

03 More Art Theory

Friday, January 17, 2025 8:17 PM

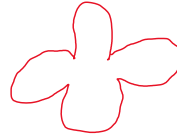
Today:

- Admin stuff,
- Art Theory
- Aesthetics definition

Schedule

Due tonight: Syllabus agreement in Canvas. Slack signup, AesDes.org login.
Check your Quarantine list and junk/spam folders
Slack trouble: Anjali Shadija <AnjaliSanjaykumar.Shadija@colorado.edu> or in Canvas
AesDes.org trouble: Dev Mahajan <DevSanjay.Mahajan@colorado.edu>
Catme trouble: email me with a list of your email addresses. Hertzberg@colorado.edu

Table Tents: bring them to every class or store them here



Monday: MLKing Day. Stay home - very cold!

Check out the 99% Invisible podcast.

Design oriented podcast. 99% of design work is invisible. Quite varied content.
<https://99percentinvisible.org/>

Yes, clickers today

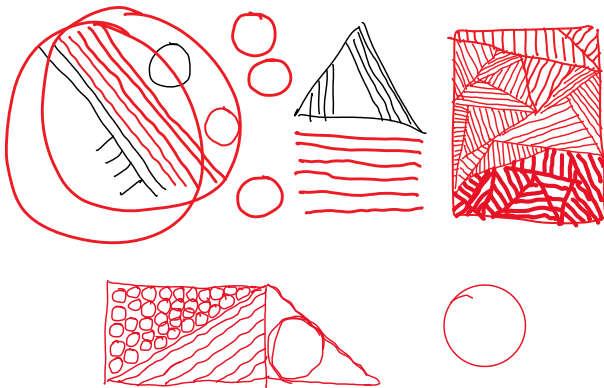
Waitlist

Don't worry, you will get in.

Andrew Widner: CU3D

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1doLvrcDBqX6hWA-TOD3oDG8J9q0S9vCiq_4GxNa9lv8/edit#slide=id.p

Don't forget to start your design notebook. Doodling counts.



Today: Straight lines, circle practice. Choose a pattern and repeat it to fill a triangular space. Part of the challenge is to keep it consistent; don't make changes partway through.

Coming from across campus? Arriving late?

Listen via Zoom as you walk.

Major Art Theories

What is art? What good is art?

- Realism
 - Plato (500 BC): Representations should be truthful. Beauty = truth. Human perceptions are fallible, invisible true world has ideal 'Forms'.
 - Aristotle: Beauty = both appearance (order, harmony, symmetry) and functionality. Form is inseparable from the purpose of art: to represent.
- Expressionism (1850's)
 - Art is to embody and stimulate emotion, often through metaphor.
 - Cognitivism: Art can teach. Dewey's 'aesthetic experience' gives meaning and value.
- Formalism (1900's):
 - Only the form is important. Emotion, narrative, functionality are irrelevant.
 - Abstract art context
- Postmodernism (1968)
 - Art and aesthetics cannot be separated from the social, ethical and political world.
 - Pluralism. No theory is absolute; context is essential.

Barrett, Terry. *Why Is That Art?: Aesthetics and Criticism of Contemporary Art*. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011.

Breakout rooms/tables. Which theory fits your beliefs?

2024	2025
a) 12	32%
b) 45	46
c) 12	12
d) 31	10

Clicker: A) Realism B) Expressionism C) Formalism D) Postmodernism

Pg26 Clive Bell, 1881-1964: to be art, must have 'significant form', and trigger an 'aesthetic emotion' = an emotion separate from all others. Barrett pg125. Evokes the 'yum'. Art is defined by this reaction.

Forsey says defining art as possessing a (this) characteristic is too narrow. Don't confuse definition with evaluation.

Andy Goldsworthy = example of Formalism and upcycling.



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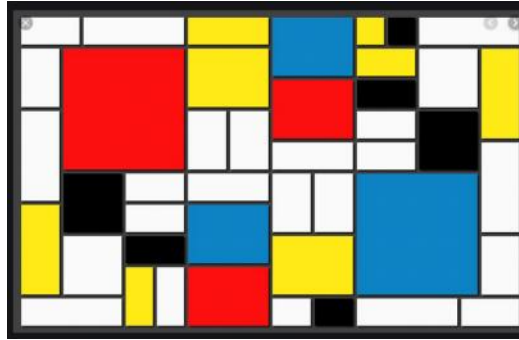
Clickers

Which major theory fits each work?

A) Realism C Form
B) Expressionism D Post-Modern



Starry, Starry Night by Van Gogh



Piet Mondrian



Edward Hopper: "Nighthawks" (1942) (Photo: Art Institute Chicago via Wikimedia Commons Public Domain)



Jeff Koons
Three Ball Total Equilibrium Tank (Two Dr. J Silver Series, Spalding NBA Tip-Off) 1985
Tate
© Jeff Koons

A Realism
B Expressionism
C Formalism
D Post-Modern

A Theory of Art

- Art is the embodiment, the instantiation, the execution of an extraordinary vision.
- Mundane, routine activities don't make the cut.
- Any endeavor can be raised to the level of art: Mathematics, physics, cooking, sports.
- Art is not a luxury, not something extra for times of prosperity, not an afterthought to necessary work.
- "Art and aesthetics give meaning to our lives, and are actually crucial for explaining / getting through the difficulty, racism, wars, and pressures of the world." - Anonymous AesDes student

The range of artifacts that are designed, and could be considered art, is broad: Design theorist Victor Margolin divides design into three

categories:

- 1) Industrial design, including products, graphic, stage, interior, and fashion
- 2) Engineering or computer design
- 3) "Immaterial products": techniques, services, processes.
 - a. Student-centered teaching
 - b. Patient-centered health care
 - c. An energetic garbage man. Has a vision of what a great garbage man does, and does it.
 - d. Athletics? Sports?

Definitions of Aesthetics

- Study of beauty
- Metric for art: is it art? Is it good art?
 - "Aesthetics of XYZ" describes a non-unique scale for evaluation of art. Once a vision or an intent has been defined, an artifact can be compared to it, be measured by it.
 - Is money an aesthetic?
- Psychological measure of affect
 - *[We define]aesthetics to be the study of those mental processes that underlie disinterested evaluative experiences that are anchored at the positive end by feelings that would accompany verbal expressions such as "Oh wow! That's wonderful! I love it!" and at the negative end by "Oh yuck! That's awful! I hate it!"*
- Set of guidelines, design rules that define an artist or a movement

Palmer, Stephen E., Karen B Schloss, and Jonathan Sammartino. "Visual Aesthetics and Human Preference." *Annual Review of Psychology* 64, (January 3, 2013): 77-107. doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100504.

For next lecture

List an aesthetic. What are the characteristics that a work needs to satisfy?

Examples from previous years:

- 1) Tropical: natural shapes, bright colors, high contrast
- 2) Academia, earth tones, books, wood paneling, old with intricate patterns
- 3) Glow wave: geometric, lights, black background, neon
- 4) Minimalism. Light colors, simple shapes, focused on functionality
- 5) Cereal boxes. Crazy mascot, large image of the grains, bright colors
- 6) Modern architecture: simplicity, monotone, sleek, blocky (large scale) Engineering Center - Brutalist
- 7) Modern gothic style: dark, ornate, intricate, stone, metal, wood, made into creatures
- 8) Workwear aesthetic; paint splatters, earth tones, dirty, worn, Carhart. Overalls.
- 9) Steampunk: open mechanisms, brass, steel, complexity, 1890s- 1920 styles
- 10) Industrial: gray metal tones, sleek, shiny, bare, utilitarian, unrefined. Exposed ductwork, polished concrete floors