

Visual Art

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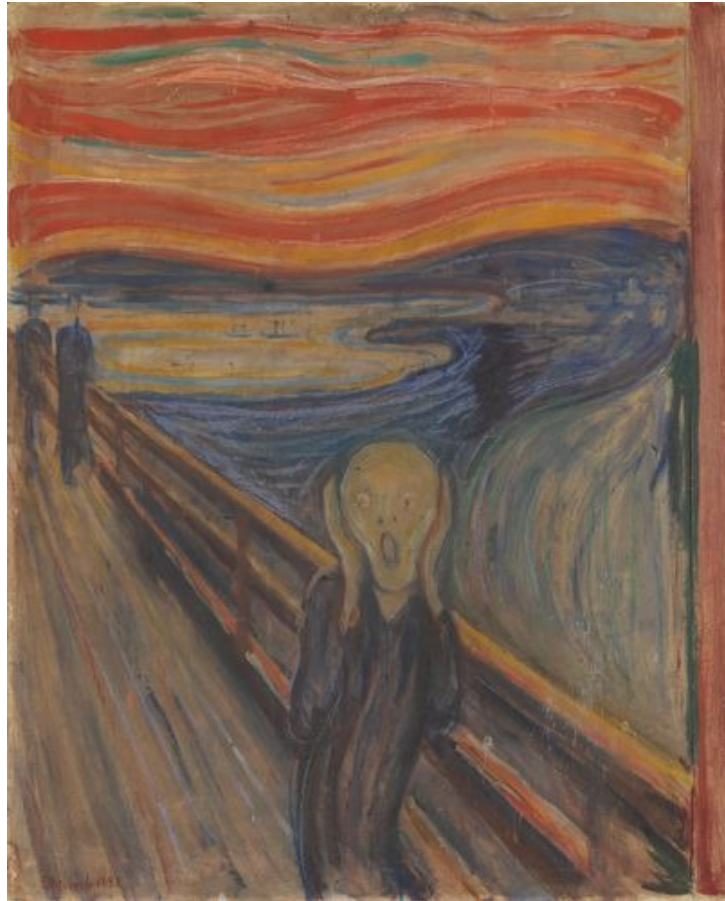
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Forms of Art - Abstract Art

240 words

Forms of Art - Symbolism

by ReadWorks



The Scream by Edvard Munch
Nasjonalmuseet/Høstland, Børre (CC BY 4.0)

Edvard Munch's painting called *The Scream* shows us how frustrated the artist is on the inside. This painting is a prime example of Symbolism.

During the late 1800s, the Symbolist movement started with French writers in response to the rigid structure of writing. They were also responding to society's age of reason and value of material things. The movement spread throughout Europe and even North America. It influenced the visual arts and theatre.

Many painters were feeling frustrated with creating art to mimic reality. Instead of painting exactly what they saw, Symbolist painters felt their paintings should be a visual outlet for their inner feelings and thoughts. To do this, they often painted mystical or loosely defined images as symbolic imagery to express themselves.

Many people believe Symbolism was an important art movement. Like Munch, some Symbolist painters painted distorted figures. They also used line and color as never before. With these tools they made emotions like fear and jealousy scream out at the viewer.

Forms of Art - African Sculpture

by ReadWorks

Many ancient African sculptures were made of wood. Wooden masks, figures, boxes, and other items were made for religious and personal use. In addition to wooden sculptures, other ancient African sculptures or pieces of sculptures have survived that were made out of ivory (elephant tusks), brass, or clay. The oldest African sculptures we know about were made in 500 B.C. in the Nok culture. The Nok terracotta figures were sculpted out of clay. They are still intact today.

In the late 1800s, many ancient African sculptures were put on display in different cities in Europe. Europeans had taken some sculptures after taking control of parts of Africa and exploring the continent. Since then, African art has had a big influence on other styles of art.

Modern African artists still use wood and metals to create masks and figures. Ivory is no longer used. A lot of elephants were killed in the 1900s for their tusks, and now there are far fewer elephants than there used to be.

Today, some museums have given ancient African sculptures taken by Europeans back to Africa. Many museums around the world have exhibits displaying ancient and modern African sculptures from many different parts of Africa. If you have never seen an African sculpture in person, maybe one day you can see an ancient or modern African sculpture.

Forms of Art - Landscape Paintings

by ReadWorks



Thomas Gainsborough's landscape painting titled "Mr. and Mrs. Andrews"

The National Gallery, London (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Landscape paintings are paintings of scenery. The scenery depicted in landscape paintings is usually an area that is very important to the painter. It could be a painting of the artist's childhood home area. It could be a beautiful vacation spot. It could also be a significant landmark like the Grand Canyon or Mount Fuji.

Before the 1700s, people were the main subjects of most paintings. Landscapes were just in the background. In the 1700s and 1800s, landscapes became the main subjects of many paintings. Many famous landscape paintings were painted in this time. One famous landscape is titled *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews* by British painter Thomas Gainsborough. In the mid-1750s, Gainsborough was hired to paint a portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Andrews. Instead of painting the couple in the center, he painted them on the left side of the canvas. He painted the couple's country estate on the rest of the canvas. The country estate takes up more space than the human figures. By using a lot of canvas space for the scenery, Gainsborough expressed how important the land was to the couple.

The amount of space used for scenery isn't the only important feature of a landscape painting. The ways landscape painters use color and their paintbrushes are also very important. Vincent van Gogh's landscape paintings were famous for their vivid color and brushstrokes. For example, in *The Starry Night*, he used a circular motion to paint the stars

and night sky. The swirling strokes make the stars look like they're shining and alive.

Many landscape painters try to paint exactly what they see. But sometimes landscape painters create landscape paintings to express ideas or feelings. For example, many landscape painters in the 1800s wanted to express their belief that God is most closely felt in nature. And some painters today make landscape paintings to show how people have impacted the land.

Forms of Art - Watercolor

by ReadWorks



John Singer Sargent used light and dark watercolors to create this painting, "The Bridge of Sighs."

John Singer Sargent

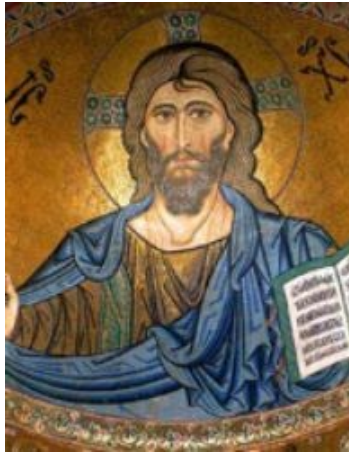
Watercolor painting is very popular among artists of all skill levels. Watercolor paint is hard in form. When water is added to it, the painter can apply the paint easily to paper. Thick types of paper are often used when watercolor painting. The thickness allows the water from the paint to be absorbed and not run or soak through the paper.

Artists can control the intensity of watercolors by adding more or less water to the paint. The more water you put on your brush, the lighter the color will be. For darker colors, you should use only a little bit of water. Watercolor equipment is light and easy to use outdoors. The paintings also dry quickly. For these reasons, many artists use watercolor paint to make quick sketches or studies of nature.

Believe it or not, water-based paint has been used since ancient times. Throughout the ages, artists have used water-based paint. Watercolor painting started to become popular in the mid-1700s. Since then, artists have tried different papers and different water levels. Maybe you should take up watercolor painting and experiment with it.

The Renaissance - Renaissance Art

by ReadWorks



Christ Pantocrator in the
Cefalù Cathedral

During the Middle Ages, most Europeans thought art should be about themes or characters in Christianity. Painters and sculptors incorporated themes from the Bible. The church wanted viewers to concentrate on Christian stories and teachings. Artists weren't concerned with making their subjects appear natural or lifelike. The figures and objects in paintings were stacked up on each other, and there was no depth. They looked flat and two-dimensional.

The period following the Middle Ages was the Renaissance. Artists in the Renaissance turned to the classic ideals of Greece and Rome for inspiration. Their art celebrated human ideas and ability. Renaissance artists stressed the beauty of the human body. They tried to capture the dignity of human beings in lifelike paintings and sculptures.

In order to create more realistic art, Renaissance artists developed new painting techniques. For example, they learned about perspective. Instead of stacking figures and objects together on a canvas, figures that were far away were painted smaller. Those closer up were painted bigger. Even formulas were made so that artists could paint perspective realistically.



Mona Lisa by
Leonardo da Vinci

Another technique Renaissance artists created was called *chiaroscuro*. *Chiaroscuro* is all about visually expressing light and shadows. This technique made figures look more realistic and three-dimensional. With shadows, painters could create a sense of depth. Figures looked less flat or stiff.

Leonardo da Vinci used *chiaroscuro* in his brilliant work the *Mona Lisa*. The painting is one of the most famous paintings in the world. It influenced Renaissance artists, especially those who painted portraits. For example, the famous Renaissance painter Raphael modeled his portraits after the *Mona Lisa*.



David by
Michelangelo

Michelangelo's *David* is another masterpiece of Renaissance art. Michelangelo carved the statue out of marble, and it stands 17 feet tall. David is a character from the Bible. In the Bible, a young David defeats a giant named Goliath with a slingshot. Like other Renaissance art, Michelangelo's *David* celebrates humanity and the human body.

Forms of Art - Photography

by ReadWorks

There are several ways to create a photograph. The most common photographs are made using a camera. In many ways, a camera works like a human eye. Like the eye, the camera takes in rays of light reflected from a subject. It then focuses the rays into an image. Older cameras record the image on inserted film. Newer digital cameras record the image on an electronic storage device such as a memory card. Once the image is captured, it can be seen and enjoyed by many people.

When using a camera, the photographic process requires care and patience. Creating great printed photographs by using older cameras requires five steps: (1) finding a subject, (2) focusing on the subject, (3) exposing the film, (4) developing the film, and (5) producing the photograph. Many professional photographers do all five steps themselves. They use a room called a darkroom. It's "dark" so that light doesn't ruin the negatives.

Photography makes our lives richer in many ways. Through photographs we can learn about other parts of the world and see how people live. We can also imagine what life was like in other time periods since the mid-1800s, when the camera was invented. Special cameras can capture images in places most human beings can't go, like distant planets or deep oceans. But, best of all, photographs remind us of the special people and special times in our lives. Millions of people use cameras to take pictures of their family, friends, and special celebrations. For them, the photographs they take are priceless.

Forms of Art - Abstract Art

by ReadWorks



abstract art inspired by Mark Rothko

Did you ever look at a piece of art that was just a box of color or a bunch of squiggly lines and wonder, "This is art?!? !" Most likely, you were looking at a piece of abstract art like the painting on the left, inspired by Mark Rothko.

Abstract art is a type of art that makes little or no attempt to create a realistic picture. It emphasizes color, shape, and texture. Many abstract artists want to express a specific idea or feeling through their art.

When I first saw abstract art, I hated it. I laughed at it and made fun of it. I only became a fan of abstract art when I saw Rothko's work. I appreciated his combination of colors and the way he always had two main areas on the canvas. It made me see something in myself.

I don't know what Rothko was thinking when he painted. Not knowing, however, allowed me to come up with my own ideas. When I look at a Rothko, I see myself in two parts. Sometimes, I see a happy side and a sad side. Sometimes, I see love and hate.

Now I always see something different when I look at abstract art. Next time you're looking at abstract art in a museum or in an art book, stop and look closer. Instead of seeing lines and colors, let your imagination run free.