

Art101 Glossary

[1] YOUR LOOKING TOOLS - Elements of Art

Term	Definition	To Consider	Words to Describe
Lines	The most basic element in art	How were the lines created? Do the lines connect or divide the elements?	Thick/thin; bold/fine; curved/straight; solid/dotted; intersecting\diverging
Shapes	2-dimensional elements formed when lines join	Are the shapes symbolic of anything? How are the shapes organised?	Organic or geometric, big or small
Forms	3-dimensional shapes	How were the forms made? Were they modelled, carved, or constructed?	Spheres, cylinders, cubes, (ir)regular
Colours		What atmosphere or emotion is evoked by the colours?	Vivid, muted, warm, cool, varied, monochrome, saturated
Tone	Lightness or darkness of a colour	What mood is evoked by the colour tone? Do the tones create a sense of depth or perspective?	
Texture	Surface quality of an artwork which can be seen or felt	How was the texture created? Does it arise through the paint, quality of objects or materials?	Smooth, rough, hard, soft, matte, glossy, delicate, coarse, uniform, granular, silky, sandy
Sound	What do you hear? How does sound relate to the image?	What do you hear? Does its volume affect your experience of the work? What does it remind you of?	Loud, quiet, high, low, continuous, intermittent, rhythmic, clear, distorted, near, distant
Perspective	The technique used to create illusion of depth and spatial relationships in an artwork; Related to composition and space	How does the perspective affect how the artwork's subjects are being presented?	Linear perspective, aerial perspective, overlapping
Arrangement	How individual elements are positioned in relation to one another	Where are things placed? How are they grouped, spaced or positioned?	Clustered/dispersed; Ordered/chaotic
Composition	Arrangement of individual elements in an artwork to create a whole	Where do the elements appear in the work? At the foreground, midground, or background?	Simple, complex
Space	Area around and within	Are objects spaced close together or far apart? Do the spaces	Positive space—area occupied by

	objects/forms/lines	between objects signal their relationships to each other?	primary elements in the composition Negative space—area unoccupied by elements
Materials	The physical substance used to make the work	What is this work made of? How does it contribute to the story you hope to tell?	Wood, steel, fabric, charcoal

[2] MAKING CONNECTIONS - Principles of Design

Term	Definition	To Consider	Words to Describe
Balance	Distribution of visual weight	Where does the visual weight sit? Does one side feel heavier than another?	Symmetrical, asymmetrical Balanced, unbalanced Stable, unstable
Contrast	Differences that create distinction or emphasis	What differences do you notice? Are any elements deliberately set against each other?	
Emphasis/ Hierarchy	Ordering elements by importance and attention	What do you notice first? Where does your eye go? What makes that element stand out? What recedes, and what takes center stage?	Focal/secondary; Dominant/ subtle Prominent/understated
Movement	How the work guides the eye/body	How does your eye move through the work? Does the work itself move? Does it encourage you to move around it?	Static, dynamic, fast, slow, abrupt, undulating, directed, wandering
Pattern	Repeated elements	How does your eye move through the work? Does the work itself move? Does it encourage you to move around it?	(Ir)regular, (un)predictable, dense, sparse
Rhythm	Repetition that creates a sense of movement or flow	What repeats? Is there a pattern to the repetition? Does it create a visual beat or pace?	Repetitive, varied, steady, changing, pulsating
Unity/ Harmony	How elements feel connected	What makes the work feel cohesive? Do the elements feel like they belong together?	Cohesive, fragmented, harmonious, discordant, consistent, varied
Proportion/ Scale	Size relationships between elements	How do the parts relate in size? Do any proportions feel unusual or exaggerated?	Proportional, disproportionate, naturalistic, exaggerated, (un)equal
Mood/ Atmosphere	Emotions or feelings elicited in the viewer or a piece of work, intentionally or unintentionally	Can you identify which aspects of the artwork have evoked those feelings? Is it the artwork's colour, shape, subject matter, pattern?	Melancholic, joyful, serene, haunting, gloomy, ominous, peaceful, whimsical