



The Great Art Movements That Changed History

KS3 ART & DESIGN

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 4 min read

What Are Art Movements?

An **art movement** is when a group of artists decide to create art in a new way at roughly the same time. They share similar ideas about what art should look like and what it should mean. Art movements usually happen because society changes, new technology appears, or artists simply want to try something different.

Think of it like fashion trends. Just as everyone suddenly starts wearing baggy jeans or bright colours, artists also follow trends where they all paint or sculpt in similar styles.

The Renaissance: Back to Ancient Ideas

The **Renaissance** happened in **Europe from the 14th to 17th centuries**. Artists became fascinated by **ancient Greek and Roman art**, and they started painting more realistically. They learned about **perspective**, which made paintings look three-dimensional. Famous artists like **Leonardo da Vinci** and **Michelangelo** created masterpieces during this time.

Impressionism: Capturing Light and Colour

In **19th-century France**, **Impressionist artists** like **Claude Monet** and **Pierre-Auguste Renoir** painted outdoors to catch natural light. Instead of painting exact details, they used quick brushstrokes and bright colours to show the feeling of a moment. People were shocked at first because the paintings looked unfinished, but Impressionism changed art forever.

Think of it like taking a quick photo of a sunset—you capture the colours and mood, not every tiny detail.

Cubism: Breaking Art Into Pieces

Pablo Picasso and **Georges Braque** started **Cubism** in the early **1900s**. They painted objects from multiple angles all at once, breaking them into geometric shapes. A face might show the front and side view simultaneously, which confused many viewers.

Surrealism: Dreams and Imagination

Surrealist artists like **Salvador Dalí** painted strange, dreamlike scenes. They wanted to explore the **unconscious mind** and create bizarre combinations—like melting clocks or impossible landscapes. Surrealism encouraged artists to ignore reality and let imagination run wild.

Abstract Art: Colours and Shapes Only

Abstract artists removed recognizable objects completely. Instead of painting a person or landscape, they used only colours, shapes, and lines to express feelings. **Wassily Kandinsky** and **Jackson Pollock** were pioneers of this movement. Pollock famously dripped and splattered paint across huge canvases.

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

Modern Art Today

Today, artists continue experimenting with **digital art**, **performance art**, and **installation art**. There's no single dominant movement anymore; artists mix styles and create whatever they want. Understanding these movements helps us see how creativity changes and evolves.