

Putting It Together

During earlier eras, the definition of art was aligned with craftsmanship and guilds, but as societies changed, so, too, did the meaning and purpose of art. Over time, art evolved beyond practical and religious functions and became an autonomous expression of the artist's creative process and of the surrounding culture.

Aesthetics is concerned with how we perceptually engage in the changing and complex concepts of beauty and the sublime (Ocvirk, 6).

Exploring the definition of art is an act of critical thinking. Critical thinking is creative thinking, and the critical-thinking process often requires a belief in the question, rather than an expectation of hard truths or answers. Through active questioning, exploration, and trial and error, we uncover multiple valid perspectives.

Consider the example of the nkisi figures introduced at the beginning of this module. Recall how that misunderstanding of visual culture was representative of the larger confrontation and oppression of African societies by Europeans. Consider also, in the final example of video games, how the introduction of new media keeps alive the ongoing debate about what art is.

Works Cited

Ocvirk, Stinson, Wigg, Bone, Cayton. *Art Fundamentals, Theory and Practice*, 12 Edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2013. Print.

Sayre, Henry. *A World of Art*, Sixth edition. Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010. Print.

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