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The Basic Concepts

When we study Art synchronically, that is, when we analyze its parts independent of the social and cultural context from where it originates, we discuss the components of subject matter, medium, technique, elements, and the Art's overall visual or aural form. This brings out the expressive content (ideas, feelings, or sensation) presented as Art. Of these components, medium is the most essential because it is through the medium that Art becomes palpable.

There are basic concepts we study when we dissect art. Art will necessarily reach us through some palpable form. What the artist wishes to express will have to pass through a "bridge" between two points from where, in the first point, the artist reaches us, the second point. The artist with his ideas and feelings that he wishes to express, will need this "bridge" to connect himself with us — his perceivers or listeners. This, to simplify matters, is the process of the artistic creation.

Subject

But even before he conceives of this link, or "bridge," an artist will have to express something. This something may be an idea or a feeling. It will be what his art is all about. This is called the *subject*, a term used to denote whatever is represented in a work of art.

However, not all arts have subjects. Many forms do not represent anything. Arts without subjects are called *non-objective* or *non-representational* because they refer to nothing in the real world. Many paintings and sculptures have no subject as they do not represent anything but are viewed and appreciated only in the manner their elements are designed, e.g., how colors are combined, and how shapes are merged. Buildings may have beautiful structures yet

these structures do not represent anything because architecture is not a representational art.

Many music compositions, too, combine tones and beautiful sounds yet these elements may not refer to anything in particular. Forms like the sonata, etude, concerto, and symphony, for instance, are understood and appreciated solely for their forms, but the opera and oratorio will have some subject to express about.

While many forms have subjects, many, too, do not. Subject, therefore, is not essential to art.

Literature is a genre where subject is an important element. When we read words, we expect words to refer to some idea in the real world. When words combine into sentences and sentences become paragraphs, they form thought groups that refer to some reality. However, there are rare exceptions when words or symbols do not refer to anything in nature but are appreciated for their own sake. National Artist Jose Garcia Villa's comma poems fall under this category.

But this is a rare example as it is easy to discern what a short story, a novel, or an essay is all about. In fact, we often study about the theme or subject of a literary work in our classes.

For instance, theatre, dance, and film will have subjects, as subjects are inherent in understanding what these performing art forms are portraying. But again in extreme cases, these forms may be without any. Performances without subjects are more common in dances, for example, where a dance is appreciated simply for the movements and the choreography it embodies. Then too, the modern age has evolved hybrid forms like performance art where often subject is absent.

The choice of subject is the artist's option. Nevertheless, 'ugly' or 'beautiful' subjects have no bearing on the beauty or ugliness of Art or of being 'artistic' and aesthetically appealing. What is more important in appreciating art is the manner the artist uses to bring across what he wants to express. The choice of subject, therefore, does little to make a work 'artistically' appealing. It does not follow that a 'beautiful' subject will automatically produce a great work.

Anything in the world can be sources of Art. Subjects may be the personal experience of an artist or author. Subjects can also be about history, about people of various nations, about folklore, religion, and about other art forms. There is no limit to subjects an artist can imagine.

Medium

Artists use something to reach their perceivers, a tangible form so that their expressions may be seen, heard, or experienced. This is what we call the *medium*. The medium is the physical means through which we come in contact with the work of art. It is the material out of which the artist creates his work.

The material, too, is the means through which the artist expresses his thoughts and feelings.

We enjoy Art through our senses. We see a painting or touch a sculpture. We listen to music or poetry. Even our sense of smell is sometimes utilized in a theatre performance like when the creators add objects that emit odor (incense, for example) to suggest an environment enhancing the audience's experience of a performance.

Medium, therefore, is what distinguishes one art form from the other. We know that music is different from poetry because each uses different means in bringing across an artist's expressions. This is also true for painting and sculpture, although sculpture is closer to architecture only because they use similar mediums, like stone or wood.

Categories of art are defined according to the mediums these art forms employ. Art that is created in space is called the *visual arts*, and art created in time is called the *temporal* or *aural arts*. Many forms combine the use of space and time as means of expressing, and these we call the *combined* or *multi-media arts*.

The *visual arts* include painting, sculpture, photography, and architecture. Also called the *space arts*, the medium for these visual expressions occupy space therefore these mediums can be seen. They may be two-dimensional like painting, photography or printmaking. Or they may be three-dimensional, having height, width, and volume, like sculpture and architecture.



Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Commode*, 1883-87. Oil on Canvas

Materials are handled differently by the artist. The choice of mediums, in fact, determines a work's expressive content. Stone that is chiselled will have a rougher, rawer appeal than marble, which will exude a smooth, classical appeal. Aluminium will exude a contemporary feel and will work best projecting modern styles of presentation.

Furthermore, the choice of material is the artist's option because he chooses according to

his intuition about how best his ideas can be expressed. The nature of each material determines the artist's expressive content as each material is worked out in different ways. Clay is molded and fired, stone is chiselled, and metal is heated then cast.

On the other hand, mediums in the space arts can capture moments frozen in time. Because the mediums are permanent, so will the art works be unmoving, too. Leonardo da Vinci captured the enigmatic smile of the *Mona Liza* displayed forever in the Louvre Museum in Paris. The spirit of academic freedom is clearly evoked by Guillermo's Tolentino's sculpture, *Oblation*, that meets all visitors to the U.P. campus in Diliman.

Medium is essential in art. Without medium, there will be no way an artist can bring across his expressions. We can do away with subject matter and even function, but without medium, there will be no art.

In short, as far as the Space Arts are concerned, the medium of painting is color, that of sculpture is mass, and that of architecture is a compendium of mass and color. In the Temporal or Aural Arts, the medium of music is tone and that of literature is the word. Since poetry crosses between music and literature, its mediums will be both words and sounds. Note that poetry is best appreciated when it is read aloud. The *Combined Arts* combine the mediums of the spatial and temporal arts so that theatre will use action as well as sounds, including color and mass.

The list above is discussed in more detail in the next chapters that will cover each Art genre. The mediums of these art forms will have qualities and these qualities we call the *elements*.

Technique

How well an artist handles his medium is what constitutes *technique*. It is the artist's ability to do what he wants to do with his medium. It is the way an artist uses his materials to express an idea, feeling, or sensation. Technique, therefore, refers to craftsmanship which is a technical ability.

Being technically proficient means that a poet can easily conjure words on paper to evoke a feeling or an insight. A musician can make a trumpet sound the way he wants it to sound. A sculptor can easily chisel bits and pieces of stone to come out with the form he intends. A painter with fast strokes of his brush captures the lifelike image of the subject of his portrait. A singer can reach very high tones while a dancer can do exacting *fouettes* (pronounced *feweh-tay*, a sharp whipping around of the body from one direction to another) many times in one single execution. In many other creative processes, techniques figure in the way glass is blown into shapes, icing is layered on a cake, a zipper is sewn into the insides of a dress, or metal is wrought into an elaborate gate.

As different art forms use different techniques, a single art genre uses

various techniques in the manner its mediums are handled. Each medium, too, may require separate artists who are adept in handling specific materials. For instance, a mason may be good at working with cement but deficient with wood to build a desired structure. A saxophone musician playing jazz may improvise with fast notes within wide registers but will be handicapped playing a trumpet which requires another kind of technique. A painter can work well with oil but will find using watercolor difficult.

But technique is not the hallmark of creativity. An artisan may have excellent technique but lacks the deeper insights revealed in his subject. A woodworker can build elegant finely-crafted furniture but his creations may not have values that we look for in the arts. A painter can copy with photographic accuracy the face of a man but this exact replica may lack the insights one associates with Art.

As technique, therefore, connects to an artist's control of his medium, it does not necessarily measure the artist's creativity. An artist's interpretation of a reality does. The high notes of a soprano are meaningless if these notes are there for their sake alone. To a painter, being photographically accurate is simply copying what he sees in real life. A camera can do the task of copying. Using a medium to express an idea does not always mean that the value of this idea is well presented. An artist may possess excellent technique, but his artisanship may produce works that lack aesthetic values. The values, therefore, of a work of art are defined by the effective expression of insights through an adept technique.

To artists, technique is no doubt important. But artists should use technique as a means to an end and not the end itself. On the other hand, for the craftsmen, technique is an end by itself.

Form

The next chapters will discuss the genres of Art presented in forms that are visual, aural, or in a combination of both. Form is the particular manner in which the elements exist or appear. It is produced because of the elements (qualities of the medium) interacting, relating, and fusing to express an idea, a feeling, or a sensation. These ideas, feelings, and sensations constitute the expressive content of Art.

Expressive content arises from the fusion of subject (if there is a subject) and the form. Subject and form (also, Content and Style in Literature) are parameters often used in the judgement of whether or not a work may be considered Art. Expressive content constitutes the attitudes, feelings, idea or statement about the subject that the artist tries to convey via the form he uses.

Form also refers to the manner elements are assembled to produce a composition. These elements – again, the qualities of the medium – are

judiciously chosen by the artist according to what he thinks and feels will make the composition beautiful and effective. Making the composition beautiful is a means that can vividly bring out its meaning or the effects an artist wishes to relay.

Through years of nurturing and practice, conventions have been formed about what a beautiful composition should be. Although these conventions are influenced by the cultures nurturing them, they will have similar principles throughout, like balance and harmony. These principles are universally being applied in the arts of the West as in the arts of Asia. With some variations, however, these principles of composition function to draw in the viewer or listener an aesthetic experience and an understanding of the insight that the artist wishes to evoke.

CHAPTER FOUR. THE BASIC CONCEPTS

Discussion

1. Define and give examples: subject, medium, technique, and form
2. Is it necessary for Art to have subject? Why or why not?
3. If a subject is 'ugly,' does it necessarily follow that the Art, too, is 'ugly'?
4. Can technique be the ultimate arbiter of an Art work's greatness? Discuss this.
5. Define the elements of a medium. Illustrate with real samples.

Suggested Activities

Activity 1.

Using the same groupings, each member brings any coloring material to class. There will be no limits to the coloring materials a student brings (Better if each brings a different one from the others so they produce variety in their works.) Each group also provides a 4" X 2" illustration board.

Instructions will be *general* (this is important: no "spoon feeding," no suggestions). Fill up the space of your illustration board using your coloring materials in the manner you see fit.

Shapes and colors in the board *should not* be recognizable objects, like a seascape, nipa hut, carabao, birds in flight, etc. All we want to see are shapes, colors, and forms put together. The choice of colors and the use of forms will be the groups'.

Time: Give the work of the composition the time of the duration of a class. Discussions can ensue the next time the class meets when all works shall be exhibited in the front, and the assigned facilitator reports on their group's efforts. The teacher facilitates the discussion. The better works may be exhibited in a culminating activity.

Activity 2.

Instead of coloring materials, each member of the groups brings objects that make sound. Working together, these members put the sounds together to come up with some musical composition with a recognizable form.

The members of each group collaborate so that the combinations of the sounds they make add up to some tangible form even with the limitations.

The teacher motivates the groups in a creative session by asking them to develop their pieces in a "linear" manner, that is, one segment moves into the next. The teacher also prods them to explore variety in the combinations of the sounds they

produce and to discover the commonalities that their sounds can come up with. (The teacher can use the example of how a story develops, from its introduction, complications, to climax, and a resolution.)

The class holds a mini-concert after each group separately composes its short pieces.

Additional Activity: If time is available, the demonstrations end with feedback sessions to critique the "compositions." After a session of evaluations, the groups may return to a second creative process to enhance their works and to produce a second "concert."

Discussion points:

Form

Medium (in music, the difference between sound and tone)

Technique

Principles of design and composition (particularly RVC: repetition, variation, and contrast)

Theme or motif

Collaboration and the Creative Process

5

The Visual Arts Painting, Sculpture, and Related Arts

The visual arts are called such because, being composed in space, they can be seen. Their appreciation is experienced through the eyes, primarily, and through the sense of touch, particularly in sculpture. Also called the spatial arts, these include painting, and sculpture. Allied visual art forms like prints, drawings, mosaics, and frescoes are related to painting because their images are formed in flat surfaces within defined spatial boundaries or frames. Like any art form, painting and sculpture have developed their own techniques from the many mediums they have used in their long years of development as one of Man's more significant venues of expressions. Discussion of the other visual arts like photography and architecture continues in the next chapters.

The Visual Arts use space to express. Also called the *Spatial Arts*, they include painting, sculpture, and architecture. Of the three, architecture is the most functional, and we will deal with this last.

In the last 3,000 years, painting and sculpture have gone through tremendous changes not only in the choice of subject matter but also in the manner subject matter (or the absence of it) is depicted. Because of these changes, it is difficult to categorize painting and sculpture that have extended their bounds into the realms of related and unrelated forms such as installation art, performance art, and action painting, among many other hybrid forms.

In this chapter of a basic Humanities course, however, we will deal with the more conventional forms of painting and sculpture, where we keep on track classical samples.

PAINTING

Medium

The medium of painting is color. Color is applied on surfaces such as canvas, cloth, wood, paper, and the like to produce images and meanings. Pigment is that part of painting that provides the color, and pigment is taken from organic sources like trees, vegetable, and other natural elements. However, much of our color requirements now are produced from chemical processes in factories. These pigments produce paint which becomes the means by which painters' expressions are depicted on surfaces, or spaces. These paints have different qualities, and, again, these qualities determine the expressive content a painter evokes in his work.

A painter does not always have complete control of his materials. Painters have to deal with the availability of mediums that are dependent on technology, economics, and many other factors, not the least of which is the milieu the painter creates in. Painters centuries ago depended on aides to pulverize and mix pigments to produce liquefied matters to be used in their work. Preparing the paint and painting were taxing professions, but then these painters had the luxury of time. But for today's painters who may not have the luxury of time, paints which are usually ready-mixed in tubes in all colors of the spectrum, can be bought off store shelves.

The following are some of the common color mediums our painters use.

Oil. Color pigments are ground and mixed with linseed oil to produce a liquid-like constituency whose viscosity (the thickness or fluidness) can be thinned by turpentine or any other solvent. Oil is a favourite because it is a flexible medium. Although slow to dry, oil can be applied by any kind and size of brush (air brush included), in various manners: palette knife, bare hands, or the use of other instruments like sticks. Because its thinness or thickness can be controlled, oil paint can produce opaque or a transparent-like textures. It is capable of being applied with fine and broad strokes or through *impasto*, in which large lumps of paint are applied on canvas with a knife, presenting a three-dimensional quality. It, too, is a favorite because it can cover or overlay previous layers and, thus, create translucent effects in the combinations of colors, or even erase what a painter may wish to change.

Acrylic. This most common medium is easily accessible and inexpensive. It is versatile as this synthetic paint may be mixed with water to temper thinness or thickness. As it can be applied to any surface, it has the flexible qualities of oil. But unlike oil, acrylic is quick drying and does not crack or turn yellow with age.

Watercolor. Pigment in watercolor is mixed with water rather than with oil. Being a difficult medium to control because it dries quickly, watercolor compels the artist to master the technique to get the required results he intends. Watercolor painting is characterized by the transparency of its texture

Michelangelo, The Sistine Chapel ceiling
1508-12, fresco.



which is controlled by the amount of water that the artist mixes with the paint. In many cases, the texture of the surface of the paper shows through the transparency in the paint.

Tempera. Tempera is another difficult medium to master allowing artists less leeway for corrections and over layering because, like watercolor, it dries quickly. Pigments in tempera are taken from organic pigments mixed with egg. Tempera is usually applied on wooden panels surfaced with *gesso*, a

combination of gypsum and gelatine.

Fresco. Fresco painting is produced when organic pigments are mixed with water and applied to a damp plaster wall. The process allows the water to seep into the surface and become a part of the wall and remains so until the wall falls. Such is the process that Michelangelo used in painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

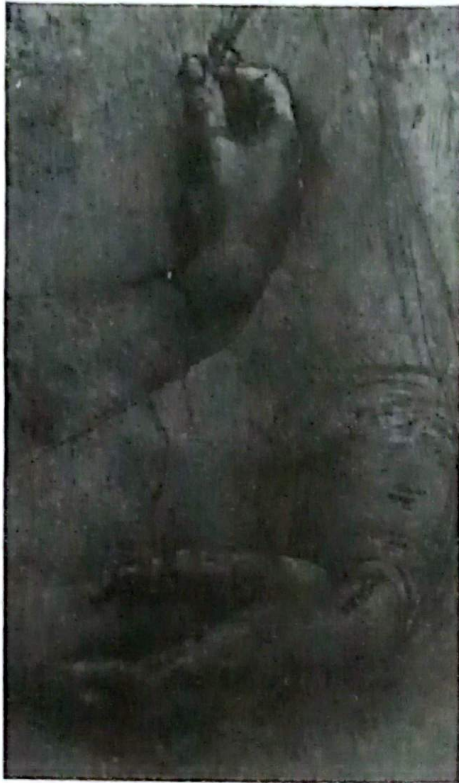
Encaustic. Artists of the old civilizations used this ancient technique to paint portraits and other images on their coffins. Also known as hot wax painting, the encaustic process adds colored pigments to heated beeswax. The liquid-like mixture is then applied to porous surfaces like wood, though canvas and other materials may also be used. Tools like metal and special brushes apply the paint before it cools. Heated metal tools are also used to shape the wax once it has cooled onto the surface. Heat-generating instruments like lamps and heat guns allow artists more time in which to apply and shape this medium. Besides being a painting medium where wax is the binding element, encaustic can also be sculpted as well. When the surface cools, a cloth polishes the finish to produce a translucent quality.

RELATED VISUAL ARTS

Drawing

If paintings are the completed images of spaces, shapes, and textures, drawings are the outlined designs of paintings. Called *studies*, drawings often set the final designs in paintings, the rough draft, so to speak, of a proposed work. Drawing, therefore, is the most fundamental of the skills in the visual arts and is the route artists take to acquire technique.

Drawings may design bigger works or they may be the final works themselves.



Apprentices learn the techniques of art through drawings. Rendering of the torso, or illustrating the more difficult parts like the feet and hands, is first learned through drawing. Apprentices learn to sketch which serves as the preliminary stage before a bigger or final work is pursued.

The rendering in comic strips and cartoons fall under the drawing category.

Mediums. The choice of mediums determines the expressive content a drawing can evoke. Drawing uses various mediums, the most common being the pencil. A graphite medium called "lead" can produce lines and shapes in various ranges of values, from thin to thick, from sharp to smudgy. Other mediums which are used in drawings include ink, pastel and chalk, charcoal, crayons, and silverpoint. Many drawings (like the Chinese styles) mix mediums where ink mixed with watercolor are applied on silk or rice paper.

Preliminary sketches are often drawn using chalk, which, like pastel, are dry pigments, compressed into sticks by a gum binder. These mediums can illustrate broad filled-up spaces in varying degrees of darkness and lightness. Being easily rubbed off, drawings in chalk and pastel are sprayed with a fixative to prevent the pigments from falling off.

Charcoal can represent light and shade and the play of light-dark values in an achromatic (black and white) quality. Charcoal is produced from carbon mixed with a binder, although some works use residues from burned pieces of wood. Charcoal can produce sharp outlines and it can also be rubbed to cover space in soft gray tones.

Crayons have less flexibility than pastels or chalk. Being hard, crayons stick well to paper but have less capability for value gradations as their pigments cannot be rubbed.

Mosaic

Created on flat surfaces like walls and floors, *mosaic* is the art of creating a picture by assembling pieces of colored glasses, stones, and other materials. These small cubic pieces glued to a surface by glue or plaster to create images are called *tesserae*. Mosaic art was important in the interiors of cathedrals which depicted the life of Christ or the various events in the Bible. Mosaic paintings that lend a fragmented quality are often associated with the divine and mysterious, especially in the faith of the Catholic. Many of the early Christian churches filled their inner structures with mosaics. However, mosaics have been known to be created as early as 2,000 B.C. in the Mesopotamian civilizations.

In the Philippines, mosaics often associated with religious art can be viewed in various churches, most notably the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros, the Sta. Cruz in Manila and the Victorias Church in Negros Occidental.

Stained Glass

Also associated with religious art, stained glass art uses assembled pieces of colored glass to create pictures. The translucent glass pieces allow light to produce various color values to affect a glorious atmosphere. Colored glass is produced in the same manner that glass is produced, from silica, having metallic oxides mixed with molten glass produce the colors required by the artist. These pieces are then assembled with strips of lead or iron placed in positions that will hold the glass pieces. This limitation in the use of the medium brings out a fragmented jig-saw like effect.

Stained glass art more closely relates to Gothic churches as this new architectural development during the Late Medieval Ages (refer to Part Three of this textbook: **Art History**) allowed sunlight to filter in to the interiors of large cathedrals. Sunlight allowed through large stained glass windows in place of dark massive walls gave these gothic churches an airy lightness.

Subjects of these glass art, like those of mosaics, were religious personages and events complementing the teachings of the Church. Stained glass art is also common in many of our Philippine churches.



Tapestry

Tapestries were the art forms of royalty, as tapestry artists were usually members of royal families who wove these from expensive silk and gold threads. The display of tapestry art was both an ostentatious projection of power and wealth and an artistic achievement by some of the leading artists of their times. These works of art were hung on walls of the castles, palaces, and cathedrals.

Tapestry is produced by weaving two sets of interlaced threads on a vertical loom: one set running parallel to the length (called the *warp*) and the other, width (called the *weft*). In normal weaving, the warp threads (pulled in tension on a loom) set up the weft thread that is passed across the threads of the warps. Design is produced by the combination of both waft and weft threads. Unlike normal weaving, the weft yarns are not continuous threads but are often cut and interlaced in their own small patterns of designs in specific areas. Warp threads like linen or cotton are common and the weft threads are usually wool or cotton. Expensive weft alternatives include silk, gold, and silver.

Printmaking

The process of printmaking involves creating images from ink that is transferred to paper from another material, usually a wooden block or a metal plate. The block or plate is etched or carved with designs in the reverse position

so that when ink is applied over the surface and this mold is pressed over paper, an image is printed out. Prints make faithful copies of the original, however, each print is considered original. Today, prints use electrostatic, ink jet, laser, and other methods used with computers. Traditionally, prints have been produced in four ways: relief, intaglio, stencil, and planographic. In each way, each surface holds ink differently. In *relief printing* (woodcut), the ink sits on the top surface of a plate or block that has been carved. In *intaglio* (etching and engraving) the ink sits in the grooves. In *stencil printing* (also *silkscreen*), there is a hole cut in the matrix and ink is pushed through it. In *planographic printing* (lithography), the matrix is flat, and the printing part is treated to hold ink, the other parts, to repel it.

Relief Printing. In relief printing, wood is incised so that only portions of the image that the artist wants to show stands out. Ink covers the surface and when this surface is pressed over paper or any other medium, a similar image is reproduced. If color is required, the artist reproduces several blocks where each block is spread with different colors. A full picture is created when each block is separately pressed on the same paper. The artist, however, should be precise that he presses the blocks on the correct exact points. A similar method is in the use of rubber linoleum called *linocuts*, using the same process as that used in wood.

Intaglio Printing. Intaglio uses the opposite process of relief printing. The design is engraved and scratched in a metal plate. The depressed lines are filled with ink and, with considerable pressure over a piece of damp paper, the plate will leave a clear impression on the paper. While all other print methods deposit ink in uniform layers, this type of printing spreads ink in different thickness to be deposited on the paper at the same time. Ink fills grooves, or incisions, of varying depths in an intaglio plate. The printer then wipes the plate surface clean. As the damp paper covering the plate runs hard through a press, all the depressions of the plate pulls the ink out to print the image.

Planographic Process. Also called *lithographic printing*, this kind of printing is done on smooth surfaces that have been chemically treated so that some parts will hold ink while others will not. This process is based on the principle that water and grease do not mix. The artist uses greasy crayon or greasy lithograph ink to make an illustration on a slab of limestone or a zinc plate. Chemicals are added so that the grease adheres to the stone. Applied by means of a roller, the ink adheres to the greasy parts, while the wet parts of the stone repel the ink. Subsequently, the stone and the paper are run through the litho-press, so that the drawing appears on the paper. As in most graphic techniques, the drawing appears in reverse. For a color printing, the paper runs through the press several times, with each time applying one color.

Stencil process. Ink rubbed over designs cut in special paper, cardboard or metal, reproduce designs underneath the surfaces of these materials. Also called *silkscreen process*, the principle is based on the use of stencils. A thin photo film is applied on a frame covered with a fine-meshed nylon cloth. A transparent foil with a drawing is placed on the silkscreen frame. It is illuminated, after which the frame is sprayed with water. On the places where the picture has lain on the wire-mesh cloth the water dissolves the emulsion and there the ink can pass through. The artist forces the ink through the screen onto the paper. This process produces an un-reversed duplicate of the original design.

Tarpaulin

A *tarpaulin* (or "tarp") is a durable plastic sheet that is water resistant and waterproof. Tarpaulin printing is now a common means to inform about almost anything because being common, it is relatively inexpensive, and easy to reproduce, particularly now when many have access to computer graphic programs. Tarp printing's commonness has made this kind of reproduction ordinary and within the reach of many. The process is simple: illustrators design what they wish to reproduce in computers using one of several digital graphic design programs, the most widely used being *Photoshop*. The images are then saved in a compact disk or any portable device that can keep digital files. These files are then brought to printing facility where a machine digitally prints out the files saved on the devices.

SCULPTURE

Sculpture is a three-dimensional work of art made of material like stone, metal, glass, wood, bronze, clay, iron, steel, paper, metal, marble, wood, and even: soap, chocolate, butter, balloons, ice, snow, and sand. Because it involves materials that can be shaped, sculpture is also considered a *plastic art*, a composition built in a space.

Sculptures are carved, assembled, constructed, fired, welded, molded, or cast and its final forms are often painted. A person who creates sculptures is called a sculptor. Most of these sculptures are called statues, three-dimensional images of persons or animals shaped from solid substances, and these are often displayed as public art.

Sculptures can represent subjects, may be representations of ideas, or are simply shapes created from found objects such as recycled materials. New technologies have been used to create interesting shapes that include holograms and light. Sculptures can be in-the-round, carved in relief, or kinetic.

Sculptures in-the-round (also free-standing) can be viewed from all positions. Statuary like the images of our *santos* in the churches are examples of this in-the-round type. Relief sculptures are carved with a flat background, from only one piece of material. Slightly raised sculptures are called *bas relief*. *High relief* sculptures are carved to project more than a half of their thickness to an almost round appearance, but also protruding from flat surfaces. *Kinetic* sculpture is constructed from moving parts and movement is an integral part of its effect.

But traditionally, sculptures are carved (like in wood), modelled (like in clay), and cast (like in bronze). Four processes are used in sculpture including subtraction, substitution, addition, and manipulation. Carving is subtracting, or removing unwanted materials to shape some form. Modelling is an additive process where materials like clay and wax are used.

However, casting is a more complicated process where a mold shapes some hot molten mass like plaster or metal. These are then cooled to solidify after these masses take the form that the sculptor wants.

Fabrication is another additive process where parts are fastened together by welding, stapling, wiring, soldering, or nailing to form a final shape. Materials

can be mixed, like a variety of metals, or the sculpture may be assembled from found objects, materials we find in junkyards and in any place.

Mediums

Sculpture uses mass to make a sculptor's ideas come to life. Different materials that have mass will have different qualities that will bring out different expressive contents, a choice a good sculptor can decide on.

Sculptors produce works that are as permanent as possible so they use durable and, consequently, expensive materials. These materials are bronze and stone, like marble, limestone, porphyry, and granite. More rarely, ancient Greek sculptures used precious materials such as gold, silver, jade, and ivory. More common materials used include hardwoods (such as narra, molave, and tanguile), glass, terracotta, ceramics, and various metals.

Wood's organic texture lends an earthly sense to any work that uses it. It is light, flexible, and allows easy carving because of its tensile quality, which makes this medium more manageable than stone, which easily breaks. Wood sculptures are often finished with varnish, lacquer, and oils to bring out these grains whose warmth complements the whole work, although some sculptures in wood are painted in opaque paint like the *santo* statues.

Sculptors exploit the various textures stone presents, from granular, porous textures to smooth, polished surfaces. Marble is soft and easier to carve than granite and basalt which, being difficult to shape, can not be applied with intricate details.

Ivory which comes from the tusks of elephants or wild boars offers a medium, although used for small sculptures, that allows sculptors to carve minute details. However, the difficulty to find ivory these days makes this medium expensive.

More malleable and stronger than the mediums previously mentioned is metal which allows wide possibilities in the shapes and textures it can present. Metals like bronze, copper, brass, iron, aluminium, and lead can be shaped anyway an artist may want it because they resist breaking and cracking.

Plaster is another versatile medium which is produced from gypsum powder. It is soft, non-resistant to blades, has no grains, and is easily carved. Mixed with water, the powder produces a creamy liquid which is set to solidify. Plasters molded by wires or layers may be added to one after another to complete a sculptural work.

Clay taken from the earth as medium is as old as the beginning of sculpture itself. Shapes can be formed from its putty-like constituency when moistened with water. The final forms are then fired or baked at high temperatures to make these ceramic works permanent. However, the ceramics remain fragile compared to the stronger pieces made from metals and stone. Variations of clay-based sculptures are porcelain and plasticine (the clay-like material that kids use for play) which is used for sculpture studies and modelling before an actual sculpture is created. Wares like jars and vases made from clay are called *terra cotta*. The surfaces of these clay wares are often coated in glazed materials to make them more durable and attractive.

Other mediums include glass and plastics. The translucence of glass make for arresting works especially with the play of lights on the various forms glass can be reproduced into; however, glass, being a fragile material, is not portable and can only be displayed properly indoors. Glass is produced by blowing molten material like a bubble through a blowpipe. Plastic, a synthetic product made from organic materials like resins and wood, is the most malleable and durable of modern sculpture's mediums. It is a very versatile medium that can also be made to look like metal, glass, leather, or wood. It, too, can be formed via a variety of means.

In the process of sculpting, sculptors often build small preliminary models called *maquettes* made of other malleable materials such as plaster of Paris, wax, clay, or plasticine before a final work is shaped.

Today, new sculptures are being shaped from new materials. Mediums can be as non-conventional as found objects (any thing that is randomly picked up), automobile parts, tools, machine parts, bicycle parts, plastics, and hardware. Many sculptures are temporary, like those that use ice, sand, and even persons who pose like sculptures. Some sculptors disregard the permanence of sculpture and choose being ephemeral by using natural materials in natural settings.

By and large, the visual arts have fascinated peoples of all nations at all times ever since Man first started to depict his surroundings through images in space. Through the history of art, techniques have changed, mediums have evolved, and principles have been challenged, but the fact remains that the visual arts chronicles in the most vivid terms Man's eternal quest for answers about his existence.
