

Arts and Literature

Art, the product of creative human activity in which materials are shaped or selected to convey an idea, emotion, or visually interesting form. The word *art* can refer to the visual arts, including painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, decorative arts, crafts, and other visual works that combine materials or forms. We also use the word *art* in a more general sense to encompass other forms of creative activity, such as dance, drama, and music, or even to describe skill in almost any activity, such as "the art of bread making" or "the art of travel." In this article *art* refers to the visual arts.

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Alphabet

The ancestors of modern alphabets were the iconographic and ideographic symbols developed by ancient man, such as cuneiform and hieroglyphics. The first known alphabet, a combination of a number of early pictographic symbols known as North Semitic, was developed between 1700 and 1500 BC. Four other alphabets - South Semitic, Canaanite, Aramaic, and Greek - had evolved from the North Semitic alphabet by 1000 BC. The Roman alphabet, used by all the languages of Western Europe including English, was derived from the Greek alphabet sometime after 500 BC. The Roman alphabet became one of the most widespread due to the extensive use of the Latin language during the reign of the Roman Empire. The development of alphabets was significant in the development of advanced civilizations because it allowed history and ideas to be written down, rather than memorized and passed along orally.

Drama

Alfred Hitchcock once said, "Drama is life with the dull bits cut out." If he'd been alive during ancient times, he might have uttered these same words when facing a play from Euripides. Reflecting the interesting (and often) tragic parts of "life" on the stage was an important part of the ancient world, and helped to shape our modern culture.

Heroic Epic

The art of writing as literature, bodies of works written thematically, is at least as old in the western world as Greek culture. Surviving records of Babylonian culture refer to at least two epic tales, which infers that literature as a comprehensive body is much older, but neither survive to this day. The development of a living body of literature became indicative of an advanced culture and is always correlated with advances in science, philosophy, theology, and art. Literature in the western world has survived in the forms that the Greeks and Romans established, but the expense and effort of hand copying texts ensured that only the wealthy had access to literate education. Libraries, which served as storehouses of these bodies of text, also became centers for education and the proliferation of ideas. Unfortunately the loss of many such libraries, such as the Great Library of Alexandria in a civil war in the 3rd century AD, also heralded the loss of many of these irreplaceable texts. It wasn't until the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg that books were

printed rather than transcribed. That single advance in literature opened the field up to those other than monks and the wealthy, birthing a proliferation of literature that spread across the world.

Library

The development of writing meant that the accumulated knowledge of a society could be written down and stored rather than memorized and passed along by word of mouth. The accumulated written material was stored in a library. The libraries of the ancient world, especially those at Alexandria and Pergamum, became leading centers of science and scholarship. The librarians actively collected the books of the world, accelerating the spread of knowledge.

Literature

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Mausoleum

Maussollos died in 349 BC. King of Caria during his lifetime, Maussollos wished to leave a reminder of himself for future generations in the form of a great tomb. In addition to hiring hundreds of laborers, Maussollos commissioned five of the finest artisans in the Hellenic world to design the hundreds of statues that were to line the peripheries of his white marble resting place. Over 130 feet tall upon completion, the Mausoleum of Maussollos stood by the harbor of Halicarnassus until 1522, when the Knights Hospitaller tore it down in order to use the stones to build defenses against the approaching Turks.

Music

Music finds a comfortable parallel with that of human language. Much as language has words, sentences, and stories, music has tones, melodies, and songs. The theory of music emphasizes the elements from which music is composed. One such structure is the melody, which is a grouping of musical notes that combine into a basic, but immensely

flexible structure. Another is the chord, which is two or more notes played simultaneously to create a harmony. The impact of music throughout history can be clearly seen, as both entertainment and an art.

Odeon

Architecture music Greek or Roman concert hall: an ancient Greek or Roman building in which musical performances were held

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Pavilion

Outdoor structure: a summerhouse or other often ornamental building in a park, fair, or garden, used for shelter and entertainment

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Pottery

The invention of pottery was essential to the development of agricultural societies. To get the most out of seasonal crops and domesticated animals, a tribe needed sturdy, waterproof containers in which to store and protect surplus food. The discovery of the properties of clay, and the invention of the kiln and the potter's wheel made it possible to build such containers. The earliest examples of Western pottery date back to as early as 6500 BC. Most of the examples from this period were strictly utilitarian. Although use continued to be primarily practical, decorative pottery soon became a ritualistic and aesthetic art form in cultures all over the world. Some of the most impressive examples of artistic pottery comes from the pre-Columbian cultures of South America, and from the Ming dynasty in 14th century China.

Theater

A theatre is a building in which audiences can watch a play or other theatrical performance. The earliest theatres were outdoors, constructed in a bowl-shaped depression to allow all in the audience to see the stage. Later, specific buildings were constructed to house theatres. Modern theatres are similar in layout to the earliest buildings. The audience sits or stands facing a stage; behind the stage is an extensive backstage area holding sets, props, dressing rooms and so forth. The primary difference between stages of Shakespeare's time and modern theaters is that the latter have electrical systems allowing them to light the stage as needed and to amplify the actors' voices.

Writing

The development of writing is considered one of the most important advances of civilization. The earliest forms of writing were simple symbols and marks, used to keep accounts and inventories. Some cultures developed pictographic symbols to tell stories and record events. Eventually, complete systems of writing were developed, capable of conveying any thought that could be expressed orally. At this point, scribes replaced the

oral historian as the chief keepers of records. Writing allowed the presentation of information in a form that could be reliably transmitted from person to person and made it possible for ideas, history, and knowledge to be stored permanently and passed between cultures more reliably than through oral recitation.