



Navigating the Arts

A Guide to Analyze Images with the Visual Elements and Principles of Design

How to Use This Journal

Navigating the Arts can be used by faculty and students within and beyond art, art history, and visual art courses interested in learning how to understand and interpret images. The accessible language, logical structure, clear objectives, and wealth of examples and images make this journal an ideal tool for everyone interested in incorporating discussions of art concepts in their classes. It is structured in individual sheets based on key terms (e.g., line, color, etc.), accompanied by pictures and a series of short assignments to apply the knowledge acquired.

This resource is divided into two main sections: **Visual Elements** and **Principles of Design**. The **visual elements** of art, also known as formal elements, are the building blocks that artists use to create a work of art. In the following sections, we will learn what these elements are, their key features, and how they can be leveraged to create compelling visual compositions. At the end of the process, you will clearly understand how these elements enhance the understanding and appreciation of images. While the examples provided within the following sections are drawn from art across time and geographies, remember that understanding how visual elements function can significantly enhance visual literacy skills and improve the interpretation of images surrounding you, even those not traditionally considered art.

After you have explored the visual elements, students can turn their attention to the **principles of design**. In essence, these are guidelines that help artists and creatives organize elements within a work to create a cohesive, harmonious, and aesthetically pleasing outcome. In art history, you will find that the arrangement of the visual elements in a work of art is also called composition (principles of composition).

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Visual Elements

Notes

1. Line

Line can be described as a continuous mark made on a surface by a moving point. Line is the most basic visual element, and it is used to define shapes, contours, and outlines, as well as to suggest mass and volume. It can vary significantly in thickness, length, curvature, and direction. At the same time, line can convey movement and emotion, guide the viewer's eye through a composition, and create a sense of depth and space. Remember, lines exist in space. We can observe them in buildings and three-dimensional objects and analyze them in similar terms. For instance, think about the height of a skyscraper or the curved line of an ocean wave.

An **actual line** consists of a physical line that is clearly visible and continuous. It can be drawn or painted on the surface. Examples include the outlines of figures, objects, and [shapes](#). An **implied line** is a line that is not physically present but suggested through the arrangement of objects, [colors](#), or other elements in the composition. These lines are the result of the viewer's perception, guiding the eye in a particular direction and creating a visual pathway through the artwork.

Lines can also be oriented in different directions, each contributing to the visual dynamics of the artwork. **Vertical lines** convey a sense of strength, stability, and height. They can also imply growth, grandeur, and spirituality, often drawing the viewer's eye upwards. **Horizontal lines** suggest calmness and restfulness. They can create a sense of space and openness, often evoking a peaceful feeling. **Diagonal Lines** imply movement, action, and tension. They can develop a

sense of dynamism and instability within the artwork, often leading the viewer's eye through the composition in a more active manner.

For instance, Thomas Eakins' painting depicts two rowers, the Biglin brothers, participating in a rowing race on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia (1.1). The painting captures a dynamic moment as the rowers execute a sharp turn around a stake. Line plays a significant role in conveying the dynamic motion and energy of the rowers and their boat. Eakins employs strong directional lines to guide the viewer's eye through the painting and emphasize the



(1.1) The Biglin Brothers Turning the Stake, 1873. Thomas Eakins (American, 1844–1916). Oil on canvas; framed: 117 x 167 x 6.5 cm; unframed: 101.3 x 151.4 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Hinman B. Hurlbut Collection 1927.1984

movement of the rowers. The actual, diagonal lines of the oars and the boat's keel create a sense of forward propulsion and action. Eakins uses vertical lines to denote the upright posture of the rowers and the stake around which they are turning. Horizontal lines, such as the waterline and the horizon in the background, provide stability and contrast against the diagonal and curved lines, anchoring the composition and balancing the sense of movement.

Think about the **horizon line** as a particular type of horizontal line. In simple terms, it is the point where the sky appears to meet the ground or sea. In reality, it is where the earth curves away, becoming imperceptible due to distance. As we will learn later, the horizon line is essential in establishing [perspective](#). It helps create a sense of depth and spatial relationships in a composition. In the linear perspective, the horizon line contains the vanishing points. These points are where parallel lines seem to converge and disappear into the distance. The location of the horizon line within the pictorial surface can generate highly diverse visual effects. Artists would use a centered horizon line, for example, to provide a balanced and stable composition. A high horizon line, instead, places the viewer's eye level above most of the scene, emphasizing the ground or objects below. Lastly, a low horizon line places the viewer's eye level below most of the scene. The sky becomes more prominent, often conveying grandeur or vastness. You will practice the different effects of the horizon line in the activity below.

Lines can effectively create the illusion of **three-dimensional forms** on a two-dimensional surface. In so doing, lines manipulate the viewer's perception of volume, [depth, and space](#), transforming a flat surface into a lifelike depiction of three-dimensional forms. As you can see in the sketch below (1.2), **gestural lines** are characterized by their swift, expressive, and often spontaneous nature. They capture the subject's essential movement, energy, and dynamics rather than focusing on precise details. In the AI-generated cityscape (1.3), instead, **contour lines** define the edges and surface ridges of the buildings. By varying the thickness and curvature of contour lines, artists can suggest the volume and shape of 3D forms. **Cross-contour lines** move across the surface of the buildings in the cityscape, emphasizing their three-dimensionality, volume, and curvature. **Hatching** involves drawing closely spaced parallel lines, as in the skyscrapers in the back; **cross-hatching**, by extension, uses intersecting sets of these lines. By varying the density and direction of hatching and cross-hatching, artists can create gradients of light and shadow, which gives the illusion of depth and texture. **Structural lines** organize and divide space within the composition, providing a framework for the artwork. We have seen an example of this in Eakins' painting, where the vertical pole in the water divides the scene and brings attention to the rowers.



(1.2) Maganza, Alessandro. *Male Figure Seen from Behind*, ca. 1603-1610.
Pen and brown ink, over a pencil sketch. 30.3x21 cm.
The Metropolitian Museum of Art, New York. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975

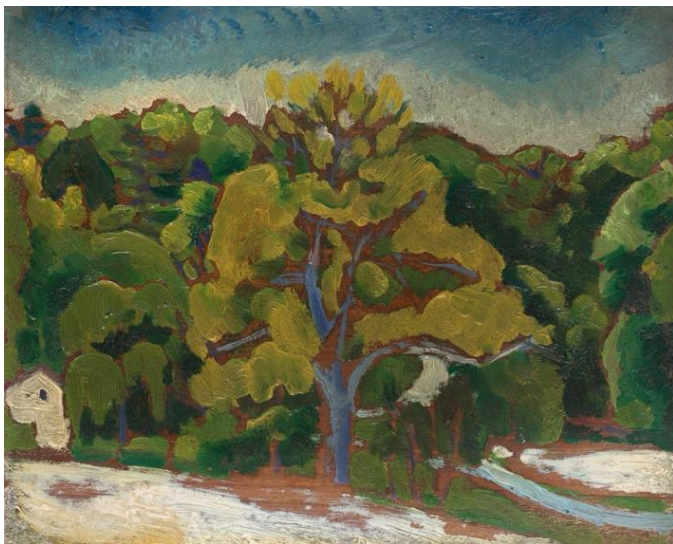


(1.3) AI-generated cityscape. June 2024. Software: Stable diffusion.



Let's Practice

Compare the three images below (1.4, 1.5, 1.6) and consider the following: how do artists use the horizon line? What are the different effects produced by its location on the pictorial surface? Which one do you find particularly compelling and why?



(1.4) Schamberg, Morton Livingston. *Landscape*, c. 1912. Oil on composition board. 19.05 × 24.13 cm. Corcoran Collection (Gift of Joan B. Detweiler).



(1.5) Fleischhauer, C. *Paradise Valley Landscape*, 1979. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ncr001023/>.



(1.6) Landscape Near Paris, c. 1840. Attributed to Georges Michel (French, 1763–1843). Oil on fabric; framed: 105.6 x 146.4 x 9.6 cm (41 9/16 x 57 5/8 x 3 3/4 in.); unframed: 88.8 x 129.5 cm (34 15/16 x 51 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Noah L. Butkin 1975.78

2. Texture

Texture is the quality of the surface of an object. An object can feel or appear to be coarse, soft, bumpy, smooth, or a variety of other sensations. We can perceive textures in two ways. **Actual** texture refers to the surface of a work of art; it can be experienced physically through touch. **Simulated** texture, on the other hand, cannot be felt, but is perceived optically.

Every material has an actual, physical texture. Actual texture can be on three-dimensional objects, like textiles, and two-dimensional objects, like paintings. The textures an object can have are limited by the **material** the object is made from and the **techniques** that the artists use. Thick, oil-based pastels will create different actual textures than watered-down watercolor paint, or woven wool.

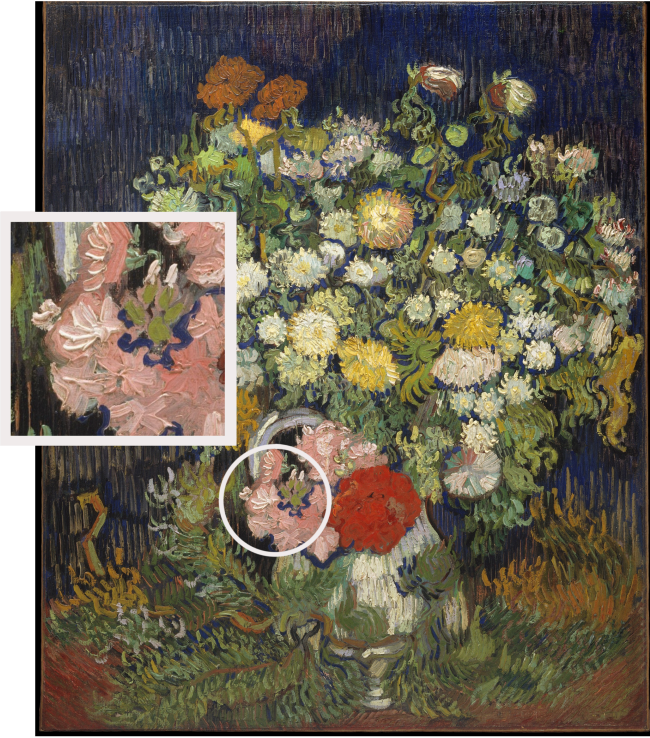


(2.1) Presentation Bowl, 1900. Native North America, California, Yokuts. Redbud, bracken fern; coiled, grass foundation; overall: 23 x 48 cm (9 1/16 x 18 7/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Presented by William Albert Price in memory of Mrs. William Albert Price 1917.492.

The dried grass, redbud, and bracken fern of this *Presentation Bowl* (2.1) of the Yokuts native to the San Joaquin Valley in California make the surface of the bowl ridged and firm, because these fibers have been coiled tightly. Oil paint on a canvas will produce an entirely different group of textures based on certain techniques. Vincent Van Gogh uses the impasto technique in many of his oil paintings, like *Bouquet of Flowers in a Vase* (2.2). Italian for “mixture,” the impasto technique is the thick application of oil paint so that brushstrokes and palette knife marks are visible.

Simulated textures give the illusion of an actual texture. Rather than the material used to make the artwork, simulated textures

are the implicit textures of the surfaces that the artist is trying to replicate. Artists can apply specific techniques and visual elements to two and three-dimensional works that simulate the tactile textures of the objects represented. We perceive the nuts, strawberries, and lemon represented in Raphaele Peale’s still life (2.3) as bumpy, full of crevices and small pits because the artist has used shading and lighting techniques to give them detail and depth. Unlike Van Gogh’s *Bouquet*, the oil paint in Peale’s still life has been rendered to conceal brush strokes, which gives the ceramics the illusion of being smooth.



(2.2) Van Gogh, Vincent. *Bouquet of Flowers in a Vase*, 1890. Oil on Canvas. 65.1 x 54 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, gift of Walter H. and Leonore Anneberg, 1993, bequest of Walter H. Anneberg, 2002.



(2.3) Peale, Raphaëlle. *Still Life- Strawberries, Nuts, &c.*, 1822. Oil on wood panel. 41.1 x 57.8 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Let's Practice

Look at this flower study by febergé artist Henrik Wigström (2.4) and analyze its use of texture:

- 1.) Does this object use implied texture or actual texture? Can an object use both?
- 2.) Why did the artist rely on textures? Consider the context in the name of the object.
- 3.) What other visual elements does Wigström rely on to make this object?

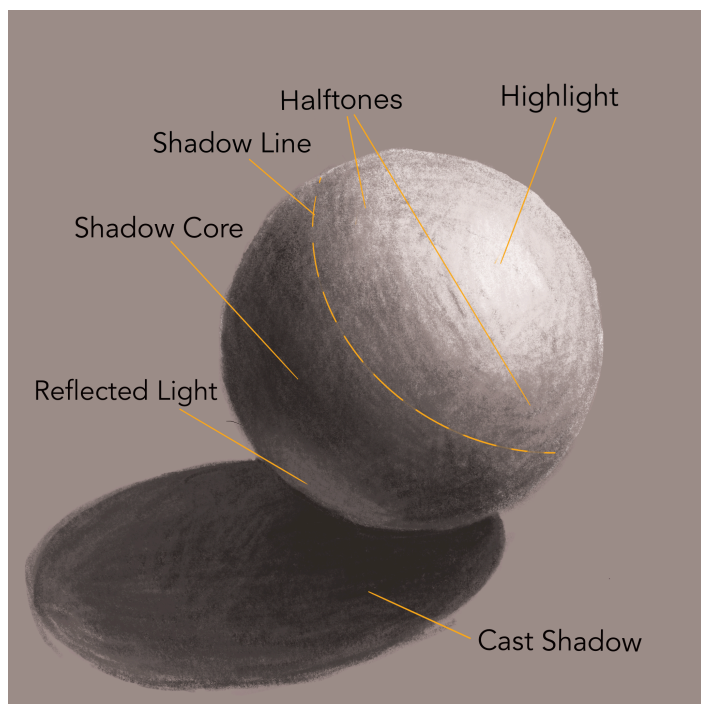


(2.4) Flower Study of an Anemone, c. 1905–15. Henrik Wigström (Russian, 1862–1923), House of Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918). Mat white stone, gold, sapphires, jade, rock crystal; overall: 14.3 x 3.9 cm (5 5/8 x 1 9/16 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, The India Early Minshall Collection 1966.441

3. Light

Light is the illumination that comes from a light source. It can be **actual** or **external** light that comes from a source of light in the real world, or it can be **implied**, such as when a light source or its effects are recreated in an image. Artists can use light to enhance other visual elements in their work, like texture, form, or space, but light can also be used independently, as a medium that can create a wide range of effects and emotions. There are two types of light, **natural** light is that which naturally comes from the sun, while **artificial** light is that which comes from an artificial source, like a lightbulb, flashlight, or neon sign. American photographer Alfred Stieglitz uses both natural and artificial light in *New York from the Shelton* (3.1). The natural light of the setting sun causes buildings in the foreground of the image to be silhouetted, while an artificial light cast from the base of the skyscraper further back distinguishes it from the silhouetted foreground and the single-toned sky behind it.

An important aspect of this visual element is **shadow**. Shadow is created when light reaches some parts of a surface, but not other parts. The parts that do not get light become darker. Shadow is helpful when creating the illusion of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface. Artists can mimic the effects of light hitting an object by applying darker values to shaded areas. Figure (3.2) breaks down key aspects of light reflecting off of a form. A **highlight** is the area of the form that reflects the most light; this is typically the area in which light hits an object directly. **Halftones** are areas in between highlights and shadows. Halftones blend into the shadow side. If a light source is concentrated, or an object does not diffuse or scatter light well, the object will have fewer halftones. The **shadow line** is the transitional point between the light and dark side. There are two shadows created when light hits a form. The **form shadow** is created on the object opposite the side the light hits. The **cast shadow** is the shadow that the form casts onto the surface it is placed on. The **shadow core** is the darkest point of the form, little light can reflect off of this area. Depending on



(3.2) Diagram of the parts of light and shadow. Drawing by Catherine Juliano.

the material the form is placed on, the surface may reflect light back onto the form. This is called **reflected light**.

All surfaces will reflect some amount of light. The material of the object's surface determines how much light is reflected and how much is diffused, and this knowledge can be used by artists to create interesting effects with light. Anish Kapoor was inspired by the hyper-reflective qualities of liquid mercury when designing the outdoor art installation *Cloud Gate* (3.3) and used polished stainless steel to recreate this effect. The reflective qualities of *Cloud Gate* as well as its curved design and placement in Millenium Park in downtown Chicago allow it to reflect and warp its surroundings, allowing for interesting visuals from any angle.

Descriptive and Expressive Use of Lighting

An object or image can use light **descriptively**, in order to depict a form as it would be seen in reality, or **expressively**, to convey feeling or psychological states. Some works of art can use both descriptive and expressive light at the same time, as in Pieter Claesz's *Still Life* (3.4). The light source coming from the left of the image helps to give the illusion of three-dimensional objects by creating shadows, and it is used to define their various [textures](#). The concentration of light from a single source also serves a thematic purpose, as it creates ominous dark spaces and shadows through the image, conveying a feeling of tension or unease in a vanitas still life that reflects on the passage of time and brevity of life.



(3.4) Claesz, Pieter. *Still Life with a Skull and a Writing Quill*, 1628. Oil on wood.
24.1 x 35.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1949.

Diffuse and Strong Lighting

There are two common ways in which light reaches the surface of objects, dependent on both the light source and the material of the objects. **Diffuse** or **soft** lighting will diffuse, or scatter around the surface of an object. It typically creates a more uniform illumination and can be used to create a harmonious image. Diffuse lighting can be made naturally, such as when the sun hits a window at a particular angle, or artificially, through the use of lamp shades or bounce lights. In many

of her miniature rooms, Narcissa Niblack Thorne mimics the sun entering windows and uses diffused lighting to scatter light across the entire space, as in the *French Salon of the Louis XVI Period* (3.5). This descriptive use of light creates a realistic-appearing miniature room, creates a serene atmosphere, and balances the image by reducing strong focal points. **Strong or hard** lighting results in fewer halftones on a form and creates sharp shadow lines between light and dark sides. Artemisia Gentileschi uses the **chiaroscuro** technique in many of her paintings, like *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (3.6). Meaning “light-dark”, this technique entails a high contrast between light and dark sections of an artwork. Gentileschi creates this effect using a strong, implied light coming off-frame from the bottom left corner of the image. This expressive use of light creates a theatrical environment full of tension, suspense, and action.

Light and Context

Actual light can be applied to enhance an object or an image. The deliberate illumination of an object, or spotlighting, can act as a signifier of the object’s value or significance, as is done within museums. It can also be used to emphasize important or interesting aspects of an object. The weaving and ornamental lines on this rocking chair made by Jacob and Josef Kohn (3.7) are emphasized with the use of strong, angled display lights. The lights cast multiple shadows behind the chair that help emphasize its intricate design.



(3.1) Stieglitz, Alfred. *New York from the Shelton*, 1935. Gelatin Silver Print. 24.2 x 19.3cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(3.3) Kapoor, Anish. *Cloud Gate*, 2004-2006. Polished stainless steel. Millennium Park, Chicago Illinois. Public domain, via Pxhere.



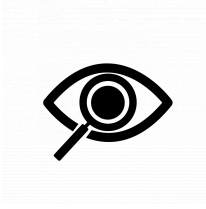
(3.5) Thorne, Narcissa Niblack. *E-24: French Salon of the Louis XVI Period, c.1780*, 1937. Miniature room, mixed media. 38.1 x 52.1 x 43.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(3.6) Gentileschi, Artemisia. *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, c.1620. Oil on canvas. 146.5x 108 cm. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

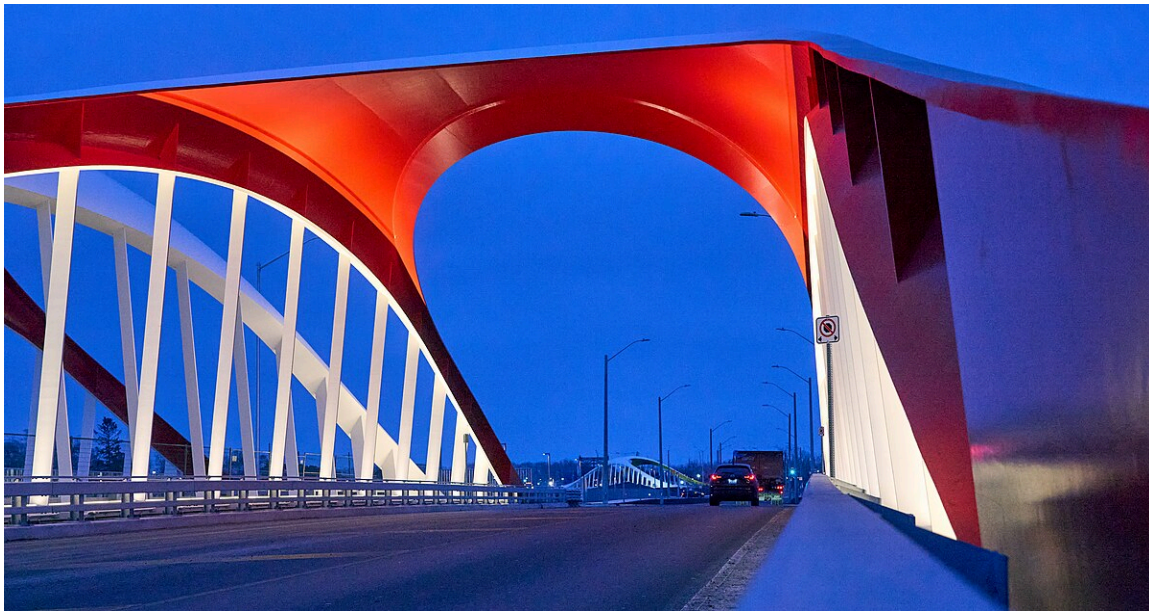


(3.7) Kohn, Jaco and Josef. *Rocking Chair*, c.1881. Beech and caning. 108.9 x 58.4 x 114.3 cm. Art Institute of Chicago.



Let's Practice

Look at this photograph of the Toronto Port Land bridges (3.8). Observe the use of light during dusk. What type of light is being used here (Actual or implied? Natural or artificial?) How is light being used?



(3.8) Two of the three new bridges in the Toronto Port Lands area. 2024. Photograph by Quist. Quist, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Light and Context

Look again at Artemisia Gentileschi's painting, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. Compare the image to the following photograph of the same painting on display at the Uffizi Galleries in Florence, Italy (3.9). Use terminology from the text to answer the following questions:

- 1.) What type of light is used in both images?
- 2.) What is the purpose of the use of light in both of these images?

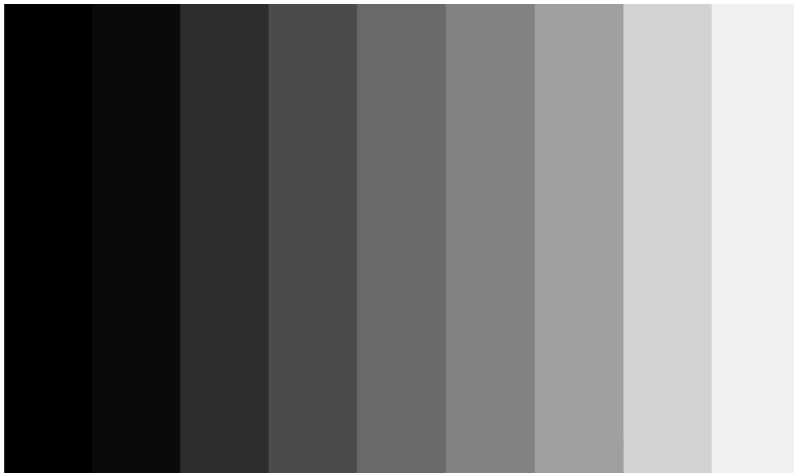


Gentileschi, Artemisia. *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, c.1620. Oil on canvas. 146.5x 108 cm. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

(3.9) Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* on display in the Uffizi Galleries in Florence, Italy.

4. Value

Simply put, **value** is the brightness or darkness of a [color or hue](#). We can imagine values along a colorless spectrum, with white being the brightest, and black being the darkest (4.1). Value can be created by the materials used, the [light](#) implemented, and the colors used in an artwork. Like many visual elements, value can be used descriptively, or to represent the appearance of an object, or expressively, to convey emotions and psychological states. Artists do this with value through the use of keys. A **key** is the prevailing range of values in an artwork. Images and objects with a **lowkey** have darker and subdued values seen in the darker end of the spectrum, and those with a **highkey** use bright, light, and pale values on the far opposite side of the spectrum. Highkey artworks tend to convey a calm, uplifting mood, while the use of lowkey can create a mysterious, melancholy, or subdued mood. For instance, observe the use of value ranges in the images below.



(4.1) A range of values from darkest to brightest. Drawing by Catherine Juliano

Some artworks will use the full range of values, but apply them strategically to achieve specific goals. A full range of values may be beneficial in creating a highly descriptive image. Artists can use a wide range of values when creating spatial distance for example. In *Paris Street; Rainy Day* (4.2), Gustave Caillebotte uses darker values in the foreground of the image and lighter values as the image recedes into the distance. This mimics the effects of natural elements like atmospheric pressure or fog and creates the illusion of depth. Values from opposite ends of the scale placed near one another in a single work can create contrast or emphasize certain parts of the artwork. When an artwork is limited on intermediary values between light and dark ones, it can also have a dynamic effect, or create tension.

Value and Color

Along with temperature and intensity, value is a defining quality of a [color or hue](#). Every color has a value, which can become easily visible by removing its saturation. This early 18th-century vase from the Chinese Qing Dynasty (4.3) uses varying values produced from the same red hue. When we arrange them from lightest to darkest and remove saturation, it shows how a color can be defined as “light” or “dark”. A color can change in value by adding white, light gray, or another brighter hue to create a **tint**, or by adding black, dark gray, or a darker hue to create a **shade**. The brightness or darkness of colors used on an object or within an image can change its meaning. The use of bright colors in Georges Braque’s *Landscape at L’Estaque* (4.4) for example helps to convey the unrelenting heat of a summer day.

Value and Light



(4.5.) Caravaggio. *The Taking of Christ*, c.1602. Oil on canvas. 133.5 x 169.5 cm. National Gallery of Ireland. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

As we saw in Gentileschi’s artwork when we discussed the [visual element of light](#), light sources can determine the range of values on an object or within an image. The strong light sources in Caravaggio’s *The Taking of Christ* (4.5) allow for a range of values to be used, but the concentrated nature of the light emanating from the image and emitted from the lantern creates a chiaroscuro effect. Intermediary values are reduced, creating a high-contrast image that expresses tension. The more diffuse light source will create different effects. The light to mid-range values created by the sunlight depicted in *Waterloo Bridge, Sunlight Effect* (4.6) help create a calm, bright, and uplifting atmosphere within the painting. In *Waterloo Bridge, Gray Weather* (4.7), a weaker light source results in the use of low-range values and creates a somber, dreary image.



(4.2) Caillebotte, Gustave. *Paris Street, Rainy Day*, 1877. Oil on canvas. 212.2 x 276.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(4.3) Unknown artist, Qing Dynasty. *The Flame*. Early 18th century. Porcelain with oxblood glaze. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



(4.4) Braque, Georges. *Landscape at L'Estaque*, 1906. Oil on canvas. 60.3 x 72.7 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(4.6) Monet, Claude. *Waterloo Bridge, Sunlight Effect*, 1903. Oil on Canvas. 65.7 x 101 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(4.7) Monet, Claude. *Waterloo Bridge, Gray Weather*, 1900. Oil on canvas. 65.7 x 101 cm. Art Institute of Chicago.



Let's Practice

Analyze this photograph by William A. Fraser for its use of value (4.8). What is the value key? Does the artist make use of a wide range of values, or limited? How were the values created? (Through the application of light? The use of color? The materials used? Did they rely on two or more of these aspects to produce the values?) How are the values being used? What effect or mood do they create, if any?

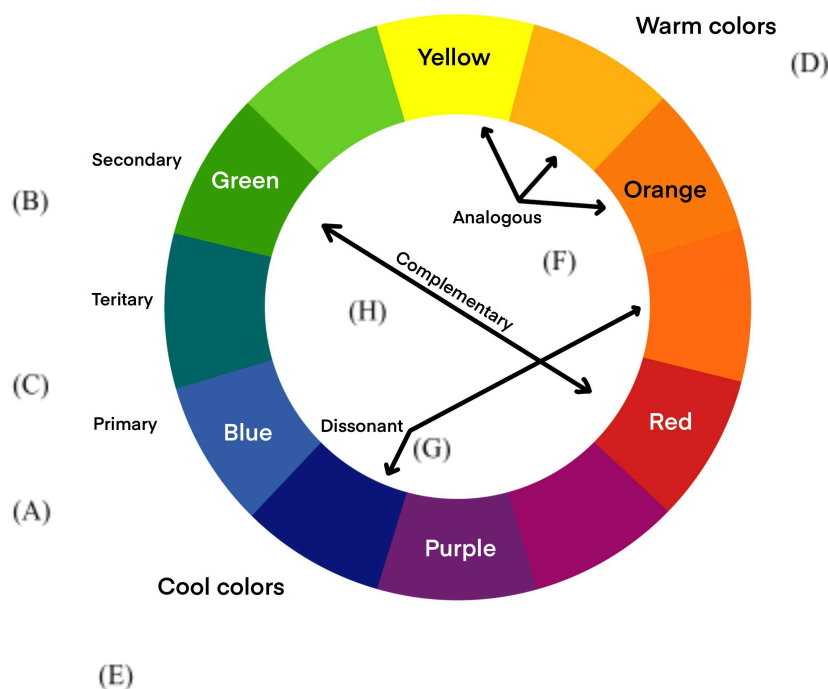


(4.8) Fraser, William A. *Wet Night Columbus Circle, New York*, No.11 from the portfolio "American Pictorial Photography, Series I" (1899), 1897. Photogravure. 16.7 x 9 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

5. Color

Color is the light that reflects off of an object's surface that stimulates the retina of the eye. It is the characteristic of visual perception, described through hue, value, and saturation. Artists can mix and apply colors to their art to create effects like depth, texture, and emphasis.

How do we see color? The visible white light of the sun is the simultaneous visibility of separate bands of ultraviolet rays with varying lengths, and as a result, varying colors. These bands of light become visible when UV light is refracted, or bent, as it hits a clear surface like glass or rain. This is what allows us to see the colors of a rainbow for example. These bands of light are naturally arranged from the longest band (red), to the shortest (violet), but we can go a step further and arrange these bands of color into a circle to create the color wheel (5.1). The colors on a color wheel are also called **hues**. In simple terms, hue refers to the name of the color itself (e.g., red, blue, or yellow). These are the basic colors found on the color wheel. Color wheels allow us to examine relationships between one or more colors, and predict outcomes when two or more colors are combined. **Primary colors** are the most basic and irreducible colors on the wheel, red, yellow, and blue (A). Two of the three primary colors can be combined to produce **secondary colors** (B), which will be located in between them on the color wheel (blue and yellow will create green). When a secondary color is mixed again with its adjacent primary color, the result is a **tertiary color** (C). Mixing red with the secondary color violet for example will create red-violet.



When applied to an image or an object, color can be used in two ways. Colors used in a **descriptive** manner strive to accurately represent an object the way that our eyes would perceive it. **Expressive** uses of color, however, strive to express an emotion or psychological state that the colors represent within a specific context. Keep in mind that many of the examples used in this section to define color as a visual element come from a Western tradition of art and design, and interpret colors' meanings through this lens.

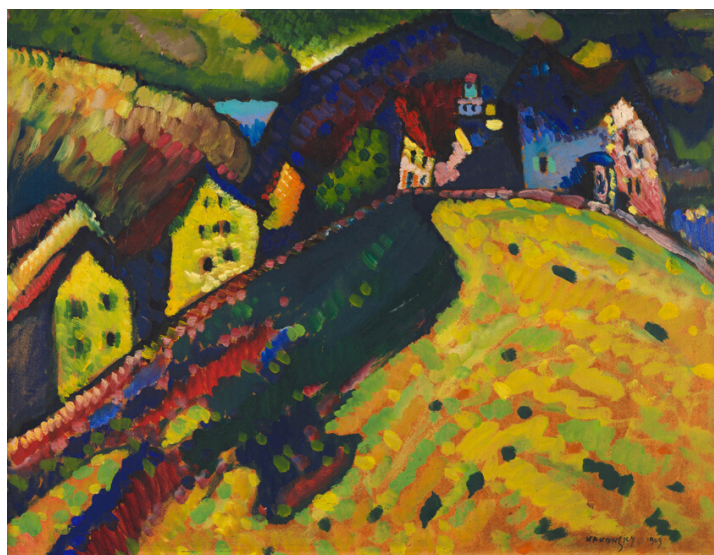
Tone

A color can be described using **tone**. Tone is the overall defining quality of a color. A color can be defined by its lightness or darkness ([value](#)), intensity, or temperature.

The **intensity** of a color is the saturation or dullness of a hue. Hues on the color wheel are at their fullest saturation, they are bright and vibrant. When white, light gray, or certain hues are added, the color will become tinted and duller. Colors with less saturation tend to have a calming effect. The low-intensity colors used in Camille Pissarro's *Morning, A Overcast Day, Rouen* (5.2) help to create a calm image despite the bustling boats and pedestrians and the use of expressive brush strokes. Because it is a descriptive use of color, heavily saturated colors would be few and far between during a cloudy overcast. Heavily saturated colors can be used to create an energetic or lively mood in an artwork. Vasily Kandinsky often uses vibrant, saturated colors to make energetic and expressive paintings and emphasize contrasting colors, such as in his landscape painting *Houses at Murnau* (5.3).



(5.2) Pissarro, Camille. *Morning, An Overcast Day, Rouen*, 1896. Oil on canvas. 54.3 cm x 65.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Grégoire Tarnopol, 1979, gift of Alexander Tarnopol, 1980.



(5.3) Kandinsky, Vasily. *Houses at Murnau*, 1909. Oil on cardboard. 49 x 64 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

The **temperature** of a color is determined by its location on the color wheel. **Warm colors** (D) are commonly those that rely on red, orange, or yellow. These colors tend to convey warmth or energy, but can also be used to create tension or distort an image or object. Because these colors tend to feel brighter, they tend to “pop” or stand out more than cool colors. This is beneficial for creating movement or emphasis in an object or image. In Winslow Homer’s *The Veteran in a New Field* (5.4) for example, the warm tones of the wheat cut horizontally across the canvas, standing out against the contrasting blue sky, and bringing attention to the central figure.

Cool colors (E) are on the opposite side of the wheel, consisting primarily of blues, purples, and greens. Unlike warm colors, cool colors tend to recede into the background and have a calming or soothing effect. Interested in communicating the mystical qualities of nature, Raymond Jonson relied on cool colors in his landscape painting of the coast of Ogunquit, Maine, called *Rock at Sea* (5.5). While this is a more expressive use of color, the image conveys a message of calmness and serenity through the use of cool colors.

Color Schemes

Hues will have varying relationships with one another determined by their positionality from one another on the color wheel. These relationships can either be harmonious and agreeable, or dissonant and contrasting.

Harmonious color schemes are those that use colors nearby one another on the color wheel. Colors that are side-by-side on the color wheel are analogous. **Analogous colors** (F) create a harmonizing effect; colors adjacent to one another tend to agree with one another, blend easily, and cause little tension. Worthington Whittredge’s *Evening in the Woods by Worthington Whittredge* (5.6) relies primarily on green and yellow, neighboring hues on the color wheel. Because they blend so easily, Whittredge was able to make a wide range of values with a limited color palette to make a representational image. Note that as the painting makes use of atmospheric perspective, the greens easily begin to fade into the lighter yellows that make up the lightsource and sky in the background.

Contrasting or dissonant (G) relationships commonly rely on colors further away from one another on the color wheel, such as green and purple. **Complementary colors** (H) are those that are opposite one another on the color wheel, such as green and red. Differently from analogous colors, these are difficult to blend, resulting in duller colors. They are called complementary because when placed side by side, they tend to contrast and emphasize each other equally. Thomas Eakins takes advantage of the high contrast between blue and yellow in *The Champion Single Sculls* (5.7), placing a bright yellow boat in the middle of a blue lake and sky. This high contrast makes the man sculling in the foreground the focal point and the scattered use of yellow to the left on the river bank and on the second man sculling guides the viewer to the background and up to the bright blue of the sky.



(5.7) Eakins, Thomas. *The Champion Single Sculls (Max Schmitt in a Single Scull)*, 1871. Oil on canvas. 81.9 x 117.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, The Alfred N. Punnet Endowment Fund and George D. Pratt Gift, 1934.

Objects and images can use polychromatic color schemes or monochromatic color schemes. **Polychromatic** color schemes use multiple colors. These color schemes can be used to create a representational image or object or can be used expressively. **Monochromatic** color schemes rely on a single hue to color the object or image. The artist will take this hue and create a range of **values** through the application of brighter colors, to create **tints**, and darker ones to create **shades**. This can occur circumstantially, as with black and white photography, or done intentionally by the artist. Some materials like watercolor can rely on layering or thick application of the color to produce a darker value, like the design on this square-shaped bottle from Korea (5.8). Monochromatic schemes are highly unifying and can take full advantage of the sensations and feelings evoked by a single hue.

Color and Context

Context matters when analyzing color. Colors can act symbolically, and carry different meanings in different contexts, like different cultures or time periods. Interpreted from a Western or European context, the colors selected for this Diné second phase (1860-1880) blanket (5.9) seem random, or intentionally selected for their ability to contrast with the bright white stripes and create excitement. When analyzed with a Diné cultural context in mind, however, the four colors used- red, white, black, and blue- have several new meanings. Each color represents a cardinal direction, as well as the four sacred mountains that surround the Diné homeland¹. When sequenced together in a design, these colors can take on an even deeper, subjective meaning. Understanding an image or object from an unfamiliar region, time, or culture will sometimes require research beyond examining the work, title, or name of the artist. This is where museum and catalog labels can come in handy.

¹ Benally, Clyde, with Andrew O. Wiget, John R. Alley, and Garry Blake. *Dinejí Nákéé' Nááhane'*: A Utah Navajo History. Monticello, Utah: San Juan School District, 1982.



55-1860. Wool. 157.5 x 186.7cm. The
f John and Margot Ernst, in celebration of the



(5.4) Homer, Winslow. *Veteran in a New Field*, 1865. Oil on canvas.
61.3 x 96.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest
of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot (1876-1967), 1967.



(5.5) *Rock at Sea*, 1920–1922. Raymond Jonson (American, 1891–1982). Oil on canvas; unframed: 88.9 x 104.2 cm (35 x 41 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund 2009.269.



(5.6) Whittredge, Worthington. *Evening in the Woods*, 1876. Oil on canvas. 107.5 x 91.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Henry H. Cook, 1905.



(5.8) Square-shaped Bottle with the Scenery of the Han River, 1800s. Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue decoration; The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund 1986.86



Let's Practice

Warm and Cool Colors

Look at Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* (5.10). First, describe the use of color in this image with any of the terminology used in this section. Examine the mix of cool and warm colors used. How does the strategic use of warm and cool colors create movement and emphasis? Consider applying other visual elements to better explain the use of color, like shape and line.



(5.10) Hopper, Edward. *Nighthawks*, 1942. Oil on canvas. 84.1 x 152.4 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Color and Context

Examine both of these paintings made by Jan Van Eyck (5.11, 5.12). First, describe the use of color in both of these images using any of the terminology from this section. How is color used in these images? *The Arnolfini Portrait* possibly represents an Italian merchant Giovanni di Nicolao Arnolfini and his wife, and features expensive fabrics, metals, and objects that the merchant may have sold. *Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele* depicts the Virgin Mary with Jesus in her lap, surrounded by two Saints and the painting's donor, Joris van der Paele. Both paintings make use of a bright, bold red, but they are used differently given that one painting is a commissioned portrait, and the other has a strong religious context. How does the meaning of the color red change in both of these images? You may have to briefly research to understand the context further, or to understand the color symbolism used in each image.



(5.11) Van Eyck, Jan. *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434. Oil on oak wood. 82 cm x 80 cm. National Gallery, London. Jan van Eyck, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



(5.12) Van Eyck, Jan. *Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele*, 1434/1436. Oil on panel. 124.5 cm x 160 cm. Groeningemuseum, Bruges. Jan van Eyck, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

6. Shape & Form

Shape

Shape refers to a two-dimensional object or area within an image, consisting of a width and a height or length. A shape can be created using a single visual element- a shape can be created with a single [color](#)- or several visual elements. As we have seen for lines, shapes can also be **actual**, or formally defined, by using a uniform visual element to define the width and height of an area, such as a closed [line](#) used to define the area of a circle. Shapes can also be **implied**, or suggested, by using approximate or similar visual elements. If you stand back from or squint at this imitation painting of Ralph Albert Blakelock's *Moonlight* (6.1), you can see that two distinct values ranges are used to break this image into four shapes that have equal weight and balance the image.



(6.1) Unknown Artist imitation of Ralph Albert Blakelock.
Moonlight, early 20th century. Oil on canvas. 75.6 x 101.3 cm.
Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Types of Shapes

Geometric shapes can be built from straight and curved lines. They are typically uniform in the sense that they commonly adhere to mathematical laws. Geometric shapes can bring a high sense of order or uniformity to a work. Piet Mondrian relies on uniform squares and rectangles in many of his compositions, like this one (6.2) to call attention to the uniform shape of the canvas.

Organic or biomorphic shapes derive from or are inspired by natural forms. Because they are inspired by shapes found in nature, like trees, flowers, or animals, organic shapes are commonly curved, and can be irregular. Anna Atkins created unique, bold compositions filled with organic shapes by silhouetting flora on cyanotypes (6.3).

Both geometric and organic shapes can be representational or non-representational. **Representational** shapes represent recognizable objects and forms. These can be elaborate shapes with many sides, or simple and reduced, like a common heart or apple outline. This lithograph print by Work Projects Administration (WPA) sculptor Sargent Claude Johnson (6.4) features many referential or representational shapes- rectangles stacked alongside one another create a segment of a piano, while more organic shapes are used to define the facial features and hair of an African American man. Representational shapes like some of the shapes in Johnson's print can be **abstracted**, or non-exact, and even distorted compared to the original source. These representational shapes are less descriptive and more expressive, and they can be used to emphasize the qualities of the represented objects, like Johnson has done here. They can also be used to express psychological states like tension, confusion, or a dream-like state of mind. WPA artist Joseph Vogel's abstracted, representational shapes seen in *Visions* (6.5) achieve this. Inspired by [Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*](#) (1937), Vogel distorts representational shapes and figures to reflect on the chaos and suffering caused by war upon the approach of World War II in the United States.



(6.4.) Johnson, Sargent Claude. *Lenox Avenue*, 1938. Lithograph print. 31.8 x 21.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of the Work Projects Administration, Allocation Unit, Chicago, 1943.



(6.5) Vogel, Joseph. *Vision*, 1939. Lithograph print. 37.2 x 52cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of the Works Project Administration, New York, 1943.

Simplified, representational shapes are commonly used as **symbols** and **iconography**. Artists make use of symbols —objects, figures, elements— to represent ideas or qualities. Symbols carry specific meanings, which are often culturally or socially constructed and context-based. Symbols allow artists to indirectly convey complex concepts or emotions, relying on shared cultural understandings. For example, a dove often symbolizes peace in Western art, while a skull can symbolize mortality or danger.

Iconography refers to studying or interpreting visual images and symbols used in artworks. It involves analyzing the subject matter, motifs, symbols, and themes depicted in artworks to understand their meanings and significance. Iconography considers how these visual elements contribute to the artwork's narrative, religious context, historical context, or cultural references. For instance, certain saints are depicted with specific attributes in Christian iconography (such as Saint Peter with keys) that symbolize their identities or roles. We will explain why this is important in the following section.

Non-representational or **non-objective** are shapes that are purely abstract and are unrecognizable. Shapes like this can also be used to create unease, disorder, or chaos in a composition. Because they do not represent sources from life, non-representational shapes can be used to bring more focus to the use of visual elements and the overall composition of an artwork. Early American abstract expressionist Irene Rice Pereira often used abstract, non-representational shapes to convey moods and explore compositions. In *White Lines* (6.6) for example, Pereira scrapes against a paper covered in gouache not to create a recognizable scene, but instead to explore how shapes, lines, and textures can interact with one another within the same image.

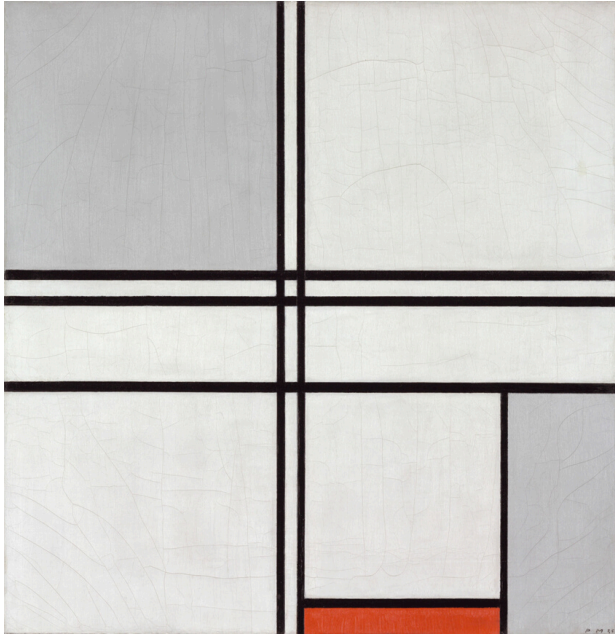
Shape and Context



(6.7) Unknown Wari artist. Tunic, 7th-11th century. Cotton and camelid hair. 103.5 x 101 cm approximately. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of Claudia Quentin, 2021.

Although a shape may appear completely abstract or non-objective, it is important to examine the context of an image or object before assuming that pure abstraction was the artist's intent. Some shapes that appear abstract may be representative of an unfamiliar animal, or distorted to emphasize specific aspects of a represented object, like in the previous examples. They can also act as symbols that we may not know how to read. In order to better understand shapes that appear to be non-objective, the viewer can find context for the art, such as the region, culture, and time period in which the object or image was made. Take this Andean textile from the Wari culture (6.7), for example. While the various abstract shapes on this textile create a composition similar to a work of abstract expressionism, many of these shapes are actually representational. Rather than using non-representational shapes to convey an emotion, these shapes have been deliberately abstracted and distorted to conceal their meaning, acting as symbols

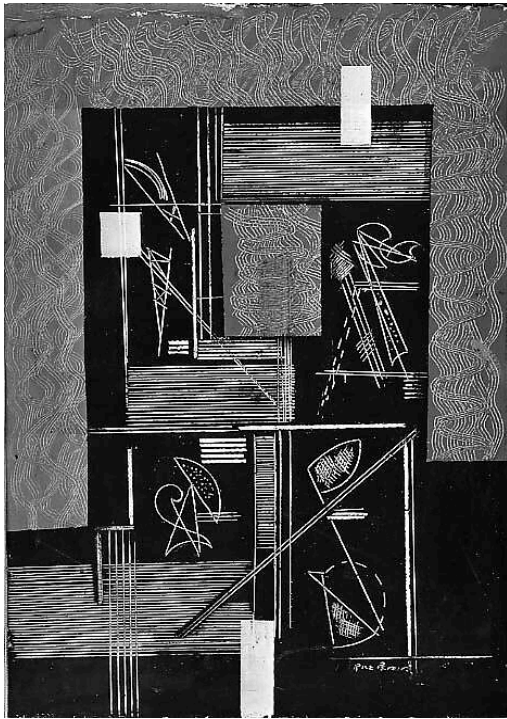
for an exclusive elite class who had access to both the textile and the symbols' meaning. Many of the shape's meanings have been lost over time, making it easier to assume that these shapes are non-objective and random.



(6.2) Mondrian, Piet. *Composition (No. 1) Gray-Red*, 1935. Oil on canvas. 57.5 x 55.6 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(6.3) Atkins, Anna. *Spiraea aruncus (Tyrol)*, 1851-1854. Cyanotype. 35.1 cm x 24.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, 2004.



(6.6) Pereira, Irene Rice. *White Lines*, 1941. Gouache and scraping on paper. 56.5 x 39.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of New York City W.P.A., 1943.

Form

Where shape is two-dimensional, made of only width and height, **form** is an object that occupies space in three dimensions- width, height, and depth. Every object has form, even a sheet of paper or canvas that a two-dimensional image is applied to. Forms will interact with the other visual elements in various and infinite ways depending on their overall shape, size, and surface material. When working with three-dimensional objects, artists will consider how forms interact with these elements to achieve specific goals in their artworks. Artists can consider how forms interact with visual elements in order to make interesting compositions with **actual** forms, or physical objects with width, height, and depth, or to create interesting forms on two-dimensional surfaces by creating **simulated** forms.

Actual Form: Three-Dimensional Objects

Actual forms are physical objects with width, height, and depth. Many artists, from sculptors to ceramicists to fashion designers to architects work in 3 dimensions. When working with actual forms, they have to consider how other visual elements like actual light, color and value will be impacted by the forms they create.

Actual forms, like this marble bust by Giovanni Battista Lombardi (6.8) can be **representational**. Using techniques like application, carving, painting and molding, artists can create forms in the likeness of other forms, such as Lombardi's representation of a woman covered in a thin veil. Simple geometric forms like spheres, prisms, and simple organic forms can be compiled together to create a representational form, like this portrait by Amedeo Modigliani (6.9). In

this sculpture, the features of the face have been reduced to simple forms to exaggerate some of the model's features and create an interesting take on a portrait. More complex forms can be used to create a more exact and descriptive representational form. Compare the number of individual forms in Modigliani's portrait of a woman to the amount of forms needed to make Lombardi's more descriptive portrait.

Representational forms can be even more expressive than Modigliani's sculpture. In *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (6.10), Umberto Boccioni distorts the figure to convey energy, wind, and speed. The use of metal and the fixation on the idea of speed reflects Boccioni's centrality in the Italian Futurist art movement, in which modern technology and industry were celebrated as thrusting humanity into the future.

Nonrepresentational forms can also be used expressively, to convey a particular message or emotion, and can be used to explore the infinite ways that forms interact within a space and with other visual elements. The nonrepresentational and irregular form that makes the lip of this vase designed by Christopher Dresser (6.11) distinguishes it from the more uniform and exact neck and base of the vase, creating a focal point that plays with light and value.

Simulated Form

Form can also refer to **simulated** forms, or the illusion of three-dimensional forms on a two-dimensional surface, like a photograph or canvas. Artists will observe how depth changes visual elements like [color](#) and [value](#) on a real object and apply these observations to a flat shape to add depth and convey form. Adding darker values on a flat circle to create shadows, for example, will give it the illusion of depth. When a two-dimensional image limits the use of visual elements, such as in this still life painting by Marsden Hartley (6.12), the flatness of the two-dimensional surface is affirmed. When visual elements are used in a less restrictive way to mimic forms in life, the image can resist the two-dimensionality of the surface, and can give the illusion of form. Johannes Vermeer was well known for his highly rendered paintings that created the illusion of depth and realism. In *The Milkmaid* (6.13), Vermeer examined the ways that light hit different objects and textures, like thick wool, skin, or liquids, and recreated them to make a realistic-appearing painting.



(6.12) Hartley, Marsden. *Movement No. 10*, 1917. Oil on composition board. 38.7 x 49.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(6.13) Vermeer, Johannes. *The Milkmaid*, circa 1660. Oil on canvas. 45.5 x 41 cm. RijksMuseum. Johannes Vermeer, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Keep in mind that when working with forms, artists have to consider how other visual elements will be impacted by the forms they create. When working with actual forms, they consider how the surface material and form will interact with actual [light](#), or the light that surrounds the object. This light will change elements in the form like [value](#) and [color](#). Artists can apply a range of techniques while creating forms that change these other elements even further. A roughly carved wooden sculpture will reflect and diffuse light very differently than a polished bronze casting for example. Referring back to our first example, the deep fabric folds Lombardi created by carving deep in the marble block out actual light and create high contrast between light and dark values, creating a dramatic and mysterious effect. As we discussed in the section on [light](#), artists can use implied or simulated light within an image to create forms on a two-dimensional surface. These observations on how actual light changes the visual elements on an actual form can be reapplied to a form on a two-dimensional surface for descriptive and expressive purposes.



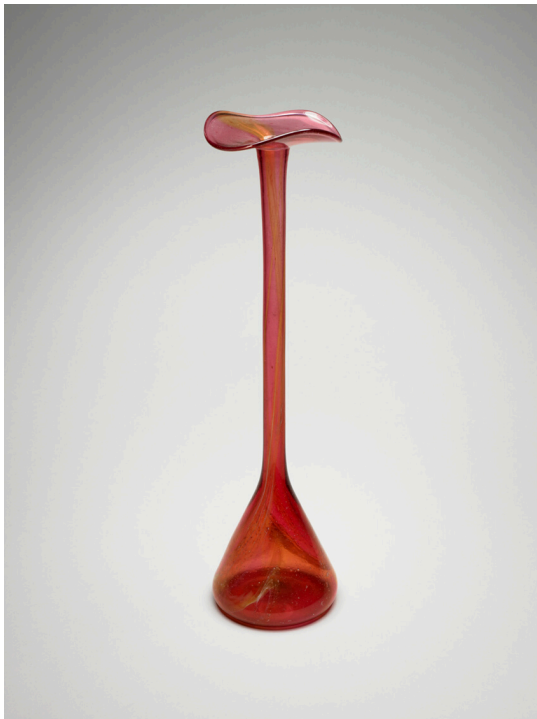
(6.8) Lombardi, Giovanni Battista . *Veiled Woman*, 1869. Marble. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of Robert L. Isaacson, 1984.



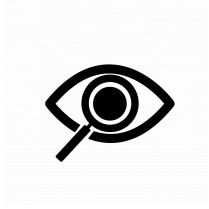
(6.9) Modigliani, Amedeo. *Head of a Woman*, c.1911-1912. Limestone. 65.2x 16.5x 24.8 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



(6.10) Boccioni, Umberto. *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, cast 1950. Bronze. 121.3 x 88.9 x 40 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Lydia Winston Malbin, 1989.



(6.11) Dresser, Christopher (Designer). *Clutha Vase*, 1890-1900. Blown Glass. 42.8 x 11.1cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Richard T. Crane, Jr. Endowment.



Let's Practice

Shape

Observe this oil painting called *Movements* by Marsden Hartley (6.14). Inspired by European expressionist painters like Vasily Kandinsky, Hartley was interested in visualizing music. Analyze this painting for its use of shapes. What kinds of shapes do you see here? Given the context provided, what effects, moods, or emotions do these shapes convey? Does the artist rely on other visual elements to achieve this? Which ones?



(6.14) Hartley, Marsden. *Movements*, 1913. Oil on canvas. 119.5 x 119 cm.
The Art Institute of Chicago.

Form

Analyze the two artworks below (6.15, 6.16) for their use of form and answer the following questions for each using terminology from the texts. Because form interacts with the other visual elements, you may need to review other visual elements.

- 1.) Are these forms implied or actual? Describe the forms you see.
- 2.) If implied, what visual elements are being used to imply depth?
- 3.) If actual, what visual elements are being considered by the artist when making the forms? Why? What effect(s) do they create?



(6.15) Hunt, Morris Hunt. *The Horses of Anahita*, modeled 1848-1850, cast 1882-1910. Plaster in a wooden frame. 49 x 74.5 x 31.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(6.16) Harnett, William Michael. *Just Desserts*, 1891. Oil on canvas. 56.6 x 68 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

7. Space

Space refers to the area within, around, and between objects. It can be manipulated to create a sense of depth, perspective, and movement. In two-dimensional art forms, space is often an illusion created through **perspective**. In Western art, artists utilize two main types of perspectives: linear and atmospheric (or aerial) perspective. **Linear perspective** is a technique used to create the illusion of depth on a flat surface by using a system of lines and points to replicate how objects appear smaller as they recede into the distance, converging towards a single point (or points) on the horizon line. **Atmospheric (or aerial) perspective** creates the illusion of depth by depicting distant objects as paler, less detailed, and usually bluer than nearer objects.

Linear Perspective

In order to understand how linear perspective functions, you need to have clarity on some key components and concepts:

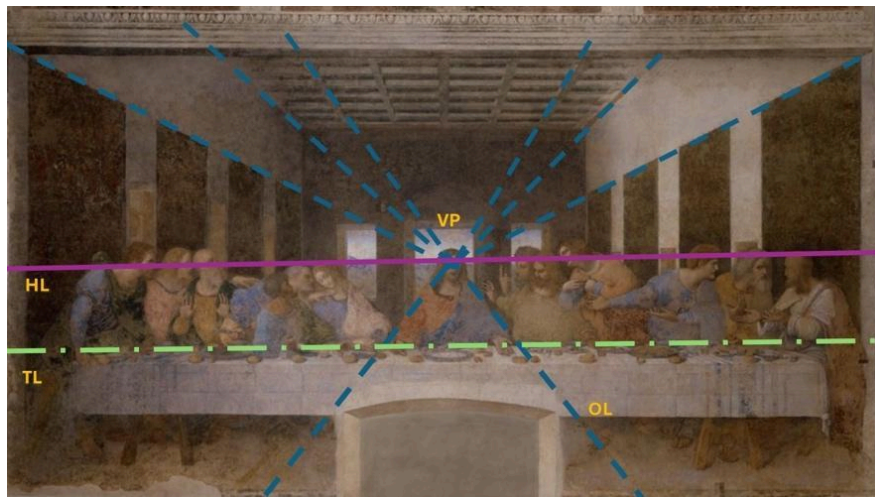
1. **Horizon Line:** As explained when we discussed [line](#) as a visual element, the horizon line represents the viewer's eye level and is where the sky meets the ground or sea. In a landscape, it often corresponds to the actual horizon, but in interiors or other scenes, it represents the viewer's line of sight.
2. **Vanishing Point:** A point on the horizon line where parallel lines appear to converge. It is the key element in establishing perspective.
3. **Orthogonal Lines:** These are diagonal lines that recede towards the vanishing point. They are crucial in creating the depth and dimensionality of the objects in the artwork.
4. **Transversal Lines:** These horizontal lines run parallel to the horizon line and are perpendicular to the orthogonal lines. They help in defining the [scale and proportion](#) of objects within the space.



Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* (7.1) is a prime example of linear perspective. The fresco depicts a moment in the Bible when Jesus reveals to his disciples that one of them will betray him. The **horizon line** intersects with the central figure of Christ, drawing attention to him and creating a sense of depth and spatial organization. The **vanishing point** is located at the composition's center, directly behind Christ's

(7.1) da Vinci, Leonardo. *Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Fresco. Milan (IT)

head. The **diagonal lines** extend from the room's corners towards the vanishing point. **Transversal lines** are conveyed by elements such as the table and the window behind Christ. A clear explanation of the aforementioned terms is observable in figure 7.2.



(7.2) da Vinci, Leonardo. *Last Supper*, rendering of the linear perspective.

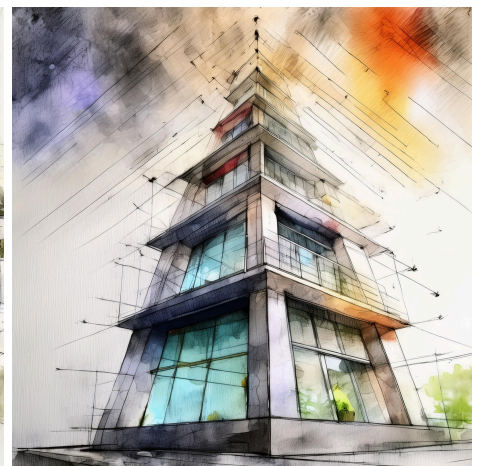
The most common types of linear perspective can be one-point, two-point, and three-point perspective. The AI-generated images below (7.3, 7.4, 7.5) will help you understand the difference between the three. The **one-point perspective** utilizes a single vanishing point on the horizon line and is commonly used for compositions with objects facing the viewer directly (e.g., a straight road disappearing into the distance). The **two-point perspective** utilizes two vanishing points on the horizon line. It is often used for architectural drawings where the corner of a building faces the viewer, and the sides recede towards two different vanishing points. The **three-point perspective** uses three vanishing points, two on the horizon line and one above or below the horizon. This technique is used to create a bird's-eye view or worm's-eye view, adding a more dramatic sense of depth and perspective.



(7.3) One-Point Linear Perspective.
Created with Adobe Firefly, June 2024



(7.4) Two-Point Linear Perspective.
Created with Adobe Firefly, June 2024

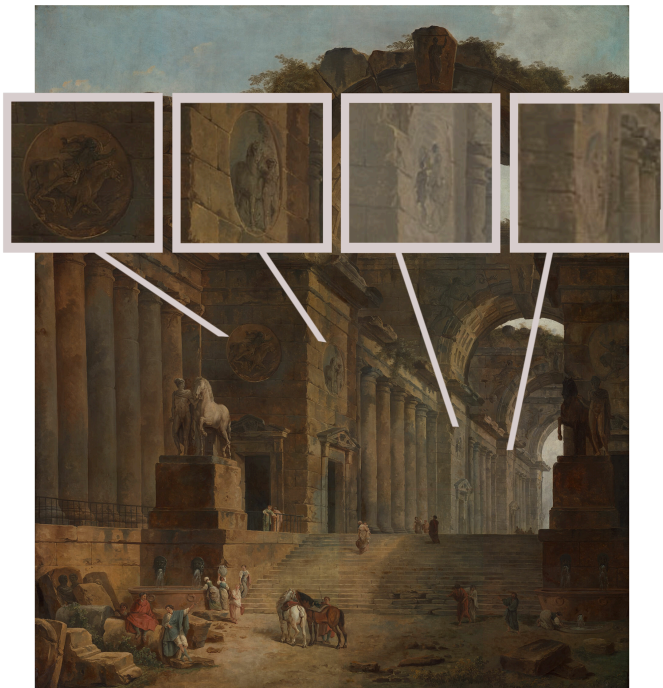


(7.5) Three-Point Linear Perspective.
Created with Adobe Firefly, June 2024

Atmospheric (or Aerial) Perspective

This method simulates the effect that the atmosphere has on objects viewed from a distance. It mimics how we perceive the world in reality, where the atmosphere causes distant objects to look different from those near, thereby creating a convincing sense of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface. To achieve that effect, artists leverage different visual elements. First, as objects recede into the distance, their [colors](#) become lighter and less saturated because the atmosphere scatters light, causing distant objects to appear less vivid compared to those in the foreground. Moreover, distant objects often take on a **blue tint**. This happens because shorter blue wavelengths of light are scattered more by the atmosphere. In *The Juniata, Evening*, Thomas Moran masterfully utilizes colors to convey the vastness of the landscape and guide the viewer's eye toward the mountains (7.6). Notice how the colors become more subtle compared to the bright green of the vegetation in the foreground or how the mountains in the background show a progressive blue tint. In atmospheric perspective, distant objects are also depicted with **less detail** and **lower contrast**. The fine details that are visible up close become blurred or indistinct, and the contrast between light and dark areas is reduced.

Like color, [implied texture](#) can also be used in an image to create depth and the illusion of atmospheric perspective using the sfumato technique. Meaning “hazy”, “blurred” or “smokey”, the sfumato technique is the intentional blurring of edges and surfaces of objects. This technique, seen in Hubert Robert's *The Fountains* (7.7), can be used to create depth by mimicking the human eye, which blurs objects as they recede into the distance.



(7.7) Robert, Hubert. *The Fountains*, 1787/1788. Oil on canvas. 255.3 × 221.2 cm. Art Institute of Chicago.



(7.6) Moran, Thomas. *The Juniata, Evening*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 50.8 x 76.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Max and Heidi Berry and Ann and Mark Kington/The Kington Foundation.

Perspective and Context

Perspective is also influenced by cultural context. For instance, the linear perspective discussed above was developed during the Renaissance, with Filippo Brunelleschi being credited for its formalization in the early 15th century. That is the model widely applied in Western art. On the other hand, **non-Western art** can employ different methods. In traditional Japanese art, such as ukiyo-e prints, artists often employ a technique where objects are drawn without a vanishing point, maintaining consistent proportions regardless of their position. This approach can be seen in the *Street Scene in Yoshiwara* by Moronobu (7.8). Moreover, Japanese art frequently emphasizes a flat brushstroke, with less concern for creating an illusion of depth, as observable in *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake* (7.9).



(7.8) Moronobu, Hishikawa. *Street Scene in Yoshiwara*, Edo period (1615–1868), late 17th century. Monochrome woodblock print; ink on paper, 27.3 x 38.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of Julia H. Manges, in memory of her husband, Dr. Morris Manges, 1960.



(7.9) Ōhashi Atake no yūdachi, *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake* (*Ōhashi Atake no yūdachi*), from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (*Meisho Edo hyakkei*), Edo period (1615–1868), 1857. Woodblock print; ink and color on paper. Oban 34 x 24.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Howard Mansfield Collection, Purchase, Rogers Fund, 1936.



Let's Practice

With reference to the two artworks shown below (7.10, 7.11), indicate if and where you can find the following elements:

- Horizon Line
- Vanishing Point
- Orthogonal Lines
- Transversal Lines

What is the overall effect of space? Are these examples of one-, two-, or three-point perspectives, and why? Or are these examples of aerial (atmospheric) perspective? Please always provide the rationale for your choices.



(7.10) Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal). *Piazza San Marco*, late 1720s. Oil on canvas, 68.6 x 112.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Purchase, Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift, 1988.



(7.11) Church, Frederic. *El Rio de Luz (The River of Light)*, 1877. Oil on canvas, 138.1 x 213.7 cm. Gift of the Avalon Foundation. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

8. Motion and Time

Motion refers to the depiction or suggestion of movement within a static image or object. Artists use various techniques to create the illusion that objects or figures are in action. That can be achieved using [implied lines](#) to guide the viewer's eye along a path that can suggest movement or using **diagonal lines**, **spirals**, and **curves**. Artists belonging to the Italian avant-garde movement known as Futurism were highly concerned with the depiction of motion. Figures or objects captured in dynamic poses and gestures convey a sense of motion, as we have seen in Umberto Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (6.10). Artists can also convey motion by repeating the same form multiple times in slightly different positions along a path, which can suggest movement. In *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (8.1), Giacomo Balla conveys motion through overlapping and intersecting [shapes](#) of the dog's legs and the owner's feet, creating a sense of movement and energy. The leash twists and turns, echoing the dog's frenetic energy.



(8.1) Balla, Giacomo. *Dinamismo di un cane al guinzaglio* (*Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*), 1912. Oil on canvas, support: 89.8525 x 109.855. Bequest of A. Conger Goodyear and Gift of George F. Goodyear, 1964. Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

Time as a visual element in art refers to the representation or suggestion of the passage of time. Artists can imply time through a series of artworks capturing different moments within a continuous narrative or showing the transformation of a subject. Throughout his career as an artist, Rembrandt created numerous self-portraits (8.2, 8.3). Together, they offer a glimpse into the different phases of his life. Progressive transformations and aging caused by the **passage of time** and other factors can also be part of artists' intentions, albeit those variations may not be in their complete control. Land Art, also known as earth art, often engages directly with the natural landscape and elements, making the passage of time an intrinsic part of the work. Andy Goldsworthy uses natural materials like ice, leaves, and stones; his works are often designed to decay and disappear, showcasing the impermanence of nature. In *Cone* (8.4), for instance, the effects of wind, rain, and other **natural forces** on the stone highlight the passage of time as these elements gradually wear down or reshape the work.



(8.2) van Rijn, Rembrandt. *Self-Portrait*, 1659. Oil on canvas. 84.5 x 66 cm. Andrew W. Mellon Collection. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



(8.3) van Rijn, Rembrandt. *Self-Portrait*, c. 1637. Red chalk. 12.9 x 11.9 cm. Rosenwald Collection. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



(8.4) Goldsworthy, Andy. *Cone*, 1992.
Steer-plate, 4-feet tall. Royal Botanic Garden,
Edinburgh. Ham, CC BY-SA 3.0
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>.
0>, via Wikimedia Commons



Let's Practice

Eadweard J. Muybridge was an English photographer known for his pioneering work in photographic studies of motion and early motion-picture projection. He is most famous for his motion studies of humans and animals, which aimed to capture and analyze movement in a sequential series of photographs. Observe the following photograph and reflect on how Muybridge is attempting to capture motion (8.5).



(8.5) Animal Locomotion: Emptying a Bucket of Water, 1887.
Eadweard J. Muybridge (American, 1830–1904). Collotype;
image: 22.5 x 34 cm (8 7/8 x 13 3/8 in.); paper: 47.4 x 60.4 cm (18 11/16 x 23 3/4 in.);
matted: 50.8 x 61 cm (20 x 24 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art,
Gift of Laurence Miller Gallery, New York, in honor of Evan H. Turner 1992.220

Principles of Design

[illegible]

9. Unity (Harmony)

An artwork expresses unity by presenting a sense of cohesion or harmony in a composition. Through **unity** (also referred to as **harmony**), all parts of an image work together to create a cohesive whole, helping the viewer's eye navigate through the artwork smoothly. In so doing, it enhances the overall aesthetic experience. Artists can achieve unity by using analogous [colors](#) (groups of colors adjacent on the color wheel), or a limited range of hues, such as in Whistler's *Symphony in White* (9.1). Here, a restricted palette and different shades of white create compelling spatial and visual connections. Creating balance through [symmetrical or asymmetrical arrangements](#) helps unify the composition. For instance, Sashiko is a quilting method employing a simple running stitch to strengthen textiles or fuse recycled cloth into new garments. In this example (9.2), the robe showcases three patterns of interlocking circles, called shippō-tsunagi, which creates visual harmony and a unified design.² In architecture, unity can also be achieved by repeating certain elements. The Colosseum is a prime example of Roman architecture (9.3). It showcases a sense of harmony through a symmetrical and balanced design of the three tiers of arches in the outer facade (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian), which provide a cohesive aesthetic.

² <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/50805>



(9.1) Whistler, James McNeill. *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1861-1863, 1872. Oil on canvas, overall: 213 x 107.9 cm. Harris Whittemore Collection. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



(9.2) Sashiko Jacket. Meiji period (1868–1912). Indigo-dyed plain-weave cotton, quilted and embroidered with white cotton thread. Overall: 129.9 x 125.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Seymour Fund, 1967.



(9.3) The Colosseum, Rome. 80 AD. Sam valadi, CC BY 2.0
[<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/), via Wikimedia Commons



Let's Practice

Observe the following pictures (9.4, 9.5) and consider: do these artworks present a sense of cohesion or harmony in the composition? How so? How could unity be enhanced further?



(9.4) Pair of Cups. China. 1723-35.
Porcelain painted in
underglaze blue and overglaze
enamels (doucai).
A: h. 5.7 cm, diam. 10.2 cm, B: h.5.7
cm, diam.10.0 cm.
Bequest of Henry C. Schwab. The Art
Institute of Chicago.



(9.5) Driscoll, Clara (Designer).
Lamp with "Hanging Head
Dragonfly" Shade and "Mosaic and
Turtleback" Base, 1901-11.
Favrile glass and bronze. 86.4 × 57.2
cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

10. Variety

Now that we have acquired clarity on [unity \(or harmony\)](#), we can look at its opposite. **Variety** adds interest to a composition by introducing different elements and contrasts. While unity brings cohesion, variety prevents monotony. It keeps the viewer engaged. As per unity, variety can be achieved through various techniques. For instance, artists can include diverse geometric, irregular, or abstract [shapes](#) to add visual interest and contrast to a composition, as in José Guadalupe Posada's twentieth-century song booklet cover (10.1). Here, the playful spatial arrangement and the overlapping of images and words engage the viewer.

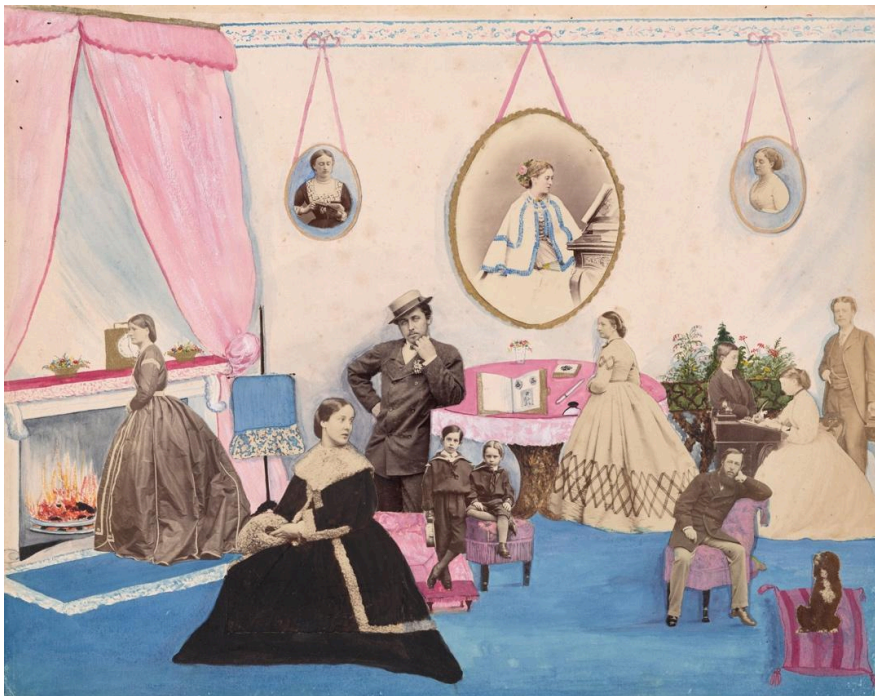


(10.1) Posada, José Guadalupe. Cover for “La Rumba: Coleccion de Canciones Modernas para el Presente Año 1903” (detail), ca. 1903. Chiaroscuro engraving and letterpress printed in red and black on tan paper. Whole sheet: 14.8 × 20 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1946.

In *Painting with Green Center*, instead, Vasily Kandinsky uses [complementary colors](#) including green and red, as well as saturation contrast to create vibrance and impact (10.2). Through the collage technique, which combines and fuses diverse materials such as paper, photographs, and fabrics on a hard surface, artists can achieve variety through the different [textures](#) of the collage elements. In her collage, Lady Filmer utilizes watercolor and cropped photographs to create a scene of friends gathering (10.3). The smooth effect of the watercolor technique used to depict the drawing room next to the glossier surface of the photographs adds tactile interest. The manipulation of spatial relationships, like proximity and overlap of the different elements, dynamically alters the perception of space within a composition. Consider the variations in proportion among the different figures and the three photographic portraits on the wall, which introduce rhythm and a sense of humor into the composition.



(10.2) Kandinsky, Vasily. *Painting with Green Center*, 1913. Oil on canvas.
108.9 × 118.4 cm. Arthur Jerome Eddy Memorial Collection. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(10.3) Caroline, Mary Georgiana (Lady Filmer). *Lady Filmer in her Drawing Room*, 1863-1868. Albumen prints, collage and watercolor. Image: 22.5 × 28.2 cm;
Mount: 36.9 × 42.8 cm. Through prior gifts of Mrs. Jack Diamond and Michael Glicker.
The Art Institute of Chicago.



Let's Practice

As seen before in *Lady Filmer in her Drawing Room*, collage in art is a technique of creating a new whole from a variety of different materials, such as photographs, paper, fabric, or other objects, to form a larger composition. The word "collage" comes from the French word "coller," which means "to glue." Artists create collages by arranging and pasting these materials onto a surface, such as canvas or paper, to produce a visually cohesive and often layered artwork. This technique offers artists a versatile way to express their creativity. Today, you will create your own collage to practice variety as a principle of composition.

Step 1: Collect a variety of **textured materials** such as magazines, newspapers, colored paper, fabric scraps, and any other items that provide different tactile experiences.

Step 2: Carefully cut out **different shapes** from the collected materials. Consider shapes, sizes, and textures to ensure a rich variety.

Step 3: Begin **arranging** the cut-out shapes on a piece of paper or carton board. Experiment with placement, layering, and overlapping to create an interesting visual composition. Emphasize variety in the placement of different textures and shapes.

Step 4: Once satisfied with the arrangement, **glue** the shapes onto the surface. Use pencils and colored markers to add details to your work.

Step 5: **Reflect** on the following prompt: How did you achieve a variety of textures and shapes? What other principles of composition are well represented in the collage?

11. Balance

Balance is the sense of equilibrium between opposing forces in a composition. One or more elements can be arranged so that opposing forces have equal visual weight on either side of an imaginary central axis. Any combination of the visual elements explored earlier can be used to create balance. It can also be achieved through a single element, like balancing complementary [colors](#) or different types of [lines](#) or [textures](#). Creating balance in a work creates a sense of cohesion, harmony and order. Artists can intentionally avoid balance in a composition to create the opposite effects of tension or uneasiness.

There are several ways that balance can be achieved in an image or object. **Symmetrical balance**, for example, is when there is congruity between parts of an image or object along a central axis. When parts of a work can be mirrored on both sides, such as the figure on the Chimú ceremonial knife or *Tumi* (10.1), this is an exact form of symmetrical balance called **bilateral symmetry**. Some symmetrical works are non-exact, like the 10th-11th century bronze sculpture of Nataraja from Tamil Nadu in India (10.2). This near-exact symmetry still relies on parts and elements equal in weight on either side of the work. While the limbs of the bronze sculpture are in different positions, symmetrical balance is still achieved through the similar arrangement of lines that represent the god's hair, the pattern of fire that encircles the central figure, and the balanced weight of the figure on either side.



(10.2) Unknown Artist from Tamil Nadu. *Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)*, 901-1100 CE. Bronze. 69.3 x 61.8 x 24.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Radial Symmetry is another form of symmetrical balance in which elements and parts of an object or image radiate away from a central point. The ceiling in the dome of the Pantheon in Rome (10.3) relies on radial symmetry to stay balanced: architectural elements of the coffered ceiling radiate away from a central point, the oculus, and create a movement that carries the eyes down from the ceiling to the walls.

Many images and objects, like Katsushika Hokusai's *Under the Wave off Kanagawa (The Great Wave)* (10.4), take a more complex approach to balance. *Under the Wave* is not identical on either side of its central axes, and instead uses balanced, opposing visual elements to create **asymmetrical balance**. The use of yellow on the ships on the right side of the print acts as a counterweight to the abundance of blue and action lines of the wave on the left side of the image. The light pink and white representing the clouds and sky are used on both sides of the print to connect them, while the use of gray in the center prevents the overuse of these colors on the right side. Finally, the use of curved,

diagonal lines throughout the image guides the viewer from the calmer waves on the right side of the print into the great wave on the left. Once here, the curved lines of the wave are meant to guide the viewer back up and over to the right side of the image, creating an ordered sense of movement throughout the entire work.



(10.1) Chimú artist. Ceremonial Knife (*Tumi*), 1100-1470 CE. Gold with turquoise inlay. 34 x 12.7 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(10.3) Coffered ceiling of the Pantheon in Rome, 125 CE. Concrete. Photo by Catherine Juliano.



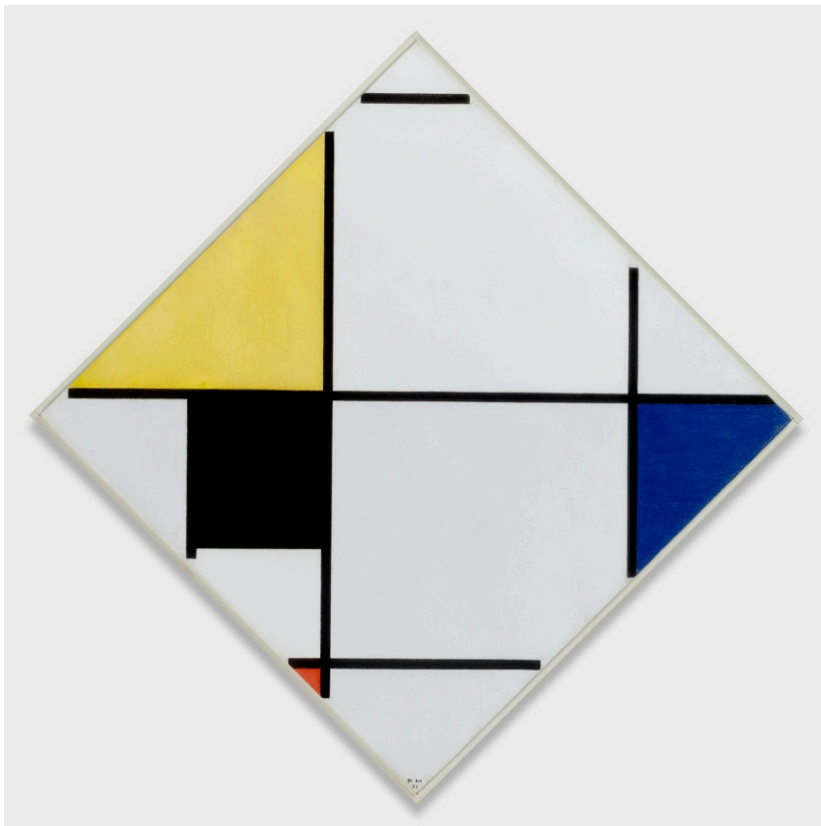
(10.4) Hokusai, Katsushika . *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (*The Great Wave*), from the series "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji", 1830/1833. Color woodblock print. 5.7 x 7.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Let's Practice

Look at Piet Mondrian's 1921 *Lozenge Composition with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red, and Gray* and answer the following questions:

- 1.) Does this painting use symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial balance?
- 2.) Imagine a line down the horizontal central axis. Is the painting balanced on both sides?
- 3.) Is it balanced or equally weighted along its vertical axis?
- 4.) If the image is balanced, what visual elements or principles of composition are used to balance the image?



(10.5) Mondrian, Piet. *Lozenge Composition with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red, and Gray*, 1921. Oil on canvas. 60 x 60 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

12. Emphasis

Emphasis is the intentional creation of one or more focal points, or centers of interest, within a single composition. Focal points grab the viewer's attention. They are intentionally given priority over other parts of an image or objects to highlight their significance and importance to the work as a whole. Areas with emphasis can help highlight themes, stories, meanings, emotions, or goals of the artwork. Because it is helpful in conveying messages and capturing attention, emphasis is often used in images like advertisements, propagandistic imagery, or public service announcements.

Emphasis can be achieved through a single contrasting element or any combination of elements. A soft [texture](#) can clash against a background made of hard textures, and a bright [value](#) surrounded by darker values will capture attention quickly. In this World War II propaganda poster by J. Howard Miller (12.1), [color](#) is used to create emphasis. Blue is contrasted against a saturated, bright yellow background to direct the viewer's attention toward the text that encouraged women to join the workforce during the war. Other principles of design can be used to create emphasis. Patterns and movements are commonly used in jewelry to emphasize a more valuable focal point, like the pectoral on this necklace from the Ancient Egyptian Middle Kingdom Era (12.2).



(12.1) J. Howard Miller. “We Can Do It!” (*Rosie the Riveter*). C. 1942-1943. Lithograph. National Archives and Records Administration.



(12.2) Unknown Artist. Pectoral a Necklace of Sithathoryunet with the Name of Senwoset II, ca. 1887-1878 BCE. Gold, carnelian, lapis lazuli, turquoise, garnet. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Rogers Fund and Henry Walters Gift, 1916.

In composition, there can be a **primary** or **central** point of focus, which has the most emphasis, and it can be followed by **secondary** or **subordinate** points of focus, which have less emphasis. Not every work has secondary emphases, but they can help to reinforce the primary point of focus. In Henry Ossawa Tanner's portrait of his mother (12.3), the primary focus is the figure's face, as it has the brightest values in the image. The secondary point, the cloth draped behind her, is slightly less bright and helps to guide the eye towards the figure's face.

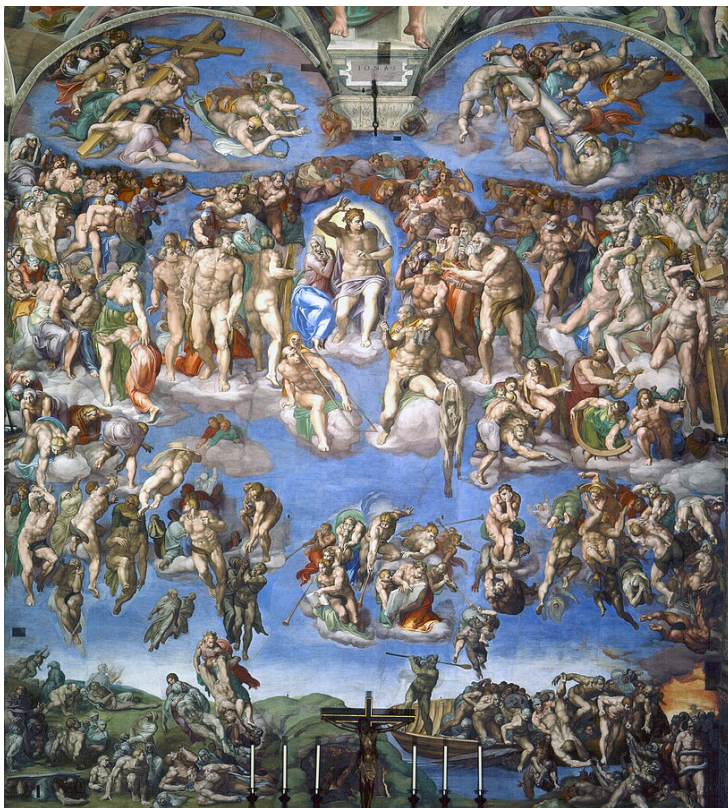
Not every composition has a strong focal point. **All-over compositions** are made when all parts of a work are equally emphasized. Completely balanced elements will reduce emphasis. In Vasily Kandinsky's *Improvisation No.30 (Cannons)* (12.4), line, color, and shape are balanced in all sections of work so no one part of the image receives more attention than the other parts. When elements are less balanced, an all-over composition can still have a focal point. Mary and Christ, the two central figures in Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment* (12.5) may be hard to identify in such a busy image if it were not for the placement of bright yellow behind them. Along with the circular arrangement of figures and the implied lines of the halo, the use of yellow contrasts with the blue sky further behind the two figures, giving them more emphasis than the other figures in the image.



(12.3) Henry Ossawa Tanner. *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*. 1897. Oil on Canvas. 74.3 x 100.3cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Partial gift of Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter and purchased with the W. P. Wiltach Fund, the George W. Elkins Fund, the Edward and Althea Budd Fund, and with funds contributed by The Dietrich Foundation, EW1993-61-1. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



(12.4) Kandinsky, Vasily. *Improvisation No.30 (Cannons)*, 1913. Oil on canvas. 111 x 111.3 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(12.5) Michelangelo. *The Last Judgment*. 1536-1541. Fresco. 1370 x 1220 cm. Sistine Chapel in Rome, Italy. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



Let's Practice

Look at Francisco de Goya's *Third of May 1808 in Madrid*. Painted in 1814, this painting reflects on the Spanish resistance to Napoleon's armies during the Peninsular War (1807-1814). On May 3rd, 1808, Spanish rebels to the French occupation in Madrid were rounded up and massacred by Napoleon's army, leaving a profound impression on the artist.

What is being emphasized in this image? How is emphasis created here? What elements and principles are being used to achieve this emphasis?

Considering the historical context provided, why did the artist intentionally make this area the focal point of the image?



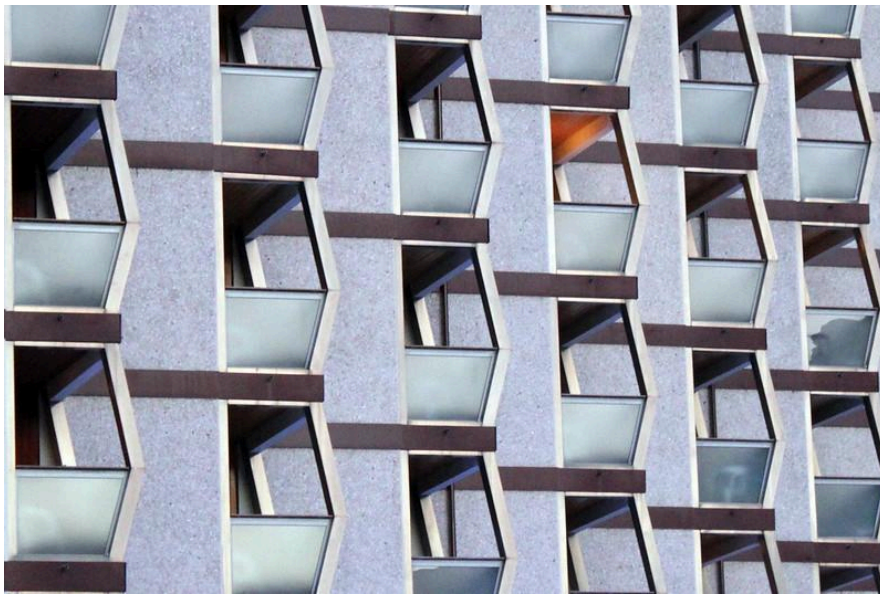
(12.6) Goya, Francisco. *Third of May 1808*, 1814. Oil on canvas.
268 x 347 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado. Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

13. Repetition

Whenever you see repeated visual elements on an object or in an image, the artist is using **repetition**. Repetition is used in many ways for a variety of goals. Most commonly, it can be used to establish a [pattern](#) or [rhythm](#). You will see repetition mentioned again when we discuss these other two principles of design. Because we are psychologically predisposed to recognize patterns and repetition, it can also create movement, and lead the eyes from one part of an artwork to the other. Repeating visual elements on either side of an image helps to unify sections of an artwork, and create [symmetrical or asymmetrical balance](#). In more expressive works, the abundance of a repeated segment can help to reinforce a theme or mood. Repetition can be used to emphasize the elements that are not repeated, like in this architectural photograph (13.1). The bright orange glow reflecting on one of the patio ceilings contrasts sharply with the uniformity of the rest of the image, creating an interesting focal point.

Repetition can also be used in a more practical way. The repetition of [lines](#) can be used to create the illusion of form or [shadow](#), or to recreate [textures](#) like fur or wood. Architecture often uses repeated features like windows, columns, and arches to make the structure look orderly and give it functionality or stability. Pieces of jewelry will often repeat elements to ensure that the piece will be balanced when worn.

Repetition is common in life and design. Many aspects of nature are highly cyclical and repetitive, therefore an artist can use repetition as a way to signify the passage of time. Repetition is extremely useful for creating unity or order. When used across multiple images, repetition can signify that a single image is connected to several others. Businesses will often repeat designs and elements to unify all of their branding imagery, from business cards to t-shirts to official website pages. Artists can use repetition on multiple works to create larger works made from smaller ones or even a unified series. The lines, colors, and shapes that make up the shell motif in these dishes made by Seifū Yohei IV (13.2) are repeated in each of the five dishes, signifying that they are part of the same set.



(13.1) Architectural Features on the Alpina Eclectic Hotel in Chamonix, France. 2015. Photograph by Dious. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/91387891@N07/>.



(13.2) Dishes with Shells, c. 1915. Seifū Yohei IV (Japanese, 1872–1951). Set of five dishes; porcelain with blue glaze, iron oxide, and molded design; height (each): 2.5 cm (1 in.); diameter (each): 12.1 cm (4 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of James and Christine Heusinger 2022.213



Let's Practice

Analyze this print by Henri Evenepoel for its use of repetition. What visual elements are being repeated? What does repetition in this print achieve? There are multiple answers.

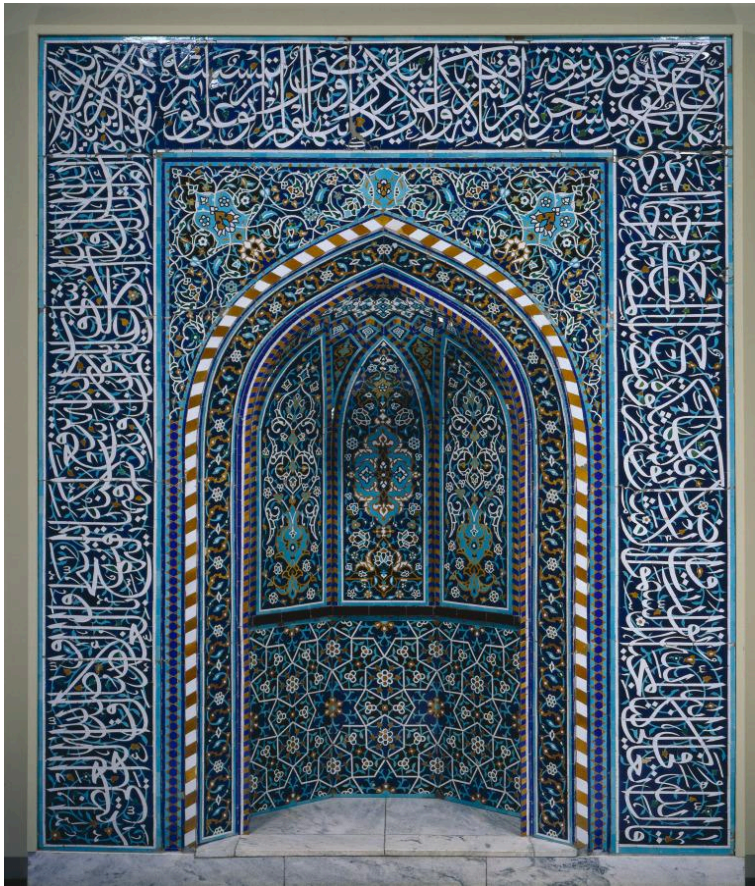


(13.3) Published in L'Estampe Moderne: In the Square, 1897. Henri Evenepoel (Belgian, 1872–1899). Color lithograph; sheet: 40.5 x 30.6 cm (15 15/16 x 12 1/16 in.); image: 33 x 23.1 cm (13 x 9 1/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of John Bonebrake 2009.558.

14. Pattern

Pattern is the repetitive arrangement of visual elements. A pattern can be created using a single element, like [line](#), [color](#), or [texture](#), or by using any combination of visual elements in a single, repeated form. Patterns can be regular, or exact, like the patterns on fabrics, textiles, or wallpaper, or irregular and non-exact. Aside from the writing along the outermost portion, this prayer niche (*Mihrab*) (14.1) is decorated with many highly regular patterns. Regular patterns can range in complexity. A single repeated shape alternating between white and gold is simple, while the pattern outside of this section is made of multiple, alternating organic shapes defined by elaborate lines and several colors. The dancers in Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's *Ballet Dancers* (14.2) form an irregular pattern because they vary in scale, color, and detail. Both regular and irregular patterns are used to create a sense of balance, contrast, emphasis, or rhythm in an image or object. The repetitive nature of patterns naturally creates movement in the work and encourages the eyes to travel along the composition in a rhythmic manner. The pattern created by the repeated figures of the dancers in *Ballet Dancers* leads the eyes to and from the opposite corners of the canvas. Combined with the energy created by contrasting colors, dramatic lighting, and short action lines, this pattern creates movement and rhythm that mimics the movement of dancers.

Beyond regular and irregular patterns, there are types of patterns found in art. **Natural patterns** are those pulled from or inspired by nature. These patterns naturally occur and can be spotted in everything from shells, leaves, animal pelts, and tree branches. They are typically irregular and can be applied to images and objects to create movement, order, and [rhythm](#) in an object or image. **Man-made patterns** are patterns that are used to compose the structure of images and objects, or they can be used more decoratively. The pattern of [shape](#) and [value](#) created by curved edges creates the large open space of the interior of the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum (14.3), creating a unique pattern that leads the viewer's eyes up to the glass ceiling. The painted tree branches used as decoration in the Moche Vessel Depicting a Bird-Hunting Scene (14.4) create a pattern of negative and positive space on the body of the vessel and guide the eyes around the vessel to the figure opposite the handle.



(14.1) Prayer Niche (Mihrab), c. 1500s or mid-1900s. Iran, Isfahan, in the style of the Safavid period (1501–1722). Ceramic mosaic; mihrab: 290.7 x 245.3 cm (114 7/16 x 96 9/16 in.); frieze: 69.2 x 1563.5 cm (27 1/4 x 615 9/16 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Katharine Holden Thayer 1962.23



(14.2) Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. *Ballet Dancers*. 1885/1886. Oil on Plaster transferred to canvas. 153.5 x 152.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(14.3) Evan-Amos and Vanamo Media. *Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Levels*. 2012. Photograph (cropped). Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons



(14.4) Moche Artist. Vessel Depicting a Bird-Hunting Scene, 100 BCE-500 CE. Ceramic and pigment. H.: 19.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Let's Practice

This photograph by Lewis Wickes Hine depicts a young girl, Sadie Pfeifer, working as a cotton mill spinner in front of a cotton loom in Lancaster, South Carolina. This photograph belongs to a group of photographs that were taken in 1908 while Hine was working with the National Child Labor Committee. This photo sparked debates about reforming child labor laws in the United States.



(14.5) Lewis Wickes Hine. *Sadie Pfeifer, a Cotton Mill Spinner, Lancaster, South Carolina*, 1908. Gelatin silver print. 11.6 x 15.3 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

- 1.) Analyze the photograph. Look for and identify patterns in the image. What visual elements are being created? What effects or principles of design do these patterns create?
- 2.) Given the context of the image and the information provided, what is the purpose of using these patterns in the image? What emotions or messages do they provoke?

15. Rhythm

Rhythm is the ordering or repetition of time, like the tempo of a song. Rhythm in art acts as a sort of visual tempo and encourages our eyes to move across an object or image at a specific pace. Rhythm is created with the repetition of a single or multiple visual elements. This repetition can be used for many reasons, like establishing a pattern, unifying or balancing parts of an artwork, creating movement, or emphasizing certain parts of an image or artwork.

Rhythm can be created in a number of ways. **Regular** rhythms are commonly created with more uniform forms of repetition, like patterns. Regular rhythms are highly unifying and help to establish balance. This 14th-century silk curtain (15.1) has a very exact rhythm, established by patterns. The consistent spacing of visual elements like the gold rectangles and squares creates a sequence. This sequence also alternates between the bright gold motifs and the red negative space.



(15.1) Silk curtain from the Alhambra palace, 1300s. Spain, Granada, Nasrid period. Lampas and taqueté: silk; overall: 438.2 x 271.8 cm (172 1/2 x 107 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund 1982.16

The exact, regular rhythm on this curtain helps to signify high-quality craftsmanship. Regular rhythms can also be less exact. Observe this painting by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (15.2). Despite the imprecise lines, shapes, and highly saturated colors, the alternating pattern of light and dark values in the floorboards, steps, and ladder helps to balance both sides of the canvas and unifies the three figures in a single space.

Irregular or **random** rhythms have no discernable pattern; visual elements will vary, but can sometimes repeat or share similarities. Visual elements can also be similarly spaced out from one another in order to create a visual tempo. Irregular rhythm is very practical when working with all-over compositions with no focal points and creating harmony within particularly expressive or chaotic images and objects. There is no pattern among the colors, lines, or fabric patterns in Gustav Klimt's *Baby (Cradle)* (15.3). An infant's face and outreached hand are depicted, resting on a cushion and swaddled under an abundance of blankets and fabrics. The number of patterns and disorganized arrangement of cloth create intentional chaos, while the absence of a recognizable background or cradle is disorienting. In this case irregular rhythm is used to create order in the chaos. The inorganic [shapes](#) that create the folds of the fabric increase in scale as they progress toward the bottom of the image, giving the illusion of

three-dimensionality. The progressive use of shape creates an irregular rhythm that moves the eyes vertically up the canvas, increasing in speed as the shapes of the fabric shrink. This progressive rhythm creates excitement, which ceases once the viewer approaches the focal point, the infant's face. In the 15th-century six-panel screens depicting the Tale of Taishokan (15.4) the placement of individual scenes all over the screens gives all parts equal weight and emphasis. Instead of relying on a focal point, the artist created an irregular rhythm by evenly spacing out parts of the screen using gold paper. The rhythm created with the uniform negative space suggests the passage of time in the narrative and helps the eye move from the left to the right of the object.



(15.2) Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. *The Visit- Couple and Newcomer*; 1922. Oil on canvas. 120.6 x 120.9 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



(15.3) Klimt, Gustav. *Baby (Cradle)*, 1917/1918. Oil on canvas. 110.9 x 110.4 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.



(15.4) Unknown Artist. *The Tale of Taishokan*, 1635-1685. Pair of six-panel screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Let's Practice

Political Drama is Robert Delaunay's visual interpretation of a newspaper illustration and caption in which Mme Cailloux, the wife of a French finance minister, shoots dead Gaston Calmette, the editor of the morning newspaper *Le Figaro*. Does this painting use a regular or irregular rhythm? How is rhythm created here? Given the context of the painting, what does the artist try to convey with the use of rhythm in this work?



(15.6) Delaunay, Robert. *Political Drama*, 1914. Oil and collage on cardboard. 88.7 x 67.3 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

16. Proportion and Scale

The main difference between proportion and scale refers to their point of reference. **Proportion** indicates the relative size of elements within a whole, ensuring that all parts are sized appropriately in relation to each other. **Scale** refers to the size of objects related to the viewer or other elements within the artwork. Correct proportions and scale contribute to the realism or intended effect of the composition. Observe the sumptuous table in this still-life by John Francis (16.1). All the elements displayed, including grapes, nuts, wine glasses, and bottles, are sized appropriately in relation to each other and to the overall design. The proper proportion conveys a sense of [harmony](#). **Scale** refers to the size of an object with reference to another object or a measurement system. It involves the overall size of an object and how it compares to others in the same environment (i.e., multiple sculptures within the same space) or the average height of a human being. In this nineteenth-century photograph (16.2), the pyramid and Sphinx's massive scale are a testament to the architectural prowess of ancient Egypt. At the same time, their immense scale relative to the human figures in front of the Sphinx highlights the grandeur and ambition of ancient Egypt.



(16.1) Francis, John F. *Wine, Cheese, and Fruit*, 1857. Oil on canvas. 63.5 × 76.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.



(16.2) Bonfils, Félix. *Pyramides et le Sphinx*, 1860s–70s, printed ca. 1870. Albumen silver print. 17.3 x 23.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Daniel Wolf, in memory of Diane R. Wolf, 1976.

Cultural Context

Observe the two figures from Gabon or Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria, Igbo-Eronmwen guild, Court of Benin (16.3, 16.4). The focus on proportion in African statues emphasizes conceptual importance rather than a reflection of the figures' actual size. Proportion reflects cultural values and aesthetic preferences, often serving to express ideas about beauty, spirituality, and social roles within the community.³

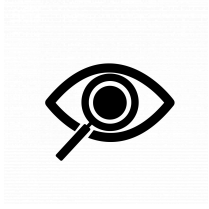


(16.3) Figure from a Reliquary Ensemble: Seated Female, 19th–early 20th century. Geography: Gabon or Equatorial Guinea. Culture: Fang peoples, Okak group. Wood, metal, 64 x 20 x 16.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1965



(16.4) Edo artist. Figure: Horn Player, 1550–1680. Geography: Nigeria, Igbo-Eronmwen guild, Court of Benin. Culture: Edo. Brass, iron, 62.9 x 29.2 x 17.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972

³ For more on how to look at African art, see this concise sheet from the [National Museum of African Art](#).



Let's Practice

Look at the room around you. This can be your dorm room, the classroom, or a museum space. Begin by lightly sketching the basic shapes and outlines of the elements you see. Use a ruler to help establish the scale of the objects in relation to each other. Pay attention to the proportions of the different objects. Make sure that smaller objects are drawn proportionally to the larger ones and that the scale accurately represents their real-life sizes. Take time to observe the relationships between the objects and the overall composition, making adjustments as necessary to create a visually harmonious representation. Once you are satisfied with your sketch, you can add shading or details to further emphasize proportion and scale and bring the scene to life. Look at your finished sketch. How does the use of proportion and scale contribute to the overall visual impact of your drawing?

Application Assignment

About This Assignment

In this assignment, you will pick one artwork among the ones explored in this journal. You will then analyze the chosen object and identify connections to the materials.

Objectives

- Consolidate notions acquired in this journal.
- Cultivate how *to look* at art, a set of skills that allows you to identify, read, and understand any image.

Directions

1. Pick one of the artworks explored in this journal.
2. Create a document and type your answers to the following questions:
 - a. **What** are the three most relevant visual elements observable in this artwork (e.g., color, line, etc.)?
 - b. **Why** are those elements important? What is the relationship of these parts to one another? What overall effect do they create? (3-4 sentences)
 - c. **How** does the composition function as a whole? What principles of design are particularly prominent? (3-4 sentences)
 - d. **What** would you like to learn more about this artwork? (1-2 sentences)

Context

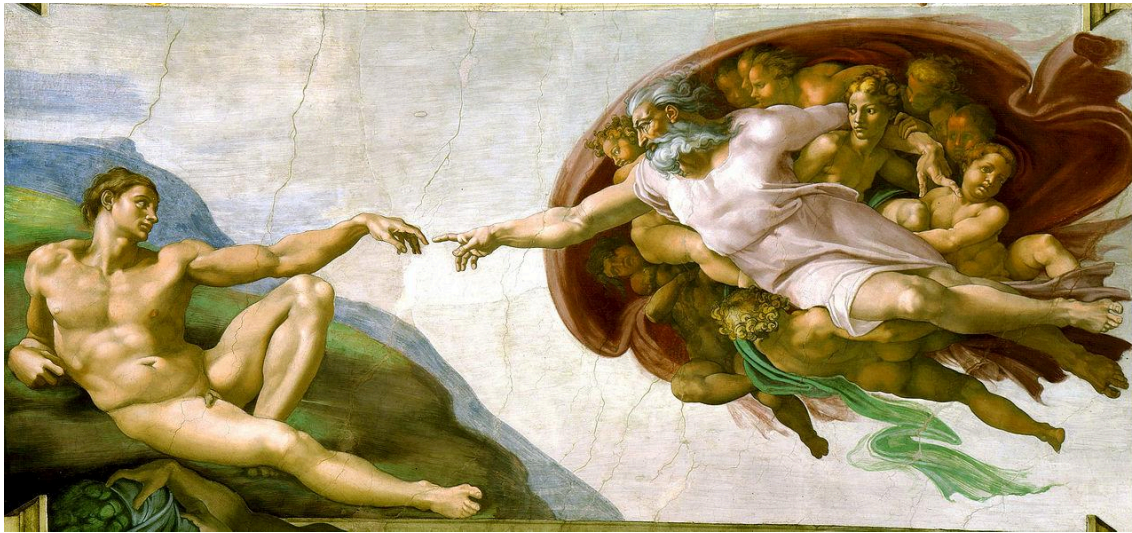
In this activity, students will learn about the relevance of physical context in analyzing and understanding a work of art. The previous units often stressed the importance of cultural, geographic, or historic contexts in order to contextualize the analysis and understanding of objects. Here, we refer to context in terms of the physical surroundings that can powerfully shape an artwork's creation and meaning, enhancing or diminishing the viewer's experience. Works designed for specific spaces, like public squares, are developed to complement their environment.

Fresco, a mural technique from the Renaissance, involves painting on wet plaster. As the plaster dries and hardens, it chemically bonds with the pigments, creating a durable artwork that's part of the wall. Frescoes have adorned buildings for centuries, serving as a form of artistic expression and storytelling. The fresco's location, whether high on a wall or at eye level, impacts how it's seen. For example, if it's on a high ceiling, the artist considered the viewer's perspective from below. The setting also influences the fresco's formal elements, especially when part of a larger decorative scheme.

During the first part of the activity, students will conduct a visual analysis of the following fresco. For detailed instructions, refer to the [Application Assignment](#) activity in this journal.



Pietro Perugino, *Delivery of the Keys*, c. 1481-1482. Fresco, 130 × 220 in. Pietro Perugino, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



Michelangelo. *The Creation of Adam*, c. 1508-1512. Fresco, 280 cm × 570 cm. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

During the second part of the activity, students will engage with *Il Divino: Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling in VR* (www.sistinevr.com/), a to explore the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City, Rome (Italy) in virtual reality. During the activity, students will actively engage with art in a VR environment. They will explore artworks in their context, connecting elements and principles of art with their physical surroundings.

Activity Learning Objectives

1. Recall key elements and principles of visual analysis (line, texture, space, composition, media, etc.).
2. Understand the role of physical contexts in the production and reception of art.
3. Apply VR technology to closely examine how artists employ visual elements to communicate themes and messages in their works.
4. Evaluate the impact of VR on the depth of analysis and understanding of artworks compared to other methods (i.e., classroom).
5. Assess the effectiveness of VR technology in enhancing visual literacy skills and its potential advantages and limitations.
6. Generate innovative strategies for incorporating VR into the process of looking at art.

Sistine Chapel Snapshot

- Location: Vatican City, Rome, Italy
- Construction Period: 1473 - 1481
- Structure: Rectangular building; 2 side walls with 6 arched windows on each; barrel-vaulted ceiling.
- Decoration: Fresco technique (interior walls and ceiling)

Step 1 | Enter the Chapel

Focus on your surroundings, light, and sensations. Move around and observe the general proportion of the chapel, how the space is divided, and elements such as windows and flooring.

Where are you? What do you look at upon entering the chapel? How does the architectural space affect the art?

Step 2 | Find the Northern wall.

In the previous activity, we explored the concept of Space in 2-D artworks. How do the context and your position within the room affect your experience of Perugino's *Delivery of the Keys*? What techniques does the artist use to create a sense of depth? How does your understanding of this artwork's visual elements and their role in artistic expression change compared to the classroom experience?



Pietro Perugino. *Delivery of the Keys*, c. 1481-1482. Fresco, 330 x 550 cm. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Step 3 | Find the Middle Ground

Go by the altar and focus on the Last Judgment by Michelangelo. How large is the fresco in relation to your size? How much space does it take up? Where is the center? How does the room's layout and spatial organization affect your viewing?

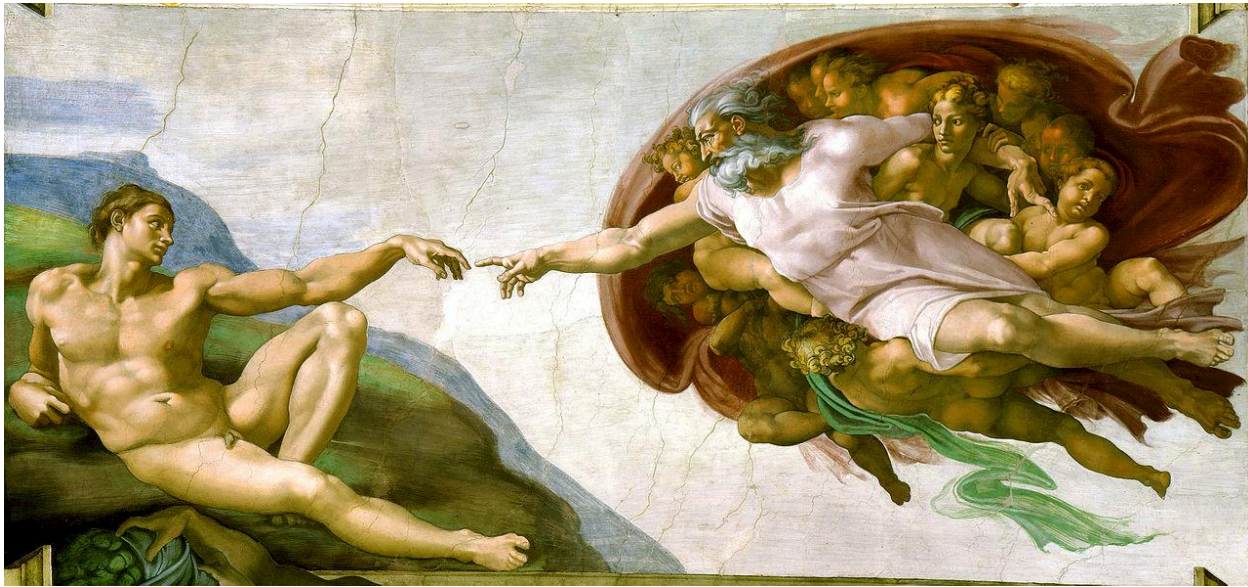


Michelangelo. *The Last Judgment*, 1536-1541. Fresco, 539.3 × 472.4 in. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Step 4 | The view from the top

Step onto Michelangelo's scaffold. Observe the ceiling up close with The Creation of Adam. What is the surface like? How would you describe the texture? Do you see traces of brushstrokes? How do you think Michelangelo painted the ceiling?

Once you leave the scaffold, look up. How does your perception of the ceiling change? How does Michelangelo direct your eye to the focal point?



Michelangelo. *The Creation of Adam*, c. 1508-1512. Fresco, 280 cm × 570 cm. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

You can download a booklet of this VR workshop through this [link](#).

Image List by Institution

The inclusion of images in this journal was made possible by several institutions that allow open access policy for images of works of art in their permanent collection believed to be in the public domain.

Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago

Braque, Georges. *Landscape at L'Estaque*, 1906. Oil on canvas. 60.3 x 72.7 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Caillebotte, Gustave. *Paris Street, Rainy Day*, 1877. Oil on canvas. 212.2 x 276.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Caroline, Mary Georgiana (Lady Filmer). *Lady Filmer in her Drawing Room*, 1863-1868. Albumen prints, collage and watercolor. Image: 22.5 x 28.2 cm; Mount: 36.9 x 42.8 cm. Through prior gifts of Mrs. Jack Diamond and Michael Glicker. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Chimú artist. Ceremonial Knife (*Tumi*), 1100-1470 CE. Gold with turquoise inlay. 34 x 12.7 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

de Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri. *Ballet Dancers*. 1885/1886. Oil on Plaster transferred to canvas. 153.5 x 152.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Driscoll, Clara (Designer). Lamp with "Hanging Head Dragonfly" Shade and "Mosaic and Turtleback" Base, 1901-11. Favrite glass and bronze. 86.4 x 57.2 cm. Roger and J. Peter McCormick Endowments, Robert Allerton Purchase Fund, Goodman Endowment for the Collection of the Friends of American Art, Pauline S. Armstrong Endowment, Edward E. Ayer Endowment in memory of Charles L. Hutchinson; purchased with funds provided by the Antiquarian Society in memory of Helen Richman Gilbert and Lena Turnbull Gilbert, Sandra van den Broek, Mr. and Mrs. Henry M. Buchbinder, Quinn E. Delaney, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley M. Dixon, Jamee J. and Marshall Field, Celia and David Hilliard, Elizabeth Souder Louis, Mrs. Herbert A. Vance, and Mr. and Mrs. Morris S. Weeden. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Francis, John F. *Wine, Cheese, and Fruit*, 1857. Oil on canvas. 63.5 x 76.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Fraser, William A. *Wet Night Columbus Circle, New York*, No.11 from the portfolio "American Pictorial Photography, Series I" (1899), 1897. Photogravure. 16.7 x 9 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Harnett, William Michael. *Just Desserts*, 1891. Oil on canvas. 56.6 x 68 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Hartley, Marsden. *Movements*, 1913. Oil on canvas. 119.5 x 119 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Hartley, Marsden. *Movement No. 10*, 1917. Oil on composition board. 38.7 x 49.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Hokusai, Katsushika . *Under the Wave off Kanagawa (The Great Wave)*, from the series "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji", 1830/1833. Color woodblock print. 5.7 x 7.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Homer, Winslow. *Veteran in a New Field*, 1865. Oil on canvas. 61.3 x 96.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot (1876-1967), 1967.

Hopper, Edward. *Nighthawks*, 1942. Oil on canvas. 84.1 x 152.4 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Hunt, Morris Hunt. *The Horses of Anahita*, modeled 1848-1850, cast 1882-1910. Plaster in a wooden frame. 49 x 74.5 x 31.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Kandinsky, Vasily. *Houses at Murnau*, 1909. Oil on cardboard. 49 x 64 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Kandinsky, Vasily. *Improvisation No.30 (Cannons)*, 1913. Oil on canvas. 111 x 111.3 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Kandinsky, Vasily. *Painting with Green Center*, 1913. Oil on canvas. 108.9 x 118.4 cm. Arthur Jerome Eddy Memorial Collection. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Kohn, Jacob and Josef. *Rocking Chair*, c.1881. Beech and caning. 108.9 x 58.4 x 114.3 cm. Art Institute of Chicago.

Lewis Wickes Hine. *Sadie Pfeifer, a Cotton Mill Spinner, Lancaster, South Carolina*, 1908. Gelatin silver print. 11.6 x 15.3 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Moche Artist. Vessel Depicting a Bird-Hunting Scene, 100 BCE-500 CE. Ceramic and pigment. H.: 19.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Mondrian, Piet. *Composition (No. 1) Gray-Red*, 1935. Oil on canvas. 57.5 x 55.6 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Mondrian, Piet. *Lozenge Composition with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red, and Gray*, 1921. Oil on canvas. 60 x 60 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Monet, Claude. *Waterloo Bridge, Sunlight Effect*, 1903. Oil on Canvas. 65.7 x 101 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Monet, Claude. *Waterloo Bridge, Gray Weather*, 1900. Oil on canvas. 65.7 x 101 cm. Art Institute of Chicago.

Pair of Cups. China. 1723-35. Porcelain painted in underglaze blue and overglaze enamels (doucai). A: h. 5.7 cm, diam. 10.2 cm, B: h.5.7 cm, diam.10.0 cm. Bequest of Henry C. Schwab. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Peale, Raphaelle. *Still Life- Strawberries, Nuts, &c.*, 1822. Oil on wood panel. 41.1 x 57.8 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Stieglitz, Alfred. *New York from the Shelton*, 1935. Gelatin Silver Print. 24.2 x 19.3cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Thorne, Narcissa Niblack. *E-24: French Salon of the Louis XVI Period, c.1780*, 1937. Miniature room, mixed media. 38.1 x 52.1 x 43.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Unknown Artist from Tamil Nadu. *Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)*, 901-1100 CE. Bronze. 69.3 x 61.8 x 24.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Unknown Artist. *The Tale of Taishokan*, 1635-1685. Pair of six-panel screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Courtesy of Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

Balla, Giacomo. *Dinamismo di un cane al guinzaglio (Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash)*, 1912. Oil on canvas, support: 89.8525 x 109.855. Bequest of A. Conger Goodyear and Gift of George F. Goodyear, 1964. Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art

Animal Locomotion: Emptying a Bucket of Water, 1887. Eadweard J. Muybridge (American, 1830–1904). Collotype; image: 22.5 x 34 cm (8 7/8 x 13 3/8 in.); paper: 47.4 x 60.4 cm (18 11/16 x 23 3/4 in.); matted: 50.8 x 61 cm (20 x 24 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Laurence Miller Gallery, New York, in honor of Evan H. Turner 1992.220

Dishes with Shells, c. 1915. Seifū Yohei IV (Japanese, 1872–1951). Set of five dishes; porcelain with blue glaze, iron oxide, and molded design; height (each): 2.5 cm (1 in.); diameter (each): 12.1 cm (4 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of James and Christine Heusinger 2022.213

Flower Study of an Anemone, c. 1905–15. Henrik Wigström (Russian, 1862–1923), House of Fabergé (Russian, 1842–1918). Mat white stone, gold, sapphires, jade, rock crystal; overall: 14.3 x 3.9 cm (5 5/8 x 1 9/16 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, The India Early Minshall Collection 1966.441

Landscape Near Paris, c. 1840. Attributed to Georges Michel (French, 1763–1843). Oil on fabric; framed: 105.6 x 146.4 x 9.6 cm (41 9/16 x 57 5/8 x 3 3/4 in.); unframed: 88.8 x 129.5 cm (34 15/16 x 51 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Noah L. Butkin 1975.78

Prayer Niche (Mihrab), c. 1500s or mid-1900s. Iran, Isfahan, in the style of the Safavid period (1501–1722). Ceramic mosaic; mihrab: 290.7 x 245.3 cm (114 7/16 x 96 9/16 in.); frieze: 69.2 x 1563.5 cm (27 1/4 x 615 9/16 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Katharine Holden Thayer 1962.23

Presentation Bowl, 1900. Native North America, California, Yokuts. Redbud, bracken fern; coiled, grass foundation; overall: 23 x 48 cm (9 1/16 x 18 7/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Presented by William Albert Price in memory of Mrs. William Albert Price 1917.492.

Published in *L'Estampe Moderne: In the Square*, 1897. Henri Evenepoel (Belgian, 1872–1899). Color lithograph; sheet: 40.5 x 30.6 cm (15 15/16 x 12 1/16 in.); image: 33 x 23.1 cm (13 x 9 1/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of John Bonebrake 2009.558.

Rock at Sea, 1920–1922. Raymond Jonson (American, 1891–1982). Oil on canvas; unframed: 88.9 x 104.2 cm (35 x 41 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund 2009.269.

Silk curtain from the Alhambra palace, 1300s. Spain, Granada, Nasrid period. Lampas and taqueté: silk; overall: 438.2 x 271.8 cm (172 1/2 x 107 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund 1982.16

Square-shaped Bottle with the Scenery of the Han River, 1800s. Korea, Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue decoration; The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund 1986.86

The Biglin Brothers Turning the Stake, 1873. Thomas Eakins (American, 1844–1916). Oil on canvas; framed: 117 x 167 x 6.5 cm; unframed: 101.3 x 151.4 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Hinman B. Hurlbut Collection 1927.1984

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Fleischhauer, C. *Paradise Valley Landscape*. 1979. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ncr001023/>.

J. Howard Miller. “*We Can Do It!*” (*Rosie the Riveter*). C. 1942-1943. Lithograph. National Archives and Records Administration, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/535413>.

Weisberg, Shari. *Understanding the Aps*, 1936-1941. [Ill.: federal art project, wpa, between 1936 and 1941] [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/98518272/>.

Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Atkins, Anna. *Spiraea aruncus (Tyrol)*, 1851-1854. Cyanotype. 35.1 cm x 24.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts, 2004.

Boccioni, Umberto. *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, cast 1950. Bronze. 121.3 x 88.9 x 40 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Lydia Winston Malbin, 1989.

Bonfils, Félix. *Pyramides et le Sphinx*, 1860s–70s, printed ca. 1870. Albumen silver print. 17.3 x 23.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Daniel Wolf, in memory of Diane R. Wolf, 1976.

Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal). *Piazza San Marco*, late 1720s. Oil on canvas, 68.6 x 112.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Purchase, Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift, 1988.

Church, Frederic. *El Rio de Luz (The River of Light)*, 1877. Oil on canvas, 138.1 x 213.7 cm. Gift of the Avalon Foundation. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

Claesz, Pieter. *Still Life with a Skull and a Writing Quill*, 1628. Oil on wood. 24.1 x 35.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1949.

Dresser, Christopher (Designer). *Clutha Vase*, 1890-1900. Blown Glass. 42.8 x 11.1cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Richard T. Crane, Jr. Endowment.

Eakins, Thomas. *The Champion Single Sculls (Max Schmitt in a Single Scull)*, 1871. Oil on canvas. 81.9 x 117.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, The Alfred N. Punnet Endowment Fund and George D. Pratt Gift, 1934.

Edo artist. Figure: Horn Player, 1550–1680. Geography: Nigeria, Igun-Eronmwun guild, Court of Benin. Culture: Edo. Brass, iron, 62.9 × 29.2 × 17.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972

Figure from a Reliquary Ensemble: Seated Female, 19th–early 20th century. Geography: Gabon or Equatorial Guinea. Culture: Fang peoples, Okak group. Wood, metal, 64 x 20 x 16.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1965

Johnson, Sargent Claude. *Lenox Avenue*, 1938. Lithograph print. 31.8 x 21.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of the Work Projects Administration, Allocation Unit, Chicago, 1943.

Lombardi, Giovanni Battista . *Veiled Woman*, 1869. Marble. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of Robert L. Isaacson, 1984.

Maganza, Alessandro. *Male Figure Seen from Behind*, ca. 1603-1610. Pen and brown ink, over a pencil sketch. 30.3x21 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975

Moran, Thomas. *The Juniata, Evening*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 50.8 x 76.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Max and Heidi Berry and Ann and Mark Kington/The Kington Foundation.

Moronobu, Hishikawa. *Street Scene in Yoshiwara*, Edo period (1615–1868), late 17th century. Monochrome woodblock print; ink on paper, 27.3 x 38.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of Julia H. Manges, in memory of her husband, Dr. Morris Manges, 1960.

Ōhashi Atake no yūdachi, *Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (Ōhashi Atake no yūdachi)*, from the series One Hundred Famous Views of Edo (Meisho Edo hyakkei), Edo period (1615–1868), 1857. Woodblock print; ink and color on paper. Oban 34 x 24.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Howard Mansfield Collection, Purchase, Rogers Fund, 1936.

Pereira, Irene Rice. *White Lines*, 1941. Gouache and scraping on paper. 56.5 x 39.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of New York City W.P.A., 1943.

Pissarro, Camille. *Morning, An Overcast Day*, 1896. Oil on canvas. 54.3 cm x 65.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Grégoire Tarnopol, 1979, gift of Alexander Tarnopol, 1980.

Posada, José Guadalupe. Cover for “La Rumba: Coleccion de Canciones Modernas para el Presente Año 1903” (detail), ca. 1903. Chiaroscuro engraving and letterpress printed in red and black on tan paper. Whole sheet: 14.8 x 20 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1946.

Sashiko Jacket. Meiji period (1868–1912). Indigo-dyed plain-weave cotton, quilted and embroidered with white cotton thread. Overall: 129.9 x 125.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Seymour Fund, 1967.

Unknown Wari artist. Tunic, 7th-11th century. Cotton and camelid hair. 103.5 x 101 cm approximately. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of Claudia Quentin, 2021.

Unknown Artist. Pectoral a Necklace of Sithathoryunet with the Name of Senwosret II, ca. 1887-1878 BCE. Gold, carnelian, lapis lazuli, turquoise, garnet. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Rogers Fund and Henry Walters Gift, 1916.

Unknown Diné artist. Chief’s Blanket, 1855-1860. Wool. 157.5 x 186.7cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of John and Margot Ernst, in celebration of the Museum’s 150th Anniversary.

Van Gogh, Vincent. *Bouquet of Flowers in a Vase*, 1890. Oil on Canvas. 65.1 x 54 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, gift of Walter H. and Leonore Anneberg, 1993, bequest of Walter H. Anneberg, 2002.

Vogel, Joseph. *Vision*, 1939. Lithograph print. 37.2 x 52 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of the Works Project Administration, New York, 1943.

Whittredge, Worthington. *Evening in the Woods*, 1876. Oil on canvas. 107.5 x 91.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Henry H. Cook, 1905.

Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art

Delaunay, Robert. *Political Drama*, 1914. Oil and collage on cardboard. 88.7 x 67.3 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig. *The Visit- Couple and Newcomer*, 1922. Oil on canvas. 120.6 x 120.9 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Klimt, Gustav. *Baby (Cradle)*, 1917/1918. Oil on canvas. 110.9 x 110.4 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Modigliani, Amedeo. *Head of a Woman*, c.1911-1912. Limestone. 65.2x 16.5x 24.8 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Schamberg, Morton Livingston. *Landscape*, c. 1912. Oil on composition board. 19.05 x 24.13 cm. Corcoran Collection (Gift of Joan B. Detweiler). Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Unknown artist, Qing Dynasty. *The Flame*. Early 18th century. Porcelain with oxblood glaze. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Unknown Artist imitation of Ralph Albert Blakelock. *Moonlight*, early 20th century. Oil on canvas. 75.6 x 101.3 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

van Rijn, Rembrandt. *Self-Portrait*, 1659. Oil on canvas. 84.5 x 66 cm. Andrew W. Mellon Collection. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

van Rijn, Rembrandt. *Self-Portrait*, c. 1637. Red chalk. 12.9 x 11.9 cm. Rosenwald Collection. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Whistler, James McNeill. *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1861-1863, 1872. Oil on canvas, overall: 213 x 107.9 cm. Harris Whittemore Collection. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

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Architectural Features on the Alpina Eclectic Hotel in Chamonix, France. 2015. Photograph by Dious.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/91387891@N07/>. Public domain, via Flickr.

Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* on display in the Uffizi Galleries in Florence, Italy. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Caravaggio. *The Taking of Christ*, c.1602. Oil on canvas. 133.5 x 169.5 cm. National Gallery of Ireland. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

da Vinci, Leonardo. *Last Supper*, 1495-1498. Fresco. Milan (IT). Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Evan-Amos of Vanamo Media. *Solomon R Guggenheim Museum Levels*. 2012. Photograph. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Gentileschi, Artemisia. *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, c.1620. Oil on canvas. 146.5x 108 cm. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Goldsworthy, Andy. *Cone*, 1992. Steer-plate, 4-feet tall. Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Ham, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Goya, Francisco. *Third of May 1808*, 1814. Oil on canvas. 268 x 347 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado. Francisco Goya, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Kapoor, Anish. *Cloud Gate*, 2004-2006. Polished stainless steel. Millennium Park, Chicago Illinois. Public domain, via Pxhere.

Michelangelo. *The Last Judgment*, 1536-1541. Fresco. 1370 x 1220 cm. Sistine Chapel in Rome, Italy. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Michelangelo, *The Creation of Adam*, c. 1508-1512. Fresco. 280 cm × 570 cm. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Pietro Perugino, *Delivery of the Keys*, c. 1481-1482. Fresco. 330 x 550 cm. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Tanner, Henry Ossawa. *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, 1897. Oil on Canvas. 74.3 x 100.3cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Partial gift of Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter and purchased with the W. P. Wiltach Fund, the George W. Elkins Fund, the Edward and Althea Budd Fund, and with funds contributed by The Dietrich Foundation, EW1993-61-1. Henry Ossawa Tanner, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

The Colosseum, Rome. 80 AD. Sam valadi, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>>, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Two of the three new bridges in the Toronto Port Lands area. 2024. Photograph by Quist. Quist, CCO, via Wikimedia Commons

Van Eyck, Jan. *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434. Oil on oak wood. 82 cm x 80 cm. National Gallery, London. Jan van Eyck, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

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Courtesy of the authors

A range of values from darkest to brightest. Drawing by Catherine Juliano.

Coffered ceiling of the Pantheon in Rome, 125 CE. Concrete. Photo by Catherine Juliano.

Color wheel. Drawing by Catherine Juliano.

Diagram of the parts of light and shadow. Drawing by Catherine Juliano.

AI-generated images

AI-generated cityscape June 2024. Software: Stable diffusion

One-Point Linear Perspective. Created with Adobe Firefly, June 2024

Two-Point Linear Perspective. Created with Adobe Firefly, June 2024

Three-Point Linear Perspective. Created with Adobe Firefly, June 2024

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Most art historical texts typically discuss visual elements, principles of design, and media. Others focus more on formal analysis, the intersection between ways of looking and aesthetic experiences, and how art can help us understand the world around us. If you are interested in learning more about these topics, here is a non-comprehensive list of textbooks available through OU Libraries:

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