

#9261

IS IT ART?

CLEARVUE/eav

1999

Grade Levels: 7-12

19 minutes

DESCRIPTION

What is art? How do you recognize it? Create it? Defines some artistic terms as a group of students visits an artist's studio and later works on a joint project. Explains: folk artist, abstract, modern, and minimalist as art terms.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Visual Arts

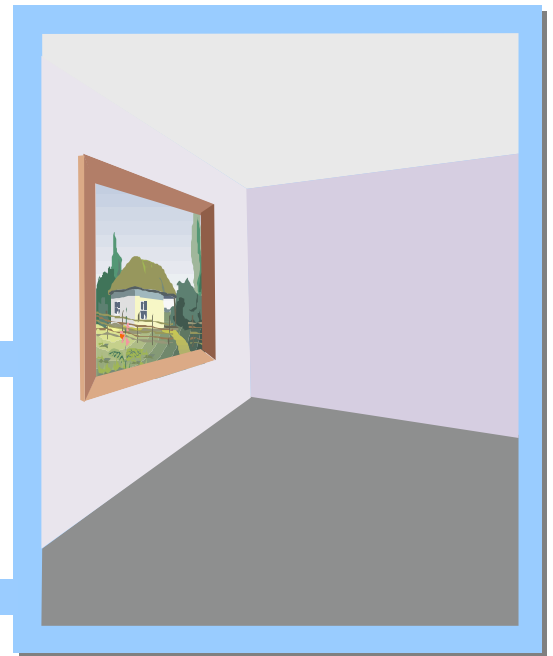
- Standard: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
 - Benchmark: Knows a variety of historical and cultural contexts regarding characteristics and purposes of works of art
- Standard: Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others
 - Benchmark: Understands how various interpretations can be used to understand and evaluate works of visual art
- Standard: Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts
 - Benchmark: Knows how visual, spatial, and temporal concepts integrate with content to communicate intended meaning in one's artworks

Subject Area: Art Connections

- Standard: Understands connections among the various art forms and other disciplines
 - Benchmark: Understands the characteristics and presentation of characters, environments, and actions in the various art forms

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To describe how the artist's choice of style shapes the meaning and experience of work of art.
2. To define *linear perspective* and explain its historical importance to the development of art.
3. To describe differences between folk, abstract, modern, and minimal artists.
4. To understand that there are different responses to any given work of art and describe and compare those responses.
5. To analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry.
6. To identify artistic intention, explore the implications of different purposes, and justify this analysis with reference to specific details of a given work.



VOCABULARY

1. abstract artists
2. censorship
3. composition
4. context
5. controversy
6. folk artists
7. geometric
8. hue
9. intentional
10. linear perspective
11. minimalists
12. modern artists
13. norms
14. optical illusion
15. portrait
16. realism
17. Renaissance
18. style
19. technique
20. three-dimensional
21. vanishing point

BEFORE SHOWING

Prepare a series of images to show the class that include a classic, representational work; folk art; nonrepresentational work; current advertisement, magazine cover, or other commercial work; and others. Ask the class to identify which, if any, of these images they would consider to be art. What essential qualities make an image a work of art? You may want to take votes on each image to record trends in how class members regard art.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Name some ideas about art that we can use to explore it.
2. What is *composition*?
3. Define *linear perspective*. When was linear perspective discovered? Before this discovery, how did artists represent distance in their work? What impact did the development of linear perspective have on composition technique? What is *vanishing point*? How did people of the Renaissance react to this innovation?
4. How do folk artists differ from other groups of artists? What do abstract, modern, and minimalist artists have in common? What principles do abstract artists employ in their work? Describe the goal of many modern artists. What is unique about minimalist composition?
5. Return to the paired images at the end of the opening segment (approximately 03:55 from the beginning of the tape). Pause to allow students to study the two paintings and have them compare the composition and style of each. What similarities can they see between the two works? What is different? How do these differences in style provide clues to the artists' concerns, intentions, and attitudes toward their respective subjects?
6. Open class discussion on the idea of rules in art. Have students respond to the opinions expressed by the young people in the program: Were these comments persuasive? What approach to art do these positions reflect? Ask the class to consider the question of bad art. How do we recognize bad art? And if the work is bad, why is it still art? If the resources are available, you may want to extend this discussion by directing students to the Museum of Bad Art Web site (<http://www.glyphs.com/moba/>).
7. Review the field trip to the artist's studio with the class. How did their experiences of the works they saw compare with Brian Meunier's description of what he wanted to express?

Was there a piece which they especially liked or disliked? Why? You may want to use images from the program to support this discussion.

8. Ask students if they agree with Allen's idea that everyone is, in some way, an artist. Do they see themselves as artists? How do we recognize an artist?
9. Brian Meunier commented that some define art as a state of consciousness in which the individual's sense of separation from the world is lost. What does this imply about the process of creation? How does this relate to the idea of artistic talent or skill? What kind of art—in terms of intention, audience, or meaning—would you expect as the outcome of such a process?
10. What are some ways we can discover an artist's intention when analyzing an unfamiliar work? Review some of the artworks covered in the "Controversial Art!" segment of the program. Ask students why these works might have challenged people's artistic tastes and boundaries. If possible, bring in images of the dominant art styles contemporary to each work for comparison. Why are these works now recognized as art? How did the change occur? What about how these works feel "artistic" to the students in the class?
11. The program states: "When we enter a museum, we expect to see works that have gained the respect and admiration of audiences before us." How does this expectation shape a viewer's response to art? When confronted with an unusual work outside of a museum, do we approach it with the same degree of thoughtfulness? How important are museums and other art authorities in determining, "Is it art?"
12. At the end of the program one of the students states that technique and composition are important to an artwork, but not as important as the idea behind it. In this concept of art, what role does the viewer and the viewer's response play in creating the meaning of the work? Do students agree with this statement? Compare this to the definition that Brian Meunier proposed (see #9). What other ways of defining art can they come up with?

SUMMARY

Throughout history, the look and meaning of art has been subject to change and debate. In the modern era, new styles, subjects, and media have continually pushed the boundaries of expression, ever complicating the question, Is it art?

Taking an open-ended approach to this elusive question, the program features informative narrative segments and two artistic encounters: a visit to an artist's studio and a group art project. Topics include the relationship of folk, abstract, modern, and minimal artists to realism; controversial art; and censorship.

The program encourages students to approach art thoughtfully and critically and to formulate their own evaluative criteria. Students will learn helpful ideas they can use to explore unfamiliar works such as style, composition, and artistic intention. And they'll be prompted to consider the nature of human involvement in art as viewer, creator, and participant.

Stressing the importance of active questioning, *Is It Art?* Guides students toward a deeper engagement with the visual arts.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Composition With Stephen Quiller #3353
- Creating Abstract Art #3227
- Masterpieces of the Met #7853



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **THE WORLDWIDE ART GALLERY**

<http://www.theartgallery.com.au/>

Experience the gallery exhibition of contemporary art by new and established Australian and international artists. Click on other art themes of interest, such as digital, abstract, surrealist, and many others. Contains artwork that can be submitted by kids from age 4 to 18 at:

<http://www.theartgallery.com.au/kidsart.html>

- **NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART—ONLINE TOURS**

<http://www.nga.gov/onlinetours/onlinetr.htm>

Explore one of the ten themes of American art such as abstraction, historical subjects, scenes from everyday life, and others. Also, explore an artist, a specific work of art. This site can be downloaded in several other languages.

- **ARTSEDNET**

<http://www.getty.edu/artsednet/search/map.html>

View artworks by artist, title, date; student art galleries; and exhibitions. Click on "Kids Framing Kids: More Than Just a Pretty Picture" and receive tips on "Six Steps to a Successful Art Project."

- **ART KIDS RULE!**

<http://accessarts.org/artkids/>

Play, learn, and create art! Topics covered include animation, art history, artists, painting, and more. After clicking on a topic of interest, this site provides links on how to do that particular theme.

- **ART HISTORY**

<http://witcombe.sbc.edu/arth21stcentury.html>

This page presents 21st-century contemporary art, but other periods are provided: 15th-century Renaissance art, 17th-century Baroque art, and other times.