



**Objective:** To teach the students about the field of commercial arts as a means by which an artist creates and organizes an image(s) for the purpose of mass production in order to communicate ideas and/or advertise and sell a concept, product, or service.

## A) Introduction

Today we are going to talk about Commercial Art. You may already know quite a lot about the Fine Arts from your art classes in school and the lessons you have had through Art Adventure. **Fine art**, which is sometimes called "High Art," involves the creation of artwork for the purpose of enjoyment. Fine art can sometimes convey a mood, message, or perhaps even tell a story.

## B) Vocabulary:

*(If the words have been provided on poster boards, refer to them here. Otherwise, write them on the board before you start the discussion on vocabulary.)*

**Fine Art:** Sometimes referred to as "High Art." Art produced or intended primarily for beauty rather than utility (use).

**Commercial Art:** Sometimes referred to as "Graphic Arts." Art produced or intended for the purpose of communicating information regarding concepts, goods, or services.

**Consumer:** One who purchases and uses economic goods and services.

**Marketing:** The understanding of consumer demand for products and services and how to sell those products and services to consumers.

**Advertise:** To make available to the consumer information about an idea, product, or service.

**Media:** All means of communications that carry advertisements. Examples include books, newspapers, radio, television, motion pictures, billboards, etc.

**Communication:** The exchange of ideas and information.

**Mass Produce:** To manufacture in large quantities.

**Printing:** A technique involving a mechanical process that allows for the reproduction of an image in large quantities.

**Pop Art:** Art that uses images seen in advertisements, movies and other objects of everyday modern life.

**Silk Screen Printing:** A method of printing where paint is pushed through holes in a cutout stencil to create an image

## Lesson Script:

**Commercial art** is all around us, every day. Commercial artists create the images (pictures) and other visual messages that we see on billboards, TV, magazines, computers, and the products we purchase when we shop. It is the job of a commercial artist to create an image that makes a product or service seem appealing or desirable to us, the **consumers**. Many times, the image is combined with words that tell us about the product or service. Those may be printed words, like those on the box that holds the cereal you ate this morning, or by spoken words, such as those in the commercials that appear during our favorite TV shows. But Commercial Art is not limited to the creation and production of advertisements alone; it can also include many genres of art and categories of art technique. **What other forms of commercial art do you see on a daily basis?** *[Book illustrations, music videos, animation, fashion and interior design, computer art, package and print design,*



*photography for commercial purposes, website designs, product packaging, billboard layouts, TV storyboards, CD and DVD case and disc art, magazine and book covers, display ads, logos, catalogs, flyers, brochures, posters, and marketing and sales presentation materials.]*

Think about all the things we buy each day and the role that **marketing** and commercial arts play in the choices we make as consumers. **What are some differences between how Fine Artists and Commercial Artists create their work?** [*Whereas fine artists create their work using subject matter of their own choice and are able to take as much time as needed to complete their work, commercial artists are required to create artwork to complement the product or service they are representing.*] Commercial Artists must work within budgetary and time perimeters, and must also be open to seeing their creative vision undergo many changes, often made by other people. Regardless of the media that is utilized, the commercial artist has one responsibility—to create an informative, eye-catching image.

**The ability to reproduce the same image many times is achieved through a technique called printing.** The earliest forms of printing date back to the 5th century in China, when wood block printing was used to decorate textiles (cloth). In the early 15th century, the manufacturing of paper began in France and Germany. Around the mid-1400's, artists began using the woodblock printing method, and were combining pictures with words. Both the pictures and words were carved into blocks of wood, covered with ink and then printed onto paper to reproduce the original image. This process is referred to as “**relief printing.**” **Have any of you ever done a potato print? That would be an example of relief printing.** By 1446, those carved wooden blocks were replaced by cast lead (metal) letters. When artists wished to create a picture and reproduce that image, they would use special sharp tools to cut or “etch” the picture onto a smooth, flat surface of either wood or metal. That etched wood or metal surface is referred to as the “plate,” and can be covered with ink to make many copies of the same image.

**Mass production** began in Britain, during the Industrial Revolution, sometime between the mid-1700's and mid-1800's, and became popular in the United States right around the time of the Civil War (1861-1865). Things could now be produced quicker, and in large quantities for a cheap cost, and shipped anywhere in the world. Commercial arts became a popular, if not necessary, means by which companies could advertise their goods to the general public. After the camera was invented in 1839, the process of printing changed dramatically, and those changes have continued with the advent of technologies such as scanners, printers, color copiers, and video.

Even though commercial artists rely on technology to generate and produce their work, they still must have a very strong knowledge of the Fine Arts. Both fine and commercial artists think about the fundamental elements and principles of art. **Do you remember from previous Art Adventure lessons any of the fundamental elements of design/art?** [Line, Shape, Form, Space, Texture, Color, Value, and Pattern.] How about principals of design/art? [Balance, Contrast, Emphasis, Movement, Harmony, Proportion, Unity, Depth, Variety, Rhythm, and Composition.] To be a successful commercial artist, an individual must also be able to organize information, and visualize and convey thoughts, images, and ideas. Commercial artists also need knowledge of media and marketing techniques, and must have the ability to work closely and cooperatively with other individuals.



Now let's look at some artwork and talk about the ideas we have discussed.

## C) Artwork

**Title:** *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1497-98

**Artist:** Albrecht Dürer

- He created this image for a book he was publishing himself
- This print shows a battle scene and involves a great deal of linear (line) quality and movement. What elements do you see that create the sense of movement? (The direction of the horses with their riders, the clouds, the soldier's sword, the angel)
- How did he create varying tones and textures to add depth and description to this print? [He created light and dark tones with parallel and cross-hatched lines, and introduced textures into the clothes, the manes of the horses, and the billowing clouds.]
- How do you think this image was carved? [By one of two possible techniques-either Dürer drew his image directly onto the block of wood to be carved, then printed, or he glued his already completed image on paper to the wood block. Consequently, there are few of his original drawings, as they were likely destroyed had they been glued to the wood prior to carving.]
- Since he was publishing the book himself, Dürer paid skilled block cutters to cut around his drawn lines. By using woodblock printing to create multiple images for books, a wider audience was able to appreciate this artwork and he was able to earn a living by selling his books.

**Title:** *World's Fair Chicago*, Illinois, 1933

**Artist:** Norman Fraser

**Details:** Poster

- Commercial Artists are hired and paid to create images that convey a message. Can you tell me what this poster advertises? [*The poster is an advertisement for the World's Fair that was held in Chicago and Canadian Pacific Railway.*] How can you tell? [There are two main images, a railway engine and a tall building. These images give us clues and are also combined with words that give us additional information. Look closely and you can see that the poster also gives us information about the dates of when you could visit and enjoy this event.]
- What mode of transportation do you think the poster suggests would be a great way to travel to Chicago for the World's Fair? [The descriptive words, also called "copy," at the bottom of the poster, encourage passengers to consider coming by train.]
- The images we see in this poster describe the big changes that happened as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The artist has depicted a powerful, fast, and shiny engine and, in the background, a towering skyscraper rises.
- After seeing this poster would like to go to this event?



**Title:** *One Hundred Cans*, 1962

**Artist:** Andy Warhol

**Details:** Pop Art Screen Print

- Andy Warhol was largely responsible for bringing about the art movement known as Pop Art; art that was created using commercial art techniques and subject matter.
- He started out in advertising as an illustrator for a fashion magazine. He wanted to use the methods he used in commercial art in his work so he used a technique called silk screen printing which enabled him to mass produce images like a machine.
- Silk screen printing is a process by which paint is pushed through holes in a cutout stencil to create an image. This allowed Warhol to create very slick, commercial looking images.
- Take a look at this picture. What about it represents the Commercial Arts? [The image is a basic, commercially available product.]
- What place could you visit that has rows of products? [The grocery store, drug store, DVD store, Hardware store, Target.]
- This particular artwork shows the same image (a Campbell's Beef Noodle Soup Can) reproduced 100 times!
- He frequently created art based on Campbell's Soup Cans. When asked why, he said, "I used to drink it. I used to have the same lunch every day, for twenty years, I guess, the same thing over and over again." Campbell's Soup to Warhol was not only something very common to him and many consumers, but it also provided an outlet for his art to reach a wider audience. Warhol said, "I don't think art should be only for the select few. I think it should be for the mass of the American people."

## Reinforcement Activity



Materials provided:

White Paper with a rounded corner square

Students provide: pencils and crayons/color pencils/ markers

Each student should be provided a single white sheet of paper with the empty square and rounded corners. Begin to explain that a company has hired them to draw an app for an iPhone or iPad. Remind them that even though the square is quite large it will be viewed very small and needs to have imagery and/or text that will be easy to read in smaller scale.

Below the square are just a few examples of artwork from existing apps. The artwork doesn't have to fill the square nor be in the shape of a square it just has to remain within the provided space. As you expand upon this project, think about the apps you use everyday. Facebook is an all blue design with just the logo, Pinterest, phone, text messaging. All of these are extremely simple designs so that someone can recognize the artwork right away.

As the students begin share some possible ideas for the company they are designing this for. The company could be trying to sell a building game (legos or mind craft), a dress up or make up stylist app, photography or editing picture app, creating artwork app, super heroes game, music production or playing app, cooking or baking app, aircraft flying game...please feel free to share your own ideas for the type of company they are designing this for.

### **Optional Activity:**

**Materials provided:** 2 samples of laminated cereal boxes White paper with cereal box outline

**Students provide:** Crayons or markers

Show two samples of cereal boxes and briefly highlight the three main concepts associated with commercial art: (1) advertising of a product (cereal), (2) related images (picture of what's inside the box and any symbols, logos, or characters that are associated with that product), and (3) related information (any copy or type that is not an image and gives additional information to the consumer, such as quantity, nutritional info, barcodes, etc.).

Instruct students to create a rough sketch of their own cereal design package utilizing all of the above discussed commercial art concepts. Students can think of their own type and flavor of cereal or use one suggested by the volunteer. Encourage the students to create an image that makes their cereal look and sound appealing to the consumer. The Art Adventure Guide can suggest that if time permits during a later free time period, the students may wish to display their sketches and, thinking like a consumer, vote on which package designs most successfully demonstrate the concept of combining an image with printed information to sell a product.



## **II Additional Background Material:**

*This material is provided to give you, the discussion leader, additional information about the artists and paintings that may help you answer questions or generate additional discussion with the children if time permits. You are not expected or required to cover this information in the classroom.*

### **Albrecht Dürer, Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1497-98**

By the age of 15, Dürer was working as an apprentice, studying the technique of printmaking, and assisting artists in a large workshop in which he produced a variety of artwork, but mostly woodcut prints for books. He traveled to many places in Europe for inspiration for his art and to learn about printmaking techniques. Having studied and become an expert at woodblock carving, it is thought that later on in his career, he began to concentrate only on the creation of the original picture to be printed and relied on specialized craftsmen to actually cut the image into the blocks of wood. As a theorist, an individual who gives much thought to the explanation of things in science and nature, Dürer wrote many books on his observations of the world through his perspective as an artist.

### **Norman Fraser, World's Fair Chicago, Illinois, 1933**

Unlike fine artists, whose lives and education are widely reported, commercial artists often gain little public notoriety. The life and work of Norman Fraser is no exception, and information about him is scarce.

### **Andy Warhol, One Hundred Cans, 1962**

Andy Warhol started out his career as a Commercial Artist. The images he created became so appealing to the general public that his work began to be viewed more as "Fine Art," and was framed, displayed in museums, and collected. His work was largely responsible for bringing about the art movement known as Pop Art; art that was created using commercial art techniques and subject matter. Warhol enjoyed playing with the idea of taking something very ordinary and elevating it to a level of importance by making it into a work of art. He also created many of the same types of artworks using bottles of Coca Cola, shoes, and portraits of people. These works of commercially inspired Pop Art gave Warhol the reputation for not only being the most renowned American pop artist, but also the highest priced living American artist. Warhol's first exhibition was actually a showing of his Campbell's Soup Art in Los Angeles. He hung up one canvas for each of the 32 varieties of Campbell's soup in existence at the time, each canvas measuring 20 inches in height and 16 inches in width. "In Campbell's Soup Cans he reproduced an object of mass consumption in the most literal sense. When he first exhibited these canvases—there are thirty-two of them, the number of soup varieties Campbell's then sold—each one simultaneously hung from the wall, like a painting, and stood on a shelf, like groceries in a store." - MoMa (Museum of Modern Art, New York) Glamour and fame were central themes to Andy Warhol. He made people question and broaden their definition of art. He called his art studio "the factory". He employed many assistants to produce his art. He also made some movies and sponsored a rock group.