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A WORLD OF ART

HENRY M. SAYRE

THIRD EDITION



A World of Art

THIRD EDITION

HENRY M. SAYRE

Oregon State University

PRENTICE HALL
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sayre, Henry M.

A world of art/Henry M. Sayre. — 3rd ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-13-959354-3

1. Arts I. Title

NX620.S28 2000

700—dc21

99-21126

CIP

Editor-in-Chief: Charlyce Jones Owen

Publisher: Bud Therien

Editorial Assistant: Mary Amoon

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Cover Image: *front cover*: (detail), Georges Seurat, French, 1859–1891,

A Sunday on La Grande Jatte—1884, oil on canvas, 1884–86, 207.6 x 308 cm,

Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.224; photograph © 1999 The Art

Institute of Chicago. All Rights Reserved. *back cover*: (detail) Georges Seurat,

French, 1859–1891, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*—1884, oil on canvas, 1884–86,

207.6 x 308 cm, Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.224; photograph

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This book was set in 11/13 Sabon and was printed by RR Donnelley
& Sons Company. The cover was printed by The Lehigh Press, Inc.

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Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-13-959354-3

Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, London

Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, Sydney

Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., Toronto

Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., Mexico

Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi

Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., Tokyo

Pearson Education Asia Pte. Ltd., Singapore

Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., Rio de Janeiro

PREFACE

It sometimes seems to me that the whole world, let alone the world of art, has completely changed since I began working on the first edition of this book nearly a decade ago. The Soviet Union was still a union, in those days. We had no e-mail, no World Wide Web. Not a single textbook had been published with an accompanying CD-ROM. Only recently had work by women and ethnic minorities begun to find its place in the canon of art history, and the very idea of writing about “a world of art,” instead of just the masterpieces of the Western canon, seemed daring, even radical.

Today, most of the innovations that drove the earlier editions of this book are part of the mainstream. Everybody has a Web page. A lot of texts come with CD-ROMs. And almost all art appreciation surveys incorporate the work of so-called “marginalized” voices to a greater degree than ever before. And yet I still feel this book is “new,” that, as we enter the twenty-first century, it continues to break new ground. What makes it “new” are its features, features that make it possible for both the teacher and student to approach art history from a fresh and original perspective.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

The major new feature in the second edition of *A World of Art* was the series of more than 30 two-page spreads called *Works in Progress*. These were intended to give students insight into the *process* of artistic creation. My greatest frustration as an instructor teaching art appreciation is that students almost inevitably believe that art is the result of some quasi-mystical, mysterious act of genius. But art, like most things, is the result of hard work and, especially, of a *critical thinking* process of questioning, exploration, trial and error, and discovery that I long to convey effectively and in a manner that students can generalize to their own experience. Many of the spreads focus on accepted masterpieces, ranging from Pablo Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger* and Henri Matisse’s *Dance II* to Albrecht Dürer’s *Adam and Eve* and Raphael’s *Alba Madonna*. In this new third edition of *A World of Art*, we have added even more *Works in Progress* spreads dedicated to masterpieces ranging from Michelangelo’s *Libyan Sybil* and Rubens’s *Kermis* to Frank Gehry’s new Guggenheim-Bilbao.

In addition, ten of the artists treated in these spreads are also the subjects of a ten-part video series titled *A World of Art: Works in Progress*, produced for public television as part of a grant from the Annenberg Foundation at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting designed to develop *A World of Art* as a distance education package. These half-hour videos develop the materials in the text to an even greater degree. As viewers follow each individual artist through the process of making a single work of art from start to finish, the creative process literally comes alive.

In the order of their appearance in *A World of Art*, the artists treated in the video series are Lorna Simpson, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Hung Liu, Judy Baca, Beverly Buchanan, June Wayne, Milton Resnick, Bill Viola, Goat Island, and Mierle Ukeles. We asked each of them to describe

their working process in their own words, and each of them is extraordinarily articulate. As a group, they are also extraordinarily diverse in terms of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds and equally diverse in terms of the media in which they work. While it would have been easy to concentrate discussion of them in Part III, the media section, we have spread them throughout the book in order to allow instructors and students the opportunity to view a program on a more or less weekly basis. In this edition we have moved some of them at the request of instructors so that they fit better into lesson plans. For instance, the discussion of Judy Baca's mural at the University of Southern California has been updated and is no longer in the painting chapter, but in the discussion of scale, a place more appropriate to a discussion of muralism. We have moved the section on Bill Viola's *The Greeting* into the chapter on video and film, and the spread on Hung Liu's painting now appears in the chapter on line. The video series is available from PBS Adult Learning Services. For more information call 1-800-LEARNER (532-7637).

The impact of *Works in Progress* spreads and videos surprised us. Since the second edition's appearance, many instructors have told us that these spreads, and the accompanying videos, have changed their approach to art appreciation. Rather than a survey of the monuments of art history, the course has turned toward process and thinking. It has made the material meaningful to students who before thought of it as frivolous or impractical. They recognize that the habits of mind and creation engaged in by artists are the very habits required for success in all human endeavor: trial and error, risk taking and inventiveness, hard work and imagination. They recognize that they can learn from art's example.

THE CRITICAL PROCESS

At the end of each chapter of the third edition of *A World of Art* is a new feature designed to further the engagement with process already generated by the *Works in Progress* spreads. Called *The Critical Process*, each of these sections poses a number of questions based on the chapter material for students to think about on their own. Thus, we hope, students will be prompted to think critically and creatively.

The questions raised in these *Critical Process* sections are by no means easy. Nor do they often lead to pat answers. But they should generate thought and provoke classroom discussion. Nevertheless, in order not to leave students completely on their own, on pages 513–514 there is a Critical Process summary consisting of short paragraphs addressing each of the *Critical Process* sections. By comparing these responses to their own, students can test the quality of their own thinking.

THE WEBSITE

To further the student's sense of the process, we have also prepared a Prentice Hall exclusive Companion Website™ that accompanies the text, authored by my colleague at Oregon State University, John Maul, and featuring a range of learning opportunities at www.prenhall.com/sayre.

THE CD-ROM

An interactive CD-ROM accompanies the text and develops the idea of process even further. It consists of two rooms. In the first is a wide variety of interactive exercises designed to give the student practical, hands-on experience manipulating the elements of art—exercises demonstrating and applying the principles of color theory, perspective, value, balance, and so on. The second room consists of a series of studio technique QuickTime video demonstrations. As an author, I have never been satisfied with the diagrams in art appreciation books that illustrate the printmaking processes, for instance, or lost-wax bronze pours (an especially difficult process both to illustrate and to discuss). Here, we have live demonstrations of those processes—and many others, such as making and mixing oil paint—that can be run in either real time or slow motion, together with text that sequentially outlines what the student is watching.

OTHER ANCILLARY MATERIALS

Taken together, the text, the CD-ROM, the Website and the *Works in Progress* television series offer the teacher and student what we believe is the strongest teaching package available anywhere. But there are other important elements in our package as well.

Faculty Guide. John Maul, who designed the Website, has also authored a Faculty Guide for the third edition that helps the instructor integrate the different aspects of the teaching package into a coherent whole by providing many ideas about ways to extend lectures beyond the scope of the text itself. Of note is background information about artists and artwork presented in the *Works in Progress* text and video segments. The Guide also includes test banks.

Student Guide. With John's help, I have authored a Student Guide. This is directed particularly at distance learners, whose study plans are often self-directed and self-sustaining, but every student should find it useful. It includes, for each chapter, a set of Learning Objectives, a list of Key Concepts, an Overview of the chapter, and a Viewing Guide to each video, including an overview of the episode, an outline of what students should pay particular attention to, questions they should ask themselves about the video, and answers to frequently asked questions about the materials presented. In addition, each study lesson includes a CD-ROM study guide, a summary of related material at the Website, Supplemental Exercises, two kinds of Writing Assignments—one on the subject of the chapter itself, and another titled "Writing to Explore New Ideas"—and Suggested Further Readings.

Slides. Finally, a set of slides is available from Prentice Hall. As well as providing the standard set of masterpieces, we included a wide variety of hard-to-find images and images pertaining to each of the videotapes. The slide set should, as a result, be a significant addition to every slide library. Ask your Prentice Hall representative for details.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The video series *A World of Art: Works in Progress* and the CD-ROM were conceived in response to the demands of creating a distance education curriculum for the Annenberg/CPB Project, but both cannot help but improve teaching and learning in the standard classroom environment as well. The television series is a production of Oregon Public Broadcasting, in cooperation with Oregon State University. Our directors were of national stature, and the quality of the production is of the highest level. John Lindsay, of Oregon Public Broadcasting, and I have served as co-executive producers of the series. I closely supervised the writing, editing, and shooting of each segment, and I exercised complete control over the content of each episode. But I am not a filmmaker, and without the extraordinarily talented people at OPB, the resulting programs would have been considerably less distinguished. In addition to John Lindsay, I need to thank particularly at OPB, videographers Greg Bond and Steve Gossen, sound engineers Merce Williams, Bill Dubey, and Gene Koon, editor Milt Ritter, and series producer Bobbi Rice. Our wonderful team of directors included Dave Bowden, Peggy Stern, John Booth, Marlo Bendau, and Sandy Brooke. Marlo especially did yeoman's service, and with the highest degree of skill.

The artists for the series were chosen in consultation with an advisory board, whose members have overseen the project at every level: David Antin, of the University of California, San Diego; Bruce Jenkins, of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; Lynn Hershman, of the University of California, Davis; Suzanne Lacy, of the California College of Arts and Crafts; George Roeder, of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; and John Weber, of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In addition, two members of the Annenberg/CPB staff have made major contributions, Hilda Moskowitz and Pete Neal. While I must accept responsibility for all of the weaknesses of what we have done, most of the strengths of the project are the result of these people's expert advice. I owe them more thanks than I can even begin to measure.

At Oregon State, I owe a special debt of gratitude to Jeff Hale, who helped guide this project through the bureaucratic maze of the university and whose knowledge of grants and grant writing got the project off the ground. Kay Schaffer, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, fought for us and supported us. Bill Wilkins, her predecessor, has stood by this endeavor from the very first days. Two university presidents, John Byrne and Paul Risser, have honored the project by their interest, encouragement, and support. So too have my two chairs, David Hardesty and Jim Folts, both of whom have helped that much more by being friends. The Art Department office staff, particularly Barbara Melton and Sarah Ann Hones, have kept me on track, and more important, kept me laughing. Finally, in the first edition of this book, I thanked Berk Chappell for his example as a teacher. He still knows more about teaching art appreciation than I ever will.

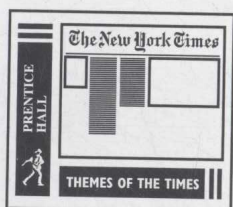
A number of colleagues made valuable suggestions to this book, and I'd like to thank them for their contributions: Christie Nuell, Middle Tennessee State University; Dr. Eugene M. Hood, Jr., University of Wisconsin at Eau-Claire; William Squires, University of Georgia; Herbert R. Hartel, Jr., John Jay College CUNY; Frederick J. Zimmerman, SUNY at Cortland (retired); Mary Elizabeth Bilger, University Of North Carolina at Charlotte; Patricia Lechman, Shelby State

Community College; Christine Sperling, Bloomsburg University; and Gerald Rowan, Northampton Community College.

At Prentice Hall, Norwell "Bud" Therein remains the best publisher an author could want, and Mary Amoon, his assistant, is at least his equal. I owe them both my every thanks. Bob Weiss has brought an editorial hand to the project that has been sure, as well as thoughtful, and he has in every way made the tiresome editing process a pleasure. Joe Scordato, in production, has been patient and willing and cooperative, for which I thank him.

Finally, I owe my greatest debt to my colleague and wife, Sandy Brooke. She directed the Milton Resnick video, served as project producer for the entire television series, and lived every moment of this project with me. She is everywhere present in the videos and in these pages. It is safe to say she made all of this possible, for without her good counsel and better company, I wouldn't have had the will to get this all done, let alone found the pleasure I have in doing it.

Henry M. Sayre
Oregon State University



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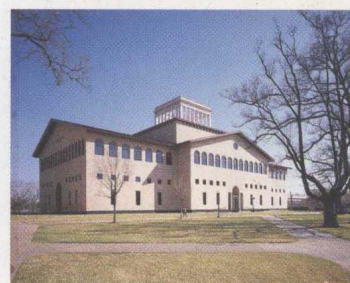
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PART I



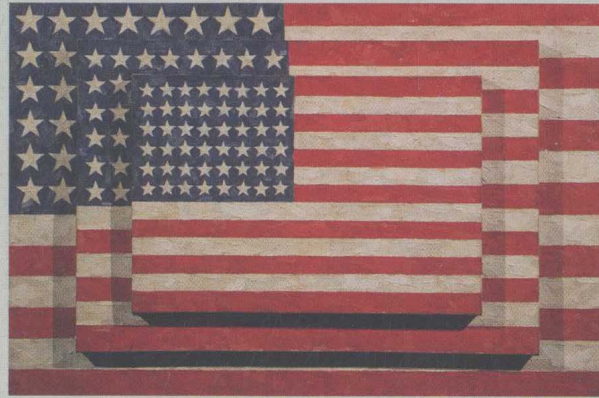
Fig. 1 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *The Umbrellas, Japan-U.S.A.*, 1984-1991.

© Christo, 1991. Photography by the author.

The Visual World

UNDERSTANDING THE ART YOU SEE

CHAPTER 1



A World of Art

THE WORLD AS ARTISTS SEE IT

An American Vista
A Chinese Landscape
An Aboriginal "Dreaming"
A Modern Earthwork

WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Creative Process

THE WORLD AS WE PERCEIVE IT

The Physical Process of Seeing
The Psychological Process of Seeing

THE CRITICAL PROCESS

Thinking about Making and Seeing

Throughout the morning of October 9, 1991, along a stretch of interstate highway at Tejon Pass, north of downtown Los Angeles, 1,760 yellow umbrellas, each 19 feet 8 inches in height, 28 feet 5 inches in diameter, and weighing 448 pounds, slowly opened across the parched gold hills and valleys of the Tehachapi Mountains (Fig. 1). Sixteen hours earlier—but that same morning, given the time change—1,340 blue umbrellas opened in the prefecture of Ibaraki, Japan, north of Tokyo, 90 of them in the valley's river (Fig. 2).

Built at a cost of \$26 million, which the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude raised entirely through the sale of their proprietary work, *The Umbrellas* symbolized for



Fig. 2 Christo and Jeanne Claude, *The Umbrellas, Japan-U.S.A.*, 1984–1991.
Ibaraki, Japan Site. © Christo, 1991. Photo: Wolfgang Volz

them how vast and various the world of art has become. *The Umbrellas* changes with each shift in our point of view, with each change of light and weather. Their aspects—yellow or blue, seen from near or far, from above or below, surrounded by many others or isolated on a ridge—are virtually infinite. No single photograph of *The Umbrellas* can capture the many different experiences of it. To experience the work in California was to experience only half of it. In California, *The Umbrellas* seemed to stretch to the horizon and beyond. Their yellow color echoed the dry grass on the hills, the aridity of the parched California landscape, which, in 1991, was deep in drought. In Japan, the blue umbrellas, identical but for their color to the yellow ones in California, had a completely different feel. In the fertile, green Japanese valley, with its small villages, farms, gardens, and fields, they appeared to grow out of the landscape itself, as if they were mushrooms or flowers. Placed closely together, they seemed almost intimate by comparison to those in California. They seemed to embody the precious and limited space of Japan itself. Blue on one side of the world and yellow on the other, the umbrellas symbolized crucial differences between the two cultures.

And yet, for all their differences, the umbrellas had a common meaning. In both cultures, the umbrella is an image of shelter

and protection and is therefore a symbol of community life. The extraordinary amount of collaborative activity required to mount the project—the vast numbers of paid workers, the complex logistics of bringing everything together—itsself underscored the communal meaning of the piece. The event became a sort of cultural umbrella, stretching across the Pacific Ocean to bring Japan and the United States together.

If the experience of *The Umbrellas* project was undoubtedly different for its Japanese and American viewers, both groups nevertheless asked themselves the same questions. What is the purpose of this work of art (and what is the purpose of art in general)? What does it mean? What are the artists' intentions? How did they do it? What do I think of it? Is it beautiful? Is it fascinating? What makes it beautiful or fascinating? Or do I consider it, as many did in the case of the Christos's work, an almost ridiculous waste of time, energy, and, above all, money? What do I value in works of art? Are there formal qualities about the work that I like—such as its color, or its organization, or its very size and scale? What does it mean not to be able to see it all at once? These are some of the questions that this book is designed to help you address. Appreciating art is never just a question of accepting visual stimuli, but of intelligently contemplating why and how works of art come to be made. By helping you understand the artist's creative process, we hope that your own critical ability, the process by which you create your own ideas, will be engaged as well.

THE WORLD AS ARTISTS SEE IT

The Umbrellas project demonstrates how the landscape is not only different in its appearance in two different parts of the world, but is appreciated and valued in different ways. Let us consider four different approaches to the landscape—works by a nineteenth-century American, a Chinese, an aboriginal Australian, and a twentieth-century American—in order to see how four different artists, from four very different times and places, respond to the same fundamental phenomenon—the world that surrounds them. But rather than



Fig. 3 Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902), *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, 1863.

Oil on canvas. H. 73 1/2 in. W. 120 1/4 in. (186.7 × 306.7 cm.). Signed and dated (lower right): ABierstadt/1863.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.123). Photograph © 1979 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

emphasizing their differences, let's ask if they have anything in common.

An American Vista

Albert Bierstadt's *Rocky Mountains* (Fig. 3), painted in 1863, was one of the most popular paintings of its time. An enormous work, more than six feet high and ten feet long, it captured, in the American imagination, the vastness and majesty of the then still largely unexplored West. Writing about the painting in his 1867 *Book of the Artists*, the critic H. T. Tuckerman described the painting in glowing terms: "Representing the sublime range which guards the remote West, its subject is eminently national; and the spirit in which it is executed is at once patient and comprehensive—patient in the careful reproduction of the tints and traits which make up and identify its local character, and comprehensive in the breadth, elevation, and

grandeur of the composition." In its breadth and grandeur, the painting seemed to Tuckerman an image of the nation itself. If it was **sublime**—that is, if it captured an immensity so large that it could hardly be comprehended by the imagination—the same was true of the United States as a whole. *The Rocky Mountains* was a truly democratic painting, vast enough to accommodate the aspirations of the nation.

But if it was truly democratic, it was not true to life. Despite Tuckerman's assertion that Bierstadt has captured the "tints and traits" of the scene, no landscape quite like this exists in the American West. Rather, Bierstadt has painted the Alps, and the painting's central peak is a barely disguised version of the Matterhorn. Trained as a painter in Europe, Bierstadt sees the landscape through European eyes. He is not interested in representing the Rockies accurately. Rather, it is as if he secretly longs for America to be Europe, and so he paints it that way.