

Gallup and the Arts

Written by Story and Photos by Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
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The world of art with its many branches is important to Gallup and the surrounding area. Articles have been published in the last several weeks, and even before, dealing with various galleries, events, and types of art that one can become almost overwhelmed with the structure – or non-structure – of the organizations attempting to publicize their particular passions.

Confusion exists in the minds of many, especially those not involved in this field, about the fuss that surrounds this subject. While this article will probably not clear up all the questions people have, an attempt will be made to clarify exactly what is going on with the many forms of art in this area.

There are basic questions to answer, first, before any reasonable resolution can be formed about ways to rectify what seems to be everyone talking at the same time.

What is Art?

One may research the definitions of Art in many ways: your personal dictionary, Wikipedia, the Octavia Fellin Public Library, and thousands of essays available on-line or in ancient or not so ancient books found in bookstores everywhere. The list is not limited just to those described above, of course, as almost every individual has their own idea of what constitutes Art.

Basically, though, art is a method of expression, whether it be strictly visual or actively visual. Art also includes sound, speech as well as music. The list covers just about everything humans do, with exceptions for pure science and a very small handful of other career choices. Yet even the exceptions have some Art involved in their discipline – a surgeon's first cut should be should not be a bloody gash – and scientists are very careful to mix chemicals in precise amounts for the best results.

Art includes, but is not limited to: paintings, music, theater, dance, sculpture, jewelry-making, and literature. Within in each of these are various types of the major art form.

Painting includes water colors, acrylics, and other compositions that adhere to a surface, and the subject matter is even more varied, from grafitti-style (not the crude words used by gangs to mark territory or threaten others) through traditional and contemporary to modern designs and what I call "splash art" used by modernists who throw buckets of paint at a canvas to express their emotions through color. In today's society, the use of logos for businesses also need to be included. There is also a niche for interior or exterior design, though the proper effect is not just paint but the use of natural or synthetic materials to highlight or distinguish a room or structure.

Music is just as varied. Church songs, popular music, head-banging rock, contemporary rock in many styles, hip-hop, operatic arias, and other classical tunes. Did I leave out anything? Probably.

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Theater is not just stage plays but also includea movies, operas and other forms that use both the power of speech - sung or recited - the action of movement and the visual of attire of the period.

Dance ranges from belly dancing and other forms of traditional movement – including square dancing – but also includes Native American, European and Asian styles of dress and movement as well as the the more modern forms of dance practiced by young and old alike.

Sculpture is creating either a likeness of people and animals, or using one's imagination to help interpret the area or situation where the design will stand. And everyone in this county knows about jewelry making, pottery and rug manufacture, so little needs to be said in that regard.

Literature is perhaps the most important art of them all, since not only reading for enjoyment is common but also provides for technical help in all the other arts. It could be stated with the advent of the computer that books are old fashioned, yet according to the statistics at Octavia Fellin Public Library thousands of patrons rely on the printed word as a major source of their knowledge; everything from children's

books to the most in-depth volumes written to educate the interested in social, political, historical and technical facts, or just tell a story designed to invigorate the thought process.

There you have at least a beginning to what belongs in the world of art.

Part II of this series will be published next Friday and will discuss the importance of Art to Gallup and the surrounding area.