

# INTRODUCTION TO ART & ART HISTORY



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# Introduction to Art & Art History

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## Licensing

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# CHAPTER OVERVIEW

## 1: Meaning in Art

### Overview

- Place works of art in historical, social, personal, political, or scientific contexts.
- Define and distinguish between symbolism and iconography.
- Identify changes in symbols and iconographic motifs over time and in different cultures.
- Relate iconography to visual literacy.
- Describe connections between symbolism, iconography, and storytelling.
- Recognize metaphorical meanings in art.

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## 1.1: Introduction

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- The process we go through when we look at a work of art to determine if we recognize and can make sense of its content is not just a visual one.
  - It is a mental process as well, largely based on the elements within and about the work we can identify and categorize.
  - As we look and think, we may be given clues about what the work means by where it is, when it was made, what culture it came from, who created it, or why it was made.
  - Any information we can gather helps us understand the work's context, that is, for what historical, social, personal, political, or scientific reasons the work of art was made.
  - And then, using all the contextual information we have gathered, we interpret the work of art's content to discover what it means or symbolizes.
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## 1.2: What is Art?

### Overview

### What is Art?

For a moment, imagine what a world without art would be like? How would buildings look? Could any kind of visual communication exist at all? It's an interesting question that leads us to quickly define defining the boundaries of what does and does not constitute art. Defining what is art can be difficult, especially since its definition can change over the years and between different cultures.

Art is studied because “it is among the highest expressions of culture, embodying its ideals and aspirations, challenging its assumptions and beliefs, and creating new visions and possibilities for it to pursue” (Sayre XVI). In the Western tradition (people and places with European roots, such as what North America is often considered), we generally think of fine art when defining art. These are works that take imagination, skill, and genius to create something that is not meant to imitate a real-world object or serve a functional purpose. However, before the Renaissance, art in the Western tradition was defined as a functional craft, such as metalworking. The idea of art for art's sake (meaning, art that was purposely created not to have a functional purpose) came about many years later.

### Spotlight

Studying art leads to a greater understanding of our own cultural values and of the society that produced it. For example, when colonizing forces of Europeans encountered African wood sculptural *nkisi n'kondi* figures they considered them to be evidence of idolatry and witchcraft or opposition to the colonizing forces (Sayre 11–12). The *nkisi n'kondi* figures were pierced with nails during elaborate ceremonies to make the sculpted figure beautiful.

An *nkisi n'kondi* is created to hold powerful ingredients used for judicial and healing contexts (Brooklyn Museum). To make an *nkisi n'kondi*, a carver begins by sculpting a human or animal figure with an empty space in its stomach. Then, during an elaborate ceremony, a ritual expert puts powerful ingredients with supernatural powers on the object and in the stomach. The ritualist activates the figure by breathing into the stomach and then immediately seals it off with a mirror. Nails and blades are driven into the figure, either to conform an oath or to destroy an evil force (ibid).



*Power Figure (Nkisi N'kondi)*, Kongo peoples (Democratic Republic of the Congo).  
c. late 19th century, wood and metal, 36 x 18 1/2 x 14 1/4" / 16/8 x 47 x 36.2 cm [Detroit Institute of Arts](#), Detroit, MI



*Power Figure (Nkisi N'kondi)*, found in Kongo (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Solongo or Woyo subgroup), late 19th-early 20th century wood, fiber, glass, iron, pigment, bone, 24 x 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 in. [Brooklyn Museum](#), New York, NY



*Power Figure: Male (Nkisi)*, 19th-mid 20th century, Kongo peoples, wood, pigment, nails, cloth, beads, shells, arrows, leather, nuts and twine, 58.8 x 26 x 25.4 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Speakers: Dr. Peri Klemm and Dr. Beth Harris

### Works Cited

Brooklyn Museum. "Power Figure (Nkisi Nkondi)," Brooklyn Museum. *Open Collection*. n.d., <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/openc.../objects/71253>. Accessed 3 Mar 2022.

Sayre, Henry. *A World of Art*, Sixth edition. Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010. Print.

### Creative Visualization

As far back as 50,000 BC/BCE, people have had the urge to create. In fact, being creative is part of our natural human ability. Let's do some creative visioning. What do you see in these clouds?



These are Nacreous clouds. Most people see a dove soaring downward to the right or a rabbit hopping to the left.



"Altocumulus Castellanus or Jellyfish Clouds," by Naseko, retrieved from <https://www.sequelanet.com.br/2010/04/fotos-de-nuvens-raras-impressionante.html>

Most people see mini tornadoes or a skeleton of a running lion (it's is on the left) in these Altocumulus Castellanus clouds.



"Lenticular or Discoidal Clouds" by Naseko, retrieved from <https://www.sequelanet.com.br/2010/04/fotos-de-nuvens-raras-impressionante.html>

Stacks of pancakes or a UFO is often seen in the circular Lenticular cloud on the left-hand side of this image.

It's almost universal for people to see waves or the heads of several swans (whose heads are facing to the left) in these Cirrus clouds.

As this creative visioning exercise proves, everyone is able to create images, even if in their minds. What might seem new is making meaning from images.

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## Visual Literacy

The process of making meaning from images and using critical-thinking skills to understand what was seen, and communicated as a result, is known as visual literacy.



*Are You a Visual Literate.* YouTube, uploaded by TubeShare.in, 3 Sept 2020, <https://youtu.be/XACblhtNSM4>.

The best way to begin analyzing a work of art is to "read" it. Just like reading a book, we start from the upper left, scan slowly to the right, and all the way down to the bottom of the work until we reach its end. While scanning, we notice all the details seen in the work. These details are clues that give meaning to the work. Take a look at the following artwork to see what you notice.



Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and His Wife (Arnolfini Double Portrait or The Arnolfini Marriage)*, 1434, oil on oak, 2' 8.36" x 1' 11.62" (The National Gallery, London)



Detail: mirror, *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and His Wife*



Detail: signature, *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and His Wife*

Now that you have gathered the details, let's see what they mean.



*Van Eyck, The Arnolfini Portrait.* YouTube, uploaded by Smarthistory, 15 Aug 2012, <https://youtu.be/9ODhKqFaugQ>.

Did you expect to find so much meaning in the details seen in this work? It's amazing how one painting can contain so much objective and subjective information. From an objective standpoint (literal facts), we see objects, such as shoes, a little dog, oranges on the window sill, a woman in a green velvet dress, etc. Yet from a subjective standpoint (our personal thoughts and opinions that are based on knowledge from our backgrounds and experiences), we learn that the shoes signify domesticity; the dog, fidelity; the oranges, the fact that the Arnolfinis were wealthy merchants; and the dress, a non-pregnant woman dressed in her finest for a ceremony of some sort.

Whether objective or subjective, such details are important to understanding art. Despite that, art does not exist in a vacuum. It responds to what is happening in the art world and in society, as a whole. These are just a couple of reasons why studying art is important.

### The Importance of Studying Art

Although art might seem highly specialized, the skills learned in this discipline can be used in several practical ways. Amy Herman explains how in this video.



*How Art Can Help You Analyze: Amy E. Herman.* YouTube, uploaded by TED-Ed, 4 Oct 2013, <https://youtu.be/ubEadhXWwV4>.

### Summary

- Art in the Western tradition takes imagination, skill, and genius to create works that are meant to exist solely on their own. These works do not need to imitate an object seen in the real world or be created to use for a specific purpose.
- Despite whether or not a person considers themselves to be artistic, the ability to be creative is a common, human trait.
- Visual literacy is a process that helps us uncover possibilities, understand, and then figure out the meaning for visual images.
- Studying the arts helps us notice the details, see the world in different ways, and effectively communicate information that is not readily apparent.

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## 1.3: Socio-Cultural Context

### Historical Context



**Figure 5.1 | Still Life with Gilt Goblet**

Artist: Willem Claeszoon Heda  
 Author: Web Gallery of Art  
 Source: Wikimedia Commons  
 License: Public Domain



**Figure 5.2 | Vase of Flowers**

Artist: Jan Davidszoon de Heem  
 Author: User "DcoetzeeBot"  
 Source: Wikimedia Commons  
 License: Public Domain

- We can learn about the historical context to help us interpret the content and understand the meaning of two seventeenth-century Dutch paintings.
- Willem Claesz. Heda (1594-1680, Netherlands) created *Still Life with a Gilt Cup* in 1635, and Jan Davidsz. de Heem painted *Still Life with Flowers* around 1660. (Figures 5.1 and 5.2)
- Although depicting different types of things, each of these paintings is **still life**, an arrangement of objects both made by humans and found in nature, such as flowers, fruit, insects, sea creatures, and animals from the hunt. A still life falls into a subject category known as **genre** subjects or scenes of everyday life.
- Both Heda and de Heem specialized in painting still lifes that were beautifully arranged and stunningly lifelike. Each was well known for his ability to depict a variety of textures and surfaces often displayed side-by-side, as we can see here, to create a dazzling and sumptuous visual array.
- The subject of Heda's painting, *Still Life with a Gilt Cup*, is ostensibly the remains of a meal of oysters and bread, but it is even more about all the objects accompanying the food. (Figure 5.1) The tin plates and open-lidded pewter pitcher are relatively simply fashioned and could have been made by local craftsmen. But the remaining items, including a spiral ribbed clear glass cruet for oil or vinegar behind the tin bowl of oysters, the green glass wine römer, or goblet, decorated with **prunts** (applied blobs of molten glass, here drawn into points), and the tall, heavily ornamented, and gilded vessel topped by a lid with a figure of a warrior, are all luxury goods. They indicate wealth and good taste, and they allude to Holland's importance as a nation of traders who import beautiful objects from around the world.
- In a similar fashion, in *Still Life with Flowers* de Heem sets before us, teeming with life and in abundant disarray, the beauty and bounty of nature. (Figure 5.2) But he also shows the swift passing of the seasons by depicting flowers, fruits, and vegetables that bloom and ripen throughout the year. The tulips from highly prized and costly bulbs imported by the Dutch from the Ottoman Empire (modern Turkey) honeysuckle, roses, carnations, peas, grapes, and corn introduced to Europe from the Americas are among the profusion of colors and forms that de Heem unrealistically depicts as all in season at the same time. The viewer would instead know that long before the orange carnation blossomed in the fall, the blood-red striped tulip would have withered in the spring. De Heem is reminding us in this **vanitas** (Latin: vanity) still life of our own mortality and the transience of life in the face of certain death.
- Both paintings' messages reflect the importance in the Protestant faith, as practiced in Holland at the time, of the believer's direct connection to God without the need for intercessors.

### Social Context



**Figure 5.3 | Conversation Piece**

Artist: Lilly Martin Spencer  
Source: Met Museum  
License: OASC



**Figure 5.4 | The Champions of the Mississippi - "A Race for the Buckhorns"**

Artist: Frances Flora Bond Palmer  
Source: Met Museum  
License: OASC

- Lilly Martin Spencer (1822-1902, USA) painted *Conversation Piece* around 1851-1852. (Figure 5.3)
- A **genre painting**, it depicts an everyday scene of a mother holding her infant in her lap while the father stands beside them playfully dangling some cherries

above the baby's eager grasp.

- It is a quiet scene of family life, a moment of contentment and peace, with the dining table not yet cleared after a meal adding an even greater sense of intimacy and informality. Spencer was the only prominent female painter at that time in the United States, and the majority of her works are narrative genre pieces such as this one. They are scenes of domestic life, often suggesting a story told through the setting, the arrangement and gesture of the figures, and their facial expressions.
- In Spencer's painting, the woman represents the feminine ideal of a nurturing and content mother. But rather than showing a father who holds himself apart from the womanly, domestic sphere—as was far more common at the time Spencer depicts the man in an equally caring and warm role. An oval is formed by the mother's bent head and arm which extends from her hand supporting the baby's head through the baby's upraised arm to the father's bent arm, his bowed head, and his left arm resting on the back of the mother's chair. At odds with many at the time who believed men and women existed in separate spheres, Spencer draws the family into one circle.
- American industrialism worked hand-in-hand with American ingenuity. Steamboat routes on the Mississippi River and its tributaries substantially contributed to the growth of settlements and cities from New Orleans to Pittsburgh began in 1811.
- The artist who drew the *Champions of the Mississippi* was Frances Flora Bond Palmer (1812-1876, USA). Palmer, like Lilly Martin Spencer, supported her family as a full-time artist.
- As was the case with the majority of scenes Palmer created, she did not witness the race between the steamboats *Queen of the West* and *Morning Star* or the cheering crowd on the shore. She depicted numerous such scenes, however, as competitions such as this were commonplace and prints commemorating them were popular and sold well. The races and the steamboats were a source of pride and a celebration of American ingenuity, competitiveness, and success.
- For those who owned a print such as *The Champions of the Mississippi*, the vast majority of whom had never seen the river or a steamboat competition, it represented the open possibilities of America's greatest waterway and indomitable spirit.

## Personal or Creative Narrative Context

1. Charles Demuth (1883-1935, USA) painted *The Figure 5 in Gold* in 1928. (Figure 5.5) Demuth met poet and physician William Carlos Williams at the boarding house where they both lived in Philadelphia while studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Demuth's painting is one in a series of portraits of friends, paying homage to Williams and his 1916 poem "The Great Figure":

*Among the rain and lights I saw the figure 5 in gold on a red firetruck moving tense  
unheeded to gong clangs siren howls and wheels rumbling through the dark city.*



**Figure 5.5 | I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold**

Artist: Charles Demuth

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

- Williams described the inspiration for his poem as an encounter with a fire truck as it noisily sped along the streets of New York, abruptly shaking him from his inner thoughts to a jarring awareness of what was going on around him.
- Demuth chose to paint his portrait of Williams not as a likeness but with references to his friend, the poet.
- The dark, shadowed diagonal lines radiating from the center of his painting, punctuated by bright white circles, capture the jolt of the charging truck accompanied by the clamor of its bells. The accelerating beat of the figure 5 echoes the pounding of Williams's heart as he was startled. It was the sight of the number in gold that Williams was first aware of at the scene, and Demuth uses the pulsing 5 to symbolically portray his friend, surrounded by the rush of red as bright as blood with his name, Bill, above as if flashing in red neon.

### Political Context



**Figure 5.7 | Plate 15 from "The Disasters of War" (Los Desastres de la Guerra): And there is nothing to be done (Y no hai remedio)**

Artist: Francisco de Goya y Lucientes

Source: Met Museum

License: OASC

- Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828, Spain) was court painter to King Charles IV from the beginning of his reign in 1789 until Napoleon ousted Charles from his throne in 1808 during the French invasion of Spain.
- Goya was hired the same year to make a visual re-

cord of the bravery of the Spanish people against the onslaught of the French invaders. The impact of what Goya saw, however, changed the direction and tone of the series of prints he made from the unflinching courage of his fellow citizens to despair over the barbarous atrocities committed and merciless suffering endured by all who are trampled in the path of war.

- He created the series of eighty-two etchings, *The Disasters of War*, between 1810 and 1823. *Y no hai Remedio* (And There's Nothing to Be Done) is the nineteenth print in the series; it reflects the hopelessness of war. (Figure 5.7) There is no escape, nor is there justice. Both civilians and soldiers become de-humanized and numb in the endless slaughter, here in the form of a firing squad.

### Scientific Context

- Art and science are inextricably linked. The words "technique" and "technology" both originate from the ancient Greek word *tekhnē*, which means art. For the Greeks, both art and science were the study, analysis, and classification of objects and ideas.
- Leonardo da Vinci was fascinated by how things work. The mechanics of nature, machinery, and the human body were all worlds to be explored deeply in order to be understood at their most essential, truthful levels.
- Although he was interested in human anatomy throughout his career, he spent the last twelve years of his life systematically studying and documenting his findings. He began in the winter of 1507-08 with a series of pen-and-ink drawings that he made of a dissection he carried out on an old man. In the winter of 1510-11, he completed additional dissections, probably working with anatomy professor Marcantonio della Torre at the University of Pavia. (Figure 5.9)



**Figure 5.9 | Anatomical studies of muscles of the arm and shoulder, bones of the foot**

Artist: Leonardo da Vinci

Author: User "Discovering da Vinci"

Source: Tumbler

License: Public Domain

1. "Steamboats." American Eras. 1997. Encyclopedia.com. (June 22, 2015). <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-2536600971.html>
2. Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.), 1883. Accessed from: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/245/245-h/245-h.htm>
3. Georgia O'Keeffe, "About myself" in *Georgia O'Keeffe: Exhibition of oils and pastels* (New York: An American Place: 1939).

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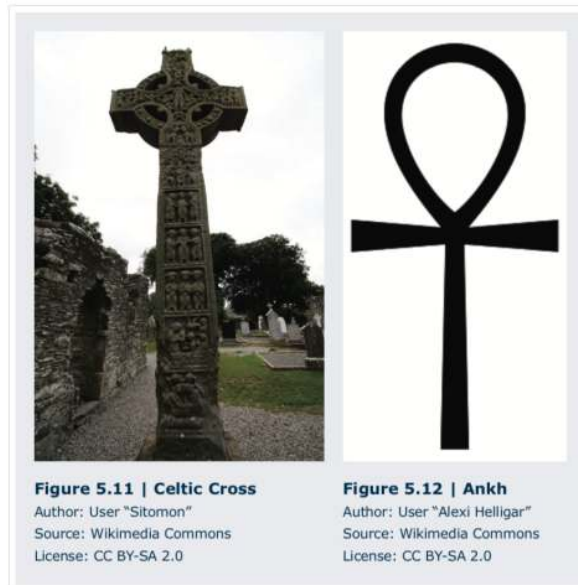
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## 1.4: Symbolism and Iconography

### Overview

- **Symbolism** refers to the use of specific figural or naturalistic images or abstracted graphic signs that hold shared meaning within a group.
- **Iconography** is the broader study and interpretation of subject matter and pictorial themes in a work of art.

### Symbolism:



- A **symbol** is an image or sign that is understood by a group to stand for something.
- The symbol, however, does not have to have a direct connection to its meaning. For example, the letters of the alphabet, which are abstract graphic signs, are understood by those who use them to have individual sounds and meanings. The users have assigned meaning to them, as letters have no meaning in and of themselves. An example of a naturalistic image is a rose, which in most Western civilizations symbolizes love. When one person gives a rose to another, it is a symbol of the love the person feels.
- While a **symbol** might have a common meaning for a certain group, it might be used with variations by or hold a different significance for other groups. Let us use the example of a cross.
- At its core, a cross is a simple intersection of vertical and horizontal lines that could refer to the meeting of celestial and terrestrial elements or forces or could lend itself to other variations of meaning.
- The cross most frequently associated with Christianity is the Latin Cross, with the long vertical bar intersected by a shorter horizontal one believed by many to be the form of the cross upon which Jesus Christ, the central figure of the faith, was crucified. (Variants of the Cross: [wpmedia.vancouver.sun.com/2010...6.crosses1.png](http://wpmedia.vancouver.sun.com/2010...6.crosses1.png)) But its simplicity of conception lends itself to various other readings, as well, and in pre-Christian use, it was related to sacred and cosmic beliefs.
- Within Christian usage, the cross has taken a great number of different forms, including the equal-armed Greek Cross, favored by the Byzantine Christians; Celtic crosses, with a circular addition to the crossing; X's and upside-down crosses associated with specific Christian **martyrs**, individuals who died for their faith, on such instruments of torture; and many others. (Figure 5.11)
- The Ankh, another cross form, with a looped handle, seems to have been devised by the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of the life-giving power of the Sun. (Figure 5.12)
- Clearly, many other symbols have various meanings, especially when they are represented as more abstract graphic signs. To read their implications in any particular application will require your considering where it was made and for what specific purposes, as well as how it might have been adopted and turned to different use at that time or later



Jan van Eyck, Arnolfini Portrait, 1434, oil on canvas. Work is in the public domain.

- **Iconography** includes implied meanings and symbolism that are used to convey the group's shared experience and history—its familiar myths and stories.
- Iconography refers to the symbols used within a work of art and what they mean, or symbolize. For example, in different cultures, a snake may stand for evil, temptation, wisdom, rebirth, or the circle of life.
- A depiction of a snake in a scene with Adam and Eve has specific meanings for those of the Christian faith or others who understand the snake stands for temptation within the context of that subject or story. In Chinese culture, however, a snake represents the power of nature and is said to bring good fortune to those who practice the snake's restraint and elegance of movement.
- Jan van Eyck's painting, *Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife Giovanna Cenami*, from 1434, is often used as a prototype example for iconographic analysis, and the conflicts that arise within it. As a painter, Van Eyck was revered for his incredible ability to mimic realism and the effects of light. The painting's many symbols, some of Christian origin, have been a source of some debate. It was widely accepted as a painting representing a marriage, but recent controversy suggests it is more a record of engagement than a wedding portrait. In van Eyck's time, a woman laying her hands in the palm of a male, as she so conspicuously does in the painting, was understood to be an agreement to wed (Sayre 35). Above the mirror in the center of the background are the words "Jan van Eyck has been here, 1434." To contemporary ears this almost sounds like a bit of playful graffiti, but it also clearly establishes the painter as a witness to the event being painted (Sayre 35).

#### Sources

1. Sayre, Henry. *A World of Art, Sixth edition*. Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010. Print.
2. Pamela Sachant, Peggy Blood, Jeffery LeMieux, & Rita Tekippe University System of Georgia via [GALILEO Open Learning Materials](https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/156838)

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## 1.5.1: Types of Representation in Art

### Overview

Representational (realistic), Abstract, and Non-representational (or non-objective) Artworks

### Representation and Abstraction

- In the broadest terms, if the work has visual reference to the phenomenal world, we consider it to be **representational**.
- To some extent, all works are also **abstract**, in that they might remind us of what we see in the phenomenal world by only reflecting some physical feature(s) rather than detailing the object, place, or person itself. Having said that, we can proceed to see art in terms of its relative representation or relative abstraction of the original form.
- Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899, France) depicted a variety of animals in great detail with regard to their anatomy and physiognomy and took great care to render her illustrations with fidelity to the appearance of the actual animals she had observed. (Figure 4.3)
- She deepened her own knowledge and honed her skills by visiting farms, veterinarian dissections, and slaughterhouses in order to develop extensive knowledge of her preferred subject matter, with which she created imagery of animals and other features of rural farm life.
- Her cows would be correctly described as very **naturalistic** in appearance their forms are quite similar in appearance to actual cows.
- [For more information about Representational Art, visit Tate Museum](#)
- [For more information about Abstract Art, visit Tate Museum](#)



**Figure 4.3 | *Ploughing the Nevers***

Artist: Rosa Bonheur

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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- In comparison, if we examine the renditions by folk artist Edward Hicks (1780-1849, USA), we see cows that are much less rigorous in their resemblance, most likely the result of his not having had exacting training and practice in precise replication.
- He simplified landscape settings that emphasized narrative and symbolic messages rather than exact proportions and details.
- *The Yellow Cow* by Franz Marc (1880-1916, Germany) clearly does not slavishly reproduce natural appearances, but instead seeks to convey through abstraction a sense of light-hearted lyrical expression for the animal. (Figure 4.5)



**Figure 4.4 | *The Residence of David Twining***

Artist: Edward Hicks  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
License: Public Domain

- To achieve this end, Marc made an expression that carries messages about what he thought and felt about his subject.
- Marc created a great many images of animals in nature that were metaphorical reflections of his views of mankind and the human spirit. Such a movement towards abstraction often derives from the artist's wish to express an emotional or intellectual commentary on the subject, or to use the subject as a starting place to diverge from visual appearances of the purely physical phenomenal world in order to create a statement of some other ideas.



**Figure 4.5 | *The Yellow Cow***

Artist: Franz Marc  
Source: Wikiart  
License: Public Domain

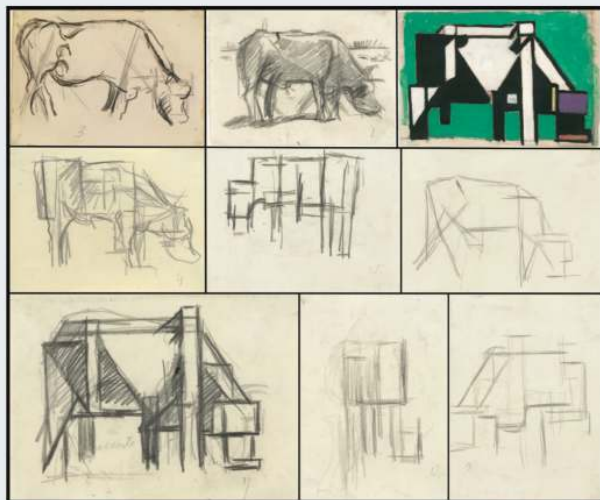


**Figure 4.6 | Composition (The Cow)**

Artist: Theo van Doesburg  
Source: MoMA  
License: Public Domain

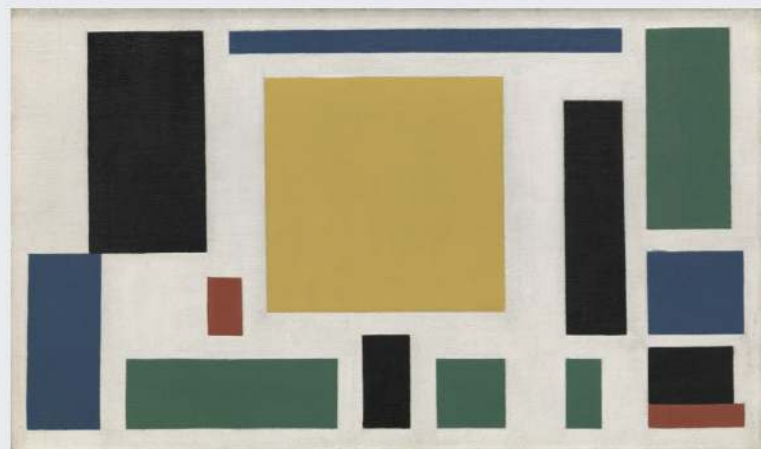


**Figure 4.7 | Composition VIII (The Cow)**

Artist: Theo van Doesburg  
Source: MoMA  
License: Public Domain

- Another artist bearing investigation in this regard is Theo van Doesburg (1883- 1931, Netherlands), who used his own philosophical probing to frame a systematic path from naturalism in his renditions of the cow to an abstraction that is visually quite far removed from what most of us see in the phenomenal world. (Figure 4.6)
- Beginning with a series of exploratory sketches, he sought to reduce the linear forces of a cow's form to the three he thought were essential components of the physical and metaphysical world, that is, vertical, horizontal, and diagonal, while reducing the three dimensions of the cow's form to the painting's two-dimensional surface.
- At the same time, he tried to simplify the forms and volumes, progressively creating a strongly abstracted picture that few of us would likely recognize as of a cow if we were not led through the process by which he developed the image.
- Indeed, we have evidence of the process and its result in *Composition VIII (The Cow)*, a fully developed instruction that provides us with great insight into Van Doesburg's train of thought and work, as well as his process of abstraction. (Figure 4.7)
- Representation, then, shows us some broad vision of what we see in the original, be it a person, landscape, interior, event, or such, with some level of detail. To one degree or another, all art is abstract in that it is not the original form, but instead the artist's response to the original form rendered in artistic terms, although, clearly, not all of it is so strongly abstracted that we lose the plainer references to the physical world.

## Non-Representational or Non-Objective

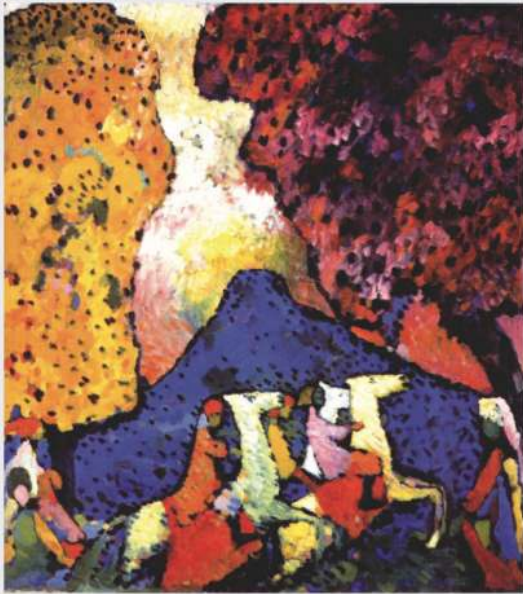


**Figure 4.10 | Blue Mountain**

Artist: Wassily Kandinsky

Source: Wikiart

License: Public Domain

- **Non-representational** or **Non-objective** art defines a type of abstract art that is usually, but not always, geometric and aims to convey a sense of simplicity and purity
- Non-representational art and non-objective art that has no derivation from figures or objects.
- Stories about the era in art and the push from abstraction to non-representational, with several artists claiming to have led the breakthrough.
- The first artist to use the term **non-objective art**, however, seems to have been Aleksandr Rodchenko (1890-1956, Russia), (*Spatial Construction no. 12*, Aleksandr Rodchenko: [www.moma.org/interactives/exh...truct\\_jpg.html](http://www.moma.org/interactives/exh...truct_jpg.html); *Assembling for a Demonstration*, Aleksandr Rodchenko: [www.moma.org/collection/works/45090?locale=en](http://www.moma.org/collection/works/45090?locale=en)) and its most active early theorist and writer was probably Vasily Kandinsky (1866-1944, Russia, lived Germany and France). (Figures 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12)
- [For more information about Non-objective Art, visit Tate Museum](#)



**Figure 4.11 | Angel of the Last Judgment**

Artist: Wassily Kandinsky

Source: Wikiart

License: Public Domain



**Figure 4.12 | Red Spot II**

Artist: Wassily Kandinsky

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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## 1.5.2: Formal or Critical Analysis of Art

### Overview

While restricting our attention only to a description of the formal elements of an artwork may at first seem limited or even tedious, a careful and methodical examination of the physical components of an artwork is an important first step in “decoding” its meaning. It is useful, therefore, to begin at the beginning. There are four aspects of a formal analysis: **description**, **analysis**, **interpretation**, and **evaluation**. In addition to defining these terms, we will look at examples.

### Description

- What can we notice at first glance about a work of art? Is it two-dimensional or three-dimensional? What is the medium? What kinds of actions were required in its production? How big is the work? What are the elements of design used within it?
- Starting with line: is it soft or hard, jagged or straight, expressive or mechanical? How is line being used to describe space?
- Considering shape: are the shapes large or small, hard-edged or soft? What is the relationship between shapes? Do they compete with one another for prominence? What shapes are in front? Which ones fade into the background?
- Indicating mass and volume: if two-dimensional, what means if any are used to give the illusion that the presented forms have weight and occupy space? If three-dimensional, what space is occupied or filled by the work? What is the mass of the work?
- Organizing space: does the artist use perspective? If so, what kind? If the work uses linear perspective, where are the horizon line and vanishing point(s) located?
- On texture: how is texture being used? Is it actual or implied texture?
- In terms of color: what kinds of colors are used? Is there a color scheme? Is the image overall light, medium, or dark?

### Analysis

- Once the elements of the artwork have been identified, next come questions of how these elements are related. How are the elements arranged? In other words, how have principles of design been employed?
- What elements in the work were used to create unity and provide variety? How have the elements been used to do so?
- What is the scale of the work? Is it larger or smaller than what it represents (if it does depict someone or something)? Are the elements within the work in proportion to one another?
- Is the work symmetrically or asymmetrically balanced?
- What is used within the artwork to create emphasis? Where are the areas of emphasis? How has the movement been conveyed in the work, for example, through line or placement of figures?
- Are there any elements within the work that create rhythm? Are any shapes or colors repeated?

### Interpretation

- Interpretation comes as much from the individual viewer as it does from the artwork. It derives from the intersection of what an object symbolizes to the artist and what it means to the viewer. It also often records how the meaning of objects has been changed by time and culture.
- Interpretation, then, is a process of unfolding. A work that may seem to mean one thing on first inspection may come to mean something more when studied further. Just as when re-reading a favorite book or re-watching a favorite movie, we often notice things not seen on the first viewing; interpretations of art objects can also reveal themselves slowly.
- Claims about meaning can be made, but are better when they are backed up with supporting evidence. Interpretations can also change and some interpretations are better than others.

### Evaluation

- All this work of description, analysis, and interpretation, is done with one goal in mind: to make an evaluation about a work of art.
- Just as interpretations vary, so do evaluations. Your evaluation includes what you have discovered about the work during your examination as well as what you have learned, about the work, yourself, and others in the process.
- Your reaction to the artwork is an important component of your evaluation: what do you feel when you look at it? And, do you like the work? How and why do you find it visually pleasing, in some way disturbing, and emotionally engaging?

## Examples of Formal Analysis

### Snow Storm—Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth by J. M. W. Turner



Figure 4.1 | *Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*  
Artist: J. M. W. Turner  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
License: Public Domain

- First, on the level of **description**, the dark structure of the foundering steamboat is hinted at in the center of the work, while heavy smoke from the vessel, pitching waves, and swirling snow surround it.
- The brown and gray curving lines are created with long strokes of heavily applied paint that expand to the edges of the composition.
- Second, we note that the paint application, heavy, with long strokes, adds dramatic movement to the image. We see that the **design principle** of scale and proportion is being used in the small size of the steamboat in relation to the overall canvas.
- Now let us **interpret** these elements and their relation: The artist has emphasized the maelstrom of sea, snow, and wind. A glimpse of blue sky through the smoke and snow above the vessel is the only indication of space beyond this gripping scene of danger, and provides the only place for the viewer's eyes to rest from the tumult. This scene is humanity's struggle for survival against powerful forces of nature.
- And finally, we are ready to **evaluate** this work. Is it powerfully effective in reminding us of the transitory nature of our own limited existence, a memento morii, perhaps? Or is it a wise caution of the limits of our human power to control our destiny? Does the work have sufficient power and value to be accepted by us as significant? The verdict of history tells us it is. J.M.W. Turner is considered a significant artist of his time, and this work is one that is thought to support that verdict.
- In the end, however, each of us can accept or reject this historical verdict for our own reasons. We may fear the sea. We may reject the use of technology as valiantly heroic. We may see the British colonial period as one of oppression and tyranny and this work as an illustration of the hubris of that time. Whatever we conclude, this work of art stands as a catalyst for this important dialogue.

### Lady at the Tea Table- Mary Cassatt Mary Cassatt



Figure 4.2 | *Lady at the Tea Table*  
Artist: Mary Cassatt  
Source: Met Museum  
License: OASC

Another example of formal analysis. Consider *Lady at the Tea Table* by Mary Cassatt. Mary Cassatt (1844-1925, USA, lived France) is best known for her paintings, drawings, and prints of mothers and children. In those works, she focused on the bond between them as well as the strength and dignity of women within the predominantly domestic and maternal roles they played in the nineteenth century.

- *Lady at the Tea Table* is a depiction of a woman in a later period of her life, and captures the sense of calm power a matriarch held within the home. (Figure 4.2)
- First, a **description** of the elements being used in this work: The white of the wall behind the woman and the tablecloth before her provide a strong contrast to the black of her clothing and the blue of the tea set.
- The gold frame of the artwork on the wall, the gold rings on her fingers, and the gold bands on the china link those three main elements of the painting.
- **Analysis** shows the organizing principle of variety is employed in the rectangles behind the woman's head and the multiple circles and arcs of the individual pieces of the tea set. The composition is a stable triangle formed by the woman's head and body, and extending to the pieces of china that span the foreground from one edge of the composition to the other.
- Let us **interpret** these observations. There is little evidence of movement in the work other than the suggestion that the woman's hand, resting on the handle of the teapot, may soon move. Her gaze, directed away from the viewer and out of the picture frame, implies she is in the midst of pouring tea, but her stillness suggests she is lost in thought. How to evaluate this work? The artist expresses a restrained but powerful strength of character in her treatment of this subject. Is the lack of obvious movement in the work a comment on the emergence of women's roles in society, a hope or a demand for change? Or is it a monument to the quiet dignity of the domestic life of Victorian era Paris? The gold of the frame, the rings, and the china dishes appear to unify three disparate objects into one statement of value. Do they symbolize art, fidelity, and service? Is this a

comment on the restrictions of French domestic society, or a claim to its strength? One indication of the quality of a work of art is its power to evoke multiple interpretations. This open and poetic richness is one reason why the work of Mary Cassatt is considered to be important.

Following are examples on how to include the visual elements of art and principles of design while doing a formal analysis (a critique) on a work of art. (The visual elements of art and principles of design will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.)

Let's start by dissecting the visual elements of art.



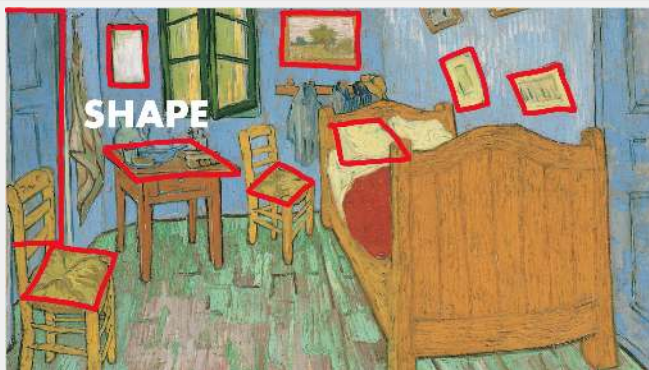
Vincent Van Gogh, *The Bedroom*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 28¾ x 36¼". "[Van Gogh, The Bedroom](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

When analyzing, remember elements of art: **Line, Shape, Color, Space and Texture.**

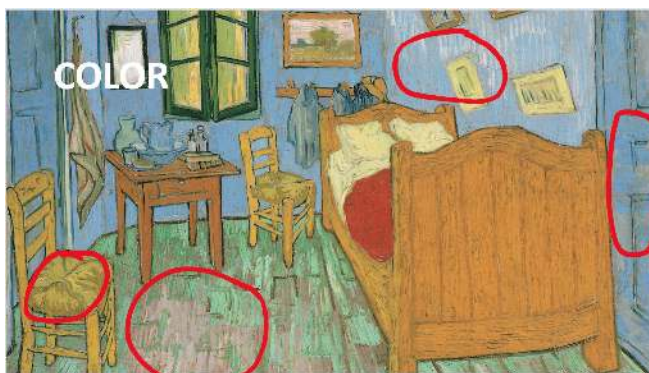


- The vertical lines he used in this painting give us a feeling of anxiety, and depression.
- The line gives unsettling energy to this painting of a bedroom
- Lines that make up the floor are strong vertical
- Strong verticals combine with diagonals to add to the uneasiness
- Suggests that Van Gogh's bedroom was not a calm place of rest

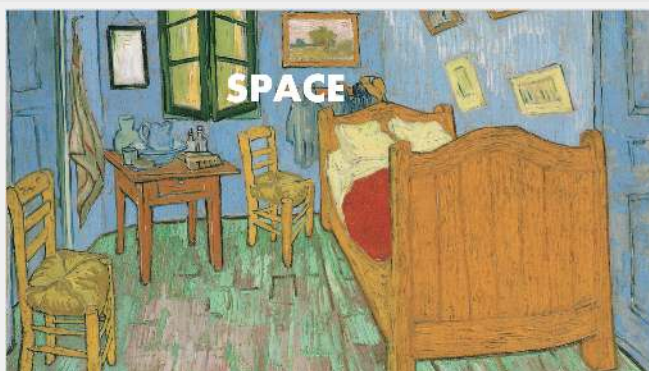
1



- The painting has a very rigid and angular theme, with mostly geometric shapes used to depict the bed frame, picture frames, tables, chairs, window, and doors.
- Some organic shapes are scattered amongst the painting for the bed cover, pillows, clothes hanging behind the bed, and towel hanging on the left-hand side. This creates a subtle contrast in shape, whilst retaining the overall rigid theme.
- The rigid shapes also help emphasize the awkward sense of perspective in the painting.<sup>1</sup>



- The Visual Element of Color has the strongest effect on our emotions. It is the element we use to create the mood or atmosphere of an artwork.
- Van Gogh intended for color to be the main focus of the painting.
- The colorful mix of orange, red, blue, and green expresses the "absolute restfulness" of his bedroom.
- Orange and red are rich and intense, while blue and green are relatively weak and are used more so as accents. That is interesting because orange is a complement of blue and red is a complement of green. Remember that complementary colors intensify each other when used together.
- The "blood" red appears to be the most dominant color in the painting, which may signify the importance of the bed.
- The floor also changes in color and value, adding anxiety
- Strong verticals combine with diagonals to add to the uneasiness
- Van Gogh committed suicide in 1890 (the following year)
- He died in this bed<sup>1</sup>



- There is a strong sense of perspective in the painting, with many of the rigid lines converging to a point around the middle. However, the sense of perspective is awkward and imperfect.<sup>1</sup>



- Texture is the tactile quality of an object.
- You can feel the texture of the floor and the wood elements in the painting. <sup>1</sup>

Now you are seeing it differently. You put attention to detail. You can see through these five different possibilities by reading this artwork.

Let's put it all together. Following is an example on how to include the visual elements of art and principles of design while doing a formal analysis (a critique) on a work of art.



*How to do visual (formal) analysis in art history.* (2017, September 18), uploaded by SmartHistory.  
<https://youtu.be/sM2MOyonDsY>

Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris

## Sources

1. DeWitte, Debra J. , Larmann, Ralph M. , and Shields, M. Kathryn *Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts* Third Edition. Copyright © 2015 Thames & Hudson
2. Toledo Museum of Art. *The Art of Seeing Art*. [www.toledomuseum.org](http://www.toledomuseum.org)

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## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

### 2: Foundation- Visual Elements of Art

#### Overview

When looking at art, many people today take a holistic or **gestalt** approach to understanding it. In this approach, the work of art is experienced as a single unified whole and an intuitive conclusion is drawn. This approach to art is a good place to start, but it can also be useful to examine the individual parts of an artwork and the relationships those parts have to the whole. When we examine an artwork by taking it apart, we are looking at its design. Design is divided into two broad categories: the elements of design and the principles of design. The **elements of design** are the physical parts of the artwork, or the **form**. The **principles of design** are the ways in which those parts are arranged or used, or the **composition**.

- When we look at the art objects that people have made over the centuries and around the world, we find they share some basic elements. They exist; they have substance; they are either flat or “in the round”; they use (or do not use) perspective, line, shape, mass, value, color, texture, and so on. Over time, both artists and art critics have developed a set of terms to describe art objects and their designs. In this chapter, we will develop an art-specific vocabulary to use in identifying different types of art forms, discerning the materials and processes used to create them, understanding how the elements and principles of design are used by artists, and recognizing how they convey meaning in visual art.
- The possible combinations in visual art are infinite, but the visual arts have traditionally been practiced and categorized in only a few broadly termed ways. The primary distinction in the visual arts is a dimension. Two-dimensional art consists of **drawing, painting, and printmaking**; three-dimensional art consists of **sculpture, including installation, and kinetic art**. In addition to these traditional types of art, new technologies and new ideas about art have given us four-dimensional or time-based art, such as **video and performance**. Such art depends on the use of technology and the passage of time for its effect. More recently, time-based art has grown to encompass a category known as new media art, which includes digital art, computer animation, interactive art, video games, virtual reality, robotics, and 3D printing.
- Today the separate categories of space and time are becoming blurred as artists seek ways to combine disparate approaches into a single, encompassing, and rich art experience. An important lesson from the modern approach to visual art for both artists and viewers is to recognize that each formal element and each approach to design has unique expressive power.

#### Visual Elements of Design

- A **design** is a governing plan or approach by which various parts of an artwork are created and assembled. It is rare to find a work of art that is entirely accidental or has come wholly out of the unconscious intuition of an artist. Further, looking at the way in which various parts of a work of art are arranged—even an intuitive or accidental work—can reveal clues to the goals and beliefs of the artist, the community in which the artist has worked, and the problems the work of art was meant to address.
- There are six basic elements of design: line, shape, mass/volume, perspective, texture, and color. One way to think of these elements of design is to “walk up the ladder” of dimension. Our perceived world has three dimensions of space and one of time. Mathematically, a point has zero dimensions. A line has one dimension, length. A shape has two dimensions, length and height. A form with mass or volume has three dimensions, length, height, and width. In moving from points to volumes, we have “walked up the ladder” of dimension from zero to three. In addition to the three dimensions of physical space, there are two more things artists can incorporate into a given work. They can introduce texture, and they can introduce color.

##### 2.1: Visual Elements of Art-Line

###### 2.1.1: Videos-Elements of Art- Line

##### 2.2: Visual Elements of Art-Shape

###### 2.2.1: Videos-Elements of Art- Shape and Contrast

##### 2.3: Visual Elements of Art-Color and Value

##### 2.4: Visual Elements of Art-Texture

##### 2.5: Visual Elements of Art- Space and Perspective

###### 2.5.1: Videos- Space and Perspective

## 2.6: Elements of Art- Mass and Volume

### 2.6.1: Video-Elements of Art- Mass and Volume

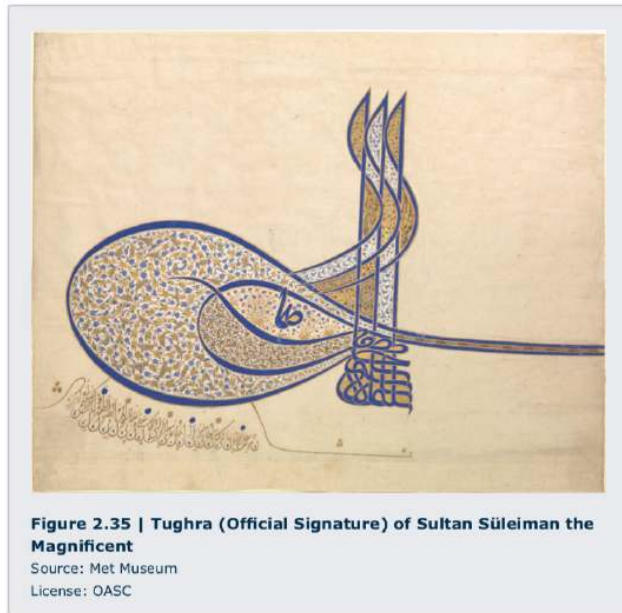
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## 2.1: Visual Elements of Art-Line

### 2.1.1 Overview

Line is the first-order element of design. A **line** is an infinite series of points that are arranged in a direction. The direction of a line may be straight (unchanging) or curved (changing). All kinds of objects are **linear** or predominantly formed by using lines. **Calligraphy**, or “beautiful writing,” is one popular use of line. The character of line in writing has two main functions. First, the linear figure or shape of a written symbol denotes its meaning. Second, the manner in which the figure is created can be seen as expressive in itself. A **tughra**, or the calligraphic signature of a sultan, and the re- fined text of Arabic calligraphy are renowned for their expressive beauty, as are many works of Asian script. In many writing cultures, the beauty of the script is as important as the message the script contains. (Figure 2.35)



### 2.1.2 Types of Lines

Actual Line, Contour Line, Implied Line, Directional Line, Communicative Line,

#### 2.1.2.1 Actual Line:

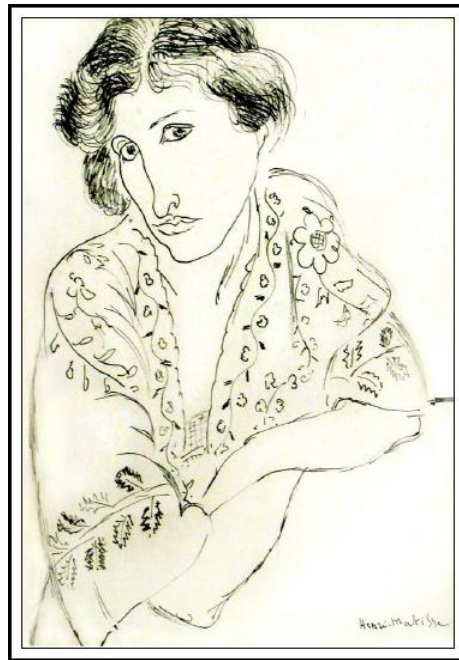
- Actual lines are lines that are physically present, existing solid connections between one or more points.
- [Richard Long's 'A Line Made by Walking'](#) is documentation of Richard Long's performance.
- In this work, he creates a short line in nature. Long created this work by repeatedly walking back and forth in a field made of grass. After that, Richard Long photographed this from an angle at which light enhanced the look of the line.



"Path through the grass" by Felip1 is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

#### 2.1.2.2 Contour Line

- **Contour** is the line where differing areas meet and form edges. A contour is an edge or profile of an object, but is not necessarily the complete outline of a shape.
- Human visual perception includes an enhanced ability to detect edges in nature. Contour lines follow the shapes of objects where they stand out from the backgrounds.
- Contour lines can suggest a volume in space by providing clues about the changing character of a surface.
- The drawing by Henri Matisse was created by using contour lines.
- Solid continuous lines represent complex three-dimensional shapes and surfaces <sup>4</sup>



"Portrait de femme, Henri Matisse (musée Maillol)" by dalbera is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

#### 2.1.2.3 Implied Line

- Some lines are not drawn at all. Instead, they are **implied** or suggested by an intentional alignment of shapes.
- Implied lines are not actually drawn, but we can connect the dots to create the lines in our minds. Implied lines are an illusion that gives the impression of line where there is no continuous mark.
- Implied lines give works of art a sense of motion and keep the viewer engaged in composition
- Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* contains wonderful examples of implied lines.
- Here, the implied lines are sightlines, which guide us throughout the image. These help us know where to look and show us what is important in the painting. Follow the gazes of the figures as they look and point at one another. The angel in the red cape to the right looks out at us, and then points at the infant John the Baptist, on the left. He looks at the infant Jesus, who in turn looks back again at him. Above, Mary looks down at Jesus and also gestures toward him with her hand. [6]



Leonardo da Vinci. The Virgin with the Infant Saint John the Baptist adoring the Christ Child accompanied by an Angel ('The Virgin of the Rocks'). 1506-8, Oil on poplar, thinned and cradled Display, 189.5 x 120cm. "[Leonardo, The Virgin of the Rocks](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

#### 2.1.2.4 Directional Line

- Artists can use lines to direct a viewer's attention to a particular part of a work. Goya in the Third May uses implied lines to direct the viewer's gaze.
- The bright white shirt of the central figure takes the attention right away.
- The actual line directs the viewer's eye from top left to mid-right through the hillside.
- An implied line created by the feet of the soldiers leads right to left.
- A shadow at the bottom continues in the same direction.
- The strong horizontal of the rifles draws attention to the victims. <sup>4</sup>



Francisco Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 8'4 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 11'3 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". [Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain](#). "Third of May" by KCC246F is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0.

#### 2.1.2.5 Communicative Line

- Line has **expressive** content. By its nature, a line compels the viewer to follow along its path. The character of the line can control the direction, speed, and attention of the viewer. The movement of a line can be curved or angular. It can progress smoothly or with a staccato rhythm. A line can be thick or thin, pale or bold. These qualities are “read” rationally and emotionally; thus, line can have an expressive and emotional content that can often be found by viewer introspection
- Vertical lines tend to communicate strength and energy
- Horizontal lines can suggest calmness and passivity
- Diagonal lines are associated with action, motion, and change
- Van Gogh's use of line is loose and free, almost out of control. Van Gogh's line is produced by his own hand. <sup>4,5</sup>



Vincent van Gogh, *The Bedroom*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 28¾ × 36¼". [Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois](#). "Van Gogh, *The Bedroom*" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

- Sol LeWitt employs line in his work too.
- Sol LeWitt's line is precise, controlled, mathematically rigorous, logical, and rationally organized whereas Van Gogh's line is imprecise, emotionally charged, and almost chaotic.<sup>5</sup>



2.1.2.5.1

"2013-05 München 171 Lenbachhaus, Sol Lewitt, Wall Drawing" by [Allie\\_Caulfield](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

📌 Spotlight: **Lynn Meyers**

### 2.1.3



Linn Meyers at [Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#). "File:Linn Meyers at work at the Hirshhorn, April, 2016.jpg" by Linn Meyers, [Bangabandhu](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).

Linn Meyers's paintings, drawings, and site-specific works have been shown in public and private venues, including The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, The Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, CA, The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, The Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan, The Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington, DC, The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, The Drawing Center, NYC, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC, Sandra Gering Inc, NYC, Jason Haam, Seoul, South Korea, ParisConcret, Paris, France, and The Bowdoin Museum, Brunswick, ME, among others. Meyers is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, The Pollock Krasner Award, a Santo Foundation award, and six DC Commission on the Arts grants. She has been Artist In Residence at The Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC, The Bemis Center in Omaha NE, The Millay Colony in Austerlitz, NY, The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, CA, Ballinglen Arts Foundation, Ireland, and The Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, NM.

Meyers's work is in public and private collections throughout the US and abroad, including the National Gallery of Art (DC), the Hammer Museum (CA), The Smithsonian American Art Museum, (DC), the Ballycastle Museum of Art (County Mayo, Ireland), The Hirshhorn Museum (DC), the Amore Pacific Museum of Art, (Seoul, South Korea), the National Museum of Women in the Arts, (DC), the Sheldon Museum of Art (NE), the Huntington Museum of Art (WV), the Phillips Collection (DC), the Academy Art Museum (MD), the New Britain Museum of American Art, (CT), the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, (ME), the Columbus Museum, (GA), and the Allentown Art Museum (PA). Meyers holds a BFA from The Cooper Union and an MFA from the California College of the Arts.<sup>2</sup>

#### Summary

- Line is the most basic visual element. Lines can be used to define shapes and figures, but also to indicate motion, emotion, and other elements
- Lines are the most fundamental element artists use. Lines organize the visible world.
- The outline or contour lines create a border or path around the edge of a shape, thereby outlining and defining it.
- The line can also express emotion, the feelings of the artist. Such lines are said to be expressive. Expressive lines refer to curved marks that increase the sense of dynamism of a work of art.
- Actual lines are lines that are physically present, existing as solid connections between one or more points.

- Implied line refers to the path that the viewer's eye takes as it follows shapes, colors, and forms along any given path.

#### 2.1.4 Source

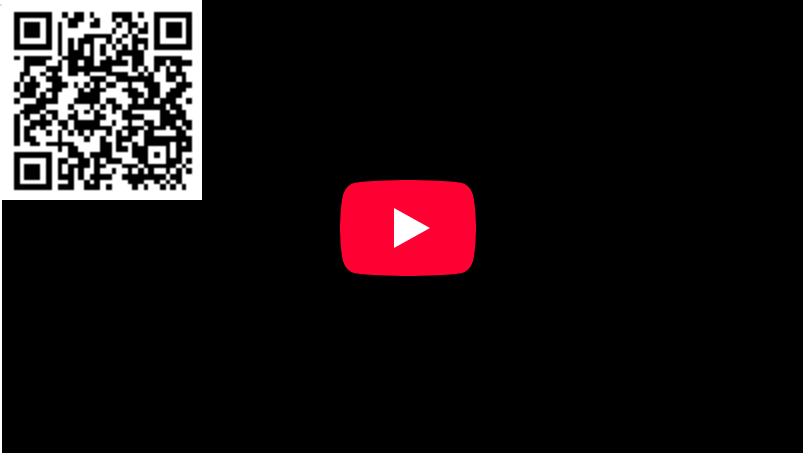
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### 2.1.1: Videos-Elements of Art- Line

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Vincent van Gogh, The Bedroom, 1889, oil on canvas, 29 x 36-5/8 inches / 73.6 x 92.3 cm (Art Institute of Chicago).

Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1tA9-ypx0g&t=1s>



Sol Lewitt | TateShots. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIH8FOtW0Q>



Sol Lewitt. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnKgSWugUWU>



Linn Meyers on the creation of "Our View From Here" - Hirshhorn Museum. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEQDBv\\_81f4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEQDBv_81f4)

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## 2.2: Visual Elements of Art-Shape

### 2.2.1 Overview:

- The design element of shape is the next element in the walk up the ladder of dimension. **Shape** has two dimensions, length and width. Shapes can be regular or irregular, simple or complex.

### 2.2.2 Types of Shapes

Shapes can be classified into two types: Organic and Geometric Shapes.

#### 2.2.2.1 Organic Shapes:

- Organic shapes are made up of unpredictable, irregular lines.
- They may seem unrestrained and chaotic, reflecting the characteristic of living things.
- *The Parakeet and the Mermaid* is one of the largest cut-outs Matisse ever made. The two creatures of the title are nestled among fruit and his – by now – characteristic algae-like leaf forms.<sup>1</sup>

Read about the [Matisse cutouts](#)



Henri Matisse. *The Parakeet and the Mermaid*. 1952. "[Stedelijk Museum](#)" by [Mario RM](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

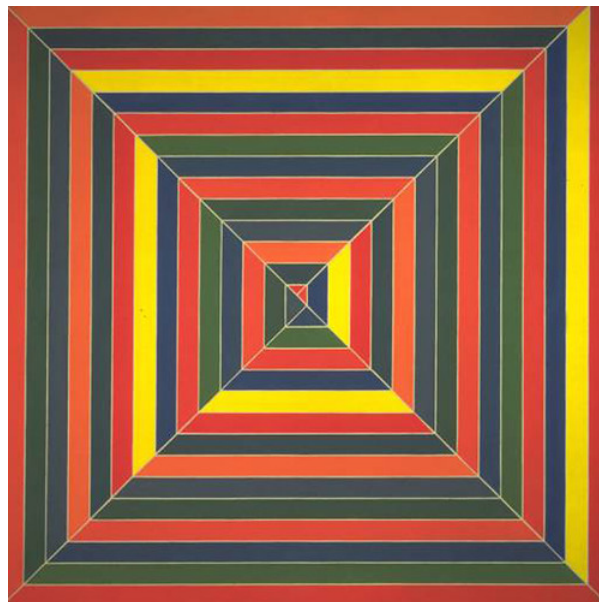
#### 2.2.2.2 Geometric Shapes:

- Geometric shapes are mathematically regular and precise.
- Hans Arp (1886-1966, France, lived Switzerland), in his work *Untitled*, used torn paper and cut shapes to create an abstract composition. While squares are geometric objects, Arp's torn and irregular edges transform them into organic shapes. The

orientation of those shapes roughly approximates a grid structure, but again, their deviation from a regular order implies a chaotic and accidental arrangement. In this work, Arp is dancing on the “edge of order.”

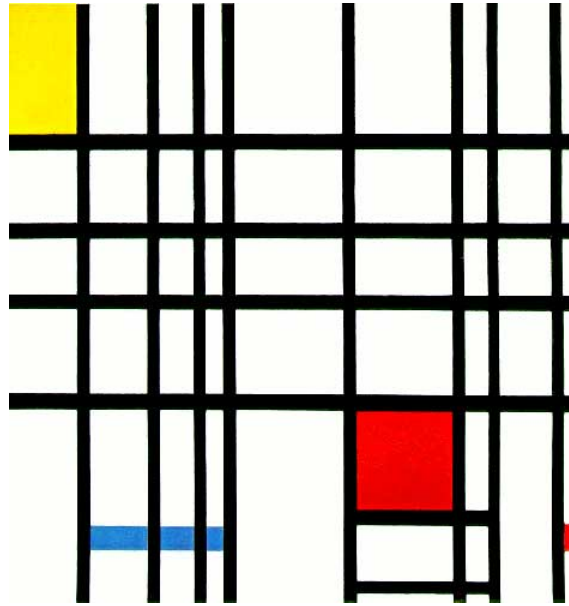


- Frank Stella's Hyena Stomp uses geometric shapes.



Frank Stella, *Hyena Stomp*, 1962, Tate, © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022. "[Frank Stella Hyena-Stomp-1962](#)" by [ateliertally](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

- Piet Mondrian is another artist who used geometric shapes in paintings. In his *Composition with Yellow, Blue, and Red*, Mondrian, uses straight vertical and horizontal black lines to divide his canvas into rectangles of primary colors.<sup>3</sup>



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Yellow, Blue and Red*, 1937–42, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 69.2 cm "[Composition with Red Yellow and Blue \(Piet Mondrian\)](#)" by [uhuru1701](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

### 2.2.3 Positive / Negative Shapes and Figure / Ground Relationships

- Shapes animate figure-ground relationships. We visually determine **positive** shapes (the figure) and **negative** shapes (the ground).
- One way to understand this is to open your hand and spread your fingers apart. Your hand is the positive shape, and the space around it becomes the negative shape. You can also see this in the example above. The shape formed by the black outline becomes positive because it's enclosed. The area around it is negative.
- Remember that a positive shape is one that is distinguished from the background. In Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, the figures become positive shapes because they are lit dramatically and hold our attention against the dark background. What about the dark figure standing in the doorway? Here the dark shape becomes the positive one, surrounded by a white background. Our eyes always return to this figure as an anchor to the painting's entire composition.



Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*. 1656. Oil on canvas. "[Diego Velázquez, Las Meninas \(1656\)](#)" by [raelga](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

- In three dimensions, positive shapes are those that make up the actual work. The negative shapes are the empty spaces around, and sometimes permeating through the work itself.
- A modern work that uses shapes to a dramatic effect is Alberto Giacometti's *Reclining Woman Who Dreams* from 1929. In an abstract style, the artist weaves positive and negative shapes together, the result is a dreamy, floating sensation radiating from the sculpture.



Alberto Giacometti's *Reclining Woman Who Dreams*, 1929 is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/).

- A positive shape is defined by its surrounding empty space (the negative space)
- In visual form, positive and negative are often represented by black and white, but any color combination can work.
- Shepard Fairey uses positive and negative shapes to create a strong visual impact in this work. The black shapes and blank white background contrast and complement each other.<sup>1, 4</sup>



Shepard Fairey, *Obey*, 1996. Campaign poster "[Shepard Fairey Obey @ Parigi](#)" by [Strifu](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

### Kara Walker

*"The illusion is that most of my work is simply about past events, a point in history and nothing else."* Kara Walker.

Kara Walker was born in Stockton, California, in 1969. She received a BFA from the Atlanta College of Art in 1991, and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1994. The artist is best known for exploring the raw intersection of race, gender, and sexuality through her iconic, silhouetted figures. Walker unleashes the traditionally proper Victorian medium of the silhouette directly onto the walls of the gallery, creating a theatrical space in which her unruly cut-paper characters fornicate and inflict violence on one another.<sup>5</sup>



*"African" - Kara Walker (1091)* by [Ron of the Desert](#) is licensed under [CC BY-ND 2.0](#). [Studio Museum Harlem](#)

### Summary

- There are two broad categories of shape: geometric and organic. **Geometric shapes** are regular and ordered shapes using straight lines and curves. **Organic shapes** are generally irregular and often chaotic.

- In two-dimensional artworks, shapes are figures placed on a two-dimensional surface that is known as a **ground**. This creates a relationship between foreground and background known as the **figure/ground relation**. The **figure** is the object that appears to be in front of the ground. In some artworks this relationship is intentionally unclear. In this case, an effect known as figure/ ground reversal can occur.
- In **figure/ground reversal**, what was seen as the positive shape of the figure can also be seen as the negative space of the ground. This effect disrupts the sense of space in an artwork and disorients the viewer.

#### Sources

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## 2.2.1: Videos-Elements of Art- Shape and Contrast

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*Shepard Fairey: Obey This Film*. YouTube, uploaded by Brett Novak, 31 May 2014, <https://youtu.be/rcSBr4ZKmrQ>.



Kara Walker: Starting Out | Art21 "Extended Play". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhByMffG9IA>

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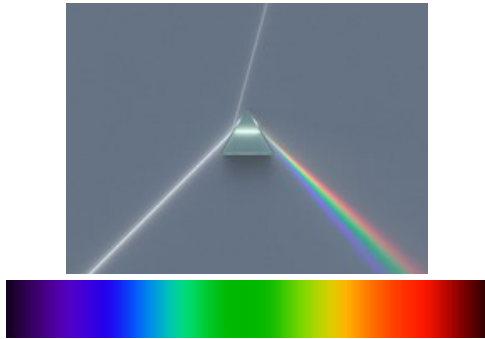
## 2.3: Visual Elements of Art-Color and Value

### Overview

Color is one of the basic artistic elements. It has the strongest effect on our emotions. It is the element we use to create the mood or atmosphere of an artwork. Hue is another word for color. Colors are organized by different types, temperatures, harmonies, and other properties.

### Color Theory

Color theory is a qualitative attempt to organize colors and their relationships. Based on Newton's color wheel, this system of organization is the most common system that artists use.



The color spectrum seen from refracted white light.

The color theory first appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when English mathematician and scientist Sir Isaac Newton discovered that white light could be divided into a spectrum by passing it through a prism. The result is a full spectrum of many different colors. Newton organized colors on a color wheel.

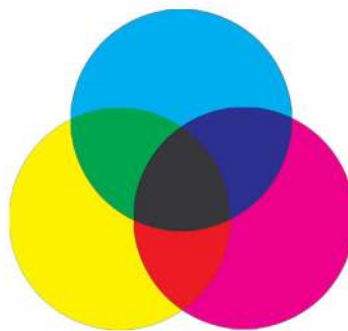


The Color Wheel

A more quantifiable approach to color theory is to think about color as the result of light reflecting off a surface. Understood in this way, color can be represented as a ratio of amounts of primary color mixed together.

**Subtractive color theory** ("process color") is used when a single light source is being reflected by different colors laid one on top of the other., such as when painting, printing color, or processing positive and negative images in color photography). Color is produced when parts of the external light source's spectrum are absorbed by the material and not reflected back to the viewer's eye. For example, a painter brushes blue paint onto a canvas. The chemical composition of the paint allows all of the colors in the spectrum to be absorbed except blue, which is reflected from the paint's surface.

- Red, blue, and yellow are the primary and secondary colors in this color theory.
- The tertiary colors (green, orange, and purple/violet) are created by mixing different amounts (or ratios) of primary colors.
- Black is created by mixing the three primary colors.
  - Note: because of impurities in subtractive colors, a true black (a deep, dark, pitch black) is impossible to create by mixing primaries. Because of this, the result is closer to dark brown or a deep, dark purple.
- White represents the absence of all colors.
- Lightness and darkness of a color is determined by its intensity (a.k.a. density).

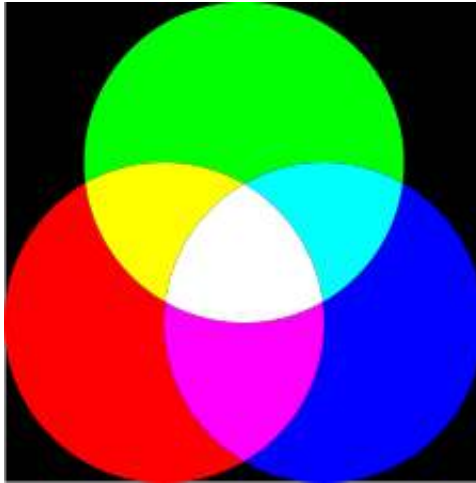


Subtractive Color

**Additive Color Theory** is used when different colored lights are being projected on top of each other, such as in theatre lighting, tvs, computer screens, etc. Images produce color by projecting light onto a reflective surface. Additive mixing produces color by selectively projecting a certain part of the spectrum. In additive color theory:

- The primary colors are red, blue, and green.
- The secondary colors are yellow (mix of red and green), cyan (mix of blue and green), and magenta (mix of blue and red).
- The tertiary colors are made by mixing the above colors at different intensities.
- White is created by combining the three primary colors.
- Black represents the absence of all color.
- The lightness or darkness of a color is determined by the intensity/density of its various parts.

- For example, a middle-toned gray could be produced by projecting a red, a blue and a green light at the same point with 50% intensity.



Additive Color

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### Color Types

There are several approaches to organizing colors into meaningful relationships. A few examples that use basic color theory follow.

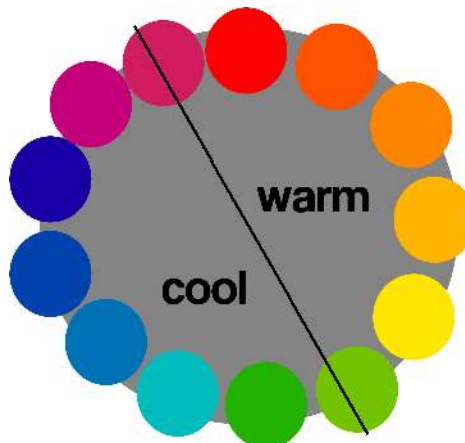
- **Primary Colors**
  - The primary colors are red, blue, and yellow.
  - These colors are equidistant from each other on the color wheel.
  - No other colors can be mixed to make primary colors.
  - All other colors are created by some combination of these three colors.
    - For example:
      - Neutral colors (browns and grays) can be made by mixing the three primary colors together.
- **Secondary Colors**
  - Secondary colors are orange (mix of red and yellow), green (mix of blue and yellow), and violet (mix of blue and red).
- **Tertiary Colors**
  - Another name for tertiary colors is intermediate colors.
  - Tertiary colors are created by mixing one primary color and one secondary color.
  - Depending on amount of color used, different hues can be obtained such as red-orange or yellow-green.
- **Neutral Colors**
  - White, gray, black and brown are neutral colors.
  - These colors are not in the color spectrum.

---

### Color Temperatures

Colors are perceived to have temperatures associated with them. The color wheel is divided into **warm** and **cool** colors.

- Warm colors range from yellow to red on the color wheel.
- Cool colors range from yellow-green to violet on the color wheel.



Warm and cool colors on the color wheel.

---

### Color Harmonies

#### Monochrome / Monochromatic

The simplest color interaction is monochrome. This is the use of variations of a single hue. The advantage of using a monochromatic color scheme is that you get a high level of unity throughout the artwork because all the tones relate to one another.

### Analogous

Analogous colors are those that are similar to one another. This color scheme is used when a subtle color change is needed. As their name implies, analogous colors can be found next to one another on any 12-part color wheel. Here are some examples:

- purple/blue-purple
- green/yellow-green
- orange/red-orange



Analogous colors

### Complementary Colors

Complementary colors are two colors that sit directly across from one another on the color wheel. This color scheme helps to create a dramatic effect when only two colors are used. This dramatic effect creates a visual tension.

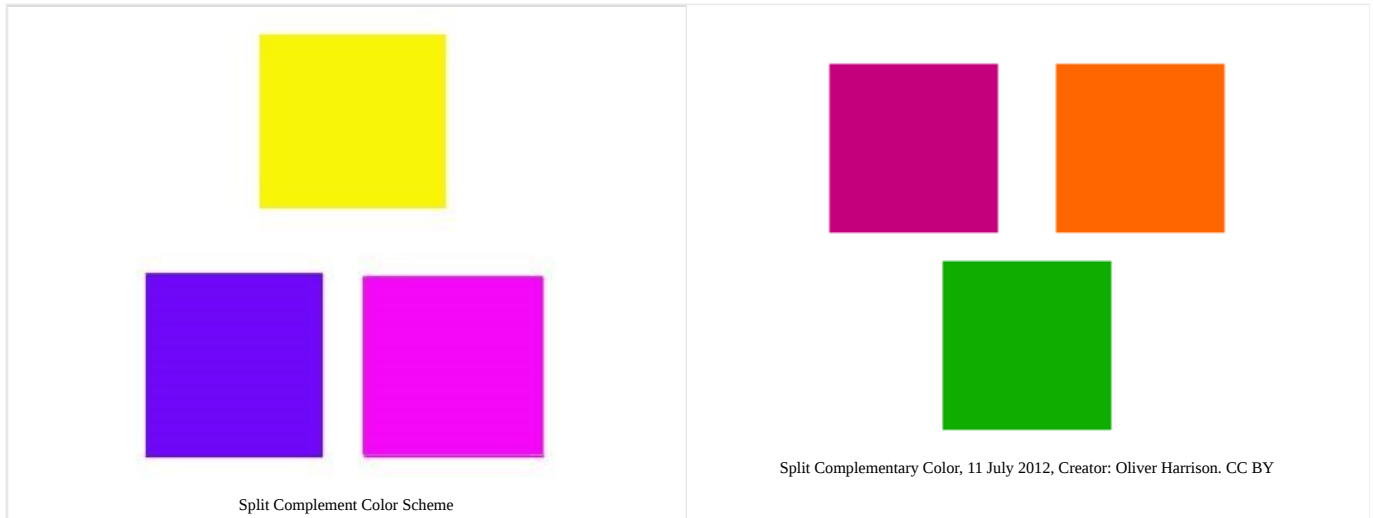
Here are some examples of opposite pairings:



Complementary Color Combinations

### Split Complementary

A split complementary color scheme uses one color plus the two colors on each side of the first color's complement on the color wheel. Just like with complementary colors, a split complement creates visual tension, but includes a third color to add variety. Here are a few examples:



Split Complement Color Scheme

Split Complementary Color, 11 July 2012, Creator: Oliver Harrison. CC BY

### Value

Value is the relative lightness or darkness of a color in relation to another color. This phenomenon happens incrementally, like turning on a dimmer switch. The concept of value can be seen in hues or neutrals. Colors are arranged by color families, such as red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple/violet (ROYGBIV); each of which have different values.

Values are described by their:

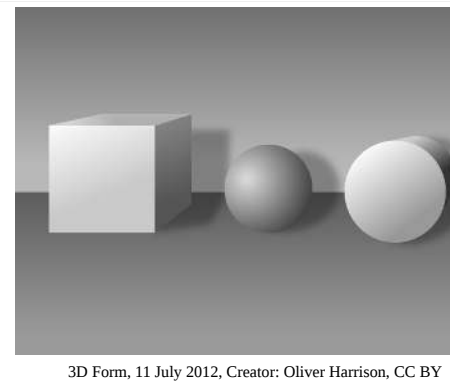
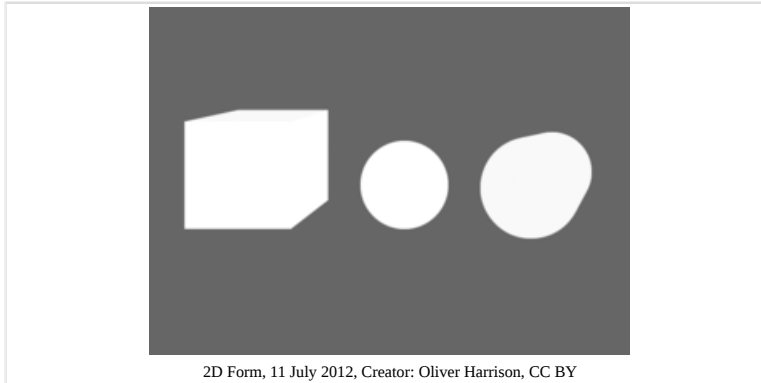
- **shade:** darker values in a color family (e.g., burgundy, which is a darker value in the red color family).
- **tone:** medium-range values in a color family (e.g., a fire-engine red in the red color family).
- **tint:** lighter values in a color family (e.g., a pink in the red color family).

The gray value scale only includes black, gray, and white. In the gray value scale, one side is pure white, the other black, and in between a series of progressively darker shades of grey. This gives an artist the tools to make these transformations.



Value Scale, 11 July 2012, Creator: Oliver Harrison, CC BY

In two dimensions, the use of value gives a shape the illusion of mass and gives an entire composition a sense of light and shadow. The two examples below show the effect value has on changing a shape to a form.



## Other Properties of Colors

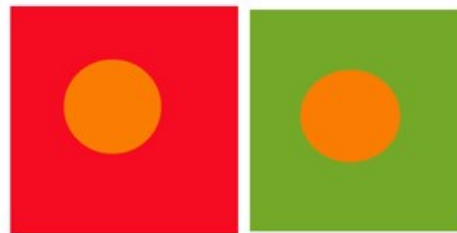
### Hue

Although hue is another name for color, it can also mean variations of a color.

Saturation refers to the purity and intensity of a color. Whether hues or neutrals, all colors have a sense of saturation. The primaries are the most intense and pure, but they become more dull as they are mixed to make other colors. The creation of tints and shades also diminish a color's saturation.

### Color Subtraction

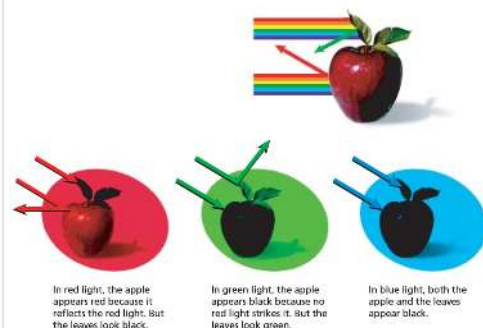
Color subtraction occurs when one color looks less intense when it is set next to another color. Don't confuse color subtraction with the *subtractive color system* mentioned earlier in this module. Color subtraction uses specific hues within a color scheme for a certain visual effect.



A color subtraction example where the same orange hue appears more yellow against a red background

### Spotlight: Color Constancy

People perceive colors from the light that is reflected off objects. For example, a red object looks red because it reflects the red part of the color spectrum. It would be a different color under a different light.



People's brains make different sets of assumptions about a color based what the brain believes are the colors that surround it, which is why colors might not be interpreted the same between different people. This is called color constancy.



The Science of that Dress. YouTube, uploaded by SciShow, 27 Feb 2015, <https://youtu.be/jexnhNfOzHg>

### ✓ Summary

- Color is a basic visual element that includes hues and neutrals.
- Color can be categorized by types, temperatures, or harmonies.
- Value is a visual element that is segmented as a shade, tone, or tint of a color family.
- Contrasts between colors can be seen as a big difference between their hue, intensity, or value.
- All colors have different levels of saturation, which become more obvious when colors are set next to each other.

#### Source

Christopher Gildow, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, <http://opencourselibrary.org/art-100-art-appreciation/>  
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## 2.4: Visual Elements of Art-Texture

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### 2.4.1 Overview

The texture is the feeling of a surface, real or represented. This might refer to the roughness or smoothness of actual objects and art media, or to the illusion of these properties.

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### 2.4.2 Types of Texture

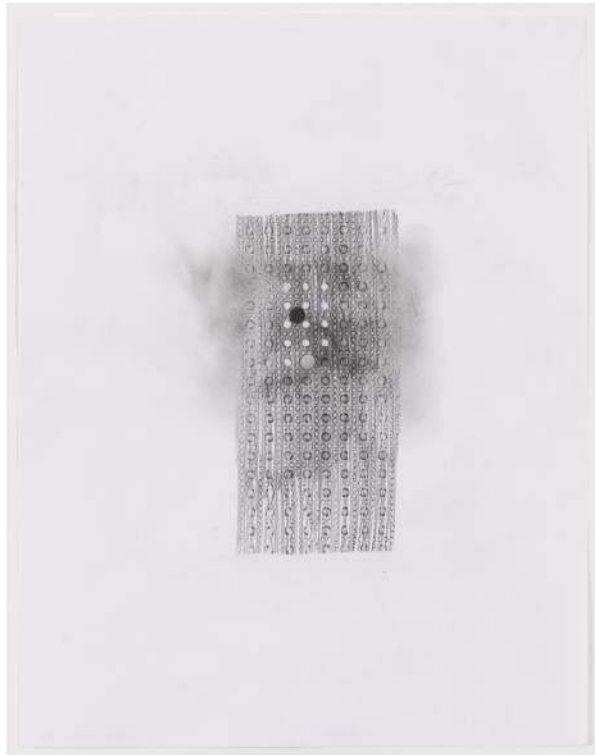
Texture can be classified into two types; **Visual** and **Actual** texture.

#### 2.4.2.1 Visual Texture;

- The visual texture appears to be actual but is not. It is a surface illusion. It is like the representation of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface is an illusion
- Visual Texture can be created with different techniques such as frottage. **Frottage** is a Visual Texture.
- **Frottage** is a technique that involves rubbing a pencil, graphite, chalk, crayon, or another medium onto a sheet of paper that has been placed on top of a textured object or surface. The process causes the raised portions of the surface below to be translated to the sheet. The term is derived from the French *frotter*, which means “to rub.”<sup>4</sup>



Mona Hatoum, *Untitled (panhandled colander)*, Rubbing on wax paper, 2000 © 2022 Mona Hatoum



Gabriel Orizco, *XRTC 4*, 1996, Rubbed graphite on paper. © 2022 Gabriel Orozco

#### 2.4.2.2 Actual Texture;

- The actual texture refers to the real surface quality of an artwork.
- Michelangelo's *Pieta* at the Vatican, completed in 1499 when he was only 24, is a masterwork that reveals the artist's love for both his medium and his faith, and demonstrates the importance of texture as an element of art.
- Marble is one of the most tactile of all artistic mediums. Beyond the emotional content of this work, part of the power of this work derives from the stone's extraordinary texture, from Michelangelo's ability to make stone come to life.
- Artists often produce or suggest textures in order to convey or further the notion of reality.
- The skill with which Michelangelo carved the sculpture creates a work so realistic that the human forms appear to be warm and fleshy, rather than cold and of stone.
- It has been described as "sublime perfection." A sense of classical structure and harmony are dominant, and the marble exudes a softness that betrays its true nature.<sup>1</sup>



Michelangelo, Pietà - 1499-1500, [Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome](#). "Michelangelo's Pietà" by [Averain](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

[Read about Michelangelo's La Pietà, 15th Century by Google Arts & Culture.](#)

- Indian-born British artist Anish Kapoor's (b. 1954) sculpture is polished stainless steel and shaped as a Bean-like form.
- The Bean is a work of public art in the heart of Chicago. The sculpture, which is officially titled Cloud Gate, is one of the world's largest permanent outdoor art installations. The monumental work was unveiled in 2004 and quickly became of the Chicago's most iconic sights. <sup>5</sup>
- Viewers of *Cloud Gate* experience actual texture when they see and touch the work. The highly polished and organic form reflects the image of the city of Chicago. Kapoor wants the viewer to interact with the sleek sculpture. <sup>1</sup>
- The Bean's reflective surface was inspired by liquid mercury. This shiny exterior reflects the people moving around the park, the lights of Michigan Avenue, and the surrounding skyline and green space — perfectly encapsulating the Millennium Park experience. The polished surface also invites visitors to touch the surface and observe their own reflection, giving it an interactive quality. The reflection of the sky above the park, not to mention the curved underside of The Bean serves as an entrance that visitors can walk under to enter the park, inspired the sculpture's creator to name the piece Cloud Gate. <sup>5</sup>



Anish Kapoor, *Cloud Gate*, 2004. Stainless steel, 32'9" × 65'7" × 41'12". Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois. "[Anish Kapoor's 'Cloud Gate,' Chicago, January 2008](#)" by [Conlawprof](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

- Another actual texture in art is paint applied in a thick, heavy manner. This type of textural effect is called **impasto**. You can see impasto in Robert Ryman's *Untitled*.
- Ryman's subject matter is actually the brushstroke itself. And its relation to the ground or canvas in which he layers it.



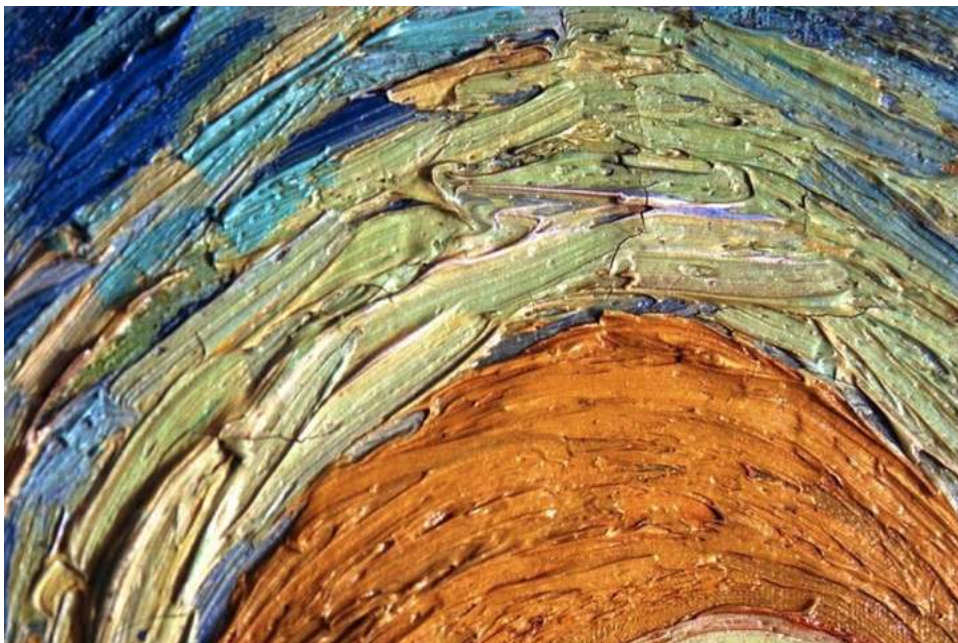
### 2.4.3

Robert Ryman, Untitled, 1963. Courtesy Robert Ryman Archive, New York. Photo: Bill Jacobson. "[ R ] Robert Ryman - Untitled (1963)" by Cea. is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

- **Impasto** is an Italian word for “mixture,” used to describe a painting technique wherein paint is thickly laid on a surface so that brushstrokes or palette knife marks are visible. Impasto should be textured and exists to show off the brush and palette knife marks.<sup>2</sup>
- In Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, a thick application of oil paint was used with no attempt to look smooth.
- Explore Vincent van Gogh. Explore Vincent van Gogh’s beloved painting in astonishing detail in this behind-the-scenes look at a new imaging tool. Kurt Heumiller, Jonathan Muzikar, Robert Kastler. Dec 1, 2020<sup>3</sup>



Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, oil on canvas, 1889. "[Van Gogh, Starry Night](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).



Detail of *Starry Night*. Screen shot Kurt Heumiller, Jonathan Muzikar, Robert Kastler

## Summary

- Texture in art stimulates the senses of sight and touch and refers to the tactile quality of the surface of the art
- Texture is an important element of design because it engages the sense of touch as well as vision.
- In the context of the artwork, there are two types of texture: visual and actual. Visual texture refers to an implied sense of texture that the artist creates through the use of various artistic elements such as line, shading and color. Actual texture refers to the physical rendering or the real surface qualities we can notice by touching an object, such as paint application or three-dimensional art.
- Many artists such as Van Gogh, Robert Ryman, Anish Kapoor, Mona Hatoum, and Michelangelo employed texture in their artworks.

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## 2.5: Visual Elements of Art- Space and Perspective

### Overview

At its core, space is the area in, around, and between objects. Space can also be thought of as a different type of perspective. Space also gives an illusion of a three-dimensional space that makes a painting look more realistic in a two-dimensional work of art.

### Space

Space is the empty area surrounding real or implied objects. The pictorial space is flat. If looking at a digital work, the digital realm resides in cyberspace. Art responds to all of these kinds of space. There are many ways for the artist to present ideas of space.

#### Techniques for creating a sense of depth and the illusion of space include:

1. Size, overlapping, and position
2. Alternating value and texture
3. Changing brightness and color

#### 1. Size, Overlapping, and Position

- The size of one shape compared to another, often suggests that the larger the object is closer to us. In a similar understanding, if one shape overlaps another, the shape in front seems to be closer. Also, a shape lower in the picture plane also appears to be closer.
- In Steve DiBenedetto's drawing, we recognize that the objects close to us appear larger than objects farther away, so the juxtaposition of large and smaller helicopter suggest deep space between two helicopters.
- Overlapping images also creates the illusion that one object is in front of the other in space. The helicopters appear to be closer to us than the elaborately decorated red launching or landing pad below.
- And because we are looking down on the screen, a sense of deep space is further suggested.<sup>2</sup>



Steve DiBenedetto, *Deliverance*, 2004. Colored pencil on paper. Courtesy of David Nolan Gallery, New York. Collection of Morris Orden, New York.

## 2. Alternating Value and Texture

- The illusion of depth in two dimensions is often influenced by the arrangement of value and texture.
- Artists use dark and light values as tools for creating depth. It is called as value.
- In Asher Brown Durand's painting, each area of light and dark occupies different amounts of space. Visual layers (background, mid-ground and foreground layers) create a sense of depth in this painting. The trees in the foreground are detailed and bright green, but as they recede into the background they become a lighter gray and out of focus. The lines and shapes also become less distinct in the background <sup>1</sup>



Asher Brown Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849. Oil on canvas, 44 × 36". Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas. "[Asher Brown Durand: Kindred Spirits](#)" by [h2kyaks](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

- In Michelangelo's *Head of a Satyr* hatching lines creates alternating value and texture. Hatching consists of a series of lines, close to and parallel to each other. Cross-hatching is a variant of hatching in which the lines overlap. Both are used to express value and create a greater sense of form and depth
- The artwork created by Michelangelo is a cross-hatched pen-and-ink drawing. It gives the face solidity and depth. By building up layers of brown ink, Michelangelo overcomes the restrictions created by the thin line of the pen. <sup>3</sup>



Michelangelo, *Head of a Satyr*, c. 1520–30. Pen and ink on paper, 10 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

### 3. Changing brightness and color

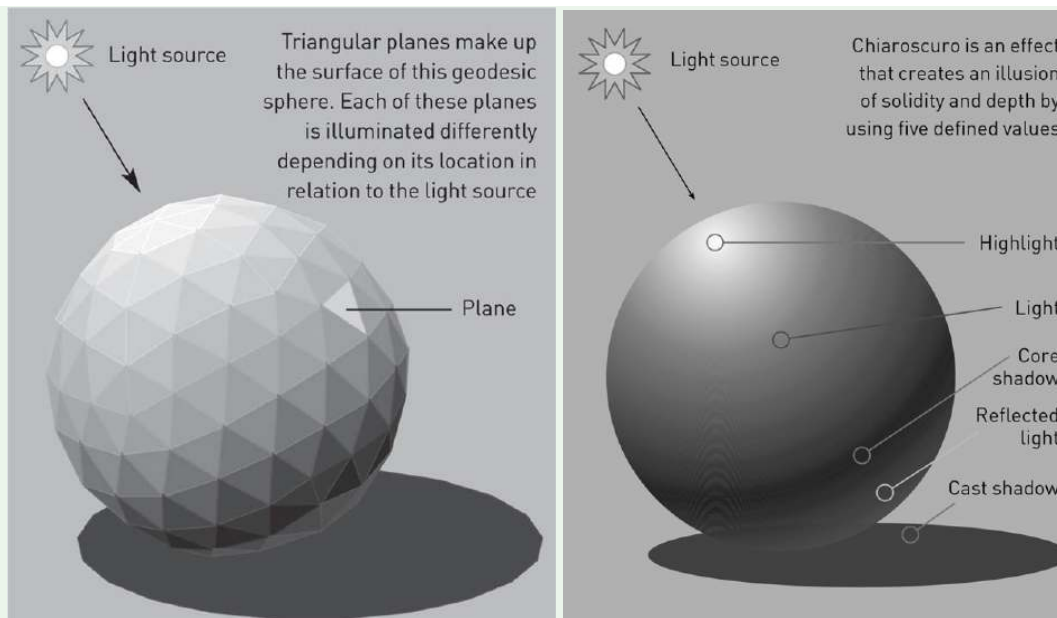
- In a painting, brighter colors may appear closer in a painting as dark or duller versions of the same color tend to recede. For example, an intense green will appear closer to the viewer than a darker green. We perceive color that is more intense as being closer.
- In *The Wreck of the Ole '97*, Thomas Hart Benton used brightness and color to create a sense of distance <sup>3</sup>



Thomas Hart Benton, *The Wreck of the Ole '97*, 1943. Egg tempera on gessoed masonite, 28 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee © Benton Testamentary Trusts/UMB Bank Trustee/VAGA, NY/DACS, London 2018

#### Definition: Chiaroscuro

- Chiaroscuro can produce dramatic effects
- Chiaroscuro is an Italian term that translates as light-dark and refers to the balance and pattern of light and shade in a painting or drawing
- Chiaroscuro is generally only remarked upon when it is a particularly prominent feature of the work, usually when the artist is using extreme contrasts of light and shade.
- This method of applying value to a two-dimensional artwork creates the illusion of three dimensions
- Renaissance artists identified five distinct areas of light and shadow: Highlight, light, core shadow, reflected light, and cast shadow. <sup>3</sup>



Values and planes of a geodesic sphere Diagram of chiaroscuro

*Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts*. Third Edition By Debra J. DeWitte, Ralph M. Larmann, and M. Kathryn Shields Copyright © 2015 Thames & Hudson

## Perspective

Perspective refers to different techniques artists use to suggest a three-dimensional (3D) space on a two-dimensional (2D) plane. Two types of perspective most commonly seen in the Western tradition will be discussed.

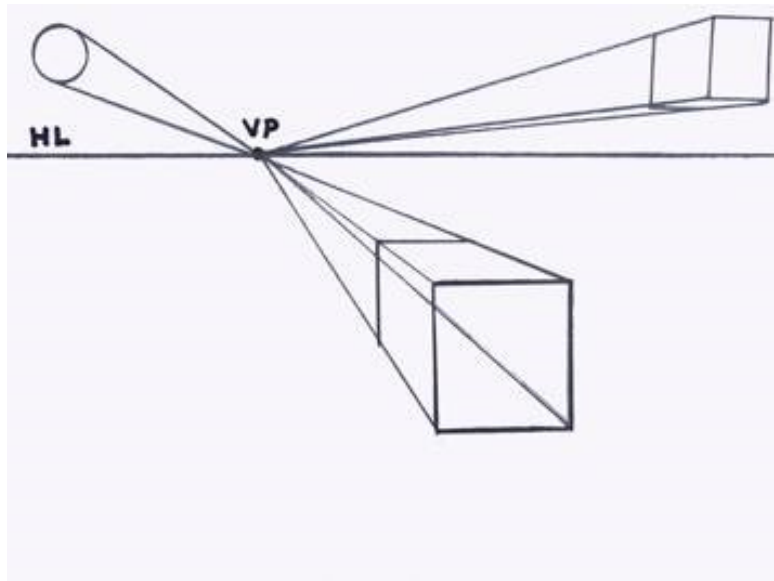
### Linear Perspective

Linear perspective is seen when parallel lines meet at a point on the horizon of a 2D composition to convey a sense of depth that mimics 3D recession or depth.

#### Definition: Term

**Depth:** how far into, from front-to-back (also considered recession), or from side-to-side we can physically go into an object or appear to go into a composition.

Linear perspective uses horizontal lines and one or more vanishing points to create this illusion of three-dimensional space.



One point perspective: HL = horizon line. VP = vanishing point

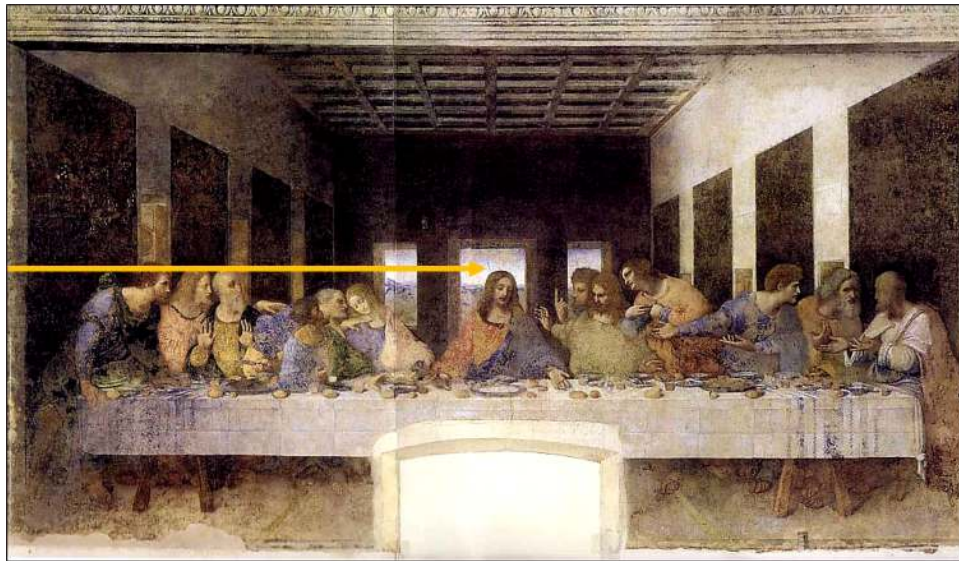
### One-point perspective

The following is an artwork that uses a one-point perspective. Sometimes, an artist will create more than one vanishing point to have the viewer focus on important forms in the composition. In this instance, that important form is Jesus Christ. Da Vinci composes the work by locating the vanishing point directly behind the head of Christ, thus drawing the viewer's attention to the center. His arms mirror the receding lines on the walls and ceiling, and, if we follow them as lines, would converge at the same vanishing point.

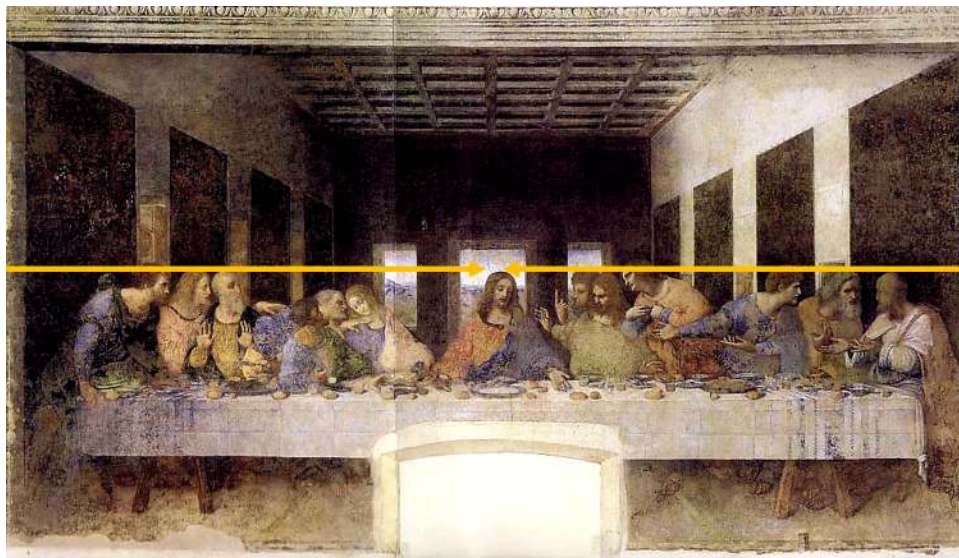


Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper*, c. 1495-1498. Tempera. 181 in. x 346 in. [Santa Maria della Grazie](#). Milan, Italy. "LEONARDO da Vinci The Last Supper 1498 Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan" by [normanrusin](#) is marked with [Public Domain Mark 1.0](#).

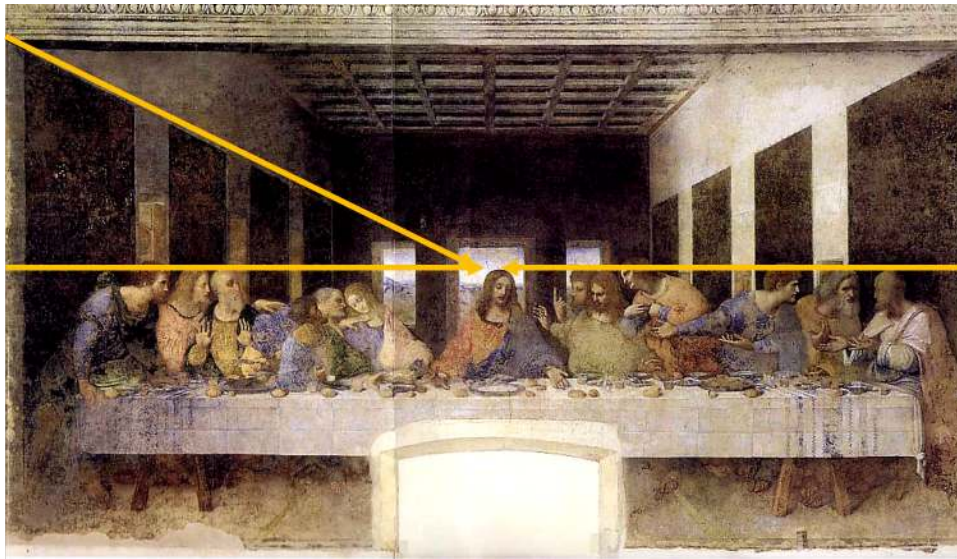
From the definition: "Parallel lines..." In this instance, there are implied lines (along the tops of the Apostles' heads) creating the parallel line.



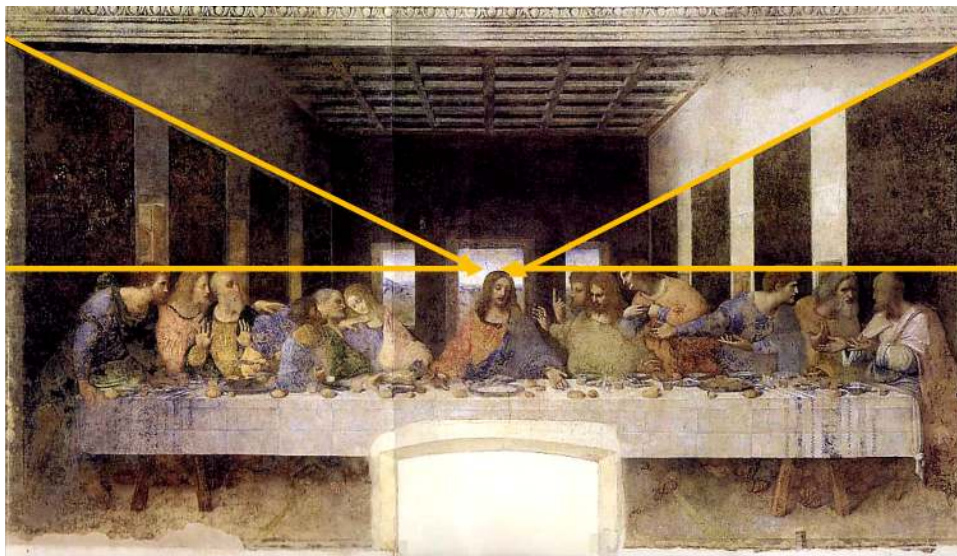
“Parallel lines that meet at a point on the horizon (this point is known as the vanishing point).”



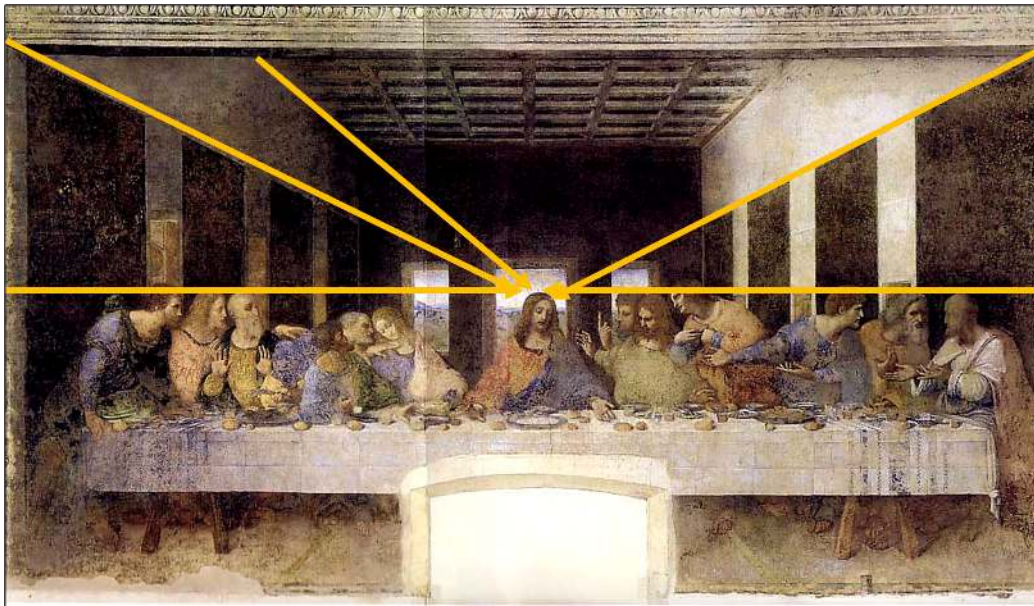
There are more implied lines (at the top of the doorways) creating a parallel line.



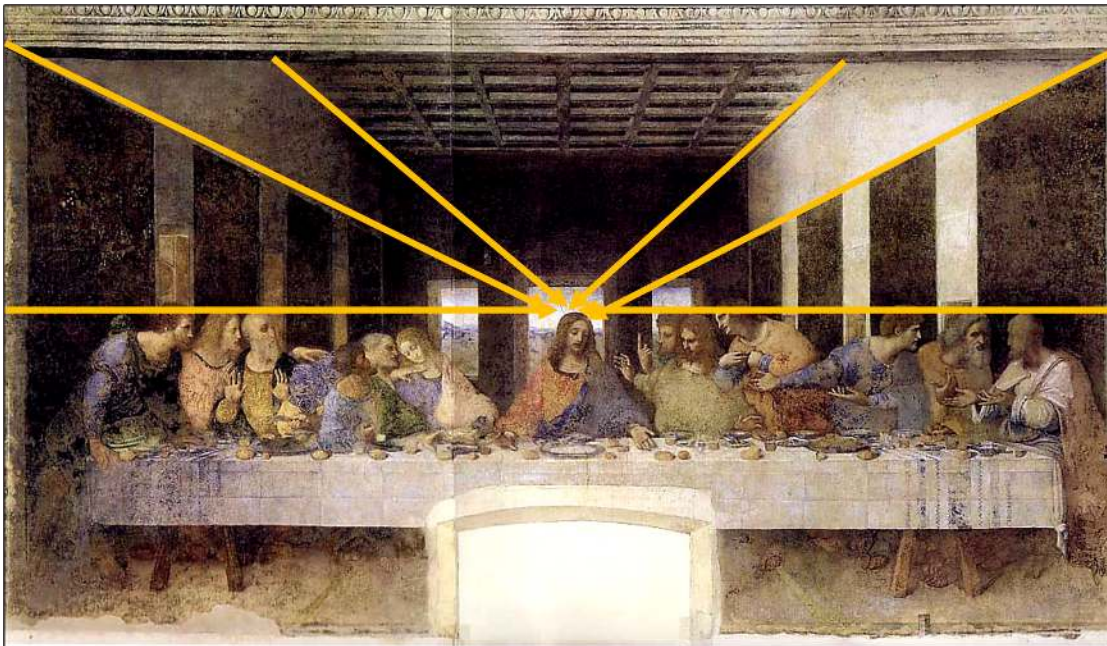
“Parallel lines that meet at a point on the horizon (of a 2D plane)...”



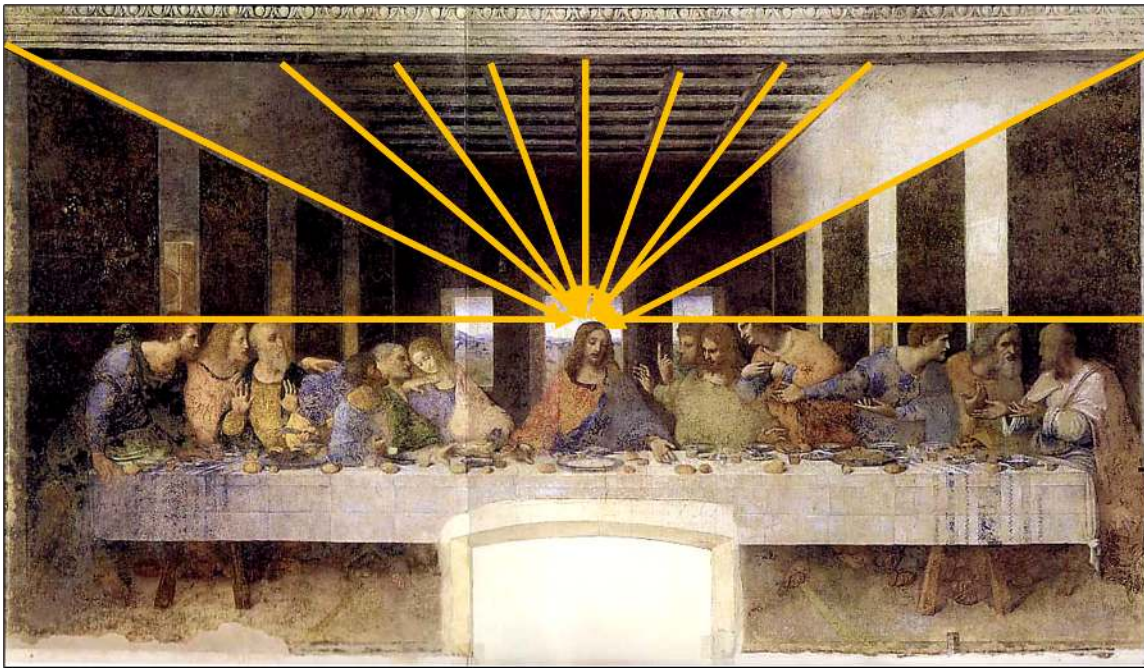
Next, there are literal lines (on the ceiling) that create a parallel line.



Now, there are more literal lines (on the ceiling) creating parallel lines.

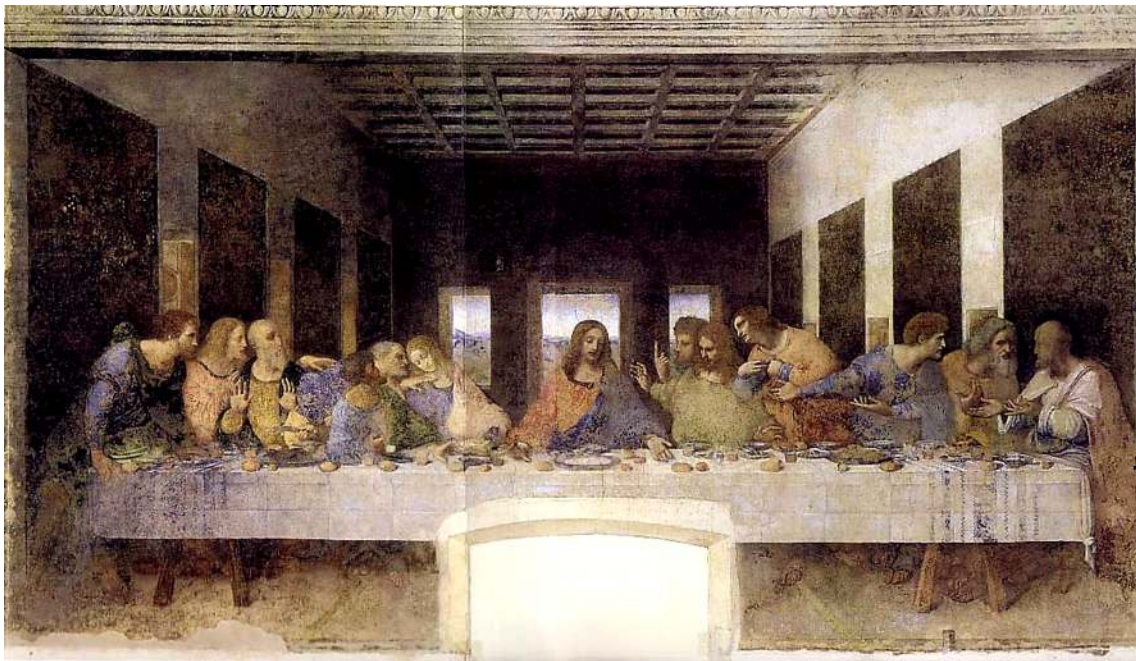


Eventually, all the literal and implied lines meet at the vanishing point.

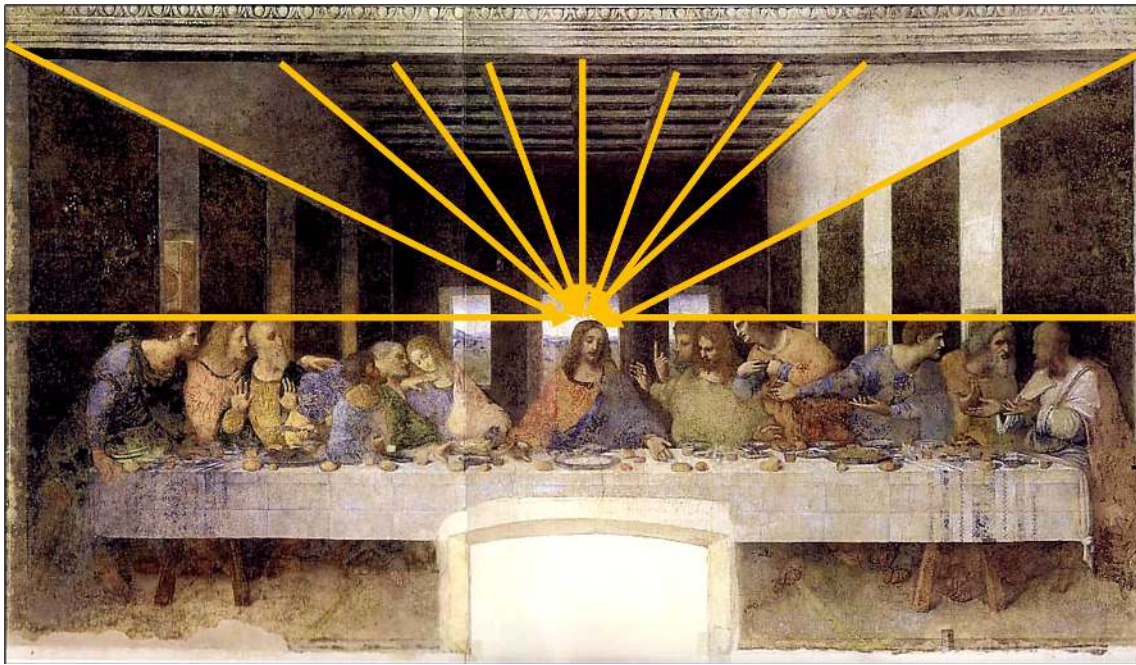


The definition continues with “...to create a sense of depth that mimics 3D recession”

Now, the definition is complete, "parallel lines that meet at a point on the horizon of a 2D plane to convey a sense of depth that mimics 3D recession or depth." Notice that the area outside of the window behind Jesus' head looks like it's further away from us; specifically, that it is in the background.

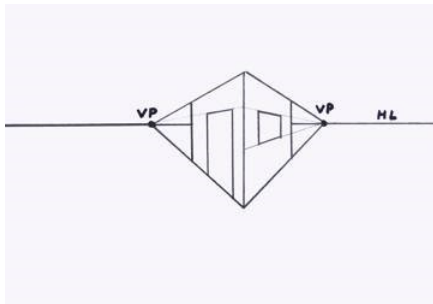


Notice something else? On what form are all the lines directed to on the horizon? Jesus. In this composition, da Vinci is suggesting that Jesus is the most important figure at his image of the last supper. In the Western tradition, the most important form in the artwork is always located at the vanishing point--a term that is sometimes called the focal point.



## Two-point perspective

Two-point perspective occurs when the vertical edge of a cube is facing the viewer, exposing two sides that recede into the distance, one to each vanishing point.



Two-point Perspective

Caillebotte's (1848-1894) *Paris Street; Rainy Day* is an example of a work that uses two-point perspective. This type of perspective can be seen in the building in the background on the left-hand side of the composition.



Gustave Caillebotte. *Paris Street; Rainy Day*. 1877. Oil on canvas. 83.5 in. x 108.7 in.

[Art Institute of Chicago](#), Chicago, IL. "[Gustave Caillebotte, Paris Street; Rainy Day](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

## Atmospheric Perspective



Asher B. Durand. *Kindred Spirits*. 1849. Oil on canvas. 45.98 in. x 35.98 in.

[Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art](#), Bentonville, AR.  
"Asher B. Durand, *Kindred Spirits*" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

Atmospheric perspective is an artistic technique on a 2D plane that mimics what the eye sees when looking at forms in the distance.

**All** of the following criteria must be present for atmospheric perspective to be seen.

Forms at a distance must appear...

- lighter in color

Notice the difference in the value between the forms in the foreground and those in the background.

- less detailed

Although there are generally plants and streams of water in the mountains, such a level of detail cannot be seen in the background of this painting.

- smaller in size

In real life, mountains are larger in size than men, but in this composition, the men are just as large (if not larger) than the mountains in the background.

### ✓ Summary

- Space is the empty area that surrounds real or implied objects.
- Different types of perspective can be used to create a convincing sense of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional plane.
- The most common types of perspective used in Western tradition art are linear perspective and atmospheric perspective.

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## 2.5.1: Videos- Space and Perspective

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What makes paintings feel as deep as the view from a window or as flat as a wall? Art Explainer 2: Surface and Depth.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZKqr1Wy45w>



What is chiaroscuro? Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrUznhnVd2s>



What is atmospheric perspective? Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8nNuiiZ1ew>



How one-point linear perspective works. Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker & Dr. Beth Harris. Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOksHhQ8TLM>



Learn about the history and meaning of the Last Supper, which depicts the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples. Oil, tempera, fresco, 1495-98 (Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan). Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV6\\_wTrkd70](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV6_wTrkd70)



Raphael, School of Athens, fresco, 1509-1511 (Stanza della Segnatura, Papal Palace, Vatican) Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker, Dr. Beth Harris. Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Smd-q44ys0M>



What is foreshortening? Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker. [https://www.youtube.com/embed/\\_enw8gnHNX4](https://www.youtube.com/embed/_enw8gnHNX4)



Caravaggio, *The Calling of St. Matthew*, c. 1599–1600. Oil on canvas, 11'1" × 11'5". Contarelli Chapel, San Luigi dei Franceschi, Rome, Italy. A moment of spiritual awakening: Caravaggio's Calling of Saint Matthew. Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yxSjUvh0g8>

**Reading:** [An Introduction to Caravaggio in 5 Paintings](#). The stories behind some of the Italian Baroque master's most famous works by Google Arts&Culture.

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## 2.6: Elements of Art- Mass and Volume

### Overview

- Three-dimensional works of art: Have height, width, and depth
- Possess three visual elements: form, volume, and mass.

### Form

- A two-dimensional object is a shape; a three-dimensional object is called a **form**.
- There are two types of form; geometric and organic
- **Geometric Forms** are regular forms that are readily expressible in words or mathematics such as cubes, spheres, cylinders, cones, and pyramids are simple examples.
- David Smith combines geometric forms in angular relationships. His sculptures are composed of simple geometric shapes and relate, as the name suggests, to [Cubist painting](#) and sculpture.
- In 'Cubi XIX' the forms on the cross beam are arranged rather like a still life, though elevated by the vertical beam. Smith intended the 'Cubi' works to be shown outside so that the burnishing of the stainless steel would reflect changes in lighting conditions. The geometric forms were softened by this response to the environment as Smith anticipated in a note on a sketch: 'polished - like I feel if I make square clouds'. *Gallery label, September 2004.*<sup>9</sup>



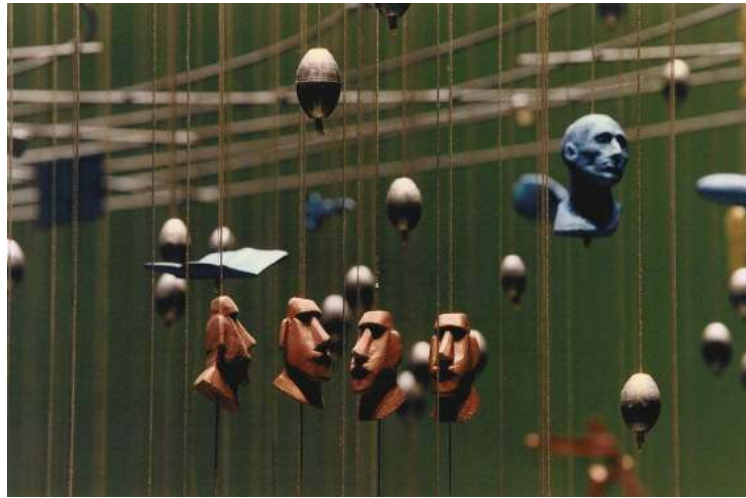
David Smith, *Cubi XIX*, 1964. Stainless steel, 113¼ × 21½ × 20½". Tate Gallery, London, England © Estate of David Smith /VAGA, New York/DACS, London 2020

- Organic Form comes from the natural world. They are usually irregular and unpredictable. The human figure is considered an organic form.
- In *Roettgen Pietà*, the artist carves the bodies of Mary and Jesus as irregular, awkward, and distorted, expressing the agony of death and grief<sup>1</sup>



*Roettgen Pietà (Vesperbild)*, Middle Rhine region, c. 1330. Wood, height 34½". [Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany](#).

- Forms have two basic attributes; **Volume**: the amount of space a form occupies and **Mass**: the volume is solid and occupies space
- **Volume** is the amount of space occupied by an object. When artists enclose a space with materials that are not completely solid, they create an **open volume**.
- In Helmick's *Ghostwriter*, carefully suspended pieces of metal create an open volume and a large human head when seen as a whole.<sup>1</sup>
- Over 3,000 varied cast metal forms are precisely located on 900 descending cables. Each element is a sculpture in itself; en masse they articulate a large head within an abstract spiral form.
- Visit this site to have more information; <https://helmicksculpture.com/work/ghost-writer>



Ralph Helmick and Stuart Schechter, *Ghostwriter*, 1994. Cast metal/stainless cable, 36 × 8 × 10'. Evanston Public Library, Illinois.  
[“Ghostwriter” Ralph Helmick and Stuart Schechter.](#)

- **Mass** is the quantity of matter, often meaning its weight. **Mass** suggests that something is solid and occupies space.<sup>1</sup>
- Whiteread's *House* suggests great weight and solidity. She filled the interior of a house with concrete before demolishing exterior walls.
- Empty volume of the interior is turned into a memorial of the lives of the people who used to live in it
- The work was a concrete cast of the inside of the entire three-story house, basement, ground floor and first floor, including stairs and bay windows, but not the roof space. After Whiteread took possession of the building in August 1993, new foundations were created to support the new concrete.
- Internal structures such as sinks and cupboards were removed, holes in the walls filled and the windows covered, to prepare a continuous internal surface that could be sprayed with a debonding agent, then a 5 centimetres (2.0 in) layer of concrete coloured light grey, and then a final 25 centimetres (9.8 in) layer of concrete reinforced with steel mesh. The builders left through a hole in the roof which was then sealed, and the external brick-built structure was removed.<sup>2</sup>



Rachel Whiteread, *House*, at 193 Grove Road, London E3, 1993. © Rachel Whiteread. Photo by Sue Omerod. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian.

[Click to see more information about this work.](#)

### Summary

- A form is a three-dimensional geometrical figure (i.e.: sphere, cube, cylinder, cone, etc.), as opposed to a shape, which is two-dimensional, or flat.
- A mass is a three-dimensional form that occupies a volume of space.
- Shape, volume, and space, whether actual or implied, are the basis of the perception of reality.

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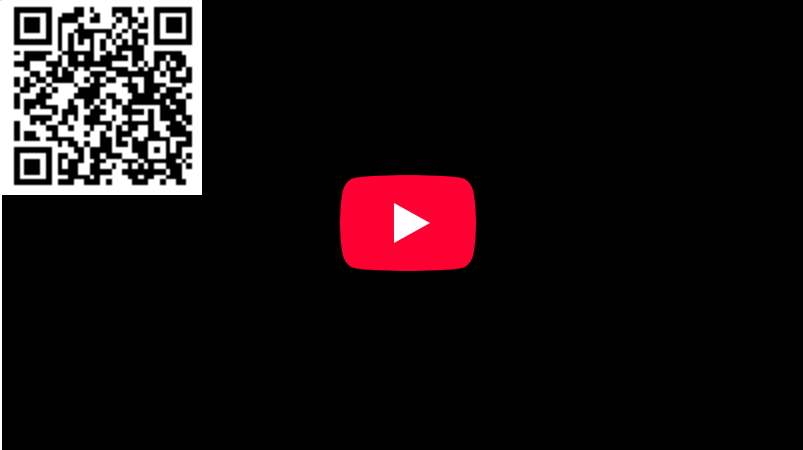
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## 2.6.1: Video-Elements of Art- Mass and Volume

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Documentary: Rachel Whiteread, House (1993). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVueGIKQTE8>

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## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

### 3: Foundation- Principles of Design

#### Overview

The elements of design are the visual components that artists use to make artworks. The principles of design are the various ways in which those elements or components are arranged to produce a desired effect. There are as many ways to approach the arrangement of the elements of art as there are artists. Each work of art is unique in its conception, design, and execution. Recent developments in the visual arts have introduced accidental and irrational approaches to artmaking. In these approaches, the outcome of the work of art is not planned. While these works of art may be said to lack conscious design, sometimes they are successful. It is often possible to attribute the success of irrationally or accidentally produced works of art to one or more operating principles of organization. Becoming aware of the principles of design in a work of art allows the viewer to add depth to the analysis of those works. What follows are five principles of design. The list is not exhaustive, but is a good place to start.

[3.1: Principles of Design- Rhythm and Pattern](#)

[3.1.1: Videos- Pattern and Rhythm](#)

[3.2: Principles of Design- Unity and Variety](#)

[3.3: Principles of Design- Scale and Proportion](#)

[3.4: Principles of Design- Emphasis, Focal Point, and Subordination](#)

[3.4.1: Videos](#)

[3.5: Principles of Design- Balance](#)

[3.6: Principles of Design- Motion and Time](#)

[3.6.1: Videos- Elements of Art- Motion and Time](#)

[3.7: Contrast](#)

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## 3.1: Principles of Design- Rhythm and Pattern

### Overview:

The design principle of **rhythm** is the repetition of visual elements to establish a pattern. This pattern can then be used to provide a stage for a special object, or the pattern can be interrupted to direct attention to the change. In his commentary of mass consumer culture, Andy Warhol's use of repetition compels us to notice the small differences between the apparently identical elements of his installation of paintings, *32 Campbell's Soup Cans*. (Figure 2.65)



### What are Pattern and Rhythm?

Because the visual rhythm of the pattern is predictable, it often tends to unify an artwork. Pattern and rhythm bring order to space and create a dynamic experience of time. When a line, shape, color, or texture is repeated throughout a work of art, this is called either **pattern** or repetition. **Rhythm** arises through the repetition of patterns.<sup>1</sup>

#### Pattern

- The use of repetition of any elements such as line, color, texture, or shape through a work of art creates a pattern.
- The Blue Room is a painting by French artist Suzanne Valadon. She used strong colors and emphasized decorative backgrounds and patterned designs in this oil painting.
- There are three patterns; The blue bed cover is covered with leaves and stems, green and white striped pajamas, and a textured pattern of the back wall.<sup>1</sup>



Suzanne Valadon, *The Blue Room*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 35½ × 45½". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France. "[The Blue Room by Suzanne Valadon-1932](#)" by [mary holman](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

#### Rhythm

- Rhythm guides our eyes from one point to another in a work of art
- Rhythm is created when one or more elements of design are used repeatedly to create a feeling of organized movement.
- Artists create repetition by using the same shape, color, size, value, line, or texture over and over again
- In Katsushika Hokusai's *The Great Wave*, the use of repeating colors of different shades and tints of blue and white curvilinear shapes on the tips of waves creates rhythm. <sup>1,5</sup>



**Figure 2.62 | *The Great Wave off Kanagawa***

Artist: Katsushika Hokusai

Author: User "Durova"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

- Rhythm gives structure to the experience of looking at an artwork. Some elements help our eyes to circle around the composition.
- In Pieter Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow*, a group of people and the dogs on the left side of the painting is the starting point.
- Our attention follows the group's direction, creating the first part of a rhythmic progression
- In the middle ground, figures appear to be ice skating
- The color of the sky and pond is almost the same color. They draw our attention to the horizon.
- The recession of the ridge-line pulls the eye to the left and into the far background
- We then naturally inspect details in the painting and notice subsidiary rhythms, such as the receding line of trees <sup>1</sup>



Pieter Bruegel, *Hunters in the Snow*, 1565. Oil on panel, 46 × 63¾". Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria. "[ B ] Pieter Bruegel - Hunters in the Snow (1565)" by Cea. is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

- Rhythm is the visual tempo set by repeating elements in a work of art or architecture.
- The arches and columns of the [Great Mosque of Cordoba](#) provide a good example.
- They are spaced very evenly, setting up an even tone to the building. This is then enlivened by the rhythm created by the striped pattern on the arches. <sup>2</sup>



Hypostyle hall, Great Mosque at Cordoba, Spain, begun 786 and enlarged during the 9th and 10th centuries (photo: wsifrancis, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

- For contrast, we could look at Jackson Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm (# 30)*. Pollock was a fan of jazz music, and tried to capture something of its loose, syncopated rhythms.

- The resulting drip-paintings (they were made with the large canvases lying on the floor of his studio) have similarly loose, improvisational compositions.
- Despite its lack of formal structure, there is a clear rhythm running horizontally across the painting, and Pollock uses the title of the work to draw our attention to it. <sup>2</sup>



Jackson Pollock, *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, 1950, enamel on canvas, 266.7 x 525.8 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art).  
"Autumn Rhythm" by gtrwndr87 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

### Summary

- The design principle of rhythm is the repetition of visual elements to establish a pattern.
- Rhythm guides our eyes from one point to another in a work of art
- The visual rhythm of the pattern is predictable, it often tends to unify an artwork.
- Rhythm gives structure to the experience of looking at an artwork.

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6. Pamela Sachant, Peggy Blood, Jeffery LeMieux, & Rita Tekippe

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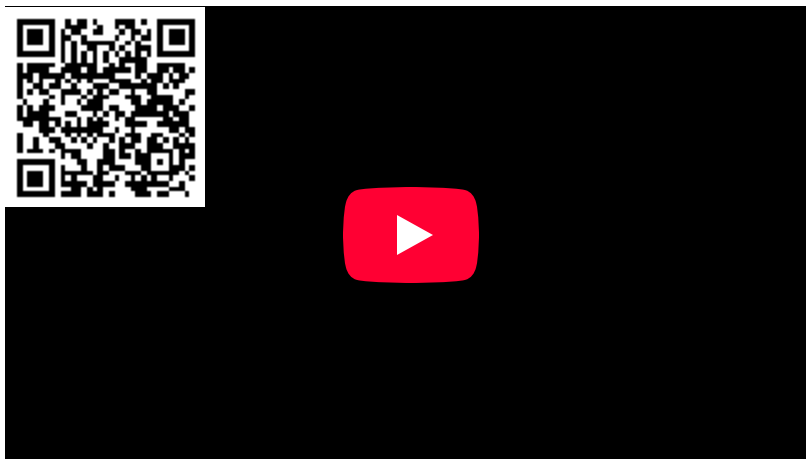
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### 3.1.1: Videos- Pattern and Rhythm

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Chuck Close explains why he follows a grid. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2Y3Fh1Tnko>



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Hunters in the Snow (Winter), 1565, oil on wood, 118 x 161 cm (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna),  
Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker & Dr. Beth Harris. Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pj3HdzOR2pY>



Jackson Pollock, Autumn Rhythm (Number 30). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQ9LbAsRs0I&t=2s>

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## 3.2: Principles of Design- Unity and Variety

### Overview

Unity is a sense of oneness (a cohesion or agreement) found in the artwork. This is a sense that all the parts fit together visually; that the whole artwork is greater than the forms or any other parts of the work. (Think of think of this in terms of a orchestra. The conductor directs the musicians who are playing many different instruments, but together, the notes that are played come together to form one, comprehensible sound.) When unity is seen, all the visual elements (or ideas) in the artwork are joined together to create a harmonic work of art.

### Conceptual Unity

Conceptual unity occurs when the artwork unites ideas known by just the artist or those that everyone understands.

Joseph Cornell's shadow box is a good example of conceptual unity, particularly, objects that the artist joins together for reasons only that artist knows.



Joseph Cornell. *The Hotel Eden*. 1945. Assemblage with music box.  
15.07 in. x 15.62 in. x 4.7 in. [National Gallery of Canada](#), Ottawa, CA.

In just looking at this shadow box, there is no clear reason why these dissimilar forms are put together to create this work. In researching the piece, we learn that Joseph Cornell was inspired by Marcel Duchamp to create a similar work.

Cornell was a solitary and eccentric figure who lived all his life in his mother's house in Queens, New York caring for his invalid brother. By day, he scoured second-hand bookstores and antique shops in Manhattan to collect images and objects that served as the raw material for his art. Birds often figured in his small wooden boxes. (These are works for which he is best known.)

Here, a lithograph mounted on wood shows a parrot perched on a branch. The bird's beak appears to be pulling a string that activates a rotating disk. The disk might reference fellow Dada artist Marcel Duchamp's "Rotoreliefs."



Marcel Duchamp. Different "Rotoreliefs." 1935.

The following image are good examples of conceptual unity for ideas that everyone generally understands because they are objects that tend to be paired together.

For instance, chickens and eggs are related, black and white are often paired together as opposite colors, and for Americans, peanut butter is often used with jelly to make sandwiches.



### Visual Unity

Visual unity refers to using similar visual elements in the artwork. These similar elements help to form a cohesive whole. In the following work, all the primary colors are used. The work also uses a geometric shape (a circle) that becomes an implied shape as the interchanging bands of primary colors expand to the edge of the composition. Although some visual elements are the same, some differences are seen in the work.



Jasper Johns. *Target*. 1958. Oil and collage on canvas. 3' x 3'. [National Gallery of Art](https://www.nga.gov/), Washington, DC.

### Gestalt Unity

In essence, Gestalt unity combines visual unity and conceptual unity in the sense that the look of the artwork and the ideas behind it fit together harmoniously. For instance, in this image, there is a repeating pattern of organic literal lines receding into the distance, which gives the sense that this hallway extends far into the background.



### Variety

To best understand unity, it is important to understand variety. Variety refers to difference. It is hard to understand what is the same unless differences can be seen. For instance, at first glance, it appears that nothing is similar in this work. When reading the painting closer, it appears all the neutral colors (except for brown) and all the primary colors are seen in the work. The artwork also contains literal and contour lines.



Jackson Pollock. *Number 1 (Lavender Mist)*. 1959. Oil, enamel, and aluminum on canvas.

87 in. x 118 in. [National Gallery of Art](https://www.nga.gov/), Washington, DC

### ✓ Summary

- Unity refers to joining together items that are paired together.
- Conceptual unity joins together ideas that are related.
- Visual unity joins together similar categories of visual elements of art.
- Gestalt unity combines both conceptual and visual unity so that the ideas and the visual look of the work match together.
- Variety, which means differences, is needed to more clearly see what is harmonious and unified.

Source

Christopher Gildow, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, <http://opencourselibrary.org/art-100-art-appreciation/>

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## SECTION OVERVIEW

### 3.3: Principles of Design- Scale and Proportion

#### Overview

Scale and proportion are planning tools artists use to get the viewer's attention.

#### Scale

Scale sets the normal size that is seen **within** the artwork to show the relative size of one form in relation to another. Think of scale as setting the expectation for how large forms are (or should be) within a two-dimensional or three-dimensional artwork. The scale of an object can provide a focal point or emphasis in an image.

#### Proportion

Proportion refers to size differences. So that this principle of design is better understood, when looking at artwork, always pair proportion with scale.

There are three (3) ways to see a sense of proportion. Forms within the same work of art can be in proportion or out of proportion from one another. The scale is what determines whether the forms are larger or smaller than other forms seen in the work.

The ways in which to see a sense of proportion:

1. between separate parts of a whole object.

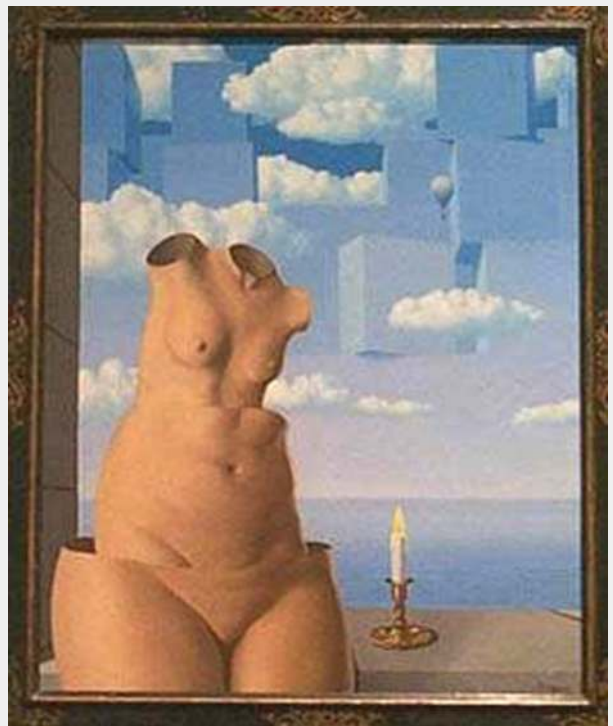
The ears are a part of the puppy, but they're an appendage (because they stick out away from the body).

Puppy's ears are pretty big right now, but one day (despite the fact he's a hound dog), we know that those ears will look more in proportion to the rest of the puppy's body.



2. between an object & its surroundings.

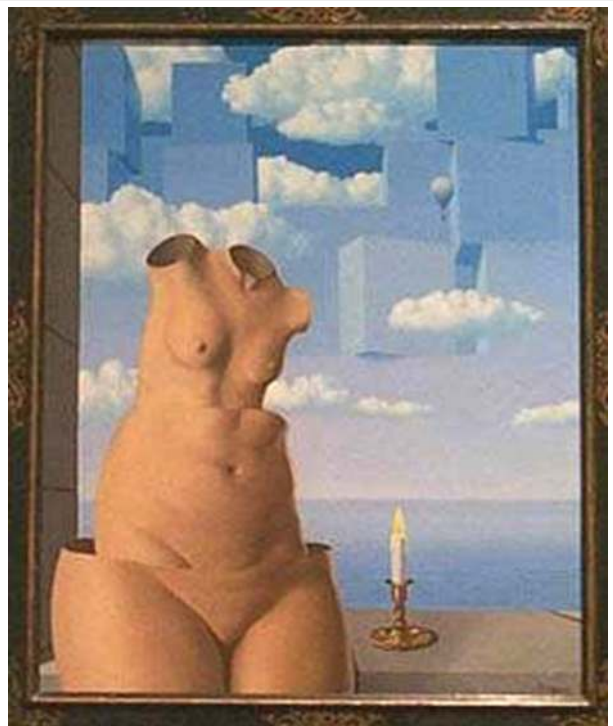
In this work by Magritte, although they're of different sizes, the sky, hot air balloon, candle stick & bottom part of the woman's body look as if they are within proportion to each other. The top two halves of the woman's body look out of proportion with the other forms seen in this piece.



Rene Magritte. *Delusions of Grandeur II*. 1948. Oil on canvas. 39-1/8 in. x 32-1/8 in. Smithsonian Institution, [Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden](#), Washington, DC.

3. between 2 or more objects meant to be read as a whole unit.

The female form is meant to be read as a whole unity, but notice the difference in the proportions between each section of the woman's body.



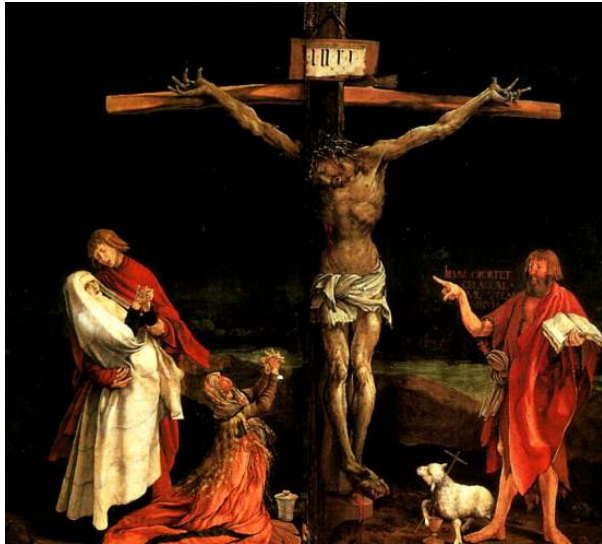
Rene Magritte. *Delusions of Grandeur II*. 1948. Oil on canvas. 39-1/8 in. x 32-1/8 in. Smithsonian Institution, [Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden](#), Washington, DC.

### Other types of design principles

Following are other types of principles of design that use the principle of scale & proportion.

#### Hierarchical Scale

Hierarchical Scale occurs when the artist purposely enlarging one form in the artwork to show its importance.



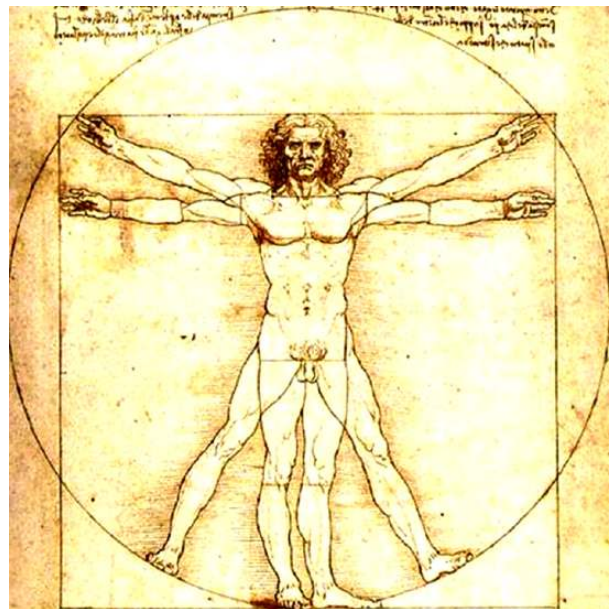
Matthias Grünewald. *Crucifixion*, from the Isenheim Altarpiece.  
Monastery of St. Anthony. Germany, c. 1510-15.  
Oil on wood. 9' 9-1/2 in. x 10' 9 in. [Unterlinden Museum](#), Colmar,  
France.

Take a ruler and size up the forms. Notice how they're progressively larger? Christ's form is the largest, which means He is the most important figure in this altarpiece.

#### Canon

A canon is what artists use to create mathematical relationships that ensure perfectly proportioned forms.

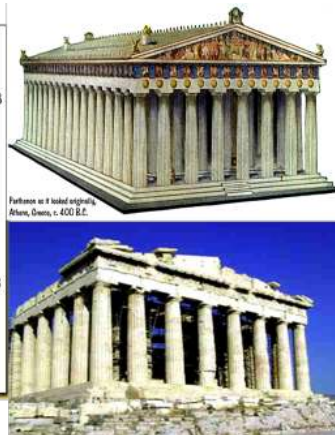
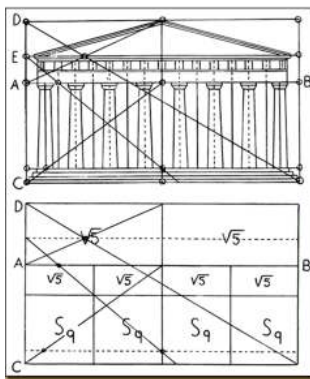
Leonardo da Vinci used the math inherent in geometric shapes (remember from your geometry class?!) to ensure that whatever size he drew a human form, the arms, legs, and torso of the body would always be in proportion to one another.



Leonardo da Vinci. *Vitruvian Man*. c. 1492. Pen and ink with wash over metalpoint on paper. 13.6 in. × 10.0 in. [Gallerie dell'Accademia](#), Venice, Italy.



Notice how the man's neck seems unusually long; head much smaller than it should be for the body and hands larger than what one would expect for the sitter's upper torso. These slight differences can be attributed to the fact that a canon was not used to create this figure.



*Parthenon. Athens, Greece. 400 BC.*

Canons are also used in three-dimensional artworks. The *Parthenon* uses the Golden Ratio (a.k.a. Golden Mean).



What is the Golden Ratio?, uploaded by Interesting Engineering. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/4xpda7WB87w>

### Human Scale

Things on a human scale are the size we expect them to be in relation to the norm. American sculptor Claes Oldenburg and his wife Coosje van Bruggen create works of common objects at an unexpected and enormous scale. Their *Spoonbridge and Cherry* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis weighs almost 7000 lbs. As big as it is, the work retains a comic and playful character, in part because of its gigantic size. This kind of sculpture lends itself to public art because it appeals to most viewers of all ages.



Claes Oldenburg Coosje van Bruggen, *Spoonbridge and Cherry*, 1985-88, aluminum, stainless steel, paint, 354 x 618 x 162".  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN. Photo by Lois Chattin with permission of the artist.

#### ✓ Summary

- The scale sets the size of forms seen in the artwork
- Proportion works in relation to scale to visually communicate which forms are in (or out of) proportion to the form that sets the scale for the work.

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## 3.4: Principles of Design- Emphasis, Focal Point, and Subordination

### Overview:

Artists create focal points and emphasis to give their work visual and conceptual impact. Emphasis and focal points underscore concepts, themes, or ideas the artist wants to express in an artwork. Subordination removes attention from a particular area, in order to emphasize something else. Artists use different elements of art to draw our attention to important areas such as **contrasts**, **color**, **direction**, and **placement**.

### Focal Point and Emphasis

#### Focal Point

A focal point is a specific place of visual emphasis that the artist use to give specific emphasis to an important symbol, event, or feature in the artwork.

#### Emphasis

Emphasis is “Highlighted” or busy areas of the artwork in which the artist uses visual elements to focus our attention. The artist draws attention to particular content by emphasizing the parts of the artwork.

### How to use Focal Point and Emphasis in an artwork?

Artists use **contrasts**, **color**, **direction**, and **placement** relationships to organize elements in an artwork work and draw our attention to important areas.

#### Contrast:

- Spanish artist Francisco de Zurbarán uses strong contrast to create emphasis and focal point in *The Funeral of St. Bonaventure*.
- Our eyes are drawn to the white area of the saint before we look at the rest of the characters.
- The white cloth of St. Bonaventure contrasts with darker colors around him and becomes the focal point.<sup>1</sup>



Francisco de Zurbarán, *The Funeral of St. Bonaventure*, 1629. Oil on canvas, 8'2" × 7'4". [Musée du Louvre, Paris, France](#). Licensed by *Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts*, Third Edition. Copyright © 2015 Thames & Hudson

### Color

- An emphasis can be established by creating strong contrasts of light and color.
- In *Still Life with Lobster*, Anna Vallayer-Coster used the complementary color scheme to focus our attention.
- By painting everything else in the composition a shade of green, she focuses our attention on the red lobster in the foreground.<sup>2</sup>



Anna Vallayer-Coster, *Still Life with Lobster*, oil on canvas, 1781. [Toledo Museum of Art \(2445 Monroe Street\), Gallery, 27](#)

### Direction

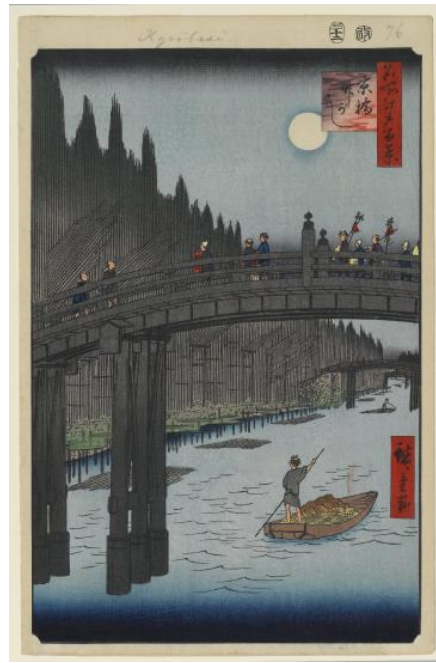
- An implied line can be an effective way to focus our attention on artwork.
- In Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith Decapitating Holofernes*, bright light emphasizes Judith's arms and those of her maidservant and creates implied lines.
- The five bare arms create strong directional lines that lead to the focal point. See the image on the right.
- Directional lines and contrasting values emphasize the story.
- Blood flow from Holofernes' neck as Judith delivers the fatal blow creates the focal point as all directional lines emerge together in Holofernes' head.<sup>1,3,4</sup>
- Click to learn more about this painting: <https://smarthistory.org/gentileschi-judith-slaying-holofernes/>



Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Decapitating Holofernes*, c. 1620. Oil on canvas, 6'6 $\frac{3}{8}$ "  $\times$  5'3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. "[The Execution](#)" by [failing\\_angel](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

### Placement

- Japanese artist Ando Hiroshige draws our attention to the right side of the work
- The bridge is the largest shape and naturally catches our attention.
- The light value and hard geometry of the moon divert our gaze
- We look at the figure under the bridge because of its placement under the moon, and because it has a definite outline that contrasts with the flat color of the water
- This artwork has three separate focal points: the moon, the bridge, and the figure in a boat
- The varying distances between these three shapes create a rhythm that adds visual interest <sup>1</sup>



Ando Hiroshige, “Riverside Bamboo Market, Kyo-bashi,” from *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, 1857. 15 × 10⅜". [James A. Michener Collection, Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii](#)

## Subordination

- The use of emphasis to draw the viewer’s attention away from a particular part of a composition is referred to as **subordination**.
- Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* is a fine example of subordination. In Bruegel’s painting, we are first drawn to the scarlet-smocked man plowing his field because of the bright red shirt he is wearing. The tree on the left, the sunset, and fanciful ships also capture our attention.
- We hardly notice Icarus, whose legs are disappearing into the sea just in front of the large ship on the right.<sup>1</sup>
- To learn more, check the [Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium's Google Arts and Culture article](#).



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, c. 1555–58. Oil on canvas, mounted on wood, 29 × 44⅛". Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium. "[Bruegel the Elder, Fall of Icarus](#)" by [f\\_snarfel](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

### Summary

- Emphasis and focal points underscore concepts, themes, or ideas the artist wants to express in an artwork
- Artists use contrasts, color, direction, and placement relationships to organize elements in an artwork work and draw our attention to important areas.
- Subordination is a technique artists use to de-emphasize certain elements in a work of art to make certain the main subject stands out.

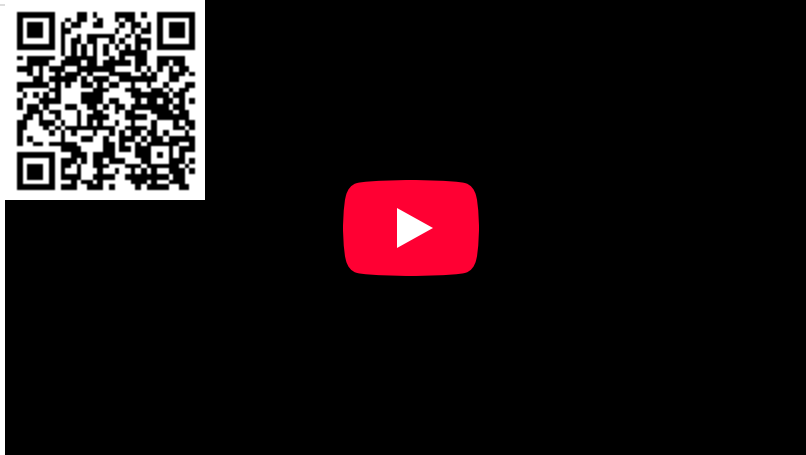
### Source

1. DeWitte, Debra J., Larmann, Ralph M., and Shields, M. Kathryn. *Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts*, Third Edition. 2018
2. Sayre, Henry M., *World of Art*, 8th Edition, 2016. Pearson
3. Camara, Esperanca. *Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Slaying Holofernes*. *Smarthistory*. <https://smarthistory.org/gentileschi...ng-holofernes/>
4. Google Arts and culture. *Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium's* <https://artsandculture.google.com/st...ewUxXpmuNdcLJg>

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### 3.4.1: Videos

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Gentileschi, Judith and Holofernes. <https://youtu.be/BHFuLS9NW6s>

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## 3.5: Principles of Design- Balance

### Overview

The design principle of **balance** is the issue of visual “weight.” Compositional balance is achieved when these competing visual weights are roughly equivalent. The “job” of balance in a work of art is to lead a person’s eye around a two-dimensional or three-dimensional work of art. There are three basic types of balance.

### How to Identify Balance

Before deciding upon what type of balance is seen in an artwork, the following must be done:

1. Bisect the work on either axis (vertical, horizontal or either diagonal) in whatever way makes sense for the artwork.
2. Mentally flip one side on top of the other (as if the artwork was printed onto a piece of paper and you folded it in half along whatever axis works best to bisect the artwork).
3. Look at the numbers, sizes, and types of forms and visual elements seen on each side of the bisected axis.
4. Then, determine what type of balance is seen.

A really good example of balance is seen in the work of Piet Mondrian, whose revolutionary paintings of the early twentieth century used non-objective balance instead of realistic subject matter to generate the visual power in his work. In the examples below you can see that where the white rectangle is placed makes a big difference in how the entire picture plane is activated.

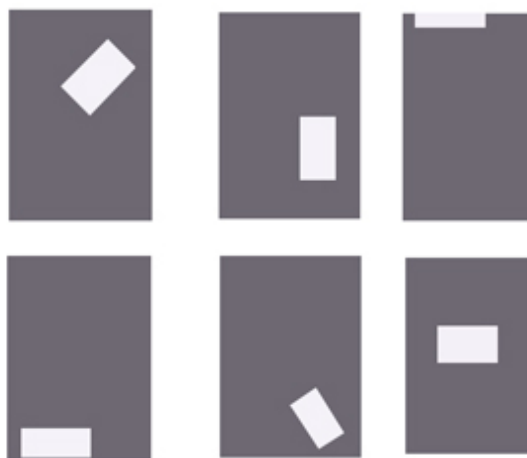


Image by Christopher Gildow. Used with permission.

- The example on the top left is weighted toward the top, and the diagonal orientation of the white shape gives the whole area a sense of movement.
- The top middle example is weighted more toward the bottom, but still maintains a sense that the white shape is floating. On the top right, the white shape is nearly off the picture plane altogether, leaving most of the remaining area visually empty.
- This arrangement works if you want to convey a feeling of loftiness or simply direct the viewer’s eyes to the top of the composition. The lower left example is perhaps the least dynamic: the white shape is resting at the bottom, mimicking the horizontal bottom edge of the ground. The overall sense here is restful, heavy and without any dynamic character.
- The bottom middle composition is weighted decidedly toward the bottom right corner, but again, the diagonal orientation of the white shape leaves some sense of movement. Lastly, the lower right example places the white shape directly in the middle on a horizontal axis.
- This is visually the most stable, but lacks any sense of movement. Refer to these six diagrams when you are determining the visual weight of specific artworks.

**There are three basic forms of visual balance:**

- Symmetrical Balance
- Asymmetrical Balance
- Radial Symmetry

Notice that the different types of balance have (in a sense) a first and last name (e.g., symmetrical + balance, asymmetrical + balance, radial + balance).



Examples of Visual Balance. Left: Symmetrical Balance. Middle: Asymmetrical Balance. Right: Radial Symmetry.

Image by Christopher Gildow. Used with permission.

### Symmetrical Balance (a.k.a. Absolute Symmetry or Mirror Symmetry)

In this type of balance, when a two- or three-dimensional work is bisected, the artwork shows the exact same numbers, sizes and types of visual elements on one side as it does the other. Symmetrical balance conveys a sense of stability in the artwork. Since symmetrical balance is the most visually stable, it is characterized by an exact—or nearly exact—compositional design on either (or both) sides of the horizontal or vertical axis of the picture plane.

- Symmetrical compositions are usually dominated by a central anchoring element. There are many examples of symmetry in the natural world that reflect an aesthetic dimension.
- The *Taj Mahal* complex was commissioned by a grieving Shah Jahan as a memorial to his wife.
- Pure visual symmetry united all elements, echoing the couple's united love and creating a perfect balance.



Ustad Ahmad Lahauri, Abd al-Karim Ma'mur Khan and Makramat Khan. *Taj Mahal*. Agra, India. Mughal period. c. 1632-1653. Marble.

"[Taj Mahal](#)" by [ndj5](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

If the image was printed and the photo was folded in half along the vertical line, the exact same numbers, sizes & types of forms and visual elements on each side is seen on both sides of the *Taj Mahal*. Symmetrical balance conveys a sense of stability in the artwork.

Another example is Richard Serra's *Tilted Spheres* (below). The four massive slabs of steel show a concentric symmetry and take on an organic dimension as they curve around each other, appearing to almost hover above the ground.



Richard Serra, *Tilted Spheres*, 2002 – 04, Cor-ten steel, 14' x 39' x 22'. [Pearson International Airport](#), Toronto, Canada.

"*Tilted Spheres*" by [Ken Mist](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

### Asymmetrical Balance

In this type of balance, when bisected, the artwork shows numbers, sizes and types of visual elements are different on one side than on the other, but the overall harmony of the artwork is not destroyed. In this the painting below, one side shows a cityscape filled with people, buildings, and streetcars; the other side shows a barren landscape with benches and lights. Despite that, we still get the sense that each half of the composition are set in the same location despite the fact that both sides of the work have different numbers, sizes, and types of visual elements.



Childe Hassam. *Boston Common at Twilight*. 1885-86. Oil on canvas. 42 in. x 60 in. [Museum of Fine Arts](#), Boston, MA.

"*Boston Common*" by [Bosc d'Anjou](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

Asymmetrical balance uses compositional elements that are offset from each other. Artists often use different visual “weights” on each side of a composition. Elements on the left and right sides are not the same, but the combination counters each other.

- Asymmetrical visual balance is the most dynamic because it creates a more complex design construction.
- A graphic poster from the 1930s shows how offset positioning and strong contrasts can increase the visual effect of the entire composition.



Poster from the Library of Congress archives.  
Image is in the public domain.

Claude Monet's *Still Life with Apples and Grapes* from 1880 (below) uses asymmetry in its design to enliven an otherwise basic arrangement. For example, Monet:

- sets the whole composition on the diagonal, cutting off the lower left corner with a dark triangle.
- purposely sets most of the fruit, which looks like it's arranged haphazardly, on the top half of the canvas to achieve a lighter visual weight.
- balances the darker basket of fruit with the white of the tablecloth, even placing a few smaller apples at the lower right to complete the composition.



Claude Monet. *Still Life with Apples and Grapes*. 1880. Oil on canvas. 26-3/16 in. x 32-1/2 in. [The Art Institute of Chicago](#), Chicago, IL.

"Monet fruits still life painting" by [Free Public Domain Illustrations by rawpixel](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

Monet and other Impressionist painters were influenced by Japanese woodcut prints, whose flat spatial areas and graphic color appealed to the artist's sense of design.

#### ✓ Spotlight

One of the best-known Japanese print artists is Ando Hiroshige (1797-1858). Strong asymmetry is seen in this woodcut, *Shinagawa on the Tokaido*, one of a series of works in which Hiroshige explored the landscape around the Tōkaidō road. Hiroshige received an invitation to join an official procession to Kyoto, Japan in 1832, which gave him the opportunity to travel along the Tōkaidō route that linked Edo and Kyoto, the two capitals. He sketched the scenery along the way, and when he returned to Edo, he produced the series *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*, which contains some of his best-known prints.



Hiroshige. *Shinagawa on the Tokaido*. Ukiyo-e print. After 1832. Woodblock print on Echizen handcrafted paper. Image is in the public domain.

In Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure* the organic form of the abstracted figure, strong lighting and precarious balance obtained through asymmetry make the sculpture a powerful example in three-dimensions.



Henry Moore, *Reclining Figure*, 1951. Painted bronze. [The Fitzwilliam Museum](#), Cambridge. United Kingdom.  
"Reclining figure" by Andrew Dunn is licensed under Creative Commons [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

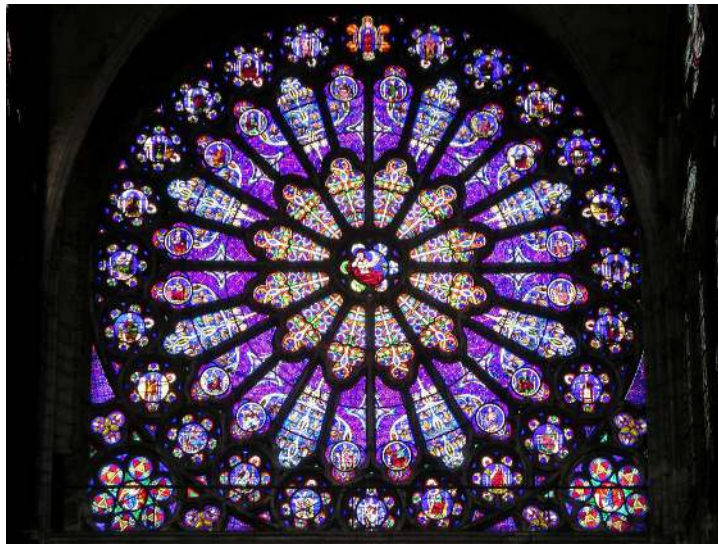
### Radial Balance

In this type of balance, the visual elements of art start from a central point within the artwork and branch outward. This arrangement suggests movement in the artwork. Radial balance is another form of symmetry that offers stability and a point of focus at the center of the artwork.



"Rose" by [tissime](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

The same concept can occur when the artwork is bisected along any axis.



"Rose Window" by D-Stanley is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Radial balance suggests movement from the center of a composition towards the outer edge—or vice versa.

- Buddhist mandala paintings offer this kind of balance almost exclusively. Similar to the scroll painting we viewed previously, the image radiates outward from a central spirit figure. In the example below there are six of these figures forming a star shape in the middle. Here we have absolute symmetry in the composition, yet a feeling of movement is generated by the concentric circles within a rectangular format.



*Mandala of the Six Chakravartins*. c. 1429-46. Central Tibet. Ngor Monastery. Distemper on cloth.  
Image is in the public domain.

### ✓ Summary

- Balance is a way to lead the eye around a two-dimensional or three-dimensional artwork.
- Whether two-dimensional or three-dimensional, works can be completely balanced, where each side of the artwork looks the same or offset, where there are minor to major differences in the numbers, sizes, and types of visual elements seen on the bisected halves of the artwork.
- Symmetrical balance creates a sense of stability.
- Radial balance suggests movement because the forms seen in the work will start from a central point and spiral outwards as it reaches the edges of the artwork.

### Sources

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Sayre, Henry. *A World of Art*, Sixth edition. Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010. Print.

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## 3.6: Principles of Design- Motion and Time

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### Overview

Motion is a principle of art. It is a tool that artists use to organize the artistic elements in a work; it is employed in both static and time-based mediums.

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### Introduction to Motion and Time

- Motion, a principle of art, is a tool artists use to organize the artistic elements in a work; it is employed in both static and time-based mediums.
- Most traditional art media (e.g. painting) are static, but artists have found ways to indicate the passage of time and the appearance of motion
- New technology and media, such as film and video, allow artists to capture motion and time
- Artists can communicate motion by implying time or creating the illusion of it <sup>1</sup>

### Implied Motion

- Implied motion is used in static works of art. Visual clues tell us that the work portrays motion, but we do not actually see the motion happening.
- In Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne*, the sun god Apollo falls madly in love with the wood nymph Daphne. As she runs away terrified, her father saves her by transforming her into a bay laurel tree.
- In this sculpture, diagonal lines convey the action. This moment is frozen in time. <sup>1</sup>



Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1622–24. Carrara marble, height 8'. Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy Artists create an illusion of motion through visual tricks. "[Gianlorenzo Bernini. Apollo e Dafne, 1625.](#)" by [Su Burning](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#).

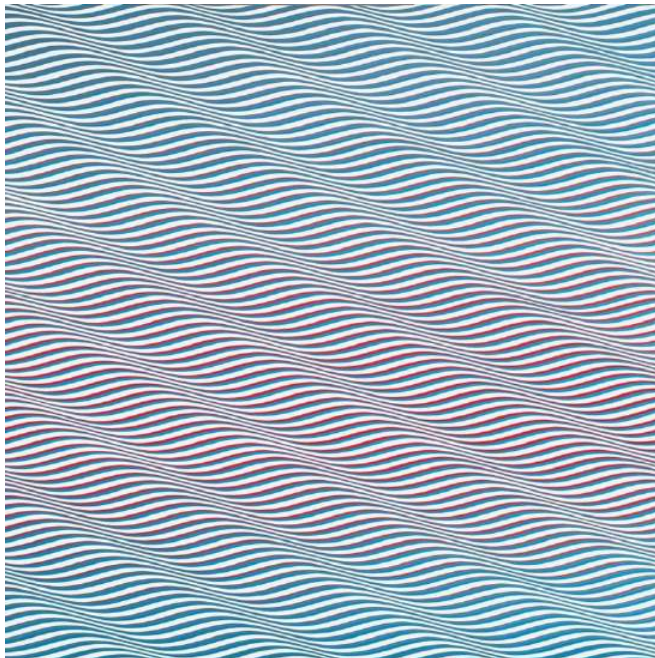
- Giacomo Balla was a member of the Italian Futurists—artists obsessed with the increasing speed and industrialization of the modern world.
- In this painting of a black dachshund walking with a woman in dark shoes and dress, Giacomo Balla was exploring a new field of technology—chronophotography: a photograph or a series of photographs of a moving object taken to record and exhibit successive phases of the object's motion.<sup>2</sup>
- A series of repeating marks in the dog's tail, feet, and leash communicate rapid movement<sup>1</sup>



Giacomo Balla, *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 35¾ × 43¼". Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.  
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### Optical Art

- An abstract style, also known as Optical Art, developed in the 1960s and featuring geometric shapes and lines in black and white or vivid colors. Based in theories of color and perception, Op Art compositions often create optical illusions of vibration or depth.<sup>3</sup>
- British artist Bridget Riley (b. 1931) was part of the Op art movement
- *Cataract 3*, 1967 is an example of Op art (Optical art)
- If we focus on a single point in the work, the image appears to vibrate



Bridget Riley, *Cataract 3*, 1967. PVA on canvas, 7'3¾" × 7'3¾". British Council Collection. Licenced by Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts, Copyright © 2015 Thames & Hudson

### Actual Movement

- We see actual motion in artworks that change in real space and time
- Examples include kinetic art (a work that contains moving parts) and performance art

- In performance art, the artist's intention is to create an experience rather than an art object
- [Alexander Calder's \*Untitled\*. 1976](#) is an example of kinetic art; art that moves or at least seems to move
- It is composed of 13 panels and 12 arms that spin around their points of balance, mobiles like the one in the east building of the national gallery of art are designed to create a sense of virtual volume as they turn on the air currents in the room in the manner of a dancer moving through the space of a stage. <sup>1</sup>

## Time

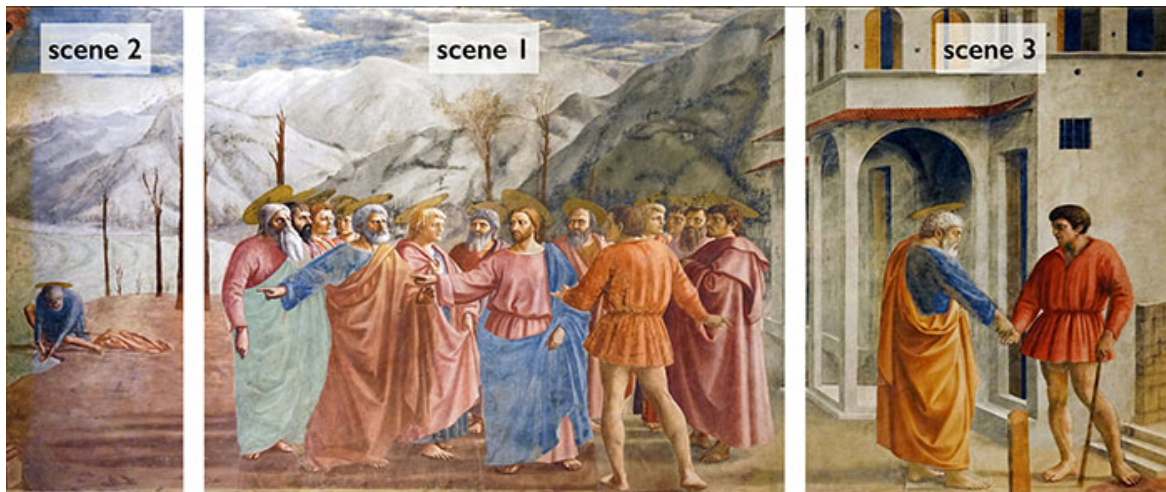
- Any artwork that deals with events must show how time goes by
- Artists find ways to communicate the passage of time and remind us of its influence <sup>1</sup>

## The Passage of Time in Masaccio's *The Tribute Money*

- Artists often seek to tell a story. This can be in a single painting
- *The Tribute Money* is one of many frescos painted by Masaccio in the Brancacci chapel.
- All of the frescos tell the story of the life of St. Peter (considered to be the first Pope).
- The story of the Tribute Money is told in three separate scenes within the same fresco
- This way of telling an entire story in one painting is called a **continuous narrative** <sup>4</sup>



Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence)



Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, 1427, fresco (Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence) (photo: [Steven Zucker](#), CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

- In the center of the fresco (scene 1), we see the tax collector demanding the money, and Christ instructing Peter.
- On the far left (scene 2), we see Peter kneeling down and retrieving the money from the mouth of a fish
- and on the far right (scene 3), St. Peter pays the tax collector.
- In the fresco, the tax collector appears twice, and St. Peter appears three times (you can find them easily if you look for their clothing). <sup>4</sup>

## Summary

- Motion, a principle of art, is a tool artists use to organize the artistic elements in a work; it is employed in both static and time-based mediums.
- Artists use implied and actual movement in their artworks.

#### Sources

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3. Modern Art Museum. Op Art. [www.moma.org/collection/terms/op-art](http://www.moma.org/collection/terms/op-art)
4. Khan Academy. Masaccio, The Tribute Money in the Brancacci Chapel. <https://www.khanacademy.org/humaniti...ancacci-chapel>

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### 3.6.1: Videos- Elements of Art- Motion and Time

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Bernini, Apollo and Daphne. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdnPdZMZ9PU>



How Alexander Calder's "Mobile" injects motion into sculpture | Art, Explained. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3OqfduWdhc>



Paying tribute, Masaccio at the Brancacci Chapel (The Tribute Money and The Expulsion). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPVeLWLbO9k>

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## 3.7: Contrast

### Overview

When an artist uses two noticeably different aspects of a visual element, that person is applying the principle of contrast. Examples include using different types of color, value, texture, size, etc.

### Simultaneous Contrast

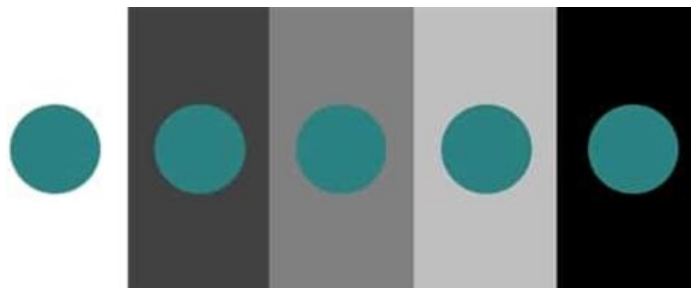
Simultaneous contrast occurs when the eye attempts to create a balance when colors seem to have a greater hue, intensity, or value when set next to another color. The effects are that:

- Colors will look darker or near lighter colors or colors will look lighter or near darker colors.



Simultaneous contrast showing different hues and intensities.

- Complementary colors will look more intense on or near each other than they will on or near grays.

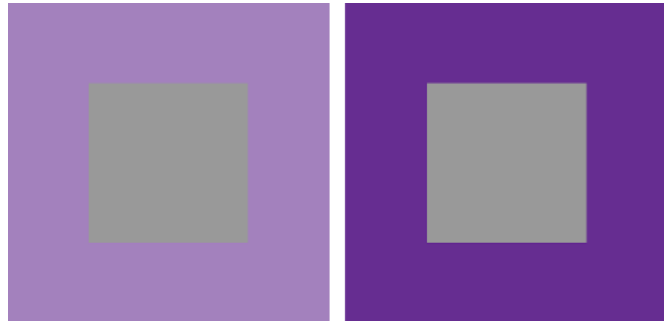


Hues that look more intense near each other than on and near gray.

- The colors of the same intensity can look darker as the background becomes lighter.



The square in the middle of each neutral background has the same value.



The square in the middle of each secondary purple background has the same value.



*Contrast: Principle of Design Explained!* (2021, July 13), uploaded by Winged Canvas, <https://youtu.be/7iwZEuT29vc>

#### Summary

- Contrast can be thought of as using opposite aspects of a specific visual element of art.
- Contrast can be created by different colors, textures, or values of an element of art.
- Although the visual elements are completely different, they are related because they fall into the same category or grouping.
- Contrast can create visual interest in a work of art by using similar groupings of visual elements in dramatic ways to create a sense of drama in the work.

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## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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##### 4.1.1: Videos-Drawing

#### 4.2: Painting

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#### 4.3: Alternative Media and Processes

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## 4.1: Drawing

### Overview

This chapter introduces drawing, a process that is not only basic to art but also a fundamental part of human communication. Learning to draw is the first step in developing the skill to write the letters of the alphabet, but drawing can also provide a rich array of communicative expressions. Drawing media comprise two main categories, dry and wet. Each possesses its own unique and versatile properties.

- Drawing is the simplest and most efficient way to communicate visual ideas, and for centuries charcoal, chalk, graphite and paper have been adequate enough tools to launch some of the most profound images in art.
- Leonardo da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist* wraps all four figures together in what is essentially an extended family portrait.
- Da Vinci draws the figures in a spectacularly realistic style, one that emphasizes individual identities and surrounds the figures in a grand, unfinished landscape. He animates the scene with the Christ child pulling himself forward, trying to release himself from Mary's grasp to get closer to a young John the Baptist on the right, who himself is turning toward the Christ child with a look of curious interest in his younger cousin.
- The traditional role of drawing was to make sketches for larger compositions to be manifest as paintings, sculpture or even architecture. Because of its relative immediacy, this function for drawing continues today.



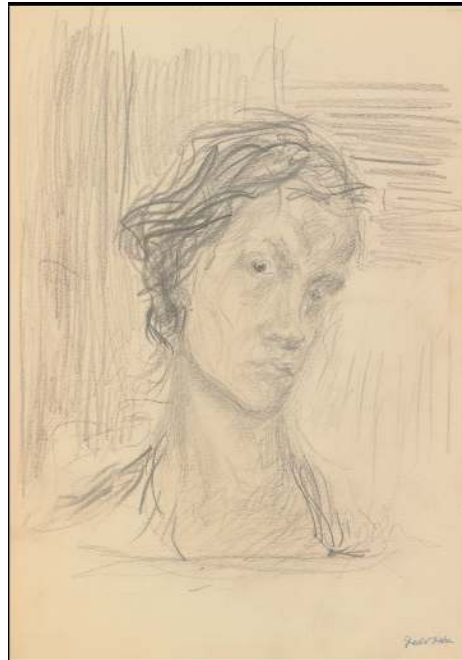
Leonardo da Vinci, *Madonna and Child with St Anne and the Young St John*, 1507-08, Charcoal with white chalk heightening on paper, 141,5 x 106 cm, [National Gallery, London Types of Drawing Media](#). Purchased with a special grant and contributions from the Art Fund, The Pilgrim Trust, and through a public appeal organized by the Art Fund, 1962 Object Number: NG6337

### Dry Media

- Dry Media includes charcoal, graphite, chalks, and pastels.
- Each of these mediums gives the artist a wide range of mark-making capabilities and effects, from thin lines to large areas of color and tone.
- The artist can manipulate a drawing to achieve desired effects in many ways, including exerting different pressures on the medium against the drawing's surface, or by erasure, blotting, or rubbing.

## Graphite

- Graphite media includes pencils, powder, or compressed sticks.
- Each one creates a range of values depending on the hardness or softness inherent in the material. Hard graphite tones range from light to dark gray, while softer graphite allows a range from light gray to nearly black.
- Gedö's use of varied pencil pressure suggests texture and creates emphasis
- Graphite is handled more softly in the areas representing the skin
- Gedö was a Holocaust survivor; this drawing records her gaunt features shortly after her internment<sup>2</sup>



Ilka Gedö, Self-portrait, 1944. Graphite on paper, 11 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". [British Museum, London](#), England. Licensed by *Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts*, Third Edition. Copyright © 2015 Thames & Hudson

## Charcoal

**Charcoal** is made from wood or other organic material that has been burned in the absence of oxygen. This process leaves a relatively pure black carbon powder. Artists compress this dry powder, or pigment, with a binder, a sticky substance like pine resin or glue made from the collagen of animal hides, to make hand-held charcoal blocks of various strengths and degrees of hardness. This compressed charcoal is used to make very dark marks, usually on paper. Compressed charcoal is challenging to erase.



**Figure 2.2 | Edmond Aman-Jean**

Artist: Georges-Pierre Seurat

Author: User "Pimbrils"

Source: Wikimedia Commons

License: Public Domain

**Figure 2.2 | Edmond Aman-Jean**

- Charcoal also comes in a form called **willow** or **vine charcoal**. This form of drawing charcoal leaves a very light mark as it is simply burned twigs. It is generally used for impermanent sketches because it does not readily stick to paper or canvas and is easily erased. Both compressed and vine charcoal drawings are easily smudged and should be protected by a fixative that adheres the charcoal to the drawing surface and creates a barrier resistant to smudging
- Charcoal, perhaps the oldest form of drawing media, is made by simply charring wooden sticks or small branches, called vine charcoal, but is also available in a mechanically compressed form.
- Vine charcoal comes in three densities: soft, medium, and hard, each one handling a little differently than the other.
- Soft charcoals give a more velvety feel to a drawing.
- The artist doesn't have to apply as much pressure to the stick in order to get a solid mark. Hard vine charcoal offers more control but generally doesn't give the darkest tones. Compressed charcoals give deeper blacks than vine charcoal, but are more difficult to manipulate once they are applied to paper.
- Charcoal smudges easily, usually has strong dark value, and is soft, creating lines that can be easily shaped
- In Käthe Kollwitz, Self-portrait, the face and hand are rendered realistically. In contrast, she uses a spontaneous burst of charcoal marks to draw the arm. We see the nervous energy connecting eye to hand <sup>2</sup>



Käthe Kollwitz, Self-portrait in Profile to Left, 1933. Charcoal on paper, 18¾ × 25". [National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.](#)  
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## Pastels

- **Pastels** are similar to compressed charcoal but, instead of finely powdered carbon, finely ground colored pigment and a binder are used to create handheld colored blocks. (Figure 2.4) The powdery pigments smudge easily, so the image created must be displayed under glass or covered with a fixative. Edgar Degas (1834-1917, France) is famous for the subtle yet distinct layering of color he was able to achieve in his pastel drawings. (Figure 2.5)



**Figure 2.4 | Pastels**

Author: User "Tau1012"  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
License: Public Domain



**Figure 2.5 | *Nach dem Bade sich abtrocknende Frau (After the Bath, Woman drying herself)***

Artist: Edgar Degas  
Author: User "Crisco"  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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- Pastels are essentially colored chalks usually compressed into stick form for better handling. They are characterized by soft, subtle changes in tone or color. Pastel pigments allow for a resonant quality that is more difficult to obtain with graphite or charcoal. Picasso's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* from 1896 emphasizes these qualities.



Picasso, Portrait of the Artists's Mother, *Portrait de la mère de l'artiste*, 1896, Pastel on paper. Public domain.

### Wet Media

#### Ink

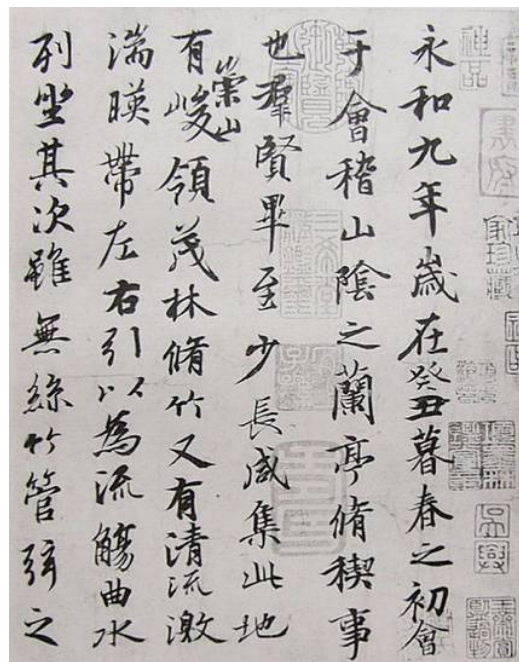
- Wet drawing media traditionally refers to ink but really includes any substance that can be put into solution and applied to a drawing's surface.
- Because wet media is manipulated much like paint – through thinning and the use of a brush – it blurs the line between drawing and painting.
- Ink can be applied with a stick for linear effects and by brush to cover large areas with tone. It can also be diluted with water to create values of gray. The Return of the Prodigal Son by Rembrandt shows an expressive use of brown ink in both the line qualities and the larger brushed areas that create the illusion of light and shade.

#### Felt Tip Pens

- Felt tip pens are considered a form of wet media.
- The ink is saturated into felt strips inside the pen then released onto the paper or other support through the tip.
- The ink quickly dries, leaving a permanent mark.
- Traditional Chinese painting uses water-based inks and pigments. In fact, it is one of the oldest continuous artistic traditions in the world. Painted on supports of paper or silk, the subject matter includes landscapes, animals, figures and **calligraphy**, an art form that uses letters and script in fluid, lyrical gestures.
- Two examples of traditional Chinese painting are seen below.
- The first, a wall scroll painted by Ma Lin in 1246, demonstrates how adept the artist is in using ink in an expressive form to denote figures, robes and landscape elements, especially the strong, gnarled forms of the pine trees. There is sensitivity and boldness in the work.
- The second example is the opening detail of a copy of “Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion” made before the thirteenth century. Using ink and brush, the artist makes language into art through the sure, gestural strokes and marks of the characters.



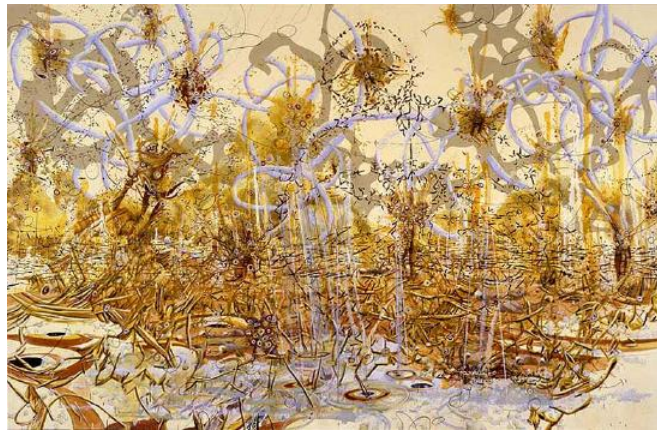
Ma Lin, Wall Scroll, ink on silk. 1246 Used under GNU Free Documentation License



Opening detail of a copy of Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion. Before the thirteenth century. Hand scroll, ink on paper. The Palace Museum, Beijing. Licensed through Creative Commons.

### Alternative Ways of Using Drawing

- Drawing is a foundation for other two and three-dimensional works of art, even being incorporated with digital media that expands the idea of its formal expression.
- The art of Matthew Ritchie starts with small abstract drawings.
- He digitally scans and projects them to large scales, taking up entire walls. Ritchie also uses the scans to produce large, thin three-dimensional templates to create sculptures out of the original drawings.



Matthew Ritchie (American, born 1964). *No Sign of the World*, 2004. Oil and marker on canvas, 99 x 154 in. (251.5 x 391.2 cm). [Brooklyn Museum](#), Gift of Jacqueline and Mortimer Sackler, 2015.101. © artist or artist's estate (Photo: image courtesy of Art21, CUR.2015.101\_Art21\_photograph.jpg)

### Erasers and Fixatives



[Robert Rauschenberg](#), *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953 *Erased de Kooning Drawing*. © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation licensed by [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art](#)

- Erasers can be used to create light marks and highlights in areas already drawn
- Fixative is a coating that preserves the appearance of a drawing by making the dry medium adhere to the surface of the paper
- Rauschenberg created a new work of art by erasing a drawing by the famous artist Willem de Kooning
- The drawing was made with charcoal, oil paint, pencil, and crayon; it took nearly a month to erase <sup>2,3</sup>
- More information here <https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/98.298/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

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[st-anne-st-john-the-baptist-cartoon/](#).

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3. Delmar Larsen. Developed by Wendy Riley from Columbia Basin College with contributing work from Lumen Learning. <https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Art%20History/Art%20History%20101/Lumen> 

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4. Pamela Sachant, Peggy Blood, Jeffery LeMieux, & Rita Tekippe University System of Georgia via [GALILEO Open Learning Material](#)

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### 4.1.1: Videos-Drawing

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Leonardo da Vinci, The Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist (Burlington House Cartoon), 1499-1500, charcoal and chalk on paper, 55.7 × 41.2 inches c. 1499-1500 (National Gallery, London). Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker..  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4F2lgyi7FA>



Matthew Ritchie: "The Morning Line" | Art21 "Extended Play". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ja2CUVJmQ48>



Robert Rauschenberg - Erased De Kooning. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpCWh3IFtDQ>

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## 4.2: Painting

### Overview

- Painting is the application of pigments to a support surface that establishes an image, design or decoration.
- In art the term “painting” describes both the act and the result.
- Three of the most recognizable images in Western art history are paintings: Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, Edvard Munch’s *The Scream* and Vincent van Gogh’s *The Starry Night*. These three art works are examples of how painting can go beyond a simple mimetic function, that is, to only imitate what is seen. The power in great painting is that it transcends perceptions to reflect emotional, psychological, even spiritual levels of the human condition.
- Painting media are extremely versatile because they can be applied to many different surfaces (called supports) including paper, wood, canvas, plaster, clay, lacquer and concrete.
- Because paint is usually applied in a liquid or semi-liquid state it has the ability to soak into the porous support material, which can, over time, weaken and damage the it. To prevent this a support is usually first covered with a *ground*, a mixture of binder and chalk that, when dry, creates a non-porous layer between the support and the painted surface. A typical ground is gesso.

### Media

There are six major painting media, each with specific individual characteristics:

- Encaustic
- Tempera
- Fresco
- Oil
- Acrylic
- Watercolor
- Mixed Media

All of them use the following three basic ingredients:

- Pigment
- Binder
- Solvent

Pigments are granular solids incorporated into the paint to contribute color. The binder, commonly referred to as the *vehicle*, is the actual film-forming component of paint. The binder holds the pigment in solution until it’s ready to be dispersed onto the surface. The solvent controls the flow and application of the paint. It’s mixed into the paint, usually with a brush, to dilute it to the proper *viscosity*, or thickness, before it’s applied to the surface. Once the solvent has evaporated from the surface the remaining paint is fixed there. Solvents range from water to oil-based products like linseed oil and mineral spirits.

Let’s look at each of the six main painting media:

#### 1. Encaustic

- Encaustic uses melted beeswax as the binder and must be applied to rigid supports like wood with heated brushes. The advantage of encaustic is that it remains fresh and vibrant over centuries. Encaustic paintings from ancient Egypt dating to the period of Roman occupation (late first century BCE-third century CE) are as brilliantly colored as when they were first painted. (Figure 2.10)
- The mixture is then brushed or spread across a support surface.
- Reheating allows for longer manipulation of the paint.
- Encaustic dates back to the first century C.E. and was used extensively in funerary mummy portraits from Fayum in Egypt.
- The characteristics of encaustic painting include strong, resonant colors and extremely durable paintings.
- Portrait of a boy, c. 100–150 CE would have been used as a funerary adornment.
- Artist created a naturalistic likeness of the deceased

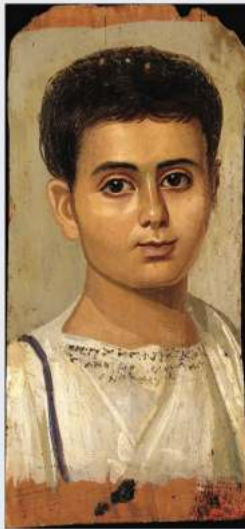


**Figure 2.10 | Portrait of the Boy Eutyches**  
Source: Met Museum  
License: OASC



**Figure 2.11 | The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden**  
Artist: Masaccio  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
License: Public Domain

## 2. Tempera

- Tempera paint combines pigment with an egg yolk binder, then thinned and released with water.
- Like encaustic, tempera has been used for thousands of years. It dries quickly to a durable matte finish.
- Tempera paintings are traditionally applied in successive thin layers, called glazes, painstakingly built up using networks of cross-hatched lines. Because of this technique tempera paintings are known for their detail.
- In early Christianity, tempera was used extensively to paint images of religious icons.
- The pre-Renaissance Italian artist Duccio (c. 1255 – 1318), one of the most influential artists of the time, used tempera paint in the creation of *The Crevole Madonna* (above). You can see the sharpness of line and shape in this well-preserved work, and the detail he renders in the face and skin tones of the Madonna (see the detail below).



Duccio, The Crevole Madonna, c. 1280. Tempera on board. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy. Image is in the public domain

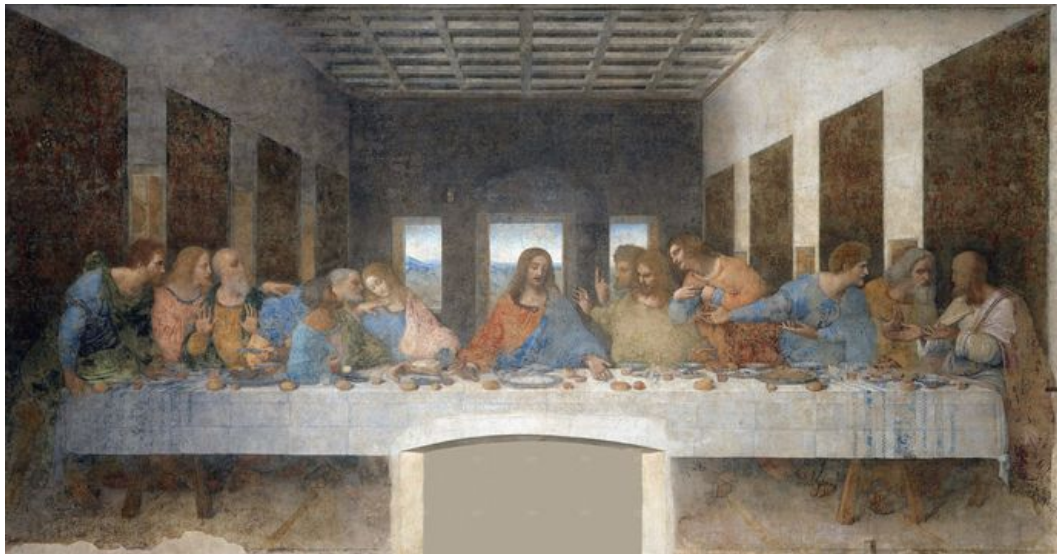
### 3. Fresco

- Fresco painting is used exclusively on plaster walls and ceilings.
- The medium of fresco has been used for thousands of years, but is most associated with its use in Christian images during the Renaissance period in Europe.
- There are two forms of fresco: Buon or “wet,” and secco, meaning “dry.”
- Buon fresco technique consists of painting in pigment mixed with water on a thin layer of wet, fresh lime mortar or plaster. The pigment is applied to and absorbed by the wet plaster; after a number of hours, the plaster dries and reacts with the air: it is this chemical reaction that fixes the pigment particles in the plaster. Because of the chemical makeup of the plaster, a binder is not required. Buon fresco is more stable because the pigment becomes part of the wall itself.
- Domenico di Michelino's *Dante and the Divine Comedy* from 1465 (below) is a superb example of buon fresco.
- The colors and details are preserved in the dried plaster wall.
- Michelino shows the Italian author and poet Dante Aleghieri standing with a copy of the *Divine Comedy* open in his left hand, gesturing to the illustration of the story depicted around him.
- The artist shows us four different realms associated with the narrative: the mortal realm on the right depicting Florence, Italy; the heavenly realm indicated by the stepped mountain at the left center – you can see an angel greeting the saved souls as they enter from the base of the mountain; the realm of the damned to the left – with Satan surrounded by flames greeting them at the bottom of the painting; and the realm of the cosmos arching over the entire scene.



Domenico di Michelino, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, 1465, buon fresco, the Duomo, Florence, Italy. This image is in the public domain

- Secco fresco refers to painting an image on the surface of a dry plaster wall. This medium requires a binder since the pigment is not mixed into the wet plaster. Egg tempera is the most common binder used for this purpose. It was common to use secco fresco over buon fresco murals in order to repair damage or make changes to the original.
- Leonardo Da Vinci's painting of *The Last Supper* (below) was done using secco fresco.



Leonardo Da Vinci, The Last Supper, 1495–98, dry fresco on plaster. Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan. This image is in the public domain

#### 4.Oil

- Oil paint is the most versatile of all the painting media.
- It uses pigment mixed with a binder of linseed oil. Linseed oil can also be used as the vehicle, along with mineral spirits or turpentine.
- Oil painting was thought to have developed in Europe during the fifteenth century, but recent research on murals found in Afghanistan caves show oil based paints were used there as early as the seventh century.
- Some of the qualities of oil paint include a wide range of pigment choices, its ability to be thinned down and applied in almost transparent glazes as well as used straight from the tube (without the use of a vehicle), built up in thick layers called impasto. You can see it below in Van Gogh's paintings.
- One drawback to the use of impasto is that over time the body of the paint can split, leaving networks of cracks along the thickest parts of the painting. Because oil paint dries slower than other media, it can be blended on the support surface with meticulous detail. This extended working time also allows for adjustments and changes to be made without having to scrape off sections of dried paint.



Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, oil on canvas, 1889. "[Van Gogh, Starry Night](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

- In Jan Brueghel the Elder's still life oil painting you can see many of the qualities mentioned above.
- The richness of the paint itself is evident in both the resonant lights and inky dark colors of the work.
- The working of the paint allows for many different effects to be created, from the softness of the flower petals to the reflection on the vase and the many visual textures in between.



Jan Brueghel the Elder, Flowers in a Vase, 1599. Oil on wood. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, Germany. Used under GNU Documentation Licensing

### 5. Acrylic

- Acrylic paint was developed in the 1950's and became an alternative to oils.
- Pigment is suspended in an acrylic polymer emulsion binder and uses water as the vehicle. The acrylic polymer has characteristics like rubber or plastic.
- Acrylic paints offer the body, color resonance, and durability of oils without the expense, mess, and toxicity issues of using heavy solvents to mix them. One major difference is the relatively fast drying time of acrylics.
- They are water-soluble, but once dry become impervious to water or other solvents. Moreover, acrylic paints adhere to many different surfaces and are extremely durable. Acrylic impastos will not crack or yellow over time.
- Julie Mehretu uses acrylic paint so she can alternate layers as she works
- She adds drawings between layers during her process.
- Using acrylic allows her to integrate other media in to her work.



Julie Mehretu, *Excerpt (Suprematist Evasion)*, 2003. Ink and acrylic on canvas, 32 x 54". "2011-08-27 San Francisco 013 MOMA, Julie Mehretu - Stadia 1" by Allie\_Caulfield is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

## 6. Watercolor

- Watercolor is the most sensitive of the painting media.
- It reacts to the lightest touch of the artist and can become an over-worked mess in a moment.
- There are two kinds of watercolor media: transparent and opaque. Transparent watercolor operates in a reverse relationship to the other painting media. It is traditionally applied to a paper support, and relies on the whiteness of the paper to reflect light back through the applied color (see below), whereas opaque paints (including opaque watercolors) reflect light off the skin of the paint itself. Watercolor consists of pigment and a binder of gum arabic, a water-soluble compound made from the sap of the acacia tree. It dissolves easily in water.
- John Singer Sargent worked *en plein air*, or outdoors, using the landscape as subject matter. He portrays the brilliance of outdoor light as an integral part in this work.



John Singer Sargent, *Mountain Stream*, c. 1912–14. Watercolor and graphite on off-white wove paper, 13¾ × 21“. [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York](#)

- Opaque watercolor, also called *gouache*, differs from transparent watercolor in that the particles are larger, the ratio of pigment to water is much higher, and an additional, inert, white pigment such as chalk is also present. Because of this, gouache paint gives stronger color than transparent watercolor, although it tends to dry to a slightly lighter tone than when it is applied. Gouache paint doesn't hold up well as impasto, tending to crack and fall away from the surface. It holds up well in thinner applications and often is used to cover large areas with color. Like transparent watercolor, dried gouache paint will become soluble again in water.
- Jacob Lawrence's paintings use gouache to set the design of the composition.
- Large areas of color – including the complements blue and orange, dominate the figurative shapes in the foreground.
- The characteristics of gouache make it difficult to be used in areas of detail.
- Through his placement of the six figures, Lawrence creates a visual rhythm in the composition that includes bridges, breaks, changes, and variations—all part of the translation of his love of jazz into a visual medium.<sup>1</sup>



Jacob Lawrence (American, 1917–2000), *Barber Shop*. Gouache on paper, 1946. 21 1/8 x 29 3/8 in. Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1975.15. Gallery 6 [The Toledo Museum of Art](#)

## 7.Mixed Media

- Traditional boundaries between art media have been blurred as artists explore new ways to express themselves. Mixed media and collage are popular ways of integrating imagery.<sup>3</sup>
- Robert Rauschenberg in his incorporates everyday life items—including anything that caught his imagination, from rubber tires to light bulbs—into his wide-ranging work. In many of his works, like *Bed*, he merged elements of postwar abstract painting with found objects.
- *Bed* is one of Rauschenberg's first combines, a term he coined to describe the works resulting from his technique of attaching found objects to a traditional canvas support. In this work, however, there is no canvas. The artist took a well-worn pillow,

sheet, and quilt, scribbled on them with pencil, splashed them with paint in a style similar to Jackson Pollock's action paintings, and hung the entire ensemble on the wall. <sup>2</sup>



Robert Rauschenberg, *Bed*, 1955. Oil and pencil on pillow, quilt, and sheet on wood supports, 75¼ × 31½ × 8". MoMA, New York.  
 "Robert Rauschenberg, *Bed* (on wall)" by profzucker is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

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### 4.2.1: Videos-painting

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Julie Mehretu: "Mural" | Art21 "Extended Play". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4F9scZ3idM>



Robert Rauschenberg | HOW TO SEE the artist with Sarah Sze. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_nAKiSuti](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_nAKiSuti)

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## 4.3: Alternative Media and Processes

### Overview

- Alternative media break down traditional boundaries between art and life
- In alternative media actions and ideas more important rather than a physical product
- Alternative media can be interactive. For example; performance art sometimes requires audience participation.
- Alternative media often incorporate more than one type of medium; categorization of artworks becomes complicated

### Spotlight Artist: Cai Guo-Qiang

- Cai Guo-Qiang was born in 1957 in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, China, and lives and works in New York.
- He explored the properties of gunpowder in his drawings, leading to the development of his signature explosion events.
- These projects, while poetic and ambitious at their core, aim to establish an exchange between viewers and the larger universe.
- For his work, Cai draws on a wide variety of materials, symbols, narratives, and traditions: elements of feng shui, Chinese medicine and philosophy, images of dragons and tigers, roller coasters, computers, vending machines, and gunpowder. <sup>8</sup>



### Conceptual Art

- Conceptual art is art for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object.
- It emerged as an art movement in the 1960s and the term usually refers to art made from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s.
- Conceptual art can be – and can look like – almost anything. This is because, unlike a painter or sculptor who will think about how best they can express their idea using paint or sculptural materials and techniques, a conceptual artist uses whatever materials and whatever form is most appropriate to putting their idea across – this could be anything from a performance to a written description.<sup>1</sup>

### Marcel Duchamp

- Conceptual art is influenced by the Dada movement and Marcel Duchamp's readymades. We can call Duchamp the father of Conceptual Art.
- The term readymade was first used by French artist Marcel Duchamp to describe the works of art he made from manufactured objects. It has since often been applied more generally to artworks by other artists made in this way<sup>4</sup>.
- The choice of object is itself a creative act. By canceling the 'useful' function of an object, it becomes art.
- The presentation and addition of a title to the object have given it 'a new thought', a new meaning.<sup>5</sup>



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917. Replica (original lost). Porcelain urinal, 12 × 15 × 18", Philadelphia Museum of Art, Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection. "[Marcel Duchamp, Fountain](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

### Joseph Kosuth

- Joseph Kosuth, one of the pioneers of Conceptual art and installation art, has initiated language-based works and appropriation strategies since the 1960s. His work has consistently explored the production and role of language and meaning within art.<sup>2</sup>
- In Joseph Kosuth's work, you see a chair sits alongside a photograph of a chair and a dictionary definition of the word chair. Perhaps all three are chairs, or codes for one: a visual code, a verbal code, and a code in the language of objects, that is, a chair of wood.<sup>3</sup>



Joseph Kosuth. *One and Three Chairs*. 1965. "One and Three Chairs' by Joseph Kosuth" by ToastyKen is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

### Yoko Ono

- Yoko Ono (b. 1933) is a Japanese-born American artist and musician. Ono has been making conceptual works since the 1960s
- The *Wish Trees* were inspired by the Japanese practice of tying prayers to a tree
- This piece relies on the interaction and participation of the viewer. Instructs the viewer to make a wish and tie it to the tree



Yoko Ono, "Wish Tree for Washington D.C." 2007. **Click here to see more images** <https://hirshhorn.si.edu/explore/wish-tree-washington/>. "Yoko Ono wish tree" by Andifeelfine is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

### Performance Art

- In the 1960s and 1970s, artists explored theatrical actions or performances
- Performance art is artworks that are created through actions performed by the artist or other participants, which may be live or recorded, spontaneous or scripted
- The body is the main medium of the artwork.
- Unlike traditional theater, there is rarely an identifiable story.

### Marina Abramovic

- Marina Abramovic is known for performances of extreme bodily endurance
- Every day for three months she sat quietly at a table in the MoMA, NYC
- Visitors sat—one at a time, for as long as they wished—in the opposite chair

- Created a silent “energy dialogue”



Marina Abramović, *The Artist Is Present*, Performance, 3 months. MoMA, New York, 2010. "[Marina Abramović](#)" by [somethingstartedcrazy](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

#### Yoko Ono

- In *Cut Piece*—one of Yoko Ono’s early performance works. The artist sat alone on a stage, dressed in her best suit, with a pair of scissors in front of her.
- The audience had been instructed that they could take turns approaching her and use the scissors to cut off a small piece of her clothing, which was theirs to keep.
- Some people approached hesitantly, cutting a small square of fabric from her sleeve or the hem of her skirt. Others came boldly, snipping away the front of her blouse or the straps of her bra.
- Ono remained motionless and expressionless throughout, until, at her discretion, the performance ended.<sup>6</sup>



Yoko Ono. *Cut Piece*. (Japanese, born 1933). 1964. Performance. "Yoko Ono" by rocor is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

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### 4.3.1: Videos-Alternative Media and Processes

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Cai Guo-Qiang - Drawing with Gunpowder - The Artist's Studio - MOCAtv. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-QIj7E6CR8>



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The Case for Performance Art | The Art Assignment | PBS Digital Studios. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4m\\_uMtf4ZjU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4m_uMtf4ZjU)



Marina Abramović: Live at MoMA. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GD5PBK\\_Bto](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GD5PBK_Bto)

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## 4.4: Sculpture

### Overview

Three-dimensional works of art: Have height, width, and depth. A two-dimensional object is a shape; a three-dimensional object is called a form.

### Venus of Willendorf

Sculpture is any artwork made by the manipulation of materials resulting in a three-dimensional object. The sculpted figure of the [Venus of Berekhat Ram](#), discovered in the Middle East in 1981, dates to 230,000 years BCE. It is the oldest example of artwork known. The crudely carved stone figure will fit in the palm of your hand. Its name derives from the similarity in form with so-called female fertility figures found throughout Europe, some of which date to 25,000 years ago. For example, the form of the *Venus of Willendorf* below shows remarkable skill in its carving, including arms draped over exaggerated breasts, an extended abdomen and elaborate patterning on the head, indicating either a braided hairstyle or type of woven cap. Just as remarkable, the figure has no facial detail to indicate identity. The meaning behind these figures is difficult to put into context because of the lack of any written record about them or other supporting materials.



Venus of Willendorf, c.25,000 BCE. Natural History Museum, Vienna. Image in the public domain

### Approaches to Three Dimensions in Sculpture

#### Freestanding or Sculpture in the Round

- Sculpture can be **freestanding or sculpture in the round**, where the viewer can walk completely around the work to see it from all sides.
- The *Rape of a Sabine* by Giambologna is a freestanding sculpture is designed to be seen from all sides.
- It forms a spiral that draws the viewer around its changing planes.



Giambologna, *Rape of a Sabine*, 1582. Gesso, height 13'8". Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy. "[Abduction of the Sabine women' \(1583\) by Giambologna \(Jean de Boulogne, Douai 1529-Florence 1608\) - Loggia della Signoria in Florence](#)" by [Carlo Raso](#) is marked with [Public Domain Mark 1.0](#).

#### Relief, Bas-Relief, High Relief

- Sculptures can be created in **relief**, where the primary form's surface is raised above the surrounding material, such as the image on a coin.
- *Dying Lioness* relief was found in the North Palace of King Ashurbanipal in Mesopotamia.



*Dying Lioness*, limestone relief from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Assyrian period, c. 650 BCE. [British Museum, London, England](#). "[Lion Hunts of Ashurbanipal, dying lioness](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

- **Bas-relief** (*bas* means "low" in French) refers to a shallow extension of the image from its surroundings

- **High relief** is where the most prominent elements of the composition are undercut and rendered in more than half in the round against the background.
- Rich, animated bas-relief sculpture exists at the Banteay Srei temple near Angor Wat, Cambodia. Here humans and mythic figures combine in depictions from ancient Hindu stories.



Bas-relief sculpture at the temple Banteay Srei, Angor, Cambodia. Tenth century. Sandstone. Image in the public domain.

## Methods of Sculpture

- Subtractive
- Additive

### Subtractive

A sculptor uses a tool to carve, drill, chisel, chip, whittle, or saw away unwanted material.

### Carving

- The most ancient works of art that still exist were made using subtractive methods
- Most were made of stone or ivory
- Worked by chipping, carving, sanding, and polishing
- Mt. Rushmore is one of largest and most famous sculpted portraits
- Borglum searched for a mountain with the right kind of carving stone
- Mostly carved by miners using dynamite
- It shows the image of four US Presidents



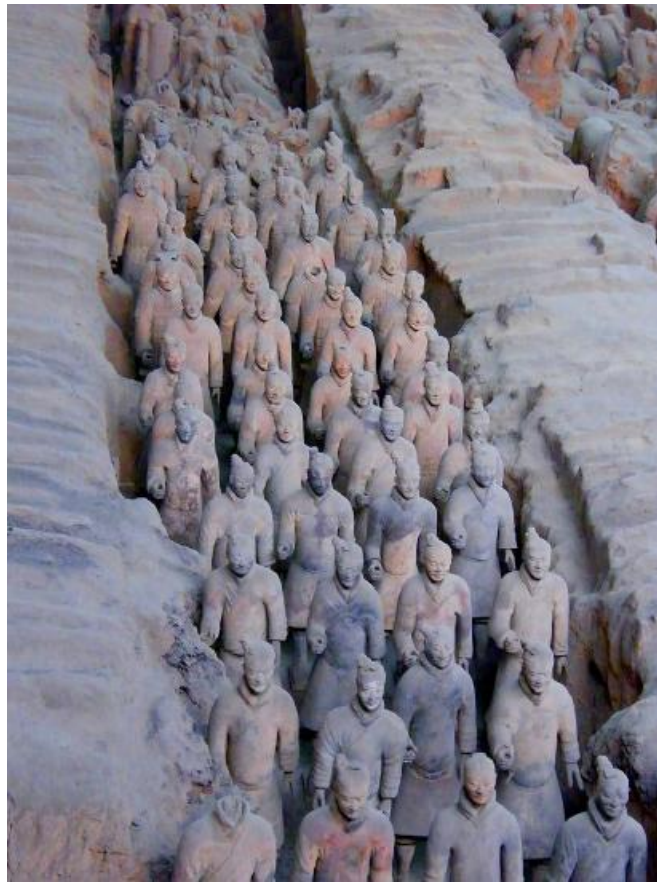
"Mt Rushmore" by [cm195902](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

### Additive

Additive is processes of modeling, casting, or constructing in which sculptors add material to make the final artwork

### Modeling

- Modeling is an additive process; the artist builds up the work by adding material
- Clay or wax is in this category.
- In March 1974, a group of peasants digging a well in drought-parched Shaanxi province in northwest China unearthed fragments of a clay figure—the first evidence of what would turn out to be one of the greatest archaeological discovery of modern times.<sup>2</sup>



The 1974 discovery of buried vaults at Xi'an filled with thousands of terra cotta (Terra-cotta is baked clay) warriors stunned the world. O. Louis Mazzatenta / NGS Image Collection. "[Terra Cotta Soldiers](#)" by [Stanley Zimny](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

### Casting

- This process involves adding a liquid or pliable material to a mold
- First, a model of the final sculpture is made; this is used to make a mold into which a casting liquid is poured
- When it hardens, the result is a detailed replica of the original model <sup>1</sup>
- [Donatello's landmark work](#) – and one of the greatest sculptural works of the early Renaissance – was his bronze statue of David. This work signals the return of the nude sculpture in the round figure, and because it was the first such work like this in over a thousand years, it is one of the most important works in the history of western art. <sup>3</sup>
- For further information; Read [Donatello, David](#), by [DR. HEATHER GRAHAM](#)



Donatello, David, c. 1440-1460, bronze. "[Donatello's David - plaster replica, V&A, right](#)" by [ketrin1407](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

### Other Mediums of Sculpture

Earthworks, assemblage, ready-mades, kinetic sculptures, and installation

#### Earthworks

- This type of art uses the surface of the Earth as material
- The best-known modern earthwork is Robert Smithson's (1938–1973) *Spiral Jetty* in the Great Salt Lake in Utah
- The coiled artwork was made using 6,550 tons of rock and dirt, sourced from dump trucks, to pave a spiraling roadbed out into the salt lake
- The artwork drowns and then rises with a new encrustation of salt crystals <sup>1</sup>



Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970 (Great Salt Lake, Utah) (photo: Gianfranco Gorgoni) ©Holt-Smithson Foundation

#### Assemblage

- A three-dimensional work of art made from combinations of materials including found objects or non-traditional art materials.<sup>4</sup>
- To create this sculpture, Nevelson stacked boxes against a wall and filled each compartment with found wooden scraps including moldings, dowels, spindles, and furniture parts. She then covered the entire assemblage with black paint, both

unifying the composition and obscuring the individual objects. She once explained her fascination with the color black: "It wasn't a negation of color. It was an acceptance. Because black encompasses all colors." The towering geometric construction plays with flatness and recession, straight lines and curves, overlaps and vacancies.<sup>5</sup>



Louise Nevelson, Big Black (1963). "[Louise Nevelson, Big Black \(1963\)](#)" by [smallcurio](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

## Readymades

- The term readymade was first used by French artist Marcel Duchamp to describe the works of art he made from manufactured objects. It has since often been applied more generally to artworks by other artists made in this way<sup>6</sup>
- There are three rules for readymade artworks; 1-The choice of object is itself a creative act. 2-By canceling the 'useful' function of an object, it becomes art. 3-The presentation and the addition of a title to the object have given it 'a new thought', a new meaning.<sup>6</sup>



Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917. "[Marcel Duchamp, Fountain](#)" by [profzucker](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

## Kinetic Sculpture

- Sculpture that moves is called kinetic sculpture
- [Alexander Calder's monumental mobile](#) moves solely on the air currents in the National Gallery of Art East Building's Central Court. The sculptor originally intended the work to have a motor, but the use of advanced, lightweight materials made this unnecessary.<sup>7</sup>
- [For more information "WHO IS ALEXANDER CALDER?" by Tate Museum.](#)



"Black Spray (1956) - Alexander Calder (1898 - 1976)" by [pedrosimoes7](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

## Installation Art

**Installation art** utilizes multiple objects, often from various mediums, and takes up entire spaces. It can be generic or site-specific. Because of their relative complexity, installations can address aesthetic and narrative ideas on a larger scale than traditional sculpture. Its genesis can be traced to the Dada movement, ascendant after World War I and which predicated a new aesthetic by its unconventional nature and ridicule of established tastes and styles. Sculpture came off the pedestal and began to transform entire rooms into works of art. With installation art, the viewer is surrounded by and can become part of the work itself.

## Dan Flavin

- Dan Flavin is one of the first artists to explore the possibilities of light as a sculptural medium.
- Since the 1960s his work has incorporated fluorescent bulbs of different colors and in various arrangements.
- Moreover, he takes advantage of the wall space the light is projected onto, literally blurring the line between traditional sculpture and the more complex medium of installation.



Dan Flavin, *untitled*, 1970. Installation view, David Zwirner, Paris, 2019. "dan flavin" by Dean Hochman is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

### Sarah Sze

- Sarah Sze is an American artist widely recognized for challenging the boundaries of painting, installation, and architecture.
- Sze's sculptural practice ranges from slight gestures discovered in hidden spaces to expansive installations that scale walls and colonize architectures.
- *Triple Point (Pendulum)* was first exhibited at the 55th Venice Biennale, where Sze represented the United States in 2013. The title is borrowed from the term "the triple point of water," a reference to the state at which water can coexist simultaneously in three forms: steam, ice, and liquid. Gathering the objects from the world around us, Sze creates a sculpture in a state of flux, hovering between many forms at once.<sup>10</sup>
- Sarah Sze's *Triple Point (Pendulum)*. 2013 at MoMA

### Rachel Whiteread

- British artist Rachel Whiteread's installation *Embankment* from 2005 fills an entire exhibition hall with casts made from various sized boxes.
- At first appearance a snowy mountain landscape navigated by the viewer is actually a gigantic nod to the idea of boxes as receptacles of memory towering above and stacked around them, squeezing them towards the center of the room.



Rachel Whiteread, *Embankment*, 2005. Source: Wikipedia, licensed through Creative Commons

### Olafur Eliasson

- Olafur Eliasson (Icelandic: *Ólafur Elíasson*; born 5 February 1967) is an Icelandic–Danish artist known for sculptured and large-scale installation art employing elemental materials such as light, water, and air temperature to enhance the viewer's experience.



[Light Installations](#) / [Art about global warming](#), [Art created in 2003](#), [Art in London](#), [community](#), [Light and Space](#), [Olafur Eliasson](#), [Tate Modern](#), [Turbine Hall](#)

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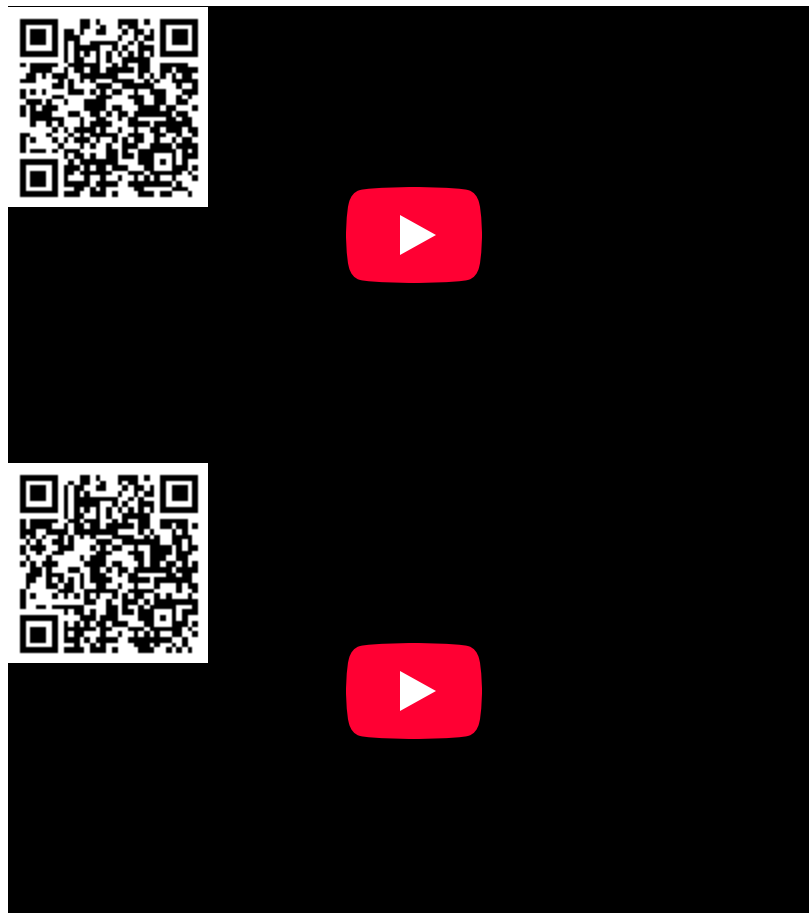
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### 4.4.1: Videos- Sculpture

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Nude Woman (Venus of Willendorf), c. 28,000-25,000 B.C.E., Limestone, 4 1/4" high (Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna).  
Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENAZqOoOVaI>



How the sculptor of Mount Rushmore started off in a remote corner of Idaho. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-Nl8T1sDw0>



Terracotta Army: The greatest archaeological find of the 20th century - BBC News [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c\\_ADqshdSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c_ADqshdSA)



Donatello, David, bronze, late 1420s to the 1460s, likely the 1440s (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence) . Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kUUJJV\\_MNA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kUUJJV_MNA)



Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, 1970, Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake, Utah, 1500 (if unwound) x 15 foot spiral of basalt, sand, and soil  
©Holt-Smithson Foundation Speakers: Dr. Steven Zucker and Dr. Beth Harris. Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrbNsHs7ptE>



Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917/1964, porcelain urinal, paint, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker. Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmjSUyyc-3M>



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Light Tree : Interactive Dan Flavin by HYBE (2011). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWo2PudGkpY>



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Olafur Eliasson interview: Retrospective opens at Tate Modern | Architecture | Dezeen. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaYdmuG\\_0Rw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaYdmuG_0Rw)

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## 4.5: Photography

### Overview

The word photography derives from Greek, “**writing with light**”. Camera obscura (Latin for dark room) used for centuries as an aid to drawing. In the 1800s, inventors found ways to make images permanent (fixed); Daguerreotype, Calotype, Cyanotype. Invention of digital cameras c. 1980s.

### EARLY DEVELOPMENT

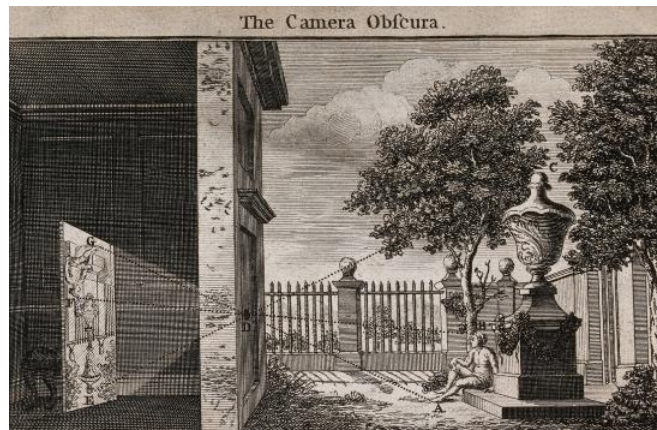
#### The Birth of Photography

- Although the principle of the camera was known in antiquity, the actual chemistry needed to register an image was not available until the nineteenth century.
- Artists from the Renaissance onwards used a camera obscura (Latin for dark chamber), or a small hole in the wall of a darkened box that would pass light through the hole and project an upside-down image of whatever was outside the box. However, it was not until the invention of a light sensitive surface by Frenchman Joseph Nicéphore Niépce that the basic principle of photography was born.
- From this point the development of photography largely related to technological improvements in three areas, speed, resolution and permanence. The first photographs, such as Niepce’s famous *View from the Window at Gras* (1826) required a very slow speed (a long exposure period), in this case about eight hours, obviously making many subjects difficult, if not impossible, to photograph. Taken using a camera obscura to expose a copper plate coated in silver and pewter, Niepce’s image looks out of an upstairs window, and part of the blurry quality is due to changing conditions during the long exposure time, causing the resolution, or clarity of the image, to be grainy and hard to read. An additional challenge was the issue of permanence, or how to successfully stop any further reaction of the light-sensitive surface once the desired exposure had been achieved. Many of Niepce’s early images simply turned black over time due to continued exposure to light. This problem was largely solved in 1839 by the invention of hypo, a chemical that reversed the light sensitivity of paper.



Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, *The Artist's Studio / Still Life with Plaster Casts*, 1837, daguerreotype (photography), 6.5 inches by 8.5 inches (public domain)

#### Camera obscura



*Optics: the principle of the camera obscura*, 1752. Engraving, 3¾ × 6½". Public Domain Mark

- Photography is a controversial fine art medium, simply because it is difficult to classify—is it an art or a science? Nineteenth-century photographers struggled with this distinction, trying to reconcile aesthetics with improvements in technology.
- The first attempts to capture an image were made from a camera obscura, used since the 16th century.
- The device consists of a box or small room with a small hole in one side that acts as a lens.
- Light from an external scene passes through the hole and strikes the opposite surface inside where it is reproduced upside-down, but with color and perspective preserved.
- The image is usually projected onto paper adhered to the opposite wall, and can then be traced to produce a highly accurate representation. Experiments in capturing images on film had been conducted in Europe since the late 18th century.

#### Chemically Fixing the Image

- Using the camera obscura as a guide, early photographers found ways to chemically fix the projected images onto plates coated with light-sensitive materials.
- Moreover, they installed glass lenses in their early cameras and experimented with different exposure times for their images.
- By modern standards, nineteenth-century photography can appear rather primitive. While the stark black and white landscapes and unsmiling people have their own austere beauty, these images also challenge our notions of what defines a work of art.
- View from the Window at Le Gras is one of the oldest existing photographs, taken in 1826 by French inventor Joseph Niepce using a process he called heliography (“helio” meaning sun and “graph” meaning write).
- The exposure for the image took eight hours, resulting in the sun casting its light on both sides of the houses in the picture.
- Further developments resulted in apertures—thin circular devices that are calibrated to allow a certain amount of light onto the exposed film. Apertures allowed photographers better control over their exposure times.



Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, *View from the Window at Le Gras*, c. 1826. Gernsheim Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. Public domain

### Daguerreotypes

- Photographers after Niepce experimented with a variety of techniques. Louis Daguerre invented a new process he dubbed a daguerrotype in 1839, which significantly reduced exposure time and created a lasting result, but only produced a single image.



William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Open Door*, 1844, Salted paper print from paper negative. Public domain

- During the 1830's Louis Daguerre, having worked with Niepce earlier, developed a more reliable process to capture images on film by using a polished copper plate treated with silver.
- He termed the images made by this process "Daguerreotypes".
- They were sharper in focus and the exposure times were shorter.
- His photograph *Boulevard du Temp* from 1838 is taken from his studio window overlooking a busy Paris street. Still, with an exposure of ten minutes, none of the moving traffic or pedestrians (One exception. See if you can find it!) stayed still long enough to be recorded.



Louis Daguerre, Boulevard du Temps, 1838. Image in the public domain

### Collodion

The collodion method was introduced in 1851. This process involved fixing a substance known as gun cotton onto a glass plate, allowing for an even shorter exposure time (3–5 minutes), as well as a clearer image.

The big disadvantage of the collodion process was that it needed to be exposed and developed while the chemical coating was still wet, meaning that photographers had to carry portable darkrooms to develop images immediately after exposure. Both the difficulties of the method and uncertain but growing status of photography were lampooned by Honore Daumier in his *Nadar Elevating Photography to the Height of Art* (1862). Nadar, one of the most prominent photographers in Paris at the time, was known for capturing the first aerial photographs from the basket of a hot air balloon. Obviously, the difficulties in developing a glass negative under these circumstances must have been considerable.

### Calotypes

- At the same time in England, William Henry Fox Talbot was experimenting with other photographic processes.
- He was creating photogenic drawings by simply placing objects (mostly botanical specimens) over light sensitive paper or plates, then exposing them to the sun.
- By 1844 he had invented the calotype; a photographic print made from a negative image.
- In contrast, Daguerreotypes were single, positive images that could not be reproduced. Talbot's calotypes allowed for multiple prints from one negative, setting the standard for the new medium.
- Though Daguerre won the race to be first in releasing his photographic process, Talbot's negative to positive process would eventually become the dominant process.



William Henry Fox Talbot, *Oak Tree in Winter*. Left: Calotype, c. 1842–43; and Right: salted paper print, c. 1892–93. Public domain

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## Impact of Photography on Other Media

- The advent of photography caused a realignment in the use of other two-dimensional media.
- The photograph was now in direct competition with drawing, painting and printmaking.
- The camera turns its gaze on the human narrative that stands before it. The photograph gave (for the most part), a realistic and unedited view of our world.
- In its early beginning, photography was considered to offer a more “true” image of nature because it was created mechanically, not by the subjective hand of an artist. Its use as a tool for documentation was immediate, which gave the photo a scientific role to play.
- The sequential, instantaneous exposures by Eadweard Muybridge helped to understand human and animal movement, but also highlighted that photography could be used to expand human vision, imaging something that could not be seen with the naked eye.
- The relative immediacy and improved clarity of the photographic image quickly pitted the camera against painting in the genre of portraiture.
- Before photography, painted portraits were afforded only to the wealthy and most prominent members of society. They became symbols of social class distinctions. Now portraits became available to individuals and families from all social levels.

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### Photography as an Art

- It wasn't long before photographers recognized the aesthetic value of a photograph.
- As a new medium, photography began the march towards being considered a high form of art.
- Alfred Stieglitz understood this potential, and as a photographer, editor and gallery owner, was a major force in promoting photography as an art form.
- He led in forming the Photo Secession in 1902, a group of photographers who were interested in defining the photograph as an art form in itself, not just by the subject matter in front of the lens. Subject matter became a vehicle for an emphasis on composition, lighting and textural effects.
- His own photographs reflect a range of themes. *The Terminal* (1892) is an example of “straight photography”: images from the everyday taken with smaller cameras and little manipulation.
- In *The Terminal* Stieglitz captures a moment of bustling city street life on a cold winter day. The whole cold, gritty scene is softened by steam rising off the horses and the snow provides highlights. But the photo holds more than formal aesthetic value.

- The jumble of buildings, machines, humans, animals and weather conditions provides a glimpse into American urban culture straddling two centuries. Within ten years from the time this photo was taken horses will be replaced by automobiles and subway stations will transform a large city's movement into the twentieth century.

## Photojournalism and photography's many subject placements

Photography is a medium that has multiple subject placements.

- It is used as an art medium, in journalism, in advertising, the fashion industry, and we use it to personally document our lives.
- It is one, if not the most, pervasive form of documentation in the world.
- These multiple subject placements make it a complex phenomena to analyze.
- The news industry was fundamentally changed with the invention of the photograph. Although pictures were taken of newsworthy stories as early as the 1850's, the photograph needed to be translated into an engraving before being printed in a newspaper.
- It wasn't until the turn of the nineteenth century that newspaper presses could copy original photographs. Photos from around the world showed up on front pages of newspapers defining and illustrating stories, and the world became smaller as this early mass medium gave people access to up to date information...with pictures!

Photojournalism is a particular form of journalism that creates images in order to tell a news story and is defined by these three elements:

1. **Timeliness** — the images have meaning in the context of a recently published record of events.
  2. **Objectivity** — the situation implied by the images is a fair and accurate representation of the events they depict in both content and tone.
  3. **Narrative** — the images combine with other news elements to make facts relatable to the viewer or reader on a cultural level.
  4. As visual information, news images help in shaping our perception of reality and the context surrounding them.
- Photographs taken by Mathew Brady and Timothy O'Sullivan during the American Civil War (below) gave sobering witness to the carnage it produced. Images of soldiers killed in the field help people realize the human toll of war and desensitize their ideas of battle as being particularly heroic.



"The Harvest of Death" Union dead on the battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, photographed July 5–6, 1863. Image in Public Domain. Available through US Library of Congress

- Photojournalism's "Golden Age" took place between 1930 and 1950, coinciding with advances in the mediums of radio and television.
- Dorothea Lange was employed by the federal government's Farm Security Administration to document the plight of migrant workers and families dislocated by the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression in America during the 1930's. Migrant Mother, Florence Owens Thompson, Nipomo Valley, California is an iconic image of its hardships and the human resolve to survive.
- Like O'Sullivan's civil war photos, Lange's picture puts a face on human tragedy. Photographs like this helped win continued support for President Franklin Roosevelt's social aid programs.



Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, 1936. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The Alfred and Ingrid Lenz Harrison Fund

[Minneapolis Institute of Arts \(Minneapolis, MN, USA\)](#)

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#### Sources

1. Debra J. DeWitte, Ralph M. Larmann, and M. Kathryn Shields. *Gateways to Art: Understanding the Visual Arts*, Third Edition.

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### 4.5.1: Videos-Photography

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How to Transform a Room into a Camera Obscura. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvWX6-0\\_VHU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvWX6-0_VHU)



Early Photography: Making Daguerreotypes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0Ambe4FwQk>



Slices of Time: Eadweard Muybridge's Cinematic Legacy. Eadweard Muybridge is remembered today for his pioneering photographic studies of motion, which ultimately led to the development of cinema. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>



The first modern photograph? Alfred Stieglitz, The Steerage. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWcPi8Iwf08>

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## 4.6: Architecture

### Overview

Architecture is an art form that reflects how we present ourselves across the earth's landscape, and, like other expressive mediums, it changes with styles, technologies, and cultural adaptations. Architecture not only provides worldly needs of shelter, workspace, and storage but also represents human ideals in buildings like courthouses and government buildings and manifestations of the spirit in churches and cathedrals. Traditional architecture has survived thousands of years in one form or another, while contemporary design offers new approaches in how we use materials and technology to shape the look of our environment.

### Early Developments in Building Design and Techniques Methods

- The basic methods of building design and construction have been used for thousands of years. Stacking stones, laying brick, or lashing wood together in one form or another are still used today in all parts of the world. But over the centuries, innovations in methods and materials have given new expression to architecture and the human footprint on the landscape. We can look to historical examples for clues that give context to different style periods.
- In western culture, one of the earliest settlements with permanent structures was discovered at Catalhoyuk in Turkey (pictured below). The rich soil that surrounds the settlement indicates the inhabitants relied in part on farming. Dated to about 7500 BCE, the dwellings are constructed from dried mud and brick and show wooden support beams spanning the ceilings. The design of the settlement incorporates a cell-like structure of small buildings either sharing common walls or separated by a few feet. The roofs are flat and were used as pathways between buildings.



Restoration of interior, Catalhoyuk, Turkey. Image licensed under Creative Commons.

- A significant advance came with the development of the **post and lintel** system. With this, a system of posts –either stone or wood – are placed at intervals and spanned by beams at the tops. The load is distributed down the posts to allow for areas of open space between them. Its earliest use is seen at *Stonehenge* (below), a prehistoric monument in southern England dating to about 3000 BCE.

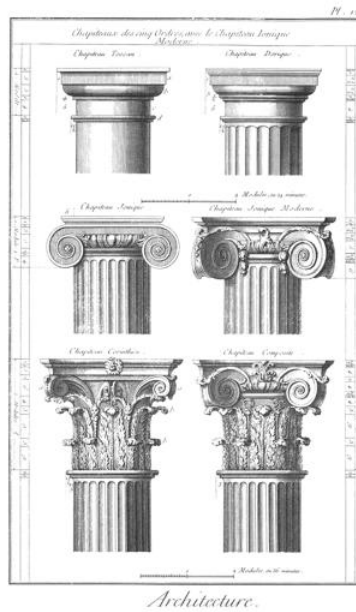


Stonehenge, Wiltshire County, England. Image: David Ball. Image licensed under Creative Commons.



Post and Lintel support in contemporary use. Image by Christopher Gildow. Used with permission.

- A **colonnade** continues the post and lintel method as a series of **columns** and beams enveloping larger areas of space. Colonnades can be free-standing or part of a larger structure. Common in **Egyptian**, Greek and Roman architectural design, their use creates visual rhythm and implies a sense of grandeur. Over time columns became categorized by the capital style at their tops. The smooth and unadorned **Tuscan** and fluted **Doric** columns give way to more elaborate styles: the scrolled **Ionian** and the high relief **Corinthian**.



Greek and Roman capitals: Top row: Tuscan, Doric. Middle Row: Ionic. Bottom Row: Corinthian and a composite Ionic Corinthian. Classical Orders, engraving from the Encyclopédie vol. 18. Public domain.

- The Parthenon, a Greek temple to the mythic goddess Athena, was built in the fifth century BCE in Athens and is part of a larger community of structures in the [Acropolis](#). All are considered pinnacles of classic Greek architecture. Ionic colonnades march across all sides of the Parthenon, the outer boundary of a very ordered interior floor plan.



The Parthenon, Athens, Greece. 447 BCE. Digital image by Kallistos and licensed under Creative Commons

- Another example is the colonnade surrounding St. Peter's Square in the Vatican, Rome.



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Colonnade at St. Peter's Square, the Vatican. 1656–67. Photo by D.F. Malan. Licensed through Creative Commons.

- The colonnade is part of our contemporary surroundings too. Parks and other public spaces use them to the same effect: providing visual and material stability in spanning areas of open space.



Contemporary colonnade. Image: Christopher Gildow. Used with permission.

- The development of the **arch** gave architecture new alternatives to post and lintel construction. Arches appeared as early as the 2nd millennium BC in [Mesopotamian](#) brick architecture. They supply strength and stability to walls without massive posts and beams because their construction minimizes the shear load imposed on them. This meant walls could go higher without compromising their stability and at the same time create larger areas of open space between arches. In addition, the arch gave buildings a more organic, expressive visual element. The Colosseum in Rome (below), built in the first century CE, uses repeated arches to define an imposing but decidedly airy structure. The fact that it's still standing today is testament to the inherent strength of the arch.



The Colosseum, Rome, Italy. First century CE. Photo by David Iliff. Image licensed through Creative Commons.

- Roman aqueducts are another example of how effectively the arch was used. Tall and graceful, the arches support themselves in a colonnade and were used to transport a network of water channels throughout ancient Rome.



Roman aqueduct, c. First century CE. Image in the public domain.

- From the arch came two more important developments: extending an arch in a linear direction formed a **vault**, encapsulating tall, narrow spaces with inverted “U” shaped ceilings. The compressive force of the vault required thick walls on each side to keep it from collapsing. Because of this many vaults were situated underground – essentially tunnels – connecting areas of a larger building or providing covered transport of people, goods and materials throughout the city.
- An arch rotated on its vertical axis creates a **dome**, with its curving organic scoop of space reserved for the tops of the most important buildings. The [Pantheon](#) in Rome sports a dome with an oculus – a round or elliptical opening at the top, that is the massive building’s only light source.



Dome of the Pantheon with oculus, Rome. 126 CE. Image in the public domain.

- These elements combined to revolutionize architectural design throughout Europe and the Middle East in the form of bigger and stronger churches, mosques and even sectarian government buildings. Styles changed with technology. **Romanesque** architecture was popular for nearly three hundred years (800 – 1100 CE). The style is characterized by barrel or groin vault ceilings, thick walls with low exterior buttresses and squared off towers. Buildings reached a point where they struggled to support their own weight. The architectural solution to the problem was a **flying buttress**, an exterior load-bearing column connected to the main structure by a segmented arch or “flyer.”

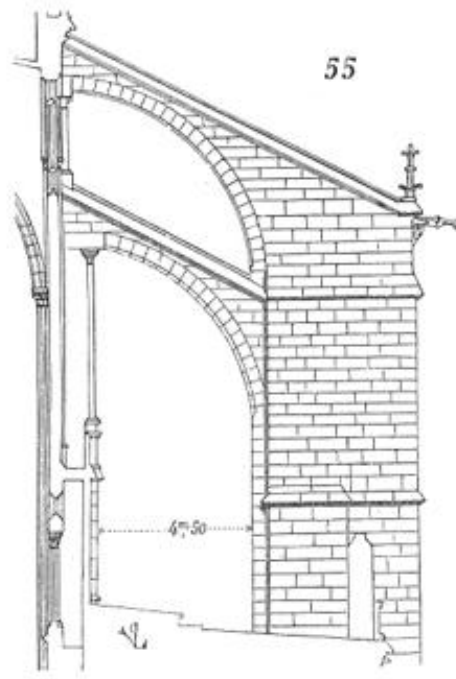


Diagram of a flying buttress from St. Denis basilica, Paris. From the Dictionary of French Architecture from 11th to 16th Century (1856), licensed through Creative Commons.

- Flying buttresses became a kind of exoskeleton that transferred the heavy weight of Romanesque stone roofs through their arches and into the ground, away from the building. They became catalysts for the **Gothic** style based on higher, thinner walls, pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and spired towers. Also, the thinner walls of the Gothic style allowed for more stained glass windows and interior illumination.



Church of St. Denis, France. Seventh–twelfth centuries CE. Image in the public domain

- St. Denis basilica in France (above) is one of the first Gothic-style churches, known for its high vaulted ceilings and extensive use of stained glass windows. The architecture of the church became a symbol of spirituality itself: soaring heights, magnificently embellished interiors and exteriors, elaborate lighting and sheer grandeur on a massive scale.
- The Doges Palace in Venice, Italy (pictured below) housed the political aristocracy of the Republic of Venice for a thousand years. Built in 1309 CE, its rhythmic levels of columns and pointed arches, divided by fractals as they rise, give way to elaborate geometric patterns in the pink brick façade. The ornamental additions at the top edge reinforce the patterns below.



The Doges Palace, 1309 CE, viewed from St. Mark's Square, Venice, Italy. Image by Martti Mustonen and licensed through Creative Commons.

## ARCHITECTURE IN CHINA & THE FAR EAST

- Chinese architecture refers to a style of architecture that has taken shape in East Asia over many centuries. The structural principles of traditional Chinese architecture have remained largely unchanged. Chinese architectural (and aesthetic) design is based on symmetry, a general emphasis on the horizontal and site layouts that reflect a hierarchy of importance. These considerations result in formal and stylistic differences in comparison to the West, and display alternatives in design.
- The Chinese have used stone, brick and wood for centuries. [The Great Wall](#), begun in the 5th century BCE, was intended to keep nomadic invaders out of Northern China. The stone wall covers 5500 miles in its entirety. The rigid material takes on a more flexible appearance as it conforms to the contours of the landscape surrounding it.

## CROSS-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

- As overland and marine trade routes expanded between Eastern and Western civilizations so did the influence of cultural styles in architecture, religion and commerce. The most important of these passages was the Silk Road, a system of routes that developed over hundreds of years across the European and Asian continents. Along this route are buildings that show cross-cultural influences in their design.
- The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem offers different cultural influences manifest in one building: a classic Greek colonnade at the main entrance, the gold dome and central turret supporting it, western style arches and colorful Islamic surface embellishment.



The Dome of the Rock, on the Temple Mount, in the Old City of Jerusalem, Photo Credit Andrew Shiva, Image licensed through Creative Commons

- The Louvre Palace in Paris, once the official royal residence and now one of the world's biggest museums, had its beginnings in the 12th century but didn't achieve its present form until recently. The building's style is French Renaissance – marked by a formal symmetry, horizontal stability and restrained ornamentation. The Louvre executive board chose architect I. M. Pei's glass pyramid design as the defining element for the new main entry in 1989. The choice was a great success: the pyramid further defines the public space above ground and gives natural light and a sense of openness to the underground lobby beneath it.

## THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

- Beginning in the 18th century the Industrial Revolution made fundamental changes in agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and housing. Architecture changed in response to the new industrial landscape. Prior to the late 19th century, the weight of a multistory building had to be supported principally by the strength of its walls. The taller the building, the more strain this placed on the lower sections. Since there were clear engineering limits to the weight such load-bearing walls could sustain, large designs meant massively thick walls on the ground floors, and definite limits on the building's height.



Eiffel Tower, Start of construction of second stage, May 1888. Image in the public domain

- Forged iron and milled steel began to replace wood, brick and stone as primary materials for large buildings. This change is encapsulated in the Eiffel Tower, built in 1889. Standing on four huge arched legs, the iron lattice tower rises narrowly to just over 1000 feet high. The Eiffel Tower not only became an icon for France but for industry itself – heralding a new age in materials, design and construction methods.
- In America, the development of cheap, versatile steel in the second half of the 19th century helped change the urban landscape. The country was in the midst of rapid social and economic growth that made for great opportunities in architectural design. A much more urbanized society was forming and the society called out for new, larger buildings. By the middle of the 19th century downtown areas in big cities began to transform themselves with new roads and buildings to accommodate the growth. The mass production of steel was the main driving force behind the ability to build skyscrapers during the mid 1880s.
- Steel framing was set into foundations of reinforced concrete, concrete poured around a grid of steel rods (re-bar) or other matrices to increase tensile strength in foundations, columns and vertical slabs.

## MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE

- The move to modernism was introduced with the opening of the Bauhaus school in Weimar Germany. Founded in 1919 by the German architect Walter Gropius, Bauhaus (literal translation “house of construction”) was a teaching and learning center for modern industrial and architectural design. Though not a movement or style in itself, Bauhaus instructors and staff reflected different artistic perspectives, all of them born from the modern aesthetic. It was partly the product of a post- World War I search for new artistic definitions in Europe. Gropius’s commitment to the principle of bringing all the arts together with a focus on practical, utilitarian applications. This view rejected the notion of “art for art’s sake”, putting a premium on the knowledge of materials and their effective design. This idea shows the influence of Constructivism, a similar philosophy developed concurrently in Russia that used the arts for social purposes. Bauhaus existed for fourteen years, relocating three times, and influencing a whole generation of architects, artists, graphic and industrial designers and typographers.
- In 1924 Gropius designed the Bauhaus main building in Dessau. Its modern form includes bold lines, an asymmetric balance and curtain walls of glass. It’s painted in neutral tones of white and gray accented by strong primary colors on selected doors.



Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany, 1925-26, Image in public domain

- Frank Lloyd Wright is considered one of the 20th century’s greatest architects. Wright designed buildings, churches, homes and schools, but is best known for his design of Falling Water, a home in the Pennsylvania countryside for Chicago department store owner Edgar Kaufman. His design innovations include unified open floor plans, a balance of traditional and modern materials and the use of cantilevered forms that extends horizontal balance.

- The Guggenheim Museum in New York City is an example of Wright's concern with organic forms and utilization of space. The main element in the design is a spiral form rising from the middle of the cantilevered main structure. Paintings are exhibited on its curved walls. Visitors take the elevator to the top floor and view the works as they travel down the gently sloped hallway. This spiral surrounds a large atrium in the middle of the building and a domed skylight at the top.



Atrium, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Manhattan, New York, 1959, Image in the public domain

## POST MODERN & CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

- Postmodern architecture began as an international style whose first examples are generally cited as being from the 1950s, but did not become a movement until the late 1970s and continues to influence present-day architecture. Postmodernity in architecture is generally thought to be heralded by the return of “wit, ornament and reference” to architecture in response to the formalism of the International Style.
- Michael Graves's Portland Building from 1982 personifies the idea behind postmodernist thought. A reference to more traditional style is evident in the patterned column-like sections. Overt large-scale decorative elements are built into and onto the exterior walls, and contrasts between materials, colors and forms give the building a graphic sense of visual wit.
- We can see how architecture is actively evolving in the contemporary work of Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid. Gehry's work is famous for its rolling and bent organic forms. His gestural, erratic sketches are transformed into buildings through a computer aided design process (CAD). They have roots in postmodernism but lean towards a completely new modern style. They have as much to do with sculpture as they do with architecture. Seattle's Experience Music Project is an example of the complexity that goes into his designs. Its curves, ripples and folds roll across space and the multi-colored titanium panels adorning the exterior accentuate the effect.

## GREEN ARCHITECTURE

- In the last decade there has emerged a strong interest in developing “green” architecture – designs that incorporate ecologically and environmentally sustainable practices in site preparation, materials, energy use and waste systems. Some are simple: buildings oriented to the south or west helps with passive solar heating. Others are more complex: Solar voltaic cells on the roof to generate power to the building. Green roofs are made of sod and other organic material and act as a cooling agent and recycle rainwater too. In addition, technological innovations in lighting, heating and cooling systems have made them more efficient.
- A branch of the Seattle Public Library uses green design. A glass curtain wall on the north side makes use of natural lighting. Overhanging wooden roof beams shades harsh light. The whole structure is nestled under a green roof of sod and over 18,000 low water use plants. Seven skylights on the roof provide more natural lighting.

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## 4.7: Digital Technology and Art of the 21st Century

### Overview

Twenty-first-century art is a burgeoning field of practice, research, and publication, making it an incredibly dynamic field of study. Many important topics have been resonating in the new century and inspiring new thinking and scholarly debate, such as the surge of bio art in response to scientific research in the life sciences, and the critical theory known as relational aesthetics that developed in response to an increase in art that invites viewers' participation and interaction. Other topics that were much-discussed in the late twentieth century remain vital for the analysis of twenty-first-century art and visual culture, including semiotics, post-modernism, and feminism.



Visitors at The Museum of Modern Art in front of Julie Mehretu, *Empirical Construction*, Istanbul, 2003. Ink and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 10' x 15' (304.8 x 457.2 cm). Photo: thatgirl

- Art of the twenty-first century emerges from a vast variety of materials and means. These include the latest electronic technologies, such as digital imaging and the Internet; familiar genres with a long history that continue to be practiced with great vigor, such as painting (see, for example, the work of Julie Mehretu and Shahzia Sikander); and materials and processes once associated primarily with handicrafts, re-envisioned to express new concepts. Many artists regularly and freely mix media and forms, making the choices that best serve their concepts and purposes. Activities vary from spectacular projects accomplished with huge budgets and extraordinary production values to modest endeavors that emphasize process, ephemeral experiences, and a do-it-yourself approach. The notion of influences has also shifted with changes in communications and technology; every location around the world has artists who respond to local geographies and histories as well as the sway of global visual culture.



Wangechi Mutu, Complete Prolapsus of the Uterus, 2004, Glitter, ink, collage on found medical illustration paper, 46 x 31cm

## Computers and digital technology

Like the camera did more than one hundred and fifty years ago, computers and digital technology have revolutionized the visual art landscape. Some artists now use digital technology to extend the reach of creative possibilities. Sophisticated software allows any computer user the opportunity to create and manipulate images and information. From still images and animation to streaming digital content and digital installations, computers have become high tech creative tools.

In a blending of traditional and new media, artist Chris Finley uses digital templates—software-based composition formats—to create [his paintings](#).

The work of German artist Jochem Hendricks combines digital technology and human sight. His eye drawings rely on a computer interface to translate the process of looking into physical drawings.

Digital technology is a big part of the video and motion picture industries with the capability for high definition images, better editing resources and more areas for exploration to the artist.

The camera arts are relatively new mediums to the world of art but their contributions are perhaps the most significant of all. They are certainly the most complex. Like traditional mediums of drawing, painting and sculpture they allow creative exploration of ideas and the making of objects and images. The difference is in their avenue of expression: by recording images and experiences through light and electronics they, on the one hand, narrow the gap between the worlds of the “real” and the “imagined” and on the other offers us an art form that can invent its own reality with the inclusion of the dimension of time. We watch as a narrative unfolds in front of our eyes. Digital technology has created a whole new kind of spatial dimension: cyberspace.

## Globalization

A key feature of the art scene in the twenty-first century (and of many sectors of twenty-first-century life) is the impact of globalization – the accelerating interconnectivity of human activity and information across time and space. Aided by the internet and mass media, awareness of the vitality of contemporary art in localities around the globe has grown exponentially. Anyone with access to the internet can follow developments in Shanghai, Sydney, São Paulo, or Nairobi. Simultaneously the increased movement of artists across borders and oceans has added to the intermixing of influences and artistic vocabularies. For example, Wangechi Mutu, originally from Kenya, pursued further education in South Wales and then in the United States. Her collaged images of women are informed by African tribal arts, 20th-century European and American collage artists, and the latest illustrations from fashion, pornography, and medical sources.

The meaning and consequences of globalization are much debated by scholars. Economically and politically, is globalization a force for growth and freedom in societies everywhere, or does it contribute to further exploitation of developing regions by the wealthy? Does globalization work in different ways in different localities?

Regarding globalization and art, do practices in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere challenge the traditional assumptions and value judgments that are the basis of the Western canon? Are Western institutions rethinking that canon or simply adding art from other places to their rosters in a token and uncritical gesture of inclusivity? How do curated exhibitions that address themes of globalization represent artists from various parts of the world? The expanding art market and the proliferation of biennials and art fairs helped a select group of artists from every continent to gain an international presence; but have the underlying structure and values of the art market changed otherwise?

## Visual Culture

In the twenty-first century visual culture has grown as a recognized interdisciplinary field of study, taking a multifaceted approach to understanding how images of all types communicate and participate in the construction of identity, gender, class, power relationships, and other social and political meanings and values. Medicine, science, politics, consumer culture, and religion and spirituality are some of the arenas that visual culture studies examine along with art. Visual culture scholars analyze film, television, graphic novels, fashion design, and other forms of popular culture in addition to established fine art media such as painting, and they draw upon many methodologies and theories, including semiotics, sociology, psychoanalysis, reception theory, feminism, and the concept of the gaze, to name a few.

Just as visual culture scholars are examining images and media of all types so, too, are twenty-first-century artists drawing inspiration, imagery, materials, and concepts from diverse areas of culture, moving well beyond influences from the history of fine art and design. The world of professional sports and fanatic fans has been a topic for Paul Pfeiffer, while the commercial television industry has informed various video installations by Christian Jankowski.

Most contemporary artists do not draw rigid distinctions between high art and popular culture. For instance, a number of contemporary artists embrace traditional techniques of fiber art but use them to create unorthodox forms or address current social and political issues. Along these lines, Ghada Amer has used thread to embroider on canvas repeated motifs of nude women engaged in sexual acts, then partially obscured the embroidered images with gestural painted brushstrokes. Her themes include the expression and repression of female sexuality and eroticism in both Western and Islamic societies. Another example of intermixing visual cultures is the complex array of interactions between science and contemporary art, with many artists engaging with scientific imagery and ideas in their practice. For example, Wim Delvoye's ongoing series called [Cloaca](#) imagines humans as cyborgs, representing the human digestive system as a kind of biomechanical contraption. Finally, many twenty-first-century artists are deeply affected by their immersion in global visual culture, which is now made vividly present through online networks. Many artists maintain a personal website, and some create art expressly for dissemination through social media. As always, new technologies provide new opportunities and challenges.

## Public and Participatory Art

Public art was a well-established genre by the late twentieth century, attracting both traditional and experimental practitioners. Public art in the twenty-first century has expanded even more as a field of activity in which creative investigation can take place. In addition to continuing familiar forms such as site-specific monuments, murals, graffiti, and collaborations between artists, engineers, and architects, public art encompasses new purposes, forms, and locations, including pop-up art shops, street parades, and online projects. Public artists in the twenty-first century might use established approaches such as installation and performance but introduce new variations. For instance, it is now common for artists to hire other people, sometimes with special skills, to undertake performances on their behalf. In this vein, Vanessa Beecroft hired fashion models for performances, and the collaborative artists Allora & Caladzilla directed professional athletes as performers in some of their installations.

A pronounced tendency in the twenty-first century has been art that is participatory, in which the social interactions prompted by a work become its content. Often called relational art, the work literally engages the public in some way. For instance, Carsten Höller has installed giant slides in museums for visitors to slide down, and Rirkrit Tiravanija has prepared Thai food and served it to gallery goers. Artists attracted by the immediacy and connectivity of globally networked media often create online projects that invite social interaction. Relational aesthetics has developed (and been contested) as a critical theory for analyzing and evaluating such undertakings. Key questions in these debates include: Does it matter if the social interactions prompted by such works promote a better world or are conviviality and entertainment sufficient goals? To what extent should the physical products of relational art (such as Höller's slides) be evaluated aesthetically as well as for their social effects?

The twenty-first century is just beginning – issues and ideas are evolving rapidly and new artists are constantly gaining attention and influence.

\*The content was first developed for Oxford Art Online and appears courtesy of Oxford University Press. [Visit to learn more](#) about contemporary art and see a list of significant twenty-first-century artists.

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## 4.8: Summary

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In this module we discussed the following:

- the basic techniques of drawing, painting, photography, and printmaking;
- additive and subtractive sculpture techniques;
- methods and materials in building design;
- techniques and challenges of film and video;
- and the growing impact of computers and digital tools on art making.

The creative process is a kind of critical thinking (Sayre, 3). It involves visual research, trial and error, being open to new information, evaluating results, and being self-critical. The medium or mixed-media are the raw materials that an artist uses to make their idea come to life.

Each medium has its own unique visual effects or characteristics. In the viewer context we read these unique visual effects and draw specific meanings from them. Photography, for example, has the ability to render a selection of life in such realistic detail that it is used in non-artistic practices for evidence collection. Even though Photoshop has become part of our vernacular in the Western world, and we know photographs can be manipulated, if we were to see a photograph of a courtroom scene our first inclination would be that it is a factual record of that moment, as opposed to an artist's drawn rendering, which has a very different set of visual effects.

### Works Cited

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## 4.9: Overview

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### Overview:

- This module will discuss some of the major materials, processes, and techniques used in making art.
- You will learn to describe the basic techniques of drawing, painting, photography, video, sculpture, printmaking, and alternative processes
- You will distinguish between additive and subtractive sculpture techniques.

### Introduction

Creating a work of art is a process. When an artist chooses to work with a certain medium or use specific techniques, those choices are some of the most defining parameters of the entire creative process.

Let's return to the caves at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc, where, roughly 35,000 years ago, humans transformed the space into a kind of canvas. Those prehistoric artists were using the technologies available to them—charred bones or charcoal from the fire. It's surprising how the nature of the work surface figures into the end result, too. In the same way that a painter might select a particular type of brush for the kind of brushstroke it will produce, the prehistoric artists made thoughtful choices about where to place specific renderings of animals so they could use the natural contours and fissures in the cave rocks to create bas-relief giving a horn, a hump, or a haunch realistic depth (Thurman).

If art is a process of seeing, imagining, and making, as Henry Sayre explains, then media and techniques give voice to the imagination (3). All media bring specific visual effects that affect how we interpret them as viewers. As you work through the content in this section, consider how the visual effects of a figure drawn by hand with charcoal are different from a figure drawn with a digital vector-based drawing program. How would an artist's drawn rendering of a scene in a courtroom be different from a photograph of the same thing?

OK, let's get started!

### Sources

1. Sayre, Henry. *A World of Art*, Sixth edition. Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010. Print.
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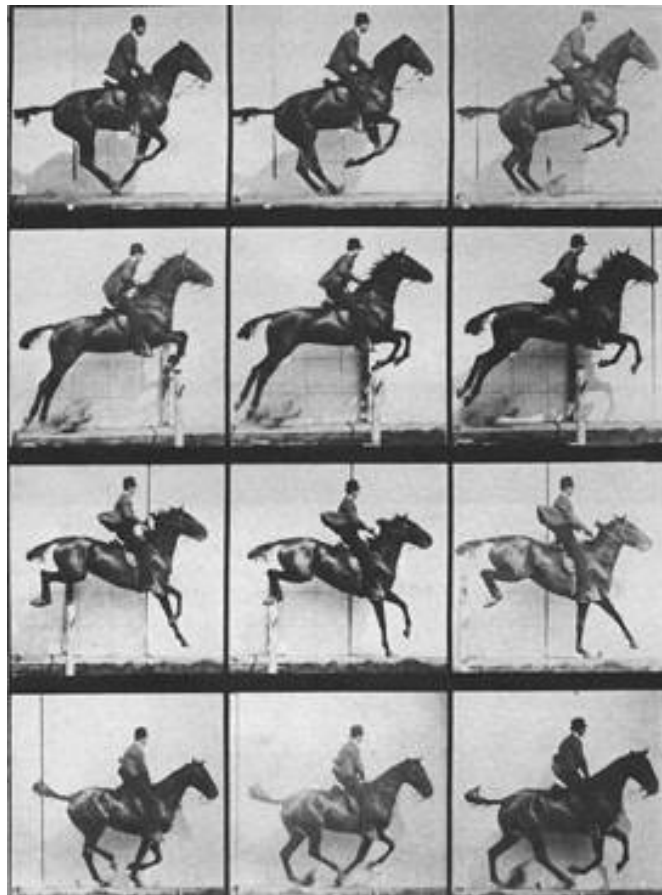
## 4.10: Time-Based Media

### Overview

This chapter covers the medium of the moving image in its various formats, including film and video. Interactive technology, for example, video games and serial television, is addressed as a distinct artistic product that also incorporates moving imagery. As soon as photography was invented, people sought to extend its capacity to capture motion.

### Eadweard Muybridge

- With traditional film, what we see as a continuous moving image is actually a linear progression of still photos on a single reel that pass through a lens at a certain rate of speed and are projected onto a screen.
- Eadweard Muybridge was an English photographer known for his pioneering work in photographic studies of motion, and early work in motion-picture projection.



Eadweard Muybridge, Sequence of a Horse Jumping, 1904. Image is in the public domain

### Video Art

- **Video art**, first appearing in the 1960s and 70s, uses magnetic tape to record image and sound together.
- Video art allows artists to work with time-based media at less expense than film requires
- However, video art often suffers from the threat of rapid technological change, quickly rendering media extinct.
- Unlike filmmakers, video artists frequently combine their medium with installation, an art form that uses entire rooms or other specific spaces, to achieve effects beyond mere projection.

### Nam June Paik

- South Korean video artist Nam June Paik made breakthrough works that comment on culture, technology and politics. By the mid 1960s Paik altered TVs displayed images altered by magnets combined with video feedback and other technologies that

produced shifted patterns of shape and color. He produced large scale video installations.

- He exhibited modified or “prepared” television sets that upset the traditional TV-watching experience. One example is *Magnet TV*, in which an industrial magnet is placed on top of the TV set, distorting the broadcast image into abstract patterns of light.<sup>2</sup>



Nam June Paik, *Magnet TV*, 1965, modified black-and-white television set and magnet (Whitney Museum of American Art) ©  
Nam June Paik Estate



Nam June Paik – 'My Crazy Uncle' | TateShots. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RE1ueYnSVc>



Nam June Paik's "Electronic Superhighway" - American Art Moments. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_6HAMtqW3Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_6HAMtqW3Y)



Preserving Nam June Paik's Electronic Superhighway <https://youtu.be/G9M8MEJlaFI>

#### Bill Viola

- He has been instrumental in the establishment of video as a vital form of contemporary art, and in so doing has helped to greatly expand its scope in terms of technology, content, and historical reach.
- Contemporary video artist Bill Viola creates work that is more painterly and physically dramatic, often training the camera on figures within a staged set or spotlighted figures in dark surroundings as they act out emotional gestures and expressions in slow motion.<sup>1</sup>



Bill Viola the crossing 1996. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bg6wW3EOY94>



Bill Viola - The Deluge. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3VoMuwBPtAE>



Bill Viola - The Raft, May 2004 (excerpt). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ili9pvlxdk>

Sources

1. Bill Viola.

[https://www.billviola.com/biograph.htm#:~:text=Bill%20Viola%20\(b.,%2C%20content%2C%20and%20historical%20reach](https://www.billviola.com/biograph.htm#:~:text=Bill%20Viola%20(b.,%2C%20content%2C%20and%20historical%20reach)

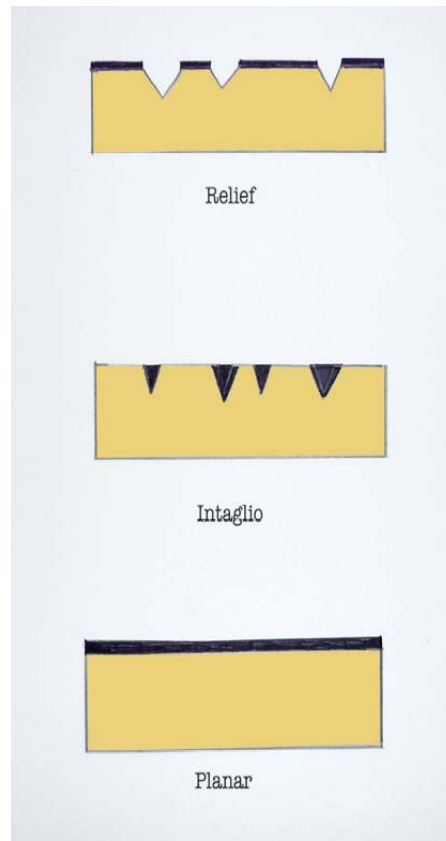
2. Rivers Ryan, Tina. Nam June Paik, Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii

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## 4.11: Printmaking

- **Printmaking** uses a transfer process to make multiples from an original image or template.
- The multiple images are printed in an **edition**, with each print signed and numbered by the artist.
- All printmaking media result in images reversed from the original. Print results depend on how the template (or **matrix**) is prepared.
- There are three basic techniques of printmaking: **relief, intaglio and planar**. You can get an idea of how they differ from the cross-section images below, and view how each technique works from this site at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Cross section of printmaking media. Christopher Gildow. Used with permission

The black areas indicate the inked surface.

- A **relief print**, such as a woodcut or linoleum cut, is created when the areas of the matrix (plate or block) that are to show the printed image are on the original **surface**; the parts of the matrix that are to be ink-free having been cut away, or otherwise removed.
- The printed surface is in relief from the cut away sections of the plate. Once the area around the image is cut away, the surface of the plate is rolled up with ink.
- Paper is laid over the matrix, and both are run through a press, transferring the ink from the surface of the matrix to the paper.
- The nature of the relief process doesn't allow for lots of detail, but does result in graphic images with strong contrasts. Carl Eugene Keel's *Bar* shows the effects of a woodcut printed in black ink.



Carl Eugene Keel, Bar, 2006. Woodcut print on paper. Licensed by Creative Commons

- Block printing developed in China hundreds of years ago and was common throughout East Asia. The Japanese woodblock print below shows dynamic effects of implied motion and the contrasts created using only one color and black. Ukiyo-e or “floating world” prints became popular in the nineteenth century, even influencing European artists during the Industrial Revolution.
- Relief printmakers can use a separate block or matrix for each color printed or, in **reduction prints** a single block is used, cutting away areas of color as the print develops. This method can result in a print with many colors.



Christopher Gildow, Boathouse, 2007, from the Stillaguamish Series. Reduction woodcut print. Used with permission

- **Intaglio** prints such as etchings, are made by incising channels into a copper or metal plate with a sharp instrument called a **burin** to create the image, inking the entire plate, then wiping the ink from the surface of the plate, leaving ink only in the incised channels **below** the surface.
- Paper is laid over the plate and put through a press under high pressure, forcing the ink to be transferred to the paper.
- Examples of the intaglio process include etching and **dry point**: In dry point, the artist creates an image by scratching the burin directly into a metal plate (usually copper) before inking and printing.
- Today artists also use plexiglass, a hard clear plastic, as plates. Characteristically these prints have strong line quality and exhibit a slightly blurred edge to the line as the result of burrs created in the process of incising the plate, similar to clumps of soil laid to the edge of a furrowed trench.
- A fine example of dry point is seen in Rembrandt's [Clump of Trees with a Vista](#). The velvety darks are created by the effect of the burred-edged lines.
- **Etching** begins by first applying a protective wax-based coating to a thin metal plate.
- The artist then scratches an image with a burin through the protective coating into the surface of the metal.
- The plate is then submersed in a strong acid bath, etching the exposed lines. The plate is removed from the acid and the protective coating is removed from the plate.
- Now the bare plate is inked, wiped and printed.
- The image is created from the ink in the etched channels. The amount of time a plate is kept in the acid bath determines the quality of tones in the resulting print: the longer it is etched the darker the tones will be.
- *Correccion* by the Spanish master Francisco Goya shows the clear linear quality etching can produce. The acid bath removes any burrs created by the initial dry point work, leaving details and value contrasts consistent with the amount of lines and the distance between them. Goya presents a fantastic image of people, animals and strange winged creatures. His work often involved biting social commentary. *Correccion* is a contrast between the pious and the absurd.



Francisco Goya, *Correccion*, 1799. Etching on paper. Work is in the public domain

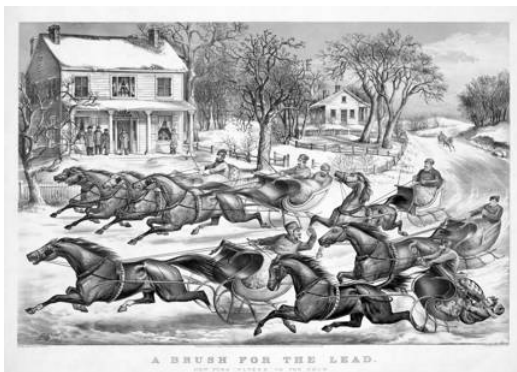
There are many different techniques associated with intaglio, including aquatint, scraping and burnishing.

- **Planar** prints like monoprints are created on the *surface* of the matrix without any cutting or incising.
- In this technique the surface of the matrix (usually a thin metal plate or Plexiglass) is completely covered with ink, then areas are partially removed by wiping, scratching away or otherwise removed to form the image.
- Paper is laid over the matrix, then run through a press to transfer the image to the paper.
- Monoprints (also monotypes) are the simplest and painterly of the printing media. By definition monotypes and monoprints cannot be reproduced in editions. [Kathryn Trigg](#)'s monotypes show how close this print medium is related to painting and drawing.
- **Lithography** is another example of planar printmaking, developed in Germany in the late eighteenth century. "Litho" means "stone" and "graph" means "to draw." The traditional matrix for lithography is the smooth surface of a limestone block.



Lithographic stone is on the left with the negative image. Printed positive image is on the right. Image by Chris73. Licensed under Creative Commons.

- While this matrix is still used extensively, thin zinc plates have also been introduced to the medium. They eliminate the bulk and weight of the limestone block but provide the same surface texture and characteristics. The lithographic process is based on the fact that grease repels water.
- In traditional lithography, an image is created on the surface of the stone or plate using grease pencils or wax crayons or a grease-based liquid medium called [tusche](#). The finished image is covered in a thin layer of gum arabic that includes a weak solution of nitric acid as an etching agent.
- The resulting chemical reaction divides the surface into two areas: the positive areas containing the image and that will repel water, and the negative areas surrounding the image that will be water receptive. In printing a lithograph, the gum arabic film is removed and the stone or metal surface is kept moist with water so when it's rolled up with an oil based ink the ink adheres to the positive (image) areas but not to the negative (wet) areas.
- Because of the media used to create the imagery, lithographic images show characteristics much like drawings or paintings. In *A Brush for the Lead* by Currier and Ives (below), a full range of shading and more linear details of description combine to illustrate a winter's race down the town's main road.



Currier and Ives, *A Brush for the Lead; New York Flyers on the Snow*, 1867. Lithograph Library of Congress. Image is in the public domain.

- **Serigraphy**, also known as **screen printing**, is a third type of planar printing medium.
- Screen printing is a printing technique that uses a woven mesh to support an ink-blocking stencil.
- The attached stencil forms open areas of mesh that transfer ink or other printable materials that can be pressed through the mesh as a sharp-edged image onto a substrate such as paper or fabric.
- A roller or squeegee is moved across the screen stencil, forcing or pumping ink past the threads of the woven mesh in the open areas. The image below shows how a stencil's positive (image) areas are isolated from the negative (non-image) areas.



Silkscreen box and stencil, image by Meul. Licensed through Creative Commons.

- In serigraphy, each color needs a separate stencil. You can watch how this process develops in the accompanying [video](#). Screen printing is an efficient way to print posters, announcements, and other kinds of popular culture images.
- Andy Warhol's silk screens use images and iconography from popular culture.

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## Index

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## Glossary

**2-Dimensional Art:** art that is executed on a two dimensional surface that has length and width; a flat (or nearly flat) surface. These include, but are not limited to, paintings, drawings, and prints.

**3-Dimensional Art:** art that is executed in the three dimensions of length, width, and height. These include, but are not limited to, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, glass, textiles, assembly, and installation.

**4-Dimensional Art:** art that is executed in, and depends upon, both space and time, which is considered the “fourth dimension.” Examples include but are not limited to performance art and video art.

**Abstract:** in art, the property of representing selected essential features of a particular subject instead of relying on objective appearance alone.

**Abstract Expressionism:** or ABEX; this art historical term is specific to a group of painters working in New York after the Second World War. This group includes Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, and Helen Frankenthaler. Their primary approach to painting was gestural, and “all over,” a condition in which no single part of the work is visually predominant.

**Acrylic:** a fast drying water-soluble petroleum based painting medium.

**Actual Texture:** the condition in which texture is created, not represented. Actual texture is the opposite of simulated texture or the illusion of texture. Examples include brushstrokes, impasto, collage, and inclusion.

**Additive Color:** color based on projected light.

**Additive:** a sculptural process in which material is added.

**Afterimage:** the optical sensation that occurs after a visual stimulus is removed. The afterimage is a quickly fading complement of the original stimulus.

**Analogous Color:** a color scheme that uses colors adjacent to an initial point on the color wheel. For example, if an artist chose red for the initial color, then an analogous color scheme would employ the color range that occurs between orange, red, and purple.

**Armature:** a wire or wood substructure used to support a clay sculpture while it is being worked.

**Assembly:** a sculptural process in which disparate materials are combined to form the final artwork.

**Asymmetric:** lacking symmetry.

**Atmospheric Perspective:** the use of color to simulate the illusion of space.

**Axis:** an imaginary line around which objects are arranged.

**Balance:** the property of equality in visual weight.

**Binder:** a transparent fluid used to suspend colored pigment and attach it to a support.

**Brush:** tools used to apply paint to a support, usually hair or fiber attached to a wooden or plastic handle.

**Buon Fresco:** literally, “good fresco.” A mural process in which pigment is painted on and absorbed into wet plaster.

**Calligraphy:** beautiful writing.

**Carving:** a sculptural process in which material is removed to reveal the final artwork.

**Casting:** a sculptural process in which material is substituted to form the final artwork.

**Charcoal:** an art medium made from burned wood used to make dark black marks usually on paper.

**Closed Form:** sculptural forms that are not penetrated by exterior space.

**Color Scheme:** an organized or formulaic approach to the selection of color. For example, Monochromatic (one color), Complementary (opposite colors), and

Analogous (adjacent colors) color schemes.

**Color Temperature:** in visual art, the sensation of “warm” or “cool” relative to a given color. Warm colors tend toward red/orange, while cool colors tend toward blue/white. Every color, when compared to another can be seen to be either more warm or more cool.

**Color:** the sensation caused by differing qualities of light.

**Complementary Color:** colors that when blended together create a neutral gray. On a color wheel, complementary colors appear opposite to one another. Examples of a complementary color pair would be blue and orange or red and green.

**Composition:** the arrangement of visual elements.

**Composite view:** the construction of a human figure from both profile and frontal views, for example, as in ancient Egyptian art.

**Conte Crayons:** in drawing, square sticks of compressed charcoal or pigment and wax or clay.

**Conte:** a mixture of pigment and clay used to make colored marks, usually on paper. Traditionally manufactured in black, white, and sanguine (red) colors.

**Contour:** the exterior boundary of a form.

**Contrast:** areas with a high difference in value, color, texture, or other scale.

**Contrapposto:** an asymmetrical arrangement of the human figure in which the line of the arms and shoulders contrasts with and balances the line of the hips and legs.

**Cool Color:** a color that tends toward blue/white in hue. A cool color can be any color that tends toward blue/white when compared to another color. For example, alizarin crimson is a cool red when compared to cadmium red medium.

**Crosshatching:** intersecting marks that create value on a form.

**deity:** a divinity, a god or goddess.

**Description:** the process of enumerating the various elements of an artwork.

**Design:** a plan for the arrangement of visual elements.

**Drawing:** the process of making marks on a support, often but not always representative of an idea or object.

**Edge:** exterior boundary of a shape.

**Edition:** a series of prints made from a single matrix.

**Electromagnetic Spectrum:** continuous range of radioactive energy by wavelength.

**Elements of Design:** the physical components of visual art.

**Emphasis:** the strategy of directing attention with the use of high contrast.

**Encaustic:** a painting process which uses wax as the binder.

**Figure/Ground Relation:** the figure in front of the ground. Used to specify which objects qualify as figures.

**Figure/Ground Reversal:** ambiguous figure ground relation in which figures can be alternately seen as grounds and vice versa.

**Figure:** a shape that appears in front of a background.

**Expressionism:** one of several art movements of the twentieth century that were concerned with conveying emotional and mental responses through art (German Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, Neo-Expressionism).

**Forced Perspective:** use of perspective to create a distorted or unnatural scale relation.

**Form:** the physical components of visual art.

**Found Objects:** material incorporated into artwork that is not normally considered an artistic medium. Found objects serve the same purpose in

sculpture that magazine cutouts serve in collage.

**Freestanding:** sculpture that can be viewed from all angles.

**Fresco Secco:** the process of painting on dry plaster.

**Fresco:** the process of painting on wet or dry plaster.

**Fugitive:** pigments that change color or become transparent with time or weathering.

**genre:** subjects or scenes of everyday life.

**Geometric:** a shape with mathematically regular contours.

**Gestalt:** intuitive perception of an artwork as a single whole experience.

**Gesture:** direction interpreted as movement.

**Gicleé:** an Ink-Jet print, usually on acid free paper with archival inks.

**Graphite:** a carbon-based mineral mixed with clay to make pencil leads of varying hardness.

**Ground:** the stage on which a figure resides.

**golden ratio:** a relationship of parts achieved when the longer part divided by the smaller part is also equal to the whole length divided by the longer part; the golden ratio in art and architecture provides the most harmonious and visually pleasing proportions.

**Gum Arabic:** a water-soluble resin from the Gum tree used as a binder in watercolor.

**Hard-Edged:** a shape with clearly defined boundaries.

**halo:** usually a circular area of light appearing behind the head of a holy person or creature.

**Height:** vertical distance or measurement.

**High Relief:** sculpture that remains attached to a base, but uses undercut. Opposite of low relief.

**hierarchical arrangement:** where the hierarchy or ranking of people or objects is represented by their different sizes, according to their relative importance.

**Hierarchical proportion:** the condition in which the size of figures is determined by social importance rather than observation.

**Horizon Line:** the visual limit of space where sky and land or water meet. In linear perspective, the vanishing point rotated 360 degrees.

**Hue:** the quality of wavelength in color; the color name.

**Humanism:** the belief that people are naturally good and that problems can be solved using reason instead of religion.

**iconography:** the study and interpretation of subject matter and pictorial themes in a work of art.

**Idealized:** an image that is represented as being ideal or perfected.

**Impasto:** thick application of paint.

**Implied Line:** invisible line perceived by alignment of unrelated shapes.

**Impressionism:** a nineteenth century art movement, originating in Paris, in which changing variations of light become a principal subject. Examples include the work of Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Mary Cassatt.

**Ink:** a liquid pigment traditionally used with pens of various manufacture.

**Installation:** an art practice that surrounds the viewer in an environment.

**Intaglio:** a printing process in which a metal plate is scratched with a steel point to produce printed images.

**Interactive:** artwork in which the viewer is expected to participate.

**Interval:** the space between elements of an artwork.

**Intuitive Color:** an approach to the selection of color that relies on intuition or other internal state rather than observation of an external condition.

**Kinetic Art:** art that incorporates motion into its design.

**Line:** an infinite series of points with limited length.

**Linear Perspective:** geometrically constructed illusion of the recession of space.

**Linear:** of or pertaining to the quality of line.

**Lithograph:** a printing process that relies on the repulsion between oil-based ink and water. A stone (or aluminum plate) is drawn on and etched. Where the stone is etched will absorb water. Where the stone is not etched (protected by the drawing or image) the stone will remain dry. Water is applied to the stone. Ink is then rolled over the stone. Where the stone is wet, ink is repelled. Where the stone is dry, ink adheres. Paper is then pressed onto the inked stone resulting in a print.

**Local Color:** the color of an object under even illumination.

**Lost Wax:** a casting process in which a wax original is molded, then wax is melted out and replaced with metal.

**Low Relief:** sculpture that remains attached to a base and does not use undercut. Opposite of high relief.

**Mass:** the quality of possessing three dimensions.

**Matrix:** in printmaking, any material used to produce an image. For example, in relief printing, the matrix is usually a carved linoleum or wood block.

**Metalpoint:** drawing using ductile metal such as silver, gold, or pewter as the pigment. Usually on paper or gessoed panel.

**metaphor:** a figure of speech in which one thing symbolically stands for another, perhaps unrelated, thing or idea.

**Mixed Media:** the use of unconventional or unusual combinations of materials in a single artwork.

**Mobile:** in sculpture, a kinetic artwork moved by wind or gravity.

**Modeling:** a sculptural process in which material is added to form the final artwork.

**Mold:** a hollow form used to shape a fluid or plastic substance.

**Monochromatic:** of or using a single color.

**Motion:** movement or change in position over time.

**Naturalistic:** of or pertaining to the appearance of nature, without idealization.

**Negative Space:** the absence of mass in space.

**Non-Objective Art:** art that does not have direct pictorial reference to objects seen.

**Non-representational:** artwork which intentionally avoids the strategy of representation, instead selecting only novel and original experience as subject matter.

**Observed Color:** the perception of color on an object illuminated by a directional light source. The perceived color of such an object varies as it tends toward highlight or shadow.

**Oil Pastels:** paper covered sticks of solid pigment and oil-based binder originally used to mark livestock.

**Oil:** in painting, a solvent soluble binder that dries slowly, usually linseed oil.

**One-point perspective:** a mathematical drawing system with the intention of making three dimensional objects and space look realistic in appearance as they converge on a single vanishing point.

**Open Form:** sculptural forms that are penetrated by exterior space.

**Organic:** shapes or forms that are loose or undefined.

**Original Print:** a handmade print.

**Orthogonal lines:** in linear perspective, diagonal lines that recede into fictive space.

**Orthogonal:** in perspective, lines that recede to the vanishing point.

**Overlap:** a shape or object which obscures or lies over something else.

**Painting:** the process of applying liquid pigment to a surface, or an art object resulting from this process.

**Pastel:** solid sticks of pigment.

**Performance Art:** an approach to art in which the object is an action by participants.

**Performance:** artworks consisting of actions, usually documented photographically.

**Perspective:** in art a system that portrays three dimensions on a flat surface.

**Pigment:** in art, the substance with gives color to a medium.

**Pigment:** the coloring agent in paints, pastels, inks, and other art media.

**Planographic:** a printing process which occurs on a flat surface, originally limestone.

**Point:** in perspective, an object with zero dimension.

**Positive Space:** the area occupied by a solid or filled object.

**Primary Colors:** in art the three basic colors by which all other colors are mixed, i.e., red, yellow, and blue.

**Principles of Design:** the strategies by which the elements of art are arranged to create a desired visual effect.

**Print:** an artwork produced by transferring pigment from a matrix to a support, usually paper. Most often done in a series of identical impressions. See "edition."

**Printmaking:** the process of producing multiple identical or nearly identical images from a single print matrix or set of matrices.

**Psychic Line:** in art, line that is understood without being seen by the eye.

**Refracted Light:** light that has been separated into distinct colors after having

been passed through a prism.

**Relief:** the physical projection of an artwork beyond the support or base.

**Representation:** in art, the use of signs or images which stand in for or take the place of something else.

**Reproduction:** a mechanically produced print.

**Rhythm:** in art, a pattern formed by repeated objects.

**Scale:** the size of an object.

**Sculpture:** the production of artwork that exists in three dimensions. Examples are carving, casting, modelling, or assembly.

**Secondary Colors:** in art, the three colors formed by mixing two primary colors, i.e., green, orange, and purple.

**Shape:** an area of two dimensional space.

**Simulated Texture:** a visual representation of a tactile experience.

**Site Specific:** installations which use their location as part of the intended effect.

**Soft-Edged:** lacking a definite boundary.

**Solvents:** substances usually liquid, which dissolve a given paint binder.

**Stencil:** a printing process in which pigment passes through a mask onto a support.

**Substitutes:** in sculpture, replacing one substance with another. In casting, hot liquid metal is substituted for melted wax.

**Subtractive Color:** sensation of color created by reflection of light off of a

surface.

**Subtractive:** a sculptural process in which material is removed.

**Support:** the surface on which an artwork is created.

**Symmetric:** shapes reflected equally about an axis.

**Technological Change:** notable shifts in available technology and science that play a part in the shift of culture and determine the availability of new artistic media.

**Texture:** the tactile quality of a surface.

**Three-Point Perspective:** a system of perspective that uses a third point above or below the horizon line to indicate the recession of space above the viewer.

**Time Arts:** the use of change as an element in art, usually performance art, kinetic art, or video.

**Tughra:** Islamic calligraphic device designating a high status individual.

**Two-Point Perspective:** a system of perspective that uses two points on the horizon to indicate the recession of space on either side of the viewer.

**Undercut:** in sculpture, an overhang created by removing material from underneath an object without detaching it from the base or support.

**Value:** in visual art, the characteristic of lightness or darkness of a color, ranging from near-white to black.

**Vanishing Point:** the point on the horizon where orthogonals meet, representing the

viewer's vision extended infinitely in one direction.

**Vector:** the characteristic of having direction.

**Video:** moving images recorded and projected or displayed on a monitor.

**Visible Light:** the portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that can be seen by the human eye.

**Volume:** a bounded three dimensional area.

**Warm Color:** a color that tends toward red/orange in hue. A warm color can be any color that tends toward red/orange when compared to another color. For example, ultramarine is a warm blue when compared to cobalt blue.

**Watercolor:** a water soluble painting medium that uses gum arabic as binder.

**Willow/Vine Charcoal:** a drawing medium made from burned willow twigs, and used primarily for initial layout of paintings as it does not adhere well to drawing surfaces.

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