

Art styles

Explore the trajectory of art styles, from realism to pop art and beyond

1840s–80s Realist painters shook tradition by choosing to depict real-life events instead of idealised historical or allegorical scenes.
Example: Gustave Courbet, *Le Déjeuner sur L'herbe* (1863)

1890–1905 Practitioners of **Art Nouveau** directed modern design towards good quality items whose appearance reflected their functionality in a unified way.
Example: The signature sinuous lines of art nouveau feature on Emile Gallé's colourful glasses

1916–24 Proponents of **Dada** used absurd humour to mock materialistic and nationalistic attitudes in the face of the First World War.
Example: Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917)

1922–66 Strongly influenced by psychoanalysis, **Surrealism** tapped into the world of dreams and the unconscious mind with techniques of automatism.
Example: In 1922 Man Ray invented the Rayograph which allowed the artist to capture an image without a camera by placing an object on photographic paper and exposing it to light.

Mid-1950s–early 1970s Pop Art blurred boundaries between 'high' art and 'low' culture, when artists borrowed commercial images to celebrate everyday life and objects.
Example: Roy Lichtenstein, *BLAM* (1962)

1960s Minimalism erased all narrative elements which could be associated with the artist to highlight form and space instead.
Example: Donald Judd created modular *Untitled* structures hung in vertical stacks jutting out from the wall.

1960s–present Performance Art borrows elements from dance, sport, ritual or even work-like tasks to challenge traditional visual art forms.
Example: For *Rhythm 0* (1974) Marina Abramović invited spectators to use objects, including a gun, on her body.

1960s–present Feminist Art makes women's perspective visible, with artworks that challenge politics and society, embracing alternative media like video.
Example: Martha Rosler *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975)

1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000

1872–92 Impressionism spread its influence from Paris across Europe, as artists took their easels outdoors to capture fleeting impressions and sensory effects.
Example: Claude Monet, *Haystacks series* (1890–1)

1907–22 Cubism disrupted the stronghold of the linear perspective which had dominated European art since the Renaissance by bringing multiple viewpoints into a single space.
Example: Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (1911)

1915–30s Constructivism In the wake of the October Revolution of 1917, Russian artists carved out a new approach to making objects which abolished composition for 'construction'.
Example: Using geometrical shapes, Lyubov Popova's textile designs could be mass produced and catered to a modern society.

1943–65 New York became the centre of the art world when **Abstract Expressionist** painters proposed monumental non-figurative works grounded in personal experience.
Example: Mark Rothko, *Seagram Murals* (1958–9)

1950s–70s During the infancy of computers, artists and computer scientists explored the creative potential of the machine to make **Computer Art**.
Example: Ben Laposky, *Oscillon 520* (1960)

1961–80 Body Artists used their body as a medium to collapse the distinction between creator and creation.
Example: In 1970 VALIE EXPORT had the image of a garter strap and stocking top tattooed onto her thigh on stage, to protest against the fetishising of women's bodies.

1960s–present Conceptualism argues that articulating an idea is art in itself, making aesthetics, expression and skill irrelevant.
Example: Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965), made people question what makes a 'chair' when he showed a chair alongside a photograph of one, and a printed definition of the word.

Roy Lichtenstein, *Stepping Out* (1978), hanging in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

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