CHAPTER 1

A WORLD OF ART

THE WORLD AS ARTISTS SEE IT
An American Vista
A Chinese Landscape
An Aboriginal "Dreaming"
A Modern Earthwork

WORKS IN PROGRESS
The Creative Process

THE WORLD AS WE PERCEIVE IT
The Physical Process of Seeing
The Psychological Process of Seeing

THE CRITICAL PROCESS
Thinking about Making and Seeing

Throughout the morning of October 9, 1991, along a stretch of interstate highway at Tejon Pass, north of downtown Los Angeles, 1,760 yellow umbrellas, each nineteen feet, eight inches in height, twenty-eight feet, five inches in diameter, and weighing 448 pounds, slowly opened across the parched gold hills and valleys of the Tehachapi Mountains (Fig. 1). Sixteen hours earlier—but that same morning, given the time change—1,340 blue umbrellas opened in the prefecture of Ibaraki, Japan, north of Tokyo, ninety of them in the valley’s river (Fig. 2).

Built at a cost of $26 million, which the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude raised entirely through the sale of their proprietary work, The Umbrellas symbolized for them
how vast and various the world of art has become. The Umbrellas changes with each shift in our point of view, with each change of light and weather. Their aspects—yellow or blue, seen from near or far, from above or below, surrounded by many others or isolated on a ridge—are virtually infinite. No single photograph of The Umbrellas, such as those reproduced here, can capture the many different experiences of it. To experience the work in California was to experience only half of it. In California The Umbrellas seemed to stretch to the horizon and beyond. Their yellow color echoed the dry grass on the hills, the aridity of the parched California landscape, which, in 1991, was deep in drought. In Japan, the blue umbrellas, identical but for their color to the yellow ones in California, had a completely different feel. In the fertile, green Japanese valley, with its small villages, farms, gardens, and fields, they appeared to grow out of the landscape itself, as if they were mushrooms or flowers. Placed closely together, they seemed almost intimate by comparison to those in California. They seemed to embody the precious and limited space of Japan itself. Blue on one side of the world and yellow on the other, the umbrellas symbolized crucial differences between the two cultures.

And yet, for all their differences, the umbrellas had a common meaning. In both cultures, the umbrella is an image of shelter and protection and is therefore a symbol of community life. The extraordinary amount of collaborative activity required to mount the project—the vast numbers of volunteer workers, the complex logistics of bringing everything together—itself underscored the communal meaning of the piece. The event became a sort of cultural umbrella, stretching across the Pacific Ocean to bring Japan and the United States together.

If the experience of The Umbrellas project was undoubtedly different for its Japanese and American viewers, both groups nevertheless asked themselves the same questions. What is the purpose of this work of art (and what is the purpose of art in general)? What does it mean? What are the artists' intentions? How did they do it? What do I think of it? Is it beautiful? Is it fascinating? What makes it beautiful or fascinating? Or do I consider it, as many did in the case of the Christos' work, an almost ridiculous waste of time, energy, and, above all, money? What do I value in works of art? Are there formal qualities about the work that I like—such as its color, or its organization, or its very size and scale? What does it mean not to be able to see it all at once? These are some of the questions that this book is designed to help you address. Appreciating art is never just a question of accepting visual stimuli, but of intelligently contemplating why and how works of art come to be made. By helping you understand the artist's creative process, we hope that your own critical ability, the process by which you create your own ideas, will be engaged as well.

THE WORLD AS ARTISTS SEE IT

The Umbrellas project demonstrates how the landscape is not only different in its appearance in two different parts of the world, but is appreciated and valued in different ways. Let us consider four different approaches to the landscape—works by a nineteenth-century American, a Chinese, an aboriginal Australian, and a twentieth-century American—in order to see how four different artists, from four very different times and places, respond to the same fundamental phenomenon, the world that surrounds them. But rather than emphasizing their differences, let's ask if they have anything in common.
An American Vista

Albert Bierstadt's *The Rocky Mountains* (Fig. 3), painted in 1863, was one of the most popular paintings of its time. An enormous work, over six feet high and ten feet long, it captured, in the American imagination, the vastness and majesty of the then still largely unexplored West. Writing about the painting in his 1867 *Book of the Artists*, the critic H. T. Tuckerman described the painting in glowing terms: “Representing the sublime range which guards the remote West, its subject is eminently national; and the spirit in which it is executed is at once patient and comprehensive—patient in the careful reproduction of the tints and traits which make up and identify its local character, and comprehensive in the breadth, elevation, and grandeur of the composition.” In its breadth and grandeur, the painting seemed to Tuckerman an image of the nation itself. If it was sublime—that is, if it captured an immensity so large that it could hardly be comprehended by the imagination—the same was true of the United States as a whole. *The Rocky Mountains* was a truly democratic painting, vast enough to accommodate the aspirations of the nation.

But if it was truly democratic, it was not true to life. Despite Tuckerman’s assertion that Bierstadt has captured the “tints and traits” of the scene, no landscape quite like this exists in the American West. Rather, Bierstadt has painted the Alps, and the painting’s central peak is a barely disguised version of the Matterhorn. Trained as a painter in Europe, Bierstadt sees the landscape through European eyes. He is not interested in representing the Rockies accurately. Rather, it is as if he secretly longs for America to be Europe, and so he paints it that way.

Tuckerman assumes that Bierstadt’s aim in painting this scene was to record it accurately. And, in fact, one of the traditional roles of the artist is to record the world, to make a visual record of the places, people, and events that surround them. To a certain degree—in his
accurate representation of Western flora and fauna, and in his equally accurate depiction of native dress and costume—Bierstadt accepts this role. But he also clearly wishes to accomplish something more. If the painting does not accurately reflect the American scene, it almost certainly reflects Bierstadt's own feelings about it. The Rockies, for him, are at least as sublime as the Alps. He wants us to share in his feeling.

A Chinese Landscape

A second traditional role of the artist, it follows, is to give visible or tangible form to ideas, philosophies, or feelings. Wu Chen's classic handscroll, The Central Mountain (Fig. 4), is a masterpiece of Chinese art. Composed according to strict artistic principles of unity and simplicity, it elevates the most bland, plain, and uninteresting view—the kind of scene the Chinese call p'ing-tan—to the highest levels of beauty, and reveals, in the process, profound truths about nature. In fact, if Wu Chen's deep feelings and reverence for nature are evident in his handscroll, it is clear that he wants to reveal something more.

Wu Chen was one of the Four Great Masters of the Yuan Dynasty, the period of history dominated by Mongol rulers and lasting from 1279 until 1368, when Zhu Yuanzhang drove the Mongols back to the northern deserts and restored China to the Han people. Wu Chen worked in an intensely creative cultural atmosphere, dominated by gatherings of intellectuals organized for the appreciation and criticism of poetry, calligraphy, and painting, and for the appreciation of good wine. In addition, the culture was dominated by deep interest in both Buddhist and Taoist thought. Of the Four Masters, Wu Chen's tastes were perhaps the simplest and most devout. The Central Mountain embodies the teachings of the Tao.

In Chinese thought, the Tao is the source of life. It gives form to all things, and yet it is beyond description. It manifests itself in our world through the principle of complementarity
as *yin* and *yang*. Representing unity as diversity, opposites organized in perfect harmony, the ancient symbol for this principle famous *yin* and *yang*:

![Yin Yang Symbol](image)

Capturing and passive, and is represented earth in general and by the cool, moist the landscape in particular. *Yang* is and active. It is represented by the the mountain.

In the natural world, the variety of visual nature obscures these principles, making it to recognize them. The goal of the therefore, must be to reveal the artist's the Tao is present in nature. In Wu scroll only trees and mountains are trees are simple dots of ink; the sides of the mountainsides are painted from flat, gray wash. There are no roads, houses, or people to distract us. The scene is without action, devoid of any movement or sense of change. The mountains roll across the scroll with a regular rhythm, as if measuring the serene breath of the spectator. The entire composition, composed of both mountains and sky, is symmetrically balanced around the central mountain. Heaven and earth, solid and void, fold into one, as if to reveal the absolute essence and universal presence of *yin* and *yang* lying at the heart of all our visual experience. In fact, *The Central Mountain*, the work of art, unites viewer and landscape in a greater harmony and whole.

**An Aboriginal “Dreaming”**

Wu Chen’s painting suggests the third role of the artist: *to reveal hidden or universal truths*. Like Wu Chen, the Australian aboriginal artist Erna Motna wishes to reveal something larger than himself in his *Bushfire and Corroboree Dreaming* (Fig. 5). The organizing logic of most Aboriginal art is the so-called Dreaming, a system of belief unlike that of most other
religions in the world. The Dreaming is not literally dreaming as we think of it. For the Aborigine, the Dreaming is the presence, or mark, of an Ancestral Being in the world. Images of these Beings—representations of the myths about them, maps of their travels, depictions of the places and landscapes they inhabited—make up the great bulk of Aboriginal art. To the Aboriginal people, the entire landscape is thought of as a series of marks made upon the earth by the Dreaming. Thus the landscape itself is a record of the Ancestral Being’s passing. Geography is thus full of meaning and history. And painting is understood as a concise vocabulary of abstract marks conceived to reveal the ancestor’s being, both present and past, in the Australian landscape.

Ceremonial paintings on rocks, on the ground, and on people’s bodies were made for centuries by the Aboriginal peoples of Central Australia’s Western Desert region. Acrylic paintings, similar in form and content to these traditional works, began to be produced in the region in 1971. In that year, a young art teacher named Geoff Bardon arrived in Papunya, a settlement on the edge of the Western Desert organized by the government to provide health care, education, and housing for the Aboriginal peoples. Several of the older Aboriginal men became interested in Bardon’s classes, and he encouraged them to paint in acrylic, using traditional motifs. By 1987, prices for works executed by well-known painters ranged from $2,000 to $15,000, though Western buyers clearly valued the works for their aesthetic appeal and not for their traditional meanings.

Each design still carries with it, however, its traditional ceremonial power and is actual proof of the identity of those involved in making it. Erna Motna’s Bushfire and Corroboree Dreaming depicts the preparations for a corroboree, or celebration ceremony. The circular features at the top and bottom of the painting represent small bush fires that have been started by women. As small animals run from the fire (symbolized by the small red dots at the edge of each circle), they are caught by the women and hit with digging sticks, also visible around each fire, and then carried with fruit and vegetables to the central fire, the site of the corroboree itself. Other implements that will be used by the men to kill larger animals driven out of the bush by the fires are depicted as well—boomerangs, spears, clubs, and spear throwers.

Unlike most other forms of Aboriginal art, acrylic paintings are permanent and are not destroyed after serving the ceremonial purposes for which they were produced. In this sense, the paintings have tended to turn dynamic religious practice into static representations, and, even worse, into commodities. Conflicts have arisen over the potential revelation of secret ritual information contained in the paintings, and the star status bestowed upon certain painters, particularly younger
has had destructive effects on traditional
architectures within the community. On the
other hand, these paintings have tended to
embrace and strengthen traditions that were,
late as the 1960s, thought doomed to
destruction.

Modern Earthwork

abstract marks that make up Erna
Motna's painting are not readily legible to us in
West. In fact, it is difficult for Westerners
to view painting in terms of landscape.

Robert Smithson's giant earthwork,
Spiral Jetty (Fig. 6), is a large-scale mark very
different to Motna's. It exemplifies the fourth
orion role of the artist: to help us see
world in a new or innovative way. It is
meant to transform our experience of the
old, jar us out of our complacency, and cre-
ate new ways for us to see and think about the
world around us.
Stretching into the Great Salt Lake at a
point near the Golden Spike monument,
Spiral Jetty literally is landscape. Made of
mud, salt crystals, rocks, and water, it is a
record of the geological history of the place.
But it is landscape that has been created by
man. The spiral form makes this clear. The
spiral is one of the most widespread of all
ornamental and symbolic designs on earth. In
Egyptian culture, the spiral designated the
motion of cosmic forms and the relationship
between unity and multiplicity, in a manner
similar to the Chinese yin and yang. The spi-
ral, furthermore, found in three main nat-
ural forms: expanding like a nebula, contrac-
ting like a whirlpool, or ossified like a snail's
shell. Smithson's work suggests the way in
which these contradictory forces are simulta-
neously at work in the universe to reveal that
hidden truth. Thus the Jetty gives form to the
feelings of contradiction he felt as a con-
temporary inhabitant of his world. Motion
and stasis, expansion and contraction, life
and death, all are simultaneously suggested
by the 1500-foot coil, the artist's creation
extending into the Great Salt Lake, America's
Dead Sea. It literally causes us to open our
eyes to possibility.

Fig. 6 Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, Great Salt Lake, Utah. April 1970.
Photograph by Gianfranco Gorgoni. © Estate of Robert Smithson/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.
The Creative Process

To a greater or lesser degree, all four of the artists we have discussed assume all four of the traditional roles of the artist. To review, they record the world, give visible or tangible form to ideas, philosophies, or feelings, reveal hidden or universal truths, and help us see the world in new and innovative ways. But they share something even more basic as well. However diverse their backgrounds and their worlds, all four create visual images. All people are creative, but not all people possess the energy, ingenuity, and courage of conviction that are required to make art. In order to produce a work of art, the artist must be able to respond to the unexpected, the chance occurrences or results that are part of the creative process. In other words, the artist must be something of an explorer and inventor. The artist must always be open to new ways of seeing. The landscape painter John Constable spoke of this openness as “the art of seeing nature.” This art of seeing leads to imagining, which leads in turn to making. Creativity is the sum of this process, from seeing to imagining to making.

For example, in discussing Albert Bierstadt’s *The Rocky Mountains* (see Fig. 3), we claimed that his central mountain is more European than American, more a figment of his imagination than a reality. If we compare the final picture to an early oil sketch (Fig. 7), probably made in preparation for the much larger painting from sketches made on his trip west in 1859, we can see, in fact, that the mountain as it originally appeared to him was far less jagged, and though dramatic in its own right, far less dramatic than in its final realization. This tells us something important about Bierstadt’s creative process. He evidently felt no compulsion to be “true” to the scene. He felt it his right, even his duty, to “elevate” the scene, to move his audience emotionally as much as possible. In 1859, Bierstadt had written to *The Crayon*, one of the leading art magazines of the day, describing his trip: “A lover of nature and Art could not wish for a better subject. I am delighted with the scenery. The mountains are very fine; as seen from the plains, they resemble very much the Bernese Alps, one of the finest ranges of mountains in Europe, if not

Fig. 7 Albert Bierstadt, Study for *The Rocky Mountains*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 7 1/4 × 10 in. (18.4 × 25.4 cm).
the world. They are of granite formation, the same as the Swiss mountains and their jagged summits, covered with snow and mingling with the clouds, present a scene which every lover of landscape would gaze upon with unqualified delight.” Evidently, Bierstadt painted The Rocky Mountains to match not the scene itself, but his description of it.

Robert Smithson’s sketches for the Spiral Jetty (Fig. 8) seem to tell us something quite different. Smithson appears to be intent on exploring how the earthwork will appear from twenty different, mostly aerial, points of view. What are we to make of this? Smithson realized that the remoteness of the site precluded large numbers of people actually visiting it. The Jetty would exist, for most people, only in its photographic documentation, and he is anticipating that “photo-reality” in these drawings. These drawings, in other words, are about the Jetty’s reception. They reveal that Smithson is as interested in his audience as he is in the work itself.

But, in a manner comparable to Bierstadt’s manipulation of his mighty peak, Smithson’s drawings of the Jetty (and almost all the photographs we have of it, including the one reproduced in this book) literally “elevate” the scene. If you were to visit Spiral Jetty in person, it would seem far less spectacular, a pile of mud, salt, crystals, and rocks, jetting out into the water, and, at ground level, its spiral design would disappear. But from the air, it is, in Smithson’s words, “abstract and illusive.” It reveals itself to be, he would write, “but a dot in the vast infinity of universes, an imperceptible point in a cosmic immensity, a speck in an impenetrable nowhere—aerial art reflects to a degree this vastness.” Smithson’s Jetty, in other words, participates in the same love of the sublime that Bierstadt celebrates in The Rocky Mountains, and the drawings help us understand how.

This book sets out to explore the creative process through examples such as these. Throughout the book, you will encounter “Works in Progress” spreads, such as this one, in which the creative process that generated a given work is explored in depth. But more than helping you to appreciate a given work of art, these examples are designed to help you understand the importance of thinking creatively for yourself. We hope you take from this book the knowledge that the kind of creative thinking engaged in by artists is fundamental to every discipline. This same path leads to discovery in science, breakthroughs in engineering, and new research in the social sciences. We can all learn from studying the creative process itself.
is patriotic in tone. It celebrates the American entry into World War I, something that the nation put off until April 6, 1917, after five American ships had sunk in a span of nine days. The scene is Fifth Avenue in New York City, viewed from 52nd Street, and the flags decorated the route of the parades held on May 9 and 11 to honor the Allied leaders who had come to New York to consult on strategy.

If Hassam’s painting seems straightforward, Jasper Johns’s Three Flags (Fig. 10) is, at first sight, a perplexing image. It is constructed out of three progressively smaller canvases that have been bolted to one another, and because the flag undisguisingly shrinks before your eyes, becoming less grand and physically smaller the closer it gets to you, it seems to many viewers to diminish the very idea of America for which it stands. According to Johns, when he created this work the flag was something “seen but not looked at, not examined.” Three Flags was painted at a time when the nation was obsessed with patriotism, spawned by Senator Joseph McCarthy’s anti-Communist hearings in 1954, by President Eisenhower’s affirmation of all things American, and by the Soviet Union’s challenge of American supremacy, shown clearly by the launching of Sputnik in 1957. Against that background, Johns’s work asks us to consider just what the flag means to us. It asks us to examine our assumptions about ourselves.

However we feel about the Johns painting, however easily we all read it as the image of a flag, its meaning is not clear. In a book called The Languages of Art, Nelson Goodman suggests why. “The eye,” he says, “functions not as an instrument self-powered and alone, but as a dutiful member of a complex and capricious organism. Not only how but what it sees is regulated by need and prejudice. It selects, rejects, organizes, discriminates, associates, classifies, analyzes, constructs. It does not so much mirror as take and make.” In other words, the eye mirrors each individual’s complex perceptions of the world. There are at least two sets of eyes at issue when we discuss Johns’s work: Johns’s (what exact ideas influenced him when he chose to paint the flag?) and ours (what needs and prejudices regulate our vision?). In the next two sections, we will explore the related processes of seeing and perceiving.

THE WORLD AS WE PERCEIVE IT

Many of us assume, almost without question, that we can trust in the reality of what we see. Seeing, as we say, is believing. Our word “idea” derives, in fact, from the Greek word idein, meaning “to see,” and it is no accident that when we say “I see” we really mean “I understand.”

Nevertheless, though visual information dominates our perceptions of the world around us, we do not always understand what we see. More to the point, no two people, seeing the same thing, will come to the same understanding of its meaning or significance. Consider the images on the two pages before you. Almost all of us can agree, I think without difficulty, on the subject matter. Both images depict flags. Childe Hassam’s Allies Day, May 1917 (Fig. 9)
The Physical Process of Seeing

Seeing is both a physical and psychological process. We know that, physically, visual processing can be divided into three steps:

reception→extraction→inference.

In the first step, reception, external stimuli enter the nervous system through our eyes—“we see the light.” Next, the retina, which is a collection of nerve cells at the back of the eye, extracts the basic information it needs and sends this information to the visual cortex, the part of the brain that processes visual stimuli. There are approximately one hundred million sensors in the retina, but only five million channels to the visual cortex. In other words, the retina does a lot of “editing,” and so does the visual cortex. There, special mechanisms capable of extracting specific information about such features as color, motion, orientation, and size “create” what is finally seen. What you see is the inference your visual cortex extracts from the information your retina sends it.

Seeing, in other words, is an inherently creative process. The visual system makes conclusions about the world. It represents the world for you by selecting out information, deciding what is important and what is not. What sort of information, for example, have you visually assimilated about the flag? You know its colors—red, white, and blue—and that it has fifty stars and thirteen stripes. You know, roughly, its shape—rectangular. But do you know its proportions? Do you even know, without looking, what color stripe is at the flag’s top, or what color is at the bottom? How many short stripes are there, and how many long ones? How many horizontal rows of stars are there? How many long rows? How many short ones? Of course, even looking back at Johns’s painting will not help you answer the last three questions, because it was finished before Hawaii and Alaska were admitted to the Union. The point is that not only do we each perceive the same things differently, remembering different details, but also we do not usually see things as thoroughly or accurately as we might suppose.

Fig. 10 Jasper Johns (b. 1930), Three Flags, 1958.
Encaustic on canvas, 30⅞ × 45½ × 5 in. (78.4 × 115.6 × 12.7 cm).
Gift of the Gilman Foundation, Inc., The Lauder Foundation, A. Alfred Taubman, an anonymous donor, and purchase 80.32.
The Psychological Process of Seeing

If seeing is a physically creative process, psychologically it is even more so. If you wanted to draw a flag, for instance, you would concentrate on the kinds of formal details listed in the previous paragraph. But the context in which you see a thing has a lot to do with how you see it. Everything you see is filtered through a long history of fears, prejudices, desires, emotions, customs, and beliefs—both your own and the artist’s. Figures 11, 12, and 13 show three widely different interpretations of the U.S. flag. In the Marine Corps War Memorial (Fig. 11), the flag becomes the symbol not merely of the nation but of freedom itself. In Faith Ringgold’s God Bless America (Fig. 12), it has been turned into a prison. Painted during the Civil Rights movement, as Martin Luther King, Jr., was delivering the great speeches that mark that era, the star of the flag becomes a sheriff’s badge, and its red and white stripes are transformed into the black bars of a jail cell. The white woman portrayed in the painting is the very image of contradiction, at once a patriot, pledging allegiance to the flag, and a racist, denying blacks the right to vote. The artists’ intentions in these two works are different, and so, potentially, are our reactions to them.

Fig. 11 Felix W. de Weldon, Marine Corps War Memorial, Arlington, Virginia, 1954. Cast bronze, over lifesize. Superstock, Inc.

Fig. 12 Faith Ringgold, God Bless America, 1964. Oil on canvas, 31 × 19 in. © Faith Ringgold, Inc.

One of the most controversial works of art concerning the flag in recent years is “Dred” Scott Tyler’s installation, What Is the Proper Way to Display the American Flag? (Fig. 13). The piece was first seen on February 20, 1989, when the School of the Art Institute of Chicago opened an exhibition of works of art by 66 students who were members of minority groups. Tyler’s work consisted of a 34 × 57 inch American flag draped on the floor beneath photographs of flag-draped coffins and South Koreans burning the flag. Beneath the photos was a ledger in which viewers were asked to record their opinions. The problem was not only that the flag was on the floor, but that it was difficult to write in the ledger without stepping on it. Thus the flag became a barrier to the freedom of expression it was meant to defend. Viewers had to choose which they revered most—the flag itself or freedom of speech.

Angry veterans wearing combat fatigues protested the exhibit soon after it opened, waving American flags, singing the national anthem, and carrying signs saying, “The American flag is not a doormat.” Said one: “When I walked in there and saw those muddy footprints on the flag, I was disgusted. It would be different if it was his own rendering of the flag.
But it was a real flag. And it belongs to the American people.” Tyler responded that he had purchased the flag at a store for $3.95. It had been made in Taiwan.

By February 24, school officials had closed the show. A week later it reopened, and a school teacher from Virginia was arrested when she walked on the flag to write in the ledger. Finally, on March 12, 2,500 veterans and supporters from nine states marched on the Art Institute. Students reacted, brawls broke out, and five more people were arrested.

Because of the exhibition, the United States Senate, the Illinois Legislature, and the Chicago City Council all passed legislation banning display of the flag on the floor. These laws were all subsequently overturned when the United States Supreme Court ruled that even flag burning is protected as free speech by the First Amendment. Freedom of speech is a difficult issue, even for the courts, and in taking freedom of speech as its subject, Tyler’s installation was equally problematic.

Flags inevitably raise issues of national pride and identity. Yukinori Yanagi’s World Flag Ant Farm (Fig. 14) is an extraordinarily witty assault on nationalism, even as it stands as a metaphor for the globalization of culture in the last fifty years. In The World Flag Ant Farm, he created a grid of plastic boxes, each filled with colored sand in the pattern of a

Fig. 13 Scott Tyler, What Is the Proper Way to Display the American Flag?, 1989. Installation. Photo: Michael Tropea.

national flag—representing the nations of the world. Each box was connected to the adjacent boxes by plastic tubing. Yanagi then introduced ants into the system, which immediately began carrying colored sand between flags, transforming and corrupting their original designs. As each flag's integrity was degraded by these “border crossings,” a new “cross-cultural” network of multinational symbols and identities began to establish itself.

Yanagi’s work directly addresses the traditional view that Japan is a distinct and isolated culture, a view challenged directly by the influence of China, Korea, and more recently, the United States, on Japanese society. But the work has technological implications as well. “If the travels of the ant show us anything,” Yanagi says, “it is that he wanders to resume the task he has been programmed to perform, not to acquire freedom.” In this sense, Yanagi’s Ant Farm functions like some cumbersomely slow microchip or processor from the early days of computing, a metaphor for what has become the processes of the Internet and the World Wide Web, and the interchange of information they have made possible.

In this chapter, we have discovered that the world of art is as vast and various as it is not only because different artists in different cultures see and respond to the world in different ways, but because each of us sees and responds to a given work of art in different ways as well. Artists are engaged in a creative process. We respond to their work through a process of critical thinking. At the end of each chapter of *A World of Art* is a section like this one titled The Critical Process, in which, through a series of questions, you are invited to think for yourself about the issues raised in the chapter. In each case, additional insights are provided at the end of the text, in the section titled *The Critical Process: Thinking Some More about the Chapter Questions.* After you have thought about the questions raised, turn to the back and see if you are headed in the right direction.

Here, Andy Warhol's *Race Riot* (Fig. 15) depicts events of May 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama, when police commissioner Bull Connor employed attack dogs and fire hoses to disperse civil rights demonstrators led by Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. The traditional roles of the artist—to record the world, to give visible or tangible form to ideas, philosophies, or feelings, to reveal hidden or universal truths, and to help us see the world in new or innovative ways—are all part of a more general creative impulse that leads, ultimately, to the work of art. Which of these is, in your opinion, the most important for Warhol in creating this work? Did any of the other traditional roles play a part in the process? What do you think Warhol feels about the events (note that the print followed soon after the events themselves)? How does his use of color contribute to his composition? Can you think why there are two red panels, and only one white and one blue? Emotionally, what is the impact of the red panels? In other words, what is the work’s psychological impact? What reactions other than your own can you imagine the work generating? These are just a few of the questions raised by Warhol's work, questions to help you initiate the critical process for yourself.