

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS ART?

- Definition and origins of art
- Art and Originality
- Who is an Artist?
- Representational and Abstract Art, Nonrepresentational
- Style
- Art and Meaning: Form and Content, Context

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.

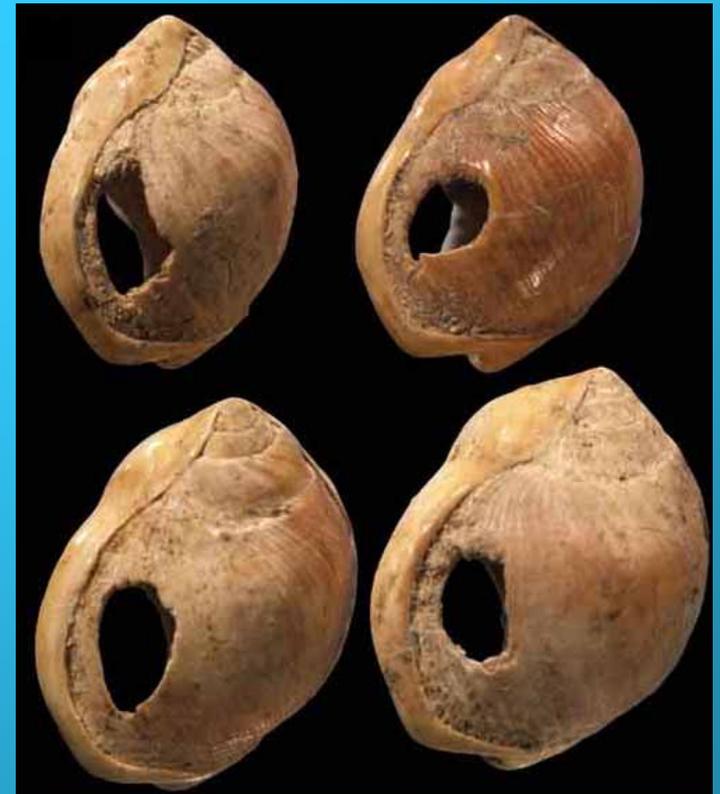
**Waterworn pebble
resembling a human face,**
from Makapansgat, South
Africa, ca. 3,000,000 BCE.
Reddish brown jasperite,
approx. 2 3/8" wide.





Red ochre stone from Blombos Cave,
South Africa (crayon with tally marks?), 75,
000 BCE

Shell Beads from Blombos
Cave.
Use-wear, indicates the
shells having being strung
and worn



Representation: the presenting again – in different and substitute form – of something observed.

40-35,000 BCE – first works of art



Woolly Mammoth Figurine from Germany.

3.7 cm (1.5 inch) long. 35,000 BCE

(It is believed to be the oldest ivory carving ever found.)

How Art made the
World

https://youtu.be/vO6ay9eueR4?list=PLK01liO6QU8K6Jk_ZjDGk2WeSo3b7nD3s

10:47



**Horses. Chauvet cave, Ardeche Valley, France. C
25,000-17,000 BCE**

Rhino. Chauvet
cave, Ardeche
Valley, France. C
25,000-17,000 BCE



Art and Originality



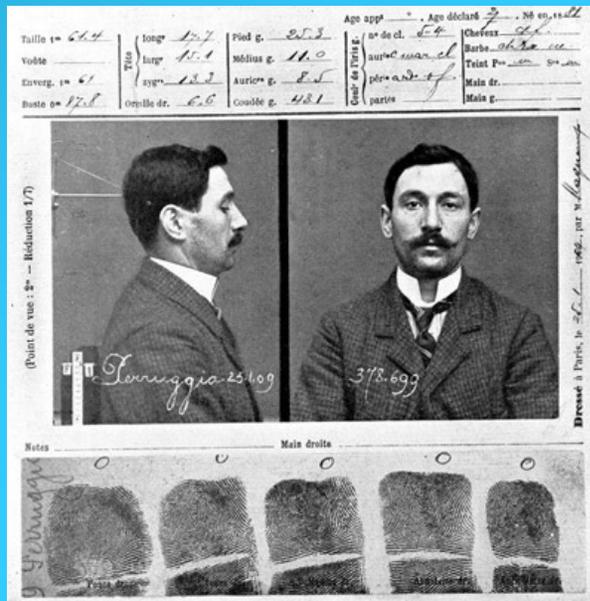
Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Italian painter, sculptor, draftsman, architect, engineer, writer and scientist whose genius epitomized the Renaissance humanist ideal.

Leonardo da Vinci, *Self-Portrait* (?) 1512, Red chalk, 33.3 x 21.3 cm



Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*,
(also known as La Gioconda)
1503-1505. Oil on wood, 2' 6" x 1'
9". Louvre, Paris.

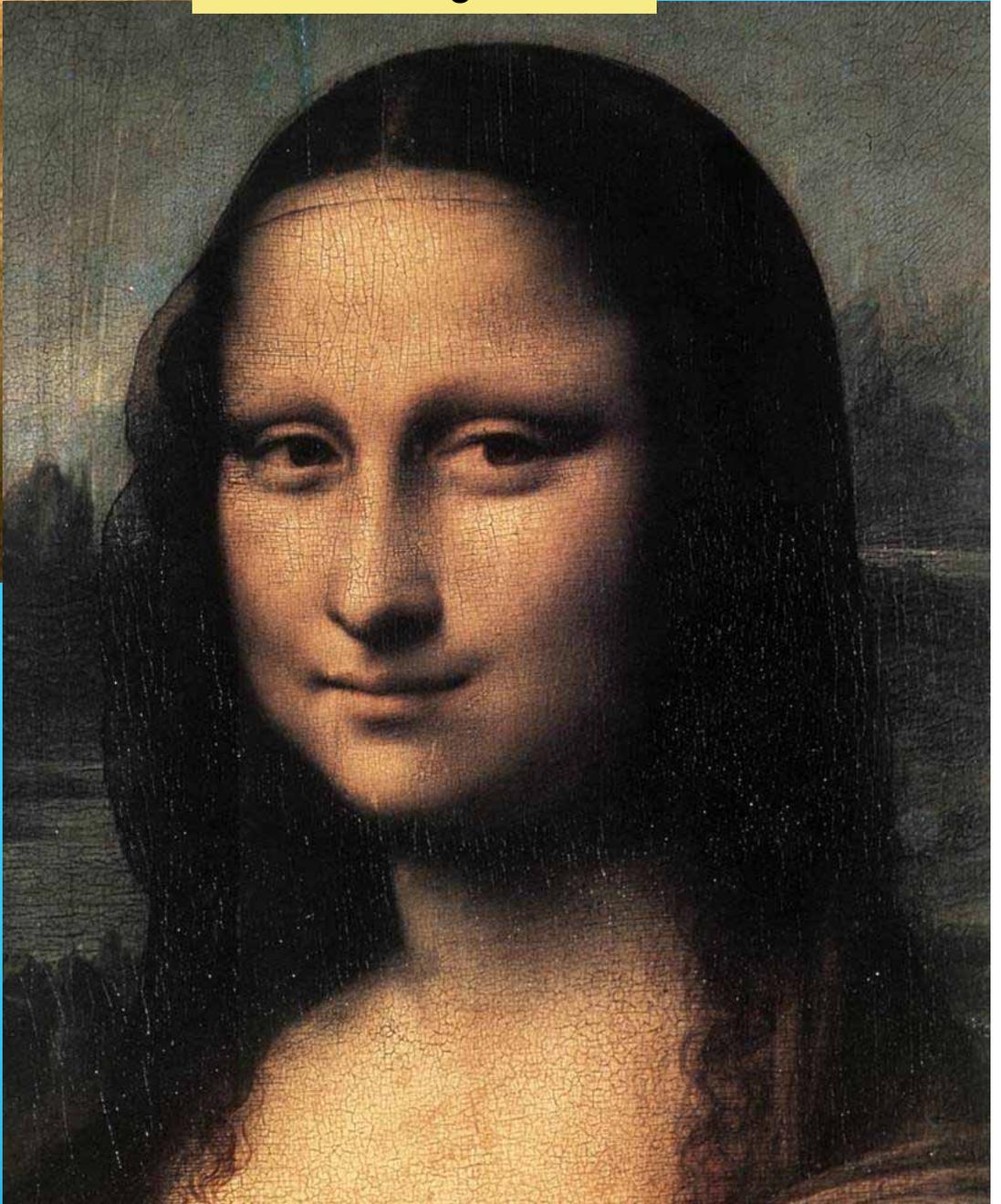
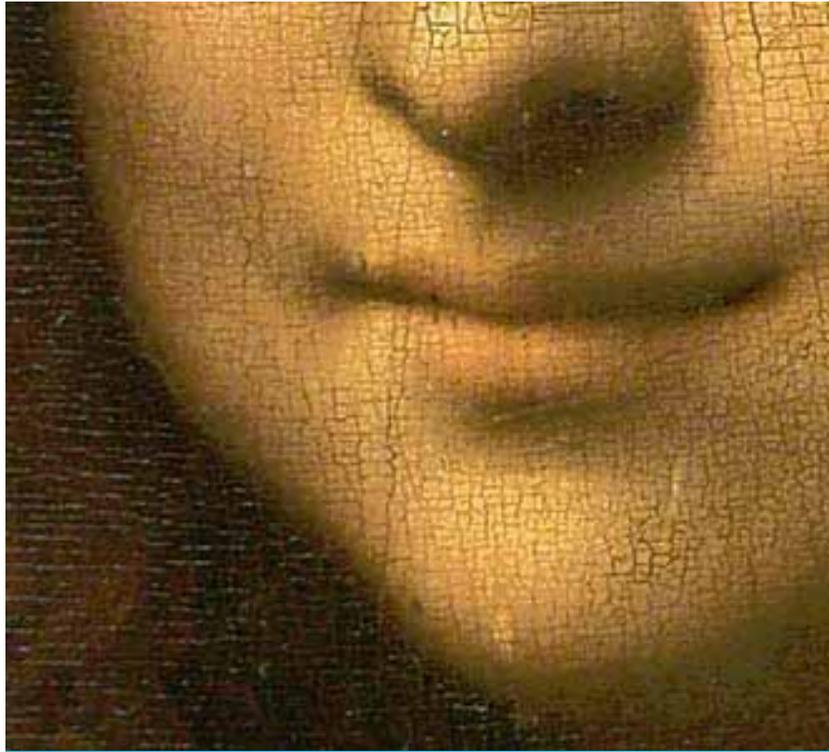
The subject may have been 24 year old Lisa Gherardini del Giocondo, the wife of a prominent merchant in Florence - Francesco del Giocondo.



Vincenzo Peruggia, an Italian who believed the Mona Lisa should be returned to Italy, stole the painting in 1911. It was recovered in 1913 when he tried to sell it.

Peruggia was hailed for his patriotism in Italy and only served a few months in jail for the crime.

Is she smiling or not?





Leonardo da Vinci. *Mona Lisa*.
c. 1503–1506 Oil on poplar. 77 ×
53 cm, 30 × 21 in. Musée du
Louvre, Paris



Marcel Duchamp. *Mona Lisa: LHOQQ* 1919. Color reproduction of the Mona Lisa altered with a pencil. 8X5”.



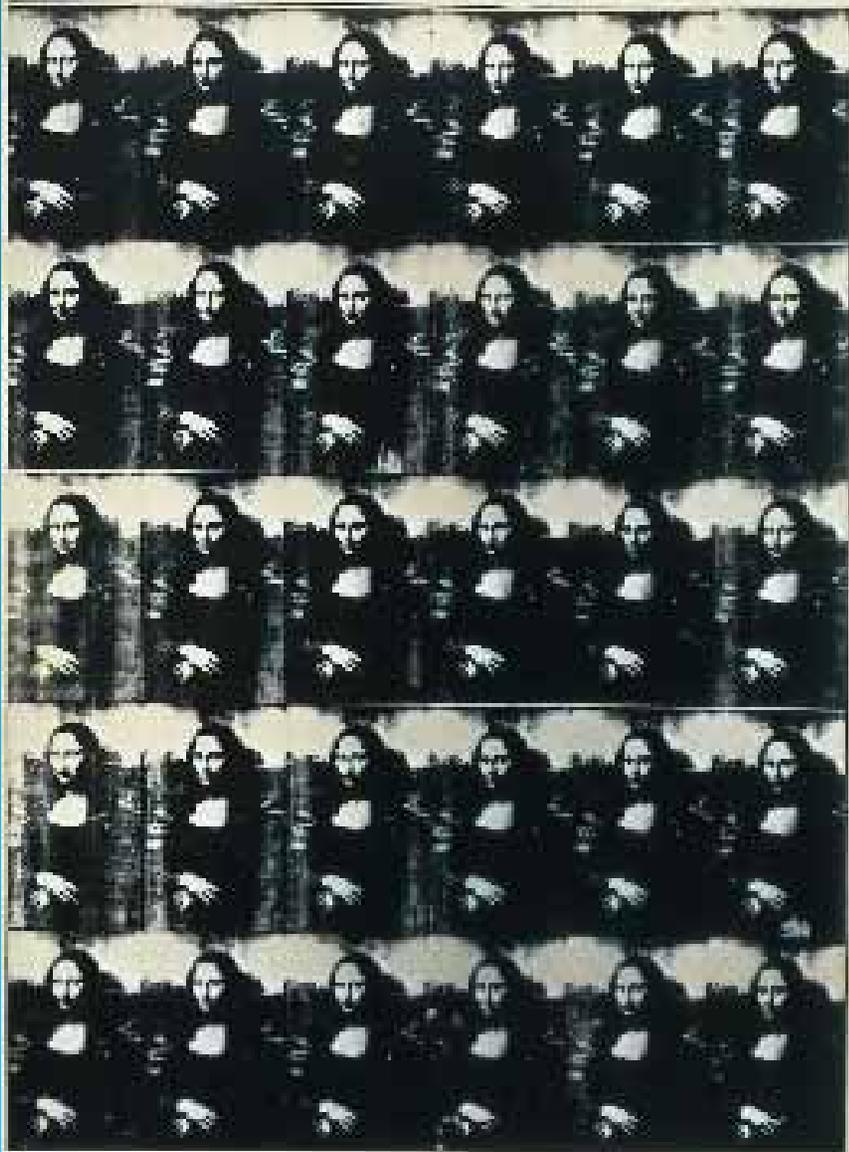
Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*.
Paint, urinal. 1917

1917 - The Independent Artists show committee said that *Fountain* was not art and rejected it from the show.

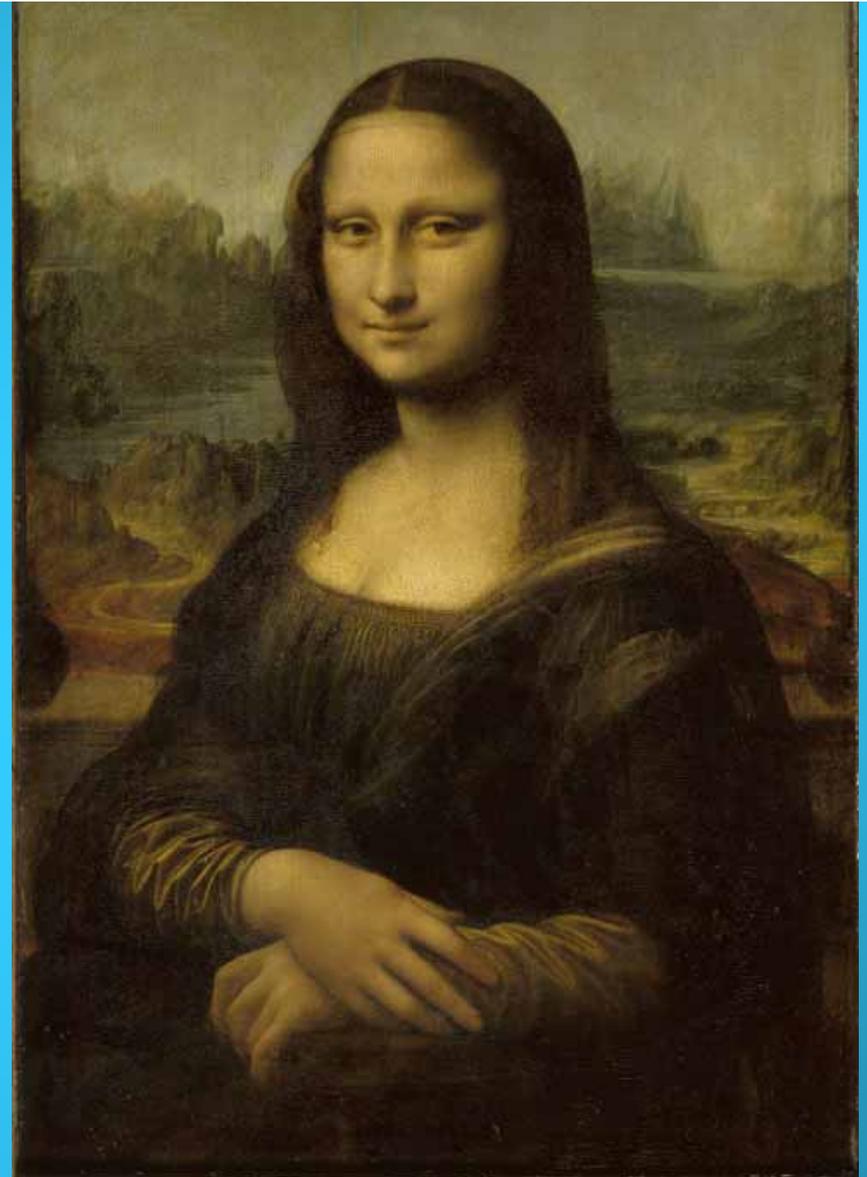
Class Assignment 3

The year is 1917 and you are a member of the show committee. Would you show this work? Why or why not? Is it art?

2004 - *Fountain* was voted the most influential artwork of the 20th century by 500 selected British artworld professionals.

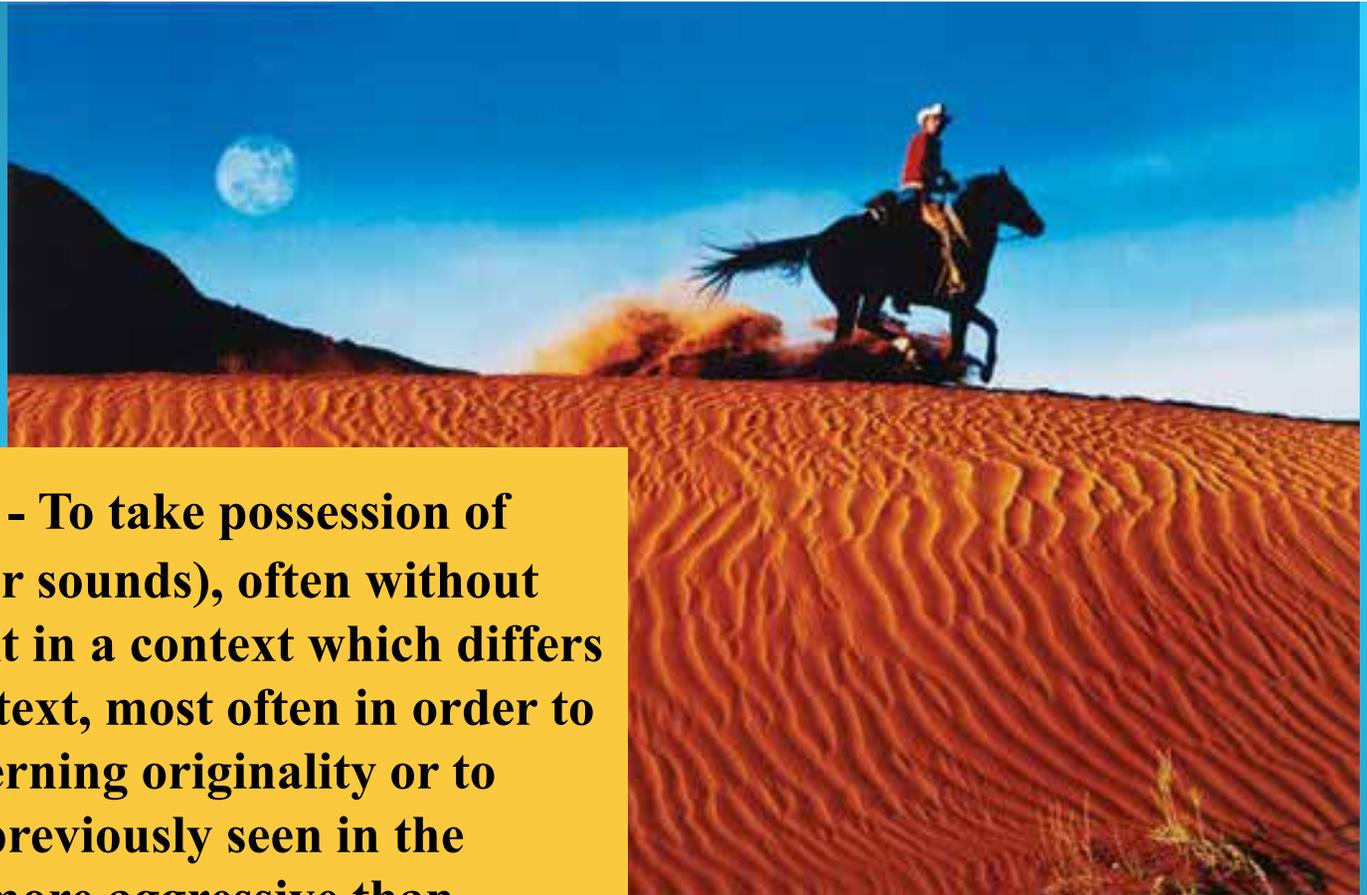


Andy Warhol,
Thirty Are Better than One,
1963. Silkscreen ink, acrylic paint on
canvas, 9' 2" x 7' 10 1/2"



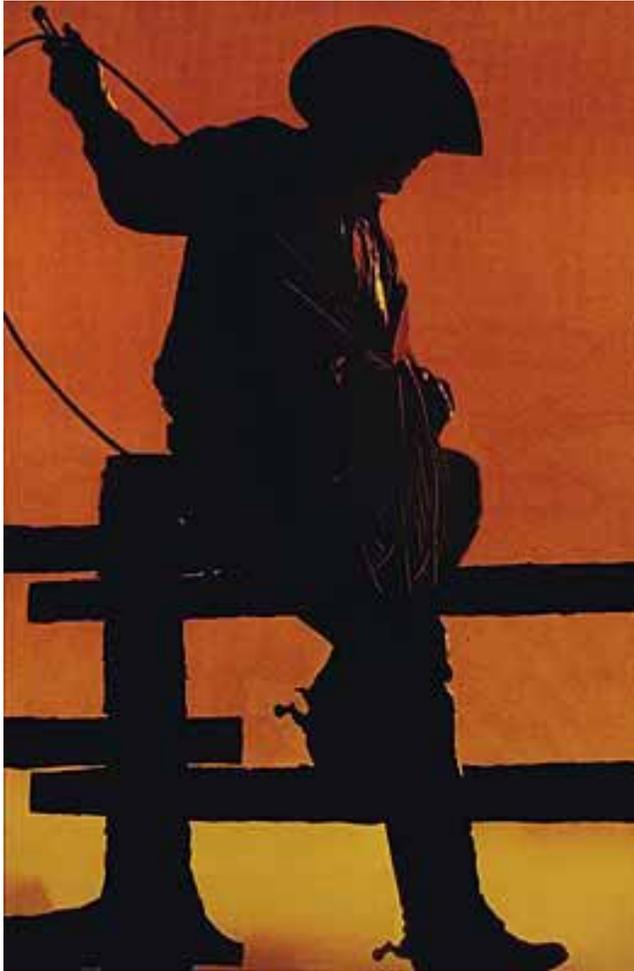
Leonardo da Vinci. Mona Lisa,
c. 1503-1505. Oil on wood, 30
1/4" x 21". Louvre, Paris.

Appropriation - To take possession of another's imagery (or sounds), often without permission, reusing it in a context which differs from its original context, most often in order to examine issues concerning originality or to reveal meaning not previously seen in the original. This is far more aggressive than allusion or quotation, it is not the same as plagiarism however.



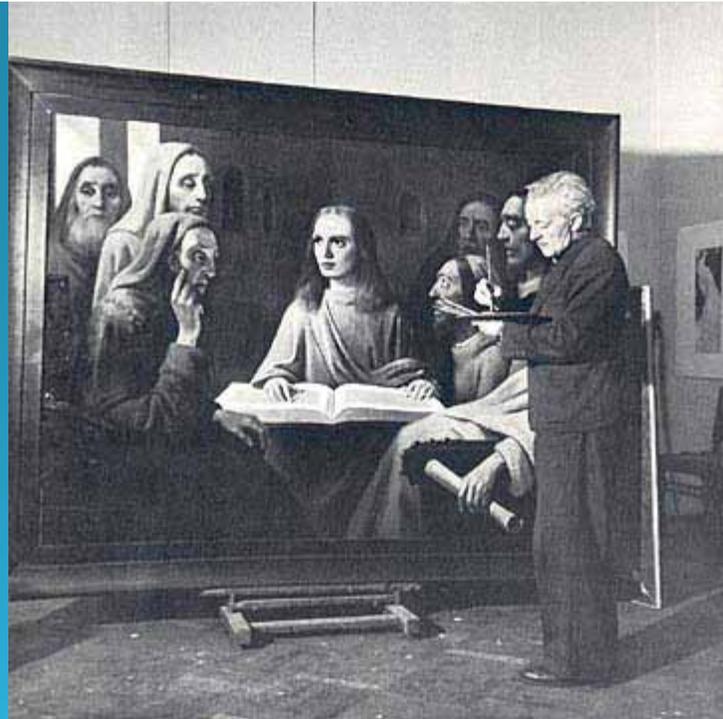
Richard Prince. *Untitled (Cowboy)*, Ektacolor print, 49 1/4 by 74 5/8 inches, 1997.

An appropriation of a Marlboro cigarette advertisement.
(Sold for \$744,000)



Richard Prince, *Untitled (Cowboy)*, 1989
Chromogenic print; 50 x 70 in. (127 x 177.8 cm)

Richard Prince, *Untitled (Cowboy)* taken from an old Marlboro cigarette advertising campaign.



Han van Meegeren
demonstrating his forgery
techniques

Art Forgery

Han van Meegeren (Art forger) 1941 – 1942, *Christ with the Adulteress* (fake “Vermeer” that was sold to Hermann Göring for 1,650,000 guildens, about \$6.75 Million today)

When he was accused of collaborating with the enemy in having sold Vermeer's *The Woman Taken in Adultery* to Hermann Göring during World War II, he was able to prove the “Vermeer” was by his own hand; van Meegeren was sent to prison for one year.



Who is an Artist?



Rembrandt Signature. Robbert Watts. 1965/75
Neon, glass tubing, plexiglas, transformer. 13 ½ X 44 X 5”

**Painting by
Congo the
chimp,
1950s, Sold
for \$25,000**

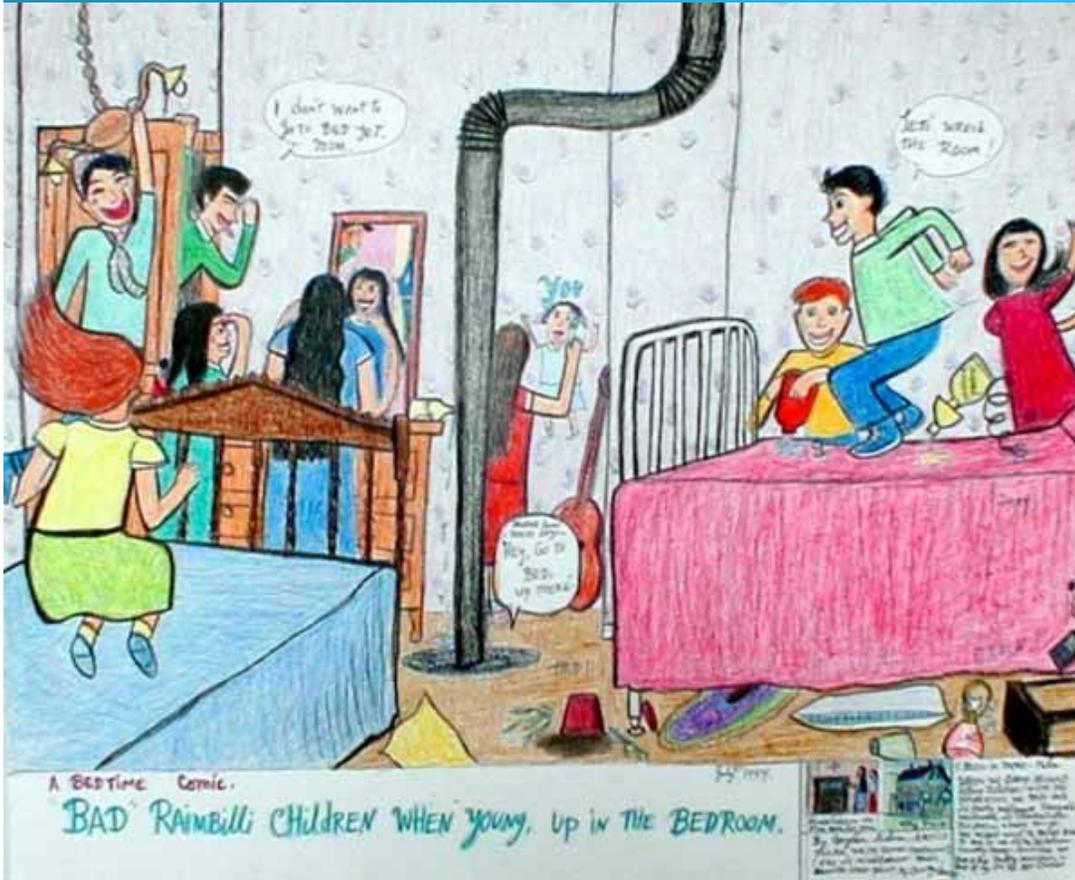


Paintings by Congo the Chimpanzee

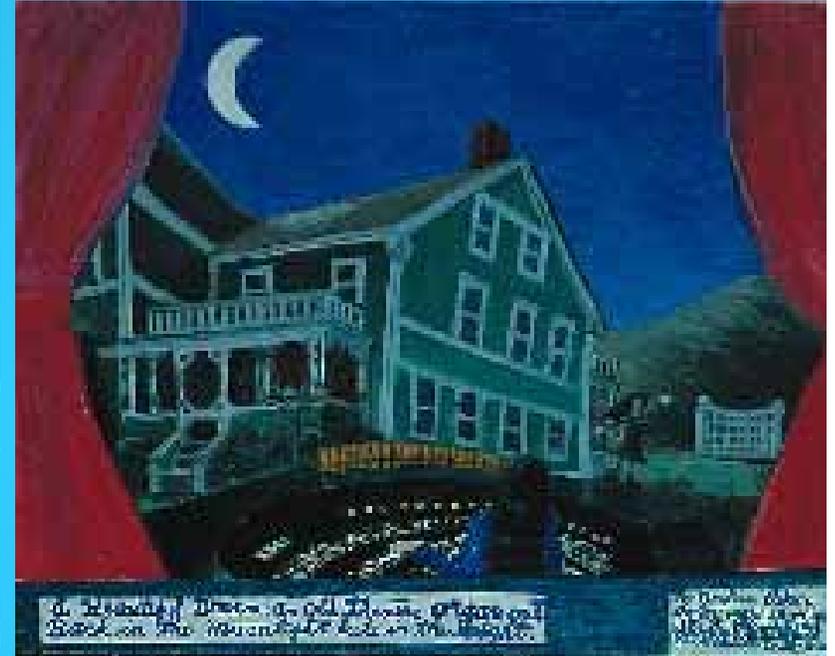


Outsider Art: Art produced by nonprofessional artists 'outside' the normal fine-art tradition (self taught, children, prisoners, mentally handicapped etc.)

Self Taught Artists/ Naïve/ Folk Art



Gayleen Aiken, *Bad Raimbilli Children When Young, up in the Bedroom*
14x17 mm/paper



Gayleen Aiken, *A Beautiful Dream*, 1982. Oil on canvas board, 12" x 16". Private Collection.



James Hampton. Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nation's Millennium General Assembly, ca. 1950-1964, Gold and silver aluminum foil, colored kraft paper, and plastic sheets over wood, paperboard, and glass. 180 pieces. 105" x 27" x 14 1/2". Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.



James Hampton with The Throne in its early stages

Plaque with James Hamptons cryptic script

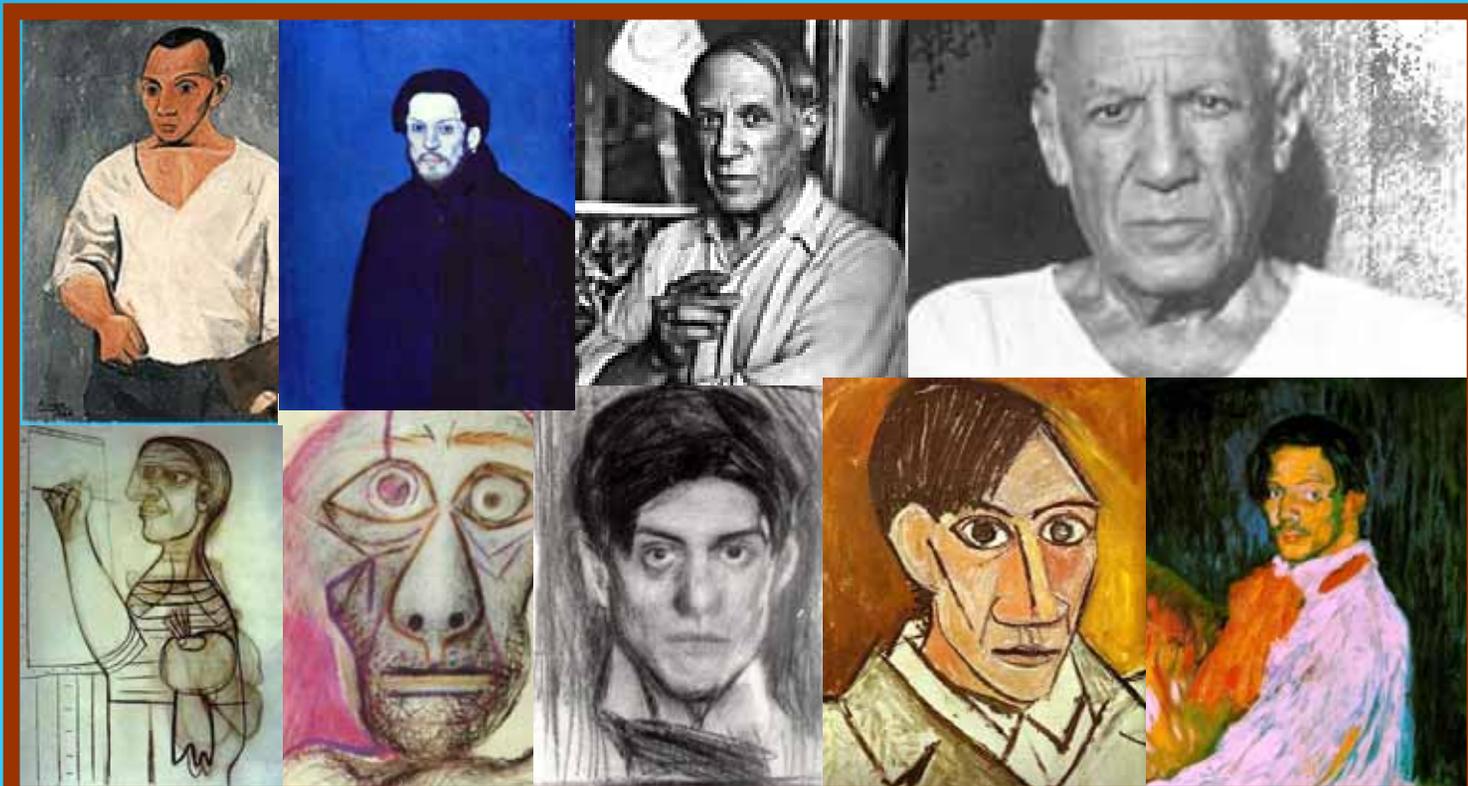


Representational and Abstract Art

Pablo Picasso: 1881-1973

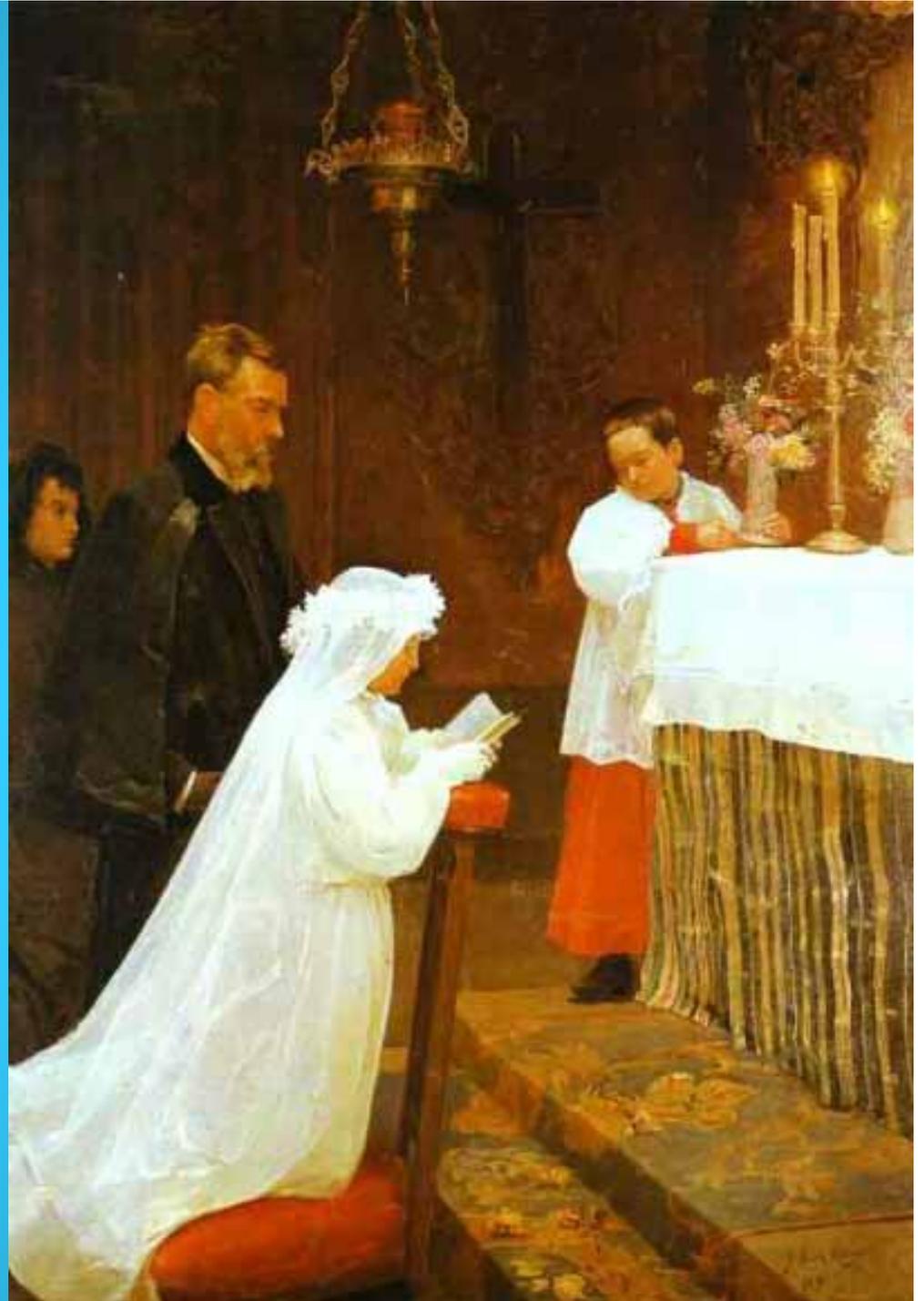
Spanish painter, sculptor, graphic artist, and ceramist, who worked in France. He is generally considered in his technical virtuosity, enormous versatility, and incredible originality and prolificity to have been the foremost figure in 20th-century art.

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



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

Representational (Related terms: Naturalistic, Figurative): Resembles forms in the natural world; "window on the world".





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

It took Mantegna almost nine years to complete the extensive fresco program in which he sought to aggrandize Ludovico Gonzaga and his family (Italian dynasty that ruled 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, *Supermarket Shopper*, 1970. Polyester resin and fiberglass polychromed in oil, with clothing, steel cart, and groceries, life-size.

Duane Hanson, *Tourists II*, 1988

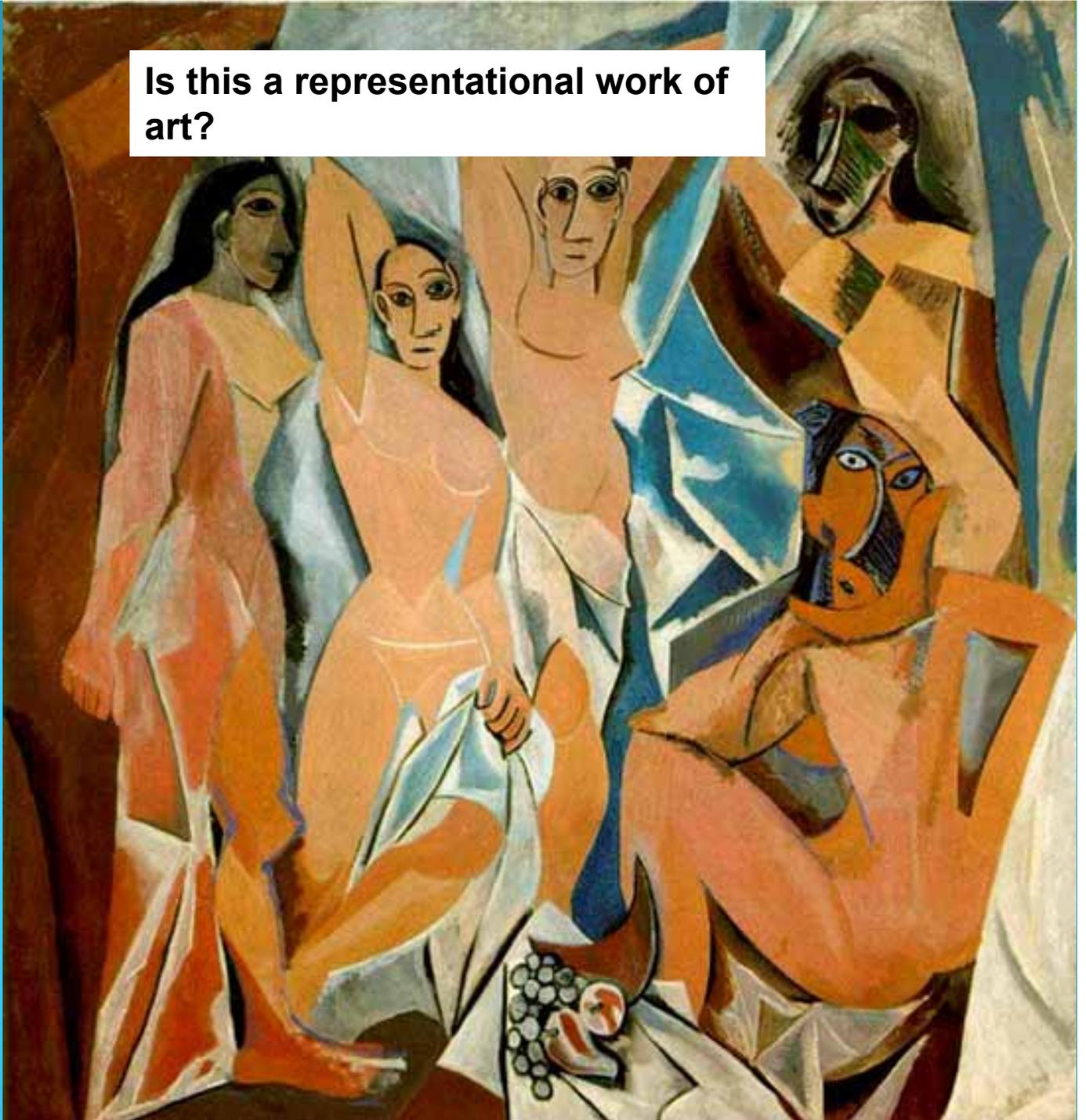


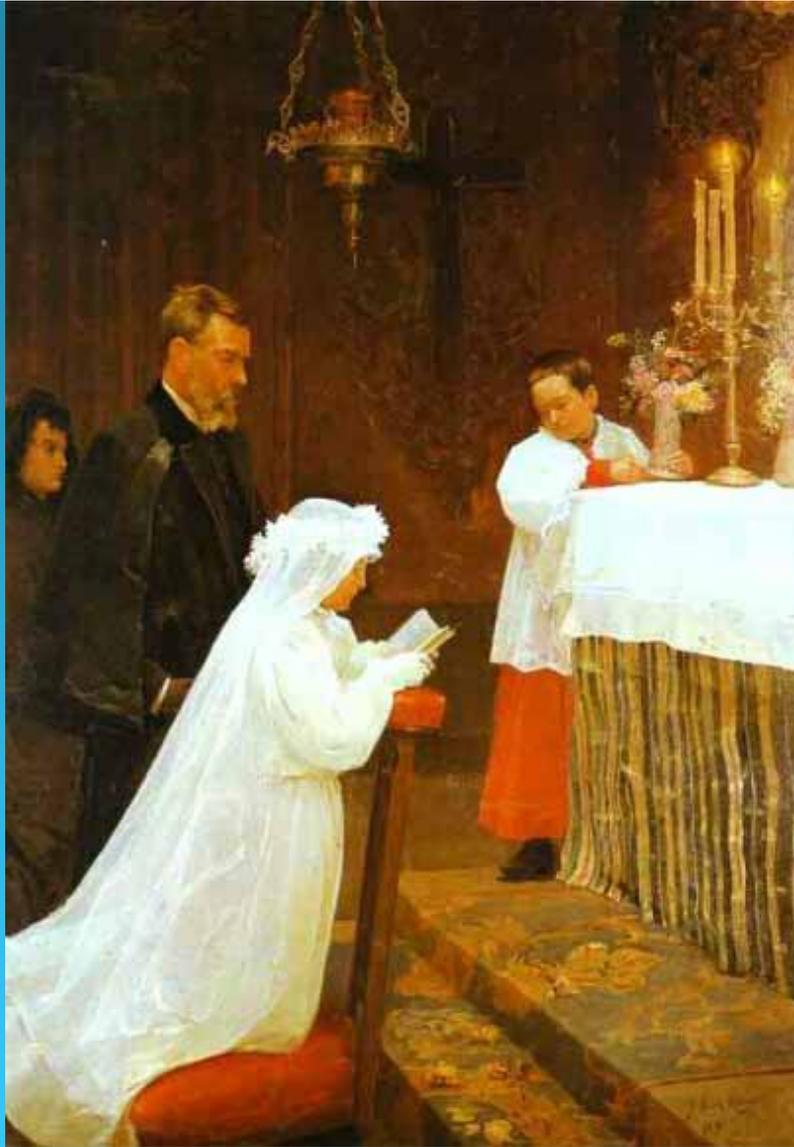
Abstract Art:

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

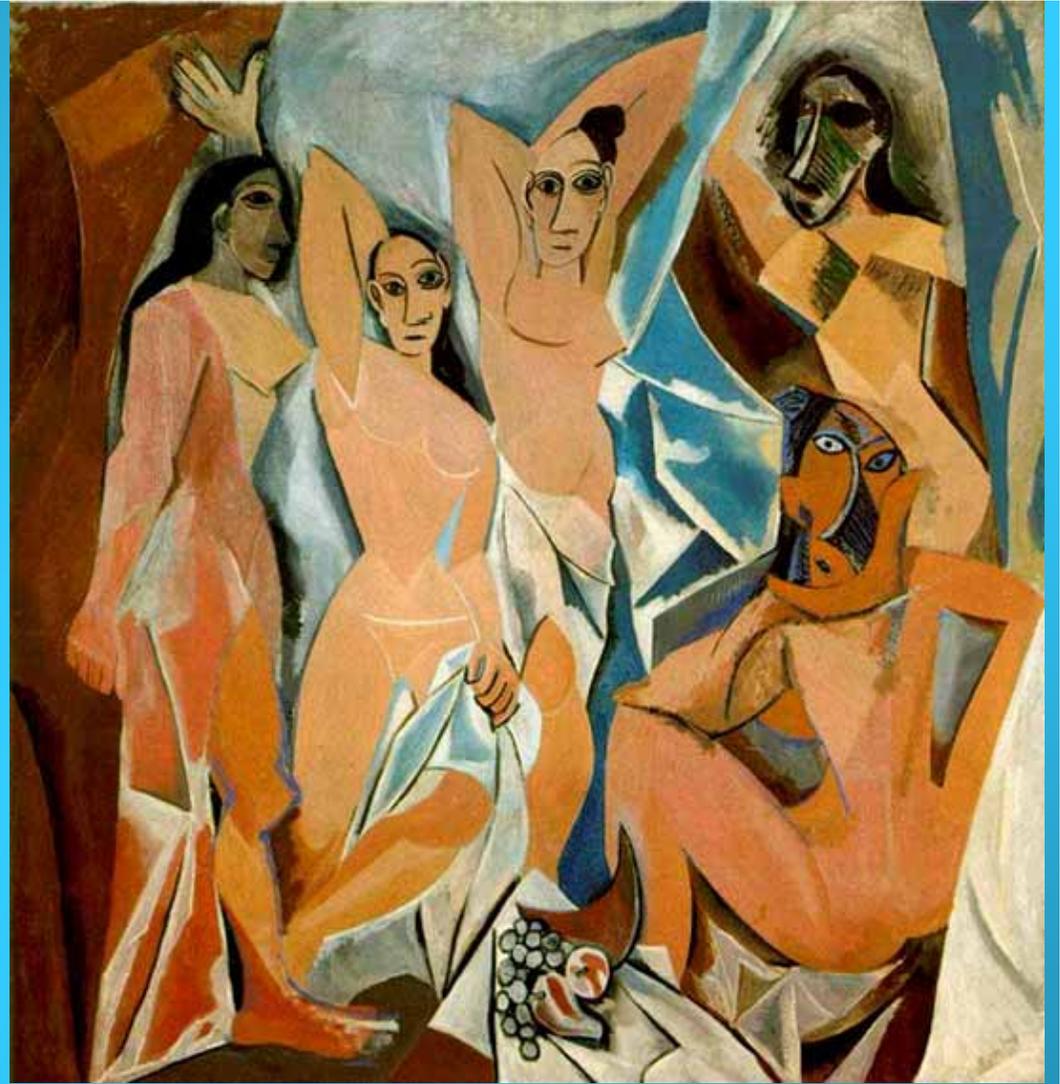
Pablo Picasso,
Les Femmes d'Alger (O.K. Version O)
1907.
Oil on Canvas, 8'X7'8"
Museum of Modern Art.
New York

Is this a representational work of art?

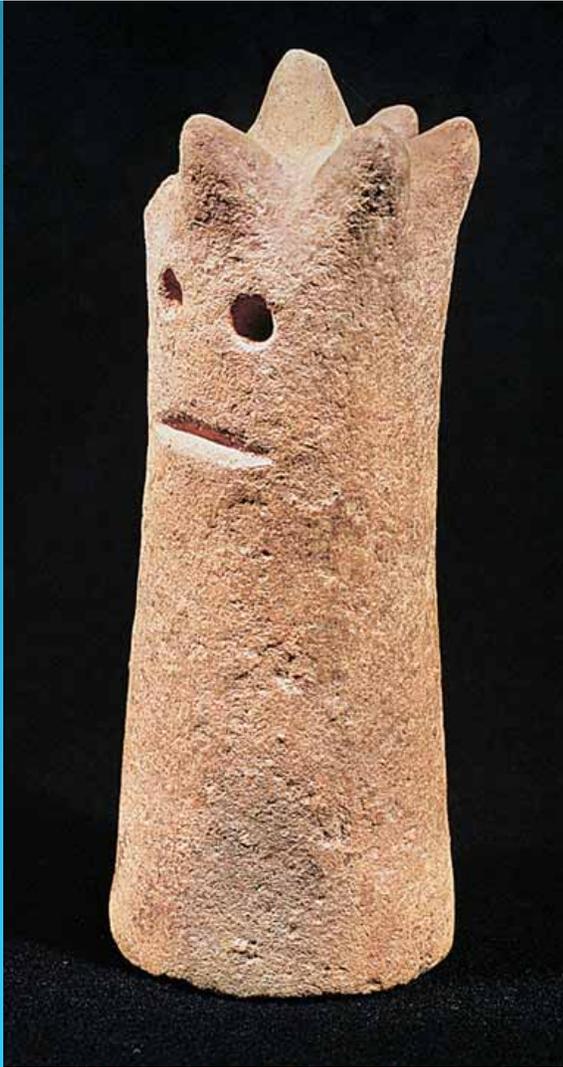




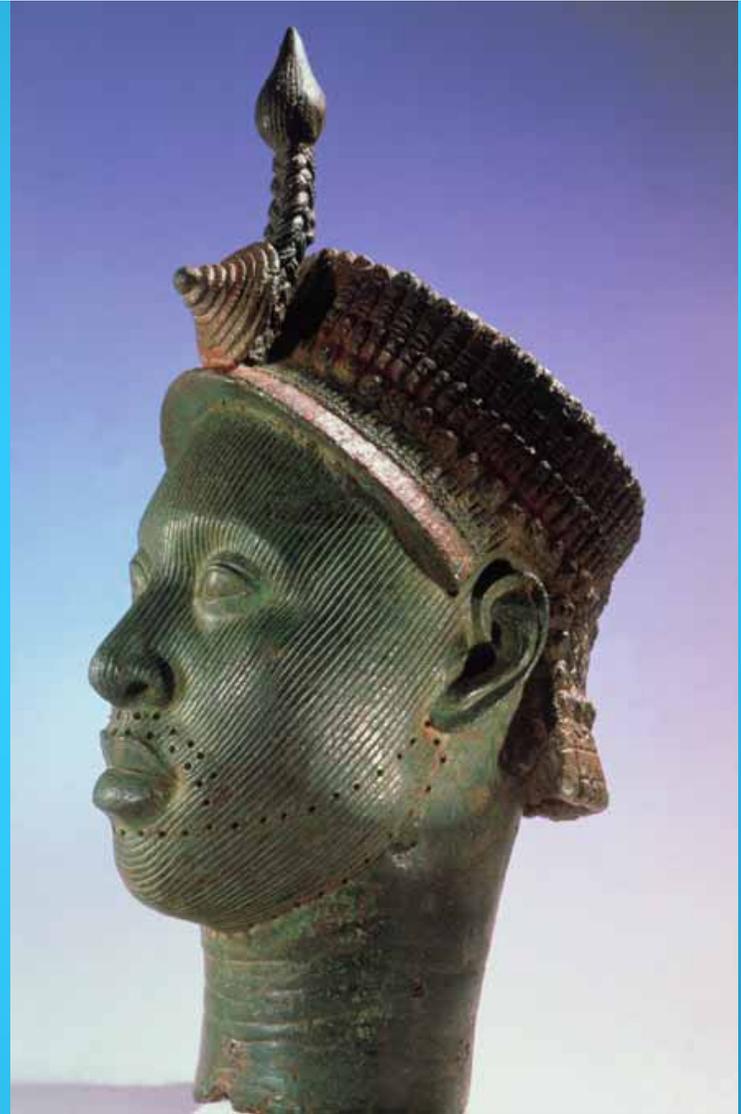
Pablo Picasso, *First Communion*, 1895-1896. Oil on canvas, 65 3/8" x 46 1/2". Museo Picasso, Barcelona.



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



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

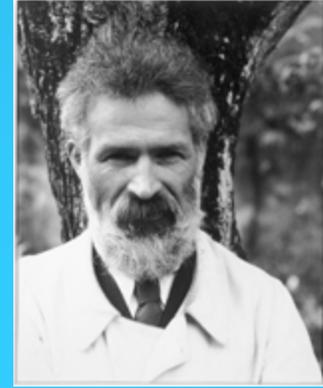


Head of a King, from Ife. Yoruba, c. 13th century. Brass, life-size. The British Museum, London.

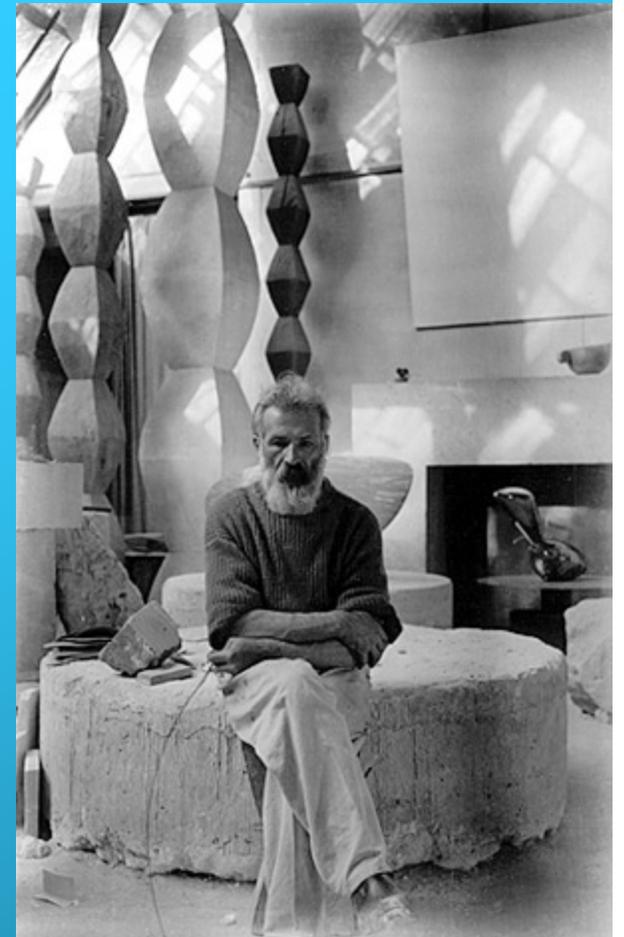
Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957)

A Romanian sculptor who settled in France.

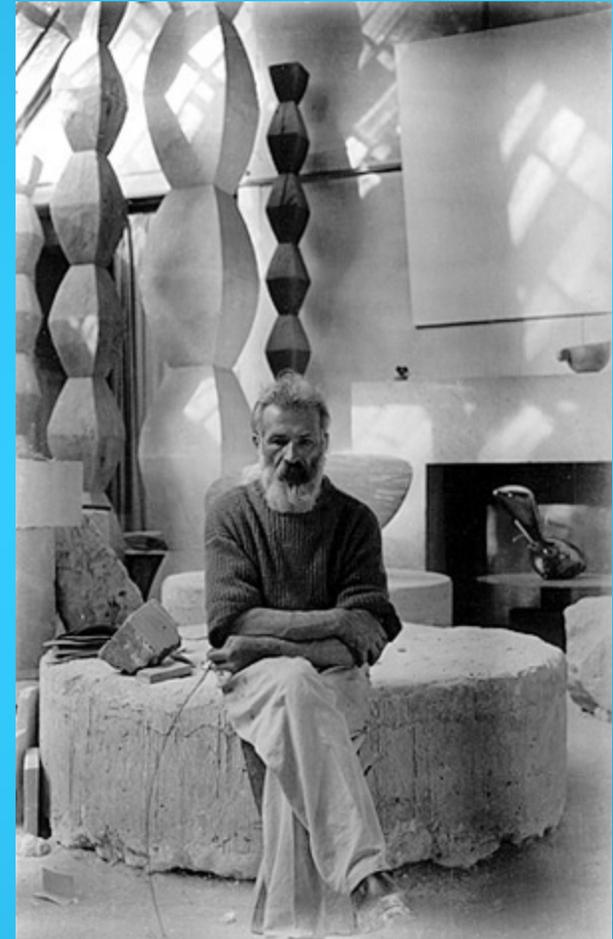
He was a central figure of the modern movement and a pioneer of abstraction. His sculpture is noted for its visual elegance and sensitive use of materials, combining the directness of peasant carving with the sophistication of the Parisian avant-garde.



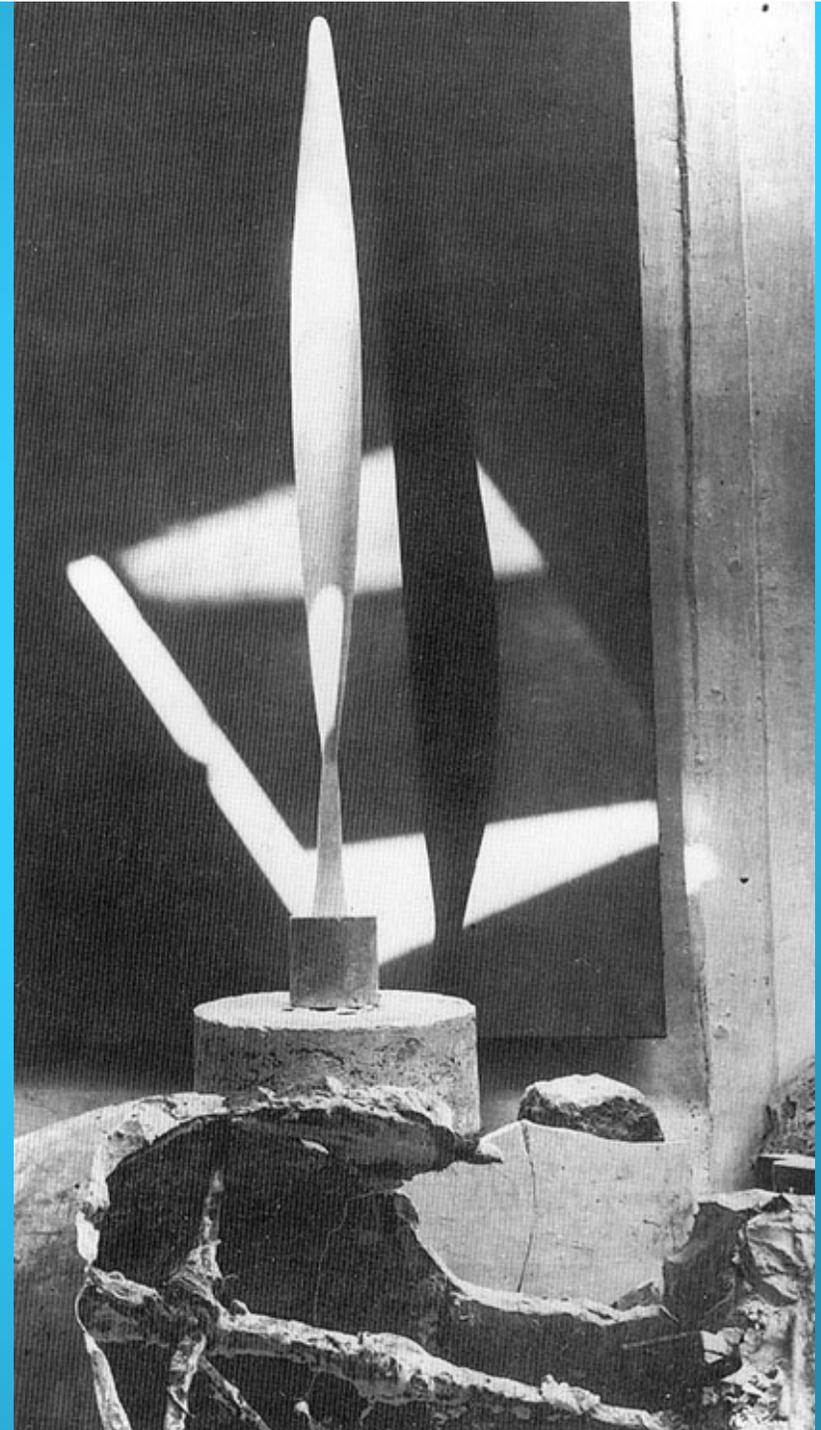
Photographs, 1933-34



Constantin Brancusi's studio,
as reconstructed 1977-1990 at the
Musée National d'Art Moderne,
Centre Georges Pompidou, France.



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



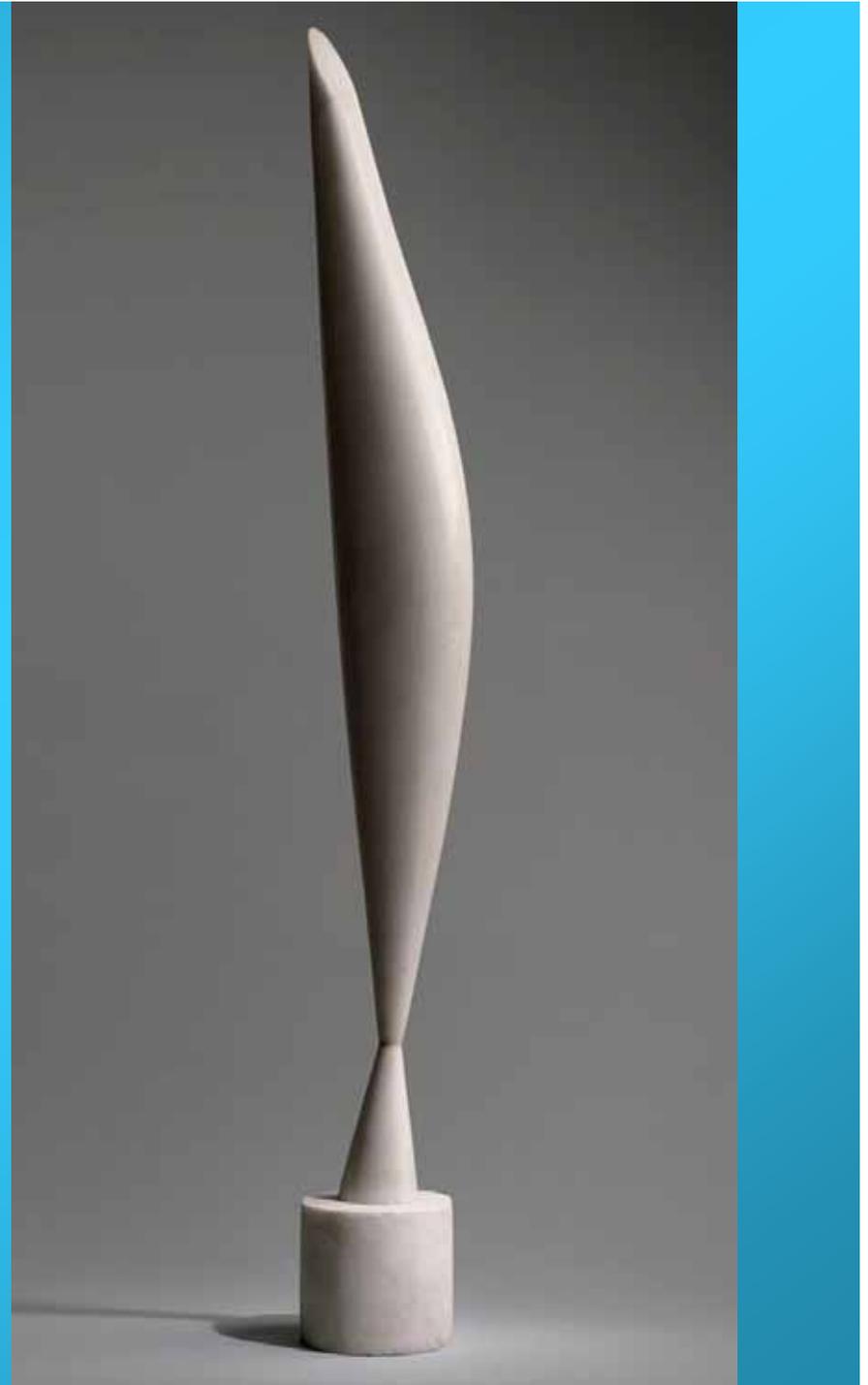
***Bird in Space*, 1923**

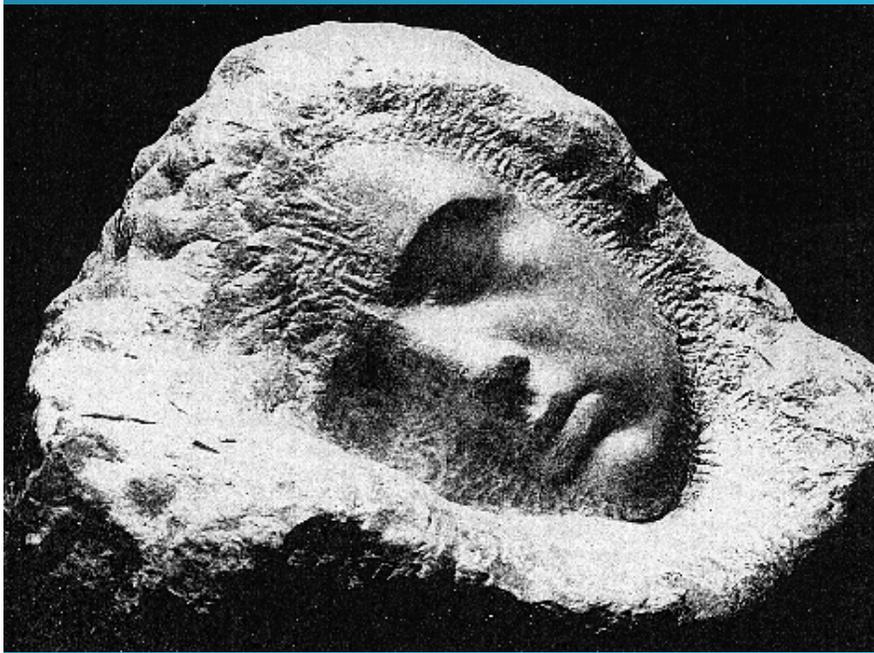
Constantin Brancusi

Marble; H. (with base) 56 3/4 in.
(144.1 cm),

Diam. 6 1/2 in. (16.5 cm)

Metropolitan Museum, NY





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.



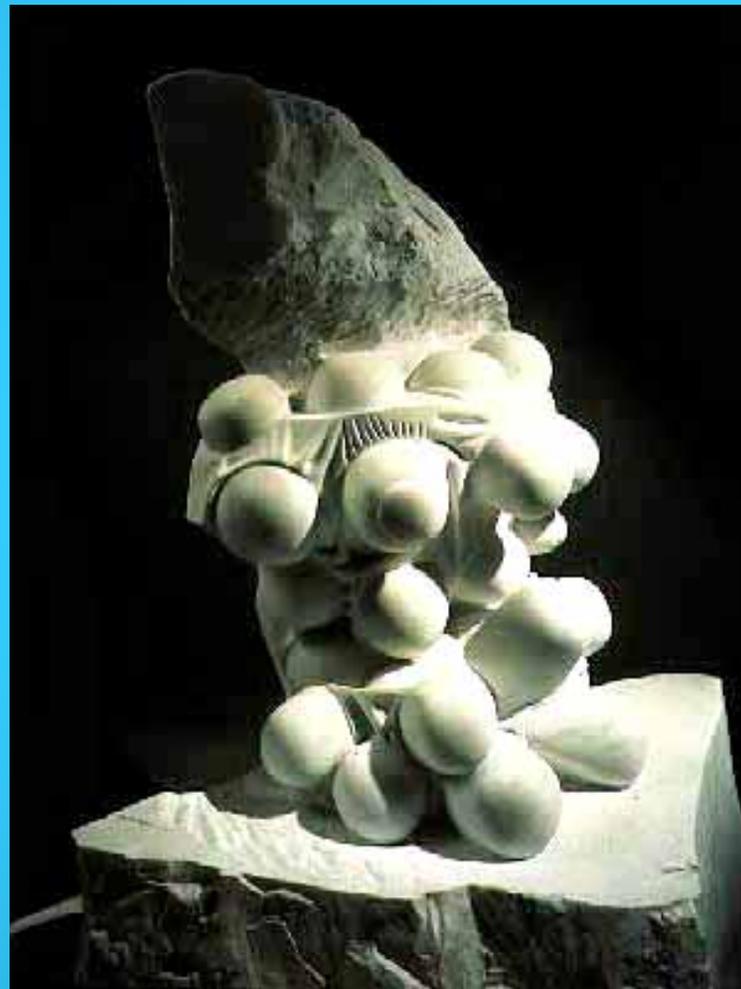
Robert Mapplethorpe.

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



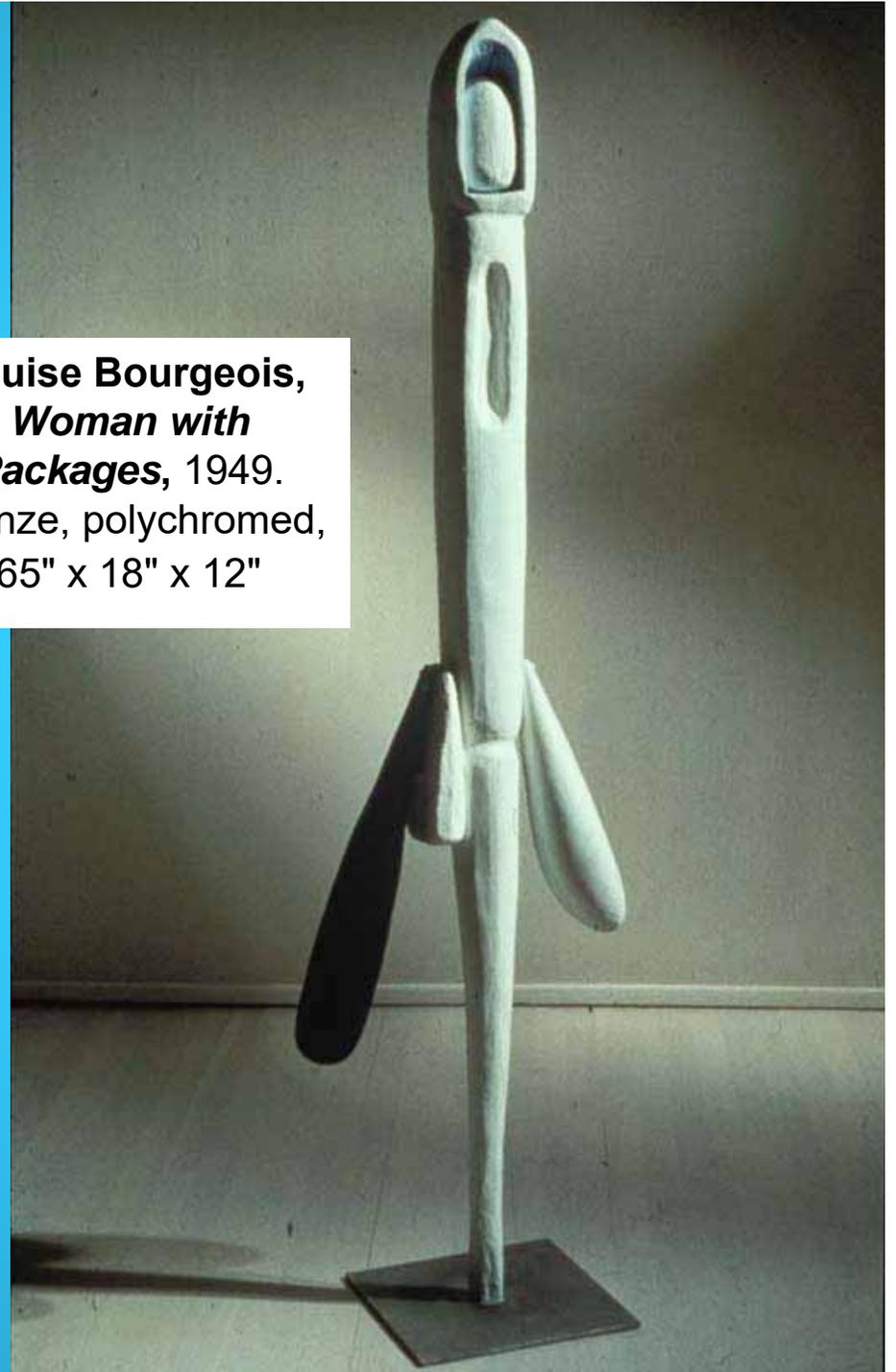


Louise Bourgeois, *The Nest*, 1994; sculpture; steel, 101 in. x 189 in. x 158 in. (256.54 cm x 480.06 cm x 401.32 cm); SFMOMA



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

Louise Bourgeois, *Woman with Packages*, 1949. Bronze, polychromed, 65" x 18" x 12"



Nonrepresentational

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

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.

Class Assignment 4

Find in your book -

1. Two representational works which are also naturalistic.
2. Two representational works which are also abstract.
3. Two non representational works.

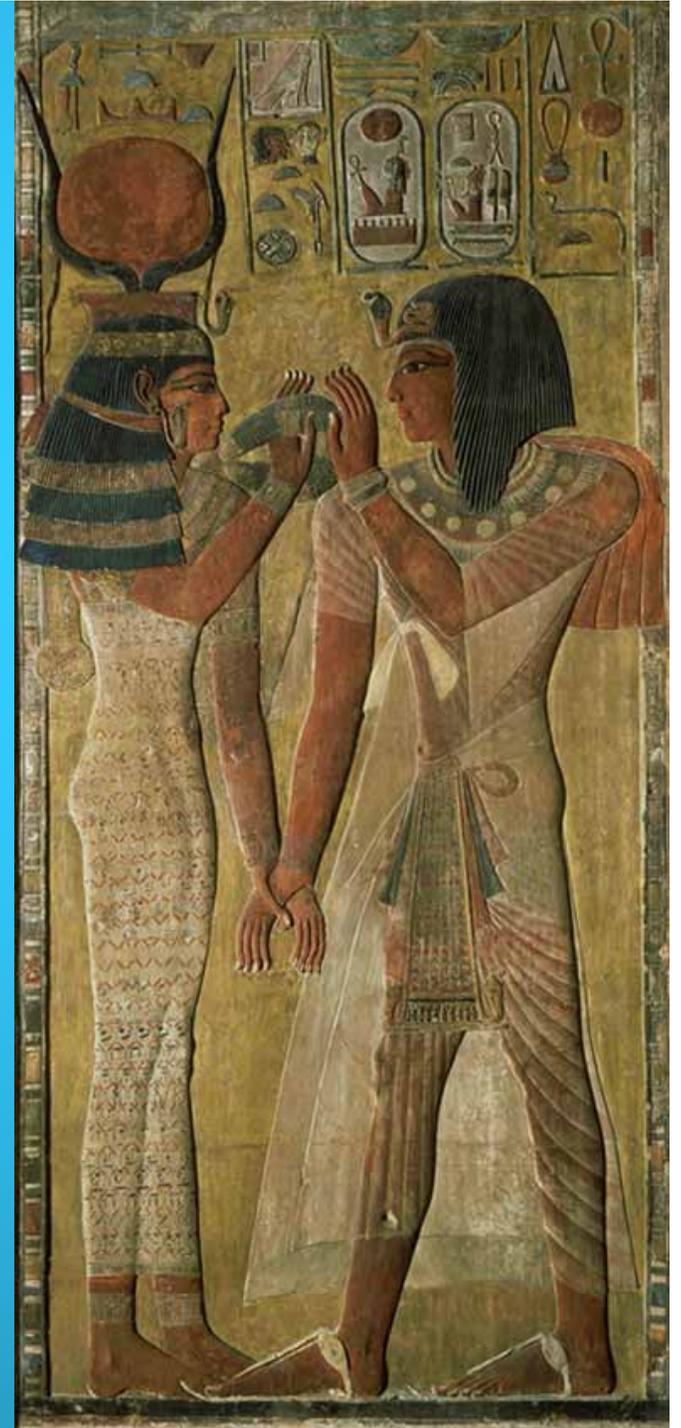
You need to provide the name of the work and the name of the artist.

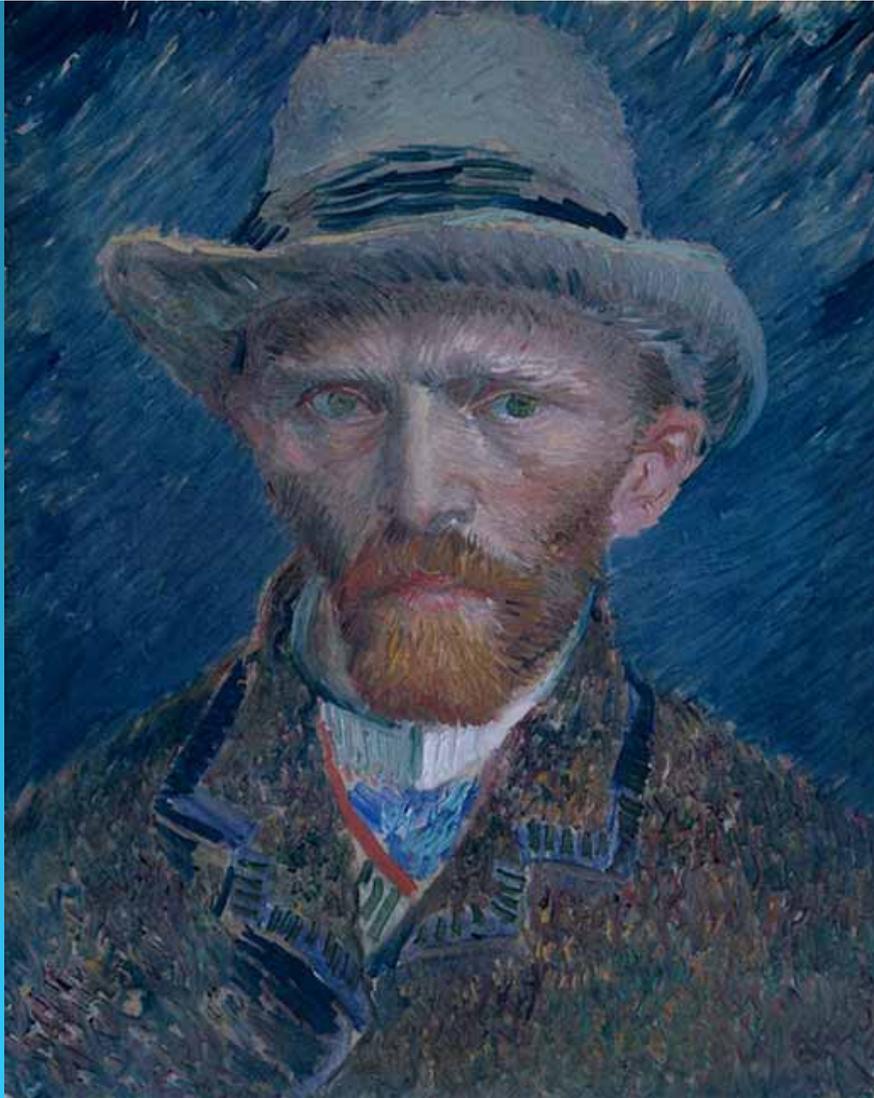
Style

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

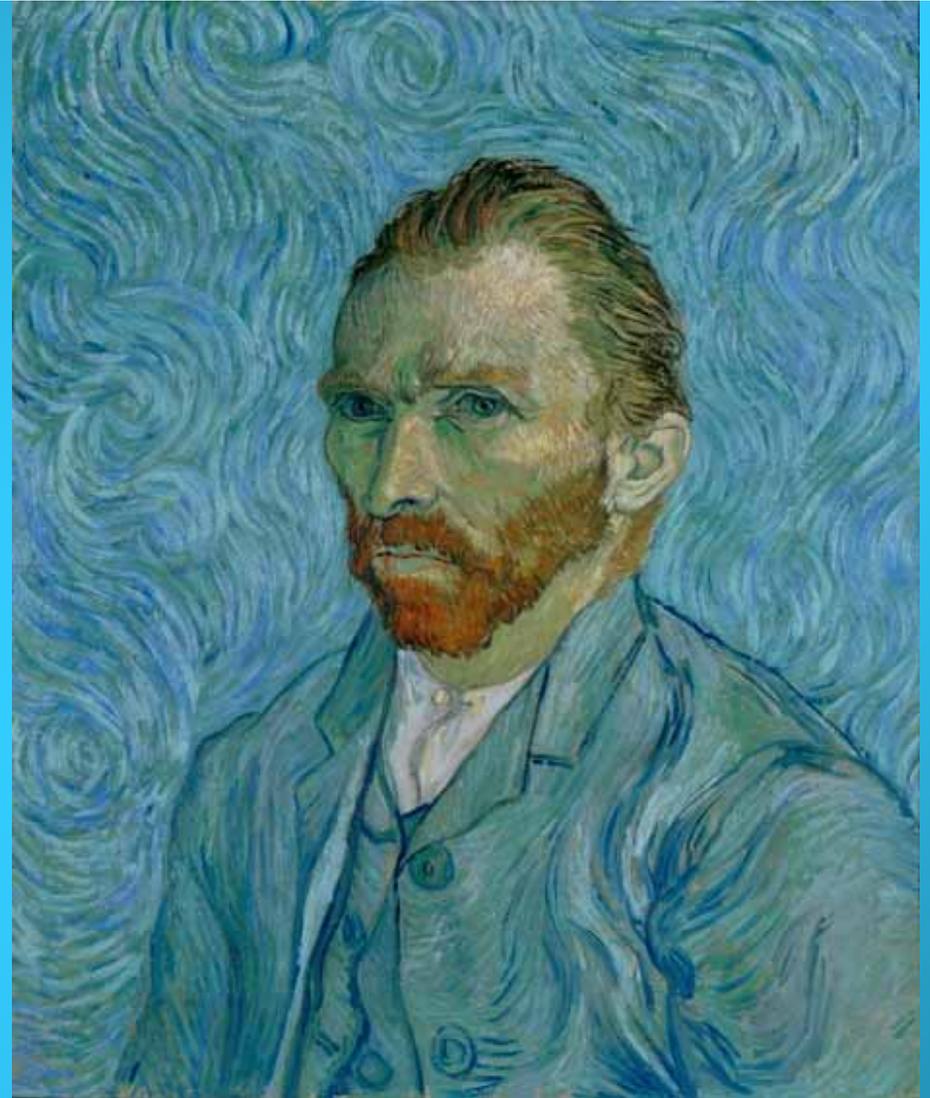
**Hathor and Sety, detail of a pillar
from the tomb of Sety I, c. 1300
B.C.E. Painted plaster on limestone,
height 7'5". Musée du Louvre, Paris.**

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





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.

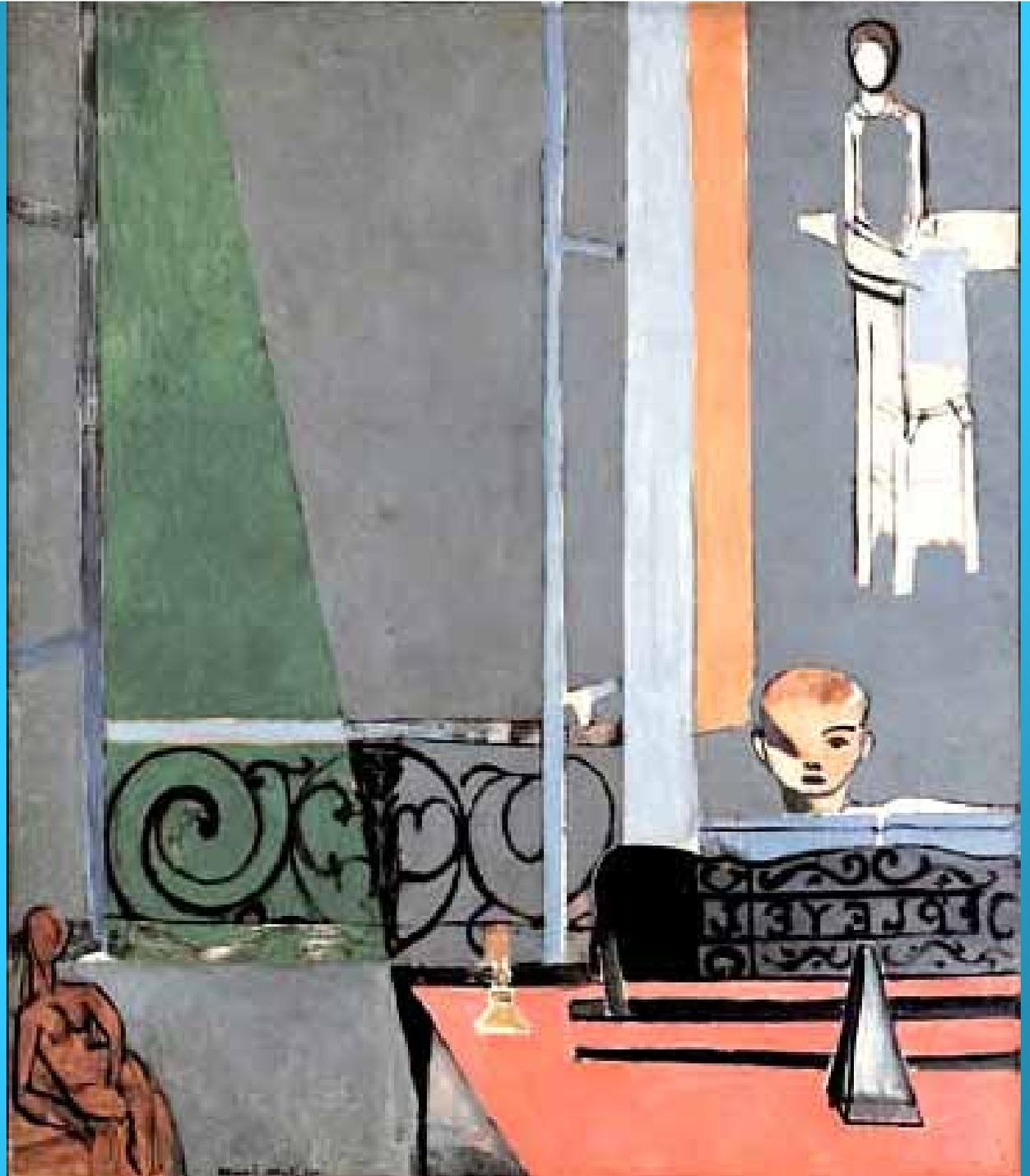
ART AND MEANING

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.

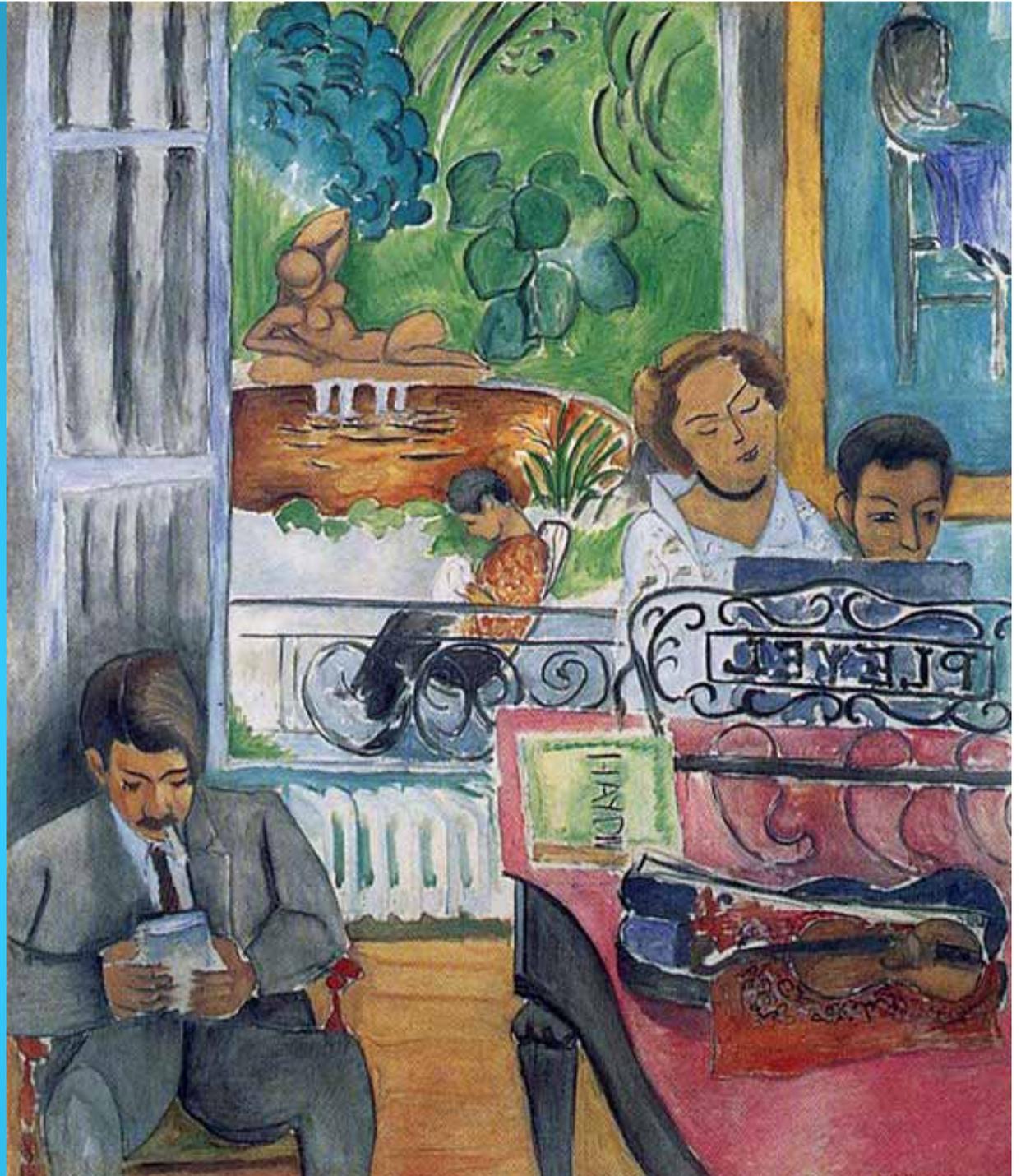
Content: What the work of art is about. It includes subject matter, message and iconography.

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



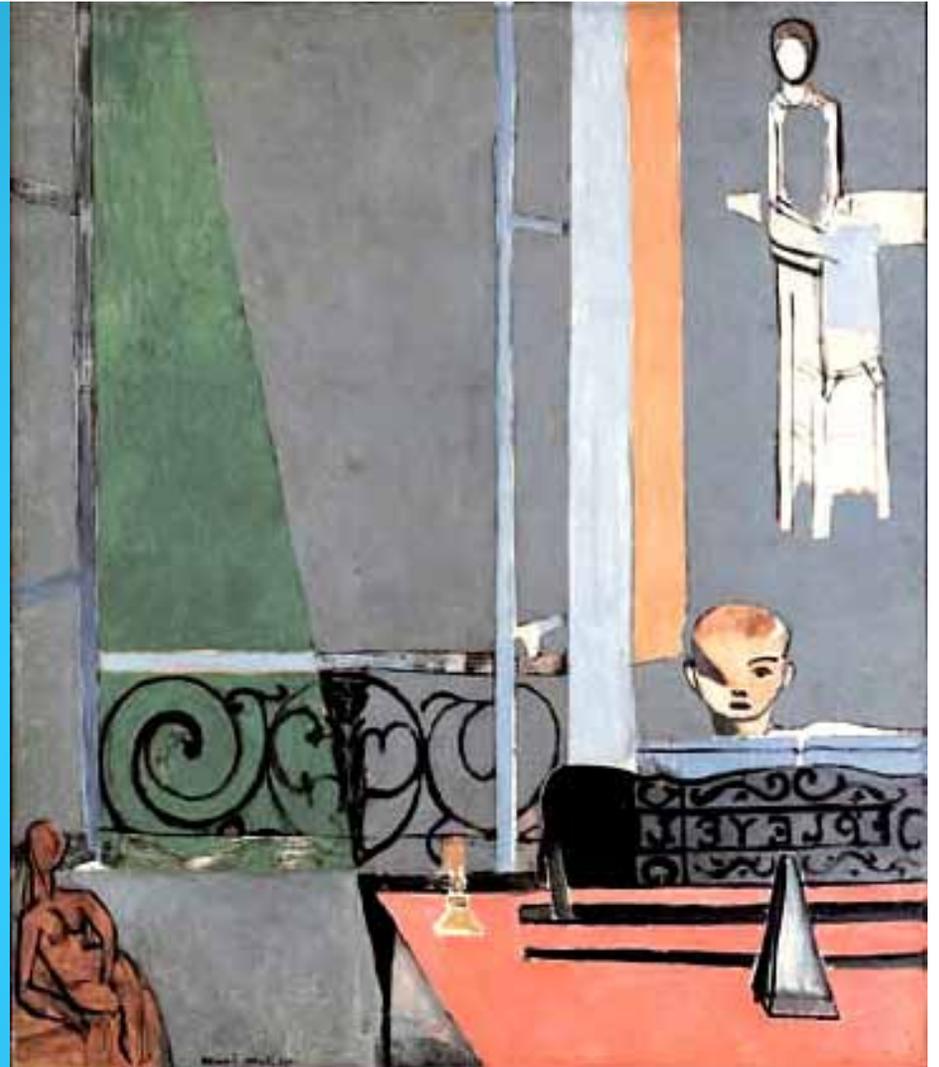
Henri Matisse.
Music Lesson.

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





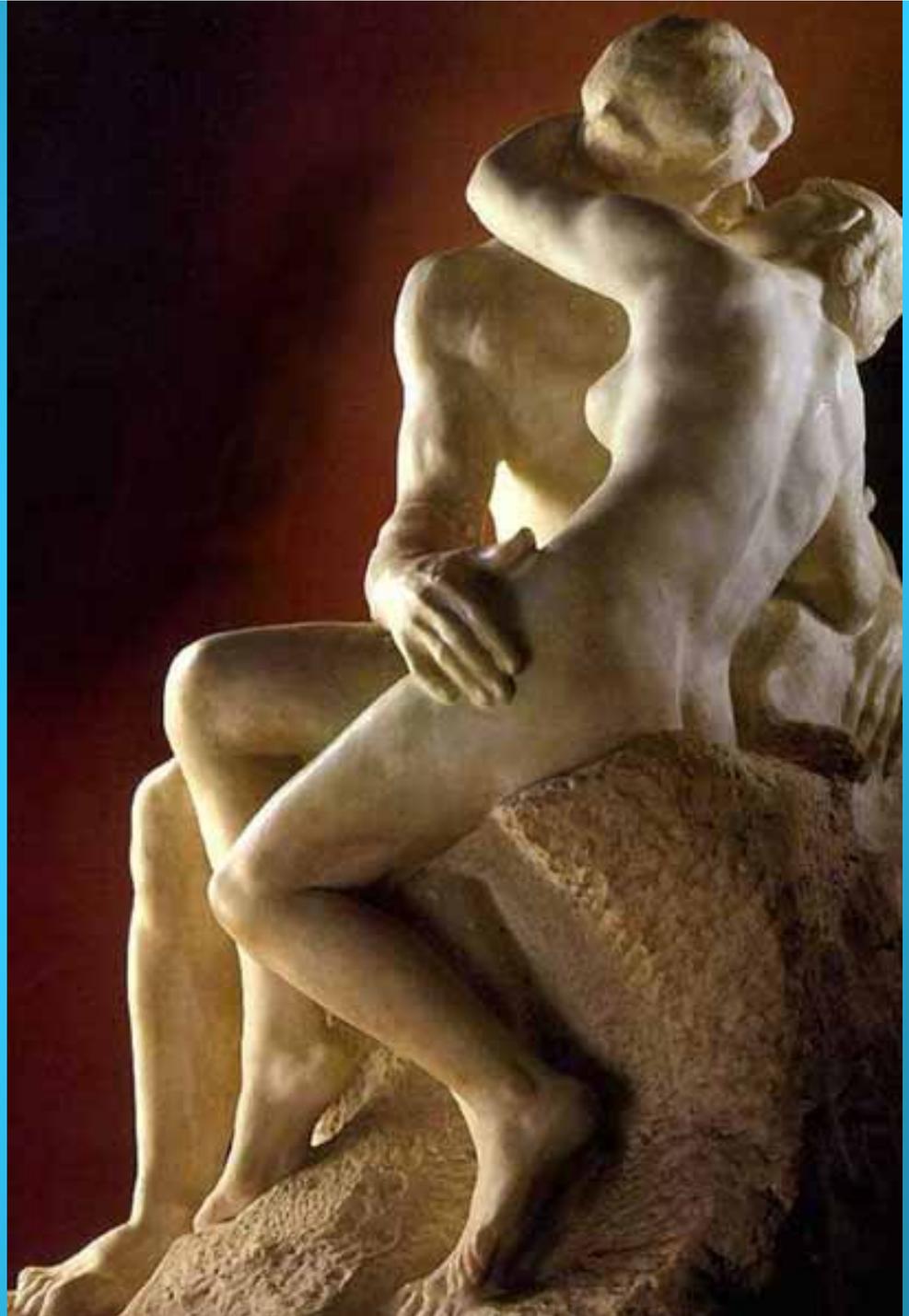
Henri Matisse. *Music Lesson*.
1917. Oil on canvas, 8'X6'11"



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

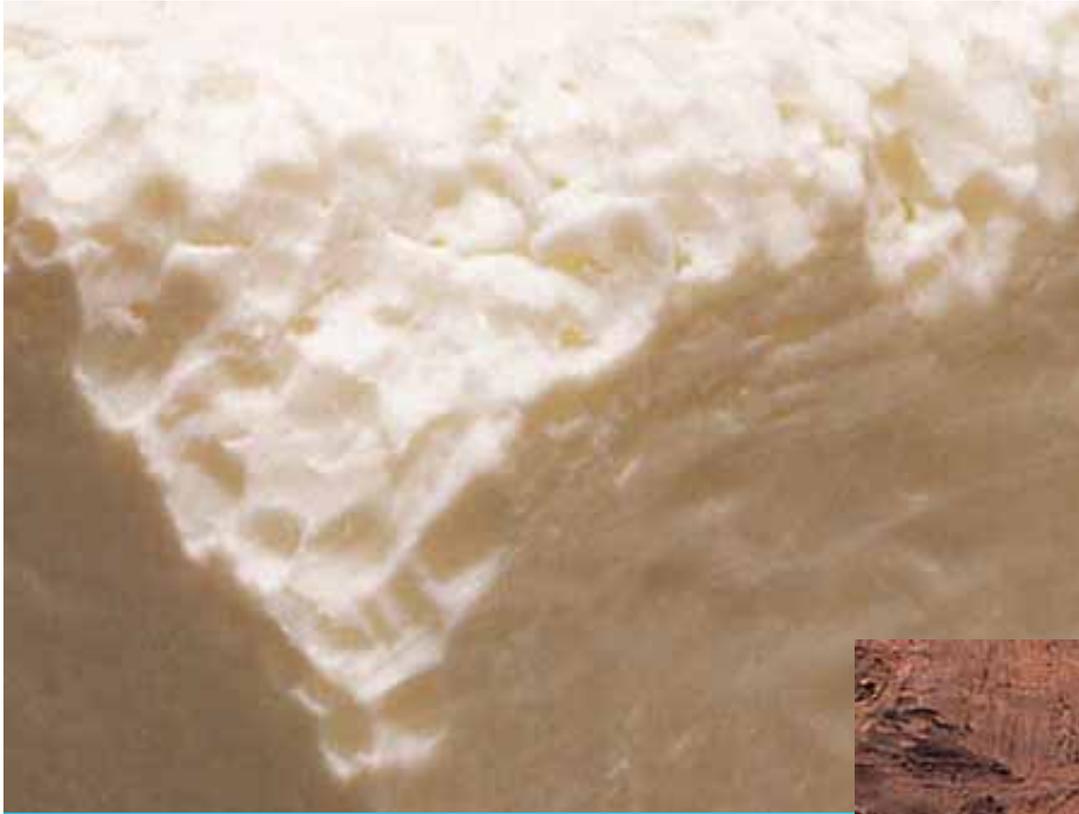
Three part installation. 600 lbs. of chocolate; 600 lbs. of lard; (approximately 2 x 2 x 2 feet) display: 130 Lipsticks made with pigment, beeswax, and chewed lard removed from the lard cube; 27 Heart-shaped packages made from chewed chocolate removed from the chocolate cube.



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.

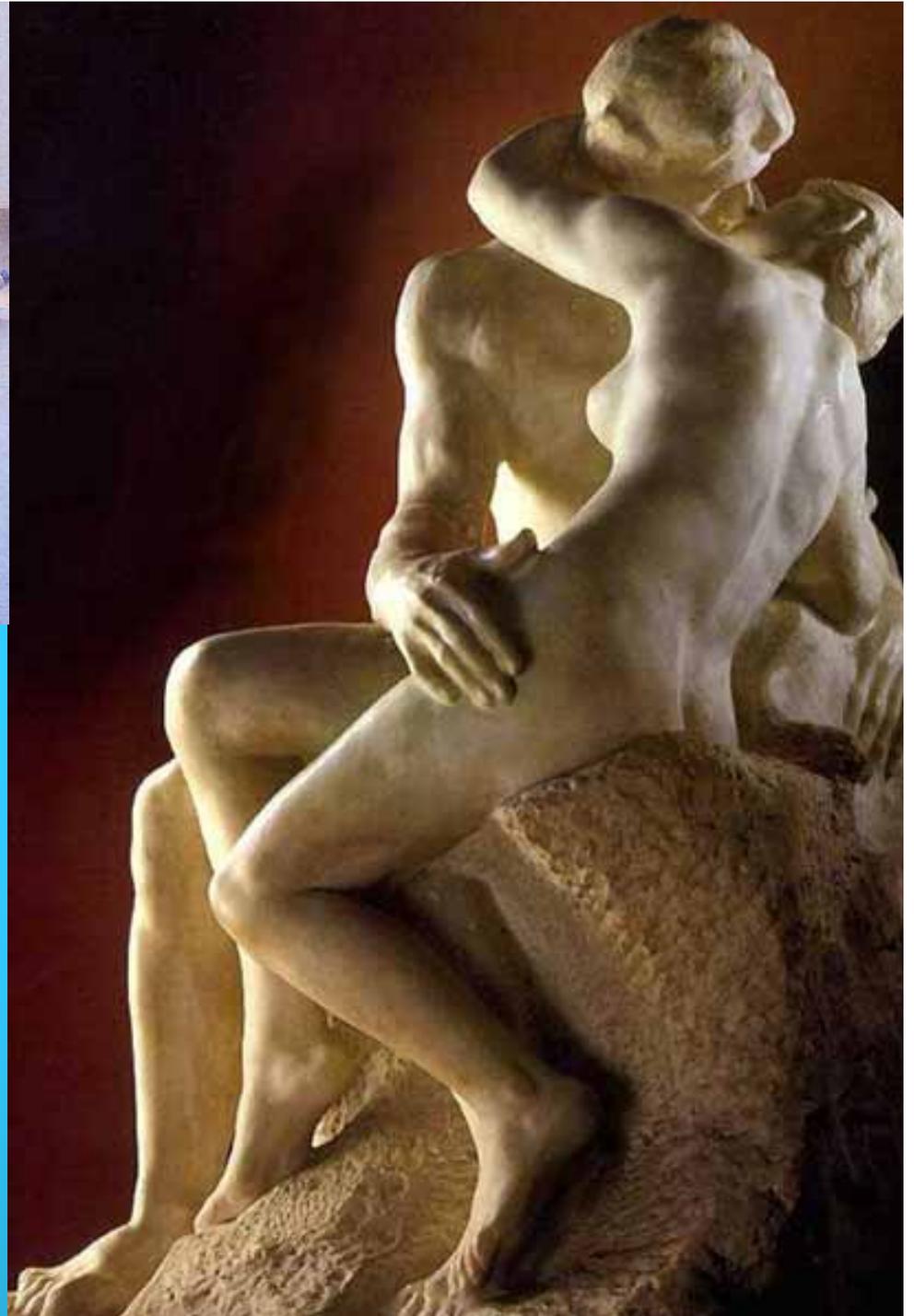




Janine Antoni, *Gnaw*, 1992.

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

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

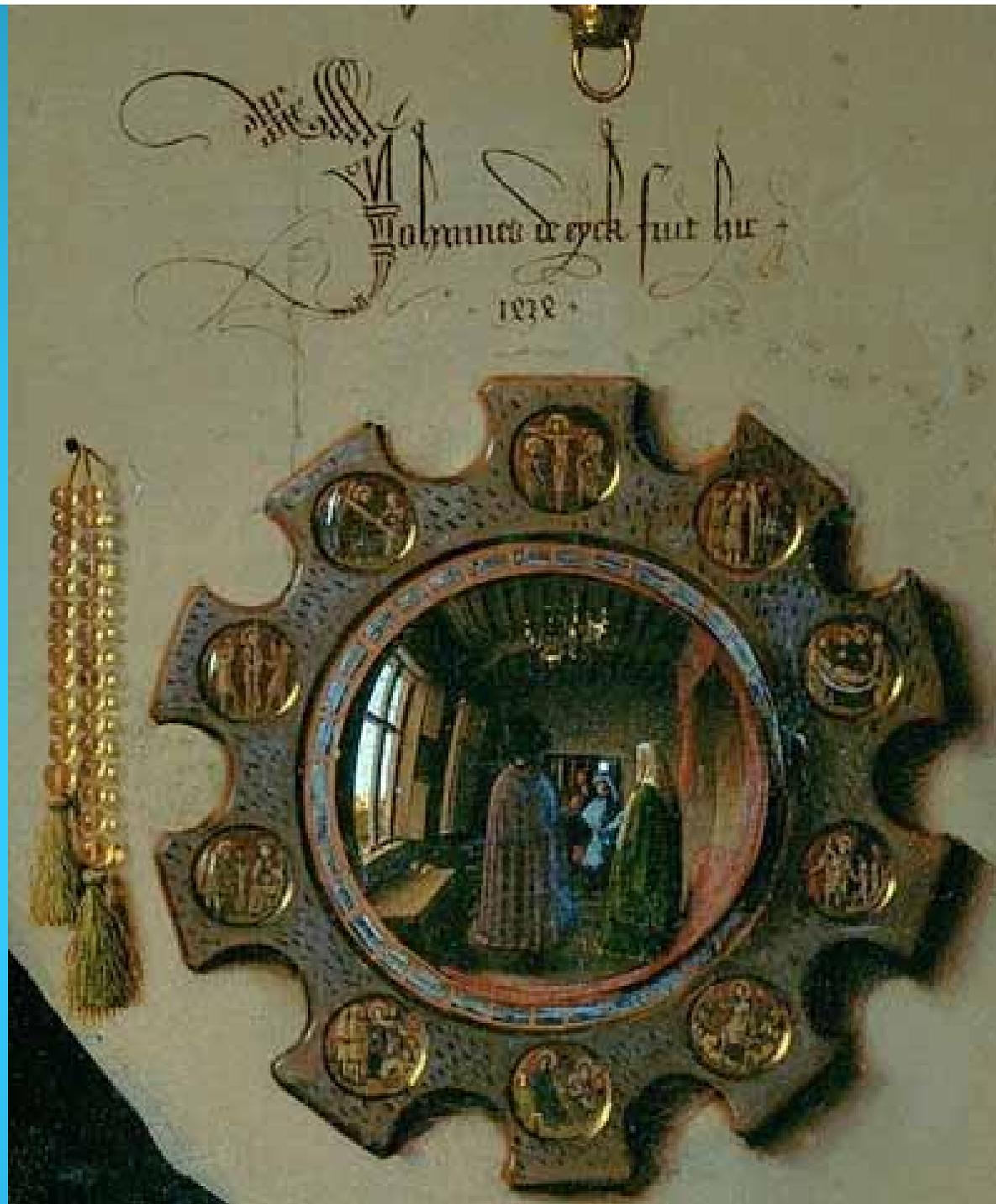


Jan van Eyck,
Arnolfini Portrait,
1434. Oil on wood, 32
1/4" x 23 1/2". National
Gallery, London.

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.

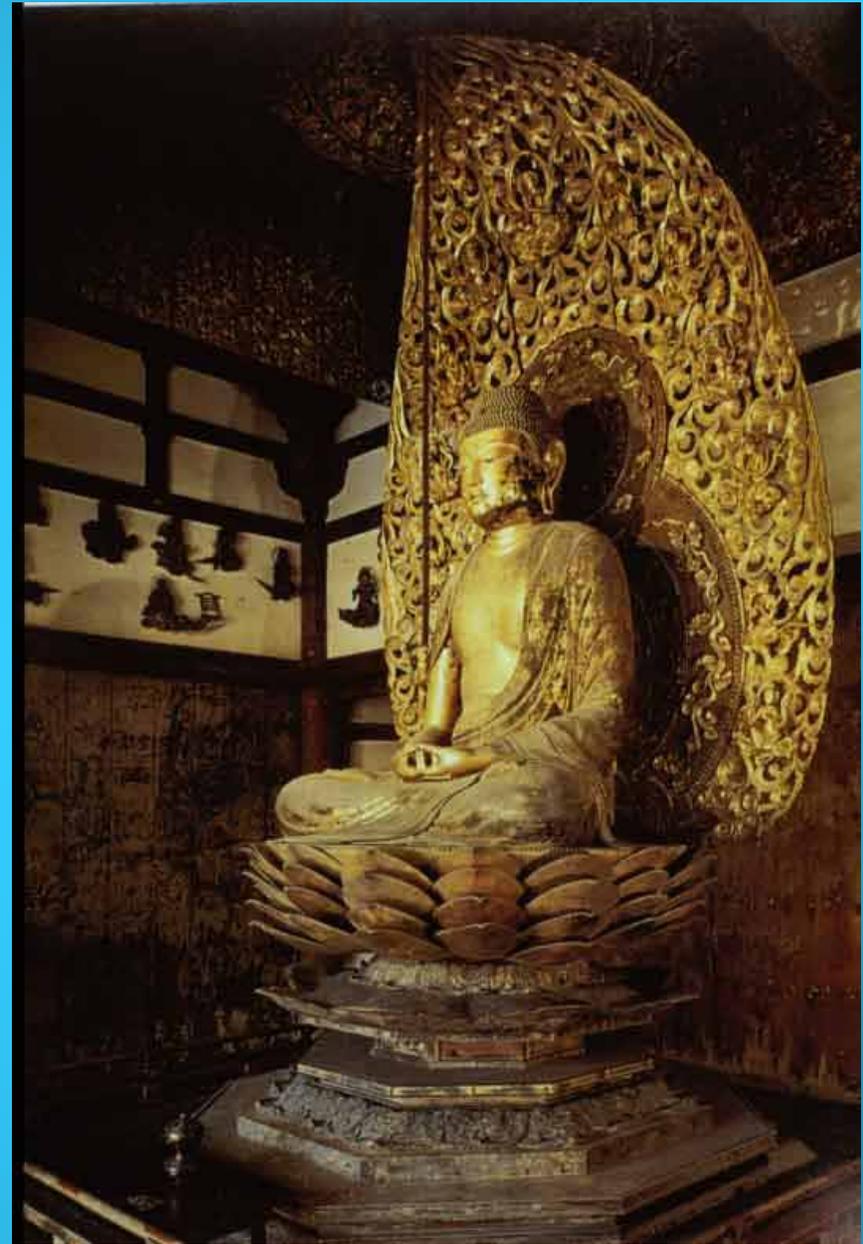
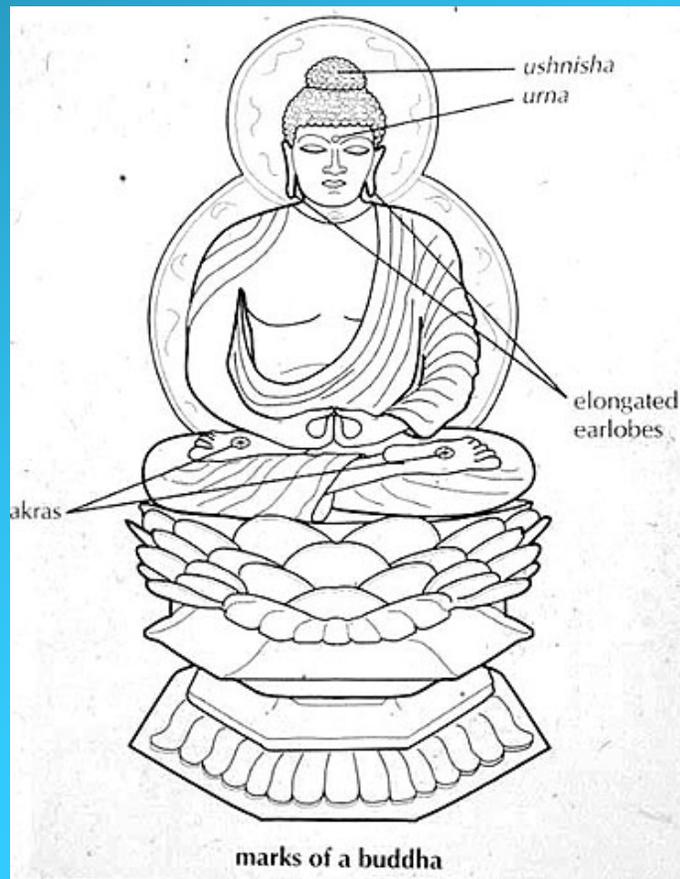


Jocho. *Amida Nyorai*

(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

Jocho. *Amida Nyorai*

(Buddha of the Western Paradise)

Byodo-in Temple, Japan.

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



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.**

Class Assignment 5

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.