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

### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviated Elements of Art</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Art Poem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Line</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape &amp; Form</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color-Simple</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color-Warm &amp; Cool</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color-Advanced Theory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space-Draw Big/Fill Space Poster</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviated Principles of Art</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern Poem Poster</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety-Detail Poster</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm &amp; Movement</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Contact artist, [mc@expandingheart.com](mailto:mc@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

WARM COLORS Neutral Tints Shades 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, color
Texture, space and value...
The ABCs of art.
LINE
(linea)

LONG (largo)
SHORT (corta)
CURVED (curva)
HORIZONTAL (horizontal)
VERTICAL (vertical)
PERPENDICULAR (perpendicular)
PARALLEL (paralelas)

BROKEN (quebrado)
THICK (grueso)
THIN (delgado)
DOTTED (linea de puntos)

WAVY/CURLY (ondulado)

VERTICAL (vertical)

ZIG-ZAG JAGGED (zig-zag)

STRAIGHT (derecho)

VARIED (varias)

DIAGONAL (diagonal)

TAPERED (termina en punta conico)

SPIRAL (espiral)

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Line

Contour (Outline)

Lines can be used to show movement...

or no movement.

(still)

Lines can be used to show mood.

Here are more words to describe lines.

Lazy bold
Energetic light
Shy broken
Dark continuous
Flexible rigid

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SHAPE AND FORM (forma y forma)

GEOMETRIC (geometrica)
- CIRCLE (circulo)
- TRIANGLE (triangulo)
- SQUARE (cuadrado)
- RECTANGLE (rectangulo)
- OVAL (ovalo)
- CYLINDER
- TRAPEZOID (trapezoide)
- DIAMOND (diamante)
- STAR (estrella)
- PENTAGON (pentagono)
- HEART (corazon)
- SEMI-CIRCLE (medio-cirulo)
- HEXAGON (hexagono)
- OCTAGONO (octagono)
- MOON (luna)

ORGANIC/FREE FORM/NATURAL (organico) (forma libre) (natural)
- CLOUD (nuve)
- LEAF (hoja)

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COLOR

This is a color wheel, a simple one.

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.

Every time I use color, I am creating a color scheme.

This is a color wheel.

The most common color schemes are listed below.

Primary... {I can make all the other colors by mixing different amounts of primary colors}
Secondary... {I can mix two primary colors to make a secondary color}
Warm... {Yellow and all the colors with red and orange tones are warm}
Cool... {Violet and all the colors with blue and green tones are cool}
Complementary... {Opposites on the color wheel are complementary}
Analogous... {Colors that are close neighbors on the color wheel are analogous}
Rainbow... {Using primary and secondary colors placed in order from the color wheel, I can make a 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

(Glass)

(Apple)

(Sand Paper)

(Bark)

(Bricks)

(Rocks)

(Cloud)

(Pillow)

(Broken Glass)

(MATERIAL CLOTHES)

(BRDS NEST)

(MORE TEXT)

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SPACE

How shapes are arranged in an art work creates a sense of space. Consider the possible ways shown below to create space.

Draw Big.  Fill the whole paper.  Extend lines off paper.

Placement in relation to horizon  Smaller in distance  Larger closer up  Lighter farther away  Overlapping

Foreground (near space)  Midground (middle space)  Background (far space)  Positive Space (the subject or objects in the work of art, not the space around them)  Negative Space (The empty space around the subject or objects)

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VALUE
IS THE RANGE OF LIGHT TO DARK.

A VALUE SCALE SHOWS THE CHANGE OF LIGHT TO DARK.

VALUE CHANGES WITH BLACK + WHITE

VALUE CHANGES WITH COLOR

SHADING APPLIED TO OBJECTS:

SHADING WITH LINE TECHNIQUES

SHADING WITH BLENDING TECHNIQUES

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

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
- Wall Paper

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

JUMPING JACKS ARE A PATTERN.

MUSIC HAS PATTERNS.

MATHEMATICS HAS PATTERNS.

INHALE EXHALE INHALE EXHALE
Breathing is a pattern.

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Patterns are everywhere. Many of our habits are patterns.
Identify the patterns on this page.
Try making patterns with your own ideas
or use some of the images below.

Use the images above to create your own patterns.
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.

Simply be used as a design element.

A non-objective design.

The light at the end of a tunnel

A house that stands out from the rest

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

A loud noise draws our attention.

Peace!!!

Shiny, bright things like jewelry attract our attention.

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.

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 colors
- A variety of flowers
- A variety of emotions
- A variety of buildings

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

I will notice the limitless variety all around me.

That's the most beautiful work I've ever seen.

I wish I could paint like that.

I wonder what the artist was trying to say.

I wouldn't pay 2 cents for that.

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Add detail.

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

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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).

- Tints (white added) colors unite.
- Analogous Colors (neighbors on the color wheel) repetition of line, shape or color can unify an image.
- Shapes unify.
- Line unites.
- Black line unites.

People can unite.

RELATED WORDS:

unite \underline{\text{ uni means one.}}

unite

united

unify

Uniform

When people join hands and unite, they become stronger.

White line unifies.

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RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

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

Active lines create a sense of movement.

Trees blowing in the wind...

Non-objective design...

People marching...

Diagonal lines create a sense of motion.

RHYTHM IS ALL AROUND US.

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

The city has a rhythm.

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

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.