

# *Philosophy of Art*

*taste, value and aesthetic judgement*



Rembrandt: "Anatomy Lesson", 1632

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# *Philosophical questions about art*



*What is art anyway? All cultures have some form of artistic production but what is its function? Philosophers seek a theoretical understanding of art.*



*Are some art works better than others, or is the value of art strictly a matter of personal taste? Philosophers are interested in exploring the nature and validity of aesthetic judgment.*



*What is the nature of creativity in the arts? What's the relation between novelty and tradition, individuality and collaboration in the arts?*

## *Art as Representation*

Art is first of all a representation -- it captures some aspect of the artist's experience of reality and presents it in a particular medium.

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*What do we represent in art and why do we do this?*

## *Art as Representation*



Lascaux caves, prehistory

The oldest surviving art dates back more than 20,000 years. The caves of Lascaux, France are filled with depictions of animals and their human hunters.

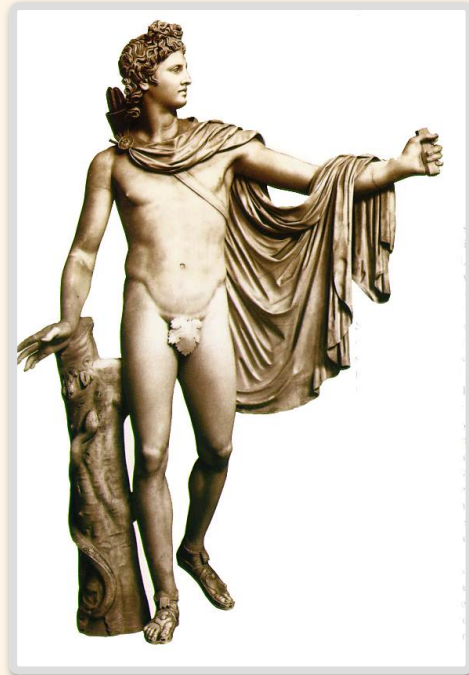
## *Art as Representation*



Lascaux caves, prehistory

These representations seem to have had a ritual function, depicting human needs and desires as much as they depicted elements of the world of the artists.

## *Art as Representation*



Apollo of Belvedere, 3rd century BCE

The Ancient Greeks depicted their gods in idealized human form, representing their vision of both divine and human perfection.



## *Art as Representation*



Caryatids: Temple of Athena in Athens, 5th century BCE

Even the structural elements of architecture were used as ways of representing the humanistic ideals of ancient Athens.

## *Art as Representation*



Roman mosaic from Pompeii: "Plato's Academy", 1st century

The Romans decorated their houses and palaces with depictions of Greek philosophers and heroes. This is ironic since Plato thought of art as a distraction from the quest for the truth about things.



## *Art as Representation*



Raphael: The School of Athens, 1511

Artists of the Renaissance adopted the humanistic ideals of Greece and sought to represent them directly and realistically.

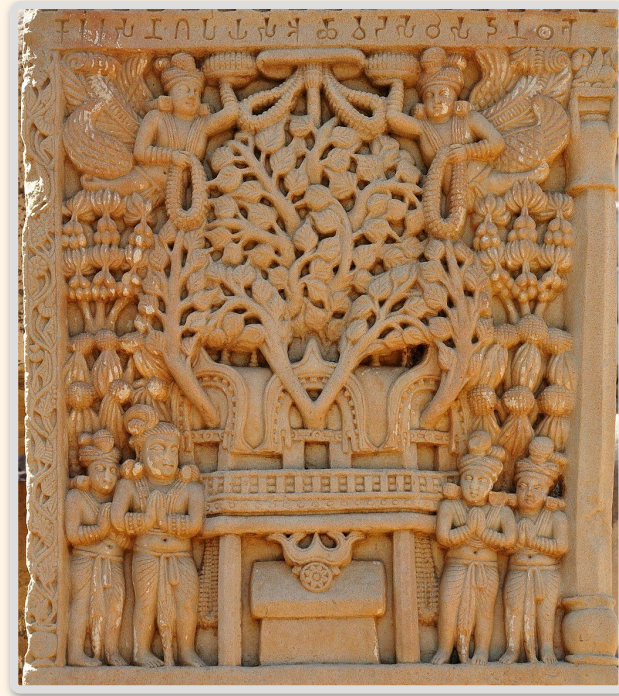
## *Art as Representation*



Giotto: "The Lamentation", 1305

Artistic representation of religious stories and themes played a major role in religious devotion, especially in Catholicism.

## *Art as Representation*



Temple at Bodhi Gaya, 3rd century BCE

Early Buddhism intentionally omitted representations of the Buddha -- the founder of the tradition, but instead depicted the location of important events.



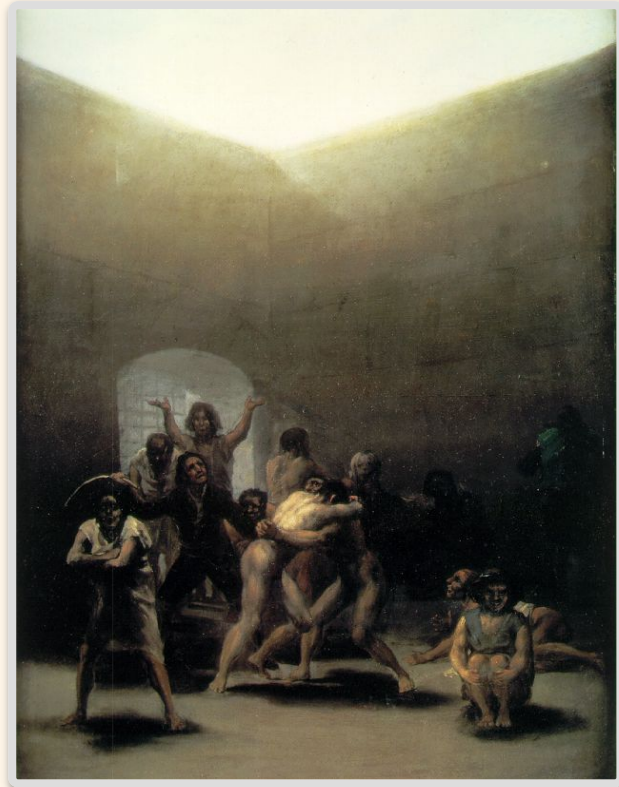
## *Art as Representation*



Japanese Buddhist sculptures, Kyoto

That changed of course and Buddhism is known for its countless depictions of the Buddha seated in meditation.

## *Art as Representation*



Francisco Goya: "The Lunatic Asylum", 1813

Some artists have used the representational power of art to show us things we wouldn't otherwise see.



## *Art as Representation*



Francisco Goya: "The 3rd of May 1808", 1814

Francisco Goya

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