

Beauty & Modern Art



The Importance of Classically
Educating Students about
Beauty through Modern Art

By Rebecca Edwards

The Importance of Classically Educating Students about Beauty Through Modern Art — *Thesis Document*

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Contents

Abstract	/	6
Research Problem & Statement	/	8
Research Review Summary	/	10
Visual Process	/	20
Visual Solution	/	32
Conclusion	/	52
Works & Images Cited	/	54

Abstract

Thesis Summary —

It has often been asked throughout the history of mankind what classifies beauty within an artwork. When observing some of the outstanding works of Leonardo DaVinci or Sandro Botticelli, a few of the great masters of the Renaissance, there is no problem teaching students about what makes those artists' work beautiful. What about the artistic work from the past two hundred years to the current art being produced today?

I have found through my own personal journey as an artist that there is a severe lack of promotion for creative gifts being used for God within the Christian communities (and even more so an appreciation for the role of the modern artist). As a Christian, I was always taught that Jesus loved me and had a purpose for me but I was not necessarily taught that my artistic talents could be a part of that purpose.

I later on knew and believed that He gave me talents and gifts to be used for Him. It is important that other students in like-minded situations with artistic talents and gifts learn this as well.

It is my intention through this paper to propose my design solution on how to properly educate students on the concept of beauty as defined by the Bible through the Modern and Contemporary art movements. I will prove if there is any way someone (more specifically, a student) of a Christian faith can relate the artwork of these art movements to the *Biblical definition of beauty*. I discuss the research, writing, and design process that was taken to create an elementary academic/interactive book that analyzes art from the Modern and Contemporary art movements seeking to classically educate the student or reader from a Christian perspective.

"For every one pupil who needs to be guarded against a weak excess of sensibility there are three who need to be awakened from the slumber of cold vulgarity. **The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts.** . . . For famished nature will be avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head."

- C.S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*

Research Problem

The Problem that Needs a Solution —

The secularization of art education throughout the United States is not training students to seek out **true beauty** that radiates the magnificent wonder of Creation and its Creator but the spurious beauty of the world.

The Problem Breakdown —

Students need to know there is true beauty in Modern and Contemporary art. Most human beings are visual creatures, naturally. This means that nearly all individuals are heavily impacted by what they see. Students most certainly are shaped by what they are taught to observe through education, most specifically through art education. The secularization of art education throughout the United States is not training students to seek out true beauty that radiates the magnificent wonder of Creation and its Creator *but the spurious beauty of the world*. What would happen if children are trained through art education on what true beauty looks like and how to portray it to the world through art? How can design be used to see this task come to fruition?

Students do not know how to observe Modern and Contemporary art from a Christian perspective. Further goals of this research are to provide the lacking information about the art from the Modern and Contemporary art movements that make it visually and emotionally understandable to the student who may or may not know how to properly observe it. Additionally, to prove that there is Biblically sound beauty that can be found in this artwork and that artists still have a purpose and calling in the artistic practices of modern art.

Research Statement

Primary Goals —

What is true beauty? It is anything that is a reflection of the Source of all beauty. This was the key focus for every aspect of this project.

Beauty Defined: Students need to be taught how to find true Biblically-defined beauty in the Modern and Contemporary Art movements.

Beauty Reflected: Students should know why it is important that true beauty in art should be a reflection of the Source of all true beauty.

Beauty Portrayed: Students should be inspired to portray beauty through their daily lives and use their artistic talents to bring glory to God

Research Questions —

- What is beauty?
- What are the correlations between beauty and faith?
- What is the purpose of teaching the concept of beauty in the classroom?
- How can a Christian perspective be integrated in art education?
- How can one physically see true beauty in art?
- Can true beauty be found in modern and contemporary art?
- What are the struggles found within modern and contemporary art and how do Christian artists represent Christian themes during this time period?
- How is modern and contemporary art often misunderstood and why?
- Should students be taught about modern and contemporary art?
- What is the validity of Modern art?
- What is the proper way to engage students in discussing beauty within art?
- What is wrong with modern education specifically regarding the arts?
- How do Christian artists represent Christian themes through the Modern and Contemporary art movements?

Research Review Summary

“Every production of art is its age’s child, and every age creates a **special art** which cannot be repeated.” - Wassily Kandisky

For the beginning of the literature review, the first element that was looked at was what is the definition of beauty. Stephen Turley discusses the definition of beauty as it relates to the other ideas of truth and goodness. All together, truth, goodness, and beauty, are what human beings were created in replication of. The sole embodiment of these core elements, is the Creator of the Universe, the Almighty God.

“Beauty is the loveliness, the radiance, the delightfulness, the delectableness of the True and the Good, that draws the human person toward Truth and Goodness” (Turley, 14-15). When discussing beauty specifically, the author discusses how it is what draws the individual towards the truth and the goodness. *Misaligning these core concepts of truth and goodness is where one can begin to observe the misconstrued version of beauty of the world.* This is where the problems have arisen in modern society and the views of beauty are not pushing anyone towards truth and goodness. The modern world does not believe in the Truth which breaks up the unity of the three.

Next, the research was adapted to look at the relationship of beauty as it relates to the Christian faith. Bryan Ye-Chung, in the resource *On Beauty and Faith*, discusses a wide range of areas regarding faith and how beauty reacts with each area. This resource discusses how as human beings who are not purely just physical beings, human beings are created with a soul. The physical body of a human being of course has needs but so does the soul and that is where art

comes into play. *All forms of art play a role in feeding the soul the nourishment it needs. Where there is art, there is beauty.* “This is the role of the artist. We are called to create and use things in the physical world to move people beyond the physical” (Sunkari, 13). The artist cannot fully live out his/her true calling without, of course, being fully saturated in God and His Word. To create something that moves others beyond the physical, the artist must, at first, *have been there.* The author reminds the reader that the obligation of the artist is to reveal that beauty can still be found when everything seems to crumble apart around the world.

The research that was then conducted looked at the purpose of teaching the concept of the Christian perspective of beauty in the classroom. Lindsey Knott discussed in her article that the act of teaching only about truth without any goodness or beauty is comparable to living in an observable perfect world but this world has no color, sound, or scent. While anything that anyone could ever need is present, it lacks the critical elements of life that give it depth; the elements that make life interesting and pleasant.

Additionally, she stressed the importance of teaching beauty alongside truth as it is on the same scale of relevancy. It must be recognized that truth, goodness, and beauty should be the grounding principles of whatever subject is being taught. It should be heeded that all three elements of truth, goodness, and beauty do coincide with each other and it should be a daily

mission of identifying them through education. “This effort should mark all our teaching, and should lead us towards daily fresh inventiveness in how we present and practice ideas with our students” (Knott, Teaching Truth-and Goodness and Beauty). How then is the right way to go about teaching these principles so that they coincide perfectly? The author goes on to discuss that *the way ideas are worded is critical* when educating students and that students can easily recognize what is being valued through the discussion by the way the teacher naturally discusses the topic of the lesson. It should be taken into consideration how the instructor questions the students if they question them at all. For example, a question that should be asked is what makes something “good” or “bad” (i.e. beautiful or ugly) and what defines what makes it good or bad?

Students should also be asked questions that stimulate their visual awareness of the discussion (i.e. Can you illustrate a solution to this problem? Did the author portray that scene in a stimulating way?) Questioning forces the student to think about the concept being discussed which in turn broadens their own minds by the act of inwardly observing what he/she believes about certain discussion, etc.

“This effort should mark all of our teaching, and it should lead us towards daily *fresh inventiveness* in how we present and practice ideas with our students.”

- Lindsey Knott

Looking at another resource to gain more insight into this research question, Stephen Turley discusses how it must be recognized that without beauty, truth and goodness are rendered useless. Beauty is what soars through when the truth and the goodness fall to the wayside. The lack of beauty in teaching is how students have become lost in education. Restless, fearful, lackadaisical, unenthusiastic, apathetic are just a few words one could use to describe the typical attitude of students today.

How does beauty still shine through even with the truth and the goodness that have fallen to secularism? The evidence of beauty calls us back to our “divine source of life” because true beauty can only ever reflect the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe. The secularization of education has overshadowed true beauty which has then impacted our students by the evidence of the students not being exposed to the Source of all beauty.

This resource discusses how the act of teaching about beauty is to return the sense of admiration and wonder. It is a return to a life motivated to live according to the principles of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. It is not a new thing to see a life miraculously turned from a life of confusion and despair to a life of joy and purpose when encountering the Source of all beauty. Life begins to flourish, and a never-ending desire to know more of this Source is ignited in those who find it.

Truth, goodness and beauty work together. It takes the fact that the student knows what is the Truth but can now also see the beauty in the Truth. Being a child of the True Source of all beauty is to realize the sacredness of a sanctified imagination is how the true beauty in art is found.

"This, for Solzhenitsyn, is the redeeming nature of art through which, regardless of the secular eclipse of Truth and Goodness, *Beauty still shines* for all to see"

- Stephen Turley

Bringing it back to education regarding art education specifically, the author recommends learning the characterizations of explaining art. These ideas refer to the idea of the world aesthetics and Turley goes into depth explaining each, *representation, formalism, and expressionism*. When referring to representation, the author discusses how representation in art is the act of art demonstrating something that could not otherwise be represented by something tangible. In other words, an artistic piece can evoke the feeling of something, giving that something an actual form as opposed to just a thought or feeling (Turley, 92).

Teaching students to see art by what it represents (even more so in regards to the more emotional work of the Modern and Contemporary art movements) as far as the idea/feeling/thought, opens the eyes of the students to see beyond just the physical art piece itself but to see the intangible meaning it represents. This is how an art piece can truly be appreciated when the student is taught how to properly observe the piece. Discussing formalism in art is the thought of *creating something beautiful out of chaos* in an illustration that can physically be viewed. Turley brings up the entire act of creation at the beginning of time by God. Genesis one

says the world was without form or void but God filled it with the beautiful creation of the universe. Therefore he took something that was theoretically chaos and turned it into something that was not only orderly but also beautiful. God saw that it was good.

As a creation of God made in the likeness of God, human beings are naturally drawn to form over chaos. Our students must be taught that true beauty is not derived from the disorderly or the chaotic. God is not the God of chaos yet he is a God who takes the chaos and turns it into something beautiful. Bringing it back to teaching in a way that can relate to the student, the student should realize that true beauty can revitalize the ugliness of the natural sinful nature and turn it into something of meaning and purposefulness.

Lastly in the ideas of aestheticism, is the concept of expressionism. This is the idea of *the demonstration of human emotion and how those emotions are shared by forming a community* through the constant and timeless shared feelings individuals may experience when viewing/hearing/taking part in any form of beauty expressed through the arts.

"The feeling of art is a means to shared feelings, creating community not merely between humans but between humans and God" - Stephen Turley

An example of expressionism when teaching, is the act of reading a book as a class. Turley points out that a book can never come alive if it is never opened and how "the student awakens the author" by reading the text. Just as no two artists could ever create an exact work of art down to the minute brushstroke, it is the same with reading a book. Each person will read it in that individual's own unique way. This

"If the teacher shows evidence of their faith, a passion for their subject matter, and a desire to **connect the two**, then students can understand them from a Biblical perspective."

- Ron D. Van Der Pol

leaves the student having his/her own special connection with the author's words. Connecting to anything uniquely is a form of communal expressionism as the student is connecting with the creator of that said thing leaving often a more lasting impression.

The closing thoughts of this resource discuss how the true purpose in education (specifically regarding the teaching of truth, goodness, and beauty) is to *inspire students to desire to do good things, to find satisfaction in doing good things, and to find enjoyment in doing good things*. Just as God did in His creation, in that He saw that "it was good" (Genesis 1).

Students need to recognize the true beauty and the source of it. Taking the information from Turley, this recognition by the student should not just be knowledge-based because it could never be derived from only pure knowledge. It should be an idea represented tangibly, it should be something beautiful formed out of ugliness, and lastly it should be an emotion expressed through a communal experience with the Creator.

C.S. Lewis in his essay on *The Abolition of Man*, discusses the downfall of our modern education system due to the fact that the laws of goodness and virtue have cast away for a more free method of thinking, only basing education off of scientific facts. This is leaving the pursuit of what is good and what is right by the student to a pursuit of whatever they feel is right to them which

ultimately leads to complete confusion. Lewis discusses in depth the idea referred to as the Tao.

Originally of Chinese descent, the Tao is thought to be what each human being should hold in agreement, regardless of what an individual may spiritually believe about the existence of mankind and the creation of the universe. "The Chinese also speak of a great thing (the greatest thing) called the Tao. It is the reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself. It is Nature, it is the Way, the Road. It is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge, stilly and tranquilly, into space and time. It is also the Way which every man should tread in imitation of that cosmic and super cosmic progression, conforming all activities to that great exemplar" (Lewis, 18).

If a man has no pursuit of something good then all is lost. Lewis goes into detail how this idea of having no firm principles to guide the student, is doing immense harm to our students. "On this view, the world of facts, without one trace of value, and the world of feelings, without one trace of truth or falsehood, justice or injustice, confront one another, and no rapprochement is possible" (Lewis, 20).

Simply put, without values and truth, is a misguided and hopeless world in search of something but looking for it in the wrong way and in the wrong place.

“And all the time — such is the tragic-comedy of our situation — we continue to glamour for those very qualities we are rendering impossible . . . In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful” (Lewis, 26).

The question is then posed as to how and why should the teacher teach from a Christian perspective in the art room? Author, Ron D. Van Der Pol, in his essay *Integration of Faith and Learning in Christian School Art Education* looks specifically into why and how this is important. The first point the author discusses is the calling on all Christians to follow through on the great commission from Christ to go and tell the Gospel to the world.

Students should know that any talent they may have in the arts was *bestowed on them by the Father to be used for the Father*. It is also the student’s duty to grow and nurture that talent through education and to not leave their talent unused.

As the art educator, the students should be reminded of the supreme calling of the artist to pursue and create artwork that reflects the true beauty of the Source of all beauty. “This cannot be done solely on

the power of the individual artist, but only through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit” (Van Der Pol, 2).

It is the duty of the art educator to provide the opening for the Holy Spirit to come through and work on the student’s heart. “If the teacher shows evidence of their faith, a passion for their subject matter, and a desire to connect the two, then students can understand them from a biblical perspective” (Van Der Pol, 18). This provides a way for the Holy Spirit to work in the heart of the student if the student can realize their purpose as a creation of the Almighty God and Creator.

The research conducted next looked to see if there can be found true beauty in modern and contemporary art. The resource by James Elkin, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*, discusses the conflicting position modern and contemporary art falls into when regarding whether or not it can at all be considered religious in any way. It also discusses how art should be taught in a way that is non-biased (i.e. it should be taught purely for what it is and not what it could possibly represent). If it has any religious meaning then it should be taught straight-forwardly about what that religious meaning may be. It goes on to discuss how art that may have some sort of religious meaning behind it, is often shunned from art publications.

“The name of God does not belong to the language of art in which the name intervenes, but at the same time, and in a manner that is difficult to determine, the name of God is still part of **the language of art** even though the name has been set aside.” - James Elkin

“‘No artist’, is worthy [of] the name whose chief concern was to give his work conventionality and naturalness. The significant artist is and always has been, interested in other and more important possibilities in art. Far from wanting his work to be conventional he rather seeks to **explore new possibilities in art**: to experiment with untried effects or to express a personal reaction which in some degree will be different and unique.”

- Walter Abell

The author inadvertently admits that art created in the modern or contemporary art periods, even if unintentionally, still can have a religious context or can impact the viewer spiritually. This leads to the impression that regardless of who the artist is or what he/she intended, a spiritual representation can be found in any form of art regardless of when it was created or who created it.

“Modernism is bound to a religion just as every movement before it has been” (p. X). The author goes on to discuss that it is not the artist as an individual or that artist’s intentions behind the work that determines whether or not the work is truly beautiful (i.e. if it includes an aspect of faith), it is the experience of the viewer as he examines the work of art. *The act of painting, is in itself, an act of faith regardless of which movement it may be painted in.*

As mentioned previously, true beauty must reflect the source of all true beauty therefore the act of creating true beauty can be viewed as an act of worship to the sole inhabiter of all that has, is, and ever will be beautiful. “The name God does not belong

to the language of art in which the name intervenes, but at the same time, and in a manner that is difficult to determine, the name God is still part of the language of art even though the name has been set aside” (p. 116).

It was then observed as to whether there can be found any validity in modern art. The resource, *The Validity of Modern Art* by Ismail Tunali, discusses the Modern art movements beginning with Impressionism to Surrealism and what are the guiding principles behind each of them. The essay analyzes how each movement of the modern era has brought something new to the art world realm and this is the essence of the nature of modern art. Impressionism has shifted the experience of purely viewing to an *entire experience of the senses*.

The Abstractionists shifted the focus of the *depiction of geometric shapes as an element itself*, as opposed to being used to represent something else (i.e. human anatomy). Looking lastly at the Surrealist and *the idea of no defined purpose*. There are no limitations that lead to leaving behind

the need to have a purpose or meaning in a work of art. The author goes on to discuss the reasons behind the questioning of the validity of art. *An art movement is representational of the culture it is derived in.* Trying to observe modern art from a more conventional art movement leads to confusion, therefore, explaining the questioning of its validity. Regardless of whether or not Modern art is as enlightening as the previous art movements, this should not be the sole determinant of whether or not modern or contemporary art is valid.

Looking next at the reasons why the artwork from the modern and contemporary art movements are mostly misunderstood, was the next research inquiry. Andrew Nurse in his essay called, *“Beauty which we had Not Previously Known”: Walter Abell and the Dynamics of Modern Art in Canada*, discussed primarily the words of Canadian art educator, Walter Abell and his thoughts on the relevance of Modern art.

Abell believes that modern art has universally been misunderstood because of the drastically change stylistic art style that mainly comprises most of the work of these time periods. He reiterates over that is necessary in order for art to truly be unique and original.

He argues that art should not be a fixed notion but rather something that is evident in the changing culture of its time. Artists of the Modern and Contemporary art periods, in order to feel valuable to the practice, more often than not being driven by the need to “push the boundaries of established expression.”

It is through the change seen in art that the art becomes something of significance. Because of this, the opinion of art must change along with it.

David Cottington in *Modern Art a Very Short Introduction*, goes into depth the conundrum that is found on the preconceived opinions of what the public believes modern art should be. It goes back to what was considered the first “modern” painting, *The Picnic Luncheon* by Edouard Manet, that shocked the art world as Manet dared to defy “rules” of art and present something that was different than the typical art of that time.

“The public’s bewilderment at modern art has been a constant throughout the last 150 years – ever since ‘Avante-Garde’ artists started to challenge traditional art practices in a self-conscious and radical way” (Cottington, 3). The goal of the modern art movements is to represent the change of its time and represent what is new. This resource discusses how modern art began partly for reasons of the need for change in society.

“If we as viewers of modern art are to keep the faith of what motivated much to it in the first place, we are committed to an avant-gardist opposition to institutionalized

“To a great extent man does not live in his own age; he lives in the past, attempting to bring past standards to bear on the present. It is this adherence to the past that poses the question of the *validity of modern art.*” - Tunali Ismail

modern art – that is, almost all of that art – which entails acquiescing in the abandonment of art as art, in favor of putting artistic creativity to work of critiquing capitalist culture in other, more propitious, field” (Cottingham, 141).

The next research question was whether or not students should be taught about Modern and Contemporary art at all. Daniel Siedell in *God in the Gallery: a Christian Embrace of Modern Art*, believes that individuals have not been taught how to properly observe artwork which then leads to a vast amount of misunderstanding of modern and contemporary artwork. The value of the artwork is not being fully appreciated. It discusses how visual art, separate from the more assumed musical/graphic/film art, is being completely overlooked by most of the faith community.

The complete disregard of Modern and Contemporary art is not something that should be done. On the contrary, it should be observed, appreciated (when need be), and most certainly taught to students. There is still an abundance amount of talent for art by human beings therefore it should still be taught and practiced. It should be realized that one cannot purely judge what art is by how it physically appears.

This is the case for much of the art of the modern era. When looking at the art piece Brillo Box by Andy Warhol, one does not compare it to Leonardo Da Vinci’s Mona Lisa as far as the visual artistic quality, but what makes Brillo Box an artistic piece is the act of reflection of the aesthetic experience. As stated previously modern art relies heavily on the museum or whatever place it is presented. “It is this space, as a literal and conceptual space, that shapes both artistic practice and audience response (Siedell, 25). The author goes on to discuss how much

“When I tried to understand all of this, it was oppressive to me til I entered the **sanctuary of God**; then I understood their final destiny.” - Psalm 73:16-17

of modern and contemporary art desires to “reveal the world as gift and offering.” The act of art-making is the act of creating appreciation to the divine in a physical visual form. A challenge for the Christian individual (and student) is to find the relevance of modern art and what parts of it point toward the truth. Siedell reminds the reader of the Scriptures from Psalms 73:16-17. “When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me til I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.”

Thomas Yoseloff in his resource, *Challenge of Modern Art*, discusses how modern art is often an art of expression through many different forms and elements. The understanding of oneself is the critical element that allows one to understand and appreciate modern art. *A work of art will be uniquely different to each individual because each individual will have their own unique interpretation of the artwork.* “Art is an experience communicated directly through a medium” (Yoseloff, 3).

Looking on the resource by Ben Schachter called, *Who’s Afraid of Modern Art? Essays on Modern Art and Theology in Conversation*, which is a summary essay of the author, Daniel Siedell, who teaches about Modern and Contemporary art from a theological view. He emphasizes

the importance of the conversation that happens when observing artwork. Siedell discusses how, when looking at an artwork, one must push away any preconceived opinion/belief/etc. and purely look at it for what the artwork represents and then begin a conversation about it. The key to understanding modern art better, according to Siedell, is to be patient and aware of what is being presented in the work. *Appreciate the beauty and allow the Spirit to speak through it to the viewer.* Rather than throwing modern art altogether as “stranger and off-putting”, Siedell urges the viewer to spend time looking at it and see what the viewer may see.

The research then looks at what kind of Christian art is being made in the Modern and Contemporary art movements. In *The Image of Christ in Modern Art* by R. Harries, it goes into detail about the challenges of the modern artists in creating something new and original, specifically regarding Christian art and the depiction of Jesus Christ. It is noticeable, even more so currently, expressing religious art is a challenge in that it has already been fully represented by the works of previous periods.

“The great difficulty which has faced religious artists in Europe for about a century is that our natural tradition for expressing religious feeling is utterly used up and dead” (Blunt-Harries, 5). How does an artist create something unique about a subject that has been portrayed countless times before? “How can what is visible be rendered by what is visible, what is infinite by what is finite, what is transcendent by what is human and limited” (Harries, 6).

When looking back at artwork from earlier periods, most often the work was overly exaggerated making Biblical characters look like roman gods and totally other-worldly.

This representation of spiritual art (although beautiful) most often did not lend to any relatability to Christ. It has been a challenge throughout the entirety of art history on how to depict the unknown spiritual world to the known world of humankind. The Modern and Contemporary artists of today, of course, still struggle with it. “But, as I shall suggest towards the end, it may be that modern art, for all the difficulties it has posed to artists who wanted to reflect Christian imagery in some way, has at least delivered them from the twin tyrannies of literalness and pastiche. Modern art has opened up new ways of indicating that there is something more going on in the picture than straightforward depiction” (Harries, 8).

Conclusion —

Clarity was given on the exact reason for teaching beauty and the proper definition of it observing it from a Christian perspective. It is evident through this research that the vast majority of students currently are not being taught about the role of art and the artist in portraying the true beauty that leads the viewer to the Source of all truth, goodness, and beauty. It is most certainly an act of worship and a way to reach others to Christ. The resources used so far for this thesis provided the groundwork to begin to look at a solution for this problem.

Visual Process

The Purpose —

What makes the solution of this thesis valuable to the targeted demographic is for the purpose of uncovering the potential of the understanding of students to the concept of the “artist of all ages” specifically regarding the modern and contemporary art that is most often misunderstood. If students are properly educated about the true definition of beauty from a Biblical standpoint, then it will reveal how the act of practicing art will never end. Just as humanity changes with the times, so do the artistic creations of man also change with it. God continues to bestow artistic talents on his people to be used by Him and for Him. Therefore, understanding the integration of beauty through modern art must be understood. Art is still valid, even in the modern and contemporary age.

The Deliverable —

The design solution for this thesis was to create an elementary academic/interactive book that would analyze art from the Modern and Contemporary art movements classically educating the reader from a Christian perspective. This material ideally would be used in the classroom but could also be used in various different settings and environments. The goal is to ignite discussions with youth about the art that is being evaluated in order for the student to use his/her natural deduction in determining where the true beauty can be found in the art piece. The guiding purpose of the deliverable is lead to further discussion about the Source of all true Beauty, the Creator of the Universe. Through these discussions, the student would ideally be experiencing God through the full observation of the artwork.

To begin the process of creating my final deliverable for this thesis, I first began by drafting out the layout of the chapters and what I would include in each chapter as far as the information was concerned. I started by looking at the timeline of artwork created in the past 100 years and then looked at key artists from those movements.

The goal was to showcase artists that were well-known in order for students to be able to study their work from a Christian perspective which is, of course, not the perspective that is typically taught in secular institutions. This further demonstrated the chance for the student to personally reflect and consider those guiding principles within Classical Education (truth, goodness, and beauty) that help establish a Biblical worldview.

God does not define an artist by how man sees them. Evidence of the different political and social issues through each time period is seen throughout the associated modern and contemporary art movements. This left a lack of recognition for a lot of female artists and artists of a different race/ethnicity (just to name a few of the issues) during the different art history time periods. After valuable feedback from my committee, I decided to include some of the artists in the minority of their associated art movements that made beautiful work that was not properly recognized during that time period.

The resulting list of artists included a diverse list of talented men and women from each movement with artwork that left room for plenty of discussion and reflection.

After looking at all of the previous modern art movements, I wanted to include a group of key movements with key artists that covered a diverse amount of artistic mediums. The art movements also provide a wide range of varying styles that in seemingly small ways, had key characteristics that were impacted by each other.

When deciding on which movements to include within the book, I began with the Impressionism and Fauvism art movements (chapters one and two). The artists of these movements were the some of first artists to subtly implement/manipulate visual elements in ways that had not ever been seen before across all other artwork of earlier art movements.

Exactly how this is done is explained in more detail within the pertaining chapter about Impressionism and Fauvism in the book. Some of the master artists who left powerful legacies happen to be a part of these movements (and rightly so) which was another deciding factor on whether to begin with these movements or not.

In order to have the time and space to give each movement the proper attention it deserved, I did not include every modern art movement that has been associated within the past 100 years. Some movements

"Outside is the world: it's there. Pop Art looks *out into the world*. It doesn't look like a painting of something, it looks like the thing itself."

- Roy Lichtenstein

I believed did not contain artwork that could be discussed revolving the topic of true beauty as it comprised of disturbing subject matter and difficult artistic styles.

For example, I did not include a prominent movement, Dadaism, as the goals and ideas of this movement revolved around *chaos, rowdiness, nonsense, and nothingness*. The main purposes and values of Dadaism in its exact definition do not align with Biblical definition of beauty, which further proves that not all art portrays true beauty.

As the foremost goal of the book was to ignite conversations on how true beauty can still be found within modern and contemporary art, I made the decision to not include those art movements that turned away from beauty completely.

A questionable art movement that I did decide to include was the Pop Art movement (chapter five). Some may argue that this movement does not portray beauty as it was mainly inspired by superficial subject matter (i.e. "popular culture"). Students should realize that regardless of what the culture may be like, it is reflective of our everyday lives. I believed the Pop Art movement could lead to conversations with students on how to be observant of one's surroundings and question why an item may or may not be popular.

The high attention to craft and detail the Pop Artists took with their artwork is a quality within art that is not necessarily always recognized. Excellent craft is an important part of making an art piece the best it can be. This is noticeable in the Minimalism art (chapter six) as well.

I included the Pop Art movement because I believe that although the subject matter may not be as grand as others, it still sought to portray art in a pleasing way.

Although each chapter features a few key artists from each movement, I want to state that the primary focus was to showcase the artist's work and the inspiration behind the work, not the personal life-choices of that artist. Some of the artists featured live/lived lives that do not represent the character values that a student should themselves seek to live. The facts and brief summary of each artist are included in order for the students to understand a fraction of what may have inspired the artist behind the artwork that is being featured.

The "Fun Facts" section on each featured artist's page was included as a way for the student to possibly relate in some way with the artist. All of the artists featured came from a range of different backgrounds all with interesting facts showing that not all artists are the same. This is way to discuss how God creates each individual uniquely and no matter what may or may not have happened in the student's life, if they surrender their lives to God, He can and will use them and their talents for their good and His glory (Romans 8:28).

Students should know that God can and will use anything and anyone to show truth, goodness, beauty. This is evident in the Scriptures, as it seen countless times. For example, when the Jews were plotting Jesus' death, Caiaphas, the high priest and unbeliever of Jesus' deity, described the fate of Jesus in an accidental prophecy (See John 11: 49-50, 18:14). What man intended for evil, God turned into good.

As stated previously, the primary goal of this book is to teach Christ to students through modern and contemporary art and regardless of the sinful status of our modern culture and world, true biblically-defined beauty can still be seen through the artwork of sinful people. God chooses to use imperfect

"Education *without values*, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil." - C.S. Lewis

people to show that He can equip anyone to do His work (1 Corinthians 1:27) and to also show that He is the Source of all truth, goodness and beauty. Any good thing that comes from man first came from God as we are made in His image. Students must be educated that all human beings are naturally sinful whether they are children of God or not. Therefore, because of His Spirit and the blood of Jesus Christ that cleans the sinful hearts of His children, beauty can be found.

I believe this is evident when studying the art movements from the past 100 years to the present, and that it will always be evident in any future art movements until sin no longer reigns on this earth. Because of His Spirit at work in the heart of believers, it is no longer the sinful person who lives, but Christ living in that person to see and portray truth, goodness, and beauty (Galatians 2:20).

Keeping that in mind, I wanted to include a "Bring It Back to Scripture" section in each chapter which, in its most basic sense, is a brief evaluation of how the student can bring what they just learned back to God and the Bible. This is a key section within each chapter to develop spiritual discussions with the student(s). It includes an accompanying discussion section with an art review question and also a reflection question specific to the movement of each chapter in order to encourage possible personal connection.

When thinking of the look and feel of my book, I first had to decide what visual style would be best for the target audience which is elementary aged students (K-6). It needed to be eye-catching with visual elements that had a playful and inviting aesthetic while also not being too overbearing to take away from the actual artwork within each chapter.

I have written/designed three other books within my time at Liberty University all implementing a simple and minimal illustration style. This visual style is what I am best at executing so I knew I would use the same style for the book for my thesis. When deciding layout styles and typography choices for any large project, I always like to start with a mood/inspiration board using the social media platform, Pinterest (Fig. 1).

When looking for visual inspiration, I searched for interesting illustrations styles across a wide variety of art/children books. Making sure to pay attention to the relationship of the illustration with the typography, I wanted to make sure to take inspiration from examples that blended the two in a fun and creative way. As important as I believe the subject matter is, it fails when it can not at first draw interest. This is part of using design as a solution to ensure that I implemented design to do its job correctly adding to the value of the book.

Children usually look at the pictures first. These examples tended to use neutral colors with sporadic bright pop colors while also adding subtle textures to bring more depth to simple and minimal illustrative styles.

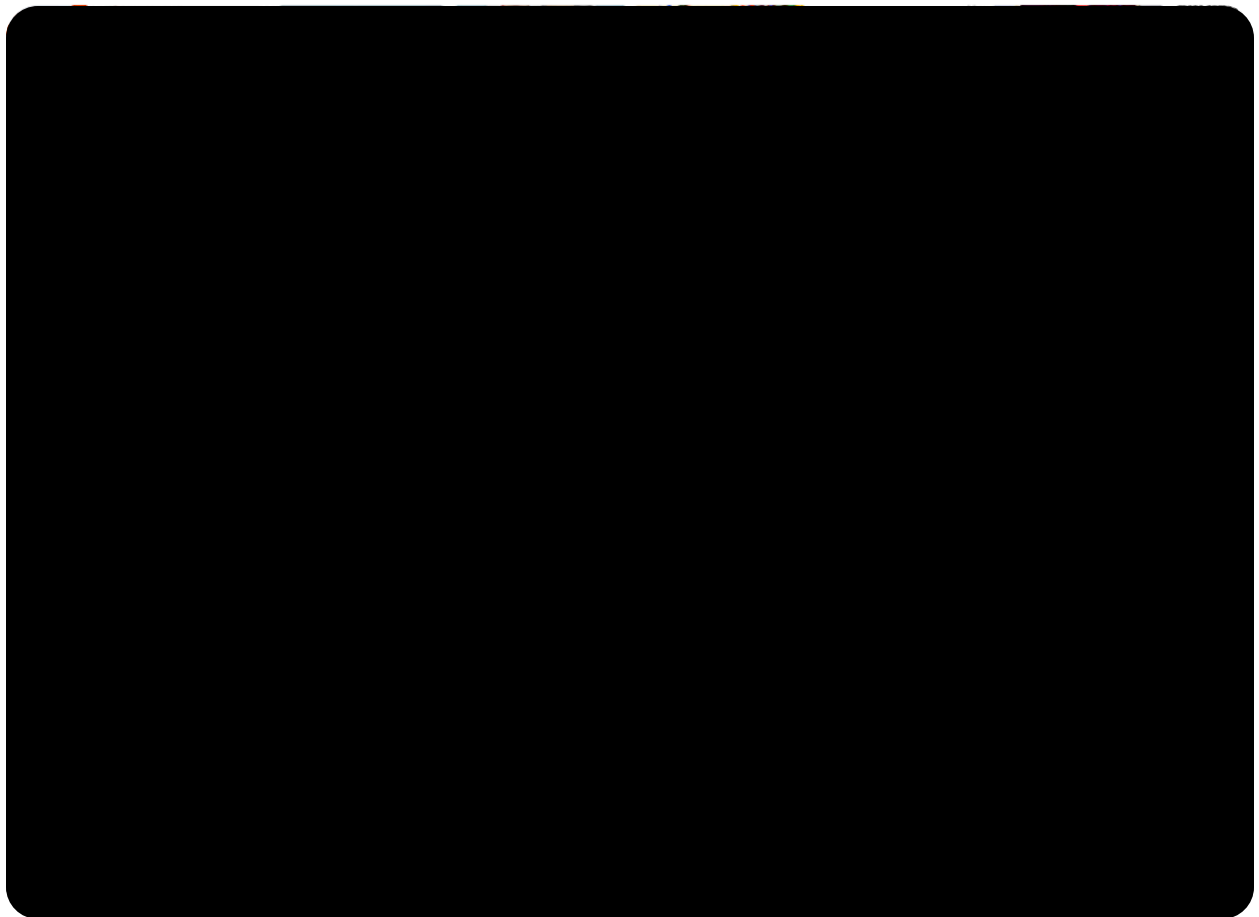


Fig. 1: Screenshot taken from my Pinterest mood/inspiration board. (pinterest.com/beccers8/books/)

Primary Color Palette —



#f23847



#3d63d9



#b5d991

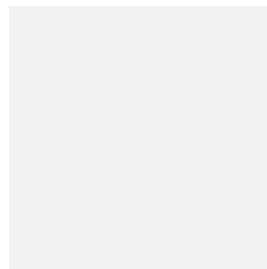


#f0cc87

Secondary Color Palette —



#383b54



#f2f2f2

Main Typeface —

Ernestine Pro

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee
Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk
Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp
Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1234567890

Ernestine Pro Bold

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee
Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk
Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp
Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1234567890

As stated previously, I have designed other books for previous classes. One book being an interactive educational ebook about the elements of art (for class ARTS 580). For this particular book, I designed a set of characters that each represent an element within art. I decided since this would be another educational book for students revolving around art education, I would bring the characters back and feature them within this book as well as using the same established branding.

When I originally chose this color palette, I thought about choosing colors of similar values but from key points within the color wheel. I did not want to have a constrictive color palette that would lead to difficulties later on when creating illustrations. I also wanted to include a secondary neutral colors to be used for text and whenever needed.

After looking through different children's books and studying the typefaces used within the books that I took inspiration from, I decided to go with the slab serif font, Ernestine Pro. Again, trying to evoke a playful aesthetic but not going as far as to pick something that would be too distracting, I liked the way this font had character but did not call too much attention. Typography, when done well, can make a simple design look impeccably done. This book is image/illustration heavy so the typeface needed to be something that could blend in well while also adding to overall visual style of the book.

The characters are on each page as reading companions. Choosing the same branding, cohesively aligned the two books so that readers could immediately recognize the art element characters.

**Different tints and shades were used of the primary color palette in some instances.*

The Art Elements —

When finding inspiration from previously made children’s literature, I was particularly inspired by the books with reoccurring illustrated characters. This technique within children publication design is using familiar graphics to spark recollection which in turn aids the child/student to in most instances use that recollection to remember what they learned when seeing the characters before. This is seen in children’s television series and movies as well.

Not only does it aid the child/student in remembering and learning but it is also a great design technique to spark personal connection. As stated previously, most children are more impacted by visuals. For example, a child might be more drawn to a character because he loves the color green.

I wanted to implement this design technique with my “What About Modern Art” book because the art element characters fit perfectly with the subject matter. The first spread in the book reintroduces the characters in the same format from the previous book, using repetition again to spark memories and recollections.

On the opposite page (Fig. 2) is a graphic I pulled from the first book. The characters are designed simply and minimally in order to aid and not pull away from the more important visuals/graphics. Because they are made in this way, I was able to manipulate their design (although still keeping the key characteristics) to the graphic below (Fig 3). Each element is representing a different movement featured within the book.



Fig. 2: Element illustration from first book, "The Elements of Art"

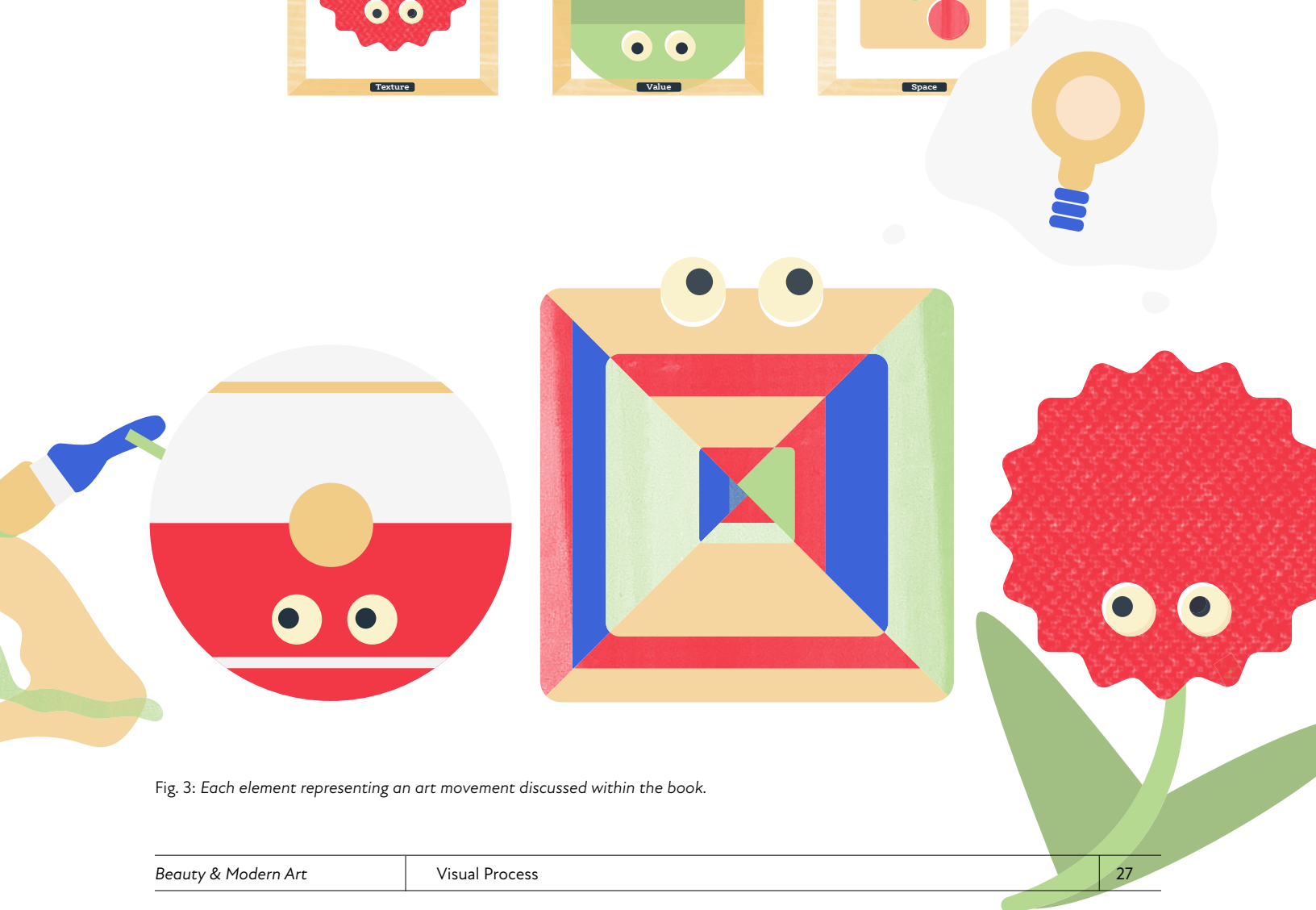


Fig. 3: Each element representing an art movement discussed within the book.

The Illustration Process —



Fig. 4: Rough Sketch

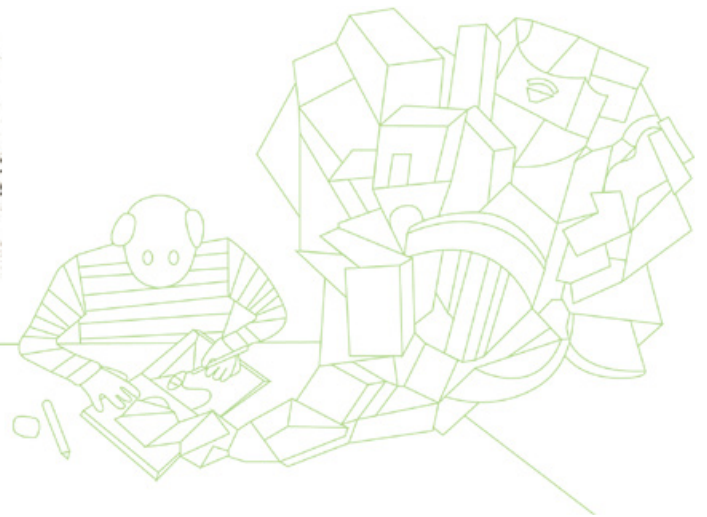


Fig. 5: Line Work



Fig. 6: Flat Color



Fig. 7: Added Textures

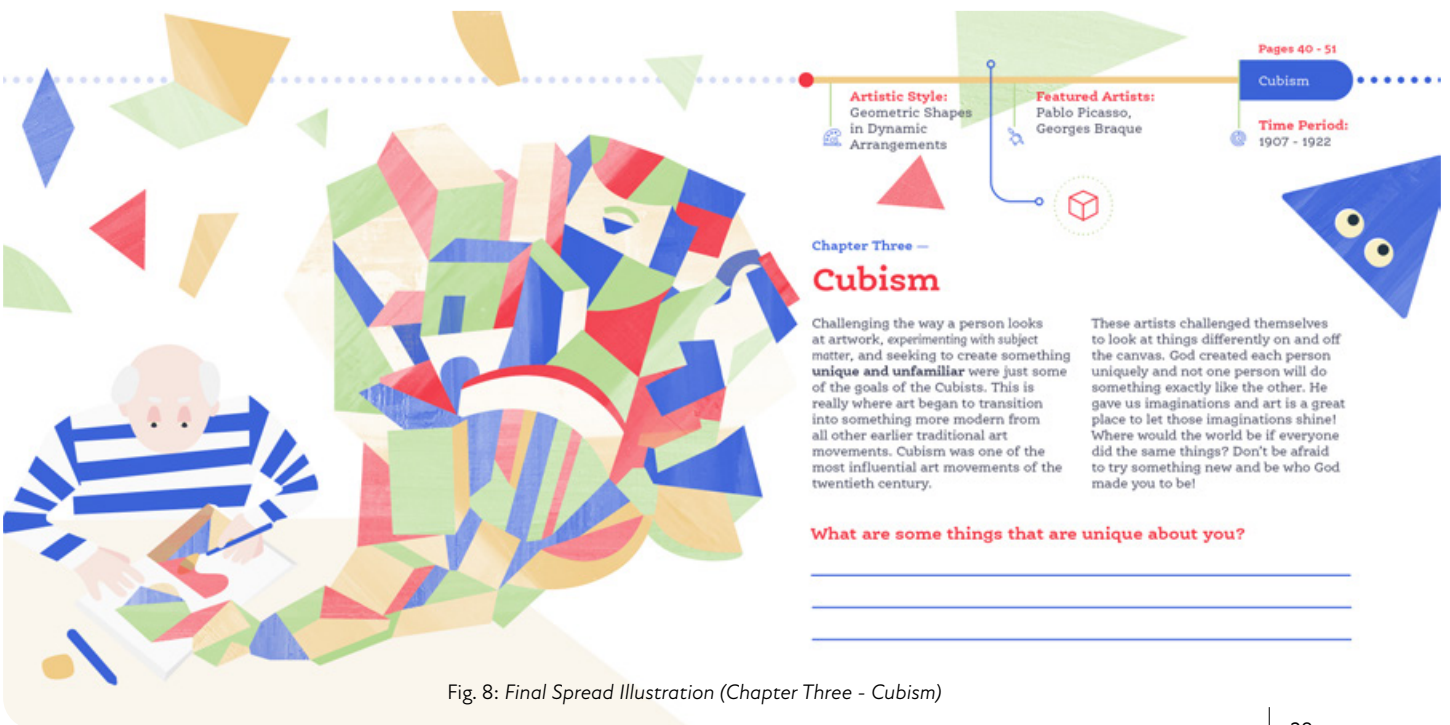


Fig. 8: Final Spread Illustration (Chapter Three - Cubism)

From the beginning of this project, I knew that one of the most time-consuming aspects would be the illustration process. I wanted the visual style of the illustrations to still have that same simple and minimal feel but I also wanted the illustrations to have a dominant visual presence. Each chapter begins with an illustration pertinent to the art movement featuring one of the featured artists. Each illustration is from my own artistic interpretation and not taken from any photos or artwork from those artists.

For each movement, I wanted to ensure that I took the necessary time to look and observe work from each featured artist by using my already found research resources and resources from online museum databases. This helped me in the planning and design process of the illustrations I created for each movement. For example Pablo Picasso and a brief example of his artistic thoughts and processes, he was an artist who rejected the idea of creating realistic artwork from representations of the world around him. He instead created artwork on how he imagined them to be in his mind. Picasso is quoted saying: "I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them." (Quote featured on page 41 of chapter three.) This inspired me to create the illustration on the opposite page (Fig. 8) which is an artistic interpretation of how I imagined Picasso would look like using his imagination when creating the artwork from the Cubism art movement.

Why include illustrations like this at the beginning of each chapter? My justification is by bringing it back to my beginning research where I found that allowing a student to personally relate to something (even in minute ways) gains a larger opportunity to spark their interest in wanting to learn more about what each chapter is about. (See pages 13-14).

How is this done through an illustration like this? Instead of only seeing a portrait of the artist or maybe a picture of the artist painting/working (etc.), I wanted the students to be able to imagine the artist working and creating artwork just like they might do when they create art. It is a way for the student to imagine (like Picasso) the artists and their work in a real-life environment as opposed to only observing them from a book or museum. This promotes the students to use their God-given imaginations in and out of the classroom.

When creating this illustration, I first started with a rough sketch (Fig 4). This is where I drew out my initial ideas with pencil and then scanned the sketch in to be used as a guideline. Using Adobe Illustrator, I then used the pen tool to create the lines and shapes of the illustration using my rough sketch (Fig. 5). I start by creating only line and shapes first in order to be able to have flexibility later on in the process if I decide to move the shapes and lines around or scale them up or down.

After I have the initial sketch outlined within Illustrator, I start to lay down color (Fig. 6). I used my established color palette for most of the illustration, only bringing in one other color for the skin tone on Picasso. As I mentioned previously, this color palette allowed a lot of leniency as far having a range of warmer and cooler tones to use in lighter and darker areas. When the colors are all added, I wanted to add more depth to the illustration. I do this by adding textures which gives that desired effect (Fig. 7). I used a paint texture masked behind different shapes within the illustration. To further evoke that playful feel to the visual style of the book, the final illustration bleeds onto the opposite page slightly (Fig. 8). This cohesively aligns the overall layout of the spread. I included one of my characters (shape), to add some final silliness and fun to the spread.

Visual Research & Feedback—

Denise Matulka, in *A Picture Book Primer: Understanding and Using Picture Books*, provided the understanding that when the core aspects of design work together in the composition of the picture spreads this creates a sense of unity which in turn creates better opportunities for student appreciation and engagement within the picture book.

“Design is an essential part of any picture book. It is the first aspect of a book that a reader judges. It is the frame-work for the text and illustration. It is the subtle weave of words and pictures that allows both to tell one seamless tale.” - — Jon Scieszka

Diane M. Barone, in *Children’s Literature in the Classroom: Engaging Lifelong Readers*, discusses how children typically view a picture book. The author states that it is important to evaluate how the typography and imagery relate to each other as a whole at first glance. She explains that it cannot be purely about just the picture and neither can it be purely about the words. They must come together cohesively because readers read from text to illustration and illustration to text. *“Picturebooks, unique in their use of complementary use of art and text, are a child’s first link to literacy and art.”*

The Challenges

Early illustrations of the characters were so simple that they appeared flat and lifeless (Fig. 9). After feedback from Professor Wilson and Professor Wright, eyes with pupils and eyelids, eyebrows, and ears were added to the artists (Fig. 8). This did not in any way take away from the minimal illustration style but did add more depth and interest. Professor Wilson suggested reworking the typographical headlines to make them more

prominent. This allowed for better aligning of the header typography with the introductory body text of this spread (Fig. 8).

The identifier icon that was established for each movement was also getting lost in its initial placement. (See figure 9, the cube in the center.) I decided to bring in the timeline graphic used at the beginning of the book and incorporate the icon with that graphic.

Remembering my visual research, it was important that both the words and illustration worked together within all spreads. In the previous design of the first chapter spread, the visual and textual elements appeared too separated. As the research pointed out, readers are less likely to appreciate or engage with the textual elements if they are not properly aligned with the visual elements designed within the compositional spread.

Quite early on within the process of creating my deliverable, I had initially planned to not use the actual artwork of the artists. I was afraid of copyright issues which would lead to not being able to have permission to use the artwork. My previous chair, Professor Hutchings, advised the importance of the reader being able to observe the actual artwork that was being discussed so I decided to include images that I could find (to the best of my abilities) that were copyright free of the artwork.

I had already created over half of the book’s artwork though so this led to a lot of unnecessary productivity work (Fig. 10). The illustrations I created of the artwork featured could possibly be used as additional resources (i.e. possibly a matching game or could be used as collectible illustration cards, etc.) if I want to use them in the future.



Cubism

Challenging the way a person looks at artwork, experimenting with subject matter, and seeking to create something **unique and unfamiliar** were just some of the goals of the Cubists. This is really where art began to transition into something more modern from all other earlier traditional art movements. Cubism was one of the most influential art movements of the twentieth century.

These artists challenged themselves to look at things differently on and off the canvas. God created each person uniquely and not one person will do something exactly like the other. He gave us imaginations and art is a great place to let those imaginations shine! Where would the world be if everyone did the same things? Don't be afraid to try something new and be who God made you to be!

What are some things that are unique about you?

Fig. 9: First Initail Spread Design (Chapter Three - Cubism)

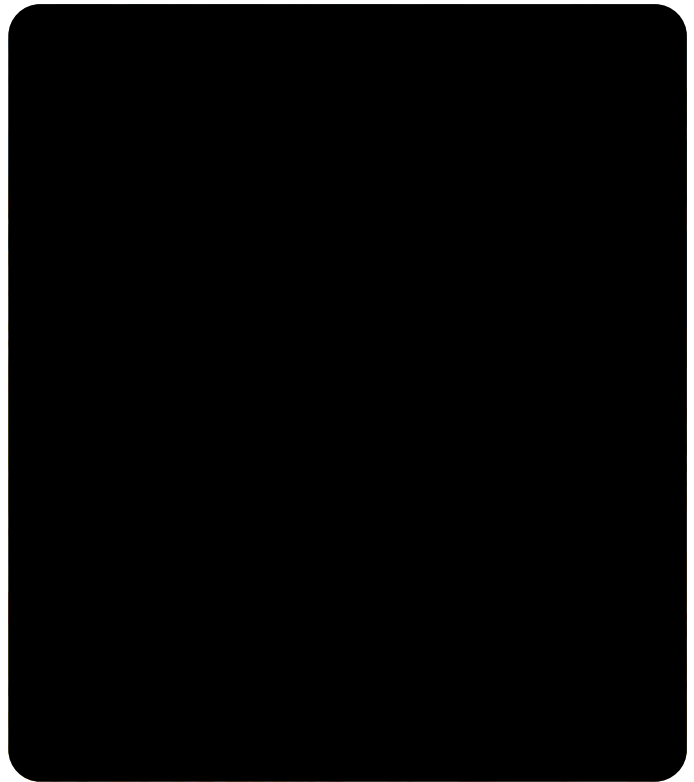


Fig. 10: First Illustration Example from Fauvism Chapter (Original Artwork by André Derain)

Visual Solution

The Final Outcome —

After accumulating research, planning the written content as well as gathering visual inspiration and creating a style guide, I began the process of creating the final visual solution, a book entitled *What About Modern Art*. The first thoughts were how to use design to make this book fun but not in any way downgrade the act of conveying the message in a way that leaves a lasting impression. In simple terms, how do I use design to make learning fun?

As an intuitive designer, much time is spent in the first initial spreads experimenting with layout styles and manipulating the typography to provide visually interesting and captivating design. The first major spreads were the table of contents and the timeline of the art movements. With the table of contents, it is meant to represent a simplistic road map, leading to the different chapters. Graphic icons are established as symbols to encourage mind recognition when noticed in the later chapters.

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the **Source of all True Art and science.**” - Albert Einstein

Similar to the table of contents, the Modern and Contemporary Art history timeline takes the simple chapter road map and zooms in more adding brief facts about each chapter. More icons are added as a key to represent the time period, the featured artist, and the artistic style(s). These are also used within each chapter of the book as well.

The timeline was intended to possibly be used for future use as a poster to be printed for a classroom/home. The art elements are reintroduced and then appear on the timeline spread to further implement the playful aesthetic of the design of the book.



Chapter One — Impressionism

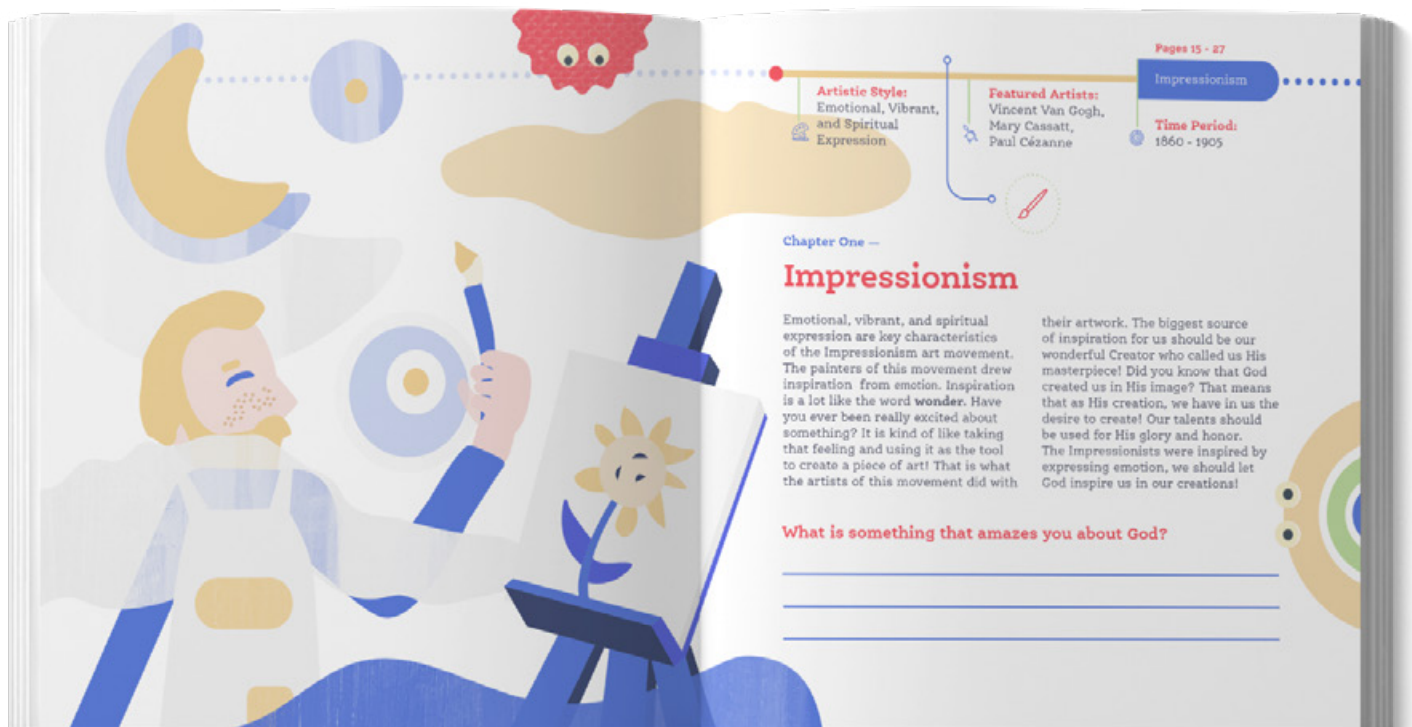
The first chapter about the art movement of Impressionism, begins the book by discussing the core ideas and inspirations of the Impressionists that were fundamental in bringing about the changes that separate all of the later art movements to the key aspects seen in art before the last 200 years. As this book is for elementary aged students, it is written for easier comprehension. The goal throughout the entirety of the book was to correlate the information (if it could be done) back to God and the Bible.

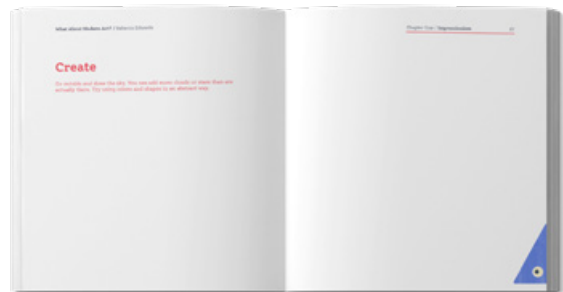
It begins with discussing the main inspiration for Impressionism, which is emotion or wonder. The introductory information does not go in depth immediately, instead it takes key Impressionist ideas and simplifies them while also drawing the student in with questions encouraging their personal and spiritual interpretation. This chapter focuses on God as our Creator with additional references made throughout (pages 22-23).

"I am seeking, I am striving, I am it *with all my heart.*" - Vincent Van Gogh

Students need to know first the history of the movement and greater detail of the key characteristics of the movement before they can observe it from a Christian perspective. The next section discusses the artistic styles and inspirations of Impressionism (pages 15-16), and goes into detail on how the artists manipulated color to portray emotion.

The artists chosen for this chapter are, Vincent Van Gogh, Mary Cassatt, and Paul Cézanne. Starting with Van Gogh, the brief summary discusses how he used his imagination when painting the sky in *Starry Night* through his creative and artistic interpretation using color and texture. The illustrative portrait of him eludes to him being in deep thought or daydreaming as he was known for painting his dreams.





The next artist featured is Mary Cassatt. Originally, this artist was not included but after feedback and observation, it became apparent that I needed to include more female artists. It is important to educate students that in the earlier modern art movements, women worked hard to establish themselves as artists. This is mentioned in her summary.

The last artist featured is Paul Cézanne, a fundamental artist known for being a source of inspiration for the Cubism art movement (mentioned in the facts). His summary is beneficial in that it discusses how he painted many different versions of the same painting (Mount Sainte-Victorie) abstracting the shapes and color values.

The first “Bring It Back to Scripture” section (page 22-23), reminds students that God is the Source of all good things, including art. Because the students observed some master artists and their artistic masterpieces, the main theme for this section is the masterpiece of God, referring to Ephesians 2:10. Out of everything that God has created, students can self-reflect on the thought that God’s masterpiece (His greatest work of art) are His children.

The discussion questions are meant to encourage the student to remember what the key ideas of Impressionism were (emotion/wonder) and then to think about an emotion that they might find difficult to portray through art.

Chapter Two — Fauvism

The second chapter focuses on the art movement of Fauvism. A key reason this movement was included was because it inspired other artists of later art movements. A progression is seen in the use of color, as the Fauvist used it even more boldly than the Impressionists. This is what is discussed in the introduction of this chapter.

Bringing it back to God and the Bible and further study of God as Creator, this chapter begins by prompting consideration of how important color is to creation. Natural color comes from light and God is the Creator of light and color. It is encouraged for the student to think of a world without color and ponder the reason for the creation color.

Complimentary colors are defined as using contrasting colors, which was a key characteristic within the Fauvist art movement. The impact of color within artwork and how it can be used as an act of expression, is evidently seen through the work of the Fauvists.

What started in Impressionism as creating emotional artwork, is seen in Fauvism by expressively using color through loosely applied brushstrokes to portray feeling. This chapter mentions how expressing emotions and feelings through art is not always easy. Something that is seen in most modern art movements, seen especially in Fauvism, is that expression in art is most evident when artists freely create. Art becomes more enjoyable when art is purely enjoyed.

A way for easier understanding and comprehension, is to promote student interaction and engagement. Students are challenged to think and act like a Fauvist by drawing something that might normally be neutral in color and draw it using a more colorful color palette.

“There are always flowers for those who want to see them.” - Henri Matisse





The artists chosen for this chapter are, Henri Matisse, and André Derain, the two key artists of this movement. Discussing Henri Matisse, it was important to mention that he was a master in expressively using color. He also was an artist that exhibited that freeing mentality of enjoying the act of making art. Scissors and cut paper are illustrated around as his most famous signature artistic style.

Another featured artist, André Derain, is in this chapter because of the pure expression seen in his work. In his summary, it is discussed how he worked spontaneously with the use of quick brushstrokes, seen even more so than Matisse. It was important to present artists that students may not immediately know, like Derain, in order to present multiple points of views and to show that not being the most well-known artist of a movement does not negate the talent of the artist in any way.

This chapter correlates the joy of making art to the everlasting joy that is found in Jesus Christ (Psalm 16:11). This was a critical opportunity to teach the Gospel to students

as everlasting joy can only be attained through the salvation of Jesus Christ. By discussing the expression shown in the artwork of Fauvist art movement and that it comes from freely enjoying the act of making art, this chapter brings it back to Scripture by helping students to understand that happiness is fleeting and fickle, but joy in Christ is a joy that never runs out.

Each chapter includes a create section where students are encouraged to take what they have read and experience it for themselves. These pages are empty for that purpose so that students can have free-range to use that space to experiment in the designated art styles and create their own work of art.



Chapter Three — Cubism

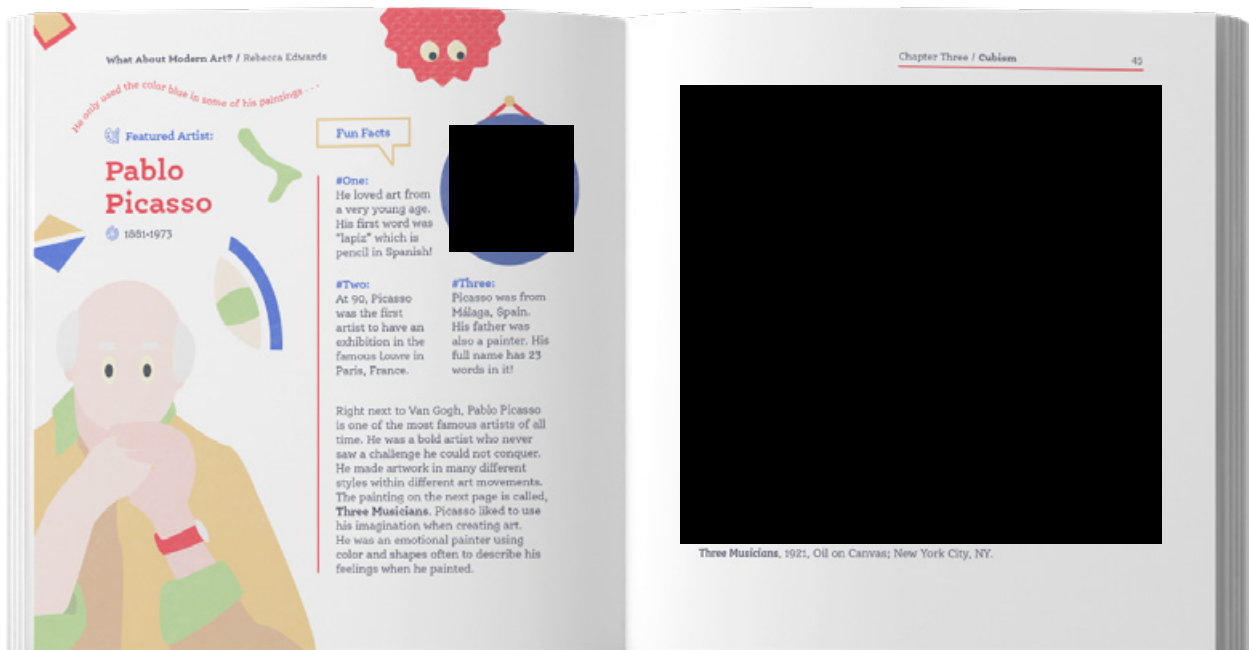
In the chapter about Cubism, students begin to see even more so than the two movements before, the radical changes of subject matter, artistic mediums, manipulation of core artistic principles (for example in Cubism, perspective), and more, brought about within the modern and contemporary art movements. In this chapter, the spiritual focus will be on how God creates each person uniquely. This is seen in Cubism by the way the artists challenged themselves to look at things differently and uniquely.

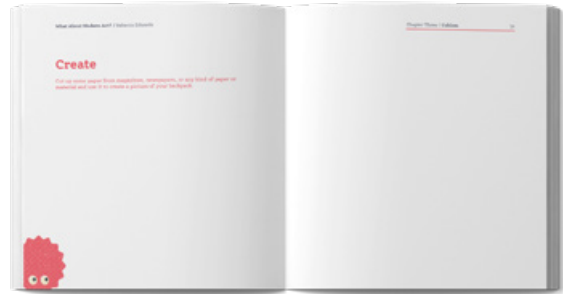
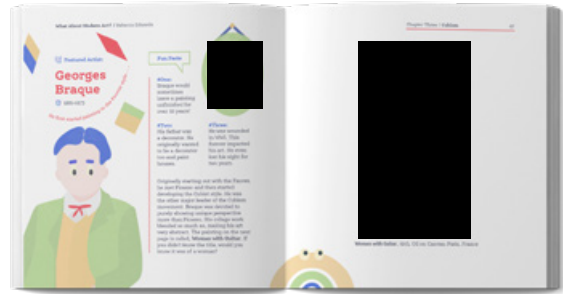
Art and the study of art is an excellent opportunity to educate students to be confident in themselves and not shy away or be ashamed of the God-given attributes that are special and individual to them. If God wanted everyone to be the same, then He would have created everyone the same. Art (especially art like Cubism) encourages uniqueness through ways such as using the imagination or experimenting with new and inventive ways of creating and making art.

Discussing Cubism specifically and more in-depth, it is first mentioned that the Cubist artists were inspired by the work of Paul Cézanne. His abstracted landscape paintings were defining artworks of inspiration for the Cubists. They took his initial process to an even more extreme level. It is discussed the key characteristic of Cubist artwork was the portrayal of subject matter from varying viewpoints and manipulating perspective. Perspective is explained and the artistic term of “viewpoint” is defined.

The two different style of Cubism, Analytical Cubism and Synthetic Cubism, are also defined and discussed. Students are educated on the rejection of only creating art that copied from nature. These artists were true experimenters in technique and subject matter.

“I paint objects as *I think them*, not as I see them.”
- Pablo Picasso





The artists chosen for this chapter are, Pablo Picasso, and Georges Braque. When discussing Picasso, it was intentional to be clear the he was a diverse artist who never stopped experimenting with different artistic techniques. His imaginative way of creating art is what made him an artist that evoked confidence in being unique.

Georges Braque was similar to Picasso but also unique in that he was devoted to only portraying experimental perspective through his heavily abstracted artwork. Braque is an important artist to discuss in that he was dedicated to creating artwork that set him apart from Picasso but similar to Matisse and Derain, Picasso was more well-known and therefore received the most recognition for his work within Cubism. This did not prevent him from making art.

Looking into the Cubism movement and seeing the boldness in trying new and different ways of making art challenges the students to wonder, is there a purpose for change when things are fine as they are? Bringing it back to Scripture, as God makes

each individual uniquely this means that change is inevitable and therefore something that should not be feared. It goes on to discuss how each person is made specifically and purposefully for a special purpose.

It was important to mention the sovereignty of God and that each student can trust that He will lead and guide their lives in the right way if they allow Him to. Jeremiah 1:5 is quoted reiterating that before birth, God knew them. As Cubism promotes being confident in uniqueness, Scripture does as well because of the special way He seeks to amplify those special traits of His children and sanctify them, all for their good and His glory. They just have be willing to let Him.



Chapter Four — Harlem Renaissance

The fourth chapter about the art movement of Harlem Renaissance, was a late addition to the book. I originally had only included one artist from this movement (Romare Bearden) in the Contemporary art chapter but I decided upon further analyzation that the artwork from the Harlem Renaissance movement needed to be presented in this book. It was an important opportunity to share artists who were not properly recognized during their time but still made inspiring artwork that deserved appreciation.

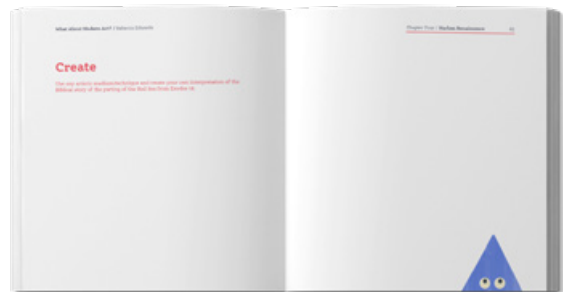
It begins with discussing the specific time period of this movement as this was a critical element in describing the artists and artwork. The primary focuses are discussed in the introductory paragraph which were freedom and expression. This chapter spiritually focuses on God creating all men and women equally and the responsibility of the actions of man. The reader is prompted to think of how they can use their voice.

“Sing it, dance it, write it, paint it. Let’s do the impossible.” - Aaron Douglas

The historical background of this movement is discussed in more detail on pages 54 and 55. Students are taught the definitions of “racism” and “inequality” which were two sins of man that the artists of this movement had to endure. The definition of “renaissance,” which is part of the name of the movement, was a declaration of being free to express after so long in slavery.

The artists chosen for this chapter are, Romare Bearden, Aaron Douglas, and Jacob Lawrence. Although these artists created artwork revolving around freedom and expression, it was discussed how each of these artists did it uniquely. This chapter shows even more so that beauty can still be found when everything seems to crumble apart around the world (page 11).





Romare Bearden was included as an artist with a background in different areas within music which is evident when observing his work. It was important for students to know that Bearden created art based on the scenes of his environment.

Aaron Douglas featured artwork was inspired about the story in Exodus of the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea escaping the enslavement of the Egyptians. This example was a great example of creating artwork inspired by the Bible. The students are told exactly how on this spread.

Jacob Lawrence was the last artist featured in this chapter. He, like Bearden, wanted others to see a piece of his world. Students

learn how it was important for Lawrence that everyone (regardless of race or gender) could relate the feelings of home that he sought to portray through his work. This was a way to discuss with students that all viewers can have their own unique artistic interpretations.

The “Bring It Back to Scripture” section of this chapter, discusses even more so the individuality God gives each person. It also discusses that it is because of *sin*, people all throughout time have suffered evilness brought about by man. This chapter was important to be added because it was an open door to discuss the Gospel. Because of Jesus’ love shown through the cross for all, students should treat others as people Christ has died for.



Chapter Five— Abstract Expressionism

Beginning the chapter about Abstract Expressionism, students are challenged to remember the first two movements where the artists of this movement take the elements of abstraction and expression to a deeper and more extreme level. Defining the key characteristics as showing movement and action through expression with color are the introductory facts about this movement. Bringing it back to personal connection, students are prompted to think about ways they like to express themselves.

In the about section, it discusses the two types of Abstract Expressionism, the action painters and the color field painters. Going into detail about the different methods and artistic processes of each style, first with the action painters where it was more energy and spontaneous movement and last for the color field painters is was more contemplation and observation.

As the different styles of this movement were key to understanding the work, it was important that the student understood the separate characteristics of each style but also understanding that the key ideas (abstraction and expression) were what brought the two styles cohesively together into one movement.

The prompt on page 53 is meant to promote spontaneity by using only one tool. This gives the student more time to understand the tool they have better, and it allows for better opportunities to embrace what they have to work with.

"A painting is not a picture of an experience, but is *the experience.*"

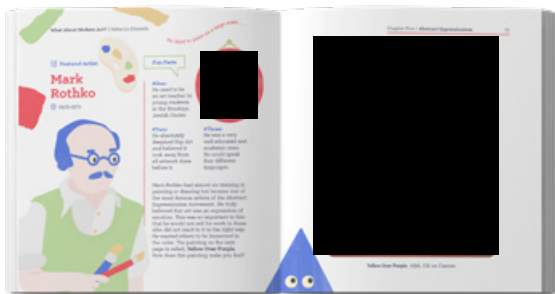
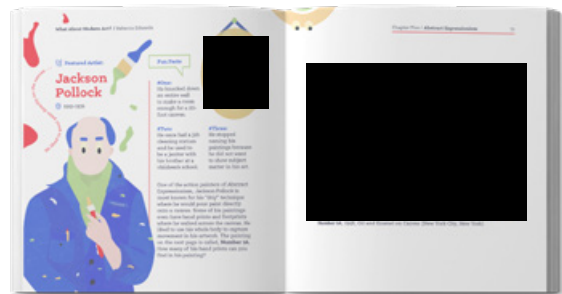
- Mark Rothko

The artists chosen for this chapter are, Jackson Pollock, Alma Thomas, and Mark Rothko. It is discussed the signature “drip” technique of Jackson Pollock and how he often used his body to create his artwork. He is a key reason why there was a separate style within Abstract Expressionism known as the action painters.

Alma Thomas was a later addition to the book. After faculty feedback to consider more diversity, I included Alma Thomas, an amazing expressionist painter. She began to get exposure later on in life which exemplifies that it is never too late to make a difference. She is an important artist that believed the creative spirit did not depend on the artist’s race or gender.

The last artist featured is Mark Rothko, a deep contemplative color field painter. His summary goes into detail how he sought to provide an emotional experience to the viewer through his artwork. The students are encouraged to ponder how his work makes them feel.

Bringing it back to Scripture, studying the pure expression of emotion through the Abstract Expressionist artwork, it discusses how God created humans to be emotional creatures. The example of the Biblical character of Job is given, and how he endured a variation of hard emotions. Students are encouraged to look to his example as a way to handle emotions in difficult times.



Chapter Six— Pop Art

Chapter five discusses Pop Art, an art movement that brought immense change to the ways of making art. The beginning of this chapter discusses the key thoughts behind Pop Art, that being questioning the entire idea of what art is and who determines it to be art. This chapter will spiritually focus on aligning thoughts and actions to those things that are pleasing to the Lord.

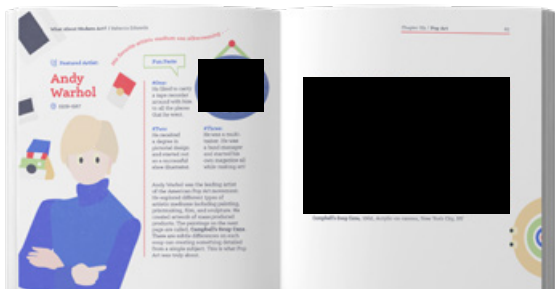
In the informative section about Pop Art, it goes deeper into what began this movement and what inspired these artists to try new things. Most early modern era artwork focuses much on emotional expression (especially within Abstract Expressionism), students are educated on how Pop Artists turned away from expressing emotion and turned to creating work inspired by what they saw and experienced within popular culture. It discusses how Pop Art was not appreciated by many when it first appeared but has become one of the most recognizable art movements of all time.

The quote on page 67 was chosen to be featured as it reveals subtly the mindset behind the leader of the Pop Art movement, Andy Warhol. It shows that what inspired him to think and create art were those every day things that were around him. The artists chosen for this chapter are, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein. Two different artists but each with an interest in portraying artwork completely different than what has ever been done before.

The first featured Pop Artist is Andy Warhol. It is discussed how he worked within many different mediums and also worked multiple jobs while being a full time artist. Students learn that he often chose simple subjects with much observance to detail.

“When you think about it, department stores are kind of like **museums.**”

- Andy Warhol





The last Pop Artist featured is Roy Lichtenstein. He was an interesting artist to feature as he was one of the first artists to propel graphic art into a more refined art category. A key reason he is featured is the attention to detail he spent on all of his artwork hopefully inspiring students to want to take the time to give their best at whatever they pursue.

In the “Bring It Back to Scripture” section we begin to discuss the concept of true beauty and whether or not it can be found within Pop Art. Beginning by prompting the students to think about what is the purpose of art and what makes something into art. This leads to educating students that the purpose of art is to portray true beauty. With help from the Holy Spirit, true beauty is seen and identified because it is from the Source of all beauty that true beauty can be found. Philippians 4:8 is quoted as a guideline to help identify true beauty within modern artwork. It is encouraged for students to line everything up, not just art, to Scripture and what the Holy Spirit speaks to their heart about.

In the discussion section, the student is asked whether they think it is important to show true beauty in art and if they think true beauty can be found within Pop Art. This is a critical section for students to contemplate within themselves and observe what they believe about beauty. It is meant to spark intimate discussions to further understand for themselves whether they think beauty can be found within secular artwork.

This section could be too mature for early elementary but I believe it is never too early to expose children to important faith questions. If they have a difficulty answering, it at least plants the seed in their minds to think about the beauty of God.



Chapter Seven — Minimalism

The chapter focusing on Minimalism begins with discussing how this art movement pushes abstraction even further than all previous art movements. The main motivating idea is given as artwork that was intended to be singular and non-identifiable to the associated artists of the Minimalist Art movement. It was not meant to have meaning that could be referred to any person, place, or thing.

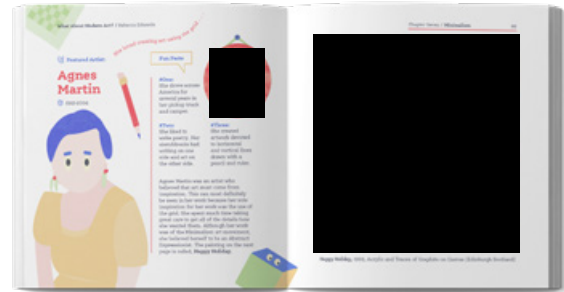
The introduction to this chapter correlates the minimalistic artistic representations, such as the use of simple shapes and materials, to the creations of God that are simple but are still full of detail and beauty when time is taken to properly observe/study them. The example of this is a blade of grass. Students are encouraged to think of simple things that they think are beautiful promoting curious observation and an internal sense of wonder. Scripture states that God's invisible qualities are seen through His creation (Romans 1:20). Students should be able to find the beauty of God through even His "simple" creations.

When discussing the Minimalism art movement further, students are educated on the complete attention the actual piece of artwork, treating the artwork as if it were it's own person. Discussing this idea more specifically, the Minimalist artists wanted to portray pure and truthful artwork visually specific to only that art piece void of any personal representation.

Linear, painterly, and hard edge are the important terms defined in this chapter as these are key descriptors (apart from painterly) to the simple and minimal artwork of this movement. Students are educated that the artwork was not meant to necessarily impress or show an abundance of skill. This disallowed separation which further promoted the artwork being of its own identity/concept. Stella famously quotes that the art is purely what you see.

"What you see is, *what you see.*" - Frank Stella





The artists chosen for this chapter are, Frank Stella and Agnes Martin. Beginning with Frank Stella, the leading artist of this movement, students are educated in his summary how he set the stage for Minimalism by being the first known artist to create artwork (his black paintings) with no obvious subject matter.

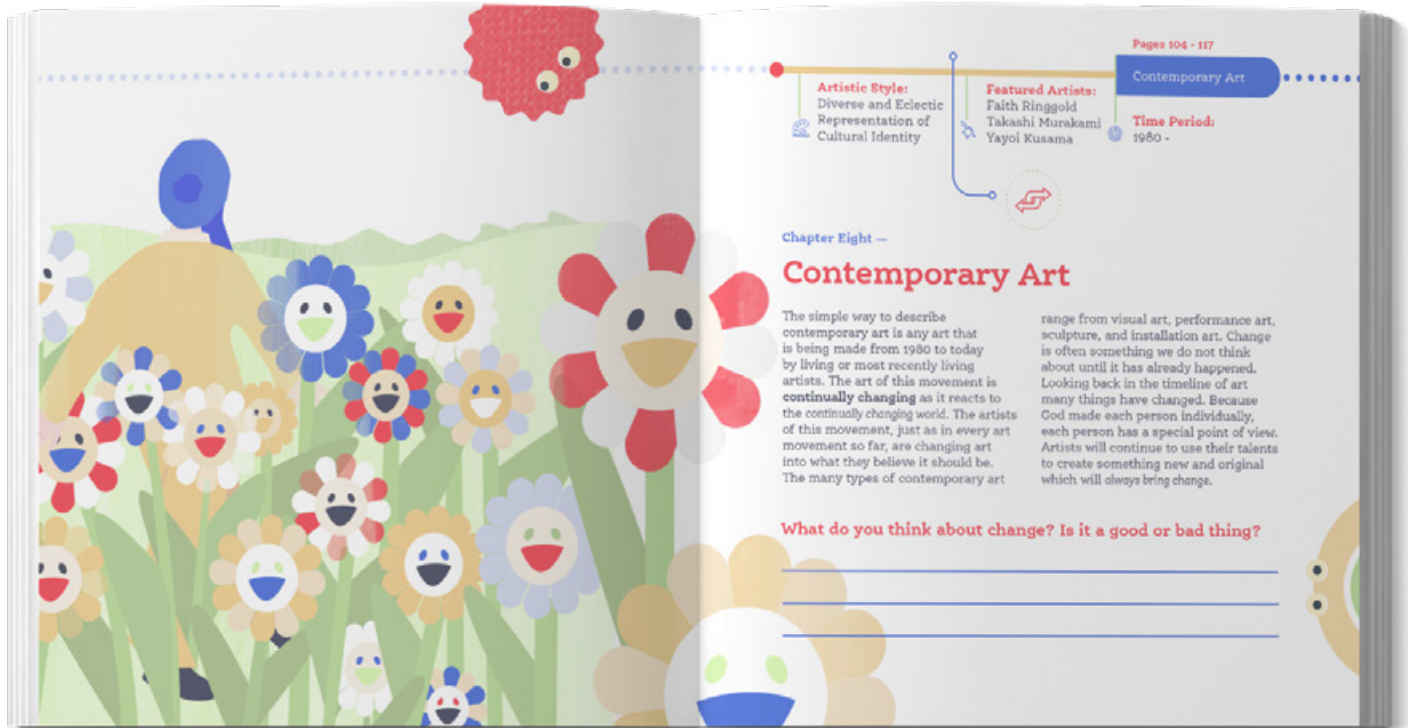
The other artist featured in this chapter is Agnes Martin, who although created minimalist artwork, she was greatly inspired by the Abstract Expressionists. In her summary, it is emphasized how she spent much time and care to perfect the details of her use of the grid. This is mentioned to inspired students to give their best at whatever they create whether it be simple or full of evident details.

Bringing it back to Scripture, the pursuit to portray true and authentic artwork within the Minimalist art movement challenges students to have observant eyes and hearts to find true beauty even when it is not so obvious to the eye. Referring back to Agnes Martin, it is discussed when time is taken to

properly observe her work and the attention to detail spent when making her art, beauty is easier to identify.

It goes on to discuss how true beauty is more than the physical appearance of something. 1 Samuel 16:7 is quoted to reiterate that true beauty comes from the heart. Minimalist artwork takes extra time to study and observe (this is the important term for this section) to see the beauty that sometimes appears to be hidden by the natural eye. Students are encouraged to take time to be still, to have open ears and open eyes to properly observe. This leaves room for students to listen to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit (1 Kings 19:12).





Chapter Eight— Contemporary Art

The last chapter of the book focuses on Contemporary art which is the art that is currently being made back to 1980. Students are educated on the fact that the art of the present is continually changing because of its reaction to the continually changing world around it. It is mentioned how art will always be a representation of change as each movement is made up of artwork from artists with their own definition of what art should be.

Students are challenged to think about change and whether they believe change is a good or bad thing. Discussing with students the inevitability of change is important in order to hopefully remove any fear or hesitancy to change. All throughout the book it states that God creates each person uniquely therefore students must know and realize that this will always bring change.

Looking at the specific work of Contemporary Art, it is discussed that each artist creates different artistic representations therefore the style is not as easy to define. One element that ties this movement together is that is influenced by the various cultures all across the world.

A key aspect that is presented to the students is to observe their surroundings more in order to understand Contemporary Art better. It is encouraged for students to ask questions and reflect for easier art comprehension.

“I wanted to make a difference, and I decided *I was going to use art to do it.*”

- Faith Ringgold

The artists chosen for this chapter are, Takashi Murakami, Faith Ringgold, and Yayoi Kusama. Faith Ringgold was a late addition, but she is an important artist to be included. She has also made an impact in the civil rights movement. Her artwork shows the diversity that is evident within the Contemporary art movement. She is the only multi-media artist featured in this book.

Takashi Murakami is a Japanese artist known for mixing modern and traditional styles to create his own unique interpretation to modern art. Students are educated on his incorporation of technology within his artwork and also being one of the first artists to promote art as a brand.

Lastly, Yayoi Kusama is featured as an installation artist creating interactive artwork that took up an entire space. The primary reason she was featured is the nature of her work being of installation art. She is a good example of someone who has endured difficult situations in life but still creates joyful works of art.

In the last “Bring It Back to Scripture” section, the comparison of the ever expanding change seen in Contemporary Art is compared to the one thing that will never change which is to honor God through our talents and gifts. He paid the ultimate price so that we can live freely with Him. He deserves all honor, glory, and praise.



Bonus Chapter — Conceptual Art

Beginning the chapter on Conceptual Art, students are first introduced to the purpose behind it. Even more so than the Minimalists, the Conceptual artists abstracted the idea of what art is. Students are educated that the movement refers to the word *conceptual* which comes from the word **concept**. It goes more into the reasoning behind the simple and often casual artistic representations of this art movement by stating that the primary focus for the artists were the thoughts that revolved around the act of creating art.

The spiritual focus for this chapter is on educating and encouraging students to use their minds and imaginations to glorify God. With the amount of negativity that surrounds the youth for seeking to be who God made them to be, it is important for students to know that they are fearfully and wonderfully made with specific attributes and traits to promote the awareness of their true worth and identity found in Christ.

“Even the act of peeling a potato **can be an artistic act** if it is conscientiously done.”

- Joseph Beuys

The first initial prompt question on page 89 asks the question of why did God give others an imagination. This again, is bringing it back to being uniquely made by the Creator to think and create things artistically creatively. Through an imagination all man-made things have/are/will be created.

Students should be encouraged that the imagination is a tool (this is most evident in Conceptual Art) that God gave to be used to imitate His nature that He bestowed upon the human race when He created us in His Image. The imagination, when combined with action is fulfilling the purpose of the artist, to create. It is a unique gift given to each person to be used in a special way.





Discussing Conceptual Art more specifically, first it is mentioned that this art movement did not have a particular style. The artists used whatever medium worked the best to portray their thoughts and ideas. It is also mentioned that some artwork from this movement was not an actual finished art piece. Performance art is one of the important terms defined in this section as it is one of the popular mediums used within Conceptual Art.

The quote from Joseph Beuys was chosen to be featured on page 91 because it authentically portrayed the key thought process of conceptual artists. Being consciously aware of the actions being made, if it is thought to be an act of art, then it was indeed an act of art according to Joseph Beuys. This movement was included because its primary principles of determined action and thoughtful contemplation should be principles that each student should consider for themselves in and outside of art.

The only artist chosen for this chapter is Joseph Beuys, who was known as one of the most important artists of his time. Students are exposed to his idea that every person has the potential to be an artist. He also believed it was of extreme importance for artists to use their voice to try and make a difference in the world.

Bringing it back to Scripture, through the Conceptual art movement, students are encouraged to observe the impact of their actions and how they can positively or negatively impact those around us. A key Biblical example is given of the unnamed woman with the alabaster box found in the Gospel of Mark. Her actions exhibit an act of true beauty shown through performance art. This is explained by breaking her most treasured and valuable possession and using the oil to pour on Jesus signifying preparation for His future burial. This performance was an act of worship and glorification to the Source of all beauty.

Conclusion

“... and by encountering Beauty, the human soul is awakened to the ***inexhaustible wellspring of divine love revealed in Christ***. In short, the Christian vision of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty is an invitation, a divine call, to awaken the fullness of our humanity as the entire cosmos is incorporated into the ***transformative life, death, and resurrection of Christ***. ‘I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.’ (John 10:10)”

- Stephen R Turley, *Awakening Wonder: A Classical Guide to Truth, Goodness & Beauty*

What About Modern Art —

Understanding the concept of true beauty from a Biblical standpoint is fundamental in being able to understand any man-made artistic creation all throughout the realm of art history but even more so within the modern and contemporary art periods. It is through understanding how God and His Word define beauty that a child of God can observe that beauty can be found in Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, the Harlem Renaissance, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art, and Contemporary Art.

Stating this, and as the book makes it clear, it is only through the eyes of a child of God that true beauty can be found in secular art. Using design as a solution, this book was created to be visually stimulating to the target audience and to implement but not take away from the written content. Design allows for the student to understand the content better by sparking visual interest and holding that attention through proper design layout. *What About Modern Art* will classically educate students through the observation of Modern Art from a Christian perspective to be aware of how important beauty is to God, how beauty should be a reflection of God, and how important it is for students to portray beauty through their art and lives.

What's Next —

I would like to look into the possibilities of having this book published. Possible support could come from Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) which is an organization that promotes Christian education and provided training and resources to Christian schools and Christian educators. I have some connections to this organization through some colleagues. Other options would be looking into possible art museums or getting connected with an art historian who would want to work collaboratively in getting this book published.

I would like to create a series of books about all of the major art movements within art history using the same focus. I would love to see a series of books of the key art movements in this same format revolving around the focus of true beauty. I think it is important that art and the study of it should return back to its true purpose.

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"Your profession is not what brings home your weekly paycheck, your profession is what you're put here on earth to do, with such passion and such intensity that it becomes **spiritual in calling.**"

- Vincent Van Gogh

