

Art History and Other Disciplines

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

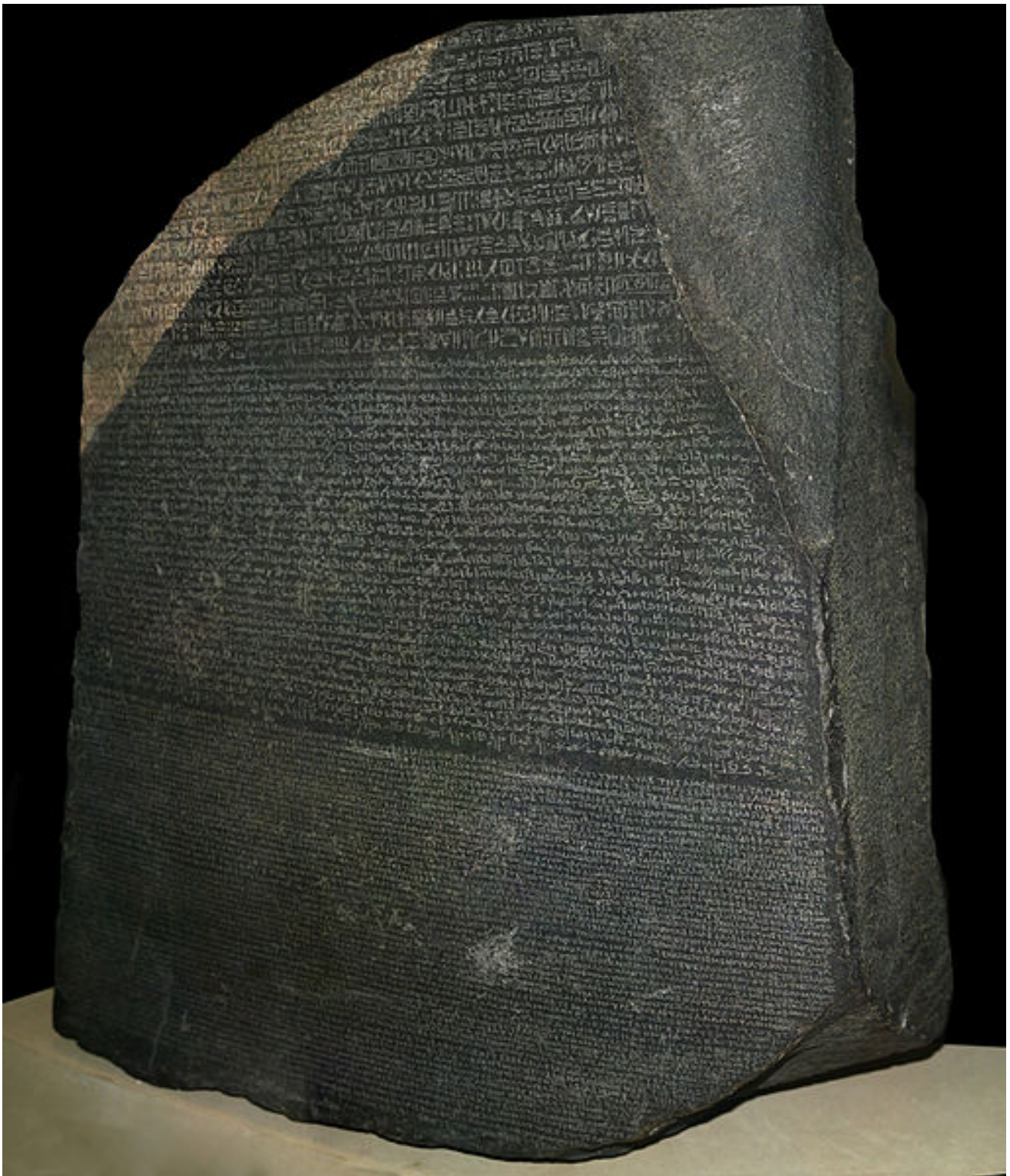
Art history studies how the visual arts relate to human history and cultural development. It often crosses over into other areas of study associated with human history and cultural development. This lesson is about these relationships between art history and other areas of study. In this lesson, you will learn about:

1. Art History and Other Areas of Study

Art history is an area of study that focuses on how the visual arts relate to human **history** and cultural development. It often crosses over into other areas of study, such as archaeology, anthropology, and sociology.

It is important to remember that art history does not stand alone. Often there is crossover into other areas that are concerned with human history and development. For the most part, art history is interdisciplinary. This area of study borrows from and contributes to other areas of study.

Archaeology is the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and analysis of artifacts. Archaeologists study human history and analyze physical artifacts, or things made by humans, as well as sites, or places, where humans lived in order to learn more about a culture and its history. Indiana Jones is a fairly accurate depiction of an archaeologist in that he is a scholar who seeks artifacts. Fieldwork such as data collection is a part of archaeology.



Rosetta Stone

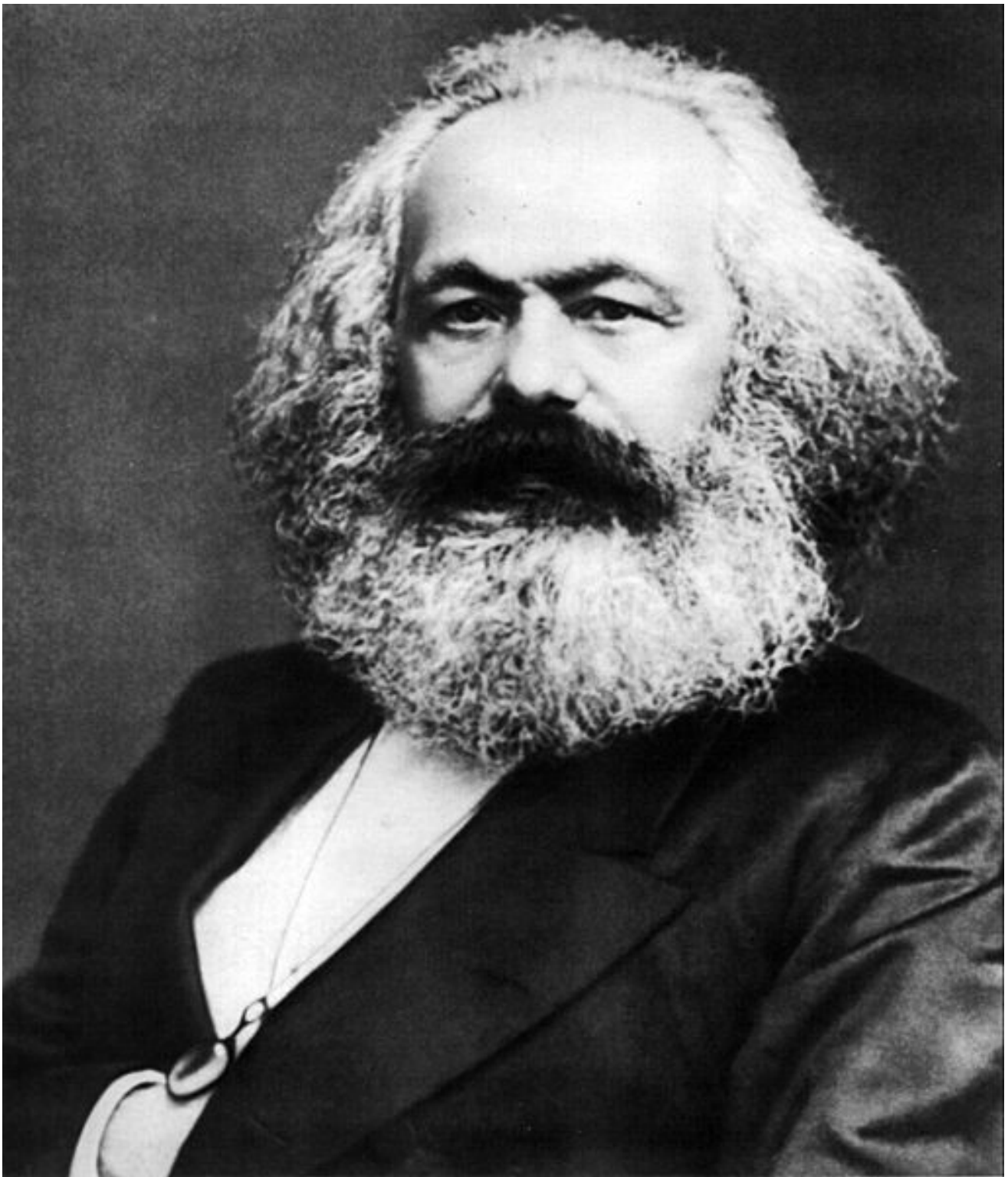
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The study of humans and their ancestors is anthropology. **Anthropology** considers time and location, as well as how humans adapted to their environment over time. Evolution, problem solving, and significant breakthroughs, such as the benefits of agriculture in the establishment and growth of societies, are studied. Anthropologists ask questions such as: What was the culture like? What role did religion play, or what were the morality and ethics of that society? What were relationships among people within the culture and between cultures? They also study other social values. Anthropologists compare modern-day society to ancient society in many contexts.



Late Neanderthal skull

The scientific study of social behavior is known as **sociology**. To better understand human behavior and social dynamics, scientific studies are used to analyze data.



Karl Marx

An emerging area of academics that looks at aspects of cultural production, with an emphasis on popular culture in everyday life, is **cultural studies**. Looking at the different ways in which Elvis Presley has been depicted through time and how this relates to cultural changes in preferences is one example. Because it's an emerging field, some scholars may not view it as a legitimate area of academic focus. This can cause controversy in the field.



Elvis Presley



TERMS TO KNOW

History

The study of the past, particularly through the analysis of written documents

Archaeology

The study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and analysis of artifacts

Anthropology

The study of humans and their ancestors in different time periods and locations, with emphasis on adaptation to physical environment, culture, and interpersonal relationships

Sociology

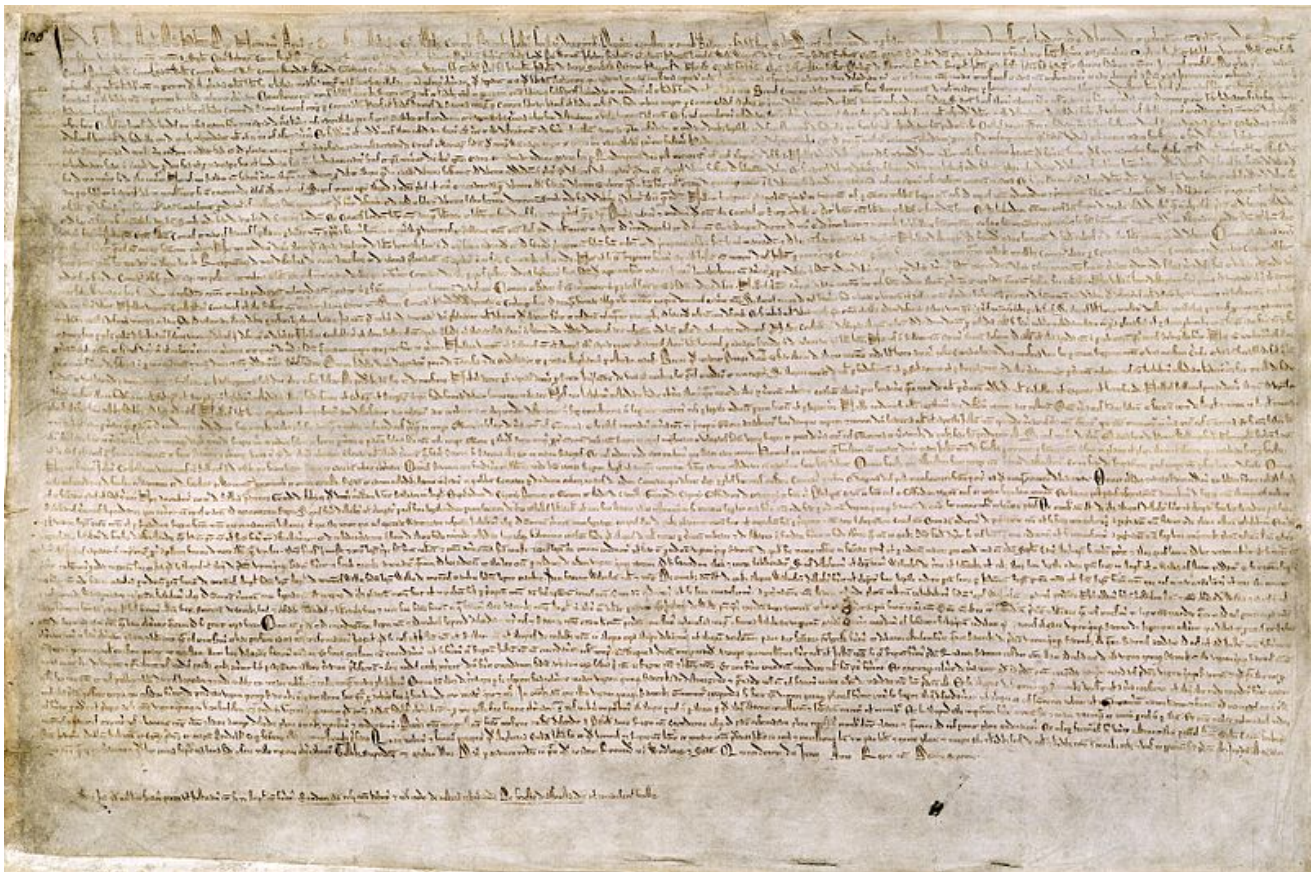
The study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society

Cultural Studies

The study of all aspects of cultural production, in particular popular culture or everyday life

2. How Art Historians Evaluate Visual Evidence

Art history, to put it briefly, is a study of the past. It looks at where we come from with an emphasis on written accounts and documents. Other areas of study have a tendency to look at visual imagery as only a reflection of the culture where they were produced rather than actually producing culture itself.



Magna Carta by King John of England

➔ EXAMPLE Japanese anime, or Japanese stylized cartoons, such as the image below, are a good example of art influencing culture versus culture influencing art.



Japanese stylized cartoon

Japanese anime cartoons were originally conceived as a stylistic departure from American cartoons such as Mickey Mouse during the mid-20th century. Anime went on to create an entire subculture of entertainment among people, particularly teenagers, as it spread across the globe. This is an example of the advantages the study of art history has over other studies.



SUMMARY

Art history is an area of study that focuses on how the visual arts relate to human history and cultural development. It often crosses over into other areas of study associated with human history and cultural development.

You learned about the relationship between **art history and other areas of study**, such as anthropology, archaeology, and sociology. Art historians have an advantage when it comes to looking at visual evidence.

Finally, you learned **how art historians evaluate visual evidence**. Other areas of study have a tendency to look at visual imagery as only a reflection of the culture where they were produced rather than actually producing culture itself.

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Cultural Studies

The study of all aspects of cultural production, in particular, popular culture or everyday life.

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The study of the past, particularly through the analysis of written documents.

Sociology

The study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society.