

# GLOSSARY

## A

### **abstract art**

Art that displays few or no references to real objects, places or people.

### **Abstract Expressionism**

A style of painting that originated in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s and is characterised by the fluid, rapid application of paint and the expression of feelings and emotions. Abstract Expressionist paintings are generally non-representational, but some include figurative elements.

### **Aesthetic Movement**

A late nineteenth-century art movement that emphasised pure beauty and art for art's sake rather than art with a narrative or moral focus.

### **aesthetic qualities**

Visual or other qualities in an artwork that evoke an emotional, sensory or intellectual response.

### **analogous colours**

See harmonious colours.

### **appropriation**

The process of copying, reworking and re-presenting an existing image or form to create a new artwork.

### **armature**

A supporting frame over which a three-dimensional artwork is built.

### **art critic**

A person who analyses, interprets and evaluates artworks.

### **art elements**

The basic elements of artworks, including colour, line, shape, form, tone and texture.

### **artform**

Any medium or form of artistic expression, including music, poetry, painting and drawing.

### **art historian**

A person who studies or is an expert on art history.

### **art history**

The study of art that focuses on the social, cultural and historical context.

### **art industry**

All business, economic and other activities related to the making, displaying, viewing, promoting and selling of artworks.

### **artisan**

A person skilled in a particular craft.

### **artist-in-residence**

An artist employed to work at a place, such as a school, hospital or historical site, often to create work inspired by the place.

### **art movement**

A trend in art, often associated with a particular style (such as Impressionism) or group of artists (such as the Surrealists).

### **art practice**

The professional work and activity of an artist, including how and where an artist works, what their art is about, who they work with and how they present their work.

### **art principles**

See design principles.

### **artwork**

Any object or image made or presented as art.

### **assemblage**

A three-dimensional artwork made by assembling a variety of materials, often including found objects.

### **asymmetrical balance**

Balance without symmetry, achieved by using different elements on each side of a composition.

### **audience**

People who view and experience artworks.

### **Australian Impressionists**

A group of nineteenth-century artists, including Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin and Jane Sutherland, who were associated with plein-air painting and sketch-like painting techniques. They focused on capturing the fleeting effects of light and colour in nature.

## B

### **background**

The area in an artwork that seems furthest from the viewer.

### **balance**

A design principle that describes the sense of equilibrium in a composition.

### **benday dots**

The tiny dots that make up the colours in many commercial printing processes.

### **benefactor**

An individual who provides a benefit to others, usually in the form of a donation or gift.

### **biennale**

An exhibition that takes place every two years.

### **bird's-eye view**

See viewpoint.

### **body of work**

A collection of artworks produced by an artist over a period of time. A body of work may be an artist's lifetime work or a smaller group of related works.

### **botanical illustration**

A drawing made to record and study the structure and form of plants.

## C

### **calligraphy**

Writing characterised by fluent, flowing lines.

### **caricature**

An image or description of a person that exaggerates physical features for comic or satirical effect.

### **carving**

Removing materials from a solid block or form, usually to create a sculpture.

### **casting**

A sculpture technique that involves pouring a liquid or pressing a soft material into a mould to harden.

### **ceramic**

Made from clay.

### classical art

The art of ancient Greece or Rome. Also artworks influenced by ancient Greek or Roman art that are characterised by balanced and harmonious compositions, idealised beauty and restrained emotion and movement.

### collaboration

Working with others.

### collage

Art created by sticking paper, fabric, photographs or other materials onto a flat surface, such as paper or canvas.

### collograph

A form of relief print made from a block (usually wood or thick card) with a raised design made using glue and textured materials.

### colonial artists

Artists working in Australia soon after European settlement (late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century). Most colonial artists were born in Europe, and their work reflects the influence of European art.

### Colour Field painting

A non-representational painting style, related to Abstract Expressionism, which originated in the United States in the 1950s and is characterised by large areas of unbroken colour.

### commercial art gallery

A privately owned and operated gallery that sells art.

### commission

A commercial arrangement where an artist produces an artwork to serve a particular purpose or need. Also a fee charged for the sale of an artwork.

### complementary colours

Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel and have nothing in common. Also known as opposite colours.

### composition

The arrangement of art elements in an artwork to create a complete design.

### Conceptual art

Art in which ideas or concepts are more important than description, personal expression or formal concerns. Emerging in the United States in the 1960s, Conceptual artists often focus on ideas about art itself and challenge traditions by using non-conventional art materials and techniques, including found objects.

### conservator

A professionally trained person who is responsible for the preservation and care of artworks.

### construction sculpture

A sculpture created by joining separate pieces of one or more materials.

### contemporary art

Art that reflects current approaches, issues and ideas.

### contour lines

Lines that define form, contours and detail.

### contrast

The effect achieved in a composition when art elements with nothing in common are used together.

### conventions

Rules or commonly accepted practices that determine how something is done. Meaning in art is often communicated by convention; for example, black may be used to represent death.

### cool colours

Colours associated with water, plants and coolness, such as blues and greens.

### copyright

The right to control how a work is copied or reproduced.

### cross-hatching

A pattern of parallel lines crossed with a second set of fine parallel lines. See also hatching.

### Cubism

An art movement that originated in France c. 1908–18 and took a radical approach to representing three-dimensional form on a flat surface. Different views and fragments of the same subject are combined to create a single image.

### curator

A person who researches, collects, cares for and displays artworks.

## D

### Dada

An intellectual and art movement that rejected and ridiculed the values, ideas and culture of society that it held responsible for the destruction and brutality of the First World War. Starting in Switzerland c. 1916, Dada artists pioneered new and original ideas, including the use of found objects, ready-mades and performance art.

### design principles

The principles that help explain how art elements are arranged, including balance, unity, variety, rhythm, focal point and space.

### destination work

An artwork that attracts people to visit the gallery where it is exhibited.

### distortion

Where the natural appearance of a subject is altered or changed in some way, often to express feelings or ideas.

### Dreaming

Cultural knowledge, tradition and lore in Indigenous Australian culture that derive from the creation period. This knowledge continues to govern social and religious customs and behaviour today, and it helps people live harmoniously with each other and the environment.

## E

### earth art

See land art.

### eastern art

Art associated with eastern cultures and traditions, including those of Asia and the Middle East.

### edition

A set of identical, original artworks produced by an artist using a technique that allows the production of multiple originals, such as photography, printmaking or casting.

### elements of art

See art elements.

### engraving

Cutting a design into a surface. In printmaking, an engraving is a form of intaglio printing where the design is cut into the surface of a printing block or plate.

### en plein air

A French term meaning 'in the open air' that refers to the practice of working outdoors to paint landscapes.

### environmental art

Art related to the urban or natural environment, including art made in and using elements of the environment, such as land art.

### ephemeral

Lasting for only a short time.

### etching

A form of intaglio print usually produced with a metal plate. The plate is covered with acid-resistant paint. A design is drawn into the paint surface. When the plate is put in an acid bath, the parts of the plate exposed by the drawing are eaten away by the acid to 'etch' the design into the plate for printing.

### Expressionism

An art movement that developed in Germany c. 1905–25 (often known as German Expressionism) where artists used materials and art elements expressively to communicate meaning.

### expressive art

Art where personal feelings, responses and thoughts are emphasised through the expressive use of art elements and materials.

## F

### fake

An artwork that is illegally presented as something it is not.

### feminism

A movement that advocates that women should have rights and opportunities equal to those of men.

### feminist art

Art that emphasises subjects, materials or techniques associated with women's lives.

### figurative art

Art with some form of likeness to real objects, people or places. Also known as representational art.

### focal point

The part of an artwork's composition that attracts attention.

### foreground

The area in an artwork that seems closest to the viewer.

### foreshortening

The visual effect that distorts the 'real' shape of an object but makes it appear in perspective.

### forgery

See fake.

### form

A three-dimensional object or representation of an object.

### formal

Relating to the structure or form of an artwork.

### formalism

Where the formal qualities of an artwork (art elements and materials) are emphasised over narrative, symbolic or emotional meaning.

### found object

Any object (constructed or natural) chosen by an artist and exhibited as an artwork or part of an artwork.

### foundry

A specialist facility for casting metal.

### four-dimensional art

Art that has the four dimensions of length, width, depth and time, such as performance art, installations and moving image artworks.

## G

### gallery

A place devoted to exhibiting art.

### geometric

Using the regular shapes or forms of geometry, such as circles, squares, rectangles and triangles.

### gestural

Where the gestures of the artist are obvious, such as obvious brushstrokes.

### glaze

A glassy-looking surface or coating, especially on ceramics.

### golden ratio

A mathematical ratio (approximately 8:13) that is based on the rounded decimal 1.618 and is associated with visually pleasing proportions.

### gouache

An opaque watercolour paint.

### grant

A sum of money awarded to an individual artist or group of artists, often for a specific project.

## H

### Hard Edge painting

A style of painting originating in the United States in the 1960s that is usually non-representational and characterised by precisely defined areas or geometric shapes of flat, smooth colour.

### harmonious colours

Colours that are near each other on the colour wheel and have something in common. Also known as analogous colours.

### harmony

The effect achieved in a composition when similar art elements are used together, such as by using harmonious colours.

### hatching

A pattern of fine, roughly parallel lines. See also cross-hatching.

### high culture

Culture that is seen as serious and valuable, such as opera, classical music, ballet, literature and fine arts. Opposite to popular culture.

### high-relief sculpture

See relief sculpture.

### homage

Honour, respect or reverence. Artists may pay respect to the work of other artists by copying their work.

### horizon

A real or imagined horizontal line in the distance, where the sky meets water or land. In linear perspective, the horizon line is determined by the viewer's eye level.

### hue

An identifiable and nameable colour, such as red, green or yellow.

### hyperrealism

Extreme realism in painting and sculpture, also called superrealism.

## I

### icon

An image or form that is widely recognised, admired or worshipped.

### idyllic

Perfect or ideal. Often used to describe picturesque scenes in nature or art.

### illusion

A deceptive appearance, such as when artists use art materials and elements to create realistic three-dimensional effects on a two-dimensional artwork.

### impasto

A painting effect where paint is applied thickly to create a heavily textured surface.

## Impressionism

An art movement originating in 1860s France. Artists painted informal views of subjects and everyday scenes of life and the landscape. Many artists worked with rapid, obvious strokes of colour to capture fleeting atmospheric effects, a technique that challenged the traditionally accepted idea that paintings should have a smooth surface and carefully modelled colours and tones.

## installation

A site-specific arrangement of art elements and materials, and other objects and media, such as sound, light or film.

## intaglio print

A print made from a design cut below the surface of a printing block or plate.

## interactive

Requiring viewer participation.

## intervention

An artwork that 'interrupts' a space or environment to encourage audiences to think in new ways about the space.

## L

### land art

Art installations in the natural environment. Some land artists use materials from the environment to create artworks that are exhibited in galleries. Also known as earth art.

### landscape

An artwork that presents a view of the natural environment.

### lenticular

Relating to a lens. Lenticular images are created from still images that are spliced together and overlaid with a sheet that has facets that work like lenses. The lenses control which strips are seen when viewed from different angles and create an illusion of depth and movement.

### life-drawing

The practice of drawing from a nude model.

### linear perspective

A mathematical system of perspective. It is based on real or imagined parallel lines that appear to recede from the viewer and meet on the horizon at a vanishing point.

### linocut

A relief print made from a design carved into a block of linoleum (lino).

### lithography

A form of printmaking where a design is drawn and fixed on a surface using a greasy or oily material.

### low-relief sculpture

See relief sculpture.

## M

### maquette

A small-scale model of a three-dimensional artwork made as part of the planning and design process.

### medium

A material used to make an artwork (plural – media). Also, a material that moistens the pigments in paint, holds the paint together and makes it stick to the painting surface.

### metamorphosis

The transformation of one thing into another.

### middleground

The area in an artwork between the foreground and the background.

### Minimal art

An art style that developed in the United States in the 1950s and flourished in the 1960s and 1970s that is based on a minimal, highly controlled use of art elements. It is associated with precisely defined areas or geometric shapes of colour (in painting) or forms (in sculpture). Also known as Minimalism.

### modelling

Shaping soft materials to create a sculptured form.

### modern art

The succession of major art movements and styles in western art from about 1860 to 1970 when art 'progressed' from the naturalism of Impressionism to abstract, non-representational art forms of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Minimal art, Hard Edge painting and Colour Field painting. A belief in innovation and progress are important characteristics.

### monochromatic

Having a colour scheme with only one hue of colour, or tints, shades and tones of that colour.

### moral rights

Artists' rights to control how their work is presented and be acknowledged as the creator.

### mould

A hollow form into which soft or fluid material can be poured or pressed to create a sculpture. See casting.

### mural

A large, two-dimensional artwork on a wall.

## N

### narrative

A story. Telling a story.

### nationalism

A form of national pride that values and promotes the unique qualities of a nation.

### naturalistic

Portraying a lifelike representation of the subject.

### negative shape

The shape created in a design around a positive shape.

### new media art

Artforms that use technology invented since the middle of the twentieth century.

### non-figurative art

See non-representational art.

### non-representational art

Art without any obvious references to objects, places or people. Also known as non-figurative art or pure abstraction.

## O

### ochres

Powdered pigments made from ground earth, which are combined with natural binders, such as plant gums or saps, to make paint.

### oil paint

Paint made from pigment and an oil that dries over time.

### one-point perspective

The simplest form of linear perspective in which parallel lines that appear to recede from the viewer meet on the horizon at one vanishing point.

**organic**

Having irregular shapes based on free-form natural shapes.

**orthogonal lines**

The real or imagined parallel lines that appear to recede from the viewer to meet on the horizon line in linear perspective.

**outline**

A line that defines boundaries and edges.

**P****painterly**

Relating to art where broad areas of colour, light and shade are suggested by fluid, obvious strokes of paint and where the lines between objects are indistinct.

**patron**

A person or organisation who supports the work of an artist, usually by purchasing or supporting the artist's work.

**performance art**

Art that includes some aspects of performance. Artists will often use their own body.

**perspective**

A set of conventions used for creating an illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat surface. See also linear perspective, one-point perspective and two-point perspective.

**photogram**

A photographic technique that involves placing objects on light-sensitive photographic paper in darkroom conditions and then exposing the paper to light in a controlled way so that an image develops on the paper.

**picture plane**

The flat, two-dimensional surface of an artwork.

**picturesque**

Meaning 'picture-like', it describes the type of beauty found in landscapes.

**pigments**

Powdered colours used to make paints.

**plein air**

See en plein air.

**Pointillism**

A style of painting in which different colours are painted side by side using small regular dots or strokes of colour. From a distance, the colours blend in the viewer's eye (optical mixing) to create new colours or tonal effects.

**Pop art**

An art movement, originating in England and the United States in the late 1950s, that takes its subjects, materials, techniques or visual effects from popular culture, including movies, advertising and fast food.

**popular culture**

Products, such as fashion, fast food, movies, comics, magazines and advertising, that are usually cheap and mass-produced for a broad audience. Opposite to high culture.

**porcelain**

A type of ceramic made from kaolin (a pure white clay) and petuntse (feldspar derived from granite).

**portrait**

An artwork that has a person as its subject matter.

**positive shape**

Any shape created by an artist as the focus of a design. Opposite to negative shape.

**Post-Impressionism**

A style that built on the innovations of Impressionism to use colour and form in new ways.

**Postmodernism**

A range of cultural and critical movements and ideas that have influenced contemporary society since the 1970s. Postmodernism is seen to question the ideas and values associated with modern art and many previously accepted beliefs and values.

**primary colours**

Colours that cannot be made by combining other colours, i.e. red, yellow and blue.

**principles of design**

See design principles.

**print**

An image made by transferring an inked design from a printing block, plate or stencil to another surface, usually paper. Also used to describe photographic reproductions of artworks.

**pronkstilleven**

A type of sumptuous still life originating in seventeenth-century Netherlands. Also known as pronk still life.

**proportion**

The size relationship between objects. To depict a human figure in proportion requires knowledge of how the size of different parts of the body relate to the body as a whole.

**public art**

Art made for temporary or permanent display in public places.

**public gallery**

An art gallery owned and operated on behalf of the public.

**pure abstraction**

See non-representational art.

**R****rarrk**

Finely painted cross-hatched lines, commonly used by artists from Arnhem Land on bark paintings.

**ready-made**

A form of sculpture invented by Marcel Duchamp in 1913 when he exhibited found objects as artworks.

**realistic**

Depicting subjects drawn from everyday life, usually in a lifelike way. In art, often used as a synonym for naturalistic.

**relief print**

A print made from a raised surface.

**relief sculpture**

A sculpture on a wall or other flat surface where the design is made by leaving some parts raised. A low-relief sculpture has a raised surface that does not stand out much from the background. High-relief sculpture has a raised surface that stands well out from the background.

**Renaissance**

A period in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe, when there was a revival of interest in learning, discovery and classical culture. Renaissance means 'rebirth'.

**representational art**

See figurative art.

**reproduction**

A copy of an artwork, often a photograph.

### retrospective

An exhibition showing artworks from all periods of an artist's career.

### rhythm

A design principle that describes the repetition of art elements in a composition to create a pattern that suggests movement.

## S

### scroll

A length of paper used for drawing or painting that can be rolled up.

### sculpture

A three-dimensional artwork.

### secondary colours

Colours that are created by mixing the primary colours, i.e. green, orange and violet.

### self-portrait

An artwork in which the artist represents herself or himself as the subject matter.

### shade

What is produced by adding black to a colour.

### silhouette

The flat, solid shape made by outlining an object or person.

### silk-screen printing

A form of stencil printing that involves attaching stencils to a fine, silk-like fabric stretched across a wooden frame.

### site-specific

Made for a particular location.

### stela

A rectangular stone slab with an inscription or design.

### stencil

A sheet from which a design has been cut. When colour is applied to the sheet, it produces a print in the shape of the cut-out design.

### still life

An arrangement of inanimate (non-living) objects, such as fruit, vegetables, flowers or household objects.

### studio

An artist's workplace.

### stylised

Represented according to a particular style or convention, often involving simplifying the subject matter's shapes, forms or colours.

### subject matter

What is literally represented or presented in an artwork

### Surrealism

An art movement originating in 1920s Paris that created mysterious images and forms that defy logic and suggest a strange, new reality, often inspired by dreams. Surrealism means 'above reality'.

### symmetrical balance

Balance in a composition that is achieved by using the same or similar elements on each side of the composition, like a mirror image.

## T

### tertiary colours

Colours made by mixing a primary colour with the secondary colour next to it on the colour wheel. There are six tertiary colours: red-orange, yellow-orange, blue-violet, red-violet, yellow-green and blue-green.

### three-dimensional art

Art with the three dimensions of length, width and depth, i.e. sculpture.

### tint

What is produced by adding white to a colour.

### tone

The degree of lightness or darkness. Mixing a colour with grey (black and white) creates a tone of that colour.

### triennial

An exhibition that takes place every three years.

### triptych

A painting in three parts.

### trompe l'oeil

A French term that means 'tricks the eye' and is widely used to describe visual effects or images that create a convincing illusion of reality.

### two-dimensional art

Art with the two dimensions of length and width, i.e. flat art, such as paintings, drawings and photographs.

### two-point perspective

A form of linear perspective in which the real or imagined parallel lines that appear to recede from the viewer meet on the horizon at two vanishing points.

## U

### ukiyo-e

Colourful mass-produced woodblock prints that were particularly popular during the Edo period in Japan (1615–1868).

### unity

A design principle that describes the way art elements in a composition work together as a whole.

## V

### value

Lightness or darkness of any hue of colour.

### vanishing point

The point at which real or imagined parallel lines in linear perspective meet on the horizon.

### vanitas symbolism

Symbolism that reminds viewers of the transitory nature of beauty and life, such as skulls.

### variety

A design principle that describes how variations of art elements are used in a composition, usually to add interest.

### viewpoint

The position in space from which a subject is depicted in a two-dimensional artwork, such as a low viewpoint (worm's-eye view) or a high viewpoint (bird's-eye view).

## W

### warm colours

Colours that suggest fire or warmth, such as reds and oranges.

### watercolour paint

Transparent paint made from pigments held together by a sticky resin called gum arabic. The paint is mixed with water before applying.

### western art

Art associated with western, predominantly European, cultures and traditions.

### woodblock print

A type of relief print where a design is created on a wooden block.