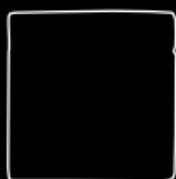


What is
contemporary
Art?



BALTIC



Introduction

Contemporary art is the term used for art of the present day. Usually the artists are alive and still making work.

Contemporary art is often about ideas and concerns, rather than solely the aesthetic (the look of the work).

Artists try different ways of experimenting with ideas and materials.

Contemporary artists use whatever they think illustrates their idea most appropriately. Nowadays artists have many different methods and materials to use. Some use painting and drawing but there is also photography, sculpture, film, new media, live performance, light, sound and installation. Contemporary art is therefore very varied.

To understand contemporary art it helps to ask questions.

These are questions that may help you explore what an artwork is about.



Does the work
tell a story?

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**Does the work tell a story?
Is there a narrative or story
to the work?**

Does the work communicate
an idea or feeling?
If so, is this important?

Are there any links to history
that you can make?

Does it make you think
of anything else?



Are there any
issues in the
work?

BALTIC



Are there any issues in the work?

Is there an underlying theme to the work?

Does the work make you think of anything important?

Are there any links that you can make to history, politics or everyday life?

Does the work make you want to investigate something? If so, what and why?



Are there any images, objects, materials or symbols that are important in the work?

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Are there any images, objects, materials or symbols that are important in the work?

Are there any clues hidden in the work? (Sometimes artists include objects or images that represent something else).

Does the artist want you to interpret what is in the work?

Is there anything in the work that refers to other cultures?



Does the
work have
a title?

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Does the work have a title?

Does the title suggest anything?

Does the title explain anything about the work?

If there is no title why might this be?



Is colour
important
in the work?

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Is colour important in the work?

What colours have
been used?

Does the colour create any
effect or emotion? If so, can
you describe it?

If different colours had been
used would this matter?
Would it create a new
meaning?



Does the work
interact with the
space it is in?

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Does the work interact with the space it is in?

Is the presentation of the work important?

Does the environment have an impact on the work?

Could this work be put anywhere else?

Do you have to experience the work from a particular place or angle? Try looking at the work from different places.



Does it require
a set time to
look at the
work?

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Does it require a set time to look at the work?

How long do you think you need to spend with the work to see it properly?

Can you see more if you spend longer looking at something?

If the work is a film, do you have to watch all of it?

Do you have to watch it from the beginning?

Does it change over time?



How has the
work been
made?

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How has the work been made?

Describe the techniques the artist has used?

Do the materials used have any meaning or associations?

What does this tell you about the work?

What senses do the materials affect? (ie. Is it visual? Do they smell? Can you touch them? Can you hear anything?)

