

Elements of Art

Sensory components used to create works of art: line, color, shape/form, texture, value and space.

Line is an element of art which refers to the continuous mark made on some surface by a moving point. It may be two dimensional, like a pencil mark on a paper or it may be three dimensional (wire) or implied (the edge of a shape or form) often it is an outline, contour or silhouette.

Color is an element of art with three properties (a) hue is the name of the color, e.g. red, yellow, etc. (b) intensity or the purity and strength of the color such as brightness or dullness. (c) value or the lightness or darkness of the color.

Shape is an enclosed space defined by other elements of art. Shapes may take on the appearance of two- or three-dimensional objects.

Form is an element of art that is three-dimensional and encloses volume. Cubes, spheres and cylinders are examples of various forms.

Texture refers to the surface quality or "feel" of an object, such as roughness, smoothness or softness. Actual texture can be felt while simulated textures are implied by the way the artist renders areas of the picture.

Value describes the lightness or darkness of a color. Value is needed to express volume.

Space refers to the distance or area between, around, above or within things. It can be a description for both two- and three-dimensional portrayals.

Principles of Design

The organization of works of art. They involve the ways in which the elements of art are arranged.

Emphasis in a composition refers to developing points of interest to pull the viewer's eye to important parts of the body of the work.

Balance is a sense of stability in the body of work. Balance can be created by repeating same shapes and by creating a feeling of equal weight.

Harmony is achieved in a body of work by using similar elements throughout the work. Harmony gives an uncomplicated look to the artwork.

Variety refers to the differences in the work. It is achieved by using different shapes, textures, colors and values.

Movement adds excitement to the artwork by showing action and directing the viewers' eye throughout the picture plane.

Rhythm is a type of movement in drawing and painting. It is seen in repeating of shapes and colors. Alternating lights and darks also give a sense of rhythm.

Proportion or scale refers to the relationships of the size of objects in a body of work. Proportions give a sense of size seen as a relationship of objects such as smallness or largeness.

Unity is seen in a painting or drawing when all the parts equal a whole. The artwork should not appear disjointed or confusing.

Contrast is the difference between two or more elements (e.g., value, color, texture) in a composition; juxtaposition of dissimilar elements in a work of art; also, the degree of difference between the lightest and darkest parts of a picture.

Composition is the arrangement of elements in a work of art.