

The Urban Experience

Theme 11: The Urban Experience

Introduction

For thousands of years cities have been hubs of activity, centers of industry, and places from which new aesthetic trends originate, evolve, and spread. The creative visions of planners, painters, architects, and sculptors have shaped the development of cities around the world. In turn, the urban experience has inspired the creation of artwork depicting aspects of city life.

Session

Review:

1. Share your responses to the comparison questions for The Natural World.
2. Share any other questions or ideas prompted by the previous assignment.

Watch The Urban Experience video (30 minutes).

Consider/discuss the following:

1. How has the organization of a city (its plan or organic layout) represented the values and beliefs of the citizens within it or their leaders?
2. If taxes are used to support architecture or public art, who should have the right to decide what public art or architecture will be built or presented? What criteria should be set to make these aesthetic choices?
3. How have artists' representations of cities informed viewers about the nature and zeitgeist of a particular urban place and time? How do we identify the idealism or the realism of city life in the artistic style of artwork?
4. What role do artists have in cities?
5. How have artists addressed urban problems in their work? How has art had an effect on metropolitan difficulties?

Between Sessions:

Go to the Web site at www.learner.org/courses/globalart and:

1. Explore featured artworks from this program, including the descriptive text and the expert perspective commentary.
2. Read the chapter about The Urban Experience in the downloadable text.
3. On the Web, compare selected artworks by considering the questions posed. Prepare to share your responses by taking notes. Bring your notes to the next session.