



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ART TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF GHANA



ART AND DESIGN FOUNDATION for Senior High Schools

Year 3



- Dr. Benjamin Quarshie • Agatha Essel
- Dr. Yaw Boateng Ampadu



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Ghana Education
Service (GES)





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FOREWORD

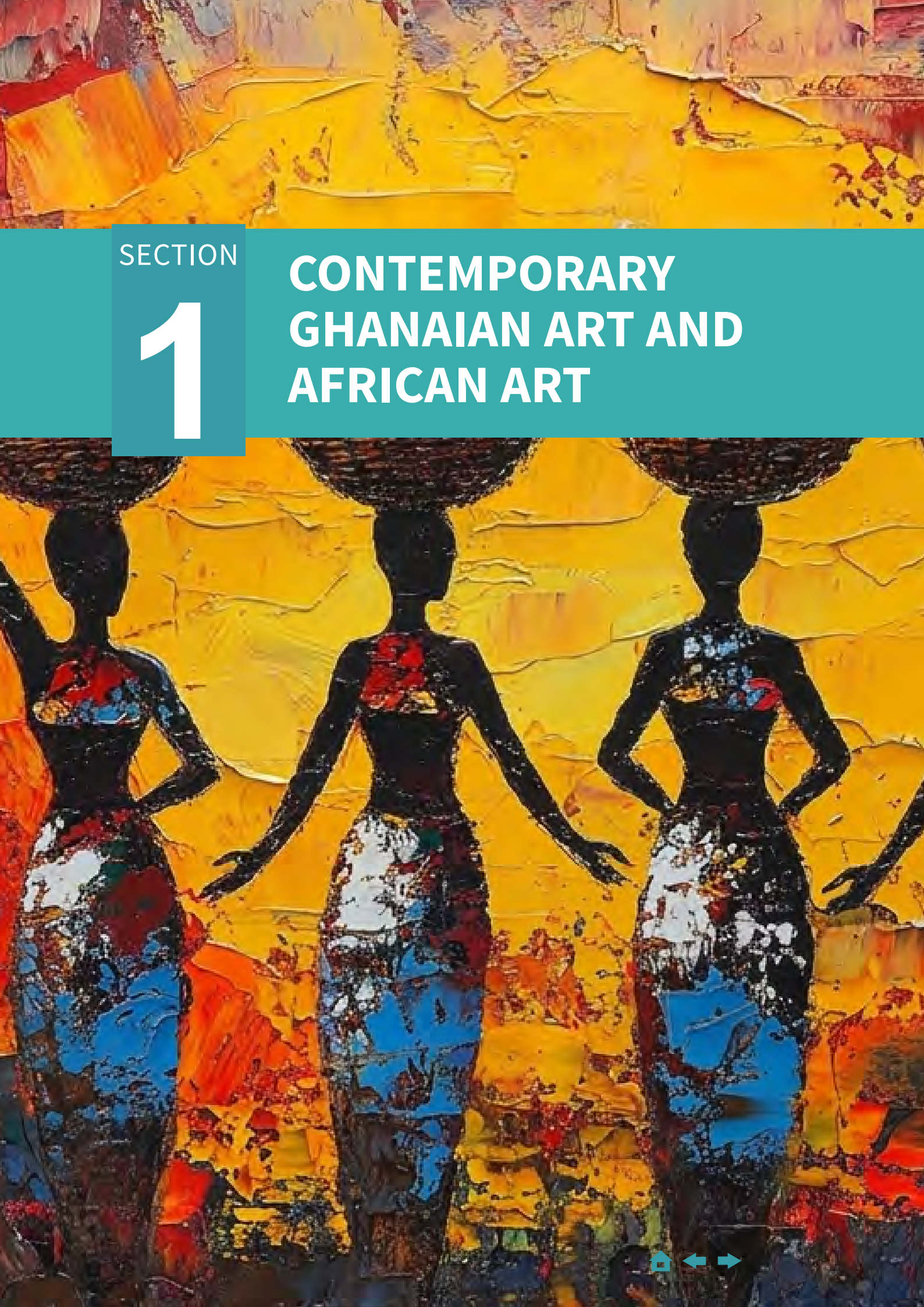
Ghana's new Senior High School Curriculum aims to ensure that all learners achieve their potential by equipping them with 21st Century skills, knowledge, character qualities and shared Ghanaian values. This will prepare learners to live a responsible adult life, progress to further studies and enter the world of work. This is the first time that Ghana has developed a Senior High School Curriculum which focuses on national values, attempting to educate a generation of Ghanaian youth who are proud of our country and can contribute effectively to its development.

The Ministry of Education is proud to have overseen the production of these Learner Materials which can be used in class and for self-study and revision. These materials have been developed through a partnership between the Ghana Education Service, teacher unions (Ghana National Association of Teachers- GNAT, National Association of Graduate Teacher -NAGRAT and the Coalition of Concerned Teachers- CCT) and National Subject Associations. These materials are informative and of high quality because they have been written by teachers for teachers with the expert backing of each subject association.

I believe that, if used appropriately, these materials will go a long way to transforming our Senior High Schools and developing Ghana so that we become a proud, prosperous and values-driven nation where our people are our greatest national asset.

Haruna Iddrisu MP

Minister for Education



SECTION

1

CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAAN ART AND AFRICAN ART

THE CREATIVE JOURNEY OF ART ACROSS TIME

INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will build on what you learned in Years One and Two about Ghanaian and African art. You will explore how modern artists and designers use materials, skills, and cultural ideas to express meaning in new ways. These lessons will help you connect art to real-life interests such as farming, engineering, banking, catering, or fine art. Each topic begins with a short review to remind you of earlier lessons and prepare you for the final year exams. As you work through this section, think about how art can shape your future by reflecting on the following questions:

- *What do you remember learning about Indigenous Ghanaian Art lessons in year one that still inspires you today?*
- *How can you use what you already know to create something meaningful this term?*

KEY IDEAS

- Contemporary Ghanaian and African art builds on earlier learning while introducing new materials, techniques, and ways of expressing meaning.
- Artists and designers use both traditional and modern media to explore identity, culture, social issues, and everyday life.
- Studying Ghanaian and African art helps learners connect creative work to real-life interests and career pathways such as design, engineering, farming, banking, catering, and fine art.
- Reviewing past knowledge and comparing it with current artistic practices strengthens understanding and prepares learners for further study and final examinations.
- Art can shape the future by helping learners think creatively, communicate ideas, and create meaningful work for their communities and the wider world.

ELEMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAN ART (2001 TO THE PRESENT)

The 21st century has been a vibrant and transformative time for Ghanaian art, with artists forging a strong identity on the global stage. Their work is marked by bold innovation and fearless experimentation that often moves beyond traditional paint and canvas. In this dynamic spirit, artists transform recycled materials like plastic gallons and jute sacks into powerful installations.

This art is not just about creating beautiful objects; it is about asking tough questions and telling new stories. It explores urgent themes of cultural identity, environmental justice, and social commentary, challenging how the world sees Africa while speaking powerfully to both local communities and an international audience.

Materials, Techniques, and Themes

One of the most exciting things about contemporary Ghanaian art is how imaginative the artists are. They can turn almost anything into a masterpiece; traditional materials that our grandparents would recognise, as well as everyday objects we might throw away.

Traditional Materials

Contemporary Ghanaian artists honour our heritage by reimagining traditional materials in exciting, new ways, proving that our culture is a living, breathing force. They are taking materials familiar to our parents and grandparents and making them speak a modern language.

- a. *Kente Cloth*: Known for its vibrant, symbolic patterns, Kente is no longer confined to ceremonial clothing. It is now powerfully integrated into paintings, collages, and sculptures. Artists use its rich visual language to explore identity and history, transforming this respected textile into a conceptual statement for the 21st century.
- b. *Wood and Clay*: These elemental materials, used for centuries, still form the heart of carving and pottery. Today, however, artists also use them to create large-scale, symbolic sculptures that tell powerful stories about modern society, justice, and humanity, connecting ancient craft with contemporary concerns.

- c. *Beads, Metal, and Leather*: Central to traditional adornment, these materials are being boldly reinvented. Contemporary jewellers and designers are blending timeless techniques with modern fashion, creating stunning pieces that are both proudly Ghanaian and globally stylish.

Recyclable Materials and Found Objects

One of the most powerful trends in contemporary Ghanaian art is the creative use of found objects and recycled materials. Artists transform the ‘waste’ we see daily into extraordinary artworks, giving discarded items a new voice and forcing us to see our environment differently. This technique connects deep local meaning with urgent global conversations.

- a. *Bottle Caps and Aluminium*: Artists like El Anatsui weave thousands of bottle caps and aluminium scraps into large, shimmering “cloths.” These monumental works resemble traditional Kente but also speak to global issues of consumerism, trade history, and waste.
- b. *Jute Sacks*: Ibrahim Mahama stitches together weathered jute sacks to cover entire buildings. Bearing the marks of Ghana’s history of labour and trade in cocoa and coal, these installations create a powerful link between our past and the global present.
- c. *“Afrogallonism”*: Serge Attukwei Clottey’s movement transforms yellow plastic jerrycans into vast tapestries. These iconic ‘Kufuor gallons’ are given new life, making a bold statement about water scarcity, consumption, and plastic pollution in our communities.

E-Waste Art

In the heart of Accra lies Agbogbloshie, one of the world’s largest and most toxic e-waste dumps. Amidst mountains of dismantled computers, tangled wires, and discarded motherboards, a group of visionary Ghanaian artists find their materials. They salvage and reclaim this technological graveyard, transforming hazardous waste into striking sculptures and intricate installations.

This “e-waste art” is more than just recycling; it is a powerful form of activism. It serves as a visual protest against the unsustainable cycle of global consumerism and our modern throwaway culture. These artworks force us to confront the severe environmental damage and the human cost of our digital lives. By turning discarded electronics into thought-provoking beauty, these artists create a direct link between the phone in our pocket and the pollution in our environment, demanding that we urgently reconsider our relationship with technology.

Technological and New Media

Many artists now work with digital tools, photography, video, and interactive installations:

- a. **Digital Art:** Artists use computers and software for drawings and animations, shared instantly online. This medium is perfect for social commentary, allowing creators like Bright Ackwerh to produce satirical works that critique politics and spark viral conversations.
- b. **Photography:** Photography is often fused with other materials to add layers of meaning. Artists screen-print photographic portraits onto textiles, creating unique works that powerfully explore complex themes of identity, Ghanaian heritage, and memory.
- c. **Video Installations:** This art form creates immersive worlds by projecting video onto multiple surfaces, often combined with sound and objects. It surrounds the audience, transforming passive viewing into an active, multi-sensory experience that tells a story in a new way.

Themes and Subject Matter

Artists are thinkers and storytellers. They use their art to explore powerful ideas, ask difficult questions, and celebrate who we are. Here are some of the most important themes you will find in contemporary Ghanaian art.

1. ***Cultural Identity and Heritage:*** This is perhaps the biggest theme of all. Artists are constantly asking: “Who are we as Ghanaians?” They explore our rich history, our diverse cultures (like the Akan, Ewe, Ga, and Dagomba), and what it means to be a modern Ghanaian. They do this by using traditional symbols, like Adinkra, and materials like Kente, but in new ways that speak to our lives today. Their work is a conversation between the past and the present.
2. ***Colonial History and Its Aftermath:*** Ghana has a complex history, including the slave trade and British colonial rule. Contemporary artists are not afraid to look at this painful past and its effect on our society today.
3. ***Urbanisation and City Life:*** Our cities, especially Accra and Kumasi, are growing and changing at a very fast pace. Artists capture the energy, chaos, beauty, and challenges of life in the city. They paint busy market scenes, Trotros stuck in traffic, and the mix of old and new buildings.

4. ***Environmental Concerns:*** Pollution, waste, and “galamsey” (illegal mining) are big problems in Ghana. Artists are using their work as a powerful voice to warn us and call for change. This is often called “eco-art.”
5. ***Social and Political Commentary:*** Artists are using their work to tackle social justice issues. Artists explore themes of power, race, and commerce, blending historical imagery with modern media to comment on colonial legacies.
6. ***Gender and Human Rights:*** Many contemporary artists are focused on fighting for fairness and equality. They create art that challenges old-fashioned ideas about the roles of men and women and highlights the strength and experiences of Ghanaian women.
7. ***Feminist Voices:*** Activists like Nana Akosua Hanson use art and pop culture to campaign against rape culture and promote a feminist future for Ghana.
8. ***Migration and Diaspora:*** Many Ghanaians live and work abroad, and many people of African descent around the world look to Ghana as their ancestral home. This connection is called the “diaspora.” Artists explore the feelings of belonging to two places, the journey of migration, and what it means to have a hybrid identity.
9. ***Spirituality and Belief:*** Spirituality has always been a core part of Ghanaian life, from traditional beliefs to Christianity and Islam. Art is a way to express these beliefs. This can be seen in the use of Adinkra symbols, which have deep philosophical meanings, or in paintings that show scenes from the Bible with a Ghanaian cultural flavour. Even hand-painted movie posters from the 1980s and 90s mixed Hollywood action with local Pentecostal ideas.
10. ***Technology and the Future:*** What does the future look like for Ghana? Artists are using digital tools, video, and futuristic ideas (sometimes called “Afrofuturism”) to imagine what is next. They explore how technology is changing our lives, from the way we communicate to the challenges of e-waste. Artists like Selly Raby Kane and Josephine Kuuire use digital media to create their work and connect with a global audience online.
11. ***Everyday Life and Joy:*** Art is not always about big, serious issues. It can also be a celebration of the small, beautiful moments of everyday life. This could be a painting of women braiding hair, children playing a game of ‘oware’, or the bright colours of a busy market. These artworks find beauty in the ordinary and celebrate the joy and resilience of the Ghanaian people.

12. **Global Connections:** Contemporary Ghanaian artists are not working in isolation. Their art is part of a global conversation. They exhibit their work in major cities like London, New York, and Venice, and they are influenced by art from all over the world. This global connection brings new ideas to Ghana and also helps the world understand our culture and perspective better.

Techniques

Techniques are the specific methods and skills artists use to create their work. Contemporary artists master many fascinating techniques, often blending traditional skills with modern innovations.

1. **Weaving and Stitching:** Just as our weavers create Kente, artists like El Anatsui weave with bottle caps and wire. Ibrahim Mahama and his team stitch together huge jute sacks, creating massive fabric-like artworks.
2. **Assemblage:** This is the art of joining or “assembling” different found objects to create a single, unified piece. Serge Attukwei Clottey’s work with plastic gallons is a powerful example of assemblage, as is creating a sculpture by arranging hundreds of old shoe shine boxes.
3. **Mixed Media:** This simply means mixing different art materials or methods in one artwork. An artist might combine painting, photography, and collage (glueing paper or fabric) all in a single piece. Zohra Opoku’s work, which fuses photos with textiles, is a perfect example.
4. **Carving and Modelling:** These are classic techniques for shaping materials. Artists still carve into wood to create figures or model (shape) clay before it is fired, connecting contemporary art to age-old traditions.
5. **Digital Composition:** This is the modern technique for making digital art. Artists use computer software like Photoshop or Illustrator to draw, edit photos, create animations, and combine different visual elements on a screen.

The Purpose of Contemporary Ghanaian Art

Contemporary Ghanaian art is not just for decoration. It has important jobs to do in our society.

1. **Keeping Traditions Alive:** Art helps preserve our culture in a modern way. The famous **fantasy coffins** of the Ga people, created by artists like **Paa Joe**, are a great example. These coffins, shaped like a fish for a fisherman or

a Bible for a pastor, honour a person's life and our traditions. Today, they are celebrated as sculptures in galleries worldwide.

2. **Commenting on Social Issues:** Artists are like watchdogs for society. They use their work to talk about important problems like corruption, inequality, and politics. The satirical paintings and street art of **Bright Tetteh Ackwerh** often poke fun at politicians and challenge us to think critically about the news.
3. Studying these artists teaches you to be creative, solve problems, and think outside the box. When you learn how El Anatsui turns bottle caps into art, you learn about innovation and sustainability.
4. Art brings people together. Festivals like the **Chale Wote Street Art Festival** in Accra turn the streets of James Town into a massive outdoor art gallery. This attracts tourists, creates jobs for local people, and fills our community with energy and pride.
5. **Promoting Our Nation:** When artists like Ibrahim Mahama or El Anatsui show their work at huge international events like the **Venice Biennale** (a sort of “Olympics” for art), they act as cultural ambassadors. They show the world the creativity and intelligence of Ghana, raising our country's profile.

Activity 1.1 Documenting Contemporary Ghanaian Art

1. Using this learner material, library resources, or a teacher-guided internet search, identify and critically observe four examples of contemporary Ghanaian artworks or designs (e.g., paintings, fashion, sculpture, logos, posters, or architecture) within your community or from documented sources.
2. In your reflective journal or sketchbook, do the following tasks.
 - a. Describe the features of the selected works (themes, styles, media, messages) that qualify them as contemporary art/design
 - b. Select one work and compare it with an Indigenous Ghanaian artwork you studied in Year One.
 - c. Explain how the work relates to topical issues in Ghana (e.g., technology, gender, human rights, migration).
 - d. Present your findings to peers using guiding questions such as:
 - i. What problem does the artwork/design respond to or solve?
 - ii. How is it different from traditional Ghanaian design?

3. From the insights gained, document your examples in a tabular format (refer to **Table 1.1** as a guide and create your own as desired), highlighting the following:
- Key elements of the works
 - Materials
 - fabrication methods used – have you considered works like fashion, logos, posters?
 - Applications and educational relevance
 - Societal problems addressed

Table 1.1: Sample template for presenting elements of Ghanaian art and design works

Name/Type of Artwork	Which Year Production	Who is the Artist or Designer	What are the Key Elements of the Artwork or design	What problem does the work solve?
Architectural design (Lokko House)	2004	Lesley Lokko (Architecture Designer)	Adaptive Reuse and Modularity Cultural Identity and Expression Use of Local Materials Art-Integrated Environment Human-Centred and Inclusive Layout	Environmental Sustainability Challenges Disconnection Between Art, Design, and Everyday Life Lack of Accessible Creative Spaces in Accra

CONTRIBUTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAAN ARTISTS TO GHANAIAAN ART

The Impact of Contemporary Ghanaian Artists

The contributions of Ghanaian artists can be seen in four major areas

Cultural Preservation and National Identity

In a world of fast-changing trends, our artists act as **cultural guardians**. They ensure that our rich heritage is not forgotten but is celebrated and given new life. Artists transform traditional wisdom, symbols, and practices into modern expressions that speak to today's generation (connecting past and present).

Ablade Glover, one of Ghana's most celebrated artists, is famous for his vibrant and energetic paintings of Ghanaian markets, lorry parks, and landscapes. His work masterfully captures the bustling spirit and communal essence of Ghanaian life, preserving these everyday scenes as important cultural records.

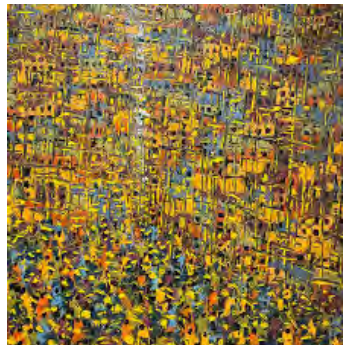
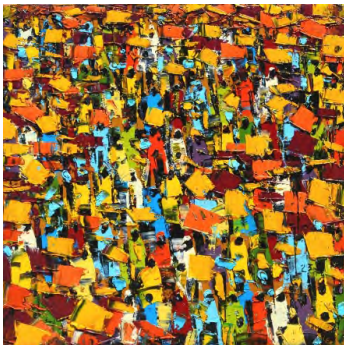


Figure 1.1: Paintings of Ablade Glover depicting Ghanaian life and culture

Kofi Setordji's powerful sculptures are often carved from wood, reflecting traditional techniques. However, his subjects tackle modern issues like war, justice, and humanity, using our cultural forms to speak on universal themes.

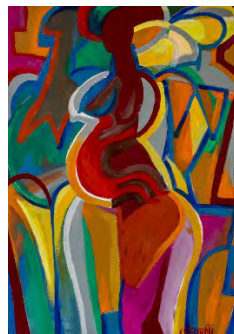


Figure 1.2: Vibrant paintings of Kofi Setordji

Social Awakening and Commentary

Art is not just for decoration; it is a powerful tool for conversation and social change. Contemporary artists use their work to act as a mirror to our society, encouraging us to think critically about the world around us. Artists address challenging topics like political corruption, environmental destruction, and social inequality, transforming galleries and public spaces into forums for debate (sparking important conversations).

Bright Tetteh Ackwerh uses digital illustrations and satirical cartoons to comment on Ghanaian politics and social life. His work, often shared widely on social media, uses humour to tackle serious issues, making complex topics accessible and sparking important discussions among young Ghanaians.



Figure 1.3: Digital Illustrations by Bright Tetteh Ackwerh

Kwame Akoto-Bamfo's “Ancestor Project” directly confronts the painful history of the transatlantic slave trade. By creating thousands of haunting cement portraits of enslaved ancestors, he forces us to remember our past and reflect on its legacy today, contributing to a national and global process of healing and remembrance.

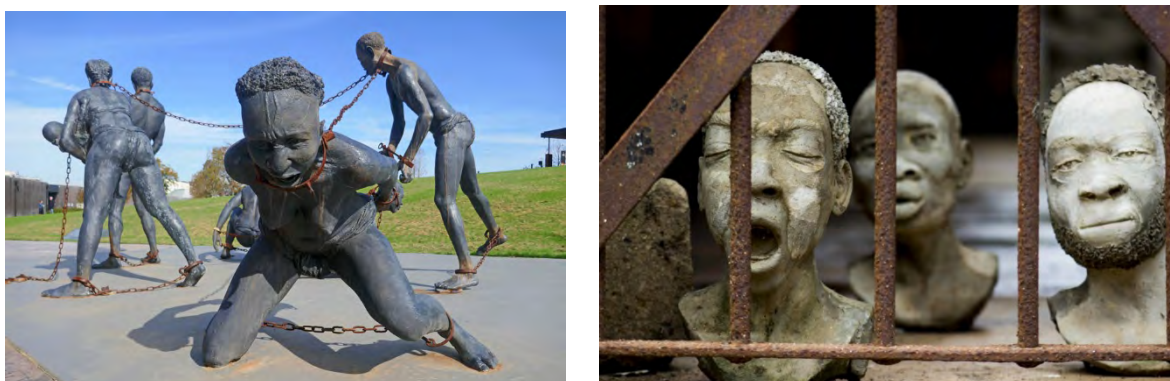


Figure 1.4: “Ancestor Project” by Kwame Akoto-Bamfo

Economic Transformation and Innovation

The creative sector is a powerful engine for economic growth, and artists are at the forefront of this transformation. They create jobs, build institutions, and drive innovation. From studio assistants to fabricators and gallery staff, the art world creates employment for many people (i.e. creating livelihoods).

Leading artists are not just focused on their own careers; they are building infrastructure to support the next generation (i.e., building a Creative Ecosystem).

Ibrahim Mahama is a perfect example. Beyond his famous jute sack installations, he has used his success to establish the **Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA)** and **Red Clay Studio** in his home city of Tamale. These institutions provide exhibition spaces, research facilities, and residency programs, creating a major arts hub in Northern Ghana, decentralising the art scene, and creating massive opportunities for local artists and communities.

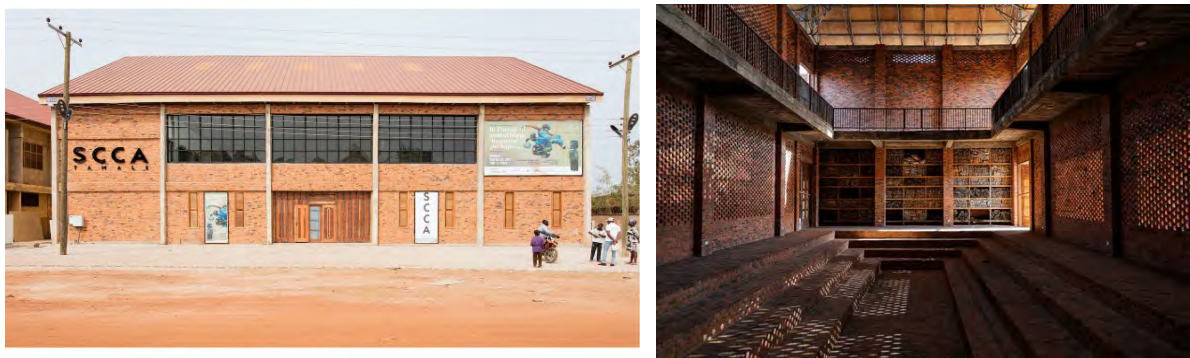


Figure 1.5: Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA) and Red Clay Studio

Achieving Global Recognition

Ghanaian artists have placed our country firmly on the world art map. Their success on the international stage brings attention, investment, and respect to Ghana's creative industry. When their work is shown in major international museums and exhibitions, it tells a positive and powerful story about Ghana (i.e., acting as Cultural Ambassadors).

El Anatsui, though he has worked mostly in Nigeria, is a Ghanaian-born artist who is one of the most celebrated artists in the world. His magnificent bottle-top "tapestries" hang in the most famous museums across America, Europe, and Asia. In 2015, he was awarded the **Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement** at the Venice Biennale, the highest honour in the art world.



Figure 1.6: magnificent bottle-top “tapestries” by El Anatsui

The 2019 Venice Biennale: For the first time, Ghana had its own national pavilion at this prestigious international art exhibition. The exhibition, titled “Ghana Freedom,” featured six of our best artists, including El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, and the painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. This historic moment showcased the sophistication and power of Ghanaian art to a global audience.

As we have seen, the contributions of contemporary Ghanaian artists are vast and varied. They are the guardians of our culture, the conscience of our society, the builders of our creative economy, and our proud ambassadors to the world. Their work challenges us, inspires us, and proves that art is essential to understanding who we are and shaping who we want to become.

Should you want to include the artist, then just mention their names (not just one person), and in a sentence, indicate how their works contribute to the topic being discussed.

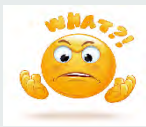
Activity 1.2 Analysing Contributions of Contemporary Ghanaian Artists

Scenario: *As the new Museum educator, you have the duty to present how contemporary Ghanaian artists/designers (e.g., El Anatsui, Ibrahim Mahama, Serge Attukwei Clottey, Aisha Ayensu) use their materials and methods to address social and global issues. How can you achieve this?*

Here are some steps to support you.

1. Review the documented works from **Activity 1.1** and discuss with a friend about;
 - a. Materials used

- b. Themes/messages expressed
 - c. Links to Ghanaian identity and everyday life
 - d. Signs of global influence
- 2. Create a concept map linking:
 - a. Traditional Ghanaian art
 - b. Contemporary materials/methods
 - c. Social/environmental issues
 - d. Global ideas/movements
- 3. Design a poster or digital slide showing how Ghanaian artists raise awareness and inspire change. Use images, notes, and artist quotes if available.
- 4. Present your ideas to the class, explaining:
 - a. How these artists inspired your thinking
 - b. One idea you would adopt in your own artwork to solve a local problem.
- 5. Use the feedback from peers to improve yours.



Think about this: What alternatives can you explore to create engaging presentations if you do not have access to ICT and digital resources for this activity?

IMPACT OF CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAAN ART ON AFRICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

We have already explored what contemporary Ghanaian art is and celebrated the incredible artists behind it. We know their work is powerful, but the influence does not stop within Ghana's borders. The question is: how does an artist from Kumasi, Sunyani, Ada or Accra become a star in London, Paris, or New York? When Ghanaian artists exhibit their work internationally, they create a ripple effect that reaches far beyond their home country. These impacts are felt in cultural, social, and economic ways across Africa and the wider world.

Shifting the Global Narrative

For centuries, the global story of art was largely told from European and American perspectives. African art was often misunderstood, oversimplified, or ignored

entirely. Contemporary Ghanaian artists are breaking this pattern. Their work provides a counter-narrative by telling stories of Ghana's history, traditions, and modern life from our own perspective. This challenges outdated stereotypes and presents Africa as a centre of creativity and innovation. Instead of being viewed only through the lens of problems, Ghana is now celebrated for its artistry, originality, and vision.

Inspiring a New Generation of Creators

The achievements of Ghanaian artists inspire countless young creatives, both locally and internationally. In Ghana, an art learner who sees the global success of Amoako Boafo might feel encouraged to pursue their own path with confidence. Beyond Ghana's borders, designers and artists from other countries are drawing inspiration from Ghanaian aesthetics. This includes the intricate patterns of kente cloth, the philosophy of reusing and recycling materials, and the bold storytelling found in contemporary Ghanaian works. These ideas are influencing art, fashion, and design worldwide.

Driving Critical Conversations

Contemporary Ghanaian art is not only beautiful; it is deeply thought-provoking. Artists are using their work to spark important conversations about global issues. For example, Ibrahim Mahama's installations made from old jute sacks push viewers in Europe and elsewhere to think about international trade, labour conditions, and the lasting effects of colonialism. El Anatsui's shimmering bottle-cap tapestries encourage reflection on waste, recycling, and consumer culture. Amoako Boafo's powerful portraits celebrate Black identity, contributing to global discussions about race, representation, and dignity. Through these works, Ghanaian artists become active voices in worldwide debates.

Boosting the Creative Economy

The global success of Ghanaian artists brings significant economic benefits back home. When a Ghanaian artwork sells for a high price in an international auction, it raises the value and visibility of Ghanaian art as a whole. This success draws the attention of international collectors, curators, and cultural tourists, who then visit Ghana to experience its creative scene firsthand. As a result, local galleries, studios, and cultural institutions gain more support, and the creative economy grows stronger.

Ghana's Growing Voice in the Global Art World

Today, Ghana's voice in the global art world is louder and clearer than ever before. Through platforms such as biennales, international art fairs, and museum exhibitions, Ghanaian artists are not just displaying their work; they are actively reshaping how the world views art, Africa, and Ghana itself. They show that creativity is a universal language, capable of crossing borders and connecting people. The stories told through their art have the power to inspire, challenge, and transform audiences everywhere.

Activity 1.3 Tracing Ghanaian Contemporary Art Impact

Investigate how contemporary Ghanaian artists and designers are making an impact beyond Ghana (in Africa and the rest of the world).

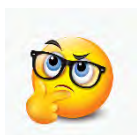
1. Research using your Learner's Material, class notes, and (if permitted) reliable digital sources, focusing on:
 - a. Where Ghanaian artists exhibit internationally (e.g., Venice Biennale, Dak'Art, galleries in Europe, America, Asia)
 - b. How their works influence global art/design conversations (e.g., decolonisation, environmental activism, Pan-African identity, contemporary African aesthetics)
 - c. What global audiences are saying (e.g., reviews, awards, collections)
 - d. Examples of leading Ghanaian artists/designers (e.g., Veronica Ayele Bekoe, El Anatsui, Serge Attukwei Clottey)
2. Create a visual mind map or infographic (**Remember you learned how to create mind maps in Year 1&2**) titled *How Ghanaian Art Impacts the World*, showing:
 - a. Artist names
 - b. Key exhibitions or collections abroad
 - c. Core ideas/messages in their work
 - d. Influence on other artists
 - e. Cultural or political conversations sparked
3. Present in a 3-minute gallery-style session where your peers can walk around, learn from your work, and ask questions.

Activity 1.4 Planning Ghana to the World

Scenario: *You are in Ghana hosting its first international Art Biennale or Triennale. You are part of the national curatorial team planning the event.*

Here are a few steps to guide you

1. Choose a **theme** (e.g., *Art and Climate Change, African Identity in a Global World, Urban Youth Expression, Reclaiming Culture*).
2. Select six artworks or artists (real or imagined, Ghanaian and African) to feature. Justify how each fits your theme and reflects both contemporary issues and African creativity.
3. Choose a **location** in Ghana (e.g., Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Cape Coast) and explain the choice of your location.
4. Create a short visual presentation including:
 - a. Exhibition name & theme
 - b. Sample artworks/artist names
 - c. Simple sketch/layout of the exhibition space
 - d. A short statement on how your Biennale connects Ghana to global art conversations
5. Present your plan to the class, with peers acting as international visitors or journalists asking questions.



Breaktime Debate: *Think about **Figure 1.7** below and engage in a critical, healthy debate with your peers by trying to find answers to the following questions:*

1. What is the name of the Ghanaian product in the image?
2. Who created the product in the picture?
3. Is the object a design, artwork or an invention?
4. Can the creator of the object be called an artist, designer or inventor?
5. What societal impact does the object contribute to?

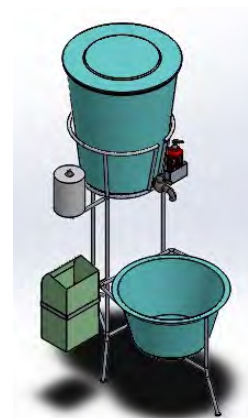


Figure 1.7: A Ghanaian Product.

6. How does the contribution of the product to society motivate you to apply art and design in your daily life and future career?

CATEGORIES OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ARTISTS AND THEIR ARTWORKS

In the previous topics, we have been celebrating the incredible art scene in Ghana. Now, we will take a step back and look at the bigger African picture. Ghanaian artists are part of a powerful wave of creativity sweeping across the continent, from Nigeria to South Africa, Kenya to Benin. In this content, you will explore the diverse art forms being created across Africa, learn how to group artworks into categories for better understanding, and meet some of the most influential contemporary African artists to discover how their work is shaping global culture.

What is Contemporary African Art?

Contemporary African Art refers to creative practices that have flourished from the late 20th century to the present. In Ghana, this includes Contemporary Ghanaian Art and Design, which blends indigenous traditions with global influences and modern technologies.

This art form is powerful because it:

1. Explores identity, history, urbanisation, and social justice.
2. Goes beyond traditional painting and sculpture to include new materials, digital media, installations, performance art, and more.
3. Reflects how African artists are both preserving heritage and innovating for the future.

Getting an understanding of the different categories of contemporary art can make us better appreciate the many ways African artists express their ideas and contribute to global culture.

Exploring the Categories of Contemporary African Art

When we look at the exciting world of contemporary African art, it is like walking through a great market filled with countless different stalls. Each one offers

something unique and fascinating. Art today is not just one style or one idea; it is a rich and diverse collection of creative expressions. To help us understand this variety, we can group artworks into different **categories** based on the materials artists use, the ideas they explore, and the methods they choose. These are not strict rules but helpful guides to appreciate the incredible range of creativity happening across our continent. Let us explore some of these key categories.

1. **Traditional-Contemporary Fusion:** This is art that builds a bridge between the past and the present. Many African artists combine traditional cultural elements with modern approaches. They honour their heritage while speaking to a contemporary audience. Artists in this category have deep respect for traditional techniques, patterns, and ideas, but they use them in new, modern ways to speak about our world today.
2. **Painting and Mixed Media:** This is the most familiar category, but contemporary painters are pushing the boundaries. Many artists now mix paint with other materials like fabric, magazine cut-outs (collage), and found objects to create rich, layered surfaces. **Wangechi Mutu (Kenya/USA)** creates breathtaking and complex artworks that are part painting, part collage. She combines images from fashion magazines, medical diagrams, and historical books with shimmering paint and soil. Her work explores themes of the female body, identity, and the legacies of colonialism, creating powerful, hybrid figures that are both beautiful and unsettling.
3. **Sculpture and Installation Art:** This category moves art off the wall and into our space. **Sculpture** refers to 3D objects, while **Installation Art** describes artworks that are designed to transform an entire room or environment, which the viewer can often walk into or around. **Romuald Hazoumè (Benin)** is famous for his powerful sculptures made from discarded plastic petrol jerrycans. He transforms these everyday objects into haunting masks that resemble traditional African carvings. His work is a sharp and witty commentary on politics, consumerism, and the relationship between Africa and the West.
4. **Photography and Visual Activism:** Photography is a crucial medium for contemporary African artists. They use the camera not just to capture reality, but to tell stories, challenge stereotypes, and fight for social change. This is often called “visual activism.” **Zanele Muholi (South Africa)**, a visual activist, creates stunning and dignified black-and-white photographic portraits of the Black LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa. Their work

insists on the presence and beauty of people who have often been made invisible. Muholi's portraits are a powerful act of protest and celebration.

5. **Performance Art:** In performance art, the artist's own body becomes the medium. The artwork is a live action or event that happens in a specific place and time. It is often used to address urgent political or social issues in a very direct and public way. **Jelili Atiku (Nigeria)** is known for his dramatic public performances where he wears elaborate costumes made from ropes, stones, and other materials. He walks through crowded city streets to draw attention to issues like human rights, political violence, and government corruption, forcing everyday people to confront difficult truths.
6. **Digital Art and Afrofuturism:** A new and exciting category involves artists who use digital technology, video, and the internet. Many of these artists are part of a movement called **Afrofuturism**, which blends science fiction, technology, and African culture to imagine bold, positive, and creative futures for the continent. **Osborne Macharia (Kenya)** is a photographer who creates fantastical, movie-like images of fictional characters. He imagines groups like a league of stylish Maasai warriors who protect the planet or a group of post-apocalyptic Kenyan grannies. His work presents a new, empowering, and cool vision of Africa.

Characteristics of Contemporary African Art

While African art is incredibly diverse, with artists from over 54 countries expressing unique visions, we can identify some common and powerful characteristics in their work.

Blending Old and New

Many African artists combine traditional cultural elements such as symbols, techniques, and stories with modern artistic approaches. This creates a powerful link between the past and the present. **Esther Mahlangu (South Africa)** applies traditional Ndebele patterns, which were historically painted on houses, to contemporary items like cars, sneakers, and aeroplanes. This shows how cultural traditions can be reimagined and kept alive in the modern world.



Figure 1.8: Traditional Painting on a car by Esther Mahlangu

Everyday Materials Used Creatively

As in Ghana, artists across Africa are known for transforming ordinary, often discarded, objects into extraordinary artworks. This is a comment on consumption, the environment, and the beauty that can be found in unexpected places. **El Anatsui** is famous for his massive, shimmering tapestries made from thousands of discarded bottle caps and aluminium scraps woven together with copper wire. His work references traditional kente cloth while also addressing the history of trade and global consumerism.

Telling Important Stories

Contemporary African art is a powerful medium for addressing complex social and political issues. Artists act as commentators and activists, using their work to explore everything from political corruption and gender inequality to environmental degradation. The legendary Ghanaian photographer **James Barnor** used his camera to document the vibrant energy of Ghana during the era of independence. His portraits and street scenes are not just pictures; they are historical records that tell the story of a nation in transition.



Figure 1.9: Historical scenes and records that tell a story by James Barnor

Identity and Heritage Exploration

Many artists explore the question, “What does it mean to be African today?” Their work examines personal and cultural identity, gender, migration, and the effects of history on how people see themselves and their communities in a globalised world. **Amoako Boafo (Ghana):** He has gained global fame for his vibrant portraits that celebrate Black identity and beauty. He uses his fingers to paint his subjects, creating a unique texture that gives his work a powerful, immediate, and personal feel.

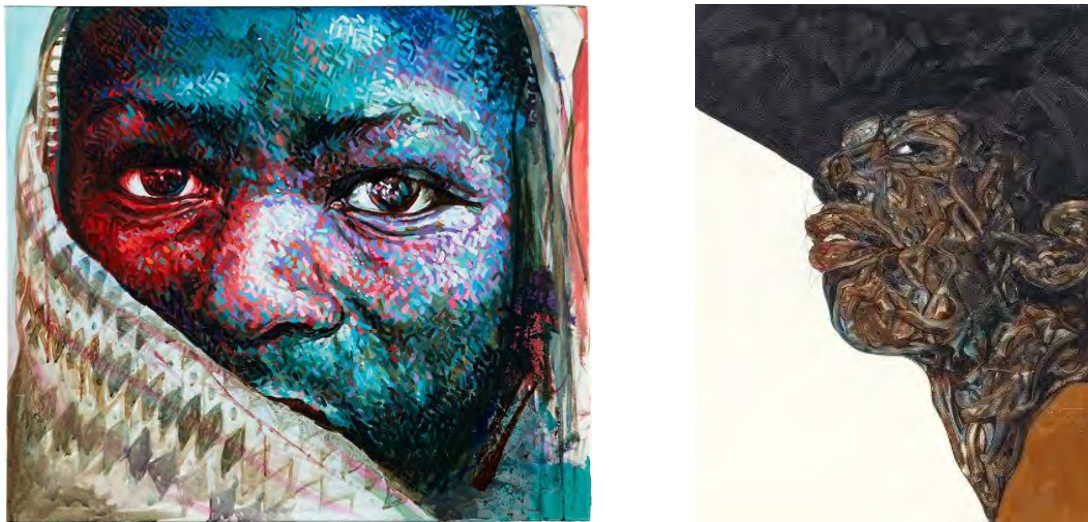


Figure 1.10: Black identity and beauty by Amoako Boafo

Breaking Boundaries Between Art Forms

Today’s African artists do not limit themselves to one medium. They often mix painting with sculpture, photography with performance, and craft with digital art. This experimentation leads to new and innovative forms of expression. **Michael Armitage (Kenya/UK)** paints on Lubugo bark cloth, a traditional material from Uganda, instead of canvas. By combining this historic African material with a European style of painting, he merges different art histories and creates something entirely new.



Figure 1.11: Using traditional material, instead of canvas, Michael Armitage

Global Connections and the Diaspora

Contemporary African artists are deeply connected to the global art world. Many live and work between Africa and other parts of the world, and their art reflects this experience of cultural hybridity and connection. **Shonibare CBE (Nigeria/UK)** creates sculptures of figures dressed in “Dutch wax” fabrics. While we often think of this fabric as African, he highlights its complex history: it was inspired by Indonesian batik, mass-produced by the Dutch, and sold to West Africa. His work explores colonialism, identity, and the tangled connections between Africa and Europe.





Figure 1.12: Sculptures of figures dressed in “Dutch wax” fabrics by Shonibare CBE

Reclaiming Historical Narratives

Artists are challenging historical accounts written from a colonial perspective. They are re-examining archives, questioning official histories, and offering alternative stories of Africa’s past and present, told from an African point of view. **Thierry Oussou’s (Benin)** installation “Impossible Is Nothing” addresses the 1897 looting of Benin’s royal treasures by British forces. Through his work, he and other artists reclaim the representation of African history, contesting the simplified or Eurocentric views of the continent’s past.

Global Connections and Cultural Hybridity

Many contemporary African artists live and work between Africa and other parts of the world. Their art reflects this mixed, or “hybrid,” experience, blending African and global influences.

Identity, the Body, and Challenging Stereotypes

Artists across the continent are exploring deep questions of identity: what it means to be African, a man or a woman, and a citizen of a nation today. They often use the human body to challenge old stereotypes and present new, more authentic visions of African life.

The Rise of Digital Art and Afrofuturism

A new generation of African artists is embracing technology to imagine new possibilities for the continent’s future. This movement, often called “Afrofuturism,”

blends science fiction, technology, and African culture to create optimistic and powerful visions of what could be.

Performance Art

In performance art, the artwork is not an object like a painting or a sculpture. Instead, the artist's own body and actions, in a specific time and place, become the medium. It is a live art form that is often created to make a statement, challenge our thinking, or create a unique experience for the audience. Nigerian artist **Jelili Atiku** creates powerful public performances to address issues of human rights and social justice. He often wears elaborate, sculptural costumes and walks through busy city streets. His silent, slow-moving presence interrupts everyday life, forcing people to stop and confront the serious messages his art carries.



Figure 1.13: Public performances Jelil Atiku

Animation

Animation is the magic of bringing still images to life by showing them in a rapid sequence. You can think of it like a flipbook, but today it is done with powerful computer software. Animation is a major part of the creative world, used in everything from blockbuster movies and television commercials to music videos and educational tools. The Ghanaian animation studio AnimaxFYB is a wonderful example of local talent. They create animated short films and series, such as “Tutulife,” that tell stories with a distinctly Ghanaian sense of humour and cultural flavour. They use animation to connect with a young audience and reflect our own society.



Figure 1.14: Ghanaian Animation by AnimaxFYB

Hybrid Media

Hybrid Art goes beyond materials to merge different artistic disciplines, forms, or technologies into a new integrated art form. This may involve crossing boundaries between visual arts, performance, digital media, installation, and sound. Hybrid art is less about the variety of materials and more about interdisciplinary blending. For example, combining sculpture with projection mapping, or painting with live performance elements.

The Ghanaian artist *Zohra Opoku* creates beautiful hybrid works. She often starts with photography, taking powerful portraits, but then she screen-prints these images onto textiles and adds other elements. Her final artwork is not just a photograph and not just a piece of fabric. It is a rich, multi-layered hybrid that combines different creative processes.



Figure 1.15: Hybrid artworks by Zohra Opoku

As you can see, contemporary African art is a dynamic and expanding field. These categories help us to appreciate the different ways artists are working, but the most exciting thing is how they often mix and borrow from each other, creating works that are truly original and unique.

Typography

Think of typography as the art of dressing up our words. It is much more than just writing; it is the careful design and arrangement of letters and text to make written language legible, readable, and appealing when displayed. A designer who works with typography thinks about the style of the font, the size of the letters, and the spacing between them to create a specific mood or feeling.

The Zimbabwean **Saki Mafundikwa** is a **prominent typographer** in Africa. His work asks a powerful question: why should African design only use Western letters? Mafundikwa looks at our own continent's rich history, researching the beautiful and complex writing systems created by Africans long ago. His famous book, "Afrikan Alphabets," is a treasure chest of these scripts, from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs to symbols from West Africa. Saki's works not only preserve knowledge but also transform these ancient symbols into modern fonts that designers can use today, creating a unique visual language that is proudly African.

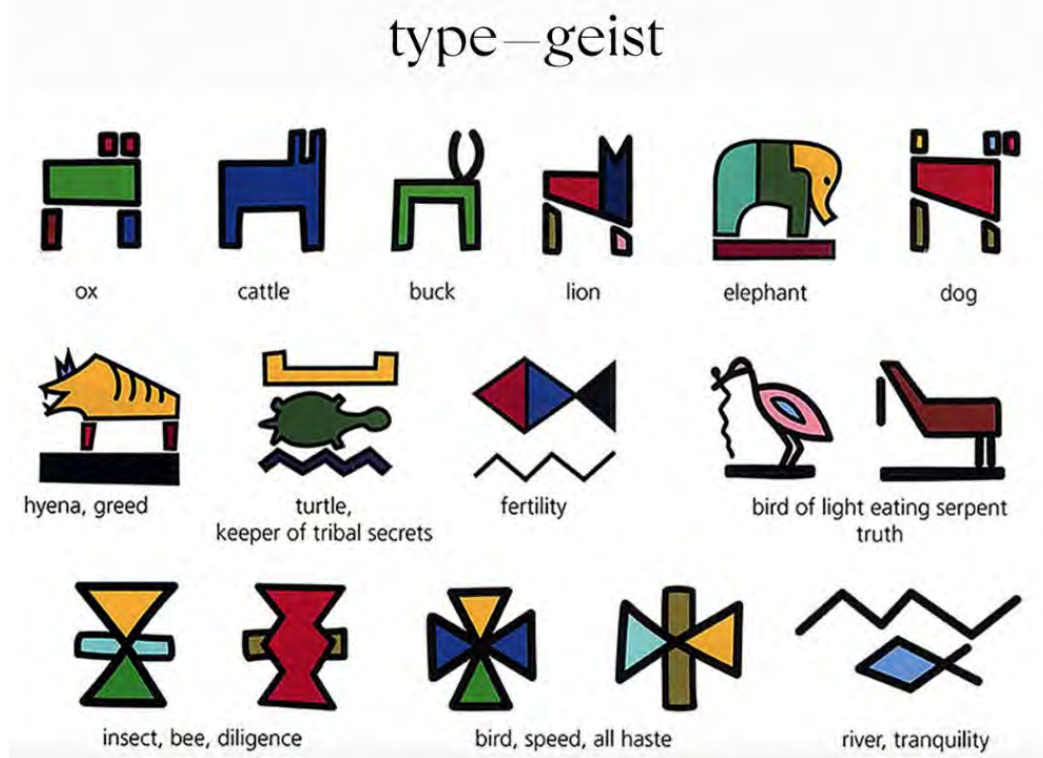


Figure 1.16: African Typography by Saki Mafundikwa

Afrofuturism

This is an exciting and imaginative category of art that blends science fiction, technology, and African culture to imagine new possibilities for the future. Afrofuturist artists create visions of a future where African identity is central and celebrated. The Kenyan filmmaker **Wanuri Kahiu** is a leading voice in Afrofuturism. Her films often show optimistic and technologically advanced futures in Africa, creating positive and inspiring stories that help us imagine a future beyond our current limitations.

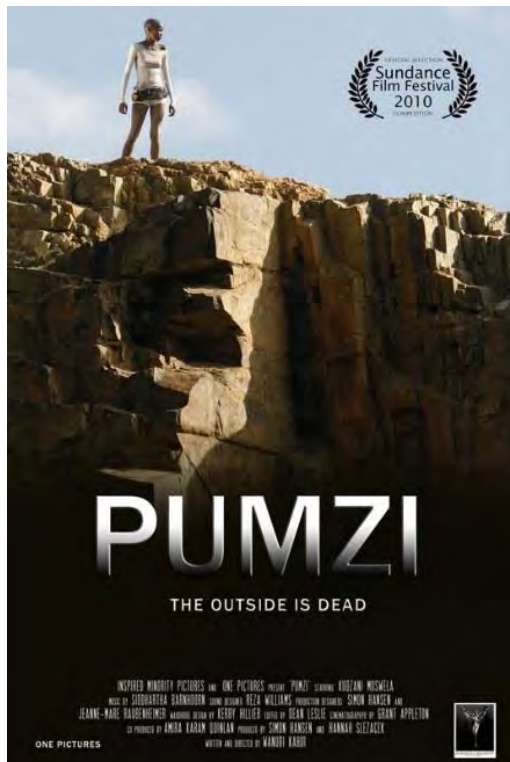


Figure 1.17: Afrofuturistic Film by Wanuri Kahiu

Notable Contemporary African Artists

Here is a list of some of the most important contemporary artists from across the continent. Notice how many of them work across different categories.

1. From Ghana

- a. **El Anatsui:** Creates massive, shimmering “tapestries” from bottle caps.
- b. **Ibrahim Mahama:** Known for his huge installations using jute sacks and other found materials.

2. From Nigeria

- a. **Yinka Shonibare CBE:** Creates sculptures and installations using colourful “Dutch wax” fabric to explore identity and colonialism.
- b. **Njideka Akunyili Crosby:** Makes large-scale paintings and collages that explore her experience of living between Nigeria and America.

3. From South Africa

William Kentridge: A giant of contemporary art, famous for his powerful charcoal drawings and animated films that deal with the history of apartheid.

4. From Ethiopia

Mehretu: Creates huge, layered, and complex abstract paintings that look like maps of cities and histories.

5. From Cameroon

Pascale Marthine Tayou: Known for his playful and colourful mixed-media installations using a wide range of materials.

The art of contemporary Africa is not one single story. It is a chorus of many powerful voices. By understanding the different categories artists work in and by getting to know the leading figures from across the continent, we can better appreciate the incredible diversity, creativity, and importance of African art today. These artists are not just making art for Africa; they are making art for the world.

Activity 1.5 Categorising Contemporary African Art

Try this independently or in groups

1. Collect images of selected contemporary African art and design works. These could be paintings, sculptures, installations, digital designs/artworks, performances, or mixed media pieces.
2. Carefully observe each work critically, and for each of the works selected, you will:
 - a. Identify the category it belongs to (e.g., performance art, installation, digital art, painting, sculpture, etc.)
 - b. Provide two reasons for your choice based on the materials, methods, and presentation
 - c. Give an example of one African artist or designer (if known) who works in that category

- d. Suggest one possible message or theme the artwork might be expressing
3. Present your findings to the class in a mini “Report”. (*Analyse the fan chart in **Figure 1.18** below for ideas on how to write a good report*).
- Your report may also include suitable illustrations that explain the texts**

How to guide students in writing a report on contemporary African art?

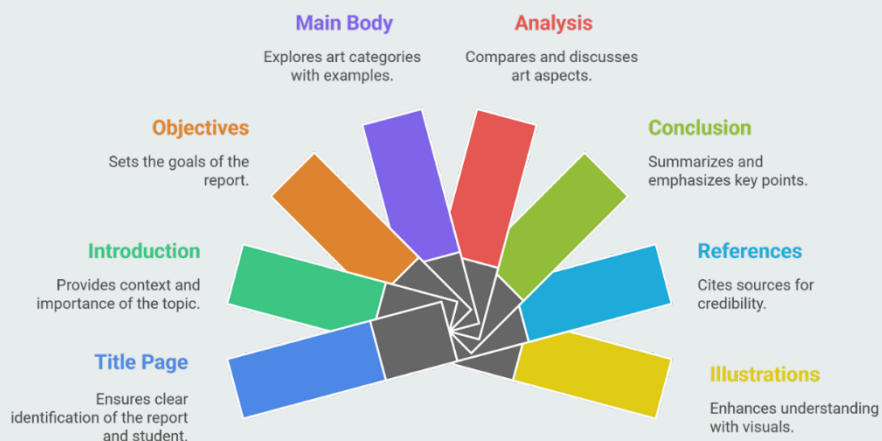


Figure 1.18: A fan chart showing the basic steps of report writing

Table 1.2: Analysing works of Contemporary African Artists and Designers

Name of Artist/Designer	Nationality	Category of Art/Design	An example /Title of Work	Features/ Characteristics of the work	Type of societal problem/ issues the work solves
Eva Sonaïke	Nigerian	Interior design	The Falomo Collection	Her collections feature bold colour palettes, unique patterns, and a blend of African heritage with modern aesthetics	Modern African Culture
Josephine Ngminvielu Kuuire	Ghanaian	Photographer/ Digital Artist	Black and White portrait series “I am What you see”	The portraits explore themes of identity, sexuality, gender, and social roles	The work questioned gender norms and championed queer identities in Ghanaian society

Activity 1.6 Contemporary African Artists and Their Artworks

You will work as a curator, researcher, and interpreter to explore the richness of contemporary African art and design. Your goal is to research, document, and present a well-rounded understanding of African artists, their works, and their significance in today's world using these steps.

1. Use the search findings on the categories of contemporary African art in **Activity 1.5** to create an Artist Profile similar to **Table 1.2** by including these:
 - a. Select one contemporary African artist or designer (e.g., Eva Sonaike, Wangechi Mutu, Mary Sibande, Yinka Shonibare, Gonçalo Mabunda).
 - b. Document the following:
 - i. Full name, country, and background
 - ii. Style/category of their work
 - iii. One or two keywords with short descriptions
 - iv. Themes/messages in their art
 - v. How their work reflects African experiences or global issues
2. Analyse & Interpret Selected Artwork in a form of concept statement (Refer to **Figure 1.19** for guidance on writing a concept statement) using these steps.
 - a. Choose one artwork/design by your selected artist.
 - b. Observe: medium, colours, composition, symbols, style.
 - c. Interpret the message and identify techniques used.
 - d. Think critically about how you would respond with your own artwork:
 - i. Medium you would use
 - ii. Message you would convey
 - e. Write a brief art concept statement in your visual diary describing:
 - i. Your understanding of the original work
 - ii. Your response idea and its link to your life, school, or community
 - iii. (Optional) Include a sketch or title for your response work

3. Prepare to make a presentation using the guidelines below.
 - a. Compiling your catalogue entries, artist profile, and artwork interpretation into a single product:
 - i. A small exhibition booklet,
 - ii. A poster, or
 - iii. A digital presentation (PowerPoint, Canva, or short video)
 - b. Sharing with the class or in small groups. Engage in a short discussion:
 - i. What themes or approaches appear often among African artists?
 - ii. What makes each artist's style unique?

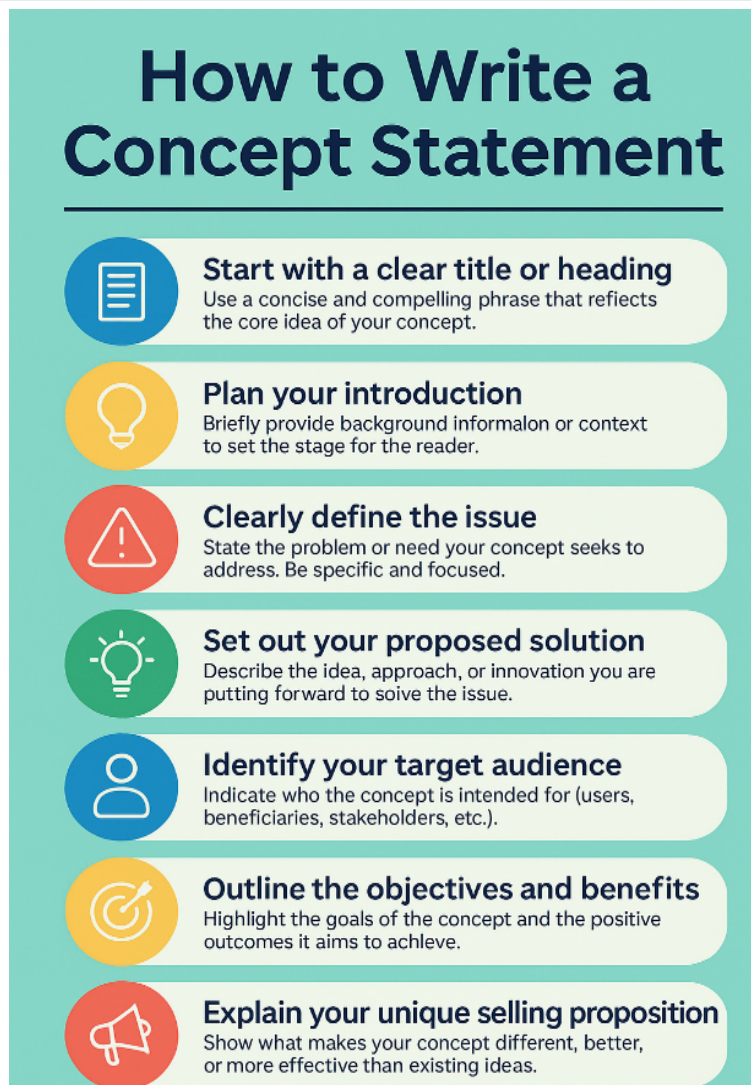


Figure 1.19: Guidelines for writing a concept statement



Think about this: Let us say you do not have access to digital and ICT resources to create catalogues. Can you create a similar one manually, like in **Figure 1.20** below?

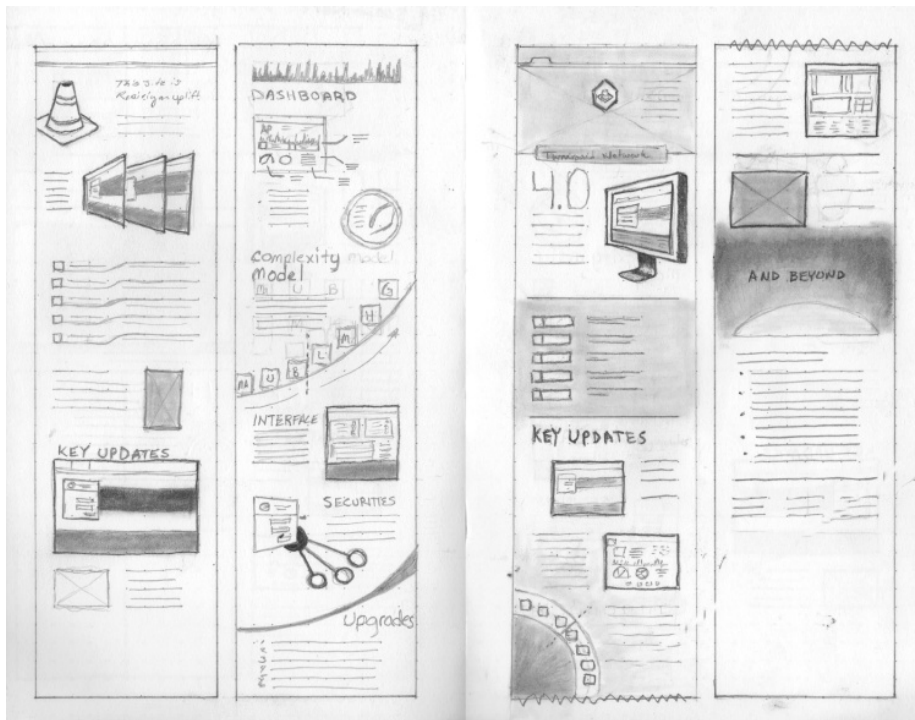


Figure 1.20: An Example of a manual catalogue.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN CONTEMPORARY ART AND ARTISTS TO ART INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA

We often talk about the brilliant artworks and the talented artists who create them. But have you ever stopped to think about *where* this art lives? An artwork, no matter how powerful, needs a home. It needs a place where it can be seen, discussed, cared for, and where it can inspire others. These art homes, museums, galleries, schools, and festivals are what we call **art institutions**. They are the essential support system, the very heartbeat, which keeps the art world alive and thriving. We are going to explore this vital ecosystem.

First, we will take a tour of some of the most important art institutions in Africa, starting right here in Ghana. Then, we will investigate one of the most exciting stories in the art world today: how the bold, innovative, and challenging work of contemporary African artists is fundamentally changing these institutions, pushing them to evolve and dream in new ways.

Key Art Institutions in Africa

An “art institution” is any organisation dedicated to creating, showing, or teaching art. Here are the main types we see in Africa today.

As it has been discussed in year two, an art institution is any organisation dedicated to the creation, exhibition, preservation, or education of art. In Africa, these institutions are incredibly diverse. Some are old and steeped in history, while others are brand new, buzzing with modern energy. Together, they form a network that nurtures the continent’s creative spirit.

Art Institutions in Ghana: A Look at Our Own Backyard

Here in Ghana, we are fortunate to have a dynamic and growing art scene with institutions that serve different, but equally important, roles.

blaxTARLINES KUMASI: This is not your typical gallery with quiet white walls. Based at the prestigious Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), blaxTARLINES is an experimental art incubator. Think of it as a creative laboratory. It was founded by faculty and students to support emerging artists who want to push boundaries and ask difficult questions. It is famous for its massive, ambitious exhibitions, like ‘*Orderly Disorderly*’, which turned spaces all over Ghana into venues for over 100 artists. It champions art that is critical, research-driven, and deeply engaged with Ghanaian society.

1. ***The National Museum of Ghana:*** Located in Accra and opened in 1957, the year of our independence, this is our nation’s most important treasure chest. Its primary role is to preserve our rich cultural heritage. Here, you will find historical objects that tell the story of Ghana: beautifully crafted ceremonial drums, ancient gold weights, and intricate wooden carvings. However, the museum is not just about the past. It also collects and displays contemporary artworks, creating a powerful conversation between our history and our present.
2. ***Nubuke Foundation:*** Situated in East Legon, Accra, the Nubuke Foundation represents a new kind of art institution. It is a multi-purpose cultural centre that fills many gaps in Ghana’s creative landscape. It hosts rotating exhibitions of renowned artists, runs structured art education programs for children, and supports emerging talents. It is a vibrant space for literary events, workshops, and community engagement, showing that a modern art institution can be a hub for all kinds of creativity.

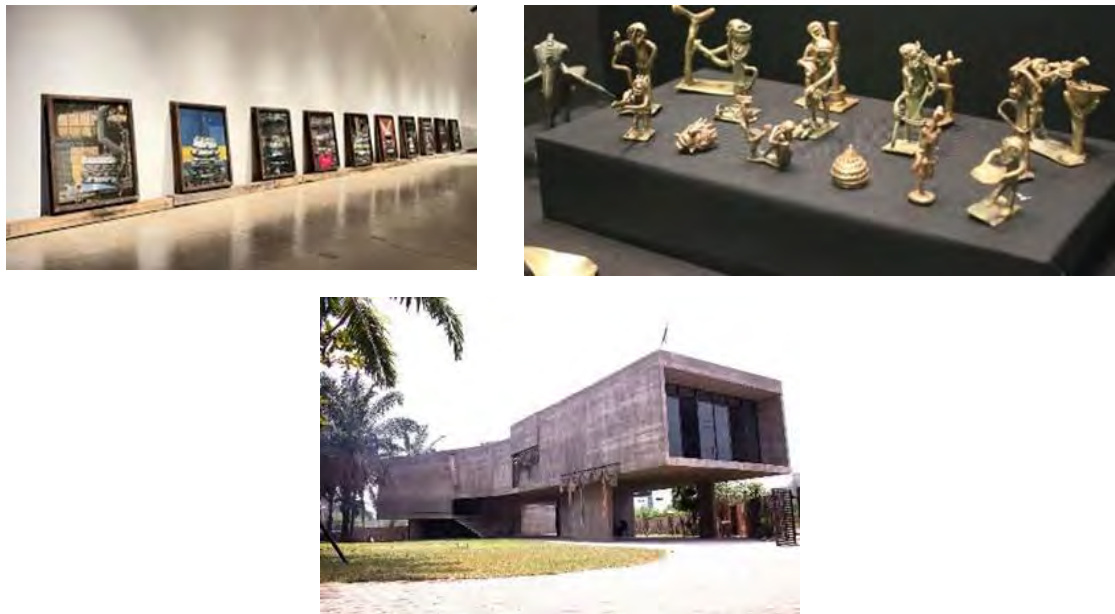


Figure 1.21: A collage showing three photos. Left: An experimental installation from a *blaxTARLINES* exhibition. Centre: A display of historical gold weights at the National Museum. Right: The modern, welcoming exterior of the Nubuke Foundation.

Significant Institutions Across the Continent

Ghana's vibrant scene is part of a larger, continent-wide network of creativity. Let us look at a few other key institutions.

1. *Zeitz MOCAA (South Africa)*

This is a true landmark. Located in Cape Town, the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) is the largest museum in the world dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. Housed in a magnificently repurposed grain silo, the building itself is a work of art. Its mission is powerful: to provide a world-class home for our continent's art, *on our continent*. It sends a clear message that African art no longer needs to look to Europe or America for validation.

2. *Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Lagos (Nigeria)*

Founded by the legendary late curator Bisi Silva, CCA, Lagos is a vital intellectual hub. It is a non-profit space that connects the local art scene in Nigeria to the global art world. It is known for promoting experimental art, especially photography and video, and for its critical art discourse through talks, publications, and residencies. It has been instrumental in nurturing a generation of artists who think deeply and critically about their work.

3. *National Gallery of Zimbabwe*

This institution shows the resilience of art. Founded in 1957, it has been a guardian of Zimbabwe's artistic heritage, from its famous Shona stone sculptures to the works of today's contemporary artists. Even through periods of political and economic difficulty, the gallery has continued to support its artists and provide a space for creative expression, proving how essential art is to a nation's soul.

4. *African Artists' Foundation (AAF), Lagos (Nigeria)*

This non-profit organisation, also in Lagos, is famous for its dynamic programs. Its most well-known project is the **LagosPhoto Festival**, an annual city-wide celebration of photography that has positioned Lagos as a major hub for the medium in Africa. By focusing on specific programs like this, the AAF shows how an institution can have a massive impact by doing a few things exceptionally well.

How Contemporary Art is Changing these Institutions

Now we come to the most exciting part of our story. The relationship between artists and institutions is not a one-way street. The institutions support the artists, but the bold and innovative work of contemporary artists is also pushing the institutions themselves to change, grow, and become more relevant to our 21st-century world.

1. **From Preserving the Past to Engaging the Present**

For many years, the main job of an African museum was to act as a guardian of history; a place for ancient masks, traditional pottery, and royal artefacts. While this is still a vital role, contemporary art has forced them to look forward as well as backward.

Museums in Africa used to focus almost exclusively on ethnography and history. Today, they are dynamic spaces that showcase all kinds of art. At the National Museum of Ghana, you can now see traditional gold weights in one room and, in another, a massive, room-filling installation by an artist like **Ibrahim Mahama** made from huge jute sacks. This creates a dialogue between the past and present. The Artists Alliance Gallery in Accra started by showing paintings but now includes video art, sound installations, and digital works. This evolution is a direct response to what contemporary artists are creating.

2. Changing How Art is Taught

The new ideas in contemporary art have also had a profound impact on art schools. Art education is no longer just about learning the technical skills of painting and drawing in a closed studio. It is about engaging with the world.

At **blaxTARLINES** in Kumasi, students are not just taught how to paint; they are encouraged to go into their communities, collect local materials like calabashes or recycled metal, and create art that tells stories about Ghana today. This approach, which values ideas and local context as much as technique, is revolutionary. Similarly, the **Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA)** in Tamale, founded by Ibrahim Mahama, runs workshops where young artists learn to use everything from palm fibres to electronic waste. This is a direct shift from a Western-focused art education to one that is grounded in our own environment and experiences.

3. Finding New Ways to Survive and Thrive

Traditional museums often rely on government funding. But contemporary art has inspired a more entrepreneurial spirit in art institutions, leading to new, creative ways to sustain themselves economically.

African art spaces have found clever ways to support their work. The **Nubuke Foundation** in Accra is a perfect example. It does not just rely on donations. It sells artwork, rents its beautiful garden for events, and runs a café. This creates multiple streams of income, making it more resilient. When a gallery like the Circle Art Gallery in Nairobi sells a colourful painting by a famous Kenyan artist, it might use a share of that sale to fund programs for younger, emerging artists who have not sold anything yet. This creates a self-sustaining ecosystem where success is reinvested back into the community.

4. Becoming the Heart of the Community

For a long time, many people felt that museums and galleries were formal, quiet, and intimidating places. Contemporary art, which is often interactive and engaged with social issues, has pushed institutions to open their doors and become true community gathering places.

The **GoDown Arts Centre** in Nairobi, for example, hosts “Nai Ni Who” (“Who is Nairobi”) festivals where contemporary artists and everyday people work together to create art using materials found in the city. Here in Ghana, the **Chale Wote Street Art Festival**, while not a permanent building, functions as a temporary institution that turns Jamestown into a living gallery

for everyone. This shift towards community engagement is a direct result of contemporary artists making work that is *about* the community and *for* the community.

5. Embracing the Digital Future

Finally, contemporary artists, many of whom work with digital tools, have pushed institutions to embrace technology to preserve and share art.

African institutions are now using technology to document today's art for the future. Online platforms like **Contemporary And (C&)** create digital archives of artists like El Anatsui, making their work accessible to anyone with an internet connection. The **National Museum of Mali** offers digital demonstrations of traditional textile-making, using new technology to preserve ancient techniques. These tools safeguard our heritage and make African art globally accessible. Institutions are no longer just physical buildings; they are becoming digital hubs for innovation, community, and African-led dialogue.

As we have seen, the art institutions of Africa are not static buildings filled with silent objects. They are living, breathing ecosystems that are in a constant, dynamic dance with the artists they support.

We have toured the key institutions, from the historical guardians like our National Museum to the experimental labs like blaxTARLINES. More importantly, we have seen how the powerful engine of contemporary art is driving these institutions forward. It is pushing them to engage with the present, to rethink how they teach, to find innovative ways to sustain themselves, to open their doors to the community, and to embrace the future.

This is a story of evolution and partnership. The institutions provide the platform, and the artists provide the creative energy that ensures these platforms are exciting, relevant, and powerful. As you continue your own journey in art, I encourage you to visit these places. See the history, but also look for the new, challenging work that is pointing the way forward. You are witnessing a remarkable transformation, and you are a part of it.

Activity 1.7 Exploring Contributions of African Art/Design Institutions

1. Research different art institutions across Africa. Each group will choose or be assigned one or two institutions to investigate (e.g., Nubuke Foundation – Ghana, Zeitz MOCAA – South Africa, RAW Material

Company – Senegal, National Museum of Mali, Centre for Contemporary Art – Nigeria).

2. For each institution, your group will find out;
 - a. The location and name
 - b. Its main role or purpose (e.g., exhibition, education, artist support, cultural preservation)
 - c. The types of artworks or artists it promotes
 - d. How it supports contemporary African art and artists
 - e. Any notable exhibitions or programmes
3. Place your findings on a large map of Africa (physical or digital).
 - a. Mark the country and add a label with brief notes or a visual
 - b. Include one image (printed or drawn) representing each institution
4. Share your section of the map with the class. As a group, discuss the questions below.
 - a. Which countries have strong art networks?
 - b. How do these institutions help African art grow globally?

Activity 1.8 Promoting Creativity, Culture, and Community

You are starting your own art institution in Ghana or another African country. Your goal is to support young artists and promote African culture locally and internationally. To achieve this, follow the guidelines below.

1. Start by planning your institution by answering these questions.
 - a. What is the name of your institution?
 - b. What is its main purpose (e.g., training, exhibitions, research, youth engagement)?
 - c. What kind of artists and artworks will you promote?
 - d. What activities or programmes will you run?
 - e. How will your institution benefit the community or African art?
2. Present your plan in a creative format.
 - a. A brochure or flyer
 - b. A visual sketch of the institution's layout
 - c. A short oral pitch to the class

3. After all presentations, reflect as a class on these questions.
 - a. What challenges do African art institutions face?
 - b. What can be done to strengthen them for the future?

IMPACTS OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART ON THE ARTWORLD

So far, we have explored the amazing art, artists, and institutions that make up Africa's contemporary art scene. We have seen incredible creativity happening right here on our continent. But what happens when this art travels abroad? What is its effect on the wider world?

Let us look at the **impact** of contemporary African art on the global art world. We will see that our artists are not just being invited to the party; they are changing the music. Their work is forcing museums to rethink their collections, shifting the art market, and sparking critical debates about history, identity, and the very definition of “art.”

How Africa is Reshaping the Global Art World

The rise of contemporary African art is one of the most important stories in global culture today. Here are some of its biggest impacts.

Redefining “Contemporary Art” Itself

For a long time, the story of modern and contemporary art was centred on Europe and America. African artists are proving that brilliant innovation happens everywhere.

- a. **New Materials and Techniques:** The world has been amazed by artists like **El Anatsui**. His use of simple bottle caps to create massive, shimmering sculptures has expanded what the world considers a material for serious art. This is innovation, not imitation.
- b. **New Perspectives:** Artists like **Michael Armitage (Kenya)** paint on traditional Lubugo bark cloth. This choice of material brings a unique history and texture to his work that challenges the dominance of Western canvas, blending different artistic traditions into something completely new.

Shifting the Global Art Market

The art market is where art is bought and sold, often for very high prices. For decades, this market was focused on Western artists. Now, that is changing dramatically.

- a. **Record-Breaking Sales:** Artists like Ghana's **Amoako Bofo** have seen their paintings sell for millions of dollars at major international auctions in places like London and New York.
- b. High prices are a signal of high value and importance. When the market values African artists this highly, it forces international collectors, museums, and galleries to pay serious attention, creating more opportunities for other artists from the continent.

Forcing Museums to “Decolonise.”

The most famous museums in the world (in London, Paris, and New York) are now rushing to acquire and exhibit the work of contemporary African artists.

- a. To stay relevant, these institutions know they must reflect the world as it is today. A museum with no contemporary African art is now seen as incomplete and outdated.
- b. **Sparking a Deeper Conversation:** This has also forced a conversation about the older African art that these museums hold. It has intensified the global debate on **repatriation**. That is, the return of artefacts like the **Benin Bronzes** (from Nigeria) and **Asante treasures** (from Ghana) that were looted during the colonial era. The presence of new art highlights the absence of the old.

Key Debates Sparked by African Art's Global Rise

The incredible success of contemporary African artists on the world stage has been celebrated, but it has also sparked important and sometimes difficult conversations. These are not simple questions with easy answers; they are complex debates that force us to think critically about identity, culture, and power in the art world.

The Debate: “What Makes Art ‘African’?”

This is perhaps the most complex question of all. As artists from the continent gain more visibility, the world wants to label their work. But is it about the artist's nationality? Where do they live? The themes in their work? Or the materials they use?

- a. **Challenging stereotypes:** For a long time, the outside world had a very narrow and often stereotypical idea of what “African art” should look like, perhaps masks, wooden figures, or works using traditional patterns. Contemporary artists completely shatter this idea. An artist like **Akwasi Afranie Bediako** from Ghana creates futuristic worlds using digital software and augmented reality. His work may not use traditional materials, but it is born from a contemporary Ghanaian experience and perspective. This proves that “African art” is not a single style; it is a universe of them.
- b. **The Question of the Diaspora:** Many of Africa’s most famous artists live and work in the **diaspora** (living outside their country of origin). For example, **Yinka Shonibare CBE** is a British-Nigerian artist based in London. His most famous works are sculptures of figures in European-style clothing made from vibrant “Dutch wax” fabric, which is strongly associated with Africa. His art is not about being *either* British *or* Nigerian; it is about the complex, in-between experience of having a **hybrid identity**. This reality challenges any simple definition based on geography alone.
- c. **The Answer is Diversity:** Ultimately, there is no single definition. “African art” today is diverse and global. It can be made in Accra or in London, with traditional beads or with digital software. It can be about a local Ghanaian issue or a universal human emotion. The complexity of this question reflects the complexity of modern African identity itself. Trying to force all this creativity into one box is not only impossible; it is a disservice to the artists.

The Debate: Cultural Appropriation vs. Respectful Exchange

As African art becomes more popular, so do its styles, patterns, and aesthetics. This is a sign of our culture’s global influence, but it also leads to a critical ethical issue.

- a. **Cultural Appropriation:** This is when a dominant culture (often Western) takes significant elements from a minority culture without understanding, permission, or credit. The harm is multi-layered. It erases the deep meaning of cultural symbols, turning something sacred into a mere fashion trend. It also often results in economic injustice. For example, when a major European fashion brand uses traditional kente patterns in its designs, it makes millions of dollars, and gives no credit or benefit to the Ghanaian weavers who have perfected and preserved that tradition for centuries. The value is extracted, but the source community is left out.

- b. *Respectful Exchange:*** This is the positive alternative. It is a genuine, two-way dialogue that is based on learning and collaboration. A respectful exchange involves taking the time to understand the history and meaning behind a cultural form, seeking permission, and ensuring that the original creators are credited and compensated fairly. For instance, the collaboration between **Amoako Boafo** and the luxury fashion house **Dior** is a powerful example. Dior did not just take his style; they worked directly with him, celebrated him as the artist, and brought his unique vision to their global platform.
- c. *The Artist's Responsibility:*** The global success of our artists has made the world more aware of this issue. They are now in a powerful position to lead this conversation, demanding greater respect for our cultural heritage and intellectual property. They show that our culture is not a free resource for the world to take; it is a treasure to be shared, respectfully.

Case Study: The 2019 “Ghana Freedom” Pavilion in Venice

The first-ever Ghana Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is a perfect example of this global impact in action.

- a. *A Statement of Intent:*** It was a bold declaration that Ghana is a major force in contemporary art. The architecture, designed by the world-famous Ghanaian-British architect **Sir David Adjaye**, was a work of art in itself.
- b. *Driving the Narrative:*** The exhibition was curated by a Ghanaian, **Nana Oforiatta Ayim**, and featured six artists with deep connections to Ghana. It told a story of our nation's history and future *on our own terms*.
- c. *Global Impact:*** It was one of the most talked-about exhibitions at the Biennale, receiving praise from international critics and putting Ghanaian art at the very centre of the global conversation.

Contemporary African art is no longer on the margins of the art world; it is becoming a new centre of gravity. Its impact is forcing change everywhere in the auction houses of New York, the museums of Paris, and the studios of artists around the globe. Our artists are not just showing their work; they are changing the rules of the game and creating a more inclusive, diverse, and honest global art world for everyone.

Activity 1.9 Analysing Contemporary African Art Impacts

You are an art critic preparing an exhibition review for an international art magazine. Your focus is on contemporary African art and its impact on the global art world. To do the following to help you succeed.

1. Select one contemporary African artist or artwork to focus on.
2. Analyse how the artist or artwork has influenced the African or global art scene.
3. Identify the social, cultural, or political issues addressed in the work.
4. Explain how the work has changed perceptions of African art locally and internationally.
5. Identify the platforms (e.g., biennales, museums, auctions) where its impact is showcased.
6. Present your analysis in a creative format, such as:
 - a. A magazine-style article with images.
 - b. A short documentary or slideshow presentation.
 - c. A visual mind map of the artist's or artwork's influence.
7. Class reflection after presentations.
 - a. Discuss how the global Artworld is responding to contemporary African art.
 - b. Suggest strategies African artists can use to expand their influence.

Activity 1.10 Mapping African Art Influence

You are the Minister for Creative Arts, Culture and Tourism, preparing to show international delegates how African creativity influences other cultures and art movements.

1. Select contemporary African artworks or artists for your exhibition.
2. Identify countries or regions outside Africa influenced by these works.
3. Describe how these influences appear in style, technique, or themes.
4. Record examples of audience reactions or collaborations resulting from the influence.
5. Explain how this exchange benefits African art in return.

6. Present your exhibition plan in a creative format, like:
 - a. An illustrated world map showing influence pathways.
 - b. A mock exhibition guide or catalogue.
 - c. A short oral presentation as the minister's pitch.
7. Class reflection after presentations
 - a. Discuss the opportunities cultural exchange creates for African art.
 - b. Suggest ways African artists can maintain authenticity while appealing to global audiences.

THE MAJOR MILESTONES OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Contemporary art means the art of our time, art made from the late 20th century to today. It reflects the issues, ideas, and styles of the world we live in. Over the years, some important events and movements have shaped how we see and understand contemporary art. These important events are called **milestones**.

The Rise of Global Art Exhibitions (Biennales and Triennales)

In the world of contemporary art, some of the most important events are global art exhibitions known as Biennales and Triennales. These events are not just art shows; they are huge gatherings where the world's artists, curators, critics, and art lovers come together to exchange ideas and celebrate creativity.

1. *Biennale*: Comes from the Italian word “biennial,” meaning every two years. A Biennale is a large-scale art exhibition that happens once every two years in a particular city.
2. *Triennale*: Similar to a Biennale, but it happens every three years.

Famous Examples

- a. Venice Biennale (Italy) – Started in 1895, it is one of the oldest and most prestigious art exhibitions in the world. Artists from over 80 countries display their works in national pavilions.
- b. Dakar Biennale (Senegal) – Focuses mainly on African contemporary art and gives African artists an international platform. It has become a major cultural event in Africa.

- c. Gwangju Biennale (South Korea) – Known for combining art with political and social themes.
- d. Milan Triennale (Italy) – Famous for design and architecture exhibitions.

These exhibitions are important because they:

- a. Bring Global Artists Together: Artists from different cultures and backgrounds meet, share, and collaborate.
- b. Promote Cultural Exchange: Viewers experience the diversity of the world's art and traditions.
- c. Address World Issues: Many artworks respond to global problems like climate change, migration, human rights, and technology's impact.
- d. Boost Local Economies: Hosting a Biennale or Triennale attracts tourists, investors, and media attention.
- e. Shape Art Trends: New art styles, materials, and ideas often emerge from these events and influence art worldwide.

The Expansion of African Contemporary Art on the World Stage

In the past, African art was often viewed by the rest of the world only through the lens of “traditional” works like masks, sculptures, textiles, and crafts linked to ancient customs. While these are still highly valued as foundational parts of our cultural heritage, the late 20th and early 21st centuries saw a major paradigm shift. The global art world finally began to recognise the powerful, dynamic, and conceptually rich contemporary art being produced across the continent. This was a move from viewing African art as a static historical artefact to celebrating it as a living, breathing, and forward-looking creative force.

This change became very noticeable in the 1990s and 2000s. This transformation was not accidental; it was driven by a more globalised world where artists, curators, and ideas could travel more freely. Influential curators began to challenge the Western-centric view of art history, creating major exhibitions that placed African artists at the centre of the global conversation. As a result, African artists began to be featured in international galleries, biennales, auctions, and art fairs alongside artists from Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

Key Platforms and Events

Several key platforms have been crucial in providing a global stage for African artists and shaping the international market.

- a. **Cape Town Art Fair (South Africa)** – As the largest art fair on the continent, this event brings together African and international artists, collectors, and curators, creating a vital space for African art to compete in the global market right here in Africa.
- b. **1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair** – Named after the 54 countries that make up the African continent, this fair is a dedicated ambassador for our art. It is held annually in major art capitals like London, New York, and Marrakech, and it focuses entirely on showcasing African talent and creativity to the world.
- c. **Dakar Biennale (Senegal)** – Established in 1992, this is the continent’s oldest and most prestigious large-scale art exhibition. It remains a key platform where African artists present their work to an international audience, often on their own terms and away from the commercial pressures of the West.

The rise of these platforms and artists has had a profound and lasting impact.

- a. ***Changed Perceptions:*** This global visibility has shattered the outdated idea that African art is only “tribal” or “primitive.” African art is now correctly seen as modern, innovative, and globally relevant, encompassing everything from sophisticated video art and monumental installations to critical photography.
- b. ***New Opportunities for Artists:*** With this new respect comes tangible opportunities. More African artists now sell their works in global markets for record-breaking prices, win prestigious international awards, and collaborate with major brands, allowing them to build sustainable careers.
- c. ***Cultural Exchange:*** These platforms allow African artists to share their unique perspectives on universal issues like politics, the environment, and identity. They add crucial, non-Western viewpoints to the global dialogue, enriching the conversation for everyone.
- d. ***Economic Benefits:*** Growing recognition means more art sales, cultural tourism, and investment in Africa’s creative industries. A successful sale in London can help fund a new gallery or artist-run space in Accra or Lagos.
- e. ***Representation and Pride:*** Most importantly, African voices are now far more visible and influential in shaping global art conversations. Our artists

have moved from the margins to the centre, fostering a sense of pride and affirming the power and importance of our stories.

The Digital Revolution in Art

In the not-so-distant past, the journey of an artist was often a long and difficult road defined by physical limitations. To share their work, artists needed access to physical galleries, formal exhibitions, or features in printed media like magazines and newspapers. This created a system of “gatekeepers” gallery owners, critics, and curators who decided whose art was seen and whose was not. This often meant that only a few artists, mostly those living in major art capitals like London or New York or those with influential connections, could hope to reach international audiences. This system was slow, exclusive, and left countless talented creators on the outside looking in.

The rise of the internet, social media, and powerful digital tools has completely changed this landscape. This digital revolution has acted as a great democratizing force, blowing the walls off the traditional gallery and handing power back to the individual artist. Now, creators can produce, share, and even sell their work instantly to a global audience from anywhere in the world, with nothing more than a device and an internet connection.

This profound shift was driven by a new ecosystem of digital platforms and technologies that have become central to our modern lives.

- a. **Social Media Platforms** like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have effectively become personal, 24/7 global galleries for artists. An artist can post high-quality pictures, engaging videos, and even live streams of their creative process. Instagram serves as a living portfolio, while platforms like TikTok and YouTube allow artists to build a community by sharing time-lapses of their work or tutorials. A young artist in a small Ghanaian town can now gain a massive following in Japan or Brazil without ever leaving their studio.
- b. **Digital Tools** such as Adobe Photoshop, Procreate for tablets, and 3D modelling software like Blender have given artists entirely new ways to create artworks. This removes the need for expensive traditional materials like oil paints, large canvases, or clay. The creative process itself has been transformed, with the ability to work in layers, undo mistakes with a single click, and experiment with an infinite palette of colours. This has lowered the barrier to entry, allowing more people to express their creativity.

- c. **NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens)** have introduced a revolutionary new way for artists to sell and protect their digital works. The biggest challenge for digital art has always been its infinite reproducibility; how can a file be rare if it can be copied perfectly? By using secure blockchain technology, an NFT acts as a unique, unforgeable certificate of authenticity. It proves who owns the original digital piece of art, making it rare and valuable, just like a physical painting. Artists like Osinachi from Nigeria have used NFTs to sell their work for high prices directly to collectors, completely bypassing the traditional gallery system.

The consequences of this digital revolution are immense and have reshaped the art world for good.

- a. **Global Access:** Technology has broken down the geographical borders that once defined the art world. An artist's talent and unique vision are now more important than their location, levelling the playing field for creators from all corners of the globe.
- b. **More Opportunities:** Artists are no longer solely dependent on galleries, which often take a large commission (up to 50%) from sales. They can now earn money by selling directly to collectors online through social media, their own websites, or NFT marketplaces, giving them greater financial independence.
- c. **New Art Forms:** Entirely new categories of art have been born from this revolution. Digital painting, generative art created by algorithms, immersive virtual reality (VR) art that you can walk inside, and NFTs are now established parts of the global art world, pushing the very definition of what art can be.
- d. **Faster Cultural Exchange:** Ideas, styles, and artistic movements can now spread around the world in an instant. A new technique can “go viral,” allowing artists from different countries and cultures to inspire and collaborate with each other in real-time, accelerating the pace of creative innovation.
- e. **Control and Protection:** While online theft is still a risk, technologies like NFTs and digital copyright tools give artists more power to control their creations. They can track the ownership of their work and ensure they are credited and compensated, turning them from just creators into entrepreneurs of their own digital brand.

Art as Social and Political Voice

In contemporary times, art has evolved far beyond being something beautiful to look at or a simple decoration for a room. Today, it stands as one of the most powerful and effective platforms for social and political commentary. Many artists use their skills and creativity to act as the conscience of their society, using their work as a megaphone to speak up about the important issues that define our lives. This can include fighting for human rights, demanding gender and racial equality, raising the alarm about the environment, exploring cultural identity, and even calling for political change.

In this role, artists become like investigative journalists, storytellers, or activists. They translate complex problems into compelling visual language, using powerful images, thought-provoking sculptures, impactful performances, or viral digital works to spark conversations and challenge people to think differently. A single artwork can often communicate a difficult truth more effectively than a thousand-word essay, creating an emotional connection that inspires a deep and lasting response.

Example

One of the most powerful examples of this is the work of the celebrated Ghanaian artist, **El Anatsui**. He is world-famous for taking thousands of discarded aluminium bottle tops and copper wire, items that most would consider waste, and painstakingly weaving them into massive, shimmering, cloth-like tapestries that flow like royal kente. At first glance, his work is stunningly beautiful, but its true power lies in its deep layers of meaning.

- a. His work talks directly about **recycling** and environmental care, transforming trash into treasure.
- b. It speaks about **trade**, as these bottle tops, mostly from alcoholic beverages, represent a long history of goods and people moving around the world.
- c. Most profoundly, it comments on **history**, especially Africa's complex relationship with colonialism and global commerce.

These artworks are not just shown in Ghana; they are displayed in major museums around the world, from New York to London and Tokyo, making his message about our shared history and environmental responsibility truly global.

The use of art as a social and political voice is critically important for a healthy society.

- a. **Raises Awareness:** A powerful artwork can put a human face on a complex problem, making people notice issues they may have previously ignored. A photograph of a river destroyed by “galamsey” can be far more impactful than a news report, forcing viewers to confront the reality of the situation.
- b. **Inspires Action:** Art does not just show a problem; it can stir emotions that motivate people to act. A powerful artwork can inspire people to recycle more, stand up for justice in their community, or lend their support to a vital cause.
- c. **Preserves History:** Art becomes a visual archive, documenting the struggles, triumphs, and defining moments of a generation. Artists can capture the spirit of protest movements or celebrate national victories, creating a permanent record for future generations to learn from.
- d. **Gives a Voice to the Voiceless:** Art can powerfully represent the experiences of communities that are often ignored by mainstream media or political structures. It can speak for marginalised groups, sharing their stories and demanding that their humanity be recognised.
- e. **Builds Global Understanding:** A powerful image needs no translation. The messages in art about shared human concerns—like the desire for freedom, the love for our planet, or the pain of injustice—can cross language and cultural barriers, allowing people from different countries to connect over their shared humanity.

The Growth of Art Education and Institutions

The incredible rise of contemporary African art on the global stage did not happen in a vacuum. It has been supported and nurtured by the steady growth of a strong creative infrastructure right here on the continent. Over the past few decades, a new generation of art schools, world-class museums, and dynamic galleries has opened across Africa. These new spaces are creating vibrant new hubs for creativity, critical thinking, and cultural exchange.

These places are not just passive buildings for displaying objects; they are active and essential engines for the entire creative ecosystem. They serve as centres for professional training, platforms for vital inspiration, and guardians responsible for preserving Africa’s rich and diverse heritage. Crucially, they also give local artists the invaluable opportunity to display their work to both their home communities

and to international audiences, often providing the launching pad for a global career.

Examples

- a. **Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)** – Located in a stunningly repurposed historic grain silo in Cape Town, South Africa, this is the largest museum in the world dedicated to 21st-century art from Africa and its diaspora. It is a landmark institution that hosts major exhibitions, educational workshops, and public talks with leading artists and thinkers.
- b. **Nubuke Foundation** – Based right here in Accra, Ghana, this foundation has become a vital part of our local art scene. It provides consistent support for Ghanaian artists at all stages of their careers, organises thought-provoking exhibitions, and runs essential training programmes and workshops specifically designed for young creatives.

These institutions perform several critical functions that are essential for a thriving art scene.

- a. **Train Future Artists** – By offering formal courses, practical workshops, mentorship opportunities, and giving young artists their first chance to exhibit, they prepare the next generation of African creative talent for professional careers.
- b. **Preserve Cultural Knowledge** – Museums and archives keep detailed records of both past and present art movements. By documenting, researching, and conserving artworks, they ensure that Africa's diverse histories and traditions are not lost.
- c. **Promote Innovation** – By providing a safe space for experimentation, these institutions encourage artists to push boundaries and explore new materials, styles, and challenging ideas that might not be commercially popular.
- d. **Connect Africa to the World** – By hosting international exhibitions and participating in global art events, they create a two-way dialogue, bringing global art to Africa and helping African art gain the international recognition it deserves.

The growth of these institutions has a powerful and lasting impact on our societies.

- a. It strengthens the entire creative industry in Africa, building a sustainable foundation for the future.
- b. It creates a wide range of professional jobs for artists, curators, educators, gallery technicians, and arts administrators.

- c. It inspires young people to see art and design as a serious, viable, and respected career path.
- d. It ensures that African voices, perspectives, and stories are not just included, but are central to shaping global art conversations.

Inclusion of New Art Forms

Today, the world of contemporary art is more diverse and exciting than ever before. It has moved far beyond the traditional idea of a painting in a frame or a sculpture on a pedestal. The most groundbreaking art of the 21st century often focuses on creating powerful experiences, encouraging interaction, and exploring big ideas, rather than just producing something beautiful to look at. This shift has opened up a universe of new possibilities for artists to express themselves.

Examples of New Art Forms

- a. **Performance Art** – This is art that is presented live by the artist. It is a temporary event, existing only in the moment it is performed. Imagine an artist in Accra’s Independence Square, dressed in a costume made of woven plastic waste, silently interacting with passersby to raise awareness about pollution. The art is the action, the moment, and the public’s reaction. It often combines acting, movement, music, and even audience interaction to create a powerful, unforgettable message.
- b. **Installation Art** – These are large-scale works that are designed to transform an entire space, allowing viewers to walk inside, around, or through them. The goal is to create an immersive environment that the audience can experience with their whole body, not just their eyes. Think of Yayoi Kusama’s famous “Infinity Mirror Rooms,” where you step inside a space and feel like you are floating in an endless universe of stars.
- c. **Street Art** – This brings art out of the gallery and into our communities. Creative works are displayed in public spaces for everyone to see, turning a boring wall into a vibrant canvas. This includes large murals, spray-painted graffiti, and urban sculptures. Street art makes our cities more beautiful and can carry powerful social or political messages.
- d. **3D Printing Art** – Technology has given artists incredible new tools. Sculptures and complex objects can now be created using digital designs and 3D printers. An artist can design a modern, intricate version of an Adinkra symbol on a computer and then bring it to life as a physical sculpture, creating forms that would be impossible to carve by hand.

- e. **Interactive Art** – This is art that needs you, the audience, to complete it. These works change or respond when people touch them, move around them, or use technology like a smartphone. An artwork might have sensors that cause it to light up or play sounds when you get close, making you an active participant in the creative process.

This evolution in art is significant for several key reasons.

- **Shows that art is not just an object, but an experience.** Instead of passively looking at a painting, you can be inside it, part of it, or even change it. This engages more of our senses and creates a deeper emotional connection.
- **Encourages artists to use new tools and materials.** Artists are no longer limited to paint, clay, or stone. They can now use their own bodies, digital code, recycled materials, light, and sound to bring their vision to life, pushing the boundaries of creativity.
- **Makes art more accessible.** By moving art into public streets, community spaces, and online platforms, these new forms reach people who might never step inside a traditional museum or gallery. It breaks down the idea that art is only for a select few.
- **Helps artists express complex ideas in creative ways.** How do you show the feeling of being connected in a digital world? An interactive installation might do it better than a painting. These new forms give artists a richer vocabulary to talk about the complex issues of our time.

Greater Inclusion of Women and Underrepresented Artists

For a very long time, the global art world was a narrow and exclusive space. Art history books and major museum collections presented a story that was largely dominated by white, male artists from Europe and America. This meant that countless brilliant artists were ignored or overlooked, not because of a lack of talent, but simply because of their gender, ethnicity, or background. Women were often denied entry to prestigious art schools or told that their subjects, like home and family, were not as important as historical paintings. Similarly, artists from Africa, Asia, and Latin America found that the gatekeepers of the art world were often not interested in their stories.

In recent decades, however, this has begun to change. Driven by social movements for equality and a more globalised perspective, there has been a conscious and determined effort to make the art world a more inclusive space. More female

artists and artists from underrepresented communities are now being recognised in major exhibitions, winning prestigious awards, and being written into the pages of art history, correcting a long-standing imbalance.

Examples

- a. **Njideka Akunyili Crosby (Nigeria/USA)** – Crosby has become one of the most celebrated painters in the world for her unique and complex works. In her large-scale pieces, she combines painting, drawing, collage, and photo-transfer techniques to explore her identity as someone living between cultures. Her art is a beautiful and intimate reflection on family, community, and the experience of being part of the African diaspora.
- b. **Amoako Boafo (Ghana)** – As one of Ghana’s most famous contemporary artists, Boafo is known for his powerful and intimate portraits that unapologetically celebrate Black identity, dignity, and beauty. Using his fingers to paint the faces of his subjects, he creates a unique texture and energy, capturing his figures with a profound sense of confidence and grace that directly counters historical underrepresentation.

This push for greater inclusion is not just a trend; it is a fundamental and necessary change for the entire art world.

- a. **Makes the art world more inclusive and fairer.** It is about correcting a historical injustice and creating a more level playing field where an artist’s success is determined by their talent and vision, not their background. It changes the art world from a monologue into a rich and diverse conversation.
- b. **Ensures that different voices and experiences are represented.** When art is made by a diverse group of people, it tells a fuller, more truthful picture of human experience. We get to know cultures from different perspectives, learn about different cultures, and hear stories that were previously silenced. This makes the art itself richer and more interesting for everyone.
- c. **Inspires young artists from all backgrounds to believe they also have a place in the art world.** When a young girl in a small town sees a celebrated female artist, or a young man sees an artist from his own country achieving global fame, it makes the impossible seem possible. It creates role models and sends a powerful message: your voice matters, your story is important, and you belong here.

Activity 1.11 Mapping Contemporary Art Milestones

Step into the role of a milestone detective. Your mission is to uncover and present the turning points that shaped contemporary art. To do that, use the steps below as a guide.

1. Search library books, online sources, or your teacher's resource bank for three significant milestones in contemporary art history (global or African).
2. For each milestone, record:
 - a. The year or period it took place.
 - b. The artists or movements involved.
 - c. Why it was important in shaping contemporary art.
3. Arrange your findings into a visual timeline (as you did in Year 1&2) that clearly shows the sequence of events.
4. Add short captions to explain each milestone's importance in everyday language.
5. Present your timeline as:
 - a. A large, illustrated wall chart.
 - b. A digital timeline using an online tool.
 - c. A fold-out booklet for display.
6. Use these questions for reflection after presentations:
 - a. Which milestones seemed to have the greatest influence on the global Artworld?
 - b. How do these milestones connect to artistic changes in Ghana or Africa?

Portfolio note: Keep your visual timeline in your digital or physical portfolio for future exhibition proposals.

Activity 1.12 Analysing Biennale and Triennale Exhibition Strategies

Across the world, Biennales and Triennales set the stage for bold artistic ideas. Some even change the way people see entire cultures. In this activity, you will investigate how these exhibitions work and what makes them successful. Follow the steps to guide you.

1. Select one Biennale and one Triennale (local, African, or international).
2. Investigate their exhibition strategies by finding out:
 - a. The themes they chose.
 - b. How artworks were selected.
 - c. How the exhibition spaces were organised.
 - d. Ways they engaged the audience (talks, workshops, community activities).
3. Compare the two events and note similarities and differences.
4. Propose three strategies you would use if you were curating your own exhibition in Ghana.
5. Share your analysis as;
 - a. A short video tour explaining your findings.
 - b. An illustrated guidebook.
 - c. A concept board with images, notes, and sketches.
6. Use these questions for reflection after presentations:
 - a. How can Ghanaian artists and curators adapt these strategies for local and international audiences?
 - b. Which strategies might help promote African art globally?

Local exploration challenge: Visit a nearby artist, gallery, museum, or cultural centre to see how exhibitions are organised. Take notes, photos, or sketches for your portfolio.

IMPACTS OF MODERN ART ON CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART

Modern art, which emerged in Europe and America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, introduced new ways of creating and thinking about art. It rejected strict rules of realism and encouraged experimentation, personal expression, and the use of new materials and techniques. When African artists encountered modern art through education, travel, exhibitions, and cultural exchange, it greatly influenced the development of contemporary African art.

Introduction of New Artistic Styles and Movements

1. African artists were inspired by modern art movements such as Cubism, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Abstract Art.
2. These movements encouraged artists to break away from purely traditional forms and explore new shapes, colours, and perspectives.
3. For example, Nigerian artist Ben Enwonwu used modernist approaches to blend traditional Igbo sculpture with European painting techniques.

Expansion of Materials and Techniques

1. Modern art encouraged experimentation with materials beyond wood, clay, and natural dyes traditionally used in African art.
2. Contemporary African artists now use acrylics, oil paints, metal, plastics, recycled materials, and digital tools in their work.
3. Ghanaian artist El Anatsui is famous for transforming discarded bottle tops into large, shimmering wall sculptures.

Greater Freedom of Expression

1. Modern art's emphasis on individual creativity gave African artists the freedom to address personal, social, and political issues in their work.
2. This allowed them to respond to topics such as colonialism, independence movements, cultural identity, and environmental concerns.
3. South African artist William Kentridge uses a modernist style to comment on apartheid and social justice.

Fusion of Traditional and Modern Elements

1. Contemporary African art often blends local cultural symbols with modernist aesthetics.
2. This fusion creates unique artworks that respect heritage while embracing global artistic trends.
3. For example, Ghanaian painter Ablade Glover mixes abstract expressionism with Ghanaian market scenes.

Growth of African Art on the Global Stage

1. Modern art's influence helped African art gain international recognition.
2. African artists began to exhibit in global galleries, participate in biennales, and sell works in the international art market.
3. The Venice Biennale and Dakar Biennale (Dak'Art) are key platforms showcasing African contemporary art to the world.

Encouragement of New Media and Technology

1. Modern art paved the way for the acceptance of photography, video art, installation art, and performance art in Africa.
2. Many young African artists now use digital media to tell stories and connect with audiences online.
3. For example, Kenyan photographer Osborne Macharia creates Afrofuturistic images that reimagine African identity.

The influence of modern art on contemporary African art has been profound. It has inspired African artists to explore new techniques, materials, and ideas while remaining rooted in cultural heritage. This blending of tradition and innovation has made African art vibrant, diverse, and relevant in the global art scene today.

Activity 1.13 Tracing Impacts of modern art on Contemporary African art

Modern art movements from 1850 to 1950 often sparked new ideas among African artists. In this activity, you will investigate how these ideas travelled, transformed, and took on African cultural meaning.

Use this guideline

1. Select and examine a pair of images; one from Modern art, one from Contemporary African art.
2. Using your visual thinking guide, find three visual similarities in technique, style, or composition.
3. Note two differences in cultural context or meaning.
4. Record observations on a dual-column worksheet you create (*See Table 1.3 for a sample dual-column worksheet*).

5. Do influence mapping
 - a. Join a mixed-ability group and use the “Influence Exchanges” diagram.
 - b. Write the names of Modern art movements in the inner ring and match them to Contemporary African responses in the outer ring.
 - c. Connect them with cards showing specific examples of influence.
 - d. Assign roles: Timekeeper, Materials Manager, Scribe, Presenter, Inclusion Monitor.
6. Do an impact gallery exchange to;
 - a. Display your influence maps in the classroom or space available.
 - b. Use the “Three Voices” technique while viewing other works by your peers. E.g.,
 - i. “I noticed...” (observation about a connection)
 - ii. “I wonder...” (question about an influence)
 - iii. “This reminds me of...” (personal connection)
 - c. Leave feedback using sticky notes or an audio note (*for those with writing difficulties*).
7. Now do a personal synthesis by individually reflecting on:
 - a. One-way African artists transformed Modern art techniques.
 - b. How African culture reshaped imported artistic ideas.
 - c. Why some Modern movements had a stronger African resonance.
8. Choose your response format: either a written reflection, diagram, or audio recording to document your reflections.

Portfolio Tip: Keep your dual-column worksheets and influence map as part of your art portfolio for future exhibition proposals or research projects.

Table 1.3: Examples of Dual-Column Worksheet

Your Heading 1	Your Heading 2

Your Heading 1	Your Heading 2

Activity 1.14 Creating Story of Influence: Contemporary Vs Modern Art

African artists often reinterpret global art movements in ways that speak to local realities. In this project-style activity, you will become a storyteller of artistic influence.

Here are some vital steps to guide you.

1. Start with a deep search using this material, or other trusted sources, to:
 - a. Select one Modern art movement (e.g., Cubism, Expressionism) and one Contemporary African artist influenced by it.
 - b. Gather physical or digital images that clearly show the link.
2. Build up an analysis of the information, which means you have to:
 - a. Use a visual analysis worksheet you design yourself.
 - b. Compare techniques, materials, and purposes of both works.
 - c. Identify social, cultural, or political factors that shaped the African interpretation.
3. Now convert the information into a creative storyboard.
 - a. Create about an 8-panel visual storyboard (e.g. **Figure 1.22**) showing:
 - i. The original Modern art influence.
 - ii. The African reinterpretation.
 - iii. How the influence was transformed in meaning and form.
 - b. Include captions for each panel explaining the transformation.
4. Mini Exhibition Simulation
 - a. Set up your storyboard as if it were part of a travelling exhibition.
 - b. Allow classmates to “tour” your storyboard and ask questions about your findings.

5. Reflection Discussion

- Discuss with your peers how global and local forces work together to shape African art today.
- Consider inclusion for learners with different communication needs and cultural backgrounds.

Portfolio Tip: Photograph your storyboard and keep a digital copy. You may use it to support applications for future art competitions, exhibitions, or university education.

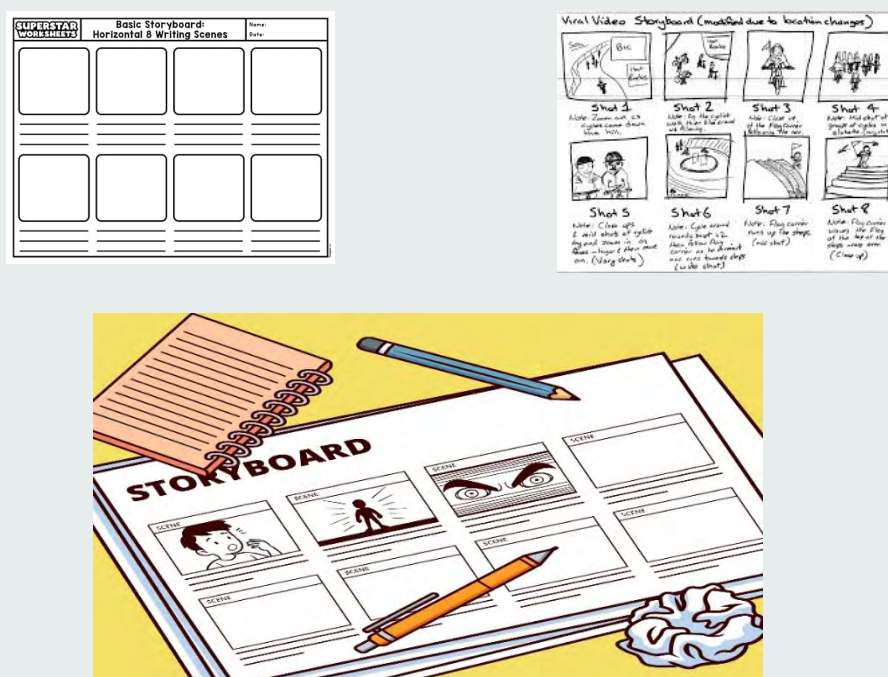


Figure 1.22: Examples of 8 Panel Storyboard

Holiday Positive Gossip



Who Influenced Whom?

Look at two artworks placed side-by-side, one Modern, one Contemporary African. Debate the following.

- Which artist borrowed more ideas?
- Can we say African art simply “followed” Modern art, or did it reshape it?
- In influence, does the origin or the transformation matter more?
- How would you explain this relationship to someone who knows nothing about art?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following best describes the main purpose of art documentation in contemporary Ghana?
 - A. Archiving artworks and related details for future reference
 - B. Encouraging artists to limit public access to their works
 - C. Promoting only traditional art forms to younger generations
 - D. Restricting the use of modern materials in art production
2. Who is the Ghanaian artist known for incorporating traditional Asafo flags into contemporary textile installations?
 - A. Ablade Glover
 - B. El Anatsui
 - C. Ibrahim Mahama
 - D. Kofi Setordji
3. Which category of contemporary African art focuses mainly on functional and decorative objects?
 - A. Conceptual art
 - B. Craft art
 - C. Installation art
 - D. Performance art
4. Which institution is located in Ghana and is dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of African contemporary art?
 - A. Nubuke Foundation
 - B. Tate Modern
 - C. Smithsonian National Museum of African Art
 - D. Zeitz MOCAA
5. In which year did Ghana first participate in the Venice Biennale, marking a milestone in its global art presence?
 - A. 2009
 - B. 2013

- C. 2019
 - D. 2022
6. Which of the following is the most suitable step when preparing to document a contemporary Ghanaian sculpture for a digital archive?
- A. Capturing multiple photographs from different angles
 - B. Painting over damaged areas before photographing
 - C. Removing artist signatures for anonymity
 - D. Using only handwritten notes without images
7. A Ghanaian artist exhibits works in New York and Accra, using recycled materials to address environmental issues. This reflects ...
- A. cross-cultural artistic influence and global engagement.
 - B. isolation from traditional and modern art practices.
 - C. preference for local exhibitions over international exposure.
 - D. shift from art as a tool for education to mere decoration.
8. Which category of contemporary African art often involves audience interaction as part of the artwork?
- A. Craft art
 - B. Installation art
 - C. Mixed media art
 - D. Performance art
9. Which African art institution is based in Cape Town and is dedicated to contemporary African art?
- A. Nubuke Foundation
 - B. Tate Modern
 - C. Zeitz MOCAA
 - D. Zoma Museum
10. Which modern influence is most evident when Ghanaian artists incorporate augmented reality into exhibitions?
- A. Digital technology integration in art presentation
 - B. Exclusive focus on indigenous cultural traditions
 - C. Reduction of global exposure for artworks

- D.** Strict adherence to hand-made traditional techniques
- 11.** A senior high school teacher in Kumasi plans to teach about Ibrahim Mahama's large-scale installations made from jute sacks. Which activity would best help learners connect the art to Ghana's social history?
- A.** Analysing how the materials reflect trade and migration in Ghana
- B.** Comparing the work to unrelated European landscape paintings
- C.** Listing the tools used in assembling the installation
- D.** Memorising the names of all the contributing artisans
- 12.** If a Ghanaian art historian wants to study the global impact of El Anatsui's work, which approach would be most relevant?
- A.** Analysing exhibition reviews from different countries
- B.** Avoiding interviews with curators and critics
- C.** Focusing only on artworks created before 1980
- D.** Limiting research to private conversations with the artist
- 13.** A gallery in Accra hosts a contemporary African art exhibition with works from multiple countries. Which step would best help them promote it to an international audience?
- A.** Creating multilingual exhibition catalogues for visitors
- B.** Restricting online promotions to local community pages
- C.** Using only traditional printed posters in the city
- D.** Withholding artist biographies to keep works mysterious
- 14.** An art teacher is guiding learners to classify artworks into contemporary African art categories. Which scenario best represents mixed media art?
- A ...**
- A.** portrait made entirely with oil paint on canvas.
- B.** sculpture combining wood, metal, and fabric elements.
- C.** woven basket designed for household storage.
- D.** dance performance incorporating live music.
- 15.** Which milestone best reflects the modern influence of global networking on African art?
- A.** Participation in major international art fairs

- B.** Isolation of artists from foreign exhibitions
 - C.** Removal of digital art from gallery spaces
 - D.** Sole reliance on oral storytelling traditions
- 16.** A Ghanaian artist's work is featured in both the Nubuke Foundation and Zeitz MOCAA exhibitions. What does this suggest about their career? They ...
 - A.** have both local and international recognition.
 - B.** are limited to exhibiting only in African spaces.
 - C.** avoid connecting with audiences outside Ghana.
 - D.** specialise only in one art form.
- 17.** You are designing a research project on how contemporary Ghanaian art documentation affects tourism. Outline the first three key steps you would take, ensuring they address both the art and tourism sectors.
- 18.** Compare the roles of Nubuke Foundation and Zeitz MOCAA in shaping perceptions of African contemporary art. Use examples from at least two exhibitions in your answer.
- 19.** Evaluate how the global success of artists like Ibrahim Mahama and El Anatsui has influenced the younger generation of Ghanaian artists in terms of materials, themes, and career aspirations.
- 20.** Propose a classification system for contemporary African art categories that could be used in senior high school teaching. Justify your choice with relevant Ghanaian examples.



SECTION

2

MAJOR DESIGN CONCEPTS

DESIGN HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Last year, you studied art from many different angles. Do you remember learning about Modern Ghanaian artists from the 1920s to 1985, the materials they used, and how their work was made? Can you recall how their contributions shaped Ghana's history? You also looked at how African art changed from the 1900s to the 21st century, and how African and Western modern art influenced design and society. Which artists or artworks do you still remember most?

In this section, we will move from learning about the past to studying important design ideas in the 21st century. You will see how modern design works, why it is important, and how to judge if a design is successful. Through debates and discussions, you will think more deeply like a designer and learn how to make good decisions about creative works.

KEY IDEAS

- 21st-century design focuses on solving real-world needs creatively.
- Digital tools expand what is possible, but analogue skills still matter in designing.
- Designs reflect values, traditions, and social changes.
- A great design looks good and works well.
- Effective critique considers purpose, impact, and improvement.

MAJOR DESIGN CONCEPTS

In the past, people often thought of “design” as just making things look beautiful (i.e. a nice pattern on a cloth or a stylish shape for a car). But today, design is much more than that. The most important designers of the 21st century are problem-solvers. They use creativity to tackle real-world challenges, from protecting our environment to making technology easier for everyone to use.

Over the next two weeks, we will explore the foundational and emerging concepts that guide these modern problem-solvers. You will learn the big ideas that are shaping everything from the apps on your phone to the way we build our cities.

The Foundations of 21st-Century Design

In this section, we are focusing on three core principles that are the foundation of all good design today. These are not just trends; they are a new way of thinking.

Human-Centred Design (HCD)

Human-Centred Design is a simple but powerful idea: start with people. Instead of creating a product and then trying to sell it, HCD starts by deeply understanding the needs, frustrations, and daily lives of the people for whom you are designing. The key word is empathy; seeing the world through someone else's eyes.

It ensures that we create things that are useful, easy to use, and solve a real problem. It avoids wasting time and resources on ideas that nobody wants or needs. The designers of MoMo did not just copy a banking app from Europe. They started by understanding the reality of life in Ghana: many people do not have bank accounts, but almost everyone has a mobile phone. They saw the difficulty people had sending money to relatives in villages. MoMo was designed as a solution to that specific problem. It was built for how Ghanaians live, using simple SMS-based technology that works on any phone, not just smartphones. That is Human-Centred Design in action.

Key Human-Centred Design Principles

- a. Empathy: Understanding users as whole people, not just customers.
- b. Target the Right Users: Identify who will use your design before starting. Research your users' demographics, needs, and common challenges without making assumptions.
- c. Define Problems Clearly: Working with users to understand exactly what needs solving. A well-defined problem statement serves as your guiding star throughout the design process.
- d. Follow a Structured Process: Moving through inspiration, ideas, and testing in an organised way. Begin with research to understand users, then generate possible solutions, create prototypes, and test them with real people. (See Year 2-Design Process)
- e. Keep Solutions Simple: Creating straightforward answers that do not add complexity. The best designs solve problems without creating new ones.

Sustainable Design

Sustainable Design means designing for our planet. It involves thinking about the entire life of a product, from where the materials come from (the source), to how it is made (production), and finally, what happens to it when it is no longer needed (disposal). The goal is to create things that have a low negative impact on the environment.

To protect our environment from pollution, reduce waste, and ensure a healthy future for generations to come.

This Accra-based company, Trashy Bags Africa is a brilliant example of sustainable design. They saw a major environmental problem in Ghana: the thousands of plastic water and ice kenkey sachets that litter our streets and clog our drains. They turned this problem into a solution. They collect, clean, and stitch these plastic sachets together to create stylish and durable bags, backpacks, and wallets. This is sustainable design because it:

1. Reduces waste by taking plastic out of the environment.
2. Reuses a material that was meant to be thrown away.
3. Creates a new, valuable product and provides jobs.

Systems Thinking

This is about seeing the bigger picture. Systems thinking teaches that no problem exists in isolation. Everything is connected. Instead of just fixing a single symptom, a systems thinker looks at all the interconnected parts to find the root cause. It is the difference between putting a plaster on a wound and figuring out what caused the injury in the first place.

It helps us solve problems more effectively and permanently, and it prevents us from accidentally creating new problems while trying to solve an old one. A good Shea butter project is a perfect example of systems thinking. A designer using systems thinking would not just focus on creating a nice package for the butter. They would look at the entire system:

1. The People: How can the production empower the women's cooperatives in the North who make it? (This leads to Fair Trade practices).
2. The Planet: How are the Shea trees being managed to ensure they will be there for the future? (This leads to sustainable farming).
3. The Product: How is the butter processed and transported to maintain its quality?

4. **The Profit:** How does the money flow back to the community that produced it?

By thinking about all these connected parts, the whole system becomes stronger, fairer, and more sustainable.

Key Principles of Systems Thinking

- a. **Keep It Simple** by focusing on solving today's real problems, not tomorrow's possible ones. Do not make things more complicated than they need to be.
- b. **Make It Easy to Understand.** Anyone can look at your system and understand how it works.
- c. **Hide Complexity** by putting difficult parts in places where people do not go often. Keep everyday actions simple.
- d. **Build on What People Already Know** by making your new system similar to what people already understand. cultural elements.

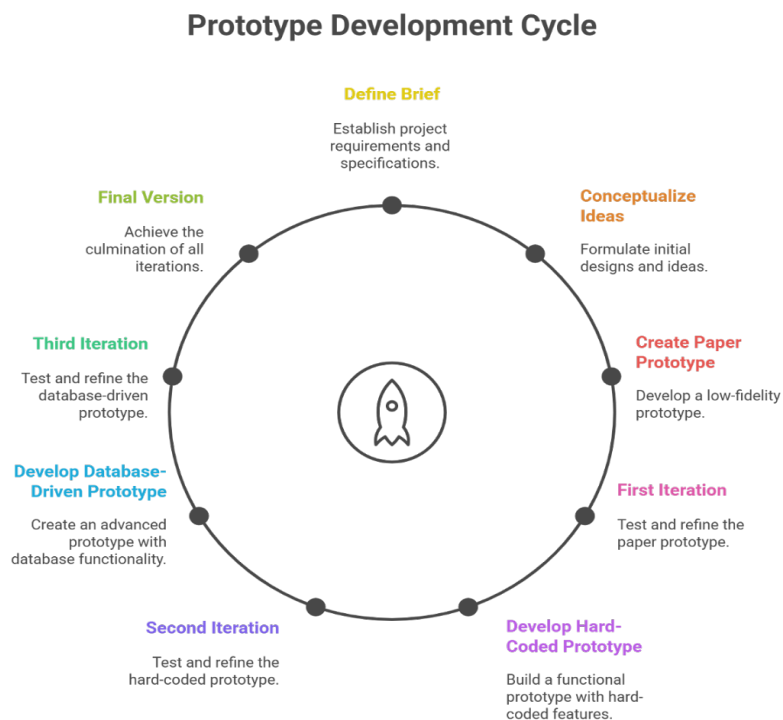


Figure 2.1: Prototype Development Cycle

Iterative Design: The Power of Practice and Improvement

Have you ever tried to cook a new dish for the first time? Did it come out perfectly on your first attempt? Probably not. Maybe the first time it was too salty. You learned from that mistake, used less salt the next time, and it was better. That process of trying, getting feedback (from your own taste), and improving is the core idea behind Iterative Design.

In the past, designers tried to create a perfect plan for a product and then build it all at once. But this was slow and risky. If they made a mistake in the plan, the final product would be a failure. In our fast-changing world, designers need a smarter, faster way to work. Iterative design is the modern approach.

Iterative Design is a cyclical process of creating, testing, and refining a product in repeated cycles.

Instead of aiming for a perfect final product in one giant leap, designers create a simple, quick version of their idea (a prototype), show it to real people to get feedback, learn from that feedback, and then create a slightly better version. They repeat this loop, or “iteration” again and again, making the product better with each cycle.

Think of it like this: you do not build a house by putting up all four walls and the roof at once. You lay one course of bricks, check if it is straight, then lay the next. Iteration is the designer’s way of checking their work at every step.

The Core Steps of the Iterative Cycle

The iterative process follows a simple but powerful loop:

Prototype (Make a Quick Version)

A prototype is an early, simplified model of your idea. It is not meant to be perfect; it is meant to be tested. The key is to make it fast and cheap.

Examples

- a. For a mobile app, the prototype could be a simple paper sketch of the screens.
- b. For a new market stall, it could be a small cardboard model.
- c. For a new service, it could be a simple role-play of how it would work.

Test (Get Real Feedback)

This is the most important step. You take your prototype and show it to the actual people who would use it. You watch them interact with it and listen carefully to their thoughts.

The Golden Rule: Feedback is a gift, not a criticism. The goal is to find out what is wrong with your idea, not to prove that you are right.

Refine (Learn and Improve)

After the test, you analyse the feedback. What worked? What was confusing? What did people want that you did not include? Based on these lessons, you go back and make changes to improve your prototype.

Repeat (Do It Again!)

You take your new, improved prototype and start the cycle all over again: Test -> Refine -> Repeat. You continue this process until you have a product that truly solves the user's problem effectively.

Examples of Iterative Design in Action

1. Mobile Phone Apps (like Instagram or TikTok)

The apps on your phone are never “finished.” Every few weeks, you get an update. Why? Because the developers are constantly in an iterative loop. They release a new feature (prototype), track how millions of users interact with it (test), analyse the data and feedback, and then release another update to fix bugs and make improvements (refine). This is why apps are always evolving.

2. Designing an Improved Cookstove

Imagine you want to design a more efficient cookstove for a rural community to reduce smoke and use less charcoal.

- a. Old Way: You spend six months in a lab perfecting a metal stove, then you try to sell it. You might find that nobody wants it because it is too expensive or does not work with their local pots.
- b. Iterative Way
 - i. **Iteration 1:** You create a simple clay model (prototype) in one day. You give it to five women to use (test). They tell you the smoke still gets in their eyes (feedback).

ii. **Iteration 2:** You refine the design by adding a taller chimney. You create a new prototype and test it again. This time, the feedback is better, but they say it uses too much charcoal.

iii. **Iteration 3:** You refine the design again, making the chamber smaller.

You repeat this process until you have a cookstove that is affordable, efficient, and truly meets the needs of the community.

Iterative design is more than just a process; it is a mindset. It is about being humble enough to accept that your first idea is never perfect. It is about believing in progress, not perfection. By building, testing, and learning in small, fast cycles, designers today can create better solutions that truly work for people in a complex and ever-changing world. It is one of the most powerful tools a 21st-century problem-solver can have.

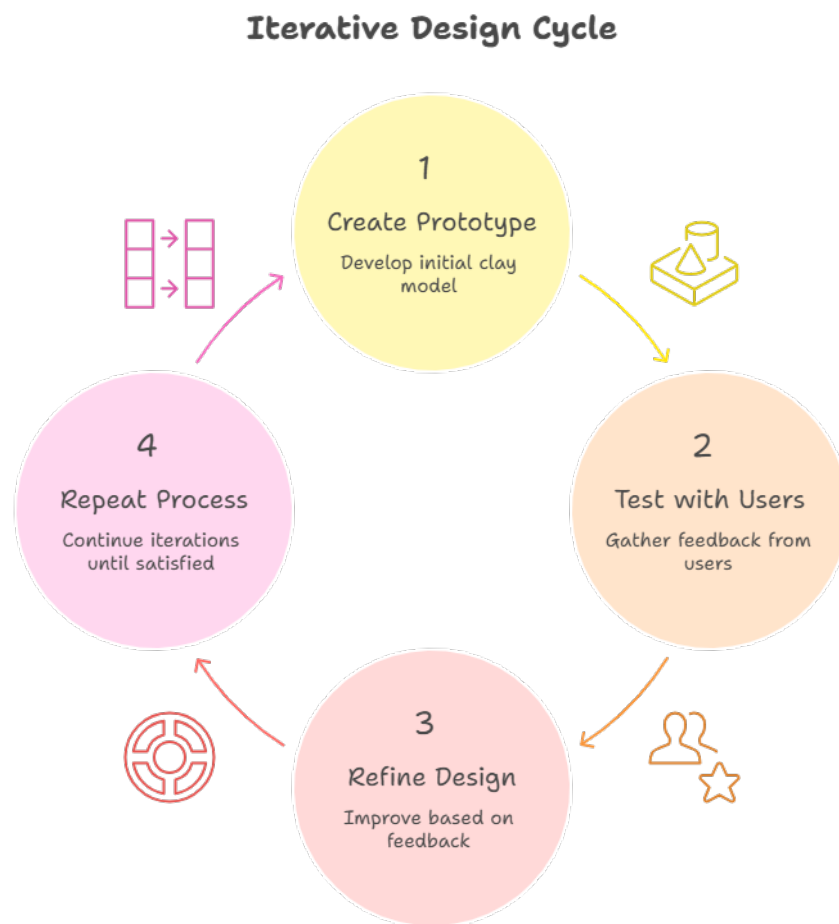


Figure 2.2: The Iterative Design Cycle

Digital Transformation: Changing Our World with Technology

Imagine your Dad's a car. You could give it a new coat of paint, and it would look better. But what if, instead, you replaced the entire old engine with a new, powerful, electric one? That is the difference between just improving something and truly transforming it.

Digital Transformation is about using computer technology, software, and the internet to completely change the “engine” of how we design, create, and share things. It is not just about using a computer to do an old task. It is about finding completely new, faster, and smarter ways of working that were impossible before. Before digital tools, designers worked with paper, physical models, and face-to-face meetings. Changes were slow and expensive. Digital transformation has changed everything.

The Big Shift: A Quick History from Manual to Digital

- a. 1970s-1980s: The first basic computer tools appeared, helping with technical drawings.
- b. 1990s: Design software became powerful enough to create detailed 3D models on a computer screen.
- c. 2000s: The internet changed everything! For the first time, designers in Accra could collaborate on a project with a team in London in real-time.
- d. 2010s: Mobile technology (smartphones), cloud computing (like Google Drive), and data analysis transformed the process again, making design accessible anywhere.
- e. 2020s: We are now in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation, which are creating brand new possibilities for designers.

Key Components of Digital Transformation

1. Smarter Tools for a Digital Age (Digital Platforms): This refers to the powerful software that designers now use. Programs like AutoCAD for architecture, Adobe Photoshop for images, and Blender for 3D animation help designers create everything from initial sketches to final, realistic models on a computer.
2. Designing with Data, Not Just Guesswork (Data-Driven Decisions): Instead of just relying on their own intuition, modern designers use data about how people actually use products.

Think about YouTube: It uses data about what you watch to recommend new videos. Designers do the same thing. They can track how people use an app to see which buttons are confusing or which features are most popular, and then use that data to improve the design.

3. **Products That Keep Getting Better (Connected Products):** Many modern products are connected to the internet. This allows them to be updated and improved long after you have bought them.

A Perfect Example: Your smartphone. You do not have to buy a new phone to get new features. The company sends a software update over the internet, and your phone instantly gets better. The physical object stays the same, but its digital brain evolves.

The Design Process: Before and After Digital Transformation

Table 2.1: How digital transformation changes the design process

Design Phase	Traditional Methods (The Old Way)	Digitally Transformed Methods (The New Way)	Benefits of Transformation	Ghanaian Examples
Research	• Face-to-face interviews • Paper surveys • Observing small local groups • Library research	• Online surveys reaching thousands • Social media listening • Digital behaviour tracking • Big data analysis	• Larger sample sizes • Faster collection • More diverse participants • Unbiased behaviour data	Market researchers use mobile surveys to understand rural consumer preferences without travelling to each village.

Design Phase	Traditional Methods (The Old Way)	Digitally Transformed Methods (The New Way)	Benefits of Transformation	Ghanaian Examples
Ideation	• Paper sketches • Physical brainstorming • Handmade mood boards • Individual creativity	• Digital sketching tools • Virtual collaboration platforms • Online inspiration sources • AI-assisted idea generation	• Team collaboration across distances • Easy sharing and feedback • Access to global inspiration • More variations explored	Ghanaian fashion designers collaborate virtually with fabric producers to create new pattern ideas.
Prototyping	• Physical models made by hand • Expensive materials • Time-consuming construction • Limited variations	• 3D modelling software • Virtual/augmented reality • 3D printing • Rapid digital iterations	• Faster creation • Lower cost per prototype • More versions tested • Easier modifications	Architectural models of new buildings in Accra are created digitally before construction begins.
Testing	• Small in-person focus groups • Limited geographic reach • Subjective feedback • Single versions tested	• Remote testing with diverse users • A/B testing multiple versions • Analytics tracking • Continuous feedback	• More diverse testers • Objective usage data • Testing multiple versions • Ongoing improvement	Ghanaian app developers test mobile interfaces with users across different regions simultaneously.

Design Phase	Traditional Methods (The Old Way)	Digitally Transformed Methods (The New Way)	Benefits of Transformation	Ghanaian Examples
Production	• Mass manufacturing • High setup costs • Long lead times • One-size-fits-all products	• Digital fabrication • On-demand production • Mass customisation • Smaller batch capabilities	• Less waste • Customisation options • Faster market entry • Lower startup costs	Small clothing businesses use digital printing to create custom designs with lower investment.
Distribution	• Physical shops • Limited geographic reach • Print catalogues • Word-of-mouth	• E-commerce platforms • Global market access • Digital marketing • Direct-to-consumer models	• Wider market reach • Lower distribution costs • Direct customer relationships • Better market data	Ghanaian artisans sell traditional crafts worldwide through online marketplaces.
Evolution	• New model every few years • Complete redesigns • Physical updates required • Product remains static	• Regular digital updates • Continuous improvement • Remote feature additions • Products evolve after purchase	• Longer product lifespan • Improved user satisfaction • Lower replacement costs • Adaptable to new needs	Radio stations create apps that add new features and content regularly through updates.

Skills You Need for a Digital World

To succeed as a creator in the 21st century, mastering digital tools is no longer optional, but it is essential. However, the most valuable skills are not just about technology; they are about how we connect that technology to real human needs. The modern designer needs a blend of technical expertise and deep human understanding.

Technical Skills

These are the practical abilities needed to build and create in a digital environment.

- a. Basic programming and digital tool literacy. This does not mean you must be a master coder. It means understanding the language of technology and being fluent in the tools of your trade, whether that is using Canva for graphic design, Figma for app layouts, or understanding the basics of how a website is built.
- b. Understanding how digital systems work together. A successful app is more than just a nice-looking screen. It is a system. You need to understand how the user interface connects to a database, how a payment is securely processed, and how all the parts work together reliably. Think of how a MoMo transaction seamlessly moves money from one person to another; that is a well-designed system.
- c. Knowing how to design apps and websites that are easy and fun to use (UX design). User Experience (UX) design is the art of making technology feel effortless and intuitive. A good UX designer thinks about every click, every screen, and every interaction to ensure the user is not confused or frustrated. This is crucial for creating solutions for everyone, from a farmer using an app for weather forecasts to a learner accessing an online learning portal.

Human Skills

These are the essential “soft skills” that ensure the technology you create is respectful, relevant, and truly helpful.

- a. Digital Empathy: Understanding that different people have different experiences with technology. True empathy means designing for people who are not like you. It is about asking: “Will my grandmother be able to read this font on her phone?” or “Does this app use too much data for someone on a limited budget?” Digital empathy is the key to creating solutions that serve the entire community, not just the tech-savvy.

- b. **Cross-Cultural Awareness:** Designing for a diverse, global audience. In a connected world, your design can reach people everywhere. This means being mindful of culture. A symbol or colour that is positive in Ghana might have a different meaning elsewhere. This skill is about creating visual language that is either universally understood or can be adapted for different cultures, ensuring your message is always clear and respectful.
- c. **Communication & Collaboration:** Working in teams that are connected digitally, not physically. The modern workplace is often online. This requires excellent communication skills; the ability to share ideas clearly in emails, chats, and video calls. It means being a reliable team member who can collaborate on projects using tools like Google Docs or Slack, often with people you may have never met in person.

Digital transformation is not slowing down; it is accelerating. As a designer, you need to be ready for what is next:

1. **Internet of Things (IoT):** More everyday objects, like cars and even our homes, will be connected to the internet. This means design is moving beyond screens. Imagine a “smart” farm in Ghana where soil sensors (IoT devices) automatically send an alert to the farmer’s phone when the crops need water, helping to conserve resources and improve yields.
2. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI will help designers analyse data and even generate new design options automatically. AI is becoming a powerful creative partner. A fashion designer could use AI to generate hundreds of new kente-inspired patterns in minutes. A city planner could use it to analyse traffic data to design better roads. AI helps us process complex information and explore ideas faster than ever before.
3. **Extended Reality (XR):** Virtual and Augmented Reality will completely change how we experience designs, from shopping to education. XR includes Virtual Reality (VR), which puts you in a new digital world, and Augmented Reality (AR), which adds digital information to the real world. Imagine an architecture student using their phone to see a full-scale 3D model of their building design standing on an empty plot of land on campus. This is the power of XR.

Digital transformation has reshaped the world of design, making it faster, more collaborative, and more powerful than ever before. For you as a learner in Ghana, this is an incredible opportunity. It is not about copying old methods digitally. It is about using these new tools to solve our own local problems in new ways. By

blending technology with our rich culture, young Ghanaian designers can create solutions that are rooted in our heritage yet open to the world.

The Future is Now: Emerging Design Concepts

Building on the foundations from last week, we now look at the cutting-edge ideas that are pushing design even further. These are the concepts shaping the future, using new technology and new ways of thinking to solve the world's most complex problems. As a future creator, knowing these ideas will make you a more powerful and relevant designer.

Parametric Design (Designing with Rules)

This is a high-tech approach where designers use software to create complex shapes and patterns based on a set of rules, or “parameters.” The designer inputs variables like height, angle, or material, and the software generates the form. Change a rule, and the entire design updates automatically. One Airport Square (Accra): This famous building has a unique, diamond-patterned outer shell. This is a form of parametric design. The pattern is not random; it is based on carefully calculated rules for providing shade, allowing airflow, and maintaining structural strength, creating a building that is both beautiful and highly efficient for our climate.

Generative Design (Designing with AI)

This is the next step after parametric design. Here, the designer does not create the design directly but instead tells an Artificial Intelligence (AI) the goals (e.g., “I need a chair that is lightweight, uses recycled plastic, and can hold 150kg”). The AI then generates thousands of possible design options that a human might never imagine, all of which meet the goals. Imagine a designer using AI to create new, complex kente patterns based on the traditional rules of colour and symbolism. The designer could set goals like “create a pattern that represents unity and strength,” and the AI could generate hundreds of original options to choose from.

Systemic Design (Designing the Big Picture)

This concept combines the creative process of design with the analytical approach of systems thinking. Instead of creating a single product, a systemic designer designs the entire interconnected system around it.

Consider the problem of food waste. A simple product designer might create a better storage container. A systemic designer would map out the whole system

from the farm to the market to the home and design interventions at each point. This could include an app to connect farmers with unsold produce directly to buyers, a community composting program, and educational workshops, creating a complete, interconnected solution.

Open and Collaborative Design (Designing Together)

This approach is based on sharing knowledge. Designs and plans are made “open-source,” meaning they are published online for free, allowing anyone to use, modify, and improve them. It is designed as a global team effort.

This has huge potential for Ghana. Imagine a design for a low-cost, 3D-printed prosthetic hand is shared online. A tech hub in Accra or Kumasi could download that design, adapt it for a local person’s needs, and print it for a fraction of the cost of a traditional one. It democratises access to life-changing design.

Planet-Centred and Regenerative Design (Designing to Heal)

This goes a step beyond sustainability. Sustainable design aims to do “less harm” to the environment. Regenerative design aims to actively do “better” by creating things that restore and heal ecosystems. It is about leaving the environment better than you found it.

In response to deforestation, a regenerative project would not just be about building an eco-friendly house. It would involve planting native trees around the house, creating a system to harvest rainwater that replenishes the local groundwater, and using materials that actually improve soil quality as they break down. It is designed to give back to nature.

Neuroaesthetic Design (Designing for the Brain)

This exciting field combines neuroscience (the study of the brain) with aesthetics (the study of beauty). It is about understanding how our brains scientifically react to different shapes, colours, light, and patterns, and then using that knowledge to design spaces that make us feel calm, focused, or happy.

This is already being used in healthcare. Designing a hospital waiting room with calming colours, natural light, and nature-inspired patterns can be scientifically shown to reduce patient stress and anxiety. It is designed based on evidence of how our minds work.

Humanity-Centred Design (Designing for All of Us)

This broadens the idea of Human-Centred Design. While HCD focuses on the needs of the direct user, Humanity-Centred Design considers the impact on all people and the planet. It forces the designer to think about long-term societal and ecological consequences.

Think about a new mining project. A user-centred approach might focus on designing efficient tools for the miners. A humanity-centred approach would ask the bigger questions: What is the impact of this mine on the local community's water supply? What happens to the land and the people who live there after the mining is finished? It considers the well-being of everyone, including future generations.

Future-Proof Design (Designing for Change)

This is about creating solutions that are flexible, adaptable, and can evolve to meet changing needs. It is the opposite of designing something that will become obsolete and useless in a few years.

A powerful example is designing low-cost, modular homes for communities in coastal areas like Keta that are threatened by sea-level rise. A “future-proof” design would allow these homes to be easily disassembled, moved, and reassembled in a safer location, providing a resilient solution for a changing climate.

Art and Design for a Better World: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Imagine the world has a shared “to-do list” to make our planet a better place for everyone by the year 2030. That is exactly what the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are. Created by the United Nations, these 17 goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that everyone can enjoy peace and prosperity.

The SDGs cover everything from clean water and quality education to gender equality and climate action. They are big, ambitious goals, and achieving them requires everyone to contribute, including scientists, politicians, farmers, and most importantly, creative people like artists and designers.

Art and design are not just about making things look beautiful; they are powerful tools for creating real-world change. They connect to the SDGs in two fundamental ways:

1. **Art as a Powerful Voice (Communication & Awareness):** Art is a universal language that can touch people's hearts and change their minds. It can take a complex problem like climate change and make it feel personal and urgent. Artists are essential communicators who can raise awareness and inspire action.
2. **Design as a Practical Tool (Problem-Solving & Innovation):** Design is the process of creating solutions. While an artist might raise awareness about a problem, a designer creates the actual product, system, or service that helps solve it. Designers build the tools we need to achieve the SDGs.

Linking Art and Design to Key SDGs

Let us look at how this works in practice with some specific goals.

Goal 1: No Poverty

Art creates economic opportunities. The work of artisans like kente weavers in Adanwomase or bead makers in Krobo is a vital source of income. Designers can help these artisans create new products for a global market, design fair-trade packaging, and build online platforms that connect them directly to buyers, ensuring they are paid a fair price for their work.

Goal 4: Quality Education

Art makes learning more engaging. A mural in a school can create an inspiring learning environment. Drawings and illustrations can help explain difficult scientific or historical concepts. Good design is crucial for creating effective learning materials, such as well-structured textbooks with clear layouts, educational apps that are easy for children to use, and infographics that simplify complex information.

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Art can challenge harmful stereotypes and celebrate the power of women. The work of female photographers who create powerful portraits of Ghanaian women in leadership roles, or films that tell the stories of female entrepreneurs, can change perceptions and inspire a new generation. Designers create campaigns and tools

that support women's empowerment, such as designing mobile apps that provide health information to women in rural areas.

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

An artist can create a powerful photography exhibition showing the impact of unsafe water on a community, raising awareness and funds to solve the problem. An engineer or product designer can then use their skills to design a low-cost, effective water filtration system that can be easily used in that community, directly providing the solution.

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Public art brings communities together and creates a sense of identity and pride. The Chale Wote Street Art Festival in Accra transforms Jamestown into a living gallery, making the city more vibrant and creating a space for community engagement. Architects and city planners design the “hardware” of sustainable city buildings that use less energy (like the Eastgate Centre in Zimbabwe, inspired by termite mounds), efficient public transport systems, and safe, green public parks.

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Artists like Serge Attukwei Clottey use discarded yellow gallons (“Kufuor gallons”) to create large-scale artworks. This is a powerful statement that forces us to see “waste” as a potential resource. Designers create the systems for a circular economy. Companies like Trashy Bags Africa design a whole process: collecting plastic waste, cleaning it, and turning it into new, valuable products like bags and accessories.

Goal 13: Climate Action

Art can make the abstract threat of climate change feel real. An artist might create a sculpture from wood salvaged from a deforested area to highlight the issue, or a powerful video installation showing the impact of rising sea levels on coastal communities like Keta. Designers create the practical solutions we need to fight climate change, such as designing efficient solar lamps to replace kerosene or creating apps that help farmers adapt to changing weather patterns.

As you can see, art and design are not luxuries; they are essential tools for building the better world imagined by the SDGs. Art gives a voice to the voiceless and makes us care about the big issues. Design builds the practical, innovative

solutions that improve people's lives. As a future artist or designer in Ghana, your creativity has the power to contribute directly to these vital global goals.

Activity 2.1 Colour-Coding the Future of Design

Step into the role of a design historian mapping the 21st-century's greatest design ideas. Your goal is to create a resource that future learners will use to understand design trends of our time.

Here are some steps to guide you.

1. Search available resources like art educators, the internet and from this material to:
 - a. Gather information on major 21st-century design movements and concepts (e.g., sustainable design, user-centred design, biomimicry, digital interface design).
 - b. Collect case studies of key designers, innovations, and technological breakthroughs.
 - c. Where possible, use accessible sources like documentaries, audio interviews, large-print articles, etc.
2. Use the information to create an interactive timeline by doing this:
 - a. Use colour-coding to represent different design approaches.
 - b. Add brief descriptions, images, or audio recordings for each milestone.
 - c. Ensure your timeline is clear and can be understood by someone new to design concepts.
3. Make a case study analysis as you do this: Select two successful designs and complete your design analysis worksheet
 - a. Identify the design concept.
 - b. Compare and contrast its application in two different settings.
 - c. Note the impact of technology on the design's success.
4. Now use your designs to create a gallery walk:
 - a. Display your timeline in the classroom, a suitable space or on an online platform (your professional social media space created in Years 1&2 can be very useful here).

- b. Invite peers to interact with your work and leave questions or comments.
- c. Use the comments to improve your practices.

Portfolio Tip: Save a digital and physical copy of your interactive timeline and worksheets for your design portfolio.

Activity 2.2 Solving Current Design Problems

Not every design concept stays in the classroom. We need to extend them to shape our entire communities. In this activity, your task is to use 21st-century design thinking to find solutions to real-life challenges.

Here are some flexible steps to follow.

1. Do a community exploration to:
 - a. Conduct a short survey in your school or community to identify design problems (e.g., waste disposal, accessibility for persons with disabilities, efficient classroom furniture).
 - b. Record responses through notes, photos, or voice recordings.
2. Try categorising the problems:
 - a. Use a 21st-century design framework (such as human-centred design or sustainable design) to group your findings.
 - b. Decide which problems are urgent, which are long-term, and which require creativity rather than technology.
3. Design solution development.
 - a. Select one problem to solve.
 - b. Develop a prototype solution using sketches, models, or digital mock-ups.
 - c. Document your design process step-by-step.
4. Infographic presentation.
 - a. Create an infographic that explains the problem, the chosen design concept, and your solution.
 - b. Present it to your class as if you are pitching to community leaders.

Portfolio Tip: Include your infographic, sketches, and photos of your prototype in your portfolio to show your ability to apply design concepts in real contexts.



Washing Time Conversations – The Designs Around Us

While waiting for your laundry to finish, chat with friends about:

- a. The most useful design in your home or school.
- b. Which 21st-century design principle do you think it uses?
- c. How that design could be improved for everyone, including people with disabilities.

APPRECIATING AND MAKING JUDGEMENTS IN DEBATES ON 21ST-CENTURY DESIGN

Design in the 21st century is more than just making things look attractive. It is about solving problems, improving lives, and shaping how we interact with the world. From smartphones to eco-friendly buildings, today’s designers work at the intersection of creativity, technology, and ethics. Appreciating and making judgments in debates on modern design means understanding its value, questioning its impact, and deciding what makes it successful or harmful.

Understanding 21st-Century Design

21st-century design covers many fields, including graphic design, product design, architecture, fashion, and digital design. It often uses new technologies such as 3D printing, virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), and sustainable materials. Modern design responds to urgent issues like climate change, accessibility, and cultural representation.

Appreciating 21st-Century Designs

When we appreciate a design, we are looking beyond whether it simply looks “nice” or “modern.” True appreciation means examining different aspects of the design to understand why it is valuable and how it works in the real world. Four important factors to consider are functionality, aesthetics, innovation, and impact.

1. **Functionality** – Does It Work Well for Its Purpose?

A design should first and foremost be able to do what it was created to do. For example, a chair should be comfortable and strong enough to support

a person. A website should be easy to navigate and quick to load. Even the most beautiful design loses value if it fails to serve its purpose effectively. When judging functionality, we ask: Is it practical? Is it reliable? Does it meet the needs of the people using it?

2. Aesthetics – Is It Pleasing or Inspiring to Look At?

Aesthetics refers to the visual and sensory appeal of a design, how it looks, feels, and sometimes even sounds. A good design can inspire emotions such as joy, pride, or curiosity. This does not mean it has to be flashy or colourful; sometimes simplicity and elegance make a design beautiful. In 21st-century design, aesthetics often blend cultural identity with modern trends, for example, furniture that combines traditional Ghanaian motifs with sleek, minimal shapes.

3. Innovation – Does It Introduce a New Idea or Solve a Problem in a Fresh Way?

Innovation is about creativity and problem-solving. A design is often more appreciated when it presents something new, whether it is a fresh way to use materials, an improved technology, or a unique approach to an old problem. For instance, turning coconut husks into eco-friendly bowls is innovative because it reduces waste and adds value to something that might have been thrown away. In today's fast-changing world, innovation is highly valued because it keeps design relevant and useful.

4. Impact – How Does It Affect People, the Environment, and Society?

Perhaps the most important question to ask is: What difference does this design make? This could be positive or negative. A positive impact might include making life easier, protecting the environment, creating jobs, or strengthening cultural identity. A negative impact could involve harming the environment, encouraging unhealthy lifestyles, or excluding certain groups of people. For example, a reusable water bottle design can help reduce plastic waste, while a gadget that uses harmful, non-recyclable materials might have the opposite effect.



Figure 2.3: Guide to Appreciating 21st Century Design

Debating 21st-Century Design

Debates about design in our era often focus on balancing creativity, ethics, and responsibility. For example:

1. Should companies prioritise sustainable materials even if they cost more?
2. How can technology-based designs protect privacy and security?
3. Should designers take inspiration from other cultures, or is that cultural appropriation?

In such debates, we must consider different viewpoints:

- a. Supporters may argue that new designs improve life and push human progress.
- b. Critics may warn about waste, over-consumption, or unethical practices.

Making Judgements on 21st-Century Design

When making judgements about any design, it is important to be fair, informed, and balanced. This means not rushing to conclusions but instead taking time to understand the full story behind the design. Good judgement looks at evidence,

listens to different opinions, and considers the short- and long-term effects of the design.

Researching the Design

Before forming an opinion, it is necessary to gather as much information as possible. This includes knowing who created the design, why it was made, and what materials or technology were used. For example, a chair made from recycled plastic might look ordinary at first. Still, when you learn it was designed by a Ghanaian innovator to reduce ocean waste, your appreciation for it changes. Research helps us move beyond surface impressions and understand the deeper intentions and craftsmanship involved.

Considering the Context

Designs do not exist in isolation; they are shaped by cultural values, environmental realities, and social needs. When judging a design, you must ask:

- a. Does it respect cultural traditions or represent them accurately?
- b. Does it help protect the environment or cause harm?
- c. Does it improve people's quality of life, or does it create problems?

For example, a fashion designer might use kente patterns in their clothing. Understanding whether they are Ghanaian and respecting the cultural meaning of the cloth helps you judge if it is an authentic representation or cultural exploitation. Similarly, a building design might be beautiful, but if it uses too much energy or ignores the needs of disabled people, its value is reduced.

Weighing Benefits and Drawbacks

A balanced judgement requires seeing both the positive and negative sides of a design. Even a great innovation can have hidden costs. For example:

- a. Positive: A smartphone app that connects farmers directly to buyers can increase profits and reduce waste.
- b. Negative: If the app requires expensive internet data, it may exclude farmers in rural areas.

When these factors are considered, you can decide whether the benefits outweigh the drawbacks or whether improvements are needed. This approach leads to fairer, more constructive feedback instead of simply labelling something “good” or “bad.” For example, an electric car design might reduce air pollution (positive)

but require rare minerals that harm the environment when mined (negative). A good judgement recognises both sides before concluding.

Why It Matters

Appreciating and judging 21st-century design helps us become responsible consumers, informed citizens, and creative thinkers. It ensures we value designs that improve the world while questioning those that cause harm. In a time when design influences everything from the clothes we wear to the cities we live in, the ability to discuss and debate design choices is an essential skill.

Critically analyse the guidelines for judging art and design works below (*Figure 2.4*). Share with your friend if you agree or disagree, and suggest your views on how it should be done better.

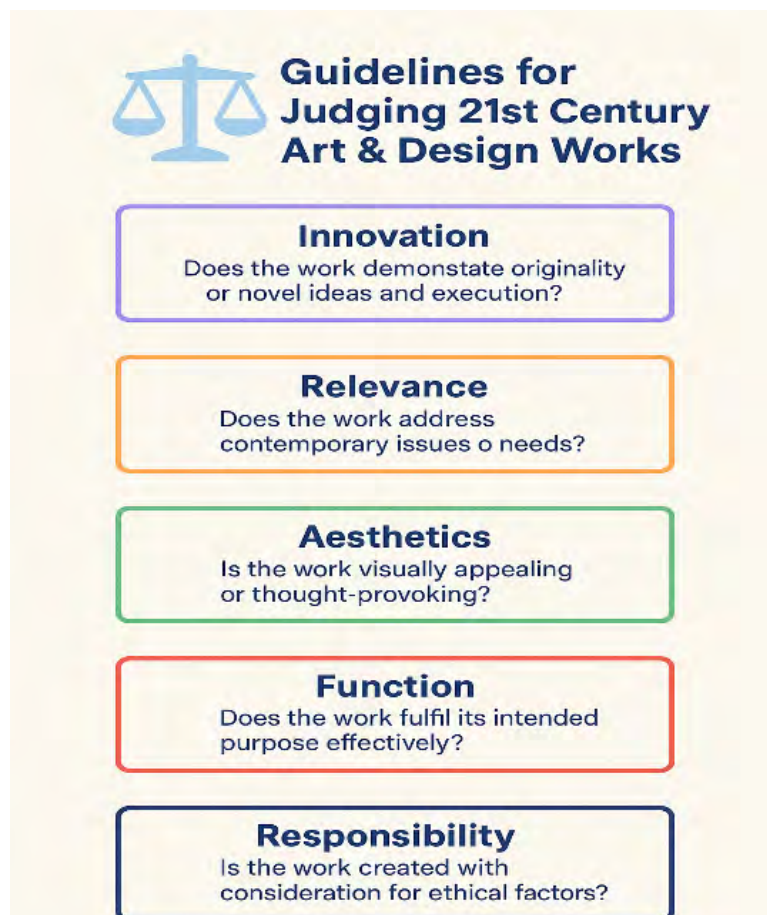


Figure 2.4: Sample guide for judging Art and Design works

Activity 2.3 Timeline Architects of Design

Picture your classroom transforming into a living timeline wall of the 21st century's most impactful design movements. You and your peers will become "timeline architects," plotting movements in a visually dynamic way that shows their relationships.

Here is your challenge

1. Choose at least five major 21st-century design movements (e.g., Sustainable Design, Inclusive Design, Biomimicry, Minimalism, Smart Technology Integration).
2. Assign each movement a colour code that reflects its design approach (for example, green for eco-focused, blue for tech-driven).
3. Add key designers, notable innovations, and important technological breakthroughs to your section of the timeline.
4. For accessibility, create an accompanying audio recording explaining each movement's key features.
5. Make your section interactive by creating QR codes (*Figure 2.5* is an example of a QR Code) linking to images or short videos, which are encouraged (Click here to learn how to make QR Codes: <https://www.the-qrcode-generator.com>)



Gallery Walk

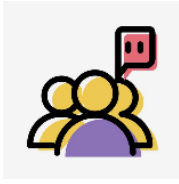
- a. Walk through the living timeline, listening to each other's audio guides and
- b. Making quick comparative notes on overlaps and differences between movements.

Try this Challenge

- a. Test your curiosity by scanning the QR code below
- b. Share with your friend or family one interesting thing you found here, and how that inspires you



Figure 2.5: An Example of QR Code



Weekend Prep Conversations – Designing for Change

At weekend prep, gather with friends and discuss;

- a. A design from your community that has made life easier.
- b. Which design principle it follows.
- c. How you could redesign it to be more environmentally friendly and accessible to all.
- d. Present your new design concepts to your teacher and peers for feedback.

Activity 2.4 The Design Detective & Innovator Challenge

You and your group are about to take on the combined roles of Design Detectives, 21st-century Design Innovators, and National Design Jury Members. Your mission is to investigate why certain ideas transform the world, design solutions to real problems, and evaluate innovations like a professional jury.

Let these steps guide you

1. Choose two case studies of successful 21st-century designs (e.g., the Tesla Powerwall, IKEA’s flat-pack innovation, 3D-printed housing). Using your design analysis worksheets, identify the main design concept applied in each case study.
2. Compare how the same concept (e.g., modularity, sustainability) was applied differently in each case. Record your findings in a side-by-side comparison chart, noting which social, cultural, or technological factors made the designs impactful.
3. Conduct a quick survey in your local community (face-to-face, phone, or online) to identify common design-related problems. Categorise these problems using a 21st-century design framework such as Human-Centred Design or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. Choose one priority problem and brainstorm possible solutions. Develop your prototype concept as an infographic showing the problem, your design process, and your proposed solution.
5. Prepare for an Interclass “What Do You Know” Dialogue where your group will present the infographic to other classes, encouraging discussion on how design concepts can drive social change.

6. Step into your role as a “Design Jury” member for a national student competition. Select a set of design examples (e.g., packaging, textiles, furniture, architecture) either from your community or from provided images.
7. For each design, discuss:
 - a. What problem it solves.
 - b. How well it meets at least two 21st-century design principles (e.g., sustainability, inclusivity, aesthetics, innovation).
8. Create and use your Personal Design Rating Checklist (See *Figure 2.6* for sample layout). This should include clear criteria and scoring options.
9. Score each design out of 10, providing clear reasons for your scores.
10. Present your top-rated design to the class, defend your choice, and gather feedback from peers. Document all insights and reflections in your personal journal for future reference.

Design Rating Checklist



Functionality

The design meets its intended purpose and requirements.

☐ ☐ ☐



Aesthetics

The design has an appealing and visually pleasing appearance

☐ ☐ ☐



Originality

The design includes creative and original elements

☐ ☐ ☐



Usability

The design is user-friendly and easy to interact with

☐ ☐ ☐

Figure 2.6: Sample Design Rating Checklist



World Design Day Chats – If I Were a Design Judge

During World Design Day, talk with friends or relatives about;

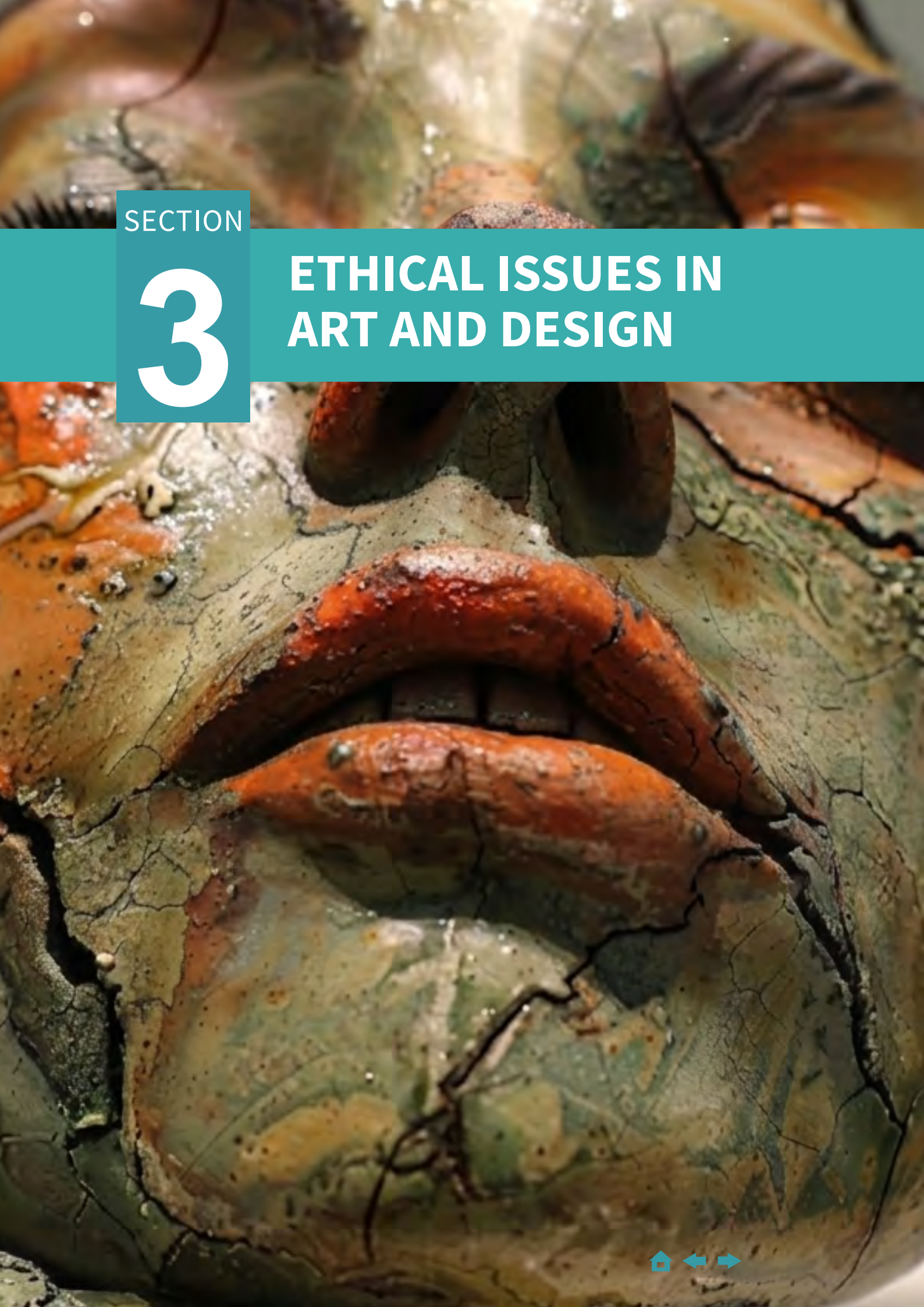
- a. The best design you reviewed in class and why it stood out.
- b. How judging designs helped you understand and appreciate creative problem-solving.
- c. One change you would make to the design to make it even better.

EXTENDED READING

- STIRworld – What is Modernism in African Art?
- Africa Direct – The Influence of African Art on Modern Artists and Design
- Cornford & Cross – African Art History Essentials
- Landtours – Contemporary Art in Ghana
- Berj Art Gallery – The Vibrant Tapestry of Ghanaian Art
- Contemporary Art Issue – Different Types of Contemporary Art
- Apre Art House – 10 Biennales and Triennales to Watch Out For
- Contemporary Art Society – National Gallery of Zimbabwe
- Thames & Hudson – Contemporary African Art
- Okwui Enwezor & Chika Okeke-Agulu – Contemporary African Art Since 1980 (PDF)

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the main differences between analogue and digital media in art-making?
2. How has the shift from analogue to digital tools influenced the speed of producing artwork?
3. In what ways can analogue techniques influence digital art-making?
4. How might cultural values shape the choice of analogue or digital media?
5. What are the environmental implications of using analogue versus digital media?
6. How can artists combine analogue and digital media to create hybrid works?
7. What skills are needed to transition from analogue to digital art-making?
8. How does access to technology affect the choice between analogue and digital media?
9. What are some examples of contemporary Ghanaian artists who use both analogue and digital techniques?
10. How might future technological developments further change art-making processes?



SECTION

3

ETHICAL ISSUES IN ART AND DESIGN

AESTHETICS AND CRITICISM

INTRODUCTION

In Years 1 and 2, we explored how design evolved—from the creative concepts of ancient cultures to the modern design movements that have shaped the world. We examined the social and material conditions that influenced these designs, asking: How did culture, resources, and history shape the way people created? What lessons can these past approaches teach us today? Now, in Year 3, we step into the 21st century, where art and design go beyond beauty and function to address important ethical questions. Artists and designers must consider how their work impacts people, the environment, and society. This includes respecting human rights, using materials responsibly, and responding to challenges like climate change. We will also explore new technological frontiers, interactive 3D and 4D works and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs). As we explore, we try to find out how innovation and ethics can work together to shape the future of art and design.

KEY IDEAS

- Understanding how to classify different ethical concerns that arise in art and design practice.
- Recognising human-centred ethical considerations, including respect for rights, dignity, and cultural sensitivity in artistic work.
- Appreciating the responsibilities of artists in ensuring honesty, originality, and integrity in their creations.
- Developing awareness of responsible use of materials and the environmental impact of art production.
- Exploring advocacy issues in art, such as promoting social justice, inclusion, and sustainable practices.
- Gaining knowledge of technology-based art forms and their applications in contemporary creative work.
- Distinguishing between 3D, 4D, and 5D art forms, including their unique features, and understanding the role of Crypto Art and NFTs in the evolving art market.

UNDERSTANDING ETHICAL ISSUES IN ART AND DESIGN

Art and design are powerful tools for communication. They can inspire, educate, entertain, and even challenge the way people think. But with that power comes responsibility. Ethical issues in art and design are about deciding what is right and fair when creating and sharing creative work.

In the 21st century, these issues have become even more important because art and design are no longer limited to physical spaces like galleries or museums; they exist online, in advertising, in virtual spaces, and on social media, reaching audiences worldwide. This means artists and designers must think carefully about the choices they make, from the messages they send to the materials they use.

For example, an artist who creates a mural about environmental protection should also consider whether the paints they use harm the environment. A designer making an advert must ensure it does not promote harmful stereotypes or false information.

Ethics in art and design often involve balancing creativity with respect for people, cultures, and the planet. It is about asking:

- a. Is my work truthful?
- b. Does it respect the dignity of others?
- c. Could it harm the environment or exploit people?
- d. Am I using my skills to make a positive difference?

Understanding these questions can guide artists and designers to create works that are not only beautiful or functional but also responsible and meaningful.

Why should Designers and Artists Consider Ethical Issues?

Ethical issues in art and design are important because they guide artists and designers to create work that is responsible, respectful, and fair. In today's world, creative works reach audiences globally through exhibitions, advertising, social media, and virtual spaces. This wide reach means that art and design can strongly influence people's beliefs, attitudes, and actions. When creators think carefully about their choices, such as the messages they send, the cultural symbols they use, and the materials they select help to ensure their work inspires positive change rather than causing harm.

These ethical considerations also protect the dignity of individuals and communities, safeguard the environment, and encourage honesty in creative expression. By addressing issues like human rights, environmental impact, cultural respect, and truthful representation, artists and designers strengthen public trust in their work. Ethical awareness not only improves the quality and impact of creative projects but also ensures they contribute meaningfully to society and future generations.

Categorising Ethical Issues Associated with Art and Design

Ethical issues in art and design can seem complex and overwhelming. To make them easier to study and address, we can group them into different categories. By understanding these areas, artists and designers can think more clearly about their choices and responsibilities, ensuring their work is not only creative but also respectful and responsible.

1. Human-Centred Ethical Issues

These issues focus on how art and design affect people's rights, dignity, and well-being. At its core, this category is about putting people first. It covers a wide range of concerns, including avoiding plagiarism, respecting cultural traditions, portraying people truthfully, and ensuring diversity and inclusion in our creative work. A good designer thinks about how their creation will be used and experienced by all people, including those with disabilities. For example, taking a photograph of someone at a private cultural ceremony and using it in a commercial advertisement without their permission is a serious ethical problem. It violates their privacy, disrespects their culture, and exploits their image for profit.

2. Artistic Responsibilities

Because art can influence people so powerfully, artists and designers have a special duty to use that influence wisely. This means being truthful in their work, avoiding the creation of content that promotes hatred or harm, and thinking carefully about how their work might influence public attitudes or behaviours. A powerful film, painting, or poster can inspire positive action, like encouraging people to protect the environment. However, that same power can be used irresponsibly. For instance, a political cartoon that relies on harmful stereotypes to criticise a leader can spread prejudice, while a well-researched one can spark intelligent debate.

3. Material Responsibility

This category is about the physical “stuff” used to create art and design. Ethical creators consider the entire journey of their materials: where they come from, whether they are safe for the artist and the user, and what happens to them after the artwork is finished. For example, a sculptor who uses recycled wood from discarded furniture or locally sourced, sustainable timber is showing material responsibility. In contrast, an artist using rare tropical hardwood that was illegally logged contributes to deforestation and environmental harm. This also includes the safe disposal of toxic materials like certain paints and solvents to avoid polluting our soil and water.

4. Environmental Impact

This is closely related to material responsibility but focuses on the broader effect the artwork has on nature. Large-scale installations, the fashion industry, or even digital projects all have an environmental footprint. For example, a massive public sculpture might require a large concrete foundation that disrupts the local ecosystem. Similarly, a major arts festival, like the Chale Wote Street Art Festival, has an ethical responsibility to manage the waste produced by thousands of attendees and numerous installations. Reducing waste, recycling materials, and using renewable energy in studios are all ways artists can be more eco-friendly.

5. Emerging Advocacy Issues

In our modern, interconnected world, artists often use their work as a megaphone to speak out about global problems. This can include raising awareness about climate change, social justice, gender equality, or human rights. This kind of advocacy in art is powerful, but it comes with a great responsibility to be accurate, fair, and respectful. An artist creating a project about the impact of plastic pollution on Ghana’s coastal communities must do their research and, ideally, collaborate with those communities to ensure their story is told authentically.

6. Technology-Related Issues

With the rapid growth of digital art, NFTs, AI-generated images, and interactive designs, a whole new set of ethical questions has appeared. For example:

- a. Ownership: If a digital artwork can be copied infinitely with a single click, who owns the “original”?

- b. Artificial Intelligence (AI): Is AI-generated art fair if the AI was trained by analysing the work of thousands of human artists without their permission or compensation?
- c. Environmental Cost: Can NFTs be considered eco-friendly when the blockchain technology they rely on uses a massive amount of electricity, contributing to climate change? These are the new ethical frontiers that today's artists and designers must navigate.

Activity 3.1 Exploring Ethical Issues in Art and Design

Scenario: Your community is preparing for a public art festival. Several artists are planning to showcase their works, but some people have raised concerns about certain artworks possibly offending cultural values or copying other artists' ideas.

Try this out

1. Identify examples of ethical issues in art and design (such as plagiarism, offensive themes, exploitation, or environmental harm).
2. Discuss why these issues might be considered unethical in your context.
3. Suggest ways artists and designers can address or avoid such problems while still being creative.
4. Use the information to create a poster or mind map showing at least four ethical issues in art and design, with short explanations and possible solutions. Include visual examples if possible.
5. Present your finished visualised poster to friends or family for feedback
6. Use the feedback from peers or family to improve the work and add it to your portfolio for future reference.

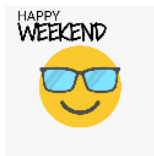
Activity 3.2 Categorising Ethical Issues in Art and Design

Scenario: Imagine you have been asked to help your school's art club organise a workshop on ethics for young artists. Your job is to group different ethical issues so that learners can understand them better.

Now try this

1. List as many ethical issues in art and design as you can think of.

2. Categorise them into themes such as Cultural Sensitivity, Intellectual Property, Environmental Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.
3. Share examples from your community or from the media to explain each category.
4. Design a colourful chart or table categorising at least eight ethical issues in art and design, with clear definitions and examples. Keep this in your portfolio for future reference.



Weekend Talks on Art, Design, and Morality

During your weekend leisure time, gather with friends or family to discuss;

- a. A time when you saw an artwork or design that made you question if it was ethical.
- b. Whether you think freedom of expression should have limits in art and design.
- c. How communities can encourage artists to be both creative and responsible.
- d. Whether some categories are more serious than others and why.
- e. How young artists can be trained to think about ethics from the start of their creative process.
- f. The category of ethical issues is most common in your community.

HUMAN-CENTRED ETHICAL ISSUES IN ART

Human-centred ethical issues in art relate to the ways artistic activities, products, and processes affect individuals, communities, and societies. These concerns focus on respect for human dignity, safety, identity, and social well-being. In the 21st century, with the growth of digital media, global interconnectedness, and new creative technologies, artists and designers must be more deliberate in addressing these issues. The following are key aspects

1. Respect for Human Dignity and Rights

Artistic works must not exploit, dehumanise, or stereotype individuals or groups. Images, symbols, or narratives should be used in ways that protect

the integrity of people's cultural, social, and personal identities. Artists need to avoid misrepresentation, discriminatory portrayals, and any form of visual or thematic bias that could harm the self-worth of audiences.

2. Cultural Sensitivity and Respect for Identity

Art often draws from cultural traditions, stories, and practices. Misappropriation, such as using cultural elements without permission, understanding, or respect, can lead to cultural harm and resentment. Ethical practice requires giving credit to cultural sources, seeking consent where necessary, and representing cultures authentically.

3. Consent and Privacy

Artists using photographs, videos, or personal data of individuals must obtain informed consent before including them in a creative work. In digital art, this extends to AI-generated content that uses likenesses of real people. Privacy violations can lead to emotional distress and legal consequences.

4. Avoidance of Harmful Content

Artistic works should avoid content that incites violence, hate, or discrimination. Works that could provoke harmful social behaviours or emotional trauma, especially among vulnerable groups, should be handled with caution. Even when addressing sensitive issues, artists should apply thoughtful framing to prevent negative social impact.

5. Fair Labour and Safe Working Conditions

In collaborative projects, assistants, models, and craftspeople should be treated fairly, paid appropriately, and given safe working conditions. Exploitation, whether through underpayment, unsafe environments, or overwork, violates ethical responsibilities in art-making.

6. Representation and Inclusion

Artists and designers should strive for inclusive representation, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are reflected in creative works. Underrepresentation of certain groups can perpetuate inequality, while inclusive representation fosters understanding, empathy, and social cohesion.

7. Accountability for Public Impact

Since art often shapes public opinion and cultural norms, creators must take responsibility for the messages their work conveys. This includes considering the psychological, political, and social effects on the audience, particularly in public installations or mass media campaigns.

Human-centred ethical issues in art require ongoing reflection and responsible decision-making. By respecting human dignity, protecting cultural identity, ensuring consent, avoiding harm, promoting inclusion, and being accountable for social impact, artists and designers can create works that not only express creativity but also uphold ethical integrity. In this way, art remains a powerful force for positive change in contemporary society.

“What artistic responsibilities do artists and designers have regarding human-centred ethical issues?”

Artists and designers hold a unique and powerful position in society. They are the creators of the ideas, images, and objects that shape how people see the world, how they feel, and even how they behave. Because this creative work reaches diverse audiences and impacts individuals directly, an artist’s responsibilities go far beyond simply making something beautiful or functional. In addressing human-centred ethical issues, creators must actively work to safeguard human dignity, promote fairness in their work, and, above all, avoid causing harm.

Respect for Cultural Identity and Diversity

In our globally connected world, ideas and images travel instantly. This makes cultural respect more important than ever. Creators have an ethical duty to avoid oversimplifying and often insulting ideas about a group of people. They must also avoid cultural misrepresentation, where traditions are shown inaccurately, or exploitation, where cultural symbols are used without proper understanding or credit. A European designer using Adinkra symbols as trendy patterns without understanding their deep proverbial meanings is not engaging in cultural exchange; they are taking a surface-level aesthetic while ignoring their soul. To act ethically, creators must practice cultural sensitivity. This requires deep research, listening, and direct consultation with elders, master craftspeople, or community leaders, ensuring that traditions are honoured, not just borrowed.

Protecting Emotional and Psychological Well-being

Art has a direct line to our emotions. This power must be handled with care. The messages, symbols, and imagery an artist uses can inspire and heal, but they can also cause real harm, trigger past trauma, or be used to spread hateful ideas. An artist wishing to depict a difficult subject, like the horrors of war or domestic violence, has a responsibility to think about their audience. If disturbing

or graphic content is necessary to convey a powerful truth, it should always be contextualised with appropriate warnings for the viewer, such as a notice at the entrance of an exhibition. The goal should be to provoke thoughtful reflection, not to create shock value for its own sake.

Ensuring Accessibility and Inclusivity

A truly human-centred design or artwork should be for everyone, not just for a select few. Creators must consider people with disabilities, varied age groups, and diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This ethical principle is about removing barriers. For a physical exhibition, this could mean ensuring wheelchair access and placing artworks at a height that everyone can see. For a digital artwork or a public health poster, it means applying principles of universal design, such as using clear, large text, providing high colour contrast for the visually impaired, and using simple language that can be understood by people with different literacy levels. Making art accessible is an act of social inclusion.

Upholding Honesty and Integrity

The relationship between a creator and their audience is built on trust. Creators must avoid plagiarism (the act of stealing someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as their own). They must also avoid the false representation and manipulative use of media. For example, a photojournalist has an ethical duty not to digitally alter a photograph of a news event to mislead the public. While artists have the freedom to be imaginative, this artistic freedom must be balanced with maintaining public trust and factual integrity, especially when dealing with real-world issues and events.

Considering Long-term Social Consequences

Art and design do not exist in a vacuum; they shape the world we live in. They can influence cultural norms, consumer habits, and even public policy. An advertising designer, for instance, has a responsibility to consider the long-term impact of their work. If an ad campaign consistently uses only light-skinned models to sell beauty products, it contributes to a harmful and narrow standard of beauty that can negatively affect the self-esteem of millions of darker-skinned girls. An ethical designer asks: “Does my work support the common good? Does it empower people and foster positive human interaction?”

Balancing Creativity with Responsibility

Ultimately, addressing human-centred ethical issues requires empathy, respect, cultural awareness, and a strong sense of accountability. This is not about limiting creativity with restrictive rules. Instead, it is about making creativity more thoughtful, meaningful, and powerful. True artistic responsibility means using one's creative influence to enrich lives, challenge injustice thoughtfully, and strengthen society not to exploit, marginalise, or harm it.

Emerging Advocacy Issues

In modern times, art has become a vital tool for advocacy. Artists often use their work to speak out about urgent global problems, such as climate change, social justice, gender equality, or human rights. A powerful mural in a community can bring attention to the issue of plastic pollution in local rivers, or a photography series can give a voice to a marginalised group. Advocacy in art is incredibly powerful, but it comes with its own ethical rules. It requires accuracy; you cannot fight for a cause using false information. It demands fairness and respect for all the voices involved; an artist must ensure they are truly representing a community's struggle, not speaking for them without their input.

Technology-Related Issues

With the rapid growth of digital art, new and complex ethical questions have appeared that we are all still learning to answer.

- a. **Ownership and Value:** Who truly owns a digital artwork? If a piece of digital art can be perfectly copied and shared with a single click, how can it be rare or valuable? Technologies like NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) are an attempt to solve this, creating a digital certificate of ownership.
- b. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Is AI art fair? Many AI image generators are “trained” on millions of images created by human artists, often without their permission. An ethical question arises: is it right for a person to use AI to generate an image in the specific style of a living artist, potentially taking work away from them?
- c. **Environmental Impact:** Can digital art be eco-friendly? Early versions of the blockchain technology used for NFTs required massive amounts of electricity, contributing to climate change. This has sparked a major ethical debate, and thankfully, newer, more energy-efficient technologies are now being developed to address this critical problem.

Activity 3.3 Understanding Human-Centred Ethical Issues in Art

You are at an art exhibition where several pieces portray people in ways that make you wonder whether their rights, dignity, or privacy were respected. Some artworks seem to show personal struggles, while others depict cultural traditions without much explanation. As a young artist, you want to ensure your own work does not harm people or misrepresent them.

To address this concern, you will explore examples of human-centred ethical issues in art and learn ways to avoid them in your practice.

Here are a few steps to follow

1. Reflect on the exhibition scenario you have experienced and list any ways in which the artworks might have raised ethical concerns.
2. Join another peer to merge your lists, discussing whether the concerns you identified could affect the dignity, privacy, or feelings of the people depicted.
3. Write explanations for each issue on your list, showing why it is an ethical concern and how it can affect viewers and subjects.
4. Develop practical tips for artists to protect people's rights and feelings in their work, such as obtaining consent, avoiding stereotypes, and representing people truthfully.
5. Create a simple visual map (guide) with these tips and add it to your portfolio (See example in **Figure 3.1** as a guide to create yours).



Figure 3.1: Sample Ethical Responsibility Visual Map

Activity 3.4 Exploring Artistic Responsibilities

You have been commissioned to create an artwork for a community event that will bring together people from many backgrounds. Since you recently examined human-centred ethical issues, you now want to apply this understanding to act responsibly as an artist. You must think about how your choices will affect the audience and the subjects of your art.

To prepare for this responsibility, you will explore what it means for an artist to act ethically and thoughtfully by doing the following

1. Discuss in small groups what responsibilities artists have when presenting work to the public, such as avoiding harmful stereotypes, protecting cultural heritage, and crediting sources.
2. Select one responsibility that you believe is most important for your community event commission and explain why in your notebook.
3. Use the visual guide you created in *Activity 3.1* as a reference to help shape your thinking and examples.
4. Plan a short role-play showing an artist making a decision that reflects the responsibility you chose.
5. Perform the role-play for the class and gather feedback on how well it demonstrated the responsibility in action.
6. Write three key lessons you learned from the discussion and role-play, and add them to your portfolio for future reference.



Try this Challenge: Art Noticeboard Challenge

Consider yourself an expert in artistic ethics and an environmental advocate;

- a. Create a clear and eye-catching poster for the school Art Club noticeboard.
- b. Your poster should guide young artists and designers on the key principles of art and design ethics, including respect for people's rights, cultural sensitivity, environmental responsibility, and honesty in artistic representation.
- c. Make sure the design is simple, attractive, and easy for others to read at a glance.

- d. Seek permission from your teacher or school authorities to paste your design on the noticeboard for feedback from peers in the school environment.

MATERIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ART AND DESIGN

Material responsibility refers to the conscious and informed choices artists and designers make when selecting, using, and disposing of materials. In the 21st century, the conversation has shifted towards sustainable and ethical sourcing of materials to minimise harm to people and the planet. Artists are expected to consider the origin of their materials, ensuring they are not obtained through exploitative labour or environmentally destructive processes.

For example, a sculptor choosing locally sourced wood from sustainable forestry rather than illegally logged timber demonstrates material responsibility. Additionally, designers are encouraged to explore recycled, upcycled, or biodegradable materials to reduce waste and lower their carbon footprint. Responsible material use also includes avoiding harmful chemicals such as toxic pigments, solvents, or plastics that may pose long-term health risks to users and the environment.

Environmental Responsibility in Creative Practice

Environmental responsibility in art and design focuses on minimising the ecological impact of creative work. This includes considering how the production, transportation, and disposal of artworks or design products affect natural resources and ecosystems.

Artists and designers are now expected to align their practice with eco-conscious approaches, such as creating energy-efficient production processes, reusing materials, and adopting “low-impact” techniques. Public art projects, for instance, may prioritise solar-powered installations or use rainwater harvesting in water-based designs. In addition, works that address climate change, pollution, or biodiversity loss contribute to raising awareness and inspiring environmental stewardship among audiences. This responsibility extends beyond the artwork itself to include exhibitions and installations ensuring energy-efficient lighting, reducing single-use plastics at art events, and favouring local rather than long-distance transport of works.

Emerging Advocacy Issues in Art and Design

Emerging advocacy issues reflect the growing role of artists and designers as social change agents. Beyond producing aesthetically pleasing works, many creatives now actively use their platforms to speak against injustice, inequality, and exploitation. In the context of art and design, advocacy can address topics such as human rights, cultural heritage preservation, digital ethics, and inclusive representation.

For example, a graphic designer may create campaigns that challenge gender stereotypes in advertising, while a contemporary artist might produce interactive installations that highlight the impact of e-waste on developing countries. Digital media has also opened new advocacy spaces, where art can quickly reach global audiences to mobilise support for environmental or humanitarian causes.

This evolving responsibility demands that artists stay informed about societal issues, collaborate with advocacy groups, and ensure their work respects cultural sensitivities and promotes diversity. As art continues to shape public opinion, ethical advocacy in design becomes not only an option but a professional duty.

Activity 3.5 Investigating Material Responsibility in Art and Design

Your school has been invited to contribute artworks for a community exhibition promoting sustainable living. You realise that some common art materials, such as certain paints, plastics, and glues, may harm the environment. Your task is to work with your classmates to investigate how artists can choose materials more responsibly.

Use these guiding steps

1. Identify and make a list of materials commonly used in your art class and research their environmental impact (This can be done digitally or with available physical materials).
2. Classify them into eco-friendly and harmful categories.
3. Explore alternatives for any harmful materials, such as recycled paper, natural dyes, or biodegradable adhesives.
4. Create a checklist for responsible material selection in art and design (See example in **Figure 3.2** to create your own checklist).
5. Display your checklist in the art room for other learners to use.

Responsible Art Material Selection

- ☒ Prioritise recycled or repurposed materials
- ☒ Choose biodegradable or non-toxic options
- ☒ Source materials locally when possible
- ☒ Reduce waste through efficient material use

Figure 3.2: Sample checklist for the Responsible Art Material Selection

Activity 3.6 Advocating Environmental and Social Responsibility

Your local youth centre is launching an “Art for Change” campaign to raise awareness about environmental issues such as waste management, water conservation, and climate change. They have invited young artists, including you, to create artworks that also advocate for responsible behaviour. How would you go about achieving this task?

Here are some useful steps to follow

1. Choose a specific environmental or social issue you care about (e.g., plastic waste, deforestation, pollution).
2. Research facts and community perspectives related to that issue.
3. Decide on an art form (poster, sculpture, installation, digital art) that best communicates your message.
4. Plan your work using environmentally responsible materials.
5. Present your artwork at a school or community mini-exhibition and invite viewers to write down one action they will take to address the issue.



Try this Leisure-time Challenge: The Creative Corner – Ethical Art Doodles

What to Do

- a. Take a blank sheet of paper and some coloured pencils or markers.
- b. Think about the ethical responsibilities in art and design that you have learned today.
- c. Draw quick, playful doodles or sketches to show one or more of these ideas – for example, a recycling sign, a picture showing nature protection, or an image that respects culture.
- d. You can work alone or with a partner. Spend about 10 minutes creating your doodles.
- e. When you are done, hold up your doodle and explain what it means in one sentence.
- f. Your work might be chosen to go on our “Ethics in Art” wall or folder for everyone to see later.

Tip: Relax, enjoy the moment, and let your creativity flow. Soft background music will be playing while you draw.

TECHNOLOGY-BASED ART AND DESIGN WORKS

Technology-based art and design works refer to creative pieces that are produced, enhanced, or presented using modern digital and electronic tools. These works combine artistic skills with technology to produce innovative designs, interactive experiences, and visually compelling outputs. They are common in today’s creative industries and are widely used in education, advertising, entertainment, and cultural preservation.

Digital Painting and Illustration

Digital painting involves creating artworks directly on a computer or tablet using software such as Adobe Photoshop, Procreate, or Corel Painter. Artists use digital brushes that mimic traditional media like oils, watercolours, or charcoal, but with more flexibility. In Ghana, young creatives are embracing digital illustration for children’s books, advertising, and social media content. For example, Ghanaian digital artist Bright Tetteh Ackwerh uses digital tools to create vibrant Afrocentric

characters that address social, economic and political issues. This approach reduces material costs and allows for faster editing compared to traditional painting.



Figure 3.3: Afrocentric characters that address social, economic and political issues

Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and 3D Modelling

CAD and 3D modelling tools such as AutoCAD, SketchUp, and Blender allow artists and designers to produce precise digital models of objects, buildings, or products before they are physically made. Ghanaian architecture students in higher educational institutions frequently use CAD to design sustainable housing solutions for urban and rural communities. For instance, CAD has been applied in Accra's housing projects to visualise eco-friendly layouts before construction begins. In industrial design, Ghanaian artisans who make jewellery and furniture are also beginning to explore 3D printing based on CAD designs.

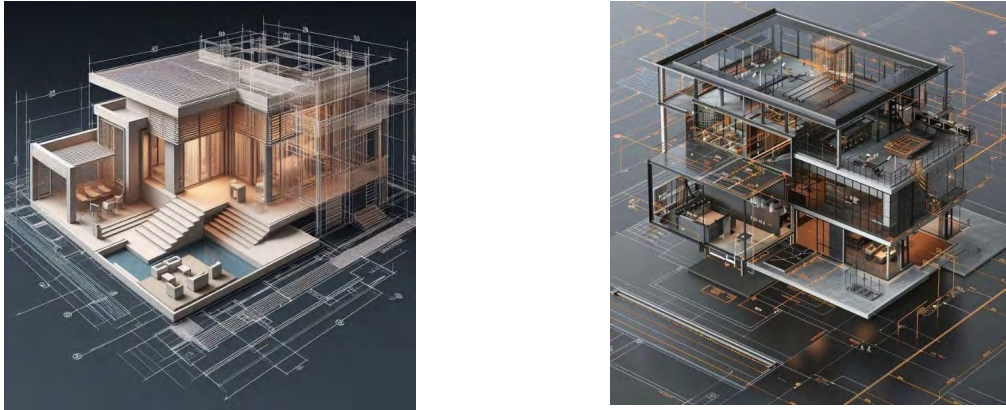


Figure 3.4: CAD and 3D modelling of a housing project

Animation and Motion Graphics

Animation combines art and technology to produce moving images for entertainment, advertising, and education. Motion graphics involve animated text, shapes, and designs used in videos and online platforms. In Ghana, studios like Elcarna Studios have produced award-winning animations, which blend traditional Ghanaian folklore with modern cartooning and animation techniques. This form of art reaches a wide audience and is used for health campaigns, tourism promotion, and educational videos.

Photography and Digital Imaging

Photography has evolved with digital cameras and editing software like Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop. Photographers can now enhance, manipulate, or combine images for creative expression. In Ghana, wedding photographers, fashion photographers, and documentary photographers make use of drones, high-resolution cameras, and digital editing to capture striking images. For example, Ghanaian photographer Nana Kofi Acquah combines powerful photojournalism with digital enhancements to tell compelling African stories in global publications.



Figure 3.5: Digital imaging combines powerful photojournalism with digital enhancements by Nana Kofi Acquah

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) Art

VR creates fully immersive digital environments, while AR overlays digital images onto the real world through devices like smartphones or VR headsets. Ghanaian innovators have started integrating AR into tourism and education. For example, the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board has explored AR for interactive museum tours, allowing visitors to see 3D reconstructions of historical artefacts on their mobile devices. Artists can create immersive exhibitions where audiences interact with artworks in ways not possible in a traditional gallery.



Figure 3.6: An Example of Virtual Reality Space

Game Art and Design

Game art involves creating visual assets for video games, including characters, environments, and animations. In Ghana, the gaming industry is emerging, with developers producing culturally inspired games. For instance, Leti Arts, a Ghanaian game development studio, produces African superhero games such as Africa's Legends, which blend digital storytelling with African history and folklore. This form of art requires skills in both creative design and programming.



Figure 3.7: African superhero games by Leti Arts

Digital Textile and Fashion Design

Fashion designers now use software to design patterns, simulate fabrics, and visualise clothing on virtual models before production. In Ghana, textile designers are using digital tools to reimagine Kente, Batik, and Adinkra patterns for global markets. Some designers create computer-generated motifs that are later printed on fabric using digital printing technology. This approach reduces waste and allows for faster production compared to traditional weaving or dyeing.



Figure 3.8: Digitally printed Ghanaian fabrics

Digital Sculpting and Fabrication

Digital sculpting uses software like ZBrush or Mudbox to create three-dimensional models that can be physically produced using CNC machines or 3D printers. In Ghana, this is gaining attention in both the creative arts and industrial sectors. For example, prototype models for public monuments and functional objects can now be digitally sculpted and then cast in metal or carved in wood. The National Theatre of Ghana has seen proposals for stage set designs created through digital sculpting, enabling artists to visualise complex forms before construction.

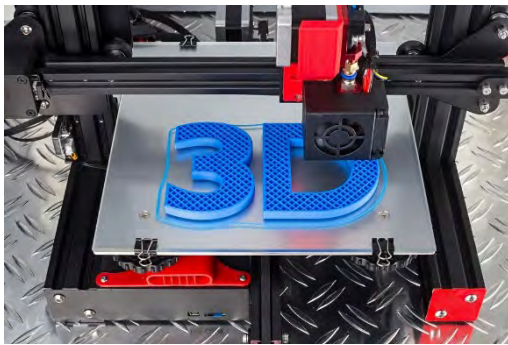


Figure 3.9: 3D Printer and a CNC machine

Activity 3.7 The Changing Face of Art from Traditional to Technological

Kwame's grandmother is a skilled Adinkra cloth printer. She works with carved calabash stamps, dyes, and cloth. Kwame loves her designs but prefers to create on his tablet using drawing software. When he showed her a digital version of her patterns, she was amazed that he could print them on T-shirts without touching dye or cloth. Your task is to explore how traditional art forms like Kwame's grandmothers have transformed through technology, and to create your own piece that blends the old with the new.

Here is what to do

1. Identify and list at least three traditional art forms you know (e.g. painting, weaving, pottery, carving, etc.).
2. For each of the traditional arts listed, discuss how technology has changed the way it is made, shared, or used. Include examples like photography, digital painting, or online galleries.

3. Choose one art form and research its journey from traditional to technology-based form. Create a simple mind map showing the changes in tools, techniques, audience, and creative possibilities.
4. Plan and create a small artwork or concept sketch that merges traditional and technological approaches. For example, scan a hand drawing and add colours digitally, or design a fabric pattern on a computer.
5. Display your work in a “Pop-up Digital Gallery” in the classroom. Be ready to explain the role of technology in your creation and how it connects to traditional techniques.

Click here to learn how to create a Pop-up Digital Gallery in your classroom: <https://youtu.be/mqXBT7CB0X4>



Think about this: What alternatives do you have to create a mini physical gallery in your classroom if you do not have the resources to create a digital gallery?



Try this after the prep tech talk

- a. After evening prep, form a circle and debate with your peers on this topic:
“In the future, will great artists need coding skills more than drawing skills?”
- b. Give real examples from Ghana and around the world and respond to others with respectful challenges.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN 3D, 4D, AND 5D ART FORMS

In art and design, dimensionality refers to the number of measurable directions or aspects that an artwork engages. While 2D art exists on a flat plane, higher-dimensional forms expand the experience by adding depth, time, and even interactive or sensory layers.

Three-Dimensional (3D) Art

Three-dimensional art refers to artworks that have height, width, and depth. These works occupy physical space and can be viewed from multiple angles. The three dimensions make the artwork tangible and often invite viewers to walk around or handle the piece to fully appreciate its form.

Examples in the Ghanaian context

- a. **Traditional Sculpture:** Ghanaian woodcarvings, such as fertility dolls (Akua'ba of the Akan people) and stools, are 3D because they exist in physical space and can be viewed from all sides.
- b. **Contemporary Installations:** Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui creates monumental installations using discarded bottle caps, which take on large, textured, and physically imposing forms.
- c. **Ceramics and Pottery:** Handcrafted pots from regions like Kpando and Sirigu are shaped in three dimensions, allowing for both functional and decorative purposes.

3D art is experienced physically, meaning light, shadow, and material texture become essential parts of the aesthetic experience.

Four-Dimensional (4D) Art

Four-dimensional art adds the element of time to the three physical dimensions. This means that the artwork changes or unfolds over a period, requiring the viewer to experience it in motion or sequence. Time-based media such as film, animation, kinetic sculpture, and performance art are examples of 4D forms.

Examples in the Ghanaian context

- a. **Performance Art and Dance:** Traditional Ghanaian dance forms, such as Adowa or Agbadza, combine movement, costume, and live music to create a time-based art experience. The movements are choreographed sequences that cannot be fully understood in a single static moment.
- b. **Video Art:** Contemporary Ghanaian multimedia artists use video installations to merge visuals, audio, and narrative storytelling, requiring time to be experienced.
- c. **Kinetic Sculpture:** Moving sculptures, sometimes incorporated into festivals or public spaces, add motion to traditional forms, engaging viewers dynamically.

In 4D art, the unfolding process is part of the meaning; how the work changes from start to finish carries as much weight as the physical form itself.

Five-Dimensional (5D) Art

Five-dimensional art takes the immersive qualities of 4D art further by adding interactive or multi-sensory engagement, often incorporating technology. In addition to height, width, depth, and time, 5D art involves the audience's active participation or simultaneous stimulation of multiple senses such as touch, smell, or taste. It can also include branching narratives where the viewer's choices influence the outcome.

Examples in the Ghanaian context

- a. **Virtual Reality (VR) Cultural Exhibits:** Imagine a VR simulation of the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum where visitors can “walk through” the site, interact with objects, and hear historical narratives as they choose their own exploration path.
- b. **Augmented Reality (AR) Festivals:** At Chale Wote Street Art Festival in Accra, future projects could use AR to let viewers point their phones at murals to see animations, hear music, or unlock hidden stories about the artwork.
- c. **Interactive Installations:** Digital exhibits that let participants use touch screens to design Kente patterns and project them onto a large virtual loom in real-time. 5D art transforms the audience from passive observers into co-creators of the experience. This makes it a powerful tool for education, cultural preservation, and tourism in Ghana.

Table 3.1: Summary Examples of Art Dimensions and their Characteristics

Dimension	Characteristics	Ghanaian Example
3D	Height, width, depth	Akua'ba dolls, El Anatsui's bottle cap sculptures, and Kpando pottery
4D	3D + time (movement/change)	Adowa dance performance, kinetic festival sculptures, video installations
5D	4D + interactivity/multi-sensory	VR Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, AR murals at Chale Wote, interactive Kente design projections

Activity 3.8 Dimensional Art Viewer Experience Study

You are part of a research team that wants to know how people in your school respond to different types of 3D, 4D, and 5D art. Your job is to collect examples, share them with people, and compare their reactions.

What to do

1. Find or create three artworks.
 - a. A 3D object like a sculpture, pottery, basket, or traditional cloth.
 - b. A 4D piece like a short video, animation, dance, or recorded live performance.
 - c. A 5D experience like VR/AR art, an NFT display, or any interactive digital artwork.
2. Make three cards with the questions below.
 - a. How does this artwork make you feel?
 - b. What do you understand from it?
 - c. How engaged are you with it?
3. Show your artworks to 20 classmates or community members and collect their answers on the cards.
4. Organise the answers into a chart, table, or graph so you can compare the emotional, understanding, and engagement levels for each art type.
5. Write a short report explaining:
 - a. Which art type created the strongest reactions?
 - b. Which might be harder to access in Ghana and why.
 - c. How Ghanaian cultural traditions influence people's reactions.
6. Present your final report in class for discussion and feedback.

Activity 3.9 Designing Multidimensional Simulated vs. Physical Space

Imagine you have been hired by a Ghanaian cultural centre to design a new art experience that exists both in the real world and in a virtual world. You must explore both types of spaces and use what you learn to create your design.

What to do

1. In small groups, explore actual art spaces such as galleries, heritage sites, or cultural centres.
2. Take virtual tours or watch videos of at least two online platforms, such as Chale Wote AR murals, virtual museums, or metaverse spaces.
3. Record your observations about;
 - a. The kinds of art displayed.
 - b. Sensory features like sound, movement, or interaction.
 - c. How people can take part in the experience.
 - d. How culture is shown in the space.
4. Discuss as a group the points below.
 - a. How the virtual experiences differ from the real ones.
 - b. Which senses are used in each?
 - c. Which Ghanaian cultural traditions could work well in VR or 5D art?
5. Create your own multidimensional art idea based on Ghanaian culture. Make sure it has at least two dimensions beyond 3D (such as time and interaction). Show how people can connect with it physically, emotionally, and interactively. Use drawings, storyboards, or 3D models to present.
6. Share your concept with the class, explaining the dimensions, cultural elements, and how you designed it to keep audiences involved.

CRYPTOCURRENCY IN ART

Cryptocurrency refers to digital money that exists only online and is secured by computer codes (cryptography). Artists can use cryptocurrency, such as Bitcoin or Ethereum, to sell their artworks without needing banks or physical cash.

Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

NFTs are unique digital certificates stored on a blockchain. They show proof of ownership of a digital item such as a painting, photograph, video, or music file. While cryptocurrency coins are all the same in value (fungible), NFTs are each different and cannot be exchanged for one another in the same way. NFTs allow artists to sell their digital work and keep track of who owns it.

Activity 3.10 Understanding Cryptocurrency and NFTs in Art

Kwame, a young digital artist in Ghana, has been creating stunning 3D artworks using his tablet. One day, he learns about cryptocurrency and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs). Instead of printing his work, he sells a piece to a collector in Japan using cryptocurrency. To secure the purchase, he creates an NFT that proves the collector owns the original digital piece. This NFT is stored on the blockchain and cannot be altered or copied. Now Kwame wonders how these new technologies might change the way artists in Ghana and Africa sell their work to the world.

Explore these steps to step into Kwame's world

1. Try to decode the terms in your own words by defining cryptocurrency and NFTs. Try to highlight what makes them different from each other, using Kwame's example to guide your explanation.
2. Spot the Connection by drawing or describing another type of artwork (digital, animation, or virtual reality art) that could be sold as an NFT. Write two to three sentences explaining why someone might buy it.
3. Create a simple flow chart diagram showing the process of selling an artwork as an NFT, starting from creation to the buyer receiving proof of ownership.
4. Critically discuss with a group of peers or a friend why blockchain technology is considered trustworthy for art transactions.
5. After the discussions, share one key reason with the class why you would recommend digital platforms for the sale of arts.

Activity 3.11 Analysing the Impact of NFTs on Artists and Audiences

After his first NFT sale, Kwame notices two things: he can earn money directly from buyers without a middleman, and each time his artwork is resold, he can receive a percentage of the resale price automatically. However, some friends warn him about environmental concerns linked to blockchain energy use and the unpredictable value of NFTs. Kwame decides to research further before making NFTs his main source of income.

Your Steps to Engage

1. Select and compare NFTs with some traditional art sales by making a two-column chart: one for Advantages of NFTs, one for Disadvantages.

Include points about reach, ownership, income, and environmental impact.

2. Do a real-world analysis by researching an African artist who sells NFTs. Summarise in a short paragraph what kind of art they sell and what benefits or challenges they have faced.
3. Make ethical reflections on your search to write a short position statement answering this question: Should artists consider environmental impact when selling NFTs? Justify your view with at least two points.
4. Put your ideas in an action plan by designing a short “NFT Guide for Artists” with three tips for safely and successfully selling digital art to global buyers. Display your guide on your class noticeboard.

Free Period Arguments

Debate this topic during your free periods in class: “NFTs are a better way to sell art than traditional galleries.”

- a. Split into two teams, one for supporters and the other for opponents
- b. Prepare evidence and argue your case in a lively but respectful way on the topic.
- c. Select 3 persons to be neutral observers to give their impressions of the depth of arguments and give their appreciation verdicts.
- d. Share your final thoughts in class when your teacher visits for his views.

EXTENDED READING

- CLRN – What Is 4D Art?
- Difference Between 2D, 3D and 4D
- MyArtBroker – Who Does Art Belong To? Ownership, Legacy and Repatriation
- Wikipedia – Repatriation (Cultural Property)
- Sustainability Directory – Ethical Implications of Cultural Appropriation in Art
- Sustainability Directory – Ethical Considerations for Artists
- Medium – The Ethics of Art: Issues and Debates
- Fiveable – Ethical Dilemmas in the Art World

- Coursera – What Is NFT Art?
- Forbes – What Is NFT Art and How to Create It?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. State an example of human-centred ethical issues in art.
2. Give an example of material responsibility in art and design.
3. Identify one key difference between a 3D and a 4D art form.
4. Mention two examples of technology-based art in Ghana.
5. What does NFT stand for in digital art?
6. Identify two ethical issues that may arise from the use of digital images in art.
7. Explain how cryptocurrency can influence the way artists sell their works.
8. Give two reasons why Ghanaian artists should consider environmental impact when selecting art materials. Discuss how Ghanaian artists can apply human-centred ethics in public murals
9. Evaluate the potential benefits and challenges of using NFTs to sell Ghanaian artworks in the global market.
10. Discuss how human-centred ethics can influence the design of public monuments in Ghana.
13. Propose an art installation that uses 5D principles to represent Ghana's cultural heritage and explain the intended audience experience.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a classical column capital. The hand is positioned at the top of the frame, with fingers wrapped around the capital. The column capital is dark and has a fluted, classical design. The background is a solid teal color. The overall composition is artistic and focuses on the texture and form of the hand and the column capital.

SECTION

4

ASPECTS OF ART CRITICISM

MAKING JUDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

In your first and second years of study, you explored the building blocks of art by identifying elements of artistic content and form, and you analysed how artists combine these to make creative decisions. You also studied aesthetic theories, learning how to explain and apply them when looking at different works of art and design. Think back for a moment on this question: how do these ideas help you to understand artworks more deeply? In this unit, you will take the next step by learning about art criticism. You will identify and explain its different aspects, analyse the stages involved, and practise applying criticism to your own work and to the works of others. This will help you see art criticism not only as judging but also as a way to reflect, improve, and connect theory with practice in meaningful ways.

KEY IDEAS

- Art criticism is the study of how to describe, analyse, interpret, and judge artworks.
- Each stage of criticism builds a pathway from simple observation to deeper evaluation.
- Criticism links artworks to the cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape them.
- Applying criticism to personal works helps learners assess their strengths and weaknesses.
- Creative improvement comes when artists use criticism to refine ideas and techniques.
- Strong criticism communicates opinions clearly with facts and sound reasoning.
- Engaging in criticism encourages respect for diverse views and artistic expressions.

ASPECTS OF ART CRITICISM

Art is a powerful form of communication. It can tell stories, express emotions, and reflect the world around us. But how do we unlock these messages? How do we move from simply seeing a piece of art to truly understanding it? The answer lies in art criticism. Contrary to what the name might suggest, art criticism is not about finding fault or making negative comments. Instead, it is the careful study, discussion, and judgment of artworks. It is an engaging process that helps us to understand what an artwork is about, how it was made, and why it is important. Think of it as a conversation with the artwork. It is a way of learning and appreciating art on a much deeper level, moving beyond a first glance to uncover layers of meaning and skill.

Meaning of Art Criticism

At its core, art criticism is the process of looking at an artwork, thinking about it, and talking about its meaning, style, and value. It provides us with a structured way to analyse, interpret, and evaluate what we see. It is like being a detective; you must assume the artist has a secret message hidden inside the work, and your job is to use a systematic approach to solve the mystery. This process allows us to explain not just what we see, but also what we feel and think about an artwork. It equips us with a special language to discuss art thoughtfully, helping us articulate our ideas and opinions in a clear and organised manner. It transforms a personal preference (“I like this painting”) into an informed statement (“This painting is successful because of its vibrant use of colour and dynamic composition”).

Importance of Art Criticism

Engaging in art criticism offers numerous benefits, not just for art students but for anyone who wants to sharpen their thinking and perception skills. It is a vital component of art education that fosters critical thinking and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of art.

1. It improves our ability to see and understand details in artworks. The process of criticism forces us to slow down and look closely. Instead of a glance, we learn to notice the finer points: the texture of the paint, the direction of the lines, the subtle variations in colour, and the symbols the artist has used. This keen observational skill is transferable to many other areas of life and learning.

2. It helps us appreciate the efforts of artists. When we critically examine an artwork, we begin to understand the immense thought, skill, and time that went into its creation. We see the deliberate choices the artist made – every brushstroke, every colour mix, every compositional decision. This insight fosters a profound respect and appreciation for the artist's dedication and talent. We move beyond seeing just a final product and start to value the creative journey behind it.
3. It guides us to create better works by learning from mistakes and strengths. For students who are also artists, art criticism is an essential tool for growth. By applying the principles of criticism to your own work, you can identify areas for improvement and recognise what you have done well. Similarly, when your peers critique your work constructively, they offer fresh perspectives that you might have missed. This exchange of ideas within a classroom creates a supportive environment where everyone learns and improves together.
4. It helps us connect artworks to culture, history, and society. Art is never created in a vacuum. It is a product of its time and place. Art criticism encourages us to explore these connections. For example, looking at the intricate patterns of Kente cloth is not just about appreciating its beauty; it is about understanding its historical significance and the stories each pattern tells about Akan culture and values. When we see the powerful sculptures of Kwame Akoto-Bamfo, which address the trauma of the transatlantic slave trade, criticism helps us understand their deep connection to Ghanaian history and their commentary on social justice.

Aspects of Art Criticism

To ensure a thorough and fair assessment, art criticism is typically broken down into four main stages or aspects. This four-step process guides us from objective observation to a well-reasoned judgment. The stages are Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment. Let us explore these steps using an imaginary painting you might see in a Ghanaian gallery. Imagine a painting of a busy market scene in Makola, Accra.

Description

This is the first and most straightforward step. Here, you state only the facts. You carefully observe the artwork and list everything you see, without giving any opinions or making guesses. It is a purely objective account.

- a. What to look for: Begin by noting the basics: the artist's name, the title of the work, and the materials used (e.g., oil on canvas, wood sculpture). Then, list the literal objects and figures you see. Identify the prominent elements of art: the types of colours (bright, dull, primary, secondary), the kinds of lines (straight, curved, thin, thick), the various shapes (geometric, organic), and the textures (smooth, rough).
- b. Example: "The painting is a large, colourful canvas showing a crowded market. I see many figures, mostly women, carrying baskets on their heads and selling goods like vegetables and textiles. The colours are very bright, with lots of reds, yellows, and greens. Many curved and diagonal lines create a sense of movement. The background shows old and new buildings side-by-side."

Analysis

In this stage, you move from just listing what you see to explaining how the parts are organised and how they work together. You are now looking at the relationships between the elements of art and the principles of design (like balance, contrast, emphasis, and rhythm).

- a. What to look for: How are the colours combined to create a certain mood? How are lines used to lead your eye through the painting? How does the artist use space? Is there a clear focal point, or an area of emphasis that grabs your attention?
- b. Example: "The artist has created a sense of chaotic energy through the use of many overlapping figures and strong diagonal lines. The bright colours create a vibrant and lively mood. There is a strong contrast between the brightly coloured clothes of the market women and the more muted tones of the buildings in the background. The central figure of a woman in a red dress is the main point of emphasis."

Interpretation

This is where you explain the meaning or message of the artwork. Based on your description and analysis, what do you think the artist is trying to communicate? What feelings or moods does the artwork evoke in you? This stage is more subjective, but your guesses must be supported by the visual evidence you have already gathered.

- a. What to ask: What is the overall theme or story? Are there any symbols that represent a deeper idea? What emotions do you feel when you look at the work?
- b. Example: “The painting is a celebration of the strength and resilience of Ghanaian women. The busy, energetic scene highlights their hard work and vital role in the community. The bright colours suggest joy and vibrancy despite the challenges of their daily lives. The painting seems to communicate a message about the enduring spirit and importance of these women in our society.”

Judgement

This is the final stage where you give your opinion on the artwork’s success or failure. This is not simply saying, “It’s a good painting.” Your judgment must be based on the insights from the previous three steps. You are making an informed decision about the artwork’s merit.

- a. What to consider: Did the artist successfully communicate their message? Was the choice of materials and techniques effective? Does the work have artistic merit and is it original?
- b. Example: “The artwork is highly successful because it powerfully captures the vibrant energy of a Ghanaian market and effectively communicates its theme. The artist’s use of strong colours, dynamic composition, and clear focal point all work together to create a visually engaging and meaningful piece. The painting succeeds in making the viewer appreciate the hard work and spirit of the women of Makola.”

Qualities of a Good Art Critic

Anyone can be an art critic, but to be a good one requires developing certain qualities. A good critic aims to be constructive and insightful.

- i. Observant: A good critic notices details that others might miss. They have a sharp eye for the subtle elements and how they contribute to the overall work. This is the foundation of a strong critique.
- ii. Honest: A critic must give fair and sincere comments. This does not mean being harsh; it means providing a balanced view that acknowledges both the strengths and weaknesses of the artwork. Honesty helps the artist to grow.
- iii. Respectful: Criticism should always be delivered with respect for the artist and their effort. The focus is on the artwork, not the person. Insulting

language is never part of a constructive critique. The goal is to encourage a thoughtful dialogue, not to discourage the artist.

- iv. **Knowledgeable:** The more you know, the more insightful your criticism will be. A good critic understands the elements of art and principles of design. They also have some knowledge of art history and the cultural context in which the art was created, which allows for a deeper and more meaningful analysis.

Application of Art Criticism

The skills of art criticism are not just for exams or for professionals; they have practical uses in many areas.

1. **In class:** In a visual arts class, students regularly critique each other's work. Using the four-step method, you can give your classmates specific, helpful feedback that goes beyond "that's nice." This peer review process helps everyone to improve their skills and learn to articulate their artistic ideas.
2. **In society:** Professional art critics play an important role in the art world. You can find their reviews in newspapers, on art blogs, on TV or on social media. They review new exhibitions at galleries like the Nubuke Foundation in Accra and help the public understand and appreciate the work of contemporary artists, such as Serge Attukwei Clottey or Bright Ackwerh. Their work can influence public opinion and help shape an artist's career.
3. **In personal work,** Artists are their own first critics. Before an artist shows their work to anyone, they go through a process of self-criticism. They step back from their canvas or sculpture and use the principles of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment to decide if the piece is finished, if it communicates their intended message, and what could be improved. This reflective practice is crucial for creating high-quality art

Activity 4.1 First Encounters with Criticism

Adwoa paints a bright market scene with bold colours. When she shows it in class, one friend says, "I like the colours, they are cheerful." Another adds, "The figures look too small compared to the stalls." Adwoa wonders why her classmates see her work differently and what exactly counts as criticism in art. If you are a young Art and Design teacher, what will you do to help Adwoa understand why her friends think differently?

Follow these steps to learn what they know

1. Start with a two-column chart: on one side, list Positive Responses (e.g., “cheerful colours”), and on the other, Constructive Critiques (e.g., “figures too small”).
2. Use this chart to define art criticism in your own words and write down two reasons why criticism is important for artists.
3. Interview a classmate briefly: ask how they feel when their work is praised and when it is corrected. Summarise their view in two sentences.
4. Create a mini-classroom poster titled “Criticism is not Insult” with three points that explain how feedback can help artists grow.
5. Share the poster with your friends and keep a copy for digital or manual portfolio.

Weekend Chats: Pair up with a friend and discuss this: “What is more useful for an artist’s praise or correction?” Share each partner’s final thought with your art teacher on Monday.

Activity 4.2 The Four Pillars of Criticism

During an art club meeting, the teacher introduces four steps of art criticism: Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgement. Some learners find it confusing. Are they supposed to do it all at once or in a sequence?

Try this activity in small groups of four members

1. Assign each member one pillar (see **Figure 4.1**) of criticism as outlined in this material or from any vital source. Each member must give an example using a painting in their textbook or classroom wall.
2. Re-join as a group and combine your ideas into a short script that shows the four steps being applied to the same artwork.
3. Perform the script as a mini role-play where each person speaks their part as a critic (e.g. someone can be a critic of the material used, techniques or the skill level of the artist).
4. After the performance, reflect individually on: Which step was easiest for you, and which was hardest? Write your reflection in three sentences and share with the class.

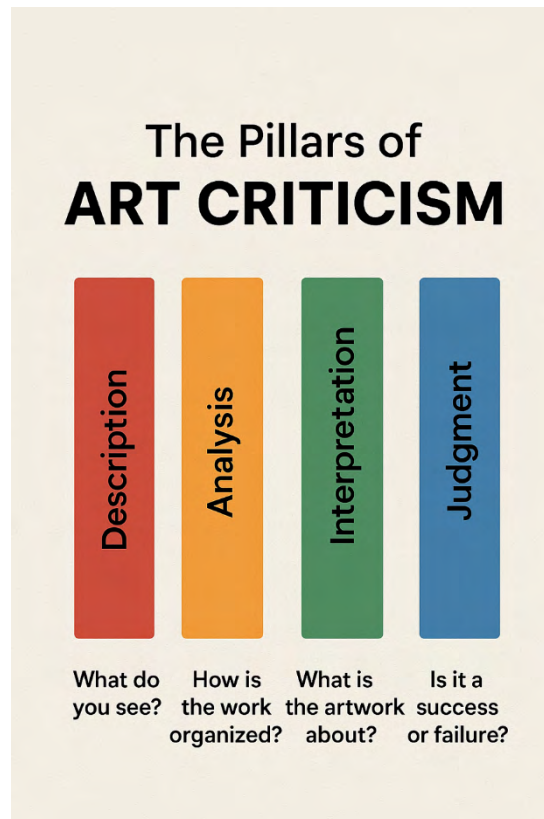


Figure 4.1: Pillars of Art Criticism

Interclass: What Do You Know

1. Organise a quick quiz between two classes (Arrange with your teacher to assist you).
2. Each team gets 5 artworks projected or displayed, and they must quickly identify which of the four steps best matches a given comment (Agree on the minutes to use).
3. Neutral judges from another class keep the score.
4. Find some creative means of rewarding the winning team to motivate them (This can be a customised artwork, certificate or a trophy)

Activity 4.3 Criticism in Everyday Life

Ben designs a new logo for the school football team. Some students cheer, saying it looks powerful, while others complain that the colours clash and the shape is confusing. Ben realises that even outside the art classroom, criticism happens daily and can help improve creative ideas.

Like Ben, you can learn to apply criticism in your everyday life by doing the following

1. Begin by listing three non-art examples where criticism plays a role (e.g., in sports, cooking, fashion).
2. With a partner, select one example and show how the four steps of art criticism (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, Judgement) could still apply to it.
3. Write a short comparison paragraph explaining how criticism in art is similar to criticism in other fields.
4. Design a mini-info-card with the heading “Criticism is Part of Life” and decorate it with one example from your discussion. Display these on the classroom board.

Washing Time Arguments

As you fetch water or wash your bowls, chat in pairs about this: “Is criticism more useful for beginners or for experts? “Share your partner’s view in class the next day.

CRITICISM PROCESS

Art is a powerful form of communication, telling stories, expressing emotions, and reflecting the world around us. To truly appreciate and understand a work of art, we need to go beyond a glance. Art criticism provides a structured way to engage with art, allowing us to look closer, think deeper, and articulate our thoughts in a clear and organised manner. This process is not about finding fault; rather, it is a journey of discovery. For any art student in Ghana, mastering these stages is a crucial step towards becoming a more insightful artist and a more discerning viewer.

Art criticism is built around four distinct stages: Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment. By following these steps, we can move from simply seeing an artwork to truly understanding its meaning and significance.

Stages of Art Criticism

Art criticism follows clear stages that guide us to look at, think about, and talk about artworks. These stages help us to move step by step so that we understand the work fully and can explain our ideas in an organised way.

Description: What Do You See?

This initial stage is all about objective observation. Imagine you are a detective at a crime scene; your first task is to report only the facts. At this point, personal opinions and feelings are set aside. The goal is to create a detailed inventory of everything you see in the artwork. This process of slowing down to look closely helps in noticing details that might otherwise be missed.

To guide your description, consider the following.

1. **Subject Matter:** What is the artwork about? If it is a painting, you might see people, landscapes, or objects. For instance, in a traditional Ghanaian market scene painting, you would describe the figures of the sellers, the items they are selling like yams, peppers, and textiles, and the general setting. You would state these as facts: “The painting depicts a busy market. There are several figures of women behind stalls of produce.”
2. **Elements of Art:** Identify the basic visual components the artist has used. Talk about the lines (are they straight, curved, thick, thin?), the shapes (geometric like squares and circles, or organic like the shape of a leaf?), and the colours (are they bright and bold like in a Kente cloth, or are they muted and earthy?). Also, consider the texture (does the surface look rough or smooth?), the use of space, and the different forms (three-dimensional objects like a sculpture).
3. **Technical Details:** Mention the medium used by the artist. Is it an oil painting, a wooden sculpture, a photograph, or a textile? You can also note the size of the artwork.

Example using a Ghanaian context

Let us take a traditional Adinkra cloth.

Description: “This is a large piece of cotton fabric. The colour of the cloth is a deep brown. Stamped onto the fabric in black ink are repeating patterns of various symbols. One of the prominent symbols is the ‘Gye Nyame,’ which looks like a stylised representation of a person. The lines of the symbols are clean and precise. The overall texture appears relatively smooth.”

Analysis: How is the Work Organised?

Once you have a thorough description, the next step is to analyse how the artist has arranged the elements of art. This stage focuses on the principles of design and the composition of the artwork. Here, you are still looking at the visual facts, but now you are considering the relationships between them.

Key aspects to focus on during analysis include;

1. **Balance:** How are the visual elements weighted? Is the artwork symmetrical (balanced on both sides), asymmetrical (balanced with different elements on each side), or radial (radiating from a central point)? A carved Akan stool, for example, often displays a strong sense of symmetry, creating a feeling of stability and importance.
2. **Emphasis:** What is the focal point of the artwork? What first catches your eye? An artist might use a bright colour, a contrasting shape, or a detailed figure to create emphasis.
3. **Contrast:** Are there big differences between elements? This could be a contrast between light and dark colours, rough and smooth textures, or large and small shapes. The interplay of bright and dark threads in a Kente cloth creates a vibrant contrast that is visually exciting.
4. **Rhythm and Movement:** How does your eye move around the artwork? Artists use repeating lines, shapes, and colours to create a sense of rhythm and guide the viewer's gaze through the piece.
5. **Proportion:** How do the sizes of different parts of the artwork relate to each other? In many African sculptures, the head is often depicted as larger in proportion to the body to signify the importance of wisdom and knowledge.
6. **Unity:** Do all the parts of the artwork feel like they belong together? Unity is achieved when the elements and principles of design work in harmony to create a complete and cohesive image.

Example using a Ghanaian context

Analysing a sculpture by the renowned Ghanaian artist El Anatsui.

Analysis: “The artist has created a large, tapestry-like sculpture from thousands of flattened bottle caps and copper wire. There is a strong sense of unity as the small, individual pieces come together to form a single, flowing entity. The repetition of the metallic shapes creates a visual rhythm across the surface. While the overall form is asymmetrical, it achieves a sense of balance through the distribution of different colours of bottle caps. The glistening texture of the metal contrasts with the rougher texture of the copper wire that holds it together.”

Interpretation: What is the Artwork About?

This is the stage where you begin to explore the meaning of the artwork. Based on your description and analysis, what message do you think the artist is trying to

communicate? Interpretation is about making educated guesses and forming your own understanding of the artwork's content.

To help with your interpretation, you can ask yourself these questions.

1. What is the mood or feeling of the artwork? Does it feel joyful, sad, peaceful, or chaotic?
2. What ideas or themes might the artist be exploring? This could be anything from motherhood and community to political commentary or spiritual beliefs.
3. Are there any symbols in the artwork? A symbol is something that stands for or represents something else. Adinkra symbols are a perfect example, with each symbol carrying a specific meaning about life, nature, or wisdom.
4. How does the title of the artwork (if there is one) affect your understanding?

Your personal life experiences and cultural background will influence your interpretation. For instance, a sculpture depicting a mother and child might be interpreted as a universal symbol of love, but within the Ghanaian context, it could also speak specifically to the revered role of mothers in our society and the importance of family.

Example using a Ghanaian context

Interpreting a fantasy coffin from the Ga people.

Interpretation: “The coffin is in the shape of a large eagle. Based on the analysis of its powerful form and majestic presence, the eagle could symbolise a person of high status or someone who was a leader in the community. In many cultures, eagles represent strength, freedom, and a connection to the divine. The choice of an eagle-shaped coffin could be a way of celebrating the life of the deceased and expressing the belief that their spirit will soar in the afterlife. It suggests that the person was respected and seen as a powerful figure in their community.”

Judgement: Is the Artwork Successful?

This is the final stage where you evaluate the artwork's merit. It is not simply about saying “I like it” or “I don't like it.” Your judgment should be a well-reasoned argument supported by evidence from the previous three stages.

There are different philosophies you can use to judge an artwork.

1. Imitationalism: Does the artwork realistically represent its subject matter? This is often a focus when looking at realistic portraits or landscapes.

2. Formalism: Is the artwork successful based on its use of the elements and principles of design? Here, the focus is on composition and technical skill.
3. Emotionalism: Does the artwork successfully communicate a mood or feeling? The main criterion is the emotional response it evokes in the viewer.

To form a strong judgment, you can consider

- a. Craftsmanship: How skilfully has the artist used their materials and techniques?
- b. Originality: Is the artwork unique and innovative?
- c. Communication: Has the artist successfully conveyed their intended message or emotion?

Example using a Ghanaian context

Judging a contemporary Ghanaian painting that addresses social issues.

Judgement: “This painting is highly successful because it powerfully communicates a critical social message about environmental pollution. The artist’s skilful use of dark, muddy colours and chaotic composition effectively creates a sombre and unsettling mood (Emotionalism). The way the artist has incorporated discarded plastic bags into the painting’s texture adds a layer of realism and strengthens the message (Imitationalism). The arrangement of the figures, with their backs turned to the viewer, draws attention to the polluted landscape, making it the central focus of the work (Formalism). Overall, the painting is a thought-provoking and well-executed piece of art that achieves its purpose.”

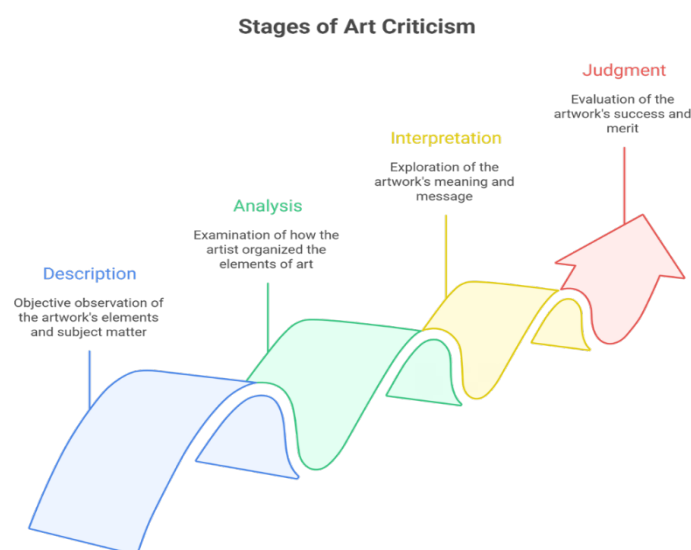


Figure 4.2: Stages of Art Criticism

Importance of the Stages

Following these stages of art criticism is not just an academic exercise; it has several important benefits for art students and anyone interested in art.

1. They help us to talk about art in an orderly way. Instead of jumping to conclusions, this four-step process provides a framework for a thorough and logical discussion. It gives you a vocabulary and a structure to express your thoughts clearly.
2. They prevent us from making quick or unfair judgments. By taking the time to describe and analyse, we are more likely to appreciate the artist's efforts and make a more informed and fair evaluation.
3. They train us to look at details and understand deeper meanings. The process encourages careful observation and critical thinking, helping us to see beyond the surface of an artwork and engage with its underlying message.
4. They help artists and learners to improve their work. When you apply these stages to your own art or the work of your peers, it can provide valuable insights for growth and development. It helps you to understand what is working well in a piece and what could be improved.

Qualities of a Good Criticism Process

To be effective, the process of art criticism should embody certain qualities.

1. It must be step by step, following description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. Each stage builds upon the previous one. Skipping a step can lead to a shallow and incomplete understanding of the artwork.
2. It must be clear, fair, and respectful. Art criticism should be a constructive process. When discussing an artwork, especially with the artist present, it is important to be honest but also respectful. The goal is to engage in a meaningful conversation, not to discourage creativity.
3. It must use art terms correctly. Using the correct vocabulary for the elements of art and principles of design shows that you have a solid understanding of the subject and allows for a more precise and professional discussion.
4. It must connect the artwork to its cultural and social context. Art is not created in a vacuum. Understanding the cultural and social background of an artwork and its artist can provide crucial insights into its meaning and significance. For example, knowing the history of the Asante Kingdom enriches one's understanding of the symbolism in their royal regalia.

Embracing these stages of art criticism will deepen your appreciation for the rich and diverse world of art, both locally and globally. It is a skill that not only enhances your art education but also develops your critical thinking and communication abilities, which are valuable in all aspects of life.

Activity 4.4 Unpacking the Stages of Criticism

During an art seminar, the facilitator displays a painting of a crowded lorry station. Learners quickly begin saying, “I think it means the chaos of city life” or “It looks untidy.” The facilitator pauses and says, “Before jumping to meaning, can we carefully go through the stages of criticism in order?”

Consider yourself as part of that seminar and follow the steps below the stages of criticism.

1. As a class, list the four stages of criticism on the board: Description, Analysis, Interpretation, Judgement.
2. In groups of four, each member selects one stage and explains what it involves in one sentence, using the lorry station painting as an example.
3. Rejoin as a group and create a flow diagram that shows how one stage leads to the next.
4. Present your diagram to the class, making sure to explain the importance of following the stages in sequence.
5. Individually, write a short reflection (e.g. 6 sentences) on which stage you think most learners often skip, and why.

After Prep Dialogue

Discuss this topic with your friends: “What happens if an art critic jumps straight to judgement without description or analysis?” Summarise your group’s thoughts and post them on the class noticeboard.

Activity 4.5 Applying and Comparing Criticism Stages

Scenario: At a school exhibition, two students criticise the same portrait differently. The first student starts with a description and slowly works through analysis and interpretation before making a judgment. The second jumps directly to saying, “This is a poor painting.” The art teacher asks: “Which approach gives deeper insight, and why?”

Follow these steps to find out how to answer the teacher

1. Apply all four stages of art criticism to a selected artwork of your choice.
2. Write a quick, direct judgement of the same artwork without following the stages.
3. Create a comparison chart with two columns: Stage-by-stage critique and Direct judgement.
4. Explain in three sentences why the staged critique provides a deeper understanding than direct judgement alone.
5. Design a mini-handout titled “The Value of the Four Stages of Art Criticism” with a one-line explanation for each stage and a simple sketch or symbol to represent it.
6. Share your handout with friends for feedback and keep it in your portfolio for future reference.

Holiday Chats

During the holidays, observe a local artwork such as a mural, a stop sign, or a sculpture. Practise applying the four stages in order and then share your reflection in class: “Did the stages help you see more than you first noticed?”

APPLYING CRITICISM IN ART AND DESIGN

After delving into the foundational stages of art criticism, it is time to bring this knowledge to life. Think of art criticism not as a rigid set of rules, but as a dynamic conversation with a work of art. It is a tool that empowers us to see more clearly, think more deeply, and communicate our ideas with confidence. Applying these stages (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment) to our own creations, the work of our peers, and the masterpieces of Ghanaian and international artists is a transformative practice. It is through this application that we not only refine our artistic skills but also cultivate a profound appreciation for the visual language that shapes our world.

Applying Criticism to Our Own Work: The Art of Self-Reflection

Turning a critical eye to our own creations is perhaps one of the most challenging yet rewarding aspects of being an artist. It requires honesty, objectivity, and a willingness to see our work for what it is and what it could be. By systematically

applying the four stages of art criticism, we can move beyond simply liking or disliking our work and begin to understand its strengths and weaknesses on a deeper level. This process is not about harsh judgment, but about constructive self-evaluation that fuels growth.

1. **Description** – Point out what you have done. This is the stage of pure observation. Imagine you are describing your artwork to someone over the phone. Be objective and factual. For instance, if you have just completed a drawing, you might say, “I have drawn a portrait of a woman using charcoal on A3 paper. I have used bold, dark lines to outline her face and softer, blended tones for the shadows on her cheeks and neck.” Or, for a piece of graphic design, “I designed a poster for a school event using a bright yellow background. The text is in a bold, blue sans-serif font, and there is a simplified illustration of a talking drum in the centre.”
2. **Analysis** – Check how the parts work together. Here, we move from what we see to how the visual elements are organised. This is where your knowledge of the elements and principles of art comes into play. You might observe, “The strong diagonal lines in my painting create a sense of movement, but the composition feels unbalanced because most of the visual weight is on the left side.” For a sculpture, you could analyse, “The rough texture of the wood contrasts with the smooth, polished metal, creating an interesting tactile quality. However, the proportions of the figure seem slightly distorted.”
3. **Interpretation** – Explain the meaning of your work. This is where you delve into the expressive qualities of your artwork. What message or mood are you trying to convey? This is your opportunity to connect your artistic choices to a deeper meaning. You might interpret your portrait by saying, “This drawing is meant to capture the strength and resilience of a Ghanaian market woman. The determined look in her eyes and the strong lines are intended to convey her fortitude.” For the poster, the interpretation could be, “The vibrant colours and the image of the talking drum are meant to create a feeling of excitement and to communicate the cultural nature of the event.”
4. **Judgment** – Decide if the work is strong or weak. After a thorough description, analysis, and interpretation, you are now equipped to make an informed judgment about your work. This is not a simple “I like it” or “I don’t like it.” Your judgment should be based on the evidence you have gathered in the previous stages. For example, “My painting is successful in conveying a sense of energy through the use of vibrant colours and dynamic lines. However, I need to work on creating a more balanced composition to

improve its overall impact.” Or “The poster is effective in grabbing attention, but the text could be larger to improve readability from a distance. I will consider this in my next design.”

Applying Criticism to Classmates’ Work: The Art of Constructive Feedback

Critiquing the work of your peers is a vital part of learning in a creative community. It is an opportunity to learn from one another, to see different perspectives, and to practice communicating your ideas respectfully and helpfully. When offering feedback, the goal is always to be constructive, aiming to build up your classmate’s understanding of their own work.

When looking at a classmate’s artwork, follow the same four stages. Begin by describing what you see, then analyse how the elements are working together. Offer your interpretation of the work’s meaning, and finally, provide a thoughtful judgment. Remember to be respectful and give clear reasons for your opinions.

For instance, instead of saying, “Your drawing is nice,” a more helpful critique would be, “The way you have used complementary colours in your painting creates a very vibrant and energetic feeling. The texture you have created in the foreground really draws the viewer in. Have you considered adding a little more detail to the background to create a greater sense of depth?” This kind of feedback is specific, encouraging, and offers a tangible suggestion for improvement. A helpful technique is the “critique sandwich,” where you start with a positive comment, offer a suggestion for improvement, and end with another positive remark.

Applying Criticism to Famous Works: Engaging with Our Cultural Heritage

The skills of art criticism extend far beyond the classroom. They are your gateway to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the rich artistic heritage of Ghana and the world. By applying these stages to famous works, you can unlock their stories, understand their cultural significance, and appreciate the genius of their creators.

Let us take, for example, a Ghanaian Handcrafted Basket

Description: “This is a handwoven basket made from dried raffia and straw fibres. The basket has a round base that gradually rises into a wide-open top. Its surface displays alternating bands of natural beige and deep brown, with accents of red

dye. The weave is tight and uniform, with decorative geometric patterns running across the sides.”

Analysis: “The artisan has created balance through symmetrical weaving, with colours arranged in rhythmic repetition. The contrast between light and dark straw fibres enhances the geometric designs, giving the basket visual depth. The sturdy base and strong vertical weave show both functional strength and aesthetic harmony.”

Interpretation: “This basket reflects Ghanaian values of functionality and beauty. Baskets are used for carrying food, storing goods, and as part of market life. The colours and patterns may also carry symbolic meanings: brown for the earth and livelihood, red for vitality, and beige for simplicity and everyday life. The craft demonstrates the close relationship between Ghanaian culture, the land, and sustainable living.”

Judgment: “This basket is a successful piece of Ghanaian handicraft. It is not only practical but also artistically pleasing. The symmetry and decorative patterns show mastery in traditional weaving techniques, while its cultural symbolism makes it a meaningful work of art that represents Ghanaian creativity and resilience.”

Importance of Applying Criticism

The practice of applying art criticism is not just an academic exercise; it has far-reaching benefits that will serve you well in your artistic journey and beyond.

1. **Helps us to improve our skills in art and design:** By critically examining our own work and the work of others, we become more aware of what makes an artwork successful. This understanding directly informs our own creative choices and helps us to refine our techniques.
2. **Trains us to think carefully before giving opinions:** Art criticism teaches us to base our opinions on evidence and to articulate our thoughts clearly and logically. This is a valuable skill in all areas of life.
3. **Builds confidence in presenting and defending our works:** When you can articulate the ideas and decisions behind your artwork, you can present it with greater confidence and engage in meaningful discussions about your creative process.
4. **Encourages respect and appreciation for the works of others:** By taking the time to understand an artwork on a deeper level, we develop a greater

appreciation for the skill, creativity, and effort that went into its creation. This fosters a sense of respect for our fellow artists.

5. Connects artworks to culture, society, and daily life: Art criticism helps us to see that art is not created in a vacuum. It is a reflection of the world in which it was made, and it can offer us new insights into our own culture, society, and daily lives.

Tips for Applying Criticism Well

To make your critiques as effective as possible, keep these tips in mind:

1. Always follow the stages step by step: Each stage builds on the one before it, so it is important to follow the process in order.
2. Use art terms (line, colour, balance, texture, etc.): Using the correct vocabulary will help you to be more precise and to communicate your ideas more effectively.
3. Be honest but respectful when giving feedback: Honesty is important for growth, but it should always be delivered with kindness and respect for the artist.
4. Accept comments from others as a way to grow: Receiving feedback can be challenging, but try to see it as a gift that can help you to improve your work.

Activity 4.6 Critiquing Your Own Artwork

Ama completes a poster design for her science project. When she looks at it again, she wonders if the colours are too bright and if the lettering is clear enough. She realises that by applying the stages of criticism to her own work, she can make it stronger before submission. If you were in her shoes, what would you do?

Learn to critique your own work by doing the following

1. Select one of your own completed artworks.
2. Apply the four stages of criticism (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, Judgement) in writing, giving at least two sentences under each stage.
3. Highlight one strength and one weakness of the work based on your critique.

4. Revise or sketch a quick improvement plan for the artwork and label the changes you would make.
5. Write a concluding note titled “How Criticism Helped Me Improve” with three points drawn from your experience.

After Prep Reflections

During evening prep discussions, share your conclusion with peers under this guiding question: “Which part of your artwork changed most after you criticised it?” Summarise the highlights for the class the next morning.

Activity 4.7 Criticism across Art and Design

At a school exhibition, visitors view paintings, craft items, and fashion designs. Some appreciate the creativity, while others raise questions about balance, function, and message. This shows that criticism must be applied across different areas of art and design, not only to paintings.

Follow these Steps to try applying criticism of other art and design works

1. Select one painting, one craft object, and one design-related item (such as a poster or dress style).
2. Apply the four stages of criticism to each, ensuring your notes show how criticism differs across the three forms.
3. Create a three-part comparison chart with columns labelled Painting, Craft, and Design and record one key insight under each stage of criticism.
4. Write a short essay (e.g. 6 sentences) answering: “Why must art criticism pay attention to the type of artwork being studied?”
5. Design a classroom display sheet titled “How Criticism Varies across Art and Design” with examples from your chart.
6. Take photographs of your display for your digital portfolio.

Weekend Arguments

Hold a debate on this topic: “It is harder to criticise design works than fine art.” Supporters and opponents must each provide evidence from at least two artworks they studied. Conclude by posting the main arguments on the class noticeboard.

EXTENDED READING

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opCmhja_qw4
- <https://youtu.be/c09iMjdAd9E>
- <https://thevirtualinstructor.com/blog/the-steps-to-art-criticism>
- https://youtu.be/oa5bEBSrh_o<https://youtu.be/UrV6WPOasOo>
- <https://youtu.be/Q3GzSX3V2ZI>
- <https://creativitychronicles.com/how-to-critique-art/>

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is art criticism?
2. List the four basic stages of art criticism.
3. State two purposes of engaging in art criticism.
4. Explain how the description stage of art criticism differs from the interpretation stage.
5. Identify and briefly explain two aspects of art criticism that focus on judgment.
6. Compare formal analysis and contextual analysis as methods of art criticism.
7. Give two reasons why applying art criticism is important for an art student.
8. Imagine you are reviewing a classmate's painting. Apply the four stages of art criticism to give a balanced analysis of the work.
9. Evaluate how cultural background can influence the interpretation stage of art criticism, using a Ghanaian art example.
10. Reflect on your own recent artwork. How would applying art criticism improve the way you present and explain your piece to others?

SECTION

5

APPLICATION OF COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN



DESIGN THINKING AND COMPOSITION

INTRODUCTION

In your first two years, you explored how design concepts emerged in ancient cultures and examined the social and material conditions that shaped them. You also studied modern design theories and schools, analysing how society's needs influenced products and solutions. These earlier lessons showed you that design has always responded to the conditions and tools available. In this section, you will learn about the development of computer-aided design (CAD) and its impact on product design, while also experimenting with different CAD software to create artworks that solve real problems in society. As you begin, think back: how did ancient and modern designers use the tools and resources available to meet society's needs, and in what ways does CAD continue this tradition with new technologies? Remember, mastering CAD not only connects you to global design practices but also equips you with skills that can shape the future of Ghanaian innovation.

KEY IDEAS

- Computer-Aided Design (CAD) uses digital technology to create, modify, and improve design solutions for real-life problems.
- CAD has transformed product design by making drawing, modelling, testing, and production faster, more accurate, and more efficient.
- Different CAD software programs, such as AutoCAD, CorelDRAW, Blender, and SketchUp, are used for specific design purposes, including 2D drawing, 3D modelling, animation, and product visualisation.
- Design thinking in CAD involves identifying problems, generating creative ideas, testing solutions, and improving designs based on users' needs.
- CAD continues the historical tradition of design by helping modern designers use available technology and materials to meet the changing needs of society.

IMPACT OF COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN ON PRODUCTS

In our modern world, nearly everything we use, from the phone in our hands to the chair we sit on and the buildings we live in, begins as a design. For many years, these designs were painstakingly drawn by hand. However, the arrival of computers brought about a revolution in the world of art and design. Computer-Aided Design (CAD) has fundamentally changed how artists, designers, engineers, and various industries create and develop products. To truly appreciate the technology and creativity that shape our world, it is essential to understand the history of CAD and the profound impact it has on the design process.

What is CAD?

At its core, CAD, which stands for Computer-Aided Design, is the use of computers and specialised software to create, modify, analyse, or improve designs. Think of it as a digital drawing board with superpowers. It is a tool that helps designers and artists bring their ideas to life with incredible detail and precision.

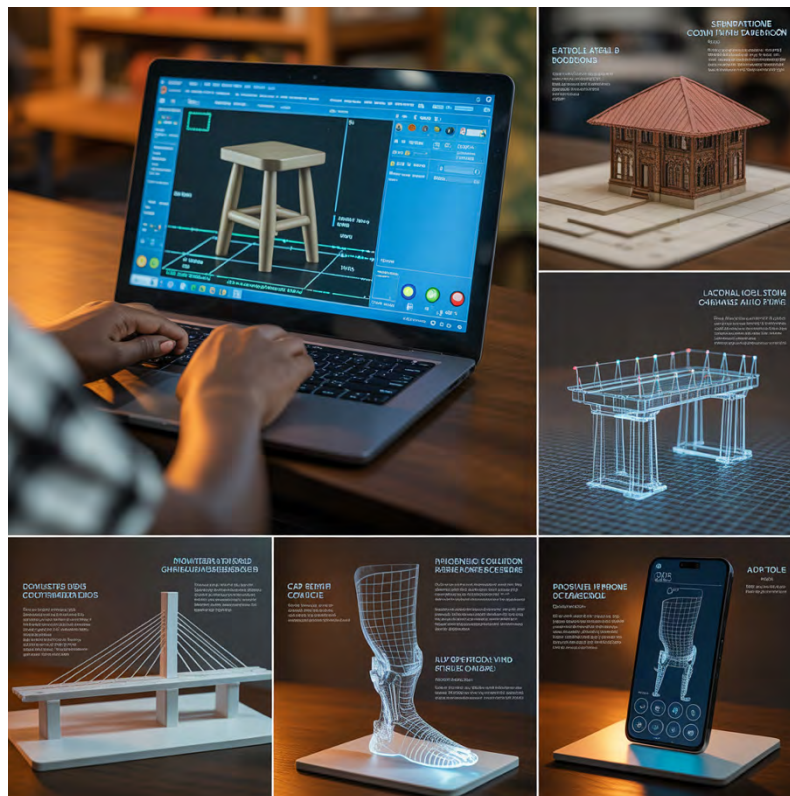


Figure 5.1: Computer-Aided Designs

1. It helps in making accurate drawings and 3-D models: Instead of using a pencil and ruler, a designer uses a mouse and keyboard to create perfectly

straight lines, flawless curves, and exact measurements. CAD can be used to create two-dimensional (2-D) drawings, which are flat like a floor plan, or three-dimensional (3-D) models, which have depth and can be viewed from any angle, just like a real object. This allows for a much more realistic visualisation of the final product.

2. It saves time and reduces mistakes compared to hand drawing: Imagine you are drawing a detailed plan for a house by hand, and you make a mistake or want to move a wall. You would have to erase a large part of your drawing and start over. With CAD, you can make changes with just a few clicks. This ability to easily edit and modify designs drastically speeds up the design process and significantly reduces the chance of human error.

The Development of CAD

The journey of CAD from a niche, expensive technology to an everyday tool is a fascinating story of technological advancement.

1. 1960s: The Beginning.

CAD began in the 1950s and 1960s, primarily in the automotive and aerospace industries. The earliest forms of CAD were developed by pioneers like Dr. Patrick J. Hanratty, often called the “Father of CAD,” and Ivan Sutherland, who created a groundbreaking program called Sketchpad. During this era, computers were gigantic machines called mainframes that filled entire rooms and were incredibly expensive. Only large corporations and government institutions could afford them. Therefore, the use of CAD was limited to high-stakes engineering and architectural projects.

2. 1970s–1980s: Growth and Advancement.

During these two decades, CAD software became more sophisticated. Engineers and industrial designers began using it more widely to design everything from cars and machines to everyday consumer products. The introduction of 3D modelling was a major breakthrough, allowing designers to create virtual objects they could rotate and inspect from all sides. However, the high cost of the systems meant that CAD was still out of reach for most individual designers.

3. 1990s: The Personal Computer Revolution.

The 1990s saw the rise of the personal computer (PC). As computers became smaller, more powerful, and, most importantly, cheaper, CAD software became accessible to a much wider audience. Companies like Autodesk,

with its popular AutoCAD software, brought CAD to the desktops of small businesses and individual designers. This is when professionals in fields like fashion and graphic design began to adopt this powerful technology.

4. 2000s to Today: CAD Everywhere.

In the 21st century, CAD has become an indispensable tool in education and industry. It is taught in schools like ours and is used across countless professions. With the internet, designers can now collaborate on projects from different parts of the world in real-time. Furthermore, modern CAD software can be directly connected to manufacturing machines like 3-D printers and laser cutters, allowing a design to be sent straight from the computer to a machine for production. Today, there are even powerful CAD applications that can run on mobile devices, putting professional design tools in everyone's pockets.

Uses of CAD in Art and Design

CAD's versatility makes it a valuable tool in numerous creative and technical fields.

1. **Drawing and Illustration:** Graphic artists use CAD to create clean, precise 2-D designs for logos, posters, and technical illustrations. The ability to work in layers and scale designs without losing quality is a huge advantage.



Figure 5.2: Sample CAD illustration

2. **Fashion Design:** In the fashion world, designers use CAD to create patterns for clothing, design footwear, and experiment with different colours and fabric textures on a virtual model before a single piece of cloth is cut. This saves time and expensive materials.

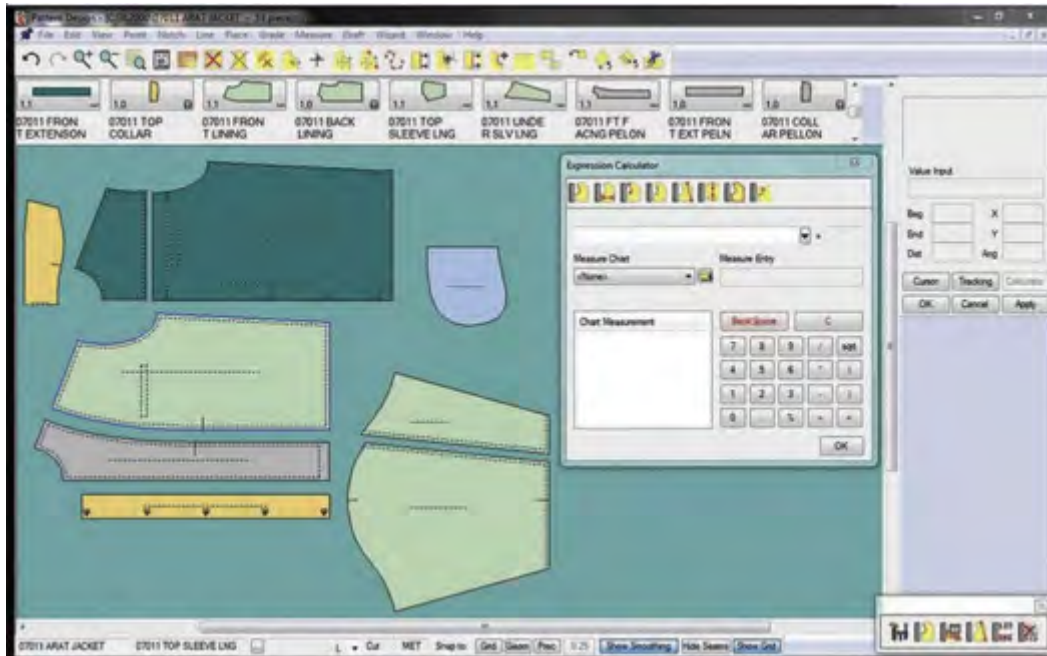


Figure 5.3: Fashion ideation in CAD



Figure 5.4: Fashion ideation in CAD

3. **Architecture:** Architects use CAD to draft detailed building plans, create stunning 3-D models of houses and skyscrapers, and even produce virtual walkthroughs that allow clients to experience a building before construction begins.



Figure 5.5: CAD Architectural design

4. **Industrial Design:** This field relies heavily on CAD to create models for almost every manufactured product you can think of, including cars, smartphones, furniture, and home appliances. Designers can analyse how different parts will fit and work together with extreme precision.

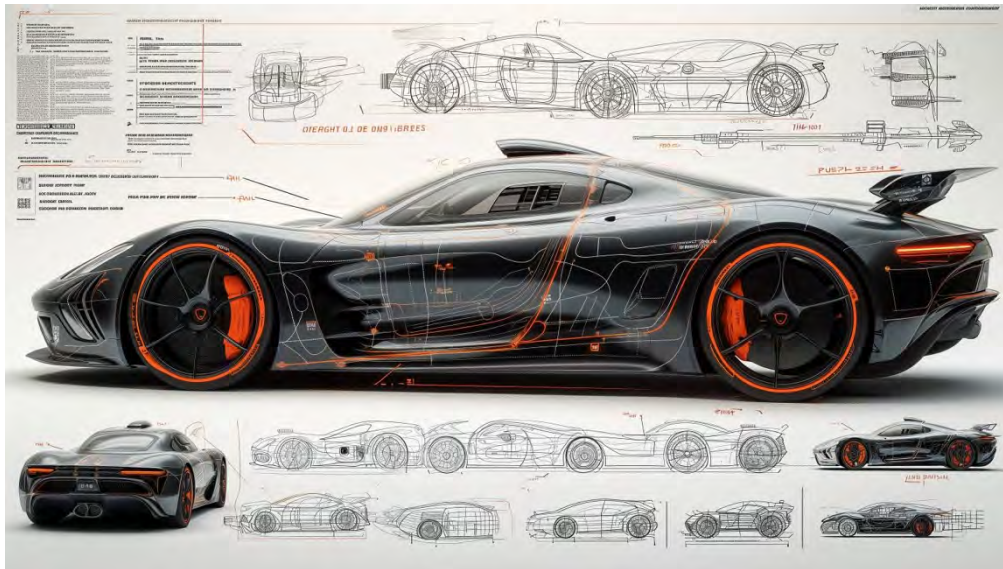


Figure 5.6: Industrial design with CAD

5. **Animation and Gaming:** The characters, environments, and special effects in your favourite animated movies and video games are created using advanced 3-D modelling and animation software, which are forms of CAD.



Figure 5.7: Designing Gaming and Animation Characters with CAD

Impact of CAD on Product Design

The introduction of CAD has had a massive and mostly positive impact on the way products are designed and manufactured.

Positive Impacts

- a.** Speed: Designs can be created, revised, and finalised in a fraction of the time it would take with traditional hand-drawing methods.
- b.** Accuracy: CAD software operates with mathematical precision, allowing for designs with exact measurements and shapes, which is critical in manufacturing.
- c.** Flexibility: Designs can be easily altered and updated without having to start from scratch. A designer can save multiple versions of a design to explore different possibilities.
- d.** Creativity: CAD provides a vast toolbox that encourages experimentation. Designers can simulate real-world conditions, like the effect of wind or stress on a product, to test and refine their ideas in a virtual space.
- e.** Collaboration: Teams of designers and engineers, whether in the same office or across continents, can share digital files and work on the same project simultaneously.
- f.** Connection to Production: CAD files can be used to directly control manufacturing machines (a process called Computer-Aided Manufacturing or CAM), which makes mass production faster, cheaper, and more efficient.

Challenges

Despite its many benefits, using CAD comes with some challenges, especially in a context like Ghana.

- a.** Requires electricity and computers: The consistent availability of electricity can be a challenge in some areas. Furthermore, the high-performance computers needed to run complex CAD software can be expensive.
- b.** Training is needed: Learning to use CAD software effectively requires proper training and practice. Access to quality training centres or reliable online courses may be limited or costly for some students.
- c.** Some software programmes are expensive: Professional-grade CAD software can cost thousands of dollars. While many companies offer free or discounted student versions, the cost can be a barrier for small businesses and professionals starting their careers.

The Importance of CAD in Modern Product Design

In today's interconnected world, understanding and using CAD is no longer just an advantage; it is a necessity for anyone entering a design or technical field.

1. It has become a global standard: Across the world, CAD is the standard language of design and manufacturing. Proficiency in CAD is a highly sought-after skill.
2. It helps Ghanaian designers compete internationally: By mastering CAD, Ghanaian artists and designers can produce work that meets global standards, allowing them to compete for international projects and clients.
3. It reduces the waste of materials: By creating and testing virtual prototypes, designers can identify flaws and make improvements on the computer before any physical materials are used. This is not only cost-effective but also environmentally friendly.
4. It connects art, technology, and industry: CAD is a perfect example of how artistic creativity and technological innovation can come together to drive industrial progress, preparing learners for the jobs of the future.

Examples in the Ghanaian Context

The impact of CAD can be seen all around us in Ghana.

1. Graphic designers in Accra use CAD software like Adobe Illustrator and CorelDRAW to design the vibrant billboards, posters, book covers, and company logos that are a part of our daily lives.
2. Architects in cities like Accra and Kumasi rely on CAD to design modern residential apartments, hotels, and office complexes, blending innovative designs with functional planning.
3. Fashion designers are increasingly using CAD to create unique patterns inspired by traditional textiles like Kente and Adinkra, and to visualise entire collections digitally before they hit the runway.
4. Industries, including local car manufacturer Kantanka Automobile, use CAD in the design and assembly of vehicle parts. Other companies use it to design efficient and attractive packaging for Ghanaian products that are sold both locally and internationally.

In conclusion, Computer-Aided Design has evolved from a specialised tool for a few engineers into a universal platform for innovation. It has broken down

barriers, accelerated the pace of development, and expanded the realm of creative possibility. As a senior high school learner in Ghana, embracing CAD is not just about learning a new computer program; it is about acquiring a vital skill that opens doors to exciting careers and empowers you to design and build a better future for Ghana and beyond.

Activity 5.1 Tracing the Rise of CAD

When Kwaku visits his uncle's furniture workshop, he notices a computer with 3D models of chairs. His uncle explains that years ago, he relied only on hand-drawn sketches, but now Computer Aided Design helps him test forms, adjust dimensions, and even show clients a preview before building. Kwaku wonders how this change came about and what it means for design today.

Learn how to guide Kwaku by following these steps

1. Create a timeline chart that shows key stages in the development of CAD, from its early beginnings in the 1960s to present-day 3-D and AI-assisted tools (Get the ideas from your year one and two learner materials).
2. Write a short paragraph explaining how each stage improved the ability of designers to work faster and more accurately.
3. Select one everyday product you use (such as a phone case, shoe, or water bottle) and explain in five sentences how CAD might have influenced its design.
4. Produce a visual sketch showing how that product might have looked if it were designed only by hand, compared to its CAD-assisted version.
5. Present your work to peers for review and modification, and file it in your portfolio.

Internal Art Day Dialogue: During your school's art day, start a conversation with peers on this question: "Which is more creative, hand-drawn sketches or CAD models?" Record at least two contrasting views to share in the next class.

Activity 5.2 Weighing the Impact of CAD on Designers

A young architect designs a school building entirely with CAD software. She enjoys the speed and accuracy, but worries that some designers might become too dependent on software and lose their hand-sketching skills. This raises

an important question about the impact of CAD on product design and the designers themselves. How would you dialogue this professionally as an art and design expert?

Follow these steps to build your arguments for the professional dialogue

1. List three advantages and three disadvantages of CAD in product design.
2. Develop a two-page commentary explaining how CAD has changed the role of designers, touching on creativity, efficiency, collaboration, and environmental considerations.
3. Create a concept poster titled “The Double-Edged Sword of CAD” (You can choose your own title) where one side shows the benefits, and the other side shows the challenges.
4. Suggest two recommendations for how young designers can balance CAD skills with traditional design practices.
5. Make a presentation in class for your peers to give you feedback.
6. Use the feedback to improve your work and file it in your portfolio.

After Prep Reflections

Raise this question with classmates during prep time (Please seek permission before doing this): “Will future designers need to know hand-drawing at all if CAD keeps advancing?” Write down your own conclusion in three sentences to present in class.

USING CAD SOFTWARE TO DESIGN AN ARTWORK TO SOLVE A PROBLEM IN SOCIETY

In today’s world, art and design go beyond drawing and painting with traditional tools. Artists and designers now use Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software to create solutions for real problems in society. CAD allows them to design accurate and detailed works on the computer before these works are produced in real life. By combining two or more CAD programmes, learners can develop creative ideas that help solve issues in their communities.

Problems in Society That Art Can Help Solve

Every society faces challenges that affect the lives of its people. In Ghana, some common problems include

1. Sanitation problems such as poor waste disposal and dirty surroundings.
2. Unemployment and the need for creative businesses for the youth.
3. Road safety issues such as careless driving, lack of signs, and poor pedestrian awareness.
4. Educational challenges, including a shortage of teaching and learning materials.
5. Housing problems, such as overcrowded and poorly planned communities.

Art and design, with the help of CAD, can be used to find creative and practical solutions to these problems.

CAD Software for Solving Problems

There are many CAD software programmes used in art and design. Each has a special use. Examples include:

1. 3D-Studio Max - Modelling, animation, and rendering for game development and architectural visualisation.
2. AutoCAD – For accurate architectural and engineering drawings. It is very useful for designing buildings, furniture, and machines.
3. CorelDRAW – For graphic design, posters, advertisements, and educational materials.
4. Adobe Illustrator – For professional vector graphics such as logos and symbols.
5. SketchUp – For simple 3D models, especially for buildings and interior design.
6. Blender – For creating animations, visual effects, and realistic 3D graphics.

When learners combine two or more of these programmes in a single project, they can produce powerful and meaningful artworks.

How to Use CAD Software to Solve a Problem

The process of solving problems with CAD can be explained step by step:

1. Identify the problem – For example, a community with poor sanitation.
2. Choose the CAD software – Select two programmes that can best address the problem.

- a. Use CorelDRAW to design posters that educate people about proper waste disposal.
- b. Use AutoCAD to design user-friendly dustbins.
3. Develop the designs – Create posters that carry strong messages with images and colours. Then draw the dustbin in 3-D with measurements for production.
4. Refine the designs – Add details, adjust colours, and make the artwork more appealing and practical.
5. Present the solution – Share the poster and dustbin design with the community, showing how the ideas can promote cleanliness and reduce waste.

Through this process, learners practise critical thinking, creativity, and the use of technology for social benefit.

Impact of CAD on Society and Product Design

Using CAD in solving social problems has many benefits

1. It makes designs accurate and professional, which increases trust in the artwork.
2. It allows the design to be easily produced or manufactured for real use.
3. It helps learners and young people to become innovators and entrepreneurs.
4. It makes art more functional, moving beyond decoration to meet social needs.
5. It supports development in Ghana, as creative solutions can improve sanitation, education, housing, and safety.

Ghanaian Examples

In Ghana, CAD software is already being used in many ways.

1. Students use CorelDRAW to design road safety posters for their towns.
2. Architecture students use AutoCAD and SketchUp to plan low-cost housing projects.
3. Fashion students use Adobe Illustrator to create modern uniforms for schools.

4. Visual arts learners use CorelDRAW and Adobe Illustrator to design teaching charts for basic schools.

These examples show that CAD is a powerful tool for solving problems, creating employment, and making Ghana a better place to live.

2D CAD: ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

Adobe Illustrator is an industry-standard vector graphics software that allows you to create scalable artwork. This means your designs can be resized without losing quality, making it perfect for logos, illustrations, posters, and more.

Basic Tools in Adobe Illustrator

Let us explore some fundamental tools you will use regularly.

1. Selection Tool (V): Used to select, move, and resize objects.
2. Direct Selection Tool (A): Used to select and manipulate individual anchor points and path segments of an object.
3. Pen Tool (P): The most powerful tool for creating precise vector paths and shapes.
4. Type Tool (T): For adding and formatting text.
5. Shape Tools (Rectangle, Ellipse, Polygon, Star): For creating basic geometric shapes.
6. Fill and Stroke: These options in the Properties panel control the interior colour (fill) and outline colour and thickness (stroke) of your objects.

Hands-on Tutorial: Designing a Simple Logo

Let us create a basic logo for a fictional “Art Studio.”

- a. New Document: Open Illustrator and go to File > New. Choose a suitable size, e.g., A4, and click Create.
- b. Creating a Shape: Select the Ellipse Tool. Hold Shift and drag to create a perfect circle.
- c. Adding Text: Select the Type Tool. Click inside the circle and type “Art Studio.”
- d. Styling Text: With the text selected (using the Selection Tool), go to the Properties panel on the right. Change the font, size, and colour.

- e. Arranging Elements: Use the Selection Tool to position the text centrally within the circle.
- f. Adding a Small Icon: Use the Pen Tool to draw a simple paintbrush or pencil shape next to the text. Experiment with curves and straight lines.
- g. Colouring: Select your paintbrush/pencil shape and choose a fill colour from the Swatches panel or the Properties panel.
- h. Saving: Go to File > Save As and save your logo as an .ai file (Illustrator's native format) and also as a .png for web use.

Here is an example of what your simple logo might look like

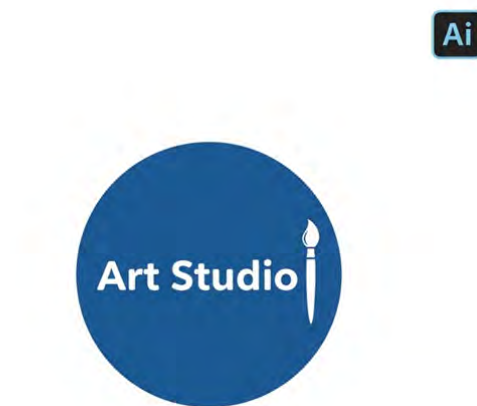


Figure 5.8: Sample Logo created from CAD

3D CAD: BLENDER 3D

Blender 3D is a free and open-source 3D creation suite. It supports the entirety of the 3D pipeline (modelling, rigging, animation, simulation, rendering, compositing, and motion tracking, even video editing and game creation).

Basic Tools and Interface in Blender 3D

Blender's interface can look intimidating at first, but with practice, you will get the hang of it.

1. 3D Viewport: This is where you will see and interact with your 3D models.
2. Toolbar (T key): Located on the left, it contains various tools for manipulation, modelling, sculpting, etc.
3. Properties Panel (N key): Located on the right, it shows properties of selected objects, transformations, and view settings.

4. **Outliner:** Usually in the top right, it lists all objects in your scene.
5. **Properties Editor:** Below the Outliner, it shows detailed properties for selected objects, materials, and rendering settings.
6. **Object Mode (default):** Used for manipulating entire objects (moving, rotating, scaling).
7. **Edit Mode (Tab key):** Used for manipulating individual vertices, edges, and faces of an object.
8. **Gizmos:** On-screen controls for moving (Move), rotating (Rotate), and scaling (Scale) objects.

Hands-on Tutorial: Creating a Simple 3D Table

Let us model a basic table in Blender.

- a. **Starting Scene:** When you open Blender, you will usually see a default cube, a camera, and a light.
- b. **Creating the Tabletop**
 - i. Select the default cube.
 - ii. Use the Scale Gizmo (or press S then Z to scale along the Z-axis, then S then X and Y to scale horizontally) to flatten the cube into a tabletop shape. Make it wider and thinner.
- c. **Creating a Leg (Duplication)**
 - i. Add a new cube (Shift + A > Mesh > Cube).
 - ii. Scale this new cube to be a thin, tall leg.
 - iii. Position it at one corner of your tabletop using the Move Gizmo.
 - iv. Duplicate this leg three times (Shift + D then move, or Alt + D for linked duplicates) and place them at the other three corners of the tabletop.
- d. **Grouping (Optional):** You can select all parts of your table and press Ctrl + J to join them into a single object or simply keep them separate but parented to the tabletop.
- e. **Basic Materials (Colour)**
 - i. Select your tabletop.
 - ii. Go to the Material Properties tab in the Properties Editor.
 - iii. Click New to add a new material.
 - iv. Change the Base Colour to a wood-like brown.

- v. Repeat for the legs.
- f. Saving: Go to File > Save As and save your project as ai. blend file.

Here is a representation of your simple 3-D table

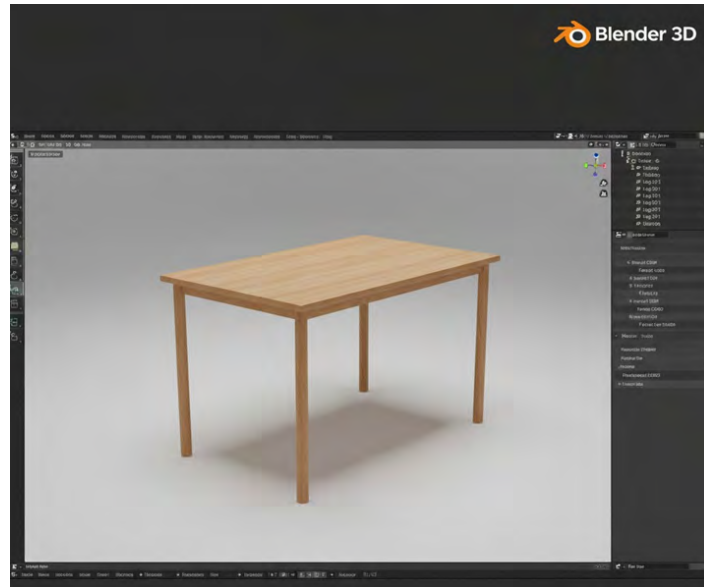


Figure 5.9: Sample 3D model of a table created with Blender 3D

Using two or more CAD software programmes to design an artwork is a skill that prepares learners to think critically, use technology, and contribute to their society. It shows that art and design are not only about personal expression but also about social responsibility and problem-solving. Remember, practice is key! The more you experiment and follow tutorials, the more proficient you will become in using these powerful CAD tools.

Activity 5.3 2D Product Label Design

A local Ghanaian artisan needs a new label design for their handmade shea butter product. The label should be visually appealing and clearly communicate the product name, ingredients (e.g., “Pure Shea Butter, Vitamin E”), and net weight (e.g., “150g”, etc.).

Using Adobe Illustrator or any other suitable CAD application, design a product label for the shea butter using the following guidelines.

1. Create a new document with appropriate dimensions for a product label (e.g., 8cm x 5cm).

2. Incorporate a simple, abstract pattern or motif inspired by Ghanaian symbols.
3. Use the Type/Text Tool to add the product name, ingredients, and net weight. Experiment with different fonts and sizes for clarity and visual hierarchy.
4. Choose a colour palette that is appealing and reflects the natural essence of shea butter (e.g., warm earthy tones).
5. Save your final design as an .ai file and also export it as a high-resolution .png or .jpeg image.

Activity 5.4 Modelling a 3D miniature Ghanaian Cultural Object

You are tasked with creating a 3-D digital museum exhibit for various Ghanaian cultural artefacts.

Using Blender 3-D, model a simplified 3-D representation of one of the following Ghanaian cultural objects:

1. Model a very basic, blocky representation of any traditional stool, focusing on its general form.
 - a. Start with a basic primitive (cube, cylinder) and use the scaling, moving, and in Edit Mode, face extrusion tools to achieve your chosen object's shape.
 - b. Apply simple colours to your 3-D model to represent its real-world appearance. You do not need complex textures.
 - c. Render a single image of your 3-D model from a good viewing angle.
2. Save your Blender project file (.blend) and also save a rendered image of your model (.png or .jpeg).

Activity 5.5 Designing for Community Needs

Imagine a future career as a product designer, asked to develop an artistic solution for waste management in a growing city. Traditional bins overflow quickly, and the community seeks an innovative design that is both functional and visually appealing. CAD tools are suggested as the medium for creating the prototype. What can you do to help solve this problem?

Here are a few steps to consider

1. Select two CAD software tools (for example, SketchUp, Blender, Tinkercad, or AutoCAD). Note: You may explore similar tools on a smartphone or tablet.
2. Use the first tool to create the basic form of a waste-management product (bin, recycling unit, or disposal stand).
3. Transfer or recreate the design in the second tool, adding improved details such as colour, material, texture, or functional parts.
4. Export images from both versions and prepare a comparison sheet that highlights the unique contributions of each software to your design.
5. Write a short reflection answering: “How can artistic design contribute to solving waste problems in society?”
6. Share your creation with peers for reviews and comments to improve

Free Period Debates

Debate the motion: “Designing with CAD is more effective than designing by hand when addressing community problems.” Invite observers to record the strongest points raised.

Activity 5.6 CAD for Accessibility

Envision yourself as a future architect challenged to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities in public buildings. The goal is to design an artistic ramp structure that is not only functional but also enhances the building’s aesthetics. Two CAD platforms are recommended to develop the concept. How would you go about achieving this target?

Follow these Steps to Learn

1. Open a CAD tool of choice and create a simple ramp structure showing basic dimensions and slope.
2. Recreate the ramp design in a different CAD program, this time adding artistic elements such as decorative rails, surface patterns, or colour.
3. Prepare a side-by-side display of the two ramp designs and label the artistic and functional features visible in each.

4. Write a short position statement (e.g. Artistic design can strengthen inclusion and accessibility in public spaces). Support your view with at least two points from your CAD work (See example in **Figure 5.10**).
5. Compile your designs and statements into a presentation board with a suitable title.
6. Share the presentation board with peers in class for review and refinement
7. Keep a copy safely in your portfolio for future reference.

Weekend Arguments

Engage in a structured dialogue on this topic: “Accessibility in design should prioritise function over aesthetics.” Conclude by recording the key arguments for both sides and displaying them alongside your CAD presentation board.



Figure 5.10: An example of artwork with a brief artist position statement

EXTENDED READING

- [Pivot International – Using CAD in Product Design](#)
- [Goodwin University – Why Is Computer-Aided Design \(CAD\) Important?](#)
- [GIS User – How the Evolution of CAD Impacts Design](#)
- [SEACADTech – Why Is CAD Important?](#)
- [Britannica – Art Criticism](#)
- [Medium – Art Criticism and Analysis](#)
- [Art in Context – How to Critique Art](#)
- [3Dnatives – Top 10 CAD Software](#)
- [Adobe Illustrator Tutorials](#)
- [Blender Documentation Manual](#)

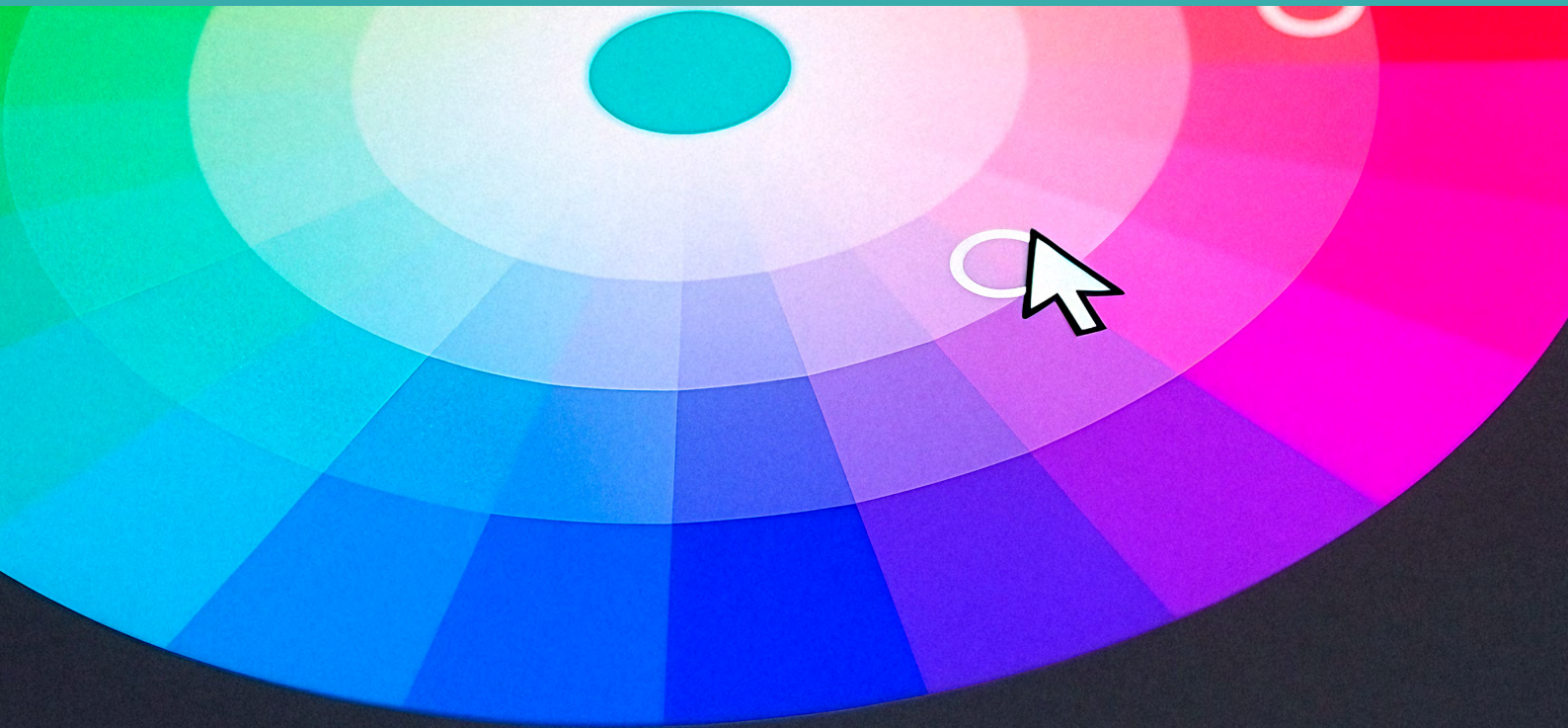
REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is Computer-Aided Design (CAD) in art and design?
2. Mention two examples of CAD software.
3. State one advantage of using CAD in product design.
4. Identify two industries where CAD is commonly used.
5. What does the term “product design” mean?
6. Explain how CAD has changed the process of designing compared to traditional hand drawing.
7. Compare two features of manual drawing and CAD drawing.
8. Explain why accuracy is important in CAD design.
9. Describe one way CAD improves the communication of design ideas.
10. Explain how CAD saves time for designers.
11. Describe how CAD can help a designer to test or preview their work before production.
12. Analyse the impact of CAD on the work of a Ghanaian craftsperson or artist.
13. Using two CAD software, design a simple product (e.g., a chair, bag, or poster) to address a need in your community.
14. Evaluate the challenges of relying only on CAD for product design in Ghana.
15. Propose ways CAD can be combined with traditional design methods to improve innovation in society.

SECTION

6

COLOUR THEORY, COLOUR SCHEME AND THEIR APPLICATION



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COLOUR THEORY AND APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION

For years one and two, you explored how colour schemes can express moods, how pigment and spectrum colours work in creating art, and how colour carries deep symbolic meanings in Ghanaian cultures. You also created artworks that reflected these symbolisms using different colour relationships. As we move into this section, you will continue to build on that knowledge by identifying colour schemes and the moods they express, analysing pigment and spectrum colours, and creating artworks from ideas in the environment. Think back for a moment about how learning about colour symbolism in Ghanaian traditions helps you to see colours differently in your own artwork. This reflection will guide you as you now apply colour more deliberately to express feelings, ideas, and meanings in your art.

KEY IDEAS

- Colour schemes can be used to show different moods such as happiness, sadness, or calmness.
- Warm colours like red, yellow, and orange often create feelings of energy and excitement.
- Cool colours like blue, green, and purple usually express calmness, peace, or sadness.
- Pigment colours are the actual paints and dyes we mix to produce different shades.
- Spectrum colours are the natural colours we see in light, such as the rainbow.
- Artists can combine pigment and spectrum colours to create new effects in their work.
- Ideas from the environment, like plants, skies, or festivals, can inspire artworks that use colour meaningfully.

IDENTIFYING AND EXPLAINING COLOUR SCHEMES AND THE MOOD THEY EXPRESS IN RELATION TO LEARNERS' RESPONSE

Colour plays a very important role in art and design because it communicates emotions, feelings, and ideas without the use of words. In the classroom, learners respond to colours in different ways depending on how the colours are combined and the mood they create. This is why it is important to identify colour schemes and explain the moods they express, especially in relation to how learners experience and interpret artworks.

Understanding Colour Schemes

A **colour scheme** refers to the way colours are arranged, selected, or combined to create a particular effect in an artwork. Artists and designers use colour schemes to achieve harmony, contrast, or emphasis. Some common colour schemes include:

1. **Monochromatic scheme** – Uses different shades, tints, and tones of a single colour. It creates calmness, simplicity, and unity.
2. **Complementary scheme** – Combines colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel (for example, blue and orange, red and green). This scheme expresses energy, contrast, and excitement.
3. **Analogous scheme** – Uses colours that are close to each other on the colour wheel (for example, yellow, yellow-green, and green). It gives a feeling of harmony, peace, and togetherness.
4. **Triadic scheme** – Combines three colours that are evenly spaced on the colour wheel (for example, red, yellow, and blue). It expresses liveliness, balance, and creativity.
5. **Warm colours scheme** – Uses colours like red, orange, and yellow. It communicates warmth, happiness, and passion.
6. **Cool colour scheme** – Uses colours like blue, green, and violet. It gives a sense of calmness, sadness, or relaxation.

Mood Expressed by Colour Schemes

Each colour scheme has a direct influence on the mood of an artwork. For example:

- a. A **monochromatic blue painting** may make learners feel calm and reflective.
- b. A **red and green complementary poster** may excite learners and capture their attention quickly.
- c. An **analogous warm scheme** (orange, yellow, red) may make a classroom mural feel joyful and lively.
- d. A **cool analogous scheme** (blue, blue-green, violet) may create a quiet and thoughtful atmosphere.

Through these moods, learners develop different responses to the artwork.

Some Learners' Response to Colour and Mood

Learners often react emotionally to colour before they even understand the details of a work of art. Their responses can be:

- **Emotional response** – Colours may make them feel happy, excited, calm, or even sad. For instance, a painting in warm colours can energise learners, while one in cool colours can make them reflective.
- **Psychological response** – Colours can influence learners' concentration and interest. Bright colours in posters may help them focus better, while dull colours may cause loss of attention.
- **Cultural response** – In Ghana, colours carry traditional meanings. For example, black is often linked with mourning, white with purity and victory, and gold with royalty. Learners may respond differently based on these cultural associations.
- **Personal response** – Learners also react based on personal experiences. A learner who loves the sea may find comfort in blue schemes, while another who dislikes darkness may feel uncomfortable with black tones.

Importance in Teaching and Learning

Identifying and explaining colour schemes and their moods helps teachers to:

1. Select colours that create a positive classroom environment.
2. Design learning materials that capture learners' attention and interest.
3. Help learners understand how colour influences meaning in artworks.
4. Encourage learners to express themselves better through their use of colour.

When teachers and learners understand colour schemes and moods, they can use colour not only for beauty but also for communication, motivation, and emotional balance in the classroom.

Activity 6.1 Unlocking Colour Schemes and their Emotional Responses

A future interior designer presents colour scheme options for a new children's library. The client asks: *“How will these colours make the children feel when they enter?”* As a young colour psychologist, how would you explain to the client?

The Steps below will help you learn how to explain

1. Create a chart of at least four colour schemes (monochromatic, complementary, analogous, triadic, etc.) and different moods (**Example Figure 6.1**).
2. Give the chart to children in your community or within the school environment to match each colour scheme with a mood it can express, such as calmness, energy, joy, or seriousness.
3. For children who cannot talk or draw lines, create separate flash cards for each colour scheme and show them to them. Observe their mood and reaction to the colours and note it down.
4. Based on the field experience, write a reflection on which colour scheme would be most suitable for a children's library, room, etc. and explain why.
5. Prepare a mini-poster titled “Colour and Mood” showing one scheme with the emotions it can trigger (**You can choose your own title**).
6. Present the poster in class for discussion and review.

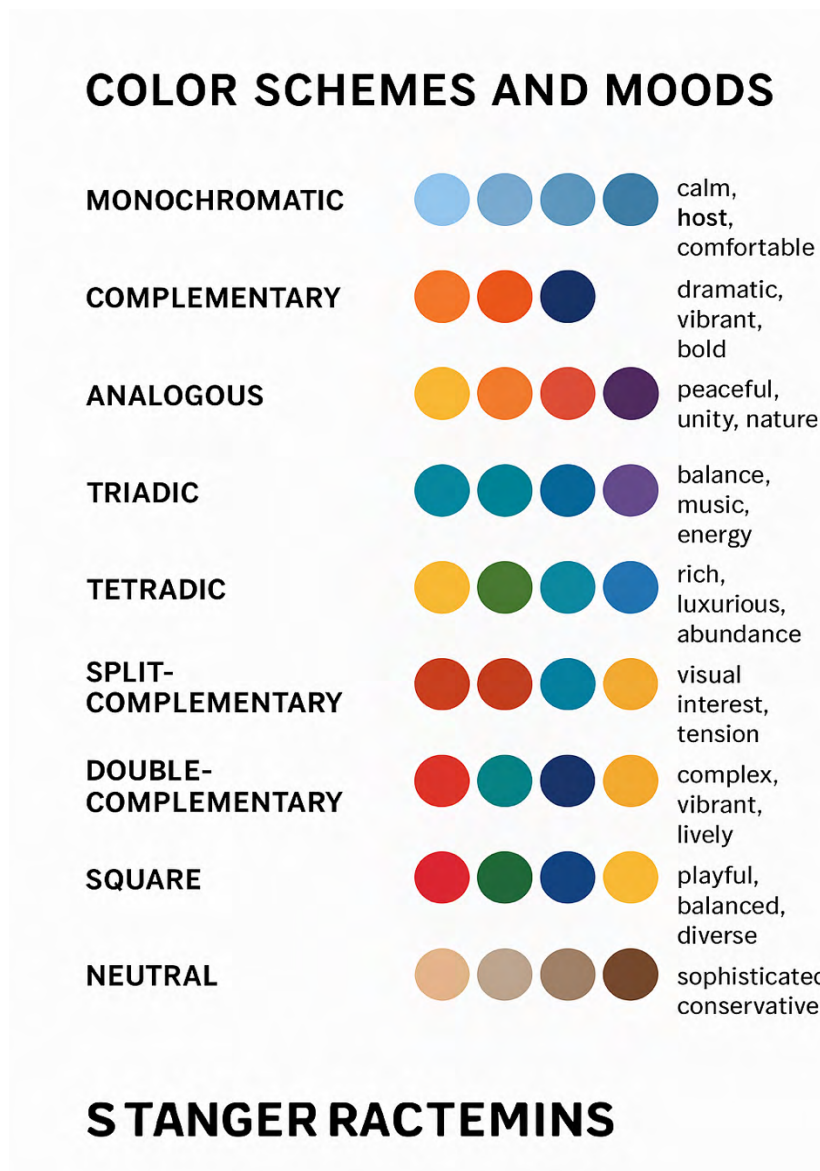


Figure 6.1: Sample Colour Schemes with Moods

Breaktime Dialogue

Discuss this with peers: “Can colour alone change someone’s mood?” Record two contrasting views for display on the classroom board.

Activity 6.2 Responding to Colour in Artworks

You are a future art therapist showing clients different paintings. The therapist explains that colours in the artworks can influence emotional responses and help with healing.

Learn how the therapist achieved that by following these steps

1. Select two art and design works that use very different colour schemes.
2. Based on your experience with *Activity 6.1* as a colour Psychologist, write a short paragraph on the mood each artwork communicates through its colour use.
3. Compare your own response to the artwork with what you think others might feel.
4. Create a small portfolio page with a suitable title, e.g. “*My Mood Responses to Colour*” with your notes and sketches.
5. Present the work to peers in class for discussion and improvement.

After Prep Reflections

Raise this question with classmates: “Should artists choose colours based mainly on personal taste or on audience response?” Share your personal conclusion in class.

ANALYSING PIGMENT COLOURS AND THOSE OF THE COLOUR SPECTRUM

Colour is one of the most important elements in art and design because it adds meaning, mood, and expression to artworks. To fully understand colour, it is important to study it from two main perspectives: pigment colours (which are physical colours found in paints, inks, dyes, and natural materials) and the colour spectrum (which is the scientific arrangement of colours as seen in light). Analysing both helps learners to understand how artists create colour and how colours naturally exist in light.

Pigment Colours

Pigments are substances that give colour to materials such as paints, dyes, crayons, pastels, and inks. When artists mix pigments, they produce different colours for their work. Pigment colours are based on the subtractive colour system, which means that colours are created by absorbing some parts of light and reflecting others.

1. **Primary pigment colours:** Red, yellow, and blue. These colours cannot be created by mixing other colours, but they can be combined to produce many other colours.

2. **Secondary pigment colours:** Orange, green, and violet. These are made by mixing two primary colours in equal amounts.
3. **Tertiary pigment colours:** These are created by mixing a primary colour with a secondary colour (for example, red + orange = red-orange).

Artists often experiment with pigment colours to achieve different shades (by adding black), tints (by adding white), and tones (by adding grey). Pigments allow the artist to physically apply colour to surfaces like paper, canvas, wood, or fabric.

Colour Spectrum

While pigment colours come from physical substances, the **colour spectrum** comes from light. When white light passes through a glass prism, it splits into seven distinct colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. These colours form what we usually call the **rainbow**.

The colour spectrum is based on the **additive colour system**, which is how colours of light combine. In this system:

1. The **primary colours of light** are red, green, and blue.
2. Mixing two primary light colours produces **secondary light colours**: cyan, magenta, and yellow.
3. When all three primary light colours are combined, they produce **white light**.

The colour spectrum shows the natural scientific order of colours as they appear in light, unlike pigment colours, which depend on physical mixing.

Differences Between Pigment Colours and Colour Spectrum

Although both deal with colour, there are important differences

1. **Source:** Pigment colours come from physical substances, while the colour spectrum comes from light.
2. **System:** Pigments use the subtractive system (mixing reduces light), while the spectrum uses the additive system (mixing increases light).
3. **Result of mixing:** Mixing all pigments tends to produce a dull brown or black, while mixing all spectrum colours (light) produces white.

4. **Application:** Pigments are used by artists in painting, printing, and dyeing, while spectrum colours are studied in science, digital screens, and lighting.

Importance in Art and Design

Understanding pigment colours and the colour spectrum helps learners and artists in many ways

1. It improves their ability to mix paints correctly and achieve the colours they need.
2. It helps them to understand how light affects the way colours are seen in artworks.
3. It connects science with art, showing how colour in nature and colour in art are related.
4. It enables learners to use both traditional materials (pigments) and modern digital tools (light colours on screens).

The BIG Conversation: Can Black and White be considered as Colours?

Black and white aren't part of the visible light spectrum because black is the absence of light, while white is the presence of all visible wavelengths of light combined. In the context of **pigments**, however, black is a colour formed by mixing pigments that absorb all colours, and white pigments reflect all colours, making them function as colours in that medium.

Light vs. Pigment: The Key Distinction

1. **Light (Additive Colour)**
 - a. **White:** When all the colours of the visible light spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet) are combined, they produce white light.
 - b. **Black:** In physics and optics, black is the absence of light. An object appears black because it absorbs all the light that hits it, reflecting none.
2. **Pigment (Subtractive Colour)**
 - a. **White:** A white pigment reflects all wavelengths of light, so it appears white. It is the colour of many natural and manmade objects.

- b. **Black:** A black pigment is created by mixing various colours that collectively absorb most, if not all, of the light. When all primary pigments are mixed in the right proportions, the result absorbs the most light, appearing black to our eyes.

In Summary

- **Spectrum:** Black and white are not on the light spectrum; there is no wavelength for black, and white is a combination of all wavelengths, not a single one.
- **Pigment:** In pigments, black and white are considered colours because they are produced by a combination of pigments that interact with light to create the perception of these colours.

Activity 6.3 Exploring Pigment Colours

A future paint manufacturer experiments with pigment samples to achieve the best colours for school murals. Before final production, the company asks for a detailed analysis. If you were the Chief Material Scientist to present that analysis to the company board, how would you go about this task?

Here are a few guiding steps to help you

1. Develop pigment mixing ratio table (See example in Table 6.1 to develop yours)
2. Mix primary pigment colours to generate secondary and tertiary pigments.
3. Record each mixture in a colour chart and note the results.
4. Explain how pigment mixing differs from the natural order of the colour spectrum.
5. Write a short essay on how pigment analysis supports artistic creation.

Table 6.1: Sample Pigment Colour Mixing Ratios

Target Colour	Mixing Combination	Ratio (Parts)
Orange	Red + Yellow	1:1
Green	Blue + Yellow	1:1
Purple (Violet)	Red + Blue	1:1
Brown	Red + Yellow + Blue	1:1:1
Pink	Red + White	1:2
Light Blue (Sky Blue)	Blue + White	1:2
Olive Green	Green + Red (tiny amount)	3:1
Turquoise	Blue + Green + White	2:1:1
Grey	White + Black	3:1
Beige	White + Brown (small) + Yellow (touch)	4:1:0.5

Weekend Arguments

Debate this motion: “Pigment colours are more important for artists than the colour spectrum.” Prepare evidence and share final points on the class board.

Activity 6.4 Comparing Spectrum and Pigment Colours

A future lighting designer compares stage lighting based on spectrum colours with painted backdrops made from pigments. The director asks for advice on which choice will better set the mood for hosting the anniversary event. With your expertise in colour psychology, what advice will you give?

Follow the guidelines to learn how to give that advice

1. Create a diagram showing the colour spectrum (ROYGBIV) and list its order (Example *Figure 6.2*).
2. Compare the spectrum sequence with the mixing of pigments, pointing out differences.
3. Write a short paragraph on how light-based colours and pigment-based colours affect audience perception differently.

4. Summarise your findings in a display sheet with a suitable title of your choice
5. Share your finished sheet with peers for appraisal and review.

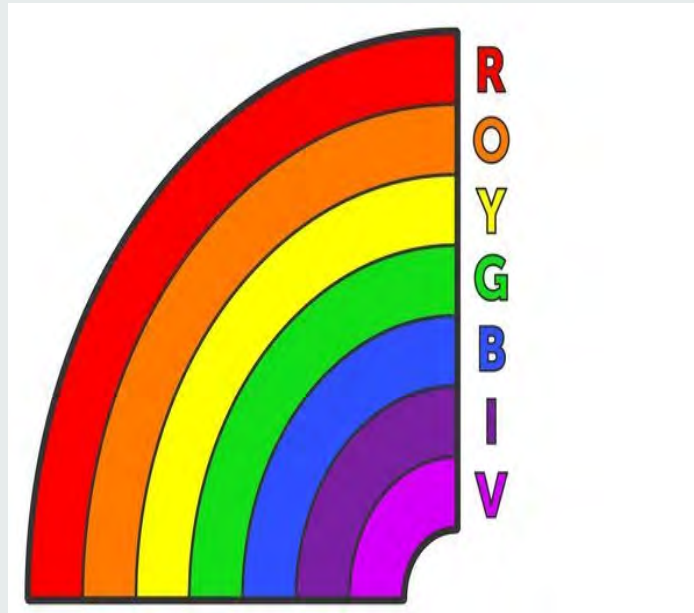


Figure 6.2: Spectrum Colours

Holiday Chats

During vacation, observe a rainbow or artificial light spectrum and compare it to the paints at home. Share your reflection when school resumes.

CREATING ARTWORKS FROM IDEAS IN THE ENVIRONMENT USING PIGMENT COLOURS AND COLOURS OF THE SPECTRUM

Art begins with ideas, and one of the richest sources of ideas is the **environment**. The environment includes everything around us, nature, people, buildings, culture, festivals, and even daily activities. Artists observe their environment and translate what they see into creative artworks. When making such artworks, colour becomes very important. Both **pigment colours** (from paints, dyes, and inks) and **spectrum colours** (from light and natural rainbows) can be used to express these ideas.

Generating Ideas from the Environment

To create meaningful artworks, learners must first look around their environment for inspiration. Examples of sources include the following listed below.

1. **Nature:** trees, rivers, sunsets, flowers, animals, and landscapes.
2. **Culture:** traditional festivals, dances, crafts, textiles, and symbols.
3. **Daily life:** markets, farming, fishing, transport, and social gatherings.
4. **Built environment:** houses, schools, roads, bridges, and monuments.

These ideas can be captured through sketching, painting, or digital design.

Using Pigment Colours in Artworks

Pigment colours are obtained from paints, dyes, crayons, and other art materials. They are useful when learners want to physically represent the colours of objects in the environment. For example;

- a. Painting the **green leaves and brown trunk of a tree** using pigments.
- b. Using pigment mixtures to show the **bright costumes in a traditional festival**.
- c. Creating posters with pigments to raise awareness about **environmental cleanliness**.

Learners can explore primary, secondary, and tertiary pigment colours to show mood, movement, and beauty in their artworks.

Using Spectrum Colours in Artworks

The colour spectrum is observed in natural light. It appears in rainbows, reflections, sunlight, and on digital screens. Learners can use spectrum colours in two main ways

1. **Observation in Nature** – for example, painting a rainbow after rainfall, or showing the changing colours of the sky at sunrise and sunset.
2. **Digital Art** – using computers and phones to create designs that combine red, green, and blue (the primary colours of light).

This approach encourages learners to blend science and art by applying the natural colours of light in their creative work.

Combining Pigment and Spectrum Colours

Artworks become richer when both pigment and spectrum colour ideas are applied. For instance

- a. A painting of a **market scene** may use pigment colours to show fruits, fabrics, and buildings, while spectrum colours can be added to represent the glow of sunlight.
- b. A digital artwork about **environmental awareness** may use pigment-inspired colours (paint-like textures) alongside bright light colours (RGB effects) to make the work attractive.

Importance of Creating Artworks from the Environment

1. It helps learners to **connect art to real life**.
2. It builds **observation skills** and appreciation of their surroundings.
3. It encourages **creativity and originality**, since no two learners will represent the same idea in the same way.
4. It develops both **traditional skills** (painting and drawing with pigments) and **modern digital skills** (using the colour spectrum in computer art).

Activity 6.5 Creating Environmental Art with Pigment Colours

A future mural artist is asked to create a painting on a school wall that reflects the natural beauty of the community, using pigment paints creatively.

Your Steps to Engage

1. Select an environmental theme (trees, rivers, markets, animals).
2. Create a painting using pigment colours to represent the theme vividly.
3. Apply blending, shading, or layering techniques to enhance the effect.
4. Write a caption that explains how pigment colours improved your artwork.

Free Period Exhibition

Mount finished work on the classroom wall and invited classmates to view it. Collect their written responses about colour use and display them beside the artworks.

Activity 6.6 Spectrum Colours in Creative Design

A future graphic designer is tasked to design an awareness poster about environmental protection using the full range of spectrum colours.

Your Steps to Engage

1. Sketch a poster idea focused on an environmental issue such as clean water, tree planting, or sanitation.
2. Incorporate spectrum colours in sequence to communicate a strong message.
3. Add text or symbols that match the meaning of the colours used.
4. Prepare the final poster and label how each colour supports the message.

Interclass: What Do You Know

Organise a fun quiz where artworks using spectrum colours are displayed. Competing teams must identify which part of the spectrum is being highlighted in each design.

EXTENDED READING

- Zeka Graphic – Colour Psychology on Student Behaviour and Academic Performance
- Artcobell – Colour Psychology for Education
- Pinot's Palette – The Effects of Colour on Behaviour
- 99designs – How Colour Impacts Emotions and Behaviours
- Cornell University Museum – What Is a Pigment?
- Flo Art Studio – Beginner's Guide to Painting with Colours
- Adobe Colour – Colour Palette Generator
- Figma – 6 Types of Colour Palettes
- Coolers – Colour Palette Generator
- YouTube – Understanding Colour Theory and Psychology

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is a colour scheme?
2. State two examples of warm colours.
3. What is the visible colour spectrum?
4. Define pigment colour.
5. Name three basic colour schemes used in art.
6. Explain how complementary colours affect mood in an artwork.
7. In what way do cool colours influence the feelings of a viewer?
8. Describe the difference between pigment colours and spectrum colours.
9. Explain why artists use analogous colour schemes in their works.
10. How can colour symbolism in Ghanaian culture guide the choice of colours in design?
11. Give two reasons why understanding colour relationships is important in creating artworks.
12. Analyse how pigment colours can be mixed to create secondary colours.
13. A student uses only blue and orange in a poster. Critique the mood and effectiveness of this colour scheme.
14. Using an object from your environment (e.g., a calabash or stool), describe how you would apply colours of the spectrum to represent it realistically.
15. Create a plan for an artwork that reflects the cultural meaning of colours in Ghana (e.g., red for mourning, white for purity). Explain your choices.

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of numerous pencil shavings. The shavings are primarily light-colored wood, but many have been colored with various pigments, including bright blue, red, yellow, and green. They are scattered across a dark, textured surface, creating a vibrant, abstract pattern.

SECTION

7

ADVANCED
COMPOSITION

RELATION OF FORMS

INTRODUCTION

In years one and two, you practised composing tonal values and hues to make your drawings look realistic, and you also created figurative representations from the environment. You went further to explore how different parts of objects can be treated for recognition or even abstraction. Can you still remember how adding the right tones made your drawings appear three-dimensional? In this section, you will build on those skills by learning how to organise and create drawings through the use of basic contours and forms from simple objects around you. You will also experiment with non-conventional materials to expand your creative possibilities, while still paying attention to tonal values and hues that bring resemblance and life into your work.

KEY IDEAS

- Drawings can be organised by observing and relating basic contours and simple forms found in everyday objects.
- Non-conventional materials, such as sticks, fabric, or sand, can be used creatively to make unique drawings.
- Contours and forms serve as the foundation for building accurate and recognisable drawings.
- Applying the right tonal values helps create depth, light, and shadow in a drawing.
- The use of appropriate hues gives drawings a sense of resemblance and makes them more life-like

DRAWING AND ADVANCED COMPOSITION

Concept of Drawing, Types, Forms and Approaches or Techniques

The Concept of Drawing

Drawing is one of the oldest and most important forms of visual expression. It is the act of making marks on a surface to represent ideas, objects, feelings, or experiences. In art, drawing serves as the foundation for many other creative activities such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, and design. It allows artists to think visually, record observations, explore ideas, and communicate messages.

Drawing is not only about copying what we see but also about expressing personal imagination and creativity. It can be realistic, abstract, or even symbolic. In everyday life, drawing is used in areas such as fashion design, architecture, engineering, advertising, and product design. This shows that drawing is not just an art skill but also a practical tool for problem-solving in society.

A drawing may serve many purposes: it can be a record of what one sees, a way of planning an artwork, or a tool for expressing personal imagination. For learners in art and design, drawing is not only about creating pictures but also about training the eye to see carefully, the hand to control tools, and the mind to think creatively.

Major Types of Drawing

Although there are many ways to group drawings, at the secondary school level, the study of drawing can be organised into three main types: **Observational drawing**, **Memory drawing**, and **Imaginative drawing**. Each type trains learners to use their eyes, minds, and creativity in different but related ways.

Observational Drawing

Observational drawing is the process of drawing directly from real-life objects, people, or scenes that are present in front of the learner. It is the foundation of accurate representation and develops careful seeing.

1. Forms of observational drawing

- a. **Still life drawing:** Drawing arranged objects such as bottles, fruits, or tools placed in a set-up.
- b. **Nature drawing:** Drawing natural forms such as plants, shells, animals, or landscapes.

- c. **Life drawing:** Drawing the human figure, whether full body or parts, from a live model.
- d. **Technical or structural drawing:** Showing the shape and structure of objects like machines, furniture, or buildings with attention to proportion.

2. Techniques in observational drawing

- a. Use of contour lines to outline objects.
- b. Shading to show light and dark areas.
- c. Proportion and perspective to create realistic relationships in size and distance.

Observational drawing trains accuracy, discipline, and the ability to translate real-life experiences onto paper.

Memory Drawing

Memory drawing is done without the object or scene in front of the learner. Instead, the artist relies on recollection of what has been seen or experienced in the past.

1. Forms of memory drawing

- a. **Everyday life scenes:** Drawing events such as a market scene, a school compound, or a football match as remembered by the learner.
- b. **Objects and figures from memory:** Drawing known items such as a chair, a goat, or a friend without looking at them.
- c. **Cultural events:** Recalling festivals, dances, or ceremonies and representing them visually.

2. Techniques in memory drawing

- a. Simplifying forms by recalling their basic shapes.
- b. Using sketches made earlier as aids.
- c. Emphasising the most important or memorable features.

Memory drawing strengthens visual memory, observation habits, and creative recall. It is important for artists who need to work without always having direct access to objects or scenes.

Imaginative Drawing

Imaginative drawing is the creation of images that come from the mind without direct observation or recall of actual objects. It allows learners to explore ideas, fantasies, and dreams freely.

1. Forms of imaginative drawing

- a. **Creative compositions:** Inventing scenes or stories, such as “a village under the sea” or “a futuristic city.”
- b. **Symbolic drawings:** Using invented shapes and forms to express emotions, concepts, or messages.
- c. **Abstract designs:** Using lines, colours, and shapes in non-realistic ways to create visual interest.

2. Techniques in imaginative drawing

- a. Brainstorming and sketching rough ideas before selecting the best.
- b. Combining forms from different sources to create new images.
- c. Experimenting with unusual materials, patterns, and perspectives.

Imaginative drawing helps learners to think beyond reality, express their inner feelings, and innovate in visual communication.

Forms of Drawing

Drawing can appear in different **forms** depending on its style and level of detail:

1. **Line Drawing:** Made mainly with outlines, showing only the shape of objects. It is often used in sketches, cartoons, and designs.
2. **Shaded Drawing:** Uses light and dark tones (shading) to show depth, volume, and three-dimensional form. It makes objects look more realistic.
3. **Contour Drawing:** Focuses on the edges or contours of an object. It may be continuous (without lifting the pencil) or broken lines to define the shape.
4. **Gesture Drawing:** A quick form of drawing that captures the movement or posture of a figure, often used in life drawing classes.
5. **Schematic or Diagrammatic Drawing:** Uses simplified symbols, shapes, and lines to represent complex ideas. For example, maps, charts, and diagrams.

Approaches or Techniques of Drawing

Artists use different approaches or techniques depending on the purpose, style, and material of the drawing. Some key techniques include:

1. **Sketching:** A quick, loose way of drawing used to capture ideas or observations. Sketches are often the first step in larger artworks or designs.
2. **Hatching and Cross-Hatching:** A shading technique where lines are drawn close together. In hatching, lines go in one direction, while in cross-hatching, they overlap in different directions to create depth and texture.
3. **Stippling:** This technique uses dots placed close or far apart to create light and dark effects. It takes time but produces interesting textures.
4. **Blending/Smudging:** Used to soften pencil or charcoal marks by rubbing with a finger, cloth, or blending tool. It gives smooth shading and a realistic effect.
5. **Scribbling:** Loose, overlapping lines that may look messy but can create expressive textures or shading.
6. **Tonal Drawing:** Focuses on using different tones of light and dark to represent form, rather than relying on outlines.
7. **Perspective Drawing:** A technique that shows depth and distance in space. For example, one-point or two-point perspective is used to make buildings, roads, or landscapes appear three-dimensional.
8. **Mixed Media Drawing:** Involves combining materials such as pencil, ink, charcoal, or even collage to create a single artwork.

Importance of Learning Drawing in SHS

- a. Helps students develop observation and concentration skills.
- b. Builds creativity and imagination for artistic expression.
- c. Provides practical skills useful in fashion, architecture, design, and advertising.
- d. Encourages problem-solving by turning ideas into visual forms.
- e. Develops personal expression and confidence in artistic abilities.

Table 7.1: Drawing and advanced composition

Benchmark	Description	Possible Dialogues / Sub-Classifications	Examples of Drawing styles that can apply
Observation Drawing	Created by studying a subject directly from life.	• Analytical/ Drawing with precisions (e.g., proportion studies, perspective, breaking objects into parts, etc.) • Technical (e.g., architectural plans, botanical illustration) • Expressive (capturing mood from life) • Descriptive (accurate depiction of form, tone, texture)	Sighting and measuring, contour drawing, gesture warm-ups, grid method, hatching / cross-hatching, blending for tone, negative-space studies.
Memory Drawing	Based on recall of subjects previously observed.	• Documentary (reconstructing events or places) • Stylised (simplifying or exaggerating remembered features) • Sequential/illustrative (storyboards, cultural narratives) • Functional (recalling designs for later use) • Analytical (recalling details of parts accurately)	Quick thumbnail sketches from memory, timed recall exercises, narrative sequence sketches, schematic diagrams, and annotated sketches.

Benchmark	Description	Possible Dialogues / Sub-Classifications	Examples of Drawing styles that can apply
Imaginative Drawing	Originates from ideas, concepts, or fantasy without direct visual reference.	• Conceptual (design ideation, visual problem-solving) - Expressive (abstract or symbolic compositions) • Fantasy/fictional worlds - Surreal or experimental explorations • Analytical (creating new products like buildings, machines, packages, etc.) • Mechanical	Freehand ideation sketches, mind-mapping, compositional thumbnails, iterative refinement sketches, model or maquette studies, digital concept mock-ups.

Organising and Creating Drawings from Basic Contours and Forms in the Environment Using Non-Conventional Materials

Drawing is one of the most important foundations of art. It allows artists to record, express, and communicate ideas by representing objects, people, and scenes. In learning how to draw, students must understand the role of **contours** and **basic forms** because these provide the structure upon which realistic and imaginative drawings are built. In addition, using **non-conventional materials** for drawing opens up new creative possibilities and helps learners to see art as more than just pencil and paper.

This lesson focuses on how learners can identify simple objects in the environment, break them down into basic contours and forms, and then use both conventional and non-conventional materials to create expressive drawings.

Understanding Contours in Drawing

Contours are the outer lines or edges that define the shape of an object. They are like the “skeleton” that helps us recognise what something is. Contour drawing involves carefully observing the outline of an object and representing it with smooth or broken lines.

- a. **Example 1:** The contour of a leaf shows its overall shape, whether broad or narrow.
- b. **Example 2:** The contour of a cooking pot shows its round rim, handles, and base.
- c. **Example 3:** The contour of a shoe reveals its outline without necessarily showing details like laces or textures.

By focusing on contours, learners can capture the essential look of an object quickly and accurately.

Understanding Basic Forms in Drawing

Beyond contours, artists use basic forms to simplify objects. The world around us is made up of a few key forms.

- 1. **Cube** (like a box, stool, or building block)
- 2. **Sphere** (like an orange, ball, or coconut)
- 3. **Cylinder** (like a tin, drum, or candle)
- 4. **Cone** (like a funnel, hat, or certain roof designs)
- 5. **Pyramid** (like some shrines or triangular roofs)

When learners look at an object, they can break it down into these basic forms. For example:

- a. A kettle is a combination of a **cylinder (body)**, a **cone (spout)**, and a **curved handle**.
- b. A mango can be seen as a slightly stretched **sphere**.
- c. A car can be simplified into a **rectangular block (body)** with **cylinders (wheels)**.

Understanding forms makes drawing easier, because instead of copying an entire object at once, the artist constructs it step by step from simple shapes.

Identifying Simple Objects in the Environment

The environment provides countless simple objects that learners can practise with. These include;

- a. **Natural objects:** leaves, stones, shells, fruits, vegetables, flowers, and branches.
- b. **Man-made objects:** pots, bottles, baskets, chairs, shoes, cooking utensils.
- c. **Architectural forms:** houses, benches, windows, doors, huts.

Learners can go outside the classroom, observe their surroundings, and select objects that interest them. This helps them build confidence while appreciating their immediate environment.

Organising Drawings: From Observation to Composition

Drawing is not just about copying objects. It also involves organisation—deciding how to place objects within the drawing space. This means:

1. **Selecting Objects:** Choosing 2–4 simple objects from the environment (for example, a bottle, a fruit, and a basket).
2. **Arranging Objects:** Interestingly organising them. A bottle may be placed upright, with a fruit leaning against it and the basket slightly behind.
3. **Blocking in Contours and Forms:** Sketching light outlines of the objects, identifying their basic shapes and how they overlap.
4. **Refining the Drawing:** Adding more details such as curves, edges, and small textures.
5. **Balancing the Composition:** Ensuring that objects do not look crowded or scattered but appear harmonised on the page.

Through this process, learners begin to create drawings that are not only accurate but also visually pleasing.

Using Non-Conventional Materials

While pencils, pens, and charcoal are common drawing tools, artists can also use non-conventional materials. These are creative alternatives that make drawing more exciting and encourage experimentation.

Examples include the following.

- a. **Natural tools:** sticks, feathers, leaves, stones, or shells dipped in ink, paint, or mud.
- b. **Household tools:** toothbrushes, combs, sponges, broom straws, or bottle caps.
- c. **Recycled materials:** pieces of cardboard, wire, plastic spoons, or packaging.
- d. **Pigments from nature:** charcoal dust, clay, ground leaves, coffee, or even fruit juices.

Using these materials helps learners understand that drawing is not limited to expensive tools. It also challenges them to think creatively about line quality, texture, and shading. For example:

- a. A stick dipped in ink may create bold, uneven lines for contour drawings.
- b. A sponge may be used to dab soft tones for shading.
- c. Charcoal dust spread with the fingers may produce dramatic shadows.

Benefits of Using Non-Conventional Materials

- 1. **Encourages creativity:** Learners think outside the box.
- 2. **Makes art affordable:** Materials are found in the environment.
- 3. **Promotes sustainability:** Recycling reduces waste.
- 4. **Improves observation:** Learners pay attention to the qualities of both the objects and the drawing tools.
- 5. **Builds experimentation skills:** Different materials produce different textures and effects.

Importance of Organising and Creating Drawings

By practising contour and form drawing with non-conventional materials, learners gain:

- a. Stronger **skills in observation**.
- b. Ability to **simplify complex objects** into manageable shapes.
- c. Increased **confidence in creativity**, since they are not limited to traditional tools.
- d. Appreciation for the **environment as a resource** for both ideas and materials.

- e. The foundation for more advanced art processes such as shading, painting, design, and sculpture.

Organising and creating drawings from basic contours and forms is a vital step in artistic growth. It trains learners to see the hidden structures behind objects and to represent them clearly. Using non-conventional materials adds a layer of creativity, affordability, and sustainability to the process. By relating objects in the environment to basic forms and experimenting with alternative materials, learners not only improve their drawing skills but also develop problem-solving abilities that extend beyond the art classroom.

Activity 7.1 Drawing with Unusual Materials

You are preparing for a future career as an industrial designer who must show creativity even when traditional tools are unavailable. A task is set to produce contour drawings of everyday objects using unconventional materials.

Here is how you can go about it

1. Select three simple objects from the environment, such as a cup, a shoe, or fruit.
2. Outline their basic contours and forms using non-conventional materials (for example, charcoal sticks, coloured sand, twigs, or fabric scraps).
3. Arrange the drawings on one sheet to show how the forms relate to each other (See *Figure 7.1*)
4. Write a short caption for each drawing explaining how the chosen material affected the look of the contour.
5. Present your work in class for appreciation and criticism.

Remember: You can always make video recordings and take photographs when producing the work, and after the work is done, for your digital portfolios

Discuss the images below with your peers



Figure 7.1: Sample drawing with non-conventional materials

Breaktime Dialogue

Share thoughts with peers on this question: “Can non-conventional materials sometimes bring out more creativity than pencils and brushes?” For example, how can drawing be done on the surface of water or in the air? Collect contrasting opinions for classroom discussion.

Activity 7.2 Creative Environmental Sketching

As a future exhibition artist, you are asked to present a collection of drawings that demonstrate how environmental objects can be captured through new, creative media instead of only conventional tools.

Your steps to take the challenge

1. Select an environmental theme such as cooking utensils, market scenes, or garden tools.
2. Create at least four contour sketches using different non-conventional materials like string, collage cut-outs, or thumbprints.
3. Organise the sketches into a mini-portfolio titled “Contours from the Environment.”
4. Add a reflection page explaining what challenges and discoveries you made while using these new materials.
5. Share your experience with peers for feedback

After Prep Reflections

Hold a conversation around this: “Which matters more in drawing, accuracy of form or creativity of material?” Present your conclusion in class.

COMPOSE APPROPRIATE TONAL VALUES AND HUES FOR FORMS OF RESEMBLANCE

When we observe objects in our environment, we notice that they do not all appear the same. Some look lighter, darker, brighter, or duller depending on their shape, position, surface, and the light that falls on them. These differences are created by tonal values and hues. In art, tonal values and hues help us create drawings and paintings that look real and believable. By mastering the use of tones and hues, learners can represent objects in ways that capture their resemblance and mood.

This section will guide you to understand tonal values and hues and show how to apply them in making artworks.

Meaning of Tonal Values

Tonal value refers to the degree of lightness or darkness of a colour or shade. Artists use tonal values to show depth, form, and contrast in a drawing. For example, when shading a ball, the side that faces the light source is lighter, while the side away from the light is darker. The smooth transition from light to dark creates the illusion of roundness.

Key points about tonal values:

1. They make flat drawings appear three-dimensional.
2. Light values suggest highlights and areas near a light source.
3. Dark values suggest shadows and depth.
4. Mid-tones help to blend light and dark areas smoothly.

Meaning of Hues

Hue is the name of a colour in its pure state, such as red, blue, green, or yellow. Hues are what we first recognise when we see colours. However, when lightness and darkness are added to hues, their effect changes.

1. A **tint** is a hue mixed with white to make it lighter.
2. A **shade** is a hue mixed with black to make it darker.
3. A **tone** is a hue mixed with grey or with both black and white.

As an artist works with hues and adjusts them into tints, shades, or tones, they can create mood and resemblance in drawings and paintings.

Relationship between Tonal Values and Hues

Tonal values and hues work together to make artworks more realistic. For example:

- a. When drawing a mango, the yellow hue must be shaded with darker yellow or orange tones in the shadow areas and lighter tints in the highlight areas.
- b. A sky drawn with only one blue hue looks flat, but when light blue tints and deep blue shades are added, it becomes lively and real.

Thus, tonal values control the light and dark effect, while hues give the drawing its colour identity. Together, they create forms of resemblance.

Importance of Tonal Values and Hues in Art

1. **Creating Realism:** They help in representing objects in ways that resemble reality.
2. **Adding Mood and Expression:** Dark tones may create a sad or serious mood, while light tones can make an artwork appear cheerful.
3. **Showing Depth and Space:** Objects closer to the viewer often have brighter and clearer hues, while distant objects appear duller and lighter.
4. **Highlighting Details:** Tonal variations draw attention to specific parts of a drawing.
5. **Improving Composition:** Balanced tones and hues make the artwork pleasing to the eye.
6. **Directing the Viewer's Eye (Focal Point):** Artists use tonal value to guide the viewer's attention to the most important part of the artwork, the focal point.

Techniques for Applying Tonal Values

You can use several methods to create tonal values in your drawings.

1. **Hatching:** Drawing closely spaced parallel lines.
2. **Cross-hatching:** Drawing intersecting lines at different angles.
3. **Stippling:** Using small dots to build up tone.
4. **Blending:** Smudging or smoothing pencil or charcoal to create soft tones.
5. **Scumbling:** Applying broken, scratchy marks to give texture and tone.

Each technique should be chosen depending on the type of form being represented and the mood the artist wants to create.

Techniques for Using Hues

1. **Layering Colours:** Applying multiple layers of coloured pencils, paints, or pigments to build up depth.
2. **Mixing Colours:** Combining primary colours to create secondary and tertiary hues.
3. **Tinting and Shading:** Mixing with white or black to control brightness or darkness.
4. **Complementary Balance:** Using opposite hues (e.g., blue and orange) to create strong contrast.

Practical Application – Drawing for Resemblance

To compose tonal values and hues effectively

1. **Observe the Object:** Study where the light source is coming from.
2. **Sketch the Outline:** Draw the basic contour of the object.
3. **Block in Major Tones:** Shade the darkest and lightest areas first.
4. **Blend Gradually:** Add mid-tones to make the transition smooth.
5. **Apply Hues:** Use pigment colours to capture the true appearance of the object.
6. **Refine with Details:** Add final touches to highlight reflections, textures, or colour variations.

For example, when drawing an orange fruit:

- a. Start with a circular outline.
- b. Shade one side darker to show shadow.
- c. Use a bright orange hue for the main surface.
- d. Add lighter tints of yellow for highlights.
- e. Introduce a touch of brown or red tones to show texture.

Examples from the Environment

1. A metallic pot can be drawn with silvery-grey tones to capture its shiny surface.
2. A green leaf may show hues of dark green in the middle veins, light green on the edges, and yellow highlights where light falls.
3. A local calabash may include warm brown hues, with darker tones near the bottom and lighter tones at the top.

Challenges

- a. Using only one flat tone (single tone), making drawings look lifeless.
- b. Ignoring the direction of light, leading to misplaced shadows.
- c. Over-darkening shades and losing detail.
- d. Applying hues without tonal variation, making the colours look flat.

These challenges can be overcome through continuous observation, practice, and experimentation with shading and colouring tools.

Reflect for a minute

- a. *What are your own challenges with drawing and shading?*
- b. *How can you overcome these challenges?*

Tonal values and hues are the backbone of creating resemblance in art. They allow learners to transform simple outlines into lively forms that capture the true appearance of objects. By carefully studying light, shadow, and colour, and by practising shading and colour application techniques, learners can compose artworks that communicate mood, realism, and beauty. Mastery of tonal values and hues not only improves drawing skills but also builds confidence in expressing ideas creatively through art.

Activity 7.3 Exploring Tonal Values for Realism

You are an illustrator asked to prepare images for a science textbook. To make the objects resemble reality, the editor insists that tonal values and hues must be carefully used to show light, shadow, and form.

Your Steps to Engage

1. Choose a simple object such as a bottle, fruit, or stone.
2. Produce a drawing of the object in plain outline.
3. Add tonal values by shading areas of light and shadow to make the form resemble reality.
4. Apply at least two hues to enhance the realism of the form and record how the colours affect its appearance.
5. Write a note titled “How Tone and Hue Changed My Drawing.”

Weekend Arguments

Debate this statement: “*Tone is more important than colour when creating realistic drawings.*” Record the best points raised by both sides and display them.

Activity 7.4 Tonal and Colour Harmony in Design

You are a fashion designer preparing a catalogue for a new collection. The success of the presentation depends on how well tonal values and hues are applied to give fabric designs depth and a realistic resemblance.

Here is how to complete the task

1. Sketch a simple clothing form such as a dress, shirt, or shoe.
2. Add tonal values to show folds, highlights, and shadows in the form.
3. Apply hues that give the design a sense of realism and appeal.
4. Create a final display board showing the drawing with labels for light tone, mid-tone, dark tone, and hue choices.
5. Write threr work in class for review.

Free Period Arguments

Discuss with peers: “*Does colour harmony matter more than tonal shading in making designs attractive?*” Summarise the outcomes of the discussion and post them beside your display.

BUILDING MY FUTURE WITH ART AND DESIGN FOUNDATION

You have completed the Art and Design Foundation course from SHS 1 to SHS 3. This is the time to pause, reflect, and plan for your future. The knowledge, skills, and competencies you have gained are not only useful for passing your WASSCE but also for shaping your academic progression and career path.

Please complete the activity below and show it to your teacher or mentor for further insights.

Activity 7.5 Reflection and Strategic Future Planning

Follow the steps below to complete this activity (you can use the sample works named *Appendix A* on page 213 as a guide).

Step 1: Personal Reflection

Write short notes on the following in your diary or an important book for safekeeping

- a. The key **skills** I have gained (e.g., drawing, design thinking, creativity, critical observation, teamwork).
- b. The important **knowledge** I now have (e.g., colour theory, art history, cultural identity, design processes).

- c. The **competences** I have developed (e.g., problem-solving, innovation, self-discipline, communication).

Step 2: My WASSCE Success Strategy

- a. List three ways in which the knowledge and skills from Art and Design will help me to answer WASSCE questions.
- b. Identify the areas I must revise more (e.g., practicals, theory, history, design principles).
- c. Outline personal study habits that will make me succeed (e.g., drawing practice, past question review, group discussions).

Step 3: My 4-Year Future Plan

Think ahead and write down your plans (You can also do it in a table form, e.g. **Table 7.2**)

- a. **Year 1 (after WASSCE):** What I plan to do immediately (e.g., tertiary admission, apprenticeship, short course, portfolio building).
- b. **Year 2:** How I will continue building on my Art and Design skills.
- c. **Year 3:** What new academic or career opportunities I will explore.
- d. **Year 4:** Where I want to be (e.g., enrolled in a degree programme, employed in the creative industry, running a design business).

Step 4: Linking Art and Design to My Future

For each year in your plan, explain briefly **how the skills, knowledge, and competencies from Art and Design Foundation will help you succeed.**

Table 7.2: Sample Strategic Plan

Year	My Goal	Key Actions	How Art & Design Skills Help
Year 1 (After WASSCE)	Gain admission into a Technical University or a tertiary institution	Prepare application documents, attend entrance interviews, and improve portfolio	Creativity and portfolio preparation skills from SHS help in showcasing talent

Year	My Goal	Key Actions	How Art & Design Skills Help
Year 2	Build ICT and digital design skills	Take short courses in graphic design, photography, or fashion illustration	Knowledge of design principles helps in adapting to digital tools
Year 3	Internship or apprenticeship	Work in a design studio, craft centre, or cultural institution	Problem-solving and teamwork skills support practical work experience
Year 4	Graduate or start a small design business	Complete studies, apply for jobs, or set up a start-up in fashion, craft, or visual design	Innovation, cultural identity, and entrepreneurial skills from Art and Design provide a foundation

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE WORKSHEET

Reflection and Strategic Future Planning

Subject: Art and Design Foundation (SHS 1 – SHS 3)

Purpose: To reflect on knowledge, skills, and competencies gained, and create a plan for WASSCE success and future career path.

Part A: Personal Reflection (Write in the spaces provided)

The key skills I have gained are:

.....

The important knowledge I now have includes:

.....

.....

The competences I have developed are:

.....

.....

Part B: My WASSCE Success Strategy

Three ways Art and Design knowledge will help me in WASSCE are:

.....

.....

.....

Areas I must revise more are:

.....

Study habits that will help me succeed are:

.....

.....

Part C: My 4-Year Future Plan

Year 1 (after WASSCE):

.....

.....
Year 2:

.....
Year 3:

.....
Year 4:

Part D: Linking Art and Design to My Future

For each year in my plan, I will explain how the skills, knowledge, and competences from Art and Design Foundation will support me:

Year 1:

Year 2:

Year 3:

Year 4:

EXTENDED READING

- <https://youtu.be/NSvGEpAUO4c>
- <https://www.sobudd.com/post/contour-drawing>
- <https://youtu.be/4qNMzOb-DY8>
- <https://youtu.be/zKTZP2uj88M>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRAAeLNhdlg>
- <https://www.artistsnetwork.com/art-subjects/understanding-value-and-tone-for-better-painting/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tint,_shade_and_tone
- <https://www.watercoloraffair.com/what-is-tone-in-art-a-watercolorists-guide/>
- <https://artstudiolife.com/introductory-guide-to-tonal-values/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zG7qa9daAbw>

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the term contour in drawing?
2. Mention two examples of non-conventional materials that can be used in drawing.
3. Define tonal value in the context of drawing.
4. State one reason why hues are important in creating resemblance in a drawing.
5. Identify two everyday objects from your environment that have simple forms suitable for practice drawings.
6. Explain how observing contours helps an artist to improve drawing accuracy.
7. Describe how tonal values can change the appearance of a form in a drawing.
8. Give two advantages of using non-conventional materials in art-making.
9. Explain the relationship between hue and mood in a drawing.
10. Show how contours and forms work together to make a drawing recognisable.
11. Compare conventional and non-conventional drawing materials with one example each.
12. Imagine you are asked to draw a market scene using charcoal dust and pieces of cloth. How would you organise the contours and tonal values to make the objects recognisable?
13. Critique a classmate's drawing that lacks tonal variation. Suggest specific ways to improve the sense of form.
14. Design a drawing activity using natural materials from your environment that can highlight both contours and hues.
15. Analyse how the choice of non-conventional materials can influence the style, meaning, or mood of a finished drawing.

GLOSSARY

2D Design: Flat design work created in two dimensions, such as drawings, posters, or floor plans.

3D Art: Art that has three dimensions: length, width, and height (e.g., sculpture).

3D Modelling: The creation of digital objects with depth, height, and width that resemble real-world forms.

4D Art: Art that includes time as an extra dimension, often using movement or change over time.

5D Art: Art that uses advanced technology to create immersive, multi-sensory experiences.

21st-Century Design: Modern approaches to creating products, spaces, and visuals that combine creativity, technology, and user needs.

Abstraction: The process of simplifying or altering the appearance of objects in art while keeping their basic idea.

Advocacy Art: Artwork that promotes a cause or raises awareness about social or environmental issues.

Aesthetic Value: The beauty, style, or artistic appeal of a design or artwork.

Analysis: The stage where you examine how the elements and principles of design are used in the artwork.

Analogous Scheme: The use of colours that lie next to each other on the colour wheel, creating harmony.

Applications of Art: The uses or functions of art in society, such as decoration, communication, education, or social commentary.

Art Advocacy: Efforts to promote the value and rights of artists and the arts within society.

Art Criticism: The careful study, explanation, and judgement of artworks to understand their meaning and quality.

Art Education: The teaching and learning of art techniques, history, theory, and appreciation.

Art Institutions in Africa: Museums, galleries, art schools, and cultural centres that nurture and exhibit African art.

Artistic Contribution: The creative input and influence an artist or group has made to their art community or field.

Artistic Responsibility: The duty of artists to create works that respect culture, people, and the environment.

Artworld: The global network of artists, galleries, museums, collectors, critics, and institutions involved in the production, distribution, and reception of art.

AutoCAD: One of the most widely used CAD software programs for technical and engineering design.

Blender: A free and open-source CAD software for creating 3D models, animations, and visual effects.

Blockchain: A secure digital system used to record and verify NFT and cryptocurrency transactions.

CAD (Computer-Aided Design): The use of computer software to create, modify, and improve design work.

Censorship: Controlling or limiting what can be shown or expressed in art.

Colour Scheme: An organised way of using colours together in an artwork.

Colour Symbolism: The meanings and messages that colours carry in cultural settings, for example, white for purity in Ghana.

Complementary Colours: Two colours opposite each other on the colour wheel, like red and green, that give strong contrast.

Composition: The arrangement of lines, shapes, tones, and colours in a drawing to create a complete artwork.

Contextual Analysis: Studying an artwork by considering the time, culture, history, and society in which it was created.

Contour: The outline or edge that defines the shape of an object in a drawing.

Contemporary African Art: Art produced by African artists today, often addressing modern themes and reflecting diverse cultural identities.

Contemporary Ghanaian Art: Art created by Ghanaian artists in the present time, reflecting current themes, materials, and techniques.

Conventional Materials: Common tools or media for drawing, like pencils, pens, and crayons.

Cool Colours: Colours such as blue, green, and violet that suggest calmness, peace, or sadness.

CorelDRAW: A graphic design software commonly used for 2D CAD illustrations and layouts.

Critique: A written or spoken report that applies the stages of art criticism to explain and evaluate an artwork.

Critical Analysis: Examining a design's strengths, weaknesses, and impact before making a judgment.

Cryptocurrency: A type of digital money used for online transactions, including buying art.

Cultural Appropriation: Using elements of another culture in art without understanding or respecting their meaning.

Cultural Identity in Art: The expression of a community's or individual's heritage, beliefs, and traditions through art.

Cultural Sensitivity: Showing respect for the beliefs, traditions, and values of different groups in art.

Description: The first stage of criticism where you talk about what you see in the artwork, such as colours, shapes, and subject matter.

Design Ethics: Moral principles that guide designers in making fair, respectful, and responsible choices.

Design Innovation: The introduction of new creative ideas or improvements in products through design processes.

Design Thinking: A creative problem-solving process that involves understanding users, generating ideas, and testing solutions.

Digital Art: Art created or modified using computers, tablets, or other digital devices.

Digital Art Fabrication: Creating art using digital tools such as software, computers, or electronic devices.

Digital Fabrication: The use of computer-controlled machines (e.g., 3D printers, laser cutters) to produce CAD designs.

Drafting: The technical process of creating precise drawings or plans, either manually or using CAD.

Educational Relevance: The importance and role of art in learning, teaching, and cultural transmission within educational settings.

Environmental Impact: The effect art production has on nature, such as waste, pollution, or resource use.

Ethical Issues: Concerns about right and wrong behaviour in art and design.

Fabrication Methods: The techniques and processes used in making art, including sculpting, weaving, painting, and digital creation.

Form: The three-dimensional shape of an object that shows height, width, and depth.

Formal Analysis: Looking at an artwork mainly through its visual elements like line, shape, colour, and texture.

Functional Value: The usefulness or purpose an artwork serves in society.

Ghanaian Art Scene: The community, institutions, galleries, and events that support and promote art in Ghana.

Globalisation of African Art: The increasing international recognition, exchange, and influence of African art on the world stage.

Highlight: The lightest part of a drawing where light shines most strongly on the object.

Hue: The name of a colour, such as red, blue, green, or yellow.

Human-Centred Ethics: Making decisions in art that respect people's dignity, rights, and well-being.

Impact of Modern Art on Contemporary African Art: The ways modern art movements influenced African artists' styles, themes, and techniques.

Inclusive Design: Designing products and environments so that they can be used by as many people as possible, regardless of age or ability.

Intellectual Property: Legal rights that protect an artist's creative work from being copied or used without permission.

Interpretation: The stage where you explain the meaning or message of the artwork.

Judgement: The stage where you decide whether the artwork is successful or not, based on set criteria.

Materials in Contemporary Art: The physical substances or media used by artists, such as textiles, metal, wood, or digital media.

Material Responsibility: Choosing art materials that are safe, sustainable, and eco-friendly.

Milestones of Contemporary Art: Key events, exhibitions, or artworks that have significantly influenced the development of contemporary art.

Minimalism: A design style that uses simple forms, limited colours, and uncluttered layouts to create a clean look.

Mixed Media: An art form that combines various materials and methods in a single artwork.

Modern Art: Art movements from the late 19th to mid-20th century that broke traditional rules and explored new forms and ideas.

Monochromatic Scheme: The use of only one colour with its tints (lighter) and shades (darker).

Mood in Colour: The feeling or emotion created by the use of certain colours in an artwork.

Non-Conventional Materials: Unusual or locally available items used for art, such as coffee, charcoal dust, leaves, or sand.

Non-Fungible Token (NFT): A unique digital certificate that proves ownership of a specific artwork or file.

Pigment Colours: Colours made from physical substances such as paint, dye, or chalk.

Plagiarism: Copying another person's creative work without giving credit.

Primary Colours: Red, yellow, and blue; the base colours used to mix all other colours.

Product Design: The process of planning, developing, and creating new items that solve human needs or problems.

Prototype: A sample or model of a product created to test and improve a design before mass production.

Recognition: The ability to identify or name objects in a drawing based on their contours and forms.

Rendering: The process of producing a realistic or final visual image of a CAD model.

Resemblance: The likeness of a drawing to the real object it represents.

Secondary Colours: Colours made by mixing two primaries, such as green, orange, and violet.

Shade: A darker version of a colour made by adding black.

Shading: The use of light and dark areas in a drawing to show depth and realism.

Shadow: The darker area in a drawing created when light is blocked by an object.

Simulation: A CAD feature that allows designers to test how a product will function before it is produced.

SketchUp: A CAD software used mainly for architectural and 3D design modelling.

Smart Design: Products or systems that use technology to improve performance, efficiency, and convenience.

Sociocultural Context: The social, cultural, historical, and political background that influences art creation and interpretation.

Spectrum Colours: Colours that appear when white light is separated, for example, in a rainbow.

Sustainable Art: Art created with materials and processes that do not harm the environment.

Sustainability in Design: Creating designs that minimise waste and protect the environment for future generations.

Technology-Based Art: Art that uses modern tools like 3D printing, virtual reality, or interactive media.

Tertiary Colours: Colours made by mixing a primary colour with a secondary colour, like red-orange or blue-green.

Texture: The way a surface looks or feels in an artwork, either smooth, rough, or patterned.

Tint: A lighter version of a colour made by adding white.

Tonal Value: The degree of lightness or darkness of a colour or shade.

User-Centred Design: A design process focused on making products or services that meet the needs and preferences of the people who will use them.

Vector Graphics: Images created with lines and curves using mathematical formulas, often used in CAD programs.

Volume: The space that a form occupies, making it look three-dimensional.

Warm Colours: Colours such as red, orange, and yellow that suggest heat, energy, or excitement.

This book is intended to be used for the Year Three Art and Design Foundation Senior High School (SHS) Curriculum. It contains information and activities to support teachers to deliver the curriculum in the classroom as well as additional exercises to support learners' selfstudy and revision. Learners can use the review questions to assess their understanding and explore concepts and additional content in their own time using the extended reading list provided.

All materials can be accessed electronically from the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Microsite.



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