



These words about art appear in this exhibition. Check out their meanings.

Art: People have argued for centuries over what art is and what it isn't. One dictionary defines art as any work that exhibits human skill, creativity, and imagination. Another defines it more narrowly as creative activity (especially painting and drawing). What do you think art is?

Taonga: From the Māori language – something highly prized or treasured. Can include tangible objects and intangible cultural heritage like oral traditions, knowledge, and the performing arts.

Visual culture: What we experience primarily through looking (as distinct from touching, hearing, or other senses) and is created rather than occurring naturally. Visual culture includes logos, comics, videos, paintings, films, and performances.

ART TERMS

Appropriation: to take ideas or elements from another artist, artwork, or culture, especially without permission, to create a new work.

Canon: a body of artists and artworks widely accepted as the most significant in the development of a field of art.

Composition: the organisation or arrangement of elements (for example, shapes, lines, and colours) within an artwork.

Conventions: established and widely agreed upon ways of making art.

Curvilinear: made up of curved lines – seen often in Māori carving.

Formal: the visual form or structure of an artwork rather than its content.

Medium, media: the materials used to create artworks, for example, oil paint, watercolour, bronze, wood.

Perspective: a way of creating an illusion of depth or three-dimensional space on a flat surface.

Positive space: the visual space created by the main elements of the artwork such as lines, shapes, or colour. **Negative space** is the remaining empty background space in the artwork.

Spectrum: the range of colours that make up a rainbow – from red to violet.

ART MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES

Acrylic: a synthetic paint that can be thinned with water. Compared to traditional artists' oil paints, acrylics offer quicker drying times and do not yellow with age. They were first used in the 1940s.

Alkyd: synthetic resin often used in house paints, enamels, and varnishes. It requires thinning with turpentine and is commonly known as oil-based paint.

Assemblage: a sculpture made by combining found or pre-made objects.

Cast bronze: a process that involves pouring liquid bronze into a mould. The metal hardens into a bronze shape in the form of the mould, which is then removed.

Ceramic: an object made of clay that is hardened by firing.

Chalk: soft rock or clay mixed with gum and compressed into sticks for drawing.

Conté: a hard, grease-free type of crayon.

Drypoint: a print made by using a metal plate on which the master image has been scratched with steel tools. The drypoint print has a distinctive look, with soft, feathery lines caused by ink caught in the rough burr of metal alongside each groove.

Earthenware: a ceramic fired at a lower temperature than stoneware, resulting in a soft, earthy-looking object that is not waterproof unless glazed.

Engraving: a print made by using a metal plate on which the master image has been scratched with a sharp tool called a burin or graver.

Etching: a print made by using a metal plate on which the master image has been etched. A wax-covered metal plate has an image scratched through the wax and is dipped in acid to etch the exposed lines into the metal. The printmaker removes the wax layer before inking the etched plate and printing.

Gesso: typically made from a mixture of plaster of Paris and glue, which is applied as an undercoat to a painting surface so that it is more receptive to paint.

Glaze: a glassy coating that both seals and decorates surfaces. The term can be applied to paintings or ceramics.

Gouache: a water-soluble paint similar to watercolour but with a whitening material added that makes it opaque so the paper or board surface doesn't show through.

Linocut: a print made by using a piece of linoleum, a modern flooring material with a smooth, easily worked surface, on which the master image has been cut and gouged.

Print: an image made when a sheet of material, usually paper, contacts the surface of an inked or painted block, plate, or screen. See also drypoint, engraving, etching, linocut, and wood cut.

Silver gelatin print: a black and white print made on photographic paper that has a coating of silver suspended in gelatin. This is the most common type of twentieth-century black and white photograph.

Stoneware: a ceramic fired at a high temperature to give a stone-like appearance to the clay. Stoneware is hard and waterproof.

Tempera: a water-based paint that uses egg-yolk or glue as a binder to thicken it and give a shiny quality.

Watercolour: a see-through paint made from water-soluble gum and pigment.

Woodcut and wood engraving: a print made by using a wood block. A **woodcut** comes from a surface sawn along the wood's grain and involves cutting away the

wood to leave a relief image. A **wood engraving** (left) comes from a surface sawn across the grain in which the line to be printed is dug out of the wood. It allows much finer detail than a woodcut.

ART STYLES AND MOVEMENTS

Abstract art: art in which forms have been significantly simplified, exaggerated, or stylised. Sometimes there is no recognisable original form.

Conceptual art: art in which the original idea and the process by which it is realised is more important than the finished product. Conceptual artworks sometimes exist only as a description of an idea or concept.

Cubism: a style of painting developed by Picasso and Braque in Paris in the early 1900s characterised by multiple views of a subject within a single picture, and by flattened geometric forms.

Expressionism: art that emphasises strong emotion and feeling through distortion of colour and form.

Figurative art: art that represents objects from real life in a recognisable form, in particular the human figure.

Genre art: a realistic style of painting that depicts subjects and ordinary scenes from everyday life. A popular style in seventeenth-century Holland.

Gestural art: art where paint is applied in broad, sweeping gestures, the effect suggesting the physical act of creating the artwork itself.

Idealised: a description of artworks that represent objects or scenes made according to an accepted ideal of beauty.

Impressionism: an art movement that began in France during the 1860s. Impressionist artists painted outdoors and used divided brush strokes to capture the changing effect of light and colour on their subjects.

Modernism: the broad movement in art of the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries that was characterised by a deliberate departure from tradition and the use of new and innovative forms of expression.

Post-impressionism: an umbrella term to describe changes in impressionism from about 1886. The four main artists associated with this movement are Cézanne, Seurat, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. Post-impressionist artists rejected the naturalism of the impressionists instead giving greater emphasis to expression, structure, and form.

Realism: a nineteenth-century style of art that showed a down-to-earth version of the real world – often depicting the lives of everyday people. In general, it means any realistic or natural representation of people, places, or things in art.

Renaissance: meaning ‘rebirth’ – refers to a great revival of interest in ancient Greek and Roman art that took place in Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, particularly in Italy.

Representational: a description of artworks that depict some aspect of reality in a straightforward way.

Romanticism: an artistic style originating in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It emphasised the expression of personal feeling and responses to the natural world.

Surrealism: a movement in art and literature originating in Paris in 1924. Surrealists sought to reveal the unconscious mind as a source of creative expression. Surrealism is represented by two main strands – the dream-like, fantastical work of artists such as Salvador Dalí, and the more abstract style of Joan Miró.