



Mark Getlein

LIVING WITH ART

ELEVENTH EDITION

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LIVING WITH ART

ELEVENTH EDITION

Mark Getlein





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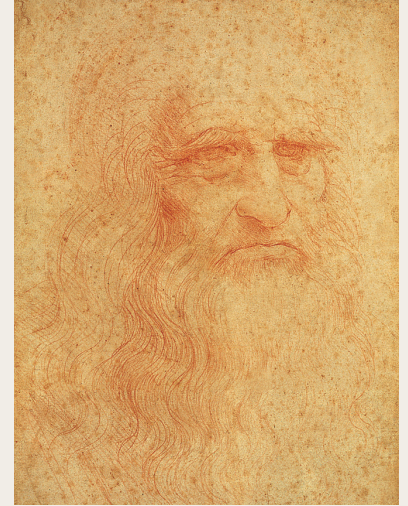
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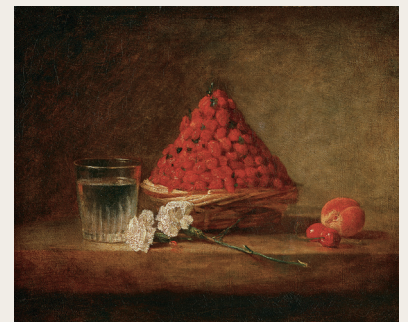
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Move beyond first impressions. See art in everyday life.

ART is part of our lives.

From the monuments in our communities, to the fashions we wear and media images we take in, to the exhibits on display in museums and galleries. It permeates our daily lives.

But why do we study art? How do we talk about art?

Living with Art helps students see art in everyday life by fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of art and by equipping them with the tools to analyze and talk about art.

Understand ART

SmartBook with NEW learning resources is the first and only adaptive reading and study experience that contextualizes the contents of *Living with Art* based on what the individual student knows and doesn't know. Enhanced by LearnSmart, SmartBook is a proven resource in the Art Appreciation course, having been used by over 11,000 students nationwide since it first launched with the tenth edition of *Living with Art*. SmartBook helps students understand art and optimizes student study time by creating a personalized learning path for improved course performance and overall student success in four stages:

Preview – Students start with a preview of each chapter and the corresponding key learning objectives. This preview establishes a framework of the material in a student's brain to help retain knowledge over time.

Read – While students read the material, they are guided to core topics where they should spend the most time studying.

Practice – As students read the material, SmartBook presents them with questions to help identify what content they know and what they don't know.

Recharge – To ensure concept mastery and retention, students complete the Read and Practice steps until SmartBook directs them to Recharge the important material they're likely to forget.



Analyze ART

Connect Art delivers assessments, analytics, and resources—including SmartBook—that make *Living with Art* a rich digital experience. Featured activities that help students analyze art include:

GUIDED VIEWING

Visit www.moma.org, the Museum of Modern Art, in New York City, on Google Art Project. Use the dropdown menu in the navigation panel to explore the gallery and to look at the different works of art on display.

From the gallery, select two works of art that place focus on a person, and respond to the series of questions provided to explore them in depth.

1. Describe the two works by providing the following information:

a. Who is the artist?

b. What is the title of the work?

c. When was the work created?

Guided Viewing Assignments, which feature links to Google Art Project. Questions guide students through learning the process of describing what they see, providing formal analysis of various works of art, discussing their meanings, and ultimately developing informed opinions.

Animations on Elements and Techniques and **Art Technique Videos** with comprehension and analytical questions that provide an engaging introduction to core concepts from each chapter to bring students into the creative process.




Interactive Activities to challenge students to apply their newly acquired vocabulary to new works of art, and to prepare them to describe the art they encounter in their lives.

Label Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *The Harvesters* by clicking and dragging each principle of art and design to the most appropriate area of the artwork.


Scale and Proportion

Emphasis


Rhythm




Determine which principle is emphasized the most in the following works of art by clicking and dragging each image to the appropriate principle.



Emphasis & Subordination



Symmetrical Balance



Rhythm


Appreciate ART

Living with Art fosters each student's unique path to "appreciation."


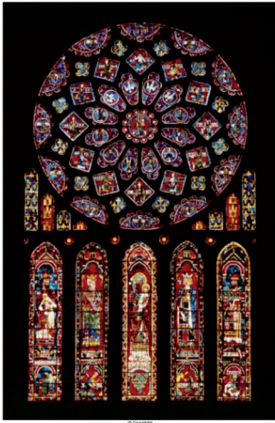
Featured essays, such as *Thinking about Art* and *Crossing Cultures*, focus on **social, historical, and global context**, introducing issues of art in society over time—how art has been appreciated, interpreted, destroyed, categorized, displayed, fought over, preserved, censored, owned, and studied.

Chapter 3 of *Living with Art* helps students appreciate some of the **common themes of art**. The following themes will be explored in SmartBook's learning resources, and can be incorporated into lectures and class discussion as appropriate:

- Community and Politics in Art
- Spirituality in Art
- The Natural World in Art
- Stories and Histories in Art
- Life and Death in Art
- Self-Expression in Art
- The Human Figure in Art



Math plays a huge role in architecture and in religion. Returning to the south transept rose window dedicated to Christ, notice the two outer rings of 12 circles each. They contain the 24 Elders of the Apocalypse. There are 4 lancets with 4 evangelists sitting on 4 prophets' shoulders. Geometrical designs and patterns run through the entire structure. The place itself does not appear to have a focal point, and the semi-circular red and white arches are countless, creating a mirror effect that seems to go forever.



style & function light **mathematics**

NEW thematic worksheets help students to build their appreciation skills, individually or as a group, as they explore a gallery or museum collection in person or online. The worksheets guide them in making connections between works of art by choosing a theme, looking for works that reflect this theme, and supporting their selections with formal and contextual details.

The Eleventh Edition

Small but significant changes appear in almost every chapter, refreshing the illustration program and clarifying and enlivening the text.

Highlights of the Eleventh Edition

Chapter 7, Painting, features a new topic called **Painting without Paint**, which looks at contemporary works that inscribe themselves in the tradition of painting but do not use paint as a medium.

Yayoi Kusama is the subject of a new biographical **Artists** essay in Chapter 3, Themes of Art. In the final chapter, Opening Up to the World, a new **Thinking about Art** essay titled “Is It Over?” invites readers to ponder the ideas put forth by Hans Belting and Arthur Danto about the beginning and possible end of the era of art.

In Chapter 13, Architecture, the section on **Sustainability** takes note of the current interest in massive timber construction and organic building materials.

Sustained attention to **contemporary art** continues to be a hallmark of the text. Artists appearing for the first time in this edition include Tara Donovan, Mark Grotjahn, Amy Sillman, Channing Hansen, Nicole Eisenman, Dario Robleto, Swoon, Olia Lialina, Aram Bartholl, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Tomás Saraceno, Jeroen Verhoeven, Merete Rasmussen, Marcus Amerman, Glenn Ligon, Nermin Hammam, Imran Qureshi, Sopheap Pich, Kohei Nawa, Damián Ortega, and Thomas Demand.

A number of **historical artists** appear for the first time as well, including Sultan Muhammad, Sonia Delaunay, Willem Kalf, Kaikei, John Frederick Kensett, Shen Zhou, Petrus Christus, Lü Ji, and Edward Steichen.

The Revision in Detail

Chapter 2, What Is Art? The discussion of Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa* now clarifies why scholars long suspected that the panel had been cut down. An endnote updates the tale with the results of the 2004–05 examination of the painting at the Louvre. The discussion of stylization has been expanded to juxtapose a Chinese porcelain bowl and a Persian miniature painting, showing how the conventions for depicting clouds and flames passed from one culture to the other. The painting, Sultan Muhammad’s *The Ascent of the Prophet Muhammad*, also serves as an example of the slender but important tradition within Islam of depicting the Prophet, a timely topic widely ignored or misunderstood. Works by Sonia Delaunay and Tara Donovan refresh the introduction to nonrepresentational art. Kara Walker’s much talked-about 2014 work *A Subtlety* provides a spectacular introduction to installation. The topics in the section “Art and Meaning” have been lightly revised and reorganized for pedagogical clarity: the role of materials and techniques in suggesting meaning, formerly subsumed into the discussion of form and content, is now presented as a separate topic. The terms *content* and *context* have been fitted with more straightforward definitions that can be committed to memory. *Form* and *content* are reinforced as paired terms.

Chapter 3, Themes of Art. *Love Is Calling*, a recent *Infinity Mirrored Room* by Yayoi Kusama, is a new presence here, complemented by a biographical “Artists” essay that introduces readers to Kusama’s life and work.

Chapter 4, The Visual Elements. The discussion of texture has been refreshed with a still life by the 17th-century Dutch painter Willem Kalf and new works by Mona Hatoum and Constantin Brancusi. John Frederick Kensett’s hushed, luminous *Lake George* illustrates atmospheric perspective, answered by a section of Shen Zhou’s handscroll *Autumn Colors among Streams and Mountains*. Richard Serra now authorizes only black-and-white photographs of his work for reproduction. His *Inside Out*, a monumental work from 2013, is illustrated with an image by his chosen photographer, Lorenz Kienzle.

Chapter 5, Principles of Design. A recent *Infinity Net* painting by Yayoi Kusama introduces readers to one of her most famous recurring motifs.

Chapter 6, Drawing. New to the chapter are a radiant drawing in colored pencil by Mark Grotjahn and a chilling work in cut paper by Mona Hatoum.

Chapter 7, Painting. Oil paint is now represented in its first decades of popularity by *A Goldsmith in His Shop*, a richly detailed Early Netherlandish painting by Petrus Christus. Amy Sillman’s *Nut* newly illustrates a contemporary approach to the medium. A new section called “Painting Without Paint” brings together Mark Bradford, shifted here from Chapter 6, and Channing Hansen, whose knit paintings were a highlight of the recent “Made in LA” exhibition at the Hammer Museum.

Chapter 8, Prints. *Sumida River, Late Autumn*, by Motosugu Sugiyama, updates the coverage of woodblock prints. Sugiyama uses traditional Japanese polychrome woodblock techniques to depict aerial views of contemporary Tokyo. Other new presences include Nicole Eisenman, Dario Robleto, and Caledonia Curry, better known as the street artist Swoon, whose wheat-paste prints appear unexpectedly on urban walls.

Chapter 9, Camera and Computer Arts. One of the most celebrated images of the Pictorialist movement, Edward Steichen’s *Flatiron*, is newly featured. The discussion of Internet art has been updated with a recent work by Olia Lialina, one of the pioneers of the medium. The term post-Internet art is introduced, illustrated by *Map*, a thoughtful and accessible project by Aram Bartholl.

Chapter 10, Graphic Design. Universal Everything’s crowd-sourced installation *1000 Hands* illustrates how today’s digital designers can be equally adept at working for corporate clients and creating their own art for the public.

Chapter 11, Sculpture and Installation. Bas-relief is now illustrated by a substantial detail from *The Churning of the Sea of Milk* at Angkor Wat. Kaikei’s carving of the Shinto deity Hachiman introduces the idea of polychrome sculpture and illustrates Japanese realism. The discussion of installation has been updated with recent works by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov and Tomás Saraceno.

Chapter 12, Arts of Ritual and Daily Life. Jade is now illustrated by a *cong*, a characteristic (though still mysterious) ritual object from the Neolithic Liangzhu culture in China. An additional example of lacquer allows the chapter to present both the Chinese tradition of carving and the Japanese tradition of inlay, illustrated in this edition by a writing box decorated with motifs that allude to the *Tale of Genji*. The section “Art, Craft, Design” has been updated with recent works in wood, ceramic, glass, and resin by Jeroen Verhoeven, Merete Rasmussen, Marcus Amerman, and WertelOberfell.

Chapter 13, Architecture. The opening of the chapter has been revised to introduce the basic concepts of loads, tension, compression, tensile strength, and compressive strength, allowing for more satisfactory explanations of the structural systems that follow. J. Mayer H. und Partner's Metropal Parasol is a new presence in "Architecture and Community," providing as well an additional example of the possibilities opened up by CAD/CAM technology. "Sustainability: Green Architecture" continues to track recent directions. New to this edition are: LISI House, Team Austria's winning entry in the 2013 Solar Decathlon; Michael Green's Wood Innovation and Design Center, a showcase for the structural potential of mass timber; and The Living's *Hy-Fi*, a temporary structure made of lightweight, organic bricks.

Chapter 14, Ancient Mediterranean Worlds. Changes to this chapter are textual: the discussion of the wall painting from the tomb of Nebamun has been enlivened with details drawn from Richard Parkinson's monograph *The Painted Tomb Chapel of Nebamun*. A review of the literature on the Parthenon laid to rest the popular claim that the facade takes the proportions of a golden rectangle and points instead to an organizing ratio of 9:4. Particularly helpful were Susan Woodford's *The Parthenon* and *The Parthenon and Its Impact in Modern Times*, edited by Panayotis Tournikiotis. A lightly revised discussion of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius is indebted to Raimund Wünsche's "Der Kaiser zu Pferd," in *Marc Aurel; der Reiter auf dem Kapitol*.

Chapter 15, Christianity and the Formation of Europe. The discussion of the mosaic fragment depicting Christ as the Sun refers now to the Greek god Helios, worshiped in Rome as Sol Invictus. Revisions to the discussion of Charlemagne and his chapel at Aachen are indebted to Charles McClendon's *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600–900*. A new image of Giotto's *Lamentation*, taken after the recent restoration, includes the decorative bands that Giotto devised to define picture spaces on the chapel walls, enabling students to understand something of the visual context of the scene and the larger organization of the fresco cycle.

Chapter 16, The Renaissance. The discussion of the Sistine ceiling has been revised to touch on the earlier decoration under Sixtus IV and Michelangelo's use of assistants to accomplish his Herculean task, explicitly countering the "lone genius" model still prevalent in popular culture. William Wallace's essay "Michelangelo's Assistants in the Sistine Chapel" informed the changes.

Chapter 17, The 17th and 18th Centuries. The Palace of Versailles is now illustrated with a view by Pierre-Denis Martin. Painted in 1722, it represents the palace as Louis XIV left it after the completion of his fourth and final building campaign. A new photograph of the Hall of Mirrors shows its appearance after the recent restoration (especially noticeable in the ceiling paintings).

Chapter 19, Arts of Asia: India, China, and Japan. Lü Ji's monumental bird-and-flower painting *Mandarin Ducks and Hollyhocks* is a new presence here, exemplifying the closely observed, decorative style favored by the Ming court. The shrine complex at Ise is now illustrated by a stunning aerial photograph that captures both the latest rebuilding nearing completion and the previous rebuilding still standing next to it, not yet dismantled. A new illustration from the 12th-century *Tale of Genji* scrolls is paired with a detail of the text, showing the exquisite decorated paper and liquid calligraphy that distinguish this aristocratic production. The chapter now ends with Hokusai's beloved *Great Wave at Kanagawa*, one of Japan's most enduring contributions to world visual culture.

Chapter 20, Arts of the Pacific and of the Americas. The survey of North America now begins with an effigy pipe depicting a beaver. Carved from stone and set with pearl eyes and bone teeth, it is one of the finest works to have come down to us from the early cultures of the Eastern Woodlands. The chapter closes with a spectacular four-headed Cannibal Bird mask from the Pacific Northwest.

Chapter 22, From Modern to Postmodern. Small changes complete this chapter's transformation to a historical chapter that follows art from the postwar years through the 1990s. New to the chapter are Walter De Maria's *Lightning Field*, Joseph Kosuth's *Five Words in White Neon*, Glenn Ligon's *Untitled (I Do Not Always Feel Colored)*, and Olia Lialina's iconic *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War*, a pioneer work of Internet art from 1996. Bill Viola is now represented by *The Greeting*, perhaps his most famous work of the 1990s. Jean-Michel Basquiat is now represented by *Hollywood Africans* and David Wojnarowicz by *Americans can't deal with death*.

Chapter 23, Opening Up to the World. This chapter has been thoroughly updated with new artists and works. Artists appearing for the first time are Nermine Hammam (Egypt), Imran Qureshi (Pakistan), Sopheap Pich (Cambodia), Kohei Nawa (Japan), Damián Ortega (Mexico) and Thomas Demand (Germany). Yinka Shonibare and Subodh Gupta are represented by more recent works. A new Thinking About Art essay called "Is It Over?" invites students to ponder the ideas put forth by Arthur Danto and Hans Belting about the era of art and the possible end of its unfolding in history.

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—Mark Getlein

Letter from the Author

To the reader,

I'm about to disappear. There I am, below, walking off the page and into the book. When next we meet, in the first chapter, you won't recognize me, for "I" will not appear. An impersonal authority will seem to be speaking, explaining ideas and concepts, imparting information, directing your attention here and there, narrating a history: first this happened, and then that. But you should know that there is someone in particular behind the words, just as there is someone in particular reading them.

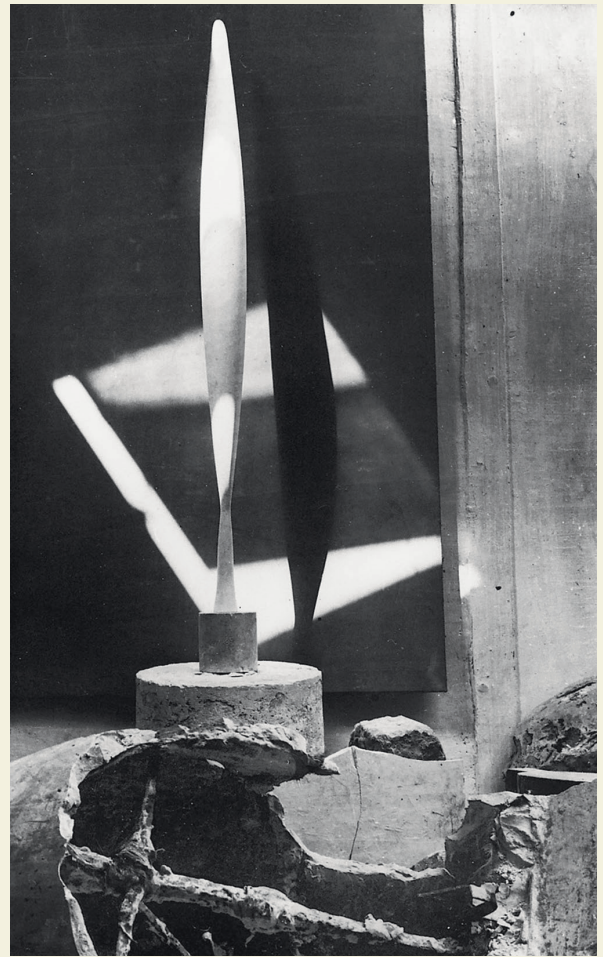
I'm walking by a painting of dancers by Matisse. Before that, I've stopped to look at a group of sculptures by Brancusi. Often it's the other way around: I linger for a long time before the painting and walk right by the sculptures without thinking much about them. The works are in the same museum, and I've known them for most of my life. In a way, I think of them as mine—they belong to me because of the hours I have spent looking at them, thinking about them, reading about the artists who made them. Other works in the museum are not mine, at least not yet. Oh, I recognize them on sight, and I know the names of the artists who made them. But I haven't given them the kind of sustained attention it takes to make them a part of my inner world.

Is it perhaps that I don't like them? Like anyone, I am attracted to some works more than others, and I find myself in greater sympathy with some artists more than others. Some works have a deeply personal meaning for me. Others do not, however much I may admire them. But in truth, when looking at a work of art for the first time, I no longer ask whether I like it or not. Instead, I try to understand what it is. These are deep pleasures for me, and I would wish them for you: that through this book you may learn to respond to art in ways that set like and dislike aside, and that you may encounter works you find so compelling that you take the time to make them your own.





1.1 Brancusi's studio. Reconstruction at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop. 1992–96.



1.2 Constantin Brancusi. *Bird in Space*. c. 1928–30. Gelatin silver print, 11¾ x 9¾". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

PART ONE

Introduction

1

Living with Art

Our simplest words are often the deepest in meaning: birth, kiss, flight, dream. The sculptor Constantin Brancusi spent his life searching for forms as simple and pure as those words—forms that seem to have existed forever, outside of time. Born a peasant in a remote village in Romania, he spent most of his adult life in Paris, where he lived in a single small room adjoining a skylit studio. Upon his death in 1957, Brancusi willed the contents of his studio to the French government, which eventually re-created the studio itself in a museum (1.1).

Near the center of the photograph are two versions of an idea Brancusi called *Endless Column*. Pulsing upward with great energy, the columns seem as though they could go on forever. Perhaps they *do* go on forever, and we can see only part of them. Directly in front of the white column, a sleek, horizontal marble form looking something like a slender submarine seems to hover over a disk-shaped base. Brancusi called it simply *Fish*. It does not depict any particular fish but, rather, shows us the idea of something that moves swiftly and freely through the water, the essence of a fish. To the left of the dark column, arching up in front of a patch of wall painted red, is a version of one of Brancusi's most famous works, *Bird in Space*. Here again the artist portrays not a particular bird but, rather, the idea of flight, the feeling of soaring upward. Brancusi said that the work represents "the soul liberated from matter."¹

A photograph by Brancusi shows another, more mysterious view of *Bird in Space* (1.2). Light from a source we cannot see cuts across the work and falls in a sharp diamond shape on the wall behind. The sculpture casts a shadow so strong it seems to have a dark twin. Before it, lies a broken, discarded work. The photograph might make you think of the birth of a bird from its shell, or of a perfected work of art arising from numerous failed attempts, or indeed of a soul newly liberated from its material prison.

Brancusi took many photographs of his work, and through them we can see how his sculptures lived in his imagination even after they were finished. He photographed them in varying conditions of light, in multiple locations and combinations, from close up and far away. With each photograph they seem to reveal a different mood, the way people we know reveal different sides of themselves over time.

Living with art, Brancusi's photographs show us, is making art live by letting it engage our attention, our imagination, our intelligence. Few of us, of course, can live with art the way Brancusi did. Yet we can choose to seek out encounters with art, to make it a matter for thought and enjoyment, and to let it live in our imagination.

You probably live already with more art than you think you do. Very likely the walls of your home are decorated with posters, photographs, or even paintings you chose because you find them beautiful or meaningful. Walking around your community you probably pass by buildings that were designed for visual appeal as well as to serve practical ends. If you ever pause for a moment just to look at one of them, to take pleasure, for example, in its silhouette against the sky, you have made the architect's work live for a moment by appreciating an effect that he or she prepared for you. We call such an experience an *aesthetic* experience. Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy concerned with the feelings aroused in us by sensory experiences—experiences we have through sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Aesthetics concerns itself with our responses to the natural world and to the world we make, especially the world of art. What art is, how and why it affects us—these are some of the issues that aesthetics addresses.

This book hopes to deepen your pleasure in the aesthetic experience by broadening your understanding of one of the most basic and universal of human activities, making art. Its subject is visual art, which is art that addresses the sense of sight, as opposed to music or poetry, which are arts that appeal to the ear. It focuses on the Western tradition, by which we mean art as it has been understood and practiced in Europe and in cultures with their roots in European thought, such as the United States. But it also reaches back to consider works created well before Western ideas about art were in place and across to other cultures that have very different traditions of art.

The Impulse for Art

No society that we know of, for as far back in human history as we have been able to penetrate, has lived without some form of art. The impulse to make and respond to art appears to be as deeply ingrained in us as the ability to learn language, part of what sets us apart as humans. Where does the urge to make art come from? What purposes does it serve? For answers, we might begin by looking at some of the oldest works yet discovered, images and artifacts dating from the Stone Age, near the beginning of the human experience.

Named for one of the explorers who discovered it in 1994, the Chauvet cave is one of hundreds of caves in Europe whose walls are decorated with images created during the Upper Paleolithic era, the latter part of the Old Stone Age (1.3). A number of these caves were already known when the marvels of Chauvet came to light, but the Chauvet cave created a sensation when radiocarbon dating confirmed that at least some of the images on its walls had been painted 32,000 years ago, thousands of years earlier than their accomplished style suggested.

The galleries and chambers of Chauvet teem with over three hundred depictions of animals—lions, mammoths, rhinoceroses, cave bears, horses, reindeer, red deer, aurochs, musk-oxen, bison, and others—as well as palm prints and stenciled silhouettes of human hands. Evidence from this and other Paleolithic sites tells us something of how the paintings were made. Charcoal, naturally tinted red and yellow clays (ochres), and a black mineral called manganese dioxide served as pigments. They were ground to a powder with stone mortars, then mixed with a liquid that bound them into paint—blood, animal fat, and calcium-rich cave water were some of the binders used. Paint was applied to the cave walls with fingers and animal-hair brushes, or sprayed from the mouth or through a hollow reed. Some images were engraved, or scratched, into the rock; others were drawn with a chunk of rock or charcoal held like a pencil. Deep in the interior of the caves, far from any natural light or living areas, the images would have been created and viewed by the flickering light of torches, or of stone lamps that may have burned animal fat using moss wicks.



When Paleolithic cave paintings were first discovered, during the late 19th century, scholars suggested that they had been made purely for pleasure during times of rest from hunting or other occupations. But their presence in deep and difficult-to-reach areas seemed to work against that notion. For Stone Age image-makers to have gone to such lengths, their work must have been meaningful. One influential early theory held that the images were a form of magic to ensure success in hunting. Other scholars began to look past individual images to consider each cave as a purposefully structured whole, carefully noting the placement of every image and symbolic marking within it. A related branch of research examines how Paleolithic artists responded to the unique characteristics of each underground space, including the spaces' acoustics. Most recently, it has been suggested that the images were used in rituals conducted by shamans—religious specialists who communicate with a parallel spirit world, often through animal spirit go-betweens.

Fascinating as those theories are, they pass over perhaps the most amazing thing of all, which is that there should be images in the first place. The ability to make images is uniquely human. Anthropologists speak of an “explosion” of images during the Upper Paleolithic period, when anatomically modern humans arrived in Europe and began to displace the Neanderthal human population that had been living there for several hundred thousand years. Along with musical instruments, personal ornaments, and portable sculptures, cave paintings were part of a cultural toolkit that must have given our ancestors an advantage over their now-extinct Neanderthal competitors, helping communities to form and thrive in a new environment. If images had not been useful to us, we would have stopped making them. As it is, we have been making them ever since. All images may not be art, but our ability to make them is one place where art begins.

The contemporary British sculptor Anthony Caro has said that “all art is basically Paleolithic or Neolithic: either the urge to smear soot and grease on cave walls or pile stone on stone.”² By “soot and grease” Caro means the cave paintings. With “the urge to pile stone on stone” he has in mind one of the most impressive and haunting works to survive from the Stone Ages, the

1.3 Left section of the “Lion Panel,” Chauvet cave, Ardèche Valley, France. c. 30,000 B.C.E.



1.4 Stonehenge. Salisbury Plain, England, c. 3000–1500 B.C.E. Height of stones 13'6".



1.5 Stemmed vessel, from Weifang, Shandong, China. Neolithic period, Longshan, c. 2000 B.C.E. Black pottery, thin biscuit, height 10½".

structure in the south of England known as Stonehenge (1.4). Today much ruined through time and vandalism, Stonehenge at its height consisted of several concentric circles of **megaliths**, very large stones, surrounded in turn by a circular ditch. It was built in several phases over many centuries, beginning around 3000 B.C.E. The tallest circle, visible in the photograph here, originally consisted of thirty gigantic upright stones capped with a continuous ring of horizontal stones. Weighing some 50 tons each, the stones were quarried many miles away, hauled to the site, and laboriously shaped by blows from stone hammers until they fit together.

Many theories have been advanced about why Stonehenge was built and what purpose it served. Recent archaeological research has confirmed that the monument marks a graveyard, perhaps that of a ruling dynasty. The cremated remains of up to 240 people appear to have been buried there over a span of some five hundred years, from the earliest development of the site until the time when the great stones were erected. Other findings show that the monument did not stand alone but was part of a larger complex, perhaps a religious complex used for funerary rituals. What is certain is that Stonehenge held meaning for the Neolithic community that built it. For us, it stands as a compelling example of how old and how basic is our urge to create meaningful order and form, to structure our world so that it reflects our ideas. This is another place where art begins.

Stonehenge was erected in the Neolithic era, or New Stone Age. The Neolithic era is named for the new kinds of stone tools that were invented, but it also saw such important advances as the domestication of animals and crops and the development of the technology of pottery, as people discovered that fire could harden certain kinds of clay. With pottery, storage jars, food bowls, and all sorts of other practical objects came into being. Yet much of the world's oldest pottery seems to go far beyond purely practical needs (1.5). This elegant stemmed cup was formed around 2000 B.C.E. in what is now eastern China. Eggshell-thin and exceedingly fragile, it could not have held much of anything and would have tipped over easily. In other words, it isn't practical. Instead, great care and skill have gone into making it pleasing to the eye. Here is a third place we might turn to for the origins of art—the urge to explore the aesthetic possibilities of new technologies. What are the limits of clay, the early potters must have wondered. What can be done with it? Scholars believe such vessels were created for ceremonial use. They were probably made in limited quantity for members of a social elite.

To construct meaningful images and forms, to create order and structure, to explore aesthetic possibilities—these characteristics seem to be part of our nature as human beings. From them, art has grown, nurtured by each culture in its own way.

What Do Artists Do?

In our society, we tend to think of art as something created by specialists, people we call artists, just as medicine is practiced by doctors and bridges are designed by engineers. In other societies, virtually everyone contributes to art in some way. Yet no matter how a society organizes itself, it calls on its art-makers to fulfill similar roles.

First, artists *create places for some human purpose*. Stonehenge, for example, was probably created as a place where a community could gather for rituals. Closer to our own time, Maya Lin created the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a place for contemplation and remembrance (1.6). One of our most painful national memories, the Vietnam War saw thousands of young men and women lose their lives in a distant conflict that was increasingly questioned and protested at home. By the war's end, the nation was so bitterly divided that returning veterans received virtually no recognition for their services. In this atmosphere of continuing controversy, Lin's task was to create a memorial that honored the human sacrifice of the war while neither glorifying nor condemning the war itself.

At the heart of the memorial is a long, tapering, V-shaped wall of black granite, inscribed with the names of the missing, the captured, and the dead—some 58,000 names in all. Set into the earth exposed by slicing a great wedge from a gently sloping hill, it suggests perhaps a modern entrance to an ancient burial mound, though in fact there is no entrance. Instead, the highly polished surface acts as a mirror, reflecting the surrounding trees, the nearby Washington Monument, and the visitors themselves as they pass by.

Entering along a walkway from either end, visitors are barely aware at first of the low wall at their feet. The monument begins just as the war itself did, almost unnoticed, a few support troops sent to a small and distant country, a few deaths in the nightly news. As visitors continue their descent along the downward-sloping path, the wall grows taller and taller until it towers overhead, names upon names upon names. Often, people reach out to touch the letters, and as they do, they touch their own reflections reaching back. At the walkway's lowest point, with the wall at its highest, a corner is turned. The path begins to climb upward, and the wall begins to fall away. Drawn by a view of either the Washington Monument (as in the photograph here) or the Lincoln Memorial (along the other axis), visitors leave the war behind.

In a quiet, unobtrusive way, the place that Maya Lin created encourages a kind of ritual, a journey downward into a valley of death, then upward toward hope, healing, and reconciliation. Like Stonehenge, it has served to bring a community together.

1.6 Maya Lin. Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C. 1982. Black granite, length 492'.



ARTISTS Maya Lin (b. 1959)



How do Lin's works provide a space for contemplation? Is she an architect or a sculptor? What kind of an artist is Lin?

“Each of my works originates from a simple desire to make people aware of their surroundings, not just the physical world but also the psychological world we live in,” Maya Lin has written. “I create places in which to think, without trying to dictate what to think.”³

The most famous of Maya Lin's places for thought was also her first, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Lin created the design in response to an open call for proposals for the memorial, and it was selected unanimously from the more than 14,000 entries that flooded in. We can imagine the judges' surprise when they dialed the winner's telephone number and found themselves connected to a dormitory at Yale University, where Lin was a twenty-two-year-old undergraduate student in architecture. Like much of Lin's work, the memorial's powerful form was the product of a long period of reading and thinking followed by a moment of intuition. On a trip to Washington to look at the site, she writes, “I had a simple impulse to cut into the earth. I imagined taking a knife and cutting into the earth, opening it up, an initial

violence and pain that in time would heal. The grass would grow back, but the initial cut would remain a pure flat surface in the earth with a polished, mirrored surface, much like the surface on a geode when you cut it and polish the edge.” Engraved with the names of the dead, the surface “would be an interface, between our world and the quieter, darker, more peaceful world beyond. . . . I never looked at the memorial as a wall, an object, but as an edge to the earth, an opened side.” Back at school, Lin gave her idea form in the university dining hall with two decisive cuts in a mound of mashed potatoes.

Maya Lin was born and grew up in Athens, Ohio. Her father, a ceramist, was chair of the fine arts department at Ohio University, while her mother, a poet, taught in the department of English there. Both parents had immigrated to the United States from China before Maya was born. Lin readily credits the academic atmosphere and her family's everyday involvement with art for the direction her life has taken. Of her father, she writes simply that “his aesthetic sensibility ran throughout our lives.” She and her brother spent countless hours after school watching him work with clay in his studio.

Lin admits that it took a long time to put the experience of constructing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial behind her. Although the design had initially met with widespread public approval, it soon sparked an angry backlash that led to verbal, sometimes racist, attacks on her personally. They took a toll. For the next several years, she worked quietly for an architectural firm before returning to Yale to finish her doctoral studies. Since setting up her studio in 1987, she has created such compelling works as the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama; *Wave Field*, an earthwork at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor; and the Langston Hughes Library in Clinton, Tennessee.

Critics are often puzzled about whether to classify Lin as an architect or a sculptor. Lin herself insists that one flows into the other. “The best advice I was given was from Frank Gehry (the only architect who has successfully merged sculpture and architecture), who said I shouldn't worry about the distinctions and just make the work,” Lin recalls. That is just what she continues to do.

Maya Lin discussing an upcoming project, 2006.

A second task artists perform is to *create extraordinary versions of ordinary objects*. Just as the Neolithic vessel we looked at earlier is more than an ordinary drinking cup, so the textile here is more than an ordinary garment (1.7). Woven in West Africa by artists of the Asante people, it is a spectacular example of a type of textile known as *kente*. *Kente* is woven in hundreds of patterns, each with its own name, history, and symbolism. Traditionally, a newly invented pattern was shown first to the king, who had the right to claim it for his own exclusive use. Like the Neolithic vessel, royal *kente* was reserved for ceremonial occasions. Rich, costly, and elaborate, the cloth distinguished its wearer as special as well, an extraordinary version of an ordinary human being.

A third important task for artists has been to *record and commemorate*. Artists create images that help us remember the present after it slips into the past, that keep us in mind of our history, and that will speak of our times to the future. Illustrated here is a painting created in the early 17th century by an artist named Manohar, one of several painters employed in the royal workshops of the emperor Jahangir, a ruler of the Mughal dynasty in India (1.8). At the center of the painting we see Jahangir himself, seated beneath a sumptuous canopy. His son Khusrau, dressed in a yellow robe, offers him the precious gift of a golden cup. The painting commemorates a moment of reconciliation between father and son, who had had a violent falling out. The moment did not last, however. Khusrau would soon stage an armed rebellion that cost him



1.7 *Kente* cloth, from Ghana. Asante, mid-20th century. Cotton, 6'5¼" × 3'9".
The Newark Museum, New Jersey



1.8 Manohar. *Jahangir Receives a Cup from Khusrau*. 1605–06. Opaque watercolor on paper, 8¾" × 6".
The British Museum, London