### PART ONE: THE LANGUAGE OF VISUAL EXPERIENCE

### *Chapter 1: The Nature of Art and Creativity*

***(previously titled The Nature of Art)***

**Transition Guide**

**Images Deleted**

**from previous 9th edition**

* *Deer and Hands*, Los Manos Cave, Argentina, 15,000 B.C.E.
* Barnett Newman, *Cathedral*, 1951
* *Wheel of Time*, Tibetan Mandala, 1997
* *The Tree of Jesse*, West Façade, Chartres Cathedral, 1150-1170
* *Blackfeet Parfleche*, 1885
* *Stonehenge*, 2000 B.C.E.

**Images Added**

**to current 10th edition**

* Janet Echelman, *Her Secret is Patience,* 2009
* Lauren Greenfield, *The View North, Toward Buri Dubai*, 2009
* Mission One, *Electric Powered Motorcycle*, 2009
* Stephen Cox, *St. Anselm’s Altar*, 2006
* Robin Rhode, *He Got Game*, 2000

**Images Added to current 10th edition (previously in chapter 2 of 9th edition)**

* Anna Zemankova, *Untitled (M),* 1970s
* Sabatino “Simon” Rodia, *Nuestro Pueblo*, Watts, California, 1921-5
* James Hampton, *Throne of the Third heaven of the Nations’ Millennium General Assembly,* 1950-64
* Kojyu, age 9. *Searching for Bugs in the Park*
* Anonymous Child, age 18 months, *First Lines*
* Alana, age 2, *House*
* Jeff, age 3, *Hand with Line and Spots*
* Alana, Age 3, *Grandma*
* Jason, age 4, *Mother Octopus with Babies*
* Yaki, age 8, *I Can Ride, I Can Ride My Unicycle*
* Anonymous Child, *Birds*
* Arroya Hondo Carver, *Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception*, 1830-50

### PART ONE: THE LANGUAGE OF VISUAL EXPERIENCE

### *Chapter 1: The Nature of Art and Creativity*

**CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

“The Nature of Art and Creativity” establishes the tone of the text. The text sets up categories for discussion for the student in the visual arts by defining art and discussing the functions of art as a means of communication, utility, and spirituality. The chapter also attempts to explain the role of art as a means to improve understanding. Art is viewed as not just a product but also a process.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**The Student Will:**

* Define art.
* Discuss whether art needs to be understood or to be enjoyed.
* Define and discuss art media.
* Discuss the purposes of art.
* Discuss the fundamental need for creativity.

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

* What Is Art?
* Purposes and Functions of Art

Art for Communicating Information

Art for Day-to-Day Living

Art for Worship and Ritual

Art for Personal Expression

Art for Social Causes

Art for Visual Delight

* What is Creativity?
* Untrained Artists

***Chapter Focus***

Biography: Jazz, Memory, and Metaphor: Romare Bearden

Art in the World: Early Encounters with the Artist Within

**VOCABULARY**

Work of Art

Medium

Creativity

Folk Artist

Outsider Artist

### LECTURE AND DISCUSSION IDEAS

1. **Defining a Personal and Scholarly Definition of Art:** Provide an overview of the variety of artworks the students will encounter throughout the text in order to familiarize them with the wealth of art forms that exist, or have existed in art history. This is a good foundation lecture that will make students comfortable in the subject by not only developing a base knowledge of the artworks discussed throughout the text, but the quantity of visual images they will encounter. This introductory lecture will also enable students to comprehend that works of art are sometimes difficult to understand and often take more than a moment’s glance to appreciate them.

For example, Gonzalez-Torres’ installation, *Death By Gun*, (page 9) is a complex piece that warrants an explanation of how socially conscious art functions differently than an aesthetically pleasing sculpture or painting. This lecture could then lead to an initial discussion session and assignment in which students answer the questions: *What is art to me as one who lives in the 21st century? What kind of art do I personally like? What have I seen in this lecture that I never knew existed as art?* *How have my perceptions of art changed as I begin to understand the breadth of visual art that exists in the world?* Parallel individual likes and dislikes of art to preferences and choices in everyday life such as vegetables, soft drinks, or brands of clothing. Compare generational preferences by those who were in college in the 1800s, 1850s, 1900s and so on. Conduct a survey of what grandparents prefer, parents prefer, and these students should distinguish generational preferences based upon the contemporary culture of each generation. Encourage students who are grounded in limiting perspectives to expand their preferences in art by pointing out that curiosity is in our human nature, and more so in a scholar’s role to allow their mind to explore and evaluate new ideas and the unknown.

1. **Functions of Art in Non-Western Civilizations:** Compare and contrast how art functions in various non-Western cultures. Point out that in many societies, art is an integral part of everyday life. Objects made within certain cultures are not, as Western art historians classify them, defined as art. Compare various non-western examples such as the Iranian *Dish* and the Yoruba figurative sculpture, *Dance Wand In Honor of Eshu*, (page 4), to discuss the terms art and artifact. Include the process of creation and use of musical instruments, masks, textiles, and ceremonial accoutrements in the discussion. Have students contemplate objects created within our western society that may or may not be classified as art, but have that potential; and vice versa, contemplate objects that are classified as art that perhaps should not be considered art.
2. **Advocating for Art:** Lead a debate with students about the importance of art in the world by reviewing the functions and purposes of art. Have students answer these two questions and make a comparative list on the board: *Art is important because…. Art is not important because …*

Encourage students to initially respond spontaneously in completing the statements above, then in a more reflective manner. Cultivate a more in-depth discussion posing these questions: What functions does art fulfill in Western society? How does art function differently in urban, suburban, and rural environments? How does artwork function in wealthy, middle-class, or impoverished social structures? Does contemporary art appropriately represent our current culture? Use graphic designer Chaz Maviyane-Davies’ *Global Warning* (page 10) as an example. What purpose does contemporary art serve? This discussion could lead to a writing assignment (in a contemporary style such as poetry slam, rap lyric, or blog entry) that enables students to express their personal viewpoint and support their beliefs while reflecting upon the reactions of their peers.

1. **Material and Method as Feminism?** Introduce the concept that art has the ability to function on a variety of aesthetic levels utilizing Miriam Shapiro’s *Heartland* (page 11) as an example. This work provides visual appeal through its bright colors and pleasant imagery, while prompting the viewer to contemplate the artist’s feminist concerns. When she created *Heartland* in 1985, Shapiro incorporated artistic media considered “taboo” by high-art standards, such as glitter. Shapiro also consciously used quilting as a fabrication technique to celebrate the role of woman-crafts. Why did Shapiro create Heartland in such large scale at 7 x 8 feet? Ask students if they believe a work of art can be pretty and political at the same time just by the materials and methods it is made of. Consider what other materials an artist might use to evoke political or social issues.
2. **Is Everyone Creative?** Ask students what creativity means to them and what status it holds in their lives. Is everyone creative? Is it an attitude or a condition? As the text states, "We all have the potential to be creative, yet most of us have not been encouraged to develop our creativity." Why not? Discuss the *Wal-Mart Phenomenon*, a proposed theory of how readily accessible mass-produced items encourage consumers to purchase pre-determined solutions to their needs, rather than develop creative solutions on their own. For example, why build a birdhouse, when you can buy one at Wal-Mart for $7.99?
3. **Expression and Creation:** Explain the significance of children’s art-making process and the art of the untrained artist as that which celebrates the process of creating and personal expression. Focus on the “aesthetic impulse” of all types of artists including children, untrained folk artists and formally trained artists. Have students recount their own childhood artistic experiences and attempt to remember when they stopped (if indeed they did) creating visual works of art.
4. **Validating Folk Art:** Compare the art made by folk artists and untrained artists with that of the trained artist. Does an artist have to go to art school to become an artist? Are the expressions of untrained artists just as legitimate as those of artists who are formally educated?

**ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS**

##### Writing Assignments

**1.1 What Is Art? Art IS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** **Art ISN’T \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** Using this simplistic sentence structure, have students make *lists* of criteria, qualities, and properties that do or do not define a work of art *for them*. Discuss how an appreciation for a work of art is created by personal taste, prompting students to identify the qualities they personally attribute to a good work of art. Students can compare their list to those of their classmates and discuss the varied criteria used to identify how art is often unique to each person, yet also similar. Conduct this exercise again during the last week of the academic term to provide students with evidence of their scholarly development in art appreciation.

**1.2 The Roving Pollster:** Distribute individual or pairs of students to various demographic locations within your town, such as the grocery store, arcade, children’s playground, retirement home, shopping mall, campus student union, movie theater, or local diner to conduct a poll of words used to describe art. Each student should poll at least ten different people, or keep polling until they obtain ten different adjectives, to ensure a solid class discussion or writing assignment. Using the adjectives accumulated, compile a master list, and discuss the pollsters' reactions, interest in the question, or manner in which they responded. This discussion idea can be linked with a writing assignment that encourages students to reflect upon their experience and evaluate results with their initial preconceptions or misconceptions of art. Another Roving Pollster assignment is to ask those being polled what they believe to be the purpose or function of art. The students can then compare the results with those functions identified in the text.

**1.3 Power of Visual Propaganda**: Graphic designers utilize the power of the visual image to advertise and sell a product or an idea. Chaz Maviyane-Davies creates graphic images that are socially aware and destined to improve critical issues in society, as seen in *Global Warning* (page 10). Have students visit Maviyane-Davies’ website, *The Portal of Truth*, to view his additional poster designs. Discuss how graphic designers are not just consumer-oriented, as many use their creative abilities to effectively speak to us about more universal concerns. Graphic designers are experts in typography and composition. Can their technical and creative abilities portray political and social ideas that manipulate our beliefs through the uses of color and design?

**1.4 Traits of Creativity:** Discuss the human traits of creativity described in the chapter by identifying your own traits of creativity and creative modes of expression. Keep a record of your activities for one twenty-four hour period and write about the creative solutions you employ within your daily activities. Can your traits and abilities be compared to those of a folk artist? Trained artist? Child?

**1.5 Coloring Books:** Coloring books contain visual images created by adults and masquerade as child-oriented solutions. Consequently, children are conditioned to develop solutions that please the adult aesthetic (color in the lines!) and inhibits a child’s own intrinsic creativity. What greater impact might coloring books have on civilization? What are benefits of coloring books? Develop a comparative argument highlighting the pros and cons of coloring books that culminates in expressing your personal opinion.

Art Projects

**1.1 Homage to Bearden Collage** *(lecture desk or studio activity)*

*Materials: 8 ½ x 11” background paper, glue stick, scissors, pencil, magazines, painted papers or solid papers*

*for collage materials*

Create a collage in the manner of Romare Bearden, and then present their work to the class. Begin with this statement from the text: “…Bearden was fascinated by the pageant of daily life he witnessed in the rural south and in Harlem, New York” (see page 8). Ask students to ponder this question as the content for their collage. What are you fascinated by in your daily life? The student will create a collage, in the manner of Romare Bearden, of his/her campus or hometown environment that responds to this question. In choosing their images, students should consider personal history, childhood memories, and key events. They may include in their collage a photocopied picture of themselves. Students should communicate their environment and concepts to others. How did the subject, purpose, artistic effects, and cultural influence all work together to create an effective work of art?

**1.2 Dish Design** *(lecture desk or studio activity)*

*Materials: paper and pencil for preliminary designs; paper or plastic dinner plate; permanent marker or felt tip pen*

The Dish from Iran (ancient Persia) (page 4) was designed to be both utilitarian and communicative. Muslim scripture painted on the inside of the dish incorporates the plate’s function with a message of hospitality: “Generosity is one of the qualities of the people of Paradise.” Provide other examples of cultural symbols (such as the pineapple as a symbol of hospitality; heart as love; peace sign representing peace) as inspiration. Students then design a motif that describes one of their philosophies about life. Then transfer that motif using a permanent marker onto a plastic or paper plate, which serves as a maquette form.

**1.3 Issue Oriented Graphic Design** (*computer activity—homework or computer studio classroom)*

*Materials: sketch paper and pencil/pen; desktop publishing program*

Through desktop publishing, each student will create an 8 1/2” x 11” flyer or poster, that elaborates on a political or social issue they have a definite opinion about. Working as a designer, the conceptual message of the poster will be designed through typography and compositional strategies. To develop their composition, provide these guidelines: use only one image, one lead word, asymmetrical balance, and vertical format. For additional inspiration on compositional strategies, students should refer to Chaz Maviyane-Davies’ website, *www.maviyane.com*.

**1.4 Issue Oriented Interactive Installation** *(lecture or studio classroom; homework assignment)*

*Materials: sketch paper and pencil/pen; desktop publishing program*

Using the Graphic Design posters created in 1.6, students make a stack of twenty or more photocopies of their poster. Working in the manner of installation artist Felix González-Torres, each student prepares an installation that includes the posters and other related objects if they deem necessary. One option is to leave the stack in the middle of a hallway or student union area with a sign that reads: “Please take a work of art with you.” Students can monitor the public response by watching the reaction and interaction of the pedestrian traffic to their installation. To summarize and document the entire experience, they should write an analysis of the total experience, including a discussion of art about political and social issues; the processes involved in designing and composing an effective poster; developing an art installation intended for a non-art audience.

**1.5 My Family Coloring Book Crayon Drawing** *(lecture desk or studio activity)*

*Materials: white paper, pencil, black marker, crayons*

Create a line-drawing picture of your family using a pencil, and then outline the contours of each person with a black marker. Then color in the “coloring book page” by working quickly, just as you did when you were a child, and enjoy the process. Using spider diagramming, write adjectives and verbs that describe your family on the back of the picture.

**MYARTSLAB RESOURCES***:*Direct students to the MyArtsLab companion website at [www.myartslab.com](http://www.myartslab.com) to further their study of the chapter topics and artists.

* *Hear More:* Listen to the audio file of the chapter.
* *See More:* Watch a video interview with Yong Soon Min about Dwelling (page 7).
* *Learn More:* Read an interview with Romare Bearden.
* *Practice More:* Get flashcards for images and terms and review chapter material with quizzes.