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The arts

The arts refers to the theory and physical expression of creativity found in human societies and cultures. Major constituents of the arts include literature – including poetry, prose and drama, performing arts – among them music, dance, and theatre; and visual arts – including drawing, painting, photography, ceramics, sculpting, and architecture – the art of designing and constructing buildings.

Some art forms combine a visual element with performance (e.g. cinematography) or artwork with the written word (e.g. comics). From prehistoric cave paintings to modern day films, art serves as a vessel for storytelling and conveying humankind's relationship with the environment.

Hans Rottenhammer, *Allegory of the Arts* (second half of the 16th century). Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

Contents

Definitions

In its most basic abstract definition, art is a documented expression of a sentient being through or on an accessible medium so that anyone can view, hear or experience it. The act itself of producing an expression can also be referred to as a certain art, or as art in general. If this solidified expression, or the act of producing it, is "good" or has value depends on those who access and rate it and this public rating is dependent on various subjective factors. Merriam-Webster defines "the arts" as "painting, sculpture, music, theater, literature, etc., considered as a group of activities done by people with skill and imagination."[1] Similarly, the United States Congress, in the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, defined "the arts" as follows:[2]

> The term 'the arts' includes, but is not limited to, music (instrumental and vocal), dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, industrial design, costume and fashion design, motion pictures, television, radio, film, video, tape and sound recording, the arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of such major art forms, all those traditional arts practiced by the diverse peoples of this country. (sic) and the study and application of the arts to the human environment.

History

In Ancient Greece, all art and craft was referred to by the same word, *techne*. Thus, there was no distinction between the arts. Ancient Greek art brought the veneration of the animal form and the development of equivalent skills to show musculature, poise, beauty, and anatomically correct proportions. Ancient Roman art depicted gods as idealized humans, shown with characteristic distinguishing features (e.g. Zeus' thunderbolt). In Byzantine and Gothic art of the Middle Ages, the dominance of the church insisted on the expression of biblical and not material truths. Eastern art has generally worked in a style akin to Western medieval art, namely a concentration on surface patterning and local colour (meaning the plain colour of an object, such as basic red for a red robe, rather than the modulations of that colour brought about by light, shade and reflection). A characteristic of this style is that the local colour is often defined by an outline (a contemporary equivalent is the cartoon). This is evident in, for example, the art of India, Tibet and Japan. Religious Islamic art forbids iconography, and expresses religious ideas through geometry instead.

Classifications

Lawrence Alma-Tadema's *Catullus-at-Lesbia's* (1865)

In the Middle Ages, the *Artes Liberales* (liberal arts) were taught in universities as part of the Trivium, an introductory curriculum involving grammar, rhetoric, and logic,[3] and of the Quadrivium, a curriculum involving the "mathematical arts" of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.[4] The *Artes Mechanicae* (consisting of *vestiaria* – tailoring and weaving; *agricultura* – agriculture; *architectura* – architecture and masonry; *militia* and *venatoria* – warfare, hunting, military education, and the martial arts; *mercatura* – trade; *coquinaria* – cooking; and *metallaria* – blacksmithing and metallurgy)[5] were practised and developed in guild environments. The modern distinction between "artistic" and "non-artistic" skills did not develop until the Renaissance. In modern academia, the arts are usually grouped with or as a subset of the humanities. Some subjects in the humanities are history, linguistics, literature, theology, philosophy, and logic.

The arts have also been classified as seven: Literature, painting, sculpture, and music comprise the main four arts, of which the other three are derivative; drama is literature with acting, dance is music expressed through motion, and song is music with literature and voice.[6]

Visual arts

Drawing

Drawing is a means of making an image, using any of a wide variety of tools and techniques. It generally involves making marks on a surface by applying pressure from a tool, or moving a tool across a surface. Common tools are graphite pencils, pen and ink, inked brushes, wax colour pencils, crayons, charcoals, pastels, and markers. Digital tools which can simulate the effects of these are also used. The main techniques used in drawing are line drawing, hatching, crosshatching, random hatching, scribbling, stippling, and blending. An artist who excels in drawing is referred to as a *drafter*, *draftswoman*, or *draughtsman*.[7] Drawing can be used to create art used in cultural industries such as illustrations, comics and animation.

Painting

Colour is the essence of painting as sound is of music. Colour is highly subjective, but has observable psychological effects, although these can differ from one culture to the next. Black is associated with mourning in the West, but elsewhere white may be. Some painters, theoreticians, writers and scientists, including Goethe,[8] Kandinsky,[9] and Newton,[10] have written their own colour theory. Moreover, the use of language is only an abstraction for a colour equivalent. The word "red," for example, can cover a wide range of variations on the pure red of the spectrum. There is not a formalized register of different colours in the way that there is agreement on different notes in music, such as C or C#, although the Pantone system is widely used in the printing and design industry for this purpose.

Modern painters have extended the practice considerably to include, for example, collage. Collage is not painting in the strict sense since it includes other materials. Some modern painters incorporate different materials such as sand, cement, straw, wood or strands of hair for their artwork texture. Examples of this are the works of Elito Circa, Jean Dubuffet or Anselm Kiefer. Broadly speaking, Modern and contemporary painting seems to move away from the historic value of craft in favour of concept; which becomes more apparent from early-twentieth century onwards. This transition has led some to say that painting, as a serious art form, is dead, although this has not deterred

The *Mona Lisa*, by Leonardo da Vinci, is one of the most recognizable artistic paintings in the Western world.

the majority of artists from continuing to practise it either as whole or part of their work. Indigenouism is also considered as Modern and contemporary Art in early 20th Century.

Ceramics

Ceramic art is art made from ceramic materials (including clay), which may take forms such as pottery, tile, figurines, sculpture, and tableware. While some ceramic products are considered fine art, some are considered to be decorative, industrial, or applied art objects. Ceramics may also be considered artefacts in archaeology.Ceramic art can be made by one person or by a group of people. In a pottery or ceramic factory, a group of people design, manufacture, and decorate the pottery. Products from a pottery are sometimes referred to as "art pottery." In a one-person pottery studio, ceramists

or potters produce studio pottery. In modern ceramic engineering usage, "ceramics" is the art and science of making objects from inorganic, non-metallic materials by the action of heat. It excludes glass and mosaic made from glass *tesserae*.

Photography

Photography as an art form refers to photographs that are created in accordance with the creative vision of the photographer. Art photography stands in contrast to photojournalism, which provides a visual account for news events, and commercial photography, the primary focus of which is to advertise products or services.

Architecture

The Parthenon on top of the Acropolis, Athens, Greece

Architecture is the art and science of designing buildings and structures. The word *architecture* comes from the Greek *arkhitekton*, "master builder, director of works," from *αρχι-* (arkhi) "chief" + *τεκτων* (tekton) "builder, carpenter".[11] A wider definition would include the design of the built environment, from the macrolevel of town planning, urban design, and landscape architecture to the microlevel of creating furniture. Architectural design usually must address both feasibility and cost for the builder, as well as function and aesthetics for the user.

In modern usage, architecture is the art and discipline of creating, or inferring an implied or apparent plan of, a complex object or system. The term can be used to connote the *implied architecture* of abstract things such as music or mathematics, the *apparent architecture* of natural things, such as geological formations or the structure of biological cells, or explicitly *planned architectures* of human-made things such as software, computers, enterprises, and databases, in addition to buildings. In every usage, an architecture may be seen as a *subjective mapping* from a human perspective (that of the *user* in the case of abstract or physical artifacts) to the elements or components of some kind of structure or system, which preserves the relationships among the elements or components. Planned architecture manipulates space, volume, texture, light, shadow, or abstract elements in order to achieve pleasing aesthetics. This distinguishes it from applied science or engineering, which usually concentrate more on the functional and feasibility aspects of the design of constructions or structures.

Table of architecture, *Cyclopaedia*, 1728

In the field of building architecture, the skills demanded of an architect range from the more complex, such as for a hospital or a stadium, to the apparently simpler, such as planning residential houses. Many architectural works may be seen also as cultural and political symbols, or works of art. The role of the architect, though changing, has been central to the successful (and sometimes less than successful) design and implementation of pleasingly built environments in which people live.

Sculpture

Sculpture is the branch of the visual arts that operates in three dimensions. It is one of the plastic arts. Durable sculptural processes originally used carving (the removal of material) and modelling (the addition of material, as clay), in stone, metal, ceramics, wood and other materials; but since modernism, shifts in sculptural process led to an almost complete freedom of materials and process. A wide variety of materials may be worked by removal such as carving, assembled by welding or modelling, or moulded, or cast.

Conceptual art

Conceptual art is art in which the concept(s) or idea(s) involved in the work takes precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns. The inception of the term in the 1960s referred to a strict and focused practice of idea-based art that often defied traditional visual criteria associated with the visual arts in its presentation as text.[12] Through its association with the Young British Artists and the Turner Prize during the 1990s, its popular usage, particularly in the UK, developed as a synonym for all contemporary art that does not practise the traditional skills of painting and sculpture.

Literary arts

Literature is literally "acquaintance with letters" as in the first sense given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The noun "literature" comes from the Latin word *littera* meaning "an individual written character (letter)." The term has generally come to identify a collection of writings, which in Western culture are mainly prose (both fiction and non-fiction), drama and poetry. In much, if not all of the world, the artistic linguistic

Sonnet 18

Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare part of the Fair Youth sequence of sonnets.

Problems playing this file? See media help.

expression can be oral as well, and include such genres as epic, legend, myth, ballad, other forms of oral poetry, and as folktale. Comics, the combination of drawings or other visual arts with narrating literature, are often called the "ninth art" (le neuvième art) in Francophone scholarship.[13]

Performing arts

Performing arts comprise dance, music, theatre, opera, mime, and other art forms in which a human performance is the principal product. Performing arts are distinguished by this performance element in contrast with disciplines such as visual and literary arts where the product is an object that does not require a performance to be observed and experienced. Each discipline in the performing arts is temporal in nature, meaning the product is performed over a period of time. Products are broadly categorized as being either repeatable (for example, by script or score) or improvised for each performance.[14] Artists who participate in these arts in front of an audience are called *performers*, including actors, magicians, comedians, dancers, musicians, and singers. Performing arts are also supported by the services of other artists or essential workers, such as songwriting and stagecraft. Performers often adapt their appearance with tools such as costume and stage makeup.

Music

Music is an art form whose medium is sound and silence, occurring in time. Common elements of music are pitch (which governs melody and harmony), rhythm (and its associated concepts tempo, metre, and articulation), dynamics, and the sonic qualities of timbre and texture. The creation, performance, significance, and even the definition of music vary according to culture and social context. Music ranges from strictly organized compositions (and their reproduction in performance) through improvisational music to aleatoric pieces. Music can be divided into genres and subgenres,

although the dividing lines and relationships between music genres are often subtle, sometimes open to individual interpretation, and occasionally controversial. Within "the arts," music may be classified as a performing art, a fine art, and auditory art.

A musical score by Mozart. 🔊 Play

Theatre

Theatre or theater (from Greek *theatron* (θέατρον); from *theasthai*, "behold")[15] is the branch of the performing arts concerned with acting out stories in front of an audience using combinations of speech, gesture, music, dance, sound and spectacle – indeed, any one or more elements of the other performing arts. In addition to the standard narrative dialogue style, theatre takes such forms as opera, ballet, mime, kabuki, classical Indian dance, Chinese opera and mummers' plays.

Dance

Dance (from Old French *dancier*, of unknown origin)[16] generally refers to human movement either used as a form of expression or presented in a social, spiritual or performance setting. *Dance* is also used to describe methods of non-verbal communication (see body language) between humans or animals (bee dance, mating dance), motion in inanimate objects (*the leaves danced in the wind*), and certain musical forms or genres. Choreography is the art of making dances, and the person who does this is called a choreographer. People danced to relieve stress. Definitions of what constitutes dance are dependent on social, cultural, aesthetic, artistic and moral constraints and range from functional movement (such as Folk dance) to codified, virtuoso techniques such as ballet. In sports, gymnastics, figure skating and synchronized swimming are dance disciplines while Martial arts "kata" are often compared to dances.

A ballroom dance exhibition

Multidisciplinary artistic works

Areas exist in which artistic works incorporate multiple artistic fields, such as film, opera and performance art. While opera is often categorized in the performing arts of music, the word itself is Italian for "works," because opera combines several artistic disciplines in a singular artistic experience. In a typical traditional opera, the entire work utilizes the following: the sets (visual arts), costumes (fashion), acting (dramatic performing arts), the libretto, or the words/story (literature), and singers and an orchestra (music).

Ernestine Schumann-Heink as Waltraute

The composer Richard Wagner recognized the fusion of so many disciplines into a single work of opera, exemplified by his cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen* ("The Ring of the Nibelung"). He did not use the term opera for his works, but instead Gesamtkunstwerk ("synthesis of the arts"), sometimes referred to as "Music Drama" in English, emphasizing the literary and theatrical components which were as important as the music. Classical ballet is another form which emerged in the 17th century in which orchestral music is combined with dance.

Other works in the late 19th, 20th and 21st centuries have fused other disciplines in unique and creative ways, such as performance art. Performance art is a performance over time which combines any number of instruments,

objects, and art within a predefined or less well-defined structure, some of which can be improvised. Performance art may be scripted, unscripted, random or carefully organized; even audience participation may occur. John Cage is regarded by many as a performance artist rather than a composer, although he preferred the latter term. He did not compose for traditional ensembles. Cage's composition *Living Room Music* composed in 1940 is a "quartet" for unspecified instruments, really non-melodic objects, which can be found in a living room of a typical house, hence the title.

Other arts

There is no clear line between art and culture. Cultural fields like gastronomy are sometimes considered as arts.[17]

Applied arts

The applied arts are the application of design and decoration to everyday, functional, objects to make them aesthetically pleasing.[18] The applied arts includes fields such as industrial design, illustration, and commercial art.[19] The term "applied art" is used in distinction to the fine arts, where the latter is defined as arts that aims to produce objects which are beautiful or provide intellectual stimulation but have no primary everyday function. In practice, the two often overlap.

Video games

A debate exists in the fine arts and video game cultures over whether video games can be counted as an art form.[20] Game designer Hideo Kojima professes that video games are a type of service, not an art form, because they are meant to entertain and attempt to entertain as many people as possible, rather than being a single artistic voice (despite Kojima himself being considered a gaming auteur, and the mixed opinions his games typically receive). However, he acknowledged that since video games are made up of artistic elements (for example, the visuals), game designers could be considered museum curators – not creating artistic pieces, but arranging them in a way that displays their artistry and sells tickets.

Within social sciences, cultural economists show how video games playing is conducive to the involvement in more traditional art forms and cultural practices, which suggests the complementarity between video games and the arts.[21]

In May 2011, the National Endowment of the Arts included video games in its redefinition of what is considered a "work of art" when applying of a grant.[22] In 2012, the Smithsonian American Art Museum presented an exhibit, *The Art of the Video Game*.[20] Reviews of the exhibit were mixed, including questioning whether video games belong in an art museum.

Arts criticism

- Architecture criticism
- Visual art criticism
- Dance criticism
- Film criticism
- Music criticism
- Television criticism
- Theatre criticism

See also

- Fine art
- Martial arts

   ▪ Arts education

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