Activity 1

What Makes Something Art?

What Do You See?

GOALS

In this activity you will:
• Create a class definition of art.
• List some materials used to make art.
• Describe how chemistry is related to art.

What Do You Think?

“The art of a people is a true mirror of their minds.”
Nehru

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”
Picasso

“Art is either plagiarism or revolution.”
Gauguin

“We must never forget that art is not a form of propaganda; it is a form of truth.”
John F. Kennedy

What makes something art?
The What Do You Think? question is meant to get you thinking about what you already know or think you know. Don’t worry about being right or wrong. Discussing what you think you know is an important step in learning.

Record your ideas about this question in your Active Chemistry log. Be prepared to discuss your responses with your group and the class.
Investigate

1. Look at the photographs of artwork on these pages. Then answer the following questions on your own in your Active Chemistry log.
   a) List at least 10 different forms or types of art.
   b) Write down some of the materials used to make art.
   c) For each material you listed in (b), consider what properties of the material make it useful for creating artwork.
2. Share your ideas with your small group.
   a) Make a list of the different art forms your group suggested.
   b) Make a group list of the different materials used in art.
   c) Write down why your group thinks each material is useful.
   d) Write down a group definition of art.
3. Over the next few weeks, become aware of the art around you. Look for examples of art in parks, as part of buildings, in your neighborhood, in magazines or posters, and in your school. As you examine artwork, look at it from two perspectives—that of an artist and that of a materials chemist.
   a) Keep a record of what you observe.
**Chem to Go**

1. **Preparing for the Chapter Challenge**

   The pictures on these pages contain a wide variety of types of art. They show some of the earliest known forms of art along with some of today’s most innovative artworks.

   a) Discuss how you could use these to express something about yourself and/or your times.

   b) Describe what information you might need to find out about these artworks in order to create your museum display.

**Inquiring Further**

1. **Impact of technology on art**

   Research the major art movements. List characteristics of each movement and some of its most notable artists and their works. Explain how you could distinguish between art of one movement and that of another. Discuss any relationships between art movements and advancements in technology. Reflect on how you can incorporate this knowledge into your museum display.

2. **Timeline of art movements**

   Create a timeline depicting the major art movements throughout human history. Illustrate your timeline with examples from that movement. Identify areas where chemistry might be involved in creating different types of art and add that information to your timeline.