

# Brief Contents

1	WHAT IS ART? MEANINGS, PURPOSES, STYLES	1
2	THE LANGUAGE OF ART: ELEMENTS, COMPOSITION, AND CONTENT	34
3	DRAWING	73
4	PAINTING	89
5	PRINTMAKING	105
6	SCULPTURE	121
7	ARCHITECTURE	145
8	CAMERA ARTS: PHOTOGRAPHY, CINEMATOGRAPHY, AND VIDEO	175
9	THE ART OF EVERYDAY LIVING: CRAFTS AND DESIGN	202
10	THE ART OF THE ANCIENTS	234
11	CLASSICAL ART: GREECE AND ROME	260
12	CHRISTIAN ART: FROM CATACOMBS TO CATHEDRALS	293
13	THE RENAISSANCE	320
14	THE AGE OF BAROQUE	351
15	MODERN ART	378
16	THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE EARLY YEARS	409
17	CONTEMPORARY ART	434
18	BEYOND EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES: A WORLD OF ART	469
	GLOSSARY	499
	INDEX	512

# Contents

PREFACE xv

## 1

### WHAT IS ART? MEANINGS, PURPOSES, STYLES 1

#### PURPOSES OF ART 2

- To Create Beauty 2
- To Provide Decoration 4
- To Reveal Truth 6
- To immortalize 7
- To Express Religious Values 9
- To Express Fantasy 10
- To Stimulate the Intellect 12
- To Express or Create Order  
and Harmony 13
- To Record Experience 15
- To Reflect the Social and Cultural  
Context 18
- To Protest Injustice 21
- To Elevate the Commonplace 24
- To Express the Universal 24
- To Sell Products 25
- To Meet the Needs of the Artist 25

#### STYLES OF ART 28

- Realistic Art 29
  - Realistic versus Representational Art 30
- Expressionistic Art 31
  - Abstract Art 31
    - Abstracted versus Nonobjective Art 31

#### A CLOSER LOOK

- Is There an Artistic Personality?* 26

## 2

### THE LANGUAGE OF ART: ELEMENTS, COMPOSITION, AND CONTENT 34

#### ART AS LANGUAGE 35

#### ELEMENTS OF ART 35

- Line 35
- Shape 37
- Light 40
- Color 44
  - Psychological Dimensions of Color: Hue,  
Value, and Saturation 45
  - Complementary versus Analogous  
Colors 46
  - Local versus Optical Color 50
- Texture 52
- Mass 54
- Space 55
  - Overlapping 55

Relative Size and Linear Perspective 57  
Atmospheric Perspective 60  
Time and Motion 60

## COMPOSITION 63

Proportion and Scale 64  
Unity 66  
Balance 66  
Rhythm 68

## CONTENT 70

The Levels of Content 70  
Iconography 71  
Content in Nonobjective Art 72

## A CLOSER LOOK

*On Abstract Art, Hamlet, Leonardo da Vinci, and Inkblots* 43

## A CLOSER LOOK

*Claes Oldenburg: On Clothespins, Baseball Bats, and Other Monuments* 66

## THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*On the Language of Art* 71

# 3

## DRAWING 73

## CATEGORIES OF DRAWING 74

Materials 74  
Dry Media 74  
    Silverpoint 74  
    Pencil 75  
    Charcoal 76  
    Chalk and Pastel 77  
    Crayon 80  
Fluid Media 80  
    Pen and Ink 80  
    Pen and Wash 82  
    Brush and Ink 82  
    Brush and Wash 85  
    Cartoons 85  
    New Approaches to Drawing 86

## THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*On Drawing* 82

# 4

## PAINTING 89

## PAINT 90

## TYPES OF PAINTING 90

Fresco 90  
Encaustic 92  
Egg Tempera 92  
Oil 94  
Acrylic 97  
Watercolor 102

## COMBINING PAINTING WITH OTHER MATERIALS 104

## THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*On Painting* 97

# 5

## PRINTMAKING 105

## METHODS OF PRINTMAKING 106

## RELIEF 107

Woodcut 107  
Wood Engraving 109

## INTAGLIO 110

Engraving 110  
Drypoint 111  
Etching 111  
Mezzotint and Aquatint 113  
Some Other Etching Techniques 114

## LITHOGRAPHY 114

## SERIGRAPHY 118

## MONOTYPE 119

## COMBINING PRINTMAKING MEDIA WITH OTHER MEDIA 120



## A CLOSER LOOK

*Why Modern Art May Never Become  
Old Masterpieces* 100

# 6

## SCULPTURE

121

### TYPES OF SUBTRACTIVE AND ADDITIVE SCULPTURE 123

Carving 123

Modeling 124

Casting 124

The Lost-Wax Technique 124

Plaster Casting of Human Models 126

Construction 126

### TYPES OF MATERIALS 127

Stone Sculpture 127

Wood Sculpture 130

Clay Sculpture 132

Metal Sculpture 133

### MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY MATERIALS AND METHODS 134

Constructed Sculpture 134

Assemblage 136

Ready-Mades 138

Mixed Media 138

Kinetic Sculpture 140

Light Sculpture 142

Earthworks 143

### A CLOSER LOOK

*The Vietnam Memorial* 129

### THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*On Sculpture* 132

### A CLOSER LOOK

*Christo: Of Running Fences  
and Skirted Islands* 144

# 7

## ARCHITECTURE

145

### STONE ARCHITECTURE 146

Post and Lintel Construction 146

Arches 150

Vaults 151

Domes 152

### WOOD ARCHITECTURE 153

Post and Beam Construction 155

Trusses 156

Balloon Framing 156

### CAST-IRON ARCHITECTURE 158

### STEEL-CAGE ARCHITECTURE 159

### REINFORCED CONCRETE ARCHITECTURE 164

### OTHER ARCHITECTURAL METHODS 167

Steel-Cable Architecture 167

Shell Architecture 168

Solar Architecture 168

### CONTEMPORARY MUSEUMS: FUNCTIONS AND FORMS 170

### A CLOSER LOOK

*A Pyramid in Paris* 157

# 8

## CAMERA ARTS: PHOTOGRAPHY, CINEMATOGRAPHY, AND VIDEO

175

### PHOTOGRAPHY 176

Cameras and Films 178

Cameras 178

Films 179

A Brief History of Photography 180

The Camera Obscura 180

Development of Photosensitive  
Surfaces 180

Heliography 180

The Daguerreotype 181

The Negative 181

The Advent of Photojournalism 182

Photography as an Art Form  
in the Twentieth Century 183

Photojournalism during the Depression  
and the War Years 183

Postwar Years 185

CINEMATOGRAPHY	190
A Brief History of Cinematography	191
Cinematographic Techniques	192
Fixed Cameras and Staged Productions	192
The Mobile Camera	194
Editing	194
A Portfolio of Recent Cinematography	195

VIDEO	198
Advantages of Television	198
Disadvantages of Television	198
The Problem of Sameness	199
The Commercial in Commercial Television	199
Public Television	199
The Element of Time in Television	201
Video Art	201

THE ARTIST SPEAKS	
<i>On Photography</i>	190

THE ARTIST SPEAKS	
<i>On the Power of Cinematography</i>	195

## 9

### THE ART OF EVERYDAY LIVING: CRAFTS AND DESIGN 202

CRAFTS	203
Ceramics	203
Methods of Working with Clay	203
The Potter's Wheel	204
Glazing	204
Types of Ceramics	205
Glass	207
Techniques of Working Glass	207
Examples of Glassware	208
Fiber Arts	210
Weaving	210
Applying Designs to Fabrics	212
Other Fiber Arts	213
Metalwork and Jewelry	214
Furniture	216
A Highly Selective Survey of Antiques	216
Contemporary Examples	218

DESIGN	219
Graphic Design	219
Package Design	219
Posters	220
Logos	221

Clothing Design	221
Functions of Clothing	221
Fashion and Fad in Clothing Design	232
Industrial Design	226
Form and Function	226
Interior Design	227
Examples of Interiors	227
Urban Design	230
The Rectangular Plan	230
The Circular Plan	230
Paris	231
Washington, D.C.	231
The Utopia of the Visionary	233

A CLOSER LOOK	
<i>A Little Something for the Birds</i>	225

A CLOSER LOOK	
<i>The Parks of Frederick Law Olmsted</i>	232

## 10

### THE ART OF THE ANCIENTS 234

PREHISTORIC ART	235
Upper Paleolithic Art	235
Mesolithic Art	237
Neolithic Art	238
ART OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST	239
Sumer	239
Akkad	241
Babylonia	242
Assyria	243
Persia	244
EGYPTIAN ART	245
Old Kingdom	245
Sculpture	245
Architecture	248
Middle Kingdom	249
New Kingdom	249
The Amarna Revolution: The Reign of Akhenaton and Nefertiti	250

AEGEAN ART	253
The Cyclades	254
Crete	254
The Middle Minoan Period	255
The Late Minoan Period	255



Mycenae 257  
Architecture 258  
Gold Work 259

#### A CLOSER LOOK

*How Old Is Ancient? Some Notes on  
Carbon-14 Dating* 243

## 11

---

### CLASSICAL ART: GREECE AND ROME 260

GREECE 261

GEOMETRIC PERIOD 261

ARCHAIC PERIOD 262

Vase Painting 262  
Architecture 264  
Sculpture 265  
Architectural Sculpture 265  
Free-Standing Sculpture 266

EARLY CLASSICAL ART 268

Sculpture 268

CLASSICAL ART 269

Architecture 269  
Sculpture 271  
Architectural Sculpture 271  
Free-Standing Sculpture 272  
Vase Painting 273

LATE CLASSICAL ART 275

Sculpture 275

HELLENISTIC ART 277

Sculpture 277

THE ETRUSCANS 279

Architecture 279  
Sculpture 280

ROME 280

THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD 281

Sculpture 281

Architecture 282  
Painting 283

THE EARLY EMPIRE 284

Architecture 284  
The Colosseum 285  
The Pantheon 286  
Sculpture 288

THE LATE EMPIRE 291

Architecture 291  
Sculpture 292

#### A CLOSER LOOK

*The Ill-Bought Urn* 274

## 12

---

### CHRISTIAN ART: FROM CATACOMBS TO CATHEDRALS 293

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART 294

The Period of Persecution 294  
The Period of Recognition 296

BYZANTINE ART 297

San Vitale, Ravenna 297  
Hagia Sophia, Constantinople 299  
Later Byzantine Art 301

EARLY MEDIEVAL ART 301

Carolingian Art 302  
The Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne 303  
Manuscript Illumination 304  
Ottonian Art 305  
Architecture 306  
Sculpture 307

ROMANESQUE ART 307

Architecture 308  
St. Sernin 308  
St. Étienne 311  
Sculpture 312  
Manuscript Illumination 314

GOTHIC ART 314

Architecture 314  
Laon Cathedral 315

Notre Dame 316  
Chartres Cathedral 316  
Gothic Architecture Outside of France 317  
Sculpture 318

#### THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*Anonymous Artists of the  
Middle Ages* 305

#### A CLOSER LOOK

*Have Chisel, Will Travel* 310

## 13

### THE RENAISSANCE 320

#### FIFTEENTH-CENTURY NORTHERN PAINTING 321

##### Flemish Painting: From Page to Panel 321

The Limbourg Brothers 321  
Robert Campin, the Master  
of Flémalle 322  
Jan van Eyck 324

##### German Art 325

Matthias Grünewald 325  
Albrecht Dürer 328

#### THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY 329

##### The Early Renaissance 329

##### Cimabue and Giotto 329

##### The Renaissance Begins, and So Does the Competition 331

Filippo Brunelleschi  
and Lorenzo Ghiberti 331  
Donatello 333  
Masaccio 333  
Filippo Brunelleschi 335

##### Renaissance Art at Midcentury and Beyond 336

Andrea Verrocchio 336  
Piero della Francesca 337  
Andrea Mantegna 338  
Sandro Botticelli 338  
Leon Battista Alberti 339

##### The High Renaissance 340

Leonardo da Vinci 341  
Raphael Sanzio 343  
Michelangelo Buonarroti 345

#### A CLOSER LOOK

*It's a Lemon . . . It's a Fig . . . It's  
Adam's Apple!* 326

#### THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*Leonardo da Vinci* 342

#### A CLOSER LOOK

*On the Mutilation of Michelangelo's  
Pietàs* 348

## 14

### THE AGE OF BAROQUE 351

#### PROTO-BAROQUE 352

##### The Venetians 352

Titian 352  
Tintoretto 353

##### Mannerism 355

Jacopo Pontormo 355  
El Greco 356  
Giovanni da Bologna 357  
Andrea Palladio 358  
Pieter Bruegel the Elder 359

#### THE BAROQUE PERIOD IN ITALY 360

St. Peter's 360  
Gianlorenzo Bernini 360  
Caravaggio 363  
Artemisia Gentileschi 365  
Francesco Borromini 367

#### THE BAROQUE PERIOD OUTSIDE OF ITALY 367

##### Spain 367

Diego Velázquez 368

##### Flanders 369

Peter Paul Rubens 369

##### Holland 371

Rembrandt van Rijn 371  
Jan Vermeer 373

##### France 374

Nicolas Poussin 375  
Versailles 375

#### THE ROCOCO 376

Jean-Honoré Fragonard 376  
Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun 377

#### THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*Gianlorenzo Bernini* 362



## A CLOSER LOOK

*Caravaggio's Police Blotter:  
The Art of Violence* 364

## A CLOSER LOOK

*Rubens, Inc.* 370

# 15

## MODERN ART

378

### NEOCLASSICISM 379

Jacques-Louis David 379  
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres 380

### ROMANTICISM 381

Eugène Delacroix 382  
Francisco Goya 383  
The Academy 384  
Adolphe William Bouguereau 384

### REALISM 385

Honoré Daumier 385  
Gustave Courbet 386  
Edouard Manet 387

### IMPRESSIONISM 389

Claude Monet 390  
Pierre-Auguste Renoir 392  
Berthe Morisot 392  
Edgar Degas 393

### POSTIMPRESSIONISM 394

Georges Seurat 394  
Paul Cézanne 396  
Vincent van Gogh 397  
Paul Gauguin 398  
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec 400

### EXPRESSIONISM 402

Edvard Munch 402

### AMERICAN EXPATRIATES 402

Mary Cassatt 403  
James Abbott McNeill Whistler 403

### AMERICANS IN AMERICA 404

Thomas Eakins 404  
Thomas Cole 405

## ART NOUVEAU 406

### THE BIRTH OF MODERN SCULPTURE 407

Auguste Rodin 407

### THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*On Impressionism* 391

### A CLOSER LOOK

*Why Did van Gogh Cut Off  
His Ear?* 398

# 16

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE EARLY YEARS

409

### THE FAUVES 410

André Derain 410  
Henri Matisse 411

### EXPRESSIONISM 413

Die Brücke (The Bridge) 413  
Emil Nolde 413  
Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider) 414  
Wassily Kandinsky 414

### CUBISM 415

Pablo Picasso 415  
Analytic Cubism 417  
Georges Braque 417  
Synthetic Cubism 418  
Derivations of Cubism 420  
Fernand Léger 420  
Cubist Sculpture 421  
Jacques Lipchitz 421

### FUTURISM 422

Umberto Boccioni 422

### EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY ABSTRACTION IN THE UNITED STATES 422

Georgia O'Keeffe 423  
John Marin 424

### EARLY 20th CENTURY ABSTRACTION IN EUROPE 424

Kasimir Malevich 424



Constructivism 425  
Naum Gabo 425  
Piet Mondrian 425  
Constantin Brancusi 427

#### FANTASY AND DADA 427

Paul Klee 427  
Giorgio de Chirico 428  
Dada 428  
Marcel Duchamp 429

#### SURREALISM 431

Salvador Dalí 431  
Joan Miró 432

#### THE ARTIST SPEAKS

*Henri Matisse* 412

#### A CLOSER LOOK

*Picasso's Guernica Goes Home* 418

## 17

### CONTEMPORARY ART 434

#### PAINTING 435

##### THE NEW YORK SCHOOL: THE FIRST GENERATION 435

##### Turning the Corner Toward an Abstract

Expressionism 436  
Arshile Gorky 436  
Hans Hofmann 437  
Focus on Gesture 439  
Jackson Pollock 439  
Willem de Kooning 439  
Focus on the Color Field 441  
Adolph Gottlieb 441  
Mark Rothko 442  
Barnett Newman 442

##### THE NEW YORK SCHOOL: THE SECOND GENERATION 443

Sam Francis 444  
Color-Field Painting 444  
Morris Louis 444  
Helen Frankenthaler 444  
Kenneth Noland 444  
Hard-Edge Painting 445  
Ellsworth Kelly 445

#### FIGURATIVE PAINTING 446

Jean Dubuffet 446  
Francis Bacon 446

#### POP ART 447

Richard Hamilton 447  
Robert Rauschenberg 448  
Jasper Johns 448  
Roy Lichtenstein 449  
Andy Warhol 449  
Larry Rivers 450  
Robert Indiana 450

#### PHOTOREALISM 451

Philip Pearlstein 451  
Chuck Close 451  
Audrey Flack 452  
Richard Estes 453

#### Op Art (Optical Painting) 453

#### SCULPTURE 455

##### SCULPTURE AT MIDCENTURY 455

Henry Moore 455

##### CONTEMPORARY FIGURATIVE SCULPTURE 456

Marino Marini 456  
George Segal 456  
Claes Oldenburg 457  
Edward Kienholz 457  
Marisol 458  
Duane Hanson 459

##### CONTEMPORARY ABSTRACT SCULPTURE 459

David Smith 460  
Louise Nevelson 460  
Alexander Calder 461  
John Chamberlain 461  
Tony Smith 462  
Don Judd 463  
Isamu Noguchi 463  
Lucas Samaras 464  
Chryssa 464  
George Rickey 464  
Judy Pfaff 466  
Jean Tinguely 467

#### CONCEPTUAL ART 467

#### A CLOSER LOOK

*On Pollock and the Role of the Unconscious in Painting* 440

A CLOSER LOOK  
*On the Happening of Happenings* 454

A CLOSER LOOK  
*If Possible, Steal Any One of These  
Drawings* 468

## 18

BEYOND EUROPE AND THE UNITED  
STATES: A WORLD OF ART 469

On Native Art: "Primitive" or  
Sophisticated? 470  
On the Art of the East 470

AFRICAN ART 470

Afro-American Art 474

OCEANIC ART 478

Polynesia 479  
Melanesia 481

NATIVE ART OF THE AMERICAS 482

Native Arts of Mexico 482  
Native Arts of Peru 485  
Native Arts of the United States  
and Canada 486

ISLAMIC ART 488

INDIAN ART 490

CHINESE ART 492

JAPANESE ART 495

A CLOSER LOOK  
*The Art in Ordinary African  
Objects* 476

THE ARTIST SPEAKS  
*Henry Moore on "Primitive" Art* 480

GLOSSARY 499

INDEX 512



# What Is Art?

## Meanings, Purposes, Styles

*Everyone wants to understand art. Why not try to understand the song of a bird? Why does one love the night, flowers, everything around one without trying to understand them? But in the case of a painting, people have to understand.* —Pablo Picasso

*Cold exactitude is not art; ingenious artifice, when it pleases or when it expresses, is art itself.* —Eugène Delacroix

*What is a work of art? A word made flesh.* —Eric Gill

*Art is nothing but humanized science.* —Gino Severini

**B**eauty, truth, immortality, order, harmony—these concepts and ideals have occupied us since the dawn of history. They enrich our lives and encourage us to extend ourselves beyond the limits of flesh and blood. Without them, life would be but a mean struggle for survival, and the value of survival itself would be unclear.

It is in the sciences and the arts that we strive to weave our experiences into coherent bodies of knowledge and to express them aesthetically. Many of us are more comfortable with the sciences than with the arts. Science teaches us that the universe is not ruled purely by chance. The sciences provide ways of observing the world and experimenting so that we can learn what forces determine the courses of atoms and the galaxies. Even those of us who do not consider ourselves scientific recognize that the scientific method permits us to predict and control many important events on a grand scale.

The arts are more elusive to define than the sciences, more difficult to gather into a conceptual net. We believe that the arts are essential to daily experience; we link them to the very quality of life. Artistic undertakings in the form of crayon drawings, paper cutouts, and block towers are parts of the daily lives of our children. Art has touched the lives of primitive peoples, and art is all around us today. We do not want to be without the arts, yet we are hard pressed to define them and sometimes even to understand them. In fact, the very word *art* encompasses many meanings, including ability, process, and product. As ability, art is the human capacity to make things of beauty, things that stir us; it is creativity. As process, art encompasses acts such as drawing, painting, sculpting, designing buildings, and composing photographs. As product, art is the completed work, such as the print, statue, structure, or tapestry. If as individuals we do not understand science, we are at least comforted by the thought that others do. With art, however, we suspect that there is something about its very nature that transcends understanding.

This book is about the **visual arts**. Despite the enigmatic nature of the visual arts, we shall try to share something of what is known about them so that understanding may begin. We shall attempt to heighten awareness of what we respond to in a work of art. In so doing, at times we shall explore some of the principles of human perception.

We shall explore the basic language of art and see how the elements of art, such as line, color, and shape, are composed into artworks. We shall explore several **media** of the visual arts: drawing, painting, and printmaking; sculpture and architecture; photography and cinematography; and the functional arts of design and craft. A traditional distinction has been made between **fine arts** such as painting and sculpture and **applied arts** such as advertising design, ceramics, and fiber arts. We shall see that applied work can also be fine, and that the creative urges that stir the painter can also stir the weaver.

When asked why we should study history, historians often answer that we must

know about the past in order to have a sense of where we are and where we may be going. This argument also holds true for the visual arts; therefore, we shall explore the journey of art from the wall paintings of the Stone Age through the steel-and-glass structures and the **wordworks** of the present day. The media, the forms, and the subject matter of art may evolve and change from day to day, but uniting threads lie in the persistent quest for beauty, truth, and other ideals.

In the remainder of this chapter we explore the purposes and styles of art to see how art meets many needs of the artist and of the viewing public.

---

## PURPOSES OF ART

*L'art pour l'art.*

*Art for art's sake.*

—Victor Cousin

*Art never expresses anything but itself.*

—Oscar Wilde

*"L'art pour l'art"—art for art's sake. . . .* Many philosophers have argued that art serves no function, that it exists for its own sake. Some have believed that there is something about the essence of art that transcends the human occupation with usefulness. Others have felt that in trying to analyze art too closely, we lose sight of its beauty and wonderment.

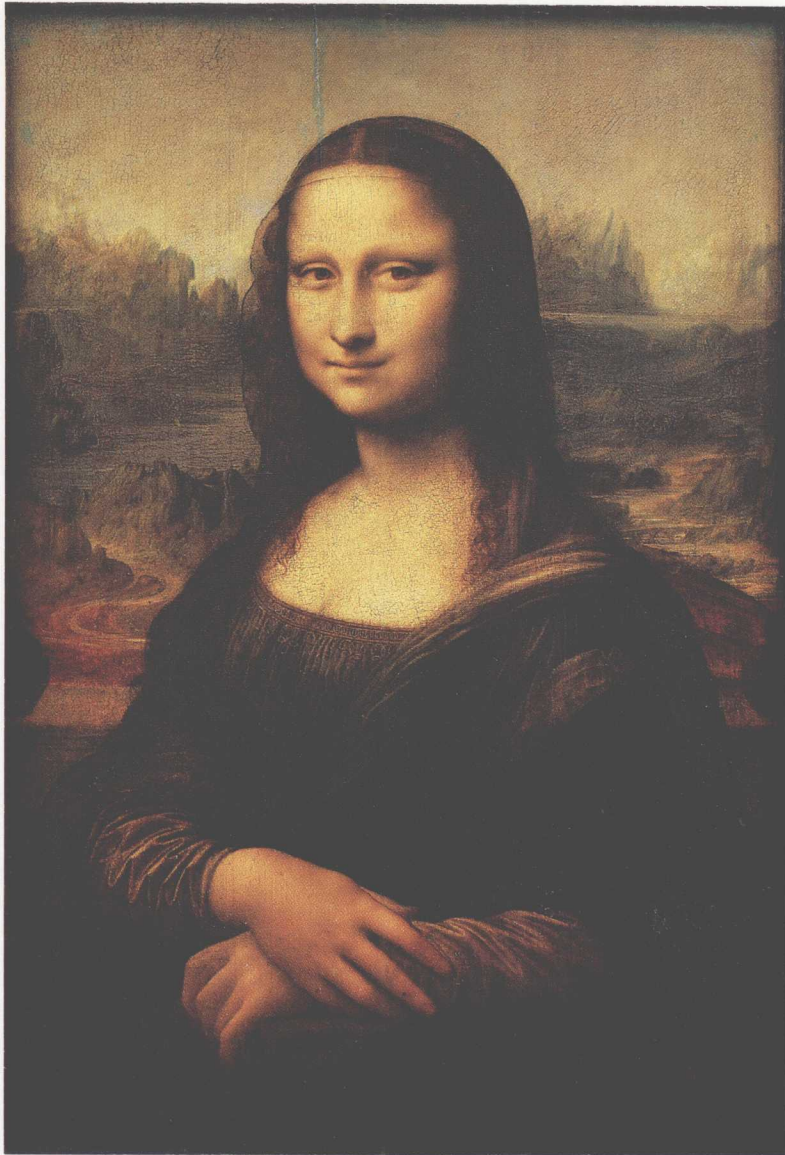
These may be valid concerns. Nevertheless, our understanding of art often can be enhanced by asking the questions: "Why was this created?" "What is its purpose?" In this section we shall see that works of art come into existence for a host of reasons that are as varied as the human condition.

## To Create Beauty

*The beautiful is in nature, and it is encountered in the most diverse forms of reality. Once it is found, it belongs to art, or, rather, to the artist who discovers it.*

—Gustave Courbet





**1-1 LEONARDO DA VINCI**  
*Mona Lisa* (c. 1503)  
 Panel. 30¼ x 21".  
 Louvre Museum, Paris.

*[Art] has as its foundation the beautiful, which is eternal and natural.*

—Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

*The artist . . . makes life more interesting or beautiful.*

—George Bellows

Art has always added beauty to our lives. Art may portray what is beautiful, but art can also elevate the commonplace to the beautiful. The Classical Greeks were obsessed with beauty, and fashioned mathematical formulas for rendering the human body in sculpture so that it would achieve

a majesty and perfection unknown in nature.

The *Mona Lisa* (Fig. 1-1) by Renaissance artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci is perhaps the most famous painting in the history of art. The woman's hands are folded before her in stately repose—an extraordinarily poetic study. The subtle gradations of light are created by layer upon layer of delicate **glazing**. The mysteriousness of the smile has enchanted generations of viewers, each trying to discern the personality of the sitter. The gentleness of the smile and the softness of the skin seem to evoke the ideals of femininity and motherhood.





1-2 ALBERT BIERSTADT *Merced River, Yosemite Valley* (1866).  
Oil on canvas. 36 x 50".

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of the sons of William Paton, 1909.

Nineteenth-century German-American artist Albert Bierstadt captured and expanded the beauty of the American wilderness in paintings such as *Merced River, Yosemite Valley* (Fig. 1-2). The wild horses and the encampment of Native Americans on the rock ledge may seem a touch trite, but when the painting was executed these were more than romantic touches; they depicted what was then a mysterious Western frontier. As pictorial devices, they lend a sense of scale to the awesome cliffs that rise from the water to pierce the heavens. The dramatic diffusion of natural light, the mirror of the water, the mountains lost in haze,

and the churning clouds all make the painting as much a product of the imagination as it is a record of the geology and meteorology of the setting.

#### To Provide Decoration

Paintings are not only objects of beauty unto themselves; they also hang on walls or are painted directly on walls. Sculptures find their way into rooms, courts, and gardens; photographs are found in books; and fiber arts are seen on walls and floors. Whatever other functions they may serve, many works of art are also decorative.



1–3 *The Hunt of the Unicorn*, VI: *The Unicorn Is Killed and Brought to the Castle* (Franco-Flemish, 15th century). Silk, wood, silver, and silver-gilt threads. 12'1" x 12'9".

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., The Cloisters Collection, 1937.

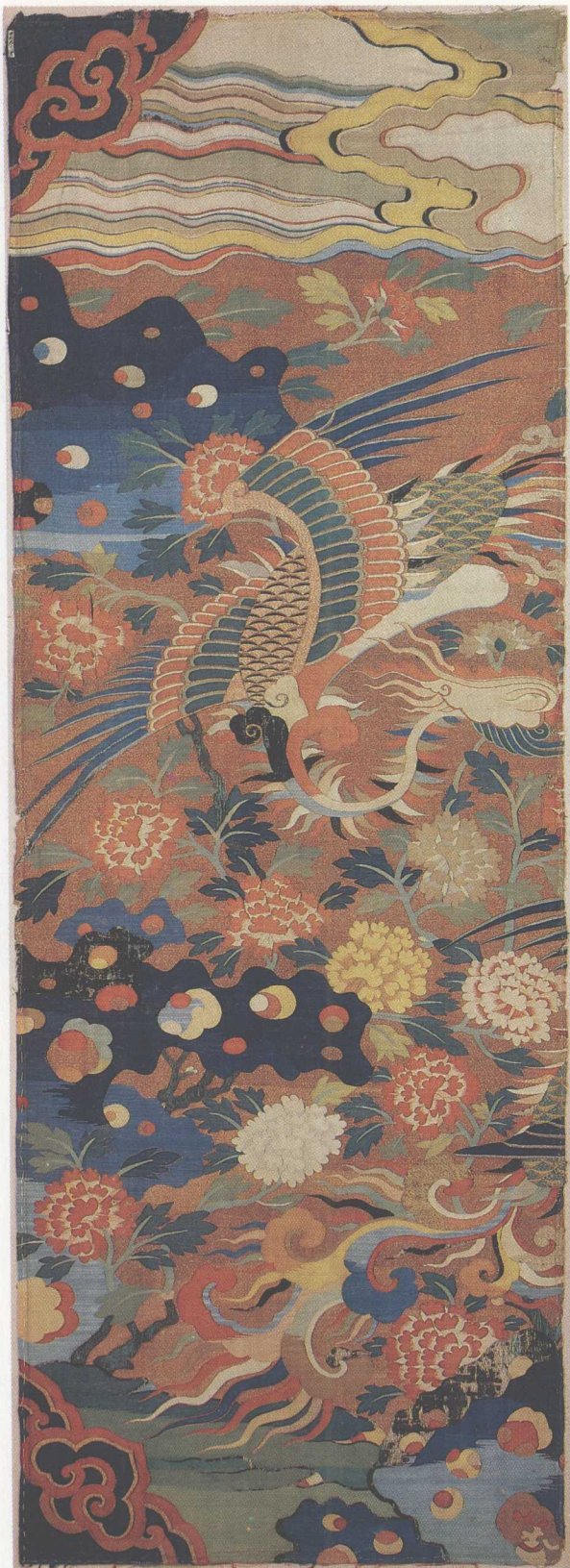


One of the most familiar and noble images in art is Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (see Fig. 13–29), one of the many **fresco** panels that adorn the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Pope Julius II commissioned the painting of the ceiling to decorate what had been a big barn of a place. Michelangelo agreed to the project only in order to gain the pontiff's favor, so that he would eventually be allowed to complete the tomb that was to house his statue *Moses*. Raphael's well-known *The School of Athens* (see Fig. 13–26) was one of a number of "wall decorations" commissioned by Pope Julius II for his apartments, a commission that stirred the brooding Michelangelo to great jealousy.

The Unicorn Tapestries (Fig. 1–3) were

commissioned at the end of the sixteenth century as a wedding present to Anne of Brittany and King Louis XII, and were meant to adorn the walls of one of the King's chateaus. The tapestries are tightly woven from wool and silk and are highlighted by threads of silver and silver-gold. Rich reds, oranges, yellows, and blues contrast with the whiteness of the unicorn and the true colors of the shrubbery. Eighty-five varieties of plants are accurately portrayed. The subject of the tapestries, the hunt of the unicorn, symbolizes courtly love and marriage and, possibly, the story of Jesus. The next-to-last scene shows the slaying of the unicorn, but in the final scene the unicorn is risen; it lives in captivity, its wounds visible.





1-4 K'o-Ssu Tapestry. Fragment of a panel (Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644). Silk and gold threads.

The Cleveland Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Wade.

The silk and gold K'o-Ssu Tapestry (Fig. 1-4) is contemporaneous with the European Unicorn Tapestries. It is a handsome example of the weaving of the Ming Dynasty, which ruled China from the fourteenth century through much of the seventeenth. These tapestries were frequently inspired by well-known paintings, but never copied them exactly. Soft, flat color schemes like that of the tapestry were also used in woven robes that suggested the status or official rank of the wearer.

### To Reveal Truth

*It is the glory and good of Art,  
That Art remains the one way possible  
Of speaking truths, to mouths like mine at least.*

—Robert Browning

*My aim in painting has always been the most exact transcription possible of my most intimate impressions of nature.*

—Edward Hopper

*There is no such thing as symbolic art, social art, religious art, or monumental art; there is only the art of the representation of nature by an artist whose sole aim is to express its truth.*

—Adolphe William Bouguereau

We must be able to see in order to appreciate the visual arts, but art can also make us see anew. It can highlight what is important and pierce façades to reveal what is beneath.

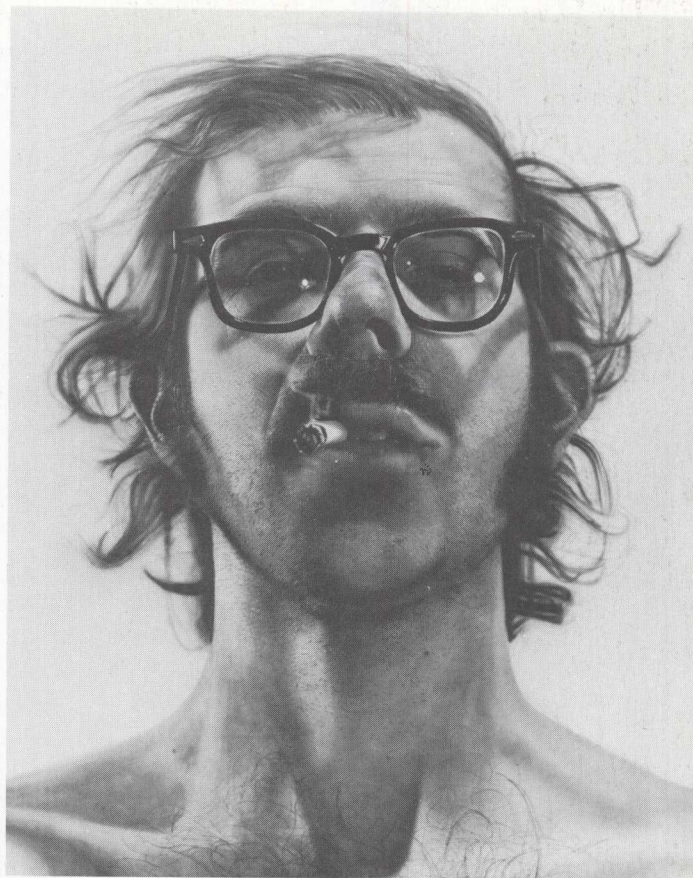
The truth, it is said, is not always pretty. Sometimes, in fact, it is ugly. Contemporary artist Chuck Close ruthlessly magnifies close-ups of photographed heads, projects them onto canvases and then paints them. His *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 1-5) measures almost 9 by 7 feet. Close's portraits, and those of many other **Photorealists**, carry the truth of photographic exactitude. All the imperfections of skin, the oiliness of unwashed hair, and the asymmetry of facial features assault the viewer. What a far cry from the *Mona Lisa*. Yet Close's self-portrait exemplifies another purpose of art.

The "ugly truth," like the beautiful truth,



1-5 CHUCK CLOSE  
*Self-Portrait* (1968)  
 Acrylic on canvas.  
 8'11½" x 6'11½".

Collection, Walker Art Center,  
 Minneapolis.



provides a valid commentary on the human condition. Just as people have vastly discrepant personal qualities, such as humility and arrogance, the subjects and methods of artists reveal what is ugly as well as what is beautiful.

### To Immortalize

*Blest be the art that can immortalize.*

—William Cowper

*All passes. Art alone*

*Enduring stays to us;*

*The Bust outlasts the throne,—*

*The coin, Tiberius.*

—Henry Austin Dobson

*I believe in Michelangelo, Velasquez, and Rembrandt;  
 in the might of design, the mystery of color, the re-  
 demption of all things by Beauty everlasting.*

—George Bernard Shaw

The sculpted bust of the emperor outlasts the emperor, according to Dobson's verse, above. The coin that shows Tiberius passes on through the centuries long after Tiberius himself has returned to dust. For millennia, art has been used to overleap the limits of this life. The patrons of art, and the artists themselves, have sought immortality through works of art.

The Great Pyramids at Giza in Egypt (see Fig. 10-13) were designed as tombs. They were meant to endure for centuries in order to guarantee a permanent resting place for the spirits of the pharaohs.

Many tales have been told of the struggles between Michelangelo and Pope Julius II concerning the completion of the Pope's tomb. The original commission called for a two-story building with twenty-eight statues. Michelangelo saw it as the crowning achievement of his career. But funds were diverted from the tomb during the Pope's