

The History of Techniques that Make Today's Art Possible

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1. Representational Art (260AD to 1350AD) - Flat, out of proportion, symbolic, and otherworldly.

No specific techniques.

2. Development of Realistic Art (1350AD to 1650AD)- Realistic art depicts objects as they appear using spatial illusions

Renaissance Art (1400AD-1520AD) laid the foundations for realistic art.

Atmospheric perspective:

- In 2D artwork, atmospheric perspective is the illusion of depth moving back into space.
- Objects closer to the viewer appear more articulate, detailed, and higher in contrast.
- Objects further back in space are blurrier, lower in contrast and have little detail (Atmospheric).

“Linear perspective. A system using the rules of geometry to depict 3-D space on a 2-D surface” (Craig Atteberry, 349).

“Chiaroscuro refers to the use of light and dark to create the illusion of three-dimensional volume on a flat surface. The term translates to ‘light-dark’; *chiaro* meaning bright or clear and *scuro* meaning dark or obscure” (Scott, Chiaroscuro). Also known as shading, rendering, or modeling.

“In fine art, **foreshortening** is a method for painting or drawing objects so they appear to recede in three-dimensional space” (MasterClass).

“Sfumato is a painting technique which involves blending the edge between colors so that there is a soft transition. The term ‘sfumato’ is Italian which translates to *soft, vague or blurred*” (Scott, Sfumato).

“Glazing techniques in oil painting are when you apply a transparent layer of paint over another dried layer of paint... Glazing creates a unique ‘shine through,’ luminous stained-glass effect that you cannot get by directly mixing the paint” (‘Glazing Techniques in Oil Painting’).

“Anamorphosis, in the [visual arts](#), [is] an [ingenious perspective](#) technique that gives a distorted image of the subject represented in a picture when seen from the usual viewpoint but so executed that if viewed from a particular angle, or reflected in a curved [mirror](#), the distortion disappears and the image in the picture appears normal” (‘Anamorphosis’).

3. Refinement of Realistic Art (1550AD to 1870AD)- more dramatic, emotional, and unpredictable.

Baroque Art (1590 AD – 1720 AD) -Baroque art was dramatic with emotions for impact.

“Tenebrism is a term derived from the Italian 'tenebroso' which means *darkened and obscuring*. It is used to describe a certain type of painting in which significant details such as faces and hands are illuminated by highlights which are contrasted with a predominantly dark setting” (‘Tenebrism’).

Rococo Art (1720-1775) created worlds of fantasy and grace with satirical undercurrents.

In the painting *The Blue Boy*, **Gainsborough** shows that it is chroma (i.e. brightness) and values that cause colors to recede or come forward, not color temperature (“The Blue Boy”).

The Branch in Art (1860 to Present) Realistic vs. Beyond Realistic Art

4. Continued realistic art – (1864 AD to present) added the artist's mental state.

Symbolism (1850 AD – 1900AD) is realistic art based upon the **unconscious mind of the artist**.

Surrealism (1917 AD – 1966 AD) explored the unconscious mind.

Today's Realistic/Imaginary Art

The use of computers to create digital art has taken realism to a new level.

- Illustrations in books and advertisement.
- Images having the illusion of movement in animation.
- Believable entertainment created with Computer Generated Images, CGI.
- Virtual reality.
- Deep fake videos. <https://www.creativebloq.com/features/deepfake-examples>

5. Beyond realistic – (1870 AD to present)

Impressionism (1872 AD – 1886) - focused on how light and color are perceived in an instant of time.

Complementary colors can be used to make colors appear brighter.

“In painting, **complementary colours** are used for their vibrant contrasts and mutual enhancement when juxtaposed, for 'shot' or cangiante draperies, and for shadows tinged with the complementary of an adjacent highlight - a device imitating the physiological response of the human eye and much used by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists” (‘Complementary colours,’).

“**Notan** is the underlying abstract framework, or pattern of lights and darks, upon which the value structure of a painting is created. A harmonious arrangement of darks, lights, and grays creates an impression of beauty, regardless of either the colors used, or of the subject matter....Barry John Raybould” (Raybould).

Impressionists pioneered **plein air painting** because of the introduction of paint in a tube.

The legal definition of art: **Art is what the artist says it is** (“Nocturne in Black and Gold – The Falling Rocket”).

Post-Impressionism (1870 AD – 1910 AD) is the term used for a group of artists with diverse styles influenced by the Impressionists.

“**Pointillism** is a technique of painting in which small, distinct dots of color are applied in patterns to form an image” (Pointillism).

Expressionism (1890-1930s)- Expressionism focused on the distortion of reality to achieve an emotional effect on the viewer or to express the feelings of the artist.

Nonobjective Art (1910-Present)- **Nonobjective** art is art that does not clearly represent visible reality and does not communicate a narrative but rather it attempts to communicate abstract qualities.

Representational Art	Realistic Art	Refinement of Realistic Art	Adding a Mental State to Realistic Art	Beyond Realistic Art
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat art to visually communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perspective Foreshortening Sfumato Glazing Chiaroscuro Improved compositions Imaginary worlds Anamorphic art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenebrism Drama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including the artist's mental state Motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notan Effects of light Complementary colors Plein air painting Legal definition of art Narrative-free art Non-objective art

Where to learn more:

Schoolcraft College's ART 115 and ART 116. I had an excellent professor named Paula Imirzian.

The Great Courses have several courses on Art History. <https://www.thegreatcoursesplus.com/a-history-of-european-art>.

Works Cited

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