

View and Discuss Contemporary Art Together



Contemporary art is art created in the past few decades. The Arts Center has many exhibitions featuring contemporary artists. Sometimes those artists are invited to create new artwork, or a **commission**. Sometimes they are asked to show work they have already created.

What is the difference between contemporary art and modern art?

You also may have heard of modern art. Modern art was created between the mid-1800s and the 1970s. Artists at that time experimented with different art styles instead of following past traditions of art making such as formal portrait and landscape painting.

Contemporary artists follow in the footsteps of modern artists. They not only experiment with the materials and form of their work, but they often connect their work with their own experiences, current events, or social issues. Some works of contemporary art are **participatory** or **ephemeral**. Sometimes you will see documentation of an artwork that has happened, or could happen, as part of an exhibition.

Words to Know

Commission: When an artist is hired to create work for a specific person, exhibition, or place.

Participatory: Something that requires other people to be a part of it.

Ephemeral: The quality of lasting only a short time.

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Look

- Visit an exhibition in person or online at jmkac.org.
- Find an artwork that interests you. Take one minute to look closely.

Respond

After looking closely for one minute, try one of the following prompts.

- Create a sketch of the artwork.
- Think about or write a question you have about the artwork.
- Find a part of the artwork that reminds you of a person, place, or thing you know about. Write or sketch about this connection.

Discuss

- Share your sketch with a friend. Did they create a sketch too? Did you draw the entire artwork, or just a detail? Is there something they noticed that you did not see?
- If you thought about a question, can you answer it by talking together? You can also try to find the answer by reading the information in the gallery, looking on jmkac.org, or asking someone who works at the Arts Center.
- Have a conversation about what the artwork reminded you of. If you were going to create an artwork about that person, place, or thing, what materials would you use? What would it look like?

