

This is Keith,
a world-renowned art historian.
Keith also happens to be an ostrich.

This is my top hat.
Rather good,
isn't it.

'Art history' is quite a grand term. If you like, when you use it, you can put on your imaginary top hat. Art historians like Keith study works of art and explore how their meanings have changed throughout history.

This is Keith's esteemed research assistant, Marmaduke.



SO WHAT IS ART?

Art has been around for hundreds of thousands of years. Every time someone made a piece of art, they did it to tell the world something – from expressing their beliefs and feelings, to capturing a moment in time. Keith's favourite thing about art is that everyone sees it slightly differently. Every time someone looks at a piece of art, it gets a brand new meaning.

Art can be made out of pencil or paint, clay or stone, or needle and thread – almost anything at all! Art is all around us and it's used for all sorts of things – and it's not always to look beautiful!

Many people in the past said that ostriches can't be art historians. Keith sure showed them!

Perhaps you'd like to know a bit more about where Keith is from. Often, though, where you are from isn't the most interesting thing about you. The most interesting thing about you is where you are GOING.

Art has the power to transport you anywhere - from the streets of Venice to outer space!



After all, art isn't just in **GALLERIES**... it is everywhere, all around us. It's on our streets, in our homes and in our classrooms.

It's not just **LIFELIKE**... it can also be abstract, symbolic, imaginary or surreal.

It's not just **BEAUTIFUL**... it can be confusing, silly, sad, funny and even downright disgusting!

It's not just for **EXPERTS**... but for people of all ages to enjoy and interpret.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves!

Keith decided the time had come to write this book when a certain incident occurred...





The **INCIDENT** was this.

Keith was in a big gallery somewhere, looking at the artwork on display. There were a lot of other people doing the same thing. I mean A LOT. With some pieces of art, you even had to wait your turn to look! And then Keith noticed something.

There were hundreds, there were THOUSANDS of beautiful, gorgeous, sumptuous pieces of art. Art as far as the eye could see! But the people visiting the gallery were only looking at the art that they were told to look at, or at the pieces that they recognised. They took a photograph, and then they quickly moved on.

Keith tried to get the crowd's attention to show them the many other marvellous paintings, sculptures, pots and textiles, but they ignored her. This made Keith rather angry.

'This isn't what art is about,'
Keith thought as she left the gallery.

The really exciting thing about art isn't
crowding into a room to look at one famous
painting. The exciting thing about art is the
way it makes you feel and the things it can
show you.

Art is a language, just like English and
Swahili and **اَللُّغَةُ الْعَرَبِيَّة** (Arabic) and
粵語 (Cantonese). It can tell you
stories through its lines, patterns
and colours. The trick is learning
how to recognise what art is
trying to show you!

"Art is everywhere and
for everyone to enjoy. And
I'm going to prove it," said
Keith to Marmaduke.

You can find art in all sorts of places -
it can be over your head and under your
feet. In fact, one of the earliest forms
of art we know of was painted in caves
40,000 years ago by early humans!
You can still see their paintings of animals
and patterns in caves today.

One very special thing about
these paintings is the way the artists
have managed to draw the animals with just a
few lines - showing the suggestion of the animal's
shape. Even thousands of years later, artists are
still trying to do the same thing. What kind of
shapes can you make with one line?