

European Art Today

The Impressionists went outdoors to find ideas. The Expressionists looked to their own hearts. The second decade of the twentieth century found artists exploring still another source for art ideas. That was the inner workings of the mind.

FANTASY ART

Imagine yourself a visitor at a showing of new art. Suddenly your eye falls upon a work that is at once familiar and shocking. It is familiar because it is a photograph of the *Mona Lisa*. It is shocking because someone has drawn a mustache on Leonardo da Vinci's world-famous portrait.

It was this very experience that outraged members of Europe's art community in 1916. The artist behind the work was a one-time Cubist named Marcel Duchamp (mar-sel doo-shahn). The movement he belonged to, **Dada** (dahd-ah) was founded on the belief that Western culture had lost its meaning. For Dadaists (dahd-uah-ists), the beauty of art was in the *mind*, not the eye, of the beholder. Art, in other words, did not have to be beautiful or express important ideas. Usually the point was driven home, as in Duchamp's photograph, by poking fun at art of the past.

SURREALISM

Although Dada lasted only six years, it paved the way for other art explorations of the mind. The most important of these was **Surrealism** (suh-ree-uh-liz-uhm). This movement probed the unconscious world of dreams for ideas, and was touched off by the works of a Greek-born Italian artist named Giorgio de Chirico (jor-joh duh kir-ih-koh). Like the artists who followed him, de Chirico created mysterious, nightmarish landscapes



▲ Figure 17-1 What gives this picture its dreamlike appearance? What kinds of feelings does it arouse in you?

Giorgio de Chirico. *The Nostalgia of the Infinite*. 1911. Oil on canvas. 135.2 x 64.8 cm (53¼ x 25½"). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.

where time had no meaning. One of these is shown in Figure 17-1. Notice the two small figures seen as silhouettes at the center of the work. Their importance seems to shrink before the huge tower looming behind them. In the stillness a sudden breeze begins whipping at some flags atop the tower. Who are these people? What is the meaning of the tower and the flags? Like a dream, the painting raises many unanswerable questions. Attempts to answer these questions only adds to the feeling that the viewers are experiencing a nightmare from which they cannot awaken.

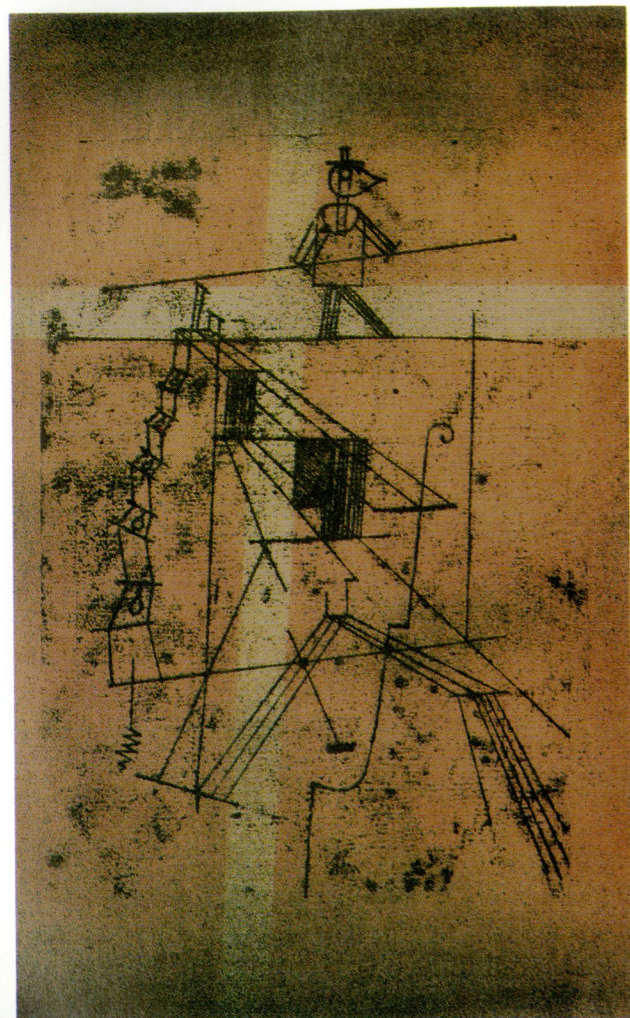
By the end of the 1920s the Surrealist movement had spread to many countries. One artist who seemed comfortable with the movement was the Spanish painter Joan Miró (zhoo-ahn mee-roh). Miró created fantasy worlds that were free not only of rhyme and reason but also of realism. In the work in Figure 17-2 he brings the viewer face-to-face with a scene depicting strange, imaginary creatures. See how the subjects whirl and twist in a playful ballet.



◀ Figure 17-2 Why do you suppose the artist called this painting "Dutch Interior"? Are there any shapes that look like animals or musical instruments?

Joan Miró. *Dutch Interior*. 1928. Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

Fantasy and humor are key ingredients also in the art of Swiss-born Paul Klee (klay). Though not a Surrealist, Klee based his work on images glimpsed through his mind's eye. Most, like his picture of a tightrope walker (Figure 17-3), are like simple, childlike creations. Notice how the walker makes his way boldly across a wire supported by a flimsy network of thin lines. These lines look as though they will collapse at any second. What statement might the artist be making about people who foolishly enter situations without weighing the consequences?



▲ Figure 17-3 What has the artist done to add a sense of harmony? Can you point to places where variety is used? What property of this work is most important—its realism, its design, or its meaning?

Paul Klee. *Tightrope Walker*. 1923. Color lithograph. 43.1 x 26.7 cm (17 x 10½"). McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas.

SCULPTURE

Over the last 40 years sculptors have also explored new areas of self-expression. Some have continued to create recognizable images. Others have taken the path toward non-objective art.

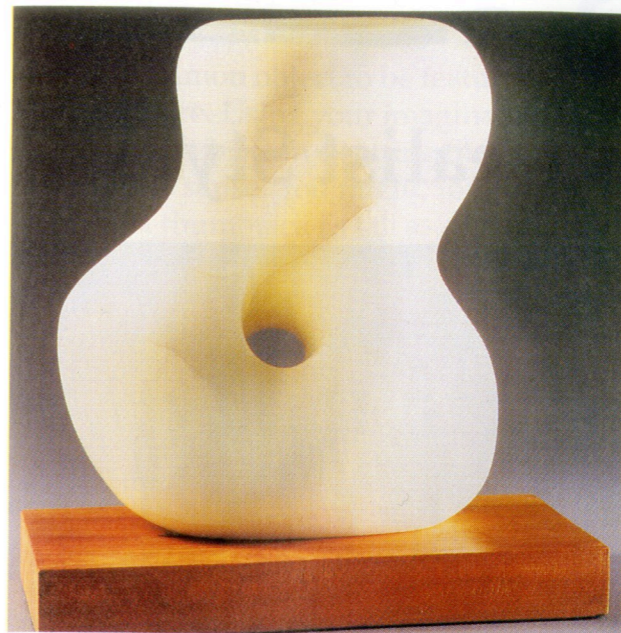
The works of Marino Marini (muh-reen-oh muh-reen-ee), an Italian sculptor, draw on a single haunting image. That image—peasants fleeing their villages on horseback during bombing raids—was one the artist witnessed during World War II. Sculptures like the one in Figure 17-4 are attempts to capture the suffering of civilians during wartime.



▲ Figure 17-4 What kinds of real and imaginary lines help add a feeling of tension? What makes this work successful or unsuccessful?

Marino Marini. *Horse and Rider*. 1951. Bronze. 55.7 x 31.1 x 43.5 cm (21¾ x 12¼ x 17⅞"). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of the Lily Harmon Foundation.

An artist best known for her non-objective creations was English sculptor Barbara Hepworth. A trademark of her work is the use of holes. As in the work in Figure 17-5, these create centers of interest within gently curving forms.



▲ Figure 17-5 Notice the smooth texture of the alabaster. Would you be tempted to run your hands over the surface of the work?

Barbara Hepworth. *Merryn*. 1962. Alabaster. 33 x 29 x 20 cm (13 x 11½ x 8"). National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay.



▲ Figure 17-6 Notice how the sculptor gave the family members a feeling of unity. How did he provide variety?

Henry Moore. *Family Group*. 1948–49. Cast 1950. Bronze. 150.5 x 118.1, base 114.3 x 75.9 cm (59¼ x 46½, base 45 x 29⅞"). Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York. A Conger Goodyear Fund.

STUDIO EXPERIENCE

Using your imagination, picture a scene you might expect to find in a nightmare. On a sheet of paper, list objects you imagine. Do not include people. Using pencil, draw the scene as a Surrealist might. Try to capture the feeling of fear the image stirs up in you. Use crayon or chalk to color your picture. Make sure you choose hues that help emphasize the fear you are trying to express.

Another sculptor, Henry Moore, created both non-objective works and works that were sometimes nearer to realism. The close relationship of family members is expressed in Figure 17-6. Moore stylized the figures and yet clearly defined them as mother, father, and child. The figures of the parents are linked by the child, the touching knees, and the husband's hand on his wife's shoulder, providing a unified whole.

✓ CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What did the Dadaists believe? How did they usually give expression to this belief?
2. What is Surrealism? What artist's works initiated the movement? Name another Surrealist.
3. For what kinds of works is Paul Klee best known?
4. What image turns up again and again in the works of Marino Marini?
5. What is the trademark of sculptor Barbara Hepworth?

American Art Today

In the late 1800s the United States was recognized as a global power. It began slowly but surely to emerge as a world leader in art. By 1950 the change was complete. New York replaced Paris as the center of painting and sculpture.

Art since that time has been rocked by one new style after another. Countless new materials and techniques have been tried as artists attempt to solve an age-old problem. That problem is how best to speak to viewers through the language of art. In this lesson you will look at some solutions.

ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

The first new form of expression was a bold style that was influenced by several past styles. Its name is **Abstract Expressionism**. In this art style, *paint was dribbled, spilled, or*

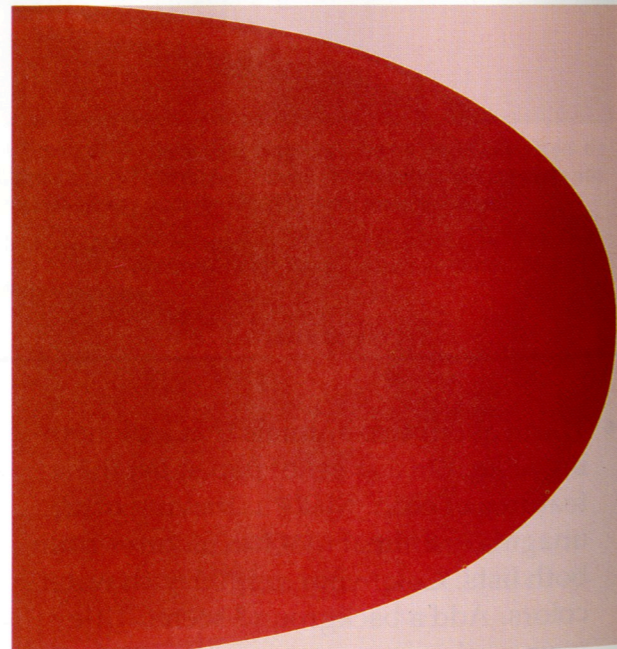
splashed onto huge canvases to express painting as an action. Abstract Expressionist artists rejected the use of subject matter in their work. They dripped, spilled, and splashed rich colors on canvas to create their paintings. The *act* of painting was so tied to their work that the Abstract Expressionists became labeled “action painters.”

One of the first members of the Abstract Expressionist movement was an Armenian-born artist named Arshile Gorky (*ar-shuhl gor-kee*). Gorky’s early works show strong traces of Surrealism. By the mid-1940s, however, he was showing real objects as doodle-like lines and shapes in his paintings. Figure 17–9 shows a painting completed a year before his death. To appreciate such works demands that viewers open themselves to the artist’s one-of-a-kind blending of colors, shapes, and lines.



▲ Figure 17–9 Does a viewer need to see things in a painting to enjoy it? Can a painting be enjoyed for the beauty of the visual elements?

Arshile Gorky. *Golden Brown Painting*. 1947. Oil on canvas. 110.8 x 141.3 cm (43⁵/₈ x 55⁵/₈”). Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, Missouri.



▲ Figure 17–10 What is the positive shape in this work? What is the negative shape?

Ellsworth Kelly. *Red/White*. 1964. Oil on canvas. 95.3 x 91.4 cm (37¹/₂ x 36”). Courtesy Blum Helman Gallery, New York, New York.

Equally dazzling in their use of color are the paintings of Helen Frankenthaler (*frank-uhn-tahl-uhr*), another Abstract Expressionist. Frankenthaler’s action paintings often begin on the floor of her studio. Standing above a blank canvas, the artist pours on layer after layer of thinned color. With each new addition, the work grows. Study the painting by Frankenthaler in Figure 2–5 on page 20. Like most works by the artist, edges of shapes are sometimes sharp, sometimes blurred. Find the flamelike shape at the center. Notice how it appears to be spreading outward to other parts of the canvas.

OTHER DIRECTIONS IN PAINTING

It was not long after Abstract Expressionism appeared on the scene that other artists began challenging it. The style, they argued, was too personal—too much in the mind of the artist. Among the solutions that arose were:

- **Hard-Edge painting.** This was a style that emphasized clear, crisp-edged shapes. The work shown in Figure 17–10 is by Hard-Edge painter Ellsworth Kelly. Notice how the square shape of the canvas shows off

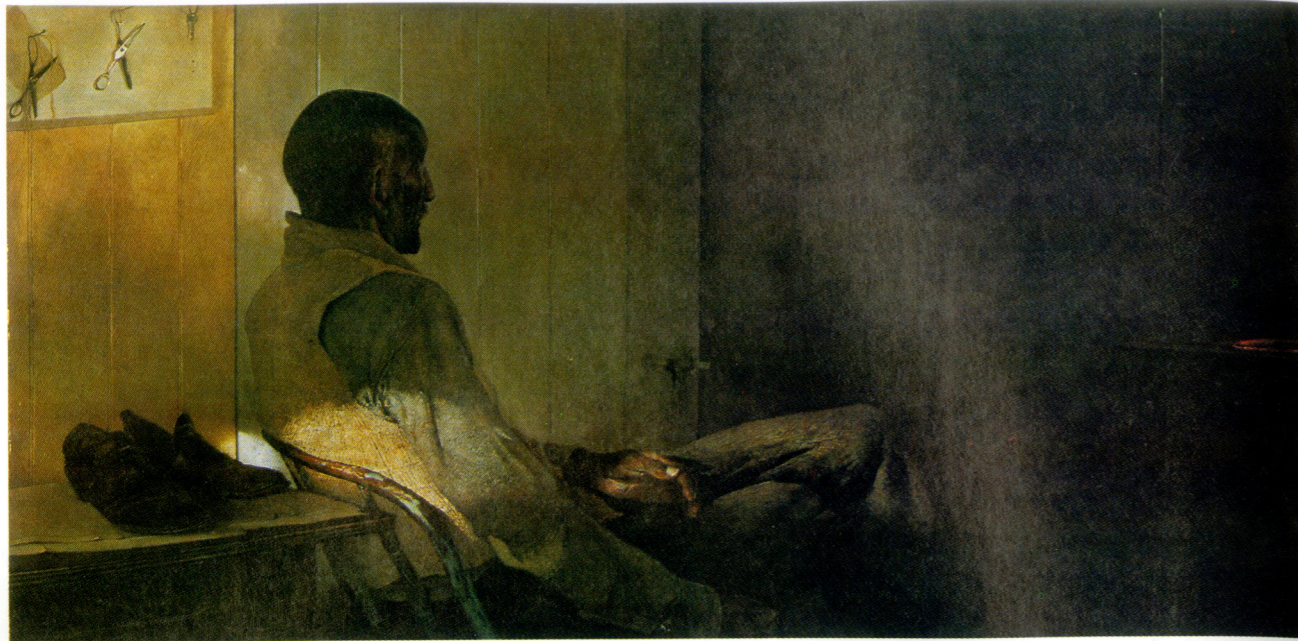
the simple positive and negative shapes. What would you see first if the colors were reversed?

- **Social protest painting.** Emerging in the 1930s, this was an art style that attacked the ills of big-city life. It remained alive through the 1960s in the works of Jacob Lawrence, a black artist. Study the painting by Lawrence in Figure 17–11. Like the artist’s other works, this one tells a story. What words would you use to describe the story?
- **New Realism.** Not all artists of the past few decades have been content to use non-objective styles. Some formed a movement called **New Realism**, an art movement that rediscovered the importance of realistic detail. Figure 17–12 shows a work by Andrew Wyeth, who has been a realist throughout his long career. The painting, you will notice, offers more than just a photographic record of its subject. It gives a glimpse of the kind of person the man is. Notice that he is turned away from the viewer. In this way he cannot see the pity in our eyes. Alone in his empty room he stubbornly guards the possessions left to him—his pride and dignity.



◀ Figure 17–11 This is an example of social protest painting. What symbols did the artist use to convey his ideas?

Jacob Lawrence. *Toussaint L'Overture Series*. 1938. Tempera on paper. 46.4 x 61.6 cm (18¹/₄ x 24¹/₄”). Fisk University.



▲ Figure 17-12 Notice how the man in the picture is turned away from the viewer. What reason might the artist have had for positioning him this way?

Andrew Wyeth. *That Gentleman*. 1960. Tempera on panel. 59.7 x 45.1 cm (23½ x 17¾"). Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas.

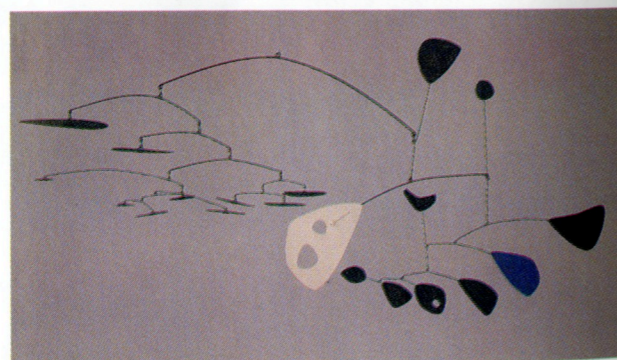
SCULPTURE

Painters have not been alone in the search for new methods of self-expression. Sculptors, too, have experimented with new styles. One of them, Alexander Calder, was able to number among his contributions the invention of a new term. That term, **mobile** (**moh-beel**), was used to describe a *sculpture made of carefully balanced shapes hung on wires*. Most of Calder's mobiles, like the one in Figure 17-13, are non-objective. Imagine this moving sculpture as it might appear as you stand near it. Try to picture the ever-changing patterns created by the bobbing and twisting of the shapes. What images do you think might come to mind?

A different approach to non-objective sculpture is found in the three-dimensional collages of Louise Nevelson (**nev-uhl-suhn**). Her works, one of which appears in Figure 17-14, were assembled from found objects and wood scraps. Viewers often experience these sculptures as at once familiar and foreign. The wood scraps in Figure 17-14 are easily identified. They are combined in such a way, however, that they create something

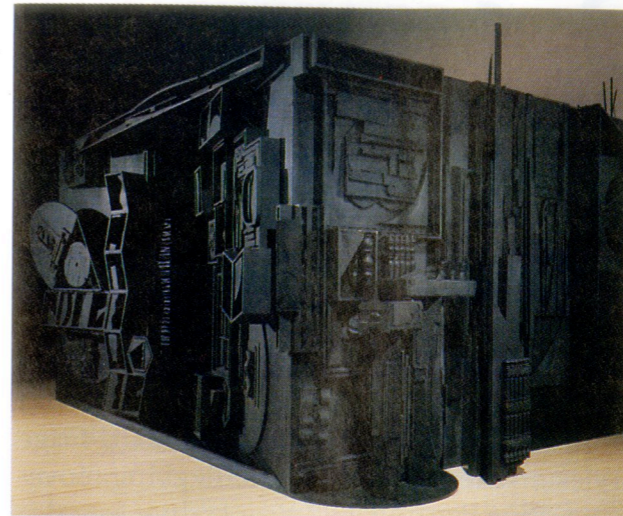
entirely new and different. Are they gates or doors? If so, what kind of fascinating world lies beyond?

Just as some painters of recent times have made realism their goal, so have some sculptors. One is artist Duane Hanson. Hanson's sculptures are so lifelike they are often mistaken for real people. Imagine yourself



▲ Figure 17-13 What shape is emphasized in this mobile? How is this emphasis achieved? Is pattern an important principle? How is pattern shown?

Alexander Calder. *Zarabanda (Un Disco Blanco)*. 1955. Painted sheet metal, metal rods and wire. 106.6 x 166.1 cm (42 x 65¾"). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn.



▲ Figure 17-14 What would happen if this sculpture were painted in several different colors? Would it be as successful? Why or why not?

Louise Nevelson. *Mrs. N's Palace*. 1971. Painted wood, mirror. 355.6 x 607 x 457.2 cm (140 x 239 x 180"). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Gift of the artist.



▲ Figure 17-15 The people in this work are types you might pass on the street or at a shopping mall. Why do you think the artist has chosen to freeze these types in time? What are we able to learn about them? What can we learn about ourselves?

Duane Hanson. *Tourists*. 1970. Polyester and fiberglass. Lifesize. OK Harris Works of Art, New York, New York.

STUDIO EXPERIENCE

Experiment with your own action painting using laundry bleach.

Dip a cotton swab into a small container of bleach. Rub the bleach over a sheet of dark-colored construction paper. You will notice faded, white areas beginning to form.

Use this technique to complete several works, each expressing a different feeling. Display your finished works along with those of classmates. Which are most successful? Why?

standing before Hanson's sculpture of tourists in Figure 17-15. Typical of his work, these people are average-looking and wear everyday clothing. What reaction do you suppose the artist wants viewers to have? What message about life in present-day America might he be sending?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is Abstract Expressionism? Name two members of the movement.
2. Besides Abstract Expressionism, name three directions painting has taken in the last 40 years. Define each school.
3. What term did Alexander Calder invent? Describe the kinds of sculptures he created.
4. Which of the artists you learned about in this lesson created three-dimensional collages?

Art of the Next Frontier

Artists have never been content to stay in one place for long. They are a restless breed, forever moving on, thirsting after new challenges. As we move swiftly toward the year 2000, questions arise: What challenges will open themselves to the artists of tomorrow? What will art be like in the twenty-first century?

Answering these questions would take a crystal ball. Still, possible glimpses of the art of tomorrow are afforded by innovative developments in the art of today. In this lesson you will look at some of these developments.

ART AND TECHNOLOGY

If there is one word most closely identified with art of today, it is *technology*. Technology is the use of science to make life better. Art of the past few years has drawn on such technological advances as the computer and laser. It has also redefined the boundaries between one branch of art and the next.

Staged Photography

In the late 1800s the new art of photography changed the way painters looked at their subjects. In more recent times another new art—filmmaking—has had the same effect on photographers. Some have begun staging pictures in much the way movie directors set up a scene.

Figure 17–18 shows a staged photograph by artist Sandy Skoglund (*skoh-gluhnd*). For this work the artist sculpted each of the goldfish individually from clay. She also painted the room and directed the location of the two people. What twentieth-century style of painting does this work call to mind? What message might the photographer be sending to viewers?



▲ Figure 17–18 How would you describe the artist's use of color? Would this work have a different appearance if it had been shot in black and white?

Sandy Skoglund. *Revenge of the Goldfish*. 1981. Staged Photograph. Lorence Monk Gallery. New York, New York.

Multi-Media Art

The ancient Hindus, you may recall, believed temples to be as much sculpture as architecture. This idea has been carried forward in recent years by artists of multi-media works. **Multi-media art** is a work that makes use of tools and techniques from two or more areas of art.

A careful merging of architecture and sculpture is found in the expressions of sculptor Judy Pfaff (*faf*). Study the multi-media work by her in Figure 17–19. Parts of the work are the floor of the room, walls, and ceiling themselves. The viewer is able to move not only around this sculpture but also *within* it.

Kinetic Art

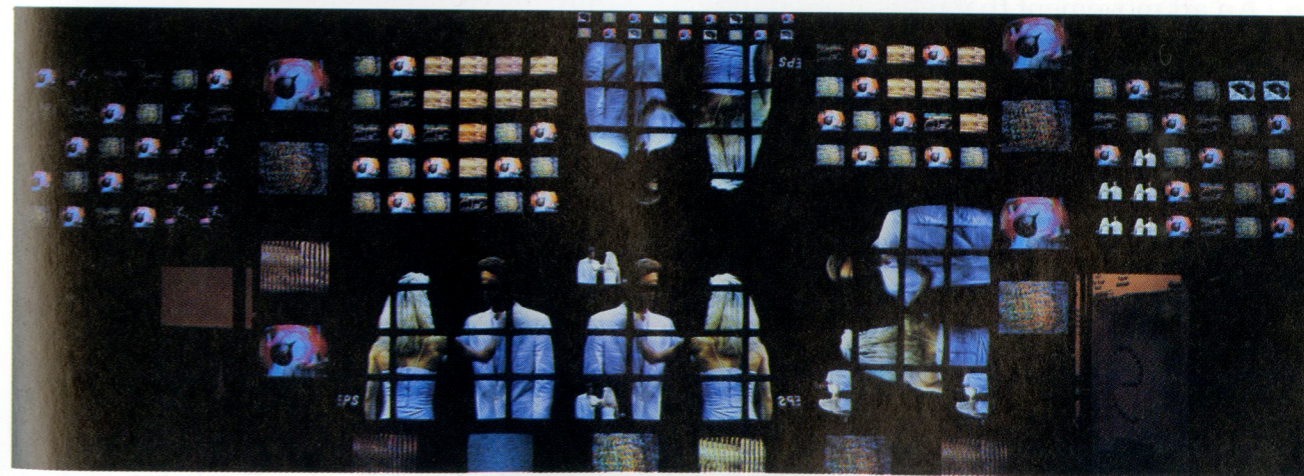
Examine the “sculpture” in Figure 17–20 by Nam June Paik. This work loosely belongs to a movement begun in the 1960s called **kinetic** (*kuh-net-ik*) art. This is a style in which parts of works are set into motion. The motion can be triggered by a form of energy or by



▲ Figure 17–19 In what ways has the artist created a “real” landscape? What other branches of art besides sculpture and architecture are brought into play in this multi-media work?

Judy Pfaff. *Kabuki (Formula Atlantic)*. 1981. Mixed media. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

the viewer moving past the work. Some art gives the impression of movement without actually moving. The work in Figure 17–20 is made up in part of 300 television screens. The viewer experiences a number of different images and sounds all at the same time. What do you imagine this experience would be like? What statement might the artist be making about the age of television?



▲ Figure 17–20 A computer is used to “flip” and enlarge images on the different screens in this work. How many different images can you count?

Nam June Paik. *Fin de Siècle II*. 1989. Video installation: Approximately 300 television sets. Originally shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York.

STUDIO EXPERIENCE

Art, it has been said, mirrors the time in which it is created. This holds especially true for the branch of art called architecture.

Brainstorm with classmates about what dwellings of the future will be like. Let your imagination guide you. On a sheet of paper, make a pencil drawing of your dream dwelling of the future. Allow in your design for solutions to such growing problems as pollution and thinning of the ozone layer. Share your finished work with classmates. Which design is the most interesting? Why?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is technology? What part has technology played in art of the present?
2. What is a staged photograph?
3. Define *multi-media art*.
4. To what two art movements does the painting in Figure 17–16 belong?

BUILDING VOCABULARY

Number a sheet of paper from 1 to 10. After each number, write the term from the box that best matches each description below.

Abstract	multi-media art
Expressionism	New Realism
Dada	Op Art
Hard-Edge painting	social protest painting
kinetic art	Surrealism
mobile	

1. An art movement founded on the belief that Western culture had lost its meaning.
2. An art movement that probed the unconscious world of dreams.
3. An art style in which paint was dribbled, spilled, or splashed onto huge canvases to express painting as an action.
4. An art style that emphasized clear, crisp-edged shapes.
5. An art style that attacked the ills of big-city life.
6. An art movement that rediscovered the importance of realistic detail.
7. A sculpture made of carefully balanced shapes hung on wires.
8. An art style that made use of precise lines and shapes to create optical illusion.
9. A work that makes use of tools and techniques from two or more areas of art.
10. An art style in which parts of works are set into motion by a form of energy.

REVIEWING ART FACTS

Number a sheet of paper from 11 to 18. Answer each question in a complete sentence.

11. Name an artist of the Dada movement.
12. Describe the works of Paul Klee.

13. What sculptor did works of Italian peasants fleeing a bombing raid?
14. For which type of sculpture was Barbara Hepworth best known?
15. In what art movement was Arshile Gorky a pioneer?
16. What sculptor you learned about created three-dimensional collages?
17. Name an artist who works in the area of staged photography.
18. For what kinds of works is Judy Pfaff known?

THINKING ABOUT ART

On a sheet of paper, answer each question in a sentence or two.

1. **Analyze.** React to the opinion that art must be serious to be good. Find works from the chapter that support your position.
2. **Compare and contrast.** Compare the works in Figure 17-2 and Figure 17-13. Aside from the fact one is a painting and the other a sculpture, how do they differ? What do they have in common? Would you use the same aesthetic view in judging the two? Explain.

MAKING ART CONNECTIONS

1. **Language Arts.** Choose one of the non-objective works you learned about in this chapter. Make a list of points about this work you would bring up in a debate with someone who claimed a two-year-old could create the same "art."
2. **History.** In this chapter you learned of some art movements that appeared in the late twentieth century. The following are several others: Pop Art, Earth Art, and Concept Art. Using an encyclopedia or other library resource, find out the names of artists who worked in the movement, and identify their goals. Report your findings to the class.

LOOKING AT THE DETAILS

The detail shown below is from Frank Stella's *Shards III*. Study the detail and answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. How would you know that this was a multi-media work if a credit line was not available?

2. Identify the two art media that Stella used to create this work.
3. How has the artist created depth?
4. Look at the entire work on page 256. What shape has been used to unify the art work?



Frank Stella. *Shards III*. 1983. Mixed media on aluminum. (Detail.) 346.7 x 304.2 x 62.2 cm (136 1/2 x 119 3/4 x 24 1/2"). Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, New York.