



Older Individuals who are Blind – Technical Assistance Center

Part 2: A Quick Survey of Art



Frida Kahlo, The Broken Column, 1944



Questions to Consider:

What is art?

Any thoughtful or intentional creative endeavor or process—regardless of the outcome.

When and why has art been considered an important part of culture?

Since prehistory, cave paintings and ceramic sculptures evidence the human need to create. Additionally, prior to the invention of writing, images and symbols served as a method for people to communicate with one another. Innovations with natural materials such as grasses and clay led to the creation of useful objects such as baskets to carry food, and ceramic vessels for collecting water.





Prehistoric cave paintings in Lascaux, France



How is art present in our lives?

Art is present everywhere in our lives: from the applied arts we see in the graphic design of advertising illustrations and published photography, to the animations, set designs and costumes of television and film.

Art is in the architecture of the buildings around us, and in every decision we make about interior design, home decoration and our choices of clothing to wear.

Art is present as a requisite course in public education. Art History and the Fine Arts are the primary focus of study for many students in higher education worldwide.

Art is usually known to us in the forms of paintings, drawings, photography and sculpture, but can also be recognized in landscaping, culinary arts and public murals and mosaics. Museums, galleries and other cultural institutions help ensure that the legacy of humanity's need for artistic expression is exhibited and preserved.





"The Big G Stands for GOODN" by Sister Corita Kent



The G Stands for GOODN

Links to view more content:

[Website for Center](#)

[Documentary](#)

[NPR special](#)



Why is Art useful?

Art is a useful tool for the inherent human need to communicate with one another, express our thoughts and feelings, and document how we understand new experiences. Art is used to express ourselves; to show respect and affection; to educate, memorialize, and advertise; and to bring awareness to our local communities. and the masses. Art can be public or private; it can serve as a source of inspiration for people in various capacities and as a source of pride for the participants.



What is ***NOT*** Art?

There is no answer to this common question. Anything can be art and art is everywhere. One could say that something not intended to be art is not art, yet someone else may consider it to be. Conversely, anything intended as art is arguably art. Whether or not something is or isn't art cannot be proven as a fact; art is inherently subjective while also being communicable to a collective public.



What skills can Creative Arts teach to assist participants in other aspects of life?

Spatial Perception: Perceive where their seat is in relationship to the size of a room or table, or to other objects.

Tactile Perception: Determine the difference between materials such as sandpaper, tissue paper, beads and seeds.

Verbal Cues: Increase ability to follow verbal directions.

Auditory Cue examples: Ability to re-orient themselves from workspace to locate sink area by listening to running water, locating an object by listening to the sound it makes when dropped on the floor or recognizing the wet sound of printing ink versus the scratching sound of pencil mark-making.



Broad Beginnings

The reason this course begins with such a broad stroke of questions is to prompt an expanded idea of what can be defined as art in contemporary culture—and to point out the subjectivity of any such definition.



The Benefit of Creative Arts

The benefit to both learner and participant is immense and varied. This diversity of experience—in life and in approaching the creative process—leads to an endless and unexpected variety of artworks that can be extremely different in their appearance, topics, mood, material choices and creative approach.

The three examples of artists and their work that we have shared speak to the diversity of materials, forms, subjects and appearances that artists can employ to express themselves authentically.

