

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **The Visual Arts and its Branches**

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#### **Introduction**

**A**rt is a human conception made manifest by the skilful use of a medium. It signifies making, fashioning or putting together, and it usually implies that the thing is accomplished by human skill (Uzoagba 2000). Furthermore, it is a way of making and communicating meaning through imagery and performances. It is a unique symbolic domain and is a discipline with its particular demands and core of learning. Art is a natural and enjoyable way of extending and enriching the child's experience of the world (visual Arts curriculum, 2010).

The word 'arts' is an all-encompassing phenomenon and has numerous branches. Art or arts is subdivided into the visual arts and liberal arts. While visual art is further partitioned into Fine arts and design areas, liberal art is sub-categorized into performing and literary arts. However, our concern is the visual arts.

#### **Visual Arts**

Visual Art is an object or experience consciously created through an expression of skill or imagination (Egonwa, 2012). The term art encompasses diverse media such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing,

decorative art, photography and installation. It is a universal means of communication. It is a process by which an individual expresses his or her feeling, taught and ideas visually. The teaching of visual art is a process of developing the creative potential in students to make the students self-reliant. The importance of visual art in the process of curriculum implementation and instruction cannot be over-emphasized.

Visual art is also defined as a means of self-expression. It provides one with various media through which one can bring to the light interior reflection of ideas, feelings, thoughts, and imagination either in two or three-dimensional form. A work of art is in two-dimensional form when it is done on a flat surface and can be measured by length and width. A three-dimensional form of art is an artwork which can be viewed right round, that is; it is measured by length, width, and breadth. Painting and drawing done on paper are examples of two-dimensional forms, while three-dimensional forms are sculptural works, which can stand on their own.

### **Forms of Visual Arts**

There is an early mention of visual arts subcategorized into fine arts and design areas. We use a thematic chart to explain it below:

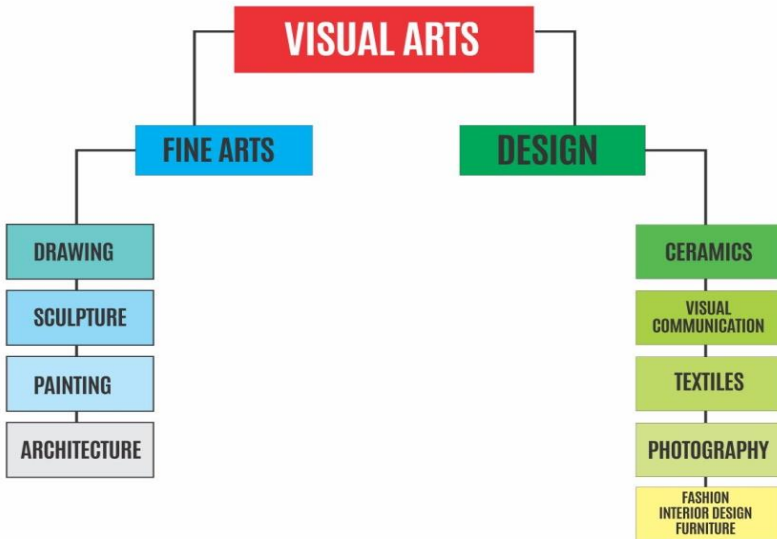


Fig 1: Thematic view of the branches of visual arts.

## **Drawing**

This is the most integral part of fine arts. Read (1972p. 51) describes drawing as delineation which remains one of the most essential elements of visual arts – even in sculpture. Drawing is a visual art form in which artists employ certain materials to make markings on paper or other two-dimensional media. Drawings seem to be the most significant form of visual art. This is so because both three-dimensional and two-dimensional artists require drawings to kick-start their works.

The importance of drawing in all forms of art cannot be over-emphasised. While a sculptor requires sketches to define the forms of his model before proceeding to his armature, so also does a visualizer

require a sketch to develop his designs for both above-the-line and below-the-line advert materials such as posters, handbills, danglers, product packages and even label cover. Even the movie maker requires delineated sketches in form of a Storyboard to direct the camera movement and other actions in a movie. Again, the Architect needs to present his designs to his clients in form of drawings.

## **Painting**

Painting is a two-dimensional form of visual art that involves using colours in certain ways to make a statement. According to Owen (2020) painting is the expression of ideas and emotions, with the creation of certain aesthetic qualities, in a two-dimensional visual language. The elements of this language—its shapes, lines, colours, tones, and textures—are used in various ways to produce sensations of volume, space, movement, and light on a flat surface. Having said this, there are numerous materials and techniques explored by specialists in the painting field, and they yield varying results. Among the various painting techniques are oil painting, watercolour painting, pastel painting, acrylic painting, digital painting, ink wash painting or literati painting, Chinese black ink, hot wax painting or encaustic painting, spray painting, Fresco secco paintings - wall painting technique, gouache - opaque watercolour medium, enamel paintings, tempera paintings (are very long-lasting), sand painting, etc (webneel.com, 2022).

Today, artists explore mixed media painting, where found objects are used as support for painting. Support is

a surface which is prepared, on which a painting will be made.

**Sculpture:** is an artistic form in which hard or plastic materials are worked into three-dimensional art objects. The designs may be embodied in freestanding objects, in reliefs on surfaces, or in environments ranging from tableaux to contexts that envelop the spectator. An enormous variety of media may be used, including clay, wax, stone, metal, fabric, glass, wood, plaster, rubber, and random "found" objects. Materials may be carved, modelled, moulded, cast, wrought, welded, sewn, assembled, or otherwise shaped and combined.

On its part is done mostly in three-dimensional form with stone, cement, and wood, as the commonest materials.



Plate 1: Brass heads from the ancient Ife Kingdom. Source:  
<https://www.worldhistory.org/Ife/>

Sculptural forms can be found in many cultures dating back to prehistoric times. In some societies, sculptures took the form of figures such as STATUES or RELIEFS while in others they took on more abstract forms such as OBELISKS, standing stones or pyramids. The size and function of the sculpture vary considerably depending on the context, materials and purpose. Traditionally, religious institutions, rulers and wealthy individuals were the main commissioners of sculpture. Sculptures in the form of statues, VOTIVES and shrines were commissioned to decorate palaces and sacred spaces such as churches, temples or tombs or to communicate a religious message, especially to a non-literate public (Irish Museum of Modern Arts, 2010)

## **Architecture**

Architecture is a form of 3Dimensional Art. Architecture is not limited to the design of buildings as Janetius (2020) says;

Defining architecture simply as an art or science of building is inadequate; also, describing architecture from the point of human habitation, raises another question, what if the structure is not habitable, say, for example, a monument, or a memorial; do they not still fall into the category of architecture?

People argued as to whether architecture is art or not, and whether architecture should be in a different discipline. Like other branches of visual art, architecture

deploys the language of formalism, content and design in its making. Architecture, being art, communicates, and like in all arts, it can be disturbing, inspiring, good, bad, or sublime, depending on the designers (Iruoke, and Onwuekwe, 2015: 91)

## **Ceramics**

This is also another branch of visual art that deals with the production of permanent earthenware through heat firing such are plates, cups, flower vases, and floor and wall tiles. Its major material is clay which is naturally deposited in abundance in all parts of the world either on the surface or under the earth's surface.

## **Textiles**

This genre is another vital aspect of visual art that deals with cloth designs and productions. It has three categories, tie-dye and batik, woven and printed textiles. Visual Arts therefore can be seen as an artist whose works are appreciated through the sense of sight.

## **Photography**

Photography is the process of making pictures by capturing light on a light-sensitive medium, such as a sensor or film. Light patterns reflected or emitted from objects are recorded onto a sensitive medium or storage chip through a timed exposure. The most common process is done through mechanical, chemical or digital devices known as cameras (Introduction to photography 403, 2008:7).

A camera is an optical instrument for recording or capturing images, which may be stored locally, transmitted to another location, or both. ... The word *camera* comes from *camera obscura*, which means "dark chamber" and is the Latin name of the original device for projecting an image of external reality onto a flat surface. The camera is also a remote sensing device as it senses subjects without any contact. The modern photographic camera evolved from the camera obscura. The functioning of the camera is very similar to the functioning of the human eye. The first permanent photograph of a camera image was made in 1826 by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (Wikipedia, 2014)

On the photographic processes, and comparing it to other two-dimensional media, Bernadine (2008), opines thus;

Photography may most closely resemble painting and the graphic arts because most photographs are stable, two-dimensional objects. The photographer's role, however, is different from the painter's. Photographers select their subject matter, but light, rather than the artist's hand, makes the image. Photographers make many creative decisions about film development, printing, or digital adjustments, and they can even add drawings or colours by hand. However, the primary process is mechanical and chemical.



## **Printmaking**

This is an art form consisting of the production of images, usually on paper but occasionally on fabric, parchment, plastic, or other support, by various techniques of multiplication, under the direct supervision of or by the hand of the artist. Such fine prints, as they are known collectively, are considered original works of art, even though they can exist in multiple.

Unlike painting, designs are prepared on surfaces, which are used to make multiples of the same original art on surfaces such as paper, fabric, or walls. "The Matrix" in printmaking is practically a surface on which a design is prepared before being transferred through pressure to a receiving surface such as paper (Getlein, 2004, 187). Printmaking is an Art form consisting of the production of images, usually on paper but occasionally on fabric, parchment, plastic, or other support, by various techniques of multiplication, under the direct supervision of or by the hand of the artist. (Nwafor and Onwuekwe, 2022: 52)

## **Animation**

Animation is art in Movement. More, it is the art of movement. In an animated film, drawings are not static, as they must be on these pages. Whether it is on a movie screen, TV set, or computer monitor, the drawings come alive, and it is the quality of that life that matters, not the quality of a particular image, frame, or film (Laybourne, 1998:22).

## Questions

1. Describe Visual Arts
2. Explain the word “Art”
3. Mention the Forms of visual arts
4. What is the Matrix?

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