

Why We Study Art

Episode 1

[click here to watch the episode](#)

Vocabulary

A. Choose the correct words in the box to match their meaning.

artifact construct perspective canon bias curator colonial

1.		A person who selects and organizes artworks or objects for a museum, gallery, or collection.
2.		The way someone thinks about or understands something.
3.		A set of works that are considered important or classic in a subject.
4.		An unfair preference for one idea or group over others.
5.		Related to a time when one country controlled another and influenced its culture and resources.
6.		A human-made object from the past that shows history or culture.
7.		An idea created by society rather than something that naturally exists.

Summary

B. Read the summary and fill in the blanks using the words in the box.

Art history is the study of objects and images to understand the people, places, and time periods they come from. Sarah Urist Green, a (1)____, explains that art history involves thinking critically by observing closely and understanding different (2)____. The (3)____ of art history was shaped by writings like Giorgio Vasari's book about Renaissance artists, which influenced which artworks became famous. However, this canon had (4)____ toward Western European art and often excluded works from (5)____ contexts. Art historians today study (6)____ and examine what materials have survived to piece together more complete historical stories, recognizing that history is something we (7)____ rather than simply discover.

artifacts

construct

perspectives

canon

biases

curator

colonial

Comprehension Questions

C. Choose the correct answers.

1.

What does art history primarily study?

- A. Only paintings from famous museums
- B. Objects and images to understand cultures and time periods
- C. The prices of artworks at auctions

2.

Who wrote the book that became the foundation of art history as we know it?

- A. Michelangelo
- B. Giorgio Vasari
- C. The Medici family

Comprehension Questions

C. Choose the correct answers.

3.

What does the episode suggest about the canon of art history?

- A. It includes all artworks equally
- B. It was arbitrarily created and biased toward Western European art
- C. It was created by democratic voting

4.

According to the episode, why is studying art important?

- A. To memorize names and dates
- B. To understand different perspectives and connections across cultures
- C. Only to appreciate beautiful paintings

True or False?

D. Choose T if the underlined word is correct, or replace the word if it is incorrect.

1.	The biombo screen tells the story of how the <u>Mexican</u> people conquered Tenochtitlan.
2.	The Lega people from the Congo have objects called masengo which means ' <u>heavy things</u> '.
3.	Kara Walker's 'Fons Americanus' was inspired by a monument in <u>Spain</u> .
4.	The Akan drum in the British Museum was made from <u>West African</u> wood.
5.	'The Raft of the Medusa' was painted by <u>Théodore Géricault</u> in 1819.



Discussion Questions

E. Answer the questions

1. How do you think the way history is recorded affects what we know about the past?
2. Why do you think certain artworks become famous while others are forgotten?
3. What role do you think museums should play in telling more complete historical stories?

Discussion Questions

E. Answer the questions

4. How can studying art from different cultures help us understand each other better?
5. Do you think art can be 'objective,' or is it always influenced by the artist's perspective?
6. What artwork or artifact from your own culture would you want future generations to study and why?