

The Study of Art

From early cave drawings to the nonrepresentational works of modern-day artists, students explore some of the great works of art in conjunction with corresponding or concurrent musical and architectural themes. In addition, students experience original works in art galleries, parks, streets, libraries, and concert halls in their local areas. The following books are required for this course:

- The Oak Meadow Study of Art Syllabus
- *The Story of Art* by E.H. Gombrich, Phaidon Press, 2007

Contents of *The Story of Art*:

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| Chapter 1: Strange Beginnings
<i>Prehistoric and Primitive Peoples; Ancient America</i> | Chapter 11: Courtiers and Burghers
<i>The fourteenth century</i> |
| Chapter 2: Art for Eternity
<i>Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete</i> | Chapter 12: The Conquest of Reality
<i>The early fifteenth century</i> |
| Chapter 3: The Great Awakening
<i>Greece, seventh to fifth century BC</i> | Chapter 13: Tradition and Innovation I
<i>The later fifteenth century</i> |
| Chapter 4: The Realm of Beauty
<i>Greece and the Greek World, fourth century BC to first century AD</i> | Chapter 14: Tradition and Innovation II
<i>The fifteenth century in Italy</i> |
| Chapter 5: World Conquerors
<i>Romans, Buddhists, Jews and Christians, first to fourth century AD</i> | Chapter 15: Harmony Attained
<i>Tuscany and Rome, early sixteenth century</i> |
| Chapter 6: A Parting of Ways
<i>Rome and Byzantium, fifth to thirteenth century</i> | Chapter 16: Light and Color
<i>Venice and northern Italy, early sixteenth century</i> |
| Chapter 7: Looking Eastwards
<i>Islam, China, second to thirteenth century</i> | Chapter 17: The New Learning Spreads
<i>Germany and the Netherlands, early sixteenth century</i> |
| Chapter 8: Western Art in the Melting Pot
<i>Europe, sixth to eleventh century</i> | Chapter 18: A Crisis of Art
<i>Europe, later sixteenth century</i> |
| Chapter 9: The Church Militant
<i>The twelfth century</i> | Chapter 19: Vision and Visions
<i>Catholic Europe, first half of the seventeenth century</i> |
| Chapter 10: The Church Triumphant
<i>The thirteenth century</i> | Chapter 20: The Mirror of Nature
<i>Holland, seventeenth century</i> |

- Chapter 21:** Power and Glory I
Italy, later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
- Chapter 22:** Power and Glory II
France, Germany and Austria, late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries
- Chapter 23:** The Age of Reason
England and France, eighteenth century
- Chapter 24:** The Break in Tradition
England, America and France, late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries
- Chapter 25:** Permanent Revolution
The nineteenth century
- Chapter 26:** In Search of New Standards
The late nineteenth century
- Chapter 27:** Experimental Art
The first half of the twentieth century
- Chapter 28:** A Story Without End
The triumph of Modernism, another turning of the tide, the changing past

Study of Art ~~~~~ Lesson 22

There is no reading of your textbook for this Lesson.

Up to the late 17th century, we have seen the ebb and flow that artists experience in trying to perfect or continue a prevailing style. It sometimes seems that after moving forward, and spreading outward, something happens that causes the artist to, once again, redevelop his artistic style. It is true however, that the common thread, which underlies all of these attempts to follow this style or reject that style, is the classical Greek order. For this lesson, think about this, reflecting on what we have read up to this point. After you see either the logic or illogic of it all, move on to complete the assignments for this lesson!

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the following quote by Kenneth McLeish (from his book *The Penguin Companion to the Arts in the 20th Century*, p. 380, Viking Press).

What are the great boom times for periods of art? Ancient Greece, Renaissance Italy (19th century Europe), also great boom times for aristocratic arrogance (military and imperial concert) and Universal smugness which led to only the rich, powerful elite members of society to commission art.

Placing this idea in the context of the great achievements in art, taking into consideration the most hedonistic in ancient Greece, or times of wealth in the High Renaissance, or the rather stifling effect that repressive periods had on artistic experimentation, argue against or substantiate the idea expressed in the above quote. Put this in the form of a brief, concise essay using examples of artistic production to emphasize your points. (Is art a prize, a weapon, a tool?)

- 2. In your sketchbook, you may use any or all of the mediums (pencil, charcoal, cray-pas) to work only on one page. Transport yourself back to the time and environment of the great artist, Botticelli. Pretend you have begun an important commission to paint a subject matter that is typical of your work. You are only about one-third completed, when you slip down the stairs of your villa and regain consciousness with the delusional notion that you are an artist called Velazquez some 200 years in the future! You are compelled to pick up your materials and continue on with the work you began before your amnesia, and you are amazed to see the emergence of a style you are not familiar with. You continue to work feverishly, well into the night, but are only able to complete another third (or so) of your commission before you collapse at the foot of your easel from exhaustion. Many hours pass before you wake up the next morning, confused, bewildered and a bit intimidated by what is around you. Everything is so strange and confining but ...for some reason you remember that you are a proud warrior of the Inuit native people of Alaska, a man known for creating powerful images capable of great magic! You usually carve masks out of wood but these drawing sticks make you want to “*finish*” this image that is before you. So you finish it in the primitive style familiar to you.**

You may make a preliminary sketch if you like, or complete this work more “*intuitively*.”