Instructor’s Manual

to accompany

*Art for Everyone*

by the Chemeketa Community College Art Faculty

**Chapter 2: Formal Elements**

# Learning Objectives

2.1. Line

2.1.a List the different types of lines and explain the expressive qualities of each.

2.1.b Using an example from the book, describe some of the ways artists use lines in their compositions.

2.2. Shape

2.1.a Using examples from the book, identify the differences between two-dimensional and three- dimensional shape.

2.3. Value

2.3.a Explain value range and cite examples of high and low key value range from the book.

2.3.b Explain how simultaneous contrast works.

2.4. Color

2.4.a Identify everyday examples of additive and subtractive color.

2.4.b List the three main attributes of color and explain their relationship to each other.

2.5. Texture

2.5.a Using examples from the chapter, describe the difference between tactile and visual texture.

2.6. Space

2.6.a Explain the difference between three dimensional and two-dimensional space.

2.6.b Explain how the formal elements of value, color, shape, line, and texture help artists create an illusion of depth.

# Chapter Overview and Outline

## Overview

The formal elements of art are line, shape, value, color, texture, space, and depth. Artists use these elements as the foundational building blocks for their art pieces. Not all artworks include all formal elements: the choices are based on the imagination and intention of the artist.

## 2.1 Line

A simple interpretation of “line” can be thought of as the edge of something.

* Lines are longer than they are wide.
* Artists use lines to differentiate forms, create illusions, imply movement, provoke emotions, and make patterns.
* Figure 2.1. Paul Klee, *Colorful Architecture*, 1917. Gouache on paper mounted on cardboard, 10.25 × 7.875 in. The Berggruen Klee Collection, 1984, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

### ***2.1.a List the different types of lines and explain the expressive qualities of each.***

1. Expressive Lines
   1. The qualities of lines (thick, thin, straight, jagged, curvilinear, etc.) can change the effect of an artwork.
   2. Figure 2.2. Illustration of line variation.
   3. Actual lines
      1. Physically define the space within a work of art.
         1. Straight linessuggest order and precision.
            1. Figure 2.3. Example of rectilinear and geometric line. Andrew Myers, *Stack #1*, 2013. Mixed media on paper, 87 × 48 in. Collection of the artist.
         2. Jagged lines can evoke strong emotion such as anger or anxiety. Angularity suggests separation, both within the composition and in the perceived psychological impact of the piece.
            1. Figure 2.4. Example of jagged lines. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Gewecke and Erna*, 1913. Drypoint, 10.06 × 8.19 in. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
         3. Curvilinear lines imply liveliness and motion. These lines may swirl, twist, or add a suggestion of volume or lightness to a work.
            1. Figure 2.5. Example of curvilinear line. Giovanni Andrea Ansaldo, *Soldiers Fighting*, ca. 1584–1638. Pen and brown ink over black chalk on laid paper, 7.25 × 11 in. Joseph F. McCrindle Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.
         4. Contour and cross contour lines create edges or outlines of shapes and forms. Cross contour lines are often added to suggest masses of hair, areas that are darker or in shadow, or places of intense movement.
            1. Figure 2.6. Linda Haukaas, *Horse Nation*, 2010. Colored pencil and ink on late 1800s ledger paper, 11.5 × 17.6 in., Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York. Credit: Gift of the Artist / Bridgeman Images.
   4. Implied lines
      1. Suggest when two or more areas come together.
         1. Physical locations within space such as the areas between objects in their environment or their relationship to other objects in the compositional plane.
         2. Psychological connections between figures in a composition such as the gaze of others.

### ***2.1.b Using an example from the book, describe some of the ways artists use lines in their compositions.***

Figure 2.7 In-Depth: Mary Cassatt’s *In the Loge*

Figure 2.7. Mary Cassatt, *In the Loge*, 1878. Oil on canvas, 32 × 26 in. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.

* Actual Lines
  + Straight lines
    - Edges of the fan resting in the woman’s lap.
    - Vertical lines separating opera boxes in the background.
    - Angular lines of flesh, white, and black colors clearly delineating the woman’s hat, neck, face, arm, and body.
  + Contour lines
    - Angular elbow resting on the edge of the opera box.
    - Body contours around figures in other opera boxes: even though the faces and forms of these figures are not clear, we can understand that these are other opera-goers. The space between the area they occupy and their physical form, however is implied.
  + Curvilinear lines
    - Arcs of balconies and opera boxes in multiple rows separated by areas of yellow paint.
    - Detail within the box walls suggests swirling arabesques.
* Implied Lines
  + Space between the central woman and the opera box.
  + Line of sight from the woman’s opera glasses to the performance.
  + Man in the background leaning out of his box to look at the woman in the foreground.
  + Bright façade and darker reddish-brown colors of the opera boxes implies a separation between these areas, making them distinct spaces.

## 2.2. Shape

A shape is an enclosed area created by lines and edges, or changes in lightness, darkness, or textures.

* The shape itself results from the perceived difference between these areas.

### ***2.1.a Using examples from the book, identify the differences between two-dimensional and three- dimensional shape.***

1. Two-dimensional Shape
   1. A flat surface with height and width.
      1. Figure 2.8. Hand-drawn circle beside a values sphere and painting of an apple. Artwork courtesy of Marlene Lee.
2. Three-dimensional Shape
   1. An object with height, width, and depth.
      1. Real three-dimensional shapes cannot exist in two-dimensional art, but artists can create the illusion of three-dimensionality.
   2. Volume
      1. Relates to an object’s outer edges or dimensions. Volume is measured by the ratio or height to width and depth.
      2. Volume is hollow.
      3. Figure 2.9. Four-Legged Jar, Heian Period (794–1185 CE), ninth century. Earthenware with green glaze and relief decoration (Sanage ware), 7.31 × 8.75 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
   3. Mass
      1. Mass is the weight and density of a shape.
      2. Mass is solid.
      3. Figure 2.10. Brian Caponi, detail of *Without Organs*, 2013. Porcelain, artist’s hair, altered found cardboard boxes, found mirror, digital print, incense, paper, graphite, borrowed coat, video monitor with 10 minute loop. Central Academy of Fine Arts, Gallery 8, Beijing, China.
3. Expressive Shapes
   1. Geometric
      1. Clean and precise edges. Strong examples include two-dimensional basic shapes such as triangles, squares, circles, etc.
      2. Three-dimensional shapes such as cubes, cylinders, and prisms can add an illusion of three-dimensionality to an otherwise two-dimensional composition.
      3. Figure 2.11. Paul Kelpe, *Machinery (Abstract # 2)*, 1933–1934. Oil on canvas, 38.25 × 26.375 in. Transfer from the US Department of Labor, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.
      4. Figure 2.12. Al Held, *Untitled*, 2006. Art glass window, 50 × 20 ft. Photographs in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. U.S. Court House, Orlando, Florida.
   2. Curvilinear
      1. Shapes that extend beyond basic geometric shapes to include spirals, swirls, and fluid, curving edges.
         1. These shapes are often found in nature and have influenced art movements such as Art Nouveau decorative arts that attempted to synthesize natural elements in the human constructed environment (staircases, desks, wrought iron railings, etc. are good examples).
            1. Figure 2.13. Victor Horta, Hôtel Tassel Stairway, 1894. Brussels, Belgium.
      2. Figure 2.14. Maria Peñil Cobo, *Subconscious Landscape III*, 2019. Woodcut print, 20 × 26.87 in. Collection of the artist.
      3. Figure 2.15. Maria Peñil Cobo in the laboratory, New England Biolabs, Ipswich, Massachusetts. Photo courtesy of the artist.
      4. Figure 2.16. Maria Peñil Cobo, *Sustenance*, 2019. Agar, arthobacter, nesterenkonia, deinococcus, E. coli, bacteria isolated from Maria’s breast, bacteria isolated from Maria’s daughter’s hands, wool thread, epoxy, 13.8 × 9.7 in. Collection of the artist.
4. Positive and Negative Shape
   1. Figure-ground relationship
      1. The relationship between positive and negative space in a composition.
      2. Positive shape refers to a figure or object.
      3. Negative shape is the area outside the object.
   2. Figure 2.17. John Singer Sargent, *Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau)*, 1883–84. Oil on canvas, 82.125 × 43.25 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
   3. Figure 2.18. Example of positive shape (on left) and negative shape (on right).

## 2.3. Value

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a given area.

* Artists use value to control the mood of a piece, add an illusion of dimensionality, or create a sense of space.

### ***2.3.a Explain value range and cite examples of high and low key value range from the book.***

1. Value range, also known as value scale, refers to the color differences from the purest white to the darkest black and all of the slight differences of color gradation in between.
   1. Figure 2.19. Illustration of a nine-step value scale. Temporary image.
2. High-key
   1. Light. At the highest point of the value scale: an upper extreme example would be the purest white.
      1. Example: Louise Nevelson’s *Wedding Chapel IV* (Figure 2.21) is an excellent example of high-key value because of its overwhelming reliance on white. The brightness of the white suggests purity, optimism, and lightness which fit with the title of the piece.
      2. Figure 2.21. Louise Nevelson, *Dawn’s Wedding Chapel IV*, 1960. Painted wood, 109 × 87 × 13.5 in. Private collection. Bridgeman Images: XIR66489
3. Mid-key
   1. Between light and dark. In the middle zone of the value scale: a good example would be gray.
      1. Mid-key values help connect the components of a composition into a unified whole and assist in adding dimension or the illusion of space.
      2. Chiaroscuro is shading that helps to give an object a solid appearance. The term comes from the Italian words for “light” and “dark,” thus in shading the extremes are blended together to imply mass and volume.
         1. Figure 2.24. Michelangelo Buonarroti, detail of *Studies for the Libyan Sibyl*, 1510–11. Red chalk, with small accents of white chalk on the shoulder of the figure in the main study, 11.375 × 8.437 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
4. Low-key
   1. Dark. At the lowest point of the value scale: a lower extreme example would be the darkest black.
      1. Example: Vilhelm Hammershøi’s *Moonlight Strandgade 30* (Figure 2.20) demonstrates the stark contrast between high and low-key values that can be easily observed in the sharp distinction between bright items hit by moonlight (high-key values) and those still shrouded in the darkness of night (low-key values).
      2. Figure 2.20 Vilhelm Hammershøi, *Moonlight, Strandgade 30*, 1900–1906. Oil on canvas, 16.125 × 20.125 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

***2.3.b Explain how simultaneous contrast works.***

1. Simultaneous contrast refers to the phenomenon of values appearing to change based on the other values in immediate juxtaposition.
   1. For example, a dark gray value can look either darker or lighter solely depending on the colors next to it in a work. This illusion is created by our brains to help unify a piece and understand the range of values in an artwork.
      1. Figure 2.22. Illustration of simultaneous contrast in value.
   2. Simultaneous contrast helps to create the figure-ground relationship in a composition by defining the differences between objects that are closer and farther away, and objects that are darker or light that should be focal points.
      1. Figure 2.23. Charles White, *Seed of Love*, 1969. Black ink, 51 × 36 in. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. © The Charles White Archives.

## 2.4. Color

The perception of color depends on light. The attributes of color: hue, value, and saturation, add unity and variety to an artwork and help convey the artist’s creative intention.

### ***2.4.a Identify everyday examples of additive and subtractive color.***

1. Additive Color
   1. Rays of light combine to create a color.
      1. Example: Technological devices have a limited selection of colors (red, green, and blue (RGB) for instance), but they combine together so that our eyes perceive accurate representations of the images shown.
2. Subtractive Color
   1. Color results from the way light reflects off of a surface and how the eyes and brain interpret that information. Surfaces can **absorb** rays of light and our eyes see the colors that remain.
      1. Example: Light shining on a cut red rose – the surface on which the rose is placed absorbs all but the red wavelength, so red is what we perceive.

### ***2.4.b List the three main attributes of color and explain their relationship to each other.***

The attributes of color combine together to produce new effects, illusions, and dimensions that add depth, variety, and balance to works of art. Artists use all of the attributes of color, particularly in relation to the color wheel, to create effective and dynamic pieces.

1. Attributes of Color
   1. Hue
      1. Every color and color family in the rainbow.
      2. Figure 2.25. Color fundamentals of hue, saturation, and value. The sample here shows how the saturation and value of the red hue may be modified. Temporary image.
   2. Value
      1. Lightness to darkness scale for a single color hue. When white or black are added, they change our perception of the color.
   3. Saturation
      1. Range of a single color hue. This can change if white, gray, black, or a complementary color is added.
2. The Color Wheel
   1. Tool for thinking about how colors relate. Reflects how colors appear when passed through a prism and connected together to form a circle.
      1. Color wheels traditionally show the twelve brightest and purest color forms from which all other colors are made.
      2. Figure 2.26. Example of primary, secondary, and intermediate (tertiary) hues.
   2. Primary Hues
      1. Red, yellow, and blue.
   3. Secondary Hues
      1. Hues created by mixing primary hues, resulting in green, orange, and violet.
   4. Tertiary Hues
      1. Hues created when a primary and secondary hue are mixed, resulting in red-orange, red-violet, and blue-violet.
   5. Complementary Hues
      1. Hues that appear opposite to one another on the color wheel.
   6. Analogous Hues
      1. Hues that appear beside each other on the color wheel.
   7. Color Temperature
      1. Warm
         1. Dividing the color wheel down the middle, warmer colors (they might remind us of the sun or a fire, for example) include yellows, oranges, and reds. Hue families can also be divided in this manner.
      2. Cool
         1. Dividing the color wheel down the middle, cooler colors (they might remind us of ice or dark pools, for example) include greens, blues, and purples. As with the warmer temperature, hue families can also be divided in this way.
   8. Color Schemes
      1. Groups of colors that produce a desired effect (like a recipe).
      2. Figure 2.29. Rita Mae Pettway, “Housetop” twelve-block “Half-Log Cabin” variation, ca. 1975. Cotton, cotton/polyester blend, corduroy, 84 × 70 in. Photo credit: Pitkin Studio / Art Resource, NY, ART573710.
         1. Analogous colors tend to appear harmonious and balanced.
         2. Complimentary colors add contrast and interest. Complimentary color schemed often create the foundation of an artwork.
            1. Figure 2.28. Vincent van Gogh, *Vase with Red Gladioli*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 25.6 × 15.7 in. Private collection.
         3. A color scheme based on a single hue is called *monochromatic*.
            1. Figure 2.27. Judith Selby Lang, *Chroma Green*, plastic collected from Kehoe Beach Point Reyes National Seashore, 2012. Photograph, 18 × 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.
   9. Objective and Expressive Color
      1. Figure 2.32. In this video, art instructor Kay Bunnenberg-Boehmer introduces color mixing, which allows artists to play with paints and better understand how color works.
      2. Objective color is color used realistically (green grass or red apples).
      3. Expressive color is unrealistic or unexpected (a blue sun or pink bananas). Expressive colors can often be a result of the artist’s imagination, emotional state, or intended message in a work of art.
         1. Figure 2.30. Franz Marc, *The Large Blue Horses*, 1911. Oil on canvas, 41.6 × 71.3 in. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
         2. Figure 2.31. Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Happy Lovers*, 1760–1765. Oil on canvas, 47.76 × 35.51 in. Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California.

## 2.5. Texture

Texture is how an object feels to you when it is touched.

* Even if you cannot actually touch some works of art, artists can also employ texture to provide the desired effect or emotional impact:
  + Soft textures are often interpreted as soothing, positive, or safe.
  + Harsh textures can indicate negative states or darker emotions.

### ***2.5.a Using examples from the chapter, describe the difference between tactile and visual texture.***

1. Tactile Texture
   1. *Tactile textures* are what your hand can directly feel when touching the surface of an object.
      1. Surface textures in works of art can appeal to the viewer by capturing complex emotions or relating interpretations of reality.
         1. Example: *Bust of Auguste Rodin* by Camille Claudel shows the impact of tactile texture, ranging from realistic and smooth to dynamic and evocative. While primarily realistic, Claudel has captured the taut softness of the forehead, descending into rough, uneven areas under the beard, mouth, and shoulders of Rodin. Creating the piece in this manner reflects Rodin’s fiery personality; it is a nod to his own characteristically rough sculptural style, and it also demonstrates Claudel’s ability to create an identifiable portrait bust of her subject.
            1. Figure 2.33. Camille Claudel, *Bust of Auguste Rodin*, 1892 (cast) 1886–88 (modeled), bronze. 15.7 × 9.7 × 11 in. Musée d’art et d’archéologie, Guéret, France. Photo by Benoît Touchard. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY. Image reference: ART567869
         2. Figure 2.34. Gaston Lachaise, *Standing Woman*, 1912–15; cast 1930. Bronze, 73.875 × 32 × 17.75 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
         3. Figure 2.35. Ginny Marsh, *Platter*, 2010. Stained and glazed stoneware, 4 × 17 × 17 in. Collection of the Haan Mansion Museum of Indiana Art.
2. Visual Texture
   1. Visual textures refer to what can be seen by the human eye. They can mimic physical textures: harnessing the effects of light in terms of color and value can help an artist accurately capture reality.
      1. Figure 2.36. Georges de la Tour, *The Fortune Teller*, ca. 1630. Oil on canvas, 40.125 × 48.625 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
      2. Trompe l’oeilis a French term meaning “to trick the eye.” Artists who employ this technique attempt to make their works look exactly like reality.
         1. Example: *Trompe L’oeil with a Print of Alexander Pope* (artist unknown) is an excellent example of fooling the viewer’s eye. The painting looks exactly as if a man’s portrait has been hung on a wall. Every object and form have been painted in a completely realistic way because of the artist’s keen attention to where light would highlight, cast shadows, or manipulate the hue of the objects presented.
            1. Figure 2.37. *Trompe L’oeil with a Print of Alexander Pope*, ca. eighteenth century. Oil on canvas, 29.937 × 25.166 inches. John G. Johnson Collection 1917, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.
         2. Figure 2.38. Misty Gamble, detail of *Tan Hands*, from *Primping and the Currency of Worth* series, 2009. Ceramic and mixed media. Collection of Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art, Saint Joseph, Missouri.

## 2.6. Space

Space is the empty area surrounding real or implied objects. Space can be actual or visual.

* In a sculpture, space surrounds the work. Likewise, the work takes up physical space.
* In a two-dimensional work, negative space surrounds the subject matter.

### ***2.6.a Explain the difference between three dimensional and two-dimensional space.***

1. Constructing Three-Dimensional Space
   1. Artists carefully consider *positive* and *negative space* when creating and installing sculptural pieces. The size, scale, and individual components of the piece (base, central figures, and additional aspects) must be carefully planned for the desired effect. Artists may consider whether their pieces are designed to be monumental, realistic, abstract, or fantastical.
      1. Figure 2.39. Peter Christian Johnson, *Red Turbine, Construction Series*, 2011. Ceramic, stains, linseed oil, tractor paint, 23.5 × 23.5 × 16.5 in. Collection of the artist.
      2. Example: *Self-destructing Porcelain Net* by Backa Carin Ivarsdotter shows the interaction of the art piece with its setting and in relation to the audience. By creating both an interior and exterior area in the column of hanging rings, the audience is free to explore their own position to the piece and how their proximity enhances their experience of the artwork. Likewise, the artist had to explore the ideal height and width of the column and the shape and size of the porcelain rings.
         1. Figure 2.40. Backa Carin Ivarsdotter, *Self-destructive Porcelain Net*, 2003. Moving installation of high fire hand built porcelain, 177 × 49 × 49 in. World Ceramic Biennial 2003, Icheon, Korea.
2. Constructing Space on a Two-Dimensional Plane
   1. Picture plane refers to the surface of a two-dimensional work of art.
      1. Example: *Paris Street; Rainy Day* by Gustave Caillebotte while abstract in it rendering of the details of the scene, accurately reflects the perspective and proportion of the individual component figures and objects. By using realistic perspective, the street looks traversable and the figures look like they are interacting with their environment. The audience feels transported to this scene even though they cannot touch or enter the painting because of the effectiveness of Caillebotte’s illusion.
         1. Figure 2.41. Gustave Caillebotte, *Paris Street; Rainy Day*, 1877. Oil on canvas, 83.5 × 108.75 in. Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois.

### ***2.6.b Explain how the formal elements of value, color, shape, line, and texture help artists create an illusion of depth.***

The elements of art can be used together to create dynamic art pieces that provide realistic impressions of depth or physical space.

1. Combining Formal Elements
   1. Adding three-dimensional elements such as volume or mass and including overlapping objects or figures can give the audience a feeling of illusionistic space that has realistic depth. Combining these elements with effective colors, lines, and textures adds to the success of an artwork.
      1. Figure 2.42. John Van Dreal, *Still Life with Berries, Chair and Cloth*, 2010. Oil on canvas, 28 × 36 in. Private collection.
      2. Figure 2.43. Lani Irwin, *Epona*, 2013. Oil on linen, 47.24 × 39.37 in. Collection of the artist.
   2. Atmospheric Perspective
      1. Using variations in value and hue to create the illusion of deep space. Objects tend to appear more realistic and more saturated when they are closer to our eyes and softer, lighter, or less realistic the further away they are from the foreground.
      2. Figure 2.44. Sanford Gifford, *A Coming Storm*,1863; retouched and redated in 1880. Oil on canvas, 28 × 42 in. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.
   3. Linear Perspective
      1. A series of lines to guide a precise depiction of space. An artist must identify the horizon line in the image and then set all figures and objects in regard to their position relative to the horizon.
         1. This technique was heavily developed during the Italian Renaissance.
         2. Figure 2.45. Luigi Pampaloni, *Filipo Brunelleschi*, ca.1838. Marble, Piazza del Duomo, Florence, Italy.
      2. Vanishing point(s) indicate the furthest viewable area in a work. Artworks may have a single point or multiple points. A good example is a building receding from the foreground to background: parallel lines and accurate mathematical rendering of doors and windows give the impression that a building is larger in the foreground and slowly getting smaller until it reaches the point where it is no longer visible near the horizon.
         1. Figure 2.46. Example of real-world linear perspective.  Edouard Baldus, *Gare d’Enghien*, 1855. Salted paper print from paper negative, 12.3 × 17.4 in. Louis V. Bell Fund, 1992, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
         2. Figure 2.47A and B. (A) Giovanni Battista Piranesi, The Piazza di Spagna, ca. 1750-1758. Etching, 20.5 × 29.312 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (B) The solid lines show the receding parallel edges of the buildings, while the dotted lines show the vanishing point.
         3. Figure 2.48A and B. (A) Illustration of two-point perspective. Edward Ruscha, Standard Station, 1966. Color screenprint on ivory wove paper, 19.625 × 36.9 in. Museum of Modern Art, New York. (B) The dotted lines converge at separate points along the horizon line.
   4. Isometric Perspective
      1. Rising perspective. Distant images are placed higher in the picture plane without making them smaller. Isometric refers to equal dimensions in the images. An example could be parallel lines that remain parallel throughout the picture plane.
      2. Figure 2.49. Huizong of Song, *Literary Gathering*, 1100–1125 CE. Ink and light color on silk, 72.6 × 48.8 in. National Palace Museum, Shilin district, Taipei, China.

# Answers to Review Questions (in “Review and Do”)

**Review 2.1**

What are the formal elements in art?

*Sample Answer*: The formal elements of art are the following:

1. Line - defined by the path created by a dot moving in space

2. Shape - a flat area that is defined by edges

3. Value - the relative darkness or lightness of something in a composition

4. Color - comprising of hue, value, and saturation

5. Texture - the tactile quality of an object, whether actual or implied

6. Space - the feeling of depth or three-dimensionality in a work of art

**Review 2.2**

How do the formal elements in a work of art function like the wooden blocks that kids use to build walls and towers?

*Sample Answer*: The formal elements (or the ingredients of art) function as the building blocks. They allow artists and designers to create engaging and complex works that carry a message and connect with individuals. An artist relies on the combination of various elements to create a work of art. For example, in a painting, an artist may combine line, color, and shape to represent a subject; these elements support and anchor each other.

**Review 2.3**

What are the three attributes of any color?

*Sample Answer*: Color is an essential element of art because of its ability to create an emotional response in the viewer. The three attributes of color are:

* Hue - the color’s name or family
* Chroma or saturation - the dullness or brightness of a color
* Value - the lightness or darkness of a color

**Review 2.4**

What is the difference between actual and visual texture?

*Sample Answer*: Artists can create a great contrast in art by combining actual (tactile) and visual textures. Actual texture refers to the physical texture of an object’s surface (rough, smooth, soft). In contrast, visual texture refers to the implied texture of a surface achieved by manipulating such formal elements as and shape. In Van Gogh’s works, for example, the tactile quality of his objects is achieved by the layers of thick paint applied with a palette knife.

**Review 2.5**

How can artists create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional picture plane?

*Sample Answer*: Artists can create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat surface by using various techniques and elements of art. In drawing or painting, artists can employ chiaroscuro, a technique where a clear range of tonal contrasts suggest the volume and modeling of the subjects represented. In painting, for example, the artist can use atmospheric perspective; the further the object or image is away from the viewer, the smaller and reduced it becomes in clarity, value, and saturation.

# Using “Try This” In Your Course (in “Review and Do”)

*Try This:* The formal elements are all around you. Walk around your living space, neighborhood, or college campus to find examples of them. For example, you might look down a street and see how the curbs or sidewalks converge into one point. That’s linear perspective and an example of space, and because we just told you about it, you can’t use the street example now, but you get the idea. Use your phone or camera to take photographs of ten examples of different formal elements. For each photo, write a brief explanation of what the element is and how it appears in the actual space you inhabit.

* This activity could easily be modified for an in-class group or out-of-class individual activity.
  1. Preview: how to do this assignment, demonstrated by the instructor.
     1. The instructor should take a suitable photo of their environment and upload it to an image editing application, presentation tool, or document that allows for digital manipulation. In different colors, highlight the component areas of the composition that demonstrate formal elements described in this chapter. Share this image with the class and explain how each element was identified and why. If desired, the instructor could begin with the most basic components referenced early in the chapter and add elements as the unit progresses.
  2. In-class group activity:
     1. Option 1: Break students into small groups and have them explore their learning environment (building, grounds, etc.), take photos, and choose one that best demonstrates formal elements. Students can then present their image to the class, discussing the most salient and effective formal elements in their image.
     2. Option 2: Break students into groups, assign each group a specific formal element and have them explore their learning environment and take a photo that best shows this element. Students then present their image to the class and explain how the element is effectively utilized.
  3. Out-of-class individual activity: in their daily lives, students can take photos of their usual environments and locate formal elements.
     1. Option 1: Students create a single image modeled after the instructor example. Students can either present the image in class at the next meeting or write a few explanatory sentences about their image.
     2. Option 2: Students create a collage of images demonstrating their most effective examples of individual formal elements. Students can either present the collage in class or write a few explanatory sentences about their images.

# Discussion Topics, Activities, and Projects

## Discussions

* Discuss the formal elements present in the interior works of Vincent Van Gogh. A good example is his piece [*Van Gogh’s Chair*](https://www.vincentvangogh.org/van-goghs-chair.jsp), created in 1888. The piece is deceptively minimal. How has Van Gogh used line, color, texture, and shape to successfully capture this object and the space it occupies?
* Referring to Rita Mae Pettway’s *Housetop* quilt (Figure 2.29), how has the artist employed color? How are colors juxtaposed based on the color wheel and what impact do these choices have on the overall piece? What hues, values, and saturation levels do you notice and how are these contributing to the work of art?
* Texture: compare Michelangelo’s [*David*](http://www.italianrenaissance.org/michelangelos-david/) to Auguste Rodin’s [*Burghers of Calais*](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/207812). How does Rodin’s use of expressive sculptural modeling change the emotional or dramatic impact of his piece?

## Discussions with Activities

* Still life paintings through time: Paul Cezanne’s [*Still Life with Apples*](https://getty.edu/art/collection/objects/102380/paul-cezanne-still-life-with-apples-french-1893-1894/) and Marlene Lee (Figure 2.8). Describe the effects of the formal elements of art. How does Lee’s attempt at three-dimensionality differ from reality? What are the similarities between Cezanne and Lee in this case?
  + Deeper discussion: art critics and aesthetic philosophers have debated the role of the artist for hundreds of years. Is it the role of the artist to depict objects exactly as they are seen, or should they be allowed to use their imaginations to create their own creative compositions? What are the potential arguments from both sides and how do they relate to the elements of art?
* Franz Marc’s *The Large* *Blue Horses* discussion of color.
  + Download a digital copy of *The Large* *Blue Horses* and open it using an image editing program (PhotoShop, Paint, etc.). Use digital manipulation to show how color is used to highlight certain areas of a work of art. Increase and decrease saturation, value, contrast, and brightness levels. Discuss the impact if colors are desaturated, removed, or made subordinate to the original scheme. What happens when the piece is viewed in a monochromatic scale?

## Activities

* Klee-inspired “A line is a dot that goes for a walk” contour line drawing or tracing. Choose one real-life object as your model: it can be a physical object or picture or an object. Using a piece of paper and a writing instrument, either attempt to draw the object free-hand or trace the outline of the model image. When you are satisfied with your drawing, add new visual elements only associated with the properties of lines. Change line qualities to make your drawing more expressive. Eliminate or erase portions of your lines. Describe the effect that adding a zigzag or curvilinear line has on your piece. How did this activity help you understand the role of a line in creating effective artwork? When you eliminated a portion of your line did your piece feel incomplete? Why?
* Review Image Walkthrough 2.11 then in small groups create your own guided walkthrough of another image. Use the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection to find a suitable work of art from any time period. [Metropolitan Museum of Art Collections](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection)
  + Some basic considerations:
    - What is the focal point of the image? How did the formal elements of the work help you identify the focal point?
    - Describe the use of line, shape, and texture in your work of art. Be sure to include a discussion of actual and implied lines.
    - Is there color in your chosen piece? How many colors can you identify and how are they used? Use terminology related to the color wheel in your analysis.
    - Is the piece two- or three-dimensional? How has the artist attempted to harness, manipulate, or alter the illusion of space?

## Projects

* Cassatt-inspired illustration: self-portrait and line analysis. After reviewing the in-depth discussion of *In the Loge*, either take a photograph or draw an image of yourself in your typical study environment. Discuss all of the instances of actual and implied line within your piece.
* Positive and negative space in modern art.
  + Part I: Explore some of the sculptures in [The Museum of Modern Art’s](https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/sculpture) collection. Choose one piece that you find appealing or interesting. Describe how the artist has utilized positive and negative space in their work.
  + Part II: Imagine that you have been asked to design your own modern sculpture to be displayed in a gallery. What would you piece look like, how would you want it to be displayed, and how would your piece be experienced by your audience? Include a robust discussion of how your exhibit utilizes positive and negative space.

# Recommended Links

## Websites

* Understanding Formal Analysis, J. Paul Getty Museum. [Formal Analysis](https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building_lessons/formal_analysis2.html)
* The Art of Seeing Art, Toledo Museum of Art. [Visual Analysis](https://www.toledomuseum.org/education/visual-literacy/art-seeing-art)

## Websites with Additional Readings and Activities

* Elements of Art: Volume, Mass, and Three-Dimensionality, Sophia Learning LLC. This resource provides easy to understand readings, details, and step-by-step guides to these elements using art historical pieces. Additional activity options are available at the bottom of the page. [Exploring Volume, Mass, and 3D](https://www.sophia.org/tutorials/elements-of-art-volume-mass-and-three-dimensionali)
* Playing with space, mass, volume, and dimensionality, National Gallery of Art. [Playing with Space](https://www.nga.gov/education/families/an-eye-for-art/playing-with-space.html)

## Videos

* Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape, National Gallery of Art. Miró utilizes many of the formal elements of art in clear juxtaposition, allowing for helpful identification, background information, and the opportunity for robust discussion of the effectiveness of each element. (19:19 minute preview, full film available for loan by request using the form on this website). [Joan Miro](https://www.nga.gov/audio-video/video/joan-miro.html)
* More on creating art with bacteria, STEAM intersections, 3:34. [Art Insider: Using Bacteria as Paint](https://youtu.be/K5AmW2JBHYU)
* Explore the use of line and color in the works of Agnes Martin, 6:24. [PBS "The Art I Can’t Show You"](https://www.pbs.org/video/art-i-cant-show-you-x47wnp/)
* Brunelleschi’s experiment and writings on the development of linear perspective, Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, 4:16. [Renaissance Perspective](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/early-renaissance1/beginners-renaissance-florence/v/linear-perspective-brunelleschi-s-experiement)