



HOW TO LOOK FOR ART OUTSIDE OF MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL CENTERS?

General Objective

The aim of this Practical Sheet is to bring people closer to the art world as a whole. In fact, art is only in museums. This is a myth that must be dispelled

In this practical sheet, you will:

- ✓ learn more about the 'art-museum' combination in general;
- ✓ learn where we can find art outside museums and cultural centers;
- ✓ discover how this can enrich everyday life.

You will need:

- ✓ the desire to discover more of your city and go for a walk;
- ✓ a sheet of paper, a pen and a city map.
- ✓ a camera or smartphone in connection with Activity 1 (optional)

Challenges and settings

The 'art-museum' combination

Often, we are used to thinking that all art is in museums. But you don't just have to go to museums to appreciate works of art. The combination of art and museum is so strong and widespread among us that we often think it is the only place dedicated to art.

The most natural thing for everyone is to associate a city with a place that represents it, and without realizing it, this often corresponds to a museum: the

MoMA in New York, the Louvre in Paris, the Prado in Madrid, the



National Gallery in London or the Uffizi in Florence. In fact, when we travel, we tend to visit at least one museum, the most iconic of a given city, as one of our first destinations.

But is art really only inside museums?

Art actually manifests itself in many different forms and in thousands of unexpected places. And if Instagram is where we all are at the moment, it's safe to say that art can be found there too. But there are also open-air and non-open-air places that host great masterpieces but cannot be considered museums at the same time. We are thinking of private galleries, exhibitions preceding major auctions or artists' studios or archives; as well as street art, monuments in city squares, even frescoes on period buildings or the construction of some houses themselves.

A few examples:

- Public artwork:

Public art is visually and physically accessible to the public; it is installed in public space in both outdoor and indoor settings. Public art seeks to embody public or universal concepts rather than commercial, partisan or personal concepts or interests.

In every city, large or small, there is always at least one public artwork, often a sculpture. This idea of art goes back to the beginnings of history when large stones or bronze statues representing gods, generals or emperors towered over the most important spaces of public life. This way of presenting art certainly predates any museum and is also much more common. A work of public art is almost always seen much more than any masterpiece displayed in a museum. In recent decades the traditional idea of public sculpture has been completely transformed, taking on increasingly abstract forms. The streets and squares are now animated by a great variety of styles and compete with the museums in our cities. The real merit of the works that surround us is that they have the possibility to react. They contribute to the evolution of their surroundings in a way that would not be possible in any white cube.



Cloud Gate, aka "The Bean" by Anish Kapoor, Chicago, Illinois.

- Street art

But public sculpture is not the only art form outside museums. Street art, as its name suggests, surrounds us and is now common in many large cities. Even more than public art, street art confronts its surroundings and characterises them. Street art is visual art created in public locations for public visibility. It has been associated with the terms *independent art*, *post-graffiti*, *neo-graffiti* and *guerrilla art*.



Girl with Balloon (2002), Banksy, London, UK.

It varies often, is sometimes short-lived and the themes are usually related to politics or satire. Street art works draw our attention to the streets. This makes it one of the most photographed art forms in the world, second only to architecture. But at the same time, by its very nature, it could not be housed in a museum. Entire neighborhoods such as Camden in London are full of works

of art that blend in completely with their surroundings, helping to characterize that place and make it remembered for its magical atmosphere. Street art also helps to give a new look to symbolic places in our history such as the Berlin Wall, leaving room for the freedom of art to redevelop the place.

- **Land art:**

Land art, also called environmental art, is an art movement that emerged in 1960s-70s, based on the artist's intervention in the surrounding environment, which becomes an essential part of the work of art. Land art is an expression of the art world's awareness of environmental issues. It is the artistic prefiguration of new models of life. It is a reflection on man's relationship with the environment, which is fully in line with the epistemological construction of the nature-culture categories developed in modern Western thought. One of the main exponents has been the artistic project known as *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*; for example, they intervene in the landscape and modify it, in their case temporarily. They are best known for their works made of fabric, "packing" monuments or spreading long sheets in natural places.



The Arc de Triomphe wrapped by Christo (2021), Paris, France.

- **The private gallery**

First and foremost, the private gallery, which, whether it hosts a young artist or proposes an exhibition project linked to a big name, is a place with a mission

that goes beyond the sale of a single work. After all, our art history was also made by great gallery owners like Paul Duran Ruel. The first to bet on the Impressionists and to make their name big overseas. And who among us would have missed the opportunity to enjoy the Impressionists just for the sheer fear of entering the Rouen gallery?

- **Artists' archives**

Another opportunity to see a work of art up close and often without filters is to visit the studio of the artist who created it. It is also an opportunity to discover and support young talent.

So, art is not only in museums! All these other forms push us to find art even when it is not explicitly indicated. We have been used since childhood to thinking about art where it is indicated to us, and museums are for us stable but often immobile points of reference. There are then many other ways of getting in touch with art outside museums: entire books have been written about performance art, tattoo art, digital art or design.

Adaptation

According to Mary Jane Jacob, a curator and art/architecture historian, public art brings art closer to life.

Common characteristics of public art are public accessibility, public realm placement, community involvement, public process (including public funding); these works can be permanent or temporary.

Public art is publicly accessible, both physically and/or visually. When public art is installed on privately owned property, general public access rights still exist. Public art is characterized by site specificity, where the artwork is "created in response to the place and community in which it resides" and by the relationship between its content and the public. Cher Krause Knight states that "art's publicness rests in the quality and impact of its exchange with audiences ... at its most public, art extends opportunities for community engagement but



cannot demand particular conclusion,” it introduces social ideas but leaves room for the public to come to their own conclusions.

Public art instills meaning creating memorable experiences for all. It humanizes the built environment, provides an intersection between past, present, and future, and can help communities thrive. Public art has been found to provide a positive impact on communities by supporting economic growth and sustainability, attachment and cultural identity, artists as contributors, social cohesion and cultural understanding, and public health and belonging.

And now...**let's try our hand at discovering art outside museums!**

As we have seen so far, art in museums is not the only art. museums are a social construction of mankind, if we think about it, they are a relatively recent and typically western invention.

Public art instills a greater sense of identity and understanding of where we live, work, and visit, now you can try yourself to look for art outside museums and cultural centers.

Practical examples and inspiration

In order to do so, we propose two different activities.

The first activity is designed for several people. You can divide into groups, and each group will have a map of the city. Look for artworks in your city in each of the categories described above and mark them on your map. If you have a camera, take a photo together as proof that you found it and were there. This game works a bit like a treasure hunt. The first group to identify each type of art wins.



For the second activity we will use the map again; not to go looking for something, but to be ourselves and create a kind of open air museum. With this activity, we will realize how rich in art our city and everyday life can be.

Think of the streets you are used to. Each person marks on the map the places where he/she feels he/she has seen monuments, graffiti, small artists' studios. Make a legend on a sheet of paper next to the map, write down what you have marked. Also mark the monuments/public art that strikes you most about your city.

This will be your personal art map! Have fun sharing it, recommending it, giving it as a gift, to bring art into everyone's everyday life.

Additional resources

- To know more about where to enjoy art outside of museums
 - o <https://www.tatler.com/gallery/where-to-enjoy-art-outside-of-museums>
- To know more about Christo and Jeanne-Claude art
 - o <https://christojeanneclaude.net/>
- For references about public art and to know more about it:
 - o <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/public-art>
- The 10 Most Famous Pieces of Street Art in the World
 - o <https://blog.artsper.com/en/get-inspired/the-10-most-famous-pieces-of-street-art-in-the-world/>

