

INSTALLATION ART

The term installation art is used to describe large-scale, mixed-media constructions, often designed for a specific place or for a temporary period of time.

Installation artworks (also sometimes described as 'environments') often occupy an entire room or gallery space that the spectator has to walk through in order to engage fully with the work of art. Some installations, however, are designed simply to be walked around and contemplated, or are so fragile that they can only be viewed from a doorway, or one end of a room. What makes installation art different from sculpture or other traditional art forms is that it is a complete unified experience, rather than a display of separate, individual artworks. The focus on how the viewer experiences the work and the desire to provide an intense experience for them is a dominant theme in installation art.

Installation art emerged out of environments which artists such as Allan Kaprow, made from about 1957 onward, though there were important precursors, such as Kurt Schwitters's Merzbau 1933, an environment of several rooms created in the artist's own house in Hanover.

From the 1960s the creation of installations has become a major strand in modern art. This was increasingly the case from the early 1990s when the 'crash' of the art market in the late 1980s led to a reawakening of interest in conceptual art (art focused on ideas rather than objects). Miscellaneous materials (mixed media), light and sound have remained fundamental to installation art.