

# **ELEMENTS OF ART: Visual vocabulary**

## **1. LINE:**

A line is an extension of a point. It can be actual: either two dimensional (pen on paper) or three-dimensional (wire); or it can be implied to pull the eye across the composition (a dotted line). Lines vary in length, width, direction, curvature, color, etc.

## **2. SHAPE:**

A shape is a flat figure created when lines or changes in color or shading meet to surround a space. Shapes can be geometric (strongly defined with lines, like triangles or squares), or organic (irregular, as in nature.)

## **3. FORM:**

A form is a three-dimensional shape.

## **4. SPACE:**

The area defined by objects. Positive space is the shape or form itself; negative space is the area around the shape or form.

## **5. COLOR:**

Color varies in hue (the categorical name of the color), value (darkness or lightness), and intensity (saturation). Colors can be dark, light, warm, cool, dull, or bright.

## **6. VALUE:**

Value is darkness or lightness, whether in color or shading.

## **7. TEXTURE:**

Texture describes the surface quality of an object. Actual texture is how the surface feels, as in a tactile 3D sculpture. Implied texture, as in a 2D drawing, describes how the surface is experienced through sight.

### **Sources:**

1. Art, Design, and Visual Thinking

<http://char.txa.cornell.edu/>

2. Creative Arts

<http://www.mpsaz.org/arts/elements/elements.html>

3. The Getty Museum: "The Elements of Art"

[http://www.getty.edu/education/for\\_teachers/building\\_lessons/elements.html](http://www.getty.edu/education/for_teachers/building_lessons/elements.html)

4. Glatstein, Jeremy. "Formal Visual Analysis: The Elements & Principles of Composition"

<http://www.artsedge.org/content/3902/>

# **PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN: Visual grammar**

## **1. MOVEMENT:**

The elements of art direct the eye across a composition.

## **2. PATTERN:**

Pattern is established through the repetition of elements.

## **3. RHYTHM:**

Visual rhythm relies primarily on movement and pattern to establish a visual “beat” across the composition, similar in effect to auditory (musical) rhythm.

## **4. PROPORTION:**

Proportion refers to the relative size of the elements in a composition.

## **5. BALANCE:**

Visual stability; elements of the composition are arranged in equilibrium with one another, either symmetrically or asymmetrically, so that one area of the composition will not weigh more heavily than the other. The eye moves thoroughly through a well-balanced piece.

## **6. UNITY:**

Harmony; the elements and principles of art work toward a coherent composition.

## **7. CONTRAST:**

Contrast, or variance, provides interest and emphasis.

## **8. EMPHASIS:**

The location in the composition that draws the most attention.

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1. Art, Design, and Visual Thinking

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