

Elements of Art

Line: element of art which refers to the marks made by a moving point. The element of line has a wide range of qualities and expressive possibilities: curved lines, diagonal lines, dotted lines, straight lines, etc.

Shape: element of art that refers to an enclosed area of 2-D space that is defined by its external edge. Shapes can be created with lines, values, colors

Value: element of art that refers to the degree and qualities of lightness or darkness. In color theory, value refers to the lightness (tint) or darkness (shade) of a color; i.e. pink is a tint of red.

Color: the various visual phenomena that are the results of the reflection or absorption of light by a surface. Color has three properties: hue, value, and intensity.

Texture: the surface quality of an object – its roughness, smoothness, softness, etc. Artworks can deal with the *actual* physical texture of a surface or the *illusion* of texture.

Space: the perceived distance or area between, around, above, below, or within a given area. Artworks can deal with *actual* physical space or the *illusion* of space (depth). Major divisions within the composition of an artwork include areas of *positive* and *negative* space.

Principles of Design

Balance: the principle of design that refers to the visual equalization of the elements in a work of art. The three major forms of balance are symmetrical balance, asymmetrical balance and radial balance.

Emphasis: the principle of design that is concerned with dominance; the development of a main idea or center of interest (focal point).

Rhythm: the principle of design concerned with the visual rhythm created through the repetition of visual elements.

Contrast: the principle of design that emphasizes differences between the art elements. Sharp contrast draws attention and can direct a viewer to a focal point within a work of art.

Proportion: the principle of design that is concerned with the relationship in size of one component of a work of art to another.

Variety: quality achieved when the art elements are combined in various combinations to increase visual interest.

Unity: refers to the visual quality of wholeness or oneness that is achieved through effective arrangement of the elements of art and principles of design.