

# **ARTS 1A: INTRODUCTION TO THE VISUAL ARTS**

**Britannica:**

## **Art:**

**A visual object or experience consciously created through an expression of skill or imagination. The term art encompasses diverse media such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, decorative arts, photography, and installation.**

**The various visual arts exist within a continuum that ranges from purely aesthetic purposes at one end to purely utilitarian purposes at the other.**

In what ways are the visual arts  
part of your life?

# **Representational and Abstract Art**

<https://www.nature.com/news/world-s-oldest-art-found-in-indonesian-cave-1.16100#/ref-link-1>

## 40-35,000 BCE – first representational works of art

*Sulawesi Cave, Indonesia (37,900 BCE)*

**Representation:** The presenting again of something observed.

**Representational Art** (Related terms: naturalistic, figurative): Resembles forms in the natural world; “window on the world”.





***Woolly Mammoth Figurine*** from Vogelherd Cave Germany. 3.7 cm (1.5 inch) long. 30-35,000 BCE

***The Venus of Hohle Fels***

Mammoth ivory. It was unearthed in 2008 in Hohle Fels, a cave in Germany. Height 6 cm (2.4 in). 33,000-38,000 BCE



Is this work considered representational?



***The Lady and the Unicorn: Sight.***  
One of six tapestries woven in Flanders from wool and silk, from designs drawn in Paris around 1500. 3.10 m x 3.30 m (10 ft 2 in x 10 ft 10 in)

**naturalism:** when works strive for an accurate representation of the visible world

**Pablo Picasso, *First Communion*, 1895-1896.** Oil on canvas, 65 3/8" x 46 1/2". Museo Picasso, Barcelona.







## **Trompe l'oeil**

(French for 'trick the eye.'  
pronounced: tromp-loy):  
Style of representation in  
which a painted object is  
intended to deceive the viewer  
into believing it is the object  
itself.

**Andrea Mantegna, interior of  
the Camera degli Sposi (Room  
of the Newlyweds), Palazzo  
Ducale, Mantua, Italy, 1474.  
Fresco.**

**Andrea Mantegna,  
*Camera degli Sposi***

***The Oculus***

1473. Fresco

270 cm diameter

Palazzo Ducale, Mantua





This drawing was requested by Live8 to support the pressure campaign on the G8 in Edinburgh

<http://youtu.be/ECeGwg7Cm0A>

**Julian Beever**  
***Make Poverty History***  
2005, Edinburgh.  
Scotland





**Duane Hanson, *Slab Man*, 1976, Vinyl, polychromed in oil, with accessories. Life-size. Cantor Museum at Stanford University**

**Duane Hanson, *Housepainter III*, 1984/1988. Autobody filler, polychromed mixed media, with accessories, life-size.**



Duane Hanson, *Tourists II*, 1988



Duane Hanson, *Supermarket Shopper*, 1970. Polyester resin and fiberglass polychromed in oil, with clothing, steel cart, and groceries, life-size.



# Pablo Picasso: 1881-1973

Spanish painter, sculptor, graphic artist, and ceramist, who worked in France. He is generally considered in his technical virtuosity, enormous versatility, and incredible originality and prolificity to have been the foremost figure in 20th-century art.

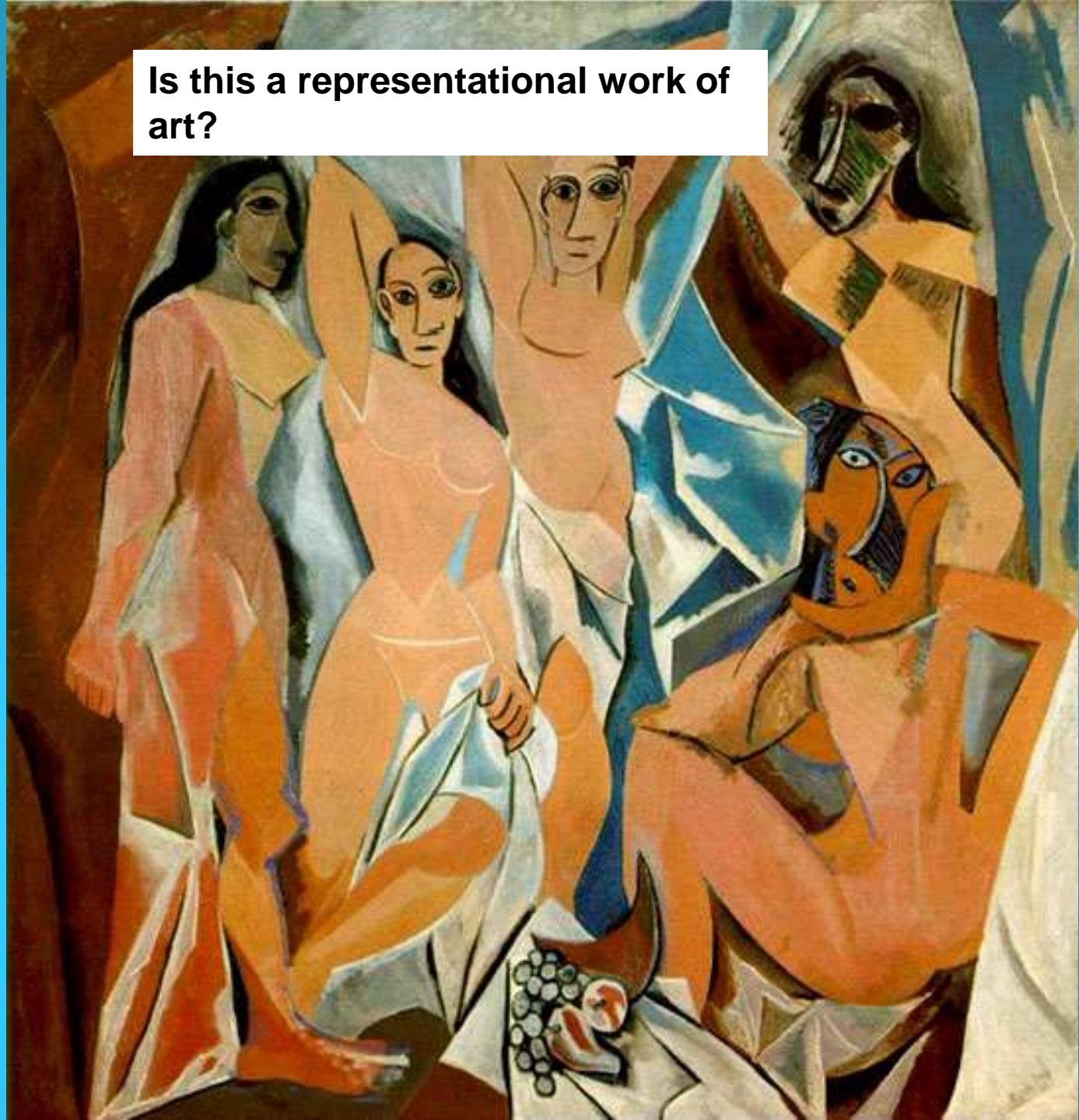
Pablo Picasso biography: <http://youtu.be/zXLi9QKaPU4>



## Abstract Art:

1. Art that distorts, exaggerates or simplifies the natural world to provide essence or universal generalized form.
2. Art that does not represent recognizable objects

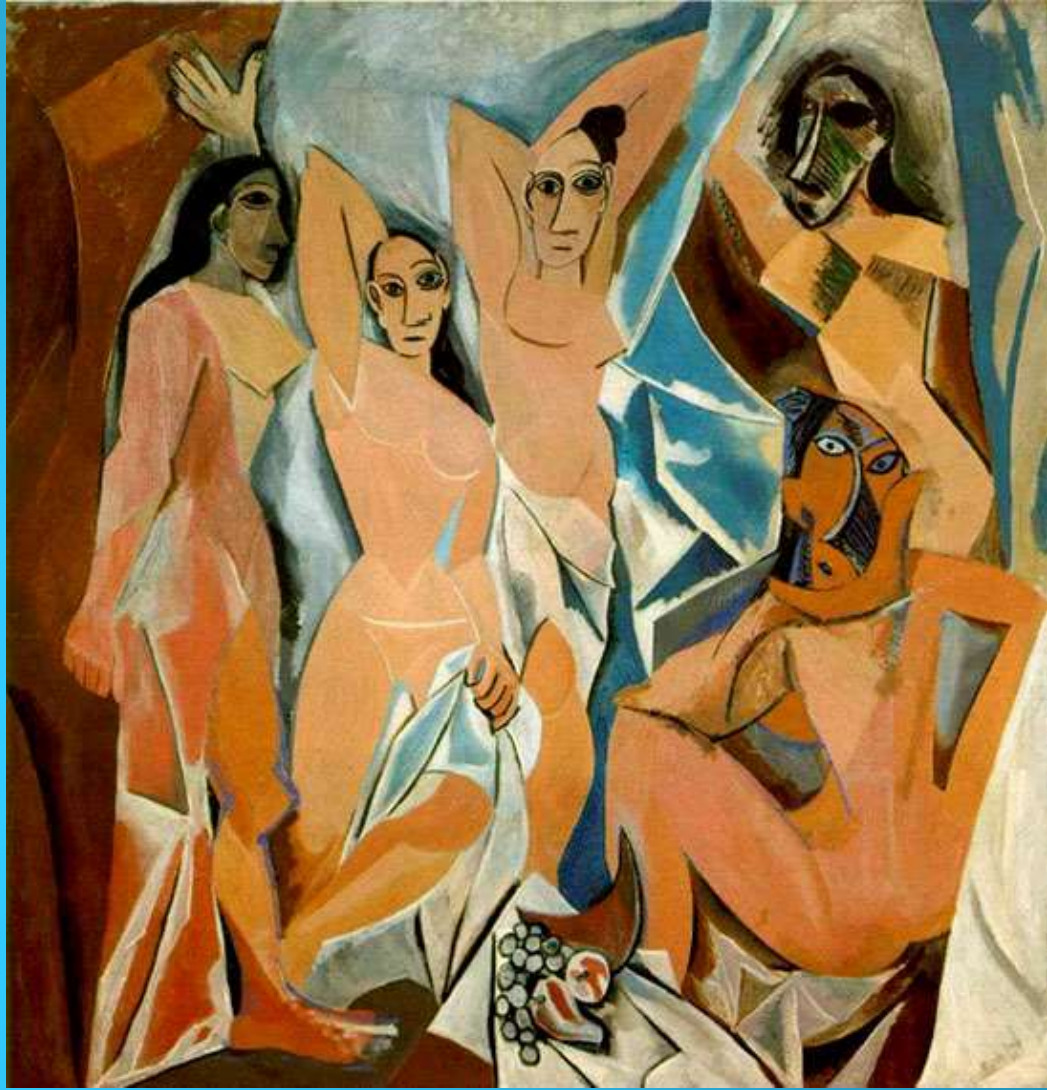
Is this a representational work of art?



**Pablo Picasso,**  
***Les Femmes d'Alger***  
***(the Young Women of Avignon)***  
1907.  
Oil on Canvas, 8'X7'8"  
Museum of Modern Art.  
New York



**Pablo Picasso, *First Communion*, 1895-1896.** Oil on canvas, 65 3/8" x 46 1/2". Museo Picasso, Barcelona.



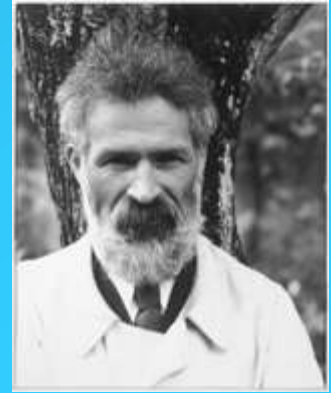
**Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* (the Young Women of Avignon) 1907.** Oil on Canvas, 8'X7'8"



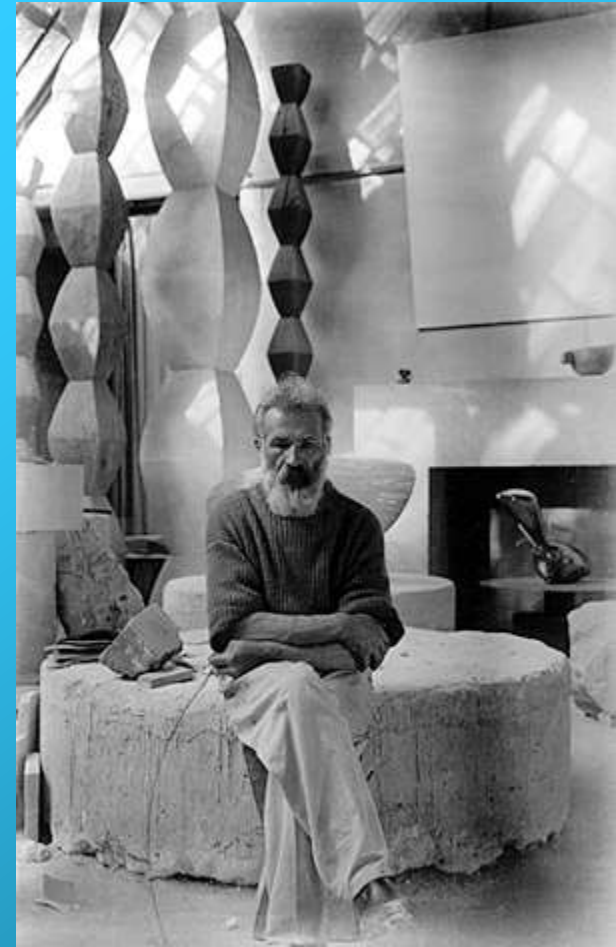
# Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957)

**A Romanian sculptor who settled in France.**

**He was a central figure of the modern movement and a pioneer of abstraction. His sculpture is noted for its visual elegance and sensitive use of materials, combining the directness of peasant carving with the sophistication of the Parisian avant-garde.**



Photographs, 1933-34





**Constantin Brâncuși , *Sleep*.**  
Marble, 1908



**Constantin Brancusi, *Sleeping Muse*,**  
bronze, marble 1909-1910



**Louis Bourgeois**  
**1911-2010 (aged 98)**

French-born American sculptor, born in 1911. After studying art in Paris, she moved to New York in 1938 with her husband Robert Goldwater and became active in the feminist movement. She was the first woman artist to have a retrospective at the MoMA in 1982.



**Robert Mapplethorpe.**

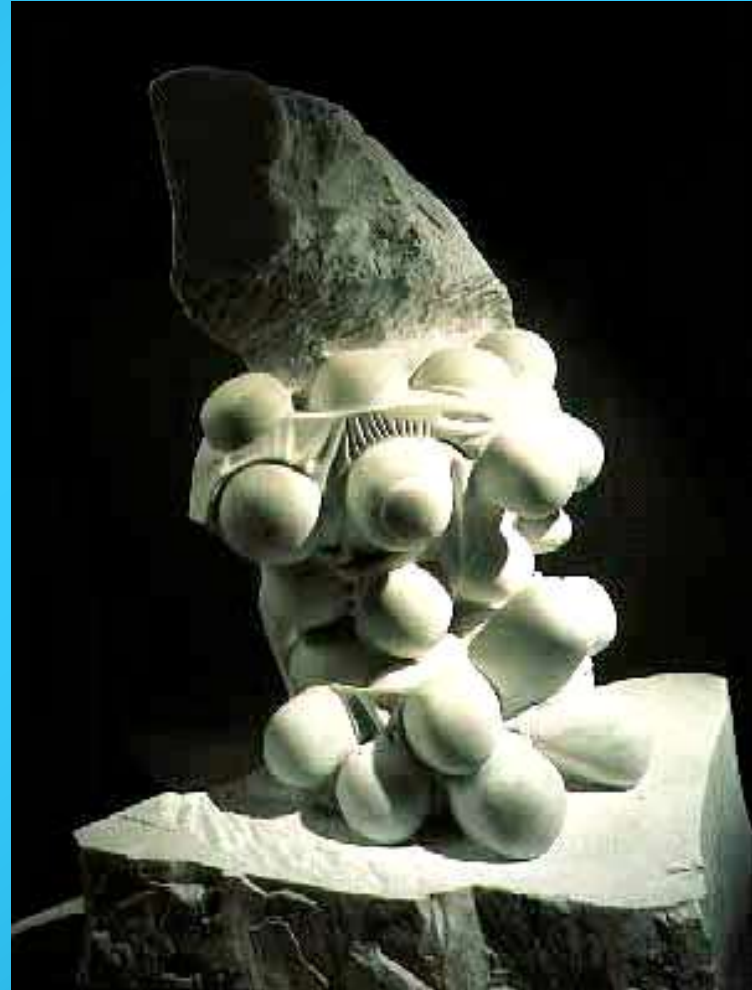
***Louise Bourgeois, 1982***

(Bourgeois is holding her latex sculpture Fillette —a French term that refers to a young and inexperienced girl)

**"My childhood never lost its magic, never lost its mystery, and never lost its drama."**

**Louise Bourgeois**

**Louise Bourgeois**  
Blind Man's Buff 1984. Marble



Comparison: Artemis of Ephesus. 1st century  
CE Roman copy of the cult statue of the  
Temple of Ephesus.



**Louise Bourgeois**

Blind Man's Buff 1984. Marble





**Louise Bourgeois, *The Nest*, 1994; sculpture; steel, 101 in. x 189 in. x 158 in. (256.54 cm x 480.06 cm x 401.32 cm); SFMOMA**



***Cylindrical Head***, c. 13th-14th century, Ife. Yoruba. Terra cotta, 6 3/8" high. National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria.



***Head of a King, from Ife. Yoruba***, c. 13th century. Brass, life-size. The British Museum, London.

# Nonrepresentational

**Nonrepresentational (Nonobjective. Sometimes called “Abstract”):** contains no reference to the natural world as we see it.





<https://www.guggenheim.org/video/hilma-af-klint>



**Hilma af Klint**  
***The Ten Biggest, No 7***  
1907  
Oil and tempera on paper  
328 x 240 cm



**Hilma af Klint**  
***The Swan, No 17,***  
*Group IX, Series*  
*SUW 1914-1915*  
Oil on canvas  
155 x 152 cm



**Vasily Kandinsky.**  
***Black Lines No. 189.***  
1913. Oil on Canvas,  
51X51". Guggenheim  
Mus. NY

**“Generally speaking,  
color influences the  
soul. Color is the  
keyboard, the eyes  
are the hammers, the  
soul is the piano with  
many strings. The  
artist is the hand that  
plays, touching one  
key or another  
purposively, to cause  
vibration in the soul.”**

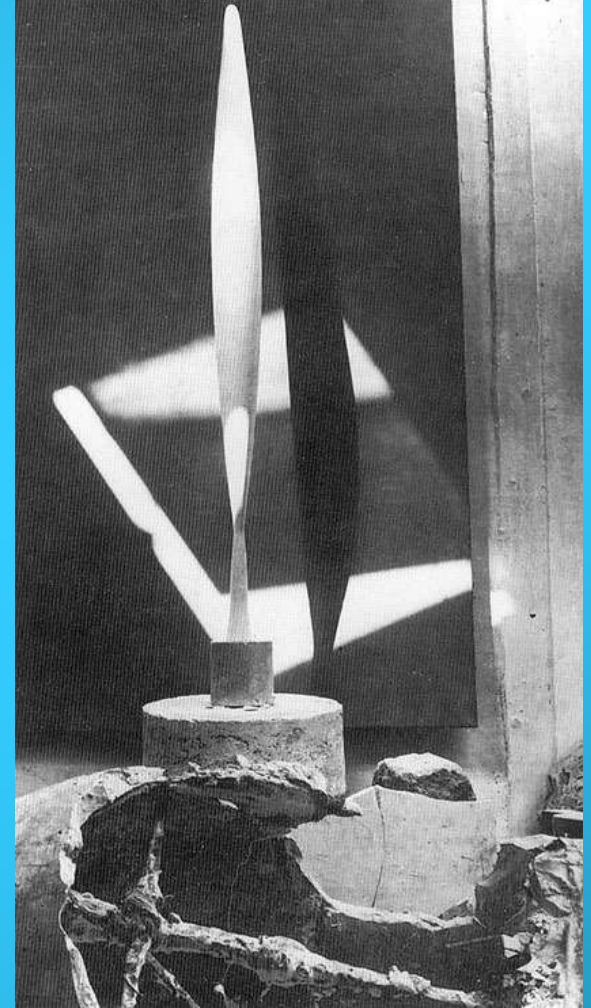
**Vasily Kandinsky**





**Vasili Kandinsky, *Composition IX*, 1936.** Oil on canvas, 44 5/8" x 76 3/4". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Constantin  
Brancusi, *Bird  
in Space*, 1923  
White Marble;  
H. (with base)  
56 3/4 in.  
(144.1 cm),  
Diam. 6 1/2 in.  
(16.5 cm)



**Constantin Brancusi. *Bird  
in Space*. c. 1928-30.  
Gelatin silver print**

Find in your book -

- Two works that are representational and naturalistic at the same time
- Two works that are representational and abstract
- Two works that are non representational

# Style

**Style:** A characteristic, or a number of characteristics, that we can identify as constant, recurring or coherent. In art, the sum of such characteristics associated with a particular artist, group, or culture, or with an artist's work at a specific time

**Hathor and Sety, detail of a pillar  
from the tomb of Sety I, c. 1300  
B.C.E. Painted plaster on limestone,  
height 7'5". Musée du Louvre, Paris.**

**Isis and Osiris. 1291-1279 BCE (New  
Kingdom.) Temple of Seti I. Abydos**





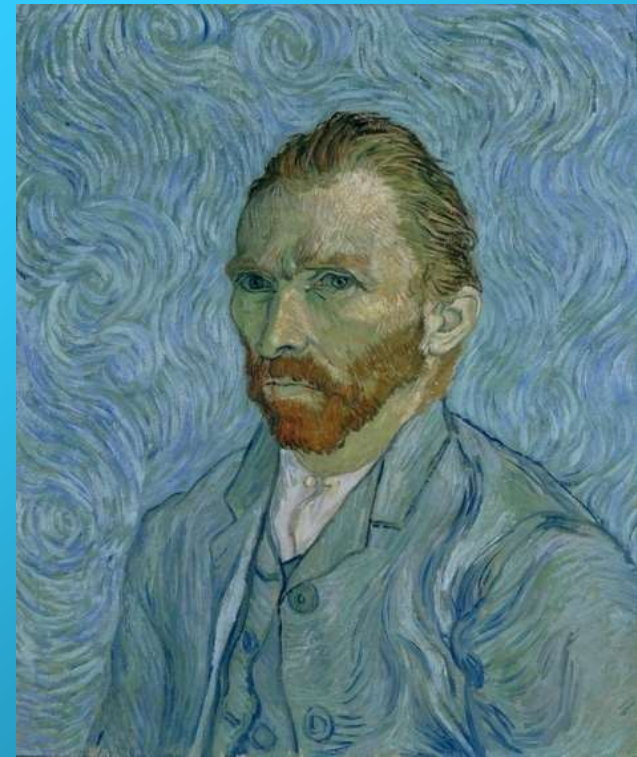
## Van Gogh, Vincent (1853–90)

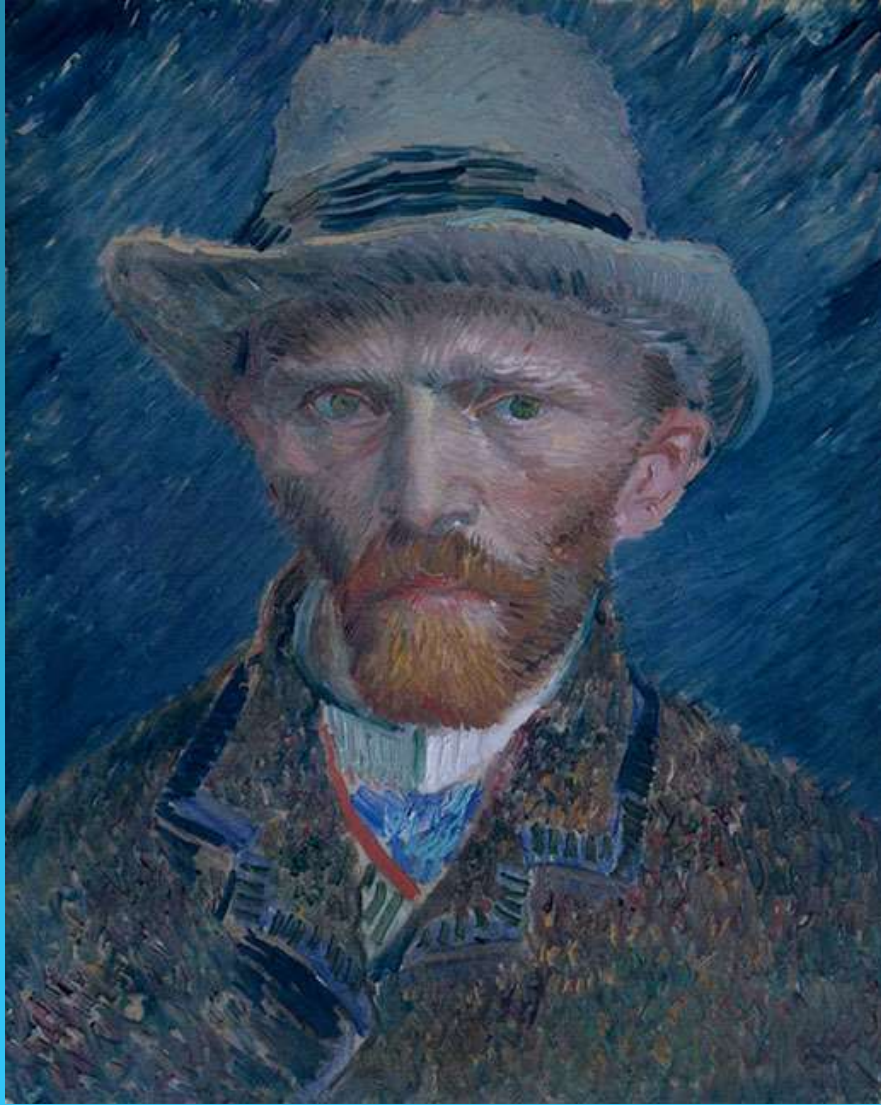
A nineteenth-century Dutch painter who worked mainly in France. His brief, turbulent, and tragic life is thought to epitomize the mad genius legend.

Only one of his paintings was sold while he lived. The great majority of the works by which he is remembered were produced in 29 months of frenzied activity and intermittent bouts with epileptoid seizures and profound despair that finally ended in suicide.

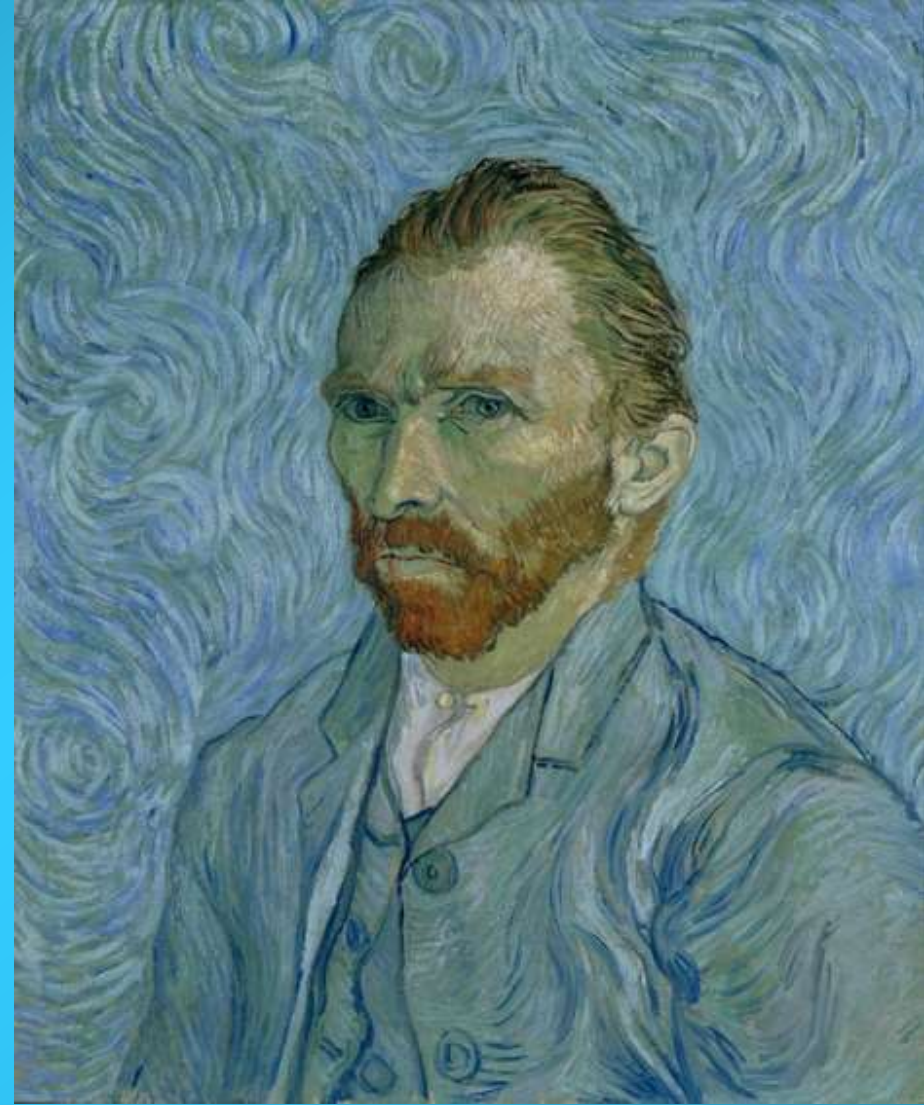
In his grim struggle he had one constant ally and support, his younger brother, to whom he wrote revealing letters detailing his conflicts and aspirations.

Since his death, his paintings have been sold for many millions of dollars.





**Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait***  
1887. Oil on canvas,



**Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait***,  
1889. Oil on canvas, 25 1/2" x 21 1/4".  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



**Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889.** Oil on canvas, 29" x 36 1/4".  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. <http://youtu.be/CUeIGjcpnHA> 38:20

# ART AND MEANING

# Form and Content

**Form:** The way a work looks. It includes all visual aspects of the work such as size, shape, materials, color and composition.

**Content:** What the work of art is about. It includes subject matter, message and iconography.

**Henri Matisse, *Piano Lesson*, 1916.** Oil on canvas, 8' 1/2" x 6' 11 3/4". The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



**Henri Matisse.**  
***Music Lesson.***

1917. Oil on canvas,  
8'X6'11"





**Henri Matisse. *Music Lesson*.**  
1917. Oil on canvas, 8'X6'11"

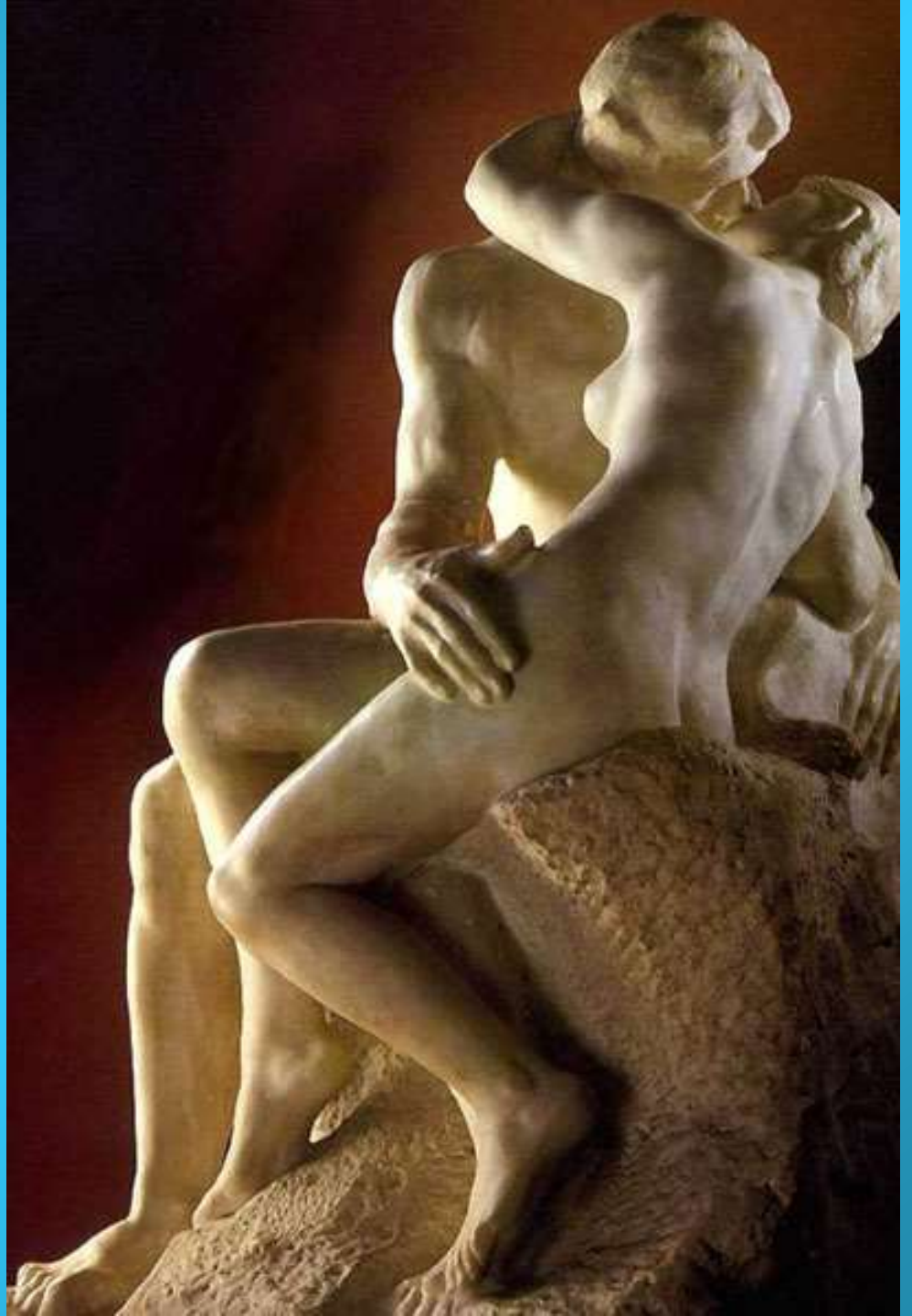


**Henri Matisse, *Piano Lesson*, 1916.**  
Oil on canvas, 8' 1/2" x 6' 11 3/4".

**How does the form in these paintings contribute to the content (including mood and message) ?**



**Auguste Rodin. *The Kiss*,  
1886-1898. Marble, 5' 11  
1/4" high. Musée Rodin,  
Paris.**







**Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992. Installation view and details**

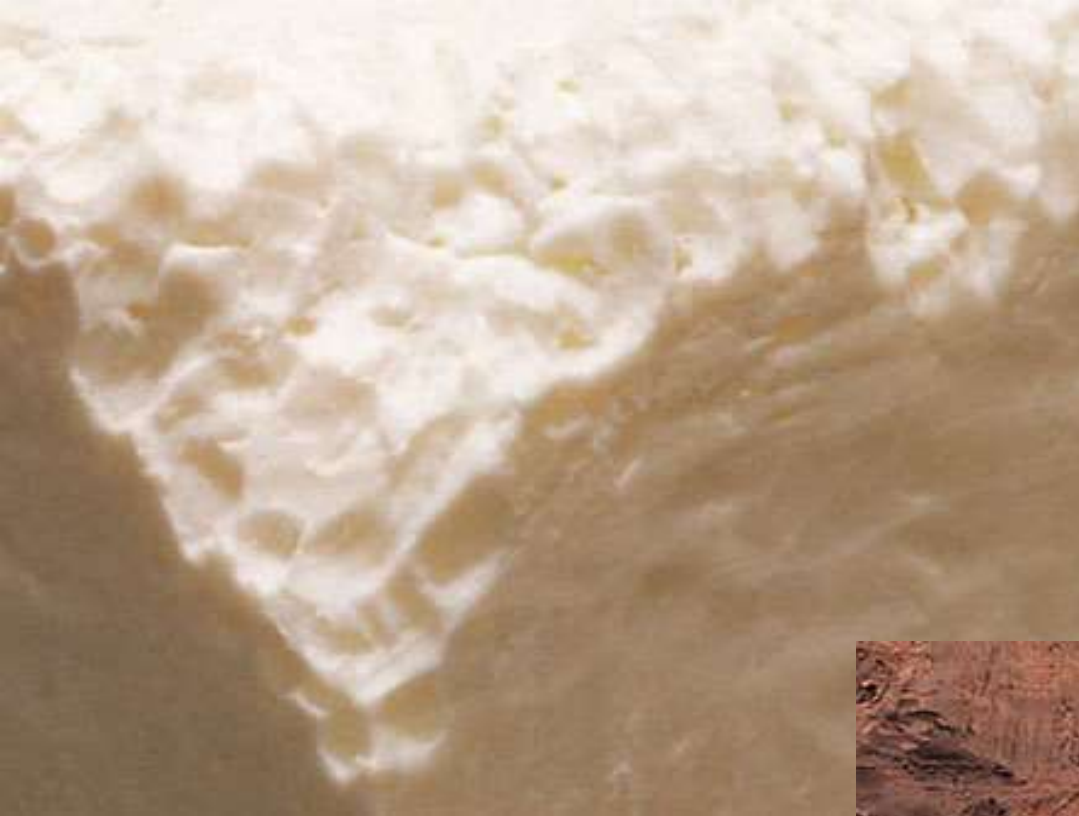
Three part installation. 600 lbs. of chocolate; 600 lbs. of lard; (approximately 2 x 2 x 2 feet) display: 130 Lipsticks made with pigment, beeswax, and chewed lard removed from the lard cube; 27 Heart-shaped packages made from chewed chocolate removed from the chocolate cube.



Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992.

Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992.





In your opinion, would it be different if Antoni used a tool to make it appear as if the chocolate and lard cubes had been chewed on instead of actually biting the cubes herself? Why or why not?



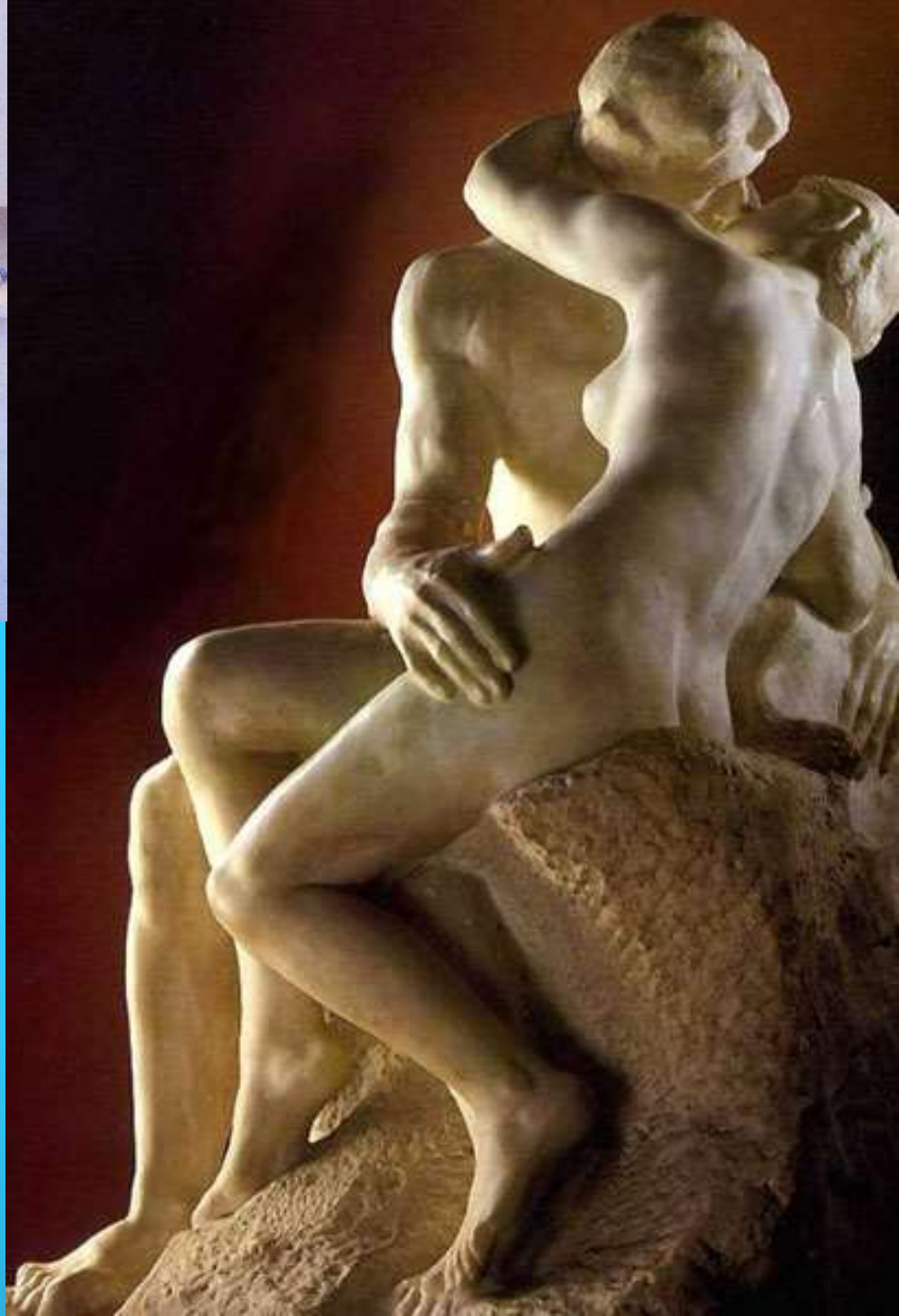
Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992.



Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992.

How does the form in these works contribute to the content?

Auguste Rodin. *The Kiss*, 1886-1898.  
Marble, 5' 11 1/4" high.



**Jan van Eyck,**  
***Arnolfini Portrait,***  
1434. Oil on wood, 32  
1/4" x 23 1/2". National  
Gallery, London.

**Iconography** (literally  
“describing images”): The  
identification, description and  
interpretation of subject matter  
in art (including symbols or  
references, people, events, etc.)  
Requires knowledge of a  
specific time, beliefs or culture.





**Jan van Eyck,  
*Arnolfini Portrait*,  
Detail. 1434. Oil on  
wood, 32 1/4" x 23 1/2".  
National Gallery,  
London.**

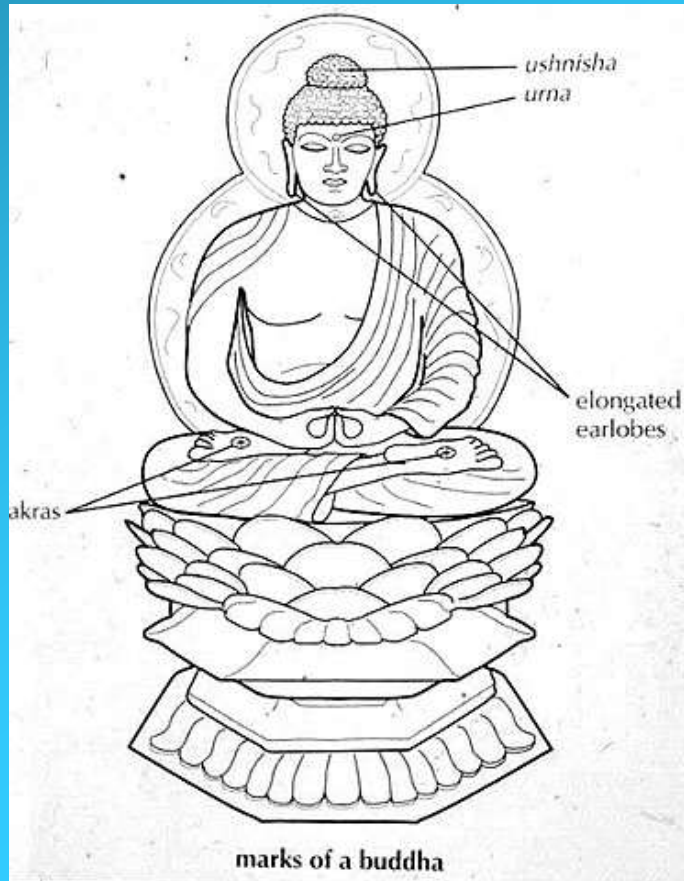


## Jocho. *Amida Nyorai*

(Buddha of the Western Paradise)

Byodo-in Temple, Japan.

C. 1053. Gilded wood, height 9'2"



Lotus=purity. Ushnisha= enlightenment. Hand gesture= meditation and balance

# Context

**Context:** The personal and social circumstances surrounding the making, viewing and interpreting of a work of art; the varied connections of a work of art to the larger world of its time and place.

**Finial of a linguist's (spokesperson) staff, from Ghana.** Ashanti culture, 20th century. Wood and gold, 2 3/4" high. Musée Barbier-Mueller, Geneva.

**Political power is like an egg, says an Ashanti proverb. Grasp it too tightly and it will shatter in your hand; hold it too loosely and it will slip from your fingers.**





**Linguists** at Enyan Abassa, Ghana, 1974.



**Titian, *Assumption of the Virgin*,  
1516-1518. Oil on panel, 22' 7 1/2" x 11' 9  
3/4" Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice.**

Choose one work of art from your book and describe its form, content and context.

**Form:** The way a work looks. It includes all visual aspects of the work such as size, shape, materials, color, style and composition.

**Content:** What the work of art is about. It includes subject matter, message and iconography. (Including the title of the artwork)

**Context:** Includes knowledge of artist, time & culture.

# Art and Beauty

## **Aesthetics:**

A branch of philosophy concerned with the feelings aroused in us by sensory experiences such as seeing and hearing. Aesthetics examines, among other things, the nature of art and the nature of beauty.

## **Beauty :**

The quality that gives pleasure to the mind or senses and is associated with such properties as harmony of form or color, excellence of artistry, truthfulness, and originality.





**Komar & Melamid**  
**UNITED STATES: *Most Wanted*:**  
**(dishwasher size)**

Komar and Melamid's People's Choice series, 1994-1997, consisted of the "most wanted" and "most unwanted" paintings of 11 countries. The artists commissioned polling companies to conduct scientific polls to discover what people want to see in art.

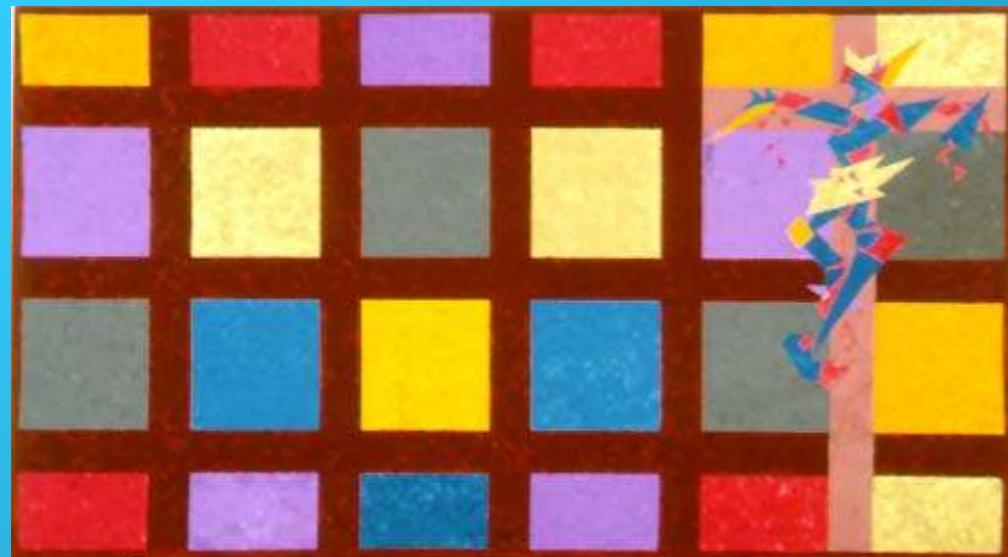
**Komar & Melamid**  
**UNITED STATES:**  
**LEAST WANTED**  
**PAINTING**  
**(paperback size)**





**Komar & Melamid  
FRANCE: MOST WANTED PAINTING  
(television size)**

**Komar & Melamid  
FRANCE: LEAST WANTED  
PAINTING (wall size)**



- Find in your book a work of art that you consider beautiful and explain what makes it beautiful.
- Find a work of art that you consider ugly and explain what makes it ugly.