[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-semi-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-indef) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [thumb|upright=1.5|Clockwise from upper left: a](/wiki/File:Art-portrait-collage_2.jpg) [self-portrait](/wiki/Self-portrait) by [Vincent van Gogh](/wiki/Vincent_van_Gogh); a female ancestor figure by a [Chokwe](/wiki/Chokwe_people) artist; detail from [*The Birth of Venus*](/wiki/The_Birth_of_Venus) by [Sandro Botticelli](/wiki/Sandro_Botticelli); and an Okinawan [Shisa lion](/wiki/Shisa).

**Art** is a diverse range of [human activities](/wiki/Human_behavior) in creating visual, auditory or performing artifacts ([artworks](/wiki/Artworks)), expressing the author's [imaginative](/wiki/Imagination) or technical skill, intended to be appreciated for their beauty or emotional power.<ref name=OD>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=MW>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In their most general form these activities include the production of works of art, the criticism of art, the study of the history of art, and the aesthetic dissemination of art.

The oldest documented forms of art are [visual arts](/wiki/Visual_arts), which include creation of images or objects in fields including painting, sculpture, [printmaking](/wiki/Printmaking), photography, and other visual media. Architecture is often included as one of the visual arts; however, like the [decorative arts](/wiki/Decorative_arts), or advertising,[[1]](#cite_note-1) it involves the creation of objects where the practical considerations of use are essential—in a way that they usually are not in a painting, for example. Music, theatre, film, dance, and other [performing arts](/wiki/Performing_arts), as well as literature and other media such as [interactive media](/wiki/Interactive_media), are included in a broader definition of art or [the arts](/wiki/The_arts).<ref name=OD/>[[2]](#cite_note-2) Until the 17th century, *art* referred to any skill or mastery and was not differentiated from [crafts](/wiki/Craft) or [sciences](/wiki/Sciences). In modern usage after the 17th century, where aesthetic considerations are paramount, the fine arts are separated and distinguished from acquired skills in general, such as the decorative or [applied arts](/wiki/Applied_arts).

Art may be characterized in terms of [mimesis](/wiki/Mimesis) (its representation of reality), expression, communication of emotion, or other qualities. During the [Romantic period](/wiki/Romanticism), art came to be seen as "a special faculty of the human mind to be classified with religion and science".[[3]](#cite_note-3) Though the definition of what constitutes art is disputed[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) and has changed over time, general descriptions mention an idea of imaginative or technical skill stemming from [human agency](/wiki/Agency_(philosophy))[[7]](#cite_note-7) and creation.[[8]](#cite_note-8) The nature of art, and related concepts such as [creativity](/wiki/Creativity) and interpretation, are explored in a branch of philosophy known as [aesthetics](/wiki/Aesthetics).[[9]](#cite_note-9)

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## Creative art and fine art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Wide image](/wiki/Template:Wide_image)

In the perspective of the history of art,[[8]](#cite_note-8) artistic works have existed for almost as long as humankind: from early [pre-historic art](/wiki/Pre-historic_art) to [contemporary art](/wiki/Contemporary_art); however, some theories restrict the concept of "artistic works" to modern Western societies.[[10]](#cite_note-10) One early sense of the definition of *art* is closely related to the older Latin meaning, which roughly translates to "skill" or "craft," as associated with words such as "artisan." English words derived from this meaning include *artifact*, *artificial*, *artifice*, *medical arts*, and *military arts*. However, there are many other colloquial uses of the word, all with some relation to its [etymology](/wiki/Etymology). [thumb|upright|20th-century Rwandan bottle. Artistic works may serve practical functions, in addition to their decorative value.](/wiki/File:Teke_bottle.JPG)

Few modern scholars have been more divided than Plato and Aristotle on the question concerning the importance of art, with Aristotle strongly supporting art in general and Plato generally being opposed to its relative importance. Several dialogues in Plato tackle questions about art: Socrates says that poetry is inspired by the [muses](/wiki/Muses), and is not rational. He speaks approvingly of this, and other forms of divine madness (drunkenness, eroticism, and dreaming) in the [*Phaedrus*](/wiki/Phaedrus_(Plato))(265a–c), and yet in the [*Republic*](/wiki/Republic_(Plato)) wants to outlaw Homer's great poetic art, and laughter as well. In [*Ion*](/wiki/Ion_(dialogue)), Socrates gives no hint of the disapproval of Homer that he expresses in the *Republic*. The dialogue *Ion* suggests that [Homer's](/wiki/Homer) [*Iliad*](/wiki/Iliad) functioned in the ancient Greek world as the Bible does today in the modern Christian world: as divinely inspired literary art that can provide moral guidance, if only it can be properly interpreted. With regards to the literary art and the musical arts, Aristotle considered [epic poetry](/wiki/Epic_poetry), tragedy, comedy, [dithyrambic poetry](/wiki/Dithyramb) and music to be [mimetic](/wiki/Mimesis) or imitative art, each varying in imitation by medium, object, and manner.[[11]](#cite_note-11) For example, music imitates with the media of rhythm and harmony, whereas dance imitates with rhythm alone, and poetry with language. The forms also differ in their object of imitation. Comedy, for instance, is a dramatic imitation of men worse than average; whereas tragedy imitates men slightly better than average. Lastly, the forms differ in their manner of imitation—through narrative or character, through change or no change, and through drama or no drama.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Aristotle believed that imitation is natural to mankind and constitutes one of mankind's advantages over animals.[[13]](#cite_note-13) The second, and more recent, sense of the word *art* as an abbreviation for *creative art* or *fine art* emerged in the early 17th century.[[14]](#cite_note-14) Fine art refers to a skill used to express the artist's creativity, or to engage the audience's aesthetic sensibilities, or to draw the audience towards consideration of more refined or *finer* work of art.

Within this latter sense, the word *art* may refer to several things: (i) a study of a creative skill, (ii) a process of using the creative skill, (iii) a product of the creative skill, or (iv) the audience's experience with the creative skill. The creative arts (*art* as discipline) are a collection of disciplines which produce *artworks* (*art* as objects) that are compelled by a personal drive (art as activity) and convey a message, mood, or symbolism for the perceiver to interpret (art as experience). Art is something that stimulates an individual's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, or ideas through the senses. Works of art can be explicitly made for this purpose or interpreted on the basis of images or objects. For some scholars, such as [Kant](/wiki/Kant), the sciences and the arts could be distinguished by taking science as representing the domain of knowledge and the arts as representing the domain of the freedom of artistic expression.

Often, if the skill is being used in a common or practical way, people will consider it a craft instead of art. Likewise, if the skill is being used in a commercial or industrial way, it may be considered [commercial art](/wiki/Commercial_art) instead of fine art. On the other hand, crafts and design are sometimes considered [applied art](/wiki/Applied_art). Some art followers have argued that the difference between fine art and applied art has more to do with value judgments made about the art than any clear definitional difference.[[15]](#cite_note-15) However, even fine art often has goals beyond pure creativity and self-expression. The purpose of works of art may be to communicate ideas, such as in politically, spiritually, or philosophically motivated art; to create a sense of beauty (see [aesthetics](/wiki/Aesthetics)); to explore the nature of perception; for pleasure; or to generate strong [emotions](/wiki/Emotion). The purpose may also be seemingly nonexistent.

The nature of art has been described by philosopher [Richard Wollheim](/wiki/Richard_Wollheim) as "one of the most elusive of the traditional problems of human culture".[[16]](#cite_note-16) Art has been defined as a vehicle for the expression or communication of emotions and ideas, a means for exploring and appreciating [formal elements](/wiki/Formalism_(art)) for their own sake, and as [*mimesis*](/wiki/Mimesis) or [representation](/wiki/Representation_(arts)). Art as mimesis has deep roots in the philosophy of [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle).<ref name=Levinson5/> [Leo Tolstoy](/wiki/Leo_Tolstoy) identified art as a use of indirect means to communicate from one person to another.<ref name=Levinson5>Jerrold Levinson, *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p5. ISBN 0-19-927945-4</ref> [Benedetto Croce](/wiki/Benedetto_Croce) and [R.G. Collingwood](/wiki/R.G._Collingwood) advanced the [idealist](/wiki/Idealism) view that art expresses emotions, and that the work of art therefore essentially exists in the mind of the creator.[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[18]](#cite_note-18) The theory of art as form has its roots in the philosophy of [Immanuel Kant](/wiki/Immanuel_Kant), and was developed in the early twentieth century by [Roger Fry](/wiki/Roger_Fry) and [Clive Bell](/wiki/Clive_Bell). More recently, thinkers influenced by [Martin Heidegger](/wiki/Martin_Heidegger) have interpreted art as the means by which a community develops for itself a medium for self-expression and interpretation.[[19]](#cite_note-19) [George Dickie](/wiki/George_Dickie_(philosopher)) has offered an [institutional theory of art](/wiki/Institutional_theory_of_art) that defines a work of art as any artifact upon which a qualified person or persons acting on behalf of the social institution commonly referred to as "the [art world](/wiki/Art_world)" has conferred "the status of candidate for appreciation".[[20]](#cite_note-20) Larry Shiner has described fine art as "not an essence or a fate but something we have made. Art as we have generally understood it is a European invention barely two hundred years old."[[21]](#cite_note-21)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|left|](/wiki/File:Venus_of_Willendorf_frontview_retouched_2.jpg)[Venus of Willendorf](/wiki/Venus_of_Willendorf), *circa* 24,000–22,000 [BP](/wiki/Before_Present)

Sculptures, [cave paintings](/wiki/Cave_paintings), rock paintings and [petroglyphs](/wiki/Petroglyphs) from the [Upper Paleolithic](/wiki/Upper_Paleolithic) dating to roughly 40,000 years ago have been found,[[22]](#cite_note-22) but the precise meaning of such art is often disputed because so little is known about the cultures that produced them. The oldest art objects in the world—a series of tiny, drilled snail shells about 75,000 years old—were discovered in a South African cave.[[23]](#cite_note-23) Containers that may have been used to hold paints have been found dating as far back as 100,000 years.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Etched shells by [*Homo erectus*](/wiki/Homo_erectus) from 430,000 and 540,000 years ago were discovered in 2014.[[25]](#cite_note-25) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:lascaux2.jpg)[Cave painting](/wiki/Cave_painting) of a horse from the [Lascaux](/wiki/Lascaux) caves, *circa* 16,000 BP

Many great traditions in art have a foundation in the art of one of the great ancient civilizations: [Ancient Egypt](/wiki/Ancient_Egypt), [Mesopotamia](/wiki/Mesopotamia), [Persia](/wiki/History_of_Iran), India, China, Ancient Greece, Rome, as well as [Inca](/wiki/Inca), [Maya](/wiki/Maya_civilization), and [Olmec](/wiki/Olmec). Each of these centers of early civilization developed a unique and characteristic style in its art. Because of the size and duration of these civilizations, more of their art works have survived and more of their influence has been transmitted to other cultures and later times. Some also have provided the first records of how artists worked. For example, this period of Greek art saw a veneration of the human physical form and the development of equivalent skills to show musculature, poise, beauty, and anatomically correct proportions.

In [Byzantine](/wiki/Byzantine_art) and [Medieval art](/wiki/Medieval_art) of the Western Middle Ages, much art focused on the expression of subjects about Biblical and religious culture, and used styles that showed the higher glory of a heavenly world, such as the use of gold in the background of paintings, or glass in mosaics or windows, which also presented figures in idealized, patterned (flat) forms. Nevertheless, a classical realist tradition persisted in small Byzantine works, and realism steadily grew in the art of Catholic Europe.

[Renaissance art](/wiki/Renaissance_art) had a greatly increased emphasis on the realistic depiction of the material world, and the place of humans in it, reflected in the corporeality of the human body, and development of a systematic method of [graphical perspective](/wiki/Graphical_perspective) to depict recession in a three-dimensional picture space. [right|thumb|The stylized signature of](/wiki/File:Tugra_Mahmuds_II.gif) [Sultan](/wiki/Sultan) [Mahmud II](/wiki/Mahmud_II) of the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) was written in [Islamic calligraphy](/wiki/Islamic_calligraphy). It reads *Mahmud Khan son of Abdulhamid is forever victorious*. [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Great_Mosque_of_Kairouan_Panorama_-_Grande_Mosquée_de_Kairouan_Panorama.jpg) [Great Mosque of Kairouan](/wiki/Mosque_of_Uqba) in Tunisia, also called the Mosque of Uqba, is one of the finest, most significant and best preserved artistic and architectural examples of early great mosques. Dated in its present state from the 9th century, it is the ancestor and model of all the mosques in the western Islamic lands.[[26]](#cite_note-26)

In the east, [Islamic art's](/wiki/Islamic_art) rejection of [iconography](/wiki/Iconography) led to emphasis on geometric patterns, [calligraphy](/wiki/Islamic_calligraphy), and [architecture](/wiki/Islamic_architecture). Further east, religion dominated artistic styles and forms too. India and Tibet saw emphasis on painted sculptures and dance, while religious painting borrowed many conventions from sculpture and tended to bright contrasting colors with emphasis on outlines. China saw the flourishing of many art forms: jade carving, bronzework, pottery (including the stunning [terracotta army](/wiki/Terracotta_army) of Emperor Qin), poetry, calligraphy, music, painting, drama, fiction, etc. Chinese styles vary greatly from era to era and each one is traditionally named after the ruling dynasty. So, for example, [Tang dynasty](/wiki/Tang_dynasty) paintings are monochromatic and sparse, emphasizing idealized landscapes, but [Ming Dynasty](/wiki/Ming_Dynasty) paintings are busy and colorful, and focus on telling stories via setting and composition. Japan names its styles after imperial dynasties too, and also saw much interplay between the styles of calligraphy and painting. [Woodblock printing](/wiki/Woodblock_printing) became important in Japan after the 17th century.

[thumb|left|Painting by](/wiki/File:Ma_Lin_Guests.jpg) [Song dynasty](/wiki/Song_dynasty) artist Ma Lin, *circa* 1250. 24.8 × 25.2 cm

The western [Age of Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) in the 18th century saw artistic depictions of physical and rational certainties of the clockwork universe, as well as politically revolutionary visions of a post-monarchist world, such as [Blake's](/wiki/William_Blake) portrayal of Newton as a divine geometer, or [David's](/wiki/Jacques-Louis_David) propagandistic paintings. This led to [Romantic](/wiki/Romanticism) rejections of this in favor of pictures of the emotional side and individuality of humans, exemplified in the novels of [Goethe](/wiki/Goethe). The late 19th century then saw a host of artistic movements, such as [academic art](/wiki/Academic_art), [Symbolism](/wiki/Symbolism_(arts)), [impressionism](/wiki/Impressionism) and [fauvism](/wiki/Fauvism) among others.

The history of twentieth-century art is a narrative of endless possibilities and the search for new standards, each being torn down in succession by the next. Thus the parameters of [Impressionism](/wiki/Impressionism), [Expressionism](/wiki/Expressionism), [Fauvism](/wiki/Fauvism), [Cubism](/wiki/Cubism), [Dadaism](/wiki/Dadaism), [Surrealism](/wiki/Surrealism), etc. cannot be maintained very much beyond the time of their invention. Increasing [global](/wiki/Globalization) interaction during this time saw an equivalent influence of other cultures into Western art. Thus, Japanese woodblock prints (themselves influenced by Western Renaissance draftsmanship) had an immense influence on Impressionism and subsequent development. Later, [African sculptures](/wiki/African_art) were taken up by Picasso and to some extent by [Matisse](/wiki/Matisse). Similarly, in the 19th and 20th centuries the West has had huge impacts on Eastern art with originally western ideas like [Communism](/wiki/Communism) and [Post-Modernism](/wiki/Post-Modernism) exerting a powerful influence.

[Modernism](/wiki/Modernism), the idealistic search for truth, gave way in the latter half of the 20th century to a realization of its unattainability. [Theodor W. Adorno](/wiki/Theodor_W._Adorno) said in 1970, "It is now taken for granted that nothing which concerns art can be taken for granted any more: neither art itself, nor art in relationship to the whole, nor even the right of art to exist."[[27]](#cite_note-27) [Relativism](/wiki/Relativism) was accepted as an unavoidable truth, which led to the period of [contemporary art](/wiki/Contemporary_art) and [postmodern criticism](/wiki/List_of_postmodern_critics), where cultures of the world and of history are seen as changing forms, which can be appreciated and drawn from only with [skepticism](/wiki/Skepticism) and irony. Furthermore, the separation of cultures is increasingly blurred and some argue it is now more appropriate to think in terms of a global culture, rather than of regional ones.

## Forms, genres, media, and styles[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Detail of](/wiki/File:MonaLisa_sfumato.jpeg) [Leonardo da Vinci's](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci) [Mona Lisa](/wiki/Mona_Lisa), showing the painting technique of [*sfumato*](/wiki/Sfumato) The creative arts are often divided into more specific categories, each related to its technique, or [medium](/wiki/Media_(arts)), such as [decorative arts](/wiki/Decorative_art), [plastic arts](/wiki/Plastic_arts), [performing arts](/wiki/Performing_arts), or literature. Unlike scientific fields, art is one of the few subjects that are academically organized according to technique. An artistic [medium](/wiki/Recording_medium) is the substance or material the artistic work is made from, and may also refer to the technique used. For example, paint is a medium used in painting, and paper is a medium used in drawing.

An ***art form*** is the specific *shape*, or quality an artistic expression takes. The media used often influence the form. For example, the [form](/wiki/Shape) of a sculpture must exist in space in three dimensions, and respond to gravity. The constraints and limitations of a particular medium are thus called its ***formal qualities***. To give another example, the formal qualities of painting are the canvas texture, color, and brush texture. The formal qualities of video games are non-linearity, interactivity and virtual presence. The *form* of a particular work of art is determined by the formal qualities of the media, and is not related to the intentions of the artist or the reactions of the audience in any way whatsoever as these properties are related to content rather than form.<ref name=SaylorIntroPDF>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

A ***genre*** is a set of conventions and styles within a particular medium. For instance, well recognized genres in film are [western](/wiki/Western_(genre)), [horror](/wiki/Horror_(genre)) and [romantic comedy](/wiki/Romantic_comedy_film). Genres in music include [death metal](/wiki/Death_metal) and [trip hop](/wiki/Trip_hop). Genres in painting include [still life](/wiki/Still_life) and [pastoral landscape](/wiki/Landscape_art). A particular work of art may bend or combine genres but each genre has a recognizable group of conventions, clichés and tropes. (One note: the word *genre* has a second older meaning within painting; [*genre painting*](/wiki/Genre_painting) was a phrase used in the 17th to 19th centuries to refer specifically to paintings of scenes of everyday life and is still used in this way.)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Great_Wave_off_Kanagawa2.jpg)[The Great Wave off Kanagawa](/wiki/The_Great_Wave_off_Kanagawa) by [Hokusai](/wiki/Hokusai) (Japanese, 1760–1849), colored woodcut print

The ***style*** of an artwork, artist, or movement is the distinctive method and form followed by the respective art. Any loose brushy, dripped or poured abstract painting is called *expressionistic*. Often a style is linked with a particular historical period, set of ideas, and particular artistic movement. So [Jackson Pollock](/wiki/Jackson_Pollock) is called an [Abstract Expressionist](/wiki/Abstract_Expressionist).

A particular style may have specific cultural meanings. For example, [Roy Lichtenstein](/wiki/Roy_Lichtenstein)—a painter associated with the American [Pop art](/wiki/Pop_art) movement of the 1960s—was not a [pointillist](/wiki/Pointillism), despite his use of dots. Lichtenstein used evenly spaced [Ben-Day dots](/wiki/Ben-Day_dots) (the type used to reproduce color in comic strips) as a style to question the "high" art of painting with the "low" art of comics, thus commenting on class distinctions in culture. Pointillism, a technique in late Impressionism (1880s) developed especially by the artist [Georges Seurat](/wiki/Georges_Seurat), employs dots to create variation in color and depth in an attempt to approximate the way people really see color. Both artists use dots, but the particular style and technique relate to the artistic movement adopted by each artist.

These are all ways of beginning to define a work of art, to narrow it down. [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Skill and craft[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Michelangelo,_Creation_of_Adam_03.jpg)[Adam](/wiki/Adam). Detail from [Michelangelo's](/wiki/Michelangelo) fresco in the [Sistine Chapel](/wiki/Sistine_Chapel) (1511)

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Art can connote a sense of trained ability or mastery of a [medium](/wiki/Media_(arts)). Art can also simply refer to the developed and efficient use of a [language](/wiki/Language) to convey meaning with immediacy and or depth. Art is an act of expressing feelings, thoughts, and observations.[[28]](#cite_note-28)There is an understanding that is reached with the material as a result of handling it, which facilitates one's thought processes. A common view is that the [epithet](/wiki/Wikt:epithet) "art", particular in its elevated sense, requires a certain level of creative expertise by the artist, whether this be a demonstration of technical ability, an originality in stylistic approach, or a combination of these two. Traditionally skill of execution was viewed as a quality inseparable from art and thus necessary for its success; for [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci), art, neither more nor less than his other endeavors, was a manifestation of skill. [Rembrandt's](/wiki/Rembrandt) work, now praised for its ephemeral virtues, was most admired by his contemporaries for its virtuosity. At the turn of the 20th century, the adroit performances of [John Singer Sargent](/wiki/John_Singer_Sargent) were alternately admired and viewed with skepticism for their manual fluency, yet at nearly the same time the artist who would become the era's most recognized and peripatetic iconoclast, [Pablo Picasso](/wiki/Pablo_Picasso), was completing a traditional academic training at which he excelled.

A common contemporary criticism of some [modern art](/wiki/Modern_art) occurs along the lines of objecting to the apparent lack of skill or ability required in the production of the artistic object. In conceptual art, [Marcel Duchamp's](/wiki/Marcel_Duchamp) "[Fountain](/wiki/Fountain_(Duchamp))" is among the first examples of pieces wherein the artist used found objects ("ready-made") and exercised no traditionally recognised set of skills. [Tracey Emin's](/wiki/Tracey_Emin) *My Bed*, or [Damien Hirst's](/wiki/Damien_Hirst) *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* follow this example and also manipulate the mass media. Emin slept (and engaged in other activities) in her bed before placing the result in a gallery as work of art. Hirst came up with the conceptual design for the artwork but has left most of the eventual creation of many works to employed artisans. Hirst's celebrity is founded entirely on his ability to produce shocking concepts. The actual production in many conceptual and contemporary works of art is a matter of assembly of found objects. However, there are many modernist and contemporary artists who continue to excel in the skills of drawing and painting and in creating *hands-on* works of art.

## Purpose of art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|right|A](/wiki/File:Transition_1880.jpg) [Navajo rug](/wiki/Navajo_rug) made *circa* 1880 [thumb|](/wiki/File:B_Escorial_93v.jpg)[Mozarabic](/wiki/Mozarabic_art) [Beatus](/wiki/Commentary_on_the_Apocalypse) [miniature](/wiki/Miniature_(illuminated_manuscript)). Spain, late 10th century Art has had a great number of different functions throughout its history, making its purpose difficult to abstract or quantify to any single concept. This does not imply that the purpose of Art is "vague", but that it has had many unique, different reasons for being created. Some of these functions of Art are provided in the following outline. The different purposes of art may be grouped according to those that are non-motivated, and those that are motivated (Lévi-Strauss).

### Non-motivated functions of art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

The non-motivated purposes of art are those that are integral to being human, transcend the individual, or do not fulfill a specific external purpose. In this sense, Art, as creativity, is something humans must do by their very nature (i.e., no other species creates art), and is therefore beyond utility. # [*Basic human instinct for harmony, balance, rhythm*](/wiki/Fine_arts)*.* Art at this level is not an action or an object, but an internal appreciation of balance and harmony (beauty), and therefore an aspect of being human beyond utility.

"Imitation, then, is one instinct of our nature. Next, there is the instinct for 'harmony' and rhythm, meters being manifestly sections of rhythm. Persons, therefore, starting with this natural gift developed by degrees their special aptitudes, till their rude improvisations gave birth to Poetry." -Aristotle[[29]](#cite_note-29)

# *Experience of the mysterious.* Art provides a way to experience one's self in relation to the universe. This experience may often come unmotivated, as one appreciates art, music or poetry.

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." -Albert Einstein[[30]](#cite_note-30) when he was making art from [found objects](/wiki/Found_art).<ref name=tate/> One of these, [*Fountain*](/wiki/Fountain_(Duchamp)) (1917), an ordinary urinal, has achieved considerable prominence and influence on art.<ref name=tate/> Anti-art is a feature of work by [Situationist International](/wiki/Situationist_International),[[72]](#cite_note-72) the lo-fi Mail art movement, and the [Young British Artists](/wiki/Young_British_Artists),<ref name=tate/> though it is a form still rejected by the [Stuckists](/wiki/Stuckism),<ref name=tate/> who describe themselves as [anti-anti-art](/wiki/Anti-anti-art).[[73]](#cite_note-73)[[74]](#cite_note-74)

### Value judgment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[thumb|left|upright|Aboriginal hollow log tombs. National Gallery,](/wiki/File:Aboriginal_hollow_log_tomb.jpg) [Canberra](/wiki/Canberra), Australia

Somewhat in relation to the above, the word *art* is also used to apply judgments of value, as in such expressions as "that meal was a work of art" (the cook is an artist), or "the art of deception", (the highly attained level of skill of the deceiver is praised). It is this use of the word as a measure of high quality and high value that gives the term its flavor of subjectivity.

Making judgments of value requires a basis for criticism. At the simplest level, a way to determine whether the impact of the object on the senses meets the criteria to be considered *art* is whether it is perceived to be attractive or repulsive. Though perception is always colored by experience, and is necessarily subjective, it is commonly understood that what is not somehow aesthetically satisfying cannot be art. However, "good" art is not always or even regularly aesthetically appealing to a majority of viewers. In other words, an artist's prime motivation need not be the pursuit of the aesthetic. Also, art often depicts terrible images made for social, moral, or thought-provoking reasons. For example, [Francisco Goya's](/wiki/Francisco_Goya) painting depicting the Spanish shootings of 3rd of May 1808 is a graphic depiction of a firing squad executing several pleading civilians. Yet at the same time, the horrific imagery demonstrates Goya's keen artistic ability in composition and execution and produces fitting social and political outrage. Thus, the debate continues as to what mode of aesthetic satisfaction, if any, is required to define 'art'.

The assumption of new values or the rebellion against accepted notions of what is aesthetically superior need not occur concurrently with a complete abandonment of the pursuit of what is aesthetically appealing. Indeed, the reverse is often true, that the revision of what is popularly conceived of as being aesthetically appealing allows for a re-invigoration of aesthetic sensibility, and a new appreciation for the standards of art itself. Countless schools have proposed their own ways to define quality, yet they all seem to agree in at least one point: once their aesthetic choices are accepted, the value of the work of art is determined by its capacity to transcend the limits of its chosen medium to strike some universal chord by the rarity of the skill of the artist or in its accurate reflection in what is termed the [*zeitgeist*](/wiki/Zeitgeist).

Art is often intended to appeal to and connect with human emotion. It can arouse [aesthetic](/wiki/Aesthetic) or [moral](/wiki/Morality) feelings, and can be understood as a way of communicating these feelings. Artists express something so that their audience is aroused to some extent, but they do not have to do so consciously. Art may be considered an exploration of the [human condition](/wiki/Human_condition); that is, what it is to be human.[[75]](#cite_note-75)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear) [Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal) [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Art movement](/wiki/Art_movement)
* [Artist in residence](/wiki/Artist_in_residence)
* [Formal analysis](/wiki/Formal_analysis)
* [List of artistic media](/wiki/List_of_artistic_media)
* [Mathematics and art](/wiki/Mathematics_and_art)
* [Outline of the visual arts](/wiki/Outline_of_the_visual_arts), a guide to the subject of art presented as a [tree structured](/wiki/Tree_structure) list of its subtopics.

[Template:Div col end](/wiki/Template:Div_col_end) [Template:Wikipedia books](/wiki/Template:Wikipedia_books)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

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## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Sisterlinks](/wiki/Template:Sisterlinks) [Template:Library resources box](/wiki/Template:Library_resources_box)

* [*Art and Play* from the Dictionary of the History of ideas](http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=DicHist/uvaBook/tei/DicHist1.xml;chunk.id=dv1-17;toc.depth=1;toc.id=dv1-17;brand=default;query=Dictionary%20of%20the%20History%20of%20Ideas#1)
* [In-depth directory of art](http://witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHLinks.html)
* [*Art and Artist Files in the Smithsonian Libraries Collection*](http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/art-design/artandartistfiles/) (2005) Smithsonian Digital Libraries
* [Visual Arts Data Service (VADS)](http://www.ahds.ac.uk/) – online collections from UK museums, galleries, universities
* [RevolutionArt – Art magazines with worldwide exhibitions, callings and competitions](http://www.RevolutionArtMagazine.com/)
* [Template:Cite SEP](/wiki/Template:Cite_SEP)

[Template:Aesthetics](/wiki/Template:Aesthetics)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[Category:Aesthetics](/wiki/Category:Aesthetics) [Category:Arts](/wiki/Category:Arts) [Category:Visual arts](/wiki/Category:Visual_arts)