

Grade 9 Creative Arts Study Guide

Activist Art, Banksy, Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and Art of the 1800s

How to use these notes: Read each section, learn the key words, study the examples, and use

1. Activist Art



the quick revision points to test yourself before an assessment.

What is activist art?

Activist art is:

Activist art is art created to promote social or political change. It raises awareness of issues such as inequality, war, and human rights, and it encourages people to question society and act.

Main features

Activist art usually has a clear message and strong emotions. It is often easy for the public to understand and is commonly displayed in public spaces so that more people can see it.

Remember: Activist art raises awareness, challenges unfairness, and encourages people to think or act.

Why it is important

Activist art is important because it makes hidden problems visible, influences public opinion, and can even help bring about real change in society.

Remember: Activist art uses images and ideas to speak out against unfairness and encourage change.

2. Banksy

Girl with Balloon links to Banksy's ideas about hope, loss, and innocence.

Flower Thrower links to Banksy's anti-war message and shows peace instead of violence.

Who is Banksy?

Banksy is an anonymous British artist who has been active since the 1990s. He is best known for street art and graffiti that appear in public places.

Style

Banksy often uses stencils because they are quick to apply and easy to repeat. His work usually includes black-and-white images with small areas of colour, and he combines humour with serious ideas through satire.

Main themes

His artworks often focus on anti-war ideas, criticism of capitalism, government control, and the loss of innocence. These themes help him comment on problems in modern society.

Examples

Girl with Balloon suggests ideas of hope, loss, and childhood, while *Flower Thrower* shows peace being chosen instead of violence.

Why he is important

Banksy is important because his art exists outside museums and galleries, which makes it accessible to everyone. His work encourages people to think critically in everyday spaces.

Remember: Banksy uses street art, stencils, and satire to share strong messages about peace, power, and society.

3. Diego Rivera



Who was Diego Rivera?

Diego Rivera was a Mexican mural artist who lived from 1886 to 1957. He was known for his strong political beliefs and for creating artworks that spoke to ordinary people.

Mexican muralism

Mexican muralism began after the Mexican Revolution in the 1920s. Artists painted on public buildings so that their messages could reach ordinary people instead of only gallery visitors.

Style

Rivera's style included large-scale murals, bold colours, realistic figures, and storytelling scenes. His artworks often looked powerful and easy to understand from a distance.

Main themes

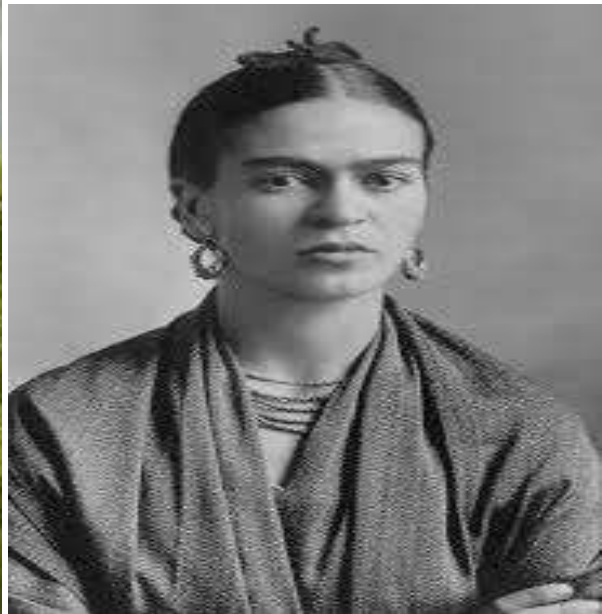
His main themes included workers as heroes, social inequality, industrialisation, and revolution. Through these themes, Rivera showed how art could tell the story of society and struggle.

Why he is important

Diego Rivera is important because he turned art into a tool for education and protest. He also helped make art accessible to the public by placing it in shared spaces.

Remember: Diego Rivera was a mural artist who used large public artworks to show workers, history, and social change.

Frida Kahlo



4. Who was Frida Kahlo?

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican artist who lived from 1907 to 1954. She is famous for her self-portraits and for painting her own life experiences, feelings, and struggles.

Style

Her style combined surrealism, symbolism, and ideas from Mexican folk art. This gave her paintings a dream-like quality while still showing strong personal meaning.

Main themes

Kahlo often explored pain, identity, gender roles, and emotional struggles. Her art helps viewers understand both her personal life and wider social ideas about identity and experience.

Symbols in her work

In her work, a broken body can show physical pain, animals can suggest protection or emotion, and hearts can represent love or suffering. These symbols add deeper meaning to her paintings.

Why she is important

Frida Kahlo is important because she was an early feminist artist who used art to express personal truth. Her work has inspired people around the world and continues to be meaningful today.

Remember: Frida Kahlo used self-portraits, symbols, and personal experiences to express identity, pain, and emotion.

5. Activist Art in the 1800s

LES POIRES,

Faites à la suite d'un décret de Paris par la direction des CARICATURES.

Vendues pour payer les 6,000 fr. d'amende du journal le *Charivari*.

(CHEZ AUBERT, GALERIE VEND-DORAT.)

Et, pour reconnaître le monarque dans une caricature, vous n'attendez pas qu'il soit déguisé autrement que par la ressemblance, vous tombez dans l'écueil. Voyez ces croquis infamés, auxquels l'artiste peut être dit bon ou digne.



Ce croquis ressemble à Louis-Philippe, vous en ferez donc ?



Alors il faudra condamner celui-ci, qui ressemble au premier.



Puis condamner cet autre, qui ressemble au second.

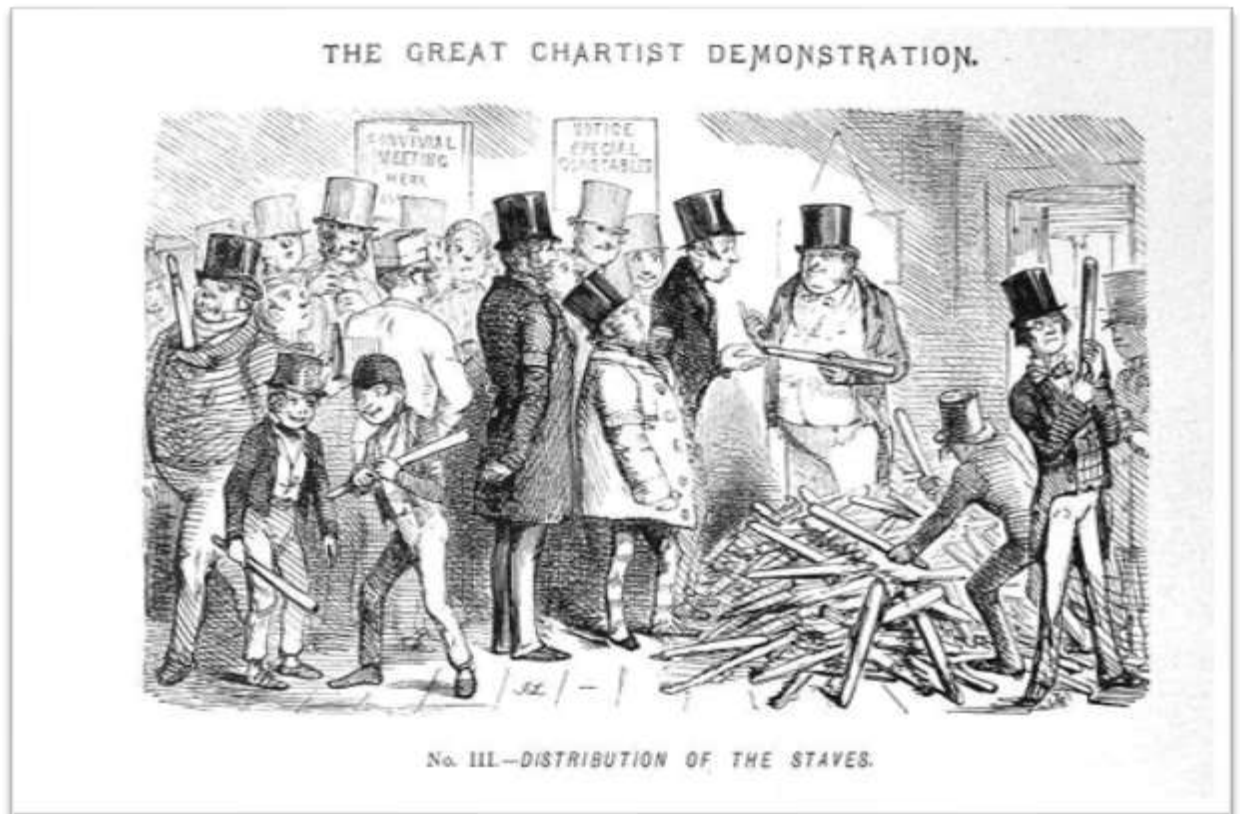


Et enfin, si vous êtes conséquents, vous ne sauriez absoudre cette poire, qui ressemble aux croquis précédents.

Ainsi, pour une poire, pour une beuhde, et pour toutes les têtes grotesques dans lesquelles le hasard ou la malice aura placé cette triste ressemblance, vous pouvez infliger à l'artiste cinq ans de prison et cinq mille francs d'amende !
 Avouez, Monsieur, que c'est là une singulière liberté de la presse !







Historical background

In the 1800s, artists responded to major social changes and problems.

During this time, artists reacted to the Industrial Revolution, poverty, labour problems, slavery, and abolition movements. Their work showed that art could respond to real events and human suffering.

Main examples

France: Honoré Daumier used political cartoons to criticise government corruption. His art showed how drawings in newspapers could spread strong political messages to many people.

Realism: Gustave Courbet painted scenes of real life, including workers and poverty. An example is *The Stone Breakers*, which shows ordinary people and difficult labour.

Britain: Political cartoons in newspapers and movements such as Chartism used art to support workers' rights and to challenge unfair conditions.

USA: Anti-slavery posters and campaign art were used to support abolition and to persuade people to oppose slavery.

Russia: Some artists protested against strict rules and wanted more freedom in art. Their work showed that creativity could also be a form of resistance.

Why this period is important

In the 1800s, art became an important tool for protest and communication. Artists showed that images could challenge injustice and help people understand social problems.

Remember: In the 1800s, artists used art to show social problems and to protest against injustice.

6. Art Elements

These are the basic parts artists use to make artworks.

The art elements are colour, line, shape, texture, space, and value. Colour creates mood, line guides the eye, shape forms objects, texture shows surface quality, space creates depth, and value shows light and dark contrast.

7. Design Principles

The design principles include balance, contrast, emphasis, pattern, and unity. Balance creates stability, contrast shows differences, emphasis creates a focal point, pattern uses repetition, and unity helps all parts of the artwork work together.

8. Symbolic Language

A symbol is an image with a deeper meaning. In activist art, symbols are useful because they help artists communicate messages quickly and clearly.

For example, a dove can stand for peace, a broken chain can stand for freedom, and the colour red can suggest danger or blood.

Revision Word Bank

Learn these key words for revision:

Activist art: art that supports change in society.

Stencil: a cut-out shape used to repeat an image quickly.

Mural: a large painting made on a wall.

Symbolism: using objects or images to show deeper meanings.

Realism: showing people and life in a realistic way.

Surrealism: dream-like images that may not look real.

Contrast: strong differences between things in an artwork.

Unity: the feeling that all parts of the artwork belong together.

9. Answering Longer Questions

Easy steps to answer well

Use these four simple steps when you write about an artwork.

- Say what you can see in the artwork.
- Explain what the artwork means.
- Mention an art element, design principle, or symbol.
- Give your own response using a clear reason.

Example answer

The artwork shows a person throwing flowers instead of a weapon. This suggests peace instead of violence. The contrast between anger and beauty makes the message strong. I think the artwork is powerful because it shows that change can happen without violence.

Quick Revision Checklist

Before your assessment, make sure you can:

- Explain what activist art is.
- Name important facts about Banksy, Diego Rivera, and Frida Kahlo.
- Recognise main themes in their artworks.
- Explain art elements and design principles.
- Identify symbols and their meanings.
- Write a clear longer answer about an artwork.