

ART IN DEMOCRACY

THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUES THROUGH
THE EYES OF EUROPEAN CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

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PEDAGOGICAL KIT



DISCOVER
THE EXHIBITION



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This publication was produced for information purposes on the occasion of the exhibition Art in Democracy from the European Parliament's Contemporary art collection, with the aim of providing an educational reference about the background and artistic legacy of the artists whose works are displayed, and of preserving and promoting their contribution to Europe's cultural heritage.

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Overview of themes and related artworks:

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- Claudine Heili, *POÉSIES EUROPÉENNES*, 1991, France
- Cristóbal Gabarrón (*1945), *TWELVE EUROPEAN MUSES*, 1992, Spain
 - *LA MEUSE* / Belgium
 - *BJARKE* / Denmark
 - *PLEYADE* / France
 - *MINNESÄNGER* / Germany
 - *SOPHOS* / Greece
 - *TIJG* / The Netherlands
 - *KELLS* / Ireland
 - *IL RISORGIMENTO* / Italy
 - *MOSELA* / Luxembourg
 - *LUISÍADAS* / Portugal
 - *ELEGIA II* / Spain
 - *BRUNANBURH* / United Kingdom

2. The relationship between human rights and democracy

- Cathy Carman (*1952), *MASQUERADE*, 1992, Ireland

3. Democracy is a fragile equilibrium

- Rui Sanches (*1954), *SERAPHITA*, 1989, Portugal
- Ovidiu Maitec (1925–2007), *EQUILIBRIUM*, 2000, Romania
- Andrea Pézman (*1975), *3D>HTML<* / *UNLIMITED BOOK*, 2010, Slovakia

4. Democracy's resilience in a changing world

- Mihai Topescu (*1956) *FABULOUS FISH*, 2010, Romania
- Anna Hulačová (*1990); *KOOPERACE 3 / COOPERATION 3*, 2020, Czechia
- Sabine Groß (*1961) *NESTING SITE*, 2018, Germany

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this pedagogical kit is to **give educators practical guidance to the exhibition 'Art in Democracy'**. Physically, the exhibition can be visited in Brussels, but most importantly, **all the material is also accessible online**. The information that is provided takes a more **generic approach** so that it can be **adapted to educational contexts at international level** that vary in the different countries. So, please feel free to use this offer according to your own needs.

With the next **European Elections approaching in June 2024**, it is interesting for students to reflect on democracy and what it means to them. Seeing Europe and its **democratic values through the eyes of its artists** offers the opportunity to **address the topic of democracy and democratic values via aesthetic and experience-based learning**. Artistic expression can more easily lead to **student engagement, facilitate classroom discussions and trigger reflection on this topic**.

In section 1, the kit gives **specific information about how the selected topics as well as the individual artworks of the exhibition relate to the overarching theme of democracy**. Below each artwork you will find a so-called **'teacher's corner'** with some hands-on ideas of how to initiate students' own creations based on the given artistic example.

Section 2 of the kit gives ideas for using the **interviews** that some of the artists gave about their works in the contemporary art collection of the European Parliament as well as their personal views on the importance of art in democracy. This part includes **key statements** of the artists and a **set of 5 questions** to be asked in the classroom. To create interest about the topic you may first want to ask the students for their own views on art in democracy and compare it to those of the artists afterwards.

Most importantly, section 3 of the kit offers a concrete **lesson plan**. This provides a very practical approach to teachers with a variety of activities that can be applied in the classroom. Students will be asked to verbalise their thoughts and feelings, they will have to debate, make compromises or follow decisions in a group based on majority votes. In this way, theory gives way to an understanding of democracy via real life experiences, interactions and collaboration with others to arrive at a common goal.

Relation to the exhibition 'Art in Democracy'

The 'Art in Democracy' exhibition is based on artworks from the contemporary art collection of the European Parliament. Simone Veil, the first President of the directly elected European Parliament, started the collection in 1980. With its over 500 European artworks, it is a unique collection and testimony of Europe's motto "United in diversity". It reflects Europe's cultural heritage and is an expression of its cultural identity as well as of intercultural dialogue. The collection is constantly growing and artistically illustrates the European Union's journey so far and what is yet to be built and created.

Conscious of the cultural and communicative power that art wields, the 'Art in Democracy' exhibition showcases selected artworks from the collection, grouped in thematic areas that touch upon the topic of democracy from different angles.

PART 1

List of Artworks and their Relation to Democracy

In this section, all the artworks that are part of the exhibition are sorted into thematic areas. Some artworks relate to several of these topics. Feel free to group them or arrange them differently based on your teaching requirements. The information about each artwork aims to specifically highlight their relationship to the topic of democracy. In a dedicated teacher's corner below each artwork you will find ideas on how to initiate own creations of your students. The lesson plan in part 3 can be adapted to the artworks you chose to work on. The aim is not only for students to develop their own artistic expression, but also to reflect upon and discuss the achieved results.

1. Symbols of the European Union

Rodolfo Zilli < Bust of Robert Schuman > (1967)

Bronze on marble plate, 60 x 60 cm



Rodolfo Zilli commemorates Robert Schuman, a Luxembourg-born French statesman. Schuman was an active member of the French resistance in the Second World War. His personal experience during his imprisonment by the Nazis forged his desire for sustainable peace in Europe.

In the aftermath of World War II, Schuman became one of the key architects of European integration. Twice Prime Minister of France, a reformist Minister of Finance and a Foreign Minister, he was instrumental in building post-war European and trans-Atlantic institutions and is regarded as one of the founders of the European Union, the Council of Europe and NATO.

In cooperation with French politician Jean Monnet, he drew up the internationally renowned Schuman Declaration published on 9 May 1950, a date now regarded as the birth of the European Union. Remarkably only five years after the devastation of World War II, the declaration is based on the belief that common economic interests would improve the standards of living and finally contribute to a united Europe.

The **Bust of Robert Schuman (1967)** serves as a tribute to Schuman's visionary leadership and his instrumental contribution to shaping Europe's future, seeking to create a peaceful and cooperative Europe following the devastation caused by two world wars. The sculpture serves as a reminder of the values and principles that the EU stands for, such as peace, solidarity, and cooperation.

Teacher's corner:

Ask students

- to identify other personalities that were important for the construction and development of the EU. This can include historical figures that lived long before such as e.g. Kant.
- to create an own bust (e.g. plaster or modeling clay) of the personality that impressed them most in this context. They could add some attributes that signal the role this personality played.

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/bust-of-robert-schuman/>

Claudine Heili < Poésies Européennes > (1991)

Leather and glass etui, with white bull design (2 parts); horn; gold painted bone; painted head in papier maché, 27.30 x 19 x 9 cm



The book, as a material and cultural object, has always been at the centre of **Claudine Heili's** work. In 1991, Heili won the European Community Art Binding Prize (Prix de la Communauté européenne de la reliure d'art) for the book-object with the present creation: ***Poésies Européennes* (1991)**. This artistic curiosity is the result of an ambitious undertaking centred on the study of Europe's poetic tradition.

Indeed, 15 European regions and cultures are represented in the book. For each culture, Heili selected one or several written excerpts by famous authors to embody that culture's poetic heritage. Additionally, the cover beautifully illustrates the Greek mythological figure Europa, complemented by the bull's head in relief on the delicate glass casing.

The history of European literature referred to in this artwork is the written testimony of the continent's cultural heritage and covers some of the world's oldest literary traditions. Starting from the epic poetry of ancient Greece and Rome until contemporary literature, it includes a wide variety of styles and expression. It highlights renowned authors that shaped our cultural identity and tradition.

Teacher's corner:

Ask students

- to identify important literary works of the European member states.
- to find a creative way of presenting them in an own artistic work.
- to discuss the criteria for their selection and the relation of the literary works to the different member states.
- to see if all of these works have something in common and in how far they are an expression of a common European cultural heritage.

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/poesies-europeennes/>

Cristobal Gabarrón < Twelve European Muses > (1992)

Painted iron in various sizes

La Meuse - Belgium / Bjarke - Denmark / Tigg - The Netherlands / Kells - Ireland / Il Risorgimento - Italy / Pleyade - France / Minnesänger - Germany / Sophos - Greece / Mosela - Luxembourg / Lusíadas - Portugal / Elegia II - Spain / Brunanburh - United Kingdom

Cristóbal Gabarrón's artworks are explicitly made for the public, while often based on collaboration with public and private organisations or even custom made for special big events. In some cities, his largescale outdoor sculptures have become part of an expression of their cultural heritage.

Gabarrón's works are abstract, but focus on the human figure. He strives for humanism and the development of human values. The peaceful coexistence of people and those living in harmony with their natural surroundings are the core concept for of his artistic oeuvre.

In ancient Greek mythology, the muses were goddesses inspiring and protecting the arts, literature and science - then considered as the sources of knowledge. Throughout history, the muse developed to be a figurative metaphor for being the source of artistic inspiration.

This set of Twelve European Muses represents the European member states at the time of their creation, thus creating a metaphorical human chain. Each individual sculpture alludes to national characteristics or corresponds to important geographic features as indicated in their respective titles.

Teacher's corner:

Ask students

- to continue this series of sculptures with the European member states that joined the EU later.
- to identify special characteristics of these countries they believe to best capture them.
- to create an own individual sculpture or to work in groups and create the missing parts of this series.

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/the-collection/?cartwork=&cartist=gabarron&cyear=&ccountry=>

La Meuse / Belgium

Painted iron, 220 x 100 x 230 cm



La Meuse is a European river originating in France, crossing Belgium and flowing into the North Sea in the Netherlands. It also refers to a francophone newspaper founded in Liege in 1856.

Bjarke / Denmark

Painted iron, 150 x 100 x 210 cm



Bjarke (from *bjare* "bear") relates to a heroic and legendary character in a verse (*Bjarkamál*) in earliest Danish literature around 1000 A.D.. The country's roots go back to ancient times of nomad hunters and peasant farmers.

Pleyade / France

Painted iron, 200 x 100 x 220 cm



La Pléiade was a group of French renaissance writers that alludes to the ancient model of the Pleiades star cluster. Their aim was to foster and enrich the French language in literature.

Minnesänger / Germany

Painted iron, 140 x 180 x 170 cm



Germany is known as the country of writers, thinkers and philosophers. Its composers take a significant role in shaping the musical heritage of Europe. Minnesänger refers to the medieval troubadours.

Sophos / Greece

Painted iron, 200 x 200 x 100 cm



Sophos means 'wise man' and sophists were teachers in ancient Greece specialised in teaching *virtue* and *excellence*. Ancient Greece is considered as the origin of European democracy and educating its citizens as free individuals with rights and obligations regarding the community.

Tijg / The Netherlands

Painted iron, 170 x 140 x 210 cm



Tijg refers to a daily Dutch newspaper dedicated to information. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the country was the birthplace of pro-European journalism.

Kells / Ireland

Painted iron, 160 x 140 x 240 cm



The title refers to the Book of Kells (ca. 800 A.D.), a Celtic manuscript. The sculpture recalls the Celtic abstract decorative style based on curves and triangles. Symbolically, it expresses the country's economic and industrial progress.

Il Risorgimento / Italy

Painted iron, 160 x 150 x 220 cm



The title refers to the political and social movement in 19th century Italy that led to the country's unification.

Mosela / Luxembourg

Painted iron, 160 x 160 x 180 cm



Moselle is the country's main river. The composition has been described as embodying prosperity and growth, themes associated with Luxembourg's economic importance.

Lusíadas / Portugal

Painted iron, 200 x 100 x 190 cm



Os Lusíadas (1572) is an epic poem by Luís de Camões', which glorifies the birth, trajectory and destiny of the Portuguese people.

Elegia II / Spain

Painted iron, 200 x 100 x 240 cm



Elegia española II (1938) by Luis Cernuda is a significant literary work building on the idea of the feminine figure of the country - the motherland.

Brunanburh / UK

Painted iron, 180 x 150 x 230 cm



The Battle of Brunanburh (937 A.D.) is sometimes regarded as the origin of English national identity.

2. The relationship between human rights and democracy

As proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948, human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. They are needed to protect and preserve every individual's humanity, to ensure that every individual can live a life of dignity. As such, democracy as a form of government is the universal benchmark for human rights protection. However, the current human rights landscape is compounded by conflict, discrimination, poverty, shrinking civic spaces, and the emergence of new human rights challenges.

Cathy Carman < Masquerade > (1992)

Bronze, 45.70 cm



"I like to work with the human body. The human body contains the story. There is no story besides the story of being human."

Cathy Carman is a sculptor who creates her figurative works out of multiple materials such as wood, stone or metal and ceramics. Her style can be described as expressionistic. The human figure is the central element and often used as a metaphor in her creations.

"Bronze is a material with a broad spectrum of possibilities from cold to warm as well as strength to fragility. There is something solid about bronze, and then the colours I use are sometimes rich reds or subtle hues, with which I try to capture various emotions."

For Cathy Carman the human body and the bronze material are tools to express human narratives and emotions. Masquerade depicts an abstract body that seems to be dancing on a wave trying to keep its balance. As the whole figure of this sculpture looks a bit torn, it is not absolutely clear if and how the body is masked.

Masquerades imply that people disguise their real being and hide it behind masks. Carnivals are the best-known occasions where this cultural heritage is celebrated. Throughout history in eras such as Baroque, people used masquerades to playfully deal with reality and illusion.

Masquerades raise questions about representation, identity, the plurality of perceptions, truth and deceptions. New developing technologies increase the uncertainty of being able to distinguish between real and fake. This fact can be applied to many aspects in our society today, such as news and information, plagiarism and also politics.

Teacher's corner:

Ask students

- to identify examples of 'masquerades' in the world that surrounds them and reflect on what is real and what is an illusion.
- to choose one example and show both sides -reality and illusion - in an own creative work that could either be a painting, drawing, photomontage or collage.

3. Democracy is a fragile equilibrium

Rui Sanches < Seraphita > (1989)

Bronze on wood base, 43 x 92 cm



Seraphita is the title of a novel by Honoré de Balzac published in 1834. In a supernatural way, this novel touches upon the theme of androgyny. Neither male nor female, the protagonist resembles the perfect human being. This sculpture depicts two identical abstract and undefined shapes confronting each other with two long poles.

The scene that is created is open to multiple interpretations: it could be part of a battle but also the attempt to carefully approach and touch each other. The symmetrical arrangement creates a homogenous, peaceful atmosphere. In a way, it also reminds us of Michelangelo's fresco the Creation of Adam in the Sistine Chapel. Inspired by the Genesis phrase "God created man in his own image", Michelangelo also depicts two similar and strong bodies. Adam in that case representing the creation of mankind - only him being definitely male.

In times of societal discussions about gender identity and gender equality, the androgynous reference of this sculpture invites to reflect on this philosophical theme.

Teacher's corner:

Ask students

- to think of a situation in everyday life, but to transform it so that there were no female or male figures, but only androgynous figures as the protagonists.
- to imagine the effect this lack of gender would have had on this particular situation.
- draw or paint such a scene. They can adapt an existing image (e.g. family photo) and then discuss the difference in the absence of different genders.

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/seraphita/>

Ovidiu Maitec < Equilibrium > (2000)

Wood, 98 x 163 cm

engraved with 17th century verse on each end; Inscription: "R" engraved in green on the upper section, "A" engraved in green on the lower section



Ovidiu Maitec's medium of expression is wood. He uniquely innovated European post-war art with a new format by rhythmically perforating and creating unusual patterns in this warm and archaic material. The effect is allowing a partial transparency that introduces light into his sculptures.

The artist is considered to be the most influential Romanian sculptor after Brancusi and was allowed to travel even in Communist times, which brought new international influences into his art that started from figurative realistic training.

Equilibrium is an abstract embodiment of a scale, an instrument for creating and measuring balance. This scale represented by two enormous blocks of wood is in balance, a condition that is not easy to achieve and which is also very fragile. A single extra weight on one side would make it move or even fall down. The damage caused by an imagined fall cannot be estimated.

This sculpture can be seen as a symbolic representation of balance in political power. In democracies, political systems are based on checks and balances and the rule of law. These are also part of the founding consensus of the European Union. If there is no respect for the law and democratic values, the political balance will be challenged and the existence of the democratic system endangered. It is therefore important for citizens as well as political decision-makers to use their rights and responsibilities to keep political power in balance.

Teacher's corner

Ask students

- to think of phenomena that could bring our current political equilibrium out of balance.
- to illustrate one of these phenomena and the effect the caused imbalance could have.

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/equilibrium/>

Andrea Pézman < 3D>HTML< / UNLIMITED BOOK > (2010)

Etching on paper, double-sided printing, 32 x 22 x 16 cm



The Unlimited Book in itself is a contradictory artwork. It uses the material of paper that traditional books are made of and combines it with printed text that gives instructions for creating digital websites. Traditional and modern technology meet each other. The shapes of the individual three strips refer to eternity – beginning and ending are infinitely repeated. Like this communication is endless, the same story moving in an endless twisted circle.

Books and websites are communication tools, telling stories, providing information and linking people through the sharing of all of it.

As presented in this sculpture, communication is eternal – as a social being, mankind will always communicate, only the tools will keep changing. Today the internet is the main communication tool to which almost everyone can contribute with hardly any control over its content. This definitely brings along a lot of advantages regarding the accessibility of remote information, yet it also creates the risk of this tool being used for misinformation, manipulation or propaganda. With the rising use of artificial intelligence, it will be increasingly difficult for the ordinary user to differentiate between real and fake news. This could endanger democracies.

Teacher's corner

Ask students

- to think of other means of communication and create a sculpture to combine them.
- or
- to think of a message this sculpture illustrates and illustrate it in an alternative way.
- or
- to think about and illustrate the effects artificial intelligence will have on the way we communicate.

<https://art-collection.euoparl.europa.eu/en/collections/3dhtml-unlimited-book/>

4. Democracy's resilience in a changing world

Mihai Topescu < Fabulous Fish > (2010)

Carved wood with hammered elements of copper plate and hot glass, fixed on the wooden structure, cast bronze element, 107 x 50 x 12.50 cm



'Art raises questions, it does not give answers.'

Mihai Topescu uses the traditional glass blowing craft and combines it with other materials to achieve surprising, almost surrealistic results that raise questions. He often works in series, creating variations on a recurrent theme and thus emphasizing the effect on the viewer.

The 'fabulous fish' has the shape of a fish, but it includes elements of a chicken or cock. The fish series presents a number of fish that all have a different appearance. In a way, it reminds us that like those fish, we are also all part of the same species, but can have different origins, social backgrounds, different skin colour or looks, religious orientation or any other elements that differentiate us from each other. Nevertheless, we have something in common that unites us - we are all human beings.

In a playful and funny way, this series invites to reflect about tolerance, respect and acceptance of our different cultural identities.

Teacher's-corner:

Ask students

- to continue the series of fish with own adaptations representing persons with different cultural backgrounds and origins...

or

- to start a new series by choosing another species and its adaptations. (e.g. chicken).

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/fabulous-fish/>

series of fish by Mihai Topescu

<http://topescumihai.com/artworks/sculptures/ciclul-pesti/>

Anna Hulačová < Kooperace 3 / Cooperation 3 > (2020)

Concrete, graphite drawing, varnished, on sheet metal, 160 x 60 x 50 cm



The sculptor Anna Hulačová is inspired by the Czech folk tradition, outsider art (art brut) and personal mythology. Her work contains intrinsically feminine elements, which she explores through a sense of mystery.

Although this sculpture depicts only one person, the title Kooperace - Cooperation - implies team work, a social aspect in work life. The depicted profession is of technical nature. The body is closely connected to its high-working platform, completely absorbed in looking into a microscope. Though concrete used as a material is hard, the shapes of the sculpture are soft, almost flowerlike and thus create a feminine appearance.

Still today technical jobs are mainly a male domain. Women are highly underrepresented in the business world and especially in technical professions. International statistics show that despite equal access, the number of women following technical studies in higher education is even on the decline.

Teacher's corner:

Ask students:

- to identify other jobs in which women are underrepresented and
- to create an own sculpture representing women in such a working environment.

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/kooperace-3-cooperation-3/>

Sabine Groß < Nesting Site > (2018)

Epoxy resin, acrylic resin, pigments, lacquer, cellulose varnish, 250 x 69 x 65 cm



The stapled bright white cubes and the title of this sculpture 'Nesting site', which alludes to a green environment, convey a controversial effect. The geometrical appearance of the sculpture is interrupted by the uneven arrangement of the cubes. In the lower part of this tower, an invisible eruptive power opened the interior to the outside view and cracks running to the upper part provoke a feeling of instability.

Sabine Groß bases her work on the concept and formal language of minimalist art, but she widens it with an emotional level in a humorous and playful way. The artistic genre of Minimal Art is thus expanded to non-artistic areas, so to say 'linked' to the 'real' world.

The harsh contours of the cubes open up to a nesting site. The depicted organic destruction gets a positive connotation by providing a place of shelter. It can easily be imagined that a species of insects could use it as their habitat.

In our industrialised and urbanised environments, we tended to exclude natural elements. Today we notice that nature 'strikes back' and that we need to rethink our way of life. Floods, storms and the extinction of many species endanger our own future.

Teachers's corner:

Ask students

- to create an own sculpture based on geometrical shapes that we often find in our cities.
- to arrange them in a way that it gives space to natural elements.
- to discuss which effect the inclusion of nature in urban environments has on our life.

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/nesting-site/>

PART 2

Artists' Interviews

In this section, you will find ideas for using the interviews given by some of the artists represented in the contemporary art collection of the European Parliament. Their messages highlight different ways in which their artworks relate to democracy. They speak about their understanding of being an artist and the societal and political impact their art has in our contemporary world. Coming from different countries and backgrounds, their views include personal experiences that they reflect in their visual expressions.

To facilitate the classroom discussion, key statements were extracted from the interviews and the main messages highlighted. Each interview is accompanied by a set of 5 questions relating to the key statements. These can be seen as samples to start a discussion with students. Some of the points raised could warrant some additional background research. An additional resource list with useful links can therefore be found on the last page.

EP-156086 - Art in Democracy - Francoise Schein



Artwork: [https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/ideoglyphe-](https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/ideoglyphe-europeen/)

[europeen/](https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/ideoglyphe-europeen/) Interview:

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/video/art-in-democracy-exhibition_EP156086

Key words used in the video:

*'I missed all the **languages**, I missed even our crazy **history in Europe**, which you know I wasn't French, maybe I was Belgian, but I didn't feel that I was Italian or Polish or Spanish. **I was all of them together.**'*

*'And it was very interesting for me to see that in 1989 [when USSR fell apart] as I said earlier, you know the sensitivity of knowing that Europe is not about just France and Germany and Poland. **It's all more about the people that move around and create other kinds of unconscious territories in some ways.**'*

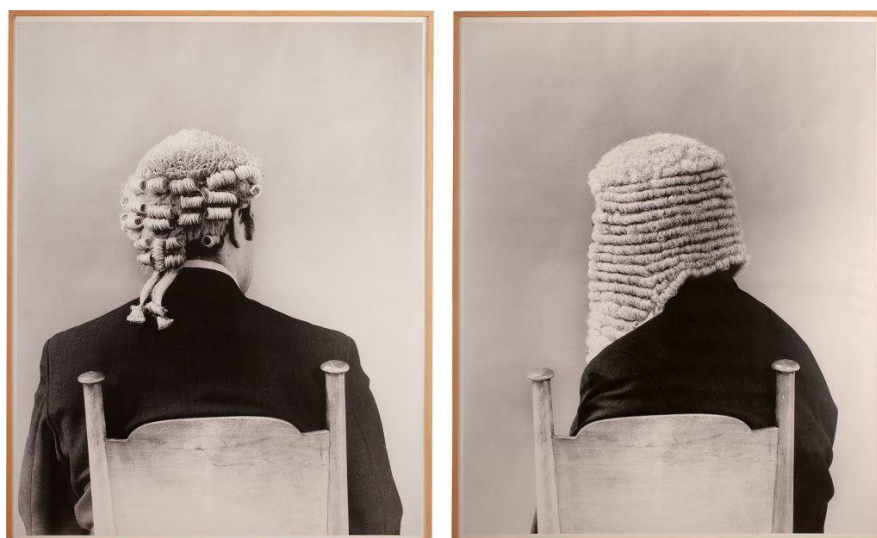
*'I think **democracy is frankly the only way to be and as people, as a continent.** In democracy, everyone, you and I, we can express what we think. **We have the right of opinion and the right of expressions.** Of course, there's a lot of people that have the right of expression, so it's complex, but it's the only political way of making Europe function. I mean just democracy is the way, there's no other way.'*

*'And **we should never forget that Europe was created in fact to protect and to create a huge continent.** You know with 450 millions of people and compared to the large other superpower like America and Russia and China, it's very important that Europe exists. I think if people don't understand that, they must be blind because **we must be together there's just no other question.**'*

Questions to be discussed in class:

1. How do you understand the artist's statement 'I was all of them together'?
2. What does the artist mean with 'people moving around and creating new territories'?
3. What role does freedom of expression play in Europe according to the artist?
4. Why was the European Union founded? Compare the artist's view with historic developments.
5. Why does the artist point out the importance of 'togetherness' as being the only option in Europe?

EP-156094 – Art in Democracy – Hannah Collins



Artwork: <https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/power-is-work-work-is-power-diptych/>

Interview: https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/video/art-in-democracy-exhibition_EP156094

Key words used in the video:

*'I think my place has always been to talk about **power** and **to be within the systems that promote that**. And my work has to do with that, has to do with **giving people power** or certainly **giving us space to think and to look, that makes you make decisions. It doesn't sort of tell you what to think.**'*

*'The wig that is the long wig is the wig of **a judge**, [...] And the shorter curly wig is the wig of **a barrister**. The person **who speaks to power** and the person **who gives judgement**.'*

*'I totally believe in **voting**. I totally believe in **Parliament**. I think, given the other systems we're looking at, **we're very, very lucky to have them and we need to support them** through whatever means we have, through our **work**, through **protest**, through **voting**, through all the ways that we have to **talk about the society** and **contribute to the society that we are in**.'*

Questions to be discussed in class:

1. Which understanding does the artist have about power, the systems and individual people? What are their relations, what are their rights and obligations?
2. What power do people have in democracies?
3. In what way do a judge and a barrister depicted in these artworks represent the power the artist refers to?
4. Can you think of other ways than voting and protesting in which individuals can contribute to the society we live in? What is your own contribution?
5. Why is Parliament so important, according to the artist? Why do you think the European Parliament in particular is important for European democracy?

EP-156092 – Art in Democracy – Costas Mantzalos (two/four/two)



Artwork: <https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/believe-in-me/>

Interview:

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/video/art-in-democracy-exhibition_EP156092

Key words used in the video:

*'However like democracy, **it remains to bring power invested in the people** and characterized by the **recognition of the equality of opinions and voices.**'*

*'In many cases our work in the last 10 to 15 years involves a process where the **art object became a series of interactive events, allowing audience participation and interaction.**'*

*'It's evident that **contemporary art practice** in the 21st century **has taken a completely new approach towards social and political issues** [...]'*

'There is a general crisis concerning various institutions in the 21st century.'

*'**Each one of us is responsible for this planet, so its future and its continuity are our own responsibility.** We are the people of Europe, the politicians, the parliamentarians and the leaders.'*

*'And there can be **no understanding between the hand and the head unless the heart acts as a mediator.**'*

Questions to be discussed in class:

1. Which understanding of democracy does the artist express in this interview?
2. What advantages do you see in art objects that allow active audience participation and interaction? Do you know of some examples of interactive artworks that had an impact on the audience? Try to find some examples and discuss their societal effects.
3. Which new approaches in contemporary art practice is the artist referring to? What importance does this have for today's democracy in Europe?
4. To what extent do you feel responsible for this continent and its future? What can you actively do to protect it, and what can artists and politicians do?
5. What is the artist referring to when he sees people's heart as a mediator? What role does art play in this context?

EP-156090 – Art in Democracy – Joep van Lieshout



Artwork: <https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/medicijnkastje/>

Interview:

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/video/art-in-democracy-exhibition_EP156090

Key words used in the video:

*'Being an artist is always difficult [...] It is really something **you really have to struggle very hard**, but this struggle, this fight is that what attracts me, that what makes it interesting.'*

*'Commercially it is not always easy as an **artist because it is not something that they need** like that, say razorblades, bread or wine.'*

'I think democracy also needs to look at itself.'

'I think it is also important to really go back to the core values of democracy: equality, freedom of expression, freedom of education, that everyone has the equal chances [...].'

*'I believe **if you want to have a voice in the world, you should have a loud voice**. A voice like my own country the Netherlands, it is very small, but **as a united Europe, we are a large group of people that can change the world a little bit.**'*

Questions to be discussed in class:

1. What understanding does the artist have of his profession?
2. What is your opinion about the necessity of art, especially in democratic societies?
3. How do you interpret the artist's statement that *'democracy needs to look at itself'*?
4. What are the core values of democracy in your opinion? Do you agree with the list mentioned by the artist? Why is it important to rely on core democratic values?
5. What is the artist's understanding of having a *'loud voice'*? In how far can a united Europe make the world a better place?

EP-156088 – Art in Democracy – Ruth Bianco



Artwork: <https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/lines-of->

migration/ Interview:

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/video/art-in-democracy-exhibition_EP156088

Key words used in the video:

*'[...] my medium in this current work is **collage**. [...] I find a parallel with the plurality of present day life through our multicultural environments.'*

*'[...] however, **migration is not simply about crossing borders**, but more is it about how we mediate space, how we mediate the world, how we create spaces to coexist with our differences, especially in our growing multicultural environments and shared problems.'*

*'I would **relate my work to democracy through its underpinning of connectivity**.'*

*'I would say that I see the **European Parliament as a defender of our European democracy**.' 'Art has a unique way of conveying messaging.'*

Questions to be discussed in class:

1. The artist sees the technique of collage as forming a parallel with the '*plurality of present day life through our multicultural environments*'. What does she mean by this?
2. To what extent do you agree with the artist that '*migration is not simply about crossing borders*'?
3. She states that her '*work relates to democracy through its underpinning of connectivity*'. Do you see a link between migration and connectivity?
4. In what way is the European Parliament the defender of European democracy?
5. To what extent can artworks convey messages? Can artworks have an impact on our society? Can you think of examples?

PART 3

Lesson Plan

Exploring Democracy in and through Art

Objective: Help students understand the concept of democracy and its importance in society. They will enhance their understanding as expressed in relevant artworks and through related artistic activities that explore different aspects of democracy.

Duration: 3 – 6 weeks – depending on class periods per week (45–60 minutes each) and the intensity of reflection on different topics

Age: 16 – 18 year olds

Material:

- Access to the online gallery of the European Parliament’s art collection and information material about the exhibition ‘Art in Democracy’
- Art supplies (paper, drawing materials, paints, brushes, recycled materials, etc.)
- Access to a computer or tablet for research (optional)
- Poster boards or display space for artwork exhibition

Procedure:

Lesson 1 aims to set the theme and get started. The following lessons can have a varied approach depending on the actual teaching and learning conditions.

Lesson 1

- Brainstorming on Democracy and related values
 - Begin the lesson by engaging students in a discussion about democracy. Ask questions such as: "What is democracy?" "Why is it important in society?" "What are some characteristics of a democratic system?" "What are the risks in a non-democratic society?" Write down their replies on the board.
 - Play or screen some of the online interviews of the artists that created some of the artworks. Students should discuss them and compare them with their own views previously collected on the board.
 - You find some guidance to the pedagogical use of the interviews in **Part 2** of this pedagogical kit <https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/spotlights/>
- Presentation of the exhibition ‘Art in Democracy’ (15–20 minutes)
 - Relate the collected students’ answers to the exhibition organised by the European Parliament with selected artworks from the contemporary art collection. The exhibition is published on a dedicated website: <https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/exhibitions/art-in-democracy-sculptura-2/>
 - Present the title and the themes under which the artworks are grouped:
Art in Democracy
The fight for democratic values through the eyes of contemporary European artists
 1. Symbols of the European Union
 2. The relationship between human rights and democracy
 3. Democracy is a fragile equilibrium
 4. Democracy’s resilience in a changing world
- Ask the students to read the introduction to each topic as published on the website. Afterwards they should select 2–4 (depending on the size of the class) topics which they believe to be the most relevant theme for them related to democracy and which they would like to work on in the next lessons.

During this process, the students have to verbalise their view on democracy-related issues and take majority votes for their favourite ones as a class.

Following lessons until the last lesson

Group work

Step 1 – selection of topic

- Write the selected topics on cardboard paper in different colours and place them on different tables. Ask the students to move to the tables that relate to the topic they would like to work on. Ask them to have approximately the same number of students in each group. Some might have to make a compromise –which is also an important aspect of democratic decision-making.

Step 2 – selection of artwork

- Once students have settled ask them to have a look at the artworks that were selected for their topic. They should discuss and decide to focus on one of the artworks.
- They should get a printed version of their selected artwork, glue it on a big cardboard paper and note down the main reasons why they chose this one. The aim is to keep track of their decision-making processes throughout their group work and present them to the whole class at the end.

Practical art work

Step 1 – analysis

- Ask students to analyse their chosen artwork practically: they should select visual elements and enlarge them with a pencil or crayons on separate drawing paper. If available, an overhead projector might help to fix the contours of the original on the drawing paper.
- The isolation and enlargement of details brings the existing artwork to a new level – a new visual experience that bears new insights as previously hidden details become more obvious.

Step 2 – interpretation

- In a second step, students should create own artworks as their own visual interpretation of the original one. They can take original elements and develop them further. This can be done by choosing different techniques, such as drawing, painting, collage, photographs, short videos (e.g. reels), small installations. The aim is to find their own definition of democracy and related values. Various examples of cues for the interpretation can be found in section 2 of this pedagogical kit, in the “teacher’s corner” under each artwork.

Final lesson(s)

Students present the results of their group work to the class. After each presentation, there should be Q&A session with the other groups.

Depending on the intensity of the work, a second lesson might be needed to value all the work done by the different groups.

Optional

Cooperate with teachers from other subjects to deepen the approach to the general topic and base the work done in art classes on facts learned in other lessons, such as history or social sciences.

The lesson plan could also be applied as a project work with a multidisciplinary approach to widen the experience.

1-2 students could be allocated as observers of the whole process. Like journalists, they could prepare an own visual presentation of their observations – in how far was the work in the classroom successful and what did the students learn about democracy.

This result could also be made available to a wider audience, e.g. school website, school newsletter etc.

Proposals for suitable artworks of the exhibition



John Goudie Lynch (*1946)

The Netherlands

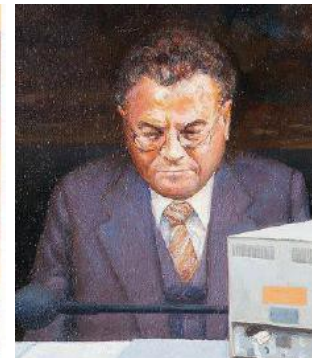
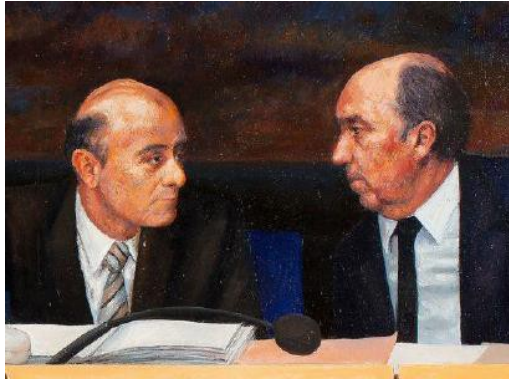
Hémicycle Strasbourg,

1987 Oil on panel,

96 x 194 cm

<https://art-collection.europarl.europa.eu/en/collections/hemicycle-strasbourg/>

Isolation and enlargement of detailed elements – new images in themselves giving a more detailed view with another impact on the viewer of the depicted plenary session.



Possible follow up:

Example 1

Collect images of the real plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.



Students can do the same exercise with e.g. picture 3 - isolate and enlarge some of the persons depicted in the photo. Relate them to the people in the painting. What do all those images express about democracy and democratic processes?

Example 2:

Collect images of different European national parliaments -some samples below



French Parliament



Belgium - Flemish Parliament



Belgian Parliament



Bulgarian Parliament



Czech Parliament



German Parliament

- Compare the images (architecture, seating arrangements, national symbols etc.) and relate them to democratic procedures in political decision making.
- Create a collage or poster representing your findings or
- Create a model with a new parliamentary structure that fosters democratic decision making.

Example 3

Create a cartoon or a poster with a message:

- Choose a current topic of political discussions such as AI and imagine what the depicted persons think or talk about.
- You could relate this to a deeper discussion on Pop-Art. Roy Lichtenstein is an example for an artist who used such a format.
- You may also find other examples in art history.

Let Art Speak



Further artworks that might be suitable for the above described procedure



Cathy Carman (*1952)

Ireland
Masquerade
(1992)
Bronze, 45.70 cm



Rui Sanches (*1954)

Portugal
Seraphita
(1989)
Bronze on wood base, 43 x 92 cm

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

EU

- <https://together.eu/>
- <https://youth.europarl.europa.eu/home.html>
- <https://what-europe-does-for-me.eu/en/home>
- https://www.europarl.europa.eu/infographic/legislative-procedure/index_en.html
- <https://elections.europa.eu/>

Teaching of Art and Democracy

- <https://www.living-democracy.com/>
- https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/index_en
- A short guide to the EU - downloadable pdf
https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/short-guide-eu_en
- <https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture>
- <Democracy is yours> animated video, Anne Frank House
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4YwdbR2fI8>
- Art of Democracy Festival on Tour in Graz, Austria 2022 <https://artofdemocracy.eu/>
- Ted talk playlist < Why is art important to democracy >
https://www.ted.com/playlists/733/why_art_is_important_to_democracy From this playlist:
The good and the bad government - Lorenzetti's frescos in the Siena town hall
https://www.ted.com/talks/anthony_d_romero_this_is_what_democracy_looks_like?referrer=playlist-why_art_is_important_to_democracy&autoplay=true
- Interview - With Klaus Staeck, Artist and Publisher
<https://www.dw.com/en/activist-artist-klaus-staeck-still-provokes-at-80/a-42518822>
- Disney Parks | How-To Draw Cartoons Series
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLflf8xbnbx65Z2oa2F9uqKZxJJn-4Nynr>

References to Art History

- *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico 1338-1339, Ambrogio Lorenzetti
- *David*, 1501-1504, Michelangelo Buonarrotti
- *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830, Eugène Delacroix
- *Nie wieder Krieg!*, (*Never again War!*), 1924, Käthe Kollwitz, Poster, Chalk and brush lithograph
- *Und Neues Leben Blüht aus den Ruinen* (*And New Life Blooms from the Ruins*), 1980, Klaus Staeck
- *Guernica*, 1937, Pablo Picasso
- *Dove*, 1949, Pablo Picasso
- *Demokratie ist lustig* (*Democracy Is Merry*), 1973, Joseph Beuys
- *Get off your rat's ass and VOTE!*, 2006, Banksy

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