

INTRODUCTION TO ART: HISTORY, ORIGIN AND TYPES

What is Art?

Art is simply self-expression. Art refers to the various ways human beings express their feelings, ideas, or imagination. It is a human activity. People perform art when they manipulate materials or objects in their environment creatively to portray a message, an idea, an information or emotion. Hence, art can also represent an inward idea.

Art may also be an imitation or depiction of life processes, scenes or experience. In this way, man tries to depict nature and things experienced either inwardly or outwardly.

Art requires skill. It involves creativity and clear thought. Art is also concerned with the beautiful and the delightful.

Art can also serve as a means of communication and inspiration. Through art, an idea can be passed to the public.

Origin of Art

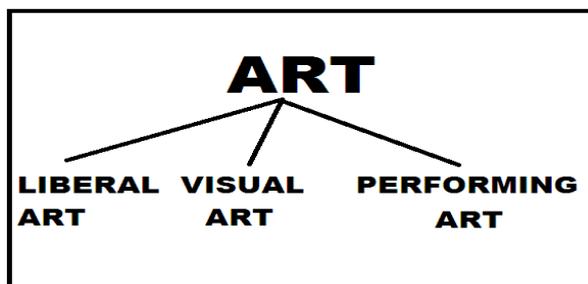
Arti is a latin term which implies “to do well”. Scholars have agreed that the English word “art” was gotten from it. Man has been involved with art for many years. The early men who lived many years ago on earth did a lot of art works. They made paintings on the walls of caves, on rock surfaces and animal skins. They also expressed art in their various tools such as knife, spear, bow etc.

Origin of Art in Nigeria

The First Nigerian to study art is **Late Chief Aina Onabolu**. He is considered as the father of modern and contemporary Nigerian Art. After studying art in Paris, France, he returned to Nigeria. He spearheaded the struggle for art to be studied in Nigerian school system which was successful eventually.

Branches of Art

Art is classified into three branches: Visual art, Liberal art, and performing art.



Visual Art

In this form of art, expressions are made through physical drawings, paintings, carvings, and mouldings. Examples of visual art are worked of sculpture at the junction of your city, framed portrait of your mother and father on their wedding day, Painted works of art in your sitting room, ceramics, textile designs, designs on banners, posters and bill board arts.

Visual art can be grouped into two:

1. Fine Art
2. Applied Art

Fine Art

This involves drawings of various kinds, paintings of various kinds and sculpture. Fine art is concerned with beauty and aesthetics. Applied

Applied Art

This involves photography, wood work, textile, graphics and ceramics. It is concerned with the combination of beauty and function. Thus applied art produces things we can use in our daily lives.

Liberal/Literary Art

This is art expressed through writing of ideas, stories, fables and various kinds of information. This involves a lot of creativity. Liberal art is also called **literary art**. Products of liberal arts are newspaper, magazines, novels, plays and so on.

Performing Art

This involves the production of sound, motion and actions as a way of expressing art. Performing art is seen in movies, songs, dances and so on. When we act a drama, we are engaging in performing arts. When we sing also, we are engaging in performing art. People relate with performing art through watching and hearing.

Importance of Art

1. **Art creates job opportunities:** It creates job for graphic artists, Creative arts teacher, sculptors, cartoonists, textile designers, ceramics and so on.
2. **Art helps to preserve our cultural heritage:** Art has been a means of preserving the culture of many tribes, ethnic groups and nations. A visit to the museum will help us see ancient art works of our predecessors.
3. **Cultural Identity:** Art can also be a means of identifying one's culture. For example, textile designs and dressing has been used on many occasions to differentiate Hausas, from Yorubas and from Igbos.
4. **Art aids teaching:** Many of the instructional materials such as wall charts, graphs, paintings and so on, used in teaching various subjects are products of art.
5. **Art is used in Religious practices:** The moulded or carved works regarded as deities or a representation of deities are all works of arts. The scapulas, staffs, images and paintings used in various worship places are products of art.
6. **Art has social function:** Thrones of kings, crowns, staff of authority, royal regalia etc. are works of art which has social meaning in our society.
7. **Art has domestic function:** In our homes, art works are very useful. Our pots, plates, spoon, clothes, baskets, shoes etc. are all products of art.

8. Art as Entertainment: Art works can serve as means of creating fun, recreation, relaxation and excitement. Dramas, novels, songs and so on are useful in creating entertainment.

9. Art for Advertisement: Art works are useful in sending messages to the public. Your school sign post, being a work of art is used to inform the public about the name and location of your school. Members of the public are invited to seminars and religious activities through banners and bill boards. Government agencies also use bill boards to pass message to the public.

10. Art for communication: Art can be used to pass information to the public. This can be a way of alerting hem of danger, discouraging certain practices such as smoking and prostitution or even to enlighten the public about a new knowledge.

Review Questions

Define Art

Explain the origin of art

List and explain the three branches of art.

State the five importance of art