

Fine Arts Terminology - Context

Baroque – the European art movement of the 1600s, in which artists attempted to move beyond the harmony and humanism of the Renaissance and express emotion, movement, drama and variety in their works.

Classical – this term has come to have several meanings. Originally it was used to describe the work of ancient Greece and Rome, and later came to include all art inspired by ancient Greek and Roman art, including that of the Renaissance period and beyond. Today the term is used to describe perfection of form, with an emphasis on harmony and unity and a restraint of emotion. Usually it is used to describe works that are representational but idealized. Art of this type often also features humanistic and rational, rather than supernatural themes or ideals.

Decorative arts – describes art forms such as ceramics, enamels, furniture, glass, ivory, metalwork and textiles, especially when they take forms used as interior decoration. These art forms are sometimes distinguished from “fine arts” such as painting and sculpture and are referred to as “crafts”

Gothic – the name given to the style of painting, architecture and sculpture of the later Middle Ages, between the 12th and 15th centuries, particularly to art of England and France. Often contain dramatic, decorative designs, and non-naturalistic colors, poses and perspective.

Graphic art – two-dimensional art forms such as drawing, painting, photography, engraving, etching and illustration. Any art form that consists of a flat, two-dimensional surface.

Graphic design – the applied art of arranging image and text to communicate a message. It may be applied in any media, such as print, digital media, video, animation, product decoration, package and signs.

Impressionism – a loose spontaneous style of painting that originated in France around 1870. This style focused more on capturing the feeling of a scene or subject using a rough, sketch-like style and bold colors rather than recording minute details.

Industrial design – the design of mass-produced or everyday products

Landscape – an image, such as a painting, photograph or drawing, which depicts outdoor scenery, often expanding far into the distance. They typically include trees, streams, buildings, fields, mountains, and wildlife.

Modernism – a 19th and early 20th century art movement characterized by the deliberate departure from tradition and the use of innovative forms of expression, including new types of paints and other materials, a rejection of naturalistic colors and forms, the creation of abstraction rather than reality, the expression of non-visual subjects, such as feelings, ideas and dreams, the use of choppy, clearly visible brush strokes. Art of this period also became influenced by a broader set of influences than ever before, including non-western (Asian, African, Native American, etc) art, literature, science, psychology and politics.

Neo-Classicism – an 18th Century French art movement that originated as a reaction of the irrationality and drama of the Baroque. It sought to revive the ideals of the classical art of ancient Greece and Rome, and often used classical forms, such as columns, domes, arches and classical statue forms, to express ideas about courage, sacrifice and love of country. A classic example in the United States would be the inclusion of classical features, such as columns and a dome, in the architecture of the Capitol Building in Washington DC.

Pop art – a style of art that seeks its inspiration in commercial art and items of mass culture, such as comic strips, popular foods and brand name packaging). A classic example would be Andy Warhol's famous painting of a Campbell's soup can.

Postmodernism – art, architecture or literature that reacts against earlier modernist principles, either by reintroducing traditional or classical elements of style or by carrying modernist styles or practices to new extremes.

Realism – a style of art that depicts subject matter (form, color, space, etc) as it appears in actuality, without distortion or stylization. This term refers to art that is created to replicate reality.

Renaissance – a revival or rebirth of cultural awareness and learning that took place during the 14th and 15th centuries, particularly in Italy, but also in Germany and other European countries. The period was characterized by a renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman art and design and

included an emphasis on human beings, their environment, science, and philosophy.

Representational – describing art that intends to depict objects, ideas, or events in a recognizable, readable manner.

Surrealism – an art style developed in Europe in the 1920s, characterized by using the subconscious as a source of creativity, using irrational or unexpected subjects and an atmosphere of fantasy.