

# Module : Humanities and Social Sciences

Level : 1st year

Teacher: Dr. Nassima Amirouche

## Lecture 03: Art

### Objectives:

- Introduce students to art with its different forms.
- Discuss the different purposes of art.
- Highlight the importance of studying art.

### 1. Etymology:

The word 'art' in the thirteenth century Middle English meant "skill as a result of learning or practice." Nowadays the word 'art' is commonly used for anything which one considers of great aesthetic merit.

### 2. Definition

- Art is a wide range of human activities that involve creative imagination and an aim to express technical proficiency, beauty, emotional power, or conceptual ideas.
- Something that is created with imagination and skill and that is beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings
- Creative activity which involves skills or expertness in handling materials and organizing them into a new.

### 3. Different Forms of Art

Forms of artistic expression have changed throughout human history, but for the most part, art falls into one of the following seven classical forms. Each different form of art is experienced differently and affects our emotions and feelings: Painting, Sculpture, Literature, Architecture, Cinema, Music and Theater. We'll explore what each art form covers, its history, and how it enriches our everyday lives.

**3. 1 Painting:** it is a form of expressing your artistic vision using paint as the primary medium. An artist who worked predominantly in this medium is known as a painter and develops their work by applying different colored paints onto a solid surface, usually a canvas, to produce a work of art. Paints are generally oil, acrylic, or watercolor, but you can also paint with pigments, dyes, and inks or incorporate other materials.

**3. 2 Sculpture:** it dates back to prehistoric times. A sculpture creates three-dimensional visual images, traditionally using materials such as clay, stone, ceramics, metals, or wood.

In many cultures, sculptures were the first and oldest forms of public art. Often too big for private homes, sculptures were commissioned by kings or religious and political leaders and displayed in public places – usually as expressions of wealth, power, religion, or politics. Many classical cities of the ancient world, such as Athens, Istanbul, and Rome, are home to impressive public sculpture collections.

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**3.3 Literature:** it is an art form that shares stories. It is an art form of language and can be read or spoken. While literature stands on its own as an art form and is one of the seven different forms of art, it is also closely related to theater, poetry, film, music, and the spoken word.

**3.4 Architecture:** is the art of structures, and we could reasonably date architecture back to the point when man first created shelter. However, the more common perception of architecture as an art form relates to just a handful of buildings that are particularly beautiful or awe-inspiring.

Ancient feats of architectural design include landmarks like the Great Pyramids, Rome's Coliseum, Taj Mahal, Hagia Sophia, or Stonehenge. Modern architectural marvels include the Eiffel Tower, Sagrada Família, Sydney Opera House, Louvre, Burj Khalifa, and the Guggenheim Museum.

**3.5 Cinema:** it is the newest of the seven forms of art. Created just over a century ago, cinema may not have the length of history as the other art forms on this list, but it has quickly become one of the most popular.

Movies are the projection of a three-dimensional world onto a two-dimensional screen, an art form that engages our audible and visual senses. Like literature, movies tell a story, but they do so with both spoken word, visual art and more

**3.6 Music:** Music is the art of arranging audible sounds and vibrations to produce a musical composition using the elements of melody, harmony and rhythm. Music can use the human voice, instruments, or both.

Music is more difficult to date than the visual arts, but it's believed that vocal sounds played an essential role in humankind's early communication before speech development. There is evidence that our ancient ancestors crafted musical instruments using wood, bones, stones, and other natural materials.

**3.7 Theater:** Theater is an art form where the artist combines both visual art and dramatic performance. Usually, it includes different art forms where the artist or artists present or perform their art on a stage. Theater has been a part of culture since the Ancient Greeks in the 6th century BC. Theater has since become one of the most popular sources of entertainment.

Theater often incorporates the other seven different forms of art in its total package, with music, set design, and literature often used as elements of theater production.

## **4. Purposes of Art**

Art has had a great number of different functions throughout its history, making its purpose difficult to quantify to any single concept. This does not imply that the purpose of art

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is “vague” but that it has had many unique, different reasons for being created. Some of the functions of art are provided in the outline below. This is a partial list of purposes as developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

- 1. Expression of the imagination.** Art provides a means to express the imagination (things, places, ideas that are unreal or unknowable) in non-grammatical ways. Unlike words, which come in sequences, each of which has a definite meaning, art provides a range of forms, symbols and ideas with meanings that can be determined by the artist. An artist can create visual imagery of mythical animals, religious concepts such as heaven or hell, fictional places, or other things from their creative mind.
- 2. Ritualistic and symbolic functions.** In many cultures, art is used in religion, spiritual or magical rituals, performances and dances as a decoration or symbol of a god or other divine quality. While these often have no specific utilitarian purpose, anthropologists know that they often serve a purpose at the level of meaning within a particular culture.
- 3. Communication.** Art, at its simplest, is a form of communication. Most forms of communication have an intent or goal directed toward other people. Illustrative arts, such as scientific illustration, are a form of art as communication. Maps are another example. However, the content need not be scientific. Stories, emotions, and feelings are also communicated through art.
- 4. Entertainment.** Art may seek to bring about a particular emotion or mood, for the purpose of relaxing or entertaining the viewer. This is often the function of the art industries such as Motion Pictures and Video Games. And of course, more traditional art, such as some paintings and sculptures are simply meant to be enjoyable.
- 5. Political change.** One of the defining functions of early twentieth-century art has been to use visual images to bring about political change. Art movements that had this goal—Dadaism, Surrealism, and Futurism, among others—are collectively referred to as the avant-garde arts. This purpose of art continues today in many objects aimed at exposing corruption of the ruling class, including government, the wealthy, and corporations.
- 6. Social causes.** Art can be used to raise awareness for a large variety of causes. A number of art activities are aimed at raising awareness on different topics such as human rights, pollution,...etc
- 7. Psychological and healing purposes.** Art is also used by art therapists, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists as art therapy. *The Diagnostic Drawing Series*, for example, is used to determine the personality and emotional functioning of a patient. The end product (the art object) is not the principal goal in this case, but rather a process of healing, through creative acts, is sought. The resultant piece of

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artwork may also offer insight into the troubles experienced by the subject and may suggest suitable approaches to be used in more conventional forms of psychiatric therapy.

- 8. Propaganda or commercialism.** Art is often utilized as a form of propaganda, and thus can be used to subtly influence popular conceptions or mood (especially regarding political issues). In a similar way, art that tries to sell a product also influences mood and emotion. In both cases, the purpose of art here is to subtly manipulate the viewer into a particular emotional or psychological response toward a particular idea or object.

## **Homework:**

Why is art important in life?