The ABCs of Art

The Elements and Principles of Design

Compiled, organized, and added to by M.C. Gillis
Dedication

This is dedicated to all learners & teachers of art.

Introduction

The elements & principles of art, also known as the elements & principles of design, open our eyes to the beauty that is in us & all around us. The elements & principles of art are the building blocks of understanding & creating art that expresses and moves us. That is the reason I call them the ABCs of Art. Just as the letters of any alphabet are fundamental to understanding that language, the elements & principles of art are fundamental to understanding the language of art.
# The ABCs of Art

The Elements & Principles of Design/Art

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Contact artist, mo@expandingheart.com, to give feedback.

Elements of Art

Line

Shape & Form

- circle
- triangle
- square
- rectangle
- moon
- free form
- sphere
- pyramid
- cube
- oval
- semi-circle
- trapezoid
- heart
- leaf

Color

- Neutral
- Tints
- Shades
- WARM COLORS
- COOL COLORS

Texture

- Smooth
- rough
- hard
- soft bumpy
- jagged
- woven

Space

- Smaller in the distance
- Filled the whole paper
- Shows perspective
- Overlapping shapes

Value

- range of light to dark
- Contrast = light against dark

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Line, shape and color
Are elements of art.
Texture, space and value
That’s where I start.
When I use what I know,
As an artist, I will grow.

Line, shape, and color,
Texture, space and value...
are the
Elements of Art.
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**LINE**

**contour (outline)**

= The outer edge/line of an image, object or shape.

Lines can be used to show movement....

Lines can be used to show mood....

More words to describe lines....

- lazy
- energetic
- bold
- shy
- light
- dark
- broken
- continuous
- flexible
- rigid

SHAPE AND FORM
(forma y forma)

GEOMETRIC (geometrica)

CIRCLE (circulo)

SQUARE (cuadrado)

CUBE (cubo)

TRIANGLE (triangulo)

PYRAMID (piramide)

HEXAGON (hexagono)

DIAMOND (diamante)

OVAL (ovalo)

CYLINDER

TRAPEZOID (trapezoide)

Semi-circle (medio-circulo)

HEART (corazon)

HEXAGONAL (hexagonal)

PENTAGON (pentagono)

STAR (estrella)

MOON (luna)

OCTAGONAL (octagonal)

ORGANIC/FREE FORM/NATURAL
(organico)
(forma libre)
(natural)

CLOUD (nuve)

LEAF (hoja)

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Use as a worksheet. Color & fill in empty areas. Use colored page for help if needed.

COLOR

This is a color wheel.

COLOR SCHEMES (PLANS) are ways I can use color to improve my art work.

PRIMARY  RAINBOW
SECONDARY  WARM  COOL
COMPLEMENTARY  NEUTRAL

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**COLOR THEORY**

Color is an element of art.

Everytime I use color, I am creating a color scheme.

This is a color wheel.

The most common color schemes are listed below.

Primary...  
Secondary...  
Warm....  
Cool....  
Complementary... 
Analogous...  
Rainbow... 

Intermediate... is a color term I need to know. It is the color in between the primary and secondary colors on the color wheel.
TEXTURE

SMOOTH

ROUGH

HARD

SOFT

WOVEN

BUMPY/LUMPY

JAGGED/IRREGULAR

RIDGED

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Space Consider Composition

Draw Big
Fill The Whole Paper
Lines Off The Paper

Placement in Relation to Horizon
Smaller in Distance
Larger Closer Up
Darker Closer Up
Lighter Farther Away
Overlapping

Foreground (near space)
Mid Ground (middle space)
Background (far space)

Positive Space: The objects or subject in the work of art, not the space around them
Negative Space: The "empty" space around the subject or objects

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BIG is BEAUTIFUL!!!

DRAW BIG

FILL THE WHOLE PAPER
Use this page as a worksheet. Fill in the empty areas yourself. Look at the colored value page for help.

VALUE
IS THE RANGE OF LIGHT TO DARK.

VALUE CHANGES WITH BLACK + WHITE

A VALUE SCALE SHOWS THE CHANGE OF LIGHT TO DARK.

This is a pencil value scale.

INK PENCIL
INK PENCIL
INK PENCIL
INK PENCIL

SHADING WITH LINES
SHADING WITH CROSS-HATCHING
SHADING WITH STIPPLING

[These are line techniques.]

VALUE CHANGES WITH COLOR

TINTING WITH COLOR TO A LITTLE BIT OF COLOR, ADD INCREASING AMOUNTS OF WHITE TO CHANGE THE VALUE.

SHADING WITH COLOR TO A LIGHT OR MEDIUM COLOR, ADD BLACK OR A DARK COLOR, A LITTLE AT A TIME, TO CHANGE THE VALUE.

[These are blending techniques.]

SHADING APPLIED TO OBJECTS:

CONTRAST = TO SHOW UNLIKENESS (SOMETHING DIFFERENT, OPPOSITE, OR DISSIMILAR)

LIGHT AGAINST DARK (BLACK + WHITE)
LIGHT AGAINST DARK (COLOR)
PATTERN AGAINST NO PATTERN (BLACK + WHITE)
PATTERN AGAINST NO PATTERN (COLOR)

Subject, bird, is detailed, busy, active space.

Detailed against undetailed space.

I WILL LOOK FOR VALUE AND CONTRAST, BOTH NATURAL AND MAN-MADE, IN MY ENVIRONMENT.

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Principles of Art

Pattern
Repetition of the elements of art

Emphasis
Focus - Main idea
What “grabs” your attention

Variety
An assortment of lines, shapes, colors and other elements of art in the art work

Unity
How the elements work together, fit together, so the art work looks complete

Balance
Symmetrical
same design on both sides of a midline.

Asymmetrical
A balance that is not even

Radial

Rhythm & Movement
A regular repetition of the elements of art to create a sense of rhythm and/or movement

Proportion
How parts fit together to make a whole - Size relations
(Includes scale, monumental, miniature, exaggeration...)

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PATTERN
IS THE REPEITION OF THE ELEMENTS OF ART OR ANYTHING ELSE.

PATTERNS OF LINES
- Non-objective design
- Portrait
- Landscape
- Leopard
- City

PATTERNS OF SHAPES
- Rainbow
- Flower
- Butterfly
- Clothing
- Wallpaper

PATTERNS OF COLOR
- Birds flying in formation are a pattern.
- Cars stopped in traffic makes a pattern.

Mathematics has patterns.
- Inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale. Breathing is a pattern.

PATTERN IS EVERYWHERE!

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EMPHASIS

FOCUS - MAIN IDEA - WHAT "GRABS" MY ATTENTION?

A beautiful flower growing in a grey, dismal setting.

It can be to make a point or for a message. It can simply be used as a design element.

The light at the end of a tunnel.

A non-objective design.

A house that stands out from the rest.

Stop. And think about what I want. Now is the time to set goals.

Big lettering draws our focus. Fast movement in a still setting grabs our attention.

A flower with more detail in the center draws our eyes to the center.

Shiny, bright things like jewelry attract our attention.

Loud noise draws our attention. Peace!!!

I will notice what "grabs" my attention in my day to day travels.

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VARIETY is a number of different types of things.

VARIETY shows contrast.

There is no end to the variety in nature and man-made things.

A Variety of people
A Variety of insects
A Variety of pens
A Variety of flowers
A Variety of emotions
A Variety of buildings

People can have a variety of ideas about the same thing.

Thats the most beautiful work I've ever seen.

Thats cool! I wish I could paint like that.

Sadly, my baby could do it.

Hmm.

I wonder what everyone is thinking.

I wonder what the artist was trying to say.

That might be worth 1 million dollars.

I wouldnt pay 2 cents for that.

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Add detail.

Using a variety of elements & principles of design adds detail and interest to a work of art.
UNITY

UNITY SHOWS WHAT THINGS HAVE IN COMMON, HOW THEY ARE ALIKE.

UNITY IS THE THING THAT JOINS THE PARTS TOGETHER.

SAMENESS... ONENESS...

Uniforms show we are joined as a team.

In art, the elements work together, fit together, in the artwork so it looks complete (some art looks more unified than other art).

Repetition of line, shape or color can unify an image.

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**BALANCE**

Symmetrical

I create symmetrical balance when I evenly place images on both sides of a mid-line.

Asymmetrical

I create asymmetrical balance when I balance by size and weight and variety of images, but not evenly from the mid-line.

Radial

I create radial balance when I repeat shapes and images evenly from the center outward.

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RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

A REGULAR REPEITION OF THE ELEMENTS OF ART CAN CREATE A SENSE OF MOVEMENT/RHYTHM.

Trees blowing in the wind...

Non-objective design...

People marching...

The day has a rhythm to it.
Sunrise... sunset... Sunrise... sunset...

The city has a rhythm.

RHYTHM IS ALL AROUND US.

The ticking of a clock is rhythm.

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Proportion is the size relationship between two or more objects. It can be how the parts fit together to make a whole.

Scale  Proportions of the head  Exaggeration

A change in proportion can change the way we look at things. Accurate proportions are used more when creating realistic images. Distorted proportions are used more for cartoons and imaginary images.

I approximate and think about volume when I work with proportions. It's math. I mentally measure size, shape, mass, weight and volume.

Halves  Thirds  Fourths  Sixths  Eighths  Tenths

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