

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: LIVING WITH ART

Is art part of your life?



Dorothy and Herbert Vogel in their apartment

Class Assignment 1

Make a list of all the purposes of art – Do not look at the textbook (or any other source) for answers!

Write as many purposes as possible.

Bullet points are ok but your ideas need to be clear.

What purposes does art serve?

(the functions of art)

- Creates places for human purpose
- Creates extra-ordinary versions of ordinary objects
- Records and commemorates
- Gives tangible form to the unknown
- Gives tangible form to feelings and ideas
- Refreshes our vision and helps us see the world in a new way
- Promotes social, political, religious ideas (e.g. – propaganda, protest)
- Assists in various rituals
- Entertains; creates alternative reality

Art creates places for some human purpose.



Maya Lin with a model
of the Vietnam Veterans
Memorial, 1980

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington
D.C. 1982. Black granite, length 492'**

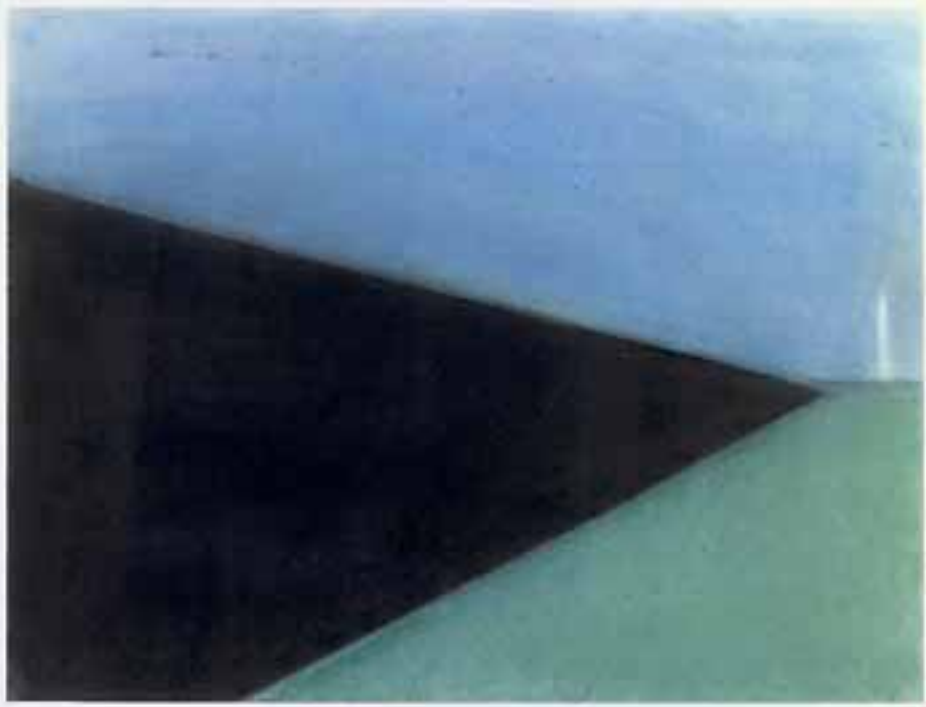


Maya Ying Lin (b. 1959).



American sculptor and architect. She was still an undergraduate at Yale University when she won the competition for a Vietnam War veterans memorial to be built near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Amid controversy over her untraditional design (and, remarkably, complaints that it had been created by a young woman of Chinese descent).

It became the most visited monument in Washington, D.C. and she has gone on to design other memorials, landscape sculptures and private residences.



Color Sketch of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

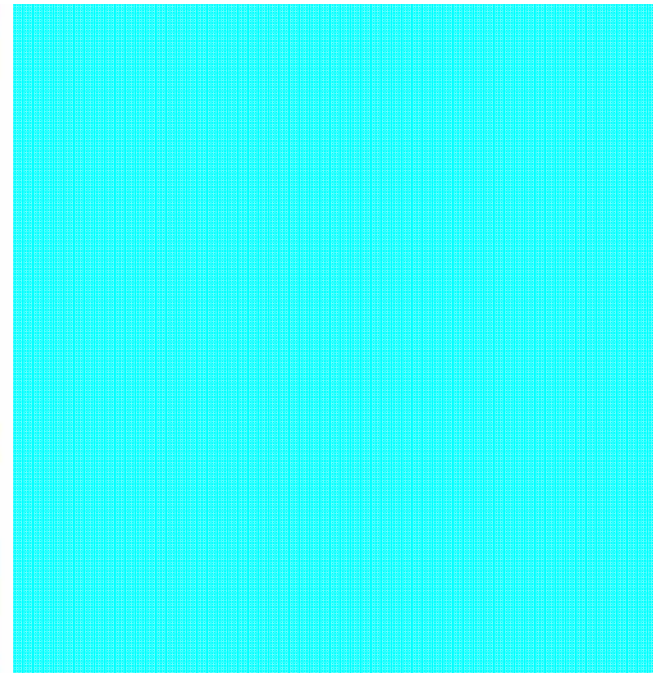




Frederick Hart . *The Three Soldiers*, bronze 1984



**Art creates extra ordinary versions
of ordinary objects**



Kente cloth from Ghana.
Asante. 20th c. 71x41", rayon.
(This size cloth is worn by a woman;
a full man's kente is usually about 7 x
11 feet.)



Kente cloth from Ghana. Asante. 20th c. 71x41", rayon



A man weaves kente cloth using a traditional loom, Bonwire village, Ashanti region, Ghana.

A variety of kente patterns have been invented, each of which has a certain concept or concepts traditionally associated with it.

Tea bowl

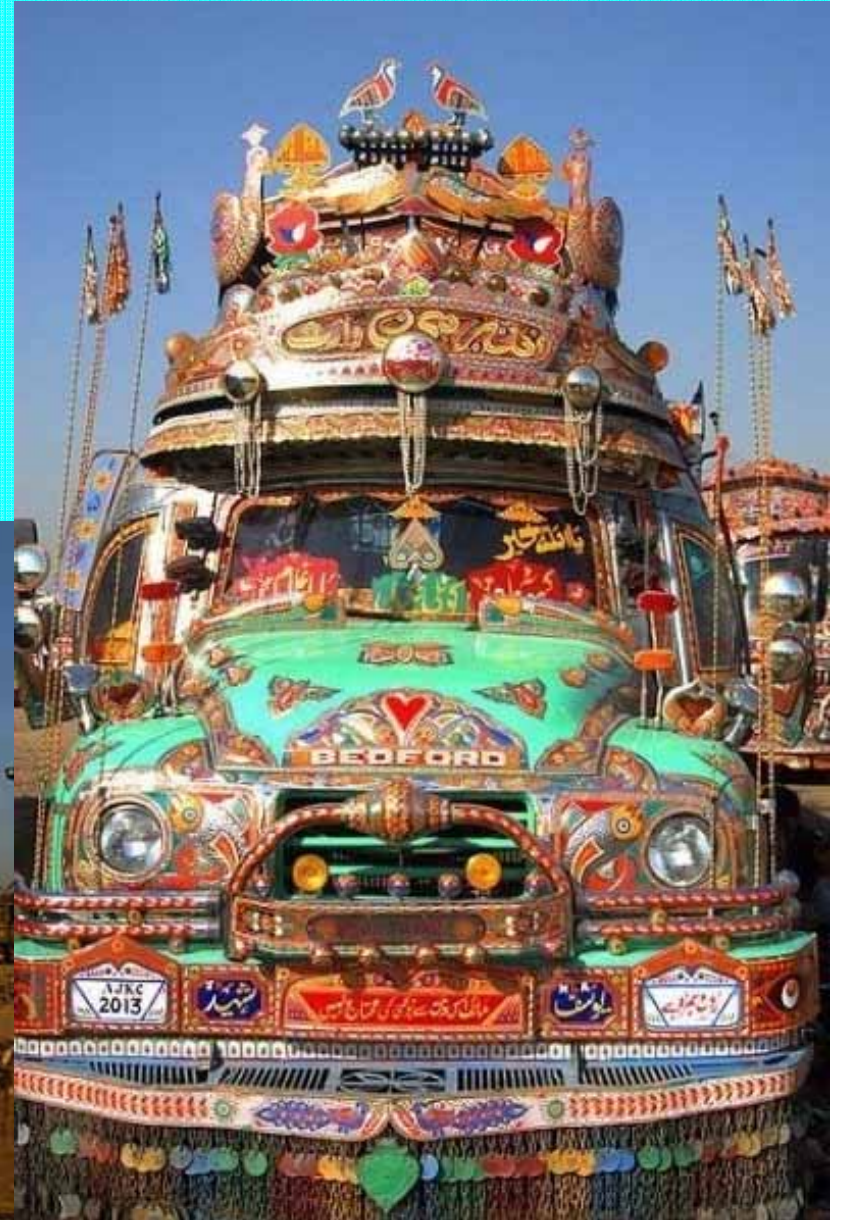
Shigaraki ware,
Japan, early 17th
century. Victoria
and Albert
Museum, London.



Art Cars



Pakistani Trucks



Art records and commemorates

Labille-Guiard was elected to one of the four places in the French Academy available for women in 1783.

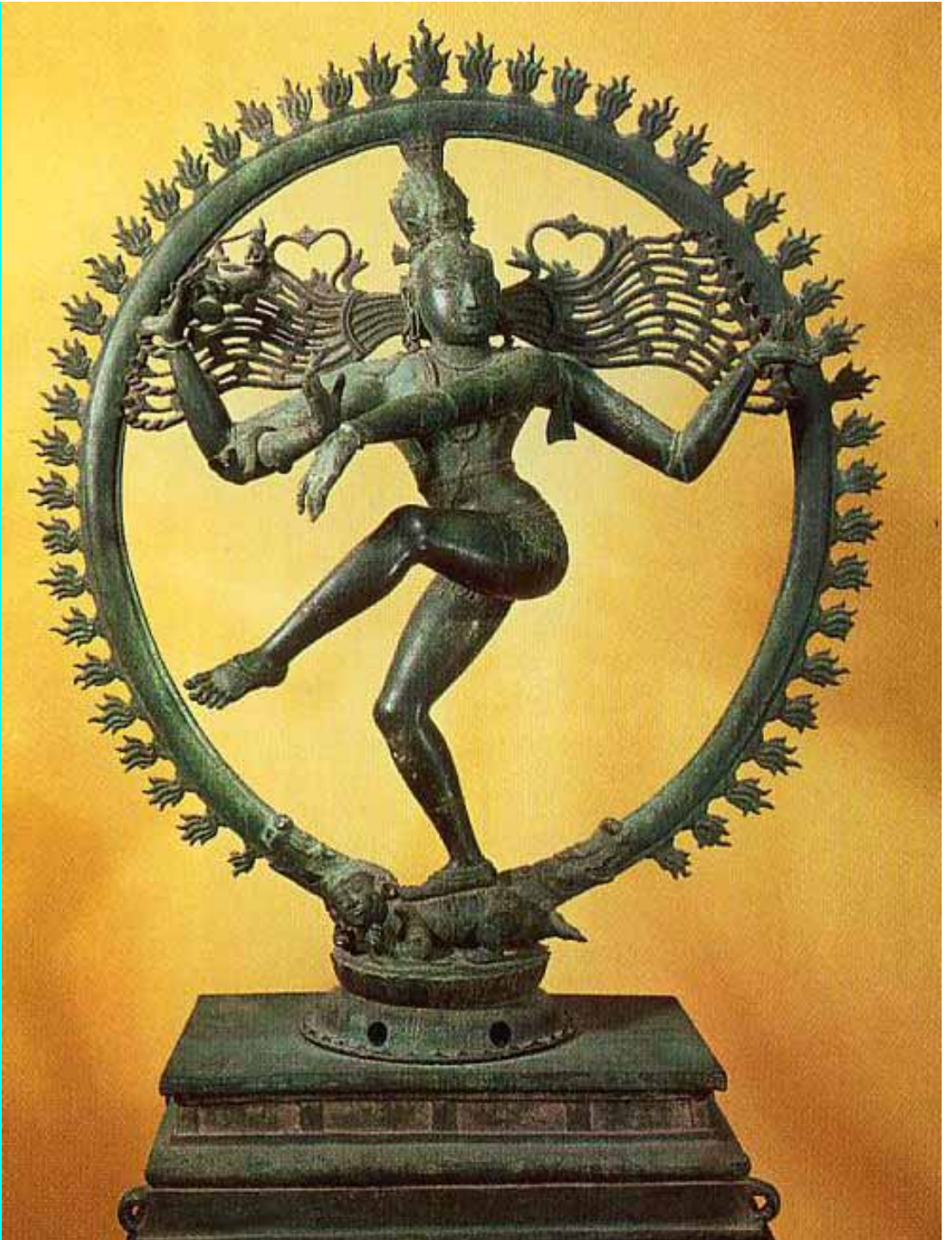
In 1790 she successfully petitioned to end the restriction on women.

Adelaide Labille-Guiard:
Self Portrait with Two Pupils. 1785. Oil on Canvas 6'X4'.
Metropolitan Museum of Art. NY



Art gives tangible form to the unknown

Nataraja (Shiva as Lord of the Dance), India,
10th century C.E. Bronze, 5
1/4" high. Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam.



**Art gives tangible form to feelings
and ideas**

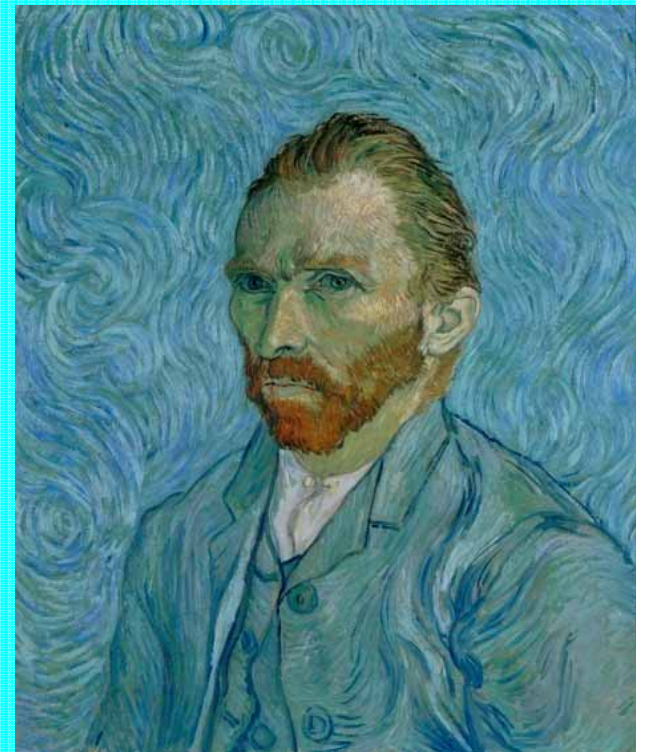
Van Gogh, Vincent (1853–90)

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, *Starry Night*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 29" x 36 1/4".
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



“Just as we take a train to Tarascon or Rouen, we take death to reach a star” Vincent van Gogh

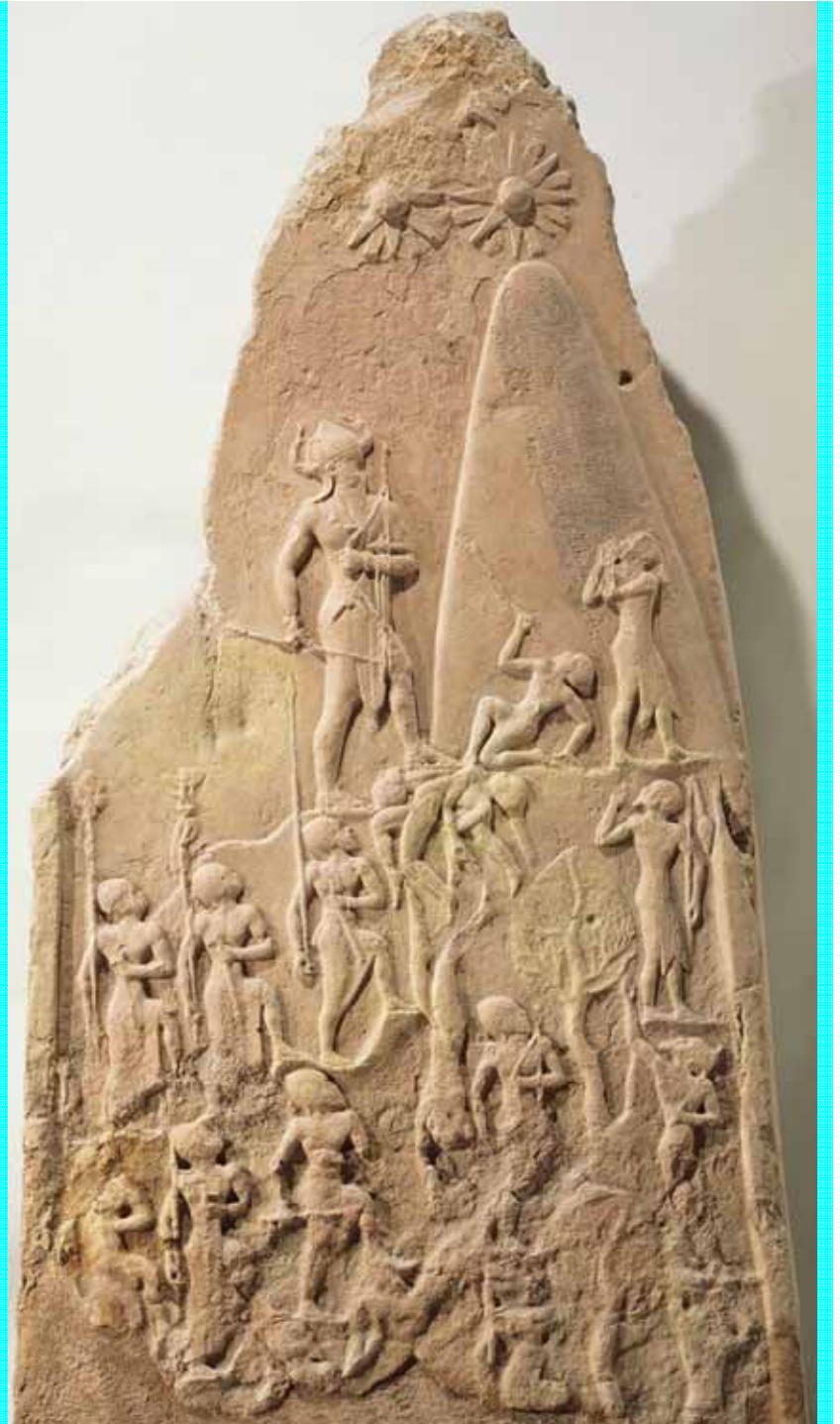
**Art refreshes our vision and helps
us see the world in new ways**



Ernst Haas. *Peeling Paint on Iron Bench*, Kyoto, 1981. Kodachrome print.

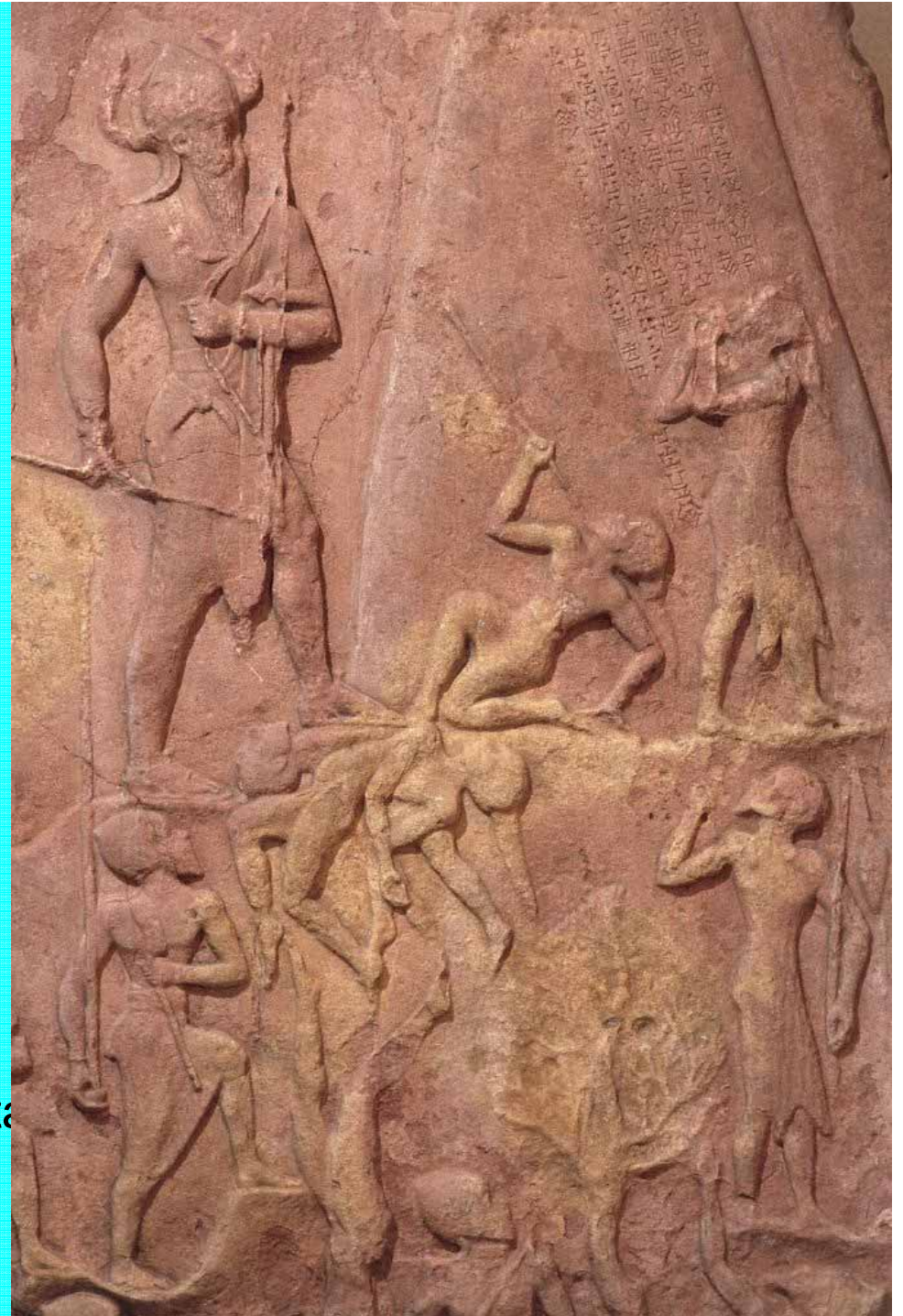
Art promotes social, political and religious ideas (e.g. – propaganda, protest)

Victory Stele of Naram-Sin,
From Susa, Iran (probably came
originally from Sippar, an Akkadian city
and brought by the Elamites to Susa),
2254–2218 BCE
Pink sandstone, approx. 6' 7" high.
Louvre, Paris.





Comparison: Ishtar (Queen of heaven/morning and evening star) and Shamash (sun god). Akkadian cylinder seal



Victory Stele of Naram-Sin. Detail



Victory Stele of Naram-Sin. Detail



**Victory Stele of
Naram-Sin. Detail**

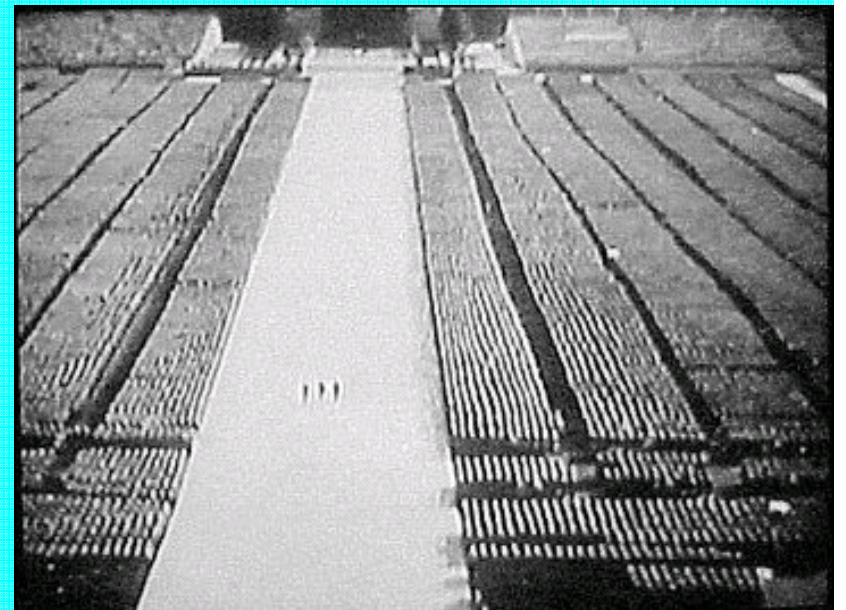
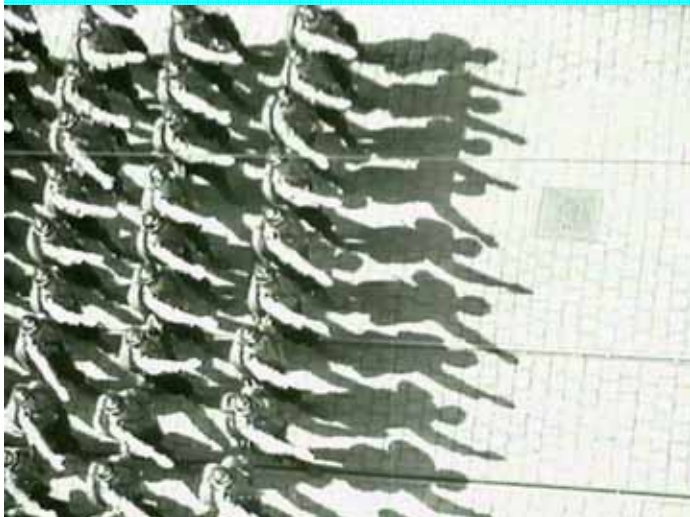




Triumph of the Will is a propaganda film made by Leni Riefenstahl. It chronicles the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg.



Triumph of the Will is "a totally unique and incomparable glorification of the power and beauty of our Movement." -- Adolf Hitler



160,000 Germans stand in silence as Hitler, Himmler and Lutze walk a ceremonial pathway toward a giant wreath honoring Germans killed in battle.

Art assists in various rituals

Mandala –

A Hindu or Buddhist graphic symbol of the universe, that is used chiefly as an aid to meditation.

Creating a Kalachakra mandala of some 2 meters diameter, traditionally takes 6 days, employing as many as 16 monks.

The Kalachakra Sand Mandala





Monk working on Sand Mandala at Nashua High School.

construction and destruction of a mandala

<https://youtu.be/10084L3Pqsc>

Art entertains

Art Cars at "Burning Man"



Larry Harvey likens the art cars to "sublimely beautiful works of art floating across the playa like a Miro painting."







Nights on the Playa

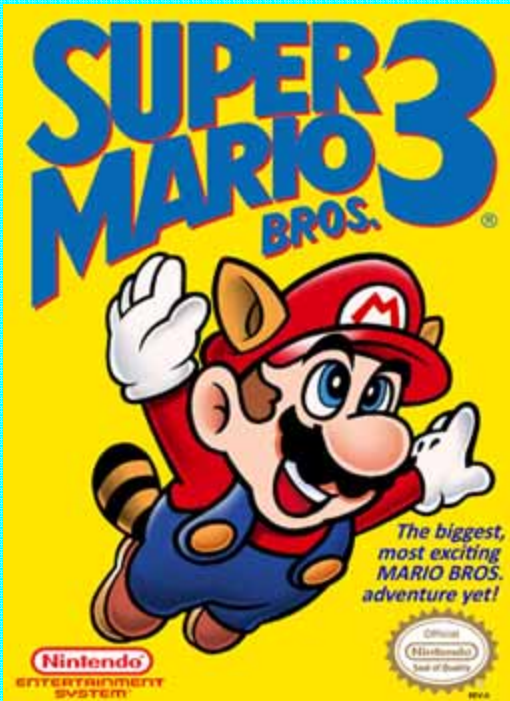






Pac Man
1981 (Atari)

Video Games



Super Mario
Brothers III, 1990
(Nintendo)
by Shigeru
Miyamoto and
Takashi Tezuka.

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of
Time 3D, 2011



Creativity

Creative people tend to possess certain traits:

1. **Sensitivity**- heightened awareness
2. **Flexibility**- adapt to new possibilities
3. **Originality**- problem solving creatively
4. **Playfulness**- humor & experimentation
5. **Productivity**- ability to generate ideas
6. **Fluency**- free flow of ideas
7. **Analytical skill**- exploring problems, & finding how they work
8. **Organizational skill**- putting things together in a coherent order.



Alan Rath. *Hound*. 1990. Wood, steel, aluminum, electronics, and cathode-ray tubes, 18X76X26". Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Looking and Responding

Seeing is both physical and psychological process.

The physical process has 3 steps:

- 1. Reception** – external stimuli enter the nervous system through the eyes.
- 2. Extraction** – the retina (nerve cells at the back of the eye) extracts the information it needs and send it to the visual cortex. There are approximately 100 million sensors in the retina but only 5 million channels to the visual cortex so the retina does a lot of “editing”.
- 3. Inference** – The visual cortex (the part of the brain that processes visual stimuli) receive the information of such features as color, motion, orientation and size, and “creates” what is finally seen.

The Psychological Process:

Everything we see is filtered through a history of fear, prejudices, desires, emotions, customs and beliefs. Through art we can understand those filters and learn to look more closely at the visual world.

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.



Edward Weston, *Cabbage Leaf*, 1931.
Gelatin silver print. Center for Creative Photography,
University of Arizona, Tuscon.



Giovanni Bellini. Pietà, c. 1500-1505. Oil on wood, 25 5/8" x 35 3/8".
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

**Francisco de Goya. Chronos
Devouring One of His Children,**
c. 1820-1822. Wall painting in oil
on plaster (later transferred to
canvas), 57 7/8" x 32 5/8".
Museo del Prado, Madrid.





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.

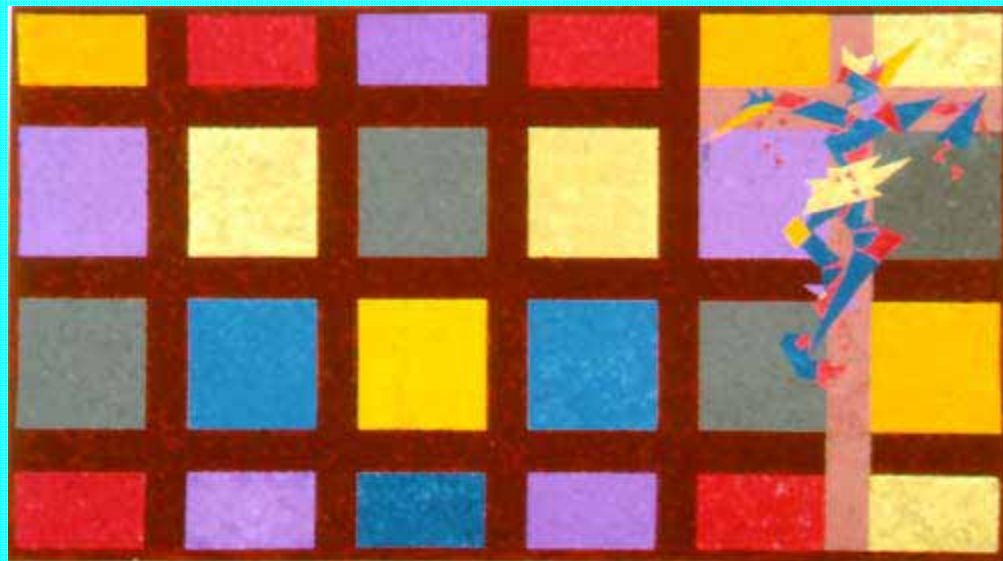
Komar & Melamid
UNITED STATES:
LEAST WANTED
PAINTING
(paperback size)





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

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



Class Assignment 2

- **Find in your textbook a work of art that you find beautiful and explain what makes it beautiful for you.**
- **Find in your textbook a work of art that you find ugly and explain what makes it ugly in your opinion.**
- **If your group can not agree you may submit more than one example and explain your choices.**
- **Do you think art should be beautiful? Why or why not?**