

Debra J. DeWitte ● Ralph M. Larmann ● M. Kathryn Shields

GATEWAYS TO ART

**SECOND
EDITION**



Understanding the Visual Arts

Thames & Hudson

GATEWAYS TO ART



Debra J. DeWitte ● Ralph M. Larmann ● M. Kathryn Shields

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SECOND EDITION

With 1706 illustrations, 1478 in color



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FRONT COVER

Frida Kahlo, *The Two Fridas*, 1939. Photo Gianni Dagli Orti/Museum of Modern Art, Mexico/The Art Archive. © 2015 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./DACS

BACK COVER

Left to right:

Katsushika Hokusai, "The Great Wave off Shore at Kanagawa," (detail) from *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*, 1826–33 (printed later). Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Decapitating Holofernes*, c. 1620 (detail). Uffizi Gallery, Florence

Raphael, *The School of Athens*, 1510–11 (detail). Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican City

Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*, 1936 (detail). Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The Taj Mahal, Agra, India. © Dietmar Temps/Dreamstime.com

Francisco De Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814 (detail). Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

Colossal Head, Olmec, Basalt, 1500–1300 BCE. Museo de Antropología, Veracruz, Mexico.
Photo Irmgard Groth-Kimball © Thames & Hudson Ltd, London

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How to Use *Gateways to Art*: *Understanding the Visual Arts*

Gateways to Art is an introduction to the visual arts, divided into four parts: Fundamentals, the essential elements and principles of art that constitute the “language” of artworks; Media, the many materials and processes that artists use to make art; History, the forces and influences that have shaped art throughout the course of human history; and Themes, the major cultural and historical themes that have motivated artists to create. Each of these parts is color coded to help you move easily from one section to the next.

Gateways to Art gives you complete flexibility in finding your own pathway to understanding and appreciating art. Once you have read the Introduction, which outlines the core knowledge and skills you will need to analyse and understand art, you can read the chapters of our book in any order. Each chapter is entirely modular, giving you just the information you need when you need it. Concepts are clearly explained and definitions of terminology in the margins ensure that you are never at a loss to understand a term.

This means that you can learn about art in the order that works best for you. You can, of course, read the chapters in the order that they are printed in the

book. This will tell you all you need to know to appreciate art. But you can also choose your own path. For example, the Introduction discusses how we define art and what it contributes to our lives. Next you might read chapter 2.6, “The Tradition of Craft,” which deals with media that artists have used for centuries to create artworks, but which our Western culture sometimes considers less important than “fine art.” Then the discussion of Japanese art in chapter 3.3, “Art of India, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia,” reveals how an expertly made kimono (an item of traditional clothing) is appreciated as much as a painting that in our culture is usually considered more prestigious.

In *Gateways to Art* you will discover the pleasure of looking at great artworks many times and always finding something new because there are many ways of seeing and analysing art. That is why our book takes its title from its unique feature, the “Gateways to Art.” Through eight iconic works of world art (introduced on pp. 17–25), we invite you to come back to these Gateways to discover something new: about the design characteristics of the work; the materials used to make it; how history

and culture influenced its creation; or how the work expressed something personal. Sometimes we compare the Gateway image with another artwork, or consider what it tells us about the great mysteries of our existence, such as spirituality or life and death. We hope to encourage you to revisit not only our Gateways, but also other works, as sources of enjoyment for years to come.

Our Gateways to Art boxes are just one of numerous features we provide to help you in your studies. In many chapters you will find Perspectives on Art boxes, in which artists, art historians, critics, and others involved in the world of art explain how diverse people involved in art think and work. Other boxes will, for example, help you to focus in depth on a single artwork, or alternately to compare and contrast artworks that deal with a similar subject or theme.

Resources for Instructors

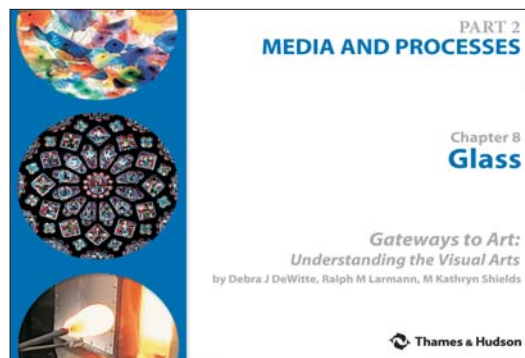
- The authors of *Gateways to Art* have written an Instructors' Manual that is available in print and digital form. In addition, they have created a test bank that is available in print, on disk with free software, and also as a download from our instructors' website.
- Images from the book are available as Jpegs and PowerPoint slides. Contact your W. W. Norton representative for details.
- With the first edition of *Gateways to Art* we provided 50 multimedia animations to demonstrate the elements and principles of art; 15 in-the-studio videos demonstrating

how art is made; and 20 video presentations of key works of world art. For the second edition we have added quizzes to the videos to provide another valuable means of assessment.

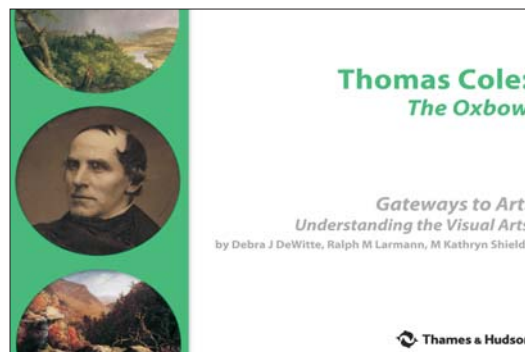
New to the second edition

An exclusive arrangement with the Museum of Modern Art, New York, offers you 20 additional videos in which MoMA curators discuss works in the collection. For example:

- In our *Starry Night* (Van Gogh, 1853–1890) video, the camera zooms in on the canvas, bringing students face to face with the artist's distinctive use of thick layers of oil paint to create vivid landscape scenes.
- An audio recording of Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) himself in our *Bicycle Wheel* video introduces students to Duchamp's wit and the inspiration behind his series of ready-mades.



1 Fifteen media and process videos made by art educators at Bowling Green State University demonstrate how art is made.



2 Twenty videos examine individual artworks in depth or set a work in a broader context.

- An examination of Barnett Newman's (1905–1970) *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* gives students a greater understanding of the meanings implicit in abstract art and the difficulties inherent in the process of artistic creation.

For full details of all instructors' resources go to thamesandhudsonusa.com/college.

Resources for Students

Our student website offers a wide range of review materials designed to improve your understanding and your grades: self-test quizzes; flash cards; chapter summaries; a glossary; multimedia demonstrations of key concepts; and videos that explain how art is made. Other content-rich resources for students include an audio glossary of foreign-language terms and artists' names.

For full details of our student resources go to <http://wwnorton.com/studyspace/gateways-to-art>.

The Authors

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1.1 Line, Shape and the Principle of Contrast:
Functions of Line

- Definition of Line
- Functions of Line
- Contour Line
- Communicative Line
- Definition of Shape
- Geometric and Organic Shape
- Positive and Negative Shape

Turn All Lines On

Roll over the image to find lines that direct the eye

Goya uses directional line to guide our attention to specific areas of the composition, heightening the drama and emotional impact of this violent scene.

3 Fifty-one Interactive Exercises help students to understand the elements and principles of art.

4 A free and open student website presents an array of review opportunities, using the analytical framework of the text throughout

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CHAPTERS EBOOK

INTRODUCTION PART 1 PART 2 PART 3 PART 4

StudySpace
Your Place for a Better Grade

- 1 StudySpace tells you what you know
- 2 shows you what you still need to review
- 3 Gives you an organized study plan to master the material

This site will launch in October, 2015. Please visit the demo chapter, [Chapter 1 & Time and Motion](#).

Welcome to the Student StudySpace for *Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts*.

This site is designed to help you to improve your appreciation of the visual arts. It provides you with resources specifically designed to enable you to understand art through the elements and principles of art, the main media and processes, the historical context, and some of the main themes of the visual arts.

[More information on this book.](#)

FEATURE DEMOS

Select a feature below to demo.

CHAPTER QUIZ ANIMATIONS WORDS FLASH CARDS AUDIO GLOSSARY

Quiz+
Quiz+ takes online assessment to the next level. Quiz+ doesn't just tell you how you did, it shows you how you can do better. With Quiz+, you are presented with a targeted study plan that offers specific page references and links to the ebook and other online learning tools. This allows you instantly to access the resources you need, when you need them most.

[Go to demo](#)

ART IN THE NEWS

List of Lost Antiquities Finally Returned
Egyptian government announces that 14 objects were stolen from the Egyptian Museum.
Sunday, April 05, 2012

Plan Adopted to Preserve Watts Towers
Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the City of Los Angeles combine to preserve Watts Towers.
Monday, March 05, 2012

Public Art in Parking Garage
Artist Sukyoung Park is commissioned to produce art for the American Club Harbor Parking Facility in San Diego.
Monday, February 27, 2012

EBOOK
The ebook version of this book is available. It offers the full content of the print version.

GRADERBOOK
Instructors and students now have an easy way to track online quiz scores with the Thames & Hudson Graderbook.

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M. Kathryn Shields has a PhD in art history from Virginia Commonwealth University. She is Associate Professor of Art History at Guilford College, where she also serves as Chair of the Art Department.

Gateway Features for *Gateways to Art*

One of the important lessons you will learn from this book is that every time you look at a great work of art, it will have something new to say to you. If you consider, for example, the way an artist designed the work, you may notice something about the use of color or contrast that had not struck you before. When you study the medium the artist chose (such as the particular choice of paint selected), you will appreciate how it contributed to the impact of the work.

Another approach that we can take to an artwork is to look at it from a historical point of view: how does this work reflect the circumstances and the society in which it was created? Does it express the values of those who held political and economic power, or could it tell us something about the status of women at the time? Alternately, you could ask yourself whether the work addresses issues that have absorbed the attention of artists ever since humans began to paint, draw, and make sculpture. Does it touch on very big questions, such as the nature of the universe, or life and death? Or is it engaged with more personal concerns, such as gender, sexuality, race, and our own identities?

You can appreciate a work of art by examining it closely from one or more of these perspectives. You can also learn more about one work by studying another and comparing the two. For example, consider how an artist might depict a famous event, such as a battle, or render the dramatic plight of sailors whose boat is caught in a terrible storm, or the poignancy of a family ruined by an economic disaster. The artist might choose a large-scale work that shows the enormous impact of events on a large number of people. But an alternative would be to create a work on a much more intimate scale, showing how such events affect a single person or a family, or even portraying that family in a moment of rest and quiet before the enormity of events becomes apparent.

There are many approaches to art, and to help you develop the important skills of looking at, analysing, and interpreting works of art, we have selected eight iconic works—the “Gateways to Art”—which you will encounter repeatedly as you read this book. Each time you see one, you will learn something new about art and how to appreciate it. Let’s begin by taking our first look at the Gateways in the pages that follow.



The Colossal Olmec Heads

The Olmecs, a people who lived on the Gulf Coast of eastern Mexico from about 2500 BCE to 400 CE, were great sculptors of stone. Probably sometime around 900 BCE they made colossal heads like the one shown here. These are amongst the most impressive sculptures of ancient Mexico. Seventeen such heads have been discovered at four sites. They range in size from 5 to 12 ft. tall and weigh approximately 6 to 25 tons each. All portray mature males with flat noses, large cheeks, and slightly crossed eyes. Many scholars believe that the heads depict individual Olmec rulers.

FUNDAMENTALS

→ **1.2** (p. 75) See how Olmec artists used the sheer mass of colossal heads to create a sense of power.

MEDIA AND PROCESSES

→ **2.4** (p. 251) Compare the colossal heads with an Olmec ceramic sculpture.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

→ **3.4** (p. 439) Experience the discovery and excavation of four colossal heads found buried at La Venta, Mexico.

THEMES

→ **4.6** (p. 628) Examine how the evidence suggests that the colossal heads were portraits of Olmec rulers.



Raphael, *The School of Athens*

In 1510–11 the Italian artist Raphael (1483–1520) painted one of the great works of the Italian Renaissance, *The School of Athens*. This was one of four wall paintings commissioned by Pope Julius II to decorate the Stanza della Segnatura (his private library) in the Vatican Palace in Rome, Italy. *The School of Athens* measures 16 ft. 8 in. high by 25 ft. wide.

The School of Athens derives its name from the reputation of Athens, Greece, as the great center of Classical learning, and from the painting's subject matter: the work depicts an imaginary gathering of the great scholars of ancient Greece and Rome.

FUNDAMENTALS

- ➔ **1.3** (p. 96) Understand how the illusion of three-dimensional depth is created on a flat surface.
- ➔ **1.7** (p. 151) Discern how the artist used scale and proportion in the work and drew the attention of the viewer to the figures in the center of the painting.

MEDIA AND PROCESSES

- ➔ **2.1** (p. 200) Study how Raphael used drawings to plan and design this large wall painting.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

- ➔ **3.6** (p. 472) See how Raphael used famous artists of his time as models for portraits of great thinkers from ancient Greece and Rome.

THEMES

- ➔ **4.5** (p. 612) Visualize how the other paintings in Pope Julius's library work in harmony with *The School of Athens* to create the illusion of an architecturally compelling space.



Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Decapitating Holofernes*

Around 1620, the Italian artist Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–c. 1656) made a dramatic painting of the story from the Old Testament of the Israelite heroine Judith killing the Assyrian general Holofernes, who had been sent by his king to punish the Israelites for not supporting his reign. Gentileschi's dramatic work, executed in oil paint on canvas, and measuring 6 ft. 6 in. by 5 ft. 4 in., addressed a subject that was popular amongst painters of the Baroque era. The artist is remarkable, however, as a woman who was determined to succeed in the male-dominated art world of her time.

FUNDAMENTALS

1.8 (p. 163) Observe how the artist directs the viewer's eye toward the decapitated head.

MEDIA AND PROCESSES

2.2 (p. 224) Examine Gentileschi's paintings as personal statements.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

3.6 (p. 485) Compare Gentileschi's style with that of a leading male painter of her time.

3.8 (p. 523) See how Gentileschi's depiction of the scene differs from that of Gustav Klimt, painted nearly 300 years later.

THEMES

4.10 (p. 680) Interpret this painting as a response to Gentileschi's experience as a victim of rape.



The Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal is a great tomb built by Shah Jahan (1592–1666) for his wife, Mumtaz Mahal (1593–1631). Shah Jahan created this monument to her after she died giving birth to their fourteenth child.

The Taj Mahal is covered in white marble inlaid with semiprecious stones; it glistens beautifully in the sun. The eye-catching and awe-inspiring central dome is 213 ft. tall and 58 ft. in diameter. Carefully designed around it are four further chambers, and identical towers, known as minarets, stand at each corner of the structure, creating a perfectly symmetrical and balanced site. Shah Jahan and his architects deliberately emphasized this formal balance in their design, in order not only to create an outstandingly beautiful memorial but also to evoke a sense of harmony, order, and stability. The Taj Mahal is part of a larger complex including a mosque, smaller tombs, enormous gardens, and a reflecting pool.

FUNDAMENTALS

1.6 (pp. 142–43) Understand how the symmetrical balance of the Taj Mahal was designed to symbolize Shah Jahan’s love for his wife.

MEDIA AND PROCESSES

2.5 (p. 278–79) Learn about the design of the Taj Mahal and the importance of the site of the colossal mausoleum.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

3.3 (pp. 418–19) Examine the importance of gardens as symbols of paradise in the art of Shah Jahan and other Islamic rulers.



Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*

In 1814 the Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746–1828) painted a dramatic depiction of war, *The Third of May, 1808*. Goya's work shows Spanish patriots being executed by invading French troops. This large oil painting (it measures around 8 ft. 4 in. by 11 ft. 4 in.) was commissioned by King Ferdinand of Spain, who had recently returned to the throne after the defeat of the French. Goya's work is generally considered one of the finest portrayals of the horrors of war.

FUNDAMENTALS

- 1.1 (p. 56) Analyse Goya's use of line to guide the viewer's eye through his painting.
- 1.9 (p. 174) Understand how Goya uses visual rhythm to direct our attention to the victims of the French troops, and see how he uses rhythm in another of his works.

MEDIA AND PROCESSES

- 2.3 (p. 239) Study the connection between Goya's famous print series *Disasters of War* and his painting.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

- 3.7 (p. 503) Examine Goya's relationship with Spain's royal family through his paintings.

THEMES

- 4.7 (p. 637) Consider how Goya's painting of Spanish resistance to the French invaders might add to your views of the war depicted in *The Third of May, 1808*.



Katsushika Hokusai, “The Great Wave off Shore at Kanagawa”

Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) is regarded as one of the greatest Japanese printmakers. In 1831 he published a series of woodblock prints titled *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*; the prints were so successful that in fact he made 46 of them. All feature a view of Japan’s sacred mountain, Fuji. One of the prints, “The Great Wave off Shore at Kanagawa,” measuring around 9 in. by 14 in., portrays a dramatic scene of fishermen caught in a storm at sea. Interestingly, Hokusai’s work became popular in Europe before it did in Japan.

FUNDAMENTALS

1.6 (p. 132) Study how Hokusai arranges the elements of his composition to create a harmonious design.

MEDIA AND PROCESSES

2.3 (p. 235) Investigate the process Hokusai used to make this woodblock print.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

3.3 (p. 423) Learn about the importance of Mount Fuji in Japanese culture.

THEMES

4.8 (p. 653) See how a contemporary artist has been inspired by Hokusai to make a work that highlights environmental concerns.



Pablo Picasso, *Girl before a Mirror*

The Spaniard Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) is recognized as one of the most important artists of the twentieth century. In a prodigiously prolific and versatile career, he explored a wide range of media including painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, and stage design.

Girl before a Mirror, painted in 1932, is a portrait of Picasso's mistress Marie-Thérèse Walter, whom he never married but with whom he had one daughter, named Maya. The painting, which measures 5 ft. 4 in. by just over 4 ft. 3 in., shows his mistress studying her own reflection in a mirror, which suggests multiple sides to or facets of her personality.

FUNDAMENTALS

1.1 (p. 59) See how Picasso used contour line to describe the figures in some of his images.

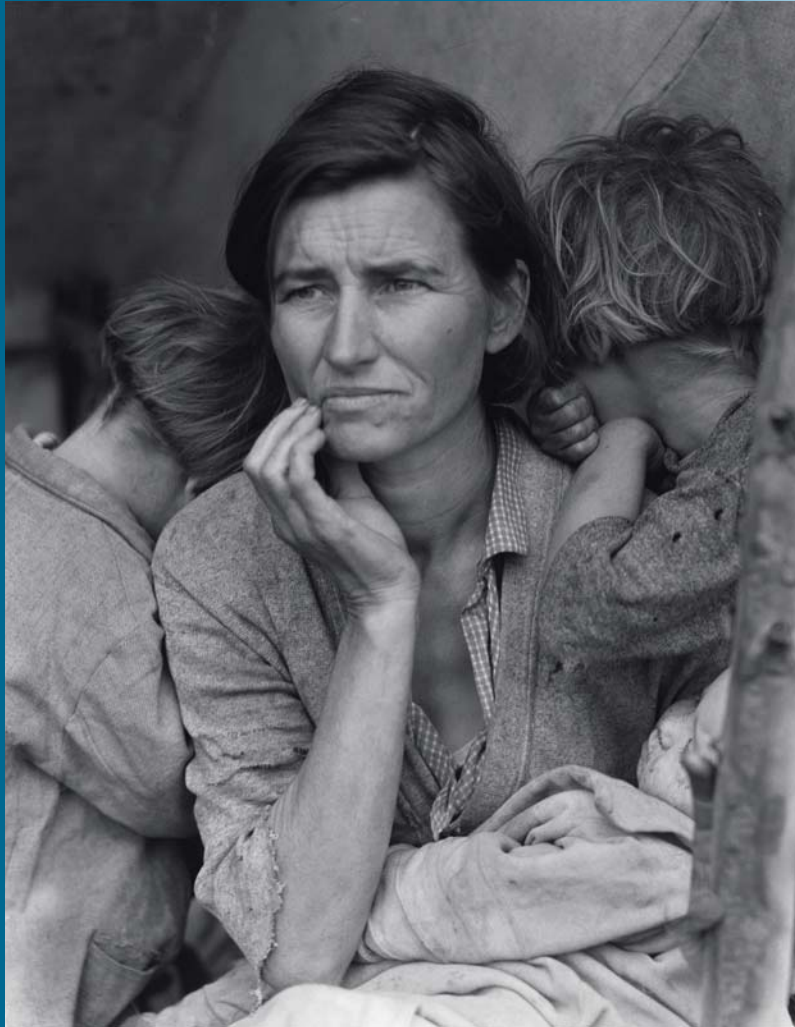
HISTORY AND CONTEXT

3.8 (p. 528) Explore Picasso's portrayal of women through this painting and his famous work *Les Femmes d'Alger*.

THEMES

4.3 (p. 593) Understand how Picasso used symbols of vanity and mortality in this artwork.

4.4 (p. 605) Learn how an x-ray of the painting taught scholars more about Picasso's creative process.



Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*

The black-and-white photograph of a homeless and hungry family, *Migrant Mother*, is widely recognized as an iconic image of the hardships of the Great Depression of the 1930s in America. The documentary photographer Dorothea Lange (1895–1965) took the picture in 1936. She had been hired by a government agency, the Farm Security Administration, to record social and economic conditions in California. Since then, *Migrant Mother* has been frequently reproduced as a record of American social history.

FUNDAMENTALS

1.5 (p. 127) Study the sequence of images taken by Lange to see how time and motion are captured even in a still photograph.

MEDIA AND PROCESSES

2.8 (p. 324) Read Dorothea Lange's own account of how and why she took photos of this family.

THEMES

4.8 (p. 651) Understand how the image became a symbol of society's responsibility toward the poor, and how the work and its reception affected the family it portrayed.

Introduction

What Is Art?

The Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) is said to have created a painting, titled *Maple Leaves on a River*, by dipping the feet of a chicken in red paint and letting the bird run freely on a sheet of paper he had just covered in blue paint. Although we know that Hokusai was an unconventional character, we cannot be certain that the story is true, because *Maple Leaves on a River* no longer exists. If we think

about this curious story for a while, however, we can begin to understand the most basic question addressed in this book: What is art? This question is not an easy one to answer, because people define art in many ways. In Hokusai's case, he captured the peaceful sensations of a fall day by a river, without showing what an actual river and real leaves look like. In this instance, art communicates a sensation to its audience.

In nineteenth-century Japan, art could be a means to encourage the quiet contemplation of nature, but to an Egyptian artist almost 3,000 years earlier, art would have meant something very different. The Egyptian who in the tenth century BCE decorated the wooden coffin of Nespawershefi with a painting of the sun god Re had a quite different idea of rivers in mind from the one Hokusai conceived. For ancient Egyptians, rivers were important for survival, because they depended on the flooding of the River Nile to grow their crops. Rivers also had religious significance. Egyptians believed that during the daytime Re sailed across a great celestial ocean in his day boat. By night, the sun god traveled in his evening boat along a river in the underworld, but before he could rise again he had to defeat his enemy, the serpent Apophis, which in 0.0.1 can be seen swimming in the river. Here the river is again suggested rather than being realistically portrayed. It is a place of



0.0.1 *The Journey of the Sun God Re*, detail from the inner coffin of Nespawershefi, Third Intermediate Period, 990–969 BCE. Plastered and painted wood. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England



0.0.2 Frederic Edwin Church, *Niagara*, 1857. Oil on canvas, 3'6¼" × 7'6½". Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

danger, not of contemplation, and if Re does not emerge victorious, the world will be deprived of the life-giving light of the sun. Re, who in the image is seated, is protected by another god carrying a spear. He travels with several attendants, including a baboon. The choice of this subject was appropriate for a coffin: no doubt Nespawershefi hoped to emerge from the underworld to live a happy afterlife, just as Re rose again every morning. For the painter of this coffin, art was a way to express profound religious ideas and to invoke beliefs in a happy life after death.

Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900), a famous American landscape artist, created a very dramatic painting of a river (or, to be more precise, a waterfall) for a very different purpose than that of the Egyptian artist who decorated the coffin. Church used **oil paint** (a **medium** not available in ancient Egypt) on canvas for several views of the Niagara River and Falls, intended for exhibition to a public eager to learn about the landscape of the still-young American Republic. Niagara was a popular subject for artists in the second half of the nineteenth century, both because of its grandeur and because it symbolized America's territorial expansion and ambitions: it marks the northern border of the United States. Church's *Niagara* of 1857 (**0.0.2**) is more than 7 ft. wide. It positions the viewer as if

on the very edge of, or even in, the falls.

The miraculous vantage point inspired one critic to remark, "This is Niagara, with the roar left out!" Landscape painters in Church's time also used the beauty and power of the landscape to symbolize the presence of God in nature, and this painting came to represent America, and, for many, God's support for the country. It is a magnificent statement of religion, an expression of national pride, and a spectacular form of public education and entertainment.

Finally, consider a work by Louise Nevelson (1899–1988) that also features a waterfall (**0.0.3**, see p. 28). Nevelson constructed twenty-five painted rectangular and square wooden sections inside an overall rectangular frame, measuring 18 × 9 ft. Inside some of the rectangles we can see undulating curved forms that suggest a cascading waterfall or the froth of white water. Other forms in the upper right of the square resemble squirming fish. Clearly, Nevelson's purpose in this artwork is not to show to us an instantly recognizable likeness of a waterfall full of fish. Instead we are invited to examine her carefully constructed work closely and to feel the sensations of watching water cascade and fish swimming.

If we go back to our original question, what is art?, can our consideration of these four very

Oil paint(ing): paint made of pigment suspended in oil
Medium: the material on or from which an artist chooses to make a work of art

0.0.3 Louise Nevelson, *White Vertical Water*, 1972. Painted wood, 18 × 9'. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York



different works help us to find a quick and simple definition that will tell us whether we are looking at something called art? The four works certainly do not have much in common in terms of their appearance. The definition also cannot include a common range of materials (in fact, art can be made from almost anything). Nor do these works have a common purpose. The Egyptian coffin painting has a clear religious message. Church's oil painting portrays a dramatic landscape but also carries a powerful message of nationalism and patriotic pride. Hokusai's painting uses very simple means to convey restful sensations. Nevelson's work also focuses on communicating the sensations of

Geometric: predictable and mathematical

Patron: an organization or individual who sponsors the creation of works of art

being by a river, but in her case with a meticulously constructed **geometric** suggestion of one.

Perhaps the works do have some things in common, however. For example, Louise Nevelson's sculpture does not simply consist of wood and white paint. The artist carefully cut and arranged each piece to create the work she intended. Similarly, the Egyptian coffin is made of plaster, wood, and paint, but we consider it to be a work of art because the artist carefully organized the painted scene. These two artists arranged their materials so that they communicate ideas and emotions (religious feelings, or the sensation of watching fish swim down a waterfall, for example). Art communicates ideas by visual means that can help us see the world in new and exciting ways and strengthen our understanding. In other words, art is a form of language.

Fine Art and Graphic Art

The terms we choose to label things often tell us more about our own attitudes and stereotypes than about the object under consideration. For example, art from cultures outside the Western tradition (such as the traditional arts of Africa or the Pacific Islands) was once termed "Primitive Art," implying that it was of lesser quality than the "fine" or "high" arts of Europe. But while—as in this case—such labels can be misused, they can none the less reflect cultural judgments and sometimes lead to ways of identifying, categorizing, and understanding art.

For example, fine art usually refers to a work of art (traditionally a painting, drawing, carved sculpture, and sometimes a print) made with skill and creative imagination to be pleasing or beautiful to look at. When the Italian artist Agnolo Bronzino (1503–1572) painted a portrait of *Eleonora di Toledo and Her Son Giovanni* (**0.0.4**), he was clearly determined to demonstrate great skill in his lavish portrait of this wife of the powerful Duke of Florence, Cosimo de' Medici, who was a great **patron** of the arts. Eleonora's dress, which was so

sumptuous that it would have cost more than the painting itself, is depicted with such great care that one can almost feel the texture of the embroidery. Eleonora, her complexion perfect and her beauty flawless, is composed and icily aloof, her hand resting on the shoulder of her young son to draw our attention to him. The young boy, destined to become a powerful duke like his father, is equally serious and composed, as befits a person of high status. Looking at this painting we can see that Bronzino intended us to marvel at his skill in producing a supreme example of fine art that conveys a vivid sense of wealth and power.

Historically, the graphic arts (those made by a method that enables reproduction of many copies of the same image) have been considered less important, and perhaps less accomplished, than the fine arts. While Bronzino's portrait is unique, made for a single, powerful patron, and probably to be viewed by a select audience, works of graphic art are made to be available to many people and are in that sense much more democratic, which is considered an advantage by many artists and viewers. Graphic art includes a wide range of media: books, magazines, posters, advertising, signage, television, computer screens, and social media.

The essence of graphic design is communication. The simplicity of a logo created in 1994 to identify the global brand of the logistics company FedEx (0.0.5) contrasts with the elaborate luxury of Bronzino's *Eleonora*. The designer, Lindon Leader, discovered that the company's name at the time, Federal Express, gave customers the impression that it operated only in the United States, rather than internationally. In addition, everybody called the company simply FedEx. Leader's task was to design a logo that could be used on package labels, advertisements, trucks, and planes to identify FedEx as a dynamic, global organization. The solution was a design that retained the colors (slightly modified) of the existing logo, but shortened the company name to FedEx. The type was arranged so that the white space between the E and x formed a white arrow that suggested speed and precision.



The design is very simple but we should be careful not to assume that it required much less skill and effort than Bronzino's portrait. The logo did not involve the same kind of technical finesse as the detailed realism of the oil painting, or Bronzino's ability to communicate the human character. But Leader and his colleagues held focus groups to research the public's impressions of the company and developed about 200 design concepts before they settled on their chosen design. Then they made prototypes of planes, vans, and trucks to test it. Leader's logo has won more than forty design awards. There is one crucial difference between the two works,

0.0.4 Agnolo Bronzino, *Portrait of Eleonora of Toledo with Her Son Giovanni de' Medici*, 1544–55. Oil on panel, 45¼ × 37¾". Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy



0.0.5 FedEx Express logo

however. The purpose of the logo is to identify a company and sell its services. Bronzino's portrait was made to please an individual patron, while the FedEx logo is intended to communicate with a worldwide audience.

The Visual World

When we look at an artwork made by a single artist, we often assume that it was created entirely from the artist's own ideas and inspirations. But art historians now recognize that art is part of a wider **context** of things we experience: the visual culture in which we live, which includes all of the images that we encounter in our lives. Think about how many images you saw on your way to class today. They will have included traffic signs, roadside billboards, and the logos of businesses along the highway. Once you arrived on campus, you will have seen posters informing you of an upcoming event, the logo of the coffee shop, and maps directing you to where your class takes place. Then a glance at your smartphone or e-mail revealed more ads, all clamoring for your attention. We live in, and respond to, a world of images, and so have artists, whether in ancient Egypt, sixteenth-century Italy, or twenty-first-century America. In other words, art reflects the visual culture in which it was created, not just the creative achievement of its maker.

The contemporary artist El Anatsui (b. 1944) makes artworks that reference the colonial history of Africa and the impact of modern consumerism on cultural values. *Old Man's Cloth* (0.0.6) is made from discarded liquor-bottle tops. El Anatsui chose bottle tops as his material because European traders bartered alcohol for African goods. Slaves were shipped from Ghana to the sugar plantations of the Caribbean; then in turn, rum was shipped from there back to Africa. El Anatsui's bottle tops thus remind us of the slave trade, as well as highlighting the way in which modern consumerism discards waste. At the same time, the artist's use of traditional designs suggests both the enduring power and the fragility of Ghanaian culture.



Where Is Art?

You have probably figured out by now that art can be found in many places: in a coffin, in a book, in any number of contemporary media, and, of course, in an art museum.

Our word “museum” comes from the ancient Greek *mouseion*, meaning a temple dedicated to the arts and sciences. The mouseion of Alexandria in Egypt, founded about 2,400 years ago, collected and preserved important objects, still a key function of museums today. Many of the great European art museums began as private collections. The famous Louvre Museum in Paris, France, was originally a fortress and then a royal palace where the king kept his personal art collection. When King Louis XIV moved to his new palace at Versailles, the Louvre became a residence for the artists he employed. After the French Revolution (1789–99), the king's collection was opened to the public in the Louvre.

0.0.6 El Anatsui, *Old Man's Cloth*, 2002.
Aluminum and copper wire, 15'9" x 17'¾"

Context: Circumstances surrounding the creation of a work of art, including historical events, social conditions, biographical facts about the artist, and his or her intentions