Context:

“Context includes a multiplicity of issues: original setting, historical events, social, religious and political developments, patronage, and function.”

Four Ways to Think of Context:

1. Physical location of the work of art in its original setting

*Where was the work of art originally situated?*

1. Artist and patron of the work of art

*Who was the artist?*

*Who was the person who commissioned this work of art? (patron)*

1. Historical events which influence the work of art

*What is the historical relevancy of the work of art?*

*What are the historical events that occur or are represented in this work of art?*

1. Concepts and idea which surround the work

*What religious, social, or philosophical ideas within the culture influence the content or presentation of the work of art?*

By studying the works of art and architecture using contextual information, we address essential questions, such as:

* Why is this work significant to the time and generation it was created?
* How do ideas or beliefs shared by the artist, his or her immediate community or society, shape the work of art?
* What influences the artist’s or patron’s choice of subject matter?
* What role do historical, political, religious, cultural events and economic developments influence the presentation of the subject matter?
* How do issues of gender, class, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation influence the choice and presentation of the subject matter?
* How do building and architectural programs express the values and political agendas of their patrons?
* What is the intended purpose or function, of the work?

**Content** is often determined by the function or the intended purpose of the work of art within the culture. It is what the work of art is about, specifically its subject matter.

**Style** is the presentation of the content