

Prebles'

ELEVENTH EDITION

Artforms

Patrick Frank



MyArtsLab™

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Patrick Frank has taught in many higher education environments, from small community colleges to public research universities. Most recently he held an appointment as Regents' Lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has also authored or edited five books on modern Latin American Art: He recently prepared the second edition of the standard book on the subject, *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America*, published by University of Texas press. Forthcoming is *Out of Disorder: New Figurative Painting in Argentina 1960–65*. He also edited the anthology *Readings in Latin American Modern Art* (Yale University Press), and wrote two other books on Latin American graphic arts. He earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

ABOUT THE COVER

In the early 1960s, a group of French and Swiss artists who sought a deeper involvement with the texture and material of everyday life formed the New Realists. One member of this group, who shortened his name to Arman (from Armand) because of a printing error, created a series of works called *Accumulations* in which he celebrated the multiplicity of mass-produced products. To create *Accumulation of Teapots* (fig. 24.24), he bought a dozen factory-made examples and sliced them lengthwise before installing them in a plastic box. If modern consumer society promises abundance, Arman showed himself willing to adopt and adapt industrial products, taking the abundance into art. To learn more about Arman and the New Realists see chapter 24.



Arman. *Accumulation of Teapots*. 1964.
Sliced teapots in plastic case, 16" × 18" × 16".
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PREBLES'

Artforms

An Introduction to the Visual Arts
ELEVENTH EDITION

Patrick Frank

PEARSON

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TO ALL WHO COME TO KNOW THE ARTIST WITHIN

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For details about the image shown on page iv, please refer to fig 2.4.

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This book also benefitted from assistance in specialized content areas from Elizabeth East, Charles James, Philip James, and Anthony Lee. Many artists opened their homes and studios to me as I was researching this book; I greatly appreciate their generosity, just as I hope that I have communicated the vigor and inspiration of their creativity.

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Patrick Frank

PREFACE

We form art. Art forms us. The title of this book has a dual meaning. As humans form works of art, we in turn are formed by what we have created. Several editions ago, the title was changed to *Prebles' Artforms*, acknowledging the pioneering contribution of the original authors, Duane and Sarah Preble. They first posited the emphasis on our two-way interaction with works of art, and that emphasis continues to inform every page of this book.

Why study art?

Because at some point in human history, artists have dealt with nearly every aspect of the human experience, from the common to the forbidden, the mundane to the sacred, the repugnant to the sublime. Artistic creativity is a response to being alive, and by experiencing such creativity, we enrich our experience of life. This is especially true of today's creations, which are more wide-ranging than ever before, and sufficiently accessible to almost any curious person. Artistic creativity is a human treasure, and in today's art world we can see it in a very pure form.

Beyond fostering appreciation of major works of art, this book's primary concern is to open students' eyes and minds to the richness of the visual arts as unique forms of human communication and to convey the idea that the arts enrich life best when we

experience, understand, and enjoy them as integral parts of the process of living.

Why use this book?

Because the art world is changing, and *Prebles' Artforms* is changing with it. The eleventh edition of this book is one of the deepest revisions it has ever seen. Critical to the revising process have been reviews, e-mails, and conversations with instructors from across the country who helped mold new ideas and redirect the book's course while keeping it true to its roots. Three recent trends drive this new edition:

- advice from instructors about changing pedagogical needs
- new scholarly research
- recent creativity by artists around the world.

***Changing Pedagogical Needs:* The most important changes in this new edition are expanded pedagogical features** found throughout the book. In response to instructor and reviewer feedback, each chapter now begins with “**Think Ahead**” statements, which highlight a set of learning objectives specific to that chapter. Then, at each chapter's close, readers will find “**Think Back**” points in the form of review questions that reinforce those learning objectives. Key terms introduced in each chapter are now defined in a box, and a “**Try This**” exercise branches out from the chapter material asking students to think critically and actively apply what they have learned. Throughout the book, vocabulary items are bolded and defined in the text. Finally, the text links even more closely to the Pearson on-line

3

THE VISUAL ELEMENTS

THINK AHEAD

- 3.1 Describe the visual elements used in the production and analysis of art.
- 3.2 Indicate how artists use visual elements to create optical and illusionistic effects.
- 3.3 Explain technical devices used to render space and volume in painting.
- 3.4 Discuss the physical properties and relationships of color.
- 3.5 Show how visual elements convey expressive and symbolic meaning in a work of art.
- 3.6 Use basic tools of visual analysis to explain a work of art.

KEY TERMS

analogous colors – colors that are adjacent to each other on the color wheel, such as blue, blue-green, and green

atmospheric perspective – a type of perspective in which the illusion of depth is created by changing color, value, and detail

complementary colors – two hues directly opposite one another on a color wheel, such as red and green, that, when mixed together in proper proportions, produce a neutral gray

figure-ground reversal – a visual effect in which what was seen as a positive shape becomes a negative shape, and vice versa

geometric shape – any shape enclosed by square or straight or perfectly circular lines

hue – that property of a color identifying a specific, named wavelength of light such as green, red, violet, and so on

intensity – the relative purity or saturation of a hue (color), on a scale from bright (pure) to dull

linear perspective – a system of perspective in which parallel lines appear to converge as they recede into the distance, meeting at a vanishing point on the horizon

mass – the physical bulk of a solid body of material

organic shape – an irregular, non-geometric shape

picture plane – the two-dimensional picture surface

value – the relative lightness and darkness of surfaces

resource **MyArtsLab** by highlighting direct connections between the book and that expanded body of material, which includes interviews, podcasts, videos, and interactive exercises.

Thematic teaching is another key pedagogical trend that drives several changes in this new edition. The title of this book itself suggested how to accomplish this, because *Artforms* arose from the simple statement: We form art; art forms us. In response to the growing number of instructors who use a thematic approach to art appreciation, the content of *Artforms* has been revamped in several important ways to enable such teaching. First, a new Chapter 2 discusses **artistic creation according to six purposes or functions** that it fulfills in society. These are Commentary, Delight, Persuasion, Commemoration, Worship and Ritual, and Self-Expression. Several examples of each are given from diverse cultures and times.

Second, **our text boxes have been streamlined and refocused** around the theme “Forming Art.”

In the first half of the book, thirteen biographical essays have been rewritten **to show how those artists shape artworks**: How they process information, personal feeling, their media, other art, or public input to create their work. These boxes let the artists speak for themselves, as actual quotes by the creators enliven the discussions wherever possible.

In the second half of the book, eleven text boxes approach the theme “Art Forms Us” by examining in more detail **how art fulfills the six social purposes** introduced in Chapter 2. For example, in connection with the discussion of Realist art of the nineteenth century, an Art Forms Us box presents several works from widely disparate times to show how other artists throughout history have “Formed Us” by making their work a commentary on their times. In Chapter 23, the discussion of politically driven art of the 1930s leads to an Art Forms Us box that discusses other examples of persuasive art, including a piece of sculpture from the London Olympic grounds, a medieval weaving, and

FORMING ART

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901): Printing from Life



8.16 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec in his studios. Photograph courtesy of Patrick Frank.

The cabaret singer Aristide Bruant provides an important key to the work of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, because the two were friends who inhabited the nocturnal world of the bar and the nightclub. The artist's relationship with Bruant helped to shape some of his lithographic creations.

Bruant as a teenager had lived in the poor neighborhoods of Paris, where he befriended people on both sides of the law. He even obtained passes to enter the prison of La Roquette, where executions were carried out. Bruant used these experiences in his songs, which were laden with social commentary about the poor and the desperate. He was among the most popular singers of the day.

When Bruant opened his own cabaret in 1885, Toulouse-Lautrec became one of its most

devoted patrons. The following year, the singer put the artist's work on permanent display at the club. Toulouse-Lautrec in turn created a lithographic portrait of Bruant (fig. 8.17). In this work, we see the singer's unconventional attire, with broad-brimmed hat and bright neck wrap.

We also see the artist's fluid and creative use of the lithographic medium. He used crayons of various widths for the lines, and tache for the solid dark areas. He created the white patches or the rhy by dropping melted wax on the stone, keeping ink away from that part. The speckles were created by spattering, as he flicked the bristles of an ink-laden brush.

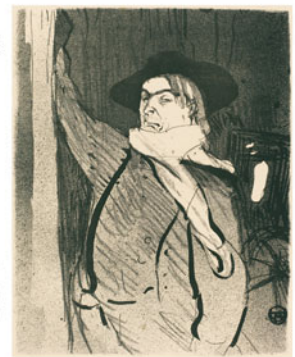
For ten years, Bruant's cabaret flourished, his act, which included taunting the audience, drew crowds of people who made the trek out to the somewhat shady neighborhood of Montmartre. There they saw the aloof and somber singer perform his tragic songs.

When the upper-crust nightclub Les Ambassadeurs hired Bruant for an engagement in its fashionable area of Champs Elysees, the singer commissioned Toulouse-Lautrec to design a poster (fig. 8.15). He responded with a rich creation in five colors, composed of a few, mostly flat, shapes in a large format unusual for that time. Each color required a separate lithographic stone. The deep blue area at the upper right

is a doorway where a sailor stands. Bruant's body fills most of the frame, bringing him close to the picture surface, overlapping the name of the club on the top. The two zones of the framing wall scarf converge near Bruant's head, leading us to the singer's distant and somewhat hoagily demeanor in his face. Toulouse-Lautrec specialized in capturing such reserved emotional states. The poster also reflects Toulouse-Lautrec's careful study of Japanese printmakers, who often used

flat shapes in bright colors to depict nightlife scenes.

This poster was not an immediate success; the Ambassadeurs manager disliked the bold design, which was novel for its day. But Bruant loved it. “Am I that grand?” he reportedly remarked.¹ He noted that hundreds were printed and plastered across Paris. They survive to this day, the originals mostly in museums, and many knockoff copies everywhere else.



8.17 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Aristide Bruant*, 1893. Lithograph, 10½" X 8¼". National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Bequest Collection 1947.7.169.



an African staff. These boxes **enable students to see common threads among widely diverse periods of creation**, and they allow teachers who approach the subject thematically to base their courses around the six functions.

New Research: Several **content areas have received expanded treatment**, in response to new research, audience feedback, or increased public interest. An expanded section on **Creativity** in Chapter 1 highlights important new findings in that field. **New discoveries in Paleolithic Art** have yielded new coverage there. The new design fields of **Interactive and Motion Graphics** have caused a further update of Chapter 11. Recent censorship controversies are included. Altogether, these

pedagogical and content changes have lengthened the book by a little over 30 pages, adding depth, breadth, and flexibility to the coverage.

This edition also introduces a large number of new images. In fact, 26 percent of the works pictured in this edition are new, a total of 165. These new images support the new pedagogical approaches, as they refresh the text from various angles. Some are ancient, such as a rock art panel from Utah and a bronze tray from Central Asia. Some are “classics,” such as the *Augustus of Prima Porta* and the *Tempietto* of Bramante. They come from diverse media as well, including works created on the Apple iPad, for example, and a building in Japan whose façade is a giant QR code. Many new illustrations come from widespread cultures, including several important African pieces, continuing the global emphasis that *Artforms* pioneered in 1998.

Recent Works by Artists Across the Globe: Nearly half of the 165 new images in this edition are contemporary, meaning that the works are either by living artists, or were created in the new millennium. This reflects my ongoing commitment to contemporary art as the best gateway to art appreciation. It also reflects the fact that I live in the midst of one of the world’s most dynamic art centers, where I personally know many collectors, dealers, critics, scholars, and, yes, artists. In the Postmodern period, many artists work in more accessible languages and styles than in the Modern past. I believe that their contemporary creativity is engaging, wide-ranging, surprising, and thought-provoking. Because of all that, it’s inspiring.

In conclusion, this new edition reflects my desire to connect with the instructors, readers, and students who use this book, and my ongoing involvement in the art world. I want *Artforms* to be the best it can be. To communicate with me more directly with thoughts, suggestions, or feedback, I invite e-mails to pfrank@artformstext.com.

Patrick Frank
Venice, California

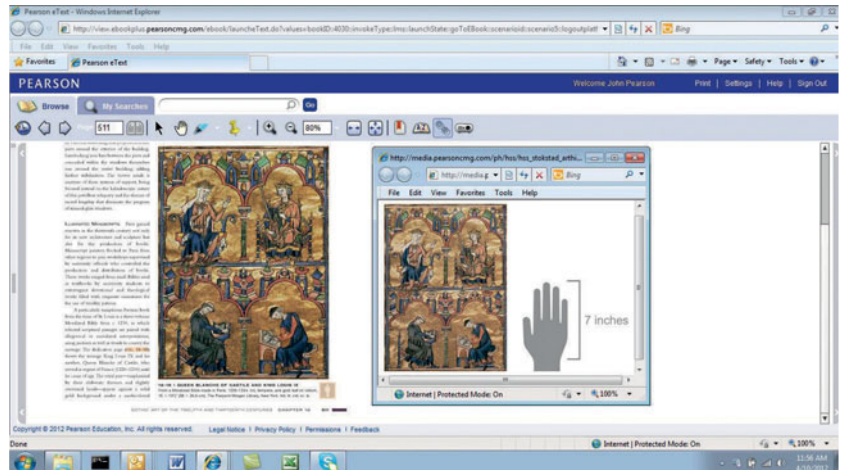


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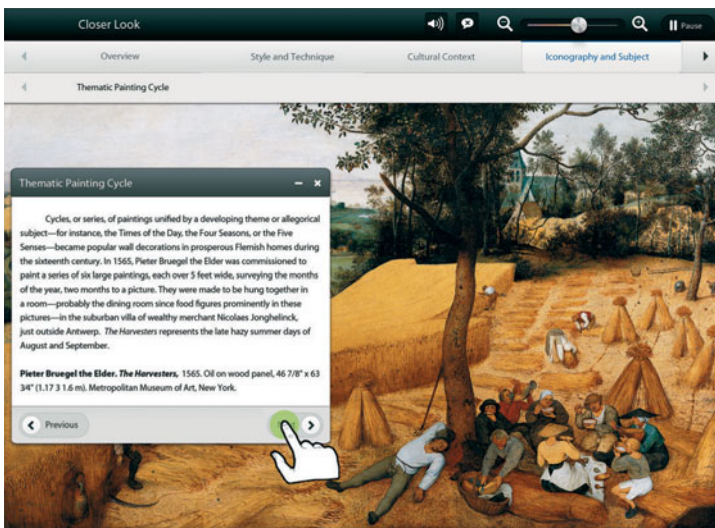
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The new **MyArtsLab** delivers proven results in helping individual students succeed. Its automatically graded assessments, personalized study plan, and interactive eText provide engaging experiences that personalize, stimulate, and measure learning for each student.

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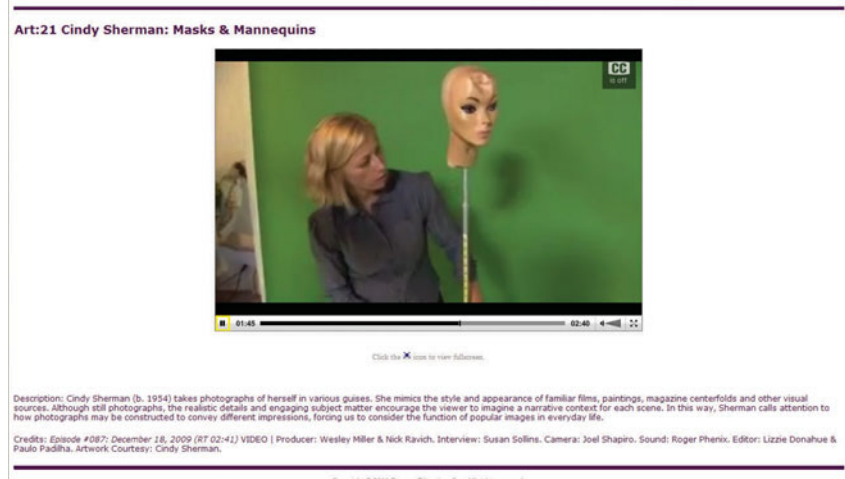
- **Personalized** study plan for each student promotes critical-thinking skills. Assessment tied to videos, applications, and chapters enables both instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback.



- **New:** Henry Sayre's *Writing About Art* 6th edition is now available online in its entirety as an eText within MyArtsLab.
- **New and expanded:** Closer Look tours—interactive walkthroughs featuring expert audio—offer in-depth looks at key works of art. *Now optimized for mobile.*
- **New and expanded:** 360-degree architectural panoramas and simulations of major monuments help students understand buildings—inside and out. *Now optimized for mobile.*

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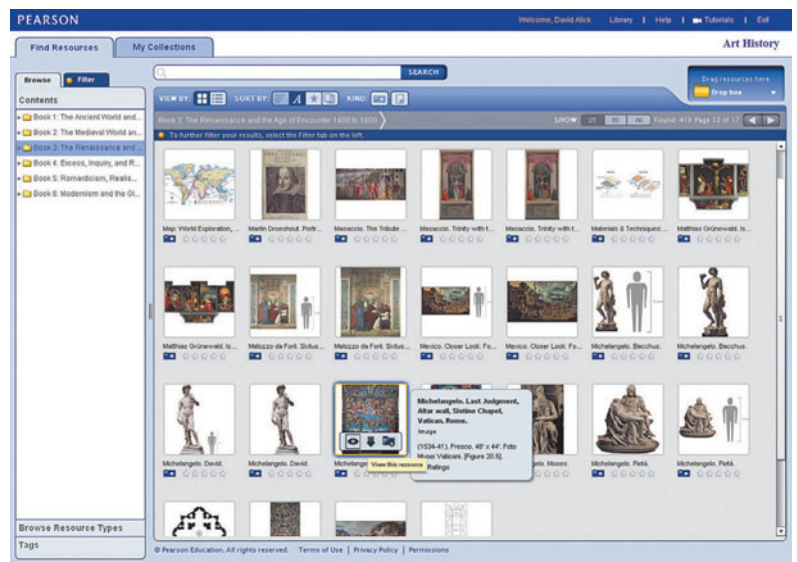
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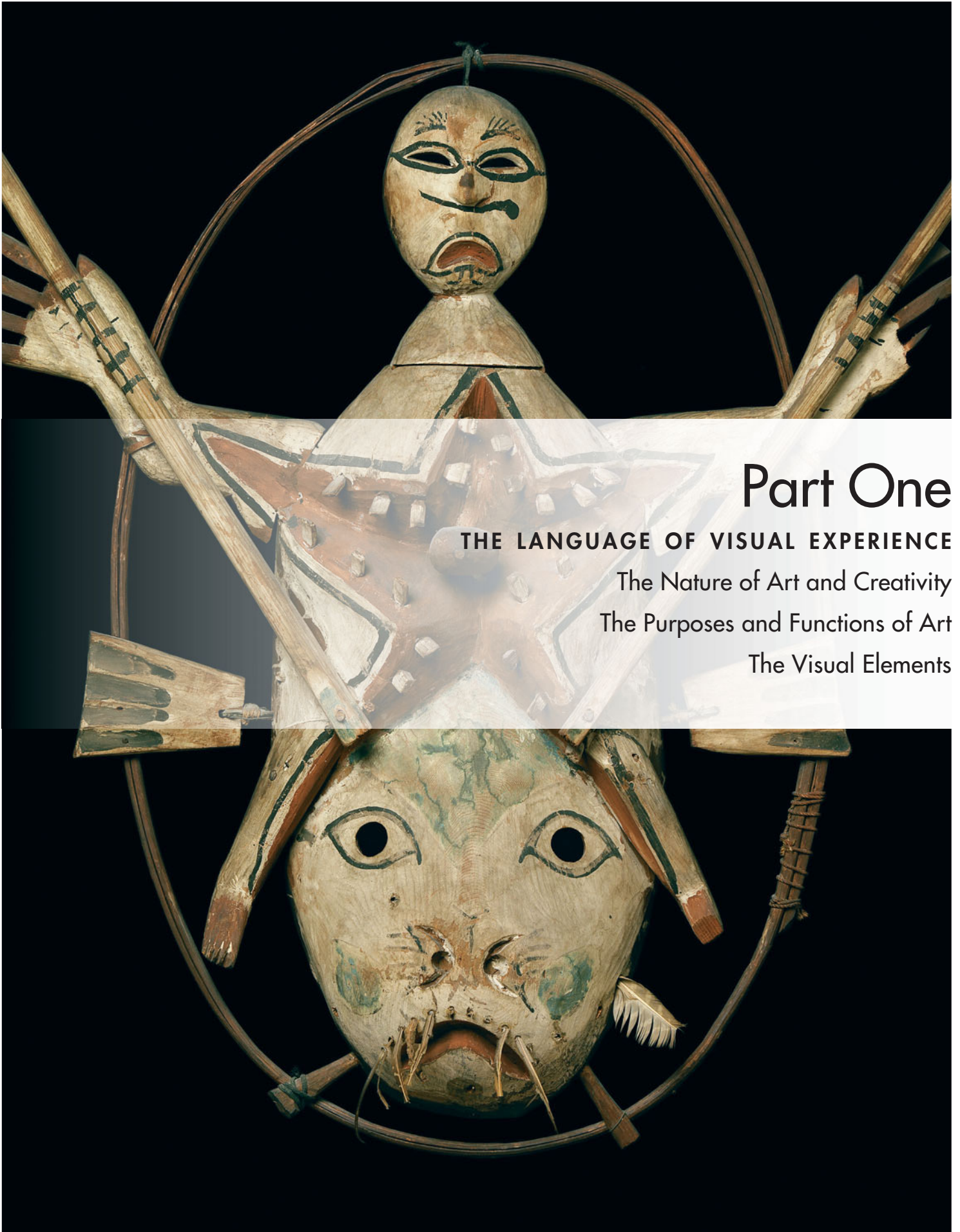
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Part One

THE LANGUAGE OF VISUAL EXPERIENCE

The Nature of Art and Creativity
The Purposes and Functions of Art
The Visual Elements

THE NATURE OF ART AND CREATIVITY

THINK AHEAD

- 1.1 Describe art as means of visual expression using different media and forms.
- 1.2 Show human creativity as an inherent trait that inspires the production of art.
- 1.3 Demonstrate the diverse intellectual, cultural, and skills backgrounds of artists.
- 1.4 Distinguish form and meaning in visual analysis.
- 1.5 Define the terms representational, abstract, nonrepresentational, and iconography used to discuss art.

Is it necessary for us to give physical form to things we feel, think, and imagine? Must we gesture, dance, draw, speak, sing, write, and build? To be fully human, it seems we must. In fact, the ability to create is one of the special characteristics of being human. The urge to make and enjoy what we call art has been a driving force throughout human history. Art is not something apart from us. It grows from common—as well as uncommon—human insights, feelings, and experiences.

Art does not need to be “understood” to be enjoyed. Like life itself, it can simply be experienced. Yet the more we understand what art can offer, the richer our experience of it will be.

For example, when Janet Echelman’s huge artwork *Her Secret Is Patience* (fig. 1.1) was hoisted into the air above Phoenix in mid-2009, even most of the doubters became admirers once they experienced this stunning work. Suspended from three leaning poles between 40 and 100 feet above the ground, its colored circles of netting appear both permanent and ever changing, solid yet spacious, defying gravity as they dance and wave slowly in the breeze.

The artist chose the cactus flower shape to symbolize the Arizona desert city of Phoenix. She was inspired by the patience of the saguaro cactus, she

said, “a spiny cactus putting down roots in search of water in the desert, saving up every ounce of energy until, one night, in the middle of the cool darkness, it unfurls one succulent bloom.”¹ The work also refers to the character of nature itself. Echelman drew her title from the words of American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote, “Adopt the pace of nature; her secret is patience.”

The citizens who advocated the piece over the extended waiting time between conception and completion were patient as well. Doubters objected to the price tag (\$2.4 million), the shape (one said it resembled a giant jellyfish), and the artist’s origins (she is not from Arizona). Those misgivings and a few technical issues kept *Her Secret Is Patience* on the drawing board for a year and a half. But today most Arizonians look on the work with pride: This unique visual delight has become a landmark for the city of Phoenix just as the Eiffel Tower became one for Paris. The *Arizona Republic* editorialized: “This is just what Phoenix needs: a distinctive feature that helps create a real sense of place.”²

The creation and the reception of *Her Secret Is Patience* embody an important idea: artistic creation is a two-way street. That is, we form art, and then the art forms us by enriching our lives, teaching us, touching our spirits, commemorating our human past, and inspiring or persuading us (see Chapter 2).

 **Listen** to the chapter audio on myartslab.com



1.1 Janet Echelman. *Her Secret Is Patience*. 2009. Fiber, steel, and lighting. Height 100' with a top diameter of 100'. Civic Space Park, Phoenix, AZ. Courtesy Janet Echelman, Inc. Photograph: Will Novak.

It can also challenge us to think and see in new ways, and help each of us to develop a personal sense of beauty and truth.

While *Her Secret Is Patience* may not resemble the type of artwork that you are familiar with—it is not a painting, and it is not in a museum—it is art. In this chapter we will explore some definitions of what is meant by “art” and “creativity,” and look at how creativity is expressed through different types of art and through its form and content.

What is Art?

When people speak of the arts, they are usually referring to music, dance, theater, literature, and the visual arts. Each artform is perceived in different ways by our senses, yet each grows from a common need to give expressive substance to feelings, insights, and experiences. The arts communicate meanings that go far beyond ordinary verbal exchange, and artists use the entire range of thought, feeling, and observation as the subjects of their art.

The visual arts include drawing, painting, sculpture, film, architecture, and design. Some ideas and feelings can best be communicated only through visual forms. American painter Georgia O’Keeffe said: “I found that I could say things with colors and shapes that I couldn’t say in any other way—things I had no words for.”³

A **work of art** is the visual expression of an idea or experience, formed with skill, through the use of a **medium**. A medium is a particular material, along with its accompanying technique. (The plural is *media*.) Artists select media to suit the function of the work, as well as the ideas they wish to present. When a medium is used in such a way that the object or performance contributes to our understanding or enjoyment of life, we experience the final product as art.

For *Her Secret Is Patience*, Echelman sought to create a work that would say something about the Phoenix area, in a way that harmonized with the forces of nature. Thus, she chose flexible netting for the medium because it responds gracefully to the wind. She similarly

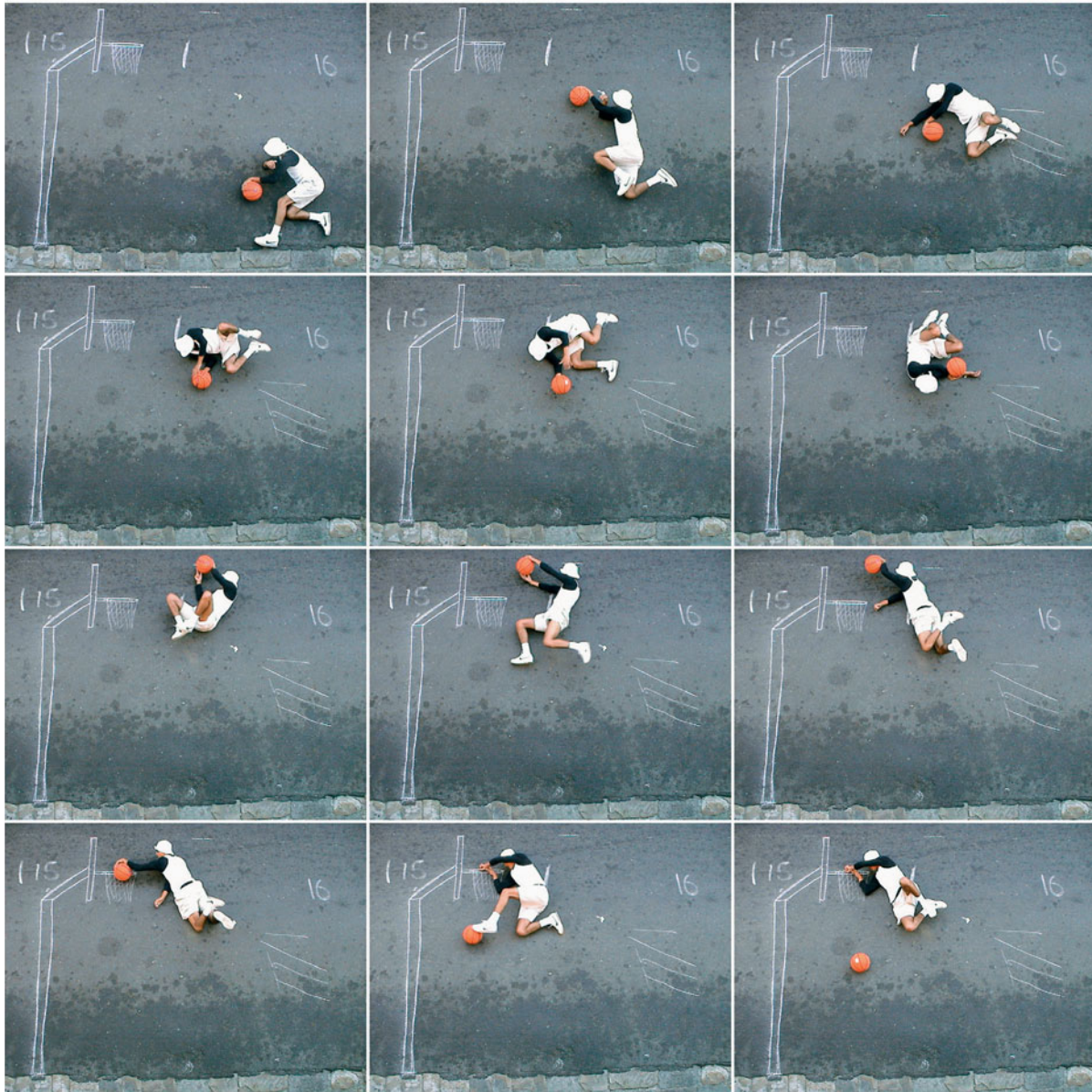
chose the size, scale, shape, and color of the work that would best support and express her message.

Media in use for many centuries include clay, fiber, stone, wood, and paint. By the mid-twentieth century, modern technology had added new media, including video and computers, to the nineteenth-century contributions of photography and motion pictures. Art made with a combination of different materials, as many artists do today, is referred to as **mixed media**.

What is Creativity?

The source of all art, science, and technology—in fact, all of civilization—is human imagination, or creative thinking. But what do we mean by this talent we call “creativity”?

Creativity is the ability to bring forth something new that has value. Mere novelty is not enough; the new thing must have some relevance, or unlock some new way of thinking.



1.2 Robin Rhode.
He Got Game. 2000. Twelve color photographs.
Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong © Robin Rhode.

Creativity also has the potential to influence future thought or action and is vital to most walks of life. In 2010, the IBM corporation interviewed 1,500 chief executive officers (CEOs) from 60 countries, asking them what was the most important leadership skill for the successful businesses of the future. Their answer was not economic knowledge, management skills, integrity, or personal discipline, but creativity.

While studying creative people in several disciplines, the authors of the 2011 book *Innovator's DNA*⁴ found five traits that seem to define creativity:

1. **Associating.** The ability to make connections across seemingly unrelated fields.
2. **Questioning.** Persistently challenging the status quo, asking why things function as they do now, and how or why they might be changed.
3. **Observing.** Intently watching the world around, without judgment, in search of new insights or ways of operating.
4. **Networking.** Being willing to interact with others, and learn from them, even if their views are radically different or their competencies seem unrelated.
5. **Experimenting.** Exploring new possibilities by trying them out, building models, and taking them apart for further improvement.

Creativity can be found in most human endeavors, but here we focus on artistic creativity, which can take many forms. A film director places actors and cameras on a stage in order to emphasize a certain aspect of the script. A Hopi potter decorates a water jar by combining traditional designs in new ways. A graphic designer seated at a computer screen arranges a composition of type, images, and colors in order to help get his or her message across. A carver in Japan fashions wood into a Buddha that will aid in meditation at a monastery. Most of us have at some time arranged images on our walls or composed a picture for a camera. All of these actions involve visual creativity, the use of imagery to communicate beyond what mere words can say.

He Got Game (fig. 1.2) is a good example of visual creativity using simple means. Contemporary South African artist Robin Rhode drew a basketball hoop on the asphalt surface of a street, and then photographed himself lying down in 12 positions as if he were


flipping through the air performing an impossible slam dunk. The artist here imitates the slow-motion and stop-motion photography often seen in sports television to create a piece with transcendent dramatic flair. The work cleverly uses low-tech chalk drawing and a slangy title to celebrate the cheeky boastfulness of street culture. As it clearly shows, creativity is an attitude; one that is as fundamental to experiencing and appreciating a work of art as it is to making one. Insightful seeing is itself a creative act; it requires open receptivity—putting aside habitual modes of thought—and a willingness to stretch the mind.

Twentieth-century American artist Romare Bearden showed a different type of creativity in his depictions of the daily life he witnessed in the rural South and in Harlem, New York City. In *Prevalence of Ritual: Tidings* (fig. 1.3) he created a **photomontage** using borrowed picture fragments with a few muted colors to portray a mood of melancholy and longing. In the work, a winged figure seems to comfort an introspective woman who holds a flower, suggesting the story of the Christian Annunciation; a train implies departure perhaps from this world or simply to a better life in the North. In this photomontage, as in many of his others, Bearden was concerned with the effectiveness of his communication



1.3 Romare Bearden.
Prevalence of Ritual: Tidings. 1967.
Photomontage. 36" × 48".

© Romare Bearden Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

 **Watch** a video of Romare Bearden discussing his work on myartslab.com

FORMING ART

Romare Bearden (1911–88): Jazz and Memory



1.4 Romare Bearden
Bernard Brown & Associates.

How can the influence of jazz and memory spark creativity and help form visual art? Romare Bearden shows us how. Growing up in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s, he witnessed firsthand the outpouring of African-American culture called the Harlem Renaissance. His mother was a political activist and journalist, his father a city inspector. The musicians, artists, and authors of the Harlem Renaissance were frequent guests in his home.

In his youth, he drew political cartoons for an African-American newspaper. He studied art in New York, and in Paris after his army service in World War II. During his European study he met several leading African intellectuals who urged artists to reconnect with their ethnic roots. But Bearden went beyond his heritage and reached for a wider impact. Of his Paris years, he recalled, “The biggest thing I learned was reaching into your consciousness of black experience and relating it to universals.”⁵

Being intellectually curious about all sorts of traditions helped enable his quest. He admired the novels of Irish writer James Joyce and the art of the early Italian Renaissance. Novelist Ralph Ellison recounted Bearden’s wide knowledge of the history of art: “I can recall visits to Romie’s 125th Street studio during which he stood at his easel sketching, and explaining the perspectives of the Dutch and Italian masters.”⁶ He made paintings inspired by the seventeenth-century poet Andrew Marvell, by the Bible, and by the *Iliad* of Homer.

Music weighed even more potently in Bearden’s creativity. He knew Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, and singer-actor Paul Robeson. Bearden said, “I’d take a sheet of paper and just make lines while I listened to records, a kind of shorthand to pick up the rhythm and the intervals.”⁷ He was especially drawn to the piano style of Earl “Fatha” Hines. Bearden listened both to the notes and to the spaces between them, discerning musical structures that influenced his art. He said of Hines: “His delicate and precise spacing helped me a great deal with pictorial composition.”⁸

We see this tendency at work in his collage *Rocket to the Moon* (fig. 1.5), where collage fragments build a scene of quiet despair and stoic perseverance. The buildings are large blocks that function like verses of a song, with a space between. The figures are more detailed, like embellishing

musical notes. “You put down one color,” the artist said, “and it calls for another. You have to look at it like a melody.”⁹ Just as the construction of a song can sound inevitable, so the parts of an artwork should hang together easily.

Of course, the African-American roots of his work are inescapable. “You should always respect what you are in your culture, because if your art’s going to mean anything, that’s where it has to come from,” he said.¹⁰ *Rocket to the Moon* tells of a certain indifference in urban black neighborhoods to the fact of the lunar exploration.

Bearden kept a list of key events from his life on the

wall of his studio. He often drew upon memories of his childhood in North Carolina. The idea of homecoming fascinated him. He said, “You can come back to where you started from with added experience and you hope more understanding. You leave and then return to the homeland of your imagination.”¹¹

Interviewed for a retrospective exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, he explained his goal as an artist: “I have tried to bring the Afro-American experience into art and give it a universal dimension.”¹² Through his creativity, and with the aid of jazz and memory, he succeeded.



1.5 Romare Bearden. *Rocket to the Moon*. 1971.
Collage on board. 13" × 9¼".

© Romare Bearden Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

to others, but equally important was his own inner need for creative expression—an aspect of how art forms us (see Chapter 2).

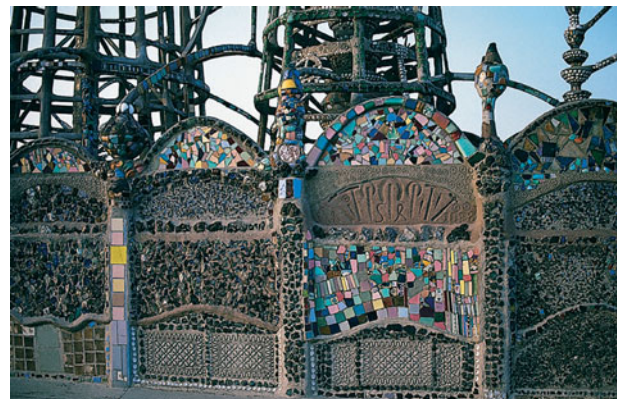
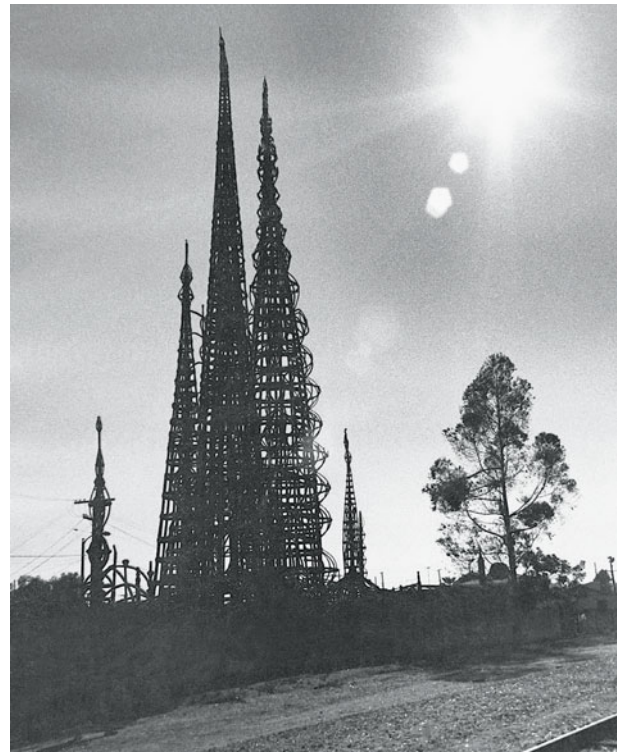
Trained and Untrained Artists

Most of us tend to think of “art” as something produced only by “artists”—uniquely gifted people—and because art is often separated from community life in contemporary society, many people believe they have no artistic talent. Yet we all have the potential to be creative.

In the past, the world’s trained artists generally learned by working as apprentices to accomplished masters. (With a few notable exceptions, women were excluded from such apprenticeships.) Through practical experience, they gained necessary skills and developed knowledge of their society’s art traditions. Today most art training takes place in art schools, or in college or university art departments. Learning in such settings develops sophisticated knowledge of alternative points of view, both contemporary and historical, and often trained artists show a self-conscious awareness of their relationship to art history.

While training, skills, and intelligence are helpful in creativity, they are not always necessary. The urge to create is universal and has little to do with art training. Those with a small amount of or no formal art education—usually described as untrained artists or **folk artists**—and children can be highly creative. Art by untrained artists, also called naïve or **outsider artists**, is made by people who are largely unaware of art history or the art trends of their time. Unlike folk art, which is made by people working within a tradition, art by outsider artists is personal expression created apart from any conventional practice or style.

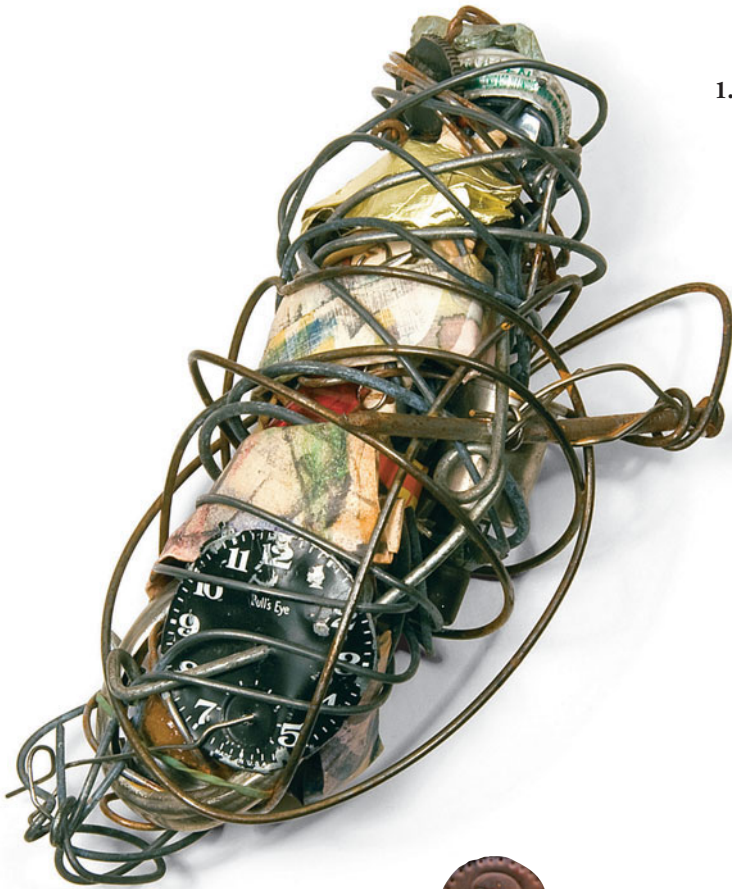
One of the best-known (and largest) pieces of outsider art in the United States is *Nuestro Pueblo* (*Our Town*), more commonly known as the Watts Towers (fig. 1.6). Creator Sabatino “Simon” Rodia exemplifies the artist who visualizes new possibilities for ordinary materials. He worked on his cathedral-like towers for 33 years, making the fantastic structures from cast-off materials such as metal pipes and bed frames held together with steel reinforcing rods, mesh, and mortar. Incredibly, he built the towers without power tools, rivets, welds, or bolts.



1.6 Sabatino “Simon” Rodia. *Nuestro Pueblo*.
Top: distant view. Bottom: detail of enclosing wall
with construction tool impressions. 1921–1954.
Mixed media. Height 100’. Watts, California.
Photographs: Duane Preble.

As the towers rose in his triangular backyard, he methodically covered their surfaces with bits and pieces of broken dishes, tile, melted bottle glass, shells, and other colorful junk from the vacant lots of his neighborhood. Rodia’s towers are testimony to the artist’s creativity and perseverance. He said, “I had it in mind to do something big, and I did it.”¹³

Some creative people are so far outside the art world that their names are unknown to us. In 1982, an art student in Philadelphia found several boxes of



1.7 Philadelphia Wireman. *Untitled (Watch Face)*. c.1970.
Watch face, bottle cap, nail, drawing on paper, and wire.
7" × 3½" × 2¼".
Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

hand-sized sculptures that had been set out among the trash in a run-down neighborhood. Numbering more than a thousand, the sculptures were collections of refuse and other small objects, all wrapped in wire (fig. 1.7). Dubbed the Philadelphia Wireman, the creator of these works is still unknown, as no one has yet claimed authorship after several exhibitions of the works. Because of the force required to bend the wire, the artist is generally thought to have been male. In any case, he created compelling conglomerations of debris that stir memory and imagination.

In contrast to outsider artists, folk artists are part of established traditions of style, theme, and craftsmanship. Most folk artists have little systematic art training, and their work often shows great enthusiasm or devotion to tradition. Folk art can take many forms, including quilts, embroidered handkerchiefs, decorated weather vanes, sculptures, or customized cars.

In Mexico and the American Southwest, *retablo* painting is a customary way of giving thanks to God when someone escapes from some danger or recovers

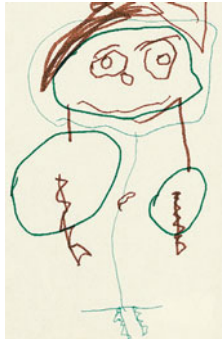
from an illness. Such paintings generally depict the scene of salvation along with a narrative of the events.

In this example (fig. 1.8), a man falsely accused of a crime escaped execution and created the painting. The inscription credits the “fervent prayers of my dear parents and my aggrieved wife” for saving him from the ultimate punishment. The spelling errors in the inscription combine with the sincere and charming painting style to yield a highly attractive work.

Children use a universal visual language. All over the world, drawings by children aged two to six show similar



1.8 *Retablo*. 1915.
Paint on tin. 9" × 11".
Fowler Museum at UCLA. Photograph by Don Cole.



1.9 Alana, age 3. *Grandma*.

stages of mental growth, from exploring with mark-making, to inventing shapes, to symbolizing things seen and imagined. Until they are about six years old, children usually depict the world in symbolic rather than realistic ways. Their images are more mental constructions than records of visual observations. The drawing *Grandma* (fig. 1.9) by three-year-old Alana shows enthusiasm and self-assurance in the repeated circles of green and brown. She found a rhythm in the eyes and the head, and she followed it exuberantly out to the sleeves.

Young children often demonstrate an intuitive sense of composition. Unfortunately, much of this intuitive sense of balanced design is lost when they begin to look at the world from a conceptual and self-conscious point of view. Most children who have been given coloring books, workbooks, and predrawn printed single sheets become overly dependent on such impersonal stereotyped props. In this way, children often lose the urge to invent unique images based on their own experiences. Recent research shows that many children begin to doubt their creativity at about the age of nine or ten years. But creative people, be they artists or CEOs, retain their creativity into adulthood.

Whether trained, outsider, or folk, artists must be independent thinkers and must have the courage to go beyond group mentality. In this way artists can offer fresh insights that extend the experiences of those who see their art.

Art and Reality

Artists may depict what they see in the physical world, they may alter appearances, or they may utilize forms that no one has seen in either the natural or the human-made world. Regardless of their approaches, most artists invite viewers to see beyond mere appearances. The terms **representational**, **abstract**, and **nonrepresentational** are used to describe an artwork's relationship to the physical world.

Representational Art

Representational art depicts the appearance of things. (When human form is the primary subject, it is called **figurative art**.) It represents—or “presents again”—objects we recognize from the natural, everyday world. Objects that representational art depicts are called **subjects**.

There are many ways to create representational art. The most “real”-looking paintings are in a style called *trompe l'oeil* (pronounced “trompt loy”)—French for “fool the eye.” Paintings in this illusionistic style impress us because they look so “real.” In Harnett's painting *A Smoke Backstage* (fig. 1.10), the assembled objects are close to life-size, which contributes to the illusion. We almost believe that we could touch the pipe and match.

Belgian painter René Magritte shows a different relationship between art and reality (fig. 1.11). The subject of the painting appears to be a pipe, but written in French on the painting are the words, “This is not a pipe.” The viewer may wonder, “If this is not a pipe, what is it?” The answer, of course, is that it is a painting! Magritte's title, *The Treachery of Images* (*La Trahison des Images*), suggests the visual game that the artist had in mind.



1.10 William Harnett. *A Smoke Backstage*. 1877.

Oil on canvas. 7" × 8½".

Honolulu Museum of Art, Gift of John Wyatt Gregg Allerton, 1964. (32111).