

Interpreting Works of Art

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

There are several main differences between types of artistic media. Works of art can be generally categorized as either two dimensional or three dimensional, and created with either traditional or experimental media. In this lesson the main areas of focus include:

1. Two-Dimensional vs. Three-Dimensional Art

The difference between two-dimensional and three-dimensional art is very straightforward. Each is measured using different dimensions, which can include measurements such as height, width, and depth.

Two-dimensional, or 2D, art can be measured only by two different dimensions, as it can only be viewed from the front. You might use height and width when describing or measuring 2D art. **Three-dimensional**, or 3D, art is measured in three dimensions, usually height, width, and depth. The subject matter of the artwork exists in 3D space. This means you can move around the object and still see some aspect of the subject matter.

IN CONTEXT

Below is an example of a two-dimensional painting. You can see that it is on a flat surface.



Now, compare that image to the one below, a three-dimensional sculpture. It's measured in three dimensions: depth, width, and height. You could potentially move around the sculpture and still see some aspect of it.



TERMS TO KNOW

Two-Dimensional Art

A work of art made on a flat surface, such as a painting, drawing, print, or photograph

Three-Dimensional Art

A work of art that exists in space, usually sculpture or variations of sculpture

2. Traditional vs. Experimental Forms of Media

Works of art can be created with various materials, the **artistic medium** or media. Materials such as stone, wood, bronze, ink, paint, and paper are considered **traditional media**. Experimental media includes any material the artist chooses to use.



DID YOU KNOW

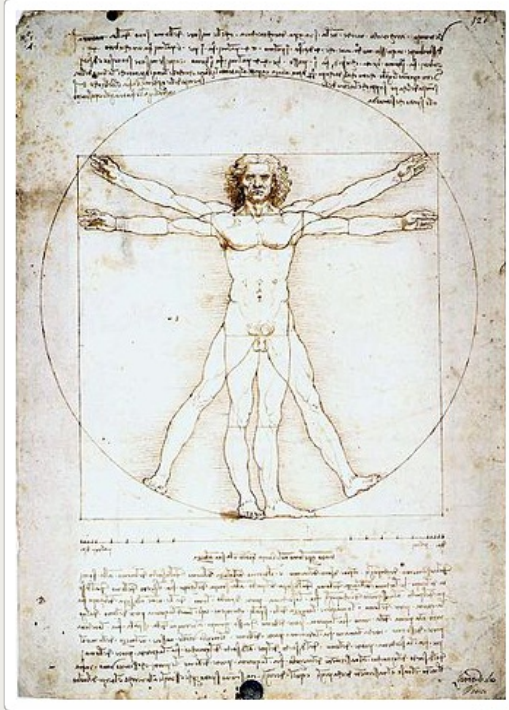
Experimental, or nontraditional, media includes almost anything you can think of. Some of the more interesting experimental media works include: garbage or ice sculptures, body art, land art, architecture

made from LEGO bricks, and even animal blood.

IN CONTEXT

Ink drawings, paintings, tapestries, and mosaics are all examples of traditional art. Experimental, or nontraditional art, might include such pieces as a bridge made out of LEGO bricks, body art, or even land art.

Traditional Media



Experimental Media



Look at the images above. On the left is a piece of work made with traditional media. It is an ink drawing by Leonardo da Vinci. On the right is one form of experimental media, a LEGO bridge. This bridge is probably not produced with real LEGOs, but it allows you to visualize that you could produce a sculpture with LEGO bricks.

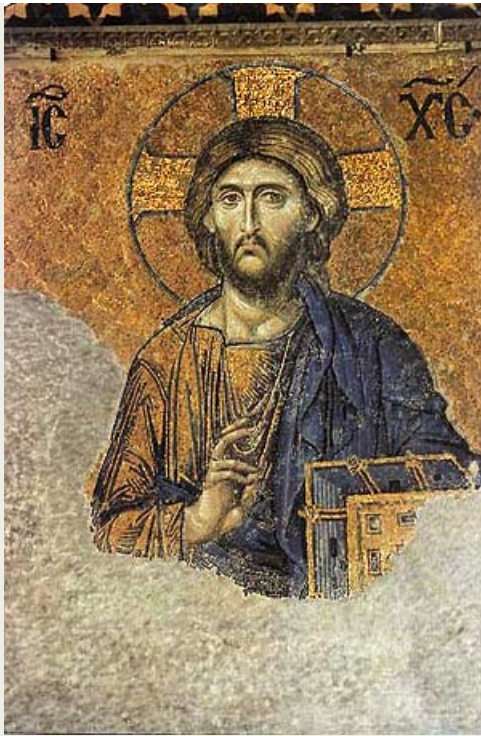
Below is another example of traditional media, a painting.



Another example of traditional media, a tapestry:



One last example of traditional media, a mosaic:



An example of nontraditional, or experimental, media, body art:



And one last example of experimental media, land art. This is a spiral jetty an artist created:



TERMS TO KNOW

Artistic Medium

The material with or in which a work of art is made, such as paint or marble

Traditional Media

Common materials used to make works of art or architecture, such as stone, wood, bronze, ink, paint, or paper



SUMMARY

Works of art can be categorized and created in various ways. In this lesson, you learned about the characteristics of **two-dimensional vs. three-dimensional art**. Two-dimensional art is on a flat surface. Three-dimensional art, such as a statue, can be moved and still have aspects of the subject matter visible.

You also learned about works of art created with **traditional vs. experimental forms of media**. Wood, stone, ink, or paint are common choices for traditional art, whereas garbage or ice, or bodies, land, or LEGO bricks might be used for experimental media.

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TERMS TO KNOW

Artistic Medium

The material in which a work of art is made, such as painting or sculpture.

Three Dimensional

A work of art that exists in space, usually sculpture, or variations of sculpture.

Traditional Media

Common materials used to make works of art, or architecture, i.e. stone, wood, bronze, ink, paint, paper.

Two Dimensional

A work of art made on a flat surface, such as a painting, drawing, print, or photograph.