

Types of Painting

Did you know that artists have been creating paintings for more than 45,000 years? That's a long time! Every time an artist makes a painting, it is something new and unique to their style, but most paintings fall into one, or a combination, of these types or *genres* of painting.

- **Portrait.** This is an image of a person or animal that tries to show what they look like or what kind of personality they have. When an artist paints their own portrait, it is called a “self-portrait”. (Like when we take a “selfie” with our camera!) Question: *If you could paint a person, animal, or yourself, what would you choose? How would you want to paint them?*
- **Landscape.** In this type of painting, the artist looks outside at the world around them and tries to capture what the land, sky, light, and other elements look and feel like. When an artist paints a landscape of a city, it is called a “cityscape”; a picture of the sea might be called a “seascape”. Question: *What is someplace you have seen or been to that you would want to paint?*
- **Still Life.** These paintings show objects, like food, flowers, and other things you might find around the house. They are arranged in a certain way and allow the artist to show how they can paint shapes, light and shadow. Question: *What kinds of objects would you want to paint?*
- **History.** These kinds of paintings capture a scene from history or literature. The artist uses the painting to try to tell the viewer a story or teach them a lesson. Question: *Think of something that has happened in your life, or a scene from your favorite story: What would you want to paint? And why?*
- **Genre.** In French, “genre” (pronounced zhawn-rah) means a type or a kind of something. This type or kind of painting features scenes from everyday life, maybe someone in a kitchen cooking, or someone sitting by a window reading. Question: *If you were going to make a painting of a moment from your day, what would it be?*

Styles of Painting

Every artist has their own style, depending on what kind of artist they are, or sometimes what time period or what area of the world they live in. An artist's painting style is sometimes described as either **representational** or **realistic**, meaning it is trying to look like what we see in real life, or **abstract**, meaning it does not look what we see, but represents the artist's ideas through shapes and colors.