. This diminutive Corsican had been the youngest General in the French army and during the Revolution had become a national hero by waging a seemingly endless string of victorious military campaigns against the Austrians in Belgium and Italy. Eventually, Napoleon would control most of Europe, would crown himself Emperor, and would release David in recognition that the artist's talent could serve the ruler's purposes.

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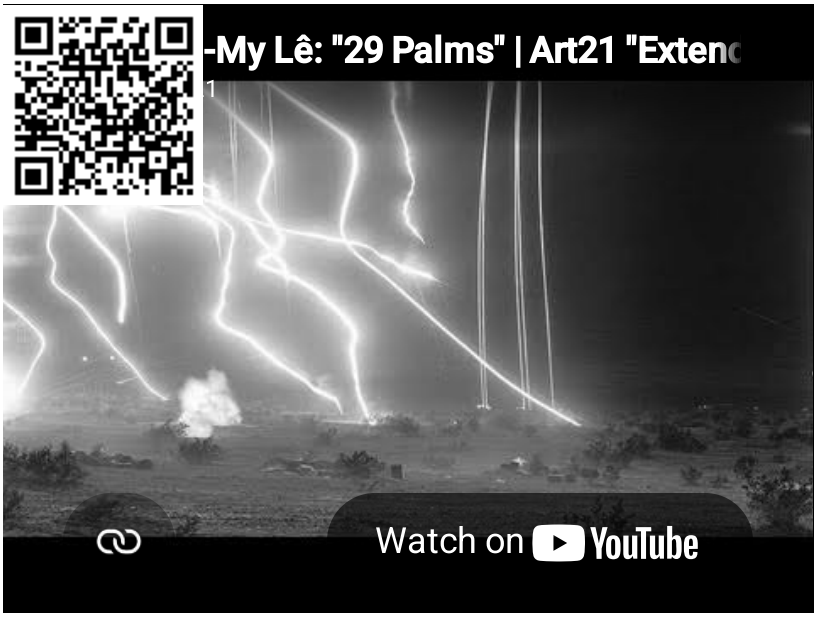
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7.9: An-My Lê, 29 Palms

- by **ART21**

Page ID

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By art21. “I just wanted to approach the idea of war in a more complicated and more challenging way” says artist An-My Lê, whose photographic series and film “29 Palms” (2003–04) explore the training exercises and desert landscape near Joshua Tree National Park as a staging ground for the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. An-My Lê’s photographs and films examine the impact, consequences, and representation of war, framing a tension between the natural landscape and its violent transformation into battlefields. Suspended between the formal traditions of documentary and staged photography, Lê’s work explores the disjunction between wars as historical events and the ubiquitous representation of war in contemporary entertainment, politics, and collective consciousness.

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7.10: Before you Move on (Art and Power)

Key Concepts

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

Test Yourself

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

KEY TERMS

Aniconic: the avoidance of figural imagery within a religion

Caricature: portrait containing features or characteristics exaggerated for comic effect

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

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

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

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

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

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

Synagogue: Jewish house of worship

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Sculpture, Performance Art and Non traditional Media

Learning Objectives

- Explain why an artist would prefer one sculptural medium over another.
- Define and describe the different sculpting techniques, materials and processes.
- Define and describe the materials and processes involved in creating installations and environments.
- Define and describe the different the concepts and activities involved in performance art.
- Understand shifting concepts of sculpture over time.

Licensing
8.1: Photography (Since 1826)
8.2: Time-Based Art
8.3: Sculptures
8.4: Installation and Sculpture
8.5: Alfredo Jaar, A Logo for America
8.6: Minimalism (1960 – early 1970)
8.7: Post-Minimalism
8.8: Conceptual + Performance Art
8.9: Digital Art
8.10: Art, Race, and the Internet- Mendi + Keith Obadike's Black.Net.Art Actions
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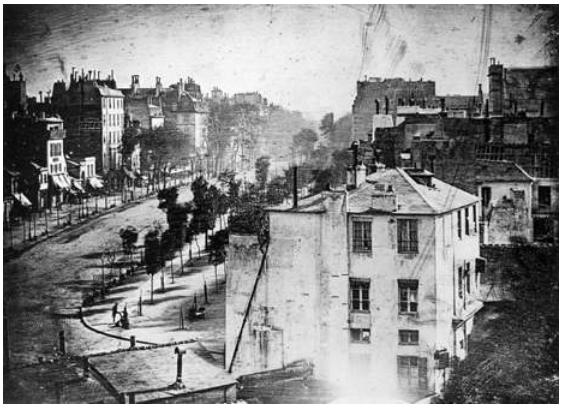
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8.1: Photography (Since 1826)

Photography captures an image in a moment of time, recording the light on a light-sensitive material. The light-sensitive material can be a photographic film or a digital image sensor. The early 19th century brought about many scientific discoveries, one being photography, changing how we look at the world. It appeared almost overnight, and enterprises like National Geographic brought us photographs from around the world we had never seen before, showing us how other cultures, natural resources, and animals coexisted on the planet. Other than paintings or drawings, the visual world in the 19th century was limited. Now anyone could look at photographs and explore the rest of the world from a library, magazine, or book.

> *How many times have we hear the expression, 'A picture is worth a thousand words.'*

The first surviving photograph was made by a French chemist, **Nicephore Niepce** (1765-1833). The hazy photograph was a polished pewter plate that he exposed to light for eight hours. **Louis Daguerre** (1787-1851), a French Romantic artist, invented the daguerreotype process, a new realistic method of photographing images. Daguerre exposed to light on a highly polished silver-plated sheet of copper producing images, as seen in the *Boulevard du Temple* (11.54). The boulevard is a major thoroughfare in Paris, and Daguerre staged his camera in 1838 to capture the street and pedestrians walking on the sidewalk. The earliest known daguerreotype was exposed for ten minutes, showing only non-moving objects. Daguerre first practiced his technique with marble statues, the light reflected off the white marble, and the statues did not move during the process.



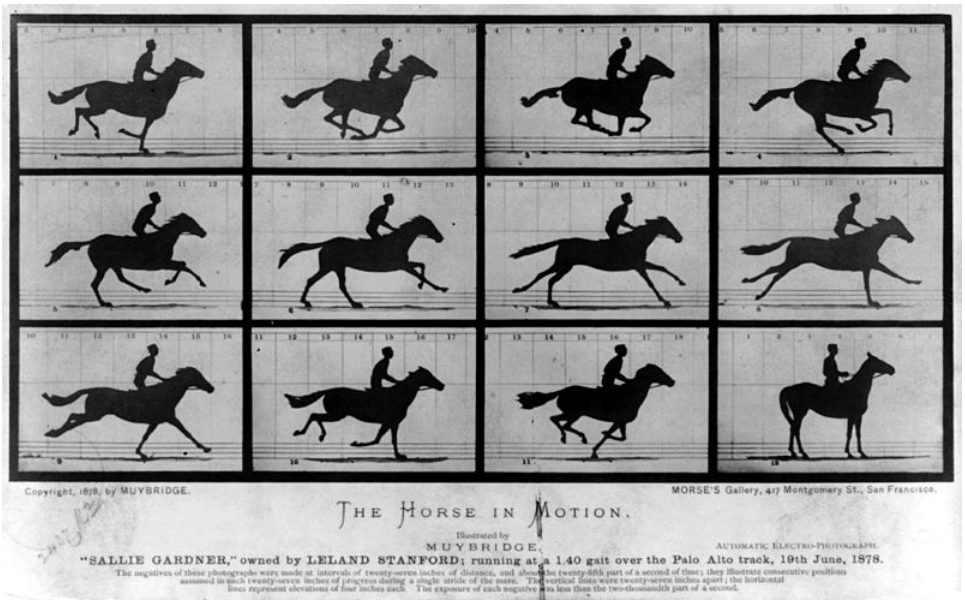
11.54 *Boulevard du Temple*



Photographs were an instant success, and soon photographers like **Eadweard Muybridge** (1830-1904) used photographs to study motion. He arrived by ship in San Francisco in 1867 and became famous for his pictures of Yosemite National Park and the

landscape around San Francisco Bay. When the San Francisco Mint was under construction in 1870, Muybridge took a photograph every day and made a time-lapse set of images to document the rise of the new mint. And then he met the former governor of California, Leland Stanford.

Stanford, the businessman, tycoon, and racehorse owner, hired Muybridge to study his horses to solve the puzzle - do all four feet of a horse came off the ground at one time or while running or is one foot always touching the ground. Experimenting with several cameras set up on a fence, Muybridge had a horse run by to capture the images, adding lines on the ground and backdrop to help guide the photographer. Muybridge proved a horse moving with a running gait did lift all four feet off the ground in a full gallop, as documented in *The Horse in Motion* (11.55).



11.55 The Horse in Motion



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8.2: Time-Based Art

Explain the techniques of film and video art

Learning Activities

The learning activities for this section include:

- Reading: Time-Based Media: Film and Video

Take time to review and reflect on this activity in order to improve your performance on the assessment for this section.

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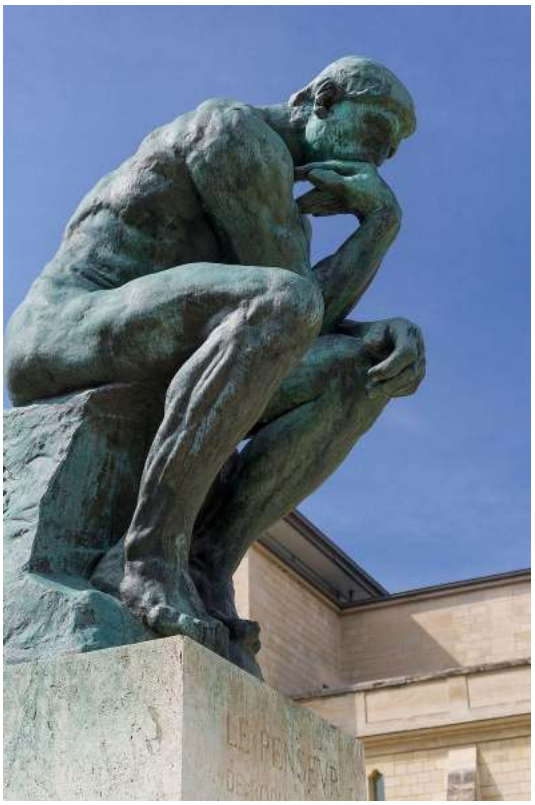
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8.3: Sculptures

Sculptor	Country	Usual Medium
Auguste Rodin	France	Bronze
Henry Moore	England	Bronze, cast fiberglass
Alexander Calder	United States	Metal
Ellen Neel	Canada	Wood
Gaston Lachaise	United States	Bronze
Isamu Noguchi	United States	Steel
George Segal	United States	Bronze
Käthy Kollwitz	Germany	Bronze
Elizabeth Catlett	United States	Bronze
Maya Lin	United States	Granite
Louise Bourgeois	France, United States	Multimedia

Modern sculpture brought about a considerable change in art as it deviated from the classical forms, leaving artists to explore and diverge from the Renaissance period. Many of the early 20th century modern sculptors were able to create as they desired and experiment, redefining sculpture, instilling the freedom to use modern materials and modern ideologies of design. Modern sculpture is considered to have started with the work of the French sculptor, **Auguste Rodin** (1840-1917). Opting to forgo the traditional, classical themes of allegory or mythology, Rodin shaped the human body with exceptional realism, physicality, and personality.

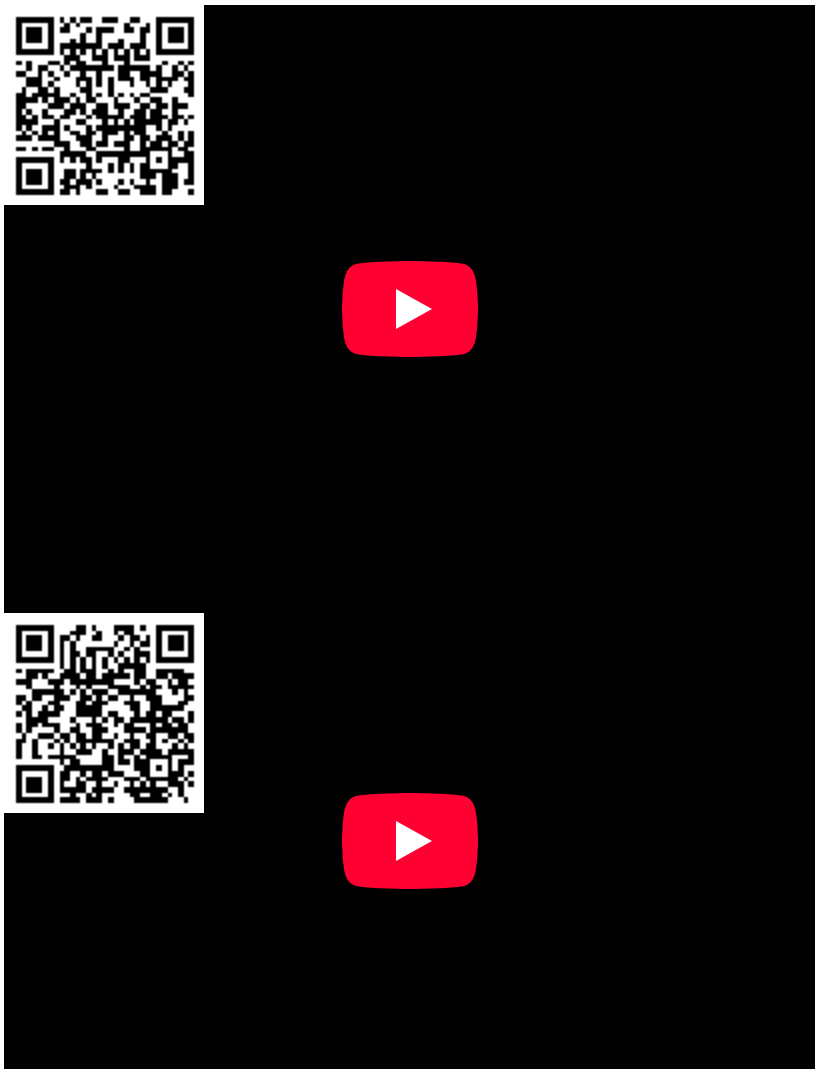
The Thinker (13.23) was perhaps Rodin's most famous work, known around the world as the classic symbol of a man deep in thought. The work is a nude male figure sitting on a rock cast from bronze about 186 centimeters high. The raw muscular body is portrayed with his head lowered onto his hand, struggling to comprehend the human condition, trying to understand how thought and reason impact the world. Twenty-eight full-size bronze castings are located in museums around the world. The *Burghers of Calais* (13.24) was based on the long war between England and France, the burghers surrendering and expecting death. Their feet are oversized as though still wanting to be anchored in this world, their hats removed, and ropes hung from their necks. The lives of the bronze figures illustrated in the emotional sculpture were eventually spared.



13.23 *The Thinker*



13.24 *Burghers of Calais*



A semi-abstract English sculptor and artist **Henry Spencer Moore** (1898 –1986) created monumental bronze sculptures located around the world, designated as public works of art. *Draped Seated Figure* (13.26) is a whimsical, bronze abstracted human form of a woman in a reclining position. Moore was greatly influenced by the *Chac Mool* (13.25) stone at Chichen Itza on the Yucatan Peninsula. The reclining figure was a common theme in many of Moore's work and became more stylized, as demonstrated in the fiberglass version *Reclining Figure* (13.27).



13.25 *Chac Mool*



13.26 *Draped Seated Figure*



13.27 *Reclining Figure*

> *"My whole theory about art is the disparity that exists between form, masses, and movement."* [1]



13.28 *Konigstrasse*



13.29 *Big Crinkly*

Using modern materials like painted sheet metal and metal rods, the American artist **Alexander Calder** (1898 –1976), who was initially trained as an engineer, was the originator of the kinetic mobile. Responding only to air currents, the mobiles were delicately balanced or suspended, creating movable sculptures (13.28), (13.29). Caldor's bold use of color in his sculptures and engineering requirements for balance give his art a unique appearance. Some of his mobiles made a sound, others moved in the wind, and several were large static sculptures (13.30).



13.30 *Grand Rapids Calder*

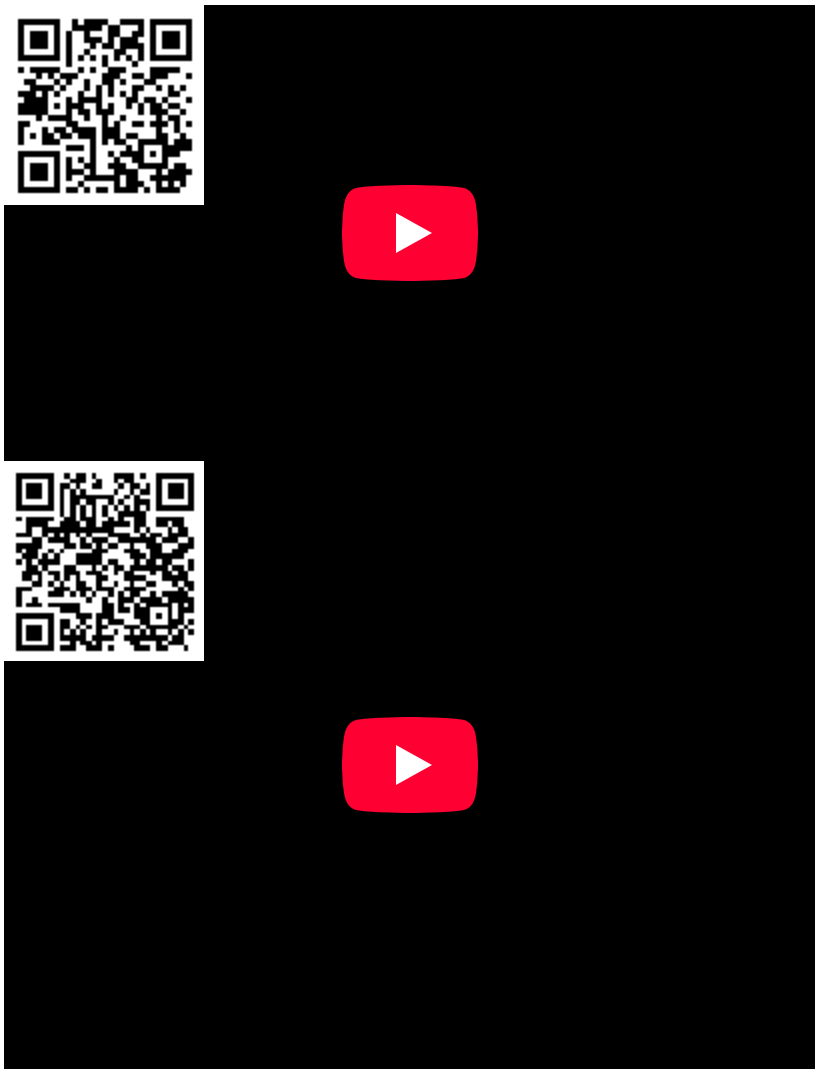


The first known woman to carve totem poles professionally was sculptor **Ellen Neel** (1916–1966), a Kwakwaka'wakw artist from British Columbia. Learning Northwest carving from her maternal grandfather, she started out carving small totems to sell, becoming successful enough to carve larger poles. Art of the Kwakwaka'wakw is similar to other northwestern art, but deeper cuts are made in the wood on the totem. Paint is used to emphasize a figure or motif, and the addition of beaks and wings for pieces on the front and sides, protrude outward, giving the sense of a flying bird.



13.31 Top of the totem pole

Neel probably used western red cedar for the more towering totems, an abundant and sizeable tree in the American Northwest. Yellow cedar trees were generally used for smaller projects. Totem poles were placed outside the house and used to display information about the family, while other totem poles might be used as welcome poles, memorial poles, or shaming poles. Each of the symbols, carvings, and paintings had particular meaning. The top of the pole displays the broadly curved eagle's beak (13.31), a raven would have a straight beak, the beaver incised with large front teeth. The figures carved on the pole (13.32) were intertwined, connected by symbolic meanings. Some of Neel's totem poles are displayed in Stanley Park as well as museums.



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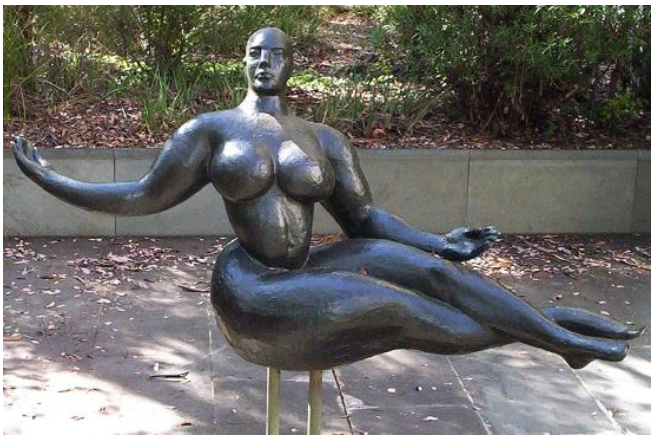


13.32 Totem pole

Gaston Lachaise (1882-1935) was an American sculptor in the early modernist period of the 20th century. Educated in his native France, he fell in love with a woman, followed her to the United States, and adoringly used that love to define his concepts of a female statue. Created in 1932 out of bronze, the sculpture *Standing Woman* (13.33), is a voluptuous nude woman who became his signature piece. Influenced in American values by his wife, he redefined the female nude into an influential figure and pushed the boundaries, innovating the definition of the female body. Her right foot steps out, the hip forward in traditional contrapposto stance with her hands on her hips, commanding the space. *Floating Figure*(13.34) also portrays the strength of the figure, sitting at ease with her legs crossed, her hand gesturing as though proving her thoughts.

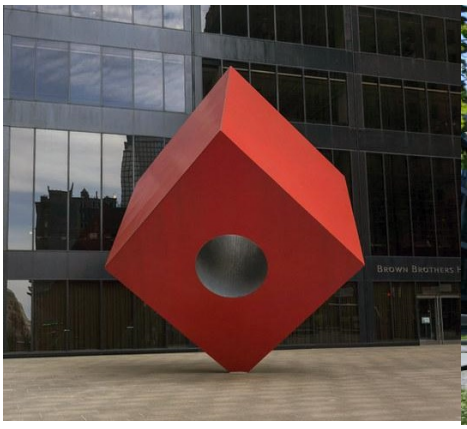


13.33 *Standing Woman*

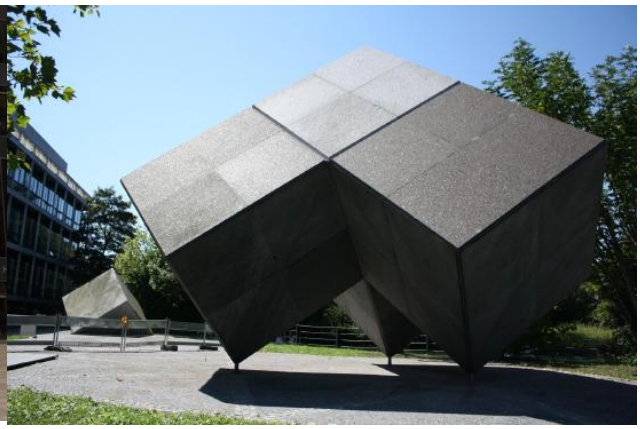


13.34 *Floating Woman*

Isamu Noguchi (1904 –1988) was a prominent Japanese-American artist who began his career sculpting busts, then turned to abstract art in the 1930s before he was voluntarily interned at the Poston Camp in 1942 — continuing his designs and drawings while in the camp he returned to New York City after the war. *The Red Cube* (13.35) is a three-dimensional parallelogram, not a cube. The cube is made of steel and designed to collaborate with the horizontal and vertical definition of the surrounding buildings, the cube sited on the diagonal, appearing to be rolling. *Zwillingsplastik* (13.36) is made in two parts, the small part that seems to support the more significant section, the missing area equaling the smaller part, giving the sculpture a floating feeling.



13.35 *The Red Cube*



13.36 *Zwillingsplastik*

George Segal (1924 – 2000) was an American painter and sculptor associated with the Pop Art movement. Segal is best known for his life-size sculptures cast from plaster bandages. Segal would wrap a model in plaster, remove the hardened forms, and put them back together to form a hollow impression of the model. Using the rough texture of the plaster bandages to his advantage, he would cast the final form in bronze.

Segal did not place his figures on pedestals or in the center of a square, and he placed them in real-life situations demonstrated in *Depression Bread Line* (13.37). The men's clothing and their posture indicate their dire situations while waiting in line for bread. He cast the bronze statues from plaster to give a worn look to the men's clothes, enhancing the look of destitution. The *Holocaust Memorial* (13.38) in San Francisco, the corpses strewn on the ground, the one emaciated survivor standing at the fence. Segal created the sculpture in bronze patinated in white, adding to the impact of the scene.



13.37 Depression Bread Line



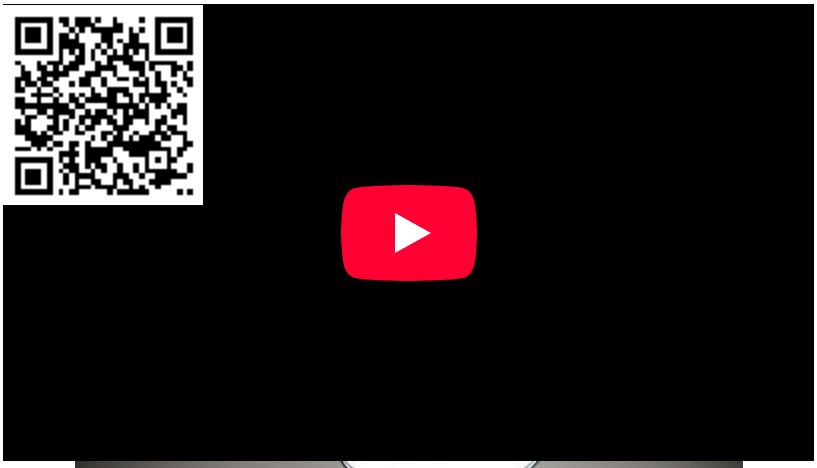
13.38 Holocaust Memorial

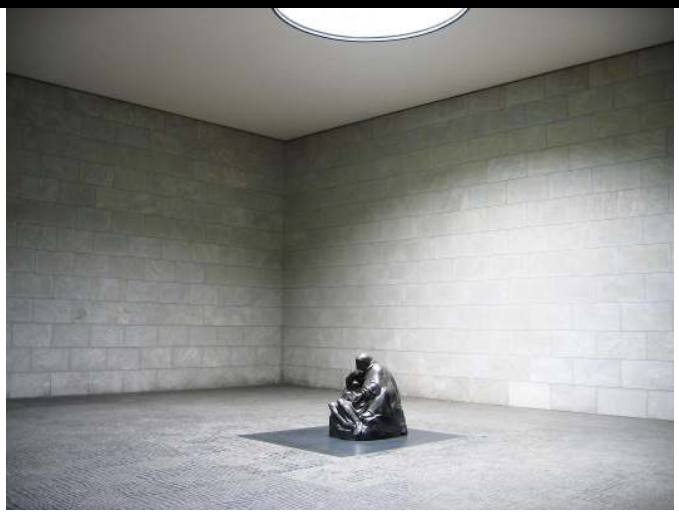
Modern sculptures demonstrate our need to understand the world, especially in the complex modern and ever-changing world, and **Käthe Kollwitz** (1867 - 1945), a German artist, created a body of work portraying eloquent, yet complex accounts of human life, especially about the tragedy of war. Using multiple mediums, including etching, woodcut, drawing, painting, and sculpting, she reproduced the emotions of war.

The death of Kollwitz's son drove her to create the memorial *Mother with Her Dead Son* (13.39) for him. Similar to the Pieta, Kollwitz positioned her son lying between her knees while she cradled his body. Her face shows a reflection of her pain, the loss of her son in the war. The statue is positioned in the center of a large room (13.40) creating a feeling of isolation which only enhanced the emotions of suffering and sadness. The bronze memorial is a tribute to all the victims of war and tyranny.



13.39 *Mother with Her Dead Son*





13.40 Installation of sculpture

Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012) was an American artist who knew from an early age she wanted to be an artist, attending Howard University. She also lived in Mexico and was influenced by the art of Rivera and Kahlo and created abstract prints and sculptures

focusing on the experiences of minority women who toiled in difficult, low paying jobs. Her sculptures were formed into busts and standing figures, including those of *Mahalia Jackson* (13.41) and *Stepping Out*(13.42), the woman ready to step out for the evening.



13.41 *Mahalia Jackson*



13.42 *Stepping Out*



13.43 Vietnam Memorial

Maya Lin (born 1959) was a university student studying architecture when she submitted her design for a nationwide competition for concepts of a new memorial to Vietnam veterans. Her design was very unusual and unlike the general tradition of memorial tributes. She proposed to build a V-shaped wall of granite, with the names of every soldier who was killed or still missing, inscribed in the wall. The wall sloped below ground level (13.43) as viewed from the air, the long walkway along the highly polished wall (13.44). The new, controversial wall, has become an accepted and essential tribute to the veterans of the contentious war, attended by many to visit a fallen soldier (13.45), lay flowers or hang flags. The wall designed by Lin became a model for new and unusual memorials and sculptures. The Civil Rights Memorial (13.46) in Alabama was also designed by Lin using the deep, dark granite and inscribing the tributes into the sides.



13.44 Wall at memorial



13.45 Soldier reads names



13.46 *Civil Rights Memorial*, Alabama



Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) was born in Paris and learned drawing by helping in her parents' tapestry business. When she married and moved to New York, she initially focused on painting and prints before working with sculptures. One of her significant themes for sculptures was the spider (13.47). She sculpted multiple sizes of spiders from immense outdoor images to small intimate statues, all using different materials. She considered spiders to be fierce yet fragile in design and the fragility is reflected in the irregular, thin legs of the spider sculptures, standing awkwardly in position.



13.47 *Spider*

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8.4: Installation and Sculpture

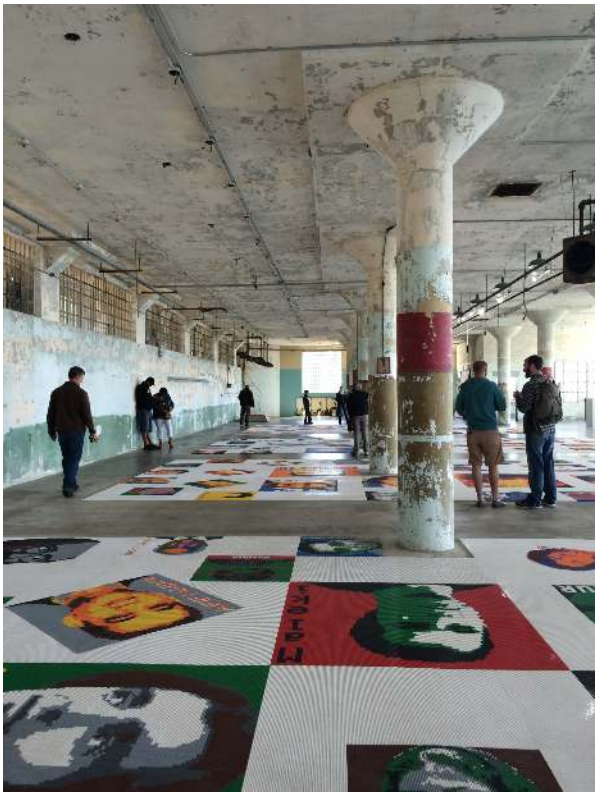
With the globalization of art and artists, public art has broadened, no longer a painting on the wall or the statue in the public square. Art installations and sculptures include experimental ideas, oversized installations covering a room of the museum or areas of large public spaces, bringing the public into the artwork with multi-dimensional views. The artist, building architects, or the local artisans who make the parts of art installation now collaborate to create a successful result.

Name	Native Country
Ai Weiwei	China
Yayoi Kusama	Japan
Kara Walker	United States
Dale Chihuly	United States
Nam June Paik	Korea
Andy Goldsworthy	England
El Anatsui	Ghana
Mona Hatoum	Palestine
Judy Chicago	United States
Christo	Bulgaria
Jeanne-Claude	Morocco
Ruth Asawa	United States
Esther Mahlangu	South Africa

Ai Weiwei (born 1957) is a contemporary Chinese artist and the artistic consultant on the Beijing National Stadium for the 2008 Olympics. Weiwei studied animation at the Beijing Film Academy and is a founder of the Avant-Garde art group called the 'Stars'. Exploring the issues of freedom of speech and human rights, he exhibited with the Stars in Beijing. Weiwei attended the Parson School of Design in New York and spent eight years taking photographs. He returned to China when his father became ill and started working on political art. In 2010, he was put under house arrest by the police when the government objected to his political ideas.



In 2014, Weiwei created an art installation to explore the issues of freedom of speech and human rights at Alcatraz Island, a notorious island prison in the San Francisco Bay. Weiwei could not leave China to attend the opening but sent all the work for the installation, relying on others to properly install his work, using 12 million Lego pieces (15.1) to create the 176 tile pictures of political prisoners, creating a dialogue for how people define individual rights, liberty and justice, and personal responsibility. He added porcelain flowers and Chinese kites, (15.2) incorporating them throughout the prison. In one of the large rooms, an oversized, colorful dragon kite hung from the ceiling and in another room binders about the dissidents provided information along with postcards viewers could send.



15.1 *Ai Weiwei at Alcatraz, Trace*



15.2 *Ai Weiwei at Alcatraz, With Wind*

The art of Marchel Duchamp, who used utilitarian objects to create his artwork, influenced Weiwei early in his life. *Forever Bicycles* (15.3) is an installation Weiwei made from almost 1,300 bicycles. His concept was based on the bicycles mass-produced in his hometown, yet too expensive for those without economic resources. The structure of steel bicycles formed a tunnel for viewers to see the unending puzzle of interwoven parts against the sky. Trees (15.4) were sculptures Weiwei made from camphor and cedar tree branches and trunks he collected from the mountains in China. He assembled the parts to resemble real trees, a source for contemplation, and appreciation of nature.



15.3 *Forever Bicycles*



15.4 *Trees*



Yayoi Kusama (born 1929) is a Japanese artist and writer who has worked with a variety of media. Her work is bold, psychedelic, repetitious, and full of pattern. Known around the world as the Princess of Polka Dots, Kusama reflects the polka dot motifs in her art. She is one of the best pop art artists and came to New York to study and work when she was young, returning to Japan and creating her exceptional and unusual art installations. She is considered one of Japan's greatest living artists.

Ascension of *Polka Dots on the Trees* (15.5) and *Pink Balls* (15.6) are red/pink and white/black polka dots surrounding the trees, or an entire room filled with polka dots. Obsessive about her art and its vibrancy, color, and style are trademarks of Kusama. The art is a combination of minimalism, abstract, surrealism, conceptual, and just plain Kusama. Using found objects in the environment as her canvas, she fills the object with shining polka dots. Pumpkins have been part of her themes for a long time, whether creating rooms of pumpkins or single giant pumpkins, always covered with her motif of dots. The lone, massive *Yellow Pumpkin* (15.7) sculpture sits by the sea, decorated with lines of large and small dots.



15.5 *Polka Dots on the Trees*



15.6 *Pink Balls*



15.7 *Yellow Pumpkin*



Kara Walker (born 1969) is an American artist with an M.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design who explores the conflicts of race, sex, and gender with significant silhouetted figures that can be humorous while also demonstrating violence and suppression. She builds a panorama of cut out paper silhouettes installed against a white wall bringing the violence to life. Overhead projectors illuminate the figures and cause the viewers' body to cast shadows onto the scene, adding depth and a ghostlike feeling. *Blacklisted: The Unsettling Art of Kara Walker* (15.8) was on of her shows exhibiting slavery in historical truths of violence, sexual assault, and subjugation as she portrays the myths of slavery from the Antebellum south.



15.8 *Blacklisted: The Unsettling Art of Kara Walker*



Dale Chihuly (born 1941) is an American glass sculptor who changed the way glass is blown, how it is shaped, and the unique effects of how the glass transforms. Chihuly started as an interior design major at the University of Washington but was introduced to glass making and switched to the Rhode Island School of Design. Constrained by the rules of the property of melted materials, Chihuly had to overcome the technical difficulties of glass blowing to create his large-scale colorful sculptures. He founded the Pilchuck Glass School in Washington, where he practiced experimenting with glass.

Chihuly creates large installations made to interact with the environment (15.9), for instance, in the botanical garden, large spheres, and spikes of glass intermix with the flowers in complementary and contrasting colors. The boat of glass balls (15.10) floating on the lake reflect the colors, while other vibrant glass balls are floating around the boat as though they fell into the water. *The Sun* (15.11) is one of his original concepts in glassblowing, creating long, twisted pieces of glass and installing them on metal spikes building a large sculpture to hang or rise from the ground. The Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum is a vast permanent exhibition showcasing his work.



15.9 Glass garden in Seattle



15.10 *The Boat of glass*



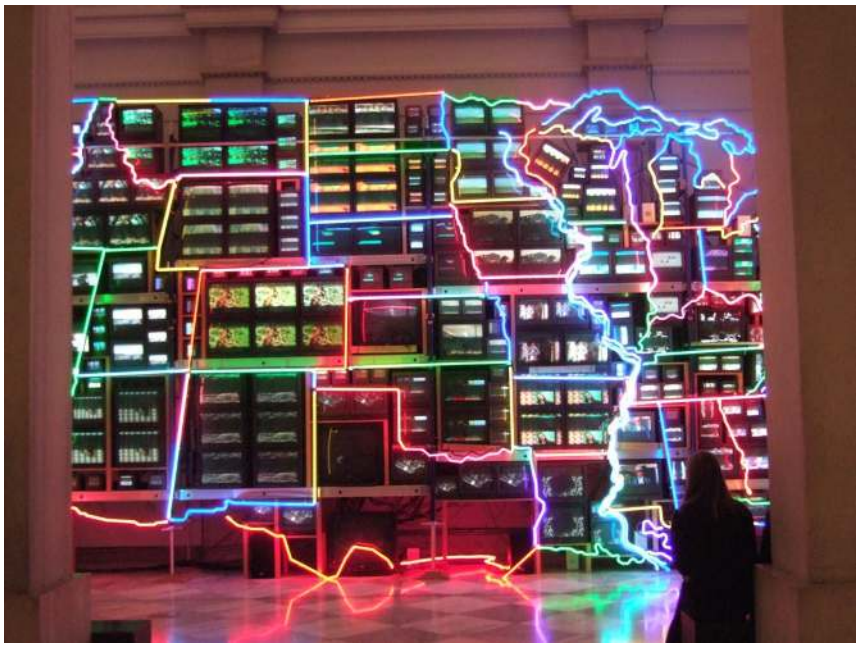
15.11 *The Sun*

Nam June Paik (1932-2006) was a Korean-American artist who worked with multiple types of media but was considered the founder of video art. Fleeing their native home during the Korean War, his family moved to Germany, and then Paik moved to New York to combine video and music with performance art. In one of his installations, he scattered televisions everywhere and used magnets that would distort or change the images and sound. In another installation, Paik laid several aquariums containing water and fish in a line swimming in front of monitors showing images of other fish. He is well known for taking television sets and making them into robots, *Pre-Bell-Man* (15.12), adding wire, metal, and parts from radios.

Paik created a large installation entitled, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii* (15.13) currently installed in the Smithsonian. It is a statement about America's obsession with television, moving images and bright shiny objects. Paik is also credited with the term 'electronic superhighway,' a precursor to the coined term 'information superhighway.' For the installation *Video Sculpture* (15.14), Paik stacked video monitors and used neon lights around the screens, flashing and reflecting on the screens.



15.12 *Pre-Bell-Man*



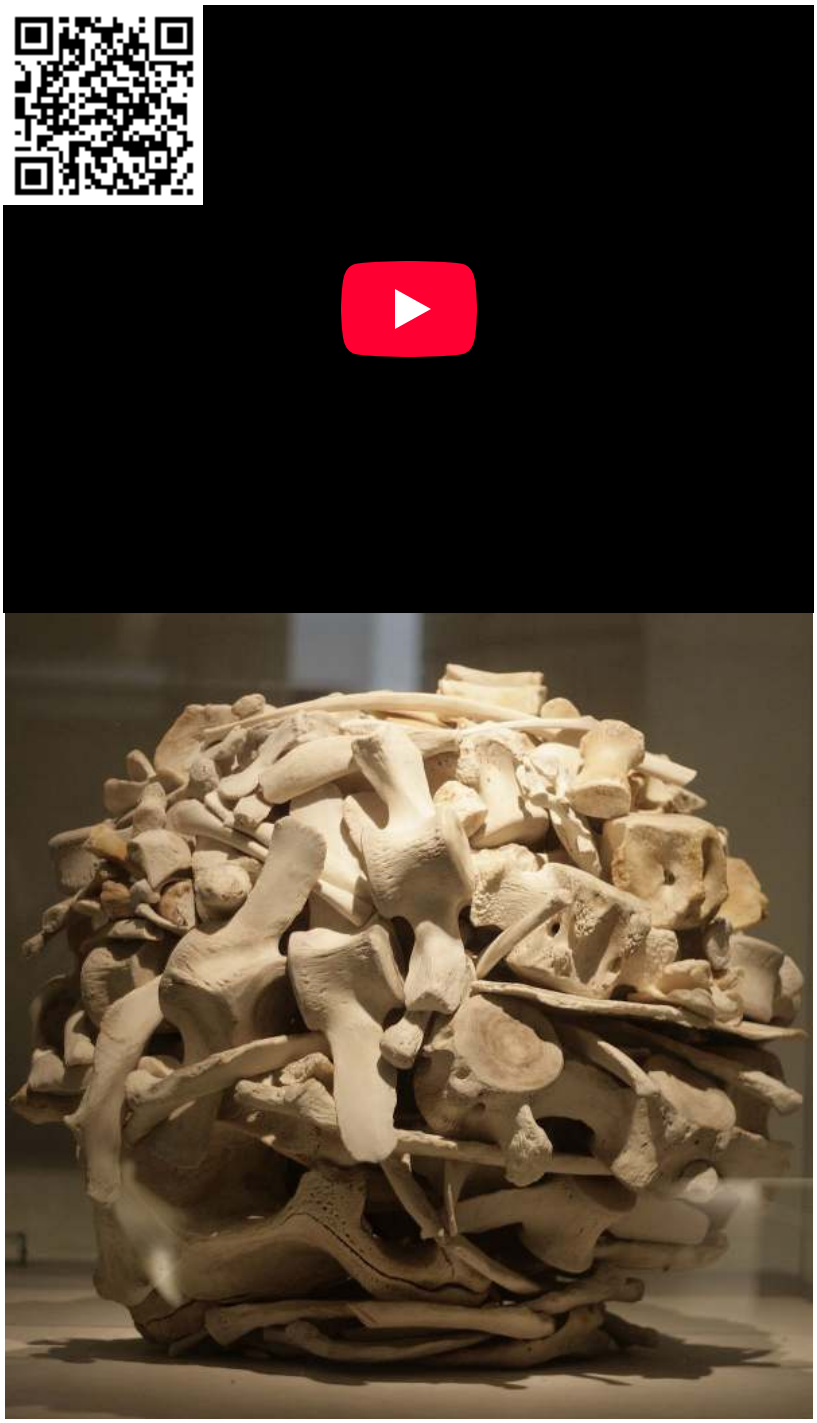
15.13 *Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii*



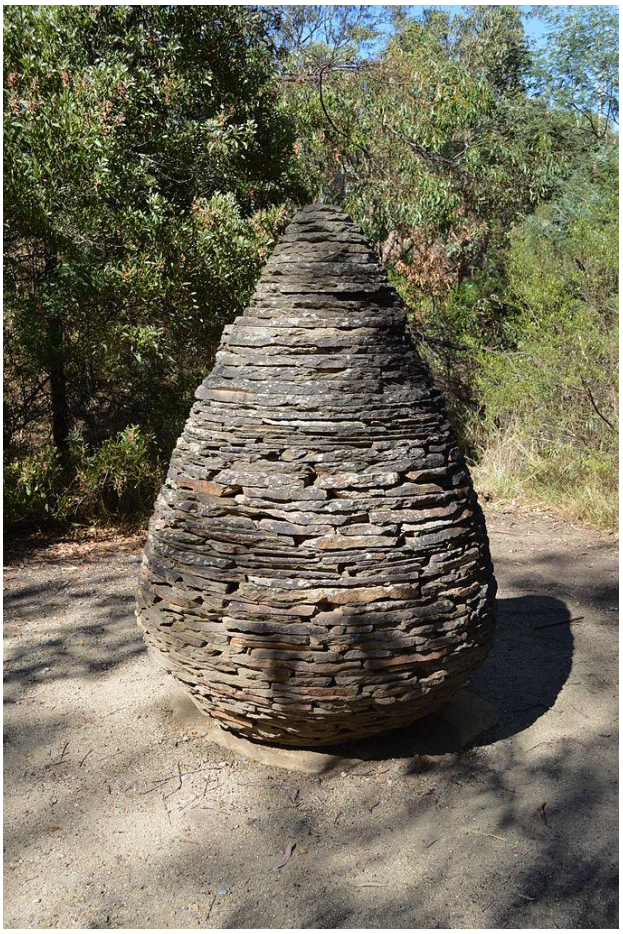
15.14 Video

Andy Goldsworthy (born 1956) is a British sculptor and environmentalist who creates land art in natural and urban settings. Goldsworthy studied fine art at Bradford College of Art and Preston Polytechnic. He uses found natural materials that are visible for a short period to construct a sculpture either outside or in a gallery (15.16). Using photography to document his work at different stages of life, he immortalizes his work in film. Goldsworthy uses materials like flowers, leaves, snow, twigs, icicles, rocks, and other found objects. Many believe him to be the founder of rock balancing seen in *Cairn* (15.17) a unique shape of rocks without mortar. He likes to use his bare hands and found tools to create with, instead of human-made tools. Some of his works are permanent sculptures standing the test of time and nature, including the *Stone River* (15.18) stacked along the dry creek bed; however, most installations succumb to decay.

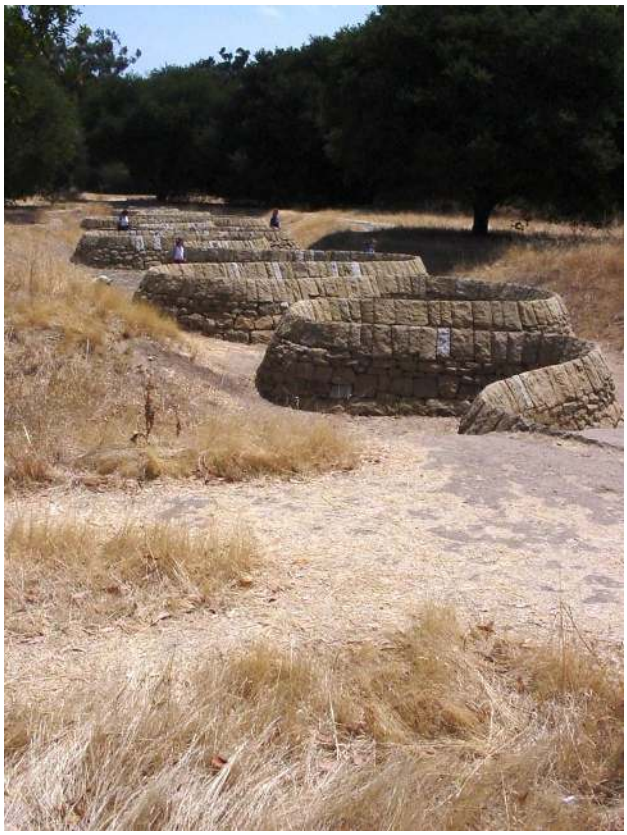
> *"I enjoy the freedom of just using my hands" – Goldsworthy*



15.16 *Sculpture*



15.17 *Cairn*



15.18 *Stone River*

El Anatsui (born 1944) is a Ghanaian sculptor who taught at the University of Nigeria and affiliated with the Nsukka group from the 1970s to revive the tradition of uli. Uli is a design drawn by the Igbo people of Nigeria and was becoming a lost art. It is a robust linear design without many perspectives and is asymmetrical. Initially, El Anatsui used clay and wood to make objects based on Ghanaian beliefs and subjects, cutting wood with chainsaws, he let the marks show from the chainsaw and then used an acetylene torch to blacken the piece.



15.19 *Man's Cloth*

El Anatsui became interested in doing something with a large amount of recycled material available. *Man's Cloth* (15.19)is a large sculpture resembling cloth and the installation material layers like Kente cloth (15.20). He used discarded items from bottle caps or folded and crumpled pieces of metal found at recycling stations, which he tied together with copper wire, giving the material the

ability to fold and drape. His works can be significant and cover a wall and the luminosity of the metal and the gallery lights reflecting through the room, give the piece its own life. *Peak* (15.21) was made of found bottle tops and tins used for milk, debris littering the countryside, and filling the trash bins that El Anatsui recovered and used to form the sculpture. He wired them together loosely (15.22), so the pieces could create their shapes and folds.



15.20 *Man's Cloth closeup*



15.21 *Peak*



15.22 *Peak closeup*



Mona Hatoum (born 1952) is a Palestinian who wanted to be an artist throughout her early years, even in the face of parental disapproval. She finally studied in Lebanon and London, now creating art to explore the dangers and issues of the world. *Hot Spot* (15.23) is a large globe depicting political unrest on the planet. The steel globe is illuminated with red lighting to magnify the problems any viewer perceives about global warming, humanitarian issues, wars, or people fleeing their homelands.



15.23 Hot Spot

Judy Chicago (born 1939) studied art at the university, and her original work followed the ideas of Minimalism before she incorporated feminist concepts into her work, and she helped start a collaborative movement to encourage and assist female artists. *The Dinner Party* (15.24) is one of the best known of her installations, a triangular table set for thirty-nine women from history. Chicago used motifs commemorating the lives of each woman, embellishing each table setting with events in the woman's life. Names of 999 other women are written with gold on the floor beneath the table.



15.24 *The Dinner Party close up*

Christo (born 1935) and **Jeanne-Claude** (1935-2009) are a husband and wife team who created large-scale installations; he was born in Bulgaria, and she was from Morocco. They worked together for over thirty-five years using materials to wrap or drape across large parts of the landscape or buildings around the world, based on themes of political or economic changes. They did not participate in the usual gallery or art markets; instead, they worked outside the system, drawing criticism. *The Gates* (15.25) was erected in New York City along the paths of Central Park. Although the planning and construction of the gates took a year, they installed 7,503 brightly colored saffron-colored gates in five days, achieved without any city money or sponsorship. Christo and Jeanne-Claude raised money to pay for the project from posters and T-shirts.



15.25 *Gates*



15.26 *Umbrellas (blue)*



15.27 *Umbrellas (yellow)*

Another project they designed and installed was *The Umbrellas*, the blue umbrellas (15.26) were mounted in Japan and the yellow ones (15.27) in California, all planned to be ready at the same time. Steel bases were planted into the ground to hold the poles and anchors before approximately 2,000 workers could insert the umbrellas. In Japan, over 1,300 blue umbrellas were fit tightly together in the smaller space; however, in California, the more than 1,700 yellow umbrellas were spread over the much larger space. The umbrella installations only remained in place for a few months; however, it was a major attraction for tourists, weddings, or family gatherings.



Ruth Asawa (1926-2013) was born in California, her parents' Japanese immigrants, and during World War II, she and her family were detained in the internment camps. After the war, she started her education as a teacher before switching to art. At one point, she learned to weave baskets and started to use galvanized wire for weaving, which inspired her to become interested in lines and how a line can go in multiple directions. She worked with wire to make her three-dimensional woven structures (15.28, 15.29) meant to hang and generate shadows that shift in the light and change the space. Asawa was passionate about art education and helped establish programs for children as well a training and employment programs for artists.



15.28 *Wire Sculpture*



15.29 *Wire sculpture reflection*



Esther Mahlangu (born 1935) was born in South Africa as part of the Ndebele people and began painting as a child. Her mother and grandmother were mural painters, an ordinary skill for the females in the region. Mahlangu paints on extensive scale backgrounds using patterns she saw in the clothing of the people, generally very brightly colored with geometric shapes. The carmaker BMW had artists such as Warhol and Hockney design a car each year to use as their Art Car. Mahlangu was the first female asked to design a car, and her BMW Art Car (15.30) was painted with her traditional geometric designs and colors. Many of her designs are found on corporate brands, the bold patterns outlined with black lines and bright colors. It is common for the people to paint their houses with colors, and she painted her house (15.31) following these concepts. Mahlangu has worked tirelessly to bring art education to children, directing a school she founded while continuing to support artists in her homeland. For her continuing dedication, she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Johannesburg.



15.30 *BMW Art Car*



15.31 *Homestead*



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8.5: Alfredo Jaar, A Logo for America

by DR. DORIS MARIA-REINA BRAVO

Page ID
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Figure **8.5.1**: Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City, 42 seconds (photos: **Jane Dickson/Public Art Fund**)

In the spring of 1987, visitors to Times Square were confronted by a puzzling 45-second animation among the glittering billboards characteristic of this part of Manhattan. The animation consisted of three digital renderings that each combined images (maps and a flag) with simple lines of text. What mystified some viewers were not the images themselves, but the text that accompanied them: in the first frame, "This is Not America" was superimposed on a map of the United States; in the second frame, "This is Not America's Flag" was superimposed on the image of the United States flag; and in the last frame, the single word "AMERICA" was superimposed on the image of the North and South American continents together.

In less than a minute, artist Alfredo Jaar succeeded in provoking patriotic inhabitants of the United States by asserting that they are not the only "Americans." Jaar's message gave credence to a long-standing belief among Latin Americans in other countries that they, too, have the right to call themselves by that term. Nearly thirty years later, Jaar's *A Logo for America* remains a powerful example of art that uses the language of commercial advertising to convey a pointed political message.

Messages in Spectacolor



Figure **8.5.2**: Catalina Parra, *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City (photo: **Jane Dickson, Public Art Fund**)

In 1982, New York City's Public Art Fund launched the *Messages to the Public* program with the goal of exposing viewers to media-based artworks through Times Square's Spectacolor board. For nearly a decade, dozens of artists created short animations that would appear within loops of commercial advertising. A new "Message" would appear every month, providing the viewing public with a fresh animation. According to the project's originator, the painter Jane Dickson (who was working as a designer for Spectacolor at the time), the purpose was to inject a political message into daily life. "I picked that title," she said of *Messages to the Public*, "because I thought the propaganda potential from this project was terrific." [1] Other Latin American artists involved in the *Messages* project also used this opportunity to highlight their critical perspectives on U.S. culture. For example, Catalina Parra's *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue* (see image) critiques the promise of the modern immigrant experience using the country's most iconic symbol of liberty.

Jaar's message

Jaar illustrates two iconic symbols of the United States of America—the map of the country and the flag—and embeds them with messages that subvert their traditional meanings. The contrast is meant to pose the question, What exactly *is* America? As a potential answer, Jaar ends his animation with a rendering suggesting that the entire hemisphere is, in fact, "America." For those living in Mexico, Central, and South America, this is an argument that has often fallen on deaf ears. For example, it is common for someone from Chile—Jaar's country of birth—to simultaneously consider themselves a Chilean and an American. The distinction is simply the difference between national and continental affiliations. When Jaar was commissioned to create this work of art, he

had only been living in the United States for a few years, and it would likely have struck him as odd to hear the term “America” being used to define only citizens of the United States.

Defining “America”



Figure **8.5.3**: Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City (Photos: Jane Dickson/Public Art Fund)

However, for many people living within the United States, this question is likely rarely, if ever considered: for them, “America” implies one country, one flag, and one nationality. According to Jaar, “Some of [the viewers] said live on national radio, ‘This is illegal. How could they let him do this?’ It is so embedded in their education that the U.S. is America, whereas the rest of the continent is erased.” [2] Jaar elicited this reaction by appropriating a national symbol to critique mainstream ideas about Americanness—not only about the definition of the term itself, but the ways that the term’s use in the United States implies superiority over other American countries and cultures. The final frame of his animation, which shows the outline of North, Central, and South America along with the word “AMERICA,” is the new “logo” referenced in Jaar’s title. It is a literal re-rendering—a “rebranding,” to use the language of advertising—of the American continents that **Europeans encountered** in the late fifteenth century. Afterall, the lands of the Western hemisphere which came to be called America after the explorer and mapmaker Amerigo Vespucci, were perceived as one geographic entity, despite political subdivisions.



Figure **8.5.4**: The first map to name America (after the explorer and cartographer, Amerigo Vespucci) and to show America and Asia as separate continents. Martin Waldseemüller, *Universalis Cosmographia*, 1507, composite map, 128 x 233 cm (**Library of Congress, Washington D.C.**)

Pop and propaganda

What does it mean to make this logo for America, a type of symbol normally used to represent products or corporations? A useful example can be seen in the earlier movement, **Pop Art**, and its use of consumer culture as a source of inspiration. Artists like Richard Hamilton, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol appropriated the slick, graphic sensibility of mid-century advertising as well as the means and materials of industrial production. Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes*, for instance, perfectly mimicked factory-made boxes, simultaneously drawing attention to the aesthetic appeal of what might otherwise be passed over as an unremarkable, mass-produced package, while critiquing high-minded notions of art that fetishized unique, handmade objects.



Figure 8.5.5: Andy Warhol, *Brillo Boxes*, c. 1964, house paint and silkscreen on plywood (Whitney Museum of American Art, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker)

However, unlike Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* which are exhibited within galleries and museums, *Messages to the Public* existed within a stream of actual advertising, emphasizing its critical opposition. Like the Pop artists before him, Jaar not only made use of the formal language of advertising, but in taking it out of the object-centric realm of the gallery and into the virtual space of the advertising screen, he also questioned the very definition of art-making, which he described as primarily a process of thinking:

> ***I think that artists are thinkers, they're intellectuals. And art is about thinking. For me, art is about 99% thinking and 1% making. So I spend most of my time, and I ask my students to spend 99% of their time, thinking. […] Only at the end of a very long thinking process [do] we make something […] And in my case I do not work with a specific medium. The medium I use is the one that I feel speaks the better for the ideas I'm working with. [3]***

Just as Jaar asserted the importance of thinking in creating his art, the viewer is also rewarded for investing time considering it—something one might not normally do in the face of advertising.

A Logo for America is still considered a seminal work of Latin American Art. It was acquired by the Guggenheim Museum as part of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative and was featured in the museum's 2014 exhibition, *Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today*. Concurrent with this show, Jaar's video returned to Times Square for a month-long reenactment, playing every night on dozens of screens. Despite its simplicity, Jaar's message continues to stir emotions and serve as a daring intellectual exercise.

[1] Alfredo Jaar—Messages to the Public: A Logo for America," **Public Art Fund**.

[2] "In Conversation: Alfredo Jaar," **The Brooklyn Rail, April 6, 2009**.

[3] "Focus on: Alfredo Jaar," **Vogue Italia**.

Additional Resources:

This work at the Guggenheim

This work on the Public Art Fund website

Messages to the Public on the Public Art Fund website

Catalina Parra's *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue* on the Public Art Fund website

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8.6: Minimalism (1960 – early 1970)

Introduction

Minimalism became one of the important art forms during the 1960s, using primary color and sleek geometric contours without decorative embellishments. The movement started in New York with young artists challenging the boundaries of traditional media, perceived emotions, and overt symbolism. By the 1970s, the movement spread across the United States and Europe, and artists used industrial materials, changing the concept of sculptures and painting. They created pure objective elements of simplistic shapes made from commercial materials.

Minimalist artists seldom used traditional materials; instead, they incorporated methodologies found in commercial manufacturing and fabrication. Using abstracted construction removed the artists' emotion, expression, and feelings found in brushstrokes, patterns, or color. The artists generally used house paint, cement, or fiberglass instead of oil paint, canvas, or clay. A part of Minimalism was to incorporate the contiguous space into their artwork and bring the viewer into the space through multiple points of view. Industrial materials allowed artists to integrate characteristics of weight, light, size, or even gravity in their work.

The Minimalist sculptors were a significant part of the movement and created three-dimensional forms using fiberglass, plywood, plastic, sheet metal, and aluminum.[1] Sculptures were no longer elevated on platforms and sat directly on the floor with repetitive geometric shapes. Minimalist painters used geometric forms in repeated patterns and specific horizontal and vertical lines to delineate space. Some artists worked with light, using fluorescent tubes to form patterns of color and shapes. They focused on how the light affected the perception of the viewer's concept of shapes formulated by light.

Donald Judd was one of the first artists to reject traditional art forms and experiment with new minimalist concepts. An exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York became one of the new art style's significant places. The artist displayed their geometric and properly simplistic work, only representing precisely what it was, absent personal feelings. The exhibition opened a new way to express ideas, relying on the result, not the artist's expression.

Donald Judd

Donald Judd (1928-1994) was born in Missouri and enlisted in the Army right after World War II. Afterward, he received a bachelor's degree from Columbia University in philosophy. For a while, Judd tried printing and then woodcutting. In the early 1960s, he wrote articles for art magazines and experimented with materials and style. Judd developed his classic boxes, stacks, rectangles, and squares, all formed into progressions. He used basic materials of concrete, wood, or metal as well as Plexiglass. Some of his early works were wall-mounted, others free-standing. In 1968, Judd purchased a five-story building in New York, turning it into a residence and studio. He also started designing permanent installations instead of the temporary gallery or museum exhibitions used by most artists. Judd believed permanence brought importance to artwork instead of the transient nature of a temporary display. By 1971, he and his family moved to Texas, where he purchased large tracts of land and buildings, giving him room to build large and complex installations. Judd taught at several universities across the country and wrote extensively about art and artists for different publications.

Judd created several different series of artwork. From 1964 to the 1970s, he created a series based on "progression," each of the various pieces based on the previous one. The works were fabricated from different materials, colors, and sizes. *Untitled* (6.8.1) was made from copper, metal with a reflective surface when polished. Judd fabricated four pieces, each progressively larger, increasing in width by 3.8 centimeters moving from left to right. He also used spacing in the reverse progression.

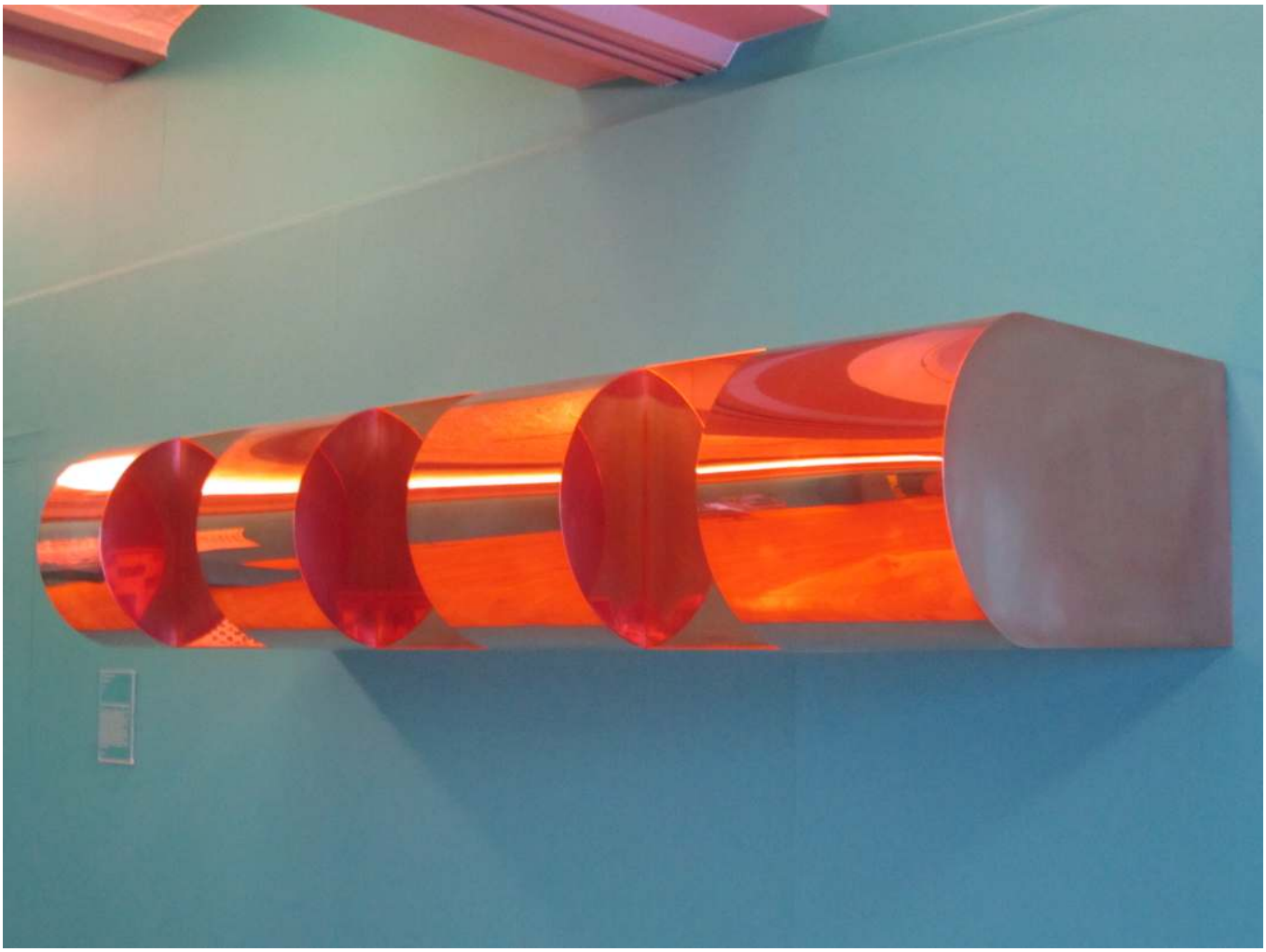


Figure 8.6.1: Untitled (1973, copper, 37.1 x 194.3 x 74.9 cm) by Rept0n1x, CC BY-SA 3.0

Untitled (6.8.2) was constructed from painted galvanized iron. Judd used similar progressives spacing, the widest space on the left side and progressing to the narrower spacing on the right side.

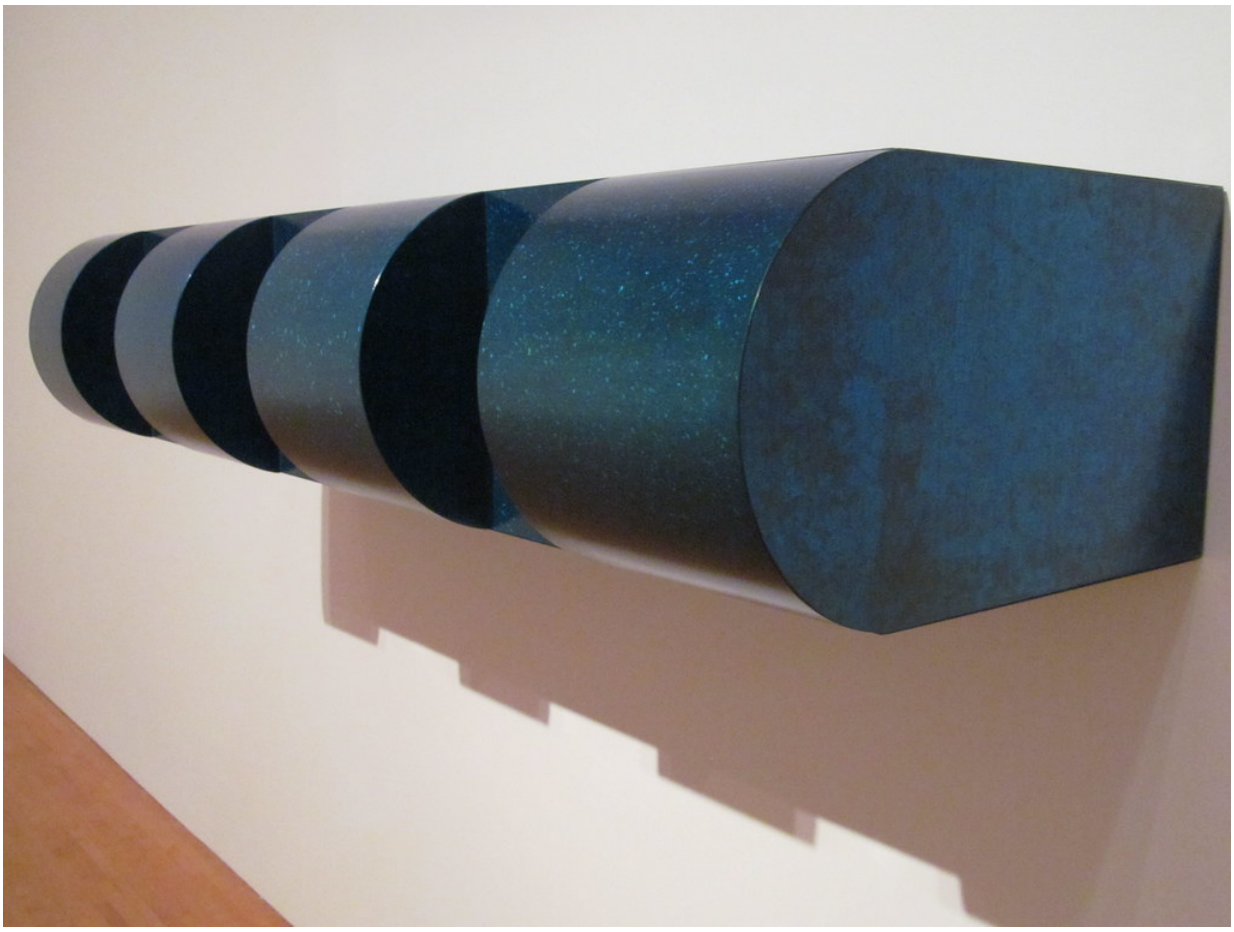


Figure **8.6.2**: Untitled (1966, painted galvanized iron) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Judd's *Untitled (Stack)* (6.8.3) hangs on the wall and projects almost 91.4 centimeters from the wall. Each of the boxes is made from galvanized iron and equal in size, maintaining the importance of every single box. Every box is 22.6 centimeters high, and they are placed in the formation of a ladder as they move upward, retaining the 22.6 centimeter spacing between them. Different numbers of boxes are displayed depending on the height of the wall space. In this stack, the sides of the boxes are unpainted and shiny. The shape of a box was a form Judd frequently used because he believed it did not represent any specific thing and was neutral in shape.



Figure **8.6.3**: Untitled (Stack) (1966, galvanized iron, 10 units each 22.9 x 101.6 x 78.7 cm) by oliworx, CC BY 2.0

Judd created fifteen boxes *Untitled* (6.8.4) made of concrete he cast and constructed them from 1980 through 1984. Each separate unit was 2.5 x 2.5 x 5 meters, and each slab side was 25 centimeters thick. He installed each unit equally distanced from the other. An installation could be composed of different numbers of boxes as the scrubby desert land provided the perfect place for his concrete boxes. The various buildings and surrounding space still display much of his artwork today. Judd always believed the artwork stood by itself and stated, "A shape, a volume, a color, a surface is something itself. It shouldn't be concealed as part of a fairly different whole"[2]



Figure **8.6.4**: Untitled (1980-1984, concrete, 2.5 x 2.5 x 5 meters each) by nan palmero, CC BY 2.0

Dan Flavin

Dan Flavin (1933-1996) was born in New York. After school, he and his twin brother enlisted in the Air Force during World War II. When the war ended, he studied art, including at Columbia University. Flavin married twice; the second marriage was held at the Guggenheim Museum. He started drawing and painting and, in 1959, began to make mixed media assemblages, finding objects on the streets of New York. By 1961, Flavin started experimenting with lights, including fluorescent and incandescent bulbs of all types and sizes, attaching the different lights to boxlike wooden structures. By 1963, Flavin found the medium he liked and focused on fluorescent tubes. At first, he used the standard white color. Flavin progressed to a palette of standard colors available, red, blue, green, pink, yellow, ultraviolet, and the full range of different whites found in commercial fluorescent lights.

He focused on the artistic variations achievable with the unusual commercial material throughout his career, exploiting the utilitarian use of light and the variable changes of color, shape, and position. He turned banal hardware into art and stated, "One might not think of light as a matter of fact, but I do. And it is, as I said, as plain and open and direct an art as you will ever find."[3] Flavin used perishable, readymade materials, forming them into objects he did not consider sculptures. He wanted his art to respond to the specific architectural setting.

Generally, he used straight lines in his work, running horizontal or vertical. Occasionally, he placed the bulbs at an angle or used a rare circular system. Flavin always tried to place the commercial stamps marking each bulb so they were visible. He did not like to refer to his works as Minimalism, although he and Donald Judd were great friends and his work paralleled Judd's ideas of objects. Flavin used the simple light tube in geometric formations, letting the light provide the colors of the walls; he wanted the walls to glow and form illusions.

Monument for V. Tatlin (6.8.5) is one of several combinations Flavin created using different lengths of standard white fluorescent tubes. Most of them were horizontal and resembled a tower or monument. The arrangement of the tubes was balanced and symmetrical, creating bright regions and more subtle light reflections. In this image, the length of each horizontal light is balanced, the center equally anchored.

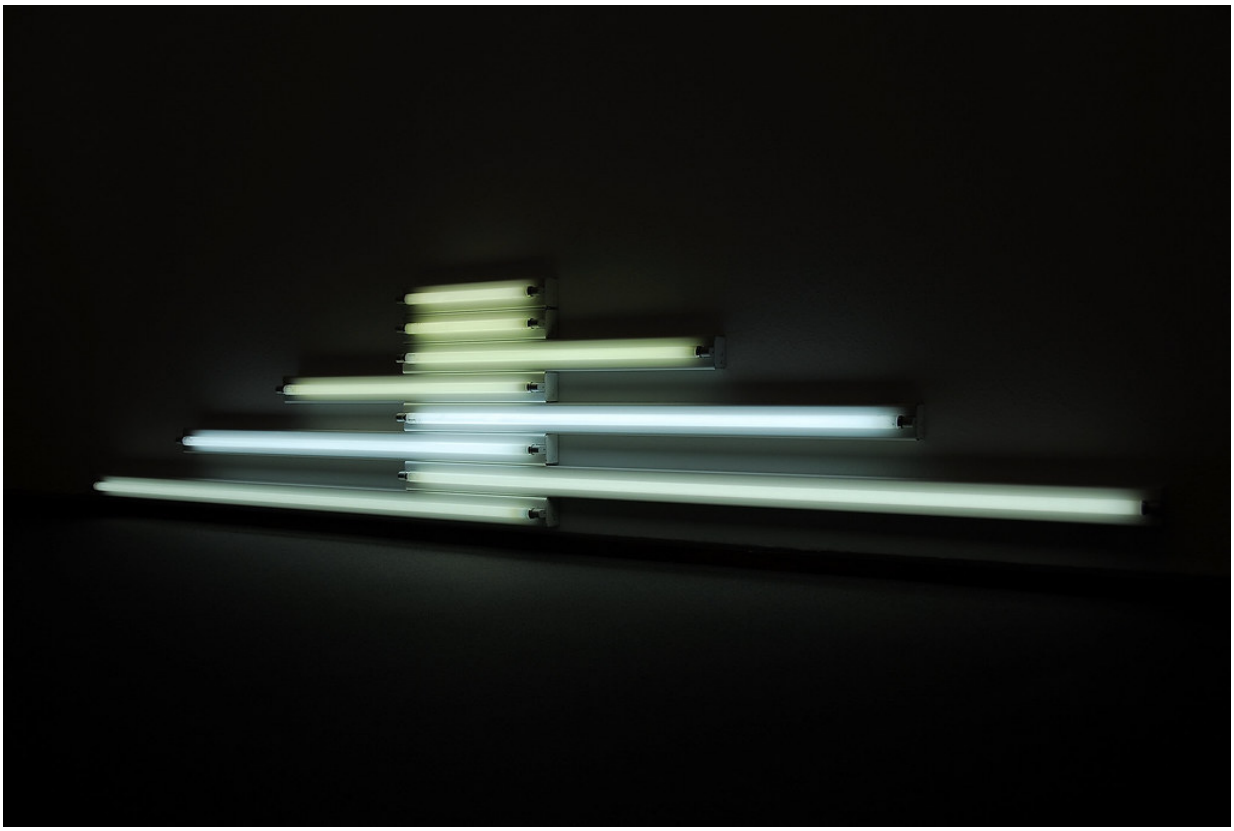


Figure 8.6.5: "monument" for V. Tatlin (1968, cool white fluorescent light tubes (70 x 425 x 11 cm) by Rino Porrovecchio, CC BY-SA 2.0

Untitled (in honor of Harold Joachim) 3 (6.8.6) forms a perfect square positioned across the corner of a room. The pink, yellow, green, and blue lights grid creates a soft glow reflected across the floor. To develop each artwork, Flavin drew multiple images before he achieved the look and feel he wanted. In this work, he used multiple green and blue tubes grouped vertically with spaces between them. Single tubes formed the thinner horizontal look.

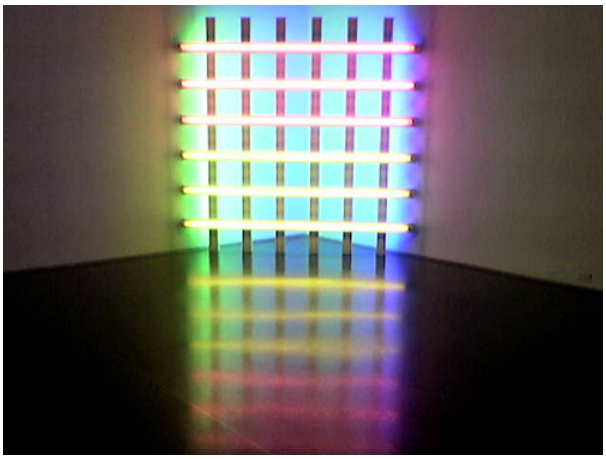


Figure 8.6.6: Untitled (in honor of Harold Joachim) 3 (1977, fluorescent light, 244 x 244 cm) by pandabrand, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

One of Flavin's major artworks was *Untitled (To Helga and Carlos, With Respect and Affection)* (6.8.7), a large-scale sculpture extending over the space and forming a barrier. The extensive work bathed the room with light, seemingly infinitely expansive. Flavin created a series of barrier-style work, modular pieces to change depending on the space available. The different blue colors emit light and a feeling of calm, or maybe it seems eerie. The spaces between the rows are open, like windows leaving the viewer to wonder what might be on the other side.



Figure **8.6.7**: Untitled (To Helga and Carlos, With Respect and Affection) (1974, fluorescent lights, each unit 121.9 x 132.1 x 7.6 cm) by Dean Hochman, CC BY 2.0

Ellsworth Kelly

Born in New York, Ellsworth Kelly (1923-2015) lived in New Jersey as a child. His grandmother taught him about ornithology when he was growing up, and Kelly became fascinated with John James Audubon and his bird illustrations. Audubon's colors and forms later influenced his career. Kelly was always interested in art; however, his parents only wanted him to pursue technical education, so he went to the Pratt Institute until he was drafted into the army in 1943. Kelly served alongside other artists working on different camouflages for military equipment. After the war, he studied art, including Paris, where he stayed for six years and was inspired by French abstracted art. He returned to New York City for a few years, showing at a few galleries before moving to New York.

Kelly developed his early artwork based on the world around him, a window, shadows from the staircase, and a hidden door. He stated, "I realized I didn't want to compose pictures…I wanted to find them. I felt that my vision was choosing things out there in the world and presenting them…There was so much to see, and it all looked fantastic to me."[4] He combined the simple forms around him with the concepts of a pure and uncluttered form, spatial unity, and bold use of color. His canvases were different shapes and sizes, frequently joined together, the canvas itself becoming part of the work. Kelly covered the canvas with basic lines and geometric forms in vibrant colors. He usually started by applying multiple coats of white paint before adding color.

By 1959, Kelly started using non-rectilinear forms and embrace Minimalism in his painting *Running White* (6.8.8). He applied white first and then added coats of black on top. At this point, Kelly was still using a standard canvas format, the running line escaping off the sides of the panel. When Kelly was visiting friends in a French village, he saw a flight of stairs and noticed how the sun created different shadows from the steps and balustrade. He took several photographs of the scene, even at different times of the day, noting the changes in shadows as the sun moved.



Figure 8.6.8: Running White (1959, oil on canvas, 223.6 x 172.2 cm) by scalleja, CC BY-SA 2.0

Kelly used the photographs to create a series entitled *La Combe*. One of the series' paintings is *La Combe III* (6.8.9), the lines on the painting are arranged to imply steps and the shadows cast by each step. The shadows did not match a photograph; Kelly reconstructed the lines over the multiple panels in the series.



Figure **8.6.9**: La Combe III (1951, oil on linen, 161.2 x 113 cm) by wallyg, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

In *Spectrum IV* (6.8.10), Kelly arranged the simple lines of color in the style of a rainbow, starting and ending with yellow. Individual colors stand-alone yet blend into the neighboring color. Each color is also a separate canvas, with thirteen panels to form the square. The long lengths of yellow on each side stand out against the white wall creating greater contrast.

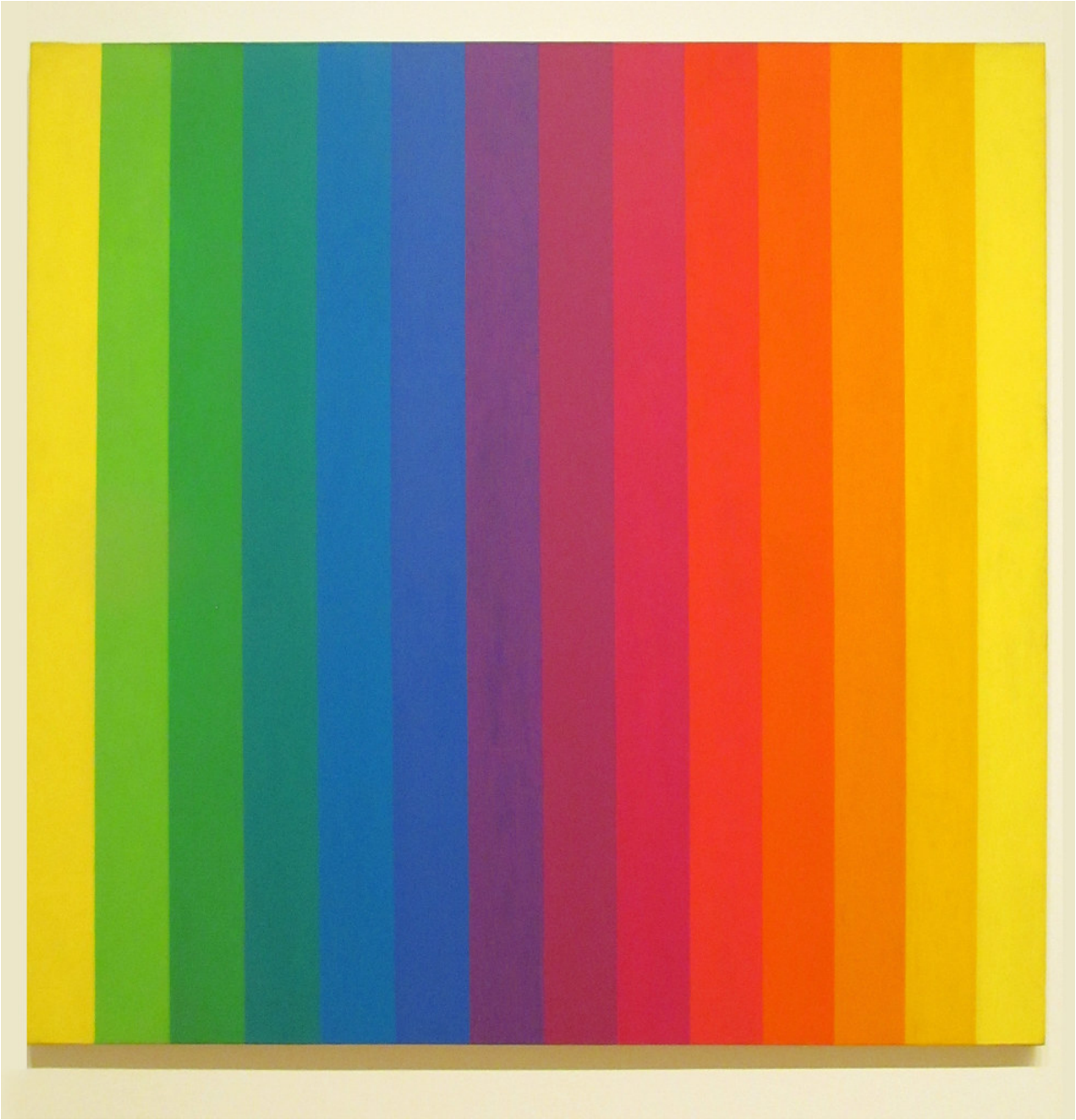


Figure **8.6.10**: Spectrum IV (1967, oil on canvas, thirteen panels, 297.2 x 297.2) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

In *Spectrum V* (6.8.11), Kelly made single panels for each color. He used the same colors and sequence of colors in each work of the series, varying the panels' size and placement. In *Spectrum V*, each color is influenced by the contrast of the white wall instead of the color next to it, softening the hues, less bold as seen in *Spectrum IV*.



Figure **8.6.11**: Spectrum V (1969, oil on canvas, each panel 84 1/8 x 34 inches) by sharkycharming, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Agnes Martin

Agnes Martin (1912-2004) was born in Canada and lived in Vancouver during her childhood. She went to college in Washington, received a bachelor's degree in education, and moved to New York City. There, Martin became interested in modern art and took several classes before attending the University of New Mexico, followed by earning a master's degree in art at Columbia University. In 1957, she moved back to New York in a local art community. Martin struggled with mental illness, including electric shock treatment. In 1967, she disappeared from New York and spent time crossing the United States and Canada, camping in different places. Martin finally settled in New Mexico, where she built her home and studio and eventually began to paint again.

Martin's work strongly resembles the rural and desert landscape she found in Canada's vast plains and New Mexico's dry, scrubby desert. Her palette was relatively monochromatic and unadorned. Martin destroyed her early works before adopting pure abstraction and Minimalist form. She focused on lines and grids with soft, subtle colors. Martin used mathematically divided lines, a regularity found in her work. Some of the lines were thin and pencil-like; others were wider and more painterly. Her addition of muted color gave her work the reflection of her beliefs in Eastern philosophy and timelessness. Martin's works were generally based on one concept with variations. She wanted them to convey to the viewers a broad range of emotions and experiences. Art reviewers consider her work in totality, with quiet contemplation of the relationships between the fine lines and soft colors.

In her painting, *White Flower* (6.8.12), Martin explained how the image was about a mental understanding, not the concept of an actual white flower. She wanted people to react to the painting as they would to the organic flower. The grid was made from white horizontal and vertical lines shaped into rectangles. Inside the small rectangles were proportioned white dashes resembling fabric. The actual white flowers she contemplated were based on the small white flowers with edible berries growing on the plains of Canada.

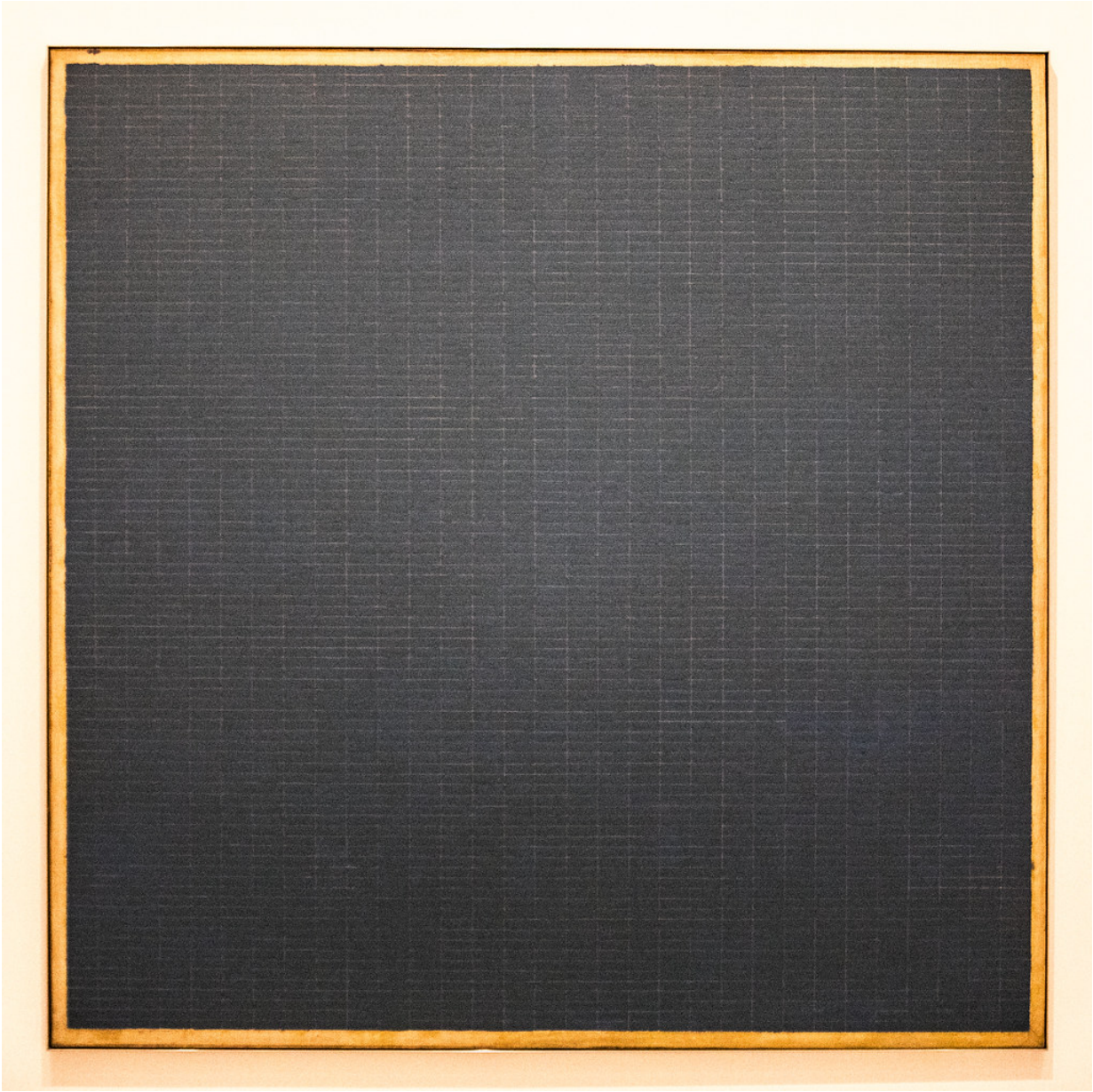


Figure **8.6.12**: White Flower (1960, oil on canvas, 182.6 x 182.9 cm) by Thomas Hawk, CC BY-NC 2.0

Untitled #12 (6.8.13) displays a graphite grid against the light background. Many art historians view the image as one of her more spiritual works and a balance between sensual and austere. Martin remarked, "Work like mine describes the subtle emotions that are beyond words, like music."[5]

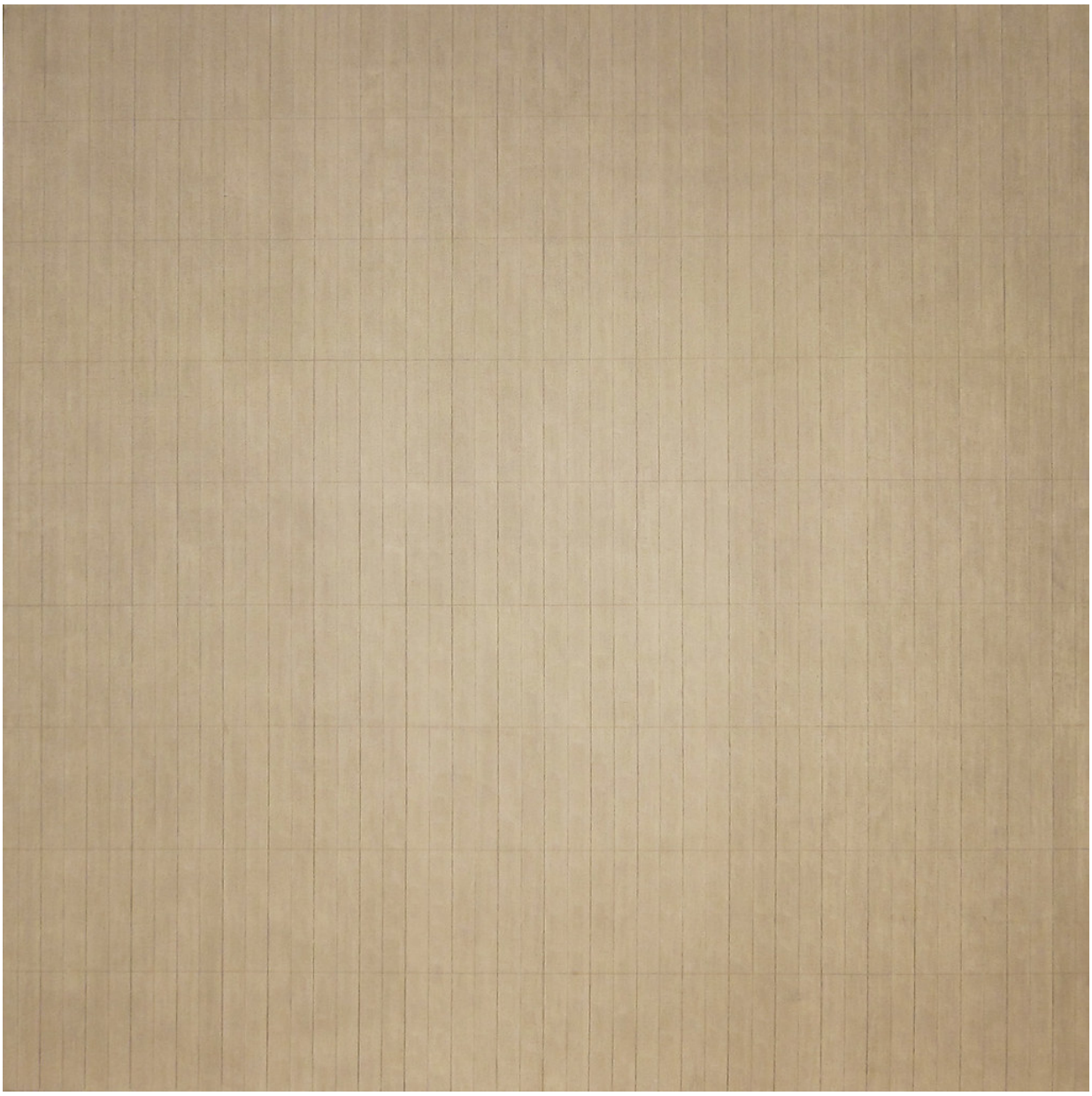


Figure **8.6.13**: Untitled #12 (1977, India ink, graphite, gesso on canvas, 182.9 x 182.9 cm) by Sharon Mollerus, CC BY 2.0

In *Untitled #14* (6.8.14), Martin used ink, pencil, and paint, multiple types of material, a common thing she frequently included in her work. By using numerous materials, Martin obtained different looks in each of her paintings. In #14, she applied gesso on the canvas before adding the lines and color, building a distinctive texture. The darker line against the light gray background demonstrated her use of the signature grid pattern. Martin used this basic grid and varied it with texture, width between lines, color, or materials. Although Minimalism relied on a more rigid formula of lines, Martin's grid use was not systematic, only coordination of lines from space to space.

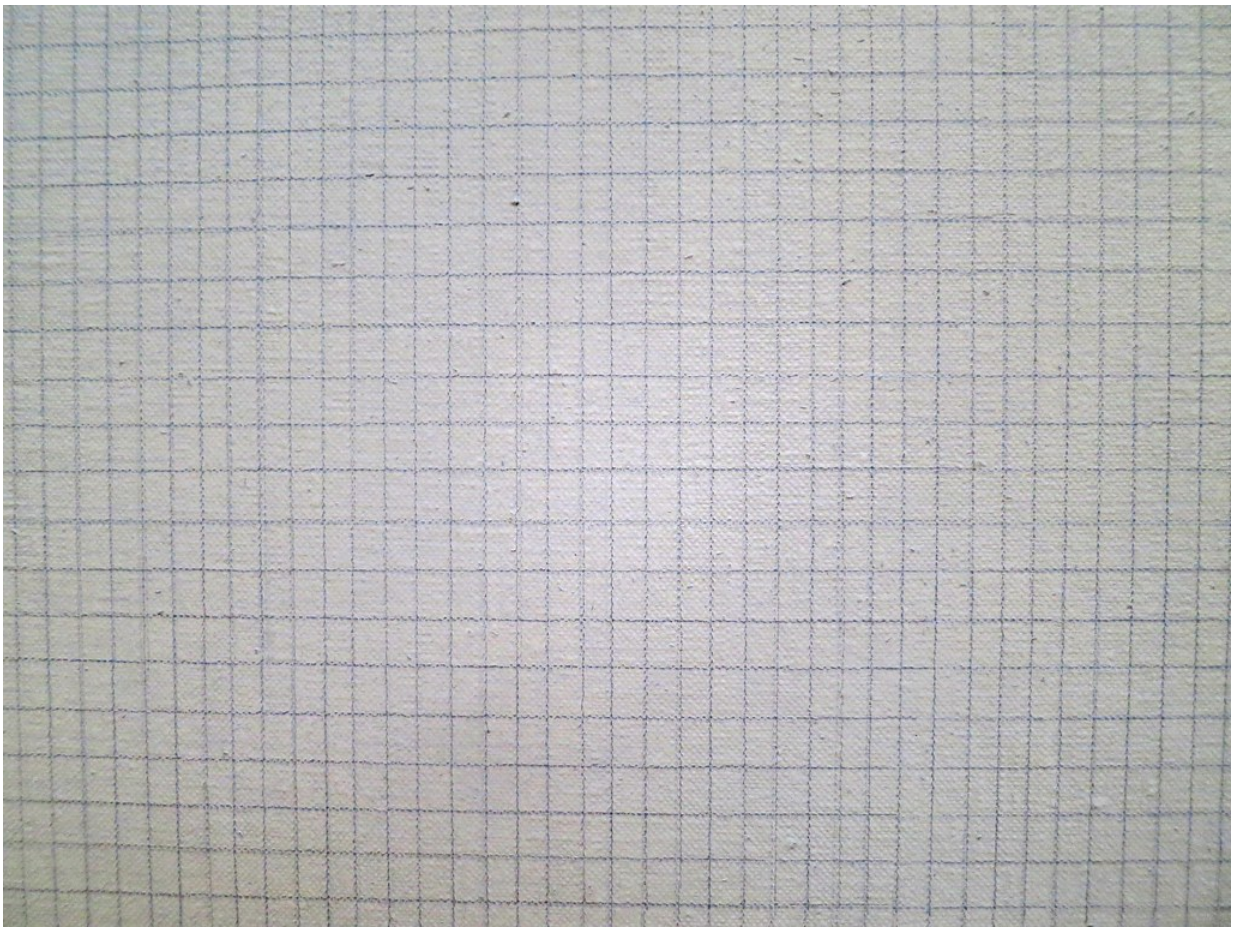


Figure **8.6.14**: Untitled #14 (1977, ink, graphite, gesso on canvas, 182.9 x 182.9 cm) by Medieval Karl, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Eva Hesse

Eva Hesse (1936-1970) achieved success as an artist despite a difficult life. She was born in Germany to a Jewish family in 1936. The family tried to leave Germany as the war was starting and sent Hesse and her sibling on one of the last Kindertransport trains. The trains were loaded with small children bound for the Netherlands to escape the brutal roundup by the Nazis. Her parents escaped six months later, and the family emigrated to New York. After World War II, her parents divorced, and her mother committed suicide. Hesse attended Yale University, graduating with a bachelor's degree. After college, she returned to New York and worked with some of the other new Minimalist artists. Hesse was married for a few years before she divorced. In 1969, she developed a brain tumor, had multiple unsuccessful operations, and died at 34. However, Hesse's short artistic career was very successful.

Hesse worked with three-dimensional and industrial materials, primarily focusing on latex and fiberglass because latex could be molded or cast, and hardened. Hesse belonged to a group experimenting with new synthetic materials and even invented her own method of rubberizing fabric. Her sculptures were usually grouped together or placed in a grid-like formation, minimally based on simple formations and a reduced color palette. The works were generally wrapped, wound, or threaded. Hesse's work was abstract while frequently referring to male or female bodies, contradictory illusions, or interpretations. *Untitled* (6.8.15) changed the rigid straight lines used by Minimalist artists to irregular, softer organic lines. Hesse knotted different pieces of rope together and soaked them in liquid latex. When the rope hardened, she assembled the parts into a sculpture of twisted, arching lines. The work is attached to the ceiling and wall, flexible enough to support variable installations. In her conceptual drawing of the work, Hesse wrote, "hung irregularly tying knots as connections really letting it go as it will. Allowing it to determine more of the way it completes itself."[6]



Figure **8.6.15**: Untitled (1969-70, latex, rope, string, wire, variable size) by veritatem, CC BY 2.0

Repetition Nineteen III (6.8.16) is an installation of nineteen round, translucent forms shaped similar to a bucket. The forms are twenty inches high and hand-formed instead of manufactured, so they are irregular and can be arranged in any formation. Hesse used fiberglass and resin, two materials with a tendency to discolor or deteriorate over time, a phenomenon happening in her work today. She always said, "Life doesn't last; art doesn't last. It doesn't matter." [7]



Figure **8.6.16**: Repetition Nineteen III (1968, fiberglass, polyester resin, each 27.8 x 32.2 cm in diameter) by mava, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Hang Up (6.8.17) was made in 1966 when Hesse decided to stop painting and concentrate on sculptural works. She wrapped the blank canvas made from bed sheets on a frame and added an excessively long tube made from steel and covered with a cord to protrude into the viewer's space. Hesse thought this image was one of her most important because it was so absurd, blurring the line between paintings and sculptures.

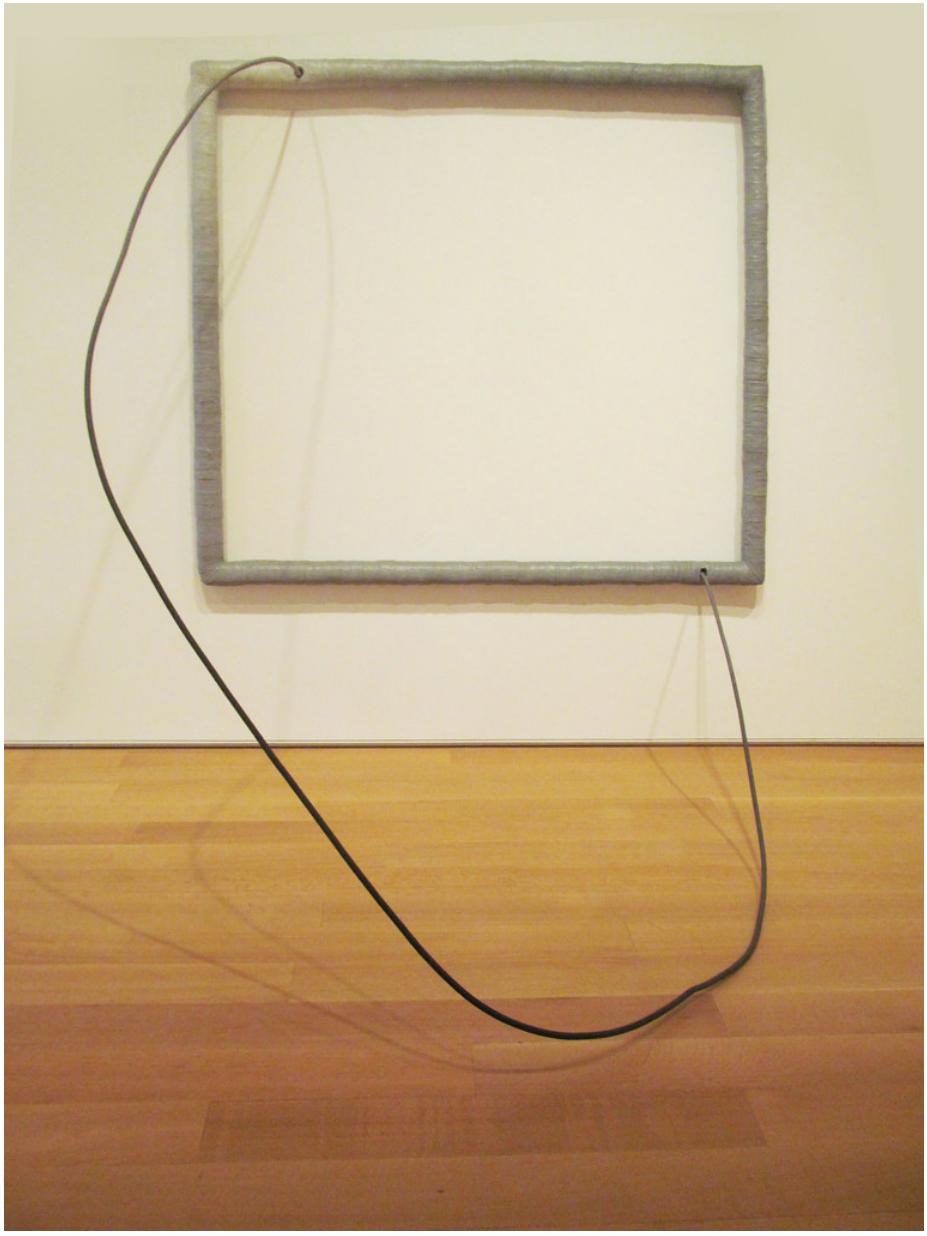


Figure **8.6.17**: Hang Up (1966, acrylic on cloth over wood, acrylic on a cord over steel tube, 182.9 x 213.4 x 198.1 cm) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Hesse's work, *Not Yet* (6.8.18), reflected her desire to create forms interpreted as almost human parts, however just an erotic resemblance. She used cotton netting and plastic drop cloths to make the image, materials found in any artist's studio. Hesse used repetitive forms like the Minimalists. However, she used forms that were uneven and irregular. Instead of manufactured materials, she handmade her shapes. Historians often explain Hesse's work as the reflection of her anxieties stemming from a painful childhood.



Figure **8.6.18**: Not Yet (1966, Cotton, plastic, paper, lead, string, 180.3 x 39.4 x 21 cm) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Carmen Herrera

Carmen Herrera (1915-) was born in Havana, Cuba, one of seven children. Her father was part of the Cuban intellectual elite, a captain in the army liberating Cuba from Spain. Her mother was an author and journalist. Herrera had private art education when she was young, even going to school in Paris at fourteen. She studied architecture at the Universidad de la Habana for one year, quitting because of the continual fighting in the streets and the unstable ability of the university to remain open. Herrera married a teacher from New York and moved there where she studied art before moving to Paris. Refining her art, Herrera focused on her straight-line, hard-edge style, a technique she developed similar to Ellsworth Kelly, who lived in Paris during the same period. When she returned to New York, she continued to face rejection as an artist, a problem Herrera attributed to prejudice against women. She was not allowed to exhibit at one gallery because she was female and received little recognition until the 2000s. She did not sell a painting until she was eighty-nine and did not attain acknowledgment until 2009 when a large exhibition of her work was held in the United Kingdom.

Herrera's training as an architect influenced her concepts and focused on lines and color within the lines, a limited color palette, and simplistic geometric shapes. She developed a process of painting she still used today. She started by drawing a concept and then

recreated the idea on vellum, where she added colors with paint markers. On the final canvas, Herrera marked her lines with tape before applying layers of paint. "I like straight lines, I like angles, I like order. In this chaos that we live in, I like to put order. I guess that's why I am a hard-edged painter, a geometric painter"[8] *Untitled* (6.8.19) was one of her breakthrough paintings, establishing her style and gaining recognition. She also asserted her love for straight lines. The painting looks like a W; however, she changed the lines by reversing the black and white colors on the four panels to create the visual effect.



Figure **8.6.19**: Untitled (1952, acrylic on canvas, 63.5 x 152.4 cm) by smallcurio, CC BY 2.0

Amarillo Dos (6.8.20) demonstrated her use of line and color to convey movement. The perceived two parts of the painting appear to be tilting; however, the top and bottom are still level. Herrera developed a sense of instability using the bold yellow color with the symmetrical and yet asymmetrical image.



Figure **8.6.20**: Amarillo Dos (1971, acrylic on wood, 101.6 x 70 x 8.3 cm) by jackszwergoldarchives, CC BY-NC 2.0

Green and White (6.8.21) also have irregular shapes, not quite fitting together, the white sections generating different spatial balance with the negative space. Herrera used a bold contrasting color to enhance the feeling of unbalance. She created her innovative body of work in the 1960s and 1970s and went unrecognized. She was now thought of as a woman ahead of her time.



Figure **8.6.21**: Green and White (1959, acrylic paint on canvas, 116.4 x 154.3 cm) by jackszwergoldarchives, CC BY-NC 2.0

By the end of the 1970s, the ideals of Minimalism were accepted in galleries by art dealers and influential publications. The use of industrial and readymade materials became common for artists giving viewers new experiences of the appearance of weight and height, the influence of line, geometric forms, and pure separated colors. The concepts of Minimalism and the use of manufactured materials continue in artwork today.

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[1] Retrieved from https://magazine.artland.com/minimalism/

[2] Retrieved from https://www.theartstory.org/movement/minimalism/

[3] Retrieved from https://www.nga.gov/features/slidesh...ospective.html

[4] Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellsworth_Kelly. Based on “A Giant of the New Surveys His Rich Past”. *The New York Times*. October 13, 1996.

[5] Retrieved from https://www.artic.edu/artworks/89403/untitled-12

[6] Retrieved from https://whitney.org/collection/works/5551

[7] Retrieved from https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_lear...teen-iii-1968/

[8] Retrieved from https://whitney.org/audio-guides/51?...&page=1&stop=1

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8.7: Post-Minimalism

Post-Minimalism

Minimalism and Conceptual Art opened the way for a variety of experimental practices in different media.

c. 1965 - 1980

Louise Bourgeois, *Cumul I*

by KAREN SCHIFMAN



Figure **8.7.1**: Louise Bourgeois, *Cumul I*, 1969, white marble on wood base, 51 x 127 x 122 cm (Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris) © Estate of the artist (photo: **Strifu**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Reality of Three-Dimensional Form

Bulbous mounds, and spherical or oval growths emerge, conflate and disturb. *Cumul I* is a marble sculpture, part of a series, by the late French-born artist, Louise Bourgeois. Cumul, as in, cumulus, is a reference to the forms of rounded clouds. The motif was first developed in drawings but Bourgeois wanted the reality of three-dimensional form, as she thought she could express deeper things in sculpture.

Like so much of Bourgeois' work, *Cumul I* is loaded with entangled metaphors of male and female body parts that are simultaneously abstract and descriptive. Her career breezed over so many significant trends of the 20th century that her work defies identification within any single art movement. Instead, there is an uncompromising personal symbolism throughout her oeuvre (life's work), filled with certain recurring motifs such as vessels, containers, ovoids, body parts, and spiders (a metaphor of her mother's work as a weaver).

Appealing and Disturbing

The sculpture, *Cumul I*, is designed to sit on the floor and be viewed from above. Its forms still shock nearly half a century after its completion. The artist denied any reference to sexual forms in this work, but the association is undeniable. The viewer is confronted with a cluster of mounds that resemble breasts and penises emerging from a rippling fabric. So what then was Bourgeois trying to communicate in this beautifully sculpted marble? What can be understood from a sculpture that is aesthetically appealing and at the same time disturbing?

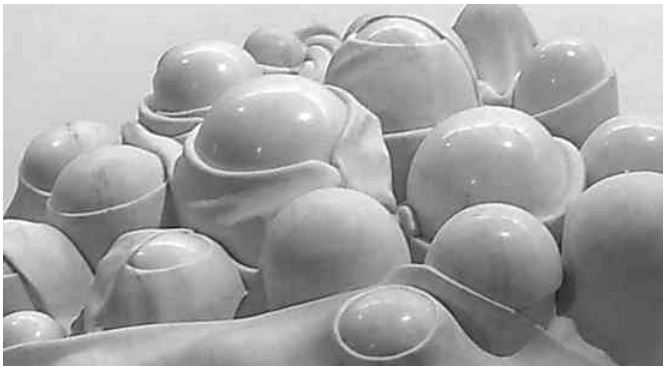


Figure **8.7.2**: Cluster of mounds (detail), Louise Bourgeois, Cumul I, 1969, white marble on wood base, 51 x 127 x 122 cm (Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris) © Estate of the artist (photo: **Baddeo**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Bourgeois offered some explanation to her mysterious oeuvre and implied that the Freudian concept of a traumatized childhood was the catalyst for her artistic motives. The artist has confirmed that all of her work found inspiration in her childhood. Scholars have noted that the childhood traumas of having a sick mother and egocentric philandering father who had an affair with her nanny, had a powerful impact on the young Bourgeois who later stated, "My childhood has never lost its magic, it has never lost its mystery, and it has never lost its drama."[1] References to Bourgeois' family, and sexuality, developed over the span of her career into a personal artistic vocabulary.

Making Sense of *Cumul I*

When we try to make sense of the male and female forms that reveal and conceal themselves simultaneously in *Cumul I*, it can help to remember Bourgeois' childhood. Ambiguity and overlapping gender are characteristics found in many of Bourgeois' sculptures and installations. Her art is deeply personal, confusing, troubling, magical and quite wonderful. She was one of the most significant women artists of the twentieth century.

1. *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father Reconstruction of the Father, Writings and Interviews 1923-1997*, edited and with texts by Marie Laure-Bernadac and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, MIT Press, 1998, page 277. The quote is also found in a compilation of Bourgeois' images juxtaposed by text entitled *"Album" 1994* and published by Peter Blum.

Additional Resources:

This sculpture at the Centre Pompidou

Video of Louise Bourgeois's *Confrontation* at the Guggenhiem Museum, 1978

Louise Bourgeois PBS/Art21 video

Louise Bourgeois' New York Times obituary, May 2010

Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*

by DR. JENNIE KLEIN



Figure 8.7.3: Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1974–79, ceramic, porcelain, and textile, 1463 x 1463 cm (**Brooklyn Museum**)

A Place at the Table

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Figure 8.7.4: The Dinner Party research team, Santa Monica, CA (**Through the Flower Archive and Judy Chicago**)

The Dinner Party is a monument to women's history and accomplishments. It is a massive triangular table—measuring 48 feet on each side—with thirty-nine place settings dedicated to prominent women throughout history and an additional 999 names are inscribed on the table's glazed porcelain brick base. This tribute to women, which includes individual place settings for such luminary figures as the Primordial Goddess, **Ishtar**, **Hatshepsut**, **Theodora**, **Artemesia Gentileschi**, Sacajawea, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Emily Dickinson, Margaret Sanger, and **Georgia O'Keeffe**, is beautifully crafted. Each place setting has an exquisitely embroidered table runner that includes the name of the woman, utensils, a goblet, and a plate.

The Dinner Party was intended to be exhibited in a large, darkened, sanctuary-like room, with each place setting individually lit, making it look as though it is composed of thirty-nine altars. The 999 names, written in gold, gleam softly, suggesting a hallowed or liminal space. Five years in the making (1974-1979) and the product of the volunteer labor of more than 400 people, *The Dinner Party* is a testament to the power of feminist vision and artistic collaboration. It was also a testament to Chicago's ability to create a work of art that spoke to people who had not previously been a part of the art world. When the exhibition opened at the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco in March of 1979, it was mobbed. Judy Chicago's accompanying lecture was completely sold out.



Figure **8.7.5**: Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1974–79, ceramic, porcelain, and textile, 1463 x 1463 cm (Brooklyn Museum, photo: **Eric Wilcox**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Although critics praised the table runners, they ignored or disparaged the plates. These ceramic objects, which become increasingly three-dimensional during the procession from prehistory to the present in order to represent women rising, look somewhat like flowers and butterflies. They also resemble female genitalia, which many people found disturbing. Writing for the feminist journal *Frontiers* in 1981, Lolette Kuby was so taken aback by the plates' forms that she suggested that Playboy and Penthouse had done more to promote the beauty of female anatomy than The Dinner Party ever could.



Figure **8.7.6**: Judy Chicago, Emily Dickinson place setting from *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79 (Brooklyn Museum, photo: **Philipp Messner**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Kuby's distaste for pudenda was echoed more forcefully a decade later, when Chicago attempted to donate the artwork to the University of the District of Columbia. Chicago was forced to withdraw her donation after the U.S. Senate threatened to withhold funding from UDC if they accepted what Rep. Robert Dornan characterized as "3-D ceramic pornography" and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher dismissed as a "spectacle of weird art, weird feminist art at that." It was not until 2007 that The Dinner Party, an icon of feminist art, would find a permanent home in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art in the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Feminist Education

What drove Chicago to embark on such a large and controversial feminist project? She was inspired, in part, by her pioneering work in feminist education. She started the Feminist Art Program at California State University, Fresno in 1970. The following year she founded the Feminist Art Program (FAP) at the newly established California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) with the abstract painter Miriam Schapiro. The galleries were still under construction when Chicago arrived at CalArts, so the FAP had their exhibition in an abandoned mansion that was slated to be demolished shortly after. The resulting installation, *Womanhouse*, was a testament to Chicago's method of teaching, which begin with consciousness raising and then progressed to realizing a message through whatever medium was most suitable, whether it was performance, sculpture, or painting.



Figure **8.7.7**: Judy Chicago, Eleanor of Aquitaine place setting from *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79 (Brooklyn Museum, photo: **Mark B. Schlemmer**, CC BY 2.0)

While at CalArts, Chicago and Schapiro developed the idea of "central core imagery," arguing in a 1973 article published in *Womanspace Journal* that many women artists making abstract art unconsciously gravitated towards imagery that was anti-phallic. By the time she began working on *The Dinner Party*, Chicago had come to believe that central core imagery, which celebrated feminine eroticism and fertility, could be used to challenge patriarchal constructions of women. For Chicago, there existed an irreducible difference between men and women, and that difference began with the genitals. Chicago would eventually put vaginal imagery front and center in *The Dinner Party*.

Right Out of History

After several years of work establishing various feminist art programs in Southern California, Chicago was eager to get back to making her own artwork and resigned from teaching in 1974. Her experience with *Womanhouse* inspired her to embrace materials that had traditionally been associated with women's crafts, such as embroidery, weaving, and china painting. She was determined to make a monument to women's history using china-painted plates alluding to thirteen specific figures, which she originally planned

to hang on the gallery wall. However, she soon realized that there were many more women that she wished to include, and the initial conception of the piece expanded to a large-scale installation with thirty-nine place settings.



Figure **8.7.8**: Judy Chicago, Sojourner Truth place setting from *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79 (Brooklyn Museum, photo: **Neil R**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

An important component of the piece was the educational material that represented the years of research that had been conducted by Chicago's volunteer staff, led by art historian Diane Gelon. *The Dinner Party* was accompanied by a book of the same title (published by Anchor Books in 1979 and designed by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville) that included the stories behind all 1,038 names. Filmmaker Johanna Demetrakas documented the monumental effort that it took to make this installation in her film *Right Out of History: The Making of the Dinner Party*.

Not Exactly Playboy or Penthouse



Figure **8.7.9**: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Two Calla Lilies on Pink*, 1928, oil on canvas, 101.6 × 76.2 cm (**Philadelphia Museum of Art**)

In order to understand *The Dinner Party*, we must keep in mind that the sculptural painted plates were intended to be metaphors rather than realistic representations. Take, for instance, **the final place setting on the table—the one for Georgia O'Keeffe**. This plate is the most sculptural piece in the installation. Pink and greenish gray swirls and folds radiate out from a central core framed

by fleshy looking folds that seem to have been deliberately spread apart in order to reveal what should be a hidden entrance. The plate can be read as suggestive of female genitalia, but its forms also recall the shape of a butterfly and the reproductive organs of flowers. O'Keeffe was famous for her abstracted paintings of flowers, and and the plate is an homage to some her best-known works, such as *Grey Lines With Black, Blue, and Yellow* (1923) and *Black Iris III* (1926), both of which have a central opening framed by folds, or *Two Calla Lilies On Pink* (1928), which has a similar color palette to the O'Keeffe plate.

Chicago's decision to use vaginal imagery has proven to be powerful. *The Dinner Party*, having survived rejection, critical dismissal, and political grandstanding, is now considered a key work of contemporary art, and is permanently installed in a dedicated space at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum.

Additional Resources:

The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago at the Brooklyn Museum

Through the Flower

Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: Restoring Women to History (*Arnold L. Lehman, foreword. Brooklyn Museum of Art/The Monacelli Press, 2014).

Jane Gerhard, T*he Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism, 1970-2007* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2013).

Gail Levin, *Becoming Judy Chicago* (*N*ew York: Harmony Books. 2007).

Eva Hesse

Eva Hesse, *Untitled (Rope Piece)*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 8.7.1: Eva Hesse, *Untitled (Rope Piece)*, 1970, rope, latex, string, wire, variable dimensions (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York)

Eva Hesse, *Untitled*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 8.7.2: Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, 1966 , enamel paint, string, papier-mâché, elastic cord (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



Figure 8.7.10: More Smarthistory images…

Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF)

by DR. ELLA MARIA DIAZ

The Chicano Movement emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s against the backdrop of the broader civil rights struggles in the United States. Advocating for equality at work, at school, and in housing, immigration, and social justice, farmworkers, artists, activists, and students called themselves “Chicanos,” asserting proudly their Mexican ancestry as well as their place, history, and identity in U.S. society.



Figure **8.7.11**: Ricardo Favela, *Huelga! Stike! Support the U.F.W.A.*, 1976 (Royal Chicano Air Force Archives, The California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Special Collections Department, the University of California, Santa Barbara Library)

The Chicano Movement was multidimensional and artists played key roles in each realm. While Chicano artists like José Montoya worked with Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta to unionize the farm workers, artist Harry Gamboa led student walkouts in East Los Angeles. Gamboa and other Chicanx artists formed collectives like Asco (Spanish for "disgust") while Montoya and others established the RCAF (Royal Chicano Air Force) to develop and disseminate their work through prints, murals, performances, and photography—media inherently accessible, participatory, and public.



Figure **8.7.12**: José Montoya, Royal Chicano Air Force, *Atencion Campesinos*, n.d., silkscreen on paper, 63.50 x 48.26 cm (Royal Chicano Air Force Archives, The California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Special Collections Department, the University of California, Santa Barbara Library)

Humor, politics, and public art

The RCAF was established in Sacramento, California in the early 1970s and was originally named Rebel Chicano Art Front (people confused the group's acronym, RCAF, with that of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and so the more humorous Royal Chicano Air Force was adopted instead). The group was infused with humor from its inception, and the RCAF contributed to two major genres of Chicanx visual art—muralism and silkscreen printing. The RCAF is also credited with implementing art-based social programs that decenter the individual artist. In this way, Royal Chicano Air Force can be understood in relation to other art collectives of the 1960s and 70s—such as Fluxus—that also brought together musicians, writers, and artists in experimental performances that challenged the definition of art.

Chicanx identity & diversity

Inspired by the culturally nationalist doctrine of the Chicano Movement, described in *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan* (1969) and *El Plan de Santa Barbara* (1969), both of which exalted the indigenous roots of Mexican-American identity, the RCAF visualized the movement's platforms, aestheticizing a Mexican-American history and identity. In solidarity with the labor-rights campaigns of the United Farm Workers union (UFW), founded by Chavez and Huerta, the RCAF mobilized Mexican-American students, educators, veterans, artists, and activists calling for economic, educational, and political equality in the United States.



Figure **8.7.13**: Royal Chicano Air Force, *Southside Park Mural*, 1977 (restored 2001), 14 x 110 feet (Southside Park, Sacramento)

The group's artistic diversity is evident in murals such as Southside Park Mural which consists of stylistically diverse panels by six artists extolling Chicanx culture and tradition. Created on an outdoor stage in Sacramento, the mural offers a culturally appropriate backdrop for community events, concerts, and festivals that celebrate Cinco de Mayo, Mexican Independence Day, and an athletic event called Barrio Olympics.

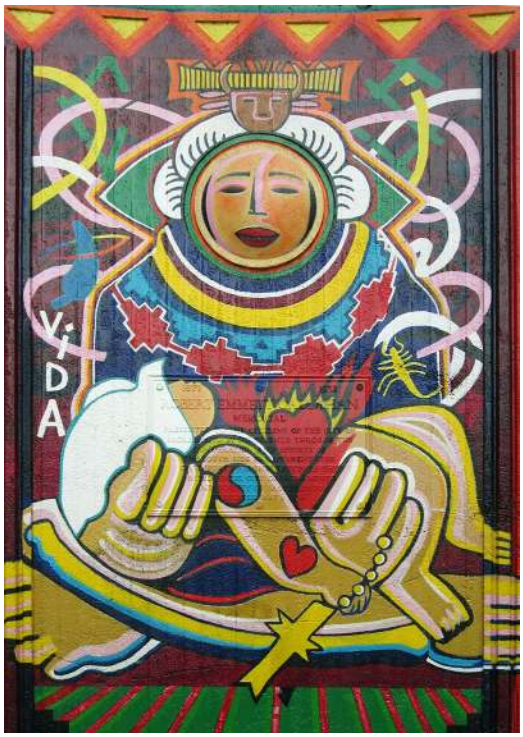


Figure **8.7.14**: Esteban Villa and the Royal Chicano Air Force, *Southside Park Mural*, 1977 (restored 2001), 14 x 110 feet (Southside Park, Sacramento)

Mural as public forum

In 1976, RCAF artist Ricardo Favela and member Rosemary Rasul negotiated with city officials to create the park mural. José Montoya, Juanishi Orosco, Esteban Villa, Stan Padilla, Juan Cervantes, and Lorraine García-Nakata each painted the panels in their own styles, reflecting the collective's diversity. The distinct styles and motifs of RCAF artists is perhaps best exemplified in the social realism of Montoya, which draws attention to the conditions of the working class, and the geometric abstraction of Orosco.

The mural panels draw on pre-Columbian, neo-Amerindian, and Chicanx youth iconography. For example, in the center panel, Esteban Villa painted a priest-like figure holding a newborn. The figures are rendered in broad strokes of color and a rosary, a Sacred Heart, and the word vida (life) can be seen. Flanking Villa's panel on the left, Juanishi Orosco represented ojos de Dios (eyes of God) with Hopi influences, representing neo-Amerindian claims made during the 1960s and 70s Chicano Movement that sought to reconnect Amerindian cultures across the political border that now divides the United States from Mexico.



Figure 8.7.15: Stan Padilla and the Royal Chicano Air Force, *Southside Park Mural*, 1977 (restored 2001), 14 x 110 feet (Southside Park, Sacramento)

To the right of Villa's panel, Padilla continued the neo-Amerindian theme by blending indigenous imagery with a visualization of the moon's cycle and a monarch butterfly, a species native to the region but also a prototype for the RCAF's Metamorphosis mural planned later that year and installed in downtown Sacramento by 1980.

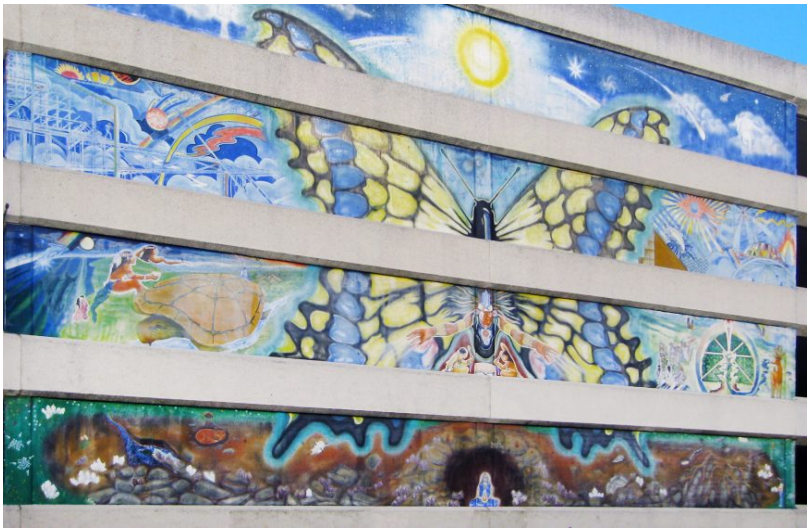


Figure 8.7.16: Juanishi Orosco, Stan Padilla, Esteban Villa and The Centro de Artistas Chicano, *Metamorphosis*, 1980, mural (east façade, parking garage at Third and L Street, Sacramento)

José Montoya's far left panel captures Pachuco/a couples: Mexican Americans of the 1930s and 1940s who participated in the "zoot suit" youth culture known as la pachucada. The scene gestures to the past represented by Mexican revolutionary heroes Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata who are identified by their mustaches, bandoliers, and sombreros. A young couple gazes up at the pachucos/as, suggesting a Chicanx future as they are a contemporary Cholo/a couple (a term for Mexican-Americans associated with a working-class culture rooted in la pachucada, but vilified in mainstream U.S. media as representing gang culture.)

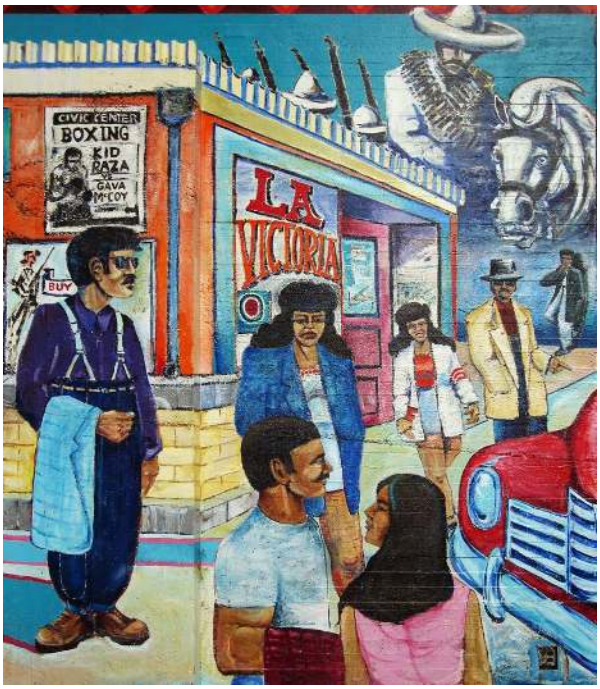


Figure 8.7.17: José Montoya and the Royal Chicano Air Force, *Southside Park Mural*, 1977 (restored 2001), 14 x 110 feet (Southside Park, Sacramento)

The murals flanking the outer walls of the stage at Southside Park were created by Lorraine García-Nakata, one of the few Chicana artist members of the RCAF. García-Nakata designed, outlined, and painted two Amerindian women with open hands. While the women stand proudly with outstretched arms and from a position of power, they also seem to caution those who approach the stage, a message underscored by the size of their hands.

Centro de Artistas Chicanos

The RCAF championed aesthetic diversity and labor equality, exemplifying members' commitment to the United Farm Workers' labor platforms. The group also rejected the notion of individual artistic genius, and capitalist values of art ownership. In fact, the practice of signing work shifted to include both individual artist and the initials RCAF, a practice that dates to the late 1970s when institutions began to collect Chicanx artwork.

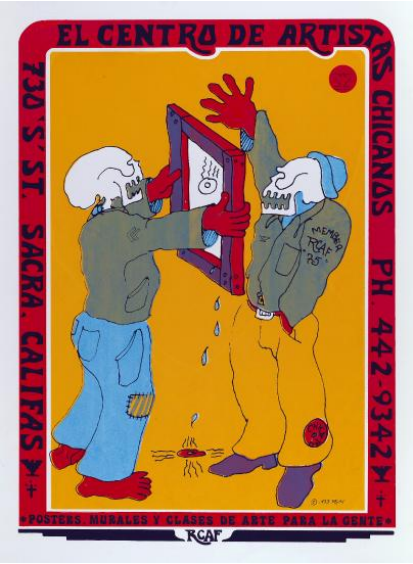


Figure 8.7.18: Ricardo Favela, *El centro de artistas chicanos* poster, 1975, screenprint on paper, 56.5 x 40.6 cm (Smithsonian American Art Museum ©1975 Ricardo Favela)

RCAF members were committed to public art. They painted murals and taught printmaking to their communities and to university students, as well as in local prison programs. They also exhibited artwork made by community members and by their students in both art institutions and in community spaces. In 1972, they founded the Centro de Artistas Chicanos as an operational hub for the RCAF and local area artists, in order to facilitate grants, teach classes, and better support community-based art programs.

Additional Resources:

Royal Chicano Air Force archives at the Online Archives of California

Royal Chicano Air Force in Calisphere, University of California Libraries

Eleanor Antin, *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND



Figure 8.7.19: ***Aphrodite of Knidos***, torso: Roman copy, 2nd century C.E., restoration, 17th century, marble (Rome, Roman National Museum, Palazzo Altemps)

In 1972, the artist Eleanor Antin decided she would make an "academic" sculpture:

> ***"I got out a book on Greek sculpture, which is the most academic of all….This piece was done in the method of the Greek sculptors…carving around and around the figure and whole layers would come off at a time until finally the aesthetic ideal had been reached."***

Of course she did no such thing—make an academic sculpture, that is. What she produced instead was a work entitled *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* in which the typical marble or bronze medium of sculpture was replaced with a grid of 148 black and white photographs of the artist's naked body. They are arranged in 37 vertical columns, corresponding to the number of days Antin spent following a diet plan proposed in a popular magazine for women. Each row consists of four photographs showing back, front, and side profiles, with a text panel at the bottom listing each day, time, and the artist's weight. When first exhibited, the photographs were simply pinned to the wall, eschewing the conventional use of frames in the display of art.



Figure 8.7.20: Eleanor Antin, *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*, 1972, 148 gelatin silver prints and text panels, each photograph 17.7 x 12.7 cm (**The Art Institute of Chicago**)

It is not sculpture per se, but the performance of sculpture. We might think of it as sculpture transposed into a living form, which is then presented as documentation—an analytical practice somewhat akin to laboratory research. The result might seem more informational than artistic.

Critiquing representations of women

Carving: A Traditional Sculpture could be seen as one answer to the rhetorical question posed by art historian Linda Nochlin's now famous essay published one year earlier: "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" Nochlin's argument was that the history of art included few women, not because there were few women artists of note, but because art history was an extension of a patriarchal system in which women were excluded from almost everything. The answer Nochlin proposed was not to simply re-insert women into history, but to scrutinize the very structure of history itself: to analyze the role of women within patriarchy, and by extension in the history of art.

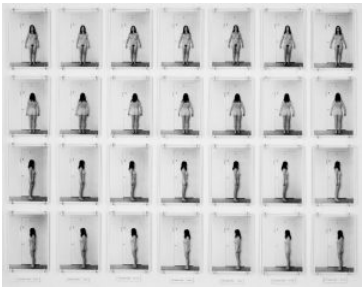


Figure **8.7.21**: Eleanor Antin, Carving: A Traditional Sculpture, 1972 (detail) (**Henry Moore Foundation**)

Antin's "traditional" sculpture is a witty and humorously feminist attack on tradition in which women were more often subjects than authors. Antin took the *idea* of sculpture as the subject of her work, thereby also following the dictates of **Conceptual art**, a dominant movement of the 1970s in which traditional notions of art were contested and redefined. Women artists at this time, in tandem with second wave feminism, embraced the Conceptual art movement's focus on concepts and processes, its adaptation of new media, and its overturning of past artistic conventions.

Though the ancient Greeks predominantly sculpted male bodies, the lasting tradition of Western art, which was rooted in the **classical ideal of ancient Greek and Roman art**, was one in which the bodies of women served as primary subject matter. Subjected to scenarios of **violence and abduction**, and the **distortion**, **abstraction** and **idealization** that supposedly served the higher goals of art, that tradition became a key target of feminist interventions into visual culture in the 1970s.

Dispensing with clichéd notions of beauty and femininity, in this piece Antin presents her body for the purposes of critical analysis (signaled by the detached presentation in black and white) rather than visual pleasure, thereby presenting a critique of the ways women had been depicted in the history of art. However, it was not just the Western tradition of fine art that Antin interrogated in this conceptual sculpture. Popular culture similarly demands that women hold to an idealized form of femininity. Antin's joining of these two mutually reinforcing systems—the weight loss program found in a typical "women's" magazine and the chiseling away of stone to reveal an ideal form in academic art—became the template for women artists in the 1970s and 1980s who were interested in examining cultural representations of gender. (**Mary Kelly** and **Cindy Sherman** are two other important examples.)



Figure 8.7.22: Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79, 1463 x 1463 cm (**Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum**)

Socially constructed, or essentially feminine?

Antin's *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* was one of the first artworks that looked critically at how women are portrayed within the contexts of both art and popular culture, but it represented only one strand of feminist art in the 1970s. Antin's work could be viewed as an example of "social constructionism." According to this way of thinking, imagery of women was seen as *constructing*, rather than simply reflecting, concepts of femininity.

A different school of thought, called "essentialism," argued that a truly feminist art meant finding and highlighting an essential female aesthetic experience. Instead of analyzing women's experience in relation to patriarchy, this approach argued that women's art should be celebrated as separate in its own right. Judy Chicago's massive installation *The Dinner Party* is an example of this theory. Created between 1974 and 1979, this work embodied a sense of essential femininity through a collaborative project that employed several hundred volunteers specialized in crafts (embroidery and ceramics, for example) that were typically associated with the domestic labor commonly practiced by women. The end result was a triangular dinner table with place settings dedicated to famous women in history and myth.



Figure 8.7.23: Helen Frankenthaler, *Mountains and Sea*, 1952, oil and charcoal on unsized, unprimed canvas, 219.4 × 297.8 cm (The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

Whatever the differences between these camps (and those differences would form a rich area of feminist scholarly debate in the years to come), by the 1970s the issue of gender could no longer be ignored. We can get a sense of how vastly different the new climate was when looking at a particular moment in a film, released the very next year, in 1973, after Antin first exhibited her work. *Painters Painting: The New York Art Scene 1940-1970* was a documentary of the school of painting that had reigned since World War II. At one point in the film, the artist Helen Frankenthaler, known for her stained abstractions in which pools of color saturated the canvas, was asked "What was it like to be a woman painter?" Like many female modernists, Frankenthaler had faced the hostility of critics who claimed women did not have the wherewithal to produce the heroically large abstractions of their male counterparts. But Frankenthaler was clearly uncomfortable with the question. Despite the fact that she had just given an impressive overview of the history of modernist painting and the problems it represented for her own generation of artists, Frankenthaler's only response to this question was a brief one—"well first of all I am a painter"—followed by an averting of her eyes. For the younger generation that came of age in the 1960s, this was no longer a tenable position. The personal was political, as the saying would go, but so too was the aesthetic.

Additional resources:

This work at the Art Institute of Chicago

The Dinner Party at the Brooklyn Museum

Eleanor Antin cited in Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, eds, *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985* (Pandora Press, 1987), p.271.

Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (1971) in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (Thames & Hudson,1989).

Painters Painting: The New York Art Scene 1940-1970, 1973, documentary directed by Emile de Antonio.

Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*

by RACHEL WARRINER

Anyone who has been in the unpleasant position of changing a dirty nappy will know that normally your first instinct is to get it as far away from it as possible. So it might seem strange that American artist Mary Kelly (born 1941) took the liners of her son's used cloth nappies, printed them with details of his diet, and displayed them as artworks. Causing some controversy at their debut exhibition, the nappy liners formed the first part of the epic and fascinating *Post-Partum Document* (1973-79).

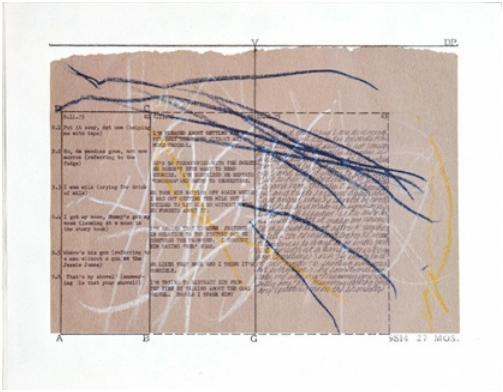


Figure **8.7.24**: Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-79, perspex units, white card, sugar paper, crayon, 1 of the 13 units, 35.5 x 28 cm each

Kelly has made works that examine complicated social issues such as the ramifications of war, and the politics of how our identities are constructed. In *Post-Partum Document*, she was engaging in a discussion that was happening at the emergence of second-wave feminism about the way in which women worked in the home. At a time where many feminist artists were looking at reclaiming the body through performance – such as Marina Abramovic and Carole Schneeman – or revising history in order to incorporate our foremothers – such as Judy Chicago – Kelly looked more directly at the invisible daily experience of women engaged in domestic labour.

Post-Partum Document consists of six sections of documentation that follow the development of Kelly's son, Kelly Barrie, from birth until the age of five. Kelly intricately charts her relationship with her son, and her changing role as a mother by writing on artefacts associated with child care: baby clothes, his drawings, items he collects, and his first efforts at writing. In addition, there are detailed analytical texts that exist in parallel to the objects.

In 'Documentation III: Analysed Markings and Diary Perspective Schema,' Kelly includes three types of text. She describes them in the documentation that accompanies their exhibition as:

R1 A condensed transcription of the child's conversation, playing it back immediately following the recording session

R2 A transcription of the mother's inner speech in relation to R1, recalling it during a playback later the same day

R3 A secondary revision of R2, one week later, locating the conversation (as object) within a specific time interval (as spatial metaphor) and rendering it "in perspective" (as a mnemic system)

Kelly's documentations that accompany the work are heavily indebted to Lacanian psychoanalysis, which conceives of the unconscious as being structured like a language. This is interesting in relation to *Post-Partum Document* because it is so layered with text. The quote above strongly contrasts with extracts taken from column R1 (the transcripts) from the piece dated 27.9.75, which is written in lowercase on a typewriter. They state:

> ***Come'n do it (wants to fly the kite)***
> ***Down dis, its falling. (I'm pretending to fly the kite)] Ask Daddy flying the kite, go ask him (I say Daddy will fly it tomorrow)***

We can see how much range there is in the text that she uses. Adding to this, there are the sections in R2 that provide a picture of an adult's day to day interaction with a small child. This column is typed in capital letters, using the aesthetic of the text in order to separate the voices. From the same piece R2 reads:

> ***I say it would be nice to take it outside as it's very windy but it's also very late so I try to change the subject.***

> ***As I started this game of pretending to fly the kite standing on a chair holding it and making sounds like wind, now I'm stuck with it.***
>
> ***He remembers promises very well.***

Finally, in section R3, Kelly describes her anxiety following an accident in which her son drank liquid aspirin and had to be rushed to hospital. This section is handwritten and is much longer, with candid text that explores the difficulties of childrearing. A part of this section states:

> ***Sometimes I forget to give him his medicine which makes me feel totally irresponsible or I just feel I wish it was all over i.e. he was 'grown up' but my mother says it never ends the worry just goes on and on.***

Over the top of all this worry and analysis are Kelly Barrie's drawings. They are typical of the drawings made by a young child, not much more than scribbles on rice paper. However, his lines cut over his mother's careful work; their carelessness seems all the more free when contrasted with her deliberations.

What makes this piece important is the way in which motherhood—so often seen in art history as a sentimental connection between mother and child—is shown as a difficult and complex relationship. Kelly's voice does not overbear her son's, instead it exists in tandem; we see Kelly develoraping and adapting as much as her child.

This is an extensive project (comprising in total of 139 individual parts) and Kelly's attention to the material qualities of these mundane objects is outstanding. This piece is a central work within feminist art that is still a relevant and a fascinating picture of what motherhood means for women.

Additional Resources:

Mary Kelly Artist Website

Mary Kelly at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (1976)

Mary Kelly interviewed by Josefina Ayerza

Mary Kelly, Four Works in Dialogue (video)

Jackie Winsor, *#1 Rope*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **8.7.3**: Jackie Winsor, *#1 Rope*, 1976, wood and hemp, 40-1/4 x 40 x 40″ (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art)

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

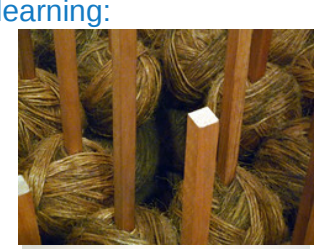
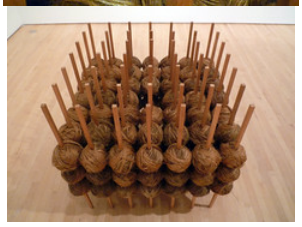







Figure 8.7.25: More Smarthistory images…

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8.8: Conceptual + Performance Art

Conceptual and Performance Art

The Modernists proposed that art could be anything—so why couldn't it be an idea or an action?

c. 1960 - present

Conceptual Art

Conceptual art can include just about any material: text, photography, found objects, and even the physical space of the gallery.

c. 1960 - present

A beginner's guide

Conceptual Art: An Introduction

by DR. TOM FOLLAND and DR. LETA Y. MING



Figure **8.8.1**: Tom Marioni, *My First Car*, 1972, De Saisset Gallery, Santa Clara, California (photo from ***Performance Anthology: Source Book of California Performance Art***, eds. Carl E. Loeffler and Darlene Tong)

In 1972 the De Saisset Art Museum at Santa Clara University in the San Francisco Bay Area gave the artist Tom Marioni several hundred dollars to help cover expenses for mounting an exhibition of his work at the institution. Instead of using the money to purchase art materials, Marioni bought an older model used car, a Fiat 750, which he carefully maneuvered into the museum for the opening of his show. The vehicle, parked on top of an oriental rug, formed the centerpiece for this exhibition, titled *My First Car*. Was this really art, or was it a scam to get the museum to pay for a car the artist wanted? After learning about the show, the University President concluded that it was more of the latter and ordered the show closed. Presumably he was put off by how *My First Car* profited Marioni without involving any technical skill or hard work on the part of the artist.

Not just a prank

Marioni's work was in many ways typical of the late 1960s and early 1970s art practices that came to be known as Conceptual art. As the term suggests, Conceptual art placed emphasis upon the concept or idea, and deemphasized the actual physical manifestation of the work. Thus an artist did not need manual skill to produce his work, and in fact could get away with not making anything at all. Rather than being a mere prank (as many dismissed it at the time), Marioni's work was a proposal for a new kind of art that deliberately disavowed art's traditional role as a showcase for the creative genius and technical abilities of the artist.



Figure **8.8.2**: Mel Bochner, *Measurement Room*, 1969, tape and letraset, dimensions variable (**The Museum of Modern Art**)

Marioni's appropriation of a car is only one example of a number of very diverse art practices that are grouped under the term Conceptual art. Refusing to work in any one medium, and especially hostile to the painting and sculptural traditions in Western art, Conceptual artists would broaden their approach to art-making to include just about any material: text, photography, found objects, and even the physical space of the gallery, as long as there was a conceptual dimension that emphasized a set of principles or process involved in producing a given artwork, rather than a finished product.

Take the artist Mel Bochner's *Measurement Room*, for example, a work that consisted of labeling gallery walls with numbers to indicate each wall's dimensions. In the place of attractive objects and captivating imagery, Bochner presented emotionless, mechanical text overlaid onto a pre-existing space. Art's new role, as proposed by Conceptual artists, was to convey information in the most straightforward, objective manner as possible and to engage the viewer within their immediate environment (instead of presenting a transcendent and imaginary world that accentuated the pleasures of looking).

Minimalism as precursor



Figure **8.8.3**: Carl Andre, *144 Aluminum Square*, 1967, aluminum, 144 units, 1 x 365.8 x 365.8 cm (**Norton Simon Museum**)

Conceptual art constituted a dramatic departure from traditional art-making, but it did not come out of nowhere. Minimalism, the movement that directly preceded Conceptual art and the style that dominated the 1960s, conceived of art not as something internally complete and detached from the everyday world (a view that had been strongly held by the **Abstract Expressionists** throughout the 1950s), but rather as something that related to both its site of display as well as the viewer's body. A Minimalist work like Carl Andre's *144 Aluminum Square*, for example, offered a spare, industrially-produced, geometric installation that was radical because it made spectators think of the floor on which it was placed and how their bodies related to it (by trampling on it!).

Emerging out of Minimalism, a Conceptual work like Bochner's *Measurement Room* also made viewers aware of the proportions of the physical gallery space and encouraged them to compare how they measured up to the room's dimensions. Minimalism, however, always maintained a reliance on a physical object, which was, in many cases, a highly finished and aestheticized form that lent itself to being traded on the art market and shown on gallery circuit. By contrast, Conceptual works like *Measurement Room* and *My First Car* not only departed from the conventional media of painting and sculpture, but moreover, their unusual forms prevented them from being easily sold or collected.

The art market

With the explosive expansion of the contemporary art market in the 1960s that included high auction prices for living artists (previously it was only dead European masters who fetched such prices), one of the main concerns of artists in the 1960s was that art had become increasingly commodified, and yet artists weren't the ones benefiting from the growing market. At the mercy of dealers, collectors, and museum trustees, artists felt they had little control over their own work and careers. So it is not entirely

surprising artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s began to reject technical artistic skill and material objects altogether. To make an object the essence of the artwork was to be in thrall to the concerns of the market and art institutions.

A radical era

The 1960s and early 1970s was tumultuous and divisive era defined by the Vietnam War, passionate social liberation movements (including the Black Power, Feminist, Chicano, and Gay Liberation Movements), as well as a massive countercultural youth rebellion. The emergence of such a radical practice as Conceptual art should be understood as part of this oppositional culture that envisioned a radically new world. To the new generation of Conceptual artists, the old rules of art making and the traditional art establishments could feel just as oppressive as the institutions of the state or police felt to the youthful protester on the streets.



Figure **8.8.4**: Martha Rosler, *Cleaning the Drapes* from the series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, c. 1967-72, pigmented ink jet print (photomontage), 44 x 60.3 cm (**The Museum of Modern Art**)

The backdrop of immense social upheaval in the 1960s and early 1970s relates to another important aspect of Conceptual art: the sense that it was entangled with larger social and political realities. In a series of collages called *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, Martha Rosler combined graphic images of the Vietnam War from the popular news journal *Life* with those of upscale interiors from the home decorating magazine *House Beautiful* to make direct reference to the Vietnam War.

In one collage, a middle-class housewife vacuums billowing drapes whose window reveals helmeted, rifle-wielding American soldiers in the trenches of war. This jarring juxtaposition not only commented on the war's insidious effects on the home front, but also signaled a sense that art should engage with and could reshape the social world. Likewise, *My First Car* employed a similar technique of inserting a temporal, everyday object into a sacred space of high art in order to highlight the connectedness of the art sphere to the social, physical, and economic world. Not afraid to embrace the mundanity of the everyday world, Conceptual artists polluted the museum space with commerce, contemporary images of war, and even leaking motor oil.

Conceptual goes mainstream

Conceptual art had its precursors, notably early twentieth-century Dada artists like **Marcel Duchamp**, whose "readymades" (mass-produced objects like a urinal or bicycle wheel that he designated as artworks) also questioned the tenet that art be solely a demonstration of an artist's creative and technical abilities. In the 1950s and early 1960s, movements such as **Fluxus**, Happenings, Neo-Dada, and Nouveau Réalisme also employed techniques we could categorize as Conceptual art from today's vantage point. Embracing ephemeral and performative practices, and provoking viewers with sometimes aggressive assaults upon "good taste," they, too, let go of the notion of art as refined object. In the decades following, Conceptual art strategies were taken up by feminist as well as postmodern artists, and today conceptualism has become a global phenomenon, with artists from around the world deploying video, photography, text, body art, performance, and installation, often interchangeably. Ironically, the strategies of Conceptual art, once a challenge to orthodox, mainstream modern art, have now become so fundamental that they are taken to be a given of contemporary art practice.

Additional resources:

Short essay on Conceptual art from Tate

Conceptual art at the Guggenheim

Conceptual art from MoMA Learning

The Case for Conceptual Art

by THE ART ASSIGNMENT



Video 8.8.1: Sometimes art is paintings, and sometimes it's a chair. Why?

Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND

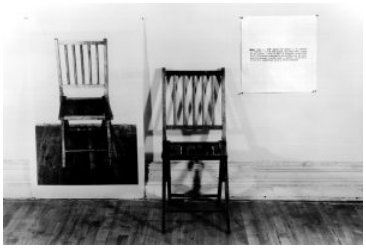


Figure 8.8.5: Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1965, wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and mounted photographic enlargement of the dictionary definition of "chair" (MoMA)

You would not be wrong, standing in front of *One and Three Chairs*, to think, "there is not much to see here." Joseph Kosuth, a conceptual artist, has placed a wooden folding chair against the wall and flanked it with two prints: a black and white photograph of the chair, and a photostat of its dictionary definition. Nevertheless, *One and Three Chairs* is a defining work of conceptual art, a movement that emerged in the mid-1960s and advocated a radically new form of artwork: one whose value, meaning and existence was rooted in its *concept*, rather than in the work's physical or material properties.

In Minimalism's wake



Figure **8.8.6**: Donald Judd, *Untitled (Stack)*, 1967, lacquer on galvanized iron, twelve units, each 22.8 x 101.6 x 78.7 cm, installed vertically with 9″ (22.8 cm) intervals (MoMA)

Questions of form (the visual elements of works of art) had been paramount for many modern artists during the twentieth century and especially post-World War II, when New York City replaced Paris as the center of the most advanced art of the time. Modernism's focus on pure form (works of art that sought to contain no references or likenesses to the external world and focused instead on their own inherent visual and material aspects) reached a peak in the 1960s with Minimalism, the movement that directly preceded conceptual art.

Minimalism pushed abstraction to its limits and set out to strip art of its historical meaning. For instance, the Minimalist artist Donald Judd produced a series of geometric boxes using industrial materials. There was no evidence of skill or handicraft—the artist had in some cases not even constructed the object—and the viewer was left with no references to a subject or theme. The result was a work that was purely formal: that sought to insulate itself from external meaning beyond its material, color, and shape.

For the Minimalists, art's role was no longer to render scenes of nature, spirituality, or humanity, as had been central to Western art since before the Renaissance, or even to celebrate the artist's vision and hand as had been the case with Abstract Expressionism. The credo of Minimalist art was "what you see is what you see." With these pure forms, art was emptied of all other meaning. It was as if the word "sculpture" needed quotation marks. It certainly strained credulity to imagine an industrially-fabricated object made from lacquered, galvanized iron as the equal to the historic sculptural processes such as carved marble or cast bronze produced by Donatello or Bernini.

"Art After Philosophy"



Figure **8.8.7**: Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (detail), 1965, wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and mounted photographic enlargement of the dictionary definition of "chair" (MoMA)

By the end of the 1960s, these Minimalist practices were being challenged. Minimalism's value remained tied directly to the physical object—a visual form that invited viewers to see it, walk around it, and enjoy its aesthetic qualities. Conceptual artists like Kosuth wanted to downplay the pleasures associated with looking at art as part of a rejection of what they saw as outdated ideas about beauty. While retaining Minimalism's critical stance toward traditional art forms, they wanted to engage with the unseen relationships that Minimalism had put aside: ideas, signification, and the construction of meaning. "Being an artist now means to question the nature of art," Kosuth wrote in his 1969 essay "Art After Philosophy." To this end, he created works that directed the viewer away from *form* and toward the *ideas* that generated them.

In the case of *One and Three Chairs*, the central idea was to explore the nature of representation itself. We know instinctively what a "chair" is, but how is it that we actually conceive of and communicate that concept? Kosuth presents us with a photograph of a chair, an actual chair, and its linguistic or language-based description. All three of these could be interpreted as representations of the same chair (the "one" chair of the title), and yet they are *not* the same. They each have distinct properties: in actuality, the viewer is confronted with "three" chairs, each represented and experienced—*read*—in different ways.

Semiotics

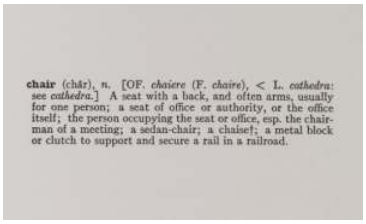

chair (chãr), *n.* [OF. *chaiere* (F. *chaire*), < L. *cathedra*: see *cathedra*.] A seat with a back, and often arms, usually for one person; a seat of office or authority, or the office itself; the person occupying the seat or office, esp. the chairman of a meeting; a sedan-chair; a chaisef; a metal block or clutch to support and secure a rail in a railroad.

Figure **8.8.8**: Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (detail), 1965, wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and mounted photographic enlargement of the dictionary definition of "chair" (MoMA)

Kosuth was influenced by new theories of language and signification that had emerged in the early twentieth century, particularly semiotics—the study of the meaning of signs (words or symbols used to communicated information). Semiotics grew out of the science of linguistics, which looks at how language structures meaning. However, the field of semiotics had a broader set of goals: it sought to explore how both linguistic and image-based forms of communication shaped larger social and cultural structures.

Why photography and text, and not a painting or a sculpture? Kosuth's avoidance of the traditional media was also a critique of the ways that art institutions had historically accepted and promoted only certain types of artworks. This criticality had roots in the radical **Dada** practices of Marcel Duchamp and other early twentieth-century artists who pushed for the acceptance of new forms of art. Artists from the 1960s onward were increasingly interested in building on this legacy, challenging the ways that museums, academies, and other art institutions adhered to traditional, nineteenth-century notions of what art was and should be.

The viewer's role

When we look at *One and Three Chairs*, we are not drawn to admire its beauty, nor are we presented with a relatable story or a figure to be admired. Rather, we are invited to consider the concept of what a "chair" is, as well as the nature of visual and linguistic representation itself—fundamental questions that Plato asked more than two thousand years ago. And like the ancient Greek philosopher, Kosuth focuses on the idea of a "chair," rather than simply its physical representation. But he also reveals the importance of the viewer's role in the function of conceptual artwork. It is not until we approach pieces such as *One and Three Chairs* and begin to engage with them intellectually that the actual "artworks"—the concepts—emerge. In this sense, conceptual art can only exist in tandem with its audience, and is created anew each time we view it. This emphasis on the participation of the viewer was also important for the related movements of **performance and participatory art**, which gained momentum as well beginning in the 1960s.

One and Three Chairs stripped art of its outer casing and celebrated, instead, the importance of the conceptual for both the artist and the viewer. Importantly, it also stripped the artist of his or her role as a romantic and existential agent of personal expression (an aspect of art that was increasingly important from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century). The conceptual artist appears, instead, as a philosopher questioning the nature of reality and the social world in which art and audience reside.

Additional resources:

This work at MoMA

Essay on Joseph Kosuth from the Guggenheim

Essay on conceptual art from Tate

The Case for Yoko Ono

by THE ART ASSIGNMENT



Video 8.8.2: Speaker: Sarah Urist Green

Additional resources:

Works by Yoko Ono at the Walker Art Center

Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* at MoMA

John Baldessari, *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 8.8.3: John Baldessari, *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*, 1971, lithograph, 22-7/16 x 30-1/16″ (MoMA), images © John Baldessari, courtesy of the artist

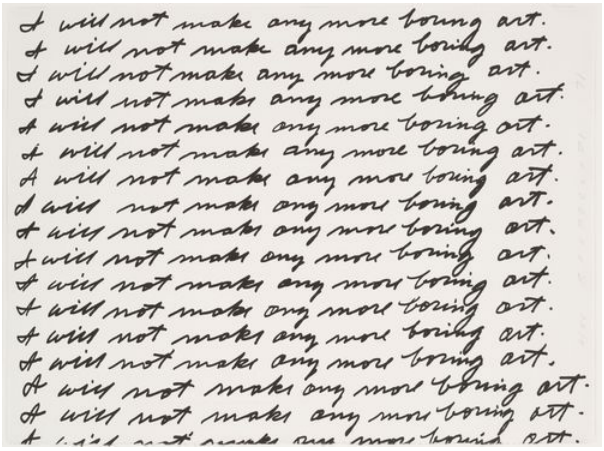


Figure 8.8.9: John Baldessari, *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*, 1971, lithograph, 57 x 76.4 cm (The Museum of Modern Art, New York) (© John Baldessari, courtesy of the artist)

Serious Humor

"I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art," repeated in a neat cursive script down the length of a sheet of lined paper is clearly reminiscent of an old-fashioned school-room punishment. But just who is it that the artist, John Baldessari, is punishing? The lines are stark and simple, and like so much of John Baldessari's art, employs a wry humor that turns on the art world, only in this case, the blackboard is a canvas.

Only a year earlier, in 1970, Baldessari underlined a key rupture in his career and one that was taking place in the art world as well at that time. Since the 1950s, Abstract Expressionism had been the dominant avant-garde style in galleries and art schools. For example, Jackson Pollock's huge canvases, dense with paint he applied directly, were understood (however inaccurately) to be a direct expression of his internal emotional state.

Cremation Project

As a young artist, Baldessari had also painted abstractions. But in 1970, a year before *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*, Baldessari, together with friends and students from University of California at San Diego, gathered paintings he had made as a young artist and drove them to a crematorium where they burned them. The artist then placed the ashes into an urn with a bronze plaque inscribed,

JOHN ANTHONY BALDESSARI

MAY 1953 MARCH 1966

The urn and plaque, together with documenting photographs of the cremation constitute Baldessari's *Cremation Project*, 1970. The previous year, the artist had written of this project as an act to,

> ***…rid my life of accumulated art….It is a reductive, recycling piece. I consider all these paintings a body of work in the real sense of the word. Will I save my life by losing it? Will a Phoenix arise from the ashes? Will the paintings having become dust become materials again? I don't know, but I feel better.***[1]

In *Cremation Project*, Baldessari defined the clearest possible demarcation between his early and mature work. By sacrificing his early paintings, by burning them, he emphasized their physicality. They existed as a thing in the world that could be destroyed. But he shifts our frame of reference from the physical, the material, by creating a work of art that relied on the physical artifact, the ashes and urn, only as a way to draw the viewer to the larger conceptual issues—including the construction of a division in his career.

With the *Cremation Project*, John Baldessari staked his place in the highly intellectualized space of 1960s and 70s conceptual art practice. By 1970, Conceptual art had established a place for itself in the art world. The stark machined repetitions created by the artist Donald Judd and the grids painted by Agnes Martin laid the groundwork for artists like Sol Lewitt who created written

instructions for lines drawn with mathematical precision onto a wall to create dazzling geometries. Lewitt had created conceptual works of art that asked the Platonic question, where is the art itself actually located? Does it exist as the completed drawing on the wall? Does it exist in the originary act of writing the instructions? Is the art embedded in the performance of the work when assistants do the drawing? What happens when the wall drawing is painted over and is remade somewhere else? This was the world of ideas into which Baldessari entered.

Word Paintings

In Baldessari's art, words, photographs and paint offer visual statements that are so flat, so bald-faced in their directness and sincerity that they become ironic visual statements aimed at the very definition of what art is. And because these statements are on canvas or within a galley context, they challenge the most sacred theories of modern art, what the artist calls "received wisdom."

Baldessari's word paintings of the late 1960s and early 1970s are a case in point. Many were hand-lettered onto stretched canvas by sign painters that Baldessari had hired to render statements that that he had not even written but had only read. These are often statements that naively set out define the most elusive of questions that confront artists. And they are rendered in the clearest most direct lettering possible, the lettering found on a sign, the most earnest typography that directs and informs in the most straightforward manner possible. We cannot help but trust what these sign paintings tell us, even when Baldessari's word paintings offer audaciously innocent solutions to the complex theory-soaked issues that define modernism.

Works of art such as *What is Painting*, 1966-68, *Everything is purged from this painting but art, no ideas have entered this work*, 1966-68 and *Composing on a Canvas*, 1966-68 are brilliantly ambitious. They layer the false objectivity of didactic grammar and clear careful hand lettering over impossibly trite yet seductive solutions at the very core of art's definition.



Figure 8.8.10: John Baldessari, *What is Painting*, 1966-68, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 172.1 x 144.1 cm (The Museum of Modern Art, New York) (© 2014 John Baldessari, courtesy of the artist)

For example, *What is Painting* tries to define what painting is and does so in only three short sentences. But these sentences are written on a canvas and so inherit a fraught five hundred year history of art making. What makes these issues all the more pleasantly absurd is that Baldessari is at least as well known for his long career as a teacher as he is as an artist. So when he offers paintings with statements such as, "Everything is purged from this painting but art, no ideas have entered this work," the allegedly instructive nature is given more weight and is ultimately more absurd.

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

Soon after the *Cremation Project*, Baldessari was asked by the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design to exhibit his work there. Instead of sending art, Baldessari sent instructions to the school in the form of a letter for the initial iteration of *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*, a work based on a sentence Baldessari had written to himself in a notebook he then kept. The letter reads in part,

…I have no idea what your gallery looks like of course, and I know that you do not have much money for shows so that conditions my ideas of course….I've got a punishment piece. It will require a surrogate or surrogates since I cannot be there to… impose punishment. But that's ok, since the theory is that punishment should be instructive for others. And there is a precedent for it, Christ

being punished for our sins, and many others. So some student scapegoats are necessary. If you can't induce anybody to be sacrificial and take my sins upon their shoulders, then use whatever funds there are, fifty dollars, to pay someone as a mercenary.

The piece is this, from floor to ceiling should be written by one or more people, one sentence under another, the following statement: I will not make any more bad art.

At least one column of the sentence should be done floor to ceiling before the exhibit opens and the writing of the sentence should continue everyday, if possible, for the length of the exhibit. I would appreciate it if you could tell me how many times the sentence has been written after the exhibit closes. It should be hand written, clearly written with correct spelling….[2]

By the end of the exhibit the walls were covered with Baldessari's statement of sacrificial punishment and he allowed the school to create a lithograph of the work for their fundraising based on his own handwriting.

A Strategist

Baldessari has called himself "purely a strategist" and in *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art* he references the fundamental modernist tension between the word and image that Magritte had exposed in *The Treachery of Images* and the cool, spare, self-referential repetitions of the minimalists. John Baldessari has spent his career coaxing beauty and complexity from our prosaic visual culture.

Special thanks to Sandy Heller, The Heller Group, LLC

1. Excerpt from, John Baldessari, *Cremation Piece*, 1969 in Donald Kuspit, "**Semiotic Anti-Subject**," *Artnet*, originally from three Getty lectures delivered at the School of Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, April 4, 6 and 10, 2000.

2. Excerpt transcribed from video, "**Curator Chrissie Iles on John Baldessari's *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art***," Whitney Museum of American Art, December 2010.

Additional Resources:

The artist's website

Baldessari on Art 21

Whitney Museum recreation of *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*

Baldessari essay and podcast on NPR

Yale Books Blog on the Cremation Project

Hans Haacke, *Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1884-1975*

by SAL KHAN, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 8.8.4: Hans Haacke, *Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1884-1975*, 1975

Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*

by TINA RIVERS RYAN

Video 8.8.5

Getting on the “Electronic Super Highway”

In 1974, artist Nam June Paik submitted a report to the Art Program of the Rockefeller Foundation, one of the first organizations to support artists working with new media, including television and video. Entitled “Media Planning for the Post Industrial Society—The 21st Century is now only 26 years away,” the report argued that media technologies would become increasingly prevalent in American society, and should be used to address pressing social problems, such as racial segregation, the modernization of the economy, and environmental pollution. Presciently, Paik’s report forecasted the emergence of what he called a “broadband communication network”—or “electronic super highway”—comprising not only television and video, but also “audio cassettes, telex, data pooling, continental satellites, micro-fiches, private microwaves and eventually, fiber optics on laser frequencies.” By the 1990s, Paik’s concept of an information “superhighway” had become associated with a new “world wide web” of electronic communication then emerging—just as he had predicted.



Figure 8.8.11: Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, 1995, fifty-one channel video installation (including one closed-circuit television feed), custom electronics, neon lighting, steel and wood; color, sound, roughly 15 x 40 x 4′ (Smithsonian American Art Museum, © Nam June Paik Estate)

From Music to Fluxus

Paik was well-positioned to understand how media technologies were evolving: in the 1960s he was one of the very first people to use televisual technologies as an artistic medium, earning him the title of "father" of video art. Born in Seoul in 1932, Paik studied composition while attending college in Tokyo; he eventually travelled to Germany, where he hoped to encounter the leading composers of the day. He met John Cage in 1958, and soon became involved with the avant-garde Fluxus group, led by Cage's student George Maciunas. Explain Fluxus.

Following the example of Cage's oeuvre, many of Paik's Fluxus works undermined accepted notions of musical composition or performance. This same irreverent spirit informed his use of television, to which he turned his attention in 1963 in his first one-man gallery show, "Exposition of Music—Electronic Television," at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Germany. Here, Paik became the first artist to exhibit what would later become known as "video art" by scattering television sets across the floor of a room, thereby shifting our attention from the content on the screens to the sculptural forms of the sets.

The father of video art



Figure **8.8.12**: Nam June Paik, *Magnet TV*, 1965, modified black-and-white television set and magnet (Smithsonian American Art Museum) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

Paik moved to New York in 1964, where he came into contact with the downtown art scene. In 1965, he began collaborating with cellist Charlotte Moorman, who would wear and perform Paik's TV sculptures for many years; he also had a one-man show at the 57th Street Galeria Bonino, in which he exhibited modified or "prepared" television sets that upset the traditional TV-watching experience. One example is *Magnet TV*, in which an industrial magnet is placed on top of the TV set, distorting the broadcast image into abstract patterns of light.

According to an oft-cited story, on October 4th of that same year, Paik purchased the first commercially-available portable video system in America, the Sony Portapak, and immediately used it to record the arrival of Pope Paul VI at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Later that night, Paik showed the tape at the Café au Go Go in Greenwich Village, ushering in a new mode of video art based not on the subversion or distortion of television broadcasts, but on the possibilities of videotape. The evolution of these tendencies into a new movement was announced by a 1969 group show, "TV as a Creative Medium." Held at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York, the show included one of Paik's interactive TVs, and also premiered another one of his collaborations with Moorman.

TV as a Creative Medium

For Paik and other early adopters of video, this new artistic medium was well-suited to the speed of our increasingly electronic modern lives. It allowed artists to create moving images more quickly than recording on film (which required time for negatives to be developed), and unlike film, video could be edited in "real-time," using devices that altered the video's electronic signals. (Ever the pioneer, Paik created his own video synthesizer with engineer Shuya Abe in 1969.) Furthermore, because the image recorded by the video camera could be transmitted to and viewed almost instantaneously on a monitor, people could see themselves "live" on a

TV screen, and even interact with their own TV image, in a process known as “feedback.” In the years to come, the participatory nature of TV would be redefined by two-way cable networks, while the advent of global satellite broadcasts made TV a medium of instant global communication.



Figure **8.8.13**: Nam June Paik, *TV Garden*, 1974 (image shows 2000 version), video installation with color television sets and live plants (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

As television continued to evolve from the late 1960s onward, Paik explored ways to disrupt it from both inside and outside of the institutional frameworks of galleries, museums, and emerging experimental TV labs. His major works from this period include *TV Garden* (1974), a sculptural installation of TV sets scattered among live plants in a museum (image above), and *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* (1984), a broadcast program that coordinated live feeds from around the world via satellite. In these and other projects, Paik’s goal was to reflect upon how we interact with technology, and to imagine new ways of doing so. The many retrospectives of his work in recent decades, including one organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 2012, speak to the increasing relevance of his ideas for contemporary art.



Figure 8.8.14: Nam June Paik, *V-yramid* (detail), 1982, video installation, color, sound, with forty television sets (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York) (photo: Mark B. Schlemmer, CC BY 2.0) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

By the 1980s, Paik was building enormous, free-standing structures comprising dozens or even hundreds of TV screens, often organized into iconic shapes, as in the giant pyramid of *V-yramid* (1982). For the German Pavilion at the 1993 Venice Biennale, Paik produced a series of works about the relationship between Eastern and Western cultures, framed through the lens of Marco Polo; along with Hans Haacke, another artist representing Germany, Paik was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion. One of the works, *Electronic Superhighway*, was a towering bank of TVs that simultaneously screened multiple video clips (including one of John Cage) from a wide variety of sources. Two years later, Paik revisited this work in *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, placing over 300 TV screens into the overall formation of a map of the United States outlined in colored neon lights (see image at the top of the page and the detail below). Roughly forty feet long and fifteen feet high, the work is a monumental record of the physical and also cultural contours of America: within each state, the screens display video clips that resonate with that state's unique popular mythology. For example, Iowa (where each presidential election cycle begins) plays old news footage of various candidates, while Kansas presents the *Wizard of Oz*.



Figure 8.8.15: Detail, Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, 1995, fifty-one channel video installation (including one closed-circuit television feed), custom electronics, neon lighting, steel and wood; color, sound, approx. 15 x 40 x 4′ (Smithsonian American Art Museum) (© Nam June Paik Estate)

The states are firmly defined, but also linked, by the network of neon lights, which echoes the network of interstate "superhighways" that economically and culturally unified the continental U.S. in the 1950s. However, whereas the highways facilitated the transportation of people and goods from coast to coast, the neon lights suggest that what unifies us now is not so much transportation, but electronic communication. Thanks to the screens of televisions and of the home computers that became popular in the 1990s, as well as the cables of the internet (which transmit information as light), most of us can access the same information at anytime and from any place. *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, which has been housed at the Smithsonian American Art Museum since 2002, has therefore become an icon of America in the information age.

While Paik's work is generally described as celebrating the fact that the "electronic superhighway" allows us to communicate with and understand each other across traditional boundaries, this particular work also can be read as posing some difficult questions about how that technology is impacting culture. For example, the physical scale of the work and number of simultaneous clips makes it difficult to absorb any details, resulting in what we now call "information overload," and the visual tension between the static brightness of the neons and the dynamic brightness of the screens points to a similar tension between national and local frames of reference.

Additional resources:

Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Nam June Paik, bio and collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Nam June Paik, *TV Garden* at the Guggenheim

Nam June Paik from the National Endowment for the Arts

Nam June Paik archive at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Nam June Paik from the Asia Society

Electronic Superhighway – American Experience in the Classroom (The Smithsonian American Art Museum)

Melissa Chiu and Michelle Yun, eds., *Nam June Paik: Becoming Robot* (New York: Asia Society Museum, 2014).

John G. Hanhardt and Ken Hakuta, *Nam June Paik: Global Visionary* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2012).

John G. Hanhardt and Jon Ippolito, *The Worlds of Nam June Paik* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2000).

Yayoi Kusama, *Narcissus Garden*

by DANIELLE SHANG

Narcissism

Today there are few female artists who are more visible to a wide range of international audiences than Yayoi Kusama, who was born in 1929 in Japan. Kusama is a self-taught artist who now chooses to live in a private Tokyo mental health facility, while prolifically producing art in various media in her studio nearby. Her highly constructed persona and self-proclaimed life-long history of insanity have been the subject of scrutiny and critiques for decades. Art historian Jody Cutler places Kusama's oeuvre "in dialogue with the psychological state known as narcissism," as "narcissism is both the subject and the cause of Kusama's art, or in other words, a conscious artistic element related to content."[1] It is within this context that we examine Kusama and her infamous *Narcissus Garden* (narcissism is, in part, the egotistic admiration of one's self).

Mirrors

Kusama arrived in New York City from Japan in 1958 and immediately approached dealers and artists alike to promote her work. Within the first few years she began to exhibit and associate herself with seminal artists and critics, such as Donald Judd, Joseph Cornell, Yves Klein, and Lucio Fontana who later was instrumental in her realizing *Narcissus Garden*.



Figure **8.8.16**: Installation view, *Infinity Mirror Room–Phalli's Field* (or *Floor Show*), (no longer extant) Castellane Gallery, New York. 1965 (photo ©Eiko Hosoe)

In 1965, she mounted her first mirror installation *Infinity Mirror Room-Phalli's Field* at Castellane Gallery in New York (left). A mirrored room without a ceiling was filled with colorfully dotted, phallus-like stuffed objects on the floor. The repeated reflections in the mirrors conveyed the illusion of a continuous sea of multiplied phalli expanding to its infinity. This playful and erotic exhibition immediately attracted the media's attention.

Narcissus Garden, 1966

The pinnacle of her *succès de scandale* culminated in the 33rd Venice Biennale in 1966. Although Kusama was not officially invited to exhibit, according to her autobiography, she received the moral and financial support from Lucio Fontana and permission from the chairman of the Biennale Committee to stage 1,500 mass-produced plastic silver globes on the lawn outside the Italian Pavilion. The **tightly arranged 1,500 shimmering balls** constructed an infinite reflective field in which the images of the artist, the visitors, the architecture, and the landscape were repeated, distorted, and projected by the convex mirror surfaces that produced virtual images appearing closer and smaller than reality. The size of each sphere was similar to that of a fortune-teller's crystal ball. When gazing into it, the viewer only saw his/her own reflection staring back, forcing a confrontation with one's own vanity and ego.

During the opening week, Kusama placed two signs at the installation: "NARCISSUS GARDEN, KUSAMA" and "YOUR NARCISSIUM [sic] FOR SALE" on the lawn. Acting like a street peddler, she was selling the mirror balls to passers-by for two dollars each, while distributing flyers with Herbert Read's complimentary remarks about her work on them. She consciously drew

attention to the “otherness” of her exotic heritage by wearing a gold kimono with a silver sash. The monetary exchange between Kusama and her customers underscored the economic system embedded in art production, exhibition and circulation. The Biennale officials eventually stepped in and put an end to her “peddling.” But the installation remained.[2] Her interactive performance and eye-catching installation garnered international press coverage. This original installation of *Narcissus Garden* from 1966 has been frequently interpreted by many as both Kusama’s self-promotion and her protest of the commercialization of art. [3]

The life of Narcissus Garden after 1966



Figure **8.8.17**: Yayoi Kusama, mirror balls, *Narcissus Garden*, Inhotim (Brazil) installation, original installation and performance 1966 (photo: **emc**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Since then, Kusama’s oeuvre has become integrated into the canon of art history, and popular with art institutions around the world. In 1993, Kusama was officially invited to represent Japan at the 45th Venice Biennale.

Her *Narcissus Garden* continues to live on. It has been commissioned and re-installed at various settings, including the Brazilian business tycoon Bernardo de Mello Paz’s Instituto Inhotim (left), Central Park in New York City, as well as retail booths at art fairs.

The re-creation of *Narcissus Garden* has erased the notion of political cynicism and social critique; instead, those shiny balls, now made of stainless steel and carrying hefty price tags, have become a trophy of prestige and self-importance. Originally intended as the media for an interactive performance between the artist and the viewer, the objects are now regarded as valuable commodities for display.



Figure 8.8.18: Yayoi Kusama, mirror balls, Narcissus Garden, Inhotim (Brazil) installation, original installation and performance 1966 (photo: emc, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The profound narcissistic undertone however has been ironically amplified not only by the artist's pervasive ostentation, but also by the viewership in the age of Internet. Seduced by his/her own reflective images on the convex surfaces, viewers snap photographs with a smart phone and instantly upload them to social media for the rest of the world to see. The urge to capture and disseminate the moment one's own image coalesces onto a privileged object in a privileged institution seems to motivate the obsession with the self. To further accentuate the effect of gazing at one's multiple selves, many installations now take place on the water where the original Narcissus from the Greek mythology fell in love with his own reflection and eventually drowned.

[1] Jody Cutler. 2011. "Narcissus, Narcosis, Neurosis: The Visions of Yayoi Kusama," in *Contemporary Art and Classical Myth*, edited by Isabelle Loring Wallace, Jennie Hirsh, (London: Ashgate Publishing ltd), p. 89.

[2] There are a few discrepancies in the anecdote of this event between Kusama's autobiography and art historians and critics. For example, 1) Kusama claims that the installation was not exactly a guerrilla act, because she received permission from the Biennale official, though she did not have an official invitation as a Biennale participant; 2) according to Kusama, the installation itself was NOT removed after she was asked to stop selling the balls; and 3) in her autobiography, the balls were made of plastic in 1966 not stainless steel.

[3] It is worth noting that the following Venice Biennale, in 1968, was marked by social and economic turmoil around the globe, and was struck by the student movement in Italy and a boycott by international artists. The Biennale was labeled as a fascist, capitalist, and commercial. In contrast to Kusama's action, many artists who were officially invited to participate decided to close exhibition halls, withdraw their works, and join street demonstrations resulting in the closure of the Biennale sales office and the end of Biennale prizes until 1986.

Additional resources:

Kusama and Experimentation (Tate blog)

Kusama and Self-obliteration (Tate blog)

TateShots: Kusama's Obliteration Room

Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, translated by Ralph McCarthy (London: Tate Enterprises Ltd., 2013) (see the section, "On an endless Highway").

Yayoi Kusama (Tate)

by TATE



Video 8.8.6: The nine decades of Yayoi Kusama's (草間彌生) life have taken her from rural Japan to the New York art scene to contemporary Tokyo, in a career in which she has continuously innovated and re-invented her style. Video from **Tate**

Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*

by JP MCMAHON

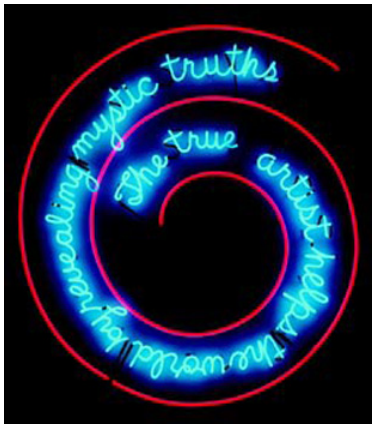


Figure 8.8.19: Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*, 1967, neon and clear glass tubing suspension supports; 149.86 x 139.7 x 5.08 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Bruce Nauman's neon sign asks a multitude of questions with regard to the ways in which the 20th century conceived both avant-garde art and the role of the artist in society. If earlier European modernists, such as Mondrian, Malevich, and Kandinsky, sought to use art to reveal deep-seated truths about the human condition and the role of the artist in general, then Bruce Nauman's *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths* questions such transhistorical and universal statements. With regard to this work, Nauman said:

> ***The most difficult thing about the whole piece for me was the statement. It was a kind of test—like when you say something out loud to see if you believe it. Once written down, I could see that the statement […] was on the one hand a totally silly idea and yet, on the other hand, I believed it. It's true and not true at the same time. It depends on how you interpret it and how seriously you take yourself. For me it's still a very strong thought.***

The medium and the message

By using the mediums of mass culture (neon signs) and of display (he originally hung the sign in his storefront studio), Nauman sought to bring questions normally considered only by the high culture elite, such as the role and function of art and the artist in society, to a wider audience. While early European modernists, such as Picasso, had borrowed widely from popular culture, they

rarely displayed their work in the sites of popular culture. For Nauman, both the medium and the message were equally important; thus, by using a form of communication readily understood by all (neon signs had been widespread in modern industrial society) and by placing this message in the public view, Nauman let everyone ask and answer the question.

While it is perhaps the words that stand out most, the symbolism of the spiral (think of Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, 1969), also deserves attention having been used for centuries in European and other civilizations, such as megalithic and Chinese art, both as a symbol of time and of nature itself.

Transcendence?

Theosophy is interesting in this regard and was an important aspect of the early European Avant-garde. In particular, Theosophists believed that all religions are attempts to help humanity to evolve to greater perfection, and that each religion therefore holds a portion of the truth. Through their materials, artists had sought to transform the physical into the spiritual. In this sense, Malevich, Mondrian, and Kandinsky sought to use the material of their art to transcend it: Nauman, and other of his generation, did not.

Process over product

Instead, Nauman's work transgresses many genres of art making in that his work explores the implications of minimalism, conceptual, performance, and process art. In this sense we could call Nauman's art "Postminimalism," a term coined by the art critic Robert Pincus-Witten, in his article "Eva Hesse: Post-Minimalism into Sublime" (*Artforum* 10, number 3, November 1971). Artists such as Nauman, Acconci, and Hesse, favored process instead of product, or rather the investigation over the end result. However, this is not to say they did not produce objects, such as the neon-sign by Nauman, only that within the presentation of the object, they also retained an examination of the processes that made that specific object.

In this sense, Nauman's neon sign isn't only an object, it's a process, something that continues to make us think about art, artist, and the role that language plays in our conception of both. The words continue to ask this of each beholder who encounters them. Does the artist, the "true artist" really "reveal mystical truths"? Or confined to the specific culture that it was made in? If we are to believe the statement (remember, it is not necessarily Nauman's, he merely borrows it from our shared culture), then we might, for example, recognize Leonardo da Vinci as a Neo-Platonic artist who showed us ultimate and essential truths through painting. On the other hand, if we reject the statement, then we would probably recognize the artist as just another producer of a specific set of objects, that we call "art."

This type of logic and analytical thinking was influenced by Nauman's reading of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). From Wittgenstein, Nauman took the idea that you put forth a proposition/idea in the form of language and then examine its findings, irrespective of its proof or conclusion. Nauman's "language games," his neon-words, his proposition about the nature of art and the artist continue to resonant in today's art world, in particular with regard to the value we place on the artist's actions and findings.

Additional resources:

This work of art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Art:21 page about Nauman's *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truth*

Philadelphia Museum of Art biography of the artist

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

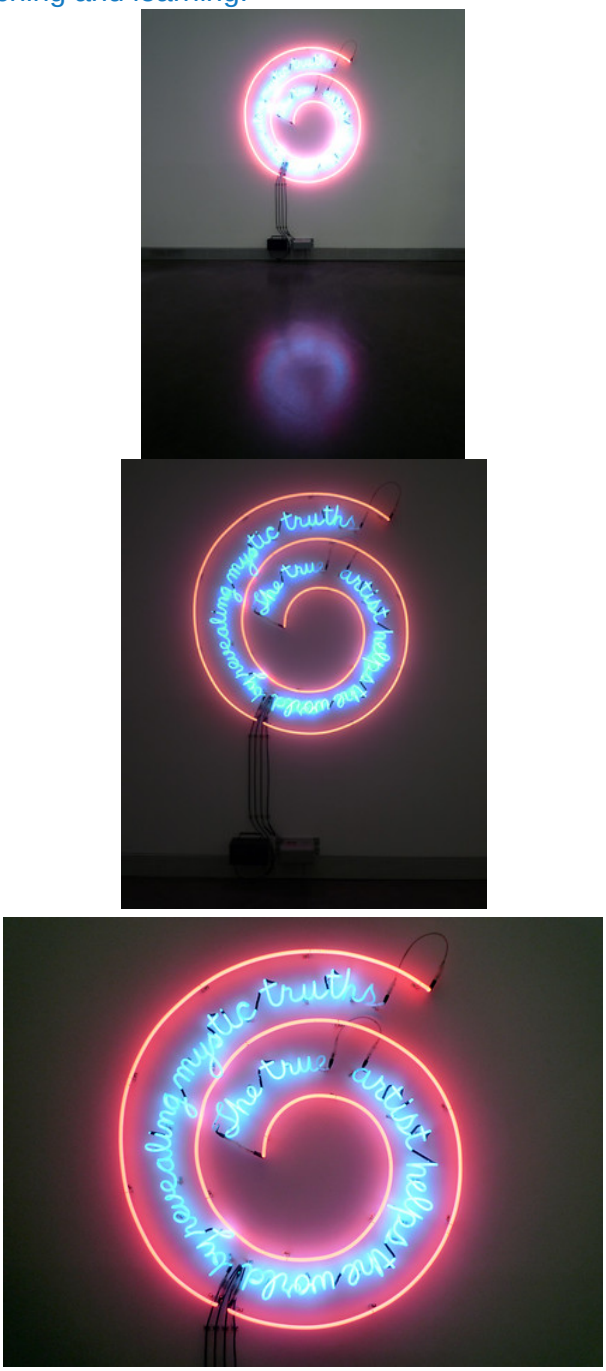


Figure 8.8.20: More Smarthistory images…

Performance art

Performance art differs from traditional theater in its rejection of a clear narrative, use of random or chance-based structures, and direct appeal to the audience.

c. 1960 - present

Performance Art: An Introduction

by DR. VIRGINIA B. SPIVEY

When Art Intersects With Life

Many people associate performance art with highly publicized controversies over government funding of the arts, censorship, and standards of public decency. Indeed, at its worst, performance art can seem gratuitous, boring or just plain weird. But, at its best, it taps into our most basic shared instincts: our physical and psychological needs for food, shelter, sex, and human interaction; our individual fears and self-consciousness; our concerns about life, the future, and the world we live in. It often forces us to think about issues in a way that can be disturbing and uncomfortable, but it can also make us laugh by calling attention to the absurdities in life and the idiosyncrasies of human behavior.



Figure **8.8.21**: Roman Ondák, *Measuring the Universe*, 2007, shown enacted at MoMA, 2009

Performance art differs from traditional theater in its rejection of a clear narrative, use of random or chance-based structures, and direct appeal to the audience. The art historian RoseLee Goldberg writes:

Historically, performance art has been a medium that challenges and violates borders between disciplines and genders, between private and public, and between everyday life and art, and that follows no rules.*

Although the term encompasses a broad range of artistic practices that involve bodily experience and live action, its radical connotations derive from this challenge to conventional social mores and artistic values of the past.

Historical Sources

While performance art is a relatively new area of art history, it has roots in experimental art of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Echoing utopian ideas of the period's avant-garde, these earliest examples found influences in theatrical and music performance, art, poetry, burlesque and other popular entertainment. Modern artists used live events to promote extremist beliefs, often through deliberate provocation and attempts to offend bourgeois tastes or expectations. In Italy, the anarchist group of Futurist artists insulted and hurled profanity at their middle-class audiences in hopes of inciting political action.

Following World War II, performance emerged as a useful way for artists to explore philosophical and psychological questions about human existence. For this generation, who had witnessed destruction caused by the Holocaust and atomic bomb, the body offered a powerful medium to communicate shared physical and emotional experience. Whereas painting and sculpture relied on expressive form and content to convey meaning, performance art forced viewers to engage with a real person who could feel cold and hunger, fear and pain, excitement and embarrassment—just like them.

Action & Contingency

Some artists, inspired largely by Abstract Expressionism, used performance to emphasize the body's role in artistic production. Working before a live audience, Kazuo Shiraga of the Japanese Gutai Group made sculpture by crawling through a pile of mud. Georges Mathieu staged similar performances in Paris where he violently threw paint at his canvas. These performative approaches to making art built on philosophical interpretations of Abstract Expressionism, which held the gestural markings of action painters

as visible evidence of the artist's own existence. Bolstered by Hans Namuth's photographs of Jackson Pollock in his studio, moving dance-like around a canvas on the floor, artists like Shiraga and Mathieu began to see the artist's creative act as equally important, if not more so, to the artwork produced. In this light, Pollock's distinctive drips, spills and splatters appeared as a mere remnant, a visible trace left over from the moment of creation.

Shifting attention from the art object to the artist's action further suggested that art existed in real space and real time. In New York, visual artists combined their interest in action painting with ideas of the avant-garde composer John Cage to blur the line between art and life. Cage employed chance procedures to create musical compositions such as 4'33". In this (in)famous piece, Cage used the time frame specified in the title to bracket ambient noises that occurred randomly during the performance. By effectively calling attention to the hum of fluorescent lights, people moving in their seats, coughs, whispers, and other ordinary sounds, Cage transformed them into a unique musical composition.

The Private Made Political

Drawing on these influences, new artistic formats emerged in the late 1950s. Environments and Happenings physically placed viewers in commonplace surroundings, often forcing them to participate in a series of loosely structured actions. Fluxus artists, poets, and musicians likewise challenged viewers by presenting the most mundane events—brushing teeth, making a salad, exiting the theater—as forms of art. A well-known example is the "bed-in" that Fluxus artist Yoko Ono staged in 1969 in Amsterdam with her husband John Lennon. Typical of much performance art, Ono and Lennon made ordinary human activity a public spectacle, which demanded personal interaction and raised popular awareness of their pacifist beliefs.

In the politicized environment of the 1960s, many artists employed performance to address emerging social concerns. For feminist artists in particular, using their body in live performance proved effective in challenging historical representations of women, made mostly by male artists for male patrons. In keeping with past tradition, artists such as Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke and Valie Export displayed their nude bodies for the viewer's gaze; but, they resisted the idealized notion of women as passive objects of beauty and desire. Through their words and actions, they confronted their audiences and raised issues about the relationship of female experience to cultural beliefs and institutions, physical appearance, and bodily functions including menstruation and childbearing. Their ground-breaking work paved the way for male and female artists in the 1980s and 1990s, who similarly used body and performance art to explore issues of gender, race and sexual identity.

Where Is It?

Throughout the mid-twentieth century, performance has been closely tied to the search for alternatives to established art forms, which many artists felt had become fetishized as objects of economic and cultural value. Because performance art emphasized the artist's action and the viewer's experience in real space and time, it rarely yielded a final object to be sold, collected, or exhibited. Artists of the 1960 and 70s also experimented with other "dematerialized" formats including Earthworks and Conceptual Art that resisted commodification and traditional modes of museum display. The simultaneous rise of photography and video, however, offered artists a viable way to document and widely distribute this new work.

Performance art's acceptance into the mainstream over the past 30 years has led to new trends in its practice and understanding. Ironically, the need to position performance within art's history has led museums and scholars to focus heavily on photographs and videos that were intended only as documents of live events. In this context, such archival materials assume the art status of the original performance. This practice runs counter to the goal of many artists, who first turned to performance as an alternative to object-based forms of art. Alternatively, some artists and institutions now stage re-enactments of earlier performances in order to recapture the experience of a live event. In a 2010 retrospective exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, for example, performers in the galleries staged live reenactments of works by the pioneering performance artist Marina Abramovic, alongside photographs and video documentation of the original performances.

Don't Try This At Home

New strategies, variously described as situations, relational aesthetics, and interventionist art, have recently begun to appear. Interested in the social role of the artist, Rirkrit Tiravanija stages performances that encourage interpersonal exchange and shared conversation among individuals who might not otherwise meet. His performances have included cooking traditional Thai dinners in museums for viewers to share, and relocating the entire contents of a gallery's offices and storage rooms, including the director at

his desk, into public areas used to exhibit art. Similar to performance art of the past, such approaches engage the viewer and encourage their active participation in artistic production; however, they also speak to a cultural shift toward interactive modes of communication and social exchange that characterize the 21st century.

* RoseLee Goldberg. *Performance: Live art since the 60s*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 1998, page 20.

Additional resources:

Video of John Cage's 4″33″ performed by the BBC Symphoney Orchestra at the Barbican Centre in 2004

Carolee Schneemann's website

Marina Abramovic's MoMA exhibition website

Performance art on The Art Story

The Case for Performance Art

by THE ART ASSIGNMENT



Video **8.8.7**: Speaker: Sarah Urist Green

Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*

by JP MCMAHON



Figure **8.8.22**: Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*, between October 3 and 25, 1969, performance, photograph © Vito Acconci 2008, shown courtesy of Vito Acconci

Conceived by performance and conceptual artist Vito Acconci, *Following Piece* was an activity that took place everyday on the streets of New York, between October 3rd and 25th, 1969. It was part of other performance and conceptual events sponsored by the Architectural League of New York that occurred during those three weeks. The terms of the exhibition "Street Works IV" were to do a piece, sometime during the month, that used a street in New York City. So Acconci decided to follow people around the streets and document his following of them. But why would he do this? Why would Acconci follow random people around New York?

Acconci's work is typical of performance and conceptual art made during this period in the way that he uses his body as the object of his art in order to explore some specific idea. In essence, *Following Piece* was concerned with the language of our bodies, not so much in a private manner, but in a deeply public manner. By selecting a passer-by at random until they entered a private space, Acconci submitted his own movements to the movements of others, showing how our bodies are themselves always subject to external forces that we may or may not be able to control. In his notes that the artist kept during the performance, Acconci wrote:

Following Piece, potentially, could use all the time allotted and all the space available: I might be following people, all day long, everyday, through all the streets in New York City. In actuality, following episodes ranged from two or three minutes when someone got into a car and I couldn't grab a taxi, I couldn't follow – to seven or eight hours – when a person went to a restaurant, a movie.

In terms of the art work, rather than being just another object that we look at in the gallery, *Following Piece* was part of the revolution that took place in the art world in the late 1960s that tried to bring art out of the gallery and into the street in order to explore real issues such as space, time, and the human body. Many artists, such as Acconci, used their bodies as their chosen medium. Look at some of Acconci's notes of the period which he wrote before, during and after the event:

- I need a scheme (follow the scheme, follow a person)
- I add myself to another person (I give up control/I don't have to control myself)
- Subjective relationship; subjunctive relationship
- A way to get around. (A way to get myself out of the house.) Get into the middle of things.
- Out of space. Out of time. (My time and space are taken up, out of myself, into a larger system).

All of these ideas were influenced by Acconci's readings. As many other artists of the period, Acconci wanted to get away from specific art problems and engage with social problems. Acconci read books such as Edward Hall's *The Hidden Dimension* (1969), Erving Goffmann's *The Presentation of the Self in Every Day Life* (1959), and Kurt Lewin's *In Principles of Topological Psychological* (1936/1966). All of these books explored the ways in which the individual and the social are interlinked in terms of complex codes that structure the way we act and live everyday.

With regard to the influence on these texts on *Following Piece*, Acconci's use of diagrams specifically refers to Lewin's notion of "field theory": that is, a model that sought to explain human behaviour in terms of relations and in relation to its environment and surroundings. Lewin placed behaviour in a "field" in order to examine it in a theoretical manner. The diagrams drawn by Acconci are an imaginative engagement with this idea of human relations as engaging in a specific field or space. So by following someone around New York, Acconci could perhaps experience what it was like to relinquish self control to others and also explore the intersecting systems that grouped different people together in one field. As we can see from the diagrams, Acconci's intentions were not subjective but much more systematic—they constituted an exploration of the private and public fields that occur in every social space.

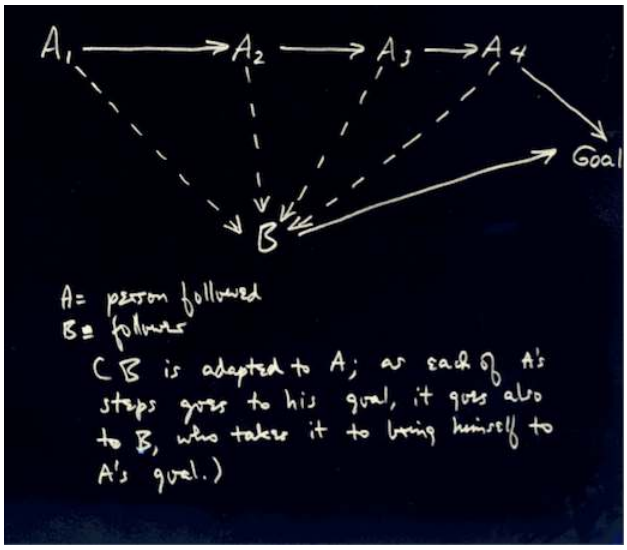


Figure 8.8.23: Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*, 1969 © Vito Acconci, shown courtesy of Vito Acconci

Ironically, for all the effort to get out of the gallery, much of Acconci's documentation of *Following Piece*, for example, the texts, photographs (which were taken after the event!), and diagrams, now constitutes a work of art in its own right. MoMA owns several of the photographs of *Following Piece* and other "versions" of this work are also in existence. So, even though Acconci's *Following Piece* was a performance that occurred in a very specific period (3rd to 25th October, 1969), the reproduction and circulation of the work continues. This fact not only teaches us important things about the nature of performance art and its relationship to the art world, but also how the context of the art work is also never exactly fixed and each time it is presented something new occurs with the work itself.

Additional Resources:

Following Piece photographs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Willoughby Sharp video interview with Vito Acconci (1973) includes discussion of *Following Piece*

Following Piece documentation

Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Washing/Tracks/Maintenance: Outside (July 23, 1973)*

by PATRICIA HICKSON, WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 8.8.8: Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Washing/Tracks/Maintenance: Outside (July 23, 1973)*, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art ©Mierle Laderman Ukeles

Additional Resources:

This work at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Jillian Steinhauer "How Mierle Laderman Ukeles Turned Maintenance Work into Art" *Hyperallergic*

Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND



Figure 8.8.24: Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*, 1974 (**Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture**, © Succession of Gordon Matta-Clark and Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark. Reprint made by the Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark from Matta-Clark negatives. Original photograph in the collection of **SFMOMA**)



Figure 8.8.25: Gordon Matta-Clark in the process of cutting the roof in *Splitting*, 1974 (**Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes**)

Rather surprising things

"Over the past ten years," the American art historian and critic **Rosalind Krauss** wrote in 1979, "rather surprising things have come to be called sculpture: narrow corridors with TV monitors at the ends; large photographs documenting country hikes; mirrors placed at strange angles in ordinary rooms; temporary lines cut into the floor of the desert." [1] To this list, we could add Gordan Matta-Clark's *Splitting*, 1974, in which a suburban home in Englewood, New Jersey slated for demolition was sliced nearly in half.

Matta-Clark had taken a chainsaw to make two parallel, vertical cuts beginning at the roof's center; the house was nearly cleaved in half, each half shifted outwards leaving a long narrow "V" shape allowing light to filter inside. It was a laborious process that involved the assistance of several friends and the resulting structure, demolished some three months later as part of an urban renewal project, was documented in photographs.

Splitting also served as the site for at least one "field trip" — the art dealer Holly Solomon (who had purportedly purchased the house as an investment), several artists, and gallery goers boarded a bus from downtown Manhattan to visit the house (a 16 mm **film**, now in the collection of the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, documented the trip).



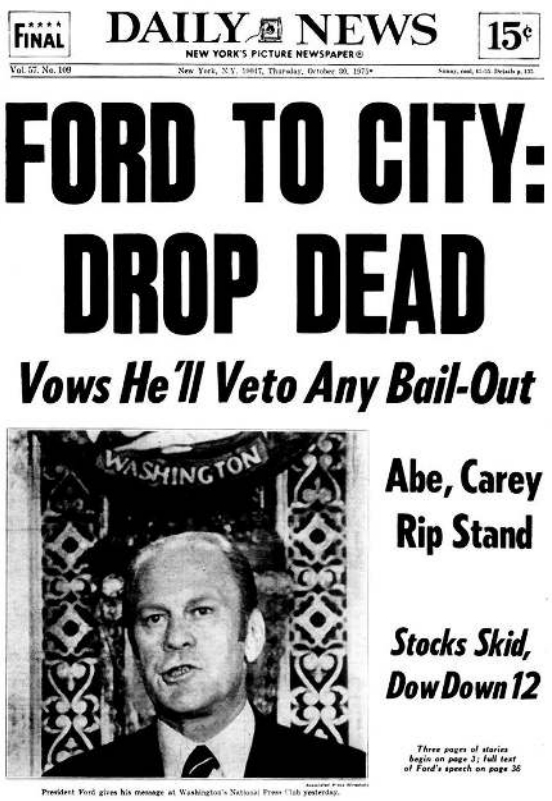
Figure **8.8.26**: Still from Field trip to Gordon Matta-Clark's "Splitting" house, c. 1974 (**YouTube**)

Post-medium

Beginning in the 1970s, contemporary art abandoned the traditional forms it had historically taken. Painting and sculpture became almost unrecognizable as such. Krauss would later characterize it as a "post-medium" condition, a condition, in other words, in which the familiar categories that defined Western art for centuries were overturned. The medium, that which constituted the material or form of a given artwork, became obsolete, or at least radically reformulated: an art work could now exist in any form.

If Gordan Matta-Clark could be said to be associated with any one particular medium, it would be architecture. The entirety of his work, of which *Splitting* stands as exemplary, consisted of alterations to the architecture of abandoned or condemned buildings. In his other work, sections of floors and walls were removed, and sometimes those removed sections themselves become the artwork; in other cases it was the void formed from the removal that is the focus.

Matta-Clark began his interventions into the urban environment at a time when New York, where the artist lived and worked, was a city in crisis as a result of economic downturns. President Gerald Ford gave a speech denying federal assistance that would have rescued New York from what seemed like certain bankruptcy in the same year the artist made *Splitting*. *The Daily News* reported on its front page the very next day: "FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD."



FINAL DAILY NEWS 15¢
NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER
Vol. 57, No. 109 New York, N.Y. 10017, Thursday, October 30, 1975*

FORD TO CITY:
DROP DEAD

Vows He'll Veto Any Bail-Out

WASHINGTON

President Ford gives his message at Washington's National Press Club yesterday.

Abe, Carey Rip Stand

Stocks Skid, Dow Down 12

Three pages of stories begin on page 3; full text of Ford's speech on page 36

Figure 8.8.27: The Daily News front page on Oct. 30, 1975 (New York Daily News)

Matta-Clark had seen his own neighborhood in lower Manhattan negatively impacted by **modernization** ever since the influential city planner Robert Moses attempted to push a freeway through Washington Square Park in the 1950s. Trained as an architect, Matta-Clark likely saw through the glossy rhetoric of urban renewal projects — though they promised regeneration such plans destroyed existing neighborhoods.

Anarchitecture



Figure 8.8.28: Gordon Matta-Clark at 112 Greene Street in 1972. Photographed by Charles Denson (Cosmos Andrew Sarchiapone papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution)

In March 1974, Matta-Clark joined a collective of artists who mounted an exhibition entitled *Anarchitecture* at 112 Greene Street in New York City. The premise was embodied in the title which merged the term "anarchy" with "architecture;" the artists in the collective were all interested in exploring new ideas of form and space in the midst of urban decay. One year later, and out of his experience working with this community of like-minded artists, came *Splitting*. But Matta-Clark's destroyed house was not just giving visual shape to the crisis of a neighborhood or even of a city on the verge of collapse, dire as those conditions surely were.

Modernism formed the larger horizon of *Splitting*'s meaning; its philosophy of the new and of progress that had underwritten the utopianism of over 100 years of art and architecture was suddenly untenable. New York City had long defined industrial modernity — its soaring skyscrapers of the early twentieth century were second only to Chicago's equally impressive skyline — and its seeming collapse was yet another symbol of a crisis of modernity. No wonder many people came to speak of *post*modernity. In architecture particularly there was already a sense that the great utopian project of modernism had failed.

It has become almost obligatory to describe Matta-Clark's work as a critique of modernist architecture — and more generally modernist art — an intervention, interrogation, disruption, investigation (all words you will encounter in the study of any postmodern or contemporary art work). But as much as *Splitting* may be regarded as critical commentary on the idea of progress and a work that helps to lay the groundwork for a postmodern aesthetic (in which artists were seen to be social commentators, engaged participants in the larger realm of visual culture, or even political activism), another aspect of the artist's work bears consideration.



Figure **8.8.29**: Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting* (interior view), 1974 (**Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture**, © Succession of Gordon Matta-Clark and Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark. Reprint made by the Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark from Matta-Clark negatives. Original photograph in the collection of **SFMOMA**)

There is a melancholy and nostalgia that pervades Matta-Clark's fragments of walls, floors, cut-through spaces or domestic interiors opened to the outside. Much like the fascination with the ruins of antiquity that peppered the landscape of Europe during the eighteenth century when classical antiquity was discovered anew, Matta-Clark' s works speak in poignant tones of the demise of the modern as both an aesthetic ideal and a utopia.

Notes:

[1] Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field,"*October* Vol. 8 (Spring, 1979), p. 30.

References:

Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field,"*October* Vol. 8 (Spring, 1979), p. 30 – 44.

Rosalind Krauss, A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000.

Additional Resources:

Field trip to Gordon Matta-Clark's "Splitting" house, circa 1974, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Marina Abramović, *The Artist is Present*

by REBECCA TAYLOR



Figure **8.8.30**: Marina Abramović sitting with Rebecca Taylor at *The Artist is Present* performance at The Museum of Modern Art, 2010

Transcendence

"Sit silently with the artist for a duration of your choosing"—so the instructions read on a small plaque in the second-floor atrium at The Museum of Modern Art. Behind the plaque, a queue of visitors forms, eager to enter a large square space—demarcated only by tape on the floor—to sit down at a wooden table across from a dark-haired woman in a navy-blue dress that conceals every part of her body save her face and her hands.

The woman is the pioneering artist Marina Abramović, but its likely that few of the people in line have any sense of this woman's indelible impact on contemporary art. As I wait, an anthology of her performances scrolling through my head. Watching her from afar, I look to see the courage and fearlessness in a woman capable of incising a five-pointed star on her own stomach, screaming until she loses consciousness, and living in a gallery for 12 days without food. Strangely, she doesn't seem reckless at all, but peaceful and wise. I then remember she trained with Tibetan Buddhists and has said she's able to transcend the limits of her own body and mind through meditation. She'll need these skills now more than ever as she attempts her longest performance-to-date, sitting at this table for every hour of every day that her retrospective is open at MoMA. No food. No water. No breaks.

My turn

So, I wait for my moment with the artist, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. A young girl is sitting across from Marina and the two seem engaged in a staring contest, though from that distance it's impossible to tell if they're actually making eye contact or simply staring ahead in a daze. Seventy-five minutes later she finally stands up and exits the square, declaring she lost all sense of time and thought it had only been a few minutes. Marina leans forward and closes her eyes, while the next sojourner steps forward and takes the empty seat. Marina sits up and another staring contest commences—this one lasting sixty-seven minutes. This process repeats —ten minutes, fifty-five minutes, twenty minutes, forty-five minutes, etc. Finally, the man in front of me takes the seat and I'm next. More than three hours from when I entered the succession I've seen only six people participate in the performance and more than thirty leave the line in frustration. The nameless, faceless strangers I queued with hours ago are now friends—an artist from Poughkeepsie, an art history undergrad from Chicago, a nurse from outside Philly—and we share our excitement as our turn approaches. Finally, after nearly four hours, my time has come.

I enter the square and approach the table, immediately noting the heat of the lights and the watchful eyes of the crowds gathered to gawk at the spectacle. I put my purse on the floor and take a seat. While Marina leans forward, I settle into the chair and imagine I'll last about ten minutes before I become either bored or totally uncomfortable. She begins to sit up and I try to prepare myself for the moment she opens her eyes. I have many skills, but sitting still and being silent are not traits I'm known for, so I was afraid: afraid of the judgment implicit in staring, afraid of the silence, afraid I wouldn't have the transformative experience that had captivated those before me, afraid, afraid, afraid. Her lids opened and our eyes locked, not in a stare but in a friendly gaze. For the

first few minutes, I thought only about who this woman was—a renegade, a feminist, an inspiration—but quickly realized that those things were more about her persona than the person. I discarded my preconceived notions and expectations and, as soon as I stopped thinking of her as an artist-celebrity, saw the woman behind the legend. We sat absolutely still in deafening silence, exchanging energy, and just being with each other. I've heard it said that couples married for decades can sit in silence and understand one another perfectly, but I'd never imagine that sort of intimacy could be possible between two total strangers. It is.

I could have stayed in that moment for hours but thought of my fellow line-mates, now friends, and decided it would be selfish to bask in this experience any longer. But, could I leave? It felt as rude as leaving a lecture in the middle. How would I leave? Abruptly just wouldn't do, so I said good-bye and thanked her. More than thirty minutes had passed, thirty minutes of epic silence I'll never forget.

Additional Resources:

MoMA exhibition website

"Performance Art Preserved, in the Flesh," *New York Times* article, 2010

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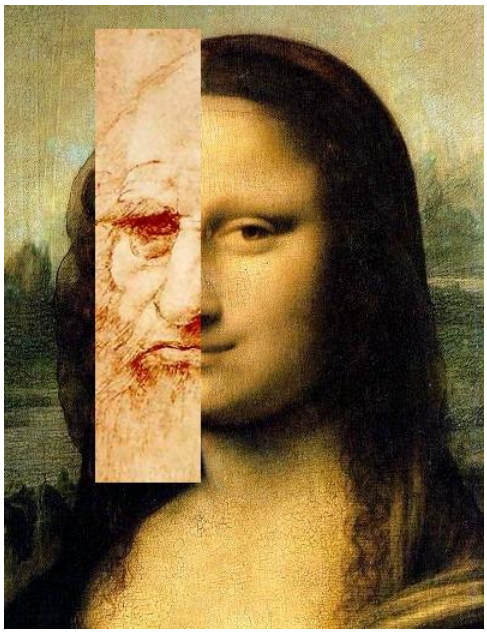
8.9: Digital Art

Digital art uses digital technology as an integral part of creating artwork and has taken on many names previously, now generally called new media art. Digital technology transforms the way the art of sculptures, drawing, and painting is created and can take the forms of a digital installation, virtual reality, or net art and might be a single object or part of mass production on digital media. Digital art can be computer-generated, computer manipulated, scanned, or drawn on a computer and reproduced in actual materials. Digital paintings are created using software and can be viewed digitally or printed on paper or canvas. Software programs supporting art with two-dimensional characteristics are drawn with a stylus, mouse, or other types of input. What appears digitally is drawn using raster graphics to represent the information.



Name	Native Country
Lillian Schwartz	United States
Pascal Dombis	France
Hamid Naderi Yeganeh	Iran
Scott Draves	United States
Helaman Ferguson	United States
Akira Toriyama	Japan
Noriaki Kubo	Japan
Eiichiro Oda	Japan
Hiromu Arakawa	Japan

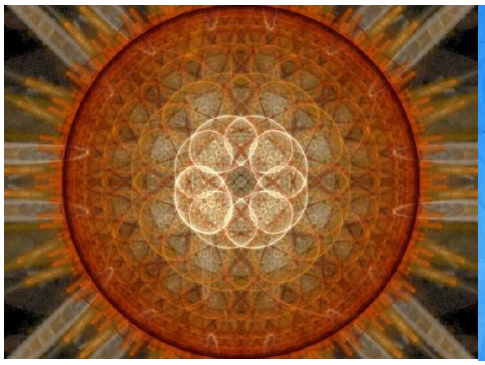
Lillian Schwartz (born 1927) is an American artist and considered the pioneer of computer art. Most of her computer projects were during the 1960s and 1970s before the desktop computer was available, and Schwartz used the necessary computer process to scan pictures and then manipulate them on the screen. She liked to base her work on Leonardo da Vinci's images for her experiments and used the portrait of *Mona Lisa* and a *self-portrait by Da Vinci* to superimpose one on top of the other (15.60). She used the technology to compare the faces and their features and the underlying structures to demonstrate how the Mona Lisa portrait is potentially a self-portrait of Da Vinci himself.



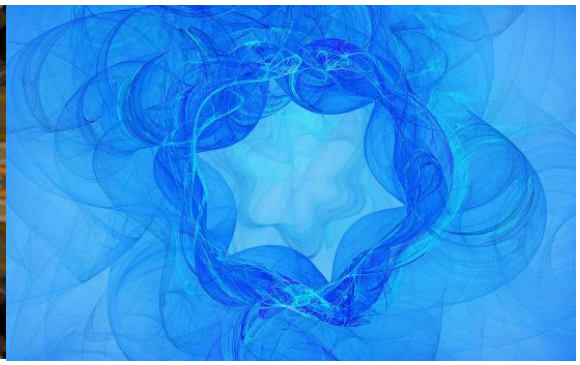
15.60 *Altered Mona Lisa*

Three-dimensional art uses the computer screen as a window and vector graphics to represent the data to create virtual reality works. 3D graphics are used for television, games, and special effects based on a variety of software programs. The software programs allow the artist to create geometric shapes, curves, and three-dimensional objects, as printers, are now available to let the artist print the artwork in the 3D format. The work can be collaborative and allow users to add their unique ideas to the artwork.

Another way to create art in 2D or 3D is to code computer programs to generate the desired artwork that cannot be produced without the computer, the artwork then becomes real-time generative art. Some of the methods are data-moshing, fractal art, or algorithmic art, methods frequently used for movies and games to create photo-realistic works. Fractal art is computer-generated fractals that create images or animations and may be combined with non-fractal art into the end product. Fractals come from regular geometry, and use lines, cubes, or triangles as the base figure is transformed. An artist can input some algorithms as well as computer programs or just define specific lines, shapes, and colors (15.61, 15.62).

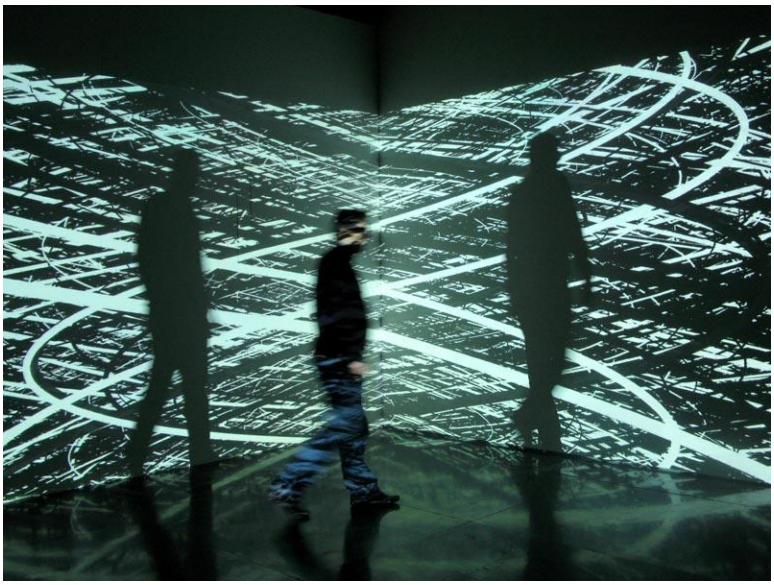


15.61 Fractal Frame 1



15.62 Fractal Frame 2

Pascal Dombis (born 1965) is a French digital artist, and his work, *Irrational Geometrics* (15.63) is a digital art installation, created using algorithmic rules, the unpredictable forms are generated and gives a Surrealist look. He used simple rules like drawing a line and digital software to generate the formats through multiple iterations. *In Test(e)~Fil(e)* (15.64), Dombis generated a 252-meter-long installation by using thousands of lines of text from authors and generating them into a digital installation. Viewers can walk through the installation and read the words or letters.



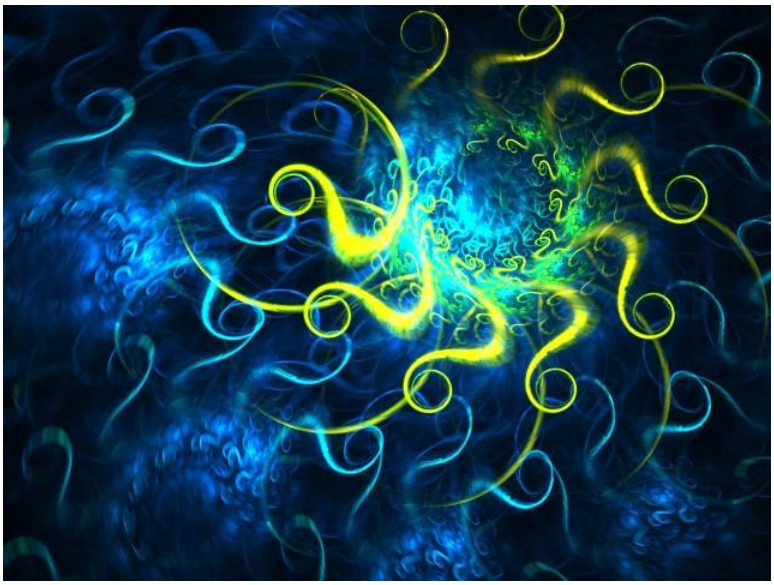
15.63 Irrational Geometrics

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/260399



15.64 *In Test(e)-Fil(e)*

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/260399

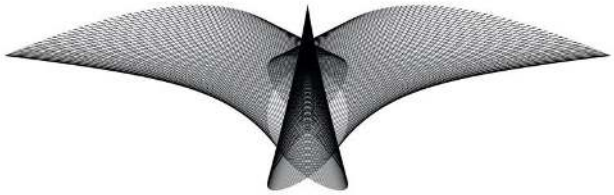


15.65 *Electric Sheep* fractal image

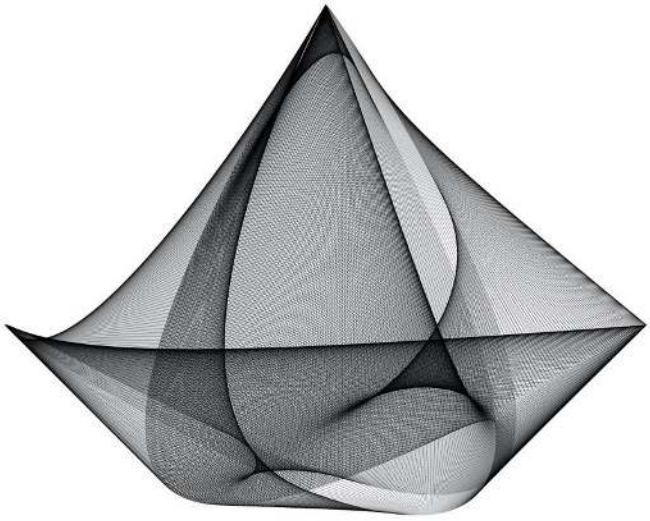
Scott Draves (born 1968) is a video artist who invented Fractal Flames using iterative functions to generate fractal images by mapping tones and colors. The fractals are generally drawn in 2D on a computer and then transformed by iterating, overlapping, transmuting, or copying the fractals. Fractals can become continually changing screen savers or printed as art (15.65, 15.66).



15.66 Fractal image



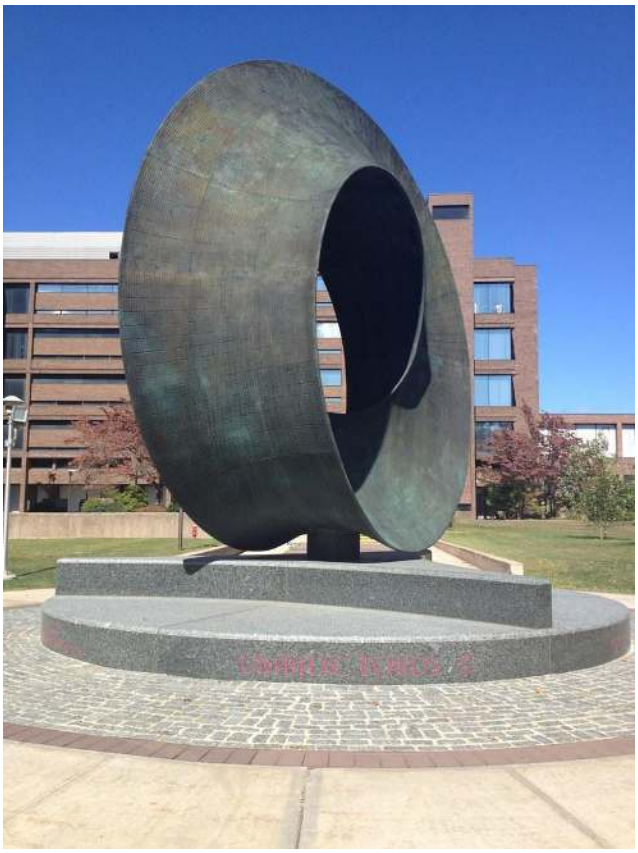
15.67 A Bird in Flight



15.68 Boat

Hamid Naderi Yeganeh (born 1990) is an Iranian, an artist and a mathematician well-known for how he developed formulas to create tessellations and fractals or images of real objects (15.67). He writes complex programs to generate lines into shapes, altering a few lines, changing the shape, and developing different figures. He believes he achieved the boat (15.68) by accident as he continually changed the formulas.

Helaman Ferguson (born 1940), who studied both art and mathematics at the universities, receiving a Ph.D. in mathematics, frequently made mathematically based sculptures. With another mathematician, he created a new Euclidean algorithm to include three or more variables called the PSLQ algorithm. He used the algorithm to create *Umbilic Torus* (15.69), a large sculpture standing 8.5 meters high. Ferguson used computers as a specialized tool creating virtual images for his projects, and for *Umbilic*, he had to compose a program for the computer of over 25,000 movements, written to control the robotic arms used to cut the material for the torus, a 3-dimensional form with a single edge.



15.69 *Umbilic Torus*

Digital installations, like sculptural installations, are a method to create and view large digital projects with projection techniques. They may be something for viewers to simply look at, or the viewer may become part of the installation. The installation is to enhance the viewer's sensory perceptions or immerse the viewer in virtual reality. In a virtual space, a person moves through space, changing the images (15.70). Digital installations have the advantage of being tailored to fit in any space with different presentations, unlike sculptural installations, they are made to be in one space.



15.70 Mixed virtual reality

Anime is a term referring to the Japanese animated productions made by computer animation or drawn by hand. They usually have fantasy-like themes made with colorful graphics and vibrant characters. Anime productions focus on the settings and use of camera

effects instead of character movements. The proportions and features of the characters are usually emotive with unusual eyes. Manga followed the stories of anime in graphic novel form, replicating the heroes of animation.

Akira Toriyama (born 1955) is a well-known Japanese artist who created *Dr. Slump* and *Dragon Ball* (15.71), one of the most popular series selling 230 million copies. Toriyama is honored as one of the people who changed how anime is created, an inspiration for any other artist. Toriyama facilitated Japanese animations' influence throughout the world. **Noriaki Kubo**, also known as Tite Kubo (born 1977), is known for his series *Bleach*. The *Bleach* 15.72) series was made into successful movies using the shonen style with a significant focus on action. He is known for quick cuts and dramatic angles and changes that form a distinctive angular look. Kubo does not use much art in the background but does use a lot of body mutilation or decay.

Eiichiro Oda (born 1975) is best known for his series *One Piece*, selling over 345 million. Individually, different parts of *One Piece* have broken publishing records in Japan. He also worked with other artists and combined parts from their work to make *Cross Epoch*. **Hiromu Arakawa** (born 1973) is known for the anime *Fullmetal Alchemist* which was adapted into two television series where she often appears herself as a bespectacled cow. She started her career with the publication *Stray Dog* and now has a new series called *Silver Spoon*, which is more realistic than her fantasy series *Fullmetal Alchemist*.



15.71 Dragon Ball Z.



15.72 Bleach

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8.10: Art, Race, and the Internet- Mendi + Keith Obadike's Black.Net.Art Actions

by DR. MEGAN DRISCOLL

Page ID

261640



Figure 8.10.1: Logo for *New Black Portraitures*, Rhizome website

Looking at the landscape of the internet today, it's hard to imagine conversations about race not being a central part of net culture. Consider "Black Twitter," a concept that goes beyond user demographics to describe the significant role the internet plays in promoting dialogues about race in all parts of our lives.[1] Or spend some time exploring the many social media accounts dedicated to the cultural heritage of specific racial and ethnic groups, from **influential Asian Pacific Islander women** to **artists of Africa and the African diaspora**. You'll also find these conversations happening in art-specific venues like Rhizome, which in 2017 hosted *First Look: New Black Portraitures*, a primarily online exhibition that links the history of portraiture to questions surrounding blackness, representation, and image making in our networked present.[2]

However, net culture looked very different back in the 1990s when internet use first started to become popular. It's not that no one was talking about race online—there were actually quite a few email lists and other proto-social networks focused on race and ethnicity—but these discussions tended to be ignored in the mainstream, or simply treated as peripheral.[3] Cyber enthusiasts had long promoted the misguided perception that virtual communication could allow users to interact without the prejudices associated with physical difference such as race, gender, or disability.[4] When advertisers seized on this premise as a strategy for making the strange new world of the internet seem more approachable, they popularized the idea that, to quote a **1997 internet ad for telecom MCI**, on the internet "there is no race." In fact, the notion that race was simply irrelevant to life online became so prevalent that sociologist Alondra Nelson once declared it the "founding fiction of the digital age."[5]

During this same period internet art, or net art, was becoming a more widely recognized category of artistic practice. Like in the rest of net culture, race was not a common topic in early net art—but that doesn't mean there weren't artists addressing it.[6] Here, we'll focus on Mendi + Keith Obadike's *Black.Net.Art Actions* (2001–2003), a suite of retroactively grouped artworks that argue that racial discourses aren't just relevant online, they are essential to how we interact with computer networks.



Figure 8.10.2: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *Blackness for Sale*, 2001, online performance from *Black.Net.Art.Actions* (**Rhizome**)

Blackness for Sale

In 2001 the Obadikes released ***Blackness for Sale***, an online performance in which they attempted to auction Keith's Blackness on eBay. It received twelve bids over four days before eBay shut the project down, calling it "inappropriate." The item description includes benefits like "This Blackness may be used for making jokes about black people and/or laughing at black humor

comfortably" as well as warnings like "The Seller does not recommend that this Blackness be used while voting in the United States or Florida."[7] The work thus reminds us that "Blackness" never just refers to a value-neutral color or the hue of a person's skin. Rather, it is bound to a complex history, simultaneously recalling the experiences of one individual and the condition of race relations across the United States.

By highlighting the field of meaning that surrounds language, *Blackness for Sale* also directs attention to how we talk about the platform that hosted it: eBay. As Keith Obadike has pointed out, many of the words we use to describe our activities online also describe the activities of colonization and slavery.[8] We cross the new electronic frontier, taking browsers like Navigator, Explorer, and Safari to plunder the Amazon and trade in the eBay. There we find representations of the Black body returned to the auction block, not just in this artwork but in the mammy figurines and other racist memorabilia sold alongside it as "Fine Arts and Black Americana."[9] *Blackness for Sale* argues that this digital frontierism is ideologically linked to the "real world" histories of colonialism and the slave trade, histories that cannot be divorced from how we interact online. In other words, even though our internet exchanges may appear to be virtual and therefore disembodied, what MCI called "communicating mind to mind," we still come to those exchanges with the experiences of our bodies and all of the histories that shape them.



Figure 8.10.3: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum's Artport gate page program (Rhizome)

Website for the Whitney Museum

The Obadikes continued their investigation into how color and race signify online with ***The Interaction of Coloreds*** (2002), a website they originally produced for the Whitney Museum's now-defunct **Artport gate page program**. Both the work's title and the grid format of its opening page reference Josef Albers's *Interaction of Color* (1963), a modernist text that theorizes the relationship between color and personal preference. Moving your mouse over that grid reveals famous lyrics from a Big Bill Broonzy song that remind us how such color preferences emerge in our ideas about race: "if you're white you're right / if you're black get back / if you're brown stick around / if you're yellow you're mellow."



Figure 8.10.4: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, Color Check, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum's Artport gate page program (Rhizome)

When you enter the main site you find the IOC Color Check System®, which the artists describe as a "brown paper bag test for the internet."[10] Using photographs of applicants' skin alongside answers to a "Hyper-Race Analysis" questionnaire, the System promises to return a precise hexadecimal color for your skin. This is a six digit HTML (hypertext markup language) code that tells your web browser what color to show you—or, in this case, assigns a color value to a human being. Now, the System exults, "Websafe colors aren't just for webmasters," a reference to the fact that when IOC was produced there were only a limited number of "websafe" codes that would display consistently on all browsers. By proposing that the color of a person can also be used to

designate her as “websafe,” IOC demonstrates how social meanings are reasserted when human beings interpret the apparently neutral mathematical system of HTML. In the Color Check System® the “true white” of #FFFFFF is like the “right white” of the Big Bill Broonzy song, representing not just a full amount of additive light but also a full human being. And the #000000 of “absolute black” (“get back”) doesn’t just signify a lack of light; it signifies the lack of humanity too often associated with blackness. (Or, as *Blackness for Sale* put it, “The Seller does not recommend that this Blackness be used while making intellectual claims.”)



Figure 8.10.5: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, top of System, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum’s Artport gate page program (**Rhizome**)

The IOC Color Check System® also invites us to consider for whom we are being designated “websafe.” In addition to wry mentions of dating websites and airlines hoping to “offer lower rates on the web to customers with non-threatening bodies,” the System suggests that it may be useful to a “new African-American web portal or an old Negro social club looking for a way to maintain your club’s discriminating tastes in the information age.” This is a reference to the racially oriented proto-social networks that flourished during the 1990s, such as the immensely popular BlackPlanet. Although these networks offered an important platform for many people who didn’t see themselves reflected in other areas of internet culture, IOC points out that they also threatened to exaggerate racial segmentation and reduce Black internet users to a consumer category. In this way, the Obadikes not only challenge the idea that race is irrelevant on the internet, they also critique the assumption that simply having more Black people online will make the internet a more equitable place.[11]



Figure 8.10.6: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Pink of Stealth*, 2003, web interactive (**Mendi + Kieth Obadike**)

The Pink of Stealth or *Keeping Up Appearances*

The final work the Obadikes choose to include in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* varies depending on the url where it is accessed. In some publications it’s ***The Pink of Stealth*** (2003); in others, it’s ***Keeping Up Appearances*** (2001).[12] What these two works share in common is an emphasis on the gender and sexual politics that are only hinted at in *Blackness for Sale* and *The Interaction of Coloreds*. *Keeping Up Appearances* is a hypertextimonial poem by Mendi Obadike that explores the relationship between Blackness and femininity, in part through the visual signifier of the color pink. This signifier is picked up by *The Pink of Stealth*, which integrates a website, hypertext poem, sound collage, and Flash game to play with the different class, gender, sexual, and even health-related meanings that have been associated with pinkness over time. The inclusion of either work in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* rounds out the suite’s focus on the multiple meanings of color language by insisting that racial discourses cannot be separated from their intersections with all of the other factors that influence our experiences—online as well as off.



Figure **8.10.7**: Mendi Obadike, *Keeping Up Appearances*, 2001, hypertextimonial poem (**Rhizome**)

As discussed at the beginning, the fact that race no longer feels peripheral on the internet is a dramatic change from the years when the *Black.Net.Art Actions* were being produced. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the myth that race disappears online still shaped how many people understood the emancipatory potential of computer networks. The Actions helped to counter that myth by revealing how the histories that influence our ideas and experiences of race persist throughout our encounters on the network. In the process, these artworks also demonstrated that the relationship between race and computer networks is an essential subject for internet-based art.

Notes:

1. Donovan X. Ramsey and Meredith D. Clark, "The Truth About Black Twitter," *The Atlantic* (April 10, 2015), https://www.theatlantic.com/technolo...witter/390120/
2. Aria Dean, "An Introduction to New Black Portraitures," *Rhizome* (blog), October 26, 2017, http://rhizome.org/editorial/2017/oc...-portraitures/.
3. Email lists like the Afro-Am Listserv started popping up in the early 1990s, and by the end of the decade commercial enterprises like Community Connect were launching racially oriented social networks such as AsianAvenue and BlackPlanet. The latter quickly became a sprawling platform that would only be eclipsed in size and popularity by the rise of MySpace.
4. Two of the most well-known promoters of the model of the internet as disembodied home of the mind are John Perry Barlow, co-founder of the internet advocacy group the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and Howard Rheingold, author of *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* (1993), an oft-cited book on The WELL, the internet's first social network. This well-meaning argument is based on the assumption that a world of the mind would be inherently more just. However, it ignores the reality that embodied experience does shape life online, for better and worse, as well as the fact that not everyone is able to shed the histories associated with their bodily characteristics even in an apparently all virtual environment—nor does everyone want to.
5. Alondra Nelson, "Introduction: FUTURE TEXTS," *Social Text* 20, no. 2 (71) (Summer 2002): 1, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-20-2_71-1. In 1998, Nelson founded the influential Afrofuturism online discussion group. While scholarship on race in early net culture was also relatively rare, she's not the only person working in this area. Other prominent voices include Lisa Nakamura, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Jennifer González, and Tara McPherson.
6. It's important to note that while race wasn't central to early net art, it wasn't entirely marginalized either. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the Mongrel group, Prema Murthy, Tana Hargest, and Mendi + Keith Obadike are just a few examples of artists who made relatively well-known work addressing the relationship between race and computer networks during the 1990s and early 2000s.
7. This is a reference to large-scale voter disenfranchisement in Florida during the 2000 US presidential election, which disproportionately affected Black voters. See Ari Berman, "How the 2000 Election in Florida Led to a New Wave of Voter Disenfranchisement," *The Nation*, July 28, 2015, https://www.thenation.com/article/ar...franchisement/.
8. Coco Fusco, "All Too Real: The Tale of an On-Line Black Sale; Coco Fusco Interviews Keith Townsend Obadike," September 24, 2001, http://blacknetart.com/coco.html.
9. This is the category to which the Obadikes submitted *Blackness for Sale* in 2001. eBay has since changed their categories, but a search for "Black Americana" still turns up plenty of racist memorabilia, much of it filed under "Ethnic & Cultural Collectibles."
10. The brown paper bag test is an historical form of colorism (racial prejudice within communities of color) that is said to have been used to admit—or deny—access to certain African American social institutions. Stories about this test claim that only those whose skin was lighter than a brown paper bag were allowed in.

11. The one area in which scholars did focus on the relationship between race and computer networks during this period was the question of access, often referred to as the "digital divide." While being able to use the internet had already become undeniably important, scholars such as Alondra Nelson argue that the digital divide narrative tends to frame Black people as inherently anti-technological while paying little attention to how race influences experience once people are online.
12. The Obadikes feature *The Pink of Stealth* as the third work in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* in Keith + Mendi Obadike, "The Black.Net.Art Actions: Blackness for Sale (2001), The Interaction of Coloreds (2002), and The Pink of Stealth (2003)," in *Re:Skin*, ed. Mary Flanagan and Austin. Booth (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 245–50. It was later replaced by *Keeping Up Appearances* in the *Black.Net.Art Actions*' **entry into the Rhizome Net Art Anthology**. Neither source is more authoritative; rather, this reflects the fluidity of internet art, which, like performance art, is often characterized by change over time.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Art and Ethics

Learning Objectives

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

9.1: Introduction
9.2: Ethical Considerations in Making and Using Art
9.3: Appropriation and ideological critique
9.4: "Creative iconoclasm"- a tale of two monasteries
9.5: Censorship
9.6: The many forms of iconoclasm
9.7: Ethical Considerations in the Collecting and Display of Art
9.8: Whose art? Museums and repatriation
9.9: Destruction, looting, and trafficking
9.10: Before You Move On

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9.1: Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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9.2: Ethical Considerations in Making and Using Art

11.2.1 Appropriation

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

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

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

In 1993, Levine was invited by the Philadelphia Museum of Art to be the first artist to participate in *Museum Studies*, a series of contemporary projects: "new works and installations created by artists specifically for the museum." Levine created six translucent white glass "reproductions" of a 1915 marble sculpture by Constantine Brancusi (1876-1957, Romania), titled *Newborn I*. (*Crystal Newborn*, Sherrie Levine: s3.amazonaws.com/classconnec...cards/7114093/ jpg/thenewborn1334629599199-14C4CC989054F51F15F.jpg) She titled her 1993 work *Crystal Newborn*; it is shown here along with *Black Newborn* of 1994. (*Crystal Newborn and Black Newborn*, Sherrie Levine: api.whitney.org/uploads/image...ge_8._crystal_ newborn_1993_black_newborn_1994.jpg) Both works are cast glass, which in the case of *Black Newborn*, has been sandblasted. (*Black Newborn*, Sherrie Levine: http://www.moma.org/ collection/works/89955?locale=en)

Similar to her 1981 photograph *After Walker Evans: 4*, these works are meant to examine notions about something being an original or, instead, being a reproduction. Just as her earlier photographic reproductions of Evans's work themselves could be reproduced, so also were these glass works part of a series; Levine cast a total of twelve versions from one (original?) mold. In addition, although sculpture such as Brancusi's *Newborn I*, is generally displayed on a pedestal or stand that elevates the work to a comfortable viewing height and separates it from its surround- ings, Levine had her work displayed on a grand piano. Doing so changed the setting from a more conventional, expected, but consciously neutral mode of display, the pedestal, to the more nuanced, domesticated, yet sophisticated tone of a polished piano top. She wanted the difference to register in the viewer's mind and influence the viewer's response to the work, including thinking of the contrast: the typical museum display is masculine, that is, part of the male world of wealthy collectors and museum board members. The piano, on the other hand, brings to mind the feminine world of the comforting and comfortable home it is a sculpture of a newborn, after all. But the cool, smooth, hard surface of

Levine's glass, as was the case of Brancusi's marble, does not allow the infant head to descend to the level of maternal sentimentality.

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

11.2.2 Use of Materials

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

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

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

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

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

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

11.2.3 Digital Manipulation

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

In 2006, freelance photographer Adnan Hajj made changes to a photograph, carried by Reuters Group, a news agency, of smoke rising in the midst of buildings in Beirut following an Israeli attack during the Israel-Lebanon conflict. (The Adnan Hajj photographs controversy revolving around digitally manipulated photographs: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikiped...comparison.jpg) A blogger commented that the photograph showed signs of manipulation. Comparing the unaltered photograph on the left to the published image on the right reveals that the smoke is obviously darker; in addition, the spreading smoke at the top of the photograph shows the telltale patterning, known as **cloning**, which indicates a digital effect that has been repeatedly duplicated. Reuters immediately retracted the photograph and issued the statement, "Reuters takes such matters extremely seriously as it is strictly against company editorial policy to alter pictures."

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

11.2.4 As an Observer

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

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

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

> *Careful not to disturb the bird, he positioned himself for the best possible image. He would later say he waited about 20 minutes, hoping the vulture would spread its wings. It did not, and after he took his photographs, he chased the bird away and watched as the little girl resumed her struggle. Afterward he sat under a tree, lit a cigarette, talked to*

> *God and cried. "He was depressed afterward," Silva recalls. "He kept saying he wanted to hug his daughter."*[1]

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

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9.3: Appropriation and ideological critique

Appropriation and ideological critique

Contemporary artists use copying and other visual methods to deconstruct the myths that inform our daily lives.

1980 - present

Masami Teraoka, *American Kabuki*

by EMMA ACKER AT THE FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **9.3.1**: Masami Teraoka, *American Kabuki (Oishiiwa)*, 1986, watercolor and sumi ink on paper mounted on a four-panel screen, 196.9 x 393.7 x 3 cm (de Young Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco), © Masami Teraoka Seeing America video Speakers: Emma Acker, Associate Curator of American Art, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

This painted screen at the de Young Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Ai Weiwei

The Case for Ai Weiwei

by THE ART ASSIGNMENT



Video **9.3.2**: Speaker: Sarah Urist Green

Additional resources:

Ai WeiWei's website

Ai WeiWei on Art21

Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*

by TIFFANY WAI-YING BERES

How can the destruction of an artifact also be an act of preservation? *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995) by **Ai Weiwei** is a highly provocative work of art. This series of three black and white photographs portray the artist holding a 2,000-year-old Han dynasty urn that, frame by frame, he drops, it falls, and shatters. As much a work of photography as a work of **performance art**, in each still an unaffected Ai looks directly at the camera aware of his destructiveness. In fact, to capture the action on film (rather than digital photography, which lets you review the image immediately), the artist actually broke two ceramic vessels, just in case. This kind of blatant destruction of artifacts may seem highly irreverent, yet it also forces viewers to consider issues of transformation and destruction of the past.



Figure **9.3.1**: Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*, 1995 (printed 2017), Three gelatin silver prints, 148 x 121 cm each (photo: © Ai Weiwei)

Ai Weiwei

Born in Beijing, China, in 1957, Ai Weiwei is an activist, filmmaker, curator and one of the world's most famous artists. Ai began his artistic career in New York City, where he lived from 1981 to 1993. When he returned to China in the mid-90s, a time of rapid modernization for his home country, he was shocked to discover that certain objects of **cultural patrimony** were not highly valued. Ai explains that when he came across these Han dynasty ceramic objects, they were just a dime a dozen: "I still have a photo of when I was in Xi'an. There was a farmer sleeping on top of these two urns waiting for someone to pay him a few hundred yuan. For him that was a few months' salary, but even then nobody wanted them." [1] Ai realized that during that period, most of his fellow countrymen were not nearly as interested in their country's historic art objects as he was. For this reason, Ai began collecting antiquities, particularly ancient vessels and furniture, and eventually began converting these objects into contemporary artworks. Whether he reworks a discarded four-hundred-year-old wooden stool into a standing sculpture or creates an installation from hundreds of salvaged blue and white ceramic shards, Ai is interested in giving these historical found objects a second life as contemporary art.



Figure **9.3.2**: Shang Dynasty jade from the tomb of Fu Hao, 1300-1046 B.C.E., Anyang, China (photo: © National Museum of China, Beijing)

Historical legacy

This kind of repurposing of the past also relates to Chinese aesthetics and culture. In China, there is a long and rarified tradition of collecting ancient material remains and transforming them into new art. For millennia before the advent of modern scientific archeology, rulers and elites collected ancient materials and acted to preserve them or emulate them in new works, whether it was preserving important documents by recording them on durable surfaces like stone steles or incorporating ancient designs into bronze or ceramics. For example, Fu Hao's tomb in Anyang, a Shang dynasty (1600-1046 B.C.E.) royal burial tomb excavated in the 1980s, enabled scholars to push the history of antique collecting in China back to the thirteenth century B.C.E. The 775 **jade** carvings found in this tomb of a powerful Shang queen included both a collection of prehistoric jades as well a collection made in her era but modeled on earlier **Neolithic** prototypes. [2] This is an important revelation because it suggests that more than three thousand years ago, antique collections were already providing references and inspirations for making new works of art. This tradition of collecting and revitalizing antiquity has encouraged generations of Chinese artists and craftsmen to look to the past in making contemporary art.



Figure **9.3.3**: Tomb of Fu Hao, late 13th century B.C.E., Shang dynasty, Anyang, China (photo: **Gary Todd**, CC0 1.0)



Figure **9.3.4**: Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (second image), 1995 (photo: © Ai Weiwei)

Act of revitalization?

Ai Weiwei has chosen an unusual way of continuing this legacy of transforming the material past while at the same time expressing dissent against a country that sometimes obliterates its own cultural heritage: through direct confrontation. On the one hand we can view his work as a destruction of another artist's work; on the other, Ai's act can also be thought of as a kind of collaboration with an ancient artist over thousands of years—a revitalization. Once an ancient receptacle, the urn in *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* takes on new meaning as contemporary art. In Ai's work, the object is less a vessel than an emblem of Chinese history. For this performance, it seems that the object selection is almost immaterial—it might as well have been any ancient object. However, in recognition of Ai's own celebrity, the artist has transformed this urn into something of great significance just by selecting it to become the subject of his art, by including its name in the title, and, of course, by destroying it. The sensationalism of breaking something so old and rare is what modern audiences find so compelling. Here the nostalgia for what once was serves as a mirror, reminding us that China's past remains important and relevant today.

Destruction as preservation

The event that Ai Weiwei created and captured in these photographs is one of violence. Many feel that it is unethical to destroy an artifact under any circumstances—that such an act indicates a lack of value and respect. Indeed, law professor Joseph Sax calls such destruction a kind of "unqualified ownership" because it enables "the indulgence of private vice to obliterate public benefits." [3] Certainly, the destruction of art for ideological or egoistic reasons reflects badly on a collector of ancient objects. Yet was *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* a true obliteration? The Han dynasty urn still exists for the public but it has been transformed into the form of captured film stills. The loss of one object gives the new artwork its potency.



Figure **9.3.5**: Ai Weiwei "According to What" exhibition, Art Gallery of Ontario, (photo: **Joseph Morris**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Ai himself says that he considers the act of dropping the urn one of creation rather than destruction: “People always ask me: how could you drop it? I say it’s a kind of love. At least there is a kind of attention to that piece [because of the photograph].” [4] From the artist’s point of view, his act was one of preservation through transformation. Indeed, this triptych (set of three photographs) and the shadow of the vessel captured within it now receive unprecedented attention. These photographs are displayed in museums and public institutions around the world. The work is widely available online, and even the focus of academic essays like this one. Given Ai’s own celebrity status and the significance of this artwork, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* is also now far more valuable than the original ceramic object. In 2016, this limited edition work **sold for nearly 1 million dollars** at Sotheby’s Auctions in London. [5]

Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn is one of many works by Ai Weiwei that focuses on heritage loss and the importance of the past. According to the artist, “the power [of my artwork] comes not from the act but from the audience’s attention, the challenge to their values. The act is easy—every day we can drop something, but it is when we are forced to come face to face with this action and make a judgment … that is the interesting part.” [6] Ultimately the work demands a judgment: was the provocation and the global attention Ai garnered for the urn worth the destruction of the urn itself? This set of photographs encourages its viewers to question value of antiquity in our modern world and whether it is worth preserving.

Notes:

1. Tiffany Wai-Ying Beres, “A Battlefield of Judgments: Ai Weiwei as Collector,” *Orientations* 46, no. 7 (2015), pp. 87–92.
2. Wu Hung, ed., *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2010), pp. 16–39.
3. Joseph L Sax, “Collectors: Private Vices, Public Benefits,” in *Playing Darts with a Rembrandt: Public and Private Rights in Cultural Treasures* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 63.
4. Beres, p. 92.
5. Sotheby’s Auction: www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.42.html/2016/contemporary-art-evening-auction-l16020
6. Beres, p. 92.

Additional resources:

Ai Weiwei’s website

The Art Assignment, “The Case for Ai Weiwei”

Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*

by MEGAN LORRAINE DEBIN



Video **9.3.3**: Video from **Tate**

Subversive seeds

Ai Weiwei often uses his art to critique political and economic injustice. This can be seen in work such as his 2010 installation, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)* at Tate Modern, London.



Figure **9.3.6**: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (photo: **Drew Bates**, CC BY 2.0)

Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds) consists of more than 100 million tiny, handmade porcelain sunflower seeds, originally weighing in at 150 tons. They filled the enormous Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, an industrial building-turned-contemporary art space. Sunflower seeds evokes a warm personal memory for the artist, who recalls that while he was growing up, even the poorest in China would share sunflower seeds as a treat among friends. The use of sunflower seeds as the basis of his installation was also designed to subvert popular imagery rooted in the artist's childhood. Communist propaganda optimistically depicted leader Mao Zedong as the sun and the citizens of the People's Republic of China as sunflowers, turning toward their chairman. Ai Weiwei reasserts the sunflower seed as a symbol of camaraderie during difficult times.



Figure **9.3.7**: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London)

Though each of the 100 million carefully crafted individual seeds can draw the viewer's attention, once arranged together in a neat rectangle, or covering the floor of an entire room, the hyper-realistic seeds create a sense of vastness. In the Tate installation, there was a sense of precision in the arrangement of the seeds, creating visual order and uniformity. The individual seed is lost among the millions, a critique of the conformity and censorship inherent in modern China.



Figure 9.3.8: Ai Weiwei, *Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds)*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London) (photo: **Waldopepper**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

Made In China

More than 1,600 artisans worked to make the individual porcelain seeds by hand in Jingdzhen, the city known as the "Porcelain Capital," where artists have been producing pottery for nearly 2000 years. Porcelain, first produced during the Han dynasty in about 200 B.C.E. and later mastered during the Tang dynasty, is made by heating white clay (kaolin) to a temperature over 1200 degrees Celsius. The fusion of the particles within the clay during firing allowed artists to create vessels with thin but strong walls. Porcelain— a symbol of imperial culture in China—was also made for export via the Silk Road and became important to the creation of the idea of China in the West.



Figure 9.3.9: Some of the 1,600 highly skilled craftspeople from Jingdezhen hired to create and paint porcelain sunflower seeds

Ai Weiwei's use of porcelain comments on the long history of this prized material while also rejecting the common negative connotations of the modern term "Made in China." Utilizing skilled artisans known for their exquisite craftsmanship to make objects that can only be differentiated one from another upon close inspection, alludes to the important porcelain tradition in Jingdzhen, as well as to the uniformity and diffusion of modern (cheap and fast) labor that is responsible for China's hard-won place in the world economy. *Sunflower Seeds* asks us to examine how our consumption of foreign-made goods affects the lives of others across the globe.

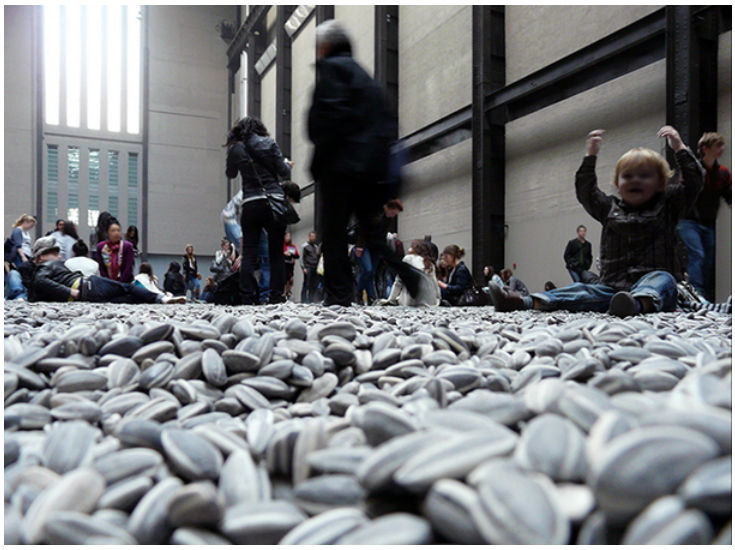


Figure 9.3.10: Ai Weiwei, Kui Hua Zi (Sunflower Seeds), 2010, one hundred million hand-painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern, London) (photo: Loz Flowers CC BY-SA 2.0)

How we experience an artwork impacts our perception of the work. In the tradition of participatory contemporary art, *Sunflower Seeds* asks the public to physically interact with the art. Initially, Tate visitors were invited to walk over and lie on the seeds, though the museum, in consultation with the artist, suspended this opportunity about a week into the exhibition because of safety concerns.

Art and activism

Ai Weiwei was arrested at the Beijing Capital International Airport on April 3, 2011 during his Tate exhibition.[1] He was detained for 81 days. The artist, along with many in the international community, asserted that his true offense was his political activism for democracy and human rights. Ai Weiwei had blogged for four years—investigating cover-ups and corruption in the government's handling of a devastating 2008 earthquake in Sichuan and the country's hosting of the Olympics. Ai Weiwei's blog was shut down in 2009. Since then, he has turned to Twitter and Instagram. During his detention, the international community, including major US art institutions, rallied for his release. Officials eventually released him, charging Ai Weiwei with tax evasion, but his passport was withheld, preventing him from leaving the country for four years. It was returned in 2015.



Figure 9.3.11: Ai Weiwei's continues to address issues of human rights in his work. The 2015 exhibit *@Large*, installed on Alcatraz, the former island prison in the San Francisco Bay, comments on surveillance, freedom, and political prisoners by mixing fine and traditional arts with pop culture materials including silk dragon kites and Lego portraits (above).

[1] Andrew Jacobs, "China Takes Dissident Artist Into Custody," *The New York Times*, 4/3/11, A4

Additional resources:

You can follow Ai Weiwei on Instagram and Twitter @aiww

More information on Ai Weiwei's Sunflower Seeds

Sunflower Seeds exhibition at the Tate

Ai Weiwei from art21

Ai Weiwei, *Remembering* and the Politics of Dissent

by JP MCMAHON



Figure **9.3.12**: Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

Dangerous Art

All art is political in the sense that all art takes place in the public arena and engages with an already existing ideology. Yet there are times when art becomes dangerously political for both the artist and the viewers who engage with that art. Think of Jacques-Louis David's involvement in the French Revolution—his individual investment in art following the bloodshed —and his imprisonment during the reign of terror. If it were not for certain sympathisers, David may well have ended up another victim of the guillotine. Goya is another example of an artist who fell foul of government power. There are instances in the 20th century when artists have faced down political power directly. Consider the photomontages of John Heartfield. Heartfield risked his life at times to produce covers for the magazine A/Z, which defied both Hitler and the Nazi Party.

Ai Weiwei

The Chinese artist, Ai Weiwei, offers is an important contemporary example. In 2011, Weiwei was arrested in China following a crack down by the government on so-called "political dissidents" (a specific category that the Chinese government uses to classify those who seek to subvert state power) for "alleged economic crimes" against the Chinese state. Weiwei has used his art to address both the corruption of the Chinese communist government and its outright neglect of human rights, particularly in the realm of the freedom of speech and thought. Weiwei has been successful in using the internet (which is severely restricted in China) as a medium for his art. His work is informed by two interconnected strands, his involvement with the Chinese avant-garde group "Stars" (which he helped found in 1978 during his time in the Beijing Film Academy) and the fact that he spent some of his formative years in New York, engaging there with the ideas of conceptual art, in particular the idea of the readymade. Many of the concepts and much of the material that Weiwei uses in his art practice are informed by post-conceptual thinking.



Figure **9.3.13**: Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern)

An International Audience



Figure **9.3.14**: Handpainted seeds (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, one hundred million hand painted porcelain seeds (Tate Modern)

Weiwei has exhibited successfully in the West in many major shows, for example, the 48th Venice Biennale in Italy (1999) and Documenta 12 (2007). He also exhibited *Sunflower Seeds* (October, 2010) in the Turbine Hall in the Tate Modern. In this work, Weiwei filled the floor of the huge hall with one hundred million porcelain seeds, each individually hand-painted in the town of Jingdezhen by 1,600 Chinese artisans. Participants were encouraged to walk over the exhibited space (or even roll in the work) in order to experience the ideas of the effect of mass consumption on Chinese industry and 20th-century China's history of famine and collective work. However, on October 16, 2010, Tate Modern stopped people from walking on the exhibit due to health liability concerns over porcelain dust.

"…a natural disaster is a public matter."

Perhaps the work that contributed most to Weiwei's current imprisonment and the destruction of his studio was his investigation of corruption in the construction of the schools that collapsed during the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China. Like many others, Weiwei investigated how improper material and the contravention of civil engineering laws led to the wholesale destruction of schools (which led in turn to the deaths of thousands of children trapped within them), Weiwei has produced a list of all the victims of the earthquake on his blog. This act is typical Weiwei's use of the internet to communicate information. This information is his "art", in much the way that American artists of the late 1960s used words and ideas as art.



Figure 9.3.15: Visitors entering the Ai Weiwei show *So Sorry* in the Haus der Kunst (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

So Sorry

In his retrospective show *So Sorry* (October 2009 to January 2010, Munich, Germany), Weiwei created the installation *Remembering* on the façade of the Haus der Kunst. It was constructed from nine thousand children's backpacks. They spelled out the sentence "She lived happily for seven years in this world" in Chinese characters (this was a quote from a mother whose child died in the earthquake). Regarding this work, Weiwei said,

> ***The idea to use backpacks came from my visit to Sichuan after the earthquake in May 2008. During the earthquake many schools collapsed. Thousands of young students lost their lives, and you could see bags and study material everywhere. Then you realize individual life, media, and the lives of the students are serving very different purposes. The lives of the students disappeared within the state propaganda, and very soon everybody will forget everything.***

The title of the show referred to the apologies frequently expressed by governments and corporations when their negligence leads to tragedies, such as the collapse of schools during the earthquake. Two months before the opening of this exhibition Weiwei suffered a severe beating from Chinese police in Chengdu in August 2009, where he was trying to testify for Tan Zuoren, a fellow investigator of the shoddy construction and the student casualties. Weiwei underwent emergency brain surgery for internal bleeding as a result of the assault.

The Arrest



Figure **9.3.16**: Blue, yellow, and red backpacks (detail), Ai Weiwei, *Remembering*, 2009, backpacks on the facade of the Haus der Kunst* (Munich)

On April 3rd 2011, Weiwei was arrested at Beijing's airport while while waiting for a flight to Hong Kong. While his detention is broadly believed to be linked to his criticism of the Chinese government, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that he is "under investigation for alleged economic crimes." Weiwei's participation in the Jasmine Rallies, a series of peaceful protests which took place all over China in February, no doubt contributed to his arrest.

Additional Resources:

*Historical Note on the Haus der Kunst: The Haus der Kunst (designed by Paul Ludwig Troost, "first master builder to the führer") was sited by Adolf Hitler and sought to express Nazi ideology by using stone from German quarries and with its references to the work of Klenze and Schinkel. From its opening in 1937, the Haus der Kunst held exhibitions glorifying the "Blood and Soil" propaganda of the Nazi regime.

Ai Weiwei's TED Video

Tate Modern: Sunflower Seeds Video

Simon Elegant, "Ai Weiwei: Interview Transcript", *Time*, May 12, 2009

Roberta Smith, "12 Heads Do the Talking for a Silenced Artist," *The New York Times*, May 2011

Hans Haacke, *Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1884-1975*

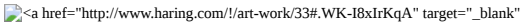
by SAL KHAN, DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **9.3.4**: Hans Haacke, *Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1884-1975*, 1975

Keith Haring, *Subway Drawings*

by DR. AMY RAFFEL



Keith Haring,
Untitled
, 1984, chalk on paper, 88 1 /2 x 46 inches, photographer: Ivan Dalla Rana © Keith Haring Foundation" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-17760" height="200" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/.../subway_01.jpg
" width="157">

Figure **9.3.17**: **Keith Haring, *Untitled*, 1984, chalk on paper, 88 1 /2 x 46 inches, photographer: Ivan Dalla Rana © Keith Haring Foundation**

An international art star, Keith Haring and his work have often been characterized as quintessentially of the eighties—an embodiment of the decade's street art, hip hop, and urban energy in New York. While his career involved a diverse range of art making—painting, drawing, performance, video, murals, and art merchandising—his subway drawings stand among his most well-known and celebrated work.

Haring drew over 5,000 chalk drawings over a five-year period, from 1980 to 1985, in New York City subway stations (visit the **Keith Haring Foundation website** to see his work year by year). Since the beginning of his career, Haring was determined to create art that could be for everyone, both through an accessible style and by locating his work in easily reachable, public locations. Creating art on the street meant that a bigger audience could see his work, outside of the more insular space of an art gallery.

Previous Street Art

Haring's subway drawings were not his first intervention into public, urban space. In New York City, early in 1980, he began to subtly alter street advertisements, such as one for Chardón Jeans, in which he blocked out letters, so the ad read "hard on Jeans." He also posted small collages on street lamps made up of images appropriated from print media and bits of painted paper. In the summer of 1980, Haring made more overtly political collages by cutting and rearranging headlines from the *New York Post*, to say things like "**REAGAN SLAIN BY HERO COP**" and "POPE KILLED FOR FREED HOSTAGE." He xeroxed these works by the hundreds and posted them all over the city in an effort to undermine the political conservatism of the period. These early experiments helped set the stage for Haring's subway drawings.

Subway Drawings



Figure **9.3.18**: **Keith Haring working in the subway. Photographer, Chantal Regnault 1983**

In late 1980, Haring noticed that New York City subway's blank advertising spaces were covered with black matte paper when advertising subscriptions expired. He immediately purchased some chalk, and started drawing. Over the next five years, this became a daily, repetitive obsession: he would ride the subway, look for these empty spaces of black paper, and draw quickly—without any preparation—and then leave on the next train. Through incessant repetition,Haring's subway drawings allowed him to perfect his highly recognizable reduced linear vocabulary, and to create an inventory of images. Simplification was practical: he needed to complete his drawings as fast as possible to avoid being arrested. He created characters, such as the barking dog and the radiating baby, which he drew on flat planes with no spatial depth, often with only a horizon line or a staircase to suggest space. Drawn close to the surface like cartoons, his images had immediacy and impact, and could carry multiple meanings through various combinations.

The **radiant baby**, for example, could represent birth or purity, but could also be read as a symbol of nuclear energy or bodily corruption depending on what he drew around it. Haring intentionally sanitized the subject matter of his subway drawings, leaving out any explicit sexual and political imagery. He wanted his audience, which included children, to enjoy his works. This made his drawings more ambiguous to an extent, but also more outwardly positive and universal in theme. This work, though, while seemingly straightforward, did incorporate some darker references, including generalized themes of oppression and the abuse of power (image below left), but these were often simplified to such an extent that they remained open to multiple interpretations.



Figure **9.3.19**: **Keith Haring, *Untitled* (Subway Drawing), 1982, chalk on paper @ Keith Haring Foundation**

Graffiti scene

Haring's arrival in New York coincided with graffiti's peak in 1978-79, when artists covered subway cars, walls, and storefront gates throughout the city. Haring's well-defined style benefited from graffiti, which offered lessons in how to make graphic images visible in a cluttered urban environment and stressed the importance of motion, speed, and improvisation. Haring never considered himself to be a graffiti artist however. His subway drawings significantly differed from graffiti in location, timing, and medium. Haring often used white chalk and worked during the day so that he could interact with his audience. In contrast, graffiti artists usually used spray paint or markers, working at night. Graffiti encompassed a subculture at the social margins of New York City that excluded artists like Haring both racially and socio-economically.

Downtown Arts Scene

Other artists of Haring's generation worked within the public spaces of New York City to create and display art including **Jean-Michel Basquiat**, Kenny Scharf, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, and Richard Hambleton. In addition the artist collectives Colab, Fashion Moda, Gran Fury, and Group Material used the street as canvas. Like Haring, these artists experimented with alternate distribution systems to expand their reach outside of the commercial art world. Through posters, billboards, or small sculptures, or by engaging the community through artist-run events, pop-up exhibition spaces, or activist demonstrations, these downtown artists (like Haring) regularly put their art and ideas on the street to be enjoyed, and to inform and involve the public. Their intention was inclusion, rather than to alienate or confuse.

Burgeoning Celebrity

Haring drew several works of art every day, over many years in the New York City subway, a system used by millions of people. While he made his subway drawings for free, they proved to be a promotional tool that catapulted him into the public spotlight and helped launch his gallery career. In effect, he co-opted spots meant for advertising and campaigned for himself. His drawing was also performative—often attracting an audience captivated by his quick actions and improvisation. He promoted his subway work in other media, including one instance in which a friend taped one of his arrests by the MTA police, which was then featured on CBS News on a nationwide special. He also designed buttons illustrating his characters and gave away thousands to subway riders. Attached to shirts and bags, these buttons enhanced the visibility of his work.

In 1982, Haring joined the Tony Shafrazi gallery, but continued to work in the subway. This was a strategy he used throughout his career: operating in both the contemporary art world and in public spaces. His gallery career helped to fund his time making street art for free, and they both reinforced his public presence. Eventually, Haring's popularity meant that his work in the subways became so valuable that people began to steal panels as soon as he drew them, ending this phase of his work. He continued to create art for all through posters and prints, merchandising, and large scale public murals in cities around the world. Before Haring became a worldwide celebrity, however, he was a local celebrity—generating his first fame through his subway drawings.

Additional resources:

The Keith Haring Foundation

Henry Geldzhaler, Introduction to *Art in Transit*

Michael Auping, *Urban Theater: New York Art in the 1980s* (New York: Rizzoli, 2014).

Peter Belsito, *Notes from the Pop Underground* (Berkeley, CA: Last Gasp of San Francisco, 1985).

Jeffrey Deitch and Carlo McCormick. *Keith Haring: 31 Subway Drawings* (New York: Art Issue Editions, 2012).

John Gruen, *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991).

Keith Haring and Robert Harris Thompson, *Keith Haring Journals* (New York: Viking, 1996).

Tseng Kwong Chi and Henry Geldzahler, Keith Haring, *Art in Transit: Subway Drawings* (New York: Harmony Books, 1984).

Keith Haring: Journey of the Radiant Baby (Piermont, N.H.: Bunker Hill Pub., 2006).

Cedar Lewisohn, *Street Art: The Graffiti Revolution* (New York: Abrams, 2008).

Anselm Kiefer

Anselm Kiefer, *Shulamite*

by REBECCA TAYLOR



Figure **9.3.20**: Anselm Kiefer, *Shulamite*, 1983, oil, emulsion, woodcut, shellac, acrylic, and straw on canvas, 213 x 145″ / 541 x 368.3 cm (Doris and Donald Fisher Collection) © Anselm Kiefer, courtesy of the artist

> ***Black milk of morning we drink you at night***
> ***we drink you at noontime Death is a gang-boss aus Deutschland***
> ***we drink you at dusktime and dawntime***
> ***we drink and drink Death is a gang-boss aus Deutschland his eye is blue***
> ***he shoots you with leaden bullets his aim is true***
> ***there's a man in this house your golden hair Margareta***
> ***he sets his dogs on our trail he gives us a grave in the sky***
> ***he cultivates snakes and he dreams Death is a gang-boss aus Deutschland***
> ***your golden hair Margareta***
> ***your ashen hair Shulamite***

—the final lines of Paul Celan's poem, "Death Fugue," published 1947 (trans. Jerome Rothenberg)

Breaking postwar silence

Born in Germany just months shy of the end of World War II, Anselm Kiefer came of age in the late 1960s when the silence surrounding the crimes of the Nazi regime was ruptured by a vocal younger generation horrified by their collective German "past,"

struggling to reconcile such shame and redefine what it meant to be German in a post-Nazi world.

For Kiefer, who had studied with the artists Peter Dreher in Karlsruhe and Joseph Beuys in Dusseldorf, painting became the arena to vocalize and elucidate his contempt for the Nazis and their reprehensible legacy, instilling every brush stroke with palpable rage, grief, and shame. In the 1970s, Kiefer developed a signature style that was influenced in part by the Neo-expressionist style of Georg Baselitz, but also by his teacher Beuys, particularly Beuys's tendency to use commonplace materials, such as fat and felt within his artistic practice. Kiefer augmented his thick layers of impasto with lead, glass, straw, wood, dried flowers, and more, yielding highly textured, viscous surfaces. As his list of materials grew, so too did the scale of his canvases, which though large and formidable, felt ephemeral and fragile as a result of the materials he utilized.

A thick impasto

All of the canonical elements of Kiefer's work are present in *Shulamite*—a thick impasto resulting from a hardened mixture of oil, acrylic, emulsion, and shellac; a brittle, textured surface infused with commonplace materials (in this case, straw and ash); mythological or biblical references (Shulamite refers to the heroine in the Song of Solomon); a literary reference (Celan's "Death Fugue"); and a historical subject or location (a Nazi Memorial Hall in Berlin).

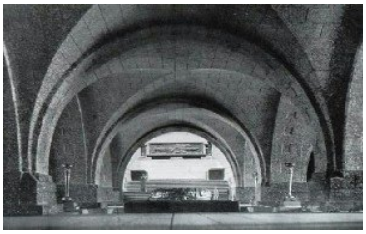


Figure **9.3.21**: Wilhelm Kreis, Funeral Hall for the Great German Soldier in the Hall of Soldiers, c. 1939 (Berlin)

Kiefer's hall is not a memorial to great men with patriotic flags waving boldly, but a gateway to damnation, a dark and foreboding road to hell, enclosed by low arches and paved with massive stones —the whole mise-en-scène (a stage set that tells a story) suggestive of an oven (immediately bringing to mind the hyperactivity of the crematoria at the Nazi death camps). Sulamith, is inscribed in the upper left hand corner, a graffiti-like testament in white paint upon the stone, to Celan's brave young Jewish girl consumed by this living hell, who came to her death in a chamber such as this because she had not the golden hair of Aryan Margarete but the dark "ashen hair" of Shulamite. Kiefer transformed architecture meant to honor Nazi heros into a memorial for their victims.

Emotional honesty

Comparisons to Jackson Pollock in terms of both scale and expressive, gestural style are understandable, but for me Kiefer's paint handling is even more reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh, in terms of raw beauty and emotional honesty. Just as van Gogh's paint can transport me into the Dutch or French countryside and fill my nose with the smell of fresh sunflowers or irises, so too can Kiefer transport me to another place in time and space—but rather than a hayfield in Holland it is the dark abyss of a concentration camp with the stomach-churning smell of burning flesh sullying the air.

Special thanks to Sandy Heller, The Heller Group, LLC

Additional Resources:

Paul Celan, Death Fugue, Copyright © 2005 by Paul Celan and Jerome Rothenberg. From Paul Celan: Selections. Reprinted with permission of the University of California Press. Poets.org

Nicolas Wroe, "Life in Art: Anselm Kiefer," essay in the Guardian Newspaper, March 18 2011

Anselm Kiefer, *Bohemia Lies by the Sea*

by COREY D'AUGUSTINE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 9.3.5: The conservator's eye: Anselm Kiefer, *Bohemia Lies by the Sea*, 1996, oil, emulsion, shellac, charcoal, and powdered paint on burlap, 75 1/4 in. × 18 ft. 5 inches / 191.1 × 561.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Corey D'Augustine and Steven Zucker.

Julie Mehretu, *Stadia II*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG



Figure 9.3.22

Opening / Ceremonies

When looking at *Stadia II*, first try to isolate the black lines from the rest of the composition. Does this centrifugal structure remind you of a sports arena, an amphitheater or opera house? Perhaps a political chamber? It could denote all of these, broadly invoking our experiences as individuals and collective bodies in such spaces. The built environment, for Mehretu, provides a setting in which people can gather, protest, pray, and riot in mass numbers.

Now, try to imagine yourself in a large stadium, at an important athletic championship such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympics. How do the crowds behave? What types of phrases or slogans are they shouting, and at what volume? Think about the matching clothing and the painted faces of spectators wearing team colors, or the flags and banners that they wave over their heads.

In her monumental paintings, murals, and works on paper, Julie Mehretu overlays architectural plans, diagrams, and maps of the urban environment with abstract forms and personal notations. The resulting compositions convey the energy and chaos of today's globalized world. *Stadia II* is part of a triptych of works created in 2004, and explores themes such as nationalism and revolution as they occur in the worlds of art, sports, and contemporary politics.

Gaze back into the painting and observe the various shards of color floating over the work's architectural skeleton. The scene, however abstract, could easily represent our visualization of the sports arena. Small circles, dots, and hash marks float through the open space at the center of the composition, resembling the eruption of confetti that announces a winning team's victory (or, alternately, that of a lucky political candidate on Election Day).



Figure **9.3.23**: Julie Mehretu, detail, *Stadia II*, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144″ (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)

Notice the larger circles, triangles, blocks and parallelograms that float across the upper register. Far from arbitrary, these basic pictorial elements could comprise the designs of nearly any country's national flag. The cluster of red and blue stripes, for instance, located along the top-right edge of the canvas, resemble the American flag, without necessarily resolving into a perfect match. We may also find corporate logos and religious symbols interspersed throughout; Mehretu is intentional in drawing analogies between these forms and the propagandistic ways in which they are often used.

Lastly, observe the painterly grey marks that seem to rise from the lower and central registers like plumes of smoke. Stadiums and capital buildings can represent triumph, pride and celebration, but they are also common targets for bombings and acts of terror, which are often motivated by a comparable degree of zealousness and ideological fervor.

Process

Mehretu's working process begins with the projection of maps and diagrams onto the work's blank surface. From these, the artist makes traces and hash marks that eventually grow into characters and communities. The first layer is coated with an acrylic-and-silica mixture that seals the drawing under a transparent ground. After drying, this ground is itself overlaid with more figures and photographs that are again assimilated into the composition.

The artist describes her final product as containing a "stratified, tectonic geology (…) with the characters themselves buried—as if they were fossils."[1] This distinct sense of temporality serves as a metaphor for history, memory, and the legacies of past cultural epochs that still influence contemporary life.

Utopian Abstraction

While nationalism, sports and global politics are key points of entry into the work, Mehretu also considers art historical precedents for these themes.

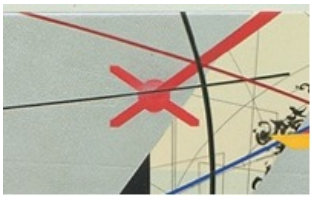


Figure **9.3.24**: Julie Mehretu, detail, *Stadia II*, 2004, ink and acrylic on canvas, 108 x 144″ (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh) (© Julie Mehretu)

Take a look at the orange diamonds at the side edges, the black quadrilaterals interspersed above, or the dynamic red "X" found at the top edge. These lines and shapes are unmistakable references to the Russian constructivist and Bauhaus movements of the early twentieth century, and to artists such as Alexandr Rodchenko, Kasmir Malevich, El Lissitzky, and Wassily Kandinsky. These artists conceived of pure abstraction as a way to wipe clean the slate of history and to promote universalism and collectivity in art, politics and culture.

Mehretu has long explored the use of abstraction in service of revolution and utopian politics throughout the history of Modernist art, "I am (…) interested in what Kandinsky referred to in 'The Great Utopia' when he talked about the inevitable implosion and/or explosion of our constructed spaces out of the sheer necessity of agency. So, for me, the coliseum, the amphitheater, and the

stadium are perfect metaphoric constructed spaces."[2] These can represent both the organized sterility of institutions and the "chaos, violence, and disorder" of revolution and mass gathering.

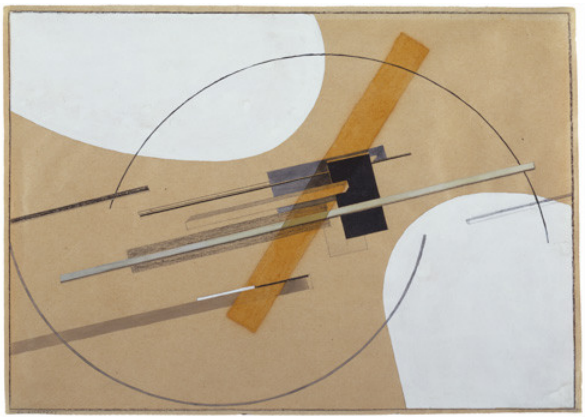


Figure **9.3.25**: El Lissitzky, *Proun (Entwurf zu Proun, S.K.)*, 1922-23, watercolor, gouache, india ink,graphite, conté crayon, and varnish on buff paper, 8 7/16 × 11 3/4″ / 21.4 × 29.7 cm (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York)

Global Networks

Because Mehretu builds her piece from multiple layers of figure and ground alike, the colors, shapes, and planar forms in *Stadia II* seem to be suspended between surfaces, and are often caught in a swirling motion around the axis of her compositions. The dynamism of the work makes reference to traffic patterns, wind and water currents, migrations, border crossings and travel.

Depicting patterns of movement, Mehretu emphasizes, on one hand, the militarization of bodies moving within and between national (or digital) spaces, and acknowledges the increasing speeds at which the world seems to be moving. Yet, while her compositions might be vertiginous and disorienting at times, we are given a chance to reflect on the potential and importance of such interconnectedness.

Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Mehretu has lived in Michigan, Rhode Island, and Dakar Senegal, and now resides in New York City.

1. Julie Mehretu, quoted in Thelma Golden, "Julie Mehretu's Eruptive Lines of Flight as Ethos of Revolution," in *Julie Mehretu: The Drawings*, ed. Catherine de Zegher and Thelma Golden, New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2007.

2. Julie Mehretu, "Looking Back: Email Interview between Julie Mehretu and Olukemi Ilesanmi, April 2003" in *Drawing into Painting*, Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2003: 13-14.

Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*

by DR. DORIS MARIA-REINA BRAVO

The Turbine Hall

Since 2000, the Tate Modern has commissioned installations (the Unilever series) for the museum's enormous Turbine Hall, including Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project* (2003) and Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds* (2010). In the eighth iteration, the Colombian artist Doris Salcedo produced *Shibboleth*, a deep meandering crack in the floor. Despite the unassuming nature of this work, it defies neat description and exists in a limbo between sculpture and installation; and the provocative title complicates the work instead of decoding it.

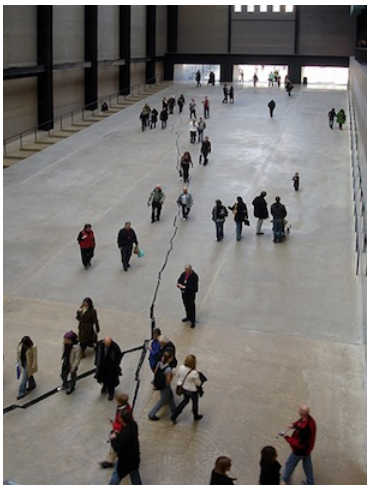


Figure 9.3.26: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, installation, Tate Modern © Doris Salcedo (photo: Nuno Nogueira/Nmnogueira, CC BY-SA 2.5-altered)

Salcedo has offered few explanations beyond stating how the fissure represents the immigrant experience in Europe. Though this theme is apparent in the work, it is by no means the only issue raised. As photographs of the installation demonstrate, visitors contorted their bodies in infinite ways as they tried to see below the crack. In *Shibboleth*, Salcedo elaborates a complex socio-political topic in a work with a tremendous formal presence.

Coded identification

Salcedo's installation requires attentive viewing. The rupture measures 548 feet in length but its width and depth vary (changing from a slight opening to one several inches wide and up to two feet in depth). The viewer's perception into the crevice alters, as he or she walks and shifts to better glimpse inside the cracks and appreciate the interior space, notably the wire mesh embedded along the sides.



Figure 9.3.27: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, installation, Tate Modern (photo: Chris Geatch, CC BY-NC 2.0-altered)

Change in perspective is one of Salcedo's goals. She quotes the Frankfurt School theorist Theodor Adorno: "We should all see the world from the perspective of the victim, like Jewish people that were killed with their head down in the Middle Ages. So he wonders, what is the perspective of a person that is agonizing in this position?"

To go from viewing this installation as a fissure in concrete to an artwork about the disenfranchised may seem like a big step. It is helpful to think of *Shibboleth* as a work of conceptual art since the ideas that frame the physical crack in the floor are of equal, if not greater importance than the material work itself. Salcedo's installation at the Tate Modern would be completely different if it were simply untitled; indeed, the analysis of the work would then settle exclusively on its formal qualities. But Salcedo has bestowed a curious and specific name: "Shibboleth," a codeword that distinguishes people who belong from those who do not.



Figure **9.3.28**: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, Tate Modern (photo: Dallas Ewing, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0-altered)

Every community, culture, and nation has its shibboleth. Among the U.S. military, “lollapalooza” was used during World War II since its tricky pronunciation could identify native, English-speaking Americans. But the sinister history of the word “shibboleth” illustrates how friends and enemies are separated by fine, linguistic lines. Any stranger in a foreign land appreciates the vulnerability this entails, especially the fear of being outed as a foreigner and exposed in a hostile environment.

Irrevocably “other”

Salcedo’s experience as a Colombian artist working abroad has made her especially sympathetic to the plight of marginalized people. Between 2002 and 2003, Salcedo completed two installations that make this clear. In the first work, the artist staged a performance where she lowered empty wooden chairs over the side of the Palace of Justice in Bogotá. The performance lasted 53 hours and commemorated the 1985 siege in that building where three hundred people were held hostage; the siege ended in a bloody confrontation between rebels and the military.

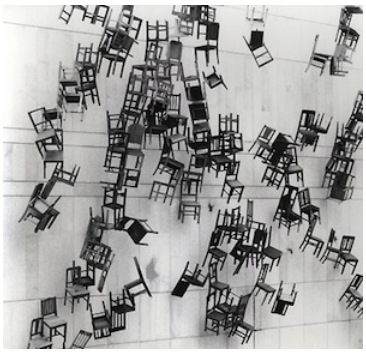


Figure **9.3.29**: Doris Salcedo, *Noviembre 6 y 7*, 2002, Supreme Court, Bogotá © Doris Salcedo

The second installation also honored the victims of senseless violence. Salcedo piled more than 1,500 chairs into a space between two buildings in Istanbul. The breathtaking sight of this nearly three-story sculpture highlighted how warfare disrupts everyday life and creates refugees out of ordinary citizens as it recalls the countless shoes discovered at concentration camps at the end of World War II.

For Salcedo, the ravine in the Tate Modern’s floor represents the immigrant experience in Europe, notably the racial segregation that marks people from the third-world as irrevocably “other,” a permanent state apart. Yet, the artist offers some hope. After seven months, the show ended and the Tate Modern filled the crack, leaving a scarred floor. This is a remarkable symbol of the possibility of healing through figurative and literal closure; however, the mark is also an obstacle to any attempts to erase the past.



Figure **9.3.30**: Shibboleth filled, Tate Modern (photo: Damien Everett, CC BY 2.0-altered)

Sources

From an institutional perspective, this scar is remarkable for other reasons: it is usually unimaginable for museum officials to permit an artist to permanently alter the exhibition space.



Figure **9.3.31**: Lucio Fontana, *Spatial Concept: Expectations*, 1960, slashed canvas and gauze, 100.3 x 80.3 cm (MoMA) © 2013 Fondation Lucio Fontana

Salcedo's act remains transgressive: the act of deliberately breaking one's media (in this case a concrete floor) is an act of rebellion. In this way, *Shibboleth* joins a tradition of artists experimenting with surface. In the late 1940s Lucio Fontana developed "Spazialismo," an approach to art-making that converted the two-dimensional canvas into a three-dimensional space. Fontana slashed his monochrome canvases, and revealed a new space underneath the gashes. The artist's bold move to disrupt the canvas's nearly sacred surface was revolutionary and influenced later artists.



Figure **9.3.32**: Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*, 1974

Throughout the 1970s Gordon Matta-Clark sawed into the walls, floors, and ceilings of buildings, often leaving cracks like the line of light in *Splitting* (1974). For centuries, a canvas was a flat plane, the support for an image rather than an object in its own right. A building by definition sought to be structurally sound; any structural damage makes it unstable and dangerous. To highlight their subversion, these artists flaunt the negative space made by their incisions: Matta-Clark's cuts in *Splitting* are illuminated by blinding light, while Fontana's slashes and Shibboleth each reveal a startlingly dark void previously unseen.

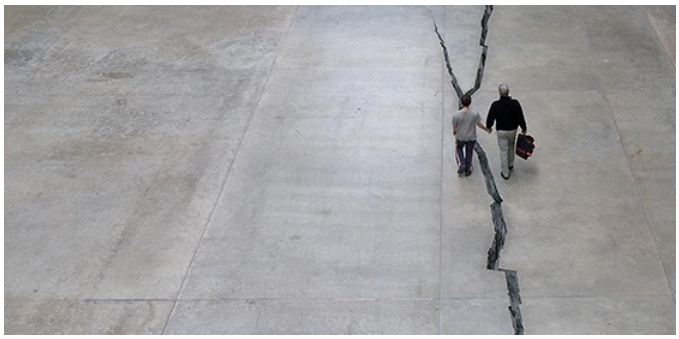


Figure **9.3.33**: Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007-08, Tate Modern (photo: Wonderferret, CC BY 2.0-altered)

Meanings

Matta-Clark, Fontana, and Salcedo create art that is difficult to classify. Is this painting? sculpture? architecture? installation? intervention? Salcedo's strength as an artist is her ability to balance the formal impact of *Shibboleth* with its message, while preventing one from overshadowing the other. Salcedo's reticence to discuss her process and meaning at length is our opportunity to develop infinite interpretations.

Cindy Sherman

Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #21*

by DR. SHANA GALLAGHER-LINDSAY and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **9.3.6**: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #21*, 1978, gelatin silver print, 7.5 x 9.5 inches or 19.1 x 24.1 cm (MoMA)

Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #228*

by MARY BETH LOONEY



Figure **9.3.34**: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #228*, from the History portraits series, 1990, chromogenic color print, 6′ 10 1/16″ x 48″ (208.4 x 122 cm) (The Museum of Modern Art)

This photograph is from Sherman's History Portraits series—where she draws inspiration from the history of art.

Description

The artist depicts herself in costume, standing in front of printed textiles parted slightly to reveal darkness beyond. She wears a red satin, full length dress, which is cinched by a dark blue sash across the shoulders, just under the bust line, and also well below a seemingly swollen abdomen. A gold sash wraps around her head and neck and drapes over each shoulder. In one hand she holds the head or mask of an old person, with a wrinkled, receding hairline, a large nose and bloodshot eyes. In the other hand, which is bloody, she holds a knife.

The figure tilts her head slightly to one side as she gazes at the viewer with a blank expression. The face is artificially made up with thin, arching brows and lips stained red in the center to suggest that they are puckered, as if about to kiss. Bare feet point outward, and appear enlarged in proportion to the rest of the figure.

Judith

In *Untitled #228*, Sherman cites the story of Judith and Holofernes—a popular subject during the Renaissance and Baroque periods (especially the 16th-17th century).

The Book of Judith (included In some versions of the Bible), recounts the story of Judith, who, to save her people (the Israelites in the town of Bethulia) from the Assyrian King Nebuchadnezzar, entered the tent of the invading general (named Holofernes), who found her attractive. She seduced him into drinking too much, and then beheaded him. In triumph, she brought the severed head back to the Jewish people.



Figure **9.3.35**: Elisabetta Sirani, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, 1638-55, oil on canvas, 129.5 x 91.7 cm (The Walters Art Museum)

For Renaissance and Baroque audiences, the story of Judith and Holofernes symbolized triumph over tyranny (much like the story of David and Goliath). Painters such as Caravaggio, Artemisia Gentileschi and Elisabetta Sirani provided patrons with select stages in the story—at times depicting Judith in the act of severing Holofernes' head, sneaking away from the darkened enemy encampment while carrying the severed head, or marching forward in triumph, holding aloft the head by the hair, as the citizens of Bethulia look on.

Sherman's photographic interpretation of this subject conflates two of those picture types. While Judith (enacted by Sherman herself) stands, holding the general's head in a fully lit space, the array of printed textiles draped behind her evokes a middle Eastern motif—referencing Holofernes' tent. The darkened parting between two cloths implies that Judith has just left.

The subject is pushed forward in the picture plane, backgrounded by the row of hanging textiles (this treatment of space is typical of Baroque art of the 17th century). She occupies a shallow stage. Her feet splay outwards, perhaps as a reminder of proto-Renaissance artists' struggles with foreshortening of forms intended to project towards the viewer (see frescos by Giotto, for example).



Figure **9.3.36**: Raphael, *The Small Cowper Madonna*, c. 1505, oil on panel, 59.5 x 44 cm (National Gallery of Art)

In a nod to Raphael's many High Renaissance Madonna images (right), the rich primary colors of red, blue and yellow figure prominently, and the two heads, arms and hand form a small, triangular composition within an otherwise vertically oriented format. The suggestion of a swollen abdomen may refer to Renaissance era fashion, in which women's empire-waisted garments deemphasized natural waists and hips. It may also be a way of conflating the figure of the Virgin Mary of the New Testament—typically portrayed in reds and blues in the Renaissance period—with the Old Testament heroine Judith.

Props

Sherman's work in this series is characterized by the blatant use of props and prosthetic devices. The full mask or head appears to be a store-bought "fright mask" typically used for Halloween. It is a jarringly out-of-place element in an image that historically featured a somewhat younger adult man. Both the rounded belly and the overly large feet are also obvious prosthetic enhancements. Sherman's facial makeup exaggerates the overall effect of artificiality.



Figure **9.3.37**: Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and Holofernes*, 1620-21, oil on canvas, 162.5 x 199 cm (Uffizi Gallery, Florence)

Sherman asks the viewer to consider layers of un-realities, beginning with the props and prosthetics she has employed in the image. Sherman herself is a prop: a real stand-in for the idealized Judiths of art history. As the props undermine the seriousness with which we might consider the scene, the image also questions the complex implications of a violent murder. As in many of the historical paintings, Judith's hands are bloody, but her garments and face remain clean. Her face—like the bland faces of so many other images of Judith is matter-of-fact, revealing no trace of the grim act that was purportedly committed (the exception to this is Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith*). The direct studio lighting of Sherman's image dampens the drama and further heightens the artificiality of the scene.

The artist invites the viewer to consider how all of these matters converge in a photograph. In the early 19th century, painters struggled to supplant or utilize the technical advantages of photography. Both painting and photography can and do afford the opportunity for invention. By adopting contrivances from prior centuries and adding multiple contemporary contrivances to her interpretation, Sherman's *Untitled #228* both blatantly exposes and provides an art historical context for her contemplations on the nature of narrative and pictorial invention.

Additional resources:

Smarthistory essay on Gentileschi's *Judith Slaying Holofernes*

Cindy Sherman from Art21

Interview with Sherman from the Walker Art Center

Cindy Sherman at MoMA

Kara Walker, *Darkytown Rebellion*

by DR. DORIS MARIA-REINA BRAVO

Brilliant patterns

The Art of Kara Walker, a "PBS Culture Shock" web activity, tests the participant's tolerance for imagery that occupies the nebulous space between racism and race affirmation. Though the activity gives the participant only two options at the end (whether or not to feature one of Walker's silhouettes on the "Culture Shock" homepage), the activity explores the multiple and complex reactions Walker's work elicits. Yet to focus solely on the controversy Walker's art generates is a disservice to her artistic training and the strength of her art, especially in a stunning and absorbing installation like *Darkytown Rebellion*. Here, a brilliant pattern of colors washes over a wall full of silhouettes enacting a dramatic rebellion, giving the viewer the unforgettable experience of stepping into a work of art. Walker's talent is not about creating controversy for its own sake, but building a world that unleashes horrors even as it seduces viewers.



Figure **9.3.38**: Kara Walker, *Darkytown Rebellion*, 2001, cut paper and projection on wall, 4.3 x 11.3m, (Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg) © Kara Walker

In contrast to larger-scale works like the 85 foot, *Slavery! Slavery!* (1997), *Darkytown Rebellion* occupies a 37 foot wide corner of a gallery. This ensemble, made up of over a dozen characters, plays out a nightmarish scene on a single plane: one figure stands upright over his severed limb, despite his bleeding leg stump, with bones protruding from his hips; another figure, also exhibiting a severed limb, rolls on his back; a woman with a bonnet and voluminous hoop skirt may be attacking a smaller figure on its back, perhaps a crying baby, with a long, plunger-like instrument.

Silhouettes and concealment

What is most remarkable about these scenes is how much each silhouette conceals. Without interior detail, the viewer can lose the information needed to determine gender, gauge whether a left or right leg was severed, or discern what exactly is in the black puddle beneath the woman's murderous tool. The color projections, whose abstract shapes recall the 1960s liquid light shows projected with psychedelic music, heighten the surreality of the scene.

Walker is a well-rounded multimedia artist, having begun her career in painting and expanded into film as well as works on paper. The layering she achieves with the color projections and silhouettes in *Darkytown Rebellion* anticipates her later work with shadow puppet films.

In addition to creating a striking viewer experience, *Darkytown Rebellion* reflects on the historical representation of African Americans in American visual culture. From the infamous Brookes slave ship print (1789), to *Birth of a Nation* (1915) to the Aunt Jemima logo (c.1890-today), powerful visuals shape African-American stereotypes and inform how popular culture perceives this community. Walker is one of several African-American women who use art to engage with and challenge visualizations of race within popular culture; others include Renee Cox, Adrian Piper, and Faith Ringgold.

Perverse ingenuity

Walker anchors much of her work in documents reflecting life before and after the Civil War. *The Daily Constitution 1878* (2011) emerged after Walker read an 1878 article from the eponymous Atlanta newspaper about a mob lynching a black woman and the brutal way the tree flung the woman's body into the air. Walker converted the article into a drawing because, as she stated, "it's this completely absurd, extreme, violent situation that required so much perverse ingenuity."[1]

Darkytown Rebellion is also born from a desire to translate the past into visual form. Walker discovered a landscape painting in *American Primitive Painting*, a book featuring artwork by unschooled artists. One anonymous landscape, mysteriously titled *Darkytown*, intrigued Walker and inspired her to remove the over-sized African-American caricatures. She placed them, along with more figures (a jockey, a rebel, and others), within a scene of rebellion, hence the re-worked title of her 2001 installation. Through *Darkytown Rebellion*, Walker is not attempting to correct a late-nineteenth century depiction of African-Americans but rather to broach a discussion: are these merely images from the past or do these caricatures still resonate in the twenty-first century?

Incomplete histories

Walker's dedication to recovering lost histories through art is a way of battling the historical erasure that plagues African Americans, like the woman lynched by the mob in Atlanta. Though this lynching was published, how many more have been forgotten? Who was this woman, what did she look like, why was she murdered? The impossibility of answering these questions finds a visual equivalent in the silhouetted voids in Walker's artistic practice.

Silhouettes began as a courtly art form in sixteenth-century Europe and became a suitable hobby for ladies and an economical alternative to painted miniatures, before devolving into a craft in the twentieth century. Traditionally silhouettes were made of the sitter's bust profile, cut into paper, affixed to a non-black background, and framed. Except for the outline of a forehead, nose, lips, and chin all the subject's facial details are lost in a silhouette, thus reducing the sitter to a few personal characteristics. In Walker's hands the minimalist silhouette becomes a tool for exploring racial identification. All things being equal, what distinguishes the white master from his slave in *Darkytown Rebellion*? Walker forces the viewer to confront the visual cues that make up stereotypes: these cues distill human forms into basic and arbitrary shapes that compose the basis of racial discrimination.

Though *Darkytown Rebellion* is full of shapes lacking detail, Walker reserves sharp outlines for faces and limbs. Walker's silhouettes are (mostly) full-bodied figures, captured in various poses from the traditional profile, to a three-quarter turn, to full frontal. This plurality of poses, often in a single body, is another example of obscured detail within the silhouette tradition: here not only is the face absent, but the body's action is also ambiguous. As mentioned earlier, it is impossible to make out which leg is severed on the standing figure near the corner, yet Walker manages to give the gory details of that man's tragedy. If traditional silhouettes illustrated a contained shape, Walker's figures overflow these boundaries, whether through graphic violence or metaphorically, in terms of subject matter.

Getting at the truth

In contrast to *The Daily Constitution 1878*, which was born from a news article, Walker herself developed the narrative for the orphaned figures that compose *Darkytown Rebellion*. Though the title suggests a historical event, both the original nineteenth-century painting and Walker's response are visual inventions rather than documents in a traditional sense. Walker enjoys this ambiguity between history and fiction: "I'm not making work about reality; I'm making work about images. I'm making work about fictions that have been handed down to me, and I'm interested in those fictions because I'm an artist, and any sort of attempt at getting at the truth of a thing, you kind of have to wade through these levels of fictions, and that's where the work is coming from."[2]

Darkytown Rebellion does not attempt to stitch together facts, but rather to create something more potent, to imagine the unimaginable brutalities of an era in a single glance.

1. Laura Barnett, "**Kara Walker's Art: Shadows of Slavery**," *The Guardian* (October 10, 2013)

2. "**Kara Walker Rattles Art World Again**," NPR (March 07, 2008)

Art, Race, and the Internet: Mendi + Keith Obadike's *Black.Net.Art Actions*

by DR. MEGAN DRISCOLL



Figure **9.3.39**: Logo for *New Black Portraitures*, Rhizome website

Looking at the landscape of the internet today, it's hard to imagine conversations about race not being a central part of net culture. Consider "Black Twitter," a concept that goes beyond user demographics to describe the significant role the internet plays in promoting dialogues about race in all parts of our lives.[1] Or spend some time exploring the many social media accounts dedicated to the cultural heritage of specific racial and ethnic groups, from **influential Asian Pacific Islander women** to **artists of Africa and the African diaspora**. You'll also find these conversations happening in art-specific venues like Rhizome, which in 2017 hosted *First Look: New Black Portraitures*, a primarily online exhibition that links the history of portraiture to questions surrounding blackness, representation, and image making in our networked present.[2]

However, net culture looked very different back in the 1990s when internet use first started to become popular. It's not that no one was talking about race online—there were actually quite a few email lists and other proto-social networks focused on race and ethnicity—but these discussions tended to be ignored in the mainstream, or simply treated as peripheral.[3] Cyber enthusiasts had long promoted the misguided perception that virtual communication could allow users to interact without the prejudices associated with physical difference such as race, gender, or disability.[4] When advertisers seized on this premise as a strategy for making the strange new world of the internet seem more approachable, they popularized the idea that, to quote a **1997 internet ad for telecom MCI**, on the internet "there is no race." In fact, the notion that race was simply irrelevant to life online became so prevalent that sociologist Alondra Nelson once declared it the "founding fiction of the digital age."[5]

During this same period internet art, or net art, was becoming a more widely recognized category of artistic practice. Like in the rest of net culture, race was not a common topic in early net art—but that doesn't mean there weren't artists addressing it.[6] Here, we'll focus on Mendi + Keith Obadike's *Black.Net.Art Actions* (2001–2003), a suite of retroactively grouped artworks that argue that racial discourses aren't just relevant online, they are essential to how we interact with computer networks.



Figure **9.3.40**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *Blackness for Sale*, 2001, online performance from *Black.Net.Art.Actions* (**Rhizome**)

Blackness for Sale

In 2001 the Obadikes released ***Blackness for Sale***, an online performance in which they attempted to auction Keith's Blackness on eBay. It received twelve bids over four days before eBay shut the project down, calling it "inappropriate." The item description includes benefits like "This Blackness may be used for making jokes about black people and/or laughing at black humor comfortably" as well as warnings like "The Seller does not recommend that this Blackness be used while voting in the United States or Florida."[7] The work thus reminds us that "Blackness" never just refers to a value-neutral color or the hue of a person's skin. Rather, it is bound to a complex history, simultaneously recalling the experiences of one individual and the condition of race relations across the United States.

By highlighting the field of meaning that surrounds language, *Blackness for Sale* also directs attention to how we talk about the platform that hosted it: eBay. As Keith Obadike has pointed out, many of the words we use to describe our activities online also describe the activities of colonization and slavery.[8] We cross the new electronic frontier, taking browsers like Navigator, Explorer, and Safari to plunder the Amazon and trade in the eBay. There we find representations of the Black body returned to the auction block, not just in this artwork but in the mammy figurines and other racist memorabilia sold alongside it as "Fine Arts and Black Americana."[9] *Blackness for Sale* argues that this digital frontierism is ideologically linked to the "real world" histories of colonialism and the slave trade, histories that cannot be divorced from how we interact online. In other words, even though our internet exchanges may appear to be virtual and therefore disembodied, what MCI called "communicating mind to mind," we still come to those exchanges with the experiences of our bodies and all of the histories that shape them.



Figure **9.3.41**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum's Artport gate page program (**Rhizome**)

Website for the Whitney Museum

The Obadikes continued their investigation into how color and race signify online with ***The Interaction of Coloreds*** (2002), a website they originally produced for the Whitney Museum's now-defunct **Artport gate page program**. Both the work's title and the grid format of its opening page reference Josef Albers's *Interaction of Color* (1963), a modernist text that theorizes the relationship between color and personal preference. Moving your mouse over that grid reveals famous lyrics from a Big Bill Broonzy song that remind us how such color preferences emerge in our ideas about race: "if you're white you're right / if you're black get back / if you're brown stick around / if you're yellow you're mellow."



Figure **9.3.42**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, Color Check, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum's Artport gate page program (**Rhizome**)

When you enter the main site you find the IOC Color Check System®, which the artists describe as a "brown paper bag test for the internet."[10] Using photographs of applicants' skin alongside answers to a "Hyper-Race Analysis" questionnaire, the System promises to return a precise hexadecimal color for your skin. This is a six digit HTML (hypertext markup language) code that tells your web browser what color to show you—or, in this case, assigns a color value to a human being. Now, the System exults, "Websafe colors aren't just for webmasters," a reference to the fact that when IOC was produced there were only a limited number of "websafe" codes that would display consistently on all browsers. By proposing that the color of a person can also be used to designate her as "websafe," IOC demonstrates how social meanings are reasserted when human beings interpret the apparently neutral mathematical system of HTML. In the Color Check System® the "true white" of #FFFFFF is like the "right white" of the Big Bill Broonzy song, representing not just a full amount of additive light but also a full human being. And the #000000 of "absolute black" ("get back") doesn't just signify a lack of light; it signifies the lack of humanity too often associated with

blackness. (Or, as *Blackness for Sale* put it, “The Seller does not recommend that this Blackness be used while making intellectual claims.”)



Figure **9.3.43**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Interaction of Coloreds*, top of System, 2002, website originally produced for the Whitney Museum’s Artport gate page program (**Rhizome**)

The IOC Color Check System® also invites us to consider for whom we are being designated “websafe.” In addition to wry mentions of dating websites and airlines hoping to “offer lower rates on the web to customers with non-threatening bodies,” the System suggests that it may be useful to a “new African-American web portal or an old Negro social club looking for a way to maintain your club’s discriminating tastes in the information age.” This is a reference to the racially oriented proto-social networks that flourished during the 1990s, such as the immensely popular BlackPlanet. Although these networks offered an important platform for many people who didn’t see themselves reflected in other areas of internet culture, IOC points out that they also threatened to exaggerate racial segmentation and reduce Black internet users to a consumer category. In this way, the Obadikes not only challenge the idea that race is irrelevant on the internet, they also critique the assumption that simply having more Black people online will make the internet a more equitable place.[11]



Figure **9.3.44**: Mendi + Keith Obadike, *The Pink of Stealth*, 2003, web interactive (**Mendi + Kieth Obadike**)

The Pink of Stealth or *Keeping Up Appearances*

The final work the Obadikes choose to include in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* varies depending on the url where it is accessed. In some publications it’s ***The Pink of Stealth*** (2003); in others, it’s ***Keeping Up Appearances*** (2001).[12] What these two works share in common is an emphasis on the gender and sexual politics that are only hinted at in *Blackness for Sale* and *The Interaction of Coloreds*. *Keeping Up Appearances* is a hypertextimonial poem by Mendi Obadike that explores the relationship between Blackness and femininity, in part through the visual signifier of the color pink. This signifier is picked up by *The Pink of Stealth*, which integrates a website, hypertext poem, sound collage, and Flash game to play with the different class, gender, sexual, and even health-related meanings that have been associated with pinkness over time. The inclusion of either work in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* rounds out the suite’s focus on the multiple meanings of color language by insisting that racial discourses cannot be separated from their intersections with all of the other factors that influence our experiences—online as well as off.



Figure **9.3.45**: Mendi Obadike, *Keeping Up Appearances*, 2001, hypertextimonial poem (**Rhizome**)

As discussed at the beginning, the fact that race no longer feels peripheral on the internet is a dramatic change from the years when the *Black.Net.Art Actions* were being produced. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the myth that race disappears online still shaped how many people understood the emancipatory potential of computer networks. The Actions helped to counter that myth by revealing how the histories that influence our ideas and experiences of race persist throughout our encounters on the network. In the process, these artworks also demonstrated that the relationship between race and computer networks is an essential subject for internet-based art.

Notes:

1. Donovan X. Ramsey and Meredith D. Clark, "The Truth About Black Twitter," *The Atlantic* (April 10, 2015), https://www.theatlantic.com/technolo...witter/390120/
2. Aria Dean, "An Introduction to New Black Portraitures," *Rhizome* (blog), October 26, 2017, http://rhizome.org/editorial/2017/oc...-portraitures/.
3. Email lists like the Afro-Am Listserv started popping up in the early 1990s, and by the end of the decade commercial enterprises like Community Connect were launching racially oriented social networks such as AsianAvenue and BlackPlanet. The latter quickly became a sprawling platform that would only be eclipsed in size and popularity by the rise of MySpace.
4. Two of the most well-known promoters of the model of the internet as disembodied home of the mind are John Perry Barlow, co-founder of the internet advocacy group the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and Howard Rheingold, author of *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* (1993), an oft-cited book on The WELL, the internet's first social network. This well-meaning argument is based on the assumption that a world of the mind would be inherently more just. However, it ignores the reality that embodied experience does shape life online, for better and worse, as well as the fact that not everyone is able to shed the histories associated with their bodily characteristics even in an apparently all virtual environment—nor does everyone want to.
5. Alondra Nelson, "Introduction: FUTURE TEXTS," *Social Text* 20, no. 2 (71) (Summer 2002): 1, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-20-2_71-1. In 1998, Nelson founded the influential Afrofuturism online discussion group. While scholarship on race in early net culture was also relatively rare, she's not the only person working in this area. Other prominent voices include Lisa Nakamura, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Jennifer González, and Tara McPherson.
6. It's important to note that while race wasn't central to early net art, it wasn't entirely marginalized either. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the Mongrel group, Prema Murthy, Tana Hargest, and Mendi + Keith Obadike are just a few examples of artists who made relatively well-known work addressing the relationship between race and computer networks during the 1990s and early 2000s.
7. This is a reference to large-scale voter disenfranchisement in Florida during the 2000 US presidential election, which disproportionately affected Black voters. See Ari Berman, "How the 2000 Election in Florida Led to a New Wave of Voter Disenfranchisement," *The Nation*, July 28, 2015, https://www.thenation.com/article/ar...franchisement/.
8. Coco Fusco, "All Too Real: The Tale of an On-Line Black Sale; Coco Fusco Interviews Keith Townsend Obadike," September 24, 2001, http://blacknetart.com/coco.html.
9. This is the category to which the Obadikes submitted *Blackness for Sale* in 2001. eBay has since changed their categories, but a search for "Black Americana" still turns up plenty of racist memorabilia, much of it filed under "Ethnic & Cultural Collectibles."
10. The brown paper bag test is an historical form of colorism (racial prejudice within communities of color) that is said to have been used to admit—or deny—access to certain African American social institutions. Stories about this test claim that only those whose skin was lighter than a brown paper bag were allowed in.
11. The one area in which scholars did focus on the relationship between race and computer networks during this period was the question of access, often referred to as the "digital divide." While being able to use the internet had already become undeniably important, scholars such as Alondra Nelson argue that the digital divide narrative tends to frame Black people as inherently anti-technological while paying little attention to how race influences experience once people are online.
12. The Obadikes feature *The Pink of Stealth* as the third work in the *Black.Net.Art Actions* in Keith + Mendi Obadike, "The Black.Net.Art Actions: Blackness for Sale (2001), The Interaction of Coloreds (2002), and The Pink of Stealth (2003)," in *Re:Skin*, ed. Mary Flanagan and Austin. Booth (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 245–50. It was later replaced by *Keeping Up Appearances* in the *Black.Net.Art Actions*' **entry into the Rhizome Net Art Anthology**. Neither source is more

authoritative; rather, this reflects the fluidity of internet art, which, like performance art, is often characterized by change over time.

Nari Ward, *We the People* (black version)

by DR. MINDY BESAW, CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **9.3.7**: Nari Ward, *We the People (black version)*, 2015, shoelaces, 8 × 27 feet (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art), a Seeing America video

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

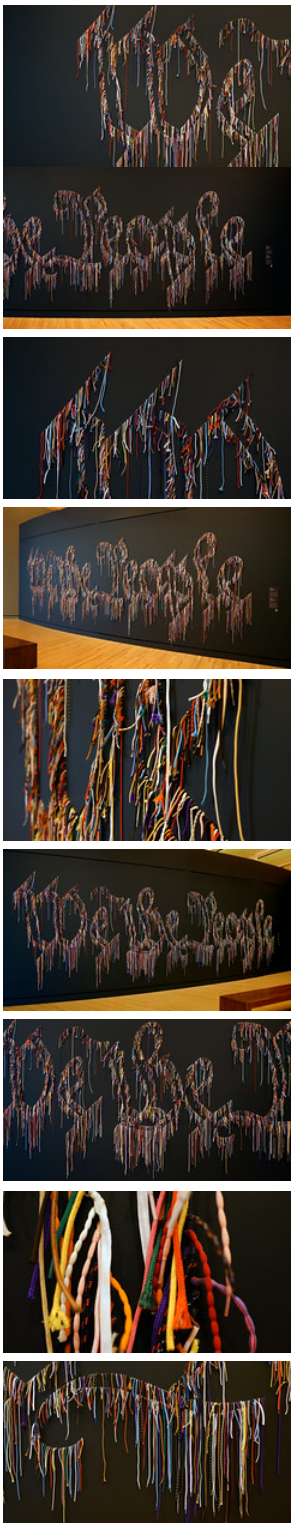


Figure **9.3.46**: More Smarthistory images…

Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*

by DR. DORIS MARIA-REINA BRAVO



Figure **9.3.47**: Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City, 42 seconds (photos: **Jane Dickson/Public Art Fund**)

In the spring of 1987, visitors to Times Square were confronted by a puzzling 45-second animation among the glittering billboards characteristic of this part of Manhattan. The animation consisted of three digital renderings that each combined images (maps and a flag) with simple lines of text. What mystified some viewers were not the images themselves, but the text that accompanied them: in the first frame, "This is Not America" was superimposed on a map of the United States; in the second frame, "This is Not America's Flag" was superimposed on the image of the United States flag; and in the last frame, the single word "AMERICA" was superimposed on the image of the North and South American continents together.

In less than a minute, artist Alfredo Jaar succeeded in provoking patriotic inhabitants of the United States by asserting that they are not the only "Americans." Jaar's message gave credence to a long-standing belief among Latin Americans in other countries that they, too, have the right to call themselves by that term. Nearly thirty years later, Jaar's *A Logo for America* remains a powerful example of art that uses the language of commercial advertising to convey a pointed political message.

Messages in Spectacolor



Figure **9.3.48**: Catalina Parra, *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City (photo: **Jane Dickson, Public Art Fund**)

In 1982, New York City's Public Art Fund launched the *Messages to the Public* program with the goal of exposing viewers to media-based artworks through Times Square's Spectacolor board. For nearly a decade, dozens of artists created short animations that would appear within loops of commercial advertising. A new "Message" would appear every month, providing the viewing public with a fresh animation. According to the project's originator, the painter Jane Dickson (who was working as a designer for Spectacolor at the time), the purpose was to inject a political message into daily life. "I picked that title," she said of *Messages to the Public*, "because I thought the propaganda potential from this project was terrific." [1] Other Latin American artists involved in the *Messages* project also used this opportunity to highlight their critical perspectives on U.S. culture. For example, Catalina Parra's *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue* (see image) critiques the promise of the modern immigrant experience using the country's most iconic symbol of liberty.

Jaar's message

Jaar illustrates two iconic symbols of the United States of America—the map of the country and the flag—and embeds them with messages that subvert their traditional meanings. The contrast is meant to pose the question, What exactly *is* America? As a potential answer, Jaar ends his animation with a rendering suggesting that the entire hemisphere is, in fact, "America." For those living in Mexico, Central, and South America, this is an argument that has often fallen on deaf ears. For example, it is common for someone from Chile—Jaar's country of birth—to simultaneously consider themselves a Chilean and an American. The distinction is simply the difference between national and continental affiliations. When Jaar was commissioned to create this work of art, he had only been living in the United States for a few years, and it would likely have struck him as odd to hear the term "America" being used to define only citizens of the United States.



Figure 9.3.49: Alfredo Jaar, *A Logo for America*, 1987, Spectacolor animation, Times Square, New York City (Photos: Jane Dickson/Public Art Fund)

However, for many people living within the United States, this question is likely rarely, if ever considered: for them, “America” implies one country, one flag, and one nationality. According to Jaar, “Some of [the viewers] said live on national radio, ‘This is illegal. How could they let him do this?’ It is so embedded in their education that the U.S. is America, whereas the rest of the continent is erased.” [2] Jaar elicited this reaction by appropriating a national symbol to critique mainstream ideas about Americanness—not only about the definition of the term itself, but the ways that the term’s use in the United States implies superiority over other American countries and cultures. The final frame of his animation, which shows the outline of North, Central, and South America along with the word “AMERICA,” is the new “logo” referenced in Jaar’s title. It is a literal re-rendering—a “rebranding,” to use the language of advertising—of the American continents that **Europeans encountered** in the late fifteenth century. Afterall, the lands of the Western hemisphere which came to be called America after the explorer and mapmaker Amerigo Vespucci, were perceived as one geographic entity, despite political subdivisions.



Figure 9.3.50: The first map to name America (after the explorer and cartographer, Amerigo Vespucci) and to show America and Asia as separate continents. Martin Waldseemüller, *Universalis Cosmographia*, 1507, composite map, 128 x 233 cm (**Library of Congress, Washington D.C.**)

Pop and propaganda

What does it mean to make this logo for America, a type of symbol normally used to represent products or corporations? A useful example can be seen in the earlier movement, **Pop Art**, and its use of consumer culture as a source of inspiration. Artists like Richard Hamilton, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol appropriated the slick, graphic sensibility of mid-century advertising as well as the means and materials of industrial production. Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes*, for instance, perfectly mimicked factory-made boxes, simultaneously drawing attention to the aesthetic appeal of what might otherwise be passed over as an unremarkable, mass-produced package, while critiquing high-minded notions of art that fetishized unique, handmade objects.



Figure 9.3.51: Andy Warhol, *Brillo Boxes*, c. 1964, house paint and silkscreen on plywood (Whitney Museum of American Art, photo: Dr. Steven Zucker)

However, unlike Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* which are exhibited within galleries and museums, *Messages to the Public* existed within a stream of actual advertising, emphasizing its critical opposition. Like the Pop artists before him, Jaar not only made use of the formal language of advertising, but in taking it out of the object-centric realm of the gallery and into the virtual space of the advertising screen, he also questioned the very definition of art-making, which he described as primarily a process of thinking:

> ***I think that artists are thinkers, they're intellectuals. And art is about thinking. For me, art is about 99% thinking and 1% making. So I spend most of my time, and I ask my students to spend 99% of their time, thinking. […] Only at the end of a very long thinking process [do] we make something […] And in my case I do not work with a specific medium. The medium I use is the one that I feel speaks the better for the ideas I'm working with. [3]***

Just as Jaar asserted the importance of thinking in creating his art, the viewer is also rewarded for investing time considering it—something one might not normally do in the face of advertising.

A Logo for America is still considered a seminal work of Latin American Art. It was acquired by the Guggenheim Museum as part of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative and was featured in the museum's 2014 exhibition, *Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today*. Concurrent with this show, Jaar's video returned to Times Square for a month-long reenactment, playing every night on dozens of screens. Despite its simplicity, Jaar's message continues to stir emotions and serve as a daring intellectual exercise.

[1] Alfredo Jaar—Messages to the Public: A Logo for America," **Public Art Fund**.

[2] "In Conversation: Alfredo Jaar," **The Brooklyn Rail, April 6, 2009**.

[3] "Focus on: Alfredo Jaar," **Vogue Italia**.

Additional Resources:

This work at the Guggenheim

This work on the Public Art Fund website

Messages to the Public on the Public Art Fund website

Catalina Parra's *USA, Where Liberty is a Statue* on the Public Art Fund website

"A Logo for America" in the New Yorker, August 27, 2014

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9.4: “Creative iconoclasm”- a tale of two monasteries

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI

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Figure **9.4.1**: Monastery (chapter house, cloister, and refectory) of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, 1133–41, built in Sacramenia, Spain, and today in North Miami Beach, Florida

Conservation, restoration and ruination

Cultural heritage professionals often draw a clear distinction between conservation and restoration. The definition of conservation is closely linked with the idea of preservation—the idea is to salvage cultural artifacts so that they retain the histories that produced them.

Restoration, on the other hand, is seen as the act of replacing components that have fallen into disrepair; it can be seen as a destructive force, or as the salvation of an object from ruination. Even when restorations are done with the best intentions, and with a desire for authenticity, restoration work can alter the historical significance of building. This is especially problematic with medieval cathedrals and monasteries, which often contain an accretion of styles built up through the ages. When doing restoration, which style should be considered the “original”? Which, if any, should be removed? For some time, the Renaissance era was privileged over all others. But this began to change in the mid-nineteenth century, when medieval architecture once again began to be considered beautiful.



Figure **9.4.2**: 50th Anniversary of the Venice Charter, 2014 Annual Report of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

In 1964, a group of concerned conservationist professionals from various disciplines gathered from several countries to draw up guidelines in regard to responsible restoration. The document they produced, "Decisions and Resolutions: International Charter for the Conservation and Renovation of Monuments and Sites" is now referred to as The Venice Charter, and it set down rules that should be followed when restoring a historical site or monument.

In the Venice Charter, the principles of authenticity and retention of the historical context were paramount. It states that the process of restoration aims "…to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument." This goal in turn should be based on "respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins." Following this premise, the Venice Charter declared that reconstructions or replacements of missing parts "must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence." The charter also held that all significant building contributions from any time period must be considered. The Venice Charter, now almost 55 years old, is still the go-to guide in regard to historic restoration.

Creative iconoclasm

In the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, restoration often involved the idealized imaginings of the restorer and/or patron —something which British anthropologist Alfred Gell termed "creative iconoclasm." Creative iconoclasm is essentially when a renovation deviates so far from the original intended form of a building that the building loses its previous meaning and takes on different meaning altogether. Hence, the use of the term iconoclasm (destruction of an image). More recently, art historian Meredith Cohen has written about the "creative interventions" done to medieval structures. They leave in their wake a whole new history, vastly different from what had been recognized for hundreds of years. Two Spanish monasteries purchased by William Randolph Hearst in the late 1920s are prime examples of these overlapping concepts.



Figure 9.4.3: William R. Hearst (Library of Congress, Harris & Ewing, photographer)

A tale of two monasteries

You may recognize the name William Randolph Hearst (the early twentieth-century newspaper baron and avid art collector), but you may not be aware of the curious case of two Spanish medieval monasteries that made their way to the United States at his behest—the monasteries of **Saint Bernard de Clairvaux** (originally in Sacramenia, Spain, and now partly in Florida), and **Santa María de Óvila** (originally in Guadalajara, Spain, and now partly in California). [1]

Both monasteries were purchased by Hearst and arduously removed from where they had stood in Spain for hundreds of years and relocated to the United States. Both were subsequently left to moulder in fragments—one on each coast of the United States. Decades later, they would be problematically restored, at great monetary and historical cost.

The Search begins — Saint Bernard de Clairvaux

In 1923 Hearst instructed Arthur Byne, architect, art historian, and antiques dealer, to seek out a historic limestone structure. This was a decade before the Spanish Civil War, but Spain had long been experiencing political unrest and climate issues. Over the centuries, medieval Spanish monasteries had suffered the stressors of age and a general lack of religious enthusiasm.

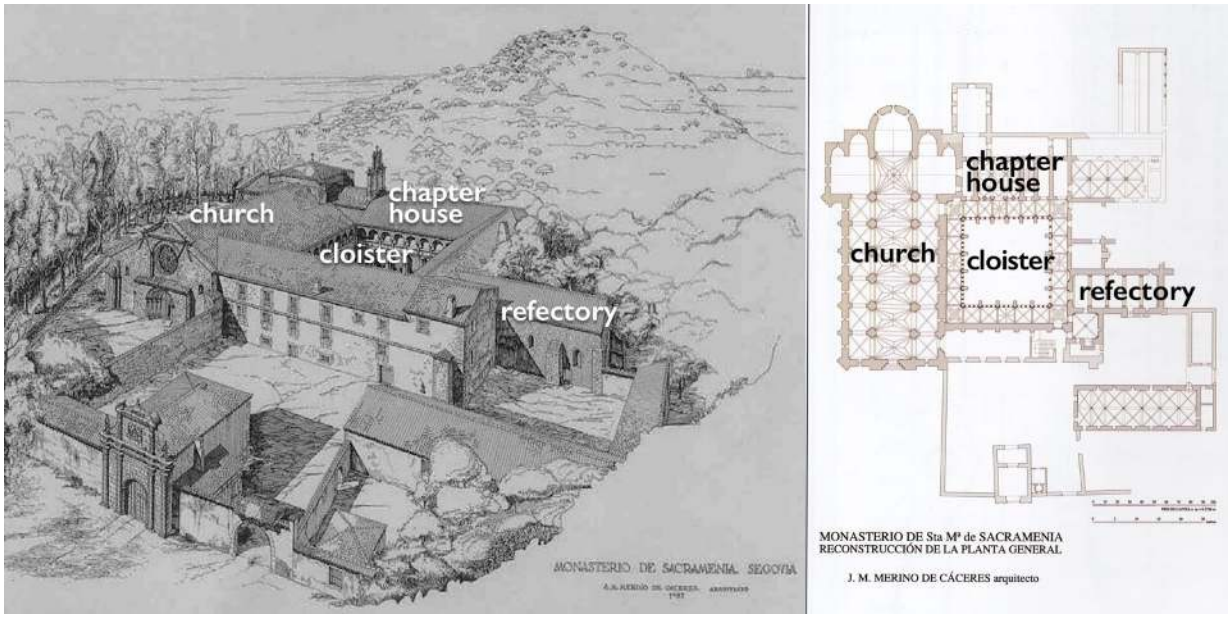


Figure 9.4.4: **Perspective drawing** and **plan** of the monastery of Saint Bernard de Clairvaux before the removal to the United States of the cloister, chapter house, and refectory (according to José Miguel Merino de Cáceres, architect, from 1982)



Figure 9.4.5: Church façade, Monastery of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, 1133–41, Sacramenia, Spain (before the 1923 removal of several monastic buildings and their reconstruction in North Miami Beach, Florida. The church is still in-situ.)

When Byne came upon the monastery at Sacramenia, it had already experienced a severe fire in the nineteenth century, and, though repaired afterward, the last monk left in 1866. The monastery is Cistercian (a Catholic religious order of monks and nuns), and Cistercian architecture is known for its fine ashlar masonry, harmonious proportions, and restraint in ornamentation. However, there were also regional variations. Parts of the Santa María de Óvila monastery had walls seven feet thick and small, slit windows to defend the complex from Muslim invaders (the Cistercian tendency to build in remote locations made them particularly vulnerable to attack).

In 1923 Byne declared in a letter to Hearst and his architect Julia Morgan, “The monastery is located in one of the most desolate corners of Spain. It is of Cistercian origin, though probably the only twelfth century cloister to be had in Europe today.” The term “to be had” in this quote underlines the sort of smash and grab policy that Hearst, Morgan, and Byne seem to have been abiding by. There was no pretense of buying the monastic buildings (the cloister, chapter house, and refectory) in order to save and preserve them (sometimes this is the motivation cited when a country appropriates the cultural heritage objects of another—one well-known example is the case of the **Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon**).

An offer amount of $35,000 for several components of the monastery was quickly extended by Byne on behalf of Hearst to the current owner, and just as quickly accepted. The idea was for these components to be adapted into part of Hearst’s ever-growing property in San Simeon (generally now known as Hearst Castle in California). The **monastery’s church** itself was not purchased and remains in-situ (in place), however, the thirteenth-century cloister (covered walkway), chapter house (meeting space) and other outbuildings were purchased by Hearst—and subsequently, slowly, removed.

Numerous letters from Byne to Morgan and Hearst reveal the politics involved in taking apart the cloister and other portions of the monastery. Numerous bribes were offered to keep the removal from being stopped by the government. The project was frequently threatened by the Spanish minister of fine arts; the sale was, in fact, illegal and the press had gotten a hold of the story. Despite this, the minister did not make good on his threats, so the project carried on.



Figure 9.4.6: Hearst Castle postcard

Taking the buildings of the monastery apart would have been a time-consuming process under any circumstances. It was soon realized the timing would not allow the cloister to be incorporated into the fabric of Hearst Castle—but another solution was at hand—a plan was made to have the monastery's cloister function as a stand-alone museum.

Supervision of the dismantling of the monastery at Sacramenia was said to be meticulous—each block was carefully numbered, and extensive drawings made. It was a labor-intensive project that required significant problem solving along the way: weather, the logistics of moving the stones, and politics all came into play.

Eventually 11,000 crates would be shipped off to the United States. Unfortunately, the crates were not transported before an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease hit the Segovia area, causing the shipment to be quarantined upon its arrival on the east coast of the United States. The crates were opened in order to burn the potentially infectious hay with which the stones had been packed and in the process. Stones were heaved haphazardly into any crate that happened to be handy, spoiling the system of how the stones were to be put back into place.

By now, several years had passed since the purchase and Hearst's finances had taken a beating in the stock market crash of 1929 (not that this stopped him from collecting European art and antiques) and the materials that had once formed the monastic buildings at Sacramenia were placed on the back burner. Once out of quarantine, the crates and their stones were left to decay in one of Hearst's warehouses in Brooklyn, New York. The remains of the monastery lingered there for almost thirty more years.

In the 1940s, Raymond Moss and William Edgemon approached Hearst to purchase the Sacramenia remains, but he refused their offers. When he died, however, the estate was willing to sell to the pair who planned to use the stones to build a tourist attraction in Florida. The reconstruction of the Sacramenia stones was overseen by Allen Carswell (who also oversaw the rebuilding of the Cloisters Museum, a satellite of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan).



THE ROCKY MOUNT

SECTION B — SUNDAY TELEGRAM — SECTION B

SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 1954

813-Year-Old Monastery Is Moved From Spain To Florida

Nineteen Months Needed To Assemble Old Edifice

They call it the biggest "jigsaw puzzle" the world has ever seen — or ever is likely to see again!

There were more than 35,000 pieces.

Each piece was a heavy stone that weighed anywhere from a hundred pounds to more than a ton.

It took nineteen months of tantalizing toil and cost almost $1,500,000 to fit the pieces together.

But today, just north of Miami, Florida, the most fantastic jigsaw puzzle in history finally ... is completed. It is the actual, 813-year-old Monastery of St. Bernard of Sacramenia — reassembled, original stone by original stone, exactly as it was first built in ancient Spain back in the year 1141.

Rich and powerful Alphonso VII, King of old Castile, built it for the sacrist Cistercian monks in a lonely valley near the village of Sacramenia.

FRANKISH FATE

A grandish fate — prized and coveted by the insatiable appetite of the publishing tycoon, William Randolph Hearst, as great art treasures — was a paramount jigsaw puzzle piece of it.

And the monastery fell to two Cincinnati, O., business men — E. Raymond Moss and William S. Edgemon.

The monastery was one of $50,000,000 worth of art treasures Hearst collected from the four ... of the jigsaw puzzle. So complex, so involved was the system of numbering that it was almost unexplicable when it came to be used twenty-five years later.

To dismantle the monastery, Hearst's agent brought stonemasons and carpenters from as far away as Madrid. Masons took the monastery apart carefully, stone by stone and painted a number on each one. Carpenters made thousands of heavy boxes to pack them in.

Each stone was bedded in a nest of hay — and that hay was fate's second prank in the creation of the puzzle.

It took 10,751 boxes to crate the monastery for shipment to New York 4,000 miles away.

QUARANTINED

But in New York the crated monastery was quarantined. The packing hay had been sworn in a section of Spain where there was an outbreak of highly-contagious

The quadrangular Cloister Walk stands again exactly as it was first built more than 800 years ago. Around these walks for centuries, monks paced while they murmured their endless prayers. Intricately carved capitals of the columns in the foreground were done by Moorish captives. No two are alike.

Marble statue of Christ stands on altar in Chapter House where once the novices took their instructions from the abbot of the Monastery. Four columns that divide principal bays in the vaulted ceiling represent the four Cardinal Virtues, wisdom, courage, temperance and justice.

Figure **9.4.7**: The Rocky Mount Sunday Telegram (June 13, 1954)

It took nineteen months and a tremendous amount of money to finish the bulk of the project. Carswell had a crew of eight stonemasons working under him. The rebuilding was criticized for its clumsy stereometry (the science of cutting stone precisely, which the medieval mason did via simple tools and tremendous skill) and the use of concrete in the reconstruction (a material not used by medieval builders).

Moss and Edgemon never intended to recreate what had once been in Spain. They dubbed their tourist attraction the "Ancient Spanish Monastery," a misnomer still used in the present, and welcomed visitors to "Step back in time 800 years!" Sadly, for Moss and Edgemon, the tourist spot they had fought so hard to create did not entice visitors; bankrupt, they had to sell.



Figure **9.4.8**: Cloister of the Monastery of St. Bernard de Clairvaux as rebuilt in North Miami Beach, Florida (photo: **Casingrid**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Today the transported parts of the Saint Bernard de Clairvaux monastery function as both an Episcopal Church and a tourist attraction—complete with a gift shop. People consider it a fascinating secret retreat outside Miami, "the perfect place to relax and enjoy the Miami sun with a European flair."

If at first you don't succeed…

Hearst, seeing the Sacramenia project as now a hopeless jigsaw puzzle (in fact *Time* magazine dubbed the situation "The Biggest Jigsaw in History" in a 1953 issue), hit the pause button on monastery acquisitions for a couple of years. But Hearst decided what any tycoon might—even in the face of the Great Depression—it was time to buy another monastery. This go-round he had plans for it to grace a "cabin" he was building in the remote wilderness of northern California, near Mount Shasta, on the McCloud River: his Wyntoon Estate. Hearst was making plans to create something that would make his San Simeon estate pale in comparison. The intended use was similar to that of the Sacramenia monastery—the stones were to be used to create a museum to house Hearst's collection of medieval armor and other medieval objects, and Hearst had some other ideas as well.

Hearst contacted his associate Arthur Byne once again and put him back on the hunt. If Byne was a little warier this time around, who could blame him? He had seen how difficult the first endeavor was, and he was now dealing with a client who was cash poor. Hearst had not escaped the stock market crash unscathed but chose to ignore the fact.



Figure 9.4.9

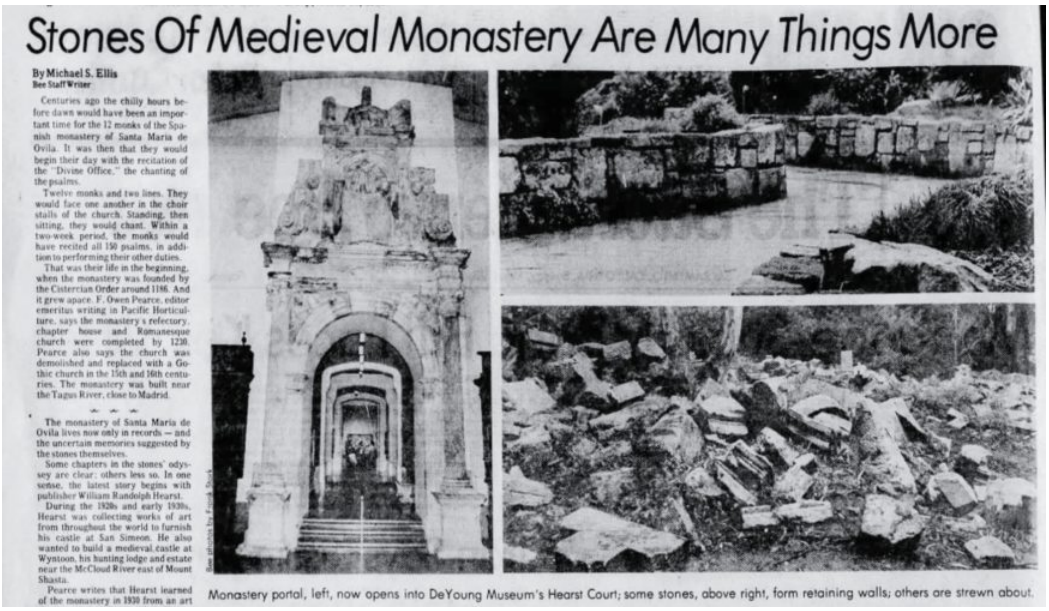
Nonetheless, Byne went on his mission and before long he found the ruins of the Santa María de Óvila Monastery in the Guadalajara province in Spain—another defunct Cistercian abbey in a remote locale. Though built later, this abbey was in a far worse condition than the monastery at Sacramenia. The Óvila abbey had suffered from the War of Spanish Succession and the Peninsular War. In the 1830s, the remaining four monks and one lay brother were ousted from the abbey when it lost the support of both the locals and the kingdom.

When Byne stumbled upon the monastery, it was owned by a farmer who used many of the buildings to house livestock; the chapter house was used for manure storage. But Byne saw potential, despite the dilapidation, manure, and overgrown vegetation. With Hearst's approval, he purchased the majority of the complex. The plan was to remove many of the same elements as at Saint Bernard de Clairvaux: cloister, chapter house, and refectory. But at Santa María de Óvila, the main chapel was also purchased. The vision for the chapel, when rebuilt at Wyntoon, was to have it contain a 150-foot-long swimming pool. There would be a lounge in one side chapel, and a ladies changing area in the other—and the *piece de resistance*, a diving board in the apse (traditionally, an apse is a semi-circular area at the east end of a church that contains the altar).

Again, a painful process began to remove the stones from where they had stood so long. Byne wrote Hearst nearly daily, imploring Hearst to pay his bills or Byne would need to quit. Grudgingly, a check would appear to keep the project going, but the money was gone almost as soon as it was deposited. More than one hundred workers had to be paid, extensive equipment needed to be paid off, and the factory producing the crates for the stones could barely keep up with the demand—especially without cash in hand.

The removal of the Santa María de Óvila was illegal, just as Sacramenia before it. The new Spanish government (the Second Spanish Republic) stepped in—literally. A group of soldiers arrived and told Byne the deal was off. However, Byne was able to convince them to let the dismantling continue. Lucky for Hearst, and with the new government already off to a shaky start, the Óvila monastery was forgotten for a time. But Byne knew the clock was ticking and carried out the dismantling as quickly as possible. A local doctor had been trying for several years to convince the government to preserve the monastery finally succeeded

in his efforts and in June of 1931 and the monastery was declared a national monument. Alas, it was too late. By this point Óvila had been almost fully dismantled, and within a month the stones were sailing towards the California coast.



Stones Of Medieval Monastery Are Many Things More

By Michael S. Ellis
Bee Staff Writer

Centuries ago the chilly hours before dawn would have been an important time for the 12 monks of the Spanish monastery of Santa Maria de Ovila. It was then that they would begin their day with the recitation of the "Divine Office," the chanting of the psalms.

Twelve monks and two lines. They would face one another in the choir stalls of the church. Standing, then sitting, they would chant. Within a two-week period, the monks would have recited all 150 psalms, in addition to performing their other duties.

That was their life in the beginning, when the monastery was founded by the Cistercian Order around 1186. And it grew apace. F. Owen Pearce, editor emeritus writing in Pacific Horticulture, says the monastery's refectory, chapter house and Romanesque church were completed by 1230. Pearce also says the church was demolished and replaced with a Gothic church in the 15th and 16th centuries. The monastery was built near the Tagus River, close to Madrid.

* * *

The monastery of Santa Maria de Ovila lives now only in records — and the uncertain memories suggested by the stones themselves.

Some chapters in the stones' odyssey are clear, others less so. In one sense, the latest story begins with publisher William Randolph Hearst.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, Hearst was collecting works of art from throughout the world to furnish his castle at San Simeon. He also wanted to build a medieval castle at Wyntoon, his hunting lodge and estate near the McCloud River east of Mount Shasta.

Pearce writes that Hearst learned of the monastery in 1930 from an art

Monastery portal, left, now opens into DeYoung Museum's Hearst Court; some stones, above right, form retaining walls; others are strewn about.

Figure **9.4.10**: The Sacramento Bee (March 23, 1980)

The stones arrived at the San Francisco Harbor later that same year. Hearst found himself once more with thousands of stones, this time on the West Coast and finally faced the fact that he was broke. Ludicrous pillaging of medieval structures takes its toll on the pocket book (these two monasteries were not the only medieval acquisitions he made). The initial estimate for the new Wyntoon estate rolled in at $50,000,000; Hearst's vision for an elaborate castle by the river was not going to happen. The dismantled monastery had arrived, but neither Hearst nor anyone else had any use for it. In this case, Hearst didn't even have his own warehouse to store the stones in. They sat instead in a costly rented storage space near Fisherman's wharf, taking up 28,000 square feet of space. Hearst now owned two dismantled monasteries on either coast that were both hopeless puzzles.

By 1940, Hearst was ready to give the stones away, and he had an interested party. By this time, the Spanish Civil War had occurred, and Francisco Franco was in power. Franco wanted the stones returned to Spain, but Hearst wasn't interested. After considering various possibilities, Hearst was convinced to give the stones to the city of San Francisco in return for a tax abatement and forgiveness on his large storage bill. There was a stipulation that the stones would be used to create a medieval museum in Golden Gate Park. World War II intervened and no less than five fires occurred where the stones were now being kept in the park. Almost half of the stones were severely damaged, making them unsound for any kind of large-scale building project. The original numbering system that had been applied in order to place the tones accurately had melted off. Interest in the project evaporated and no museum was built.



A model of the monastery chapter house, an display at the de Young Museum

The Spanish Acquisition

A battle royal over the stones of a medieval monastery, shipped here by William Randolph Hearst and now crumbling in Golden Gate Park

BY RICHARD EK

Delay always breeds danger, and to protract a great design is often to ruin it.
— Miguel de Cervantes, "Don Quixote"

Father Thomas X. Davis, abbot of the Trappist abbey of New Clairvaux in the Tehama County town of Vina, prays that Harry Parker, director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, might come to recognize the error of delay.

Parker could help fulfill what has become, over 30 years, a passionate mission for Father Thomas: to bring to his abbey, located in the rural Sacramento Valley 130 miles northeast of San Francisco, the crumbling remnants of the medieval Monastery of Santa María de Óvila.

Disassembled in Spain and shipped to San Francisco in 1931 by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, the monastery stones have lain moldering in a eucalyptus grove behind the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park since 1941, when Hearst gave them to the city and the M. H. de Young Museum because he could no longer afford to pay for their storage in a waterfront warehouse. But delay, neglect, misuse, erosion in the damp climate and a series of fires in the wooden crates that contain the stones have left only enough pieces intact to construct some of the entrance portal of the chapter house.

Father Thomas X. Davis with the stones he took north to Vina

Figure **9.4.11**: The San Francisco Examiner (August 20, 1989)

A doorway from Óvila was reconstructed for an entrance at the de Young Museum in San Francisco (the doorway as part of the last additions to the Óvila monastery and dates from the Renaissance era). But the majority of the disassembled buildings, like those of its elder compatriot, was left in boxes to decay. Most of the stones were now kept in a warehouse at the de Young Museum; however, a good chunk remained in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. They were considered debris until some innovative gardeners used them in a variety of ornamental ways. A number of Óvila's stones remain there to this day.

The Sacred Stones Project

In the 1990s, Abbot Thomas of New Clairvaux Abbey in Northern California began to petition San Francisco for the sale of the stones. It took almost a decade and much patience, but Abbot Thomas did succeed in his goal. This was the beginning of the Sacred Stones project, which planned to use the Santa María de Óvila stones for a new chapter house at the abbey of New Clairvaux in Vina, California. By this time, vast technological advances made precision much easier in terms of stereometry. Parts of the reconstruction involved sawing the now extremely weathered stones with a stone saw, then chiseling in an attempt to use the old techniques and thus make the building more authentic. Also, a hydraulic mortar was used (Cistercians built with ashlar masonry, which requires no mortar, just compression and finely cut and fitted stones). A steel framework topped things off, leaving the current building twice as strong as it was in the Middle Ages, and earthquake ready.

The abbey in Vina, California hired a master stonemason and several other skilled masons. Vast amounts of time were spent researching the project, mainly by Margaret Burke, an art historian. Burke made the call that—of all the abbey components brought over—only the chapter house was capable of being rebuilt with any kind of verisimilitude.

The chapter house took over ten years to build and in the end the monks decided that, after all the effort, their creation should be a church not a chapter house (they wanted the public to be able to visit the building). New Clairvaux Abbey is proud of its new structure, and the Sacred Stones project as a whole. Certainly it is better than having the stones continue to decay in a warehouse. But the lack of cultural and architectural accuracy and the repurposing of the building should no longer qualify it as a

reconstruction. This is, instead, an entirely different building. The attempt at a reconstruction was lost somewhere during the process to the point where it bears no semblance to any original at Santa María de Óvila, and has effectively stripped it of its previous historical value.



Figure **9.4.12**: Chapter House of the Abbey of New Clairvaux, Vina, Northern California (photo: **Frank Schulenburg**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Those involved in the building of the chapter house/chapel at New Clairvaux in California choose to highlight and even exaggerate the Gothic features that might have been at Óvila and to play down the earlier Romanesque features. Romanesque architecture in the last 100 years has played the foil to Gothic which was described as the clunky, heavy, and gloomy older sister of the lighter, thinner, and delicate Gothic.

Hearst's motivations and conclusion

Hearst never lived to see either Spanish monastery rebuilt, but for Hearst it seems as though the process of taking ownership of these buildings was somehow enough. Hearst could have recreated a Spanish monastery on his property without going to the trouble of hauling two medieval Spanish abbeys piece-by-piece across the world. Clearly, there was more at work here than a simple longing to have a European cloister. The power to attain these objects in the first place seems to have been a large part of Hearst's obsessive collecting, rather than aesthetic enjoyment. Hearst uprooted Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and Santa María de Óvila, at the cost of negating parts of Spain's national heritage, in an attempt to create his own legacy. His narrow and myopic view destroyed what could have been passed on to posterity as a cultural legacy.

So what is at stake here? On one hand one could say that Florida has gained a lovely church and tourist attraction and California monks a shiny new chapter house/chapel. But what has been lost? The original identity of these churches and their history will eventually disappear entirely, and new history centered around the reconstructions will be created. Will people visit the chapter house in Vina, California under the impression they are seeing true work of Cistercian architecture? Will visitors go to the Sacramenia cloister in Florida and understand this was once a space where monks were meant to walk and meditate upon God? Already it is frequently mistaken to be a Spanish Mission from the seventeenth century. Will visitors understand that to take such objects from another country puts that country's cultural heritage in jeopardy, or just find the story of its creation interesting?



Figure **9.4.13**: Church, Monastery of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, 1133–41 in Sacramenia, Spain

And what has Spain been left with? What remains at the original sites? As mentioned, the church was left in place at the Sacramenia site. It is larger than most Cistercian churches and has been restored. It is still on private land but is open to the public one day a week, but it keeps a low-profile and you will find no gift shop here. It is said to be an exemplar of Spanish Cistercian architecture of the golden age, when Saint Bernard came to lead the order.



Figure **9.4.14**: The remaining Spanish ruins of Santa María de Óvila

Santa María de Óvila is also currently on private lands. The monastery was in a derelict state before the Hearst dismantling, but who knows what might be there today if it had been declared a national monument just a little bit sooner and restored at its original site. Now all that remains is a ruin and no visitors are welcomed. The oldest and most intact part of the monastery that remains is the wine cellar.

It would be nice to think that we are beyond acts such as Hearst's, but black-market deals occur behind closed doors frequently. Absconding with the majority of a monastic complex may be trickier, but war can still destroy large scale structures, as can social unrest. Indeed, it was Spain's political instability that in part allowed Hearst to come to take ownership of the Sacramenia and

Óvila stones. Thus while we may see ourselves as more sensitive to other cultures and more global minded, a glance at history should show that things can change on the turn of a dime and then all bets are off.

Footnotes

1. Saint Bernard de Clairvaux was originally named Santa María la Real.

Additional resources

Richard L. Kagan, *The Spanish Craze: America's Fascination with the Hispanic World, 1779–1939* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

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9.5: Censorship

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

Michelangelo was a sculptor, painter, and architect. He considered his sculptural and architectural works to be of far greater importance than his relatively few painted works. But many know him today as much for the two frescoes, or wall paintings, he completed in the Sistine Chapel in Rome as for the far greater number of marble figures and buildings he created. The chapel is within the Pope's residence in Vatican City, the seat of the Roman Catholic Church, in Rome. The first fresco Michelangelo painted on the 134-foot-long ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, from 1508 to 1512, is a complex series of nine scenes from the Book of Genesis, architectural elements, and figures. It was the first large-scale painting of his career. He returned to paint *The Last Judgment* on the wall behind the altar from 1535 to1541. (Figure 11.1)



Figure 11.1 | *The Last Judgement*
Artist: Michelangelo
Author: User "Wallpapper"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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

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

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

In 1565, two years after the Council's decree and the year after Michelangelo's death, Daniele da Volterra (1509-1566, Italy) was commissioned to paint drapery on the nude figures and alter the posi- tions of some that were deemed too indelicate. Some of his

modifications, and others carried out in the eighteenth century, were removed when the fresco was cleaned and restored between 1980 and 1994.

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

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9.6: The many forms of iconoclasm

Erased from memory: the Severan Tondo

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **9.6.1**: A conversation with Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris in front of *The Severan Tondo*, c. 200 C.E., 30.5 cm, tempera on wood (Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin)

Additional resources:

More on Damnatio Memoriae

Klaus Forschen, The portraits of Roman emperors and their families," in *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual*, edited by Björn C. Ewald and Carlos F. Noreña (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Eric R. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation : Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Brill 2004)

Rewriting history: *damnatio memoriae* in ancient Rome

by DR. FRANCESCA TRONCHIN

If the Roman government condemned a ruler, his portraits often died with him.



Figure **9.6.1**: Detail of Geta (face removed) and Caracalla from the Severan Tondo, c. 200 C.E., tempera on wood, 30.5 cm diameter (Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, photo: **Carole Raddato**, CC BY-SA 2.0)

We know that Roman emperors were often **raised to the status of gods** after their deaths. However, just as many were given the opposite treatment—officially erased from memory.

Condemning memory

Damnatio memoriae is a term we use to describe a Roman phenomenon in which the government condemned the memory of a person who was seen as a tyrant, traitor, or other sort of enemy to the state. The images of such condemned figures would be destroyed, their names erased from inscriptions, and if the doomed person were an emperor or other government official, even his laws could be rescinded. Coins bearing the image of an emperor who had his memory damned would be recalled or cancelled. In some cases, the residence of the condemned could be razed or otherwise destroyed. [1]

This was more than a form of casual, politically-motivated vandalism, carried out by disgruntled individuals, since the condemnation required approval of the Senate and the effects of the official denunciation could be seen far from Rome. There are many examples of *damnatio memoriae* throughout the history of the Roman Republic and Empire. As many as 26 emperors through the reign of **Constantine** had their memories condemned; conversely, about 25 emperors were deified after their deaths. The damning of memory phenomenon, however, is not unique to the Roman world. Egyptian pharaohs **Hatshepsut** and **Akhenaten** likewise had many of their their images, monuments, and inscriptions destroyed by political opponents or religious purists. [2]



Figure **9.6.2**: Portrait of Emperor Caligula, 37-41 C.E., marble, 28 cm high (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, photo: **Dr. Francesca Tronchin**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Instances of *damnatio memoriae* were not always completely successful in wiping out the memory of an individual. Among the emperors who suffered *damnatio memoriae* are some of the best-known figures from Roman history, including **Gaius** (a.k.a. Caligula) and Nero. The notoriety of these men comes to us not only from texts written during their lifetimes and later, but also from images which survived the immediate violence of the *damnatio memoriae* and then centuries of neglect.

For instance, one marble portrait preserves not only the image of Caligula, but also traces of paint, informing us of the existence of this condemned emperor as well as the polychromy of ancient sculpture. In antiquity, these types of images were considered very powerful and closely linked with the identity of the person they represented.



Figure **9.6.3**: Two portrait heads of Emperor Caligula, created 37-41 C.E., marble, both detached from the sculpted bodies after his death. Left: 43 x 21.5 x 25 cm (**The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles**); right: 33 x 21 x 23.5 cm (**Yale University Art Gallery**)

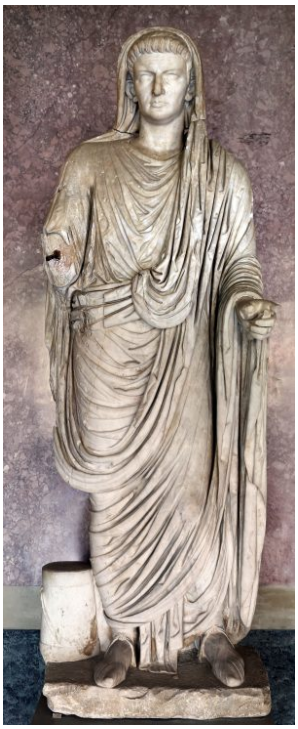


Figure **9.6.4**: Portrait statue of Caligula, recarved as Claudius, from the Basilica at Velleia, first half of the 1st century C.E., marble, 221 cm high (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma, photo: **Sailko**, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Small heads, big reputations

Caligula was the first emperor to have his images purposefully destroyed after his death. It is impossible to know how many portraits in bronze or other precious metals were melted down, but a number of marble portraits show traces of being re-cut or simply dismantled and disposed of. Workshop procedures for official imperial portraits dictated that many full-length statues in stone were to be created in two pieces. So heads of Caligula, like those now in the Getty Villa and the Yale University Art Gallery (above), could be fairly easily detached from the bodies and tossed aside and a portrait head of the new emperor would swiftly replace the offending one.

A full-length, one-piece statue of a *pontifex maximus* (chief state priest, a title held by the emperor) from Velleia, however, apparently underwent a kind of sculptural recycling. The face of Caligula's successor Claudius appears rather small in comparison to the head and the rest of the body—suggesting to some scholars that it was cut down from a portrait of Caligula.

Cancelleria Reliefs: Nerva replaces Domitian



Figure **9.6.5**: Domitian recut into Nerva, detail of a felief from the Palazzo della Cancelleria, 81-96 C.E., marble (Museo Gregoriano Profano, Vatican Museums, photo: **Erin Taylor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

A similar re-cutting is evident on a set of reliefs found in Rome and now housed in the Vatican Museums (below). The so-called Cancelleria Reliefs show mythological and allegorical figures celebrating members of the Flavian dynasty for their military successes.

In one, Domitian departs from Rome on a military campaign, ushered out of the city by Victoria, Mars, and Minerva, as well as personifications of the Senate and the Roman people. Yet the head atop the stately tunic-clad body of the emperor is not that of Domitian. Instead it is Nerva, who succeeded Domitian after his assassination and subsequent *damnatio memoriae*. As in the Claudius *pontifex maximus* statue from Velleia, Nerva's face is far too small for the relief and even appears comical when compared to the divinities surrounding him.[3] Apparently the sculpture was recarved.



Figure **9.6.6**: Relief from the Palazzo della Cancelleria, 81-96 C.E., marble (Museo Gregoriano Profano, Vatican Museums, photo: **Egisto Sani**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0). Domitian/Nerva can be seen fourth from the left.

Slightly more elegant solutions for *damnatio memoriae* could be executed in metal statuary. The face of a bronze equestrian portrait of Domitian (below) was sawed off and replaced with that of his successor, Nerva. The result is much less jarring than on the Cancelleria relief, as the bronze "mask" was made to the same scale as the rest of the statue and the join is mostly unnoticeable.



Figure **9.6.7**: Equestrian statue of Nerva (formerly Domitian), from the Sanctuary of Augustales, Miseno, bronze (Museo Arceologico dei Campi Flegrei, Bacoli, photo: **Erin Taylor**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Figure **9.6.8**: Relief showing Septimius Severus and Julia Domna with a caduceus, Arch of the Argentarii, Rome, completed 204 C.E. (photo: Panairjdde, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Perhaps the most striking and widespread examples of *damnatio memoriae* come from the reign of **Caracalla**, a member of the Severan Dynasty who ruled from 211-217 C.E. He was initially co-emperor with his younger brother Geta, but after months of squabbling between the sibling rulers, Caracalla had Geta assassinated. This death was quickly followed by a *damnatio memoriae*, one in which it became a capital offense to even speak the name of the younger co-emperor.

In Rome, Geta's image was eliminated from reliefs on the Arch of the Argentarii. No attempt at an elegant recarving was made as in the Cancelleria Reliefs; in a panel showing Septimius Severus and Julia Domna (the parents of Caracalla and Geta) sacrificing at an altar, a caduceus floats over an empty space where Geta must have stood.[4] Even images of Geta's wife and father-in-law were carved out of the Arch of the Argentarii panels, as they too had suffered a *damnatio memoriae*. The names of all the condemned individuals were erased from the arch and replaced with new inscriptions honoring Caracalla.



Figure **9.6.9**: Severan Tondo, c. 200 C.E., tempera on wood, 30.5 cm diameter (Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, photo: Carole Raddato, CC BY-SA 2.0). This circular painting is exceptional for its materials, state of preservation, and insight into Roman painting beyond frescoes and other murals.

Erasing memory across time and space

A painted panel found in Egypt demonstrates the very long reach of Roman vengeance when enacting a *damnatio memoriae*. The panel shows the Severan family: Julia Domna wears heavy pearl earrings and necklaces; Septimius's hair and beard are tinged with gray; and highlights in the eyes of all the figures add a lifelike quality. Caracalla's boyish face—painted when he was merely heir to the throne—peers out to the viewer's left. Next to him is a circular erasure in the paint where Geta once appeared. This deletion is dramatic when considering the procedures of *damnatio memoriae.* Someone in the province of Egypt, far from the center of the Empire, was charged with erasing the image of a child—a child who grew up to be co-emperor, only to be killed by his own brother. The tyranny of Caracalla and the thoroughness of *damnatio memoriae* meant that practically no image of the emperor's enemies, no matter how small or out-of-date, would escape destruction.

Damnatio memoriae continued in the Roman world through the fourth century C.E., as seen in disfigured portraits of Constantine's rival Maxentius. With Christianity made official in the Roman world, vandalism of imperial portraits continued, but with more of a religious bent than a political one. The fact that Roman portraits were removed, damaged, or destroyed because of dramatic changes in the subjects' reputations is unmistakable evidence that such images are more than just "pictures." A portrait can carry meaning over decades and centuries—whether it is of a Roman emperor, a Communist leader like Joseph Stalin, a dictator like Saddam Hussein, or Confederate generals in the United States.

Notes:

1. Nero's *Domus Aurea* (Golden House) in downtown Rome was eventually filled in and built over by his successors in the Flavian Dynasty, but it was not a systematic destruction. In fact, there is evidence Vespasian lived in the controversial villa before he and his sons turned the land from Nero's private estate back over to the public.
2. Hatshepsut's successor, Thutmose III, ordered her images, cartouches, and monuments destroyed as she was seen as a usurper to his throne. Akhenaten, who brought monotheism briefly to Egypt, suffered a sort of *damnatio memoriae* by those who enthusiastically returned to polytheism after his death.
3. In a *coup de grâce* for the Cancelleria Reliefs, they seem to have never been displayed, instead discarded in a Republican-period cemetery after Nerva died just fifteen months into his reign. The Flavian Dynasty was over and it would have been too challenging to re-recarve the portrait of Nerva into Trajan.

4. It appears that Julia Domna's left arm was carved in the space where Geta's body once was; in the original format, she was probably holding the caduceus.

Additional Resources:

Essay on Roman portrait sculpture from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Sarah Bond, "Erasing the Face of History," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2011

S. Bundrick and E. Varner, *From Caligula to Constantine: Tyranny & Transformation in Roman Portraiture* (Michael C. Carlos Museum, 2001).

Harriet I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace & Oblivion in Roman Political Culture* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Eric Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (E.J. Brill, 2004).

Making and Mutilating Manuscripts of the *Shahnama*

by DR. SHEILA BLAIR



Figure **9.6.10**: "**The Bier of Iskandar (Alexander the Great)**," folio from the Great Mongol *Shahnama* (Il-Khanid dynasty, Tabriz, Iran), c. 1330, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 57.6 x 39.7 cm (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1938.3; photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Illustrated manuscripts are one of the glories of Persian art, especially those made during the heyday of production from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century. The most popular text was the *Shahnama*, or Book of Kings. This 50,000-couplet poem recounts the history of Iran from the creation of the world to the coming of the Arabs in the seventh century through the reigns of fifty successive monarchs. Rulers and their courtiers often commissioned splendid copies of the *Shahnama* to link themselves to the heroes of the past, whether the "Alexander of the Age" or "The Lord of the World."

Today some of the most important manuscripts are sadly dismembered. Reconstructing the history of two of these splendid manuscripts—from creation to mutilation—shows how they have been used (and misused) over the centuries as political propaganda, loot, and even fodder in the international art market.



Figure 9.6.11: Sultan Muhammad, “The Court of Kayumars,” 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp I (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Great Mongol *Shahnama* and the Tahmasp *Shahnama*

These two illustrated pages (above) come from the most ambitious manuscripts known: the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, made for the Mongol court in northwest Iran around 1330, and the Tahmasp *Shahnama*, made two centuries later in the same region for the Safavid shah Tahmasp (and perhaps inspired by the earlier one).



Figure 9.6.12: Sultan Muhammad, “The Lord of the World” shown as part of “The Court of Kayumars,” 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp I (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, photo: **Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Large books with hundreds of illustrations

Both of these manuscripts are very large books. The 759 folios, or leaves, in the Tahmasp *Shahnama* measure 32 x 47 cm (12½ x 18 ½ inches) with a whopping 258 illustrations, many of them nearly full size and sometimes spilling into the gold-sprinkled

margins. The Great Mongol *Shahnama* was even larger: it had around 300 folios with some 200 illustrations, most about half or two-thirds the area of the written surface.[1] Both projects must have taken a decade to complete, even with a workshop of papermakers, calligraphers, painters, illuminators, binders, and other craftsmen.

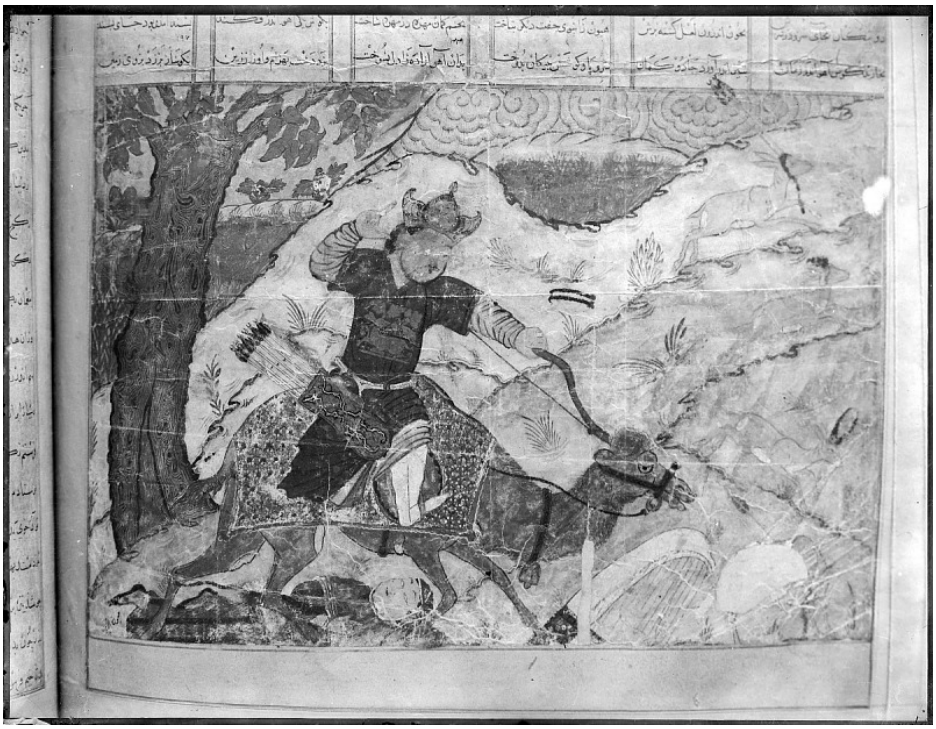


Figure 9.6.13: Photograph taken by Antoin Sevruguin in Tehran showing the illustration of "Bahram Gur Hunting with Azada," within the bound Great Mongol *Shahnama*, 1880–1910 (**Freer Gallery of Art**, FSA.A.04, Item FSA A.4 2.12.GN.40.07)

Both manuscripts became part of the royal library, a necessary accoutrement of a cultured prince from the fourteenth century onwards in Persia and elsewhere. The Great Mongol *Shahnama* seems to have stayed there until the nineteenth century when the manuscript, perhaps unfinished or damaged, was repaired: some of the faces in the paintings were retouched with pink cheeks and heavy eyebrows typical of the nineteenth-century Qajar style, the folios were numbered and remargined on imported Russian paper dated 1832, and the original two volumes were conflated into one. A photograph taken in Tehran at the end of the nineteenth century by the Armenian photographer Antoine Sevruguin shows the bound volume open to one of the illustrated pages.



Figure **9.6.14**: Painting of "Bahram Gur Hunting with Azada" from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*. By 1931, Georges Demotte had sold this folio from the Great Mongol *Shahnama* to Edward W. Forbes, director of the Fogg Museum at Harvard University (**Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum**, Gift of Edward W. Forbes, 1957.193)

The Tahmasp *Shahnama* is given to an Ottoman sultan

The Tahmasp *Shahnama* had a different trajectory. It remained prized at Tahmasp's court for a few years, as the court librarian Dust Muhammad extolled its painting of "**The Court of Kayumars**" in an album preface written in 1544, and two illustrated folios were replaced for unknown reasons. But then in 1566 Tahmasp, who had apparently tired of painting and dispersed his royal workshop, decided to give the manuscript to the Ottoman sultan Selim II to mark his succession. Tahmasp sent the *Shahnama* at the head of a long camel train along with a Qurʾan manuscript attributed to the hand of Prophet's son-in-law ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, books chosen to emphasize the shah's royal and religious pedigree and show up his rival as a mere parvenu.



Figure **9.6.15**: Nakkaş Osman, “Presentation of Gifts by the Safavid Ambassador, Shahquili, to Sultan Selim II at Edirne in 1568,” from Seyyid Lokman, Sehname-i Selim Han. Istanbul, Topkapi Palace Library A3595, fol. 53b-54a (Topkapi Palace Museum Library)

The Ottomans got the message, and their reception of the embassy and its gifts was just as orchestrated. They produced their own richly illustrated dynastic histories, including one with a painting showing the enthroned Selim loftily accepting the gifts from groveling ambassadors as a form of entitled tribute rather than an exchange between equals.

Ottoman gloss added on a separate sheet and pasted into the Tahmasp <em
Shahnama>/em> opposite the painting of “The Angel Surush rescues Khusraw Parviz,” attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali, c. 1530–35, opaque watercolor, ink, silver, and gold on paper, 34.3 cm high (Metropolitan Museum of Art 1970.301.73)" aria-describedby="caption-attachment-49987" height="598" sizes="(max-width: 466px) 100vw, 466px" src="
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...70-301-73b.jpg
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830w,
https://smarthistory.org/wp-content/...3b-300x385.jpg
300w" width="466">

Figure **9.6.16**: Commentaries by Mehmed ʿArif Efendi, added on a separate sheet and pasted into the Tahmasp *Shahnama* (opposite the painting of “The Angel Surush rescues Khusraw Parviz,” attributed to Muzaffar ʿAli), from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp I (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran, c. 1530–35, opaque watercolor, ink, silver, and gold on paper, 34.3 cm high (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art** 1970.301.73)

The Ottomans sequestered the Tahmasp *Shahnama* in their royal library. It may have been examined occasionally, as details of the Safavid paintings are occasionally repeated in Ottoman manuscripts, but the lack of fingerprints, smudges, creases, and other marks show that few people consulted the volume. One exception was Mehmed ʿArif Efendi, keeper of guns at the court treasury, who added synoptic commentaries about the paintings in Ottoman Turkish in 1800–01. Written on polished sheets that were glued into the manuscript opposite the illustrated pages, these synopses suggest that readers at the Ottoman court, which by this point used Ottoman Turkish, merely flipped through the Persian text, looking only at the paintings.

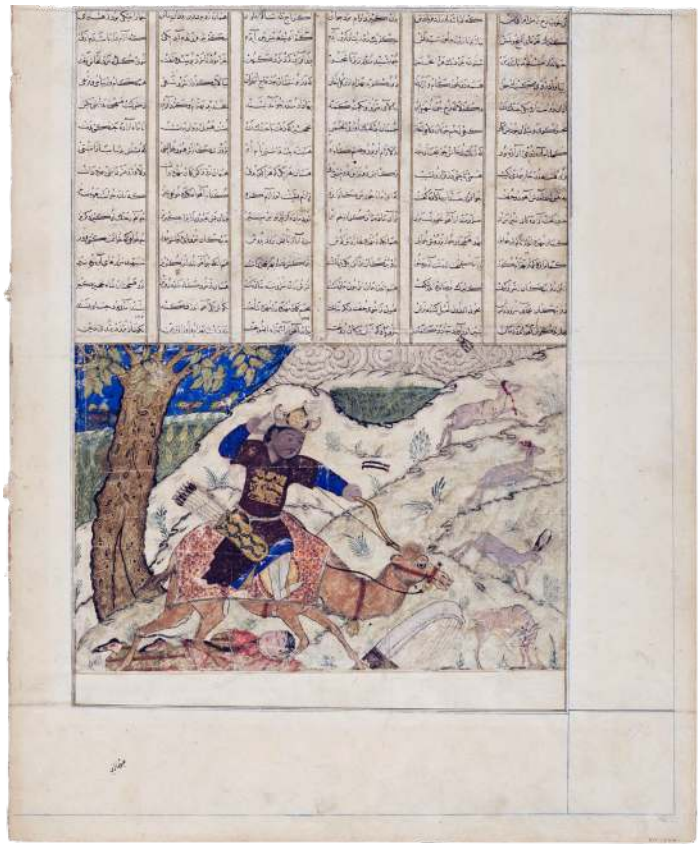


Figure **9.6.17**: By 1931, Georges Demotte had sold this folio from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, photographed bound in the manuscript in Tehran in the nineteenth century, to Edward W. Forbes, director of the Fogg Museum at Harvard University. Folio from the Great Mongol *Shahnama* with "Bahram Gur Hunting with Azada," c. 1335 (Il-Khanid dynasty, Tabriz, Iran), ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 49.3 x 40.2 cm (**Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum**, Gift of Edward W. Forbes, 1957.193)

Cutting up the Great Mongol *Shahnama*

The situation for these and many other illustrated manuscripts changed dramatically at the turn of the twentieth century with political upheavals in the Islamic lands and the growing power of Europe and the art market there. Impoverished courtiers apparently filched manuscripts from royal libraries and sold them to European and American dealers and collectors who had developed a taste for richly illustrated texts. The Tahmasp *Shahnama* was the first of the two manuscripts to go. By 1903 it had moved, perhaps via Iran, to Paris where it entered the collection of Baron Edmund de Rothschild.

The Great Mongol *Shahnama* left a few years later, and by 1910 it was in the hands of the Belgian collector Georges Demotte. Unable to sell the whole manuscript, perhaps because of the looming threat of war in Europe, Demotte decided to cut it up and hawk the folios separately to collectors who could display them framed, hanging on the wall. Demotte was faced with a problem, however, as some folios had paintings on both sides.



Figure **9.6.18**: A page from the Great Mongol *Shahnama* that has been abraded while being split from the original reverse side of the folio. It is now pasted into a page with text from another part of the epic (scissor icons indicate the edges of the top sheet of paper). It was purchased from Demotte, Inc in 1923. “Zahhak Enthroned,” from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330–40 (Il-Khanid dynasty, Tabriz, Iran), ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 24.3 x 19.7 cm (Freer Gallery of Art, F1923.5)

To maximize his profits, he had the two sides of the folio pulled apart and then remounted the pages separately (such as “Zahhak enthroned” and “Faridun mourning his son”) or had the detached paintings pasted onto other folios (such as “Faridun goes to Iraj’s palace and mourns”).



Figure **9.6.19**: These two paintings were originally on different sides of the same folio. To maximize his profits, Demotte pulled the folio apart and in doing so damaged the pages. The page on the left, much abraded but intact, is now pasted to a back side with unrelated text about Kay Khusraw's war. The painting shown on the right has no original text around it and is now pasted onto a folio with irrelevant text about Siyavush. Left: "Faridun mourns the coffin of his son Iraj," from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330–40 (Il-Khanid dynasty, Tabriz, Iran), ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 59.5 x 40 cm (**Sackler Gallery of Art** S1986.101); right: "Faridun goes to Iraj's palace and mourns," from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1330–40 (Il-Khanid dynasty, Tabriz, Iran), ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 59.3 x 40.1 cm (**Sackler Gallery of Art** S1986.100).

In doing so, he damaged some of the pages. Many of them are abraded because of the paper sheets that were temporarily glued on to help separate the two sides of the folio. In a few cases, parts of the folio, including the painted area, were damaged. Some entire pages or folios may have been destroyed. All together, Demotte is known to have sold 58 illustrated folios and a handful of text folios that were attached to them so that collectors could frame a double-page spread to resemble an open book. The rest of this magnificent manuscript, with some of the most emotional scenes ever produced in Persian painting, is missing, likely destroyed.

The dispersal of the Tahmasp *Shahnama*

The Tahmasp *Shahnama* again followed a different course. Two years after the death of Baron Rothschild's son Maurice in 1957, the manuscript, intact with all of its 258 paintings, was sold to the American magnate and bibliophile Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. who commissioned the American scholars Martin Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch to prepare a lavish monograph that reproduced all 258 illustrated pages at full size. To make the plates for publication, the volume had to be unbound, a step that presaged its dispersal.



Figure **9.6.20**: One of the original 76 folios from the Tahmasp *Shahnama* that Houghton donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1970. Folio 708b showing "The Angel Surush rescues Khusraw Parviz," from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp I (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran,, c. 1530–35, attributed to Muzaffar 'Ali, ink, opaque watercolor, silver, and gold on paper, 47.3 x 31.4 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art** 1970.301.73)

Small groups of paintings, now framed in silk mats, were exhibited starting in 1962 at the bibliophilic Grolier Club in New York, of which Houghton was president. At this time the international art market was heating up, and works of Middle Eastern, particularly Persian, art were in high demand. Empress Farah of Iran was a major collector, and texts like the *Shahnama* that reflect the glories of Iranian kingship were particularly popular in this imperial era. Houghton, who was in the midst of divorcing his third wife and marrying his fourth, began to auction off his rare books. In 1970 when The Metropolitan Museum of Art celebrated its centennial, Houghton, then chairman of the board, donated 76 illustrated folios from the Tahmasp *Shahnama* to it. He needed to establish a tax basis for his donation, and beginning in 1976, individual folios appeared for sale on the market. The first seven comprised works by all the major painters that Dickson and Welch assigned to the manuscript, thereby establishing a unit price for works by different hands.

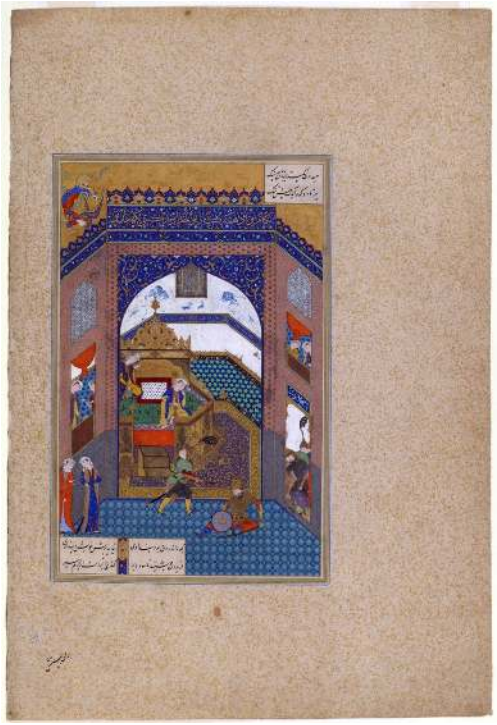


Figure **9.6.21**: Folio from the Tahmasp *Shahnama* that was sold in 1977 to the British Rail Pension Fund and then resold at auction in 1996 to the Freer Gallery of Art. “Faridun strikes down Zahhak,” from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp I (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran, c. 1525, ink opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 27.2 x 17.4 cm (**Freer Gallery of Art** F1996.2)

More sales followed, some to connoisseurs like Prince Saddrudin Aga Khan who acquired what is regarded as the finest painting in the manuscript, “The Court of Kayumars,” but others (such as “Faridun strikes down Zahhak”) went to investors such as the British Rail Pension Fund.

The manuscript’s peregrinations did not end there. Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the art market changed and uproar over the manuscript’s crass dismemberment increased. After Houghton’s death in 1990, his son decided to sell intact the carcass of the manuscript, including its binding and 118 remaining paintings. Complex negotiations through the London dealer Oliver Hoare led to an arrangement in 1994 with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran to trade the manuscript’s remains for a 1953 Willem de Kooning painting, *Woman III*, a large oil of a standing nude purchased by Empress Farah but considered distasteful in the Islamic Republic. In a scene worthy of a Graham Greene thriller, the trade-off took place one rainy night on the tarmac of Vienna airport. The manuscript, disbound and deprived of its finest paintings, returned to its homeland where it was feted as a national treasure.

Reconstructing the manuscripts today

It is impossible to undo the damage suffered in dismembering these manuscripts, but scholars have pursued several strategies to help us appreciate some of their original glories. Each approach brings different benefits, but also entails certain limitations. Exhibitions of disbursed folios allows viewers to compare folios side by side, especially important in the case of the Great Mongol *Shahnama* in which the individual paintings differ so widely. But some museums are prohibited from lending, and few would risk sending all of their folios from one manuscript at a single go.

Another approach is to produce a handsome monograph with full-size color illustrations of all the folios, as Sheila Canby did with the **Tahmasp** *Shahnama* to celebrate the poem’s millennium in 2010. The book showcases the wonders of the images, but privileges paintings over poetry and downplays the manuscript as the integral work of art. Calligraphers, heirs to two centuries of tradition in transcribing this text, wanted to have the lines describing the action frame the painting. To do so, they manipulated the layout.

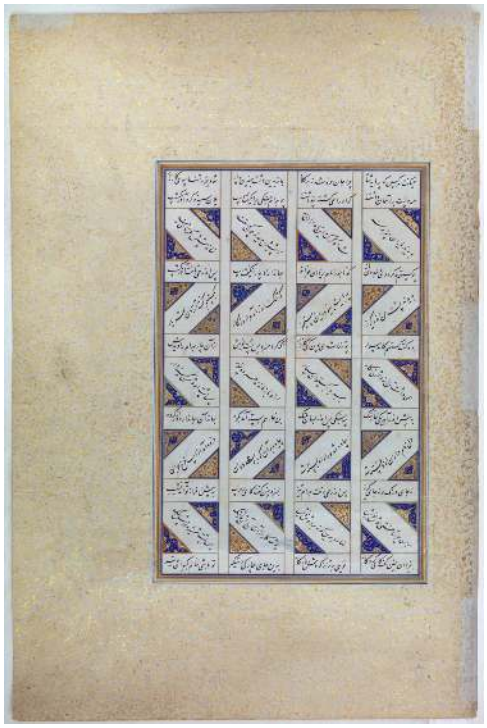


Figure **9.6.22**: Folio 708a, front side of the folio with "The Angel Surush rescues Khusraw Parviz" shown above. The calligrapher needed to stretch out the text and wrote some of the lines on the diagonal so that the appropriate verses fell around the painting on the back side of the folio (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art** 1970.301.73)

In the case of the "The Angel Surush rescues Khusraw Parviz," for example, the calligrapher wrote some of the lines on the front side of the folio diagonally so that the page contains only 12 lines of text instead of the standard 22, and the couplets describing the angel's descent fall next to the painting on the reverse. The diagonal layout signals to readers that an illustration is approaching and heightens their anticipation in turning the page.

A digital reconstruction of the manuscript would allow the reader to sense the rhythm while flipping the pages, but such an enterprise is exceedingly difficult given that this manuscript is divided between two major institutions in the U.S. and Iran, with additional folios scattered among dozens of public institutions and private collectors, with some still changing ownership. Furthermore, books in the Islamic lands were never meant to be seen flat, as the bindings allow them to be opened only 110 degrees. Instead, books were read three-quarters open while supported on a cradle or stand. So images of a two-page spread flat on a computer screen directly in front of viewers are distorted and do not convey the original aspect of reading the book. Nevertheless, all of these approaches help us to visually reconstruct these glorious illustrated books, in the words of the Safavid chronicler Dust Muhammad, the likes of which the celestial spheres have never seen.

Notes:

1. For the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, we cannot say exactly how large the folios were since it was remargined, but the written area is more than twice that of the Tahmasp *Shahnama* (1160 vs 486 sq. cm.) The larger area of writing in the Great Mongol *Shahnama* allowed for more columns (six vs. four) and more lines (31 vs. 22) per page.

Additional resources

The Court of the Gayumars (Kayumars), Smarthistory video

Folio from a *Shahnama*, The Bier of Iskandar (Alexander the Great), Smarthistory video

Read more about "Bahram Gur in a Peasant's House," a folio from the so-called *Second Small Shahnama*

Read more about "Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (Horned Wolf)," from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*

How a page is split, short video from The Morgan Library and Museum

Sheila Blair, “Reading a Painting: Sultan-Muhammad’s *The Court of Gayumars*,” in *The Empires of the Near East and India: Source Studies of the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal Literate Communities*, ed. Hani Khafipour (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019): 525–38.

Sheila R. Canby, *The* Shahnama *of Shah Tahmasp: the Persian Book of Kings* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014).

Martin B. Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnama* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

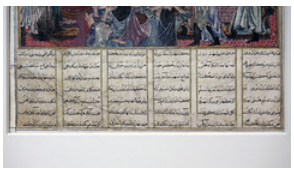
Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shah-Nama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



















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Figure 9.6.23: More Smarthistory images…

Folio from a *Shahnama*, The Bier of Iskandar (Alexander the Great)

by DR. MASSUMEH FARHAD, FREER GALLERY OF ART and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 9.6.2: The Bier of Iskandar (Alexander the Great), folio from the Great Mongol Shahnama (Il-Khanid dynasty, Tabriz, Iran), c. 1330, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 57.6 x 39.7 cm (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1938.3). Speakers: Dr. Massumeh Farhad, Chief Curator and The Ebrahimi Family Curator of Persian, Arab, and Turkish Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution and Dr. Steven Zucker.

Additional resources:

This folio at the Freer Gallery of Art

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

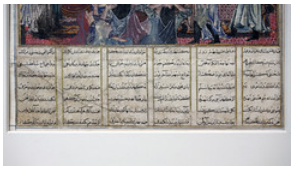


















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Figure 9.6.24: More Smarthistory images…

The Court of Gayumars

by DR. NANCY DEMERDASH, DR. FILIZ ÇAKIR PHILLIP, CURATOR, AGA KHAN MUSEUM and DR. MICHAEL CHAGNON, CURATOR, AGA KHAN MUSEUM



Video 9.6.3: Sultan Muhammad (attributed), *The Court of Kayumars* (Safavid: Tabiz, Iran), c. 1524–1525, from the Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh, c. 1524–35, opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, 45 x 30 cm (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto) speaker: Dr. Michael Chagnon, Curator, Aga Khan Museum and Dr. Steven Zucker



Video 9.6.4: Sultan Muhammad (attributed), *The Court of Kayumars* (Safavid: Tabiz, Iran), c. 1524–1525, from the Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh, c. 1524–35, opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, 45 x 30 cm (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto) speakers: Dr. Filiz Çakir Phillip, Curator, Aga Khan Museum and Dr. Steven Zucker



Figure 9.6.25: Whole page left, and detail, right: Sultan Muhammad, *The Court of Gayumars*, c.1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

The Shahnama

This sumptuous page, The Court of Gayumars (also spelled Kayumars— see top of page, details below and large image **here**), comes from an illuminated manuscript of the Shahnama (Book of Kings)—an epic poem describing the history of kingship in Persia (what is now Iran). Because of its blending of painting styles from both Tabriz and Herat (see map below), its luminous pigments, fine detail, and complex imagery, this copy of the Shahnama stands out in the history of the artistic production in Central Asia.

The Shahnama was written by Abu al-Qāsim Ferdowsi around the year 1000 and is a masterful example of Persian poetry. The epic chronicles kings and heroes who pre-date the introduction of Islam to Persia as well as the human experiences of love, suffering,

and death. The epic has been copied countless times—often with elaborate illustrations (see another example here).

Safavid patronage

This particular manuscript of the Shahnama was begun during the first years of the 16th century for the first Safavid dynastic ruler, Shah Ismail I, but was completed under the direction of his son, Shah Tahmasp I in the northern Persian city of Tabriz (see map below). The Safavid dynastic rulers claimed to descend from Sufi shaikhs—mystical leaders from Ardabīl, in northwestern Iran. The name "Safavid" stems from one particular ancestral Sufi, named Shaykh Safi al-Din (literally translated as "purity of the religion"). Over a two-hundred-year span starting in 1501, the Safavids controlled large parts of what is today Iran and Azerbaijan (see map below). The Safavids actively commissioned the building of public architectural complexes such as mosques (image below), and they were patrons of the arts of the book. In fact, manuscript illumination was central to Safavid royal patronage of the arts.

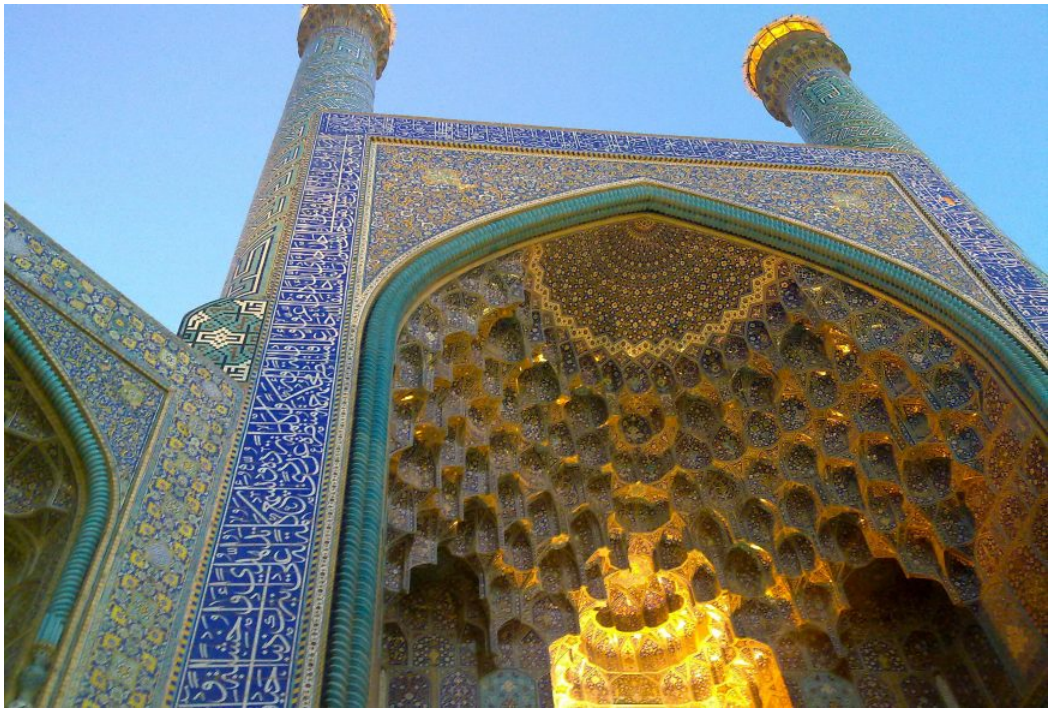


Figure 9.6.26: The Imam Mosque (formerly Masjed-e Shah) was built for a later Safavid ruler during the 17th century, Isfahan, Iran. photo: Ladsgroup, GNU Free Documentation License

Depicting figures

It is often assumed that images that include human and animal figures, as seen in the detail below, are forbidden in Islam. Recent scholarship, however, highlights that throughout the history of Islam, there have been periods in which iconoclastic tendencies waxed and waned.[1] That is to say, at specific moments and places, the representation of human or animal figures was tolerated to varying degrees.



Figure **9.6.26**: Detail, Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

There is a long figural tradition in Persia—even after the introduction of Islam—that is perhaps most evident in book illustration. It is also important to note that, unlike the neighboring Ottoman Empire to the west who were Sunni and in some ways more orthodox, the Safavids subscribed to the Shi'i sect of Islam.



Figure **9.6.27**

Two centers of culture

Although it is widely recognized that the conventions of what is sometimes termed "classical"[2] Persianate painting had become established by the fourteenth century, it is in the reign of Shah Tahmasp I that we see the most dramatic advancements in illumination and the arts of the book more generally.[3] His patronage of this specific art form is in part due to his own painting studies in Herat (in the western region of present-day Afghanistan) and Tabriz (in the northwestern region of present-day Iran), under Bihzad and Sultan Muhammad, respectively.[4] Both cities were major centers for the production of manuscript illuminations. While the entire manuscript of the *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* consists of approximately 759 illustrated folios and 258 miniatures all produced over the span of several years,[5] this particular miniature is attributed to the workshop of Sultan

Muhammad, according to Dust Muhammad, an artist and historian from this period.[6] In 1568, this lavish Shahnameh was given as a gift by Shah Tahmasp I to the Ottoman Sultan, Selim II.[7]



Figure **9.6.28**: *Nasta'liq* (detail), Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

King of the world

There are several interpretive issues to keep in mind when analyzing Persianate paintings. As with many of the workshops of early modern West Asia, producing a page such as the Court of Gayumars often entailed the contributions of many artists. It is also important to remember that a miniature painting from an illuminated manuscript should not be thought of in isolation. The individual pages that we today find in museums, libraries, and private collections must be understood as but one sheet of a larger book—with its own history, conditions of production, and dispersement. To make matters even more complex, the relationship of text to image is rarely straightforward in Persianate manuscripts. Text and image, within these illuminations, do not always mirror each other.[8] Nevertheless, the framed calligraphic *nasta'liq* (hanging)—the Persian text at the top and bottom of the frame (image above) can be roughly translated as follows:

> ***When the sun reached the lamb constellation,[9] when the world became glorious,***
> ***When the sun shined from the lamb constellation to rejuvenate the living beings entirely,***
> ***It was then when Gayumars became the King of the World.***
> ***He first built his residence in the mountains.***
> ***His prosperity and his palace rose from the mountains, and he and his people wore leopard pelts.***
> ***Cultivation began from him, and the garments and food were ample and fresh.[10]***



Figure 9.6.29: King Gayumars (detail), Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto).

Dense with detail

In this folio (page), we can see some parallels between the content of the calligraphic text and the painting itself. Seated in a cross-legged position, as if levitating within this richly vegetal and mountainous landscape, King Gayumars rises above his courtiers, who are gathered around at the base of the painting. According to legend, King Gayumars was the first king of Persia, and he ruled at a time when people clothed themselves exclusively in leopard pelts, as both the text and the represented subjects' speckled garments indicate.



Figure 9.6.30: King Gayumars, Siyamak, and Hushang (detail), Sultan Muhammad, The Court of Gayumars, c. 1522, 47 x 32 cm, opaque watercolor, ink, gold, silver on paper, folio 20v, *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp I* (Safavid), Tabriz, Iran (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto)

Perched on cliffs beside the King are his son, Siyamak (left, standing), and grandson Hushang (right, seated).[11] Onlookers can be seen to surreptitiously peer out from the scraggly, blossoming branches onto King Gayumars from the upper left and right. The miniature's spatial composition is organized on a vertical axis with the mountain behind the king in the distance, and the garden below in the foreground. Nevertheless, there are multiple points of perspective, and perhaps even multiple moments in time—rendering a scene dense with details meant to absorb and enchant the viewer.



Figure **9.6.31**: Sutra Box with Dragons amid Clouds, c. 1403-24 (Yongle period, Ming dynasty), 14 x 12.7 x 40.6 cm, red lacquer with incised decoration inlaid with gold; damascened brass lock and key (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

One might see stylistic similarities between the swirling blue-gray clouds floating overhead with pictorial representations in Chinese art (image above); this is no coincidence. Persianate artists under the Safavids regularly incorporated visual motifs and techniques derived from Chinese sources.[12] While the intense pigments of the rocky terrain seem to fade into the lush and verdant animal-laden garden below, a gold sky canopies the scene from above. This piece—in all its density color, detail, and sheer exuberance—is a testament to the longstanding cultural reverence for Ferdowsi's epic tale and the unparalleled craftsmanship of both Sultan Muhammad and Shah Tahmasp's workshops.

Notes

1. See Christiane Gruber, "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting," *Muqarnas* 16 (2009), pp. 229-260; Finbarr B. Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *The Art Bulletin* 84, 4 (December 2002), pp. 641-659; Christiane Gruber, "The Koran Does Not Forbid Images of the Prophet," ***Newsweek*** (January 9, 2015).

2. For a helpful analysis of the historiographic ascription of the term 'classical' to Persian painting and the cultural hierarchy that was established largely by scholar-collectors in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Christiane Gruber, "Questioning the 'Classical' in Persian Painting: Models and Problems of Definition," in the *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (June 2012), pp. 1-25.

3. David J. Roxburgh, "Micrographia: Toward a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 43 (Spring 2003), pp. 12-30.

4. Sheila Canby affirms Stuart Cary Welch's estimate that it took Sultan Muhammad and his workshop three years to complete the Court of Gayumars illustration. Sheila Canby, *The Golden Age of Persian Art, 1501-1722* (New York: Abrams, 2000), p. 51.

5. David J. Roxburgh, "On the Brink of Tragedy: The Court of Gayumars from Shah Tahmasp's Shahnama ('Book of Kings'), Sultan Muhammad," in Christopher Dell, ed., *What Makes a Masterpiece: Artists, Writers and Curators on the World's Greatest Works of Art* (London; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2010), pp. 182-185; 182. The text was subsequently possessed by Baron Edmund de Rothschild and then sold to Arthur A. Houghton Jr, who in turn sold pages of the book individually.

6. Roxburgh, "Micrographia: Toward a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting," p. 19. "In the Persianate painting, however, image follows after word in a linear sequence; the text introduces and follows after the image, but it is not actually read when the image is

being viewed…In the Persian book the act of seeing is initiated by a process of remembering the narrative just told. Moreover, that text does not prepare the viewer for what will be seen in the painting."

7. This expression denotes the beginning of spring.

8. I am grateful to Dr. Alireza Fatemi for generously providing this translation.

9. Roxburgh, "On the Brink of Tragedy," p. 182.

Additional resources:

The Court of Gayumars at the Aga Khan Museum

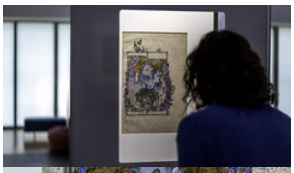
Large image here (click for full-size)

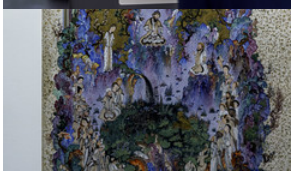
Biography of the poet Abu al-Qāsim Ferdowsi, Encyclopaedia Iranica

The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

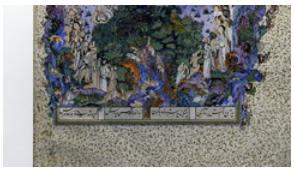
The Art of the Safavids before 1600, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

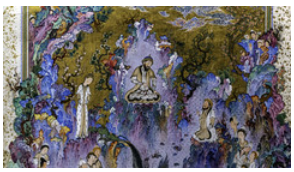
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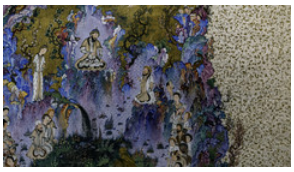




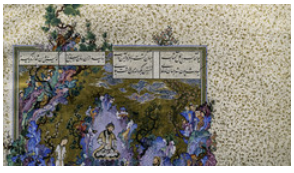




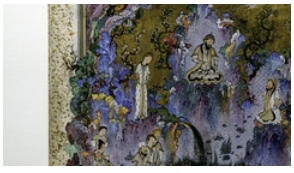












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Figure **9.6.32**: More Smarthistory images…

Iconoclasm in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century

by DR. SASKIA BERANEK



Figure **9.6.33**: Pieter Jansz. Saenredam, *Interior of Saint Bavo, Haarlem*, 1631, oil on panel, 82.9 x 110.5 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Different church interiors — Calvinist (Protestant) and Catholic

In paintings by seventeenth-century Dutch artist **Pieter Saenredam**, the interiors of Calvinist churches often appear as blank, sterile spaces with white walls, clear glass windows, and a notable lack of decoration. We know from his meticulous preparatory drawings that Saenredam was a precise artist, and although he sometimes did make changes to the interiors he represented, they were by and large emblematic of what Dutch Calvinist sacred space was like. By contrast, Pieter Neefs's contemporary paintings of Flemish Catholic religious spaces — which contain a profusion of small altars and devotional artwork — reflect a distinctly different attitude about decoration, materiality, and piety. The difference between Calvinist and Catholic churches persists to this day.



Figure **9.6.34**: Pieter Neefs, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, 1606, oil on copper, 38 x 56 cm

Breaking idols

Some of these differences can be attributed to two intertwined events of the sixteenth century that transformed the Low Countries (a lowland region in northern Europe that includes Belgium and the Netherlands): the prioritization of the written word in the theological reforms of the **Protestant Reformation** and the Iconoclasm (or *Beeldenstorm*) of 1566. The word "iconoclasm" refers to any deliberate destruction of images. Instances of iconoclasm can be found from the ancient world to contemporary events, such as the 2015 destruction of **Palmyra** in Syria by ISIS or the elimination of the **Bamiyan Buddhas** by the Taliban in 2001.



Figure **9.6.35**: Workshop of Adam Dircksz, *Prayer nut with The Nativity and The Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1500 – 30, boxwood, silver, and gold, diameter 4.8cm (**Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam**)

Here, iconoclasm specifically refers to the events of 1566 in an area that we now know as Belgium and the Netherlands. Prior to 1566, most churches in this region would have been largely encrusted with ornament: guilds commissioned altarpieces for their chapels while private patrons donated memorial paintings, endowed tomb sites, and donated elaborate shrines or ritual vessels. Piety was made visible in the material culture of the church, paralleling a northern European explosion in personal devotional artwork in the form of manuscripts, woodcut prints, carved boxwood shrines and prayer beads, and small paintings.

Protestant change

The sixteenth century was a time of significant religious change. According to legend, in 1516, Luther nailed his 95 Theses to a church door in Wittenberg and criticized what he perceived as corrupt practices within the Catholic Church. Following Luther, numerous other Northern European reformers shifted away from the Catholic Church centered in Rome. Among other more systemic and doctrinal issues, the reformers also had complicated relationships with religious imagery.

Controversy over the nature of religious images was not new in the sixteenth century. The same tension had rocked the **Byzantine Empire** in the eighth and ninth centuries. Like the earlier Byzantine case, strict reformers believed images were inherently sinful.

The northern humanist Desiderius Erasmus noted that the physical veneration of an object made it an active agent and turned it into an idol, pushing the objects and images traditionally at the heart of northern European piety into the zone of the idolatrous. Therefore, to use an image as part of your prayers creates idols — the very sin explicitly condemned in the Second Commandment, which reads:

> ***You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:3***



Figure **9.6.36**: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Portrait of Martin Luther as an Augustinian monk*, 1520 engraving, 14.4cm × 9.7cm (**Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam**)

Luther himself was not entirely anti-image, stating that if there was no sin in the heart, there was no risk in seeing images with your eyes. However, the faithful needed to remove the roots of sin in themselves; they needed to worship God and not a material object which takes the place of God. Luther later clarified that what the second commandment prohibited was images of God; images of saints or crucifixes were not condemned by him as they serve as memorials.

By 1566, the debate about the line between “an image of a religious figure or story that aided in devotional practice” and “an idolatrous object which took the place of God in the sinful heart of the viewer” had been heavily contested for close to fifty years.

The precise nature of the debate varied widely based on location, and violence against images erupted at different times in different cities throughout Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Belgium, and England.

The debate about the nature of images seems abstract and it is impossible to know to what extent the theological details were the motivations of any specific iconoclast. In the case of the *Beeldenstorm* of 1566, we can focus on a few factors to more closely examine one particular case and the intersection of tensions that led to violence. Studying the *Beeldenstorm* is complicated by the fact that it took many different forms depending on the local conditions and the range of responses to both religious and political circumstance.



Figure **9.6.37**: European territories under the rule of the Philip II of Spain around 1580, with the Spanish Netherlands in light green (**public domain**)

Church, state, and other complex issues

Debates over religious imagery occurred at the same time as other complex disputes. Political tensions were running high. At the time, most of the land that now constitutes The Netherlands and Belgium was the Spanish Netherlands — an assortment of territories brought together through marriages and dynastic alliances and owing fealty to the King of Spain.

Through the abdication of the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, Charles V, in 1556 and the ascension of Philip II to the throne of Spain, Netherlanders were becoming increasingly unhappy. The Spanish Crown supported an aggressive Catholic identity and agenda and vigorously pursued heretics (anyone not practicing Catholicism in line with the teachings of the Church in Rome).

The Spanish Inquisition existed specifically to root out those who were not Catholic enough. Though we tend to think of the Inquisition as something confined to the Iberian peninsula (Spain and Portugal), it also had a significant impact on Northern Europe. A branch of the Inquisition operated there which was overseen by Margaret of Parma (the illegitimate daughter of Philip II who had been appointed regent and reported to her father). In response to petitions filed by the local nobility, Margaret ended the Inquisition in 1564 in an attempt to broker peace and avoid outright rebellion. A group who came to be called the *Gueux* brought further petitions in 1566 to try to end ongoing persecution. The tensions surrounding religious persecution were made worse by several bad harvests, prolonged and widespread famine, particularly harsh winters, and new taxes.

“Hedge preachers” as rebellious leaders

Religious, political, and economic issues were closely intertwined. To a Flemish Protestant, the Spanish Catholic Crown represented religious and political oppression. This was made worse by the widening cultural and linguistic gap between the Spanish Crown and its Flemish subjects. These tensions were brought to a boil by *hagenprekers*, or “hedge preachers,” wandering figures who whipped up anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic sentiment in sermons held outdoors, and usually outside of city walls and therefore beyond easy jurisdiction.



Figure 9.6.38: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, 1566, 95 × 160.5 cm (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

Several scholars have argued that Pieter Bruegel's painting, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, represents this biblical event as if it were happening in the current political climate. John the Baptist, here cast as a hedge preacher, almost disappears into the crowd; Jesus, who he is introducing, is even less noticeable. Typically for Bruegel, the crowd of people gathered to listen to the speaker are from all walks of life and dressed in contemporary Flemish clothing.



Figure 9.6.39: Detail, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, 1566 (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)



Figure 9.6.40: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Sermon of Saint John the Baptist*, 1566, detail (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

One face stands out in the crowd because he unexpectedly faces the viewer: a man in a black hat having his palm read in the foreground. He would have been identifiable to contemporary viewers as dressed in a Spanish mode, and fortune telling would have been seen as corrupt and popish.

The Spaniard alone ignores the humble John the Baptist in favor of giving in to superstitious practices, while two monks in the front right look on with expressions that could be interpreted as jeers and skepticism. As a result, Bruegel's painting possibly functions simultaneously as a biblical scene and a contemporary political polemic, containing just enough ambiguity to not ruffle Inquisitorial feathers.

Iconoclastic riots

The hedge preachers were at least partially responsible for the ignition of the *Beeldenstorm*, the sudden outbreak of violence against religious images that began in the summer of 1566 and spread throughout the Low Countries. In response to their anti-Catholic preaching, violence began in West Flanders and radiated outward.

In some towns, it was outright mob violence: groups of people burst into churches, smashing windows and sculptures. In other cities, the destruction of religious images was systematic and either openly or covertly supported by the local government. In some cases, the iconoclasts and the local Catholic Church officials negotiated for the survival of certain artworks.



Figure 9.6.41: Altar retable of the Jan van Arkel chapel, Utrecht Cathedral (Domkerk). Found behind a false plaster wall during restoration activities in 1919. Dated 15th century, defaced during the Beeldenstorm (photo: Sailko, CC BY 3.0)

It was a fever that spread throughout the Low Countries, leaving few towns untouched by the sudden explosion of anti-image sentiment. According to Alistair Duke, the destruction of images functioned as a ritualistic act intended to prove to both Catholics and Protestants that the images were powerless. If images were indeed sacred conduits that connected the faithful to God, they

would defend themselves; since it was possible to destroy them, they were therefore earthly vanity and merely distractions from truth.

To destroy the objects and ritually humiliate them was to reject the broader political and religious structures they represented, as well. Sculptures were torn down from their niches, windows were smashed, and altars and shrines were disassembled and burned.

When the sculptures were part of the fabric of the building and could not be easily removed, the heads of the figures were hacked off. Examples reflecting this kind of violence remain visible in churches throughout the Northern Low Countries inside previously Catholic, now Protestant churches.



Figure **9.6.42**: Jan Luyken, *Beeldenstorm*, 1566, etching, 27cm × w 34.8cm (**Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam**)

Iconoclasm in 1566 was not just the result of doctrinal disagreement about the nature of religious imagery and the interpretation of biblical text. It was instead a response to intertwined issues of politics, religious oppression, and economic factors. It was one spark that helped ignite the flames of the Eighty Years War, a war that ultimately resulted in the split between the northern Calvinist provinces of the Dutch Republic and the southern Catholic province that remained connected to Spain. As much as the violence of the *Beeldenstorm* itself may have been short-lived, the broader cultural and historical changes that cascaded as a result had permanent and far-reaching consequences.

Additional resources:

Read more about the *Beeldenstorm* in the *Low Countries Historical Review*

David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

Alistair Duke, “Calvinists and Papist Idolatry: the Mentality of the Image-breakers in 1566,” in *Dissident identities in the early modern Low Countries*, ed. Pollman and Spicer (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009).

Submerged, burned, and scattered: celebrating the destruction of objects in South Asia

by DR. CRISTIN MCKNIGHT SETHI



Figure 9.6.43: Ketaki Sheth, *Girl at Ganpati Immersion, Chowpatty*, 2002, gelatin silver print, 36.8 x 55.9 cm (National Museum of Asian Art, Washington DC)

A photograph by artist Ketaki Sheth depicts a little girl, wearing a lacy floral dress and standing upon the shoulders of a man, perhaps her father, to get a better view of the surrounding crowd that carries a large sculptural image of the Hindu god Ganesha. Sheth captures a moment of stillness during an otherwise boisterous and energetic occasion: the artist brings us above the crowd and into the clouds that backlight the richly adorned body of the elephant-headed deity—remover of obstacles and **son of Shiva** and **Parvati**—on his way toward a body of water for ritual immersion during the annual festival of Ganesha Chaturthi.

Impermanence and belief

The practice of ritually submerging, and thereby destroying, sculptural images of Ganesha during Ganesha Chaturthi represents one of several religious and cultural acts in South Asia which complicate ideas about the value and permanence of material objects. Makers involved in these practices produce objects and artistic depictions with the knowledge that the products of their creative labor are temporary and will be intentionally destroyed or deteriorate over time. In some cases these practices of ritual destruction resonate with ideas about the cyclical nature of time as described in concepts like ***samsara***. In other cases the destruction of an object is symbolic of the removal of evil and the restoration of good in the universe. In still other cases, we find beautifully wrought material objects whose impermanence is embedded in their form and function, much like disposable paper plates.

These examples challenge us to push against the preciousness of objects—an approach that we encounter so often in the study of art—and to rethink the way we value the permanence / impermanence of material things. This call to rethink our valuation of objects is also critical to the decolonizing of the discipline of art history; privileging objects of durable and precious materials over ephemeral works of art (such as things made from unfired clay, paper, or cotton fiber) is in many ways a legacy of British colonial rule on the subcontinent that sought to promote a Eurocentric view and valuation of objects and artistic practices.[1]

For the Ganesha images created in celebration of Ganesha Chaturthi, their destruction is a joyous celebration. Occurring in August or September of each year according to the Hindu lunar calendar, the ritual immersion of Ganesha marks the deity's birth and symbolic return to the earth. [2] According to legend, Ganesha was created from clay by the goddess Parvati and was given an elephant's head after his father, the god Shiva, inadvertently beheaded him. Ganesha Chaturthi celebrates the moment when the deity received his elephant head, and his ritual immersion in water each year following ten days of rites is a significant event that bestows blessings on devotees.

Immersion as purification

It is not surprising that worshippers laboriously carry sacred sculptural images or *murtis* of Ganesha to local bodies of water for ritual immersion. Water is a symbolic purifier in South Asia and used in numerous religious and cultural practices connected with worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses as well as honoring holy figures, saints, and sacred architecture in **Buddhist**, **Christian**, Jain, **Muslim**, and Sikh beliefs. For the Hindu devotees participating in ritual immersion festivals like Ganesha Chaturthi, the water itself is sacred and ultimately connected to the holiest river in India, the Ganga.[3]



Figure **9.6.44**: Ganesh Visarjan at Girgaum Chowpatty, c. 2007 (photo: **Chris**: CC BY 2.0)

Historically, artists made disposable or perishable *murtis* of the god from unfired clay or low-fired terracotta decorated with natural pigments. [4] These images would slowly dissolve in water and eventually be reincorporated into the ecosystem. However, over the last several decades increasingly larger Ganesha images made from synthetic paints, gypsum plaster (plaster of Paris), and plastic ornaments have become popular, and the heavy metals and toxins associated with these raw materials have leached into India's waterways, creating dangerous amounts of pollution. [5] Recently, the Government of India's Central Pollution Control Board established rules requiring that devotees use Ganesha *murtis* made from biodegradable materials (like terracotta) and have encouraged that ritual immersion practices occur in specially-designated water tanks.



Figure **9.6.45**: *Alpana* patterns created for the festival of Sankranti. Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh, India, 2020 (photo: Dr. Cristin McKnight Sethi, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

In addition to annual events like Ganesha Chaturthi, the making of temporary, perishable objects and artistic depictions appear on a daily basis in many parts of India through the creation of decorative floor paintings known by various names including *alpana*, *kollam*, and *rangoli*. [6] Typically made by female members of a household or community using rice flour, chalk, powdered pigments, or flowers, the symmetrical forms of these temporary paintings symbolize divine power. They are intended to sanctify a space, and have ancient origins in goddess worship. [7] For special festivals some women create particularly elaborate floor paintings that last for several months or even up to a year. There are many, however, who treat this practice as a daily ritual with the intention that the painting will be swept clean and remade each morning—the epitome of intangible cultural heritage. [8]



Figure **9.6.46**: Left: *Rangoli* in chalk (photo: **ramya_aiyappan**, CC BY-NC 2.0) Right: *Rangoli* in chalk and flowers (photo: **McKay Savage**, CC BY 2.0)

Destroying the demon king

A particularly dramatic example of the ritual destruction of objects occurs with sculptural effigies of the demon king Ravana and his demon armies which are burned and physically torn apart during multi-day performances of the *Ramacharitamanas*, the Hindi version of the story of Rama which is especially popular throughout North India and famously performed in the city of Ramnagar. [9] This performance, known locally as *Ramlila*, narrates the story of Rama, an earthly form or *avatar* of the Hindu god Vishnu, who is the beloved king of the city of Ayodhya and husband to Sita, an avatar of the goddess Lakshmi. The *Ramacharitamanas*, similar to the Sanskrit ***Ramayana***, describes the adventures of Rama, his brother Lakshmana, and Sita during their fourteen-year

exile from Ayodhya. The story culminates in a series of battles between Rama and the powerful demon king, Ravana, who has abducted Sita and held her captive at his palace in Lanka.

In the final days of the Ramlila performance, sculptural depictions of Ravana and other demons made from bamboo and paper are set ablaze to symbolize their mythological destruction. The most dramatic moment in the Ramlila performance occurs on Dussehra, an important Hindu festival celebrated throughout India, when participants destroy sculptural depictions of Ravana, sometimes 75-feet tall and filled with firecrackers, to mark Rama's victory over the demon king and the ultimate victory of good over evil.



Figure **9.6.47**: Destruction of a Ravana sculpture during Dusshera at Ranthambore, Sawai Madhopur. Rajasthan, Oct 2019 (photo: **Kandukuru Nagarjun**, CC BY 2.0)

In other parts of India, Dusshera is celebrated as a way to mark the goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura, understood by devotees as a mythological act that restores ***dharma*** to the universe. Worshippers celebrate Dusshera by creating elaborate temporary altars or *pandals* for Durga, many of which are then submerged in water on Dusshera, marking the culmination of nine nights of celebration known as *Navratri*. The *pandals* made for the worship or ***puja*** of Durga are most famously created in Bengal where families, neighborhoods, community organizations, and businesses commission elaborate *pandals* that incorporate depictions of iconic architecture and motifs from popular culture. [10]



Figure **9.6.48**: Durga puja pandal modeled after the Pantheon (photo: **Biswarup Ganguly**, CC BY 3.0)



Figure 9.6.49: Raghu Rai, *INDIA, Calcutta, Finally, Durga is brought to the Ganges for immersion.* Magnum Photos PAR156220 © Raghu Rai / Magnum Photos

A photograph by artist Raghu Rai depicts the ritual immersion of Durga during a Dusshera celebration in Kolkata. In Rai's image we see a larger-than-life *murti* of Durga being carried with bamboo poles to the Ganga by several human figures—a scene that parallels depictions of Ganesha Chaturthi. These human devotees work together to hoist the goddess into the river. We see Durga's many arms clearly holding the weapons she uses to vanquish Mahishasura and her lion mount or *vahana* with its mouth agape seated nearby. A nineteenth-century painting of a similar moment suggests earlier practices of this form of ritual immersion. While the focus in the painting is on the elaborately adorned *murti* of Durga and the human devotees who carry her *pandal* in procession, in the foreground of the scene appears loose brushstrokes that hint at water, perhaps a subtle indication of the immersion to come.



Figure 9.6.50: Durga Puja: a procession carrying an idol of Durga to honor her victory over evil, 19th century, in *A Collection of Indian costumes, types and occupations*, gouache on mica (Wellcome Library, CC BY 4.0)



Figure **9.6.51**: Adornment (*alankara*) of Ganesha murti in a home shrine, Bangalore, 2004 (photo: Dr. Cristin McKnight Sethi, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The practice of ritually submerging or destroying images is not limited to depictions of gods, goddesses, or demons, but even applies to the floral garlands that adorn many sacred images. The practice of *alankara* or adorning a *murti* includes dressing the deity in strands of marigolds, roses, and jasmine flowers. Floral offerings are also used in worship at other religious sites in India including Sufi shrines, Sikh temples, and Christian churches. These flowers are most often tossed into water after their use in religious rites. Once blessed by the divine these floral offerings need to be disposed of in the holiest way possible, either scattered in a sacred river like the Ganga or immersed in a local body of water.



Figure 9.6.52: Discarded flowers, Varanasi (Banaras), India, 2011 (photo: Eric Parker, CC BY-NC 2.0)

With increased scrutiny over environmental repercussions of such ritual practices, entrepreneurs and designers have begun to collect these discarded flowers and upcycle them into new products. Textile artist Rupa Trivedi and her team at Adiv Pure Nature have created a way to reuse flowers discarded by the Siddhivinayak Hindu temple and the Haji Ali Sufi shrine in Mumbai to create contact-dyed garments and home textiles. In these textiles the temporary floral offerings are made more permanent by imprinting their natural pigments onto cotton and silk fibers. By using water throughout the mordanting and dyeing process, Trivedi maintains the sacred connection to water that is so pivotal to ritual immersion. While Trivedi's textiles give new life to floral offerings that would otherwise decompose into the earth, it is striking that textiles as a medium epitomize intangibility and impermanence: textiles are objects that break apart through wear and tear, fade under excessive exposure to sunlight, and deteriorate when subjected to bacteria, fungus, or invasive insects.



Figure 9.6.53: Detail of fabric by Adiv Pure Nature dyed with upcycled marigold flowers

Perhaps the most pervasive example of the regular destruction of impermanent, temporary objects occurs through the culture of food. Ceramic artists all over South Asia produce small vessels from low-fired terracotta to be used for drinking spiced tea known as *masala chai* or yoghurt beverages known as *lassis* which are sold at roadside stands and eateries. While many vendors of *chai* and *lassi* have taken to glass, paper, plastic, and styrofoam substitutes, there are still some who prefer to use traditional clay cups. The potters who make these hand-thrown vessels do so with the knowledge that these objects will have short lives: they will be thrown to the ground or crushed underfoot after the *chai* or *lassi* has been drunk.



Figure 9.6.54: A boy stands in a potter's yard, holding traditional clay cups (photo: Meena Kadri, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Much of the value of these objects lies in their impermanence and the easy way they return to the earth. While some *chai* or *lassi* cups may enter into museum collections—quintessential repositories of permanent objects—their most potent cultural value and circulation is in their temporary use and ultimate demise. As such these vessels remind us that not all tangible cultural heritage is in need of preservation, and sometimes a community requires, even celebrates, the destruction of cultural objects.





Figure 9.6.55: Left: Masala chai in terracotta cups (photo: Biswarup Ganguly, CC BY 3.0); Right: Chai vendor, Kolkata (photo: Nomad Tales, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Notes:

1. For an expanded discussion of colonial valuation of "fine arts" vs. "craft" within the context of unfired clay sculpture see Susan Bean, "The Unfired Clay Sculpture of Bengal in the Artscape of Modern South Asia," in Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton, eds., *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2011), 604–628.
2. Ganesha Chaturthi occurs every year on the day of Ananta Caturdasi in the month of Bhadrapada (according to the Chandramana calendar).
3. For more on the sacred nature of the Ganga and its connection to other bodies of water in India, see Diana Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography* (New York: Random House, 2012), 131–188.
4. Clay has been a material of ritual importance on the subcontinent for millennia. See Bean, "The Unfired Clay Sculpture of Bengal," 609.
5. For further discussion of the environmental implications of ritual immersion of synthetic Ganesha images see Dinesh C. Sharma, "Idol immersion poses water pollution threat" in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* (October 2014, Vol. 12, No. 8): 431; and M. Vikram Reddy and A. Vijay Kumar, "Effects of Ganesh-idol immersion on some water quality parameters of Hussainsagar Lake" in *Current Science*, Vol. 81, No. 11 (10 December 2001): 1412–1413.

6. There are comparable ornamental patterns made on the walls of homes. See for example, Asimakrishna Dasa, *Evening Blossoms: The Temple Tradition of Sanjhi in Vrndavana* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1996).
7. See for example, Stella Kramrisch, "The Art Ritual of Women," in *Unknown India* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1968); and Pupul Jayakar, *The Earthen Drum: An Introduction to the Ritual Arts of Rural India* (New Delhi: National Museum, 1980).
8. Tibetan Buddhist monks are famous for creating similar temporary paintings in the form of sand mandalas. For example, see **monks creating a mandala at the Rubin Museum**.
9. For more on the Ramlila of Ramnagar, see Richard Schechner and Linda Hess, "The Ramlila of Ramnagar" in *The Drama Review: TDR*, September 1977, Vol. 21, No. 3, Annual Performance Issue (September 1977): 51–82; and "**Ramnagar Ramlila: All about the 200-yr-old cultural extravaganza**."
10. For more on Durga Puja pandals and their makers see Bean, "The Unfired Clay Sculpture of Bengal in the Artscape of Modern South Asia," 604–628; Tapati Guha-Thakurta, "From Spectacle to 'Art'" in *ArtIndia* Vol 9, Issue 3 (Quarter 3, 2004): 34–56; Krishna Dutta, *Image-Makers of Kumortuli and the Durga Puja Festival*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2016; and Geir Heirestad, "The Durga Puja Business," in *Caste, Entrepreneurship and the Illusions of Tradition: Branding the Potters of Kolkata* (Anthem Press, 2017), 1–6.

"Creative iconoclasm": a tale of two monasteries

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI



Figure **9.6.56**: Monastery (chapter house, cloister, and refectory) of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, 1133–41, built in Sacramenia, Spain, and today in North Miami Beach, Florida

Conservation, restoration and ruination

Cultural heritage professionals often draw a clear distinction between conservation and restoration. The definition of conservation is closely linked with the idea of preservation—the idea is to salvage cultural artifacts so that they retain the histories that produced them.

Restoration, on the other hand, is seen as the act of replacing components that have fallen into disrepair; it can be seen as a destructive force, or as the salvation of an object from ruination. Even when restorations are done with the best intentions, and with a desire for authenticity, restoration work can alter the historical significance of building. This is especially problematic with medieval cathedrals and monasteries, which often contain an accretion of styles built up through the ages. When doing restoration, which style should be considered the "original"? Which, if any, should be removed? For some time, the Renaissance era was

privileged over all others. But this began to change in the mid-nineteenth century, when medieval architecture once again began to be considered beautiful.



Figure **9.6.57**: 50th Anniversary of the Venice Charter, 2014 Annual Report of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

In 1964, a group of concerned conservationist professionals from various disciplines gathered from several countries to draw up guidelines in regard to responsible restoration. The document they produced, "Decisions and Resolutions: International Charter for the Conservation and Renovation of Monuments and Sites" is now referred to as The Venice Charter, and it set down rules that should be followed when restoring a historical site or monument.

In the Venice Charter, the principles of authenticity and retention of the historical context were paramount. It states that the process of restoration aims "…to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument." This goal in turn should be based on "respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins." Following this premise, the Venice Charter declared that reconstructions or replacements of missing parts "must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence." The charter also held that all significant building contributions from any time period must be considered. The Venice Charter, now almost 55 years old, is still the go-to guide in regard to historic restoration.

Creative iconoclasm

In the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, restoration often involved the idealized imaginings of the restorer and/or patron —something which British anthropologist Alfred Gell termed "creative iconoclasm." Creative iconoclasm is essentially when a renovation deviates so far from the original intended form of a building that the building loses its previous meaning and takes on different meaning altogether. Hence, the use of the term iconoclasm (destruction of an image). More recently, art historian Meredith Cohen has written about the "creative interventions" done to medieval structures. They leave in their wake a whole new history, vastly different from what had been recognized for hundreds of years. Two Spanish monasteries purchased by William Randolph Hearst in the late 1920s are prime examples of these overlapping concepts.



Figure 9.6.58: William R. Hearst (Library of Congress, Harris & Ewing, photographer)

A tale of two monasteries

You may recognize the name William Randolph Hearst (the early twentieth-century newspaper baron and avid art collector), but you may not be aware of the curious case of two Spanish medieval monasteries that made their way to the United States at his behest—the monasteries of **Saint Bernard de Clairvaux** (originally in Sacramenia, Spain, and now partly in Florida), and **Santa María de Óvila** (originally in Guadalajara, Spain, and now partly in California). [1]

Both monasteries were purchased by Hearst and arduously removed from where they had stood in Spain for hundreds of years and relocated to the United States. Both were subsequently left to moulder in fragments—one on each coast of the United States. Decades later, they would be problematically restored, at great monetary and historical cost.

The Search begins — Saint Bernard de Clairvaux

In 1923 Hearst instructed Arthur Byne, architect, art historian, and antiques dealer, to seek out a historic limestone structure. This was a decade before the Spanish Civil War, but Spain had long been experiencing political unrest and climate issues. Over the centuries, medieval Spanish monasteries had suffered the stressors of age and a general lack of religious enthusiasm.

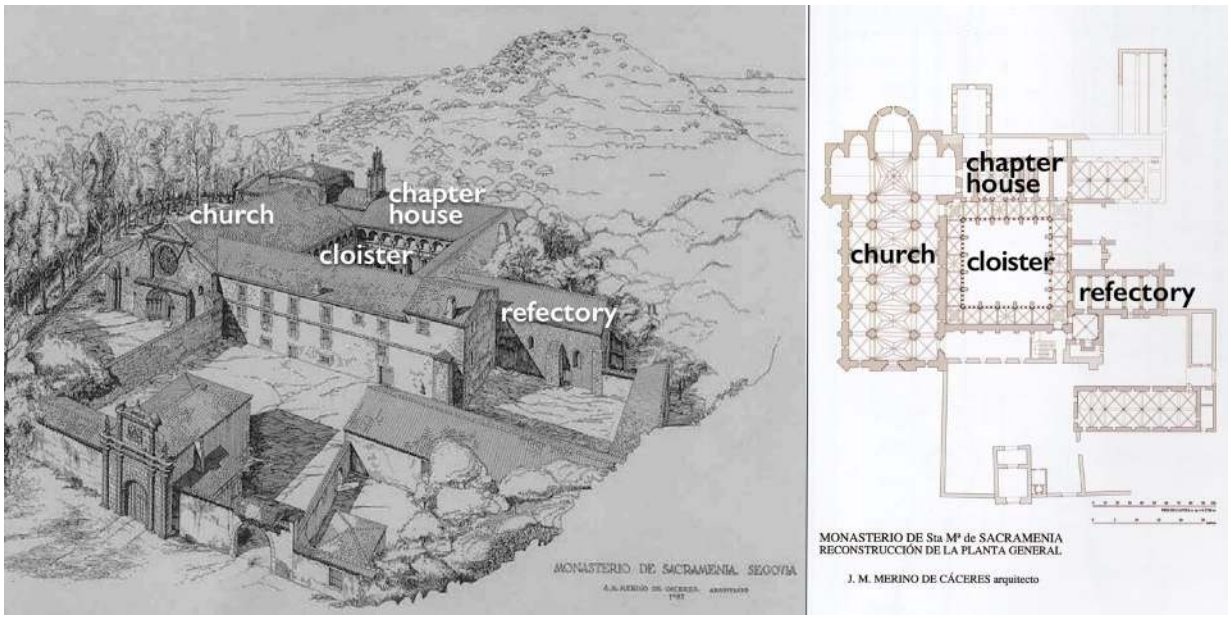


Figure 9.6.59: **Perspective drawing** and **plan** of the monastery of Saint Bernard de Clairvaux before the removal to the United States of the cloister, chapter house, and refectory (according to José Miguel Merino de Cáceres, architect, from 1982)



Figure 9.6.60: Church façade, Monastery of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, 1133–41, Sacramenia, Spain (before the 1923 removal of several monastic buildings and their reconstruction in North Miami Beach, Florida. The church is still in-situ.)

When Byne came upon the monastery at Sacramenia, it had already experienced a severe fire in the nineteenth century, and, though repaired afterward, the last monk left in 1866. The monastery is Cistercian (a Catholic religious order of monks and nuns), and Cistercian architecture is known for its fine ashlar masonry, harmonious proportions, and restraint in ornamentation. However, there were also regional variations. Parts of the Santa María de Óvila monastery had walls seven feet thick and small, slit windows to defend the complex from Muslim invaders (the Cistercian tendency to build in remote locations made them particularly vulnerable to attack).

In 1923 Byne declared in a letter to Hearst and his architect Julia Morgan, “The monastery is located in one of the most desolate corners of Spain. It is of Cistercian origin, though probably the only twelfth century cloister to be had in Europe today.” The term “to be had” in this quote underlines the sort of smash and grab policy that Hearst, Morgan, and Byne seem to have been abiding by. There was no pretense of buying the monastic buildings (the cloister, chapter house, and refectory) in order to save and preserve them (sometimes this is the motivation cited when a country appropriates the cultural heritage objects of another—one well-known example is the case of the **Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon**).

An offer amount of $35,000 for several components of the monastery was quickly extended by Byne on behalf of Hearst to the current owner, and just as quickly accepted. The idea was for these components to be adapted into part of Hearst’s ever-growing property in San Simeon (generally now known as Hearst Castle in California). The **monastery’s church** itself was not purchased and remains in-situ (in place), however, the thirteenth-century cloister (covered walkway), chapter house (meeting space) and other outbuildings were purchased by Hearst—and subsequently, slowly, removed.

Numerous letters from Byne to Morgan and Hearst reveal the politics involved in taking apart the cloister and other portions of the monastery. Numerous bribes were offered to keep the removal from being stopped by the government. The project was frequently threatened by the Spanish minister of fine arts; the sale was, in fact, illegal and the press had gotten a hold of the story. Despite this, the minister did not make good on his threats, so the project carried on.

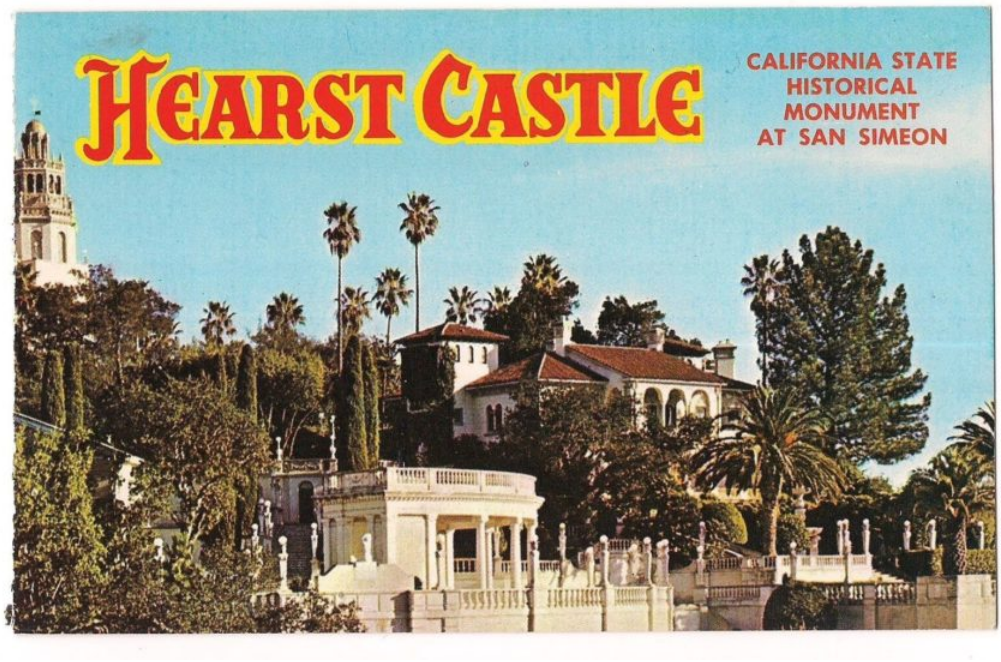


Figure **9.6.61**: Hearst Castle postcard

Taking the buildings of the monastery apart would have been a time-consuming process under any circumstances. It was soon realized the timing would not allow the cloister to be incorporated into the fabric of Hearst Castle—but another solution was at hand—a plan was made to have the monastery's cloister function as a stand-alone museum.

Supervision of the dismantling of the monastery at Sacramenia was said to be meticulous—each block was carefully numbered, and extensive drawings made. It was a labor-intensive project that required significant problem solving along the way: weather, the logistics of moving the stones, and politics all came into play.

Eventually 11,000 crates would be shipped off to the United States. Unfortunately, the crates were not transported before an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease hit the Segovia area, causing the shipment to be quarantined upon its arrival on the east coast of the United States. The crates were opened in order to burn the potentially infectious hay with which the stones had been packed and in the process. Stones were heaved haphazardly into any crate that happened to be handy, spoiling the system of how the stones were to be put back into place.

By now, several years had passed since the purchase and Hearst's finances had taken a beating in the stock market crash of 1929 (not that this stopped him from collecting European art and antiques) and the materials that had once formed the monastic buildings at Sacramenia were placed on the back burner. Once out of quarantine, the crates and their stones were left to decay in one of Hearst's warehouses in Brooklyn, New York. The remains of the monastery lingered there for almost thirty more years.

In the 1940s, Raymond Moss and William Edgemon approached Hearst to purchase the Sacramenia remains, but he refused their offers. When he died, however, the estate was willing to sell to the pair who planned to use the stones to build a tourist attraction in Florida. The reconstruction of the Sacramenia stones was overseen by Allen Carswell (who also oversaw the rebuilding of the Cloisters Museum, a satellite of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan).



THE ROCKY MOUNT

SECTION B — SUNDAY TELEGRAM — SECTION B

SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 1954

813-Year-Old Monastery Is Moved From Spain To Florida

Nineteen Months Needed To Assemble Old Edifice

They call it the biggest "jigsaw puzzle" the world has ever seen — or ever is likely to see again!

There were more than 35,000 pieces.

Each piece was a heavy stone that weighed anywhere from a hundred pounds to more than a ton.

It took nineteen months of tantalizing toil and cost almost $1,500,000 to fit the pieces together.

But today, just north of Miami, Florida, the most fantastic jigsaw puzzle in history finally ... is completed. It is the actual, 813-year-old Monastery of St. Bernard of Sacramenia — reassembled, original stone by original stone, exactly as it was first built in ancient Spain back in the year 1141.

Rich and powerful Alphonso VII, King of old Castile, built it for the sacrist Cistercian monks in a lonely valley near the village of Sacramenia.

FRANKISH FATE

A grandish fate — prized and coveted by the insatiable appetite of the publishing tycoon, William Randolph Hearst, for great art treasures — was a paramount ... of it.

And the ... fell to two Cincinnati, O., business men— E. Raymond Moss and William S. Edgemon.

The monastery was one of $50,000,000 worth of art treasures Hearst collected from the four ... of the jigsaw puzzle. So complex, so involved was the system of numbering that it was almost unexplicable when it came to be used twenty-five years later.

To dismantle the monastery, Hearst's agent brought ... Arabs and carpenters from as far away as Madrid. Masons took the monastery apart carefully, stone by stone and painted a number on each one. Carpenters made thousands of heavy boxes to pack them in.

Each stone was bedded in a nest of hay — and that hay was fate's second prank in the creation of the puzzle.

It took 10,751 boxes to crate the monastery for shipment to New York 4,000 miles away.

QUARANTINED

But in New York the crated monastery was quarantined. The packing hay had been sown in a section of Spain where there was an outbreak of highly-contagious

The quadrangular Cloister Walk stands again exactly as it was first built more than 800 years ago. Around these walks for centuries, monks paced while they murmured their endless prayers. Intricately carved capitals of the columns in the foreground were done by Moorish captives. No two are alike.

Marble statue of Christ stands on altar in Chapter House where once the novices took their instructions from the abbot of the Monastery. Four columns that divide principal bays in the vaulted ceiling represent the four Cardinal Virtues, wisdom, courage, temperance and justice.

Figure **9.6.62**: The Rocky Mount Sunday Telegram (June 13, 1954)

It took nineteen months and a tremendous amount of money to finish the bulk of the project. Carswell had a crew of eight stonemasons working under him. The rebuilding was criticized for its clumsy stereometry (the science of cutting stone precisely, which the medieval mason did via simple tools and tremendous skill) and the use of concrete in the reconstruction (a material not used by medieval builders).

Moss and Edgemon never intended to recreate what had once been in Spain. They dubbed their tourist attraction the "Ancient Spanish Monastery," a misnomer still used in the present, and welcomed visitors to "Step back in time 800 years!" Sadly, for Moss and Edgemon, the tourist spot they had fought so hard to create did not entice visitors; bankrupt, they had to sell.



Figure **9.6.63**: Cloister of the Monastery of St. Bernard de Clairvaux as rebuilt in North Miami Beach, Florida (photo: **Casingrid**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Today the transported parts of the Saint Bernard de Clairvaux monastery function as both an Episcopal Church and a tourist attraction—complete with a gift shop. People consider it a fascinating secret retreat outside Miami, "the perfect place to relax and enjoy the Miami sun with a European flair."

If at first you don't succeed…

Hearst, seeing the Sacramenia project as now a hopeless jigsaw puzzle (in fact *Time* magazine dubbed the situation "The Biggest Jigsaw in History" in a 1953 issue), hit the pause button on monastery acquisitions for a couple of years. But Hearst decided what any tycoon might—even in the face of the Great Depression—it was time to buy another monastery. This go-round he had plans for it to grace a "cabin" he was building in the remote wilderness of northern California, near Mount Shasta, on the McCloud River: his Wyntoon Estate. Hearst was making plans to create something that would make his San Simeon estate pale in comparison. The intended use was similar to that of the Sacramenia monastery—the stones were to be used to create a museum to house Hearst's collection of medieval armor and other medieval objects, and Hearst had some other ideas as well.

Hearst contacted his associate Arthur Byne once again and put him back on the hunt. If Byne was a little warier this time around, who could blame him? He had seen how difficult the first endeavor was, and he was now dealing with a client who was cash poor. Hearst had not escaped the stock market crash unscathed but chose to ignore the fact.



Figure **9.6.64**

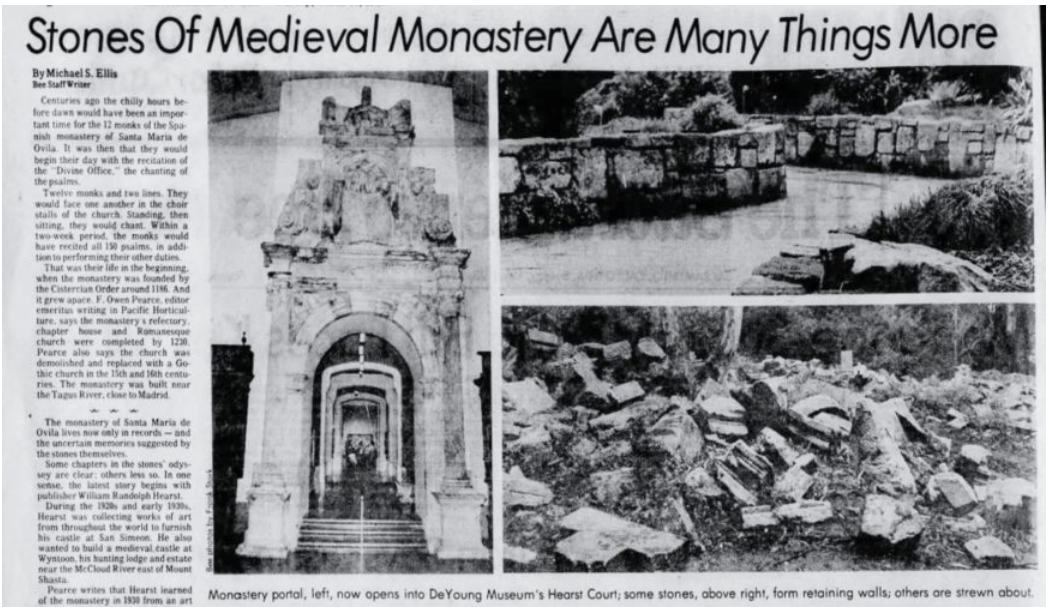
Nonetheless, Byne went on his mission and before long he found the ruins of the Santa María de Óvila Monastery in the Guadalajara province in Spain—another defunct Cistercian abbey in a remote locale. Though built later, this abbey was in a far worse condition than the monastery at Sacramenia. The Óvila abbey had suffered from the War of Spanish Succession and the Peninsular War. In the 1830s, the remaining four monks and one lay brother were ousted from the abbey when it lost the support of both the locals and the kingdom.

When Byne stumbled upon the monastery, it was owned by a farmer who used many of the buildings to house livestock; the chapter house was used for manure storage. But Byne saw potential, despite the dilapidation, manure, and overgrown vegetation. With Hearst's approval, he purchased the majority of the complex. The plan was to remove many of the same elements as at Saint Bernard de Clairvaux: cloister, chapter house, and refectory. But at Santa María de Óvila, the main chapel was also purchased. The vision for the chapel, when rebuilt at Wyntoon, was to have it contain a 150-foot-long swimming pool. There would be a lounge in one side chapel, and a ladies changing area in the other—and the *piece de resistance*, a diving board in the apse (traditionally, an apse is a semi-circular area at the east end of a church that contains the altar).

Again, a painful process began to remove the stones from where they had stood so long. Byne wrote Hearst nearly daily, imploring Hearst to pay his bills or Byne would need to quit. Grudgingly, a check would appear to keep the project going, but the money was gone almost as soon as it was deposited. More than one hundred workers had to be paid, extensive equipment needed to be paid off, and the factory producing the crates for the stones could barely keep up with the demand—especially without cash in hand.

The removal of the Santa María de Óvila was illegal, just as Sacramenia before it. The new Spanish government (the Second Spanish Republic) stepped in—literally. A group of soldiers arrived and told Byne the deal was off. However, Byne was able to convince them to let the dismantling continue. Lucky for Hearst, and with the new government already off to a shaky start, the Óvila monastery was forgotten for a time. But Byne knew the clock was ticking and carried out the dismantling as quickly as possible. A local doctor had been trying for several years to convince the government to preserve the monastery finally succeeded

in his efforts and in June of 1931 and the monastery was declared a national monument. Alas, it was too late. By this point Óvila had been almost fully dismantled, and within a month the stones were sailing towards the California coast.



Stones Of Medieval Monastery Are Many Things More

By Michael S. Ellis
Bee Staff Writer

Centuries ago the chilly hours before dawn would have been an important time for the 12 monks of the Spanish monastery of Santa Maria de Ovila. It was then that they would begin their day with the recitation of the "Divine Office," the chanting of the psalms.

Twelve monks and two lines. They would face one another in the choir stalls of the church. Standing, then sitting, they would chant. Within a two-week period, the monks would have recited all 150 psalms, in addition to performing their other duties.

That was their life in the beginning, when the monastery was founded by the Cistercian Order around 1186. And it grew apace. F. Owen Pearce, editor emeritus writing in Pacific Horticulture, says the monastery's refectory, chapter house and Romanesque church were completed by 1230. Pearce also says the church was demolished and replaced with a Gothic church in the 15th and 16th centuries. The monastery was built near the Tagus River, close to Madrid.

* * *

The monastery of Santa Maria de Ovila lives now only in records — and the uncertain memories suggested by the stones themselves.

Some chapters in the stones' odyssey are clear, others less so. In one sense, the latest story begins with publisher William Randolph Hearst.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, Hearst was collecting works of art from throughout the world to furnish his castle at San Simeon. He also wanted to build a medieval castle at Wyntoon, his hunting lodge and estate near the McCloud River east of Mount Shasta.

Pearce writes that Hearst learned of the monastery in 1930 from an art

Monastery portal, left, now opens into DeYoung Museum's Hearst Court; some stones, above right, form retaining walls; others are strewn about.

Figure **9.6.65**: The Sacramento Bee (March 23, 1980)

The stones arrived at the San Francisco Harbor later that same year. Hearst found himself once more with thousands of stones, this time on the West Coast and finally faced the fact that he was broke. Ludicrous pillaging of medieval structures takes its toll on the pocket book (these two monasteries were not the only medieval acquisitions he made). The initial estimate for the new Wyntoon estate rolled in at $50,000,000; Hearst's vision for an elaborate castle by the river was not going to happen. The dismantled monastery had arrived, but neither Hearst nor anyone else had any use for it. In this case, Hearst didn't even have his own warehouse to store the stones in. They sat instead in a costly rented storage space near Fisherman's wharf, taking up 28,000 square feet of space. Hearst now owned two dismantled monasteries on either coast that were both hopeless puzzles.

By 1940, Hearst was ready to give the stones away, and he had an interested party. By this time, the Spanish Civil War had occurred, and Francisco Franco was in power. Franco wanted the stones returned to Spain, but Hearst wasn't interested. After considering various possibilities, Hearst was convinced to give the stones to the city of San Francisco in return for a tax abatement and forgiveness on his large storage bill. There was a stipulation that the stones would be used to create a medieval museum in Golden Gate Park. World War II intervened and no less than five fires occurred where the stones were now being kept in the park. Almost half of the stones were severely damaged, making them unsound for any kind of large-scale building project. The original numbering system that had been applied in order to place the tones accurately had melted off. Interest in the project evaporated and no museum was built.



A model of the monastery chapter house, an display at the de Young Museum

The Spanish Acquisition

A battle royal over the stones of a medieval monastery, shipped here by William Randolph Hearst and now crumbling in Golden Gate Park

BY RICHARD EK

Delay always breeds danger, and to protract a great design is often to ruin it.
— Miguel de Cervantes, "Don Quixote"

Father Thomas X. Davis, abbot of the Trappist abbey of New Clairvaux in the Tehama County town of Vina, prays that Harry Parker, director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, might come to recognize the error of delay.

Parker could help fulfill what has become, over 30 years, a passionate mission for Father Thomas: to bring to his abbey, located in the rural Sacramento Valley 130 miles northeast of San Francisco, the crumbling remnants of the medieval Monastery of Santa María de Óvila.

Disassembled in Spain and shipped to San Francisco in 1931 by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, the monastery stones have lain moldering in a eucalyptus grove behind the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park since 1941, when Hearst gave them to the city and the M. H. de Young Museum because he could no longer afford to pay for their storage in a waterfront warehouse. But delay, neglect, misuse, erosion in the damp climate and a series of fires in the wooden crates that contain the stones have left only enough pieces intact to construct some of the entrance portal of the chapter house.

Father Thomas X. Davis with the stones he took north to Vina

Figure **9.6.66**: The San Francisco Examiner (August 20, 1989)

A doorway from Óvila was reconstructed for an entrance at the de Young Museum in San Francisco (the doorway as part of the last additions to the Óvila monastery and dates from the Renaissance era). But the majority of the disassembled buildings, like those of its elder compatriot, was left in boxes to decay. Most of the stones were now kept in a warehouse at the de Young Museum; however, a good chunk remained in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. They were considered debris until some innovative gardeners used them in a variety of ornamental ways. A number of Óvila's stones remain there to this day.

The Sacred Stones Project

In the 1990s, Abbot Thomas of New Clairvaux Abbey in Northern California began to petition San Francisco for the sale of the stones. It took almost a decade and much patience, but Abbot Thomas did succeed in his goal. This was the beginning of the Sacred Stones project, which planned to use the Santa María de Óvila stones for a new chapter house at the abbey of New Clairvaux in Vina, California. By this time, vast technological advances made precision much easier in terms of stereometry. Parts of the reconstruction involved sawing the now extremely weathered stones with a stone saw, then chiseling in an attempt to use the old techniques and thus make the building more authentic. Also, a hydraulic mortar was used (Cistercians built with ashlar masonry, which requires no mortar, just compression and finely cut and fitted stones). A steel framework topped things off, leaving the current building twice as strong as it was in the Middle Ages, and earthquake ready.

The abbey in Vina, California hired a master stonemason and several other skilled masons. Vast amounts of time were spent researching the project, mainly by Margaret Burke, an art historian. Burke made the call that—of all the abbey components brought over—only the chapter house was capable of being rebuilt with any kind of verisimilitude.

The chapter house took over ten years to build and in the end the monks decided that, after all the effort, their creation should be a church not a chapter house (they wanted the public to be able to visit the building). New Clairvaux Abbey is proud of its new structure, and the Sacred Stones project as a whole. Certainly it is better than having the stones continue to decay in a warehouse. But the lack of cultural and architectural accuracy and the repurposing of the building should no longer qualify it as a

reconstruction. This is, instead, an entirely different building. The attempt at a reconstruction was lost somewhere during the process to the point where it bears no semblance to any original at Santa María de Óvila, and has effectively stripped it of its previous historical value.



Figure **9.6.67**: Chapter House of the Abbey of New Clairvaux, Vina, Northern California (photo: **Frank Schulenburg**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Those involved in the building of the chapter house/chapel at New Clairvaux in California choose to highlight and even exaggerate the Gothic features that might have been at Óvila and to play down the earlier Romanesque features. Romanesque architecture in the last 100 years has played the foil to Gothic which was described as the clunky, heavy, and gloomy older sister of the lighter, thinner, and delicate Gothic.

Hearst's motivations and conclusion

Hearst never lived to see either Spanish monastery rebuilt, but for Hearst it seems as though the process of taking ownership of these buildings was somehow enough. Hearst could have recreated a Spanish monastery on his property without going to the trouble of hauling two medieval Spanish abbeys piece-by-piece across the world. Clearly, there was more at work here than a simple longing to have a European cloister. The power to attain these objects in the first place seems to have been a large part of Hearst's obsessive collecting, rather than aesthetic enjoyment. Hearst uprooted Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and Santa María de Óvila, at the cost of negating parts of Spain's national heritage, in an attempt to create his own legacy. His narrow and myopic view destroyed what could have been passed on to posterity as a cultural legacy.

So what is at stake here? On one hand one could say that Florida has gained a lovely church and tourist attraction and California monks a shiny new chapter house/chapel. But what has been lost? The original identity of these churches and their history will eventually disappear entirely, and new history centered around the reconstructions will be created. Will people visit the chapter house in Vina, California under the impression they are seeing true work of Cistercian architecture? Will visitors go to the Sacramenia cloister in Florida and understand this was once a space where monks were meant to walk and meditate upon God? Already it is frequently mistaken to be a Spanish Mission from the seventeenth century. Will visitors understand that to take such objects from another country puts that country's cultural heritage in jeopardy, or just find the story of its creation interesting?



Figure **9.6.68**: Church, Monastery of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, 1133–41 in Sacramenia, Spain

And what has Spain been left with? What remains at the original sites? As mentioned, the church was left in place at the Sacramenia site. It is larger than most Cistercian churches and has been restored. It is still on private land but is open to the public one day a week, but it keeps a low-profile and you will find no gift shop here. It is said to be an exemplar of Spanish Cistercian architecture of the golden age, when Saint Bernard came to lead the order.



Figure **9.6.69**: The remaining Spanish ruins of Santa María de Óvila

Santa María de Óvila is also currently on private lands. The monastery was in a derelict state before the Hearst dismantling, but who knows what might be there today if it had been declared a national monument just a little bit sooner and restored at its original site. Now all that remains is a ruin and no visitors are welcomed. The oldest and most intact part of the monastery that remains is the wine cellar.

It would be nice to think that we are beyond acts such as Hearst's, but black-market deals occur behind closed doors frequently. Absconding with the majority of a monastic complex may be trickier, but war can still destroy large scale structures, as can social unrest. Indeed, it was Spain's political instability that in part allowed Hearst to come to take ownership of the Sacramenia and

Óvila stones. Thus while we may see ourselves as more sensitive to other cultures and more global minded, a glance at history should show that things can change on the turn of a dime and then all bets are off.

Footnotes

1. Saint Bernard de Clairvaux was originally named Santa María la Real.

Additional resources

Richard L. Kagan, *The Spanish Craze: America's Fascination with the Hispanic World, 1779–1939* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

Erasing Art: Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning drawing*

by DR. TOM FOLLAND



Figure **9.6.70**: Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953, traces of drawing media on paper with label and gilded frame, 64.14 cm x 55.25 cm (© Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, **SFMOMA**)

That's right, the *Erased de Kooning Drawing* is… an erased drawing by **Willem de Kooning**. It is also a statement that the "erasing" artist, **Robert Rauschenberg**, made about the artistic culture of his time and about his own artistic practice.



Figure **9.6.71**: Community meeting, Black Mountain College (photo: **Black Mountain College Museum**)

How It Happened

In the Fall of 1952, the young artist Robert Rauschenberg visited the New York studio of Willem de Kooning. Rauschenberg met de Kooning and befriended him as a student at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. By 1952, de Kooning was a leading figure, along with Jackson Pollock, in Abstract Expressionism, one of the first modernist art movements in post-World-War II New York. Both de Kooning and Pollock had forged a radically new style of **abstract painting**, and de Kooning would become particularly well known for a painting series that dramatically distorted the female form. The so-named "de Kooning style," in fact, became a template for modernist painting for years to come.



Figure **9.6.72**: Rauschenberg with Jasper Johns, John Cage, and others in Rauschenberg's or Johns's Pearl Street studio, New York, c.1955 (photo: Jerry Schatzberg)

But Rauschenberg was not interested in painting like de Kooning; his plan, as he told the elder artist, was to erase one of his drawings. And de Kooning agreed, after having chosen one that might prove difficult to undo, as it had been done in charcoal, oil paint, pencil, and crayon. Rauschenberg dutifully erased it over the ensuing weeks.

Fellow artist and Rauschenberg's longtime friend, Jasper Johns would later provide a gilded frame and mat, onto which was placed an inscription for the re-titled drawing: "*Erased de Kooning Drawing*, Robert Rauschenberg, 1953."

Cultural Context of Abstract Expressionism

Rauschenberg's erasure was at odds with the prevailing sensibility in art during the 1950s in America. Abstraction had emerged as the defining characteristic of Modernism. In fact, it became a kind of post-war call-to-arms, vigorously promoted by the influential art critic Clement Greenberg. Accordingly, all art, whether it be painting, sculpture, or photography, was to pursue a path that eliminated subject matter and narrative, whilst focusing instead upon the expressive qualities of the medium. This often took the form of highly gestural and non-representational mark-making. Since it was painting that best embodied this new approach, it was painting that reigned as the dominant artistic medium of the Post-World-War II years.



Figure **9.6.73**: Jackson Pollock, *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, 1950, enamel on canvas, 266.7 x 525.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Whether it was the overall effect of **Jackson Pollock**'s so-called "drip" paintings (in which paint had been flung or dripped across large canvases), or the stained pools of color in the work of **Helen Frankenthaler**, or even the distorted images in **de Kooning's**

Women series, the unifying force was a will to abstraction. Pollock once famously remarked that if what he was painting veered too closely to resemblance, he would paint it out.

Even photography tried to mimic painting's abstract qualities. The documentary photographer Aaron Siskind had created portraits of rural America in the 1930s, but by the 1950s his photographs were reduced to black and white arrangements of form. Abstraction was seen by many artists as a liberating force, especially in the context of American realist painting of the preceding decades. Folkish American subjects and themes now seemed provincial compared to what had been achieved in Europe and particularly France since the early twentieth century.

Most significantly, abstraction embodied a specifically postwar American sense of individualism. Through the gestural and often theatrical or performative act of making marks upon the large, flat expanse of canvas, the artist was freed from the constraints of subject matter. In Abstract Expressionist painting, the subject matter, if there can be said to be one, was the artist himself. I use the gendered pronoun "himself" purposively here since it was male artists who were the celebrated authors of these muscular paintings, requiring large brushes and massive canvases. This is not to say that women did not produce powerful bodies of work in this period —indeed Lee Krasner, Janet Sobel, Buffie Johnson, Anne Ryan, Hedda Sterne, and others did just that.



Figure **9.6.74**: Lee Krasner, *Untitled*, 1953, oil paint, gouache and paper, 57 x 76.2 cm (National Gallery of Australia © estate of Lee Krasner)

Erasing conformism: Rauschenberg's Neo-Dada

One of the Black Mountain Poets, Robert Duncan described the "bravura brushstroke" as evidence of "the power and movement of the arm itself" and of the "involvement of the painter in the act." [1] It is hard not to see in this statement evidence of the gender bias that reflected a prevalent idea according to which painting powerfully on large surfaces meant painting like a man.

In this regard, it is important to point out that Rauschenberg was gay, and like women and even artists of color, invariably deemed too far outside the extremely conformist culture of 1950s America to produce the requisite kind of art that was needed to prove America's place on the international stage. Metaphorically therefore, it could be argued that Rauschenberg was erasing not just a drawing, but this very idea of artistic, masculine authorship.



Figure **9.6.75**: Example of Neo-Dada work by Robert Rauschenberg, *Almanac*, 1962, showing the artist's continuous use of erasure as a formal and conceptual tool (© Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, image: **Tate**)

Erased de Kooning Drawing thus had symbolic force. Though, as one can imagine, that force was mostly viewed by critics as negative. Rauschenberg's erasure was a destructive act, to be sure, one that seemed to harken back to a World-War-I movement called **Dada**, in which traditional ideas of art were challenged in often absurd ways. Rauschenberg's seeming nihilism would, in the later 1950s, be called "Neo-Dada," and he would be linked to **Marcel Duchamp** whose anti-art objects had resurfaced in New York during the 1950s. But Rauschenberg saw the erased drawing in very different terms and possibly as a follow up to a series of white paintings in which canvases were entirely painted white.

> ***"It was nothing destructive…. I was trying to purge myself of my teaching…so I was doing monochrome no-image."***
>
> ***Robert Rauschenberg in conversation with Tanya Grosman, Interview, vol. VI, no. 5, 1976***

Of course we must always weigh the proclamations of artists against the cultural climate in which they work. Rauschenberg's coy statement would not mark the first time an artist feigned indifference or ignorance of the larger meanings of their work. American artists had finally achieved what they believed to be a truly modern art that could rival Paris. It was also no coincidence that America had emerged as a superpower in the world at large. There was, as a result, a heroic sense about the whole affair; artists inadvertently became cultural cold warriors. Rauschenberg seemed cavalier about it all. In the words of one critic: "We have finally won, are we going to throw it all away?" [2]



Figure **9.6.76**: Label (detail), Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953, traces of drawing media on paper with label and gilded frame, 64.14 cm x 55.25 cm (© Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, SFMOMA)

Notes:

[1] Robert Duncan, *Black Mountain Review*, 1956. The *Black Mountain Review* was a literary magazine associated with the community of poets and artists active at Black Mountain College, and seen by its founders as a way of continuing the legacy of the College after its closure.

[2] Leo Steinberg paraphrasing the art critic Robert Rosenberg. Interview by Tom Folland with Leo Steinberg, January 16, 2008, New York, New York.

Additional resources:

This drawing at SFMOMA

Rauschenberg discussing *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (short video)

This drawing on the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation website

Destruction as Preservation: Ai Weiwei's *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*

by TIFFANY WAI-YING BERES

How can the destruction of an artifact also be an act of preservation? *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995) by **Ai Weiwei** is a highly provocative work of art. This series of three black and white photographs portray the artist holding a 2,000-year-old Han dynasty urn that, frame by frame, he drops, it falls, and shatters. As much a work of photography as a work of **performance art**, in each still an unaffected Ai looks directly at the camera aware of his destructiveness. In fact, to capture the action on film (rather than digital photography, which lets you review the image immediately), the artist actually broke two ceramic vessels, just in case. This kind of blatant destruction of artifacts may seem highly irreverent, yet it also forces viewers to consider issues of transformation and destruction of the past.



Figure **9.6.77**: Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn*, 1995 (printed 2017), Three gelatin silver prints, 148 x 121 cm each (photo: © Ai Weiwei)

Ai Weiwei

Born in Beijing, China, in 1957, Ai Weiwei is an activist, filmmaker, curator and one of the world's most famous artists. Ai began his artistic career in New York City, where he lived from 1981 to 1993. When he returned to China in the mid-90s, a time of rapid modernization for his home country, he was shocked to discover that certain objects of **cultural patrimony** were not highly valued. Ai explains that when he came across these Han dynasty ceramic objects, they were just a dime a dozen: "I still have a photo of when I was in Xi'an. There was a farmer sleeping on top of these two urns waiting for someone to pay him a few hundred yuan. For him that was a few months' salary, but even then nobody wanted them." [1] Ai realized that during that period, most of his fellow countrymen were not nearly as interested in their country's historic art objects as he was. For this reason, Ai began collecting antiquities, particularly ancient vessels and furniture, and eventually began converting these objects into contemporary artworks. Whether he reworks a discarded four-hundred-year-old wooden stool into a standing sculpture or creates an installation from hundreds of salvaged blue and white ceramic shards, Ai is interested in giving these historical found objects a second life as contemporary art.



Figure **9.6.78**: Shang Dynasty jade from the tomb of Fu Hao, 1300-1046 B.C.E., Anyang, China (photo: © National Museum of China, Beijing)

Historical legacy

This kind of repurposing of the past also relates to Chinese aesthetics and culture. In China, there is a long and rarified tradition of collecting ancient material remains and transforming them into new art. For millennia before the advent of modern scientific archeology, rulers and elites collected ancient materials and acted to preserve them or emulate them in new works, whether it was preserving important documents by recording them on durable surfaces like stone steles or incorporating ancient designs into bronze or ceramics. For example, Fu Hao's tomb in Anyang, a Shang dynasty (1600-1046 B.C.E.) royal burial tomb excavated in the 1980s, enabled scholars to push the history of antique collecting in China back to the thirteenth century B.C.E. The 775 **jade** carvings found in this tomb of a powerful Shang queen included both a collection of prehistoric jades as well a collection made in her era but modeled on earlier **Neolithic** prototypes. [2] This is an important revelation because it suggests that more than three

thousand years ago, antique collections were already providing references and inspirations for making new works of art. This tradition of collecting and revitalizing antiquity has encouraged generations of Chinese artists and craftsmen to look to the past in making contemporary art.



Figure **9.6.79**: Tomb of Fu Hao, late 13th century B.C.E., Shang dynasty, Anyang, China (photo: **Gary Todd**, CC0 1.0)



Figure **9.6.80**: Ai Weiwei, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (second image), 1995 (photo: © Ai Weiwei)

Act of revitalization?

Ai Weiwei has chosen an unusual way of continuing this legacy of transforming the material past while at the same time expressing dissent against a country that sometimes obliterates its own cultural heritage: through direct confrontation. On the one hand we can view his work as a destruction of another artist's work; on the other, Ai's act can also be thought of as a kind of collaboration with an ancient artist over thousands of years—a revitalization. Once an ancient receptacle, the urn in *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* takes on new meaning as contemporary art. In Ai's work, the object is less a vessel than an emblem of Chinese history. For this performance, it seems that the object selection is almost immaterial—it might as well have been any ancient object. However, in recognition of Ai's own celebrity, the artist has transformed this urn into something of great significance just by selecting it to become the subject of his art, by including its name in the title, and, of course, by destroying it. The sensationalism of breaking

something so old and rare is what modern audiences find so compelling. Here the nostalgia for what once was serves as a mirror, reminding us that China's past remains important and relevant today.

Destruction as preservation

The event that Ai Weiwei created and captured in these photographs is one of violence. Many feel that it is unethical to destroy an artifact under any circumstances—that such an act indicates a lack of value and respect. Indeed, law professor Joseph Sax calls such destruction a kind of "unqualified ownership" because it enables "the indulgence of private vice to obliterate public benefits." [3] Certainly, the destruction of art for ideological or egoistic reasons reflects badly on a collector of ancient objects. Yet was *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* a true obliteration? The Han dynasty urn still exists for the public but it has been transformed into the form of captured film stills. The loss of one object gives the new artwork its potency.



Figure 9.6.81: Ai Weiwei "According to What" exhibition, Art Gallery of Ontario, (photo: **Joseph Morris**, CC BY-ND 2.0)

Ai himself says that he considers the act of dropping the urn one of creation rather than destruction: "People always ask me: how could you drop it? I say it's a kind of love. At least there is a kind of attention to that piece [because of the photograph]." [4] From the artist's point of view, his act was one of preservation through transformation. Indeed, this triptych (set of three photographs) and the shadow of the vessel captured within it now receive unprecedented attention. These photographs are displayed in museums and public institutions around the world. The work is widely available online, and even the focus of academic essays like this one. Given Ai's own celebrity status and the significance of this artwork, *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* is also now far more valuable than the original ceramic object. In 2016, this limited edition work **sold for nearly 1 million dollars** at Sotheby's Auctions in London. [5]

Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn is one of many works by Ai Weiwei that focuses on heritage loss and the importance of the past. According to the artist, "the power [of my artwork] comes not from the act but from the audience's attention, the challenge to their values. The act is easy—every day we can drop something, but it is when we are forced to come face to face with this action and make a judgment … that is the interesting part." [6] Ultimately the work demands a judgment: was the provocation and the global attention Ai garnered for the urn worth the destruction of the urn itself? This set of photographs encourages its viewers to question value of antiquity in our modern world and whether it is worth preserving.

Notes:

1. Tiffany Wai-Ying Beres, "A Battlefield of Judgments: Ai Weiwei as Collector," *Orientations* 46, no. 7 (2015), pp. 87–92.
2. Wu Hung, ed., *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2010), pp. 16–39.
3. Joseph L Sax, "Collectors: Private Vices, Public Benefits," in *Playing Darts with a Rembrandt: Public and Private Rights in Cultural Treasures* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 63.
4. Beres, p. 92.
5. Sotheby's Auction: **www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.42.html/2016/contemporary-art-evening-auction-l16020**
6. Beres, p. 92.

Additional resources:

Ai Weiwei's website

The Art Assignment, "The Case for Ai Weiwei"

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9.7: Ethical Considerations in the Collecting and Display of Art

11.4.1 Collecting/Holding

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



Figure 11.2 | German loot stored at Schlosskirche Ellingen
Author: Department of Defense
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Representatives of the Nazi Party in Germany took art from its rightful owners, both museums and individuals, from 1933 until the end of World War II in 1945. When Adolf Hitler assumed the role of Chancellor of Germany in 1933, he began a campaign to sell or destroy art he did not approve of in the collections of German museums. Much of that art had been produced by artists who were part of twentieth-century art movements such as German Expressionism, Dadaism, Cubism, and Surrealism. Hitler objected to *avant garde* experimental and innovative art and to the artists who were part of those groups. By 1937, his agents had amassed nearly 16,000 works, 650 of which were included in the Degenerate Art Exhibition (*Die Ausstellung Entartete Kunst*) held in Munich that year and viewed by more than 2,000,000 people. Hitler condemned the degenerate art as contributing to, if not the cause of, the decay of German culture, and the artists as racially impure, mentally deficient, and morally bereft. Thousands of the works were then destroyed by fire, and thousands more were sold to collectors and museums worldwide.

The funds generated by works sold were earmarked for the purchase of more traditionally acclaimed artists and subjects that were to go into the *Führermuseum*, or Leader's Museum, in Linz, which Hitler intended to be the greatest collection of European art in the world but which was never built. Art for the Leader's Museum was purchased from museums, private owners, and art dealers, often under pressure to sell the work at a steep discount to Hitler's agents or risk arrest. And, the Nazis acquired art by confiscating it from institutions and private owners, many of whom were Jewish. The Nazis purchased and looted work in every country they occupied during World War II. They had amassed 8,500 works intended for the *Führermuseum* by the time Hitler committed suicide in 1945.

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

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

11.4.2 Display

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

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

The mission of the MHS is to collect, preserve, and study objects related to Maryland history. This is often accomplished through the display of objects in its collection. As the organizer of the exhibition, or guest curator, Wilson was allowed to explore the thousands of artifacts in storage, many of which are seldom if ever displayed. He was seeking to bring to light, so to speak, objects rarely seen, and to present groupings of objects in unexpected ways, sometimes humorous and at other times disturbing. For example, with the label identifying the objects as "Metalwork 1793- 1880," Wilson placed iron slave shackles in the midst of ornately decorated silver tableware. No explanatory text accompanied these things; Wilson wanted viewers to contemplate what they saw and make connections without directions:

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

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

11.4.3 Property Rights, Copyright, and the First Amendment

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

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

Discoveries.” That right, or copyright, remains in place for the artist’s lifetime plus seventy years, granting the artist the power to control their work, its use, and its reproduction.

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

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9.8: Whose art? Museums and repatriation

Repatriating artworks

by DR. SENTA GERMAN

Repatriation is the return of stolen or looted cultural materials to their countries of origin. Although a belief that looting cultural heritage is wrong and stolen objects should be returned to their rightful owner dates to the **Roman Republic** (see **Cicero's Verrines**) it was not until the 1950s, when the stark truths of colonization and war crimes against humanity began to be exposed, that a broad desire for restitution emerged and laws and treaties to facilitate this increased in number. Repatriation claims are based on law but, more importantly, represent a fervent desire to right a wrong—a kind of restorative justice—which also requires an admission of guilt and capitulation. This is what makes repatriations difficult: nations and institutions seldom concede that they were wrong.

The debate and law



Figure **9.8.1**: Bronze plaques from the **Kingdom of Benin** in the British Museum, many removed from Benin City during the Punitive Expedition of 1897 (photo: **adunt**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

The repatriation of art and cultural objects is a popular topic in the news and there is a familiar list of arguments on either side of the debate. The primary arguments for repatriation, most frequently deployed by countries and peoples who want their objects back, are:

- It is morally correct, and reflects basic property laws, that stolen or looted property should be returned to its rightful owner.
- Cultural objects belong together with the cultures that created them; these objects are a crucial part of contemporary cultural and political identity.
- To not return objects stolen under colonialist regimes is to perpetuate colonialist ideologies that perceived colonized peoples as inherently inferior (and often "primitive" in some way).
- Museums with international collections, often called universal or encyclopedic museums, are located in the Global North: France, England, Germany, the US, places which are expensive to visit and therefore not somewhere most of the world can go to see art. It is precisely a colonial legacy that allowed so many "universal" museums to acquire the range of objects in their collection.

- Even if objects were originally acquired legally, our attitudes about the ownership of cultural property have changed and collections should reflect these contemporary attitudes.

The arguments against repatriation, most frequently deployed by museums and collections which hold objects they don't want to lose, are:

- If all museums returned objects to their countries of origin, a lot of museums would be nearly empty.
- Source countries do not have adequate facilities or personnel (because of poverty and/or armed conflict) to receive repatriated materials so objects are safer where they are now.
- Universal museums enable a lot of art from a lot of different places to be seen by a lot of people easily. This reflects our modern globalist or cosmopolitan outlook.
- The ancient or historical kingdoms from which many objects originally came no longer exist or are spread across many contemporary national borders, such as those of the ancient Roman empire. Therefore, it's not clear to where exactly objects should be repatriated.
- Returning cultural objects which were obtained under colonial regimes to their countries of origin does not make up for the destruction of colonialism.
- Most objects in museums and collections, at the time of their acquisition, were legally obtained and therefore have no reason to be repatriated.



Figure **9.8.2**: Relief of a protective deity from the Northwest Palace, Nimrud, Iraq, **Assyrian**, reign of Ashurnasirpal II, 883–859 B.C.E., gypsum, 221.7 x 176.3 cm (87 5/16 x 69 7/16 inches) excavated by Sir Henry Layard by the 1850s (**Museum of Fine Arts**, Boston)

The debate over repatriation engages powerful and personal sentiments of morality, nationhood, and identity, and few people can talk about it without raising their voice. Regardless of this passion, however, the issue, ultimately, is a legal one and the international **legal frameworks** developed in the 20th century are what bring about repatriations. The first, which recognized the damage of warfare to property, was the **1907 Hague Convention**, which forbade plundering of any kind during armed conflict, although it did not deal specifically with cultural property. The **1954 Hague Convention**, however, in the wake of the widespread **destruction of art during the Second World War**, sought to expressly protect cultural property during armed conflict. The **1970 UNESCO Convention** allowed for stolen objects to be seized if there was proof of ownership, followed by the **1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects**, which calls for the return of illegally excavated and exported cultural property. Without these conventions and treaties, there would be no legal obligation for the return of anything.



Figure **9.8.3**: The Koh-i-Noor in the front cross of Queen Mary's Crown (**Royal Collection Trust**)

The vast majority of repatriation cases derive from colonial or imperial subjugation. Throughout history, across the globe, powerful nations and empires have taken valuable objects, including cultural property, from those they have conquered and colonized. These objects of beauty and esteem number in the many millions and most will likely be lost to their former owners forever. However, the theft of a few especially valuable and/or important objects have proven unforgettable and the subject of frequent repatriation requests. Examples are, for instance: the **Koh-i-noor** diamond, seized by the British East India company in 1849 and currently part of the British crown jewels; the **Benin Bronzes**, looted from the capital of Benin (in modern Nigeria) by British soldiers in 1897 and now spread across several museums in Europe and America; the **Rosetta Stone**, seized by British troops from the French army in Egypt in 1801 and today one of the most popular exhibits in the British Museum in London. The **Parthenon Sculptures** are another example.

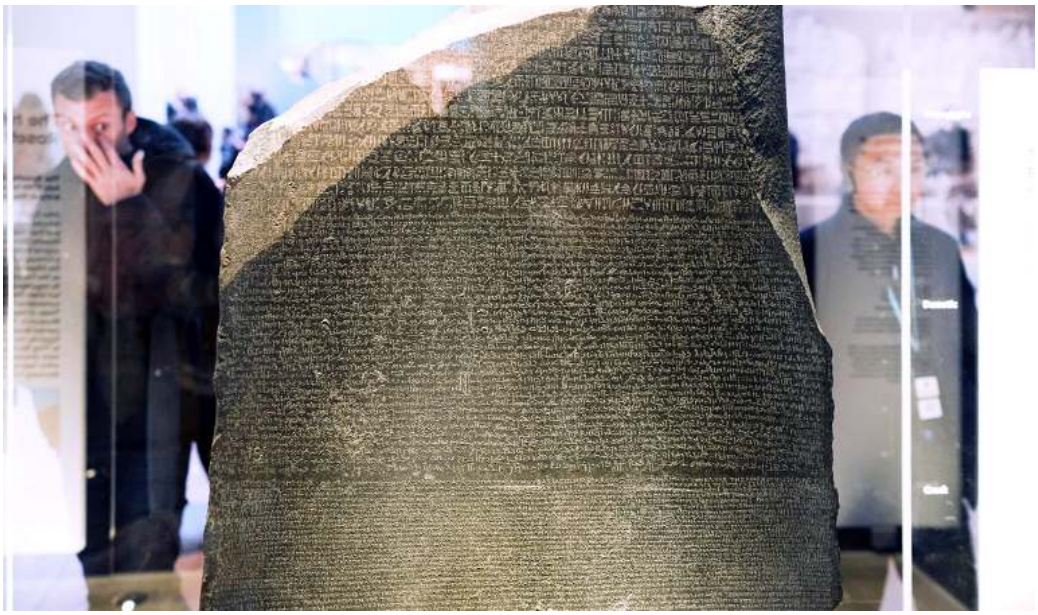


Figure **9.8.4**: Visitors view the Rosetta Stone in the British Museum (photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Repatriation cases such as these have been approached, by and large, on a case-by-case basis, between the nations seeking return and the nations (and sometimes specific institutions), which hold these objects. More recently, however, as pressure for repatriations has increased, some former colonial powers are taking stock of their collections and moving towards large-scale repatriations. For instance, in 2017 France commissioned a report which recommended the repatriation of objects in French museums acquired during France's colonial occupation of parts of western Africa.



Figure 9.8.5: National Museum of World Cultures (**Tropenmuseum**, Amsterdam)

In 2019, the German government passed a resolution to lay the groundwork to establish conditions for the repatriation of human remains and objects from German public collections derived from colonial rule. In 2019, The Netherlands' National Museum of World Cultures **pledged** to proactively return all artifacts within its collection identified as stolen during the colonial era. These efforts, importantly, include sharing catalogues of holdings, a gesture of transparency which will greatly facilitate claims. However, as many point out, the stated intentions for large-scale repatriations are proving very, very slow to come to fruition and, moreover, several important museums (many in the United Kingdom) are conspicuous in their absence from the conversation.

Colonialist desires to collect beautiful objects from far flung, exotic sources are still with us and because of this, wealthy individuals and institutions continue to collect cultural objects, ancient and contemporary. To meet this demand, modern looters (people who illegally dig up and steal cultural property) feed an **underground market** of antiquities and ethnographic objects. Often this looting is in conjunction with war or armed political conflict.



Figure 9.8.6: Iraqi Col. Ali Sabah, commander of the Basra Emergency Battalion, displays ancient artifacts Iraqi Security Forces discovered Dec. 16, 2008, during two raids in northern Basra (photo: **U.S. Army by Multi-National Division South East PAO**, public domain)

Repatriation claims for objects involved in this illegal trade of cultural property are especially difficult as proof must be established of the illicit extraction of the objects and thieves seldom document their work, especially in war zones. Moreover, these types of repatriation requests symbolize fresh colonial wounds, illustrating that the collection practices of the wealthy and powerful continue and less powerful nations and people are still vulnerable.

The good news is that successful repatriations of recent looting have occurred and those who purchase from the illicit trade are increasingly discouraged from doing so. For instance, in 2011, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston **returned** a Roman sculpture of Herakles to Turkey from which it had been stolen. In 2018 The National Gallery of Australia **returned** to India a bronze statue of the god Shiva which had been looted from a Hindu temple in Tamil Nadu. In 2020 The Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. returned nearly 11,500 looted objects to Iraq and Egypt, including approximately 5,000 papyri fragments and 6,500 clay tablets.

Another type of repatriation request is for the return of cultural objects and burial remains stolen from Indigenous populations by European invaders, largely in North and South America, Australia, Oceania, and **New Zealand**. What distinguishes these claims is the enduring living memory, among contemporary tribal communities, of specific objects and sites which were looted and

desecrated and the acute spiritual need for their return and restoration. Indeed, these fragments of living culture can only be fully understood, properly used, and rightly treasured by their native owners.

In an attempt to address these sorts of repatriation requests, two legislated responses, the **Native American Graves and Protection Repatriation Act** (in the US,) and the **Indigenous Repatriation Program** (in Australia) were enacted. Through these two programs, legal frameworks for repatriation were established and hundreds of thousands of objects and human remains have been returned to Indigenous communities where they again work as powerful actors in the creation of spiritual, community and personal meaning. A famous example is the return of The Ancient One (also called Kennewick Man) after five Pacific Northwest tribes argued that the human remains were an ancestor. Still, the successful repatriation occurred only after genetic testing done by Danish scientists proved the Indigenous peoples' claim, highlighting the ongoing colonialist legacies affecting cultural repatriation.



Figure 9.8.7: Moai Hoa Hakananai'a, taken from Orongo, Easter Island (Rapa Nui) in November 1868 by the crew of the British ship *HMS Topaze* and now in the British Museum (photo: **Markus Lütkemeyer**, CC BY 2.0)

The era of repatriations has finally come. The work is slow and uneven and there are countless objects yet to return home, but repatriations are now occurring at a rate never before seen. What examples such as the **Euphronios krater** show us about repatriation is that objects come back changed. Not only physically but, because of the way they have been used (often ideologically) in their meanings as well — and, they cannot be changed back. Even if they are exhibited in quiet and historically proscribed ways (as in the case of the **Euphronios krater**), their life experience has made them bigger, louder, emotional, and more political.

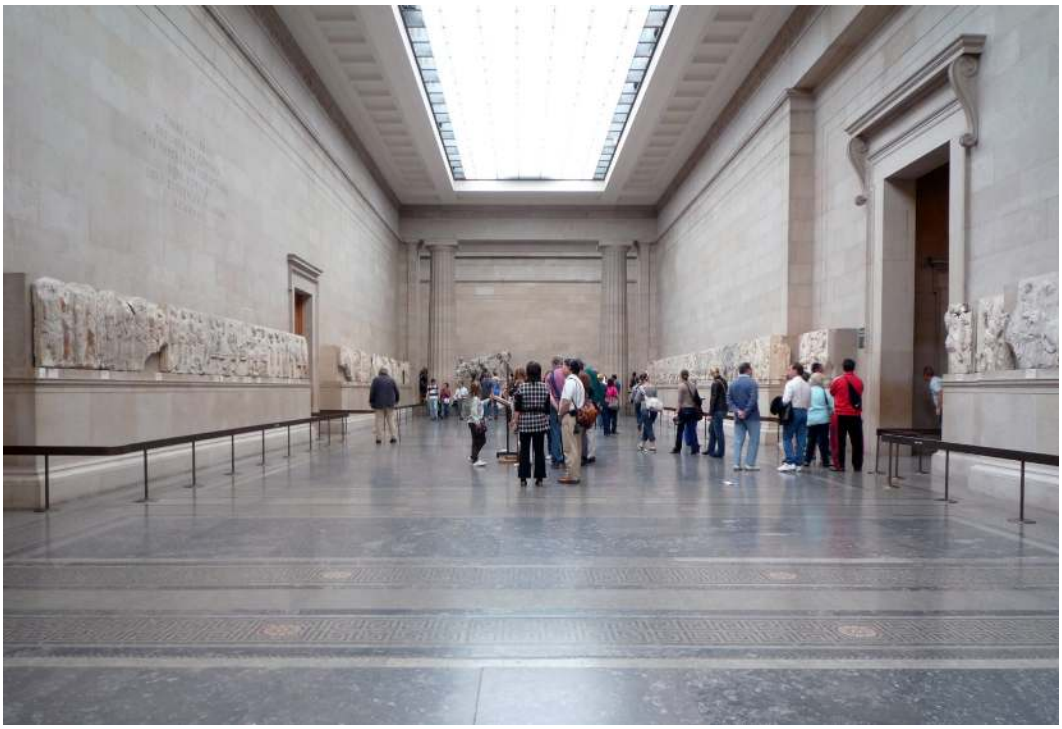


Figure 9.8.8: Duveen Room, British Museum, Phidias(?), Parthenon Frieze, c. 438-32 B.C.E., pentelic marble (420 linear feet of the 525 that complete the frieze are in the British Museum, photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

When, for instance, the Parthenon marbles return to Athens they will never again only be the sculptural decorations of **Athena's 5th century B.C.E. temple**. They have become so much more to Greeks, the English, generations of artists, historians, protectors of heritage, politicians, art law lawyers, and millions of visitors to the Acropolis and the British Museum. Through their dramatic biographies, we very much want to connect with, visit and understand repatriated objects and because of this they will not slip into obscurity in local museums, as is sometimes feared. The great power, the searing meaning that repatriated objects communicate, is that lost things can come home, that a wrong can be righted, and that we can all take part in that celebration and moral victory

Additional resources

Read more about how the seizure of looted antiquities often illuminates what museums want hidden

Read more about cultural heritage

Read about provenance and the antiquities market

From tomb to museum: the story of the Sarpedon Krater

by DR. ERIN THOMPSON and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **9.8.1**: Euphronios, Sarpedon Krater, (signed by Euxitheos as potter and Euphronios as painter), c. 515 B.C.E., red-figure terracotta, 55.1 cm diameter (National Museum Cerite, Cerveteri, Italy)

Additional resources:

The Euphronios Krater on Trafficking Culture

Black- and red-figure painting techniques on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The many meanings of the Sarpedon Krater

by DR. SENTA GERMAN



Figure **9.8.9**: Euphronios Vase (or Sarpedon Krater), signed by Euxitheos as potter and Euphronios as painter, c. 515 B.C.E., red-figure terracotta, 55.1 cm diameter (National Museum Cerite, Cerveteri, Italy, photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art returns a pot to Italy

One of the most **notorious repatriations** is that of a 6th century B.C.E. ancient Greek pot, commonly referred to as the Sarpedon Krater or Euphronios vase. This pot was looted from an **Etruscan** tomb not far from Rome in 1971 and a year later illegally bought by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (MMA). The Italian government eventually requested the return of the pot, having collected evidence for its theft and illicit sale. In 2008, seeking to avoid a long and potentially damaging court battle, the MMA struck an **agreement** with the Italian government for its return. After it was exhibited at the National Etruscan Museum, the Villa Giulia, in Rome, in 2014 the vase was moved to The National Archaeological Museum of Cerveteri, nearby the Etruscan tomb from which it had been stolen 43 years before. Italy had achieved the impossible: forced the return of a stolen piece of its history from a wealthy and influential universal museum.



Figure **9.8.10**: Tombs near Tumulo del Colonello, Necropolis of the Banditaccia, Cerveteri, Italy (photo: **Gwendolyn Stansbury**, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In the story of the repatriation of the Euphronios vase—this unequivocal win for the protection of heritage and redress of colonialist collection strategies—we have the opportunity to reflect on the various meanings and phenomena of repatriation: what gets lost, what gets gained, and how meanings shift.

With the Euphronios repatriation, the MMA gained an end to legal entanglements and perhaps some moral high ground for negotiating the return. Needless to say, however, it lost its very expensive and beautiful pot. But, what else was lost? Perhaps a bit of authority to write a certain type of history.

Museums are, among other things, in the business of codifying the history of art. Within institutions like the British Museum, the Vatican, and the MMA, the arrangements of their spectacular treasures have written the history of art for nearly three centuries. In this history, individual works are markers on a timeline: a painting, sculpture, or ancient pot. And this history has nearly always been presented as tidy, inevitable, and linear, with white Western men nearly always at the forefront of invention and innovation, as conquerors, kings, popes, explorers, pioneers, collectors, patrons, painters, and sculptors. In short, a white male imperialist history. Therefore, the great pieces of art in universal museums are not only valued for their beauty or cultural worth but also for their role in the establishment of a particular imperialist art historical knowledge. With the return of the Euphronios vase, the MMA has lost, in some measure, its authority to do this.

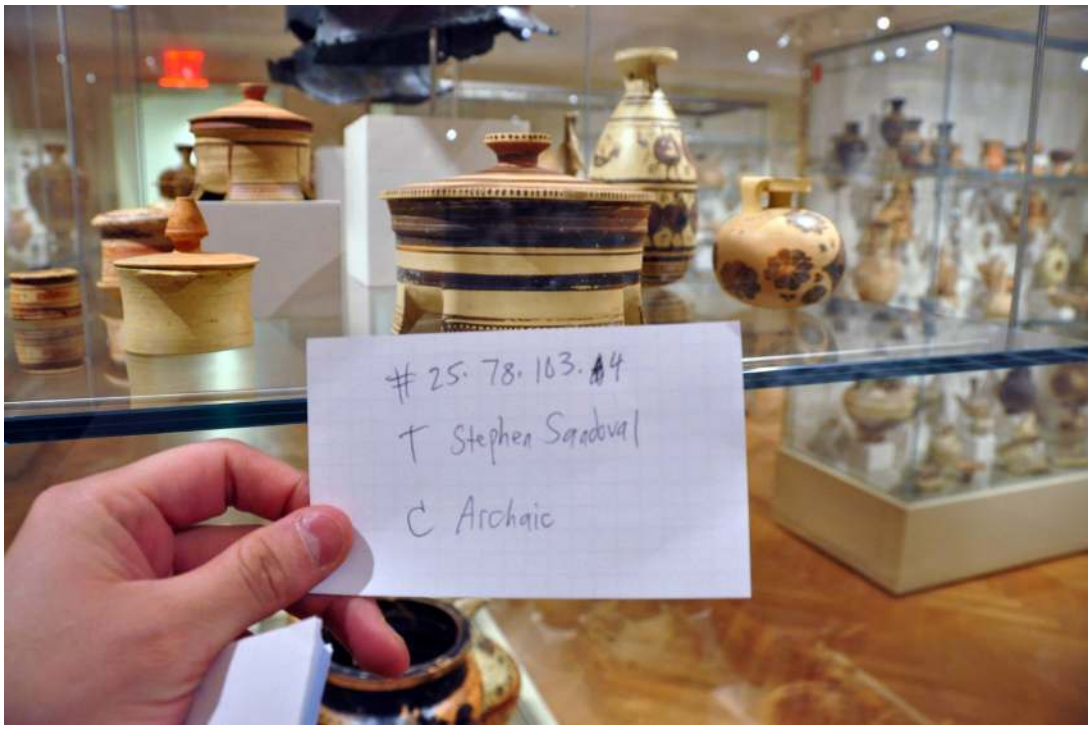


Figure **9.8.11**: Taking note of art styles in the Greek and Roman galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (photo: **STEPHEN SANDOVAL**, CC BY 2.0)

As for Italy, what is gained by the return of the Euphronios vase is substantial. With the vase brought back to the region in Italy where it was buried in a tomb, The National Archaeological Museum of Cerveteri gains a star object, with which it can highlight first rate Greek vase painting and construct a more nuanced and contextual meaning of ancient **Etruscan burial and culture** in the region. And, of course, Italy has won a notorious repatriation fight against a formidable opponent, which gives hope to others with similar repatriation claims.



Figure **9.8.12**: Euphronios Vase (or Sarpedon Krater), signed by Euxitheos as potter and Euphronios as painter, c. 515 B.C.E., c. 515 B.C.E., red-figure terracotta, 55.1 cm diameter (National Museum Cerite, Cerveteri, Italy, photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

The social life of the Euphronios vase

And what about the vase itself? Although it sounds odd, thinking about the experience of the Euphronios vase reveals a lot. Anthropologists and art historians like to think about the social life of things, or the biography of objects. This approach ascribes the meaning of an object not through its maker or owner but rather by a study of its form, use, and trajectory—its life history. So, how has the form, use, and long travels of the Euphronios vase made its meaning?

The Euphronios vase began its life at about 515 B.C.E., born in the Keramikos, or potters' quarter, just outside the walls of ancient Athens, made from Attic clay. The pot itself was formed by Euxitheos and painted by Euphronios, an innovative painter who would, in the modern era, come to be regarded as one of the most talented Greek pot painters. The Euphronios vase was not cheap; scholars surmise it would have cost approximately a week's wages in the 6th century B.C.E. The vase, in shape, is called a krater—a large wine serving bowl—intended to be the focal point and inspiration of discussion, at an all-male drinking party called a symposium.



Figure **9.8.13**: Euphronios Vase (or Sarpedon Krater), signed by Euxitheos as potter and Euphronios as painter, c. 515 B.C.E., detail showing Hermes, c. 515 B.C.E., red-figure terracotta, 55.1 cm diameter (National Museum Cerite, Cerveteri, Italy, photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

The pot has painted scenes on two sides, the most remarkable of which illustrates a moment from Homer's Iliad, recounting an episode in the Trojan War between the Achaeans (Greeks) against the city of Troy (which was also largely Greek). On the vase we see a slain warrior on the Trojan side, Sarpedon carried off the battlefield by the gods of sleep and night, to be returned to his homeland for proper burial. Sarpedon was killed by Patroclus, who is then killed by Hector (prince of Troy), an event which leads to his death at the hands of the famous warrior Achilles (but not before Hector prophesizes Achilles's death). An Athenian would have known the dark prophecy of the death of Sarpedon, and no doubt such an image would have inspired drinkers to reflect on a range of topics, such as the inevitability of death, the imperfect power of the gods, the fate of great warriors, and the primacy of burial rituals. The very material of the pot, the story it tells in its decoration, and the symposium for which it was made all reflect a deeply Hellenic identity. Despite this, the Euphronios vase eventually left its homeland forever.



Figure **9.8.14**: Map showing the extent of Etruria in 750 B.C.E. (map: **NormanEinstein**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Indeed, it is unclear how long the pot remained in Greece but at some point, it traveled across the central Mediterranean Sea to Etruria (the land of the Etruscans, the central area of Italy, around Rome). Thousands of Athenian pots were sold to the Etruscans from the 8th to the 3rd century B.C.E. and thousands were placed in Etruscan tombs so we can safely assume that they were desired and valued by their buyers—although not much is known about how they were used. We assume that Etruscans used them in the ways the Greeks used them, wine cups for drinking, hydria for serving water, and kraters (like the Euphronios vase) to mix wine and water together, likely on a special occasion, given their value. However, there is evidence from **painted tombs** that Etruscan women participated in feasts in which Greek pots were used, which is different from Greek practice. How deeply the Etruscans understood the Greek identity is hard to know. How long the Euphronios vase was used by its Etruscan owner(s) is also hard to say.

The tomb in Cerveteri, in the Greppe Sant'Angelo necropolis, where the Euphronios vase was entombed, was huge, with many chambers, and used from the late 4th to 3rd century B.C.E. Because the tomb was looted and we have no associated finds to date nor the exact part of the tomb in which the pot was found, we cannot date its burial any better than the date of the tomb itself. But, this alone tells us that the Euphronios vase was used for at least a century before it was buried; sadly, we don't know if this use was mostly by Greeks or Etruscans because we don't know when it arrived in Italy. However, a precise repair, with metal rivets, was made sometime in antiquity, which can be seen on the less famous side of the vase, which shows young men readying for battle. This reveals to us some vigorous use and special care.



Figure **9.8.15**: Detail showing repair, Euphronios Vase (or Sarpedon Krater), signed by Euxitheos as potter and Euphronios as painter, c. 515 B.C.E., c. 515 B.C.E., red-figure terracotta, 55.1 cm diameter (National Museum Cerite, Cerveteri, Italy, photo: **Sailko**, CC BY 3.0)

The looting of the tomb

In December of 1971, the tomb in Greppe Sant'Angelo was looted and the Euphronios vase was stolen. If the vase was again broken during its theft is not known but we do know that when it was illegally exported to Switzerland it was extensively repaired. It was then sold to the MMA, for $1 million, the greatest price the museum had ever paid for a work of art. The pot was conserved again by the MMA upon its arrival in New York (to which it travelled in its own first-class seat on a TWA flight from Zurich) and treated to a bespoke glass case, designed by staff from Tiffany's, at its unveiling. The pot's initial display at the MMA was a great media event. It was described as the finest Greek pot to survive from antiquity; the director of the museum at the time called it an ancient **Leonardo da Vinci**. The vase was immediately featured in books about ancient Greek art and general survey texts, picked out as a singular achievement in the narrative of Western art history. With the Euphronios vase's installation in the Greek and Roman galleries of the MMA its previous life as an object of Etruscan value was erased. The Euphronios vase became one of the many focal points of the museum's collection, arguing for a narrative that places the singular achievement of ancient Greek art at the foundation of Western visual heritage, where it became the wellspring of the **Renaissance** and **Enlightenment**, and an expression of Western imperialist inevitability and dominance.



Figure **9.8.16**: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (photo: **Tony Hisgett**, CC BY 2.0)

In its New York home, the Euphronios vase was enjoyed by increasing numbers of visitors from the 1970s on to the first decade of the 21st century; the MMA had over 4.5 million visitors in 2007, the last year of its stay. In addition to these public viewers, the Euphronios vase hosted scores of academic and celebrity visitors, not to mention regular after-hours attention from conservators, lighting technicians, photographers, security consultants, exhibition designers, and curators, seeking to extract from it maximum historical and aesthetic content. The Euphronios vase lived in the MMA as a subject of near constant focus, awe, and inspiration.

The attention which the Euphronios vase enjoyed in its temporary New York residence can hardly compare with the emotional hero's welcome it received at its **homecoming** to Rome, in 2008. Its first unveiling occurred at the Presidential Palazzo del Quirinale, in a special exhibition together with other repatriated objects entitled *Nostoi*, which means "those who return home," also the title of a lost ancient Greek epic poem, about the return of the Greek heroes after the sack of Troy.

The *Nostoi* exhibit was widely covered by the international press, its reviews full of pathos and emotional satisfaction, also seen as an example of Italian political savvy on the part of the increasingly unstable government of president Romano Prodi. At the Palazzo del Quirinale, the Euphronios vase wasn't standing in for the superiority of Greek art or the foundations of Western heritage in an imperialist narrative; it spoke instead of the return of a precious object to its homeland after a long struggle far away, a triumphant warrior of a watershed battle in the growing cause for cultural heritage repatriation. Remember the vase was made in Greece, though it was found buried in an Etruscan tomb in central Italy.

The next move for the Euphronios vase was to the National Etruscan Museum at Rome in the Villa Giulia, where it was exhibited, for the first time, as a treasured piece of Etruscan culture. Its meaning now shifted yet again, to one centered around Etruscan appropriation of Greek sympotic practice, trade with the wider Mediterranean world, and burial customs. Visitors to the Villa Guilia came to learn about the pre-Roman history of Italy, to understand one of the earliest civilizations of the Italic peninsula (the Etruscans), a part of which was the trade in beautiful Greek vases. The Euphronios vase now told a story anchored in its own ancient Italic experience, not about the foundations of Western art and imperialism in a universal museum, not the catharsis of a long sought and hard-won repatriation, but the story of its past owners and users.



Figure 9.8.17: National Archaeological Museum of Cerveteri (photo: Sailko, CC BY 3.0)

Returning home

And, finally, in 2014, the Euphronios vase was installed in a museum very close to where it had been deposited in antiquity, The National Archaeological Museum of Cerveteri, a 15-minute drive from the Greppe Sant'Angelo necropolis (in what was once Etruria, the home of the Etruscans). It now sits among other grave goods and assemblages found in local Etruscan tombs, excavated by archaeologists who work to reveal and understand Etruscan culture. The Euphronios vase is now truly home, back in the region where in antiquity it had been cherished as an elite Greek import, regarded with wonder in lively social ceremony, and chosen to accompany its owner into the afterlife and eternity.



Figure 9.8.18: View of the Euphronios Vase (or Sarpedon Krater) in the National Archaeological Museum of Cerveteri (photo: Sailko, CC BY 3.0)

The Cerveteri museum is a quiet place, especially on the second floor where the Euphronios vase is exhibited, and it is easily missed by less intrepid museum visitors. And those visitors are a tiny fraction of those the pot has been accustomed to seeing: the Cerveteri museum welcomed some 12,500 visitors, in 2018. But, for those who climb the steps to find the Euphronios vase in the cool solitude of its new museum home, they will find not only a remarkable ancient object but a nearly impossible challenge: to believe that this is the pot which has traveled so far away and returned, suffered destruction and careful restoration twice, been the

subject of so much violence, desire, admiration, and contention, whose meaning has been remade so many times: Attic Greek, Etruscan, Greek again but in the service of a Western imperialist narrative, glorious booty returned to its Italian homeland, a poster child for repatriation battles, then Etruscan again, in a deeply local and contextual way. This quiet wonder can be contrasted with the continued high celebrity which the Euphronios vase enjoys on the global digital sphere. Indeed, because of its complex biography, it is among the most famous pots in the world.

Additional resources

Read about the Euphronios krater on Trafficking Culture

Elizabeth Marlowe, *Shaky Ground: Connoisseurship and the History of Roman Art* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

Nigel Spivey, *The Sarpedon Krater: The Life and Afterlife of a Greek Vase* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019)

Who owns the Parthenon sculptures?

by DR. STEVEN ZUCKER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Also watch Smarthistory's videos on **The Parthenon** and **it's sculptures**

Additional resources:

How the Parthenon lost its Marbles (National Geographic)

The British Museum on the Parthenon sculptures

The Acropolis Museum

William St Clair, Imperialism, Art & Restitution: The Parthenon and the Elgin Marbles

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

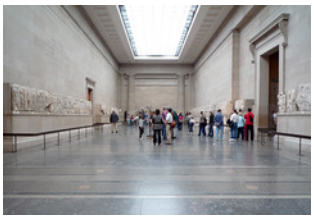
















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Figure **9.8.19**: More Smarthistory images…

Plunder, war, Napoleon and the Horses of San Marco

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **9.8.3**: *Horses of San Marco* (ancient Greek or Roman, likely Imperial Rome), 4th century B.C.E. to 4th century C.E., copper alloy, 235 x 250 cm each (Basilica of San Marco, Venice), an ARCHES video

Additional resources:

The Four Horses Rest Inside St. Mark's Basilica in Venice after Being Plundered from Constantinople in the 13th century (from ARCA, Association for Research into Crimes against art)

Patricia Mainardi, "Assuring the Empire of the Future: The 1798 Fête de la Liberté," *Art Journal*, vol. 48 (2014), pp. 155-163

Paikea at the American Museum of Natural History

by DR. WAYNE NGATA

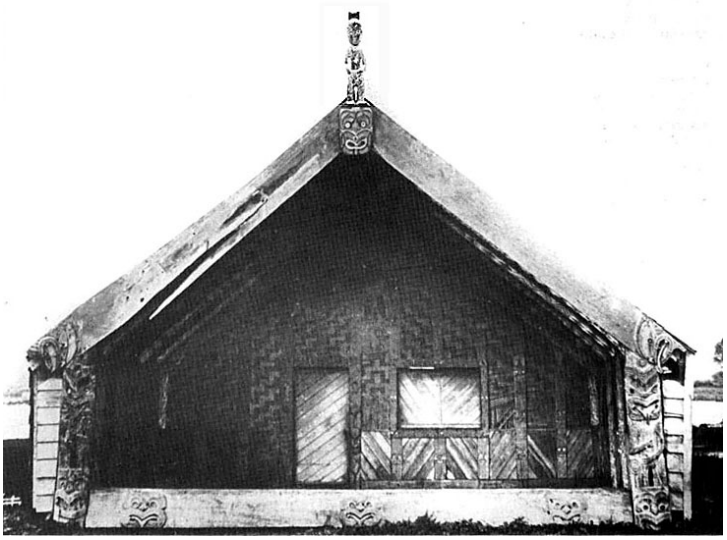


Figure 9.8.20: Photograph showing Paikea in its original location atop the Māori meeting house, Te Kani a Takirau, Uawa, Aotearoa (New Zealand)



Figure 9.8.21: Paikea, 19th c., wood, pigment, 64x42x19cm, photo: Jennifer Steffey, courtesy **AMNH**

During the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the trade in ethnic artifacts was rife, particularly where territories had been colonized by European powers. Thousands of artifacts of all descriptions from across the Pacific were traded legally and illegally, and many now reside in museums, private collections, and other institutions throughout the world—including an important sculpture of a Māori ancestor named Paikea (pronounced pie-kee-ah)

The Whale Rider

Paikea was an important ancestor of the Māori tribes in Uawa (Tolaga Bay) on the East Coast of the North Island of Aotearoa (New Zealand). He survived a marine disaster in the ancient Hawaiki homeland of the Māori in the Pacific Ocean, by invoking, through incantation, the denizens of the deep sea to come to his rescue and take him ashore. Paikea eventually made landfall at Ahuahu (Mercury Island) in Aotearoa (New Zealand). After several excursions to the south-east, Paikea eventually made his way to the

mouth of the Waiapu River on the East Coast, married Huturangi, and settled at Whangara. He is more popularly known throughout the world as “The Whale Rider,” from the movie of the same name.

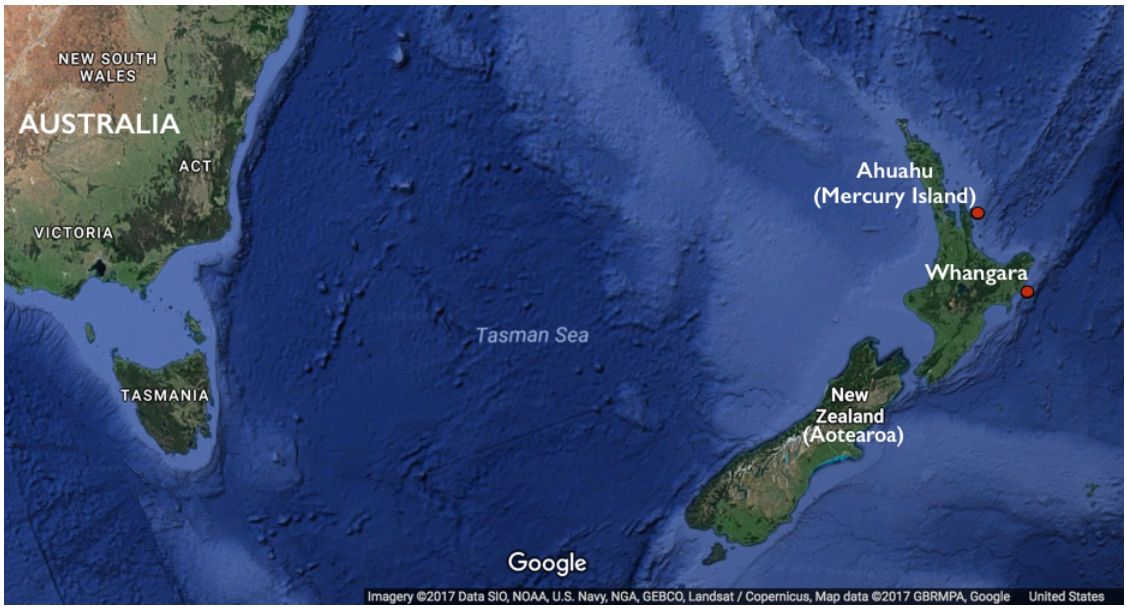


Figure **9.8.22**

For his many descendants, Paikea is a key link to the ancient Hawaiki homeland, as well as to the marine stories and body of seafaring knowledge, and to the tribal settlements on the eastern seaboard of both islands of Aotearoa (New Zealand). He is honored through songs, genealogy, stories, dances, novels, film, and art.

A house and a dance

Paikea’s descedant, Te Kani a Takirau, was born 23 generations later, in about 1790. He was regarded throughout Māoridom as a leading *ariki*, a noble high-ranking person of his time. After Te Kani a Takirau’s death in 1856, a carved house was built by his people at Uawa, and named after him (see photograph at the top of the page). The carved figure on top was named Paikea, and notable orators composed a *haka* (posture dance) for this occasion:

Uia mai koia whakahuatia ake	If it is asked
Ko wai te whare nei e?	What is the name of this house?
Ko Te Kani	It is Te Kani
Ko wai te tekoteko kei runga?	Who is the figurehead on top?
Ko Paikea, ko Paikea	It is Paikea, it is Paikea
Whakakau Paikea	Paikea transformed
Whakakau he tipua	Into an amazing being
Whakakau he taniwha	Into an awesome being
Ka ū Paikea ki Ahuahu, pakia!	And Paikea did come ashore at Ahuahu!
Kei te whitia koe ko Kahutiaterangi	Do not mistake him for Kahutiaterangi
E ai tō ure ki te tamahine a Te Whironui	He cohabited with the daughter of Te Whironui
Nāna i noho Te Rototahe	And resided at Te Rototahe
Auē, auē he koruru koe, e koro e!	You are there sire as the figurehead!

Table 9.8.1



Figure 9.8.23: Performance at the American Museum of Natural History, June 1, 2017

Since that time, six generations of Paikea's descendants have performed this *haka*. For the past four generations it has also been performed as a *waiata ā-ringa*, an action song. In the last two generations it has developed into a novel—*The Whale Rider*, by Witi Ihimaera—which became the basis for the movie of the same name. This legacy now centers on another house: Whitireia at Whangara, on top of which Paikea sits on his whale. Children who are born into the legacy of Paikea "absorb" the *haka* and the *waiata ā-ringa* while growing up, performing it with peers, parents, and grandparents. It is a tribal marker, a rallying call, an expression of pride, and a reminder of our origins.



Figure 9.8.24: Documentary photograph of the Major-General Robley purchase, 1908 (Paikea is on the right), photo: Thomas Lunt, courtesy of the **American Museum of Natural History**

A century in storage

In 1908, the American Museum of Natural History acquired the Te Kani a Takirau Paikea from Major General Horatio Robley (British Army), a colonial collector of the time. Paikea was eventually placed on a storage shelf until 2013 when a small group of Paikea's descendants of Te Aitanga a Hauiti, the tribe of Uawa, **arranged a visit to the museum** for the purpose of reconnecting with this ancestor figure—part of a bigger plan to reconstruct the house Te Kani a Takirau, physically or digitally.



Figure 9.8.25: With Paikea at the American Museum of Natural History, 16 April 2013, photo: Dr. B. Lythberg (the author is standing second from the left wearing a dark shirt)

It was an emotional visit: a mix of tearful reunion, immense pride and melancholy reflection. Coincidentally, the visit occurred at the same time as the **Whales (Tohorā) exhibition** at the museum, which allowed us to share our Paikea stories with members of the public, museum professionals, students, and others.

A token of love

Our parting with Paikea at the end of the week was difficult and tearful. As is our tradition, we left a gift with him as a token of our love: a carved whale tooth pendant sourced originally from a bull sperm whale that beached at Mahia in northern Hawkes Bay, New Zealand in 1967, which we secured around his neck. In doing so, we unknowingly transgressed museum acquisition protocols as well as international laws regarding trade in ivory, although we had done what was *tika*, or right, in our view. This provided an embarrassing conundrum for the museum curators who had hosted us, and so later that year the whale tooth was returned to us in New Zealand.



Figure 9.8.26: Pendant carved by Lance Ngata from the tooth of a bull sperm whale that beached at Mahia in northern Hawkes Bay, New Zealand in 1967

In 2017, as part of filming a documentary series "**Artefact**" and with the support of Greenstone TV, the American Museum of Natural History, and professional colleagues from Auckland University, we organized to return the whale tooth—legally this time—to Paikea, and make good our initial gift. Again, a small group of young people from Te Aitanga a Hauiti accompanied the whale tooth and once more the occasion, although shorter, was an emotional one. It was also an opportunity to consider repatriation again: both the process and the implications for the museum, and for Paikea's descendants and their communities as well. This is what we will deliberate on over the next few months as we reflect on our experiences with this icon of our history and symbol of the colonial artifact trade.



Video 9.8.4

Additional resources:

Paikea at the American Museum of Natural History

Billie Lythberg, Jenny Newell, and Wayne Ngata, "Houses of Stories: The whale rider at the American Museum of Natural History," *Museum and Society*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 195-220

Listen to a native speaker say "Maori"

Nazi looting: Egon Schiele's *Portrait of Wally*

by DR. ERIN THOMPSON and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 9.8.5: Egon Schiele, *Portrait of Wally Neuzil*, 1912, oil on panel, 32 × 39.8 cm (Leopold Museum, Vienna) Speakers: Dr. Erin Thompson and Dr. Beth Harris

Additional resources:

"Two Schiele Drawings Ordered Returned to Heirs of Nazi Victim," *The New York Times*, April 6, 2018

Seizure of Looted Antiquities Illuminates What Museums Want Hidden

by DR. ELIZABETH MARLOWE

Over 20,000 precious art objects were seized in a raid at dawn — what can this tell us about beauty, theft, and the museum?

On July 4, 2018, Europol and the Italian Carabinieri's Division for the Protection of Cultural Heritage announced the culmination of "Operation Demetra." This criminal investigation, tracking a network of Sicilian archaeological looters and international traffickers, resulted in dawn raids on 40 houses in 4 countries and the arrest or detention of 23 people, and the seizure of some 20,000 plundered objects worth an estimated €40 million (approximately $46.6 million).



Figure **9.8.27**: One of the looted works seized in Operation Demetra, probably a 1st century CE portrait of a member of the Roman imperial family, the Julio-Claudians (photo: **Europol**)

The Europol press release was accompanied by an uncaptioned photograph of a beautiful, naturalistic marble portrait head, presumably one of the works seized in the raids. The portrait depicts a young, beardless man wearing a veil over the back of his head. The figure has a protruding, dimpled chin, and very small ears, but there are few signs of individualization here.

On the basis of its similarity to other works, the portrait can be plausibly identified as a young man of the Roman imperial family from the early 1st century C.E. The sculptor was skilful at capturing in stone the appearance of soft, youthful skin as it stretches over cheekbones and puckers out at the corner of the mouth The nose and left cheek are damaged, but otherwise, the piece seems to be in extraordinarily fine condition. It would be a centerpiece in the ancient gallery of any museum in the world today.

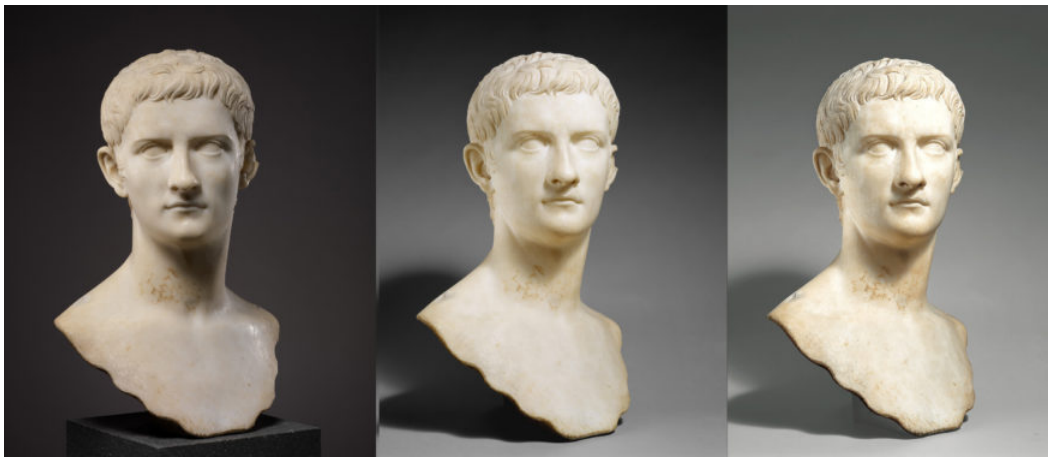


Figure **9.8.28**: Three museum photographs of a portrait of Caligula, said to have been found near Marino, Lago Albano. Purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1914 from Alfredo Barsanti, Rome (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**)

The head has much in common with other Roman imperial portraits, but the Europol photograph is unique. The depiction is not at all how we've become accustomed to seeing ancient sculpture presented. Museum and art market photography usually features pieces like this against a seamless muslin backdrop. The backdrop can be black or gray or, for a little spice, it can fade from black to gray or from dark gray to light. The neutral color, the absence of a horizon line and of any representational detail other than the

single object itself, work together to situate the piece in an other-worldly realm, one far removed from any actual specific, physical location. The non-space of these official photographs complements the museum rhetoric of universality. This rhetoric is grounded in a philosophy of art that goes back to Immanuel Kant.

Museums and contexts



Figure 9.8.29: Bronze statue identified as Marcus Aurelius, likely one of a large number of bronzes that were looted from an archaeological site in southern Turkey called Bubon in the 1960s and sold to American collectors and museums in subsequent decades (**Cleveland Museum of Art**)

Implicitly in their architecture and explicitly in their labels, art museums frame their holdings as manifestations of creativity, genius, truth, and beauty — ostensibly universal and timeless human values. This makes the objects' installation in a museum, often far removed from the particular culture and setting for which they were created and where they may still hold very different meanings, seem unproblematic and even natural.

Sometimes the rhetoric of universality takes on a more literal and pragmatic meaning, as when self-proclaimed "universal museums" claim the right to own — and retain — objects from every corner of the globe, regardless of the dubious circumstances by which they may have acquired them. The two concepts of universality are, of course, mutually reinforcing; and the gray vacuum photographs of record are part and parcel of this ideological apparatus.



Figure 9.8.30: Portrait of Drusus purchased by the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2012. It was sold with provenance documents indicating an ownership history going back to the 19th century. These documents turned out to be false; the piece had in fact been stolen from a small museum near Naples in 1944. It was returned to Italy in 2017 (photo: **Daderot**, CC0)

The Europol press release photo is the antithesis of the gray vacuum images. It is teeming with details that anchor the ancient portrait in a very particular and very mundane realm. The most startling of these details are the two slippers partially visible along the lower edge on either side of the head. These must be the slippered feet of the photographer himself, as he stood over the marble head and aimed his camera at the floor.

The head is lying on what looks like a nice Persian carpet, but our photographer was apparently untroubled by the disarray surrounding it: a pen, whose metal clip catches the light in the image's upper left corner; two pieces of battered wooden furniture; what appears to be an ornate but broken gilded plaster picture frame; and a blue crocheted blanket. It would not have taken much to push all this detritus out of the frame of the photograph, but our cameraman did not bother. He also apparently couldn't be bothered, before snapping the picture, to turn off his TV, the blue glow of which illuminates the portrait's proper right side.

These details not only root the image in a specific earthly setting; they also introduce a concept art world insiders usually take pains to hide from the general public: the inevitably messy *human agency* behind the removal and relocation of artworks or cultural objects from their original context to their end destination in a gallery display. Europol didn't release any information about the photograph itself, and it is possible that it was taken by one of the investigators. The slippered feet, however, suggest a different actor, someone in possession of the looted head in his own home.

Erasing stories, erasing the past

We know from other cases of looted antiquities that middlemen often photographed their wares after receiving them from the *tombaroli* (grave-robbers) who dug them out of the ground. The photographs were used to shop the pieces around to potential buyers. Perhaps this photograph was meant to serve as the basis for negotiations over price between the middleman and the dealer whose role in this network was to smuggle the pieces out of Italy to Munich, where, the investigators claim, they were supplied with false provenance papers and sold at auction. No doubt this laundering entailed new photography as well.

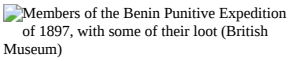


Figure **9.8.31**: Members of the Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897, with some of their loot (British Museum)

The Europol photograph is a stark reminder that many of those polished marble masterpieces on their spotlit museum pedestals were once merely raw goods on the floor of a crook's cluttered living room. The alchemy is usually carefully hidden from view; museums do everything they can to keep our attention away from the men behind the curtain.

In its power to reveal more profound truths about museum objects, the Europol photograph recalls the famous image of those manspreading colonialists, the members of the British Punitive Expedition, seated atop their loot at Benin in 1897. That is the "before" image to be paired with the loot's "after" images, both in photographs of record and in the beautiful modernist grid in the new Sainsbury African Galleries of the British Museum.

The fact that these "before" photographs still have the power to shock years, and even decades, after debates about "decolonizing the museum" have become widespread, and the looting of antiquities is widely recognized as a scourge, reveals how thoroughly we've been conditioned by museum rhetoric of beauty and universality. The truth is that the route to the gallery is often ugly, built on crime, brute force, and lies. When we catch a glimpse of that reality, we must not look away.



Figure **9.8.32**: Gallery devoted to the material from Benin, in the Sainsbury wing of the British Museum (photo: **Shadowgate**, CC BY 2.0)

This essay first appeared in **Hyperallergic** (used by permission).

Additional resources:

Peter Watson and Cecilia Todeschini. *The Medici Conspiracy: The Illicit Journey of Looted Antiquities – from Italy's Tomb Raiders to the World's Greatest Museums (*New York: PublicAffairs, 2007).

Europol's post about Operation Demetra

Read more about Operation Demetra at Artnet

More information about Operation Demetra from ARCA

Read about a campaign to return looted Benin bronzes to Nigeria at Artnet

Looting, collecting, and exhibiting: the Bubon bronzes

by DR. ELIZABETH MARLOWE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video**9.8.6**: Bronze statue of a nude male figure, Greek or Roman, Hellenistic or Imperial, c. 200 B.C.E. – c. 200 C.E. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Dr. Elizabeth Marlowe and Dr. Steven Zucker ARCHES: At Risk Cultural Heritage Education Series

Additional resources:

Bubon on Chasing Aphrodite

Bubon on Looting Matters

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

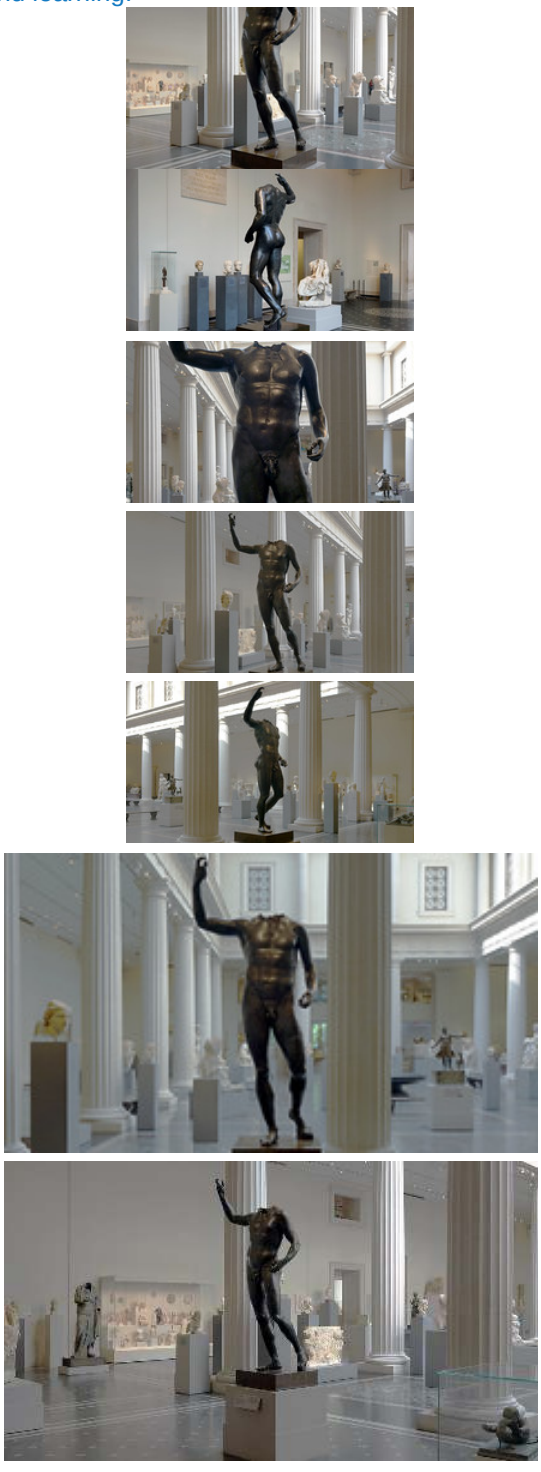


Figure 9.8.33: More Smarthistory images…

Napoleon’s booty—Perugino’s (gorgeous) *Decemviri Altarpiece*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **9.8.7**: A conversation with Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris in front of Perugino, *Madonna and Child with Sts Laurence, Louis of Toulouse, Ercolanus and Constance (Decemviri Altarpiece)*, 1495–96, tempera on wood, 193 x 165 cm (Vatican Museums)

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9.9: Destruction, looting, and trafficking

Mesa Verde and the preservation of Ancestral Puebloan heritage

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Video **9.9.1**

Wanted: stunning view

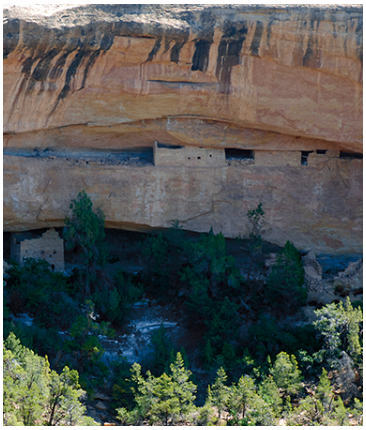


Figure **9.9.1**: Cliff dwellings, Ancestral Puebloan, 450–1300 C.E., sandstone, Mesa Verde National Park, (photo: Steven Zucker, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Imagine living in a home built into the side of a cliff. The Ancestral Puebloan peoples (formerly known as the Anasazi) did just that in some of the most remarkable structures still in existence today. Beginning after 1000-1100 C.E., they built more than 600 structures (mostly residential but also for storage and ritual) into the cliff faces of the Four Corners region of the United States (the southwestern corner of Colorado, northwestern corner of New Mexico, northeastern corner of Arizona, and southeastern corner of Utah). The dwellings depicted here are located in what is today southwestern Colorado in the national park known as Mesa Verde ("verde" is Spanish for green and "mesa" literally means table in Spanish but here refers to the flat-topped mountains common in the southwest).



Figure 9.9.2: Ladder to Balcony House, Mesa Verde National Park (photo: Ken Lund, CC BY-SA 2.0)

The most famous residential sites date to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Ancestral Puebloans accessed these dwellings with retractable ladders, and if you are sure footed and not afraid of heights, you can still visit some of these sites in the same way today.

To access Mesa Verde National Park, you drive up to the plateau along a winding road. People come from around the world to marvel at the natural beauty of the area as well as the archaeological remains, making it a popular tourist destination.

The twelfth- and thirteenth-century structures made of stone, mortar, and plaster remain the most intact. We often see traces of the people who constructed these buildings, such as hand or fingerprints in many of the mortar and plaster walls.



Figure 9.9.3: View of a canyon, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado (photo: cfcheever, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Ancestral Puebloans occupied the Mesa Verde region from about 450 C.E. to 1300 C.E. The inhabited region encompassed a far larger geographic area than is defined now by the national park, and included other residential sites like Hovenweep National Monument and Yellow Jacket Pueblo. Not everyone lived in cliff dwellings. Yellow Jacket Pueblo was also much larger than any site at Mesa Verde. It had 600–1200 rooms, and 700 people likely lived there (see link below). In contrast, only about 125 people lived in Cliff Palace (largest of the Mesa Verde sites), but the cliff dwellings are certainly among the best-preserved buildings from this time.



Figure 9.9.4: Cliff Palace, Ancestral Puebloan, 450–1300 C.E., sandstone, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado (photo: Steven Zucker, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Cliff palace

The largest of all the cliff dwellings, Cliff Palace, has about 150 rooms and more than twenty circular rooms. Due to its location, it was well protected from the elements. The buildings ranged from one to four stories, and some hit the natural stone "ceiling." To build these structures, people used stone and mud mortar, along with wooden beams adapted to the natural clefts in the cliff face. This building technique was a shift from earlier structures in the Mesa Verde area, which, prior to 1000 C.E., had been made primarily of adobe (bricks made of clay, sand and straw or sticks). These stone and mortar buildings, along with the decorative elements and objects found inside them, provide important insights into the lives of the Ancestral Puebloan people during the thirteenth century.



Figure 9.9.5: View of Cliff Palace structures, Mesa Verde (photo: **Paul Middleton, Shadow Dancer Images**, CC: BY-NC 2.0)

At sites like Cliff Palace, families lived in architectural units, organized around kivas (circular, subterranean rooms). A kiva typically had a wood-beamed roof held up by six engaged support columns made of masonry above a shelf-like banquette. Other typical features of a kiva include a firepit (or hearth), a ventilation shaft, a deflector (a low wall designed to prevent air drawn from the ventilation shaft from reaching the fire directly), and a *sipapu*, a small hole in the floor that is ceremonial in purpose. They developed from the pithouse, also a circular, subterranean room used as a living space.

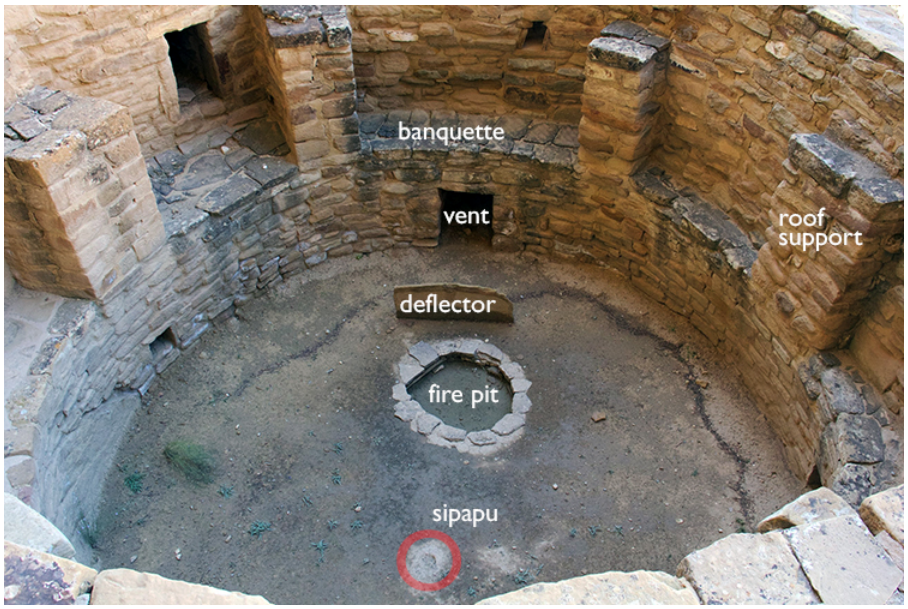


Figure 9.9.6: Kiva without a roof, Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde National Park (photo: Adam Lederer, CC: BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Kivas continue to be used for ceremonies today by Puebloan peoples though not those within Mesa Verde National Park. In the past, these circular spaces were likely both ceremonial and residential. If you visit Cliff Palace, you will see the kivas without their roofs (see above), but in the past they would have been covered, and the space around them would have functioned as a small plaza.

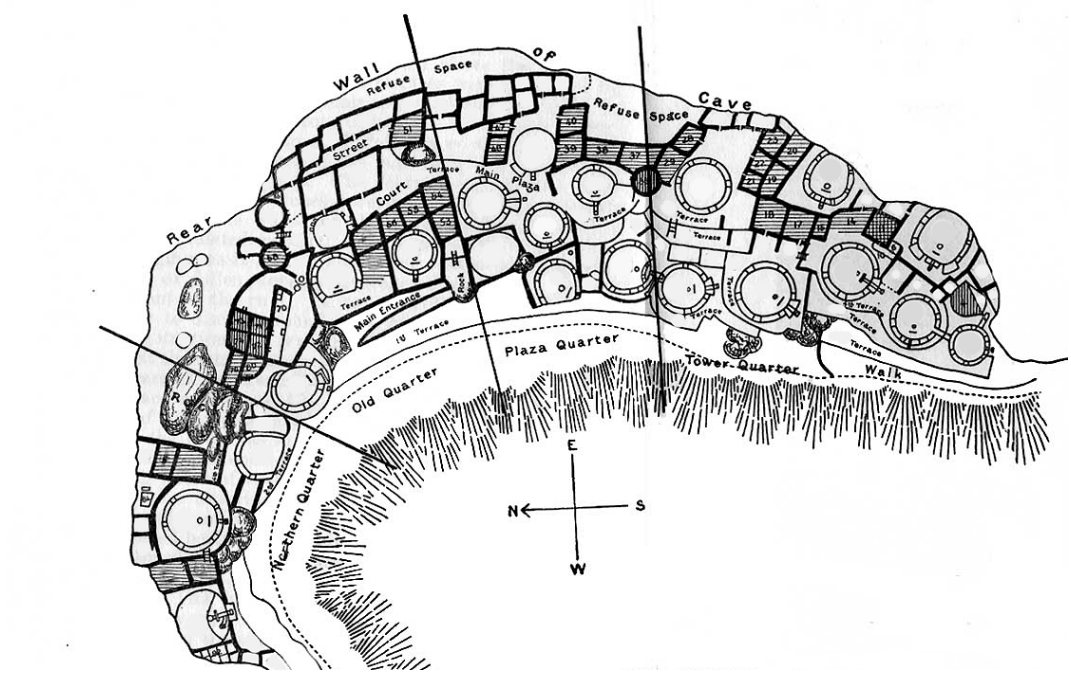


Figure 9.9.7: Cliff Palace plan with circular kivas, National Park Service

Connected rooms fanned out around these plazas, creating a housing unit. One room, typically facing onto the plaza, contained a hearth. Family members most likely gathered here. Other rooms located off the hearth were most likely storage rooms, with just enough of an opening to squeeze your arm through a hole to grab anything you might need. Cliff Palace also features some unusual structures, including a circular tower. Archaeologists are still uncertain as to the exact use of the tower.



Figure 9.9.8: Kiva at Spruce Tree House, Mesa Verde National Park (photo: Doug Kerr, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Painted murals

The builders of these structures plastered and painted murals, although what remains today is fairly fragmentary. Some murals display geometric designs, while other murals represent animals and plants.



Figure 9.9.9: Mural 30, Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde National Park (photo: National Park Service)

For example, Mural 30, on the third floor of a rectangular "tower" (more accurately a room block) at Cliff Palace, is painted red against a white wall. The mural includes geometric shapes that are thought to portray the landscape. It is similar to murals inside of other cliff dwellings including Spruce Tree House and Balcony House. Scholars have suggested that the red band at the bottom symbolizes the earth while the lighter portion of the wall symbolizes the sky. The top of the red band, then, forms a kind of horizon line that separates the two. We recognize what look like triangular peaks, perhaps mountains on the horizon line. The rectangular element in the sky might relate to clouds, rain or to the sun and moon. The dotted lines might represent cracks in the earth.



Figure 9.9.10: Mugs found at Mesa Verde (photo: by the author, Mesa Verde Museum)

The creators of the murals used paint produced from clay, organic materials, and minerals. For instance, the red color came from hematite (a red ocher). Blue pigment could be turquoise or azurite, while black was often derived from charcoal. Along with the complex architecture and mural painting, the Ancestral Puebloan peoples produced black-on-white ceramics and turquoise and shell jewelry (goods were imported from afar including shell and other types of pottery). Many of these high-quality objects and their materials demonstrate the close relationship these people had to the landscape. Notice, for example, how the geometric designs on the mugs above appear similar to those in Mural 30 at Cliff Palace.

Why build here?

From 500–1300 C.E., Ancestral Puebloans who lived at Mesa Verde were sedentary farmers and cultivated beans, squash, and corn. Corn originally came from what is today Mexico at some point during the first millennium of the Common Era. Originally most farmers lived near their crops, but this shifted in the late 1100s when people began to live near sources of water, and often had to walk longer distances to their crops.



Figure 9.9.11: New Fire House, Masa Verde National Park (photo: Ken Lund, CC: BY-SA)

So why move up to the cliff alcoves at all, away from water and crops? Did the cliffs provide protection from invaders? Were they defensive or were there other issues at play? Did the rock ledges have a ceremonial or spiritual significance? They certainly provide shade and protection from snow. Ultimately, we are left only with educated guesses—the exact reasons for building the cliff dwellings remain unknown to us.

Why were the cliffs abandoned?

The cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde were abandoned around 1300 C.E. After all the time and effort it took to build these beautiful dwellings, why did people leave the area? Cliff Palace was built in the twelfth century, why was it abandoned less than a hundred years later? These questions have not been answered conclusively, though it is likely that the migration from this area was due to either drought, lack of resources, violence or some combination of these. We know, for instance, that droughts occurred from 1276 to 1299. These dry periods likely caused a shortage of food and may have resulted in confrontations as resources became more scarce. The cliff dwellings remain, though, as compelling examples of how the Ancestral Puebloans literally carved their existence into the rocky landscape of today's southwestern United States.



Video **9.9.2**

Additional resources:

Mesa Verde National Park site

Yellow Jacket Pueblo reconstruction

Janet Catherine Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips, *Native North American Art, 2 ed. Oxford History of Art series* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Elizabeth A. Newsome and Kelley Hays-Gilpin, "Spectatorship and Performance in Mural Painting, AD 1250–1500," *Religious Transformation in the Late Pre-Hispanic Pueblo World*, eds. Donna Glowacki and Scott Van Keuren, Amerind Studies in Archaeology (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2011).

David Grant Noble, ed., *The Mesa Verde World: Explorations in Ancestral Pueblo Archaeology* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2006).

David W. Penney, *North American Indian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004).

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

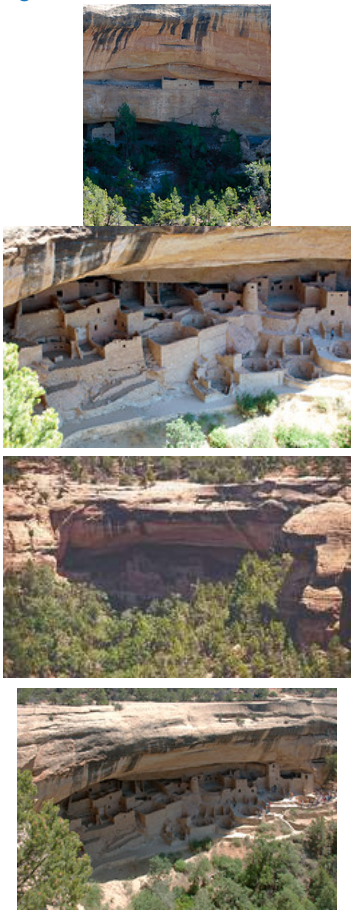


Figure **9.9.12**: More Smarthistory images…

A market for looted antiquities

by SIMON MACKENZIE



Figure **9.9.13**: Detail, Phidias(?), Parthenon Frieze, c. 438-32 B.C.E., pentelic marble (420 linear feet of the 525 that complete the frieze are in the British Museum) (photo: Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA)

Several members of the cast of the film **The Monuments Men** made headlines for **expressing the view** that the British Museum should return the Elgin Marbles to Athens after their "very nice stay" of 200 years in London.

That reignited the debate around the ethics and intentions of **their removal from the Parthenon** in the early 19th century, as well as the controversy around what to do with them now. But whether or not the removal of the sculptures should be considered "pillage or protection", as **the Guardian put it**, we might take the opportunity to reflect on other more contemporary and unambiguous examples of international cultural heritage plunder.

Demands of the art market

The international art market that deals in ancient cultural objects casts a destructive shadow. Tombs are looted, statues broken from their pedestals, and facades chainsawed off temples, all to feed a booming economic demand among connoisseurs who prize the enjoyment of the artistic attributes of cultural objects, the thrill and investment value of collection, and the social status attributed to those associated with high culture.

The source countries for these collectible objects tend to be less economically developed than the market countries and so are usually not very well equipped to protect their heritage resources against plunder. London and New York are the two biggest centers for this trade in the world, and their active art markets have over the years exerted a strong demand for the archaeological riches underground in countries like Egypt, Greece and Turkey; or pieces of temple complexes like those found in South America and South East Asia.



Figure **9.9.14**: Bronze statue of a nude male figure, Greek or Roman, Hellenistic or Imperial, c. 200 B.C.E.—c. 200 C.E., bronze (on loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and possibly looted from the ancient site of Bubon in Turkey)

Estimates of the size of the illicit underworld of the international trade in art and antiquities are unreliable at present. Although figures as high as **US$6 billion** have been proposed, it is generally recognised that it is currently impossible to verify size estimates. Many looted antiquities are sold on the open market and their illicit origins will never be detected, let alone proved. And, as well as the public trade through auction houses and museum acquisitions which can be scrutinised to some extent, there is also a private trade between individuals, which is difficult to investigate.

Police statistics in most countries do not even have a separate category for art related thefts or seizures. They tend to lump them in with all other types of property theft. Looting in source countries happens at sites which are often remote, and in some cases undiscovered, and much looting activity is not detected or recorded by over-stretched local police forces.

All of these factors, and more, make it very difficult to know how much illicit market activity there really is. But **a growing body of research** has established considerable evidence to show that looting and trafficking is still a sizeable and serious issue, and one involving significant sums of money.

Cultural looting

There was a relatively uncontested free and open dealing in looted cultural objects in Britain and elsewhere running through the colonial era, supported by imperialist values, and this continued. Then, in the 1960s a sustained critique of these practices began to take hold.

Archaeologists who had experienced first-hand the looting of sites they had been working on began to reflect on the rapacious nature of the market in cultural resources. In particular, they argued that looters destroyed sites as they dug out tombs and other underground heritage, depriving researchers of the historical knowledge which the context of buried objects could give up.

Criticism of the international trade in looted antiquities mounted, and in 1970 UNESCO brought countries together under **an international convention** to protect the world's cultural heritage from exploitation by market forces. This date of 1970 has over time come to be accepted as the norm for acquisition of antiquities, particularly among museums subscribing to a collective ethical code.

They now have to look for a "provenance" (ownership history) dating back to at least that date. This is obviously therefore a rule intended to reduce demand for artifacts looted in recent decades, rather than to right any perceived wrongs of a more historical nature. But not all types of buyers in the market subscribe to the 1970 norm – and our research evidence suggests the "1970 rule" is not greatly influencing aggregate buying decisions in public market settings.

Repatriation

Major dealing and collecting institutions have been implicated in the trade in illicit cultural objects, as one would expect, given that traffickers have inserted looted artifacts into the legitimate trade, where they have most value. And as the understanding of the reach of this increases, so does the trend towards "repatriation" of objects to their source countries from the world's encyclopedic museums.

For example, in 2013 the Metropolitan Museum in New York **returned two "Kneeling Attendants"** to the national museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, looted originally it seems from the temple complex at the ancient Khmer capital of **Koh Ker**, one of Cambodia's great heritage sites.



Figure **9.9.15**: Koh Ker National Park, Cambodia (photo: **Bruno Schoonbrodt**, CC BY-NC 2.0)

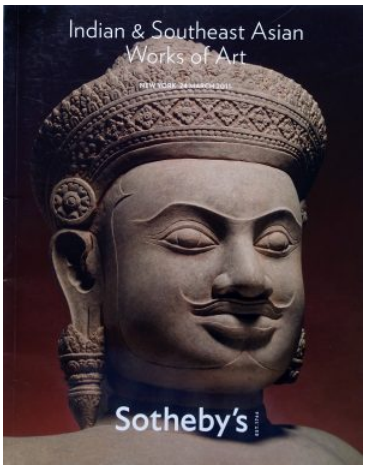


Figure **9.9.16**

At the same time, another statue from Koh Ker has been the subject of litigation in the New York courts: **the Duryodhana**, offered for sale by Sotheby's for an estimated $2m-$3m. The statue in New York was broken off at the ankles and its feet were discovered still attached to their pedestal in the Prasat Chen temple at Koh Ker.

The US Department of Justice alleged that it was torn from its base in the 1970s during **the civil war which led to Khmer Rouge power** – and from our fieldwork in Cambodia, we have first-hand accounts of similar looting activity from traffickers active at that time. Subsequently, it was transported to London where it was sold to a Belgian collector through the auction house Spink. Late in 2013, Sotheby's and Cambodia concluded a settlement to the case, and the statue was returned.

The pressing question for the great museums of the world is what will happen to their repositories in a climate of greater attention to the ethics of acquisitions, present and past. This raises difficult value judgements around the wider issue of where ancient artifacts belong, the moral status of major museums in rich countries, and "who owns culture", as the titles of several books in the field put it.

For some people, this question may invite different responses when applied to cases like the Elgin Marbles on one hand, or fresh loot on the other. For so-called "cultural internationalists," the issue is the very moral legitimacy of countries declaring ownership of all cultural heritage. But the countries themselves would see the moral and legal elements of their title as being settled.

Market victim or complicit?

The extent to which museums, dealers, collectors and auction houses know about the illicit origins of objects they acquire – and whether they turn a blind eye or are genuinely duped by fraudulent sellers – is hotly contested. The New York dealer **Frederick Schultz**, for example, once president of the National Association of Dealers in Ancient, Oriental and Primitive Art, **was sentenced** in 2002 to nearly three years in jail and received a $50,000 fine for his part in receiving looted items from Egypt through a British smuggler named **Jonathan Tokeley-Parry**.

The smuggled objects had been **dipped in plastic** and painted to look like tourist souvenir items, thus evading Egyptian border control. The two dealers then fabricated provenance for the items in order to give them the appearance of having a legitimate ownership history, inventing a collector they called Thomas Alcock and attaching labels to the objects to suggest they were from his collection.

They even went so far as to artificially age the labels by dipping them in tea, to better support the illusion they were creating. The artifacts included a sculptural head of the 18th dynasty pharaoh Amenhotep III, subsequently to be sold by Schultz for $1.2 million.

And in 1997, journalist Peter Watson published the results of his five-year investigation **Sotheby's: the Inside Story**, which alleged complicity among some of the auction house's employees in knowingly receiving looted and trafficked artifacts.

Subsequently, **Sotheby's closed** the London arm of its antiquities sales department, never to re-open, in a move which was "**widely interpreted**" as a response to Watson's book, and which prompted Boston University archaeology professor and long-time commentator on illicit trade issues Ricardo Elia to note that "**London has been called the smuggling capital of the world**."

Against these scandalous examples of malpractice, trade representatives tend to argue that they exercise appropriate levels of "due diligence". Criminal offenses for dealing in illicit cultural objects like the **up-to-seven year prison sentence** created in the UK in 2003 often require the prosecution to prove a buyer's "knowledge or belief" of an object's tainted history, which has proved very difficult to do. The UK law remains virtually unused.

And so the current debate raised by George Clooney, Matt Damon and Bill Murray's thoughts on the repatriation of the Elgin Marbles is important, but for reasons which don't tend to make their way into press reports of the controversy. The discussion around antiquities which were taken from Greece over two centuries ago is part of the context of a more immediate issue of global crime. Looting and trafficking of cultural objects is not only a problem of the past.

by Simon Mackenzie, Professor of Criminology, Law and Society, ***University of Glasgow*** (CC BY-ND 4.0)

This article was originally published on **The Conversation**. Read the **original article**.

THE CONVERSATION

Save Culture – end trafficking

by UNESCO



Video **9.9.3**: Conflict situations and natural disasters increase the risk of theft and trafficking dramatically. Many instances of plunder, theft and trafficking of cultural objects go unseen or unsolved.

This video was produced by the UNESCO Beirut Office in the framework of the Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage project, funded by the European Union and supported by the Flemish Government and the Government of Austria.

Produced by Keeward, Illustration, Animation and Sound Design by Squarefish

Trafficking the past

by DR. NEIL BRODIE



Figure **9.9.17**: "Conflict Antiquities: A Terrorist Financing Risk," **The Guardian**, June 15, 2014

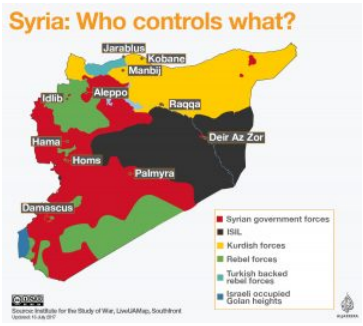


Figure **9.9.18**: Map of government control in Syria

In June 2014 the *Guardian* newspaper ran **a story** claiming that the terrorist organization Daesh had made $36 million from antiquities sales in the al-Nabuk area of Syria, and that it obtained a major part of its funding from antiquities sales more generally.

Almost overnight, this story transformed the antiquities trade in the public imagination from being a crime against culture into a crime against humanity. If the headlines that followed over the following weeks and months were anything to go by, vast sums of money were being directed from the antiquities trade into the war chests of Daesh and other armed terrorist and insurgency groups. Something needed to be done. It was a compelling narrative, one that played out well with the media-malleable public, and it certainly hooked the attention of concerned policy-makers, but for many long-time experts in the field it just did not ring true.

Fantasy economics

In the first place, the idea that $36 million could be made over the period of a year or so actually *within Syria* was unprecedented, unbelievable even. Many studies had shown that the monetary value of antiquities close to their source is only a small and even a vanishingly small percentage of their value on the destination market in places like London and New York.

In 1972, for example, The Metropolitan Museum of Art paid antiquities dealer Robert Hecht one million dollars for a **Euphronios Attic red-figure krater**. The *tombaroli* who stole the krater from an ancient Etruscan tomb in Italy are believed to have received the equivalent of $88,000 for their labors—only nine percent of its final price. Such markups are typical. So, if the story was to be believed, antiquities worth $36 million on the ground in Syria would be worth a staggering $360 million on the destination market, perhaps much more. It was fantasy economics. There was no evidence for that kind of market activity and the reality had to be something less spectacular.



Figure **9.9.19**: Daesh receipts for payment of "war booty" tax (source: **U.S. Department of State**)

The *Guardian* figure was never corroborated, but a more accurate assessment was achieved when in May 2015 United States Special Forces **seized a book of receipts** during a raid on the Syrian headquarters of Abu Sayyaf, the head of Daesh's antiquities division. These receipts suggested that Daesh might be making something like four million dollars a year from the antiquities trade. A large and worrying sum, but nothing like the figure first suggested, and one that would account for only about one percent of Daesh's total income.

Antiquities trafficking is nothing new

Terrorists and insurgents profiting from antiquities trafficking was nothing new. What was new was the sensationalist reporting. In the 1990s, for example, it was well known that *mujahideen* and later Taliban groups inside Afghanistan were making money from the antiquities trade, but this never made the headlines.



Figure **9.9.20**: More than Just Digging: Daesh Antiquities Trafficking an Institutionalized Process, infographic from **The Antiquities Coalition**

Before that, in the 1970s, combatant factions in the Cambodian civil war, including after 1990 the Khmer Rouge, had been likewise engaged. It is believed, for example, that the Khmer general Ta Mok, the so-called "Butcher of Cambodia," had held a central organizing role in the Cambodian antiquities trade.

During the early 1980s, until his fall from favor in 1985, Bashar al-Assad's uncle, Rifaat al-Assad, controlled the antiquities trade in Syria, and his counterpart in Iraq was perhaps Saddam Hussein's brother-in-law Arshad Yashin, who is said to have organized much of the looting there. Violence was a growing accompaniment to the antiquities trade during this period. In late-1990s Iraq, guards were killed in gun battles while trying to protect sites. In 2005, while transporting arrested antiquities dealers, eight Iraqi customs officers were ambushed and shot dead. So while it might be an exaggeration to report the antiquities trade as a crime against humanity, it is a violent enterprise, and one that profits armed and criminal organizations alike.



Figure 9.9.21: Statue found during the raid on Abu Sayyef's headquarters (source: U.S. Department of State)

Why did we fail to protect Syria's cultural heritage?

The real surprise and indeed outrage of the Daesh involvement with the trade was that it was happening at all. The threats posed by antiquities trafficking to cultural heritage and more broadly to society at large had been known since at least the 1960s, when the international community had supported the drafting and subsequent adoption of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. For the first time, the antiquities trade was recognized internationally as a harmful enterprise and one that needed to be controlled. Since then, there has been a proliferation of conventions, recommendations and actions aimed at combatting the trade and protecting cultural heritage. So why, 45 years later in 2015, was the antiquities trade devastating Syrian cultural heritage? Had the international policy response failed? What had gone wrong?

A rise in consumer demand

The answers to these questions are to be found in the nature of the policy response. The antiquities trade is fueled by consumer demand. Antiquities are bought by museums and private collectors in the rich acquiring countries of the destination market.



Figure 9.9.22: Antiquities found during the raid on Abu Sayyef's headquarters (source: U.S. Department of State)

Yet international policy has never quite come to grips with tackling demand and reducing the attractive pull of museums and collectors. Instead, its focus has been on protecting cultural heritage at source and reducing the flow of antiquities onto the destination market. Yet it is an impossible task to protect every cultural site in the world, particularly in poor countries unable to afford the required infrastructure, or in countries suffering from war or civil disturbance where public order has disintegrated. Only when collectors can be convinced to stop buying antiquities will thieves and traffickers stop selling them.

Museums in the spotlight

Back in the 1960s, when the **1970 UNESCO Convention** to prevent the illegal trafficking of cultural property was being drafted, museums were believed to be the mainspring of demand. And perhaps they were. There has been a concerted effort since then to develop ethical guidelines discouraging museums from acquiring trafficked antiquities. The work of the **International Council of Museums** (ICOM) has been particularly notable in this regard.



Figure **9.9.23**: The Euphronios Krater at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2006 (photo: **Tim Pendemon**, CC BY 2.0)

Yet following investigations by Italian and Greek law enforcement authorities, the museums world was rocked during the 1990s by revelations that major US art museums had been actively acquiring stolen and trafficked antiquities. Museums such as the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York were forced to return important antiquities to Italy and Greece, including the Euphronios krater.

But the bad news didn't stop there. In the 2010s, police and customs officials in India and the United States broke up a major trafficking operation headed by New York-based dealer Subhash Kapoor. He was shown to have sold a large Chola bronze Shiva Nataraja, which had been stolen from a temple in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu only two years earlier, to the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) for five million dollars. The NGA returned the Nataraja to India in 2014. Kapoor had sold other antiquities from the same temple thefts to Singapore's Asian Civilizations Museum and the Toledo Museum of Art. The case triggered an independent review of the problematic histories of 36 antiquities acquired by the NGA between 1968 and 2013.

Museums, clearly, are still an important component of demand. They act materially by making big money purchases and acquisitions, but also set a moral tone when they seem to make indiscriminate collecting socially acceptable.

Booming demand

Nevertheless, by the time of Kapoor's arrest, museums were not the only destination for trafficked antiquities. Antiquities were being touted as tangible assets for canny investors, and they had become trendy ornaments for interior-design makeovers. Antiquities from Middle Eastern countries were being marketed as "relics" from the "Holy Land," and the meditative worth of Buddhist antiquities similarly attracted more spiritual collectors. The rapid expansion of the internet as a means for trading antiquities created a market for smaller and less-valuable pieces that would previously not have been worth looting. Demand was booming like never before, and was largely out of control.

Successful indictments and convictions of offenders for antiquities trafficking were so rare as to be almost non-existent. Even when convictions did happen, sentencing was light and failed to pose any serious deterrence. In 2012, two U.S.-based dealers pled guilty to offenses related to antiquities trafficking. One was sentenced to six months' home confinement and one year's probation, the other was fined $1,000. Within a couple of years, they were both back in business.



Figure 9.9.24: Cuneiform tablet illegally imported by Hobby Lobby (source: U.S. Attorney's Office)

Missing evidence

Trafficked antiquities are routinely sold without documented evidence or even with fraudulent evidence of ownership history—so-called "unprovenanced" antiquities. The problems facing law enforcement authorities who must try to establish provenance were made abundantly clear in July 2017 when it was announced that Hobby Lobby had agreed to pay a $3 million forfeiture to the United States government and relinquish claims to and possession of 3,599 Iraqi antiquities bought in 2010 for 1.6 million dollars. Knowledgeable observers believed the antiquities to have been stolen from Iraq, and that someone should have faced a felony charge for the theft. But the evidence was not there. Theft could not be proved. Instead, Hobby Lobby was punished for customs violations.

Hobby Lobby is owned by the Green family, which in 2009 established the Green Collection of antiquities and other objects related to biblical history, and the **Green Scholars Initiative** of university academics to study them. As the 2017 forfeitures showed, much of the unprovenanced material being studied by the Green Scholars is likely to have been trafficked.

The Green scholars are not alone. A new academic industry has developed, comprised of university scholars studying suspect antiquities acquired by large private collections. Ancient manuscripts and other text-bearing antiquities, many of them from Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, and Palestine, are particularly worthy of attention. Scholarship establishes the importance and authenticity, and thus monetary value of studied material—to the financial benefit of the collector. In 2007, for example, a U.S.-based private collector claimed a $900,000 tax deduction for a donation of 1,679 Iraqi cuneiform tablets to Cornell University. He had purchased the tablets sometime during the 1990s for $50,000. The mark-up in price must have been due to scholarly study over the intervening period that had established their importance—and their value.

How do we stop trafficking?

Antiquities trafficking damages cultural heritage worldwide, and the proceeds from trafficking fund organized crime and terrorist violence. No one has to buy unprovenanced antiquities. Antiquities collecting does not confer cultural sophistication and antiquities are not good investments. Antiquities trafficking will only stop when people stop buying them.

Additional resources:

Dr. Neil Brodie's blog, Market of Mass Destruction

Saving Antiquities for Everyone (SAFE)

Looting Matters blog

Trafficking Culture

Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA)

U.S. Department of State Cultural Heritage Center

We will need Monuments Men for as long as ancient sites remain battlefields

by EMMA CUNLIFFE



Figure 9.9.25: The ruins of the 11th century Great Umayyad Mosque, Aleppo, Syria (photo: **Fathi Nezam** from Tasnim News Agency, CC BY 4.0)

The destruction and looting of cultural heritage has been intertwined with conflict for thousands of years. To steal an enemies' treasures, defile their sacred places and burn their cities has been part of war throughout history. And sadly, in the **modern battlefields** of the ancient world, in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, and elsewhere, it continues to this day.

The Colosseum in Rome, for example, was built using spoils from the **sack of the Temple of Jerusalem** in AD 70. Many of the Louvre's collections were "acquired" by Napoleon while rampaging through Europe (albeit later returned). In fact, much of Napoleon's collection of war booty – acquired during his failed campaign in Egypt – was declared forfeit by the British victors and given to the British Museum under the Treaty of Capitulation of 1801. The **Rosetta Stone**, which famously enabled the deciphering of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic script, was acquired through this treaty and is still on display there today.

Although antiquities gained widespread public interest throughout the 19th and early 20th century, it was not until the Second World War that the idea of preserving them in conflict finally took hold. As Hitler's armies advanced across Europe, he saw an opportunity to conquer not only the land and the people, but the cultures of defeated nations. Millions of artistic works and important cultural objects were seized and sent back to Germany, where Hitler took a personal interest in selecting the very best. His new **Führermuseum** was to be the most spectacular art museum ever built, culled from the cultural riches of the western world.

Those in command of the Allied forces were faced with a historical and cultural loss of unprecedented scale. Declaring his support for the protection of the past, the supreme Allied commander, Dwight Eisenhower, said:

> ***Inevitably, in the path of our advance will be found historical monuments and cultural centres which symbolise to the world all that we are fighting to preserve. It is the***

> ***responsibility of every commander to protect and respect these symbols wherever possible.***

Enter the Monuments Men

In 1943, the Allied forces approved the formation of a new unit: the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Commission (**MFAA**). For the first time in history, armies went into the field with officers dedicated to protecting art and monuments during the conflict. It was going to be a tough job. Entire historic quarters in cities such as Warsaw were demolished in days and the artistic treasures of Europe were vanishing.

Just 345 men and women, with no dedicated resources, were tasked with protecting historic buildings, monuments, libraries and archives across the whole of Europe and North Africa. Most were museum staff, art historians, scholars and university professors, yet their success was incredible. They found and returned more than five million stolen objects and artworks and ensured the protection of numerous buildings, often using no more than their own ingenuity.

A part of their story is told in the new film, Monuments Men, based on author Robert Edsel's **book** of the same name, by the **Monuments Men Foundation**, and also in the book and ensuing film **The Rape of Europa**. In 1951, the MFAA was disbanded as politicians drafted the **1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict**, followed by the First Protocol in 1954 and the Second Protocol in 1999 (which extended and clarified the original tenets).

The convention protects places and objects "of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people" during conflict. It argues the heritage of all sides should be protected and that warring sides should not use it or its immediate surroundings, nor direct assaults against it. It also granted suitable authority and units for its protection. Crucially, it separates the principles of **military necessity from military convenience**. Unfortunately, it is not widely adhered to and many of the lessons learned by the MFAA have been forgotten.

The monumental battle today

The Monument Men of today are almost all volunteers. Some are local people, such as the **Syrian Association for Preserving Heritage and Ancient Landmarks**, who work in Aleppo (a UNESCO World Heritage city) to try and save its monuments and buildings. Individual organisations **monitor the situation**. Some countries have formed voluntary national **Committees of the Blue Shield**.

The Blue Shield network was suggested in the Hague Convention and is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is a group of non-governmental organisations working to protect monuments, sites, museums and archives during and after conflict and natural disasters. Members are drawn from universities, museums and heritage organisations, with advisors from the Red Cross, UNESCO, the military and others.



Figure **9.9.26**: World Heritage site: The Basilica of St Simeon Stylites in Syria, the oldest surviving Byzantine church, dating back to the 5th century, now rumoured to be badly damaged by fighting (photo: **Bernard Gagnon**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Their objectives are to formulate and lead national and international responses to emergencies that threaten cultural property. They encourage respect for, and protection of, cultural heritage, providing training and advice. Despite the Hague Convention's mandates, often the only military personnel who engage with cultural heritage protection do so voluntarily.

Today, 126 countries have ratified the **Hague Convention**, although the necessary work is rarely funded and not all the tenets are enforced. The **UK has not ratified it**, despite the **destruction caused by the coalition** invasion of Iraq in 2003. In August 2013, chemical weapons were used in Syria and intervention was discussed. Had it happened, the British military is under no obligation to protect, or even consider, any of the thousands of significant sites throughout the country, many of which date back to the **earliest achievements of mankind**.

Protecting cultural property is about more than old books, buildings and fine paintings. Our cultural heritage stands as the symbol of everything humanity has achieved: our finest moments and even our worst atrocities. It is the physical reminder of our past and inspiration for our future. While not every site can be saved, its loss should be a matter of necessity and never convenience. As Eisenhower stated 70 years ago, to fight without even considering it is to sacrifice everything for which we are fighting.

by Emma Cunliffe, Postgraduate Associate, ***Durham University*** (CC BY-ND 4.0)

This article was originally published on **The Conversation**.

THE CONVERSATION

What the bulldozers left behind: reclaiming Sicán's past

by DR. SARAHH SCHER and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 9.9.4: Inverse-Face Beaker, 10th-11th century, Sicán (Lambayeque), Peru, gold, 20 x 18.1 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Key points:

- The Sicán culture was located on the north coast of Peru, and is sometimes referred to as Lambayeque.
- We have lost a significant amount of knowledge of Sicán culture due to systematic looting and grave-robbing. These looted objects were smuggled out of Peru and many find their way to private collections and museums in North America and Europe.
- This inverse-face beaker, made of hammered gold, shows a face in a position that would have been upside-down when it was used. This inversion may suggest the underworld, or contact with spirit forces.

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Donna Yates, Batán Grande on Trafficking Culture

Izumi Shimada, “Sicán Elite Tombs and Their Broader. Implications” (Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 1992)

Izumi Shimada, “Precious Metal Objects of the Middle Sicán,” *Scientific American* (2005)

Lost History: the terracotta sculpture of Djenné-Djenno

by DR. KRISTINA VAN DYKE and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video 9.9.5: Seated figure, 13th century, Mali, Inland Niger Delta (Djenné peoples), terracotta, 25.4 x 29.9cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) Speakers: Dr. Kristina Van Dyke and Dr. Steven Zucker

Additional resources:

This work at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Djenné on Art and Life in Africa (University of Iowa)

Works from Djenné at the Yale University Art Gallery

The Spread of Islam in West Africa (Stanford University)

The Looting of Cambodian Antiquities

by TESS DAVIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **9.9.6**: The looting of ancient Cambodian antiquities from Prasat Chen, the 10th century the Khmer capital at Koh Ker ARCHES: At Risk Cultural Heritage Education Series

Additional resources:

"Sotheby's Accused of Deceit in Sale of Khmer Statue" (*The New York Times*, November 13, 2012)

Rebuilding Koh Ker: A 3D Reconstruction Restores Context to a Looted Khmer Temple (from Chasing Aphrodite)

Cambodia Vs. Sotheby's In A Battle Over Antiquities (from NPR)

Return of six of the nine statues looted from Cambodia (UNESCO)

Red List of Cambodian Antiquities at Risk (ICOM)

Sotheby's Returns Looted 10th Century Statue to Cambodia

by TESS DAVIS



Video **9.9.7**: Archaeologist and legal expert Tess Davis talks about Sotheby's attempt to auction an ancient Cambodian statue that had been looted by the Khmer Rouge in 1972; and the statue's eventual return home.

The Scourge of Looting: Trafficking Antiquities from Temple to Museum

by TESS DAVIS



Video **9.9.8**: Archaeologist and legal expert Tess Davis talks about the illicit antiquities trade, and how the looting of archaeological sites in conflict zones goes to fund paramilitary groups and terrorist organizations.

To learn more about the Angkor period of Cambodia see our essay on **Angkor Wat.**

How a famous Greek bronze ended up in the Vatican

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

Taken from Greece, confiscated by an emperor and returned to the people.



Video **9.9.9**: Lysippos, Apoxyomenos, Roman marble copy after Greek bronze original dating to c. 300 B.C.E. (Vatican Museums, Rome, Italy)

Fact and fiction: The explosion of Reims Cathedral during World War I

by CHRISTINE M. BOLLI

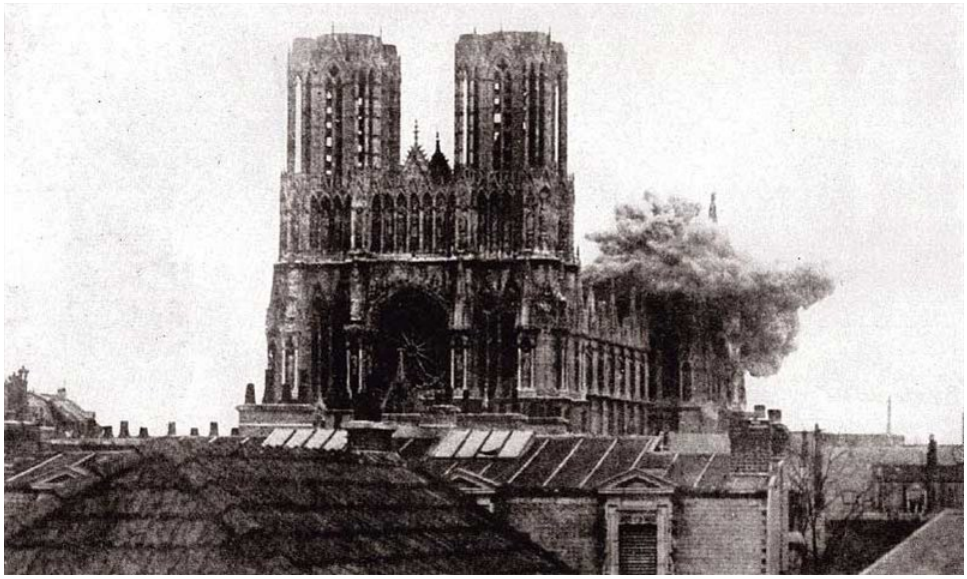


Figure **9.9.27**: Shell bursting on the cathedral at Reims, from *Collier's New Photographic History of the World's War*, 1918

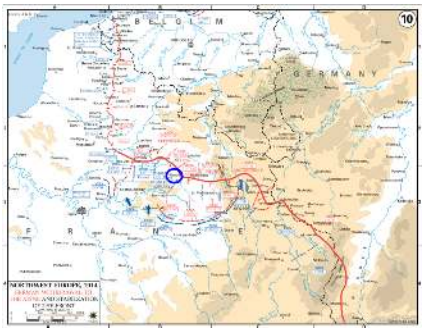


Figure **9.9.28**: Map of the Western Front, 1914, with Reims circled in blue (map: **The History Department of the United States Military Academy**, CC0)

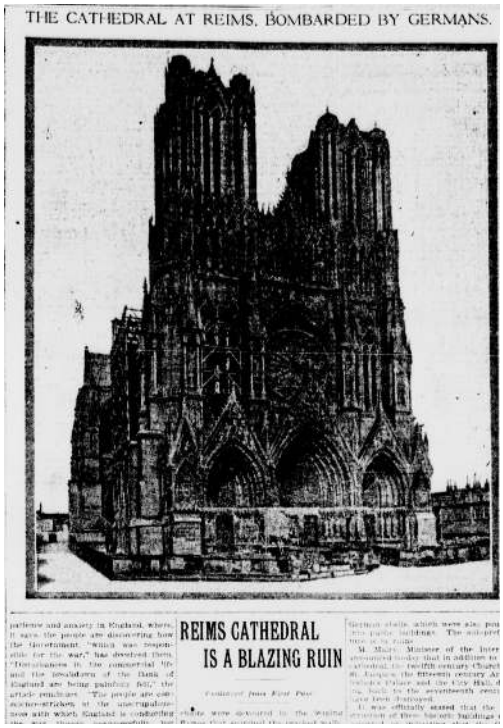
The facts…?

World War I officially started July 28, 1914. Originally it was believed that the "situation" would clear itself up by no later than Christmastime. Instead, it took over four long and grueling years, and resulted in more than 15 million deaths. Early on in the conflict, the German army moved into northeastern French territory. This was the beginning of the Western Front. The expeditious land grab by the Germans included the city of Reims. Reims had a well-established history, from its days as a bustling hub of the Roman Empire, to becoming a center of French culture in the early Middle Ages. Additionally, Reims was the "Coronation Capital," so to speak, the traditional location for the coronation of French kings. It was also home to a magnificent high Gothic cathedral, **Notre-Dame de Reims**. By early September, the French had forced the Germans to retreat and though the French regained the town, the Germans stayed close by for the entirety of the war.



Figure **9.9.29**: View of Reims cathedral over the rooftops of the city in 2014 (photo: **Dr. Steven Zucker**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The city of Reims saw significant destruction, and both civilian and military casualties. But no event ignited indignation as did the bombing of the much-venerated Notre-Dame de Reims. The cathedral was first hit by shell fire on September 19th, 1914. Wooden scaffolding that was in place for ongoing repairs caught fire, and contributed to the damage, as did several smaller fires that resulted from the attack. Though the cathedral would be struck again and again as the war continued, it was this initial shelling that sparked a firestorm of outrage, horror, and prodigious propaganda—surely here was damning proof that the Germans were indeed "barbarians," so lacking in culture themselves that they were compelled to destroy the beauty of another culture out of sheer spite and jealousy. The propaganda insisted that there was no reason to bomb the church since it had no strategic military value, and was a place of sanctuary. The French and their allies stressed that there was no justification to shell the cathedral especially given that was being used to house the wounded (mainly German soldiers callously left behind by their fleeing brothers-in-arms).


THE CATHEDRAL AT REIMS, BOMBARDED BY GERMANS.

REIMS CATHEDRAL IS A BLAZING RUIN

Figure **9.9.30**: "Reims Cathedral is a Blazing Ruin," *The Sun* (New York City), September 21, 1914 (**Library of Congress**)

War crimes

It was acknowledged, even at the time, that the Germans were committing more horrendous acts than the bombardment of Reims Cathedral. So why should a building create more outcry and indignation than the killing of innocent civilians, or other kinds of wartime savagery? Perhaps it was in part that the cathedral, literally meaning the seat of the bishop, could be seen as representing the French nation as a whole, its cruciform shape evoking a sacrificial body. Or, on a more practical note, it was a story that could be easily sensationalized and discussed *ad infinitum*—cultural war damage was far easier to get past the censors. In the words of Maurice Landrieux, a former priest at Reims but later the Bishop of Dijon "…but it was the most ignoble, because it was at once sacrilegious and stupid, and because it reveals, by its uselessness, the blackest depth of German misdoing." There was a pervasive belief that the Germans had come to France with the express intention of destroying the cathedral from the outset of the war.



Figure **9.9.31**: "The great arches at Notre Dame: The wars of seven centuries had passed over Reims, and still all armies spared the beautiful cathedral. Is is now but a wonderful ruin." from *Collier's Photographic History of the European War*, by Francis J. Reynolds and C. W. Taylor, c. 1917

There are two sides to every story, and so it is here. The Germans did shell the cathedral—that is irrefutable. Their explanation as to why they did so was wildly at odds with the French account, and they claimed to be horrified just as deeply as the French, at the damage done to this architectural masterpiece.

The French story was that is that the Germans, before their hasty retreat, had covered the floors of the cathedral with straw, to make it more combustible and that they intentionally left their wounded knowing they would be brought into the church by the French to be tended. A Red Cross flag was raised, a further signal that the cathedral was off-limits as a military target. However, the Germans later claimed the cathedral was being used for military intelligence: a signal station, telephone equipment, and an observation post had been espied in one of the towers during a German fly-by—along with a large cache of weapons. If true, according to international law, the cathedral was a viable military target—a wolf wrapped in sheep's clothing.



Figure **9.9.32**: "Cathedral before removal of sandbags (upper right); Reims Cathedral; side view of cathedral" (**New York Public Library Digital Collections**)

The church was severely damaged—roofs had burned, statues melted, stonework was no longer viable, and more. Nonetheless, the structure was still essentially in good condition after the attack, all things considered. The local French authorities were actually taken to task by their own administrators for not doing a better job putting out the fire, which caused the majority of the damage. The Germans claimed it pained them to commit such an act, but the cunning French had left them no choice. These claims gained little traction.

The result was that—for the French—the German reputation for philosophical thought and general erudition, were suddenly erased—they were viewed once again as one of the "barbarian hordes" of the migration era. German art historians were quick to point out they had been one of the primogenitors of that discipline, and they highly appreciated art from around the globe. German art historians and professors were even dispatched to the front, joining various army units to help provide protection to valuable art on both sides, but to no avail. The mud would not unstick.



Figure **9.9.33**: Harry R. Hopps, *Destroy this mad brute Enlist – U.S. Army*, 1918, color lithograph, 106 x 71 cm (**Library of Congress**)

Culture wars

Reims Cathedral continued to be used as propaganda for the whole of the war. Its burnt image was printed on posters and postcards. German soldiers were depicted gun-wielding and slavering at the jaw to seeking to destroy the next great work of art they saw. Meanwhile, the Germans lampooned the French, accusing them of using their own great works of art for nefarious ends without compunction. One well-known cartoon read, “The cunning French have used Reims cathedral as a shooting platform—next they’ll be building trenches with the contents of the Louvre.”

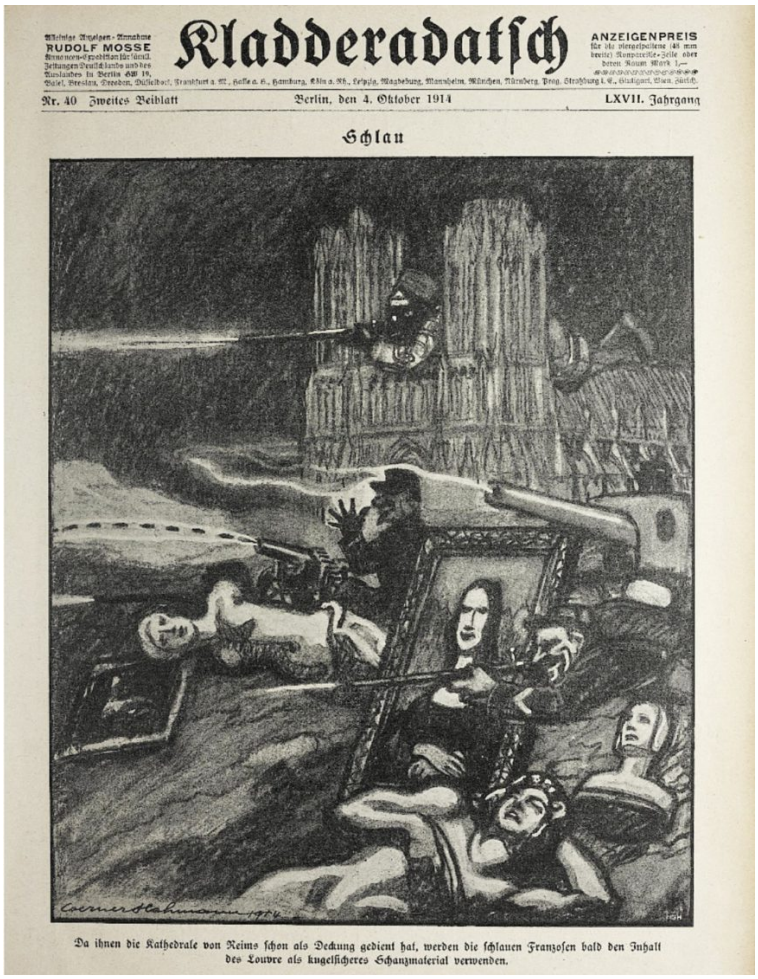


Figure **9.9.34**: "The cunning French have used Reims cathedral as a shooting platform—next they'll be building trenches with the contents of the Louvre," Werner Hahmann, *Schlau (Sly)*, from **Kladderarsch**, no. 40 (cover, October 1914)

Beyond the trenches, the battle for cultural superiority was on. The French had the upper hand when it came to the events at Reims that fateful night. They could claim eyewitnesses, and they also photographed the cathedral in ways intended to most incite a viewer.

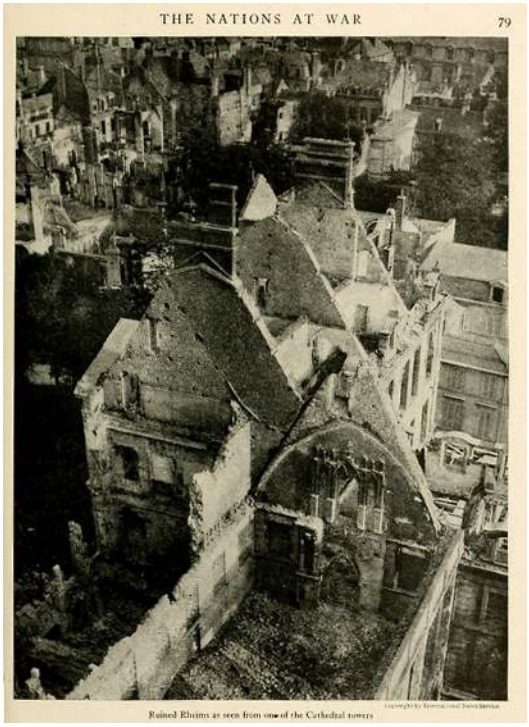


Figure **9.9.35**: "Ruined Reims as seen from one of the Cathedral towers," from *The Nations at War* by Willis John Abbot, 1917

The Germans did try hard though, despite their lack of handy visual evidence, to underscore that they had been the only country to carry out any form of art protection. *Kunstschutz* (the German term for the principle of preserving cultural heritage and artworks during armed conflict) was said to protect art on both sides of the war. It was even said to be endorsed by Kaiser Wilhelm II himself. The Germans emphasized that the bombing of the cathedral at Reims had not been part of a systematic effort, instead, it was one of the many sad byproducts of the war.



Figure **9.9.36**: E. Lemielle, *Souvenez-vous! 1914. Rien d'Allemand!!! Des Allemands (Remember! 1914. Nothing German! Nothing from the Germans)*, 1919, color lithograph, 83 x 60 cm (**Library of Congress**)

Neither side held back, each was determined to show that while one was on the side of the angels, the other was ruthlessly attempting to profit by the destruction of art. Meanwhile, the Germans claimed that as they were the creators of the **Gothic** style, and so the cathedral was just as much part of their cultural heritage as it was France's, and they again attempted to remind the world of their integral role in the creation of art history. Again, this gained no traction with the French, nor with most nations.



THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME AT RHEIMS, AFTER REPEATED BOMBARDMENTS

Nearly every building in the neighborhood crumbled under the terrific bombardments which began September 18, 1914. The walls of the cathedral stand, though its matchless stained-glass windows and many fine carvings were destroyed. This magnificent building, dating from the 13th century, was considered one of the most beautiful in the world. It was here that Kings of France were crowned and Joan of Arc believed her mission ended when Charles VII had been crowned at Rheims

Figure 9.9.37: "The cathedral of Notre Dame at Reims, after repeated bombardments," from *Collier's Photographic History of the European War*, by Francis J. Reynolds and C. W. Taylor (c. 1917)

By the end of the war Reims, which had been targeted multiple times, was the ruin the French had claimed after the initial attack. The continued attacks on the cathedral called into doubt the veracity of the Germans' initial account. After the first bombardment, it was certain that the cathedral was no longer being used for any military purpose—if it ever had been. Again, a cultural landmark of this kind could only become subject to brute force with good reason, so the continued bombing only furthered the French position of German brutality and outright vandalism. J.W. Garner, in his *International Law and the World War*, states, "Monuments of this stature are not only entitled to respect because of their sanctity but are especially protected because of the Law of Nations" (p. 445).

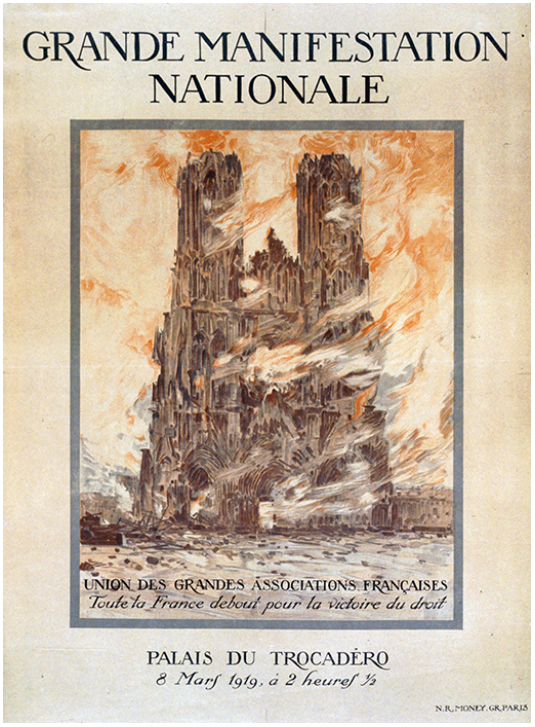


Figure 9.9.38: Grande Manifestation Nationale, 1919, color lithograph, 80 x 59 cm (Library of Congress)

Restoration on the cathedral began almost immediately after the end of the war, funded in part by the Rockefeller family. The cathedral reopened in 1938, though work continues to this day. Recently, the world looked on aghast when, in April of 2019, the iconic Notre-Dame de Paris burned. Even more recently, the lesser-known Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Nantes, another Gothic jewel, caught on fire. In these cases there appears to be no terrorism involved, only age and human error. Perhaps then, the. most important take-away from the bombing of Reims Cathedral is that blame is, to a degree, irrelevant, at least after the fact. The real lesson is that we must do better at preserving our cultural heritage the world over.

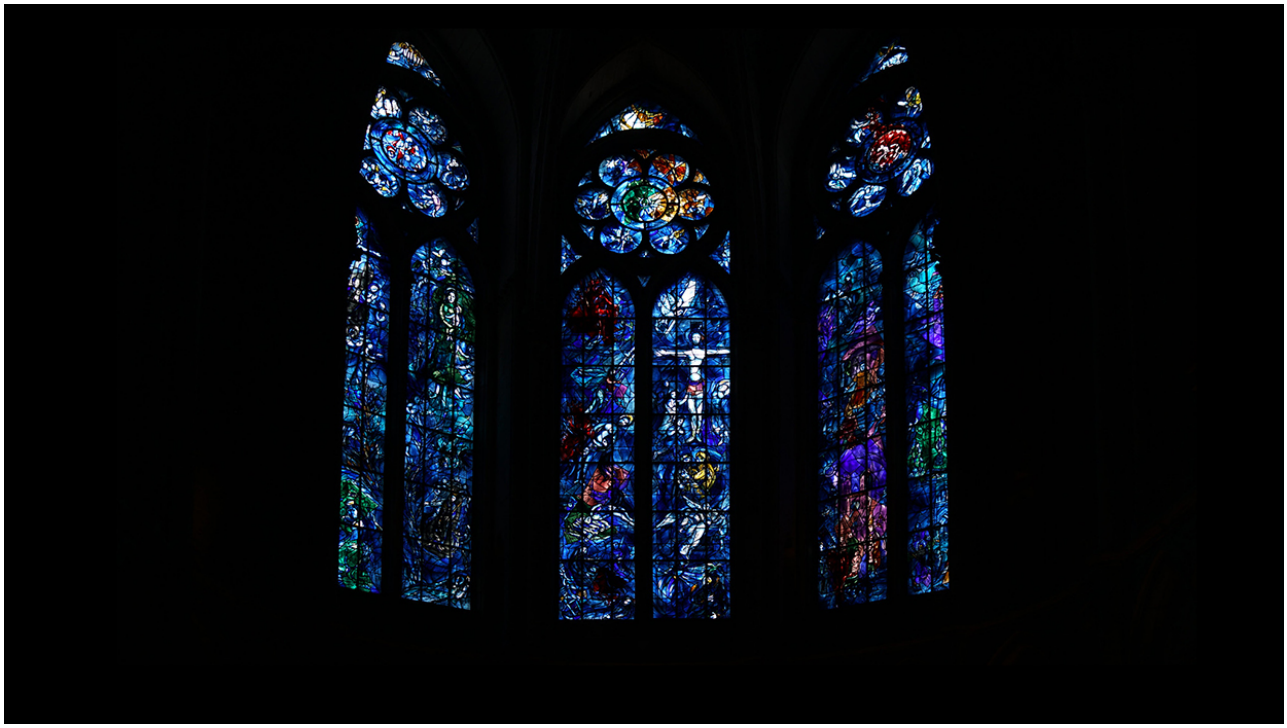


Figure 9.9.39: Marc Chagall, stained glass windows replacing war-damaged ones, Reims Cathedral, 1967-1985 (photo: Dr. Steven Zucker, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Additional resources:

The official website of Notre-Dame de Reims

Explore Reims Cathedral at Mapping Gothic France

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9.10: Before You Move On

Key Concepts

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

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

Test Yourself

1. Is there a relationship between art and ethics? Defend your answer explaining why you agree or disagree. Select works not used in this text to clarify your stance. Attach selected works with captions. Add a commentary at the end of your response explaining why you selected the art works and their significance to the topic.
2. Select two ethically controversial works of art from different periods in history. Explain how each work was received at the time it was made, and how changes in societal values have impacted acceptance of the works today.
3. Should certain types of art be censored? Explain your answer and select at least two examples to assist in clarifying your statement. Give an opposing response with justifications and select works to describe and clarify your opinion.
4. Describe one way appropriation has become acceptable in contemporary art.
5. What does it mean when some contemporary artists question what is an "original" work of art, and what is a "reproduction?"
6. What concepts was Damien Hirst exploring in using butterflies in his artwork? What did the butterflies symbolize for Hirst?
7. Why is it important that news photographs not be altered?
8. What was the ethical dilemma photojournalist Kevin Carter faced when he photographed a child during the 1993 famine in Sudan?
9. What acts of censorship did Adolf Hitler and his associates engage in prior to and during World War II?
10. As guardians of culturally significant objects, what obligations do museums have?
11. Describe how claims of "copyright" and "fair use" came into play in relation to Shepard Fairey's portrait of Barack Obama.

KEY TERMS

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

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

Cloning: the repeated duplication of a digital effect.

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

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

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

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Film and Photography

Learning Objectives

- Explain why an artist would prefer to use film or photography over other media.
- Define and describe the different photography techniques, materials and processes.
- Define and describe the different the materials and processes used in film and video art.
- Understand the historical relationship between the camera arts.

10.1: Photography- The Beginning

10.2: Surrealist Photography

10.3: Photography

10.4: Trevor Paglen, The Black Sites

10.5: Will Wilson, Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange

10.6: Cinema

10.7: Women in Cinema

10.8: Cinematographic Art

10.9: Conclusion

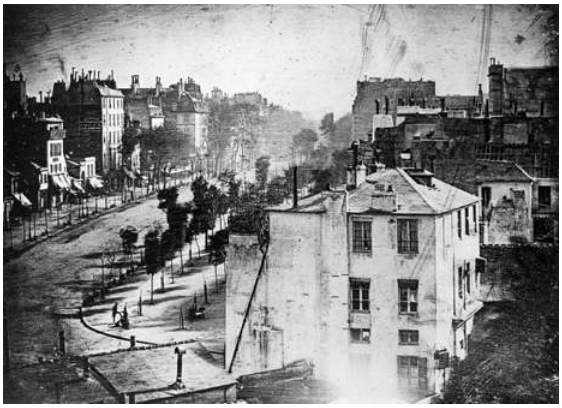
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10.1: Photography- The Beginning

Photography captures an image in a moment of time, recording the light on a light-sensitive material. The light-sensitive material can be a photographic film or a digital image sensor. The early 19th century brought about many scientific discoveries, one being photography, changing how we look at the world. It appeared almost overnight, and enterprises like National Geographic brought us photographs from around the world we had never seen before, showing us how other cultures, natural resources, and animals coexisted on the planet. Other than paintings or drawings, the visual world in the 19th century was limited. Now anyone could look at photographs and explore the rest of the world from a library, magazine, or book.

> *How many times have we hear the expression, 'A picture is worth a thousand words.'*

The first surviving photograph was made by a French chemist, **Nicephore Niepce** (1765-1833). The hazy photograph was a polished pewter plate that he exposed to light for eight hours. **Louis Daguerre** (1787-1851), a French Romantic artist, invented the daguerreotype process, a new realistic method of photographing images. Daguerre exposed to light on a highly polished silver-plated sheet of copper producing images, as seen in the *Boulevard du Temple* (11.54). The boulevard is a major thoroughfare in Paris, and Daguerre staged his camera in 1838 to capture the street and pedestrians walking on the sidewalk. The earliest known daguerreotype was exposed for ten minutes, showing only non-moving objects. Daguerre first practiced his technique with marble statues, the light reflected off the white marble, and the statues did not move during the process.



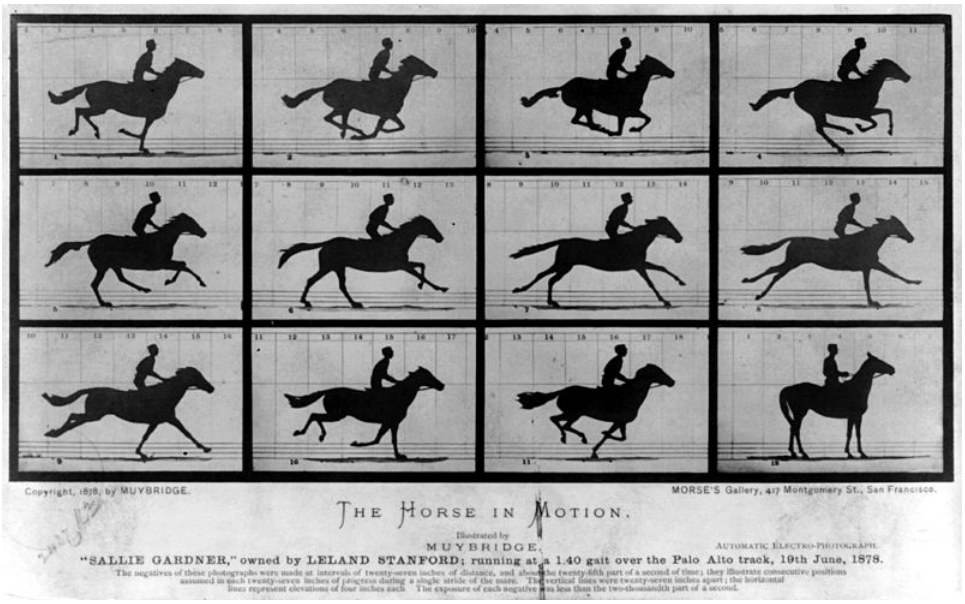
11.54 *Boulevard du Temple*



Photographs were an instant success, and soon photographers like **Eadweard Muybridge** (1830-1904) used photographs to study motion. He arrived by ship in San Francisco in 1867 and became famous for his pictures of Yosemite National Park and the

landscape around San Francisco Bay. When the San Francisco Mint was under construction in 1870, Muybridge took a photograph every day and made a time-lapse set of images to document the rise of the new mint. And then he met the former governor of California, Leland Stanford.

Stanford, the businessman, tycoon, and racehorse owner, hired Muybridge to study his horses to solve the puzzle - do all four feet of a horse came off the ground at one time or while running or is one foot always touching the ground. Experimenting with several cameras set up on a fence, Muybridge had a horse run by to capture the images, adding lines on the ground and backdrop to help guide the photographer. Muybridge proved a horse moving with a running gait did lift all four feet off the ground in a full gallop, as documented in *The Horse in Motion* (11.55).



11.55 The Horse in Motion



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10.2: Surrealist Photography

by DR. CHARLES CRAMER and DR. KIM GRANT

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Figure **10.2.1**: Man Ray, *Enigma*, gelatin silver print, 1920

An enigmatic image

Man Ray's photograph of a mysterious object or objects covered in a blanket and tied up with rope is the opening image of the Surrealists' first journal, *La Révolution Surréaliste*. It appeared without caption or attribution in the middle of an essay announcing the Surrealists' dedication to dreams and revolution. Readers were left to determine its significance on their own. Perhaps it was intended to represent the **mysteries of the unconscious** bound up and hidden beneath the surface of ordinary things. Perhaps it referred to the as-yet-undisclosed contents of the magazine that the reader would encounter in the following pages.

Most likely it was intended to appeal to the unconscious desires of each individual reader. Surrealism as a movement was dedicated to creating works that not only expressed their author's unconscious mental activity, but also provoked such activity in the viewer. The Surrealists developed a number of tools for achieving this end, including **irrational juxtapositions**, **suggestion**, and **subversive realism**, all of which were mobilized in Surrealist photography.

Rayographs



Figure **10.2.2**: Man Ray, Rayograph #3 from *Champs Délicieux*, 1922 (Pompidou Center, Paris)

Photography played an important role in Surrealism from the movement's inception. The New York Dadaist Man Ray moved to Paris in the 1920s and became an early member of the Surrealist group as well as working as a successful fashion photographer. The Surrealist leader André Breton admired his Dada rayographs for the surprising ways they both revealed and transformed common objects. Rayographs, also known as rayograms or photograms, are made by placing objects on photo-sensitive paper and briefly exposing them to light. The silhouettes of the objects are recorded on the paper as white unexposed areas, and can create unexpected patterns and suggestive images.

Photographic proof

Man Ray's photographs liberally illustrate Surrealist journals, as do many photographs from anonymous sources. In many instances these photographs were intended as visual proof of Surrealism's existence in the world. Traditionally regarded as a means to create factual visual records, photographs were used by the Surrealists both to document Surrealist occurrences and to call into question the nature of reality.

During early debates on the possibility of a Surrealist visual art, Pierre Naville published a statement that the only acceptable types of visual production were non-artistic photographs that revealed the Surrealist nature of reality. Although this restrictive view of Surrealist art did not prevail, interest in photography as a form of Surrealist documentation endured and became an important aspect of Surrealist visual production.



Figure **10.2.3**: J.-A. Boiffard, photograph of the Humanité bookstore used as an illustration in André Breton, *Nadja*

Breton's autobiographical texts *Nadja* and *L'Amour fou* were illustrated with photographs by Man Ray, Brassaï, Boiffard, and others. The photographs document the objects and Paris locations described in Breton's narrative. They are presented as a form of evidence that implicitly attests to the truth of Breton's description of his Surrealist adventures.



Figure **10.2.4**: Man Ray, *Untitled (Hat)*, 1933, gelatin silver print

Man Ray's photographs of fashionable hats and Brassaï's photographs of discarded bus tickets were used to illustrate Surrealist essays on the widespread presence of erotic forms and **automatism** in daily life. The photographs were intended to document how the common objects of the modern world are profoundly shaped by **unconscious, frequently sexual, desires**. Women's hats take on phallic and vaginal forms, while the tickets and other odds and ends people drop on the street have been folded and fondled into elaborate and suggestive shapes.



Figure **10.2.5**: Brassaï, *Involuntary Sculpture (Bus Ticket)*, 1933, gelatin silver print

The Surrealists called these manipulated objects involuntary sculptures and, like doodles and Surrealist artworks created by using automatic techniques, they understood them to be the direct result of unconscious creative activity.

The strangeness of the world



Figure **10.2.6**: Dora Maar, *Père Ubu*, 1938, gelatin silver print (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Surrealist photographs were also used to reveal the strangeness of the world we think we know, often by simply presenting it in a new way. Dora Maar titled her photograph of a baby armadillo after the anti-hero of Alfred Jarry's famously transgressive and iconoclastic play *Ubu Roi* (1896), which was much admired by the Surrealists.

The close-up image of the animal's unfamiliar form is startling in itself, but by connecting the armadillo to Père Ubu, Maar created an emotional resonance for viewers familiar with the character. Suddenly, the small animal is transformed into a large, greedy, and violent human being — what was perhaps merely strange becomes monstrous. This is possible in part because of the way the photograph distorts our sense of scale by close-cropping and isolating the animal within the frame.

Innovative techniques

In addition to presenting photographs as Surrealist documents of the unexpected strangeness of reality, photographers associated with Surrealism experimented with darkroom techniques to create bizarre, often unpredictable, results.



Figure **10.2.7**: Raoul Ubac, *The Secret Gathering*, 1938, gelatin silver print (MoMA)

In works such as *The Secret Gathering*, Raoul Ubac exploited the unsettling effects of double exposures and solarization (extreme over-exposure of film, which reverses tones) to suggest photography's capacity to reveal a Surrealist reality hidden from ordinary vision. Based on photographs of two nude women, Ubac used darkroom manipulations to transform the original photographs into the suggestion of an other-worldly gathering of semi-human beings. Because we can still see some body parts clearly, we are led to think that this strange photograph may be a faithful document of a surreal world.



Figure **10.2.8**: Left: Claude Cahun, *Que me veux tu*? 1929, gelatin silver print (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); Right: Claude Cahun, *Self-Portrait*, 1929, gelatin silver print (Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris)

In *Que me veux tu? (What do you want from me?)* Claude Cahun similarly used darkroom manipulation to present herself doubled. Cahun's self-portraits use multiple exposures, costumes and varied strategies of self-presentation to question the nature of individual identity. Her photographs are unusual in the context of Surrealist photography both as self-portraits and as images of a woman made by a woman.

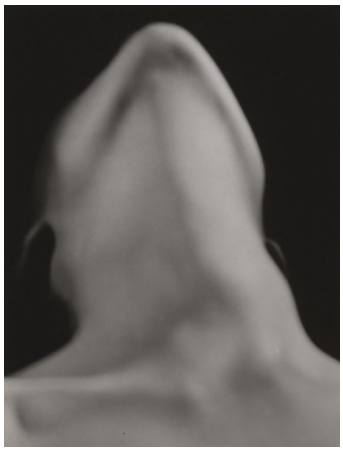


Figure **10.2.9**: Man Ray, *Anatomies*, 1929, gelatin silver print (MoMA)

Women's bodies were a favored subject for Surrealist photographers. Employing unusual angles, cropping, distorting lenses, and selective focus, Surrealist photographers transformed the body according to their desires and imagination. The infinitely malleable forms of the body served as revelatory means for Surrealist vision. Man Ray's *Anatomies*, for example, transforms a woman's chin and neck into a phallic form, in keeping with **Freudian theories of fetishism**.



Figure **10.2.10**: Hans Bellmer, *The Doll*, 1936, gelatin silver print (MoMA)

Hans Bellmer combined sculpture with photography in the creation of his doll, whose body changed with each image, fragmenting and multiplying body parts according to the erotic desires of its maker.

Photography and film as Surrealist media

Some scholars consider photography to be the most effective of the Surrealists' visual productions in part because of its ability to reveal hidden realities and to demonstrate the transformative powers of vision. In addition, photography is less restricted by the expectations and artistic conventions that affect the traditional art forms of painting and sculpture.

Film also seems to be a particularly appropriate Surrealist medium, as was noted in the first published discussion of the possibilities for Surrealist visual art. The Surrealists recognized that film could literally show the flow of unconscious thought and create extended dream-like visual experiences. During the Dada period the group made a practice of moving from theater to theater, watching only parts of the films being screened. In this way they experienced the unfolding of a suggestive collection of disparate images without submitting to the logic of a single narrative.



Figure 10.2.11: Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, still from *L'Age d'Or*, 1930

Luis Buñuel was the most dedicated and successful Surrealist filmmaker. Salvador Dalí collaborated with him in the creation of the two most important and notorious Surrealist films, *Un Chien andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'Or* (1930). While film never became the primary focus of Surrealist visual production, the influence of Surrealism on photography and filmmaking has been immense and endures to the present day.

Additional resources:

Watch *Un Chien andalou*

Read more about Man Ray at MoMA

See all of the Rayograms from *Champs Délicieux* at the J. Paul Getty Museum

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10.3: Photography

Photographer	Focus Subject Matter	General Format
Ansel Adams	Nature, Landscape	Prints
Gordon Parks	Fashion, Poverty, Sports, Portraits	Magazine photos, Documentary
Dorothea Lange	Social Issues	Documentary
Margaret Bourke-White	Social issues, World War 2 correspondent	Magazine photos
Alfred Stieglitz	Figures, Original paintings	Prints, Exhibition

When gazing at an Ansel Adams photograph in the visitor's center at Grand Teton National Park and viewing the iconic *Tetons and the Snake River* (13.48) from 1942, one tries to think about hiking through the magical peaks of the Tetons, walking in the footsteps of Adams, and trying to visualize the images he skillfully captured. **Ansel Adams** (1902-1984) was one of America's most famous photographers and a dedicated environmentalist. Using black and white film to capture the landscapes of America's treasured national parks, he assisted in the preservation of thousands of acres of land. Born in San Francisco, California, and following his father's devotion to the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson, he understood the beauty of the natural landscape in his neighborhood and developed an appreciation for the environment that would become his lifelong focus.

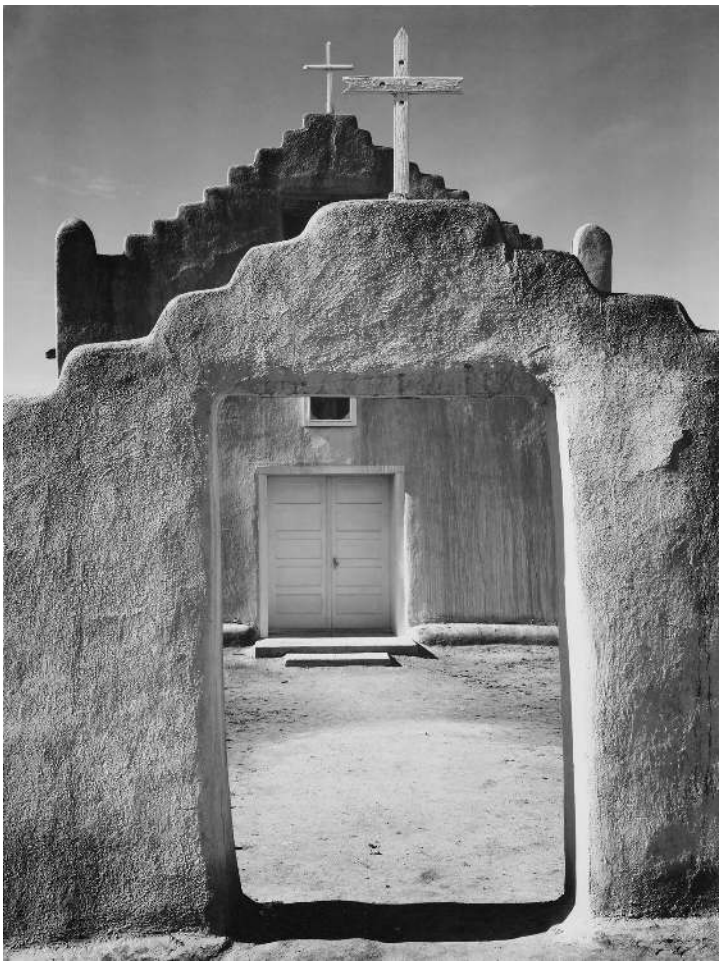
> *"To live a modest, moral life guided by a social responsibility to man and to nature" – Ralph Waldo Emerson*



13.48 *Tetons and the Snake River*

During the 1920s, Adams began his career in photography following the photo-secession movement of the famous photographer Alfred Stieglitz. In the days before Photoshop, what was captured on film was the photograph. The skill of photography was in the hands and eyes of the artist, and Adams had a gift of patience. A photographer cannot merely walk up to Half Dome in Yosemite Park and snap a beautiful photo, and it takes hours or days to capture the desired image based on the perfect light in the right

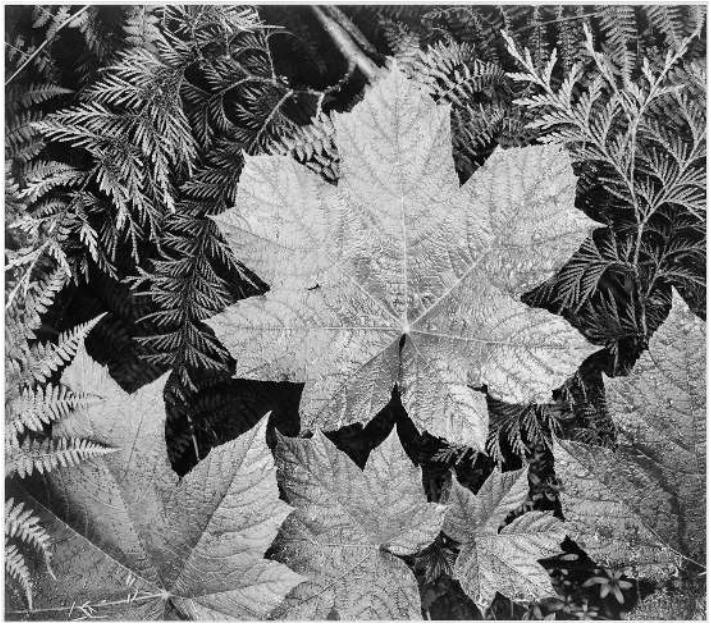
season. In the 1930s, Adams traveled extensively to take photographs, his work demonstrating an experience level of a master. He produced books of his photographs; the book *Taos Pueblo* (13.49) was a pictorial of the western United States and one of his most inspiring books. The paper inside the book was created so Adams could print directly on the paper producing an extraordinary tonal range on a matte surface.



13.49 *Taos Pueblo*



13.50 *Evening on McDonald Lake*



13.51 *Leaves at Glacier National Park*

In the early 1940s, Adams contracted with the Department of the Interior to take photographs of America's national parks. *Evening on McDonald Lake* (13.50) is an image he captured of the lake in Glacier National Park during a momentary break in the clouds. *Leaves at Glacier National Park* (13.51) is a detailed close-up of the leave structure from one of the trees in the park. Adams recorded nature in photographs for almost sixty years and earned many awards for his spectacular images and his contribution to conservation.

Gordon Parks (1912-2006) was another American photographer and film director best known for his photographic essays for *Life Magazine*. Parks grew up on a farm in Kansas and attended a segregated school. His parents died when he was a teenager, and he was on the streets to fend for himself. Buying his first camera from a pawn shop at age 25, Parker began to capture photographs of everyday life in Chicago. *American Gothic* (13.52) is a portrait of Ella Watson, who worked on the janitorial staff at the FSA building. The original *American Gothic* (13.53) by Grant Wood is clearly represented in Parks photograph, a parody to demonstrate the inequality in America. The photograph by Parks shows a single black mother holding both a mop and broom, which she used daily to clean offices. The civil rights movement in America was underway to give rights to all Americans. The final picture is one of Ella Watson and her family (13.54) at home after cleaning all night, sitting in the cramped quarters of her space.



13.52 *American Gothic*



13.52 *American Gothic*

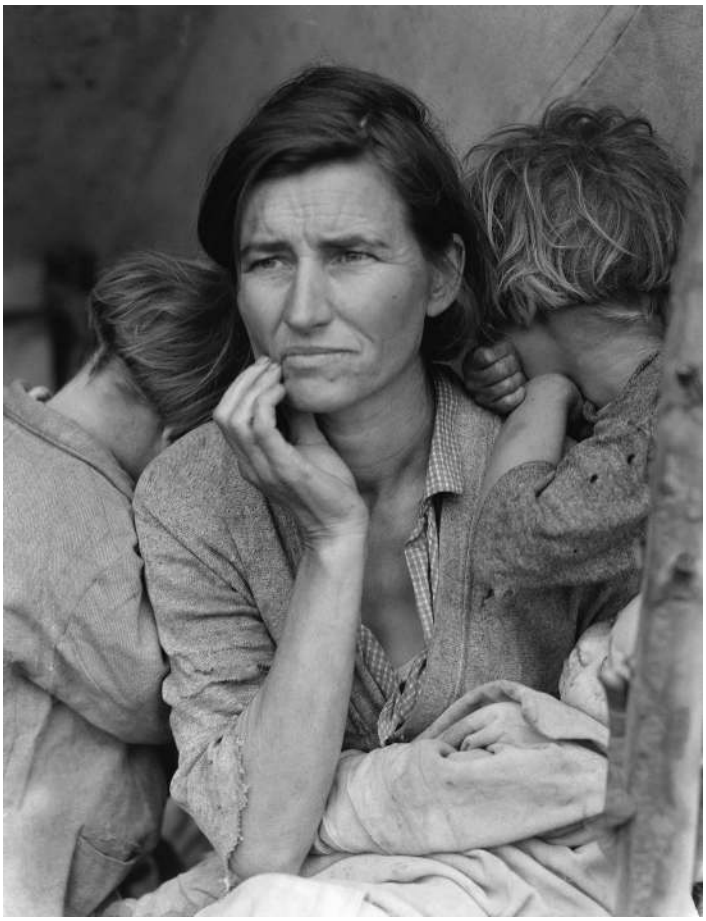


13.54 *Ella Watson and her family*

https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/260407



Migrant Mother, an icon of the American depression, is one of the most recognized photographs from **Dorothea Lange** (1895-1965). Born in New Jersey, she contracted polio at a young age, which damaged her right leg, causing her to limp the rest of her life. Lange’s health contributed to her dramatic photographs because she was able to sit motionless for hours in one place. She never hurried and coupled with her courage, and she captured some of America's finest photographs.



13.55 *Migrant Mother*

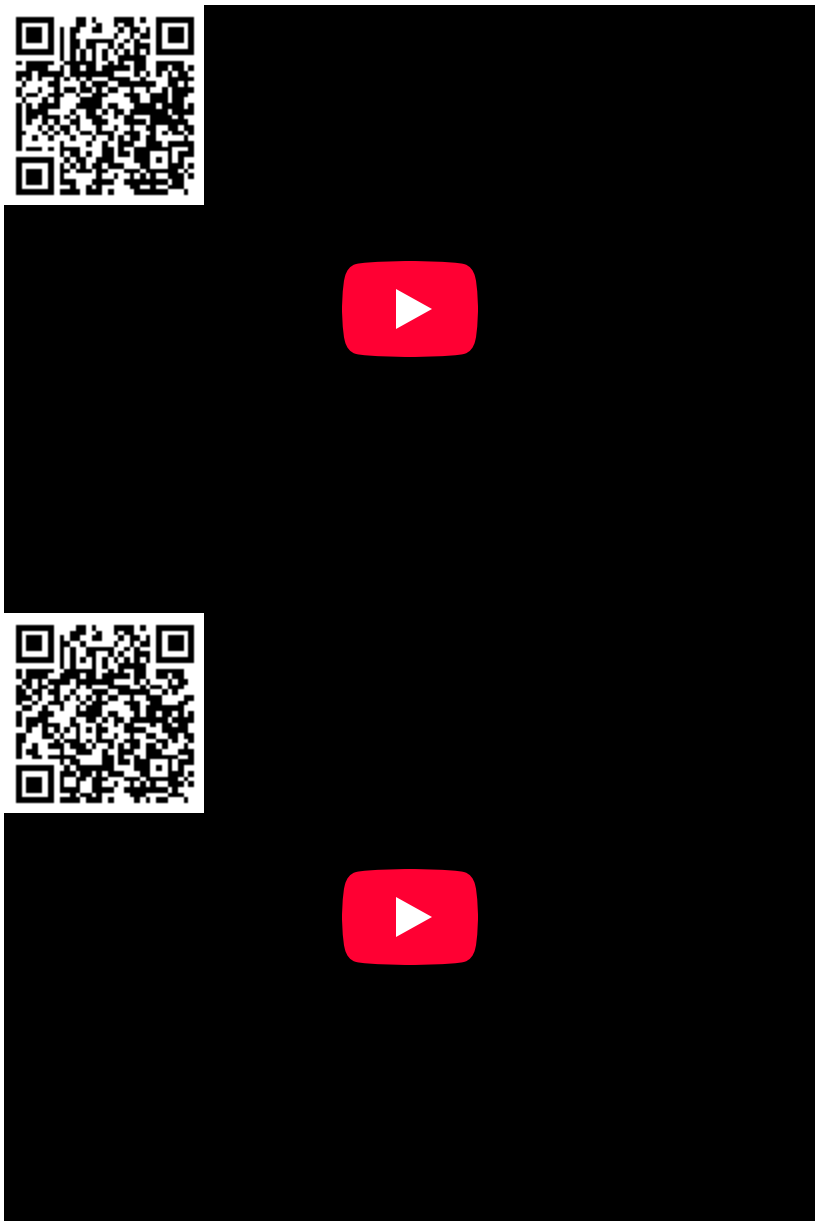


13.56 *Manzanar*

Migrant Mother (13.55) was a series of photographs taken while on assignment for the Resettlement Administration of the Farm Security Administration Office. Lange was in Nipomo, California, when she noticed a mother with several children in a tent. She took five photos, each time closer than the last one until she produced the final photograph and the eyewitness to history.

Manzanar (13.56) was one of the Japanese Internment Camps based on Executive Order 9066 President Roosevelt authorized to remove and imprison Americans of Japanese descent forcibly. Lange was hired to photograph the massive relocation project and

portray it as a necessity of American war requirements. Lange did not share the same opinion as to the government and struggled to justify her work, inspiring her to capture the suffering and misery of American citizens in the camps. Lange's work was refused and not published until 40 years later in a book after her death. Lange did not walk away from the injustice and photographed the real stories.



Another great American female photographer was **Margaret Bourke-White** (1904-1971). She is best known for her pictures in the Soviet Union and as the first foreign war photographer. Born in New York, her interest in photography started at an early age, and she worked in a commercial photography studio after college. Bourke-White was the first woman to fly with the US Air Force on a combat mission, and with the outbreak of World War II, she was already an established war correspondent. She took some of the critical images of the war (13.57) during her assignments, bringing the war into focus. She also went to India and Pakistan during their conflict and recorded events from each country, including the image of Gandhi sitting at a spinning wheel a few hours before he was assassinated.



13.57 *Flyers*

One of the most significant influences on modern photography was **Alfred Stieglitz** (1864-1946). Stieglitz was an American photographer, owned the famous Stieglitz Gallery in New York City, and was married to Georgia O'Keefe. By the turn of the 20th century, Stieglitz was an accomplished artist and began to photograph everyday scenes in New York City. *Terminal* (13.58) is a city street scene with a horse and trolley passing through the mountains of snow on the ground, steam seen rising off the horses and from their nostrils.

The *Venetian Canal* (13.59) and a portrait of *Katherine Stieglitz* (13.60) are two more examples of Stieglitz's artistic ability with the camera. The portrait of his daughter is black and white; however, the movement at the time was to colorize photographs by hand, giving them a colored photograph appearance. The photographs of Venice were taken during a nine-year trip to Europe and appeared in many magazines. The photo was taken using a straightforward printing method, without retouching. The soft focus of the photo comes from the early morning light, and the close-up is almost guaranteed with the small, tight Venetian canals.



13.58 *Terminal*



13.59 *Katherine Stieglitz*



13.60 *Venetian Canal*

When Stieglitz was near the end of his life, he was asked what he thought was the perfect photograph and he answered:

> *"I will be sitting with the plate of a picture I have just taken in my hands. It will be the picture I have always known that some day I would be able to take. It will be the perfect photograph, embodying all that I ever have wished to say. I will just have developed it; just have looked at it; just have seen that it was exactly what I wanted. The room will be empty, quiet. The walls will be bare – clean. I will sit looking at the picture. It will slip from my hands, and break as it falls to the ground. I will be dead. They will come. No one will ever have seen the picture nor know what it was." [2]*

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10.4: Trevor Paglen, The Black Sites

by **DR. CHRIS BALASCHAK**



Figure **10.4.1**: Trevor Paglen, *The Black Sites – The Salt Pit, Northeast of Kabul, Afghanistan*, 2006

As early as August of 2002, the United States Department of Justice drafted a set of legal documents that would come to be known as the "Torture Memos." [1] The documents advised the Central Intelligence Agency on the use of "enhanced interrogation techniques" on individuals detained by the CIA during the "war on terror." [2] These techniques included mental and physical abuse, humiliation, deprivation of sleep, food, and water, and were labeled "torture" (a human rights abuse) by Amnesty International in 2003. [3]



Figure **10.4.2**: Trevor Paglen, *Black Site, Kabul, Afghanistan*, 2006

The abuse described in these documents is nowhere to be seen in Trevor Paglen's photograph of *The Salt Pit*, located outside of Kabul, Afghanistan. Like a companion in the series, *Black Site, Kabul, Afghanistan*, Paglen's photograph of *The Salt Pit* is unassuming. *The Salt Pit* captures a hillside that might be any number of arid regions worldwide; beneath it, a warehouse that, if we knew no better, might be abandoned. In the foreground, though, barbed wire, and a high, beige wall, partially obstruct our view. As with its companion, *Black Site*, there is also the slight appearance of pixelation, as if the subject is out of focus, or (as is the actual case), the photograph was taken from a great distance. The banality of the subject matter in each photograph, and the obstructed view they impart, affirm a theme of concealment, indicative of the photographs' true content: secret CIA prisons, or *black sites*, facilities used as prisons and interrogation centers, whose existence is denied by their respective governments.

The "enhanced interrogation techniques" counseled in the "Torture Memos" were made visible to the public on April 28, 2004, when *60 Minutes II* broadcast photographs taken by a U.S. soldier of the torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. [4] In the week to come, Seymour Hersh's article, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," published alongside additional photographs in *The New Yorker*, would further reveal the graphic and abject character of the CIA's interrogations. [5] The Abu Ghraib prison

photographs became symbols of the coercively inhumane U.S. occupation of Iraq, while indicating a broad and largely invisible infrastructure of interrogation and intelligence gathering at *black sites*. While it remains unclear what actions took place in the locations he photographed, Trevor Paglen's *Black Sites* only further opened our eyes to the U.S. military's clandestine operations.

Exposing Black Sites

Trevor Paglen has a multi-disciplinary practice that has ranged from making photographs, writing investigative journalism, creating interactive digital exhibits, and, in 2018, launching the first "purely artistic" object into space, the ***Orbital Reflector***. What connects this disparate practice is Paglen's Ph.D. in Geography. He is interested in mapping, digital technology, and surveillance. In 2006, for example, Paglen published *Torture Taxi: On the Trail of the CIA's Rendition Flights*. Part investigative journalism, part photographic survey, *Torture Taxi* was co-written with the journalist A.C. Thompson and offered, in their words, "a quick glimpse into this new and hidden world" of rendition flights. [6] "Extraordinary rendition" was a policy pursued by the George W. Bush presidential administration that allowed for detaining and transporting enemy combatants from their country of origin to a third-party state, such as to the Guantanamo Bay detention camp (a U.S. Naval base on the island of Cuba). Transportation to the third-party state is referred to as a "rendition flight," and were made using private, civilian aircraft, in order to conceal their true operators (the US State Department) behind corporate designations. Once transported, combatants were subject to "enhanced interrogation" in an extra-legal situation, outside the U.S. jurisdiction (where torture is illegal). As critics of the program would claim, subjects were abducted for the sake of torture. Paglen's *Torture Taxi* was an attempt to document this network of *black sites* used by the United States. To photograph the *black sites*, and make them visible to the public, not only implied a desire for truth and substantiation, but also illustrated the extent to which the CIA's use of torture and "extraordinary rendition" was hidden.

The Salt Pit, revealed

Black Sites – The Salt Pit was taken in Kabul, Afghanistan, from a significant distance, and using an astronomy telescope. The image reveals blurry flat buildings surrounded by security fencing, a desolate landscape, and mountains. No human activity is visible. The site's code name, *The Salt Pit*, was revealed in a story in *The Washington Post* in 2005. However, finding the site's particular location proved to be a more difficult task. Paglen describes his search here:

> ***To find the Salt Pit, I used a collection of commercial satellite imagery, a compass, testimonies from former prisoners, and a map drawn by a former prisoner. Although they were blindfolded, hooded, and shackled, prisoners held who spent time at the Salt Pit consistently describe a ten-minute ride from the Kabul International Airport to the prison. I also had a map drawn by a man named Khaled el-Masri of what he believed the interior of the prison looked like. If you draw a circle around the Kabul airport that represents the distance that one might travel in ten minutes, and compare that to el-Masri's map, the Salt Pit jumps out at you.[7]***

Paglen's photograph of the outside of *The Salt Pit* is neither sharp nor clearly defined. The image's significance lies not in its aesthetic clarity, but simply in its existence: it is the visible trace of a location where many individuals were illegally detained and subjected to inhumane treatment. The image corroborates allegations as much as el-Masri's memories.



Figure **10.4.2**: Trevor Paglen, *Large Hangars and Fuel Storage, Tonopah Test Range*, 2006

In photographs such as *The Salt Pit* and *Large Hangars and Fuel Storage, Tonopah Test Range, NV*, which was shot from a distance of "about 18 miles," according to Paglen, the image is the product of careful research into the whereabouts of rendition flights as much as the use of high-power telephotographic lenses, with between 1,300-7,000 millimeter focal lengths. [8] The lack of detail, and subtle blur across the image, are evidence of Paglen's intent to make "hidden aspects of the landscape become apparent," while the image's lack of focus also testifies to the U.S. government's efforts to conceal their existence from the public. [9]

Susan Sontag

In her landmark 2004 essay, "Regarding the Torture of Others," Susan Sontag addressed the gravity of the Abu Ghraib photographs and their revelation of U.S. war crimes while speaking to their significance within visual culture: "What is illustrated by these photographs is as much the culture of shamelessness as the reigning admiration for unapologetic brutality." [10] Noting the pervasive use of digital photography in contemporary U.S. culture, Sontag reflected on the ways in which photography enables trauma as spectacle. But, she was careful to assert, "they were necessary to get our leaders to acknowledge that they had a problem on their hands." [11] Paglen's photographs of the CIA's *black sites* speak to an enduring quality of photography as a means of visual testimony.

Notes:

[1] "A Guide to the Memos on Torture," *The New York Times*, n.d. Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

[2] The "Torture Memos" included three documents written by the United States Department of Justice and signed in August 2002, including "Standards of Conduct for Interrogation under 18 U.S.C. sections 2340–2340A" and "Interrogation of al Qaeda." These two documents were drafted by Assistant Attorney General Jay Bybee.

[3] "Torture," Amnesty International. Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

[4] "Abuse of Iraqi POWs by GIs Probed: 60 Minutes Has Exclusive Report on Alleged Mistreatment," 60 Minutes II (April 28, 2004). Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

[5] Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," *The New Yorker* (April 30, 2004). Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

[6] Trevor Paglen and A. C. Thompson, *Torture Taxi: On the Trail of the CIA's Rendition Flights* (Hoboken, N.J.: Melville House Publishing, 2006).

[7] Trevor Paglen, "The Black Sites." Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

[8] "Limit Telephotography: Gallery, San Francisco," *Limit Telephotography*. Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

[9] Trevor Paglen, "Limit Telephotography." Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

[10] Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 23, 2004, 29. Accessed March 23, 2022.

[11] Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others," p. 42.

Additional resources

Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," *The New Yorker* (April 30, 2004). Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

Jen Itzenson, "The Experimental Geography of Trevor Paglen," *The Brooklyn Rail* (February 2007). Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

Rebecca Leung, "Abuse of Iraqi POWs by GIs Probed," *60 Minutes II* (April 27, 2004). Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

Trevor Paglen, *Blank Spots on the Map: The Dark Geography of the Pentagon's Secret World* (New York: New American Library, 2014).

Trevor Paglen, "The Black Sites," Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

Dana Priest, "CIA holds terror suspects in secret prisons," *The Washington Post* (November 2, 2005). A01.

Rebecca Solnit, "The Visibility Wars," Introduction to Trevor Paglen, *Invisible: Covert Operations and Classified Landscapes* (New York: Aperture, 2010), pp. 6–15.

Susan Sontag, "**Regarding the Torture of Others,**" *The New York Times Magazine* (May 23, 2004). Accessed Feb. 26, 2022.

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10.5: Will Wilson, Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange

by **CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**

Page ID

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Will Wilson, native Diné photographer and center of our focus exhibition, is hosting a pop-up portrait studio where he will engage guests in the Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange (CIPX). Referencing the photographs of Edward Curtis, Wilson intends to produce a contemporary visual reimagining of Native American culture through his photographs. Depicting local Native Americans who work to expand the role of their customs and heritage in today's society, Wilson follows Curtis's documentary practice, but with a renewed, open, and more fully representative eye. He uses the historic wet plate collodion process, and offers the tintype itself as a gift to the subject in return for the photograph. This pop-up will be open to all who wish to view the process in action. Wilson will then speak on the exhibition's panel later this evening, alongside various Native individuals whose work focuses on seeking justice and a more prominent role for Native culture in contemporary America.

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10.6: Cinema

Leland Stanford was bored.

In 1872, Stanford was a wealthy robber baron, former Governor of California, and horse racing enthusiast with way too much time on his hands. Spending much of that time at the track, he became convinced that a horse at full gallop lifted all four hooves off the ground. His friends scoffed at the idea. Unfortunately, a horse's legs moved so fast that it was impossible to tell with the human eye. So he did what really wealthy people do when they want to settle a bet, he turned to a nature photographer, Eadweard Muybridge, and offered him $25,000 to photograph a horse mid gallop.

Six years later, after narrowly avoiding a murder conviction (but that's another story), Muybridge perfected a technique of photographing a horse in motion with a series of 12 cameras triggered in sequence. One of the photos clearly showed that all four of the horse's hooves left the ground at full gallop. Stanford won the bet and went on to found Stanford University. Muybridge pocketed the $25,000 and became famous for the invention of **series photography**, a critical first step toward motion pictures.

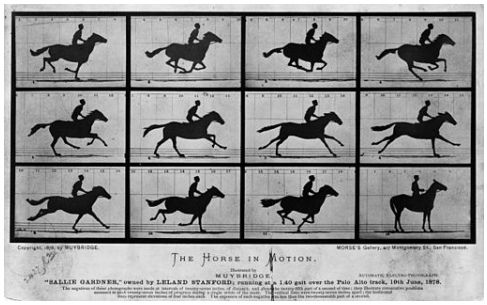


Figure **10.6.1**: The Horse in Motion. Eadweard Muybridge, 1878. (Copyright; author via source)

Of course, the mechanical reproduction of an image had already been around for some time. The **Camera Obscura**, a technique for reproducing images by projecting a scene through a tiny hole that is inverted and reversed on the opposite wall or surface (think pinhole camera), had been around since at least the 5th century BCE, if not thousands of years earlier. But it wasn't until a couple of French inventors, Nicephore Niepce and Louis Daguerre, managed to capture an image through a chemical process known as photoetching in the 1820s that photography was born. By 1837, Niepce was dead (best not to ask too many questions about that) and Daguerre had perfected the technique of fixing an image on a photographic plate through a chemical reaction of silver, iodine and mercury. He called it a **daguerreotype**. After himself. Naturally.

But to create the illusion of movement from these still images would require further innovation. The basic concept of animation was already in the air through earlier inventions like the **magic lantern** and eventually the **zoetrope**. But a photo-realistic recreation of movement was unheard of. That's where Muybridge comes in. His technique of capturing a series of still images in quick succession laid the groundwork for other inventors like Thomas Edison, Woodville Latham and Auguste and Louis Lumiere to develop new ways of photographing and projecting movement. Crucial to this process was the development of strips of light-sensitive celluloid film to replace the bulky glass plates used by Muybridge. This enabled a single camera to record a series of high-speed exposures (rather than multiple cameras taking a single photo in sequence). It also enabled that same strip of film to be projected at an equally high speed, creating the illusion of movement through a combination of optical and neurological phenomena. But more on that in the next chapter.

By 1893, 15 years after Muybridge won Stanford's bet, Edison had built the first "movie studio," a small, cramped, wood-frame hut covered in black tar paper with a hole in the roof to let in sunlight. His employees nicknamed it the **Black Maria** because it reminded them of the police prisoner transport wagons in use at the time (also known as "paddy wagons" with apologies to the Irish). One of the first films they produced was a 5 second "scene" of a man sneezing.



Riveting stuff. But still, movies were born.

Sort of.

There was just one problem: the only way to view Edison's films was through a **kinetoscope**, a machine that allowed a single viewer to peer into a viewfinder and crank through the images. The ability to project the images to a paying audience would take another couple of years.

In 1895, Woodville Latham, a chemist and Confederate veteran of the Civil War, lured away a couple of Edison's employees and perfected the technique of motion picture projection. In that same year, over in France, Auguste and Louis Lumiere invented the **cinematographe** which could perform the same modern miracle. The Lumiere brothers would receive the lion's share of the credit, but Latham and the Lumieres essentially tied for first place in the invention of cinema as we know it.

Sort of.

It turns out there was *another* French inventor, Louis Le Prince (apparently we owe a lot to the French), who was experimenting with motion pictures and had apparently perfected the technique by 1890. But when he arrived in the US for a planned public demonstration that same year – potentially eclipsing Edison's claim on the technology – he mysteriously vanished from a train. His body and luggage, including his invention, were never found. Conspiracy theories about his untimely disappearance have circulated ever since (we're looking at you, Thomas Edison).

Those early years of cinema were marked by great leaps forward in technology, but not so much forward movement in terms of art. Whether it was Edison's 5-second film of a sneeze, or the Lumieres' 46-second film *Workers Leaving a Factory* (which is exactly what it sounds like), the films were wildly popular because no one had seen anything like them, not because they were breaking new ground narratively.



There were, of course, notable exceptions. Alice Guy-Blaché was working as a secretary at a photography company when she saw the Lumieres' invention in 1895. The following year she wrote, directed and edited what many consider the first fully fictional film in cinema history, *The Cabbage Fairy* (1896):

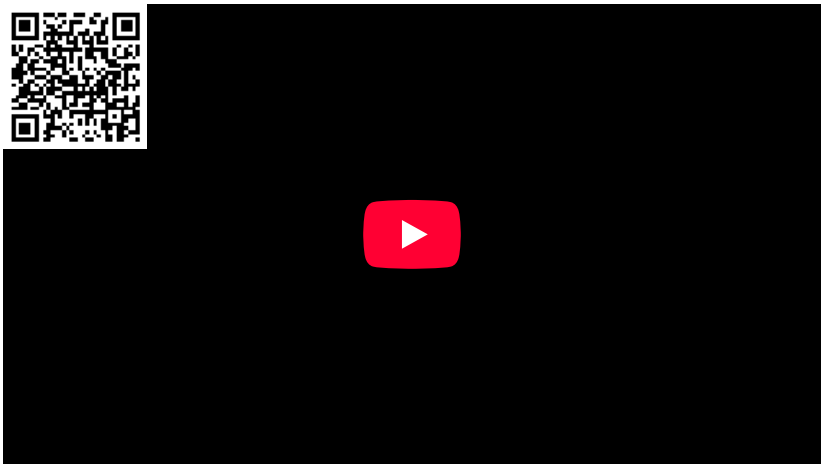


But it was George Melies who became the most well-known filmmaker-as-entertainer in those first few years. Melies was a showman in Paris with a flare for the dramatic. He was one of the first to see the Lumieres' *cinematographe* in action in 1895 and immediately saw its potential as a form of mass entertainment. Over the next couple of decades he produced hundreds of films that combined fanciful stage craft, optical illusions, and wild storylines that anticipated much of what was to come in the next century of cinema. His most famous film, *A Trip to the Moon*, produced in 1902, transported audiences to surface of the moon on a rocket ship and sometimes even included hand-tinted images to approximate color cinematography.

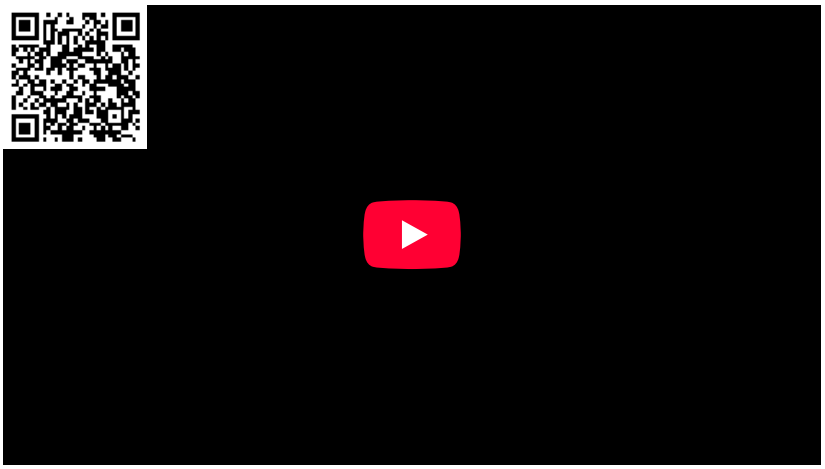


He was very much ahead of his time and would eventually be immortalized in Martin Scorsese's 2011 film *Hugo*.

By the start of the 20th century, cinema had become a global phenomenon. Fortunately, many of those early filmmakers had caught up with Melies in terms of the art of cinema and its potential as an entertainment medium. In Germany, filmmakers like Fritz Lange and Robert Weine helped form one of the earliest examples of a unique and unified cinematic style, consisting of highly stylized, surreal production designs and modernist, even futuristic narrative conventions that came to be known as *German Expressionism*. Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) was a macabre nightmare of a film about a murderous hypnotist and is considered the world's first horror movie.



And Lange's *Metropolis* (1927) was an epic science-fiction dystopian fantasy with an original running time of more than 2 hours.



Meanwhile in Soviet Russia, Lev Kuleshov and Sergei Eisenstein were experimenting with how the creative juxtaposition of images could influence how an audience thinks and feels about what they see on screen (also known as *editing*, a relatively new concept at the time). Through a series of experiments, Kuleshov demonstrated that it was this juxtaposition of images, not the discrete images themselves, that generated meaning, a phenomenon that came to be known as **The Kuleshov Effect**. Eisenstein, his friend and colleague, applied Kuleshov's theories to his own cinematic creations, including the concept of *montage*: a collage of moving images designed to create an emotional effect rather than a logical narrative sequence. Eisenstein's most famous use of this technique is in the Odessa steps sequence of his historical epic, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).



But it was the United States that was destined to become the center of the cinematic universe, especially as it grew into a global mass entertainment medium. Lois Weber was an early innovator and the first American director, male or female, to make a narrative feature film, *The Merchant of Venuce* (1914). Throughout her career, Weber would pursued subjects considered controversial at the time, such as abortion, birth control and capital punishment (it helped that she owned her own studio). But it wasn't just her subject matter that pushed the envelope. For example, in her short film, *Suspense* (1913) she pioneered the use of intercutting and basically invented split screen editing.



Others, like D. W. Griffith, followed suit (though it's doubtful Griffith would have given Weber any credit). Like Weber, Griffith helped pioneer the full-length feature film and invented many of the narrative conventions, camera moves and editing techniques still in use today. Unfortunately, many of those innovations were first introduced in his ignoble, wildly racist (and wildly popular at the time) *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Griffith followed that up the next year with the somewhat ironically-titled *Intolerance* (1916), a box office disappointment but notable for its larger than life sets, extravagant costumes, and complex story-line that made George Melies's creations seem quaint by comparison.



Weber, Griffith and many other filmmakers and entrepreneurs would go on to establish film studios able to churn out hundreds of short and long-form content for the movie theaters popping up on almost every street corner.

CINEMA GOES HOLLYWOOD

This burgeoning new entertainment industry was not, however, located in southern California. Not yet, anyway. Almost all of the production facilities in business at the time were in New York, New Jersey or somewhere on the Eastern seaboard. Partly because the one man who still controlled the technology that made cinema possible was based there: Thomas Edison. Edison owned the patent for capturing and projecting motion pictures, essentially cornering the market on the new technology (R.I.P. Louis Le Prince). If you wanted to make a movie in the 1900s or 1910s, you had to pay Edison for the privilege.

Not surprisingly, a lot of would-be filmmakers bristled at Edison's control over the industry. And since patent law was difficult to enforce across state lines at the time, many of them saw California as an ideal place to start a career in filmmaking. Sure, the weather was nice. But it was also as far away from the northeast as you could possibly get within the continental United States, and a lot harder for Edison to sue for patent violations.

By 1912, Los Angeles had replaced New York as the center of the film business, attracting filmmakers and entertainment entrepreneurs from around the world. World-renowned filmmakers like Ernst Lubitsch from Germany, Erich von Stroheim from Austria, and an impish comedian from England named Charlie Chaplin, all flocked to the massive new production facilities that sprang up around the city. Universal Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Warner Bros., all of them motion picture factories able to mass-produce dozens, sometimes hundreds of films per year. And they were surrounded by hundreds of other, smaller companies, all of them competing for screen space in thousands of new movie houses around the country.

One small neighborhood in the heart of Los Angeles became most closely associated with the burgeoning new industry: Hollywood.

By 1915, after a few years of failed lawsuits (and one imagines a fair number of temper-tantrums), Thomas Edison admitted defeat and dissolved his Motion Picture Patents Company.

In the heyday of those early years, some of those larger studios decided the best way to ensure an audience for their films was to own the theaters as well. They built extravagant movie palaces in large market cities, and hundreds more humble theaters in small towns, effectively controlling all aspects of the business: production, distribution and exhibition. In business terms that's called *vertical integration*. It's a practice that would get them in a lot of trouble with the U.S. government a couple of decades later, but in the meantime, it meant big profits with no end in sight.

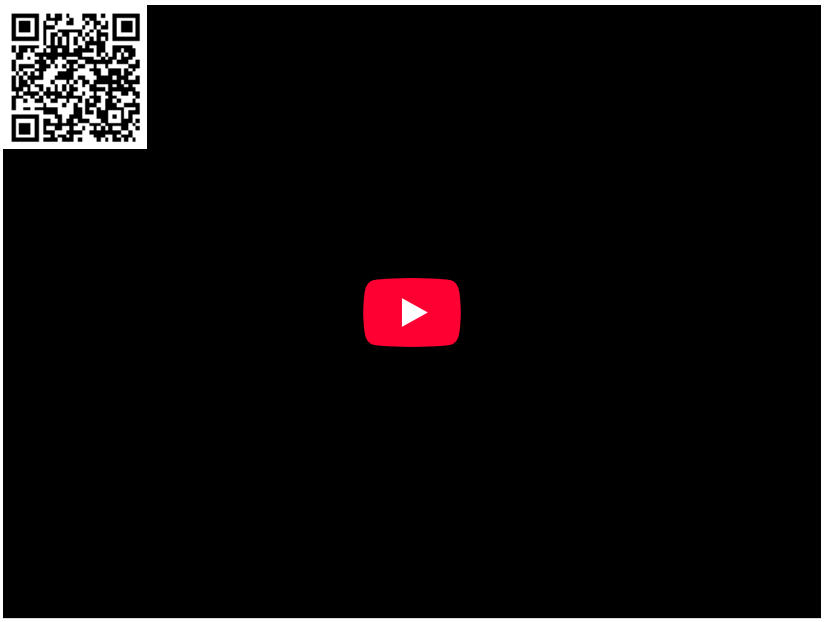
Then, in 1927, everything changed.

Warner Bros. was a family-owned studio run by five brothers and smaller than some of the other larger companies like Universal and MGM. But one of those brothers, Sam, had a vision. Or rather, an ear. Up to that point, cinema was still a silent medium. But Sam was convinced that sound, and more specifically, sound that was synchronized to the image, was the future.

And almost everyone thought he was crazy.

It seems absurd now, but no one saw any reason to add sound to an already perfect, and very profitable, visual medium. What next? Color? Don't be ridiculous…

Fortunately, Sam Warner persisted, investing the company's profits into the technology required to not only record synchronized sound, but to reproduce it in their movie theaters around the country. Finally, on October 6th, 1927, Warner Bros. released *The Jazz Singer*, the first film to include synchronized dialog.



Spoiler alert: It was a HUGE success. Unfortunately, Sam Warner didn't live to see it. He died of a brain infection on October 5th, the day before the premiere.

Suddenly, every studio was scrambling to catch up to Warner Bros. That meant a massive capital investment in sound technology, retrofitting production facilities *and* thousands of movie theaters. Not every production company could afford the upgrade, and many struggled to compete in the new market for films with synchronized sound. And just when it seemed like it couldn't get worse for those smaller companies, it did. In October of 1929, the stock market crashed, plunging the nation into the Great Depression. Hundreds of production companies closed their doors for good.

At the start of the 1930s, after this tremendous consolidation in the industry, eight major studios were left standing: RKO Pictures, Paramount, MGM, Fox, Warner Bros., Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures and United Artists. Five of those – RKO, Paramount, MGM, Fox and Warner Bros. – also still owned extensive theater chains (aka **vertical integration**), an important source of their enormous profits, even during the Depression (apparently movies have always been a way to escape our troubles, at least for a couple of hours). But that didn't mean they could carry on with business as usual. They were forced to be as efficient as possible to maximize profits. Perhaps ironically, this led to a 20-year stretch, from 1927 to 1948, that would become known as The Golden Age, one of the most prolific and critically acclaimed periods in the history of Hollywood.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The so-called Golden Age of Hollywood was dominated by those eight powerful studios and defined by four crucial business decisions.[1] First and foremost, at least for five of the eight, was the emphasis on vertical integration. By owning and controlling every aspect of the business, production, distribution and exhibition, those companies could minimize risk and maximize profit by monopolizing the screens in local theaters. Theatergoers would hand over their hard-earned nickels regardless of what was playing, and that meant the studios could cut costs and not lose paying customers. And even for those few independent theater chains, the studios minimized risk through practices such as **block booking** and **blind bidding**. Essentially, the studios would force theaters to buy a block of several films to screen (block booking), sometimes without even knowing what they were paying for (blind bidding). One or two might be prestige films with well-known actors and higher production values, but the rest would be low-budget westerns or thrillers that theaters would be forced to exhibit. The studios made money regardless.

The second crucial business decision was to centralize the production process. Rather than allow actual filmmakers – writers, directors, actors – to control the creative process, deciding what scripts to develop and which films to put into production, the major studios relied on one or two **central producers**. At Warner Bros. it was Jack Warner and Darryl Zanuck. At RKO it was David. O. Selznick. And at MGM it was Louis B. Mayer and 28 year-old Irving Thalberg.



Irving Thalberg. Central Producer at MGM.

Thalberg would become the greatest example of the central producer role, running the most profitable studio throughout the Golden Age. Thalberg personally oversaw every production on the MGM lot, hiring and firing every writer, director and actor, and often taking over as editor before the films were shipped off to theaters. And yet, he shunned fame and never put his name on any of MGM's productions. Always in ill-health, perhaps in part because of his inhuman workload, he died young, in 1936, at age 37.

The third business decision that ensured studios could control costs and maximize profits was to keep the "talent" – writers, directors and actors – on low-cost, iron-clad, multi-year contracts. As Hollywood moved into the Golden Age, filmmakers – especially actors – became internationally famous. Stardom was a new and exciting concept, and studios depended on it to sell tickets. But if any one of these new global celebrities had the power to demand a fee commensurate with their name recognition, it could bankrupt even the most successful studio. To protect against stars leveraging their fame for higher pay, and thus cutting in on their profits, the studios maintained a stable of actors on contracts that limited their salaries to low weekly rates for years on end no matter how successful their films might become. There were no per-film negotiations and certainly no profit sharing. And if an actor decided to sit out a film or two in protest, their contracts would be extended by however long they held out. Bette Davis, one of the biggest stars of the era, once fled to England to escape her draconian contract with Warner Bros. Warner Bros. sued the British production companies that might employ her and England sent her back. These same contracts applied to writers and directors, employed by the studio as staff, not the freelance creatives they are today. It was an ingenious (and diabolical) system that meant studios could keep their production costs incredibly low.

The fourth and final crucial business decision that made the Golden Age possible was the creative specialization, or **house style**, of each major studio. Rather than try to make every kind of movie for every kind of taste, the studios knew they needed to specialize, to lean into what they did best. This decision, perhaps more than any of the others, is what made this period so creatively fertile. Despite all of the restrictions imposed by vertical integration, central producers, and talent contracts, the house style of a given studio meant that all of their resources went into making the very best version of certain kind of film. For MGM, it was the "prestige" picture. An MGM movie almost always centered on the elite class, lavish set designs, rags to riches stories, the perfect escapist, aspirational content for the 1930s. For Warner Bros. it was the gritty urban crime thriller: *Little Caesar* (1931), *The Public Enemy* (1931), *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). They were cheap to make and audiences ate them up. Gangsters, hardboiled detectives, femme fatales, these were all consistent elements of Warner Bros. films of the period. And for Universal, it was the horror movie:



Frankenstein (1931), *Dracula* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), all of them Universal pictures (and many of them inspired by the surreal production design of German Expressionist films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*).

But the fun and profits couldn't last forever.

Three important events conspired to bring an end the reign of the major studios and the Golden Age of Hollywood.

First, in 1943, Olivia de Havilland, a young actress known for her role as Melanie in *Gone with the Wind* (1939), sued Warner Bros. for adding six months to her contract, the amount of time she had been suspended by the studio for refusing to take roles she didn't want. She wasn't the first Hollywood actor to sue a studio over their stifling contracts. But she was the first to win her case. The court's decision in her favor set a precedent that quickly eroded the studios' power over talent. Soon actors became freelance performers, demanding fees that matched their box office draw and even profit participation in the success of their films. All of which took a sizeable chunk out the studios' revenue.

Then, in 1948, the U.S. government filed an anti-trust case against the major studios, finally recognizing that vertical integration constituted an unfair monopoly over the entertainment industry. The case went to the Supreme Court and in a landmark ruling known as **The Paramount Decision** (only because Paramount was listed first in the suit), the court ordered that all of the major studios sell off their theater chains and outlawed the practices of block booking and blind bidding. It was a financial disaster for the big studios. No longer able to shovel content to their own theater chains, studios had to actually consider what independent theaters wanted to screen and what paying audiences wanted to see. The result was a dramatic contraction in output as studios made fewer and fewer movies with increasingly expensive, freelance talent hoping to hit the moving target of audience interest.

And then it got worse.

In the wake of World War II, just as the Supreme Court was handing down The Paramount Decision, the television set was quickly becoming a common household item. By the end of the 1940s and into the 1950s, the rise of television entertainment meant fewer reasons to leave house and more reasons for the movie studios to panic. Some of them, like MGM, realized there was money to be made in licensing their film libraries to broadcasters. And some of them, like Universal, realized there was money to be made in leasing their vast production facilities to television producers. But all of them knew it was an end of an era.

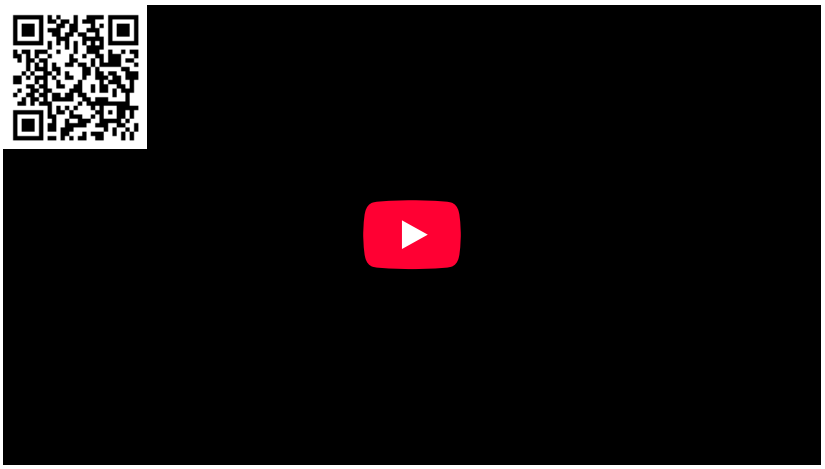
THE NEW HOLLYWOOD

The end of the Golden Age thrust Hollywood into two decades of uncertainty as the major studios struggled to compete with the new Golden Age of *Television* and their own inability to find the pulse of the American theater-going public. There were plenty of successes. MGM's focus on musicals like *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) and historical extravaganzas like *Ben Hur* (1959), for example, helped keep them afloat. (Though those came too late for Louis B. Mayer, one of the founders of the studio. He was fired in 1951.) But throughout the 50s and 60s, studios found themselves spending more and more money on fewer and fewer films and making smaller and smaller profits. To make matters worse, many of these once family-owned companies were being bought up by larger, multi-national corporations. Universal was bought out by MCA (a talent agency) in 1958. Paramount by Gulf Western in 1966. And Warner Bros. by Seven Arts that same year. These new parent companies were often publicly traded with a board of directors beholden to shareholders. They expected results.

And that's when Warren Beatty, an ambitious young actor, walked into Jack Warner's office with a scandalous script about two mass murderers named Bonnie and Clyde in his hand. Inspired by the upstart, avant-garde filmmakers making waves in France with their edgy, experimental films like Agnes Varda's *La Pointe Courte* (1955), Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) and Francois Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959) (we can't seem to get away from the French!), Beatty wanted to break the mold of the Warner Bros. gritty crime thriller. He wanted to make something bold, unpredictable, and transgressive. He begged the aging Warner brother to finance the film.

Maybe Jack Warner was at the end of his creative rope. Maybe he knew the movie business needed to start taking risks again. Maybe he was inspired by Beatty's artistic vision. Or maybe he had just sold the studio to Seven Arts and figured Beatty's crazy idea for a movie would be their problem, a parting shot before the last Warner left the building.

Whatever the reason, Warner Bros. bankrolled *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), tried to bury it on release, but ultimately had to admit they had a huge hit on their hands. It was as bold, unpredictable, and transgressive (for its time) as Beatty had hoped. And audiences, especially younger audiences, loved it.



Six months later, an off-beat comedy no studio would touch called *The Graduate* (1967) opened to equally enthusiastic audiences and extraordinary profits. And two years after that, BBS, a fledgling production company bankrolled by its success in television, produced *Easy Rider* (1969), a drug-fueled, fever dream of a movie that captured a changing America, a seismic shift in the culture at the end of the 1960s. It cost less the $500,000 to make and earned nearly $60 million at the box office. Something had indeed changed. The major studios weren't sure exactly what It was, but they knew they wanted a piece of it.

The next decade would become another creative renaissance for the film industry known as The New Hollywood.[2] Like the Golden Age which rose from the ashes of the Great Depression and the rise of synchronized sound, The New Hollywood rose from the ashes of The Paramount Decision and the rise of television. Unlike the Golden Age, however, The New Hollywood emphasized the authority of the director and star over the material, not the central producer. And rather than control costs to maximize profits, studios allowed the freelance artists they employed to experiment with the form and take creative risks. In fact, more and more filmmakers were smart enough to shoot on location rather than on the studio backlot where executives might micromanage their productions.

Those risks didn't always pay off, but when they did, they more than made up for the disappointments. Films like *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Exorcist* (1973) broke every accepted norm of cinematography, sound design, narrative structure, editing, performance and even distribution models. And in the process broke every box office record.

But such creative fertility *and* unpredictability couldn't last forever. Not when there are billions of dollars at stake. The New Hollywood was done in by a one-two punch of films that were so successful, so astronomically profitable, they would have to coin a new term for them: **Blockbusters**.

The first was meant to be a run-of-the-mill Universal monster movie, a direct descendent of the studio's Golden Age classics like *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. This time around it would be a shark. A really big shark. And in a (futile) effort to save some money, they assigned a young, 28 year-old television director named Steven Spielberg to helm the project. *JAWS* (1975) cost $9 million to make (three times more than Universal budgeted) and took 159 days to shoot (three times longer the Universal had hoped), but it grossed more than $120 million in its first theatrical run. It hit Hollywood like a tidal wave. A simple genre movie with clear heroes and just enough eye-popping special effects to wow the audience. Best of all, there was no need for an expensive, star-studded cast or a well-known, temperamental director. The concept was the star. It was a formula the studios understood and knew they could replicate.

Two years later, 20th Century Fox released *Star Wars* (1977). Its success dwarfed that of *JAWS*.

Hollywood would never be the same.



BIG MEDIA AND GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT

The rise of the blockbuster breathed new life into the Hollywood studio system, and by the 1980s, they had successfully wrested control of the filmmaking process from the young upstart artists of The New Hollywood era. But with increasing profits came increasing interest from investors and larger multi-national corporations looking to diversify their portfolios. The acquisition of major studios in the late 50s and 60s by mega-companies such as Gulf Western continued into the 80s and 90s.

For example, between 1969 and 2004, entrepreneur Kirk Kerkorian bought and sold MGM three times (mostly so he could put its name on a casino in Las Vegas) until finally selling it to Sony, the Japanese electronics company. In 1990, Warner Bros. merged with Time, Inc. to form Time Warner which was in turn purchased by AOL, an internet service provider, in 2000, then spun off into its own company again in 2009 before being purchase by AT&T in 2019. Throughout the 1980s, 20th Century Fox changed hands among private investors multiple times until finally falling into the hands of Australian media tycoon Rupert Murdoch. It was in turn acquired by Disney in 2019. But it's Universal that has the most colorful acquisition history. In 1990, MCA which owned Universal was acquired by Panasonic, another Japanese electronics company. In 1995, Panasonic sold it to Seagram, a Canadian beverage company, which in turn sold it to Vivendi, a French water utility in 2000 (the French again!). Vivendi sold the studio to General Electric, this time an *American* electronics company that already owned NBC. Finally, in 2011, GE sold NBC Universal to Comcast, the cable provider (which incidentally joined forces with Sony to purchase MGM back in 2004).

If all of that makes your head spin, you're not alone. In short, back in 1983, 90% of all American media was controlled by more than 50 distinct companies. By 2012, that same percentage was controlled by just 5. By 2019, it was down to 4: Comcast, Disney, AT&T and National Amusements.

This massive consolidation of American media companies has equally massive implications for cinema. Beholden to shareholders and the corporate bottom-line, Hollywood studios must be more efficient than ever, producing fewer and fewer movies at higher and higher budgets to attract more and more eyeballs. And if that sounds familiar, you've been paying attention. A similar consolidation occurred after the advent of sound and the financial havoc of the stock market crash of 1929. Only this time, major studios don't have the luxury of monopoly control through vertical integration (though they are dancing close to the edge with Comcast and AT&T, both internet and cable providers, controlling nearly half of all media in the United States). Instead, they've looked abroad to a new and growing global audience to ensure profitability.

Before 2008, international sales made up less than 20% of box office dollars. By 2008 it was 50%. By 2013 it had grown to more than 70% of Hollywood's bottom line. That's due in part to a massive investment in theaters around the world. In 2019, there were more than 200,000 cinema screens globally. Just over 44,000 were in the United States and Canada. Nearly 100,000 were in Asia alone.[3] And the theaters themselves are not immune to consolidation. In 2013, Dalian Wanda, a Chinese company, bought the American theater chain AMC for $2.6 billion.

What does all of this mean for contemporary cinema? At the corporate Hollywood level, it means tailoring content for a global audience. That means building film franchises around globally recognizable characters and brands. If you're thinking Marvel and DC comics, you're on the right track. That means fewer original movies and more entertainment spectacles that in turn cost more money to make. The lessons Hollywood learned from the blockbusters *JAWS* and *Star Wars* in the 1970s seem to have been carried to their logical conclusion.

But corporate Hollywood isn't the only hope for cinema.

A NEW HOPE

While much of this (very) brief history of cinema has focused on the media machine that is the Hollywood studio system, cinema – that is, the art of motion pictures – lives and breathes outside of that capital-intensive entertainment ecosystem. And it always has.

Alice Guy-Blachè, Georges Melies, Lois Weber, D.W. Griffith, and most of the very first cinema artists operated independently of any corporate studio. And during that great Golden Age of cinema, which was so dominated by Hollywood studios, independent producers like David O. Selznick were putting out massively popular films like Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and the perennially remade *A Star is Born* (1937). One of the most successful films of the era, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) was arguably an "indie" picture (Selznick produced it with MGM as distributor). In fact, the New Hollywood of the 60s and 70s could not have taken hold at the corporate level without visionary filmmakers like Mike Nichols, Dennis Hopper and Hal Ashby working outside of the studio system:

As the technology required to make motion pictures became easier and cheaper to acquire, more and more cinema artists chose to work outside of the studio system. Towering figures like Shirley Clarke in the 1960s, John Cassavetes in the 1970s and Jim Jarmusch in the 1980s put out provocative and engaging cinema with limited distribution to match their limited budgets but often with enormous cultural impact. That trend continued into the 1990s and 2000s, supported by new production and distribution companies like Miramax (founded by the now disgraced Harvey Weinstein) that insisted on working outside of the studio system and often outside of Los Angeles itself.

That independent spirit in American cinema also created space for women and people of color to have a voice in the art form. A quick scan of the history above and you'll notice there are not a lot of women's names. And almost all of the men are white. But filmmakers like Shirley Clarke, Julie Dash and Allison Anders didn't wait around for Hollywood to give them permission to make great cinema. Nor did the filmmakers of the early so-called Blaxploitation movement (though their success was eventually and sadly co-opted by white filmmakers).

And as the massive corporate consolidation of the American media landscape has created a narrowing of cinematic content from the big studios, that indie spirit – along with a healthy dose of investor interest – has lead to new innovations in production and distribution models. Whether it's pre-selling foreign rights to a script to fund its production, or turning to streaming services for funding in return for exclusive rights to content, filmmakers continue to find new ways to push the boundaries of what is possible in cinema. Just take a look at the nominees for best picture at any of the recent Academy Awards ceremonies. Once dominated by studio-financed pictures, almost all of them are now independent productions.

But perhaps the most exciting new direction in cinema is not found in theaters at all. For more than a century, cinema has been most closely associated with that roughly 90 minute, closed-ended feature film playing at a theater near you. And while that continues to be an important cinematic space, the rise of cable and streaming services in desperate need of content has created exciting new frontiers to explore for the medium. No longer restricted to those 90 or so minutes, cinema can sprawl over 100s of hours or even just a few cut into 30 minutes chunks. And while it's tempting to call this a new Golden Age of Television, even the term "television" no longer seems appropriate. We consume this content on all manner of devices, on our phones, laptops, even our wristwatches. Even theatrical content has picked up on the trend. What is the *Fast and Furious*, the *Transformers* or *The Avengers* franchises but multi-billion dollar episodic series distributed to theaters (and after a few months to our phones, laptops and wristwatches)?

Ultimately, regardless of how it's made or how we engage with it, all of the above still fits into one artistic medium: cinema, the art of the motion picture. The tools and techniques, the principals of form and content, are all exactly the same. And that will be true whatever comes next, whether it's VR, AR or a cinema-chip implanted in our visual cortex (heaven forbid…). Mise-en-scene, narrative, cinematography, editing, sound and acting will all still matter. And our understanding of how those tools and techniques not only shape the medium, but also shape our culture will also still matter. Maybe more than ever.

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1. For a much more detailed analysis of this period (and a thoroughly entertaining read for film buffs), check out Thomas Schatz's The Genius of the System. ↵
2. If you want to know more about this fertile, drug-fueled portion of Hollywood history, check out Peter Biskind's Easy Riders, Raging Bulls. ↵
3. You can see a comprehensive report on the global entertainment marketplace here: www.motionpictures.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/MPA-THEME-2019.pdf↵

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10.7: Women in Cinema

> *"It seems like a silly, girlish thing to do."*

That's what Léon Gaumont, owner of a Parisian photography company, said to his secretary, Alice Guy-Blaché, when she asked if she could film a few scenes with the new cinematograph in 1896. They had just come from the exhibition where the Lumiere brothers had unveiled their invention with such riveting classics as *Workers Leaving a Factory* and *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* (okay, that's sarcasm, they were super boring). But Alice saw the potential of the new technology. She saw a whole new way to tell a story. And she wanted to see what she could do with it. Her boss was less enthusiastic, "On one condition: that your office work doesn't suffer."

So, after hours, Alice wrote, directed and edited *The Cabbage Fairy* (1896), a short, one-minute film about a young woman plucking babies out of a cabbage patch:



By all accounts, it was the first entirely fictional film ever produced. Before Georges Melies. Before D. W. Griffith. In fact, Alice Guy-Blaché would go on to establish her own studio, Solax Pictures, in the United States in 1910, and make as many as 1,000 films over the course of her lifetime. Many of those films featured women in principle roles or gave women at least equal weight to men. She experimented with synchronized sound, color cinematography, and pushed the boundaries of what was possible in cinematic storytelling.

She was a force of nature in the fledgling film industry. One of a kind.

And that was the problem.

For those first several years of her professional life, she was one of the *only* women making cinema *in the world*. Others would follow, of course, including Lois Weber (who got her start by working for Guy-Blaché), the great Mabel Normand (the female Charlie Chaplin… or maybe Chaplin was the male Mabel Norman), and eventually, during the Golden Age, the trailblazing Ida Lupino (who also formed her own small studio). And there were many women employed as writers and, especially, editors in the early film industry. But the fact was, that industry was (and unfortunately still is) dominated by men:



I know. What's new, right? An industry dominated by men that historically marginalizes women, forcing them to work twice as hard to achieve half as much. It's an all-too-common theme in modern history. But there's something much more important at work here than "simply" unfair labor practices. The films produced out of this imbalance became part of our shared cultural experience, they showed us ourselves to ourselves, or at least a version of ourselves. And that version was shaped almost entirely by men.

Just take a look at the earliest films ever made. George Melies' *A Trip to the Moon*, for example. An intrepid group of astronomers – all men – set off on a scientific expedition to the moon (shot from a cannon inexplicably surrounded by bevy of young women in skimpy sailor suits). Remember Lev Kuleshov's experiment with editing? It pointedly featured a man "reacting" to a scantily-clad woman. Heck, even Edison's early 5-second film *The Sneeze* is an uninspired image of a *man* sneezing.

Guy-Blaché's first film? It featured a woman without a man in sight.

Perhaps if there were more Alice Guy-Blachés and fewer D. W. Griffiths in those early years I wouldn't need to write this chapter (but, come on, who are we kidding?). But the net result of this lopsided control over one of the most influential forms of mass media in the 20th century was a seemingly infinite loop of images crafted by men and re-enforcing the idea that women were the "weaker sex". In fact, in almost all of those early films women characters were relegated to two conflicting roles: the virginal, saintly Madonna in need of saving; or the debased, fallen "loose" woman who must be cast out if not eliminated.

It was right out of Freud. Literally. Sigmund Freud had a term for it - the **Madonna-Whore Complex**. It explained what he observed as a paradox of male desire: the degraded "loose" women men desired were not worthy of love; and yet the women worthy of men's love were too pure to be desired. Film critics have applied this concept to the (mostly male) portrayal of women in early film, a kind of psychoanalysis of cinema, and have found a startling pattern of women cast as either the chaste "damsel in distress" or the wanton temptress. Remember this scene back in the chapter on editing:



It's from D.W. Griffith's *Way Down East* (1920). I used it to demonstrate an early example of parallel action, an element of cinematic form. But what about the content? Well, it's about a young woman, played by Lilian Gish, who is tricked into a fake marriage, gets pregnant, is abandoned by the father, loses the baby, tries to start over in a new town and when her "disgraceful" past is exposed, is cast out into the snow by the town mayor. Fortunately, the mayor's own son heroically saves her. A kind of two-for-one in the Madonna-Whore Complex.

And it turns out Gish and Griffiths made a habit of leaning hard into this trope. Remember this scene:



It's from Griffith's *Broken Blossoms* (1919). I used it to demonstrate an early example of acting style, another element of cinematic form. And the content? This one is about a young woman, again played by Gish, who is brutalized by her abusive father and finds solace in the (chaste) arms of a Chinese immigrant. When her father finds out, he beats her. To death. The Chinese immigrant, played by Richard Barthelmess (the same actor who saves Gish in *Way Down East*, and no, he was not Asian), kills her father and then kills himself. This one has all the trappings of the Madonna-Whore Complex *and* xenophobic racism. Griffith was on a roll.



Figure **10.7.1**: Cleopatra as portrayed by Theda Bara in the American film Cleopatra (1917), in a costume of dubious historical accuracy. (Public Domain; Fox Film Corporation via Wikipedia)

But perhaps the best (worst?) example of the Madonna-Whore Complex in early cinema, at least in terms of the villainous temptress aspect, would have to be Theda Bara. Bara was arguably cinema's first sex symbol, appearing in over 40 films during the silent era. The term "vamp" was actually coined to refer to her recurring character, an intoxicating temptress who could lure even the most morally upright men into sin. Rumors circulated that she was born in the Sahara, a mysterious and wanton woman.

The truth is, she was born Theodosia Goodman, and her father was a tailor from Cincinnati. The name Theda Bara? Fox Studios made it up. It's an anagram for "Arab Death" (Oh, how I wish *I* were making this up).

These are just a few examples of early cinema's narrow view of women and the roles they were allowed to play. But how does this happen? Are the men behind the camera all raging misogynists? Maybe. But it's not that simple. To understand how this pattern developed and what effect it has on society, we have to understand how certain kinds of power work, and what happens when that power intersects with mass media.

The first concept we need to understand is **hegemony**. In the most basic sense, hegemony refers to any political or social dominance of one group over another. Now, any good colonizer will tell you that anyone with a large enough army can exert a certain amount of control over another nation or region simply by brute force. But violence will only get you so far. Sooner or later, the oppressed will resist violence with violence. Instead, what if you could convince them their oppression is somehow beneficial, or even divinely ordained? What if you could establish a set of cultural institutions – politics, education, religion, the arts, etc – that built this narrative of colonization as the "natural order of things" from the ground up? What if the oppressed *internalized* this narrative and actually participated in their own repression? Well, then you'd have a hegemony on your hands. And perhaps the most insidious aspect of this form of power? It works both ways. Those in power *also* internalize that narrative, believing that their oppression of whole nations and regions is somehow divinely ordained and, ultimately, for everyone's own good.

Don't believe me? Just ask the British Empire how they managed to rule over 1/4 of the earth's population at the height of their power.

The second concept we need to understand is **patriarchy**. The term refers to any cultural system in which men hold the primary power (political, social, economic, moral), including authority over women. To be clear, just because a nation elects a woman as head of state (I'm looking at you, basically every modern democracy *except* the United States) doesn't mean they've suddenly ushered in a matriarchy. Patriarchies are complex, historically produced and institutionally affirmed systems where power is multi-layered and distributed unevenly throughout society. A woman president of the United States, for example, would not instantly shift that balance of power (any more than an African American president instantly eradicated racism).

So, two big ideas – hegemony and patriarchy – put them together and what do you got? That's right, **hegemonic patriarchy**: a cultural system in which men hold the primary power to manipulate meaning and values such that even women perceive their own subjugation as the natural order of things. Whew. Quite a mouthful. Let's break it down. This is a system in which men wield extraordinary power over women, not through physical violence (though all too often that is employed as well), but through an array of cultural institutions that convince women that their oppression is somehow for their own benefit, divinely ordained, the "natural order of things." And the trick is, men come to believe it too, convinced by that same narrative. The result is that no one,

neither the oppressed not the oppressor, recognizes it as a cultural invention, a product of history. They all believe it to be a truth that exists outside of themselves, and no one thinks to challenge it.

What does hegemonic patriarchy have to do with cinema? Well, it turns out, mass media is one of the most effective means of communicating the values and ideas that prop up hegemonic systems. And cinema, a medium that has historically been controlled almost entirely by men (and white men at that, but more on that later), is one of the most effective examples of mass media. In fact, for the previous eight chapters I've discussed in great detail how cinema manipulates meaning through a host of tools and techniques that remain largely invisible, by design, to most viewers. And that's exactly how we like it. We *want* to be manipulated. But maybe we should think a little more deeply about *what* is being manipulated and just *who* is doing the manipulating. In film after film, from the earliest narrative cinema, through the Golden Age and the New Hollywood, and arguably into the modern era, the Madonna-Whore Complex has shaped how cinema, and by implication we the audience, see women. For the men in that audience (and behind the camera), that has meant decades of objectifying of women as either virginal or villainous. For the women, it has meant decades of *internalizing* that same paradox.

WOMEN IN THE GOLDEN AGE

The Madonna-Whore Complex was clearly alive and well throughout the early years of cinema. But remember that cinema and society exist in a kind of ongoing feedback loop, where cinema both *reflects* the values of society and also *influences* those same values. Typically this process results in a net re-enforcement of the status quo, where cinema, controlled by a narrow slice of society (again, mostly men and mostly white), remains inherently conservative. But change happens. And as the industry and the technology has evolved over time, we can trace the shifts in that cultural feedback loop, observing where cinema reflects political, economic and cultural change, and where it influences society to potentially resist those same changes.

Let's look at a couple of examples.

The Golden Age of cinema covers the period in Hollywood production from around the adoption of synchronized sound in 1927 to the anti-trust case that dismantled studio monopolies in 1948 and the rise of television in the 1950s. During that period, the world was plunged into a second great war right on the heels of a global depression. When the United States entered the war in the 1940s, there was a massive mobilization of resources, including a seismic shift in how women fit into the nation's economy. With thousands of men off fighting in the war, someone had to keep the factories going. Women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, doing manual labor and other jobs historically reserved for men. Desperate times called for desperate measures… like giving a woman a wrench, apparently.



Figure **10.7.2**: Jane Greer as the Femme Fatale in Out of the Past (1947).

Around this same period, one of the most popular genres produced by Hollywood was the hardboiled detective story, gritty, urban and full of morally ambiguous characters. Eventually, this trend in cinema would come to be known as **Film Noir**. Every studio got in on it, though Warner Bros. was the most prolific. *TheMaltese Falcon* (1941), *Double Indemnity* (1944), *The Big Sleep* (1946), there were dozens of them every year. And each one invariably featured two main characters, the righteous if fatally flawed detective, and the beautiful if emotionally damaged temptress, the **Femme Fatale**. The Femme Fatale typically set the story in motion, stepping into the (male) protagonist's life with a tale of woe, desperate for his help, but usually hiding a secret that could get them both killed. Sometimes the Femme Fatale would wind up behind bars or dead, and sometimes they could be redeemed and

live happily ever after. But that was the point. You never quite knew if you could trust them, they were mysterious, morally ambiguous, and most importantly, didn't seem to know their place.

Sound familiar?

At a time when thousands of women were forced to cross an invisible but sacrosanct line and engage in public, manual "men's" work, Hollywood was filling movie houses with images of unpredictable, dangerous women pushing the boundaries of acceptable behavior, *reflecting* society's anxiety over the moral ambiguity of women leaving the home for the factory. But more than merely reflecting a contemporary reality, these films also seemed to have strong opinions about these women, and thus exerted a certain *influence* over movie-goers. Echoing that tried and true Madonna-Whore Complex, these films (and their male filmmakers) suggest that these women would eventually need to be redeemed by a good man or end up in jail (or worse).

In the years that followed, especially after the war, the United States experienced an incredible economic expansion, known as the post-war boom. Not only did the men return to take their places in the factories, white-collar work became more available and higher paying. New housing developments, the "suburbs", developed to cater to the higher salaries and growing families. Women were not only sent back to their homes; those homes were bigger and more luxurious than ever before.

But the genie was already out of the bottle. Thousands of women had experienced the psychological and economic freedom of work outside the home, and many were reluctant to fall back into pre-war patterns. This would eventually grow into a social and political movement for gender equality in the 1960s and 70s, but in the short term, during the 1950s and the tail end Hollywood's Golden Age, there was a collective restlessness in U.S. society.



Figure **10.7.3**: Marilyn Monroe in Niagra (1953).

And what was the response from Hollywood? With the 1950s came the end of Film Noir (though it would survive in various forms and at various periods throughout the century), and the rise of the domestic comedy and the **Blonde Bombshell**, portrayed most famously and consistently by Marilyn Monroe. Films like *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953), *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956) and *Tunnel of Love* (1958) all featured women, mostly blonde, often portrayed as naïve innocents (and sometimes willfully unintelligent) who were either blissfully happy housewives or desperately wanted to be. The unifying theme of all of these films was that a woman's place was in the home, preferably with a wealthy, successful husband. Cinema in that historical moment reflected a kind of nostalgia for the gender dynamics of pre-war America, but it also presented that image as an ideal for women to internalize and ultimately pursue.

What is crucial to understand about the dynamic described above is that it is bound up in a much larger hegemonic process. This is not the malevolent scheme of a few powerful actors bent on controlling society. I am fairly confident there was never a room full of men from all the major Hollywood studios working out how to make films that would convince women to stay subservient to men (I mean… *fairly* confident). And that's because there doesn't have to be. That's the power of hegemonic patriarchy, everyone – men and women – are bound up in the same system, internalizing and re-producing the meaning and values that support inequality… without ever recognizing it as un-equal.

SECOND WAVE FEMINISM AND THE MALE GAZE

By the time we get to the 1960s, enough women had had enough of the status quo, and they didn't care what Hollywood had to say about it. Women like Betty Friedan, who founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, were tired of the limitations placed on women in the post-war period. Not just in terms of where and how they could work, but how they dressed, what they thought, and who they loved. Inspired by women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony who, a half century earlier, fought and won the right for women to vote, Friedan and women like her wanted to build on that political revolution with a more wide-spread *cultural* revolution. To them, the women's suffrage movement was the "first wave" of feminism, the beginning of real change. They wanted to usher in the Second Wave of feminism that would fundamentally alter the way women engaged with politics, the economy and society in general.

There was just one problem. They were still living in a hegemonic patriarchy. Second wave feminists wanted to change the fundamental values of society, but they had little or no access to the mechanisms that controlled and manipulated meaning. Namely, mass media and, more specifically, cinema. Their strategies involved mass protests, marches, support groups, lectures, and other more traditional forms of political activism. None of which could effectively compete with the hegemonic machine of cultural production churning out a counter-narrative in cineplexes (and on televisions) around the country. Not to mention the fact that their main source of resistance wasn't from men who wanted to hold onto their social position, it was from other *women* who had internalized the patriarchal idea that their place was in the home, that it was the "natural order of things."

The result was wave after wave of cinematic responses to the Women's Movement that echoed the earlier responses from Film Noir to the Blonde Bombshell. First up was the late 60s trend toward **sexploitation films**. These films, like *Sex and the Single Girl* (1964) and *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* (1965) (not to mention the lower-budget, grindhouse films that were more akin to pornography), embraced one small part of the movement, the *sexual* liberation of women. These films managed to both undermine the movement by using sexual freedom as an excuse to further objectify women's bodies, *and* conveniently ignore every other issue important to second wave feminists. By the late 1960s and into the 1970s, this tactic shifted into ignoring women altogether in favor of **male buddy comedies** like *The Odd Couple* (1968) and *The Sting* (1973), films that seemed to suggest that men could get along quite well without any women at all.

It was around this time, 1975 to be exact, that film theorist Laura Mulvey wrote "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," a pivotal essay that helped clarify how hegemonic patriarchy worked, specifically in cinema. It was like pulling back the curtain to see how meaning was manipulated and by whom. And she did it by giving it a name: **The Male Gaze**.

Mulvey's premise is pretty simple. First, she suggests we're all inherently narcissistic. That is, we tend to think of ourselves as the center of the universe. So, when we see the (male) hero in a film, all of us, male and female, tend to identify with that hero. Second, she suggests we are also all inherently voyeuristic. That is, we like to watch others but remain unobserved ourselves. Which is, essentially, what cinema offers. As I've written several times in the preceding chapters, the camera is our only way into the cinematic world. We watch events unfold through the frame, which can suggest the frame of a painting in terms of composition, but also a window frame in terms of our fascination with watching the private lives of others. Put those two together, and you get two mutually re-enforcing phenomena: We identify with a male hero in his objectification of female characters (as Madonnas or whores), *and* we identify with the camera as it mirrors that objectification. Put more simply, the Male Gaze suggests the camera is never a neutral observer, but rather it forces all viewers to assume a heterosexual male point of view.

And since you can never have too much irony in your life, here's a guy mansplaining the Male Gaze that I just mansplained for you:



Or we could just hear Mulvey talk about it herself:



The Male Gaze explains a lot about the cinematic examples I outline above. And it makes sense when you think about how rare an Alice Guy-Blaché or Ida Lupino was throughout most of 20th century Hollywood. The fact was men were overwhelmingly the ones making the films, from the studio executives right down to the production assistants. But even if there were more women involved, the hegemonic patriarchy was so firmly in place we may well have seen them reproducing the same images, adopting that Male Gaze and thinking it was neutral.

By the 1980s, it was as if Hollywood, and society in general, knew that the game was up. Mulvey's theory of the Male Gaze had exposed cinema as a tool of hegemonic patriarchy (at least for those who had bothered to read her work). But instead of opening up the process to more voices, allowing the machine of meaning production to evolve with changing times, the industry doubled down on resisting the revolution of second wave feminism. Whether it was role reversal comedies like *Mr. Mom* (1983) and *Three Men and a Baby* (1987) that affirmed a woman's place in the home by showing us the comedic anarchy of men trying to change a diaper or do the shopping, or the trend toward blockbuster action movies like *Commando* (1985), *Rambo* (1985), and *Die Hard* (1988) starring hypermasculine men – Schwarzenegger, Stallone, Willis – capable of saving the world without a woman in sight, Hollywood did its best to reproduce images of a woman's place (or complete absence) in line with traditional patriarchal ideals.

But the most interesting and enduring of these trends was the 80s slasher movie. The horror sub-genre arguably got its start in the late 70s with John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) (or even earlier for horror purists who point to *Black Christmas* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, both from 1974), but really hit its stride in the 80s with *Prom Night* (1980) *Friday the 13th* (1980), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) and a host of sequels and knockoffs that continue to this day. In each, a familiar pattern develops. A group of young men and women gathers at a cabin, a lake house, a suburban neighborhood, and test the boundaries of moral purity through drinking, drugs, and most often, sex. One by one they are brutally killed by a faceless killer, as if being punished for their transgressions. Until the last victim. Almost always a woman. And almost always the one character who remained pure, who

didn't drink or engage in sex. And it's that character that either escapes with her life or overcomes the faceless killer. Madonna-Whore Complex anyone? The trope became so common we gave the character a name: **The Final Girl**:



WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

Obviously, the Male Gaze is alive and well in contemporary cinema. As is its corollary, the Madonna-Whore Complex. Women continue to be objectified and marginalized in mass media entertainment, and cinema, whether in the multiplex or streaming across the internet, continues to be a powerful tool in perpetuating hegemonic patriarchy. But, fortunately, there has been more resistance and critique in the years since Mulvey's essay.

One important source of that contemporary critique originated from an unexpected source: a 1985 LGBTQ comic strip in *Dykes to Watch Out For* by Alison Bechdel (Though perhaps it shouldn't be surprising that a critique of marginalization would need to start at the margins of mass media). In one ten-panel comic strip, Bechdel shows two women contemplating a trip to the theater. One of them explains that she has a rule about going to the movies.

Bechdel Test

Basically, it has to satisfy three requirements:

1. It has to have at least two women in it
2. Those two women have to actually talk to each other and
3. They have to talk about something besides a man.

Now think about the last few movies or even tv series you've watched. How many of them could pass that test? In fact, by the early 2000s, that's exactly what this became, a test. **The Bechdel Test**, to be more precise. A kind of basic test to see if a piece of filmed entertainment could muster even the absolute bare minimum of equal representation. Here's a quick video essay about it (that is mercifully *not* narrated by a man):



It is astonishing how little of even contemporary cinema can pass this test. Don't believe me? Check out this relatively depressing running tally: https://bechdeltest.com/

As the feminist critique of cinema gained steam through the 2000s, even film and tv advertising came under scrutiny. For example, Marcia Belsky started a social media campaign to highlight a bizarre but largely unexamined trend in Hollywood advertising: they like to chop women's heads off. Her Tumblr *The Headless Women of Hollywood* is an endless scroll of headless women in film and tv series advertisements. This kind of visual dismemberment, not uncommon in the films themselves, is the height of objectification. A woman's body, or even just one body part, is isolated as an object of visual pleasure (see The Male Gaze above).

These calls for greater awareness of the representation of women on screen are useful and productive. But much of the discussion above regarding the Madonna-Whore Complex and the Male Gaze in 20th and 21st century cinema hinges on the reality that the entertainment industry, like many other industries throughout that period, has historically been owned and operated almost entirely by men. Unless and until there are more women *behind the camera* actually telling the stories, cinema will remain steeped in that patriarchal point of view.

Fortunately, there's some light there too.

Despite the early successes of female filmmakers in the silent era, women were rarely "allowed" behind the camera throughout much of the 20th century. Unless they took control themselves. That's what Hollywood movie star turned filmmaker Ida Lupino did. As an up and coming actor in the 1940s, she was offered the usual stereotyped roles that actors on contract were required to perform during the Golden Age. Fed up, she started her own independent film company and made several films that foregrounded controversial (for the time) subjects like out-of-wedlock pregnancy and sexual assault. Still, she remained on the margins of the industry as a director and producer, a rare exception that seemed to prove the rule of male dominance.

Others would follow in Lupino's path, especially in the era of low-budget indie filmmaking. Shirley Clarke, for example, made a series of underground, independent films starring non-actors in the 1950s and 60s, most famously with *The Connection* (1961). Julie Dash was another trailblazer for women filmmakers, picking up where Clarke left off in the 1980s and early 90s.

By the 21st century, the work of those pioneers began to finally pay off as more and more women stepped behind the camera to take control of the cinematic narrative. It helped that more and more women were also rising in the ranks at the major Hollywood studios, able to greenlight film and television that supported that narrative (or at the very least, passed the Bechdel Test). Writers like Diablo Cody (*Juno*, *Young Adult*), Amanda Silver (*Jurassic World*, *Mulan*) and Andrea Berloff (*Straight Outta Compton*) and directors like Katherine Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*, *Zero Dark Thirty*), Ava DuVernay (*Selma*, *When They See Us*) and Greta Gerwig (*Lady Bird*, *Little Women*) have generated cinema that, even if it doesn't directly dismantle patriarchy (What's with the high heels in *Jurassic World*? Oh, right, a man directed that), poses a direct challenge to the iron grip men have had on the medium from the beginning.

Still, we are a long way off from true gender equality when it comes to who controls the medium. A recent study showed that out of 1,335 entertainment professionals surveyed, only 14.4% of the writers were women, 21.1% of the producers were women, and most startling, only 4.5% of the directors were women. And even when a woman finds herself in a position of power or influence in the entertainment industry, they are often paid much less than men in the same position. This wage discrimination has been highly

publicized when it affects well-known movie stars, like when Mark Wahlberg was paid eight times more than Michelle Williams for the film (ironically titled) *All the Money in the World* (2017), but it affects women at every level of the industry. Add to this humiliation the rampant sexual misconduct, harassment and outright assault suffered by women throughout that same industry, as exposed by the #metoo and Times Up movements, it may seem like an absolute miracle that there are still women willing and able to work within the system to tell their stories.

But it isn't a miracle.

It's the result of more than 100 years of struggle, from Guy-Blaché to Greta Gerwig. And yes, as I made clear earlier in the chapter, simply having a woman behind the camera does not necessarily translate into a uniquely feminist cinema. Hegemonic patriarchy implicates everyone, and women are just as capable of reproducing the tropes of inequality. But the more voices we have telling our cinematic stories, the more likely those stories will reflect the diversity of our collective experience.

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10.8: Cinematographic Art

Introduction

Video art exploits audio and visual technology using multiple formats of recorders, computers, video tapes, television sets, projectors, and newer digital equipment. Video art began in the 1960s with the advent of the old analog video recorders and tapes. Nam June Paik was considered the pioneer of the concept when in 1965, he made a recording and played it in a local café. Previously, only 8 and 16mm film were available, and it had to be played on expensive, cumbersome equipment. Paik used new technology from SONY to easily record and play videos, the first step for ordinary consumers to afford video-recording technology. The inexpensive technology gave artists an experimental platform, challenging them. In the 1970s, artists and technicians combined elements like multiple television sets to display video images. Many artists used the camera to create and project personal or taboo images and videos onto displays, challenging the ideas of what was acceptable and shattering traditional art concepts. When confronted with this new technology outside the conventional description of art, museums were horrified at the concept of sounds, movement, unknown objects sitting in their white-walled spaces.

Technological abilities increased exponentially during the 1980s and 1990s; hardware became more sophisticated and smaller as software added more capabilities. Artists found it easier to create video installations with unknown innovations. Artists used the newer capabilities to develop installations, virtual reality, or performance art. Video art also allowed artists to express social concepts and political causes in methods common to how people received information. Social movements became dependent on video technology to define and expand their messages. The video capabilities allowed artists to mimic more traditional art forms, utilizing video signals' distortion and dissonance as the creative platform. By the 1990s, the museums finally accepted the new forms of artwork as the advance of technology propelled the art form into the mainstream. Video obtained the rank of the other art mediums, art schools offering video as a viable specialization.

Nam June Paik

Nam June Paik (1932-2006) was born in Seoul, Korea; his father owned a large textile company. He was the youngest of five children and trained as a pianist as a child. During the Korean war, the family fled to Hong Kong and then Japan, where, in 1956, he received a BA from the University of Tokyo in aesthetics. Paik went to West Germany to further study music and became part of a new experimental art group. When he moved to the United States in the early 1960s, Paik started to experiment with synthesizers and how to manipulate musical sounds. He first used a Sony recorder until 1967 when Sony introduced a new portable video-tape-recorder giving Paik the platform he needed, creating a new direction in art. Paik's first exhibition was based on thirteen television sets. He continued to use TV sets for experiments, spanning the capabilities of technology and art. By 1974, he proposed the electronic information superhighway, connecting cities and people with satellites, coaxial cables, and fiber optics. Paik wanted to distribute videos freely, flowing through the information highway. His optimism and forward-thinking forecasted the future and is internationally considered the Father of Video Art. Paik also began to make installations from old televisions sets and video monitors to display different images on closed circuits across the installation. He used televisions sets to make robots adding wire, metal, and miscellaneous parts. Paik understood the future capabilities of imagery and used file and video as multi textual art forms.

> *"Using television, as well as the modalities of single-channel videotape and sculptural/installation formats, he imbued the electronic moving image with new meanings…transforming the electronic moving image into an artist's medium, part of the history of the media art."[1]*

Paik used television sets to create the American flag; in this installation, *Video Flag* (7.4.1), seventy sets are primarily programmed to red, white, and blue images. He used magnets to manipulate the signals and synthesizers, video feedback, and various technologies to create different colors and shapes. Paik made several other installations of flags in a variety of sizes. In this flag, he projected on a continuous loop, 24 hours a day, different images of political images. Technology has a finite ability to continue

working, and all of Paik's flag installations have been undergoing conservation efforts, using new technology and wiring to preserve the mechanisms.

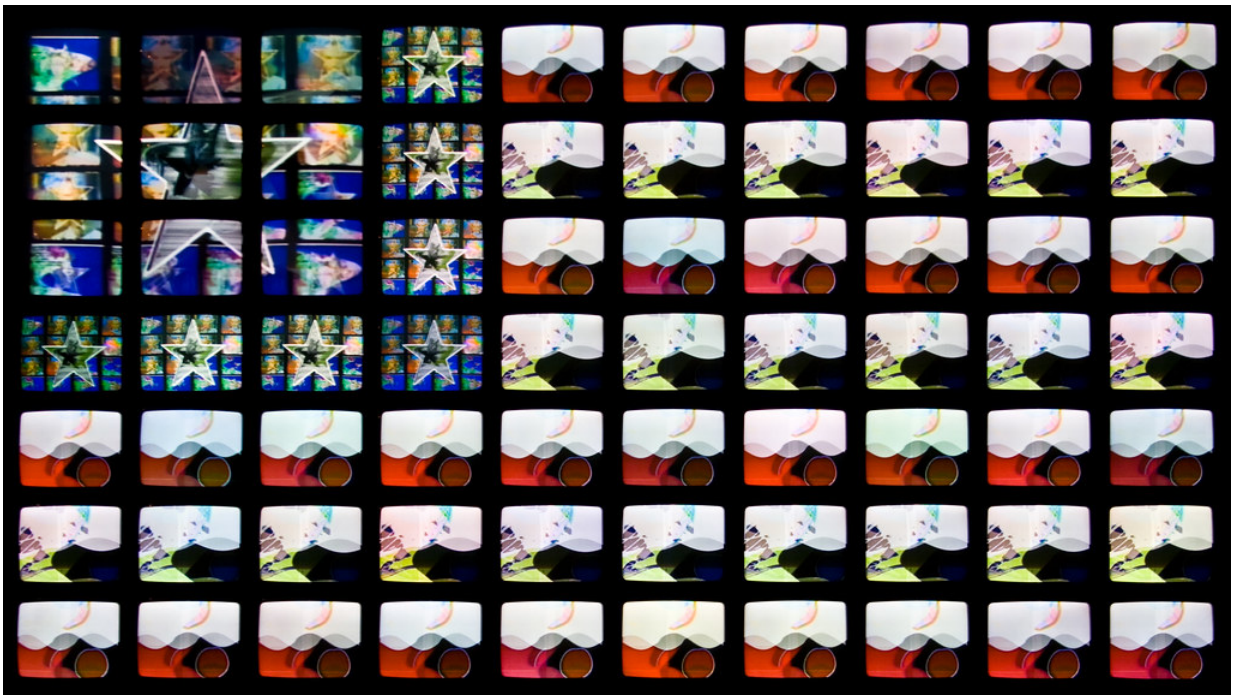


Figure **10.8.1**: Video Flag (1996, 70 CRTs, wiring, fans, metalwork, power strips) by Ukenaut, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

In 1964, when Paik first came to America, the interstate highway system, established under Eisenhower's presidency, was only nine years old. The highway ran from coast to coast, linking the states of the country. At the time, detailed maps guided the drivers from state to state. Restaurants and motels were constructed across the country, their neon nights burning brightly, different states presenting different cultures. The entire country also embraced the use of the television set, linking the news and days events with the homes of America. Paik recognized how to use video media to connect people and how it would transform everyone's life. He created *Electronic Superhighway* (7.4.2), a massive installation of 336 television sets, 50 DVD players, 3,750 feet of cable, and 575 feet of multicolored neon tubing. [2] On the different monitors, he plays images to represent each state surrounded by flashing tubes of neon light. Paik wanted to display his vision of how technology and communication would advance in the future.

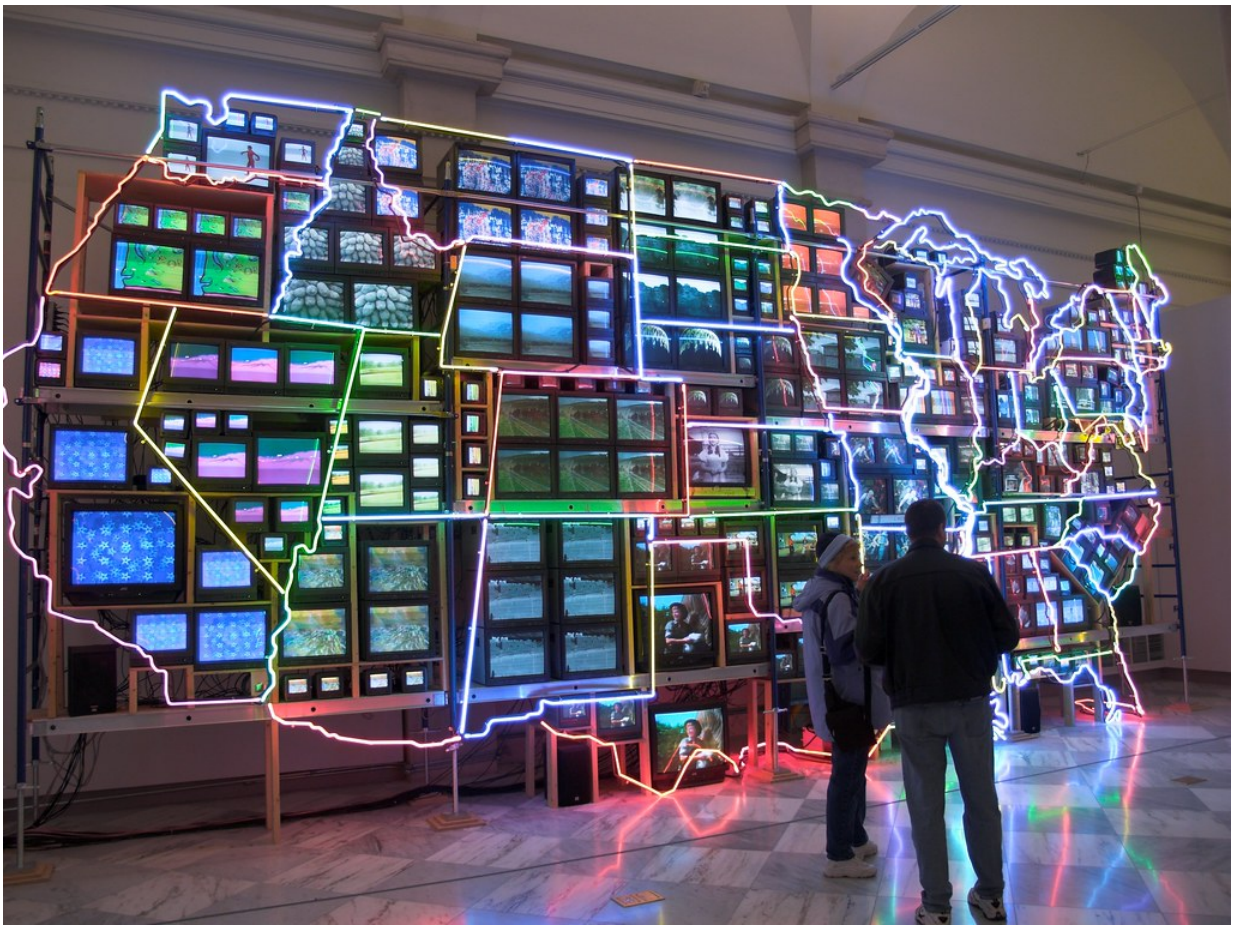


Figure **10.8.2**: Electronic Superhighway: Continental US (1995, 313 monitors, neon, steel structure, sound, 4.5 x 9.7 x 1.2 meters) by TimothyJ, CC BY 2.0

Megatron Matrix (7.4.3) was an installation of 215 monitors. Paik played different clips in sections, some based on his images from his home country of South Korea and others different ideas of entertainment and culture of the United States. All of Paik's installations were prophetic of the world's future information age.

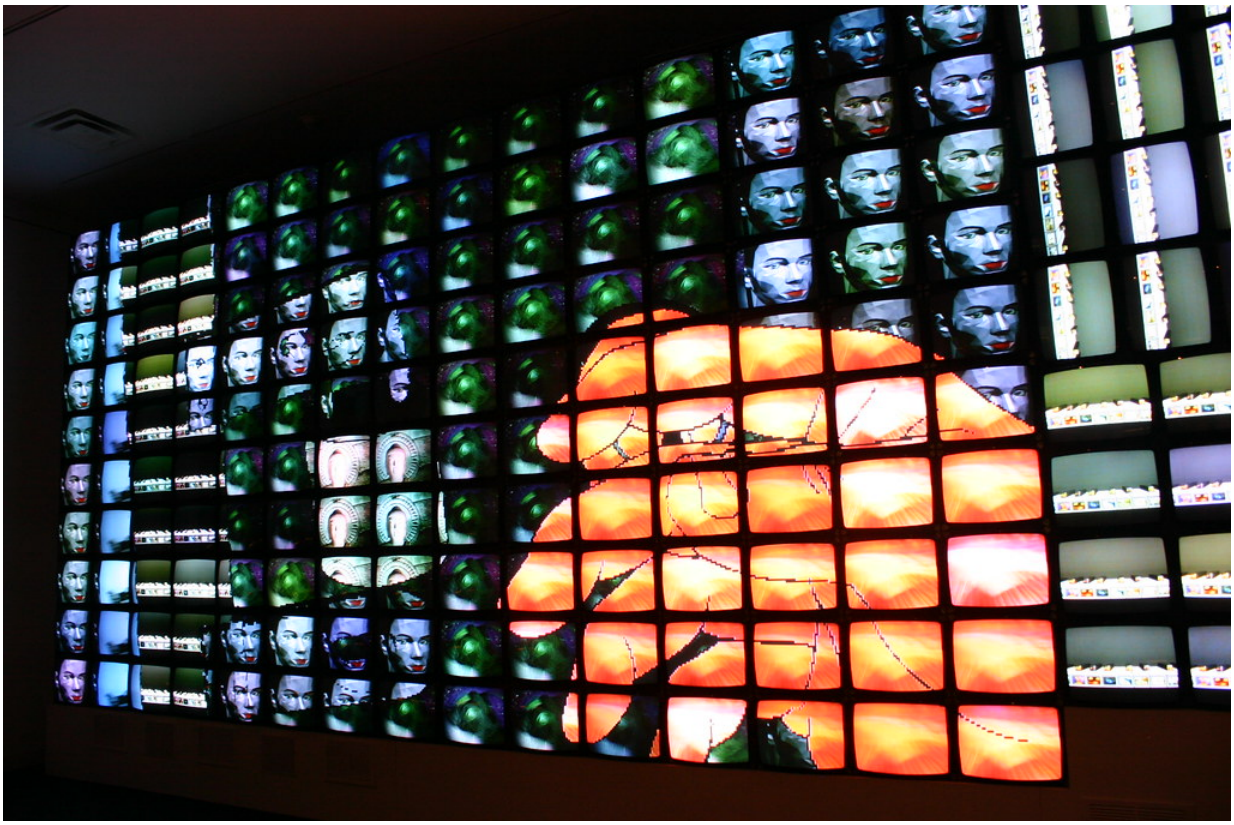


Figure 10.8.3: Megatron/Matrix (1995, eight-channel video installation, custom electronics, color, sound, 335.3 x 1005.8 x 121.9 cm) by Ryan Somma, CC BY 2.0

Alan Rath

From Cincinnati, Ohio, Alan Rath (1959-2020) graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with his degree in electrical engineering. Rath was always captivated by machinery when he was young. He worked for a short while as an engineer before moving to California to study visual arts, incorporating his knowledge of machinery and sculptures. Rath created his electronics and wrote the software to run his sculptures, even changing the presentations of the sculptures over the years. Most of his works featured computer-generated independent body parts; a moving eye or a twitching nose. Rath wanted to reflect the correlation between technological systems and humanity. He primarily featured eyes in many of his works, sometimes staring at viewers, blinking, or jumping around the screen. Rath made sculptures somewhat alien, using fiberglass, polypropylene, aluminum, custom electronics, and partridge feathers because of their fluidity.[3] Rath used motion sensors and heat detectors, the viewers themselves causing motion.

Clock II (7.4.4) was one of his early creations. At this time, the industry was in transition, moving from electrical to computational. Rath's work used cathode ray tubes (CRT), the precursor to current liquid crystal displays (LCD). In this installation, he has two screens, each with a hand, the extended fingers moving. The sculpture needed large boxes with multiple large cables to make the images move. Throughout his career, Rath added different sculptures of his *Eyeris* series.

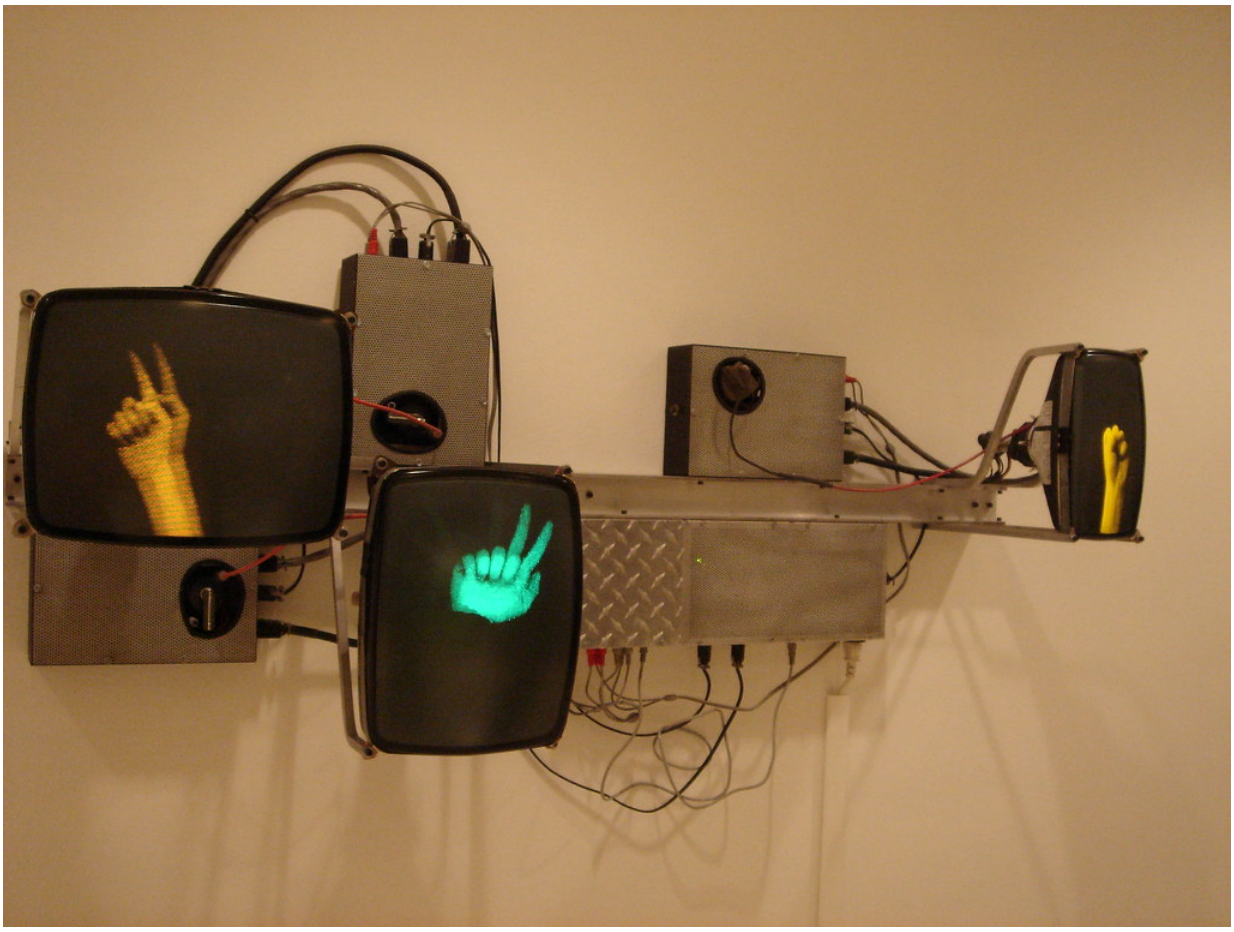


Figure **10.8.4**: Clock II (1991, aluminum, custom electronics, three cathode ray tubes, 63.5 x 76.2 x 33.0 cm) by inju, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

In *Eyeris V* (7.4.5), as in the others, the eyes follow the viewer's movement, projecting an eerie feeling. The loose red power cords and straight aluminum rods give the structures a skeleton-like look.

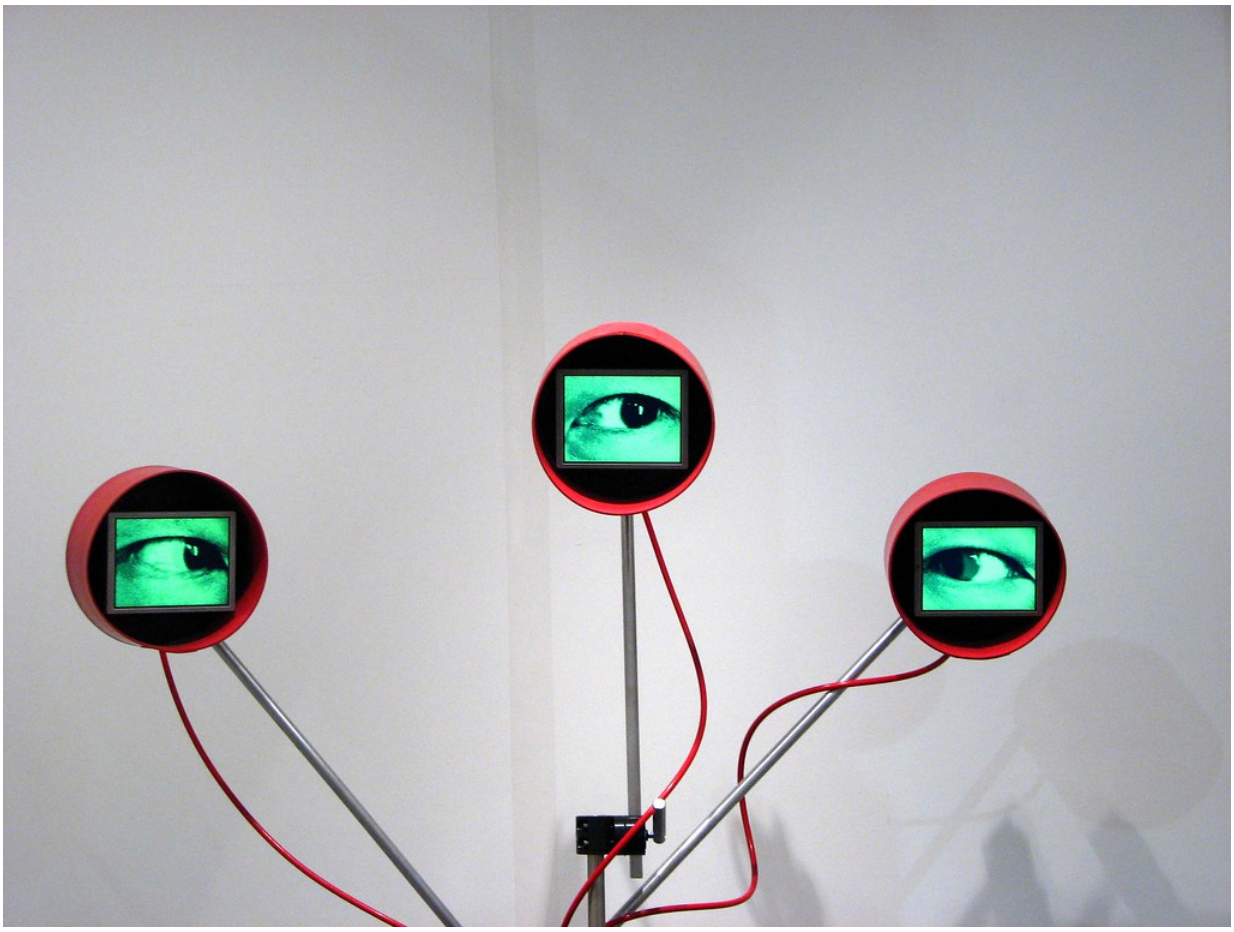


Figure **10.8.5**: Eyeris V (2007) by C-Monster, CC BY-NC 2.0

Instead of eyes, *Atherton Wallflower* (7.4.6) used audio speakers of different sizes, almost appearing like flowers blooming from the wall. The thick, looped cords plugged into the box on the floor, anchoring and bringing the elements together. Although a viewer did not hear any noise from the speakers, each speaker pulsates, demonstrating the invisible sound.



Figure **10.8.6**: Positively (2012, aluminum, fiberglass, electronics, motor, ostrich feathers) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Positively (7.4.7), *Absolutely,* and *Again* was a series of moving sculptures featuring feathers. *Positively*, with its plumes of bright pink ostrich feathers move whenever it senses motion. The feathers on long robotic arms move open and closed, dancing as though welcoming the viewer into its embrace. The whirring of the motors adds sound to enhance the captivating feeling.



Figure **10.8.7**: Atherton Wall Flower (2001, aluminum, speakers, mixed media) by rocor, CC BY-NC 2.0

Joan Jonas

Joan Jonas (1936-) was born in New York City. Her family focused on multiple types of arts, including taking her to museums, operas, and the theater. Jonas always said she wanted to be an artist, believing it took her a long time to achieve success because she was a woman. Jonas graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a degree in Art History and followed this with an MFA from Columbia University in sculpture. In the New York art scene, Jonas worked with choreographers in the theaters and, by 1968, started working with mixed props and symbolic works, frequently using mirrors. By the early 1970s, the new video concepts started, and Jonas started experimenting with making different short videos. She incorporated images of herself in the live video shots, the first artist to do that and perhaps the forerunner of the selfie. Jonas' central motifs covered choreography, nature, or rituals, all enhanced with mirrors. She made her own scripts retelling myths and tales into visual landscapes. Jonas could mix performance art with her video art through dance, music, costumes, and video technology.

For her video, *Light Time Tales* (7.4.8) was a video installation compiled from ten different installations she made on ten single-channel videos. Jonas used an old, empty factory site over 5,500 square meters. First, Jonas removed all the walls and constructed the exhibition through a long snaking pathway for viewers to follow. Every video piece had its own space and sound. However,

each one was visible from multiple points, and the individual sounds from each video resonated through the building. *Reading Dante* were performance videos Jonas created based on Dante's Divine Comedy. She initially made a short video with different gestural drawings and percussion noises.



Figure 10.8.8: Light Time Tales, by Loz Flowers, CC BY-SA 2.0

In 1994, Jonas expanded the concept and made a series of videos, all incorporated into an installation running over distinctive video projections. For the videos, she integrated chalk drawings (7.4.9, 7.4.10), masks, photographs, and other miscellaneous objects; some of the elements were drawn, others acted, all imagined into Jonas' exceptional work.

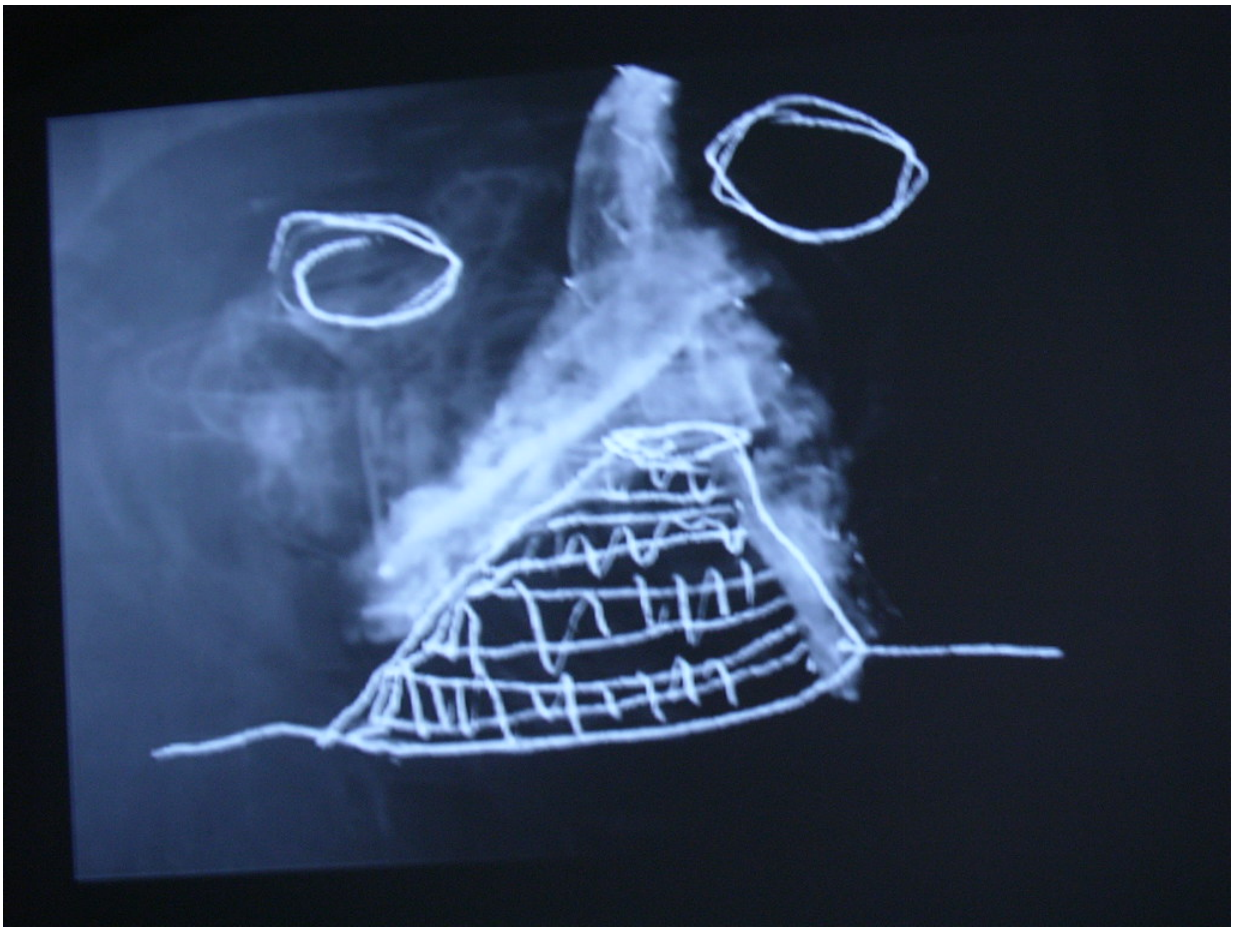


Figure **10.8.9**: Dante III, by n e o g e j o, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

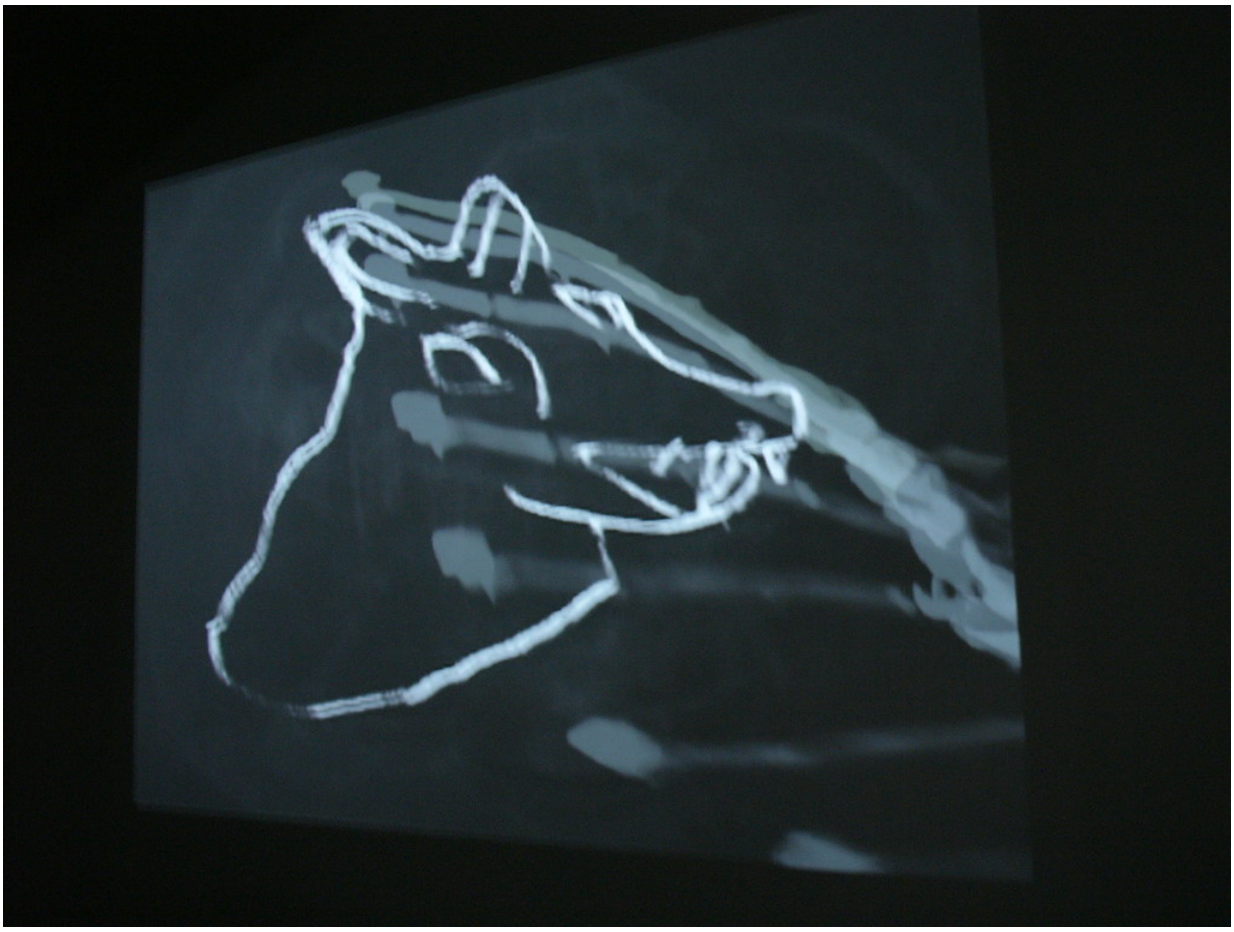


Figure 10.8.10: Dante III, by n e o g e j o, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Pipilotti Rist

Pipilotti Rist (1962-) is from Switzerland. She changed her name from Elisabeth to Pipilotti because her nickname was Lotti. At the beginning of college, she majored in theoretical physics for a short period before switching to art, illustration, and video at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Afterward, Rist joined a performance group and made her prize-winning video. She began making short videos and experimented by altering color, speed, or sound with themes generally based on gender or sexuality. She added music to the simplistic videos generating pleasure and happiness. Rist was considered a feminist in her work; however, she believed the images of women stood for all humans. Rist used vibrant colors, unique musical scores, and sweeping vistas with the undertow of sexuality in her expanded, large-scale installations. In her first few videos, she experimented with nude images, becoming part of the allure of her work.

Pixel Forest (7.4.11) was a massive installation with multiple screens and changing projections. The different images and short videos incorporate elements across her career. Rist frequently integrates herself in the videos, whether older, fragmented nude images or her distorted face pressed against the glass. She often blurred the lines between the interaction of bodies, how the camera is used, and portrayal on the screens. The viewer walked through the videos in different rooms as the cameras projected onto translucent screens; the shadows of the viewer's body became part of the visuals.



Figure 10.8.11: Pixel Forest (Hanging LED light installation and media player) by maekke, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Parasimpatico (7.4.12) was a compilation of older works mixed with newer short videos creating floating images with psychedelic colors and otherworldly sensations. Rist placed objects in unexpected containers, toilets, purses, or bottles and projected them onto suggestive surfaces. She wanted to explore all senses in enveloping experiences. Rist also incorporated humor in the video installation and the environment around the installation, including the staircases and auditorium.



Figure **10.8.12**: Parasimpatico, by br1dotcom, CC BY 2.0

The *Massachusetts Chandelier* (7.4.13) was made of clean, used underpants hung on a frame of tiered metal. Some of the underpants had lace, others with pockets, most were larger sizes, a mixture of varieties for men and women. Rist used a 2-channel video running color without her usual music.



Figure **10.8.13**: Underwear Chandelier, by Marcel Oosterwijk, CC BY-SA 2.0

Christian Marclay

Although Christian Marclay (1955-) was born in California, he holds American and Swiss citizenship, his father from Switzerland. He lived most of his childhood in Switzerland and studied art in Geneva before receiving a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art. Initially, Marclay was attracted to music, creating songs and collecting tapes. He purchased records at thrift stores trying to re-assemble the music on the records with different noises. Marclay also played in live performances and made a few recordings. He gradually became interested in visual art to represent his sounds, combining video and sound. Marclay disassembled and reorganized the sounds together, joining different LP records and collages made from recombined sounds.

2822 Records (PS1) (7.4.14) was composed of vinyl records installed on the floor. Marclay used 12-inch LP records from every genre of music, demonstrating the wide variety of sounds in music. Marclay said, "I wanted to disrupt people's usual relation to this fragile object, be destructive and make you aware that every step you take will transform this music into noise. Music is about life, and you can't freeze life because it is as fragile as these records."[4] Marclay also made some installations by throwing records over the floor, unattached. The loose records made it difficult to walk on, the viewer more carefully moving, gaining more attachment to the individual recordings. Marclay thought of records as his tools, providing the ability to recreate, change and destroy the original

recording. He thought of the vinyl record as an art form itself. In the installation, the useless records reclaimed their visual possibilities.



Figure **10.8.14**: 2822 Records (PS1) (1987-2009) by Shawn Hoke, CC BY-NC 2.0

In *Gestures* (7.4.15), Marclay created an extensive video installation based on his accumulation of vintage record turntables, old musical instruments, and LP records. He built a multisensory experience with images combined with sound. The visuals include pictures and actions to recreate music with the record on the turntable and the sounds produced.



Figure **10.8.15**: Gestures (1999) by eye & ear, CC BY-NC 2.0

In *Moebius Loop* (7.4.16), Marclay used over 2,000 cassette tapes he stacked in rows and affixed them together with nylon ties. The sculpture has a nostalgic feel, a past of music of every genre played in futuristic media. The colorful and graphical effect is formed by the multiple colors of the cassette labels randomly placed.



Figure 10.8.16: Moebius Loop (1994) by C-Monster, CC BY-NC 2.0

The close-up (7.4.17) of a cassette demonstrates how he used plastic ties to attach each of the tapes. The use of tape cassettes represented Marclay's long focus and integration of music and art.



Figure 10.8.17: Moebius Loop *Closeup*, by C-Monster, CC BY-NC 2.0

Diana Thater

Diana Thater (1962-) was born and lives in California. She did earn a degree in Art History at New York University and an MFA from the Art Center College of Design. Thater investigates space and interaction with light and images in her video installations. She mainly explored the relationship between the natural world of nature and humans and how nature was manipulated or still maintained its original characteristics. Thater was dedicated to the interactions and relationships of those in the animal world and humans. She helped push the envelope of spatial and conceptual perceptions in the new media of video. One of Thater's major video installations, *Science, Fiction* (7.4.18, 7.4.19), covered multiple elements and ideas from outer space to dung beetles. She constructed two parts, one with a section containing double nine-screen monitors set on opposing walls. The monitors projected shows of the night skies from the Griffith Observatory as the room was lit to resemble the sky at dusk. In the other part, Thater erected a room-sized box emitting an odd yellow light at the base and projected dung beetles on the ceiling.

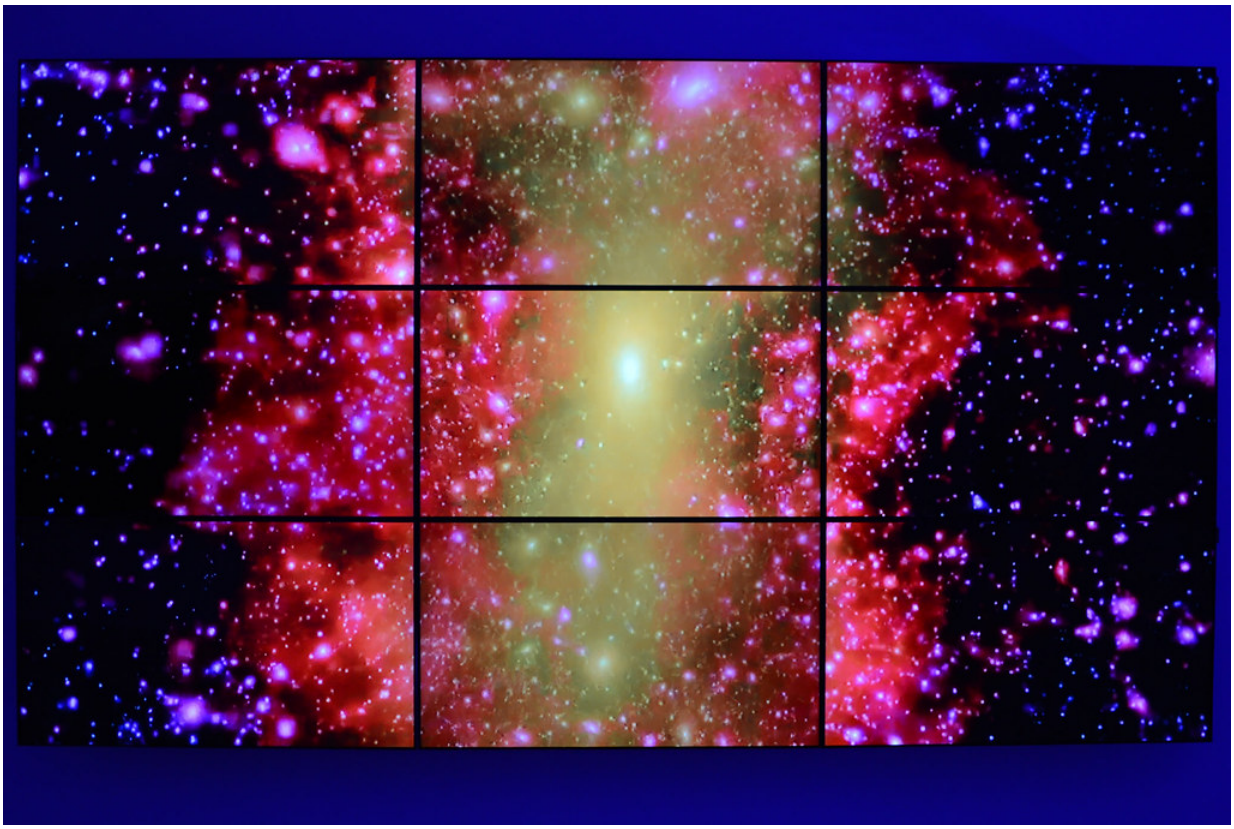


Figure 10.8.18: Science, Fiction (section 1) by Ian E. Abbott, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

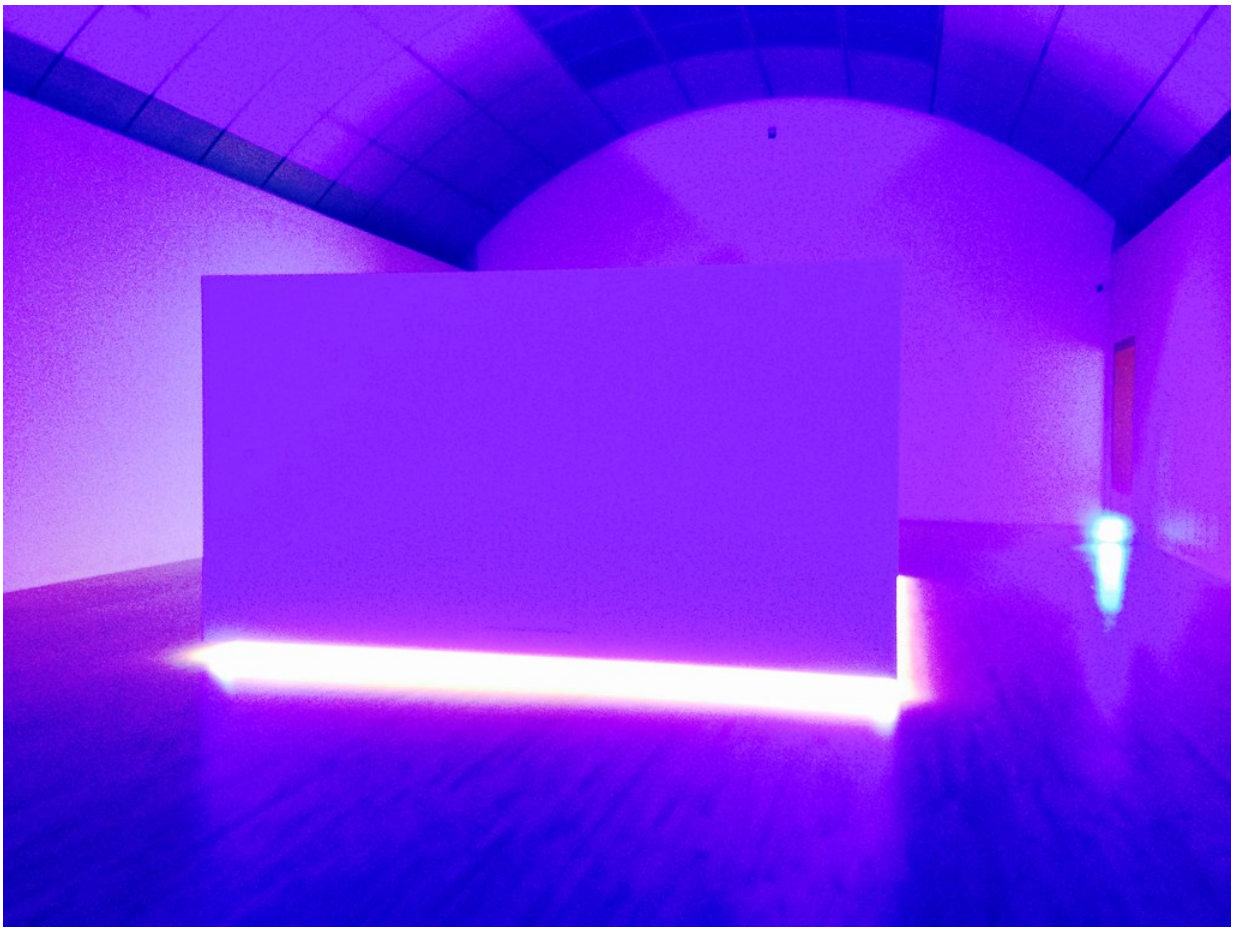


Figure 10.8.19: Science, Fiction (section 2) by Ian E. Abbott, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

In *Untitled* (7.4.20), Thater placed video monitors on the floor, adding two fluorescent light fixtures. She wanted to use the concept of fragmented images, each of the videos displaying parts of the butterflies as they fly. She painted with walls of the room orange to mimic the colors found in the butterflies. The interactions of color were an essential part of the installation.

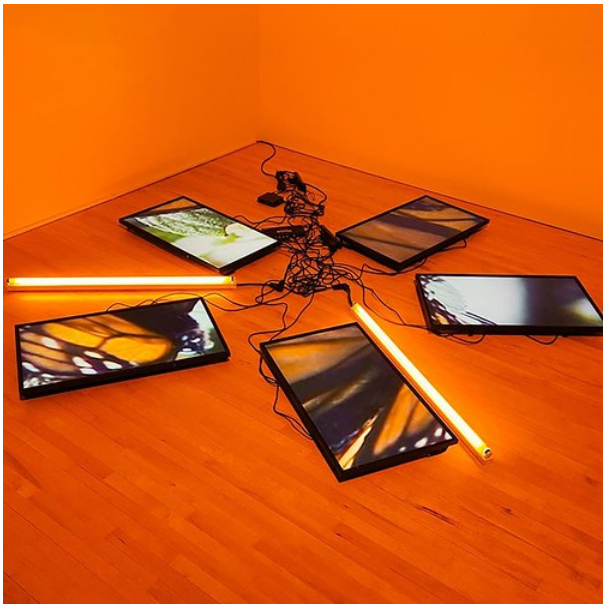


Figure 10.8.20: Untitled, by veritatem, CC BY 2.0

Rare (7.4.21) is another installation portraying images of endangered animals and how they are close to extinction. Thater placed sixteen monitors on the wall, each screen showing fragments of the environment and the animal's movements in its environment.



Figure **10.8.21**: Rare, by brainfloat, CC BY-NC 2.0

[1] Retrieved from https://www.paikstudios.com/

[2] Retrieved from https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/e...a-hawaii-71478

[3] Retrieved from https://datebook.sfchronicle.com/art...res-dies-at-60

[4] Retrieved from https://www.qchron.com/qboro/stories...5966fe1a4.html

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10.9: Conclusion

The nineties brought the internet and started the technology revolution. People soon recognized the vast possibilities of this virtual global network, and the digital art scene started booming. The internet helped numerous artists make their artwork more visible, increasing accessibility to worldwide audiences. Advanced technology also enabled the artist to transform and manipulate their artwork, thus becoming a significant art medium. The new millennium would introduce digital methods to substantial numbers of artists to use advanced technology and change the methods and marketplace of art.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Art and Ritual Life

Learning Objectives

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

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11.1: Introduction

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

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11.2: Exterior Ritual Spaces



Figure 10.1 | Stonehenge
Author: User "garethwiscombe"
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The well-known site of Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, England, although not completely understood today, provides us with insight into the early evolution of a ritual location. (Figure 10.1) It was developed over the course of some 1,500 years (c. 3,000-1,600 BCE). The site's configuration has astronomical implications, with a design of a ritual offering or sacrifice table, and portal placed in relationship to the sunrise at the summer solstice. (Figure 10.2) Its concentric rings were made of wooden posts, earthen ditches, and thirty **megaliths,** or large stones, each of which is approximately thirteen feet high, seven feet wide, and weighing more than twenty-five tons. In places where two megaliths support another horizontal stone, a **dolmen** or **cromlech** is formed. (Figure 10.3) Other parts of stone, wood, and earth were placed in particular spots for which the choice of location and use are now unclear.

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

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

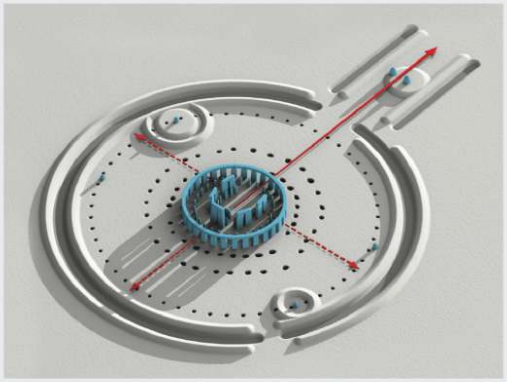


Figure 10.2 | Digital rendering of Stonehenge
Author: Joseph Lertola
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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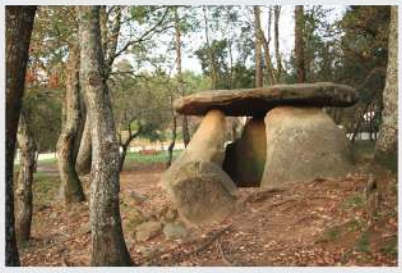


Figure 10.3 | Dolmen of Oleiros, Spain
Author: Arturo Nikolai
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Human societies from widely separated times and locations have constructed strikingly similar forms of symbolic or physical enclosure or elevation of the sacred. The altar is the most simple and expedient means. An altar, found in religious settings and structures to this day, is a piece of **liturgical** (religious ritual) furniture possessing ancient symbolism primarily as the site of sacrifice, most often in the offering of animals ritually slain for the deity.

It is a short step to placing the altar on a built, raised platform to accentuate its status. For ex- ample, a **heiau** is a Hawaiian temple composed of a Polynesian raised earthen or stone temple platform in an enclosed area that might also contain stone markers and cult images. Heiau were used for a variety of reasons: to treat the sick, offer first fruits, control rain, and achieve success in war (for which human sacrifices were made). Heiau are found throughout the Pacific island. This print depicts the heiau at Waimea, on Kauai, one of the Hawaiian islands, as it existed prior to European occupation. (Figure 10.5) The print was created by artist John Webber (1751-1793, England), who accompanied British explorer Captain James Cook on this third Pacific expedition (1776-1779). Although many Hawaiian Heiau were deliberately destroyed at the official end of the Hawaiian religion in the nineteenth century, some have since been fullyrebuilt and are now public attractions.

Olmec, Maya, and Aztec, built large temple complexes dedicated to religious worship, which included animal and human sacrifice. One such fine example of these large complexes is the Mayan temple at Chichen Itza. It is a four-sided pyramid with staircases of ninety-one steps on each side all leading to a temple at the top. The number ninety one is no accident: four times ninety-one equals

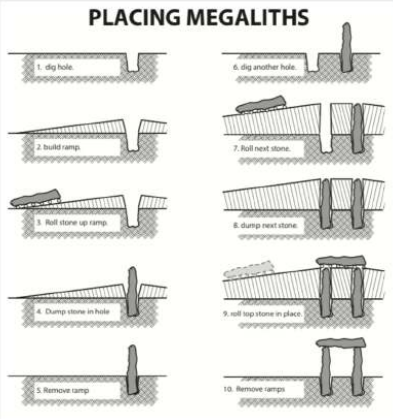


Figure 10.4 | Diagram Depicting Placement of Megaliths
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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364, which, paired with one final step at the top, represents the number of days in the solar year. Quetzalcoatl appears in succeeding Central American religions.

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



Figure 10.5 | Drawing of Heiau at Wimea
Artist: John Webber
Author: User "KAVEBEAR"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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

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



Figure 10.6 | The torii gate at Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Itsukushima at low tide
Author: Dariusz Jemielniak
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.7 | The torii gate at Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Itsukushima
Author: Jordy Meow
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11.3: The Sacred Interior

Sacred interior spaces offer several advantages over exterior sites such as platforms and gate- ways. In particular, they offer controlled access to the ritual space, for example, as we saw with complexes such as the Temple of Horus at Edfu (see Figure 7.42) and the Temple of Hephaestus in Athens, Greece, (see Figure 7.44) and they permit a new level of control over who is admitted. The nature of an interior space may also act as a metaphor for a personal encounter with the sacred with- in oneself.



Figure 10.8 | Nanzen-ji garden, Kyoto
Artist: Musō Soseki
Author: User "PlusMinus"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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We have noted that architectural forms have often been adopted and adapted according to the ways they serve group or congregational needs. Many religious centers meet a variety of purposes and needs, so they might include spaces or separate buildings for schools, meeting rooms, and any type of subsidiary accommodations. We will look, however, primarily at the basic distinctions among architectural forms that articulate and address the ritual and practical needs of the group.

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

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

10.3.1 Features and Forms



Figure 10.9 | Church of the Covenant
Author: User "Fcb981"
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Innumerable symbolic features are associated with worship; a few stand out as basic to identification of a building or site associated with a specific belief system. We quickly recognize and identify the distinctive implications of a **steeple** (church tower and spire) or a minaret, or the form of a stupa or pagoda, and we can sometimes discern how these and other such expressions came into use and accrued significance. (Figures 10.9 and 10.10) As discussed in Chapter Seven: Form in Architecture, the Islamic minaret was developed as a tower associated with a mosque that was used primarily to issue the call to prayer (and also to help ventilate the building). (see Figure 7.50) In the past, the **imam**, or prayer leader, charged with the ritual task would climb to its summit and intone the *adhan* five times each day, making the call in all directions so that the surrounding community would be notified; now, electronic speaker systems achieve this function. But the minaret has other implications and uses, as well. (Figure 10.11) It has become a striking visual symbol of the very presence of the mosque and of Islam's presence in the community; over time, many mosque complex designs have incorporated multiple minarets most often four, with one at each corner of the main structure. The visual significance may have been further accentuated to rival the Christian presence of a nearby steeple or bell tower.

The bell tower has been used similarly to announce the onset of Christian services by ringing at specific times. Public clocks are sometimes added, with the function of noting the time, ringing or chiming a tune on the hour, the half hour,or the quarter hour. Because churches were often community centers, the bells could also give public notice of celebration, mourning, or warnings of emergency like fire. In the Middle Ages, the control of the bell ringing was sometimes a political issue, especially as urban communities developed governments and sought independence from local churches in certain ways. At Tournai, Belgium, such struggles notably led to a sort of visual combat of towers on the town skyline. The city's civic

leaders there were granted the right to control the bell ringing for community notices and built a separate tower away from the church located on the town square. The Church countered by renovating the church building to include four bell towers, seeking thereby to assert its own rights to identify itself with the task. (Figure 10.12)



Figure 10.13 | Washington National Cathedral
Author: Carol M. Highsmith
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 10.10 | Phoenix Hall
Artist: Musō Soseki
Author: User "ういき野郎"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.11 | Minaret of the Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia
Author: Keith Roper
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The steeple or bell tower visually implies a Christian presence and is generally part of the church building, usually on the façade. Over time, builders have added multiple towers, as they did at Tournai and elsewhere. Doing so emphasized the width of the façade, or other parts of the building, such as the transept, the "arms" in a Latin cross plan church, or the **crossing**, where the "arms" meet. For example, at Lincoln Cathedral in England, towers are placed at either side of the façade and another marks the crossing. (Figure 10.13) Some steeples and towers associated with Christian use, however, have been erected independently of other buildings. For example, the Campanile, or bell-tower, by Giotto in Florence follows the Italian tradition of erecting the tower adjacent to the church. (Figure 10.14)



Figure 10.12 | Tournai, Belgium
Author: Jean-Pol GRANDMONT
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

More specific features of church and stupa structures, among others, include space within or outside for circumambulating, walking around a sacred object. In medieval churches that featured display of relics and accommodated pilgrim visitation, the **ambulatory** might be altered to allow visitors to walk around a ring or succession of chapels at the end of the church where the apse was located.(Figure 10.15) As referred to in Chapter 7 Form in Architecture, at the Sanchi Stupa, provisions were made for the devotee to walk around the fence surrounding the stupa, then enter one of the gateways and circumambulate the mound on the ground level, then climb the stairs and circumambulate again on a walkway attached to its exterior surface. (see Figures 7.52) (Great Stupa at Sanchi: s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/564x/e2/14/ b2/e214b2c65c63f16198bf64b1dbc63d67.jpg) Since the stupa is an earthen mound faced with masonry, it has no interior space accessible to the practitioner and all of the rituals are accomplished outside.

The provisions for making an offering of animals ritually slain for the deity can be seen in the ruins of the Anu or White Temple in Uruk (c. 3,000 BCE), today Iraq, which stood atop the ziggurat there. (The White Temple floorplan: https://classics.unc.edu/



Figure 10.14 | Giotto's Campanile
Author: Julie Anne Workman
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

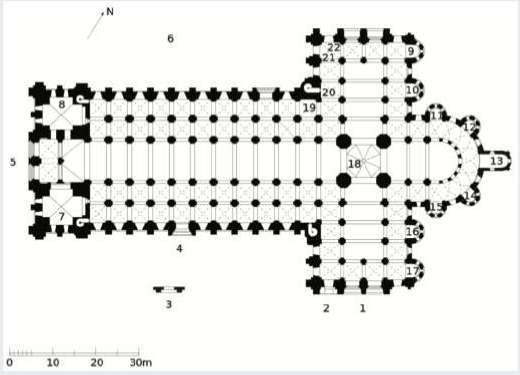


Figure 10.15 | Floorplan of St. Sernin
Author: User "JMaxR"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.0

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



Figure 10.16 | Relief of a sacraficial alter
Author: Wolfgang Sauber
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.17 | A Romanesque baptismal font from Grötlingbo Church, Sweden
Artist: Master Sigraf
Author: User "Bilsenbatten"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 10.18 | Baroque pulpit in the Amiens Cathedral, France
Author: User "Vassil"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.19 | Amr Ibn al-Aas Mosque (Cairo)
Author: User "Protious"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Ritual ablutions, or cleansings, also have artistic accommodations in the forms of fountains and pools, which were once a standard part of Christian atrium courtyards that marked the entryways to churches and are frequently provided in courtyards for mosques. (Islamic Pre-Prayer Ablution Fountain in Kairaouine Mosque Courtyard in Fes, Morocco: encircleworldphotos. photoshelter.com/image/I0000EvE9geT8XFA) Vestiges are found in holy water

fonts that still stand at portals to Catholic churches, where the practitioner dips the fingers and makes the sign of the cross. Also related are baptismal fonts or tanks used for the ritual cleansing, which, along with other ceremonial rites, signifies the entry into some faiths (Figure. 10.17) Another type of symbolic liturgical furniture that appears in many worship contexts and is given considerable artistic attention is the **pulpit**, or **minbar**, as is it called in Islamic centers. It is the site of preaching, reading scriptures, and other addresses to congregations, and is, sometimes, very elaborately adorned. (Figures 10.18 and 10.19)

10.3.2 Sculptural and Painted Expressions of Belief



Figure 10.20 | Rocker in the Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill
Author: User "Carl Wycoff"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY 2.0



Figure 10.21 | Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanshiyin), Shanxi Province, China
Author: Rebessa Arnett
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Beyond the types of symbolic features and forms we have explored, there exists a tremendous variety of objects expressing common or personal belief and devotions. In many instances, they adorn temples, synagogues, and churches; at other times, they were designed to be used in private or family settings. Even the sects with the most austere attitudes about the use of art, such as the Shakers, have a design aesthetic that is related to the belief system of finding creative solutions in the functionality of the form. (Figure 10.20). A lot of artistic efforts have been applied to religious expression, often entailing the notion that the most lavish and sumptuous goods should be provided for these purposes.

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

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

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



Figure 10.22 | Virgin and Child of Jeanne d'Evreux
Author: Ludwig Schneider
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.23 | The nave of Vézelay Abbey
Author: Francis Vérillon
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.24 | The central portal of Vézelay Abbey
Author: User "Vassil"
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10.3.3 Ritual and Devotional Objects

In devotional centers where the philosophical or religious beliefs allow the use of figural imagery, the use of cult statues and other images of deities or persons associated with the ideology are important focal points for worshippers. Some, like the cross, are essential statements; others play subsidiary roles, designed for amplifying or enhancing the spiritual experience and providing additional opportunities for contemplation or stimulus of devotional response. As we have noted, Buddhist and Hindu temple complexes often have a great array of portrayals of deities and/or spiritual leaders, as befits polytheistic religions. Part of the complaint of the Protestant revolt was that Christian churches had be- come too similar in spirit to polytheistic cults, with the wide selection of saints comprising a system that seemed no longer sufficiently focused on the central singular God. Part of the effect, in artistic terms, was that the decoration of many Protestant churches changed character as well as liturgical focus eliminating many of the lavish accouterments that had accrued around Catholic ritual.



Figure 10.26 | Reliefs in Vézelay Abbey
Author: User "Vassil"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.27 | Reliefs in Vézelay Abbey
Author: User "Vassil"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 10.25 | Lower Compartments Detail, Vézelay Abbey
Author: User "Vassil"
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While few general rules exist for Christian decoration, the Catholic churches usually have a large and prominent crucifix above the main altar where the **Mass/Eucharist, t**he primary religious ritual for Catholics, is celebrated; Protestant sites are more likely to have a plainer cross or none at all, and are unlikely to have an altar. Throughout the ages, the character of the crucifix has seen tremendous variation, from an expression of the extreme suffering of Christ to a much more iconic expression of the belief behind the symbol. Between the time of Christianity's legitimization in 313 CE and the tenth century, for example, representations of Christ on the cross generally showed him as alive, having gloriously defied death. Cross- es also varied considerably in scale.

The Gero Crucifix (c. 965-970), now placed over a side altar in Cologne Cathedral, Germany, compared to others of its era was very large at six feet, two inches, and was considered to be provocative in eliciting contemplation of the suffering of Christ. (Figure 10.28) Over the next sever- al centuries, depictions of Christ on the cross in northern Europe would increasingly emphasize the



Figure 10.29 | Pietà
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

agony of the human being in the throes of death, as opposed to his everlasting triumph, in ever more graphic portrayals of the event central to Catholic worship and to the liturgy of the Mass. (Figure 10.29) The range of emotional content in Christian imagery is vast and ever changing. This diversity is a typical characteristic for objects that are related to devotional use, as the nature of active faith is to grow and change, ever producing fresh new expression.

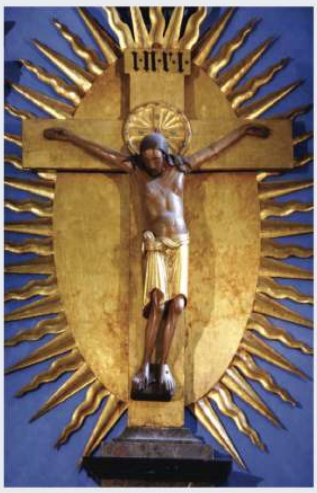


Figure 10.28 | The Gero Crucifix
Author: User "Elya"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 10.30 | Replica of the Chalice of Doña Urraca
Artist: User "Locutus Borg"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The variety of liturgical equipment that was conceived for Christian ritual over the centuries provided great outlet for inventiveness. While some versions of ritual objects were simple and utilitarian in design, others clearly spurred flights of great fancy and flair. An important symbolic and functional object in all worship centers is the candlestick and a tremendous variety of these were created. One of the most elaborate was the enormous seven branched candelabra cast of gem studded bronze and covered with a mass of imagery of saints, plants, animals, and angels, with the whole immense and tangled array supported on four large dragon-form feet. (Duomo Milano Candelabro Trivulzio: https://it.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Candelabro_ Trivulzio#/media/File:IMG_6849_-_Duomo_-_Menorah_ Trivulzio_-_Foto_Giovanni_Dall%27Orto_3-Mar-2007. jpg; Candelabro Trivulzio base detail: http://neuteboom.it/wp-content/uploa...029-063521.jpg) The complexity of the iconography, as well the intricacy of the work, is befuddling. Candleholders were not simply basic pieces of equipment, but also carriers of implications for the spiritual quest and the nature of religious inspiration, at least in part based on the symbolism of light as a representation of the Holy Spirit, purity, and peace.

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



Figure 10.31 | Situla (Bucket for Holy Water)
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

received great attention, as well. (Figure 10.32) This fourteenth century example from England is of velvet embroidered with silk, metal thread, and seed pearls that ornament scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary.



Figure 10.32 | Chasuble (Opus Anglicanum)
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC



Figure 10.33 | *The Nativity*
Artist: Limbourg Brothers
Author: User "Petrusbarbygere"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Special attention was also paid to books of Scriptures, as well as those that were used for the Mass and other ceremonies. In the Middle Ages, the pages of books had to be created as manuscripts on parchment or vellum, as we have observed be- fore; they were frequently supplied with lavish and showy covers, particularly those that might be used by important people or for important occasions. The commissioning of such was another deep and significant expression of faith due to the sacred writings they contained, the value of all liturgical equipment, and the merit accrued by donating riches for spiritual purposes.

The front and back covers of the Lindau Book Gospels were created at two different times and places with somewhat different design ideas. (Front Cover of the Lindau Gospels: www.themorgan.org/sites/defau...on/download/m1-front-cover.jpg; The contents of such books also often warranted rich illu- mination, or illustration, as we see in the prayer book or book of hours called the *Trés Riches Heures du Duc de Berry.* (Fig- ure 10.33) It was created by the Limbourg Brothers (Herman, Paul, and Johan, active 1402-1416, Netherlands) for John, Duke of Berry, a French prince. Throughout its heavily illus- trated pages or leaves, it is brightly colored, carefully inscribed, and replete with depictions of the Duke and of his many architectural and land holdings. It is well known for its calendar pages that depict activities associated with the changing seasons of the year, such as this scene of January showing the Duke seated in resplendent blue to the right at a sumptuous feast. (Figure 10.34)

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



Figure 10.34 | *January*
Artist: Limbourg Brothers
Author: User "Petrusbarbygere"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.35 | Mandala
Author: User "GgvlaD"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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11.4: Bill Viola, The Crossing

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG

Page ID
261804

We have to reclaim time itself, wrenching it from the "time is money" maximum efficiency, and make room for it to flow the other way – towards us. We must take time back into ourselves to let our consciousness breathe and our cluttered minds be still and silent. This is what art can do and what museums can be in today's world.
—Bill Viola [1]



Figure **11.4.1**: Bill Viola, *The Crossing*, 1996, video/sound © Bill Viola (photo: **stunned**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Taking time back

Bill Viola's *The Crossing* is a room-sized video installation that comprises a large two-sided screen onto which a pair of video sequences is simultaneously projected. They each open in the same fashion: a male figure walks slowly towards the camera, his body dramatically lit from above so that it appears to glow against the video's stark-black background. After several minutes he pauses near the foreground and stands still. He faces forward, staring directly into the lens, motionless.

At this point the two scenes diverge; in one, a small fire alights below the figure's feet. It spreads over his legs and torso and eventually engulfs his whole body in flames; yet, he stands calm and completely still as his body is immolated, only moving to raise his arms slightly before his body disappears in an inferno of roaring flames. On the opposite screen, the event transpires not with fire but with water. Beginning as a light rainfall, the sporadic drops that shower the figure build up to a surging cascade of water until it subsumes him entirely. After the flames and the torrent of water eventually retreat, the figure has vanished entirely from each scene, and the camera witnesses a silent and empty denouement.

Expanded temporal experience



Figure **11.4.2**: Bill Viola, *The Crossing*, 1996, video/sound © Bill Viola (image: **SFMOMA**)

The Crossing makes use of Viola's signature manipulation of filmic time. Like many of the artist's recent works, it was shot using high-speed film capable of registering 300 frames per second, thus attaining a much greater level of detail than would be discerned by the naked eye. In postproduction, Viola reduces the speed of playback to an extreme slow motion—further enhancing the level of definition to a dramatic and scrutinizing effect.

However, it is not only an interest in technological experimentation that drives the artist's technical and aesthetic decisions. Viola's use of slow-motion is meant to invite a meditative and contemplative response, one that requires the viewer to concentrate for a longer duration of time and simultaneously to increase his or her own awareness of detail, movement and change. This is consistent with the artist's intent to reignite the longstanding relationship between artistic and spiritual experience. A devoted practitioner of Zen Buddhist meditation, Viola has explained that after "fifty minutes of quiet stillness in a room of solitary individuals"—a description that could, just as easily, reflect a museum-goer's experience of his installations—"time opens up in an unbelievable way." [2]

Religious symbolism



Figure **11.4.3**: Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja), Chola period, Indian (Tamil Nadu), c. 11th century, copper alloy, 68.3 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

The Crossing might be interpreted through the lens of mythology or religious thought, even though the work does not make iconographic or stylistic reference to a particular narrative. Viola has been inspired by a rich variety of spiritual traditions, including Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sufism. Viewers may recall, for instance, the ring of flames that surrounds images of Shiva Nataraja (left) in which he sets in motion the continuous cycles of creation and destruction through his cosmic dance, or the biblical tales of fire and brimstone, rapture and the Great Floods. Throughout such narratives, the elemental forces of fire and water often symbolize change, redemption, transformation and renewal— common themes in Viola's oeuvre. The artist has similarly made reference to transitions and passages in works such as *The Passing*, a 1991 video made shortly after his mother's death, or *Two Women*, a 2008 piece in which figures slowly move through a translucent and symbolic barrier of water.

Viola's education and artistic practice have long been guided by questions of "how we see, how we hear, and how we come to know the world." [3] The artist grew up in Queens, New York and attended Syracuse University in the late 1960s where he enrolled not only in fine arts classes, but also in a variety of academic subjects ranging from the humanities to the hard sciences. In particular, he was captivated by religious studies, psychology and electrical engineering, interests that are clearly assimilated throughout his oeuvre.

Technological experimentation

As early as the 1970s, Viola was one of the first visual artists to make use of new video technologies. As a student he experimented enthusiastically with new portable recording devices, with which he created short video performances that explored a variety of gestures, sounds and expressions. During the 1970s and 1980s, he was artist-in-residence at a number of media laboratories and television stations, while also serving as an assistant curator at Everson Museum of Art where he was exposed to the work of Nam

June Paik and Peter Campus, artists who were early innovators in the emerging field of video art. Eventually, Viola conceived of multi-channel and immersive installations where viewers are surrounded by carefully arranged screens and projections, sometimes displayed within an otherwise pitch-black room.

Sacred space

Between 1974 and 1976, Viola lived in Italy, where religious paintings and sculptures are often displayed in-situ, in the cathedrals for which they were commissioned. The continuing integration of historical art into contemporary public and religious life inspired Viola to design installations that mimicked the forms of devotional paintings, diptychs, predellas and altarpieces—formats that encourage intimate contemplation of religious icons. Later traveling throughout Japan and other parts of East Asia, Viola observed the same active level of engagement with art. In Tokyo, for instance, he witnessed museum visitors placing offerings at the feet of sculptural bodhisattvas or other religious statuary.

For viewers, the experience of viewing Viola's works need not be spiritually inscribed. In many cases, his works appeal to or reflect raw human emotions (the theme of his acclaimed exhibition *The Passions*) or universal life experiences. While *The Crossing* can be interpreted in light of a host of religious associations, the act of "self-annihilation" represented in the figure's disappearance at each conclusion also serves as a metaphor for the destruction of the ego. In the artist's words, this action "becomes a necessary means to transcendence and liberation," [4] especially in the face of life's inevitable unpredictability.

[1] Bill Viola, as quoted in *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, Jacquelynn Baas and Mary Jane Jacob, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 254
[2] Bill Viola, *Buddha Mind*, p. 254.
[3] "Bill Viola Interviewed by John Hanhardt, *Going Forth By Day* (Berlin: Deutsche Guggenheim and New York: Harry N Abrams, Inc, 2005), p. 87.
[4] Bill Viola, as quoted in "Emotions in Extreme Time: Bill Viola's Passions Project," in *The Passions*, John Walsh, ed. (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), p. 53.

Additional resources:

Bill Viola at SFMOMA

Bill Viola – James Cohan Gallery

Bill Viola – the artist's website

Bill Viola, The Passions from the J. Paul Getty Museum

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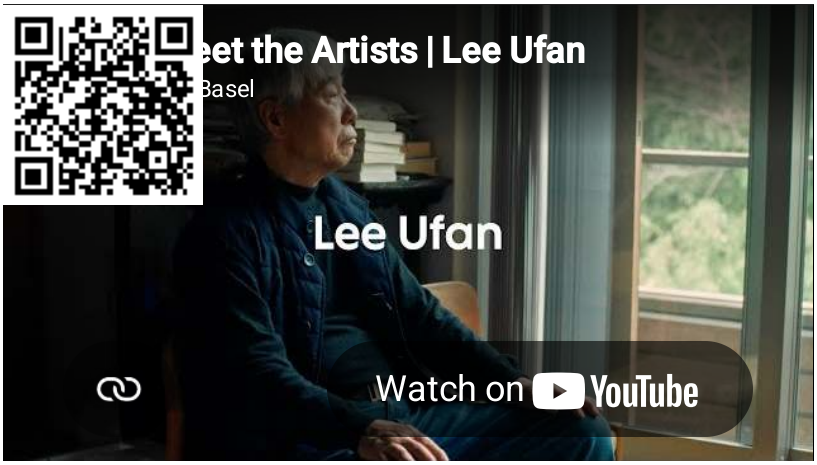
- **12.5: Ritual, spirituality, and transcendence** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

11.5: Lee Ufan

- by **ART BASEL**

Page ID

261805



To behold a painting or sculpture by the Korean artist and philosopher Lee Ufan is to feel suspended in a single breath longer than seems biologically possible. Whether consisting of an isolated brushstroke on canvas or an installation of carefully counterpoised rocks and steel plates, each work is an encounter between interior and exterior that produces a lasting reverberation. While the artist – also a prolific writer and critic – has deep roots in the Korean avant-garde, associated with the Mono-ha group in the late 1960s and the Dansaekhwa school of monochrome painting in the 1970s, in latter decades, his dedication to his singular vision has garnered him solo exhibitions at international institutions including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., and the Château de Versailles. In this video, the 84-year-old master grants Art Basel access to his tranquil studio enclave in Kamakura, Japan, for a meditation on creativity, the primacy of nature, and the end of man. Lee Ufan is represented by Kukje Gallery, Seoul; Pace Gallery, New York; kamel mennour, Paris; Lisson Gallery, London; and SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo.

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11.6: Masks and Ritual Behavior

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



Figure 10.37 | Yoruba Egungun Dance Costume
Author: User "Ngc15"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 10.36 | Mask of Burkina Faso
Author: Andrea Praefcake
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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

Contemporary African tribal rituals generally center on a number of life issues: birth, puberty, courtship and marriage, the harvest, the hunt, illness, royalty, death, and ancestors. In Burkina Faso, animal masks enter the community to purify its members and protect them from harm. (Figure 10.36) In Nigeria, Yoruba **Egungun**, or masquerades, involve both masks and costumes. (Figure 10.37) Costumes are made from layers of cloth chosen notonly to demonstrate the family's wealth and status, but also to connect the wearer to the spirits of ancestors who re- turn to the community to advise and to punish wrongdoing. Once completely concealed, the wearer is possessed by and assumes the power of the ancestor through dance: as the pieces of cloth lift, they bestow blessings.



Figure 10.38 | Eskimo Medicine Man
Photographer: Frank G. Carpenter
Author: User "Yksin"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 10.39 | Havré (Belgium), chaussée du Roeulx - The Gilles
Author: Jean-Pol GRANDMONT
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Due to a generally harsh climate not conducive to agriculture, Inuit cultures located in the Arctic regions of North America subsisted mainly on fish and other sea dwelling animals, including whales. Early twentieth-century explorer and anthropologist Knud Rasmussen asked his guide, an Inuit shaman, about Inuit religious belief. His response was that "we don't believe, we fear."

While it is a myth that Inuit elders were sent off in- to the wild to die (elders were and still are highly valued members of the tribe), many of the totemic and mask images of this culture are warnings against the dangers of making bad choices in a cold, harsh, and unforgiving environment. In this circa 1890 image, a Yupik (Eskimo) shaman exorcises evil spirits from a young boy; note the complex mask and large claws. (Figure 10.38)

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

that took place during Lent. The associated festivities were a time to ignore normal standards of behavior and celebrate the excesses of life. Often dressed in masks and costumes as a means of casting aside one's identity and social restrictions, the carnivals of Mardi Gras allowed a sense of freedom rarely known in societies that upheld a strict social hierarchy. (Figures 10.39 and 10.40) We could discuss many more such visual experiences in the context of spiritual and philosophical ideas about the artistic expressions we devise to reflect our beliefs about mortality and immortality and how we connect these notions for ourselves. Suffice it to say that we can stay aware of the pervasive nature of art and visual experience in reflecting them.

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11.7: Transformation masks

by DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



Figure **11.7.1**: Kwakwaka'wakw artist, *Eagle Mask closed*, late 19th c., from Alert Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, cedar wood, feathers, sinew, cord, bird skin, hide, plant fibers, cotton, iron, pigments, 37 x 57 x 49 cm (American Museum of Natural History)

Transformation

Imagine a man standing before a large fire wearing the heavy eagle mask shown above and a long cedar bark costume on his body. He begins to dance, the firelight flickers and the feathers rustle as he moves about the room in front of hundreds of people. Now, imagine him pulling the string that opens the mask, he is transformed into something else entirely—what a powerful and dramatic moment!

Northwest Coast transformation masks manifest transformation, usually an animal changing into a mythical being or one animal becoming another. Masks are worn by dancers during ceremonies, they pull strings to open and move the mask—in effect, animating it. In the Eagle mask shown above from the collection of the American Museum of Natural History, you can see the wooden frame and netting that held the mask on the dancer's head. When the cords are pulled, the eagle's face and beak split down the center, and the bottom of the beak opens downwards, giving the impression of a bird spreading its wings (see image below). Transformed, the mask reveals the face of an ancestor.



Figure 11.7.2: Kwakwaka'wakw artist, *Eagle Mask open*, late 19th c., from Alert Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, cedar wood, feathers, sinew, cord, bird skin, hide, plant fibers, cotton, iron, pigments, 37 x 57 x 49 cm (American Museum of Natural History)

A Transformation Mask at the Brooklyn Museum (below) shows a Thunderbird, but when opened it reveals a human face flanked on either side by two lightning snakes called sisiutl, and with another bird below it and a small figure in black above it.



Figure 11.7.3: 'Namgis artist (of the Kwakwaka'wakw), *Thunderbird Mask open*, 19th c., from Alert Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, cedar, pigment, leather, nails, metal plate, 78.7 x 114.3 x 119.4 cm open; 52.1 x 43.2 x 74.9 cm closed (Brooklyn Museum)



Figure 11.7.4: 'Namgis artist (of the Kwakwaka'wakw), *Thunderbird Mask closed*, 19th c., from Alert Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, cedar, pigment, leather, nails, metal plate, 78.7 x 114.3 x 119.4 cm open; 52.1 x 43.2 x 74.9 cm closed (Brooklyn Museum)

A whale transformation mask, such as the one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (below), gives the impression that the whale is swimming. The mouth opens and closes, the tail moves upwards and downwards, and the flippers extend outwards but also retract inwards.



Figure 11.7.5: Kwakwaka'wakw artist, *Whale Mask*, 19th c., from Alert Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, cedar wood, cord, metal, leather, denim, pigments, 58 x 36.5 x 161.3 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Transformation masks, like those belonging to the Kwakwaka'wakw (pronounced Kwak-wak-ah-wak, a Pacific Northwest Coast indigenous people) and illustrated here, are worn during a potlatch, a ceremony where the host displayed his status, in part by giving away gifts to those in attendance. These masks were only one part of a costume that also included a cloak made of red cedar bark. During a potlatch, Kwakwaka'wakw dancers perform wearing the mask and costume. The masks conveyed social position (only those with a certain status could wear them) and also helped to portray a family's genealogy by displaying (family) crest symbols.

The Kwakwaka'wakw

Masks are not the same across the First Nations of the Northwest Coastal areas; here we focus solely on Kwakwaka'wakw transformation masks.

The Kwakwaka'wakw ("Kwak'wala speaking tribes") are generally called Kwakiutl by non-Native peoples. They are one of many indigenous groups that live on the western coast of British Columbia, Canada. The mythology and cosmology of different Kwakwaka'wakw Nations (such as the Kwagu'ɬ (Kwakiutl) or 'Namgis) is extremely diverse, although there are commonalities. For instance, many groups relate that deceased ancestors roamed the world, transforming themselves in the process (this might entail removing their animal skins or masks to reveal their human selves within).

Kwakwaka'wakw bands are arranged into four clans (Killer Whale, Eagle, Raven, and Wolf clans). The clans are divided into *numayn* (or *'na'mina*), which can be loosely translated as "group of fellows of the same kind" (essentially groups that shared a

common ancestor). *Numayns* were responsible for safe-guarding crest symbols and for conveying their specific rights—which might include access to natural resources (like salmon fishing areas) and rights to sacred names and dances that related to a *numayn's* ancestor or the group's origins. The *numayn* were ranked, and typically only one person could fill a spot at any given moment in time. Each rank entailed specific rights, including ceremonial privileges—like the right to wear a mask such as the Brooklyn Museum's Thunderbird transformation mask. Animal transformation masks contained crests for a given *numayn*. Ancestral entities and supernatural forces temporarily embody dancers wearing these masks and other ceremonial regalia.

Animals and myths



Figure **11.7.6**: Transformation Mask, Kwakiutl population, British Columbia, Canada, wood paint, graphite, cedar, cloth, string, 34 X 53 cm closed, 130 cm open (Quai Branly Museum). "This transformation mask opens into two sections. Closed, it represents a crow or an eagle; when spread out, a human face appears. It was associated with initiation rites that took place during the winter. During these ceremonies, both religious and theatrical, the spirit of the ancestors was supposed to enter into men."

Many myths relate moments of transformation often involving trickster supernaturals (a trickster is a god, goddess, spirit, man, woman, or anthropomorphic animal who exhibits a great degree of intellect or secret knowledge and uses it to play tricks or otherwise disobey normal rules and conventional behavior). Raven, for instance, is known as a consummate trickster—he often changes into other creatures, and helps humans by providing them with a variety of useful things such as the sun, moon, fire, and salmon. Thunderbird (*Kwankwanxwalige'*), who was a mythical ancestor of the Kwakwaka'wakw, also figures prominently in mythology. He is believed to cause thunder when he beats his wings, and lightning comes from his eyes. He lives in the celestial realm, and he can remove his bird skin to assume human form.

Design and materials

The masks illustrated here display a variety of brightly colored surfaces filled with complex forms. These masks use elements of the formline style, a term coined in 1965 to describe the characteristics of Northwest Coast visual culture. The Brooklyn Museum mask provides a clear example of what constitutes the formline style. For instance, The Brooklyn Museum mask (when open) displays a color palette of mostly red, blue-green, and black, which is consistent with other formline objects like a Tlingit Raven Screen (a house partition screen) attributed to Kadyisdu.axch' (detail below). The masks, whether opened or closed, are bilaterally symmetrical. Typical of the formline style is the use of an undulating, calligraphic line. Also, note how the pupils of the eyes on the exterior of the Brooklyn Museum mask are ovoid shapes, similar to the figures and forms found on the interior surfaces of many masks. This ovoid shape, along with s- and u-forms, are common features of the formline style.



Figure **11.7.7**: Detail, *Tlingit Raven Screen* or *Yéil X'eenh*, attributed to Kadyisdu.axch', Tlingit, Kiks.ádi clan, active late 18th – early 19th century (Photo: **Joe Mabel**, CC BY-SA 3.0)

The American Museum of Natural History and Brooklyn Museum masks are carved of red cedar wood, an important and common material used for many Northwest Coast objects and buildings. Masks take months, sometimes years, to create. Because they are made of wood and other organic materials that quickly decay, most masks date to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (even though we know that the practice extends much farther into the past). In fact, the artistic style of many transformation masks it thought to have emerged over a thousand years ago.

With the introduction and enforcement of Christianity and as a result of colonization in the nineteenth century, masking practices changed among peoples of the Northwest Coast. Prior to contact with Russians, Europeans, and Euro-Americans, masks like the Brooklyn Museum's Thunderbird Transformation Mask, were not carved using metal tools. After iron tools were introduced along with other materials and equipment, masks demonstrate different carving techniques. Earlier masks used natural (plant and mineral based) pigments, post-contact, brighter and more durable synthetic colors were introduced. The open mask from the American Museum of Natural History, for example, displays bright red, yellow, and blue.

Ceremonies and potlatches

Masks passed between family members of a specific clan (they could be inherited or gifted). They were just one sign of a person's status and rank, which were important to demonstrate within Kwakwaka'wakw society—especially during a potlatch. Franz Boas, an anthropologist who worked in this area between 1885 and 1930, noted that "The acquisition of a high position and the maintenance of its dignity require correct marriages and wealth—wealth accumulated by industry and by loaning out property at interest—dissipated at the proper time, albeit with the understanding that each recipient of a gift has to return it with interest at a time when he is dissipating his wealth. This is the general principle underlying the potlatch…."[1]



Figure 11.7.8: Edward S. Curtis, Kwakwaka'wakw potlatch, c. 1914

Potlatches were banned in 1885 until the 1950s because they were considered immoral by Christian missionaries who believed cannibalism occurred (for its part, the Canadian Government thought potlatches hindered economic development because people ceased work during these ritual celebrations). With the prohibition of potlatches, many masks were confiscated. Those that weren't destroyed often made their way into museums or private collections. When the ban against potlatches was removed by the Canadian government, many First Nations have attempted to regain possession of the masks and other objects that had been taken from them. Potlatches are still practiced today among Northwest Coast peoples.

Editor Note: In the United States, it is more common to see the term "Native American," "Native," or "Indigenous," whereas "First Nations" used more frequently in Canada.

1. Franz Boas, *Kwakiutl Ethnography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 51. It is important to mention that Boas is a controversial figure for many, especially because of his active acquisition of objects and skeletons belonging to different First Nations. Much of what he collected is today in the American Museum of Natural History in NYC.

Additional resources:

Kwakiutl Ethnography from the Milwaukee Public Museum

American Indian History from the Smithsonian

Repatriation of a British Museum mask (UNESCO)

Whale Transformation Mask at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Bill Holm, *Northwest Coast Indian Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965).

Alice B. Kehoe, *North American Indians: A Comprehensive Account*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992).

Bruce Greenville, "Introduction," in *Down from the Shimmering Sky: Masks of the Northwest Coast*, Peter Macnair, et al, 14–16 (Vancouver, BC, Seattle: Douglas & McIntyre and University of Washington Press, 1998).

Aldona Jonaitis, *Art of the Northwest Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

Edward Malin, *A World of Faces: Masks of the Northwest Coast Indians* (Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1978).

Judith Ostrowitz, *Privileging the Past: Reconstructing History in Northwest Coast Art* (Vancouver, BC: Univdrsity of British Columbia Press, 1999).

Stanley Walens, "'The Potlatch Era,'" in *Kwakiutl, Indians of North America* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1992 [Updated 2008]).

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- **11.3: North America c. 1500 - 1900 (I)** by Smarthistory is licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

11.8: Funerary Spaces and Grave Goods



Figure 10.41 | Banditaccia (Cerveteri)
Author: User "Johnbod"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 10.42 | Tomb of the Reliefs at Banditaccia necropolis
Author: Roberto Ferrari
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.0

Archaeologists have dated the earliest burial sites found worldwide to around 100,000 BCE, though some argue that certain ones are as old as 300,000 BCE. A considerable body of art related to funerary customs and beliefs has been found at such sites, and in many instances it is much more extensive than other types of evidence of how people lived. This disparity is likely due to the general respect given to sites of tombs and burial grounds. Usually considered sacred places, they have often been left intact when other parts of a settlement have been destroyed and rebuilt. These places, the ways they are marked, decorated, and furnished, supply us with a good deal of data to explore for insights into beliefs and practices related to burial practices and the afterlife, including how the people prepared for both during their lifetimes. Burial sites often include **grave goods**, such as personal possessions of the buried individual, as well as food, tools, objects of adornment, and even a variety of household goods.

The Etruscans and their culture, predecessors to the Romans on the Italian peninsula, existed from c. 800 BCE until conquered by the Romans in 264 BCE, They are well known for their highly developed burial practices and the elaborate provisions they made for the afterlife. They created a type of mound tomb known as a **tumulus**, made from **tufa**, a relatively soft mineral/rock substance that is easy to cut and carve, but hardens to become very strong. (Figure 10.41) Like the Egyptians, the Etruscans grouped their tombs into a necropolis, but they were not reserved for the highly born.



Figure 10.43 | 5th century BC fresco of dancers and musicians, Tomb of the Leopards, Monterozzi necropolis, Tarquinia, Italy
Author: Yann Forget
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Within each tomb, the Etruscans created and decorated chambers in ways that showed what they expected would happen in a "next lifetime." (Figure 10.42) They expected to rejoin their family and friends and to continue many of their ordinary activities and their celebrations. (Figure 10.43) Some tombs were supplied with a complete stock of household furnishings, while others showed scenes of athletic or leisure activities, and still others, ritual banquets. Their terra cotta sarcophagi included portraits of individuals and couples who expected to reunite and continue their married life in the afterlife. (Figure 10.44)

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

In ancient China, tombs for the important and the wealthy were very richly appointed and it is clear that the expectations for the afterlife included a need for food and other sustenance, as well as ongoing ritual appeasement of deities and evil spirits. Artisans' remarkable skills at casting bronze were put to use for a variety of fine vessels for food and wine, altars for ritual, and various other objects. (Figure 10.46)

Also included were jade amulets, tools, and daggers. Some tombs were laid out like a household of the living, and nested coffins were decorated with mythological and philo- sophical motifs similar to those on the bronzes and jades. In the tomb of a woman known as Lady Dai (Xin Zhui, c. 213-163 BCE), a fine silk funerary banner carried mythological symbolism of her life and death



Figure 10.46 | Altar Set
Source: Met Museum
License: OASC

as well as a depiction of her and her coffin. (Figure 10.47) The expectation for musical enjoyment was exemplified in tombs that enclosed elaborate sets of tuned bells along with a carving showing how they would be arranged and played.



Figure 10.44 | Sarcophagus of the Spouses, Cerveteri, 520 BCE
Author: User "sailko"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 10.45 | Samanid Mausoleum in Bukhara, Uzbekistan
Author: User "Apfel51"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC0 Public Domain

The Terracotta Army of Qin Shi Huang (r. 247-210 BCE), who unified China and ruled as the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE), is another dramatic example of craft, devotion, and ritual meant to honor the dead. The figures were first uncovered in 1974 by local farmers in the Shaanxi Province. The Terracotta Army is a now famous collection of more than 8,000 life-sized, fired clay sculptures of warriors in battle dress standing at attention, along with numerous other figures, pieces of equipment, and animals such as horses, around the mausoleum of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, from whom China's name originates. (Figures 10.48 and 10.49) It is believed the figures were intended to protect the emperor in the afterlife.



Figure 10.47 | Western Han painting on silk was found draped over the coffin in the grave of Lady Dai
Author: User "Cold Season"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 10.48 | Terracotta Army
Author: Gveret Tered
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.0



Figure 10.49 | Terracotta Soldier with his horse
Author: User "Robin Chen"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

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

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

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

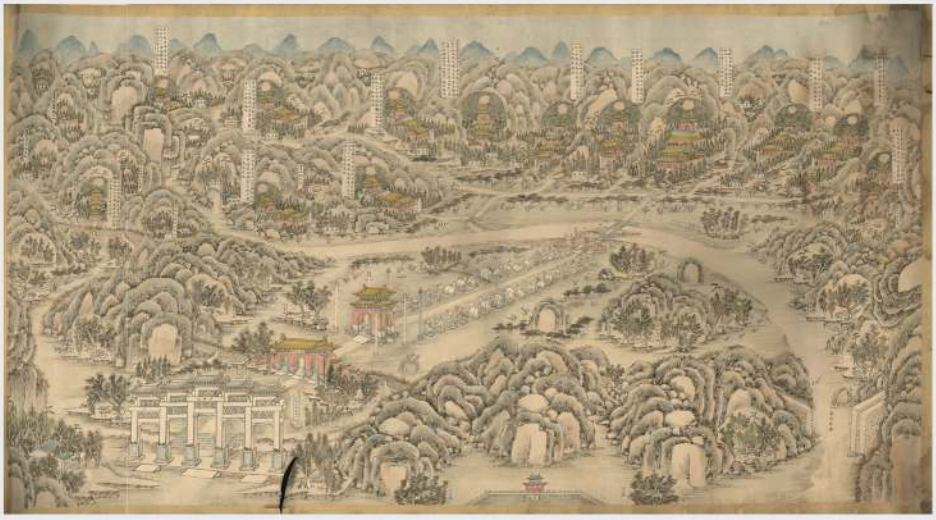


Figure 10.50 | Watercolor overview of the Ming Tombs
Author: User "Rosemania"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

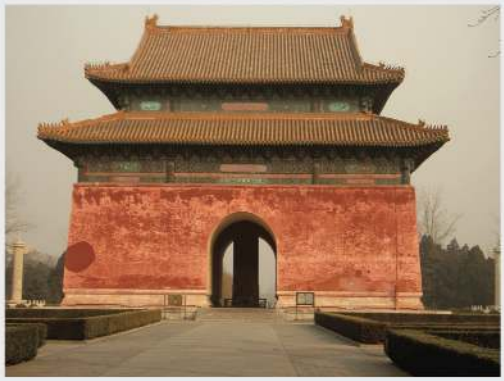


Figure 10.51 | Pavilion with "ways of souls" a turtle-borne stele at the tombs of the Emperors of the Ming Dynasty
Author: User "ofol"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 10.52 | The spirit way at the Ming Tombs
Author: User "Richardelainechambers"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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11.9: Tlingit mortuary and memorial totem poles

by TERESA DEWITT and DR. LAUREN KILROY-EWBANK



A conversation between Teresa DeWitt and Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank in front of a Mortuary Pole, Tlingit origin, 19th century, from Village Island, 16 x 2 ft. (Totem Heritage Center, Ketchikan, Alaska); and a Bear/Killer Whale Pole (memorial pole), Tlingit origin, 19th century, Village Island, 27 x 2 ft. (Totem Heritage Center, Ketchikan, Alaska)

Terms to know:

- Tlingit
- Totem pole
- Tongass tribe
- memorial vs. mortuary
- Northwest Coastal peoples (Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian)
- bentwood box
- clan crest

Additional resources:

Learn more about the Totem Heritage Center

Read more about totem poles from The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University

Learn about the **Northwest Coast Village Project**

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11.10: Ritual, spirituality, and transcendence

Ritual, spirituality, and transcendence

Spirituality remains important, but it takes on new forms in the global contemporary era.

1980 - present

Roger Minick, *Woman with Scarf at Inspiration Point, Yosemite National Park*

by ELIZABETH GERBER, LACMA and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video 11.10.1: Roger Minick, *Woman with Scarf at Inspiration Point, Yosemite National Park* (Sightseer series), 1980, dye coupler print, 38.1 x 43.18 cm, ©Roger Minick (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), a *Seeing America* video

Additional resources:

This photograph at LACMA

The artist's website

Mariko Mori, *Pure Land*

by KATRINA KLAASMEYER

Floating on a lotus blossom

Set within a golden landscape, a female figure serenely floats above a lotus blossom while six alien musicians whirl by on bubbly clouds. Her pink robes mirror the predominantly pale orange, yellow and pink of the water, land and sky—firmly embedding her within the tranquil scene. *Pure Land*, a photograph set within glass, is the counterpart of Mori's three-dimensional video installation, *Nirvana*, 1997. *Nirvana* animates the imagery we see in *Pure Land*. Viewed within a darkened room with the aid of three-dimensional glasses, *Nirvana's* audience was limited to a group of 20 people at a time. During the seven minute video, the central female figure would hum and whisper echoed rhythms as if meditating, while the little musicians floated around her. At the conclusion, a fan came on and blew cool, scented air into the audience's faces. Through the integration of sensory elements such as three-dimensional imagery, sound, scent, and the gentle touch of a breeze, combined with the limited viewing audience, *Nirvana* created an immersive, intimate experience. As its photographic counterpart, *Pure Land* captures a moment of this experience, enabling the viewer a longer, perhaps more meditative, relationship with the work.



Figure **11.10.1**: Mariko Mori, *Pure Land*, 1996-98, glass with photo interlayer, 305 x 610 x 2.2 cm



Figure **11.10.2**: Mariko Mori, *Enlightenment Capsule*, 1996-1998, plastic, solar transmitting device, fiber optic cables, 108 x 83 x 83 inches

Symbolism and spiritual allusions

Every element we see here has significance that may not be apparent at first glance—the serene landscape, with its golden sky, smooth pink land masses, and perfectly still water, is rich with symbolism. *Pure Land* is set during sunrise in the landscape of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, called "dead" because the high salinity of its water does not support fish or plant life. In Shinto tradition, salt is used as an agent of purification. Floating in the water is a lotus blossom—symbol of purity and rebirth into paradise. This blossom resembles one in Mori's 1998 sculptural installation, *Enlightenment Capsule* (left), which featured a rainbow-colored acrylic lotus blossom set within a space-age capsule illuminated by sunlight. In both *Enlightenment Capsule* and *Pure Land* Mori blends traditional symbolism with futuristic elements. On the right hand side of the background of *Pure Land*is a fantastical object which resembles a playful futuristic spacecraft with arms. This may be a variation of a **Tibetan stupa**—a sacred Buddhist monument originally used as a burial mound. Through her imaginative reinterpretation of symbols steeped in tradition, the artist creates a timeless setting appropriate for meditation on death, purification, and rebirth.

Immersion

The distant horizon line, combined with the larger island in the foreground that seems to continue into the viewer's space, create a sense of immersion, as if one were present with these fantastical figures. Perhaps this feeling of personal involvement ties in with the title itself, *Pure Land*, which is the paradise of Amida (or Amitabha) Buddha who descends to greet devotees at the moment of their death and takes them back to his "Pure Land of Perfect Bliss."



Figure 11.10.3: Descent of Amitabha and the Heavenly Multitude, Heian period, 12th century, National Treasure (Yushi Hachiman Ko)

Beginning with the eleventh century in Japan, several paintings and sculptures were made on this theme, such as the *Descent of Amida and the Heavenly Multitude* (above). In this type of imagery, Amida Buddha, resting on a lotus blossom and holding his hands in a symbolic gesture known as a mudra, is typically surrounded by celestial attendants in a sea of swirling clouds. These attendants are boddhisattvas, enlightened beings who act out of great compassion to help others achieve enlightenment. In a sculptural example from Byodo-in Temple, 52 boddhisattvas fly on clouds on either side of Amida Buddha (below); some are seated quietly with their hands joined in prayer, some hold a lotus blossom to receive the soul of the deceased, while others are playing musical instruments.



Figure 11.10.4: Jōchō, Amida Buddha, Heian Period, c. 1053, wood covered with wood leaf, 295 cm (Phoenix Hall, Byodo-in, Kyoto)



Figure 11.10.5: Mark Mori, *Oneness* , on exhibit in 2007 at the Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art, Luxembourg (MUDAM) (**photo: Mark Weston** , CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

In Mori's version, these celestial attendants are pastel-colored alien figures with large pointy heads and delicate bodies. Each figure plays a different instrument as they float on their light blue bubbly clouds. The two musicians in the foreground are blurred, as if they are flying quickly toward the viewer. These muscians appear again in a later sculptural installation by Mori, *Oneness* , 2003 (left). In this work, the six aliens are given three-dimensional form, complete with soft, flesh-like material. They stand in a circle facing outward as they hold each other's hands. The viewer becomes an active participant in the work — when a person hugs one of the figures, its eyes light up and you feel its heartbeat. As in the Nirvana video installation upon which *Pure Land* is based, Mori seems to want to engage more than just the viewer's sense of sight and for each participant to have a direct experience with the artwork. Perhaps more significantly, *Oneness* is a metaphor for bringing in the outsider, achieved through revealing commonalities of experience. The binding together of seemingly disparate realities is a central theme throughout Mori's work.

Artist as object

Another element typical in Mori's work is for the artist to cast herself in the principle role, and *Pure Land* is no exception. The central female figure is the artist herself, wearing an elaborate costume and headdress, both of her own design. Born in Tokyo in 1967, Mori studied design at Tokyo's Bunka Fashion College and worked part-time as a fashion model, which she originally considered a form of personal creativity. However, she found modeling an inadequate medium in which to express herself fully, so she began to stage elaborate tableaux, taking full creative control of the process, acting as director, producer, set and costume designer, and model. This recalls the practices of other photographers, most notably **Cindy Sherman** , as well as **Yasumasa Morimura**, the Japanese photographer notorious for substituting himself for figures in famous paintings throughout art history.

In the *Pure Land* photograph, Mori's light blue, pupil-less eyes, gauze serenely somewhere beyond our vision. Like the Amida Buddha, she rests above a lotus blossom and holds her right hand in a mudra of blessing and teaching; the circle formed by the index finger and thumb is the sign of the Wheel of Law. In her left hand she holds a *hojyu*, or magical wishing jewel, in the shape of a lotus bud. This figure is inspired by Kichijoten, originally the Indian goddess, Shri Lakshmi, who was eventually incorporated into Buddhism, and typically represents fertility, fortune, and beauty. Here Mori bars comparison with a well-known eighth-century painting of Kichijoten from Yukushi-ji Temple in Nara. Similarities include the serene elegance, softly fluttering gown, and wish-granting jewel. The eighth-century painting depicts the clothing and appearance of an elegant lady of the Chinese Tang Dynasty, and it may have been an object of veneration during the annual New Year event when devotees prayed for happiness and fertility. In this manner, a beautiful, elegant woman was seen to embody the ideas of good fortune and prosperity and became an object of worship.



Figure 11.10.6: Left: Kichijoten from Yukushi-ji Temple in Nara, 8th century, color on hemp, 53 x 31.7 cm; right: Mariko Mori, Pure Land, 1996-98, glass with photo interlayer, 305 x 610 x 2.2 cm

By taking on this ancient persona, Mori dissolves her own identity and is transformed into the elegant Tang lady and goddess of fortune, while simultaneously performing the welcoming role of Amida Buddha. Mori's enlightened self-representation descends to guide the viewer into a "Pure Land of Perfect Bliss" of her own creation. Perhaps more significantly, the artist seeks to lead the viewer into her immersive paradise. In both formats, the multi-sensory video *Nirvana* and purely visual *Pure Land* photograph, the message is clear: enlightenment is for all.

Additional resources:

Mariko Mori at the Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art

Video — The Artist Project: Mariko Mori (from The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Scott Indriskek, "Mariko Mori wants to bring her nature-loving art to six continents," *Modern Painters* (May 2011)

Visualizing an Endless Universe: Mariko Mori Makes the Cosmos Life-Size

Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Earth's Creation*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG



Figure 11.10.7: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Earth's Creation*, 1994, synthetic polymer paint on linen mounted on canvas, four panels (private collection)

At nearly twenty feet wide and nine feet high, Emily Kwame Kngwarreye's painting *Earth's Creation* is monumental in its scale and impact, rivaling Abstract Expressionist masterpieces by Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock not only in size but also in its painterly virtuosity (see a photo of it **in a gallery here**, to get a sense of its scale). Patches of bold yellows, greens, reds and blues seem to bloom like lush vegetation over the large canvas. Comprised of gestural, viscous marks, each swath of color traces the movement of the artist's hands and body over the canvas, which would have been laid horizontally as she painted, seated on (or beside) and intimately connected to her art.



Figure **11.10.8**: Still from a short video produced by The National Museum of Australia **source**

The work made records at auction when it was sold in 2007 for over $1,000,000—the highest price ever fetched for a work by a female artist in Australia. Yet, just decades earlier, Kngwarreye was virtually unknown to the world outside her small desert community in the Australian country of Alhakere. A self-taught artist who was trained in ceremonial painting, she rose to international prominence only in her eighties, and enjoyed a flourishing career at the end of her life.

Rooted in tradition

Kngwarreye was born around 1910, and spent most of her life in an isolated Anmatyerr community in Central Australia. The area, however, was forcibly occupied by European pastoralist settlers in the 1920s, and the artist, alongside other members of her community, worked on the pastoral property (pastoral refers to the tending of cattle and sheep). In 1976, Aboriginal land rights were legally granted, and she was able, finally, to live independently.

Aboriginal culture has long been intimately connected to the landscape of Australia; inhabited by humans for over 40,000 years, the region is characterized by deserts, grasslands and dramatic arched rock formations. Kngwarreye was an established elder of her community and was trained to create ceremonial sand paintings inspired by her ritual "dreamings,'" as well as to paint decorative motifs on women's bodies as part of a ceremony called *Awelye*. These visual forms were connected to cultural expressions in song, storytelling and dance. While her paintings have never been figural, they remain influenced by the culture in which she grew up as well as the natural environment.

Artistic intervention

In the late 1970s, Kngwayere began to work in the medium of batiks, making works that were purely artistic endeavors for the first time. In 1977, she was a founding participant of the Utopia Women's Batik Group. Her compositions were abstract and featured the motif of repeated dots, acting sometimes as a linear stroke, or elsewhere used to fill large patches of space. A decade later, in 1988, the S.H. Ervin Gallery in Sydney initiated a "Summer Project" that sought to facilitate the creation of Aboriginal art, as well as to establish a market for the genre. Sponsored by the collector Robert Holmes à Court, curators traveled to the Aboriginal homeland of Utopia and delivered acrylic paints and materials. After two weeks they returned to find "abstract and richly expressive" compositions created by many of the artists, and held a group exhibition in Sydney.



Figure **11.10.9**: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Emu Woman*, 1988–89, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 92.0 x 61.0 cm (The Holmes à Court Collection, Heytesbury)

Kngwarreye's painting *Emu Woman* (above) was selected for the cover of the exhibition catalogue as a gesture of respect for her seniority, as she was the oldest artist from the community. Dominated by rich, earthy tones, the painting—her first ever on canvas–contained references to plants and seeds that featured in her "dreaming" ritual. Against a dark field of charcoal, violet and black, the piece is punctuated with bright marks in tangerine and white hues, which lend the work an electric sense of energy and rhythm.

Her decades-long experience in painting directly on the human body informs the curving swells of dotted marks that comprise the composition.

Critics lauded the piece, and virtually overnight, the artist received international exposure and unprecedented acclaim. The following year, Kngwarreye held her first solo exhibition at Utopia Art Sydney, after which she would be invited to participate in several renowned international exhibitions and biennales.

The “global” turn

The arc of Kngwarreye’s career runs alongside a period of tremendous change in Australia, moving from the end of a phase of colonial settlement through to a more ethical embrace of Aboriginal culture by the nation’s Western population. Yet the period in which she came to prominence also reflects changes taking place in the contemporary art world internationally, as the 1980s and 1990s saw a notable expansion within the mainstream to include non-Western or minority artists.

“Green time”

Earth’s Creation belongs to the “high colorist” phase in Kngwarreye’s work, which is characterized by a loosening of her compositions—which were no longer reliant on pseudo-geometric patterns—and the expansion of her color palette to include a range of tones beyond the familiar clay and ochre hues that dominated her prior works. Still connected to the natural environment, however, these works reference the changing atmospheric character of seasonal cycles. *Earth’s Creation* documents the lushness of the “green time” that follows periods of heavy rain, and makes use of tropical blues, yellows and greens. The piece has often been likened to Claude Monet’s studies of seasonal and temporal change, and given its formidable, room-filling scale, a comparison to the artist’s *Water Lilies* of 1914-26 (MoMA) might be remarkably apt.

Earth’s Creation was created as part of the larger Alhalkere Suite which contains twenty-two panels, and is still considered one of the most virtuosic of Kngwarreye’s immense and prolific artistic output. In the last two weeks of her life, Kngwarreye completed a suite of twenty-four small paintings. These were characterized by extremely broad, milky strokes of jewel-toned hues of blue and rose, and communicate the artist’s long-standing fascination with color and her sophisticated grasp of abstract composition.

Additional resources:

“Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye” at the National Museum Australia

Earth’s Creation at the Venice Biennale, Universes-in-Universe

The artist at the National Gallery of Australia

Emily Kame Kngwarreye, The Alhalkere suite from the National Gallery of Australia

Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, review by Chrischona Schmidt

Teacher notes for Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere — Paintings from Utopia

Australia 1900-present on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*

by JP MCMAHON

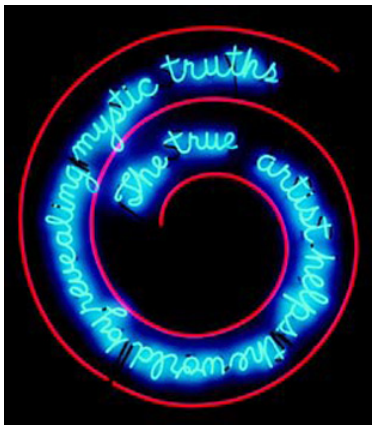


Figure 11.10.10: Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*, 1967, neon and clear glass tubing suspension supports; 149.86 x 139.7 x 5.08 cm (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Bruce Nauman's neon sign asks a multitude of questions with regard to the ways in which the 20th century conceived both avant-garde art and the role of the artist in society. If earlier European modernists, such as Mondrian, Malevich, and Kandinsky, sought to use art to reveal deep-seated truths about the human condition and the role of the artist in general, then Bruce Nauman's *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths* questions such transhistorical and universal statements. With regard to this work, Nauman said:

> ***The most difficult thing about the whole piece for me was the statement. It was a kind of test—like when you say something out loud to see if you believe it. Once written down, I could see that the statement […] was on the one hand a totally silly idea and yet, on the other hand, I believed it. It's true and not true at the same time. It depends on how you interpret it and how seriously you take yourself. For me it's still a very strong thought.***

The medium and the message

By using the mediums of mass culture (neon signs) and of display (he originally hung the sign in his storefront studio), Nauman sought to bring questions normally considered only by the high culture elite, such as the role and function of art and the artist in society, to a wider audience. While early European modernists, such as Picasso, had borrowed widely from popular culture, they rarely displayed their work in the sites of popular culture. For Nauman, both the medium and the message were equally important; thus, by using a form of communication readily understood by all (neon signs had been widespread in modern industrial society) and by placing this message in the public view, Nauman let everyone ask and answer the question.

While it is perhaps the words that stand out most, the symbolism of the spiral (think of Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, 1969), also deserves attention having been used for centuries in European and other civilizations, such as megalithic and Chinese art, both as a symbol of time and of nature itself.

Transcendence?

Theosophy is interesting in this regard and was an important aspect of the early European Avant-garde. In particular, Theosophists believed that all religions are attempts to help humanity to evolve to greater perfection, and that each religion therefore holds a portion of the truth. Through their materials, artists had sought to transform the physical into the spiritual. In this sense, Malevich, Mondrian, and Kandinsky sought to use the material of their art to transcend it: Nauman, and other of his generation, did not.

Process over product

Instead, Nauman's work transgresses many genres of art making in that his work explores the implications of minimalism, conceptual, performance, and process art. In this sense we could call Nauman's art "Postminimalism," a term coined by the art critic Robert Pincus-Witten, in his article "Eva Hesse: Post-Minimalism into Sublime" (*Artforum* 10, number 3, November 1971). Artists such as Nauman, Acconci, and Hesse, favored process instead of product, or rather the investigation over the end result.

However, this is not to say they did not produce objects, such as the neon-sign by Nauman, only that within the presentation of the object, they also retained an examination of the processes that made that specific object.

In this sense, Nauman's neon sign isn't only an object, it's a process, something that continues to make us think about art, artist, and the role that language plays in our conception of both. The words continue to ask this of each beholder who encounters them. Does the artist, the "true artist" really "reveal mystical truths"? Or confined to the specific culture that it was made in? If we are to believe the statement (remember, it is not necessarily Nauman's, he merely borrows it from our shared culture), then we might, for example, recognize Leonardo da Vinci as a Neo-Platonic artist who showed us ultimate and essential truths through painting. On the other hand, if we reject the statement, then we would probably recognize the artist as just another producer of a specific set of objects, that we call "art."

This type of logic and analytical thinking was influenced by Nauman's reading of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). From Wittgenstein, Nauman took the idea that you put forth a proposition/idea in the form of language and then examine its findings, irrespective of its proof or conclusion. Nauman's "language games," his neon-words, his proposition about the nature of art and the artist continue to resonant in today's art world, in particular with regard to the value we place on the artist's actions and findings.

Additional resources:

This work of art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Art:21 page about Nauman's *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truth*

Philadelphia Museum of Art biography of the artist

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:

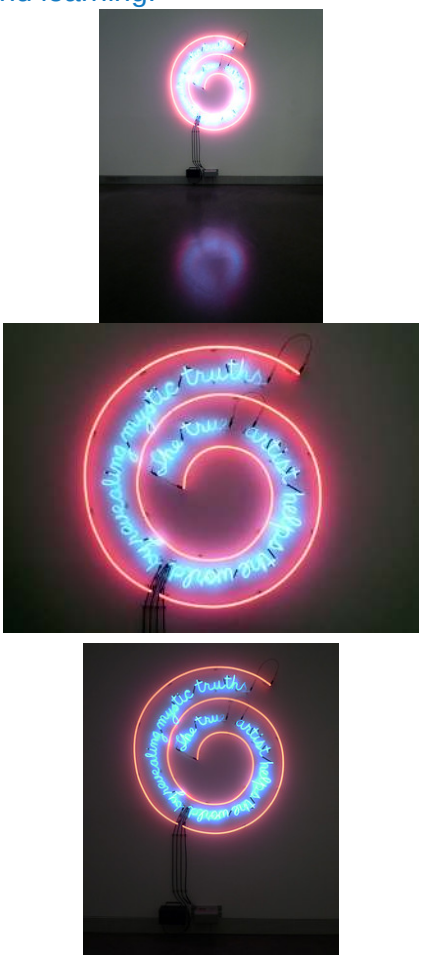


Figure **11.10.11**: More Smarthistory images…

Chris Ofili, *The Holy Virgin Mary*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG



Figure **11.10.12**: Chris Ofili, *The Holy Virgin Mary*, 1996, paper collage, oil paint, glitter, polyester resin, map pins & elephant dung on linen, 243.8 x 182.9 cm © Chris Ofili

Sensation

When the personal collection of British advertising executive and art collector Charles Saatchi went on tour in an exhibition called *Sensation* in 1997, viewers should have known to brace themselves for controversy. The show presented a cross-section of shocking work by a brash new generation of "Young British Artists," including, for example, Marcus Harvey's portrait of convicted child-murderer Myra Handley, and pornographic sculptural tableaux by Jake and Dinos Chapman. In London, the museum was picketed from day one, but the media attention eventually ushered in record turnouts.

In October of 1999, *Sensation* opened at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, where it was Chris Ofili's iconic painting, *The Holy Virgin Mary* that incited the most heated debate. Mayor Rudy Giuliani threatened to close the city-funded institution on the grounds that this artwork was offensive to religious viewers. Two months later, the painting, which rests upon two large balls of elephant dung, was desecrated by an elderly visitor who smeared white paint over its surface, claiming that the image was "blasphemous."

At first glance it seems easy to discern why the painting raised a few eyebrows: the inclusion of real shit and collaged pornography might be enough to offend conservative viewers. However, Ofili's work is more nuanced than it appeared to his detractors; the piece reflects on art historical precedents while addressing identity politics, religion and pop culture. To grasp its complexity, one must look beneath the surface—as dazzling and shocking as it may be.

Iconic or iconoclastic?

Set against a shimmering gold background comprised of carefully placed dots of paint and glitter, the central figure in Ofili's painting stares directly at her beholder, with wide eyes and parted lips. Her blue gown flows from the top of her head down to the amorphous base of her body, falling open to reveal a lacquered ball of elephant dung where her breast would be. Collaged images of women's buttocks surround the Virgin; cut from pornographic magazines, they become abstract, almost decorative forms that refuse to signify until confronted up-close. The two balls of dung beneath the canvas are adorned with glittering letters spelling out the work's title.

Formally, the use of gold and the front-facing Virgin link the work to Medieval icons, making the vulgarity of the pornographic images all the more stark. Yet, the artist claims that the sacred and the profane are not always opposed, even in traditional religious art:

> ***As an altar boy, I was confused by the idea of a holy Virgin Mary giving birth to a young boy. Now when I go to the National Gallery and see paintings of the Virgin***

> ***Mary, I see how sexually charged they are. Mine is simply a hip hop version.***

Race, religion, and representation

It is perhaps Ofili's final statement above that indicates the source of his critics' anxieties. As Carol Becker has explained, Ofili is "transforming the Holy Virgin into an exuberant, folkloric image. (…) probably most controversial of all, he made his own representation of the Virgin, defiant of tradition."[2] The "parody-like African mouth" and exaggerated facial features call attention to racial stereotypes, as well as to the assumed whiteness of biblical figures in Western representations. Ofili's icon asks us to confront the possibility of a black Virgin Mary. Other works express Ofili's interest in black culture more explicitly: paintings like the *Afrodizzia* series and *No Woman No Cry* make references not only to hip-hop and reggae but also to contemporary racial politics.

The triumph of painting

While his works pay homage to iconic black celebrities such as James Brown, Miles Davis, and Muhammad Ali, they are also just as much about the act of painting. With their psychedelic patterning, bright colors and textured surfaces, the images express Ofili's desire to "get as deeply lost as possible in both the process of painting and the painting itself."[3]

From his beginnings, the artist was passionate about the medium, even as painting grew out of favor in the wake of postmodernism. He enrolled at the Chelsea School of Art where he developed an expressionistic style, but his work really started to mature after an oft-mythologized trip to Africa.

Ofili was born in Manchester, England to Nigerian parents. When he was awarded a British Council grant in 1992, however, he ventured not to their home country but to Zimbabwe, in southern Africa. There, he was inspired by the abstract motifs found in San rock painting; these graphic marks found their way into the swirling backgrounds of his later compositions.

In Zimbabwe he also discovered elephant dung, and experimented with using it as an aesthetic medium, sticking it onto the surfaces of his canvases. As he later recalled, "it was a crass way of bringing the landscape into the painting," as well as a nod to modernist art history through the dung's status as a found object.[4]

The following year, back in Europe, Ofili was already at work with his new material. He staged a performance in Berlin and London entitled *Shit Sale*, a nod to the American artist David Hammons' *Bliz-aard Ball Sale* of 1983, and later produced a work on canvas simply titled *Painting with Shit on It*, from which his mature style eventually emerged.

Combining visual pleasure with a conceptual practice

Ofili's work is as formally-motivated as it is political. The artist did not only return to painting, he returned to decoration and visual pleasure, at a time when art was expected to comply with the more cerebral aesthetics of postmodernism. Perhaps his attraction to gaudy bright colors, earthy materials and glittering surfaces, paired with the highly conceptual stakes of his project, reflects another blending of sacred and profane, regarding the conservatism of the art world. By incorporating high and low art forms, historical narratives, religion and pop culture, *The Holy Virgin Mary* represents a deeper inquiry than the spectacle of Sensation would imply.

1. Quoted in Jonathan Jones, "Paradise Reclaimed," *Guardian*, magazine section, 15 June 2002.

2. Carol Becker, "Brooklyn Museum: Messing with the Sacred" in *Chris Ofili*, Rizzoli, 2009, p. 84.

3. Chris Ofili, quoted in Judith Nesbitt "Beginnings" in *Chris Ofili*, London: Tate Publishing, 2010, p. 15.

4. Chris Ofili, "Decorative Beauty was a Taboo Thing", interview with Mario Spinello, *Brilliant! New Art from London*, exh. cat., Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1995, p. 67.

Additional resources:

Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection (Brooklyn Museum)

Ofili at the Saatchi Gallery

Biography of the artist from Grove Art/Tate Modern

San rock art

Clarissa Rizal, *Resilience Robe*

by LILY HOPE AT PORTLAND ART MUSEUM and DR. BETH HARRIS



Video **11.10.2**: Clarissa Rizal, Resilience Robe, 2014, merino wool, 64 x 53 inches (Portland Art Museum)

Bill Viola, *The Crossing*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG

> ***We have to reclaim time itself, wrenching it from the "time is money" maximum efficiency, and make room for it to flow the other way – towards us. We must take time back into ourselves to let our consciousness breathe and our cluttered minds be still and silent. This is what art can do and what museums can be in today's world.***
>
> ***—Bill Viola [1]***



Figure **11.10.13**: Bill Viola, *The Crossing*, 1996, video/sound © Bill Viola (photo: **stunned**, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Taking time back

Bill Viola's *The Crossing* is a room-sized video installation that comprises a large two-sided screen onto which a pair of video sequences is simultaneously projected. They each open in the same fashion: a male figure walks slowly towards the camera, his body dramatically lit from above so that it appears to glow against the video's stark-black background. After several minutes he pauses near the foreground and stands still. He faces forward, staring directly into the lens, motionless.

At this point the two scenes diverge; in one, a small fire alights below the figure's feet. It spreads over his legs and torso and eventually engulfs his whole body in flames; yet, he stands calm and completely still as his body is immolated, only moving to raise his arms slightly before his body disappears in an inferno of roaring flames. On the opposite screen, the event transpires not with fire but with water. Beginning as a light rainfall, the sporadic drops that shower the figure build up to a surging cascade of water until it subsumes him entirely. After the flames and the torrent of water eventually retreat, the figure has vanished entirely from each scene, and the camera witnesses a silent and empty denouement.

Expanded temporal experience



Figure **11.10.14**: Bill Viola, *The Crossing*, 1996, video/sound © Bill Viola (image: **SFMOMA**)

The Crossing makes use of Viola's signature manipulation of filmic time. Like many of the artist's recent works, it was shot using high-speed film capable of registering 300 frames per second, thus attaining a much greater level of detail than would be discerned by the naked eye. In postproduction, Viola reduces the speed of playback to an extreme slow motion—further enhancing the level of definition to a dramatic and scrutinizing effect.

However, it is not only an interest in technological experimentation that drives the artist's technical and aesthetic decisions. Viola's use of slow-motion is meant to invite a meditative and contemplative response, one that requires the viewer to concentrate for a longer duration of time and simultaneously to increase his or her own awareness of detail, movement and change. This is consistent with the artist's intent to reignite the longstanding relationship between artistic and spiritual experience. A devoted practitioner of Zen Buddhist meditation, Viola has explained that after "fifty minutes of quiet stillness in a room of solitary individuals"—a description that could, just as easily, reflect a museum-goer's experience of his installations—"time opens up in an unbelievable way." [2]

Religious symbolism



Figure **11.10.15**: Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja), Chola period, Indian (Tamil Nadu), c. 11th century, copper alloy, 68.3 cm high (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

The Crossing might be interpreted through the lens of mythology or religious thought, even though the work does not make iconographic or stylistic reference to a particular narrative. Viola has been inspired by a rich variety of spiritual traditions, including Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sufism. Viewers may recall, for instance, the ring of flames that surrounds images of Shiva Nataraja (left) in which he sets in motion the continuous cycles of creation and destruction through his cosmic dance, or the biblical tales of fire and brimstone, rapture and the Great Floods. Throughout such narratives, the elemental forces of fire and water often symbolize change, redemption, transformation and renewal— common themes in Viola's oeuvre. The artist has similarly made reference to transitions and passages in works such as *The Passing*, a 1991 video made shortly after his mother's death, or *Two Women*, a 2008 piece in which figures slowly move through a translucent and symbolic barrier of water.

Viola's education and artistic practice have long been guided by questions of "how we see, how we hear, and how we come to know the world." [3] The artist grew up in Queens, New York and attended Syracuse University in the late 1960s where he enrolled not only in fine arts classes, but also in a variety of academic subjects ranging from the humanities to the hard sciences. In particular, he was captivated by religious studies, psychology and electrical engineering, interests that are clearly assimilated throughout his oeuvre.

Technological experimentation

As early as the 1970s, Viola was one of the first visual artists to make use of new video technologies. As a student he experimented enthusiastically with new portable recording devices, with which he created short video performances that explored a variety of gestures, sounds and expressions. During the 1970s and 1980s, he was artist-in-residence at a number of media laboratories and television stations, while also serving as an assistant curator at Everson Museum of Art where he was exposed to the work of Nam June Paik and Peter Campus, artists who were early innovators in the emerging field of video art. Eventually, Viola conceived of multi-channel and immersive installations where viewers are surrounded by carefully arranged screens and projections, sometimes displayed within an otherwise pitch-black room.

Sacred space

Between 1974 and 1976, Viola lived in Italy, where religious paintings and sculptures are often displayed in-situ, in the cathedrals for which they were commissioned. The continuing integration of historical art into contemporary public and religious life inspired Viola to design installations that mimicked the forms of devotional paintings, diptychs, predellas and altarpieces—formats that encourage intimate contemplation of religious icons. Later traveling throughout Japan and other parts of East Asia, Viola observed the same active level of engagement with art. In Tokyo, for instance, he witnessed museum visitors placing offerings at the feet of sculptural bodhisattvas or other religious statuary.

For viewers, the experience of viewing Viola's works need not be spiritually inscribed. In many cases, his works appeal to or reflect raw human emotions (the theme of his acclaimed exhibition *The Passions*) or universal life experiences. While *The Crossing* can be interpreted in light of a host of religious associations, the act of "self-annihilation" represented in the figure's disappearance at each conclusion also serves as a metaphor for the destruction of the ego. In the artist's words, this action "becomes a necessary means to transcendence and liberation," [4] especially in the face of life's inevitable unpredictability.

[1] Bill Viola, as quoted in *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, Jacquelynn Baas and Mary Jane Jacob, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 254
[2] Bill Viola, *Buddha Mind*, p. 254.
[3] "Bill Viola Interviewed by John Hanhardt, *Going Forth By Day* (Berlin: Deutsche Guggenheim and New York: Harry N Abrams, Inc, 2005), p. 87.
[4] Bill Viola, as quoted in "Emotions in Extreme Time: Bill Viola's Passions Project," in *The Passions*, John Walsh, ed. (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), p. 53.

Additional resources:

Bill Viola at SFMOMA

Bill Viola – James Cohan Gallery

Bill Viola – the artist's website

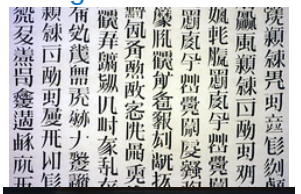
Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky*

by DR. ALLISON YOUNG and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER

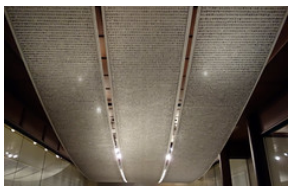


Video **11.10.3**: Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky*, c. 1987-91, hand-printed books and ceiling and wall scrolls printed from wood letterpress type, ink on paper; each book, open: 18 1/8″ × 20″ / 46 × 51 cm; each of three ceiling scrolls: 38″ × c. 114′ 9-7/8″ / 96.5 × 3500 cm; each wall scroll: 9′ 2-1/4″ × 39 3/8″ / 280 × 100 cm (installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014, collection of the artist) © Xu Bing

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Figure **11.10.16**: More Smarthistory images…

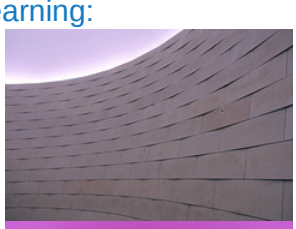
James Turrell, *Skyspace, the way of color*

by DR. BETH HARRIS and DR. STEVEN ZUCKER



Video **11.10.4**: James Turrell, *Skyspace*, *The Way of Color*, 2009, stone, concrete, stainless steel, and LED lighting 228 x 652 inches © James Turrell (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas). Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker

Smarthistory images for teaching and learning:



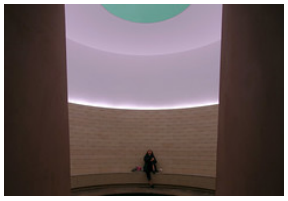














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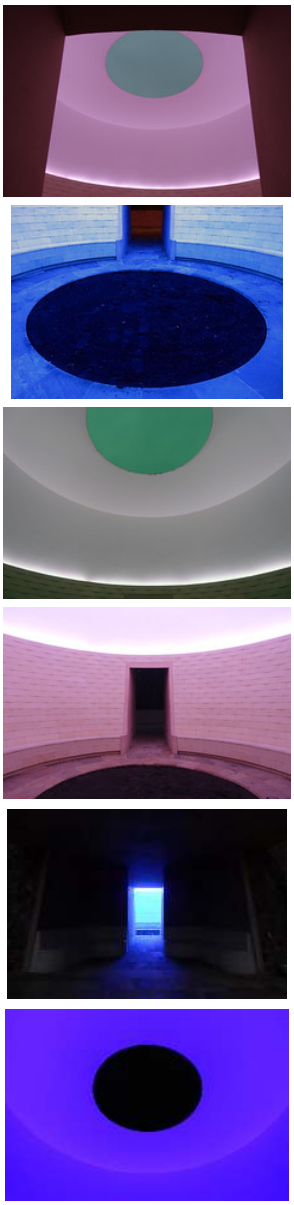


Figure 11.10.17: More Smarthistory images…

Tenzing Rigdol, *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara*

by DR. SARAH MAGNATTA



Figure **11.10.18**: Tenzing Rigdol, *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara*, 2013, ink, pencil, acrylic, and pastel on paper, 232.7 x 124.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, Gift of Andrew Cohen, in honor of Tenzing Rigdol and Fabio Rossi, 2013) © Tenzing Rigdol

In Tenzing Rigdol's monumental painting, *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara*, we encounter a traditional **Buddhist** deity—though the artwork itself is anything but conventional in form, material, or meaning. Rigdol uses a combination of acrylic paint, pastel, and pieces of manuscript pages assembled on paper to create a complex rendering of a multi-armed, multi-headed deity—over seven feet tall—who emerges between the interlocking edges of a grid-like overlay. Although the main figure is one that is recognizably sacred for **Tibetan** Buddhist practitioners, the work itself constitutes a radical departure from historical precedent, and reflects contemporary questions surrounding exile, activism, and cultural heritage.

Rigdol was born in 1982 in Kathmandu, Nepal. His parents fled Tibet in the late 1960s and worked in Nepal's carpet industry. After training in traditional Tibetan arts, including *thangka* painting (a painting on fabric depicting a Buddhist subject), sand painting, and butter sculpture, the artist turned to contemporary modes of representation. He is one of the first contemporary Tibetan artists to have his work collected by major institutions, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art. By using culturally specific forms in radically new compositions, Rigdol shifts his work's focus away from the spiritual symbolism often associated with Tibetan art, and towards more politically charged content.



Figure **11.10.19**: Avalokiteshvara (Bodhisattva & Buddhist Deity) – Sahasrabhujalokeshvara (11 faces, 1000 Hands), 19th century, Eastern Tibet, ground mineral pigment on cotton (**private collection**)

Who is Avalokiteshvara?

In the center of *Pin drop silence* is the Buddhist deity known as Avalokiteshvara (Tibetan: *Chenrezig*). Avalokiteshvara is a *bodhisattva* (an enlightened being who helps others achieve enlightenment) and is the embodiment of compassion. Avalokiteshvara remains a major figure in Buddhist art throughout Asia (he is known as Guanyin in China). The Dalai Lama is viewed as the earthly incarnation of Avalokiteshvara by practitioners, and as such, plays an important role in Tibetan Buddhism.



Figure **11.10.20**: Tenzing Rigdol, *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara* (detail), 2013, ink, pencil, acrylic, and pastel on paper, 232.7 x 124.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, Gift of Andrew Cohen, in honor of Tenzing Rigdol and Fabio Rossi, 2013) © Tenzing Rigdol

In *Pin drop silence*, Avalokiteshvara is shown in his eleven-headed form, a reference to his head splitting into several parts in order to more fully observe the world and disseminate compassion. Unlike traditional imagery of Avalokiteshvara, however, none of Rigdol's Avalokiteshvara's heads are given a face. For orthodox Tibetan Buddhist practitioners, this omission is significant; *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* are traditionally drawn with very specific guidelines and gridlines in place, including precise renderings of facial features. Here, Rigdol omits these features and seemingly splits the image into pieces with his use of gridlines.



Figure **11.10.21**: Tenzing Rigdol, *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara* (detail), 2013, ink, pencil, acrylic, and pastel on paper, 232.7 x 124.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, Gift of Andrew Cohen, in honor of Tenzing Rigdol and Fabio Rossi, 2013) © Tenzing Rigdol

Guidelines and Gridlines

In traditional Tibetan Buddhist painting known as *thangka*, gridlines were (and are) used as guides to ensure the proper placement and depiction of *buddhas* (of which there are many, not just the historical **Buddha Shakyamuni**) and *bodhisattvas*. The lines are the first step of the process, and they are ultimately covered by the paint—they function merely as guidelines for the artist. Yet Rigdol makes gridlines a major component of *Pin drop silence*. They divide the image, deconstructing the form of Avalokiteshvara through their presence.

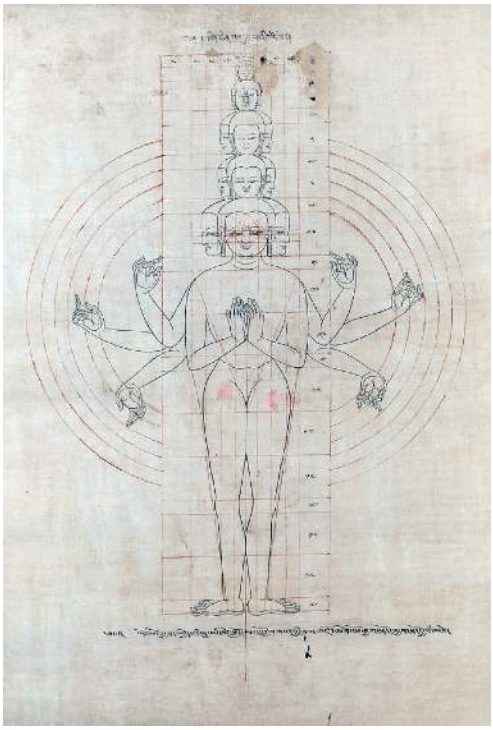


Figure **11.10.22**: Traditional use of gridlines, Buddhist (**private collection**)

Rigdol has referenced his early work as a carpet designer in Nepal as an additional point of reference for these gridlines (the design process for carpets uses a matrix as well). Further, some scholars have noted similarities between Rigdol's affinity for grids and lines and those of the modernist **De Stijl** artist **Piet Mondrian**, for whom geometric abstraction held spiritual or utopian value. [1] Rigdol says this about the lines:

> ***Lines are innocent, direct and uncompromising. There is a sense of contentment within the geometric forms. They exert no pressure on me, but instead pull me towards them to look closer. [2]***

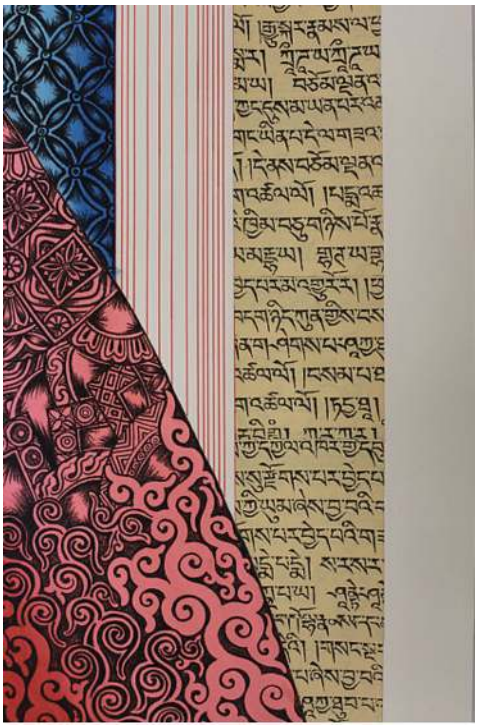


Figure **11.10.23**: Tenzing Rigdol, *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara* (detail), 2013, ink, pencil, acrylic, and pastel on paper, 232.7 x 124.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, Gift of Andrew Cohen, in honor of Tenzing Rigdol and Fabio Rossi, 2013) © Tenzing Rigdol

Replacing the Background



Figure **11.10.24**: Detail of Avalokiteshvara, 19th century, Eastern Tibet, ground mineral pigment on cotton (**private collection**)

The gridlines in Rigdol's work are constructed from intersecting fragments of manuscript pages, which hold a personal meaning for the artist. Rigdol's family had been in business as ink manufacturers in Tibet prior to their escape to Nepal in the late 1960s. This ink was used by monasteries to print the Buddhist manuscript pages used by monks, nuns, and lay Buddhist practitioners.

The script on these pages is known as *u-chen*, and is utilized across the Tibetan plateau. (Though the dialects differ across the region, this script can be read by many Tibetans). In traditional Tibetan *thangka*, the backgrounds often incorporated influences from Chinese landscape painting. By "replacing" that landscape with the unifying Tibetan script, Rigdol reimagines "tradition," questioning the role of Chinese landscape painting in the history of Tibetan art.

As he notes:

> ***Historically, the landscape elements in Tibetan thangka painting—the clouds, the rivers and so on—were influenced by Chinese painting. They later got an upgrade in Tibetan art. I have often said, sometimes jokingly and sometimes seriously, that in adopting Chinese style landscapes in their paintings, Tibetan artists of the past were foretelling the colonization of Tibet's land, sky, rivers and mountains by the Chinese. In 1959, when Tibet lost its country, the prophecy was fulfilled. [3]***

In this passage, Rigdol refers to a series of events in the 1950s that established Chinese rule over Tibet. There exist two opposing narratives about this period: the Chinese government and Chinese history books refer to it as the "Peaceful Liberation of Tibet," whereas Tibetans view the period as a devastating takeover of their land by colonizing forces, the "Chinese invasion of Tibet." Although many decades have now passed, there is still great strife in the region (now called the Tibet Autonomous Region, or TAR), resulting in ongoing political protests and efforts to silence dissent.

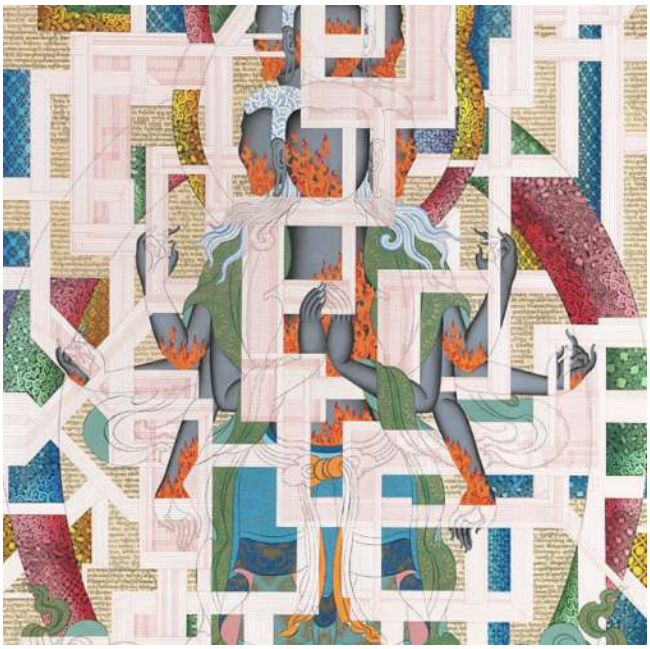


Figure **11.10.25**: Tenzing Rigdol, *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara* (detail), 2013, ink, pencil, acrylic, and pastel on paper, 232.7 x 124.8 cm (**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, Gift of Andrew Cohen, in honor of Tenzing Rigdol and Fabio Rossi, 2013) © Tenzing Rigdol

Representing self-sacrifice



Figure **11.10.26**: Tenzing Rigdol, *My World Is in Your Blind Spot* (1 of 5 panels), 2014, silk brocade, scripture, photographs, 72 x 72" (182 x 182 cm each) (image courtesy of Tenzing Rigdol and Rossi & Rossi) © Tenzing Rigdol

Rigdol incorporates flames throughout the body of the deity, a reference to the ongoing self-immolation by Tibetans. Since 2009, 156 Tibetans have publicly protested the rule of the Chinese government by setting themselves on fire, often resulting in death. [4]

Another work by Rigdol, *My World Is in Your Blind Spot*, incorporates these flames. This work is a direct reference to the lack of attention that these devastating protests have had in the international community. *My World Is in Your Blind Spot* is a series of five works that shows *buddhas* in meditative postures, with flames appearing within the contours of their bodies. Rigdol photographed the flames and then cut the images apart before reassembling them, claiming a preference for a "calm" and dignified flame rather than an aggressive flame to honor the sacrifice of so many Tibetans. The casual viewer of Rigdol's work is likely unaware of these protests. While the panels are beautiful to look at, they are devastating to comprehend. This political statement would not be permitted in the Tibet Autonomous Region because of strict censorship imposed by China, instead it was made in exile.

Rigdol is one of many contemporary Tibetan artists who has never set foot in Tibet. In exile communities scattered around the world, artists have established a visible global presence by creating group exhibitions such as *Waves on the Turquoise Lake* (2006), *Traditions Transformed* (2010) and *Anonymous* (2013–2015), all of which showcased work by artists located both in the Tibet Autonomous Region and those working in exile communities. Many of these artists incorporate Buddhist elements in their work, although in some cases this inclusion is more of a nod to a cultural connection than to religious identity (artists may or may not be Buddhist practitioners, and the work in these exhibitions was rarely meant to function in a sacred manner). Yet, the relationship to Tibet is firmly established, as it is in *Pin drop silence: Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara*.

Notes:

[1] Francesca Gavin, "The Construction of Harmony," *Tenzing Rigdol: Experiment with Forms* exhibition catalog (Rossi & Rossi Ltd., 2009), p. 9.

[2] Gavin, "The Construction of Harmony," p. 9.

[3] Interview of Tenzing Rigdol by Fabio Rossi, 2015 Accessed August, 2018.

[4] The International Campaign for Tibet lists the current number of self-immolations at 156, though the actual number may be higher, "Self-immolation Fact Sheet"

Additional resources:

Kurt Behrendt, "Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Twenty-First Century" (March 12, 2014)

Rossi Rossi

Sarah Magnatta, "Between the Lines," *Tenzing Rigdol: Dialogue*, exhibition catalog (Rossi & Rossi Ltd., 2019).

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11.11: Before you Move On (Art and Ritual)

Key Concepts

As for the design of a building for sacred purposes, its many features will be determined by the requirements of specific rituals and cult usage. Meeting individual or community needs determines the most defining elements of design and plan. If a space is needed for a large gathering, it might be accomplished either out-of-doors or within a building. If an outdoor arrangement serves the purposes, it may or may not require a building, as well. For instance, as we noted with Greek temples, the cult rituals were performed in the open area outside the structure that housed the deity. Similarly, Buddhist stupas were set into a complex where devotees could approach the stupa itself, as well as visit any of the subsidiary shrines or other buildings around it. Some of them might house cult statues for deities or include libraries for scriptures, treasuries, dining halls, or other features of use or interest. Often the grounds of a sacred complex will emphasize natural features of the settings used for contemplation, such as gardens or wooded pathways, fountains, pools, and lakes. These might include careful and meaningful arrangements of statues, iconic im- agery, or rocks, trees, and plants. Monastery complexes often provide for all the activities needed to sustain the community, providing for their sacred and social activities in community and indi- vidually, while also making accommodation for visitors.

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

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

Test Yourself

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

KEY TERMS

Altar: a sacrificial or offertory table.

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

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

Cromlech: a circular arrangement of megaliths.

Dolmen: a large upright stone or marker.

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

Egungun: a general term for Yoruba masquerade rituals.

Elevated Platform: a raised area intended to confer status.

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

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

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

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

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

Megalith: literally, "large stone."

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

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

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

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

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

Sacred: held as a highest good.
Sarcophagi: plural of sarcophagus – a burial container, usually of stone or other masonry

material, often embellished with sculptural decoration.

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

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

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

Terra Cotta: porous low fired ceramic.

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

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

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Architecture

Learning Objectives

- Understand the differences between function and form in architecture
- Understand how form and function work together in architecture created for different purposes
- Understand different types and uses of architecture

12.1: Introduction
12.2: Residential Needs
12.3: Community and Government
12.4: Contemporary Native American Architecture
12.5: Commerce
12.6: Worship
12.7: Khmer Empire Bayon Temple (13th Century)
12.8: Gothic Notre Dame (Started 1163 CE)
12.9: Islamic Golden Age Umayyad Mosque (715 CE)
12.10: 20th Century Architecture
12.11: Before You Move On (Architecture)

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12.1: Introduction

So far, we have given very little consideration to architecture, yet it is one of the most culturally significant forms of art. Often, with structures that were built for group activities, they reflect the culture, its values, style, purposes, and preferences in the time and place more broadly and deeply than settings where individual choices might predominate. And decoration of such architectural settings, even if individual needs and ideals have been expressed through painting or sculptural themes, generally reflects the greater permanence of a structure expected to serve the group's purposes and needs.

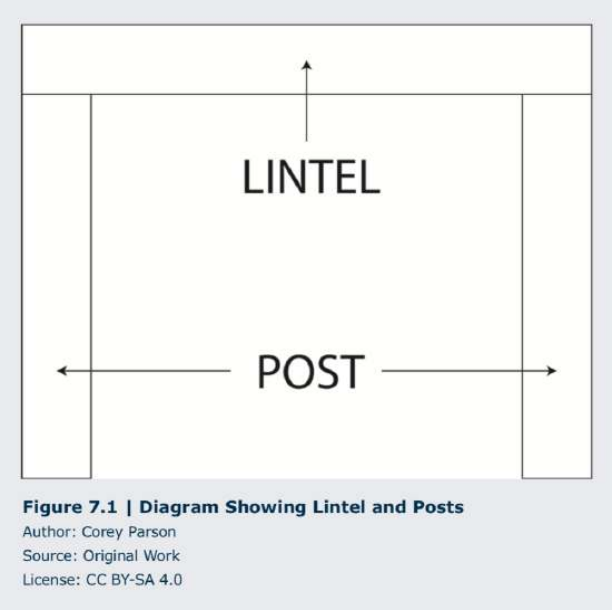


Figure 7.1 | Diagram Showing Lintel and Posts
Author: Corey Parson
Source: Original Work
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The earliest buildings were likely designed to shelter a family or small group that lived together. Soon group needs came into play, and the community may have wanted to provide for joint activities of several types such as ritual/worship, group protection, government, markets, and other commercial needs. The types expanded as the societies grew, diversified, specialized, and sought ways to meet needs for both individuals and communities. The specific purposes led to diverse designs, and cultural values influenced both practical and stylistic choices. We will survey a small sample of landmark types from across the centuries from several different viewpoints, depending upon the significance of features for the individual examples. Our focus will sometimes be on the plan or layout of the structure, materials used in its creation, or spatial considerations as they relate to purposes and use. At other times, we will look at how the building is situated within a community, or how patrons, owners, and community members influence its construction and use. We will examine in greater detail the ritual uses, meanings, and significance of architectural settings and their decoration, in Chapter 10 Art and Ritual Life: Symbolism of Space and Ritual Objects.

Before we start our discussion, you should familiarize yourself with the basics of building, that is, how you might create walls and place openings in the walls while supporting the parts of the structure above. The most basic method is the **post-and-lintel** design in which two upright beams support a horizontal one to create a rectangular opening. (Figure 7.1) Before long, builders also devised a variety of **arches**, a curved or pointed structure spanning an opening and supporting the weight above, and then created further modifications of these techniques to develop **barrel vaults**, a series of circular arches that form a ceiling or roof, and **domes**, spherical-shaped ceiling or roof. (Diagram of Roman Arches: classconnection.s3.amazonaws.../jpg/untitled-13EF5EB39821CEF88AF.jpg; Domes: 2.bp.blogspot.com/-jbiaW24DTZI/TVxCBDxxoTI/AAAAAAAAACk/VytZNRg0UK0/s1600/40-typology-dome.jpg) They also made variations that served decorative purposes. Over time, these have been imaginatively used for a tremendous variety of structural and decorative purposes, and you should keep them in mind as we investigate an array of buildings that reflect cultural concerns and human needs of all sorts. We will classify these buildings into several groups, although noting that a great number of them were multi- purpose: residential/housing, community needs, commercial buildings and centers, governmental structures, and those designed for worship.

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12.2: Residential Needs

The earliest types of shelters were likely caves found by humans as they wandered to hunt and gather food and to find refuge from bad weather or pursuing creatures. The first independently standing structures were made of materials that were impermanent, that is, those found in nature sticks, bones, animal pelts and fashioned to create a covered space apparently as a protection from the elements. We have little evidence left for us to know fully how they were built and used, but some vestiges do remain that have enabled scholars to make reconstructions. (Figure 7.2)



Figure 7.2 | Reconstructed Jōmon period (3000 BC) houses.
Author: User "Qurren"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 7.3 | Recreation of a Celtic Roundhouse
Author: User "FruitMonkey"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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As people became more settled, domesticated animals, and cultivated crops, they developed such construction techniques as **wattle-and-daub** (sticks covered with mud), **rammed earth** (moist dirt and sand or gravel compressed into a temporary frame), and clay bricks (unfired and fired that developed alongside their evolving techniques for creating pottery vessels). (Drawing depicting architectural structure of Chinese round houses: arthistoryworlds.org/wp- includes/images/nhatau.jpg) (Figure 7.3)



Figure 7.4 | Çatalhöyük at the Time of the First Excavations
Author: User "Omar hoftun"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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They used these methods for communal living centers such as the village of Catalhöyük in modern Turkey (7,500-5,700 BCE), including common walls so that the clustered houses supported one another. (Figure 7.4) Such building methods addressed security issues by confining entry into living spaces to openings in the roofs, with ladders that could be retracted to foil trespassers. All of these types had certain common features to meet such everyday needs as warmth, cooking, sleeping, and storage, and were usually centered around a hearth with provision for smoke ventilation. Catalhöyük also included rooms that may have been for other common purposes, varying from shrines to serving as bakeries. The use of stone for building structures began in prehistoric times, and an example of such a structure can be seen the Scottish village of Skara Brae (3,180-2,500 BCE). The walls were made of stacked stone while entryways and some of the furniture were created using the post-and-lintel method. (Figure 7.5) Because of the harsh northern climate, the structures were partially underground for protection from the elements. Additionally, covered walkways were created to facilitate movement among its eight units. Seven of theseunits apparently accommodated a family or small group, while the eighth was a common room, perhaps a workshop. In addition to cultivating crops, these villagers likely herded, fished, and hunted for food. Stone furnishing such as seating, beds, storage spaces, and other items within the single-room units were around a central fire pit. (Figure 7.6)

With these basic methods, the humble shelter types of the Neolithic Age (c. 7,000-c. 1,700 BCE) and overlapping Chalcolithic (Copper) Age (c. 5,500-c. 1,700 BCE) provided a foundation for buildings of every sort used throughout history (with considerable elaboration of residential structures for the powerful and wealthy). Material choices eventually expanded to include first wood, brick, and stone, and later concrete and metal.

Residential palaces appeared by the time of the two great early civilizations of the Ancient Near East, Mesopotamia and Egypt, as well as those of the Aegean Sea: Crete, Cyclades, and mainland Greece prior to the development of the Greek Empire. The Palace at Knossos on the island of Crete was a grand residence for rulers of the Minoan civilization; the palace was built c. 1,700 BCE, after an earlier structure was destroyed by an earthquake, and abandoned between 1,380 and 1,100 BCE.



Figure 7.5 | Old settlement Sjara Brae in Orkney Island, Scotland
Author: User "Chmee2"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

(Drawing of Knossos: res.cloudinary.com/hrscywv4p/...sos_vsyfng.jpg) The sprawling complex included residential areas, throne rooms, a central courtyard, and food storage magazines for crops and seafood used in the commercial trading, an important industry and mainstay in sustaining the people. (Floorplan of Residential Palace: classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/16/flashcards/3907016/jpg/aafxpid0-1419F6BAD180C1BB19F.jpg) An island civilization, the Minoans were in the rare position of not having to protect themselves from enemies. The Palace at Knossos and similar structures on Crete were not fortified, that is, built behind solid walls and gates to hold off invaders. The palaces were instead built with windows and **colonnades**, or covered rows of columns, on their exteriors, allowing free circulation of light and air.



Figure 7.6 | Inside a house at Skara Brae
Author: User "John Allan"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Another palace complex, that of Neo-Assyrian King Sargon II (ruled 722-705 BCE) at Dur- Sharrukin, today Khorsabad in Iran, was clearly much more militaristic in character, evident by the surrounding defensive walls that strictly controlled access to the royal precincts. (Figure 7.7) Even after passage through a complex and imposing gateway, one had to cross guarded courtyards and passageways to approach the king's throne room. The structural presence was one of imposing power, as you can see from the enormous towered main portal. (Figure 7.8) To intimidate the visitor, interior decorations further asserted the mighty and ferocious nature of Sargon II with wall carvings depicting victorious battles. The complex also included temples for worship of the deities as well as quarters for high-ranking officials and servants.

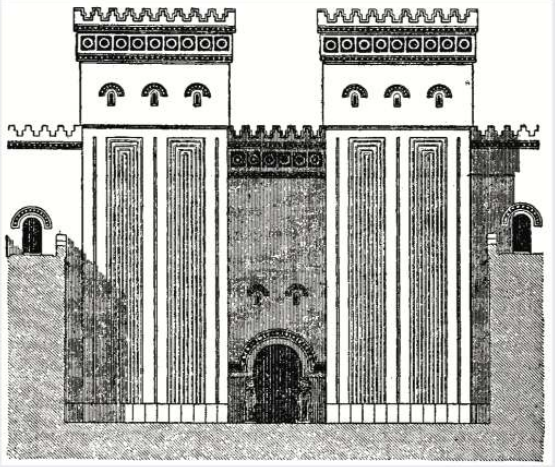


Figure 7.8 | Palace of Dur-Sharrukin
Author: Encyclopedia Britannica
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Later developments for residences include apartment buildings for urban dwellers; such multi-family dwellings have taken many forms over time, and we can view an early type, from the second-century CE Roman port town of OstiaAntica, called an ***insula***, which is Latin for "island." (Figure 7.9) In middle-class "apartments" such as these, there were stores and vendors' stalls on the ground floor facing the street. In some versions, the lower floors were for the wealthier people, while upper floors decreased in cost and desirability. The basic ideas of how to accommodate



Figure 7.9 | Ostian Insula
Author: User "Nashvilleneighbor"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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multi-family living were established by this time and have remained similar since. What has changed over time are the material and decorations used, styles adopted, provisions for electricity, water, and sewage management, and eventually zoning policies that would dictate locations, sizes, required provisions for safety, and density of occupation.

Private homes existed for the middle class and wealthy in towns and in the countryside; the latter were called villas whether they were primary residences or vacation homes. A private home in town might also have shops around its perimeter, but the accommodations for family life, entertainment, and conducting the owner's business were generally contained in a single floor layout. (Diagram of Roman Villa: http://michellemoran.com/CD/Roman-Villa.jpg) After passing through an entry from the street, one entered the **atrium**, a courtyard with a **peristyle**, a row of columns within a building often supporting a porch, left open to the sky with a pool in the center to catch rainwater. A private garden was in a second area open to the elements. The mild climate led to provisions for a good measure of outdoor living as well as fresh air and sunlight during much of the year, even including indoor and outdoor dining rooms. There were rooms for sleeping, storage, and household work off the atrium and garden, as well as a space for worship, known as the ***lararium***. (Figure 7.10) Here, two Lares, or household gods, flank an ancestor figure; the snake below symbolizes fertility and prosperity.



Figure 7.10 | Scene from Lararium, House of the Vettii, Pompeii
Author: User "Patricio.lorente"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Roman royalty had grand palaces, and we have good evidence of such from the retirement compound created for the Emperor Diocletian (r. 284-305 CE) in Split set on the Bay of Aspalathos in the Roman province of Dalmatia, today Croatia. (Figure 7.11) The walled precincts with defensive watchtowers and fortified gateways included housing for his military garrison, a central peristyle courtyard, three temples, and his mausoleum, the building housing his tomb. The design, perhaps fitting for the aggressive persecutor of Christians and retired general, was quite militaristic in many ways, resembling a Roman military encampment, or **castrum**. The private and public imperial areas were luxurious by contrast. Like most palace complexes, provisions were made to house soldiers and servants, and it was lavishly decorated throughout with frescos, sculptures, and **mosaics**, images or designs created on a wall or floor made up of small pieces of stone, tile, or glass.

While the locations for palaces were always strategically selected, the rationale was not always defensive in character. When Charlemagne selected Aachen, Germany, as the site for his main palace (he had several), among the attractions were its centralized site within his growing empire and the healing waters of the natural spa there. In examining the reconstruction of his complex, you will notice the baths, shown to the left of the palace complex, are an important feature, as they had been in Roman society. (Figure 7.12) He had a large audience hall, a grand portal, courtyards, housing, and an impressive palace chapel, which is the major structure still standing. (see Figures 3.13 and 7.64)

The church was an important statement for this model Christian ruler, and although it has been enlarged from its original central plan design, the struc- ture still carries notable features that were both impressive and influential for later medieval church architecture. Charlemagne's throne was positioned on the **gallery** level, an upper level overlooking the floor below. (Figure 7.13) The throne was above the entrance to the church, with an enormous "window of appearance" above the portal facing out into the atrium courtyard, where Charlemagne could address his Christian subjects gathered there. This emphasis on the western entryway was developed into the grand western facades of Romanesque and Gothic churches.



Figure 7.11 | Diocletian's Palace
Artist: Ernest Hébrard
Author: User "DIREKTOR"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

The Doge's (Duke's) Palace in Venice is another impressive statement of rulership wed to Christian leadership. (Figure 7.14) With its façade on the waterfront, the church of San Marco sitting directly behind it, state offices located across from it, and the communal, open-ended **piazza**, or courtyard, between them, the palace literally connects the secular, religious, social, and political realms of Venetian life. (Figure 7.15)



Figure 7.13 | The throne of Charlemagne and the subsequent German Kings in Aachen Cathedral.
Author: Bojin
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.14 | Doge's Palace and St. Mark's Tower, Venice
Author: User "Rambling Traveler"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Public courtyards at the heart of cities became typical during the Italian Renaissance, as did private, interior court-yards in the center of Italian homes for rulers, wealthy aristocrats, and high church officials. As an official governmental center and residence, this Venetian palace included private quarters for the Doge along with meeting rooms and council chambers, all richly decorated with marble, stucco, and fresco and including iconographic themes related to Venice, its history, and civic identity.

In Japan, the fourteenth century Himeji Castle, built as a fort by the samurai Akamatsu Norimura, was situated dramatically atop Himeyana Hill. (Figure 7.16) Though a defensive posture was its primary motive, the great beauty and lyrical appearance of its curved walls and rooflines are its predominant effects. It has been called the "white heron" in response to the impression it gives of a great bird about to take flight. The complex, again, has many purposes and comprises eighty-three different structures. The grounds include huge warehouses, lush gardens, and intricate mazes. Despite its fairytale looks, its defensive systems are complex and effective, including moats, keeps, gates, towers, turrets, and mounts and brackets for a variety of weapons. It has withstood numerous attacks and natural disasters over the centuries.



Figure 7.16 | Himeji Castle, Japan
Author: User "Bernard Gagnon"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The final such royal complex we will explore is the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet, established in 1645 by the fifth Dalai Lama; the palace functioned as the spiritual and governmental center for Tibetan Buddhism until the fourteenth and current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (b. 1935), fled for political refuge in 1959. (Figure 7.17) The basic purpose of the palace was that of a Buddhist monastery; its original foundation was centered on two chapels of historical and spiritual significance to the order of monks. The palace is named after Mount Potalaka, the mythical abode of the Bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteshvara, and the paradisiac implications are meaningful to devotees.



Figure 7.17 | The Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet
Author: User "Xiquinho"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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As at Himeji, the hillside is a striking component of its appearance, and the enormous complex makes a very dramatic presentation. Indeed, whether intended for defensive purposes or not, its imposing appearance is often a very important feature for royal architecture. The impression of this palace's organic relationship to the mountain is enhanced by its sloping walls, flat roofs, and numerous stairways that lead to its various structures. The complex includes living quarters for the Dalai Lama and the monks as well as governmental offices, a seminary, assembly halls, shrines, libraries, storage rooms, and numerous chapels. It includes statues and portraits of historical and spiritual leaders and many devotional and didactic depictions painted on walls and banners, and works for meditation and prayer. Burial mounds and tombs contain the remains of lamas and important scriptures.

The residential structures of the wealthy of previous eras have often been lost to us; however, we can examine some of the aristocratic family homes of the last several centuries to gain insight into some of the additional trends for creating dwellings that go far beyond the need for simple shelter and that show some of the design ideas devised by artists and architects. The house created for Lord Burlington in 1729 in Chiswick, England, is a good example of the Neo-Palladian style of architecture. (Figure 7.18) Andrea Palladio (1508-1580, Italy), a Venetian Renaissance architect, deeply studied ancient Greek and Roman architecture and architectural theory and developed new designs based on those but better fit to the means, methods, and needs of his day. His ideas were popular and have remained widely influential throughout the West to this day.



Figure 7.18 | Chiswick House, London
Author: User "Patche99z"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Lord Burlington created his neo-Palladian villa design under the influence of Palladio's ideas and those of other related designers. The basic idea here derives from a combination of a Greek temple front and a Roman dome, here supported by an octagonal **drum**, or circular or multisided base. Lord Burlington planned the house to showcase his fine collection of pictures and furniture and his architectural library as well as to provide comfort for his family living there. Great attention was paid to the surrounding gardens, and their design was very much a part of the overall scheme. Inspired by Roman gardens, they were designed by his friend William Kent (c. 1685-1748, England), an architect and early landscape architect, and included classicizing statues and miniature temples of a sort that were popular in English gardens of the day, thereby providing interesting and restful stopping points to a refreshing stroll outdoors. The logic and order of the layout of the building and grounds as well as the villa's sense of grandeur led to its admiration and emulation by other builders who sought a similar elegance.

The Neo-Palladian style was carried to the United States by Thomas Jefferson for the campus of the University of Virginia, the state capitol of Virginia, and his own home of Monticello, near Charlottesville, Virginia. (Figure 7.19) Jefferson adapted ideas he gathered while U.S. Ambassador to France by using humbler materials such as the red brick made from local clay that he considered a better choice for a less pretentious statement than marble or limestone. At Monticello, he also brought the structure lower to the ground and added a wooden **balustrade**, a railing supported by upright supports, to the roofline. Nonetheless, its Palladian design origins are clear. The interior of the house is full of provisions for Jefferson's notable intellectual and work habits such as his bedroom that opened into his office, his workrooms, and his collections of American artifacts.

In the United States of the late nineteenth-century Gilded Age (c. 1870-1900), a time of rapid technological, commercial, and economic expansion, wealthy industrialists built enormous mansions in cities and at the seaside resorts or mountain retreats they favored. Among these, the Vanderbilt family (whose wealth came from shipping and railroads) commissioned several notable residences, mostly in the French-inspired Beaux Arts style, a period and style known in the U.S. as the American Renaissance (1876-1917).



Figure 7.19 | Monticello, Charlottesville, VA
Photographer: Matt Kozlowski
Author: User "Moofpocket"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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One of these residences was The Breakers in Newport, Rhode Island, a lavish resort area replete with such structures. (Figure 7.20) The oceanfront house, designed by Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895, USA), has seventy rooms on five floors and covers nearly an acre of land on a thirteen-acre lot with elaborate gardens. It was built with the most lavish material such as marble and wood from around the world and was decorated with rich and sumptuous furniture, fittings, and valuable artwork, as can be seen here in the library. (Figure 7.21) Clearly a residential structure of this type went far beyond the simple needs of housing to shelter a family from the elements and served to make a very grand and ostentatious statement of wealth and power.

By contrast to design ideas of the architects who catered to the wealthiest Americans, a new conception for providing living space came into being in the early twentieth century with Frank Lloyd Wright, who developed what he called the Prairie Style. He sought to counter the blocky forms that had become the standard for American homes with a structural sweep that hugged the ground, echoed the landscape, and fostered communication between the spaces in the house and the natural elements around it.



Figure 7.22 | *Fallingwater*, Pennsylvania
Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright
Author: User "Daderot"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC0 Public Domain



Figure 7.20 | The Breakers, Vanderbilt's mansion in Newport, RI
Author: User "Menuett"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Perhaps the epitome of this thinking was realized in Wright's design for Falling Water, a western Pennsylvania mountain home he created for the Kaufmann family of Pittsburgh. (Figure 7.22) At their request, he incorporated elements of their favorite recreation spot into the design: the rocky outcrop where they held picnics is in the living room, and the adjacent Bear Run waterfall pours out beneath the house's **cantilevered** terraces, self-supporting rigid structure projecting from the wall. Like most of Wright's houses, the place has flowing interior space, a great number of windows, and abundant natural light, as well as carefully coordinated use of stone and wood to incorporate the structure into the natural setting.



Figure 7.21 | The library at The Breakers
Photographer: Matt Wade
Author: User "UpstateNYer"
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12.3: Community and Government



Figure 7.23 | Ziggurat of Ur, Iraq
Author: User "Hardnfast"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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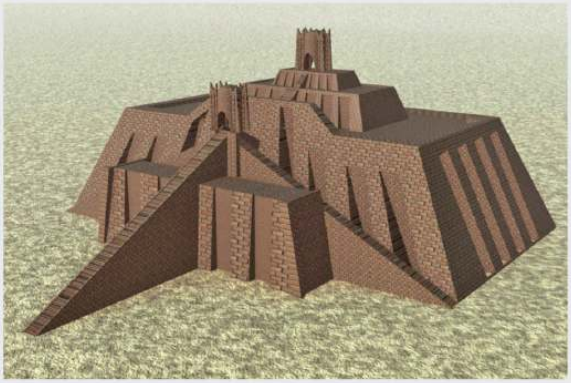


Figure 7.24 | Digital Rendering of the Ziggurat of Ur
Author: User "wikiwikiyarou"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain

Clearly, many of the palaces and complexes we have explored included accommodation of community government needs. There were others throughout history that had somewhat more pointed community needs in mind for their creation but were often combined with other purposes as well. From the time of the rise of the earliest civilizations, the needs for government and religious expression often coalesced.

In the Mesopotamian Valley of the ancient Near East, today Iraq and Iran, we see this exemplified in the structure of the Ziggurat of Ur. (Figures 7.23 and 7.24) With the idea that the deities resided in the heavens, the **ziggurat** was conceived as a man made mountain that served as a base for the temple, raising it closer to the celestial regions where the deities were. The pathways to the temple at the summit were steep and the approach to the gods was appropriately aggrandized and formalized. At the same time, the basic platform structure was part of a complex that included the provisions for a variety of other community services, record keeping, and commercial and governmental functions. The compact complex was located at the center of the community and in many aspects became the hub of life.

The people of the ancient Near East built with mud brick, sometimes baked, that has not proven to be durable, so the remains of these structures, constructed from around 2,400 BCE until the sixth century BCE, are generally not well preserved. Still, there are sufficient clues in the ruins to reconstruct the ways they were built and used.

The Romans generally made provisions for community functions in the **forum**, an open public space at the center of each city; the cities were often laid out in a grid plan organized with areas dedicated to various types of industrial, commercial, communal, and residential needs. (The Master Plan of Verbonia: classconnection.s3.amazonaws...FF4A4DE1CC.jpg) The number and types of buildings varied, but they often included temples, libraries, markets, public baths (*thermae*), and judicial structures. The Forum at the heart of Rome was the site of numerous architectural statements and additions for the public good that were created by successive rulers.

One of the most influential of the buildings in the Forum of Trajan in Rome was the Basilica Ulpia, a center for law courts, business, and public gatherings. (Figure 7.25) The **basilica** included a long and broad open center space, a nave, flanked by aisles that fluidly expanded the area. (Figure 7.26) This design provided a readily adaptable concept for other purposes, most notably perhaps the congregational space needed for Christian churches that would arise in later centuries as the Christian populace grew.

Significant community spaces sometimes have as their boundaries adjoining but separate architectural structures. These spaces are nonetheless important gathering places that need to be considered as such and in connection with the surrounding architecture that defines them. The National Mall in Washington, D.C., is one such place. (Figure 7.27) We identify it by its location within the capitol city and by its placement among all the government and other public/community buildings that line and define it. One only has to see it as a site for a presidential inauguration celebration or other large public gatherings to realize its significance as a community center.



Figure 7.28 | Theatre of Epidaurus
Author: User "Olecorre"
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Figure 7.29 | Colosseum in Rome
Author: User "Andreas Tille"
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Community needs for ceremony and entertainment have been addressed with specifically purposed architectural works since antiquity as well. Both the Greek and the Romans designed and built **theaters**, outdoor structures for dramatic performances, and **amphitheaters**, round or oval buildings with a central space for events, that provided models for such structures to this day. (Figures 7.28 and 7.29) While the basic concepts were devised by the Greeks to present religious festivals and ritual dramas, the Romans with their great ingenuity in engineering and material development added considerably to the potential for these designs to cater to changing needs and broader applications.



Figure 7.30 | Wawadit'la, also known as Mungo Martin House, a Kwakwaka'wakw "big house", with heraldic pole.
Artist: Chief Mungo Martin
Author: Ryan Bushby
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 2.5



Figure 7.31 | Whare at Waitangi Treaty House site
Author: User "Andy king50"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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One of the most important contributions to the history of architecture was the Roman develop- ment of concrete for use as building material. Its greater strength, flexibility, and potential for adap- tation made concrete far superior to the cut stone used to that point. These advances enabled the Ro- mans to create new architectural forms by expand-ing the types of vaulting and means of spanning space they had previously used. Both of these im- portant community structures, the theater and the amphitheater, were enlarged and put to new uses because of the Roman architectural contributions.



Figure 7.32 | Waitangi in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand
Author: Phil Whitehouse
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Pacific Island cultures, as do those of Native Americans, particularly venerate tribal heritage and so celebrate the communal events related to their heritage. Native North Americans of the Kwakiutl Nation created the clan **totems**, objects or animals that hold significance for a group of people, at the Wawadit'la, also known as the Mungo Martin House in honor of the chief and artist who built it in Victoria, British Columbia. (Figure 7.30) The recognition and celebration of their shared culture is expressed, as well, in the Meeting House of the Maori people at Waitangi, New Zealand, with its deep front porch and big open hall for group events. (Figures 7.31 and 7.32) Additionally, the carved and painted decorations inside and out have specific iconographic and symbolic significance for the individuals who gather together at such communal sites.

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12.4: Contemporary Native American Architecture

by DR. CAROL HERSELLE KRINSKY

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Figure 12.4.1: Fountain (detail), Douglas Cardinal, Louis Weller with GBQC and Polshek Partners, National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC, 2004 (photo: Gryffindor)

Design and heritage

You are a member of one of the midwestern nations of Native Americans. Your ancestors had no permanent architecture because they were nomadic hunter-gatherers (see photo below). But now you live on a reservation in South Dakota, or near the Twin Cities in Minnesota. You and your relatives want to establish a cultural center, or a day care, or health clinic for your people.



Figure 12.4.2: Cass Lake Health Clinic (Indian Health Service), Leech Lake Reservation (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe), Minnesota

Do you want it to look like the local museum or clinic (image left) built by the Federal or State government? Probably not, because in the post-modern era since about 1965, various groups have proclaimed their specific ethnic identity. Native Americans now reinforce cultural memory despite the near-eradication of their cultures by European-American governments and individual prejudice. This emphasis is now common among other minority and religious groups that have suffered under dominant cultures here and abroad.

Your native nation will seek an architect perhaps not of Native American ancestry; that will depend upon available talent and sensitivity to your culture, although increasing numbers of Native Americans have studied architecture. You will want the design to suggest something appropriate to your heritage.



Figure 12.4.3: Edward S. Curtis, *Moving camp* (detail), c. November 19, 1908, photographic print, Atsina on horses with travois behind them, tipis in background, Montana (Library of Congress)

Midwest

In the Midwest, the result might reflect local types of lodges, tipis, and ceremonial buildings of the past, but made of practical and accessible modern materials since an original tipi made of animal hides would be impermanent and lightweight. When the original hides no longer kept out the weather, they were easily replaced with new ones, but people today want durable materials and have time and funds for less frequent maintenance. The tipi has inspired versions in concrete, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Community Hall (1989) by Johnson, Sheldon, Sorensen, in glass, the Southern Ute Cultural Center (2011), by Jones & Jones* (see image below) and in rough stone with wood beams as in the Chief Gall Inn (1972) designed by Harrison Bagg at the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota.

The Four Winds School (1983) at Fort Totten on the Spirit Lake Reservation in North Dakota by Charles Archambault, Denby Deegan* and Neil McCaleb,* has the overall round shape of a ceremonial lodge or tipi but in order to accommodate classrooms, a gymnasium and cafeteria, the interior is divided into rooms around a circular core containing a tipi for counseling sessions.



Figure 12.4.4: Jones & Jones, Southern Ute Cultural Center, 2011 (photo: NorthShore Productions, Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum)

Northwest coast

Along the Northwest coast, the building will probably be a rectangle of logs or milled wood with a pitched roof, evoking ancestral longhouses made from trees in the dense local forests. Retaining the traditional long shape while using some reinforced concrete

for the sake of permanence, the Makah nation in Washington State created a cultural center in Neah Bay (1979 by Fred Bassetti architects) that has cedar cladding to harmonize with older buildings on the reservation. The Native American student center at Oregon State University uses logs and the longhouse form to accommodate members of several Native nations, without imitating buildings of one group (image below). The longhouse is a traditional form of architecture for several Native American nations in the coastal Northwest and was built to house extended families and community functions.



Figure 12.4.5: Jones & Jones*, Native American Longhouse (student center), 2013, Oregon State University (photo: Theresa Hogue, CC BY-SA 2.0)

At least one individual, Lawrence Joe,* of the Upper Skagit reservation in Washington has built a longhouse (1986) for therapeutic activities intended to accustom delinquent or disturbed youths to better ways of living according to traditional ethical standards. Northeastern forests, too, have provided logs for construction since ancient times, and various wood-covered buildings have been erected there for tribal offices, a student center at Cornell University (1991, by Flynn Battaglia, see detail below), museums and cultural centers. If there is insufficient money for a properly insulated wooden construction, a group may decorate a simpler building made of industrial materials with appropriate historically-based ornament, as in the Takopi Indian Health Center in Tacoma, WA (2002, by Mulvanny G2) or the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum in Salamanca NY (by Lloyd Barnwell,* designs by Carson Waterman*).

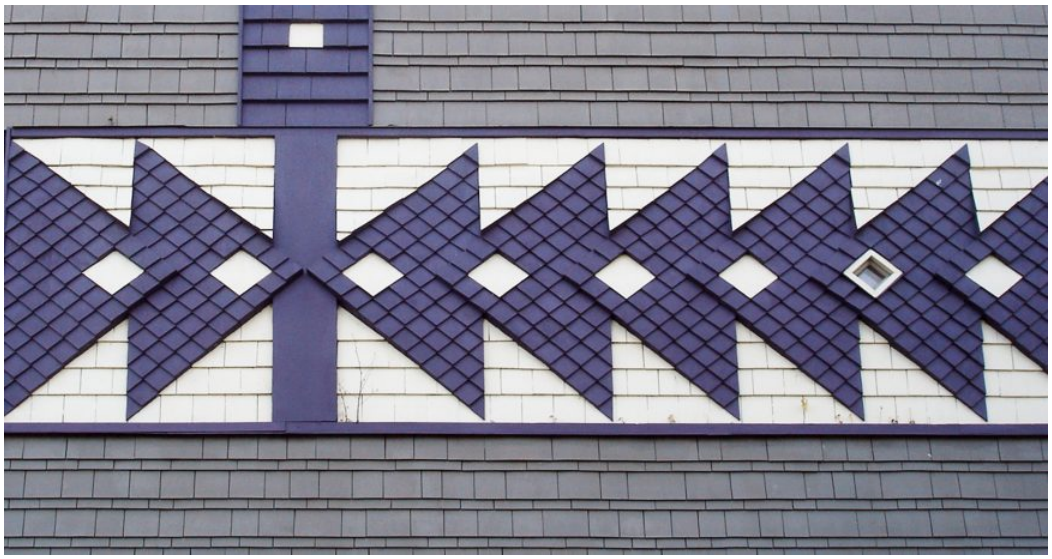


Figure **12.4.6**: Haudenosaunee wampum belt design on exterior shingles (detail), Flynn & Battaglia, Akwe:kon ("all of us" in Mohawk), 1991, student residence and community center, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Southwest

In the southwest, a structure might be made of adobe (earthen brick structures made of sand, silt, clay, and straw), with thick walls and small windows to moderate heat during the warm months. Adobe requires frequent maintenance, however, so new buildings are often made of reinforced concrete, a durable material that can be colored to match the local earth of which adobe is composed. The San Felipe Pueblo school in New Mexico (image below) has geometric forms, close to those of an adobe building but with larger windows to admit more natural light and with subtle colors to enhance the appeal of the building to its young users.



Figure **12.4.7**: Michael Doody supervised by Robert Montoya,* The San Felipe Pueblo School, 1982, San Felipe Pueblo, New Mexico (photo: courtesy of the author)

A southwestern building may also be built primarily of other natural materials, such as stone or wood, roughly hewn as the ancestors would have left it. The Pojoaque Pueblo Council Chambers, a seriously impressive building of modest size, is one example. A stone post barely altered from its natural state supports the sapling ceiling of the principal room in a thick-walled adobe structure. The building owes its form to two designers, the pueblo's own governor, George Rivera* (also a sculptor) and Joel

McHorse, Jr., as well as to its own construction organization—rather than to an imported designer. Along the highway entrance to the pueblo, Rivera* also designed a museum and cultural center using the solid, massive geometric forms customary in adobe building (see image below).



Figure 12.4.8: George Rivera with early assistance from Dennis Holloway, Poeh Cultural Center and Museum, 2012, Pojoaque (Po'su wae geh), New Mexico (photo: Howard Lifshitz, CC BY 2.0)

Urban centers

It is less easy to imagine an urban center where members of several native nations come together despite their varied cultural and architectural traditions. Whose culture will dominate? When it is impossible to find a site and funds for a new building, members must rent space in existing buildings that can be decorated inside with art or objects pertinent to the cultures in the area. The Minneapolis American Indian Center is a purpose-built center (see image below). The design connects the inside to nature through large glass windows. Woven wood designs by George Morrison* cover large parts of the outside. A ceremonial circle with stepped seating forms part of the entrance plaza. Inside, events take place below a ramp that replaces stairs or banked seating, to accommodate the customary ways of observing events—in small groups, spaced comfortably apart from one another. This building expresses Native life ways even though it does not imitate an indigenous building type.



Figure 12.4.9: Hodne-Stageberg Partners with Denby Deegan* and Dennis Sun Rhodes,* exterior wooden design at right by George Morrison,* Minneapolis American Indian Center, 1972 (photo: Bill Forbes, by permission, all rights reserved)

Natural forms

Several buildings for Native groups specifically evoke natural forms revered by the members of the nation. The Oneida in Wisconsin built a school with a plan in the form of a turtle (below left), and the same animal, sacred to the Iroquois confederacy,

inspired the plan of a now-closed cultural center in Niagara Falls (below right).



Figure 12.4.10: Left: Aerial view, Richard Thern, Oneida Nation Elementary School, 1995, Oneida, Wisconsin (photo: ©Google). Right: Hodne-Stageberg with Dennis Sun Rhodes,* Iroquois Confederacy Cultural Center (closed), 1981, Niagara Falls, New York (photo: TC Fenstermaker, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

Left: Aerial view, Richard Thern, Oneida Nation Elementary School, 1995, Oneida, Wisconsin (photo: ©Google). Right: Hodne-Stageberg with Dennis Sun Rhodes,* Iroquois Confederacy Cultural Center (closed), 1981, Niagara Falls, New York (photo: TC Fenstermaker, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

The National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., opened in 2004, is the result of collaboration, first with Douglas Cardinal* and GBQC, then with a consortium headed by Louis Weller* and Polshek Partners. Donna House,* an ethnobotanist and others also contributed to the result. Unlike smooth white buildings on the Mall, this one has a rough yellow stone surface, and is surrounded by landscaping of only indigenous ornamental or food-yielding plants. The boldly contoured facade confronts the neoclassical design of the Capitol. Inside and out, curving lines dominate because some Native American design participants claimed that these contours were natural and indigenous; they saw rigid straight lines as imports from abroad. A domed rotunda just inside the entrance accommodates ceremonies that can be viewed both at ground level and from surrounding balconies. As a building in the nation's capital, the Museum reflects its position within the largely neoclassical context of the straight-sided Mall while accommodating various indigenous traditions.



Figure 12.4.11: Douglas Cardinal*, Louis Weller* with GBQC and Polshek Partners, National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC, 2004

The variety of native traditions, available materials, and architectural expertise has therefore given our continent new and culturally sensitive architectural forms during the last two generations.

*denotes Native American ancestry

Additional resources

Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Contemporary Native American Architecture*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1996

Joy Monice Malnar and Frank Vodvarka, *New Architecture on Indigenous Lands*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2013

Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton, *Native American Architecture*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990

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12.5: Commerce

Buildings for commerce have appeared over time. Early systems of trade and barter in some places eventually became formalized in ways that required marketplaces and commercial establishments with temporary or permanent housing. While open-air markets with vendor stalls continue to be used in many places, in others shops or full buildings evolved for commercial and service transactions.



Figure 7.33 | Church of the Holy Apostles and Museum of Ancient Agora
Author: User "A.Savin"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.34 | Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company Building, Chicago, IL
Author: User "Beyond My Ken"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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An early example appeared in ancient Athens, Greece, in the area where the open market or **agora**, was also located.The **Stoa** of Attalos, built by King Attalos II of Pergamon (r. 159-133 BCE), was comprised of a two story covered walkway made of marble and limestone with columns on one side and a closed wall on the other. (Figure 7.33) Along the closed wall, there were twenty-one rooms on each level with each room providing space for a shop. These rooms were similar in character and purpose to those we noted on the ground floors of Roman villas and apartment buildings, but they provided for a more concentrated shopping area.

Our modern provisions for shopping centers and department stores were designed with different ideas about merchandising, sales, and consumerism but, as we have seen with the rapid rise of on-line shopping for durable and perishable goods, this scenario will likely be ever evolving. Indeed, grocery and department stores may become completely passé. But their development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries presented new possibilities for architectural design.

An example is the Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company Store in Chicago, designed by Louis Sullivan (1856-1924, USA) and built in 1904. (Figure 7.34) One of the early applications for steel frame, or "skeleton frame," construction that made the development of skyscrapers possible, this sort of building also opened new possibilities for retail and office space. Here, the large ground-floor windows and corner entrance could provide a great deal of display space for attracting pedestrians while the expansive multi- story interior offered shoppers a wide array of goods, especially compared to the sorts of small shops and markets that had been its predecessors.

Not only the structure but also the decorative approach was innovative, as Sullivan combined Beaux Arts ideas with Art Nouveau motifs in the building's surface design. (Figure 7.35) The elaborate, curvilinear, plant-based motifs central to the Art Nouveau movement, c. 1890-1910, in cast metal relief panels above the doors and ground floor windows added to visual appeal for potential customers.

New designs emerged for other commercial firms in this era as well. The Austrian Postal Savings Bank in Vienna, Austria, designed by architect Otto Wagner (1841-1918, Austria) has a huge multi story façade covering a broad open interior space on the ground level; its sleek and modern aesthetic was startlingly new and different when it was completed in 1905. (Figure 7.36) One of Wagner's aims in the design was to create a sense of strength and solidity that engendered trust and a feeling of financial security in customers. The main banking customer area is filled with natural light. Wagner used marble, steel, and polished glass for the simplified decoration of the reinforced concrete building, turning away from the Art Nouveau aesthetic and replacing it with his sense of modernism.

The use of steel and reinforced concrete that facilitated the advent of the skyscraper truly revolutionized architecture and began a contest for height that continues today. Wealthy entrepreneurs and ambitious developers from around the world have joined in the competition for buildings of modern distinction. One example is the Chrysler Building in New York City, designed by William van



Figure 7.37 | The Top of the Chrysler Building, New York City, NY
Author: User "Leena Hietanen"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.36 | User "Beyond My Ken"
Author: User "Extrawurst"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 7.35 | The northwest entrance to the Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company Building
Author: User "Beyond My Ken"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Alen (1883-1954, USA). (Figure 7.37) Its décor in the Art Deco style (c. 1920-1940), including the ribbed, sun- burst pattern made of stainless steel in the building's terraced crown, celebrates American industrialism and the automobile. At 1,046 feet, the Chrysler Building was for eleven months after its completion in 1930 the tallest in the world. (It was surpassed in 1931 by the Empire State Building at 1,454 feet.)

A more recent example is the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lampur, Malaysia, designed by César Pelli (b. 1926, Argentina, lives USA). (Figure 7.38) Inaugurated in 1999, they were the tallest buildings for several years and remain the tallest twin towers to this day. The buildings' design motifs are inspired by Islamic art and culture; for example, the shape of each tower is the Muslim symbol of Rub el Hizb, or two overlapping squares that form an eight-pointed star. Both structures house commercial and business concerns and symbolize the architecture of modern business.



Figure 7.38 | Petronas Twin Towers, Malaysia
Author: User "Morio"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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In the late twentieth century, architectural ingenuity, new materials, and the potential of computer design led some architects to develop radically innovative approach- es to structures that might house any number of different types of needs. Among the most innovative in this regard is Frank Gehry (b. 1929, Canada, lives USA), who has designed buildings all over the world including museums, business towers, residences, and theaters.

In Los Angeles, he created the Walt Disney Concert Hall, completed in 2003. (Figure 7.39) Using titanium sheathing for multiform, swooping curvilinear forms and volumes, his buildings are sculptural in effect from a visual standpoint. Yet in each case, his buildings have proven effective and dynamic in creating spaces for the activities they house. The acoustics of the concert hall are widely praised as is the beauty of the architectural form in capturing the whimsical spirit of Walt Disney, the creator of so many American comics, cartoons, and movies.



Figure 7.39 | Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, CA
Author: John O'Neill
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12.6: Worship

Structures for worship, as we have noted, were sometimes combined with or were near those created for other communal needs. We saw this with the ziggurat, in the Roman forums, and in palaces, among others. But we also have a considerable history of architecture intended solely for religious purposes. From early times, there were two distinctive conceptions for a sacred building: whether it was a house for the deity or a house for the worshippers. Beyond that, it might be for individual devotional activities or for accommodating a congregational group. We can keep these points in mind when examining the types of building designed for these goals.

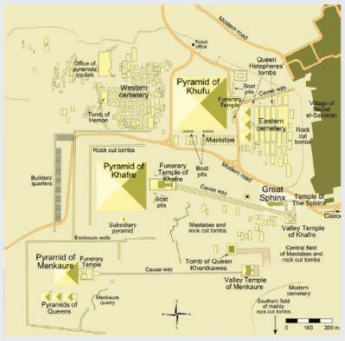


Figure 7.40 | Rendering of the Giza Pyramid Complex, Egypt
Author: User "MesserWoland"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Among the earliest examples are the pyramid complexes from ancient Egypt. (Figure 7.40) The **pyramids** were tombs composed of millions of large stones in mathematically regular geometric structures carefully oriented to the stars. Pyramids evolved over thousands of years out of pre-Egyptian burial practices that began with placing heavy stones over gravesites to protect the occupants and their grave goods buried within.

The Egyptians created these elaborate and massive groupings of buildings for the royal dead on the west bank of the Nile River, creating a **necropolis**, or city of the dead. At Giza, the body of the pharaoh or other royal family member was brought down the river from the palace to the valley temple on the edge of the pyramid precinct. After priests mummified the body of the deceased and prepared it for entombment, the body would be taken to a mortuary temple near the pyramid. (Figure 7.41) That temple was the site where ceremonies were carried out at the time of the mummy's placement within the pyramid, as were the perpetual rituals required to honor the king in the afterlife.

There were also temples for the living that the king would have had commissioned and served. One example is the Temple of Horus at Edfu, which has a number of typical features, although it was built relatively late in Egyptian history. It is of the **pylon** type, so named for the two upright structures that form its monumental façade and flank the main ceremonial portal. (Figure 7.42) The approach to temples was often along an avenue of **sphinxes**, imaginative hybrid creatures, part human, part animal, that led to the main door. Beyond the pylon wall was an open courtyard (Figure 7.43) and then a **hypostyle hall**, a structure with multiple rows of columns that support a flat roof, leading to the sanctuary. Typical of many sacred structures is this sort of staged progression by which one moves from the public or profane spaces through gradually more sacred, and often more restricted, areas that lead ultimately to the most sacred and reserved part. It is often the case that only priests or otherwise consecrated and dedicated persons are allowed in the **sanctuary**, the innermost and holiest space, while most of the congregation or worshipers are confined to less sacred parts of the temple, and the general public may be denied access to the premises altogether.



Figure 7.42 | Temple of Horus, Edfu
Author: User "ljanderson977"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 7.43 | Inside the Edfu Temple
Author: User "Than217"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Greek temples like that devoted to Hephaestus in Athens, Greece, were not congregational at all. (Figure 7.44) They were designed as houses for the deity with a **cella**, or room, inside that was provided for the cult statue. Sometimes, there was also a cult treasury room within the temple, but ceremonies and sacrifices were conducted outside in the temple courtyard. Like the ziggurats, Greek temples incorporated the belief that the gods were on high, in the celestial realms, so they were often located in an **acropolis**, or sacred city high on a hill.

This can clearly be seen in the case of the Parthenon, dedicated to the goddess Athena, the patron of the city of Athens. (Figures 7.45 and 7.46) As in all Greek temples, a mathematical relation can be found ordering the size and relation of the Parthenon's

elements. The length to width of the structure, the height to the width, the diameter of the columns, and their spacing all conform to the golden ratio of 4 to 9. This use of a single relation between the various elements of the structure gives it an aesthetically pleasing, unified, and more solid appearance, as does the use of several optical corrections. The columns lean slightly inward, and the **stylobate**, the base upon which the columns stand, bows upward slightly in the middle, both to give the appearance of being completely straight and flat.



Figure 7.44 | Temple of Hephaestus, Athens
Author: User "sailko"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Roman temples were often built in emulation of those of the Greeks, but they made many practical changes to the designs and often placed them in the center of the community, as opposed to the separated locations preferred by the Greeks. An important and very innovative temple design was created during the early Imperial era to honor the **pantheon** of nine planetary deities. To address the honor of the group, rather than individual gods, this temple, the Pantheon, took a different form. (Figure 7.47)

The building had a traditional temple front made up of columns supporting a triangular **pediment**. Rather than continuing into a rectangular, gable- roofed structure, however, the interior was an open circle with cult statues arrayed around its perimeter, each in a separate **niche**, or shallow recess in the wall. (Figure 7.48) That circular interior, acting as a drum, supported a huge domed space with an **oculus**, a circular opening, at its summit. Combining the circles of drum and dome creates a perfect sphere (diameter = height). (Figure 7.49) The whole of the structure was constructed using the ingenious Roman concrete, which allowed the creation of an unsupported dome greatly facilitated by the use of **coffers**, or recessed squares, which tremendously reduced the dome's weight. The circle and square are not only featured in the ceiling construction, the repetition of those shapes is carried out in all of the architectural and decorative elements of the Pantheon's interior and exterior.



Figure 7.45 | The Acropolis of Athens, Greece
Author: User "Salonica84"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



Figure 7.46 | The Parthenon, Athens, Greece
Author: Steve Swayne
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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In addition to these singular features, the Pantheon was the first temple structure the congregation was allowed to enter. Once Christianity supplanted the ancient Roman religions, spaces with large, open interiors would be needed to house the faithful attending mass. The Pantheon served the needs of a Christian church well, and it was converted in 609 CE. Its adaptation as a Christian church prevents our viewing it as it was intended to be used, but the Pantheon still stands in well-preserved condition and with little alteration to the structure and basic décor of fine marbles for the floor and interior columns, due to its continuous service as a house of worship since it was built in the second century CE.

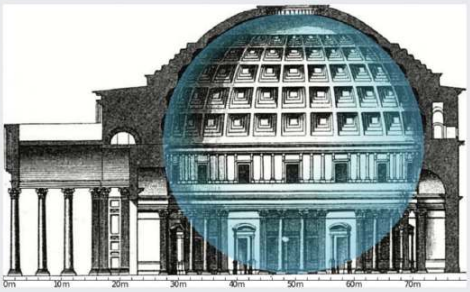


Figure 7.49 | Cross-section of the Pantheon in Rome
Author: User "Cmglee"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.48 | Interior of the Pantheon, Rome
Artist: Giovanni Paolo Panini
Author: Google Cultural Institute
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Some of the earliest evidence of worship in India shows that it was conducted in caves; we also see attempts to create worship spaces by excavating the living rock and creating larger caves for this purpose. While rock-cut architecture exists in many places around the world, its extent in India over the centuries is unsurpassed and, due to its great durability, many fine examples of it are preserved.



Figure 7.50 | Lomas Rishi Cave
Author: User "Neilsatyam"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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A very early example is the Lomas Rishi Cave in the Barabar Hills from the third century BCE. (Figure 7.50) Because it is unfinished, we have a good idea of the methods and plans for the excavation, which included the addition of a large rectangular chamber leading into a smaller circular one. The sculptural treatment of the frame of the portal is a good example of the ways in which early architecture and decoration in stone imitated prior work in impermanent materials such as wood, as was the case for early architectural design around the world. Here, the designs simulate lattice, beams, and bentwood construction.



Figure 7.51 | Brihadeshwara Temple, India
Author: User "Abhikanil"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Later Indian worship structures such as the Brihadeshwara Temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, from the eleventh-century Chola Dynasty era, show the great complexity of conception of this type of worship space. (Figure 7.51) The tower at the far end is over the **garba griha**, or sanctuary, and as with the Temple of Horus at Edfu, there is staged progression from the profane (everyday) space to the most sacred. The whole is raised on a platform, a feature also seen in many sacred structures. Here, one must begin the approach by entering a gated courtyard, then ascend the stairs, and pass through the **mandapa**, or audience hall, before approaching the sanctuary. Outside the main temple but within the courtyard are subsidiary temples and shrines, as the worship is **polytheistic**, that is, with a great number of diverse deities.

As is the case with most Hindu and Buddhist temples, although there are certainly ceremonial and ritual functions that are priestly duties, there is no restriction for lay people entering the sanctuary as the relationship to the deity is generally considered to be a personal one, not mediated by a priesthood.

The coexistence of Hindu and Buddhist deities evidenced by their shrines appears at many sites, though usually one or the other predominates at a given site. In addition to temples, another basic structure associated with Buddhism is the stupa. (Figure 7.52) One of the oldest stupas is in India where Buddhism first arose, at Sanchi in Madya Pradesh. Established in the third century BCE, it was conceived as a burial mound of a type, as it was believed to contain part of the earthly remains of Sakyamuni, founder of Buddhism. Surrounded by a tall stone fence, it is designed for the devotee to enter the fenced area and circumambulate, or walk around, the stone-faced, rubble-filled mound.

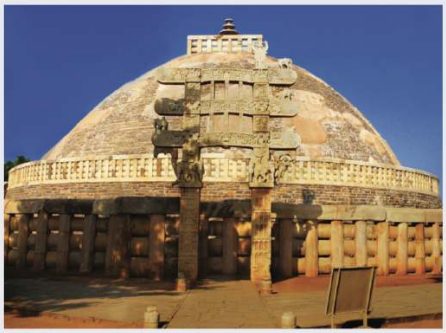


Figure 7.52 | Sanchi Stupa, Madhya Pradesh
Author: User "Ekabhishek"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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A great deal of symbolism is associated with the form including a **yasti**, or mast, rising from the center of the dome that stands for an **axis mundi**, or axis of the world, separating the earth from the sky above. The fence and gateways are also covered with mythological carvings related to Buddhist and Hindu beliefs. (see Figure 4.23) When the Buddhist stupa form migrated to China, Japan, and elsewhere, the design evolved to include native architectural traditions resulting in the stupa form becoming the multi-tiered **pagoda**, a Hindu or Buddhist sacred building.

Centers for Islamic worship are housed in architectural structures known as **mosques**. While churches and temples associated with other faiths are generally oriented to the four cardinal directions, usually with the altar toward the east where the sun rises, the mosque will always be situated so that the worshippers face in the direction of the **qibla**, a fixed wall aligned to face Mecca, the city that is the epicenter for Islam. This orientation remains consistent regardless of where in the world the building is set. While several different standard architectural forms exist for a mosque, its most common distinguishing exterior feature is the **minaret**, the

slender tower from which the call to prayer is issued. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque shows six minarets while four are common at other sites. (Figure 7.53)



Figure 7.53 | Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey
Author: User "Dersaadet"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0

The most basic architectural form for Christian congregational churches is the **basilica**, a structure of longitudinal plan adapted from the Roman public building form. (Figure 7.54) The Roman basilica had an entrance on one long side that led to the large open interior space, the nave. The **Christian basilica**, unlike that used by the Romans, has an entrance on one end, is divided into a center nave and side aisles along its length, and holds a semi-circular **apse**, or recess, containing the altar at the opposite end of the longitudinal building from the entrance. (Figure 7.55)

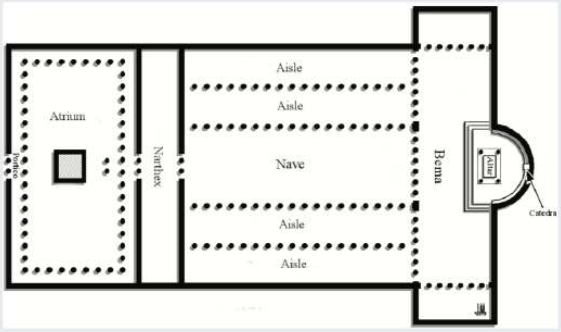


Figure 7.54 | Diagram of old St. Peter's Basilica
Author: User "Locutus Borg"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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As in other centers for worship we have seen, the holiest part of the church is farthest away from the most profane or public spaces. The progression from one end of the church to the other is a processional ritual, enhanced by the long rows of columns flanking the nave, the long exterior walls, that were often heavy wood or masonry structures until the Gothic era, and the filtered light that played among the structural components.

This was the case in Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, (Figure 7.56) built in the fourth century CE on the model of the Roman ba- silica type. Also based on the Roman secular model was an atrium that was placed before the entrance. The original St. Peter's was the center of the Christian world for centuries and a model for church architecture, but it was replaced during the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods with the much grander structure that exists today in Rome.



Figure 7.55 | Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Italy
Author: Angela Rosaria
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 7.56 | Drawing and reconstruction of the Constantinian Basilica, Rome
Artist: H. W. Brewer
Author: User "Lusitana"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Christians in the Western Roman Empire used the basilica, or Latin cross, plan, but those in the Eastern Roman Empire, more commonly known as the Byzantine Empire, also employed the central plan, which had its origins in the circular plan, such as that used for the Pantheon. In the West, however, the circular, or central plan, church was used for a palace church such as Charlemagne's at Aachen, (Figure 7.57) mausoleum (tomb building), or **martyrium** (site marking the death of a **martyr**, someone who died for their faith), where the placement of the altar does not need to address large crowds.

Perhaps the most familiar basilica or Latin Cross churches are those in the Gothic style in Europe that began in 1144. (Figure 7.58) When these structures were being built, they were not called "Gothic." Instead they were called "opus francigenum" or "work of the Franks" because of its origination at the Abbey of Saint-Denis. The term "Gothic" was coined in the sixteenth century, originally meant as an insult, by artist and historian Giorgio Vasari (1511- 1574, Italy). He wanted to distinguish the architectural style, based on forms from ancient Greece and Rome at that time practiced in Italy, from medieval Christianity and its associations with the destruction of classical learning and culture. The Goths were Germanic tribes that he believed had invaded and destroyed the refined culture of ancient Rome. His pejorative name has persisted but without its originally negative connotation.

That first Gothic architecture was seen in the rebuilt choir at that Abbey Church of St. Denis, outside Paris, France, that was designed by the Abbot Suger and completed in 1144. (Figure 7.59) Several of the defining features of the Gothic cathedral were used there: the pointed arch, the ribbed vault, flying buttresses, and stained glass windows. Unlike the Roman circular arch, the **Gothic or pointed arch** is formed by two arcs with parallel sides. (Figure 7.60) A **ribbed vault** is formed at the intersection of two barrel vaults, with stone ribs sometimes added to support the weight of the vaults. The **flying buttress** is a load-bearing component located outside the building, connected to the upper portion of the wall in the form of an arch.

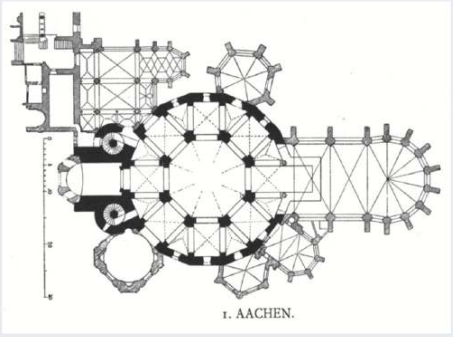


Figure 7.57 | Floorplan of Aachen Chapel
Artist: Georg Dehio
Author: User "Fb78"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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(Figures 7.61 and 7.62) The combination of the pointed arch, ribbed vault, and flying buttress allowed the height of the interior spaces to be dramatically increased and the thickness of the outside walls dramatically decreased. This development led to the widespread use of stained glass throughout the church and the addition of the **rose window**, a circular stained glass window dedicated to the Virgin Mary, usually found above the main portals. (Figure 7.63) The much arger number and size of windows allowed natural and multicolored light to flood the interior of formerly dark churches as was the case at St. Denis. (Figure 7.64)

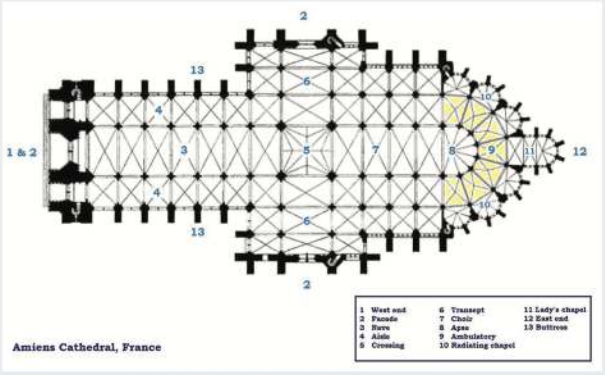


Figure 7.58 | Floorplan of Amiens Cathedral
Artist: Georg Dehio
Author: User "Mattis"
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Figure 7.59 | Basilica of St. Denis
Author: User "Ordifana75"
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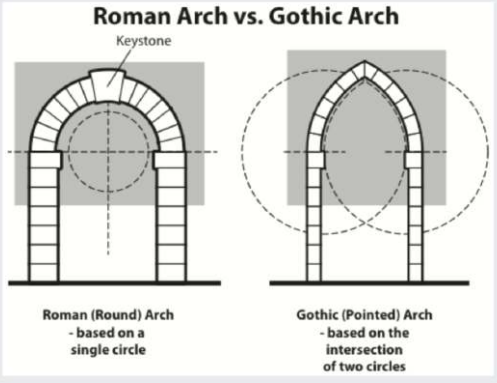


Figure 7.60 | Roman Arch/Gothic Arch Diagram
Author: Jeffrey LeMieux
Source: Original Work
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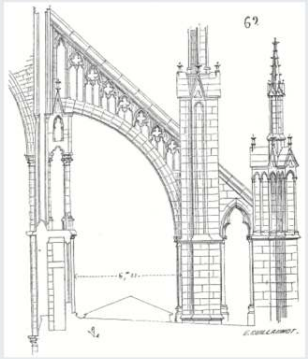


Figure 7.61 | Diagram of flying buttress of the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Amiens
Author: User "BuzzWikimedia"
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Gothic churches were built throughout continental Europe and England, with regional variations, in the center of their communities usually, especially if they were cathedrals, or Bishop's churches. Whether viewed from a distance approaching a town or standing within the cathedral itself, the building soared above all others as it reached to the heavens. They were filled with architectural and sculptural ornamentation to teach the doctrines of the Church, Bible stories, and the accounts of Mary, the Apostles, and the other saints. Portals were especially the focus of sculptural effort. Standing figures in high relief of prophets, kings, and saints graced the sides of the **jambs**, or upright supports to either side of a door. (Figure 7.65) And many other sacred and secular figures, relief sculptures, often of Jesus and symbols of the Four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were included in the tympanum above the doors. (Figure 7.66) The architects, masons, and sculptors responsible for these monumental buildings were highly skilled and creative, and Gothic cathedrals remained the dominating forms of the Western urban landscape until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the modern structural steel skyscraper surpassed them in height and scale.



Figure 7.62 | Bourges Cathedral
Author: User "sybarite48"
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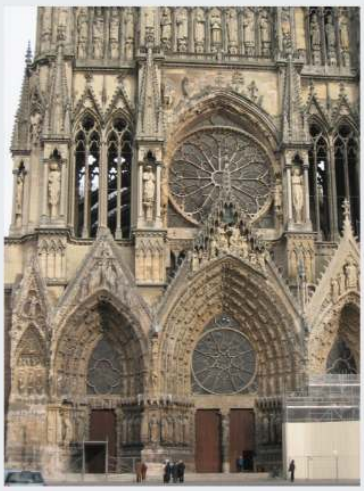


Figure 7.63 | Reims Cathedral, France
Author: Magnus Manske
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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The overall effect of walking into a Gothic cathedral is to be drawn upward into a vast, light, and airy space, and to be dislocated from the physical and drawn into the spiritual. (Figure 7.67) This effect is the epitome of the Gothic Christian view that the physical and sensual world is to be ignored or even disdained in favor of chastity, spiritual awareness, and religious devotion.

Christian churches of all denominations today generally follow the basilica model, but the sanctuaries vary considerably for diverse ceremonial practices. The **Gothic** type, with its pointed arches and glass windows that filter mystical light into the interior, is still common.



Figure 7.64 | Ambulatory of the Basilica of St. Denis
Author: User "Beckstet"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.65 | Martyrs, Chartres Cathedral
Author: User "Ttaylor"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.67 | Nave of the Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire, UK
Author: User "Diliff"
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One example of an updated version is Thorncrown chapel, designed by E. Fay Jones (1921-2004, USA). Jones created a number of elegantly simple nondenominational chapels set into nature that let in diffuse light. (Figures 7.68 and 7.69) A pupil of Frank Lloyd Wright, Jones was inspired by Wright's principles of using simple, local materials to thoroughly integrate structure and setting. The most striking feature at Thorncrown, located in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, is the structure's light airiness. The whole of the interior for each of Jones's chapels is a small sanctuary that seems entirely at home in the forest.



Figure 7.68 | Thorncrown Chapel
Architect: E. Fay Jones
Author: Clinton Steeds
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.66 | Central tympanum of the Royal portal of Chartres Cathedral
Author: Guillaume Piolle
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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Figure 7.69 | Inside the Thorncrown Chapel
Architect: E. Fay Jones
Author: User "Bobak"
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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12.7: Khmer Empire Bayon Temple (13th Century)

Bayon Temple (7.47) built in the center of the walled city Angkor Thom, the capital of the Khmer Empire in the 13th century. The temple appears as a mountain rising from the ground behind the walls of the city. Constructed to evoke the form of the Buddhist cosmic mountain of Mt. Meru, the structure honors the many gods from the Khmer empire. The temple was the last of the state temples built at Angkor Thom and was a centerpiece of a massive building program that included bridges, walls, and supplementary buildings to support the city.

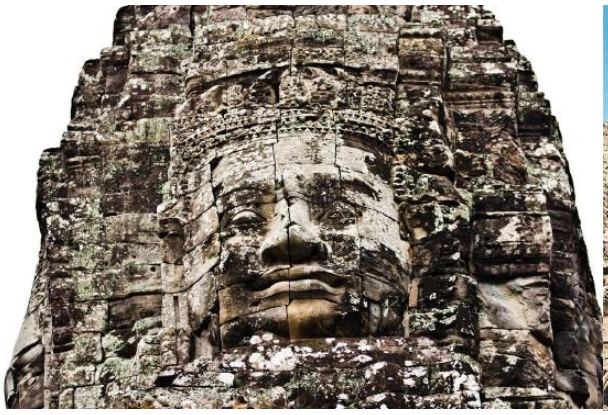


7.47 Bayon Temple complex

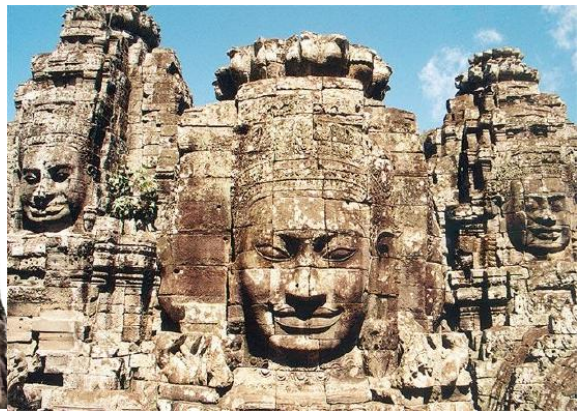
The decorating the thirty-seven massive towers, the temple is known for its vast sculptures of faces (7.48), gazing outward in four directions on every tower. Wet and humid weather allowed lichen to grow on the rock (7.49), causing deterioration. The large stone faces resemble other sculptures of Jayavarman VII (7.50), in Cambodia, characterizing him as a bodhisattva. Fifty-four enormous pillars have a face carved on each side, appearing to look out to the cardinal points. Today, over 200 giant faces still intact.



7.48 Facial sculptures at gateway



7.49 Deteriorated face



7.50 Temple faces

> *A Bodhisattva is someone motivated by compassion and has a wish to become Buddha like.*

The elongated temple faces east along an east-west axis in a square, and the city and temple combination covers an area of nine square kilometers, more significant than the Angkor Wat temple. The temple itself does not have walls because the city was enclosed like a fortress, along the roadway into the temple, faces of the gods stand guard (7.51). There are three enclosures or galleries in the lower and upper terraces. The outer walls of the galleries have extensive bas-reliefs illustrating musicians, horsemen, elephants, battles, and processions. The temple contains two impressive sets of bas-reliefs, a combination of mythological, ordinary, and historical scenes relating stories of businesspeople, friends drinking and dancing, elephants pulling carts, people picking fruit from trees or farming, scenes of everyday life (7.52).



7.51 Entrance faces



7.52 Bas-reliefs

The central tower was first made in the cruciform but later converted to a circular design. At the heart of the central tower is a 3.6-meter statue of Buddha, the flared hood of the serpent king guarding the statue of Buddha. At some point, the statue was removed and later found at the bottom of a well. When it was recovered and pieced back together, it has been restored to its proper location. The temple has undergone many changes based on the government in charge and their current religious beliefs.



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12.8: Gothic Notre Dame (Started 1163 CE)

The Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral (7.29) is located on the Ile de la Cite in Paris, France, and is one of the best examples of Gothic architecture as well as one of the most well-known churches in the world. The cathedral began in 1163 CE after building a unique roadway to transport building supplies, causing the demolition of several houses on the new site.



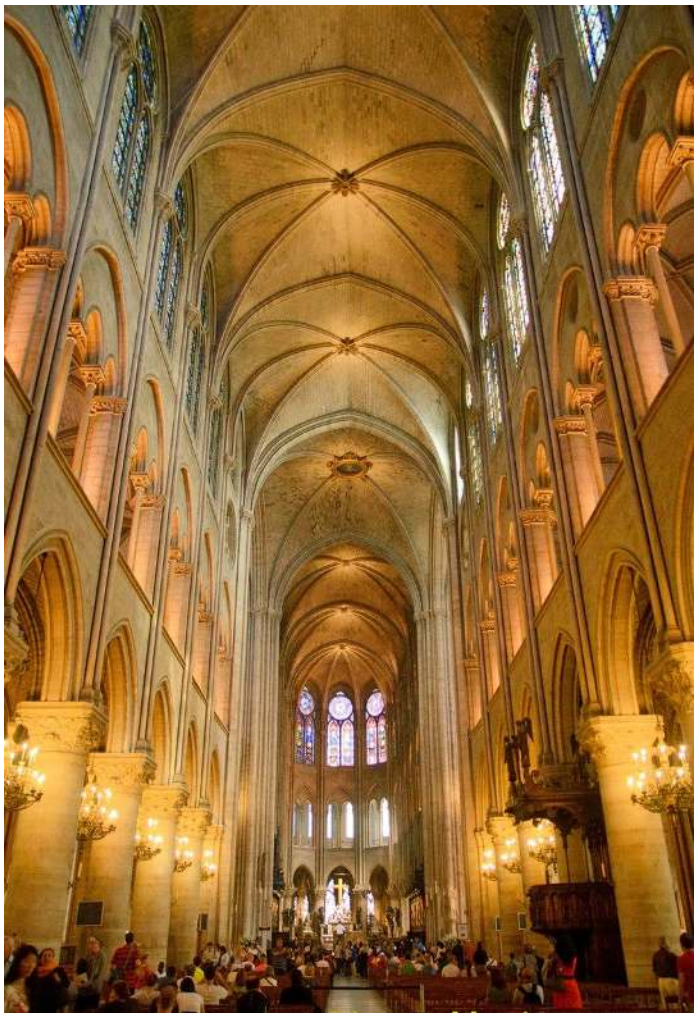
7.29 Notre-Dame de Paris



Gothic cathedrals have large walls of windows displaying colors from streaming sunlight, are encircled by a spider network of flying buttresses, and topped with ornamental gargoyles. Gothic architecture became a familiar feature of many great churches and castles in this period and led to towns competing to build the most significant and grandest cathedrals. Building a cathedral consumed the labor of surrounding towns, and occasionally took over 100 years to complete. Gothic cathedrals began to rise from the ground, stone by stone, to higher and higher heights, throughout the Western European Catholic region.

The architecture included unique structures, pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and flying buttresses. The pointed arches (7.30) allowed the height of the church to soar and large spaces for windows in these gothic churches instead of the restrictions found in the thick-

walled Romanesque church. Because of the invention and architecture of ribbed vaulting (7.31), the architectural capabilities for taller churches and larger windows were possible. Using the strength of stone close to the roof was conceivable, with the construction of multiple barrel vaults intersecting in the middle.

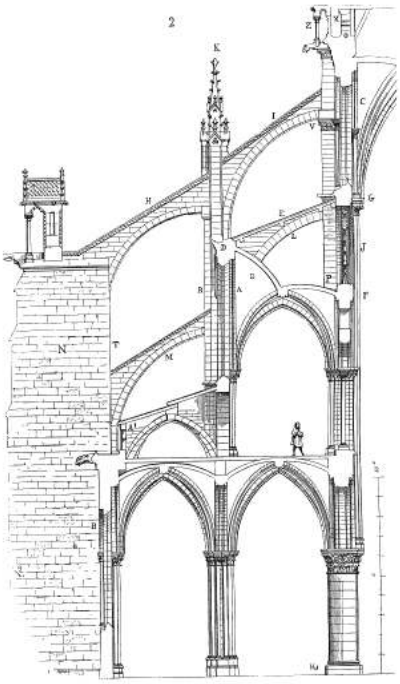


7.30 Pointed arches

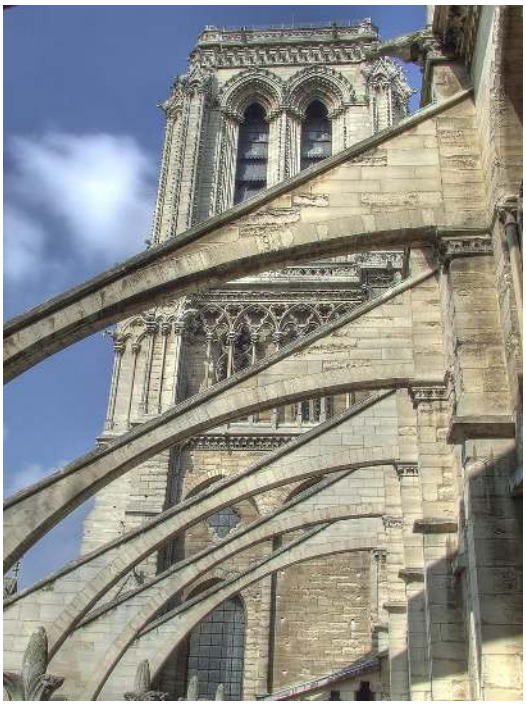


7.31 Ribbed vaults

As Gothic churches ascended in height and they constructed large openings for stained glass, however, with the additional height of the walls, the lateral forces of the wall began to push outward, causing the heavy stone load above to tumble. The design of the flying buttresses (7.32) was to redirect the forces from the pointed arches to the ground. They projected from the walls to a foundation, supporting the weight of the high walls by carrying the pressure of the lateral thrust and stabilizing the walls. The flying buttresses became an architectural part of the structure (7.33).



7.32 Buttress plan



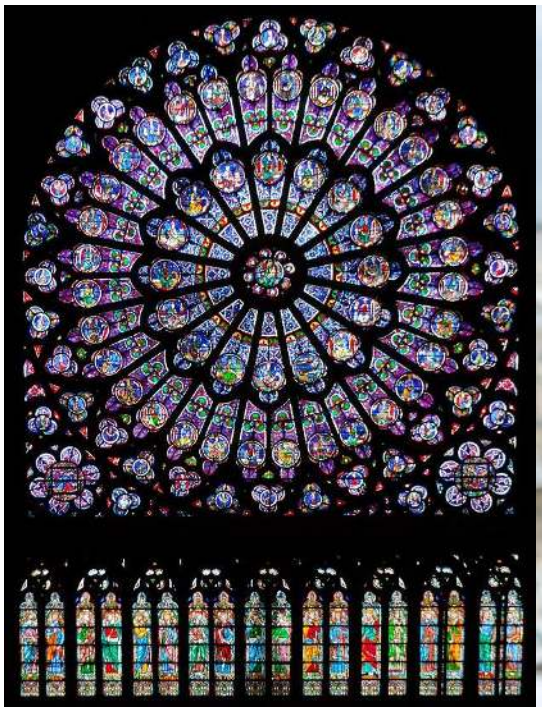
7.33 Flying buttresses

The cathedral was a tribute to Gothic architecture, and the layout of the church followed the basilica style. A nave is the central aisle in the building and usually ends in the rounded end to form the apse with additional aisles along each side of the nave separated by colonnades. The transept cuts across the aisle between the nave and apse, which gives the building its cross-like shape, the choir area is located where the nave and the transept intersect.

> *Basilica style refers to a very large open communal gathering place.*

The cathedral was built in parts; the choir area from 1163 to 1177 CE, the high altar finished in 1218 CE, the transepts and nave by 1208 CE, and the western façade and finishing details all finally completed by 1240 CE. Over the years, many different architects worked on the design of the building resulting in distinctive styles and heights of different sections and towers. Each architect specialized in distinct aspects of the building; for example, the work of one architect was to oversee the assembly of the rose windows. Other architects focused on the great halls beneath the towers.

One of the many design modifications occurred while building the transepts, especially the gabled portal on the north transept, a change to replace the ordinary with a spectacular rose (7.34) window. The idea so successful they added a similar window to the southern transept. The two transept portals were decorated with images from different religious stories, images used to teach devotees during weekly religious gatherings.



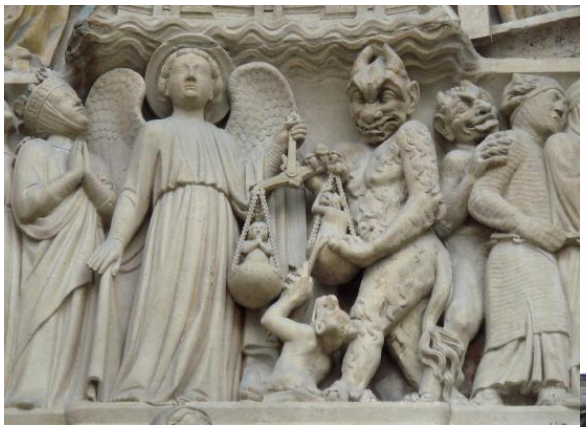
7.34 North rose window



7.36 Chimera

The cathedral was one of the first buildings to use the flying buttresses with their arched exterior supports designed for the stability of the structure. Initially, the original architectural drawings did not include the flying buttresses; however, after construction began, the thin walls of the Gothic style building began to fracture. At the joining of the pointed arch, the forces of gravity started to push outward, which can lead to the walls collapsing. The architects designed the buttress supports around the building located at exact points of failure; the fracturing stopped. Other tall cathedrals were experiencing fracturing, triggering flying buttresses to become the standard in building during the Gothic era.

Notre Dame is beyond a church as it is also draped in art. Small statues (7.35) of religious figures and stories used as decoration everywhere, another method of teaching the illiterate population about the tenets of their religion. Initially, the ornate statues were decorated with bright paint and gold gilding. Other figures, the most famous are the chimeras (7.36) and gargoyles designed as waterspouts, were symbols of evil, meant to threaten people, and encourage proper religious adherence. Gargoyles (7.37) were first designed in the 13th century to disperse water from the roof away from the foundations of the building and used extensively across the roofline; they also became the guardians of the building.



7.35 Statues



7.37 Gargoyles

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12.9: Islamic Golden Age Umayyad Mosque (715 CE)

The Islamic Umayyad Mosque sits in the city center of Old Damascus. The original temple was known for its beauty and size, the largest temple in Roman Syria, dedicated to the god Jupiter. By the end of the 4th century, it was converted into a Christian church and associated with Saint John the Baptist based on the legend his head (also known as a relic) buried inside the church. The area was conquered in 634 CE, then came under Muslim rule and in 700 CE the Umayyad caliph al-Walid I proclaimed: “Inhabitants of Damascus, four things give you a marked superiority over the rest of the world: your climate, your water, your fruits, and your baths. To these, I wanted to add a fifth: this mosque”. The construction of the Umayyad Mosque (7.14) was started in 706 CE and completed in 715 CE and dedicated to the people of Damascus for worship.



7.14 Umayyad Mosque

People from all over the region were employed to build the mosque, and the labor force grew to 12,000 workers, the old Christian church demolished to make way for the new mosque. Byzantine artisans created the mosaic art depicting buildings and landscapes in tile and glass, a universal art form throughout the Mediterranean structures.



7.15 Dome of the Clock

In the eastern section of the mosque, the Dome of the Clock (7.15) added in 780 CE, and nine years later, the Dome of the Treasury (7.16) was incorporated. Over the years and throughout various wars and rulers, the mosque fell into disrepair. In 1082 CE, the new rulers began repairing the mosque with additional support pillars and an updated, more massive central dome. Throughout the next centuries, the mosque experienced cycles of damage and rebuilding, creating the structure we see today.



7.16 Dome of the Treasury

Four walls enclose the mosque built in the shape of a rectangle, 97 meters by 156 meters, and in the northern part of the complex, a large courtyard. Stone columns support the arcades around the courtyard with a pillar between every two columns. The southern section of the mosque contains three arcades creating the sanctuary, two types of stone columns support the arcades; level one has large semi-circular arches and level two made of double arches. The entire face of the courtyard and the arcades covered with glass mosaics (7.17), colored marble, and gold gilding. It was the most extensive mosaic wall ever created at the time. Only some of the original embellishment remains (7.18), but over the centuries, different rulers have added to the patterned embellishments seen today.





7.17 Mosiac



7.18 Embellishments

There are three minarets in the complex, the Minaret of the Bride (7.19) first constructed about 800 CE, added to and repaired over the centuries. Today, the minaret is divided into two sections; the oldest and the lower part is square and built from large blocks, the upper part made of sculptured stone. The minaret has 160 steps that are leading to the top. The Minaret of Jesus (7.20) sits on the main body of the large blocks formed in the shape of a square with an octagonal spire on the top. It is the tallest minaret and started at the same time as the Minaret of the Bride but not completed until 1247. The Minaret of Qaitbay (7.21) was not built until 1488 and is octagonal in shape.



7.19 Minaret of the Bride



7.20 Minaret of Jesus



7.21 Minerat of Qaitbay

The building is one of the few mosques that have maintained its basic shape and architect since it was started in the 8th century, becoming a model for other mosques throughout the Middle East. However, today much of the mosque has been destroyed in the war in Syria.

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12.10: 20th Century Architecture

Architecture is generally described as any creatively designed and constructed building or structure enhancing the city, town, or landscape. It is also the science of designing the building so the structure is safe, inhabitable, and will still be standing in the event of damage from fire, flood, earthquake, or other natural disasters — the architects below designed buildings in styles unique to their ideas, designs, and creations.

Architect	Style	Specialty Designs	Specialty Materials
Antoni Guadí	Catalan Modernism	Helicoid and hyperboloid forms	Brick, mortar, concrete, ceramic pieces
Frank Lloyd Wright	Organic architecture Prairie School	Sloping roofs, open plans, low profile, long/low windows, cantilevered balconies	Concrete
Oscar Niemeyer	Abstract forms and curves	Free-flowing curves	Metal, concrete, glass
Julia Morgan	Arts and Crafts	Craftsman Style	Re-enforced concrete, tiles
Eero Saarinen	Neo-futuristic	Sweeping, arching, structural curves	Steel, glass
Unknown	Systemic and functional	Style based on use	Mud, water, thatch

The Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain (13.1), was designed and partially built by **Antoni Gaudí Cornet** (1852-1926), a Spanish artist following Catalan modernism with a distinctive style reflecting his individualization. Gaudí was inspired by the art from Persia, India, and Japan and incorporated these ideas along with the neo-Gothic movement, a growing art movement at the time. He also integrated his design with an organic style from nature.



13.1 *La Sagrada Familia*

The Basilica Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Familia is a Roman Catholic Basilica started by Gaudí in 1883 who used the Gothic and Art Nouveau styles with curvilinear forms and columns as his design inspiration. When Gaudí died in 1926, the building was only twenty-five percent complete. Construction carried on, only interrupted by the Spanish Civil War, with a planned completion date of 2026, the one-hundredth anniversary of Gaudi's death.

The interior of the church is a standard cross with five aisles and a central nave vault stretching forty-five meters, the side naves reaching thirty meters (13.2). The columns are uniquely Gaudi designed with tree-like structures and spreading branches to support the load, a three-dimensional intersection of helicoidal columns. In the center of the nave, the designs intersect with the multi-colored columns. There is extensive glasswork in windows on each end of the church. The outside façade is heavily decorated with iconic religious carvings (13.3). Eighteen spires were designed for the completed cathedral; however, only eight spires (13.4) have been built to date.



13.2 La Sagrada Familia ceiling



13.3 Religious carvings



13.4 Spires

Antoni Gaudí transcended conventional modernism with his unique, organic style of design. He never drew plans on paper, opting for building three-dimensional models to view all the details.

Casa Batllo (13.5), built between 1904 and 1906, is in the center of Barcelona. The façade of the building was designed on imagination and whimsy, built from stone and colored glass. The wavy shape of the building was plastered with lime mortar and covered in glass and tile mosaic. The roof (13.6) of the building is built in the shape of an ornate animal exhibiting oversized iridescent scales and tiled spine. Casa Batllo is a modern marvel of shape, light, color, and design.



VIDEO*: www.khanacademy.org/humaniti...r-construction



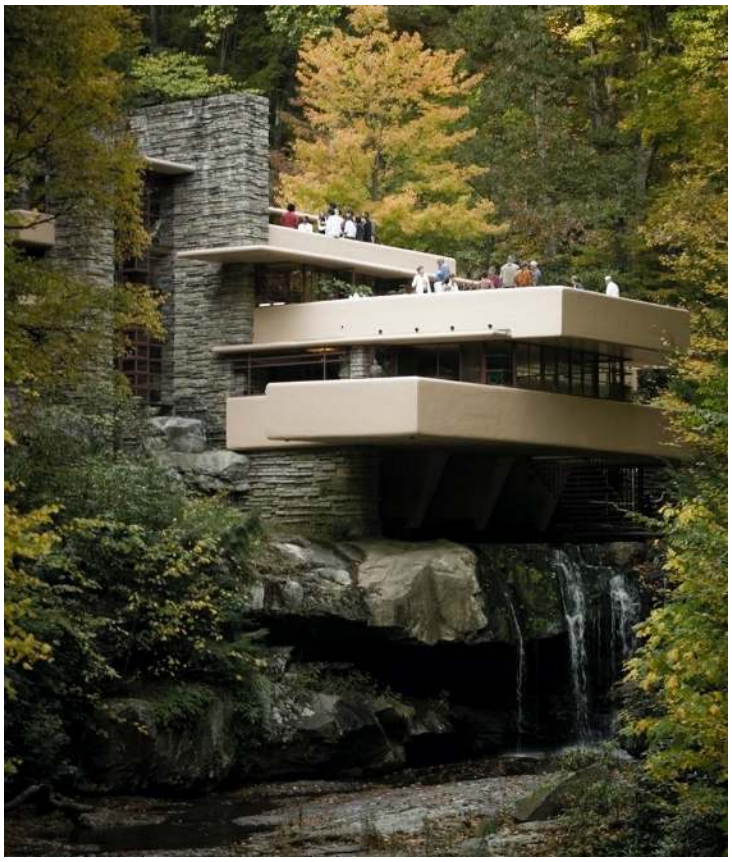
13.5 *Casa Batllo*



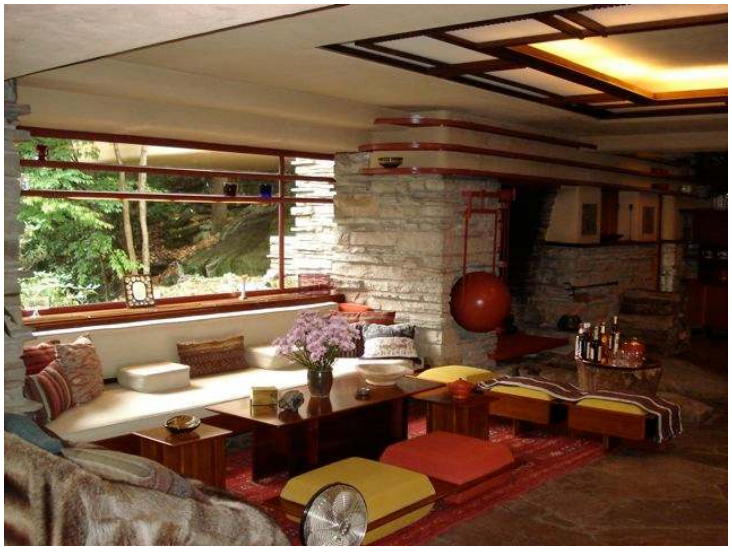
13.6 *Casa Batllo* roofline

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), one of America's premier architects, designed more than 1,000 buildings in his lifetime. Wright's philosophy on design extended to the environment where the building was to be placed. The structure needed to be in harmony with humanity living in the house or using the building and the surrounding land. He was a leader of the Prairie School movement—a 20th-century style based on the Midwestern United States—loosely following the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Constructed in 1936, Fallingwater (13.7) is one of the most famous Wright homes. The 5330 square foot house appears to float over a waterfall, jutting out above the river on a 4,100-hectare nature preserve. The waterfall cannot be observed from anywhere in the house, and you must leave the home and walk down a short trail to even see the waterfall, a contentious point with the homeowner since they wanted to see the waterfall. Wright disagreed with the owners and believed in exercising the sense of hearing to appreciate the waterfall from the house, the sound creating a magical atmosphere. Wright designed the furnishings for the living room (13.8), with a strong reflection of Japanese design and architecture. The fireplace has the same brick inside and outside, only separated by a glass window giving the appearance of sitting in nature. The living room was built on top of a large boulder that Wright incorporated directly into the design. Fallingwater is now owned and maintained by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.



13.7 *Fallingwater*



13.8 *Fallingwater* interior

Wright also designed the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (13.9) in New York City in a cylindrical formation. The grand interior contains a ramp gallery (13.10) from the first floor to the massive skylight on the top floor. Opening in 1959, the museum received criticism from architects, artists, and critics, however, the public widely praised the design as new and innovative.



13.9 *Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*



13.10 Interior ramp



13.11 *Cathedral of Brasilia*

The Guggenheim Museum, with its spiral design, influenced **Oscar Niemeyer** (1907-2012), a Brazilian architect who was a leader in modern architecture. In 1960, Niemeyer was known for his planned city of Brasilia, the newly designated capital of Brazil and the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. He embraced modernism with its curved lines and organic shapes, offering a contrast to the geometric severity of the current architectural designs.

Niemeyer was an advanced engineer who experimented with his favorite medium, concrete, and developed techniques using reinforced concrete to improve the plasticity of the material, challenging traditional architecture, breaking from the past, and making a giant leap into the future. Dedicated in 1970, the Cathedral of Brasilia (13.11) was constructed as a hyperboloid structure with sixteen concrete columns weighing 90 tons each. As the official building for the executive branch of government, The Palacio do Planalto (13.12) was one of the essential Niemeyer buildings. The four-story structure designed with tapering lines formed the columns standing against the broad expanse of glass walls.



13.12 *Palacio do Planalto*

From California, **Julia Morgan** (1872-1957) was one of the greatest American architects. Known for her large buildings founded on Craftsman-style structures, she designed more than 700 buildings. Hearst Castle in San Simeon, California, is her best-known work along with Asilomar in Monterey, California. Graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, Morgan was the first woman to be admitted at I Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris for the architecture program. Morgan returned home

to her Northern California home and was the first woman in California to be granted an architectural license. After she started her own company, one of her first significant designs were many of the buildings at Mills College.

She met William Randolph Hearst, who hired her to design the Los Angles Examiner Building in 1914, and in 1919, Hearst hired Morgan to design his most significant and most complex project, Hearst Castle (13.13) in San Simeon. Morgan designed the buildings, landscaping, pools, and animal shelters, spending 28 years to supervise every aspect of the Hearst Castle project. Inspiration for the buildings came from the grandeur of Europe, a Mediterranean style main house with two ornate twin towers. The iconic Greek Neptune pool (13.14) boasts marble columns and statues, while several guest cottages are scattered around the gardens. The elaborately decorated interior rooms (13.15) have marble fireplaces with an extensive collection of art and tapestries hanging on the walls.



13.13 *Hearst Castle*



13.14 *Neptune pool*



13.15 Library



Located on 107 acres on the beach in Monterey, Asilomar (13.16), Morgan designed most of the buildings between 1913 and 1928 in the Arts & Crafts architectural style. The movement-based its designs on the harmony between nature and the craftsman, creating expertly crafted buildings from local resources to blend in with the surrounding landscape. Asilomar was initially constructed for the YWCA with 16 buildings, 11 are still standing. Today the property is owned by California State Parks (13.17) and is a popular place as a conference center. Julia Morgan paved the way for all women architects who followed her.



13.16 Asilomar

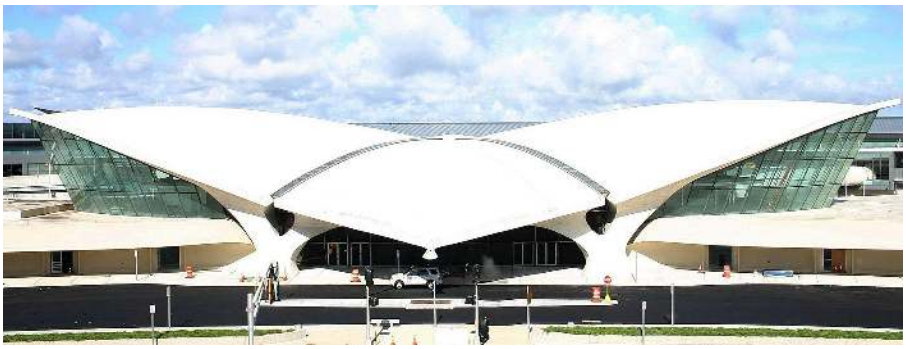


13.17 Merrill Hall *Asilomar*

Large sweeping arching curves are associated with the designs of **Eero Saarinen** (1910-1961), a Finnish American architect and industrial designer known for his neo-futuristic styles. Saarinen was the designer of the iconic Saint Louis Arch (13.18) TWA terminal at JFK Airport, New York, and the Milwaukee Art Museum. Saarinen designed the St. Louis Arch to rise from a small forest on the edge of the Mississippi River, signifying the gateway to the West. The TWA Flight Center (13.19) opened in 1962 using Saarinen's design, employing modernism and human movement originally called the grand center of flight. The design from overhead resembles a bird, TWA's logo. The 31,700 square meter Milwaukee Art Museum (13.20) was open to the public in 1957, a dynamic structure resembling winged flight.



13.18 Saint Louis Arch



13.19 TWA terminal at JFK Airport

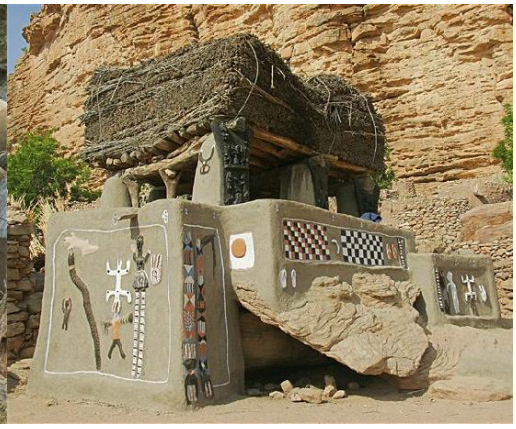


13.20 *Milwaukee Art Museum*

The **Dogon** are a group of people living on the central plateau in Mali, just south of the Niger River. The Dogon settled the area in the 13th century and still follow the religious traditions of their ancestors reflected in their dance masks, elaborate wooden sculptures, and beautiful architecture. The Dogon villages (13.21) are groups of unique mud buildings designed for different purposes. Their granaries have a distinctive pointed roof covered with woven thatch and containing the owner's possessions. There are separate granary buildings for women and men; the male granary is designed to house pearl millet and other grains while the female granary is a storage hut for personal belongings and goods for sale like woven cotton or pottery.



13.21 Dogon village



13.22 *Togu na*

Although all the villages are laid out slightly differently, the architecture of the village is based on the body of a human lying stretched out on the ground, the head oriented to the north where the togu na is located. The togu na (13.22) is a building for men and used to rest during the heat of the day and as a place to discuss affairs of the village. The roof is quite low to the ground, the low height designed to prevent fighting amongst the men during their conversations. For menstruating women, there is a house on the outside of the village the women occupy for five days and then return to their family. On the highest position in the area, stands the house of the Hogon, the village elder. Multiple structures may have carved human figures, each one with a different meaning. The support pillars or columns are tree trunks carved with human forms.



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12.11: Before You Move On (Architecture)

Key Concepts

We have seen architecture change throughout history in style, concepts, and purpose. Howev- er some aspects remain the same: its use for different purposes, expression of different types Specific in each instance to the particular patron or designer and to the purposes for the structure. Its uses for residential, commercial, communal or religious purposes, spiritual ideas, and sentiment.

This chapter allowed you to understand a broader range of methodologies in context of issues in modern art that evolved over time and with a world that became more complex. Architecture, other forms of art, has experienced great change in the designs of contrasting skyscrapers, incorporating more functionality and fluidity for the lives of modern people. Especially notable, perhaps, from our current perspective, are developments in art and architecture that occurred after World War II, when art's focus moved from Europe to New York. With the focus on the West, art changed to incorporate more freedom in technique and style as opposed to rules that governed art and structures. Artists and architects are now committed to societal issues and personal expression in art and architecture, using all aspects of society to define and explain. This new construct reflects tradition and non-tradition, gives more voice on societal issues, expresses more culture, and resonates individual expression and identity and society's aesthetic personality. Postmodern art focuses on public attention and its role in contemporary society by defining, questioning, and examining art's function, form, content aesthetics, and value.

Test Yourself

1. Describe at least three different examples of architectural work – each built for a different purpose, and discuss specific features of the work that are designed to meet certain distinctive needs.
2. Discuss two different structures built for religious use, explaining how form is related to purposes, and how the form is used by that religious group. Be specific about how it meets particular ritual or other needs of the group.
3. Select four different types of architectural structures and explain the type of architecture and the purpose of each building. Discuss characteristics of each façade, and how the façade addresses the user of the building.
4. Describe different features of temple/church structures that reflect specific beliefs about the deity/deities of the people who use it for worship. Discuss why those particular features are logical and suitable for the ways they are used.

KEY TERMS

Acropolis: "high city" – a hilltop setting such as that reserved for the temple complex in ancient Athens associated with Classical Greece, including several temples to Athena and other sacred sites and structures. The elevated location is associated with greater proximity to the gods who were believed to reside in the celestial realms.

Aesthetics: the branch of philosophy that concerns itself with the definition of beauty and with considerations of the purposes and value of art.

Aisle: one of the longitudinal divisions of a basilica building. Basilica form churches usually have either three or five aisles, the central one being called the nave.

Amphitheater: a round or oval building with tiers of seats around a central area used for performances and sport events.

Arcade: a colonnade with arched spaces between the columns.

Art Functionalists: believe that form follows function and that the value of art consists in its function or performance.

Avatar: an embodiment of a deity on earth. **Avant-garde**: new, original, and experimental.

Basilica: a building of longitudinal plan, originally designed for Roman law courts and public meetings, later adopted for Christian usage because of its suitability for accommodation of large congregations and processional ritual.

Bodhisattva: a Buddha-to-be; a being who has achieved enlightenment but has postponed Nirvana in order to help fellow seekers in their spiritual quests.

Cantilever: a long beam or other horizontal prop projecting from a wall to support a balcony, stairs, or similar structure.

Castrum: a Roman military encampment or fortress, specifically designed on a grid plan, with specific zones related to activities/uses.

Colonnade: row of columns supporting a roof or entablature.

Deity: a religion's god or goddess.

Form: the structural components of a work of art or architecture.

Forum: open public space in Roman cities that served social, commercial, religious, and political needs of the residents.

Function: the meaning or purpose a work of art.

Gallery: a balcony or upper floor of a church or hall.

Garba Griha: Literally, the "womb" or most sacred precinct in a Hindu temple -- the sanctuary.

Gothic: a late medieval (12th-14th centuries) architectural style that may include pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and flying buttress. Gothic churches have very tall structures, high interior spaces and, increasingly, the walls are filled with stained glass windows that filter mystical colored light into the interior.

Hypostyle hall: structure consisting of a "forest of columns" arranged in numerous rows that support a flat roof.

Iconography: the subject matter and/or symbolism of an artwork, including reference to religious or other narrative meaning.

Insula: an apartment building in the ancient Roman civilization.

Logo: a design used by an individual or organization to identify itself or its products.

Mandapa: an audience hall in Indian architecture, often a porch-like ante-room to a temple, but also a free-standing gathering hall.

Mausoleum: a building containing one or more tombs.

Middens: refuse heaps, often of kitchen waste, but also for other discarded materials.

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

Oculus: "eye"; an opening in an architectural structure, to let in light, located in a ceiling, a dome, or on a wall.

Peristyle: a row of columns that surrounds a space such as a courtyard.

Post-and-lintel: basic architectural means of creating an opening in a wall by placing two vertical members (posts) to either side of the opening and spanning the upper part of the space with a horizontal member.

Propaganda: biased, and sometimes misleading or hidden, information intended to influence views, beliefs, or behavior.

Qibla: a wall in an Islamic mosque that is situated so that prayer is oriented towards Mecca. **Rammed earth**: dampened earth mixed with sand, gravel, or clay that is compacted into a temporary frame to create a wall.

Sphinx: a hybrid human/animal sculpture.

Stele: an upright stone slab often serving as a grave marker or public monument.

Stoa: a covered walkway in a public area, often fronting market stalls or other commercial spaces.

Stupa: a domed, hemispherical structure that functions as a Buddhist shrine. The conception is of a burial mound, designed for ritual circumambulation.

Tympanum: the semicircular area above a doorway, often decorated with sculptural artwork, especially as noted in Romanesque and Gothic church portals.

Wattle and daub: branches intertwined with twigs and straw, then coated with a substance such as plaster or clay to create a wall.

Ziggurat: a man-made mountain, designed to be the platform for a temple, raising it closer to the heavens where the gods were believed to reside.

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