

SUGGESTED THEMES

Initial Source/compilation: YuBong Ko 2014

This is a random list of suggested themes (and topics) that I have compiled with the help of many teachers and colleagues at workshops and readings of the AP exams. Some of the themes and topics have appeared more than once on past AP exams. Since they are broad, recurring, unifying and overarching artistic experiences suitable for making timely old-new and global connections across time and cultures, many teachers including myself have utilized themes and topics from this list to shape the course.

In AP Art History curriculum, **art beyond the European traditions (ABET)**, a.k.a. non-Western art and cultures include: Africa (beyond Egypt), the Americas, Asia, Oceania and global Islamic traditions.

Patronage and Art/Artist

- Motivation of the patron in art
- Role of the patron in art
- Role of the artist in society
- Relationship between artist and patron

Art as Propaganda

- Glorify the power of the state
- Exploited for religious purposes
- Illuminate a social cause
- Glorify the ruler

War

- Representations of battle scenes
- Protest against war
- Images of the warrior
- Memorial/tribute to fallen heroes
- Images of violence and hostility

Representations of nature

- Nature and the landscape
- Attitude towards nature
- Perspective systems
- Man and nature

Sacred Spaces

- Burial places and grave monuments
- Places of worship
- Sites used for religious ritual and practices
- Pilgrimages

Death and Burial

- Concepts of the afterlife
- Heaven and Hell
- Funerary practices
- Objects used in ritual

The Human Image in Art

- Depictions of the human body
- Representations of human identity
- Gender
- Deity figures in guise of human forms
- Hybrid man/beast figures

Cultural Attitudes About Women

- Depictions of motherhood and fertility figures
- Portraits representing power, wealth and status
- Depictions of female divinities and icons
- Representations of female heroism
- Depictions of geisha and courtesans
- Stereotypes of women in various role and scenes

The Text as Sources

- Torah
- Bible
- Quran
- Vedas
- Tao Te Ching
- The Mayan Popol Vuh

Narrative in Art

This is an exercise with students in defining and clarifying what is meant by “narrative in art.” (The essential characteristics are):

- Tells a story (visually and can include text).
- Illustrative of an event in some form of a timed sequence.
- Sequence of events depicted can be continuous, linear, in multiple registers, and disjointed or juxtaposed. (Does not have to have a beginning and ending).
- Narrative theme or subject matter is culturally relevant – sociological, historical, political, personal, religious, mythological, popular.
- Includes figural characters (including animals) and setting in implied action and interaction within given time and space.
- May contain symbolic elements that aides in the delivery of a message.
- Narrative is meaningful to an audience and communicates shared understanding.

- The artwork can be completed in any medium.

More THEMES/TOPICS:

- **Power and Authority**
- **Representations of Everyday Life**
- **Representations of Animals and Birds**
- **Representations of Seasons**
- **Vertical Elements**
- **The Dome**
- **Circles in Art**
- **Art and Geometry**
- **Significance of Light and Dark**
- **Gender Issues in Art**
- **Identity**
- **Women in Art/ Women and Art**
- **Site Art/Environmental Art**
- **Guardian Figures that protect and warn**
- **Art that “documents” a historical event**
- **Race, Clan and Class in Art**
- **Family Portraits**
- **Portrait of the Artist**
- **Representation of Marriage and the Couple**
- **Dreams and fantasy images**
- **Art from Art**
- **Art Now**
- **Concept of Beauty**
- **Social Protest**
- **Images of Mother and Child**
- **Symbols and Allegory**
- **Words and Images**
- **Icons**
- **Secular Architecture**
- **The City**
- **Time**
- **Art that Challenge Established Traditions: Rebels in Art**
(Add on more)

Other THEMES/TOPICS that are based more on form than content:

- **Art and Technology/Technological Innovations**
- **Alternative Ways of Seeing: Visionaries in Art**
- **Abstractions**
- **Treatment of the Surface**
- **Development of Artistic Style**

- **Regional Variations in Style**
- **Determining Artistic Influences**
- **Identifying Artistic Medium**
- **Architecture: Elevation, Facades, Interiors**
- **Printmaking History and Technique**
- **Photography History and Technique**
(Add on more)

Many of the themes overlap and could be enfolded under a more concise list of overarching themes. A useful resource for making the list more manageable is a website *Art Through Time: A Global View* by Thirteen.Org produced for Annenberg Media.

<http://www.learner.org/courses/globalart/>

In a thirteen part series, the site examines thirteen themes connecting works of art created around world in different eras:

1. Converging Cultures
2. Dreams and Visions
3. History and Memory
4. Ceremony and Society
5. Cosmology and Belief
6. Death
7. Domestic Life
8. Writing
9. Portraits
10. The Natural World
11. The Urban Experience
12. Conflict and Resistance
13. The Body