

Ancient India: An Overview

A PROJECT REPORT

18LEM110T - Indian Art Form

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CHAPTER I:

Folk Art: An Overview

ABSTRACT

This document delves into the fascinating fusion of abstract art and folk traditions, exploring how these seemingly disparate styles intersect and influence each other. Through an interdisciplinary lens, it examines the rich tapestry of cultural heritage embedded within folk art and the innovative expressions of emotion and form characteristic of abstract art . Drawing upon a diverse range of sources, including art history, anthropology, and cultural studies, this exploration seeks to unravel the complexities of this artistic intersection. It investigates how abstract artists have drawn inspiration from folk motifs, patterns, and techniques, incorporating them into non representational compositions that transcend cultural boundaries. Furthermore, this document analyzes the role of abstraction in preserving and reinterpreting folk traditions for contemporary audiences. It considers how abstract representations can evoke the essence of cultural identity and collective memory, while also allowing for individual interpretation and expression.

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Introduction

Background and Importance:

Creating Social Awareness and Educating Folk art was always a popular medium to educate raise awareness and concerns, bring about dialogue on important topics like environment, health, human rights etc thereby being a great impact on the world , making the world a better place of living. Art can communicate information, shape our everyday lives, make a social statement and be enjoyed for aesthetic beauty.

Tarrant County College reinforces Fort Worth's rich culture. Each campus offers a variety of fine art experiences for students of all majors to attend and become inspired. These opportunities include theater performances, music concerts, dance performances and visual art gallery exhibitions. Trinity River Campus is even home to a large technocentric art collection. These free resources represent an extension of the classroom and can be utilized and appreciated by the entire community.

In an informal conversation with Scott Robinson, dean of humanities at the Trinity River Campus, several Design I students were discussing the importance of art and why it is necessary in an academic environment. Through much discussion and some arguing, the group concluded that the arts are necessary to give meaning to things. The sciences provide the facts and information that give order to our world and are at the vanguard of innovation and human achievement.

Objective of the Overview:

Folk art, predominantly functional or utilitarian visual art created by hand (or with limited mechanical facilities) for use by the maker or a small circumscribed group and containing an element of retention—the prolonged survival of tradition. Folk art is the creative expression of the human struggle toward civilization within a particular environment through the production of useful but aesthetic buildings and objects.

The object is created by a *single or team of artisans*. The craft-person works within an established cultural framework. The folk art has a recognizable style and method in crafting its pieces, which allows products to be recognized and attributed to a single individual or workshop. This was originally articulated by Riegl in his study of *Volkskunst, Hausfleiss, und Hausindustrie*, published in 1894. "Riegl ... stressed that the individual hand and intentions of the artist were significant, even in folk creativity.

Each of these art forms, both tangible and intangible, typically were developed to address a practical purpose. Once the purpose has been lost or forgotten, there usually is no reason for further transmission unless the object or action has been imbued with meaning beyond its initial practicality. These artistic traditions are shaped by values and standards that are passed from generation to generation, most often within family and community, through demonstration, conversation, and practice.

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expectations to work within the norms of transmitted forms and conventions, but individual creativity – which implied personal aesthetic choices and technical virtuosity – saved received or inherited traditions from stagnating and permitted .

Folk Art And Popular Culture

India is a religious and ethnically diverse country. Indian culture is characterized by distinct languages, and rich traditions among various ethnic and religious groups. Despite hosting a hindu-majority it is difficult to attach a singular and unifying notion of identity to indian culture. This is in part due to the flexible nature of the hindu religion which allows for the aggregation of numerous regional cultures, and ethnic practices to grow and flourish. The folk and tribal arts of india express the cultural diversity of the nation and provide a window through which one can explore the rich heritage of indian culture..



Folk Art

Folk-art as a visual medium does not have a unique definition but generally consists of all forms of visual art delivered in the context of an existent society within a particular geographical and cultural niche. In this manner, folk-art caters to local tastes and needs, is reflective of the way of life and culture in a community, and provides tangible and intangible forms of art with distinctive styles and objects that stand removed from other cultural developments of their time.

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Thanjavur Art

Tanjore or Thanjavur paintings originate from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, in the city of Thanjavur, about 300 km from the state's capital city of Chennai. These paintings are essentially "religious paintings with a royal heritage" and are among the greatest traditional art forms noted worldwide.

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Madhubani Painting

Also referred to as the art of Mithila, Madhubani paintings are said to originate from the kingdom of Janaka, who was the father of Sita in the much beloved Hindu epic *Ramayana*, in Nepal and in present-day Bihar.¹¹

The paintings are produced using mineral pigments prepared by the artists and were traditionally drawn on freshly plastered mud walls. For commercial purposes, the same has now been achieved on paper, cloth, canvas, and other media.



Warli Painting

Warli is one of the oldest art forms of India and originates from the Warli tribe found on the northern outskirts of Mumbai in Western India. Despite their close proximity to one of the largest metropolitan cities in India, Warli culture is distinct in shunning all influences of modern urbanization.¹³

Warli tribal art is representative of this attitude and mainly uses geometric structures such as circles, triangles, and squares to depict daily and social events of the Warli tribe. Compared to the Madhubani

paintings, Warli art is quite simple. The paintings are often done on a red ochre or dark background, while the shapes are white in color. This color is obtained from the grounding of rice into white powder.



Pattachitra Painting

An east-Indian counterpart to the Warli as one of the oldest and most popular art forms of India, we find Pattachitra paintings from Odisha. The word Pattachitra is a combination of the Sanskrit words *patta* (canvas), and *chitra* (picture), and is basically a canvas painting.

The preparation of the canvas is among the most important aspects of a pattachitra painting. The painters, also called chitrakars, achieve this by preparing tamarind paste (by soaking tamarind seeds in water for three days). The seeds are crushed, and heated in an earthen pot to turn into a paste or niryas kalpa. The paste is used to hold two pieces of cloth together with it, and coated with a soft clay stone powder to keep it firm.



Kalamezhuthu

Kalamezhuthu specifically comprise of the tradition of drawings found at the entrances of homes and temples. This folk-art form is unique to the south Indian state of Kerala and is practiced in temples and sacred groves where the representations of Hindu deities are made on the floor. The drawings are made using natural pigments and powders of five colors (white, black, yellow, red, and green) and are done with bare hands without the use of tools.

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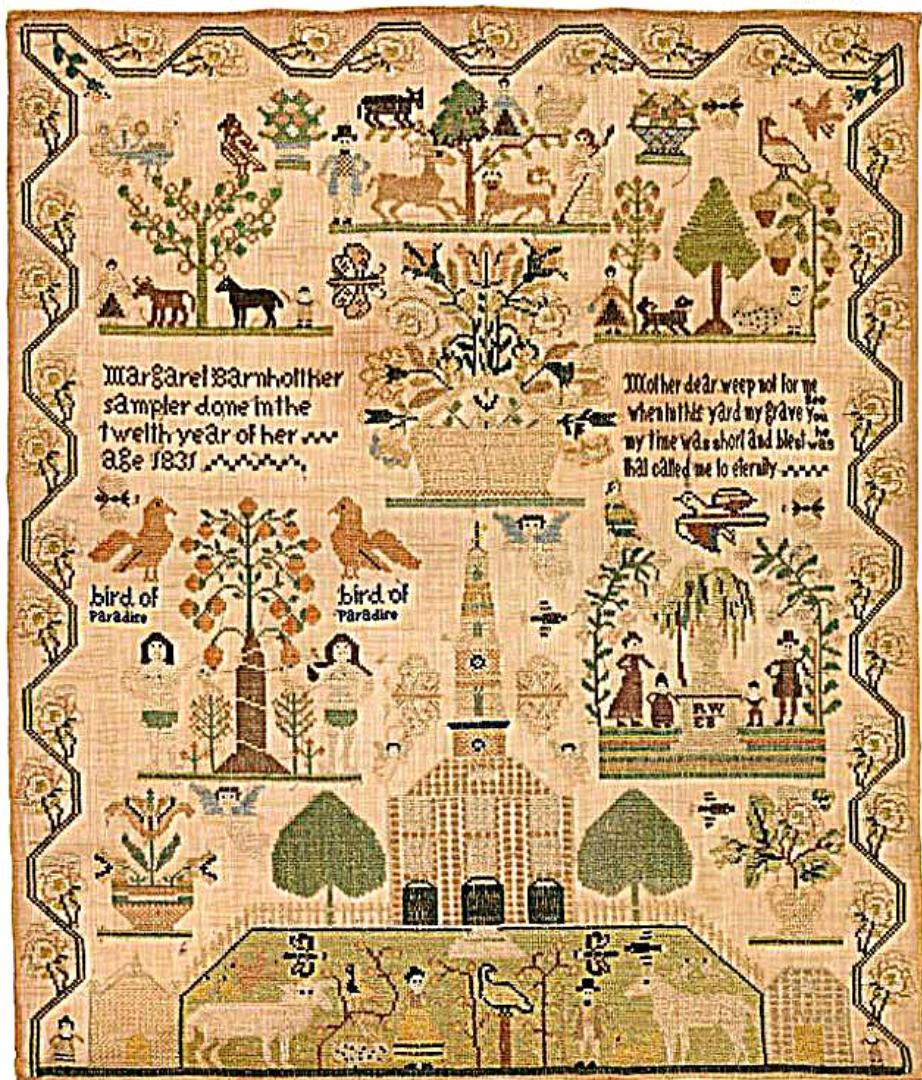


The completion of the Kalam is accompanied by the singing of ritual songs in worship of the deity that is being celebrated. The songs themselves are part of an oral tradition with the rituals being performed by the artists themselves in a folk-art form that combines tangible and intangible media. Upon completion of the rituals, the "kalam" is immediately erased.



Characteristics of folk art objects

Objects of folk art are a subset of material culture and include objects which are experienced through the senses, by seeing and touching. Typical for material culture in art, these tangible objects can be handled, repeatedly re-experienced, and sometimes broken. They are considered works of art because of the technical execution of an existing form and design; the skill might be seen in the precision of the form, the surface decoration or in the beauty of the finished product. As a folk art, these objects share several characteristics that distinguish them from other artifacts of material culture.



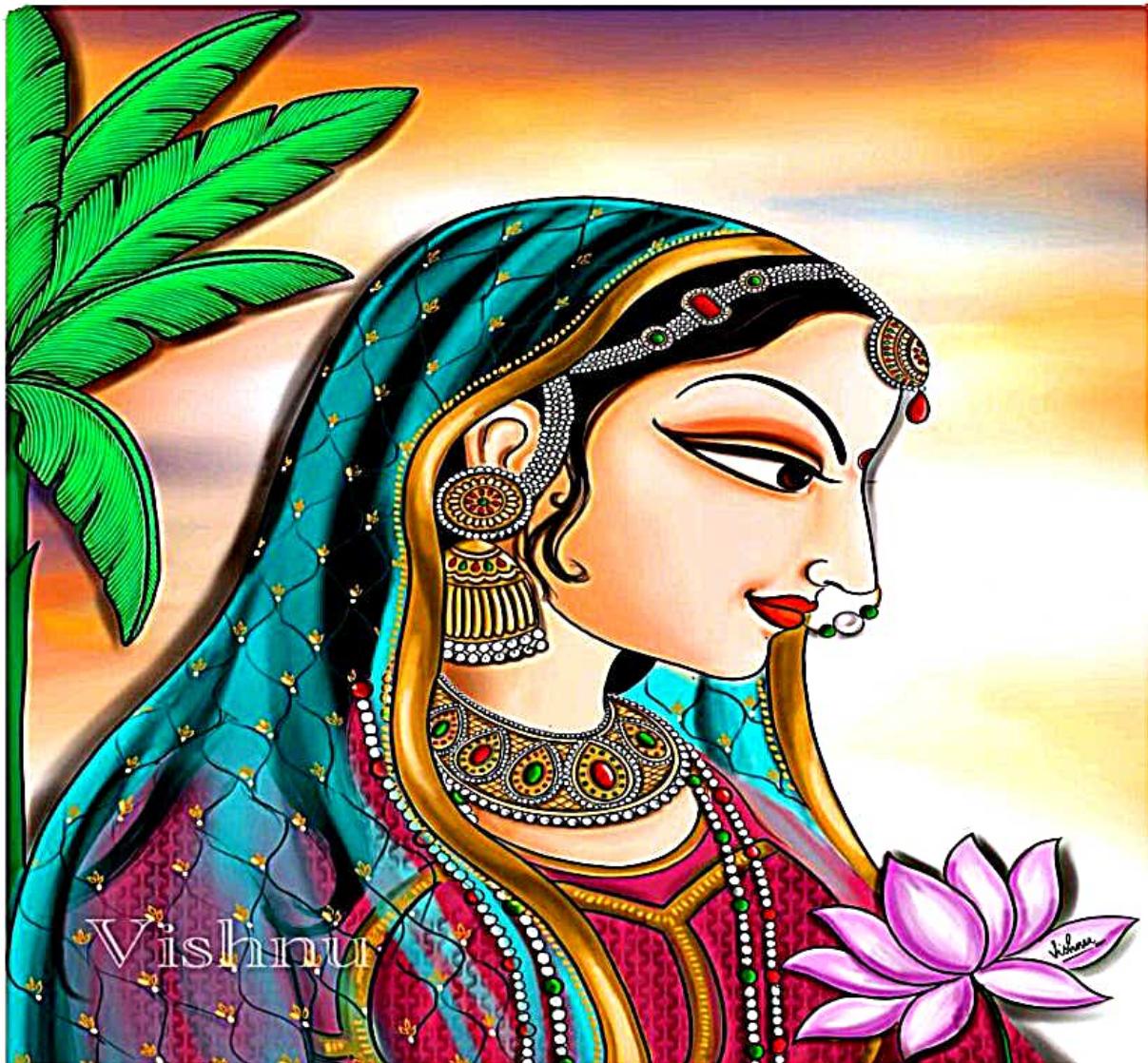
Architecture

In architecture the focus is naturally on the basic dwelling and on a simple public or religious building. One of the oldest and most remarkable dwelling forms survives in the trullo of Puglia, in Italy. A circular dry-stone structure with a tall conical roof, it is often decorated with symbolic designs splashed in white; for multiple rooms, the basic construction is simply repeated. The whitewashed stone architecture of the Greek islands, combining basic cubic forms with a variety of free shapes and inventive projections of balconies, overhangs, and exterior stairways, has been extensively studied and acclaimed by modern architects—as have the wooden churches of eastern Europe, with their delicate, needlelike wooden spires, and the wooden stave churches of Scandinavia. Other unique forms are the Alpine house, with its steep, wide-eaved roof designed for snow; the cave dwellings of Spain, some with several rooms and a constructed exterior front; the adobe house; and the log cabin. A characteristic design may evolve for such outbuildings as the granary (notably the *hórreos* of Galicia), the dovecote, the straw shepherd's hut, or the barn. In community building, the walled agricultural villages with radial pathways to surrounding fields, the fishing villages that are oriented to a harbour, and the American stockade cluster as well as the village common exemplify the close relationship of folk design to folk activities.



Painting

The idea of a picture to be hung on the wall is by no means universal in folk art. It occurs in Europe, notably as the ex-voto, or *votive offering*, hung in churches and chapels, and in America, where portraits and local scenes were executed in oil, pastel, or watercolour. More typically, the painted depictions that occur in folk art are incorporated into other objects; for example, the American clock faces *bearing* local landscapes. A feature of some folk art is the "picture" displayed as if it were painted but executed in such media as fern, cork, shells, or embroidery. Oil paints and prepared canvasses are sophisticated materials and, though sometimes available, were often replaced by house paint or chalk and by silk, linen, or cotton fabric. Painting on velvet and underglass painting emerged as specific folk types.



Sculpture

Work in wood was particularly widespread, though stone, a more difficult material, was also used, especially for gravestones and religious sculpture with its quick and bold effects, was widely adopted both in the East and West for carnival and votive figures and for a multitude of toys. The folk artist was often at his best in making small things, delighting in toys, small-scale representations of daily activities, and such oddities as ships carved inside bottles. Miniature sculptures were often skillfully executed in elaborate groups displaying a cohesive harmony; in Russia, for example, an entire herd of cattle was mounted on a jointed trellis designed to provide a scissorlike movement to the whole.



Conclusion

This conclusion identifies five main points that emerge from the empirical chapters. First, there are multidirectional relationships between the festival, rebellion and folk culture. Second, the case studies reveal a wide spectrum of inherited cultural repertoires, which lead to the use of unconventional repertoires within modern-day politics. Third, social actors turn to these protest repertoires because they believe them to be effective: an appeal to the cultural codes of 'the people' gives legitimacy to the leaders of any attempt at mobilization. Fourth, over and

above the construction of legitimacy, campaigners operate a selective and tactical use of the repertoires inherited from folk culture. The fifth and final point is that it is far from the case that the use of repertoires inherited from folk culture has been monopolized by one particular political bloc.

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CHAPTER II:

Influential Factors Giving Rise To Modern Art

Concepts And Motifs Behind Modern Art

The Development of Modern art

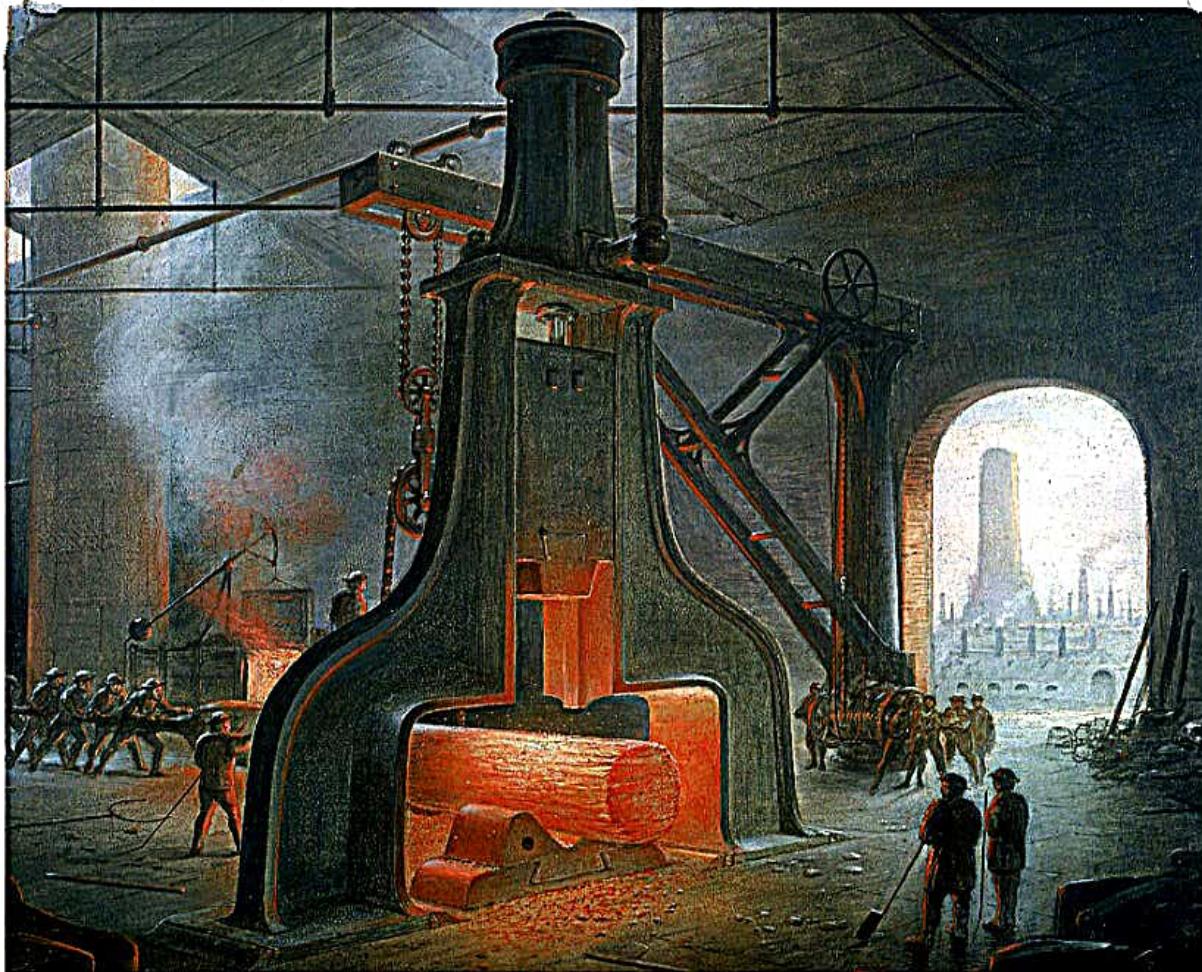
Modern art includes artistic work produced during the period extending roughly from the 1860s to the 1970s, and denotes the styles and philosophies of the art produced during that era. The term is usually associated with art in which the traditions of the past have been thrown aside in a spirit of experimentation. Modern artists experimented with new ways of seeing and with fresh ideas about the nature of materials and functions of art. A tendency away from the narrative, which was characteristic of the traditional arts, toward abstraction is characteristic of much modern art. More recent artistic production is often called contemporary art or postmodern art.



Industrialization

Thus was its beginning, understood as a period of major and significant technological, socio-economic and social changes collectively. With the advances obtained from the creation of the multi-bovine spinning machine, which greatly optimized textile production, added to the great leap in commerce with the invention of the steam engine, which promoted the improvement of transportation routes, the technology of mass production and distribution began, almost completely replacing manual labor.

Many paths were opened to art and architecture, but all of them can be summarized in one: the freedom of creation. **The influence of the industrial revolution in art** had its continuity in artistic expression. Since then, and even today, art continues in the same direction.



Now, how does art and architecture behave in the face of such a drastic change? How does the demand for technology and mass production affect the handcrafted creation of unique pieces? What is the collective perception towards the individually produced in comparison to mass production? These are some of the many questions that arise in the face of such a radical transformation; which are developed first in the initial reluctance that provoked the arrival of massive technological innovations in the artistic groups of the same period.

Technological Advance

Modern art has been transformed by technology, which has also encouraged new forms of artistic expression. Artists can create complex designs using digital tools, such as algorithmically generated masterpieces or 3D-printed sculptures. Social media

platforms democratize exposure by acting as global canvases. With their immersive experiences, augmented and virtual reality alter viewer engagement. Traditional authorship is challenged when artists engage with artificial intelligence. Beyond geographical limitations, the exhibition space is extended through online galleries. Interactivity is added to installations through smart materials and sensors. Technology breaks down barriers, allowing artists to work in hitherto uncharted territories, reinvent established media, and establish connections with a wide range of viewers in the ever-evolving field of contemporary art.



World War

Throughout history, most representations of war depict military achievements and often show significant battle scenes. However, in the 19th century a “turn” in the visual representation of war became noticeable. Artists started to show the disastrous aspects of war, instead of its glorified events and protagonists. Such a perspective is best exemplified by Francisco Goya's series, *The Disasters of War* (1810-1820, first published in 1863), and Otto Dix's portfolio, *Der Krieg* (published in 1924).

During World War II, the relations between art and war can be articulated around two main issues. First, art (and, more generally, culture) found itself at the centre of an ideological war. Second, during World War II, many artists found themselves in the most difficult conditions (in an occupied country, in internment camps, in death camps) and their works are a testimony to a powerful

"urge to create." Such creative impulse can be interpreted as the expression of self-preservation, a survival instinct in critical times.





Expressionism

Expressionism is a modernist movement, initially in poetry and painting, originating in Northern Europe around the beginning of the 20th century. Its typical trait is to present the world solely from a subjective perspective, distorting it radically for emotional effect in order to evoke moods or ideas. Expressionist artists have sought to express the meaning of emotional experience rather than physical reality.



Cubism

Cubism is an early-20th-century avant-garde art movement that revolutionized European painting and sculpture, and inspired related artistic movements in music, literature, and architecture. In Cubist works of art, the subjects are analyzed, broken up, and reassembled in an abstract form—instead of depicting objects from a single perspective, the artist depicts the subject from multiple perspectives to represent the subject in a greater context.

Cubism has been considered the most influential art movement of the 20th century. The term *cubism* is broadly associated with a variety of artworks produced in Paris (Montmartre and Montparnasse) or near Paris (Puteaux) during the 1910s and throughout the 1920s.





Conclusion

The emergence of modern art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a profound response to the sweeping changes reshaping society. Industrialization and urbanization transformed the landscape, as cities burgeoned and technology advanced at an unprecedented pace. Artists, confronted with the stark realities of urban life and the mechanization of society, sought to capture the essence of this new world through their work. They grappled with themes of alienation, fragmentation, and the human experience in an increasingly impersonal and industrialized environment. Moreover, technological innovations like photography and film challenged traditional artistic conventions, prompting artists to explore new ways of seeing and representing reality. These technological advancements not only influenced artistic techniques but also facilitated the dissemination of new artistic ideas and movements on a global scale, contributing to the diversification and internationalization of modern art. As artists engaged with the social, political, and philosophical currents of their time, they forged new paths of expression, giving rise to a rich tapestry of styles and movements that continue to captivate and inspire audiences today.

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