

Animal

Historical periods and art forms

Animals have appeared in art from the prehistoric period to the modern age. Some early artworks were simplistic, consisting of simple lines and shapes. However, some sculptures in bone, stone or ivory show great detail, revealing that some ancient civilisations were more advanced than others. Later artworks were more realistic, capturing minute, anatomical details. Some modern artworks are surreal, exaggerating the animals' actual form to make a statement.



Prehistoric cave painting,
c17,000–c15,000 BC



Molly Long-legs with her Jockey by George
Stubbs, 1762



Untitled (Horse on Square) by Tom Claassen,
1996

Human relationships with animals

Some ancient cultures used animal sculptures to represent the gods and used vessels in the shape of animals in religious rituals. Many artworks show the close relationship between humans and animals on the farm or in the home. Others show human dominance over animals, as the animals have been put to work or been hunted.



Aztec jaguar *cuauhxicalli*
(eagle gourd bowl), c1300–1521 BC

Drawing animals

Animals can be drawn as a series of simple shapes. For example, heads are circles and beaks are triangles. Hard pencils are used to draw the initial shapes, which are then joined to form the animal's outline. Soft pencils are used to refine the line drawing, then an eraser removes the original lines for a neat finish.



Bankura horses

A Bankura horse is a sculpted terracotta horse, crafted in the Panchmura Village in the Bankura District of West Bengal, India. They are used for decorative and religious purposes. The horse sculptures have long necks, elongated ears and slightly protruding eyes.

Animal coverings

Animals are covered in fur, feathers, scales or a shell. Artists try to capture these coverings through their use of shape, colour, pattern and texture.



fur



feathers



scales



shell

Glossary

anatomy	The structure of an animal's body.
ivory	The substance from which elephants' tusks are made.
realistic	Resembling real life.
simplistic	Simpler than it really is.
surreal	Something shown in a strange way, with a dreamlike quality.

