

## Overview of Art Vocabulary

### **Design Elements:**

**Line-** Line is the path of a point moving through space.

**Shape / Form-** Shape implies spatial form and is usually perceived as two-dimensional. Form has depth, length, and width and resides in space. It is perceived as three-dimensional.

**Color-** Colors all come from the three primaries and black and white. They have three properties – hue, value, and intensity.

**Value-** Value refers to relative lightness and darkness and is perceived in terms of varying levels of contrast.

**Texture-** Texture refers to the tactile qualities of a surface (actual) or to the visual representation of such surface qualities (implied).

**Space / Perspective-** Space refers to the area in which art is organized. Perspective is representing a volume of space or a 3-dimensional object on a flat surface.

### **Design Principles:**

**Pattern-** Pattern refers to the repetition or reoccurrence of a design element, exact or varied, which establishes a visual beat.

**Rhythm / Movement-** Rhythm or movement refers to the suggestion of motion through the use of various elements.

**Proportion / Scale-** Proportion is the size relationship of parts to a whole and to one another. Scale refers to relating size to a constant, such as a human body.

**Balance-** Balance is the impression of equilibrium in a pictorial or sculptural composition. Balance is often referred to as symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial.

**Unity-** Unity is achieved when the components of a work of art are perceived as harmonious, giving the work a sense of completion.

**Emphasis-** Emphasis refers to the created center of interest, the place in an artwork where your eye first lands.

**Abstract-** A term generally used to describe art that is not representational or based on external reality or nature.

**Aesthetic-** Relating to or characterized by a concern with beauty or good taste (adjective); a particular taste or approach to the visual qualities of an object (noun).

**Background-** The area of an artwork that appears farthest away from the viewer; also, the area against which a figure or scene is placed.

**Complementary colors-** Colors located opposite one another on the color wheel. When mixed together, complementary colors produce a shade of gray or brown. When one stares at a color for a sustained period of time then looks at a white surface, an afterimage of the complementary color will appear.

**Composition-** The arrangement of the elements within a work of art photograph. The composition is the interplay between the subject, foreground, background, and other elements in the photograph.

**Figurative-** Representing a form or figure in art that retains clear ties to the real world.

**Genre-** A category of artistic practice having a particular form, content, or technique.

**Happening-** A performance, event, or situation considered as art, especially those initiated by the artists group Fluxus in the early 1960s. Such events are often planned, but involve elements of improvisation, may take place in any location, are multidisciplinary, and frequently involve audience participation.

**Horizon line-** A line in works of art that usually shows where land or water converges with the sky.

**Landscape-** The natural landforms of a region; also, an image that has natural scenery as its primary focus.

**Medium-** The materials used to create a work of art, and the categorization of art based on the materials used (for example, painting [or more specifically, watercolor], drawing, sculpture).

**Middle ground-** The part of the picture that is between the foreground and background.

**Monochromatic-** Having a single color. A work of art rendered in only one color.

**Mural-** A large painting applied to a wall or ceiling, especially in a public space.

**Primary color-** One of three base colors (blue, red, or yellow) that can be combined to make a range of colors.

**Relics-** Body parts or personal belongings of saints and other important figures that are preserved for purposes of commemoration or veneration.

**Rendering-** A representation, executed in perspective, of a proposed structure.

**Subject matter-** The visual or narrative focus of a work of art. What do you see in the artwork?

**Still life-** A representation of inanimate objects, as a painting of a bowl of fruit.

**Symbol-** A form, sign, or emblem that represents something else, often something immaterial, such as an idea or emotion.

**Tone-** The lightness or darkness of a color. In painting, a color plus gray.

**Tint-** In painting, a color plus white.

**Vanishing Point-** the point at which you can no longer visually see an object. Think of a picture of a road... the point at which you can no longer see the road is the vanishing point.