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Impact of the Arts

When we learn about art or try to understand it, we are learning about different perspectives than our own. Art is educational, and the art we learn the most from is the art that we understand the least. It requires us to ask questions and challenge our ways of thinking. For example, many of us in western society, especially at BYU, are very familiar with and fond of Christian artworks. Works such as da Vinci's *The Last Supper* or Michelangelo's *The Last Judgement* are traditionally beloved artworks – due to their incredible technique if not their divine subject matter. And while these works are certainly masterpieces and incredibly culturally valuable, they don't ask the same difficult questions as works by Marcel Duchamp or Judy Chicago about what our society values and why.

Art reveals the values of its society. When we learn about art from the past, we learn from a culture that we can never experience. This requires us to understand and sympathize with people we can never know or really understand. Additionally, learning about different cultures expands our worldview, making us more open-minded and receptive to points-of-view that may differ from our own. The artist's experience often shapes their artwork, thus revealing their perspective or values.

I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to learn from artists during this class. Learning from and appreciating art is not always easy – it's something that more people should learn how to do. Learning from the differing perspectives and stories presented by art of today and throughout history has deepened my appreciation for other cultures and my capability to be challenged. I will continue to nurture my love of learning and my love of art by visiting museums and supporting the performing arts. It is such an enriching thing and adds so much value to my life everyday.