



Marcel Duchamp



MATERIALS

Urinal made in a factory,
signed "R.Mutt"

DETAILS

"Readymade" art - an item, not
made by the artist, is chosen by the
artist to display

Inspired generations of conceptual
artists: art that focuses on ideas as
the primary goal

THIS PIECE ASKS

If an ordinary object is placed in
a museum, does that make it art?
Does an artist need to hand-make
a piece to gain ownership, or is an
idea or a plan enough? Must an
artist display their craftsmanship to
affect their viewers, or is the merit
of their concept sufficient to send a
message?



Janine Antoni



MATERIALS

Two 600 lb blocks, one of chocolate and one of lard, with bite marks from the artist. Artist used chewed bits from each block to create fancy molded chocolates in boxes and lipstick tubes, displayed as a mock store counter.

DETAILS

This piece shows art as the relic of an activity

Process and product are displayed together

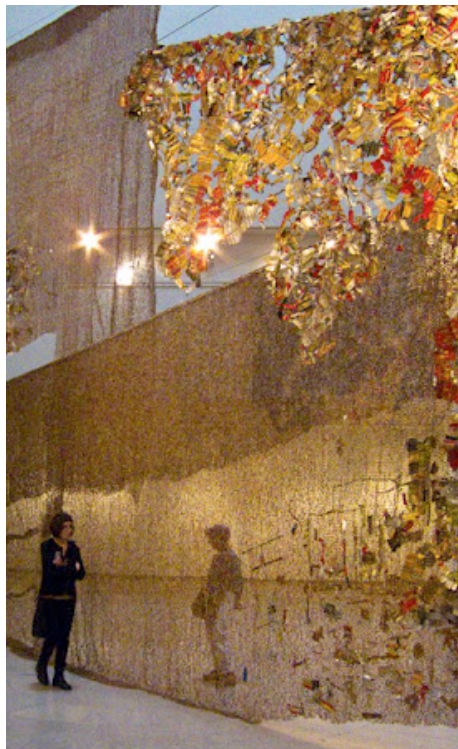
The artist had to use ample time and strength to gnaw the large amount from each block with her teeth, and then used fine arts techniques to mold and display the chocolates and lipsticks made from the bitten materials

THIS PIECE ASKS

Is the process or the product most important in an artwork? In what ways is the process visible in any artwork? Does an artwork need to be beautiful or refined to be important?



El Anatsui



MATERIALS

Bottle tops, aluminum, copper wire

DETAILS

Gli can mean wall, disrupt or story in the Ewe language- what is the function of a wall? What can a wall hold back, and what can go beyond a wall?

This woven piece turns discarded objects like trash into a glittering, opulent, sculptural tapestry

Each piece is custom draped for its exhibition space, so the work can change each time it is displayed

THIS PIECE ASKS

How can context and technique change your opinion of a material? How can the history of the raw materials influence our experience of an artwork? When does the whole mean more than the sum of its parts?

Gli(Wall) 2010



Takashi Murakami



MATERIALS

Offset lithography with cold foil stamp and high gloss varnish

DETAILS

Artist coined the style "Superflat" that combines traditional Japanese imagery with Japanese pop culture

Superflat takes inspiration from commercial graphic design, cartoon characters, while combining fine art techniques and concepts

This style challenges the divide between fine art and pop culture imagery like anime, manga, and advertisements

THIS PIECE ASKS

Why do we separate commercial art from fine art? How can contemporary art coexist with the rest of art history? How are trends reflected in the art world?



Cindy Sherman



MATERIALS

Chromogenic color print

DETAILS

Inspired by Madame de Pompadour or aging royalty

Artist uses costumes, prosthetics, wigs, lighting, and set design to mimic a painting style

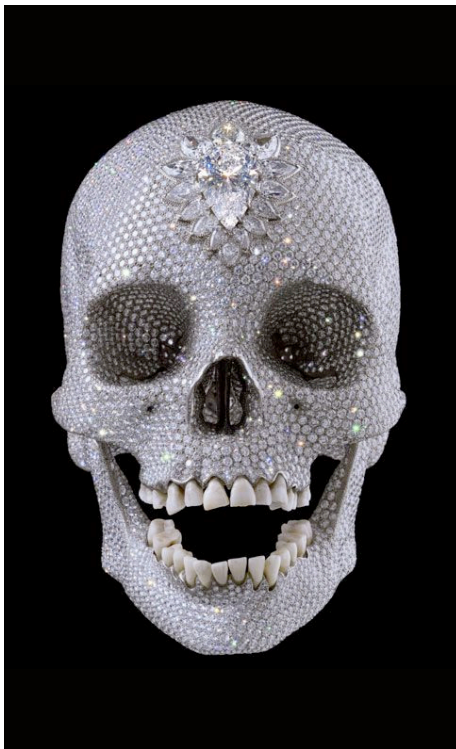
Silly elements like gigantic toes on a huge foot in the bottom right corner

THIS PIECE ASKS

What role does an artist play in a piece of artwork? Do we have to revere all of art history? How can our sense of humor be used as an artist? Are women artists the subject or the object of their work?



Damien Hirst



MATERIALS

Platinum, 8,601 diamonds, and human teeth

DETAILS

The skull was cast in platinum from a mold of a 35-year-old man of European/Mediterranean ancestry.

The title is inspired by the artist's mother who said to him "For the love of God, what are you going to do next!"

Artist took inspiration from the Mexican love of decoration and attitude towards death.

Sold for \$100 million dollars!

THIS PIECE ASKS

How do we evaluate the price of a piece of art? Why do we consider some objects sacred? How can you laugh in the face of death?



Ai Weiwei



MATERIALS

100,000,000 handcrafted porcelain sunflower seeds, total weight of 150 tons

DETAILS

Porcelain seeds took over two years for 1,600 workers to create in Jingdezhen, China using kaolin from local mountains

Jingdezhen, China once made imperial porcelain for over a thousand years

Each seed is unique, painted by hand

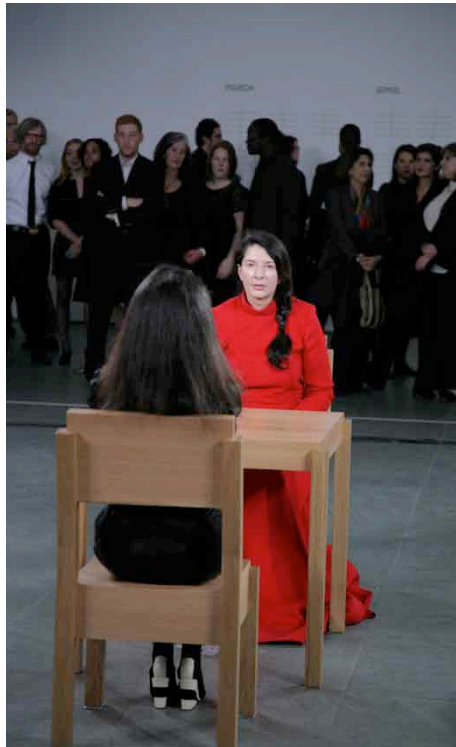
A sunflower seed is a common street snack, cheap but not filling

THIS PIECE ASKS

How can a tiny, common object become significant? What is the difference between the individual and a collective? How do we consider scale or size in art?



Marina Abramovic



MATERIALS

Artist, table, two chairs, tape rectangle on floor, 736 hours and 30 minutes, with 1,545 sitters

DETAILS

Sitters were invited sit opposite the artist for as long as they chose.

Artist would sit still, unless a sitter cried, she would cry.

Sitters were asked not to speak to or touch the artist.

THIS PIECE ASKS

What role does the artist play in our world? What might an artist risk by attempting a performance like this one? What is the nature of fame? How do we connect with others?



Yoko Ono



MATERIALS

Candy dispenser, plastic air capsules

DETAILS

Visitors are encouraged to take an air capsule

"We are all breathing the same air and we are all connected to the world by air" - Artist

Some visitors may see the capsules as empty/worthless, some may see them as full of air

THIS PIECE ASKS

What does it mean when an artist gives their work away? Can you put a price on natural elements like air, water, land? Can natural resources, like air, be given? What does the format of the candy dispenser evoke?



Kara Walker



MATERIALS

Offset lithography, silkscreen

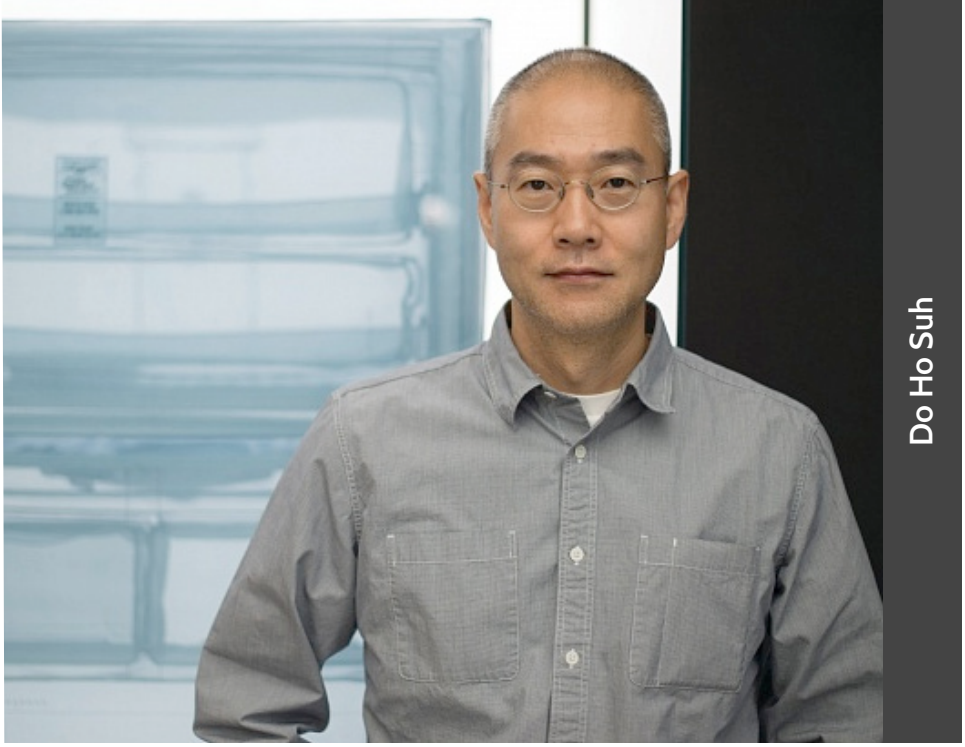
DETAILS

This series takes images from a book on the Civil War from 1866 and inserts unspoken narrative of racism and slavery by silkscreening silhouettes over the preexisting illustrations

Layering two narratives together expresses contrasts between the voices speaking

THIS PIECE ASKS

Who writes the history that people remember as a "truth"? How can we re-write history that does not include the experiences of all people? What do we ignore because it is uncomfortable to consider?



Do Ho Suh



MATERIALS

Glass plate platform, multicolored plastic figures

DETAILS

Visitors are invited to walk on the exhibit floor

Multicolored specks are visible beneath the glass floor

Closer inspection shows the specks are figures all crowd together with their heads and hands lifting up to support the weight of the glass and the visitors

THIS PIECE ASKS

Who are the invisible communities that support us without our notice every day? How does the scale of the crowd allow us to see them as an abstract pattern rather than individuals?



Yayoi Kusama



MATERIALS

Mirrored room, LED lighting system, acrylic balls, water, small visitor platform

DETAILS

The mirrored room is designed for one visitor at a time, you experience the work alone

Mirrors create the illusion of endless space in all directions, filled with tiny pulsing and flickering lights

THIS PIECE ASKS

What happens when an artwork is truly immersive? How does experiencing a piece of artwork in solitude change your experience? What can an artist-constructed space do to our sense of self and the world? What can the concept of infinity be applied to? Is the *room* the artwork, or is our *experience of the room* the artwork?



Amy Sberald



MATERIALS

Oil on canvas

DETAILS

Painting is made in full color, but the skin tones of the figure are painted in grayscale

The woman is dressed in equestrian gear and holds a child's toy unicorn

"...this became really important, interjecting images of the underrepresented" -Artist

"My work is about taking blackness past the stereotypes and opening it up to the imagination. These paintings exist in the liminal space between fantasy and reality. They start with color and costume."-Artist

THIS PIECE ASKS

Do the walls of most museums reflect the communities that visit them? How can we challenge bias and prejudice in the art world?



Nick Cave

**MATERIALS**

Mixed media

DETAILS

Full body costumes made from twigs, buttons, ceramic figurines, toys and other objects found at flea markets

Sound suits are designed to mask the body from identifying race, gender, and class

First made as a "protective second skin" in 1991 in response to racial profiling by LA police officers

THIS PIECE ASKS

What is significant about using costume to hide gender, shape, race, and class? How can anonymity be freeing? How can anonymity feel confining?



Carrie Mae Weems



MATERIALS

Sepia toned photograph

DETAILS

Artist uses sepia tone with a circular frame that was common in 19th century portraiture

Artist places her models in costumes that match the 19th century style

Girls are shown at leisure on a lawn, with flowers in their hair

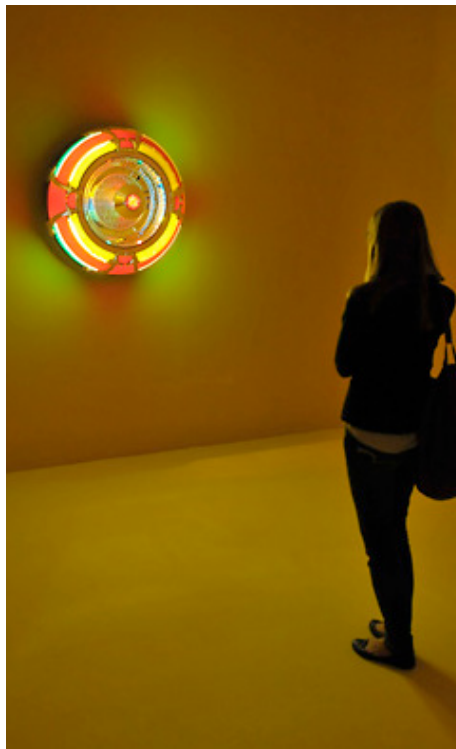
At the suggested time of this photograph, African American women were more likely to work as servants in upper-class homes and would rarely appear in a portrait like this

THIS PIECE ASKS

What place does irony have in art? How can you draw attention to inequity with contrast? How can you use the past to critique, and legitimize, the present?



Kimsooja



MATERIALS

Circular bubbler jukebox, neon light, sound installation of Tibetan, Islamic, and Gregorian chants

DETAILS

Mirrored elements in the mandala jukebox rotate and reflect neon lights as the sound installation is played

The chants from the jukebox are interwoven to wrap the viewer in a collage of sound

The shape of the jukebox references a Buddhist Mandala suggesting a meditative practice

THIS PIECE ASKS

What is a modern act of meditation? Can the beliefs of many groups coexist together peacefully in the same narrative? Can the museum or gallery be a holy place?



Barbara Kruger



MATERIALS

Digital print on vinyl

DETAILS

Work is influenced by a background in graphic design

A bold red emoji smile is printed over found image of a crying, broken doll face with from a magazine

THIS PIECE ASKS

What are the emotions we share publicly? How does our private life differ from the one we share online? What other facades do we maintain for the benefit of others?



Jaune Quick-to-See Smith



MATERIALS

Woodcut monotype on paper

DETAILS

Rabbit is part of the creation story for Chippewa, Cree peoples. The rabbit is a trickster

Hashmarks reference petroglyphs from the Plateau, home of the Cree peoples

“Down the rabbit hole” is a saying from Alice in Wonderland, but is has taken on the meaning of leaping off a cliff or taking chances

The door symbolizes a possible escape from the fire

THIS PIECE ASKS

How do we view new experiences and opportunities? How do we deal with what life presents us? How can literature be a tool in visual art?



Arlene Shechet



MATERIALS

Glazed ceramic, acrylic paint,
and wood

DETAILS

All sculptures in this series are displayed with custom-made, unique wood or metal pedestals, without glass cases

This piece is abstract, yet has elements that resemble parts of a body

The texture is powdery, with tiny stippled dots of glaze

“Clay is a three-dimensional drawing material.” -Artist

THIS PIECE ASKS

How can an artist imbue a non-objective object with life, with personality? How can we understand or relate to a form that does not reference anything we can recognize?



Céleste Boursier-Mougenot



MATERIALS

Harpsichord strings, piano pins, contact microphones and broadcast system, coat hangers, metal recipients, seeds, water, nests, ground in MDF, sand, grass, finches

DETAILS

As finches fly and perch on instruments, their sounds are amplified in an inclosed space

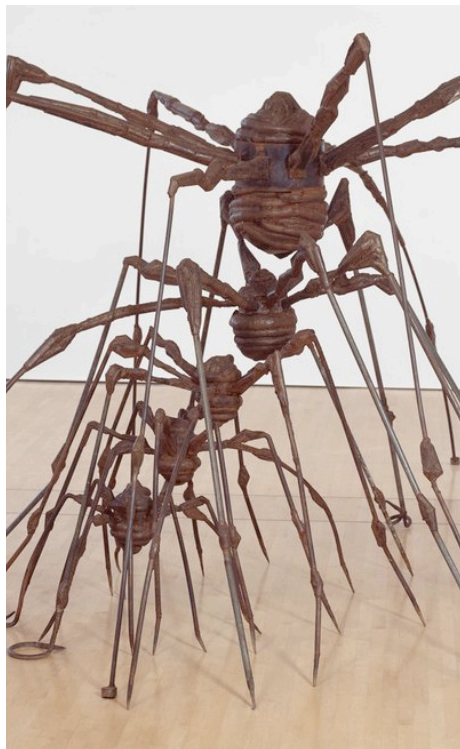
Some critics have questioned the ethics of using live animals in art pieces like this, and if it is harmful to the birds

THIS PIECE ASKS

Can humans and animals collaborate to create art? How can a space be changed with sound? Is it ethical to use living creatures in an artwork?



Louise Bourgeois



MATERIALS

Steel

DETAILS

The legs of the spider serve as sculptural objects as well as lines in space

The theme of the spider is often used by the artist, a massive spider titled "Maman" is the size of a small building

Why a spider? "Because my best friend was my mother... and she was as clever, patient and neat as a spider; she could also defend herself." -Artist

"What is drawing? It is a secretion, like a thread in a spider's web, a significant organization of space."

- Artist

THIS PIECE ASKS

What does the word "nest" evoke in your memory? What is the nature of strength? How does this differ from other structures made from steel?



Maya Lin



MATERIALS

Existing soil, gravel, and grass on 11 acres at Storm King Art Center sculpture park, New Windsor, NY

DETAILS

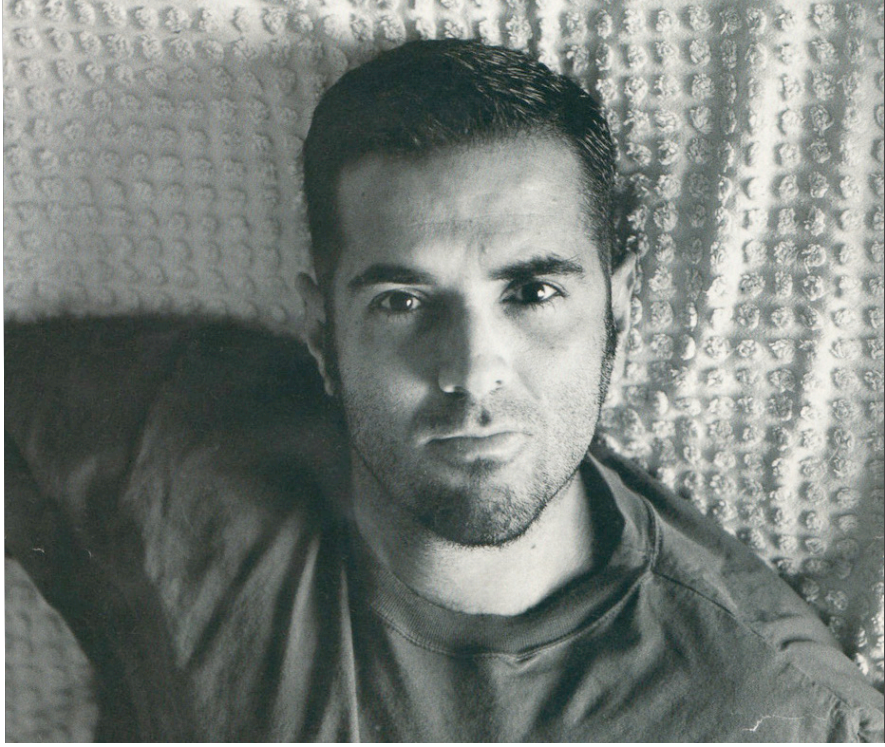
Seven grass-covered waves range from 10 to 15 ft high and 400 ft long

Visitors are invited to walk along the wave field

THIS PIECE ASKS

What connects us to the natural landscape around us? What does it mean for an artist to reshape the landscape? Is this art to view, or to experience through moving through it?

Storm King Wave Field 2009



Félix González-Torres



MATERIALS

175 lbs of candy in colorful wrappers

DETAILS

Symbolic portrait of the artist's partner, who was 175 lbs when healthy

The shrinking of the pile symbolizes the feeling of his partner wasting away from an AIDS-related illness

The pile is constantly replenished by art handlers as it is taken by visitors

THIS PIECE ASKS

How can we invite strangers to participate in an intimate tribute?
How do we remember people who were important to us? How would we want to be remembered?

"Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.) 1991



Meriem Bennani



MATERIALS

Video, photography, and costumes

DETAILS

"Fardous Funjab" is a parody reality TV show about a hijab designer and her work

"Reality TV and Instagram have their own languages. I like toying with the familiar and then making it something else."
- Artist

THIS PIECE ASKS

What does it mean to be American? Do all people feel the same ownership over nationalistic symbols? How do we perceive people who chose to wear clothing that is part of their culture or religion?



Lorna Simpson



MATERIALS

Paper, collage images from a 1963 Jet Magazine, ink

DETAILS

Old images are given new meaning by the addition of juxtaposed text elements

In this series, the artist adds washes of color in ink or paint, often to give the illusion of a wild hairstyle or hat

THIS PIECE ASKS

What happens when you remove an image from the context of its story? How can you infuse your own story into the artwork of others?