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How to analyze the cultural significance of art

Ask yourself these key questions to analyze the cultural significance (or context) of art:

1. When was this piece made?
2. What historical (social, political, or religious) events were taking place at the time of its creation? How are these events reflected in this piece?
3. Who are the key individuals associated with this piece, either real or mythological, and what significance do these individuals have to this piece?
4. Where was it originally located? How does it relate to its environment?
5. Who was the artist that was responsible for creating this piece?
6. What is known about the artist who created this piece?
7. What techniques were used to create the piece? Is there any significance to these techniques? Are they new or innovative in some way?
8. What materials were used to create this piece? Do the materials have symbolic associations?
9. Who was the patron for this piece?
10. What was the relationship between the patron and the artist?
11. What were the patron's motives for commissioning this piece?
12. What types of documents did the artist or patron leave that help to explain this piece?
13. How was this piece used? How did it function in society?
14. Who was able to see this piece? Who used this piece?
15. What does this piece symbolize? What symbolic meaning or message does it convey to the viewer?
16. What is the subject matter of the piece? How does the subject matter relate to society, the artist, or the patron?



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