

What is art?

What are some forms of the visual arts?

Is the concept of beauty universal?

What are some of the purposes of art?

Chapter 1

The Power of Art

The first step in learning to appreciate art is learning to *look*. Art can renew the pleasure of seeing and make us feel more alive.

The Role of the Artist:

1) Artists help us see the world in new and innovative ways:

We stop and re-examine our surroundings.

We might get jarred out of complacency.

[The Umbrellas](#)

[About the Umbrellas](#)

The Power to Awaken our Senses



Christo and Jeanne-Claude
The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979-2005
Photo: Wolfgang Volz
© 2005 Christo and Jeanne-Claude

Art can wake us up to the beauties of the natural world In the modern world - photography has become a medium for this kind of artistic revelation – to slow us down, make us stop, and really look



California

Cost: 26 Million dollars.

Christo Umbrella Installation
1991, lasting 18 days.
October 9 – 27, 1991

Financed entirely by Christo
and Jean Claude. They do
not accept sponsorships.



Japan

Christo and Jeanne-Claude prepared for their next project, "The Umbrellas". The plan was to have yellow umbrellas set up in California and blue umbrellas in Japan at the same time.

In September 1991 the umbrellas were brought to their places by 2,000 workers. In California, some of the bases were transported to the site by helicopter.

The final cost of the project totaled \$26 US million. By September 7, 1,340 blue umbrellas in Ibaraki and 1,760 yellow umbrellas at the Tejon Ranch in southern California had been set up; the exhibition opened on 9 October 1991.

In total, 3 million people saw the umbrellas, each measuring 6 meters in height and 8.66 meters in diameter. The umbrellas became a huge tourist attraction, finding use as everything from picnic spots to wedding altars. On 26 October 1991, one of the umbrellas in California was toppled by high winds, killing one woman and injuring several others. The exhibit was ordered closed immediately. A second death occurred during the removal of the umbrellas.

The Power to Touch our Emotions

- Art can touch our emotions and begin a process of healing
- The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial reminds viewers of the losses of American lives in that war by listing all of the names of the dead and missing



The Power to Shock

- Many artists in the early 20th century wanted to wake viewers up and make them **question their preconceptions about art**
- Duchamp seems to be rejecting centuries of tradition by creating a kind of **parody of the Mona Lisa**. He creates a new category of art object – the rectified *readymade*, where he simply alters something that already exists; in this case a postcard of the painting



The Power to Shock



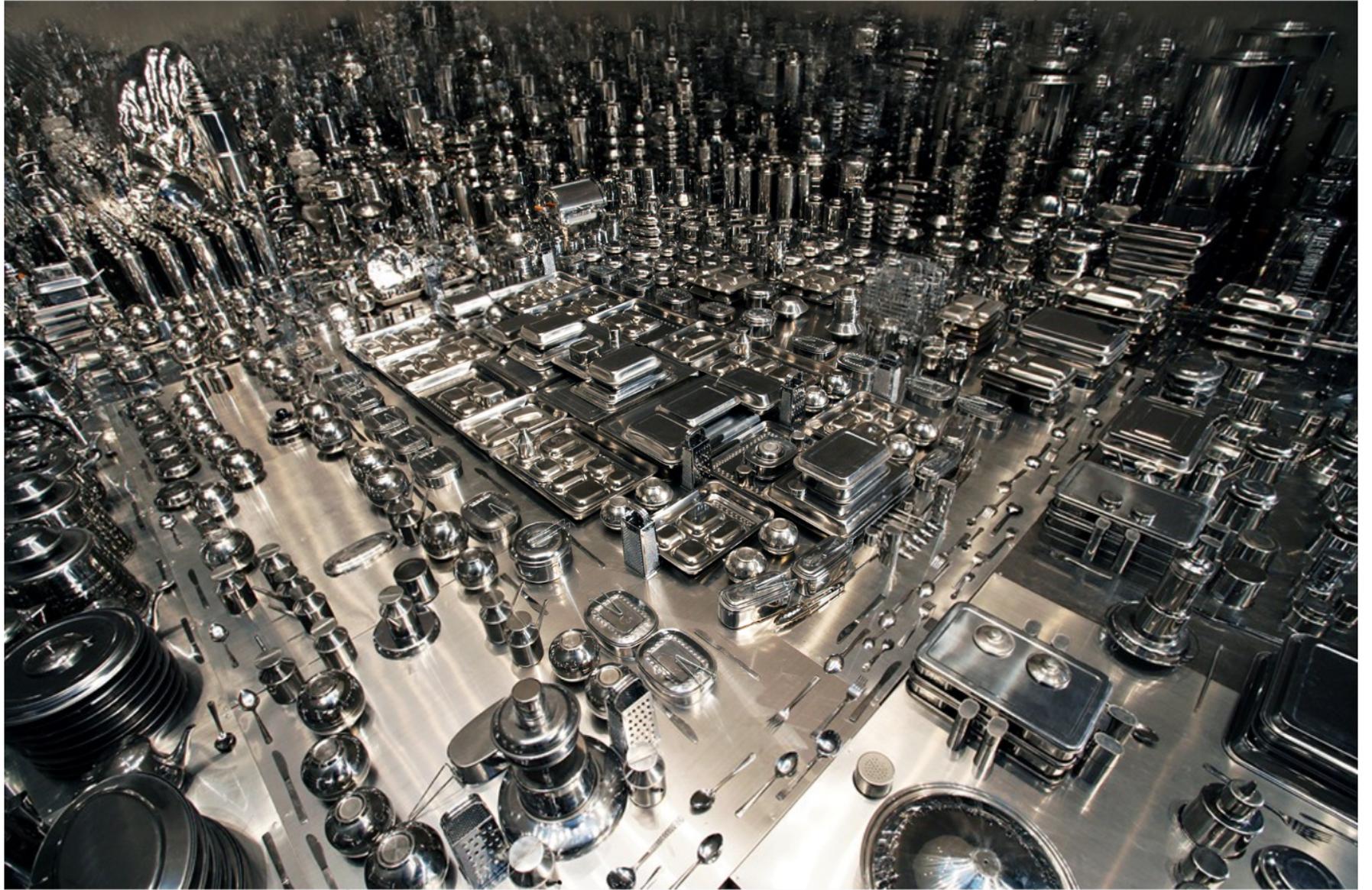
Fountain, by Marcel DuChamp. 1917.

The Power to Transform the Ordinary

- Sometimes art can show us something familiar in new ways
- Zhan Wang's *Urban Landscape* transformed restaurant equipment into a shining city scape.



[More images](#)



The Power of Art for the Artist

Self-Expression

- Artists sometimes use their art to transform painful experiences
- Frida Kahlo's painting seems to have cathartic, healing powers, as she addresses the physical pain she suffered from an early traumatic accident
- She shows her strength through her calm facial expression



Frida Kahlo, The Little Deer, 1946. Oil on Canvas.

The Role of the Artist:

2) Artists Record the World.

Examples:

Portraits of the Wealthy & Powerful.

Historical events.

Art Reflects the World.

Art Represents Ideals

Art as a Declaration of **Power**

- The western conception of great art as a combination of the real or truthful, and the ideal, or beautiful, is descended from the aesthetics of Ancient Greece
- Physical beauty and athletic strength were considered as important as mental and spiritual growth

Roman copy of Praxiteles, Hermes with the Infant Dionysus from Olympia. C 340 BCE (?)



Art Represents Ideals

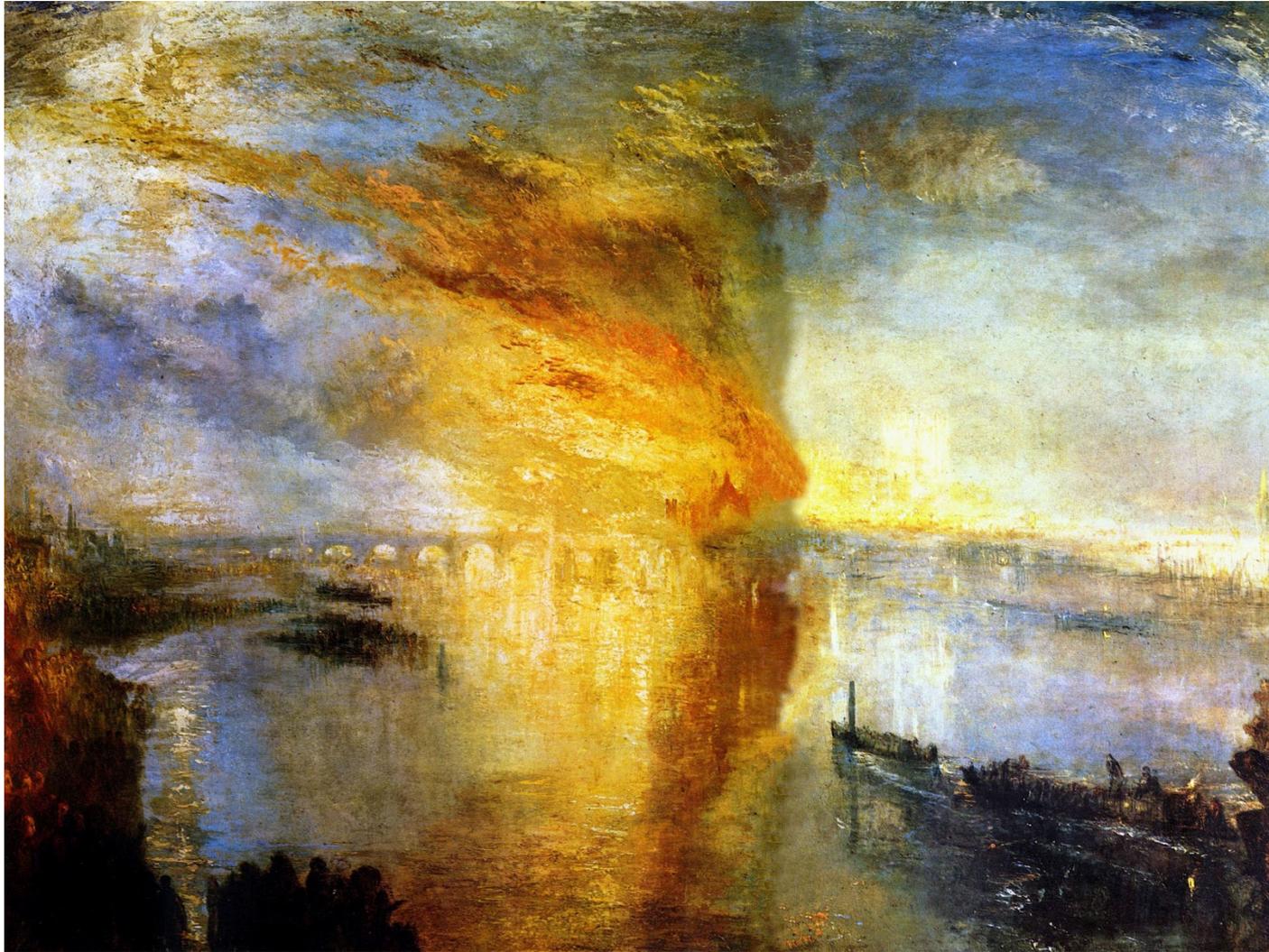
Art as a Declaration of **Power**

- Besides expressing cultural beliefs, art has been used from the earliest times to express power
- This realistic portrait of Henry VIII emphasizes him as a larger than life-size figure



Portrait of King Henry VIII
Holbein, Hans (the Younger) 1540. Oil on
Panel.

Art Records Events in History.



The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons
(Page 354), J. M. W. Turner, 1834.

Art Records (and sells) Places: When Our Country was Pushing Westward.



The Rocky Mountains, Albert Bierstadt, 1907.

The Role of the Artist:

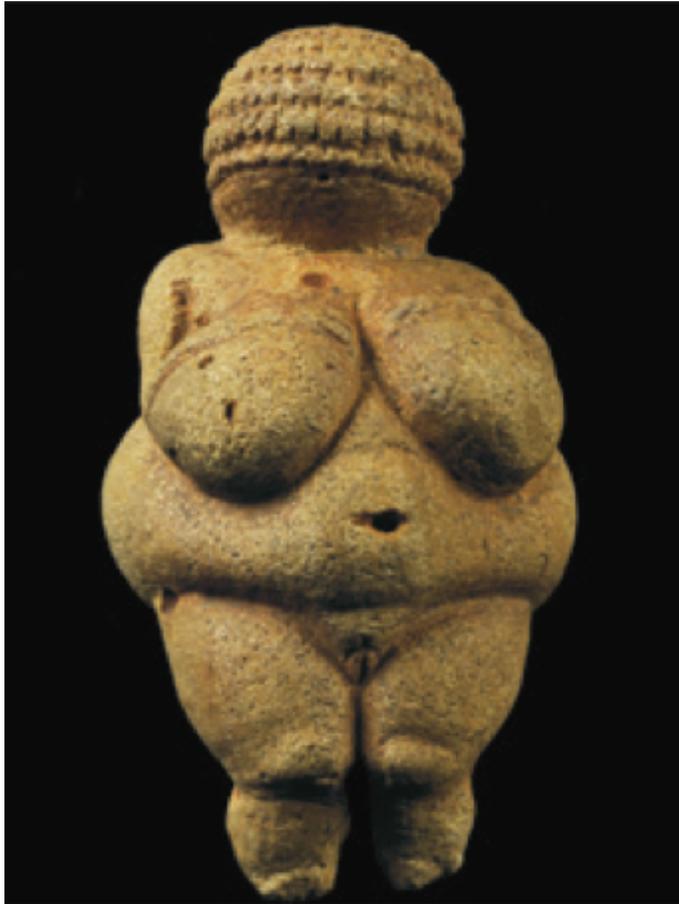
3) Artists Give Form to the Immaterial.

Examples:

Bringing Faith and Magic to Life.

Bringing Faith to Life

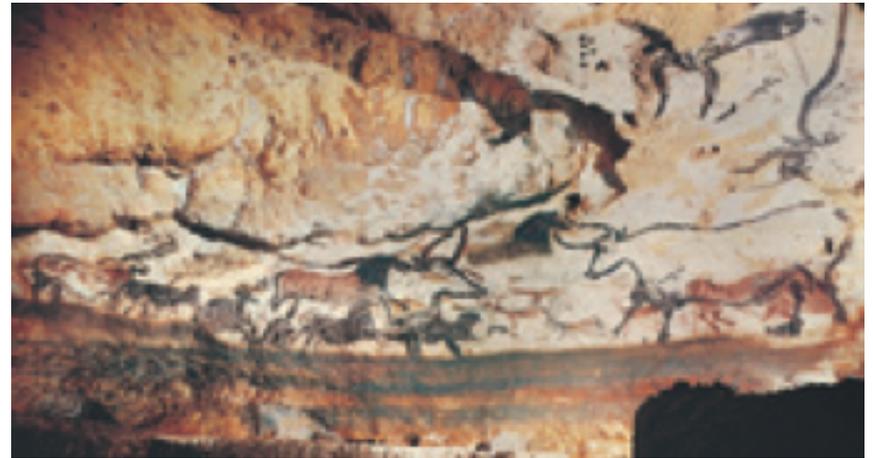
Prehistoric Art and Magical Powers



- The Venus of Willendorf
- Exaggeration of the parts of the body related to childbearing suggests the idea of a fertility goddess
- The small size of the work suggests a magic charm **held in the hand to promote fertility** and survival in the harsh ice age environment

Prehistoric Art and Magical Powers

- These cave paintings seem to have been used for some sort of hunting rituals as they were mostly painted deep in the caves, away from where the humans dwelled



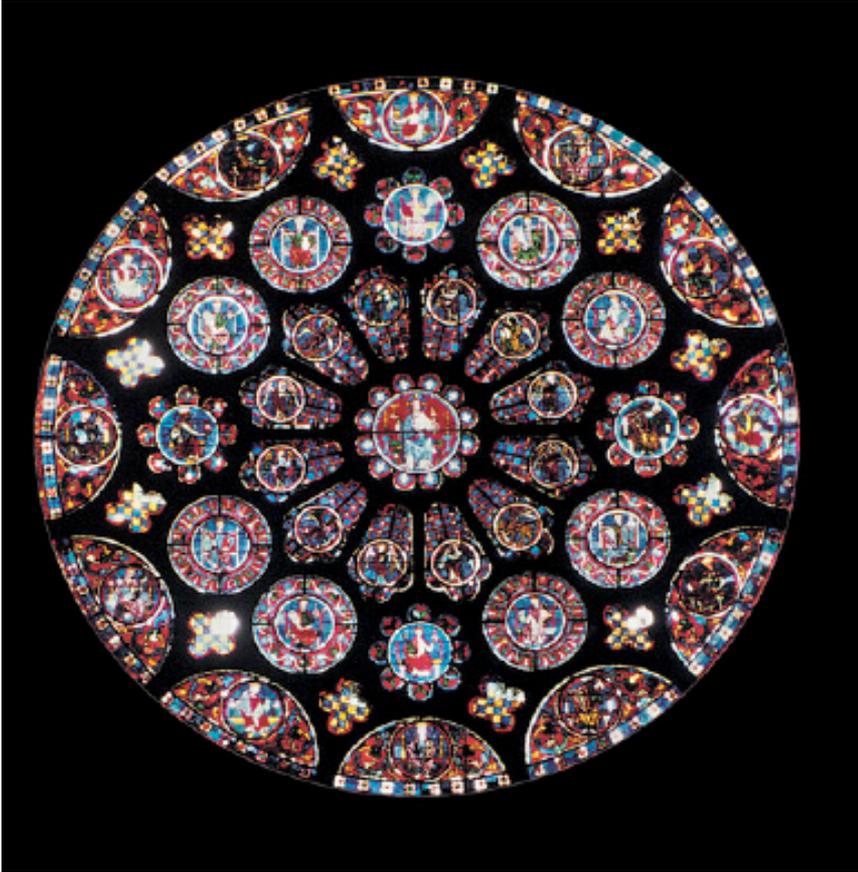
Art and Culture

- This Buddha is as refined and aloof as a prince who looks down graciously at his worshippers
- The Buddha is floating to earth with music-making angels to bring people to a paradise where the aristocratic class believed their life of luxury and beauty would continue



Bringing Faith to Life

The Power of Religious Art



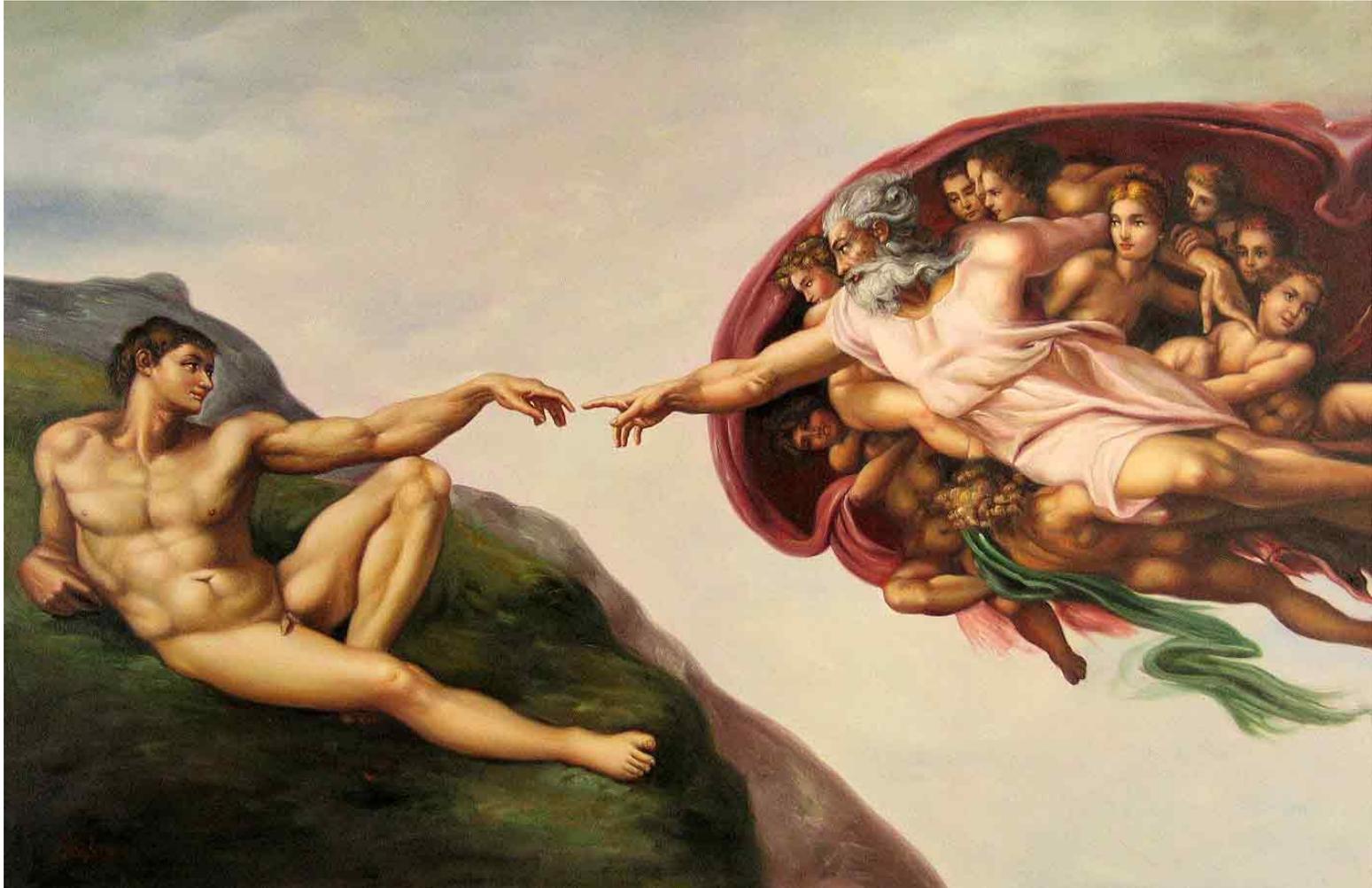
- Art in Gothic Cathedrals convey particular religious messages and spiritual values
- The soaring vertical space of the cathedral seems to lift the soul heavenward toward God
- The stained glass tells stories and creates a mystical atmosphere

Bringing Faith to
Life
The Power of
Religious Art



God Almighty (detail), Jan van Eyck, 1426-27. The Ghent Altarpiece.

Bringing Faith to Life The Power of Religious Art



Creation of Adam, Michelangelo, 1511-12. Sistine Chapel Ceiling.

Bringing Faith to Life

The Power of Religious Art



Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja), 11th Century.
Culture: Indian (Tamil Nadu). Copper sculpture.

The Role of the Artist:

4) Artists Make Things Beautiful.

To delight the eye.

Many of us like to surround ourselves with things of beauty.

Standards of beauty are not universal. Aesthetic taste can vary with different cultures and time periods.

Art Records (and sells) Places: When Our Country was Pushing Westward.



The Rocky Mountains, Albert Bierstadt, 1907.

Art is Beauty.



The Rocky Mountains, Albert Bierstadt, 1907.



Luncheon of the Boating Party. Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1880-1881. French Impressionism.

The Impressionists

When the Impressionists first exhibited their work in the late nineteenth century in Paris, the art was rejected as being hideously ugly.

One critic accused them of “**making war on beauty!**”

Some thought the work seemed unfinished and crude.

Today, people flock to see the same work, and praise it for its beauty and sweetness, as romantically ideal.



La loge (The Theatre Box). Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1874. French Impressionism.

Is it ugly?

Some great works of art get their depiction of “ugly” subjects or the distortion of forms..

Some people react with “**My child (or dog) could do a better job!**”

Characterized with loose, expressive brushstrokes.

Use of colors to communicate emotion.

Though painted 80 years apart, both Renoir and De Kooning share a philosophy of art that stresses expressiveness, and a radical development of ideas.

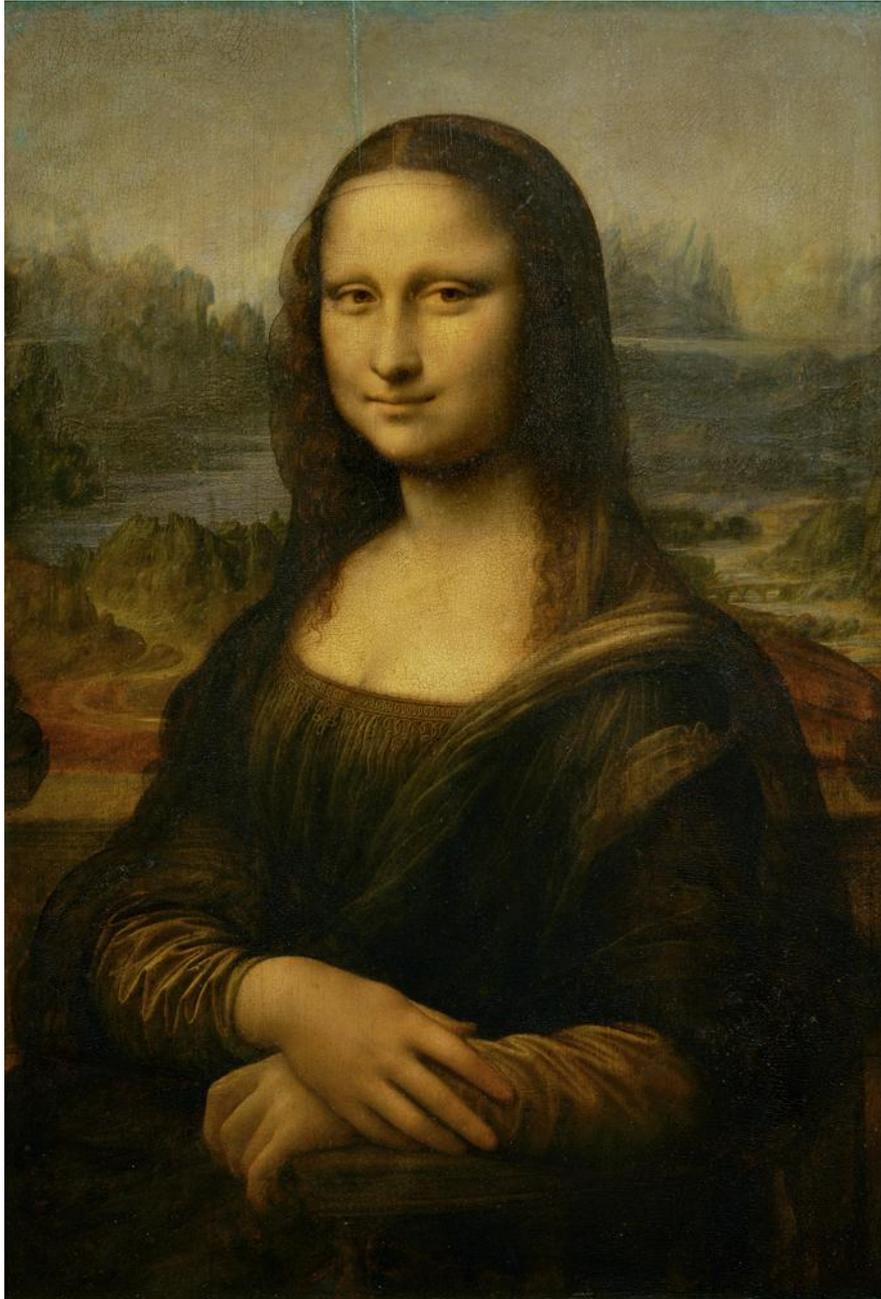
Woman and Bicycle. De Kooning,
1952-53. Abstract Expressionism.





Potato-Eaters. Vincent van Gogh,
1885. Ordinary People. Expressive brush strokes.

Methods and Materials



- The Mona Lisa is the best known work of art in the West
- Leonardo Da Vinci revolutionized the art of portraiture, adding movement and life
- The use of ***sfumato lighting*** is a soft light that dissolves edges and blurs details, giving his forms a sense of ambiguity, as in her smile
- The background not lining up on both sides also adds movement, suggesting that her shoulder shifts as we view her

sfumato – vanished, gone up in smoke

Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa* 1503-1506. Oil on Wood.



Leonardo da Vinci. *Lady with an Ermine*, 1490. Oil on wood.
Sitter: Cecilia Gallerani, mistress of Ludovico Sforza.



Leonardo da Vinci. *Portrait of a Woman of the Court of Milan*.
1490-96. Oil on panel.

Defining Art

Creative arts are subdivided into broad categories:

- Performing arts (theatre, music, and dance).
- Literary arts (poetry, essays, and novels).
- **Visual arts**

We will be concerned with artists who **draw, paint, photograph, sculpt or design.**

1) Fine Arts

2) Applied Arts

Fine Arts & Applied Arts

- 1) **Fine Arts:** Painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography, conceptual art. Created for aesthetic and intellectual value.
- 2) **Applied Arts:** Architecture and design: graphic design, interior design, decorative arts, photography and illustration. This includes the art trades, as in animation and web site design.

The **applied arts** are the application of design and decoration to everyday objects to make them aesthetically pleasing. The term is applied in distinction to the **fine arts** which aims to produce objects which are beautiful and/or provide intellectual stimulation.

In practice, the two often overlap.

Fine Art



Number 3. Jackson Pollock, 1950. Oil, enamel, and aluminum paint on fiberboard.
Abstract, non objective art.

Applied Art

Narrative Illustration

Saying Grace
“Post Cover”.

Norman Rockwell,
November 24, 1951.

Original Painting sold for over
\$46 million at auction by
Sotheby's, December 2013.





Applied Arts

Crafts & Decorative Art

Vase in shape of long-stemmed flower; circular domed foot. Bulbous enlargement in lower part of stem, opening into long open blossom form with undulating rim.

Decoration: green leaf rosette over gold iridescent luster on under side of base. Delicate narrow green leaves extending upward from base against translucent white of flower bowl. Orange iridescence inside.

Louise Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933),
Tiffany Studios, New York



Crafts

Contemporary objects that are **handmade**.

A way of **appreciating**
and **practicing** art in every day life.

Examples: hand thrown pottery, fiber weavings,
wood carvings.



Industrial Design

A field of art:

Manufactured functional objects that are thoughtfully and well **designed**.

The **aesthetic refinement** of products, making functional engineering solutions **easy to use** and **attractive**.

Examples: telephones, computers, containers, the things you use every day.

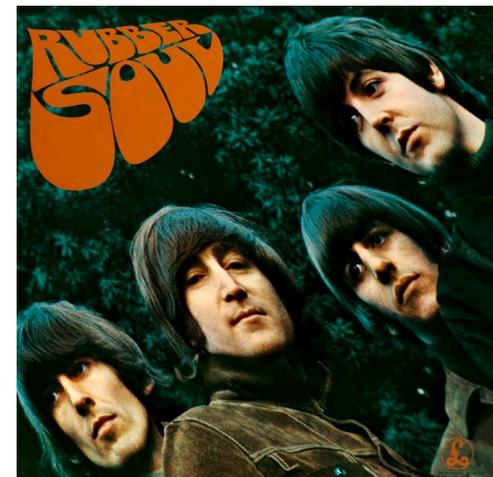
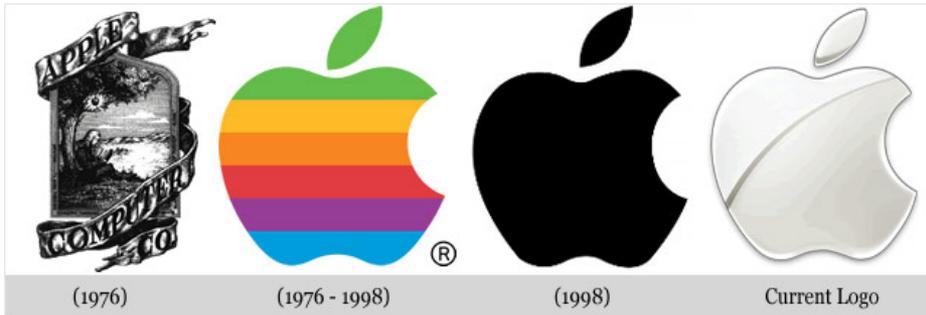


Graphic Design

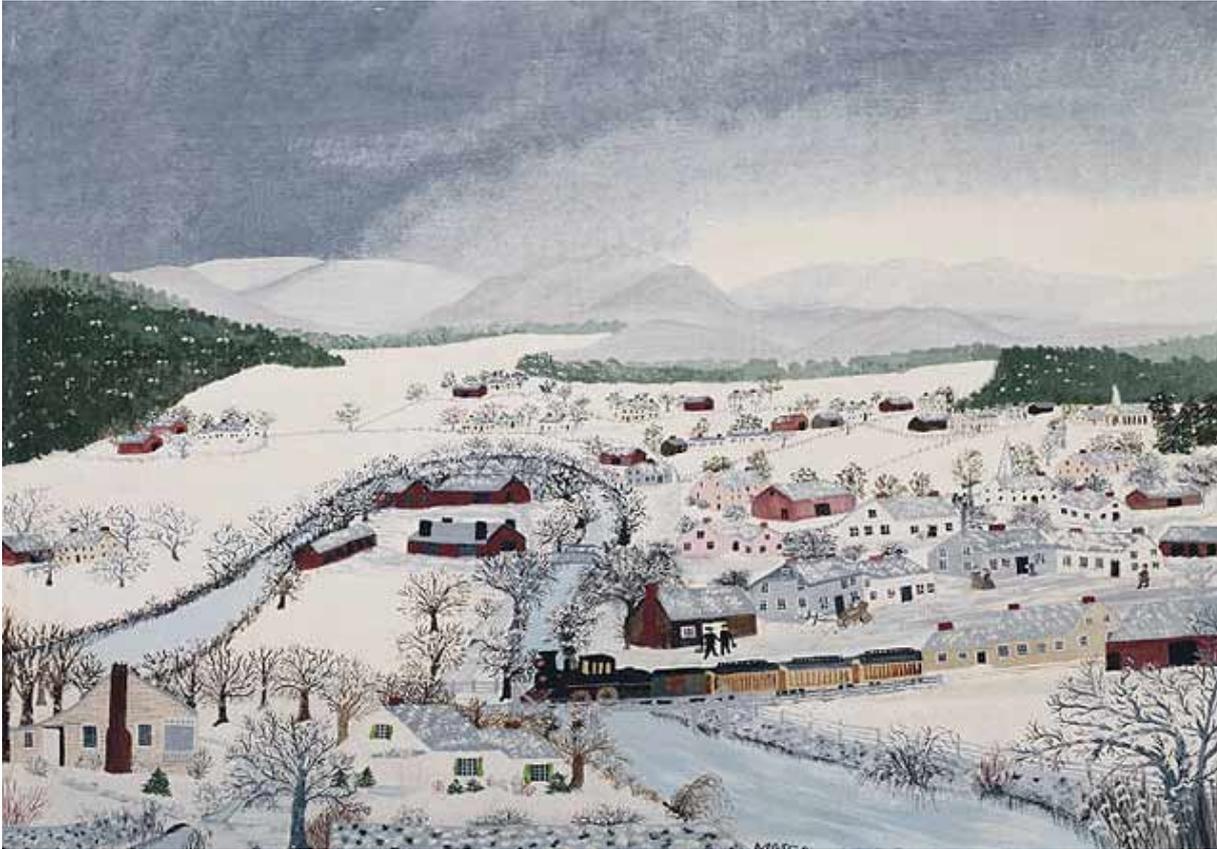
Sometimes called “commercial art.”

Two-dimensional designs that are mass produced.

Examples: logos, magazine layouts, decorative posters, album covers, book covers, currency, lettering and web site design.



Folk Art (“naïve”)



The work of untrained artists who work in mostly rural areas.

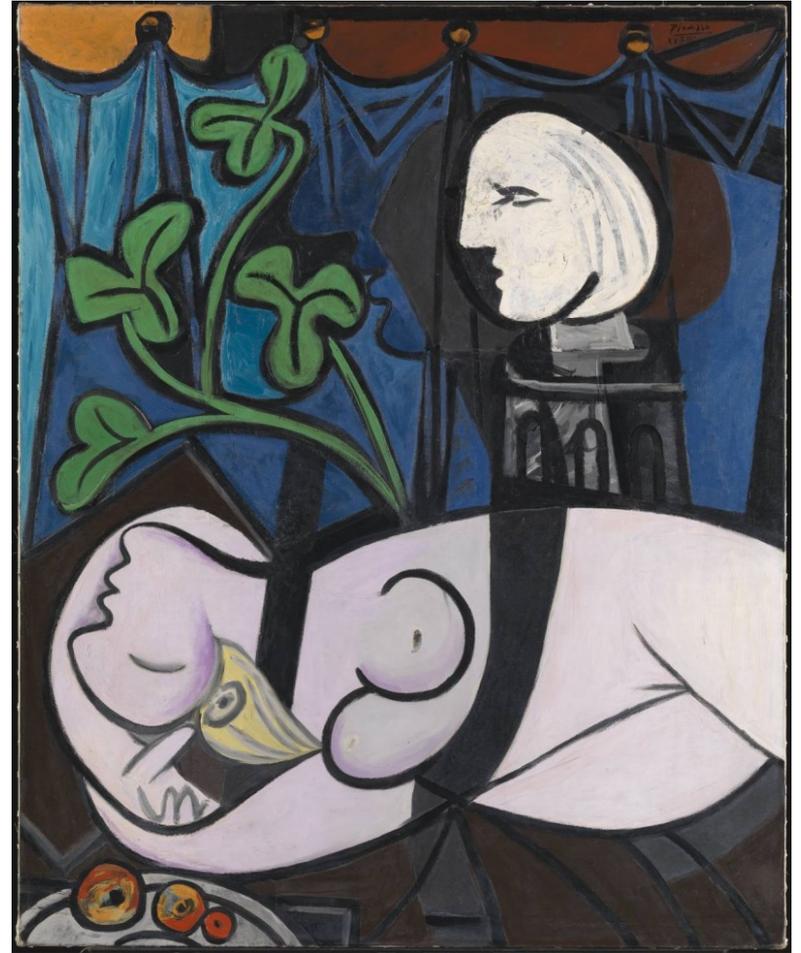
Grandma Moses's
Hoosick Falls,
winter of 1944 is a good example.

[Who is Grandma Moses?](#)

The Value of Art & Art Theft



[Nazi Art Theft](#)



[Video: The Most Expensive Paintings of the World](#)

prov·e·nance

'prävənəns/

noun

noun: **provenance**

the place of origin or earliest known history of something.

"an orange rug of Iranian provenance"

synonyms: origin, source, place of origin; birthplace, fount, pedigree

Usage: **"the provenance of the paintings"**

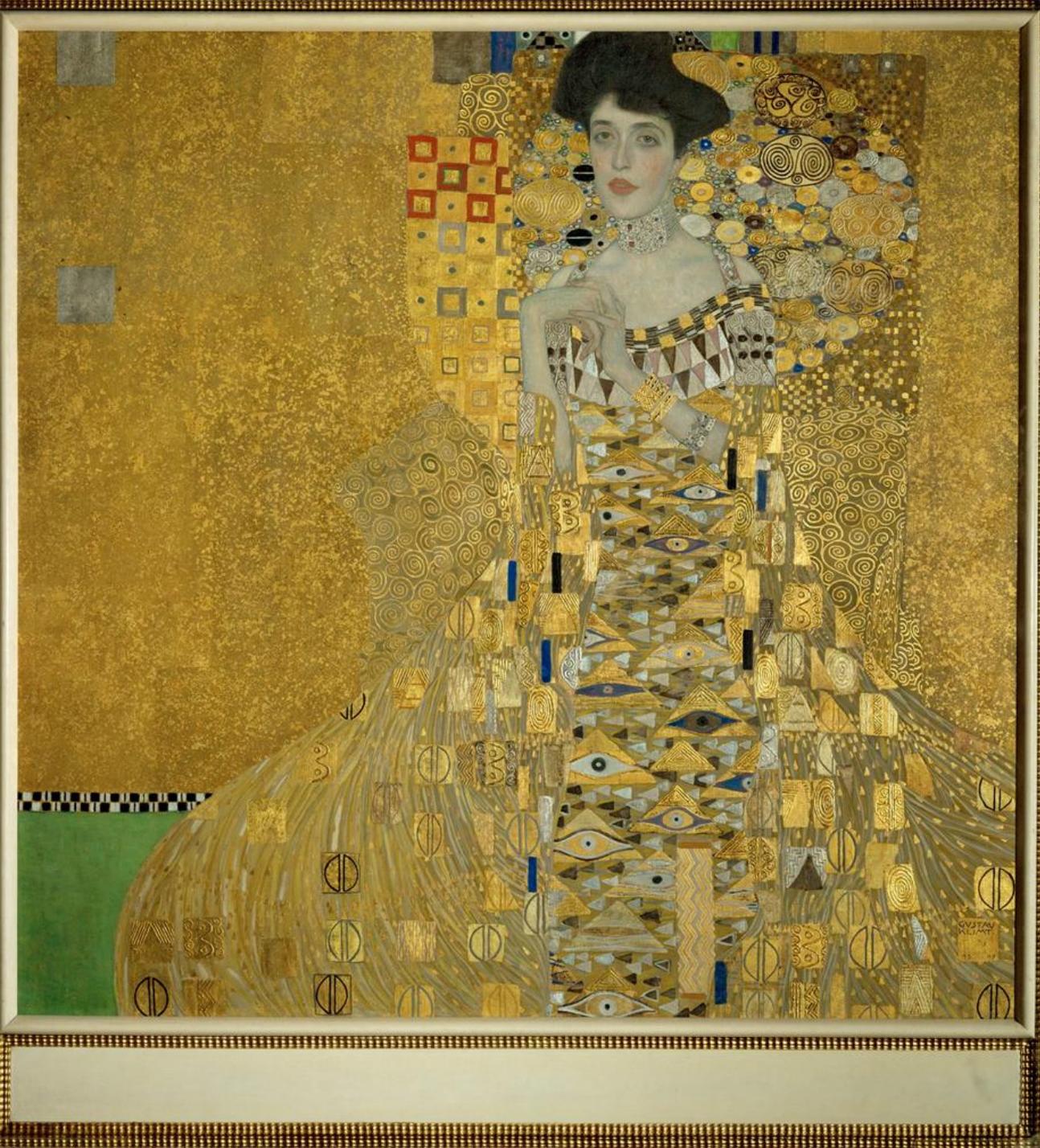
the beginning of something's existence; something's origin.

"they try to understand the whole universe, its provenance and fate"

a record of ownership of a work of art or an antique, used as a guide to authenticity or quality.

plural noun: provenances

"the manuscript has a distinguished provenance"



One of many works
of art
stolen by the Nazis:
Lady in Gold

Adele Bloch-Bauer I
Gustav Klimt
1907
Oil, silver, gold on
canvas

[The Rape of Europa](#): Trailer



Dwight D. Eisenhower (right) inspects stolen artwork in a salt mine in Merkers, Germany accompanied by Omar Bradley (left) and George S. Patton (center)

Approximately 20% of the art in Europe was looted by the Nazis, and there are well over 100,000 items that have not been returned to their rightful owners.

Art is still missing.

Three questions not to ask
about art –
and four to ask instead.