

NCCAS Discipline Specific Glossary
VISUAL ARTS GLOSSARY

Visual Arts, as defined by the National Art Education Association, include the traditional fine arts such as drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, and sculpture; media arts including film, graphic communications, animation, and emerging technologies; architectural, environmental, and industrial arts such as urban, interior, product, and landscape design; folk arts; and works of art such as ceramics, fibers, jewelry, works in wood, paper, and other materials. (Revised July 2012)

- Art** In everyday discussions and in the history of aesthetics, multiple (and sometimes contradictory) definitions of art have been proposed. In a classic article, “The Role of Theory in Aesthetics,” Morris Weitz (1956) recommended differentiating between *classificatory* (classifying) and *honorific* (honoring) definitions of art.
- In the Next Generation Core Visual Arts Standards, the word *art* is used in the *classificatory* sense to mean “an artifact or action that has been put forward by an artist or other person as something to be experienced, interpreted, and appreciated.”
- An important component of a quality visual arts education is for students to engage in discussions about *honorific* definitions of art—identifying the wide range of significant features in art-making approaches, analyzing why artists follow or break with traditions and discussing their own understandings of the characteristics of “good art.”
- Appropriation** intentional borrowing, copying, and alteration of preexisting images and objects
- Artist statement** information about context, explanations of process, descriptions of learning, related stories, reflections, or other details in a written or spoken format shared by the artist to extend and deepen understanding of his or her artwork; an artist statement can be didactic, descriptive, or reflective in nature
- Artistic investigations** in making art, forms of inquiry and exploration; through artistic investigation artists go beyond illustrating pre-existing ideas or following directions, and students generate fresh insights—new ways of seeing and knowing
- Art-making approaches** diverse strategies and procedures by which artists initiate and pursue making a work
- Artwork** artifact or action that has been put forward by an artist or other person as something to be experienced, interpreted, and appreciated

Brainstorm technique for the initial production of ideas or ways of solving a problem by an individual or group in which ideas are spontaneously contributed without critical comment or judgment

Characteristic(s) attribute, feature, property, or essential quality

Characteristics of form (and structure)

terms drawn from traditional, modern, and contemporary sources that identify the range of attributes that can be used to describe works of art and design to aid students in experiencing and perceiving the qualities of artworks, enabling them to create their own work and to appreciate and interpret the work of others

Collaboration joint effort of working together to formulate and solve creative problems

Collaboratively joining with others in attentive participation in an activity of imagining, exploring, and/or making

Concepts ideas, thoughts, schemata; art arising out of conceptual experimentation that emphasizes making meaning through ideas rather than through materiality or form

Constructed environment

human-made or modified spaces and places; art and design-related disciplines such as architecture, urban planning, interior design, game design, virtual environment, and landscape design shape the places in which people live, work, and play

Contemporary artistic practice

processes, techniques, media, procedures, behaviors, actions, and conceptual approaches by which an artist or designer makes work using methods that, though they may be based on traditional practices, reflect changing contextual, conceptual, aesthetic, material and technical possibilities; examples include artwork made with appropriated images or materials, social practice artworks that involve the audience, performance art, new media works, installations, and artistic interventions in public spaces

Context interrelated conditions surrounding the creation and experiencing of an artwork, including the artist, viewer/audiences, time, culture, presentation, and location of the artwork's creation and reception

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Creativity	ability to conceive and develop rich, original ideas, discover unexpected connections, and invent or make new things
Criteria	in art and design, principles that direct attention to significant aspects of a work and provide guidelines for evaluating its success
	<p>Contemporary criteria principles by which a work of art or design is understood and evaluated in contemporary contexts which, for example, include judging not necessarily on originality, but rather on how the work is re-contextualized to create new meanings</p> <p>Established criteria identified principles that direct attention to significant aspects of various types of artwork in order to provide guidelines for evaluating the work; these may be commonly accepted principles that have been developed by artists, curators, historians, critics, educators and others or principles developed by an individual or group to pertain to a specific work of art or design</p> <p>Personal criteria principles for evaluating art and design based on individual preferences</p> <p>Relevant criteria principles that apply to making, revising, understanding, and evaluating a particular work of art or design that are generated by identifying the significant characteristics of a work</p>
Critique	individual or collective reflective process by which artists or designers experience, analyze, and evaluate a work of art or design
Cultural contexts	ideas, beliefs, values, norms, customs, traits, practices, and characteristics shared by individuals within a group that form the circumstances surrounding the creation, presentation, preservation, and response to art
Cultural traditions	pattern of practices and beliefs within a societal group
Curate	collect, sort, and organize objects, artworks, and artifacts; preserve and maintain historical records and catalogue exhibits
Curator	person responsible for acquiring, caring for, and exhibiting objects, artworks, and artifacts
Design	application of creativity to planning the optimal solution to a given problem and communication of that plan to others
Digital format	anything in electronic form including photos, images, video, audio files, or artwork created or presented through electronic means; a gallery of

Engagement	artwork viewed electronically through any device attentive participation in an activity of imagining, exploring, and making
Exhibition narrative	written description of an exhibition intended to educate viewers about its purpose
Expressive properties	moods, feelings, or ideas evoked or suggested through the attributes, features, or qualities of an image or work of art
Fair use	limitation in copyright law which sets out factors to be considered in determining whether or not a particular use of one's work is "fair," such as the purpose and character of the use, the amount of the work used, and whether the use will affect the market for the work
Formal and conceptual vocabularies	terms, methods, concepts, or strategies used to experience, describe, analyze, plan, and make works of art and design drawn from traditional, modern, contemporary, and continually emerging sources in diverse cultures.
Genre	category of art or design identified by similarities in form, subject matter, content, or technique
Image	visual representation of a person, animal, thing, idea, or concept
Imaginative play	experimentation by children in defining identities and points of view by developing skills in conceiving, planning, making art, and communicating
Innovative thinking	imagining or and conceiving something new and unexpected, including fresh ideas and ways of looking at things and new approaches to old problems as well as formulating new problems
Material culture	human-constructed or human-mediated objects, forms, or expressions, that extend to other senses and study beyond the traditional art historical focus on the exemplary to the study of common objects, ordinary spaces, and every day rituals
Materials	substances out of which art is made or composed, ranging from the traditional to "non-art" material and virtual, cybernetic, and simulated materials
Medium/Media	mode(s) of artistic expression or communication; material or other resources used for creating art
Open source	computer software for which the copyright holder freely provides the right to use, study, change, and distribute the software to anyone for any purpose (http://opensource.org/)

Play	spontaneous engaged activity through which children learn to experience, experiment, discover, and create
Portfolio	actual or virtual collection of artworks and documentation demonstrating art and design knowledge and skills organized to reflect an individual's creative growth and artistic literacy
Preservation	activity of protecting, saving, and caring for objects, artifacts, and artworks through a variety of means
Preserve	protect, save, and care for (curate) objects, artifacts, and artworks
Style	recognizable characteristics of art or design that are found consistently in historical periods, cultural traditions, schools of art, or works of an individual artist
Technologies	tools, techniques, crafts, systems, and methods to shape, adapt, and preserve artworks, artifacts, objects, and natural and human-made environments
Text	that form which information can be gathered, expanding beyond the traditional notion of written language to encompass visual representations such as paintings, sculpture, diagrams, graphics, films, and maps
Venue	place or setting for an art exhibition, either a physical space or a virtual environment
Visual components	properties of an image that can be perceived
Visual imagery	group of images; images in general
Visual organization approaches and strategies	graphic design strategies such as hierarchy, consistency, grids, spacing, scale, weight, proximity, alignment, and typography choice used to create focus and clarity in a work
Visual plan	drawing, picture, diagram, or model of the layout of an art exhibit where individual works of art and artifacts are presented along with interpretive materials within a given space or venue