

The Story of Art – A Concise Version (2014)

I've never had a proper academic education on the history of art. Recently I decided I wouldn't be ashamed of this anymore and even to use it as an "advantage". Revealing my nearly total lack of knowledge about the history of art, I have dedicated a work to each chapter of "The Story of Art" by E. H. Gombrich.

1. Strange Beginnings

Prehistoric and primitive peoples; ancient America

Cave Painting

HD video, sound, 6:37 min, looped

Based on a drawing of a bison in Altamira cave.

2. Art for Eternity

Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete

Anubis

watercolour pencils on papyrus, 30 x 20 cm

3. The Great Awakening

Greece, VII to V century BC

Hero (or Athlete), V century BC

black inflatable nylon air dancer with blower

"The new-found freedom to represent the human body in any position or movement could be used to reflect the inner life of the figures represented."

4. The Realm of Beauty

Greece and the Greek world, IV century BC to I century AD

Venus of Milo

acrylic on plaster cast, bought at the "Women's market" in Sofia, 95 x 24 x 21 cm

5. World Conquerors

Romans, Buddhists, Jews and Christians, I to IV century AD

A Keystone

styrofoam, plywood, book, 240 x 132 x 40 cm

6. A Parting of Ways

Rome and Byzantium, V to XIII century

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes

HD video, silent, 1:04 min, looped

Based on the mosaic "The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes", c. 520, Basilica of S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna.



7. Looking Eastwards

Islam, China, II to XIII century

Landscape After Rain – To Be Looked At in Case of Meditation Only

black ink on paper, 5 x 25 x 5 cm

8. Western Art in the Melting Pot

Europe, VI to XI century

St. Luke

watercolour pencils on paper, 18 x 12.5 cm

9. The Church Militant

XII century

St. Gareon

black and red ink on paper, 21.5 x 14 cm

10. The Church Triumphant

XIII century

Mourning Triumphs

ten colour photographs, wooden stand
79 x 110 x 48 cm

Based on "The Mourning of Christ" fresco by Giotto, c. 1305, Capella dell'Arena, Padua.



11. Courtiers and Burghers

XIV century

Studies of "Studies of a Monkey" by Antonio Pisanello

black ink on paper, 21.5 x 14 cm

12. The Conquest of Reality

The early XV century

Il Duomo di Firenze's Dome in 1:100 scale

colour photograph, 75.47 x 71.67 cm

13. Tradition and Innovation I

The later XV century in Italy

14. Tradition and Innovation II

The XV century in the North

Innovating the Traditional

two audio recordings, 2:06 min and 2:14 min

I asked two people from southern and northern Bulgaria to read excerpts from the chapters in their own dialect.

15. Harmony Attained

Tuscany and Rome, early XVI century

Harmony Reenactments

three plastic Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles action figures, approx. 15 cm each

16. Light and Colour

Venice and northern Italy, early XVI century

Light and Colour, and a Fish Tank, and a Mirror

fish tank with water, mirror, 20W LED light, colour spectrum on wall, dimensions variable

17. The New Learning Spreads

Germany and the Netherlands, early XVI century

Dürer's Bumper Cars

five nano bugs, cuttings from facsimiles of Dürer's woodblock prints, metal container, metal mesh 4 x 32 x 35 cm

18. A Crisis of Art

Europe, later XVI century

A Crisis of Art

HD Video, sound, 04:31 min, looped

I asked my father (an artist from the XX to XXI centuries) how Bruegel overcame the crisis of art at the end of the XVI century and how he (my father) received inspiration from Bruegel (his favourite artist) to overcome the XXI century financial crisis.

19. Vision and Visions

Catholic Europe, first half of the XVII century

Picturesque

colour photograph, 87.89 x 121.05 cm (average dimensions, based on ten of the most famous paintings by Claude Lorrain)

20. The Mirror of Nature

Holland, XVII century

Self-portrait of a 26-year-old Me, Reenacting a Self-portrait of a 26-Year-old Rembrandt

colour photograph, 63.5 x 47 cm



21. Power and Glory I

Italy, later XVII and XVIII centuries

Cleopatra's Cocktail

crystal glass, pearl, vinegar

Based on Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's fresco "The Banquet of Cleopatra", c. 1750, Palazzo Labia, Venice.



22. Power and Glory II

France, Germany and Austria, late XVII and early XVIII centuries

23. The Age of Reason

England and France, XVIII century

24. The Break In Tradition

England, America and France, late XVIII and early XIX centuries

125 Seconds Out of Many More

HD video, sound, 2:42 min, looped

Doing field work for 125 seconds (the duration in years between the start of the construction of the Palace of Versailles and the beginning of the French Revolution).

25. Permanent Revolution

The XIX century

A Badly Made, Kitschy Replica of a Famous Impressionist's Lily Pond

colour photograph, 66.04 x 104.14 cm

Based on "Nymphaeas" (1897-1898) by Claude Monet.



26. In Search of New Standards

The late XIX century

Seurat's Dot

computer-generated photo mosaic, 200 x 200 cm

27. Experimental Art

The first half of the XX century

An Eclectic Drawing

colour pencils and black ink on paper, 18 x 24 cm