



# Art Movements: How Artists Changed the World

KS2 ART & DESIGN

KS3 HISTORY

Ages 10-14



4 min read

## What Is an Art Movement?

An **art movement** is when a group of artists decide to paint, sculpt, or create in a completely new way. Instead of copying what came before, they break the rules and try something totally different. Think of it like a fashion trend—one day everyone wears bell-bottoms, the next day it's skinny jeans. Art movements are the same, but they last for years or even decades.

Think of it like a group of your friends deciding to invent a new game. Everyone else plays football, but your group decides: "Let's create something completely different!" Soon, other kids want to play your game too.

## The Renaissance: Looking Back to Look Forward

The **Renaissance** happened in **Europe between the 1300s and 1600s**. Artists like **Leonardo da Vinci** and **Michelangelo** became obsessed with making art look realistic. They studied human bodies, learned about perspective (making things look three-dimensional), and created masterpieces like the Mona Lisa. What made this movement special was that artists started treating art as a serious science, not just decoration.

## Impressionism: Catching the Moment

In the **1870s and 1880s**, artists like **Claude Monet** did something radical—they painted quickly with loose brushstrokes to capture light and colour in a moment. People thought they were lazy! But **Impressionist** artists weren't trying to paint exact copies of things. Instead, they wanted to show how light changed everything, painting the same water lilies or haystacks over and over at different times of day.

Think of it like taking a blurry photo that catches the feeling of a moment, rather than a perfect, sharp picture.

## Cubism: Breaking Art Into Pieces

In the **early 1900s**, **Pablo Picasso** and **Georges Braque** invented **Cubism**. Instead of painting things the way they look, they broke objects into geometric shapes and painted them from multiple angles at once. A face might have the nose pointing sideways and both eyes on one side. It looks weird, but it shows you the object from many viewpoints at the same time—like seeing an object from the front, back, and sides all at once.

## **Abstract Art: Pure Expression**

By the **1950s**, some artists decided paintings didn't need to look like anything real at all. **Abstract artists** like **Jackson Pollock** splattered and dripped paint onto huge canvases. There were no recognizable objects—just colours, shapes, and emotions. What made this movement special was that it was completely about feelings and creativity, not copying the real world.

Think of it like listening to music without words—you feel the emotion from the sounds, not from a story.

## **Why Movements Matter**

Art movements show us that artists are always asking: "What if we tried something completely different?" Each movement changed how people saw the world and inspired new generations of creators. Understanding them helps us appreciate that art isn't about following rules—it's about expressing ideas in fresh, exciting ways.